



Providing Pastoral Care for Seafarers

By Jim Lindgren, Chaplain/Director

I boarded the APL Turquoise and was greeted by a jovial Chief Cook, Jessie. He quickly darted back into the galley as it was time to serve the crew. I joined the Bosun, Bernardo, for lunch and we talked about his family. I asked how many children he had. "Three," he replied, "but one is already dead." He told me about his two living children who were out of college and working as a nurse and a civil engineer. I asked him about the one who had died. It was a son who was killed in a motorcycle accident just before graduating from college. The anniversary of his death was only days away.

I prayed for him and the memory of his son and told him I would remember him on the anniversary of his son's death.

It was at this time that Jessie, the cook interrupted us. He had a picture of his family in his hand. He said, "Do you remember when you took me to transfer money to my family four years ago?" I didn't remember until he jogged my memory. "Then you took me to the bus station so I could visit my sister in San Jose. Look, here is a picture of my daughter who is 15 now. Alive and kicking!"

He explained how his daughter was one of 17 who had typhoid fever in his town. Seven of the children died. It was a terrible time because he could not be with his family, but he was able to send the money home that they needed.

Seafarers don't often have the opportunity to thank us for what we do. When that thanks came four years later, it was gratifying. With your support, you help make this happen!

Share the Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate's Ministry with Your Church or Group

Do you believe in the importance of our ministry? Do you want to share this with others? Invite Chaplain Jim Lindgren to come and speak to your church or group. Call 510-893-3104 or write chaplain@seafarersministry.com

Justice for Seafarers

Mark Haggerty, one of our volunteers, who is also a Bar Pilot for the San Francisco Bay, called me recently concerning American seafarers aboard the Sea River Baytown. They were upset with the security policy of Pacific Atlantic Terminals located in Martinez CA. Seafarers, regardless of their nationality or credentials are not allowed to leave the ship, unless they notify the Facility Security Officer 48 hours in advance of the ship's arrival. Then they must arrange for transportation by a facilities contracted security company at \$1,500 per day!

When we reported this to the Center for Seafarers Rights, we learned that this is the most outrageous fee charged by any terminal in the United States.



Ruell, the Chief Cook aboard the Maersk Bering which also docks at Pacific Atlantic Terminals in Martinez

I contacted the terminal for clarification on this policy as regards to chaplains boarding the ship. Coast Guard regulations, state that terminals are required to make arrangements for Chaplains to visit the ships. I tried many times to reach the terminal, but the security officer was never available. One wonders about the level of security concern when the Security Office seems to be unreachable. I finally reached a live person who relayed my concern. I was told that I could board the ship by water taxi (cost unknown). Later I was told I could enter through the terminal but I would have to pay

the \$1,500 for security transportation. I protested, saying that this was not the intention of the Coast Guard regulation. I contacted the Coast Guard which has not yet been able to resolve the situation.

I later boarded the Maersk Bering when it was berthed in Richmond CA. It had previously docked at the Pacific Atlantic Terminal in Martinez CA. The seafarers were also prohibited from leaving this terminal, even though they had visas and shore passes.

Working on oil tankers is the hardest job in shipping. Tankers work around the clock. Unlike container ships, the crew is responsible for discharging the cargo. The Maersk Bering left Martinez in the middle of the evening to transfer to Richmond. When I arrived at 10:00 a.m. those who were not working were sleeping. I left two phones for the seafarers to use to call home. However, between the work and sleep schedule, few of the Indian, Burmese and Filipino crew had time to call home. The crew told me that there are few places where they have the opportunity to go ashore. They either don't have the time or they are not allowed. **When seafarers are denied to go ashore by the terminal, even to make a phone call, this is the same as imprisonment.**

Legislation was passed by the U.S. House to make it illegal to charge seafarers or chaplains to pass through a terminal. However, it did not pass the Senate before the November election. Now the process must begin again. When legislation surfaces again, we will inform you so that you can write to your Congressman and Senators. It will not help to write until the legislation is proposed.

This is just one of the justice issues with which we are dealing. There are a number of seafarers who are being detained in our area for trial because of oil spills on their ships. We have been able to reach some of them, but for others, information has been hard to obtain. In one case there are eight Filipinos being detained in separate hotels around the Bay Area and they are not able to contact each other. We are concerned about their living conditions as well as their mental state. Are they getting information about their rights? Are they being properly represented?

We know from other cases around the country that this is a terrifying situation. In some cases, these are ratings who have been ordered to discharge oil by officers. If they tell the truth, they may be black listed. They may also be in danger of their lives when they go home. If they say nothing, they may be the ones convicted.

Then there are still many seafarers who cannot go ashore. Again, we have a hard time attaining the reasons. In some cases, the men don't have visas. A

good company will help the seafarers obtain visas.

There are also companies who do not want the seafarers to get visas. This is particularly true of Chinese seafarers.

We have a number of ships with Burmese seafarers where the men are not able to go ashore. We get conflicting reports. Sometimes they are detained by the Border Patrol, even when they have been given visas by the American government. There are also some who are detained by the Captain or on shipping company orders. We have heard of situations where one Burmese, or in some cases Filipino, seafarer has jumped ship. Because of this, all the crew members of that nationality on *all* vessels of that company will not have shore leave for the next year.

In all cases, seafarers who are denied shore leave cannot go ashore even to make a phone call. In some cases, if they are taken ashore for medical reasons, they are taken in hand cuffs.

Memorial Gift

Mrs. Margaret J. Henderson
in Memory of
Herman and Regina Dahl

Fourth Annual Shoreline Stroll Scheduled for September

It's not too early to set Saturday , September 29 aside for the Annual Shoreline Stroll of the Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate. This is a great way to support our ministry to seafarers as well as enjoy some of the most beautiful views of San Francisco. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. with the Stroll starting at 10:00 a.m. This is a 5K walk (not a race). For more information, please contact us at chaplain@seafarersministry.com.



Strollers from the Neighborhood Samaritan Center of First Baptist Church of Oakland walking to support the Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate

We Salute Our 2006 Members of the Crew

Listed below are the individuals, churches & organizations who have supported the Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate during the calendar year 2006. Their generosity make this ministry possible.

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Meet Our New Volunteer



Carolyn Person, second from left. attends Oakland First Baptist Church and is our newest volunteer host at the International Maritime Center. Carolyn volunteers every other Thursday evening. She is pictured with seafarers from the Philippines who work on the YM Anping which comes to Oakland every five weeks.

Preparing for Tomorrow

Remembering the Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate Foundation in your estate planning today ensures that seafarers will not be forgotten tomorrow.

For more information call:
 Charlie Fender at 510-526-1625
 or email foundationinfo@seafarersministry.com

**Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate
 Yes! I (we) want to join as a Member of the Crew!**

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American Seafarers on Oil Tankers

by Jim Lindgren

Since writing the article on the front page, I've been able to board an American ship which has docked at the Pacific Atlantic Terminals in Martinez, owned by Plains All American Pipeline of Houston Texas. I had never heard of this company before, but since that time I have seen articles on the Internet touting this company as a good investment that pays great dividends. Apparently it's not making enough money to concern itself with the welfare and well being of the very seafarers who bring oil to their terminals and make it possible to carry on its business.

The story is more intriguing when the security issues of the oil terminals are considered. While trying to get clearance at the Pacific Atlantic Terminal, I received a call from Ed Clark of Secure Solutions in Kansas City, the company which wrote the security plan for this terminal. He explained that the problem with people coming on this terminal is that there are so few people working there, no one has time to bother with the gate.

Then I visited another American Ship docked at another terminal. I had a chance to talk at length with the Chief Engineer, John, who had just joined the ship while it was berthed in Martinez. Here is his story.

"I boarded the ship at Martinez. You're right, in order for us to enter or leave the terminal, we have to pay \$1,500. Fortunately our company pays the fee. However, it took me a couple of hours to get on the ship. The driver for the company that's paid all this money was somewhere on the property but he wasn't answering his phone. He apparently fell asleep. We had to call the agent, who called the security company who called the driver on his radio.

"Then they only take you about a third of the way to the ship. They drive about a quarter of a mile down the road to a pier that goes about a half mile out to the ship. We have to walk from there. And this security company only escorts us on the property. If we want to go anywhere beyond the terminal gate, we have to call a taxi.

"John told me that security varies from terminal to terminal. On some big terminals in Los Angeles, all we have to do is sign in and out at the gate. On some terminals in Houston, we can't go ashore for any reason, unless we're deathly sick. They've taken all the cell phones off the docks in many places. We can't even make a phone call if there is an emergency.

"On one dock in New Jersey, they have to pay \$400 a

day for a security company to transport us 50 yards to the gate. The funny thing is the tank farm is on the other side of the road. There's only a couple of pipes going from the ship under the road to the tank farm.

"There is really a lot of discrimination against American seafarers. Whenever, I have to join a ship we get a one way ticket. We're automatically flagged for an in depth security check because we don't have a round trip ticket. They tell me it's a random extra check. I ask them, 'Why am I singled out every time if it's a random check?' We're just being hassled before we join the ship, when we're on the ship and when we fly home."

"We have to pass a security check to get our seafarers card. We have a security check to get our passport. Now we're going to have to pay for a Transport Workers Identification Card (TWIC). We're American citizens coming into an American port, but we're treated as criminals.

"Does all of this make us safer? The big danger is someone coming onto a terminal from the water. Yet there is no one patrolling the waterways."

What's the price of a gallon of oil? We all complain when the cost continues to rise. The hidden cost of a gallon of oil is the toll it takes on seafarers and their families. Some of this cost is needless. It could be eased by terminals taking a humane approach to the treatment of seafarers at their docks.

Coffee Break on the Essen Express



Three Filipinos on the Essen Express are taking their coffee break and perusing the newspapers and magazines we bring on board. What do they like to receive? We bring them current Filipino newspapers, local newspapers and magazines. The most popular are National Geographic, Time, Newsweek, Readers Digest and devotional literature.