

13 March, 1943

115 S.S. CITIES SERVICE MISSOURI

U.S. Tanker; built 1920; 7,612 gross tons; in ballast.
Departed New York for Aruba, N.W.I., in convoy.
Torpedoed 13 March, 1943, 0458 EWT; 74°40'W.-14°10'N.
Weather, clear; sea, moderate; wind, moderate NE.
On board, 54; saved, 52.
Vessel: total loss.

This tanker was in #23 position, in the rear of the second column of the convoy, when the first torpedo crashed into the stem on the starboard side, the explosion smashing the compass, and damaging bridge and wheelhouse. The machinery was uninjured, however, and by shifting the water ballast, the Captain was able to get the ship on an even keel again. At 0610, another torpedo struck on the port quarter and exploded with terrific force, blowing the engine room to pieces. The sub surfaced about 1200 yards away, and the armed guard opened fire, but the vessel was going down rapidly, and the Master gave the order to abandon ship, which was carried out in an orderly manner in three lifeboats and one raft. All hands got safely away, but the boatswain was drowned when his grasp slipped on the lifeline thrown him by the rescue ship, the USS BIDDLE, and one crew member died on that vessel, of wounds and burns suffered when the second torpedo exploded.

At 0747, the vessel went down, stern first, her bow straight up in the air for a moment before the final plunge.

