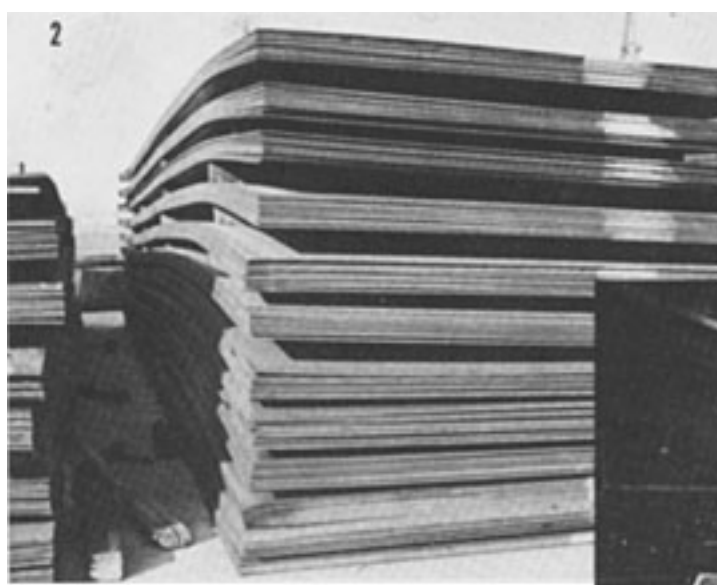


The Building of TAPLINE

In 1950, the world's largest oil pipeline system was completed. Oil fields in Saudi Arabia were linked with the Mediterranean Sea at Sidon, Lebanon, over a thousand miles away. The pipeline greatly reduced the number of tankers required to transport oil around the Arabian Peninsula through the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean, a 20-day, 7,000 mile trip. The building of the great pipeline is a story of accomplishment by Americans and Middle Easterners working together towards a common goal. It took the courage, perseverance and skills of 16,000 men, most of them nationals of the lands through which the line was passing, to overcome the heat, desert, sand storms, loneliness and other obstacles that beset the pipeliners during the construction period. At the Mediterranean, the oil is loaded on tankers and transported to the world markets.

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Though the trans-Arabian pipeline is 1068 miles long, only the 753 mile section from the Sidon Terminal to the Qaisumah pump station is rightly called the TRANS-ARABIAN PIPELINE or TAPLINE. The remaining 315 miles is part of the Arabian American Oil Company's gathering system in eastern Saudi Arabia. This part of the line gathers the oil before its long journey to the coast of Lebanon.



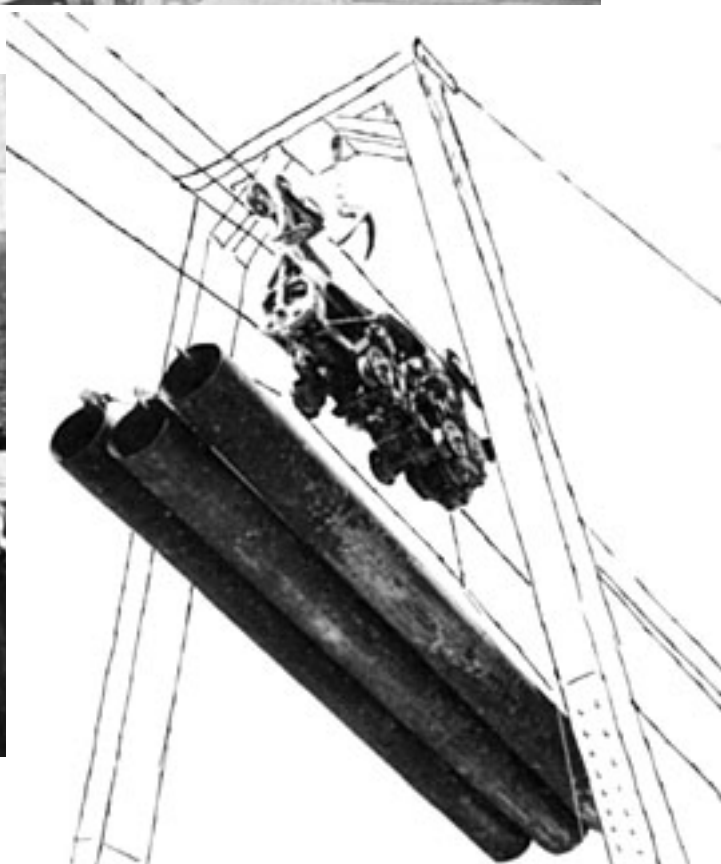
In 1947, the trans-Arabian pipeline was started. Thousands of tons of steel plate were fabricated into 31 foot lengths of pipe at factories in the United States.



Half the pipe was made 30 inches in diameter and the other half 31 inches. This made it possible to save shipping space by "nesting" or slipping the smaller pipe inside the larger.



When the pipe arrived at the Persian Gulf port of Ras el Mish'ab, shallow coastal waters prevented ships from getting close to shore. A Skyhook, an ingenious overhead trolley which rode on steel cables strung over towers, took the pipe ashore from a man-made sea-island where the ships unloaded. The Skyhook could shuttle ten-ton loads of pipe to the mainland three miles away in a few minutes.



Once on the mainland the 31 foot lengths of pipe were stored in yards. Three lengths were then welded together and these huge 93 foot tubes were ready to be trucked to the construction crews on the desert.



Huge 300 horsepower trucks, equipped with special, low pressure sand tires, hauled the pipe across desert and plain. More than 1500 vehicles made up the desert fleet of cars and trucks that were used on the job.

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The pipe was strung out on the ground length after length along the surveyed route of the pipeline. Powerful tractors with side-booms unloaded the trucks and lined up the pipe sections readying them for the welders.



Machines like the GiantRipper with its great steel tooth, were used to rip a trench along the ground in which the pipe was to be buried.



Final welding of the sections fashioned the 93-foot lengths of pipe into one great tube. All told, over 180,000 welds were made on the great line.



To protect the pipe against corrosion, it was coated with asphalt and machines wrapped it in fiberglass and asbestos felt covering.



The wrapped pipe was then lowered into the trench and covered over. Sixty per cent of the pipe system was put underground.



The trans-Arabian pipeline system transports over 300,000 barrels of crude oil a day from eastern Saudi Arabia to the terminal near the biblical town of Sidon, Lebanon. That's enough oil to produce gasoline to operate almost 3 million automobiles for an average day's driving; or an amount of fuel oil sufficient to heat almost 260,000 homes.

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