



## American Merchant Marine Veterans

*Serving America in Peace and War*

### **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 19, 2025**

#### **American Merchant Marine Veterans Honor U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans and National Maritime Day**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA. On National Maritime Day, celebrated annually on May 22, Americans honor the courageous accomplishments of all U.S. Merchant Mariners, in peace and war, and the essential contributions to our nation's economy lead by the U.S. maritime industry for hundreds of years. During the ceremony to dedicate a new monument at the West Coast Memorial in the Presidio of San Francisco, AMMV will honor U.S. Merchant Mariners who were killed in action while serving in the Pacific Theater of World War II. The new monument is a fitting tribute to Merchant Marine officers and crews who gave their lives for the freedom of the world.

At the ceremony, AMMV will salute the service of five living U.S. Merchant Marine World War II veterans, including: John "Ed" Laughton, Frank Mendez, Charles Mills, Claude Perasso, and Dave Yoho. These men will represent all Merchant Mariners who made the ultimate sacrifice during the war and those shipmates who sailed the oceans of the world and returned home to their loved ones after WWII ended.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> United States Congress created National Maritime Day on May 20, 1933, by Public Resolution 7, to commemorate the SS SAVANNAH's voyage from Savannah, GA to Liverpool, UK that began on May 22, 1819. The SAVANNAH was an American hybrid sailing ship/sidewheel steamer that accomplished the first successful crossing of the Atlantic Ocean with steam propulsion. The voyage took 29 days and 11 hours to reach Liverpool on June 20, 1819. The SAVANNAH's arrival in Liverpool was cheered by large crowds for the crew's historic accomplishment.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt supported the initial Congressional Resolution by issuing Proclamation 2234, saying, "Now, Therefore, I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, do hereby call upon the people of the United States to observe May 22, 1937, as National Maritime Day by displaying the flag at their homes or other suitable places, and do direct Government officials to display the flag on all Government buildings on that day." The National Maritime Day tradition has been observed regularly on May 22 each year by U.S. Presidents, the U.S. Merchant Marine, the U.S. Maritime Administration, the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command, and many representatives of our nation's maritime industry.

In addition, AMMV is proud to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the United States Merchant Marine on June 12, 1775. For the first time, patriot merchant mariners from the American colonies captured a British warship, HMS MARGARETTA, during a battle in Machias Bay, ME. The American Revolutionary War battle was called the “Lexington of the Seas.”

AMMV is grateful for the support of a number of maritime industry participants and sponsors at the Presidio of San Francisco ceremony, including: Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Rep. John Garamendi, the American Battlefield Monuments Foundation, the American Maritime Officers Union, the California State University Maritime Academy, the SS JEREMIAH O’BRIEN, the Marine Engineers’ Beneficial Association, the Marines’ Memorial Association/Marines’ Memorial Foundation, Matson Shipping, Pasha Stevedoring and Terminals, the Propellor Club of the United States, the SS RED OAK VICTORY, the Seafarers International Union, the Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Walt Disney Family Museum.

Capt. Dru DiMattia, president of AMMV, is available for interviews. Contact AMMV for more information:

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