

This is a record of the initial occupation of Japan as observed by me from the decks of the U.S.S. Missouri. I am writing this expressly for my daughter, Kristan Louise Reichart, because it occurs to me that in the years to come, she might deem these efforts of mine to be of some value historically,

With this in mind, I have set down to the best of my ability, the sequence of events that unfolded before us each day during this period. In my clumsy fashion, I have endeavored to record little points of interest concerning our steaming in and taking over that historians will fail to write about because of their insignificance and that newspapers will fail to print because they had a much bigger job to do.

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U.S.S. Missouri

It was about 0700 the morning of August 27, 1945 aboard Adm. Halsey's flagship, the U.S.S. Missouri. I was a member of the ship's company. In the van of Task Force 38, we were on our way to Tokyo to receive the official Japanese surrender scheduled to take place aboard this great ship on September 2nd.

Our lookouts had just previously sighted a small Japanese ship about two points on our starboard bow, and one of our Destroyers, The Nicholas, had been sent out to contact her. The Jap was right on time. He had been previously directed by Gen. MacArthur to meet us at this particular rendezvous to put aboard our ships, pilots to guide us in.

At approximately 0723, we went to "General Quarters". All of our guns were trained on the enemy ship so that in the event of any untoward act, we could immediately blow them right out of the water. Through our binoculars we could definitely make out the Jap battle flag flying. The ship itself was a small two-stacker, probably a destroyer or destroyer escort. We were all standing around up on the bridge anxiously watching our destroyer make his approach to the other vessel. A flag hoist on the Nicholas (International Code of Signals) was ordering the Jap to "Heave To", and several of the men around me were asking one another how they supposed that one little ship out there felt with our tremendous force approaching her. I wondered myself.

It seemed as if our "can" had been out there an unusually long time. Finally we received a report that the Japs seemed to be doing a lot of fooling around--acted as if they hated to leave. (I don't doubt it.) In about fifteen minutes, the Nicholas reported she had taken aboard two Japanese emissaries, thirteen pilots, and six interpreters. She put her rudder over and swung around toward us.

A little after 0800 our lookouts reported land on the horizon bearing 025 degrees relative. From time to time, more and more coastline rose out of the sea.

The Nicholas was now alongside, lines had been crossed to her and we were all straining our necks to see the Japs start coming across in our colorful little "Toonerville Trolley" (A very picturesque chair-like contraption used in transferring personnel from one ship to another. I think everyone was excited about transferring some of these Japs to our ship. For many of us, it would be our first real good look at one. Finally we saw the first of them, and immediately thousands of opinions were born and discussed by all hands topside.

We took two of these fellows aboard and they were standing down on the 1st superstructure deck below us, guarded by six Marines carrying sub-machine guns. It appeared that we certainly weren't taking any chances. I'll bet the Japs were beginning to wish there had never been a Pearl Harbor. Both men were officers of the Japanese Imperial Navy--a Comdr. Furitani and Lt. Comdr. Kato. We were all getting a tremendous "kick" out of them.

I don't know what we expected, but really they looked much nicer than one might think. They were small of course just like Japs are supposed to be, but in all fairness to these particular men, they looked exceptionally neat and clean. I didn't see them being searched right after they came aboard, but I understand from those who did that our little visitors didn't like the way our Marine officer jerked them around, pulled their pockets inside out, and generally manhandled them. Good for "Al" Kelly!! He let them know who was boss--and fast!

The only arms they were wearing were their Samurai swords (long saber-like weapons generally used for committing hari-kari) which they reluctantly gave up to us. Both men carried large rolls of charts and maps under their arms.

Presently they left, having been taken to the Captain's cabin to be interviewed by Rear Adm. Carney, Chief of Staff. After their interview, they were to be brought up to the bridge for a discussion with our "Skipper", Capt. S. S. Murray, and Navigator, Comdr. H. B. Lyon.

It was just about this time that one of our destroyers reported a sound contact. We were instantly alert for the well known Jap treachery -- a few well placed torpedoes into our formation right now would make it hotter than I cared to think about. It was sure a welcome relief let me tell you, to get the report a few minutes later that the contact was finally evaluated "non-sub". No target movement -- no doppler -- probably a reef.

Another interesting occurrence of the morning was when the little Jap destroyer came alongside for further instructions. We had told her what to do once, but because she appeared confused and wasn't accomplishing anything, we had called her alongside to explain more in detail. We were enthused over the opportunity to get a good look at her, and when she was close aboard, we all agreed she was a poor comparison with one of our own. We noticed her depth charge racks were all empty and that her five inch guns, fore and aft were both covered and unmanned. I guess they weren't looking for trouble.

It seemed that all of her crew that might be spared, were topside and looking over, wide-eyed at our powerful big battleship. Some of the Nip sailors were pointing at various parts of our vessel and appeared to be quite interested in what they saw. It looked funny to see that large Japanese battle flag flying so close aboard. Just a month ago, it would have been suicide ----- for the Jap!

After the two little men were brought up to the bridge, they went into the chart house with Capt. Murray and Comdr. Lyon. Comdr. Lyon told me later that Furitani had informed him that on his midshipman's cruise from the Japanese naval academy, their ship had visited our own "Trade School" at Anna polis.

He answered questions directly and without emotion -- he was very polite and dignified. When asked how many mines they had cleaned out of Tokyo Harbor, he replied very simply and to the point, "twelve". When he was asked why they hadn't swept out any more than that, he said "That's all we thought your planes dropped".

One of the "flag" officers told me early this evening that while the Japs were being interviewed by Adm. Carney, one of them had started to

light a cigarette but that it was promptly taken away from him. It seems the Admiral wasn't taking any chances either.

All of us on the bridge were thoroughly enjoying our opportunity of seeing the Jap pilot at close hand. He continuously scanned the horizon for land marks, buoys, etc. as he guided us in. He worked quietly and efficiently, and didn't seem to mind us peeping out the corners of our eyes at him. Somehow thought, I'll bet he hated the guts of every last one of us.

One point of interest that took place around noon time was when our little Jap pilot was given a K ration for his lunch. (Because we were at "CQ", we all had K rations). In each ration is some brand of chewing gum. He had drawn "Chiclets", one of the popular candy-coated varieties, and thinking them energy pills of some sort, placed them in his mouth one at a time, far back on his tongue, and with two man-sized gulps -- the chewing gum was in his stomach. We sure got a "bang" out of that.

We were the first ship to enter Sagami Wan, or the Sagami Bay. Following us was the famous Task Force 38 of which our ship was a part. There were in all, 11 fast battleships, 16 aircraft carriers, 27 cruisers, and 92 destroyers. This Task Force was the largest, most powerful-- the most formidable organization of fighting ships the world has ever known. It was always a real thrill to see them steaming silently along, bristling with thousands of gun barrels of every size and description. It looked like we meant business alright, and I have always been very proud that I have been one of the little cogs in this stupendous array of naval machinery.

The Sagami Bay is a small body of dark, emerald green water just outside of Tokyo Bay and connected to the Bay by a channel about seven miles long and a little over two miles wide. As we approached our anchorage, we passed the world famous Mt. Fujiyama to port. It was an awe inspiring sight -- very majestic and regal looking, she towered head and shoulders above any of the surrounding mountains. Her peak was proudly jutting up thru the soft white clouds hovering around her and covered with small patches of snow.

It was a beautiful day. The sky was a brilliant blue in which there were many little white puffs of clouds. A good stiff breeze out of the north-east shingled the sea with white caps, and the flying fish were having a circus. The air smelled fresh and clean, and it seemed great to be alive -- perhaps because of our mission, it made everything seem even a little better than usual.

We had changed course several times until most of the shore line was now on our port hand. Nestled back in the mountains, appeared several industrial sections -- we could see the tall smoke stacks poking up here and there. Down nearer the water, there was what appeared to be a magnificent beach and many lovely big homes. One of our interpreters informed me later in the day that it was one of the most exclusive summer resort sections on the Island of Honshu. As we proceeded on in, towns popped up from time to time, and in even closer, we could see large extremely modern hotels fronted with long golden strips of sandy beach -- colorful beach umbrellas and everything. It really did look like a wonderful spot. But what completely amazed us were the hundreds of people in swimming or out skipping around in little sailboats and sampans. It seemed queer as the very dickens to see all of these people having such an apparently good time while at that very moment the powerful U. W. Fleet was on its way to Tokyo to initiate the occupation of their country.

We could also see trolleys and busses running along the large, up to date highway that seemed to follow pretty much the contour of the shoreline; and automobiles were parked in rows along the beach. Maybe they came out to see us -- who knows! Anyway, it seemed darn funny -- I

guess we figured everyone would be scared to death of us and nowhere to be seen. I can't explain how odd it really did seem to me. Here was taking place, Japan's greatest tragedy -- history that will live forever as a blot on her country's record -- and the Japs didn't seem the least bit concerned. Or so it seemed to us.

We of course, were all eyes. It felt good to play the part of the conquering hero, and it was all very thrilling and interesting. By early afternoon we were almost to our anchorage berth and had decreased speed several times during the last half hour. At 1324, the Skipper gave the order, "All engines stopped", and our starboard anchor went rumbling out the hawse pipe to the bottom of Sagami Wan. Our soundings showed 25 fathoms.

Adm. Halsey immediately issued orders to arm several small boats to patrol the full length of the fleet anchorage -- their mission, to keep swimmers and unauthorized boats out of the anchorage area, "using force if necessary".

After anchoring, the bridge was secured and the "watch" shifted to the quarter-deck. Because I had a few things to get squared away before going below, I was on the bridge for quite some time. The only other people up there were the Jap pilot and his Marine guard. I noticed the little fellow was reading a magazine so I ambled over his direction to see what it was. Imagine my complete surprise when the magazine turned out to be "Esquire"! And the particular item he was reading was entitled, "No Woman Can Tame Me."

I forgot to mention that he had been given a package of our own cigarettes. He was smoking one right after the other. I guess he was actually more nervous than he appeared to be. Or maybe they were just better cigarettes than he was accustomed to. (And my poor countrymen back in the States willing to pay a dollar a pack).

The rest of the ships were anchoring in their assigned berths and in a very short time, Sagami Wan was filled with a size-able force, each individual ship of which was trying to out do the other in the size of the "colors" she flew. I wondered what the Japs over on the beach must think to see all these fine big war ships with two or three American flags proudly whipping in the breeze above each one.

The rest of the afternoon we carried out regular shipboard routing and at 1800 had dinner. That night, all ships were ordered blacked out and everything was very quiet with the exception of hundreds of little picket boats that scurried around all over the place. As a precaution, one hour before, until one hour after sunset, we set Condition I in the AA battery. We had movies in the wardroom that night -- Bette Davis in "The Corn is Green". We all hit the sack that night, saying over and over to ourselves, "Well, well Who'd of thought a month ago we'd be here tonight."

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The morning of August 28th broke bright and clear. Every-one was discussing what wonderful weather the Japanese enjoyed during August and we were all in high spirits as we went about our various tasks. The spare moments of each day were spent in getting everything shipshape for the historic event to take place on board within the next few days.

Being somewhat of an artist, I had been asked by our Captain to originate a design embodying our ships emblem, a very angry Missouri mule, together with Japanese flags, emblematic of enemy aircraft shot down by us. This then was to be painted on our bridge as has been the custom of combatant ships during this war as a kind of score card -- a record of a

ship's individual accomplishments in combat. With four enlisted men, I was working frantically to get this painted on our bridge before the big day.

We were all cognizant of the fact that there were a great many more ships anchored here at Sagami Wan this morning than there were yesterday. Many supply ships, tankers, mine sweeps, repair ships, and all types of landing craft had come in during the night.

At about 0900, the cruiser San Diego with five or six destroyers got underway, proceeded out around the little peninsula, through the mine-swept channel and out into Tokyo Bay. Rear Adm. Badger was in command. These were the first U. S. ships to actually enter Tokyo Bay, their mission being merely a "feeling out" maneuver. If all goes well with them today, tomorrow we will lead the rest of the ships in.

The remainder of the day passed uneventfully. Around 1430, the "Diego" reported all secure in Tokyo Bay -- everything had gone very smoothly. Many formations of our carrier based planes flew overhead. All types were represented--bombers, fighters, torpedo planes, and occasionally, a Navy scout from one of the battleships. From time to time during the day, more ships continued to arrive until by nightfall, Sagami Wan was full to overflowing -- or so it appeared.

We heard the fishing was good and during the evening, I watched a lot of the men using hand lines over the side but I didn't see any of them having any luck.

Just before dark, I experienced one of my greatest thrills of the war. Adm. Halsey originated a despatch to all ships that tonight we would not darken ship -- movies out on deck and the smoking lamp lit topside. This exhilaration on my part may seem a bit absurd but after having lived in complete darkness each night for months on end, this was really something! For the first time since Japan announced her surrender, it began to seem like the war was really over.

We all felt like a "million bucks". and turned in early that night full of anticipation and many opinions as to what tomorrow would bring. Tomorrow we would steam past Yokosuka, Yokahama, and finally into Tokyo itself. It was hard to believe.

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Wednesday, August 29th. Revielle at 0400. It was still dark, but in the east the horizon was beginning to streak with magenta and pale greens, blending into various shades of gold. It was a beautiful sunrise, and as we stepped out on deck to breathe the clean fresh morning air, we all commented again on this glorious weather -- it was nothing short of terrific, I can assure you.

All hands ate a hearty breakfast of hot cakes, bacon and coffee; and at 0457, the Skipper gave the order, "Heave right up!", and the windlass went to work pulling our 15 ton anchor out of the mud at the bottom of Sagami Wan. At 0500, we were underway.

The ship went to "CQ" at 0520 for our trip through the channel into Tokyo Bay. When the last note of the bugle had died away, I heard one of the enlisted men remark, "Well, that's probably the last time we'll hear that." I thought he said it a little wistfully, but I'm sure he would have hotly denied it if questioned.

What he had said made quite an impression on me and the more I thought about it, the deeper it sunk. As much as I despise war and all it stands for, I really got quite a lump in my throat when I realized that probably never again would we experience that irrepressible thrill of hearing the call we all knew so well -- "All hands to battle stations!"

I guess there's a little more of the old war horse in us than we care to admit.

We were about an hour or hour and a half making our sortie out of Sagami Wan into the little channel. Many formations of the carrier planes droned above us and over the beach, so after a while when everything seemed pretty well in hand, I beat it down to the Signal Bridge, picked up a pair of glasses and went up to Sky Control. This station is eleven decks above the main deck and I considered it an ideal spot to see the "show". It is sort of a modern "crow's nest".

The channel was about two and a half miles wide with steep green mountains rising up from either side. Our Jap pilot was keeping us pretty well to port and apparently knew just where all the mines were, so we fishtailed along at his direction. Every so often, we would see coastal defense guns poking their long barrels out of an embuttment in the side of the mountain. We only had our 5 inch battery trained on them, but our "16's" were manned and ready and could have been brought to bear in just a matter of seconds.

The day turned out to be as beautiful as it began so our visibility was unlimited. The sights were plentiful too -- we were cramming into our eyes all that we possible could. About halfway through the channel, the factories and buildings of Yokosuka began to show up. It was interesting to see the damage our carrier planes and B-29's had done the past few months. Practically every building and factory along the coast was burned out completely or in part. We all got a good laugh out of the fact that many of these places had huge white flags flying over them. They evidently knew we were coming in today and wanted to be sure we wouldn't take a crack at them.

As we entered the harbor proper, we saw many Jap ships burned out, sunk, and resting on the bottom. This was mostly around the Yokosuka Naval Base. I remember so well the day our planes returned and reported the complete "working over" they had given the Jap battlewagon, Nagato; and here she was, burned black from stem to stern and resting on the bottom near the beach. There was nothing left of her superstructure but the framework.

We were picking our way along at six knots, and up ahead, the city of Yokohama was coming into view. Here again it was the same story. There were factories and large gas tanks as far as the eye could see, and practically each one had suffered various degrees of damage -- several of these large gas tanks were burned clear to the ground. Here also, the section was sprinkled with white flags.

Now that we were actually in the harbor and any Jap treachery a very remote possibility, our topside decks were filled with both officers and enlisted men, all straining their necks. Those of us who had binoculars were enviously looked upon as God's chosen people, but we did the best we could to let all hands have a look.

Everybody was yelling and laughing. A man would point toward the beach and exclaim, "Hey, ain't those sub pens over there?" Or one of his shipmates in an argument would lustily voice the opinion, "If that ain't a cruiser on the bottom, I'll eat the business end of a swab!" And still another, "Come on Mike -- you've had those glasses more'n anybody. Lemme have 'em a minute." I nearly exploded with laughter at one smooth faced kid when he dreamily expressed his desires, "Boy, I hope we get over on the 'beach' here -- I'd like to get me a

nice hotel room with hot and cold running gieshas!" That brought down the house, believe me. These, and many other similar remarks could be heard in every dialect from Brooklyn to the hills of Tennessee. All hands were in exceedingly high spirits.

From the ship, it was impossible to see any of the business or residential sections of either Yokosuka or Yokahama. It was the same with Tokyo. These must have been farther inland. All we could see were the industrial areas, but these alone were really something! Factories, factories, and still more factories -- they stretched as far as the eye could see and much farther. Without exaggeration, there must be a half a million smokestacks along the water front over there. And it's this way anywhere you go around Japan. During the past few months we have bombarded at different places along the coasts of both Honshu and Hokkaido, and always the thing that impressed me most were all the smokestacks. There is no question about it -- the Nips were really rigged for a man-sized war. And they would probably have put up a good fight for another six months or a year if the atomic bomb hadn't given the "the cure".

The most unusual sight of the day occurred about 0730. A Jap body went floating down our port side close aboard. Dead as a doornail, he was bobbing along in the choppy green water, face down with his arms and legs hanging beneath him, legs tending slightly aft. The body was entirely unclothed, a bright yellow in the sunlight, swollen, and stiff as a board. A large splotch of dark red could be clearly seen near the small of his back so we all assumed it to be blood.

I suppose he was some Jap who was unable to bear the thought of "losing Face" by surrendering and had committed the well known hari-kari. But that didn't prevent him dying a thousand additional deaths in the minds of those aboard the Missouri today. Everyone had his own personal idea as to just how he happened to be dead and floating along out there. I wish I could remember some of the more fantastic ones. What imaginations some of these sailors have!

Having passed thru the channel and well into Tokyo Harbor, we began coming right, swinging out into the open water to make our anchorage, still several miles ahead. This harbor is a fairly large body of water, between 30 and 35 miles long and about 14 miles in width. At this time, it was absolutely devoid of ships with the exception of the San Diego and the three destroyers who came over yesterday. Plus of course, the sunken Japanese vessels whose bows, sterns, or super-structures here and there protruded out of the water at all sorts of crazy angles.

Following us came the Iowa, one of our sister ships; and directly astern of her, steamed the British battlegoon, the King George V. And so it went -- on and on -- a column of ships that stretched all the way over the horizon. Neither space, nor memory permits me naming the rest, but there were well over a hundred that followed us into Tokyo Harbor today.

At 0924 we "dropped the hook" and Bos'n mate of the Watch passed the word, "Now sweepers man your brooms. Give her a clean sweepdown, fore and aft -- all decks and ladders." How sailors love to hear that. The only one they dislike more is "Field Day" and that came about an hour later as we continued getting "dolloed up" for the big day.

The rest of the day we carried out regular shipboard routine. Tomorrow the Marines, Army, and Naval landing forces were scheduled to

go ashore to begin the actual occupation of Japan, so all afternoon the radio circuits were red hot with last minute preparations. Small power boats scurried about the harbor, delivering the Admiral or that General to a conference here -- or there -- someplace.

That night we had movies topside again -- Greer Garson and Gregory Peck in "Valley of Decision". It was a good show and afterward, some of us stood out on deck awhile looking at the myriad of lights over on the beach.

Someone mused aloud, "By golly, thats Tokyo we're looking at over there."

And someone else said dreamily, "It really is. Just imagine."

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This morning, August 30th, I got up bright and early, had eggs over light for breakfast, and was up on the bridge around 0700 to see what I could of the landing operations scheduled to take place about an hour later.

I don't know if it's because we've been nearly baked alive so much of the time this year in the insufferable heat down around Ulithi, Guam, and Leyte or what, but I just can't rave enough about the weather up here. This morning was the kind of a day you read about but never see. Even if I was proficient enough to describe it, no one would believe me anyway, so I shall let it suffice to say that the sun was shining and that when I inhaled deeply it was like anything wonderfur you can think of.

Once again many ships had arrived during the night and as I glanced around me now, there were ships of every description and in every direction as far as the eye could see. The harbor was a beehive of activity. The familiar little LCM's and LCVP's that are found in any U. S. anchorage were already here and plowing along thru the choppy water in their own inimitable fashion. "Skimmers" were scooting around all over the place and Admiral's barges, both "Limey" and our own, hurried from one battleship to another. Here and there a destroyer or DE shuttled across the harbor on some unknown mission.

The currents and tide had swung us around so that now our heading was perpendicular to the beach about five miles away; and on up ahead about six thousand yards, were several transports busily engaged in lowering their troops in landing boats into the water. With the aid of my binoculars, I could see the little boats going through their "ring around the rosy" maneuvers abeam of the mother ships, preparatory to their dash to the beach. The voice radio circuits were flooded with last minute orders as "H" hour drew near. There was also considerable activity around the LCI's nosing in and out like a lot of little pigs trying to get their share of the meal.

I'll bet those boys who made this landing were a happy bunch of boys because today they didn't have to worry about machine gun slugs tearing and ripping through their lines, or hand grenades exploding in their faces on the way in. It has been an act of God that an actual invasion of Japan has been avoided -- it would have been a horrible and bloody affair, not to mention the countless thousands of American lives it would have cost.

Around 0800, there was a general movement toward the beach as our troops actually began going ashore. An hour or two later, reports

began coming into our ship for Admiral Halsey, advising that the American flag was now flying over the Yokosuka naval base and that everything was well in hand; or that "green" beach (and other beaches) had been taken with no opposition; and so on and so forth. These and similar reports streamed in all day as our landing forces fanned out through the territory. Almost every report carried the statement, "Nips all appear docile -- no outbreaks, no disturbances, or opposition of any kind." This was gratifying to know because we still doubted the sincerity of their surrendering. We had all learned long ago that they are not to be trusted. And inasmuch as their peculiar "Shinto" religion makes it a glorious act for them to be killed in defense of their emperor, they are a fanatic and dangerous adversary.

On board our ship, everyone was still painting and polishing as we continued preparations for "V-J" Day. A group of men down on the main deck and the O1 level around the Captain's cabin were erecting scaffolding on which platforms were to be placed for use of the "press" and photographers on the big day.

The most interesting and amusing incident of the day as far as I was concerned, occurred shortly after the landing operations began. A prize crew was ordered put aboard the Jap battlewagon, Nagato, that was burned out and resting in the shallow water up near the beach dead ahead of us. About a half hour later, Admiral Halsey received a report from this crew that the Japanese ensign painted on her superstructure had been struck out and the American flag was flying from the mainmast. "All Secure". In reply to this, the Admiral immediately originated the following message: "To the Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. Nagato -- Commence "field day". Perhaps you'd have to be in the Navy to appreciate this little episode, but it is so typical.

More good fortune came my way today. I was chosen to be one of the 20 officer escorts to show the Admirals, Generals, and dignitaries to their respective locations for the surrender ceremonies. This means that I will be right in the middle of everything -- a sort of "ringside seat", you might say. I know that every important figure of the Pacific war will be here and I do consider it rare good luck that I will get to observe so closely all these famous men.

As far as we on the Missouri were concerned, the day passed uneventfully. The only thing out of the ordinary were the many formations of B-29's that cruised majestically overhead all day long. Against the brilliant blue of the sky, their long silver bodies glistened in the sunlight till it almost blinded us, but it was an awe inspiring sight -- very impressive.

Movies topside again tonight and we had a wonderful picture. Because it was an English production, I don't recall the names of the "stars", but it was extremely interesting. "Colonel Blimp" was the title -- all in technicolor, and three hours long. A rare bit of entertainment.

After the movies, those of us who had been designated as escorts were called to a meeting in the wardroom to be given a brief idea of just what our duties would consist of, and a general overall picture of just what all would take place. Among other things, although it was of no concern to us, we were informed that one of the biggest "headaches" of the entire affair, is where were they going to get a suitable table on which to sign the peace documents. General MacArthur has asked the Japanese to furnish one but hadn't had a reply as yet. If the Nips don't produce one, those in charge of this affair don't know what they'll do. I understand they are nearly frantic because ships during war time only possess very simple

metal tables and one of these wouldn't do -- Not for this auspicious occasion!

I don't know what kind of a sense of humor I have, but this strikes me as being very funny. Very funny indeed. As a matter of fact, I have to laugh everytime I think of it.

I was in good spirits when I turned in a little later, and I slept "like a log" all night. We were all so thankful that the landing forces hadn't encountered any opposition.

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Imagine how surprised I was to step out on deck this morning to find myself in a cold drizzle of rain and the harbor filled with fog. Here it was, the 31st of August, the last day of the month and the weather man had to pull a trick on me like this. And after the way I've almost outdone the Miami Chamber of Commerce expostulating about the climate here. It really was cold though -- most topside personnel were wearing their little dungaree jackets or wool jerseys.

There was no wind to speak of at all -- our anemometers were barely moving; and the water was smooth as glass. But the usual activity of a harbor prevailed and all types of small craft went scurrying about from one ship to another.

Around 0800, the tanker, Neches (AO-47), came alongside to "gove us a drink" and we refueled from them until almost noon. Everyone was hoping that all this "black gold" was intended to take us back to the good ol' States. Boy of boy, how we are looking forward to that! Now that the war is over, nothing much else really matters to us. "Home" -- what a beautiful word.

As the morning wore on, the fog lifted some, until by noon the visibility had increased to about six to eight thousand yards. In spots, we could even make out the beach.

The only noticeable increase of ships that had arrived during the night were three hospital ships that had come in to pick up allied prisoners of war just recently liberated from Jap prison camps, and return them to the States.

Needless to say, these "O. W.'s were almost crazy with joy, and voice radio reports from the beach indicated those in charge of operations were experiencing extreme difficulty in keeping them in hand. So anxious were they to get away from Japan, many of them were breaking ranks and running out into the water to swim out to the ships that had come for them. It was the wrong thing for them to do of course, but how could you blame them? Many of them were the heroes of Bataan and Corregidor and had been beaten and starved in Japanese prison camps for over three years.

During the afternoon, I took a pair of binoculars and went up on the bridge to look around at anything of interest that might be going on. The only thing I saw worth mentioning was a subtender back on our starboard quarter that I hadn't noticed before. She had ten U.S. subs alongside of her -- each abeam the other. These were more submarines than I had ever seen before in one place and at one time, so I got a big kick out of it. A submarine is always a rare sight anyway -- oh, you will usually see one or two in any big port, but out at sea a sub doesn't like to be very near even her own ships. There is always a chance of mistaken identity and anybody "in subs" will tell you that your own ships and planes attack you about as often as the enemy does. This was especially true the first couple of years of war.

I don't know what these ten were doing in here. They probably just came in to look around and pick up fuel and supplies. They all slipped out just before dark.

On board ship we carried out the regular routine all day long. Preparations for the peace ceremony continued of course, and the four men and myself finally completed the job of painting our Jap flags, Mule, and bombardments up on the bridge. The ship is beginning to look pretty good and everything is going along right on schedule.

Because of the weather, we had movies in the wardroom tonight -- Katherine Hepburn in "Dragon Seed". It was a powerful picture of the cruelty and tyranny of the Japs in their war with China. It left me a little sick inside so I stayed down in the wardroom awhile, playing cards until I was back in good spirits again. I turned in about 2330 but I didn't go to sleep for quite some time. I couldn't get over the fact that we Americans had been as blind as we had to all the Japanese preparations for World domination.

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Today, September 1st, the weather continued nasty and cold. That didn't cut down on any of the activity here in Tokyo Bay however -- ships came and went, both large and small, and of course the small boats, barges, and gigs kept up their endless trips and deliveries from here there and everywhere.

Nothing very important occurred around here today -- the ship was practically ready for the big show tomorrow, so we all were just doing little last minute jobs that still remained, and otherwise took things pretty easy.

Naturally we were interested in all the radio reports we received concerning the activities of our landing forces, but they weren't encountering any opposition and everything was going along as planned.

Two of the men on the ship had cut a linoleum block postage cancellation stamp on which were the words, "U.S.S. Missouri, September 2, 1945, Tokyo Bay -- Japanese Formal Surrender". Because we all wanted to send letters home with this cancellation on the envelope, I think the greatest part of us spent the day writing letters. We were limited to five apiece, and from the pile of mail I saw in the post office this afternoon, I'm sure everybody took advantage of the limit.

For awhile this evening. I did get to talk with the Chief Engineer off the Quincy who had come aboard to see one of the staff officers about something. He and two other officers off his ship had been over on the beach yesterday, and he said that if all of Japan was in the same condition as Yokosuka and Yokohama, the Japanese were in much worse shape than any of us believed. The thing that impressed him most was the evident gross neglect of things, both personal and real. He said everything was very "run down" and very dirty.

In the business districts, stores and shops were open, but there wasn't a great deal of merchandise on the shelves. Nor were there many people on the streets. The men passed our officers without any signs of recognition whatever but he said the Japanese women were scared to death of them. Whenever they saw an American soldier, marine, or sailor coming, they would turn and run the opposite direction. The Nip propogandists must have told some wonderful stories about us. And everywhere he went he said there was an abundance of dirty little children.

He spoke almost reverently about the elaborate system of caves found everywhere along the shoreline. "They must have spent ten years building those caves", he said. For miles on end, these caves ran back in the mountains, all connected, one with the other; and without exception, everyone was electrically equipped. In this maze of tunnels and spaces were stored everything from ammunition and food supplies, to absolutely anything you can think of. After talking with him, it isn't surprising the length of time our Marines and soldiers have had to spend, digging Japs out of islands like Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and many others now recorded in blood in the annals of history.

A little keepsake we were given today that pleased us no end was the little card, here attached, that certifies our presence at the surrender ceremony. Every man on the ship received one of these cards, and we all prized them highly.....we considered it a great honor.

The most interesting occurrence of the day was the arrival of a little Japanese tug that came alongside with a garbage scow in tow to take all our garbage, scrap paper, empty boxes, etc., etc. It was manned by Japanese but sitting on top of the pilot house were three armed U. S. Marines with automatic rifles across their knees.

The tug was filthy dirty and the men themselves were very unkept and in shabby clothes. They went about their work disinterestedly and had deaf ears to the jibes and jokes the sailors aboard our ship hurled at them. I'm quite sure they didn't understand English but nevertheless, I'm positive they got the general idea.

We were all interested to see that there were many 50 caliber bullet holes in the tug. It too had evidently felt the strong arm of the 3rd Fleet's carrier planes. There was a crowd of sailors along the rail of our ship all afternoon just looking at the Nips. We had been fighting them a long time and yet had never seen any until the other day when we took the two pilots aboard. They were a great novelty.

The weather cleared sufficiently by this evening to have movies out on deck and the entertainment was the best. Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman in "Saratoga Trunk".

We all went to bed hoping the weather would be bright and clear in the morning; and saying, "Well, tomorrow's the big day -- wonder what it will be like." Yes, tomorrow the war ends officially. It still seems incredible, but it's a pleasant thought and we're all mighty happy.

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V-J Day !!! September 2, 1945. Reveille at 0530 and all hands were up like a shot -- no "idlers" this morning -- everyone was too excited.

The first thought that popped into my mind was, "Whats the weather like?" I jumped into some clothes and beat it out on deck to find the sky overcast and grey but no rain clouds. I was thankful for that. Just so it didn't rain.

Deciding I'd go down and eat before getting all spruced up for the big event, I washed my face, combed my hair, brushed my teeth, and went down to the wardroom. When I got there, I found that most of the other officers had had the same idea and the stewards mates were having a busy time of it. I felt like a million dollars so I had the "works" -- tomato juice, half a grapefruit, a couple of poached eggs on toast, and two cups of coffee.

There was a great deal of speculation as to the day's coming events and a lot of good natured joking as to whether or not we would get anything to eat at noon time with so many admirals and generals on board. We were all in the best of spirits but all voiced the opinion that we would be glad when it was over with. We were positive it was going to be quite an ordeal handling the hundred or so admirals and generals, PLUS some 350 newspapermen and photographers we had been told would be on hand. Especially those of us who were to be escorts. Naturally we were excited about being in such a prominent spot, but thought things would get entirely out of hand somewhere along the line before it was over.

After a thoroughly enjoyable breakfast, I returned to my room and began checking the various accessories for my uniform. A week or so ago we had been ordered to have our "whites" ready for today's affair, but since that time Admiral Nimitz had issued a directive decreeing that the uniform of the day for the surrender ceremonies would be khki or grey without coats or ties. This was music to our ears -- at least we would be comfortably dressed for the thing.

My roommate, Ed Cummings, and I busied ourselves polishing belt buckles and collar bars. The biggest job we had was getting the large emblem on our caps cleaned up. We hadn't touched them since we left the States, and salt air has a way of tarnishing that's all its own. What used to be silver and gold was now all black and green. I owned a blitz cloth and we worked patiently on them with that but with very little success. We finally got our best results with an old toothbrush and soap and water.

After polishing our "brightwork", we got busy on our shoes and I gave myself the best shine I ever had anywhere. Using plenty of polish about three different times, mixed with a little water and a lot of determination, the toes of my shoes were like a couple of mirrors when I was done.

By 0700, most everyone was dressed and I was down in the wardroom wandering aimlessly about with some of the other officers waiting for things to begin. Practically none of us were sitting down just taking it easy -- even though we were only wearing our khakis, mine were so nicely starched and pressed that I hated to sit down and wrinkle them up. Maybe everyone else felt the same way. Occasionally we'd take a look out on deck to see what was going on and from time to time we could notice an increasing amount of activity both on the ship and in the water.

For this momentous occasion, Lt. Cmdr. J. L. Starnes was the O. O. D. and Lieut. D. C. Plate was the J.O.O.W. They were both fine looking young men -- good sailors -- competent -- and had plenty of war under their belts. They were fine looking officers up there on the quarterdeck.

At 0730, the first destroyer came alongside to port with the Army and foreign press, and just a minute or so later, one came along the after starboard gangway with the Navy press. There were about 350 of these war correspondents and photographers and was the first real highlight of the day -- they were dressed in every conceivable uniform and "get-up" imaginable. It looked like practically every country in the world was represented and I never heard so much jabbering and yelling in so many different languages in my life. It was really funny. And many of their faces were adorned with varying styles of beards and moustaches -- some with both. They were a colorful group and merely by the nature of their business at hand, they were a hard bunch to control. They were constantly trying to get in better positions and consequently were in a continual state of flux from the moment they came aboard. By the time the ceremonies were ready to begin they were practically hanging all over the superstructure.

During the time these correspondents were coming aboard and getting situated, a couple of members of the ship's force under the direction of Lt. Cmdr. Kitchell (Adm. Halsey's Flag Sec'y.) had brought our on deck outside the Captains cabin where everything was to take place, a wooden table about four feet square. "Aha". I thought, "At last they have a table -- wonder where it came from." It certainly wasn't overly ornate but it was a heavy wooden table -- one I had never seen before.

After moving it a couple of inches this direction and then an inch or so that direction, they finally left it and went inside to return a minute later with a green felt cover for it and the surrender documents that were to be signed here today. These official papers were quite large -- about 30 inches long and 18 inches wide. There were two of them and each one was inside a separate black, leather-backed folder.

Those of us who were escorts, had been given a black sleeve band with a white "E" sewn on it to denote our authority to be on the quarter-deck or up where the ceremonies were to take place. Consequently we did quite a little strutting ourselves and had a lot of fun kidding one another as to which of us would be in the most newsreels or magazine pictures.

At this particular time, most of us were up on the O1 level just outside the Captain's cabin, minutely examining the surrender documents. I had never given any thought as to what size they would be, but for some reason or other, they looked immense -- and very official. They were really quite plain - no unnecessary scrolls on the letters, no decorative borders -- nothing! And there was no color on them anywhere. They were neatly and very beautifully lettered but contrary to what one might think, were done in a simple gothic style. Really, they were startling in their simplicity.

As I stood there looking down at them, it just didn't seem possible that someday, 150 years or so hence, people would walk thru some historical museum and look with awe upon these same papers. I also thought, a little ironically perhaps, that just 12 men out of all the billions of men on the face of the earth would sign their names to these papers and peace would then be restored to the world. Just 12 men! And what good are peace treaties anyway? If a nation decides to make war, they break agreements as easily as a cat snaps the neck of a mouse.

The weather remained unchained -- it was overcast and cool, but there was so much activity going on everywhere and everyone was in such high spirits we completely forgot the probability of rain. The correspondents continued in a long, seemingly endless procession from back aft, forward, and up the ladder to the top of turret two. There were notebooks, cameras, filters, lightmeters, and many other odds and ends hanging from their belts, belt hooks, and loops sewn on their clothes for just such a purpose. Occasionally, one of the more fortunate were directed to the scaffolding built up from the main deck, outboard of the O1 level or to the platform on top of the 40 mm. quad just aft of the official table. These two positions were specifically for the newsreels (on the outboard scaffolding) and the broadcasting equipment (on the platform aft of the table). There were six or eight men in each of these crews and they worked quietly and efficiently setting up their equipment.

A great many of these photographers and correspondents knew one another and a lot of good natured jesting sallied back and forth across the deck as they worked or were on their way to their appointed spots. "Hey Joe, I thought they buried you at Sicily!" or "How'd you come out on that deal you pulled at the Potsdam show?" or "Have you seen Mike since that 'Limey' threw him out of that native chief's hut over in Burma?"--

And many others. Here were war correspondents who had knocked around all over the world, and I couldn't help but think that they seemed just like they are always portrayed in novels and movies -- a carefree, devil-may-care bunch, and yet, regardless of the perils and ramifications of war, they were men who got their stories and pictures to their respective papers in the shortest possible time.

By 0745, things had taken a definite shape -- the Marines were in "full guard" just forward of the quarterdeck and the sideboys were "at ease" by turret one within easy call of the O.O.D. There was no band as would normally have been the case when admirals and generals were coming aboard. There were going to be so many today that Admiral Nimitz had requested the "ruffles and flourishes" be excepted from the regular piping aboard procedure.

One historical point worthy of note was the presence of the American flag which flew over Admiral Perry's ship when he sailed triumphantly into Japanese waters back in the middle 1800's. It was very old and weatherbeaten but was mounted in a glass case within a rectangular wooden frame about 6 feet long and 4 feet wide. This was hanging outside on the angling bulkhead of the superstructure just to the right of the entrance to the Captain's cabin. It was high enough on the bulkhead so that it could be seen above all the people present and formed a sort of background for the entire setting.

Cmdr. H. V. Bird, gun boss of the Missouri was in charge of the escorts and had just given us our final instructions. He gave each of us about 25 of the little Jap surrender cards (see p. 12) to be presented to all the distinguished guests as they came aboard, and at 0750 we took our designated positions on the quarterdeck.

We didn't have long to wait before things really began happening. Lying off the forward starboard accommodation ladder now were many barges and gigs waiting to come alongside with their famous personages. It was just like a bunch of taxicabs at the 42nd St. entrance to Grand Central Station in New York. From this time on, high ranking Navy and Army officers came aboard in such a steady stream it is impossible for me to record their names or the order in which they arrived. (At the end of this record I have attached a supplement on which all dignitaries, signatories, and high ranking officers are listed by name, rank, and the country they represented. In this supplement also will be found, a detail drawing of that part of the ship where the surrender ceremonies took place and the respective positions of all concerned.)

These men were from many different countries and their uniforms were very colorful as compared with our own. As mentioned previously, we (both Army and Navy) were dressed in khaki or gray without coats or ties, while everyone else from the other countries were wearing their dress uniforms even down to handsome, richly made dress swords or dirks. It was a great contrast -- we Americans were conspicuous in our plainness. The British were informally attired but because their uniforms were white, they seemed much more dressed up than we were. And anyway, we always got a kick out of their trousers which are cut off just above the knee and their knee-length white stockings. But they do look cool and comfortable. We're forced to admit that.

I only wish it were possible though to describe each and every uniform that came on board today. Every color in the rainbow -- and a great many "off" shades, were present. And while all these men were milling around getting into their rightful places for the ceremony, the thought kept running through my mind, "It all looks like a grande finale from some musical comedy." I cannot find words to express my complete

amazement and intrigue in this ever moving spectrum of human beings. If no one took technicolor pictures of this affair, somebody should lose his job. It was the greatest show I ever saw. And the actors were the greatest men of their time.

From time to time, as we escorted this admiral or that general, many whose faces we had seen on the covers of Time Magazine or in the pages of "Life", we discovered they were really human beings, not at all unlike ourselves. Most of them were in good spirits and they all knew one another. So far in this war, all these great names belonged to men in whose hands were held the fate of nations--men whose names demanded an almost hushed reverence -- names that will live forever in the annals of history. And yet here today, they greeted one another just as any school boy would his chum. "Hello Charlie, you old rascal!" or "Joe! Gee but its good to see you again -- how's it going?" These and many others. They laughed and joked with one another, shaking hands vigorously accompanied by many goodnatured slaps on the back. Yes, here were the Grants, Lees, Sherman, Washingtons, the John Paul Jones, Farraguts, Perrys, and Deweys of our present day and they are all just as human as any of us. It didn't detract any from their glory however. It made us feel good -- all warm inside -- and proud.

During one of my trips escorting a couple of admirals up to the surrender deck, I noticed a couple of sailors removing the square wooden table from the scene. It was all being done very casually just as if they always carried tables into the superstructure at this hour. The fact of the matter is, it was almost too casual; so after having delivered my two admirals safely to their rightful places, I delayed a moment to see just what was taking place. Imagine my surprise a few seconds later to see them bring out a spindly legged, very ordinary metal mess table, -- set it in the place of honor, hurriedly cover it with a large green felt cover that almost touched the deck -- and then disappear into the milling throng.

"Neatly done", I mused. And because of all the activity up there, I think there were very few people cognizant of the swindle. To think that one of the greatest documents in the history of the world was to be signed on an ordinary seaman's mess table. I really had to laugh about it. Three days ago, the powers that be had been so concerned over getting a suitable piece of furniture for today -- a table worthy of this momentous occasion. And now finally -- this. Such are the vignettes of life.

At 0800, the word began spreading around to all hands that "That destroyer right out there is the one thats bringing the Jap representatives"; so whenever we had the opportunity, we peered intently at this newly found interest and much speculation ensued as to how they would act, how they must feel, etc., etc.

Shortly after 0800, I noticed Admiral Halsey making his way down the ladder to the main deck and on up to the quarterdeck where he joined Captain Murray, our Skipper. All of us are fond of our Captain. He is a big easy going guy that just sort of takes everything in his stride. Practically all of the Admirals that came aboard seemed to know him pretty well, most of them greeting him with his nickname, "Sunshine". We always thoroughly enjoyed this bit of good fellowship of which the "old man" was the recipient.

But the fact that Admiral Halsey had gone to the quarterdeck meant only one thing -- Cincpac must be arriving. Quickly scanning the water, I noticed a 5 star barge close aboard, making its approach to our accomodation ladder -- thus confirming the fact. The shrill

whistle of the bosn's pipe momentarily silenced everyone and the next instant, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz stepped lightly up the ladder and came aboard. It was a thrill I'll never forget. I had never seen him in person and wondered just how he would impress me -- the man who had started with an almost hopeless task 4 years ago and yet, had finally turned the tide so brilliantly.

I find it difficult to describe my many instantaneous impressions, but Admiral Nimitz was one of the most clean cut, intelligent looking individuals I have ever seen. He looked every inch a great man, yet his bright blue eyes bespoke a humbleness seldom found in a conqueror. There wasn't the remotest sign of haughtiness or grandeur about him. He spoke softly, courteously to everyone, yet he was a leader -- a great leader -- and there was never a doubt in your mind. "Here", I thought to myself, "is a man whose own personality is one of the greatest tribute to the United States of America that I have ever seen. No wonder we won the war." And then a little sentimentally, perhaps -- "How proud his mother would be ."

At this particular time, the photographers were having a heyday. The monotonous whir of movie cameras was heard from all directions and there were so many flash bulbs exploding it looked like a 4th of July celebration. Halsey and Nimitz saluted, then smiled and shook hands. the photographers mob followed them all the way to the Admiral's cabin where the two famous men disappeared inside.

Scuttlebutt had it that a small boat had been dispatched to the destroyer which had the Jap representatives aboard, so we all felt sure if they were going to bring them aboard now, that it must be about time for General of the Armies, Douglas MacArthur to arrive. Or as he is affectionately referred to by most of us in the service, --"Sug-out Doug".

Inasmuch as he had been appointed Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, he would be S.O.P. (Senior Officer Present) today. At this point I wish to emphasize the bit of diplomacy in this title. He is the Supreme Commander FOR the Allied Powers -- not OF the Allied Powers, and everyone is constantly reminded not to forget it. In this way, he represents all Allied Nations, whereas and if one uses the word "of", one automatically insinuates that he is commander OF the Allied Nations. And that wouldn't be cricket you see.

About 0850, a messenger reported to the O.O.D. that the destroyer bringing MacArthur was coming alongside to port, so the Skipper left the quarterdeck at once for the other side of the ship. The word spread over the ship like wildfire and almost immediately the photographers began jockeying for choice positions on top of turret I, the main deck around the forward part of the superstructure, and up on the surrender deck. Everyone was craning their necks for a better view, and here again the good fortune of being one of the escorts was going to pay dividends. We all knew General MacArthur would have to come around the forward superstructure and those of us on the quarterdeck had an unobstructed view of this area. It was another exciting moment for most of us as was the case with the majority of these famous men. We had heard about, read about, and seen many many pictures of MacArthur but to actually see him in person, and in the role he would play here today, it would be another great moment in our lives -- one our grandchildren will talk about and discuss with pride.

I could see the photographers on the port side of the ship and up on turret I start their cameras just a few seconds before General MacArthur and his party came into view. It was a great thrill to see him

come swinging along with those long smooth strides of his, chin high, just as I had seen him do in so many newsreels these past four years. The minute I saw him I knew why he had been successful in returning to the Phillipines.

Here was a man with keen gray eyes, determined, sure of himself -- a shrewd tactician, a stern ruler, a man in complete command of any situation. All at once, I was very glad he was going to be in charge of the occupation of Japan -- you knew instinctively somehow that this man wouldn't handle the Nips with kid gloves; they would never pull the wool over his eyes. And you knew also that when his job was finished, it would be thorough and complete. He was a fine looking officer, and I was very impressed. He quickly ran the gauntlet of flash bulbs and movie cameras and moved on up to the Admiral's cabin where he was greeted by Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Halsey.

Now that General MacArthur was aboard, we all knew that just as soon as the Japs arrived, the surrender ceremonies would begin. This was probably the highlight of the day. Naturally we were all thrilled and very proud to have been even a small part of this momentous occasion but our curiosity to see the Japanese representatives, to observe their actions and reactions -- our hidden desire to revel in their humiliation and subjection -- just to see these arrogant, brutal, two-faced little individuals being stripped completely of all they possessed far overshadowed anything else that might happen. Here now we could really play the part of the conqueror and thoroughly enjoy it.

It was approximately 0858 when they arrived. There were 11 of them -- four army officers, four naval officers and three civilian representatives, one of whom was the Premier of Japan, Mr. Shigemitsu. The Premier only had one good leg, the other being artificial, and walked very badly.

The military representatives had on clean but rather ill-fitting uniforms and of course, their funny little caps. The Premier and one other civilian, were impeccably attired in formal morning clothes even to the high silk hats which looked about as out of place as an elephant at a horse show. The other civilian wore a seersucker suit. I wondered how they flet as they were dressing early this morning for this affair.

Premier Shigemitsu wasn't a bad looking little fellow, but he seemed mighty unhappy and downtrodden as he hobbled along, his eyes darting furtively at the many curious faces that lined his path. One of these civilian representatives was a little pasty-faced individual with hard cruel eyes that looked neither to the right or left. He followed along after the Premier with his jaw set and eyes filled with contempt. As one of my friends expressed it, "He looks like death warmed over."

Both the naval and army representatives were high ranking officers and were wearing many decorations but no arms of any type. Two of these fellows seemed docile enough but the other ones looked like they would cut your throat for a nickle. All were proud and walked with their heads high, but none of them were quite sure whether or not they should salute the O.O.D. and other of our officers on the quarterdeck. One of the naval officers did finally, and the others confusedly followed his actions. Their salutes were returned.

From the very moment the Japs had first appeared over the side of the ship, the photographers' 3 ring circus began once more and with an even greater fury than previously. The 11 Japs were escorted by armed Marines up to the surrender deck to their previously appointed places and the ceremonies were ready to begin.

By 0900, everyone was in his designated position, and at 0902, General MacArthur took his place by the table and immediately began his address to all present -- and to the world by radio. It was short and to the point, requiring about ten minutes in all. When he had finished, he said, "The Japanese representative will now sign for the Japanese Empire". and Premier Shigemitsu, assisted by the other statesman, walked slowly to the table and sat down. He wrote his name in Japanese characters and seemed forever doing it -- I thought he would never finish. When he had signed the first document, he moved it hesitatingly to one side and signed the other without looking up. When he had finally completed both, he looked up for just a moment rather sheepishly at General MacArthur standing at his full height on the opposite side of the table, then arose and returned to his place with the others.

MacArthur said, "I will now sign for the Allied Nations and ask that Lt. General Wainwright and Lt. General Percival join me at this time."

General Wainwright was a tall gaunt ghost of a man having just been liberated a few days ago from several years interment in a Japanese prison camp. He had fallen with the other heroes of Corregidor three long years ago.

General Percival was the British hero in command during the siege of Singapore. Both he and Wainwright had much cause for rejoicing to have the Japs bowing low before them at last, but they were grim men as they took their places behind MacArthur while he signed.

At this particular time, Gen. MacArthur set a precedent followed by all others who signed here today. It was most unusual and was one of the main topics of discussion the rest of the day. He took one of the pens on the table and began writing his name. When he had written "D-O-U-G", he paused, turned and handed the pen to General Wainwright. He then took another pen from the table and finished his first name, upon completion of which, he turned and handed this second pen to General Percival.

He now withdrew two fountain pens from his pocket, using both to sign his last name. These he placed back in his pocket when finished. When he was ready to sign the second document, he used two more pens from the table which he promptly gave away when he had completed signing the second set.

For purposes of clarification, there were two identical copies of the Articles of Surrender -- one for the Allies Nations and the other for the Japanese Empier.

MacArthur now stood up and Wainwright and Percival took their previous positions. MacArthur spoke again: "The representative for the Republic of China will now sign." And so on down the line. After China came the United Kingdom, then the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of Canada, the Republic of France, the Commonwealth of New Zealand, and finally, the United Kingdom of Netherlands.

As each of these representatives came forward to sign, they were always accompanied by usually two other representatives from their own country who would stand behind them and who were usually the recipient of the several fountain pens each of the signatories used in signing his name.

This all went off very smoothly with the exception of the time when one of the representatives, the Canadian I believe it was, signed his name on the wrong line. The Japanese Premier noticed this error and

immediately began objecting very strenuously that this constituted the documents invalid, etc., etc., and that he could not accept it. Gen. Somerville, Chief of Staff to MacArthur, and General "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell however, who happened to be near the table at that time, quickly crossed out the name of one country and filled in the names correctly; and then MacArthur, in a very positive voice, firmly informed the Premier that the document was valid and that nothing more would be said about it. The Jap looked around at the others then back at MacArthur, blinked his eyes a couple of times, nodded, and backed away to where he belonged.

When the Netherland's representative had completed his signature and returned to his place, General MacArthur stepped forward and in a loud clear voice said, "These proceedings are closed." At this precise second the sun broke thru the clouds and its warm rays flooded the earth just as though God was rejoicing because peace on earth, good will toward men reigned supreme once more.

The flash bulbs and movie cameras which had been rather quiet during the proceedings, now were unleashed once more as MacArthur finished and the Japs were led away for return to the destroyer. Their faces were mostly devoid of expression as they left the ship. I was a little amused at the two naval officers however because of the respectful way in which they glanced up at our towering superstructure as they walked down the accomodation ladder to the small boat awaiting them.

The only other time I had seen any noticeable change in their expressions was about half way thru the ceremony when 400 B-29's and 1800 carrier based planes flew over the ship. It was a startling and most effective show of power to see this many airplanes flying over us at one time and in such tight formations. The roar of the motors was deafening and the sky was black with their silhouettes nearly as far as the eye could see. Everyone of the Japs on board looked up at the planes as they droned majestically, almost ominously, overhead. And although none of the little men spoke to each other, let alone even look at one another, I could tell they found it difficult to believe their eyes. It was even hard for me to believe. I knew of course that we had this many planes out here but I had never seen even half this many in the air at one time. And I don't suppose I'll ever see this many again, but I know I'll never forget this particular sky full of planes.

After the Japs had gone, and General MacArthur had returned to the Admiral's cabin, everything became very informal and almost immediately there were many little groups talking and laughing and just having a good time in general.

The photographers took a few shots of these informal gatherings, but they and the war correspondents left the ship about twenty minutes after the ceremonies had come to a close -- they were anxious to get their pictures developed and their stories written and on the way to a waiting world. This all came about without the least confusion. In fact, this large group of men disappeared almost as if by magic -- one moment they were here and the next they were gone.

At 1000 General MacArthur's destroyer came alongside again, and about 1005 he left us to return to the Japanese Emperor's summer place which he had taken over as his headquarters.

Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Halsey up on the 02 level just outside the Admiral's cabin, talked together for quite awhile and finally Admiral

Nimitz left in his 5 star barge about 1045.

I had gone into the wardroom for a cup of coffee after MacArthur departed and didn't come out on deck again until I heard that Admiral Nimitz was preparing to leave. By that time about a third of the guests had left the ship and by 1115 the ship actually looked deserted. It was unbelievable! It seemed incredible that just two hours before, the ceremonies had just begun and that the ship had been literally covered with correspondents, admirals, generals, sailors, and "what have you." A few men were engaged now in removing the last of the scaffolding, one sailor was filling empty cardboard cartons with what appeared to be thousands of used flash bulbs, a couple more were completing their sweep down, and by 1130 everything was ship-shape once again -- all visitors had departed -- and normal shipboard routine was resumed. At long last the Peace Treaty for the most horrible war in the history of the world had finally been signed and the ceremonies were ended.

At noon time we had a delicious buffet luncheon and all the "gold braid" we had anticipated so everything was swell. The expressions one heard most were, "Well, the war is officially over -- still can't believe it", or "Boy, the ceremonies sure went off without a hitch, didn't they", and, accompanied with big grins. "New York, here I come! Stand from under!"

Yes, the war is now officially over and we are all more than ready to start for home -- our mouths water everytime we think about it. Well it really won't be long now -- we shove off from Tokyo here on September 6th, to arrive in Guam on the 9th. A couple of days at Guam and then on the 12th we head for "Pearl", being due in there the 20th. Our orders indicate departing "Pearl" on the 29th for the long, almost 5000 mile trip to the Panama Canal, arriving October 12th. We lay over that night in Balboa and transit the canal the next day, the 13th. Then out into the beautiful blue Cariabean, up through the Windward Passage in the West Indies, up past the Bahamas, to arrive Norfolk the 18th. A few days there and then finally New York and my beloved family.

It all seems so unreal. So beautiful and utterly impossible. Being out here is, I imagine, a lot like being in prison -- day after day, week after week, month after month you dream of the time when you will be sent home, but that time never comes. So many times you think it never will. As I sit here at my typewriter, I am filled with many mingled emotions. We will soon return to civilization -- after almost a year -- once again we will see flowers and shrubs, and grass -- nice soft green grass -- we'll see automobiles and lots of people on paved streets. There'll be department stores, dime stores, smart shops, restaurants, theaters, night clubs-- just think!

And best of all, there will be our many friends and families. All the people who have worried about us -- those in whose hearts we live -- those we dearly love and wondered so many times if we would ever see again.

This great ship is quiet tonight. Practically everyone is asleep and dreaming of the glorious days that lie ahead for those of us who are lucky enough to be going home. In all this echoing stillness, I solemnly thank God for having restored peace to this war-torn world.

My cup runneth over.

THE END