

Congratulations Chief Mate/Master Graduates



Brian Kiesel

Brian joined MM&P in 2005 and worked his way up the hawse pipe, taking courses at PMI. He lives in Fort Myers, Fla., with his wife Kathryn and ships out of MM&P's Tampa Hall. In his free time, he enjoys wakeboarding, fishing and home improvement projects. "Thank you to my entire family for their support and understanding," he says. Brian completed all Chief Mate/Master courses in October 2012.



John McEntee

John joined MM&P in 2007 after graduating from Massachusetts Maritime Academy. He lives in Plymouth, Mass., and ships out of MM&P's New York/New Jersey Hall. In his free time, he enjoys competitive sports: he recently participated in a mini-triathlon. John completed all Chief Mate/Master courses in October 2012.

MITAGS Page Editor Ashley Morrow

Pilot From Mauritania Taking Classes at MITAGS

Mohamed Kotob, a pilot based in Mauritania, has been attending classes at MITAGS over the course of the past year. Each time he makes the trip from his home country in the western part of Africa, he spends over 48 hours in transit, including flights and airport waiting times, to get to MITAGS in Linthicum Heights, Md. What's more, he's paying for the training himself.

Kotob earned his chief mate's license through a training program in Morocco and has worked as a pilot in Mauritania for many years. He expects to finish the MITAGS Chief Mate/Master course by June 2013.



Captain Mohamed Kotob, a pilot based in the port of Nouadhibou, Mauritania, is completing the Chief Mate/Master program at MITAGS.

Unique challenges for pilots In Mauritania's ports

Pilots in Nouadhibou, Kotob's home port, face a unique challenge: they must perform their work without the use of tugboats. The practice began when the port was built in 1963 and the largest ship was about 50,000 tons. Over the years, as larger ships began to use the port, the pilots adapted to piloting vessels as large as 200,000 tons without tug assistance.

In order to pilot one of the large ships into dock, Kotob explains, the pilot must come parallel to the berth, drop anchor, pass the lines to two mooring boats, one forward and one aft, and "slowly, slowly" bring the ship into the dock. In strong winds, the lines may part, adding complications and stress to the process.

Leaving the port is even more difficult: 1600 meters from the berth, pilots are confronted with a 180-degree turn. They must carefully time the raising of the anchor and make the turn using the engine, going very slowly at first and then taking the ship quickly up to full speed.

Kotob is one of three pilots at Nouadhibou who perform the demanding maneuvers day and night, in all weather conditions. At any given time, he says, there is one ship leaving the port and one ship entering.

"We're at the top limits of size now," Kotob says, explaining that if the ships get any larger, the pilots will be unable to bring them into port without tugs. "It's a matter of safety."

The pilots have told local authorities that tugboats will be essential when a new port now under construction, capable of handling ships of 250,000 tons, is finished in two years.

In the meantime, Kotob says, he is honing his professional skills, enjoying the classes at MITAGS and seeking new opportunities to network with professional mariners from the United States and abroad.