Newsweek
The Magazine of News Significance
September 3, 1945
p. 19

• VICTORY •

Curtain Rises on War's Last Act as MacArthur Takes Over Japan

Move on the Home Islands Paced by Massive Allied Fleet; Landing Forces Fully Armed

"See you in Tokyo."

Since Dec. 7, 1941, that had been the parting phrase of men throughout the Pacific. For many months it sounded like a foolishly empty boast. Then as the tide slowly turned it became a promise. This week the phrase was becoming reality—not so far as Tokyo itself was concerned, for the capital was too badly wrecked to be occupied immediately. But in a large area around Tokyo the American occupation was on and that was good enough. For the first time in history the flag of an enemy cast its shadow on the land of the rising sun.

On Tuesday, Aug. 28 (Tokyo time), the Japs got their first taste of the ignominy of surrender. A small airborne force of American troops zoomed down on Atsugi airfield 14 miles southwest of Tokyo. As they piled out of their great transport planes the conquered took their orders concerning preparations for the great events to come—the dramatic descent from the skies of MacArthur himself along with a great airborne force and the landing at the Yokosuka naval base of marines and bluejackets.

Then still later the formal surrender aboard the battleship Missouri would signal the end of the Japanese Empire all over the Pacific and the Far East—in the far flung islands, where Fleet Admiral Nimitz announced surrender negotiations were under way; at Singapore and Hong Kong, names of bitter memory for the British; at Nanking, China's ravished capital; and in Manchuria, where the Russians had already taken their revenge.

U.S.S. Missouri: In Tokyo Bay an empire is coming to an end on this symbol of the power that beat the Japs

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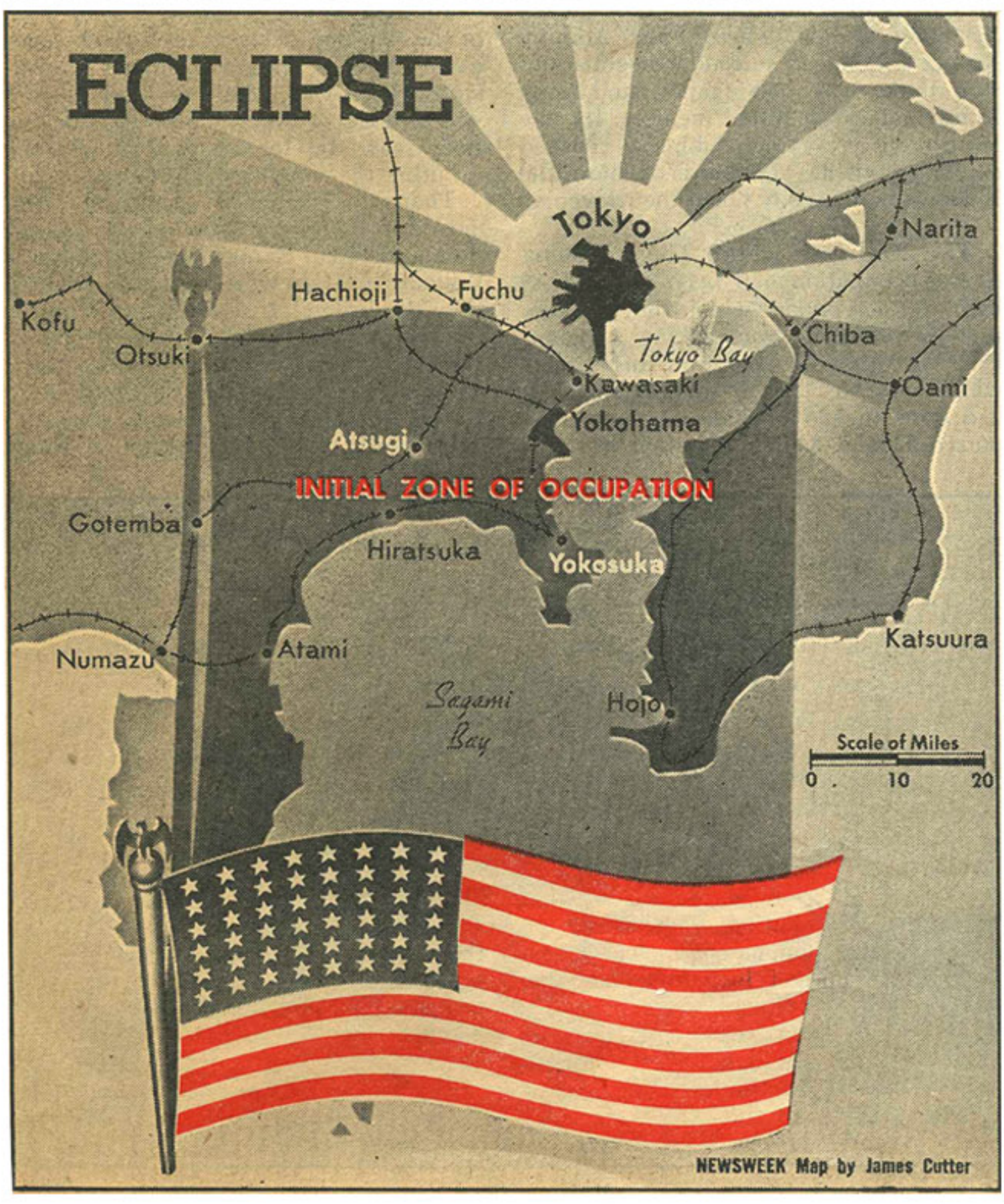

This is where the American flag is going up in Japan

The Undivine Wind: The beginning of the occupation had been delayed 48 hours by a typhoon—which the Japanese politely refrained from calling a "kamikaze" or "divine wind." And this "divine wind" was too late to save Japan as it had done in 1281, when a typhoon dispersed Kublai Khan's invasion fleet. Instead, the typhoons actually gave the Allied airborne and amphibious forces more time to organize the landings.

General of the Army MacArthur had announced originally that the preliminary airborne force would land Aug. 26 at Atsugi. He had intended to fly personally with troops to Atsugi on Aug. 28. Members of the imperial General Staff were instructed to be there at 6 a.m. to talk to his representatives. And simultaneously that day, Marine and naval units would land at the Yokosuka naval base below Tokyo and also at points in Sagami Bay.

The formal document of surrender—Jap emissaries had brought a copy back with them from Manila—was to be signed on Friday, Aug. 31, aboard the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay. This was postponed until Sept. 2.

In Fujiyama's Shadow: When word of the two-day delay in all arrangements came, most of the vast armada of warships, transports, and auxiliary vessels was already steaming for Japan. Bucking high seas, the force stood off Honshu awaiting the signal for landing.

Then an advanced group of ships moved in the morning of Aug. 26. As the shores of Japan came into sight, Admiral William F. Halsey Jr. jubilantly shouted from the bridge of his flagship: "Tell the United States—California, here I come!" The force moved to the mouth of the 40-mile-wide Sagami Bay, which joins Tokyo Bay through a narrow strait 25 miles south of the Jap capital. A dingy little Jap destroyer, the Hat Uzakura, approached. Halsey grinned as a staff member remarked: "You wanted the Jap Navy. Well, there it is!"

Twenty-one bemedaled, sober-faced Japanese were transferred by whaleboat to the destroyer Nicholas, then by breeches buoy to the flagship, the battleship Missouri. The two naval officers,

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thirteen harbor pilots, and six interpreters, who were armed with maps and charts, were conducted to the Missouri's wardroom and handed instructions on the forthcoming landings at Yokosuka, demobilization of coastal guns, and minesweeping. Admiral Halsey remained on the bridge and let his staff attend to the details. The two naval officers returned to their ship to relay instructions and the pilots and interpreters remained aboard as guides. Then the vanguard of the mighty Third Fleet sailed close to shore and anchored under the shadow of Mount Fujiyama, ready for the landing hour.

From the Sea: There was no need for secrecy now, and Fleet Admiral Nimitz disclosed that the entire tremendous fleet consisted of 401 vessels, 383 of them American and 18 British. The American combat ships included 12 battleships, 17 large aircraft carriers, 6 escort carriers, 20 cruisers, and 91destroyers. Then came a vast force of destroyer escorts, transports, tankers, minesweepers, ammunition ships, hospital ships, tenders, and landing craft. Operationally, all these were under the command of Admiral Halsey of the Third Fleet and Admiral Raymond A. Spruance of the Fifth Fleet. Later Halsey and Spruance will probably accept surrender of remnants of the Jap Fleet.

The occupational forces were ordered to go ashore much as they regularly did in amphibious operations—with full combat equipment and battle dress, across beaches and onto docks. No chances were to be taken. For good measure, an air umbrella of at least 1,200 planes from carriers would hover above the landing forces for protection against possible treachery.

Seabee and Army engineer units were due to follow the combat troops closely. They will prepare installations for liberated war prisoners and civilian internees, as well as quarters and offices for the occupation forces. The greatest danger in the landing appeared to come from mines which Superfortresses had laid for months in Japanese waters. But minesweepers arrived to clear paths to all invasion beaches, and the Japs were told to clean out all mines and other obstacles in Tokyo Bay.

From the Air: Meanwhile, immense preparations for the main airborne operation rolled forward on the airfields of Okinawa and Iwo Jima. Strips which until two weeks ago were crowded with combat aircraft now were packed wing to wing with transport planes rushed in from all over the world, including Africa and Europe.

While the amphibious landings are beginning to the south, the first large airborne landings are being made with about 150 four-engined C-54 transports and 150 Liberators converted to troop carriers from Okinawa bases, and about 50 other transports from Iwo Jima. The latter are chiefly carrying supplies. In addition, there are 45,000 packages of food and clothing for prisoners and in-

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ternees who are scattered through the Tokyo area. Transports carry from twenty to 40 men each, plus extra gasoline.

At least 7,500 troops were expected to land with MacArthur on Aug. 30. The planes will shuttle back and forth continually on the 4-hour-45-minute run to Atsugi from Okinawa. Two other airstrips in the Tokyo area also are due to be repaired and used within three days.

On Sept. 3, the occupation is scheduled to spread to Kyushu, southernmost island of the Jap homeland. Two Allied planes will land advance parties at Kanoya airfield that day, followed the next day by debarkation of amphibious troops at Takasu, 4 miles southwest of Kanoya. The landing and support groups for this operation will be commanded by Admiral Spruance.

At about the same time, other landings will take place at Yokohama in Tokyo Bay, and at Tateyama just outside it. And on Aug. 27, General MacArthur announced that the honor of occupying Tokyo itself would go to the Eighth Army, veterans of the Philippines campaign commanded by Lt. General Robert L. Eichelberger.

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