

(NOTE) (It is believed the Navy Department has ordered all of these type flares off oil tankers)

Gardner states he slid down the lines to the lifeboat and dove from it. Every time he came up for air his hair caught fire. Finally he was hauled on to the life raft. Eleven of the crew of fifty-seven men made the raft. The Captain and fourteen other survivors were picked up by the coastwise vessel and put ashore in Charleston. The bodies of sixteen who perished in the flames were brought to Southport, North Carolina by the Coast Guard. The rest are missing.

The raft had no row locks apparently since men had to take turns lying down and using their bodies as row locks for the others.

The stern gun on the vessel was manned for fifteen minutes after the torpedo hit but they were unable to sight the submarine.

TEXAN (March 12, 1942)

After the ship went down, those that could clear floated on wreckage and other objects that came to the surface. At daylight the lifeboat was righted, which had come to the surface, and two life rafts appeared.

Until daylight they floated, some on overturned lifeboat, and at daylight they sighted a couple of life rafts, and finally at 15 hours G. M. T. all hands were transferred from rafts, logs, etc., to No. 3 lifeboat. All survivors (38) had been found and they proceeded sailing in a southerly direction to make the Cuban Coast. That was the 12th.

The next night at about three hours G. M. T. on the 13th, Cuban fisherman took the majority of the men from the lifeboat -- fisherman named Yo Yo -- and he proceeded with the lifeboat in tow towards Neuvatis, Cuba, arrived on the 14th at 15 hours G. M. T., which would be 11 A. M. L. S. T.

Master says number 3 boat swung broadside partly because ship still had some way on her. Interesting note is that while lifeboat was capsized all night long, when it was righted all equipment was in place with exception of sail, rations, food and water were sweet and in perfect condition. All equipment in first class shape.

LOOKOUTS Vessel had two lookouts and one stand-by man. When asked if he would recommend more lookouts he answered "It would be a good idea. Of course, you would have to put extra men on but the more lookouts the better chance you have to see something." Did not think watch on watch good as men get fatigued.

Reference to No. 2 boat, the master stated that when the vessel was settling so fast the suction held the boat into the ship, and the davits



that were sticking out from the gunwale flipped the boat over. Life rafts were the regulation life rafts as required by the Bureau.

Grabrails saved ten men who hung on all night and also enabled them to right the boat.

Boats were lowered away and three became waterborne but were unable to get away from the side of the ship due to the suction of the rapid sinking of the vessel. Two lifeboats were capsized by being caught under the davits. The men were floating around on various pieces of debris. Two life rafts broke clear of the ship, and about eight or ten men clung to a capsized lifeboat. At day light the men clinging to the lifeboat righted it and bailed it out and proceeded to pick the men out of the water and off the life raft. A total of 38 survivors were picked up in the one boat.

The vessel was fitted with the old fashioned davits that are slacked down on the relieving tackle. Namely the Mallory type. The No. 2 boat, after it became waterborne, was hooked by the davits and capsized. In so far as No. 3 boat is concerned the forward fall was left go and she swung around broadside and capsized.

OLGA (March 12, 1942)

I found that all the water on the rafts was salty, the reason being that the spigot is in the kegs. I would suggest that the spigot be attached with an auger so that the spigot can be inserted after the rafts are launched, as the shock seemed to open the spigots as they are now arranged and permitted water (salt) to enter. Another suggestion is that whistles be attached to life preservers in order to call to boats, as they could be heard much farther. Another thing, in order to cut the lashings of rafts, I think a sharp knife attached nearby would be far better than hatchets, because the lashings tend to spring and the hatchets were somewhat ineffectual.

OLEAN (March 14, 1942)

Able seaman, Gray, testified that they had one boat ready to launch after first torpedo hit but master ordered them to wait until vessel was stopped. In this manner the boat was launched safely. One boat capsized when line got caught but no one was in boat.

Q. "You mentioned a while ago that the port boat capsized before it struck the water. What was the trouble?"

A. "When we were in the shipyard. Here is the ship, here is the davit. We fixed everything ready to launch, and there were two boats