



Sitting is Jack Wild, standing left to right are Monica Surina, Jeff Beitel, Cindy Aldoff, and Tim Cove.

Bawden Team Conquers Unforeseen Challenges in Ghana, West Africa

Keta Lagoon in the summer of '86 was a muddy mess. The West African country of Ghana was experiencing the worst drought it had seen in years. And Bawden Drilling was preparing to dredge a 4.5-mile-long channel as a means of transporting a drilling rig to the center of a shallow land-locked lagoon.

Administrative manager Chuck Collerain summed it up this way, "What made the Ghana job unique from most other jobs was that the initial six months was not a drilling operation—it was a dredging operation. The lack of water only compounded the difficulty."



Swamp Buggy pulling plow, one method used to dig trenches in order to supply water to the dredge.

Bawden had trucked equipment 100 kilometers from the port of Accra, the capital of Ghana, to a lagoon where a dock facility was constructed. Next, a dredge was assembled and dredging of the 100 foot wide channel was started. Corporate Project Manager Kevin Hogan remembers that dredging was greatly hampered by the lack of water. It was necessary to bring in extra pumps and dig trenches so that water could be diverted to the dredge.

Operations managers Danny McKee and Dave Wilson estimate that only 15% of the job consisted of actually drilling the well. As a result, when hired or assigned to the Ghana job, employees had to successfully contend with different challenges.

Personnel were told to forget about job titles and be prepared to do whatever was needed to make the job a success.

Such was the case with Buck Kilgour, who was hired as a truck pusher. But in the words of Chuck Collerain, "For most of the job, Buck ended up working as just about everything else but a truck pusher. He was a boat captain, marsh buggy operator, certified air boat driver and (acting) camp manager."

Several types of equipment utilized in Ghana, like the air boat and marsh buggy, are not typical for a drilling job. The marsh buggy is an amphibious vehicle described by Kevin Hogan as a "tank that floats."



Buck Kilgour

Originally, Canadian Buck Kilgour was sent on his first visit to New Orleans to test a marsh buggy for use in Ghana. Although he had never operated a marsh buggy, he had earned a reputation for being adept at mastering all types of oilfield equipment. As it turns out, he was so comfortable driving the amphibian that he found himself in middle of the Mississippi river dodging giant ocean-going vessels.

Other aspects of the Ghana project required exceptional effort. For instance, digging the trenches became an incredibly arduous task. Many methods were employed, from a specially designed plow mounted on the marsh buggy to elbow grease and shovels.

Dave Wilson meets with local chiefs and village elders.



In particular, many Ghana project veterans humorously remember heavy transport specialist Bob Leoppy's method of dealing with the problems encountered while working the night shift on a backhoe. He simply quit his job—at least two times a day—every day—until the job was completed.

Once the channel was completed, in order to reach the drill site, Bawden assembled a floating drilling platform from FLEXI-FLOAT sections that were shipped in from another part of Africa. Then the rig was mounted on the platform and pulled by powerboat to the designated drilling location.

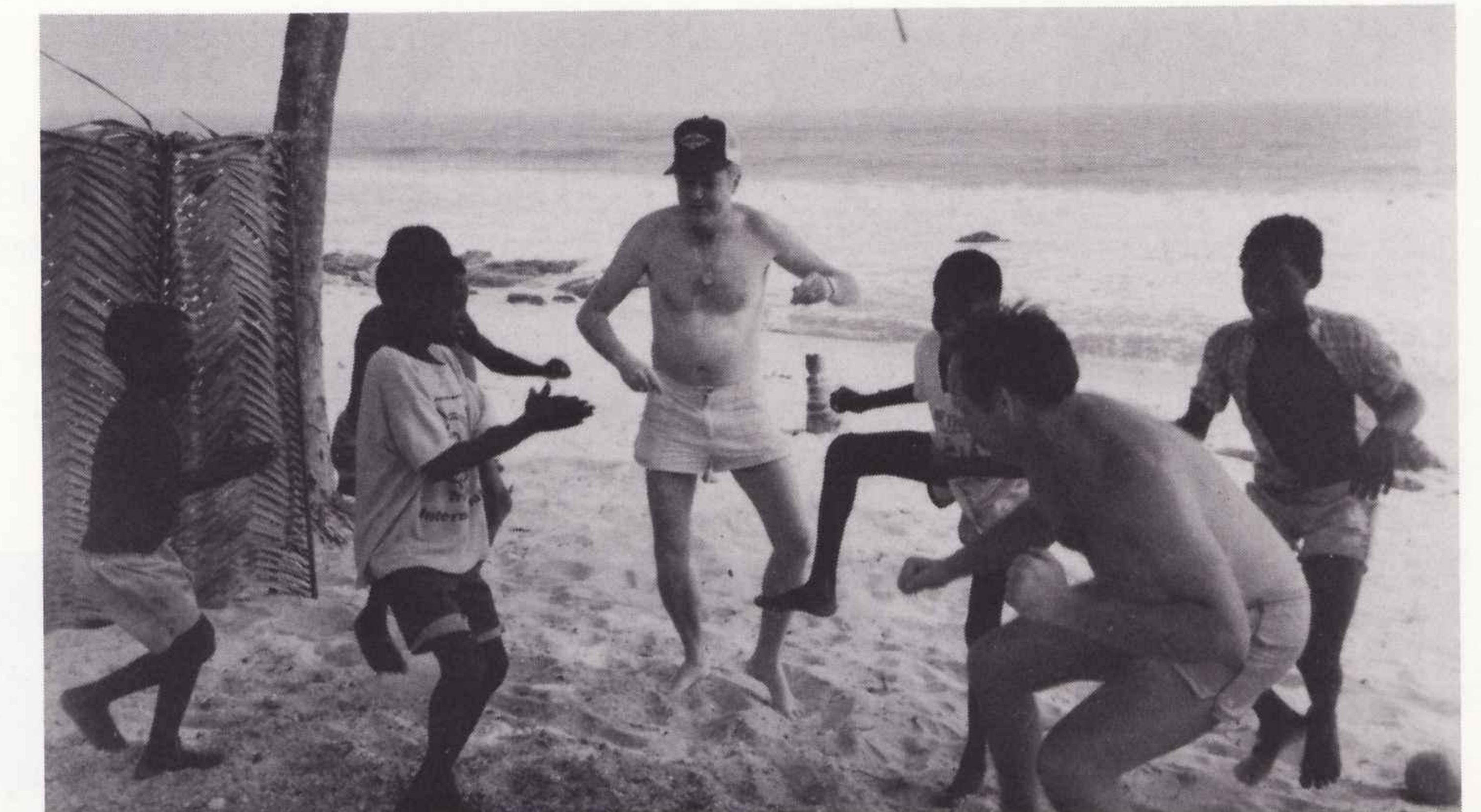
Besides the rigors of the natural environment, Bawden employees had to contend with encounters of the supernatural kind, mischievous Ju Ju creatures. Chuck Collerain describes them as being similar to Irish leprechauns, which are part of his own heritage. Let's hope that this was pure speculation on Chuck's part, and not based on actual sightings of either Ju Jus or leprechauns. Because even though little Ju Ju huts are quite common throughout the countryside, Ju Ju creatures are always invisible to Westerners.

Occasionally, Ju Ju creatures would become an annoyance because they were seen by the local workers in the back of a truck or on a piece of equipment. Respecting the culture of the host country, several Bawden employees became skilled at "manhandling" stubborn Ju Ju creatures. This is quite an accomplishment when you remember a Ju Ju cannot even be seen by Westerners.



Tribal chief pours a libation on drilling hole to drive away evil spirits.

The Ghanians probably found the site of a Bawden employee wrestling a Ju Ju very amusing, but for Bawden hands, it was just part of a day's work. Fortunately for Bawden, the local medicine men keep a tight rein on unruly Ju Ju creatures. On several occasions, a village shaman was on hand to pour a libation to a god and the ancestors, a tribal custom that discourages evil spirits. Also, many Bawden employees such as operations manager Danny McKee developed a warm

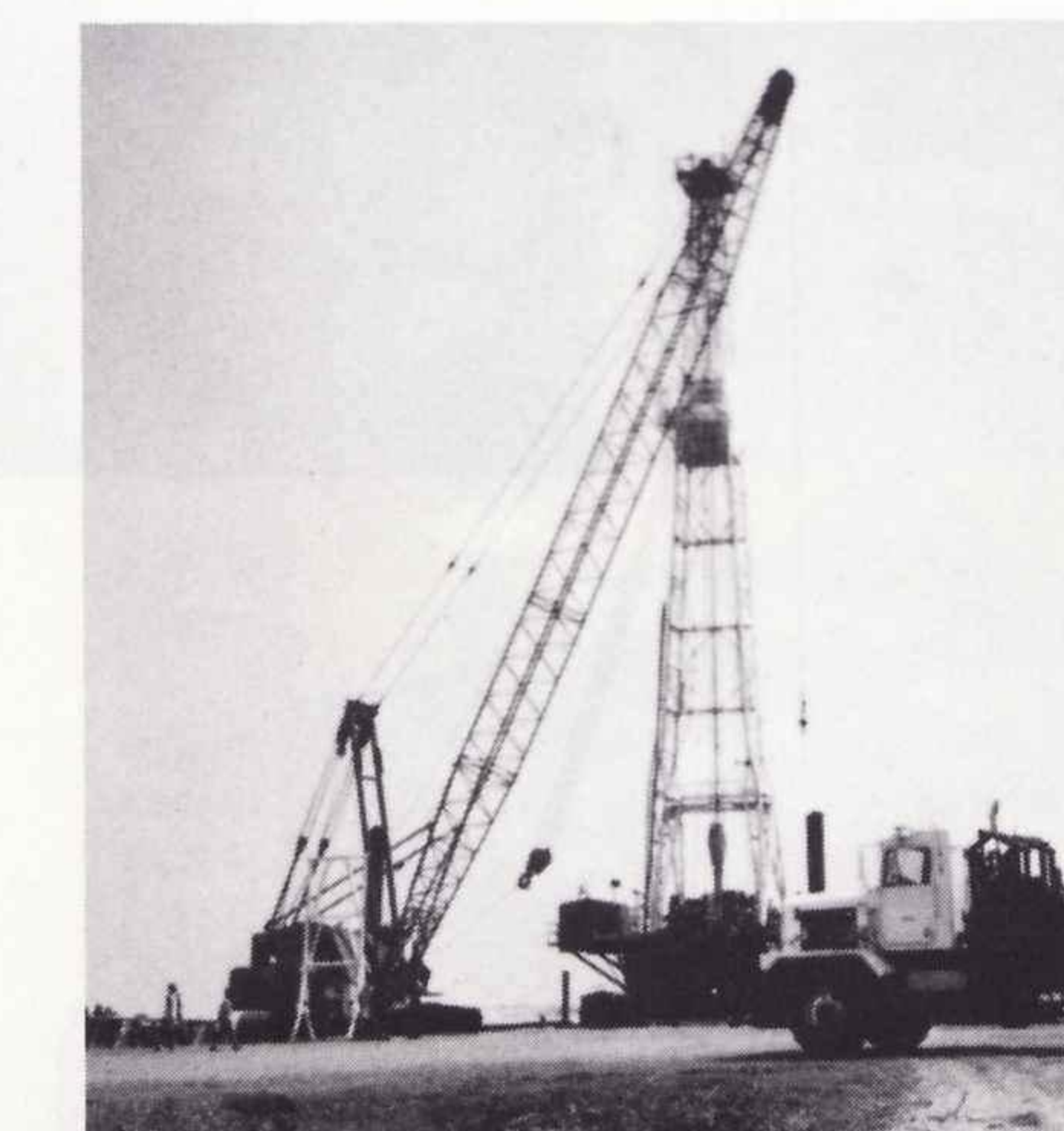


Chuck Collerain and Dave Wilson getting down in Ghana.

relationship with the Ghanians. McKee would often return from a leave at home with a suitcase full of nice gifts for the local people.

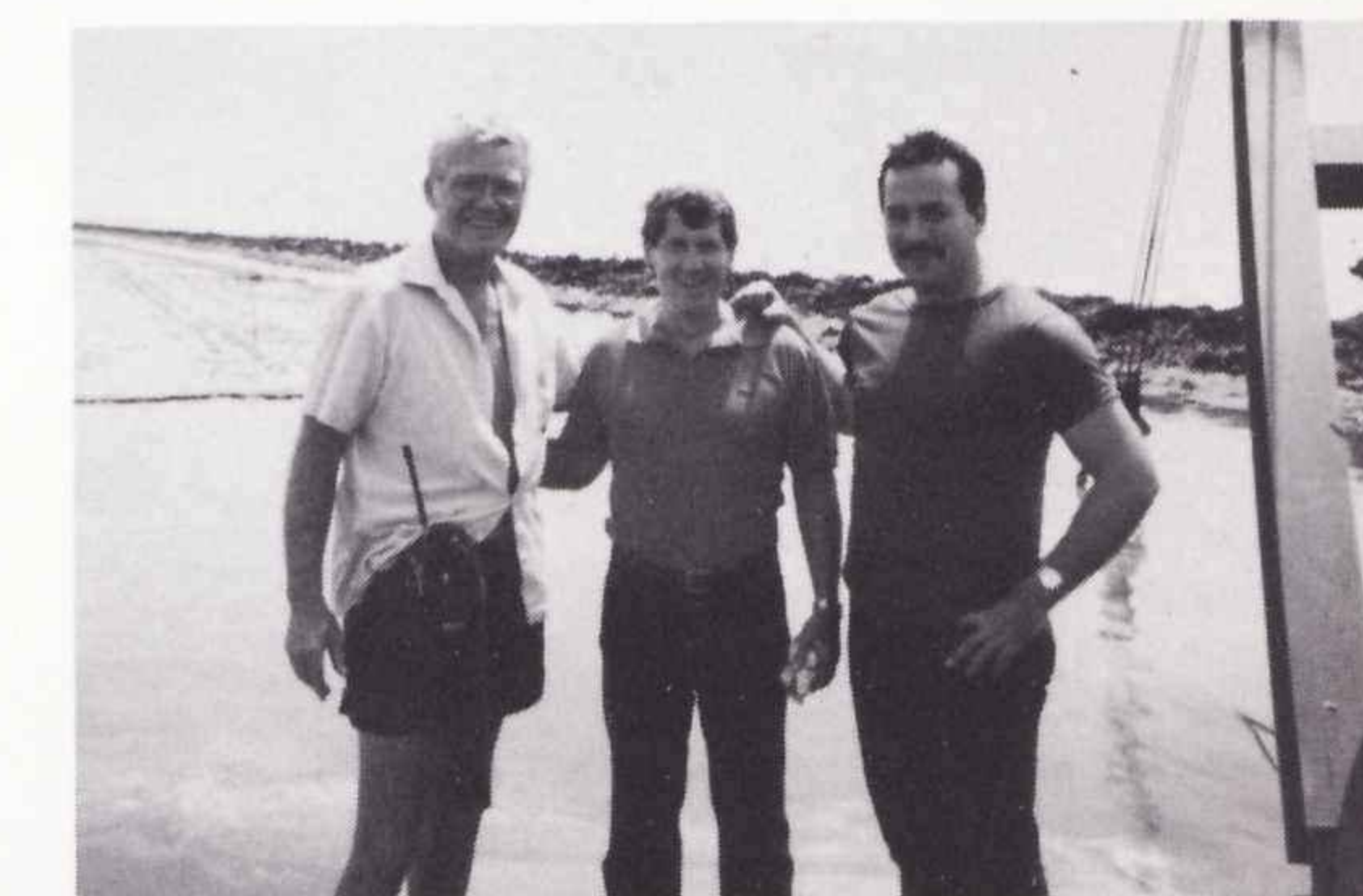
After looking at all the different challenges that the Bawden team successfully managed, the most amazing aspect of the job was that the contract was accepted on a turn-key basis. In a letter to the corporate headquarters in Houston, the operator Diamond Shamrock had this to say about the Ghana project:

"Bawden Drilling displayed a high degree of imagination and professionalism with regard to the work. The project was well managed by both field engineers and home office support staff, and conducted in an efficient manner. We would recommend Bawden Drilling Company as a company capable of carrying out international drilling assignments in harsh environments and remote areas."



Rig 7, a land rig is assembled on a floating platform and prepared for transportation to drill site.

Operations manager Dave Wilson commented on the Ghana project, "Remote logistics will play an ever-increasing role in international drilling. In fact, in the past two years, 80% of our work has revolved around remote logistics, with 20% or less being drilling. Bawden holds a distinct advantage in the world (drilling industry) because we have endeavored and completed those projects that no other drilling contractor would even attempt."



Doug Parker, Danny McKee, Buck Kilgour



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