

SURRENDER

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ABOARD THE U.S.S. *MISSOURI*, TOKYO BAY—For a while it looked as though the proceedings would go off with almost unreasonable smoothness. Cameramen assigned to the formal surrender ceremonies aboard the battleship *Missouri* arrived on time and, although every inch of the turrets and housings and life rafts above the veranda deck where the signing was to take place was crowded, no one fell off and broke a collarbone.

The ceremonies themselves even started and were carried on according to schedule. It took a Canadian colonel to bring things back to normal by signing the surrender document on the wrong line.

No one had the heart to blame the colonel, though. A mere colonel was bound to get nervous around so much higher brass.

The other minor flaw in the ceremonial circus was that it was something of an anticlimax. Great historic events probably are always somewhat that way and this one, to those of us who had taken off three weeks before with the 11th Airborne Division from the Philippines, was even more so. We had started out thinking in terms of a sensational dash to the Emperor's palace in Tokyo, only to sweat it out on Okinawa and later off Yokohama.

When it did come, the signing aboard the *Missouri* was a show which lacked nothing in its staging. A cluster of microphones and a long table covered with a green cloth had been placed in the center of the deck. On the table lay the big ledger-size white documents of surrender bound in brown folders.

The assembly of brass and braid was a thing to see—a lake of gold and silver sparkling with rainbows of decorations and ribbons. British and Australian Army officers had scarlet stripes on their garrison caps and on their collars. The French were more conservative except for the acres of vivid decorations on their breasts. The stocky leader of the Russian delegation wore gold shoulder-boards and red-striped trousers. The Dutch had gold-looped shoulder emblems. The British admirals wore snow-white summer uniforms with shorts and knee-length white stockings. The olive-drab of the Chinese was plain except for ribbons. The least decked-out of all were the Americans. Their hats, except for Adm. Halsey's go-to-hell cap, were gold-braided, but their uniforms were plain sun-tan. Navy regulations do not permit wearing ribbons or decorations on a shirt.

Lack of time prevented piping anyone over the side, and when Gen. MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied powers, came aboard he strode quickly across the veranda deck and disappeared inside the ship. Like the other American officers, he wore plain sun-tans. A few minutes later, a gig flying the American flag and operated by white-clad American sailors putted around the bow of the ship. In the gig, wearing formal diplomatic morning attire, consisting of black cutaway coat, striped pants and stovepipe hat, sat Foreign Minister Namoru Shigemitsu, leader of the Japanese delegation.

Coming up the gangway, Shigemitsu climbed very slowly because of a stiff left leg, and he limped onto the veranda deck with the aid of a heavy light-colored cane. Behind him came 10 other Japs. One wore a white suit; two more wore formal morning attire; the rest were dressed in pieced-out uniforms of the Jap Army and Navy. They gath-

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ered into three rows on the forward side of the green-covered table. The representatives of the Allied powers formed on the other side. When they were arranged, Gen. MacArthur entered and stepped to the microphone.

His words rolled sonorously: "We are gathered here, representatives of the major warring powers, to conclude a solemn agreement whereby peace may be restored." He emphasized the necessity that both victors and vanquished rise to a greater dignity in order that the world may emerge forever from blood and carnage. He declared his firm intention as Supreme Commander to "discharge my responsibility with justice and tolerance while taking all necessary dispositions to insure that the terms of surrender are fully, promptly and faithfully complied with."

The Japanese stood at attention during the short address, their faces grave but otherwise showing little emotion. When the representatives of the Emperor were invited to sign, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu hobbled forward, laid aside his silk hat and cane, and lowered himself slowly into a chair. The wind whipped his thin, dark hair as he reached into his pocket for a pen, tested it, then affixed three large Japanese characters to the first of the documents. He had to rise and bend over the table for the others.

The audience was conscious of the historic importance of the pen strokes, but it watched for something else, too. Gen. MacArthur had promised to present Gen. Wainwright, who had surrendered the American forces at Corregidor and until only a few days before had been a prisoner of war, with the first pen to sign the surrender. Shigemitsu finished and closed his pen and replaced it in his pocket. There could be no objection. He had needed a brush-pen for the Japanese letters.

When the big surrender folders were turned around on the table, Gen. MacArthur came forward to affix his signature as Supreme Commander. He asked Gen. Wainwright and Gen. Percival, who had surrendered the British forces at Singapore, to accompany him. Gen. MacArthur signed the first document and handed the pen to Gen. Wainwright. He used five pens in all, ending up with one from his own pocket.

Sailors have been as avid souvenir collectors in this war as anyone else, but when Adm. Nimitz sat down to sign for the U. S. he used only two pens. After that the representatives of China, the United Kingdom, Russia, Australia, Canada, France, the Netherlands and New Zealand put down their signatures.

As the big leather document folders were gathered a GI member of a sound unit recorded a few historic remarks of his own. "Brother," he said, "I hope those are my discharge papers."

(EDITOR'S NOTE:

the font changed as the article continued from page 2 to 3)