# BOMBING OF NAGASAKI


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This image appears at page 10 of *The Effects of Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagaski, United States Strategic Bombing Survey* (published, in 1946, by the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC). The aerial photo depicts ground zero, at Nagasaki, as it appeared before the August 9, 1945 atomic-bomb strike.

**CAUTION: THIS CHAPTER CONTAINS**

**GRAPHIC PICTURES OF WAR FROM**

**THE HIROSHIMA INSTITUTE FOR PEACE**

As *Bock's Car* approached the cloud-covered city of Nagasaki on the morning of August 9th, she was running low on fuel.

Her crew had originally planned to drop the B-29's payload - a Plutonium 239 bomb dubbed "Fat Man" - on the Japanese city of Kokura. Bad visibility over the primary target caused *Bock's Car's* crew to divert to Nagasaki.

Although the skies above Nagasaki had been fairly clear earlier in the morning, a front was moving in. A break in the clouds allowed the bombardier to see his target.

"Fat Man" detonated at about 11:02 a.m. Instead of exploding over the center of the industrial port city of Nagasaki, the bomb exploded 1,540 feet above the Urakami River Valley. Smoke rose 60,000 feet.

Like Hiroshima, Nagasaki and its people were devastated. Ground photographs taken by Yosuke Yamahata document the gruesome scene. Fourteen hundred feet north of ground zero, the Mitsubishi-Urakami Torpedo Works (where Pearl Harbor torpedoes had been built) was also destroyed.

Later that day, Major Charles Sweeney, *Bock's Car's* pilot, observed:

> *The shock explosion was felt by those of us in the strike plane. The turbulence of the blast was greater than that at Hiroshima. Even though we were prepared for what happened, it was unbelievable. Seven or eight miles from the city shock waves as visible as ripples on a pond overtook our plane, and concussion waves twice thumped against the plane jolting it roughly.*

What did he see below the plane, coming from the city of Nagasaki?

> *The underside of the great clouds over Nagasaki was amber-tinted, as though reflecting the conflagration at least six miles below. Beneath the top cloud mass, white in color, there gradually climbed a turbulent pillar of black smoke and dust which emitted a second fireball less vivid than the first. It rose as solid as a stump, its base dark purple, with a reddish hue in the center that paled to brown near the top. As we headed away from the city, our last look showed a thick cone of dust covering half of it. On its rim near the harbor great fires were raging.*

President Truman's White House statement (scroll to the last paragraph) told the American people:

> *We are now prepared to obliterate more rapidly and completely every productive enterprise the Japanese have above ground in any city. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications. Let there be no mistake; we shall completely destroy Japan's power to make war.*

Except ... at that moment ... America's supply of atomic bombs had already been used. Japan, of course, didn't know that.

Meanwhile, and for sixty more years, the American public did not know what the first U.S. observer in Nagasaki had seen (and tried to report) regarding a mysterious illness called "Disease X." Known today as "radiation sickness," it was killing Nagasaki residents who'd survived the bomb.

MacArthur's censors, in Tokyo, prevented George Weller's accounts from seeing the light of day. His stories were finally published—under the title *First Into Nagasaki: The Censored Eyewitness Dispatches on Post-Atomic Japan*—after Weller's son (Anthony) found the old manuscripts following his father's death.

After the Nagasaki bomb exploded, some of the tough-minded Japanese military men vowed to keep fighting. The people, however, had had enough.

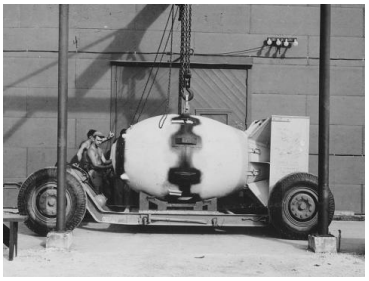
On the 14th of August, 1945, Emperor Hirohito announced the war was over. Japan was ready to surrender to the Allied Powers, and jubilant Americans gathered to celebrate. In one of the day's iconic moments, Alfred Eisenstadt snapped a picture of a sailor kissing a nurse (later claimed to be Edith Shain) in Times Square.

America's use of the bomb - particularly the one sent to Nagasaki - remains a subject of debate.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BOMBING-OF-NAGASAKI-Einstein-s-Letter

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BOMBING-OF-NAGASAKI-Einstein-s-Letter

## Media Stream



### Atomic Bomb, Fat Man - Target, Nagasaki

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives. ARC Identifier 519397

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### Atomic Bomb View of Explosion Above Nagasaki

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives. ARC Identifier 535795.

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### Nagasaki after the 1945 Bomb Attack

This aerial photo depicts ground zero, at Nagasaki, as it appeared immediately after the August 9, 1945 atomic-bomb strike. The 1,000-foot superimposed circles provide a sense of distance.
Among other places, this image appears at page 10 of *The Effects of Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagaski, United States Strategic Bombing Survey* (published, in 1946, by the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC).
Image, described above, online via the Library of Congress.
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### Nagasaki - Children Injured

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives. ARC Identifier 558580

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## Nagasaki - Mitsubishi-Urakami Torpedo Works

Image online, courtesy Hiroshima Peace Institute.
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## Charles W. Sweeney - Pilot of Bock's Car

Image, from the U.S. Department of Defense, online via Wikimedia Commons.
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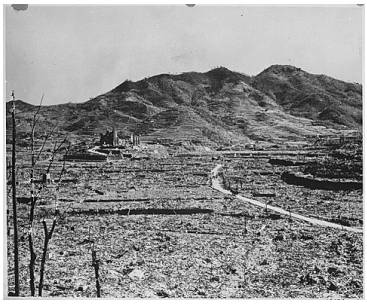

## Nagasaki - Property Damage

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.  ARC Identifier 519387.

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## Atomic Bomb - Explosion Over Nagasaki

**Producer:** US Army Signal Corps, Pictorial Service
**Production Company:** US War Department
**Released:** 1946
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## Americans on VJ Day - August 14, 1945

Text of Emperor Hirohito 's Radio Broadcast, Accepting the Potsdam Declaration, transmitted by Domei and recorded by the Federal Communications Commission, 14 August 1945. Online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

German newsreel, online via YouTube.
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## Edith Shain - Nurse in the "War is Over" Picture

Clip of an interview with Edith Shain, recorded on April 19, 2010 at the Veterans Home of California in Yountville.  The event was part of a Celebration of the "Spirit of '45."  Video online, courtesy Napa Valley Museum.

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