



THE STORY.

1918-2023



PREFACE.



PREFACE

It was in the late autumn of 1918 when Michael Zeck (1891-1967) went into business for himself, opened a locksmith's store and specialized in mechanical engineering. With this step and his courage to take entrepreneurial risks, he laid the foundation for today's company, the pioneer and world market leader in the field of transmission line construction and the development and production of the special machines required.

The first century of ZECK was worthily celebrated in October 2018. Within the scope of the celebrations at that time, the idea arose to record the results and milestones of ZECK's corporate history in a chronicle. After senior boss Fritz Zeck (2nd generation) was called away to eternity on February 19, 2021, at the age of 91 after a long and full life, where he was followed by his wife Gisela on March 23, 2021 - less than five weeks later - this chronicle is to be dedicated in a special way to the memory of both of them.

Of great importance, therefore, are the conversations held in 2018 in preparation for the anniversary with Fritz Zeck, whose experiences will find their place here. It is also his anecdotes that impressively reflect the spirit of ZECK and are worth passing down and preserving. This chronicle reveals how these stories became a story of success.

It is also a tribute to all the employees who, day after day, give their best to move the company forward, who contribute their talents to meet customer needs; but it is also a tribute to all the partners and customers who, through their trust, have contributed to making this company what it is today - a symbol of excellence, progress, and innovation. They are all part of the whole; they are all part of the ZECK history of success.

This chronicle is a journey that leads through crucial milestones, challenges and triumphs, documenting at each stage the growth and

THREE GENERATIONS.

transformation of a vision into reality. It reflects the evolution that the company has undergone over time. From a small local company to a global leader, each step opened a new door to increase the impact and range of the company. New technologies were introduced, modern production methods were developed, and strategic partnerships were formed - all of which helped the company to grow and prosper. We invite you to explore this chronicle of the company's history and be inspired by its history and success. Immerse yourself in a world of innovation, passion, and perseverance.

THREE GENERATIONS OF ENTREPRENEURS



Michael Zeck

1891-1967



Fritz Zeck

1929-2021



Michael Zeck

*1966

Three generations of entrepreneurs have shaped ZECK, each in their own way. Each generation brings its unique skills, perspectives, and innovations, leaving its mark on the company's development and success. The first generation with Michael Zeck (1891-1967) laid the foundation for the company. With pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit, he led the company through the challenges and uncertainties of the early days. Through hard work, risk-taking and an unwavering vision, the foundation was laid on which the company could build.

The second generation with Fritz Zeck (1929-2021) followed in the founder's footsteps and brought in new ideas and strategies. With a fresh look at the market and innovations

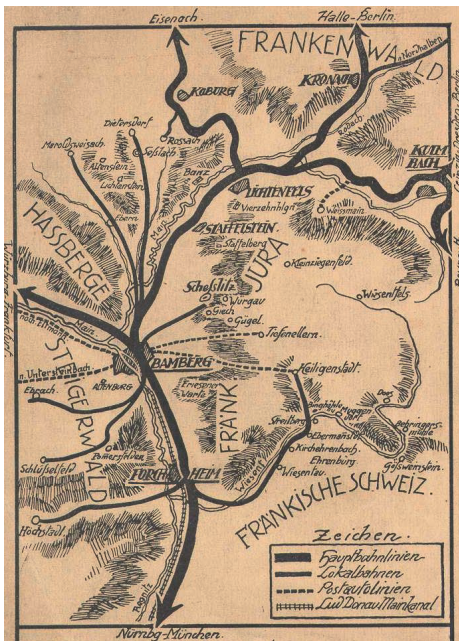
LOCATION.

in technology, production, or sales, he contributed to developing the company and taking it to new levels. He built on the experience of the first generation but set new impulses to stay on the road to success and keep the company competitive.

The third generation with Michael Zeck (*1966) is characterized by new challenges and a constantly changing business environment. Michael Zeck brings modern ideas, technologies, and digital strategies to lead the company into the future. He is responsible for ensuring that the company meets current trends and requirements.

Thus, each generation of ZECK has played its part in shaping the company's culture and driving its success. This chronicle captures the history and achievements of each generation and shows how the company has grown because of these individual contributions.

ONCE ALMOST RAILWAY STATION - THE LOCATION



Transport connection of Schesslitz in 1912

The story of ZECK begins in 1918, the fateful year in German history after the First World War. However, it is first worth taking a look at the company's current location, which is itself historical ground in many respects. This does not refer to the more than 1,200-year history of the town of Schesslitz, beginning with the first mention around the year 805, or even to the 6,500-year-old evidence of early settlements from the early Neolithic period, but rather to the fact that tracks were once to be laid precisely on today's ZECK testing site for specialized rail vehicles, namely the extension of the railroad from Schesslitz to Hollfeld.

On September 30, 1908, the Bamberg-Schesslitz railroad line was inaugurated. Under cannon salute and accompanied by marching music, the first train arrived at Schesslitz station at 11:26 am. Thus, Schesslitz was connected to the Bavarian railroad network. It is said that during the reception on the station square, the festively decorated honorary stand made of light boards collapsed with the guests of honor - just at the moment when the mayor had begun his festive speech. This led

1918.

to tumultuous scenes, which the priest was able to end with the blessing of the locomotive and wagon.

However, Schesslitz was not to remain the final destination. Plans to continue the railroad to Hollfeld and thus ensure the connection to Bayreuth date back to 1894. Spurred on by iron ore discoveries in the Jura, the project was pursued further with different route layouts. One option was to go directly past Burgellern and across the testing grounds to Stadelhofen.

Many communities fought for a direct connection to the railroad line. After the First World War, the idea of continuing the project was discussed once again, but then shelved by the Reich Ministry of Transport in view of the poor economic situation and the shortage of building materials.

THE SETTING IN THE FOUNDING YEAR 1918: LOST WAR, FAMINE AND PANDEMIC

Exactly in this time, the company ZECK was founded. The First World War from 1914 to 1918 was the first war of industrialized powers among and against each other. All the inventions and achievements of industrialization were put to use, including machine guns, tanks, and poison gas. Almost 20 million dead were the result, although there was no fighting at all on German soil in the homeland if you will. On the home front, the advancing duration of the war, due to the Allied naval blockade, the lack of supplies from Russia, and crop failures, meant increasingly severe cuts in daily life due to strict food rationing. Food became scarce, although rural areas were not affected to the same extent as cities.

The winter of 1916/17 and the famine that accompanied it went down in history as Turnip Winter. In total, about 800,000 people died of hunger and malnutrition in Germany from 1914 to 1918. People's health suffered additionally because, due to the rationing of soap to 50 g per month, personal hygiene was only possible to a limited extent; 50 g of a soap that had a fat content of only 20 percent, contained fillers such as clay and soapstone, and could only be obtained through soap cards.

From the spring of 1918, a pandemic in the form of the so-called Spanish flu was added, which in three waves up to 1920 claimed at least 25 million, and according to a balance sheet published in the Bulletin of the History of Medicine in the spring of 2002, even almost 50 million lives, and is comparable to the great plague wave of 1348, which at that time claimed the lives of more than a third of the European population. A peculiarity of the Spanish flu was that it was mainly 20- to 40-year-old people who succumbed to it.

FREISTAAT BAYERN.



Food stamps for flour and bread from the year 1917

After the war was de facto lost from the German point of view, the German High Seas Fleet was to sail out for a final battle against the British Royal Navy by fleet order of the Naval War Command on October 24, 1918, despite Germany's already determined defeat in the war. The mutiny of some ship's crews in Kiel and Wilhelmshaven, which resulted in a sailors' revolt, was directed against this absurd plan. This, in turn, developed within a few days into a revolution that swept the entire empire.

END OF THE MONARCHY - BAVARIA BECOMES A FREE STATE

The revolution led to the proclamation of the Republic in Berlin on November 9, 1918. The abdications of Kaiser Wilhelm II and all other monarchs of the German principalities followed shortly thereafter. In Munich, Bavarian King Ludwig III had already been declared deposed on November 7. This ended the rule of the Wittelsbach dynasty, which had ruled Bavaria since 1180. In the first hour of November 8, 1918, Kurt Eisner of the Independent Social Democrats had proclaimed the "Free State of Bavaria". Political unrest increased significantly in the period that followed. After the assassination of the first Minister President Kurt Eisner on February 21, 1919, the government under Johannes Hoffmann fled with the state parliament to Bamberg and worked here on a constitution for the Free State of Bavaria, which was adopted on August 14, 1919, and went down in the history books as the "Bamberg Constitution". That was the political setting, the framework in which Michael Zeck founded his company, well, started his business.

MICHAEL ZECK.

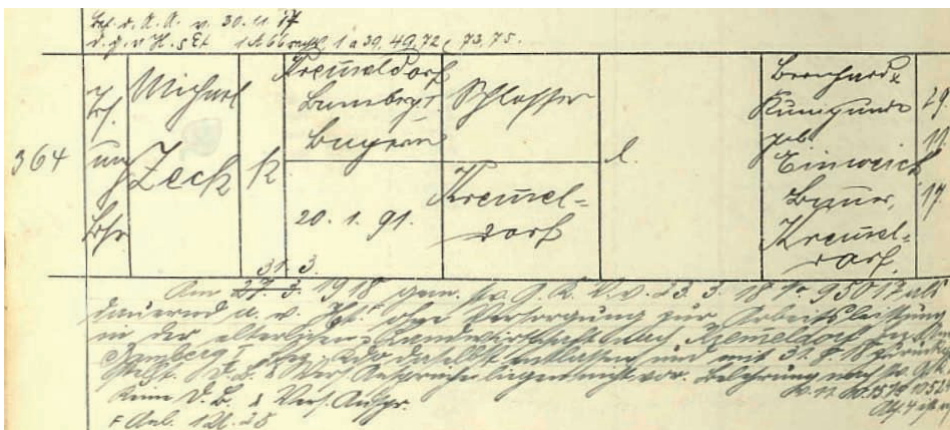
ABOUT THE ROOTS: THE FOUNDER MICHAEL ZECK

Michael Zeck was born on January 21, 1891, in Kremmeldorf near Bamberg, which has been a district of Memmelsdorf since the 1972 municipal area reform. His parents were Bernhard and Kunigunde Zeck, née Einwich. By profession, Michael's parents were "brickyard owners' couple" and farmers. Records of Michael Zeck's life are unfortunately very sparse. Neither in the family archives nor in the city archives of Schesslitz nor in the state archives of Bamberg much information has been found. He was probably already a "hidden champion" back then.

LABOR PERFORMANCE ON THE PARENTAL FARM

The War Archives in Munich hold the muster rolls of soldiers who were called up and registered by the military in Bavaria during the First World War. In volume 19.674, the 13th volume of the Bavarian War Rolls, our Michael Zeck can be found. The files show that as a recruit he formally belonged to the "Train Supply Unit Würzburg 2, Bamberg District Command". "Train" means military transportation and column, i.e., logistics of material. This had developed in the course of the war of position on the western front to France and the months of material battles.

On March 31, 1918, Michael Zeck was deputized to Kremmeldorf as "permanently at the parental farm to perform labor on the parental farm" and deferred until August 31, 1918. This means that during this time he did not have to actively fight with weapons. The supply of food to the population, i.e., the "food battle" on the home front, had meanwhile become the decisive question of survival.



Eintrag von Michael Zeck in der Kriegstammrolle (Auszug)

FOUNDATION.

LOCKSMITH BY PROFESSION: ALL-ROUNDER IN METALWORKING

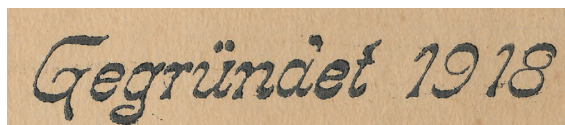
From the record in the war archive it can be seen that Michael Zeck was a locksmith by training and profession. Locksmiths were and are all-rounders in metalworking - from artistic design of gates and fences to mechanical engineering. Michael Zeck developed a keen interest in machinery and technical design at an early stage. From the memories of Fritz Zeck, we know that his father Michael worked in the family brickyard and maintained the machines of the brickyard and the agriculture.

This developed into a real passion for mechanical engineering. Fritz Zeck reported that his father was able to disassemble, analyze, rebuild, and even develop everything himself - right up to complete engines and his own designs. For example, Michael Zeck's brother had lost a leg in World War I, whereupon Michael built him a tricycle with a gasoline engine.

THE FOUNDING DATE

Unfortunately, no exact date beyond the founding year 1918 can be proven, because Michael Zeck, as a small businessman or self-employed craftsman, was not required to register in the commercial register at the district court. The trade roll of the city of Schesslitz, where it should be listed in turn, has been lost or destroyed. In addition, one must know that toward the end of the Second World War, when the Americans stood so to speak in Schesslitz before the door - after the memory of the archive keeper and former mayor Franz Zenk - large parts of the archives, in particular the time starting from 1900 concerning, were burned, because the politically responsible persons feared repressions because of affiliation to the NSDAP or to other NS organizations, which probably included nearly everyone.

Since Michael Zeck had been deferred until August 31, 1918, and was no longer called up for military service, the official start of his activity was probably in the immediate aftermath, i.e., around September 1, 1918, or immediately after the end of the war and the proclamation of the Free State of Bavaria, i.e., in the third week of November (November 11-17) 1918.



Gegründet 1918

FROM KREMMELDORF TO SCHESSLITZ

Michael Zeck's activity and further entrepreneurial growth developed harmoniously from his profession as a locksmith, initially offering his skills in machine maintenance to others. However, there was not enough space for this on the parents' estate. It was probably not centrally located enough, so he moved from the tiny village of Kremmeldorf with 30 houses to the town of Schesslitz, where he set up his business in a half-timbered house with three garage doors at Altenbach 19. There he remained for a decade.

Michael Zeck did all the work for the house and yard, all the locksmith work that was needed in the rural area. From the 1920s, for example, these were:

- Water supply
- Water pumps
- All kinds of installations
- Setting up small gasoline and diesel engines
- Transmissions for feed cutting machines, grist mills, etc.
- Setting up generators

This house Altenbach 19 still exists, it was later the origin of the Schesslitz car dealership Bärenstrauch and today houses a car repair shop.



Fritz Zeck with his grandson Nikolas Weitz in October 2018



Altenbach 19 – First operating location in Schesslitz until 1928

INFLATION.

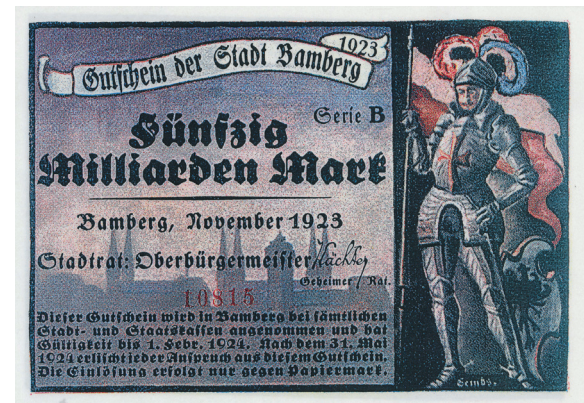
THE INFLATION

In the early 1920s, the German Empire's debt during World War I and the reparations subsequently stipulated in the Versailles Peace Treaty led to gigantic inflation. During this time, it was almost impossible to sell tangible assets, because you had to expect that the profit would immediately vanish into thin air. The municipalities issued emergency money in the form of vouchers so that the economy would not collapse completely.

Inflation peaked in November 1923, when 1 dollar cost an astounding 4.2 trillion marks. For 1 liter of beer, 260 billion marks were due. During this period, trade in capital goods was not possible. It was not until the currency reform of November 20, 1923, with the introduction of the Rentenmark and a radical cut by deleting 12 zeros (1 trillion Reichsmarks to 1 Rentenmark) that conditions changed.



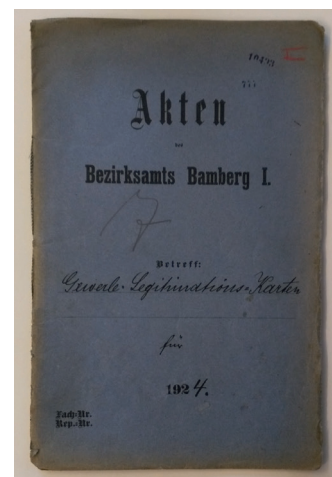
German Reichsbank bill for 1 million marks



Emergency money of the city of Bamberg for 50 billion marks

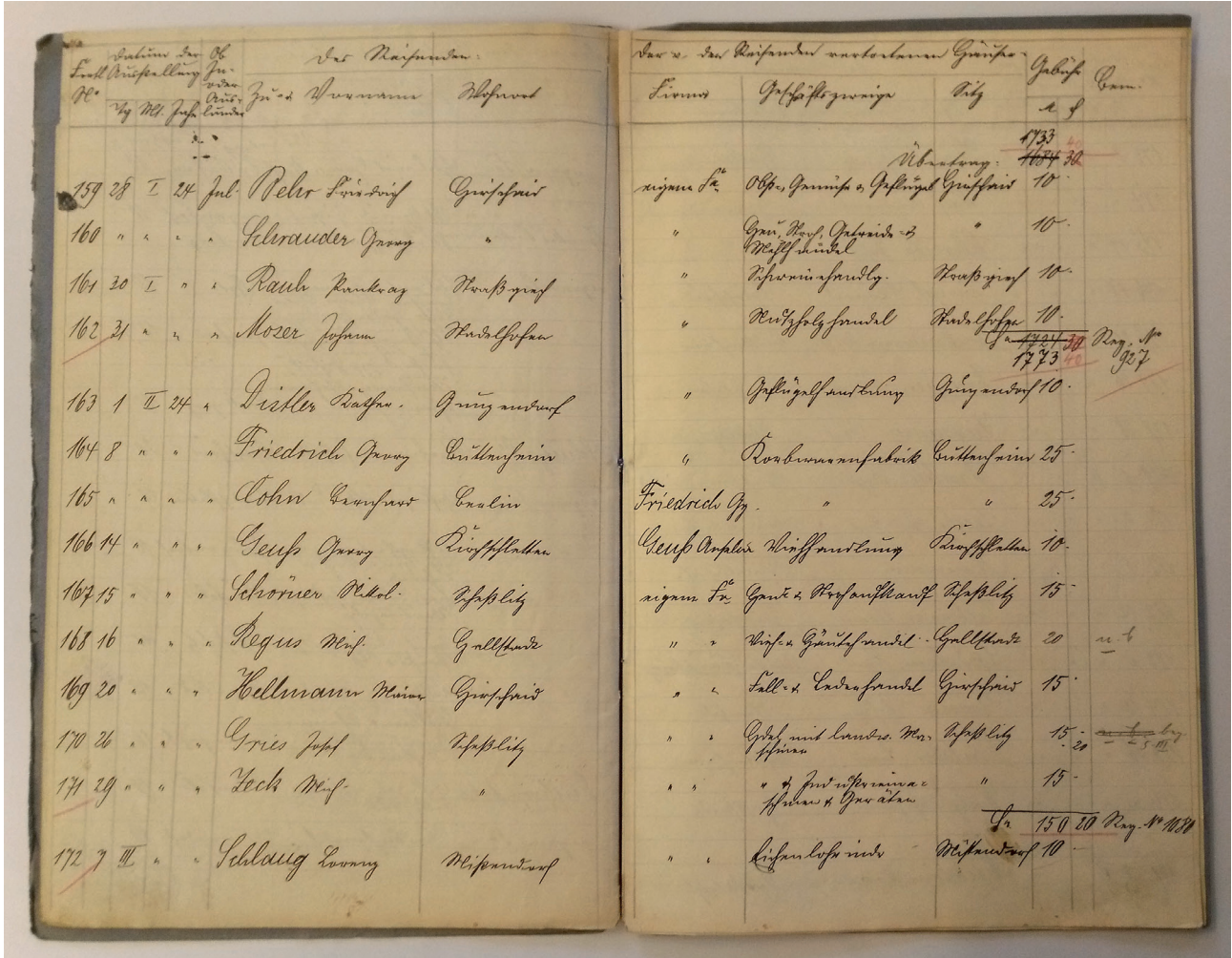
THE TRADE IN MACHINES

At the beginning of 1924, Michael Zeck started trading with agricultural machinery. For this year Michael Zeck was issued a trade card as a trader and commercial traveler for agricultural machinery by the district office of Bamberg. The register of "trade legitimation cards" lists him under number 171 with issue date February 29, 1924, and the business branch "trade in agricultural



Issue of trade card for Michael Zeck 1924

machinery & industrial machinery & equipment", for which a fee of 15 marks had to be paid. It is not uninteresting that Michael Zeck did not limit his line of business to agricultural machinery, but explicitly extended it to industrial machinery as well.



AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY & MECHANICAL ENGINEERING FACILITY

Nevertheless, agricultural machinery in particular, and not only trade, but also "customizing" with oxyacetylene welding, repair, maintenance, and overhaul in the midst of a very strongly agricultural environment between Bamberg and Bayreuth, formed the focus of Michael Zeck's activities, whose company stamp now identified the company as "mechanical engineering facility."

Michael Zeck, Scheßlitz Maschinenbau-Reparaturwerkstätte
Autogene Schweißanlege
Lager landwirtschaftlicher und gewerblicher Maschinen und Motoren - Transmissionsstelle aller Art

Tafelrand Nr. 21
Publikations-Nr. 8978
Bau-Zone
Dachstuhl-Schaltz
Stahlblech-Spannen-Gelege
Flach-Schleife

Lieferung, Reparatur und Einrichtung von
Düsen-Rohr,
-Schiebe-Elektromotoren
und Dampfkräft-Anlagen

Scheßlitz, den 21. Mai 1927.

Rechnung

an Herrn Michael Krug Landwirt in L. S. B. A. R. S.

Bittgebet Scheßlitz: Erlauben Sie mir, wenn Sie innerhalb 8 Tagen nach Empfang der Rechnung zugestimmt werden.
Zahlung in bar ohne Abzug

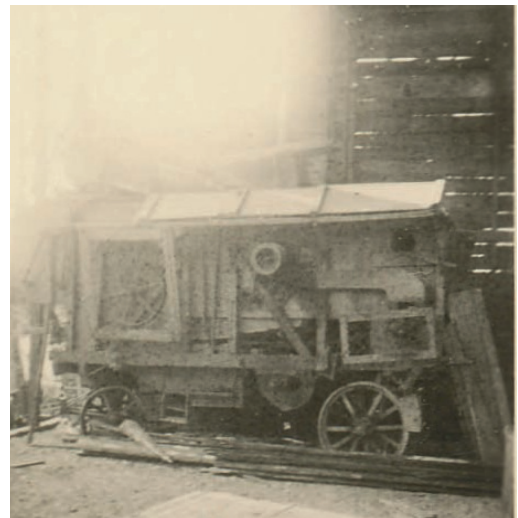
Anzahl	Objekt	1	2	3	4
	Rechnung von 2. 10. 26.				1 6 5
	Futterschneidteil ordnung autog. geschweis				
	Stahl gerichtet u. geschliffen				
4	vermonte Schrauben dazu				6 50
	Arbeit Schweißmaterial u.s.w.				5 50
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Michael Zeck Scheßlitz
Autogene Schweißanlege
Lager landwirtschaftlicher und gewerblicher Maschinen und Motoren - Transmissionsstelle aller Art

OBEREND 21.

Harvesters and combines in particular became a specialty of Michael Zeck. In many villages around Schesslitz, farmers had joined together to operate a threshing machine. These threshing machines were maintained and repaired by Michael Zeck.



Example of a municipal / cooperative threshing machine as maintained by Michael Zeck

THE GOLDEN TWENTIES: FROM ALTENBACH TO OBEREND

Michael Zeck's business, with its broad portfolio of welding and repair work, its wide range of all kinds of spare parts and its own workshop, flourished in terms of technology, machinery and agricultural equipment, his company had earned an excellent reputation in the area.

However, the spatial conditions in Altenbach became increasingly cramped and could not be extended, which is why a new, larger location was sought and found at the address Oberend 21 on the main thoroughfare. At the turn of the year 1927/28, the company was relocated to Oberend and remained there for 65 years until the move to the new company building in Burgellern in 1993.



65 years of head office: Oberend 21, Schesslitz

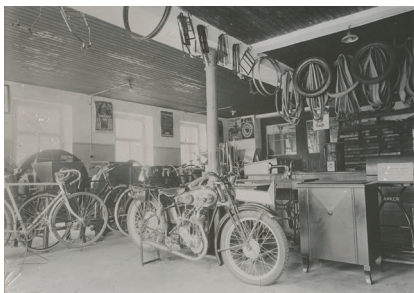
TRIUMPHANT AUTOMOBILE MARCH



Information material of the "German American Petroleum Company" about brand a

The Golden Twenties of the 20th century also marked the triumphal march of the automobile. There was an immediate need here, not so much for dealers, because the car was an absolute luxury item, but for repairmen who also offered spare parts, accessories, and wear parts. Specifically, Schesslitz also lacked a gas station, which is why Michael Zeck had already applied for a concession in 1927, which was approved for him, who from then on also operated as "Car-Service Michael Zeck", on November 10, 1927.

Two tanks were installed with a capacity of 3,000 liters and 2,000 liters, which is very modest from today's point of view. The supplier was the "German American Petroleum Company" based in Nuremberg, from which the ESSO brand later developed. There is also an exchange of correspondence concerning the approval of a "Pump" sign 500 meters away as an indication of the nearest gas station, in which the "German American Petroleum Company" endeavored to explain to the government of Upper Franconia the usefulness of the sign to the general public.



Ladengeschäft im Oberend 21

OBEREND 21: "CAR SERVICE MICHAEL ZECK"

The new location proved to be a bull's eye due to its size, central location, in-house assembly areas and retail store: The store offered motorcycles, bicycles, tubes, coats, rims, sewing machines, as well as a lot of accessories, in addition to the agricultural machinery standing in the background.



Werkstatt im Oberend 21

A look into the workshop shows transmissions and belts on the ceiling, which were used to drive the locksmith's equipment for turning, milling, drilling and grinding. On the right in front is the OPEL "STRICH 16", with which senior boss Fritz Zeck learned to drive.

In the "showroom" of the store behind the large display window, motorcycles, and bicycles (also racing bikes) were exhibited. MIELEWERKE from Gütersloh was known for very high-quality motorcycles and bicycles at that time.

MIELE BASE

However, Michael Zeck not only purchased bicycles from MIELEWERKE in Gütersloh, but also what the MIELE originally stood for: Special machines for agriculture, such as this butter kneader, which was advertised on a poster as "Michael Zeck, Maschinenhandlung, Schesslitz" with the lower half hidden in a picture frame. MIELE had already offered this immediately after its foundation in 1899 and developed the first washing machine from it.



„Showroom“ at Oberend 21



Butter kneader from MIELE in the assortment

MARGARETE ZECK AND THE STORE

From the tradition of Fritz Zeck, we know that Michael Zeck's wife Margarete, who came from Schammelsdorf, ran the store and also took care of the bookkeeping of the entire business. The oldest surviving handwritten invoice from the "Maschinenbau-Reparatur-Werkstätte Michael Zeck, Schesslitz" is dated March 21, 1928.

Mr. Georg Schönlein from Hohengüßbach is charged for repairs to his electric motor: "Engine completely disassembled, armature rollers aligned", "2 new [...] bearings made and fitted", "Engine assembled and tested". 1 part welded to chuck machine" and "2 new dustproof plow wheels made and fitted". Margarete Zeck collected and receipted the amount of 43.50 marks on March 22 upon pickup.

Michael Zeck, Scheßlitz
Maschinenbau-Reparatur-Werkstätte
Scheßlitz, den 21. März 1928.

Auftrag
von Georg Schönlein Hohengüßbach

Gelieferte Ware bleibt mein Eigentum bis zur restlosen Bezahlung. — Erfüllungort Scheßlitz. — Reklamationen werden innerhalb 8 Tagen nach Empfang der Ware berückichtigt. — Zahlbar in bar ohne Abzug.

Anzahl	Gegenstand	ℳ	pf	ℳ	pf
	Fliehkraftmotor zusammengebaut				
	Motor mit Ufführung geschraubt				
	Reibwalzen mit Reibringflanz aufgesetzt				
2	neue Lagerrollen gemacht				
	in zusammengebaut				
	Motor zusammengebaut mit Reibringflanz			27	25
1	Teil des Drehmaschinen aufgesetzt			1	25
2	neue Drehflüsse hergestellt	4	9		
	in zusammengebaut			2	50
	Antony Luthaus auf dem Tisch von Mh.			43	50
	77. pfl. 22. 3. 28.				

Marg. Zeck
Unterschrift des Käufers:

Handwritten invoice dated March 21, 1928

IRONMONGERY SHOP AND OWN CONSTRUCTIONS

In 1930s entries of the company can be found, for example in 1935 in the "Directory of the bicycle, motorcycle, sewing machine, and office machine industries", and in 1936 in the daily newspaper "Bavarian Ostmark" / "Bamberger Daily Newspaper". Here Michael Zeck advertised with two ads at the same time, once the farmer was addressed directly:

"Farmer, a good result of the production battle includes a good work of your threshing machine. To bring the grain completely from the straw, the threshing concave must fit the drum and be sharp. However, this is not the case with most machines. I can provide you perfectly with my special machine created for this purpose, which processes the threshing concave exactly according to the radius of the drum.

All other repairs to threshing sets and all agricultural machinery and equipment are also carried out well and inexpensively. Pick-up and delivery on request. - Also, I maintain large stock in spare parts of agricultural machinery, equipment and accessories. Hardware of all types."

Michael Zeck thus offered a customized machine that he had designed himself, or at least modified along the lines of the current models. This is probably the first evidence of an in-house design that was officially marketed. The second ad, under the headline "What you need, astonishingly inexpensive and good," was aimed not only at farmers, but also at craftsmen and tradesmen. In addition to agricultural machinery, motorcycles and bicycles, the complete range of an ironmongery shop or almost a hardware store was added.

Bauer • Handwerker • Gewerbetreibender
Was du brauchst, staunend billig und gut
Pflüge, Sämaschinen, Erntemaschinen, Motore,
Dreschmaschinen, Zentrifugen, Buttermaschinen,
Futterbereitmungsmaschinen, Motorräder, Fahrräder,
Nähmaschinen, Transmissionsteile, Riemenscheiben,
Ledertreibriemen, Wasserleitungsrohre, Verbindungsstelle, Hähne, Pumpen, Jauchefässer, moderne Verteiler, Öle, Fette, Schrauben, Nägel, Ketten, Schaufeln, Gabeln, sämtliche Werkzeuge, Baubeschläge, Eisenwaren aller Art.
Für meine Kundschaft sämtliche Ersatzteile und Reparaturen. Ausführungen v. maschinellen Anlagen, automatische Heuaufzüge und Tränkeanlagen, Wasserleitungen, Klosett und Baderichtungen.
Was kommt, kann ausgeführt werden, mustergültig, einwandfrei u. preiswert.
Michael Zeck, Maschinenbau u. Reparaturwerkstätte • Schoßnitz • Telephon 31

Inserat 1935



FRITZ ZECK.

THE 2ND GENERATION: FRITZ ZECK

Michael Zeck and his wife Margarete, née Pager, who came from Schammelsdorf, were blessed with three children: Anna, Hans, and Fritz, born on November 13, 1929, who went to grammar school in Bamberg after elementary school and actually wanted to become a teacher. His favorite hobby, even as a nine-year-old, was model flying. His dream of becoming a teacher came to nothing, because when his older brother Hans was killed defending the Wolf's Lair in East Prussia in 1944, Fritz had to work in his parents' business. With the death of his brother was also certain: "Then Fritz will be the successor!"

Fritz Zeck initially worked, among others, at KÖDEL & BÖHM in Lauingen on the Danube, Europe's largest threshing machine factory in the 1930s, which had already been working on the development of the combine harvester since 1940. After joining his parents' company in 1947, he was sent to various agricultural machinery manufacturers for training, including ALLGAIER-PORSCHE and CLAAS. At ALLGAIER-PORSCHE in Friedrichshafen, he was able to witness on the sidelines how Dr.-Ing. Ferdinand Porsche and his chief engineer Karl Rabe developed the "Porsche People's Tractor" after the VW Beetle and how it went into series production



Fritz Zeck and model flight - his hobby since childhood days



Fritz Zeck in October 2018 in front of an ALLGAIER-PORSCHE from 1955



Tractors parade at ZECK

FOCUS ON AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY

The main focus of ZECK's business after World War II was mainly the sale and repair of agricultural machinery and equipment. Regular exhibitions were also held for this purpose. In particular, tractors of ALLGAIER-PORSCHE and FIAT brands were modified and repaired. In addition, there was the construction or installation of hay elevators with electric winches, threshing machines, straw balers and later combine harvesters. Michael Zeck developed his own control system for the hay elevators, which was continuously improved. The service station was now called ESSO, and the workforce had grown to a team of 35 employees.



Workforce at Oberend

TITLE OF MASTER CRAFTSMAN AND MINISTERIAL INSPECTION LICENSE

On May 22, 1953, Fritz Zeck was awarded the master craftsman's certificate for the agricultural machinery trade after passing his master craftsman's examination. Now he was authorized to train apprentices himself and thus to continue the tradition of apprentice training at ZECK. In the same year, the company was authorized by the Bavarian State Ministry of Agriculture and Transport to carry out tests for agricultural equipment as a "specialist agricultural machinery company". Today one would say: the main inspection or German TÜV.



Fritz Zeck's master craftsman's certificate dated May 22, 1953



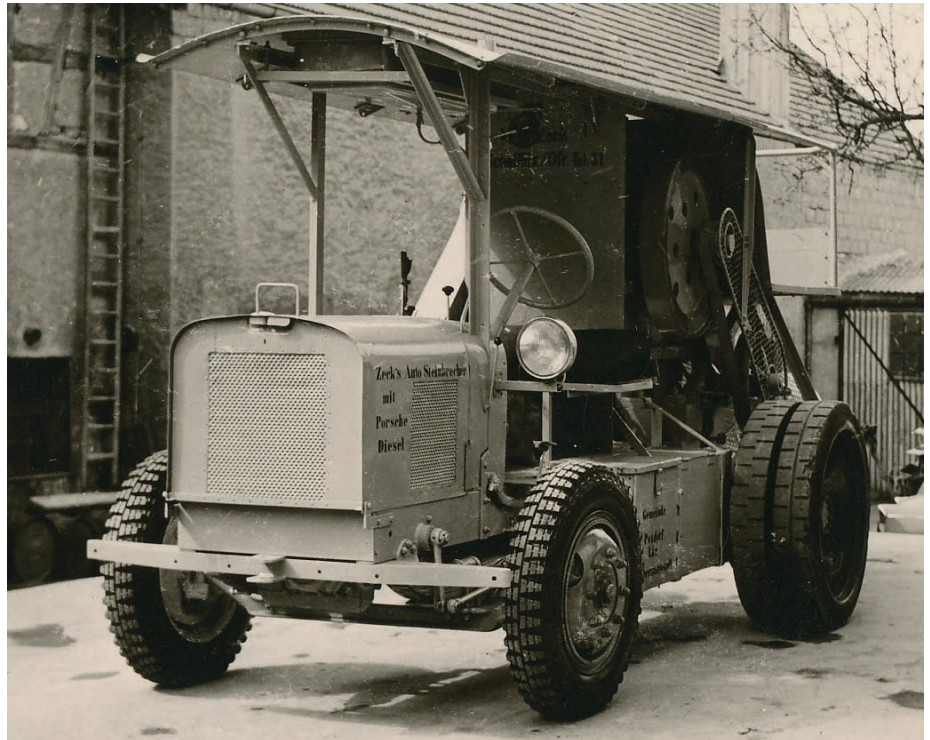
Approval as inspection company from October 8, 1953



**"THE JOY OF IN-
VENTING, AT THE
SAME TIME SEEING
SUCCESS – THAT'S
WHAT MAKES THE
DIFFERENCE"**

Fritz Zeck, Interview 2015

OWN MACHINES.



ZECK self-propelled stone crusher

CONSTRUCTION OF OWN MACHINES: STONE CRUSHER AND DRIVE AXLE TRAILER

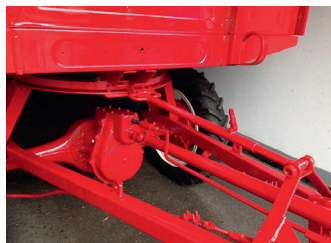
In this time of the economic miracle, the 1950s with upswing and sustained economic growth, father and son began to manufacture their own machines and equipment. One of the first original machines was the "self-propelled stone crusher with Porsche diesel".

These machines were manufactured especially for communities in the Jura Mountains and Franconian Switzerland. They crushed stones and the material could be used in road construction. The machines were a great relief for the municipalities and always came back to Schesslitz to ZECK for maintenance and repair.

In the "epoch year" 1953, the first trailer with an axle driven by the tractor via PTO was also designed and filed for a patent. Unfortunately, the patent was revoked because Ferdinand Porsche had already patented the Landwehr train in 1917. This drove the axles electrically via hub motors, but the sense and effect were identical. Many of ZECK's drive axle trailers were built specifically for steep conditions in vineyards.



Stone crusher from ZECK as trailer model



ZECK drive axle trailer from 1958



type plate

FRITZ AND GISELA.



Fritz und Gisela Zeck 2016

A BOND FOR ETERNITY: FRITZ UND GISELA ZECK

1958 was an important year for the Zeck family: Fritz Zeck married Gisela Zeck on May 30, 1958, with whom he spent almost 63 years together. In 2018, Fritz and Gisela Zeck celebrated the extremely rare and special Diamond Wedding Anniversary. Unfortunately, both of them are no longer among the living, but the amusing story of their acquaintance deserves to be preserved for posterity as part of this history.

Thus, the couple met for the first time at the pilgrimage site of Our Lady's apparition in Heroldsbach, where Fritz Zeck immediately fell in love with Gisela. Seven years of courtship followed, as the beloved was surrounded by numerous admirers. But Fritz was always late for dates because of his restless work in the company. When he was late again, Gisela sent him a registered letter explaining that he didn't need to show up again. Fritz, however, was not discouraged and continued to court Gisela. Finally, she gave in to the courtship and on May 30, 1958, the wedding took place in the for-

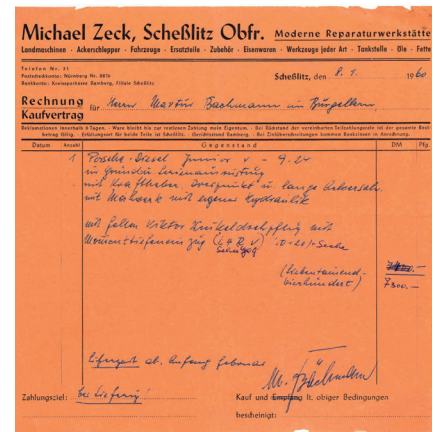
mer monastery church on the Michelsberg in Bamberg.

Gisela and Fritz had three children: Daughter Helga was followed a year later by daughter Jutta and in 1966 by son Michael, who is now the third generation to run the company. Together with her mother-in-law Margarete and her sister-in-law Anna, Gisela Zeck ran the hardware store at Oberend 21, where you could buy everything from screws to bicycles. On the day of the diamond wedding Fritz Zeck revealed his secret of a long marriage: "You just have to find the right woman and get old enough."

STILL AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY

For ZECK, agricultural machinery - trade, modification, repair, maintenance - remained the core business alongside the ironmongery. In this field, ZECK had now developed a competence and technical expertise over decades that was appreciated far beyond the Schesslitz area. An invoice for a PORSCHE diesel tractor to Martin Bächmann in Burgellern, in the neighborhood of the present company location, has been preserved from the year 1960.

This tractor still exists. There also exists an advertisement for it - with Fritz Zeck on the machine, by the way. As chance would have it, during a visit in October 2018 in preparation for the 100th anniversary celebration, exactly such a PORSCHE tractor was standing in the hall at Oberend, perfectly prepared by a driving school instructor who had rented the premises.



Invoice for a PORSCHE diesel-tractor



Fritz Zeck with his grandson Nikolas Weitz in October 2018



Advertising for the "Standard Star" with Fritz Zeck on top

CONSTRUCTION OF OVER

THE 1960S:

THE ENTRY INTO CONSTRUCTION OF OVERHEAD POWER LINES

In the early 1960s, Fritz Zeck began a friendship with Horst Wölfert, an avid aviation enthusiast - initially on model flight, later on gliding and motor flight. Fritz Zeck pursued the hobby "model airplanes" already since his childhood. Horst Wölfert was a site manager at FRANKENLUK-Leitungsbau and knew about ZECK's drive axle trailers, of which he had also purchased several.



One of the many model airplanes of Fritz Zeck

Wölfert then asked whether Fritz Zeck could design and build machines for installing high-voltage lines without dragging. Background was a new regulation, according to which overhead lines or high-voltage lines may only be installed without contact to the ground. "That's something for you!" Wölfert is reported to have said to his friend Fritz. Anyhow, this was the kick-off for overhead line construction, because the first machines were built at ZECK as a result. Since then, ZECK has played a major role in defining this sector worldwide. FRANKENLUK was in a joint venture with SIEMENS at the time. The experts from SIEMENS were enthusiastic about ZECK's machines in operation. In memory Fritz Zeck says: "I was lucky the first machines worked great."

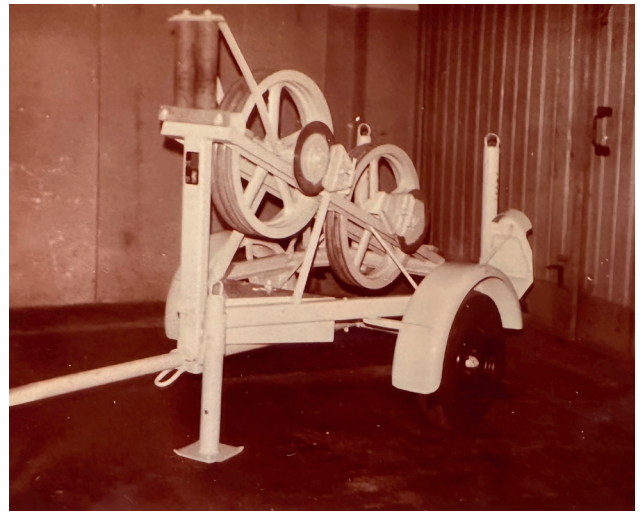
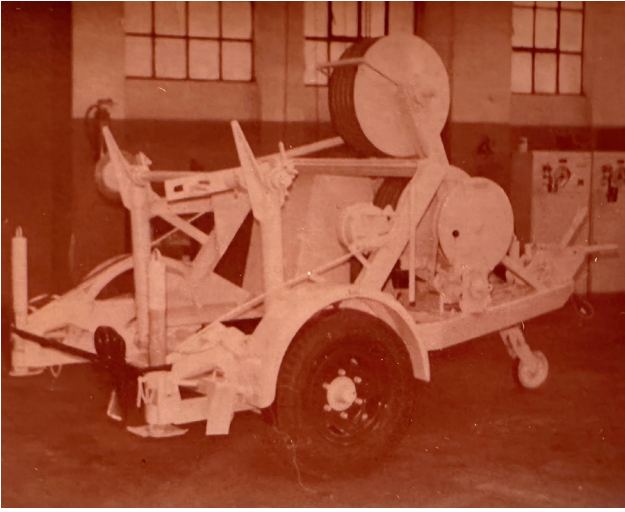
MICHAEL ZECK'S LIFE TIME ACHIEVEMENT

Michael Zeck senior, however, was not very enthusiastic about this development away from agricultural machinery. In memory, he told Fritz: "When I first started with these machines, my father said: 'You'll be out of business in three months!'" The future should prove him wrong in this point. Michael Zeck, the company's founder, died in 1967. It was his life's work that laid the foundation for the present company. In his son Fritz's memory, he was a genius.



Great master craftsman's certificate for Michael Zeck

HEAD POWER LINES



The first tensioners for FRANKENLUK



PROJECT.

THE GAME CHANGER: JOINT VENTURE WITH SIEMENS

Many fruitful projects and innovations emerged from the collaboration with SIEMENS. One of the world's first innovations was the mobile winch brake WB 1500 with a drum stand and drum drive in 1973. Fritz Zeck was initially ridiculed for this machine, with people saying, "Now Zeck is building brake machines with motor drive!" However, within a few years, these machines were in use world-wide.

FROM NIGERIA AROUND THE GLOBE

SIEMENS' orders have taken ZECK's people all over the world. The first major foreign project was in Nigeria during or after the Biafra War of 1967-1970. A 9t Puller with Tensioner and drum stand was to be positioned there and used in a SIEMENS project.

The machine set had been transported to Africa by ship, then continued by land to the site of operation in the interior of the country. The bridge over the river Niger had been blown up and replaced by a temporary wooden bridge that ran about 60 meters above the river. When the set was about mid-river with a towing vehicle, the bridge collapsed with a deafening roar, and the machinery set plunged into the river, "where it probably still lies today," as Fritz reported in 2018. This was followed by countless trips abroad with major projects that made ZECK well-known in the industry. Always in his luggage were salami and canned peas with bacon, for example in 1977 during a rope pulling project in Saudi Arabia.



Picnic in the savannah of Kenya 1977 - on the right Fritz Zeck



ZECK Puller-Tensioner WB 1500 in operation

THE ELBE CROSSING

The project of the year 1978 was the Elbe crossing in Stade, near Hamburg, a construction site of SIEMENS with the largest overhead line towers in the world at that time with a height of 227 m and a weight of 1,000 t each. The towers were erected with a ZECK PULLER SPW 5, which first had to be approved by the German Technical Inspection Agency (TÜV) as a hoist.

The construction company had purchased a special, heavily greased, and very expensive steel rope for this purpose. While pulling, the rope slipped over the bull wheels of the puller and landed on the ground. The approx. 300 m long rope then had to be pulled through a tub of detergent about 15 times, a process that took days. When the operation did work, it was a prime example of tower erection, that is, mounting a very tall and heavy tower using a Puller.



Overhead transmission line tower of the Elbe crossing with spiral staircase inside, 227 m high

MASTER ACHIEVEMENT.

EHRENFRIED DUSOLD: HALF A CENTURY AT ZECK

A story about ZECK wouldn't be complete without mentioning Ehrenfried Dusold. Dusold joined the company in 1960 as an apprentice for the skilled occupation of "agricultural machinery technician" with Michael Zeck senior and spent his entire working life with the company until his well-deserved retirement in 2011, i.e., more than half a century, and knows many stories to tell. For example, the weekly pay as an apprentice was 6.25 marks, but the train fare Bamberg-Gaustadt to the vocational school alone cost 2.90 marks, and they had to walk from Gaustadt to the Bamberg train station to save money.

For him, the foreign employments were always impressive. A particularly remarkable experience was in 1982 during the project with SIEMENS in Saudi Arabia. In this strictly Muslim country, engineers faced the challenge of ensuring the supply of alcohol. They solved this problem by brewing home-made beer in the bathtub and making schnapps from various fruits.

On a Friday, the Muslim holiday, Ehrenfried Dusold went on an excursion with an Austrian technician and the two wives of SIEMENS project employees who were regular visitors to Saudi Arabia. Suddenly, a sheikh came by in a luxurious limousine and was very impressed with the female escort. In fact, he offered 15 camels in exchange for one of the women....



Fritz Zeck and Ehrenfried Dusold in October 2018



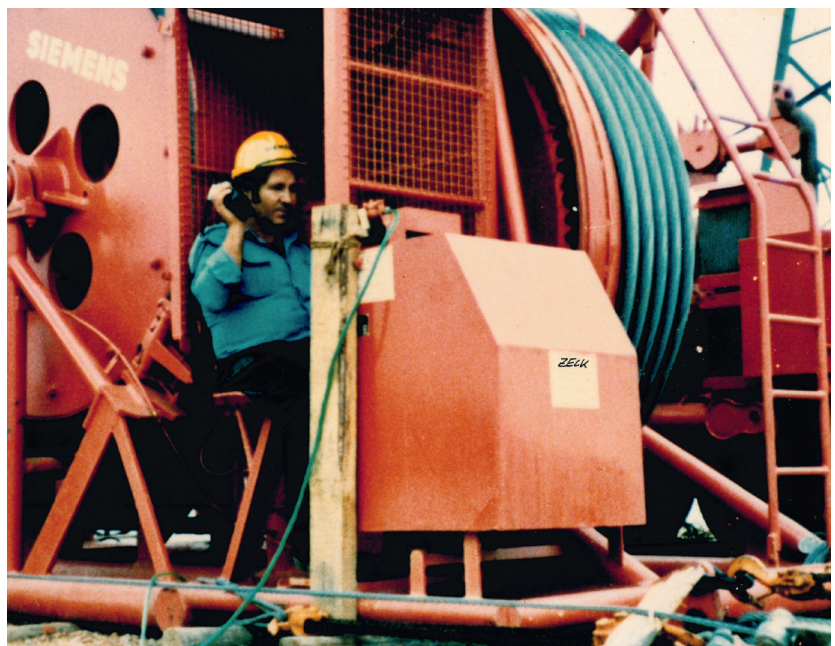
PROJECT.

THE BOSPORUS CROSSING 1983

Another flagship project was the connection of Europe with Asia via the Bosphorus Strait in 1983 directed by SIEMENS. The "Strait of the Black Sea" was the largest river crossing in the world at that time. The distance between the 160 m high towers was 1.75 km, and the clearance for ships was 70 m. The conductors were the largest ever made, with a diameter of 60 mm. To thread the ropes, auxiliary ropes were pulled across the strait by boats.

It had been agreed - as Fritz Zeck recalled it - that the pulling of the ropes was not to begin until he himself was on the construction site. Fritz took on the 1,800 km journey by car with his wife and son Michael. When they arrived it was said, you can go home again. At night, during a storm, the rope had torn off on one side. Workers had miserably installed the ropes. The worst thing, however, was that the pulling rope was hanging loosely over the tower. A Russian freighter had pulled the rope along and had torn it off, so it was lying damaged on the seabed. At the same time, an aircraft was on the way with interested people and could not be cancelled either.

After a three-month construction stop, a new rope was delivered, and the Bosphorus crossing could be completed. SIEMENS had made a film about it, which also showed the fiasco. This film was shown all over the world and became the best advertisement for ZECK, which contributed decisively to promote ZECK. "Today, everyone who has anything to do with overhead power lines knows us," says Fritz Zeck. "Bosphorus 3" was built in 2002 also with ZECK technology.



Stringing operation across the Bosphorus in 1983

CHANGE.



Technical highlight 1984: The synchronization system developed by ZECK for SIEMENS during the demonstration in Vienna

1992 – THE PASSING OF THE TORCH

Production was still carried out at the parent company in Oberend - despite all the operations around the globe. The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the following years of reunification brought an enormous flood of orders for ZECK, because the entire infrastructure in the former GDR had been driven to wear and tear for 40 years.

When Fritz Zeck turned 63, he wanted to sell his company to FRANKENLUK and asked his son whether he wanted to go into industry after graduating as a mechanical engineer or take over the family business. Michael decided to take over the business. However, it was necessary to build a new production site, because it had become clear that the Oberend plant had become too small for the requirements of the future. This was accompanied by the decision to discontinue the agricultural machinery business. It is important to remember: Until then, agricultural machinery continued to be repaired and maintained during the harvesting season, and mechanical engineering was primarily carried out in the winter months, which could not be a future model in the long term.





Until 1992, the production of stringing machines was located at Oberend

OFF TO BURGELLERN!

In 1992/93, the new building was realized and with it the relocation of the entire company with its almost 30 employees from the parent company in the town center of Schesslitz to the district of Burgellern. Unbelievable from today's perspective: At the new location, the company initially employed one single engineering draftsman - and that on a part-time basis.

But as early as 1994/95, the first major expansion was coming up. Building, rebuilding, and expanding was and still is on the agenda to this day.



The first production hall in Burgellern 1993



The extension building in Burgellern 1994/95

CATENARY.

STILL ON TRACK FOR SUCCESS: SOUTH KOREA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Under Michael's direction and together with his wife Astrid, senior boss Fritz (until 2021) and since 2016 also with his nephew Nikolas Weitz as representative of the fourth generation, success continues to follow success. Therefore, only a selection of milestones and flagship projects from the past three decades since the start of production in Burgellern follows:

ZECK's machines were sold through SIEMENS with great success. Since 1995, this is also done directly. An important milestone was ZECK's entry into the catenary business. In 1996, the first major project was the electrification of the TGV line from Seoul to Busan. In cooperation with WINDHOFF railway and infrastructure construction, the high-speed line was rebuilt and electrified.

A second beacon project in this area was West Coast Main Line in the UK in 2000/2001. This involved replacing the existing catenary during ongoing operations within time frames of just five hours. The skills acquired here are being incorporated into a project involving eight catenary installation units for the Swiss Federal Railways SBB.



Das Joint Venture mit WINDHOFF für die TGV-Strecke in Südkorea

PROJECT.

THE ST. GOTTHARD-TUNNEL

Catenary once again: The 57 km long St. Gotthard Tunnel, one of the longest rail tunnels in the world, was electrified in 2013/14 with machines from ZECK. The opening took place in 2016, and the complete construction costs amounted to 12 billion Swiss francs.



Elektrifizierung des St. Gotthard-Tunnels



MDC.

TAKEOVER OF MAINTENANCE DE CENTRE

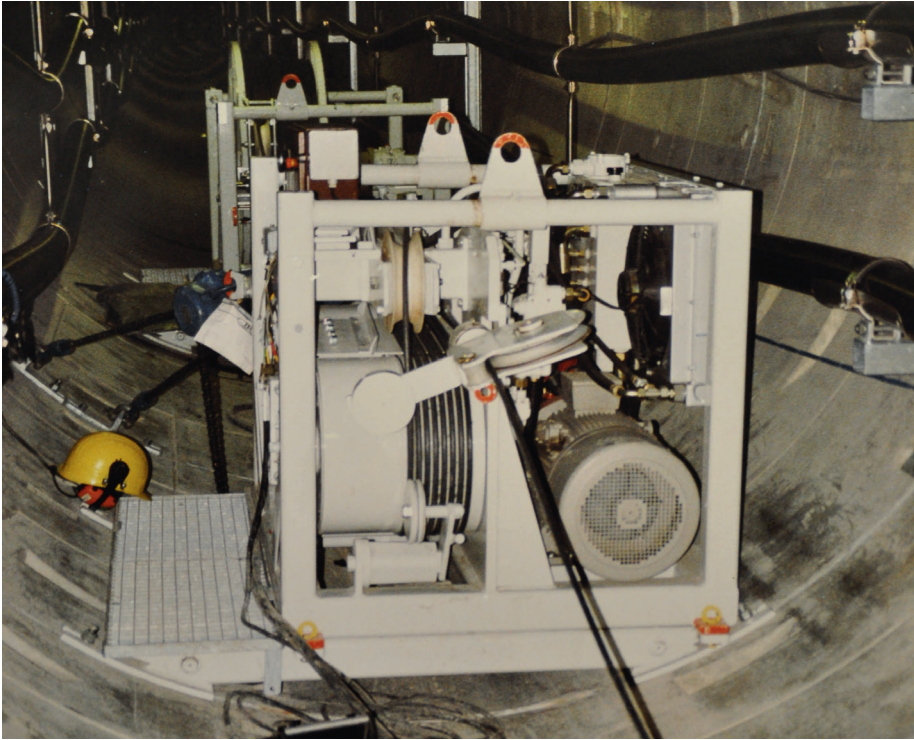
An extension of the product range "Railway Technology" took place in 2017 with the acquisition of the French company MDC "Maintenance de Centre", which has been designing and building RR-machines (Rail-Road) since 1998. The basic idea behind this is that the machines MDC offers for the French market are manufactured by ZECK for the German and international markets.





MDC building in Chartres

UNDERGROUND CABLE.



Customized machine for underground cable installation



UNDERGROUND CABLE INSTALLATION

The field of Pullers for underground cable installation is covered by serially produced machines of other manufacturers, but as soon as customized machines are required, ZECK gets involved. As early as the mid-1990s, customized machines were manufactured for SIEMENS and ABB for installing underground cables in the government district in Berlin-Mitte below Pariser Platz. In the politically motivated energy revolution that is currently being implemented, one major issue is the installation of underground cables, for example in the SuedLink project. ZECK develops and builds machines that fit these extra-high voltage underground cable routes with 500 kV lines.

PROJEKT.



Fjord crossing in Norway



Fjord crossings in Norway

In Norway, various fjord projects involving ZECK have been carried out since 2008, more precisely fjord crossings of the companies STATNETT, VALARD and DALEKOVOD with spans of up to 4,200 m, for example across the Glom Fjord. The special feature is that these machines can be dismantled and transported by helicopter in individual parts to the surrounding mountains, where they can be assembled.

ZECK TSE.

ZECK TSE TEAM

In 2010, Michael Zeck founded the company "ZECK Thailand Ltd." in Bangkok together with Dirk Braun-Friderici, who has been ZECK's sales manager for Asia and Africa since 1999, as a distribution base for the machines and accessories manufactured in Schesslitz for the Asian and African markets. Since 2011, this has developed into a production site for braided steel ropes, which together with the machines are offered all over the world.

Previously, braided steel ropes were purchased from China, but the quality was not satisfactory, so the decision was made to switch to in-house production. In addition, Europe imposed punitive tariffs of 60.5% on Chinese steel products. The new production site in Thailand was ceremoniously inaugurated in 2017 and the offspring was renamed "ZECK International Ltd. TSE", with TSE standing for "Tension Stringing Equipment".



ZECK TSE-Team



View into the production hall

ZECK S.R.L. EXPANSION.

ZECK SRL IN ITALY

Simultaneously with the establishment in Thailand, a development and engineering office was successfully opened in Romano di Lombardia, in the province of Bergamo, Italy. This office consists of four highly experienced engineers specializing in the construction of overhead power lines.



AT THE HEADQUARTERS: HALL 8

Further development is clearly demonstrated by the expansion of the Burgellern site: One hall in 1992/93 has now grown into eight with a total of 11,500 square meters of floor space, with the new building for After-Sales-Service in 2014/15 certainly representing a significant milestone in the company's recent history. In July 2021, during Corona and after only four months of construction, another new hall was completed where incoming goods inspection takes place.



In early 2022, the old Willing building was purchased and demolished. Since then, this area serves as an additional storage possibility.

EXPANSION.

ZECK TRAINING ACADEMY

A special innovation is ZECK TRAINING ACADEMY, built in 2022, which started operations in October 2022. This department provides training and instruction in the area of catenary and overhead power lines. Already in the first year of operation, about 150 training courses were held with a total of 1,400 participants.



ZECK Academy - Schulungsraum



Test- und Schulungsgelände

VTZ – TEST AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER

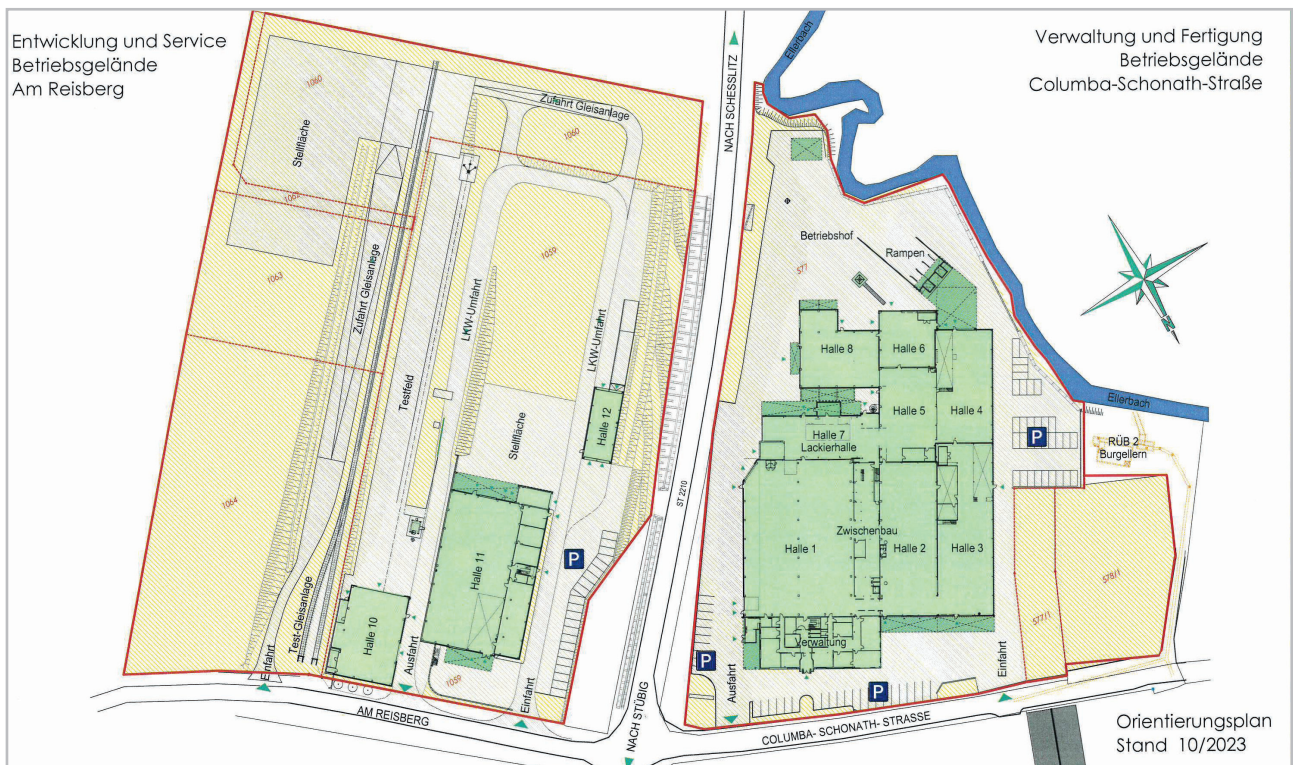
In cooperation with our German customer, SPIE, a proving ground is currently being developed for the Test and Technology Center (German abb. VTZ) on the after-sales grounds. VTZ is an independent testing institute that is accredited and specializes in the examination and development of components, assemblies, and complex systems of power supply, especially in the field of overhead power lines. Customers from the energy supply sector, industry, and component manufacturers from all over the world benefit from our special know-how.

The main objective of this project is to test different conductors at different tensions and to analyze their performance.

FEAT OF STRENGTH.

THE NEW HALL 1

In June 2023, production hall 1, which was built in 1992, was successfully demolished. This impressive step required an enormous effort and impeccable organization, and yet the project was completed in just 4.5 months. During this time, production continued, with parts of it being outsourced, but nevertheless the schedule was precisely adhered to. The newly built hall now meets the most modern requirements and standards. By the end of 2023, it is planned to install a photovoltaic system with a capacity of about 500 kWp.

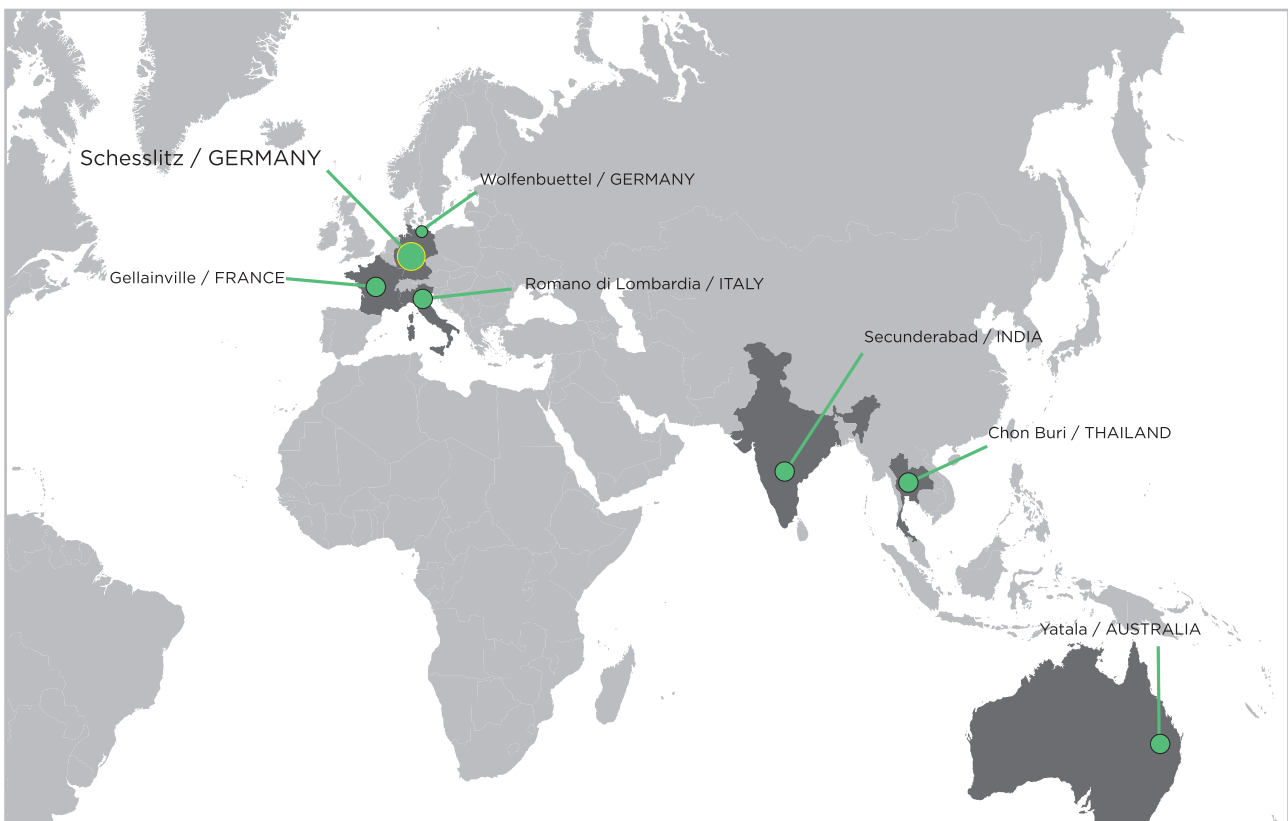


NUMBERS..

ZECK IN NUMBERS

Since its foundation in 2003, ZECK GmbH has impressively increased its turnover from just under 4 million euros to a total of 54 million euros, with 44 million euros being generated in Germany. In the years 1992/93, the company employed only 28 people, but today it has a total of 324 employees worldwide. The production capacity was recently increased to approx. 600 machines and devices per year. Until now, over 12,000 machines and devices have been sold in more than 118 countries.

ZECK GmbH	Germany	200 employees
ZECK TSE	Thailand	90 employees
MDC	France	24 employees
ZECK S.r.l.	Italy	3 employees
ZECK Power & Rail	India	7 employees
ZECK Australia	Australia	1 employee



AWARDS.

HONORS AND AWARDS

This success did not remain unnoticed. Without much ado, ZECK was awarded a host of prizes: the Construction Award 2003 was followed by the Bavarian State Prize 2005. In 2010, ZECK received the "Europe's 500 Award" and in 2013 the Bavarian Quality Award.

In November 2021, ZECK received the prestigious TOP 100 INNOVATOR award. In the scientific selection process, ZECK made a particular impression in the size class B (51 to 200 employees) in the category "Innovation-promoting top management". In 2010, 2012 and again in 2023, ZECK was awarded "Bavaria's Best 50" as one of the 50 fastest growing medium-sized companies in Bavaria.



f.l.t.r.: State Secretary Roland Weigert, Michael and Astrid Zeck, Marcus v. Goldacker, Oberschleißheim Castle 2023



TEAM.

MORE THAN 100 YEARS OF SUCCESS

A century of success, a century of constant innovation that carries the name and face of Franconia out into the world as an ambassador: ZECK is a blue chip that is cosmopolitan yet deeply rooted in the region. All this was and is only possible with a fantastic team that feels at comfortable in the ZECK world, whether at the headquarters in Burgellern, in Thailand, in France, in Italy or with other partners around the world.



The ZECK Team, Schesslitz 2018



DREAMTEAM.

FRITZ AND MICHAEL ZECK

Especially the achievements of Fritz Zeck and his son Michael have led the company to where it is today. Their story was not about the mere preservation of ashes, but about the continuous passing on of fire. In this spirit, this chronicle serves as a lasting tribute to the life's work of Fritz Zeck and the successful expansion course of Michael Zeck, Jr..



Michael Zeck



Fritz Zeck



OUTLOOK.

THE OUTLOOK

The chronicle of the company's history serves not only as a review of the past, but also as a prospect for the future. It has been shown that ZECK has always been advanced by new ideas and innovations throughout its history. This started with the motorized tricycle for an injured brother, led to self-designed stone crushers and drive trailers, and finally to the development of the entire overhead power line construction with its specialized machines.

ZECK is determined to maintain its position as an innovation leader and meet the challenges of an ever-changing world. New markets are to be penetrated, partnerships formed, and innovative technologies developed, all with the aim of maintaining the high level of quality and meeting the needs of customers worldwide.

The fourth generation, represented by Nikolas Weitz, Moritz, and Amelie Zeck, is already waiting in the wings to continue this tradition.



v.l.n.r.: Nikolas Weitz, Amelie Zeck, Moritz Zeck, 2018

IMPRINT.



ZECK - THE STORY.

AUTHOR:

Christian Kestel (economic historian)
E-mail: christian.kestel@gmail.com

Written in 2023

DESIGN AND LAYOUT:

Astrid Zeck (az@zeck-gmbh.com)

RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTENT:

ZECK GmbH
Columba-Schonath-Str. 6
96110 Schesslitz
E-Mail: info@zeck-gmbh.com

INTERNET:

www.zeck-gmbh.com

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Managing Director: Michael Zeck

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Fritz Zeck

13.11.1929 - 19.02.2021

Nach einem erfüllten Leben ist unser Firmengründer, Ehemann, Vater, Großvater und Freund, **Fritz Zeck**, am 19.02.2021 friedlich eingeschlafen.

Wir sind sehr stolz und dankbar für die Spuren, die er in seinen 91 Lebensjahren hinterlassen hat und werden diese in seinem Sinne weiterverfolgen.

In tiefer Trauer:
Geschäftsleitung, alle
Mitarbeiter und Mitarbeiterinnen
der ZECK GmbH



AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

