



American Merchant Marine Veterans

Serving America in Peace and War

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 8, 2023

Historic Honors for the U.S. Merchant Marine on Veterans Day

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs invited members of the American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to honor U.S. Merchant Marine veterans from World War II on Veterans Day. The wreath laying ceremony will be the first time in history that U.S. Merchant Mariners will be honored on Veterans Day at Arlington National Cemetery during one of our Nation’s most enduring displays of respect for all U.S. veterans. Jack Kammerer, Executive Director of the U.S. Maritime Administration, will also lay a wreath during the ceremony.

At the wreath laying ceremony, U.S. Merchant Marine veterans from World War II will include Pete Kurkimilis, Charles Mills, Howard Pfeifer, and David Yoho with their chaperones. The honor guard carrying Old Glory and the Merchant Marine flag will represent the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, a merchant marine educational facility in Piney Point, MD that is affiliated with the Seafarers International Union.

The honor guard from the Seafarers-affiliated Paul Hall Center is ready to carry on the legacy of our World War II mariners, who were nothing short of indispensable in winning the war. Our mariners suffered a casualty rate rivaled only by that of the Marine Corps, yet they kept going back to sea, delivering the goods wherever and whenever needed, often without any escort. They earned their status as United States veterans.

The Merchant Marine veterans are members of AMMV, a non-profit organization serving all U.S. Merchant Marine veterans since 1984. The organization and its members are proud to be included in the President’s traditional wreath laying ceremony on Veterans Day at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

AMMV is grateful for support from the following agencies and organizations for the 2023 Veterans Day event: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Maritime Administration, Arlington National Cemetery, Seafarers International Union, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, USA Maritime, American Maritime Congress, Transportation Institute, Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, Ms. Gloria Cataneo Tosi, American Maritime Officers, and International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots.

Capt. DiMattia, president of AMMV, said, “America honors all U.S. Merchant Mariners who served our Nation in times of peace and war, including military sealift support during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and six Expeditionary Operations in the Middle East and Northeast Africa. Laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Veterans Day this year is a historic

first for the Merchant Marine. The American Merchant Marine Veterans are proud that our organization's veterans can represent the heroic contributions of the U.S. Merchant Marine, our Nation's fourth arm of defense, to military successes and maritime leadership of the United States." Capt. DiMattia is available for advance interviews.

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