



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet**  
**Admiral Scott H. Swift**

*70th Anniversary*  
*End of WW II Commemoration*  
*Battleship Missouri Memorial*  
*September 2, 2015*  
*As prepared for delivery*

Senator Hirono, Senator Schatz, Congresswoman Gabbard, and Congressman Takai of the Hawaii delegation, Chairman Forbes, Congressman Courtney and delegation members who traveled here from Washington D.C., Admiral Harris, ladies and gentlemen, it's an honor to speak with you this morning here on the decks of the USS Missouri.

I'd like to thank the USS Missouri Memorial Association for organizing this event. It was on this ship, in Tokyo Bay, that representatives of the allied powers and Japan ended World War II by signing the Instrument of Surrender on September 2nd, 1945.

Spin the calendar head 70 years to the day, and we gather here only a ship's length away from the USS Arizona, perhaps the most famous icon representing the beginning of the War in the Pacific for so many Americans. Many Arizona Sailors remain entombed within the ship they served, a reminder to all of those who serve our nation do so without regard for reward or destiny.

It is telling that many of those who survived the attack chose, upon their passing, to be interred alongside their shipmates, a solemn reminder that the prosperity we enjoy today was delivered by a generation committed to ensuring future generations would have as much, or more, than they did. Those whose destiny was to serve in USS Arizona on December 7th, 1941 honor us today as they stand an eternal watch, an example any one of us would be proud to emulate.

Like all who lost their lives during World War II, they guard an enduring peace that has allowed former enemies to become friends. As just one example, a young Japanese Imperial Navy pilot who participated in the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor had a son who is now my very good friend and shipmate, Admiral Kawano, the chairman of the Japan Self-Defense Force Joint Staff. In 1943, here in Pearl Harbor, a young U.S. Navy Ensign fresh from the Naval Academy reported aboard the heavy cruiser USS New Orleans, serving in her the remaining two years of the Pacific campaign. He had a son who is now the commander of the Pacific Fleet.

Two sons from fathers on opposing sides of the war in the Pacific, best of friends today, committed to delivering an enduring peace for tomorrow – a better outcome could not have been imagined either on December 7th, 1941 or on September 2nd, 1945.

It was the actions of those like our fathers, who were so fortunate to survive the war, and even more so those who stand that silent, eternal watch, that enabled so many nations to ride a rising post-war tide of security, stability and prosperity that continues in their wake for us to enjoy today.

We are honored today by the presence of 20 World War II veterans – eleven of whom were Mighty Mo Sailors. We remain indebted to these veterans whose service demonstrated the selfless actions of the “greatest generation.”

I'd like to take a moment and recognize a few of these Sailors. Mr. Ray Morse served on board Mighty Mo as an Electrician's Mate. He watched first-hand the signing of the Instrument of Surrender from the weather decks above. In fact, you probably saw him as a young Sailor in the film standing along the rails. For many years, he has traveled from his hometown in Huntington, West Virginia, to attend this commemoration and his presence here today makes this anniversary particularly special.

One of Ray's shipmates, Mr. Jack Brock, is with us today having served in Mighty Mo's Gunnery Department, and was a side boy during the signing ceremony. He was just 18 years old at the time, turning 19 a few days later on September 9th.

We are also honored by World War II veteran, Ms. Eugenia Woodward, who is 93 years young. In early 1944, she was part of the first group of U.S. Navy WAVES who learned how to repair aerial photography cameras in New York and served in Norfolk during the war. She moved to Hawaii in 1990 and raised three children who served in the armed forces.

This is truly a day of reverence. It's about reflecting on and commemorating the millions of departed and surviving veterans of World War II. It's about mourning the civilians from all nations whose passing is all that much more poignant in light of their innocence. It's about our enduring commitment to allies, partners and friends – a commitment to ensuring such tragic losses and sacrifices are not for naught – demonstrated by the constant presence of U.S. forces throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific.

It's about upholding the international framework of norms, standards, rules and laws that make our nation great. A binding agreement that formalized the transition from war to peace, the Instrument of Surrender, illustrates that framework perfectly. As part of our heritage, it continues to shape our shared interests, values and conduct in international affairs.

As we saw in the film a few moments ago when General MacArthur signed the Instrument of Surrender there were two officers standing just behind him. On MacArthur's left was Lieutenant General Arthur Percival, who commanded British forces in Singapore and Malaya. Next to him stood Lieutenant General Jonathan Wainwrite, who commanded American and Filipino forces in the last days of Corregidor and Bataan. Many famous photographs captured this moment as well.

In the weeks that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor, and Japan's sweep through Asia, both men fought valiantly to the end of their resources, ultimately succumbing to Japanese forces in Southeast Asia. Both men suffered physically from years in captivity – haunted mentally by defeat -- until their release to allied forces from a prisoner of war camp in Manchuria. MacArthur asked for these men by name to witness this event, standing behind him as he signed the instrument with six pens, giving the first to General Wainwrite and the second to General Percival, in recognition of the fact that their leadership and sacrifice was as significant as any who participated in the war.

The presence of generals Wainwrite and Percival on these decks 70 years ago was not about retribution. Like today's commemoration, it was an acknowledgement that the shared losses of World War II vastly exceeded the gains for any side. A message not lost on the representatives from China, Russia, France, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the Netherlands who signed the instrument as well. The challenge for us going forward is to ensure the prosperity that arose from the ashes of war continues into the future. That is why MacArthur famously cautioned in his radio address after the ceremony, and I quote:

“We have known the bitterness of defeat and the exultation of triumph, and from both we have learned there can be no turning back. We must go forward to preserve in peace what we won in war.”

As the Pacific Fleet commander, I believe this is still the mandate that informs and guides everything we do alongside our allies, partners and friends today in this region. While periods of friction and conflict remain facts of life today, it is the preponderance of security, stability and prosperity that allows all nations to enjoy the benefits of peace that began 70 years ago. This is not our birthright any more than it was our fathers'. This is a legacy that was presented to us from the ashes of World War II. Our legacy, measured against this backdrop, will be how well we preserve the peace presented to us as a gift from these decks 70 years ago.

May those who lost their lives in bring us peace be honored here today and into the future.

May those who honor them be mindful of the burden and responsibility they bear to ensure that gift of peace and freedom is sustained.

May God bless those we honor here today with eternal peace as we seek the same for us and future generations.

Thank you.