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## Guide to the Messinger Pacific Theater World War II Collection

Special Collections Department

Robert E. Kennedy Library  
1 Grand Avenue  
California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0605

### Contact Information

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Messinger Pacific Theater World War II Collection

**Date (inclusive):** August-October, 1945,

**Date (bulk):** August-October, 1945

**Collection number:** MS 064

**Creator:** Donald J. Messinger

**Extent:** 1 box

**Languages:**

English

**Repository:** Special Collections, Robert E. Kennedy Library

California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, California 93407

**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.

**Selected digitized images from this collection:**

**Provenance**

Found in collection.

**Restrictions on 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.

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**Preferred Citation**

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

**Biography**

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, 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 original captions.

**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

**Genre and Forms of Materials**

Photographs

**Related Material**

**Related Collections**

**Special Collections, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo:**

Guide to the Smith Family Papers on World War II, 1936-2005 (MS 65)

Guide to the Manzanar Collection, 1942-1994 (MS 026)

**1. Photographs 1945**

**Scope and Content Note**

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

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**A. Photographs of Hawaii and Japan**

**Scope and Content Note**

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	<b>Sad Sacks, the day of leaving, Hawaii</b>
Box 1, Folder 1	<b>Always trucks</b>
Box 1, Folder 1	<b>Convoy making up in Pearl Harbor</b>
Box 1, Folder 1	<b>Plenty of room to enjoy the beautiful trip out</b>
Box 1, Folder 1	<b>From the bridge to forward deck</b>
Box 1, Folder 2	<b>Real comfort below-decks</b>
Box 1, Folder 2	<b>Late evening, Sept. 21, 1945, Sasebo, Japan</b>
Box 1, Folder 2	<b>Early morning, Sept. 22, 1945, Sasebo, Japan</b>
Box 1, Folder 2	<b>The outer harbor looking east to China, Sasebo, Japan</b>
Box 1, Folder 2	<b>Sasebo's inner harbor</b>
Box 1, Folder 3	<b>Landing at the Seaplane Base of the great Sasebo Naval Base, Sept. 22, 1945</b>
Box 1, Folder 3	<b>The first Christian service to be held in this area</b>
Box 1, Folder 3	<b>This factory moved 95% underground</b>
Box 1, Folder 3	<b>A great factory for making catapults</b>
Box 1, Folder 3	<b>Inside said bunkhouse – former factory</b>
Box 1, Folder 4	<b>Mountainside entrance to underground factory</b>
Box 1, Folder 4	<b>Inside view of underground factory</b>
Box 1, Folder 4	<b>Japanese working for 98th N.C.B. cutting grass</b>
Box 1, Folder 4	<b>Airstrip of mowed grass at V.M.O. 5 Seaplane Base, Sasebo</b>
Box 1, Folder 4	<b>Typical forward area Post Office</b>
Box 1, Folder 5	<b>Some mail did come</b>
Box 1, Folder 5	<b>Sweating out the trip home</b>
Box 1, Folder 5	<b>Stateside hair cut???</b>
Box 1, Folder 5	<b>Japanese Washrack</b>
Box 1, Folder 5	<b>We stand in line to eat!!! We Stand in Line!!!</b>
Box 1, Folder 6	<b>Japanese squat facing the high end</b>
Box 1, Folder 6	<b>One of three Peace Planes</b>
Box 1, Folder 6	<b>Charcoal burners used in lieu of gasoline</b>
Box 1, Folder 6	<b>Typical farm wife with child on her back</b>
Box 1, Folder 6	<b>Little Miss, with Sasebo Harbor in background</b>
Box 1, Folder 7	<b>Curing rice in sunlight</b>
Box 1, Folder 7	<b>Even the very old did their share</b>
Box 1, Folder 7	<b>All except the middle-class city man — his wife his serf</b>
Box 1, Folder 7	<b>Not so the farmer — his wife his partner</b>
Box 1, Folder 7	<b>Saw a great deal of this</b>
Box 1, Folder 8	<b>Typical sight of loaded women</b>
Box 1, Folder 8	<b>As a rule, it's the women's place in front of the load</b>
Box 1, Folder 8	<b>Taken near Haiki, 10 miles from Sasebo</b>
Box 1, Folder 8	<b>Japanese police</b>
Box 1, Folder 8	<b>Kids — very colorful kimonos</b>
Box 1, Folder 9	<b>Notice the very large doll on the child's back</b>
Box 1, Folder 9	<b>Threshing rice</b>

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## 1. Photographs 1945

### A. Photographs of Hawaii and Japan

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Box 1, Folder 9	Japanese bicycle-taxi near Kashima
Box 1, Folder 9	Inside shot of middle-class home
Box 1, Folder 9	It's quite humid in this area
Box 1, Folder 10	View of Sonogi, Japan, with terraced rice paddies
Box 1, Folder 10	Women carry male children until quite an advanced age
Box 1, Folder 10	Air view of rice paddies
Box 1, Folder 10	Very little land goes to waste in Japan
Box 1, Folder 10	Ten million people live on the island of Kyushu alone
Box 1, Folder 11	View of terraced fields
Box 1, Folder 11	Air view of the Kumamoto Mountains across the Shimabara Kaiwan Bay
Box 1, Folder 11	Inland waterways on air flight from Sasebo to Nagasaki
Box 1, Folder 11	Rice fields, with part of Saga Mountain Range in background
Box 1, Folder 11	Japanese plane factory, not far from Omuta.
Box 1, Folder 12	Roadside shrine hidden in the rocks
Box 1, Folder 12	Inside view of the Catholic Church, Sacred Heart, Main Street, Sasebo
Box 1, Folder 12	Entrance to Shinto Shrine
Box 1, Folder 12	These shrines were out of bounds to all troops
Box 1, Folder 12	Entrance to a Buddhist temple
Box 1, Folder 13	Country village
Box 1, Folder 13	Country estate of rich farmer
Box 1, Folder 13	Front view of estate
Box 1, Folder 13	Better than average farm house
Box 1, Folder 13	Missionary school
Box 1, Folder 14	Main street of Sasa Village, approximately 20 miles north of Sasebo
Box 1, Folder 14	Main street of Arita, northeast of Sasebo
Box 1, Folder 14	Alleys of Sasebo
Box 1, Folder 14	Three Japanese aircraft carriers
Box 1, Folder 14	Middle class city house
Box 1, Folder 15	Looking over the city of Omuta
Box 1, Folder 15	Sasebo from the air
Box 1, Folder 15	Closer view of the city showing the firebombed area
Box 1, Folder 15	Military college, 5th Marine Headquarters
Box 1, Folder 15	Closer view of Sasebo
Box 1, Folder 16	Sasebo
Box 1, Folder 16	Sasebo main street
Box 1, Folder 16	Looking across town
Box 1, Folder 16	His home
Box 1, Folder 16	Firebombing hit in spots, leaving others untouched
Box 1, Folder 17	The main theater, Sasebo, gutted
Box 1, Folder 17	Sasebo Main Street
Box 1, Folder 17	The main shopping area
Box 1, Folder 17	The air view from Omora. This section untouched
Box 1, Folder 18	Nagasaki, bomb dropped midway in the upper center, looking north Aug. 9, 1945
Box 1, Folder 18	The entire valley was a complete ruin, looking south
Box 1, Folder 18	The residential area, protected from the bomb blast to the north by a range of hills
Box 1, Folder 18	Large airplane factory. At the upper end of valley, or north end
Box 1, Folder 19	Vertical view of a string of factories at the southern end of the Nagasaki Valley
Box 1, Folder 19	Close of factories
Box 1, Folder 19	Flying over the residential area
Box 1, Folder 19	Former church located on the very edge of the bomb blast
Box 1, Folder 19	Result of blast – southern end of valley

## 1. Photographs 1945

### A. Photographs of Hawaii and Japan

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Box 1, Folder 19	<b>Approximately 12 miles from bomb blast, to the north, beyond the end of the valley</b>
Box 1, Folder 20	<b>Japanese Army-Navy hospital — southern end of valley</b>
Box 1, Folder 20	<b>Approximately eight miles to the northeast of the valley, only the blast reached here</b>
Box 1, Folder 20	<b>A few miles further on, up the same valley</b>
Box 1, Folder 20	<b>Church approximately seven miles down the southern end of the valley</b>
Box 1, Folder 20	<b>The sun has set on Japan</b>