

# Lt. David Collins "Kisses-Off" The War, Witnesses Signing of Terms From B-29

DAVE COLLINS  
WAS MY NAVIGATOR  
9 in Lock  
NAV. K-16

Winnfield and Winn parish were not without representation at the signing of the peace terms in Tokyo Bay on September 2 for Lieutenant David Collins, navigator, was a member of one of the B-29 crews that buzzed the Missouri during that history making occasion.

In writing to his mother, Mrs. Sam Collins, Route 2, he had this to say in a letter after his wonderful 15-hour trip to "kiss-off" the war and buzz the Missouri:

Yesterday David C. Collins and crew gave their kiss-off to the war in a power display over Tokyo Bay and a buzz job on the Missouri General McArthur will remember for a long time.

"We took off from Guam at 3:30 a. m. to put on a power display of all the B-29s based in the Marianas over Tokyo Bay while the peace treaty was being signed.

"The trip up to Japan was very uneventful. We arrived at the coast to join our formation at 10:30. Only one other ship from our Squadron was there so the two of us took off on a tour of Tokyo. We separated over the heart of Tokyo and our ship made a complete tour of the city. I've never seen a more devastated or completely burnt out area in my life. There were some spots in the city where several square miles were burnt out so bad there wouldn't be a thing left standing except a single smokestack sticking out like an island in the ocean. We looked around and found the Emperor's palace which we circled and took a good look at. It consisted of several buildings spread out in a manner of an estate with a large moat surrounding the entire area. We were flying at an altitude of about 1,000 feet so we were able to see the people running around.

"Tokyo with a pre-war population of seven million had fewer cars on its streets than the Town of Winnfield. The principal means of transportation seemed to be bicycles and nearly everyone had one. We must have flown over a dozen railroad terminals and I saw only one train.

"Outside Tokyo the country is beautiful. The grass is green and

Sept. 1945

it reminded me of the U. S. in the springtime.

After we flew over the city about 45 minutes we headed out over the bay to look for the American Fleet. It was there in Tokyo Bay and in large numbers. Everything from battleships and aircraft carriers to Red Cross ships and several ships of the British Navy. We saw the Battleship Missouri ahead of us and put our nose down in a dive. We went over the Missouri 300 miles per hour and if we had been lower we would have had to pull up to avoid hitting the mast. It was really a beautiful sight with the sailors all dressed in white and as we headed out to sea we dipped our wings in salutes and took what I sincerely hope was the last look at the Japanese Empire I will ever have.

"The trip back was uneventful and we landed in Guam after being in the air over 15 hours."

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