

87. S.S. BENJAMIN BREWSTER

U.S. Tanker, built 1917; 5,950 gross tons; cargo, gasoline.  
 Departed Baytown, Tex., 8 July, 1942, for Tampa, Fla.  
 Torpedoed, 9 July, 1942, 2335 CWT; 29°05 N.- 90°05 W.  
 Weather, fair; sea, moderate; wind, light W.  
 On board, 42; saved, 16.  
 Vessel: total loss.

The BREWSTER had anchored for the night in shallow water 60 mi. west of Southwest Pass, and was hit by two torpedoes about 10 seconds apart from the port side, 2-1/2 hours later. The ship instantly burst into flames amidships, and those who were saved jumped from the after section into the water, as the vessel was anchored facing east, and a light west wind kept the fire off the stern for a while. A few had life preservers, but many did not, and some were unable to swim away from the spreading film of blazing gasoline on the water. One lifeboat, whose falls had burned off, dropped to the water on an even keel, although burning, and 11 men managed to climb into the metal shell after all woodwork was consumed. The boat drifted to the beach about 3 hours later, and several men also were picked up by small fishing craft at daylight.

The tanker settled to the bottom shortly after being abandoned, with her upper works still visible above water.

