

97. S.S. CAMDEN 89

U.S. Tanker, built 1921; 6,653 gross tons; cargo, diesel oil.
 Departed San Pedro, Calif., 30 Sept., 1942, for Puget Sound.
 Torpedoed 4 October, 1942, 0655; 43°42' N.- 124°52' W.
 Weather, clear; sea, choppy; wind, brisk N.W.
 On board, 48; saved, 47.
 Vessel: total loss.

This tanker, bound for Puget Sound, was stopped at sea for the purpose of making engine repairs on the morning of Sunday, 4 October, 1942. Another American Tanker, the SS VICTOR R. KELLEY was in sight, about seven miles north. It was sunrise, and the repairs were nearly completed, when the Mate on watch on the bridge saw the wake of a torpedo cross the bow of the ship and disappear, apparently spent. Five seconds later, at 7:00 A.M., PWT, another torpedo struck on the starboard bow about ten feet from the stem. There was a burst of flame from the forepeak tank, and the tanker began to settle by the head until the deck was awash to the bridge.

The order was given to abandon ship, and the crew got off in three lifeboats and several doughnut life rafts. One man, apparently without a rubber life suit, jumped overboard and was lost, but the remaining 47 crew members were picked up by the Swedish M.S. KOOKABURRA about four hours later, and landed at Port Angeles, Washington, the afternoon of 5 October.

The tug KENAI took the SS CAMDEN in tow, and, as she was drawing too much water to cross the Columbia River bar, it was decided to attempt to tow her to Seattle. Early in the morning of 10 October, six days after the torpedoing, the tanker suddenly burst into flames, and sank 15 minutes later in 52 fathoms of water.

