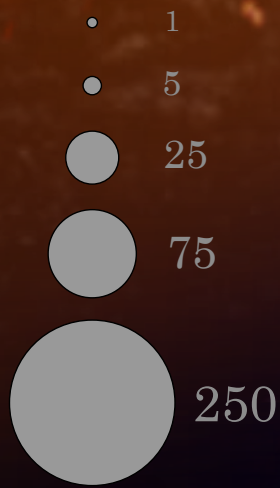


Steel Rain

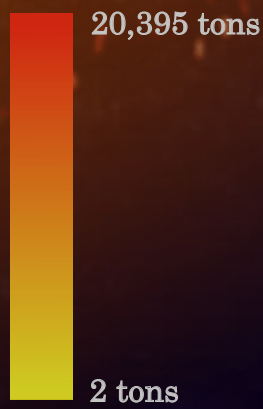
Bombings on Japanese Civilians in World War II

From 1942 until 1945, the United States Air Force bombed mainland Japan. A total of 2,796 bombing missions were flown, dropping a total of 189,290 tons of bombs. While several cities had military targets, mission data reveals that a startlingly large number of the targets were “Towns” and “Urban Areas.” To this day, the United States has neither acknowledged nor expressed regret for their deliberate firebombing of civilians.

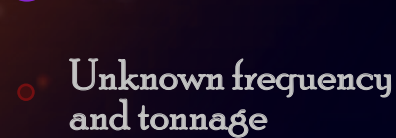
Number of Bombing Missions



Tons of bombs dropped



Atomic bombing



363
cities bombed

400,000+
civilians injured

440,000+
civilians killed

What is firebombing?

While strategic bombing aims at military bases to weaken fighting abilities, firebombing deliberately targets cities to kill civilians, including women and children. After the Tokyo Firebombing, the US expanded their firebombing raids to many other cities including Osaka, Kobe, and Nagoya. These raids killed many civilians and destroyed 25% of all the housing in Japan.

Firebombing of Tokyo

The Deadliest Day in the History of War

On the night of March 9, 1945, flares from American B-29 bombers lit up the sky like daytime. Metal and glass melted and canals boiled. Civilians crowded by the thousands into the concrete structures of elementary schools and parks. After the bombing, only ashes were left of the people within.

334
bombers

1,667
tons of napalm firebombs

Death Toll Compared to Other Catastrophes



“If we lose, we’ll be tried as war criminals.”

— Curtis LeMay
U.S. Major General

Tsukiyama Minoru’s Story

16-year-old survivor

“People were thrown into a living hell to suffer, agonize, and die. One by one...they became nothing but blackened clumps of charcoal. If you let your hands or feet be still for even the briefest of moments, your clothes would instantly burst into flame. It was so terribly hot.”



The firebombing of Tokyo (Operation Meetinghouse) is the deadliest air raid in human history.

Author’s Note:

Tonnage here refers to the payload weight, not explosive potential. This map is not intended to vindicate Japanese war crimes. The author is an American of Japanese descent.

created by Hiram Hsu

Sources:

U.S. Air Force, ESRI Living Atlas, USGS, Natural Earth, Kaggle, ProductionCrate, the Guardian, the Smithsonian Magazine
Charcoal texture photo by Haniel Cal on Unsplash
Firebombed Tokyo aftermath photo by Universal History Archive/Universal Images Group/Getty Images