

## NO “GIVE UP” IN HIM!

Carl Garner

In the first few days after America realized we were at war with Japan, we found out a lot about our people. We did not want a war, that’s for sure, but a war had been thrust upon us at Pearl Harbor and we were not about to lose it—too much was at stake. Very soon men lined up at recruiting stations volunteering to put on the uniform and take up their weapons. On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, Japan was already prepared for the war, and its people were determined to do whatever it took to win. So, both nations went to war against each other, and both paid a higher price than they had expected.

Stories of valor, patriotism and heroism flowed from the printing presses of America, drawing from history and current leaders of our country. Lives were lost, many families were fearful, and millions of Americans grew weary of war and the fear generated by war. Some have said that those days and years were “America’s finest hour,” but that provided little comfort for many families with husbands and/or family “in harm’s way.”

Many men and women died, many families were devastated, but desertion and insubordination were rare. Presidents Roosevelt and Truman spoke often of the high quality of our men and women—and our support systems “back home.”

Probably one of the most fascinating stories to come out of that war was not about an American but about a Japanese soldier in whom there was “no give up.” Even though he was an enemy soldier, his loyalty to his country and to his leaders leaves all who hear it in awe. Perhaps it is merely a part of the fanaticism that lived in the Japanese people in those years, but the unique character of the man involved seems more like loyalty and honor than fanaticism.

On a Sunday in 1974, almost thirty years after the war was over and peace existed between Japan and America, Hiroo Onoda, surrendered his Samurai sword to President Marcos of the Philippines. Though the armistice was signed in 1945 on the Battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay, Onoda refused to surrender until he was ordered to do so by his superiors. When asked why he waited so long, why he had not already surrendered, his response was, “I had not received the order.” His last orders from them had been, “Continue Guerrilla tactics until further orders” and he was a man who respected his orders. Even when the war was officially ended—though he did not know it—Onoda would not surrender until he got the “order” from an authoritative source. It was March 1974, nearly thirty years later, but Onoda rendered true respect for his nation and his military principles.

Google records his life, and tells of how he finally did receive those orders. In February 1974, a young college dropout was traveling the world in search of “Lieutenant Onoda, a panda, and the Abominable Snowman.” Onoda was found after four days of searching. The student returned to Japan with pictures of Onoda and official papers were drawn up that authorized him to surrender.

Such loyalty seems almost foolish to some, even today. Surely he must have had his doubts at times, but he had so much respect for the honor of his orders that he went far beyond what most of us would consider necessary.

To draw from this illustration, let us consider the task we have been given today, recorded in the Bible. New Testament Christians were given “orders” to take the gospel to the world. When you contemplate the enormity of that task it appears impossible to accomplish. Even if it were not really possible, do you think today’s Christians should just pass it off as “not capable of fulfillment in our day?” Even if we do not reach every person, we would/could reach many.

What if every Christian today was as diligent and as respectful of our orders? Many would likely still resist the inspired word, even deny the need to obey it. Would we stick to our assignment like Onoda did? I'm sure many would, and the gospel could work upon the heart of man bringing men and women to repentance. Why not take a look at Matthew chapters 20, 28, and Mark 16. And don't forget Hiroo Onoda and his dedication to his Emperor and his native land. Though he had been our enemy, we still admire his loyalty.