

13 March, 1944

139 S.S. H. D. COLLIER

U.S. Tanker; built 1938; 8,298 gross tons; cargo, gasoline and kerosene.
Departed Abadan, Iran, 9 March, 1944, for Bombay, India.
Torpedoed 13 March, 1944, 1820 - 5 time zone; 21°30' N.-66°11' E.
Weather, overcast; sea, choppy; wind, light NW.
On board, 71; saved, 26.
Vessel: total loss.

This tanker was proceeding in a southeasterly direction in the Arabian Sea, when, less than an hour before sunset, she was struck on the port side just aft of the mainmast. The explosion destroyed the #4 lifeboat, and ignited the gasoline, and the after part of the vessel was a mass of flames in a few moments. The ship's head was swung to bring her into the wind and check the spread of the fire. Part of the crew succeeded in releasing a doughnut float, but the raft did not survive the burning fuel on the water. The starboard motor lifeboat was launched and carried 14 men to safety, although the motor could not be started for two hours, preventing this boat from picking up possible survivors from the water. #2 boat swamped in launching, and 12 men managed to climb back up the net and release a float, on which they paddled away from the flames. These men later found a burned out lifeboat which had dropped to the water and drifted away when the falls burned off, and they were able to climb aboard, and also to save one man and the equipment from a raft which floated near.

The submarine shelled the abandoned vessel about 1915. No one in the #1 lifeboat was injured by the shellfire; and, after 64 hours, these survivors were picked up by the British Steamship EMPIRE RAJH and landed at Karachi, India, 17 March, 1944.

The burned-out boat was sighted, and the 12 men taken aboard the S.S. KARAGOLA on 18 March, after four and a half days, and these men were landed at Bombay, 25 March.

