



The Owens' Ping

SERVING THE MEN WHO SERVED ABOARD

USS ROBERT A OWENS DDK, DDE, DD 827

SUMMER 2018 - EDITION

SHIPMATE'S ASSOCIATION GOALS

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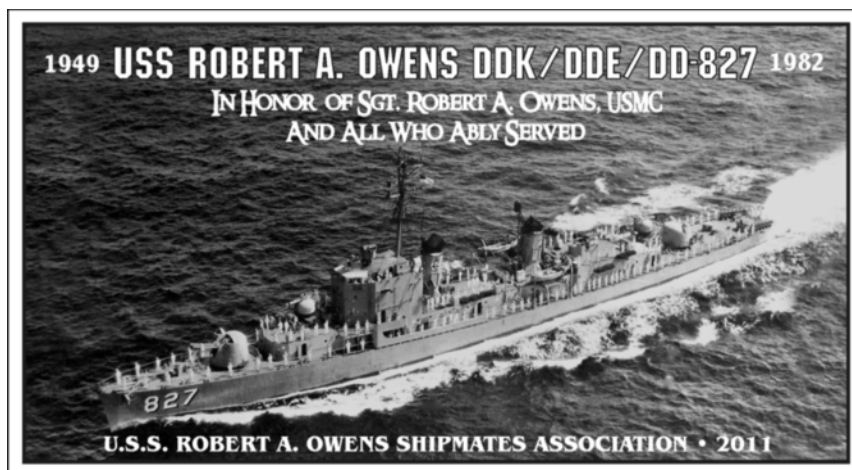
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SECTION 1: To further the remembrance of the deeds of the USS Robert A. Owens (DDK/DDE/DD-827), and all of the officers and enlisted crew members who served in her during the vessels thirty-two years of U.S. Navy service.

SECTION 2: To promote the bond of friendship between all of the crew members who served in her during the years of commissioned service through newsletters, web site, Internet, and reunions..



Commissioned
1949

Decommissioned
1982



The Owens' Ping

Once again, good day to all my friends and fellow veterans. I'm writing this two days before the 4th of July and looking forward to another wonderful holiday to celebrate our country's birthday – 242 years old! I look back on all the 4^{ths} that I've celebrated over my life and can remember watching fireworks over the treetops, sitting on the roof of dad's car so we could get a better look at the ones that soared high enough for us to see. We always set off fire crackers that someone brought back from Tennessee or Florida (it was illegal to buy them in Kentucky). We had cookouts, grilled hot dogs and hamburgers to go with the chips and slaw my mother made. Basically, it was no different then as it is now except for the amount and improved quality of the public firework displays. Ellen and I hope you had a wonderful holiday week and celebrated the 4th in a big way. Thanks to all of you for your service which gave us the opportunity to do so.

I have been getting a lot of SPAM mail via my email lately wanting to put commercial advertising on our web site and in the PING. I've taken it upon myself to deny all of this for a couple of reasons. First, we're a non-profit organization and I'm not sure how this would affect that status; so I don't allow it. Second, there are a lot of people out there who are taking advantage of the popularity of veterans for their personal gain. I'm not familiar with all the products people are wanting to advertise and don't know if they are legitimate or just trying to make a buck off us. Some of the products with which I am very familiar I don't believe everything they're advertising, which makes me very distrusting of their company. So I've just kept it clean and said "no" to all of them.

I've been working with Keith Totsch, Ship's Store Proprietor, on a couple of items that may be of interest to all of you. Keith is doing a great job with the store and making a few sales during the year from the ads in the Ping and web site. He ordered a new shipment of the ship's patch, which had all sold, and it may be in this issue. So if interested, get in touch with Keith.

The other item we have discussed and that he ordered is Challenge Coins. These are beautiful coins which will depict the OWENS seal on one side of the coin and wording on the other. For those who aren't familiar with challenge coins, it is a tradition that started in the military where a member of a company, ship, squadron, etc., would show a challenge coin and ask to see yours. If you did not have it, then it was your time to buy!! Therefore, you were "challenged" to show your coin. This has carried over to many organizations, fire departments, police departments, etc., and many people have actually begun to collect these. There are shadow boxes available online to utilize as display cases for the many coins one has collected. Take a look at them, buy one, and be able to meet a "challenge" at the next reunion.

Speaking of the next reunion, Ellen and I drove to Charleston about a month ago and stayed in the hotel and met with the representatives of the hotel and the tour company and finalized our reunion deals. We were both very happy with the hotel room and the surroundings. See the reunion information page in another section of this Ping.

Finally, I would be remiss not to mention the passing of one of our former organization presidents, Paul Witkowski. Paul lived in Ohio and to the best of my recollection was a retired educator. He led our shipmates association for two terms and then did not continue due to health concerns. Paul was a great story teller and was quick with an appropriate (usually!) joke. He was never at a loss for words and those of us who knew him know he was a pure joy to be around. On behalf of the association, I extend our sincere condolences to Jean and all of Paul's family. May God rest his soul.

Larry



2019 Reunion - Advance Tentative Planning

REUNION INFORMATION

The reunion committee has been busy scheduling the next reunion in 2019 and we have finalized the hotel and day-trips. In keeping with the wishes of the organization we're having it during the week and not over a weekend and we have moved it three weeks away from the Labor Day weekend. We certainly hope this gives more encouragement to attend by all our members. Here's a list of the information as follows:

REUNION DATES: September 30 to October 4, 2019. We'll check-in on Monday, 9/30, side trips on Tuesday and Wednesday 10/1-2, business meeting and banquet on Thursday, 10/3 and check-out from the hotel on Friday 10/4. Of course, you can come early and stay late if you want, just let the hotel know the extra dates. But be advised, there is a significant increase in the room rates for Friday and Saturday. (See the reservation sheet enclosed.)

HOTEL: Town and Country Inn and Suites
2008 Savannah Highway
Charleston, SC
www.thetownandcountryinn.com

You may make your reservations now by calling the hotel or by submitting the enclosed reservation form. The group code is: **USSROA**. The room rates are displayed at the top of the reservation form. As of now the hotel has reserved 25 rooms for us; if we don't fill them all we have no obligation to pay for the remainder. **Make your reservations now; 25 rooms will go quickly.**

SIDE TRIPS: We have two trips scheduled for Tuesday, 10/1, and Wednesday, 10/2. They are attached below. We will be doing the Patriots Point w/ Lunch in the CPO Lounge on Tuesday and the Historic Charleston Tour on Wednesday. We've yet to put a price to the trip but will have this along with all prices in the next issue of the PING for us to begin making our reservations.

BANQUET: Our banquet will be a buffet style dinner held in Salons B, C, and D on Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m. A guarantee of 40 or more people is required. The cost is \$33 per person plus a 20% gratuity and 11% tax (\$43.23). The menu is:

Southern Fried Chicken (a house specialty) Lemon Layer Cake
Chopped Sirloin Steaks Pecan Pie
Charleston Red Rice (a house specialty)
Southern Lima Beans
Stir Fried Vegetables

MEETING, BANQUET AND HOSPITALITY ROOMS: To get a feel of where our rooms are located, please go to the hotel's web site or view a layout of the property on the attached page. Our banquet is in Salons B, C, and D, and our hospitality room is Salon A. There is adequate room in each for our needs. In order for these rooms to be complimentary, we need to fill an average of 15 paid guest rooms per night. Otherwise, the organization will be charged for the rooms. The hotel's web site is www.THETOWNANDCOUNTRYINN.com.

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SUMMATION: (Continued from Page 3)

As you can see, most of the things we do depend on the membership supporting the reunion. The smaller the attendance, the more each of us will have to pay and the more organizational expenses we will incur. The reunion committee will do its best to control the prices of the trips, banquet, etc. When we think of the costs, we have to remember for the trips it includes transportation in a nice, air-conditioned tour bus with driver provided, some food, the cost of the tours and the charge for the tour company. For the banquet, it's the food, wait staff, gratuity, tax, 3 banquet rooms; and somewhere we have to remember the "free" hospitality room. Bottom line, it costs to have fun, so don't let the prices deter you from attending. Nothing we do is mandatory so you are not obligated to participate in everything; but the committee feels as though each item is a good value compared to anything or anywhere else.

We cannot stress attendance enough. The reunion is still a year away which gives each of us time to budget and plan and we will be able to pay for these items all together or one at a time, whichever is easier for you. But please plan to attend and make this a memorable reunion.

The reunion committee, Bobby Williams and Larry McCoskey, will be working together to establish a reservation form and a price guide for all trips and the banquet and have it printed in the next issue of the PING. At that time you will be able to begin making reservations and submitting your checks for the activities you choose. However, remember that the hotel reservations must be made separately with the hotel.





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USS Robert A. Owens September 30 through October 4, 2019

Town & Country Inn and Suites
2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, SC 29407
T: 843-571-1000 TF: 800-334-6660 F: 843-766-9444

Group Room Rate:

\$105.00 plus 14% tax per room per night, Sunday through Thursday evenings.

\$169.00 plus 14% tax per room per night, Friday or Saturday evenings.

Group rates are not subject to further discounts or any current promotions.

A Credit Card Number is required to guarantee this reservation.

The Town & Country Inn and Suites is a non-smoking Hotel.

Your Name: _____ Telephone #: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____ # Rooms: _____

Roommate Name(s): _____

Room Type Preferred: _____ Contemporary King _____ Contemporary Two Queens

Special Requests: _____

*Although we cannot guarantee special requests, every effort will be made to meet your request. Group reservations are blocked several days prior to arrival. Although the Hotel makes every effort to pre-block group reservations as close as possible, we do not guarantee the proximity of rooms due to numerous variables, including varying arrival dates and room types.

Deposit Enclosed: _____ OR

Credit Card Number: _____ Exp: _____

Cardholder Signature Authorizing Hotel's Use of Credit Card: _____

*(PLEASE NOTE: Those guests sending a cash deposit should be aware that a credit card imprint and valid, state-issued ID will be necessary upon check in. Should you wish to pay for your stay with cash, a credit card imprint and valid ID will still be required upon arrival to secure your accommodations. All cash payments are accepted upon departure.)

Cancellation Policy: 24 Hours prior to arrival date

Check-in Time: 3:00pm Check-out Time: 12:00pm

Group Code **USSROA**

To confirm accommodations, please return form to the Hotel, or call directly, by **August 30, 2019**.
The accommodations block will not be held beyond this date.

We look forward to seeing you in September!



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Paul Witkowski

May 20, 1940 - June 22, 2018



Paul Witkowski, 78, of Port Clinton, Ohio passed away on June 22, 2018 at Otterbein North Shore, Lakeside -Marblehead. He was born in Milwaukee, WI on May 20, 1940 to Anton J. and Florence H. (Kostrzewa) Witkowski. On November 14, 1964 in Mequon, WI, he married Jean R. Gies and she survives.

Paul was a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy serving from 1957-61, stationed aboard the USS Robert A. Owens and the USS Tidewater. In his later years he became active in the organizations associated with each of the ships, attending reunions and keeping in touch with his shipmates. Paul was a proud Spartan having received his Bachelor and Masters Degrees from Michigan State University. Paul spent his career in higher education as an Associate Director of the Telecommunications Center at Ohio University, from which he retired in 2002. He also served as an Instructional Television Administrator at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and as a Producer/Director at Michigan State.

Paul was a very creative person who enjoyed working with his hands and had a keen interest in scrimshaw. He loved antiquing, particularly early American maritime items and folklore. He was a member of the AMVETS, the Ohio University Trustees Academy and was past president of the Owens Assn. Many will remember Paul as one who enjoyed life, who was a jokester, a great storyteller, a motorcycle enthusiast, an avid Green Bay Packers fan and a karaoke singer.

Surviving Paul is his beloved wife Jean, son, Joel D. (Rebekah) Witkowski, his loving grandchildren who called him "Weepa", Gabriella Marie, Cara Elizabeth, Anton Alexander. Also surviving are his brother, Thomas (Sandy) Witkowski, sister, Victoria (Lawrence) Mack, and his faithful canine companion, Murray. Paul was preceded in death by his parents and brother, David Witkowski.

A service to celebrate Paul's life will be conducted on Tuesday, July 10, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. at the Firelands Presbyterian Church, 2626 East Harbor Road, Port Clinton, OH with the Reverend Mark Cooper officiating. Visitation is scheduled for 2 hours prior to the service. A meal will be provided at the church immediately following the service. Paul's final resting place will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. The family suggests memorial contributions for Paul be directed to Stein Hospice, 1200 Sycamore Line, Sandusky, Ohio 44870 or to Shriner's Hospitals for Children, 2900 Rocky Point Drive, Tampa, FL 33607. Arrangements have been entrusted to the Gerner-Wolf-Walker Funeral Home & Crematory, 216 Washington St., Port Clinton, OH 43452.

To send flowers or a remembrance gift to the family of Paul Witkowski, please visit our Tribute Store.

***Editors Note:** Paul Witkowski was the President of the USS Robert A. Owens Shipmates Association from the year 2005 to 2009.



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USS ROBERT A. OWENS DDK/DDE/DD-827 SHIPS STORE INVENTORY EFFECTIVE July 2018

ITEM		ON HAND	UNIT COST
Shirt, Polo, Golf, Blue	(Medium)	5	\$28
Shirt, Polo, Golf, Blue	(Large)	2	\$28
Shirt, Polo, Golf, Blue	(XL)	22	\$28
Shirt, Polo, Golf, Blue	(XXL)	All Out	\$28
Shirt, Polo, Golf, Blue	(XXXL)	4	\$28
Shirt, Polo, Golf, Gray	(Medium)	All Out	\$23
Shirt, Tee, w/Pocket, Blue	(Small)	13	\$18
Shirt, Tee, w/Pocket, Blue	(Medium)	12	\$18
Shirt, Tee, w/Pocket, Blue	(Large)	2	\$18
Shirt, Tee, w/Pocket, Blue	(XL)	All Out	\$18
Shirt, Tee, Long Sleeve, Blue	(Large)	All Out	\$19
Shirt, Tee, Long Sleeve, Blue	(XL)	All Out	\$19
Shirt, Tee, Long Sleeve, Blue	(XXL)	All Out	\$19
Sweat Shirt, Hooded, Zip-Up, Blue	(XXL)	All Out	\$30
Cap, Baseball Style, Wool (Winter)	(Adjustable)	2	\$17
Cap, Baseball Style, Mesh (Summer)	(Adjustable)	5	\$17
Ships Patch, 1949-1964		15	\$3.50
Ships Patch, 1964-1982		50	\$6.00
Challenge Coin		100	\$10.00
Patch, Plank Owner		1	\$3
Pin, US Navy/Flag		1	\$3
Ships Magnet		22	\$2
Book, "Owens Saga"		96	\$15
Book, "Sea Tales"	(Initial Edition)	1	\$7
Book, "Sea Tales"	(Second Edition)	9	\$7

As always, to place an order for items; please list the items by name, quantity desired, and price with a total. Make your check payable to: Robert Owens Shipmates Association.

Mail your order and payment to:

Mr. Keith Totsch
200 Sheridan Ct.
Waukegan, IL 60085

Ktotsch@comcast.net



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This is the new ships patch that has been ordered as the 1964-1982 ships patch. Due to inflation over the years and since the last ordering, the price will now be \$6.00

The new shipment has arrived and now in stock with 50 available. Contact Keith Totsch at ktotsch@comcast.net or see the information on the ships stores page in this edition.



THE NEW "CHALLENGE COIN IS HERE.....!!!!!!

The Challenge Coin has arrived to the Ships Stores and Keith has 100 of them in stock. They sell for \$10.00 each and are available now.

Keith has asked me to tell you to please, when you order them, please include your phone number and email

address so that in the event of a problem with the order, he can check with you immediately. See the above patch Ad for information on how to contact Keith or go to the Ships Stores page of this edition for more info on how to order from him.

CORRECTED MEMBERSHIP REPORT

289 Current members on Master Roster (Includes 10 Spouses)

86 Currently are contacted by USPS mail

180 Currently are contacted by E-mail

24 Currently unable to be contacted by any known means (Please see web site for list of people)

231 Currently listed on the Honor Roll



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NOTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP:

The PING is your link to the Association and the others that have served on the “Bobbie O” throughout her service to this country and the US Navy. You had experiences, like we all had, and others would like to hear them. Filling space on these pages is all about that. Please submit your stories and experiences to me so that I can publish them for everyone to share in.

Those who have internet capabilities and haven’t taken the opportunity to visit the web site, please do as we attempt to expand and keep current, the web pages so that at any time the membership can check in on what is happening. I will also be very glad to publish any comments you may have that will fit on the pages. Jokes (clean of course), stories, and words of wisdom are always welcome. The Owens was our home for a while as we journeyed through life and we all lived in that same home at one time. That makes us family and one always wants to hear from family once in a while.

www.ussrobertaowens827.org is the website address. Drop in and look around. Suggestions are always welcomed. Submissions are always welcomed as well.

ANOTHER NOTE: Each time the PING is sent out, I receive mailed copies back as undeliverable or when sent by e-mail, I receive electronic notices back that the email address is no longer valid. The Spring 2018 Edition was no different. A total of 7 more members did not receive their copies and I have been unable to track them down. Please make sure you notify one of the officers if you move or change your email address.....We don’t want to lose touch with our members but we must have the information to do so.

(Remember, you have to be a member to access the Association Rosters page)

Jerry Jackson

PING Editor and Web Master