

August and September 1945

Japan has surrendered and we are on our way to the
Philippine islands.

No one knows what is going on or why.

Several Destroyers and the LCS L 125, 126, 129 and 130 are sailing together. Rumors are flying. Is there someplace called Indochina? If there is, why would we be going there?

When we begin to see land masses we are told that we are in the Philippine Islands. We begin to wonder "what the hell for" MacArthur has already been there twice. The officers tell us that we are going to Subic Bay and there is a town called Olangapo there.

We anchor some distance away from Olangapo and swarms of Philippine children swim out to the ships. They are like little Otters in the water. Soon they have begged the sailors to throw coins in the water. We watch them swim down to the bottom after the coins. They swim next to the ships and beg for anything the sailors will give them.

After we have been here for awhile quite a few of our crew decide they want to swim. So a swimming party is formed and a couple of lookouts posted to watch for sharks. They each had a rifle. The swimming party went off very well.

The next day everyone that went in swimming had dysentery. It turned out that the area we were anchored in was influenced by a fresh water river emptying into the harbor near us. It was highly polluted and had the unique nickname of "Shit River". How come the kids swimming in the same waters did not have that problem? Finally everyone was well again and it was decided we needed some R and R.

Liberty boats picked up groups of us to take to a place called Grand Island out in Subic Bay. It had Quonset Huts, soft-ball fields and something called near beer.

After a long day on the ball-fields in the boiling hot sun we were ready to go back. Everybody was half stoned from the heat and the near beer.

The wharf was crowded waiting for the liberty boats and someone managed to knock a puppy off the wharf.

I have never in my life been a drinker and I proved it that day. I dove in to save the dog. The tide was out and I hit both knees on a coral outcrop (I still have the scars). That damn fool dog was having a ball swimming around me and barking its fool head off.

The sailors from the various ships, while waiting to return to them were having a ball at my expense. They were cheering and yelling. When they got me up on the wharf and saw that I was bleeding from both knees, it got worse.

Then they started yelling that I should get the Purple Heart for trying to save a fellow sailor at the risk of my own life.

It sure does not take much to make a bunch of half drunk sailors that want to go home happy.

I became a cult figure aboard my ship. We stopped in San Diego on the way back home, and a group of us went to the bar that sailors hung out at, The same bar that the picture in this booklet was taken in, on the way to the war.

It did not take very long for my shipmates to have all these Navy War Veterans in that bar cheering for me and buying drinks for them. It was embarrassing.

Right up to the time of my discharge a crew member would

occasionally ask if my knees hurt, or such stuff as "do you think you will ever be able to wear a bathing suit"?

After weeks of General Quarters drills, gunnery practice and doing nothing, the officers told the crew, that along with a lot of other ships we would be heading back to Okinawa and joining the Occupation Fleet.

Finally we were doing something.



EVEN IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY

The Legends of "Kilroy Was Here"



There was one person who led or participated in every combat, training or occupation operation during WWII and the Korean War. This person could always be depended on. GI's began to consider him the "super GI." He was one who always got there first or who was always there when they left. I am, of course, referring to

Kilroy Was Here. Somehow, this simple graffiti captured the imagination of GI's everywhere they went. The scribbled cartoon face and words showed up everywhere

- worldwide. Stories (some even true) abound.

Okinawa Diary

It is time to go home

What is left of our crew is ready to go home. We will be going home with a greatly reduced crew.

Many of our shipmates had come from other ships and other battles. They had enough points to be sent home by air.

So we head home on a little ship that is a little worse for wear. Mainly because of Typhoon Louise.

Although we came to the shooting war late, most of us saw just enough to know that there is no glamour in war. Mostly it is utter boredom, trying to find out what is going on, Nobody ever seems to know, and moments of utter terror.

Joy is when you have escaped something that you knew in your heart was going to end your life, and the lives of your shipmates.

We stop at Pearl Harbor for a couple of days, where that ridiculous medal ceremony takes place. Then it is San Diego for a couple of days. Then down past Mexico and the Baja. We do see a lot of whales doing belly-whoppers.

Then it is back through the Panama Canal, out to the Atlantic, up the east coast to Little Creek, Virginia. We decommission the ship there.