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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10 August 2021

Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association will proceed with moving USS Orleck after City Council votes to support.

Jacksonville, Florida – The Jacksonville City Council approved the Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association’s (JHNSA) plan to move the naval museum ship, the former *USS Orleck* (DD 886) to Jacksonville. The decision was approved with a 17-0 vote, on 10 August 2021. The JHNSA is proud to proceed with making final steps to bring the Orleck Museum to Jacksonville to create the Jacksonville Naval Museum.

The *Orleck* museum ship will be dry docked at Port Arthur, Texas. In dry docking the ship will receive an inspection of the hull to ensure it is capable of the transit to Florida and continue to serve as a museum ship. Should the hull be found beyond the JHNSA financial means for restoration, the decision will then be made to scrap the ship by the Orleck Association with concurrence of the JHNSA. If found fit for continued use as a museum ship, the *Orleck* will receive a hull repairs and mostly preservation (painting) work while in dry dock. The time of dry docking is expected to take three to six weeks depending on the amount of work required.

After dry docking, the *Orleck* museum ship will embark on a 10-day tow from Texas to Florida. The ship will be moored stern in, starboard side to the 600’ long “Pier 1”. This is adjacent to the Berkman Marina along East Bay Street in the old Shipyards area of the Sports and Entertainment District in downtown, Jacksonville. There is currently no estimated date of arrival. It is JHNSA’s goal to have the ship in Jacksonville the week of Veterans Day.

The arrival date is dependent on work in the dry dock and weather. Once moored the JHNSA will continue prepare the museum ship for opening as the Jacksonville Naval Museum. The “pier-side” preparation work is expected to be two to four weeks in length but may be extended as needed. Prior to the ship’s arrival, work will be done to prepare the pier. A separate modular building with ticketing, gift shop, and restrooms will be put on hold by request of the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA). The DIA has asked JHNSA to wait until plans are worked out for the Shipyards area.

The Jacksonville Naval Museum will feature the “US Navy Cold War Experience”, which is represented by the ex-*USS Orleck*. The *Orleck*, a WWII era Gearing Class destroyer, was heavily modified under the Fleet Rehabilitation and Maintenance (FRAM II) program in the early 1960’s. The *Orleck* embodies the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Cold War periods in US Navy history having served in all three. The steam powered, twin propeller, 4 boiler *Orleck* is much smaller than today’s modern-day gas turbine powered destroyers with a length of only 390 feet, 41’ wide beam, an “air draft” of 109’ at the top mast with a current empty displacement of approximately 2,350 tons.





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Having such a long and prolific service history the *Orleck* is the most decorated post-World War II ship ever built and was awarded 18 battle stars. After the *Orleck's* US Naval service, she was transferred to the Turkish Navy and renamed the *Yüctepe* (D 345). She continued to serve until being transferred back to the United States in August of 2000 to become a museum ship.

The Jacksonville Naval Museum will honor past generations of Veterans and inspire future Patriots through STEM plus history education opportunities. The museum will serve as a gathering place for Naval Associations, crew reunions, and military conventions while supporting Veterans as a local resource and networking center. Future initiatives may include a Tall Ships Festival or Navy Fleet Week; increasing tourism to downtown Jacksonville.

Bringing the ship to downtown and creating the Jacksonville Naval Museum is a monumental undertaking, but we feel with the support of our local community - this long-standing dream will be turned into reality! We ask our local community to support us in any way possible: share the news of the museum coming, visit the museum once we are open, volunteer with us for the variety of positions that will be available, and donate to this worthy cause if possible. We named it the 'Jacksonville' Naval Museum because it really is about our community coming together to celebrate our rich military history, inspire patriotism, and honor our veterans and active-duty service members.

We look forward to bringing this “*Bold Ship to the Bold City*” that once was home to many Cold War era workhorses like the *Oliver Hazard Perry* Frigates, P-3 *Orions*, and MH-60 *Seahawks*. We are excited for the community to enjoy stepping back to the time of the Cold War onboard this piece of living history! With Jacksonville's large Naval community, we feel the *Orleck* is a fitting tribute and terrific match to call Jacksonville home!

Very Respectfully,

Daniel K. Bean
President, JHNSA
Captain, USN (Ret.)

John E. O'Neil
Executive Director, JHNSA
Captain, USN (Ret.)





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MUSEUM WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND DONATION INFORMATION:

- **Website:** www.jaxnavalmuseum.org
- **Donation (electronic):** <https://www.jaxnavalmuseum.org/donate/>
- **Donation (check via mail):** Please make checks out to “JHNSA”
 - JHNSA
2220 Country Road 210 West
Suite 108, PMB 314
Jacksonville, FL 32259
- **General Information:** info@jaxnavalmuseum.org
- **Volunteer Information:** volunteer@jaxnavalmuseum.org
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/jaxnavalmuseum/
- **Instagram:** @jaxnavalmuseum
- **Twitter:** @jaxnavalmuseum

INFORMATION REGARDING THE EX-USS ORLECK:

- Named after Navy Lieutenant Joseph Orleck, Commanding Officer of USS Nauset, who was killed in action on 9 September, 1943 during World War II and posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.
- Gearing Class Destroyer
- Built: Orange, Texas
- Launched: 12 May, 1945
- Length: 390 feet, 6 inches
- Draft: 14 feet, 4 inches
- Served: Korean War
- Recognized as the “Top Gun” in Vietnam firing over 11,000 rounds
- Major weapon systems: two dual cannon 5 inch gun mounts, Anti-Submarine Rocket Launcher (ASROC), and Drone Anti-Submarine Helicopters (DASH) system.
- Awards: 18 battle stars with the Navy Unit Commendation, Battle ‘E’, China Service Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal, National Defense Medal (multiple awards), Korean Service Medal (multiple awards), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (multiple awards), Vietnam Service
- 14 Gearing Ships once called Mayport home
- Keel Laid: 28 November, 1944
- Commissioned: 15 September, 1945
- Beam: 40 feet, 10 inches
- Displacement: 2,616 Long Tons Standard
- Served: Vietnam War
- Nicknamed the “Grey Ghost of the Vietnam Coast”



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Medal (multiple awards), Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation, United Nations Service Medal, and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.



Conceptual artwork of the Jacksonville Naval Museum by Chris Flagg



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The USS Orleck as a museum ship