
HIROSHIMA

AUGUST 5 1945

By Noel Jensen-Holm

It appeared as nothing more than a flash of light in the sky high above Hiroshima in the early Autumn morning of August 5 1945. So high in fact the residents of the Pristine and Pretty Japanese City were to take little or no interest, possibly, it was thought, it could have been nothing more than an American Reconnaissance Aircraft which had appeared a few times previously before the bombing of the busy Harbor Area.

Something appeared, as nothing more than a speck to have fallen, or had been dropped, from the high flying plane, but again, few, if any took little notice, and continued with their daily routine all completely unaware of the impending catastrophe that was about to engulf the entire Japanese City and a huge proportion of the surrounding suburbs.

The tiny object far above and racing towards the earth was, in fact, the first Atomic Bomb and subsequent Nuclear Blast to be directed at a Civil Target in the world and would become known World Wide as the "Hiroshima A Bomb". The Domed Copper Roof of the Hiroshima Repository Building had been chosen as the target sight, or Ground Zero, because of it's proximity to the City Center and also the ease of identification from the Bomber Aircraft high above.

Hiroshima was a busy city with large amount of light industry as it's lifeline. It was situated on a Plain with a hills Backdrop and ran from the Hills Area to the Inland Sea Of Japan's foreshore. The City had a busy Harbor and Port Dock and was larger in size and population, but was comparable to Adelaide City and suburbs in it's location.

As the American Bomber sped out of sight the bomb, afterwards nic-named "Fat Boy", hurtled downwards in a direct path above the Repository. When a few hundred feet above the intended target the pre-set bomb detonated. A huge black Mushroom Cloud Shot Skyward, at the same instant a grayish then light brown to eventually red fireball raced toward earth in a 360 degree circle at a frightening speed never before witnessed by a Civilian Population.

The Fireball hit the earth with a tremendous force and with a speed much faster than a Bullet Train, then it spread outwards with double the force of the strongest Hurricane, it would obliterate everything in it's path as it traveled across the city and well out in the surrounding suburbs for many kilometers.

At the epicentre nothing survived, all human life was snuffed out within seconds with the domed roof of the Repository stripped and leaving only a shell. As the holocaust moved outwards the noise was simply deafening with the original shock wave following the speeding fireball.

Out in the suburbs some were miraculously spared with their life even though thousands of civilian dwellings, commercial buildings, factories, shopping centers, and places of worship were to become instant piles of rubble.

Well in excess of 160,000 were to loose their lives almost instantly in the Hiroshima bombing, many thousands more were to receive indescribable injuries and were to die in the following 24 to 48 hours of the original blast.

Not only did the victims receive terrible injuries from flying glass and debris, worse was the radiation burns from the intense heat. Women were found with the imprint of their Kimono's actually impressed and printed on the body skin. Thousands of others had the skin literally burnt and peeled from their body as they fought the losing battle to survive

So intense was the heat it would melt iron and steel into a solid mass and even footprints were found embedded into solid concrete. Some of the larger Reinforced Concrete Multi Story buildings that had been constructed to withstand the strongest Earthquakes, had the upper floors sliced off as though cut with a knife. All were completely gutted with nothing left in the interior while other less stronger structures simply collapsed into piles of rubble.

In Australia American photos of the Hiroshima Bomb blast, together with huge headlines, were splashed across the front pages of Newspapers throughout the country then, within a few days, image of the blast and tremendous damage could be seen in Cinema Newsreels always with little, or no mention, of the shocking death and injury toll. It must be remembered that Television was not yet a reality. At the time few Australians outside Universities and the better educated knew little, or in fact absolutely nothing, of an Atom, a Nuclear explosion or, for that matter, understand about Radiation and it's potential hazards. Further, there were few who could really understand, or fully comprehend, the enormity of the situation in the Japanese City.

As peace was declared and fighting came to a halt on August 15 1945 huge celebrations took place around the world with "V P Day" (Victory in the Pacific) the only topic of conversation.

Australian citizens, Servicemen and Women all breathed a sigh of relief at the Ending Of World War Two. They looked forward to life without fear, hardship and to return to a semblance of normality.

Few, if any, gave a thought to the pain and suffering of the Japanese residents of Hiroshima This bombing was just one of those unfortunate episodes of Wartime and even though the dropping of the Atom Bomb on the city would never be forgotten, especially in Japan with the shell of the beautiful Repository (Library) Building left as a Permanent Shrine, it was after the terrible atrocities committed by the Japanese Armed Forces throughout Asia that sympathy for the Japanese was, at that time, at a very low priority, if any at all.

Sometime during November 1945 it had been intended that the American Occupation Force would Occupy Hiroshima Prefecture. Clad in protective clothing Scientists tested the "A Bomb" area and were to make an urgent report to Supreme Commander Eisenhower that Radioactivity was still at a dangerous high level. Some American Occupation Forces, who were stationed at Osaka , a distance away were shifted almost immediately North to Tokyo.

The Australian Government was to accept a United States invitation for Australian Troops to occupy Hiroshima with assurances to Bureaucrats that it was quite safe from Radiation. It was considered by the then U.S. President, that it would be a huge honor for the Australians to occupy the site of the worlds first Atomic Bomb Site. The Hiroshima Bomb was fuelled with Uranium while the Nagasaki bomb, dropped on August 8 1945, was fuelled with Plutonium. The half life of Plutonium was estimated at 24,000 years while the half life of Uranium was estimated at over 4.5 million years.

- The Australian built Frigate H.M.A.S. Murchison was commissioned on December 17 1945. The writer then 20 year old Able Seaman Noel Jensen-Holm P.A. 3535, had rejoined the R.A.N. for a further 2 years after 3 years of wartime Service and had been selected as a crew member of the brand new Naval Ship.

At the completion of Sea Trials by Christmas Day 1945, Murchison was ordered North to become attached to the Australian Section of the B.C.O.F. Japan, the "British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (Japan), in the role of convoy duties. The ship had a crew of 7 Commissioned Officers and 76 Lower Deck ratings including Non Commissioned Officers.

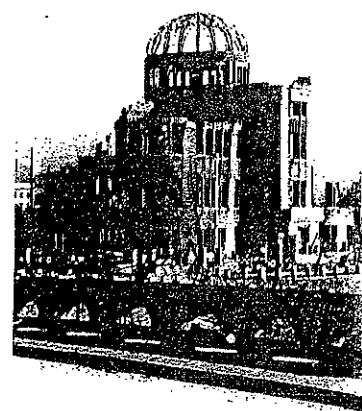
Murchison arrived in the former Submarine (including the midgets that had attacked Sydney) and Ship Building Port of Kure Southern Japan on February 21 1946 with the first wave of Australian B.C.O.F. Troops. The following is a True and Factual report of the FIRST SHIP OF ANY NATION PERMITTED TO ENTER HIROSHIMA HARBOR AFTER THE "A" BOMB, and of the first Australians to land on the City Shore by Sea at the same time.

There have been plenty of books written about the Horror seen in Hiroshima during the landing of occupation troops on the doomed city and all have given a clear and precise picture of such. In the following I have purposely left out the unbelievable Horror that confronted the young sailors who went ashore in the City and have concentrated only on the resilience of the unfortunate Japanese Citizens forced to live among the ruins of this once beautiful city.

Noel Jensen-Holm JUNE 2002

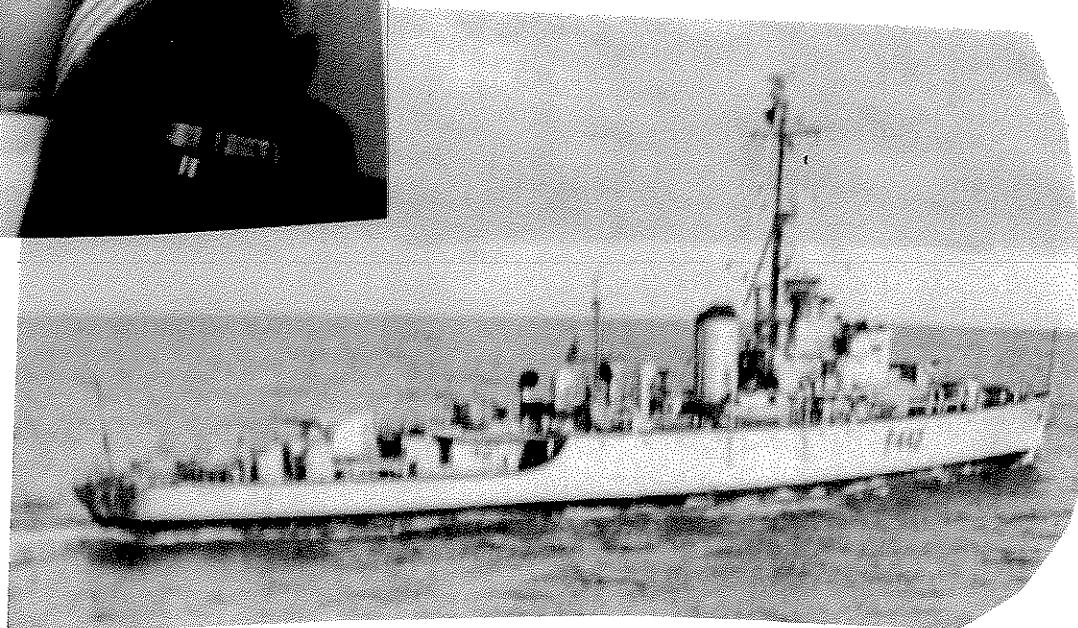


**NOEL
1946**



**GROUND ZERO
REPOSITORY
HIROSHIMA**

**H.M.A.S.
MURCHISON
Inland Sea Of
Japan**



VICTORY

But at what cost

Hiroshima: 10 am February 25, 1946

The Australian Frigate HMAS Murchison, slow ahead but with extreme caution, made her way up the main channel through a virtual graveyard and maze of sunken, upturned, anchored but badly damaged ships of all shapes and sizes. She would drop anchor in the middle of Hiroshima Harbour where it was safe and clear. It was a cold, late northern winter morning with a clear sky and the sun shining, but not warming, the crisp air.

Ships lay aground in the dirty, oily water. Some had sunk bow first with their stern section, rudder and propeller, visible. A couple had gone down stern first with the bow high above the waterline. One huge cargo ship lay on its starboard side in the shallows, while others had been sunk alongside the now non-existent wharves.

There were at least a half dozen large ships riding at anchor and like their half sunken sisters, were completely gutted by fire. What had once been majestic sea transports were now nothing more than rusting hulks with absolutely no paintwork left. It was as though they had all been swept over with a giant blowtorch.

Murchison had been ordered to Hiroshima as the first ship of any nation to receive permission of entry to the harbour since the atomic bombing of the city. The ship carried a human cargo of eight Japanese dignitaries who had been chosen by B.C.O.F. chiefs and included a new Mayor and his officials for Hiroshima, as well as a Town Planner and Civil Engineer. The Japanese would work under the Australians to rehabilitate the survivors, commence clearance of bomb damage, lie out and begin the gigantic task of rebuilding the city, suburbs and the large harbour.

The ship's motor boat was lowered and the Japanese were taken ashore. Crew of the motor boat was myself as bowman, a Leading Seaman as coxswain, a stoker motor driver and a Petty Officer in charge, complete with sidearms. Not one word was spoken during the 15 minute trip to shore and the sombre faced Japanese bowed politely when helped ashore. They were loaded onto a truck which sped away in a cloud of dust, the driver's only recognition was a curt nod. And that, so we presumed, was the end of our Hiroshima duty.

Back on board the crew went about their normal in-harbour duties when it was noticed and commented on; the still air, the millpond smooth, filthy water, the complete lack of sound and lack of any other human presence.

Normally a harbour of this size would have motor boats darting noisily over the surface, there would be tugboats, ferries, pilot vessels and plenty of ship movements with a cacophony of sirens and horns. The wharf-side would be a hive of industry with hundreds of wharf labourers noisily going about their business. Ships' cranes would be a clatter of movement, loading or unloading cargo, but there was absolutely nothing; not a sound, not a human voice or any movement and through the lack of

scraps of food the ubiquitous seagulls were absent. On the shoreline the lack of plant life stood out starkly. It was only then that we were to realise how eerie and ghostly the entire harbour and surrounds actually were.

Just before the midday meal the Captain, Lt Commander John Adams, announced that four hours of shore leave would be granted to those who wished and for those not on watch (duty). Although unexpected, some 40 lower deck personnel lined up at 1:00 pm to be transported to the dock. There would be no Commissioned Officers who would set foot on Hiroshima soil.

As we made our way to shore most, if not all, approached the port with a certain trepidation of not knowing, or for that matter with an uneasy feeling, as to what we would see. Certainly we had all seen plenty of newspaper photos and newsreel footage of the damage, but after the shock of conditions in the harbour, one could hardly envisage just what to expect.

When offloaded the sailors, as usual, were to break up into small groups of 3 or 4 together and were to then make their way through the once thriving port. There were no warehouses, office or administration buildings, or stores, sheds and portside workers homes left. Everything was a tangle of galvanised iron, concrete, bricks and mortar. A wall remained here and there, but essentially the whole port district and its homes and buildings were nothing more than piles of rubble.

In the distance, when emerging from the portside and wharf area, we could see what appeared to have been a main road which everyone made for through sheer devastation. Once on the wide road one could now see the extent of the damage. Photo or film could never convey a true image as seen through the naked eye. It was much, much worse than even the greatest cynic could ever have hoped to envisage.

To look in all directions and see nothing but complete carnage was more than anyone could hope to comprehend. Away in the distance, wrecked buildings of the city could be seen but it was the suburban districts that had suffered the most. Not a home was left standing, all timber had simply been reduced to cinders. As the initial shock at the sight and the enormous desolation had time to seep through the young minds, the feeling of awe started to take over.

How could it be, the sailors said, how on earth was it possible that just one solitary bomb could cause such devastation over such a huge area? It was quite unbelievable then as it is now some 56 years later.

Walking along the road we could see a number of Japanese rummaging through the rubble while a few pedestrians passed by, most who would completely ignore us, with only some giving recognition of a sly sideways glance.

It was here we were to see our first burns victim; a young lady, perhaps aged 20 years, dressed in traditional Japanese clothes came walking towards us. As she was about to pass by it was quite plain to see that the left side of her face had been shockingly burnt and was disfigured. Her left hand and possibly her left arm, were

swathed in bandages. It was hard not to stare and as she passed she actually gave a smile.

The burns victim was one of the 'walking wounded' who, we were later told, was one of the lucky ones. She would walk on down the littered street with a courageous dignity and a distinct air of confidence. For the first time in the city, a feeling of sympathy took over and a feeling of shame for what had been our ignorant behaviour for staring. We would see many others during the next two hours.

It would seem become obvious that apart from ourselves and the quiet Japanese, we were all entirely on our own. It was a complete surprise that there was not some sort of an official to be seen anywhere. There were no Military Police, no soldiers, no army personnel, no Americans either civil or service, no Japanese Police and no officials either civil or government.

Apparently the only officials who were aware that we had set foot in Hiroshima were our own Commissioned Officers, all back onboard the Murchison. It also seemed evident that no-one wanted to know that we were ashore and probably, for that matter, cared.

In a place of such human tragedy and adversity it would hardly be likely to expect the unexpected. It came as a grinding, bumping noise from a distance, cutting across the still afternoon air, gradually getting louder and louder until, in a cloud of dust and as if out of a mirage, 'IT' screeched to a halt alongside where we had been walking. With a clang of a bell and to our complete surprise to find 'IT' was a tramcar. We then noticed that a single wire had been strung and was hanging precariously from bent and twisted light poles fed from a generator somewhere away in the distant hills. The tramcar roof trolley swung violently from side to side but somehow managed to feed electricity to the workings.

The tramcar so out of place, even bizarre, comical and slightly ridiculous standing there in such a barren moonscape. It had only been used a few days previous in a desperate attempt to move people from one side of the city to the other.

With a wave the conductor, dressed in a baggy uniform complete with his cap and a well worn money bag, motioned for us to climb aboard and so started a trip to rival any rollercoaster ride.

The driver, also in full uniform, with a grim face, seemed to try and extract the maximum speed possible, narrowly missing great chunks of broken concrete, large tangled pieces of twisted iron and steel as well as bits of brick and mortar, by no more than centimetres and without reducing speed. The rubble had been pushed aside to clear the track.

After about 15 minutes of a bumping, lurching and hair-raising, nerve wracking ride the tramcar came to a halt in what, a few months earlier, would have been the centre of the city and a hundred metres or so from the Repository Building. With a movement of his thumb, the conductor was to grunt in English 'off' and that's just what we did.

With a lot of noise and a certain flair, the tramcar, with about six Japanese passengers on board, rumbled away out of sight and then out of noise range. We could see some Japanese in the distance, moving in and out of one of the bomb damaged buildings, otherwise it became deathly silent again. With the now famous Repository Building close by we found someone had erected a rickety fence halfway around it, probably American scientists, which showed a very small sign in both Japanese and English 'Out of Bounds'. This sort of notice, to us, was nothing more than an invitation to go take a look.

The Repository, or Library, had been the pride and showpiece of Hiroshima. It had been a magnificent building with its distinctive roof, immensely strong walls and unique design. It had housed rare, antique and historical books, historical records dating back centuries, exhibits and museum pieces valued in 1945 at several million yen.

On inspection we soon were to discover that inside the once proud building there was nothing. All valuable books, records, glass cases, shelving and interior fittings were but piles of ashes among the debris.

On leaving the Repository we were confronted by about eight children, aged somewhere from 10 to 12 years old, who were to make it clear that we were to follow them to a distant, burnt and bomb damaged building, the one where we had noticed the Japanese activity 20 minutes or so earlier. On arrival, after walking a few hundred metres, the children urged us to take a look inside and for the second time that day we were to receive another unexpected surprise.

On the cracked, badly damaged and uneven floor, some ten or so dealers of mixed ages and sex, stood behind their wares for sale that were placed on rags or blankets. It must be remembered that apart from one single tram wire there was no electricity, no communication and no other means of contact available, apart from the very active Hiroshima grapevine which, in this case, had worked a near miracle.

Markets of these types have been common in Japan for centuries but this was the first in Hiroshima since the bombing. For sale were goods of surprising quality including china, stoneware, basket-ware, filigree silver, nick-knacks and genuine pre-war fine Japanese silk, scarves of all shapes and sizes with a few jackets and an odd Kimono.

On entering the building a strange silence, lasting perhaps two minutes took place. They, the dealers, not knowing what type of reaction they would receive, stared at us, some serious, a couple even sullen. We, in turn, stared at them and goodness knows what the Japanese thought of that. Suddenly someone, somewhere coughed and then someone laughed and almost in an instant the strange silence was broken.

A babble of voices soon took over, cigarettes were offered to the Japanese, even some almost impossible to get chocolates were handed out to the kids. So, for the next hour, despite the huge language barrier, there was wheeling, dealing, haggling, plenty of laughter and good companionship, despite the fact that a few months

before we had all been bitter enemies. Best of all some almost non-existent money was eagerly put into the dealers' pockets while the sailors purchased good quality items at what were ridiculously cheap prices.

Within 10 minutes or so Japanese men, women and children appeared as if from nowhere to join in the fun, the crowd spilling outside where a couple more dealers set up in the dirt to take advantage of the situation.

There would be no doubt about it if 'HE' and a group of his Angels had looked down during that hour, what a strange and unusual sight they would have seen. About, by now, 300 Japanese men, women and children, 40 sailors with their white caps looking like white dots in the weak sun, all mingling together and actually laughing, joking and enjoying themselves in almost a carnival atmosphere. Yet, here they were right in the dead centre of one of the most appalling, awfully shocking and horrific bomb damage that was ever inflicted by a group of human beings onto another group of humans anywhere on this earth.

Among the civilians were a number of walking wounded, many with injuries it is not wise to try and recall.

The hour went quickly. It was time to leave and the tramcar was waiting; another grapevine miracle a short distance away, for our return trip. Sailors made their way, a number with arms full of goodies and little money left in the pocket.

Myself and my mate, Cec (Bluey) Higginbottom, were among the last to leave the makeshift market. Bluey was a big, rough, tough bloke, a fitness fanatic and always a much better fellow to have as a friend than to be an enemy. With his height and shock of ginger hair, he was the type that always stood out in a crowd.

As we were about to leave, an elderly Japanese woman, a victim of severe facial injuries, with help from her husband who had a pronounced limp from a leg injury, shuffled up and were almost dwarfed by the big bloke. She had a huge grin on her face when she was to grasp a surprised Bluey by his hands and say in broken, but easily understood English, just two words: "Now Good". She was to squeeze his hands in an affectionate gesture before she let go. The woman meant that at last a chink of light showed at the end of a long, long tunnel of despair and now she was happy.

It was the first time ever we had seen Bluey speechless. He was not the type to show much emotion, but he was deeply touched by her sincerity and the incident, that as he walked away clutching his few purchases he was not to speak for more than an hour.

Back on board Murchison the hopelessly crowded Mess Decks (living quarters) with hammock bars overhead where crew members of lower deck status lived with no privacy and often with a survival of the fittest mentality, it was like returning to a 4 star, top class hotel after what had been witnessed ashore. Our complaints seemed, all of a sudden, innocuous and trivial after the conditions the helpless Japanese had no alternative but to endure.

The Hiroshima purchases were carefully packed away. Most, if not all, were given away to friends and relatives on the return to Australia.

Before dark we took a cruise, via the motorboat, around the harbour which proved more depressing, so we were glad to return to the ship.

It can sometimes be very lonely at sea, but there is always movement or something happening in many different ways. As the darkness set in over the harbour, the silence seemed much more profound than during daylight. There was not a light to be seen anywhere outside the ship. It was just like looking into a black morass. Except for the usual shipboard sounds during that night, it was ghostly to say the least. It was, in fact, a silent graveyard with us stuck in the middle.

Hiroshima: 10:00 am February 26, 1946

The Frigate HMAS Murchison weighed anchor and slow ahead with great care made her way out of Hiroshima harbour and back into the Inland Sea on her way back to Kure Harbour, several sea miles away. Many of the Murchison crew had served in different theatres of war during 1940-1945. All were to admit that the 24 hour Hiroshima experience was the most unbelievable they ever had, or possibly, ever likely to have.

Aftermath

Over the following two weeks, crew members were to suffer a series of unusual ailments: nausea, vertigo, mood swings, bodily aches and pains, stomach problems including vomiting and many more minor, but irritating complaints. The problems were attributed to food poisoning, both on board and ashore at the time. It was many years later that it was admitted that the symptoms were typical Radiation Sickness and had been experienced by those at nuclear test sites around the world.

Murchison crew were never to receive any medical examination or backup advice of the possible danger of radiation, however slight. There was never an enquiry into the health of those who went ashore, or for those that remained on board at Hiroshima. It was quite obvious that the Commissioned Officers had received a warning not to set foot on land and there was never any information to that effect passed on to the lower deck personnel, then or after. It is strongly possible that for that reason there was, and never has been any recognition to Murchison or the crew members as being the first into the stricken city. It is like a well kept secret.

Hiroshima: Christmas 1945

By Christmas 1945 the death toll had risen to well over 180,000.

Injured

It was estimated that many more than 200,000 Hiroshima citizens were injured, many critically.

Occupation by the Australians

On orders by C.I.C. Japan General Douglas MacArthur, B.C.O.F. Australian Troops were to occupy the Prefecture of Hiroshima on March 7, 1946, nine days after the departure of HMAS Murchison.

At the same time 28 Australian Nurses were ordered into Hiroshima Hospital situated on the outskirts and well away from the bomb damaged city. Hundreds of thousands of Hiroshima citizens had set up makeshift homes on the outskirts, the foothills and hills area in quite appalling conditions and surrounds.

Australian B.C.O.F. servicemen were to perform an extraordinarily difficult and quite often dangerous job with distinction. They soon were to ease the situation for the Japanese survivors and quickly, with compassion and integrity, were able to organise a better standard of living conditions and supply of food, especially for the unfortunate women and children.

The 28 Australian Nurses received many accolades for their tireless work when performing their duty among the most difficult conditions possible. They were to nurse burns victims, the critically injured and the walking wounded, many of whom they were to bring back to health and regain the use of their bodily functions, despite many who had been given up as hopeless cases by others.

The End

Well before the end of the 20th century, scientists had perfected weapons of mass destruction in the form of hydrogen and thermo-nuclear devices with an explosive power many times that of the Hiroshima A Bomb. Radiation exposure to any of these explosives would be from High Level to Extreme Danger Level.

Now in the 21st Century there are many scientific boffins, politicians, members of the media, Christian leaders, bureaucrats and a large section of the Australian public who consider the 'A' bomb quite insignificant and even minor alongside those of the present. The radiation danger in Hiroshima is often scoffed at as being 'low level' and in that respect it was quite harmless to human beings and for that matter animals as well.

Try telling all that to the residents of Hiroshima where well in excess of 600,000 lives have been lost either during or following the explosion. Tell the relatives and friends of those who suffered the loss of 3 or 4 generations whose lives were wiped out in a

matter of seconds. The many thousands who suffered and succumbed to a slow, agonising, debilitating death from cancer, cancer related illness, Leukaemia, bone marrow cancer and a multitude of blood disorders. Then tell their children and their children's children who now suffer with conditions passed on genetically, all of which have been proved are directly associated with the 'Big Bomb' 1945.

Many, now into the hundreds, of the Australian Veterans who served in the occupation of Hiroshima are now dead. Almost all of these deaths have been through the effect of cancer and cancer related illness.

The entire force of the 28, tireless working nurses that were posted at Hiroshima in March 1946 are now dead. All of these brave, fine women died of cancer.

Well over three-quarters of the Murchison crew who served in early 1946 are now dead. Ninety percent of those deaths were cancer related.

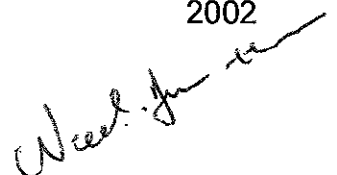
Big, fit, healthy Bluey Higginbottom took ill in January 1951. He was diagnosed with cancer and died in June the same year.

There are millions of good, honest citizens of Australia who go about their daily business mostly trouble free. Unfortunately there are a sizeable percentage of misfits. There are the greedy, the selfish, those who have made an art form of rotting the system, including some politicians, those who whinge and should know better and then there are those minority groups forever trying to seek attention.

When one is constantly to hear and see these type, my mind swings back to that short 24 hours in Hiroshima. I wonder how many of these sometimes precocious humans, both male and female, would handle the situation if faced with the living conditions through and then post the 'A' Bomb.

Could they, or would they, compare with that little elderly Japanese woman among the ruins. Through no fault of her own she became not only a victim, but nothing more than a statistic of the bombing. She faced an enormous personal challenge through a trauma of huge dimensions, including the loss of her home, her living standards, her dignity, her loved ones, her own injuries and the list goes on. And yet, with a determination and a certain charm, combined with a humble approach, she was able to shuffle across the broken and crumbled floor of a bomb damaged building to grasp the hands of big Bluey, smile, look into his eyes and say the two words in her broken English 'Now Good'. Could they cope? Let's hope we will never have to find out. Hiroshima was to be the beginning of the end. After all, it was..... **VICTORY, but at what cost!**

Noel Jensen-Holm
2002

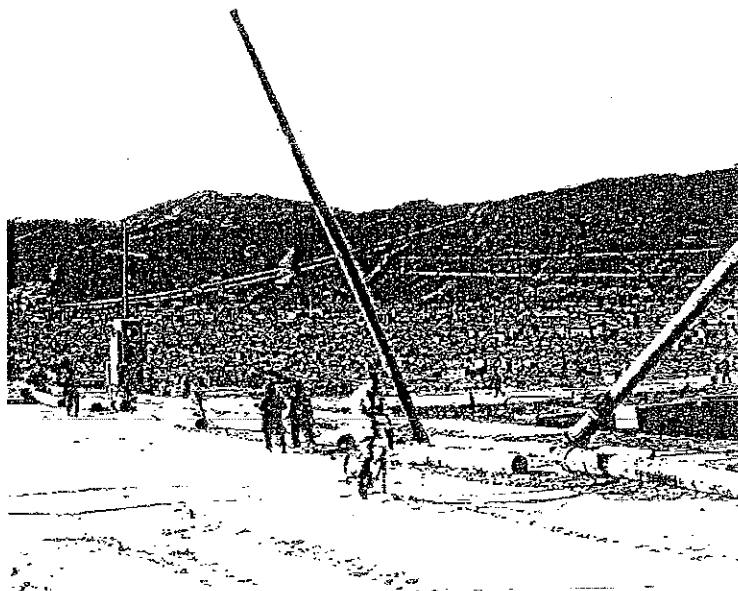


Ship: "Murchison"

Flag H.M.A.S.
Page I

Port	Arrived	Left	Remarks
Commissioned at Brisbane 17/12/45			
Brisbane		8-1-46	
Morotai	18-1-46	25-1-46	
Ternate (Holmahora Group)	25-1-46	25-1-46	Sent to exhume 18 Australians killed by the Japanese before war's end. Arrest four Japanese responsible. Return to Morotai for Trial.
Lenado	26-1-46	26-1-46	
Kema (Celebes)	26-1-46	26-1-46	
Gorontalo	27-1-46	27-1-46	
Sanana (Malmans)	28-1-46	28-1-46	
Ternate	29-1-46	29-1-46	18 buried in Morotai War Cemetery.
Morotai	30-1-46	10-2-46	
Kure	21-2-46	25-2-46	
Hiroshima	25-2-46	26-2-46	Overnight stay
Kure	26.2.46	27.2.46	
Morotai	9-3-46	22-3-46	
Kure	1-4-46	8-4-46	

Ship Movement Sheet 1946



THE MOROTAI INCIDENT

By Noel Jensen-Holm

It was a warm, tropical day, March 20 1946, a slight breeze blew across the sea while crew members of the Frigate HMAS Murchison, at anchor in Morotai Harbour, went about their duties in the usual orderly way.

The Chief Petty Officer on duty called myself, a stoker driver also an Able Seaman and then ordered us to lower the ship's motorboat, with an inboard motor, with myself as Coxswain and to transport the Leading Stores Assistant to shore in order to pick up supplies from the Army Depot, Japanese POW camp and office of the War Graves Commission complex which was on the hill overlooking the beautiful harbour.

After tying up on the makeshift pontoon wharf Leading Supplies told us we could await his return. "Don't worry lads" he said "I may be an hour or so, you can just relax while I'm away", and off he went in an Army Jeep that had been ordered from Murchison by radio phone.

The three of us sat on the wharf smoking cigarettes, myself as Coxswain, Snowy as inboard motor driver and Wally as Bowman. We discussed the huge shark that had been caught by those on the ship the day previous. It was hauled up on a davit, gutted and jaws removed, giving a frenzy of sharks an unexpected feed. Local indigenous fishermen, in their small fishing boats with one square sail, were busy out on the harbour and Snowy, a tall, over six footer, brought to our attention that one of the fishing boats was waving a flag as a gesture of friendship to the Australian sailors, so we all waved enthusiastically in return.

The friendly fishing boat was coming straight toward the wharf and again was waiving what appeared like a white singlet, or shirt, and again we all waved back. As the boat sailed nearer and eventually pulled up alongside the wharf, we were to receive the greatest shock one could experience when we realised that the occupants of the boat were not locals at all, but were in fact Japanese. As we tied up the boat we counted eight Japanese who, after the usual confusion of a huge language barrier, were able to convince us that they were Japanese Army Servicemen and were surrendering, as Prisoners Of War, hence the waving of the white flag of capitulation.

To we three sailors, we were to experience a flood of human emotions; apprehension, certainly fear, confusion and even momentary amusement, fright and then above all completely overawed to be involved in such an incident which was a deadly serious life and death situation to the Japanese.

We ordered the Japanese out of the boat, but were then to discover that they were in such poor condition, both physically and mentally, we had to all but carry them on to the wharf. Only six of them could move. There were two who were hardly recognisable as humans, so sick with starvation and probably Malaria were they. They were all painfully thin and unshaven with their wispy beards blowing in the breeze.

Under the circumstances the Japanese, now our prisoners of war, were remarkably clean and even their clothing, pitifully ragged as they were, was clean. They must have bathed and washed their clothes before handing themselves over. As it turned out they had been hiding out in the jungle since the ending of World War II, 15 August 1945 until this day, March 20 1946, some seven months or approximately 212 days. For reasons only known to themselves they had surrendered to the Allied victors who in this case, by sheer coincidence, happened to be three sailors from HMAS Murchison.

As we assisted the six Japanese onto the wharf, one who was obviously an officer and in charge of his men, carried a Samurai Sword with him. We sat the men on the wharf but the officer, barely able to stand, strapped his sword around his waist and then bowed deeply. We in return all bowed back, which to anyone watching must have looked completely idiotic.

The officer then grasped the Samurai Sword by the handle and slowly and deliberately withdrew it from the scabbard, all the time with a deadly serious face. We three sailors immediately thought we were about to be attacked and had fleeting visions of our severed heads rolling about on the wharf. We were now almost as rigid as any statue, we had cleverly placed the prisoners between ourselves and the land behind the wharf and the only escape was to jump into the shark infested water behind us, which was not a good option. Slowly the officer walked toward us, sword in hand. When about two feet in front, he placed the sword across both his hands and again bowed deeply. He then, with a gracious movement, handed the sword over to Snowy, who had stood his ground, rooted to the spot, with his skin deathly white and, like Wally and myself, with eyes bulging with fright. Never have three RAN personnel been so relieved and thankful.

During the war many were the famous speeches made by famous people; Churchill, Roosevelt and MacArthur to name a few, but none could surpass the acceptance speech of the pretty battered Samurai Sword by Snowy who said in a loud, but slightly quivering voice, "Gawd strike me pink....thanks mate". Snowy immediately handed the Sword to me, indicating to the Japanese Officer that, as Coxswain, I was Number One and the officer handed me the scabbard. I quickly placed the Sword back into its rightful resting place.

While all this commotion on the wharf was happening, those on board Murchison had noticed and were given a running commentary by a Petty Officer looking through huge binoculars (purchased in Japan) to anyone in earshot. The whole episode from the original surrender, the unloading of the prisoners onto the wharf, the fright of the exposed Sword and then the ceremonial handing of the Sword to Snowy had taken no more than ten minutes, but seemed under the circumstances, to be a lifetime.

We sat the prisoners on the wharf and then offered them cigarettes, which they all eagerly accepted. Wally produced a paper bag full of ship's biscuits which they devoured in seconds.

Fortunately there was a phone, on a post, just off the wharf, so I picked it up and was answered by some Army Corporal who was incredulous when I informed him that we

were holding eight Japanese POW's who had given themselves up to us. The immediate answer was that I was in serious trouble for frivolous use of the phone, but after giving him my name, rank and number, he finally came to the party and listened when I told him what had happened. He said that a truck would be sent and also was quite sympathetic when I told him that two stretchers would be needed for the very sick Japanese soldiers. He was to advise me that the truck and Military Police would arrive in about 15 minutes.

The truck with five soldiers and a very young and arrogant Army Lieutenant arrived. Fortunately Staff Sergeant Big Jim, who had spent time on the ship earlier, was in charge of the men. The young Lieutenant ran around shouting orders and behaving almost irrationally. He frightened the prisoners so much that they all crouched behind we three sailors for protection from a complete idiot. The young officer then noticed my Samurai Sword and said that on behalf of the Australian Government he was going to confiscate my Sword. He grabbed the Sword and I shouted back at him I had no intention of giving it to him. After a few tense seconds he was to threaten me with insubordination and intended to report me to the Captain of Murchison, so I reluctantly let him have the Sword.

Immediately after the altercation with the arrogant officer, Staff Sergeant 'Big Jim' called the young Lieutenant aside and quietly spoke to him. The officer then went and sat, complete with the Sword, in the cabin of the truck and that is where he was to stay.

The soldiers gently helped the Japanese onto their feet and then lifted them onto the truck. They then, with surprising care and gentleness, placed the two immobile prisoners onto the stretchers and loaded them on the truck. There is no doubt that if we three had been the prisoners and the Japanese our captors, one would hate the thought of what would have happened to us. Yet, for the short time we had been with them, sitting on the wharf and talking with sign language and even laughing, a strange and unusual bond had sort of sprung up between us. The last thing we saw of the prisoners was when they were all waving (rather sadly so it seemed) goodbye to their new found Australian friends.

Some five minutes or so later, Leading Stores returned and complained how hard he had been working while we lazy sailors had done nothing but lounge around the wharf. Onboard Murchison we had to report the incident to the Captain in full. We also received a right royal ribbing from our shipmates over the next few days, but while at sea and on our way back to Japan, it was soon all forgotten.

The Japanese prisoners would have been given urgent medical treatment and brought back to health. They then would have been questioned and if it was found that they were nothing more than foolhardy soldiers simply carrying out the Imperial Japanese Doctrine of 'No Surrender' under any circumstances, or that they may have been awaiting orders from their superiors to surrender, they would have been returned to their homeland and, no doubt, reunited with their families who would have given them up as dead months before.

If that sort of incident were to be repeated now in this 21st Century, surely newspaper headlines would shout that 'Brave Young Unarmed Australian Sailors Capture Dangerous Enemy'. Let me assure the reader that Young we certainly were; Unarmed we certainly were; but Brave we certainly were not and the Enemy was anything but dangerous. It is like I said above, it was nothing more than a very curious incident, a bit frightening for sure, but an incident just the same.

Wes. J. H. H.

THE MOROTAI EXPERIENCE

By Noel Jensen-Holm

The R.A.N. Frigate H.M.A.S. Murchison had returned to the main harbour at Morotai Island, Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) after convoy duties with ships carrying the first wave of A.I.F. Troops of the British Commonwealth Occupational force (B.C.O.F.) to Kure, Japan.

While in Japan from 21st to the 27th February 1946 Murchison had been given the honour of being the first ship of any nation to be given permission to enter Hiroshima harbour. The once beautiful city and suburbs, including the harbour, had been obliterated by the use of the first Atomic Bomb used on this earth August 7th, 1945.

After unloading Murchison passengers (eight Japanese dignitaries), some of Murchison Crew were given four hours shore leave to inspect the horrific damage that had been done by the use of this first Weapon of Mass Destruction.

The First Visit to Morotai

On the first visit to Morotai Island, arriving January 13, 1946, Murchison was ordered to become available for use by the Australian War Graves Commission during the time spent awaiting the arrival of B.C.O.F. troops from Australia to be convoyed to Japan. The ship would be used to visit small towns and villages in the Celebe Island Group for the exhumation, identification and retrieval of bodies of Australian Servicemen who had been killed (or executed) by the Japanese during the latter part of World War II.

Three Australian Army servicemen, a Lieutenant, a Staff Sergeant and a Lance Corporal came aboard and were in charge of firstly, discovery of the grave sites; secondly negotiations with the Dutch East Indies Consuls in the various villages; and lastly to organise crews for the digging, exhumation including members of Murchison crew, the writer included.

The Staff Sergeant, a kindly spoken giant of a man, known simply as 'Big Jim' would conduct the digging and exhumations in a completely professional and dignified manner. On all occasions the indigenous locals who had been chosen would walk off the site in a hurry as soon as a body was uncovered, leaving the Sergeant and Murchison crew members to finish this unpleasant task. Always 'Big Jim' would speak softly and encourage any of the sailors who became distressed when a body had to be removed from the grave.

During this 15 day odyssey, eighteen (18) Australian Servicemen's bodies were recovered and identified. They were wrapped in canvas which was then tied with a cord (there were no official body bags at that time) and were laid side by side on the after deck of Murchison and then covered with a tarpaulin.

The bodies were unloaded on the return to Morotai and taken to the Commission Headquarters on the hill overlooking the harbour. There they were officially recorded and relatives and families could then be notified and given an official certificate to say that the body had been recovered and that they had been interred with a full Christian burial conducted by Chaplains attached to the Commission in a proper and dignified manner with full Military Honour.

During the trip around the Celebes, five Japanese Army officers were arrested. They were accused of being responsible for the Australians' deaths and were locked away with a 24 hour suicide watch on board the ship. At Morotai they were questioned and then taken away to be tried at the War Criminals Court conducted by the Australians and Americans. After a few weeks those on board Murchison who had been involved in this most unpleasant experience would forget (on the surface at least) that the retrieval of the bodies ever existed.

Naal Jan. 1942

INCIDENT AT THE DOMAIN 1946

By Noel Jensen-Holm

It was on May 8 1946 the Australian Frigate H.M.A.S. Murchison was to enter Sydney Harbour. The ship had returned to Australia after a short tour of duty with the 'British Commonwealth Occupation Forces' 'Japan'. She was a new vessel, built in Brisbane and had been commissioned December 17 1945.

On May 10 an article headed 'Returns from Japan' was to inform readers of the afternoon Sydney Newspaper 'The Sun' that the Murchison, with members of the B.C.O.F. had been in the Port of Kure, Southern Japan for the occupation etc. etc.

Unknown to the crew at that time was that allegations and accusations, via a Sydney Morning Newspaper, had been levelled at some B.C.O.F. Personnel's behaviour then serving in Japan no more than a few days previous. The criticism had been taken up by other media outlets, some politicians and a number of the politically correct members of the clergy.

Although the innuendo and insinuation against B.C.O.F. were firstly, entirely incorrect and secondly unsubstantiated, it did not and of course would not, stop both the clergy and the media from making further attacks.

On the first Sunday after the return to Sydney, myself with three fellow shipmates were to nonchalantly wander into the Domain. It was here that park speakers would gather to air their views on a range of topics, from politics to religion and from commercial to legal, some of the speakers eloquent and entertaining, with others less so. The park speakers always attracted large crowds and were considered part of the Sydney scene for those wishing to pass a few pleasant hours.

There was one young Christian Evangelist who had a large crowd around him. He was above the calibre of most other speakers in both is delivery and his actions. He was fearless to drive home point, humorous to keep is audience interested and quite confident in his approach to his Christian belief.

The young, intelligent, enthusiastic evangelist was an almost boyish Reverend Allan Walker. Mr Walker held his audience in the palm of his hand and so interested did we four sailors become, we were to make our way forward toward his platform to have a better view and to be able to hear him clearly.

It was at this stage Mr Walker was able to read the name of our ship, H.M.A.S. Murchison on our hat bands. It soon became obvious that Walker had read the article in the press and it also became obvious, as we later discovered, he was one of the prime movers in the attacks on the behaviour of members of B.C.O.F. then serving in Japan.

Mr Walker informed the crowd that among them were four sailors who had just returned from duty in the occupation of Japan and in doing so were implicated in the scandalous allegations against Australian Servicemen of B.C.O.F. We four were, he ranted, not only the worst type of cowards, we were un-Australian and had behaved

appallingly while in Japan. For well over the next five minutes he was to deliver nothing more than a vicious verbal attack on our integrity, finishing with, as he said, worse. We had not only fraternised with our former enemy, the Japanese civilians, we had also fraternised with the Japanese women, also being involved in robbery, pillage and rape.

The good Reverend was then to turn his attention to the Australians serving in the occupation forces. His stinging verbal abuse of B.C.O.F. personnel lasted another five minutes when he made accusations of misconduct by, at that time, the defenceless young men in Japan.

While all this idiotic, senseless and highly embarrassing verbal assault took place, the crowd were to gradually close around we four, also defenceless sailors, in mind no doubt to administer some sort of punishment or revenge with a 'mob rule' mentality, also together with urging from the Reverend Allan Walker.

The situation to us now looked decidedly dangerous. Already a few punches had been thrown at us. There was no avenue of escape through a hostile crowd of that size and had it not been for the intervention of three, not very friendly Police Officers we most certainly would have become the victims of violence which could have, within seconds, escalated into a situation with quite horrific consequences that could have included serious injury or even worse, such was the mood of the mob.

The rowdy crowd were to Boo and Jeer at us as we were escorted away and then out of the park and ordered away from the area. It was a highly volatile, very frightening and dangerous incident that could have and, I have no doubt would have, got completely out of hand. The 'Incident in the Domain' was never reported or appeared in the Press of the time, nor was a mention reported over any radio news bulletin. Yet, it was witnessed by hundreds of normal Sydney-siders out for a pleasant Sunday. It was quite evident that the affair was deliberately and quickly well forgotten.

Like all sections of society there were certainly some 'bad apples' serving among B.C.O.F. personnel. The percentage of misfits was much lower than the average in Australia, while any misdemeanours by Australian servicemen against the Japanese was always quickly and often harshly dealt with by their superior officers.

Australian members of B.C.O.F. were faced, from 1946-52, with a very difficult and quite often dangerous task in the occupation of Southern Japan. They were able to handle any situation with a great deal of dignity, integrity, honesty and compassion and indeed, they displayed all these human qualities with distinction, while back in Australia pious members of the clergy, press and opportunistic politicians showed nothing but a complete lack of sensitivity and decency.

Over many months and indeed years, the Reverend Walker would continue his invective of Australian members of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan. His continued attacks were to become boring to the Australian public in time, while he and his allies achieved little more than to embarrass themselves and make

life almost intolerable for the hundreds of wives, parents, families and friends of those fine young men simply performing the job allotted to them.

The Reverend Walker would become a well known figure after the introduction of television. To his credit, MR Walker was often noted for his tireless humanitarian work among the poor and the disadvantaged for many years. He was to receive a Knighthood to become Sir Allan Walker and he would continue with his important task of raising money and assistance to several charities, always with the underprivileged in his mind. Sir Allan would also continue his ministry, advice and assistance to the poor until his death.

I often wondered when either watching or hearing Sir Allan Walker over the years, if he ever gave even the slightest thought about his entirely silly and unprovoked, embarrassing attack on those four innocent young sailors in 1946. I personally doubt it. He placed them in a dangerous and hostile position which, at the time, seemed not to concern, but even to satisfy him.

For his enormous contribution to those in need, particularly in Sydney, Sir Allan will not be forgotten, but for myself, I have never forgotten becoming a victim of his misguided stupidity and, of course, in the circumstance, have never and will never forgive him.

It has been proved, by 2004 that the high profile clergy (including Walker) were all aware, but were not involved in the almost unbelievable and horrific treatment of children during World War II and during 1946 up until well into the 1990s. The high profile clergy of all denominations who were responsible for the outrageous and untrue allegations against innocent members of B.C.O.F. Japan were all aware of the treatment of children in Christian run orphanages, where both boys and especially young, innocent girls were raped, beaten, starved, bashed, even murdered and treated in the most inhuman manner by the 'Christians' responsible for the running of the establishment. Yet what did these high profile clergy (including Walker) do? For the Sanctity of the Church they allowed the inhuman treatment to continue for many years to come.

The high profile clergy (including Walker) were also aware of the disgusting actions of a virtual smorgasbord for Paedophiles in long black gowns and preacher's collars to abuse young boys, mostly under threat of exposure, for many years. In many cases this caused the children to suicide as the only means of escape. The high profile and self-righteous clergy who allowed these and many other atrocities against children of the day should have all hung their heads in shame. I hope a higher order has punished them all because of the wrongful allegations they all thrust on the decent young men that they so wrongly condemned in 1946.

Wend. J. H.

Noel Jensen-Holm
41 Dudley Ave
North Plympton
S.A. 5037

Ph 8293 5723

Dear Japanese Friend

Please find enclosed my true and factual story of my
Hiroshima Experience in 1946.

The top letter is to the Naval Historian followed by his answer just recently and please read the story as laid out in the plastic covers, otherwise it would be very hard to follow.

You may notice that I accuse the Americans of playing with the death toll of the original number this is true as they have a habit of sometimes not telling it as it was and quite often just to suit themselves another example was that the name of the "A" bomb was changed from the original "Fat Boy" to "Tall Boy", silly isn't it but this is how it was when I went ashore in Hiroshima.

I originally wrote this in 2002 after many years of insistence from my late wife Beryl but never had the chance to do much with it as she became very sick and I had to care fully for her until she passed away in January 2007. It took me until last year to get over it fully as we were happily married for 55 years, also I thought I had better do it before I "conk" out.

If you wish to ring me I am always home between 5.30 until after Midnight as I don't usually go to bed until about 2.00 or so as I worked as a printer at The Advertiser on all night work for over 45 years and still have not got used of living normally.

You may wonder about my surname Jensen-Holm, well my Grandfather was Danish and landed (illegally) here in S.A. in 1871 but retained his full Danish Name, but I usually don't use the full name unless it is something official and I had to go right through the Navy with it and it is used on my Pension number and also at my bank and, as I said, anything legal or official. There are over 220,000 Jensen's in Denmark but only about 12 Jensen-Holm. Happy reading.

Sincerely
Noel Jensen-Holm



Noel Jensen-Holm
41 Dudley Ave
North Plympton
S.A. 5037
Ph (o8) 8293 5723.

Mr John Perryman

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed a report (in two sections) of the R.A.N. River Class Frigate, H.M.A.S. Murchison and of her adventure into the "A" Bomb Stricken City of Hiroshima on February 25 1946.

At that time I was A/B Noel Jensen-Holm and a crew member of the brand new Navy Ship and we were told that, the Murchison's entry into Hiroshima Harbor was the first of any Nation to be given permission to do so (page 3 of report one).

Over the years I have repeated this statement many times, and have been ridiculed, called a liar, a story teller, and many other not too kind, and usually profane, statements by the listeners, who always insist that the Americans would have been the first into the City.

During the last ten or more years I have been involved in deep research over this matter and can now assure you Sir that firstly the Americans were nowhere near the port at any time after the bombing (the occupation troops on any ships I mean). Certainly there were American Scientists and Photographers present after the August 5 1945 event and all entered the City by land (not sea) and also I can report that indeed the Murchison was the first to enter Hiroshima Harbor and has never been given the proper honor (or respect) or any recognition for achieving this actually momentous occasion. The reason is quite obvious and is written in section two and should be changed immediately and noted in the Navy history for those interested in the future years and also some sort of accolade and notice should be given by the Australian Government.

Also you may notice, in report one, the number of deaths stated as 160,000 this was the number as told to us by the Hiroshima survivors when we went ashore (Full story in second report) and is accurate. There are many American reports which vary from 80,000 to 160,000, also the report of the Repository used as a Target site has been changed since about 1955, to the two Hiroshima Rivers running through the city as the main Navigation Criteria during the dropping of the bomb, this is quite correct, but, the Repository (Library) was used as the Target site for accurate aim to near the exact center of Hiroshima City.

Please read the story section one first then followed by section two, I am now 85 years of age

I remain Sincerely

Noel Jensen-Holm.



**ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY
SEA POWER CENTRE - AUSTRALIA**



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2011/1000829/3
SPC-A/OUT/2011/036

Mr N Jensen-Holm
41 Dudley Ave
NORTH PLYMPTON S.A. 5037

Dear Mr Jensen-Holm,

Thank you very much for your recent letter and for forwarding me the professionally typed version of your memoirs relating to your service in the Royal Australian Navy.

I was very interested to again read of your exploits and have added your account to our reference collection where it will be retained in the Naval History Section. I feel confident that future generations of researchers and authors will be very interested to read of your adventures which provide a unique insight into operations during those times.

Thank you again for your willingness to assist in preserving Australia's naval history.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Perryman'.

Mr John Perryman, CSM
Senior Naval Historical Officer
Tel: (02) 6127 6509
Fax: (02) 6127 6519

1 April 2011