

13 July, 1942

88. S.S. R. W. GALLAGHER

U.S. Tanker, built 1938; 7,989 gross tons; cargo, fuel oil.

Departed Baytown, Tex., for Port Everglades, Fla.

Torpedoed 13 July, 1942, 0140 EWT; 28°32' N.- 90°59' W.

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

On board, 52; saved, 44.

Vessel; total loss.

This vessel was proceeding along the coast of Louisiana near Ship Shoal Buoy, when struck on starboard side, forward, by a torpedo, followed within a few seconds by another abaft the midship house. The ship took a starboard list immediately, and fire broke out. The confusion was added to by the fact that the whistle cord was apparently jammed and the blast on the whistle continued as long as there was any pressure in the boilers. Two of the boats were destroyed by the explosion, and #2 burned, but the men were able to launch #4, and also #1 raft, though some difficulty was experienced due to haste and inefficient handling. Most of those saved jumped from the burning vessel and were later picked up by the boat and raft, and transferred to the Coast Guard Cutter BOUTWELL, which was in the vicinity at the time of the attack. The Master remained on the forward part of the ship for about 40 minutes, but was finally forced to jump as the flames crept nearer. He was in the water about two hours before being rescued by the Coast Guard Cutter.

The tanker went down about 0315.

