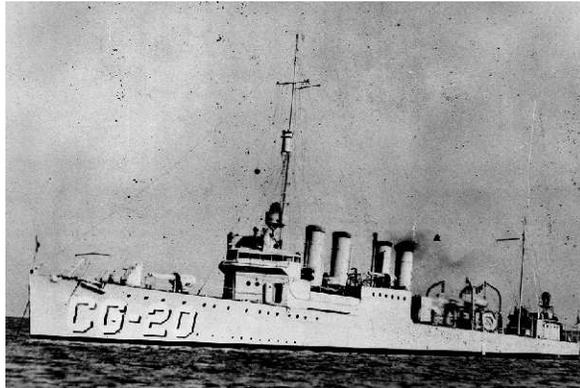




USCGD *Semmes*

(CG-20)



Displacement: 1,190 tons

Dimensions: 314' 5" overall x 31' 9" x 9'10" draft

Machinery: Geared turbines, 2 screws, 26,500 hp, 35 knots

Complement: 101 (USN)

Armament: 5-4"/50 (USN)

Built: Newport News Shipbuilding Company, Newport News, VA

Commissioned (USN): 21 Feb 1920

Acquired: 25 Apr 1932

Commissioned (USCG): 25 Apr 1932

Decommissioned: 20 Apr 1934

Design and Service

A total of thirty-one Navy destroyers were lent to the Coast Guard for the enforcement of Prohibition. The vessels ranged from the prewar 742-ton

"flivvers" to the postwar four-stack flush deckers like *Semmes*. Adapting these vessels to service was thought to be less costly than building new ships. The wartime service and exceedingly poor condition of earlier destroyer classes often required nearly a year of reconditioning before they were seaworthy. The flush deckers, on the other hand, were in much better condition. Not having had wartime service, they were more quickly reconditioned for anti-bootlegging patrols.

These vessels were also by far the largest and most sophisticated vessels ever operated by the service. Trained personnel were nearly nonexistent. Congress authorized hundreds of new enlistees. It was these inexperienced men that generally made up the crews of these vessels. All were capable of over 25 knots, an advantage in the rum-chasing business, but they were easily outmaneuvered by smaller boats. As a result, the destroyers' mission was to picket the larger supply ships ("mother ships") and prevent them from off-loading their cargo onto smaller, speedier contact boats.

Semmes was the last destroyer taken over by the service and had the shortest destroyer career. She was stationed at New York.

Operational Highlights

25 Apr 1932 Transferred from US Navy and commissioned at Philadelphia Navy Yard.

9 May 1932 Left Philadelphia Navy yard for reconditioning in Boston. Towed by USCGC *Champlain*.

12 May 1932 Arrived Boston.

17 Sep 1932 Departed Boston.

Cuban Expedition

7 Sep 1933 Discontinued target practice off Hampton Roads, VA and left for Key West.

9 Sep 1933 Arrived for duty with US Navy.

16 Sep 1933 Left Key West for Havana.

6 Nov 1933 Released from duty with US Navy. Directed to return to duty in Eastern Area.

20 Apr 1934 Decommissioned and returned to US Navy.

