

Sept 26 5pm CPACS - Day the World Nearly Ended/International Nuclear Disarmament Day

Written by John Hallam

Friday, 19 September 2014 18:05 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 February 2015 21:55

People for Nuclear Disarmament (PND) and
The Human Survival Project (HSP) at CPACS

invite you to a lecture/discussion:

THE DAY THE WORLD NEARLY ENDED:
INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT DAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1983/2014

Keynote Speaker: Jane Singleton, Director, Sydney Peace Foundation
'Peace Activism: the Way Forward'

Time: 5.00 to 6.30 pm

Date: Friday 26 September 2014

Place : Room 114/CPACS Poster Gallery, Mackie Building, Arundel St, Forest Lodge:
<http://lostoncampus.com.au/281/map>

There will be refreshments after the forum in the Poster Gallery.

>Learn how the world nearly ended and more about what is expected of US missile crews when it is to do so. At 12.30pm Moscow Time, on 26 Sept 1983, Colonel Stanislaw Petrov was the officer on watch at the Serpukhov-15 nuclear command and control center, not far from Moscow. Serpukhov-15's main function was to receive data from the then Soviet Union's surveillance satellites, similar to (and at that time more advanced than) those of the US, whose job was to look for a missile launch in North Dakota.

The political situation was dire, with senior Kremlin generals predicting WW-III anytime now 'or sooner because we might pre-empt'. KAL-007 had just been shot down. Reagan had quipped on radio about bombing the Soviet Union. The apocalypse was most emphatically on the global agenda.

Suddenly, sirens wailed and klaxons blared.

The moment that everyone had been trained to fear for decades seemed to have come. According to the main command computer, a number of missiles had been launched by the US, and the aforesaid apocalypse was approaching at thrice the speed of sound and would arrive in roughly twenty minutes.

Colonel Stan Petrov's job description was that he was supposed to report a missile attack to his superiors via a red telephone, and buttons would then be pressed which would launch thousands of retaliatory warheads at the US and its allies (including Australia, with Pine Gap a super-high- priority target).

He didn't do it.

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He said later that 'I had a feeling in my gut that there was a mistake somewhere'.

His actions that night prevented World War III.

Statement Films has now made a movie about Colonel Stan, not only about that momentous night, but also about how the consequences of that night played out in the rest of his life.

The Non – Aligned Movement (comprising between 2/3 and 3/4 of all the world's governments) after being sent a memo on the significance of Sept26 by the Human Survival Project in the lead up to a High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on Sept26 2013, voted in the General Assembly to make said day into International Nuclear Disarmament Day.

Colonel Stan says 'I am not a hero. I was just in the right place at the right time'. (Interestingly, he wasn't supposed to have been on duty that night, having swapped his shift with someone else who, being junior to him, would have 'gone by the book' and we would not be here to speculate on it.)

>As we said, learn some more about what happened on the night of 26 Sept 1983 at CPACS on 26 Sept 2014, with keynote address by Jane Singleton, 'Peace Activism: the Way Forward', film promo clips for the (yet – to be released) movie on Colonel Stan Petrov, 'The Man who Saved the World', and a discussion about what is expected of US Missileers when it is deemed necessary to end the world (following a new clip from the documentary film 'Missile'), with John Hallam and Prof. Peter King of the Human Survival Project.

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HSP Web page: (Don't miss "Shakespeare and Nuclear Weapons")

http://sydney.edu.au/arts/peace_conflict/practice/human_survival_project.shtml]