



From: Commander, NYS Military Emergency Boat Service

Subj: OPSUM 29 MAR 2024 MEBS PROGRAM

The link to the MEBS LOG APP is <https://www.jotform.com/app/build/222037196822152>

**The following is the status of the New York State Military Emergency Boat Service**

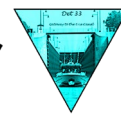
1) ADMINISTRATION:

a. The MEBS HQ phone number has voice mail, again. Persons reaching out to CAPT McKnight should use the following phone numbers: Office: 518-786-6021 Cell: 518-322-0644

b. The NYNM Uniform instruction is in revision. The new instruction will not include the current MEBS technician devices for Mercury Marine or Cummins Diesel. We are in the process of developing replacement uniform devices that recognize these achievements.

c. We have been working to arrange for MEBS personnel to get paid while in a training status. **If** this plan comes to fruition, it will be the first time since 2008 that it has happened, outside of last year's Exercise Empire Challenge. NOTE THAT **THIS PLAN HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED**. The main purpose of paying MEBS in a training status will be to improve our overall training readiness, and the intent is to maximize the number of MEBS personnel participating in training. The funds that we anticipate will be severely restricted. In order to maximize our training readiness, we need to spread the wealth across a number of events including regular proficiency training days and scheduled exercises. Here are some factors that are being used to help us calculate training payroll:

- i. This plan is contingent upon approval of the pending New York State budget, so we do not expect to be able to execute this until 1 May at the earliest. That does not mean that training cannot happen before then. It just means that training will be in a non-pay status, the same way we have operated in past years.
- ii. This potential funding category is only for Personnel Services (PS), which includes pay and BAH. The other category of Non-personnel Services (NPS) covers all other expenses including travel, per diem, commodity purchases; and is not part of this plan.
- iii. Participation in exercises counts the same as proficiency training, so we are projecting that if a member is involved in an exercise, they will not be slated for pay in routine proficiency training.
- iv. Persons already assigned to standing missions such as JTF Empire Shield or the Asylum Seeker mission are not part of our calculations since you cannot be on two separate payrolls at the same time. Persons on the Asylum Seeker mission who want to participate in MEBS activities MUST do so in an "M" (military duty) status. This is the same status as if you are on federal drill. You cannot use Pass Days for MEBS training. Do not, because you will get caught.
- v. Since potential funds will be limited and we need to include as many members of MEBS in a pay status, do not expect to get paid for multiple training events until such time as it is clear to us that we have additional funds available later in the year.
- vi. Although our boating season extends from now through to 1NOV24, we expect nearly all of the paid training events to take place between 1 MAY – 8 SEP 24.



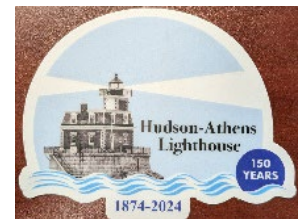


- vii. This potential funding plan only relates to training and exercises involving MEBS. Any real-world events to which we may be tasked would be separate funding. However, real-world events do count towards readiness.
- viii. Any payroll funding for Exercise Empire Challenge will include both MEBS and non-MEBS personnel.
- ix. If, by 8JUL24, a MEBS member has not completed a paid training event or has not scheduled participation in a paid training event of exercise, we will look at freeing up non-obligated funds for additional paid training opportunities.
- x. At this time, nearly all of the exercises and known events are in the upstate region. SOUTHCOM members should consider requesting participation in these events.
- xi. In addition to MEBS Proficiency Training days, here is a list of current activities for which we want at least some measure of pay:
  - (1) May-Jun24; MEBS Assessment; Leeds; 2 man-days
  - (2) 1JUN24; Hudson Athens Lighthouse 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary; 2 man-days
  - (3) 28-30JUN24; ECX ADVON, Lake Champlain; 9 man-days
  - (4) 11-13JUL24; Operation Commanding Force Phase 1; A-Bay; 9 man-days
  - (5) 24JUL24; PREP Exercise; Albany; 2 man-days
  - (6) 25-27JUL24; Operation Commanding Force Phase 2; A-Bay; 6 man-days
  - (7) 6-8SEP24; Exercise Empire Challenge, Lake Champlain; 45 man-days

d. This coming Sunday marks the last date of the period for the 2024 Josephthal Award. Members who have displayed exceptional performance of duty during the period 1APR23 – 31MAR24 may be eligible for recognition and selection as the Naval Militia Member of the Year, with the Josephthal Award. Nominations may be submitted to NYNM HQ. See NYNMINST 1650.1.

e. Upcoming events:

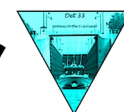
- i. 5 APR24: WESTCOM regional kick off; Buffalo
- ii. 6 APR24: Comms training with NYG; CSTS
- iii. 8APR24: Solar Eclipse
- iv. 22APR24: USCG Sector New York Change of Command: NYC
- v. 4MAY24: Comms training with NYG; CSTS
- vi. 10MAY24/1000; NYNM Leadership Meeting; Latham
- vii. 1 JUN 24: Hudson-Athens Lighthouse 150-year anniversary celebration; Hudson
- viii. 28-30 JUN 2024 NorthCom MEBS - ADVON RECON ISO Empire Challenge 2024
- ix. 12JUL24: OCF '24, Phase 1; Alexandria Bay
- x. 23-24 JUL 24: USCG PREP Exercise; Port of Albany
- xi. 26JUL24: OCF '24, Phase 2; Alexandria Bay
- xii. 6-8SEP24: Exercise Empire Challenge '24; Lake Champlain



2) INFORMATION: **USA Today**. As investigators work to determine what caused the hulking Dali container ship to topple Baltimore's Francis Scott Key bridge in a matter of seconds on Tuesday, maritime experts around the country are pointing to what could have stopped it. Tugboats.

These small but mighty vessels tow and push ever-larger ships through channels and help them where their own propulsion systems – or lack thereof – cannot. They are standard equipment in ports worldwide and especially useful to help ships with docking and undocking.

On Tuesday, a pair of tugboats operated by McAllister Towing and Transportation did just that, helping the Dali unmoor itself from the main terminal at the Port of Baltimore and orient the ship toward the open waters.





But they broke away before the massive ship navigated under the bridge, as is common practice. Minutes later, the Dali appeared to lose power and propulsion, sending the craft adrift and directly into one of the bridge's support columns. The steel-truss bridge immediately collapsed into the frigid Patapsco River.

The accident is igniting debate over the proliferation of “megaships” that fuel today’s commercial transportation industry and whether port protocols have ramped up to safely accommodate them. Although the Dali is average-sized compared to many of these behemoths, the devastation it caused in Baltimore was formidable. Had the tugboats accompanied the ship all the way under the bridge, some experts said, they might have been able to stop, slow or steer it away from danger.

Such a scenario should be standard operating procedure in all ports, said Capt. Ashok Pandey, a master mariner and associate professor of maritime business at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. But he said the industry’s reliance on tugs has waned over the years as technological advancements gave many ships the ability to maneuver through channels independently. Technology is great, Pandey said, until it fails.

“We went wrong by simply equipping ships with bow and stern thrusters that we use in lieu of tugs to maneuver in and out of the ports,” Pandey said. “When we are getting into ports like Baltimore, within a few miles of the bridge, that’s too important an asset that we must think of protecting it by all means possible. And we can do that. We can easily do that.”

It may be rare for a ship to lose power at such a high-stakes moment, but it clearly does happen, and he said tugboats could have averted catastrophe.

Implementing such a practice, though, would require a significant investment for U.S. ports, which either own and operate their own tugboats or contract out for tug services. Those costs are then rolled into the ports’ fees charged to shipping companies who use their facilities.

“There are a finite number of tugs, and 99.9% of the time there are no issues,” said Sal Mercogliano, a former merchant mariner and current maritime historian at Campbell University who also hosts a YouTube show called “What’s Going On With Shipping?”

“If the port required tug escorts in and out, then they would not be able to help other ships dock, and undock,” Mercogliano said. “It would need more tugs, and the question becomes, how much will this cost, and will it be passed on to the consumer?”

Because ports compete with each other for shipping business, he said, it’s unlikely that one port would mandate tug escorts unless all of the ports did it for fear of losing lucrative contracts. Shipping companies want the most efficient and cost-effective deal and will simply move to the next port if confronted with higher costs or longer waits. Mercogliano said he’s not even sure tugboats would have been able to stop the Dali from hitting the bridge. At the time its power appears to have failed, the ship was going about 8 knots – roughly 9 miles per hour – with a weight of over 100,000 tons. “It would be like a Prius trying to move a Mack truck on the highway,” he said.

The Dali isn’t even big compared to other container ships hauling goods from port to port these days.

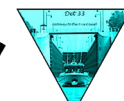
Over the past several decades, newly constructed ships have ballooned to gigantic proportions with load-carrying capacities that used to require five or six ships. The largest container vessel in the 1980s had a maximum capacity of 4,300 20-foot containers – otherwise referred to as TEUs, or 20-foot equivalent units, which is the standard unit of measurement for cargo capacity. Today’s largest ship, the MSC Irina, has a capacity of 24,346 TEUs.

The Dali, by comparison, has a capacity of just under 10,000 TEUs, making it the typical “meat and potatoes of container ships,” said Kevin Calnan, assistant professor of marine transportation at California State University Maritime Academy. Like most container ships, Calnan said, the Dali has one engine and one propeller. Its emergency diesel generator, standard in all such vessels, has enough power to keep key systems going – but not enough to restart the engine or provide propulsion.

In a video posted to social media, lights on the Dali shut off, then turned back on, then shut off again before the ship struck the bridge. Experts said that was likely the generator as it powered up the lights but not the engine. It would have taken a second engine on board to fully power the ship and restore propulsion at that point. But Calnan said nobody in the commercial shipping industry is advocating for two engines because of their size and cost.

“Cargo is money, and companies want to maximize the amount of space they want to put cargo in, so to build a ship with a whole other engine would be taking up the space of, like, 150 containers on that ship,” he said. “Unfortunately, there’s not too much movement to require these ships to have two engines.”

Calnan, who has worked and sailed on numerous ships during his career, is among the experts who believe tugboats “definitely” could have stopped the Dali from hitting the bridge. He said he has been in similar situations where the power went out and “having tugs there basically saved the day.”







The bigger the boats and the more sophisticated the technology, the fewer the crew members on board. The Dali's crew is 22 strong. In his 26 years sailing on commercial ships, Capt. Mike Campbell said he witnessed that shift to smaller crews as automation and electronics made it possible to do more with less when it came to docking, navigating and maintaining the engines. "I had captains who would turn the radar off in the middle of the day because they didn't want to wear it out, and you'd just go off visual cues, take readings off lighthouses. Now everything is chips and boards," he said. "And people are more dependent or reliant on it because they are more reliable."

Campbell, now a professor at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and master of the training ship Kennedy, said he's also seen captains push to meet tight schedules, recalling a time when several other chemical carriers owned by competitors sailed out of the Port of Philadelphia into bad weather. His ship stayed put for three days, and arrived in Houston, safely, a day behind schedule. The other ships, he said, all had to sail to shipyards for repairs caused by the storm. "I was fortunate that the people I sailed under, my mentors, they never worried about the schedule. It was always about the safe operation of the ship," he said. "You don't want to push things."

Mariners are always worried about their schedules now, Pandey said.

The shipping industry has become so highly competitive, with companies all vying for a slice of the business, that crews are more likely to leave port without containers than wait on a late shipment and risk falling behind. Ships typically go from port to port, spending anywhere from six to eight hours in each, before moving on to the next. He called it a race to nowhere in which everyone – from the ports to the shipping companies – are playing along.

U.S. ports have spent billions of dollars over the years adapting to the new reality – upgrading their facilities and dredging their channels deep enough to accommodate these massive ships. Some experts warn they could get even bigger in the future, possibly doubling in cargo capacity at some point.

Amid the race to compete for the revenue and jobs brought by these ever-larger ships, port authorities seem to have forgotten about protecting their critical infrastructure, according to Pandley, the former master mariner. He said Tuesday's accident might be the wake-up call they need to do some real soul searching.

USA TODAY reached out to the American Association of Port Authorities to ask its thoughts on requiring tug escorts or any other measures to avert the kind of disaster that happened in Baltimore, but a spokesman said nobody was immediately available to take those questions.

Unfortunately, experts said, it often takes a tragedy to improve an industry.

That's what happened after the 1989 Exxon-Valdez oil spill in Alaska when the U.S. government required double-hull construction for all newly built oil tank ships and all oil tank barges in American waters. California passed its own law in the aftermath of that disaster, requiring all oil tankers to have tug escorts in its ports and harbors.

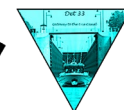
"We have a saying that the laws are written in blood," said Roland Rexha, international secretary-treasurer of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, the oldest maritime union in the United States.

"Knowing what we know now, could we have had tugs accompany the ship to the bridge? Sure. But what were the issues that caused the vessel to lose power in the first place?" he said. "There will be an investigation, and we're hopeful that the lessons learned will lead to an active change in how things are operated."

### 3) OPERATIONS:

#### a. Readiness Rating:

MEBS Readiness Rating		Minimum Standard	Actual	Rating	Goal
Personnel Census	P-Rating	60	65	1	120 MEBS Members
Personnel Staff	S-Rating	7	12	1	13 Key Staff
Training Qualifications	Q-Rating	27	31	1	45 Qualified Coxswains
Training Proficiency	T1-Rating	106	91	2	240 Proficiency Mandays (2/member/year)
Additional Training	T2-Rating	90%	89.68%	2	Basic Course, Towing Cert., UECO, and +





Communications Reliability	K-Rating	90%	99.64%	1	100% Functionality
Equipment Maintenance	E-Rating	90%	95.65%	1	100% Operational
Equipment Vehicle Quantity	V-Rating	11	9	2	11 Trucks

**Overall Readiness R-RATING**

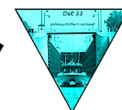
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**Date:** 29-Mar-24

- b. **1** Squadron ONE/JTFES Naval activity for the past week:
  - i. DET 1 Indian Point Activity: Federal Safety and Security Zone Patrol/Lower Hudson River Patrol.
  - ii. DET 2 Staten Island Activity: Support to USCG Sector NY.
  - iii. DET 3 Jones Beach Activity: Support to JTFES and USCG Sector NY.

**4) LOGISTICS:**

- a. We have received the new Mercury 300HP SeaPro motors for LC-350. The N4 shop is in the process of removing the old OPTIMAX 250HP motors. We are expecting completion of the installation by 19APR24.





b. SFY 2023-24 NPS Expenditures to date:

General	\$5,770.67
Boat Maintenance	\$154,650.98
Truck Maintenance	\$2,330.76
Trailer Maintenance	\$1,210.86
Travel/Per Diem	\$21,592.51
Boat Gasoline	\$13,118.83
Truck Diesel	\$6,543.76
Major Acquisition	\$297,973.68
Grants Reimbursement	-\$71,963.53
Total	\$431,228.52
Available:	\$13,866.36

c. SFY 2024-25 NPS Expenditures to date:

General	\$460.25
Boat Maintenance	\$1,707.48
Truck Maintenance	\$324.04
Trailer Maintenance	\$42.00
Travel/Per Diem	\$625.20
Boat Gasoline	\$816.60
Truck Diesel	\$528.55
Major Acquisition	\$0.00
Grants Reimbursement	\$0.00
Total	\$4,504.12
Available:	\$195,495.88

d. Boat, Truck and Trailer Status / Locations:

<u>Bow / Bumper #</u>	<u>Boat / Vehicle</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Mission</u>	<u>Comments</u>
PB 220	Patrol Boat	Leeds	FMC	Available	On trailer
PB 221	Patrol Boat	Leeds	FMC	Available	On trailer
PB 230	Patrol Boat	New Rochelle	FMC	Training	Ready, in water.
PB 280	Patrol Boat	Leeds	FMC	Available	On trailer
PB 281	Patrol Boat	Leeds	FMC	Available	On trailer
PB 300	Patrol Boat	Jones Beach	FMC	JTFES DET 3	Ready, in water.
PB 301	Patrol Boat	Leeds	FMC	Maintenance	On trailer
LC 350	Landing Craft	Leeds	NMC	Maintenance	Old engines being removed, pending replacement.
LC 351	Landing Craft	Jones Beach	FMC	JTFES DET 3	Ready, in water.
PB 400	Patrol Boat	Verplanck	FMC	JTFES DET 1	Ready, in water.
PB 440	Patrol Boat	Staten Island	FMC	JTFES DET 2	Ready, in water.

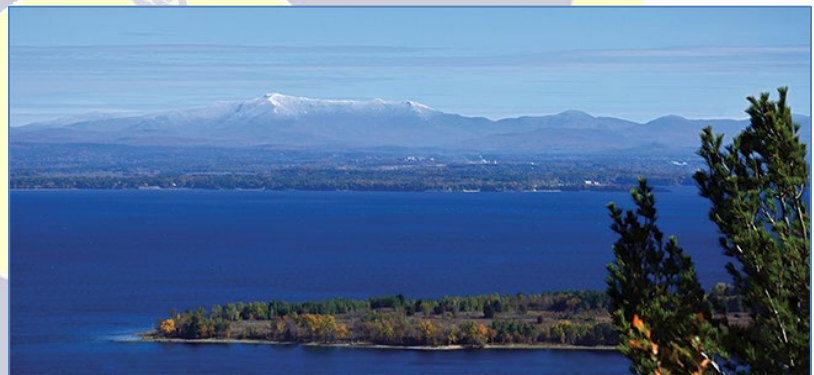






F350-5274	Prime Mover	Leeds	FMC	N/A	Ready
F350-5275	Prime Mover	Camp Smith	FMC	N/A	Ready
F350-5327	Prime Mover	Leeds	FMC	N/A	Ready
F350-5329	Prime Mover	Leeds	FMC	N/A	Ready
F350-5339	Prime Mover	Leeds	FMC	N/A	Ready
F350-5340	Prime Mover	Leeds	FMC	N/A	Ready
F350-5619	Prime Mover	Leeds	FMC	N/A	Ready
F550-5008	Prime Mover	Leeds	FMC	Service Truck	Ready. No long-range tows.
F550-5009	Prime Mover	Leeds	FMC	N/A	Ready
CT 8901	Cargo Trailer	Staten Island	FMC	N/A	Ready
CP 8902	C2 Trailer	Leeds	FMC	N/A	Ready
MT 8903	Maint Trailer	Leeds	FMC	NA	Ready

5) PLANNING AND EXERCISES. A presentation for Empire Challenge '24 was made to the Lake Champlain AMSC sub-committee on 26MAR. As part of the presentation, we received the initial acknowledgement of the plan from NYS DEC and USCG Sector Northern New England. We may change the scenario location from Schuyler Island to the DEC-owned Trembleau Mountain tract, which is less restrictive in use policy. This location is on the west shore of Lake Champlain, just west of Schuyler Island.



(View east from Trembleau Mountain)

6) COMMUNICATIONS. N/A

7) TRAINING.

- a. FAA Part 107 certifications on file: 2
- b. Authorized motor vehicle drivers: 45. With CDL: 7
- c. Available training boat is in place with DET 21 at New Rochelle; and boats are soon to be in place at DET 52 in Buffalo, and DET 22 at Hudson.

