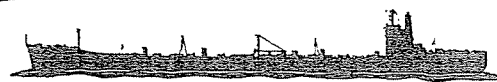


# ESSO FLEET NEWS

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## V-J Day: Role of Esso Fleet Recalled

To many of us in Humble's Esso Fleet, August 14, 1970, was just another work day. But to those who served aboard tankers owned by Jersey Standard and affiliated companies, this date 25 years ago—V-J Day—meant more than the end of World War II. It meant the end of a job well done.

From the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 to V-J Day, sea-going personnel in Jersey-owned tankers serving under various Allied governments delivered more than 665,000,000 barrels of oil and oil products to every theater of the war. They also delivered other types of vital cargo such as airplanes, boats, and trucks. These were carried on specially-built spar decks designed to utilize every inch of shipping space. During 1944, their peak year, tankers delivered 2,125 airplanes, 84 gliders, 315 miscellaneous vehicles, 72 miscellaneous boats, 81 PT boats, and 254 trucks.

### Many Heroes In Fleet Today

The tankers carried heroes, too, and skill, and courage beyond the call of duty. Many of these men are alive and working in the fleet today. Among them is Thomas J. McTaggart (now Port Engineer in headquarters Marine) who was chief engineer in the *Esso Bolivar* when she was shelled off Cuba by a German sub in March, 1942. He was one of three crewmen invited to Washington by the president to

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Recalling their World War II adventures aboard Esso tankers are, from the left, Captain Frank L. Hooper, port captain in Headquarters Marine, who was chief mate in the *John Worthington* when she was torpedoed off the Brazilian coast; Steve English, repair superintendent, who was 1st assistant engineer in the *Esso Providence* when she was hit above and below by bombs in an air raid in the Port of Augusta, Sicily; and Tom McTaggart who holds the Distinguished Service Medal (see accompanying article).

## Teagle Foundation Raises Nursing Scholarship Award

The Teagle Foundation has announced that, commencing with the 1970-1971 academic year, the maximum annual Nursing Scholarship award will be raised to a total of \$1,000 consisting of a maximum of \$750 (now \$500) toward tuition,

fees, room and board, etc., plus the present personal allowance of \$250, payable \$25 each month September through June. The increased allowance toward tuition and required expenses will apply to scholar-

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## 'Twas A Real Shattering Experience

This article might be called: "The trials and tribulations of a new third mate trying to catch a ship."

James E. Harrigan, who received a third mate's license in June, was working as an AB in the *Esso Baltimore*. Later, when the ship arrived in New York, he received orders to report to Corpus Christi to pick up the *Esso Dallas* which needed a third mate. Between the time Harrigan got his orders and when he arrived in Corpus, the *Dallas* changed course to come into Houston for boiler repairs. In the meantime, Harrigan landed at Corpus barely ahead of Hurricane Celia.

"I called Houston and got the word about the ship's change in route and was told to get out of Corpus as soon as possible," he said. "But there was no way. I was lucky to find a motel



James Harrigan, aboard *Esso Dallas*, describes experiences in trying to reach ship.

room — probably because this motel was right on the waterfront and people were moving farther inland to find accommodations. A short time after I checked in, Celia came roaring ashore. She built up force,

things started flying by, and the window in my room shattered—you might say that for me, my first hurricane was a shattering experience.

"It wasn't until I toured the area the next morning that I realized just how destructive Celia was—wrecked buildings and cars were everywhere. This was on Tuesday. Later in the day I learned that the Red Cross had a chartered plane going to San Antonio the next morning. There was one vacant seat and I got it and notified Marine Personnel in Houston."

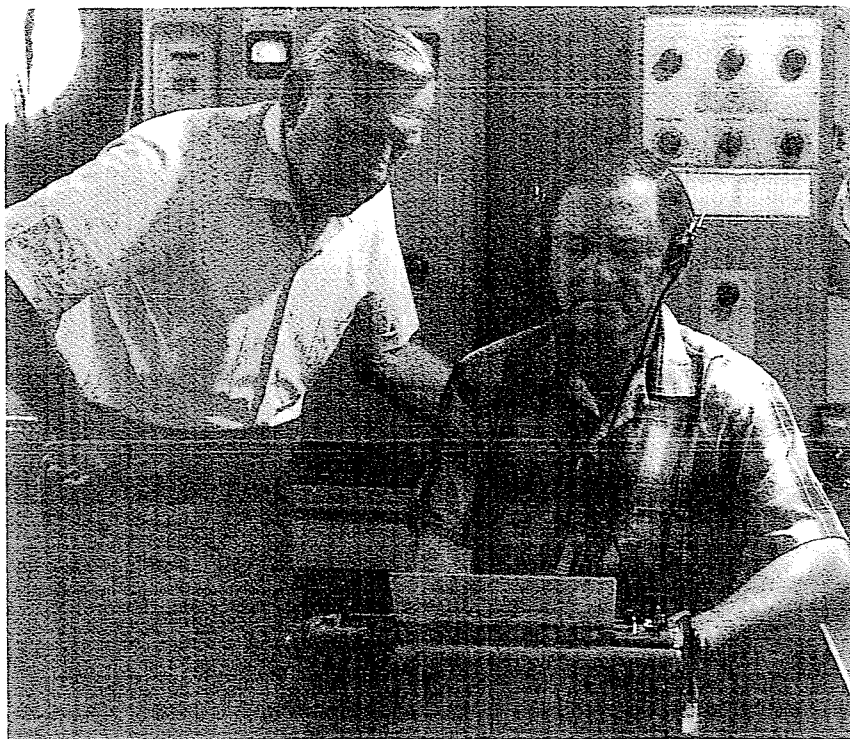
When Harrigan arrived in San Antonio, a ticket was waiting for him on the next flight to Houston Intercontinental Airport where a limousine was standing by to deliver him to the *Esso Dallas* in Houston.

"What started out on Monday as a routine change of ship turned out to be a hair-raising experience by Wednesday when I finally reached the ship," James said.

## Ship Reduces Speed To Dodge Hurricane

Although none of our ships was directly involved with Hurricane Celia, the *Esso Dallas*, enroute from Florida to the Texas coast, had to change course for a short distance and slow down to get behind her.

"We kept up with weather reports and when Celia left the Cuban coast heading NW toward Texas, we slowed down and stayed right on her outside perimeter all the way," said Captain Julius Wend. "At night we made about 10 or 11 knots. We didn't want to get too close because you can't tell what a hurricane will do, especially at night. Other than some pretty rough seas about 100 miles west of the Dry Tortugas, the hurricane didn't affect us," he said.



Captain Julius Wend kept close tabs on Hurricane Celia by studying weather reports taken by Ben S. Crowder, radio officer in the *Dallas*.

receive the Maritime Commission's Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal awarded for extraordinary heroism and meritorious service beyond the call of duty. The medal was awarded posthumously to a fourth crewman who had been mortally wounded and died later.

McTaggart's ship was raked by shellfire for more than two hours, then torpedoed. Remaining behind in the burning vessel with the second engineer after the abandon ship order had been given, he made sure the engine was left in condition for future operations in case salvage should prove possible. Climbing into the last lifeboat with the second engineer, he took charge when the chief mate was mortally wounded by shellfire.

#### Had Shell In Shoulder

McTaggart himself had a piece of shell in his shoulder and after landing the boat was ordered to the Naval hospital at Guantanamo. However, he refused to give up the idea that the tanker could be saved. On the way to the hospital, he sent a radio message to the commandant stating his conviction that, with help and equipment, he and some of the tankermen could return to the ship and salvage her. This spirit appealed to the commandant and he immediately had aerial photographs taken of the burning ship which were shown to McTaggart in the hospital. He was asked what equipment and assistance he would need in his salvage efforts. As the result of this conference, the net tender *USS Mulberry* was assigned to take back to the stricken ship all of the tankermen who were able to go, and the Navy provided an additional 25 men. Despite his wounds, McTaggart was discharged from the hospi-

tal that night, and at midnight the salvage party headed back to the still-burning *Bolivar*. Through McTaggart's efforts, electricity was restored, the engine started, and the ship got underway. It arrived at Guantanamo Naval Base still burning, but very much afloat. The fire was later extinguished and the *Bolivar* was repaired and put to sea.

McTaggart and his shipmates were each given the Distinguished Service Medal for their heroic action under fire and their valiant efforts in saving the ship. Only three such medals had previously been conferred.

#### Many Lost Lives

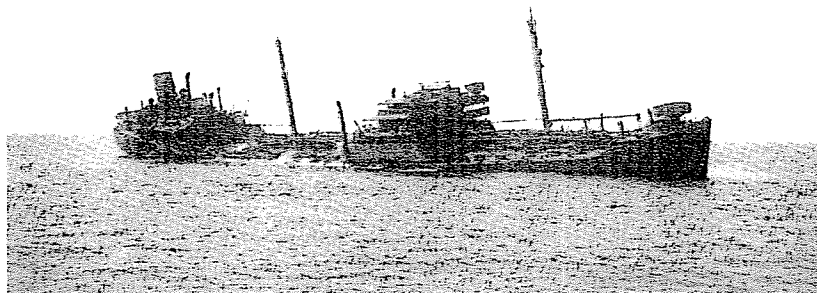
During the war, a total of 439 seamen serving aboard 93 tankers owned by Jersey and affiliated companies lost their lives as the result of enemy action. The fleet suffered losses even before the United States entered the war. From September 9, 1939, when the *MS Kennebec* was torpedoed and sunk, to the time the U. S. entered the war, a total of 26 vessels of the Jersey group had been reported missing or sunk. Fourteen of these were operating under the British flag; four were under Panamanian registry; one, Dutch; one, Danish; one, Canadian; one, French; three, German; and one, Italian. In addition to these sinkings, seven other vessels of Jersey's affiliated companies were seriously damaged by enemy action.

The heaviest losses of the war came in 1942 when Jersey and its affiliates lost 48 ships. In addition, five vessels belonging to Jersey were seriously damaged, but were subsequently repaired and returned to service. In 1943, the strengthening of defensive and offensive measures against submarine activities resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of vessels lost or damaged by enemy action and a corresponding decrease in the number of men lost or injured. During this year, 11 vessels were sunk or lost and one ship sustained serious damage from an underwater explosion. By 1944, the risks from torpedoes had declined greatly and losses narrowed to seven.

#### Tankers Were Famous

Many famous ships of the war were tankers, a number of them former Jersey Company vessels. One of the hardest working of these war-time ships was the *Esso Baytown* (the first one). Not only did she merit special letters of commendation from high Navy officials, but she earned the unofficial record as one of the most traveled work-horses of the world's tanker fleet. At one period in her career, she clocked off the amazing sea mileage of 65,786 nautical miles or 75,986 statute miles on one extended trip. This was computed from the time she left New York in April, 1944, enroute to the Pacific until she

*Continued on Next Page*



*Esso Bolivar*, with starboard list, was "rescued" by Tom McTaggart and others after heavy shelling during WWII and brought to shore for repairs.

returned to New York in January of the next year.

Three hundred and thirty-four American seamen and 57 of other nationalities lost their lives while serving on the 21 ships of the Esso Fleet and 19 Panama Transport Company tankers sunk by enemy action in World War II. A few of those ships disappeared without a trace, and their crews were listed as "missing."

Not all Esso Fleet ships served as tankers during the war. Several, such as the *Esso Trenton* and *Esso New Orleans* (1), achieved heroic stature as "baby flattops" and instead of being ships that served the fighting ships, they became fighting ships themselves. When the *Esso New Orleans* went into Navy service, she was renamed the *Chenango* and became known as the "Lucky Lady." She served 38 consecutive months in the thickest action of the war in the Pacific without being damaged by the enemy. During that time, she sailed some 218,000 miles (equal to nearly nine times around the world) and won the privilege of painting a string of Japanese flags on her bridge signifying enemy warcraft of one type or another destroyed. She achieved such wartime fame that the Japanese detailed special missions of bombers and suicide planes to sink her "or else." During the attack at Leyte, the bomber pilots pounded another ship, the *Sangamon* (formerly the *Esso Trenton*), mistaking her for the *Chenango*. A pilot downed by anti-aircraft fire from the *Chenango* was picked up and taken aboard the *Sangamon*.

Last Lost-Time Injury In  
Esso Fleet Reportable  
To National Safety  
Council  
JULY 17

"I am on the *Chenango*?" he asked.

When told he was on the *Sangamon* and that the *Chenango* was anchored nearby, he said:

"So sorry. Too bad we make mistake. We were sent to destroy *Chenango* or not come back. Maybe better I am prisoner."

#### Jersey Tankers Praised

Despite the heavy toll of lives and ships, the tankers of the Jersey group gave an excellent account of themselves throughout the war. Many drew praises of "Well Done" from Navy commanders. A number of our tankers won ribbons of commendation, and officers and men aboard these and other company ships became the proud owners of medals awarded by the Navy and letters of commendation from top Navy brass such as Admiral H. R. Stark, USN, commander-in-chief of the United States Naval Forces in Europe; Admiral F. J. Horne, USN, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations; and Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey, USN, then commander of the Third Fleet.



WHEN HOWARD SCEARS, steward, announced his decision to retire recently, shipmates in the *Esso Lima* gathered on deck to present him a new alligator wallet full of money. He is shown fourth from the left with Captain Bertram Christensen. Scears joined the Esso Fleet as a messman in the *John Worthington* in 1936, left the company in 1939, and returned in 1943. He served as steward aboard a number of ships, but with the exception of short periods in the *Esso Gettysburg* and *Esso Boston*, he spent most of the years since 1962 as steward on the *Lima*. He retired August 1 with 30 years company service. In addition to the gift from his shipmates Scears was presented a watch and service emblem at formal ceremonies held in the New York branch office.

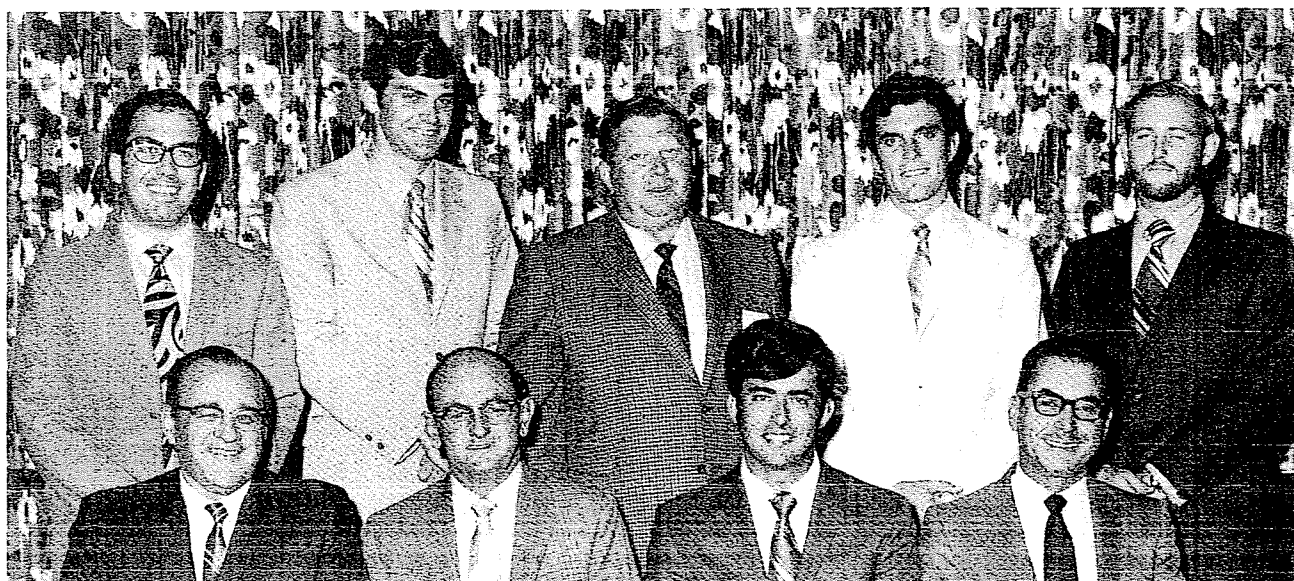
These officers were in accord when they remarked that the tankers involved in the transportation of petroleum products and other critical war materials were particularly effective in helping to bring the war to its successful conclusion.

## Seamen's Service To Sponsor Sports Event At Port of Houston

An international seamen's track and field meet will be held September 10 through 17 at the Port of Houston. The meet is sponsored by the Norwegian Government Seamen's Service to promote competition between ships' crews and individual seamen in such events as dashes, relays, broad jump, high jump, and shotput.

This annual sports event, last year, attracted about 650 seamen from ships of many nations.

Anyone in the Esso Fleet whose ship will be in Baytown during this period and who is interested in participating in any of the events, either as an individual or as part of a team, should promptly advise W. A. Scott at the Baytown office.



Deck officers who attended the Marine Conference in Houston are; front row from the left: Francis E. Salt, Daniel F. Donovan, Michael R. Savoy, and George R.

DeCaires. Second row, from left: Roland Parent, Peter Nolan, Robert T. Andreasen, Martin J. Farrell, Jr., and Bruce S. Van der Linde.



Engine Department officers at the meeting included, front row from the left: Sheard C. Johnson, Dennis M. Durand, Edwin J. Gould, James I. Edwards, and Doyle

L. Stinson. Second row, from left: John Chamberlain, Marion Waltner, Vincent S. Franzik, Richard Chretien, Joseph J. Cabral, and Walter S. Smalley.

## Third Conference For Officers Held

The third in a series of two-day conferences for officers in the deck and engine departments was held in Houston on August 3 and 4. Twenty officers attended the conference, bringing to 72 the number who have met so far this year. The conferences are designed to clarify officers' authorities and responsibilities and to bring them

up to date on the latest in labor relations, benefit plans, and contract administration. The meetings will be held about every two weeks until all of Marine's nearly 250 second and third mates and second and third assistant engineers have attended. The next conference in the series is scheduled for August 18 and 19.

**TEAGLE** — continued from page 1  
ships granted initially for the 1970-1971 academic year, as well as to renewals of current Nursing Scholarships.

The Teagle Foundation has requested that students returning to school under Nursing Scholarships request their school to forward promptly to the Foundation a transcript of the student's grades and a statement of expenses.

## Crew Leaves By Ship, Returns By Airplane

When the *Esso Houston* left the U. S. on February 22 with grain cargo for East Pakistan, little did 24 of the ship's crew know that they would come back home without their ship.

Nothing disastrous happened. It's just that the *Houston* was on long-term overseas charter when time came for the crew to go on paid leave. As the vessel was not scheduled to return to the U. S. soon, Marine Personnel in the Houston office arranged to fly a replacement crew to Savona, Italy, where the ship was discharging crude. All but four of the crew to be replaced caught the return flight to the States. It was their first trip on a Boeing 747, the new 350-ton super-jumbo jet.

Captain Thomas K. Lawton and Chief Mate Walter Brelsford decided to stay over a short time before returning. Two others, Columbus Swonger, second assistant, and Richard Vila, oiler, chose to remain aboard the ship.

The long charter is the result of a sudden increase in demand for tankers to help meet the need for tonnage in international trade. After the *Houston* discharged grain in Chittagong, she sailed to the Persian Gulf to load crude for delivery to Sydney and Geelong, Australia. She then returned to the Persian Gulf for another cargo of crude, this one scheduled for Portofoxi, Sardinia, but enroute the ship was diverted to Savona where the crew change took place.

From Savona, the master, Harold L. Sholes, and crew sailed to Libya to load crude for Fawley, England, with arrival there on August 2.

The ship repaired at Fawley for about three days and is now on her way to the Arabian Gulf.

## Deaths

### Sylvester D. Rabadan Dies At Age 59

Sylvester (Sy) D. Radaban, who retired January 1, 1969, as head of the Agency Section in the New York branch office, died July 25 at a hospital in Teaneck, New Jersey. He was 59.



Rabadan joined Esso in New York in 1927 as an office boy. He later spent a few years in the Con-

struction and Repair departments and except for two years in Estimating, he had been in Port Operations since 1936. He was named assistant chief of this section in 1945, and later became head of the section. He was in charge of entering and clearing vessels; customer work; arranging for berths, tugs, and pilots; and coordinating vessel movements in port—in general, he performed the indispensable liaison work between ship and shore. Rabadan had nearly 42 years service when he retired.

He is survived by his widow, two daughters and four sons.

### Humble Tankers In Offshore Service

*Enco Gloucester*—Scheduled to arrive in San Francisco about September 7 to discharge crude from Iran. It is planned to retain the ship in West Coast service.

*Esso Houston*—Due Arabian Gulf about September 1 to load for UK-Continent.

*Esso Jamestown* — Sailed August 15 from India, where she discharged grain, to Arabian Gulf to load crude for U. S. East Coast.

*Esso Lexington* — Enroute from LaSalina, Venezuela, with crude for New York. Due to arrive New York about August 20.

*Esso Seattle* — Due Arabian Gulf about August 13 to load gasoline and diesel fuel. Arrival at Sasebo scheduled for about August 30 and at Inchon about September 2.

*Esso Scranton*—Scheduled to discharge lube oil at Bombay on August 29 and Calcutta on September 10. Present plans call for her to pick up a cargo in the Arabian Gulf for the Far East where it is anticipated that the ship will be sold.

### Caleb B. Harrison Dies On July 24 In New York City

Caleb B. Harrison, 77, died July 24 in New York City. He retired February 1, 1958, following nearly 32 years of service. His first assignment was as messman in the *O. T. Waring* in September, 1923. His first assignment as cook was in the *H. M. Flagler* in January, 1925. He last sailed as chief cook in the *Esso Florence*. He is survived by his widow, Mildred, two daughters, Ruby and Mavis, and two sons, Alfred and Herbert.



ESSO FLEET NEWS is published every other Monday for active and retired employees of the Marine Department, Humble Oil & Refining Co.; Russell C. Curtis, General Manager; Sydney Wire, Assistant General Manager.

GENE LEGLER, Editor

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