

The disarming and occupation of Japan began on August 27th and is now completed. You have all set foot on the Jap homeland and have been able to see at first hand how completely our foe has been defeated.

The Imperial Navy's maximum battleship strength during the war totaled 12 - two of them commissioned after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The total number of aircraft carriers in the Imperial Fleet during the war was 27, all but nine of them put into commission after the start of hostilities. There were a total of 18 CL's in enemy Fleet, all in commission before 7 December 1941, 22 CL's, 5 of which were added during the period of hostilities; more than 200 DD's, some 75 of which were wartime commissionings; and about 210 SS's, nearly two-thirds of them commissioned during the war. At the end of hostilities, all that remained of this once potent fleet was the BB N. O. L. T. O., and 4 carriers, all damaged except 1 carrier, and all unarmed; 4 cruisers, 3 of them damaged and all unarmed, 38 DD's, 6 of which were damaged and at least 12 of them unarmed; and 51 SS's.

An interesting point to mention here is the fact that almost two-thirds of all naval personnel - 2,131,000 - were on duty afloat or at overseas posts at the time of the Japanese surrender. Of these, 118,000 officers and 1,152,000 men were aboard ships at sea.

During the war eleven US aircraft carriers were sunk and 30 others were damaged, by Japanese attacks. Those sunk were the LEXINGTON, YORKTON, WALSH, HORNET, PRINCETON, LISCOMBE BAY, RAMBER BAY, BLUNT 10, OMAHA BAY and BISMARCK SEA. Of the 14 large CV's operating in the Pacific during the early part of 1945, all but three - the BENNINGTON, ESSEX and HOWLERS - were damaged. A fact well worthy of the work performed by each and every member of the crew of the "Bony Bee".

Admiral Mitcher said, "In the Battle of the Pacific, carrier-air power has been a unique weapon, in a unique war. It was the decisive factor; for carrier supremacy destroyed the enemy's air force and his fleet. It accelerated the course of the war. It gave us bases for our final assault which, while it was still only in the preliminary air stage, forced the enemy's offer of surrender." We should be proud to have been such an important link in our Fleet, which defeated the Japanese.

In conclusion, the message received from Rear Admiral Sprague upon the BENNINGTON's detachment from Task Group FIFTY-EIGHT POINT TWO and departure from Tokyo Bay for the West Coast, is quoted:

FROM: CTG 58.2
ACTION: BENNINGTON

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MY H.I IS OFF TO THE SHIP THAT DID NOT MISS A DAY OF ACTION SINCE SHE JOINED THE FIGHT X YOU HAVE CONTRIBUTED YOUR FULL SHARE TO THE

FINAL VICTORY AND YOU CAN BE JUSTLY PROUD OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS X
W.Y GOOD LUCK AND SUCCESS CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE SHIP'S COMPANY OF

BIG BEN X I'M PROUD OF YOU X GOD BLESS AND HAPPY LANDINGS UNTIL WE
MEET AGAIN X SPRAGUE IX

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