

Japanese “Rising Sun” Surrender Flag returns to the USS South Dakota crew and memorial.



“When I went aboard the South Dakota in Tokyo Bay 1945, I was assigned to the “N” Division, more as a transient than a regular crew member. I had a lot of leave coming to me when we got to the states and left the ship in Long Beach, CA with all my belongings. After 30 days leave I returned on board in the Philadelphia Navy yard. Then I was assigned to the regular crew. It was then that many of the crew left (discharged) and we started preparing to put the ship in mothballs in the 16th Reserve Fleet. It took a long time and a lot of painting etc. to secure the ship. I was in charge of most of the super-structure. That’s when I came across a bundle wrapped in brown paper in what was Admiral Halsey’s sea cabin. It was the Japanese Flag from the Battleship *NAGATO*. I got permission from the Officer in Charge of my detail to donate the flag to my VFW Post. I don’t remember the officers name, nor the names of many of the Quartermasters working with me. I do remember Lt. Comdr Harold Stassen when he was aboard.

At the decommissioning, I lowered the flag and the ship’s commission pennant for the last time. I was still assigned to the South Dakota as one of the many ships in the 16th moth ball fleet and I had to maintain security patrols and fire patrols. I left active duty in the USN in 1947 and transferred to active duty as a Navigation instructor in the Naval Reserve. I got married and a year later was activated to full duty on the CVL36 USS Monterey, a light carrier. We were sent to Pensacola, FL to qualify Naval Air Cadets in carrier landings. After the Korean war, already having a family, I decided to leave the Navy which I loved and *Go Home* to raise a family.

Well that’s about it. I hope you receive the package in good condition and it’s appreciated by my shipmates of the USS South Dakota.

Charles M. Cavell