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3-31-1977

## DeShazer Learned to Turn the Other Cheek

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### Recommended Citation

Rowe, C. W., "DeShazer Learned to Turn the Other Cheek" (1977). *Japan, 1967-1977*. 102.  
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## Doolittle raider became missionary

# DeShazer learned to turn the other cheek

By SGT. C.W. ROWE

IWAKUNI MCAS, Japan — Christ teaches to love one's enemies and turn the other cheek, but pitifully few people follow these teachings.

Love is taught to children in the bright, cheerful, secure surroundings of a Sunday school classroom, but for a soldier to learn it in a foul-smelling, vermin-infested prison seems a

miracle. For Jacob DeShazer it was a miracle, one that turned his life around. He learned to love his enemies so well that he returned to their country to spread the word of God.

DeShazer accepted Christ while he was a prisoner of the Japanese in Nanking, China, one of eight members of the Army Air Force unit led by Doolittle who had been captured after the April 18, 1942 raid by 16 B25

bombers on Tokyo.

He was serving a life sentence handed down by a Tokyo court after being captured in China after his plane crashed in Japanese-held territory. As miserable as his fate was, DeShazer fared better than two pilots and a gunner who were executed by firing squads for machine-gunning women and children.

Of his 40 months of prison, 34 were in solitary confinement.

"We ate potato peelings, were infested with lice and our clothes were in tatters. We were kicked and abused. One man died from the poor food. After his death, the Emperor ordered them to treat us better," DeShazer remembers.

It was this order that was the first step in the transformation of Jake DeShazer from warrior to reborn Christian.

"After things got better, one of the guards gave me a Bible."

With time on his hands, the POW turned to God.

"I read the prophecies and believed they were true. I came to believe there was only one way to salvation and that was through Christianity. I prayed about it, and the Lord gave me proof.

"I hated the guards. I used to fight with them. They'd hit me, and I'd hit them back and that would make things worse.

"Then I accepted Christ's teachings to love your enemies. The guards started to respect me. I was able to get along with them and I'd never done that before."

Though isolated from the

rest of the world, the Americans never doubted their country would win the war. Their belief was bolstered by some fragments of news.

"We heard about the bombings of Tokyo and the fighting in the Philippines. We knew we were winning."

Their own fate was uncertain.

"We didn't know if they would kill us when the war ended, but they didn't. They moved us to a hotel in Peking instead. Then some Americans, I think they were Marines, parachuted in to rescue us and make sure we weren't killed."

Having lived through such a long, harrowing experience, DeShazer found it hard to adjust to freedom.

"I couldn't talk to a person because I had been in solitary so long. It took a while to adjust. They gave me candy bars and I'd hide them. I was still afraid I wouldn't get enough to eat, that somebody would take the food away from me."

Freedom became more than a word when he was driven to the airport for a flight home.

"I saw an American sentry near the plane. He was in an immaculate uniform with knife-edged creases. Having been filthy and hungry and afraid and alone for so long, I guess this made it all real. I knew I was going home. It was all over. I just broke down right there and let it all out."

Back in the States, the ex-POW married, finished college and faced the future.

"Having learned to love my enemies, I felt I had no choice but to come back as a

missionary."

His return caused massive publicity in the Japanese press. Among the readers of the stories were some of the 200 guards from the Nanking prison. Forty of them called on DeShazer, one of them the soldier who had given him a Bible. Former captor and former captive became friends.

"We have stayed in touch since then, 29 years now. Last year we went to the Philippines together. He is an old samurai-type fellow and is not a Christian. We have much in common though. Both of us have five children, and he's only a couple of years older than my 64." DeShazer now lives in Tokyo.

In the years right after the war, missionary work in Japan was quite an experience. Thousands would attend services and DeShazer was even mobbed handing out pamphlets on the streets. He had some early successes, converting Mitsuo Fushida, the pilot who had led the first wave of planes against Pearl Harbor.

However, as the Japanese people began to regain their own identity, the missionary's job became harder.

"The bad thing is the slowness," says DeShazer. "It is hard to get it across." Despite the problems, his work has been "... a joy, a satisfaction and a fulfillment."

There are no regrets.

"I feel like I've tried. I've made a lot of mistakes, but it was what I wanted to do."

He chose to turn the other cheek.



MISSIONARY JAKE DESHAZER