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SIU Officials Meet With MSC Leadership *Union Uses Forum to Address Issues Important to Civilian Mariners*

Top SIU officials met with Military Sealift Command (MSC) leadership in May to discuss issues important to MSC CIVMARS.

Held May 20 in Washington, D.C. as part of a semi-annual labor-management forum, the meeting included SIU President Michael Sacco, Executive Vice President Augie Tellez, Vice President Contracts George Tricker, Government Services Rep. Kate Hunt and SIU Counsel Deborah Kleinberg. They met with MSC Commander Rear Adm. Thomas K. Shannon, MSC Deputy Commander Rear Adm. Lawrence Jackson and MSC program representatives. Officials from other maritime unions were also in attendance.

"These meetings provide a way to keep the lines of communication open with MSC to discuss issues that have a significant impact and are important to every CIVMAR," Sacco said. "They help everyone stay aware of how our labor-management relationship is functioning. Keeping track of how issues are moving and how significant concerns are being addressed is very important to the union."

Many of the agenda items were specifically related to the unlicensed CIVMAR bargaining unit. The agenda addressed MSC's joint high-speed vessels (JHSV), including SIU concerns related to operations tempo, fire foam equipment, CIVMAR leave, vessel visitors and passengers and possible incentives for CIVMARS sailing in the JHSV program.

The SIU also spoke about CIVMAR concerns related to workers' compensation claims processing. Some individual workers' compensation problems were resolved shortly after the meeting. Alternative dispute resolution processing and problems achieving reasonable accommodations for CIVMARS – including accommodations for pregnant mariners – were also addressed.

The MSC's policy regarding the failure to maintain a work schedule, the new Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) payroll system and an MSC information technology update were also touched upon during the high-level meeting.

Once the scope of the problems was discussed at the meeting, an outcome list was generated and follow-up



SIU officials met with Military Sealift Command leadership May 20 during a forum held in Washington, D.C.

tasks were identified. Union representatives said they would work on the list with MSC representatives to ensure positive outcomes for the issues, many of which impact unlicensed CIVMARS in MSC's East and West Coast fleets.

Created by a 2009 executive order from President Barack Obama, labor-management forums are designed to promote better labor-management partnerships throughout the federal government, address mission-related issues and promote involvement among employees and their unions.

As part of the executive order, each federal agency is required to have a labor-management council, which hold forums with labor leaders. The purpose of the forums are to gather labor-management council members together to address issues or problems currently facing the agency or workforce.

The SIU will continue to update CIVMARS about these topics in upcoming issues of the *Federal Mariner* and via CIVMAR-GRAMS. To ensure you receive union messages about important topics as soon as they are issued to the *Federal Mariner* list-serve, send your email address to siufedmariner@seafarers.org.

Submissions Wanted

Attention all ACOE, NOAA, SBRF-MARAD and MSC federal mariners:

Your work on behalf of our government is vital. Your union appreciates all you do in your workplace and on behalf of our nation.

We want your voices to be heard! We want to make sure we are writing about issues and topics that are of importance to all our Government Services units. Please send your comments, pictures and requests for coverage to siufedmariner@seafarers.org

We will do our best to print your photos and publish articles based on your requests.

Be active. Stay involved. Support the *Federal Mariner* and your union!

Seafarers Assist With Sunken Korean Ferry Recovery

SIU federal mariners recently took part in a search and recovery effort that grabbed headlines around the world.

On April 16, a South Korean ferry, the *MV Sewol*, capsized during a trip between Incheon and Jeju while carrying 476 people.

More than 300 have been listed as dead or still missing and the ongoing recovery effort has become a conversation around the world.

To help its South Korean allies, the United States launched an American recovery effort that included the *USNS Safeguard*, which is crewed with SIU Government Services mariners. The *Safeguard* was also assisted by the Seafarers-crewed, TOTE-operated *USNS Wheeler* and its support boat, the *USNS Fast Tempo*.

Arriving at the site of the tragic *Sewol* sinking in late April, the *Safeguard* provided support to the U.S. Navy's recovery effort, including the use of its recompression chamber. That chamber was especially useful to Navy divers as it allowed them to get used to normal conditions following their operations deep under the water.



The *USNS Safeguard* (pictured above) worked with Navy divers in the aftermath of the sinking of the *MV Sewol* in Korea. (Photo courtesy U.S. Navy.)

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President's Column

Recognizing Your Service

I've always been proud of our union's work with our Government Services units and their agency employers. We have federal mariners on ACOE, MARAD, NOAA and MSC vessels around the world, working tirelessly on all types of jobs that advance American interests. It's a high calling and we are proud to support all federal mariners who answer that call.

In this issue, for example, you can read about the work done by SIU federal mariners aboard the *USNS Safeguard*. They were recently part of the U.S. Navy's response in the aftermath of the sinking of the Korean passenger ferry *MV Sewol*. Our members worked alongside their Navy colleagues to help in the recovery effort during tragic circumstances. Federal mariners are always ready to serve, and that story shows the commitment firsthand.



Michael Sacco

It was gratifying to see that effort, along with the service of millions of American civil servants, being acknowledged recently during Public Service Recognition Week. Held May 2-10, Public Service Recognition Week turned the eyes of the nation on federal workers and celebrated those working in federal agencies both at home and abroad, including SIU Government Services mariners. There was a huge exhibit on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. and statements of recognition from President Obama and Congress were presented.

When I saw President Obama's statement about the "unmatched perseverance" federal workers had when delivering "the critical resources and services so many Americans depend on," I felt like he was describing our government services mariners to a T. Your work is unequalled around the world, and it's nice to see our country is grateful for all you do. By the way, you can find the president's full Public Service Recognition Week statement on this same page.

Speaking of federal service work, I was happy to take part recently in a labor-management forum with MSC. We discussed a variety of issues important to SIU CIVMARS, and you can read about the meeting in this edition of *The Federal Mariner*.

These forums are incredibly important because they ensure there's a running dialogue between our members and the agencies that employ them. While we are proud of our federal agency partnerships and the work done around the world, the SIU first and foremost is dedicated to ensuring our members get a fair shake when they're on the job. With that in mind, we use these meetings to address issues or concerns our members may have. Knowing these concerns are dealt with is important to the union. It's important to me.

We look forward to many such meetings in the future. They are productive exercises and I can't state enough how important it is to have that line of communication with our federal agency partners.

The SIU will continue to work hard to represent the interests of all federal mariners working for ACOE, NOAA, MARAD and MSC.

Seafarers International Union Directory

Michael Sacco, *President*

Augustin Tellez, *Executive Vice President*

David Heindel, *Secretary-Treasurer*

George Tricker, *Vice President Contracts*

Kermet Mangram,
Vice President Government Services

Chester Wheeler,
Asst. Vice President Government Services

President Obama Thanks Federal Workers for Dedicated Service

Editor's note: Following is a statement released by President Barack Obama in honor of Public Service Recognition Week, which was held May 2-10.

I am pleased to join in observing Public Service Recognition Week.

A government of, by and for the people relies on dedicated citizens eager to carry out the necessary work of self-government. Every day, public employees like you assume this responsibility with passion and professionalism at the Federal, state, county and local levels.

With unmatched perseverance, you deliver the critical resources and services so many Americans depend on. You defend our country abroad and provide our service members with the care they deserve when they return home. You push the boundaries of science, which keeps America on the cutting edge of innovation. You support small business, guard our civil rights, educate our next generation, and help hundreds of thousands experience the wonder of our national parks and treasures.

Each of you has specific duties you perform on behalf of our people, and together, public servants like you form the government our citizens can count on and strive to meet the high expectations they set. Whether you recently came to public service to build a brighter tomorrow or you are a career employee



President Barack Obama

who has dedicated your life to this pursuit, I am deeply grateful for your commitment to the American people, and I wish you all the best.

SIU Offers Guidance on Air Travel Reimbursement

The SIU is updating unlicensed CIVMARS with guidance for the purchase of commercial airline tickets.

The SIU is currently negotiating with Military Sealift Command (MSC) on a travel advisory policy that will provide unlicensed CIVMARS with thorough and complete guidance on how to purchase commercial airline tickets for travel to and from assignments, leave periods, training and other types of travel.

The SIU has heard from CIVMARS there may be some confusion and different practices throughout the fleet regarding how unlicensed CIVMARS should navigate the process of purchasing commercial airline tickets.

Until the SIU completes negotiations and a new travel policy is distributed to the fleet, unlicensed CIVMARS should be aware that there are ways to make sure airline travel costs are reimbursed.

To make sure CIVMARS are fully protected from financial loss and reimbursed for their airline tickets, the SIU recommends they secure their tickets through the Navy Passenger Transportation Office

(NAVPTO), Scheduled Air Transportation Office (SATO) or with the assistance of the MSC Travel Department. Additionally, should CIVMARS need to change their original travel arrangements, MSC recommends they use the same MSC procedures and contact the offices noted above. It is recommended that CIVMARS follow these processes until the final processes are negotiated.

Tickets purchased by husbanding agents are also in a category of tickets that will not be reimbursable when processing a travel claim submitted by CIVMARS.

If you are on a vessel, you may also receive guidance and assistance from the ship's purser or the ship's licensed officer who may be acting as the purser.

The SIU will continue to keep all unlicensed CIVMARS updated about the progress of the negotiations.

Should you have any questions or concerns, call your SIU Government Services representative or send your questions and comments to siufedmariner@seafarers.org.

Federal Mariners Take Part in 'Freedom Banner'



Members of the SIU Government Services Division, sailing aboard the *USNS Sacagawea*, played important roles in the annual Freedom Banner exercise testing U.S. sealift capability. This photo from April 1 in the East China Sea shows the CIVMAR-crewed vessel participating in the drill with a Marine Corps CH-53 Super Stallion helicopter. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Lance Burleson)

Understanding Your Benefits and How to Secure Them

Picking the Best Dates to Begin Retirement

Whether it happens next month or several years from now, retirement is a huge leap for any federal mariner. But like any other important choice, timing is key. Not properly timing your retirement, in fact, could result in significant financial losses.

There's a lot to consider. Retiring at the right time can mean getting as much of your final paycheck and accumulated leave compensation as possible – money that could prove especially helpful as you wait for that first annuity check to arrive. Whether you're covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), there are several guidelines you can follow to get your retirement started right.

Timing Retirement, Annuity Issuance

While it differs between CSRS-covered and FERS-covered employees, the date of retirement directly impacts how long you have to wait to receive your first retirement check. For CSRS employees, a few days difference could mean an extra month of waiting.

CSRS employees have a three-day window at the beginning of each month where their first retirement check is issued the following month. If an employee retires between the fourth and final day of the month, their retirement check is issued a month later than those who retired during the first three days of the month.

For example, CSRS-covered employees who retire Jan. 1-3 would have an effective retirement date the following day and would receive their first retirement check Feb. 1. Employees retiring Jan. 4 and before Feb. 3 would receive their first retirement check March 1.

Timing here is crucial. It's also a good idea to wait until the end of the pay period lines up with the first three days of the month or among a month's final days. That way, you can receive your full paycheck and wait the shortest possible time before receiving your first retirement check.

For FERS employees, the process is less complicated. Regardless of when they retire, FERS-covered employees' effective retirement date is the first day of the following month. Their first retirement check is issued the first day of the month after that.

For example, under FERS, if you retire in January – regardless of the date – your effective retirement date would be Feb. 1. You would then receive your first annuity check March 1. Because of this, the last day of the month is usually the best time to retire for FERS employees. It will be most beneficial if the end of the month is paired with the end of a pay period.

There are certain situations, however, where the middle of the month is the best time to retire. The *Federal Mariner* will touch on that topic in a future issue.

Maximizing Unused Leave Time

When they retire, federal employees receive a lump sum payment for their unused leave time deposited into the same bank account as their paychecks. These funds can be especially important as you wait for your first retirement check to arrive. Maximizing this amount is a good way to make the leap between a regular paycheck and a monthly retirement annuity check as painless as possible.

It's important to remember that you must work through the entire pay period to accrue the full amount of leave hours for that period. If you retire before the end of a pay period, you will forfeit all leave hours for that final pay period. Retiring at the end of the pay period ensures that leave time is accrued and added to that final lump sum.

Therefore, it is usually best to retire on the last day of a pay period – most times a Saturday – or the first day of a new pay period – most times a Monday. This will ensure you not only receive a full final paycheck, but accumulate as many leave hours as possible.

It's also a good idea to get an estimate of how much your annuity will be prior to submitting your retirement application. A surprise in your pension annuity amount may change your retirement plans.

Additionally, you should be aware that there is still a significant backlog of federal retirement claims waiting to be processed. It may take a few months to have your retirement claim completed by the Office of Personnel Management.

Federal employees are also advised to seek advice from a financial advisor before making any retirement decisions.

Individual Situations Should Determine How TSP is Allocated

Saving and investing for retirement is one of the most important things employees can do over the course of their careers. For federal workers, however, that process may soon change.

A bill is making its way through Congress that would change the way new federal workers invest their money through the government's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). It's a move designed to allow greater flexibility for workers based on individual situations.

Currently, all federal workers are automatically enrolled in the TSP and 3 percent of their pay is invested in the program. While the TSP has several different investment options, employees' money is automatically placed in the G fund – a conservative, low-return investment in government securities that might not be the best choice for younger workers.

The government also contributes a 3 percent match and a 1 percent agency contribution for those enrolled in the TSP. While employees are automatically enrolled in the TSP when they are hired by the government, they can still choose to opt out of it. Opting out, however, means they would not receive the matching investment funds provided by the government. Taking advantage of that matching contribution is critical to increased savings. Whenever possible, federal mariners are advised to contribute as much as possible to get the highest level of matching contributions.

When it comes to how those contributions are invested the bill making its way through Congress makes some significant changes. Under this bill, new employees would automatically have their TSP funds invested in lifecycle funds instead of the G fund. With lifecycle funds, there is a much wider diversification and the investment strategy is much more aggressive. This could prove especially useful for young employees who have time on their side and the ability to become more conservative as they approach retirement.

While the bill would alter TSP allocation for new employees, those already enrolled in the program can still change the way their money is invested. Many employees, however, are unaware of the way the TSP works and may not be investing their money in the most effective way.

There are incentives to change. Plotting a TSP investment strategy based on individual factors could result in a better return on contributions and investments for those who pay attention to their investments.

An employee's age and length of service should play a significant role in where their TSP investments should be placed. Different funds have different risks and return on investment. Younger workers many years away from retirement, for example, would get more out of a diversified TSP retirement investment plan. As workers get older they may want to invest in more conservative funds.

Rather than placing all of their money in the G fund, which is the default plan, employees with a lengthier career ahead of them could divide their investment among the different plans. These plans include common stock (C), small capitalization (S), and international stock (I) funds. According to the federal government, in 2013 the G fund had a return of 1.89 percent, while the C fund had a 32.45 percent return; the S fund had 38.35 percent; and the I fund returned 22.13 percent.

Such returns could be beneficial for younger workers, who have more time to wait out setbacks and lulls in the stock market. Besides, the long-term return of stock investments are generally much higher than the return on government securities, which make up the TSP's G fund.

Whether or not this new bill becomes law, all federal workers are encouraged to examine their individual situation and select the TSP retirement options that are best suited to them. The SIU, meanwhile, will keep you updated as the bill proceeds through Congress.

You can find more in-depth information on TSP investing at the Office of Personnel Management site at www.opm.gov or the TSP site at www.tsp.gov.

Remember, TSP rules change, and you should also check for the most recent information and seek advice from professional advisors before making investment decisions.

Calendar Year	Leave Year: Beginning Date to Ending Date (number of pay periods)	Best Days to Retire for Employees covered by CSRS/CSRS Offset	Best Days to Retire for Employees covered by FERS/TransFERS*
2014	1/12/2014 to 1/10/2015 (26 pay periods)	Dec. 29, 2013 May 3, May 31, June 28, Nov. 1, Nov. 29, and Dec. 28 (all 2014)	May 31, June 28, Nov. 29 and Dec. 28 (all 2014)
2015	1/11/2015 to 1/9/2016 (26 pay periods)	May 2, May 30, June 28, Oct. 3, Oct. 31 and Nov. 28 (all 2015)	May 30, June 28, Oct. 31 and Nov. 28 (all 2015)

If you're planning on retiring in 2014 or 2015, this chart – based on the information provided in this article – will help you make the most informed decision on which day to retire. Remember to double-check these dates to ensure accuracy before making a final decision.

Safeguard Assisted in Korea by Fellow Seafarers-Crewed Vessels

Continued from Page 1

“For our part, we conducted a lot of small boat operations to move U.S. Navy dive and salvage personnel back and forth from the Korean ships in the area,” said AB Michele Stevens.

Knowing that hundreds were dead and missing, the crew worked tirelessly to get the job done. AB Joseph Palomo said it was impossible not to feel the weight of the work they were doing.

“Everyone here on the *Safeguard* felt sad for the families of the victims,” he said. “Our hearts went out to them.”

Compassion for the families, added Bosun James Gage, worked to further motivate the crew as they worked through sometimes difficult conditions.

“Out of respect for those who died, our involvement focused on broad area searches of the surrounding area,” he said. “The water was really cold and you could see that there was a lot of drift current in the area. I can't say whether or not our searches were successful, only that we safely launched and recovered our boats daily for about a month.”

As the mission stretched into May, another SIU-crewed operation was

launched. Capt. Glenn Macario of the *Wheeler* said his vessel's supply ship, the *Fast Tempo*, was selected to do the job.

“The *Safeguard* was running low on some supplies and had a large backlog of mail in Busan, South Korea. Meanwhile, a large amount of trash was piling up,” Macario wrote in an email. On May 12, the *Fast Tempo*, a 160-foot support boat crewed with five mariners from the *Wheeler*'s regular contingent, loaded 30 sacks of mail and 17 pallets of supplies, including critical spare parts for the *Safeguard*'s recompression chamber.

The vessel quickly made its way to the *Safeguard* to unload its supplies and gather the *Safeguard*'s trash. By 6 a.m. May 14, the *Fast Tempo* had returned to Busan from its supply mission.

“The *USNS Wheeler*'s SIU crew played a role in the entire operation,” Macario wrote. “Wiper Brulio Ente made the trip to the *Safeguard* as part of the *Fast Tempo*'s crew. The 17 pallets of supplies and the dumpster were loaded and secured by Bosun Jerry Gonzaga, assisted by ABs Carlo Gentile, Tony Olaya, Edsel Renegado and Kyle Silva.”

SIU Helps Deliver Pro-Maritime Messages to Congress

SIU officials and staff members were active in this year's congressional "Sail-In," a day-long event on Capitol Hill that emphasizes the importance of America's maritime industry and the role of Seafarers and federal mariners.

SIU Executive Vice President Augie Tellez, Vice President Contracts George Tricker and Vice President West Coast Nick Marrone each served separately on one of 24 meeting groups composed of representatives from throughout the industry. Those groups – totaling around



130 individuals – met with senators, congressional representatives and staff members from mid-morning to late afternoon May 7.

This was the fifth straight year of the Sail-In, organized by the U.S. Maritime Coalition, to which the SIU is affiliated. As in previous events, the meetings involved a mix of longtime industry supporters from both political parties as well as newer members of Congress who may not have been familiar with maritime. Also in past years, central topics included the Maritime Security Program, the Jones Act, and cargo preference including Food for Peace.

Before participants scattered throughout the three House and three Senate office buildings, Acting Maritime Administrator Chip Jaenichen addressed them. He said the Maritime Administration fully supports the Sail-In, and added that it's more important than ever to spread the word about the industry's importance to U.S. national and economic security.

Mariners and the maritime community "have long been what I would call the unseen, silent servants of our economy," he said. "Our nation, as we know, would not be the same without our maritime industry and our seafaring trade, and we need to let the American people know that. The U.S. Merchant Marine has been integral to every armed conflict since the American Revolution.... Our nation owes a great debt to the U.S. Merchant Marine."

The Sail-In included participants from almost every segment of the American maritime industry engaged in the transport of waterborne cargo, including maritime

labor, vessel operators, marine terminals, shipyards and more. Collectively, the domestic industry alone moves nearly 888 million tons of cargo every year and plays an important role in relieving congestion on the nation's crowded roads and railways.

"This is an exciting time for American maritime. The industry is investing billions of dollars to meet the nation's transportation needs; it is creating thousands of jobs for Americans; and it consistently works to bolster our national security at zero cost to the federal government," said Thomas Allegretti, chairman of the American Maritime Partnership, another important coalition whose members include the SIU. "These Congressional meetings are an important opportunity for the maritime industry to join together and brief their elected officials on the many ways American maritime is making our nation safer, stronger and more secure."

Capt. Richard Phillips, whose rescue from Somali pirates was made into an Oscar-winning film starring Tom Hanks, also participated in this year's Sail-In. He noted that the strength of America's merchant marine comes in part from the Jones Act, which boosts our nation's economy while also strengthening America's national and homeland security.

"The nation's merchant mariners are some of the most highly trained in the world and are prepared for any situation they may encounter," Phillips said. "Most importantly, the men and women of American maritime are proud stewards of our nation's waterways, because not only do they work in these communities, they also live in them."

Get Latest SIU News, Information

Texting Service and More Available to Federal Mariners

Whether a federal mariner is accessing information through the union's website or sharing photos and comments on the SIU's social media sites, there are lots of ways to stay connected. Here's a quick look at some of the informational resources available to federal mariners:

- **Text Messaging.** Mariners can sign up for SIU text alerts by sending the word "join" (without the quotation marks) to 97779. The union is just getting started with this service and will be selective in how often it's used. It will generally only be used for important union matters.

- **Facebook and Twitter Sites.** The SIU's social media pages are linked on the

homepage at www.seafarers.org. The SIU's twitter handle is @SeafarersUnion. We normally post a handful of times per week – usually current photos of members, occasionally links to interesting articles, and once a week (Friday morning) an old file photo.

- **Mobile Website.** Want to check something on the union's website but can't get to a computer? The SIU late last year launched a mobile version. Just type the web address for the home page into any mobile browser and it should automatically redirect to the mobile site. Most pages have been optimized for mobile browsing, although visitors may scroll to the bottom of nearly any page and select "Classic" if they'd rather view the traditional design.

- **Good Old Seafarers.Org.** Launched in 1997, the union's website features general and SIU-specific news items, current and past issues of the *Federal Mariner* and *Seafarers LOG*, lists of all the union halls and membership meeting dates and photo galleries.



How to Become An SIU Member

Joining the SIU is easy. The union's website – www.seafarers.org – includes printable PDF versions of forms that mariners may use to request and authorize payroll deductions for labor organization dues. The forms are posted at:

www.seafarers.org/memberbenefits/civmar.asp

Forms are also available under "union forms" in the SIU membership tab.

Contact Information

Asst. Vice President Government Services Chet Wheeler:

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Government Services Fleet Representative

Kate Hunt:
Phone: (201) 434-6000, ext. 223
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For contact with SIU:
siufedmariner@seafarers.org

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www.twitter.com/seafarersunion

CIVMAR Habitability Pay – Why You Get it

Since their formation, seafaring unions have fought hard to improve health, safety and living conditions for all sea-going employees.

Habitability pay for CIVMARS is a direct result of the arbitrations (legal cases) the SIU and the NMU have brought on behalf of federal mariners to ensure adequate habitability aboard vessels and in shoreside lodging. If habitability conditions are inadequate and cannot be improved, these cases ensure CIVMARS receive habitability pay. Read on for more about the history of this important topic.

The SIU and NMU – which merged in 2001 – began litigating for safe and healthy living environments in a case involving the USNS Glover in 1991. The next case was to protect mariners aboard the USNS Comfort. In 2007, arbitration was brought on behalf of mariners at the East Coast CSU when hotel accommodations were extremely substandard. The union won an award

of more \$750,000 worth of back pay for CIVMARS housed in that hotel, in addition to \$67,000 in attorney's fees. Attorney's fees won in arbitration cases go directly into a fund that continues to help pay for the significant costs associated with pressing ahead with arbitration cases on behalf of federal mariners.

In 2008, 2009, and 2010 the union arbitrated three more inadequate habitability cases – Comfort II, USNS Grasp and Grapple – and won all three arbitrations. These victories were accomplished with the help of CIVMARS who provided testimony and information allowing the union to construct strong, successful cases for the collective good of all unlicensed mariners.

In 2010, after significant and successive union victories, Military Sealift Command (MSC) agreed to begin negotiations on habitability pay. The SIU and MSC arrived at a comprehensive negotiated agreement to allow automatic shipboard habitability pay

when habitability conditions fell below a certain standard. In addition to pay, and as important for CIVMAR protection, a process was developed to allow union representatives to participate in habitability committees with MSC representatives. In these committees, the SIU and MSC negotiate shipboard conditions early in the renovation process of older vessels or the development of a new ship.

After almost 25 years of strong and persistent union advocacy, arbitrations and negotiations, today's CIVMARS are far more protected. As a result of CIVMAR and union efforts, habitability concerns are always in the forefront of issues considered by MSC when modifying vessels or planning for new construction.

What can you do to ensure your health, safety, comfort and economic interests during long and difficult voyages? Support the collective good. Support the SIU. JOIN NOW!