

## ***KILROY WAS HERE***

Every American service member, folks on the home front, even our enemies knew the guy. He sported an enormous elongated nose, a smooth bald head, a pair of dotty beady eyes, and three to four fingers on each hand dangling over the imaginary line of an imaginary wall. A rather rib-tickling image yet pitifully ugly if representative of a real person, Kilroy is forever memorialized as one of the iconic symbols of World War II.

Kilroy appeared in all theaters of operation and never failed to encourage soldiers or provide them with an immediate chuckle. Sailors, soldiers, flyboys, and marines grew fond of Kilroy and

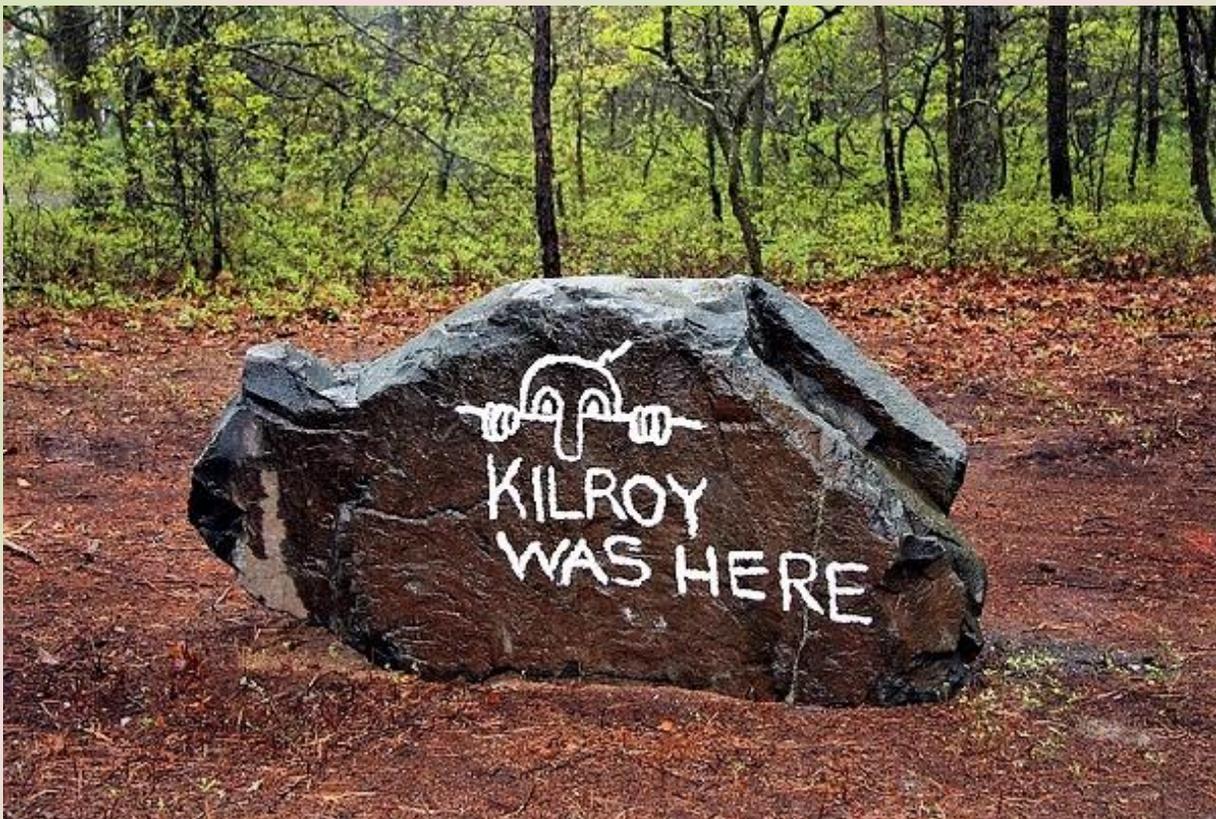
anticipated his appearance in the most unlikely of places. He'd pop up on an ammo box, a large rock, the turret of a Sherman tank, on the fuselage of a B-17 bomber or on the wing of a P-38 Lightning. He hid in the ruins of buildings, emerged on a castle wall, decorated the hull of a ship; Kilroy was everywhere, and, Kilroy was here!



Three of the most powerful men in the world shared the same latrine at the Potsdam Conference in 1945. An executive privy was built for the private use of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, England's Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Union dictator, Joseph Stalin. Stalin was the first who needed to 'go'.

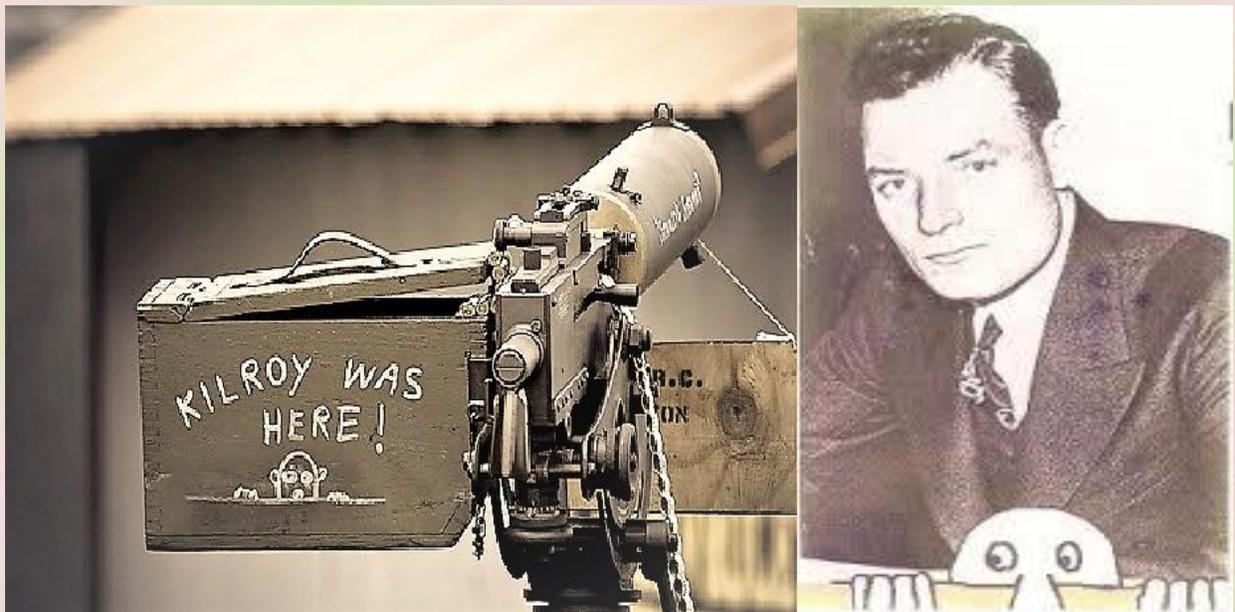
As he emerged slightly baffled from the outhouse, Stalin asked his aide-de-camp, “Who is Kilroy?” Kilroy was everywhere!

Specially trained Marine recon units and Navy frogmen sneaked onto Japanese-held islands in the Pacific to gather pre-invasion intelligence. On one island a Navy underwater demolition team reportedly discovered Japanese ‘painting over’ a Kilroy logo on a large rock. The question everybody asked, “If only Japanese inhabit the island, how did Kilroy get there?”



So, with all this universal fame and recognition, who in the heck was Kilroy? The creator of ‘Kilroy’ is recognized as James Kilroy of Halifax, Massachusetts. James, a rivet inspector at the Fore River shipyard in Quincy during the war, had the responsibility

to oversee the completion of rivets since the riveters were paid by number of rivets completed. After counting rivets, he check-marked a completed block with a piece of chalk to prevent any double-counts.



## ***KILROY WAS EVERYWHERE! JAMES KILROY***

Nice try, James. Actually, while James was off duty the riveters erased the chalk marks so an on-duty checker would count the rivets a second time; consequently the riveters received double pay. Questioned by his boss about top-heavy riveter wages, James investigated and determined the cause. His answer was simple: continue to mark the rivets but he added "KILROY WAS HERE' in large letters next to the chalk marks. He later added the celebrated sketch of a bald-headed, hefty proboscis, beady-eyed man with the apparent DNA of a white Smurf peering over an imaginary fence.

With the war at full gallop, ships were departing the Fore River shipyard so fast there was no time to paint over all the artwork. James Kilroy's inspection gimmick was seen by thousands upon thousands of soldiers boarding troop ships. The odd caricature spread like wildfire. Soon 'KILROY WAS HERE!' materialized in every corner of the earth.



The imaginary Kilroy became an imaginary hero to the G.I.s. He was already there wherever they went, welcoming the Greatest Generation in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, Europe, and Pacific

islands in the middle of nowhere. Kilroy was part of home, part of why we fight, part of the American spirit.



Kilroy's image was displayed boldly or hidden in strange places, as if the prize in a grownup game of hide and seek. His legend lives on, as does many myths. Kilroy is rumored to be atop the Statue of Liberty, on the underside of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, atop Mount Everest, and even scribbled in the dust on the moon. Perhaps the most profound recognition of Kilroy is his 2 hard-to-find depictions on certain walls of the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. WWII veterans always search for their imaginary buddy when they visit their Memorial in Washington. You see, it's only natural for them to do so, since Kilroy was with them through thick and thin, wherever they fought, wherever they bled, wherever their human buddies fell.

Kilroy is a veteran, too, a member of the Greatest Generation, and now, after completion of the WWII Memorial, he is finally home. Indeed, 'KILROY IS HERE!'

