

26 December, 1943

136 S.S. CHAPULTEPEC

U.S. Tanker, built 1943; 10,195 gross tons; cargo, fuel oil.
Departed Aruba, N.W.I., for Cristobal, C.Z.
Torpedoed 26 December, 1943, 0725; 10°33 N. - 79°10 W.
Weather, hazy; sea, moderate; wind, brisk NE.
On board, 81; saved, 81.
Vessel: salvaged.

Although she was proceeding independently, 3 ships and 2 escort vessels of a convoy were within sight, dead ahead on the same course, and a PBM was overhead.

It was daybreak, and the CHAPULTEPEC was making approximately fifteen knots on a zigzag course when the port warning light of the torpedo detector flashed red, but the sound device was not activated. Five seconds later, there was a detonation as the torpedo hit 5' or 10' abaft the stem on the starboard bow. The starboard detector was known to be out of order, and the angle of the approaching torpedo, so nearly dead ahead, is thought to have been responsible for activating the port indicator. A distress signal was sent and acknowledged by Balboa.

The general alarm was sounded and all hands reported in good order to their stations, but it was found unnecessary to abandon ship, and the course was continued for Cristobal, where the cargo was discharged the following day. The ship then proceeded to Galveston, where drydocking and repair facilities were available. She carried a merchant crew of 53 persons, and 28 armed guard crew, all of whom were safe and uninjured.

28 December 1944

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