

18 November, 1942

105 M.S. BRILLIANT (1)

U.S. Tanker, built 1930; 9,131 gross tons; cargo, fuel oil.  
Departed New York, 9 November, 1942, for Belfast, N. Ireland, in convoy.  
Torpedoed, 18 November, 1942; 0520; 50°42 N.- 45°50 W.  
Weather, clear; sea, moderately rough; wind, fresh N.W.  
On board, 59; saved, 59.  
Vessel: not abandoned; salvaged.

The vessel was attacked while in convoy in position #73, 9 days out of New York. The night was dark, though clear, and no other ships in the convoy were visible. The torpedo hit almost under the bridge on the starboard side, and an intense fire immediately broke out, cutting off all contact between the midship house and those aft. Engines were secured, and the Master, believing the ship doomed, abandoned her with the 8 other persons amidships. The lifeboat capsized, but all were taken safely aboard the escort vessel HMS BURY and placed under the surgeon's care.

Those remaining aboard the BRILLIANT were able, under the direction of the Junior Third Officer, (the Senior deck officer remaining aboard) to control and extinguish the fire, and get the tanker underway again. The Master and other officers aboard the escort tried to secure permission to return to their ship, but the Surgeon would not grant it, and they were carried to Glasgow, and later return to Boston, via Halifax, arriving 12 December.

The skill and courage of the Junior Third Officer who assumed command of the vessel and navigated her safely to St. John, Newfoundland, for temporary repairs was high commended. It was his first voyage as an officer, and, when he reached comparative safety off Newfoundland 22 November, he had stood 29 consecutive watches on the bridge with only snatches of rest. There were no casualties other than minor injuries. For his heroic feat in bringing the vessel safely into port as the only deck officer aboard, James C. Cameron was posthumously awarded the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal.

