

22 July, 1943

129 S.S. CHERRY VALLEY

U.S. Tanker, built 1942; 10,172 gross tons; in ballast.
Departed New York for Aruba, N.W.I.
Torpedoed 22 July, 1943; 0321 EWT; 25°10 N.-68°35 W.
Weather, clear; sea, calm; wind, light SE.
On board, 79; saved, 79.
Vessel: salvaged.

Her tanks ballasted, but carrying 165 tons of Army cargo in her forward hold, a very bright moon silhouetting the ship in spite of a complete blackout, the CHERRY VALLEY was struck by a torpedo nearly amidships on the starboard side, and this was followed immediately by another which struck near the same spot, slightly further aft. The ship listed almost at once, and the engines stopped for some 20 seconds, then resumed. The Master, Captain John H. Rose, ordered #1 starboard tank emptied of its water ballast, which restored the vessel's trim, and he attributes his success in bringing the tanker into port under her own power in large measure to the ballasting instructions distributed by the U. S. Coast Guard in a pamphlet for tankers.

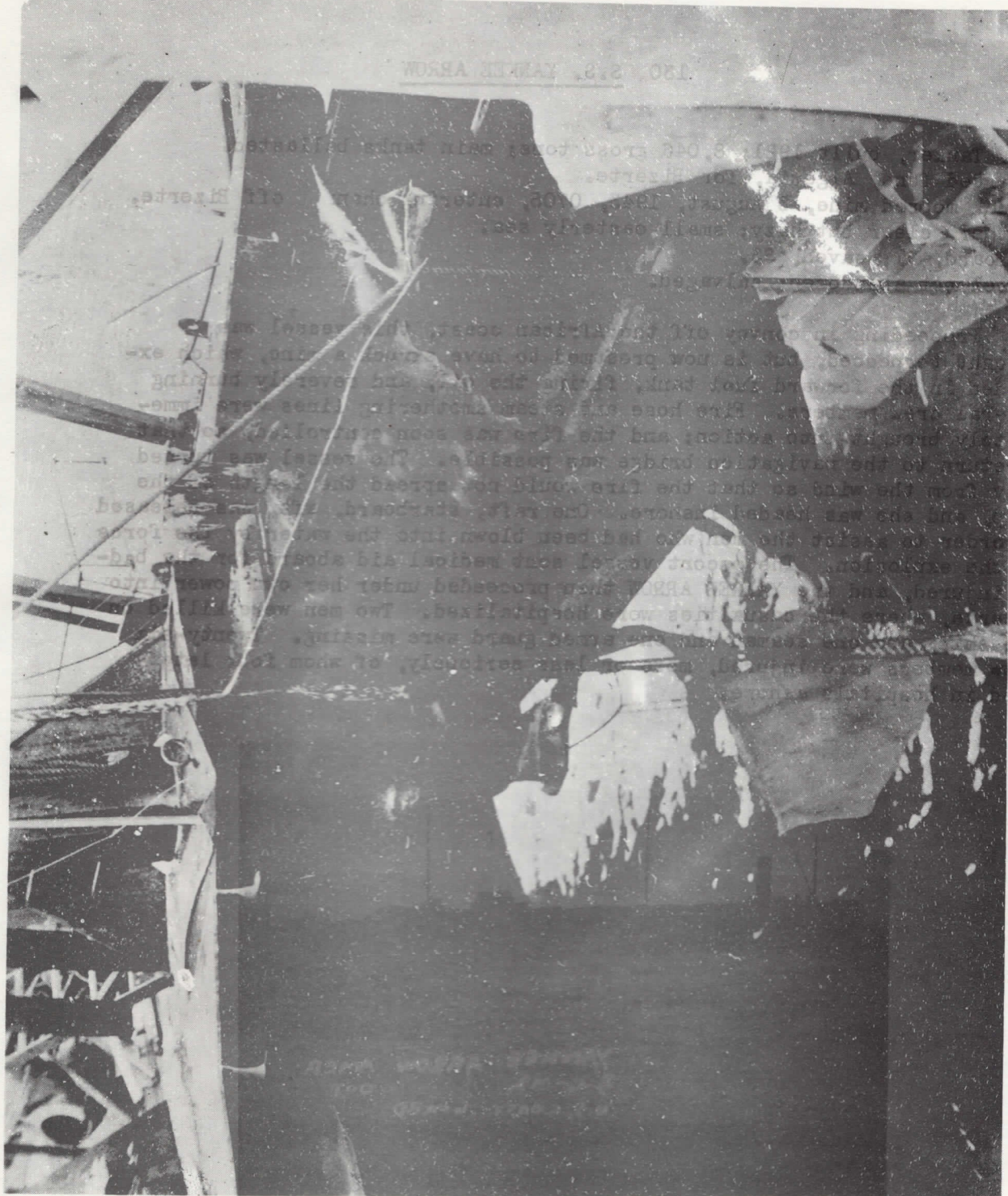
The stricken ship proceeded at 3/4 speed without further zig-zagging. Lookouts were increased, and at 5:30, two more torpedo wakes were observed to starboard. The wheel was put hard right at once, and, as the ship swung in a 90° arc, one torpedo passed about 20 feet ahead and the other astern. The submarine was sighted, but submerged before the guns could be brought to bear on it. Several shots were fired, with unknown results, but one shot was seen to hit in the wake left by the submerging craft.

All radio equipment had been disabled by the blasts. However, at 6:30, the radio operator was finally able to send a distress message, which was acknowledged by Norfolk, Bermuda and San Juan.

A patrol plane sighted the vessel about 11:00 and a request was received by blinker for a surface standby escort because of the precarious condition of the ship, held together at one point only by the sheer strake. A Dutch corvette picked her up at 7:30 on the morning of 23 July, and escorted her into San Juan, with her entire crew and armed guard, 79 persons in all, safe and uninjured.

3 August 1943

150 2.2. YAMEN ARROW



157 821