

54. H.S.S. MUNGER T. BALL

U.S. Tanker; built, 1920; 5,104 gross tons; cargo, gasoline.
 Departed Smith's Bluff, Texas, 1 May, 1942, for Wilmington, N.C.
 Torpedoed 4 May, 1942, 1845; 25°17 N.- 83°57 W.
 Weather, clear; sea, choppy; wind, moderate N.E.
 On board, 37; saved, 4.
 Vessel: total loss.

Attacked by daylight, about 100 miles N.W. of Tortugas, this vessel was struck on the port side amidships, and immediately burst into flames. A second torpedo followed 30 seconds later, to starboard and further aft than the first. The submarine surfaced and commenced machine-gunning the blazing ship. A group of men tried to launch the #4 boat, but "the fire had froze the davits", as a survivor expressed it, and the men were forced to slide down ropes into the water. A raft had been launched, but those on it were forced to jump off when burning gasoline enveloped it. There was much confusion, and it is not known definitely which boat or rafts may have reached the water, as none came through the fire. Four swimmers were picked up about 2100 by the Norwegian MT KATY, and taken into Key West, where the Coast Guard took them ashore. The other 33 crew members are missing and presumed lost when the tanker went down about 1900.

