

146. S.S. OKLAHOMA (2)
(See also Group 3; 8 April, 1942)

U.S. Tanker, built 1940; 9,264 gross tons; cargo, gasoline and kerosene.
Departed Aruba, NWI, 23 March, 1945, for Dakar, FWA.
Torpedoed, 28 March, 1945, 0145 L?A.T.; 13 52N - 41 17W.
Weather, clear; sea, choppy; wind, moderate E.
On board, 72; saved, 22.
Vessel: total loss.

Proceeding independently, five days out of Aruba, the Oklahoma was struck on the starboard quarter abaft the pump room at 0145 ship's time. The explosion, presumably of a torpedo, was muffled, but was followed immediately by a sheet of flame which enveloped the after part of the ship completely. The forward guns were manned, but the enemy craft did not surface, and the master ordered the survivors to abandon ship fifteen minutes after the explosion. The #1 and #2 boats were launched, but #1 was caught in the blazing gasoline pouring from ruptured seams, and the four men in it had to abandon it and swim away, to be picked up later by the #2 boat containing the remaining 18 survivors. No sign of life was evident from the 50 men aft at the time of the explosion, and the vessel was still blazing fiercely when last seen, about 0720, by the men in the lifeboat, her cargo ablaze on the water behind her for nearly a mile.

The lifeboat's radio was lost overboard in launching, but the Master set the boat's course for the Barbadoes, and on 15 April, after 18 days in the boat, it was reported by a PBV, and picked up with the survivors in good condition, by the S.S. DELAWARE, in 11 45N - 66 06W.

