ESSO FLEET NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE MARINE DIVISION, HUMBLE OIL & REFINING COMPANY

Vol. 6, No. 15 July 23, 1964



A Seaman's Life

By Werner Zoepf

Werner Zoepf left the Esso Gettysburg May 30 for paid leave and retirement (July 1) after 12 years with the Company as AB. He has had an eventful career, experiencing triumphs, calamities and the powerful tides of world affairs. Throughout he has had the courage and fortitude expressed in William Ernest Henley's stirring lines —

"It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul."

We hope you will find Mr. Zoepf's story, which he wrote "from the heart" as inspiring as we did. (Ed.)

July 1, 1964 was a turning point in my life. My thoughts reflect upon nearly 50 years at sea — starting as a young cadet in a German schoolship on April 13, 1916, reaching a climax as chief mate in the famous passenger liner *Bremen* in July 1936 and completing my seagoing career as AB with the Esso Fleet. But let me start from the beginning.

The German training on a schoolship was really hard going. We saw the world, climbed masts, repaired wind-torn sails and got big receptions in faraway countries. After 2 years in the schoolship *Prinzess Eitel Friedrich* and 2 more years as AB, mostly in sailing ships, I went to navigation school and got my chief mate's license in 1921. One fine day in Nov. 1925 I had my German Master's license and after a long line of freighters and passenger liners, I was assigned as chief mate in the *Bremen* in Aug. 1936. It was a tremendous feeling to be in this famous ship and the darkest day of my life was March 16, 1941 when she was aflame in Bremerhaven — sabotaged and a total loss.

Afterward I served as a lieutenant and lt.-commander in the German "Kriegsmarine" and saw the world again from a twisted angle. Among various war fronts, I was in the seatransport for Gen. Rommel's Africacorps.

The year 1945 found Germany and her ships a littered debris. One could walk miles and miles through Bremen seeing nothing but ruins. My company, North German Lloyd, had just a few river boats and tugs left. Shipwrecks blocked the rivers and ship basins. The U. S. Navy entrusted the job of salvaging the wrecks to many German Masters and mates who, all of a sudden, had no employment. I was one of these men — Captain on a 100-ton floating crane.

Watching the diplomatic maneuvers between East and West closely, especially the Berlin Blockade, we found that the U.S.A. would be the only country where one, marked by 2 world wars, could look for refuge. After all, I had twice lost all my possessions — my home, furniture, savings and objects of sentimental value. Who wanted to lose a third time?

For the sake of our son (he is now at M.I.T.. on a Teagle Scholarship), we immigrated to the United States in Nov. 1949. Even though my wife's brother, a professor at U.C.L.A., had sent affidavits, it took a year to get the papers processed.

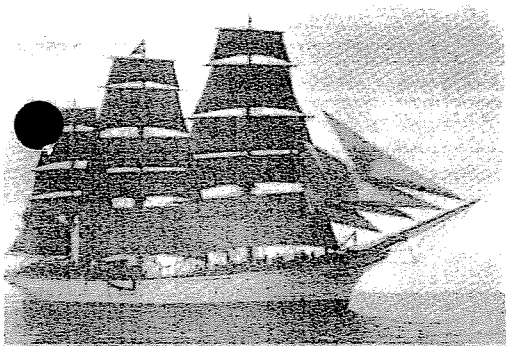
It was with mixed feelings that I stood again on the streets of New York. We were immigrants, with thousands of others, and we had it especially tough as we had responsibility for a 4-year old son and all we owned was $50. In spite of being in my 50s, I can state that I have hardly been unemployed one day since coming to America. Neither has my wife. She began as a maid in a New York hotel, got an American Master's degree and has been a high school teacher for 8 years. But that is another story.

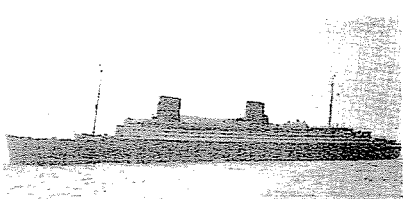
At first I was a houseman, painter, cabin-renter, caretaker, private chauffeur, etc., all the way from New York to "Dixieland". Then came Jan. 13, 1952 (I'm glad I'm not superstitious) when I found my way back to the sea — in this case, coastwise waters — with Esso. It was the first time I had served in a tanker. Well, I made it and, looking back over my years in the Esso Fleet, I treasure many memories. And I shall not forget that our son is a protege of the Teagle Foundation.

Let me now point out a few of the highlights of my seafaring life. As second and first mate in the schoolship *Grossherzogin Elisabeth* (1927-32), it was most challenging to train young high school graduates to become officers of the North German Lloyd. Unfortunately, many of the best were on the casualty lists of World War II.

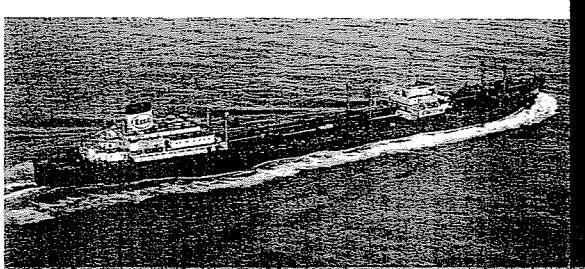
During my service in the *Bremen* I had the pleasure of meeting many of the notables of the world. I spent most interesting afternoons with them during the 5 o'clock teas. Conversations with these famous men and women are engraved in my memory.

It was a tremendous difference to start over as an AB in Jan. 1952 in the *Esso Montpelier*. However, I must truthfully state that my years with the Company were a worthwhile experience. I met many





Three important ships in Mr. Zoepf's career — his schoolship, the *Princess Eitel Friedrich;* the *Bremen,* in which he was chief mate, and the *Esso Gettysburg,* his last.



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fine men in the offices and at sea. Perhaps it is the infiniteness of sky and sea which molds men.

My wife and I have always worked shoulder to shoulder and now that she has a teaching position with the Armed Forces in Europe, we have booked passage on the new *Bremen* this June. It will be strange to meet old friends from North German Lloyd — as a passenger this time and as an American citizen. We are proud to be American citizens and will never give up this precious gift. It can't be denied that the United States is the one and only country which gives freedom of opportunity, i.e., if one is willing to work.

Lastly, let me talk about my hobbies — the Jaguar I am going to get at the factory in England, driving very fast, meeting people and learning many languages. Retirement does not mean to rest but to employ leisure purposefully. Time is the most precious commodity and man is not here to vegetate but to absorb new impressions and gain new experiences. This is a never ending process and this is what makes retirement a new challenge.

Turnarounds at Baytown Show Continued Improvement

Last April we reported on the improved turnarounds made by our vessels at Baytown during the first 3 months of this year, compared with the same period in 1963. Now we can do the same for the first half of this year.

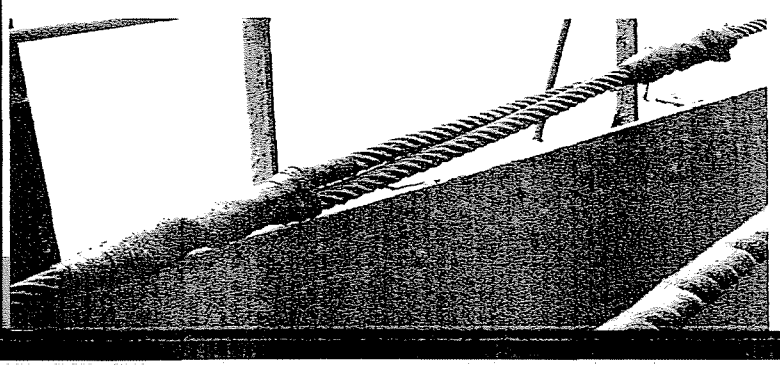
In all, there were 107 Company vessel loadings (full cargoes) at Baytown during the first 6 months of 1964. Of these loadings, 91 were in 28,000-ton vessels which averaged 3.23 hrs. shorter turnarounds than in the first half of 1963. The 38,000-tonners and one 48,000-ton ship lifted 16 cargoes in an average turnaround time of 5.42 hrs. less than in 1963.

The total ships' time saved during the 6-month period was 380.65 hrs, or 15.86 fewer days spent at the Baytown docks — a really tremendous improvement. It means that not only were the ships moving that much more — equal to about 1½ round trips, Baytown to the East Coast — but it means that the docks had that much more time for bunkering or other business.

Here are some of the best turnarounds made during the first 6 months.

	Total Cargo (bbls.)	No. of Grades	Loading Time (hrs-min)	Bbls/hr.	Turn-around (hrs-min)
Esso Dallas	197,735	3	8:05	24,472	15:55
Esso Jacksonville	222,641	8	10:25	21,367	16:15
Esso Lima	223,051	8	10:05	22,300	14:25
Esso Miami	195,287	2	8:30	22,975	14:00
Esso Jamestown	258,440	5	10:40	24,221	17:20
Esso Washington	282,081	10	10:35	26,662	15:20
Esso Boston	333,925	5	12:50	27,586	17:20

A double spliced, served and Rust-Ban coated mooring wire on the *Esso New York* — the work of AB Erich Huck and OS Reidar Bohnhorst. A strand of the wire had broken under a sudden strain early this month, due to a surge of the vessel. The splices saved about 100′ of wire from being discarded, or a more expensive splicing job ashore.



It is rather surprising to note how a little time saved on a single turnaround adds up to something big when it is repeated. The 3.23-hr. average saving of the 28,000-ton ships, when multiplied by the 91 loadings Jan. 1 - June 30, makes a total saving of 293.93 hrs. — equal to at least $65,000 worth of ships' time.

It is also somewhat surprising how the 1964 time savings have been accomplished. The Refinery's improved facilities — new pumps, improved loading systems and a very modern control center — have played a part, but the biggest influence has been the desire and interest of ship and shore personnel to work separately and together toward the same goal. For example, the Master, mates and others aboard ship are concerned with handling ballast, removing all water from tanks, loading and discharge sequences, shipboard lines, cargo compatibility, trim and stress, etc. Refinery personnel are concerned with having required products available, loading without conflicts between 2 or more ships (and pipelines) and loading with minimum line displacements. It has been the direct contacts between ships' Masters and mates and the Refinery's Dock Dept. personnel, with assistance from the Marine Division's Port Staff and Baytown Branch Office, that these many turnaround factors have been coordinated for better efficiency. It's like a lifeboat crew — each man pulls but they go faster when they pull together.

Stock Pool Purchases

Over 39,000 shares of Standard Oil Company (N. J.) stock have been credited to the Thrift Fund accounts of 10,296 Humble employees who participated in the pooled purchase of Company stock during the April-June quarter. Shares of stock have been credited at an average cost of $85.93. Total purchases amounted to $3,363,901.71.

ESSO FLEET NEWS is published for the seagoing employees of the Marine Division, Humble Oil & Refining Co.: Joseph Andreae, General Manager; Sydney Wire, Assistant General Manager.

W. E. Gardner, Editor.

Contributions and suggestions are invited and should be addressed to The Editor, ESSO FLEET NEWS, Humble Oil & Refining Co., P. O. Box 1512, Houston 1, Texas

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Transportation Change at Baton Rouge

The Baton Rouge Refinery will soon discontinue jitney service between the main gate and various areas of the refinery, including the docks. After discussion with Union representatives, arrangements are being made with local taxicab companies to provide free transportation for Humble's seagoing employees between the main gate and the docks. Employees will need their identification cards for imprinting on the cab companies' vouchers to obtain the free rides.

Hints for Would-be 3rd Asst. Engineers

A Fireman-Watertender wrote recently asking for information about schools he might attend to prepare for the U. S. Coast Guard's examination for a Third Asst's license. Thinking that perhaps others may be interested in this and related information, we give you the following results of our research.

MARINE ENGINEERING SCHOOLS

Captain Van's Deck & Engine License Upgrade Schools, 1521 Proctor St., Port Arthur, Texas, P. O. Box 66 ..... YU 2-2911
Armstrong School of Marine Engineering Godchaux Blvd., New Orleans, La..... 523-7450
Strauss Marine School 61 Whitehall St., New York, N. Y. .... WH 4-0742
Paul School of Marine Engineering 65 Long Wharf, Boston 10, Mass. .... RI 2-2084

We do not wish to imply that we especially recommend these schools or that there are not others. These are just the ones we are aware of. Antonio DePalma, Clement DeGrood and Phil Gaither went to Captain Van's school (tuition $150) and Antonio Rose studied at the Paul School (tuition $200). All 4 men are former Firemen and Oilers who have obtained Third Asst's licenses during the past 3 months. They have also received Educational Refunds from the Company amounting to 2/3rds the tuition cost.

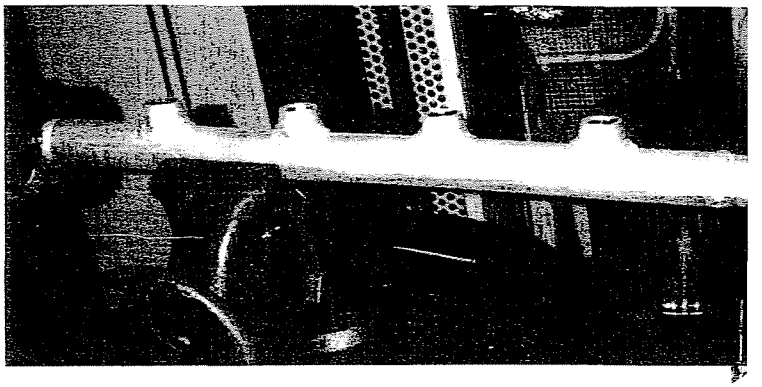
Some helpful hints to aspiring engineer officers were offered by Mr. DePalma, who is now Third Asst. in the *Esso Boston*.

"Don't take your family with you to Port Arthur," Mr. DePalma advised. "You can concentrate better without them during the 4 to 5 weeks usually required for the course.

"It is best to have someone to study with. It's more difficult to go through alone.

"You get some diesel and reciprocating engine questions on the exam and it does no good to tell the Coast Guard officer that we don't have any up-and-downers in our fleet.

"A good place to stay is Mrs. Palmers, 1532 5th St., Port Arthur. She is very nice, like a mother, encourages you. She charges $8 per week for a room with kitchen privileges."



A new heater coil steam manifold for the *Esso Bangor* is shown on the drill press after being fabricated by Third Asst. James E. Fowler, using the ship's welding equipment. "An excellent job," according to Chief Engineer Clyde C. O'Neal, to whom we are indebted for the photo.

HELPFUL BOOKS

Mr. DePalma also recommended the following technical books as being helpful in preparing for a license examination:

RED BOOK OF MARINE ENGINEERING, by W. B. Paterson (Cornell Maritime Press) $5.00
PRACTICAL MARINE ENGINEERING, by Reno C. King, Jr. (Prentice-Hall, Inc.) $9.75.

These books (and others) are available at the Brown Book Shop, 1013 Fannin St., Houston, Texas 77002.

"The Navy also has some good training books," Mr. DePalma said, "which may be obtained from the U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C."

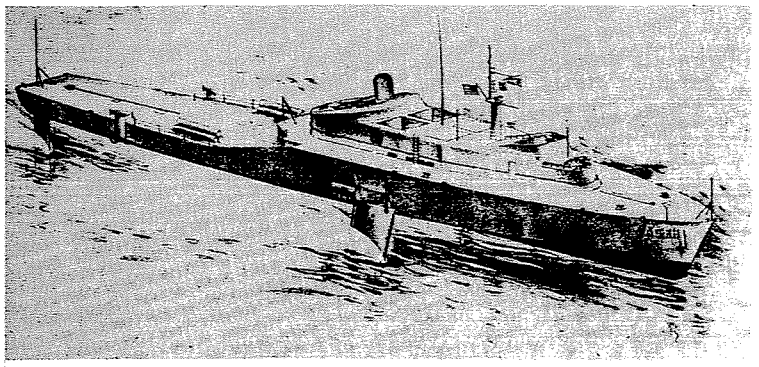
Hospital-Medical Booklets Coming

A booklet describing the Hospital-Surgical-Medical and Major Medical Expense programs is being distributed to seagoing employees and eligible annuitants. Annuitants who retired on or after Jan. 1, 1963 were eligible to carry their Hospital-Surgical-Medical coverage into retirement and, effective July 1, 1963, could have the Major Medical protection.

Copies of the Health Service certificates on the H-S-M program have been distributed to members and a certificate on the Major Medical coverage, not yet available, is to be sent later to participants.

5 Ships Get Weather Bureau Certificates

The U. S. Weather Bureau, Washington, D. C., has issued "Recognition of Special Service" certificates to the *Esso Baltimore*, *Bangor*, *Jamestown*, *Lexington* and *New York*. In a letter to the Master of each vessel, G. L. Canaday, Marine Supervisor of the Weather Bureau at New Orleans, said that the certificates were presented for recording special weather observations during the 1963 hurricane



Drawing of a 220' 5" x 40', 300-ton hydrofoil research ship which is scheduled to be delivered to the U. S. Navy this fall by the Puget Sound Bridge & Dry Dock Co., Seattle. The $12 million craft is twice the length and 3 times the displacement of the Maritime Administration's hydrofoil ship *Denison*.

Designated the AG(EH), the research vessel is being built entirely of aluminum except for the steel struts and foils. Power for propulsion in the water will be by 2 600-hp. diesels and by 2 14,000-hp. gas turbines when foil-borne. No estimate of her speed has been given.

season and transmitting this information by radio. All the certificates mention special weather reports made last October.

TAFFRAIL TALK

Third Mate Paul E. Genest has accepted an assignment to the *Esso Scranton* to assist with a series of Mediterranean cargoes the ship is to discharge at Bizerte, Tunisia. The *Scranton* arrived at Bizerte from Ras Tanura on July 18 and will load 12 cargoes (more or less) at Sidon, Lebanon and Marsa al Brega, Libya, the last one scheduled for mid-October. It is about a 6-day round trip between Brega and Bizerte and 10 days between Sidon and Bizerte.

* * *

Chief Engineer Joseph L. Kellahan, who has been the regular Chief in the *Esso Jacksonville* for the past year, is recuperating after surgery in Bayonne Hospital, according to a note from Mrs. Kellahan.

* * *

We have a "Hello Gang", written on a circular for "The Boulders", from Edward A. (Champ) Snyder (Chief Engr., ret. May 1, 1955). "The Boulders" is a plush summer resort — main house, cabins, land and water recreation facilities — "right on the shores of beautiful Lake George, N. Y." Mr. Snyder has owned the place for many years.

* * *

Theron A. Guire joined the *Esso Newark* as Third Mate, July 15, after paid leave and a few weeks' sick leave. It seems that Mr. Guire was laid low at his Freeport, N. Y. home by a "pulling sensation in my back", experienced while digging up a dead shrub under the supervision of his "Chief Mate", Gladys Guire. Mr. G's back strain was caused, he said, "by what turning hundreds of valves over 14½ years has not". It also inspired him to poetry, to wit:

It's better to let sleeping plants lie,
Even if they are about to die.
Just let them blow away
And save your back for another day.

At considerable personal risk we offer a second, though less poetic, suggestion — leave standing orders with the "Chief Mate" to water, spray and fertilize the plants so they don't die.

* * *

When you read this, the chances are that ye FLEET NEWS Ed. will be painting the house, hacking up a golf course or making an annual pilgrimage to one of the Original 13 Colonies. What we are saying is that we're on vacation and the next issue of this periodical will be dated Aug. 20. Till then, smooth sailing to y'all — and keep the news coming.

* * *

Thought for the day in the ESSO LIMA LEDGER — "Anger is an acid that does more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured."

SERVICE EMBLEM AWARDS

★ 20 YEARS ★



Walter Brelsford
Second Mate
April 9, 1963



Lawrence J. Filliaux
Second Mate
July 11, 1963



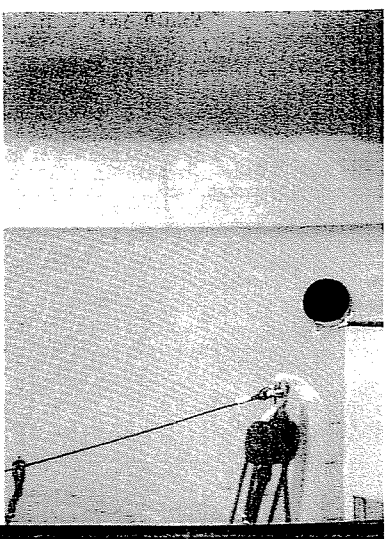
Stephen Shelby
Fireman-Watertender
July 18, 1962

☆ 10 YEARS ☆

John F. Shayner
Utilityman
June 6, 1964

Fred G. Stevens
Ordinary Seaman
June 11, 1964

Harry H. Toney
Ordinary Seaman
March 29, 1964



A waterspout in the Gulf of Mexico (27° 4' N.; 90° 2' W.), photographed by Edwin J. Fellows, Second Mate in the *Esso Lima* on June 12. The waterspout was 145 ft. in diameter, 1,200 ft. high and 3 miles from the ship. It lasted for about 10 minutes and was followed by a second spout, somewhat larger and higher.

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