



Deck Cadet Evaluates His Second Sea-Phase

Recently UK Deck Cadet Marcus Jones spent three months onboard the 24,405DWT, IMO Type II Chemical Tanker, MT Chembulk Savannah. For Marcus this was his second of the three scheduled sea-phases of his cadetship after previously serving onboard the Oil tanker, MT Barunawati. Marcus has written of his experiences below.



Well my second trip to sea is now at an end and I can happily say that it has been excellent experience. I joined my vessel 'The Chembulk Savannah' on 3rd May in Suez Egypt where I was expecting to see pyramids everywhere but instead I had to make do with a few locals racing their cars around the streets!

My first day onboard I was pretty surprised to find out that I would be doing two watches a day from the get go. Although surprised I was also happy because it meant I got to be on the bridge whilst transiting the Suez Canal.

My duty was the 4-8 watch with one of the two 3rd Officers whose name is Than Oo. I can't tell you how many times I tried to pronounce his name correctly but I just couldn't do it so we agreed that I give him a new name that was easier for me to say. We decided on 'Einstein'. He has the craziest hair I've ever seen and I think if Einstein was from Burma he would have definitely looked like him! The funny thing is that now everyone on the ship calls him Einstein!

From Suez we sailed to Cartagena Spain where we discharged some of the Crude Palm Oil we were carrying. It was at this port that I experienced my first discharge operation onboard a chemical tanker. I still can't quite believe what I witnessed whilst in this port. As Crude Palm Oil cools it becomes very viscous and so even with a large trim is extremely difficult to get all the cargo to flow to the well under the pump. Because of this, 3 crew members entered the tank whilst the pump was still running and started to push the cargo towards the pump. Now even though all relevant risk assessments, permits to work and gas testing was carried out before entering, as a first time chemical tanker man I was a little scared to say the least. There was no way that the Chief Officer wanted me to go inside but just standing at the tank top looking down at the crew inside and listening to 'wurring' of the pump is something I definitely won't forget.



After Spain we sailed to Rotterdam and Amsterdam to discharge the remainder of our cargo. Whilst in Amsterdam Ken Lyall visited the ship and was able to give him a short tour around. From Amsterdam we sailed to Pori in Finland. During this voyage we got to pass through the Kiel Canal cutting thru Germany. This was so beautiful. I was however a bit jealous of all the people out enjoying the sunshine and drinking beer but it was a great experience all the same. It was after Kiel Canal transit that the crew all told me that I would soon have to finish my career at sea.... I couldn't understand in the beginning why they said this as I am only just starting my careerit was a few minutes later that they all smiled and explained that because I had transited the Suez Canal, The Amsterdam Canal and now the Kiel Canal so I only have one more Canal to transit (the Panama Canal) and then I can stop working at

sea as I will have done them all !!! Everyone laughed a lot.

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In Pori Finland we loaded Sulphuric Acid and then headed west to our discharge port of Beaumont in Texas. When you are sat on a ship in the middle of the Atlantic with heavy sea and swell it makes you realise just how small we are in this world and how much of a force nature is.

After Beaumont we sailed to Houston Texas. In Houston we had to load 18 different cargoes from 5 different berths. It was at this time that my cargo work and ability during mooring ops really started to come on leaps and bounds as I spent a lot of time out on deck learning from the crew and officers alike.

It was a bit frustrating for everyone during this time because after loading from one berth we had to travel all the way out to anchorage and wait for our next berth to become available. We had to wait 10 days for our last berth which was a bit of a wait although I did get a bit of time to do some sunbathing!

When news came in of our discharge ports everyone was really happy. We sailed from Houston to Brazil. We discharged in Suape, Aratu, Santos and Rio before sailing to Argentina for the final discharge and my signing off.



During my trip I had the opportunity to go ashore a few times which was really nice. In Brazil I got to go and see the Statue of Christ with some friends in Rio and in Santos I went to the beach both of which were a lot of fun. I went ashore in Houston however this was more work than if I'd stayed on the ship.

What I didn't realise was that I was the only man on the ship with a US visa.

Due to this it meant me going ashore to do shopping for ALL the crew. Now, I had no problem doing this, but can you imagine how stupid I felt walking into a department store with a list and a wad of money asking the salesman "can you help me ?, I need to buy 10 pairs of Levis all different sizes, designs and colours and none of them are for me!" The crew were happy though so it was worth it.

On the Wildlife side of things I've seen jelly fish, flying fish, a huge turtle, dolphins of all shapes and sizes, alligators, and in the last month I sailed through the middle of what looked like a breeding ground for Whales. It was amazing; they were all jumping out of the water and swimming only about 10 metres away from the ships side. The most incredible thing I saw however was at anchorage in Santos where I saw a Killer Whale!

The crew all knew that I used to Box and so the Bosun and one of his AB's made me a punch bag so that I could train everyday which was so nice of them. I think there are a few guys that will keep using it as well.

The food has definitely been better than my last ship. I steered clear of eating rice three times a day this time as I didn't want to get 'rice withdrawals' like after my last trip!

To conclude, my trip has been a great learning experience, a lot of fun and I hope that I can come back on the same ship for my final sea phase as I now have lots of great friends onboard who made me feel like I was part of one big family.

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