

Hiroshima warning: We all must work for peace



BARB GUY

An author in his mid-60s, a noted nuclear weapons expert, came to town for a reading. Afterward we chatted and he wrote a nice inscription in my book.

It was a few months into Ronald Reagan's presidency and deep in the muck of our nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union - summer 1981. The author, Dr. Herbert Scoville Jr., was opposed to the MX Missile System, a preposterous plan to hide nuclear weapons all over the Great Basin.

Before the reading, the wonderful and legendary then-Utah State Sen. Frances Farley spoke. She had gained national acclaim for intrepidly standing up to our nation's nuclear behemoth.

Two years earlier, Farley had set up a meeting of local activists

and invited Dr. Scoville, known as Pete, to educate Utahns about the MX. Stan Holmes, who attended that 1979 living-room gathering, says, "Pete Scoville explained the program and said, 'I know it sounds ridiculous, but, people, this is serious - what can we do?'"

Holmes, who soon afterward became a coordinator for Utah's MX Information Center, says, "That's when Utah's opposition to the MX began."

Scoville's daughter, Molly Scoville Fitzmaurice, told me, "My father was always happy to go anywhere to spread the word about arms control. He was especially impressed to be invited to speak at the Mormon Tabernacle, as he stood up there in full amplification!"

Not coincidentally, Utah became a critical factor in the defeat of the MX, in no small part because of the LDS Church's explicitly stated opposition to it.

An intelligent, humble man with a doctorate in physics, Scoville started his career developing nuclear weapons and went on to design U2 spy plane technology. Then he started working for a test ban treaty. President Kennedy once asked Dr. Scoville to chair a high-level committee to assess the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons program.

People came to these meetings trailing minions carrying locked briefcases. Scoville's career swam the alphabet soup of DOD, AEC, and CIA.

By 1977 Dr. Scoville wrote in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* that we should reduce existing nuclear weapons and resist creating new ones, concluding, "If the world [is to be] spared increasing risks of nuclear devastation, then the two superpowers must adopt an arms control program." He began racking up awards for his arms control work.

When I met Dr. Scoville, he was both a former deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency and a kindly peace activist, close to the end of his life. I never saw him again, but I still have my autographed copy of *MX: Prescription for Disaster*, and in one of those odd twists that life can take, years after our chance meeting I became a Scoville Peace Fellow. I took his signed book with me to Washington, D.C., and kept it on my desk.

The Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellowship program, created after his passing, pays people to work at an important peace organization (of the Fellow's choosing) in our nation's capital. I might be the only Scoville Peace Fellow who ever met the eponym, I don't know.

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Dr. Scoville taught me that some people from military backgrounds are as concerned about our world as any peace activist: people like Daniel Ellsberg, John Kerry, Jimmy Carter and my old boss from my fellowship days, Dr. Robert Musil, a former Army captain who is CEO of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Peace people too often have the idea that military folks are the enemy; military folks frequently think of peace people as unrealistic dreamers. But, really, we have much in common.

I talked with Dr. Musil recently, thanking him again for all he did for me when, as my husband puts it, I was "not only a Guy but a Fellow." Musil says that military and intelligence types are often idealists with a clear set of morals and values and a deep concern for humanity. That describes Musil and Scoville and a whole lot of other good military/peace people.

This is the 20th anniversary of Pete Scoville's death. Ann Scoville, his widow, looks back with pride at her husband's career, seeing it as a logical progression, not a changing of sides. She's modest about the fact that he helped to save us from the MX, if not the nuclear brink. I ask Mrs. Scoville if her husband ever wholly renounced nuclear weapons.

She says, "No, he never felt we could give them all up. He did not believe in first strike, but he

believed in deterrence." Without my asking, she adds, "He would have been horrified at the Bush administration and their 'attack first' attitude."

The book Dr. Scoville inscribed for me is tattered now and may even be obsolete, but I still keep it on my desk. The anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are haunting us again and there are rumblings about the resumption of nuclear testing. I wonder when good-hearted people of all stripes can collaborate to craft a peaceful world.

Barb Guy is a frequent contributor to these pages. © Salt Lake Tribune.