

22 June, 1942

SS June 22

81. S.S. E. J. SADLER

U.S. Tanker, built 1921; 9,638 gross tons; cargo, kerosene.
Departed Aruba, N.W.I., 21 June, 1942, for New York.
Shelled and sunk, 22 June, 1942, 1557 L.A.T.; 15°36 N.- 67°52 W.
Weather, clear; sea, moderate; wind, brisk E.
On board, 36; saved, 36.
Vessel: total loss.

The SADLER was about 36 hours out of port when attacked by shell fire from an enemy submarine, identified by survivors as of the Italian CALVI type. Firing on the unarmed tanker commenced at a range of about 4 miles, and eight hits were scored out of ten rounds fired before the vessel was abandoned. An attempt was made to turn the stern toward the submarine, but crew members became panicky and left the engine room. One lifeboat was launched without orders, while the vessel had some way on, but it fortunately was not swamped. A distress message was sent and acknowledged, and the Master decided, since the tanker was out of control, to order her abandoned. The remaining three lifeboats were successfully launched, and all crew members got away safely. A few minutes later, the submarine closed to point blank range, and poured shells from both her guns into the abandoned ship, which burst into flames almost at once, and was still burning fiercely 3-1/2 hours later.

The lifeboats were sighted about 0200 next morning by a PBY, which signalled them "Help will be here at dawn!" About 1030, the USS BIDDLE, directed by the plane, arrived on the scene, and by 1230 all boats had been picked up. Survivors were taken to Mayaguez, P.R., where they were landed 24 June, 1942, with no casualties.

