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National Air and Space Museum

World War II Propaganda Leaflets

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	World War II Propaganda Leaflets
Date:	1945
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.0846
Creator:	United States. Office of War Information
Extent:	.05 Cubic feet (1 folder; 3 leaflets; 8.5 x 5.5 inches (22 x 14 cm))
Language:	Japanese .
Summary:	This collection consists of three black and white Japanese language psychological warfare propaganda leaflets (Nos. 2094, 2097, and 2101) designed and printed by the United States Office of War Information (OWI) to be dropped by air over Japan during World War II, circa mid-1945.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Unknown, found in collection, 2008, NASM.XXXX.0846

Related Materials

See related collection [World War II Propaganda Leaflets \[Kurzman\]](#), [NASM.2008.0018](#) , containing OWI Leaflet Nos. 112, 2001, 2010, and 2031.

Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Melissa A. N. Keiser, 2024.

Preferred Citation

World War II Propaganda Leaflets, NASM.XXXX.0846, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

The United States Office of War Information (OWI) was formed during World War II on June 13, 1942, combining several preceding agencies to create a centralized unit to provide information about the ongoing war to the American public. The Domestic Branch of the OWI utilized printed materials, radio, and motion pictures to achieve their mission to help Americans understand the status and progress of the war effort; the Overseas Branch used print media to promote American war aims to foreign audiences and operated a Psychological Warfare Branch to use propaganda messages to target enemy troops and populations. In April 1944, the OWI office in Honolulu, Hawaii, added full-scale propaganda activities aimed at Japan to its war information duties, designing and printing Japanese-language propaganda leaflets to be dropped by air over Japan and Japanese-occupied territories by long-range Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers. By mid-1945 the OWI had established an office with a printing plant on Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, putting them closer to the bases of the US Army Air Forces' XXI Bomber Command whose aircraft were tasked with the job of delivering the leaflets to their targets. By the end of the war, tens of millions of leaflets had been airdropped over Japan.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of three 5.5 x 8.5 inch black and white psychological warfare propaganda leaflets, printed on both sides, combining Japanese text with photographic images. The leaflets (Nos. 2094, 2097, and 2101) were designed and printed by the United States Office of War Information (OWI) circa mid 1945 and were intended to be air dropped from Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers over Japan and Japanese-occupied territories. All three leaflets promote the theme of unconditional surrender to the United States to prevent the further destruction of Japan, Japanese soldiers, and the Japanese people. Two of the leaflets feature a small portrait photograph of US President Harry S Truman with excerpts from a personal message to the Japanese people: "Unconditional surrender is a purely military term meaning only the yielding of arms. It does not entail enslavement. It does not entail extermination of the Japanese people."

Arrangement

The three leaflets which comprise this collection are arranged in numerical order by OWI number.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Psychological warfare -- 1940-1950
- World War, 1939-1945
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Aerial operations
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Propaganda

Types of Materials:

- Leaflets

Container Listing

NASM-9A20113: [US Office of War Information \(OWI\) Propaganda Leaflet No. 2094, 1945](#)

Language: Japanese.

Notes: Leaflet No. 2094. Front features photo montage of Japanese military equipment (Mitsubishi G4M Betty, tank, artillery piece, and truck) with title "Unconditional Surrender means Simply the Laying down of Arms"; at left is photo of US President Harry S Truman, with excerpt of his speech to the Japanese people, "Unconditional surrender is a purely military term meaning only the yielding of arms. It does not entail enslavement. It does not entail extermination of the Japanese people. [...]" Reverse refers to victory in Europe; top: "Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allied Forces on 7 May 1945. General Gustav Jodl, Wehrmacht Chief of Staff signed for the Germans"; bottom: "Smiling German civilians wave white flags of surrender at soldiers of the 94th Infantry Division of the US 3rd Army."

NASM-9A20114: [US Office of War Information \(OWI\) Propaganda Leaflet No. 2097, 1945](#)

Language: Japanese.

Notes: Leaflet No. 2097. Front includes photos of an emaciated Japanese soldier and the open ocean with text, "Just a year since regular supplies stopped going to the orphaned islands of the south. This wreckage drifting about on the high seas and this picture of a soldier tells the real truth about the war." Reverse is text appealing to families of Japanese soldiers stationed on outlying Pacific islands, exhorting them to "Save your loved ones on the by-passed islands! Save your native land! Throw down your weapons and come forward to build a new Japan."

NASM-9A20115: [US Office of War Information \(OWI\) Propaganda Leaflet No. 2101, 1945](#)

Language: Japanese.

Notes: Leaflet No. 2101. Front includes photo of US President Harry S Truman at top right, and a happy Japanese mother and child and civilians in small boats on a canal at left; text warns "Your alternatives are as follows: A cessation of hostilities with unconditional surrender; this is the only way left for preservation of your families, your homes, your economy, and your country." Reverse has aerial photo of bomb damage to a city at top ("Save yourselves from this destruction") and a B-29 in flight at bottom ("A Super-Fortress over Tokyo"); text warns "Or a futile prolongation of resistance which will result in a needless desolation of your country and destruction even surpassing in scale that of Germany."