

Remembering Hiroshima (August 6, 1945)



HARRY TRUMAN'S DIARY AND PAPERS



As we remember the Enola Gay dropping an Atomic Bomb on the Japanese City of Hiroshima, I felt a need to put the Diary and Writings regarding this by the 33rd President of the United States, Harry S. Truman; who succeeded Franklin Delano Roosevelt on April 12, 1945, when Roosevelt passed away after months of declining health. Under President Truman, the U.S. successfully concluded World War II both the European and Pacific Theaters.

Before I continue, I need to tell you readers and fans why this day is and will be VERY IMPORTANT to me for the rest of my life:

August 6, 2016 – Page 1 of 9: Author Jeff Hertzog of www.jeffhertzog.net

Remembering Hiroshima (August 6, 1945): Page 2



My father; John F. Hertzog Sr. (November 21, 1926 – July 13, 2014 age 87); (Photo of my dad holding yours truly @ the age of 1 in the Summer of 1962!) served in the U. S. Marines Corp during the Second World War, and the Navy Seabees during Korea. He was stationed in Guam for training for the invasion of Japan planned for November 1, 1945! He was going to be amongst the first Marines and Army Soldiers to land on Japan. The first invasion, which my father would have been in; code named Operation Olympic, American combat troops (Army & Marines) would land on Japan by amphibious assault during the early morning hours of November 1, 1945. Fourteen combat divisions of Army Soldiers and Marines would land on heavily fortified and defended Kyushu, the southernmost of the Japanese home islands, after an unprecedented naval and aerial bombardment.

If the November 1945 invasion would have taken place instead of the dropping of the 2 Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, It was estimated that maybe up to 95% of the Initial Invasion force would of died! If they invasion would of happened and my father would have been those who died, well we do NOT need to go there! (Let alone a possible 1,000,000 U.S. Servicemen that might have died!

Here are some Documentations of President Truman's Diary regarding Hiroshima!

[4/12/45: President Franklin Roosevelt dies. Vice – President Harry S. Truman becomes President.]

4/12/45 Diary Entry:

"I did not know what effect the situation *[the change in Presidents]* would have on the war effort, price control, war production and everything that entered into the emergency that then existed. I knew the President had a great many meetings with Churchill and Stalin. I was not familiar with any of these things and it was really something to think about but I decided the best thing to do was to go home and get as much rest as possible and face the music."

Remembering Hiroshima (August 6, 1945): Page 3

[Later, Truman described his lack of preparation for managing the war to his daughter:]
3/3/48 Letter to Margaret Truman:



"If there ever was a top secret this is it. Someday I'll have to tell it. As you know I was Vice-President from Jan. 20 to April 12, 1945. I was at Cabinet meetings and saw Roosevelt once or twice in those months. But he never did talk to me confidentially about the war, or about foreign affairs or what he had in mind for the peace after the war."

[Later in the letter, President Truman lamented about his early days as president:] "Then I had to start in reading memorandums, briefs, and volumes of correspondence on the World situation. Too bad I hadn't been on the Foreign Affairs Committee or that F.D.R. hadn't informed me on the situation." (Margaret Truman, *Letters From Father*, pg. 103-106).

5/17/45 Truman Appointment Sheet Entry; meeting with Sec. of the Navy James Forrestal:

"Held a session in projection room to outline the proposed campaign in Pacific for the Japanese war. Apparently a very detailed plan worked out with the idea of invasion of Japan."

[The meaning of this passage is unclear. Forrestal had seen many Americans killed at the battle of Iwo Jima during his trip there in February 1945. He was horrified, and upon returning implored, "We cannot go from Iwo to Iwo. We must find a formula to gain peace without this frightful bloodshed." (Ellis Zacharias, "The Forrestal Enigma", United Nations World, March 1949). Yet in the week before the 5/17 meeting with Truman, Forrestal had questioned the wisdom of having Russia participate in an invasion of Japan. The Dept. of War believed that Russian entry would help save American lives. Forrestal, on the other hand, feared control of additional occupied territory by Russia. He also hoped that postwar Japan might become a counterweight to Russia in the Far East. The Navy favored their blockade as the primary means of defeating Japan. A psychological warfare plan, focusing on non-military methods of winning the war that Forrestal had backed had been largely rejected. (Ellis Zacharias, "How We Bungled the Japanese Surrender", Look, 6/6/50).]

Remembering Hiroshima (August 6, 1945): Page 4

6/17/45 Diary Entry:

"I have to decide Japanese strategy - shall we invade Japan proper or shall we bomb and blockade? That is my hardest decision to date. But I'll make it when I have all the facts."

[The next day Truman met with military representatives to discuss how the war against Japan should proceed. Truman decided at that meeting to have the Joint Chiefs of Staff go ahead with plans to invade Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four major islands. The planned invasion date was Nov. 1, 1945].



[7/16/45: The first atomic bomb was successfully tested. That night Truman, who was in Potsdam, Germany at a conference with Churchill and Stalin, received a brief secret notification that the atomic bomb test had "exceeded expectations". It's likely that Truman's diary reference on 7/17/45 to his "dynamite" refers to the a-bomb news, of which he had not told Stalin, from the 16th.]

7/17/45 Diary Entry:

"I told Stalin that I am no diplomat but usually said yes & no to questions after hearing all the argument. It pleased him. I asked him if he had the agenda for the meeting. He said he had and that he had some more questions to present. I told him to fire away. He did and it is dynamite - but I have some dynamite too which I'm not exploding now."

"He'll *[Stalin and Russia]* be in the Jap War on August 15th. Fini Japs when that comes about."

[Did this mean that Truman thought Russia would be the final element in bringing Japan's defeat? Or Russia plus the atomic bomb? Truman did not receive word of when the first atomic bomb would be ready for use on Japan until July 22nd.]

[7/18/45: Truman received another brief message confirming the success of the a-bomb test. Later that day he wrote his wife a letter.]

7/18/45 Letter to Bess Truman:

"...I've gotten what I came for - Stalin goes to war *[against Japan]* August 15 with no strings on it. He wanted a Chinese settlement *[in return for entering the Pacific war, China would give Russia some land and other concessions]* - and it is practically made - in a better form than I expected. *[Chinese Foreign Minister]* Soong did better than I asked him. I'll say that we'll end the war a year sooner now, and think of the kids who won't be killed! That is the important thing."

Remembering Hiroshima (August 6, 1945): Page 5

7/18/45 Diary Entry:

"P.M. [*Prime Minister Winston Churchill*] & I ate alone. Discussed Manhattan [*atomic bomb*] (it is a success). Decided to tell Stalin about it. Stalin had told P.M. of telegram from Jap Emperor asking for peace. Stalin also read his answer to me. It was satisfactory. Believe Japs will fold up before Russia comes in. I am sure they will when Manhattan appears over their homeland. I shall inform Stalin about it at an opportune time." [*The closest Truman came to doing that was on 7/24/45 when "I casually mentioned to Stalin that we had a new weapon of unusual destructive force." (Harry Truman, "Memoirs, 1945", pg. 416). No mention was made by Truman that the weapon was an atomic bomb.]*

[A positive response or inquiry to Japan regarding their request for peace was avoided on the grounds that the purpose of Japan's request was not "clear", as Stalin put it. For the request, see U.S. Dept. of State, "Foreign Relations of the U.S., The Conference of Berlin (Potsdam) 1945, vol. 1", pg. 875-876 and 879-880. For Stalin's response to Japan, see U.S. Dept. of State, "Foreign Relations of the U.S., The Conference of Berlin (Potsdam) 1945, vol. 2", pg. 1250-1251 and 1587-1588.]

[The following diary entry is not found in "Off the Record". It appears to refer to the meeting between Truman and Stalin on 7/17/45 at the Potsdam Conference. It may have been written by Truman in the Fall of 1951 for his aide Eben Ayers (Gar Alperovitz, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb", pg. 558-559).]

7/19/45 Diary Entry:

"Stalin was a day late in arriving. It was reported that he was not feeling up to par. He called on me as soon as he arrived. It was about 11 A.M. He, Molotov, Vishinski and Pavlov stayed for lunch. We had a most pleasant conference and Stalin assured me that Russia intended to carry out the Yalta agreements and to enter the war against Japan in August." (William Hillman, "Harry S. Truman: In His Own Words", pg. 123).

7/20/45 Letter to Bess Truman:

"I have to make it perfectly plain to them [*Russia and Great Britain*] at least once a day that so far as this President is concerned Santa Claus is dead and that my first interest is U.S.A., then I want the Jap war won and I want 'em both in it. Then I want peace - world peace and will do what can be done by us to get it."

[7/21/45: This afternoon Truman received his first detailed report of the successful atomic bomb test of 7/16/45.]

[7/22/45: Truman was informed that the first atomic bomb for use on Japan "...will be ready for final operation first good break in August. Complicated preparations for use are proceeding so fast we should know not later than July 25 if any change in plans." (U.S. Dept. of State, "Foreign Relations of the U.S., The Conference of Berlin (Potsdam) 1945, vol. 2", pg. 1372); the date Truman was informed comes from the Henry Lewis Stimson Papers, 7/22/45 Diary entry, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.]

Remembering Hiroshima (August 6, 1945): Page 6



7/22/45 Letter to Bess Truman:

"He [*Stalin*] talked to me confidentially at the dinner [*on 7/21/45*] and I believe things will be all right in most instances. Some things we won't and can't agree on - but I have already what I came for [*see the 7/18/45 letter to Bess Truman*]. Hope I can break it off in a few days." [*i.e., leave the Potsdam Conference*].

[7/24/45: Truman was given more specific dates for when an atomic bomb would be ready to drop on Japan: "...some chance August 1 to 3, good chance August 4 to 5 and barring unexpected relapse almost certain before August 10." (U.S. Dept. of State, "Foreign Relations of the U.S., The Conference of Berlin (Potsdam) 1945, vol. 2", pg. 1374); the date Truman was informed comes from the Henry Lewis Stimson Papers, 7/24/45 Diary entry, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.]

[7/25/45: Sec. of War Henry Stimson and Army Chief of Staff George Marshall approved and sent the order to drop atomic bombs on Japan "after about 3 August 1945" (Leslie Groves, "Now It Can Be Told", pg. 308.)

7/25/45 Diary Entry:

"We met at 11 A.M. today. That is Stalin, Churchill and the U.S. President. But I had a most important session with Lord Mountbatten & General Marshall before than. We have discovered the most terrible bomb in the history of the world. It may be the fire destruction prophesied in the Euphrates Valley Era, after Noah and his fabulous Ark. "Anyway we 'think' we have found the way to cause a disintegration of the atom. An experiment in the New Mexican desert was startling - to put it mildly. Thirteen pounds of the explosive caused the complete disintegration of a steel tower 60 feet high, created a crater 6 feet deep and 1,200 feet in diameter, knocked over a steel tower 1/2 mile away and knocked men down 10,000 yards away. The explosion was visible for more than 200 miles and audible for 40 miles and more.

"The weapon is to be used against Japan between now and August 10th. I have told the Sec. of War, Mr. Stimson, to use it so that military objectives and soldiers and sailors are the target and not women and children. Even if the Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as the leader of the world for the common welfare cannot drop this terrible bomb on the old capital or the new [*Kyoto or Tokyo*].

Remembering Hiroshima (August 6, 1945): Page 7

"He [*Stimson*] and I are in accord. The target will be a purely military one and we will issue a warning statement [*known as the Potsdam Proclamation*] asking the Japs to surrender and save lives. I'm sure they will not do that, but we will have given them the chance. It is certainly a good thing for the world that Hitler's crowd or Stalin's did not discover this atomic bomb. It seems to be the most terrible thing ever discovered, but it can be made the most useful."

[Privately, Truman later expressed misgivings about the mass killing of civilians in Hiroshima; see the "Didn't the Japanese Deserve It?" section in Random Ramblings on Hiroshima.]

[7/26/45: The U.S., Great Britain, and China issued the Potsdam Proclamation, which called for Japan's "unconditional surrender". It made no reference to the future status of the Emperor, Russia's secret agreement to declare war on Japan, or the atomic bomb. It was rejected by Japan's Prime Minister Suzuki.]

7/31/45 Letter to Bess Truman:

"He [*Stalin*] doesn't know it but I have an ace in the hole and another one showing - so unless he has threes or two pair (and I know he has not) we are sitting all right." **[A possible reference to the atomic bomb, possessed at the time by the U.S. but not by Russia.]**

[8/6/45: An atomic bomb was dropped on the people of Hiroshima.]

8/6/45: Excerpt from public statement by President Truman. This was the first time he publicly gave a reason for using the atomic bomb on Japan:

"The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold. "If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth." (*Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman, 1945, pg. 197, 199*).

[8/8/45: Russia declared war on Japan, effective 8/9/45.]

[8/9/45: An atomic bomb was dropped on the people of Nagasaki.]

8/9/45: Excerpt from public statement by President Truman. This was the second time he had publicly given reasons for using the atomic bomb on Japan:

"The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. That was because we wished in this first attack to avoid, insofar as possible, the killing of civilians. But that attack is only a warning of things to come. If Japan does not surrender, bombs will have to be dropped on her war industries and, unfortunately, thousands of civilian lives will be lost.

"Having found the bomb we have used it. We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbor, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned all pretense of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.

Remembering Hiroshima (August 6, 1945): Page 8

"We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan's power to make war. Only a Japanese surrender will stop us." (*Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman, 1945*, pg. 212).

[Even before Hiroshima was a-bombed, hundreds of thousands of civilians had been killed in the conventional bombings of over 60 of Japan's largest cities (Michael Sherry, "The Rise of American Air Power", pg. 314-315, and pg. 413, note 43). Was President Truman unaware that Hiroshima was primarily a city of civilians and that they would be the a-bomb's main victims? Note his reason (8/10/45 below) for halting the atomic bombings.]

8/9/45 Letter to Senator Richard Russell:

[In response to Sen. Russell's wish that Japan be hit with more atomic and conventional bombing:]

"I know that Japan is a terribly cruel and uncivilized nation in warfare but I can't bring myself to believe that, because they are beasts, we should ourselves act in the same manner.

"For myself, I certainly regret the necessity of wiping out whole populations because of the 'pigheadedness' of the leaders of a nation and, for your information; I am not going to do it until it is absolutely necessary...

"My object is to save as many American lives as possible but I also have a humane feeling for the women and children in Japan." (*Barton Bernstein, Understanding the Atomic Bomb and the Japanese Surrender: Missed Opportunities, Little-Known Near Disasters, and Modern Memory, Diplomatic History, Spring 1995, material quoted from pg. 267-268*).

[8/10/45: Japan makes surrender offer to Allies.]

[8/10/45: Having received reports and photographs of the effects of the Hiroshima bomb, Truman ordered a halt to further atomic bombings. Sec. of Commerce Henry Wallace recorded in his diary on the 10th, "Truman said he had given orders to stop atomic bombing. He said the thought of wiping out another 100,000 people was too horrible. He didn't like the idea of killing, as he said, 'all those kids'." (John Blum, ed., "The Price of Vision: the Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946", pg. 473-474).]

8/10/45 Diary Entry:

"Ate lunch at my desk and discussed the Jap offer to surrender which came in a couple of hours earlier. They wanted to make a condition precedent to the surrender. Our terms are 'unconditional'. They wanted to keep the Emperor. We told 'em we'd tell 'em how to keep him, but we'd make the terms."

Remembering Hiroshima (August 6, 1945): Page 9

8/11/45 Letter to Samuel McCrea Cavert, general secretary of the Federal Council of Churches:

[In response to Cavert's request, "Respectfully urge that ample opportunity to be given Japan to reconsider ultimatum before any further devastation by atomic bomb is visited upon her people.":]

"Nobody is more disturbed over the use of Atomic bombs than I am but I was greatly disturbed over the unwarranted attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor and their murder of our prisoners of war. The only language they seem to understand is the one we have been using to bombard them.

"When you have to deal with a beast you have to treat him as a beast. It is most regrettable but nevertheless true." (Gar Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, material quoted from pg. 563).

[8/11/45: U.S. issued counter-surrender offer for Japan to accept.]

8/11/45 Diary Entry:

"We are all on edge waiting for the Japs to answer. Have had a hell of a day."

[8/14/45: Japan accepted the counter-surrender terms.]

1/5/46 Unsent letter to Sec. of State James Byrnes; the excerpt from this letter refers to Truman's feelings at the July 1945 Potsdam Conference about having Russia enter the Pacific war:

"At the time we were anxious for Russian entry into the Japanese War. Of course we found later that we didn't need Russia there and the Russians have been a head ache to us ever since."

When my Dad was still alive, I promised him I would do all I can to make sure America NEVER forgot Hiroshima and World War 2! That promised was inspired due to Television Talk Show Host Jon Stewart's comment on his April 28, 2009 show claiming "Truman a War Criminal for Bombing Hiroshima". (I am NO fan of Truman, but that is for ANOTHER discussion!) All I will say is my father was PROPERLY raged @ them comments (of Jon Stewart's)! So was I raged! Now I hope you will understand why I did this Blog Article!



LET FREEDOM RING!

August 6, 2016 – Page 8 of 9: Author Jeff Hertzog of www.jeffhertzog.net