April, 1942

29 April, 1942

51. S.S. CONNECTICUT

U.S. Tanker; built, 1938; 8,684 gross tons; cargo, gasoline. Departed Port Arthur, Texas, 21 March, 1942, for Capetown, S.A. Torpedoed by surface raider, 23 April, 1942, 0210, 23°50 S.- 17°50 W. On board, 54; saved, 19, one of whom died from injuries, and two in prison camp. Vessel: total loss.

A message from the CONNECTICUT was intercepted on 8 April, stating "suspicious vessel following us", and giving the position as 11°13 N. and 61°35 W., and the tanker was not directly heard from again. She was due in Capetown 29 April, and on 25 May, 1942, the Navy declared her overdue and presumed lost as a result of enemy action.

In January, 1943, information was received from a Norwegian Merchant Marine officer, indicating that the CONNECTICUT was intercepted and sunk by two torpedoes from a German surface raider, and that the crew got off in three boats, only one of which, however, survived the burning gasoline on the water. The crew members from this boat were taken aboard the raider, and later transferred several times, and ultimately were put ashore in Japan for internment. Three officers and fourteen men were reported to be in the group, but only sixteen survived. The sixteen survivors were repatriated from Japanese internment camps, and reached this country early in October, 1945.

Fifteen minutes later, they were shelled by two submarines, and the Navy gan graw got into action, scoring two probable hits, and the shelling stopped. NNT, 2, NE

the first, but still leaving the tarker allowing work and with the coming of anylight, the even settled to the task of taking her in to Bermade in seleby.

However, at 1040, a third torpedo penetrated aft on the port side, and the ship began to settle rapidly. Al boat had been destroyed by the second torpedo, but the men prepared to adandon in the other three boats, and, as the Master expressed it, "We abandoned the ship when there was no more ship there. and they didn't almb down to the boats, they just stepped in". the men taken to Santo Domingo, All hands were saved.

The Master was later tried for misconduct in failing to follow routing instructions, and as found guilty as charged, and his licence suspended of procetion for six months.

61