

invade Kyushu, over a quarter million were expected to be killed, a loss ratio of 1 in 3. Other estimates raised this figure to over a million US casualties for a protracted battle. The landing on Japanese soil was slated for a possible November 1, 1945 start but no later than November 15, 1945..

July 16, 1945, the first atom bomb was exploded in Alamogordo, New Mexico. On July 26, the Potsdam declaration of unconditional surrender was released to the news media. Unconditional surrender was not welcomed in a Japan that had a two and a half million manned army still able fight. While the army was badly bruised in the island campaigns, it was the Japanese Navy that was soundly defeated.

In the face of high casualty expectations, the use the bomb was approved. One argument that allegedly was postulated is that these loss estimates were too high. Yes, of course, in 50 years hindsight this argument could be made, -now that the war archives are mostly declassified and available for all to see.

There was one other consideration regarding the use of the A-bomb that hasn't been talked about much, and that is: that the end of the war would be secured. Because Japan had been led so long by a military faction bent on conquest, there was no certainty that uprisings wouldn't break out all over the nation. The end of the war had to be dramatic to get the leaders' attention that they were truly defeated once and for all. There was still some opposition to the surrender even while the Emperor was dictating a message of surrender on a transcription record that was to be played on a national radio network on August 15, 1945. In a brief and violent mutiny on the night of August 14 against the palace area, hard core patriots tried to find the

recording and destroy it. The revolt was quickly put down .

When the war in Europe ended in May 1945, many of us in the 15th Air Force were slated for transfer to the Pacific Theater for the war against Japan. It was felt that the 15th Air Force's personnel and possibly its equipment were needed to bring the Pacific War to a quick end. Some 8th Air Force operations were already in the Pacific. The truth of the matter was that naval transport could not re-supply the B-29 commands with incendiaries and bombs fast enough. Such was the fury of conventional B-29 bombing missions. Logistically the transport of a whole air force could not be accomplished in the time frame allotted.

President Truman had three options to consider. 1) Starve them out by blockade, itself very inhumane, costly and time consuming. 2) Invade the island at great cost in human lives. 3) Drop the Bomb and limit destruction and loss of life to a confined area. The bombs were available, the means to drop them were at hand. It was 1) the most cost effective way of bringing the war to a quick and definite close, and 2) to insure a lasting peace. President Truman never wavered in his decision, and the countless GIs who were slated for service in the Pacific, and their families too, never wavered and neither did the general public, and neither should the American People of today.

Only a portion of this B-29 will be shown, this is wanton desecration of a proud old bird the way I see it. I think that the Enola Gay should be given to the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, for restoration and reassembly. It should stay there for exhibit and its role in bringing the war to a close should be told, but without political comment.



*Crew of Robert C Quinlan shot down June 13, 1944 on the mission to Innsbruck, They are: Top Row L to R Chester A Nordling-E, Donald W Peterson-AE, Joseph J Canfield-R/O, Joseph W Keene-G, Kenneth Whiat-G, Wallace W Smith-G. Bottom Row Robert C Quinlan-P, Kennth A Hanson-C/P, Charles H Bell B, and Rollin K Preston-N. Plane No 42-52602 crashed near Natters, see page 19.*