CHESAPEAKE
(Hess Voyager)
Beaumont Reserve Fleet
Beaumont vicinity
Jefferson County
Texas

HAER TX-117
HAER TX-117

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Chesapeake
(*Hess Voyager*)

HAER No. TX-117

Location:	Beaumont Reserve Fleet, Neches River, Beaumont vicinity, Jefferson County, Texas
Type of Craft:	Petroleum tanker
MARAD Design No.:	Stm/50K
Builder's Hull No.:	4603
Official Registry No.:	296863
IMO No.:	6420056
Navy Designation:	T-AOT-5084
Principal Measurements:	Length (waterline): 708′ Length (over all): 736′ Beam: 102′ Draft (maximum): 39′ Deadweight: 50,023 long tons Gross registered tonnage: 27,015 Net registered tonnage: 19,148 Maximum continuous shaft horsepower: 15,000 hp Service speed: 15 knots (The listed dimensions are as of 2011, but it should be noted that draft, displacement, and tonnages were subject to alteration over time as well as variations in measurement.)
Propulsion:	Steam turbines geared to a single shaft and propeller.
Dates of Construction:	Launch: August 18, 1964 Delivery: October 29, 1964
Designer:	Sinclair Oil Corporation
Builder:	Bethlehem Steel Company, Sparrows Point Shipyard, Baltimore, Maryland
Original Owner:	Hess Shipping Corporation (Hess Oil & Chemical Corporation)
Present Owner:	Maritime Administration U.S. Department of Transportation
Names:	*Hess Voyager* (1964–1980) *Chesapeake* (1980–present)

Disposition: Laid up in the National Defense Reserve Fleet

Significance: Built as the *Hess Voyager* and acquired by the government in 1987, the petroleum tanker *Chesapeake* was assigned for twenty years to the Ready Reserve Force maintained by the navy's Military Sealift Command. It was used as needed to support American military operations around the world. Equipped in 1989 with the Offshore Petroleum Discharge System for discharging cargo on undeveloped shores, the ship operated in the Persian Gulf during the first Gulf War, was stationed at San Francisco during the 1990s, and supported U.S. forces in the Indian and Pacific oceans from 2001 to 2006 through deployment to the prepositioning force based at the island of Diego Garcia. Since 2009, the ship has been laid up in the National Defense Reserve Fleet at Beaumont, Texas.

Author: Michael R. Harrison, 2011

Project Information: This project is part of the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a long-range program to document historically significant engineering and industrial works in the United States. The Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, administers the HAER program.

The project was prepared under the direction of Todd Croteau (HAER Maritime Program Coordinator). Jet Lowe (HAER Photographer) created large format photographs, and Michael R. Harrison (Historian) wrote the historical report.

Description:

The *Chesapeake* is a bulk oil tanker. It has a raked stem, cruiser stern, one complete deck, an enclosed forecastle, and a single deckhouse located at the stern. The ship is propelled by two Bethlehem steam turbines geared to a single shaft and propeller. Two boilers manufactured by Combustion Engineering produce the steam for the turbines, turbo generators, and other ancillary machinery.

History:

The *Chesapeake* was built in 1964 as the *Hess Voyager* for the Hess Oil & Chemical Corporation at Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point Shipyard in Baltimore. Intended for the transport of crude oil and refined petroleum products between the company's refineries and terminals along the U.S. Gulf and East coasts, the *Hess Voyager* was the first new ship the Hess Corporation had ever ordered. The balance of its fleet at that time comprising jumboized World War II–era T-2 tankers.

Bethlehem Steel reused the design of the tanker *Sinclair Texas* (now the *Petersburg*) to build the *Hess Voyager*. According to an article by Edward A. Morrow in the *New York Times*, the *Sinclair Texas*, completed in June 1963 for the Sinclair Oil Corporation, was designed by the Sinclair Corporation itself. Its bridge-aft design—where the navigating bridge and officers' quarters were placed aft instead of in their own midships deck house—was intended to reduce construction costs and operating expenses. The *Sinclair Texas* and the *Hess Voyager* are early examples of large American-built tankers with such a design. Other cost-saving features incorporated into the earlier ship and duplicated on the later one were automatic cargo-handling pumps hydraulically controlled from the deck and zinc-coated ("Dimetcoted") interior and exterior metal surfaces to reduce corrosion and the need for painting.

The *Hess Voyager* was sponsored at its launch by Norma Hess (*née* Wilentz), the wife of company president Leon Hess. It was given the name of a previous company ship that had been sold in 1963.

After a number of years in service, the ship was sold to Keystone Shipping, which renamed it *Chesapeake* in 1980. In December 1987, Keystone transferred the ship to the Maritime Administration under the latter's Ship Exchange Program for use by Military Sealift Command (MSC), the navy's ocean-cargo agency. In 1989, the ship was equipped with the navy's Offshore Petroleum Discharge System, a means of offloading cargo in areas without port facilities. This system comprised on-deck reels for flexible conduit, new high-pressure cargo pumps, and gantries and cranes for stowing and launching the system's submersible mooring platform, buoys, portable shore terminals, and support boats.

The *Chesapeake* was assigned to MSC's Ready Reserve Force where it was maintained ready for rapid activation when needed to support Department of Defense activities. Its first major deployment in this role was in the Persian Gulf during the first Gulf War.

The *Chesapeake* was outported to San Francisco during the 1990s. From 2001 to 2006, it supported U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf and the Indian and Pacific oceans through a long-term deployment to the prepositioning force based at the remote island of Diego Garcia. Since 2009, the ship has been laid up in the National Defense Reserve Fleet at Beaumont, Texas.

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Jet Lowe, photographer, April 2009

TX-117-1	Perspective view, port quarter.
TX-117-2	Perspective view, port side.
TX-117-3	Stern view. *Chesapeake* lies at left. Moored alongside it from left to right are the tankers *Potomac*, *American Osprey*, and *Mount Vernon*.
TX-117-4	Bow view with the tankers *Potomac* and *American Osprey* moored alongside.
TX-117-5	View looking forward across the bow of the *Chesapeake*. The lifeboat in the foreground is that of the tanker *Potomac*.
TX-117-6	View of the upper deck looking aft. Various elements of the Offshore Petroleum Discharge System are visible. At lower right are three of the ship's eight conduit reels. Next and aft are five service boats, from right to left a tow boat, a dive boat, an LRB, and two more tow boats. The crane for launching the boats sits aft of them. View taken from the tanker *Potomac*.

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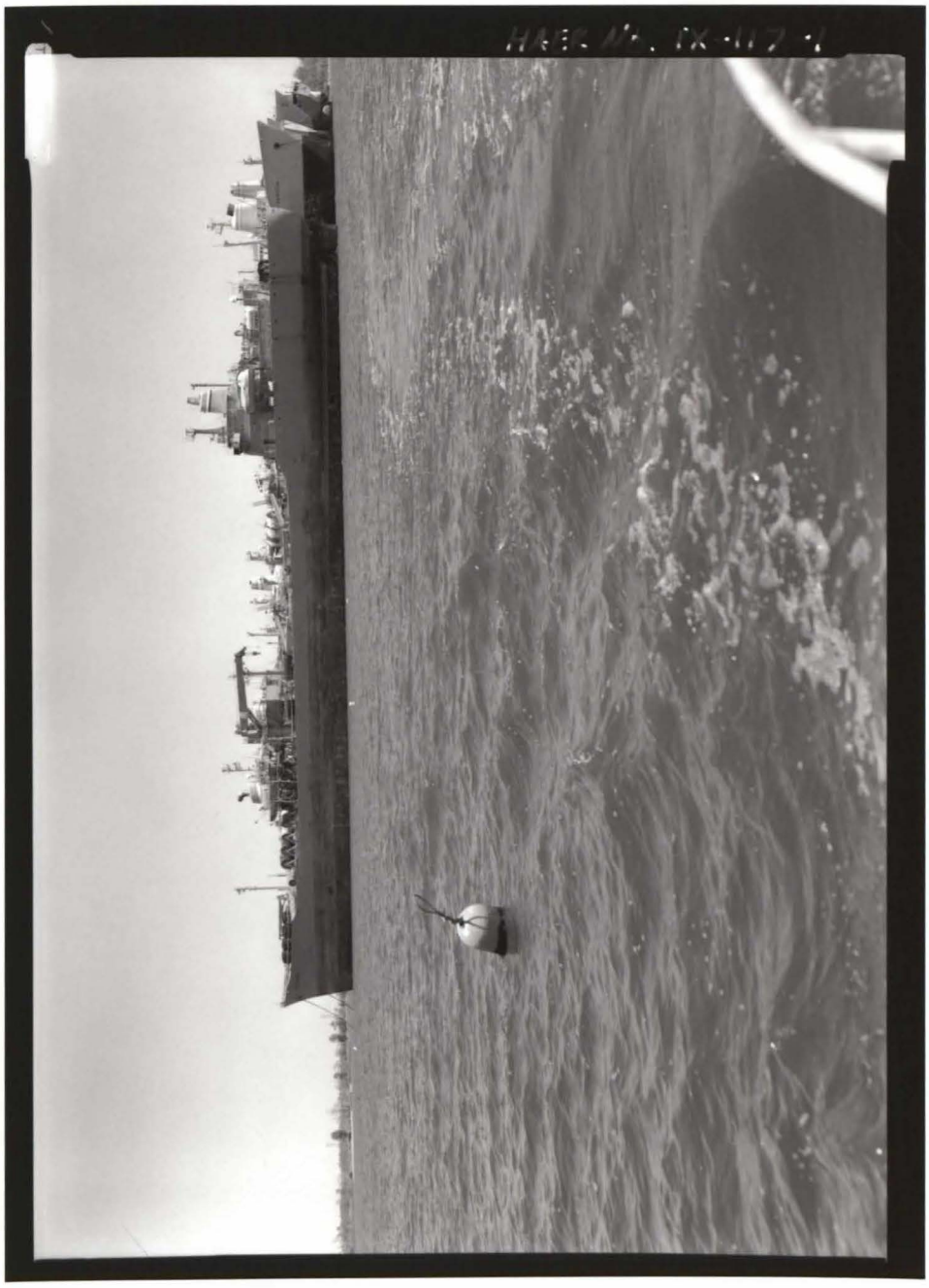

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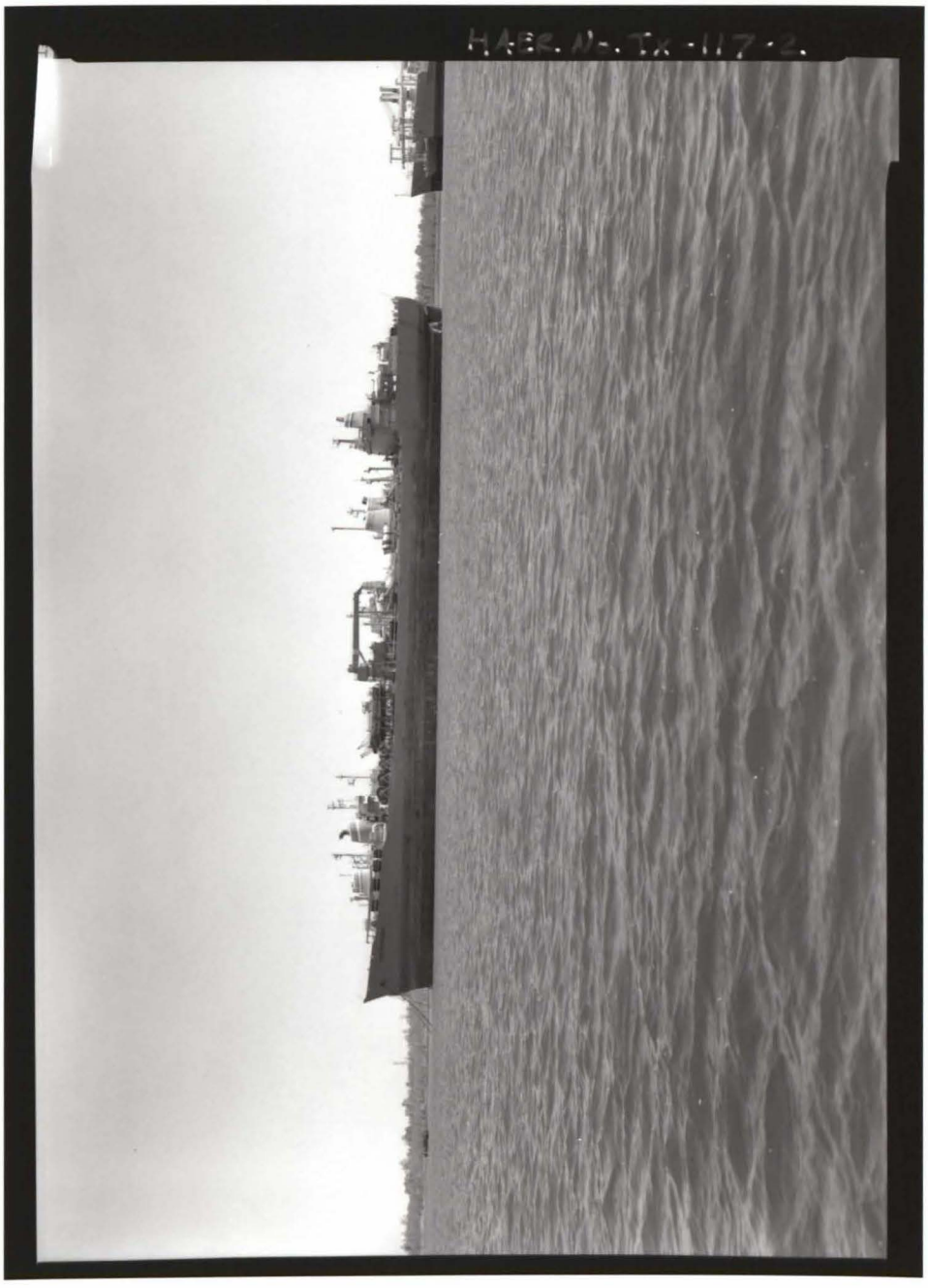

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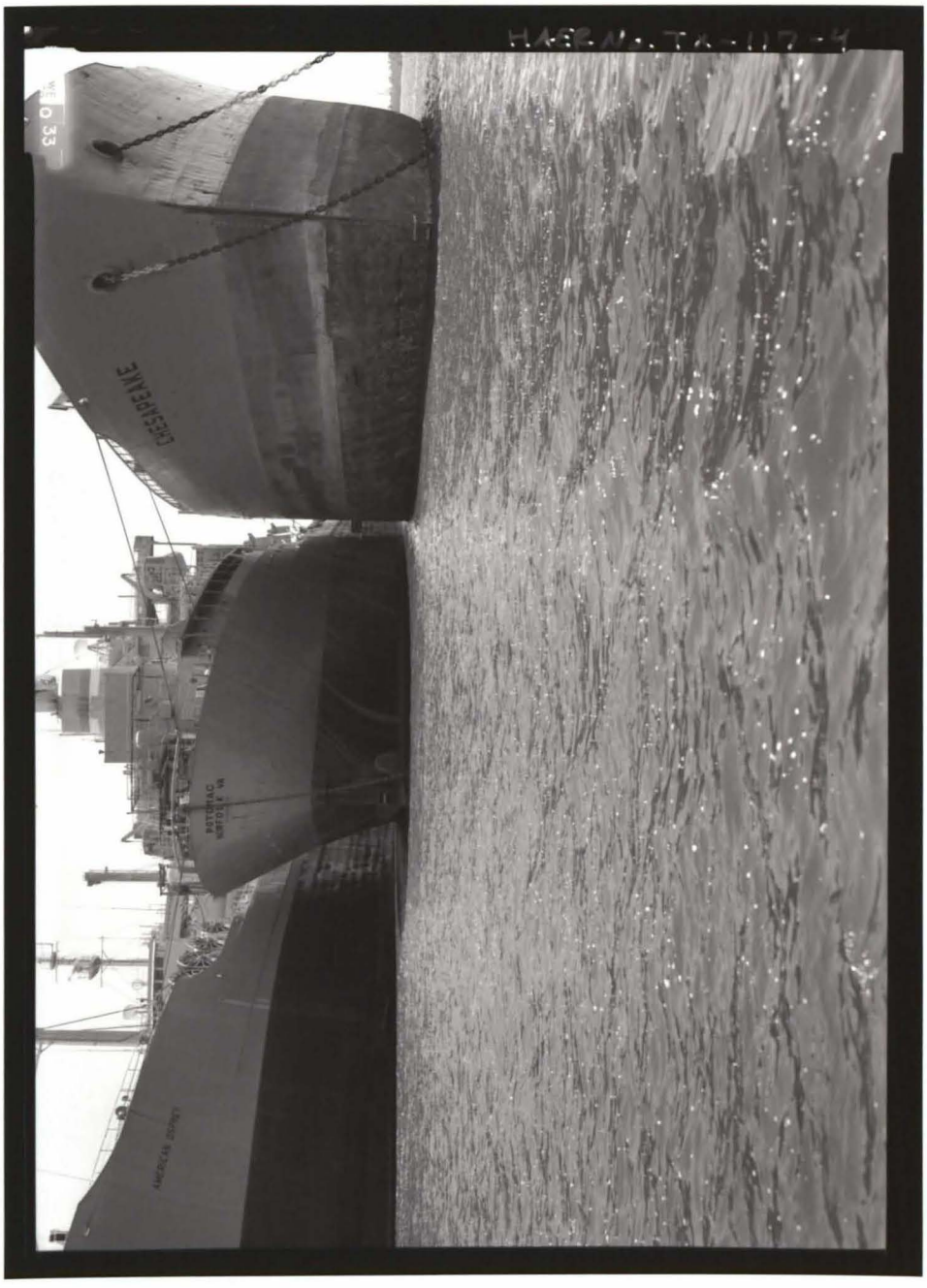

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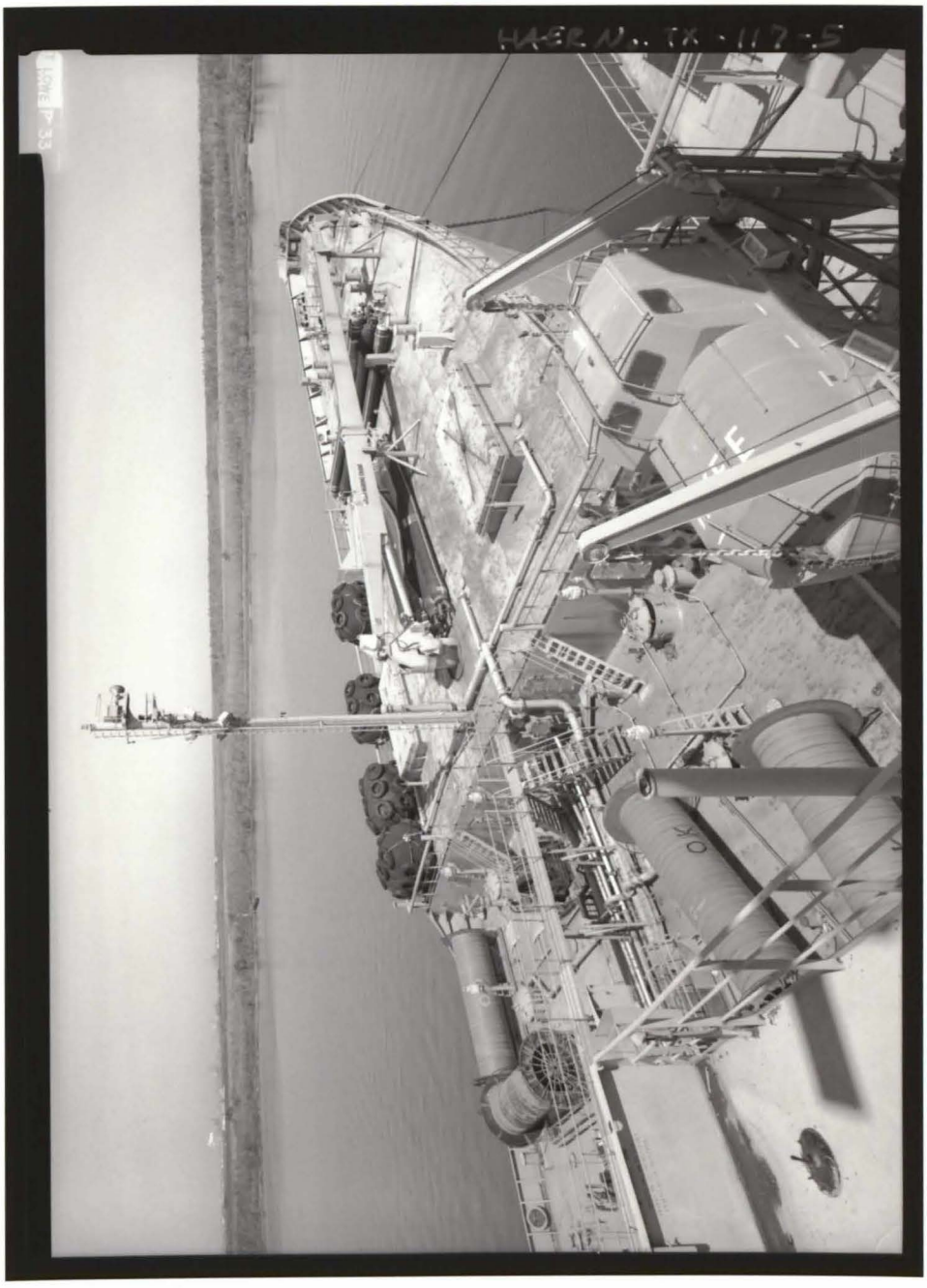

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