

August 16, 2006

My name is Charles R. King. I served as a radioman in the CR Division on the U.S.S. BB57 until November 1, 1945. I had many occasions to visit Bull Halsey in his cabin. He was a great inspiration to us all. I took him a news sheet every morning and had coffee with him.

The article by J.D. Chambers, about the gun powder bags exploding on the U.S.S. Iowa, was very interesting to me, because I was on the main deck of the South Dakota when the powder bags exploded, while taking on ammo for our magazines below. The one blast caused several more, because the debris fell all the way through the hatches to the magazines and exploded other bags. I cannot believe the theory that Clayton Hartwig sabotaged the ship.

I, too, feel bitter about the South Dakota being bypassed for the signing of the surrender. Actually, I was thrilled when the Japanese surrendered on my 21st birthday, August 14, 1945. We were told it would happen on our ship, because we were the most decorated ship in the U.S. Navy and had fought in every major campaign in the South Pacific. Alas, it didn't happen, so we watched the ceremonies from nearby in Tokyo Bay.

Oh well, enclosed is a picture of me after the Saipan incident. I would dearly love to hear from my old shipmates.

Charles R. King

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