The USS Tampa Is Born Again!

Hampton Dunn
THE USS TAMPA IS BORN AGAIN!
By HAMPTON DUNN

The USS Tampa sails again

That was the name of the Coast Guard cutter that was torpedoed and sunk in World War I in the Bristol Channel carrying to watery graves 24 Tampans serving aboard.

On a cold, blustery day on March 19, 1981, at the Tacoma, Washington, Boat Building Co. yards, a new USS Tampa went down the ways after formal christening. It was the commencement of life for the fourth Coast Guard cutter by that name.

Representing the City of Tampa at the christening was City Representative Helen Chavez. Chilled by the wind, Mrs. Chavez facetiously suggested the traditional bottle of champagne broken on the cutter's bow probably could have been put to better use.
“We would have been better off if we had passed around the bottle,” she remarked.

Mrs. Chavez was warmed, however, by the spirit of friendship among Tacoma's residents. Tacoma Mayor Mike Parker made her an honorary citizen of the city.

The Tampa Councilwoman found the launching “really exciting.”

“It almost makes you want to cry when the vessel slides down the ways,” she said.

Christening the cutter as the Tampa was Dorothy Hoffman of New York City, whose husband, Irwin, was principal speaker at the launching. Hoffman, a professional artist, is the surviving younger brother of David Hoffman, a former Harvard law student who was among the 131 seafarers lost aboard the original Tampa.

The cutter, the second of 13 vessels the Coast Guard has on order in the so-called Famous class, cost about $35 million. Each of the cutters will be named for a famous Coast Guard vessel of yesteryear.