

13 May, 1942

63. S.S. DAVID McKELVY

U.S. Tanker; built, 1921; 6,820 gross tons; cargo, crude oil.
 Departed Corpus Christi, Texas, 11 May, 1942, for New York.
 Torpedoed, 13 May, 1942, 2245; 28°30 N.- 89°55 W.
 Weather, clear; slight swell; wind, light S.W.
 On board, 42; saved, 25.
 Vessel: beached, total loss.

Immediately after a tremendous explosion rocked this tanker amidships, she burst into flames, and burning oil poured on the water around her. The two port lifeboats were destroyed by the explosion and fire, and, since there was no sign of any life in the midship house after the torpedo blast, the #1 boat was not lowered. All the deck officers presumably perished, as the bridge structure caved in in flames. 23 men got off in #3 boat and on 2 rafts, and the Chief Engineer and a pumpman remained on board through the night, standing partly submerged in the fresh water tanks of the ship's double bottom, while the fire burned itself out over their heads.

The survivors in the lifeboat were rescued by a Coast Guard vessel and taken to New Orleans, where one man died of burns. The other two were taken off the drifting vessel the following day about noon, and carried to Key West aboard a Norwegian tanker. The burnt out hulk of the DAVID McKELVY was later beached on the Louisiana coast, and declared a constructive total loss.

