

148 S.S. SWIFTCOUT

U.S. Tanker, built 1921; 8,300 gross tons; in ballast.
Departed Philadelphia 16 April, 1945, for Venezuela.
Torpedoed 18 April, 1945, 0925; 37 30 N 72 45 W.
Weather, overcast; sea, choppy; wind, moderate SW.
On board, 47; saved, 46.
Vessel: total loss.

The SWIFTCOUT had stopped about 0700 to make a minor engine repair, and was proceeding slowly when struck by a torpedo which broke her back just aft of the midship house on the port side. The conning tower of the submarine, momentarily seen, was fired on by the armed guard, but submerged immediately. The Master ordered the tanker abandoned, and all four lifeboats were launched just before a second torpedo struck near the location of the first. The Chief Engineer was drowned in attempting to board the lifeboat, but all others got off in safety. Two rafts were launched or jarred loose, and one of these was used by two messboys, who were later taken into one of the lifeboats.

The tanker buckled quickly and sank, bow and stern in the air, at 0940, and a distress message from the lifeboat radio was picked up by the S.S. CHANCELLORSVILLE, which rescued the survivors after 6 1/2 hours in the boats, and took them to Norfolk, where the injured were hospitalized.

(For similar tanker, see S.S. Swiftsure, No. 100)