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CAREER CHOICES

U.S. Merchant Mariners Enjoy Wave Of Popularity

(NAPSA)—Steering a course to good pay and benefits becomes easier when job seekers take to the seas—to find work in a little-known part of America’s national defense structure.

One way to find out about these employment openings in the all-civilian U.S. Merchant Marine is the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Maryland. The school, open since 1967, guarantees its graduates their first job.

The school, which offers dozens of U.S. Coast Guard-approved courses and world-class training equipment, is affiliated with the Seafarers International Union (SIU), chartered in 1938. The Paul Hall Center provides the training needed for a successful career in the merchant marine, including a highly regarded entry-level program as well as courses for veterans who have qualifying sea time in a deck or engine rating.

Although not part of the armed services, the U.S. Merchant Marine has long been a key part of America’s national defense. During World War II, General Eisenhower dubbed the civilian mariners America’s “fourth arm of defense.” That arm of defense has played a significant role lately in the Iraqi war.

Today, the merchant marine consists of U.S. flag vessels in the deep sea, Great Lakes and inland trades. Some serve in military support roles, others in the commercial sector.

Seafarers get good pay and benefits, along with virtually



Thousands of U.S. mariners have received the Merchant Marine Expeditionary Medal for service in the war on terrorism.

unrivaled freedom in scheduling. SIU contracts normally call for competitive pay, medical coverage for participants and their families, a pension plan and vacation benefits.

Since its founding, the school has helped tens of thousands hone their skills and advance their careers. Overall, more than 50,000 rated and licensed seamen have completed upgrading classes; 21,000 men and women have graduated from the trainee program.

The campus is on 60 acres in picturesque Piney Point, Maryland. Among the school’s beneficial training tools are the bridge and engine simulators, the marine fire and safety school, and the culinary lab. Students may receive college credit recommendations for certain sanctioned courses.

There are no fees for tuition, room or board for students in the training program. For information, visit www.seafarers.org or call 1-877-235-3275.