



Physical Address: 604 N. Enterprise Blvd, Lake Charles LA 70601
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4470, Lake Charles LA 70606-4470
Ship Office: (337) 214-7447 Email: info@orleck.org Web: <http://orleck.org>

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACTS:

Primary: Maj. Ron Williams
(337) 526-2699 (Cell)
(337) 214-7447 (Ship Office)
Alternate: Dawn Carrier
ron.williams@orleck.org
dawn.carrier@orleck.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 9, 2020

USS ORLECK TOW TO DRY DOCK MOVED UP ONE WEEK: WILL DEPART LAKE CHARLES BERTH AS EARLY AS MARCH 17TH

The USS ORLECK Naval Museum's (USSONM) scheduled tow to dry dock in Port Arthur TX has been moved up a week and is now scheduled to depart its Lake Charles berth on North Enterprise Blvd. as early as March 17th, weather permitting. The tow by Smith Maritime's *Elsbeth 3* out of Morgan City LA will take approximately 16 hours. The planned schedule: March 15th tug arrives; March 16th ship is prepped for tow; March 17th ORLECK departs under tow from N. Enterprise Blvd berth; March 18th ORLECK arrives at Gulf Copper Central Yard in Port Arthur TX.

The historic 75-year old ex-US Navy Destroyer DD-886 will undergo inspection, repairs, application of preservation products, and painted before tow to Jacksonville FL to reopen as the flag ship of the Jacksonville Naval Museum (JNM) in downtown Jacksonville on the St. John River. The tow from Port Arthur to Jacksonville will take about a week, depending on weather conditions. The work is being performed at Gulf Copper Manufacturing Corp's Port Arthur Central Yard on Proctor Street.

The schedule changed due to earlier availability of Gulf Copper's WW2-era floating dry dock that began its life as a floating dry dock for the United States Navy in 1942. Ex-USS AFDM-2 (YFD-4), renamed Mr. Morris, is an auxiliary floating dry dock built in Mobile AL by Alabama Ship Building and Dry Dock Company. It was operated by Todd Shipyards of New Orleans to repair ships during WW2. It has a long history of service during war and peace, as did USS ORLECK DD-886. In 2013, USS LST-325 (USS LST Ship Memorial, Evansville IN) underwent repairs in this dry dock.

The museum was closed for tours on March 2nd so volunteers and workers can prepare the ship for tow. This includes packing, storing, and securing museum artifacts, documents, and equipment. Local packing and moving company "Two Cajuns and a Truck" augmented volunteer efforts. Some items will be removed from the ship for protection and separate transport. Pumps, alarms, generators, lighting and other items are being positioned and tested as required by the trip-in-tow survey and tow plan. The US Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit (MSU) - Lake Charles has been working with the ship's Marine Surveyor to ensure all tow plan tasks are complete before departure, which is standard operating procedure for such tows. Two individuals from the Jacksonville organization are in Lake Charles assisting with the preparations.

The Boards of Directors and volunteers of both the USS ORLECK Naval Museum and the Jacksonville Historic Naval Association thank supporters who have partnered with the two non-profits to preserve the ship as a museum and education platform to honor the service and sacrifice of those who have served our nation. Continued support is greatly needed to get the ship to its new home!

ORLECK Museum memberships remain valid during the transition and will be transferred to JNM when the ship reopens at its new home at a commensurate level for the duration of the existing membership. It is a great time to renew memberships or join as a member as the Museum participates in the Individual Member Admission Exchange as a Fleet Member of the

USS ORLECK NAVAL MUSUEM
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Historic Naval Ship Association (HNSA) that permits cardholding members free or reduced admission to other Fleet Member ships. See list of museums at <https://hnsa.org>. Renew or join the ORLECK Musuem or make donation by calling the ship office at 337-314-SHIP, email us at info@orleck.org, or going on-line at <https://orleck.org>. Donations can also be made to the Go Fund Me tow fund (<https://www.jaxnavalmuseum.org>).

###END###



Photos Clockwise From Top Left. 1. USS ORLECK, Gulf Copper, and JHNSA leadership meet at Gulf Copper Central Ship Yard, Port Arthur TX, to coordinate dry dock statement work and schedule for Ex-USS ORLECK DD-886. From Left: USS ORLECK Musuem Board President David Farmer; Orleck Ship Superintendent Steve Miller; Matt Agee (Operations Mgr.) , Lance DeJohn (General Manager), and Larry Klinner (Estimator) of Gulf Copper; and John O'Neil, Executive Director JHNSA. 2. Top Right: and 3. Bottom Left: WW2-era Ex-USS AFDM-2 (YDF-4) (Mr. Morris) auxiliary floating dry dock. 4. Bottom Right. ORLECK Musuem volunteer Leland Broussard "dogging down" one of the port side hatches to secure hatch for tow.