Japanese surrender was signed on board the USS Missouri, September 2, 1945.

The 22nd Special Naval Construction Battalion celebrated V-J Day.

V-J Day

On August 15, 1945, a little after noon Japan Standard Time, Japan’s Emperor Hirohito went on Radio Tokyo to broadcast an announcement to the Japanese people that Japan had surrendered. World War II had ended. The day became known as “Victory over Japan Day,” or simply “V-J Day.” Then on September 2, Japan formally surrendered.

Japan’s surrender did not come easy. Allied leaders promised Japan a peaceful government if they surrendered unconditionally. If not, Japan would face “prompt and utter destruction.” The Japanese government refused to surrender, and on August 6 and 9, American B-29 planes dropped an atomic bomb on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively. The next day, August 10, the Japanese government communicated its intentions to surrender. Then on August 15, 1945, the official announcement was made; Japan had unconditionally surrendered.

Due to the time difference, it was actually August 14 in the United States, and as soon as the news of Japan’s surrender was announced, celebrations erupted. Images came flooding in from around the world of people celebrating. Then on September 2, on board the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, Allied supreme commander General Douglas MacArthur, along with the Japanese foreign minister, Mamoru Shigemitsu, and the chief of staff of the Japanese army, Yoshijiro Umezu, signed the official Japanese surrender.

With celebrations happening around the world, it was also a bittersweet time for the families of more than 400,000 Americans and over 65 million people worldwide who had died in the war. The death toll, the savagery, and suffering was more than anyone could have imagined.

Every state felt the effects of the war, and North Carolina perhaps more than most. Over 360,000 North Carolinians served during World War II, but for those left on the home front, the fear of an attack was all too real. Along their coast, the Battle of the Atlantic raged and more than 90 ships sank. The threat of the U-boat ended with Germany’s surrender to the U.S. on May 7, 1945, but thousands of men and women continued to fight the war in the Pacific. Soon after V-J Day, they began to come home. Over the last decade, NOAA and its partners have worked to document and protect this significant collection of shipwrecks and to honor the sacrifice of those who served.

Today in the United States, V-J Day is celebrated on September 2. As we approach the commemoration of the end of World War II, we invite you to join us in pausing to remember the great sacrifices made both here at home and abroad. It is only through the sacrifices of so many that today we live in freedom.

World War II – V-J Day

To learn more about Victory over Japan, visit the following websites:

- The National World War II Museum – New Orleans
- History.Com
- Naval History and Heritage Command
- President Truman’s Address on V-J Day (audio recording)

*The inclusion of links in this newsletter does not imply endorsement or support of any of the linked information.
Register Today to Join Us on September 2

Living Shipwrecks 3D: Exploring North Carolina’s World War II Heritage

In honor and commemoration of the 75th anniversary marking the end of World War II, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary (MNMS), in collaboration with the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Service (NCCOS), will host a webinar on September 2 from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm EDT.

Off the coast of North Carolina lie the remains of a forgotten World War II battlefield that serves as the final resting place for nearly 1,700 men lost during the Battle of the Atlantic. Join us as researchers discuss the shipwrecks of this naval battlefield and how NOAA honors our nation’s heritage both above and below the waves.

Join Tane Casserley, MNMS’s Resource Protection and Permit Coordinator, and NCCOS’s Research Ecologist Dr. Chris Taylor and Research Associate Dr. Avery Paxton as they highlight a decade of research to document the Battle of the Atlantic shipwrecks off North Carolina’s coast. Hear about the advanced technologies used and see acoustic fish visualizations created of the surrounding marine life that thrive on these wreck sites.

Learn how this partnership and collaborative research not only honors the sacrifices of our Allied seamen and the heroism of the U.S. Merchant Marine, but also recognizes the role these shipwrecks play today in the region’s health as habitat for vibrant and thriving marine ecosystems. These shipwrecks are truly both ecological and historical wonders.

Click here to register for the September 2nd webinar, and visit the Living Shipwrecks 3D website.

Dr. Chris Taylor, Research Ecologist, NCCOS

Dr. Avery Paxton, Research Associate, NCCOS

Tane Casserley, Resource Protection and Permit Coordinator, MNMS
Discovery of the USS Monitor - 47 Years Later

It was on New Year’s Eve 1862, when the USS Monitor slipped to a watery grave off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. For more than a century, the ship’s final resting place remained unknown. Although there were numerous searches and the occasional claims of discovery, no one could show absolute proof that Monitor’s location had been found. That is until 1973.

John G. Newton, geologist, oceanographer, and historian served from 1963 to 1975 as the marine superintendent of the Cooperative Oceanographic Program of Duke University Marine Lab (DUML). As chief scientist in 1973, Newton coordinated one of the most significant cruises aboard Duke’s research vessel Eastward. The expedition had two missions. One included the study of the marine geology of the North Carolina continental shelf. The second, to locate the wreck of the USS Monitor.

Over the years in compiling and processing bathymetric data from previous Eastward cruises, Newton noted that shipwrecks had a distinct signature. Combined with his personal interest in Civil War history and his data analysis, he decided to search for the elusive Monitor in deep water, south of Cape Hatteras.

Newton secured funding for the mission from the National Geographic Society and assembled a team that included the pioneer in scanning sonar technology, Dr. Harold Edgerton of MIT, geologist Dr. Robert Sheridan of the University of Delaware, and Gordan P. Watts, Jr., an archaeologist with the North Carolina Division of Archives.

With only seven to eight days to accomplish their mission, the search was an extremely high-risk project. During the survey, 22 wrecks were located and each site was compared with Monitor’s “footprint.” All were eliminated except one. Although the size and shape matched Monitor’s dimensions, the investigators were unable to quickly verify it as Monitor; identification was complicated since Monitor lay upside down.

After months of reviewing the data, on March 7, 1974, John Newton, jointly with the North Carolina Department of Archives, made the long-awaited announcement that the Duke survey team had confirmed the discovery of the USS Monitor. In April 1974, the U.S. Navy research vessel Alcoa Seaprobe began a systematic examination of the Monitor wreck site and collected over 1,200 quality photographs and several hours of video. A photomosaic was completed of the wreck convincing the last of any doubters that Monitor had indeed been found!

Monitor was arguably one of the most important objects in American history, and its discovery created much discussion on how best to protect and preserve this great ship. To accomplish that goal, the governor of North Carolina nominated the USS Monitor wreck site for status as a national marine sanctuary. On January 30, 1975, the 113th anniversary of its launch, the Secretary of Commerce designated the USS Monitor and a column of water one nautical mile in diameter surrounding the vessel as the nation’s first national marine sanctuary.

Learn more about the USS Monitor’s history, see the wreck site as it is today, download educational activities, and more at our website, https://monitor.noaa.gov.
National Marine Sanctuary System
The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The network includes a system of 14 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.

Photo Contest
In celebration of national Get Into Your Sanctuary activities, NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is hosting a photo contest. From May 23 through September 7 (Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend), send us your best photos of the National Marine Sanctuary System and help us celebrate the beauty and importance of these special places.

Show the world what the ocean and Great lakes mean to you.
https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/photo-contest.html

Submit Your Photos

Writer and Editors: Shannon Ricles and Dayna McLaughlin
For more information, email monitor@noaa.gov.

http://monitor.noaa.gov/