

4 May, 1942

55. S.S. JOSEPH M. CUDAHY

U.S. Tanker; built, 1921; 6,947 gross tons; cargo, crude oil.
Departed Houston, Texas, 2 May, 1942, for Marcus Hook, Pa.
Torpedoed 4 May, 1942, 2128 EWT; 25°57' N.- 83°57' W.
Weather, clear; sea, moderate, wind, light N.E.
On board, 37; saved, 10.
Vessel: total loss.

At 1830, observers on this vessel saw another tanker, presumably the MUNGER T. BALL, about 9 miles to the South of their position burst into flames. The Master accordingly altered his course, and authorized the transmission of a radio message giving time and approximate position of the explosion seen. It was felt by those on board that the submarine was following their ship, but it was not until 2128 that the conning tower of a submarine was seen about 500 feet off the starboard beam. A few seconds later, a torpedo struck forward of the beam, and fire broke out immediately in the midship house. The Master put the wheel hard right to bring her head into the wind, then set it amidships to give her lee to port, and he and eight others who were forward at the time of the attack got off in the #2 boat at 2154. The #4 boat is thought to have been also launched, but was not picked up. The men in the lifeboat were rescued at 0900, 5 May, by a Navy PBV, and taken to Key West. One survivor was taken from the water by another PBV about 1/2 hour earlier.

On 7 May, the tanker, gutted and still burning, was sighted by the USS CORAL, which requested permission to sink the hulk by gunfire, as it was a menace to navigation.

