

TOM BROKAW

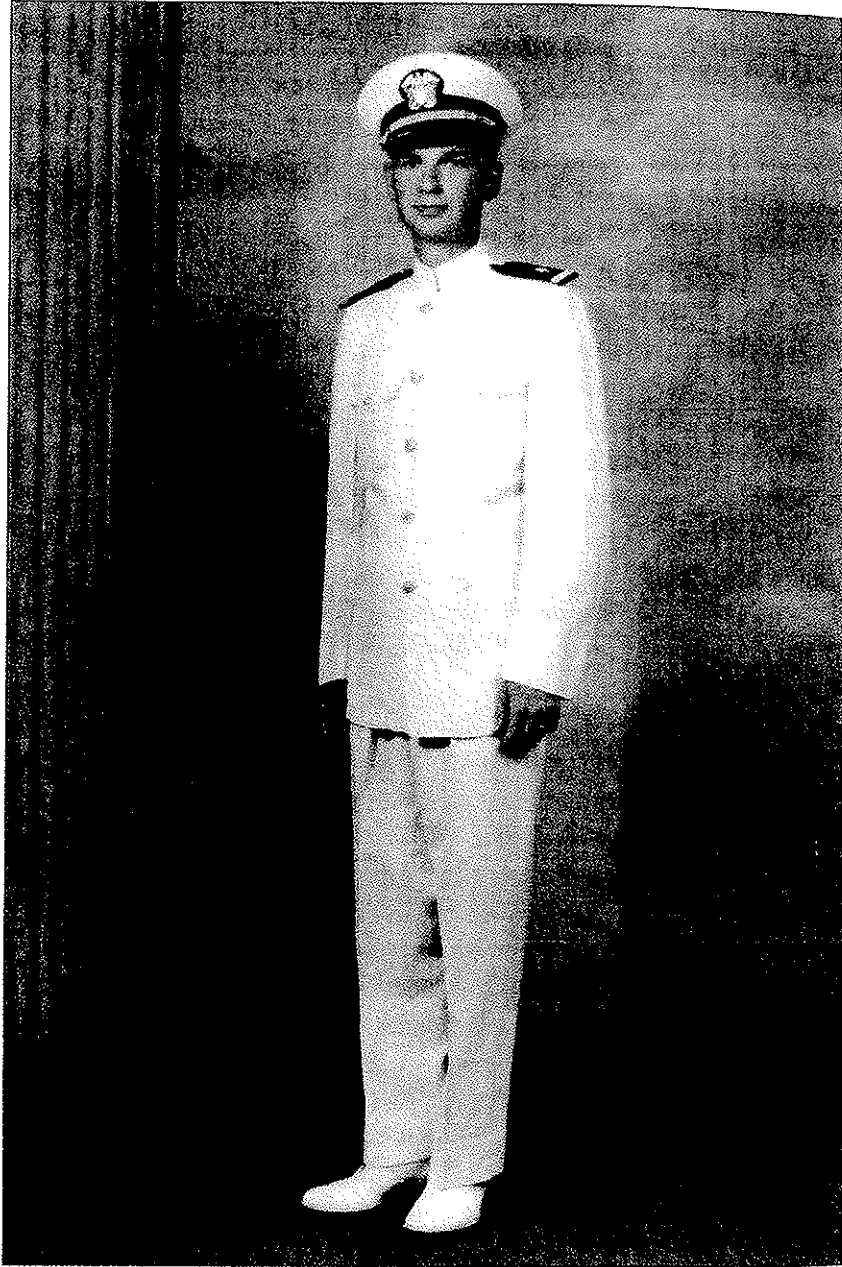
TOM BROKAW
THE GREATEST GENERATION



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RANDOM
HOUSE



COURTESY MARK HATFIELD

Mark Hatfield

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SENATOR MARK HATFIELD of Oregon is a politician whose central political philosophy was defined by the interlocking experiences he had as a young man raised in a strongly religious family and by what he saw as a Navy ensign in the Pacific, particularly at Hiroshima. Consequently, he was always a unique member of the Republican party in the U.S. Congress. While other members of the GOP were aggressive defenders of American involvement in Vietnam, he was an early critic of that war. He also voted against his own Republican presidents, Reagan and Bush, when they sent American troops to Grenada and the Persian Gulf.

Hatfield, a teetotaler and devout member of the Baptist church, also split from his party on the issue of gun control and the death penalty, although he did support the antiabortion views of the vast majority of his fellow Republicans. Despite the differences on some of the major litmus tests of the GOP, Hatfield's place in Oregon politics was always secure.

Following the war, he earned a master's degree at Stanford and returned to his alma mater, Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, to teach political science and serve as dean of students. He served in the state legislature, as secretary of state, and in two terms as governor before winning the first of his four elections for senator in 1966.

Before Pearl Harbor, Hatfield said his family had been strongly isolationist, explaining, "My father had been in the Navy in World

War I. . . . We were very patriotic . . . but you didn't want to become cannon fodder for European wars. We thought we were protected by the oceans. Why should we get involved? Pearl Harbor changed all of that."

Hatfield was a freshman at Willamette when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He immediately joined the Naval Reserve and accelerated his studies so he could be in training by the winter of 1943. He remembers it was a jolt to go from the mild winters of the Pacific Northwest to the harsher ones in upstate New York, where he trained to become first a midshipman and then an ensign, assigned to amphibious landing craft duty.

However, he was such a novice that when he was told to report to Coronado Beach, California, for assignment as a wave commander, he remembers his first reaction "was that I was going to do a lot of close-order drills for WAVES [the newly formed women's branch of the Navy]. I found out that wasn't the waves they were talking about. They meant ocean waves to hit the beaches in those flat-bottom boats."

After additional training in Hawaii, Hatfield participated in the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, two of the most critical and costly battles of the war in the Pacific. As is often the case with veterans of combat, he remembers the comical and the tragic equally well.

Recalling the landings at Iwo Jima, he said, "Our boat was taking on water and we had to bail. We had two buckets. The first bucket load . . . they threw the bucket overboard with the water. . . . It wasn't going to work with that bucket down in the water, so it just came to me, 'Take off your helmets and use them—and hang on to them!' It broke the tension and gave everyone an opportunity to laugh."

There weren't many other laughs on Iwo Jima or in Ensign Hatfield's experience there, however. He was too busy making the runs from the mother ship to shore with fresh Marines, and returning with wounded Marines. The Navy maps failed to show that the approach to the landing zone was a steeply pitched beach, so many of the larger vessels were partially sunk or wrecked. That made maneuvering the small landing craft a tedious and even more hazardous affair.

It was a dangerous assignment that Hatfield repeated again and again, always aware that he could be killed at any moment, but like

COURTESY MARK HATFIELD



Mark Hatfield, wartime

Mark Hatfield, senatorial portrait

COURTESY MARK HATFIELD



so many his age and in these conditions, he had what he remembers as a "certain feeling of fatalism. There is nothing you can do about it. You become oblivious to the death and wounds all around. You become a detached person, viewing it from a distance, even though it is going on right at your feet."

There was something else for Hatfield: his faith. "I was raised in a very strong Christian home," he says. "I suppose that was also part of my armor, in the sense if I got hit, I knew where I was headed. I had confidence in my faith."

Hatfield was on the beach at Iwo Jima the day one of the most symbolic acts of World War II occurred. He remembers, "One of the guys said, 'Hey, look!' At the top of the rock—Suribachi—we saw the American flag being raised. It was a thrilling moment. When we saw that flag go up it really did give us a sense of victory, even though we still fought on for some time."

The future senator from Oregon had a close-up look at other momentous occasions in the Pacific war. After participating in the Okinawa invasion, his unit was sent to the Philippines to prepare for the invasion of Japan. When the United States dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, forcing Japan to surrender, Hatfield suddenly had an altogether different assignment: he was part of the fleet that accompanied Douglas MacArthur into Japan to begin the occupation.

"We sailed by the USS *Missouri* as the Japanese diplomats were going aboard to sign the terms of surrender. Quite a moment. MacArthur had instructed the Japanese to place a white sheet in front of every gun emplacement, so when we were coming into Tokyo Bay it was like a checkerboard on all sides of us. We would have been caught in a murderous cross fire in the invasion. It would have been terrible, terrible, invading Japan," Hatfield concludes.

In September 1945, Hatfield had a one-day experience that would affect his life and his political behavior forever. "I was part of a crew of people that went into Hiroshima," he says. "This was about a month after the bomb had been dropped. There was a smell to the city—and total silence. It was amazing to see the utter and indiscriminate devastation in every direction, and to think just one bomb had done it. We had no comprehension of the power of that bomb until then."

Hatfield says as the American party sailed into the canals, Japanese parents and their children watched silently. "When we landed, the little kids saw we weren't going to kill or shoot them, so they began to gather around. We realized they were very hungry, so we took our lunches and broke them up and gave them to as many kids as we could."

In that moment, Hatfield came to realize something that stays with him to this day. "You learn to hate with a passion in wartime," he says. "If you don't kill your enemy, they'll kill you. But sharing those sandwiches with the people who had been my enemy was sort of a therapy for me. I could almost feel my hate leaving me. It was almost a spiritual experience."

When he made his way to the U.S. Senate, Hatfield brought with him not only what he calls "an unshakeable anti-nuke" philosophy, but also a firsthand understanding of what motivated Ho Chi Minh and his forces. In addition to seeing the flag raised on Iwo Jima, the USS *Missouri* when the surrender ceremonies were getting under way, and the devastation of Hiroshima, Hatfield saw a future battleground, Vietnam.

"We were sent to Haiphong to pick up Chinese nationalist troops and transport them to northern China, where they would fight the Communist forces of Mao Zedong." In Vietnam, Hatfield visited Hanoi, where Ho Chi Minh, who had been an American ally against the Japanese, was organizing his forces for independence. "Seeing the terrible misery imposed on the Vietnamese people by the French affected my position on the Vietnam War from the very beginning," Hatfield says. "I never could buy the idea that America somehow had a national interest out there, or was threatened."

Hatfield became one of the most persistent and articulate opponents of the Vietnam War as soon as he was in the Senate, often joined by fellow World War II veteran Senator George McGovern of South Dakota, another product of a religious family who had learned to abhor war during his heroic service in the Army Air Corps. They were among the earliest congressional critics of the war, often mocked by conservative voices as being somehow soft on the question of how to face down communism.

At least McGovern had support within his own party. Hatfield was often alone within the GOP ranks, but it did not deter him. Si-

multaneously he devoted a good deal of his energies to checking the growth of nuclear weapons and power. "I was persuaded," he says, "that the genie was out of the bottle, but somehow we had to try to put it back in. I devoted myself to stopping underground nuclear testing and controlling the military spending on nuclear weapons. Also, I was opposed to the use of nuclear power for electricity. That, to me, is the greatest environmental problem that we have."

Through the years Hatfield remained a consistent foe of nuclear weapons and war in general. In addition to his persistent stand against Vietnam, one of the reasons he wound up on President Nixon's infamous "enemies list," Hatfield also opposed Ronald Reagan's invasion of the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada, and he was even more critical of President Bush's plan to go to war in the Persian Gulf. He says, "Why, I couldn't believe the American people approved the . . . war in the Gulf. To me, it was nothing but an oil war." Hatfield was one of just two Republicans to vote against approving Operation Desert Storm. He also criticized the dispatch of an American peacekeeping force to Bosnia, wondering aloud what American troops could do to reverse eight hundred years of history.

As time went on, Senator Hatfield was increasingly isolated within his own party, and not just because of his views on war and nuclear power. He had cast the vote that defeated the proposed amendment to the Constitution requiring a balanced federal budget. At the time he was chairman of the mighty Senate Appropriations Committee, so his negative vote was a powerful statement—and unacceptable to the class of aggressively conservative younger Republicans who had been elected to the Senate in the Republican Revolution. They wanted to strip him of his chairmanship or find some other way to punish him. Hatfield was astonished. He'd even offered to resign his seat rather than be forced to vote against his conscience. As Hatfield told *The Washington Post*, "I said what I would do from the beginning. I at no time got any indication that I was going to be chastised or disciplined for voting my conscience."

Hatfield stood his ground and won the day, garnering praise primarily from older senators who recognized that instances of individual courage in their chamber were rare. But Hatfield also knew it was time to go, after four terms in the Senate. In his last elec-

tion, his margin of victory had fallen after an embarrassing and surprising development. "St. Mark," as he is sometimes called, had been formally rebuked by the Senate Ethics Committee for not reporting gifts and loans from friends and lobbyists. Now he was plainly much more out of step with his party on the issues that defined the GOP agenda in the nineties.

So in 1996, Mark Hatfield retired and returned to his beloved Oregon to teach and share in the benefits he had brought to his state during thirty years in the Senate. He left as he arrived, a man of strong, independent convictions and still a member of the Republican party, despite the changes in the DNA of the GOP in recent years.

Commenting on the Republican newcomers, Hatfield told a reporter, "There are those who think we should be of one mind. They feel, perhaps, that diversity in the party is a weakness, not a strength. I'm an Old Guard Republican. The founders of our party were for small business, education, cutting the military budget. That was our platform in 1856 and I think it's still a darned good one."

Some of the newer Republican senators, with their strict conservative dogmas, may never understand a man like Mark Hatfield, but then they've never shuttled Marines ashore under heavy fire at Iwo Jima or Okinawa. They've never looked out on the unworldly landscape of nuclear devastation and shared their lunch with a starving Japanese child.



VIC GILLIAM
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
900 COURT ST NE H-384
SALEM, OR 97301

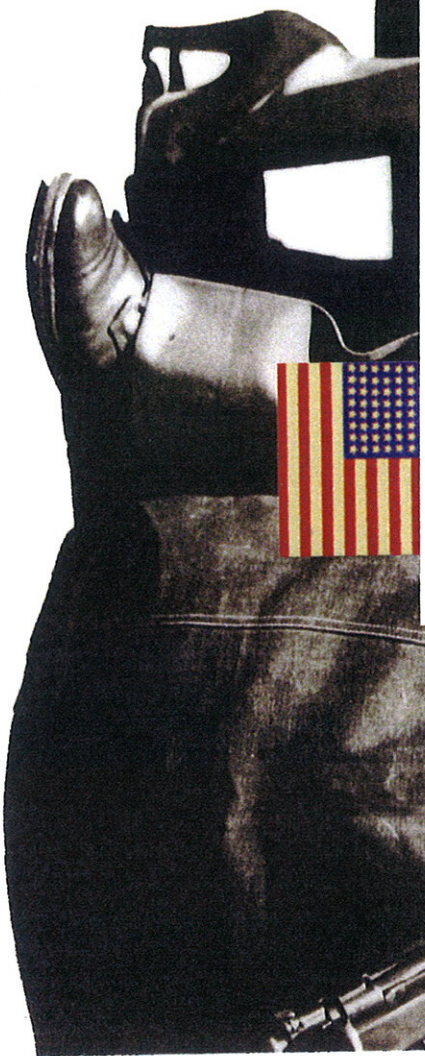
From the desk of

Vic Gilliam

-Here is a special chapter from Tom Brokaw's book - I recommend the entire volume.



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