

Egypt - Third

The latest from the young sailor:

hey howdy hey!

so another short update for any wandering minds out there.

i'm still slightly tired from the suez canal transit yesterday as my work day started at 3:15 AM and was not over until 9:30 PM. either way it was an interesting trip across.

for the last few days we've been motoring along with one cylinder out of service... yet again. it's the exact same problem that we were experiencing prior to singapore, the fix we did there didn't hold. so anyways, we made the trek through the canal on eleven cylinders and then anchored just off the coast of Israel to do the repair work. all of the engine department is unsure of the fate of this repair, but that's what the company wanted us to do. either way, we're two days behind schedule now, we should be getting into NY next sunday(march 29th) rather than friday. anyhow, on to random tales of egypt.

as was the deal last time, we had four men come onboard the ship and sell random junk. well, i use the term sell in the loosest form possible, i think they might have sold \$30 worth of trinkets. but i have a funny story about this gaggle of boatmen.

i walked into the conference room on the main deck of the ship, and there they had the utterly useless crap that they try to sell for far too much money. for example, they wanted \$15 for a 1980s era four-function calculator. they also wanted \$50 for a candlestand... granted it was pretty cool looking, but hardly worth \$50. i walked in and offered them \$25 for three items total... they wanted \$100 for one of the items, \$45 for another, and \$25 for the smallest item. they told me that i was crazy and asked me to leave them alone. this made me laugh and made them mad. ha!

so as i'm working through the day, which involved a lot of time in the control room standing by waiting for stuff to happen, but anyways, the suez electrician kept hassling me all flippin day for stuff. first he wanted some coffee. so i took him to get some coffee, which outraged the chief cook and caused a screaming match between the two that resulted in the electrician throwing his coffee into the trash and storming off. then he attempted to steal my coke that i had for lunch out of my pocket as i walked by, then he wanted two cups of sugar for his tea, then he wanted ice cream, cigarettes, etc... it just never ended. i think the worst part of it was the fact that he never said please or thank you. ugh!!!

then i finally was able to get away from him for a bit and go outside. this is where i found one of the most interesting diversities in landscape ever.

on the west side of the canal sat a lush, green, beautiful landscape. on the east side of the canal sat the Sanai desert... flat, nasty, barren wasteland. i found it to be interesting that

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only 250 feet of water separated these two extremes. either way, it was interesting. as i was standing outside looking at the desert landscape, i saw, out of the blue, a giant statue of an AK 47 barrel with a huge bayonet on it sticking out of the sand. i've been told that the egyptians put that monument there to remember the six-day-war... i guess they wanted a reminder that you shouldn't be jerks to Israel.

so anyways, that's pretty much it for israel. the boatmen did not come down to the price that i wanted to, we made the transit, fixed the engine and are now motoring across the med headed for home. please write me back! my social life is rather limited out here so it's nice to hear from people!

much love,

-T

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Hey! Wha's Happenin'?(said just like The Ladies Man, Leon Phelps) for those of you that are...uninitiated, let me tell you about the Egyptian Air Force. this branch of irritants works ceaselessly to infiltrate every possible airspace over Egyptian waterways. in fact, we shall probably have a bomber escort for the next few days, until they run out of fuel and crash to their deaths. i am speaking, of course, about the giant black flies that swarm the ship when we come into egyptian waters. they're not so much fun, but i thought i'd at least mention them and hopefully get a chuckle out of ya. 😊

egypt was not all that exciting this go-around. i think that is due, in large, by the fact that most of the Suez Canal transit was done at night.

normally i am required to be in the engine control room any time we are in a maneuvering situation. however, the first engineer (my boss) did not see any reason to keep me up all night, so he never called me out to work. by the time i was awake and ready to start work, we were already past the giant bayonet statue i mentioned last time that signifies that the Egyptians now know not to pick on Israel.

i also did not spend much time in the control room, but rather spent most of the morning in the engine room doing work. the first bit of drama that hit the ship in egypt though occurred about 9:30 AM local time. this is when the egyptian boatmen decided to wake up and wanted breakfast. they were told to shut up and go away by the galley workers for a few reasons: breakfast is served from 7:30 to 8:30 only, they really don't like the egyptians, and the galley staff has more important things to work on. so the egyptian boatmen threw a bit of a fit because they didn't get breakfast because they slept in.

my first interaction with them was at morning coffee. i, as is typical, went to do a little shopping. more of the same worthless junk at excessively high prices. i bought a few trinkets from them and paid for them mostly with cigarettes. remember now, in many parts of the world, american made cigarettes are more desirable than any other commodity, so i have made it a habit to keep a carton available for bartering purposes.

going back to the purchase of worthless trinkets though. they had set up two shops, more or less, on the ship. one was the boatmen's, and the other was the electrician's. the boatmen (who all smelled absolutely horrid, by the way—it was Beyond B.O. ... bulous maximus!) were very rude to me and i got the impression that they really did not like americans. whatever. the suz electrician, on the other hand, made every effort to show that he loves americans. i was totally creeped out by him actually. every time i picked out another trinket to buy from him, he would grab me around the neck and kiss my forehead. yeah, creepy right?

at the end of my bartering, which he was less than pleased about, there was still one item that i wanted, which he wouldn't budge on the price. my final offer to him was \$5, a new pack of gum, and a bar of soap. he thought about it and said he couldn't do it. at that, i picked up my gum, soap, and the \$5 bill and walked out. he seemed hurt that i didn't just give him the bar of soap. whatever, when i'm in shopping mode, i'm not up for giving people stuff. especially when their economic situation is such that they can afford things

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like soap. that's not the case in places like Sri Lanka, where they're dirt poor and have nothing. i'm all about helping those guys out however possible.

shortly after the kissing-my-forehead/soap scandal ended, i went back to work and the egyptians got off the ship and that was the end my tale of egypt. as i said, not too exciting, but a story nonetheless.

we are now at the southern portion of the Red Sea and will be in Pirate waters by about dinner time tomorrow. since the whole piracy thing spread to the US Fleet, we've been talking about it a lot. we've always taken precautions throughout these waters, but we've started to discuss the actual plans for if an attack takes place, how we will respond.

as i said, we are heading towards the U.A.E. and as such will be in pirated waters for the next several days. once again, we're considered fairly safe due to our size and speed. many ships traverse these waters every day and most are slower and lower to the water than us, making them much easier targets to hit. we are larger than a US Navy Aircraft Carrier, and are capable of speeds up to 24 knots (about 28 mph)– which is quite fast for anything this large.

we are capable of locking up the entire ship from the inside, with the only possible access being windows on the bridge, which is 7 stories above the main deck and about 215 feet above the water. the only “weapons” we have onboard are firehoses, twist locks, and flare guns, so basically if they were to board, we'd have to either comply, or pull a macgyver.

do not worry about it too much please, i'm sure that i will be safe and that everything will work out just fine. i just know that the media is having a field day with the piracy issue now that it has spread to the american public.

love ya very much!

-Tyler