

# Creating a Maritime Industry Expo Center with a Retired SL7/TAKR RO/RO Container Vessel



Rik van Hemmen, P.E.

SL7expo

NMHS September 26, 2025

# The SL-7 Class Container ships

- 8 First generation purpose built container ships for Malcom McLean's Sea-Land
- Designed by Sea-Land's John Boylston
- The only remaining first generation container ships
- A remaining vessel from the world's first truly successful intermodal shipping company
- At 33 knots the fastest operating cargo ship ever
- US designed, US propulsion plant, European built
- 100% commercial and privately financed.



# Converted to T-AKR Fast Sealift Ships

- US converted into the fastest US military supply vessel in the early 80's.
- A war veteran in support of US intervention in foreign aggression
- An awesome public display for Maritime with superb display volume potential (150,000 square feet)
- Relatively inexpensive to convert for public access.
- 8 to choose from right now, but not forever



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## ACHIEVE MARITIME PROSPERITY

- ▶ Strengthen America's maritime workforce and the Jones Act Fleet—the backbone of our sea services, industry, and maritime transportation system.
- ▶ Invest and innovate in domestic shipbuilding and U.S.-flag shipping capabilities and capacity to advance the power and influence of America's maritime industry.
- ▶ Revitalize the U.S.-flagged international fleet through targeted incentive programs and regulatory reforms to make the fleet competitive with international carriers.
- ▶ Drive modern business and manufacturing approaches: innovative maritime logistics, fuels, and advanced nuclear energy, human-machine teaming, additive manufacturing, and other advanced technologies.
- ▶ Survey and evaluate conditions of critical maritime infrastructure to invest in America's marine highways, guiding public and private investments to the most high-impact projects.
- ▶ Leverage existing, unused authorities to speed the flow of taxpayer resources towards U.S.-flag shipping and domestic commercial shipbuilding.

## ENSURE MARITIME SECURITY

- ▶ Ensure U.S. and allied naval forces can effectively defend global freedom of navigation on the high seas, including against the People's Republic of China's coercive maritime insurgency in the South China Sea and beyond, as well as emerging asymmetric adversaries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz, Iranian-backed Houthis in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and ongoing piracy in critical chokepoints around the world.
- ▶ Confront rapidly emerging challenges by immediately accelerating polar, seabed warfare, and undersea warfare capabilities.
- ▶ Encourage public outreach to demonstrate how American shipbuilding and U.S.-flag shipping are critical to national security, and that maritime workers are essential.
- ▶ Harden critical maritime infrastructure and networks, enforce the new federal ban on the use of the People's Republic of China's Ministry of Transportation's National Transportation and Logistics Public Information Platform, commonly referred to as "LOGINK," and incrementally replace Chinese-built cranes in American ports with domestically manufactured ones.
- ▶ Attract private investment into U.S.-flag shipping and domestic shipbuilding while restricting cash flow into the People's Republic of China's maritime shipping and shipbuilding industries.

## CONGRESSIONAL GUIDANCE FOR A NATIONAL MARITIME STRATEGY

Reversing the Decline of America's Maritime Power

**Congressman Mike Waltz**  
**Senator Mark Kelly**  
**Senator Marco Rubio**  
**Congressman John Garamendi**

**April 30, 2024**

- ▶ Encourage public outreach to demonstrate how American shipbuilding and U.S.-flag shipping are critical to national security, and that maritime workers are essential.

“Encourage”? How about: “Engage In”

- ▶ Strengthen America’s maritime workforce and the Jones Act Fleet—the backbone of our sea services, industry, and maritime transportation system.

# The Unique Position of Maritime

- Next to farmers, mariners have the highest level of career skills.
- Like farming, it requires specialization on top of an extremely high level of general skills.
- Unlike farming, maritime has better prospects for career success.
- Maritime is a historical force multiplier. In maritime one person can move orders of magnitude more product than in non maritime, which tends to result in higher wages.
- Maritime is the path to the middle class. As in: I have nothing, I sign on to a ship, I learn along the way, and I can advance to command or ownership and make real money.
- Maritime is not sentimental. Once I achieve the middle class, I will not make my offspring follow the same path.
- Maritime has existed for thousands of years and continues to be stable, flexible, adaptable and cooperative.
- Maritime has always competed successfully with new technologies.

# Consider this:

- Teddy Roosevelt. Wrote: *The Naval War of 1812*, Ass't Secretary of the Navy
- Franklin Roosevelt. Ass't. Secretary of the Navy
- John Kennedy. Navy Officer
- Lyndon Johnson. Navy Officer
- Richard Nixon. Navy Officer
- Gerry Ford. Navy Officer
- Jimmy Carter. Navy Officer
- George Bush Sr. Navy Pilot
- Bill Clinton. Taught Admiralty Law

# There is a Crisis in Maritime

- MARAD and MSC have severe Mariner shortages.
- In general, there is insufficient supply of Mariners into the industry, not just in the US, also in many other countries
- [https://wallstreetjournal-ny-app.newsmemory.com/?publink=ofod2c054\\_134d42c](https://wallstreetjournal-ny-app.newsmemory.com/?publink=ofod2c054_134d42c)

The Wall Street Journal | Page A015

Wednesday, 4 September 2024

SHARE

## The U.S. Navy's Chief Supplier Is in Peril

By Seth Cropsey

**T**he U.S. Navy has struggled to maintain personnel and readiness across the fleet, which makes its new plan for the Military Sealift Command to lose 17 ships under a “force generation reset” deeply troubling.

The Military Sealift Command

Retiring them nevertheless cuts into the Navy's deployed missile-cell numbers, while forcing the Arleigh Burkes to cover another full mission, that of fleet air defense, which will further strain the destroyer fleet.

Less discussed but crucial for combat power are the Navy's support ships. MSC operates these ships with some 5,500 ci-



to sustain American forces in a Eurasian war.

The ships on the chopping block include two Expeditionary Sea Bases, or ESBs, likely the Centcom-deployed USS Lewis Puller and the Eucom/Africom-deployed USS Hershel “Woody” Williams, along with the remaining 12 Spearhead-class Expeditionary Fast Transports, or

# How do we fix it?

- The discussion of this issue has been ongoing for years
- We have the schools, but students no longer choose to pursue USCG licensing
- The maritime industry, as a whole, is the red headed stepchild of US government support
- Hard work, drug testing
- People engaged in maritime fulfill a national security function.
- Public awareness of maritime is minimal and deeply misunderstood
- How do we increase general awareness?

# Maritime is Massive

- But not understood to be massive by a very significant portion of the population
- Nor by government. US Bureau of Labor Statistics:

## Summary

Quick Facts: Marine Engineers and Naval Architects	
2023 Median Pay <a href="#">?</a>	\$100,270 per year \$48.21 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education <a href="#">?</a>	Bachelor's degree
Work Experience in a Related Occupation <a href="#">?</a>	None
On-the-job Training <a href="#">?</a>	None
Number of Jobs, 2023 <a href="#">?</a>	10,100
Job Outlook, 2023-33 <a href="#">?</a>	8% (Faster than average)
Employment Change, 2023-33 <a href="#">?</a>	800

### What Marine Engineers and Naval Architects Do

Marine engineers and naval architects design, develop, and evaluate the operation of marine vessels, ship machinery, and related equipment.



How do we fix it?

# Do Museum Ships increase awareness?

- We have hundreds of museum ships and it seems to have no positive effect on public interest in maritime careers.
- There are successful museum ships, but do they advance Commercial Maritime?
- At best they advance Navy awareness (Combat instead of Commerce)
- All museum ships focus on past glories not present opportunities
- There are no public displays of modern ships
- Do museum ships show that maritime continues to be an extremely viable career?
- Do Museum ships show the next generation how to enter Maritime as a career?

# History versus the Present

- History is not just about the past; it is also about the future. History is important, but it needs to connect with the present.



# We need to optimize Maritime's resources.

- If we are thinking in terms of a public outreach, exhibit, or display, it needs to be connected to the present, not the past.
- It needs to have industry support; not sentimental support of a prior generation
- It needs to sharply focus on the present hyper dynamic nature of maritime
- The weirdness of maritime: "How did you get into maritime?"
- Getting into maritime used to be easier, we have to make it easy again.

# Maritime and Intermodalism

- The most visible component of today's maritime industry is the container trade.
- Other components such as tankers and bulk carriers are just as viable. While not as visually stimulating, they are part of the greater whole.
- Ferries and cruise vessels are equally visible, but actually remove the passengers from the realities of maritime (Seasickness avoidance)
- Maritime changed the course of history for thousands of years
- Containerization and intermodalism changed the course of history in our lifetime and continues to do so. The US invented it, but it is a worldwide phenomenon that has lifted millions of people.
- The public needs to understand intermodalism and maritime for the industry to be able to attract the next generation.
- We need the Smithsonian of Intermodalism. It is not sentimental; it is of vital national interest.

# The “Not a Museum” Concept

- Focus more on the future than the past
- Show that Maritime is an active patriotic expression
- The past exists to show that the future will be just as exciting.
- Focus on reasons for the public to continue to return rather than a single visit (Disney World instead of Grand Canyon)
- It is an educational institute and a clearing house of maritime knowledge and advancement
- Learn by doing. Incorporate a marine activity center/ferry terminal
- The main mission is to expand public understanding of maritime and to expand interest in maritime (intermodal) careers
- While the ability to visit other countries and cultures is less in maritime today, the ability to learn and make money continues to be high in maritime. Make Mariners.

# Allow Me to Introduce SL7expo



- A 501(C)3 membership organization
- To preserve one or more SL-7's for the promotion of commercial maritime
- To arrange for industry financial support
- 620 Shrewsbury Ave. Tinton Falls NJ 07701
- [www.sl7expo.org](http://www.sl7expo.org)
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sl7expo/>



**INTREPID MUSEUM** | **NAMEPA** (North American Marine Environment Protection Association) | **SMPE** (SOCIETY OF MARINE PORT ENGINEERS) | **CSA** (CHAMBER OF SHIPPING OF AMERICA)

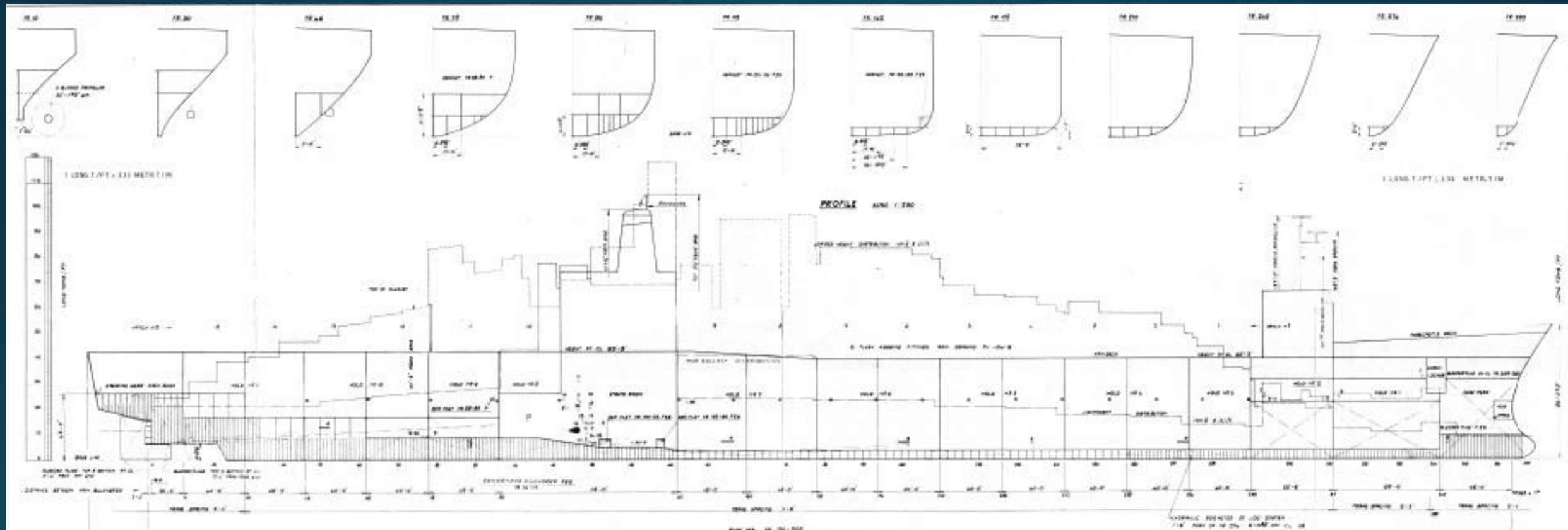
**SIU** (BROTHERHOOD OF THE SEA AFL-CIO) | **SEAFARERS' UNION** | **ASSOCIATION OF THE PORTS OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY** | **ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND PILOTS** | **LINE** | **World Shipping Council**

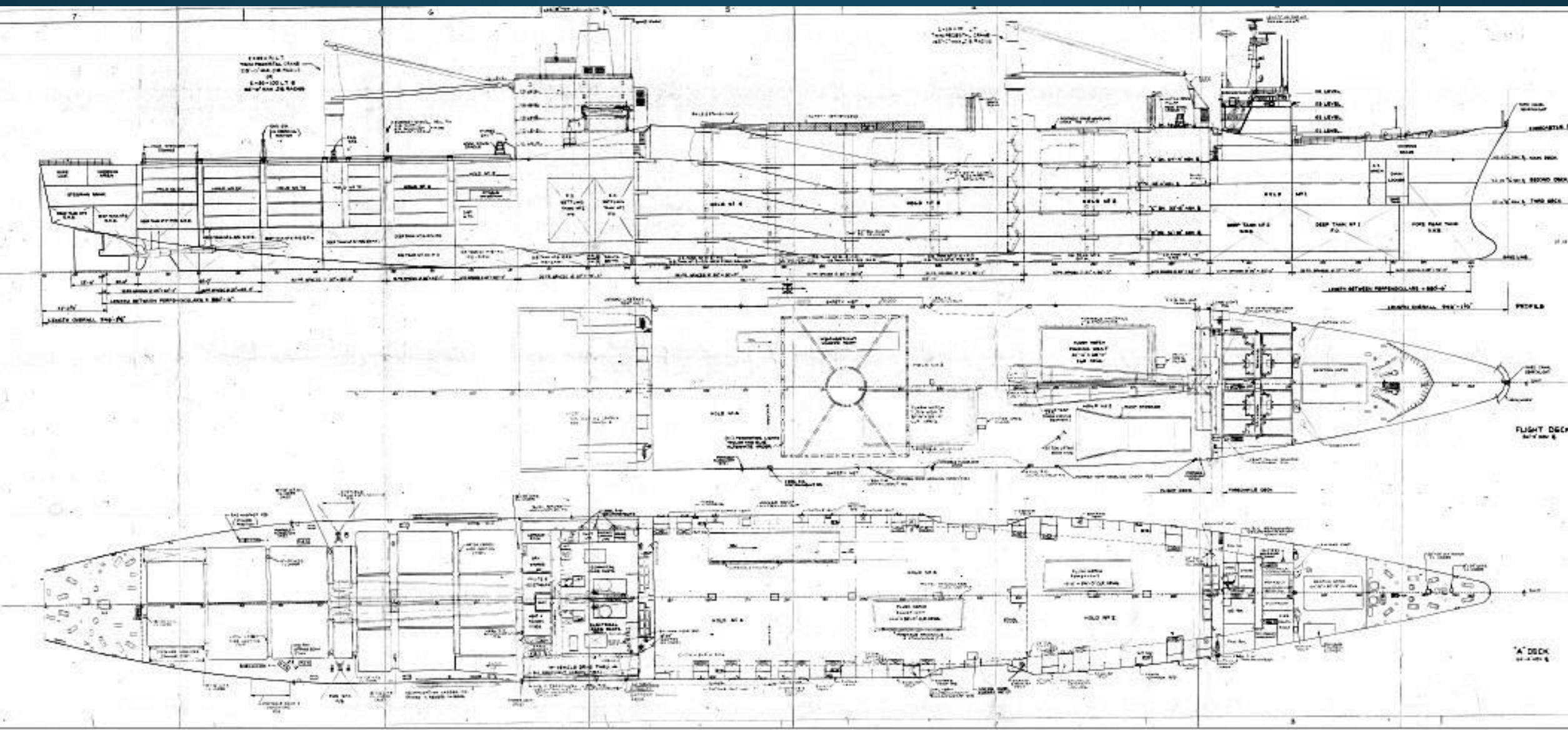
**MARTIN OTTAWAY** | **PORT OF COEYMAN'S MARINE TERMINAL** (Connecting the world to the Northeast) | **Ocean Shipholding Inc.** | **Carver MARINE STEEL WORKS** | **ABS**

# Why an SL-7?

- The only remaining first generation container ship
- A remaining vessel from the world's first truly successful intermodal shipping company
- The fastest operating cargo ship ever
- US designed, US propulsion plant, European built
- 100% commercial and privately financed.
- US converted into the fastest US military supply vessel.
- A war veteran in support of US intervention in foreign aggression manned by civilians
- An awesome public display for Maritime with superb display volume potential (150,000 square feet)
- Relatively inexpensive to convert for public access.
- 8 to choose from right now, but not forever

# Malcom McLean's Dream and John Boylston's Baby







# Potential features:

- Industry displays, including the most modern features
- Intermodal simulators with decision making and problems solving features
- Integration with industry organizations
- High level of access by the public incl. ADA. (Most ship types have poor public access potential)
- Ability to display and promote active shipping and intermodal companies
- It is about commercial maritime trade. It is not about the Navy or the USCG or the Marines, but they are an integral part of the story.
- High level of event and entertainment attraction rather than museum attraction, promoting repeat attendance
- Social center (Bars, Brewery (Distillery), Restaurants. Seaman's food)
- (Inter)National Maritime Hall of Fame
- Career fair and counseling

# PENNSHIP CONVERSION VESSELS

## USNS CAPELLA (T-AKR 293)/USNS DENEbola (T-AKR 289)



**AFT CRANE CAP @ 105' RADIUS:**  
35 LTON SINGLE  
70 LTON TWIN

**AFT CRANE CAP @ 85' RADIUS:**  
50 LTON SINGLE  
100 LTON TWIN

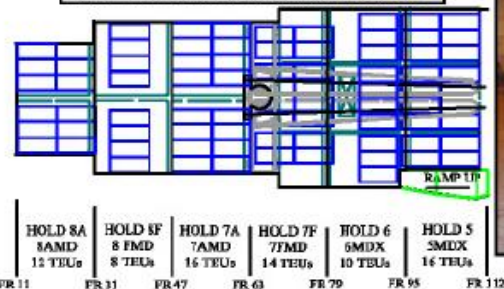
HINGED RAMP - A DK TO WDX

**NOTE: TOTAL AVAILABLE RO/RO DECK AREA REFLECTS AREA LOSS TO CARGO HANDLING GEAR STOWAGE ON "A" DECK**



**MAIN DECK AFT HEIGHTS:**  
MAX RO/RO HT: 8'  
MAX LO/LO HT: 25'0"

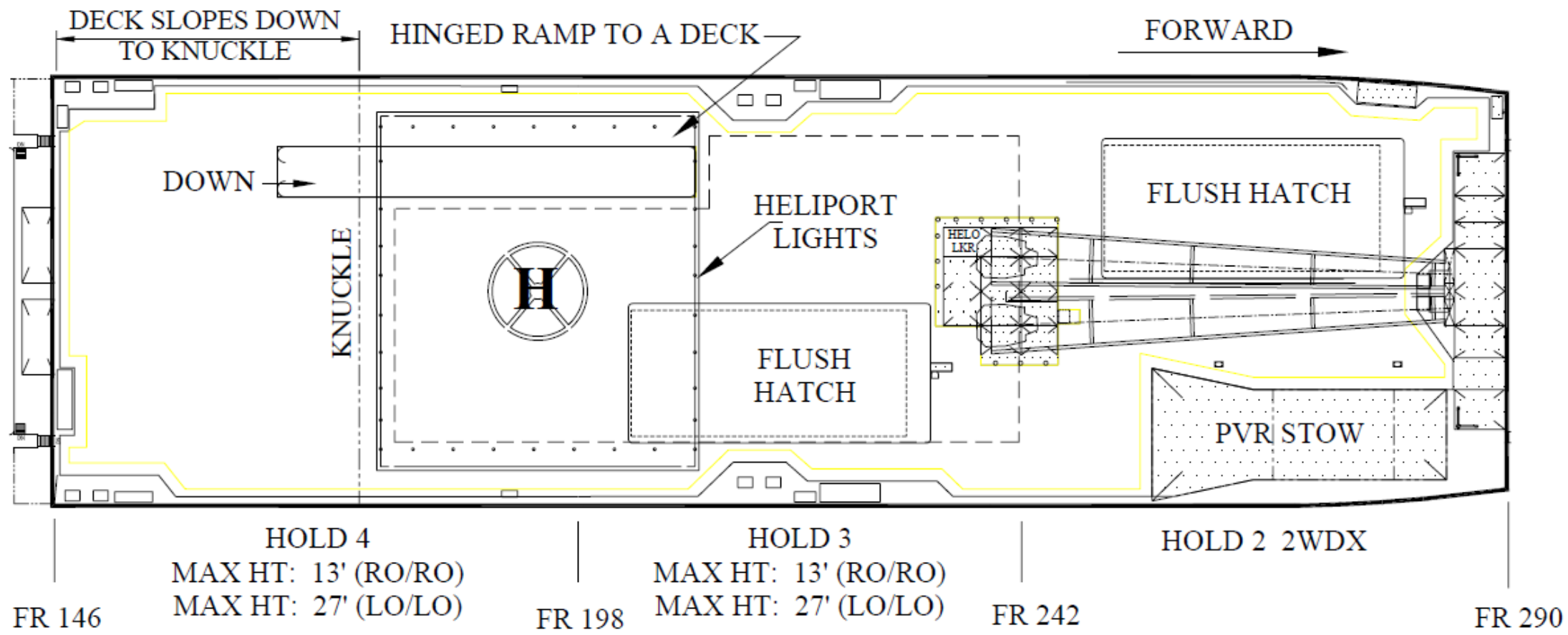
**CONTAINER LAYOUT FOR MAIN DECK AFT**

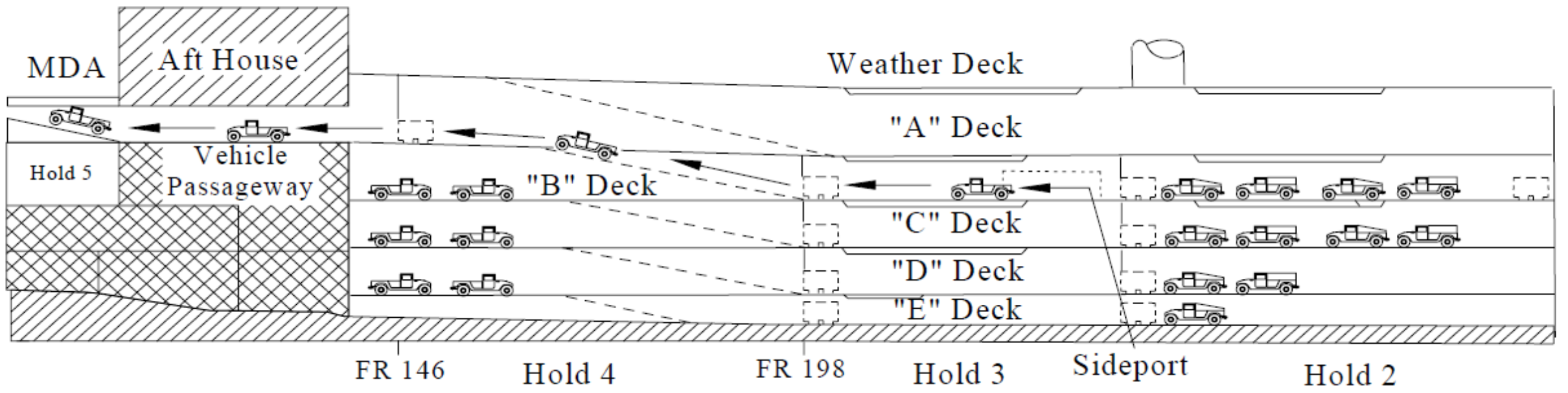


**A DECK/MAIN DECK AFT TIER 1 - TOTAL TEUs: 76**

**A DECK - 525 PSF (FWD FR 111) (64'4" ABL)**

**MAIN DK AFT - 200 PSF (AFT FR 111) (73'4" ABL)**



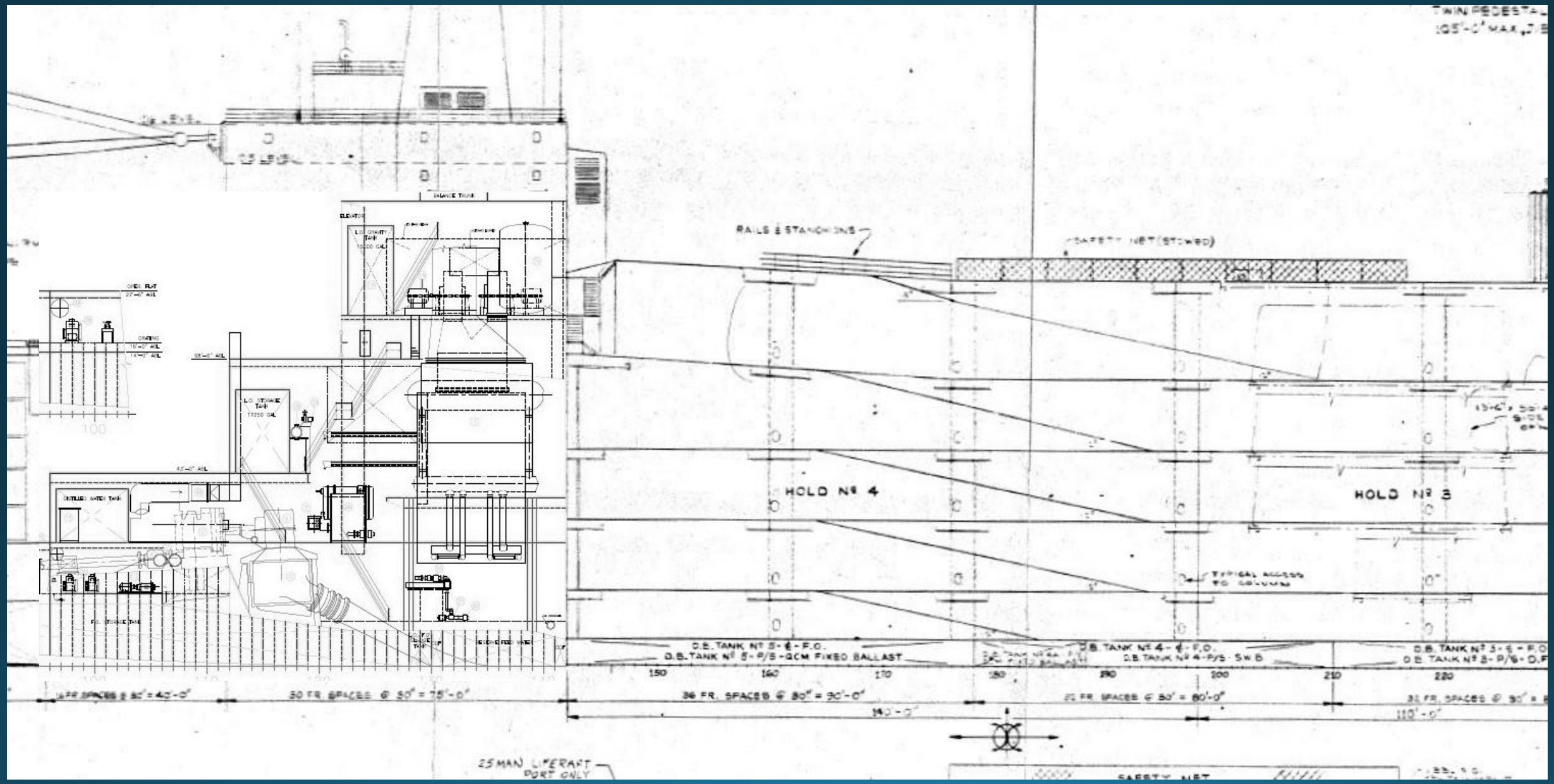




# Some technical considerations

- General access
- Deactivation
- ADA access
- Engine Room Access
- Atrium design
- PCB's and Asbestos
- Continued maintenance access (drydocks)
- Siting, where will it be moored?

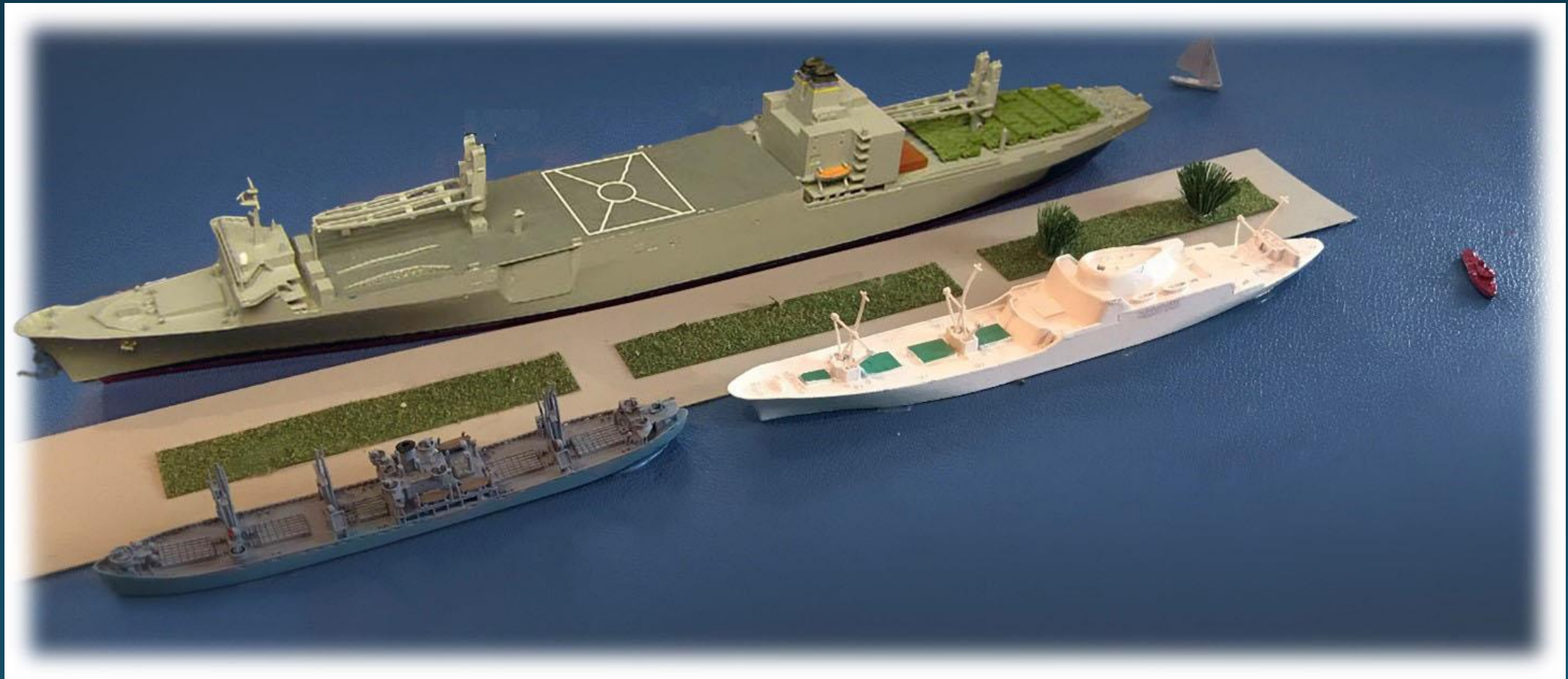
TWIN PEDESTAL  
105'-0" MAX. J.B.



# Potential partners

- MSC/MARAD
- Dept. Education, Labor and Defense
- Smithsonian (There is a National Spy Museum, but not a National Museum of Commerce and Trade)
- Technical and professional organizations, SNAME, SMPE, IMarEST, ASNE, MLA, WISTA
- Unions
- Maritime education, MITAGS, Maritime Academies and NAME schools, Maritime High schools
- Maritime exposure, Sea Scouts, community sailing and boating, JROTC, etc.
- Intermodal companies. (Railroads, international logistics organizations)
- Local, regional, and international maritime industry organizations
- Maritime Museums

# An Interesting Side Bar



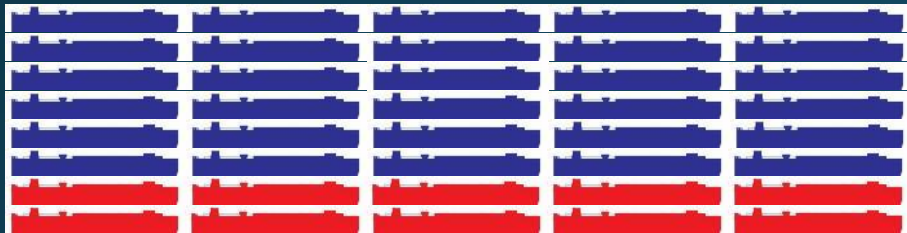
# The Money Thing

- This is not inexpensive
- It can only be achieved with wide and consistent support
- Commercial support could be advertising
- Think of a budget of millions per year with only a fraction from visitor income
- USS Enterprise budget is \$35M
- Cost effectiveness: Do I maintain a fleet of 40 MARAD/MSC ship of which I can crew only 30, or do I maintain a fleet of 39 MARAD/MSC ships plus recruitment ship for the same cost and be able to crew 39 ships?
- US Navy spends \$600M per year in recruiting

# Cost Benefit

Today

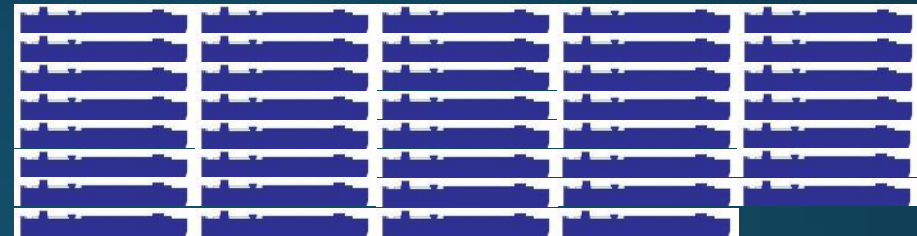
MARAD Budget \$600M, \$15M each



40 RO/ROs, but only 30 can sail due to crew shortages

Tomorrow

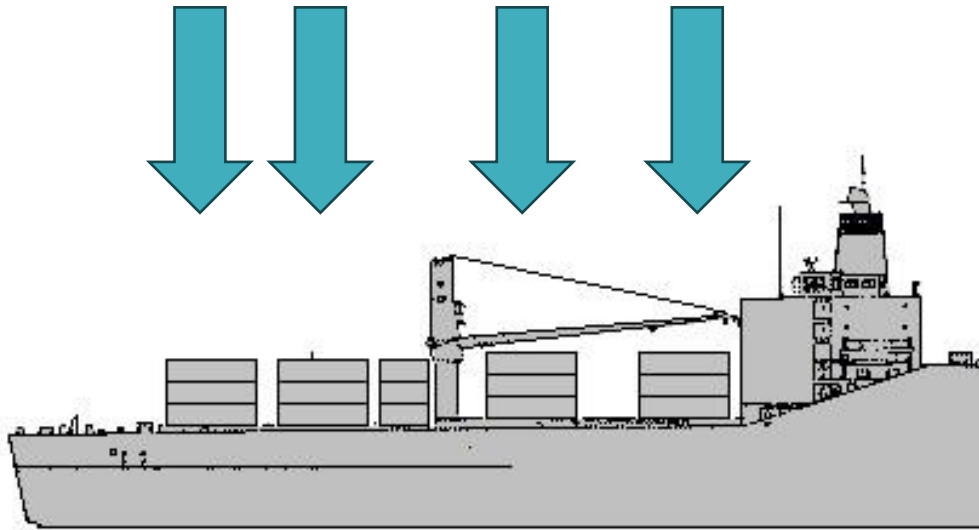
MARAD Budget \$600M, \$15M each



39 RO/ROs and 1 Recruiting Center and 39 can sail

You tell me what makes more sense

# Advertise your Business Here!





A/S J. Ludvig Mowinckels Reederi Lygnos Bros. Shipping, Inc. Lykes Bros. SS Co. Mærsk Line Manchester Liners Ltd. Marasia S.r.l. Marine Transport Lines, Inc.



Mystic Steamship Corp. National Shipping & Trading Co. Navis Corp. Nedlloyd Lines Nervion Line Nearchos Nippon Yusen Kaisha (N.Y.K. Line)



Orion & Global Chartering Co., Inc. Pacific-Australia Direct Line Swedish Transatlantic Line Pacific Steam Navigation Co. Royal Mail Lines, Ltd. Pan Atlantic Lines Panoscean-Asco Limited. Phillips Petroleum Co. Princess Cruises



Saini Reiter Services Saini Tanker AB Saini Dry Cargo AB Scindia Steam Navigation Co., Ltd. Sea-Land Service, Inc. Seasmaster Shipping, Inc. Seatrain Lines, Inc. Shipping & Produce Simer Cruise Lines



Turkish Cargo Lines The Union-Castle Mail Steamship Co., Ltd. Union Oil Co. of Calif. United Arab Shipping Co. United Baltic Univera Tankship (Del) Inc. United States Lines, Inc.



West Wide (Shipping), Ltd. Yangming Marine Transport Corp. Y.S. Line Zapata Tankships, Inc. Zim Container Service Zim Israel Navigation Co. Ltd.

# Join the Party



- SL7expo started small but is growing.
- We are in discussions with a large group of people at high levels
- Provide a letter of support
- Follows us on LinkedIn [www.linkedin.com/company/sl7expo/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/sl7expo/)
- Become a member (\$100 per year, founding member \$1000 per year) <https://sl7expo.org/members/>
- Contact me; [rhemmen@martinottaway.com](mailto:rhemmen@martinottaway.com) if you think you can help or have questions.