

USS Oak Ridge rings in Secret City Festival

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column on June 1, 2017)

Come out Friday evening, June 2, 2017, at the pavilion in A.K. Bissell Park for the official kick-off of the Secret City Festival. Starting at 8pm, Oak Ridge mayor, Warren Gooch will officially open the festival along with special guests, the crew of the USS Oak Ridge, by ringing the bell from the ship. Afterwards, stay in the park and watch "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," starring Jimmy Stewart. This will get you ready for the next day's events for "Celebrate Our Heroes"

The USS ARD-19 was commissioned in March of 1944 as a floating dry dock used to retrieve and repair damaged ships. She saw service in Philippines during World War II where she was damaged by a kamikaze and strafing runs. Soon afterwards she was back to her mission of repair other ships. After the war, she performed ferrying duties along the west coast of the United States.

In 1962, the ship was heavily modified and recommissioned as the USS Oak Ridge, named for the Secret City. She was then capable of servicing the submarines of that period and was eventually moved to her home port of Rota, Spain. The USS Oak Ridge served in this roll until 1970. She was decommissioned in 2001 and transferred to the United States Coast Guard.

The crew of the USS Oak Ridge is making Oak Ridge their host city for their annual reunion. They will be set up in the Midtown Community Center, formally the Wildcat Den. Memorabilia from the ship including the bell, will be on display and their station will be hosted by former members of the crew.

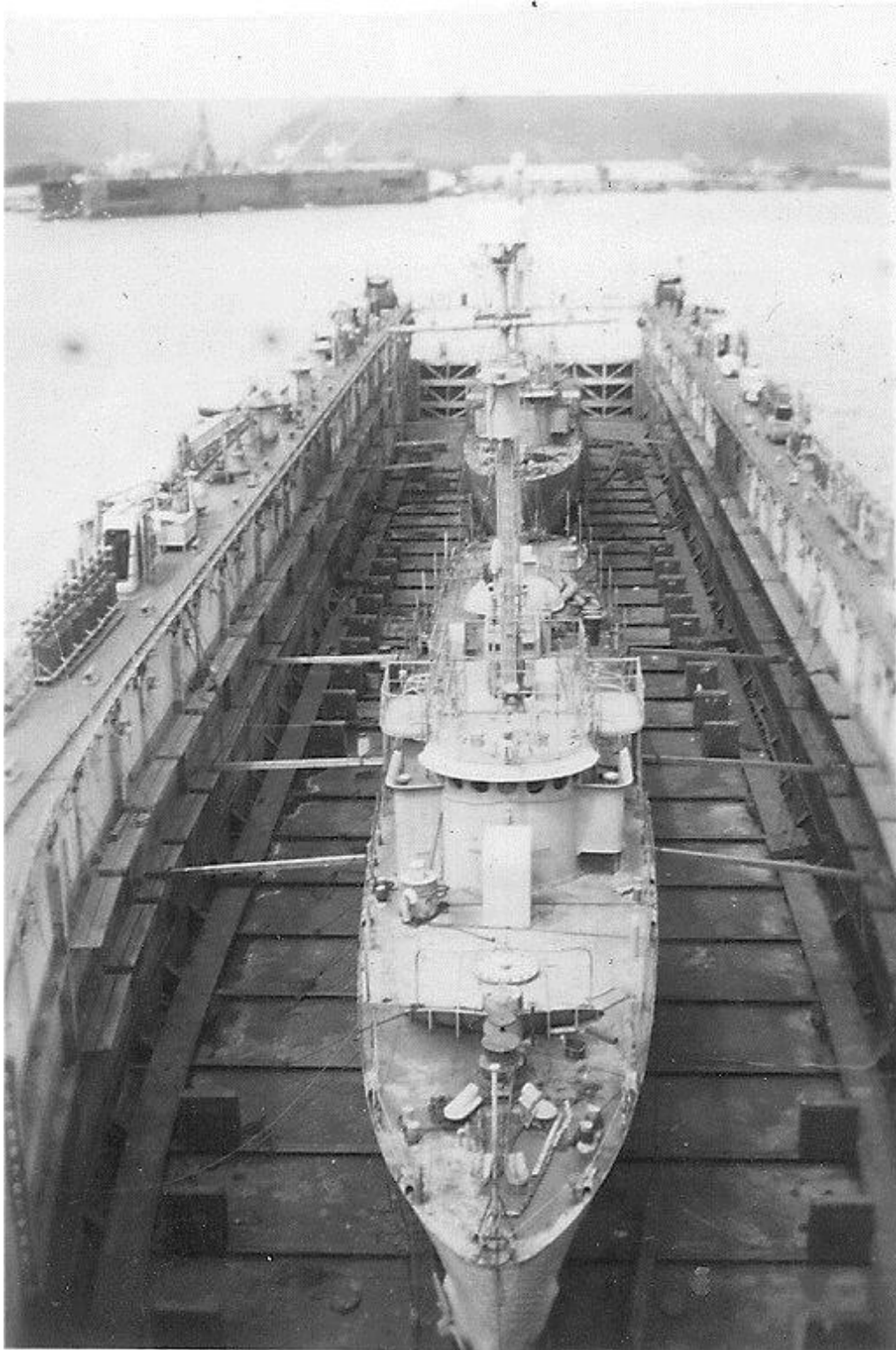
Stop by, see the artifacts, talk to the crew, and let them know how their service to our country is appreciated.



The USS Oak Ridge patch

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The ship during World War II with two ships in her dock

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The USS Oak Ridge with a Los Angeles Class nuclear attack submarine in her dock