



American Merchant Marine Veterans

Serving America in Peace and War

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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American Merchant Marine Veterans Honor U.S. Merchant Mariners on Veterans Day

WASHINGTON – For the second time, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 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. In addition to WWII veterans, AMMV honors the service of all Merchant Marine veterans who served our nation during military sealift operations. The ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery provide one of our Nation’s most enduring displays of respect for all U.S. veterans. AMMV representatives are proud to honor the men and women of the U.S. Merchant Marine, and their families, who served our nation.

At the wreath laying ceremony, USMM WWII veterans William Balabanow and James Dipelesi will be escorted for the event. Prior to the wreath laying event at Arlington National Cemetery, the USMM WWII veterans and their chaperones will have breakfast with President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden. It will be a great honor for the veterans and their chaperones to meet the President.

Dennis Ng, son of a late U.S. Merchant Marine WWII veteran, will lead AMMV’s delegation. Mr. Ng is AMMV’s regional vice president for New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He will be accompanied by Joe Cox. Mr. Cox is a graduate from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY in February 1967 and served for two years on the Vietnam sealift. Capt. Dru DiMattia, president of AMMV, will also attend the ceremonies. He will represent members of AMMV and all men and women of the U.S. Merchant Marine who served our nation in times of peace and war.

A Merchant Marine color guard will be composed of midshipmen from the Maine Maritime Academy located in Castine, ME. The color guard will present the American flag and the U.S. Merchant Marine flag during the Veterans Day ceremony at the Arlington Memorial Amphitheater, and they will accompany AMMV’s representatives to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Capt. Mark Winter, Commandant of Midshipmen at the Maine Maritime Academy, said, “Maine Maritime Academy is honored to serve as the color guard and escort for the World War II Merchant Marine veterans during the wreath laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery on Veterans Day this year. It is important that today’s young Mariners respect and recognize the sacrifices that these Merchant Marines made, putting themselves in harm’s way to defend our nation’s freedoms.”

The Maine Maritime Academy color guard and their fellow midshipmen are ready to carry on the legacy of our WWII mariners, who were nothing short of indispensable in winning the war. Our mariners suffered more than 9,500 casualties, yet Merchant Mariners kept going to sea, delivering the goods wherever and whenever needed, often without any escort. They earned their status as United States veterans.

Many Merchant Marine veterans and families of veterans are members of AMMV, a non-profit organization serving all U.S. Merchant Marine veterans since 1984. Our organization is pleased to be invited by the VA to participate, with other U.S. veterans organizations, 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 2024 Veterans Day event: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Maritime Administration, Arlington National Cemetery, American Maritime Congress, American Maritime Officers, Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, Seafarer's International Union, Transportation Institute, USA Maritime Coalition, Youngquist Brothers, LLC and many anonymous donors.

As AMMV's representative, Mr. Ng said, "I am honored to represent AMMV and our Merchant Marine WWII veterans at the wreath laying ceremony. My father, Chow Chuck Ng, was one of those veterans. He became a merchant mariner in early 1942 after being stranded in New York and kept from returning to his wife and infant daughter after the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong. He completed twelve voyages in the Atlantic War Zone, which included making the perilous Murmansk Run and ferrying desperately needed men and supplies to Belgium to counter the German offensive at the Battle of the Bulge. He was very proud of his service in the U.S. Merchant Marine, and, fortunately, he lived long enough to see that all merchant mariners of WWII achieved veteran status."

Mr. Ng also said, "On Veterans Day, America honors U.S. Merchant Marine veterans of WWII and all other U.S. Merchant Mariners who served our Nation in times of peace and war, including military sealift support during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and six Expeditionary Operations in the Middle East and Northeast Africa. For the second year, the American Merchant Marine Veterans are proud that our organization's veterans and family members can represent the heroic contributions of the U.S. Merchant Marine, America's fourth arm of defense, to military successes and the global maritime leadership of the United States."

Mr. Ng is available for advance interviews. For additional information, please contact AMMV National Headquarters, P.O. Box 2024, Darien, CT 06820-2024; Telephone: (475) 470-9200; Email: ammermarvets@gmail.com.

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