EXXON FLEET NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT - EXXON COMPANY, U.S.A.

Volume 15, No. 13 July 2, 1973

COPIED FROM THE COLLECTIONS IN THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Brussels Disaster Marked By Heroism

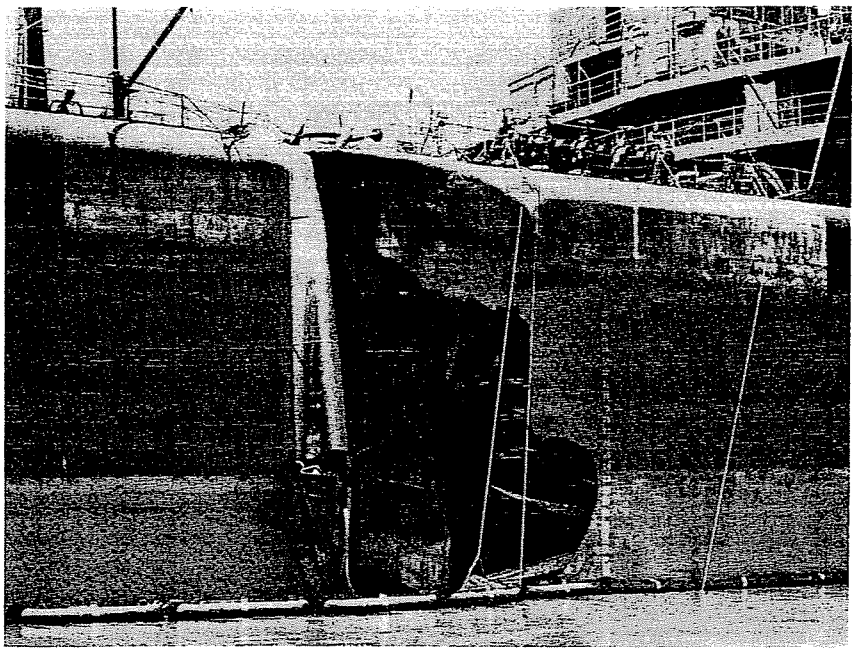
Nearly 20 men lost their lives, dozens were injured, and two ships were gutted by fire because of an improperly installed pin worth 60¢. The pin was in the universal joint that connected an electrical box to the steering mechanism of the *Sea Witch,* the containership that plowed into the *Esso Brussels.* This was the conclusion reached by a U. S. Coast Guard board of inquiry. The collision occurred on June 2 in New York Harbor (see *Fleet News,* June 18).

Burning Ships Boarded

The men who escaped from the ships with their lives have their dramatic stories to tell. Still other stories can be told by the men who risked their lives to battle the flames that raged through the ships, and the tugboat crewmen who boarded the flaming *Sea Witch,* her containers glowing red from the heat, to attach tow lines, and the men who discharged the dangerously volatile cargo of oil from the still-smoldering *Brussels.*

The New York City fire department rushed three fireboats to the scene. Under the direction of Fire Chief O'Hagan, firemen boarded the violently burning vessels to fight the flames and locate survivors. The U.S. Coast Guard also boarded the ships. The heat was so intense that coils of synthetic mooring line were found reduced to little piles of carbon.

The fact that more men did not die in the catastrophe can be credited in large measure to the swift action of the tugboats, especially the *Grace McAllister* and the *Texaco Fire Chief.* Braving the blazing sheets of oil that spread outward from the *Brussels'* ruptured tanks, tugboat crews picked up dozens of survivors.



The *Esso Brussels* after the collision.

Danger of Overstress

Even after the fire on the *Brussels* was brought under effective control, and the ship refloated, the necessity of discharging the remaining cargo presented formidable difficulties. The ship, its hull weakened by a gaping 40-foot-high hole, was in serious danger of overstress. To minimize this possibility, naval architect Walter Devine laid out a discharge sequence designed to maintain a balanced stress distribution during the discharge operation. The pumping procedures were delicate and demanding, and the volunteers had to carry them out under constant danger of potentially explosive hydrocarbon vapors.

The salvage operations on the *Brussels,* involving more than a dozen volunteer seamen, were directed by Captain Sydney Wire, Marine Department Assistant General Manager, and Fred F. Newton, Senior Assistant Port Engineer. These two men remained on board the ship virtually around the clock from June 2 to June 15. Also assisting in salvage operations were *Brussels* officers J. Geerts, Chief Engineer, and G. Van Steen Bergen, 1st Assistant Engineer.

The result of these efforts: 282,000 barrels of Nigerian crude were recovered without contamination. Most of the spilled oil had burned and very little oil slick could be found in the area. Coast Guard observers declared it miraculous that so little oil was lost.

Bay State Commended For Swift Action In Emergency

"The rapid response and excellent seamanship of the skipper and crew in the tug *Exxon Bay State,* in assisting the *M/V World Diana* in clearing the burning Mystic Pier under hazardous circumstances on May 19, 1973 is most commendable," said Captain H. F. Lynch, Captain of the Port of Boston, in a letter of commendation to the Marine Department General Manager. "Without the assistance of the *Exxon Bay State,* it is highly unlikely that the *M/V World Diana* would have been able to remain in the navigable channel, and damage to the vessel and possibly to other facilities or vessels on the Mystic River would surely have resulted."

Captain Lynch's commendation was prompted by the quick action taken by Captain Gregory Brooks and his crew in the *Exxon Bay State* when they were loading a barge at Everett Terminal on May 19. "About 11:30 a.m., we saw heavy smoke erupt from the pier directly across from us. I told AB Tony Ferreira to stop loading and button up the barge, and I rushed to start the tug," Captain Brooks explained. "The *M/V World Diana* was berthed directly in front of the fire. Calling for the rest of the crew to drop the cables off the tug, I radioed the Boston towboat dispatcher and asked him to call for fire equipment. The ship, in the meantime, had gotten up power and had cast off her stern lines. We squeezed in between her and the burning pier and shoved her bodily sideways away from the fire. The ship's captain, using hand signals (we were never able to establish radio contact), indicated that he wished to be turned around so that he could anchor upstream of the fire. The smoke was too thick to sail through blind. After turning him, we again shifted sides and held him against a brisk southwest wind. Finally, another towboat arrived with a harbor pilot who boarded the ship. When the smoke cleared enough to see, the pilot turned the vessel and headed her to the anchorage at which time we were released by the U.S. Coast Guard."

Others in the *Exxon Bay State* who participated in assisting the *World Diana* were Mate Raymond T. Eaton, AB Joel S. Stephens, Cook Anthony J. Ganem, and Utilityman Barry W. Cook.

In his letter of commendation, Captain Lynch said: "As Captain of the Port of Boston, I take pride in congratulating the skipper and crew of the tug *Exxon Bay State* for a job well done. I take comfort in the knowledge that there are crews such as this throughout our port, ready and able to assist when emergencies arise."

George Gordon Dies

George W. Gordon died on June 11 at the age of 68. He retired to Westfield, N.J., in 1962 after nearly 20 years of service. He began his career as Oiler in the *F.Q. Barstow* in September 1942 and became 3rd Assistant in the *Esso Norfolk* in November 1943. He was 2nd Assistant in the *Esso Paterson* in July 1946 and 1st Assistant in the *F.W. Weller* in January 1947. He first sailed as Chief Engineer in the *Esso Scranton* in January 1953. From that time he sailed as 2nd, 1st, and Chief Engineer and was relieving Chief in the *Esso Lima* at the time of his retirement.

Mr. Gordon is survived by a widow and a married daughter.

A REMINDER

Teagle scholars who wish to renew their scholarships should notify the Foundation by Aug. 1 and include a statement of the coming year's expenses.

Jamestown Helps Prevent Fuel Shortage

The *Exxon Jamestown* was called on recently to deliver some 16,000 barrels of JP5 from Baton Rouge to a large industrial customer in the New Haven area. The customer needed the fuel quickly to avoid a shortage.

The *Jamestown,* the only available ship in the Gulf Coast area, was notified of the emergency. She quickly discharged a cargo of crude at Baytown, then sailed for Baton Rouge to pick up the JP5 and a balance cargo of heating oil. Immediately after leaving Baytown, the crew quickly set to work cleaning the ship's cargo tanks so that when the vessel reached Baton Rouge, she could load without delay.

"Those involved in preparing the ship during the relatively short sailing time between Baytown and Baton Rouge are to be complimented for a job well done, especially for the extra effort they gave in cleaning No. 8 center tank to hold the more critical JP5," said Port Captain Torrance Inman. "Because of their efforts, we were able to deliver the urgently needed jet fuel to our good customer up East, not only on time but on spec—and the fuel shortage was avoided."

Million Manhour Record

Licensed and unlicensed personnel who served in the *Exxon Boston* between October 3, 1969, and April 26, 1973, are eligible for individual safety awards in recognition of a million manhours worked in the vessel without a disabling injury. A million-manhour plaque will be presented to the vessel at a convenient time.

EXXON FLEET NEWS is published every other Monday for active and retired employees of the Marine Department, Exxon Company, U.S.A. (a division of Exxon Corporation); O. R. Menton, General Manager; Sydney Wire, Assistant General Manager.

GENE LEGLER.....Editor

COPIED FROM THE COLLECTIONS IN THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

EXX-MOR-007238

A Message From B. E. (Gene) Crawford, Marine Dept. Safety Coordinator

Everyone is interested in safety. We all hope to keep ourselves uninjured and healthy. Unfortunately, our actions do not always support our good intentions. Although efforts are continually being made to provide safe facilities and procedures, when it comes to preventing personal accidents the problem is more difficult to solve.

So far this year the personal injury record in Marine has not been good. Injuries in both the ocean and inland fleets exceed those experienced in all of 1972. We sometimes rely too much on statistics when the important consideration is the individual pain and suffering represented by each injury. But what these statistics do tell us is that we are experiencing too many cases of pain and suffering.

What can each of us do to help in this area? Safety is a combination of many factors, but, as can be seen from an accident review elsewhere on this page, most injuries have been the result of personal actions, such as taking a shortcut, or taking a different approach from what we all know is the safest way. In other words, the main area of concern in preventing accidents should be our own actions and habits—the simple things we do every day.

One way to improve in this area is to develop the habit of stopping a moment before any job and considering the safety aspects of what you are about to do. If you are working with someone, this should be a joint effort. If the job is difficult or complex, I recommend that the licensed officer in charge participate in your discussion. Although such discussions may at first seem awkward and stiff, many seamen have found that these precautions quickly develop into a simple habit that pays off in preventing needless suffering.

25 Years Without A Disabling Injury

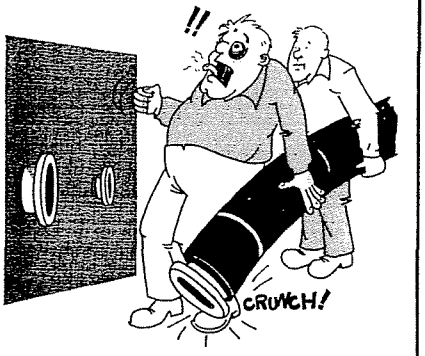


"Stay alert, keep your mind on your work, keep to a set routine, and, above all, don't rush." This is the advice of Arthur A. Derderian, Oiler, who has spent more than 25 years in a world of pipes, ladders, hard edges, and uncertain footing without suffering a single disabling injury. Relaxing in his quarters aboard the *Exxon Gettysburgh,* Mr. Derderian ponders the safety habits that have served him so well over the years. "I'm careful. I'm always thinking. Before doing a job I look the thing over, and if it doesn't seem safe I go speak with the Engineer." He is never reluctant to inform his supervisor whenever he feels that an assigned task is unsafe.

Over the years Mr. Derderian has come up with some basic conclusions about safety:

- Avoid doing a job in a hurry and never push someone else to hurry.
- Wear proper safety equipment—in the engine room, for example, wear nonskid safety shoes and long sleeves.
- Be especially careful when working overtime. Your mind doesn't function as well when you're tired.
- Be certain that you are in good physical condition so that you can properly respond to a hazardous situation.

Accident Review



An accident is something that always happens to the other guy, right? That's what the people you're about to meet thought—until it happened to them! Here are a few of the real-life accidents that have laid some of your shipmates low this year. It happened to them. It could happen to you, if you fail to exercise caution at all times.

ACCIDENT

A seaman was shifting a cargo hose and dropped the flange, fracturing his foot. There were two separate instances of this type of accident.

PREVENTION

Remember that feet are vulnerable when loads are being handled. Safety shoes offer some protection, but it is even more important to fully appreciate the risks involved. A safe worker prevents injury by anticipating potential mishaps. In this particular case, there was an obvious possibility that the flange might slip.

ACCIDENT

A seaman was descending a stepladder and made a misstep. Because the ladder was not secured, it tilted to one side. The victim fell five feet and badly injured his right hand.

PREVENTION

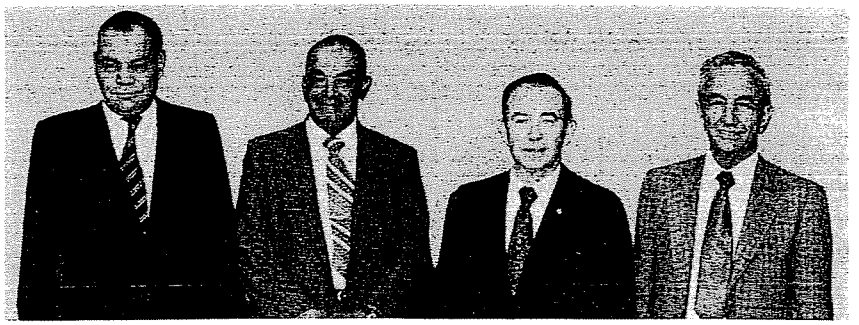
This accident could have been prevented if a basic safety rule had been observed: always *secure a ladder (with ropes, for example) before setting foot on it.*

COPIED FROM THE COLLECTIONS IN THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

EXX-MOR-007239

All Hands Ashore

Five retiring Marine Department personnel were recently honored at ceremonies held at the Houston office. Many old friends were present to extend their congratulations. Marine Department General Manager O. R. (Buddy) Menton presented the honorees with gifts of their selection.



Left to right, A. W. Kirby, D. G. Fernandes, C. J. Bennett, and A. A. McBride

CAPTAIN ARNOLD A. McBRIDE, who retired June 1 after 30 years service, first saw service as AB in the *C. A. Canfield* November 17, 1942. He attended U.S. Maritime Service training school and obtained his 3rd Mate's license July 13, 1944. His initial assignment in this rank was aboard the *Esso Scranton* August 6, 1944. He obtained his Master's license May 18, 1951. Because of the number of senior Deck Officers with Master's licenses, Captain McBride did not take command of a ship until December 7, 1968, aboard the *Exxon Lexington,* which was his last vessel.

Captain McBride and his wife, Kimmie recently moved from Corpus Christi to Rogers, Arkansas, where he plans to use his 19-foot cruiser on a large lake there. He plans to fish and to do some rock hunting and polishing.



Mr. Consoli (left) and Mr. Menton

NUNZIO CONSOLI retires August 1 after 29 years and 7 months service. Mr. Consoli was first employed January 16, 1942 as Oiler aboard the *Esso Bayway.* He obtained his 3rd Assistant Engineer's license August 30, 1943, his 2nd Assistant October 12, 1944, his 1st Assistant July 14, 1945, and his Chief Engineer's license June 19, 1946. His first engineering berth was aboard the *Esso Norfolk* September 8, 1943. Subsequent assignments were: 2nd Assistant Engineer, *Esso Hartford* October 29, 1944; 1st Assistant, *Birch Creek* (while on loan to War Emergency Tankers Inc.), July 17, 1945; Chief Engineer, *Barren Hill* (on another loan assignment), September 26, 1947. His first Chief Engineer assignment in the Esso fleet was in the *Esso Utica* February 3, 1948. For the past several years his regular ship was the *Exxon Huntington.*

Mr. Consoli plans to retire to his home in Jacksonville, Fla., where he hopes to become involved in volunteer work and to indulge in his hobby of home repairs.

COLOS J. BENNETT, who retired May 1 after 32 years service, began his career as Wiper aboard the motorship *Esso Bolivar* October 6, 1939. He quickly advanced to Fireman/Watertender and then to Oiler. He attended U.S. Maritime Service training school and obtained his 3rd Assistant Engineer's license June 14, 1943, and advanced to 2nd and 1st Assistant. He obtained his Chief Engineer's license September 12, 1945, and was promoted to Chief Engineer November 12, 1946, aboard the *Esso Annapolis.* After ten years as First Assistant and Chief aboard eight different vessels, he left to work as a construction inspector, then returned to our fleet in March 1961. He served as Chief Engineer in the *Manhattan* and was instrumental in converting the vessel to an ice tanker.

Mr. Bennett, who lives in Houston, plans to take a vacation to the west coast and Canada.

ALFRED W. KIRBY, JR., who retired April 1 after 25½ years service, began his career aboard the *Allan Jackson* as OS from June 27, 1941, to July 11, 1941. He rejoined the fleet in 1946, as Deck Maintenance man aboard the *Esso Manhattan.* After receiving his 3rd Mate's license February 8, 1952, he was assigned as 3rd Mate aboard the *Esso Scranton* July 15, 1952. Since then he has sailed in that capacity in many vessels.

Mr. Kirby owns a cottage on Trinity River near Dayton, Texas. He plans to boat and fish for "the best catfish in the world."

DANIEL G. FERNANDES retired July 1 after 35 years and 5 months of service. He joined the *W.S. Farish* as Second Cook July 2, 1941, and advanced to Chief Cook August 21. His first assignment as Chief Steward was aboard the *Esso Portland* November 9, 1945, and he had continuous employment in this capacity. His last ship was the *Exxon Bangor.* Upon his retirement shipmates on the *Bangor* gave him a clock-barometer set.

Mr. Fernandes lives in New Bedford and plans to fish from his 22-foot cabin cruiser in the Buzzards' Bay area.

COPIED FROM THE COLLECTIONS IN THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

EXX-MOR-007240