

Atomic bomb - hiroshima

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



In August 1945 the United States military and political leaders dreaded a bloody invasion of the Japanese main land, but few believed it couldn't be avoided. On August 6th 1945 the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, they dropped a second one on another Japanese city, Nagasaki. Those two bombs were first and only atomic weapons ever used in actual combat. Until atomic bombs were reported in "The New York Times", most American citizens had never heard of atomic bombs. Ordinary bombs had been an important part of World War II, and they brought much destruction to both sides. This atomic bomb, the equivalent of 20,000 tons of TNT, flattened the city. Today, many people question the wisdom of having used the atomic bombs against Japan. In 1945, during the desperate struggles to end the war and bring their servicemen home, the news of the atomic bomb were greeted with rejoicing. Few people understood that the bombs would keep American soldiers from the dreaded mainland invasion. Though the reporting after the bombs were dropped was as honest as it could be, the whole development project had been shrouded in absolute secrecy. Because of this, and the amount of destruction the atomic bombs brought, it was months and years before Americans could understand the full impact of those bombs on the Japanese and on the world. Even the crew that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima was unprepared for the extent of the damage. The crew knew they were flying a special weapon from the Pacific island of Tinian to the city of Hiroshima, but no one used the words atomic bomb. There were seven B-29s assigned to the mission, three as weather planes, one as a stand-by, two to carry scientific equipment and the observers, and the Enola Gay to carry the

bomb. Enola Gay was named after the pilot, Colonel Paul Tibbets, after his mother. The atomic bomb was named " little boy". " Little Boy" was created using uranium-235, a radioactive isotope of uranium. This uranium-235 atomic bomb, a product of \$2 billion of research, had never been tested. Nor had any atomic bomb yet been dropped from a plane. Some scientists and politicians pushed for not warning Japan of the bombing in order to save face in case the bomb malfunctioned. Everything went just about the way it was programmed to go. Hiroshima. Captain Robert Lewis, the co-pilot, stated, " Where we had seen a clear city two minutes before, we could no longer see the city. We could see smoke and fires creeping up the sides of the mountains." The bomb was dropped from an altitude of 31, 600 feet, forty-three seconds later it detonated at 1, 800 feet over. Even though the United States was winning the war against Japan some generals thought that they would have to invade the island nation to defeat the Japanese. Experts thought that hundreds of thousands of American soldiers might die in such an attack. After the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States, Harry Truman became president. He learned about the successful test of the bomb. In July 1945 Truman warned the Japanese that the United States would destroy the country with a powerful bomb if they did not surrender at once. In spite of the warning Japan continued fighting. Three days later a much larger bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. It killed about 40, 000 people. Thousands of people died of injuries and radiation in the years that followed. On August 14, the Japanese government agreed to surrender. Many officers committed suicide. September 2, 1945 World War II officially ended. No one knows exactly how many people were killed in the initial

blast, because thousands disappeared without a trace. The officials estimated between 60,000 to 80,000 in Hiroshima and about 40,000 in Nagasaki, with many injured. Of course, no one predicted the horrible, lingering deaths of thousands who would die from radiation effects days, months and years later. The citizens of Hiroshima who survived the blast have testified that the effect of the bomb was unimaginable. The explosion was indescribably loud, and it was accompanied by a wave of concussion that flattened 6,820 buildings and badly damaged 3,750 more. The fireball sucked up millions of tons of dust and debris and formed a mushroom cloud that rained radioactive material on the city. In the city there were 45 hospitals, but only 3 were left standing. Only 28 of the 290 physicians in the city were unhurt, but only 126 of the 1,170 nurses. The city was a blaze of fire, and it continually burned for three days.