

NEW York City has ordered three new ferries from Manitowoc Marine Group in a deal that will be worth around \$120m to the ambitious Wisconsin company, writes John McLaughlin.

Manitowoc said the new Kennedy-class ferries, which will be used on the heavily used commuter and tourist route between Staten Island and Manhattan, would be 310 ft long, 70 ft wide and capable of carrying 4,400 passengers and 30 vehicles.

The work will take place

over the next 30 months with the first vessel due for delivery in the autumn of 2003. The ferries will be built at Marinette Marine, which Manitowoc acquired for \$48m in cash last November.

Company president Tom Byrne said the new contract marked a further step in extending "the reach of our shipyards beyond their traditional Great Lakes markets".

He also viewed it as a vindication of the company's purchase of Marinette and

the improved opportunities for growth it provided. Manitowoc has been growing steadily through acquisition.

A measure of its ambition is its participation in one of the three consortia bidding for the US Coast Guard's multi-billion-dollar Integrated Deepwater System project, which will see the entire Coast Guard fleet replaced over coming decades.

Bids for the project were submitted on September 28 and the winner is expected to be announced next spring.

In addition, Manitowoc said this week that it had tied up a \$4.8m deal to build a dump scow for Great Lakes Dredge & Dock.

The 7,100 cu yd capacity, split-hull scow will be built at the company's Bay Shipbuilding facility at Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, with delivery scheduled for next August.

The scow will be the 50th vessel built by Manitowoc for Great Lakes Dredge & Dock in a relationship dating from 1906.

riers are preparing to remove ships over the Christmas and New Year period when cargo liftings are traditionally slack.

The Trans-Atlantic Conference Agreement expects to file a proposal with the Federal Maritime Commission and notify Brussels within the coming fortnight.

The seven-member group, whose market share is now less than half the total trade, plans to repeat the vessel withdrawal programme of last winter.

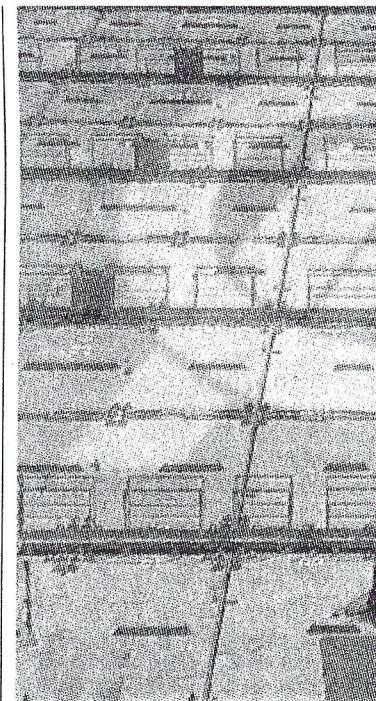
The idea is to remove two ships a week for a five or six week period, beginning just before Christmas, according to Taca manager David Jeffries.

Taca's previous vessel withdrawal programme was recently held by FMC chairman Harold Creel as a good example of how to cut tonnage supply without disrupting cargo flow or upsetting customers.

The group has promised that no cargo will be left behind for lack of space.

Ship utilisation usually falls to little more than 50% from mid-December to end-January, and carriers want to take advantage of a slow market to carry out ship maintenance and drydocking.

Taca members are Maersk Sealand, P&O Nedlloyd, Hapag Lloyd, Orient Overseas Container Line, NYK Line, Mediterranean Shipping Co, and Atlantic Container Line.



German cruise operators upbeat

By Birgit Strietzel in Cologne

GERMAN cruise operators have refused to be spooked by US war on terrorism.

Tomorrow, the 18,591 gt vessel *Arkona*, operated by German cruise operator Seetours, will go head for a voyage into the eastern Mediterranean Sea. She will call at Port Said in Egypt and at Ashdod in Israel, before going back towards Italy. The vessel is at the moment cruising off the coast of Greece.

"We will keep our schedule as long as the ports are not classified as endangered," said a Seetours spokeswoman.

The company already has an alternative route prepared, a so-called "plan B".

The alternative ports, however, were also situated in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, the spokeswoman said.

Seetours also operates the 38,531 gt vessel *Aida* in the western Mediterranean. She will head for the Caribbean in November, as will the *Arkona*.

"There have been only 70 cancellations," said the spokeswoman. These could, however, not clearly be classified as fears to travel into the eastern Mediterranean Sea, she said. "Most of those cancelling seemed to be afraid of flying in general." Other customers seemed to have used the existing situation as an excuse.

Operator Hapag Lloyd said it felt

some reluctance from customers in cruise bookings. "Though the situation is far from being dramatic," said spokeswoman Antje Borstel. The company had not yet taken any decisions to change the itineraries. "That remains to be seen," Mrs Borstel said.

Immediately after the terror attacks on New York, Hapag Lloyd had to cancel a voyage of its vessel *Columbus*, which was scheduled to start from the city on September 12. Later, the vessel began her voyage from Philadelphia, to where the tourists were transferred by busses.

Also, passengers boarding the 28,600 gt vessel *Europe* were transferred to Philadelphia.

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