



Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

Japanese World War II Balloon Bombs Collection

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National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Japanese World War II Balloon Bombs Collection
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.0558
Date:	1860-1988 (bulk 1945-1983)
Extent:	1.51 Cubic feet (3 legal document boxes)
Creator:	Mikesh, Robert C.
Language:	Collection is in English and Japanese.
Digital Content:	Image(s): Japanese World War II Balloon Bomb Collection

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

NASM Generated, Transfer, unknown, NASM.XXXX.0558.

Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Elizabeth C. Borja, 2018.

Preferred Citation

Japanese World War II Balloon Bombs Collection, Acc. XXXX.0558, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

During World War II the Japanese constructed nearly 10,000 lighter-than-air balloons for the purpose of carrying destructive pay loads to the U.S. Between November 1944 and April 1945 these balloons made use of the prevailing west-to-east jet stream over the North Pacific Ocean. Nearly 285 sightings and

fragment findings have been recorded in North America, and 5 deaths resulted. This was the first and only attack upon the American continent directly from an enemy homeland.

Scope and Contents

This collection was gathered by National Air and Space Museum curator Robert C. Mikesh for his publication on this subject, "Japan's World War II Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America." The collection consists of the following: magazine and newspaper articles on the Japanese balloons; manuscripts and independent articles; 83 photos Mr. Mikesh used in his book and 68 miscellaneous photos collected for research purposes; also photocopies of Japanese balloon illustrations and Japanese balloon propaganda reports. The collection also includes the working files of Kiyoshi Tanaka, the Supervisor Technical Lieutenant Commander for the Japanese Navy balloon project, and multiple copies of Mr. Mikesh's publication.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as originally numbered and titled by Robert C. Mikesh. Additional folder title information has been added by the processing archivist in brackets.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics, Military
- Air defenses
- Air defenses -- United States
- Balloons
- World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

- Clippings
- Manuscripts
- Photographs
- Publications
- Reports

Names:

- Japan. Navy
- Mikesh, Robert C.
- Tanaka, Kiyoshi

Container Listing

- Box 1, Folder 1 1. Finders Aid - Balloon Bomb, 1988
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 2 2. Magazine Articles, 1945-1988
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 3 3. Balloon Bomb Book - Master Copy. [Mikesh, Robert C. Japan's World War II
Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America. Master Copy], 1973
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 4 4. News Clippings, 1905-1977
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 5 5. Japanese Language Accounts, 1946-1985
[Image\(s\)](#)
Japanese.
- Box 1, Folder 6 6. Exhibit of Balloon Bomb Device [National Air and Space Museum's Balloon
Bomb Control Device Exhibit in Japan], 1974-1975
[Image\(s\)](#)
Japanese.
- Box 1, Folder 7 7. Manuscripts, 1964-1978
[Image\(s\)](#)
Mikesh, Robert C. with Chris Cross. 1965. The World's First Intercontinental
Missiles.

Mikesh, Major Robert C., USAF (Ret.) undated. Japan's Paper Balloon Bomb.

Higham, Robin. 1978. Draft Article and Correspondence.
- Box 1, Folder 8 8. Miscellaneous Reference Sources, 1903-1987
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 9 9. Fragments of Balloon Material [and Reports], 1945-1972
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 10 10. Photographs - Album and Miscellaneous [Folder 1 of 2], 1860-1974
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 1 10. Photographs - Album and Miscellaneous [Folder 2 of 2], 1860-1974
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 2 11. Working Files of K. Tanaka [Kiyoshi Tanaka], 1940-1975

[Image\(s\)](#)

- Box 2, Folder 3 12-1. Japanese Free Balloons, Control Devices, 1945
[Image\(s\)](#)
Guggenheim Aeronautics Laboratory, California Institute of Technology. April 4, 1945. Japanese Free Balloons, Control Units. Analysis of Operations and Construction. [two copies]
- Box 2, Folder 4 12-2. Study of Japanese Free Balloons, 1944-1945
[Image\(s\)](#)
Western Defense Command. November 4, 1944 - February 10, 1945 .
Intelligence Study No. 1, A Study of Japanese Free Balloons and Related Incidents." [three copies]
- Box 2, Folder 5 12-3. Japanese Balloon and Detachment Devices, 1945
[Image\(s\)](#)
Technical Air Intelligence Center (TAIC). May 1945. Report #41, Japanese Balloons and Attached Devices. [Wright Field Technical Document Library Number D52.8/125]

Air Technical Intelligence Group. November 23, 1945. Report No. 138, Japanese Balloon Bombs (Interview of Major General Kusaba and LTC Miizuma). [Wright Field Technical Document Library Number D72.31/721]
- Box 2, Folder 6 12-4. Japanese Balloons, 1945-1946
[Image\(s\)](#)
Weidner, George E. Office of the Chief Engineer, GHQ, Army Forces Pacific. January 2, 1946. Engineer Technical and Technical Survey, Japanese Bombing Balloons.

Fourth Air Force Historical Study No. III-2. 1945. Chapter X: Japanese Balloon.
- Box 3, Folder 1 12-5. The Great Japanese Bomb Balloon Offensive, 1968
[Image\(s\)](#)
Conley, Cornelius W. 1968. The Great Japanese Bomb Balloon Offensive." [two copies]
- Box 3, Folder 2 12-6. Balloon Bomb, 1945-1951
[Image\(s\)](#)
Kusaba, Sueki, and Kiyoshi Tanaka. Translated by Kiyoshi Tanaka. 1951. Amendment of Mr. T. Takada's Article on 'Balloon Bomb' in the Shizen (the Nature), Vol. 6, No. 1-3.

Notes in Japanese by Sueki Kusaba.

Takada, Teiji. Translated by Ken Suda. 1951. Balloon Bomb.

Takada Article in Japanese.

9th Military Laboratory. November 10, 1945. A Report on the Research of the Bombing Balloon.

Box 3, Folder 3

12-7. Documents - Misc., 1901-1975

[Image\(s\)](#)

Arakawa, H. 1956. Basic Principles of the Balloon Bomb. Meteorological Research Institute, January.

Western Defense Forces, Situation Maps to Accompany Air Annex to G-2 Periodic Report No. 188.

Tatsu, Hirada, 1964. Paper-made ICBMs.

Summarized Translation in Koku-Fan. September 1964.

[Wiss, John.] Undated. Use of Differential Equations to Predict the Stability of a System: Japanese Balloon Missile.

Mikesh, Robert C. October 10, 1970. Interview - Dr. Clarence S. Ross, Retired U.S. Geological Survey.

Rand, James L. 1975. Superpressure Balloon Loads.

Nishimura, Jun, and Haruto Hirosawa. 1970. Recent Activities of Scientific Ballooning in Japan.

Japanese Explosive Ordnance (Bombs, Bomb, Fuzes, Land Mines, Grenades, Firing Devices, and Sabotage Devices), TM 9-1985-4/TO 39B-1A-11. 1953. [selected pages]

Balloons, Manned, Early 1900s, Miscellaneous References, 1901-1902.

Box 3, Folder 4

13. Extra Copies - Japan's World War II Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America [four copies], 1973