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## The Casualty List Was Correct

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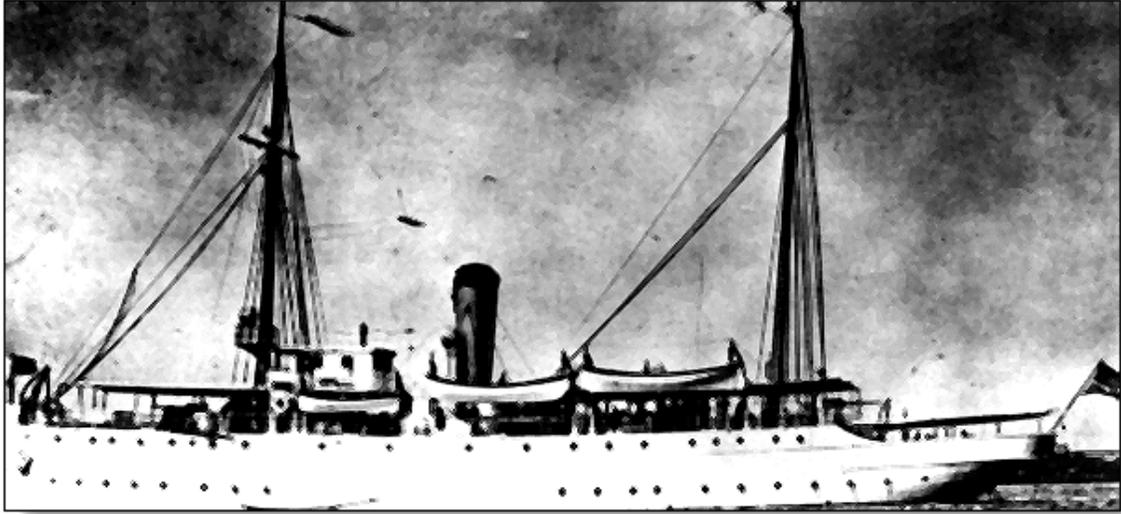
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# The Casualty List Was Corrected

By TONY PIZZO



-From Hampton Dunn Collection

**The USS Tampa went down after being torpedoed in the Bristol Channel.**

On the pitch black night of Sept. 26, 1918, in the ebbing days of World War I, the Coast Guard cutter U.S.S. Tampa was torpedoed by a German submarine.

The ship was on convoy duty leading the way for merchant ships through the Bristol Channel on the southwest coast of England. U-Boat No. 53, under the command of Von Schraeder, had followed the convoy all day, and when darkness fell the submarine went ahead and waited for its prey.

"Help! For God's sake, help!" was the last message from the Tampa. The U-boat also sent a radio message for help for the vessel after it was struck. For the U.S.S. Tampa sank immediately in the cold, murky waters. The entire crew of 118 was lost. Twenty-three of the sailors were Tampans.

This was the worst tragedy for Tampa - and the worst single loss for the Navy during the war.

From this sea tragedy emerged a moving story of patriotism which stands nobly in the annals of Tampans at war. With the passing of time, the story had vanished from memory since it was first reported by The Tampa Daily Times in 1918.

Vincenzo (Jimmie) Guerriero, a member of the ill-fated crew, was an impressionable youth with a blazing desire to serve on the U.S.S. Tampa. While the Coast Guard cutter was based in Tampa, Jimmie visited her deck and gazed upon her for hours with admiration, dreaming of sailing with her to the seven seas.



-From Tony Pizzo Collection

**Jimmie Guerriero entered the service at age 16 under the name "Ross."**

The following is a touching story of Jimmie Guerriero as it appeared in the Times Oct. 4, 1918:

### **LOST ON THE U.S.S. TAMPA Enlisted Under Assumed Name**

Jimmie Guerriero, whose name appeared in yesterday's paper as "Jimmie Ross," is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Guerriero of 2908 12th Ave., in Ybor City. The father owns a tailor shop on Michigan Avenue.

(Jimmie) enlisted two years ago under the name of "Ross" because he was only 16. He claimed to be 18 when he joined the Tampa. He was born in Italy and came to Tampa

with his brothers, Rocco and Carmine, in 1909.

The boy was crazy about Tampa and bound to enlist to fight for his adopted country.

Jimmie's brother Rocco received his last letter, dated August 24th, as follows:

"Dear Brother: I am writing you these few lines to let you know that I received your letter two months ago, and I was very glad to hear from you and to know that you are well and happy. I am in good health and feeling fine every day. I will close this time because I have got to work. Give my best regards to everyone and to you. From your brother, Jim Ross."

Guerriero means "warrior" in Italian. Jimmie's sacrifices gave meaning to his name, and it remains a lasting example of a young immigrant's love for the glory of America.

At a memorial service for the U.S.S. Tampa in 1924, attorney Cody Fowler referred to the sinking as "Just a flash of fire on a distant sea, but it burned the name of Tampa high on an immortal tablet of fame."

Lest we forget.