

27 May, 1943

121 S.S. JOHN WORTHINGTON

U.S. Tanker, built 1920; 8,166 gross tons; in ballast.
Departed Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 24 May, 1943, for Caripito, Venezuela.
Torpedoed 27 May, 1943; 2345; 03°52 S.- 36°48 W; in company.
Weather, clear; sea, moderate; wind, fresh S.E.
On board, 56; saved, 56.
Vessel: salvaged.

The Third Mate on watch saw the flashes of torpedo explosions which damaged the FLORIDA and the CARDINAL GIBBONS in the same convoy, and sounded the general alarm just as the ship was struck on the starboard quarter. The force of the explosion sheered the ship's stern 30° to starboard, but the engines and steering gear were not injured, and the vessel was able to resume her course and speed. The crew did not abandon ship, and there were no deaths or serious injuries.

There was some criticism of the fact that the convoy escort vessels apparently did not patrol astern of the convoy, and it was from this direction that the ships were attacked. Also, an Argentine ship, the RIO BERNEJO, though not attached to the group, remained in the general vicinity until ordered away by Naval authorities. This ship had been seen in the neighborhood of attacks on several occasions, and had also been reported as proceeding fully lighted along the Gulf Coast, and her radio had been used to jam the international distress frequency during attacks on United Nations shipping.

