

The attached photo was taken when the Shangri La was docked in Sydney Harbor in May of 1947

Shangri La CV38 flag ship for Task Force 38 and RADM Cinder

In March 1947, she deployed, calling at Pearl Harbor and Sydney, Australia. When she returned to the United States, Shangri-La was decommissioned and placed in the Reserve Fleet at San Francisco on 7 November 1947.

I reported aboard at the Puget Sound shipyards in February 1947. As we set sail for the Pearl Harbor, Air Group CVG5 consisting of F8F's and SB2C's came aboard. Those SB2C's were so underpowered it would take them 3 or 4 miles to stop skimming the waves and gain altitude. We had several of them that hit the drink before they could get up. We also had several F8F's go over the side on landing. Fortunately, we never lost a pilot as they were picked by our destroyers. Leaving Pearl, we crossed the equator at the International Date Line and were initiated as Golden Shellbacks. We were initiated into the Order of the Golden Dragon and became Shellbacks at the same time. (Few of us around) When I get some time, I'll scan some photos of the initiation and forward them to you.

When we reached Australia in May of 1947, half of our Task Force 38 with the carrier Antietam CV36 docked in Melbourne and the other half, which included the Shangri La, docked in Sydney. We were the first U S forces to come to Sydney in 7 years. Needless to say, we were treated like royalty.

Since we were at sea for such a long period of time, I had a considerable amount of money on the books. I withdrew a pretty good amount thinking I'd spend it on shore leave. We were in port for 21 days and every night some club, dance hall, tavern or other party place was free for the navy. The whole time there I only paid for maybe 3 or 4 meals. I think every single girl in Sydney showed up at those free places. There would at least 40 or 50 girls waiting at the free places, you just walked up to the prettiest one, said "Hi my names Warren", and you had your date for the night. They never refused (anything). Sydney was a serviceman's shore leave dream.

When we docked at the Alameda Naval Air Station, October 1947 we were told the ship was being decommissioned. There was a decommissioning dance at the San Francisco YMCA and I met an attractive girl that I later saw whenever I was in port.

I was transferred to the Boxer CV21 and spent the remainder of my enlistment in and out of port.

Warren Draugelis ex RM2