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From the STINKO to the USSBS Motion Picture Project: Daniel A. McGovern and the Army Air Forces' First Atomic Bomb Films

Atsuko Shigesawa

1. Introduction

In early September 1945, following the end of World War II, about a dozen correspondents from the major American media visited several Japanese cities, including atomic-bomb-blasted Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Limited accounts¹ and personal papers² reveal that they were members of a press tour, organized as part of publicity campaign by the Army Air Forces (AAF) dubbed “STINKO Project,”³ which was aimed at featuring the roles the AAF had played in bringing about Japan’s capitulation. The AAF hoped that the coverage would help ensure their independence from the Army in the postwar reorganization of the US armed forces.⁴

In addition to the correspondents from major newspapers, news agencies and broadcasting companies, the press tour also included the staff of the military’s public relations wings—such as writers of Army’s *Yank* magazine and cameramen from AAF’s motion picture unit. One of them was Lieutenant Colonel Daniel A. McGovern, who later led the Motion Picture Project of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS), an authoritative commission consisting of more than 1,000 civilians and

¹ Craven and Cate, eds., 733; Major Ben Z. Kaplan, “Nippon Diary: tojo [*sic*] doesn’t live here any more,” *Free World* (Dec. 1945), 33.

² For example, see the Vern Haugland Papers at the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, University of Montana at Missoula. Haugland was a correspondent for the Associated Press (AP). Other members of the press tour included Clark Lee of International News Service (INS), James McGlinchy of the United Press (UP), Guthrie Janssen of NBC, Bill Downs of CBS, Bernard Hoffman of *Life* magazine, John Bockhorst of MGM “News of the Day,” Stanley Troutman of Acme Newspictures, William H. Lawrence of the *New York Times*, Homer Bigart of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Frederick Oppen of ABC and Bob Brumby of MBS. See, Shigesawa, 2010.

³ It is unknown whether this is an abbreviation and if so, what it stands for.

⁴ Shigesawa, 2010, 20-23, 162-165.

military personnel that evaluated the effects of the strategic bombing during World War II.⁵

The USSBS Motion Picture Project is known for two films—a 160-minute black-and-white *Effects of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki*⁶ shot and edited by *Nippon Eiga Sha* (“*Nichiei*” in short), a Japanese film unit, and the collection of 85,000 feet of color film shot of various scenes and events across cities in Japan by American cameramen. About one third of this color footage was taken in either Hiroshima or Nagasaki.⁷ These films have, after buried in obscurity for a quarter of a century, been appropriated by or converted into numerous documentaries and nuclear holocaust fictions, as they have been almost the only motion picture materials that captured the horror of the nuclear attacks. It is certainly hard to imagine how those documentaries and the fictional films could have been done without this footage.

Many of the preceding studies of the USSBS atomic bomb films focus on the suppression these films had undergone.⁸ While the USSBS Motion Picture Project has been taken for granted as a presupposed operation, historians rarely delve into why and how this method of recording—not used in the USSBS European survey—was introduced in the Pacific survey.⁹

In this essay, the author attempts to explore the history that brought about the STINKO Project, which eventually evolved into the USSBS Motion Picture Project. She then sheds light on the purpose and roles for which these projects were intended, as well as on the background of the films’ suppression.

Motion pictures have been used since before World War II not only as a way to record battles, but also for publicity to recruit volunteers and as a tool to train those inducted. In the US during the war, making films had become a huge undertaking for armed forces as they competed with each other and the motion picture industry in Hollywood cooperated with the military to produce hundreds of films.¹⁰

⁵ “Forward,” USSBS, *Summary Reports (European War & Pacific War)*, ii; Daniels, ed., xxi-xxvi.

⁶ The entire film, consisting of 19 reels (local identifier: 342-USAF-17679), can be viewed online at the web site of the National Archives (hereafter, NARA).

⁷ Analysis by the author. There are 90 reels of USSBS color footage (local identifiers: 342-USAF-11000 to 342-USAF-11088, with 342-USAF-11051A) at the NARA at College Park, MD, of which 80 can be viewed online at NARA’s Web pages (as of April 6, 2017).

⁸ For example, Barnouw, 1982 & 1988; Furukawa; Nomes, 1996 & 2003; Mitchell; Oya, 2011 & 2012.

⁹ There is no record of a motion picture project in the USSBS European Survey. Beveridge, *European & Pacific*. The National Archives holds 12 reels of motion pictures from the USSBS European Survey; however, they were those confiscated from Germany by the USSBS. See, “243.2 Records of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey [USSBS]” and “A Finding Aid to Audiovisual Records in the National Archives of the United States Relating to World War II.

¹⁰ For the study of making war films by Hollywood in cooperation with the armed forces, see Koppes &

Among those who contributed to the production of such films were anonymous cameramen who risked their lives to film front-line combat scenes. McGovern was one of them. History attests that he happened to play a crucial role in recording the effects of the atomic bomb and preserving the record, whatever the original intention and purposes were behind the footage.

It is an irony of history that these intentions—while they might be also partly responsible for the suppression of the films—and the conjuncture of other circumstances during the war led to the creation of these extraordinary records of the first and so far the last use of the atomic bomb in combat in human history.¹¹

2. McGovern Becomes Military Cameraman

McGovern was born in Carrickmacross, Ireland, in 1909. He migrated to the United States with his family in 1922 when Southern State of Ireland won independence from the United Kingdom, an event that forced his father, a policeman for the British crown, out of the country. He was 12 when the family moved to New York.

As a young boy, McGovern was interested in movies and started filmmaking, using a 16-mm hand-cranked camera when he was 17. That summer, he participated in a Citizens Military Training Camp (CMTC),¹² a month-long military training program run by the US Army, and successfully completed all the requirements to become a reserve officer candidate after four summers of training. He joined the New York National Guard in 1934, after his application was turned down for a special photographic guard position in the Army's elite 102nd Observation Squadron based in Staten Island. He was accepted by the Squadron in 1937 as a corporal and was inducted in 1940.¹³

Late in 1942, McGovern was assigned to the First Motion Picture Unit

Black; Suid. For the study of making films by armed forces with the cooperation of the Hollywood film makers, see Vincent; Maslowski; Cunningham.

¹¹ Needless to say, the footage would not have had to be taken if the atomic bomb was not used in the first place.

¹² The provisions for the voluntary training were prescribed in the National Defense Act of 1920 to compensate for the universal military training that was not made compulsory by the law. The programs were held each summer from 1921 to 1940 when the selective service act of 1940 was introduced. For CMTC, see Donald M. Kington, *Forgotten Summers: The Story of the Citizens' Military Training Camps, 1921-1940*, San Francisco, CA: 1995; John Garry Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers: The Plattsburg Training Camp Movement, 1913-1920*, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1972.

¹³ U. S. Air Force Oral History with Lieutenant Colonel Daniel A. McGovern, Air Forces Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, AL (Hereafter, "AFHRA"), 1-9, 16-18 (Hereafter, "Oral History").

(FMPU) to become an instructor to train combat cameramen. By then he had become a seasoned cameraman, working for the 16th Photographic Squadron Special based at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. that was in charge of filming VIPs. His last job at the base was to film the arrival of President Fulgencio Batista of Cuba on December 8, 1942.¹⁴

The FMPU was established in July 1942 by the AAF as a unit independent of the Army's counterpart to produce its own motion pictures and still photos. The AAF was rapidly expanding that year with a planned production of 65,000 aircraft and needed 100,000 crewmembers to man the planes. In April 1942, AAF Commander Henry H. Arnold invited Jack L. Warner, vice president of Warner Brothers, who was also his personal friend, to Washington and asked for his cooperation. It was the time of college graduation—a great opportunity for the armed forces to recruit volunteers, and many of the nation's universities had advanced their commencements a month in view of the graduates' enlistment—and Arnold wanted to make the most of this opportunity.¹⁵

In two months, Warner Brothers made a film *Winning Your Wings*, featuring then popular actor James Stewart. Thousands of young Americans who watched the film joined the AAF, and it had also become the urgent task for the FMPU to produce films to help train these recruits.¹⁶

The FMPU soon started its task at Warner Brothers' Vitagraph Studio in Los Angeles. After the studio grew overcrowded with the staff, the unit moved to Hull Loach Studio in Culver City near Hollywood in October 1942, and started to produce training films on requests from AAF's various departments.¹⁷ The first of these films was *Learn and Live* (1943), which taught crewmen on how to avoid and survive airplane crash accidents. The FMPU also made such films as *Recognition of the Japanese Zero Fighter* (1943) that told how to discern their own P-40 fighters from the Japanese Zero, which shared similar characteristics with P-40s, and *Resisting Enemy Interrogation* (1944) that taught how to behave during interrogation by the enemy if captured and made prisoners of war. The FMPU produced 238 films in three years until 1945, with a total run time of 88 hours and 27 minutes.¹⁸

In the meantime, Combat Camera Units (CCU) were established within the FMPU in November 1942, in order to shoot actual battles from the air, and the FMPU

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 19-27; "Batista Is Feted on Capital Visit," *New York Times*, Dec. 9, 1942, 14.

¹⁵ Cunningham, 96, 105-107; Vincent, 11-15; Koppes & Black, 78.

¹⁶ Cunningham, 105-107.

¹⁷ Vincent, 24.

¹⁸ Vincent, 33-34, 112, 116, 131; Richard Dyer MacCann, 165; Cunningham, 96.

started to train CCU's would-be cameramen. The training of aerial shootings took six-week in Las Vegas for combat cameramen after an 11-week lecture course at the Culver City Studio.¹⁹ Fourteen CCUs were organized by the end of 1944, of which 12 were sent overseas; the Ninth CCU was the first unit to be sent when it traveled to North Africa to film battles in Operation Torch that was launched in November 1942.²⁰

Footage taken by the CCU cameramen was used in various films, newsreels, and magazines, as well as newspapers, just like still photos and motion pictures taken by civilian photographers. Those battle scenes shot by the CCU cameramen were often used in films produced by professional directors from Hollywood, who were now working for the FMPC.²¹

In June 1943 McGovern was sent to Europe as a combat photographer. He was assigned to the Eighth CCU and shot battles fought by the AAF's Eighth Air Force based in London. The footage he shot was used in such films as the *Memphis Bell: A Story of a Flying Fortress* (1944) by William Wyler (then an AAF major) and *Combat America* (1945) featuring actor Clark Gable (then an AAF lieutenant) and *Target for Today* (1943).²²

The Memphis Bell is the story of a B-17 heavy bomber and its crew who were on their way to completing their 25th mission, after which they were to return to the US. Their last mission comes as a critical moment for the crew as the injury rate per sortie in a battle with the German Luftwaffe was at least five percent. It was calculated that only one third of aircraft would survive after 20 missions.²³

CCU photographers shared their fate with the aircraft and the crew, as they flew as part of the crew. While some photographers received medals for also shooting down enemy airplanes, others got killed as their airplanes were shot down.²⁴

McGovern survived two crashes, although he was badly injured; he returned to the US in the spring of 1944 and hospitalized in a rehabilitation center. After his recovery, McGovern was assigned to a position of a public relations officer; however, he arranged to come back to the FMPC in Culver City as he missed the job of a cameraman. He spent two months prior to the end of the war in the Mariana's Saipan and Tinian as part of the 11th CCU, shooting pictures for *The Last Bomb* (1947) being

¹⁹ Vincent, 29-31

²⁰ Maslowski, 157-158, 199.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 26-31.

²² Oral History, 30. They were all produced by the FMPU.

²³ Maslowski, 160. A limited tour of duty was ultimately raised to 30.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 182; Vincent, 31-32.

produced under the director Frank Lloyd, then an AAF major.²⁵

The CCUs' focus shifted with the change in the emphasis of the AAF's strategies from the recruitment and production of training films to the recording of their battles, which started in the summer of 1944.²⁶ It was considered that the motion picture history "will make it possible to set forth in the fullest manner the part played by the Air Forces in the present conflict...factually and irrefutably..."²⁷

In the summer of 1943, military officials initiated planning for their postwar reorganization, which would feature unification of the armed forces to promote economy and efficiency. Anticipating the reduction of the military budget, it was a question at stake for each branch of the armed forces, Army, Navy and Army Air Forces, to determine how big a slice of pie they would get after the war. The competition was especially fierce between the AAF, who had been seeking to be independent from the Army, and the Navy, who was afraid of losing its vested interest to the rising air force.²⁸

Against such a backdrop, the AAF intended these motion pictures to be their weapon to win the heart of people in the Congress, White House, and civilian groups.²⁹ These films would eventually play a role in persuading the policy makers that the country's air arm should be given an independent status when the National Security Act of 1947 was enacted.³⁰

3. Making of the First Atomic Bomb Films

When the war finally came to an end, McGovern was ordered to be one of the first photographers to film Hiroshima and Nagasaki.³¹ He was told that it would be for a newsreel pool, which would be also used by the regular media. It was part of the STINKO Project, a press campaign organized by the United States Strategic Air Force (USSTAF) that was established in July 1945 to inflict a final blow on Japanese cities.³²

²⁵ Oral History, 36-38, 56-57, 115.

²⁶ Maslowski, 306.

²⁷ Letter to Major General L. S. Kuter from James P. Hodges (Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Intelligence), dated Nov. 16, 1944, Motion Picture History of Army Air Forces, Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Plans, AFHRA.

²⁸ Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: American Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941-45*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977, 1-26; Perry McCoy Smith, *The Air Force Plans for Peace 1943-1945*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970, 5-7; Laurence J. Legere, *Unification of the Armed Forces*, NY: Garland Publishing, 1988, 239-240, 249-250; Vincent Davis, *Postwar Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, 1943-1946*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962, 10-14.

²⁹ Maslowski, 32-33.

³⁰ Cunningham, 118.

³¹ Oral History, 38.

³² JCS 742/12, "Directive on the Establishment of U.S. Army Strategic Air Forces (USASTAF)," July 11,

After all, another photographer went to Hiroshima on Sept. 3, while McGovern visited Nagasaki on September 8 and 9, together with the correspondents of the press tour who visited Hiroshima five days earlier.³³

According to the personal papers and memoirs of the participants, or newspaper articles they wrote, the tour, consisting at first of seven journalists, left Washington, D.C. in late July 1945. McGovern and several other journalists likely joined the tour in Guam where it arrived in the middle of August after making stops at such cities as London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Cairo, and Bagdad, as well as Calcutta, Chongqing, and Manila. They entered Japan from Atsugi, Kanagawa Prefecture—the point of landing during the occupation of the country—on August 30. The group visited Hiroshima by motor vehicles provided by the Japanese Navy at Kure, at which airstrip they landed their B-17 from Atsugi.³⁴

In Hiroshima, the correspondents walked around the city center, trying to find Japanese citizens along the way who witnessed the bombing, and had a conference with a representative of the local Japanese military police and the Japanese press. In Nagasaki, they visited a POW camp where they talked with a Dutch doctor, and walked around Ground Zero.³⁵ In the six-minutes of black-and-white footage McGovern shot—the only footage taken in the STINKO Project discovered—we can see a scene of rubble of the demolished city and apparently Dutch or Australian POWs with severe burns that they suffered when they were exposed to the atomic ray while being mobilized to work at the Mitsubishi Nagasaki Shipbuilding.³⁶

Following the visit to Nagasaki, McGovern and the correspondents traveled to

1945, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 1: 1942-1945, The Pacific Theater, Reel 1, Paul Kesaris, ed., University Publication of America, Frederick, MD, 1981; Craven and Cate, 676-702, 733.

³³ From 1st Lt. Daniel A. McGovern to G-2 Section, USSBS, "Motion Picture Coverage of Japan by Army Air Force," Nov. 13, 1945, Role No. 53, USSBS RSR.

³⁴ These papers, memoirs and articles include; "War Correspondents' Trip," 1945, Folder 2, Box 10; "The Flying Circus," Folder 8, Box 8, both in Vern Haugland Papers, at the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, University of Montana at Missoula; Clark Lee, *One Last Look Around*, New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947; Bill Laurence, *Six Presidents, Too Many Wars: The 40-Year Memoirs of a Washington Correspondent*, New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972; "What the Atom Bomb Did to Hiroshima: 'Most Terrible Destruction in World,'" *PM*, Sept. 4, 1945, p. 5; Homer Bigart, "A Month After the Atom Bomb: Hiroshima Still Can't Believe It," *New York Herald Tribune*, Sept. 5, 1945, 1, 8. See also, Shigesawa, 2010, 20-29.

³⁵ Shigesawa, 2010, 28-29, 69-70, 76.

³⁶ The author found the footage at the National Archives in April 2010. "STINKO," Motion Picture Films from the "Combat Subjects" Program Series, ca. 1939-ca. 1945, RG 18, NARA at College Park. She is grateful for the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum for identifying places that appear in the video. According to NARA's Motion Pictures and Sound Recording (hereafter, MPSR), the Nagasaki footage was transferred to the facilities from the Wright-Patterson Air Base in August 1963 along with 95 titles (276 reels) of battle footage filmed during World War II. No restriction was set then. Email answer from MPSR to the author, May 13, 2013.

the Korean Peninsula on September 10 to cover a special ceremony celebrating the country's independence from Japan. Then they returned to Tokyo the next day and made it in time to capture some scenes of the aborted suicide by former Prime Minister Hideki Tojo. McGovern then continued to film places and events in Tokyo, Yokohama, and Atsugi before visiting Kyoto from September 15-19.³⁷

The STINKO Project inspired McGovern as a cameraman. While other war photographers and soldiers returned home to the US after they were discharged from the military, McGovern sought to stay in Japan to continue filming. When Lieutenant Colonel John R. McCrary,³⁸ PR officer of the press tour, asked him if he would continue with the press tour to China and Southeast Asia, McGovern declined, saying that he wanted to stay in Japan to work on a story that had to be told.³⁹

In an effort to seek extension of his stay in Japan—he only had permission for a one-month stay—McGovern visited Major General Orvil A. Anderson, Director of the USSBS Military Analysis Division and military advisor for the USSBS Chairman, at his office in Meiji Building in Tokyo. McGovern hoped that the former deputy commander for operations of the Eighth Air Force who was involved in the USSBS from the planning stage would somehow arrange to issue him a new order.⁴⁰

McGovern explained the situation he had faced—that he was doing the newsreel coverage for the news pool and working on the motion picture history of the AAF. Anderson asked him about the type of equipment he had. When McGovern told the general that there were sufficient equipment and film in Guam enough to last for a year, Anderson told him to go back to Guam to renew the order, as he would make arrangements to assign him to the USSBS.⁴¹

By “film,” McGovern meant color film—both 16-millimeter and

³⁷ From 1st Lt. Daniel A. McGovern to G-2 Section, USSBS, “Motion Picture Coverage of Japan by Army Air Force,” Nov. 13, 1945, Role No. 53, USSBS RSR. McGovern mentioned in his oral history that he was in Kyoto from Sept. 21-24 and in Atsugi, Tokyo and Yokohama from Sept. 25-30. Oral History, 88-92.

³⁸ Formerly the New York Daily Mirror's chief editorial writer, McCrary joined the Army Air Corps (AAF's predecessor) in 1942. He married actress Jinx Falkenburg in 1945 and the couple became famous for their radio and TV talk shows after the war. A political strategist, McCrary convinced Dwight D. Eisenhower to run for US President and contributed to his victory in the election. As a publicist, he was best known for fixing “kitchen debate” between Vice President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet General Secretary Nikita S. Khrushchev in 1959. Richard Severo, “Tex McCrary Dies at 92; Public Relations Man Who Helped Create Talk-Show Format,” *New York Times*, July 30, 2003, C12.

³⁹ Oral History, 59-60.

⁴⁰ Oral History, 59-62; Beveridge, *European*, 96-97.

⁴¹ Oral History, 61-62. He had actually arranged to have hundreds of color film roles and other equipment to be sent from Guam. USSBS Outgoing Message, Oct. 25, 1945, Folder: 664 Outgoing Message (USASTAF), October 1945 [2 of 2], Box 150, RG 243.

35-millimeter.⁴² For the Army during World War II, filming with 35-millimeter black-and-white was the standard. That changed for the AAF in early 1945 when its commander Arnold saw the Navy's *The Fighting Lady*, produced in 1944 by a popular director Edward Steichen. Arnold was stunned by the impact of beautiful color images.

How shocked and upset AAF leaders were for finding that they had fallen behind the Navy is obvious in the following account written by Lt. General Barney M. Giles, Chief of the Air Staff.

“It is a crime that we have no comparable color pictures of Regensburg, Schweinfurt, Gotha, Zeitz, and those other spectacular strikes of the heavies; of the Tactical Air Forces’ massacre of 22-25 January; of the thousands of fighters kills and strafings [*sic*] scored by the Eighth and Ninth during this past year of Big League operations. Such pictures would enable us to show the country in convincing fashion something of the damage we have done to the heart and guts of Germany and which precipitated her military collapse—something of the part our airmen have played in the actual battles on the ground.”⁴³

In a desperate attempt to catch up with the Navy, the AAF was set to produce color motion pictures.⁴⁴ They mobilized a number of cameramen and a large amount of 16-millimeter Kodachrome film for four Special Film Projects—No. 186 on war against Germany and Nos. 193, 194 and 195 on the war against Japan. However, with the sudden end of war in August 1945, three of them were canceled. While 120,000 feet of film was exposed for No. 186, they were never put together to be shown to the public, and Nos. 194 and 195 were never initiated. The only project that came to fruition was No. 193, which became *The Last Bomb*, depicting the successful strategic bombings of Japan by B-29s, including the two by atomic bombs.⁴⁵ What McGovern referred to as the stock in excess in Guam were those left unused due to the cancellation of the Special Projects Nos. 194 and 195.⁴⁶

⁴² Oral History, 61.

⁴³ Letter to Hoyt S. Vandenberg from Giles, Feb. 1, 1945, Folder: H.S.V.—Personal 1944-1945, Box 77, Hoyt S. Vandenberg Papers, LC.

⁴⁴ Maslowski, 56-60, 213-217.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 60-61. McGovern's Oral History says, ““Last Bomb Production” was canceled” (p. 61), but all the available sources tell of its completion. See, for example, “Atomic Bomb Film is Made in Color,” *New York Times*, October 23, 1946, 48.

⁴⁶ History of 18th Army Air Force Base Unit (Motion Picture Unit), Culver City, California, August 1 through August 31, 1945, AFHRA, 6. The official USSBS historian also confirmed this when he wrote that “A large supply of color film had been obtained on Guam, as it had been collected for use by the AAF and

Returning from Guam, McGovern was assigned to the USSBS's Physical Damage Division⁴⁷ and left Tokyo for Nagasaki on November 1 together with three other division members, including Dan B. Dyer, a civilian target analysis specialist.⁴⁸ There is little record in his Oral History of his activities during the month of October other than that he went back to Guam to have his order extended, but it is likely that McGovern had revisited Nagasaki before this November assignment and that he came to know *Nichiei's* project at this time.⁴⁹

A government-controlled documentary film company established in 1940 during the Sino-Japanese War,⁵⁰ *Nichiei* started filming the aftermath of the atomic bombings since late September as part of a research party organized by the Japanese Ministry of Education.⁵¹ The crew, however, had been ordered to suspend their

not used because of the sudden end of the war, and it had been decided to use this to photograph and illustrate Survey activities." Beveridge, *Pacific*, 124.

⁴⁷ The division, one of 15 USSBS study divisions operated in Japan, was to survey the extents of damages caused by bombings on buildings and other structures, and consisted of 150 persons in 15 teams that were sent to various cities across Japan. Beveridge, *Pacific*, 116, 125-126.

⁴⁸ He was assigned as a photo interpreter to the PDD's Photo Interpretation Section as of Nov. 26. Personnel Order No. 12, Nov. 26, 1945, Folder: 300.4-F Personnel Order, Box 12, RG 243. Operation Order No. 41, Oct. 30, 1945, Folder: 300.4-E Orders-Operations (USSBS) Tokyo, Box 12, RG 243; Beveridge, *Pacific*, 68, 124.

⁴⁹ Oral History, 93; Entry of Oct. 17, 1945, Work Diary, Papers of Hidetsugu Aihara, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. It is difficult to confirm this fact, however, as another document mention he was flying from Guam to Atsugi on this day. "First Lt McGovern will arrive courier plane tail number 552. ETA 1700, 17 October, Atsugi Air Base with 1000 pounds photographic equipment." Incoming Message from COMGEM USASTAF to USASTAF ADVON ATT G-4 USSASB Tokyo, undated, Folder: 664-Outgoing Message (USASTAF) October 1945, Box 151, RG 243.

⁵⁰ Started as *Nihon News Sha* (Japan News Corporation), which combined news film units of three newspaper companies of *Asahi*, *Mainichi* and *Yomiuri*, and *Domei* news agency in April 1940, it changed its name to *Nihon Eiga Sha* in May 1941. Uryu, 1977, 520-521.

⁵¹ Personal memoirs published by *Nichiei* producers speak of the launch of their filming as independent action that came from their professional urge to record the first-ever use of the atomic bomb on cities. However, declassified GHQ documents or contemporary military memorandums all point out that they were under the research party assigned by the Education Ministry and the film itself supports this as it recorded the activities of the scientists. I am inclined to believe that the unit worked under the research party because the declassified papers say the Japanese government was "to pay all expenses incurred till prohibition by American command." (American authorities to pay all expenses thereafter and royalties for the film.) There is no record found that proves that *Nichiei* actually received the payments. However, there is no reason to believe otherwise when everything else was conducted as noted in the documents. "Estimate" by K. Negishi (*Nichiei*) for commanding officer, USSBS, Dec. 7, 1945; Request for continued investigation, Dec. 19, 1945; "Atomic Bomb," a Memo to Lt. Ehlers, Jan. 22, 1946; "Atomic Bomb Film," a memorandum for record by Press, Pictorial and Broadcast Division, Jan. 28, 1946, all in Folder: Atomic Bomb Films, Box 8578, RG 331 (microfilm collected by National Diet Library in Japan, by courtesy of Shugakukan Research Library, Ritsumeikan University); also, "Documentary Atomic Bombing Film," a memorandum to Akira Iwasaki (*Nichiei*) from USSBS, Jan. 11, 1946; Statement of the Production Cost on "Effects of Atomic Bomb," Dec. 17, 1945, both in the Daniel A. McGovern Collection. The author would like to thank Dr. Nornes for opening to the public his important [Daniel A. McGovern Collection] in the Web pages of the Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan. Japanese filmmakers' personal memoirs include: Kano, 274-278; Iwasaki, 96-99.

operation by the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (GHQ/SCAP) after one of its cameramen was found filming in Nagasaki by the occupation forces on Oct. 17, 1945.⁵²

By then the Japanese filmmakers had taken 26,000-feet of film. The GHQ/SCAP's Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) wanted the film seized by the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) of the GHQ/SCAP's Civil Intelligence Section (CIS) because it "might be inflammatory if shown to the general public" and that it was "objectionable from a security or public safety viewpoint" to have the film completed by the Japanese.⁵³ However, McGovern, together with the Surgeon General's Office and NavTechJap (Naval Technical Mission to Japan), both of which were then conducting research on the effects of the atomic bomb, arranged to have the Japanese party complete the film under his supervision and have the completed film be sent to the Army Medical Museum in Washington, D.C.⁵⁴ In a memorandum addressed to the G-2 section of the USSBS military affairs division, McGovern said:

"Inasmuch as the work of the Japanese research party and Japanese motion picture group was accomplished prior to the entrance into Hiroshima and Nagasaki of American research teams, the Japanese film and their factual findings are considered... to be inestimable value to agencies in the United States which are concerned with the development of atomic energy and its military and economic application."⁵⁵

After spending some two weeks in Nagasaki, McGovern returned to Tokyo and officially established the Motion Picture Project on December 7.⁵⁶ A memorandum he wrote on USS *Barr*, which the USSBS was using as its headquarters and accommodation in Nagasaki, describes the two phases of the project—one that "will

⁵² Oral History, 60; Entries of Oct. 17, Nov. 12, 13, 1945, Work Diary, Papers of Hidetsugu Aihara. Nornes says it was Oct. 24 when the cameraman was found by the military police. Nornes, 1996, 122-128.

⁵³ "Atomic Bomb Film," a memorandum for record by Press, Pictorial and Broadcast Division, Jan. 28, 1946, Folder: Atomic Bomb Films, Box 8578, RG 331.

⁵⁴ "Japanese Motion Picture Film of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," from Daniel A. McGovern to Lt. Commander Woodward, USSBS G-2, dated Dec. 29, 1945, 1; Memorandum, Subject: Atomic Bomb Motion Picture Project, Jan. 3, 1946, both in the [Daniel A. McGovern Collection].

⁵⁵ "Japanese Motion Picture Film of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," from Daniel A. McGovern to Lt. Commander Woodward, USSBS G-2, dated Dec. 29, 1945, 1. [Daniel A. McGovern Collection]

⁵⁶ McGovern was assigned as Director of Photography and Production and Officer in Charge of the USSBS Motion Picture Project. Personnel Order No. 16, Dec. 7, 1945, Folder: 300.4-F Personnel Order, Box 12, RG 243.

bring to the public an objective picture of life in Japan as it exists today,” and the other “designed to record the physical damage inflicted upon Japan and also to document certain important technological aspects of the Japanese war economy.”⁵⁷ It was planned that this motion picture be released at the same time that the USSBS in Japan would present its final report.⁵⁸

McGovern left again for Nagasaki on January 5, 1946, in a five-car steam locomotive with a Pullman, which would be their headquarters and accommodations, and all the equipment. The team then consisted of 11 officers and enlisted men.⁵⁹ According to Akira “Harry” Mimura, a Japanese cameraman who was educated in the US and worked in Hollywood in prewar years, there were ten members, including a Japanese cook and two pages, when he joined the team in February upon request by McGovern, while other cameramen returned to the US one after another as they were demobilized.⁶⁰

Nichiei resumed their filming in Nagasaki in late December. The USSBS Motion Picture Project, on the other hand, toured Kyushu and Chugoku regions after completing filming Nagasaki early February, and then stayed in Hiroshima from the middle of March until April 24. Then they visited Osaka, Takarazuka, and Kyoto before returning to Tokyo on April 29.⁶¹ McGovern in the meantime moved back and forth between the team and Tokyo, where *Nichiei* was editing their footage after returning from Nagasaki. He also traveled to Kagoshima, where he filmed the eruption of the *Sakurajima* mountain from the air on March 20, and to Tsuruga and Kobe in May.⁶²

The filming phase of the Motion Picture Project was completed by the time the members came back to Tokyo on June 7. McGovern and his crew returned to Washington, D.C. through Guam and Kwajalein Atoll, where the Operation Crossroad—atomic bomb tests—were being conducted, Hawaii and San Francisco.⁶³ The color films were sent to Hollywood to be processed.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ “Function of PDD #10,” a memorandum to G-2 Section, USSBS, dated Nov. 17, 1945, Role No. 53, USSBS RSR.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Oral History, 66; “Personnel Order No. 16, U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey, Dec. 7, 1945,” Folder: 300.4-F Personnel Order, Box 12, RG 243; Beveridge, *Pacific*, 124-125.

⁶⁰ Kudo, 1985, 181; Roger Pulvers, “Akira ‘Harry’ Mimura: A life uniquely focused on both sides of the Pacific,” *Japan Times*, Jan. 8, 2012, 5.

⁶¹ Oya, 2011, 29.

⁶² Oral History, 107-118.

⁶³ Oral History, 119-121.

⁶⁴ Oral History, 123.

The Japanese film was supposed to be completed by March 1.⁶⁵ However, the schedule was delayed due to bad weather.⁶⁶ The Japanese film was completed on April 21 and a preview was held in Tokyo on May 4 for a small group of parties involved in the production.⁶⁷ Its 35mm negative and positive projection print were then shipped out on May 6 and May 23, respectively, by air and received by the AAF's Motion Picture Service Division in Washington, D.C. on May 28 and June 18, respectively.⁶⁸ *Nichiei* producers, in the meantime, took the risk of secretly making a rush print of the film for them to keep, which did not have a soundtrack.⁶⁹

4. Atomic Bomb Films Suppressed

The films that McGovern was so eager to create and to take home to the US hardly made it to the theaters in the United States as he hoped. Both *Nichiei*'s black-and-white film and Motion Picture Project's color footage were classified, after all. According to McGovern, when the *Nichiei*'s edited film was screened at the Navy's Science Laboratory in Anacostia, Maryland, the Army's Manhattan Engineer District, which developed the atomic bomb, raised an objection to showing the film to the general public, saying that it included confidential information—i.e., the heights the bomb exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁷⁰

In an attempt to protect the film from the possible destruction, McGovern secretly produced two 16-millimeter copies of the *Nichiei* film, which he asked to be placed in the custody of the Wright-Patterson Air Field in Dayton, Ohio. While whereabouts of the original film had come to be known only in 1994, the copied films McGovern produced had eventually been transferred to the National Archives in 1967.⁷¹

⁶⁵ "Documentary Atomic Bombing Film," a memorandum to Akira Iwasaki (*Nichiei*) from USSBS, Jan. 11, 1946, in the [Daniel A. McGovern Collection].

⁶⁶ Incoming cablegrams from Tokyo to War Department on March 16, 20, 27, 1946, Folder: 664 Cablegrams (Incoming) Pacific 1946 Jan.-Oct., Box 150, RG 243.

⁶⁷ Entries of April 21 & May 4, 1946, Work Diary, Papers of Hidetsugu Aihara; Kano, 276.

⁶⁸ Incoming cablegram from USSBS Motion Picture Project to War Department to Motion Picture Service Division, AAF, May 7, 1946; Incoming message from CG, PACUSA Tokyo to Motion Picture Service Division, AAF, May 24, 1946, both in Folder: 664 Cablegrams (Incoming) Pacific 1946 Jan.-Oct.; Outgoing Classified Message to CG 5th Air Force Tokyo, Japan for Lt McGovern US Strategic Bombing Survey Motion Picture Project from WARCOS, May 28, 1946, Folder: Cablegrams (outgoing), Pacific (1945) Aug.-Dec.; Outgoing Classified Message to CG 5th Air Force Tokyo for Lt McGovern US Strategic Bombing Survey Motion Picture Project from Hurley signed WARCOS, June 18, 1946, Folder: Cablegrams (outgoing), Pacific (1945) Aug.-Dec., all in Box 150, RG 243. McGovern seems to have had a wrong recollection when he mentioned that he had hand-carried the preprint material and a print of the Japanese black and white version to Washington. Oral History, 121-122.

⁶⁹ Normes, 1996, 131.

⁷⁰ Oral History, 121-123.

⁷¹ "Transfer of Motion Picture Film" from H. M. Baumhofer, Chief, Film Depository, Department of the Air

The planned production of a documentary from the USSBS color films came to a standstill when Warner Brothers told McGovern that “the war is over now... we’re no longer working for the government.”⁷² The footage was classified soon after the US Atomic Energy Commission was established.⁷³ It was declassified by 1961 and transferred to the National Archives in 1962.⁷⁴

The Effects of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki examines the damages caused by the bomb from scientific points of view. Its physical damage sections, in particular, detail the method to calculate the heights at which the bombs had been detonated, with some graphical data and scenes of scientists making measurements. It is not hard to understand why the US government wanted to classify the film. The color footage from Hiroshima and Nagasaki of the USSBS Motion Picture Project, on the other hand, consists of pictures of mostly people and structures—so vivid and painful that it is often disturbing to watch—but does not contain any confidential information. Why, then, did the US government classify this material?

Suppression of films and literature on the atomic bomb to a large extent has been discussed in numerous preceding studies.⁷⁵ The conclusions of these studies can be categorized into three patterns; one that concerns security, another that concerns the Japanese as the subject of the occupation, and a third that concerns America’s reputation. For the security, secrecy about technical information on the atomic bomb was maintained on all fronts. At the Japanese front during the occupation, censors of the SCAP’s Civil Censorship Detachment often suppressed references to the atomic bomb as an element that might disturb the public tranquility. This also involved an intention to suppress any attacks on the use of the atomic bomb from the Japanese for propaganda purposes.⁷⁶ As for the American reputation, expressions on the atomic bomb were censored out of fear that the material would give “the impression that the United States was inhumane or barbaric in using it.”⁷⁷

Suppression of information regarding the atomic bomb in the US also

Force (hereafter, DAF), to Audio Visual Branch, NARA, Sept. 19, 1967. The film was transferred as an accretion to the color footage that was transferred five years earlier. Oral History, 123; Normes, 1996, 133, 152-153 (notes 33, 35).

⁷² Oral History, 123-124.

⁷³ It was sometime around March 1947 that it was classified. Mitchell, *Atomic Cover-Up*, 50-52.

⁷⁴ “Offer to Transfer Film Records to the National Archives,” from Directorate of Administrative Services, DAF, to Wayne C. Grover, Archivist of the United States, NARA, Sept. 15, 1961; Accession Inventory, Feb. 21, 1962, both by courtesy of MPSR.

⁷⁵ For example, Mayo, 1984; Braw, 1991.

⁷⁶ Mayo, 311; Braw, 89-142.

⁷⁷ Braw, 133.

concerned the American public. McGovern believed that the films were suppressed “because of the horror, the devastation... The medical effects were pretty gory... One of the most terrible things was the body burns... The attitude was: Do not show any medical effects. Don’t make people sick.”⁷⁸ He also mentioned that “[t]hey didn’t want the general public to know what their weapons had done—at a time they were planning on more bomb tests. ...we didn’t want the material out because ... we were sorry for our sins.”⁷⁹

When we talk about the domestic concerns in the US, we should also note circumstances surrounding the political and military landscapes of the time. Before the atomic bomb was embraced as a decisive, revolutionary weapon, which brought Japan to her knees,⁸⁰ government and military leaders often downplayed the horrific effects of the atomic bomb, treating it as just another bomb.⁸¹ Behind such a narrative was likely the competition among armed forces and the fear of the possible resurgence of the isolationist sentiment that was strong among the public before the war.

In addition to the unification of the armed forces, President Harry S. Truman planned to introduce universal military training (UMT) following the end of the war, which would require all qualified citizens to serve for a period of reserve duty.⁸² In the congressional hearing in February 1946, opponents of the plan often pronounced that the atomic bomb had rendered the UMT unnecessary.⁸³ While such a discussion threatened the possible legislation of the UMT, military leaders tried to belittle the role of the atomic bomb in the US arsenal.⁸⁴ This has also complicated the argument for the reorganization and unification of the armed forces, as the competition between the Army, Navy, and AAF for the postwar size and budget seemed to be now joined by the atomic bomb.⁸⁵ The atomic bomb was officially posing a

⁷⁸ Mitchell, 50.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

⁸⁰ Most famously, this narrative is found in Henry L. Stimson, “The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb,” *Harper’s Magazine*, Vol. 194, No. 1161 (February 1947), 105.

⁸¹ Those who had this type of mindset, at least for some time after the war, include Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson and Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall. For this discussion, see, Shigesawa, 2016, 52-63; Frank A. Settle, Jr., *George C. Marshall and the Atomic Bomb*, Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016.

⁸² According to the Truman’s address before a Joint Session of the Congress on UMT, all the male citizens at the age of 18 and 19 should enter military training for a period of one year, upon which completion he would become a member of the general reserve for six years, after which he should be placed in a secondary reserve status. “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on Universal Military Training,” Oct. 23, 1945, *Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman 1945-1953*, Harry S. Trumann Library & Museum.

⁸³ See, Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, 79th Congress, 2nd Session (Feb. 18-21, 1946) on H. R. 515. The discussion was so heated that the Chairman warned the members “[w]e are not considering the atomic bomb here except in its relation generally in military training.” Part 2, 854.

⁸⁴ See, Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, 79th Congress, 1st Session (Nov. 8, 13, 15-16, 19-21, 26-30, Dec. 3, 6-7, 10-14, 17-19, 1945) on H. R. 515.

⁸⁵ Possibly out of such a fear, Marshall warned army officers that “legislation for the establishment of a

problem.

The Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall urged the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on August 18, 1945, to study the possible effects of the atomic bomb on modern warfare, saying that “The development of the atomic bomb presents far-reaching implications and problems... It is desirable that a concerted viewpoint of the military on the over-all effect of this new weapon on warfare and military organization be developed as soon as possible...”⁸⁶ The first draft report prepared by the JCS’s Joint Strategic Survey Committee regarding the inquiry on October 30, 1945, contained the following statement:

“Widespread discussion of the atomic bomb has created a popular belief that the advent of the bomb renders obsolescent [*sic*] the roles of ground, naval and air forces as we now know them. Every appropriate step should be taken to correct this popular misconception. Lest it develop to proportions prejudicial to national security.”⁸⁷

In such a circumstance, the atomic bomb films that depict vividly the reality of the effects of the atomic bomb should have understandably been suppressed.

By the time its members left Japan for the US in December 1945, USSBS had apparently lost its interest in the motion pictures.⁸⁸ Five education films from the USSBS color footage were produced, though, for Air University in Montgomery, Alabama, after

single department of the armed forces is in no way connected with the bill before Congress in connection with universal military training.” Memorandum to General H. H. Arnold from George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, Oct. 29, 1945, Folder: Joint Chiefs of Staff 1945 Unification, Box 51, Hoyt S. Vandenberg Papers, LC. Almost identical account can be found in the “memorandum for General and Special Staff: War Department policy on the establishment of a single Department of the Armed Forces,” Nov. 5, 1945, in the Statement of Hon. H. Struve Hensel, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Nov. 29, 1945, Hearings, Senate Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Congress, 1st Session on S. 84 & S. 1482, 473.

⁸⁶ JCS/1477, “Over-all Effect of Atomic Bomb on Warfare and Military Organization,” Memorandum by the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, dated Aug. 18, 1945, 1, *Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Microfilm), Part 2: 1946-1953, Strategic Issues: Section 1*, Reel 1.

⁸⁷ JCS 1477/1, Over-all effect of atomic bomb on warfare and military organization, Reference JCS 1477, Report by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, Oct. 30, 1945, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (microfilm), Part 2: 1946-1953, Strategic Issues: Section 1 Reel 1.

⁸⁸ A memorandum from the USSBS headquarters in Washington, D.C., to Tokyo on Dec. 21: “Survey has no funds for prints of film and Army Air Forces advises that their funds for printing color motion picture film exhausted. Organization at Culver City, California disbanded and no procedure presently available whereby film can be printed without specific approval Army Air Forces Motion Picture Board and allocation of funds. Continuation of project will require approval General Anderson as an Army Air Force project.” Outgoing Classified Message to CINCPAC from WARCOS, Dec. 21, 1945, Folder: Cablegrams (outgoing), Pacific (1945) Aug.-Dec., Box 150, RG 243. The USSBS historian Beveridge also confirms the fact when he wrote, “The results of its work will be of undoubted value to the government, but cannot be utilized by the Survey.” Beveridge, *Pacific*, 125.

the AAF's Headquarters approved the plan in October 1946.⁸⁹ Why the Presidential committee did not see the project through to the end is an enigma of history. We have to remember, however, what brought about the USSBS Motion Picture Project. It all started with an AAF's ambition to display its air power. McGovern had likely kept this purpose in mind as he directed the project—regardless of what his own motivation was—as he was working under Anderson, who was one of the most vocal air power proponents of the time.⁹⁰ It was inherently an AAF project.

McGovern's direct involvement with the USSBS Motion Picture Project ended with the completion of the five training films, but it did not end his connection with the atomic bomb. After his service in the Korean War, McGovern was assigned in 1954 to the Look Out Mountain Air Base where he was placed in charge of recording—filming and editing the films of—nuclear tests in the Pacific and Nevada.⁹¹

5. Legacy of the Atomic Bomb Films

Of all the color films taken by the USSBS Motion Picture Project, those of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—which account for one third of the entire collection—have been used in such documentary features as *The Atomic Café* (1982),⁹² *Original Child Bomb* (2004),⁹³ and *White Light Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (2007),⁹⁴ and inspired such a fiction as *The Day After* (1983).⁹⁵ *Nichiei's*

⁸⁹ The five films were: The Effects of the Atomic Bomb Against Hiroshima; The Effects of the Atomic Bomb Against Nagasaki; The Medical Aspects of the Atomic Bomb; The Effect of Strategic Air Attack Against Japan; The Effect of the Aerial Mining Program. "Establishment of Training Film Projects Covering Strategic Bombing of Japan," from E. E. Partridge, Assistant Chief of Air Staff-3, to Commanding General, Air University, Oct. 17, 1946; Memorandum for commanding general, air material command, Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, from Henry B. Saylor, deputy assistant, Chief of Air Staff, AAF, Washington, D.C., March 6, 1947; Memorandum for Commanding General, AAF, Washington, D.C., from Neal E. Ausman, Chief, Photographic Division, Intelligence, T-2, Headquarters, Air Material Command, Wright Field, May 6, 1947, all in Folder: 062.2 USSBS Motion Picture Project, Box 3667, RG 342.

⁹⁰ For example, one cablegram reads: "General Anderson desires complete coverage from sea and air of results aerial mining. Charts and tables of minefield areas coming with special courier. Also desire coverage high explosive on target Marufu Yard Iwakuni Honshu SW Hiroshima." Outgoing Classified Message to CINCAFAC Tokyo for ADPACUSA Tokyo USSBS Liaison from Hurley sgd WARCOS, March 6, 1946, Folder: Cablegrams (outgoing), Pacific (1946) Jan.-Aug., Box 150, RG 243. The fierce rivalry between Anderson and Rear Admiral Ralph A. Ofstie, director of USSBS Naval Analysis Division, was known as the "great Anderson-Navy war." Letter to Orvil A. Anderson from Edward Mead Earle, Feb. 16, 1946, Folder: Gen. Anderson's Special Correspondence, 1935-1947, Box 4, O. A. Anderson Papers, AFHRA.

⁹¹ Oral History, 142-148.

⁹² Produced and directed by Kevin Rafferty, Pierce Rafferty and Jayne Loader.

⁹³ Directed by Carey Schonegevel.

⁹⁴ An HBO documentary film directed and produced by Steven Okazaki.

⁹⁵ A two-hour ABC documentary program written by Edward Hume and directed by Nicholas Meyer. Mitchell and Kudo suggest that the color footage of the USSBS Motion Picture Project were used in the film. However, the author could not identify any scenes in the film from the footage. A make-up designer of the

footage can be seen in *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959)⁹⁶ and *Hiroshima-Nagasaki: August 1945* (1970).⁹⁷ It is difficult to gauge the impact they have had on the international society, but there is no doubt that they are one of a kind. Nothing could tell more graphically than these films of what happened and what can happen when nuclear war occurs.

Abe Markus Nornes, Professor of Asian Cinema at the University of Michigan, says that the appropriations by other media turned *Nichiei's* film “into the source for many of humanity’s images and icons for the atomic bomb attacks.”⁹⁸ He argues that had the suppression of this film been successful, the images “would have been lost forever,”⁹⁹ and then “every single film about the bombings would be different. More importantly, our very memory of the events would be radically altered.”¹⁰⁰

What Nornes meant by “suppression” is the attempted confiscation of the film that took place by the Surgeon General’s Office in early December 1945. He argues that there was a competition for control over the Japanese film between the Surgeon General’s Office and the USSBS. However, McGovern attributed his success to win the control over “certain intelligence facilities, the Army especially”¹⁰¹ to the Surgeon General’s Office. And as we saw above, it was GHQ/SCAP’s CIE that had actually wanted its Intelligence Corps to seize the film.¹⁰²

In his oral history, McGovern emphasizes that he saved the film.¹⁰³ But even if he saved the film from the GHQ’s Intelligence Corps, the Japanese faced the same result, as they could not keep the film anyway.¹⁰⁴ He did not save the film when it was

program designed the human effects based on motion pictures taken by the first American Army units to enter Hiroshima, and it is obvious the scenes of the ruins in the film had also been modeled after the devastations in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the USSBS footage. Mitchell, 62; Lifton & Mitchell, 1995, 373-374; Kudo, 9-12; Stephen Farber, “How a Nuclear Holocaust Was Staged for TV,” *New York Times*, Nov. 13, 1983, H1, H34.

⁹⁶ Directed by French director Alain Resnais. The footage they used came from *Nihon Eiga Shinsha*, *Nichiei's* successor, which inherited the rush print *Nichiei* producers hid from Americans.

⁹⁷ Produced by Erik Barnouw and funded by Museum of Modern Art Film Library.

⁹⁸ Nornes, 1996, 121.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁰¹ Oral History, 60-61, 63-65; Nornes, 1996, 122-128; “Japanese Motion Picture Film of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” from Daniel A. McGovern to Lt. Commander Woodward, USSBS G-2, dated Dec. 29, 1945, 1; Memorandum, Subject: Atomic Bomb Motion Picture Project, Jan. 3, 1946, both in the [Daniel A. McGovern Collection].

¹⁰² See, Note 51.

¹⁰³ Oral History, 63-65.

¹⁰⁴ We have to remember that it was arranged that the Americans would pay for the royalties for the film, in addition to the expenses incurred to produce it. See Note 51 above. In fact, the phrase “turn over” replaced “confiscate” after the arrangement. We should not forget, however, that whatever legal action it was to purchase the film, it might have been done with an irresistible force that people of defeated nation could not

returned from the Office of Surgeon's General to *Nichiei*, as the Office would obtain it later anyway. McGovern had the film returned to *Nichiei* because he would rather have it finished by the Japanese instead of having the film sent to the US unfinished. He was clear on this point:

“In its present form this heterogeneous mass of photographic material is practically valueless...Several weeks will be required properly to edit, cut, caption this material in such a manner that it will have a scientific value as atomic bomb research material. The only individuals qualified to do this work are... the cameramen who, exposed the film, the individuals who were members of the Japanese research party...”¹⁰⁵

McGovern considered the film invaluable because “...the conditions under which it was taken would never be duplicated, until another atomic bomb is released [*sic*] under combat conditions...”¹⁰⁶ As for the purpose of the Motion Picture Project in Japan, he noted that “[t]he main thing then was to get documentation before Japanese people had started reconstruction.”¹⁰⁷ The footage was the symbol of destruction the airpower had inflicted. It had to have been taken as soon as possible, before any restoration of the city began.

It is difficult to say whether our memory of the atomic horror would be radically different if we did not have the *Nichiei* film, as we have other forms of recordings; namely, photos, hand-painted pictures and testimonial accounts by survivors and bereaved ones, which have been accumulated over the last 70 years. The author, for example, is more familiar with the horrifying photos of people and buildings affected by the bomb, which were taken only days after the bombing by such Japanese photographers as Hajime Miyatake, Eiichi Matsumoto¹⁰⁸ and Yosuke Yamahata.¹⁰⁹ There is no doubt, whatsoever, that we are fortunate to have both the black-and-white and color USSBS motion pictures. They are important witness of what the atomic bomb can do.

refuse.

¹⁰⁵ “Japanese Motion Picture Film of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” from Daniel A. McGovern to Lt. Commander Woodward, USSBS G-2, dated Dec. 29, 1945. [Daniel A. McGovern Collection]

¹⁰⁶ “Japanese Motion Picture Film of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” From Daniel A. McGovern to Lt. Commander Woodward, USSBS G-2, dated Dec. 29, 1945, 1. [Daniel A. McGovern Collection]

¹⁰⁷ Oral History, 63.

¹⁰⁸ Miyatake and Matsumoto were photographers of the *Asahi Shimbun*. Their photos most famously appeared in the Aug. 6, 1952, issue of *the Asahi Graph*.

¹⁰⁹ A military cameraman who was ordered by the Army to take photos of Nagasaki for a propaganda purpose against the enemy.

On Dec. 14, 2016, the US Library of Congress named *The Atomic Café* as one of that year's 25 additions to its National Film Registry, bringing the number of film titles earmarked for preservation by the library for their cultural, historical or aesthetical significance to 700.¹¹⁰ With the film, the footage taken by the USSBS Motion Picture Project will also live forever in American memory.

6. Conclusion

While much about STINKO Project is yet unknown, it had likely served as the parent of the USSBS Motion Picture Project, which created one of the most important records of the effects of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The images might not have existed, however, if the conjuncture of circumstances had been aligned differently. As we have seen, the USSBS Motion Picture Project was not a planned endeavor but rather a result of a fortunate coincidence. If there were no competitions between the AAF and the Navy, there would have been no Special Film Projects. If there were no Special Film Projects, there would have been no color films stored in the AAF bases in Guam, and that would mean no USSBS Motion Picture Project, and McGovern would not have been involved in the USSBS or the *Nichiei* project. And that would have definitely affected the fate of the *Nichiei*'s films, as well.

Contrary to the original intention and purposes, the US Air Forces' first atomic bomb films have become an indispensable tool for convincing citizens the world over of the inhumanity and insanity of nuclear weapons. While it would take another article to discuss to whom the films should belong, the subjects of the films—those nameless victims and survivors of the atomic bombings—certainly could not have told a lie about what they had suffered.

Together with the *Nichiei*'s black-and-white film, the USSBS's motion pictures are remembered as the symbol of America's censorship of the atomic bomb. It may also be the time to remember them as the legacy of the brief period when the United States struggled to come to terms with the bomb.

¹¹⁰“With “20,000 Leagues,” the National Film Registry Reaches 700,” News from the Library of Congress, Dec. 14, 2016. Accessed at <<https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-16-209/with-20000-leagues-the-national-film-registry-reaches-700/2016-12-14/>> on March 1, 2017.

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