

In Memoriam: Iva Toguri D'Aquino 1916-2006

Iva Toguri was born in Los Angeles on July 4, 1916. Her parents were Japanese immigrants. After graduating from U.C.L.A., 25-year-old Iva left for Japan in July 1941 to help care for her ill mother's only living sister.

With relations deteriorating between Japan and the U.S., Iva wasn't allowed to board a California bound ship on December 2, 1941, because the Certificate of Identification provided by the State Department for her travel to and from Japan wasn't considered proof of her U.S. citizenship.

Iva was trapped in Japan when Pearl Harbor was attacked five days later. She refused to renounce her U.S. Citizenship, and because of her Japanese heritage government officials denied her request to be interned with other foreigners.

To repay money she borrowed due to six weeks hospitalization with pellagra, beriberi and malnutrition, Iva went to work as a typist at Radio Tokyo in August 1943.

Three allied POW officers were conscripted by the Japanese in early 1943 to broadcast the *Zero Hour* program on Radio Tokyo. The POWs subverted the program's intended propaganda purpose by writing the scripts to surreptitiously boost allied troop morale.

Iva gained the trust of the *Zero Hour* broadcast crew by smuggling food and medicine to them and other allied POWs. When the Japanese wanted to add a woman to the *Zero Hour* the POWs recommended Iva. She reluctantly agreed after being assured by the POW broadcasters that she would not have to say anything against U.S. servicemen. Iva's first broadcast was in November 1943. Her radio name was initially "Ann," and later "Orphan Ann."

Under the noses of the Japanese, the four *Zero Hour* broadcasters audaciously produced a news and entertainment program that reduced the Japanese's desired propaganda into harmless rhetoric and spirit lifting music.



Iva Toguri on
September 4, 1945

Iva expected to return to the U.S. after the war ended in August 1945. Instead, she was arrested two months later by the 8th Army Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), and imprisoned for a year while investigated by the CIC and FBI. Iva was released in October 1946, without charges being brought against her.

With Iva's return to the U.S. imminent, influential media personality Walter Winchell led a chorus of calls for her prosecution for treason. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover personally directed the FBI's effort to find evidence against Iva. In August 1948 she was arrested in Tokyo by military police and escorted to the U.S. The FBI arrested her when she arrived in San Francisco.

Iva was indicted on eight counts of treason, and her trial began on July 5, 1949. The prosecution claimed Iva was 'Tokyo Rose' and that she "maliciously betrayed the United States."¹

After a 12-week trial that was the most expensive in U.S. history up to that time, the jury acquitted Iva of seven treason counts after 80 hours of deliberations. They found her guilty of one count related to testimony by the government's two "star" witnesses: California born Japanese-Americans who were Iva's superiors at Radio Tokyo and who had renounced their U.S. citizenship after Pearl Harbor. Both men testified Iva made a treasonous statement during a broadcast after the U.S. Naval victory at the Philippines Leyte Gulf in October 1944.

Iva was the seventh person convicted of treason in U.S. history. On October 6, 1949, she was sentenced to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Iva appealed, and the U.S. Supreme Court twice declined to review her conviction.

On January 28, 1956, Iva was released from prison on parole. She moved to Chicago and worked at her family's mercantile store. Iva's parole ended on April 18, 1959. She had spent a total of 8-1/2 years

in jails and prisons, and more than 3 years on parole from the time of her first arrest in 1945.

In 1976 the *Chicago Tribune's* Tokyo reporter, Ron Yates, tracked down the two men who had provided the critical testimony relied on by the jury to convict Iva of treason. Both men told Yates that Iva did not make any treasonous broadcasts, and they perjured themselves under pressure by the federal prosecutors.

Also in 1976, the Justice Department, the FBI and U.S. Army Intelligence provided San Francisco filmmaker Antonio Montanari with more than 2,300 documents about Iva's case in response to Freedom of Information Act requests.

Montanari discovered that before Japan surrendered, the U.S. Office of War Information determined, "There is no Tokyo Rose; the name is strictly a G-I invention."² He also discovered that, "Six months after Iva's arrest, the 8th Army's legal section reported, "There is no evidence that [Iva Toguri] ever broadcast greetings to units by names or location, or predicted military movements or attacks indicating access to secret military information and plans, etc."³ That report unequivocally concluded, "the identification of Toguri as 'Tokyo Rose' is erroneous."⁴

Iva's federal prosecutors concealed from her trial lawyers the proof that she was not 'Tokyo Rose' and had never committed treason.

Yates wrote several articles about Iva's case for the *Chicago Tribune* that resulted in a segment about Iva on CBS' *60 Minutes* that aired on June 24, 1976. One of the CIC officers who interviewed her in 1945 said the U. S. State Department simply abandoned her in Japan. The jury foreman said he believed she was innocent, but he submitted to the pressure of the other jurors and the judge.

In November 1976 Wayne Merrill Collins, the son of Iva's trial lawyer, filed a presidential pardon petition for Iva. The evidence of her innocence was so convincing that President Ford pardoned Iva on January 19, 1977. She became the only person in U.S. history pardoned after a treason conviction.

Iva lived quietly in Chicago, declining interviews and working at the family store. Iva and Felipe D'Aquino, a Filipino, were married in April 1945. However, the federal government barred him from entering the U.S., and after decades apart the couple divorced in 1980.

On January 15, 2006, Iva was awarded the World War II Veterans Committee's Edward J. Herlihy Citizenship Award. Iva described it as "the most memorable day of my life."⁵

Two months after her 90th birthday, Iva Toguri D'Aquino died of natural causes in Chicago on September 26, 2006.

During a National Public Radio interview the day after Iva's death, Ron Yates was asked, although Iva had been granted a presidential pardon, "Did she ever come out from under the shadow of suspicion, or did people always think of her in some way as 'Tokyo Rose'?" Yates replied, "They always thought of her as 'Tokyo Rose'. It was branded on to her soul this 'Tokyo Rose' thing. She could never get out from under it."⁶

The media created myth of 'Tokyo Rose' may be what the general public believes, but it doesn't change the facts of Iva Toguri D'Aquino's life, or the quiet dignity with which she lived.

Endnotes and Sources:

For details about Iva's experiences from 1941 to 1959, see, Iva Toguri Is Innocent!, *Justice:Denied*, Issue 28, Summer 2006.

1 They Called Her Traitor, J. Kingston Pierce, *American History*, October 2002, pp. 22, 28.

2 *Id.* 26.

3 *Id.* at 27.

4 *Id.* at 27.

5 Quiet life of alleged Tokyo Rose, By Ben Goldberger, *Chicago Sun-Times*, September 28, 2006.

6 Remembrances: Iva Toguri D'Aquino Dies at 90, All Things Considered program, *National Public Radio*, September 27, 2006.

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