

ESSO FLEET NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE MARINE DIVISION, HUMBLE OIL & REFINING COMPANY



Vol. 5, No. 20

October 17, 1963

If We Don't Move Ahead, We Fall Behind

A friend in the fleet, cleaning out an old file, came across a report listing the accidents aboard all the ships in the fleet in 1952. On top of the report someone had written: "Remember when? 64 ships only 11 years ago."

Our friend's comment was that if we had those 64 American flag vessels today, "everyone would be a Skipper or Chief Engineer."

We know what he means, of course, but in our opinion he's dead wrong. If we had those ships today, probably all but 9 would be laid up and we'd have only half as many Skippers and Chiefs.

What were those 64 ships? Eight were new 27,000-tonners which are still operating; nine were of 13,000 tons which, to operate today would mean economic suicide. The rest were of the 16,000-ton class, mostly T2s, which are also just about out of the race today, economically speaking.

Why were those ships money-makers in 1952 and money-losers in 1963? One reason was demand. Tankers were in demand in 1952. The Korean War was on and there were a lot of foreign voyages. Foreign flag tanker owners had not yet recovered their World War II losses. Today our fleet has practically no foreign voyages (except U. S. Government cargoes) because foreign-flag vessels can be chartered for about half the U. S. cost.

But the main over-riding reason why we have fewer ships today than we did in 1952 is the fierce and sometimes brutal competition that prevails in the oil business and the oil transportation

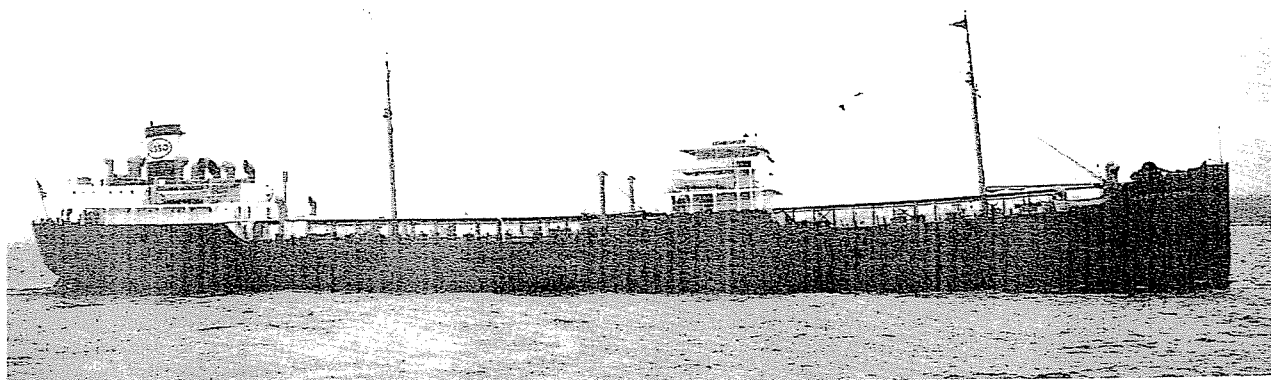
The 13,000-dwt. Esso Bayonne was one of the 64 ships in the fleet in 1952. Her ABs were paid \$316.50

business. If management gave a 5% wage increase to employees and then raised the price of gasoline to cover it, that would be one thing. But actually, the price of gasoline, exclusive of government taxes on it, has gone DOWN 4% in the past 10 years, according to the American Petroleum Institute. Not only that but regular grade gas now has a higher octane rating than premium grade 10 years ago.

How is it possible to increase our labor cost without increasing the selling price of our product and still stay in business? And how labor costs have increased! In 1952 an AB with 3 years' service earned \$356.50 per month. Today he has 10 years' service and gets \$505. An Oiler with 5 years' service in 1952 got \$370.50 per month; now he also earns \$505. A Third Mate whose pay was \$544 monthly 10 years ago now gets \$867. Also, they all get 4 months paid leave a year instead of 3 which, in the case of the AB, costs the Company \$2,020 instead of \$1,069.50, exclusive of Thrift Fund benefits.

Again we ask — how is it possible to increase your employees' pay 40% to 50% and more while the price of one of your biggest volume products drops 4%. The answer, of course, is in more efficient equipment. Bigger, faster, more economical ships have been the answer so far. But they are not necessarily the *only* answer to the economic pressure on transportation costs. If we don't move ahead, we'll fall behind — behind chartering costs, behind the pipelines, maybe even behind the barges. And as the old saying goes — the devil takes the hindmost.

per month base wage; 30 days' paid leave after 90 days' work; no overtime; no air conditioning.



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



A CERTIFICATE OF SAFETY, the Marine Division's special award for a year's operation without a lost-time personal injury accident, was presented to the Esso Boston for her

unblemished record in 1962. Port Captain Frank L. Hooper (left center) made the presentation to Captain George E. Christiansen on Oct. 6.

Left to right are: Chief Mate Julius

E. Wend, Asst. Port Steward Johnny Camp, Second Mate Francis E. Salt, Asst. Port Engineer H. W. Bradbury, Captain Hooper, Crew Messman Henry Thomas, Able Seaman Warren F. Davis, Utilityman Ernest Rodriguez, Chief Engineer Aubrey G. Allen, Captain Christiansen and Utilityman Joseph M. Cruz.

The Boston was the fourth ship to receive the award for 1962. As for safety this year — the Humble fleet was in sole possession of first place in the National Safety Council's ocean tanker contest at the end of July. (It's hard to type with fingers crossed.)

Esso Gloucester Aids in Two Rescues

Men in the *Esso Gloucester*, particularly those who manned lifeboat No. 2, witnessed a gruesome tragedy on Sept. 26. "It was an experience that left them quite shaken up," Captain Edward Crawford wrote later. "No one said very much that evening. No one ate much for supper and an unusual quiet reigned over the ship. I guess we're not so tough after all."

Events leading up to the incident began about 1145 when the *Gloucester* was 4¾ hours out of Boca Grande, Fla., proceeding to Southwest Pass. A U. S. Coast Guard plane approached and requested the vessel to aid 3 persons clinging to a life raft. The plane had marked the position with a smoke bomb. In 45 minutes the *Gloucester* arrived at the scene and had No. 2 lifeboat prepared for launching. Weather was clear; wind NNE, 12 knots; sea choppy with long rolling swells.

The succeeding events, as reported by Captain Crawford, were as follows:

1238 — Coast Guard helicopter on scene . . . requested vessel to stand clear . . . helicopter took 2 survivors aboard . . . third survivor (apparently dead) was washed into the water.

1242 — Airplane requested vessel to pick up third survivor or body.

1243 — No. 2 lifeboat away with 8 Deck Dept. men* and Chief Mate Ralph F. Mazzucco in charge.

"I am extremely sorry to report," Captain Crawford wrote, "that before our lifeboat could get to the third person, it was attacked by sharks, torn apart, pulled out of its lifejacket and disappeared.

*Able Seamen Hilmar Eidsvaag, Vincent McCaffrey, Michele Messina, Sivert S. Nygaard and Frank J. Vieira and Ordinary Seamen Clyde C. Fluitt, Jr., Roberto Garcia and Jose Silva.

Lifejacket and so-called life raft retrieved. Raft was actually the roof of cabin cruiser *Ev-Ann*."

The *Gloucester* stood by until 1442 when the salvaged material was turned over to the cutter *Nemesis*.

"It was learned later from radio reports," Captain Crawford said, "that the person attacked by the sharks was Mrs. James Dumas and that the boat, *Ev-Ann*, with Mr. and Mrs. Dumas and another man (Kenneth Crosby) aboard, was chartered out of Tampa Bay."

Newspapers reported that the cruiser had hit or been hit by something on the evening of Sept. 24 and had been carried approx. 82 miles out to sea in the northeast gale. Mrs. Dumas, who was 7 months' pregnant, had died the following night.

"The entire crew of this vessel cooperated fully during this operation," Captain Crawford concluded. "I would like to commend particularly Chief Mate Mazzucco and the lifeboatmen for their excellent handling of the No. 2 lifeboat in choppy seas."

The *Ev-Ann* episode was the second rescue mission for the *Gloucester* in as many days. And strangely, both occurred within a 9-mile area about 100 miles west of Boca Grande. On the morning of Sept. 25, while making for Boca Grande, a boat apparently in distress was sighted about 10 miles off. Investigation found it to be a

ESSO FLEET NEWS is published for the seagoing employees of the Marine Division, Humble Oil & Refining Co.: Joseph Andraea, General Manager; Sydney Wire, Assistant General Manager.

W. E. Gardner, Editor.

Contributions and suggestions are invited and should be addressed to The Editor, ESSO FLEET NEWS, Humble Oil & Refining Co., P. O. Box 1512, Houston 1, Texas.

derrick barge with no one aboard. The Coast Guard at St. Petersburg requested the vessel to contact the tug *Commodore*, which had lost the barge in heavy seas. The tug was raised, tracked on the radar, given her position and the position of the derrick. They were about 30 miles apart.

The commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District at Miami sent a radiogram expressing appreciation of the *Gloucester's* report of the drifting barge and assistance to the *Ev-Ann* survivors. "These actions were in line with the highest traditions of the sea," the radiogram concluded.

Bob Williams is Back

Robert T. Williams, Jr. returned to the Marine Division Oct. 1 as a Sr. Project Engineer. He will work on corrosion control, marine research and technical problems.



Mr. Williams received a BS degree in electrical engineering from Manhattan College in 1952, spent 3 years in the Navy and joined the Company in Dec. 1955. He was in the Repair and Operations depts. until 1961, except for a 15-month nuclear training course in connection with the NS *Savannah*. For the past 2 years he has been a Technical Adviser in the Jersey Company's Transportation Coordination Dept.

Last Tied-Up Ships Sold

The *Esso Binghamton* and *Esso Hartford* have been sold, the former to Marine Corporation and the latter to Hudson Waterways Corp. It is believed that the *Binghamton* will be equipped with a new forebody and the *Hartford* will be traded in to the Government for a dry cargo ship. Both of the 16,000-ton tankers have been in tie-up at Jacksonville for 5 years.

OBITUARY



THIRD MATE ALTON J. ROSS, who has been on sick leave for the past 5 months, died Oct. 10 in Staten Island. He was 55 years old and is survived by his wife, Helen; daughter, Judith, 17 and son, Garry, 8.

Mr. Ross was born in North Carolina and lived in Jersey City. He had 23 years' service in the fleet, sailing intermittently from 1930 to 1942 and continuously from 1949. His daughter started nurses training at the Jersey City Medical Center in Sept., under a Teagle Scholarship.

An unceremonious thumb on a button put the world's biggest products pipeline in operation last month. Colonial will have a 1,600-mile main line and 1,000 miles of branches.

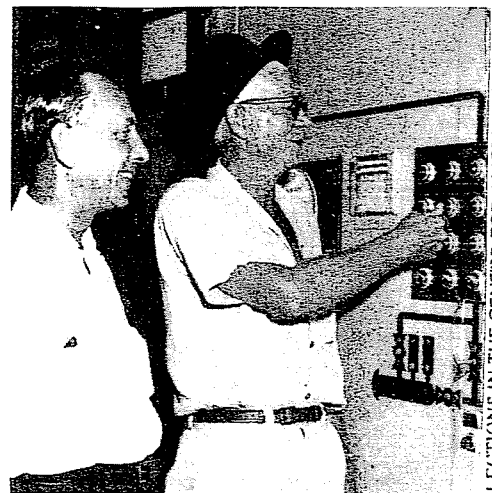


Photo courtesy The Oil & Gas Journal

Colonial Pipeline Starts Up

The first batch of gasoline — 100,000 bbls. — started moving through the 36" Colonial Pipeline on Sept. 16. Just a push of a button in Houston got the product underway for Greensboro, N. C., a distance of 1,047 miles. However, when a remote control system is completed, dispatching will be from the pipeline headquarters in Atlanta.

Gasoline was pumped into the line at a rate of 8,600 bph. but will be stepped up to 20,000 bph. later. It will require 7 million bbls. of products (worth about \$30 million) to fill the Houston-Greensboro section of the line. By next spring it is expected to be extended to Linden, N. J.

The MIS-Adventures of

J. STUMBLEPRONE MC FRACTURE

Mac here is demonstrating one of his variations on the theme of the former Broadway play "Hit the Deck". It's a simple procedure — easy as falling off a log, so-to-speak. Just carelessly slap a wrench on a valve wheel, give it a sudden jerk, and there you are. Beginners might start by opening valves that are tightly closed. But an expert like J. Stumbleprone can pancake when closing a valve. The sport is petering out though. More and more valves are being fitted with Teflon soft seats and you don't put a wheel wrench on soft seated valves.



"To See Ourselves as Others See Us"

You know the expression "can't see the forest for the trees". It applies to ourselves sometimes. We are so close to the routine of our daily lives, we can't see ourselves long-range. But here's a fellow who can. He's far enough removed from the fleet to get a good perspective. You'll like his letter (and honestly, we didn't put him up to it).

Dear Sir:

In 1956 I started my seagoing career with Esso and although I am no longer an employee, I still feel a strong bond with the men of the fleet.

I was straight out of high school and as green as could be. But thanks to the understanding, patience and good-naturedness of the men, my short time

with the fleet was an experience I'll always cherish.

I left the Company on an educational leave of absence during 1961 and started as a full time student with New York University. Through a stroke of good luck I was offered a teaching assistantship. At that time, with many regrets, I resigned from the fleet. Since then my duties with the school have been expanded. I am now teaching, doing basic research, fabricating a laser system, and taking my own classes in chemistry.

One of the greatest pleasures I enjoy is reading the FLEET NEWS. For in those moments I am re-associated with all my friends; Joe, Russell, Fred and a host of others. I wish to thank them for making my time at sea enjoyable and rewarding. I grew while I was at sea; not only physically but mentally and morally as well. Wherever I go I'll always hold the men of the fleet in the highest regard for they are real men.

Before I close I would like to express my thanks to the men of the shore staff for all they have done for me. From the time of my first employment to my educational leave, they did nothing but help, encourage and inspire me.

Yours very sincerely,

(signed) Louis C. Simon
Assistant, Department of Science
and Mathematics Education



Louis C. Simon
Mr. Simon joined the fleet in June 1956 after attending the New York City schoolship *John W. Brown*. He sailed as Messman and Ordinary Seaman for 2 years and had 4 years of military service before his educational leave and resignation.

SERVICE EMBLEM AWARDS

☆ 30 YEARS ☆



Svafar Steffensen
Chief Engineer
May 16, 1963



Fernando Tirado
Fireman-Watertender
November 26, 1962

☆ 20 YEARS ☆



Arthur W. Smith
Master
March 15, 1962



Edward Wilson
Chief Steward
January 10, 1963



Alex. M. McDonnell
Able Seaman
February 9, 1963

☆ 10 YEARS ☆

Dennis Armand
May 28, 1959
William E. Bailey
Jan. 27, 1960
Thomas A. Barden
Oct. 4, 1960
Carl E. Brooks, Jr.
April 1, 1961
Richard A. Brower
June 26, 1960
Charles A. Bujol
Nov. 21, 1960
Jean H. Carlson
Dec. 5, 1960
Frank E. Caroros
May 16, 1961
Raymond R. Darby
March 2, 1961
Clarence Day, Jr.
March 6, 1961

Joseph E. Duzant
April 30, 1961
Hilmar Eidsvaag
March 16, 1960
Sylvester L. Felty
July 10, 1960
Ariel Gomez
Jan. 2, 1961
Lawrence Gonsalves
Jan. 30, 1961
Wesley S. Grant
March 23, 1961
Earl Hankins, Jr.
Dec. 30, 1960
Arthur L. Hatchett
Feb. 7, 1961
Raymond C. Lollar
May 21, 1961
Daniel Lopes
May 3, 1961

Bernard Malkowski
Feb. 1, 1960
Albert Mucci
Feb. 3, 1959
John Olivo
Feb. 6, 1961
Howard J. Ottmann
March 13, 1961
Francisco I. Ravara
Oct. 19, 1958
James O. Sims, Jr.
April 16, 1961
Richard K. Surgocinski
March 27, 1960
Simplicio J. Tirol
July 27, 1960
Willard Walsh
Nov. 15, 1960
Melvin F. White
May 12, 1960

TAFFRAIL TALK

John M. Wittman, former Third Asst. in the fleet and now with the Tanker Dept. of Esso International, Inc., is going to Japan as a construction supervisor on three 66,000-dwt. tankers. Two of the vessels will be diesel driven and one steam propelled.

* * *

Chief Engineer John A. Waite (ret. Dec. 1945) is in Sailors' Snug Harbor, Staten Island, N. Y. and doubtless would be cheered to receive a note from former shipmates.

* * *

Humble Benefit Plan statements (this is something new) will be sent to Thrift Plan addresses of member employees in about 2 weeks. The machine-processed statements will contain information on disability benefits, life insurance and figures from which you can estimate your retirement income from Company plans. It will also show the amount you have contributed to annuities, including interest. An article in the HUMBLE NEWS for Oct. gives more complete information on the statements.