

18 May, 1942

67. M.S. MERCURY SUN

U.S. Tanker; built, 1931; 8,893 gross tons; cargo, Navy fuel.
Departed Beaumont, Texas, 13 May, for Cristobal, C.Z.
Torpedoed 18 May, 1942, 0004 CWT; 20°02 N.- 84°25 W.
Weather, clear; sea, choppy; wind, light S.W.
On board, 36; saved, 29.
Vessel: total loss.

The MERCURY SUN had been attacked by submarine gunfire on 20 March off Cape Lookout, while proceeding South in ballast, but there was no damage, and no hits were scored. The shelling commenced at 0010, and continued over 1/2 hour. Upon hearing that the S.S. ARGON was being shelled just ahead of her, the MERCURY SUN anchored behind Cape Lookout breakwater, until daylight.

Upon the occasion of the second attack, the vessel was in the Gulf of Mexico carrying Navy fuel to the Canal Zone when struck by 3 torpedoes in succession. The CO fire extinguishers probably prevented the tanks from catching fire immediately, but after another torpedo struck, the engines were stopped and the vessel burst into flames. 29 crew members succeeded in abandoning ship in the two after lifeboats at 0015. They were picked up by the S.S. HOWARD on 19 May at 1530, and one seriously injured man was transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard boat at Tampa Sea Buoy, and the remaining survivors arrived at Mobile, Ala., at 2358, 22 May.

On the afternoon of the day before the attack, two foreign sailing vessels approached the MERCURY SUN very close aboard, and it was the opinion of a crew member that information might have been supplied to the submarines by them.

The vessel, with the bow sagging in the middle. sank about 0300.

