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Photo # 80-G-332701 Gen. Umezu signs instrument of surrender, 2 Sept. 1945

The Naval History & Heritage Command describes this photo: "General Yoshijiro Umezu, Chief of the Army General Staff, signs the Instrument of Surrender on behalf of Japanese Imperial General Headquarters, on board USS *Missouri* (BB-63), 2 September 1945. Watching from across the table are Lieutenant General Richard K. Sutherland and General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. Representatives of the Allied powers are behind General MacArthur. Photographed from atop *Missouri*'s 16-inch gun turret # 2."

Harry Truman pondered whether he should use the atomic bomb. It was a decision, in the end, only he could make.

Knowing he would face criticism for using such a weapon of mass destruction, Harry Truman did not flinch. His main objective was saving American lives. His decision was supported by the men who would have had to risk death by invading Japan's home islands.

As Professor Paul Fussell (a former U.S. Army infantryman in Europe) said in his essay, *Thank God for the Atom Bomb*:

When the atom bombs were dropped and the news began to circulate that we would not be obligated in a few months to rush up the beaches near Tokyo assault-firing while being machine-gunned, mortared and shelled we broke down and cried with relief and joy. We were going to live. We were going to grow to adulthood after all.

Japan surrendered on August 14, only eight days after Hiroshima and five days after Nagasaki. The world, especially American troops who would have been part of an invasion force, celebrated the war's end.

Formal surrender ceremonies took place September 2, 1945, on board the USS Missouri (in Tokyo Bay).

As the original Instrument of Surrender (written by the U.S. War Department and approved by President Truman) indicates, Japan's representatives were acting on behalf of Emperor Hirohito, the Japanese government and the Japanese military.

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.

For the first time ever, Hirohito's voice was heard by his people as he announced the surrender. People were

shocked.

Hirohito also told his subjects that he was not a god. That upset them even more.

For their whole lives, up to that point, Japanese people had revered their Emperor as a deity. How could he be just a man?

General MacArthur, in charge of Occupied Japan, helped the Emperor's subjects understand Hirohito's post-war status. In the only photograph which MacArthur allowed, of himself with the Emperor, one can tell who's in charge.

By cooperating with the General, Hirohito avoided a war-crimes trial. Not everyone agreed with that approach, but decision-makers on such matters spared Japan the anguish which would have surely followed such an event.

The Prime Minister, Tojo, was not as fortunate. He was tried, convicted and hanged in Tokyo.

Blame, of course, was rampant as finger-pointing and scape-goating inevitably followed the war's end. Nowhere was the need to establish responsibility as great as it was in the Pearl Harbor hearings. There had to be some explanation why (as Gordon Prange later wrote) *At Dawn We Slept*.

And ... there had to be a few individuals, at least, who "took the fall."

Whether the results of the Pearl Harbor hearings were fair is a matter still questioned (and doubted) by many.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SURRENDER-on-the-USS-MISSOURI-Pearl-Harbor>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SURRENDER-on-the-USS-MISSOURI-Pearl-Harbor>

Media Stream



Paul Fussell - Writer on Use of Atomic Bomb

Image online, courtesy U.S. Army.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Paul-Fussell-Writer-on-Use-of-Atomic-Bomb>



Photo # 80-G-377102 Soldier's family reads of Japan's surrender

Japanese Surrender - Reaction by Soldiers and Families

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, National Archives Collection.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-Reaction-by-Soldiers-and-Families>



Photo # NH 62897 Pyrotechnic celebration of the Japanese surrender

Japanese Surrender - Fireworks Celebration

Photo, depicted above, from the Collection of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Part of the Naval History & Heritage Command.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-Fireworks-Celebration>



Photo # USA C-4627 Gen. MacArthur signs Japanese surrender instrument

Japanese Surrender - Formal Signing by Gen. MacArthur

Photograph from the Army Signal Corps Collection in the U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-Formal-Signing-by-Gen.-MacArthur>



Photo # USA C-1189 Signing Japanese surrender on USS Missouri, 2 Sept. 1945

Japanese Surrender - Ceremonies on USS Missouri

Photograph from the Army Signal Corps Collection in the U.S. National Archives.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-Ceremonies-on-USS-Missouri>



Japanese Surrender - POWs React to Hirohito's Broadcast

U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-POWs-React-to-Hirohito-s-Broadcast>



Photo # NH 58082 Nimitz signs Japanese Surrender instrument -- Autographed

Japanese Surrender - Adm. Nimitz Accepts for U.S.

Photo, depicted above, from the Collection of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Part of the Naval History & Heritage Command.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-Adm.-Nimitz-Accepts-for-U.S.>



Photo # USA C-1732 Gen. MacArthur arrives at Atsugi, 30 Aug. 1945

Japanese Surrender - Gen. MacArthur's Arrival

Photo and quoted passage, courtesy U.S. Naval Historical Center.

PD

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-Gen.-MacArthur-s-Arrival>



SC 210649 USS Missouri anchored in Tokyo Bay, 2 September 1945

Japanese Surrender - USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay

Photograph from the Army Signal Corps Collection in the U.S. National Archives.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-USS-Missouri-in-Tokyo-Bay>



Japanese Surrender - Emperor Hirohito

Emperor Hirohito, after the Japanese surrender.

Photo, U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-Emperor-Hirohito>



Photo # SC 213700 Foreign Minister Shigemitsu signs Japanese surrender instrument

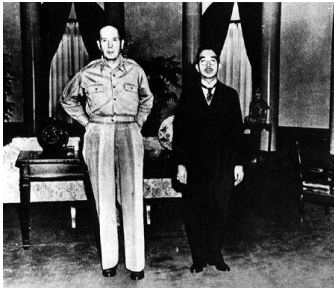
Japanese Surrender - Japan Signs Document

Photograph from the Army Signal Corps Collection in the U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-Japan-Signs-Document>



Japanese Surrender - MacArthur and Hirohito

Photo, U.S. National Archives.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-MacArthur-and-Hirohito>



Japanese Surrender - POWs Weeping

U.S. National Archives.

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Japanese-Surrender-POWs-Weeping>



Tokyo War Crimes Trial - Tojo as Defendant

U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Tokyo-War-Crimes-Trial-Tojo-as-Defendant>



Photo # 80-G-332701 Gen. Umezu signs instrument of surrender, 2 Sept. 1945

SURRENDER on the USS MISSOURI

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/SURRENDER-on-the-USS-MISSOURI>

Japan Surrenders Aboard the USS Missouri

Newsreel of historical footage, maintained by the U.S. National Archives. Public Domain.

Move the video forward to 00:30 to begin the relevant segment.

Dignitaries and military commanders present at the surrender:

Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu and General Yoshijiro Umezo of Japan;

Gen. MacArthur; Gen. Wainwright; Brit. Gen. Arthur E. Percival;

U.S. Adms. Halsey and Nimitz;

Chinese Gen. Hsu Yung-Ch'ang;

Brit. Adm. Bruce A. Fraser;

Russian Gen. Kuzma Derevyanko;

Australian Gen. Thomas Blamey;

Canadian Col. L. Moore Cosgrave;

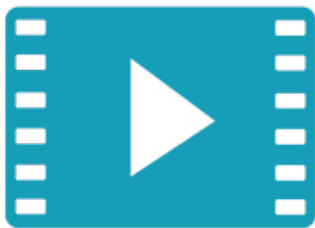
French Gen. Jacques LeClerc;

Adm. C.E.L. Helfrich of the Netherlands;

Air Marshall Leonard M. Isitt of New Zealand.

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Hirohito - As a Young Man

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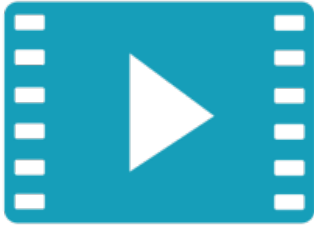
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Hirohito - Conduct During the War

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Hirohito - Immediately After the War

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Hirohito - Was He Responsible for the Pacific War?

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