**F.W. Abrams**

**U.S. Flagged Merchant Tanker**

**Vessel History**

**Built:** 1920, New York Shipbuilding Corporation - Camden, New Jersey

**Owner:** Standard Oil Company, New Jersey

**History:** Launched in 1920 for Grace Line Inc., the ship was originally named *Nora* until it was sold to Standard Oil in 1932 and renamed *F.W. Abrams*. The tanker was 467.6' long, 62.7' abeam, had a depth of 31.3' for a gross tonnage of 9,310, and was outfitted with three oil-fired boilers that provided steam to a quadrupel expansion steam engine. During WWII, *Abrams* fulfilled a critical service delivering bulk oil for the War Shipping Administration as part of the Western Hemisphere Supply Line. From the outbreak of hostilities until its sinking, *Abrams* carried a total of 3,748,828 barrels for the war effort.

**Loss:** The destruction of *F.W. Abrams* was an unfortunate accident. Rather than enemy action, *Abrams* sank from “friendly fire.” In the spring of 1942, the U.S. Navy established a defensive minefield off the coast of Hatteras due to a lack of deepwater ports. It consisted of two overlapping crescents with a total of 2,635 Mark VI sea mines (left image). On the morning of June 11, 1942, *F.W. Abrams* left the minefield anchorage escorted by CG-484, carrying 90,000 barrels of crude oil. Thick fog, confusion, and poor communication between Captain Coumelis, master of *Abrams*, and CG-484 resulted in the two vessels losing contact. *Abrams*, believing they were clear, inadvertently struck three submerged mines that destroyed the ship. All crew were saved, but the vessel was a total loss. The minefield was ultimately a failure, succeeding only in destroying friendly ships. It was later swept, but records indicate only about half of the mines were actually removed.

**Marine Life Commonly Found on the F.W. Abrams Site**

- Sand Tiger Shark: *Odontaspis taurus*
- Greater Amberjack: *Seriola dumerili*
- Great Barracuda: *Sphyraena barracuda*
- Northern Sea Robin: *Prionotus carolinus*
- Loggerhead: *Caretta caretta*
GPS Coordinates: N34° 59.407'  U.S. Flagged  Tanker  F.W. Abrams  Archaeological Site Plan

Depth: 80fsw  W75° 48.060'  Skill Level: Intermediate

Take Only Pictures ~ Leave Only Bubbles!

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