



ESSO FLEET NEWS

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Last AB Seaman's Class Graduates; Courses to Resume Again in Fall

Graduation ceremonies were held last Friday for the third and final class of Esso seamen to attend the first able seaman training program sponsored by the Marine Dept. at the request of the Esso Seamen's Association. Success of the program has led to plans for another seaman's school in the fall.

Sydney Wire, assistant general manager of the Marine Dept., told the 10 graduates that "your success is in itself a source of pride and also the right step in the direction of a third mate's license." Afterwards he presented certificates of completion to the class aboard the *Texas Clipper* training ship at Galveston, Tex.

John J. Brennan scored a high grade of 99 on the Coast Guard Able Seaman's and Lifeboat Examination. It was the top grade in the third class as well as the highest recorded score during the six-week program. Lowest score in his class was

an 85—a full 15 points above the passing grade of 70. Class average was 92.1.

Completion of the course leads to an increase in pay and overtime rates when graduates are promoted from ordinary seamen to able seamen.
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1969 OCEAN CREWS DRIVE UNDERWAY IN ESSO FLEET

The American Merchant Marine Library Association's 1969 Ocean Crews Drive for funds to support seamen library facilities is underway throughout the fleet.

All Humble vessels have always contributed to the fund campaign and, in fact, the crews of 12 ships pitched in \$100 or more during each of the past two annual drives. The *Esso Baltimore* holds the record of contributing \$100 or more for seven consecutive years.

Funds collected in the drive are used to purchase and circulate library books in the American merchant marine fleet.

Esso San Francisco Nears Launch Date

The *Esso San Francisco*—first of three 75,600-dwt tankers under construction for Humble—is tentatively scheduled for launching July 12, Robert X. Caldwell, Marine Dept. technical superintendent, announced last week.

"The *San Francisco* is about 70 per cent complete," he noted. "The present schedule calls for builder's trials in early October, which will consist of a one-day voyage up the Mississippi River." The vessel and her two sister ships are being built at Avondale Shipyards in Louisiana about 15 miles up the Mississippi from New Orleans.

Humble will put the *San Francisco* through her first sea trials in early November. Trials consist of putting the ship through her paces for three days at sea. "Assuming this tentative schedule is maintained, we can expect delivery of the *San Francisco* right about Christmas time," Mr. Caldwell said. The *Esso Baton Rouge* is slated for launching later this year with a target date for delivery in March, 1970.

Icebergs, Bergy Bits, Growlers Lie Ahead on Northwest Voyage

Studies of the environment in the Northwest Passage indicate that the *S.S. Manhattan* will sail on one of the most arduous voyages ever undertaken by a commercial vessel when the 115,000-ton ship starts cutting her way through the ice-choked waters at the top of the North American continent.

The world's first tanker-icebreaker will make a 4,500 mile voyage, much of it threatened by a gamut of ice conditions ranging from bergy bits to ridges of ice up to 100 feet in draft as well as a host of other obstacles along the route. Nobody expects a pleasure cruise.

Opening the formidable Northwest Passage to commercial ship-

ping would provide a route for transporting oil from Alaska's North Slope—where Humble holds sizable leases—to refineries on the East Coast. The *Manhattan* is slated to set sail on the experimental voyage in mid-summer.

Capt. Robert Stap, of Humble's Arctic Task Force, recently outlined ice and weather conditions along the route from Philadelphia, Pa., to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. Bob has been engaged in environmental studies of conditions in the passage since joining the task force last August.

He has scoured information from libraries, environmental consultants, the Canadian Department of Transport, the U.S. Oceanographic Service and myriad other sources to compile as much data as there

is available on the extremely fluctuating environment the *Manhattan* is expected to encounter on the trip.

Maps show the Flemish Cap as a dot about 300 miles east of Newfoundland. Sailors plying the Atlantic know it as the jumping off place to iceberg country in the north. The *Manhattan* will pass east of Flemish Cap—a shallow bank—and proceed north-northeast to Latitude 60° N. about 100 miles off the southern tip of Greenland. "We'll really be alert for icebergs from then on," Capt. Stap said.

The ship will turn north-northwest there and move along the west coast of Greenland on a 980-mile long course—on the east side of Davis Strait where the frequency

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Northwest Passage

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of icebergs is lowest. "Plans are to stay about 120 miles off the western shore, maneuvering around ice fields and watching for icebergs, bergy bits and growlers," Bob said. Two icebreakers, one Canadian and one U.S., will proceed in advance of the *Manhattan* to warn of ice conditions.

Icebergs pose less danger to ships than bergy bits and growlers because they can be detected on radar scopes. "Icebergs 'calve' and when they do the pieces that break off are called bergy bits and growlers," the captain explained. "A bergy bit is usually the size of a small cottage and a growler is about the size of a piano." Both are capable of damaging a ship.

"Flying over the water along Greenland's west coast you can see thousands of bergy bits and growlers," Capt. Stap reported. "But aboard ship you can't always see them because they 'hide' on the backsides of waves and aren't discernible on radar." Even the *Manhattan* with her re-enforced hull will move through those waters at reduced speeds.

At Latitude 75° N. the ship will turn way from Greenland and head west into Parry Channel that cuts through the top of the North American continent. "It's possible we may encounter small icebergs at the head of the channel," Bob said, "but by this point we'll be leaving the icebergs behind us. It is possible that we shall enjoy open waters for the next 300 miles, or about half-way through the channel. However, beyond *Resolute* on Cornwallis Island, the *Manhattan* will almost certainly have to start crunching her way through ice." *Resolute* is a weather station and Royal Canadian Mounted Police post.

Weather conditions at *Resolute* are anything but stable. Fahrenheit temperatures range from a high of

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PLOTTING the course of the S.S. *Manhattan* through the ice-choked Northwest Passage are Capt. Robert Stap (right) and A. D. Mookhoek of Humble's Arctic Task Force. The ship—the world's first tanker-icebreaker—is scheduled to sail from Philadelphia, Pa., to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, in mid-summer.

61 degrees to an extreme recorded low of 61 below zero—a variance of 122 degrees! In August when the *Manhattan* passes through the Barrow Strait temperatures are not usually severe, however. Daily mean readings indicate 37 degrees, with a possible high of 59 to an extreme low of 17. But during October temperatures at *Resolute* average 7 degrees, with a possible high of 32 to an extreme recorded low of minus-30. The *Manhattan* may pass through that area in October

on her return voyage.

From *Resolute* west to Banks Island, the ship is expected to encounter a wide range of varying conditions—small flows of ice, ice islands, plate ice, ridges of ice, and open leads. "Plate ice is of uniform thickness," Capt. Stap said. "It can come in sheets from two to nine feet thick. Ridges of ice are the most formidable barriers we expect to encounter. They result when the wind creates pressures in an ice sheet causing it to bend, break and

Comedy of Humorless Happenstances Grounds Lexington in Mississippi

The *Esso Lexington* snuggled up against the muddy east bank of the Mississippi River and Capt. Thomas K. Lawton sighed in relief.

To be sure, few masters find relief in a vessel's going aground—yet fewer still have been put through the wringer of hairy happenstances that Capt. Lawton and his somewhat wayward ship experienced. For instance, do you know anybody else who's lost two 20,000 pound anchors from the same ship on the same day and in the same place?

It all started after the *Lexington* took on a load of crude oil at Baton Rouge, La., March 24. The ship was ready to sail when Chief Engr. William McKay notified Capt. Lawton of mechanical problems in the engine room. Unable to sail, the tanker remained at the dock until late the following day when she was moved to an anchorage to complete her repairs.

Three tugs eased the powerless *Lexington* out into the Mississippi. The vessel dropped both anchors and lay quietly in still waters. Repair work continued. All was well until on March 26 a ship departing a dock farther upstream went aground in the river—a foreboding sign of unforeseeable events in the making. "This (grounded ship) must have caused some change in the river current because at 3 p.m. our vessel began to yaw rather wildly and drag a little," Capt. Lawton reported. By 7 p.m. the *Lexington* was yawing like a frightened whale.

Two tugs arrived to push the loaded, 40,000-dwt ship to the safe-

ty of a vacant berth. Capt. Lawton ordered the starboard anchor up—only to learn he had no starboard anchor! "Upon heaving up the starboard anchor it was discovered that there wasn't anything left of it but a piece of the shank," the dismayed

master said. It looked as if a Mississippi mud cat had snapped it off just above the flukes. Incredibly, the port anchor was missing too—also snapped off just above the flukes.

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FIRST IN SAFETY. T. J. Fuson (right), general manager of the Marine Dept., presents an engraved plaque commending the Baytown Branch inland waterway tug boats and barges for its unblemished safety record in 1968 to W. W. Cottle, Baytown Branch manager. This first inter-branch safety award went to the Baytown Branch for completing the year without a single lost-time injury reportable to the National Safety Council.

pile up and down. Such piles of ice are called ridges and can measure from 100 to 130 feet from top to bottom under extreme conditions. Open leads are cracks in the ice, often big enough to sail through."

When the *Manhattan* reaches the western end of Parry Channel at Peel Point, she will proceed over either of two routes. One is the McClure Strait which goes north of Banks Island, south of Melville Island and empties into the Beaufort Sea in the Arctic. From the Beaufort Sea, the ship would sail southwesterly toward the northern coast of Alaska.

An alternate route lies through the Prince of Wales Strait. It runs

south-southwest along the eastern shore of Banks Island and the western edge of Victoria Island. Prince of Wales Strait empties into the Amundsen Gulf east of the Beaufort Sea. Passing through this strait, the *Manhattan* would sail into the Amundsen Gulf and proceed westerly to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.

Because McClure Strait is farther north and empties directly into the Arctic ice pack, conditions could be more severe there. Which route the *Manhattan* takes is a decision which will be made when the ship reaches Peel Point in the Parry Channel at the northern entrance of Prince of Wales Strait. The decision will be based on ice reconnaissance reports

obtained by overflight ahead of the vessel.

In addition to the Canadian and U.S. icebreakers, the *Manhattan* will be accompanied on her maiden voyage by a Canadian DC-4 flying from weather station air strips along the route. The plane will provide medium range reconnaissance. Two helicopters aboard the tanker will be used for short range reconnaissance.

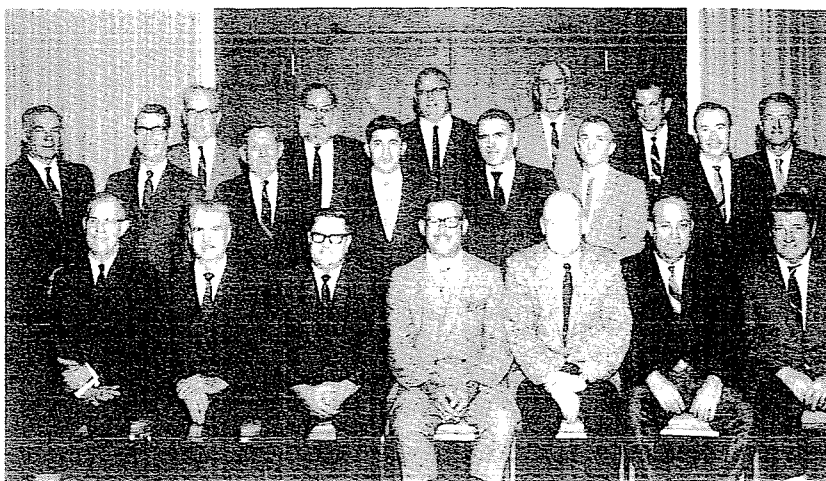
"We're not saying this is how it will be along the route," Capt. Stap observed. "These are predicted conditions. When we get back we'll know a lot more about it—which is one of the reasons for the voyage."

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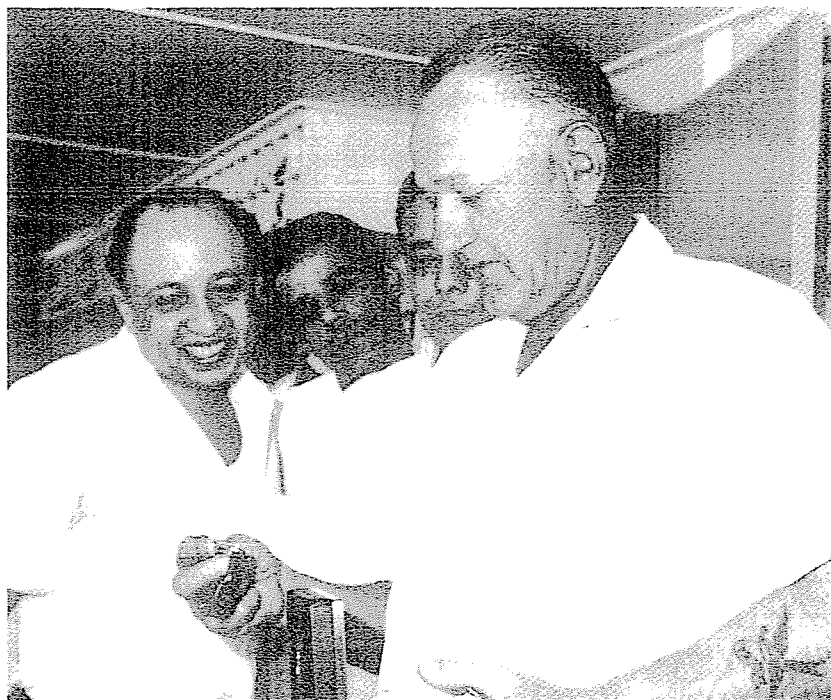
The tugs pitted all their horsepower against the helpless ship and the whimsical currents of Old Man River. "After three hours of darting back and forth across the river, the vessel grounded gently on the east bank," Capt. Lawton reported. "It was the only time that I remember being glad to be aground."

The *Lexington* stayed aground until repairs were made and the lost anchors replaced. In the early afternoon of March 30, the six-day ordeal ended when two tugs nudged the ship off the mud bank and she continued her voyage to New York.

The only loss was time and a couple of 10-ton anchors. The story of the lost anchors—as it will doubtless become known in marine annals—is recorded here so that Capt. Tom Lawton can whip it out of his pocket as bona fide evidence of the facts when doubting Thomases begin to sneer at "just another sea yarn."



FLEET OFFICERS attending the recent Fifth Marine Officers' Conference in Houston are seated (from left) Capt. Milton Franklin, First Asst. Louis P. Raeder, Capt. Taisto Johnson, Chief Mate James Wanamaker, Chief Mate Dale M. Silcox, Chief Mate William Straley, Chief Mate Daniel J. Bradley. Standing: Capt. James Mercer, Chief Mate William Greene, Chief Engr. Edward Branigan, Capt. Julius Wend, First Asst. Alfred Fieldman, Chief Mate Albert M. Scara, First Asst. Edward P. Dolloff, Chief Engr. Lawton Williams, Chief Mate Thomas Milligan, First Asst. Gustav Pedersen, First Asst. Richard E. Lewis, Chief Engr. Colos Bennett, and Chief Mate Robert H. Stotts. The Sixth Marine Officers' Conference is scheduled for May 26-29.



CONGRATULATIONS were heaped on AB Benjamin "Tex" Autry (right) at ceremonies aboard the *Esso New Orleans* when he received a gold watch and a 30-year "endurance" medal presented by W. W. Cottle, Baytown Branch manager. Admiring his new timepiece are (from left) shipmates Chief Steward Marcelino Gomes, Messman John Valles and Chef Antonio J. Fernandes.

Your Thrift Fund Distribution Can Be Deferred at Retirement

Ed Fischer, head of Benefits and Claims, reminds personnel considering retirement—who will have annuitant status and are less than 65—that they will receive their Thrift Fund accounts upon retirement unless they defer settlement until the following year.

"You should consider whether you want to defer distribution of your Thrift Fund balance until the beginning of the year following retirement in the event you may retire prior to the year in which you reach normal retirement time," Mr. Fischer said. "Such an election may result in tax savings because distribution of your account will not occur in a year in which you also receive company pay. The election must be in effect for at least six months before retirement, and is irrevocable during those six months."

Forms for exercising the option are available from the Marine Dept. Benefits and Claims Section in Houston.

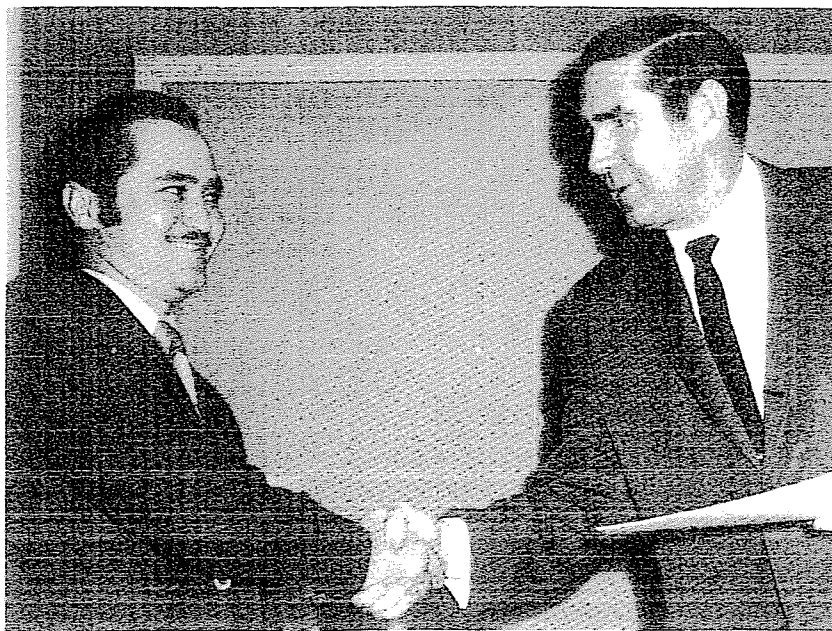
AB School

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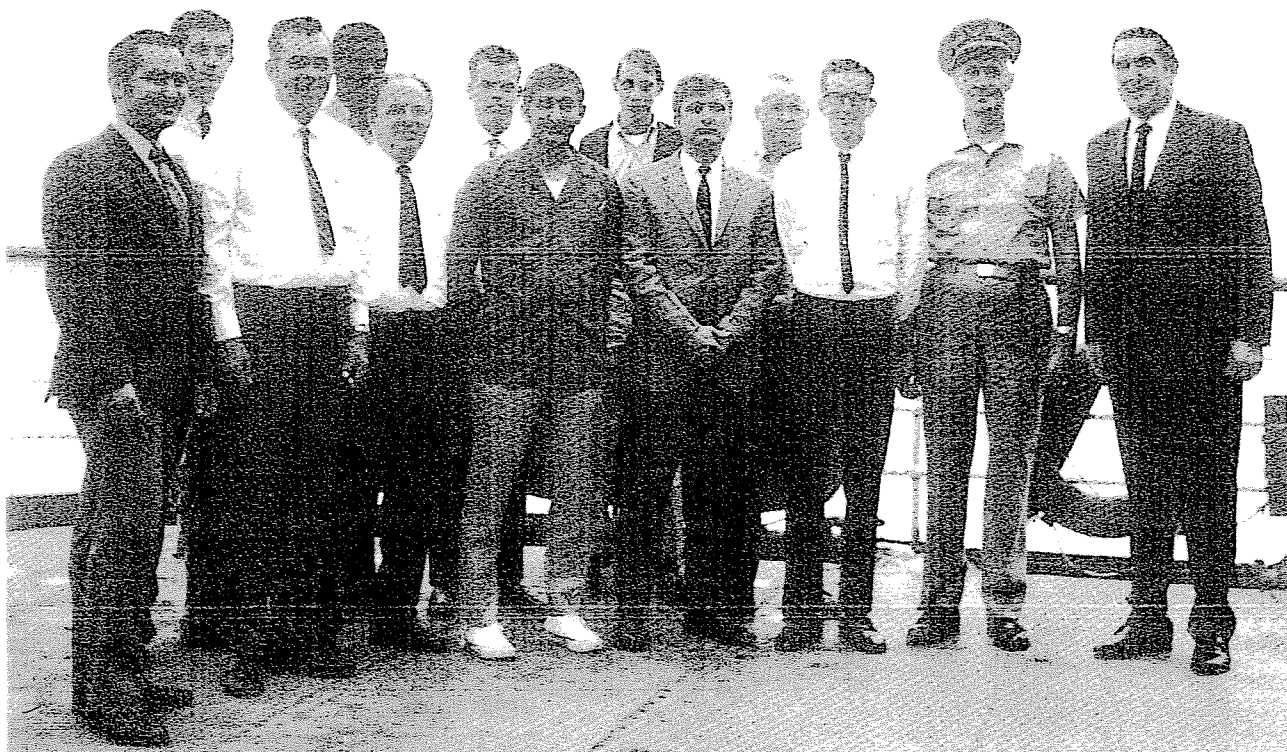
men. Thirty-three Esso seamen completed the training. Those in the last graduating class were John J. Brennan, Artur M. Castro, Antonio P. Ferreira, Antone M. Gomes, Claude H. Loyd, James G. Maude, Thomas J. Niemiera, Edward C. Nutter, Juan C. Razo and Harry H. Toney.

Michael Sharik III was honored by Marine Dept. officials at a luncheon in Galveston for setting up and instructing the first training program of its kind in the fleet. Mr. Wire also expressed Humble's appreciation to Coast Guard Capt. Steve Rogeski, Capt. Albert Philbrick, CWO Kenneth C. Riggs, BMC L. D. Batson and others who cooperated with Mr. Sharik in making the program a success.

The program's success, its wide acceptance by seamen in the fleet and an increasing number of able seamen vacancies prompted Marine Dept. officials to make plans to resume the classes in the fall.



SMILE OF SUCCESS crosses Juan M. Lerma's face as he happily receives his certificate of completion from Sydney Wire, assistant general manager of the Marine Dept., at graduation of second able seaman training class.



SECOND GRADUATING CLASS of the Marine Dept.'s able seaman training program received certificates of completion April 11 at ceremonies aboard the *Texas Clipper* training ship at Galveston, Texas.

Class members, Coast Guard and company officials are (from left), front row, Juan M. Lerma, Colon W. Cowart, Joseph M. Ruiz, George R. Rivet, Burnice E. Malpass, Gerald V. Quinn, Coast Guard Admiral James

D. Craik, Sydney Wire, assistant general manager of the Marine Dept.; back row, Walter T. Patterson, Keller E. Gilyard, George W. Jensen, Herman R. Cumbee and James E. Hyman

TAFFRAIL TALK

The officers and men of the *Esso Florence* bade Capt. Clarence Lee farewell at a party and going away dinner aboard ship on his final voyage prior to retirement May 1. They also presented the retiring master with a Polaroid camera and a speech he's likely to remember for some time. Chief Mate Bertram O. Christensen said in behalf of Capt. Lee's shipmates, "You have been one of the 'good guys' around here and, as such, will be long remembered and greatly missed. We hope that you will master this camera—just as you have mastered your profession—and that some day soon we will find out that it is you taking the pictures for *Playboy*. And may the old sailor's benediction be yours: 'That smooth seas and fair winds follow you wherever you go.'"

And the upper Mississippi River pilots at Baton Rouge, La., wired: "The Baton Rouge pilots would like to sincerely thank you for your kindness and genuine hospitality shown us over the years. You shall be long remembered by us and we shall always have a warm feeling of friendship in our hearts for you. So we bid you farewell and pray for your happiness, good health and long life."

In a letter to Sydney Wire, assistant general manager of the Marine Dept., Capt. Lee wrote, "I have enjoyed my work and knowing you during all my service. I wish you and everyone in the Marine Dept. a long and happy life."



Chief Mate Bertram O. Christensen (center left) presents Capt. Clarence Lee a handsomely wrapped Polaroid camera on behalf of the officers and crew of the *Esso Florence* on the eve of the master's retirement.

Hearty congratulations to Capt. William Stuart on his first voyage as master. He skippered the *Esso Gloucester* from New York to Baytown on a voyage that began April 25.

To keep the wires from getting crossed when you phone the Marine Dept. Boston Branch Office, call Ellis Bessels regarding personnel assignment and ship information. His number is Area Code 617 387-5966. Jack Bennett says he is receiving most of the calls now and has to transfer them from his number, 387-1733, to Ellis' wire. Jack, of course, is still very much a part of the Boston office. It's just that he has other chores to attend to.

RECENT RETIREMENTS

Edmund A. Flotten started with Standard Oil Company (N.J.) Marine in 1926 at 26 Broadway, New York City. Mr. Flotten graduated from Pace Institute, majoring in accounting and business administration. In 1957, after filling successive positions of responsibility, he was named treasurer-comptroller of the Esso Shipping Company. Since that time, through various changes in corporate name and structure, Mr. Flotten has been the marine controller.



Pausing to reflect back over his 42½ years with the company, he recalled the tremendous changes that have occurred in marine during these years, particularly in the size and composition of Humble's fleet. "I have been very fortunate, I have had good health during these years and have had the opportunity to participate in the challenging changes that have occurred in the company, particularly in marine operations," he said. Mr. and Mrs. Flotten are planning to move to California and initially settle in the San Francisco Bay area. They are looking forward to some travel, golf, and enjoying the company of their children and grandchildren.

Capt. Joseph E. Johnson joined the fleet aboard the *Esso Bolivar* in Oct., 1939, as messman. He advanced to ordinary seaman and able seaman by 1941 and sailed as junior third mate in the *Esso Portland* in 1944. Mr. Johnson was promoted to second mate in 1947 and first shipped out as chief mate in the *Esso New Orleans* in 1951. He first sailed as master in April, 1968, in the *Esso Gloucester*. Capt. Johnson's last voyage before retirement May 1 was in the *Esso Dallas*. Before sailing in company vessels, he went to sea from 1935-39 in the Navy aboard the *USS Texas*, *USS Quincy* and several destroyers.

Living at Waretown, N.J., with his wife, Catherine, Capt. Johnson plans to spend some time in his garage workshop, "fish and take things easy." He is originally from New York.

Ordinary Seaman Albert Garcia retired May 1 after more than 21 years' service in Esso ships. A native Texan, he joined the company in Oct., 1946, and sailed in the *Esso Memphis* as messman, transferred to the deck department and later became an ordinary seaman in April, 1948.

Mr. Garcia made his last voyage in the *Esso Lima*. He and his wife, Norma, live in Baytown, Texas.

Messman Edward N. Payne made his final voyage in the *Esso Gettysburg* before retiring May 1. He had more than 18 years' service with the company. Mr. Payne joined the fleet in the *Esso Raleigh* in Feb., 1951.

He was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. Mr. Payne lives in Bayonne, N.J., with his wife, Nellie, and son, Edward, Jr.