

STINGIEST MAN

Boss of the Norfolk fuel depot, Jam



During Battle of the Bulge, Navy was asked to speed urgently needed fuel to Europe. Mac took charge. When sparkproof hammers were required to close gasoline cans, he made them, cheap

JAMES C. MACKECHNIE, the superintendent of the huge U.S. Navy fuel depot at Norfolk, Virginia—the biggest oil storage base of its kind in the United States—has a very peculiar allergy. It pains him to spend the taxpayers' money.

There are virtually no lengths to which this dogged old Scotsman won't go to avoid expending government funds. Just recently, for example, the Navy Department proposed to buy some new apparatus which was badly needed for pumping oil at the depot. Most government men would have greeted the advent of new equipment with cheers. MacKechnie refused to take it.

"No, no, laddie," he told a high-ranking admiral in the Scottish burr which is as thick today as it was when he left Glasgow 39 years ago. "I'll not have you paying out the Navy's hard-earned dollars for such nonsense."

Instead, he salvaged parts from the engine room of an abandoned destroyer, had them rebuilt and put them to work pumping oil on dry land.

Not long ago, the Navy decided that a mammoth water tank had to be shifted from one site on Craney Island, the 870-acre strip of land in Norfolk Bay on which the depot is located, to another some 750 feet away. It called in a private contractor and asked him how much he wanted for making the move.

"This is a tough job," the contractor said. "We'll have to construct an enormous flatcar, hoist the tank onto it with cranes and bring in several tractors to tow it. It'll take at least a week's work. I'd say that \$6,000 is the lowest we can do it for."

MacKechnie's ruddy, weather-beaten visage turned almost white when he heard the estimate. Luckily for him, he is a civilian employee of the Navy, not a serviceman, and is free to speak his penurious mind.

"Six thousand dollars!" he snorted. "Why, it'd be sheer sinful to lay out that much money. I'll do it myself."

He rented a bulldozer and dug a shallow channel between the old and the new sites for the 600-ton tank. Next, he pumped some water into this impromptu canal. Then he inundated the area around the tank with water, too. The water lifted the tank off its foundations and he just floated it down the canal to its new location. He didn't employ a single tractor. He and two other men pulled the tank along by hand. The whole operation took only eight and a half hours and the sole cost to the government was for rental of the bulldozer—\$75.

"I'm a Scotsman through and through," MacKechnie states, "and it makes me plain sick to my stomach to see money being spent when there's no need for spending it. I watch my oon pennies, and there's no reason why I shouldn't watch the government's pennies, too."

MacKechnie won't even spend money for oil to operate the depot power plant. He gets his fuel by salvaging it from ships' ballast water and sludge. And he sells the leftover oil to commercial freighters at two cents a gallon.

The economies this sixty-one-year-old mechanical wizard has achieved at Craney Island—and the fantastic way in which he has achieved them—have made his name a byword in the Navy. At Navy headquarters in Washington, D.C., Rear Admiral Malcolm G. Slarrow, the inspector general of the Navy Supply Corps, declares:

"Old MacKechnie has saved only Heaven knows how much money for the Navy, certainly hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Mac's immediate boss, Rear Admiral T. Earle Hipp, the commanding officer of the Norfolk Naval Supply Center, agrees with this view, adding: "In the 34 years I have spent in the naval service, I do not recall ever having met a man who was more conscientiously interested in saving money for the government than J. C. MacKechnie."

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One of MacKechnie's boosters is Rear Adm. T. Earle Hipp, who heads Norfolk (Va.) Naval Supply Center



Mac's junk pile at Craney Island Fuel Facility has saved buying new equipment

in the Navy

By DONALD ROBINSON

MacKechnie saves thousands of dollars yearly for Uncle Sam. "It's my job," he says, "and my pleasure, too"

To Mr. MacKechnie, economy is truly a religion, and he observes it with the utmost devotion."

A gnarled little fellow with gray hair, MacKechnie has been superintendent of the Fuel Facility (that's the official designation of it) on Craney Island since the Navy took it over 13 years ago.

This Craney Island Fuel Facility is a really vital cog in our national defense system. Located on the western side of Norfolk Bay, across from the vast Norfolk Naval Base, it is the principal oil depot for our entire Atlantic fleet, the chief filling station for all the great battleships, aircraft carriers, tankers and other naval craft based on the East Coast.

From the bay, Craney doesn't look like much—just a long, dingy dune with a grotesque sky line of scattered, gray oil tanks and a few white frame buildings. It's not even an island any more; the Navy has built a fill linking it to the mainland. But despite its unprepossessing appearance, Craney is a fabulous spot, a \$50,000,000 installation boasting

48 fuel oil tanks with a combined capacity of 114,950,000 gallons, eight Diesel oil tanks with a capacity of 22,500,000 gallons and 11 gasoline storage tanks holding 2,465,000 gallons. It has 92 miles of underground electric cable, 12 miles of highway, seven miles of railroad track and uncounted miles of subterranean pipes. Its five piers—each of them studded with pulsing oil lines—are big enough to accommodate any ship in the Navy.

MacKechnie has full charge of this establishment and, for all that his salary is only \$6,905 a year, he rules it like a czar. He is said to be a fine man to work with if you do things right. Then he's twinkly-eyed, friendly, and quick with a cheery wisecrack. However, woe betide the Navy skipper, no matter how many his stripes, who doesn't obey Mac's instructions as to the most efficient methods for pumping oil, and Heaven help any one of Mac's 265 civil service employees who loiters on

the job or doesn't take proper care of government property. MacKechnie's temper is as short as his economy-mindedness is long, and his years with the Navy have taught him some salty language.

Recently, one of his workers let a few drops of oil out of a 20,000-gallon consignment spill over on the ground.

"Don't you know oil costs money?" Mac asked him, enraged.

"For Pete's sake," the man protested. "I only lost a pint."

"Only a pint, you say," MacKechnie sputtered. He then gave vent to a long string of expletives, winding up breathlessly: "Isn't a pint worth money, too?"

He is equally tough on people who seek to tie him up in government red tape. A while back, a local bureaucrat tried to prevent him from firing a slovenly worker. "It's against regulations," he said.

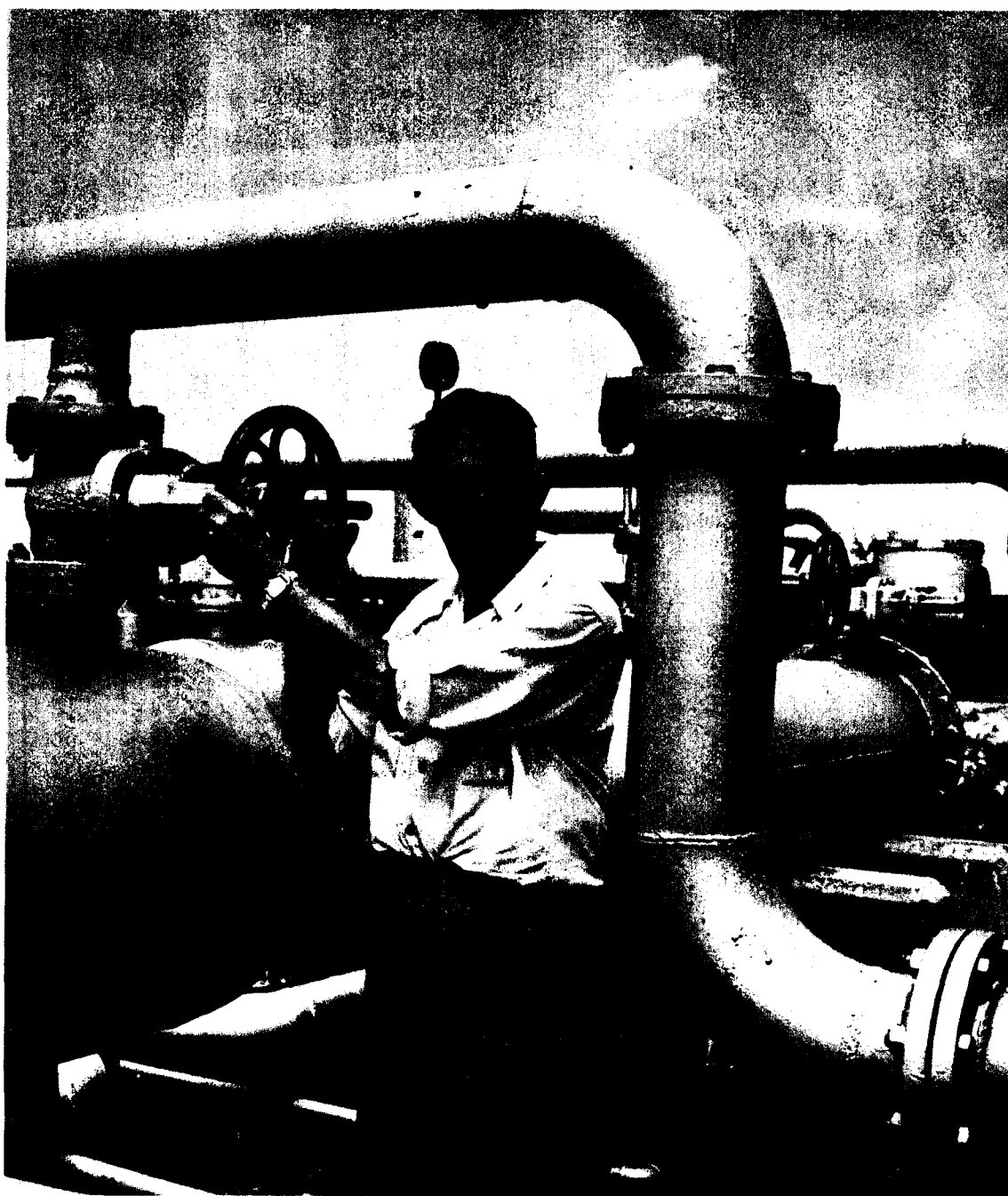
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A handy man, he economizes at home, too, by doing repair work for equally thrifty wife



By bringing goats to island, Mac saved price of cutting grass. They cost nothing to keep



Navy fuel depot at Craney Island, Va., is crammed with machinery like this pumping station, made by frugal superintendent from salvage materials. He chases scrap for 100 miles around

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY MAXWELL FREDERIC COPLAN



Buckley schools' bantam circus side show featured strong man A. J. Uniack, fat lady Mary Sharp and sharpshooting Deadeye Dick Raskin, son of David Raskin, the composer of Laura

Hollywood Circus

Movieland parents pop with pride at the Buckley schools' annual pageant

ALICE FAYE and Phil Harris, Betty Grable and Harry James, Susan Hayward, Maureen O'Sullivan and Ginny Simms are not the kind of people movie fans usually associate with toys, tots and report cards. Yet, when Mrs. Isabelle Buckley invites them and some dozen or so other Hollywood celebrities to her annual school-circus at Van Nuys, a few miles from the California film center, they go scurrying over, with hearts pounding in anticipation to see their kids perform. Living behind a glamorous façade, they may seem isolated from the cares and delights of normal parenthood, but they get as much of a kick out of seeing their kids in action as any parents in the nation.

Though Buckley's bantam circus provides buckets of joy for many a movie mother and dad, the schools are less interested in who's who than what's what. There are two Buckley schools in Van Nuys and one in Los Angeles, which guide the educational destinies of some 300 boys and girls from two to twelve years old. Big-name children, though their parents can easily afford the \$400 to \$600 yearly tuition, aren't even admitted to a Buckley school unless they can mix well with other kids.

Basing its educational methods on a middle road between conservative and progressive principles, the Buckley system has for 17 years been combining good manners and good conversation with the three traditional "R's," striving to inculcate "self-expression through self-discipline." Annually, to prove the point, the three schools top off year-round classes in art, music, dancing, handicrafts and composition with a big circus, almost completely put together by their famous and nonfamous students alike.

This year's show, for the benefit of the St. Joseph's Hospital in Burbank, featured 11 acts, a gen-u-wine side show and a water carnival. All 300 pupils participated. And a half-dozen times during the afternoon, highly polished feminine voices were heard to squeal in delight: "That's my kid!" Even movie stars twinkle when their kids shine.

ROBERT CAHN



Judy Garland's four-year-old daughter Liza had a leading role in ballet. Here nursery teacher, Kathryn Ryan, fixes Liza's hairdo



Phil Harris' and Alice Faye's youngster, Alice, was a wandering flower girl. She gave prizes to winners of carnival games



Mr. and Mrs. Barry Sullivan's four-year-old, Jenny, was in Buckley nursery school ballet. Beaming Daddy couldn't take his eyes off her