

*Halsey Book
memo*

Mr. Joseph Bryan, III
Doylestown, Pennsylvania

Dear Joe:

Sorry there has been this delay in the material
for the Halsey book.

I have been working on an extremely intense
schedule but nevertheless should have set time
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Here goes for some rambling anecdotes which I,
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PRISONER OF WAR

Under the general assignment of staff duties during the war, questions relating to allied prisoners of war came under my section of the staff as assistant chief of staff for administration. Consequently, when the top secret dispatches began to indicate ~~that~~ a Japanese surrender was ~~possible~~ probable in the not distant future we ~~begin~~ to prepare ~~a~~ a proposed plan for the liberation, emergency care, evacuation, and repatriation of the ~~allied~~ prisoners of war in Japan. With the assistance of the intelligence section of the staff, as to information on location of ~~Japanese~~ Prisoner of War Camps; under Commander Cheek and Commander Lawrence, and of the operations section

as to ~~availability~~ forces that could be assigned under Captain Wilson and Commander Moulton; and of the Third Fleet Medical Officer, Commodore Boone, as to the health phases, my section of the staff prepared a memorandum of proposed Prisoner of War Plans. As I recall, we nicknamed it "Operation Swift Mercy".

At this time the ~~top~~ command directives ~~envisioned~~ that ~~Prisoner of War~~ came out, envisioned a prisoner of war evacuation coincidental to the ~~occupation~~ occupation of Japan and the advance of the land forces in that occupation, which would of course take a number of weeks to reach the various camps. One of the main phases of our proposal was ~~that~~ ^{based} on our assumption and belief that once the Japanese surrendered, they would be servile and subservient and would be extremely desirous of making amends for their abominable treatment of war criminals, and that ^{we proposed} therefore it would be possible to move in immediately, far in advance of the occupying armies and

to bring out the prisoners of war for prompt medical care, food, clothing and repatriation. Our plans ~~then~~ ^{thus} envisioned moving in boldly immediately after the announcement of ^{intention to} surrender and in advance of the occupying armies with hospital ships, APD's, a

few light forces, and clothing and medical assistance ~~requisitioned~~ ^{fighting} from ~~stocks on hand~~ in the fleet. The carrier planes were to be utilized to actually spot the location of the camps, make the first emergency food drops, and the B 29's were then to be advised of the location for further food, clothing, and medical drops by parachutes. From preliminary information, it was estimated that all prisoners of war in Japan could be reached through these small mercy landings at six or seven points on the coast, beginning with the test in Tokyo Harbor, where ~~we considered~~ some 4000 prisoners of war were located within ^a thirty mile radius.

I shall never forget the afternoon ^{following} after the indications that surrender was definitely pending, ~~and after~~ going over the plans with the Chief of Staff, Admiral Carney, making adjustments and improvements ~~under his suggest~~ as indicated by him, Admiral Carney then presented the plan to Admiral Halsey, ~~and~~ I was present as were some of the other officers of the staff sections. ^{Halsey} ~~The~~ Admiral/asked a number of questions ^{such as} about what ~~we would do if~~ the plan envisioned if the Japanese refused to deliver the prisoners or if they actually used force and open ^{ed} fire to prevent ~~xxxxxx taking them~~ the prisoners being taken and ~~asked some other questions~~ as to the hospital ships that could be obtained for the purpose, and then asked as to the ~~condition of~~ most recent information on the condition of the men in the camps.

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surveyed its characteristics, with his customary decisiveness, he said: "Those are our boys, go and get them!"

This phrase rang through my mind during many of the activities of the succeeding days, and I will never forget it.

The plan envisioned the assignment of a task group and task group commander for this purpose, and the Chief of Staff and the Admiral selected Commodore Roger Simpson who had made a great record in the war and had demonstrated in the South Pacific as a Destroyer Squadron Commander of ~~Squadron~~ *Division* 12, I believe it was, that he had all the courage in the world. Then the Admiral said to me that since the time was short to pass over the great accumulation of information that our staff had on this subject, to the staff of any task group commander, that he would send me over for temporary additional duty with Commodore Simpson as his chief staff officer to assist in placing in execution the plan which we had proposed.

Thus it was that I flew in with Commander Moulton to ~~Atsugi Airfield on the 27th~~ ^{light} in a couple of TBF's from the Carrier Independence on August 27th, to meet the advance representatives of General MacArthur's forces who were landing that day by air, and to establish on the spot liason for the prisoner of war evacuation, ~~and~~ thus it was that Commodore Simpson and the San Juan and the Hospital Ship Benevolence, and a number of APD's steamed up into Tokyo inner harbor on ~~August 28th~~ the afternoon of August 28th, behind the mine sweepers, ~~and~~ we went into the ~~Amori~~ *Amori* Camp No. 8 and began the liberation and evacuation. The conditions we found were indescribable. I recall drafting ~~_____~~ particularly at Shinagawa Hospital Prisoner of War Camp which was a hell hole rather than a hospital. ^{under the plan} The process established/was to bring the prisoners of war out in ~~LCVP's~~ LCVP's to the Hospital Ship Benevolence where they were docketed,

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corpsmen.

Equally thrilling were the faces of the prisoners of war when we arrived and told them that Admiral Halsey had sent us to bring them out to the waiting hospital ships. I recall one bluejacket *at Kawasaki Buncho Camp* exclaiming, ~~at Kawasaki camp~~, "You see! I told these Jap so and sos that Admiral Halsey would be here after us!"

There can be no question but that the boldness and ~~promptness~~ *promptness* ~~decisiveness~~ of Admiral Halsey's decisions to move right in after the prisoners saved the lives of a number of them *through* in the speed with which they obtained assistance.

Another typical instance in this connection *of* the Admiral's actions was his direction that a few of these prisoners of war, representative of the various branches of the service, should be brought down on the surrender day, ~~September~~ *September* 2nd, to witness the surrender of the Japanese. This was done, and I am certain there were no more interested spectators *and* or no one that took a deeper personal satisfaction in the ceremonies than the prisoners of war who were on board the Missouri in an honored position under Admiral Halsey's orders that day.

Flag Plot and Combat Information Center

Another phase of the work that I will not soon forget was the occasion when I returned from the Saipan landings on the First Battle of the Philippine Sea to report to the Admiral and the Chief of Staff my observations during these operations and the recommendations for the preparation of the Admirals Flag Plot ^{to present} Combat Information Center, ^{and} ~~which~~ ^{These recommendations in chart and picture form} had been prepared on the basis of noting the inadequacies of previous arrangements ~~with~~ the fleet, and the necessities during ~~these~~ ^{fleet} fifth ~~sea~~ actions. They were prepared, ~~in~~ ~~consultation~~ ~~with~~, and with the ~~assistance~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ recommendations of the communications officer, Captain ~~Don~~, ~~and~~ the operations officer, Captain Wilson, and other officers of the staff. It involved some rather extensive alterations in the flag country on the New Jersey. It is usual that alterations in a ship are rather difficult to bring about in any Navy Yard, particularly when they are contrary to ^{Buships} ~~new ship~~ specifications and involve cutting through bulkheads and decks. In order to have room for a real comprehensive information center, the proposal involved cutting out a bulkhead between flag plot and flag radio, shifting most of flag radio ~~on~~ ^{down} to ship's radio room, with teletype and pneumatic tube connections,

and cutting an opening in the deck between the flag plot level and the Admiral's cabin level, ^{and} installing a ladder for rapid ^{and easy} access under all conditions of blackout or combat from any part of Admiral's country to the ~~flag~~ ^{combat} information center. The Admiral, ^{and} Chief of Staff, looked the plans over carefully, made some modifications and then said, "They're approved. Get it done."

The installations were made, ^{and} extensive alterations accomplished over many protests, ~~and~~ principally because my section of the staff took the unwavering position that this is what Admiral Halsey wanted, and that nothing less than four stars (Admiral Halsey's rank at that time) could change it. ^{but polite} We knew we could take this firm position because ~~it is one of the reasons it was really tops to work for~~ Admiral Halsey ~~was that he would always back up his staff and his subordinates,~~ ^{This is one of the many reasons I was tops to work for Admiral Halsey} and of course, as a corollary to it, ^{he} did not accept any alibis for not getting things done.

This whole flag plot center with its alterations ^{was} subsequently generally adopted for a fleet commander's flag ship, and almost identical installation ^{was} made on the U. S. S. ^{on CinCPac and BuShips orders} Missouri, ~~and I believe also on~~

It provided Admiral Halsey ^{and readily observable} at sea with the most comprehensive information of his own and enemy forces that any naval

commander has ever had at sea, ~~and~~ ⁹ it was manned 24 hours a day throughout the Western Pacific operations.

One Fighting Team under an unmatchable leader

As to his unusual qualities of leadership, these ~~three~~ ^{his} instances with reference to relations to the Army stand out in my mind. I recall a morning at intelligence staff conference when he had a message read from ~~the~~ Naval Base Commander picking rather petty fault with an army division commander on the same island and referring to standing up for the navy's rights. With his eyes flashing, the Admiral said that the next navy commander that sent a message like that would lose a part of his anatomy-and that if it were determined that conditions reflected in this dispatch was the fault of the navy commander, he would be an ex-base commander.

Then on the other hand, when General Barnett, who was Lieut General Harmon's Chief of Staff received his promotion from Brigadier General to Major General, Admiral Halsey directed that a pinning on party should be held for General Barnett's new stars, and that evening at the ~~ILB~~ ¹¹ New Officers Club in New Caledonia, with a flourish of trumpets, the Admiral had some navy nurses from a hospital ship in the harbor pin two large oversized shoulder boards with two

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Pacific and the Southwest Pacific were meeting on the division of

equipment and forces of the South Pacific as ^{at the conclusion of the} Admiral Halsey was

^{Sofac campaign,} ~~leaving that area,~~ ^{there} and it was brought to ^{Admiral Halsey} him some question of

the divergent positions of the representatives in the two areas

on some of the materials and forces, ^{when} ~~when~~ he was asked for his

view on which way they ought to go. ^I Instead of indulging in that

petty detail and haggling, he said "Dammit, Go back and tell them

that they're all fighting the same war!"

~~One fighting team!~~
These are just minor flashes that indicated the kind of

forceful personality that I think brought about the most remarkable

coordination of army, ~~and~~ navy, airforce, New Zealanders, Australians, ^{and}

^{Fiji Islanders} ~~and what have you~~ under his command in the South and Western Pacific.

Another phase of his personality that I have observed

is that he could make the hard tough decisions that were necessary

to send in forces and ships and fliers that had to be done, when he

knew they would then be in for a very tough fight, and on the other

hand, I have seen him on the Admiral's con level, in the gathering

darkness, listening with tears in his eyes as a single flier with

a damaged plane would be trying to find the fleet and get back to his carrier deck after an attack, and have observed his belligerent insistence on the alteration of plans to save the lives of his men, whenever he could detect a means of reaching the objective in a manner less expensive in human lives. The shift from ^Kavieng to ^FEmerau is an outstanding instance of that, and ~~his~~ ^{his} persistent opposition to the Yap and ^{Petileu} ~~Tuleru~~ and ^{Anguar} ~~Anger~~ actions was another instance of it.

Cease Hostilities!
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I likewise ~~will never~~ forget the inimitable gleam in his

eyes as he stood on the deck of the U. S. S. Missouri, at sea off Tokyo, when I brought ^{to} him the definite radio message that the Japanese ^{had} surrendered and to cease hostilities, and as he observed the battle flags break out on the Missouri and the rest of the fleet following ^{her} motions. *By chance I had the staff duty that morning.* In the midst of the intense emotional impact of this

hour, to which we had looked forward for the long years of the war, I was ~~also~~ deeply conscious of the fact that we were witnessing the climactic event in the career of one of the most colorful, courageous, *congenial*, clear-thinking and victorious Admirals of all of naval history.

Tell him no!
Another little sidelight, I can recall a number of occasions when he would hand me a long letter from some Admiral or General which

had obviously annoyed him by its length and its complaining nature and say "Here, find out what the hell he wants and tell him 'no'!"

I also recall his ^{early} ~~very~~ distaste for the new grey uniforms that ^{was} prescribed for naval officers, ~~and that~~ apparently as a result of this a special ^{navy} bulletin came out, very pointedly saying that

grey uniforms were authorized as an alternate uniform in the entire

navy, including every theatre of the war, etc. The admiral ^{who himself always wore khaki with open shirt and over-seas khaki cap} took cognizance of the bulletin with the remark that it was of course correct that any uniform authorized for the navy ~~was~~ worn in

^{indirect} the South Pacific, applied to the navy everywhere, and that if any officer in the South Pacific Force was so lacking in ordinary naval courtesy and of such limited intelligence that he wanted to wear some uniform different from the commander of the force, he was

entirely at liberty to do so!

San Francisco Conference

I also recall that when the first message came through in February, 1944, ^{from Sec Nav} ~~to him~~ saying that it was imperative that Commander Stassen accompany him on his impending trip to Washington, and we were all at a loss as to the explanation, ~~and~~ he speculated that he thought somebody was ^{trying to} steal me from his staff, and that he would not permit it unless I wanted to leave, which of course I assured him

that I definitely did not want to do. Then a few hours later we got word over the regular news broadcast ~~the~~ of President Roosevelt's appointment ~~for~~ the San Francisco delegation ~~and~~ ~~he~~ then said with a grin, that he supposed he'd have to revise his earlier statement and perhaps he would let the President steal me from him, provided he'd promise to send me back!

Let them know!


Another strong characteristic ~~I thought~~ was his determination that the officers and men of his force should have the maximum of information of what the nature and purpose of their own activities and operations was to be and how they fitted into the total conduct of the war. I think this ~~was~~ ~~an~~ ~~important~~ emphasis on information to the fleet had an important bearing on the morale of his force.

Another interesting sidelight is the fact that I had no indication of what he thought of the work I was doing in my section of the staff from the time I arrived until seven or eight months later when a request ^{headquarters} from Admiral Nimitz' ~~staff~~ came through asking if I would be available for duty at that headquarters. He called me in and asked whether I wanted to go to Admiral Nimitz' staff and I replied "No, sir, unless you ~~want~~ to get rid of me". He grinned and handed me a message he had already prepared personally, stating

that I was not available and that it was essential that I continue
on his staff ^{in view of} with impending operations and the ^{future} duties of the Third
Fleet Staff. I doubt if he will ever realize how much that message
meant to me, because it was ^{the} first definite indication of approval
from a Commander for whom I had ~~been~~ already developed extreme
admiration and respect.

Joe, I trust some of this material fits in with what you
would like to have, but if not, shoot me a wire, indicating a little
more definitely the nature of the material ^{you} seek and I will make
another stab at it before the 15th. ~~xxxx~~ I also want to
reemphasize that I do not want you to use any of this material
without clearing it with Admiral Halsey personally. ~~Best regards.~~

Best regards. Am looking forward
to a great book which will be read for
generations!



Halsey Book

PRISONER OF WAR

Under the general assignment of staff duties during the war, questions relating to allied prisoners of war came under my section of the staff as assistant chief of staff for administration. Consequently, when the top secret dispatches began to indicate a Japanese surrender was probable in the not distant future we began to prepare a proposed plan for the liberation, emergency care, evacuation, and repatriation of the allied prisoners of war in Japan. With the assistance of the intelligence section of the staff - Commander Cheek and Commander Laurence - as to information on location of the Prisoner of War Camps; and of the operations section under Captain Wilson and Commander Moulton, as to forces that could be assigned; and of the Third Fleet Medical Officer, Commodore Boone, as to the health phases, my section of the staff prepared a memorandum of proposed Prisoner of War Plans. As I recall, we nicknamed it "Operation Swift Mercy".

At this time the first top command directives that came out, envisioned a prisoner of war evacuation coincidental to occupation of Japan and the advance of the land forces in that occupation, which would of course take a number of weeks to reach the various camps. One of the main phases of our proposal was based on our assumption and belief that once the Japanese surrendered, they would be servile and subservient and would be extremely desirous of making amends for their abominable treatment of war criminals. Therefore we proposed to move in immediately, far in advance of the occupying armies and bring out the prisoners of war for prompt medical care, food, clothing and repatriation. Our plans thus envisioned moving in boldly immediately after the announcement of intention to surrender and in advance of the occupying armies with hospital ships, APD's, a few

light forces, and clothing and medical assistance requisitioned from stocks on hand in the fighting fleet. The carrier planes were to be utilized to actually spot the location of the camps, make the first emergency food drops, and the B-29's were then to be advised of the locations for further food, clothing, and medical drops by parachutes. From preliminary information, it was estimated that all prisoners of war in Japan could be reached through these small mercy landings at six or seven points on the coast, beginning with the test in Tokyo Harbor, where some 4000 prisoners of war were located within a thirty mile radius.

I shall never forget the afternoon following the indications that surrender was definitely pending. After going over the plans with the Chief of Staff, Admiral Carney, making adjustments and improvements as indicated by him, Admiral Carney then presented the plan to Admiral Halsey. I was present as were some of the other officers of the staff sections. Admiral Halsey asked a number of questions, such as what the plan envisioned if the Japanese refused to deliver the prisoners or if they actually used force and opened fire to prevent the prisoners being taken and as to the hospital ships that could be obtained for the purpose, and then asked as to the most recent information on the condition of the men in the camps.

After this series of questions, which indicated that in his usual manner he had gone right to the heart of the problem, had surveyed its characteristics, with his customary decisiveness, he said: "Those are our boys, go and get them!!"

This phrase rang through my mind during many of the activities of the succeeding days, and I will never forget it.

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Admiral selected Commodore Roger Simpson who had made a great record in the war and had demonstrated in the South Pacific as a Destroyer Squadron Commander - of Desron 12, I believe it was - that he had all the courage in the world. Then the Admiral said to me that since the time was short to pass over the great accumulation of information that our staff had on this subject, to the staff of any task group commander, that he would send me over for temporary additional duty with Commodore Simpson as his chief staff officer to assist in placing in execution the plan which we had proposed.

Thus it was that I flew in with Commander Moulton to Atsugi Airfield in a couple of TBF's from the light Carrier Independence on August 27th, to meet the advance representatives of General MacArthur's forces who were landing that day by air, and to establish on the spot liaison for the prisoner of war evacuation. Thus it was that Commodore Simpson and the San Juan and the Hospital Ship Benevolence, and a number of APD's steamed up into Tokyo inner harbor on the afternoon of August 28th, behind the mine sweepers. We went into the Omori Camp No. 8 and began the liberation and evacuation. The conditions we found were indescribable, particularly at Shinagawa Hospital Prisoner of War Camp which was a hell hole rather than a hospital. The process established under the plan was to bring the prisoners of war out in LCVP's to the Hospital Ship Benevolence where they were docketed, bathed, examined, given clean clothes, and either hospitalized or sent on over to an APD tied up alongside as a sort of convalescent hospital ship. The nurses and doctors and crew of the Benevolence did a great job and as we observed the results of this whole process we promptly labeled it as being "Benevolenced". I recall our first message to the Admiral reporting that on that first night over a thousand American, British, Canadian, Australian and Dutch prisoners

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Another typical instance in this connection of the Admiral's actions was his direction that a few of these prisoners of war, representatives of the various branches of the service, should be brought down on the surrender day, September 2nd, to witness the surrender of the Japanese. This was done, and I am certain there were no more interested spectators and no one that took a deeper personal satisfaction in the ceremonies than the prisoners of war who were on board the Missouri in an honored position under Admiral Halsey's orders that day.

FLAG PLOT AND COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER

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It provided Admiral Halsey at sea with the most comprehensive and readily observable information of his own and enemy forces that any naval commander has ever had at sea. It was manned 24 hours a day throughout the Western Pacific operations.

ONE FIGHTING TEAM UNDER AN IRRESISTIBLE LEADER

As to his unusual qualities of leadership, these three instances with reference to his relations to the Army stand out in my mind. I recall a morning at intelligence staff conference when he had a message read from a Naval Base Commander picking rather petty fault with an army division commander on the same island and referring to standing up for the navy's rights. With his eyes flashing, the Admiral said that the next navy commander that sent a message like that would-lose a part of his anatomy - and that if it were determined that conditions reflected in this dispatch was the fault of the navy commander, he would be an ex-base commander.

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Another phase of his personality that I have observed is that he could make the hard, tough decisions that were necessary to send in forces and ships and fliers that had to be done, when he knew they would then be in for a very tough fight, and on the other hand, I have seen him on the Admiral's con level, in the gathering darkness, listening with tears in his eyes as a single flier with a damaged plane would be trying to find the fleet and get back to his carrier deck after an attack, and have observed his belligerent insistence on the alteration of plans to save the lives of his men, whenever he could detect a means of reaching the objective in a manner less expensive in human lives. The shift from Kavieng to Emerau is an outstanding instance of that. His persistent opposition to the Yap and Pelileu and Anguar actions was another instance of it.

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TELL HIM NO!

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SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

I also recall that when the first message came through to him in February 1944 from SecNav saying that it was imperative that Commander Stassen accompany him on his impending trip to Washington, and we were all at a loss as to the explanation, he speculated that he thought somebody was trying to steal me from his staff, and that he would not permit it - unless I wanted to leave, which of course I assured him that I definitely did not want to do. Then a few hours later we got word over the regular news broadcast of President

Roosevelt's appointment to the San Francisco delegation. He then said with a grin, that he supposed he'd have to revise his earlier statement and perhaps he would let the President steal me from him - provided he'd promise to send me back!

LET THEM KNOW!

Another strong characteristic was his determination that the officers and men of his force should have the maximum of information of what the nature and purpose of their own activities and operations was to be and how they fitted into the total conduct of the war. I think this emphasis on information to the fleet had an important bearing on the morale of his force.

Another interesting sidelight is the fact that I had no indication of what he thought of the work I was doing in my section of the staff from the time I arrived until seven or eight months later when a request from Admiral Nimitz' headquarters came through asking if I would be available for duty at that headquarters. He called me in and asked whether I wanted to go to Admiral Nimitz' staff and I replied "No sir, unless you want to get rid of me." He grinned and handed me a message he had already prepared personally, stating that I was not available and that it was essential that I continue on his staff in view of impending operations and the future duties of the Third Fleet Staff. I doubt if he will ever realize how much that message meant to me, because it was the first definite indication of approval from a Commander for whom I had already developed extreme admiration and respect.

Joe, I trust some of this material fits in with what you would like to have, but if not, shoot me a wire, indicating a little more definitely the nature of the material you seek and I will make another stab at it before the 15th. I also want to reemphasize that I do not want you to use any of this material without clearing it with Admiral Halsey personally.

Best regards. Am looking forward to a great book which will be read for generations!

Sincerely,

HES vc



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