

## Day 59, (Sunday, 11/16/08) Honolulu Hawaii, Battleship Missouri (BB-63)

The day started for us before sunrise as the Amsterdam approached the harbor at Honolulu, Hawaii. We had calm sea, clear sky and temperature in the high 70s. The last few days the noon navigation report has indicated a sea water temperature of about 80 F.

The lights of Honolulu, on the island of Oahu were initially strung out along the horizon without much definition. However, as we got closer to shore that icon of Honolulu, the Aloha Clock Tower, became visible. As we approached our dock we could hear the familiar sound of the ukulele and soft Hawaiian hula music coming from the base of the clock tower. There was not enough light to get a good photo of the hula dancers with our little camera but here on the right is a photo we got a few minutes later of Pier 10 and the Aloha Clock Tower. The high rise skyline of Honolulu in the background is impressive. Back in the 1940s the Aloha Clock Tower was the tallest building in Honolulu.

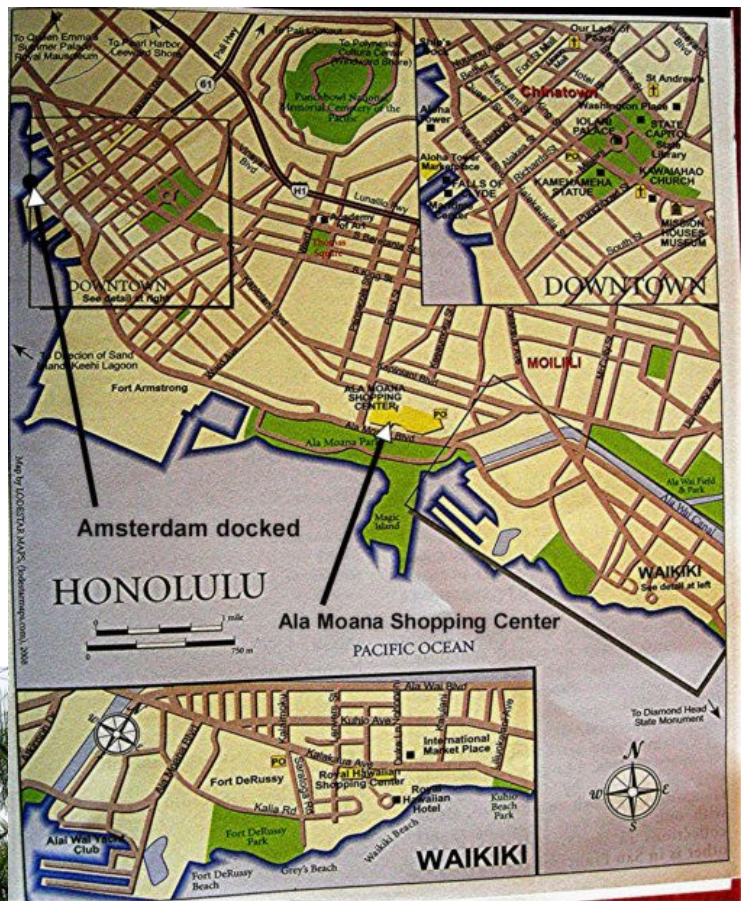


The Amsterdam tied up at Pier 10 about 7am and we went through the inspection of our passports by US immigration officials. Each person on the ship had to be individually observed by an immigration official while holding the picture page of the passport next to the individual's face. After it was verified that all the people on board had valid passports and really were who they said they were, then it was possible for us to go ashore. We got the all clear to go ashore announcement about 8:30am.

The location of the Amsterdam in Oahu is shown on the map on the right.



A street map of Honolulu and some sites we visited in during our stay are shown on the map on the right.



When leaving the Amsterdam we were presented with beautiful flower leis by the Honolulu greeting committee. We then passed through the passenger terminal at Pier 10 into a shopping mall called the Aloha Tower Marketplace. The Aloha Tower is a real icon of Honolulu. This made a good place to get the picture of Barbara's Oak Ridge Library card with the Aloha Tower in the background so that we could show "where in the world" her card was located today.

The temperature was in the mid 70s with some cloud cover. We have been to Hawaii several times so we had no huge sight seeing agenda for the day. It was great weather so we decided to just walk down Ala Moana Boulevard to the Ala Moana Shopping Center which was a little less than 4 miles from the ship. We enjoyed the sights as we went along. High rise condo and business buildings were visible on the shore side of the street while yacht harbors and Ala Moana Park were on the harbor side. We arrived at Ala Moana Shopping Center after a 45 minute walk. It was time for a break and the first thing we found was Starbucks Coffee next to a Macy's store. It felt good to be back in the US with familiar names and not having to ask if the stores took US money. Luckily we still had a little US money left.



The Ala Moana Shopping Center has a stage set up where daily entertainment is presented by local organizations. Today a hula dancing school was putting on a show of their talent. These little girls shown on the left were fun to watch.



We caught an open air trolley that took us from Ala Moana Shopping Center down to the Waikiki Beach area. The traffic was heavy and the trolley

slowly made its way through the district. We just stayed on board the trolley and took pictures of the passing scene. Shown on the right is the classic Waikiki Beach with a good population of people enjoying the sun and surf.



In the afternoon we returned to the Amsterdam. From our stateroom on the ship we could view the harbor activity. A few years ago an inter-island "Superferry" service for cars and trucks was initiated. The pick-up and drop-off dock for that ferry was located across the inlet from the Amsterdam so we got a good view of operations. On the right is a picture of the ferry with the ramp in place for cars and trucks



The ferry has a catamaran type hull design. As it left the harbor it turned so that it was possible to see daylight between the twin hulls as shown on the left.

As part of our cruise package, Holland America had invited us for an evening visit to the USS Missouri battleship that is moored in Pearl Harbor. The Missouri, which is also known as "The Mighty Mo" is probably best known to most people as the site of the September 1945 signing of the surrender documents by the Japanese at the close of WW II. However, there was much more to her history. The USS Missouri (BB-63) was commissioned in 1944 as an Iowa class battleship. During WWII she participated in the invasions of Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and operations against mainland Japan.

The Mighty Mo later served two tours of duty during the Korean War before being decommissioned in 1955. The Missouri remained in the "mothball" fleet for the next 30 years. She was brought out of mothballs, modernized and recommissioned in 1986. The Missouri participated in three Gulf War related campaigns in the early 1990s. On March 31, 1992 the USS Missouri was decommissioned for the final time and returned to the mothball fleet. After years of effort, the USS Missouri Memorial Association has managed to have the USS Missouri assigned the task of standing watch over the fallen at Pearl Harbor, and providing a fitting symbol of our nation's military legacy. On the night of our visit the members of the USS Missouri Memorial Association were out in full force to get us to the Missouri, escort us around the ship, entertain us and then get us safely back to the Amsterdam. This volunteer organization can always use donations to help in the restoration and maintenance of the Mighty Mo. For more information and to make donations interested people can contact them on-line at [www.mightymomembers.org](http://www.mightymomembers.org).

As a midshipman in the US Navy, Orlin had spent 6 weeks on the sister battleship, USS Wisconsin (BB-64), which was identical to the Missouri so we were expecting some nostalgia on this visit.

A bus driven by a Missouri Memorial Association volunteer picked us up and took us out to Pearl Harbor Memorial site. After passing through a security checkpoint we arrived at the site. The USS Missouri is located just a few hundred feet from the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor but it has a completely separate entrance that is on Ford Island. When we arrived there were ladies handing out flower leis to everyone and also military style caps that we could wear. Our first view of the Mighty Mo was through a flag lined ramp leading to the dock where the ship was tied up. Barbara was leading the way in her new Army hat.

There was a display of the 16 inch diameter projectiles that were fired from the nine big rifles on the ship. They were over 5 feet long as can be seen in this picture below with Esther, Bob, and Barbara.



The cylindrical canisters stacked up behind Bob and Barbara were used to hold the 100 pound sacks of gunpowder. The projectiles weighed over 1900 pounds and six of the 100 pound sacks of powder were used to fire off each projectile. The range of the projectiles was up to 23 miles.

Friend, Ben, back in San Diego questioned the above use of the word "rifle" when referring to the 16 inch weapons seen projecting from the forward turret of the Missouri in the picture on the left. He thought it would be more appropriate to use the word "gun". It turns out Ben was correct. When Orlin was attending Navy ROTC at Oregon State University he was instructed to call them "rifles". A little Internet research now suggests that these instructions may have been related to the fact that during the US Civil

War time rapid changes in armament were taking place. Cannons in use then may have had either old smooth bore barrels or new barrels with rifling. The rifling consisted of spiral grooves

cut into the inside surface of the barrel to cause the projectile to spin as it was hurled out of the barrel. The spinning imparted more stability and accuracy than was possible with a simple cannon ball. The smooth bore cannon fired steel balls while the cannons with rifling required a cylindrical projectile with a fitting to engage the rifling in the barrel. In order to distinguish between the two types of cannons, and ensure the proper projectiles were provided, a smooth bore cannon was called a "gun" and the cannon with rifling would be called a "rifle". Virtually all cannons nowadays have rifling so there is really no need to make the distinction. In fact, a 1915 article in The New York Times shows a preference for the word "gun" for these weapons ( <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9901E5D61439EF32A25752C2A9659C946496D6CF> ). Even though Orlin attended Navy ROTC classes a few years after the Civil War and the 1915 New York Times article his instructors were rigorously carrying on the "rifle" tradition. It seems that today most people think "rifle" only refers to a shoulder fired gun and the battleship weapons should be called guns.

The nearness of the Missouri to the Arizona Memorial is illustrated by the picture on the right. The white structure of the above water portion of the memorial is visible behind Orlin while the "63" is visible on the Missouri hull on the right in the picture.

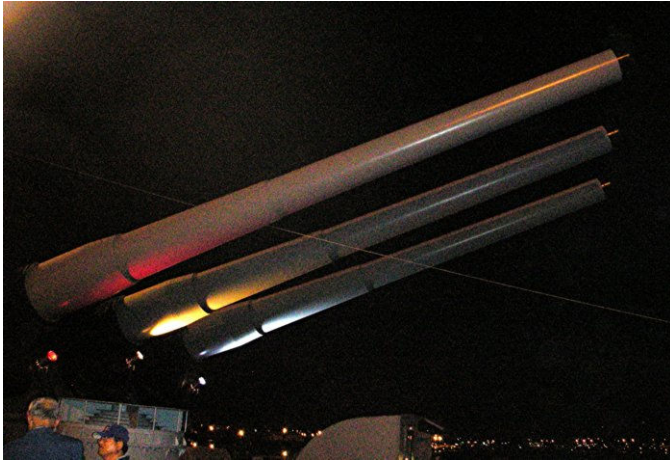
Once on board a close-up view of the main battery was possible even though it was getting dark. We joined with Ann and Dick under the big guns as shown below. Note that upon



boarding the ship Barbara took off her Army hat and donned an officer's cap after getting a "Battleship" promotion ("Battlefield" promotions are harder to achieve nowadays).



Another view of the big guns was achieved with some red white and blue lighting they had rigged up, as shown below.



The teakwood planking on the deck was showing some wear and rot in spots. However, since the Missouri has probably not had the decks worked on since the 1992 decommissioning they were in remarkably good shape.

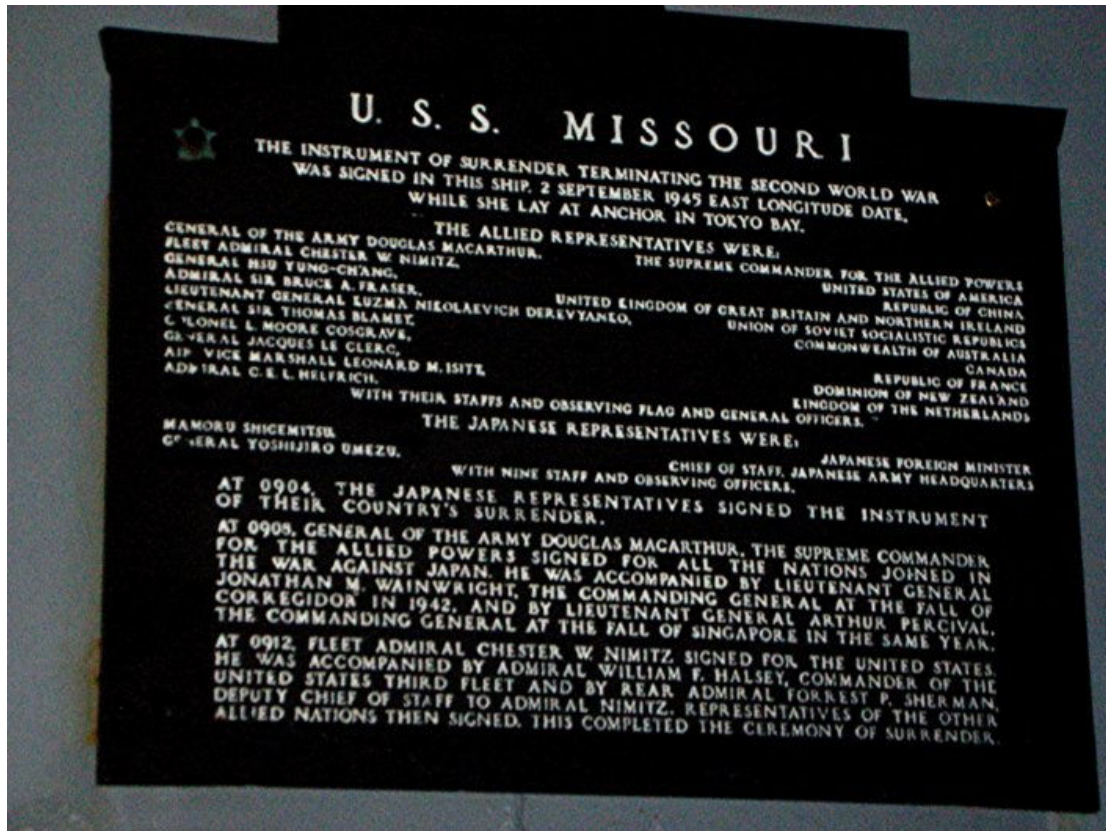


A huge anchor was needed to keep the Missouri from drifting when it was supposed to be staying in one place. We didn't get a chance to see the anchor but the anchor chain was wrapped around the capstan on the main deck for us to see. In the picture on the right, Barbara is giving some perspective of the size of the links on the chain.

Near a forward turret there was a brass plate embedded in the deck where the WWII Surrender Documents were signed by Japanese, US, and Allied Force representatives. Some visitors are checking out the deck plate in the picture on the right.



There was a plaque on the bulkhead nearby that described what had taken place at this site in September 1945.



Soon it was too dark to tour the ship any further so we went to a simulated USO "O" Club



reception and entertainment area that had been set up on the fantail of the Missouri. This was the location of the seaplane flight deck during WW II. Wine and hors d'oeuvres were served while we all gathered in from touring the various parts of the Missouri.





Three lady singers and a band started playing and singing 1940s songs that might have been heard at a USO show during the war. As shown in the picture on the left, the ladies were dressed in WAC uniforms and with the 1940s songs it was nostalgia time.

We took photos of friends who had come to the affair.

Our 2007 GWV friends, Jack and Evelyn (itravel2much) got front row

seats, as shown below.

In the photo below: our new Cruise Critic friends Chet & Anne (travelinggg) on the left and right side with 2007 GWV friends as well as Cruise Critic contributors, Dick and Anne, (ansalberg) in the middle.



Sitting at our table were Left to Right: Orlin, Judy, Aaron, Bob and Esther (Barbara took the picture).



Barbara and Esther got together in this photo below.



The music and dancing gradually was shifted from the 1940s through the 70s and up to the 80s and 90s. Even though we didn't participate in some of these more daring recent dance styles we enjoyed watching the happy revelers carry on.



The party finally had to end and we made our way off the Missouri and back to the Amsterdam on our bus. We all agreed that this evening tour of the USS Missouri was one of the most enjoyable cruise related outings we have had. Both the Amsterdam Shore Excursion Staff the volunteers of the USS

Missouri Memorial Association deserve accolades for the superb evening they gave us.

Tomorrow will have another day in Honolulu and then we will go to Lahaina for the last port visit before arriving at San Diego and the end of the cruise on Sunday November 23.