

USS Orleck  
Lake Charles, LA



HISTORY

The U.S.S. Orleck, a destroyer battleship, traveled the world's oceans for 54 years of active duty. The Orleck was first commissioned to the U.S. Navy on September 15, 1945. The Orleck is a 390-foot battleship that served in Korea , Vietnam and the Gulf War. She won four battle stars for service during the Korean Conflict, was a member of the famous Train Busters Club of Korea and was "Top Gun" of the Seventh Fleet in Vietnam . She was known as the Gray Ghost on the Vietnam Coast . Her final United States port was in Tacoma , Washington , where she was a vital part of the Naval Reserve Forces. Over the years she was decorated many times and the men of the ship developed a pride and loyalty to her and her namesake, Lieutenant Joseph Orleck. She was decommissioned and transferred to the Turkish Navy on 1 October 1982 where she operated as TCG YUCETEPE D 345 for sixteen additional years. On April 1, 1998, the final

decommissioning ceremony was held for the U.S.S. Orleck. The ship then returned to its birthplace, Orange , Texas , on August 11, 2000, and was open to the public as a museum for several years. The U.S.S. Orleck is now docked in Lake Charles , Louisiana . The U.S.S. Orleck Association is working to restore the ship so it may be re-opened to the public as a museum and national historic monument.

Danita Noland with the SW Chapter of LaSpirits began communicating with the U. S.S. Orleck Agency shortly after the ship arrived in Lake Charles , Louisiana, in May of 2010. Aaron Benoit, Case Manager of the SW Chapter, gathered information on the ship from Sherwood Buckalew, Volunteer Coordinator, and Ron Williams, Board President. There were two known deaths on the ship. One man was overcome by paint fumes in a paint closet and died. Another man was critically injured by a rotating gun turret and did not survive his injuries. There has been only a few stories of personal experience from people who have spent time on the ship over the years. Some have reported hearing footsteps in the hallways of the ship when no one was there and the occasional loud sound that could not be accounted for as the normal creakings and groanings of the ship. There had been no previous formal paranormal investigation. The SW Chapter was very pleased and proud to be granted permission to conduct the first paranormal investigation aboard this historically significant location.

Due to the size of the ship, the SW Chapter opened the investigation up to the other chapters of LaSpirits. The investigation was conducted on September 18th, 2010. Participating in the investigation were: Aaron Benoit, Danita Noland, Connie Kitchens, David O'Neal, Lori Russell, Bess Maxwell, Charles Gardner, Martin DeLatte, Brandon Thomas, Steve Coleman. We had several infrared cameras positioned around the ship. The investigators divided into teams of 3 and covered all areas of the ship, rotating in 40 minute shifts. While we greatly enjoyed the night on board the U.S.S. Orleck and investigated as fully as we could, we did not collect any significant data pointing to paranormal activity that night. The SW Chapter hopes to have the opportunity to continue investigating the U.S.S. Orleck in the future.