Guide to the Messinger Pacific Theater World War II Collection



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Messinger Pacific Theater World War II Collection, August-October 1945 (bulk August-October 1945)

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Descriptive Summary

Title:

Messinger Pacific Theater World War II Collection, August-October, 1945

Collection Number:

MS 064

Creator:

Donald J. Messinger

Abstract:

The Messinger Collection contains 100 black-and-white photographs that record one soldier's views of Japan in the closing days of World War II, including 14 aerial photographs of Nagasaki after the atomic bombing on August 9, 1945.

The photographs include views of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; the sea voyage to the Sasebo Naval Base, Japan; Japanese and American ships and aircraft; Army, Navy and Marine military personnel; images of Japanese urban and rural life in and around Sasebo following the fire-bombing; and aerial photography showing the devastation after the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

Extent:

1 box

Language:

English

Repository:

Special Collections, Robert E. Kennedy Library California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Administrative Information

Provenance:

Found in collection.

Access:

Collection is open to qualified researchers by appointment only. For more information on access policies and to obtain a copy of the Researcher Registration form, please visit the Special Collections Access page.

Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:

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Preferred Citation:

Messinger Pacific Theater World War II Collection, Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Indexing Terms

Subjects:

Bombing, Aerial -- Japan -- Pictorial works

Nagasaki-shi (Japan) -- History -- Bombardment, 1945 -- Pictorial works

Sasebo-shi (Japan) -- History -- Bombardment, 1943 -- Pictorial works

War photography -- United States -- History -- 20th century.

World War, 1939-1945.

World War, 1939-1945 -- Archival resources

World War, 1939-1945 -- Japan

World War, 1939-1945 -- Aerial operations, American -- Pictorial works.

World War, 1939-1945 -- Japan -- Nagasaki-shi.

Messinger, Donald J. -- 1914-1993

Genres and Forms of Material:

Photographs

Related Materials

Related Collections:

Guide to the Smith Family Papers on World War II, 1936-2005 (MS 65) Guide to the Manzanar Collection, 1942-1994 (MS 026)

Biographical Note

Donald J. Messinger was born on February 9, 1914, and died in Rochester, New York, on June 4, 1993. Little is known about his life or his service during World War II.

Scope and Content Note

The Messinger Collection contains 100 black-and-white photographs that record one soldier's views of Japan in the closing days of World War II, including 14 aerial photographs of Nagasaki after the atomic bombing on August 9, 1945.

The photographs include views of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; the sea voyage to the Sasebo Naval Base in Japan; Japanese and American ships and aircraft; Army, Navy and Marine military personnel; images of Japanese urban and rural life in and around Sasebo following the fire-bombing; and aerial photography showing the devastation after the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

The collection is arranged in original chronological order, from August through October of 1945 and uses Mr. Messinger's captions from the photographs in folder lists.

Series Description/Folder List

Series 1. Photographs, 1945

Contains one subseries: A. Photographs of Hawaii and Japan.

A. Photographs of Hawaii and Japan

Contains black-and-white snapshots of military personnel from the Army, Navy and Marines, and the Japanese people in and around Sasebo; military transport by air, land and sea, and the devastation from firebombing and the atomic bomb at the close of World War II, arranged chronologically from August-October, 1945.

Box 1 Folder 1
Sad Sacks, the day of leaving, Hawaii
Always trucks
Convoy making up in Pearl Harbor
Plenty of room to enjoy the beautiful trip out
From the bridge to forward deck

Box 1 Folder 2 Real comfort below-decks Late evening, Sept. 21, 1945, Sasebo, Japan Early morning, Sept. 22, 1945, Sasebo, Japan The outer harbor looking east to China, Sasebo, Japan Sasebo's inner harbor

Box 1 Folder 3
Landing at the Seaplane Base of the great Sasebo Naval Base, Sept. 22, 1945
The first Christian service to be held in this area
This factory moved 95% underground
A great factory for making catapults
Inside said bunkhouse – former factory

Box 1 Folder 4
Mountainside entrance to underground factory
Inside view of underground factory
Japanese working for 98th N.C.B. cutting grass
Airstrip of mowed grass at V.M.O. 5 Seaplane Base, Sasebo
Typical forward area Post Office

Box 1 Folder 5
Some mail did come
Sweating out the trip home
Stateside hair cut???
Japanese Washrack
We stand in line to eat!!! We Stand in Line!!!

Box 1 Folder 6
Japanese squat facing the high end
One of three Peace Planes
Charcoal burners used in lieu of gasoline
Typical farm wife with child on her back
Little Miss, with Sasebo Harbor in background

Box 1 Folder 7
Curing rice in sunlight
Even the very old did their share
All except the middle-class city man – his wife his serf
Not so the farmer – his wife his partner
Saw a great deal of this

Box 1 Folder 8
Typical sight of loaded women
As a rule, it's the women's place in front of the load
Taken near Haiki, 10 miles from Sasebo
Japanese police
Kids – very colorful kimonos

Box 1 Folder 9 Notice the very large doll on the child's back Threshing rice Japanese bicycle-taxi near Kashima Inside shot of middle-class home It's quite humid in this area

Box 1 Folder 10 View of Sonogi, Japan, with terraced rice paddies Women carry male children until quite an advanced age Air view of rice paddies Very little land goes to waste in Japan Ten million people live on the island of Kyushu alone

Box 1 Folder 11 View of terraced fields Air view of the Kumamoto Mountains across the Shimabara Kaiwan Bay Inland waterways on air flight from Sasebo to Nagasaki Rice fields, with part of Saga Mountain Range in background Japanese plane factory, not far from Omuta.

Box 1 Folder 12 Roadside shrine hidden in the rocks Inside view of the Catholic Church, Sacred Heart, Main Street, Sasebo Entrance to Shinto Shrine These shrines were out of bounds to all troops Entrance to a Buddhist temple

Box 1 Folder 13 Country village Country estate of rich farmer Front view of estate Better than average farm house Missionary school

Box 1 Folder 14

Main street of Sasa Village, approximately 20 miles north of Sasebo Main street of Arita, northeast of Sasebo Alleys of Sasebo Three Japanese aircraft carriers Middle class city house

Box 1 Folder 15 Looking over the city of Omuta Sasebo from the air Closer view of the city showing the firebombed area Military college, 5th Marine Headquarters Closer view of Sasebo

Box 1 Folder 16
Sasebo
Sasebo main street
Looking across town
His home
Firebombing hit in spots, leaving others untouched

Box 1 Folder 17
The main theater, Sasebo, gutted
Sasebo Main Street
The main shopping area
The air view from Omora. This section untouched
The Valley of Death. Nagasaki, Japan

Box 1 Folder 18

Nagasaki, bomb dropped midway in the upper center, looking north, Aug. 9, 1945. The entire valley was a complete ruin, looking south.

The residential area, protected from the bomb blast to the north by a range of hills Large airplane factory. At the upper end of valley, or north end Vertical view of a string of factories at the southern end of the Nagasaki Valley

Box 1 Folder 19
Close of factories
Flying over the residential area
Former church located on the very edge of the bomb blast
Result of blast – southern end of valley

Box 1 Folder 20

Japanese Army-Navy hospital – southern end of valley.

Approximately eight miles to the northeast of the valley, only the blast reached here A few miles further on, up the same valley

Approximately 12 miles from bomb blast, to the north, beyond the end of the valley

Church approximately seven miles down the southern end of the valley The sun has set on Japan