

18 May, 1943

120 S.S. H. M. STOREY

U.S. Tanker, built 1922; 10,765 gross tons; in ballast.
Departed Noumea, N.C., 15 May, 1943, for San Pedro, Calif.
Torpedoed, 18 May, 1943, 0239 (Zone 11); 17°30 S.-173°02 E.
Weather, clear; sea, choppy; wind, light S.E.
On board, 65; saved, 63.
Vessel: total loss.

Proceeding from Noumea in ballast toward California, this tanker was torpedoed 3 days out. A torpedo struck the starboard side in way of the engine room, causing the immediate stoppage of the machinery, and flooding of the after part of the ship. Mirrors were cracked and glass shattered throughout the vessel. The operator sent an SOS which was acknowledged from Suva, Fiji, and the guns were manned, but the enemy was not sighted until after abandonment.

The tanker was abandoned upon order of the Master, shortly after a second torpedo struck below the waterline a little forward of the first, ripping out the entire starboard quarter. Boats #1, #2 and #4 were used to abandon ship, as well as two life rafts. #3 boat was destroyed by the explosion of the second torpedo. The submarine, thought to be Japanese, surfaced about 0345, and circled the ship, shelling her until she sank at 0430.

The 63 survivors were rescued by the USS FLETCHER at 1636 the same day, and landed at Villa, Efate, 20 May, 1943. The missing had been on watch in the engine room.

