

Fat Man Loading Pit Wreath Laying Ceremony

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Good morning ladies and gentleman. It is an indeed an honor to speak with you here today. For all of us, this has been a year of anniversaries, of remembrances. Anniversaries bring us back to times long past, to memories long forgotten. Just a few weeks ago, I attended my 40th high school reunion. As I spoke with one of my old teachers, I was reminded that evening that back in my junior and senior year I worked as a laboratory assistant to my chemistry and physics teacher. His name was Darwin Kaestner. During WWII, he worked at the University of Chicago on a secret project known only as the Metallurgical Laboratory. As one of many scientists there, he worked on that tiny portion of the Manhattan Project that was developing a newly-discovered element called plutonium. The very same material that 60 years ago wound up inside the Fat Man atomic bomb that was raised up into the belly of *Bockscar*.

I was born just after the end of WWII and grew up in the fifties on a steady diet of Westerns, John Wayne, Ozzie and Harriet, and Walt Disney. When I was around 16, I got my first introduction to what war was really like. The father of one of my classmates had been a combat surgeon in WWII out here in the Pacific. One day he brought some old photos his father had taken during the war. These were startling because they showed me for the first time the real horrors of war. A few months later I worked shoulder to shoulder during my summer vacation with a man who had survived the Bataan Death March. His terrible memories are now part of my memories.

Let me tell you also, about another 16 year old. His name is Keijiro Matsushima. His first introduction to what war was really like was when he looked out the window of his engineering classroom in Hiroshima one summer day and saw the *Enola Gay* flying overhead. What he endured that day changed his life and is burned forever in his memory!

Earlier this year, I met Keijiro for the first time when he was part of the Hiroshima World Peace Mission that was on a month-long tour of the US. They had brought me back out to Wendover, Utah to inspect the Little Boy replica my son and I had built last year for the Wendover museum. They wanted to see the crumbling old buildings where the Little Boy and Fat Man test units had been built and then subsequently dropped out in the desert by members of Paul Tibbets' 509th Composite Group. They also wanted to interview me for the Hiroshima newspaper and to discuss the speech I made last August 14, along with Paul Tibbets, at the United States Air Force Museum. During that speech, I explained exactly why those atomic bombs were used in an effort to bring that long, bloody war to a swift conclusion, a war that had already claimed 60 million lives.

Keijiro told me what happened to him that day in Hiroshima. Along with that Death March survivor, Keijiro's terrible memories are now also part of my own. We all discussed what I had said in that speech and had a frank, yet peaceful and respectful exchange of views. At the end of the day all of us had a much deeper understanding of each others viewpoints, we had dinner, and parted as friends. Keijiro is here this week with us and these events have given us both an opportunity to renew the friendship we formed that day last April out in the Wendover desert.

Countless millions of survivors on both sides of that terrible conflict still carry painful memories of those times. While many have moved on, unfortunately for others no amount of time can ease their agonizing burden.

The purpose of the Peace Mission's tour was much the same as the purpose for this peaceful commemoration during the past week out here on Tinian. That is to say, the purpose was not to blame each other for those still-painful memories, but rather to show that those once-bitter enemies can move forward and meet together 60 years later in a spirit of peace and friendship.

I know there have been some strong opinions expressed both here and on Saipan that this event should never have happened, that these two groups of former enemies should never have been brought together here at the same time, at the same place. While I certainly understand those strongly-felt views, I also must respectfully disagree with them.

On our first day here, Andy Giles, Leon Smith, George Cohen, and I were out here inspecting these loading pits. While Andy remained at this pit to interview both Leon and George, I walked back over to inspect the other pit. As I was standing there, a van drove up containing one of the Hiroshima survivors, Fumiaki Kajiya, accompanied by a Japanese NHK TV news crew. This meeting was quite accidental and not supposed to have taken place, yet within a short period of time we all gathered together and were soon sharing our honestly felt viewpoints on both the use, and even the very existence, of nuclear weapons. It wasn't long before new friendships had formed and once former enemies found common ground through mutual respect and a fervent, sincere desire for a peaceful future. Mr. Kajiya even rode back to the hotel with us in our van. When I entered the lobby, I walked up to Phil Mendiola-Long and quickly explained what had just occurred. I pointed back over to Fumiaki, Leon, and George and said, "Look over there, Phil. Look at the smiles on their faces and the still animated discussion taking place as they're entering the hotel. That is what this entire event here this week is all about!!" Phil just stood there beaming! Despite facing what must have seemed at times to be almost insurmountable challenges, he has a right to be justifiably proud of what he has accomplished here over the past week.

The Fat Man that was loaded into *Bockscar*, and then dropped on Nagasaki 60 years ago this morning, was the second, and last, atomic bomb to be exploded in anger on this planet. Because those two fearsome weapons ended the war swiftly, the Russian

advance toward Japan was halted and a partition similar to Korea's was averted. Since the massive Allied invasion of Japan never took place, America poured billions into reconstructing that war-ravaged country, installed a democratic form of government which, for the first time brought individual freedom to a country whose citizens had never enjoyed such freedom, and helped to turn Japan into the economic powerhouse it is today as one of the so-called Asian Tigers. Since that time, our two great countries have become good friends and strong allies. Today, members of Japan's Self Defense forces even serve alongside our own soldiers in Iraq.

None of this would have been possible without the events that happened 60 years ago this week...here...on Tinian.

Thank you very much.