

29 March, 1943

U.S. TANKER
 116 S.S. ESSO MANHATTAN

U.S. Tanker, built 1942; 10,172 gross tons; in ballast.
 Departed New York 28 March, 1943, for Curacao, N.W.I.
 Broke in two, 29 March, 1943, 1205 EWT; 25 mi. outside Ambrose Channel.
 Weather, fine and clear; slight ground swell.
 On board, 73; saved, 73.
 Vessel: both Halves salvaged.

According to most accounts, this vessel's breaking in halves was preceded by a dull thud, or a sharp cracking sound. An examination of the halves in drydock failed to establish satisfactorily, whether the break was caused by structural defects, or by striking a mine outside the channel boundaries.

All hands abandoned ship and were taken aboard by the Coast Guard Cutters KIMBALL and CARTIGAN, while the halves of the vessel were also towed to drydock.

The Master was tried on a charge of negligence for not following Naval routing instructions in keeping to the swept channel. He was convicted, and his license suspended for one month on six months' probation. There were no casualties.

