**What Happens When Former Enemies in War Meet Face To Face?**

**SAKURA & PEARLS: HEALING FROM WORLD WAR II**

**Premieres ­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on Ch. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**& Streaming on the PBS Video App.**

(DATE/STATION MARKET) – What happens when Japanese Survivors of the Atomic Bomb meet the American Survivors of Pearl Harbor?

*SAKURA & PEARLS: HEALING FROM WORLD WAR II*, airing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on Ch. ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and streaming on demand on the PBS Video App., captures uncensored stories of the survivors from both sides, striking a deep emotional cord, and showing that the reconciliation process post World War II is still happening. What happens when former enemies meet face to face?

In 2016, U.S. President Barack Obama and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe came together for two historic memorial services to commemorate World War II. It was the first time that sitting leaders from either nation had paid their respects to those who perished during World War II.

They met at both the Atomic Dome in Hiroshima, Japan and at the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor on Oahu, HI. It took 75 years for such a meeting to occur, and this powerful exchange of respect still reverberates today.

These historic meetings were the inspiration for *SAKURA & PEARLS: HEALING FROM WORLD WAR II*.

However, in addition to these official meetings, an exclusive meeting at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center was captured - between Japanese atomic bomb survivors and the U.S. Pearl Harbor Attack survivors.

This remarkable and intense exchange between former enemies showed the unspoken dialogue that doesn’t happen at elaborate public ceremonies. The candor of these survivors reveal how we can resolve historical conflicts without repeating the painful experiences of our ancestors.

(FAQs are below.)

**PRODUCTION BIOS**

**G. K. Hunter**, writer & director of SAKURA & PEARLS, shares inspiring stories of forgiveness to show the future generations that we can mend the scars of history. He began his career as a facilitator of multi-cultural workshops, helping such groups as Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Native Americans Veterans find healing from their past. He is also the author of ***Healing Our Bloodlines****: The 8 Realizations of Generational Liberation*, which is a guidebook that teaches us how our families can heal after the devastation of war. Hunter has spoken at such venues as Cornell University, NPR’s “All Things Considered”, and the Pacific Historic Parks “History Talks” series.

**Brad Stoddard** is an award winning filmmaker, editor, writer, producer and cinematographer with experience in project development, production, postproduction and finishing. He is a multiple time recipient of the Bronze Telly Award, including for his documentary “The B-29 Superfortress at the NMNSH” in Cooperation with the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History. Brad is the owner of Stoddard Communications, a New Mexico production/postproduction company, and past President of the New Mexico Post Alliance. Brad is a film educator and has managed post facilities, editors, assistants, sound and visual effects artists as a postproduction supervisor. IMDB <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2268406>

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**FAQ -- SAKURA & PEARLS: HEALING FROM WORLD WAR II**

**What inspired you to make Sakura & Pearls; Healing from WWII?**

This movie wasn’t planned. It just happened to me. I was visiting Hiroshima to see the cherry blossoms bloom which the Japanese call the Sakura. I met my first atomic bomb survivor who was giving a talk at the Atomic Dome structure which is the only remaining building that survived the atomic bomb blast. He inspired me to start interviewing Atomic Bomb Survivors in a similar way that Steven Spielberg’s Shoah Foundation was preserving the testimonies of Jewish Holocaust Survivors. My mother suggested that I also record the testimonies of the U.S. Pearl Harbor Survivors since I lived 15 minutes away from the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center. The next thing that I know, I’m filming a documentary about Japanese Atomic Bomb Survivors meeting the U.S. Pearl Harbor Survivors. I was so enthralled that I felt that I needed to capture this exchange for the future generations to see.

**This year will be the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Do Pearl Harbor survivors still hold onto hard feelings from the past?**

Not all survivors feel the same way. Some still feel the emotional pain of that day and others still have shrapnel coming out of their skin. But those who agreed to be interviewed often shared about how they hated the Japanese for the surprise attack for many years. Some boycotted Japanese products after the war and spoke poorly about the Japanese for years after the war. But a good number of Pearl Harbor survivors shared that they did forgive what happened in war, recognizing that they were all soldiers just doing their jobs. Everett Hyland was a survivor on the U.S.S. Pennsylvania. He was asked by Tom Brokaw “do you hold any animosity towards the Japanese?” Everett replied “My wife is from Japan”. Brokaw said, “well, I guess that answers that question.”

All Pearl Harbor survivors and their families will never forget the sacrifice that was made on the 7th of December in 1941. My hope is that Sakura & Pearls ensures that everyone else will remember what happened that day as well.

**What inspired you to bring the Hiroshima survivors to meet the Pearl Harbor survivors at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center?**

The first attempt at reconciliation happened in 1955 on a TV show “This is Your Life”. I include a clip of this show in the movie. There, Capt. Robert Lewis who was the co-pilot of the Enola Gay B-29 bomber that actually dropped the bomb on Hiroshima met Rev. Tanimoto who survived that A-bomb. Capt. Lewis was remorseful about what he felt was his duty. Rev. Tanimoto’s 10 year old daughter, Koko, nearly tried to hit Capt. Lewis when she found out who he was because she also survived the atomic bomb. She shares the story in the movie as an adult in Sakura & Pearls. It was very emotional. But there weren’t any Pearl Harbor survivors on that show. When I arranged for the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center meeting, I wanted to see if the survivors on both sides still hated each other. They really bare their souls in this documentary.

**What’s the significance of the title *Sakura & Pearls*?**

One of the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb survivors named Mori-san told me about returning to his school after the bomb dropped. Everything had burned down, so they had to rebuild and replant everything. They planted cherry blossom trees, which they call the Sakura, in the back of the school. The first bloom after the bomb dropped was so brilliant that I saw the Sakura bloom as a rebirth of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On the U.S. side, Pearl Harbor got its name because the lochs were rich with oysters. The pearls under the water are precious, just like the deceased serviceman who are still underwater inside the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor. Sakura & Pearls are both beautiful things that remind us to value life.

**What was the biggest challenge when making this movie?**

For me, making the movie was scary because I didn’t know what was going to happen when former enemies were in the same room together. So, I was always concerned about offending both sides and I wasn’t sure how to navigate the cross-cultural conflicts because these types of meetings are very rare. I couldn’t have pulled it off without the help of Pacific Historic Parks and the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center who hosted the event. The Matsunaga Institute at the University of Hawaii was also essential.

**What happened at the end of the meeting between the Japanese atomic bomb survivors and U.S. Pearl Harbor survivors?**

You’ll have to watch the documentary to find out!

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