

Zeitschrift: IABSE reports = Rapports AIPC = IVBH Berichte
Band: 37 (1982)

Artikel: Design of the steel gates for the eastern scheldt storm surge barrier
Autor: Ypey, E. / Weijde, H. v.d.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-28955>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 01.04.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Design of the Steel Gates for the Eastern Scheldt Storm Surge Barrier

Dimensionnement des vannes en acier pour le barrage anti-tempête de l'Escaut oriental

Bemessung der stählernen Schützen des Sturmflutwehres an der Ostschelde

E. YPEY

Chief design engineer
Ministry of Traffic and Waterstaat
Voorburg, the Netherlands

H. v.d. WEIJDE

Senior design engineer
Ministry of Traffic and Waterstaat
Voorburg, the Netherlands

SUMMARY

The steel gates of the barrier have main support structures of tubular steel trusses. Heavy storms will create high stresses in the tubular connections because of stress concentration. As the waves have periods of 6 to 10 seconds, some 15'000 load cycles may be expected in a 24 hour storm. For economic reasons the designers expect and accept fatigue cracks after 30 to 40 years of use and will give special instructions for inspection on that basis.

RESUME

Les vannes en acier du barrage sont constituées d'une structure principale en treillis composé de tubes d'acier. Des contraintes élevées dans les assemblages entre tubes sont dues à des effets de concentration de contraintes, lors de violentes tempêtes. Les vagues ayant une période de 6 à 10 secondes, il peut se produire quelques 15'000 cycles de charge lors d'une tempête de 24 heures. Pour des raisons économiques, les ingénieurs projeteurs prévoient et acceptent l'apparition de fissures de fatigue après une durée d'utilisation de 30 à 40 ans et fournissent des instructions spéciales pour un contrôle des ouvrages.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Tragkonstruktion der stählernen Schützen des Sturmflutwehres besteht aus Rohrträgern. Infolge der Spannungskonzentration verursacht ein schwerer Sturm hohe Spannungen in den Verbindungen. Da die Wellen Wiederkehrperioden von 6 bis 10 Sekunden aufweisen, ergeben sich ungefähr 15'000 Belastungszyklen während eines Sturmes von 24 Stunden Dauer. Aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen werden bei einer Nutzungsdauer von 30 bis 40 Jahren Ermüdungsbrüche akzeptiert und spezielle Inspektionsvorschriften erlassen.



General description of the design of the flood barrier

The mouth of the estuary of the Eastern Scheldt has three channels, named Hammen, Schaar and Roompot. Between the channels, totally 3,5 kilometers wide, is shallow water in which islands constructions are made (fig. 1).

In the three channels 66 piers, forming 63 apertures, will be placed on 45 m centre-to-centre distance. The piers are 45 m high and have base plates measuring 25 x 50 m². The sills between the piers will be increased in height and box-beams will span the piers, thereby achieving the desired effective flow opening of 14.000 m² between sills and box-beams. The tidal range will still be 77% of what it is today and as a result of that, the salt

water tidal environment in the Eastern Scheldt will be kept intact. This will conserve the mussel and oyster cultures and other specific flora and fauna. A steel gate will be installed between each pair of piers. Under normal conditions the gates are open, allowing seawater to flow in and out the Eastern Scheldt. The existing environment will thus be kept intact. Under storm conditions the gates will be closed. The hydraulic electro-mechanical devices which operate the gates, will be housed in the prestressed concrete bridge elements spanning the piers.

Steel gates

The closure system of the flood barrier consists of a static part, the sill and box-beam and a mobile part, the steel gates. There are 63 steel gates with a gross flow profile of 18.000 m². The gross flow profile of 18.000 m² has an effective profile of 14.000 m² taking flow contraction and blocking of two gates for maintenance into account. With the effective flow profile of 14.000 m² a tidal range of 2.70 metres is achieved.

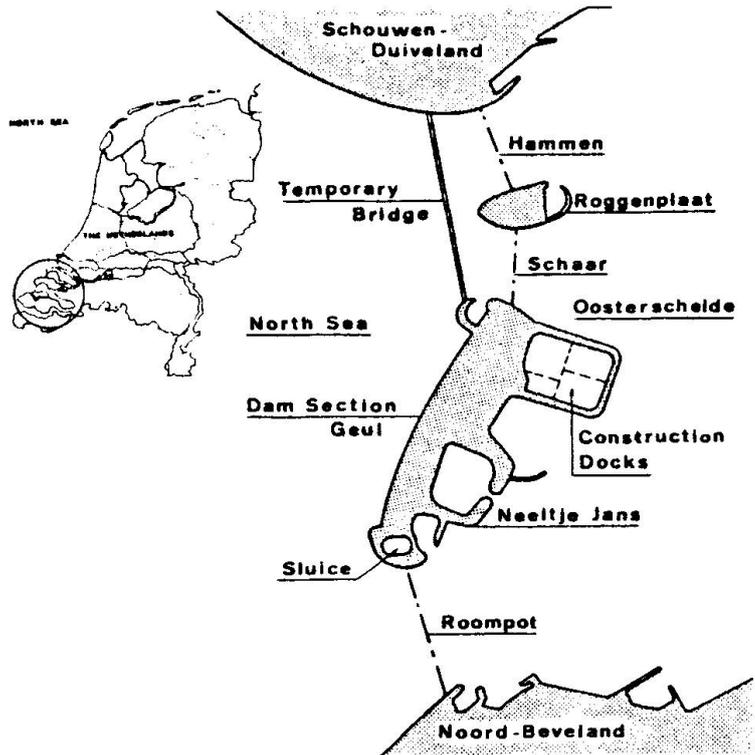


fig. 1 The mouth of the Oosterschelde with trace of stormflood barrier

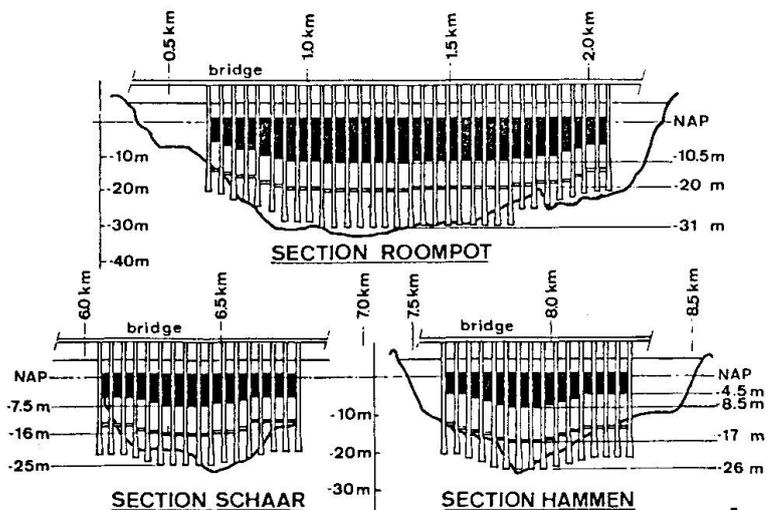
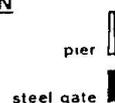


fig.2 THE THREE SECTIONS OF THE FLOOD BARRIER



The 63 steel gates are divided over the three channels as follows:
 15 in the Hammen;
 16 in the Schaar van Roggenplaat;
 32 in the Roompot.

These numbers are determined by the flow volumes in the channels. The height dimension of the steel gates will be determined by the cross-sectional profile of the channel (see also fig. 2) and varies in steps of one metre from 5.90 metres to 11.90 metres; weights vary between 300 and 520 tons. In their closed position the steel gates extend from the concrete sills upwards to Amsterdam Zero + 1.20 metres (the under side of the box-beams). From Amsterdam Zero + 1.20 metres to Amsterdam Zero + 5.80 metres the concrete box-beam acts as a barrier. The thickness of the gates is 5.40 metres. There will be 7 different types of gates, due to the difference in height. Because the piers, between which the steel gates are sliding up and down, are founded independent of each other, positioning tolerances (with respect to centre-to-centre distances and nonparallelity) will have to be

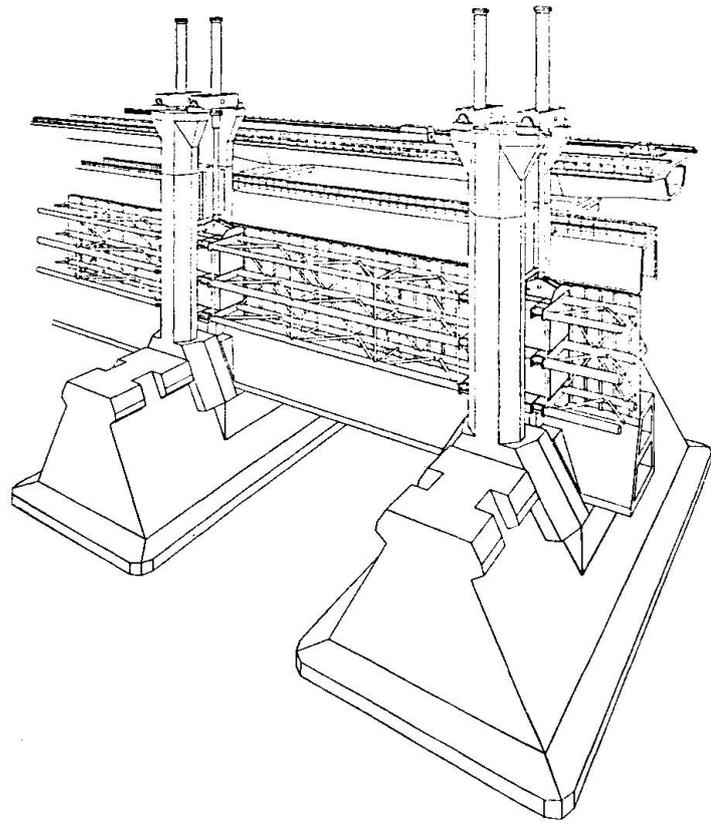


fig. 3 Artist impression of flood barrier

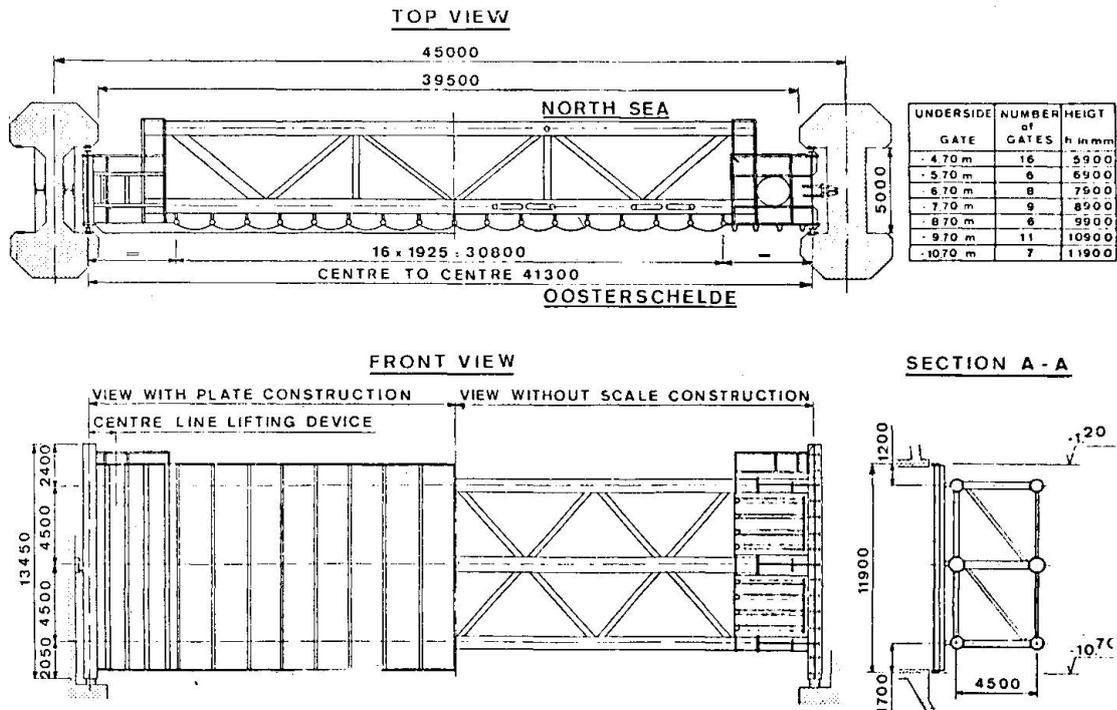


fig. 4 Construction of steel gate



- a. the location of the gate in the barrier;
 - b. the relation of tide and wave height;
 - c. the "opened periods and the "closed" periods of the gate;
 - d. the shape of the construction having effect on the transfer;
- wave → wave loading → stress in construction.

Extensive calculations have been made to determine the probability of the dynamic loading on each gate. An illustration of the distribution of the dynamic loading of gate number 16 in the Roompot is given in table 1. Since the periods of the loadings due to water level difference are long, their loading effect can be neglected in the calculations of the effects of the dynamic loadings. Resulting, consideration is only given to the wave loading, the total number of loadings in 200 years is given in table 2.

In order to receive a more or less identical safety guarantee for all the gates, the load-spectra of the various main members of the gates have been reduced to a standard load-spectrum. This method is acceptable since the main members are of an identical construction type and therefore the same S-N curve is applicable. For the tube truss constructions this is the X-X line of the Americal Welding Society (fig. 5).

For the reduction it is acceptable to use the second branch of the S-N curve. The equation of this branch is approximately:

$$\log N = 4.38 \log S + 11.32 \quad (S \text{ in ksi})$$

$$N = C_1 \times S^{4.38} \quad (C_1 = \text{constant})$$

Since the stress S is linear dependent on the loading L, it can also be written:

$$N = C_2 \times L^{4.38}$$

Taking:

L_r = loading to which actual loading is reduced

L_a = actual loading

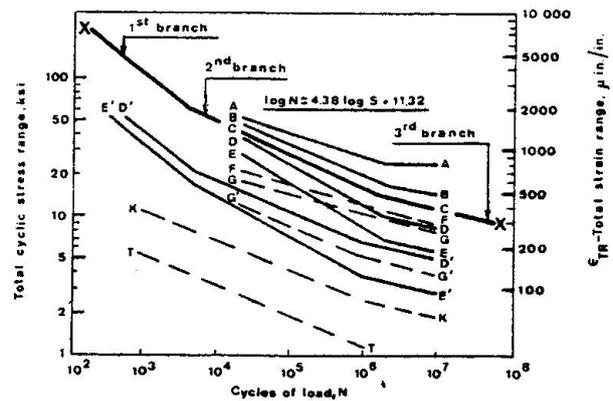


fig.5 Allowable fatigue stress and strain ranges for stress categories (American Welding Society)

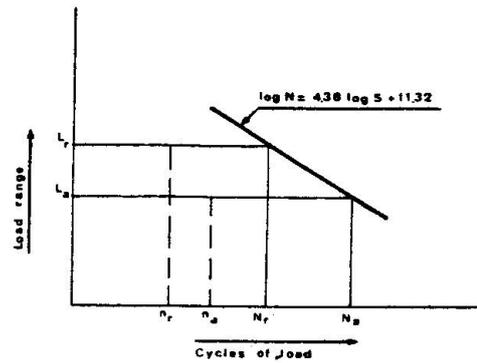


fig.6 S-N curve

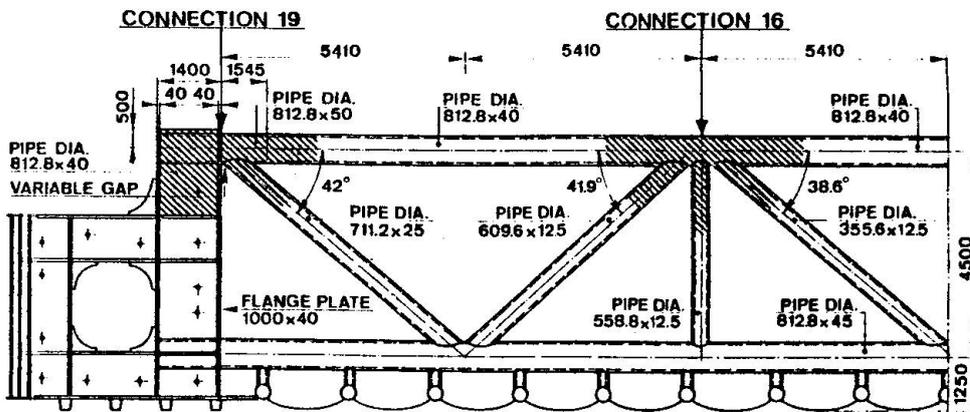


fig.7 LOCATION OF CONNECTIONS VERIFIED IN LABORATORY



n_r = reduced number of cycles
 n_a = actual number of cycles

then

$$n_r = n_a \times \left(\frac{L_a}{L_r} \right)^{4.38}$$

This means that n_r cycles of loading L_r give the same result towards fatigue as n_a cycles of loading L_a . For the gate number 16 in the Roompot this method of reduction results in the number of reduced loadings as given in table 2. For the reduced loading is taken

$$L = 100 \text{ KN/lin. metre}$$

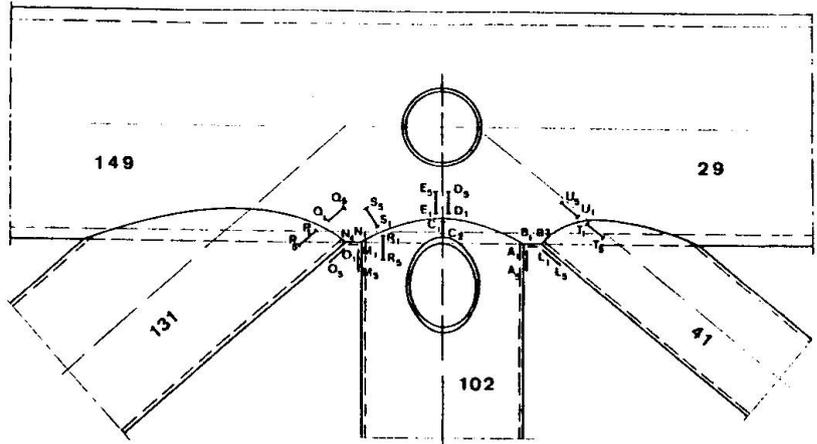


Fig. 8 LOCATION OF STRAIN GAUGES IN CONNECTION No. 16

Stress concentrations, strain concentrations (S.C.F. - S.N.C.F.)

For the less complicated mutual connections of the tubes the calculation method of Kuang, Potvin and Leick [1] for the determination of the stress concentration factor has been applied in the preliminary design phase.

For the more complicated connections the three dimensional effects were too large. For these connections perspex models were tested to verify the S.N.C.F. (see fig. 7). The strain ganges were placed in such positions that the required informations regarding the hot spot stresses would be received (see fig. 8). In fig. 9 the forces and bending moments acting in the members in the neighbourhood of the connection are illustrated. The forces and moments in the members I and II were small as compared to the other forces and are neglected in the model tests.

The results of the model tests are given in figure 10.

For an easy comparison the results are made dimensionless by dividing the measured strain by the strain due to the axial force in member 41. From fig. 8 and 10 it can be seen that the highest strain appears at the crown position of the connection of member 102 to the chord.

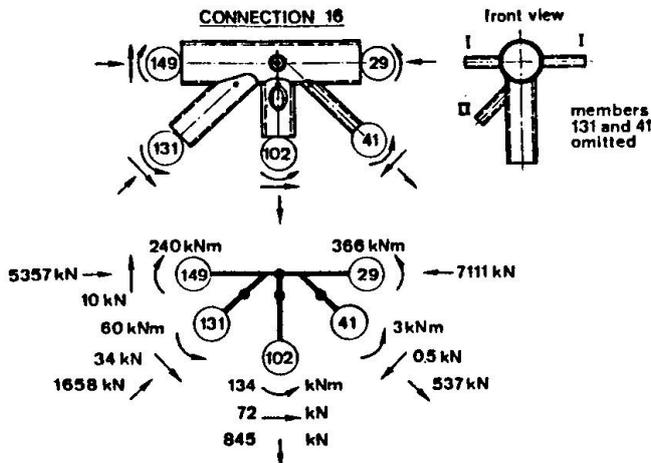


Fig. 9 FORCES AND MOMENTS ACTING IN THE MEMBERS OF CONNECTION 16

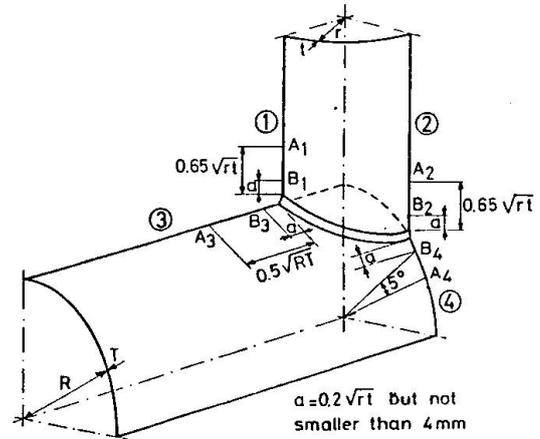


Fig. 11 Locations of straingages for linear extrapolation to weldtoe to determine strain concentration factor.

The extrapolation of the measured strains to the weld toe has been carried out according to the procedure outlined by the European Working Group III

"Tubular joints", see also fig. 11. This linear extrapolation includes the influence of the geometry of the joint and the geometry of the weld, but not the influence of the condition of the weld toe such as notches, the angle between weld and parent metal etc. These influences must be taken into account by considering the applicable S-N curve.

Due to the difference in height there are 7 different types of gates, which are composed of 2 or 3 trussed girders. As a result of the difference in loading the total number of different types of trussed girders is 13. In order to apply the results of the investigated connection for other geometries the results have been converted in stresses and compared with the calculated stress

concentration factors (S.C.F.).

For calculating the S.C.F. of a K-T joint with branches of which the diameters and loads are not equal, formulas are not available in the literature, even if the members I and II (see fig. 9) are omitted. Considering the joint as a K-joint, consisting of the branches 131 and 102 (see fig. 9) and all branches having the diameter of member 102, the best agreement is obtained by using the formulas of Wordsworth [2].

The strain in joints with different parameters is calculated by

$$\epsilon_i = \sigma_{hs} \times \left(\frac{\epsilon_{\text{measured}}}{\sigma_{\text{hs calculated}}} \right) \text{ joint 16}$$

From fatigue tests it has appeared that the first visible crack occurs at appr. 25% of the lifetime of the specimen [3].

Since the design lifetime of a gate structure must be 120 years and the adopted AWS X-X curve is based on complete failure of the connection, it means that it is accepted that the first visible crack will occur after approximately 30 years. After every storm-closure the most critical joints of the gates will be inspected. If a crack is not perceived immediately, it would not mean that a gate will fail during the next storm.

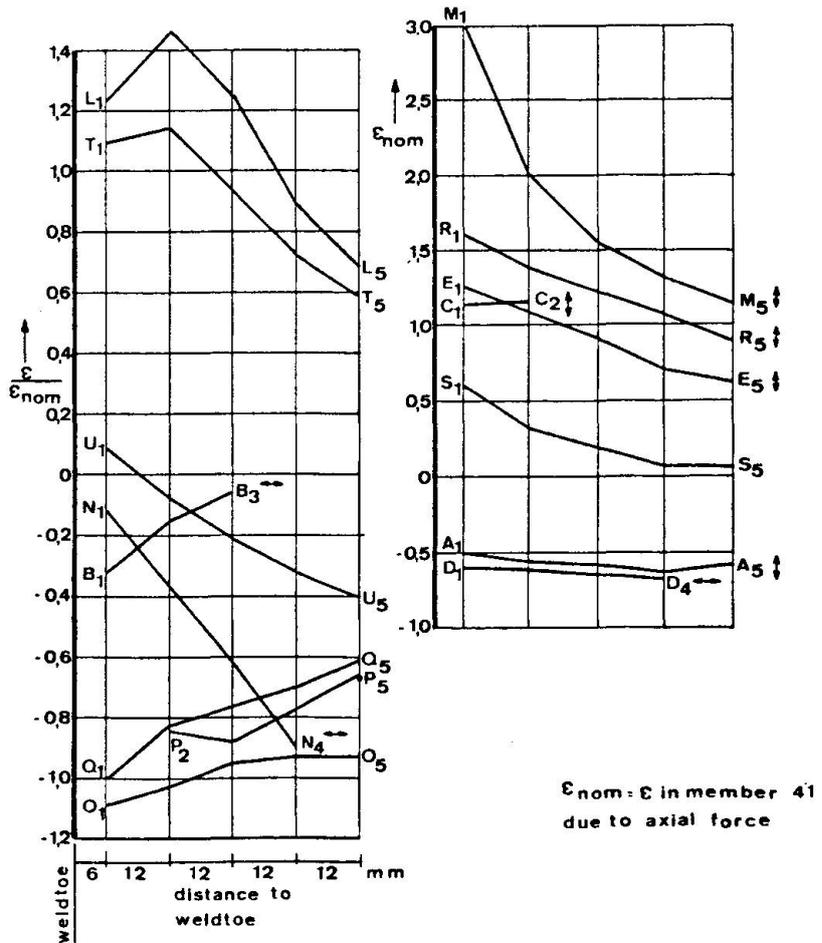


fig 10 $\frac{\epsilon}{\epsilon_{\text{norm}}}$ in connection 16



The ratio between the number of cycles after which the crack is completely through the wall and the number of cycles required for the first visible crack is greater than 1,5 [3], e.g. for gate number 16 appr. 225.000 load cycles may occur after the first visible crack is in existence, before that crack is completely through and through. The total number of load cycles during a 24-hours storm is approx. 15.000, this means that approx. 15 heavy storms are required after occurrence of the first crack before complete failure of the connections has been reached.

After a crack has been perceived, the crack will be repaired. From fatigue tests on repaired tubular joints it has appeared that the fatigue strength is equal or even greater than the fatigue strength of the original specimen [3]. All joints are designed as non-overlapped joints to ensure inspection and possibility of reparation of all welds.

In order to carry out a reliable and quick inspection of the critical joints an investigation is started to the application of acoustic or magnetic methods, capable of detecting cracks in uncleaned surfaces.

- [1] Kuang, J.G.; Potvin, A.B.; and Leick, R.D.:
"Stress Concentrations in Tubular Joints", paper OTC 2205 presented at the 7th Annual Offshore Technology Conference, Houston, Texas, May 1975
- [2] Wordsworth, A.C. "Stress concentration factors at K and KT tubular joints"
- [3] Dijkstra, O.D.; De Back, J.:
"Fatigue strength of welded tubular T-and X-joints", paper OTC 3696, presented at 12th Annual OTC in Houston, Texas, May 1980
- [4] De Back, J. and Vaessen, G.H.G.:
"Fatigue and corrosion fatigue behaviour of offshore steel structures", ECSC Convention 7210-KB/6/602 (J.7.1 f/76), April 1981