

16 May, 1942

66. S.S. GULFOIL

U.S. Tanker; built, 1912; 5,188 gross tons; cargo, Diesel oil.  
Departed Port Arthur, Texas, for Philadelphia, Pa.  
Torpedoed 16 May, 1942, 2241 CWT; 28°10 N.- 89°48 W.  
Weather, clear; sea, slight; wind, light S.E.  
On board, 40; saved, 19.  
Vessel: total loss.

The tanker was slowly steaming in an east-southeasterly direction when the first torpedo hit the starboard midship section, ripping up a portion of the flying bridge. The Mate on watch saw the wake of the torpedo a few seconds before it hit, but was unable to take any effective counter measures. She immediately listed about 40° to starboard, but a second torpedo striking in the engine room, again from the starboard, caused her to partially right herself about 15 seconds later. There was no opportunity to sound an alarm or launch either of the two lifeboats carried, as the ship settled rapidly, and went down by the stern within 90 seconds of the first hit.

Nineteen crew members got away on two life rafts, and a third raft, empty, was sighted by the survivors. The occupied rafts kept within sight of each other through the next day and night, and saw no other ships or patrol planes until dawn 18 May, when they were sighted by the Tanker BENJAMIN BREWSTER, and picked up at 0830, 18 May, 1942.

