## The Evolution of Rainwear

By R.B. Jones

There are brand names that denote excellence in materials and workmanship that have been so consistent over the years that they are the standards by which all other products in their field are judged. In the field of rainwear London Fog is the standard of excellence.

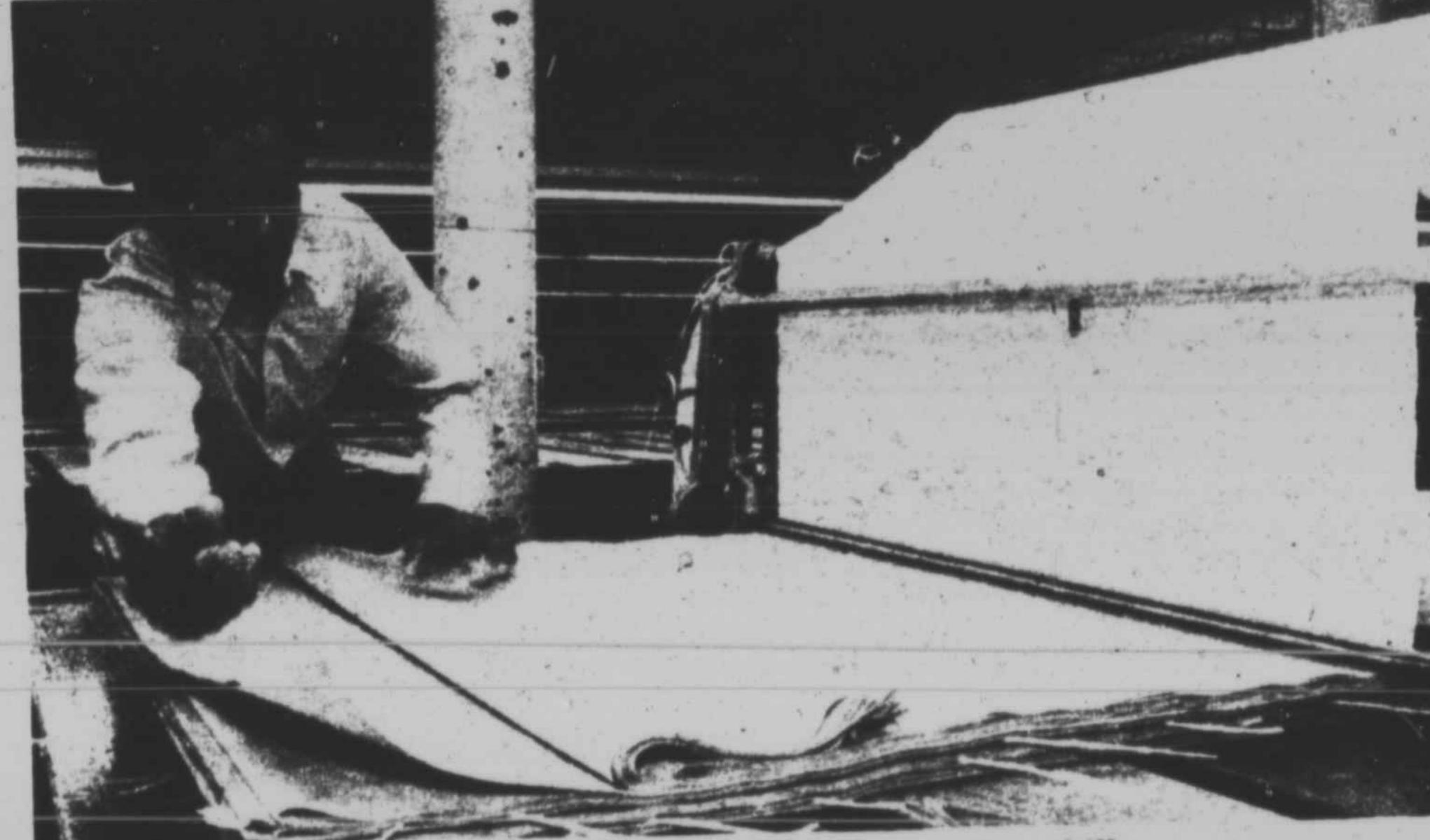
A recent visit to the Baltimore Londontown plant revealed some of the reasons. The plant itself is a large old building in an industrial park next to an expressway. Inside the building, with its large winding staircase, there is a frenetic pace.

To manufacture a Coat there are over 130 separate operations that must be carried out. The coats are put together piece by piece with exact procedures that are scrutinized thoroughly.

The coats originate as large rolls of fabric that are cut and color matched. Then the various pieces are sewn individually and then joined together.

Despite the attention to detail, the Baltimore Plant manages to produce approximately 8,700 coats per week. To turn out this tremendous number of coats about 570 people are employed. Overall the company has six manufacturing facilities that employ about 3,000 people.

Londontown is an innovator in the field of rainwear although the company which was founded in 1922 did not get into the rainwear field until World War II. The company manufactured rainwear for the Navy and learned a great deal about making raincoats while fulfilling its contract.



Cutters begin the process with exacting skills

In the early 1950s DuPont invented a synthetic blend of Dacron, a man-made fiber, and cotton-which was water repellant and machine

Collaborating with DuPont, Londontown developed special sewing techniques that created a water repellant, easy care product that was light and comfortable. The product revolutionized the rainwear field.

The coat was marketed at Saks Fifth Avenue Stores in 1954 and became a sellout hit. During that same year the world famous name London Fog was adopted by the company

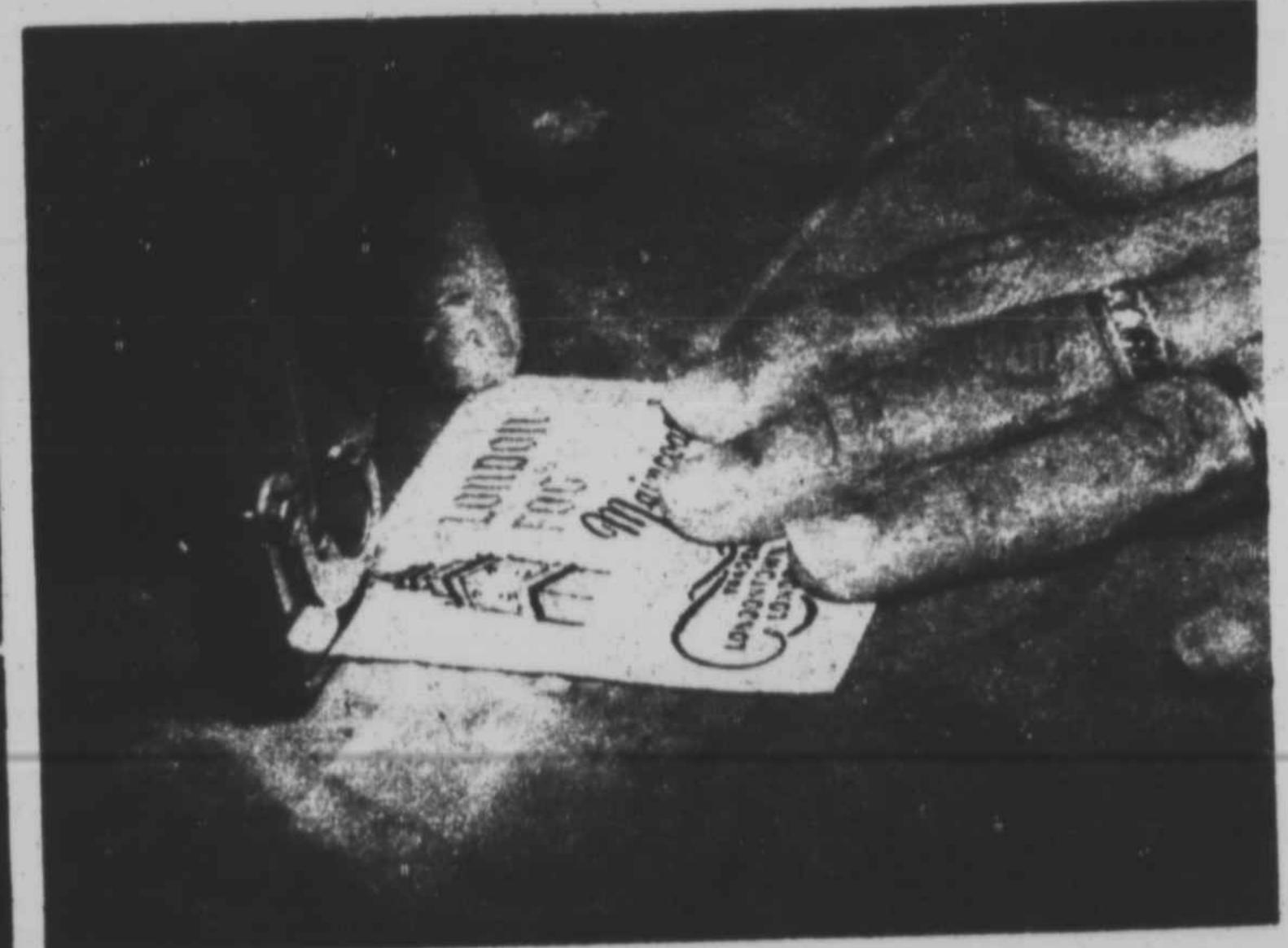
president Israel Myers after initially rejecting it. The name fits the product perfectly.

From 1954 on, Londontown became the leader in rainwear. Londontown brought out the first zip-out lining which made the coat usable year round.

There are approximately 17 special features that make a London Fog stand out and visiting the Baltimore Manufacturing plant and seeing the fastidiousness of the sewers indicates the source of the coat's quality. It is pride of workmanship and careful inspection.



Stitching the coat is a full-time job for Londontowne workers.



Putting on the label—one of the final processes.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH FEATURE

## BREAKING THE ICE:

## Black contractor makes it big in shipbuilding

By Robert Fikes, Jr.

on a typically warm and sunny day on November 2 at San Diego's Broadway Pier.

A host of local dignitaries, government officials, military brass, and 300 spectators were on hand to celebrate the crowning achievement of the nation's most successful blackowned 8(a) contractor, Bay City Marine, Inc., founded by millionaire David Lloyd in 1971, then with only 7 employees.

As politicians, admirals, and generals sang the praises of Lloyds shipbuilding and repair company which had completed its latest major project ahead of time and under budget, a sense of pride in an unparalelled accomplishment swelled the breasts of many who had come to share in this christening ceremony.

To the right of the podium, floating dockside, was the gleaming new 140-foot U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Penobscot Bay, a \$15 million vessel which began construction two years ago at the company's Tacoma, Washington indoor facility.

Within minutes Bay City Marine would become the first minority-owned shipbuilder to deliver a ship to the United States government, the only minority-owned firm of its kind in the nation.

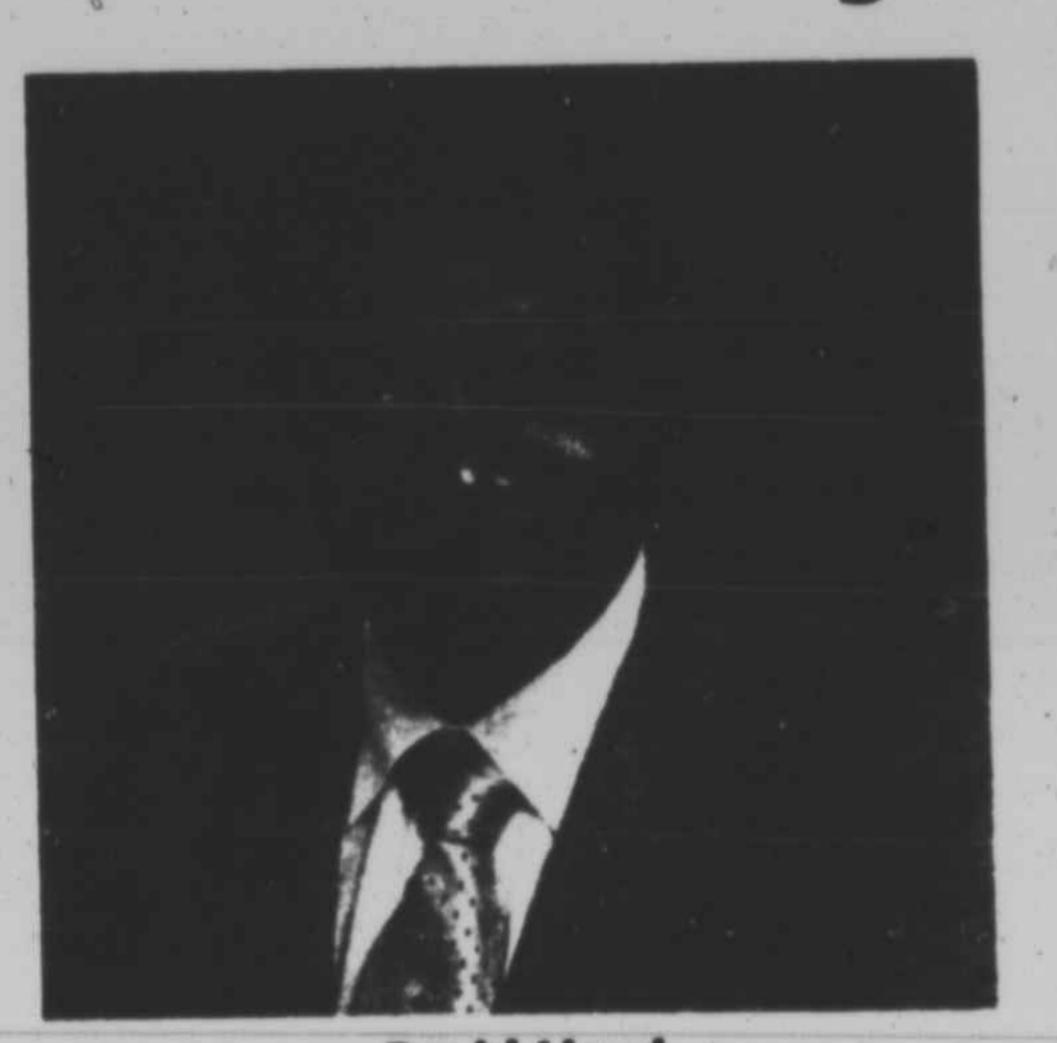
This was not the first time Bay City Marine had successfully executed a project for the military, Specializing in structural steel fabrication, it had built the \$6 million Obiter Lifting Frame for the Air Force in 1982.

This 100-foot high crane is currently being used to lift the space shuttle atop a 747 carrier aircraft for flights between California and Florida.

For this and other notable achievements the company was awarded the Small Business Administration's 1983 Contractor of the Year Award, and the 1984 Outstanding Minority Business Award which was presented to Lloyd by President Ronald Reagan.

Lloyd, a soft-spoken native of Birmingham, Alabama who arrived in San Diego in 1955 where he learned shipbuilding from hull to poop deck, is known to be as proficient at welding and pipefitting as any of the 300 persons he employs at his company's three locations, 60 percent of whom are minorities.

Mexican and American Foundation, and as a board member of the local United Way keeps him active in the social life of his adopted city. Last spring he hosted a reception at his



David Lloyd

home for then candidate for U.S. President Jesse Jackson.

Clard to build two more icebreakers which are built from the keel up. If the San Diego Port District approves his request for a larger shipbuilding site they will be constructed in San Diego instead of Tacoma, creating 180 new jobs in the city.

This would also help to boost the company's earnings beyond the \$26 million it predicts it will gross in calendar year 1984. This may entail adding more blacks and Hispanics to the company's in-house apprenticeship program.

Besides shipbuilding and ship repair, Bay City Marine does fiberglass work, electrical

work, drydocking, hydraulic repair, painting and sandblasting, and marine engine and transmission repair. It has the capacity to completely overhaul ships up to 500 tons at one of its two facilities in San Diego.

In regards to new employees general manager Irving Refkin said: "We don't hire people at minimum wage. Janitors have gone on to become welders. Getting a helping hand is one thing, but giving a helping hand is another thing."

One gets the impression from Lloyd and Refkin that they are as proud of having been able to employ a significant number of minorities in the shipbuilding industry as they are with having established the best reputation for quality construction along San Diego's waterfront.

Lloyd and Refkin became friends long ago when Lloyd performed a much needed favor for Refkin and refused to accept payment for his professional service. Years later Refkin would come out of retirement to assist Lloyd in obtaining the master shipbuilder's license.

On November 27 the Penobscot Bay and her crew of 17 officers and enlisted men arrived in Portsmouth, Virginia to be outfitted for duty on Penobscot Bay, located about 15 miles south of Bangor, Maine.

The sleet 662-ton high tech vessel will patrol the waters up to 14.5 knots conducting search and rescue missions, breaking sheets of ice up to 30 inches thick, towing, and participating in law enforcement operations.



U.S. Coast Guard Icebreaker Penobscot Bay.