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Notes: August 6, 1945, the world's first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Reactions from those who were alive on that day.

URL of Article: http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/1991_War_06_Bomb.pdf

Photos: The *Enola Gay*, assembled at the Martin Bomber Plant near Omaha; "By His Deeds Measure Yours," by John P Falter (black and white)

THE BOMB

“This part was beyond anyone’s imagination.”

William Chalupsky

At that time, we corpsmen were given to understand that we were going to have a ninety percent casualty rate if we went into Japan. To say the least, we decided that when the atom bomb was dropped that was the finest thing that ever happened to us.

Keith Vail

They [the Japanese] had their chance. They started it, and they had their chance and even after they dropped the first one, they didn’t give up, so they had to drop the second one. It was a terrible, terrible thing, and it’s too bad, but there were a lot of people who got killed in that war. You’d think that would cure everybody of ever starting a war again, but it hasn’t.

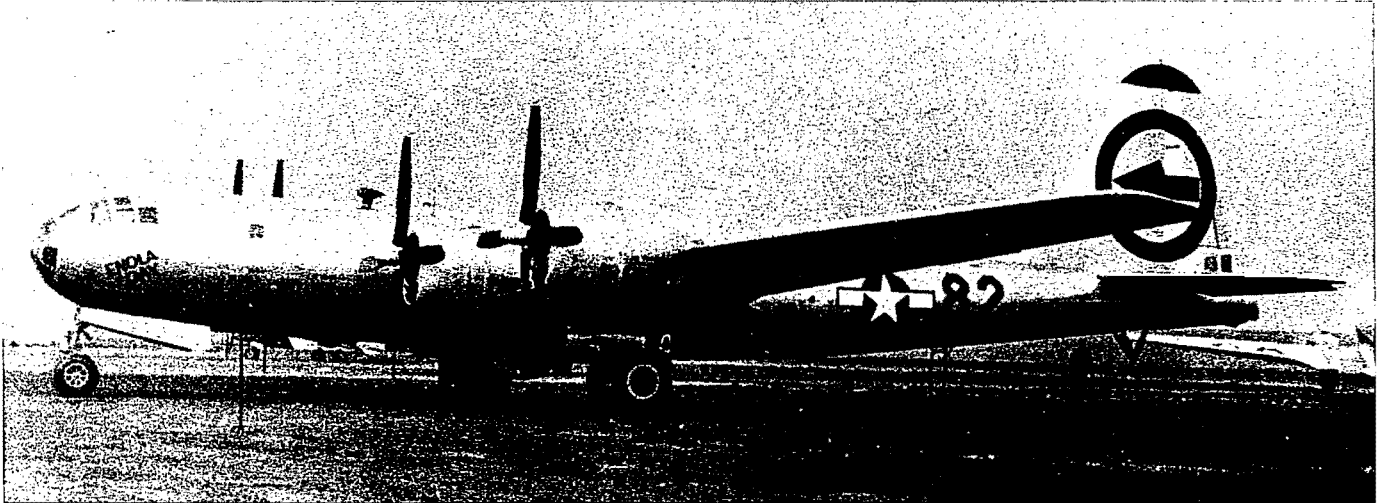
Rose Marie Murphy Christensen

I thought at the time and I still do, that we saved an awful lot of lives, American and Japanese both. The Japanese were never going to give up unless we had something like that. We would have had to kill off all the Japanese, and there would have been a lot of Americans killed in the meantime My conscience never hurt me any. I think we saved thousands and thousands of lives.

Vince Ortman

Well, this part was beyond anyone’s imagination. When that happened you just couldn’t possibly visualize that anything could be that devastating. Just anything though at that time to bring the war to a close was very elating, and yet it was a terrible catastrophe, I know Since then there’s been a lot of speculation whether they should have done it or shouldn’t [have], but that’s the way it happened.

William Chalupsky



*The Enola Gay was assembled at the Martin Bomber Plant near Omaha.
(Courtesy USAF Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio)*

THE ENOLA GAY

The *Enola Gay* undoubtedly became World War II's most famous airplane when it dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima August 6, 1945. The modified B-29 was made by the Martin Bomber Plant of Omaha and was handpicked from the assembly line by pilot Paul Tibbets. Some writers have claimed that the bomber came from the Boeing plant in Wichita. However, a telephone call to Tibbets confirmed that the plane was made in Omaha.

The *Enola Gay* was returned to the United States in 1946 and stored in Arizona for several years before being flown by Tibbets to Park Ridge, Illinois, a storage site for the Smithsonian Institution. It made its final flight on December 2, 1953, when it was flown to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. The *Enola Gay* is currently being restored for exhibit by the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum.

I think we all agreed with him [Truman] that he made the right decision of bombing Hiroshima. If he hadn't . . . I'm sure we would have lost an awful lot of men. They claimed that if we went into Japan we would have lost millions. I know he saved more American lives than he cost the Japanese, and he probably saved Japanese lives when it comes right down to it, because they would have lost a lot more lives in the fighting than they lost in that bombing. It's too bad they couldn't have forgot how to make them after that bombing, but on the other hand, maybe the bombs are the things that have kept peace this long.

Tom Sherman

I think my feeling was that even though it was hard on a lot of Japanese, [it was justified]. You see, a lot of our units were being brought over here and being reconditioned to go on there. I was sure that whatever the cost in life had been [from the bomb], it would have been much greater had there been an invasion, much, much greater. So, of course, I was glad that the thing was over. I can't remember any other reaction than that. These GIs had a hard, hard life, and I didn't want to see them going on to Japan. I guess I never developed any great philosophies as far as wars were concerned. They seem always to be with us. I guess they always will.

Lawrence Youngman



"By His Deeds Measure Yours," by John P. Falter. Oil on canvas for Coronet, January 1943. (NSHS Collections - R. Bruhn Photo)