

**Okinawa Diary**  
**October 1945 with the Occupation Fleet**  
**Typhoon Louise**

**Aboard LCS L 129, we are on our way to Japan. The fleet is huge, and includes every type of ship in the United States Navy.**

**When we get near Japan the part of the fleet that we are attached to is to break away and sail toward Kure, which was the port for Hiroshima and had been a major Japanese Naval Base.**

**As we near Japan the seas are getting very bad. We get word that we are heading into a typhoon. Soon the wind in the rigging was howling. It was typhoon Louise playing its own maniacal music.**

**If you made the mistake of opening your mouth while facing the wind, you could not close it.**

**The seas had become monstrous, the only time you could see another ship was if you were both on top of a wave.**

**Our little ship would climb up one side of a wave, get to the top and tip forward so far that the screws would come out of the water. Then we would slide down the other side, and when we hit the bottom of the trough, the flat bottom would hit.**

**The sound was like being inside a huge drum, and everything on the ship would shake, including the**

mast.

It was my turn on signal watch in the conning tower. The officer on watch with me got a message through the voice tube that we were getting into a mined area of the sea, and mines had been spotted that the storm had torn loose.

It was not safe to be out on any part of the decks, most of the time they were under water. A seaman managed to get up the ladder to the Conning Tower to help watch for mines.

I had been in a New Jersey Hurricane, and storms in the Atlantic, but this was the first time I was truly afraid. I knew that if we ever got broadside to those 70 foot waves it would be the end for our little ship, and in those wild seas there would be no survivors.

As if all this was not bad enough, the lookout spotted a mine. As we slid down the back side of one of those huge waves we were headed right toward that ugly thing, with those horns sticking out all over it.

I knew in my heart, that it was all over, but when we hit the bottom of the trough, our bow wave pushed it away. It passed down the whole length of our ship never more than six feet away.

I have been told almost all of my life that I have a slightly irregular heart beat. and I know just when it started.



## **Okinawa Diary**

### **Kure and Hiroshima**

**The LCS L 129 has escaped Typhoon Louise and the floating mines. Many crew members begin to appear on deck dazed, bruised and battered by the contorted agonies of our little ship trying to stay alive. Our fear has begun to abate, leaving us weak and amazed that we and our ship have survived this.**

**The fleet is scattered all over the ocean, most with some kind of damage, and some severely damaged. We have heard that a couple of ships were overturned and sank. We had topside damage, but soon resumed our course to Kure.**

**Arriving at Kure we were given orders to anchor in a certain area of the harbor. Kure and its huge naval base have been demolished. The Japanese Navy has ceased to exist.**

**Since I was a signalman I was soon talking with other ships and found out that liberty parties were being formed on the various ships to go ashore and walk to Hiroshima to see what had happened because of this strange new weapon that had forced Japan to surrender.**

**Sorting out all the rumors produced just one fact. It was a big bomb called an A Bomb. Since we had no idea what that meant, as sailors do, we gave it a name. It**

became, "The Big Ass Bomb".

Soon it was our turn to be allowed liberty. I became part of the first group of eight to go ashore. So, knowing not one thing about atoms or radiation we were picked up by the liberty boat that carried liberty parties from various ships to the wharf.

We started walking toward Hiroshima on the road we were told would take us to the city. After a couple of miles we passed a bunch of sailors from a destroyer who were getting drunk with the long necked bottles of Saki that they had found.

As we neared the city we began to see all these flimsy Japanese houses. heavily damaged with all the wreckage pointed inward toward the city. We did not know what to make of this. It was like something had tried to suck them into the city.

Then it became a waste land, nothing but rubble as far as you could see, with here and there a piece of a burned out building standing. Or twisted masses of steel girders that looked as though they had come from the mind of an insane sculptor. It was eerie. No dogs barking, no insects, no birds, and no people.

We passed a group of destroyed industrial buildings. Out on the side of one of them, that must have made plate glass, was a stack of glass just like you stack sheetrock. It had been fused into a huge loaf of glass.



Another place where we walked past this concrete wall, were strange pictures all along it, human size.

They were outlines. like some of the ancient cave paintings of a human hand. I found out many years after the war that these were outlines of people.

The blast had incinerated these people and left their outlines burnt into the wall. They were called death shadows.

On another street, what must have been a very old, huge tree stood with all but its four main limbs gone.

Hanging from one of these amputated limbs was the burnt out frame of what seemed to have been a bus.

As all servicemen do, we were looking for souvenir's. We were passing another flattened building when one of the guy's spotted a bunch of coins just below sidewalk level in a hole.

Right away they were all on their knees trying to get them, with me looking over their shoulders. No way! They were fused together.

While this was going on I could see way back behind the coins something that looked like it had flowers painted on it.

Since I am so tall, I was able to lay down on the sidewalk, get my shoulders into the hole and reach the object. When I got it out (Finders Keepers) I saw that it was like a small decorated dust pan without a handle.

**Maybe cedar. The mass of coins had protected it, and only had a few char marks on it.**

**Years later i was told that it was a money scoop used in Japanese banks. I am still not positive, but a woman from Japan told me this, and I will take her word for it.**

**We only saw six people during this whole trip, and they were all bandaged and did not look at us.**

**As we were walking back a Japanese man gave us a ride back to the wharf in the back of his truck.**

