

War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: Robert W. Crewe

Current home town: Not given

Age: Not given

My name is Robert w. Crewe, 3rd class petty officer on destroyer *Wallace L Lind*, DD703. Plank owner (first time out of this ship). After the surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945, our ship remained in Japanese waters doing courier duty as a mail ship to the military bases on the Pacific side of Japan. We would pick up United States mail at Yokosuka, Japan, naval base and drop off mail at the bases going around to Sasebo, Japan. While there, we would pick up mail and return to Yokosuka.

On Thanksgiving day of 1945, we stopped at Nagoya, Japan. Six of us were allow to go ashore only to see complete devastation. The city was built of wood, and the fire bomb raids left nothing but cinders. As we walked further into the town, a young Japanese priest greeted us and, in perfect English, said "Welcome to my country." When I asked him where he learned such perfect English, he said he went to Fordham University in New York.

We chatted a bit, then he said, "I know what this day is for you Americans; it is your Thanksgiving. You would please me very much if you would have Thanksgiving dinner with me." We agreed since there were only six of us. He was living in a shack on the site of what used to be his church with a small, ragged vegetable garden in front. After a blessing, we all sat down to a dinner of sweet potatoes; that was all he had to serve us. It was a humbling experience to us all. This is but a few of the memories of the war in the pacific.

The ship *Wallace L. Lind* was given to the South Korean Navy in 1975 and returned to USA in 1995, then sent to the scrap yard. It was a historic ship with many battles in Japanese waters.