

The Human Costs of Total War - World War II



Learning Target:
I will evaluate the waging of and consequences of Total War.

Total War in World War II

World War II was an unprecedented war. The technologies of World War I had been honed and improved, leading to new tactics and more casualties. The “Total War” mentality of the First World War was ramped up in World War II. Civilians were involved to higher degrees, and therefore civilian casualties were higher as well.

This set of documents and clips shows that destruction.

Atrocities in China



Famous photograph of crying baby Ping Mei amid the bombed-out ruins of Shanghai South Railway Station, August 28, 1937 [Wikimedia Commons](#)



“Bodies of victims along Qinhuai River out of Nanjing's west gate during Nanjing Massacre.” ca. 1937/38. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Massacres and Rape of Nanking



“The Contest to Cut Down 100 People”
between Tsuyoshi Noda and Toshiaki
Mukai. Dec. 1937 [Wikimedia Commons](#)

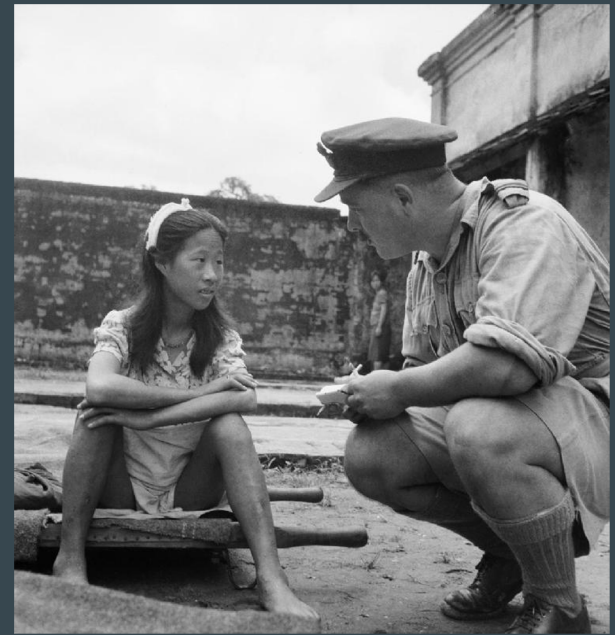


“Chinese to be buried alive by Japanese
soldiers” ca. 1937/1938. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

“Comfort Women” (Sex Slaves in Japanese Military Brothels)

Allied Reoccupation
of the Andaman
Islands, 1945
Chinese and Malayan
girls forcibly taken
from Penang by the
Japanese to work as
'comfort girls' for the
troops.

[Wikimedia
Commons](#)



A Chinese girl from a Japanese
Army 'comfort battalion' sits on a
stretcher at a camp in Rangoon.
Man is a Flying Officer in the
Royal Air Force. August 8, 1945.

[Wikimedia Commons](#)

"Statue of Peace," Sonyeosang

Nicknamed "the Comfort Woman Statue," she sits facing the Japanese Embassy in South Korea.

Asymbol of the victims of sexual slavery perpetrated by the Japanese military during World War II, who were euphemistically called "Comfort Women." The statue is calling for an apology and remembrance of what happened to the women.

Photos taken 2019 by
Kelsey Hudson



Bataan Death March

Prisoners on the “Bataan Death March” to Camp O’Donnell in the Philippines, 1942. In [Britannica](#)

“Captives were beaten, shot, bayoneted... beheaded.” If prisoners made it many starved. Exact numbers are unknown.

Of 75,000 or so captured, 16,000 died.



Holocaust

Jewish women from Mizocz (some holding infants or pregnant) wait in a line before their execution by Ukrainian auxiliary police. (October 14, 1942) [Wikimedia Commons](#)



A German policeman shoots individual Jewish women who remain alive in the ravine after a mass execution of Jews from the Mizocz ghetto. (October 14, 1942) [Wikimedia Commons](#)



Holocaust



US soldiers view bodies of prisoners found in the liberated Ohrdruf concentration camp. Ohrdruf, Germany, April 6, 1945.
[US Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)



Starving prisoners in Ebensee, sub-camp of the Mauthausen concentration camp after it was liberated. Photo taken May 7, 1945
[\(US Holocaust Memorial Museum\)](#)

Holocaust



Pile of corpses at the Russian Camp (Hospital Camp) section of Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria after liberation. May 5-15, 1945. [US Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)



Famous photograph of the liberation of Buchenwald, Germany, April 11, 1945. [History.com](#)

Katyn Massacre

Russian Secret Police massacred 22,000 Polish military officers and elite members of Polish Society in 1940.

USSR covered up/denied until 1990.

Photograph taken in 1943

[Wikimedia Commons](#)



Firebombing of Dresden

Operation Thunderclap, by
USA and GB.

February 14, 1945, around
30,000 deaths.

"Dresden, partial view of the
destroyed city center on the
Elbe to the new town." 1945

German Federal Archive via
[Wikimedia Commons](#)



Firebombing of Dresden

“Dresden.- Piles of corpses after the air raids of February 13 and 14, 1945, behind them ruins of destroyed buildings”

German Federal Archive via
[Wikimedia Commons](#)



Firebombing of Tokyo

Called Operation Meetinghouse, it was the deadliest aerial bombing campaign in history. March 9/10, 1945
100,000 dead, 1 million homeless.
Both Photographs taken by Ishikawa Kōyō found at [Wikimedia Commons](#)



Above: Civilians in Tokyo after the bombing

Left: Woman who was carrying a child on her back; her back itself was not burned. Taken ca. March 10, 1945.

Firebombing of Tokyo

The US forces continued to
Firebomb Tokyo.

“Tokyo Burns under a B-29 Fire
Assault” - May 26, 1945.

([Library of Congress](#))



Execution of SS Troops

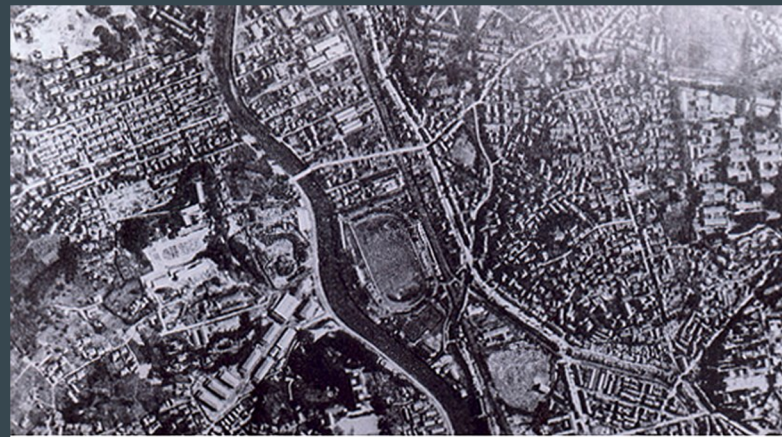
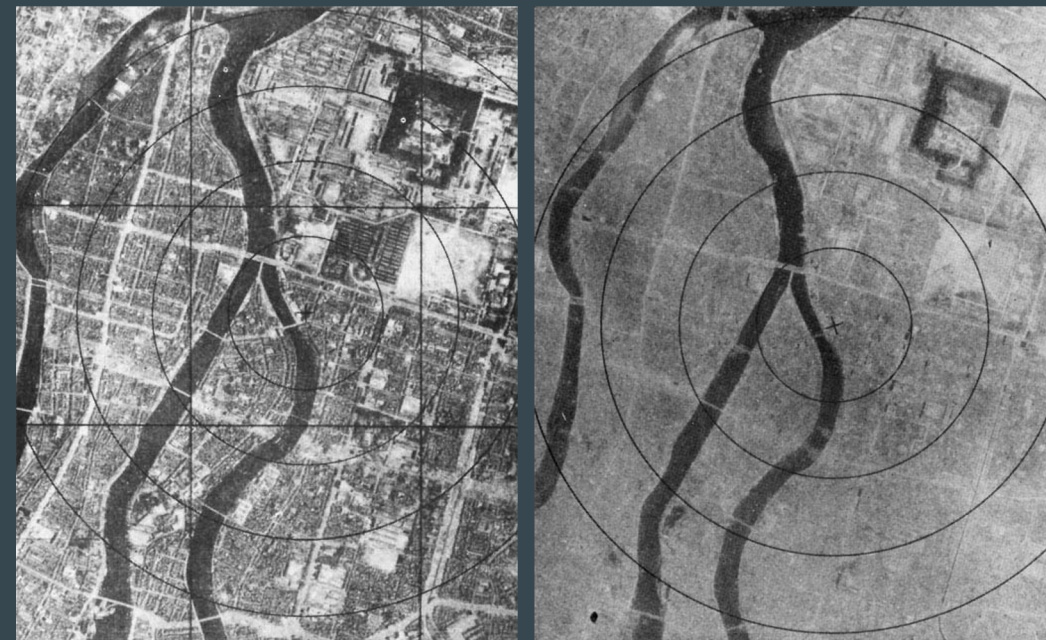
Dachau, Bavaria, Germany: United States execution of SS troops in a coalyard in the area of Dachau concentration camp during the liberation of the camp.

April 25, 1945

[Wikimedia Commons](#)



Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

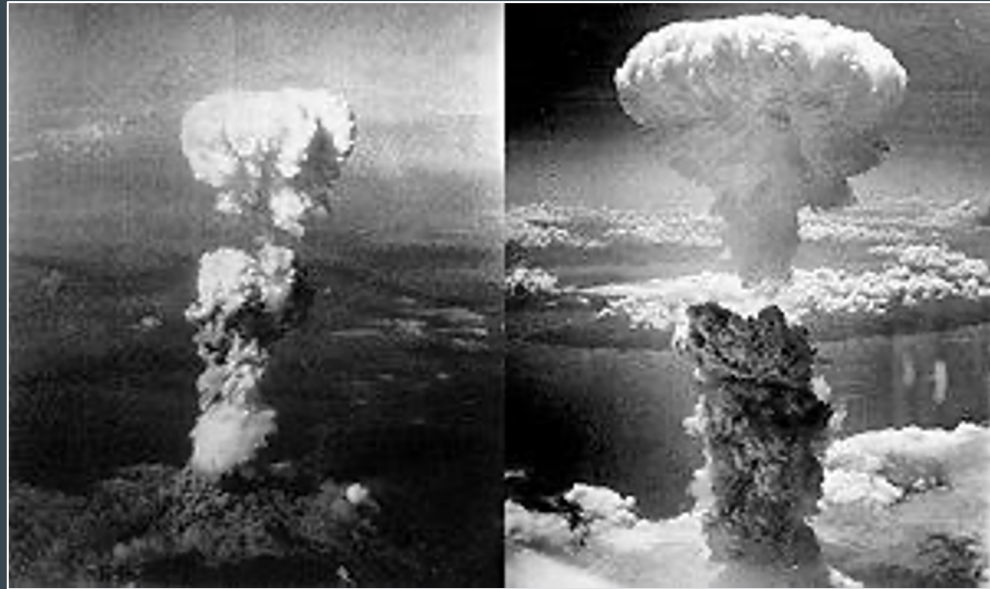


Above: [Hiroshima](#), Right: [Nagasaki](#) in Japan.
Before and after the atomic bombing of August 6/9, 1945. Both Sources = Wikimedia Commons

Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Operation Centerboard. Both bombs killed 200,000 people

Pictures of the clouds from the bombing of Hiroshima (rt) and Nagasaki (left) in [Wikimedia Commons](#)



“General view of Hiroshima, Japan as seen from vicinity of 'zero', shows complete devastation as a result of atomic bombing.” [National Archives](#)

Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Nagasaki after the Atomic Bomb. Photo taken March 17, 1948. [National Archives](#)



Burned child in Nagasaki. Photo by Yosuke Yamahata, August 10, 1945.

[Wikimedia Commons](#)

Photographs of Hiroshima Peace Park and Museum



Photos taken 2016 by
Kelsey Hudson



Trials for War Crimes

- Nazi Germany: Nuremberg Trials
 - 24 Nazi leaders put on trial, 12 sentenced to death, others to prison
- Later trials: 200 found guilty
 - Could not say “I was following orders”—individual responsibility
- Imperial Japan: International Military Tribunal for the Far East
 - 1100 put on trial, 7 sentenced to death, including Tojo

