The Final Days - August 1945

USS Missouri (BB 63) : Flag Ship Third Fleet (Fleet Admiral William F. Halsey)

As witnessed by Captain Arthur H. Taylor (later promoted to Rear Admiral)
Japan Surrenders... WWII is Over

Tokyo Bay

September 2, 1945
After 3 successful patrols, “Art” or “Otts” Taylor was asked by Rear Admiral Lockwood (Commander Submarines Pacific) to “Fix the Damn Torpedo Problem!”

He and his Chief Torpedoman from USS HADDOCK (SS 231) developed a means for testing the errant Mk-14 torpedos firing pins and came up with a solution where the torpedos could be modified right there in Pearl Harbor.

**Submariner**
- **Skipper:** USS Haddock (SS 231)
- 3 Patrols in 1942-1943 (Sinking or damaging 10 Japanese ships)
- (2) Navy Cross
- Silver Star
- Presidential Unit Citation (awarded to HADDOCK)
- **Staff Commander Submarine Pacific**
- Legion of Merit
The Third Fleet’s final operations in Japanese waters were in the summer of 1945, launching air attacks on Tokyo, Japanese naval bases, and firing on various coastal cities with naval gunfire in preparations for Operation Olympic, the invasion of the Japanese Home Islands scheduled to begin on 1 November 1945.
USS Missouri (BB 63) … last battleship of the 20th century

- The Third Fleet flag ship, USS MISSOURI, was a relatively new battleship and had only been on the war front in the Pacific for a little more than a year
- Launched January 1944
- Displacement: 45,000 tons
- 887 feet long
- (9) 16” guns, (20) 5” guns, (80) 40 mm guns, (49) 20mm guns
- Iowa Class: one of 4 largest US battleships
- Japan had 2 battleships larger: 73,000 tons (sunk in 1944 & 1945)
- USS MISSOURI decommissioned in 1992 (Action in World War II, Korea, and the Persian Gulf)
- Final Home: Pearl Harbor; maintained by the USS Missouri Memorial Association

Firing 16” guns

(Range: 24 miles; each projectile weighed as much as 2700 pounds… much more than a VW Beetle)
War in Europe is Over…
Time to Force Japan to Surrender

- By March ’45 the newly promoted Captain Taylor had reported for duty aboard USS Missouri as Admiral Halsey’s Gunnery and Submarine specialist

- By May 7th Germany officially surrendered to the Allies, bringing an end to the European conflict in WW II

- By late May, the U.S. was engaged in heavy fighting with the Japanese on Okinawa sustaining more than 75,000 casualties

- In late July 1945 the Allies declared at Potsdam that the Japanese must unconditionally surrender… what were their choices?

Captain Arthur H. Taylor
Third Fleet Gunnery/Submarine Assistant Chief of Staff

"The last year of the war on Missouri was the most scary part"
MISSOURI was struck by a Japanese Kamikaze

Three weeks after reporting on board, MISSOURI was struck by a Japanese Kamikaze suicide aircraft during Battle of Okinawa.

The dent on the Missouri caused by the kamikaze attack can still be seen.

The Fleet's next major combat operation would have been Operation Olympic, the invasion of the Japanese Home Islands scheduled to begin on November 1st.

“I felt much safer in my sub HADDOCK while being depth-charged where the enemy couldn’t see me... at least there I felt I was in charge of the situation!”

Captain Taylor after Kamikazi attack
President Harry Truman: Alternatives at his disposal for ending the war

- Invade the Japanese mainland (Operation Olympic)
- Hold a demonstration of the destructive power of the atomic bomb for Japanese dignitaries
- Drop an atomic bomb on selected industrial Japanese cities
- Bomb and blockade the islands
- Wait for Soviet entry into the war on August 15
- Or mediate a compromised peace
The Japanese ability to fight had been seriously hampered in the preceding months.

- Their navy had ceased to exist as an effective fighting force and the air corps had been decimated.
- American B-29's made bombing runs over military targets on the Japanese mainland.
- **Allied submarine campaign** and the **mining of Japanese coastal waters** had largely destroyed the Japanese merchant fleet.
- Yet, Japanese resolve stayed strong as their idea of a bloody "house to house" invasion of the Japanese mainland would produce many, many more American and Allied casualties.
Operation Olympic

- Operation Olympic, a full scale landing of United States armed forces, was already planned for Kyushu on November 1, 1945

- Depending on the degree to which Japanese civilians would have resisted the invasion, estimates ran up into the millions for Allied casualties.
From about 26 July, 1945 onward, dispatches (naval message traffic) received on board USS Missouri, flagship of Commander Third Fleet, were indications that efforts toward ending the war in the Pacific were underway at the highest levels.
Altogether, there were 7 terms of the Potsdam Declaration including one that declared that

“The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives”

Final term of the Potsdam declaration:

“...The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.”
The Japanese Imperial Government reviewed the Potsdam Ultimatum with much trepidation, especially when it considered the future of the Emperor.

NOTE: Post-war documents indicated that the Japanese Government was already considering surrender as early as the spring of 1944.

“Through the Swiss Government Japan stated that she is willing to accept Allied surrender ultimatum issued at Potsdam provided they can keep their Emperor.”
So after Japanese government leaders had apparently rejected the Potsdam Declaration, President Truman authorized use of the atomic bomb anytime after August 3, 1945.

This decision was made only after much consideration, including moral, political and militarily… the President’s concern for the potential loss of a million or more Allied troops during an invasion tipped the balance.

“The only language they seem to understand is the one we have been using to bombard them. When you have to deal with a beast you have to treat him as a beast.” President Truman
In Japan: One Last Fight... Or Not

- In Japan hard-liners were concerned about Allied policies regarding
  - Unconditional surrender
  - Occupation
  - Disarmament
  - Elimination of militarism
  - Democratic reforms Punishment of war criminals

- And the status of the **Emperor**... above all, the **removal of the Emperor** was not acceptable to the Japanese leadership
Interpretation … Did Japan Really Reject the Potsdam Declaration?

According to the commonly accepted story, Japan chose to spurn the Potsdam Declaration of July 26, 1945, which called upon her to surrender, and thereby brought down upon her head the atomic bombing and the Russian declaration of war against her. A close examination of the Japanese response to the Potsdam Declaration will show, however, that the Japanese government never intended to reject the Potsdam Declaration. Its policy was that of mokusatsu, which was quite a different thing from rejection.¹

The subsequent course of events predicated on the assumption that Japan had rejected the Potsdam Declaration represents a tragedy of errors for which the major responsibility must be attributed to the inexcusable bungling of the Japanese officials. But some measure of responsibility also rests upon the more excusable but unfortunate deficiency in perception on the part of the Western allied leaders and upon the calculated reluctance of the Russian authorities to share their information with their Western allies.

* Mokusatsu translates to mean “stupid,” not rejection!
No Choice

On August 6, 1945, an American B-29 bomber dropped the world's first deployed atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

Three days later, a second B-29 dropped another A-bomb on Nagasaki.
“Cease Offensive Action”

“The story of Five Disquieting Days, That Ended in the Last Carrier Strike of the War, on Tokyo, and Which Brought a Cessation of Hostilities, if not Peace, to the Rampaging Third Fleet… as witnessed from Admiral Halsey’s Flagship, the USS Missouri”

by Lieutenant Dana R. Bergh, USNR

August 10th: A young Navy lieutenant starts writing in his journal

This is a bit of the story of how the officers and men in the flagship of Commander Third Fleet drifted toward a state of peace, and, it is prayed, to a final "Victory Over War Day."

* * * * * *

It is generally agreed that "peace" first came to most of the wardroom officers of the MISSOURI shortly after Brenda Joyce emerged in her sarong from Tarzan's penthouse, deep in the heart of Africa. The radio operator, therefore, would have been copying the flash while the UCLA dream girl was still tip-toeing through the steaming jungle, clad in her well-tailored white suit, with accessories to match. That would make it about 2105 on the night of August tenth, east longitude time.

The flag wardroom is two decks above. Under discussion was a flash report from the San Francisco Army News Service that the Japs were willing to accept the terms of the Potsdam Ultimatum provided the Emperor could remain on his white horse. Nothing official had yet been received. Nor had the rumor interrupted the Admiral's movie except for a few minutes. But it is not hard to understand how the realities of Esther Williams could demand higher priority of attention than would another unconfirmed, unofficial report that the Japs were calling "Unc.
Divisions within the Japanese leadership

- Despite suffering destruction from two atomic bombs on Japan on the 6th and 9th of August, for the most part, the Imperial military-dominated cabinet initially favored continuing the war.
- A Japanese, surrender was unthinkable—Japan had never been successfully invaded or lost a war in its history.
- Hard-liners favored fighting one last "decisive" battle that would inflict so many casualties on the Allies that they would be willing to offer more lenient terms, but after much debate, they have seen no other course but to surrender.
- But it was Emperor Hirohito who made the final decision despite an attempt by several junior officers to carry out a military coup d’état moments before the Emperor addressed the Japanese people, through a recording made the night before, at 12:00 noon Japan standard time on August 15.
15 August 1945:
Japan Surrenders

The War is Over!

General MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers now in charge

“Army General Douglas MacArthur has been designated as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers...”
15 August 1945:  
Cease Fire!…

VJ DAY!

NOTE: A number of Japanese soldiers never “got the word” that the war was over (or didn’t believe it.) One Japanese soldier who hunkered down in the jungles of the Philippines for nearly three decades, refusing to believe that World War II had ended… he finally came out of the jungles in 1974… a few others held out even longer.

“Cease offensive operations against Japanese forces. Continue searches and patrols. Maintain defensive and internal security measures at highest levels and beware of treachery or last moment attacks by enemy forces or individuals”
15 August: General MacArthur sends his first message directly to the Emperor

“It is desired that a radio station in the Tokyo area be officially designated for continuous use in handling radio communications between this headquarters and your headquarters”
16 August: General MacArthur directs the Japanese High Command as how they should stand down

“Submarines will remain on surface fly a black flag or pennant and show lights at night. Report their positions and proceed on surface to nearest of following ports....”
16 August: Japan has surrendered...“Is this a real peace?”

(Lieutenant Bergh’s final journal entry)
Victory Dinner
Aboard MISSOURI

- VICTORY! Japan surrenders (August 15, 1945)
- Atomic bomb dropped over Hiroshima (August 6, 1945)
- Atomic bomb dropped over Nagasaki (August 9, 1945)
- An attempted military coup in Japan to prevent the Emperor to announce surrender fails (August 11-14, 1945)
Dispatches at Sea
(selections as saved by Capt A.H. Taylor)

18 August: Japanese Imperial Headquarters reports to MacArthur that Soviet forces were still carrying out offensive actions in Manchuria

Soviet Union had declared war on Japan on 9 August with the intent of occupying Manchuria

In November 1943, Stalin agreed that the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan once Nazi Germany was defeated

“As the result, the Japanese forces in Manchukuo (Manchuria) are meeting great difficulties in carrying out the Imperial (cease fire) order.”
21 August: MacArthur sends details regarding plans for his arrival in Tokyo Bay and for the **Surrender Ceremony** initially planned for 31 August 1945

“The Allied Powers will receive from the duly authorized representatives of the Japanese Emperor via the Japanese Government and the Japanese headquarters the proclamation signed by the Emperor of Japan and the instrument of surrender to be signed as indicated at this ceremony”
First Priority: Free our POWs!

- 25 August: First list of naval POWs being held by the Japanese is released.

- There were more than 140,000 allied prisoners in Japanese prisoner of war camps.

- Of these, one in three died from starvation, work, punishments or from diseases for which there were no medicines to treat.
Condition of American POWs

29 August: Initial reports concerning condition of American POWs:

“...worst malnutrition imaginable...bestial beatings...den of barbarism...”

Captain Taylor reports Commander Hurt is OK (he was skipper of a sub sunk early in the war; one of Capt. Taylor’s Naval Academy classmates)

“There has never been a Blacker Hell Hole than the prisoner of war hospital we are evacuating ½ north of Omori. Approximately 500 have been processed through benevolence including fractures, open wounds, concussions, burns and general the worst malnutrition imaginable. Bestial beatings were common especially at Ofuna the inquisitorial den of barbarism. Captain Taylor reports Commander Hurt is OK at Ashio”
Beware of Enemy Forces Who Had Not Received the Word!

26-27 August: Messages regarding missing Japanese submarines... initially one, then a second, but both found later on surface flying black flag...
Super-sized Subs Were to Bomb California in Late September 1945

- The I-400 Class Japanese subs could stow up to three float planes each in a specially designed hangers

- Each sub was 400 feet long; carried enough fuel to go around the world one-and-a-half times

- It had been planned for the first five I-400 submarines to deploy near the waters of Southern California at night, allowing them to launch their aircraft and drop biological weapons on the intended target, which would infect the entire Western seaboard and kill tens of thousands of people.

- The plan was scheduled for September 22, 1945... fortunately for us, Japan had surrendered before they could deploy these submarines on their mission

*US subs were about 311 feet long
MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay

- 27 August: USS Missouri and Task Force 58 under Admiral Halsey steam into Tokyo Bay 150 ships-strong
- MISSOURI anchored at the same spot where Commodore Perry had been in 1853
- Surrender Ceremony now changed to 2 September

The Supreme Command Allied Powers (SCAP) ...
...Gen. MacArthur

“Surrender Time now set by SCAP as 0900 2 September”
Surrender Ceremony Plan

The following in order of seniority:

Fleet Admiral Chester W. NIMITZ
Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr.
Admiral Richmond K. Turner
Vice Admiral John H. Tower
Vice Admiral John S. Dreea
Vice Admiral Charles A. Lockwood, Jr.
Vice Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson
Vice Admiral Frederick C. Sherman
Lieutenant General Hoy S. Greer, USMC
Rear Admiral John F. Sharples, Jr.
Rear Admiral Donald R. Beery
Rear Admiral Oscar C. Baker
Rear Admiral Howard P. Kimball
Rear Admiral James C. Jones, Jr.
Rear Admiral Wilder D. Easby
Rear Admiral Lynde H. McClellan
Rear Admiral Inman C. Sheriff
Rear Admiral Lloyd J. Wilke
Rear Admiral Gerald F. Nolan
Rear Admiral Robert B. Caseby
Rear Admiral Arthur W. Blyth
Rear Admiral Donald R. Duncan
Rear Admiral Thomas H. Oxford
Rear Admiral Forrest L. Sherman
Rear Admiral Thomas L. Sprague
Rear Admiral John J. Ballentine
Rear Admiral C.M. Stagg
Rear Admiral Carl Hollen

Brigadier General Norman C. Feldman, USA
Commodore Oliver S. Kessing
Commodore Joel T. Rogers (NC)
Commodore John F. Holmes
Brigadier General W. T. Clement, USMC
Brigadier General J. H. Fellows, USMC
Commodore Roland H. Shott
Commander Roger W._Structure
Commodore John M. Hingins
Commodore Joseph C. Grobin
Captain Tom H. Hill
Colonel Theodore J. Dayhuff, USA
Captain Harold W. Kear
Captain William D. Anderson
Captain Ralph E. Wilson
Captain Edwin J. Lydon
Captain John G. Cross
Captain Fitzgerald Lee
Captain Marion C. Green
Captain Herbert L. Moore
Captain Arthur H. Taylor
Commander M. Ward
Commander Howell A. Lind
Major Roy Cowley, USAF
Lt. Commander Kaufman
Lieutenant Stringer
On the day prior to the Surrender Ceremony it was reported to the staff on board MISSOURI that the Japanese foreign minister had a wooden leg as the result of having lost it in Shanghai several years before.

Since General MacArthur had stipulated that the Japanese surrender party was not to be on board the ship before 0900, the Missouri’s captain ordered a rehearsal of the arrival of the Japanese emissaries and ordered a sailor with a mop handle in one pant leg to practice how long it would take the foreign minister to get out of the small boat and then make his way up the ladder to the main deck.

It was decided that it would take the minister 4 minutes to make his way aboard.
8 Sideboys Tend the Japanese Emissaries

- A sideboy is a member of an even-numbered group of seamen posted in two rows at the quarterdeck when a visiting dignitary boards or leaves the ship, historically to help (or even hoist) him aboard, in a ceremony known as tending the Side.

- The piping continues and salutes are held while the visitor has passes between the two rows of sideboys until the officer of the deck receives him.

Sideboys Standing By to Pipe Japanese Foreign Minister Aboard USS Missouri

The Foreign Minister, Mamoru Shigemitsu, is seen tipping his hat in a salute as he “Request Permission to Come Aboard”
Surrender Ceremony

- Japanese foreign minister, Maroru Shigemitsu, signs the Japanese Instrument of Surrender on board USS Missouri, followed by others who signed for the Japanese government and the Imperial armed forces.

Signed at Tokyo Bay, Japan at 0904 I on the second day of September, 1945

Two copies of the Article of Surrender were signed, one for the Allies (bound in leather) and one for Japan (bound in canvas).
Articles of Surrender

“We hereby proclaim the unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers of the Japanese imperial General Headquarters and of all Japanese armed forces and all armed forces under Japanese control wherever situated.”

NOTE: The state of war between the United States and Japan officially ended on April 28, 1952 when the Treaty of San Francisco took effect.
Fleet Admiral Nimitz Signs Surrender as U.S. Representative

- General MacArthur signed the Articles of Surrender on Behalf of the Allied Forces
- Fleet Admiral Nimitz Signed on Behalf of the United States
- The Surrender document was drawn up on parchment paper well over a century old, located in a monastery in Manila

Fleet Admiral Nimitz presented this autograph photo in 1957:

“To Rear Admiral Arthur H. Taylor, USN — with best wishes and great appreciation
C.W. Nimitz, Fleet Admiral, U.S. Navy”
MacArthur Speaks to America

• At the conclusion of the Surrender Ceremony, General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, made a radio address that included these words:

“Today the guns are silent. A great tragedy has ended. A great victory has been won. The skies no longer rain death -- the seas bear only commerce men everywhere walk upright in the sunlight. The entire world is quietly at peace. The holy mission has been completed.”
The Flyover

- A massive aerial demonstration was conducted over the MISSOURI to ensure the Japanese never forgot the power brought to their shores to guarantee victory.

- The noise was so loud that no one could hear to speak until the aircrews had passed.

Five days after the surrender had been signed, General MacArthur went ashore to the American Embassy and hoisted the American flag... it was the same flag flown over the U.S. Capitol on December 7, 1941.
A Father & Son at the Surrender Ceremony

Admiral John S. McCain, Sr, commanded the fast carrier task force through the Battle of Okinawa and raids on the Japanese mainland.

His son, CDR John S McCain, Jr, a submariner, met his father after the surrender.

The senior McCain died in San Francisco four days later.

The CDR McCain was the skipper of a prize crew that took one of the Japanese subs back to Pearl Harbor; he later became a four star admiral making for the first father and son pair to achieve four-star rank.

His son is John S. McCain, former naval aviator and Vietnam POW, is now a US Senator.

The wife of Admiral McCain, Roberta McCain, turned 106 on 7 February, 2018!

I have known Senator McCain’s younger brother, Joe, since I was five years old; to my recollection, my longest known friend.

From 1967-'69 I was the aide and flag lieutenant to Admiral McCain.

Admiral passed away in 1981.
“Japanese People Forever Renounce War as a Sovereign Right of the Nation….”

Under U.S. occupation and with Emperor Hirohito still in place, Japan eventually adopted a new constitution, enacted on May 3, 1947.

The drafting process was complicated, with Japanese leaders initially reluctant to adopt a new document in place of the Meiji constitution that had served as the country’s foundational document since the late-19th century.

Ultimately, much of the text of the famous post-war constitution was written by American lawyers.

The document was written with consideration of the Meiji constitution and input from pacifist Japanese politicians at the time.

Most famously, the document included an article unlike any other constitution. Article 9 of the constitution noted that the “Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.”

Guns Silenced as Peace Takes Reign
Imperial Japanese Battle Flag
Postcard from our dad!

Masters Pat & Tony Taylor
206 S. Cherry Grove Ave
Annapolis, Maryland
CERTIFYING THE PRESENCE OF:

Captain Arthur H. TAYLOR, USN

at the formal surrender of the Japanese Forces to the Allied Powers.
70th Anniversary of the End of World War II

- September 2, 2015: Ceremony aboard USS Missouri in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

- USS Missouri is moored at Ford Island just aft of USS Arizona Memorial

- USS Missouri (BB 63) Today
Tony and Brigitta at the 70th Anniversary of the End of WWII along with longtime friend, Joe McCain, whose grandfather, Admiral John S. McCain, was also present at the signing of the Surrender in 1945

Battleship Missouri Memorial Museum in the wardroom with a display of some of the memorabilia donated by Captain Patterson and Captain Anthony Taylor in 2015
1965: Rear Admiral Arthur H. Taylor Retires

Tony & Pat at our Father's Retirement

Now at Peace in Arlington Cemetery (1905-1982)

38 years of Service to His Country