

## Their Road To Redemption Began At Pearl Harbor – Part 2

Part 2: we looked at the first of several of God's Providential Miracles performed in this amazing WW11 tale, starring a young woman named **Peggy Covell**, and her "heart change" involving total forgiveness for people who had killed her missionary parents in the Philippines in 1943. She was the first link in this miraculous chain of God's "events", which changed not only her life, but also the lives of two other principles she inadvertently interacted with. Inadvertently, perhaps, in her mind but NOT in God's plan."

# Their Road To Redemption Began At Pearl Harbor – Part 2

Published: Tuesday, 01 September 2020 10:06  
by W.H. Lamb  
Views: 916

## Their Road To Redemption Began At Pearl Harbor – Part 2

Staff Sergeant Jacob DeShazer (1912-2008). This photo was taken in late 1945 after he had recovered from the effects of over 3 years as a prisoner of war in a Japanese Prison Camp. A "Doolittle Raider," he spent his life as a Christian Missionary to Japan.  
By W.H. Lamb  
Hits: 916

If you call up their names on the internet, you can look closely at the faces of the two principle characters that God used as “actors” in His eternal drama. One, a Japanese Naval Aviator named **Mitsuo Fuchida** (1902-1976), who became a Japanese national hero on Dec. 7, 1941 by leading the FIRST wave of attacking bombers and fighters launched from six Japanese aircraft carriers. The other, an American airman named **JACOB DeSHAZER (1912-2008)**, usually shows him in uniform in late 1945, AFTER he was released from 40 months of torture and imprisonment in Japan and occupied China, being one of the participants in the counter-attack on Japan by Col. Jimmy Doolittle and his sixteen “raiding” B-25’s, launched on April 18, 1942 from the deck of the American aircraft carrier, U.S.S. Hornet (CV-8). The Japanese face indicates a trust in his Emperor, in his government, and in his future. It doesn’t evidence any of the soul-searing hatred that would almost consume him years later.

Take a look at the 1945 face of the American, Staff Sergeant Jacob DeShazer. Although the physical affects of his torture and poor diet have almost disappeared by this time, his soul was consumed by hate for

the Japanese who had tortured him, starved him, mistreated him, and did likewise to the other Doolittle Raiders who had been captured along with

him. “Jake”, as his military friends and family called him, was Oregon born and educated. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1940, and was a Corporal on Dec. 7, 1941 when he heard news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. As he said in his biography later, he became enraged and shouted: “*The Japs are going to have to pay for this.*”

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, DeShazer and others from the 17<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group volunteered to join a secret and dedicated group that was being assembled to launch a counter-attack upon Japan. Following weeks of special training, and commanded by Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle, their specially modified B-25 bombers, loaded with explosive and incendiary bombs, launched from the deck of U.S.S. Hornet early in the morning of April 18, 1942. Jake served as the bombardier of B-25 #16, and his was the last plane to launch from Hornet. As we know from history, this famous and DARING raid was almost a total success -- almost because the Hornet’s task force was spotted by the *Nitto Maru*, a Japanese patrol boat, about 700 miles from Japan’s coast, forcing Col. Doolittle and the Captain of the Hornet to order the launch of the 16 bombers much earlier and farther from their targets than had been planned, because Nitto Maru sent a warning to Japan before it was sunk. (These American bombers were to proceed on to bases in China after their raid on Japan, be refueled, and made a part of the vaunted 10<sup>th</sup> Air Force.)

The Doolittle Raiders targeted five Japanese cities. Jake’s bomber delivered its bombs on Nagoya but, like all of the planes, it ran out of fuel because it had been forced to fly farther than

## Their Road To Redemption Began At Pearl Harbor – Part 2

Planned: DeShazer and his crew (5 crew member bomber) had to parachute right into territory occupied by the Japanese military over Ningpo, China. Jake was injured as he came down in a Chinese cemetery. By the next day Japanese soldiers had captured Jake and all of his crewmates. They were soon sent to Tokyo for brutal interrogations. Eight Doolittle Raiders were ultimately captured by the Japanese military, and were held in several prison camps in both Japan and occupied China for a total of 40 months, most of that time in solitary confinement.

During his ordeal, Jake was beaten mercilessly, and suffered from malnourishment and dysentery. Three of his fellow Raiders were executed by firing squad in Japan, and another died from extreme dysentery and starvation in a Japanese prison in occupied China. DeShazer's sentence was eventually commuted by the Japanese Emperor Hirohito to life in prison for his "crimes against the Japanese people". But the war ended, and on August 20, 1945 DeShazer and three other Raiders who were being held in a prison in occupied Peking, China were liberated when a group of American paratroopers parachuted directly into the prison grounds. Jake and his comrades were released to freedom after 40 months of hell. At this same time, Jake's soul was also being liberated from his hatred for the Japanese.

Jacob DeShazer came back to America and slowly recovered physically. End of story? Not exactly. God had "purified" the dross of sin in Jake's soul, for during his ordeal one of the Japanese prison guards had loaned Jake a Bible, which he could keep and read for only three weeks. Soon, Jake resolved to become a true follower of our LORD and Savior, Jesus, there in his tiny prison cell. After his "rebirth", Jake learned some Japanese words and began treating his prison guards respectfully, which soon resulted in their responding the same way. (He later recounted how one of his guards brought him a baked sweet potato one morning, which "tasted wonderful").

Shortly after returning to the States, Jake enrolled in a Christian College and began to study to become a missionary. He met and married a Christian young woman and together with their first child they returned to Japan in 1948, and in 1959 they moved to the very city (Nagoya) that Jake had bombed in 1942, having determined to obey his Savior's command to forgive his enemies. Jake soon wrote a pamphlet titled: "***I Was a Prisoner of Japan***", which was distributed throughout Japan. In the meantime, Mitsuo Fuchida, the ex-commander of the first wave of the attack against Pearl Harbor, was still seething with hatred against the Americans who were occupying Japan. After the war, many of the former Japanese military were put on trial for war crimes, the trials being overseen by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who was the Supreme Commander For the Allied Powers at that time. Many Japanese were accused of severe mistreatment of prisoners of war. Fuchida himself was called to testify at one of these trials, which he believed were total shams, for in his heart he believed that the Americans had treated Japanese POW's just as harshly. During this time, Fuchida located and questioned many recently released Japanese POW's who had been held in the States, for evidence of his beliefs regarding harsh treatment of his countrymen by Americans.

It was during this "searching" for evidence to bolster his hatred of all Americans that he was told

## Their Road To Redemption Began At Pearl Harbor – Part 2

the amazing (to him) story of how a young American Christian woman named Peggy Covell had been kind and forgiving to the Japanese who had been held in that internment camp in Colorado. Fuchida found it difficult to believe this story, but one day he met an old friend who had been his flight engineer, and whom Fuchida had assumed to have been killed during the Battle of Midway, but who instead had been taken prisoner by Americans. Instead of being told of torture and harsh treatment by the Americans, his friend told him how a young American woman, Peggy Covell, whose missionary parents had been killed in the Philippines by Japanese troops, had treated him and his fellow prisoners with kindness, explaining to them that her Savior, Jesus, commanded her to forgive them.

Of course, Fuchida was dumbfounded by this information, for his “code” as a Japanese warrior not only permitted one to kill his enemies, it virtually commanded it. But this young woman in the internment camp declined to seek revenge and instead offered the Japanese prisoners her compassion. This unexpected truth greatly increased Fuchida’s interest in Christianity. In a crowd, someone handed him a pamphlet written by a former POW of the Japanese named Jacob DeShazar, who told the story of his Christian conversion in a Japanese prison—the pamphlet titled, “**I Was a Prisoner of Japan**”, in which were the words that had compelled Jacob Deshaver to renounce his hate: “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*”

On Feb. 26, 1950, Commander Mitsuo Fuchida became a Christian, saved by the shed blood of his Savior, Jesus. He was baptized on Feb. 25, 1952. As he later recounted, “**Looking back, I can see now that the LORD had laid His hand upon me so that I might serve him.**” He eventually founded the Fuchida Evangelical Association and travelled throughout Asia and the U.S., telling all who would listen of his miraculous conversion. In his autobiography titled, “*From Pearl Harbor to Calvary*” (published in 1959), he wrote: “**I remember the thrill that was mine when, in one of my first meetings, I led my first soul to Christ in America. And he was one of my own countrymen.**” Our brother in Christ, Mitsuo Fuchida, once our bitter enemy, often said: “**Ignorance breeds inconsideration – inconsideration breeds hatred -- and it is hatred that breeds the tragedy of war. We need to break the chain of hatred stemming from ignorance. That’s the way to no more ‘Pearl Harbors’.**” Would that the governments of the U.S. and Japan back in 1941 had only heeded those words of wisdom!

## Their Road To Redemption Began At Pearl Harbor – Part 2

Published: Tuesday, 01 September 2020 10:06

by W.H. Lamb

Views: 916

Mitsuo Fuchida and Jacob DeShaver, Christian missionaries and evangelists serving Jesus their Lord and Savior together, after WWII. (ca. 1950's).

And Jake Deshaver? He and his wife, Florence, spent the next 30 years in missionary service to their former hated enemies, the people of Japan, where they were greatly loved and respected. He soon met his former enemy, now his brother in Christ, Mitsuo Fuchida, and on several occasions they preached TOGETHER at Christian mission meetings in Japan. The DeShavers retired to Jake's home town of Salem, Oregon, and in 2008 Jake, aged 95, went home to be with his LORD and Savior, to meet again with his former enemy, his brother in Christ, Mitsuo Fuchida, both of whom were surely greeted by Jesus with the words: **“WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT. ENTER NOW INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD....”**