

I will pass on a story that I received by mail today from Walter Evans, who served on USS Silverbell AN-51. I have known him for several years. He still doesn't have the computer bug. He attended the last 2 reunions. He was asked to write this for his hometown Topeka Kansas newspaper in 1995

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#### A CELEBRATION ABOARD SHIP:

I was 22 years old when WWII ended and a signalman first class on the USS Silverbell. We were at anchor several miles offshore from the Philippine Island of Samar.

It all started when Boatswain Mate "Swede" Swanson came into the mess hall shouting that the war was over and Japan had surrendered.

The time was early evening and in the excitement that followed many of the ships in the harbor fired their anti-aircraft guns and were joined by salvos from the anti-aircraft batteries on Samar Island. The noise and patterns of tracer bullets put on a show similar to that of the fireworks on July 4th

Our Captain refused to let anyone fire our anti-aircraft weapons and rightly so, because of the danger of free falling shrapnel.

Our quartermaster George Lockhart and myself felt that we had to do something to celebrate and each grabbed a very pistol and shot pyrotechnic shells into the air. These put out bursts of different colors and were used for identification purposes with a code that changed every four hours.,

After we had fired maybe a dozen rounds, a warrant officer, Elisha Jones stormed to the bridge, putting a stop to our barrage.

I remember that even then there was a lot of discussion as to whether we should have used the atom bomb. It is a matter of record that the USS Silverbell was scheduled for the invasion fleet to the Japanese home islands. The crew, including myself had mixed feelings about this invasion and the end of the war meant we would be going back to the states instead of Japan. To say that we were happy would be putting it mildly.

WALTER EVANS - Topeka