Building offshore giants with diversity
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Ramadan Donation Campaign generates over SR 12 million
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‘Safety is a way of life, and Aramco cares about our employees and their families’
See back page

The Tapline: A tale of engineering triumph
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Aramco Asia has received international recognition for its promotion and use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Aramco Asia won the 2021 Global UAV Contribution Award at the Fifth Drone World Congress and International UAV Expo held in May in Shenzhen, in China’s southern Guangdong Province.

Mohammad W. Al-Qahtani, vice president of Engineering and Technical Services at Aramco Asia, received the award from the Shenzhen UAV Industry Association on behalf of the company. Aramco Asia won for its outstanding efforts in promoting UAV and robotic technology; leading the deployment of 50 sets of UAVs in Saudi Arabia over the past three years; and being actively involved in the corporate digital transformation process. Aramco Asia was one of five finalists to receive the award.

Great honor

“It is my great honor to attend this event. The award is especially meaningful for Aramco Asia, as we have assessed, adapted, and applied UAV technology to ensure safer, cost-effective, and efficient operations for many of our key industrial facilities,” Al-Qahtani said on accepting the award.

Implementation

The Aramco Asia delegation delivered a presentation at the congress’ plenary session prior to the award, presenting scenarios where drone technology had been used to support corporate operations.

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It takes courage to grow from an absolute beginner to a seasoned expert

Every beginner learned to be an expert by failing a few times. Every time we face a challenge we cannot immediately say “I give up.” Nobody knew how to do basic things like walking, talking, or even eating when they were first born; everyone learned slowly, only through making mistakes.

At the beginning of our training at Aramco, we experienced hurdles that made us anxious, nervous, and afraid of failing. But we, too, learned through our mistakes to improve what we’re doing.

Heart pounding, palms sweating

For Maryam M. Alansari, before working at Aramco, the mere thought of standing in the center of a room and making a speech made her heart pound and palms sweat. After making a few mistakes and successfully overcoming her public speaking phobia, she was applauded for her communication skills and even asked to lead a tour for general managers.

Previously, Munia S. Alnasser had always preferred working independently. In the collaborative work environment at Aramco, however, her interpersonal dealings allowed her to see how invaluable it is to discuss and exchange opinions. Experiencing firsthand the enormous potential of a group’s synergy to solve problems has changed Munia’s perspective. She is now perfectly comfortable working in either a group or an individual setting.

An especially daunting task

Both of us undertook various, often challenging tasks during our training, including virtual presentations, which are so different from in-person presentations. One particular type of face-to-face presentation was especially daunting: We would for the first time be presenting to male students. Going from being used to presenting to a female audience, to then presenting to a male audience wasn’t an easy transition, but it taught us to persevere until it became natural to communicate with this new audience. Giving presentations also meant developing good management skills, learning how to handle participants, and ensuring everyone participates in discussions equally.

Without these challenges that came with our job tasks, we wouldn’t have grown personally or professionally. We are immensely grateful for both the hard times and accomplishments during our training period, as well as the opportunities where we learned to let go of anxiety and nervousness. These opportunities almost always related to speaking in front of an audience. Accomplishing such things has given us a lot of courage and confidence.

Maryam and Munia are Jubail University College students majoring in English. They are completing their university internships at the Dhahran North Industrial Training Center.
Navigating new waters
In-house trained Aramcon earns international marine certification

Hussain M. Al-Nasrallah has become the first in-house trained Marine Department employee to be awarded a navigating officer’s Certificate of Competency (CoC) issued by the Transport General Authority (TGA) of Saudi Arabia.

The TGA is the authorized national body that issues marine CoCs in line with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW). The CoC was issued with no limitation, enabling Al-Nasrallah to work as a navigation officer on board any size and type of marine vessel worldwide.

Mandated by the Royal Decree No. 63 of 2017, which was prepared for women who will occupy field technical positions in the Industrial Safety and Security Department, including security officers, who provide safety and security while saving lives and protecting assets.

In 2019, S&IS implemented directives to increase female hiring in administrative and technical jobs. Mandated by the vice president of S&IS, Aali M. Al Zahrani, the journey began in 2020 with a recruitment team chaired by the manager of the Fire Protection Department (FrPD), Albadr M. Jannah. A total of 79 females were recruited for technical field jobs, including security officers, emergency dispatchers, and fire inspectors.

Important step
“T’m excited, proud, and happy for S&IS to be making such an important and serious step toward empowering females in a male dominant field. We are confident in our decision and its future success,” Al Zahrani said.

“Saudi women are qualified and will prove their capabilities to the Kingdom, the company, and to S&IS, becoming a contributing factor within safety,” he added.

Extensive efforts with stakeholders, including Human Resources, Labor Relations, the Staffing Services Department, Training and Development, and the Law Department, turned the initiative into a successful recruitment process.

New challenge
Jannah said the process consisted of campaigns, interviews, and face-to-face meetings to market the new jobs across the Kingdom, providing information about the nature of the work, and addressing inquiries raised by potential candidates.

“Bringing females into this workforce is indeed a new and difficult challenge to be fulfilled within the S&IS success story,” Jannah said.

To create an appropriate environment for future female employees, job titles were reviewed and adjusted, and new job ladders were created. New Line Specific Training (LST) programs were also developed for female security officers and fire inspectors.

Ongoing Journey
In coordination with the Industrial Training Department, S&IS welcomed the candidates with an orientation and showcased operations with visits to fire stations, the FrPD hydro-test workshop, the 911 Security Center, and the Industrial Security Operations Academy. Candidates also visited the Leading National Academy in al-Khobar for an overview of the four-month academic training program before their LST. The journey will include quarterly engagement sessions to provide the young females with the opportunity to meet with senior S&IS management.

Several insights were contributed during the orientation conversation. One asked when female security officers would be able to carry live weapons. Another asked about the possibility of becoming a K-9 specialist. Work location and further training were also topics of curiosity, with S&IS stating that female hiring would be based on place of residence, and on-the-job training would continue for 20 months after attendance at the academy as part of the two-year entry level program.

Laila M. Ghamdi, an HR generalist with the FrPD’s Training Coordination Group, said S&IS is very keen to pave the way for females through encouraging diversity and inclusion at all levels in the organization.

Enthusiastic candidates
Yara K. Osaimi, from Jiddah, aspires to become a fire inspector and expressed her gratitude in joining Aramco. “I’m proud to be a part of a program that promotes safety,” she said.

Sarah Shamrani, from Dammam, believes that joining S&IS is a golden opportunity. “I am excited to become one of the first females to make history,” she said.

Al-Khobar-based Amina A. Alyousif, said, “There is no routine in this program as I will learn something new every day. I’m happy to be contributing in saving lives.”

World-class training
The MTAU was awarded an international benchmarking certificate issued by Applied Research International, a world-class maritime training institute and a global leader in the production of simulation and virtual reality training solutions. The MTAU was then officially accredited by the TGA to deliver training for navigation and engineering disciplines in line with the STCW.

“The success story of Hussain Al-Nasrallah will certainly inspire others,” Otaibi noted. “Our journey has just begun. We have many other training related initiatives and projects in progress. With the installation of an engine room simulator and the procurement of a ship captain’s approved curriculum, we’re committed to extending the STCW training programs to even higher levels.”

Promoting diversity
Women’s empowerment across breadth of our business

By Daliah Darweesh

In line with women’s empowerment, Aramco continues to implement further diversity and inclusion efforts.

Safety and Industrial Security (S&IS) has always been known for traditional male positions such as firefighters and security officers, who provide safety and security while saving lives and protecting assets.

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The Trans-Arabian Pipeline — or Tapline — has been officially recognized as Saudi Arabia’s first industrial Heritage site. This is the story of how the 5,800-year-old oil pipeline won its place in history — and in the affections of those who worked on it.

The Tapline, located in the northwestern Saudi Arabia, is considered a historical feat of engineering that brought energy to Europe in the aftermath of World War II.

When it began operations in 1950, it was the world’s longest oil pipeline system. It carried billions of barrels of crude oil. 1,648 km long from the Arabian Gulf to the Mediterranean. It carried billions of barrels of crude oil.

The Tapline was always much more than the sum of its physical parts. Its success was thanks to the dedication of an adventurous and resourceful team of engineers, mechanics, and technicians, drawn from all over the world.

Now, 31 years after it was decommissioned, the Tapline occupies a prominent place in the history books as Saudi Arabia’s first officially recognized industrial heritage site.

From blueprint to reality

As World War II approached its final days, it became clear that the reconstruction of Europe would need a steady and cost-effective supply of crude oil. Precisely, it was a one-year, 5,800-km voyage by ship from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean, a long and costly journey that would not accommodate the expected surge in crude oil demand.

In 1944, Aramco founded the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company, a joint venture between Aramco and the governments of Saudi Arabia and Jordan, to develop a pipeline that would transport oil from the Arabian Gulf to the Mediterranean. The project was designed to ensure a reliable, cost-effective source of crude oil.

The Tapline was a success. In 1951, the first full year in which the pipeline was operational, Aramco’s production rose from 278 million barrels, and more than one-third of it flowed through the Tapline. It proved to be a long, steady stream of energy to the Western markets, both accelerating Aramco’s development and growth during the 1950s, as well as fulfilling the need for new economic advantages. Pumping was discontinued, but the pipeline continued to transport smaller quantities of oil up until 1990.

The Tapline was completely decommissioned and finally “de-activated” or cleared out in 1997.

The Tapline today

Today, the story of the Tapline is well known to those who worked on it or live near it, with fond memories of the challenges and unique experience of working on the 1,648 km pipeline.

In December 2020, the Kingdom’s Ministry of Culture selected it as Saudi Arabia’s first industrial heritage site, while surveys are underway to recognize it as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The physical pipeline still runs parallel to the highway in northern Saudi Arabia — aptly named the Tapline Road. In its current, unused state, the clear-sea water of the Tapline creates challenges for those working to preserve and celebrate it. Although the original main pumping stations have long been dismantled, the pipeline remains a monument to ingenuity, vision, and determination, and is one of the milestones of Aramco’s legacy.

For the main pump stations, the Tapline ran — in Lebanon, Jordan, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — through the lands of three different governments sharing the custodianship of the land through which the Tapline ran — in Lebanon, Jordan, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Tapline is a great engineering structure that accumulated one of the largest engineering structures in the world. The nature of the desert is difficult, especially for long distances.

The Tapline includes a series of pump stations, as pump stations, facilities, and maintenance in a timely manner.

Saudi B. Al-Sharhan, operations engineering Group Leader at Northern Area Pipelines, said: “I’m an operations engineer at Bani Saud, and my responsibilities include protecting the lands around the Tapline from encroachment.

The Tapline runs 1,280 km in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including 325 km in the land 200 meters in width for the full length. That’s about one-fifth of the land in the Kingdom of Bahrain. So for me, as an engineer, the Tapline is one of the milestones to be proud of.

The Trans-Arabian Pipeline was one of main pipelines that carried 278 million barrels of oil to Europe over the years, in the aftermath of World War II.
Building offshore giants with diversity

First offshore facilities fabrication by female project engineer

By Janet Pinheiro

A 2,234-ton jacket, resting on its side in a northern Saudi Arabian port, patiently tolerates the constant hum of construction activity alongside it.

Workers in blue or red overalls swarm around the steel titan, preparing it for the day it is lifted up from its dockside home and sailed into blue Gulf waters to take its place in the Marjan field for at least 25 years.

The jacket is one of more than 25 infrastructure giants being fabricated at the Dammam Fabrication Yard for offshore installation to support the company’s drilling program.

Every infrastructure piece — jackets, production deck modules, pipelines and cables — is designed for unmanned operation, and all are a testimony to humanity’s power to create big things.

Jacket the favorite giant

Project engineer Manar A. Albalawi works at the fabrication yard.

The jacket — each one typically made up of six legs and three bays — is Albalawi’s favorite piece.

Securing her safety helmet on her head, she enthusiastically steps out of the administrative building to tour the yard. Predictably, her first stop is the jacket.

“The jacket will support the tie-in platform, which will both collect produced water, and supply water to the wellhead platforms,” she explains.

“In front of you, the jacket, are four production deck modules designed to be water injection platforms.

“For the final fabrication, we bring together four levels. The helideck, mezzanine deck, main deck, and cellar deck, to all form the water injection platform,” she added.

Starting out right

The core role of Albalawi’s team is managing the design, procurement, and construction by the fabrication contractor.

“Our job is to lead the project and solve any problems coming up during the phases of the project,” she says.

“By checking every single thing, from the material the contractor uses to the completion of the fabrication, we work to prevent issues.

“We use a sequence to check everything, starting from the cutting, to the fabrication, as well as the electrical work and welding.

“We have to approve the different procedures the contractors use here in the yard, and we work with the Project Inspection Department to check the integrity of the fabrication.”

With infrastructure needing to operate smoothly for at least a 25-year design life, “We need to get it right at the beginning,” Albalawi notes.

Growing up alongside the Aramco family

As a young child, Albalawi delighted in disassembling her battery operated toys.

“I loved energy,” chuckles Albalawi. “I was curious to know more, and my parents encouraged my curiosity.”

Aramco was all around Albalawi when she grew up in Dhahran. “I wanted to be a part of Aramco and contribute to the Kingdom.”

My father is a traditional Saudi man with a pure heart and an open mind,” she says. “He always supported my education and career journey, and his teachings and advice guided me through my journey from Dhahran to the U.S.

With three sisters and three brothers, Albalawi says her parents supported all their children to pursue their career dreams. “They encouraged us to work hard in our education.”

After being awarded a university scholarship from the Kingdom, Albalawi studied a four-year electrical engineering degree at Merrimack College, Massachusetts, USA, achieving honors (Cum Laude) for high academic performance.

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Employees give record amount in Ramadan Donation Campaign

As a leading global energy company, Aramco and its employees have the resources to help build a better world. This has been a founding basis of Aramco’s corporate value of citizenship, by mobilizing our resources to generate opportunities that help make a positive impact on people and their communities.

This value pervades everything we do, but is especially true during the Holy Month of Ramadan, when employees reach deep into their pockets to give to those less fortunate, and when the company matches those donations, riyal for riyal.

This year, employees contributed over SR 6,000,000 during the 2021 Ramadan Annual Donations Campaign in 4 weeks. It was an all-time record-breaking number since the introduction of the employee online donations program 19 years ago. The campaign ran from April 19 to May 20. The company matched the employee donations to double the overall amount, which was more than SR 12,000,000.

Compared to the 2020 Ramadan campaign, this year’s numbers for contributors increased by 25%, almost 14,000 employees. With more contributors, the total amount of donations this year also increased 37% over last year.

Overall, corporate engagement for the 2021 Ramadan campaign was 19.1%, an indication of the passion, commitment, and generosity of Aramco employees during difficult times.

This year, employees could funnel their donations into two funds, Social and Medical. Both funds gave a special focus on vulnerable groups such as orphans, widows, senior citizens, and needy individuals.

Memory Lane: The Sun and the Flare become one

From new names to new homes, and big computers to ball games, the start of summer has always brought news.

June 2, 1946

Merger effected

As of June 2, 1946, the “Arabian Sun” and the “Flare” are combined into one publication, and the new publication will be known as the “Arabian SUN and FLARE.”

The editorial policy will remain the same, to give you NEWS primarily about things happening not only in Dhahran, but in Ras Tanura, Abqaiq, and a new one added temporarily — Al Khobar.

As evidenced by this issue, Ralph Reed, Fletcher Johnson, Jean Johnson, and a nom de plume writer from Ras Tanura have made this edition quite interesting.

May 19, 1971

5 rescued from bay’s rough seas

Brothers Jim and John Bowler of Dhahran carried out a two-phase rescue mission Friday afternoon when boats carrying five English Airworks employees capsized in waves three to four feet high at Half Moon Bay.

A sailboat with three aboard was the initial casualty, but the closest brush with tragedy came when a small motorboat carrying two Englishmen became swamped after going to the sailboat’s aid.

May 21, 1986

Computerization to encompass all AMS health care records

When Aramco Medical Services (AMS) put into operation its 8 megabyte IBM 4381 computer in February 1985, it seemed adequate to handle project-ed plans for computerizing necessary health care data for Aramco employees and their dependents.

As it turns out, the Patient Care system project workload has progressed so rapidly that an additional 8-megabyte memory unit has been ordered.

Already implemented and working well are appointment scheduling, patient admissions and discharges, and file tracking. In mid-July, the system will begin incorporating laboratory test data. With some 2.7 million lab tests to be administered by AMS in 1986, the need for greater computer memory capacity is understandable.

May 24, 1961

3,000th house purchased through home ownership plan

Ali ibn Miskeen, a mail clerk in the Senior Staff Mail Center, Dhahran, on Saturday acquired the 3,000th house built or purchased by a Saudi Arab company employee through Aramco’s Home Ownership Program.

On welcoming the large group who came to congratulate the new property owner, D.J. Sullivan, assistant general manager of Operations, cited the Home Ownership Program as “one of the best ways Aramco can assist an employee to improve his living standards, and at the same time, help him create an estate.”

Saudi Arab employees of Aramco are acquiring houses through the Home Ownership Program as “one of the best ways Aramco can assist an employee to improve his living standards, and at the same time, help him create an estate.”

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Photographic memory

An exploration party in the Rub' al-Khali traverses the dunes aboard a sand buggy in June 1967. Aramco had a fleet of 12 sand buggies, which were used to transport men and equipment for seismic operations. The buggies' large, low-pressure tires gave the vehicles high mobility in the desert. They later saw service along the Gulf coast, performing seismic work in intertidal zones. (Photo by B.H. Moody)
‘Relentless in our safety focus’ good for you, good for business

By Mohammed N. Al Shammari

An uncompromising culture of safety is good for business, according to Mohammed Y. Al Qahtani, senior vice president of Downstream.

“Safety, of course, is a corporate value that is embedded in everything we do at Aramco,” Al Qahtani said. “We aspire to be the safety leaders in the Kingdom and in the industry, ensuring that our activities, every day, in our facilities, in our homes, on- and off-the-job, are conducted in the safest way possible.”

“Being relentless in our safety focus is not only good for business, creating value for the company, but it also keeps our people and the company’s assets safe for generations to come,” he said.

Safety boot camp by the beach

Al Qahtani made his comments while on a second consecutive weekly visit to the Downstream Safety Boot Camp held at the White Sand Lounge in Najmah, Ras Tanura, reinforcing the importance of the program on the business line’s health, safety, and environment (HSE) record, which he said had improved significantly compared with previous years.

“I have full confidence in our people to continuously improve the HSE performance,” he said, highlighting the challenges related to H2S, flammable products, temperature, high-pressure, and aging equipment, while reinforcing the importance of remaining vigilant.

Distractions cause accidents

Al Qahtani also emphasized the importance of traffic safety, expressing his deep sorrow for the employees who had lost their lives in road accidents and highlighting the risks of driving in the Kingdom. He said the main causes of road accidents were related to distractions, which he said were mostly caused by mobile phones, speeding that was often encouraged by peers, and stress.

He also stated the importance of maintaining safety when off-duty. “Safety is a way of life,” he said. “Aramco cares about workers and their families.”

Importance of knowledge transfer

Al Qahtani told his audience that he expected all employees and contractors to return home from work happy and in good health at the end of each day. He also said he trusted every worker was well trained to fulfill his or her duties, highlighting the importance of more experienced professionals transferring their knowledge to younger generations.

The five-day safety camps, which typically include Downstream professionals with between six to 32 years of experience, have seen more than 1,000 frontline supervisors complete the program in 77 iterations since 2009.

In closing, he said, “We are in a tough environment, but we are a committed team, and our responsibility is to properly manage risks every day and prevent accidents on- and off-the-job. And together, we can do it.”

Safety, of course, is a corporate value that is embedded in everything we do at Aramco.

— Mohammed Y. Al-Qahtani

Abdallah Garrous, who worked for Aramco for 17 years at various locations from Hawiyah and Haradh to Ras Tanura, Berri, and Qatif, captured the reflection of street lights across calm waters near the Qatif Corniche.

Garrous, who lives in Qatif, used a Samsung Galaxy S8+ phone to take the photograph.