



# Remembering Piper Alpha

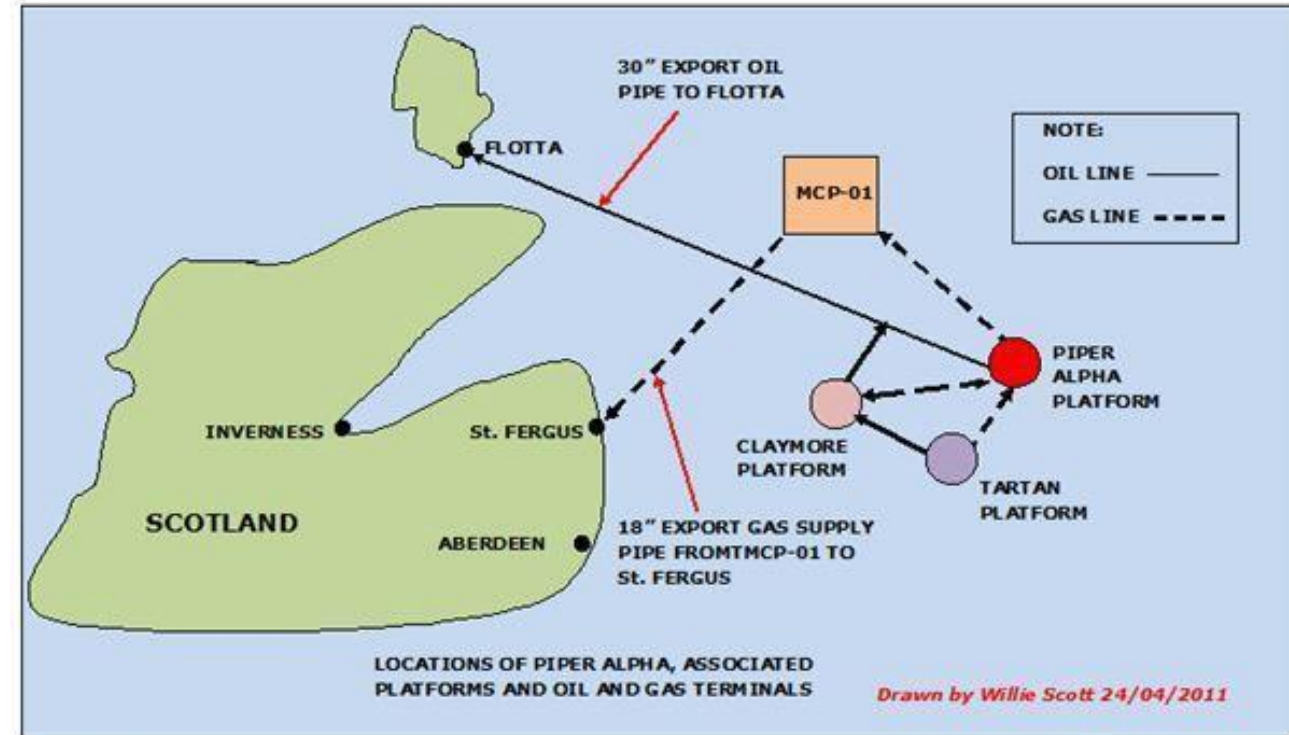
## The Night That Changed Our World

Commemorated by Paul Farquharson

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# Piper Alpha – Operated by Occidental Petroleum Ltd

- Located about 120 miles (193 Km) North East of Aberdeen, Scotland
- The Platform started production in 1976
- Originally only for Crude Oil, converted to include Gas in 1980
- Contributed to about 10% of the Oil production from the UK sector of the North Sea
- Piper Alpha had four main transport risers:
  - an Oil export riser
  - the Claymore Gas riser
  - the Tartan Gas riser
  - MCP-01 Gas riser.



## DAY SHIFT

- Work began on one of two condensate-injection pumps, designated A and B, which were used to compress gas on the platform prior to transport of the gas to Flotta Terminal on the Orkney Islands
- A pressure safety valve was removed from compressor A for recalibration and re-certification and two blind flanges were fitted onto the open pipework.
- The dayshift crew then finished for the day.

## Piper Alpha – 6<sup>th</sup> July 1988



## NIGHT SHIFT

- That evening, pump B tripped, the crew decided that pump A should be brought back into service.
- Once the pump was operational, gas condensate leaked from the two blind flanges
- **21:55 – FIRST EXPLOSION.** The gas ignited and exploded, causing fires and damage to other areas with the further release of gas and oil.
- **22:04** – Mayday signalled via Radio
- **22:05** – Search and Rescue dispatched from RAF Lossiemouth
- **22:20 – SECOND EXPLOSION.** Tartan Gas Riser Ruptured, releasing 15-30 Tonnes of HP gas every second. It ignited immediately.
- **22:30** – Tharos support vessel drew alongside Piper Alpha
- **22:50 – THIRD EXPLOSION.** MCP-01 Gas Riser Ruptured, ejecting millions of cubic feet of gas into the conflagration increasing its intensity, resulting in a third major explosion.

## Piper Alpha – 6<sup>th</sup> July 1988





- 226 men on board, 62 on night shift, most stayed in Living Quarters.
  - Evacuation by helicopter or lifeboat was not possible
  - 61 survived by climbing down ropes, hoses or by jumping from 210ft into the sea.
- 167 men died, including 2 crewmen of a rescue vessel.
  - 109 by inhaling smoke
  - 14 while attempting to escape &
  - A few died of burns
  - 135 bodies were recovered.
- The total insured loss was around £1.7 billion (\$3 billion)

**The following video is dedicated to those who lost their lives that night and to those who were directly affected.**

# Piper Alpha – 6<sup>th</sup> July 1988

