



VICTORY!

1945

From the Commander

On my first job after graduating from the university I had a mentor who was an old mining engineer who had worked as an explosives expert in the Alaska goldfields. He told me this story. During the war, he was approached by a government agent and asked to consult on a problem. When he agreed, he and other "consultants" were escorted onto a train in Los Angeles that, after many hours, stopped in the middle of the desert. After debarking they were driven for several hours into the mountains where they arrived in a small town on a large plateau. For several days they observed wild men setting off explosives in a large pit, and were asked to comment on how the explosives could be made more efficient. The group was then returned to Los Angeles in the same clandestine manner. None of the "consultants" knew what they were doing.

Time and declassification of the Manhattan Project makes it clear now that they were observing Los Alamos scientists developing the implosion devices for the atomic bombs. In addition to huge classified facilities at Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, and Hanford, many individuals at private companies and universities were making secret contributions to the largest industrial project ever undertaken. Despite its enormous size and cost, the project was so highly classified that it was unknown except to a small handful of people until its results became apparent 70 years ago and profoundly affected the outcome of World War II and its aftermath. In August of 1945, we entered the Atomic Age! Germany and Japan had also been doing nuclear research during the war to develop their own bombs, but only the U.S., with its enormous resources, was able to succeed in such a short period of time.

In recent years, it has become popular with revisionist historians and politicians to state that it was unnecessary for the U.S. to drop the bombs on Japan because that country was already preparing to negotiate peace with the Allies. It is said that Japan had approached the Soviet Union, which was then still neutral in the Pacific war, to help in the negotiations. The European war was over and Stalin was starting to instigate the policies in Eastern Europe that caused the Cold War. He now

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Japan Surrenders

The Emperor of Japan announced the surrender of his empire to the Allied forces on August 15, 1945. The surrender documents were signed in a formal ceremony aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2. For all intents and purposes, the fighting ended upon the Emperor's announcement, but preparations of the surrender terms and documents had to be prepared in a coordinated effort between two bitter enemies. Normally such negotiations would be accomplished through a neutral arbiter, but time didn't allow for such diplomatic niceties.

The Allies came up with a solution by arranging to have Japan send their diplomats on two Mitsubishi "Betty Bombers" to an American occupied island, and from there they would be flown to Manila on an American Aircraft where General MacArthur and his staff would negotiate the surrender terms. The Japanese bombers were to have all armament removed, be painted white, with large green crosses showing where normally the red "meatball" insignia would be so that the diplo-



matic aircraft could be easily distinguished from operational bombers

With Japanese officers and envoys on board, the green cross bombers took off from Japan and were escorted by American B-25 bombers from the 345th bomb group, while

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saw an opportunity to expand the Soviet Union's influence into Asia.

Through an extensive spy network that had penetrated the Manhattan Project, The Soviet Union was aware of the successful A-bomb test in New Mexico and that the U.S. was now preparing to drop A-bombs on Japan. Ever the opportunist, Stalin decided that, instead of assisting Japan in negotiating peace, he would join the Allies in subjugating our enemy. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8, two days after the atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. Early in the morning of August 9, the day the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, the Soviets started their invasion of Manchuko (Manchuria).

After the bombs were dropped and Japan announced its unconditional surrender, The Soviets occupied Manchuria and Korea, accepting the surrender of Japanese forces in Northern China. The weapons they confiscated were turned over to the Chinese Communists in Northern China, which gave them a huge arsenal to attack Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek and his Nationalist army. During the war, the U.S. had supplied the Chinese Army with weapons to equip 200 divisions and trained these divisions to fight the Japanese. The Generalissimo instead withheld many of his troops from aggressive action against Japan and reserved as much of the U.S.-supplied weapons for the postwar action against the Communists.

The surrender of Japan triggered the conflict with the Communists that had been suspended while both armies fought the Japanese. Well equipped with Japanese weapons, the Communists swept down from the north and through China, driving the Nationalists to surrender or depart for Formosa. By 1949, the Communists were in complete control of China. In 1950 North Korea's communist Army invaded the south, and America and its allies were at war in the Pacific again. Meanwhile Stalin dropped the Iron Curtain around the nations in Eastern Europe that had been captured during the advance on Germany, and the Soviets started instigating communist revolutions around the world. The British were fighting a communist insur-

gency in Malaya and France was fighting one in Indo China.

As the communist threat broadened, American strategy became one of strengthening the Japanese economy so it would become a bulwark against the spread of communism in Asia. The U.S provided enormous economic assistance and produced a peace treaty in 1951 that could be interpreted as forgiving Japan for all of its atrocities during WW II and eliminating any further financial responsibility for its acts. Japan's rapid recovery from the war and its growth became the West's defense against the inroads of communism.

Today, Japan's conservative government takes advantage of the revisionists who say that the events at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were unnecessary, and that it was only right for America to compensate them for the huge destruction the bombs rendered. But when one looks at history without the jaundiced eye of the revisionists, it is clear that we had little choice in trying to quickly end the war. Unfortunately, the opportunistic involvement of the Soviet Union resulted in creating further chaos throughout much of Asia, while being highly beneficial to Japan, which is now the third largest economy in the World.

One could rationally argue that the dropping of the A-bombs on Japan actually helped that nation. First, at the cost of less than 200,000 people it saved the lives of millions of Japanese military and civilians who would have been killed if the Allies had been forced to invade the Home Islands. Second, it created a need for the U.S. to provide enormous economic assistance to help the economy recover and to make Japan a reliable anti-communist ally. And third, it created a sense of guilt in Americans that today allows the Japanese to deny their responsibility for the atrocities they committed during the war. In just two actions, the Imperial Army killed almost three times as many people as were killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki – the Rape of Nanking and the Manila Massacre - but today use many propaganda techniques to deny their responsibility.

Isn't it time that we stopped putting up with this nonsense that the U.S. should not have dropped the bomb on Japan?

Angus Lorenzen

We Knew You When

Rupert Hugh Wilkinson was born in Surrey, England on May 18, 1936, and moved to the Philippines five years later where his father was not only in the sugar trade, but also worked for British intelligence.

In 1941 when the Japanese Imperial Army took over the Philippines, the elder Wilkinson was whisked away to America as part of intelligence assignment, leaving his wife Lorna and two children, Mary June and Rupert, to spend the war months in the city of Manila, and part of the time under Japanese captivity as enemy aliens – in the Santo Tomas prison camp.

It is little wonder that this experience led Wilkinson to an obsession with the workings of authority, which encompassed the relationship between authoritarian character and social environment, specifically in Germany and the U.S. As an adamant scholar and teacher of American studies he spent his life between studies in the United States and Great Britain, and

retired as a professor at Sussex University.

Rupert died on December 21, 2014 and is survived by his wife, Mary, children, Mathew, Camilla and Clara, and six grandchildren. Rupert also leaves his sister, Mary June Pettyfer.

Patricia Muriel Chittick Remley – Born September 12, 1924 in Manila, Pat became a civilian POW for 37 months in Santo Tomas prison camp from the ages of 17 to 20 years old. After coming to the U.S. in 1945, Pat enlisted in the U.S. Navy and proudly served for 18 months. Upon retirement from Roseville Community Hospital after 28 years, Pat enjoyed returning to the Philippines with former POWs, and being a member of the BACEPOW organization and the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

She is survived by her daughter, Pat Hinkle – her sister, Mary Gardner, two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

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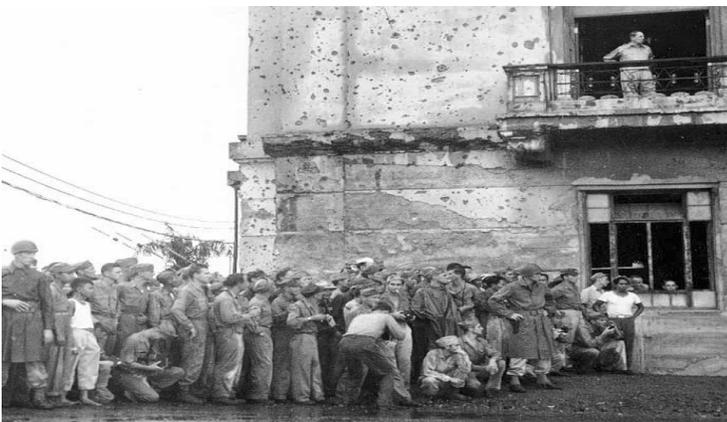
P-38 fighters flew top cover because certain Japanese generals had ordered their fighter aircraft to shoot down the surrender bombers. On a brutally hot day, they landed on the American-occupied island of Iejima near Okinawa, where practically the entire complement of troops on the island turned out to view the historic occasion.



The Japanese disembarked in a scene of total humiliation and intimidation. After a brief ceremony, eight of the designated negotiators crossed to the C-47, which soon took off for Manila.



General MacArthur watched the arrival of the delegation from the balcony of the ruined Manila City Hall. There was no negotiation of the surrender terms as Japan had agreed to an unconditional surrender. MacArthur and his staff dictated the terms and the Japanese delegation returned to Iejima the



next day, then to Japan with a document that reflected what the government leaders would soon be signing aboard the USS Missouri.



Meanwhile on Iejima, the Japanese aircrews awaited the return of the delegation and suffered further humiliation as American airmen, sailors, and Seabees swarmed over their aircraft for a victory photo.



Less than 2 weeks later, General MacArthur and the Commanders of the Allied forces, assembled aboard the USS Missouri for the formal signing of the document that had been conveyed in such an unusual manner.

Christmas 1945

Christmas of 1944 was a miserable time for the people in the Japanese camps, and in a previous issue we told their stories about how they celebrated the season with practically nothing to share and very little food. For our next edition, we'd like to tell some of the happier stories about your first free Christmas 70 years ago in 1945 after 4 years of war. It must have been a joyous season to be home with family and friends so how did you celebrate it? If you have an interesting tale, please send it to us at one of the e-mail addresses shown in the masthead of this issue.