

James C. Ogorek was one of the two plank owner Chief Electronic Technicians who were assigned to the USS Mahan DLG-11.

James had converted from a torpedoman to ET. James was somewhat a hero as he was mentioned in at least two books for what he had done when the USS Johnston DD 551 was sunk during the battle of Leyte gulf.

I was a plank owner on the Mahan and had been in my bunk reading a historical paperback about naval battles. In the book it described the battle that the USS Johnston was involved in. She had been severely damaged with most if not all guns knocked out and was in the process of sinking. James C. Ogorek a torpedoman was credited with saving lives by setting the depth charges to safe before the ship sunk and then helping one of the crew members who did not have a life jacket survive. Upon reading this I went to the ET shop and found Chief Ogorek. I asked him if he was any relation to this individual. His comment was "It was me".

Many years later (2004) I was looking for some information and found another article about the USS Johnston where James C. Ogorek was in the water and was with an officer who, if my memory serves me, was the weapons officer. The officer was quoted as saying that Ogorek reported to him as if he were standing on a street corner something to the effect of "Them torpedoes got off and ran hot straight and normal".

On one occasion we were coming out of the yards and for some reason the yard refused to finish the light off and check out of our radars, the 10, 29, and 39. Ogorek asked several of us if we wanted to do a 2nd shift operation to get the radars up; we would get open gang way until the tasks were completed. We eagerly signed up. All three radars had problems, the 10 was quickly fixed, the 29 ended up having to be fixed by the Westinghouse people as they had put in a major change and it simply didn't work. The 39 however was a different problem and to make matters worse the snipes had torn up the cooling pump without telling anyone about it.

When we inquired about getting the pump fixed we were told to go pound sand, they had more important things to worry about. A little later I was in the ET shop when Ogorek and the Lt Commander Engineering Officer came bursting in. Ogorek immediately launched into a tirade about the pump and every time he spoke he proceeded to thump the engineering officer in the chest with his finger as if to make a point. When Ogorek was finished he informed the engineering officer if he had any problems with getting the pump fixed or getting the snipes off their lazy asses that they could continue this (rather one sided) discussion with the Captain. The pump was fixed that night. Myself, I was concerned that I was going to be the chief witness at a court martial.

Ogorek was a leader and we as ET's would have followed him anywhere he wanted to go.