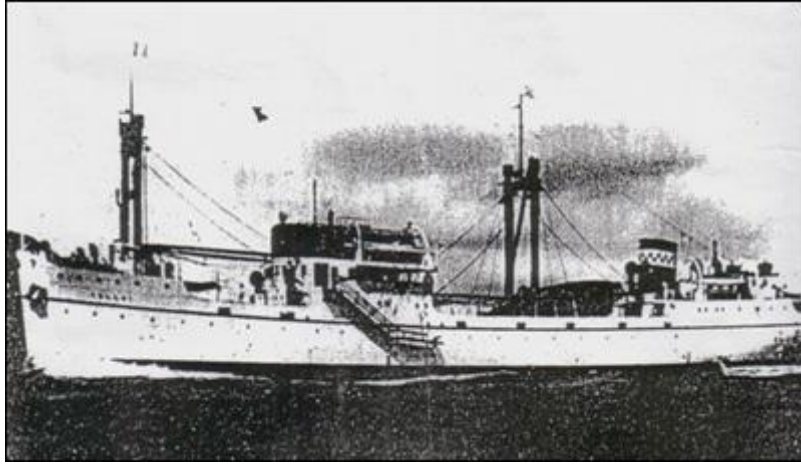


S.S. TULAGI



At 19.40 hours on 27 March 1944 the unescorted **Tulagi** (Master Leonard Walter Aleric Millar) was hit on the starboard side by two torpedoes from [U-532](#) while steaming on a non-evasive course at 11 knots in moderate weather about 500 miles southeast of Chagos Archipelago. The ship capsized and sank by the stern in less than 30 seconds, so fast that the crew had no time to send distress signals or to launch the lifeboats. Ten crew members and five Australian gunners (the ship was armed with one 12pdr and two 20mm guns) managed to rescue themselves onto four rafts that floated free, but the master and 38 crew members were lost. The survivors recovered the rations from the damaged lifeboats and tied the rafts together. However, after drifting for a month it was decided to distribute the 15 men on two rafts secured to each other with a painter in order to make better progress. On 19 May, the painter parted and no one was capable of securing the rafts again, all being very exhausted and weak because the men existed on rainwater and fish and birds they caught. One raft with the chief engineer and six crew members made landfall at the uninhabited Bijoutier Island in the Seychelles after drifting more than 1500 miles in 58 days. They were taken care of the local population from the neighbouring Alphonse Island and brought to Port Victoria by an auxiliary schooner on 16 June and later to Bombay. The other raft in charge of the third officer with three crew members and the five gunners was never seen again, though a floor board which was in it had been washed up on St. Francois Island.

Australian Crew

Master (1)	-Leonard Walter Aleric Millar
Cadet Officer (2)	-John David Brown -John Bainbridge Harrison
Wireless Operator (2)	-Lloyd Victor Hartwill-Law -Arthur William John Williams
1st Mate	-William James McManus
1 st Wireless Operator	-George Newton Reid
2 nd Engineer	-Norman Arthur Young
3 rd Engineer Officer	-George Angus Morrison
3 rd Mate	-Edwin John Board
4 th Engineer	-Gladstone Lionel Smedley
5 th Engineer	-John Robert Moffitt
Electrician	-Norman Hazlewood