

Professor Discusses Effects of 1945 Bombing With Japan Club

BY TANIA SILVIA CALDERON
STAFF WRITER

White paper cranes, a peace symbol echoed in a Hiroshima statue of a girl who died 50 years ago when the United States dropped the first atomic bomb. Descriptions of images such as these dominated a Japan Club discussion Tuesday about the anniversary led by a UNC professor.

Miles Fletcher, a professor of history and author of several books about the political and economic history of Japan, told a group of UNC students and guests of the Japan Club that Americans were in danger of forgetting about the bomb.

Fletcher cited a recent Gallup poll saying that 65 percent of Americans polled couldn't name Truman as the president that decided to drop the bombs. He also said 35 percent could not name either of the cities the bombs were dropped on.

Fletcher described three philosophies behind the decision to drop the bombs.

Fletcher said the belief that from 500,000 to 1 million American lives could have been saved by dropping the bombs and avoiding a ground attack on Japan in November 1945, was articulated by a Japanese historian and commonly held to be

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MILES FLETCHER
UNC Professor of History

the "orthodox" justification for the decision. He said the theory was based on the assumption that Japan was set to fight a "final" battle.

Fletcher said that within the past decade evidence had surfaced suggesting the numbers of American lives saved had been exaggerated and that the estimate was closer to 25,000 to 40,000. Fletcher also said that a 1946 U.S. Army survey had estimated between 15,000 and 20,000 lives had been spared.

"The implication seems to be that Truman inflated the numbers to assuage a guilty conscience," he said. "But no matter what the numbers, the logic of the Orthodox position (would) still be persuasive," especially, he said, to the more than 600,000 American troops who had been slated to

participate in the first phase of a ground attack.

Bureaucratic politics were cited by Fletcher as a second reason that the bombs were used. He said officials had sunk too much time, at least four years, and too much money—about \$2 billion—into the bomb's development not to drop it. Also, he said Truman had come in as an unexpected and inexperienced president, and used the weapons because he was afraid that he would lose authority if he didn't.

"The main problem with those theories is that they don't address the basic issue that if the bomb had not been used, how would the United States have induced Japan to surrender in a short time?" he said.

Fletcher said the United States had called for an unconditional surrender all along. Unclear surrender terms from Japan were described as the third potential justification for dropping the bombs.

"Even after the two bombs were dropped August 6 and August 8 (1945), Japan wouldn't surrender until after they solidified the position of their emperor," Fletcher said. "I would have been happy if the U.S. would have offered a conditional surrender before making the decision, just to see what would have happened."

Remains of MIA From N.C. Identified

BY JOSH AHN
STAFF WRITER

The Pentagon has released the names of 11 U.S. Air Force servicemen previously unaccounted for in Southeast Asia on Monday. The remains of the missing men have been identified and are scheduled to arrive at California's Travis Air Force Base from a base in Hawaii.

During the Nov. 24, 1969 mission, the crew of the escort aircraft saw 37-millimeter anti-aircraft artillery fire, said Pentagon spokeswoman Beverly Baker.

Forensics teams analyzed and identified remains of the missing airmen. One of those identified was Captain Earl C. Brown of Stanley who was piloting the plane when it went down.

The C-130A was seen descending quickly in flames, then exploding and breaking apart shortly before impact, Baker said. No parachutes were sighted and no beepers or voice transmissions were detected.

"It's been 25 or 26 years," said Brown's eldest sister, Jane B. Patrick. "This thing

has to have closure; it's time to close this chapter of our lives, and put it behind us."

Patrick also said she held on to hope while her brother was missing. "I was 99.9 percent sure that he had died in the crash; it took me four or five years to reconcile this," she said. "That one-tenth of me said, 'well, he might have gotten out.'

"If I hear Cambodia or Vietnam or Laos, I stop whatever I'm doing to run to the TV, and something clicks in the back of my head."

Brown was a graduate of N.C. Agricultural & Technical University in Greensboro, where he was involved in the ROTC and got his beginning in flying, Patrick said. "He enjoyed piloting," she said. "I think if my brother had to do it all over again, he would."

Brown's remains were discovered after negotiations between the United States and Vietnam resulted in the deployment of a joint U.S.-Laotian search team to the site where the C-130A had gone down.

A team of scientists, as well as Laotian nationals, worked to excavate the site, near

Ban Salou, Laos, said Larry Greer, spokesman for the Pentagon POW and MIA office.

Greer said artifacts like bone and teeth fragments, dog tags, suit identifications and items like parachute buckles were used to establish the identities and to evaluate whether the crew had ejected from the plane.

"Never in any nation's history has such a commitment been made to achieve this effort. Military people who die in service of their country are not forgotten, and this national effort is one that continues to honor them even after death," he said. "It's a serious commitment, one of the highest national priorities."

According to a Pentagon press release, the crew of the C-130A included Brown, Lt. Col. Richard O. Ganley, Majors Michael D. Balamoti and Peter R. Matthes, and four chief masters sergeants. The names of three other pilots of an F-4D reconnaissance plane whose remains were identified were also released, but three others were kept concealed by family request.

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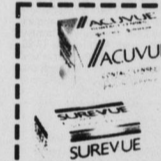
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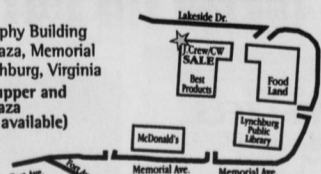
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