



THE FEDERAL MARINER

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CIVMARS Aid in Navy Helicopter Recovery

Federal Mariners Help Recover Missing Aviator Following Crash

SIU CIVMARS worked alongside U.S. Navy personnel recently on a search and salvage mission following a Navy helicopter crash off the Virginia coast.

The *USNS Grasp*, a Military Sealift Command vessel crewed with members of the SIU's Government Services Division, was assigned to search the waters near Virginia Beach after the January crash of a MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopter. The Navy's search team recovered the body of a missing Navy aviator and salvaged 95 percent of the wreckage.

The crash occurred during a routine training mission Jan. 8 in a location approximately 20 miles off the Virginia coast. Five crew members were aboard the helicopter at the time of the crash and four of them were found shortly afterward. The four crew members were taken to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, where two of them later died. The two survivors were released from the hospital.

The body of missing crew member, Lt. Sean Christopher Snyder, was recovered Jan. 9. His family released a statement shortly after his body was recovered thanking those who helped find him.

Adm. Bill Gortney, commander of the U.S. Fleet Forces Command, praised the crew and service members for their work in the salvage and recovery operation. Thanks to their hard work, he said, Snyder's family has peace of mind.

"Thanks for helping us find the 'what happened' on the helicopter, and from the family: 'thanks for bringing him home,'" Gortney said, according to a Navy report. "We can find out what caused it, and put in place mechanisms to prevent it from happening again."

Gortney added the crew of the *Grasp* and its 26 CIVMARS should know their hard work isn't going unnoticed and that the Navy does pay attention to CIVMARS efforts. "Maybe you think we don't pay attention," he said. "We do."



The *USNS Grasp*, crewed by members of the SIU Government Services Division, helped with a search mission following the crash of a Navy helicopter Jan. 8 near Virginia Beach, Va. Two of the five personnel from the helicopter survived, while two others were immediately confirmed dead. The pilot's body was recovered a few days later. In this U.S. Navy photo, taken Jan. 9, Navy divers are lowered into the Atlantic from the Seafarers-crewed vessel.

The *Grasp* is one of four Navy rescue and salvage ships operated by MSC and crewed by SIU CIVMARS. The other ships include the *USNS Grapple*, *USNS Safeguard* and *USNS Salvor*.

MSC operates 110 non-combatant ships with civilian crews that replenish U.S. Navy ships, chart ocean bottoms, conduct undersea surveillance, strategically preposition combat cargo at sea around the world and move military equipment and supplies used by deployed U.S. forces. Unlicensed MSC CIVMARS are represented by the SIU.

Coast Guard Keeps Marijuana Prohibited

While laws concerning recreational and medicinal marijuana are changing throughout the country, the marijuana policy for mariners is remaining the same.

The U.S. Coast Guard issued a notice in January to all mariners and marine employers informing them that the use of marijuana is still prohibited for those serving in safety-sensitive positions in the maritime transportation industry. That prohibition stands for everyone, whether marijuana is legal to consume in their jurisdictions or not.

"It is important to note that marijuana remains a drug listed in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act," read the Coast Guard's notice. "It remains unacceptable for any safety-sensitive employee serving in the maritime industry and subject to drug testing under the Department of Transportation's drug testing regulations to use

marijuana. The Department of Transportation's Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulation ... does not authorize the use of Schedule I drugs, including marijuana, for any reason."

The Coast Guard added that it will not verify a drug test as negative due to an employee having a medicinal prescription or if the employee lives in a state where marijuana is legal for recreational use.

Marijuana laws have changed greatly in recent years, with two states – Colorado and Washington – voting to legalize marijuana for recreational use. Another 18 states and the District of Columbia allow for medical marijuana.

For more information regarding the Department of Transportation's marijuana policy, visit www.dot.gov/odapc, which has specific notices regarding medicinal and recreational marijuana.

Protect Yourself From Phony Tax Calls

In addition to identity thefts, the number of phony tax fraud scams has risen dramatically in recent years, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). In 2010, about 15 percent of the identity theft complaints the FTC received dealt with tax returns. In 2013, it was 43 percent.

Many victims found themselves trapped by tax scammers who use phone calls and emails to threaten taxpayers, all while pretending to be IRS representatives. And when it comes to these types of scams, federal mariners can be an especially vulnerable group.

As reported in several pieces in the *Federal Mariner* and the *Seafarers LOG*, identity theft and tax scams can severely impact workers holding security clearances. For many workers, their jobs depend on holding such clearances.

The IRS has identified stolen identity tax fraud as a "top priority" and has assigned more than 3,000 employees to work on the problem. Thanks to scam-

fighting efforts, more than \$50 billion worth of fraudulent refunds have been stopped since 2011.

But that's not to say things aren't still troublesome for taxpayers.

The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration reports there may be billions of dollars of tax payer refunds lost to identity theft over the past several years. It's easy to see how these things can happen – some of these hoaxes can appear very real and very frightening.

Sometimes, victims are called and told they are about to be arrested and should find someone to accompany them to the police department. In some cases, these criminals even know the last four digits of the victim's Social Security number. The scammers provide the victims with telephone numbers to confirm the fake violations and confirm the original caller is truly an IRS representative. Conspirators awaiting the next call

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President's Column

Fighting for You in 2014

We're only a few months into 2014, but the year is already shaping up to be an important one for the SIU and the federal mariners we represent.

As you've no doubt noticed in the stories printed in every edition of the *Federal Mariner*, we actively work to better the lives and careers of the mariners who are part of our membership rolls. In this issue alone, you can read about our work negotiating a fair deal for our brothers and sisters in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).



Michael Sacco

There will be more to report on those activities as the year progresses. Needless to say, we'll be working hard to make sure those mariners are able to secure the best outcomes possible. That's what the SIU is known for. That's what we do.

But that's not all we've been up to. We've been busy on several fronts to provide the best opportunities for our members. Just recently, the SIU established a special seniority status for our Government Services

Division mariners. We heard from many federal mariners that this change in seniority is important to them, so we listened and acted.

The newly created Class C-Gov seniority gives our Government Services mariners better access to jobs in SIU hiring halls on vessels operated by private sector maritime companies. Federal mariners may find the skills and credentials obtained while working aboard government vessels will really help if they decide they want to experience working on vessels in the private sector. This is certainly a welcome development for our hardworking Government Services mariners.

Speaking of hard work, I'm proud to say federal mariners have taken part in some important and difficult missions recently on behalf of our military and nation. As you've read about in this issue, SIU members recently assisted in military missions to recover a crashed Navy helicopter, destroy Syrian chemical weapons and clear the New York-New Jersey region following Superstorm Sandy. As always, the SIU recognizes our members' efforts, but these missions have made national headlines, too. I commend our brothers and sisters for their hard work and for making our union and our country proud.

These stories show how closely we work with America's Armed Forces. Our partnership with our military has been ironclad for decades. We've always been proud to work alongside our men and women in uniform. The SIU promises to offer protection and support to all the federal mariners who work tirelessly aboard NOAA, ACOE, MSC and MARAD government vessels.

One other note: Each year, the government issues a report on union membership in the United States. In 2013, our movement saw an increase in overall membership that pushed the total number of union members to around 12.5 million.

No one is pretending these aren't challenging times for unions. Federal workers, in particular, are continuously under attack by people who don't have much information about the contributions federal employees make to our country.

But the increase of 162,000 union members nationwide is encouraging, and unions still have much to offer. I would argue, in fact, that we are the only true hope of revitalizing America's middle class.

What isn't up for debate, as noted by Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez, is that union members on average earn more money than unrepresented workers and also have greater access to health care, retirement savings plans, and sick and vacation leave compared to non-union workers.

As we move into the second quarter of 2014, I look forward to helping secure more gains for every mariner in the SIU's Government Services Division.

Seafarers International Union Directory

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Defense Secretary Praises SIU Crew Of MV Cape Ray for Syrian Mission

With praise and encouragement from Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel himself, the SIU crew of the *MV Cape Ray* dove into the first part of its three-month mission to destroy parts of Syria's chemical weapons stockpile.

The Keystone-operated *Cape Ray* departed from Portsmouth, Va., Jan. 27 to take part in an historic mission to eliminate nearly 700 tons of chemical weapons at sea, in international waters. Sailing as a Military Sealift Command vessel, the 648-foot *Cape Ray* has a crew that includes 35 seafarers, more than 60 U.S. Army chemical specialists, a security team and representatives from U.S. European command. Members of the Machinists Union are on board, too.

In a statement released as the *Cape Ray* left for its mission, Hagel commended the crew for "accomplish(ing) something no one has tried" and helping to make the world safer.

"As you all know, your task will not be easy. Your days will be long and rigorous. But your hard work, preparation and determination will make the difference," Hagel said. "You are ready. We all have complete confidence in each of you. You represent the best of our nation, not only because of your expertise and commitment, but because of your willingness to serve when called upon. For that, we will always be grateful."

The crew and U.S. Merchant Marine were also honored by Acting Maritime Administrator Paul "Chip" Jaenichen during a press conference aboard the vessel. The mission, Jaenichen said, "demonstrated the versatile resources we have" available.

"And that's the Ready Reserve Force ships and our U.S. Merchant Mariners who are ready and able and, when called, serve our nation so capably," Jaenichen said, specifically pointing to the Seafarers aboard the ship. "I'd like to make a couple of thanks to the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA) and the Seafarers International Union. It's no small effort to keep a 30-year-old vessel like these ready to serve with little to no advanced warning."

The *Cape Ray's* deployment comes following an international agreement to destroy Syria's chemical weapons. The country has been embroiled in a civil war since 2011 and more than 1,400 people were killed in a chemical attack last August. International outrage followed that incident and Syria agreed shortly thereafter to give up its entire chemical weapons stockpile.

Under the agreement, the Syrian government is supposed to transport the chemical weapons to 12 undisclosed sites where they will be loaded onto Danish and Norwegian ships. Those vessels will then take the weapons to the Italian port of Gioia Tauro and transfer the weapons to the *Cape Ray* there. The ship will then travel to an undisclosed area in international waters to destroy the chemical weapons, which include mustard gas and a form of sarin nerve gas.

In order to complete its mission, the *Cape Ray* was outfitted with a pair of massive units designed to break down and neutralize the chemical weapons. These units are installed at the center of the *Cape Ray's* cargo hold and are covered with a plastic tent



Acting Maritime Administrator Chip Jaenichen (in back) visits with SIU members aboard ship shortly before the mission began. Pictured from left in front are Chief Cook Helen Mitchell, SA Jacqueline Sivels and Chief Cook Sandra Vann.

to protect the crew during the neutralization process. Inside, the system uses water and a chemical cocktail to break down the weapons.

Once that process is complete, the crew will have approximately 6,600 tons of waste that will be transported and eliminated elsewhere. The entire process is expected to take 90 days and will not dump any waste into the ocean.

In a press conference aboard the *Cape Ray* prior to its departure, Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Frank Kendall, explained why the weapons were being destroyed in international waters. The main reasons have to do with safety and international law.

"This avoids having to put these materials on somebody's territory, where you have to deal with all the political and environmental conditions associated with doing that under local law," he said.

The SIU crew aboard the *Cape Ray* includes: Bosun William Lima, ABs Walter Ott, Jonathan Davis, George Phillips, Mark Brownell and Shaun Wood, QE4 James Anthony Fells, QEEs Kevin Quinlan and Mark Maduro, Oiler Andre Mitchell, GVAs Lance Spain and Dionta Winstead, Steward/Baker Edward Banks, Chief Cooks Jose David, Helen Mitchell, Emanuel Spain and Sandra Vann, and SAs Cornelius Taylor, Arica Shaw, Jacqueline Sivels, Mary Slade and Emanuel Spain.

Tax Scammers Can Appear Very Convincing

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from the victim verify the facts provided in the original call. The scammers then tell the victim that for a certain amount of money, the charges will be dropped.

Other victims are sent fake emails or links to phony websites to trick them into providing important information such as W-2 or other tax statements. Scammers lure their victims into providing this information by threatening an audit or promising a quicker tax refund. This type of scam has also been used on individuals who owe back payments to the IRS.

You should also be careful of thieves using natural disasters or large-scale tragedies to trick victims. If you have been a victim of a natural disaster and someone claims to be an IRS representative looking for information such as your Social Security number or bank account numbers, don't provide it.

How You Can Protect Yourself

If you do have a tax issue, you will generally be contacted by mail.

If someone calls you or a family member claiming to be an IRS representative, be cautious and do not provide any information over the telephone. Hang

up and call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040. This is an automated number with many prompts, so be aware of lengthy wait times if you are calling from overseas.

If you have an accountant or lawyer, call that person first to help you assess whether the inquiry is real or phony. You can also call the IRS or review the information at:

<http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/How-Do-You-Report-Suspected-Tax-Fraud-Activity>

If you are away for lengthy periods, use a Post Office Box to receive tax or financial information or an address where the mail can be collected regularly.

Make sure any computer you use to file taxes or send financial information is protected. Anti-virus software is essential. Do not file or send important financial documents or tax records over a public Wi-Fi or on an unsecured network.

If you get an unexpected email from the IRS requesting information or stating you have an outstanding refund, be careful. Send any false looking messages to phishing@irs.gov. Look carefully at website links that may look like the IRS website but are slightly different.

Understanding Your Benefits And How to Secure Them

What to Consider Regarding Survivor Benefits

For federal mariners who will be eligible for an annuity from the government, one of the most important decisions you will need to make is whether to elect a survivor benefit. This benefit is available to mariners under both the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) programs.

A survivor benefit is a portion of the annuity that you earned while working as a federal employee. It may be provided to your spouse (including same-sex spouses), a former spouse or your eligible child upon your death. The survivor annuity is payable should you die in the performance of your duties and it is also payable after you retire, but only if you elect this type of benefit.

The survivor's benefit election decision has many important consequences for you and your family members. Be sure to learn as much as you can about this choice so you can effectively evaluate your options and make the best decision possible for you and your family.

When you select a survivor benefit your annuity amount after you retire is reduced by a certain percentage. This allows your spouse or your child to receive an annuity after your death. CSRS and FERS each have different types of survivor annuities that may be selected.

More information about the percentages which apply to reduce your annuity and the amount of money your beneficiary will receive can be found in the resource links below. Information about the requirements (ie: length of time in federal service, length of time you must be married, when benefits begin, how long they last and how a dependent child may receive benefits) can also be found in the resources below.

Important factors to consider when making this election is whether you believe your spouse or dependent children would have enough financial income or assets to rely on if they did not have your income or part of your income to meet their daily expenses.

Another important factor in the decision about whether to select a survivor

benefit is whether your spouse or dependent children may be able to keep their coverage under the Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) program. In many cases, if a survivor benefit is not elected, health benefits may not be available to your spouse or your eligible children in the event of your death. If you and your spouse are considering the purchase of the federal long-term care insurance benefit offered by the federal government, this decision may also be impacted by whether you elect a survivor annuity.

The decision to select a survivor benefit is a big one. Make sure you have all the information you need to make the right decision. Take the time to understand this benefit as completely as you can. In addition to the factors noted above, it is important to understand how this benefit, if you select it, will coordinate with other coverage you have may have elected, as well as any estate plan you may have developed and insurance benefits you may have acquired to provide for your spouse or dependents.

For more information on how to elect survivor benefits you can check out:

- 2014 Federal Retirement Handbook at:

www.federalhandbooks.com

- If you participate in CSRS and have already elected a survivor benefit, provide a copy of this pamphlet to your family: Information for Survivor Annuitants which can be found at:

www.opm.gov/Blogs/Retire/

- For information under CSRS: www.opm.gov/retirement-services/csrs-information/

- For information under FERS: www.opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/

- Additional helpful information and resources on retirement planning in general can be found at AARP.com.

Government Offers Retirement Tips

No one plans to work forever, and federal mariners are no exception. Planning for retirement is an important part of any career, though the task can sometimes seem daunting and complex.

That's where www.investor.gov comes in.

At investor.gov, federal employees have a wide range of tools available that help put retirement needs in perspective and give workers the know-how they need to properly plan for the day when they receive their last paycheck. From calculators offering guidance on investment and Social Security income, to worksheets for determining income and expenses, the site offers a wide range of tools and tips to help workers properly anticipate their retirement needs and help them prepare.

Here are just a few of the tools the site offers:

401(k) and IRA Minimum Distribution Calculator

Investment tools like 401(k) plans and IRAs are very common for Americans preparing for retirement, and they generally require workers to start withdrawing money from those accounts once they reach 70.5 years old. Here, workers can find out the minimum amount needed to withdraw, depending on age and the value of the accounts.

Compound Interest Calculator

Investments allow workers to let their money grow. This tool allows workers to find out how much money their investments earn using compound interest.

Social Security Retirement Estimator

Employees who are eligible for Social Security benefits in conjunction with their federal retirements know that their Social Security benefits will be a very important part of their retirement income.

Using this estimator, workers are able to get personalized estimates of how much they can expect to

receive from Social Security once they retire.

Those expecting to receive Social Security benefits need to make sure they are receiving yearly updated information from Social Security and ensure information is correct. Address any mistakes immediately so there are no additional delays to collect benefits.

Worksheet for Determining Net Worth

A key step to determining how to prepare for retirement is to analyze assets and debts. This worksheet allows you to calculate where you stand when all those factors are taken into account.

Worksheet for Tracking Income and Expenses

Setting a proper budget and knowing how money is coming in and going out is vital to staying on track with financial goals. Here, you can see where money is going and determine the amount you are able to put aside for retirement.

The key to successful retirement planning is starting early. Even for those in the middle of their federal career or near the end, keeping track of records and making as large a financial contribution as possible puts retirement planning on the right track.

Future issues of the *Federal Mariner* will continue to highlight tips and strategies to help mariners know more about retirement education and how to stay on top of their retirement options.

Suggestions for future retirement topics for the "Understanding Your Benefits and How to Secure Them" section can be sent to:

siufedmariner@seafarers.org.

SIU Gives Update on Travel Comp Time

In December 2013, the SIU and Military Sealift Command (MSC) completed negotiations over the Compensatory Time Off for Travel Program. This program is a benefit available to prevailing wage civilian employees and makes sure they earn time for travel when travelling outside of their regularly scheduled hours and away from their official duty station.

Compensatory time for travel may be earned during waiting time for flights, buses and trains up to a certain amount of hours. The union also negotiated the procedures by which CIVMARS request compensatory time and what documents they need to submit in order to get this earned time.

The advisory was distributed to the fleet from the deputy director of the CIVMAR Manpower and Personnel Office. The SIU encourages all unlicensed CIVMARS to read the advisory carefully to learn how to become eligible for this benefit.

If you have not received information about this program, please send a message to the SIU federal mariner email address at siufedmariner@seafarers.org or ask your ship's purser to provide you a copy.

SIU Helps Workers Caring for Parents, Children

Older workers have increasingly found themselves as caregivers for both their parents and adult children and grandchildren, according to several recent studies. And the need to support those family members is often delaying retirement and keeping older workers in the workforce.

In a recent survey of older adults, AARP found the need to support family members was a major reason for continuing to work for 53 percent of men and 38 percent of women. The number of older adults reporting caregiving duties has also become quite large.

Knowing that so many employees are affected by this situation, the SIU has advocated for mariners who have been disciplined for failing to maintain a regular work schedule due to caregiving responsibilities. The union has also helped mariners navigate the complicated maze of leave options available to them.

Deciding to use the Family Medical Leave Act or other agency-specific types of leave can be a complex decision. Through union representation, federal mariners are able to receive assistance by reaching out to the correct agency representatives and using the appropriate services from the outset – making communication easier and saving time.

According to data by the Sloan Center for Aging and Work, more than 26 percent of workers 45 and older care for one or more children, 18 percent provide care for a spouse and more than a third reported being responsible

for the care of a parent. It also found that one in seven cares for both an adult and a child.

This is affecting the careers of older workers. A Hartford study found 68 percent of older workers said they missed work due to caregiving duties within the last six months. Nearly half of those surveyed by the Hartford cited caregiving as their number one concern, while many also said they were most concerned about postponing retirement due to their role as a caregiver.

That was a topic addressed by the Sloan report, as well.

"Many older adults desire to remain in the workforce in order to help provide financial support and/or care for parents, children and grandchildren. However, their caregiving responsibilities may affect the need for flexibility in their work schedules," the Sloan report read. "Some older adults postpone retirement because of financial responsibilities for family members who are dependent on their support, while others cut back their hours or leave the workforce earlier than expected because of their caregiving responsibilities."

The federal mariners who have received help from the union have reported the efforts made a positive difference during a difficult time. Such work, however, couldn't happen without the dues paid by the union's rank-and-file members. Time and again members have found that the services provided by the union have been essential to getting the most out of their careers.

CIVMARS Meet With MSC Commander



Rear Adm. Thomas K. Shannon, commander of the Military Sealift Command (center), visits with ABs Andrew Vogelheim and James Coakley, who are both CIVMARS serving on the *USS Mount Whitney*. Shannon is in the process of gathering data to help define the state of MSC. (U.S. Navy photo by Meghan Patrick Henderson)

NOAA Mariners Gather for Conference

Virginia Meeting Covers Topics Important to Members, Union

SIU members working for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) gathered in Virginia recently to trade ideas and discuss issues important to mariners.

Held in Virginia Beach, Va., in December, the NOAA Fleet XO Conference brought together senior NOAA management officials (both shipyard and shoreside) and every NOAA chief bosun. Representatives from the SIU were also in attendance and took part in the portion of the conference that dealt with labor and personnel matters. One of the main topics of discussion during the labor portion was the administration of collective bargaining agreements.

SIU Government Fleet Representative Kate Hunt, who attended the meeting, said those topics are very important to mariners. NOAA, she added, knows this and takes the meeting very seriously.

"This is just part of what NOAA does," Hunt said. "The seminar itself focused on a variety of different things. It was just a myriad of different employment issues. They go over all sorts of different things with this event."

Hailing from ports around the country, the mariners in attendance spent four days with NOAA and SIU personnel, discussing issues that directly impact their working relationship with the organization. From topics like wages and sick

leave, to disciplinary actions and safety policies, nearly every aspect of their work life was addressed.

"There was also a day that was a discussion of a lot of collective bargaining issues. It was good to meet with management to present the interpretations of the contract on both sides," Hunt said. "And that's what our union does. We are there to talk about our agreement."

She added such events, which typically occur around once a year for NOAA mariners, are important for a variety of reasons. Not only are the mariners able to voice their concerns and have their questions answered, but they also have the chance to spend time with their union brothers and sisters from different parts of the country.

"It was a really good opportunity – a great opportunity," Hunt said. "It is just so rare to get all of those folks together like that in one place. And they all had questions and got the chance to have their questions answered."

As a fleet representative, Hunt said such comprehensive gatherings are a valuable tool for her as well. It helps her gauge the members' views on different subjects and effectively work with them to address those needs.

"I've seen all of them individually on their ships, but I've never had them all in the same room together like this," Hunt said. "It's a great opportunity for everyone involved."



SIU Government Fleet Representative Kate Hunt (front row, third from left) poses with SIU federal mariners at the NOAA Fleet XO Conference in Virginia Beach, Va.

SIU, Army Corps to Begin Negotiations

SIU members working for the Army Corps of Engineers in Caven Point, N.Y. are about to enter into contract negotiations.

A few dozen federal mariners work for the ACOE in Caven Point, mainly as operations and survey personnel. SIU Government Fleet Representative Kate Hunt said the union and its members are excited to begin negotiations.

"The union agreement has not been reviewed in a long time and the union is excited about opening up the contract again," Hunt said. "This is a very important step."

The mariners working in the area have had quite the workload in recent years. From the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, to the intense work following the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy and other storms, the Caven Point ACOE mariners have taken part in almost every major event in the area.

Those working in Caven Point have known the extent of those disasters all too well. Most recently, Superstorm Sandy destroyed much of the ACOE's Caven Point Marine Terminal when a five-foot wall of water tore through the facility. Despite such a major setback, those working at Caven Point continued to help with the post-storm recovery. Their hard work helped the region and its economy recover following the storm's devastating impact.

"Reopening the harbor is very important because it's the lifeblood of commerce in the region," New York District Deputy Chief Operations John Tavolaro told the Army. "The things we need to run on a daily basis, most of that comes by water."

Much of their work focused on survey missions designed to support the massive debris removal around the region's ports and waterways. Throughout it all, the Caven Point personnel were able to get the job done, despite some difficult conditions.

"They do a lot of important work and they are proud to be able to do it," Hunt said. "These are the guys who did a lot of work with 9/11 and the Sandy rescue. They are an essential part of New York harbor."

The contract negotiations are expected to begin soon. Check back for more information in future editions of the *Federal Mariner*.

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.

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