



# ENOLA GAY REMEMBERED

---

5115 Mountain Top Road East, New Hope, PA 18938  
215.794.8788 · fax 215.794.1960 · [www.enolagay.org](http://www.enolagay.org)

## ENOLA GAY CREW - - “NO REGRETS”

Columbus, Ohio (August 6, 2005) - On this occasion, the surviving members of the *Enola Gay* crew would like the opportunity to issue a joint statement.

This year, 2005, marks the sixtieth year since the end of World War II. The summer of 1945 was indeed an anxious one as allied and American forces gathered for the inevitable invasion of the Japanese homeland. President Truman made one last demand, one final appeal. Together with Great Britain's Churchill, and Russia's Stalin, the President of the United States urged the Japanese to “... proclaim the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces ... The alternative,” they said, “for Japan is prompt and utter destruction”. Ignoring the obvious military situation, the Japanese Prime Minister Baron Kantaro Suzuki issued the Japanese refusal to surrender which included these words: “... there is no other recourse but to ignore it [the surrender demand] entirely and resolutely fight for the successful conclusion of the war.”

While it is certainly unfortunate this course of action was necessary, for the allies, at that moment in time, there was no other choice. Secretary of War Henry Stinson wrote, “The decision to use the atomic bomb ... was our least abhorrent choice”.

President Harry S. Truman approved the order to use the atomic bomb. It was his decision and his hope to avoid an invasion of the Japanese homeland. An invasion that would have cost tens of thousands of Japanese and allied lives.

Winston Churchill concurred with the decision saying, “To avert a vast, indefinite butchery [the invasion], to bring the war to an end, give peace to the world, to lay healing hands upon its tortured peoples ... at the cost of a few explosions, seemed after all our toils and perils, a miracle of deliverance.”

On August 6, 1945, the B-29 Superfortress *Enola Gay* dropped the world's first atomic bomb on the island of Hiroshima hoping to expedite the end of World War II. The second atomic weapon was delivered over Nagasaki by the B-29 Superfortress *Bock's Car* three days later. The availability of those weapons in the American arsenal left President Truman no choice but to use them. To spare the world a horrific invasion and to save American, allied, and Japanese lives was literally the only course of prudent action.

The surviving members of the *Enola Gay* crew: Paul W. Tibbets (pilot), Theodore J. “Dutch” Van Kirk (navigator) and Morris R. Jeppson (weapon test officer) have repeatedly and humbly proclaimed that, “The use of the atomic weapon was a necessary moment in history. We have no regrets”. They have steadfastly taken that stance for the past six decades.

“In the past sixty years since Hiroshima I have received many letters from people all over the world. The vast majority have expressed gratitude that the 509th Composite group consisting of 1700 men, 15 B-29s and 6 C-54s were able to deliver the bombs that ended the war. Over the years, thousands of former soldiers and military family members have expressed a particularly touching

- more -

and personal gratitude suggesting that they might not be alive today had it been necessary to resort to an invasion of the Japanese home islands to end the fighting. In addition to Americans veterans, I have been thanked as well by Japanese veterans and civilians who would have been expected to carry out a suicidal defense of their homelands. Combined with the efforts of all Americans and our allies we were able to stop the killing," comments Brigadier General Paul W. Tibbets. It is a sentiment upon which the surviving crewmen are unanimous.

In this year, 2005, we will observe the anniversary of the epic flight of the *Enola Gay* close to our homes and our friends. To our fellow veterans and the American nation we all echo one sentiment, "I pray that reason will prevail among leaders before we ever again need to call upon our nuclear might. There are no regrets. We were proud to have served like so many men and women stationed around the world today. To them, to you, we salute you and goodbye."

# # #

Points of Contact - - Questions

Ed Humphreys – The *Enola Gay* Remembered, Marketing Representative. Crew of the *Enola Gay*  
215-794-8788 (8:00 am – 5:00 pm EST M-F)