

Welcome to  
**New Orleans!**



American Merchant Marine Veterans  
**36th National Convention**

April 18 - 21, 2024  
New Orleans, Louisiana

# AMERICAN MARITIME CONGRESS



AMC is proud to support the  
U.S. Merchant Marine, and  
recognizes the contributions  
and sacrifices of our WWII  
Merchant Marines.

*Advocating for responsible maritime policy, effective commercially operating  
fleet for our national and economic security, and a level playing field to ensure  
the success and continued viability of a U.S.-Flag maritime industry.*

[WWW.AMERICANMARITIME.ORG](http://WWW.AMERICANMARITIME.ORG)

444 NORTH CAPITOL ST NW #800, WASHINGTON, DC 20001





## *Welcome to the “Big Easy”!*

The Convention Committee is pleased to welcome you to the 36th annual National Convention of the American Merchant Marine Veterans at the Higgins Hilton Hotel. The history-rich seaport of New Orleans offers an excellent location to host this milestone gathering. We hope that you will enjoy our planned activities and that you choose to participate in the business meetings as we work together to better this organization. There is much planned in the next few days, mostly centered around the National WWII Museum. It is a positive thought knowing that the WWII Merchant Marine is properly recognized at this museum in the Ralph E. Crump wing.

2024 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of AMMV, making this a great time to reflect on AMMV’s organizational history and the many accomplishments since 1984. From our WWII mariners receiving Veteran status in 1988, to passage of the WWII Merchant Mariners Congressional Gold Medal Act in 2020 and the official CGM ceremony in 2022, to the participating of AMMV at national Veterans Day and Memorial Day programs in D.C., there are many reasons to be proud and thankful. As we chart our course into the future, what will the next 40 years bring for the AMMV organization?

If you are a World War II Merchant Marine Veteran, we hope you have a wonderful reunion with your “shipmates” and perhaps even meet some new ones. And, most of all, thank you for your WWII service. Our other attendees – family members, friends, supporters, and younger mariners – will join you in celebrating the legacy of the WWII U.S. Merchant Marine.

*Heave Ho!*

– *The 2024 AMMV Convention Committee*



**MARITIME EXPERT GROUP, INC.**  
**CONSULTANCY & WITNESS SERVICES**



## AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS

### National Officers

**National President** ..... **Capt. Dru DiMattia** *Member-at-Large*  
1242 SW Pine Island Rd, Suite 42-304 – Cape Coral, FL 33991  
(239) 243-3409 - drudimattia@gmail.com

**National Vice President ... Capt. Darin Huggins (interim)**  
*Member-at-Large*  
226 Morningside Drive – Durham, NC 27713  
(409) 223-3989 – CaptainHuggins@protonmail.com

**National Secretary** ..... **Capt. Chris Edyvean** *Midwest Chapter*  
P.O. Box 41 – Hurley, WI 54534 – cjedyvean@hotmail.com

**National Treasurer** ..... **Dennis Kelly** *Member-at-Large*  
6 Holmes Ct. – Darien, CT 06820 – (203) 967-8776 – dkelly49@aol.com

### Regional Vice Presidents

#### Region ONE – FL, PR

**Stephen Snyder** *Member-at-Large*  
11111 Windy Oaks Dr. N – Jacksonville, FL 32225 – (609) 458-3207 – snyderjx54@yahoo.com

#### Region TWO – AL, DE, GA, KY, MD, MS, NC, SC, TN VA, DC, WV

**George Bruno** *Member-at-Large*  
6880 McFrancis Rd. – Trussville, AL 35173 – (510) 543-0966 – gibruno@pacbell.net

#### Region THREE - NJ, PA

**Dennis Ng (interim)** *Dennis A. Roland Chapter*  
dennissally@msn.com

#### Region FOUR – CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, VT

**Kyle Knickerbocker** *Member-at-Large*  
22 Falls River Drive – Ivoryton, CT 06442 – (860) 876-7557 – kyle.knickerbocker@icloud.com

#### Region FIVE – IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI

**Paula Papamarcos (interim)** *Mid-West Chapter*  
paulapapa19@outlook.com

#### Region SIX – AR, AZ, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX

**vacant**

#### Region SEVEN – AK, CO, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

**Jens Inge Egeland** *Member-at-Large*  
(458) 239-3196 – jensingeegeland@gmail.com

#### Region EIGHT – AUS, CA, HI

**Scarlett Rose (interim)** *Member-at-Large*  
(530) 945-2224 – sroseqlter@gmail.com

### Appointed Officers

**Judge Advocate** ..... **Capt. Joseph Byrne** *Member-at-Large*  
joe@captainbyrnelaw.com

**Chaplain** ..... **vacant**

**Editor,**  
**National Magazine** ..... **Capt. Chris Edyvean** *Midwest Chapter*

**Historian** ..... **vacant**

**Nat'l Public Relations** .... **vacant**

**Nominating &  
Credentials** ..... **vacant**

### Standing Committees

**Editorial** ..... **Capt. Chris Edyvean** *Midwest Chapter*  
**Lynn Kelly** *Member-at-Large*

**Government Affairs** ..... **Charles A. Mills** *Lonestar Chapter*  
mcamco@aol.com

**Patrick Cotter** *Member-at-Large*  
coolenvconsulting@gmail.com

**Veterans Affairs** ..... **Bob Lewis** *Member-at-Large*  
(617) 820-8968 – robertlewis865@yahoo.com

**Constitution & By-laws** ..... **vacant**

**Membership** ..... **Lynn Kelly** *Member-at-Large*

**Christian Yuhás** *Golden Gate Chapter*

**Stephen Synder** *Member-at-Large*

**Patti Holmes** *Member-at-Large*  
1206 Tiffany Lane – Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
(404) 451-6255 – pitipat88@yahoo.com

### Internet &

**Social Media** ..... **Capt. Dru DiMattia** *Member-at-Large*  
**Capt. Chris Edyvean** *Midwest Chapter*

**International Affairs** ..... **Jens Inge Egeland** *Member-at-Large*

### Convention

**Committee** ..... **Capt. Dru DiMattia, Chairman**  
**Paula Papamarcos, Events Co-Chair**  
**Veda Handy, Events Co-Chair**  
**Lynn Kelly, Registration**



**City of New Orleans**

Mayor LaToya Cantrell



Dear Friends,

As Mayor of the City of New Orleans, it is with great enthusiasm that I welcome attendees of the American Merchant Marine Veterans National Convention to New Orleans for American Merchant Marine Veterans' (AMMV) 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I am honored that you have chosen our beautiful city to gather, the rich history of The Port of New Orleans makes this the perfect destination to convene.

Dating back to the founding of New Orleans in 1718, ports have always been essential to driving economic impact and industrialization. On behalf of my community, I want to thank you all for your hard work and unwavering commitment to our country in connection with economics, war efforts, and preservation of national security. In addition, I encourage you to use this time in New Orleans to brainstorm, procure, and revamp ways to help veterans and their families connect with information regarding benefits and services available to them, in and out of service. In addition, while you are here, feel the love of our city, share it with yours and return often.

The energy of our city is unmatched. During your stay, immerse yourself in everything New Orleans has to offer. Treat yourself to our famous cuisines at local restaurants, dance to the beat with our local jazz musicians and visit our exceptional cultural establishments to indulge in some of New Orleans history, such as the National World War II Museum, the New Orleans Museum of Art, or The Port of New Orleans. Lastly, I extend my best wishes for an inspirational convention.

Sincerely,

LaToya Cantrell  
Mayor, City of New Orleans

# AMMV 36<sup>th</sup> National Convention

New Orleans, Louisiana – April 18 – 21, 2024

Higgins Hotel by Hilton  
1000 Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA 70130  
phone: (504) 528-1941



## Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>

1:00 p.m. – 6:00p.m. Registration & Hospitality Room open – *American Red Cross Chartwell Room*

## Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>

7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Higgins Hotel – breakfast on your own  
8:00 a.m. – Noon Registration & Hospitality Room open – *American Red Cross Chartwell Room*  
(coffee in Hospitality Room before meetings start)  
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. AMMV Business Session – *Casablanca Room*  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch – *Casablanca Room*  
1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. AMMV Business Sessions – *Casablanca Room*  
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Guest Speakers; AMMV program awards – *Casablanca Room*  
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Break & Hospitality Room open – *American Red Cross Chartwell Room*  
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Cocktail hour – *National WWII Museum*  
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Gala Dinner hosted by CAMM – *National WWII Museum*  
Includes Victory Belles entertainment and AMMV spotlight

## Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>

7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Higgins Hotel – breakfast on your own  
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Hospitality Room open – *American Red Cross Chartwell Room*  
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. National WWII Museum tours (pay as you go)  
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Lunch w/ speaker(s) at National WWII Museum – *BB's Staged Door Canteen*  
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Continued museum tours featuring movie *Beyond all Boundaries*  
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Hospitality Room open – *American Red Cross Chartwell Room*  
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Riverboat dinner cruise – *off site* (pay as you go)  
(Busses depart 6 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.)  
8:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Hospitality Room open – *American Red Cross Chartwell Room*

## Sunday April 21st

7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Higgins Hotel – breakfast on your own  
8:00 a.m. – Noon National WWII Museum tours (pay as you go)  
11:00 a.m. – Noon Hotel check-out & travel home for many

Monday April 22<sup>nd</sup> Optional extended stay

*HEAVE HO! Safe Travels!*



# WWII Merchant Marine Veterans

*(expected attendees at this convention)*

William Balabanow

Charles Deemer

William Fairfield

William Keim

George Koch

Bob Kulick, Sr.

Capt. Pete Kurkimilis

Frank Mendez

Charles A. Mills

George Norton

Donald Pantone

Claude Perasso

James Powell

Edward M. Prather

Seth Schneible, Sr.

Harold Seibel

Donald Sperrier

Bob Webb

Dave Yoho

***Thank you for your service!***

# Presentation of the *Harvey-Wichita Award*

The *Harvey-Wichita Award* was introduced at the 2017 AMMV National Convention. This award is first and foremost designed to honor by name Past National Presidents Morris Harvey and A.J. Wichita, both WWII veterans, who worked extremely hard for AMMV and gave so much over many years. This award is the highest level of recognition for organizational service to the AMMV, with recipients having displayed a level of excellence commensurate with the namesakes of this award. The criteria are:

- One annually presented to a WWII-era Merchant Mariner or member. This is a “lifetime achievement” award in terms of dedication to AMMV causes and USMM advocacy.
- One award annually to a post-WWII member. This is our “Man or Woman of the Year”.
- This is a one-time award. Once presented, a recipient will be ineligible for future consideration.



## *Morris Harvey & A.J. Wichita*

### Past recipients of *Harvey-Wichita Award*

31 <sup>st</sup> National Convention	2017 – Reno	Nelson & Shirley Cauble	Sheila Sova
32 <sup>nd</sup> National Convention	2018 – St. Louis	Charles A. Mills	Michael Helbig
33 <sup>rd</sup> National Convention	2019 – Tampa	Toni Horodysky	Capt. Dru DiMattia
34 <sup>th</sup> National Convention	2021 – Baltimore	Dave Yoho	Capt. Chris Edyvean
35 <sup>th</sup> National Convention	2023 – Las Vegas	Bill Balabanow	Lynn Kelly



# APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (AOS-USA)

**JOIN THE CAUSE  
FOR SERVANT OF GOD  
BROTHER MARINUS**

- **U.S. MERCHANT MARINE CAPTAIN**
- **RESCUED 14005 NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES**
- **BENEDICTINE MONK FOR 47 YEARS**



**APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
409-985-4545  
brothermarinuscause@gmail.com



**AOS-USA** Salutes the America Merchant Marine Veterans for their service to the maritime industry and to our country. Thank you for your service in Peace and War!

We wish to thank AMMV for endorsing our efforts to promote the cause of Servant of God Brother Marinus, O.S.B.

Before taking on the name of Brother Marinus, Capt. Leonard LaRue was the master of the SS Meredith Victory, and oversaw the rescue of 14,000 North Koreans over Christmas 1950.

Capt. LaRue also was a World War II Merchant Marine Veteran, sailing as second mate on the Mormacmar during Convoy, PQ 13, which sailed from Iceland to Murmansk. After leaving the sea in 1954, he became a Benedictine monk at St. Paul's Abbey in Newton, New Jersey, and took the name Brother Marinus.

We invite Catholic mariners to Join as Mariner Members for \$60

Affiliate Membership is open to anyone, regardless of Faith background. Affiliate membership is \$35 and is open to anyone who supports the work of the Apostleship of the Sea.

To join go to our website at:  
[www.aos-usa.org](http://www.aos-usa.org)

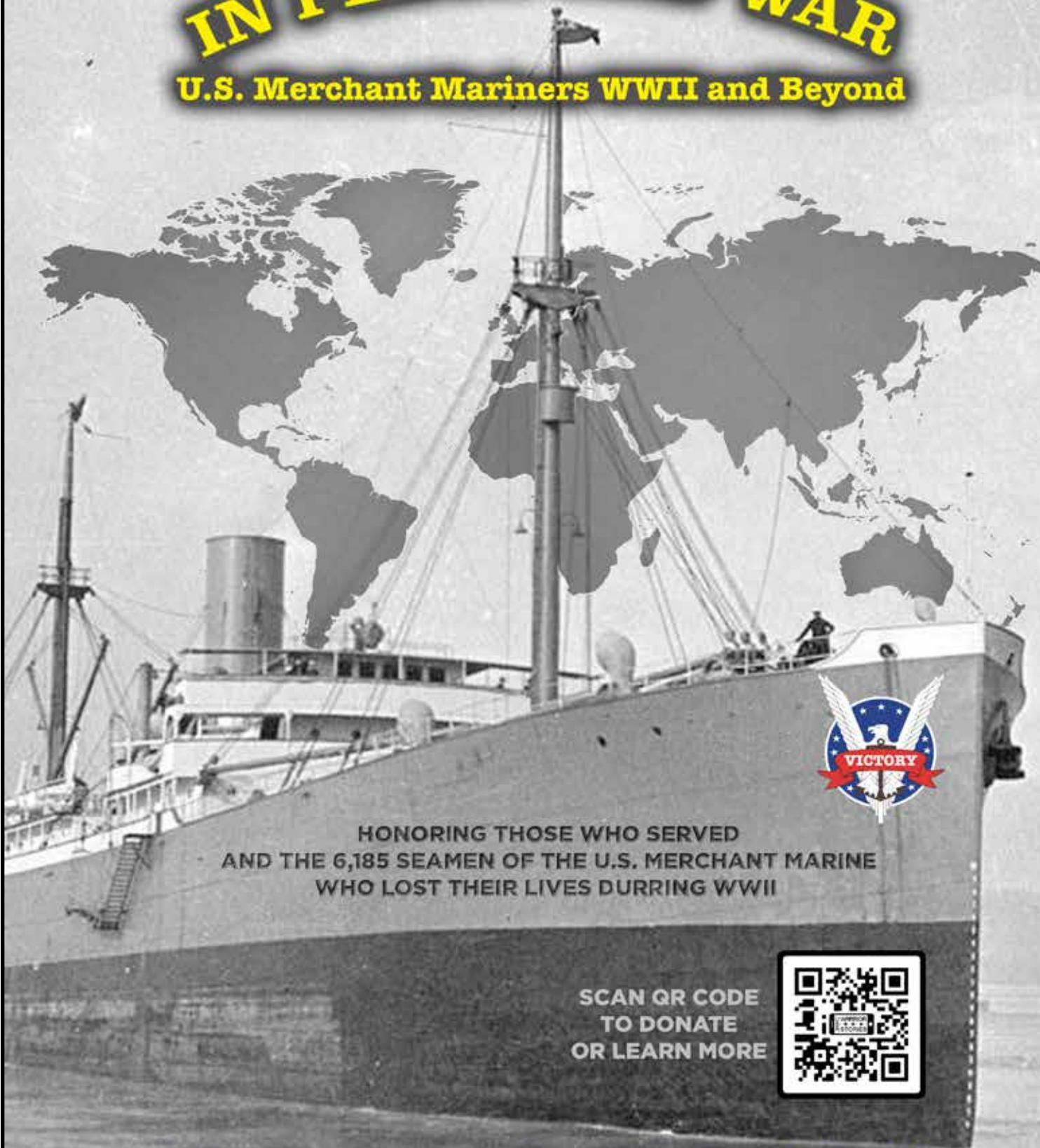
Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America  
The professional association of Catholic Mariners and Maritime Ministers.  
Capt. George P. McShea, Jr - President  
1500 Jefferson Drive Port Arthur, TX 77642-0646 • 409-985-4545



**COMING SOON**

# **IN PEACE AND WAR**

**U.S. Merchant Mariners WWII and Beyond**



**HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED  
AND THE 6,185 SEAMEN OF THE U.S. MERCHANT MARINE  
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES DURING WWII**

**SCAN QR CODE  
TO DONATE  
OR LEARN MORE**



**A New Documentary from USA Warrior Stories  
[usawarriorstories.org](http://usawarriorstories.org)**

# **The Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO Supports Our Merchant Marine Veterans**



**David Heindel**  
*President*

**Anthony Gonsiewski**  
*Vice President*

**Mark Clements**  
*Executive Secretary-Treasurer*

# Boston Marine Society

The Oldest Marine Society in the World

Est. 1742

“to make navigation safer & to relieve members & their families in poverty or other adverse accidents in life”



The Boston Marine Society is proud to support  
American Merchant Marine Veterans  
National Convention 2024.

Thank you for your contributions to our Nation.

Boston Marine Society, 100 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite 102

Boston, MA 02129

[www.bostonmarinesociety.org](http://www.bostonmarinesociety.org)

# AMMV Midwest Chapter

Salutes

Captain Dru DiMattia and Crew

on the

36<sup>th</sup> Annual AMMV Convention



Midwest Chapter members (left to right): Bob Weagant, Marilyn Wnuk, Joe O'Connor, Karyn Holm, Paula Papamarcos.

# REMEMBERING Jack Schmidt



*Founder of the:*  
**American Merchant Marine Veterans  
John T. Schmidt Palmetto Mariners Chapter  
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina**

**John T. Schmidt  
South Carolina Palmetto  
Mariners Chapter  
American Merchant Marine Veterans**



***BEST WISHES TO ALL  
AT THE CONVENTION  
AND ALL AMMV SUPPORTERS***

The  
**SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION**  
Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes, and Inland Waters

*Respectfully Salutes the*

# **American Merchant Marine Veterans**

**DAVID HEINDEL**  
*President*

**AUGUSTIN TELLEZ**  
*Executive Vice President*



**GEORGE TRICKER**  
*Vice President Contracts*

**TOM ORZECOWSKI**  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

**DEAN CORGEY**  
*Vice President Gulf Coast*

*Thank You for Your Service to Our Country*



**Congratulations and Best Wishes to the American Merchant Marine Veterans Association Convention Committee for a very successful and productive 36<sup>th</sup> National Convention at New Orleans, Louisiana, April 18 – 21, 2024.**

**From the Officers and Members of the Golden Gate Chapter, San Francisco, California.**

# GREATER NEW ORLEANS COUNCIL OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

## *CITIZENS IN SUPPORT OF THE SEA SERVICES*

WE SUPPORT OUR LOCAL SEA SERVICE COMMANDS AND SERVICEMEN, TO OUR COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL ROTC PROGRAMS, AND TO OUR OWN NAVAL SEA CADET SQUADRON.



WE WELCOME AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS AND SUPPORTERS TO THE 2024 CONVENTION!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO JOIN VISIT US AT [WWW.GNONL.ORG](http://WWW.GNONL.ORG).

EMAIL: [NAVYLEAGUE@BELLSOUTH.NET](mailto:NAVYLEAGUE@BELLSOUTH.NET)

BY PHONE: 504-779-5671

## **Ahoy & Congratulations!**

***Good Luck to the A.M.M.V.'s 36th Annual National Convention!***



Founded in 1883, the International Ship Masters Association is North America's largest fraternal organization of vessel Captains, Officers and Crewmen. Consisting primarily of U.S. and Canadian Great Lake's mariners, local lodges are in most of the primary ports. We are proud to support the American Merchant Marine Veterans group and A.M.M.V.'s National Secretary Capt. Chris Edyvean, a member of I.S.M.A.'s Twin Ports Lodge 12 of Duluth, MN & Superior, WI.

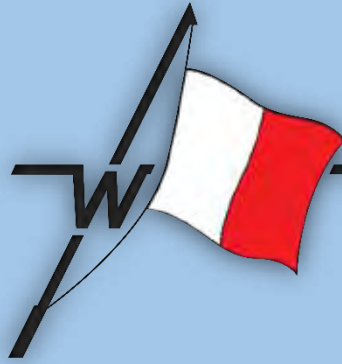


[www.shipmaster.org](http://www.shipmaster.org)

I.S.M.A. members operate & support vessels from the remarkable 1,000 foot behemoths to the hundreds of smaller tugs, pilot boats and research vessels working on the Great Lakes. We work toward a safer and more efficient St. Lawrence Seaway system, by advocating for the American and Canadian Great Lakes merchant mariner. We make sure this voice is heard on matters of regulation and law, as well as maritime safety and working conditions. Through scholarships, mentoring and apprenticeships, we assist the working seaman, as well as encouraging newcomers to join the proud tradition of being a U.S. Merchant Mariner.

*Twin Ports Lodge 12 ✦ P.O. Box 122 ✦ Superior, WI 54880 ✦ 715-392-6287*





**Western Great Lakes  
Pilots Association**

*Thanking our U.S. Merchant Mariners who have  
answered the call, in peace and in war, since 1775!*

Western Great Lakes Pilots Association, LLC  
P.O. Box 365, Brimley, MI 49715  
(715) 392-5200 • [info@wglpa.com](mailto:info@wglpa.com) • [www.wglpa.com](http://www.wglpa.com)



**THE TRUSTEES OF THE SAILORS' SNUG HARBOR**

Salutes U.S. Merchant Mariners  
for their service and sacrifice to our country.

SSH, one of the oldest secular charities in the country, was founded through the 1801 Will of Captain Robert Richard Randall. **Our mission is to aid retired merchant mariners across the country in need of assistance.** We subsidize housing costs for mariners in their home communities who demonstrate a financial need and meet other eligibility requirements.

**BRING THE MESSAGE BACK TO YOUR HOME COMMUNITY**

*If you know of a retired mariner in need of assistance, please visit  
our web site or call our Mariner Counselor at 646-465-8585.*

17 Battery Place, Suite 929 New York, New York 10004  
Tel: 646-465-8585 Toll Free: 1-888-257-5456 Fax: 212-513-0243  
Website: [www.thesailorssnugharbor.org](http://www.thesailorssnugharbor.org)  
Email: [info@thesailorssnugharbor.org](mailto:info@thesailorssnugharbor.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/sailorssnugharbor/](http://www.facebook.com/sailorssnugharbor/)



**Ocean Liner  
Row**

THE GREAT OCEAN LINERS OF THE  
20TH CENTURY IN NEW YORK HARBOR

**We Appraise, Purchase & Sell  
Ocean Liner Memorabilia**

**Ian Robertson • 917-416-7653**

P.O. Box 20586, New York, NY 10025

[www.oceanlinerrow.com](http://www.oceanlinerrow.com)

**Norman Palmer**

19111 N 90th Dr.  
Peoria, AZ 85382

623-566-2691

[npalmer82cox.net](http://npalmer82cox.net)





Membership Application for:  
***MEMBER-AT-LARGE***

(To join an organized Chapter, please contact AMMV HQ for further information.)

American Merchant Marine Veterans is an incorporated non-profit group working to promote the history of the U.S. Merchant Marine; membership is now open to any interested persons with a desire to share in our goals. Climb aboard and join us as we strive to educate the public about the role which the U.S. Merchant Marine has played throughout American history!

AMMV aims to obtain overdue recognition for our WWII Merchant Marine Veterans and gain recognition for post-WWII U.S. merchant seamen. AMMV members participate in memorial events and support laws/program which promote our modern U.S.-flagged fleet. Membership includes a full color quarterly AMMV News magazine and an annual membership card.



**Join online at [ammv.us](http://ammv.us) or complete the following information and send to National Headquarters:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF APPLICATION: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any connection to the Merchant Marine? (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Member-At-Large Dues are \$50 annually (July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>). Other options are \$90 for two years, or \$130 for three years. Send check or money order to:**

***American Merchant Marine Veterans  
P.O. Box 2024, Darien, CT 06820-2024***

Questions? Please call AMMV HQ: (475) 470-9200; email [ammermarvets@gmail.com](mailto:ammermarvets@gmail.com)



## Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association District No. 1-PCD, M.E.B.A. (AFL-CIO)



---

**M.E.B.A. represents licensed engine and deck officers aboard seagoing vessels, ferries and government-contracted ships.** Our members also serve on tugs & barges, cruise & research ships, Great Lakes & LNG vessels and in various capacities in the shoreside industries.

---

### Honoring Merchant Mariners Past & Present

**Claudia Cimini**  
Executive V.P.

**Adam Smith**  
Gulf Coast V.P.

**Jason Callahan**  
Atlantic Coast V.P.

---

M.E.B.A. HQ | 444 N. Capitol St., N.W., Ste. 800 Washington, D.C. 20001  
(202) 638-5355 | [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org) | [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)

---

**Adam Vokac**, National M.E.B.A. President | **Roland Rexha**, Secretary-Treasurer

The U.S. Merchant Marine Officers of AMO Thank and Salute  
**AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS**



**WILLIAM BARRERE**  
National President

**ROBERT RICE**  
National Secretary-Treasurer

**DANIEL ROBICHAUX**  
National Executive Vice President



601 S. Federal Highway  
Dania Beach, FL 33004

(800) 362-0513

[www.amo-union.org](http://www.amo-union.org)

Founded by U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans of World War II