

NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

VESSEL: *Cape Bover* / ex-*Frederick Lykes*



Figure 1: *Cape Bover* assisted by a tug circa 1990.

Vessel History

The break-bulk cargo vessel *Frederick Lykes* was built at Avondale Shipyards near Westwego, Louisiana for Lykes Brothers Steamship Company in 1965. After serving Lykes Brothers in the commercial trade for nearly two decades, the U.S. government acquired the vessel and renamed it *Cape Bover* (AK-5057). It was assigned to the Maritime Administration's (MARAD) Ready Reserve Force (RRF)¹ in 1985. The RRF is a subset of the National Defense Reserve Fleet.

Cape Bover is one in a group of twelve general cargo/break-bulk vessels classified as C4-S-66a type by MARAD. The other eleven vessels include the following: *Louise Lykes*; *Elizabeth Lykes*; *Ruth Lykes*; *Letitia Lykes*; *Genevieve Lykes*; *Mallory Lykes*; *Mason Lykes*; *Stella Lykes*; *Dolly Turman*; *Howell Lykes*; and *Velma Lykes*. The ships were constructed for Lykes Brothers between 1965 and 1968. Collectively the ships were known as the *Louise Lykes* class.

¹ The Ready Reserve Fleet later became known as the Ready Reserve Force.

After World War II, Lykes concentrated on bulk shipments of cotton and other commodities in their B-2 line (known as the Continent Line), which served the Gulf of Mexico, the West Indies, England, Denmark, and Portugal. Due to the steady demand for bulk shipments, Lykes contracted for the construction of the *Louise Lykes* class of ships. After decades of service, eight of the twelve vessels were acquired by the U.S. government. *Mason Lykes*, *Frederick Lykes*, *Howell Lykes*, and *Velma Lykes* were renamed *Cape Blanco*, *Cape Bover*, *Cape Borda* and *Cape Bon* respectively and placed into the RRF. MARAD assigned *Cape Bon* to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy² as that school's training ship where it was renamed *Enterprise*. *Louise Lykes*, *Elizabeth Lykes*, and *Ruth Lykes* were transferred to MARAD and were subsequently scrapped.



Figure 2: Lykes Line Cargoliner SS Frederick Lykes at anchor, date and location unknown.

Maritime Administration

MARAD acquired *Frederick Lykes* on April 1, 1985. It was renamed *Cape Bover* and assigned to National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF) anchorage at Suisun Bay as part of the RRF. The RRF, a subset of MARAD's NDRF, was established under Section XI of the Merchant Ship Sales Act of 1946 to serve as a reserve of ships for national defense

² MARAD operates the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York, and provides and maintains training ships and funding for the six state maritime academies that include: the State University of New York (SUNY) Maritime College; Massachusetts Maritime Academy; California Maritime Academy; Maine Maritime Academy; Texas Maritime Academy; and the Great Lakes Maritime Academy.

and national emergencies. An RRF component was established in 1976 as a subset of the NDRF, comprised of vessels that capable of activation on short notice to provide rapid deployment of military equipment during an emergency. When activated, the ships are transferred from MARAD to the Navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC).

In 1990, the RRF consisted of 96 ships, 79 of which were activated to support Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, the U.S.-led coalition's response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. This was the first large-scale activation and employment of the RRF since it was established in 1976. In December 1990, MSC activated *Cape Bover* and it supported cargo operations until March 1992.

More than 75% of the RRF provided sealift to support the U.S. efforts in the Persian Gulf between from 1990-1991. The ships transported 750,000 short tons of dry cargo, which was one-fifth of the total dry cargo sealifted during the conflict. Ro-Ro vessels proved to be the most effective vessels and they delivered nearly 20% of Central Command's material and other support during the first phase of the operation.

MARAD maintained *Cape Bover* in a reduced operating status (partially crewed) in Benicia, California, after which it was laid-up in the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet. The ship was downgraded from retention status to non-retention status in 2003. *Cape Bover* is currently located at MARAD's Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet in Benicia, California where it serves a source of spare equipment of the U.S. Training Ship *Kennedy* at Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

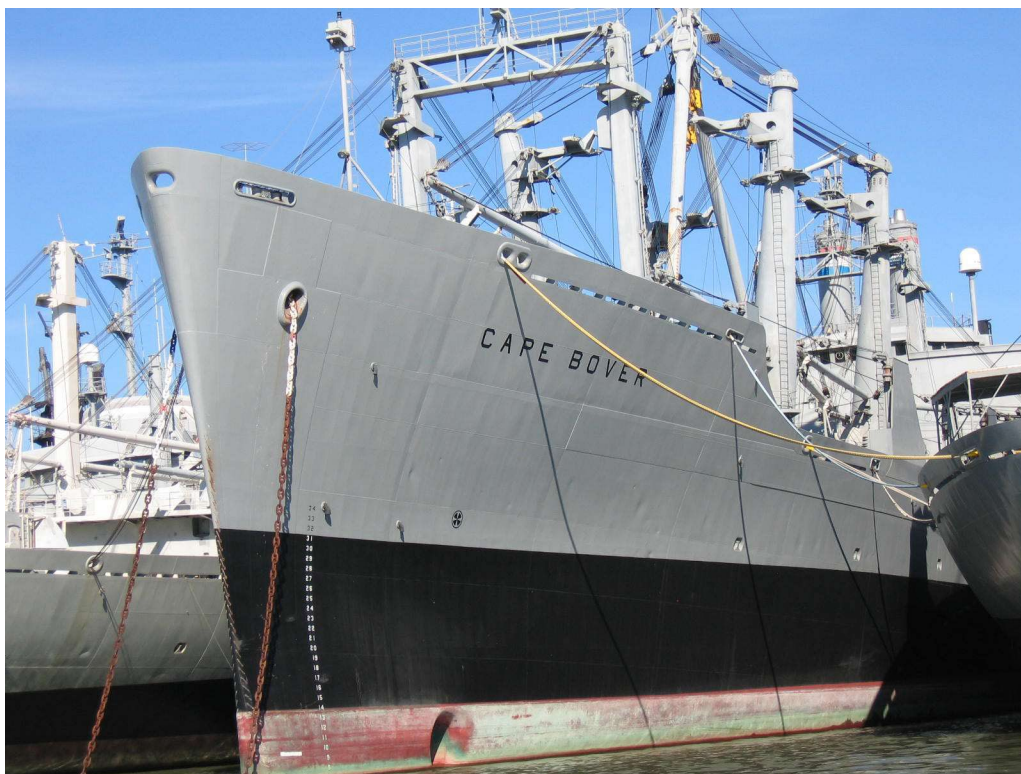


Figure 3: *Cape Bover* at the National Defense Reserve Fleet in Suisun Bay, California.

Description/Characteristics of Vessel Type

Type: C4-S-66A (Cape "B" Class)

Official Number: 506812

Previous name: *Frederick Lykes*

Builder: Avondale Shipyards, Avondale, Louisiana

Year: 1967

Location: Suisan Bay Reserve Fleet

Length B.P.: 540'

Beam Moulded: 76'

Depth: 42'-6"

Draft, scantling: 33'

Displacement, loaded: 21,840 LT

Deadweight: 13,808 LT

Gross Tonnage: 10,950 Measurement Tons

Net Tonnage: 6,320 Measurement Tons

Cargo Capacity: 54,033 Square Feet

Speed: 20 knots

Main Engine: DeLaval Geared Turbine

Shaft Horsepower: 15,500 SHP

Ship Service Generators: Two at 750KW

Boilers: Two Water Tube Foster-Wheeler

The 12 C4-S-66a vessels built for Lykes Brothers Steamship Company were characterized as “Mini-*Mariners*.” However, the term referred mainly to the vessels’ dimensions, capacity, and speed. This class of ships had many characteristics that were improvements upon or were never featured on the *Mariners*.

The *Mariner* class (C4-S-1a) was the U.S. government’s first and only effort to build standardized cargo ships for the country’s merchant marine after World War II. The basic plans were prepared by MARAD and the shipbuilding division of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. *Mariners* were faster and more modern than previous U.S. cargo vessels but did not represent any major advances in cargo ship design. They had the standard profile with a unified superstructure aft of amidships containing the navigating bridge, upper machinery spaces, and quarters for a crew of 58 and 12 passengers. There were four hatches forward of the superstructure and three aft, all served by the standard gear of kingposts, booms and winches. They were 563.5 feet in length overall with a beam of 76 feet and a depth of hold of 44.5 feet. *Mariners* were powered by high-pressure cross-compound steam turbines providing 17,500 horsepower for an operating speed of 20 knots.

The C4-S-66a design differs from the *Mariner* design in that the ships are shorter in length, with equivalent beam but two-feet less draft. Consequently, the ship carried less cargo and weighed less than the *Mariner*. Six cargo holds are arranged with four forward and two aft of the deck house. The class has upper and lower tween decks that were built without sheer to make access to cargo stowage in those spaces simple. *Mariners* had

sheer in the upper tween (or second) deck but were flat on the lower tween (or third) deck. The hatch covers on the Cape Bs were hydraulically and remotely operated. The Cape Bs each has an 80-ton Stulcken heavy-lift boom that served Holds 2 and 3. Like the *Mariner*, the 66a used mast booms; however, while it has the same number forward as the *Mariner*, it has one less aft due to its cargo hatch configuration. As on the *Mariner*, there are mast booms attached to the fore and aft of the deck house.

Similar to that of ships built in the days prior to the development of today's higher performance coatings, the steel surfaces above the main deck are coated with inorganic zinc silicate without a conventional topcoat (white in the case of Lykes Brothers vessels) in order to reduce maintenance costs.

Cape Bover is propelled by a geared steam turbine driving a single propeller. The main propulsion machinery could deliver a maximum of 15,500 shaft hp but was designed to operate at optimum efficiency of 12,500 shaft hp. Steam is generated by two oil-fired, two-drum, bent-tube, marine-type boilers with double cavity, walk-in superheaters. The ships have two turbine driven auxiliary generators and an emergency diesel generator, which was also used for automatic or manual hydraulic starting.

Passenger accommodations on the Cape Bs were limited to four persons who were housed in 2 two-person rooms. This made economic sense in the twilight of passenger travel on cargo ships in that it may have been possible to reduce the manning of the steward's department by one or two people.

One of the features that made the Cape B class unusual, if not unique, included the wheelhouse. Although vessels of many types had wheelhouses that were focused entirely upon the forward movement of the vessel with a clear view dead ahead, the wheelhouse of the Cape Bs was essentially pentagonal in shape, with the port and starboard sides consisting of two planes that met at apex on nearly halfway to the bridge wing. This allowed the watch officer and others to have some vision outboard and aft without

leaving the wheelhouse — seemingly not a great advantage, but it was a step toward 360° vision from the wheelhouse.

After Lykes contracted for the twelve C4-S-66a vessels, just twenty additional break-bulk cargo vessels were ordered under MARAD's CDS/ODS programs.³ The last vessel, *American Mail*, was delivered in October 1969. Container ships quickly eclipsed the break-bulk cargo ship and rendered it obsolete.

Historical Integrity

Cape Bover has been used as a source for equipment for the TS *Kennedy* and has also experienced normal wear and aging for a vessel of its age. The ship did not undergo any substantial modifications during its service life and has retained much of its original form and its overall historical integrity.

Statement of Significance

Cape Bover is a good example of the final evolutionary development of the break-bulk general cargo ship in the age just before the containerization revolution. It is an equally good representative of the domestic *Mariner* design, which dominated the U.S. foreign trade in the latter half of the 1950s and through the mid-1960s. It was activated for service during Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, where it, along with 79 others, provided war materiel in support of U.S. and coalition forces.

National Register Eligibility Statement

Cape Bover is over 50-years-old, but it does not possess the extraordinary historical significance necessary under Criteria Consideration G or in any category necessary to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It remains a typical break-bulk ship, similar in size, construction, machinery, propulsion, cargo capacity and other

³ Subsidy programs under the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, as amended, included Construction Differential Subsidy (CDS) and Operating Differential Subsidy (ODS). Another form of financing included Federal Ship Financing Guarantees, more commonly known as "Title XI" loan guarantees.

features to many of the 100 or so other break-bulk vessels constructed domestically in the 1960s. While it did participate in DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, it was one of 79 RRF vessels activated by the Navy to support those operations and its role was not significant enough to qualify under Criteria A, particularly considering the recent nature of those operations.

Date: 9/27/24

Determination: NOT ELIGIBLE

Sources

“SS Cape Bover (AK-5057),” Navsource, accessed on 22 June 2023,
<http://www.navsource.org/archives/09/13/135057.htm>.

The Evaluation of Selected Obsolete Break-Bulk Cargo Vessels in the Maritime Administration Reserve Fleets. Prime, Inc., T/A Marine Innovations, Designs and Solutions, Inc., September 2007.

Texas State Historical Association.

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