

SINKING OF S.S. KWANGTUNG

A report has now been received of the circumstances in which the British Steam Ship KWANGTUNG, 2,626 tons, owned by the China Navigation Co, Ltd., was sunk south of Java on January 4th.

There are only 12 known survivors out of a total complement of 98 officers and men. The sinking was attended with calculated brutality on the part of the Japanese U-boat commander.

The KWANGTUNG was torpedoed without warning at 3 o'clock on the morning of January 4th. The crew took to four boats and made sail, setting course for the nearest land independently.

Shortly afterwards the Japanese U-boat surfaced and made for the Master's boat. The U-boat's machine guns were trained on the lifeboat, which was deliberately ramméd amidships. The survivors were left floating on pieces of the shattered lifeboat.

The chief officer of the KWANGTUNG, who was in charge of another boat and had seen the attack on the Master's lifeboat, at once put about and sailed towards him. While he was picking up 12 survivors from the 25 original occupants of this boat the Japanese U-boat reappeared.

This second lifeboat was destroyed by the Japanese U-boat in exactly the same way. No other lifeboats being in sight the U-boat then submerged and was not seen again.

After this second attack 13 only of the KWANGTUNG's 98 officers and men were left alive and all of them were more or less injured. It was then about 8 o'clock in the forenoon and they floated all through that day and through the following night on the two portions of the last lifeboat, which continually capsized. One of the survivors died during the afternoon of that day.

At about noon on the second day a steamer was fortunately sighted and the survivors were picked up.