

Nagaoka War Damage Exhibit Hall Captions

A Typical Sitting Room of the Time

During the war, Japanese homes were made of wood. They also consisted of other flammable materials, such as tatami floor mats and shoji paper inserts in doors. At night, people drew dark curtains over the windows to make sure light did not seep outside. Radios were an important source of information, but not all homes had them, so neighbors would often gather together to hear important announcements.

The Attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, Japanese forces attacked the main battleships of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet. The attack took place in the morning, local Hawaii time, while the ships were stationed at Ford Island in Pearl Harbor.

The picture shows a plume of water sent up as a torpedo hits the USS *Oklahoma*.

The USS *Arizona* Memorial

The sunken USS *Arizona* serves as the final resting place of 1,102 of the 1,177 crew members who lost their lives during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. This memorial was built over the ship's submerged hull using public funds and general donations. Plans for it originated in 1958, and it was completed in 1961 before officially opening the following year.

Increased Metal Recovery

With the Metal Recovery Order, the government requested donations of metal to the state to help manufacture munitions for the war effort. The order, based on the National Mobilization Law, came into effect in August 1941. As the war escalated, donation became mandatory. Tea kettles, pots and pans, temple bells, gongs, Buddhist statues, and other items were all repurposed as scrap metal.

The Death of Yamamoto Isoroku

On the morning of April 18, 1943, Yamamoto Isoroku, the commander-in-chief of Japan's naval fleet, was killed when his transport aircraft was shot down over Bougainville Island, near Papua New Guinea. The aircraft had come under fire from U.S. fighter planes.

Full-Time Student Mobilization

As the war intensified, more and more adult men reported to the front lines. As a result, rural areas faced a serious shortage of labor for munitions factories. To alleviate this problem, the government issued an Emergency Recruitment Guideline for Mobilization. This meant third-year junior high school students could work, not only in munitions factories but also in the aircraft assembly factory in Nagoya. In total, around 3.1 million students mobilized throughout the country.

Air-Raid Drills

Local neighborhood associations conducted air-raid training sessions several times a month. Participants were required to put air-raid hoods over their heads and follow fire extinguishment procedures. The training was mandatory. Women whose husbands were engaged in combat were not obligated to attend, but failure to do so could lead to them being branded unpatriotic.

U.S. Military Plans for the Nagaoka Air Raid

This is a lithograph composed using several U.S. Army aerial images. The photos were taken on June 23, 1945, just over a month before the Nagaoka Air Raid. The circle, whose diameter spans 1.2 kilometers, represents the targeted bombing range. Meiji Park is at its epicenter.

Firebombing Japanese Cities

From March 1945, the U.S. Army had begun a strategy of firebombing Japanese cities. Targets were determined by ranking 180 cities in Japan in order of population, and residential areas in these cities were listed to be hit with incendiary bombs. Cities that were either geographically difficult to reach (for example, because they were in the mountains) or those listed as planned atomic bomb targets, like Niigata, were not subject to firebombing.

As Niigata was one of the cities targeted for an atomic bomb along with Kokura, Hiroshima, and Kyoto (later switched out for Nagasaki), it was spared an attack with incendiary bombs. Nagaoka was therefore the only city in Niigata Prefecture to be struck with incendiary bombs.

The “Pumpkin Bomb”

On July 20, 1945, at 8:13 a.m. local time, a single U.S. Army B-29 bomber dropped one large “pumpkin bomb” (so named because of its shape) on a field in the Sakon area (formerly the town of Sakon, Kamigumi Village). Four people were killed instantly and five more were injured. Additionally, the bomb destroyed two houses and damaged twenty-nine more.

This was just a test bombing, and although the bomb was intended for the Tsugami Plant in Nagaoka, the cloud cover reduced visibility, causing it to be dropped in the field in Sakon.

M47 Incendiary Bomb Full-Scale Model

A large napalm bomb dropped by the lead bomber (also known as the pathfinder) for the main bombing unit to follow. In total, 2,172 of these were dropped on the city of Nagaoka.

E46 (M19) Focused Incendiary Full-Scale Model

B-29s dropped these incendiary cluster bombs. Each device contained 38 M69 bomblets, filled with napalm and divided into two stacks of 19. A total of 4,244 of these bombs were dropped on Nagaoka.

The Bomb That Comes with a Warning

This bomb-shaped case held about 10,000 information flyers. The photograph shows a Japanese prisoner of war packing flyers into the bomb case under the supervision of U.S. Marines. These air-raid notice leaflets, nicknamed “paper bombs,” were designed to break the Japanese people’s will to fight.

From July 31 until the morning of August 1, 1945, the U.S. military dropped similar notices over Nagaoka. However, the flyers did not name Nagaoka as the target. Citizens were instructed to submit these leaflets to the authorities without reading them, so it is said that few people actually read the notices.

Sadako Sasaki’s Prayer

On August 6, 1945, five days after the Nagaoka Air Raid, an atomic bomb was detonated over Hiroshima.

This small paper crane contains the prayer of a 12-year-old girl who developed leukemia from the radiation she absorbed during the bombing. Sadako believed that if she kept praying every morning, noon, and night, her sickness would be cured. Sadly, her condition only worsened and she passed away on October 12, 1955.

A Fragment of a Zero Fighter Donated from the Battleship Missouri Memorial

This is a fragment of aluminum alloy from a Type 0 aircraft (Zero Fighter) that made a kamikaze attack on the USS *Missouri* during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945. On the ship’s rear starboard side, traces remain of the Zero Fighter that made the attack.

Although the pilot died, Captain Callaghan of the *Missouri* ensured he was given a proper burial. He said, “Now that he’s dead, he is not the enemy anymore. He paid the ultimate sacrifice with his life, fighting for his country.”

The Nagaoka-Honolulu Peace Exchange Commemoration Project, August 2015

On March 2, 2012, Honolulu and Nagaoka became sister cities. Later, from August 14–16, 2015, the Nagaoka-Honolulu Peace Exchange Commemoration Project was held in Honolulu, 70 years after the end of the war.

The Peace/Youth Symposium took place at the Pacific Aviation Museum. Additionally, *shiragiku* (white chrysanthemum) firework displays were launched at Pearl Harbor in honor of all those from the United States and Japan who lost their lives in the war.

The Origin of the Nagaoka War Damage Exhibit Hall

The Nagaoka War Damage Exhibit Hall opened in July 2003. The hall aims to accurately convey the true story of the Nagaoka Air Raid, and pass this knowledge on to

younger generations who have never experienced war.

Since the hall's inception, it has been managed as a private-public partnership, with 20 management volunteers working alongside the city government. In 2008, the hall moved to its current location. A new study room was added, and there is more space to accommodate visitors and various activities.