

Convoy KS-520 Factsheet

KS-520 Convoy

Designation: Key West – South 520

Port of Origin: Norfolk, Virginia

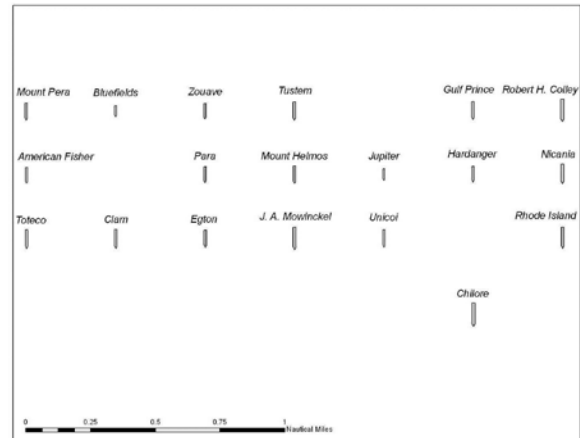
Destination: Key West, Florida

Merchant Ships: 19 (tankers and freighters)

Escorts: 5 (U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard)

Attacked: July 15, 1942

Losses: *Bluefields* (sunk), *J.A. Mowinckel* (damaged), *Chilore* (sunk later), four killed



On July 14, 1942, 19 merchant ships and five Navy and Coast Guard escort vessels of convoy KS-520 departed Norfolk, Virginia on a seven-day cruise to Key West. During this time, KS-520 would experience constant threat from German U-boats known to be operating in the mid-Atlantic, especially off the North Carolina coast.

The 19 ships in the convoy were: *Mount Pera*, *Bluefields*, *Zouave*, *Tustem*, *Gulf Prince*, *Robert H. Colley*, *American Fisher*, *Para*, *Mount Helmos*, *Jupiter*, *Hardanger*, *Nicania*, *Toteco*, *Clam*, *Egton*, *J.A. Mowinckel*, *Unicoi*, *Rhode Island*, and *Chilore*. The five support vessels that made up Escort Group Easy were: USS *Ellis*, USS *McCormick*, USS *Spry*, USCG *Triton* and USCG *Icarus*. Several merchant vessels in the convoy also had Armed Guard crews aboard manning deck guns.

On July 15, at approximately 4:15 p.m., U-576 attacked the convoy off Ocracoke, North Carolina. Three ships were hit in less than four minutes. The *Chilore* was struck with two torpedoes and the *J.A. Mowinckel* and *Bluefields* were each hit by one torpedo. *Bluefields* sunk in just minutes while the others remained afloat.

The Armed Guard crew aboard *Unicoi* fired and hit the U-576, while two U.S. Navy Kingfisher aircraft dropped a series of depths charges directly on the U-boat resulting in its immediate sinking.

Mowinckel and *Chilore* strayed into a Hatteras minefield and struck mines. During a salvage attempt, the tugboat *Keshena* struck a mine and sank, while *Chilore* later ended up sinking under tow. In addition to the deaths of the submarine crew, the skirmish resulted in four Allied casualties: A naval gunner, a merchant sailor and two crewmen on the tug *Keshena*.