

ALL HANDS

THE BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL INFORMATION BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 1945

JAPS FINALLY QUIT

PERIOD 21 JULY THROUGH 20 AUGUST

War Grinds to Halt

The Mikado had announced complete and unconditional surrender to the Allies. Slowly arrangements were completed for the formal signing of the surrender (see p. 14). Meanwhile, on the many fronts that had made up the war in the Pacific, the war machine was grinding to a halt, not at one appointed hour, but over a period that covered days.

Several days after the surrender announcement, Japan was still fighting the Russians in Manchuria, Korea and the southern half of Sakhalin Island. Finally it took a stern Russian ultimatum to bring about mass surrenders of Jap troops, though some resistance continued.

The final phase of the Russian part of the war was marked by an unbroken string of Soviet successes that began on 9 August when the Reds smashed across the border of Outer Mongolia and into Manchuria. Other Russian columns struck into Manchuria from the north and east along the 2,000-mile front.

Main objective of at least three Russian armies in Manchuria was the great Jap arsenal city and communications hub, Harbin. Within a week after the Russo-Jap conflict began, the Russians were less than 180 miles from Harbin, having seized more than 20 strongpoints.

On 12 August, when the rest of the world was waiting for Japan to surrender, the Russians announced they had invaded Korea under cover of their Pacific Fleet. Quickly captured were the naval base of Rashin and the nearby port of Yuki.

The next day Tokyo declared that the Reds had landed on Karafuto Jap-held southern half of Sakhalin Island. The Soviet forces established beachheads on the west shore of the island within 30 miles of Japan.

Explaining the continuance of warfare beyond the Jap surrender to the Allies, the Russians said they would cease fighting only when the Jap forces laid down their arms. In keeping with this policy, Marshal Vasilevsky, commander of Russia's Far Eastern Armies, on 16 August ordered the Jap Kwantung army to surrender by noon, 20 August. A day before the deadline thousands of Jap troops began laying down arms and surrendering.

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FIRE BOMBS from B-29s drift in toward a target, the docks and warehouses at Osaka, during a day-light incendiary attack shortly before surrender.

The battleship *Haruna*, beached; converted battleship *Hyuga*, heavily damaged; battleship *Ise*, apparently resting on the bottom; heavy cruiser *Aoba*, guns silenced and stern on the bottom; cruiser *Oyodo*, lying on its side; cruiser *Tone* beached. Other heavily damaged vessels were the aircraft carriers *Amage* and *Katsuragi*; light cruiser *Kuma*. Other damaged vessels were the light aircraft carrier *Hosho*, the escort carrier *Kaiyo*, and several destroyers. In addition, 19 planes were shot down, 111 destroyed on the ground and 119 damaged on the ground. All told, 189 enemy ships were sunk or damaged and 283 planes destroyed or damaged.

Then on 30 July the 3d Fleet and units of the British Task Force co-operating with the 3d Fleet closed in on Japan, attacking with surface units and planes. The targets were near Tokyo, Nagoya and Maizuru. This time they concentrated on ground installations and transportation hubs.

During the final days of the war, the Navy's carrier aircraft concentrated on northern Honshu, inflicting heavy damage on industrial targets of Hamaishi on 9 Aug. One of the last blows struck, however, was directed at Wake Island, where the Japs had scored one of their earliest victories of this war.

By-passed Battles

Announcement of Japan's acceptance of surrender terms by President Truman on 14 August came at a time when powerful units of the U. S. Pacific Fleet were cruising off the Japanese mainland and hundreds of thousands of Army and Marine Corps troops were poised at advance bases in readiness for an invasion of the heart of Nippon's empire.

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This vise, closing around an ever-narrowing sphere of resistance, might seem to indicate that fighting which had raged over vast Pacific areas for the past three and a half years was now confined to the Jap home islands and to China.

Yet the surrender announcement found Japanese forces still battling Allied troops on islands hundreds of miles removed from the main theater of action—islands which in some cases had been the scenes of bloody campaigns as far back as three years ago, and which had been officially reported as secured.

Where fighting was still going on as the end of the war neared:

- in Bougainville in the Solomons, where Australians were in sight of the end of the campaign after nine months of fighting by them, following a year of American campaigns;
- on New Britain in the Bismarcks;
- in northeastern New Guinea;
- in the Philippines, where American and native forces on Luzon had compressed most of the Jap survivors in the southern Cordillera mountain ranges and in the foothills of the Sierra Madre mountains, while other units on Mindanao engaged in widely scattered clashes with enemy bands in the upper reaches of the Agusan River valley along the Kibawe-Tolomo trail;
- in Borneo, where Australian troops were conducting mopping-up operations in Brunei Bay, Tarakan and the southeast Borneo area of Balikpapan.

Meanwhile isolated Japanese forces on islands in the Marshalls, Carolines, Solomons, Bismarcks, New Guinea, Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines and Kurils had been taking a daily aerial pasting from shore-based Army and Marine Corps planes which bombed and strafed barracks, destroyed transport and fuel supplies, harbor buildings and river craft.

The spotlight had shifted from these actions but the Japs had not been neglected. Wherever a Jap garrison or stronger unit remained, it was being harassed and pounded from land, sea and air.

U. S. Ship Losses

A few minutes before President Truman announced Jap capitulation, the Navy disclosed the sinking of the heavy cruiser *Indianapolis* with 1,196 casualties—every man aboard. In one of the worst disasters of the war, the *Indianapolis* was sunk by torpedoes after delivering atomic bomb materials to Guam.

Casualties included five Navy dead, including one officer; 845 Navy missing, including 63 officers; 307 Navy wounded, including 15 officers; 30 Marine missing, including two officers, and nine enlisted Marine wounded. The skipper, Captain Charles B. McVay, USN, was among the wounded.

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Three days before the news of the *Indianapolis*, the Navy had announced that 113 vessels, previously unannounced for reasons of security, had been stricken from the Navy Register because of loss or damage either as the result of enemy action or perils of the sea. In addition, 45 LCTs, not previously mentioned, had been stricken from the Navy Register.

Included among the vessels stricken from the Register were the destroyers *Parrott*, *Tucker* and *Worden*. Eliminated, too, were the AKs *Aludra* and *Deimos* and the APA *Thomas Stone*. Also among these 113 vessels were a DE, 19 LSTs and 45 PTs.

The Navy announced also that three submarines—the *Bonefish*, *Lagarto* and *Snook*—were overdue and presumed lost. The destroyer *Callaghan* was lost in the Okinawa area as a result of enemy action.

On 11 August the Navy summarized its losses of the war, counting vessels sunk; overdue and presumed lost; destroyed to prevent capture; stricken due to loss or damage. The total was 434, including one battleship, 11 carriers, six heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, 70 destroyers, 10 destroyer escorts, 51 submarines and 282 miscellaneous.

On the credit side of the ledger, the Navy released two communiques on actions by our submarines in the Far East. The first report, dated 21 July, reported the sinking of 11 enemy vessels, including four combatant ships. On 10 August, the Navy said our subs had sunk 13 more enemy vessels, including a light cruiser.

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