

The

# Navigator

Ports Authority of the Turks and Caicos Islands Newsletter



September 2021





**EDITORIAL** by Paula Stewart



We are delighted, once again, to bring you another issue of the Navigator as we continue the focus on the important role seafarers

contribute to making our daily lives comfortable.

It is World Maritime Day again, (last Thursday in September) and we celebrate under the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) theme “*Seafarers: at the core of shipping’s future*”. We share with you messages from the IMO Secretary-General and our very own Minister of Immigration and Border Services.

In our efforts to show appreciation, the Ports Authority delivered over 50 care bags to seafarers who regularly visit our shores, bringing our food and medical supplies, and dry goods. Photos of this occasion are inserted in the article “*10 Reasons You Must Thank Seafarers*”.

To this end, we will pay tribute to our local seafarers of the past as we chronicle their voyages across the globe to seek work and to provide for their families who they left at home depending on them for their survival.

Isn’t it funny how we take things for granted, especially when it comes to shipping? In one of my featured stories, based in South Africa, a synopsis is given of the global supply chain calamity and show how heavily dependent we are on it. With consumer demand and labour shortages up and the inability to efficiently move containers, we are now experiencing empty shelves at grocery stores across the US with little relief in sight.

In our daily lives here in the Turks & Caicos, we use a myriad of products that are not manufactured here. If you were to look at the labels on the products that we use, you will see on the tags, manufactured in China, India, USA, Taiwan, Mexico or Japan. Seldom do you see a label on any product that states manufactured in the Caribbean, save for perhaps, Jamaica or the Dominican Republic. It is only on the very rare occasion you will see a package labeled manufactured in the Turks & Caicos Islands and it would often relate to lobster, fish or conch.

However, when consuming many of these internationally manufactured products, it hardly ever crosses our minds to consider how these products got to us, perhaps until very recently. The reality of how these products make it here has been brought into stark focus as a result of the shipping bottleneck currently resulting from the pent up demand which is now clogging up shipping lanes from Asia to the USA.

In fact, we cannot escape what is going on because whenever we turn on any news network channel, you see the congregation of ships in the Pacific Ocean waiting to off load their cargo at the ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach. These ships are spending more time waiting in port than the journey it takes to come from China or Japan to the USA. We in the Turks & Caicos rely on the seamless transfers and consolidations of cargo to get our goods from the United States

here. But not only that, you will glean from this issue of the Navigator, that given our countrymen’s journey, it was possible and perhaps still is that some of our own seafarers could have been on one or two of these ships.

This brings me to the topic of this issue and the subsequent issues of the Navigator as we reflect on the critical decisions that some of our young men had to make in deciding whether to venture out to sea or suffer the indignity of being without work at home after the salt industry closed. In this particular issue, we have concentrated our attention on the paths that some of the young men of Salt Cay took to find work and provide for their families. In the next issues, we will bring you accounts from the men of Grand Turk & South Caicos.

I have found their accounts to be very intriguing, each one bringing a different perspective but all reflecting on how difficult it was to earn an income in their own country at the time being the main reason for them going to sea. I hope that you will likewise find their life’s journey to be equally captivating and perhaps enlightening as they reflect on their lives as seafarers from this small country we call our home, the Turks & Caicos Islands.

I invite you to join me now as we immerse ourselves in the voyages of Raymond Maxwell Simmons, Leslie Williams and Edgar Stanley Jennings as they braved the high seas making the transformation from boys to grown-up men virtually overnight.~

**September 2021**

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# World Maritime Day 2021 Message

By IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim



Ladies and gentlemen, As we begin a new year, the COVID-19 pandemic still holds sway, with many countries subject to lockdowns and travel restrictions.

We need more Governments to step up. Key worker designation is crucial to ensure prioritization for vaccination. Once again, I strongly urge Governments to designate seafarers as key workers.

With the development of vaccines, there is a need for further cooperation and concerted efforts to facilitate the vaccination of seafarers. IMO stands ready to work with all stakeholders on these emerging issues.

However, this year, we want to shine a light on the significance of the human element to the safety of life on board ships and the importance of ensuring an appropriately trained and qualified future workforce, ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of digitalization and automation. We will also place a special focus on seafarers' well-being, an area highlighted by the plight of seafarers during the COVID-pandemic.

The development of various vaccines offers the first gleams of hope, although for many seafarers, the situation is still desperate. Hundreds of thousands cannot leave ships; whilst many others cannot join. Abandonment of seafarers reached record levels in 2020. This humanitarian crisis threatens global trade and safe navigation.

But seafarers have not only been impacted by the pandemic, their lives have also been put at risk in other ways – one major issue being piracy incidents, costing lives and traumatizing many more who have been held hostage or are still in the hands of their attackers.

All these important topics need global attention. We will be hosting many events supporting the theme. Our goal to highlight seafarers as the heart of shipping throughout the year and beyond. We will unveil our programme of events soon.

We all must do better to support our brave professionals who continue to deliver global trade. The dedication and professionalism of more than one and a half million seafarers worldwide deserve our great admiration and gratitude – but most importantly, immediate action.

We need to do more and IMO has decided to make 2021 a year of action for our seafarers.

We have a challenging year ahead.

A first step would be for all countries to designate seafarers as key workers, as outlined in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution adopted in December. To date, just over 50 IMO Member States have done so.

This year's World Maritime Theme – “Seafarers: at the core of shipping's future” – is dedicated to the seafarers who have shown tremendous fortitude and determination in continuing to deliver global trade throughout this global crisis.

Let us focus on finding solutions and preparing for the post-COVID world – a world in which sustainable shipping will play a crucial role. I look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders to enhance the resilience and green credentials of shipping; and to putting seafarers first and foremost. Let us all join in supporting our World Maritime Theme – “Seafarers: at the core of shipping's future”. Thank you.~

At IMO, seafarers have always been at the centre of all our work - be it in the area of safety, maritime security, or environmental protection.



## Message from Hon Arlington Musgrove Minister for Immigration and Border Services



Today, I join with the Ports Authority and the global maritime community to observe World Maritime Day under the theme- “IMO

Many of us can reflect on times when our fathers traversed the seas near and far to support the livelihoods of their families here at home.

sea for months on end, their lives hanging in the balance and filled with uncertainties.

2021 Seafarers: at the core of shipping's future”.

The past year has been extraordinarily challenging for all, but particularly for seafarers who continuously risk their lives, leave their families, ensuring safe and efficient transport of 90 per cent of the world's cargo. Easily coming to mind are those seafarers who have been severely impacted by covid-19, abandoned at

I and my government are cognizant of how important the maritime sector is to the Turks and Caicos Islands' economy and how deeply embedded it is in our rich history. Today we stand in support of the women and men who make up more than 1.5 million seafarers worldwide who continue to serve and face the numerous challenges that life at sea brings.~

On this occasion, it is with pride that I acknowledge our heritage of seafaring.



# 10 Reasons You Must Thank Seafarers

By [Raunek](#) | In: [Life At Sea](#) | Last Updated on January 11, 2021



For the past thousands of years people from around the world have been sending goods through sea ways. From the clothes people wear to the food they eat, almost everything today is brought to them through ships. The shipping industry, also termed as the invisible industry by many, is crucial to the existence of the global economy, yet very few people have any idea what happens at the high seas. It is an industry which is secretive and fascinating at the same time.

But as vital as the industry is to the world and its people, equally important is the work of the brave seafarers who perform one of the toughest jobs in the world by running those massive ships through the roughest seas and riskiest areas. If it hadn't been for them, the global trade would come to a stand still, people would be devoid of their basic necessities and some nations would find it extremely difficult to even survive.

Seafarers are one of those neglected professionals, who have often been overlooked not only by international organizations but also by their own countries. If you make an effort to go beyond their smart uniforms and fancy travel schedules, you will be able to see the tough lifestyle they live and the hardships they endure at sea to make sure the world and its people continue to enjoy their life on shore.

Mentioned below are some of the most important reasons (among million others), for which, each and every seafarer needs to be thanked from the greatest depth our hearts.

## 1. Seafarers Run the Global Economy

90% of the world's food, fuel, raw material and manufactured goods are delivered by sea. Nearly all things sold world wide are transported through ships, which need skilled seafarers to operate, maintain and repair. What would happen to the world if the ships and seafarers didn't work? Needless to say, the world would come to a halt and the people would be devoid of their basic necessities. It is because of these skilled and brave people called seafarers that businesses around the world continue to thrive and people are able to buy the things they desire from their favorite stores. Though seafarers work in a closed fraternity, which is not visible to outsiders, their work is indispensable. It is high time they get the respect and importance that they deserve from us.

## 2. Seafarers Sacrifice Their Social Life

One of the biggest [difficulties seafarers face](#) in their life (not out of choice) is staying away from their loved ones while they carry out their duties at sea. Missing birthdays, family events or brother's

wedding is the price they pay to ensure that the cargo reaches people on time. There are many seafarers who have missed every single birthday celebration of their kids. Some haven't been able to attend funerals of their loved ones. It is a tough choice they make to earn a livelihood for their families, but the pain of going away from the family doesn't deter them from performing their duties. Some one has to do the job and seafarers are tough enough to accept this bitter fact. While people on land celebrate and socialise at every possible opportunity, seafarers continue to toil away at sea to ensure that those celebrations do not stop, even at the cost of their own happiness.

## 3. Seafarers Fight The Toughest Seas and Roughest Weather

Taking cargo from one port to other often involves facing ugly storms and monstrous waves. A sea isn't as friendly as it seems when watched from shore. In spite of all the latest technological advancement, a seafarer at sea is at the mercy of nature. But what may come, the cargo has to be shipped to the scheduled location and that too on the right time. Several ships sink each year because of storms and rough weather, but that doesn't scare a seafarer – They are born for such conditions. He is build tough and has the heart to carry on with this work as the ship rolls and pitches over huge waves. If you think working in such conditions is easy or fun, then you are highly mistaken. Not everyone can do it, and those working on land can never fathom the hardships one has to face in such environment. So while people on land work in their extremely cozy offices with ultra luxurious amenities, peo-





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ple at sea work through sickest and unfriendliest conditions to ensure that businesses around the world do not stop and those on land continue to enjoy their comforts.

#### 4. Seafarers Risk Their Lives Through Piracy and War Zones

According to a report, more than 100,000 seafarers at any one time either



travel or are planning to go through the dangerous piracy affected areas. Until now, several ships have been hijacked and many seafarers have been taken as hostages by pirates. They are tortured, abused, and kept in miserable conditions as prisoners. Even today, events of piracy have not stopped. Ships continue to get hijacked and seafarers are still being taken as hostages. But in spite of all the risks and fear, seafarers continue to do their duties through these dangerous areas. The "Piracy Zones" covers one of the most important sea trading routes for food, raw materials, and manufactured good. Nearly half of the world's seaborne oil supply passes through these pirate-infested areas. Just imagine what would happen to the world economy if seafarers refuse to work in these areas? You already know the answer.

Moreover, if need be, seafarers even sail through war zones and assist navies to deliver cargo and supplies where they are required the most. Can they say no? Yes! But they never say so, they never will.

#### 5. Seafarers Face Extreme Health

#### Hazards

Working on ships is not easy. Visit a ship and you will know. Seafarers are prone to several specific diseases and illnesses because of the nature of the work and continuous travel to new places. Apart from physical hazards such as diseases and injuries caused due to accidents, seafarers also fall prey to psychological problems such as homesickness, loneliness and fatigue, a part and parcel of their life at sea. Moreover, if something happens onboard there are in most cases no possibilities to turn to an expert and get extra medical help. Seafarers have to manage everything themselves when at sea. But no matter how many risks they have to face working on board ships, they continue with their jobs and face the health hazards quite bravely by acquiring knowledge and training themselves for the worst medical emergencies. What would you do if you break your bones while working and do not have to a doctor or hospital to attend you immediately? Well, seafarers perform some of the most dangerous jobs without a doctor around. Do they need any greater reason to be thanked?

#### 6. Seafarers Follow Toughest Regulations and Laws

With the increasing number of stringent regulations related to ships around the world, seafarers are facing grave difficulties not only to ensure their own safety but also to abide by the rules and regulations of environmental and ship protection. Moreover, each country the ship visits has its own law and regulations which they can freely use to criminalise a seafarer. Most of the times this is done with the intention to raise revenue or settle political issues. In the past years, several seafarers have been made scapegoats by countries desperately wanting to prove a point to other nations. Under such acts, seafarers have been prisoned for years, tortured and treated in the most deplorable manner. Can you consider living each day of your life dealing with different (and sometimes insane) laws without any kind of substantial reassurance to help you out incase things go wrong? If you are on land, you can immediately call your lawyer or at least know the right person to talk to, but sea-

farers don't have that luxury. They work through toughest legal obligations at their own risk while delivering the world cargo.



#### 7. Seafarers Work Round the Clock With Monotonous Routines

Sailing the high seas with all those exotic locations and glamorous uniforms sounds romantic to many people. But most do not know about the hard work seafarers put every day and night to run those ships and their machinery. Ships of every seafarer, who has been sailing for a few years must have reached the best places in the world such as New York, Hong Kong, Tokyo etc., but for majority of seafarers, all these beautiful places either look like the ship's engine room or upper deck. Gone are the days when seafarers had the luxury of prolonged stays at ports. Today a ship is loaded and unloaded in max 24 hours leaving no time for shore leaves. Moreover, port means additional work, which sometimes involve continuously working for 18 hours at a stretch. With increasing threats from terrorists, most countries now do not even allow shore leave to seafarers, leaving them with no option but to stay on board. Would you like if someone made you work for several days and then restricted you from stepping out of the office premises? Of course not. But seafarers work happily under such circumstances and deadlines, not because there is no other option, but because they know the importance of their work and delivering of the cargo on time.

#### 8. Seafarers Work The Most Without the Basic Rights



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A majority of seafarers sail without proper insurance or pension policies – few of the basics rights every working professional on this earth must get. Many shipping companies do not have a proper pension scheme in their contract, even if seafarers want to contribute. Moreover, seafarers from several countries (especially Asian) do not even have the provision of decent medical care or insurance system either at sea or on leave. Considering the fact that a person working on land at any level has all such basic rights, it is surprising to see how seafarers continue to work in such adverse situations even without the basic rights that they deserve. There have been cases in the past wherein seafarers had to literally beg in order to receive compensation for expenses and medical treatment for injuries they endured on board. Though the seafarers know they deserve all these rights and a lot more, but are still devoid of them, the work on board ship do not stop. They continue to carry out their duties with the same intensity as ever.

**9. Seafarers Are At High Risk Of Criminalisation and Abandonment**



**While Performing Their Duties**

According to ITF, seafarers are among the most exploited and abused group of workers in the world. They face exploitation, abuse and corruption on a large scale. Many seafarers have been criminalized, abandoned and not paid by their shipping companies, especially in tough financial times. Several of them find themselves abandoned in a port with no money, no supplies and no way to get



home. In certain types of maritime accidents, especially those involving pollution, seafarers are highly vulnerable because of unfair trails and weight of expectations from local people and government. In the past, seafarers have been wrongly accused and sentenced punishments without a proper trial or help from their own government or shipping company. The number of such incidents are on the rise because of the increase in stringent laws around the world. In spite of such grave injustice and ill-treatment, seafarers perform their duties on ships plying in countries with some of the most inhumane laws. Isn't it unfair to watch them go through such situations while all they were doing was carrying out their duties? No matter how small a mistake, seafarers always have to pay a heavy price.

**10. Seafarers Live With Least Accommodation And Communication Facilities**

While people on land have the luxury to call their loved ones as and when they want, seafarers often have to wait until they reach land to find a decent communication facility (Also, there is no guarantee that every port will have such facilities). Even today most of the seafarers are devoid of a decent mode of communication. That's not all, there are many who live in poor quality cabins with filthy couch and mould. Moreover many complain of bad quality and insufficient quantity of food. For those on long voyages, rotting fruits and stale meats is a common sight. Though the regulations to

monitor the quality of food and living conditions have improved, there are often times when seafarers do not even have a decent meal. As harsh as it may sound, seafarers not only have to deal with such conditions but also continue to carry out their duties onboard ships. Of all the things, at least decent accommodation and food is most deserved by all seafarers, considering the life of loneliness and hardships they live on ships.

Seafarers are often seen as happy-go-lucky people, who are always flashing a broad smile both on and off board ship. But there is a lot more to them. They are probably, one of the very few people in the world, who understand the true value of family and work. With the types of difficulties they face at sea, seafarers know very well how to make the most of the free time and enjoy to the fullest. Even though they are aware of the importance of their work, they do not allow it to go to their head. They continue with their duties even if the world, governments and companies continue to ignore them; for they know their time, both on ship and on land, is limited and making the most of that is the only option they have.

We at Marine Insight, request the people of the world to give a special "THANK YOU" to all the seafarers for the tremendous work they do.

*Share this article to as many people as possible – A little bit of respect and appreciation is all a seafarer desires.~*



## Seafaring—the TCI Experience

By Paula Stewart— Business and Communications Manager

Every year on the last Thursday in the month of September, World Maritime Day is observed. This is the day that the International Maritime Organization (IMO), has set aside for the global maritime community to observe the important role maritime plays in international trade. The IMO's theme this year is "Seafarers: at the core of shipping's future".

In addressing the theme, the Director of Ports, Delton Jones, noted how the theme recognizes the importance of shipping and trade for global prosperity and the role of seafarers who man the world's merchant ships.

Shipping is the life blood of the global economy and seafarers fearlessly risk their lives to ensure a better life for themselves and their family who they leave at home. From as far back as we can go, people around the world have been sending goods by sea and today, over 90% of global supply is brought to them by ships. This requires the need for seafarers to deliver them. According to the National Chamber of Shipping, there are over 1.8 million seafarers worldwide manning over 74,000 merchant ships. The brave men and women who choose to work on ships across oceans face a far more punishing experience than many of us cannot even begin to fathom.

The Turks and Caicos Islands has a rich heritage in seafaring. For many at the time, plying the seas was an opportunity to secure the livelihoods of their families, travel the world and get paid to do so all at the same time.

Recently, I had the opportunity to sit and speak with some of our local seafarers and also Mr Alfred Been, who worked at the Government's Labour Office. For this issue of the Navigator, I wish to share their stories with you in

their search of a better life, crisscrossing the globe on the high seas.

There were two or three shipping companies operated by Arthur *Bowlie* Been, Ritchie Outten and the National Bulk Carriers (NBC) that offered sailing assignments. NBC was probably the largest recruiter of seaman operating in the Turks and Caicos Islands at that time.

*The National Bulk Carrier was a shipping company which owned and operated oil tankers and bulk carriers. Some of them were among the largest in the world at that time. It was one of the largest multinational corporation in the world. It was founded by Daniel K Ludwig.* [Wikipedia](#)

As Mr Alfred Been explains, economic activity within the islands was slow, particularly on the salt islands of Grand Turk, Salt Cay and South Caicos which were dependent on the then fading salt industry.

Upon taking up office with the Labour Department in 1972, Mr Been recalls that there was an agreement in place made with NBC and the Government to take one thousand men a year to man the ships on sailing assignments. This, he says, was Government's way of ensuring lucrative employment was available for Turks and Caicos Islanders, knowing that the salt industry was on decline. There was already large migration to the Bahamas, US, and Canada.

Seamen for sailing assignments were derived from a register that Mr Been kept to record names of men who already had careers as seamen and those desirous to find work. At the request of NBC, the list was sent up from which they made their selection. By office messenger, seamen were notified of their selection and had to prepare for dispatch to whichever country they were to join their ship. Confirmation of acceptance had to be received by the company within 24 hours of request. With

a small chuckle, Mr Been recollects at one occasion he sent 12 men out at one time by way of London. They had told him it couldn't be done, but he proved them wrong.

### Raymond Maxwell Simmons



Mr Simmons, from the island of Salt Cay, became a seafarer out of necessity. A need to find employment, to earn a living as in Salt Cay there was nothing for a

young man his age to do; *things were slow and money small*, he said. This, as we will come to learn, was the constant cry of many young men back then. At age 19 in 1968, Mr Simmons registered to become a seaman with the National Bulk Carriers. Sailing was an opportunity to work. He was off to New York, via Nassau on Bahamas Airlines.

With his designation as Ordinary Seaman on the *Universe Commander*, one of five tankers on which he worked, Mr Simmons embarked on an employment contract on 12 months intervals. A typical voyage lasted, at times, upwards of 32 days, traveling from the US to the Persian Gulf and back carrying millions of barrels of oil.

Initially, Mr Simmons duties entailed shipping, painting, and washing oil tanks for dry dock. Mr Simmons reminisces on his days cleaning 80ft oil tanks on 85,000 tonne tankers which he said was one of his biggest challenges to overcome.

Life at sea for Mr Simmons was mainly uneventful, save for the times he experienced two hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean, when he thought that he wouldn't make it back home alive. He spent his



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leisure time reading and learning as much as he could. He worked his way up becoming a pump-man assigned to the ship's engine room as second engineer. Here he learned his trade as a diesel mechanic.

On voyages to the Far East, Mr Simmons remembers times during the summer when they would travel through, what they referred to at the time 'Hell's Gate', an area in the Persian Gulf en route to Saudi Arabia known for its extreme heat. During these months their work hours were adjusted to 5am to 10am. Mr Simmons recalls times when it got so hot that the bottoms of their shoes would stick to the deck.

But it wasn't all work onboard these tankers. Their vessels were outfitted with recreation rooms. During their down time sailors were able to watch movies every other night, play dominoes, cards, etc. When Sundays came around, Mr Simmons recalls how my dad, the late Daniel Hall, would entreat them to gospel music on his guitar. They would also write letters to their families back home. These letters were given to 'Sparks' (the Radio Operator), who would then pass them on to the agent in port. Receiving letters from home, as one would imagine, took a long time and were months old by time they got them, but that was ok. On stops at different ports, they were allowed to explore and unwind on shore.

Mr Simmons enjoyed his life at sea and speaks of it with pride. He had traveled the world stopping at ports in countries some of us only imagine going to. After 17 years of sailing, he called it quits and returned home. Until his retirement, Mr Simmons worked at the TCI Government mechanic workshop. He now lives an idyllic life on Grand Turk.

### Leslie Williams



Following in the footsteps of his father, the late Alfred 'Desi' Williams, Leslie took to the sea in the 1970s. Also from Salt Cay and with very little to do there, Leslie traveled to Grand Turk and registered to become a seaman. On his visit to the office, Leslie recalls asking a reluctant Alfred Been to register him with the National Bulk Carriers. It was at the coaxing of the Hon JAGS McCartney, who was in the office at the time, as Leslie recalls. JAGS had just returned home from a short three months at sea after discovering sailing was not the life for him. But as the story goes, JAGS persuaded Mr Been to give the young Leslie a chance saying that "what didn't work for me, might work for Leslie".

Traveling for the first time outside the Turks and Caicos Islands, Leslie boarded Eastern Airlines to Miami and on to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where his seaman career began. He was 18 years old.

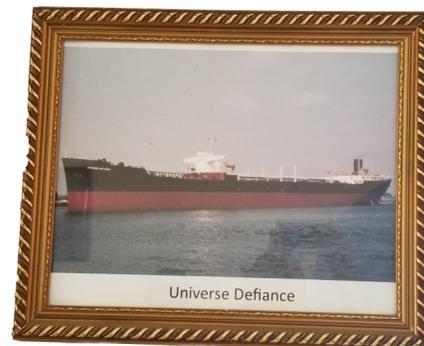
Leslie immersed himself in his duties as 'wiper', mopping and cleaning. After a few short months he was promoted to oiler, i.e. taking oil temperature in the engine room on shift work. He embraced life at sea. His first voyage was 14 days to Nigeria, West Africa and from there 32 days at sea to Japan. From Japan he would then sail an additional 28 days to the Persian Gulf. This was an adventure for young Leslie; he saw



things he never saw before. He was seeing the world. Other stops on the high seas included Venezuela, Trinidad, Puerto Rico, Bahamas, Italy, and Spain just to name a few.

Although he experienced bouts of homesickness, Leslie stayed the course. He settled into his life at sea among 54 people and crew who were strangers to him, away from what was familiar to him. He recalls an occasion when a fellow sailor from St Vincent and the Grenadines was returned home after receiving bad news that left him so unsettled that it caused him unfit to complete his contract.

On one of Leslie's voyages, he recalls an encounter with the ship's Chief Engineer who thought to share some insight on life at sea. The Engineer had over 28 years experience working at sea and sitting on the back stump where he had gone to get some fresh breeze, Leslie listened keenly. The Chief Engineer said to him that when he started out he was Leslie's age and that now he had trouble to climb the engine room steps. He encouraged him to do his work but not to kill himself. *Take your*





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time, but don't do more than you can do. The ship will still be here even when you're gone. He thought when he had started working he could kill the ships, but he found out that "you can't kill ships, ships kill you."

At 12 months intervals, Leslie would return home and await his next sailing assignment which could sometime be a three month reprieve between sailings. Each time it was on a different vessel in the fleet. This continued for four years. On Leslie's return home he busied himself with a number of things as he likes to keep himself occupied.

### Edgar Stanley Jennings



By trade, Mr Jennings was a boat builder. Taught by his uncle, Joseph Kennedy. He spent his early days fixing and building boats and barges in Salt Cay.

In 1957, Mr Jennings and a number of young men from Salt Cay set out on small boats operated by a Caymanian company who had the contract to transport salt, wheat bran, and food cargo between Miami, Tampa, Jamaica, Cayman and Cayman Brac. This run suffered and was short-lived due to poor planning. He and his fellow countrymen, who made up the crew, returned home to Salt Cay.

During the early 1960s the salt industry was in steady decline, and times in Salt Cay were getting hard. Recruitment for sailing assignments with the National Bulk Carrier (NBC) was beginning to gain traction. Looking to secure a better life for her daughter, Mr Jennings' mother-in-law, being in Grand Turk, spoke to Mr Nathaniel 'Dooly' Robinson (the agent) to gain employment for him with the company. Mr Jennings, along with Jack Simmons and Norman Talbot, both from Salt Cay, flew to Portland, Oregon via Miami to begin their seaman life on the Berkshire.

Once onboard, they were greeted with familiar faces from home; about twenty-two or more. For six months on the *Berkshire* (Liberty Ships), there shipping route took them up and down the Pacific Ocean transporting salt from western Mexico making stops at Portland, OR; Tacoma WA; and Vancouver, BC. After a short six months on this run, the company decided that the ship would be taken to Japan for scrap. Assigned to take the ship to Japan, the 'Turks Islands Boys' all refused for fear of cyclones prone to that region

during that time of the year. They were all sent back home to Turks.

This was not the end of Jennings sailing career. In 1963, the NBC sent for him and John Missick, the first two from the *Berkshire* to be reassigned. On a different vessel, the *Ore Transport* out of Philadelphia took them up and down the Canadian East Coast. Mr Jennings recalls that from the time he stepped foot onboard the ship he met ice until he left 12 months later there was still ice. The ice never melted. Steam hoses were used to spray the hatches to open them. There were even times they were stuck at sea in ice where steam had to be used to melt a path.

After the Philadelphia/Canada run, Mr Jennings returned home to thaw out before heading to Grand Bahama where he spent two years working for the Port Authority there. He took a break from the sea.

The sea beckoned him and he took the call again in 1967 to join the *Petro Pan*, an oil tanker. This time his travels would take him on voyages that would last all of two months at sea making runs from Trinidad to Saudi Arabia. These were not pleasure trips says Mr Jennings. It was work and it was of *no harm to him* and he went about it diligently making his way through the ranks. With the aid of fellow TCIs-landers, Evan Storm Missick and Charlie Manual, Mr Jennings moved up the ranks from Ordinary Seaman to Able Bodied Seaman. Though he is deaf in one ear it was of no hindrance to him in carrying out Captain's orders when steering. When asked how his experience went during storms he laughed and said "they were never good".

As we continued to talk, Mr Jennings told the story of when he was in Cuba during the Cuban Revolution, when Batista the then President fled to nearby Dominican Republic and Fidel and his army took

Dis. 1

### CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE

FOR A SEAMAN DISCHARGED BEFORE A SUPERINTENDENT  
OR A CONSULAR OFFICER

Name of Ship and Official Number, Port of Registry and Gross Tonnage		Horse Power	Description of Voyage or Employment	
S.S. "BERKSHIRE" OFF. No. 187577 N. R. T. 6258.00 G. R. T. 8649.05		2500.	Foreign	
Name of Seaman		Date of Birth	Place of Birth	
Edgar S. Jennings		24/9/32	Turks Island.	
Rank or Rating		No. of B.R.C. Commission or Certif.	No. of Cert. (if any)	
A.B.				
Date of Engagement	Place of Engagement	Copy of Report of Character*		
MAY 24 1962	Tacoma, Wash. U.S.A.	For Ability	For General Conduct	
Date of Discharge	Place of Discharge	V.G.	V.G.	
NOV 21 1962	Vancouver B.C.			

I certify that the above particulars are correct and that the above named Seaman was discharged accordingly.  
Dated this 21 day of Nov. 1962. AUTHENTICATED BY

Harold L. Tapscott, MASTER, Signature of Master  
Signature of Superintendent of Marine Office

\* If the Seaman does not require a Certificate of his Character, enter "Not Required" in the spaces provided for the copy of the Report.

Signature of Seaman Edgar S. Jennings

Note—Any person who fraudulently alters any Certificate or Report, or copy of a Report, or who makes use of any Certificate or Report, or copy of a Report, which is forged or altered or does not belong to him, shall for each such offence be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and may be fined or imprisoned.

N.B.—Should this Certificate come into the possession of any person to whom it does not belong, it should be handed to the Superintendent of the nearest Mercantile Marine Office, or be transmitted to the Registrar-General of Shipping and Seamen, Cardiff.



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BUREAU OF MARITIME AFFAIRS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE					
Name of Vessel M/T DEB MARIS	Last Name JENNINGS	First Name EDGAR	Middle Initial S	Nationality BRITISH	Age 45
Type of Vessel and Propulsion MOTOR TANKER - DIESEL	Capacity in which served ABLE BOATED SEAMAN		License or Document No.		
Official Number 2007	Port of Registry MONROVIA	Port of Engagement ST. JAMES, LA, USA	Date of Engagement 29 AUG 78	TOTAL SERVICE	
Gross Tonnage 31,194.57	Horsepower 18,900	Port of Discharge NEWORLEANS, LA, USA	Date of Discharge 26 NOV 79	Months 14	Days 29
Nature of Voyage INTERNATIONAL			Vessel Seal		
Remarks VESSEL SOLD.			I hereby certify that all entries herein were made by me and are correct, in witness whereof I have this day affixed my signature and the seal or stamp of the vessel. N. J. Van Houten Signature of Master VANHOUTEN, WILHEM J. Name of Master - Print or Type		
Date NOVEMBER 26TH, 1979					

BUREAU OF MARITIME AFFAIRS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE					
Name of Vessel S/S UNIVERSE JAPAN	Last Name JENNINGS	First Name EDGAR	Middle Initial S	Nationality BRITISH	Age 46
Type of Vessel and Propulsion OIL TANKER - STEAM	Capacity in which served ABLE SEAMAN		License or Document No. PF #. C 398666		
Official Number 3182	Port of Registry MONROVIA	Port of Engagement POINT TUPPER, CANADA	Date of Engagement 11 APR 1980	TOTAL SERVICE	
Gross Tonnage 149,622	Horsepower 37,400	Port of Discharge LISBON, PORTUGAL	Date of Discharge 17 SEP 1980	Months 5	Days 07
Nature of Voyage WORLD WIDE TRADE.			Vessel Seal		
Remarks VESSEL SOLD.			I hereby certify that all entries herein were made by me and are correct, in witness whereof I have this day affixed my signature and the seal or stamp of the vessel. S. J. Nicolopoulos Signature of Master NICOLOPOULOS, S. J. Name of Master - Print or Type		
Date 17 SEP 1980					

over Cuba. Their boat had just arrived from Tampa delivering 4,000 crates for packing produce for shipment to the US, but before they could offload, the ship's agent told them they had 10 minutes to leave Cuba. Castro was coming. Their ship, under British flag, was the only one to narrowly make it out of Cuba avoiding capture like so many of his friends he knew on ships that weren't so lucky. Mr Jennings says even up to today he still has dreams of that day.

Throughout the interview with Mr Jennings, his youngest daughter, Danzella sat with us. She recalls with humor the times her dad came home when she and her older siblings and other children whose dads were coming back would be ushered into the Hall to welcome their return. She said the children would whisper among themselves asking each other if they knew which one was their dad.

With their mom raising them on her own, they soon realized that their father's job was at sea, where he would bring the nicest clothes for them when he returned home on visits. "We were dressed like Chinese and Indians", Danzella laughs, clothes made with the finest fabrics. Mr Jennings too admits that he was not around for the births of ten of his and his wife's 11 children and neither did he get to see them take their first footsteps, save for the firstborn.

This is how life at sea impacts families. Seafarers often miss out on significant milestones and achievements of their loved ones.~





## Why even giant ships can't solve the shipping crisis

Published on <https://www.bbc.com/news/business> :  
Business Reporter

Chris Baraniuk, Technology of  
14 Sept 2021



Jared Chaitowitz has a fleet of around 300 rental bikes in Cape Town, South Africa. He relies on a steady supply of spare parts - from pedals to bells - to keep them running. But there's a problem.

"The guy that supplies the tyres that we use on our bicycles, earlier this year gave us a 10 to 12 month waiting period for new tyres," says Mr Chaitowitz, of Up Cycles. "It's been stressful."

The pandemic **sparked a global cycling boom** prompting an increase in demand for bikes whilst simultaneously wholesalers have been stung by a worldwide shipping container shortage.

Mr Chaitowitz is juggling multiple challenges to keep his business operating. He is also waiting for a container with 50 brand new bikes from France, though he says he has no idea when it will actually arrive. And months ago, a local business asked him to repair some bicycles earmarked for donation to charity. That charity work is on hold because Mr Chaitowitz can't get hold of the components he needs.

Mr Chaitowitz has taken to sourcing spare parts where he can from local bike shops. "A lot of times, they've been quite generous and able to help," he says. But it's far from an ideal solution.

Mr Chaitowitz is not alone, many businesses around the world have faced similar logistical headaches lately.

Lockdowns led to **a massive drop in retail purchases**, followed by a

**sharp rebound as countries** started to open-up again.

At present, **hundreds of container ships** are queuing for access to over-loaded ports, mostly in the US and China.

In addition, in Europe and the US, lorry driver shortages mean it is **harder to move containers** on to their destinations once on land.

And **port closures caused** by Covid-19 outbreaks have further exacerbated the traffic jam.

It's become common to hear stories about containers left idling on quaysides for months on end. Plus, prices for containers are through the roof.

Sending one 40ft container from Asia to Europe costs \$17,500 (£12,650), more than 10 times the price of a year ago, says George Griffiths, editor of global container markets at S&P Global Platts.

He adds that some shipping companies are now charging premium rates to





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guarantee delivery within a few weeks, for example, and that importers are also attempting to outbid one another, offering extra cash to snap up containers over their rivals.

"It's really starting to bite in the market," says Mr Griffiths.

### A perfect storm?

It all begs the question - is this just a momentary supply chain blip, or a sign that the great behemoth of container shipping can no longer keep pace with our changing world?

The container shipping industry is "creaking" under the strain of high demand at the moment, says Rose George, author of *Ninety Percent of Everything*, a book about the shipping industry.

"It's always been absolutely vital, it's just never been noticed," she adds. It's taken the current crisis to highlight how crucial shipping is to the global economy,

### The steel box that changed global trade

Recently, some big businesses have even decided to purchase their own containers and charter ships inde-

pendently in response to shortages. Among them, the US giants Walmart and Home Depot, and the Swedish furniture brand Ikea. is among the companies that has chartered vessels to tackle a product shortage

A spokeswoman for Ikea confirms that the company has bought additional containers and chartered vessels in order to redress a product shortage.

"We have also sent goods by train from China to Europe and we have invested in temporary intermediate warehouses in China, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, and Thailand to support production," she adds.

From toys to cars, countless industries rely on shipping containers moving steadily and continuously around the globe.

"I have a gut feeling that we're going to see empty shelves," says Stavros Karamperidis, head of the Maritime Transport Research Group at the University of Plymouth, referring to the Christmas period. The particularly severe lorry driver shortage in the UK could make this especially pronounced in Britain, he adds.

Lorry driver shortages are particularly

acute in Britain, in part, due to EU workers leaving the UK following Brexit as well as during the pandemic plus tax changes making it more expensive for drivers from elsewhere in Europe to work or be employed in the UK.

While shipping firms are expected to make record profits this year, to the tune of many billions of dollars, they continue to be beset by problems.

"We have deployed more vessels and containers than prior to the pandemic, yet we still see unfortunate delays leading to missed sailings and missed capacity," says Concepción Boo Arias, a spokeswoman for Maersk, the largest shipping container line in the world.

Delays in ports are having knock-on effects on ship schedules, she says. A couple of days' hold-up at one port can end up adding two weeks to a container ship's total journey time.

The current pressures are creating awkward situations - such as empty containers piling up at some ports while becoming scarce in others.

So what can be done?

Jack Craig, head of global technical at APM Terminals, which is owned by A.P. Moller - Maersk, emphasises the role that data and automation can play at ports. Automated checkpoints at Gothenburg in Sweden, which scan every container coming into the port, have reduced idling times by 30%, he says.

But large infrastructural interventions are tougher. A brand new container ship takes about two or three years to build, so any vessels ordered now will not be able to assist in the short-term.

Mr Griffiths adds that uncertainty over how best to meet new regulations



Cont'd from page 11



on shipping industry emissions, expected in 2050, also means that some companies are wary of expanding their fleets at present.

"It's a very costly mistake if you order 10 big container ships that might cost you \$100-200m apiece, if, come 2050, you can't use them," he explains.

For decades, container ships have become bigger and bigger. The largest in the world today can hold nearly 24,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent unit) - that would allow 24,000

containers, each one 20 ft (6.1m) in length, to be packed on to a single vessel.

But such ships require large, deep ports and giant cranes, which limits where they can go. They also place heightened demand on resources at ports where they do call, says Dr Karamperidis. He argues that a greater number of medium-sized vessels could help to make supply chains more reliable in the future.

Marc Levinson, an economist and author of *Outside the Box*, a book about globalisation and container shipping, agrees that smaller ships are easier for ports to handle.

Dr Levinson adds that businesses may also have to rethink their reliance on global supply chains that bring parts or products from single factories halfway round the world. This approach can be cheap but it

relies on everything always functioning as intended.

"The shipping crisis has really pointed out the riskiness of these kinds of business strategy," says Dr Levinson.

Ms George goes further and suggests that we may all have to have a rethink on our shopping habits. "I don't know where it's going to go," she says of the current situation. "But I do hope it goes more towards reduction of consumption."

And in Cape Town, while Mr Chaitowitz entertains the idea of sourcing parts closer to home, to escape the ups and downs of international shipping, he admits that this probably isn't a realistic solution.

"All of the little things that go in a bicycle are made so cheaply in Asia, I can't see, locally, how we would ever be able to compete," he says. "It seems like we're trapped in the system."~

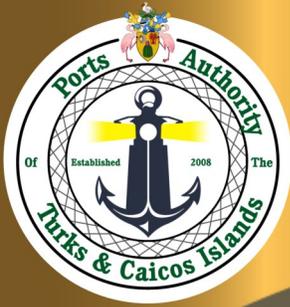


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part in our journey**



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