

MANSFIELD

The road to this victorious day had been tortuous and twisted, one that tested both the abilities of the ship and the men who had so courageously manned her. A raging typhoon that sent three of our destroyers to the bottom and had damaged so many other ships, served only to test her skill and impregnability. Like the countless ships who performed daring, heroic tasks, tasks that had assumed a prosaic insignificance because of their frequency, the Mansfield "had delivered the mail". Months of back-breaking, wearying cruising, highlighted by action with the enemy, had been consummated in the glorious moment of victory that erased ache, pain, and uncertainty.

The war had ended, and with the cessation of fighting, all eyes looked homeward, all hearts anxiously awaited the long voyage back to the United States. And on that great day of September 1945, almost twelve months after her departure from her homeland, the Mansfield steamed into San Francisco Harbor to share in this city's tribute to the returning fleet. A few days later the jubilant destroyer moved over to the Mare Island Navy Yard for a much-needed overhaul.

By this time, demobilization had become an epidemic disease that threatened the very life of our navy. The ravaging, destructive force of this pestilence had begun to take a strong hold on board the Mansfield. Inside of several months, the once efficient and deadly man-o-warsman had found herself hopelessly unattended and provided for. Large turnovers of personnel, resulting in insufficient experience and manpower, made conditions critical. The few remaining regulars, and a handful of "low-point" reserves, found themselves confronted with a nightmare of obligations and responsibilities. The job of keeping the Mansfield in operation had fallen on their shoulders, shoulders that had withstood the burdens and crushing loads of war, and were, by now, weary and eager for rest.

The navy yard overhaul ended in late November of 1945, and rumors of impending assignment to duty in Western Pacific waters had already started going around. On December 8, the Mansfield arrived in San Diego and reported for duty. Almost immediately after her arrival, she was ordered to start operating with training units already present there.

Six weeks of continuous steaming, broken up by a ten day holiday, passed. On 1 February of 1946, strengthened only by the weeks of training before, the Mansfield, with four of her squadron mates, headed west. Honolulu, Eniwetok, and Guam were only stopping-over-places. Her destination, China.

On February 27, she steamed into the harbor of Tsingtao, China, and reported to the Fleet Commander for duty. Six months of duty