ESSO FLEET NEWS

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ESSO DALLAS GOES TO VIETNAM

By AB BILL E. TYRA

Suddenly we found ourselves in the midst of the war. We had just crossed the "bonus boundary" and were near the coast of Vietnam. A scant 2 weeks before, when the *Esso Dallas* was 2 days away from Bahrain, orders were received to load a cargo of diesel and jet fuel for Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam.

Because of an anticipated large-scale offensive by North Vietnam, similar to their "Tet" offensive earlier this year, we were hoping for a change of orders to Japan or other relatively safe port. When this change never came, we resigned ourselves to the fact that we were bound for Vietnam and jokingly reassured one another there was no real danger.

Arriving early next morning at the entrance to Cam Ranh Bay, Captain Sebastian J. Masuzzo requested the services of a pilot but when none was available, he skillfully piloted the *Dallas* to the anchorage area. Just as the ship was safely in the inner harbor preparing to anchor, we received a message from MSTS via radiotelephone — PROCEED AT ONCE TO DA NANG VIETNAM TO DISCHARGE FULL CARGO. In what *has* to be the fastest port turnaround in Esso's history, Captain Masuzzo executed a sharp 180° turn and went out the way we came in.

Cam Ranh is a beautiful harbor, with modern port facilities built since the United States intervention in Vietnam. Everything here looked peaceful and serene, except for 3 or 4 armed patrol boats and some Navy frogmen. The frogmen (skindivers) were bobbing up and down around a Shell Oil Co. tanker, apparently looking for mines or explosives that may have been attached to the ship's hull by Viet Cong.

Departing Cam Ranh Bay only minutes after arrival, we proceeded out into open water and followed the coastline (about 250 miles) toward Da Nang. During the daytime we could hear the heavy whomp, whomp sounds supposedly from heavy artillery and big bombs. At night we could see flashes of light — like lightning — as the sky lit in reds and yellows from the shelling and bombing. Muted, muffled explosions were heard as we were now further out from shore.

We passed several destroyers on their stations in a picket line, and a number of Vietnamese "fishing" boats. There didn't appear to be much activity at sea but occasionally one of the destroyers would signal us by semaphore, wanting to know the ship's name and destination.

Now that we could see and hear the sights and sounds of shellfire and bomb bursts, a pathetic and apathetic mood encompassed the ship. This mood was alleviated to some extent by a message from the Company (with the loading orders) advising us to "stay loose." The oft-repeated phrase soon became the by-word aboard ship as loose we stayed.

Captain Masuzzo, desiring a daylight arrival of the *Dallas* at Da Nang, deliberately delayed her. The arrival was timed for early next morning (8/19/68) and once again, without the services of a pilot, Captain Masuzzo carefully maneuvered his ship into a strange harbor, relying solely on his judgment and experience in ship handling.

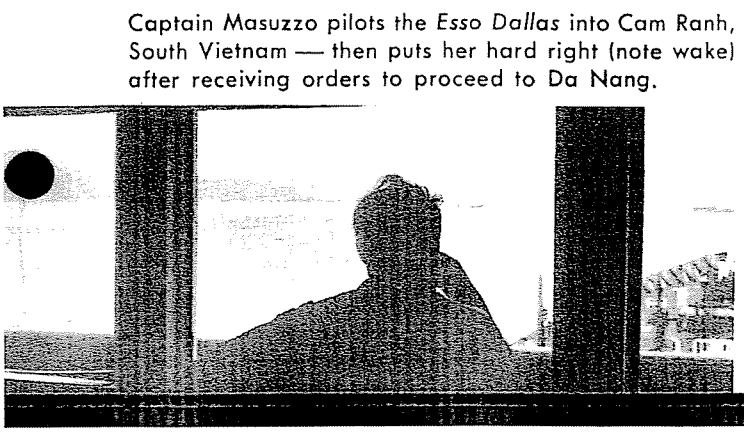
At first, when we got this last-minute change of orders to proceed to Da Nang, we thought it was just a "snafu" and we found ourselves frequently using the French phrase, *c'est la guerre* (it's the war). But as we eased into Da Nang Harbor, we could see a still-burning and smoldering tank containing jet fuel that had been set afire 2 nights before. This, perhaps, was the reason we were diverted to Da Nang.

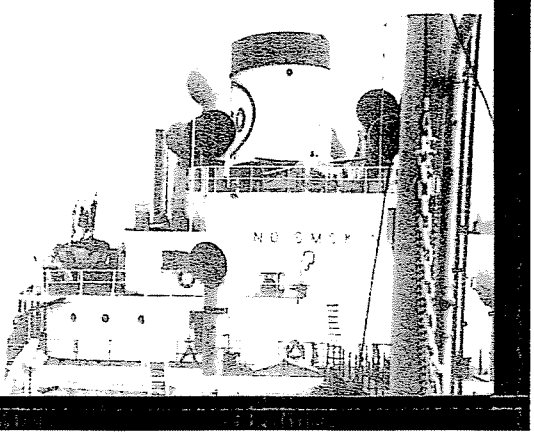
Finally, a native pilot came aboard and guided us to an off-shore mooring where the ship was made fast. Hoses were connected and we began pumping the diesel and jet fuels into shore tanks. As expected, discharging was quite slow, giving us several days in a safe sanctuary to watch the "fireworks." We were even granted shore leave to Da Nang City in spite of it being off limits to military personnel.

Da Nang is a typical Asian city with narrow streets, throngs of people, awful smells, bazaars. bistros and street vendors who deal mostly in black market merchandise. Some of the better bazaars have what appear to be legitimately imported and domestic goods and produce.

As for the sightseeing I would say that it's all very interesting and educational but not very entertaining. It's not much fun to tour a town that's tattered and

Captain Masuzzo pilots the *Esso Dallas* into Cam Ranh, South Vietnam — then puts her hard right (note wake) after receiving orders to proceed to Da Nang.





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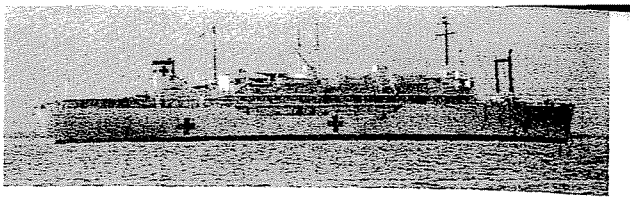
Photos by Bill Tyra



A quartet of helicopters (left) carry wounded GIs to the hospital ship *Repose* (above) in Da Nang Harbor.

FWT William Katros and OS DeForest Marshall in front of a sand-bagged defense post in a tree-lined residential area of Da Nang.



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torn, where each street bristles with barbed wire and sandbag emplacements and the people are indifferent to what is transpiring around them. But it's not necessary to go ashore for entertainment. Each night you are treated to a fireworks display like you've never seen before — even on the 4th of July.

Most of the action around Da Nang occurs at night because that is when the Viet Cong are most active. In an effort to spot any Viet Cong, hundreds of flares are expended nightly. One hill that commanded the highest view of the harbor area was under attack almost every night. We were able to see the arcs made from the tracers of machine guns and the flashes of rockets and artillery. And nightly a light cruiser would come into the harbor and fire sporadically toward the DMZ. Each time she fired we would watch the muzzle blast and count the seconds until the sound reached us.

In the daytime we watched as America's air might peppered and pounded the hills and valleys around us, the big bombers going up to lay their "eggs" near the DMZ. The DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) is a strip of land about 6 miles wide that separates North and South Vietnam.

And there was the familiar chatter of 'copters on their missions of mercy and mayhem. One day we watched a team of these whirley birds retrieve a drone (small remote-controlled airplane used in photo reconnaissance missions) from the air as it dangled from a parachute. And every day we could see the medical evacuation or "dustoff" choppers deposit wounded GIs on one of the hospital ships.

Da Nang Airstrip (allegedly the world's busiest airport) was hit twice by Viet Cong rocket attacks while we were there. In an attack early on the morning of Aug. 23, the airstrip, city and tank farm were hit and we had to shut down because the shore line we were discharging through was hit and required the replacement of 4 sections of pipe. At 8 a.m. the same morning Da Nang went on a 24-hour curfew, ending our shore leave as no one was allowed on the streets.

The same morning an American patrol boat made a circle around the *Dallas* and tossed grenades to discourage any Viet Cong frogmen from trying to attach explosives to our hull.

Not having storage space ashore, or perhaps because of damaged facilities, we shifted the ship over to an MSTS T2 tanker, the *Schuylkill*. We pumped the remaining cargo into her and departed about 10:30, Aug. 24, for Singapore and the Persian Gulf.

As we left Vietnam and the war behind, the somber mood of the *Dallas'* crewmen vanished — and once again we had a "happy" ship.



Two views of downtown Da Nang.



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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, Texas 77001.

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Teagle Scholarships Awarded

College scholarships for the academic year beginning Sept. 1968 have been granted by the Teagle Foundation to:

JOHN E. KELLEY, son of JOHN F. KELLEY, First Asst. Engr. in the *Esso Scranton*, to attend Tulane University, and

PAUL W. LEWIS, JR., son of New York Branch tug captain PAUL W. LEWIS, SR., enrolled at Cornell University.

WORDS OF THE WISE

The man who thinks his wife is smarter than he, is married to a smart woman.— AB *Carl Vella*

The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear. — *Socrates*

20 Years' Service



Paul P. Balcius
Hull Inspector
July 16, 1968



Edmund H. Smith
Repair Inspector
September 13, 1968

Six Ships Sailing Offshore

Maybe, if the *Esso Gettysburg* shaves a little time off her schedule and the *Esso New York* doesn't, there could be some salty versions of "Imagine meeting you here; small world, isn't it." in Chimu Wan, Okinawa. Both ships are on their way there, the *Gettysburg* due about Oct. 9 and the *New York* about Oct. 6.

Esso Lima loaded at Baton Rouge for Pearl Harbor but before she sailed Sept. 17, the orders were changed to San Francisco and Stockton, Calif. — so the lads won't need their grass skirts this time.

Esso Dallas was to arrive at Yokosuka, Japan, Sept. 26 (from Ras Tanura), completing her 5-month charter to MSTS with that cargo. She should be heading homeward now with all hands anticipating Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day ashore.

Our other 2 offshore voyagers are the perennial long rangers *Esso Scranton*, homeward bound (Tampa, Oct. 14) from Chittagong, East Pakistan and the *Esso Seattle*, outward bound from Port Arthur to Yokosuka.

The reason for this unusual offshore activity was a dovetailing of a long position in our coastwise trade and MSTS requirements for tonnage.

Individual Safety Awards Being Sent To Esso Jamestown Men

As a result of the *Esso Jamestown's* 1 million man-hours without a reportable lost-time accident, achieved between Jan. 30, 1965 and June 2, 1968, individual safety awards are available to every man who sailed in the ship during this period.

A pamphlet illustrating and describing 24 award items has been mailed to each of the 430 eligible men, along with a post card on which to indicate the choice of award. The post cards are pre-addressed to M. Sickles & Sons, 1260 E. Mermaid Lane, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118. This concern will ship the awards and guarantee safe arrival in proper condition. They have also agreed to settle complaints or problems to the satisfaction of each employee who contacts them directly in such regard.

The 24 items in the safety awards pamphlet are as follows:

- 24-cup coffee urn
- Insulated pitcher and mugs in holder
- Staple gun kit
- Folding step stool
- Rechargeable portable lantern
- 3/8" electric drill
- Hedge and pruning shears
- Elec. can opener and knife sharpener
- 3-piece sauce pan set
- Elec. jig saw
- Air temp.-pressure-humidity combination
- Elec. blender
- Hair dryer & case
- Kodak Instamatic camera kit
- Portable radio
- Portable food mixer
- Fishing tackle box
- Fishing rod and reel
- 50-piece set stainless tableware
- Elec. deep fryer
- Elec. sander
- Chrome Binmaster
- Teflon steam and dry iron
- Barbecue grill

This picture of J. H. HAYS (AB, ret. Aug. 1) arrived too late for his retirement write-up in the Aug. 29 issue. J. H. says he is operating a 400-acre dairy farm in Pelican, La. and "milking 43 head of dairy cows." That's what he's doing here (no Roscoe, NOT milking their heads) with an electric milker and a bottle of beer for a chaser. We feel sure the cows mean no disrespect by their position to the photographer.



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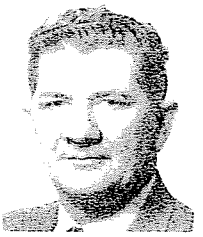
RECENT RETIREMENTS



CHIEF ENGINEER JOHN DANKO, who retired Sept. 1 with 28 years' service, hasn't decided yet where he and his wife, Mary Louise and daughter, Karen, 13, will live. They have 3 choices, at least, in addition to their present home in Baltimore. John owns 23 acres (and 10,000 pine trees) near Manchester, Md., a home and 33 acres in Washington, N.J. and 5 acres near Pittsburgh.

Beginning in the Fleet as FWT on May 30, 1939, *Mr. Danko had wartime service as Electrician in the Esso Houston* (torpedoed on May 12, 1942) and *Esso Bolivar,* and in the *Esso Baytown* as Third and Second Asst. After his first Chief's berth in the *Esso Charlotte,* Dec. 7, 1948, he sailed as First Asst., relieving Chief and, since 1964, Chief Engineer.

"It's been a pleasure working for the Company," John said, "met a lot of fine men and made a lot of good friends. Good sailing to all of them."

SECOND ASST. ENGINEER THOMAS A. MATTHEWS' credited service of 20 years, 1 month at mandatory retirement, Sept. 1, almost exactly equaled the elapsed time since he joined his first Company ship, the *Esso Little Rock, on July 8, 1948. Except for one assignment as* Oiler, all his service was as Third, Second and First Asst.

A native of Massachusetts, Mr. Matthews lives in Barrington, R.I. with his wife, Helen. They have a daughter, Virginia, 24.

SERVICE EMBLEM AWARDS

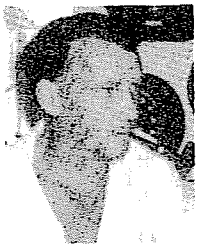
★ 20 YEARS ★



William A. Wilburn
Second Mate
March 27, 1968



John A. Gerrity
Third Mate
August 27, 1968



Harry J. Gillway, Jr.
Second Asst. Engineer
December 22, 1966



Edward B. Kerby
Radio Officer
August 9, 1968



John J. Fernandes
Chief Steward
October 6, 1967



Willard W. Poyner
Fireman-Watertender
July 25, 1968

★ 10 YEARS ★

John J. Brennan
Ordinary Seaman
September 14, 1968

Charles S. Cicero
Ordinary Seaman
September 2, 1968

Patrick F. McLaughlin
Ordinary Seaman
September 8, 1968



CHIEF COOK ALFREDO GIBAU has been sailing and/or cooking for nearly 50 of his 65 years. In addition to his 20 years, 11 months in the Esso Fleet at retirement, Sept. 1, he has operated a food concession on a New York excursion boat, worked ashore in West Coast restaurants and made annual summer cruises to northern Alaska and Canada in a fur trading boat. His Company service has been almost exclusively as Chief Cook, starting with the *F. H. Bedford, Jr.* in Sept. 1947 and including the maiden voyages of the *Esso Baltimore* and *Esso Boston.*

Al and his wife, Alice, are residents of Brooklyn, N.Y. and have 4 children: Alfred 20, Dolores 18, Henry 14 and Yvonne 13.



ABLE SEAMAN FRANCIS A. ANTONIO went to sea in 1930 as a cabin boy in a sailing ship in the British West Indies (where he was born) and worked up to skipper in 11 years. He joined the Company as OS in the *S. B. Hunt,* April 30, 1942, was AB in the *H. H. Rogers* from July 1942, until she was torpedoed in Feb. 1943 and sailed in 4 other vessels during the War.

Frank returned to the Fleet in Dec. 1946, after 2 years in a U.S. Army Transport tanker. Since then he has been Bos'n and AB, retiring Sept. 1 with 23 years, 4 months' credited service.

A good craftsman, Frank does ship models and miniature furniture and has made a "show place" of his home in Baytown, where he lives with his wife, Maud.

MESSMAN JESUS T. CAMPOS, retired Sept. 1 with 20 years' service as Messman, Utilityman and Wiper. His first ship was the *Esso Wilmington,* in Feb. 1947, and his last, the *Esso Houston.* A native Texan, he lives in Baytown with his wife, Esther. They have a son, Adrian, 13 and 3 daughters, Olga 12, Edna 9 and Leah 6.

OBITUARY

ROBERT G. MUIR, 46, Third Asst. Engineer in the *Esso Bangor,* died Sept. 19 in Methodist Hospital, Houston. On the same day his heart was transplanted into a 57-year-old Jacksonville, Fla. engineer, Bernard E. Pfohl, by the famous surgical team headed by Dr. Michael DeBakey. Mr. Muir is survived by his wife, Oleta.

Born in Jamestown, N.Y., and a resident of Baytown, Mr. Muir had more than 20 years' service in the Fleet. He started at FWT in Oct. 1947 and had been Third Asst. for the past 5 years.

MICHAEL KICA, 73, former Fireman-Watertender, died Sept. 19, in Bayonne, N.J., where he had lived for many years. Mr. Kica retired Jan. 1, 1960. He had over 31 years' service in thhe Fleet, during which he sailed in 52 vessels and survived the sinking of the *Wm. Rockefeller* on June 28, 1942.

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