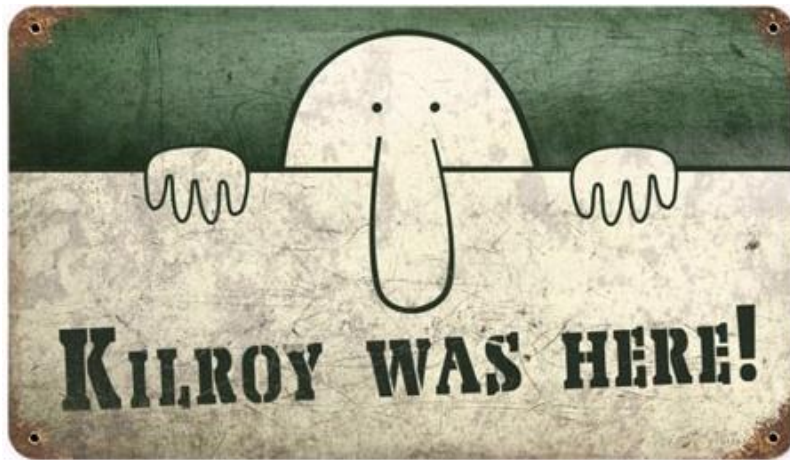
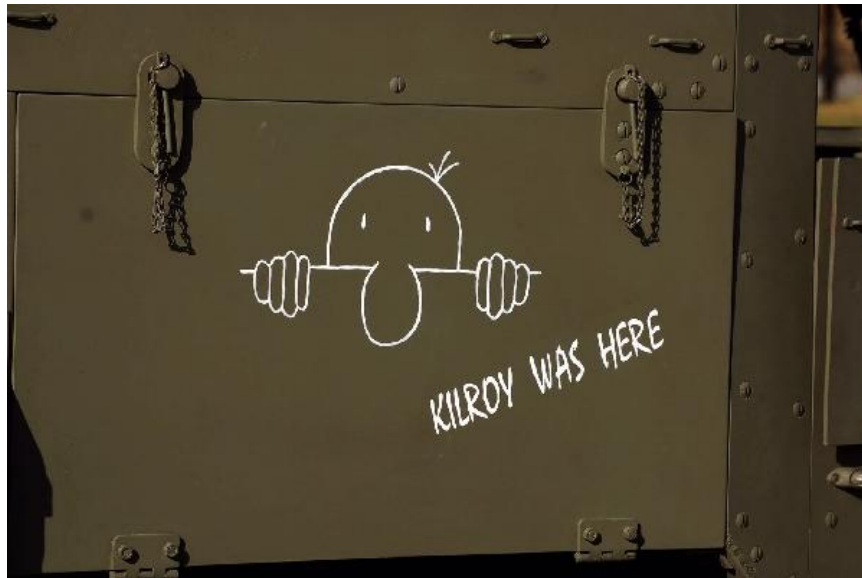


Kilroy Was Here

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.



He is engraved in stone in the National War Memorial in Washington, DC- back in a small alcove where very few people have seen it. For the WWII generation, this will bring back memories. For you younger folks, it's a bit of trivia that is a part of our American history. Anyone born in 1913 to about 1950, is familiar with Kilroy. No one knew why he was so well known-but everybody seemed to get into it. So who was Kilroy?



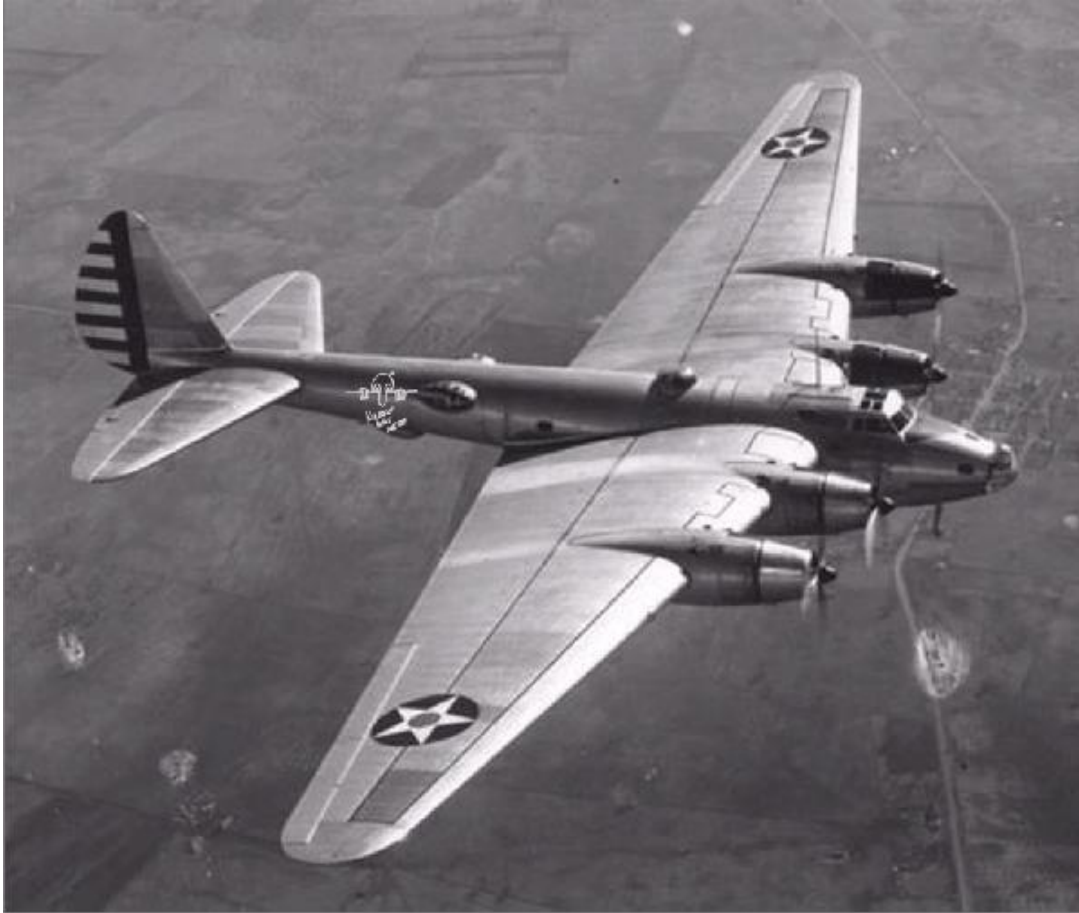
In 1946 the American Transit Association, through its radio program, "Speak to America," sponsored a nationwide contest to find the real Kilroy, offering a prize of a real trolley car to the person who could prove himself to be the genuine article. Almost 40 men stepped forward to make that claim, but only James Kilroy from Halifax, Massachusetts, had evidence of his identity.



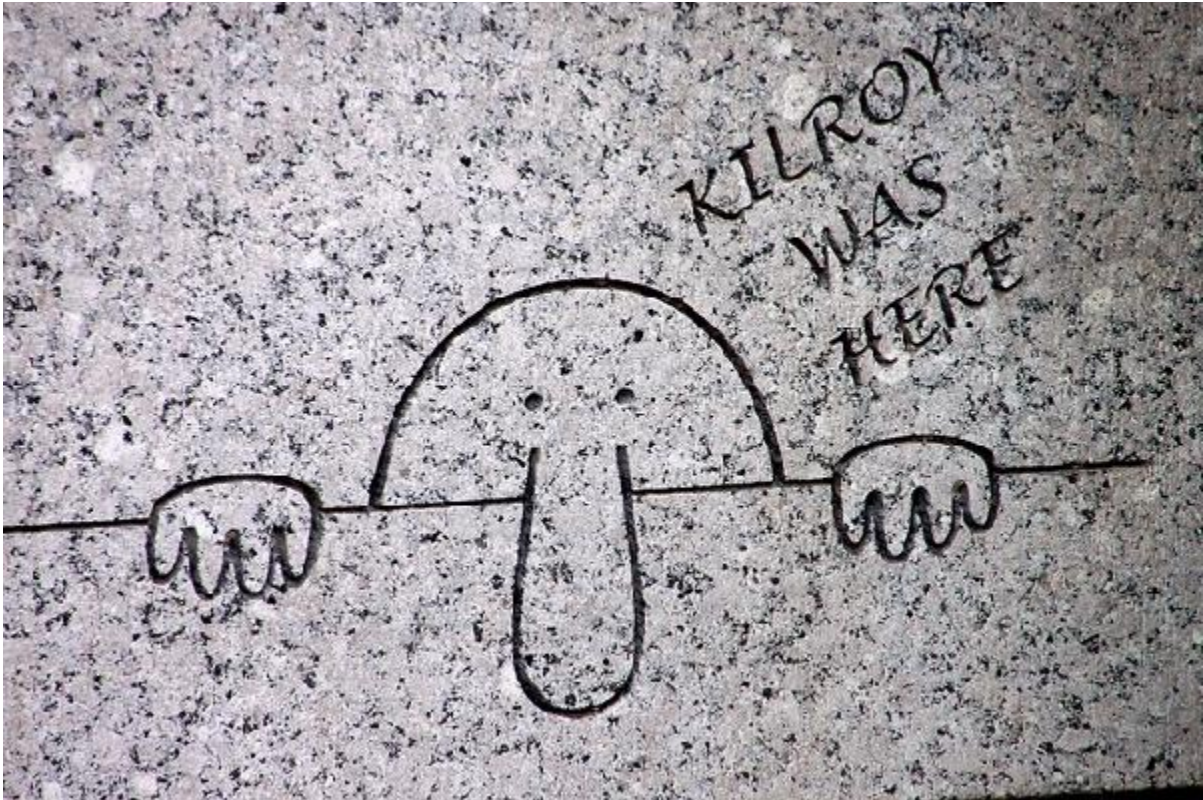
Kilroy on Cannon in Kuwait, 1991



'Kilroy' was a 46-year old shipyard worker during the war who worked as a checker at the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy. His job was to go around & check on the number of rivets completed. Riveters were on piecework & got paid by the rivet. He would count a block of rivets & put a check mark in semi-waxed lumber chalk, so the rivets wouldn't be counted twice. When Kilroy went off duty, the riveters would erase the mark. Later on, an off-shift inspector would come through & count the rivets a second time, resulting in double pay for the riveters.



One day Kilroy's boss called him into his office. The foreman was upset about all the wages being paid to riveters, & asked him to investigate. It was then he realized what had been going on. The tight spaces he had to crawl in to check the rivets didn't lend themselves to lugging around a paint can & brush, so Kilroy decided to stick with the waxy chalk. He continued to put his check mark on each job he inspected, but added 'KILROY WAS HERE' in king-sized letters next to the check, & eventually added the sketch of the chap with the long nose peering over the fence & that became part of the Kilroy message.



Once he did that, the riveters stopped trying to wipe away his marks. Ordinarily the rivets & chalk marks would have been covered up with paint. With the war on, however, ships were leaving the Quincy Yard so fast that there wasn't time to paint them. As a result, Kilroy's inspection "trademark" was seen by thousands of servicemen who boarded the troopships the yard produced.



His message apparently rang a bell with the servicemen, because they picked it up & spread it all over Europe & the South Pacific.



"KILROY WAS HERE"
Famous WWII graffiti
(as 4 inch tall figurine)



Before war's end, "Kilroy" had been here, there, & every where on the long hauls to Berlin & Tokyo. To the troops outbound in those ships, however, he was a complete mystery; all they knew for sure was that someone named Kilroy had "been there first." As a joke, U.S. servicemen began placing the graffiti wherever they landed, claiming it was already there when they arrived.



Kilroy became the U.S. super-GI who had always "already been" wherever GIs went. It became a challenge to place the logo in the most unlikely places imaginable (it is said to be atop Mt. Everest, the Statue of Liberty, the underside of the Arc de Triomphe, & even scrawled in the dust on the moon.



As the war went on, the legend grew. Underwater demolition teams routinely sneaked ashore on Japanese-held islands in the Pacific to map the terrain for coming invasions by U.S. troops (& thus, presumably, were the first GI's there). On one occasion, however, they reported seeing enemy troops painting over the Kilroy logo!



In 1945, an outhouse was built for the exclusive use of Roosevelt, Stalin, & Churchill at the Potsdam conference. Its' first occupant was Stalin, who emerged & asked his aide (in Russian), "Who is Kilroy?"

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Massachusetts, had evidence of his identity.



To help prove his authenticity in 1946, James Kilroy brought along officials from the shipyard & some of the riveters. He won the trolley car, which he gave to his nine children as a Christmas gift & set it up as a playhouse in the Kilroy yard in Halifax, Massachusetts.



Boston American, December 23, 1946



And The Tradition Continues...



EVEN Outside Osama Bin Laden's