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## **Battleship Missouri Commemorates 67th Anniversary of the End of WWII**

### *Senior Archivist of MacArthur Memorial Among Guest Speakers*

**Pearl Harbor, Sept. 2, 2012** — In commemoration of the 67th anniversary of Imperial Japan's formal surrender aboard the USS *Missouri* (BB-63) that ended the world's most devastating war, the Battleship Missouri Memorial held a free ceremony this morning on the ship's fantail.

Keynote speaker, James Zobel, Senior Archivist for the General Douglas MacArthur Memorial in Norfolk, Virginia, highlighted the ceremony. Zobel spoke on the importance that World War II and the surrender had in shaping today's world.

Christian Wells of Radford High School winner of the "MacArthur's Words" essay contest read his inspirational essay. Wells' essay explained the relevance and applicability of MacArthur's famous change must "be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh" line in today's world. USS *Missouri* Memorial Association, Inc. board member Mark Polivka offered remarks on behalf of the nonprofit organization that today is entrusted with the care and operation of America's last battleship. Samantha Peterson and Corey Snider's essays earned them second and third respectively.

The ceremony featured patriotic music performed by the Pacific Fleet Band, a rifle salute, Echo Taps, and a special Old Glory Detail by the Naval Health Clinic Hawaii.

The flag from the Old Glory presentation was given to GM1 Danny Poling, United States Navy (RET). GM1 Poling is a native of Columbus, OH but now calls South Carolina home. GM1 Poling served his country for 20 years from 1942 – 1962 and has the rare accomplishment of serving in all of World War II's major theaters of operation and the Korean war, making both of the USS *Missouri*'s deployments to the Korean peninsula.

The formal surrender occurred months following V-E Day (Victory in Europe Day), May 8, 1945, when German troops laid down their arms after Germany surrendered to Allied Nations. Japan announced its surrender on Aug. 15 (Japan time) but formalized the agreement on Sept. 2 aboard the USS *Missouri*, thereby signifying the Allies' victory over Axis Powers and restoring peace to the world.

(more)

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Following the ceremony guests toured the historic battleship including the site where Supreme Allied Commander General Douglas MacArthur and representatives from 10 nations accepted Imperial Japan's surrender. Guests were also amongst the first to enjoy newly restored areas and exhibits aboard the ship.

An exhibit paying tribute to Edwin Asimakoupoulos, a *Missouri* Marine from the WWII era who was the honor guard escorting the Russian General who signed on behalf of the Soviet Union, was also unveiled. This exhibit honors all Marine Detachments stationed on the *Missouri* and is representative of the history and legacy of seagoing Marines from the time of the Revolutionary War until the last seagoing Marine departed the ship in 1992.

Other new features include a revitalized Captain's cabin display case and restoration of the Captain's in-port cabin, new 1940's berthing compartment and a fully restored wardroom mural.

#### About James Zobel

*James Zobel has been the Archivist at the General Douglas MacArthur Memorial in Norfolk, VA, for the past twenty years. He obtained a BA and MA in History from Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. The MacArthur Memorial Archives is an international research center dedicated to the preservation and research of materials related to the life and times of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. As Archivist, he has collected, organized, and catalogued the papers of General Douglas MacArthur, 18 of his subordinate generals, and thousands of veterans who served in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.*

#### About the Battleship Missouri Memorial

*The Battleship Missouri Memorial, located a mere ship's length from the USS Arizona Memorial, completes a historical visitor experience that begins with the "day of infamy" that saw the sinking of USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor and ends with Imperial Japan's unconditional surrender aboard USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. Following an astounding career that spans five decades and three wars, from World War II to the Korean conflict to the Liberation of Kuwait, the "Mighty Mo" was decommissioned and donated to the USS Missouri Memorial Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which operates the battleship as a historic attraction and memorial. The association oversees her care and preservation with the support of visitors, memberships, grants and the generosity of donors. The Battleship Missouri Memorial is one of Hawaii's top 10 attractions according to Pacific Business News and starred in Universal Studios' Battleship.*

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