

23 November, 1943

133 S.S. ELIZABETH KELLOGG

U.S. Tanker, built 1920; 5,189 gross tons; cargo, fuel oil.  
Departed Cristobal, C.Z., 22 November, 1943, for Puerto Barrios, Guatemala.  
Torpedoed 23 November, 1943, 0335 CWT: 11°10 N. - 80°43 W.  
Weather, hazy; sea, heavy groundswell; wind, light NW.  
On board, 44; saved, 38.  
Vessel: total loss.

The relief watch had just been called when the torpedo, thought to have been of an incendiary type, struck amidships on the port side, and exploded directly under the bridge and officers' quarters. The Master, three deck officers, the radio operator and a steward are presumed to have perished in the blast, or in the fire which immediately enveloped the mid-section of the ship, and spread rapidly astern.

The radio-equipped lifeboat was destroyed by the initial explosion, and it was with difficulty that the crew, under the direction of the boatswain and an able seaman, were able to launch the #3 and #4 lifeboats astern, due to the burning through of the rope falls, sprayed with blazing oil. The wheel had been put hard left, and the engines were turning full speed astern when the crew abandoned the burning vessel in two lifeboats and one raft. It was reported that the bilge pumps in the lifeboats were invaluable in keeping them reasonably dry during the day and a half the boats were adrift before a rescue was effected.

After 36 hours adrift, one lifeboat with six of the survivors was picked up by the USA Tanker Y-10 at 1:30 on the 24th, and an hour and a half later the SC-1017 took aboard the remaining 32, and both groups were landed at Cristobal the same day. The 11 injured crew members were hurried to the nearest hospital to be treated for exposure and burns.

The stricken vessel was photographed from a plane on the 24th, and was shown to have her back broken but the fire burnt out. A tug with several escort vessels was dispatched to attempt salvage operations, but when the last recorded position of the ship was reached, no trace could be found with the exception of one wooden life raft and one doughnut raft floating on an oil slick, and it is presumed that the ELIZABETH KELLOGG sank sometime between the 25th and 26th of November, 1943.

For heroism above and beyond the call of duty in abandoning the SS ELIZABETH KELLOGG under great difficulties, J. E. Williams was awarded the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal.



U.S.S. TOUCHET

... cargo, fuel oil, ...  
... for New York ...  
... OZSO 837 of Mexico, 86° 5' W, 23° 15' N ...  
... choppy, wind light southeast.

... before OZSO, ... warning device was set-  
... to port, and ... alarm was sounded and the  
... effort to avoid impact, but the torpedo  
... about 10 ... of the stem. Full speed  
... order was changed ...  
... as she ...  
... in the port midship sec-  
... and the Master believed this was a dud.  
... and all left the tanker in  
... of 10 armed guard members, who  
... should be stable. At OZSO, the  
... and struck at  
... which undoubtedly  
... and ...  
... but it was ... to rescue them.  
... but being separated dur-  
... they were picked up  
... West and Pensacola,  
... Texas.

