

12 June, 1942

78. S.S. CITIES SERVICE TOLEDO

U.S. Tanker; built, 1918; 8,192 gross tons; cargo, crude oil.  
Departed Corpus Christi 10 June, 1942, for Portland, Me.  
Torpedoed 12 June, 1942, 0150 CWT; 29°02 N.- 91°59 W.  
Weather, overcast; sea, choppy; wind, moderate S.  
On board, 45; saved, 30.  
Vessel: total loss.

About 20 mi. east of Trinity Shoals Gas Buoy, the ship was rocked by two violent explosions a few seconds apart, and almost under the bridge. #1 lifeboat was shattered by the explosion, but 17 men got off safely in #2 boat, which was picked up early next morning by the Norwegian S.S. BELINDA. A second pair of torpedoes, thought by some to be shells, set fire to the cargo, and in a few minutes the ship was in flames. Another boat which was launched could not get clear of the oil burning on the water, and its occupants jumped and swam clear. The gun crew was highly praised by crew members for remaining at their posts and continuing to fire in the direction of a light seen on the submarine until the gun position became untenable.

The men who were in the water were rescued about 1000 next morning by the Tanker GULF KING and the S.S. SAN ANTONIO, and taken to Burrwood, La., and thence to New Orleans by the Coast Guard.

The tanker, burning fiercely from stem to stern, appeared about ready to plunge stern first when last seen at 0230, and is presumed to have sunk soon after.

