

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
Approximately 12 miles from bomb blast, to the north, beyond the end of the 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
Church approximately seven miles down the southern end of the valley
The sun has set on Japan