

## MY NAVY CAREER

My name is Aaron C. Kulow. I <sup>was</sup>~~was~~ born on Sept. 28, 1924 near Detroit Michigan. I enlisted in the Navy on Sept. 10, 1942 and as I was only 17 years old, I needed my Mothers Permission. My Father had died in 1935 when I was 10 1/2 years old.

On Sept. 19, 1942 I, along with other Recruits, left Union Station in Detroit, Mi. heading for The Naval Training Station at Great Lakes Illinois for basic training. We arrived there very late that evening. This was my first Train ride ever. For about the first two weeks we were assigned to a Barracks which didn't have Bunks so we slept in Hammocks. Which were surprisingly comfortable. Though some guys couldn't seem to get the hang of them. Almost every night we would hear a big thump and someone would yell out "there goes Hill". Hill was a pretty guy and I guess he either needed a bigger <sup>Hammock</sup> or better balance. I had my 18 Birthday in Boot Camp. One day all Personnel were out on the Parade Ground to Honor several Navy Pilots who were receiving Medals. One member of our Company decided to have a Cigarette and of course someone spotted the rising smoke. When we returned to our Barracks we were questioned as to who was smoking. The guilty party didn't admit to it nor did any one else squeal on him. From then until the end of Boot Camp we were Restricted and not allowed to leave our Barracks. That meant we couldn't go to the Ship's Store to purchase anything or go anywhere else during our off hours. We only left the Barracks for necessities such as getting Medical Shots, getting our Uniforms issued, Meals, Lectures and etc. About half way through Boot Camp we were transferred to a new Barracks where we had Bunks. Altogether I had less than one Month of Boot Camp, and one week of that was spent on Mess Hall duty. Among other things we were supposed to have our Teeth examined, and taken care of if necessary. Which we didn't. We were to be given Swimming Tests, which we also didn't have. In fact I couldn't swim all the time I was in the Navy. We weren't even issued our full ration of clothing. They were pushing out of Boot Camp as fast as possible as we were needed aboard Ships. When we took our Aptitude Tests I scored 97 Percent on Mechanical Ability, so they made me a Signalman. Before our Company left Boot Camp 8 of us were listed as going to Sub School. All 8 of us were assigned to the same Ship. After going home on 9 day Boot Leave I returned to Great Lakes and assigned to the Outgoing Unit. Several days later our group boarded a Troop Train for Transportation to the Norfolk Navy Base in Virginia. On October 31, 1942 I boarded the U.S.S. Pollux AKS-4 for Sea Duty. I will describe the Ship later on. I was assigned to the Bridge Gang to become a Signalman Striker. Luckily I already knew the Morse Code from Boy Scouts. A Signalman must learn to read Morse Code by flashing light and to be able to identify all the Signal Flags, which include, the Alphabet, Numerals and Special Pennants. On some Ships, like the Pollux, you are required to do many things that a Quartermaster might do. Besides learning to Steer the Ship it might entail filling in the Log book with Weather conditions, Air Temperature, Barometer readings, Cloud Conditions and type of Clouds, the Ship's Speed and etc.

On Nov. 5, 1942 the Ship departed Norfolk heading to New York. After departing New York we sailed to Guantanamo Bay Cuba, arriving on Nov. 15, 1942. While at sea we Signalmen Strikers started our training. The day before we were to reach Port the Chief said that

he was going to send a Blinker message to each of us and whoever passes can have Liberty. If you fail, no Liberty. On the first day somehow I was the only one that passed, but not the second day. From Cuba we sailed to Port of Spain, Trinidad, B.W.I. then to San Juan, Puerto Rico and back to Cuba. The Ship departed Cuba for the Naval Supply Depot at Bayonne, New Jersey.

My first Christmas away from home was spent in the New York area. Christmas Dinner was the only time in my Navy Career that I ate from a Plate and not a Tray. This Christmas turned out to be my very best Christmas ever for that was the day that I met my future Wife. We Celebrated our 50th Anniversary, on a Cruise to Alaska, with our Son and Daughter-in-Law in 1994.

The Pollux made more trips to the Carribbean, returning each time to Baltimore, Md. or New York with a Cargo of Bags of Raw Sugar. On March 13, 1943 we left Trinidad, B.W.I. enroute to Recife Brazil. On this trip the Pollux was escorted by the Cruiser U.S.S. Omaha and 2 Destroyers. We must have been carrying some valuable Cargo to rate that kind of escort. Never before or after did we have that kind of escort and in fact many times traveled alone. Just off the tip of South America a U.S. Army Transport joined us. It was reported that a German U-Boat sank all 5 of us Ship's, naming each Ship except the Army Transport which they called unidentified. Thank goodness they were wrong. At about 1700 hours, the evening before we reached Port, one of the Destroyers disappeared over the Horizon in search of a contact. We never heard anything more about what happened.

During our trip to Brazil the Pollux crossed the Equator, which in the Navy was traditionally a big day. In the Navy prior to crossing the Equator, you are a Pollywog, the lowest form of life. After the Crossing you are a Shellback and are welcomed into King Neptunes Kingdom. On this day the Breakfast and Lunch Menu for Pollywogs was Crackers and Water, while a Shellback ate a normal meal. At Supper they are allowed a regular meal as they are now Shellbacks. Each Polly wog is issued a Subpeona and Summons Extraordinary, stamped with the Offical Ship's Seal. I still have mine. You are ordered to appear before King Neptune and His Court to answer the charges against you, as listed on your Subpeona. My Charges were "Associating with FiFi and Mopery and Doperly on the High Seas". FiFi was my best friend in the Navy and who I am still in contact with and visit with often. Heres how he got the name FiFi. Most of time was spent in hot climates and he liked to use Talcum Powder to help keep dry from sweating. In the Navy Talcum Powder is reffered to as FuFu, so taht how he got his Nickname. My Nickname was "ACK-ACK", my initials twice. Anti Aircraft Guns were called ACK-ACK Guns. After appearing before King Neptune and His Court you must then go through the Initiation. This could comprise of many different things. FiFi had to dress like a Girl. I have a picture of one of our Officers, dressed in full Winter Uniform, practice loading Ammunition in a Gun. Another one is swinging from a Bosun Chair suspended high above the Deck. You may have to crawl through a receiving line where each guy has a Paddle to smack your Backside. You could be Blindfolded and told they are going to drop little live Fishes into your Mouth. In reality it would be canned sliced Peaches but for the moment you would swear they were Fish. All sorts of crazy things are thought up to put a Pollywog through, but you know next time it will be your turn to the same thing to

others. Anyone who is a Pollywog had to go through this ritual whether they are a Captain or a Seaman. When we again crossed the Equator in the Pacific Ocean one of our Officers, who was not very well liked by the Crew, asked the Captain to be excused. The Captain asked if his Service Record showed he <sup>HAD</sup> crossed the Equator, which of course it didn't. So he was not excused. The Crew heard about it and he got just a little more hazing than the other Pollywogs, and in fact wound up in Sick Bay.

From Recife we then sailed to Bahia, Brazil which has a very pretty Harbor. While we were in Brazil we were forbidden to take American Money ashore. We had to change it into Brazilian Currency before going ashore. South America had German Sympathizers and I guess they could put American Money to good use for sabotage. Before leaving Brazil, the Ship was fully loaded with sacks of raw Cocoa Beans, We were glad when we returned to New York and the Ship was unloaded. The Ship then went into Dry Dock in Brooklyn, N.Y. where it was fumigated to get rid of the Bugs and odor from the Cocoa Beans.

On several of our trips to the Caribbean we made a stop at Bermuda. On one of our return voyages we gave most of our Fresh Water to the Naval Base there as they were in dire need of Fresh Water due to the lack of Rainfall on the Island. During the rest of our trip back to New York our Fresh Water was rationed. It was the only time I remember Water being rationed on the Pollux.

There was one other memorable trip we made in the Atlantic Ocean. Our Ship was in company with an Ammunition Ship heading for the Caribbean. The threat of German Submarines were very great and the area was known as "Torpedo Junction". Therefore the Ships would steer a Zig-Zag Course. Which meant changing Course, lets say about every 15 minutes. One time to Port and the next to Starboard. Before leaving a Port, in a Convoy, all Ship's would have a Chart designating Course and Time of change and would observe the signal from the Flagship as to when to execute the change of course. Our Officer of The Deck neglected to order the Course change at 0800 hours and we were converging on the Ammunition Ship. At about that the Captain came up to the Bridge and seeing what was happening, yelled to the Helmsman "Hard Right", which he repeated several times, though the Helmsman said I have it on Hard Right Captain. Finally our Ship started to Move to Starboard and a disaster was averted. We estimate that we came within 50 feet of the other Ship. If we had collided there would have been one big explosion as we were also carrying Shells in one our Cargo Holds plus Acetylene Tanks. We had other close calls such as when we would Sail past a certain location and find out later that another Ship passing the same spot got Torpedoed. This is just one of the reasons you will hear me refering to our Ship having a Guardian Angel.

It is now August 1943 and we are again in the New York area. We had a change of Command. We now go to Norfolk Naval Base where we have Radar installed on the Pollux for the first time. On August 24, 1943 The Pollux left Norfolk heading for the Panama Canal. We arrived at Balboa, Canal Zone on Aug, 31, 1943 where two 60 foot Tug Boats were loaded on our Deck. One Tug on Number 3 Hatch and one on Number 4 Hatch. The Tugs spanned the width of the Ship as the Pollux had a 63 foot Beam. We left the Canal Zone, unaccompanied, heading for Sydney, Australia. About one week out from Panama we ran into the worst Storm that I ever witnessed in the Navy. The Pollux was so heavily loaded that we were just plowing through the

Waves, which in most cases were higher than our Ship. Literally the only place you didn't see Water was if you looked straight up. I saw a Waterspout in the distance off our Starboard Bow and were lucky it didn't get any closer. A Waterspout is like a Tornado over Water. The rest of the trip was uneventful and we arrived in Sydney on Sept. 26, 1943 which was 2 days before my 19 Birthday. The Tugs were unloaded in Sydney. Sydney Harbor is the most beautiful Harbor I have seen. I liked Australia and have often said that next to the U.S.A or Canada, that is where I would want to live.

The Pollux then sailed to Brisbane and Townsville, both in Australia. Then our first visit to Milne Bay, New Guinea. On Dec. 31, 1943 we left Milne Bay heading for the U.S.A.. We arrived at the Naval Supply Depot at Oakland, California where we stayed until Feb. 9, 1944 then returned to Milne Bay. We spent the next 6 Months in many different Ports in New Guinea, the Admiralty Islands, and the New Hebrides Islands.

Leaving New Guinea we again headed back to America, arriving in San Francisco on Oct. 4, 1944, where the Pollux was scheduled for Dry Dock. San Francisco Harbor is noted for its Fog and Ground Swells. On our way into the Harbor we encountered dense Fog, from quite a distant out, and the Ship's Fog Horn must have been blowing continuously for about 5 hours. Being that the Ship was going into Dry Dock it was completely empty and when we hit the Ground Swells, the Inclonometer, was showing a roll of 37 Degrees to each side. Nothing stood up, Chairs fell over and everything went flying. Whenever we entered a Port it was the Bridge Gangs job to cover the Recognition Lights mounted on the Foremast. The first thing to do is to notify the Radio Room not to Transmit as you could get a shock climbing the Mast. Through a mix up, as the Signalman started up the Mast, the Radio Room started to Transmit. He scooted down the Mast and refused to go back up. So guess who got the job? After making sure the Transmitter was off I went up and finished the job. With the Ship rolling as it was it wasn't what you would call fun. This reminds me of another "fun" time I had while climbing the Mast. The Commission Pennant flies from the highest point of the Ship from the day it is Commissioned to its Decommissioning. Our Pennant was snagged and not flying freely, as it should be. So again guess who got the job? Usually once a day the Engine Room will request permission to "Blow The Stack", which is to clear the Smoke Stack of Soot. When permission is granted The Officer of The Deck will turn the Ship so that the Soot will blow clear of the Ship. I don't know what happened, whether the Wind shifted or what, but as I was at the top of the Mast, I got a full blast. You can guess what I looked like when I came down. Needless to say my Clothes needed washing and I needed a good Shower.

Now back to San Francisco. I was to be given Leave, not long enough for me to make a CrossCountry Trip. I called my Fiancee and asked her if she wanted to come to California and get Married. She replied Yes, and it took her 5 days by Train. There were no Sleeper Cars and Servicemen were boarded first so a Civilian was lucky to even get a Seat. Some Servicemen saved her a Seat and took good care of her. In fact when the Train stopped in Chicago, and it was her Birthday, they got her a Cake.

We were Married in Oakland, Ca. on Oct. 12, 1944. The Ship had moved to Oakland from San Francisco. In 1993 we celebrated our 49 Anniversary, by returning to California and Renewing our Vows with the same Priest who Married us. When my Leave was up and I returned

to the Ship and heard we would be in Port longer than expected. I called the Hotel to see if my Wife could delay her departure. She has already checked out but was able to get another Room. We had 20 days together. The Hotel Bill came to \$100.00. my months pay in the Navy. I think it was the day my Wife left California that the Ship had a Fire in the Stack which delayed our departure even more.

When the Ship was fully loaded we sailed on Nov. 7, 1944 for Hollandia, New Guinea and then to Sydney, Australia where we spent Christmas 1944. It is then Summer in Australia and it felt strange being so warm on Christmas day. Next to Brisbane, Aus., and several Ports in New Guinea. On Jan. 31, 1945 our first visit to the Phillipine Islands where we anchored in San Pedro Bay, Leyte, P.I. On Feb. 7, 1945 we arrived in Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, P.I. where we were to supply a Fleet of Ships prior to their leaving for an Invasion. The day before we entered Port, and while still underway, a Supply Officer was transferred by Breeches Buoy from a Ship along side. In that way all arrangements could be made for the transfer of supplies without delay. We had so many Messages to send out requesting Boats alongside at a certain time to receive Supplies that we didn't have enough Signal Lights. Every Light was busy and we could have used more. Some of the Crew, such as Storekeepers and Cargo Handlers, had to work for 36 hours, around the Clock to complete the transfer of Supplies on time. I remember while there looking up at the Sky one day and seeing it full of Airplanes, returning from a Mission. After we left Mindoro we sailed to the Lingayen Gulf, P.I. and my most memorable days of WW-II.

On or about Feb. 17, 1945 about 125 Americans, who had been Prisoners of the Japanese for approx. 3 years in a Prison Camp near Manila, P.I., came aboard the Pollux. We were told that none of them weighed more than 120 pounds and the Doctor had to monitor their Food intake so that they wouldn't overeat and cause problems for themselves. They had been Liberated from the Prison Camp approx. 2 weeks by the Army Rangers. These Men had a difficult time climbing the Gangway. It was rumored that they had a Dog for a Mascot and that our Captain did not want any Animal aboard Ship. I think we would have had a Mutiny aboard Ship if that had happened. We understand some of them were Survivors of the Bataan Death March. I remember talking to one of them who had managed to keep a copy of "Jaynes Fighting Ships" hidden from his Captors all through his internment. He showed me the Book. Another one I talked to showed me a hole in his Leg. One of his biggest concerns was that the Navy would give him a Medical Discharge, because of his leg. after he went home on Leave. He wanted to stay in the Navy. We left Lingayen Gulf at about 1530 hours and at about 1700 hours there were 2 Air Raids and an Ammunition Dump blew up. To this day I think how ironic it would have been had we still been in Port with all those ExPrisoners aboard. Our Guardian Angel brought us through another close call. Though their stay aboard the Pollux wasn't long those days will be forever etched in my Memory. I can still visualize them struggling up the Gangway, as if it were yesterday, and not over 55 years ago. We took them to Subic Bay, P.I. from where they were transported home.

Another Memory I shall never forget is when I had to be a Pall bearer for one of my Shipmates. He also had just been Married when we were in California. When we arrived back at Milne Bay in Jan, 1945, a Port he hated, he was asked to go on a Swimming Party. He very seldom went ashore, least of all in Milne Bay, but reluctantly

agreed to go. No one knows for sure exactly what happened, and although he was a good swimmer, he drowned. His Body wasn't found until 3 days later and it had turned a Reddish Brown. I was told I was to be a Pall Bearer. We left for the Base Hospital just after Breakfast. We also took our Lunch with us as we wouldn't return to the Ship until the Afternoon. We went in a small Landing Craft. After taking his Body aboard we had a long trip across the large Bay. There was a misty rain falling and we had to decide whether to stay outside and get wet or go under cover where the Body was and smell the Chemicals. Most of got wet. When we arrived across the Bay we carried his Body and placed it on a Table where it was prepared for Burial. Then out to the Parade Grounds and the Gun Salute and playing of Taps. To this day when I hear Taps played the memory of that day is as clear as if it happened yesterday. To me Taps is the saddest Tune and when I hear it tears come to my eyes.

Again the usual round of Ports of Call. I will list all the Ports I visited in both the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean Later. Another interesting story was when we were going into Tawi Tawi, Subic Archipelago, P.I. It is a very shallow Harbor with a narrow Channel. So we needed a Pilot to guide us into the Dock. The Channel was still marked with Japanese Buoys, which of course we didn't know if we could trust there location. Our Pilot was Phillipino and didn't speak English. Somehow we made it safely in and out of the Harbor.

Prior to V.J. Day we were again in Subic Bay, P.I. and I went on Signal Watch at 0800 hours that Morning. We always kept track of all Ships in the Harbor and any others that would enter the Port. About the time I started my Watch, Ships began to enter the Harbor. A lot of these were loaded Transports carrying Troops in preparation for the Invasion and Landing on Japan. When I went off Watch at 1200 hours, Ships were still coming in the Harbor. When I hear or read of people saying we never should of dropped the A-Bombs on Japan, I think of those loaded Transports and how many of those Men may not have survived the War if the Bomb hadn't been dropped.

Finally V.J. Day and we are in Manila Harbor. I was notified that I would have Shore Patrol Duty in Manila. I was stationed on the Dock, where a large Tent had been erected. The Sailors, who had a little too much Liquid Refreshment, were put in the Tent until a Liberty Boat from there Ship arrived. As each Liberty Boat came to Dock we asked them to look in the Tent for any of there Shipmates and return them to there Ship.

The War is now over and I had all my "Points" needed to go Home for Discharge, but our Captain wouldn't release me for almost another Month. I have now been Promoted to Signalman Second Class. We are still Anchored in Manila Harbor and I am standing the 2000 to 2400 Signal Watch. I have some Messages to send out , but a Storm is brewing, and it is Raining so hard that I can't keep my eyes open. I went into the Wheel House and removed my Rain Jacket. I then heard the blast of a Ships Horn which sounded very close. Looking out the Port Window of the Wheel House I see a Merchant Ship bearing down on our Port Bow. I sound an Alarm and holler Stand By For A Ram. The Storm had broken there Anchor loose and drove the Ship into us damaging about 60 feet of our Port side and which in turn dislodged our Anchor. We were on Stand By power only, which is not enough

steam to get underway, and we are now swinging freely in the Storm. I went up on the Flying Bridge and manned the 24 inch Carbon Arc Signal Lamp to illuminate the surrounding area, as Manila Harbor was quite crowded. I didn't have time to get my Rain Jacket or Life Jacket, and I was freezing from the Rain. I never thought I could be cold in Manila, but I was. An Officer brought me a Life Jacket, and that helped. During this time, a small Landing Craft was drifting by and the Sailor aboard was hollering for Help, and there was nothing we could do for him. I often wondered what happened to him. Hopefully he made it back to Shore safely. Finally there was enough Steam to get underway and find our way clear of other Ships and then Re-Anchor. I had to testify at a Court of Inquiry as to my knowledge of what happened that night.

At last I am leaving the Pollux to go home for Discharge. It is Oct. 12, 1945, our First Wedding Anniversary. I am sent to Cavite, outside of Manila, where I will be processed for Transportation Home. The next day a Draft Number is Posted for 21 of us and we will be going Home on the S.S. Kaposia, a fast Tanker. That means we could be in California in about 17 days. A week goes by and nothing is happening. We ask around and hear rumors that the Ship is having Engine problems. Being a Signalman, I figure I can Signal the Ship and find out something. I go to the Base Signal Tower and Signal the Ship, without success. We went to the Chaplain and the Executive Officer of the Base and said all the later Drafts have already left and we are still here, what's happening? No satisfaction. I think it was the Tenth day when the Captain of the Base heard about our problem. He said I want those Men out of here tomorrow, even if you have to Fly them out. Some Members of our Draft heard about it and started getting rid of some of there Gear so there Baggage wouldn't be over weight. The next day as we were going to Lunch, our Draft was called out. We forgot about Lunch and went to gather our Gear. We were loaded on a Truck and transported to Manila. We boarded the S.S. Martha Berry, a Liberty Ship which had a speed of about 8 Knots, which is about 9 Miles Per Hour. We left Manila bound for the Panama Canal.

After several weeks at Sea, the Captain said that he wanted the Navy Passengers to help the Ships Crew in disposing of Ammunition overboard. Now the Ship's Crew did not want it disposed of as they received Extra Pay while it was aboard. The Union Shop Steward told the Captain, as the Navy was paying \$7.00 a day for our Transportation, if he wanted us to work he would have to pay us Union Wages. Needless to say the Ammunition stayed aboard. We spent Thanksgiving at Sea. We arrive in Panama in late afternoon and the Captain said that there would be no Liberty as we were scheduled to be one of the first Ships into the Locks in the Morning. Now the problems start.

After dark some small Boats came alongside the Starboard Bow and are selling Whiskey. They find some eager buyers. A group is sitting up by the Bow enjoying there Spirits. An Irishman from Ireland and an Irishman from New York get to arguing about who is the best Irishman. The dispute heats up and they are going after each other with broken Glass Bottles. One of them is subdued and locked in a Stateroom. He kicked out

the Emergency Escape Panel in the Door and came out to resume the fight. Eventually all were calmed down and 5 of the Navy Crew were taken off the Ship. The rest of us thought how stupid they were to screw up this close to being Discharged. They made it to New York before we did. They were put on a Destroyer which went directly to New York and they were in the group discharged just before us.

After 45 days on the Ship we reach New Orleans, La. There is a delay in our getting off the Ship. Then we hear that the Ship has received Sailing Orders to proceed to Texas. We are all upset and protest vehemently and let our feeling be known and are finally taken ashore. We were taken to the Algiers Receiving Station, Near New Orleans, for transportation arrangements. We left there, by Train, on Dec. 7, 1945, the 4th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day, for New York. Trains going to New York got Day Coaches and those going to Florida got Sleepers. 36 hours later we arrive in New York and are transferred to Lido Beach, Long Island, N.Y. Separation Center. It is Winter in New York and we are really feeling the cold after all our time spent in the Tropics. My Wife, who I haven't seen in 14 Months, came to visit me. On Dec. 12, 1945, exactly 2 Months after leaving the Pollux I am Discharged and can go Home.

Altogether I spent a little over 39 Months in the Navy, entering the Service when I was not quite 18 years old and being Discharged about 10 Weeks after my 21st Birthday. You might say I grew up in the Navy. As it is said "Join The Navy And See The World", which I did. I never dreamed I would see South America or Australia and etc. My Navy days taught me responsibility, Discipline, Respect and many other things which affected my life. I believe it made me a better person in many ways. Thankfully I was lucky and came Home Healthy and not harmed by War as many others were. Some of the Friendships I made aboard Ship has remained with me all these years, and in fact will see FiFi tomorrow, as I am writing this. Other Friendships have been rekindled and new ones made at our Reunions. We didn't have a Reunion until 1995 in Pensacola, Fl.. With Computers it is possible to compile lists of Shipmates which would be almost impossible otherwise. As my Wife says- You wouldn't think they hadn't seen each other in over 50 years. They started talking as if it all happened yesterday.

I must tell you of one of the many happenings that occurred at one of our Reunions. This one was in San Antonio, Tx.. A Woman was driving to work passing the Hotel where our Reunion was held. She saw the Hotel Sign which had the Pollux Reunion listed. Her Father had been a Shipmate of mine, and had since passed away. She couldn't stop as she had an appointment that she had to keep. Later that day she stopped at the Hotel and came to our Reception Room. She was shaking with excitement. She said she doesn't know why she drove that Street to work as she had never gone that way before. She was invited to attend our Dinner, which she did with her Husband and 2 Daughters. One of the Daughters Sang The Star Spangled Banner, at Dinner, without music. I wished I had a Tape Recorder as She sang it the way it should be sung. The second coincidence. Another Shipmate, who was a Buddy of her Father aboard Ship, made an Enlargement of a Picture of Her Father. Which he brought to the Reunion. How was he to know that She would be there? Third coincidence. My Son had gotten 3 used Blue Jackets Manual at a used Book Sale. I had my own so that was a total of four. For some reason, I don't know why, I brought only 2 of the Books to give away at the Reunion. Why didn't I bring all three? While I



was talking to Her She asked me if I knew any one who had a Blue Book. I said do you mean a Blue Jackets Manual. She replied yes, My Brother and Father were very close and he has been trying to get one. I said that I have one, that is not new, but if your Brother would want it I will send it to you. Which I did.

That is my story of my Navy Career. Now I will give you some data on the Pollux and the Ports I visited.

The U.S.S. Pollux is named for one of the Twin Stars, Pollux and Castor. This Ship is the Second Ship of WW-II to carry the Pollux name. On Feb. 18, 1942 the U.S.S. Pollux AKS-2, along with the Destroyer Truxton, ran aground and Sunk off St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, Canada. There were 93 Men lost and 140 Survivors from the Pollux. The Truxton lost 110 Men and had 46 Survivors. The casualties would have been much greater, but for the Bravery of the People of St. Lawrence. The People of St. Lawrence have erected a large Cross and laid a Monument to Honor those who Died. A Book "Standing Into Danger" was published in Canada and tells the story of the Sinking and rescue. Several Magazines, including Readers Digest and Oceans, have also had articles pertaining to the Sinkings. The Ship which was to become the next Pollux was being built at Kearney, N.J. as the S.S. Nancy Lykes. The Navy acquired the Ship, after the Sinking, and converted it to Navy specifications. It was Commissioned as the U.S.S. Pollux AKS-4 on April 24, 1942.

An AKS Designates a General Stores Ship, and it is just what the name implies. Unlike a regular Cargo Ship which normally takes Cargo from one Destination to another, an AKS will issue directly to the Fleet. We could Supply the Fleet with almost anything they might need from Tools, to Food, to Clothes and etc. In one Article I have it states that the Pollux carried a 4 Million Dollar Cargo consisting of nearly 26,000 items. This would make a very valuable Prize for the enemy to destroy. There were only about 6 AKS Ships in the Navy during WW-II. The AKS-4 sailed for 26 years and logged over One Million Nautical Miles. It also served as an Observer Ship during "Operation Crossroads" which were the A-Bomb test on the Bikini Atoll during 1946.

Ports I visited while aboard the Pollux AKS-4

Norfolk, Va.	Townsville, Australia
Yonkers, N.Y.	Morotai, Netherlands East Indies
Brooklyn N.Y.	Espiritu Santos, New Hebrides
Staten Island, N.Y.	Manus Island, Admiralty Island
Thompsonville, L. I., N.Y.	New Guinea- Milne Bay, Buna,
Bayonne, N.J.	Cape Cretin, Langemak Bay,
Baltimore, Md.	Madang, Cape Sudest, Morobi,
Oakland, Ca.	Mios Wondi, Biak, Finschaven,
San Francisco, Ca.	Hollandia
Guantanamo Bay, Cuba	
Port of Spain, Trinidad, B.W. I.	Phillipines- Leyte, Mindoro,
San Juan, Puerto Rico	Lingayen Gulf, Tawi Tawi,
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands	Parang, Taloma Bay,
Bermuda	Zamboanga, Puerto Princessa
Recife, Brazil	Ilo Ilo, Cebu City, Manila
Bahia, Brazil	
Colon, Panama	
Balboa, Panama	
Sydney, Australia	
Brisbane, Australia	