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Downstream

Prince William safe and Sound after heroic crewmen battle sea

At 1:30 on the morning of May 9, Ed Riemenschneider, first engineer aboard the *Prince William Sound*, was awakened from a sound sleep by the constant ringing of the ship's emergency alarm system.

As he rushed to the engine room, he was intercepted by Chief Engineer Paul Allen who told him the ship was taking on water and to start up the auxiliary circulating pump for the emergency bilge suction system.

Riemenschneider got the pump working and ran to the engine room where he was greeted by a sight that momentarily froze him in his tracks.

The engine room already was under 12 feet of water and the water level was rising rapidly.

The *Prince William Sound*, at 869 feet the largest ship in Sun Transport's fleet, was in grave danger. Carrying 845,000 barrels of Alaskan crude to Panama, she was 60 miles off the coast of Mexico and more than 90 miles from the nearest port, Puerta Vallarta.

Mather

Riemenschneider

Hergenrather

Ruch

Worse yet, no one could determine where the potentially disastrous leak was coming from.

In an effort to find out, Riemenschneider and four crew members—without equipment or regard for their personal safety—began diving repeatedly into the inky waters, first to open the emergency bilge suction valve and then to close the overboard valve that allows the flow of water to the engine-cooling condensors back to the sea.

Before the situation was stabilized, 62 feet of sea water had flooded the 69-foot-high engine room, the ship's lifeboats had been swung out in anticipation of an 'Abandon ship!' order, and another glorious chapter had been added to Sun Company's long history of heroism at sea.

The *Prince William Sound* remained afloat and eventually was towed to Los Angeles where her cargo was discharged. She never lost a drop!

Following preliminary repairs and equipment-preserving cleansing, she proceeded to Portland, Ore.,

Continued on Page 4

New Ultra

'Making the best even better'

In the most significant marketing development since the introduction of Ultra, Sun R&M will introduce in late July a gasoline unsurpassed in the industry in both octane and the capability to clean fuel injection systems.

Created in response to a challenge from automobile manufacturers, Sunoco Marketing's new Ultra not only continues to boast the highest octane (93.5) of any major unleaded brand, but also contains new additives which will clean a car's fuel injector system with as little as one tankful.

"Our objective in Sunoco Marketing always has been to provide the motoring public with the finest gasoline possible," said Jerry Pierri, manager, Sunoco/DX brands. "With

Continued on Page 3

62 feet of water in engine room

Continued from Page 1

where more extensive repairs—which may run as high as $10 million—are being made.

"The response of the entire crew was magnificient," said Don Lindquist, manager, Maintenance and Repair for Sun Transport and one of five key personnel who were flown to the scene of the near-disaster. "Everyone's main concern was. 'What can I do to save the ship?'

"Inter-company cooperation was outstanding," Lindquist added. "We got whatever we needed without hesitation. At one point, Bob McClements (Sun Company President and CEO) relinquished the corporate jet so we could fly equipment to the ship as needed."

News of the ship's plight from Capt. Bob McKnett reached Sun Transport's Capt. John Bates, manager, Fleet Operations, at his home in suburban Philadelphia at 3:53 a.m. By noon, Bates had dispatched Lindquist, Capt. Dick Mellen, manager, U.S. Fleet, West Coast; Rudy Terry, manager of Engineering; Capt. John Commiskey, manager, Marine Services and Cargo Operations; and Roberto Penna, Italian cargo master; to Puerta Vallarta aboard a company jet with Dick Salzarulo, manager, Sun Company Aviation, whose fluency in Spanish and coordinating ability was to prove invaluable.

There they met with U.S. Coast Guard officials and Mexican Naval officials to discuss the situation, the condition of the ship and plans for the next few days. The following morning, Lindquist and Capt. Mellen were flown to the vessel aboard a Coast Guard helicopter.

The comparative calm which greeted the inspection team was a far cry from the frenzied activity of the previous day.

Although eventually it was determined that an expansion joint had failed on a 28-inch line that takes in sea water used to cool the condensors, it was impossible to know this while the engine room was flooding.

However, the huge cooling water lines had been suspect because of the speed at which the engine room was flooded. Therefore, Riemenschneider, 34, of Utica, N.Y., and four crewmen made Herculean efforts to close the cooling water valves.

The others were Jim Ruch, 39, boatswain from Sunbury, Pa.; Umar Ahmad, 31, an automated oiler from Chester, Pa.; Joe Hergenrather, 39, able seaman, from West Palm Beach, Fla.; and Ken Mather, 29, automated oiler, from Winterhaven, Fla.

"We didn't even take time to take off our clothes," Riemenschneider recalled, "and, of course, we were working without any lighting. So we'd alternate diving into the water, first trying to locate the valve and then trying to close it.

"Without diving equipment, we couldn't stay down too long. But we did find the overboard valve and were closing it when we ran out of time. At that place in the engine room, there was a deck above us, 27 feet up from the floor. We dove until there was only a foot of air space left, then we had to get out."

Later, the salvage crew discovered that the heroic crewmen had succeeded in closing the main overboard valve three-quarters of the way.

"We just ran out of time," Riemenschneider said.

Because of the severity of the situation, Capt. McKnett had ordered the lifeboats swung over the side. A signal to standby was relayed by the Coast Guard to a freighter in the vicinity, and the crew went on deck to await developments.

Meanwhile, back at Sun Transport, fleet staffing coordinators Janet Brady and Grace Connell were contacting the families of each of the crew of 28 and keeping them apprised of the situation.

"Actually, there was little danger of the ship sinking if the water remained solely in the engine room," Lindquist explained. "Once the water rushing in reached sea level, the ship stabilized.

"There was some danger that the intake of cold water to the boilers

Part of team assembled by Capt. John Bates (left) to visit stricken tanker included (from left) Don Lindquist, Capt. John Commiskey and Capt. Dick Mellen.

ndangers Sun Transport tanker

could cause an explosion, but the engine room crew had lessened that possibility by shutting down the boilers as much as they could before the water reached them.

"When we determined that the ship would remain afloat, we took off all crew members not vital to the salvage and towing operations. We then calculated what cable and equipment was required to 'jury rig' the emergency switchboard to provide living facilities for the personnel remaining on board.

"Until those connections were made, there was no fresh water, no hot food, no refrigeration, and no air-conditioning. And since the crew is housed in enclosed areas, ventilation is essential."

With the crew's safety assured, the next concern was to salvage as much of the engine room and its equipment as possible. Since pumping out the sea water would expose the equipment to potentially devastating oxidation, it was decided to have the *Prince William Sound* towed to Los Angeles, approximately 1,100 miles to the north, with the engine room still partially flooded.

With the ship safely in port and while the cargo was being offloaded, the tedious clean-up and salvage job began.

Rather than pump out all the water at once, it was necessary to pump out only a few feet at a time. As soon as the water level dropped, the salvage crew and ship's crew immediately began cleaning the equipment and applying a moisture displacement chemical to prevent corrosion from the exposure of the equipment to the atmosphere with salt water present.

That part of the operation was completed on June 8, and the *Prince William Sound* is now in Portland for additional repairs. She could be returned to service in about four months.

Gordon Kirk, vice president, Operations, expressed his admiration for the entire *Prince William Sound* crew, and especially the five crew members who repeatedly dived into the swirling black waters in an attempt to save their ship.

"As employers, we can't anticipate that our people will perform so heroically in situations such as these, yet it seems that whenever Sun people are faced with a crisis, they always respond in keeping with the finest traditions of the company.

"Everyone in Sun Company takes pride in the bravery of these five fine men."

With lifeboats still in launching position, water is pumped from engine room.

Capt. Dick Mellen arrives on board in personnel basket from helicopter.

***Prince William Sound* is dead in water with U. S. Coast Guard buoy tender standing by and a helicopter hovering overhead.**