

ESSO FLEET NEWS

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From Sea to Service Station

**A letter from Jim Key, ex-Third Mate,
Now Manager of Woodholm Esso Station**

A number of men who are accepting the Company's early retirement or special severance pay offers have been considering the idea of becoming a service station operator. To find out what it is like to get started in this business, we talked to James G. Key, Jr., of Pikesville, Md. (near Baltimore) who has been "through the mill". Mr. Key sailed in the fleet for 14½ years as AB and Third Mate, resigning last March to start his new career. He wrote an excellent account of his experiences and opinions, which we are pleased to present below.

After being away from the ships for about one year, it gives me pleasure to speak to my friends through the FLEET NEWS.

I have now been a Humble dealer for a little over a month in a fine new station named Woodholm Esso. This marks the end of about 18 months' planning and working. It also is the beginning of a completely different way of life from what I enjoyed as a seaman.

After hearing of and seeing Mr. Graham's successful operation in Baytown* and deciding on a service station as the business for me, I presented my case to the District Sales Office

*Max R. Graham operated a Humble service station on Market St., Baytown (also two or three others) for several years. He was Wiper, FWT and Oiler in the fleet from 1947 to 1957 and last year moved to Madisonville, Texas, where he works at a Humble bulk station.

for the Baltimore area. Frank Barrett, then Assistant District Manager, completely discussed the business with me, listing first the many detrimental aspects of a dealer's life. It was decided that, being without previous experience, I should attend the District Retail School and get as much practical experience as possible before starting. After some soul searching, I resigned from the Marine Division in time to start in April 1962 at the Retail School.

The eight weeks at the school was a happy, rewarding experience. I learned a lot, worked hard and became acquainted with many fine people. What appeared to be a fairly simple business from the outside revealed itself as highly competitive, fast moving and greatly detailed.

After completing the course, which included automotive work, bookkeeping, salesmanship, product knowledge, service procedure, housekeeping, management, finance and promotion, I went to work in a Company station in Lutherville, Md. Now started "meeting the public". It is very stimulating to deal with people and their problems. The best part of service station life is in satisfying the needs of the motorist. Everyone rolls into the driveway because he needs something; products, service or just plain help.

Woodholm Esso was completed in Jan. 1963 and I was fortunate enough to become the dealer. Our station is very modern. It has two bays, salesroom, storeroom and large rest rooms. It has an

James G. Key, Jr. and his Woodholm Esso Station on Route 140, NW of Baltimore, Md.



outside covering of porcelain enamel and a very pleasant sheltered patio under a peaked roof, an ideal spot for vending machines. We have five modern dispensers connected to three high-speed underground pumps. There is storage for 4,000 gal. of Esso Plus, 8,000 gal. of Esso and 8,000 gal. of Esso Extra. We have vacuum cleaner outlets and hose at each pump island, in our sales-room, wash bays and rest rooms.

Woodholm Esso got off to a flying start after two open house days. Gallonage has constantly increased since opening and we are now averaging 2,400 gal. per day. Located near the Baltimore Beltway, we are constantly answering calls for road service and getting a reputation for taking care of car troubles. This will help build a business of repeat customers. As I write this (Feb. 26) my hopes for a high volume, well-balanced business are very high.

In the next month I have one very big problem facing me—to increase sales of other products and service above gasoline. As you probably know, gasoline alone will not support a station. It is necessary to sell much TBA in order to balance out against the very low profit margin at the gas pumps. This is the big struggle for every service station dealer.

In the month of March I hope that by holding the line on wages and other expenses, by training my present employees (four full time and six part time), by selling more aggressively myself and by carefully selecting promotional aids, to put Woodholm Esso on a profit paying basis.

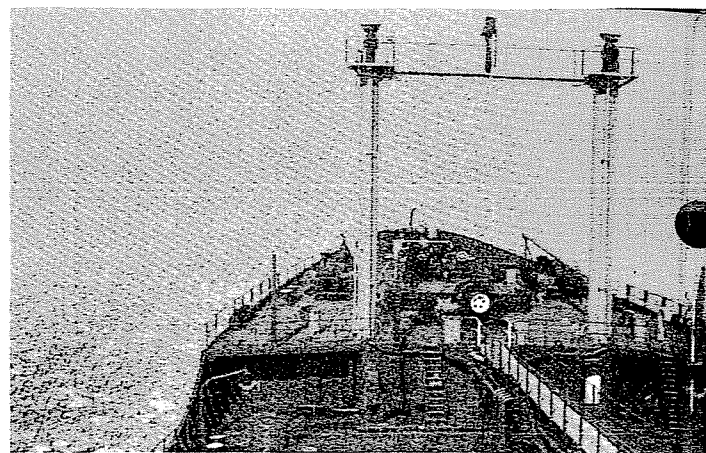
I believe seamen in general to be well suited to the service station life because of their easy, open way with people, their high moral sense and because they are already used to being away from home much of the time. Seamen should also train themselves to be hard bargainers.

If you are interested in a service station, go to work in one for awhile, be willing to learn from the old hands, get used to long hours and approach all of your obstacles with a cheerful heart. One more thing you will need is some money—at least \$5,000 and preferably \$12,000*, depending upon the size of your operation. But this is something you can arrange if you are very enthusiastic.

Well, I'll say goodbye with a hello to all of my old buddies. Come to see me at 1701 Reisterstown Road, Pikesville 8, Md.

Happy Sailing and Happy Motoring,
(Signed) JIM KEY

*Mr. Key's figures are high for Texas and some other parts of the country. Also, an agency type station would require considerably less capital to start.



OS Frank Gross

Esso Gloucester moves cautiously in the ice-choked, fog-shrouded River Elbe, after leaving Hamburg.

Esso Gloucester's Hamburg Voyage

Ice, snow, fog, rough weather and navigating the Elbe River by shore-based radar and radiotelephone were some of the experiences encountered by the Esso Gloucester on her voyage from Baton Rouge to Hamburg and return to Baltimore, Feb. 5 - March 11. Here is Captain Roland E. Parkhurst's description of the unusual trip.

We made the crossing to Hamburg under fairly good conditions except for rough quartering seas from the Azores to the French coast. Made radio contact with the *Esso Frankfort* and her Master supplied us with latest information about his country and the mine-swept channels.

We navigated these channels in poor visibility, with heavy snow at times. The radar did not pick up the buoys very well but God was good to us and gave us just enough visibility to see two or three miles. We arrived at the Elbe Lightship, Feb. 20 and anchored in ice, waiting for the tide at Hamburg. A total of eight pilots and two docking masters handled the ship while in port. There were no buoys to speak of, due to heavy ice, so we were guided up river at night by seven shore-based radar stations. They kept in contact with the pilots, telling them when we were clear of danger spots, when to change course and advising of on-coming traffic. Hamburg was the only German port open to day and night traffic during the European freeze. Heavy, rafted ice floes were 2' to 3' thick.

Our stay in Hamburg was a cold one (average temperature 20°) with ice, snow and fog. The

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W. E. Gardner, Editor.

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fog at that temperature made all the trees and wires look like a weird, frosty fairyland. Everyone got ashore to see the city.

We left the dock the morning of the 23rd but didn't get too far because of dense fog and ice. While anchored we saw the launching of the *Esso Deutschland* on television. The two pilots kept us informed of what was going on during the hour-long program. It was clear in Hamburg, although we were in fog.

The trip back was rather uncomfortable, due to nearby storms and we had to slow down for three gales even though we took a southern route through the Azores. We rocked, rolled and pitched for 12 of our 14 days back to Baltimore. We blamed this bad weather on a pigeon that came aboard off the French coast and stayed with us until the day of arrival.

Chief Steward Manuel J. Lopez kept us well-fed and boosted our morale on the way back (many had colds) with several fancy dishes and surprises. OS Frank Gross helped me with German lessons and made a trip to Bremen to see his mother.

All in all, it was a successful voyage, nobody hurt and everyone happy.

Heart Attack Fatal to Esso Pumpman Despite Strenuous Efforts to Save Him

Emory T. Bidle, MM/Second Pumpman in the *Esso Washington*, died at 0500, March 11, at the U. S. Public Health Service Hospital in Norfolk.

Mr. Bidle became ill late in the evening of March 9, while the *Washington* was off the Carolina coast bound for Baltimore. Captain Bernard Roberts examined the patient and after an exchange of radio messages with the Norfolk hospital, arrangements were made to fly Mr. Bidle ashore.

At 0633, March 10, a Coast Guard helicopter (Lt. Phillips) and an amphibious plane (Lt. Comdr. Baker) arrived over the ship. The helicopter put a stretcher aboard at 0642 and 18 min. later picked it up off the *Washington's* stern with Mr. Bidle aboard. He was landed on the hospital lawn about an hour later.

It was reported that Lt. Phillips did an excellent job of handling the 'copter. The patient was transferred aloft without the *Washington* reducing her speed of 19 knots.

Coast Guard helicopter hoisting up stretcher from the *Esso Washington* with Emory T. Bidle aboard.

AB Michael Sharik, III



Credit too, should go to Captain Roberts and Third Mate Charles I. Foote, who were up all night doing what they could to help Mr. Bidle, and to Radio Officer Joseph A. Curry, for a night of sending and receiving medical messages.

Mr. Bidle, a native of Maryland and resident of Baltimore, was 54 years old and had over 13 years' service in the fleet as Pumpman and Second Pumpman. He is survived by his wife, Frances, who arrived at his side shortly before his death.

TAFFRAIL TALK

J. M. B. Howard, Sr. Vice President and Director of Esso International, Inc. and formerly President of Esso Tankers, Inc., died on March 8. He was 51 years old. Surviving is his wife, Clara and a daughter, Amanda, 17.

Mr. Howard had almost 30 years' service with marine affiliates of Jersey Standard, starting as a deck officer with Standard Shipping Co. in 1933.

James K. Bryan, who has been in our Traffic Dept. for the past two years, has transferred to New York as Analyst in the Marine Economics and Forecasting Div. of Jersey's Transportation Coordination Dept. Mr. Bryan was a Mate in the fleet from 1948-52 and with Inland Waterways from 1952-61.

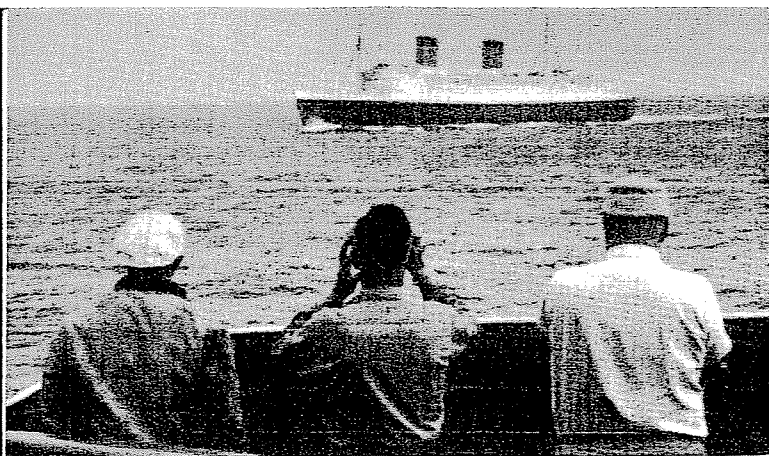
Oiler Frank H. Freundlich was taken off the *Esso Scranton* by a Coast Guard boat at Lewes, Del., March 9 and hospitalized with an intestinal disorder. He was moved to the Baltimore Public Health Service Hospital a few days later and is reported progressing satisfactorily.

When the *Scranton* docked at Paulsboro, March 10, from Mina al Ahmadi, Calcutta and Bombay, the entire crew went on paid leave with the exception of Chief Engineer Thomas J. Bov. Captain Victor T. Springer is the new Skipper.

Emil Sesto (Bos'n, ret. Feb. 1, 1958) and family have moved from Staten Island to St. Petersburg, Fla. (3043 - 53rd St., N.). Emil writes that they like Florida very much. He keeps busy taking care of a large plot of ground and going on a trip or two every year - recently to Mexico and the Seattle World's Fair.

William Naden, Executive Vice President and a Director of the Company, has elected to retire on April 1.

Mr. Naden joined Esso Standard Oil Company in 1927 as a chemist and was President of that company prior to its merger with Humble late in 1959.



Second Mate Edwin J. Fellows

Captain Bernard Roberts (center), Chief Mate Robert H. Stotts (right) and AB Walter J. Zekos on the bridge of the southbound *Esso Washington*, with the *Queen Elizabeth* in the background, March 1. The liner had seen a small civilian aircraft crash in the water off Cape Hatteras, tilt vertically and disappear. The *Washington* assisted and relieved the *Elizabeth* in searching for survivors (none found) for two hours.

RECENT RETIREMENTS

CAPTAIN VICTOR G. LEE. "Busman's holiday" or no, Captain and Mrs. Lee are planning a leisurely five-month freighter trip around the world this fall. "It will be extremely pleasant for me to have someone else do the driving while I relax in a deck chair," Captain Lee said.

It was 35 years ago that Captain Lee signed on as OS in the American Pioneer Line's *Scottsburg*. In April 1929 he joined the Company's *Standard* in the same rating and had made Third Mate by Jan. 1937. He was Second Mate in the *Beaconlight* when she was torpedoed and sunk off Trinidad on July 16, 1942. His first command was the *Wallace E. Pratt*, in April 1946 and he served as Master from Aug. 1957 until his retirement, March 1.

Captain and Mrs. Lee, residents of Staten Island, are both interested in gardening and Mrs. Lee has won many first prizes with their roses.



SECOND ASST. ENGINEER THEODORE J. WALLACE retired Feb. 1 with 28 years of credited service. He sailed in Deck and Engine ratings in the '30s and as Third, Second and First Asst. from Aug. 1939. He shipped out in 10 vessels during World War II, including the *I. C. White*, which was torpedoed and sunk off the coast of Brazil on Sept. 27, 1941.

Mr. Wallace served more than four years in the *Esso Norfolk* and was most recently in the *Esso Dallas*. He and his wife live in Bayonne, N. J.

CHIEF STEWARD JOEL L. HENRY. Born and raised on a ranch in Miss., Mr. Henry intends to go back to his small farm there (from Bayonne, N. J.) after 40

years at sea. He plans to raise cattle—and his children, of which he has 10, eight ranging from 18 months to 14 years. Mr. Henry's broad shoulders will have to carry all the burden, too, as his wife passed away three months ago.

Joel shipped with Waterman and Lykes Bros. before starting his Esso career as Chief Cook in the *Hanseat* on Aug. 20, 1939. He first sailed as Steward in the *Peter Hurl* in March, 1940 and continuously in that rank from Aug. 1942 until his retirement, Feb. 1.

BOS'N ROBERT B. ALLEY now lives in Georgetown, Grand Cayman Island (he was born in the British West Indies) and plans to enjoy fishing and gardening there and occasional visits to friends and relatives in Texas, following his Feb. 1 retirement.

Mr. Alley has been going to sea for 38 years, starting in 1924 as a cabin boy in a lumber schooner. He was aboard a U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey vessel for five years, Gulf tankers for six and survived the torpedoing of a Liberty ship in 1943. He joined Esso's *Dartmouth* as AB in Jan. 1946 and has been Bos'n since Sept. 1947 — 17 years' service.

BOS'N WILLIAM HOOGENBOOM. Born in The Netherlands 65 years ago, Mr. Hoogenboom's 15 years' service in the fleet has been almost entirely as Bos'n, starting with the *Dartmouth* on Feb. 5, 1948 and ending with the *Esso Florence* on Dec. 11, 1962. He retired to his home in St. Albans, N. Y.

MAINTENANCE MECHANIC / SECOND PUMPMAN JULIO G. VAZQUEZ' retirement Feb. 1 came after 26 years in the fleet and about that much time again in other jobs afloat and ashore. He was a coal passer, laborer and railroad fireman before going to sea in 1927. He sailed with the New England Steamship Co., Erie Railroad, Portland Trawling Co. and the Ward Line as fireman and oiler.



Mr. Vazquez' Company service began in Oct. 1935 as Fireman in the *E. J. Sadler*. He was FWT, Oiler and Storekeeper throughout the War and until Aug. 1952. From then on he sailed mostly as MM/2nd Pumpman, recently in the *Esso Jamestown*.

Julio and his wife, Felicita, live in Woodside, L. I., N. Y. and are planning a visit to Coruna, Spain, where Mr. Vazquez was born.

DECK MAINTENANCEMAN JOHN DEMARTINI left the *Esso Gloucester*, Dec. 29 for his regular paid leave and then the "long paid leave" beginning Feb. 1. He had 20 years of credited service, all in Deck Dept. ratings save for his first assignment as Messman in the *Frederic R. Kellogg* in June, 1941. He is a native and resident of New York City.

UTILITYMAN FRED W. PETERS wasn't off the *Esso Boston* two weeks before he had two job offers in his home town of Summerville, S. C. He was a member of the Summerville Fire Dept. for 2½ years before World War II and worked as an anglesmith in the Charleston Navy Yard from 1941-46.

Mr. Peters sailed in the fleet in Steward's Dept. ratings for 15½ years — June 18, 1947 to Feb. 1, 1963.