

MINUTES OF PRESS CONFERENCE

HELD BY ADMIRAL HALSEY

19 February 1945 - 1030

REAR ADMIRAL MERRILL: Good morning, gentlemen. Before the conference starts, I would like to announce that Acting Secretary Bard asked me to inform you that the official reception by the Navy of our distinguished Admiral will not take place until the Secretary returns to Washington. I don't know just when that date will be.

The Admiral would like to conduct this conference by the question and answer method -- so you can 'fire when you're ready.'  
(Laughter)'

THE PRESS: Admiral, are you willing to gaze into the crystal ball again -- we've got another Christmas coming up this year -- as to how soon we're coming into Tokyo?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I've dropped all that. Only thing I can say -- the sooner the quicker -- and I hope to God I'm there!

THE PRESS: Admiral, where have you been since the last report of you in the China Sea. Would you like to tell us a little bit more about that sweep in there, and where you've been since?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Well, I think you all pretty well know now what the sweep into the China Sea was. We were in there for eleven days - and what was the mileage?

COMMANDER STASSEN: About 37-38.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: About 3800 miles covered in there. And pretty thoroughly hit all the monkeys' installations from - (I don't know that place) - Swatow down to Saigon. We hit on various days and various occasions. It was a very thoroughly satisfactory move. We have lost some planes but none of the ships were touched at all; and I think, when we left, they knew we had been in there.

THE PRESS: Is there any part of your Fleet operating? Did they take part in this latest show off Tokyo?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I'd rather not answer that.

THE PRESS: Is there anything you'd like to say about that particular operation?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Yes. I haven't received all the facts of it, but as far as I can see, it was another magnificent show of the United States Navy against the deteriorated and rapidly deteriorating ex-Japanese navy.

THE PRESS: Admiral, did you believe the Jap navy would come out and fight?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No!

THE PRESS: Could you give me that again?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No, I said I don't believe they're coming out and fight in this operation. We'll have to go out and dig them out. They've got very little left to fight with, and what they have is in no too good shape.

THE PRESS: What do you think will take to bring them out?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Pardon?

THE PRESS: What do you think it will take to bring them out?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I can't get myself in that rat's frame of mind so I don't know.

THE PRESS: Admiral, did you form any impression during this sweep of the China Sea about Japanese Air force - that is, whether it's getting conspicuously weaker or the same strength?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: The quality of the Japanese pilot is deteriorating all the time. We hear stories of large production. Whether they're true or not, I don't know. I do know this -- that everytime they have come out against us recently, they brought a rag-tail, bob-tail lot of planes out with them -- which indicates they're pretty thoroughly disorganized.

THE PRESS: What about these reports the Japanese have several new types of planes now in operation?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Oh, yes, we've had those new types of planes -- play around with them. We shot them down just the same as any others. (Laughter).

THE PRESS: New ones then aren't very numerous or much better?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: They're better but they have not been so numerous so far. We have shot down practically every type of new plane they claim they have. They burn just as nicely as the old ones.

THE PRESS: Admiral, do you care to say why you're in Washington at this time?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Yes, I'm here under orders of Admiral King. (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Admiral, what is the jurisdiction of the Western Pacific Task Force?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: What is the jurisdiction --?

THE PRESS: Yes, sir.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Will you elaborate on that?

THE PRESS: I mean, what areas are taken in it and the extent of their command?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: (Laughingly) Oh, from the North Pole to the South Pole - anyplace we want to go.

THE PRESS: Does that include the Third Fleet only, sir?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Includes any Naval Force operating out there. The Western Pacific is just a general term. We have command of it from one end of it to the other. They can't stop us anywheres.

THE PRESS: Any danger that MacArthur might get his Fleet to Tokyo before you get yours in?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No; we'll go in there together. He's a very fine man. I worked under him now for over two years and I have the greatest admiration and respect for him.

THE PRESS: Admiral, we have heard reports that the Japanese are beginning to establish themselves strongly along the Coast of China. In your sweep of that area, did your fliers bring back any reports that would substantiate that?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I think it's very evident that even the stupidest bestial Jap sees that he's losing control of the sea everywhere, and he wants to make what he can out of his ill-gotten gains in his so called Stolen Empire. He knows he can't do it by sea routes now, so he's going to try to establish a land route, build railroads through



from Singapore and up to Chosen or someplace up there; and it will take him sometime to build the railroads but he won't be able to get much over and we'll be in a position to knock out the railroads -- so - heads, we win, and tails, he loses.

THE PRESS: What about coastal garrisons where there are no railroads?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Pardon?

THE PRESS: What about coastal garrisons where no railroads run, about the southeastern coast of China?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: What about the coastal --

THE PRESS: Yes, sir.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Well, like all the rats - we can go and dig them out. We can go in and dig them out anytime. They hole up just like rats, and have to go in and dig them out just like we do a decent rat.

THE PRESS: Admiral, have any plans been made for the Japs on the islands that have been by-passed?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No, let them starve to death slowly and painfully.

THE PRESS: Admiral, who made the decisions to by-pass the islands instead of taking them, each one at a time?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Pardon?

THE PRESS: Who made the decision of the by-passing strategy?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I think the first by-pass that took place was up in Alaska - I'm not sure. I think the second by-passing took place when we by-passed Kolombangara and went from New Georgia to Vella Lavella. The decision to by-pass Kolombangara was made by my people. I don't know if we were fully informed that time in the Aleutians or not. Were we?

BRIG. GENERAL RILEY: Yes, sir; we didn't consider it a by-pass then.

REAR ADMIRAL MERRILL: May I ask if that was a by-pass due to the better suitability of the island that was taken than anything in between? Wasn't it that rather than a system, Admiral?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: What we were hunting for, of course, when we

went to Vella Lavella -

REAR ADMIRAL MERRILL: I mean up in Alaska.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Oh, up in Alaska. When we decided to by-pass Kolombangara and go into Vella Lavella, we had the Empress Augusta Bay landing planned, and we were hunting for some place to put off fighters where we could protect our people when we went in there, and Vella Lavella seemed to be a good place to go. After we got in there, put the Japs in Kolombangara in a perfect tailspin, and they began to try to get away from there - and we got most of them. That was due to Admiral Merrill and his gang - kept them from getting away. They drown just as easily as they burn. (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Admiral, one time when you heard the Jap radio ask where the American Fleet was, you turned to your aide and told him to send the longitude and latitude. Would you care to send them any message now that you're back in this country? They're undoubtedly curious about your visit.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Just tell them I still believe in the Chinese origin of the Japanese race. (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Is that the turtle?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Pardon?

THE PRESS: Want to expand on that a little bit?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I thought you gentlemen all knew about it. If the ladies here will pardon me (laughter). I understand this proverb is from the Chinese textbooks -- that many years ago they had a benevolent Emperor of China. He rounded up all the desperate criminals in China and he segregated the women from the men. He took the men, put them out on an island to the eastward of them. After a certain length of time, the men destroyed all the male apes on these islands and in the course of years, when their progeny wore their tails off, they dropped down from the trees -- and that's the origin of the Japanese race. (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Admiral, I wonder if you can tell us something about your decision that led to the invasion of Leyte?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Led to our decision going north, you mean?

THE PRESS: Yes.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Yes, very glad to. We had been playing with the Jap fleet for two years or more down in the South Pacific, and we

knew how he handled his forces. We knew they had always tried to get us into position where he could shuttle bombs on us. We discovered two parts of their fleet - the central portion and the southern portion and we'd hit them very heavily all day long. We were very thoroughly convinced that they were so severely damaged that they were not impotent but next to impotent. Suddenly in the late afternoon of the 24th of October, we found what we were looking for -- the Jap carriers. We had been looking for them for two days then, and unanimously we decided that was the most dangerous to us, because if we had stayed outside of the San Bernardino Straits, the Jap fleet would probably not come through - the carriers would have flown their planes off, bombed us, landed in Luzon, re-loaded, come out and bombed us again and gone back. They were a very dangerous threat, not only to ourselves but to MacArthur's landings in Leyte; and we decided to go after them. It was the first time that we had ever been able to get the jump on the Jap carriers. In every action they had, we had to split, or they got the jump on us. They got no jump that day!

THE PRESS: Would you tell us, Admiral, or elaborate just a little bit about what happened when you got your forces north and hit that Jap force. Is there anything in there --

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Well, just a normal thing. We were snooping despite what has been said in some papers -- we were snooping the Jap fleet up to 11:30 or 12:00 o'clock that night, and they had turned back at that time and they were snooping us too. We started north towards their carrier group and they got word - I don't know where - must have been from their snoopers that we were coming north, and they started trying to get away, but they were a little bit late and we put a flight off at daylight in the north and just went in and started hammering; and I had the battle force out in front ready to clean them up, and got word they were in a little bad way down towards Leyte. I turned around with the battleships and headed down there at full speed. I took the two fastest battleships we had and headed down ahead of everybody else. Of course, by the time we had gotten there, the Japs had seen the error of his ways and he had turned and run again. In the meantime, the few surface forces we had left up there - were cruisers - had gone in and battered the remnants of the Jap's northern force. A few ships got away from them. I personally was heartbroken because we were within 45 miles of contact with these people, and I had to turn around -- and there wouldn't have been any gotten away if we had gotten them with the battleships. I'm afraid I swore. (Laughter).

REAR ADMIRAL CARNEY: Understatement! (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Admiral, I understand it was a decision of yourself that led to the going in to Leyte at the time we did. Could you tell us anything about that?



ADMIRAL HALSEY: Yes. The first day we went into the Central Philippines, we were steaming back and forth about forty or fifty miles off the coast of Samar, and to our utter surprise, we got practically no opposition. We were knocking Jap planes down right and left everywhere, and we had one of our pilots shot down. He was taken in charge by the guerrillas and the next day we went in and got him. He came out and gave us certain information which led me to believe that the time was ripe to hit them there and not waste time on other places. I sent a recommendation in that we combine the forces that were lined up under me to go into various places out there with MacArthur's forces and move into Leyte immediately. And Admiral Nimitz picked the ball up, and General MacArthur picked the ball up, and in less than 24 hours later, I think that we got a decision to go into Leyte.

THE PRESS: Could you tell us the date of that incident?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: It was about the 12th or 13th of September?

COMMANDER STASSEN: Yes, sir; 13th of September.

THE PRESS: The landing was made?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: On the 20th of October.

These forces that I speak of, both from MacArthur's and Nimitz' forces, were not due for another landing - none contemplated - until the 15th of October. Was that it?

BRIG. GENERAL RILEY: Yes, sir.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: The 15th of October, so it was a pretty quick move to shift everything around and in five days later, go into Leyte.

THE PRESS: Wasn't the original plan to land on Mindanao?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Can I answer that?

REAR ADMIRAL MERRILL: I don't believe you could.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I think you better leave that off.

THE PRESS: Hasn't the President told that in one of the messages in the House that that previously had been planned?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: He said - by-passed several islands, called them A, B and C.

REAR ADMIRAL MERRILL: He named the ones that they planned to by-pass.

THE PRESS: That was not Mindanao?

REAR ADMIRAL MERRILL: I don't think he told where the original intent to land was. I haven't seen it. Have you, George?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL: I haven't seen it.

THE PRESS: It did represent an alteration of plans?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: It represented a very violent alteration of plans, but MacArthur was ready for it because he had his alternate plans that covered this thing entirely and, incidentally, we didn't know that he had them at the time.

THE PRESS: Is there any elaboration you can give us, Admiral, on the current operations off Iwo Jima -- on the bombardment?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No, it's the usual thing going into an island and routing them out. It's going to be pretty tough fighting.

THE PRESS: Do you think that's going to be as tough as Tarawa?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No, we have learned a lot since Tarawa.

THE PRESS: Admiral, can you say whether any of Admiral Bruce Frazier's ships are participating?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I prefer not to answer that. (Laughingly) I might get my head chopped off.

THE PRESS: Admiral, what will be the strategic value of Iwo Jima?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Strategic value of Iwo Jima is that from there you can bomb Tokyo with medium bombers and probably cover them with fighters all the way home, cover your B-29's with fighters. You can cover anything you want to send in there with fighters.

THE PRESS: Is the island large enough to accommodate a couple of airfields?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Three there.

THE PRESS: Only one there now?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Two.

THE PRESS: There are two.



ADMIRAL HALSEY: If necessary, the Seabees will build another island and put four or five in. (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Admiral, what is the present status of Ponape. Are they active?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No, they're just a liability to the Japs. They fly planes in there occasionally and make observations from there, and when we have nothing else to do, we go and do a little practise bombing on them. Furnish very good targets for green crews to go over and practise on.

THE PRESS: Is there anything inside the lagoon?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Oh, they have small stuff in there from time to time. They don't care to bring in anything more. Subs, of course, can get in and out of there. Impossible to stop the subs from running in there, but only two ways of getting in there now, practically -- by plane and sub. As far as we're concerned, they're just in the discard.

THE PRESS: That's what we'd regard as the longest naval base in the world, and now completely by-passed?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Completely by-passed and completely useless to them.

THE PRESS: How many men do they have there?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: What was the last estimate?

BRIG. GENERAL RILEY: I don't know.

THE PRESS: They were given out by Captain Smedburg.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I had forgotten the estimate they had but probably in the neighborhood of ten or fifteen thousand.

COMMANDER STASSEN: About forty thousand.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Forty thousand. I thought maybe they had gotten a lot of them out. This is off the record. (Off the record statement).

THE PRESS: Admiral, why haven't the Japs made more effective use of their submarines?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Of their submarines -- they don't know how to handle them.

THE PRESS: Admiral --

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Just one minute. May I elaborate on that a little bit? It's a rather curious thing -- you gentlemen may remember at the beginning of the war when the Jap used to brag his most important weapon was a submarine because their people were endured to a very hard life and we were all soft and we couldn't begin to compete with them. You see the way it has turned out.

THE PRESS: Well, Admiral, on that point, during the early months of the war, it was generally understood that the subs were being used quite extensively for reconnaissance and observation purposes. Are the Japs still conserving them for that reason?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Oh, yes. I don't know whether they're conserving them or because they're scared to come out and use them.

THE PRESS: But that's their principal use?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: As far as we know, they don't bother us very much. They won't bother us - once we get out there.

THE PRESS: Admiral, how much trouble are you having from the Jap suicide squadrons?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: That's off the record. I'm sorry.

THE PRESS: Is there anything on the record?

THE PRESS: Admiral, can you tell us the name of that rescued fighter pilot whose information really changed it?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No, I don't remember his name. Does anybody remember it? It's a matter of record but I don't remember what it was. See, we are getting reports all day long from this, that and the other man, and we rarely ever know the name of the man who made the report -- just that the report came in -- and then, in a case like that, the individual is of no importance but the report is very important.

THE PRESS: Did he get any medals, Admiral?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Did he?

THE PRESS: Yes.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I suppose so. That was not under my command but most of those kids are pretty well decorated out there now, and goodness knows, they deserve it.

THE PRESS: Admiral, could you tell us anything about the participation of the British Fleet in the Pacific? They have announced, of course, that they have a Fleet out there.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: The Fleet was not under my jurisdiction out there and I don't know anything about it except by hearsay and I can tell you about the British Fleet, though -- part of the British Fleet that has participated under me in time gone by.

THE PRESS: Do you have any units of the British Fleet?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I've had no units of the British Fleet with me.

THE PRESS: Admiral, may I return to that question I asked earlier - about the Western Pacific Task Force. I may not have kept up on all the announcements, but the last I heard of, you were the Commander of the Third Fleet, and it has been announced that you are in command of the Western Pacific.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No, I had both titles -- Commander of the Third Fleet and Commander of the Western Pacific Task Forces.

THE PRESS: That takes in only the Third Fleet?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: It takes all forces that were operating under my control, whether they were Third Fleet or other forces. In other words, from time to time we shift forces back and forth.

THE PRESS: I see.

THE PRESS: Admiral, in your opinion, why haven't the Japs made better use of their fleet as a whole, including the submarines?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: They've tried it on several occasions but we're too good for them. I don't know why those little rats ever thought they could lick an American anyhow. Greatest mistake they ever made in their lives. Second greatest mistake is when they start fighting dirty.

THE PRESS: How is your "Dirty-trick Department" working out?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: (Staring at Admiral Carney). (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Admiral, do you think we'll have to knock out Formosa before we can possibly knock on the China Coast?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Oh, I don't know. Pretty hard to tell what you have to knock out. The thing to do is get your fingers around their throats as fast as you can and keep on squeezing - and what's the best way to do that has not been decided yet. You've got to remember that as a principle all the time - that whether we by-pass this island or that island or go into this island or that island - all has only one objective in view and that's to kill 'em as a nation!



THE PRESS: Admiral, there was a suggestion from the Jap radio last week that they might be getting ready to bid for a negotiated peace.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Well, I think the handwriting is pretty thoroughly on the wall about that. I'm one of the few people, from the very beginning, that believed the Japs would break, eventually. The industrialists in Japan undoubtedly see that their Empire, which has taken them a great many years to build up, is rapidly getting in position where it's going to absolutely crumble, and the dollar means just as much to them as it does to any other industrialists in any other part of the world. When they can get the upper hand of these beasts, who are apparently from the Army - and who are now in control of the Government - they will take over, and they will begin to put out very attractive peace feelers. And to my mind, that is the most dangerous period we are facing until peace is actually declared.

They will appeal to the mothers of men who are out there now, and naturally, the mother wants her son saved, though without thinking that by doing that she is sending her grandson and his grandson to death. If we let them negotiate a peace now and don't demand absolute and unconditional surrender, we will be committing the greatest crime in the history of our country. They will merely use the peace as Germany did before them -- to build up for another war. We have gone far enough in this thing now to keep on going so we make them impotent for all time to wage another war, and it can be done and should be done.

Now you gentlemen of the Press, I think, can do more to help that out than any people I know of. You can persuade the people of this country, when that time does come, that they are merely sentencing their grandchildren, instead of their children, to death.

THE PRESS: Admiral, do we negotiate that final peace with the Mikado or whom?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: It won't make any difference. There ought not be any Mikado when this thing is over.

THE PRESS: How about the story that Winchell had last night -- that there had been instructions to the American Navy not to bomb the Mikado's palace?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: We never bother anything except military objectives. (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Is the Mikado's palace a military objective?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: No. If by chance the B-29's or somebody came over there in an undercast, they might hit it by mistake, but it would have been a mistake. I'd hate to have them kill that white horse because I want to ride it. (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Admiral, can't we make the Japanese impotent without destroying their Army on the mainland?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Beg pardon.

THE PRESS: Can we make Japan impotent without destroying their Army on the mainland?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: You say the mainland. Do you mean China?

THE PRESS: Yes.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Well, I don't know that you have to destroy it. You can take away their sources of supplies and their food and let them rot it out, somewhere. We've gotten by a good many places without destroying all their people. Their nation is destroying them slowly. If we have to destroy their Army, let's go in and destroy it! I think before that time happens that they will be very glad to save what they can out of their records. But we can dictate what they will save and won't save, and they'll have nothing to say about it.

THE PRESS: Admiral, do you think there is a chance, even with an unconditional surrender, that the Japs will try this again?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: That they will do what?

THE PRESS: That they will try another war?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: They will plan another war if we don't --

THE PRESS: Even if we do demand that --

ADMIRAL HALSEY: If we are smart, they won't start another war. As I heard someone express it the other day - a high official - we are like a tremendously powerful heavyweight in a ring who has knocked out everybody ahead of them but has made no plans for the future. It behooves us right now to make plans for the future and enforce them by whatever means are necessary to see that they don't start another war; and that is where the great danger is in our people being a bit emotional when the war is over, saying that - "Oh, he wasn't as bad as painted." If anything could be worse, I don't know what is.

THE PRESS: Admiral, do you think we should keep the Fleet regardless of a world league?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Pardon?

THE PRESS: You think we should keep our Fleet regardless of what happens at a world league?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: We better had!

THE PRESS: Admiral, what do you think will be the effect of the German surrender on the Japanese?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: (Laughingly) They won't like it.

THE PRESS: Admiral, could you tell us something about the other men who operated with you out there since the only one who is mentioned is Admiral Kinkaid in that biography about you.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Well, the principal task force commander I had under me - two of them - were Admiral Mitscher until about the latter part of October, and then Admiral McCain who took over and operated up until the time we left. And under them -- (To Admiral Merrill) Have those names been mentioned?

REAR ADMIRAL MERRILL: Largely, yes, sir. I see no objection, as long as we don't mention what their commands are, I see no objection to naming them at all, but not in connection with their particular command. Mitscher has been mentioned and McCain has been mentioned.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: It will be awfully hard for me to give you the names of these men because I'm just as sure as shooting I'll forget somebody and he'll hate me. (Laughter). How many vice admirals and rear admirals did we have out there?

REAR ADMIRAL CARNEY: God knows, Admiral. At least four vice admirals with us -- Wilkinson, Lee, Mitscher and McCain.

ADMIRAL HALSEY: And we must have had --

REAR ADMIRAL CARNEY: An inexhaustible supply of rear admirals. (Laughter).

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Admiral Wilkinson has been mentioned. He was in charge of the Palaus Operation Amphibious Force; went into Leyte with combined forces and again went into Lingayen Gulf with Command Forces. He has worked with us right straight through, starting in the South Pacific and in command of the Third Amphibious Force. And there was,



as Admiral Carney says, an inexhaustible supply of rear admirals, and they were all so perfectly splendid if I mentioned one of them without mentioning all of them, it would be a great misfortune.

THE PRESS: Admiral, are you going to give your Flag Secretary a leave of absence to go to this forthcoming conference in San Francisco?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Going to do what?

THE PRESS: Give him a leave of absence?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: I've got it under consideration. (Laughter). He's a pretty tough man to lose. I don't mean that he is tough but I mean it would be tough on us to lose him, even temporarily.

THE PRESS: Admiral, what do you call the Japs when you're not being polite and calling them "monkeys"?

ADMIRAL HALSEY: Too many ladies present. (Laughter).

THE PRESS: Thank you, Admiral.

NAVY DEPARTMENT

FEBRUARY 19, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS:

The enclosed material is made available for background purposes in connection with today's press conference with Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., U.S.N., Commander of the Third Fleet.

The material may be used in any manner desired, except in quotation as an official Navy Department document.

It consists of:

(1) A packet containing . . .

(a) Anecdotes and miscellaneous information to show what manner of fighting man he is.

(b) A brief analysis of Admiral Halsey the fighting man, with emphasis on his role in developing modern sea-air warfare.

(c) A collection of Admiral Halsey quotes to illustrate his command of colorful language.

(2) A chronological list of actions in which Admiral Halsey's various commands have participated since the outbreak of war.

(3) Summary of Third Fleet accomplishments during the first five months of Admiral Halsey's Command of Western Pacific Task Forces.

(4) Admiral Halsey's official biography.

A collection of photographs of Admiral Halsey, to supplement photographs taken at the press conference, is available upon request in the Pictorial Section, Room 0112, Office of Public Relations.

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## HALSEY THE MAN

Here are a number of human interest stories about Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., U.S.N. These anecdotes are confined to the period of the war, and serve as a measure of Halsey as an individual.

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When Admiral Halsey got his promotion to four stars, he gave his pins of three stars to a fellow officer to be presented to the widows of Rear Admirals Daniel J. Callaghan, U.S.N., and Norman Scott, U.S.N., both killed in the Solomons Campaign. "Tell them that it was the fighting guts of their husbands that got me my four stars," he added.

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There was a remark of the pilot who was picked up after one of Admiral Halsey's Formosa raids. He had been in the water a number of hours. A friend asked him if he had been worried.

"No," said the pilot. "I knew if there was any way possible, Admiral Bill would get me back, and if it wasn't possible, there was no use worrying anyhow."

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Admiral Halsey is a strong advocate of teamwork, not only within the Navy but with the Army and with our Allies. Operating on the theory that "there is glory enough for all," he generously shares the credit all around.

After the stirring Solomons victories of 1942, the late Secretary of Navy Frank Knox formally congratulated Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, U.S.N., and Admiral Halsey. Admiral Nimitz modestly gave credit to Admiral Halsey and his "courageous personnel." And Admiral Halsey passed it on to his own men and those of the Army and Marine Corps.

"In the Southern Pacific," said Admiral Halsey, "neither we of the Navy nor those of the Army and Marine Corps recognize any division between the services. All are united in service to the United States."

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Shortly after receiving the Distinguished Service Medal for his Marshall Island raid in February 1942, Admiral Halsey appeared unexpectedly one night at the ship's movie.

"I want to make a little speech," he said. "I just want to say that I've never been so damn proud of anyone as of you."

The crew raised the roof with cheers as tears welled into the Admiral's eyes.

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Admiral Halsey chose January 1, 1943, to venture the prediction that the Axis would be defeated during that year. His prediction was promptly challenged, but 15 days later in New Zealand, he reiterated it.

When the prediction proved wrong, he swore off prophesying. Asked by reporters when he expected the Jap fleet to join action, he once alluded to his prediction in this way:

"I stopped looking into my crystal ball some time ago."

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Admiral Halsey's farewell tour of his South Pacific command was a triumphant occasion. Starting at Noumea, he visited various Atolls and beachheads in his area. At every place, all hands -- Army, Navy, and Marines -- turned out, not that they had been ordered to do so, but they wanted to see him and wish him well.

At each of his eight stops, he made a brief talk. Each time he came away with tears in his eyes and was so choked up when he climbed back into his plane that he was speechless for an hour.

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Once at sea, one of Admiral Halsey's destroyers kept getting out of formation and lagging behind. The Admiral flashed a message to the skipper: "What division do you belong to?"

The DD skipper, a little startled, replied that he belonged to such and such a division.

Halsey messaged him again:

"Then why don't you join up with it?"

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Admiral Halsey likes to kid his staff. One day while his fleet was in an advance anchorage, one of his staff officers walking on the beach stumbled over a log and skinned his shin.

Next evening at officer's mess, the Admiral turned to his Flag Lieutenant: "Haven't we got something to bring up tonight?"

The Flag Lieutenant reached under his chair and handed to the Admiral a pair of football shin-guards which had been dug up somewhere. The Admiral, with appropriate remarks, presented them to the officer who had stumbled.

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Admiral Halsey is attentive to the safety of his pilots. He becomes very much concerned when planes are aloft and the weather turns bad. On these occasions, he stays on the bridge until all flights are aboard.

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The day that news of the Army's re-entry into Manila was announced, Admiral Halsey called in his chief steward, Tulao, a Filipino who has been with him for many years.

As Tulao entered, the Admiral took him by the hand and put his arm around his shoulder.

"Tulao," he said, "you and your people have done a great deal to cooperate with us in these operations and make them a success."

The Filipino was trembling and tears were on his cheeks.

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The first order of business when the Admiral returns from a mission is to inspect all damaged ships, see all injured personnel aboard, and then visit the hospital ships, ward by ward.

He never allows any publicity or pictures to be taken during these visits.

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He has a pride in the prowess of his pilots. "One American is worth at least four Japs in aerial combat," he once said. Later he revised the figure up to 20.

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PERSONAL MISCELLANY: - - Admiral Halsey is square-jawed with a wide mouth that turns down at the corners . . . Eyes that are piercing, yet quickly turn to a twinkle of warmth . . . An appearance of good humor . . . Very shaggy eye-brows, and a face that indicates the rugged strength of both character and physique . . . Barrel chest and powerful arms . . . An anchor tatooed on one shoulder . . . Athletic build gives appearance of being larger than he is . . . Weight about 180 pounds.. Average height . . .

A very powerful swimmer . . . Likes to swim whenever the Fleet is at an anchorage . . . Enjoys battling the surf . . . Swims out far beyond any members of his staff . . .

The sun irritates his skin and he is usually red-faced while at sea . . . When his feet hurt, stands on bridge wearing carpet slippers . . . Always neat in appearance . . .

Dresses informally . . . Wears no tie . . . Banned ties in South Pacific on grounds that the time taken to tie and untie neckties each morning and evening constituted, in the aggregate, a tremendous waste of manpower . . .

Wears garrison cap . . . A good story teller . . .  
Likes to hold "bull sessions" to swap ideas with his staff . . .  
Easily accessible . . . Gets lots of fan mail, mostly from anxious mothers .. Like  
most Navy men, has his before-breakfast cup of coffee and several cups  
between meals during day . . . Eats light lunches and insists his Staff  
do the same "because it's good for them" . . . Shows no exterior  
nervousness while on mission . . . Moves back and forth across the bridge  
and checks on flag plot, but seldom stands on bridge except when  
necessary . . .

Plays deck tennis regularly each afternoon at 1600,  
unless under attack . . . Wears shorts and sneakers while playing . . . He  
and a Commander on his Staff hold fleet championship and have never  
been defeated in a long series of sets.

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