

5 May, 1942

56. S.S. JAVA ARROW

U.S. Tanker; built, 1921; 8,327 gross tons; dry cargo, and petroleum products.

Departed New York, 28 April, 1942, for Capetown, S.A.

Torpedoed 5 May, 1942, 2347; 27°30 N.- 80°08 W.

Weather, clear; sea, smooth; wind, light S.E.

On board, 47; saved, 45.

Vessel: salvaged.

The first torpedo struck the port side just aft of the bridge and about 15 feet above the keel, while a second struck aft on the starboard quarter only a minute later, at 11:48, leading to the supposition that two submarines may have been involved in the attack. The second torpedo penetrated and exploded in the engine room, and two engineering officers on watch were apparently killed by the blast. The Master gave the order to abandon ship, and the first boat was clear 4 minutes after the vessel was struck, with the second following 9 minutes later. Five men stated they saw the submarine, but no attack was made on the boats. The 45 survivors were picked up after 3 hours by a Coast Guard vessel and the U.S.S. PC-483, and landed at Ft. Pierce and Miami, respectively.

The tanker remained afloat, and the District Coast Guard Officer directed the Commanding Officer of the Ft. Lauderdale Base to secure the aid of the tug boats ONTARIO and BAFSHE to take her in tow for Pt. Everglades. The tugs with their tow were guarded on their 90-hour voyage by the CGC-212 and the CGC-244, and by Navy planes from Miami and Jacksonville, and tied the vessel up at Pt. Everglades at 4:45 P.M., EWT, 9 May, 1942.

Philip Shera received the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal posthumously for his heroism when the S.S. JAVA ARROW was torpedoed.

