

Careers At Sea

What Is A U.S. Merchant Mariner?

(NAPSA)—If you've ever been at sea when looking for a good definition of what a merchant mariner does, here's one that will keep you from getting too far adrift. The Merchant Marine is composed of men and women who crew U.S.-flag commercial vessels on the deep seas, inland waterways and Great Lakes. Although civilians, they are often referred to as the nation's "fourth arm of defense."

Since the founding of the United States, merchant mariners have played a vital support role in the nation's conflicts. For instance, some of the vessels they work on transport troops and military goods.

One of the more recent missions of the U.S. Merchant Marine was Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). During the initial combat phase of OIF, more than 5,000 American mariners sailed aboard hundreds of U.S.-flag ships in support of our troops. They executed what has been described by top government and military leaders as the most efficient sealift operation in history.

In a recent address, U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao stated, "American merchant mariners have a rich history in this nation. They have served in every American war since the U.S. was born. With their tradition of courage, patriotism and perseverance, merchant mariners have proven that they stand by this great nation no matter what the challenge."

The U.S. Merchant Marine also plays a crucial role in America's peacetime economy by crewing the many vessels involved in international trade. U.S.-flag ships can be seen regularly in the major ports of the world. Crew members serve



OCEAN'S THOUSANDS—The U.S. Merchant Marine is composed of men and women who crew U.S.-flag commercial vessels on the deep seas, inland waterways and Great Lakes.

on all types of vessels, including containerships, tankers, bulkers, passenger vessels, tugs and much more.

Free Training, Guaranteed 1st Job

At a time when higher-education costs continue to rise, there's actually a vocational training facility that does not charge entry-level students for tuition, room or board. Plus, it assures a first job for its graduates. The Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, affiliated with the Seafarers International Union, prepares students for successful careers in the U.S. Merchant Marine.

The entry-level program includes a mix of hands-on training and classroom instruction. It features state-of-the-art training tools and also includes a phase spent working aboard an actual vessel.

For more information, call toll-free at 1-877-235-3275 or visit