

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



The War is Over — Part 1

“The war is over and we are truly thankful. Now as the din of battle fades, we pledge anew to the accomplishment in fact of an enduring peace...We join our fellow Americans in celebrating this righteous victory and promise to play our part in creating a bright and happy future...for our country and the world.”

Frank Seger, Editor
The Brighton Argus, August 22, 1945

My brother Ed was only three but he swore all his life he remembered hearing Dad say “Ray Lanning must be home from the war.” It was mid-day and someone he couldn’t see in a ‘39 Ford raced down Rickett Road past our farm the same way Ray used to when he went to town to see Jean Leith. In those days, war talk was always the number one topic of conversation. I didn’t know what war was, just that it was terrible. Only a few years later was I able to discern the difference between *that* war, in which so many of our family and neighbors had fought, and *another* war—a “conflict” this time. History too soon repeated.

The war had ended. Neither of us heard much talk of anything else from the late ‘40s into the 50s. On a work bench in the dark, damp basement of our Rickett Road farmhouse, a yellowing special edition of the *Detroit Free Press* with headlines in huge letters attracted my attention even before I could read. **“US Turns Terrible Power of Atomic Bomb on Japan”** it proclaimed. The nation was still in mourning after losing Franklin D. Roosevelt, its wartime leader, four months earlier and it had been up to his successor, Harry S. Truman to make the fateful decision to end the war by the cataclysmic use of the first nuclear weapon.

America’s greatest generation had met the most unfathomable challenge in the history that August of 1945 when I was only 10 months old. The scourge of fascism in Europe under Hitler and Mussolini had ended in victory three months before and with the dawn of the nuclear age Imperial Japan’s horrendous reign of terror did as well. Brighton men and women fought valiantly in that war, with close to 400 names inscribed on the Honor Roll at the corner of Grand River and Main at war’s end. And far too many had paid the ultimate price in what was the costliest and most deadly of all American wars.

To be continued.....

(The above excerpt is from “Remembering Brighton: Still in Touch,” Paul Weber’s forthcoming sequel to his novel “Con Weber’s Brighton: Portrait of Family, Church and Nation, 1832—1942.”)

