



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

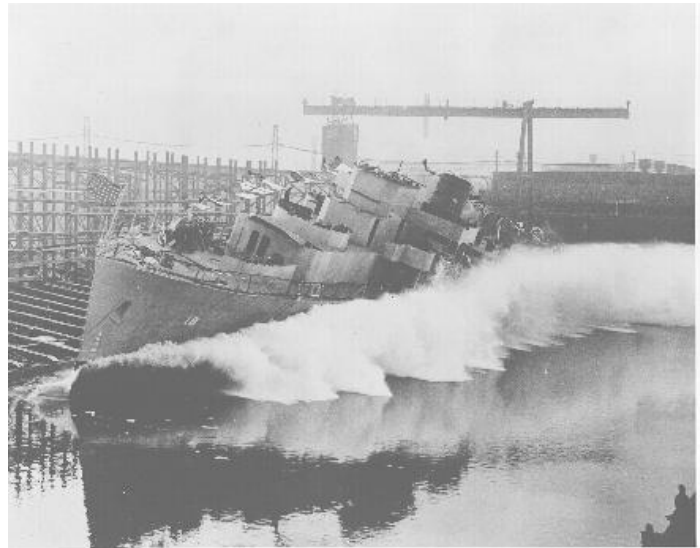
The USS Alexandria

Alexandria Times, April 12, 2012

Image: The USS Alexandria. Photo, Alexandria Library.

Since Colonial times, Alexandria has played a vital role in the defense of our nation through its strategic location, people and resources. More than once, important facilities and infrastructure were completed very late in the conflicts, just missing the primary role for which they were intended. Such was the case with the torpedo Factory, which was completed just as World War I ended.

The situation repeated itself in World War II. The first U.S. Navy ship named for Alexandria, the Tacoma-class frigate USS Alexandria (PF-18), was built at the American Ship Building Co. in Lorain, Ohio, in June 1943. The ship was launched in January 1944, as seen in this photograph, and towed down the Mississippi River to New Orleans where she was fitted out. The ship was finally commissioned and ready for her intended mission, to assist the Battle of the Atlantic in pursuit of German U-boats traversing America's eastern shores, in March 1945.



Under the watchful eyes of Lt. Cmdr. C.G. Houtsma, the ship immediately sailed for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where she participated in shakedown and anti-submarine warfare. Upon completion of those exercises in late April 1945, she was moved to Norfolk for repairs. Three days later, the war in Europe ended. When the ship finally arrived to serve with the Atlantic fleet May 15, her mission was reassigned, and she was sent back to Charleston, S.C., to be retrofitted as a weather ship.

In June 1945 she began her only patrol service off the Newfoundland coast, interrupted only by a brief visit to Alexandria in October. In February 1946 she was declared surplus and sold for scrap the following year.

“Out of the Attic” is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as “Marking Time” and explored Alexandria’s history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into “Out of the Attic” and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.