



## SURRENDER AT SEA

As the highest ranking officer under General McArthur's command in Manila at the end of the war, I was assigned to board a Japanese ship and accept the captain's surrender. It was a brief experience, but I'll never forget it.

I was taken to the ship in Manila Bay on a small tender. As I climbed onto the ship, my heart was pounding fast. I was excited about my mission and hopeful that I would be able to conduct myself properly. The Captain welcomed me aboard in halting English and bowed. I bowed slightly and saluted. He was a small dark man probably in his forties, with the straight black hair of the Japanese, a thin mustache and steel rimmed glasses. He wore his captain's uniform, a sword in its sheath at his waist.

We went through the formalities of the surrender in his quarters. I had brought the proper surrender papers, one for him and one for me, which we both signed, and then, in accordance with the Japanese symbol of surrender, he handed me his sword.

I had ample opportunity to see how Japanese sailors live, eat, and sleep. There were piles of straw mats rolled up in one small corner of the deck. These served as beds. About twenty small hibachis were the only stoves. I assumed the rice and dried fish stacked in bags below the deck, near the captain's quarters was the steady diet of the crew.

From my appearance and my name, the captain must have concluded that I was Jewish. Trying to be cordial, he said, "I have some canned corned beef. Would you like some?"

"Yes, thank you," I replied.

Shortly after, a white-gloved seaman entered the captain's quarters carrying a silver tray laden with the thin sliced corned beef on a white porcelain dish, a blue porcelain plate filled with thin white crackers, two teacups and saucers, and a steaming teapot. In a way that appeared to be a time honored ritual, he served the tea, placed the two porcelain plates on the captain's desk, bowed and left us. There was very little conversation as we ate, but I learned that his ship had been heading into the harbor of Eniwetok when he received the news of the surrender. I told him very little, but did a few magic tricks which seemed to fascinate him.

When I left the ship I smiled inwardly thinking, "*Who would have ever thought that a Jewish kid from Toledo, Ohio would ever be accepting the surrender of a Japanese captain?*"