

Written by Albert Hall

In August 1945 I was serving, as a wireless operator, aboard HMS London. Early in that month a naval task force was assembled, consisting of the battleship Nelson, at least 3 Cruisers (of which London was one), 2 aircraft carriers, a number of destroyers and frigates and innumerable minesweepers and other subsidiary vessels.

The C in C South East Asia Command, Admiral Louis Mountbatten came aboard London and told the assembled ships company, in unequivocal terms, the fleet was about to sail across the Indian Ocean and through the Malacca Straits with the intention of retaking Singapore from the Japanese. He also made it very clear that “we do not mind how many ships we lose or how many men we lose – we will not turn back”.

Fortunately, for myself and many others, the atom bomb was dropped and the engagement was aborted.

However, subsequently HMS London, accompanied by a destroyer, HMS Raider was instructed to sail to the island of Sabang to accept the surrender of the Japanese garrison.

I have a log record of the intercom broadcast made while we were at action stations, and also a small photograph of the Japanese party on board London. I did have a photograph of the Japanese handing over his ceremonial sword in surrender but unfortunately this has been lost.