

The 29th Edition of Thinking about Peace

[Elementary School Students]

The War Was Scary

Daiichi Elementary School 5th Grade

Haruna Totsuka

I visit my grandparents' house every summer vacation. I watched a drama with them before going to bed. It was about the war. Before watching the drama, I didn't know much about the war. So, I just wondered, "What was the war like?" However, my feelings changed so much after watching it.

Various people were described in the drama. There were people who fought to defeat enemies, people who lost their families, and people who killed themselves because of the war.

I started to think about the fear of war and reached one conclusion. Every person said, "The war was scary," even though not all of them experienced it. Is it true? How do people who didn't experience the war like me think about the fear of the war? Do they consider it the same as losing their family? Do they consider it the same as losing their houses by fire? Those two scary things happened at the same time during the war, so I imagined it might be scary. When I watched the drama, I felt it was scary. That fear cannot be compared with anything I experienced before. That was the first time for me to feel fear like that. It was hard to describe how scared I felt with any words. I thought only the people who experienced the war knew the fear of the war.

I decided to ask my grandfather who experienced the war to tell me the story of the war. He told me many things about the war. The most impressive story was about "the family." My grandfather has 4 siblings, and he and his little sister moved to their uncle's house and were taken care of by him during the war. Once the war started, fathers of every family had to go to the war as soldiers. My grandfather's father also died because of the war when my grandfather was a child.

There will be more people who don't know much about the war like me. I think it is hard for us to know the real fear of the war. However, we should learn more about it in order to tell people in the next generation, "The war was scary."

Pray for Peace

Daini Elementary School 6th Grade

Moe Satomu

Wars must not happen.

I researched about Bombing of Numazu in World War II during this summer vacation.

The reason for attacking Numazu was that it was a city.

It was really sad that many people had to suffer for this simple reason.

Bunches of fire bombs were dropped.

A radius of 1200m around the intersection at Ootemachi was burned with 3,72,764 fire bombs.

The area became a sea of flame.

The air raids kept up for about 1 hour and 40 minutes and settled down at 6 o'clock in the morning.

It was such a terrible night.

11,802 houses were burned down partially or completely.

779 people were injured or killed.

It happened to Numazu where I live peacefully.

All people suffered because of the war.

Their sorrow last into the future.

Wars must not be started.

Even today, wars are about to start somewhere in the world.

The world is not stable.

It's time for the people in the world to remember the fear of the wars we had in the past and the value of peace.

Wishing for Peace

Daini Elementary School 6th Grade

Miyu Ogawa

I traveled to Hiroshima last year with my family. I visited Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum at that time. There were things that told us the misery of the atomic bombs such as the picture of people burned by the heat wave and the clock that stopped at 8:15. The atomic Bomb Dome also told us the fear of atomic bombs. Honestly, I couldn't look directly at things displayed at the museum. Last year, Mr. Obama, the U.S. President at that time, visited the museum and dedicated paper cranes and a message for peace. I thought it was big step toward the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

We have many chances to watch the news and TV programs about the war and the atomic bomb in August because it is the month for important memorial days such as the day of atomic bomb in Hiroshima on August 6th and in Nagasaki on August 9th and the day of the end of the war on August 15th. I think it is important for us not to forget about the war and to tell the next generations.

I listened to the story of the war from my grandparents. My grandfather had a hard time coming back from Manchuria after the war was over. When he came back to Numazu, he found that the area of Numazu station was completely burned by the bombs dropped by the U.S. Besides, he didn't have enough food and money. Even so, he felt that he would be able to have a peaceful life without wars. I thought that I should appreciate being alive, having food, and not killing each other after I heard the story of my grandfather. My grandmother said that she was always hungry because there was not enough allocated food. She shared everything such as food, school supplies, and so on with her 5 sisters. The sisters always cooperated in their lives. The war was over when my grandfather was 7 years old and my grandmother was 5 years old.

Their school life in elementary school was totally different from mine. So, it is hard for me to imagine what it was like. I strongly felt my school life was rich and comfortable. I also thought I should appreciate the things and the food I can have more than I thought before.

I thought we should learn about the war instead of turning away from the fear of the war. The number of people who experienced the war is decreasing every year. If there will be only people who don't know well about the war, the same tragedy we had at the war might occur again. To avoid it, I think we should keep telling how the war was horrible. We must learn about the war and tell it to the next generation.

There are some wars and many people die in some countries in the world. Wars will bring only sorrow. We should think that there are still wars in the world and make effort to have a world without wars.

Small Peace and Big Peace

Daisan Elementary School 5th Grade

Yuaru Hitosugi

There are two things I felt after learning and listening about the war.

The first one is "small peace." I thought it was ordinary to have good meals or play freely every day. However, I learned these were not ordinary things a long time ago and I felt sorry about it. I think the life I considered as ordinary is "small peace."

The second one is “big peace.” I think a stack of “small peace” is “big peace.” However, when I look around the world, I notice that there are countries having conflicts and not having peace.

How can we make a world without conflicts?

We need lots of “small peace” to make “big peace.” I go to school and study lots of things every day. There are many students who have different ideas and character. That is why we sometimes argue or fight at school. However, I can learn things like, “There are people who have different ideas from me,” or, “I have problems that I have to correct,” from those arguments or fights.

I heard that there are many children who cannot go to school where we can learn those ideas. If we cannot go to school, it would be hard for us to understand others who have different ideas. I think it will be one of the reasons for conflict. Small conflicts can become bigger and will be a big war.

I think it is very important for us to go to school and study with others.

I want to ask grown-up people to let all children in the world go to school.

I cannot stop all wars right now. However, I want to be a person who can accept different ideas or opinions and correct any problems I have. If everyone in the world thinks same way as me, we can adjust small conflicts easily and prevent us from having big conflicts.

I believe that we can have a peaceful world without wars after stacking “small peace.”

Blue Sky

Daisan Elementary School 6th Grade

Kaoruko Ichikawa

I want to help,
Refugees in a country far away.
Crying children.

I want to save,
Scared, sad, and insecure feelings.
Fragile life.

I want to stop,
Towns which lose a place to live after bombs dropped.

I want to know,
The reality of the world.
Countries which need someone's help.

I want to make a plea,
Like Malala did.
My opinion bravely.

I want to accept,
The differences between races, religions, and ways of thinking.
Historical background.

I want to share
A kind and rich spirit.
And honest feelings to forgive others.

I want to keep watching
Days for everyone in the world to live with smiles.

I want to enhance
The knowledge of peace.
Being equal for everyone.

I want to imagine
All the people in the world are holding hands with each other and make one circle.

I want to make
The world one.

I want to change the black sky to a blue sky.
Wish the sky of the world will be completely blue.

Peaceful Japan

Daisan Elementary School 6th Grade

Ryota Endo

What is peace?

I have many chances to watch TV programs about the war during summer vacation every year.

One of my grandfathers was born in 1948, which means he doesn't know the war.

My other grandfather was born in 1942. He doesn't remember much about the war, but he still told me what he remembered. He often heard sirens and escaped to the air-raid shelter. After hearing from my grandfathers, I would like to know more about the war. So, I decided to ask Mr. Goto, my neighbor, who experienced the war.

Mr. Goto is 83 years old. He was 11 years old at the time of the war, the same age as I am now.

He went to Daisan Elementary School where I go now. The name of the school at that time was "Daisan National Elementary School." It doesn't sound familiar to me. It was still during the war when he was in 6th grade. The air-raid shelter was a building at the school, and he went to Ashitaka mountain every day to get logs for it. The diameter of those logs was about 20cm. He told me it was very heavy and hard to bring them back to school.

He rarely had classes at school during the war. After the war was over, an American teacher came and said, "Black out some of the pages of your history textbook." That was one of his homework assignments.

Flare bombs were dropped almost every night. When those bombs were dropped, the night sky became so bright, like day, that he couldn't sleep well. Fire bombs were dropped during daytime. Hama town in Ganyudo was burned completely, and half of Tsushima town was burned. He saw the airplanes of Grumman flying toward the east every day.

I asked him, "What was the worst thing for you during the war?" He answered, "I hated the war itself."

I agreed with him. He spent every day like this when he was the same age as me. He had to make the air-raid shelter every day as he worried about bombs dropping. I tried to imagine if I were him. Could I walk to Ashitaka mountain every day? Would I have the time to relax?

Japan of today is very peaceful compared to Japan during the war. I have food, watch TV, play video games, and study a little every day. I can spend my days doing ordinary things.

There are some countries having wars now. After listening to the story of Mr. Goto, I learned we should have a peaceful Japan because people during the war tried to make it so. We should appreciate their effort to make a peaceful Japan and protect what they made for us.

Fear of the War

Daiyon Elementary School 4th Grade

Yuuta Sugiyama

I don't know about the war. However, I have heard the stories of the war from my great grandfather and grandfather who experienced it.

My great grandfather joined the army and went to the Battle of Imphal. The battle was very terrible. Some soldier who worked with him even blew himself up with hand grenades.

My grandfather's big brother was a kamikaze pilot in Okinawa. He boarded "Shinyo" which was a small boat for one person made from plywood in order to do a ramming attack against an American ship during the night. Then, he died.

I had heard about the kamikaze pilots, but I didn't know the big brother of my grandfather was one of them. I was surprised. I think it was very sad to waste young human lives, and my grandfather and his family must miss him so much.

I joined the event which was called "The war historical site tour for thinking about peace" in this summer vacation. I visited many places related to the war in Numazu.

In this tour, I saw the mooring of "Shinyo" which was boarded by my grandfather's big brother. They were at Enoura and Omosu. I also learned that there is a scar of the war on Onaribashi bridge where I often walk, and the big factory for the navy was in Numazu.

I found that the war was more terrible than I expected after learning about it more and more.

I should appreciate that my great grandfather survived the war that I couldn't even imagine. That is why I exist now. Also, I should appreciate other soldiers who were with my great grandfather, the big brother of my grandfather, and other people who died in the war. I learned peace we have now is based on many people's lives, and it is not an ordinary thing.

Wars hurt many people. I wish the world would not have any wars again.

Why Do Wars Occur?

Kaihoku Elementary School 6th Grade

Keisuke Shigyo

Why do wars occur? The reason for it is that people try to expand their own territory. Wars change people.

I learned the way to save people's lives as much as possible by "Tsunami Tendenko"

at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Recently, I noticed that the news of evacuation instructions come soon after it's predicted to have heavy rain or thunder. This is also for saving people.

Everyone knows how important each life is. I think wars are very sad things which take people's lives.

Toward the end of World War II, even elementary students like us were told how to handle bamboo spears to kill enemies. I don't want to even imagine that.

The American military decided there were no citizens in Japan when they knew that children and women were also trained as soldiers. Then, they decided to drop bombs everywhere in Japan.

I know that people at that time had a hard time living when I read or watch about the war. I feel I'm very happy and lucky because I don't have to live with those scary things.

I had a chance to learn about Oskar Schindler from Germany and Chiune Sugihara from Japan. Both tried to protect people's lives even though they lived during the war a time to kill others without thought. They tried to save others despite of the risk being killed by their countries. I think they were people with great courage. Also, I think they were very cool. I want to be a person who will not be influenced by others and can determine what is important.

I strongly felt it was very scary to neglect people's lives while I studied about the war. I decided to live thinking of the value of other people's lives all the time.

Precious Life

Senbon Elementary School 6th Grade

Nami Murata

Many countries joined World War II. Many people were killed by the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These are the only things I know about the war. It is difficult for me to ask people to tell me the story of the war because there are not many people who experienced the war around me.

I studied the story of "Friedl and small artists at Terezin" in my Japanese class first semester. I learned that all Jewish people included children were discriminated and put into concentration camps.

I was not familiar with Jewish people, so I decided to find out about them. They are an ethnoreligious group consisting of followers of Judaism and people whose parents are Jewish. I don't understand why Jewish people had to be discriminated against and killed. I think both Jewish people and Germans are human beings. There are no lives to

be wasted. I think there is nothing worse than it.

Our teacher librarian introduced me to one book called “Girl with a White Dog” right before starting the summer vacation. This book seemed to be related to the story I studied in my Japanese class, so I decided to read it.

The book told me that Nazis discriminated and killed old people and disabled people at the beginning of World War II. Also, children in Germany at that time were taught that “Jewish people are vermin, so we need to get rid of them.” I think children were not suspicious about this because it was told to them by their teacher.

The main character of this book was Jessie's grandmother. She lived as a British person, but really was German. Her father was a veterinarian. He had to kill pets of Jewish people by order of the Nazis. He had to do it even though he didn't want to, and it was not the right thing to do. Otherwise, he would be killed. However, he saved one dog and asked his daughter to take it to the dog's owner. His daughter was Jessie's grandmother when she was a child. I think both Jessie's grandmother and her father were people with great courage. They were also people who cared about others as well. However, their effort didn't reach the Jewish owner. She was abused by the owner and started to live hiding that she was German.

I think people couldn't determine what was right and wrong during the war. Each of us should try to determine right and wrong and protect our peaceful life. I want to be a person who will not discriminate others and care about all lives.

Things I Learned from Malala Yousafzai

Katahama Elementary School 6th Grade

Hanaka Ikai

I was interested in the book, “Bukiyori Issatsu no Hon wo Kudasai” which means, “Please give me one book rather than weapons,” which my big sister read. So, I decided to read it, too. This book is about peace and education. Malala, the main character of this book, stood up against the adults who were strong and scary to protect her rights.

I didn't understand why she wanted to study so much. Studying is painful and takes a lot of time. Even so, she still had a passion for studying. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan where Malala lived didn't allow girls to have an education. It means they can't study even if they want to. I think that was one of the reasons why Malala wanted to study.

I sometimes don't want to study because it takes lots of time and work. However, Malala couldn't study because she was not allowed to. Honestly, I think it would be

more fun to stay at home all day without any studying. However, when I imagine if I didn't study, some negative ideas came to my mind. I might be bored every day. I might have difficulties in life. My dream might not come true in the future. Malala also said that she was very bored when she couldn't go to school and outside in the book.

The moment Malala was shot on her way to school impressed me so much. She only wished to study. I felt very sorry for her. It was a terrible incident, however, it became motivation for many young people and children who are a different religion or nationality to send her letters or pictures. Those letters and pictures encouraged Malala so much, and she stood up and appealed that all people need peace and education, and education is the only solution to the world.

My motivation toward studying became a little better after reading the book. If I hadn't read it, I wouldn't have faced my negative feeling of studying.

I realized that I should be happy to be able to study. I decided to attend classes and appreciate that I can study. I also want to try something difficult like Malala did. I will not forget what I learned from the book and make an effort step by step to have a better life.

Things I Can Do Now

Kanaoka Elementary School 5th Grade

Yuuya Kouno

I joined a tour of historical sites of the war this summer vacation. I visited some places related to the war in Numazu and looked at damages from the war. I was impressed especially by the damage on Onaribashi bridge. There are still remnants. The damage is very big. I could imagine how the air-raid was big and terrible. I considered the war as an old incident which was happened in places I didn't know. However, I realized it was very close to me. There were some facilities and temples where children evacuated from Tokyo to Numazu. If I were them, I couldn't suffer and endure so many difficulties such as living apart from own family or not doing things I wanted to do. Both North Korea and the United States have done missile tests this year. I object them. I want them to become countries which will not use missiles like Japan. It would be possible for us to have peace if we tried to fix situations such as bullying or violence around us. I have never been got bullied, but I used to try to stop people. I felt very sorry them at that time. Once we have a war, we will get direct damages by bombs. Also, it will split families and friends and make our lives poor. There will be only sad things. I learned these things after joining the tour. Learning

about the old wars, incidents that happened in other countries, and peace are only things I can do now. However, I decided to keep learning and wishing for peace.

Numazu in Old Time and Peaceful Future

Ooka Elementary School 6th Grade

Ayumi Saito

This summer vacation, I realized that we should not consider wars as the only way to get back peace.

I joined the event which was called “The war historical site tour for thinking about peace” by Meiji Museum in Numazu. I visited 12 places in this tour and 3 of them impressed me so much.

The first one was the moorage shelters. There were more than 30 in Enoura area. 4 types of dangerous suicide weapons were stored in various places. Soldiers who would ride on these suicide weapons had to accept that they were going to die. They must need great courage. So, I felt better when I heard that none of them were used.

The second one was the underground factory site of the institute for navy technology. It was a big cave for escaping from air-raids by enemies. There were many Korean people forced to work for clearing the land in the cave. I couldn't expect that Japanese people also forced others to work before visiting this place. I was also surprised the place was much bigger than I imagined.

The third one was the building of the evacuation school. Children between 3rd grade and 6th grade were evacuated there while they had air-raids. According to the people who experienced the war and lived there, they could live comfortably and practice swimming or communicating with local fishermen every day. The children who used to live there still have chances to meet again. I am interested in what they would talk about in present Japan without wars at such a reunion.

I learned there were many places related to the war in Numazu. Then, I realized the war really occurred in Japan. I think all people, who fought at the war and who were involved the war, at that time wished, “the war would be over as soon as possible.” I imagine that they must have been afraid of the war very much and wanted to escape from it. However, they had to fight for peace and beat enemies to win. The age of the war is unbelievable for me.

Japanese people had two opposite feelings, “happy” and “sad” after the war. People who felt “happy” might think that the war was finished and they could meet people who came back from the war. People who felt “sad” might think that they missed someone close who didn't come back from the war. There must be people who felt

both.

I think wars are terrible and will not make anyone happy. They are the last thing people should do. I think if someone started a war for future without caring about others, people wouldn't have a good and bright future. We should make the present world peaceful. I felt many things through the tour. Each of us should do something to not have a war again.

For Not Making a War Happen

Ashitaka Elementary School 6th Grade

Sho Mano

My grandfather passed away last year. He had pancreas cancer and fought against it very hard.

He watched the video of my sports day, looked at the picture of me wearing my uniform for junior high school, and had a birthday party before he died. His family including my grandmother was of his side when he died.

I really miss him. I cried all night when I knew he had the disease.

I have lots of memories with him. He always smiled in pictures with me. They were taken when I was very young.

He was smiling when I rolled over for the first time, the time he held me, the time he and his family had meals cooked by my grandmother, the time he and I made a rocket from a plastic bottle, the time he and I played in the water on our balcony, the time he traveled with his family, the time we dug for sweet potatoes, and the time he taught me how to play Japanese chess.

My grandmother told me the reason why he was so kind and gentle. It was because he lost his father in the war. He missed his father so much and didn't want me to have the same feelings as he did.

It was very hard for me to lose my grandfather. If a war happened, I would lose more people and feel like I didn't have any happy things I have today.

I think Japan is about to start a war. All people in this country must feel insecure under the situation we are in now.

Wars must not start.

Why do wars happen in the world?

I think it is difficult for us to get rid of wars because each one has a "feeling."

Most fights tend to start with small reasons. If a fight occurred without a reason related ourselves, we would not have any "feelings" for it.

However, if my friends got bullied or my family had something painful, I would be

angry. I would show my anger and try to beat others by force.

I think the same thing happens when a war starts.

Fights by people can be solved before they become big. However, wars will be held by countries. It means so many people will fight and die.

It is ironic that feelings including affection make people start wars for protecting someone they care. A world without feelings means no communicating with others. A self-contained world. We would not be interested in other things like plants if we lived in a world like that.

People have feelings. People make weapons. They are the reasons why it is hard to get rid of wars from the world.

However, these cannot be reasons for starting wars.

It has passed 72 years since the end of World War II. It is a long time. We cannot say Japan will never have wars in future. What can we do to prevent Japan and the world from starting wars?

I think the answer for it depends on us in the future.

Things We Should Not Forget

Uchiura Elementary School 6th Grade

Moa Oota

There was an era called the age of provincial wars in Japanese history. It was several hundred years ago and at the time many feudal warlords flourished. I noticed the similarity between those old fights and wars that occurred recently. Their similarity is that both changed the people. Will the time come for people to forget about the war which took the human mind from the people?

There was a place called Iga, the ninja place, during the age of provincial wars. Iga was the home of the ninja. There was a story that each feudal warlord hired those ninja for their espionage activities or assassination. I wonder whether they felt any hesitation to use people to kill or not. There were uncountable fights and uncountable numbers of people who were killed every time. It might be easy for them to get used to death. I think that their minds were broken if they didn't care about people dying. They might not feel anything about it.

I learned that similar idea was common during World War II. People were taught that it was their mission to kill enemies. The entire nation could become militaristic as a result. If there were people who were against the idea, other people tried to put restraints them. There was no wonder that all of the nation considered it was the right idea to kill enemies. I think it is easy for people to kill others once they strongly

believe it is the right thing to do. Then, people would not be people anymore. My great grandfather went to and came back from the war. Did he also hate the enemies? Did he think it was a good thing for him to die for killing enemies? I have no idea.

Now, there are people who kill others. Some of them have to do it because they are involved with wars even though they don't want to murder. If Japan had a war, I could be one of them. However, I don't want to kill others and I'm not going to be a person without a human mind. I am nothing except for a person. I believe it.

People can learn, think, and produce things. I would say this is the one thing that people are better than other animals. I think I can live with this ability. If people broke their human mind and lost this ability, we would not be able to have an advantage over other animals. I think people already learned it was a not good idea to kill people during of provincial wars or even before that age. However, people forgot it. They forgot the tragedy after 250 years of peace. I think, now, we should not forget the human mind. We should not forget the scar of the war if we want to live as a person with a human mind, now and in future.

To Protect Our Smiles

Hara Elementary School 6th Grade

Maho Takahashi

I visited “Shizuoka Heiwa Shiryo Center,” the resource center of peace in Shizuoka with my family at the end of this July. The reason for visiting was that I wanted to learn about the war before the anniversary of the end of the war in August. The center was placed at the center of Shizuoka downtown area and seemed unrelated to the war.

I found the display about the war with China and the beginning of the war with America and United Kingdom right after I entered the center. They were explained with difficult words, so I didn't understand them well. Things used at the time of the war were displayed in the glass showcase. There were a dark brown service cap and the bag called “Houkoubukuro,” and so on. There was also small kimono for a child which was unforgettable for me.

Each of those items had a picture of a battle ship or war-horse. I understood that the war was a part of people's lives. As I moved further inside, I found a thing that looked like a broom which was made of straw. It was called “Hitataki” and used to put out fires. People made it wet and hit the fire. When I was wondering how a fire occurred, a staff of the center talked to me. He said, “Would you like to watch the video about the war?” I decided to watch it without much consideration.

The video started with the airplanes. I watched firebombs drop from those airplanes

and the town burned with them. My mind gradually became painful. When I watched about the ways to make and use firebombs, I realized why people had “Hitataki.” I thought, “No more!” every time I watched the scenes of firebombs dropping. U.S. jet fighters attacked the nation without any hesitation. They calculated population density of each area at that time for dropping firebombs efficiently. There was Numazu city where I live now on their list. Numazu city had 8 air-raids from January to August and more than 90% of the city area was burned. It was higher level of burnt percentage in Japan. My mind became more painted.

After watching the video, the staff introduced me to another video which was about people who experienced the war.

There were some stories told by the people. One mother and her baby were burned and killed right before they escaped into the shelter. So, their bodies were burned in the shape of them escaping. It was the most shocking story for me in that video. They might have been saved if they could get into the shelter several seconds before. Then, they might be alive now. It was just the boundary between life and death. The staff asked me, “Would you like to hold a real firebomb? Here's one you can hold.” I held it tentatively. It was very cold and heavy for me and my mind.

Once I left the center, I found many smiles in the town. I strongly felt that we should not start any wars with any reasons to protect these smiles.

Japan 70 Years Ago

Hara Elementary School 6th Grade

Anri Monbe

“Beep! Beep! Air-raid alarm! Air-raid alarm!”

When people heard this alarm, they evacuated to a mountain or a river. People at home took things they could hold and escaped with their family. People at school followed the directions of their teachers such as “Go to Mt. Honza.” Students from the 1st grade to 6th grade took and wore their disaster hoods and escaped to the mountain. This is the story of my grandmother. She told me lots of her experiences she had when she was a child like me. Evacuation space was not big enough for all people in her town, so her family and 10 other families lived together in a small cave on the mountain. When she saw the west from the mountain, she could see Shimizu town which turned to be red because of the bombs from B29 bombers. Since she lived in the country, she didn't get any bombs dropped near her. She had many hard times, but she also had fun, even during the war.

Summer is a season of the ocean. Some people enjoyed swimming around the

harbor and other people came back from Izu by ship. Many people were around the harbor, so B29 bombers targeted them. Children who were swimming in the ocean escaped to land quickly. People who were on the ship escaped as they were shouting. They tried to protect their heads with anything. When they had an air-raid close to them, they sat down. Then, they would not be found by enemies easily. They said, "Protect your head. Protect your head with anything!" to each other before they were found by enemies. They used even pots to protect their heads and got through that air-raid. The hardest thing when they had air-raids was food. They couldn't buy any food because enemies might find them. They grew wheat and made flour to make Udon noodles. They had this every night. Usually, a machine for making Udon noodles was shared with the other families. So, they also made Suiton instead of Udon noodles in case they couldn't use the machine. Suiton was the meal of dough flakes roughly torn by hand in Udon soup. These were the only things they could have during the war. Men, who were healthy and between 18 and 20 years old were forced to go to the war. Most of them died in the war.

During the war, there was the slogan, "I won't demand anything until I win." Nobody could demand anything at that time. It is unbelievable life for Japan now. People at that time made things they needed and shared them each other.

I hardly believe that they had to live in such hard circumstance and their lives were always in danger. We can live without wars now in Japan. I learned that people 70 years ago couldn't have the life that we have without any questions. I hope the peaceful life we have now will last forever.

I Visited the Atomic Bomb Dome

Kanuki Elementary School 6th Grade

Yurari Ichikawa

I went to Hiroshima and saw Atomic Bomb Dome first time in this summer. My first impression of Hiroshima city was it was very beautiful. There were many tall buildings and big shopping malls.

One male staff explained about the atomic bombs at the Atomic Bomb Dome. He told me when and how the building changed to the one we saw. I couldn't believe that the beautiful city was attacked by an atomic bomb. He said that there might be some evidence of the atomic bombs under this beautiful city. I realized the place I was standing at that time was also damaged by the atomic bomb. There was one old man who sat on the bench and fed some birds in Peace Park. The reason for feeding birds was not that he just had a free time. He was 10 years old and evacuated from the city

when the atomic bomb was dropped. However, his parents lived in the city, so they died. Since he lost his parents, he couldn't get anything to eat by himself. He decided to catch birds to eat. He fed birds because birds helped his life at that time. If I were him, I could not live by myself and catch birds for living. However, he did it when he was just 10 years old. I have never had a hard time getting food in my life. So, his story was beyond my imagination.

I looked at what damages Hiroshima had at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. The thing I was impressed the most was the pictures drawn by people who experienced the atomic bomb. The pictures reminded me of the picture of hell that I saw in a book when I was a young child. I couldn't believe that all the pictures were based on real life. I was reminded how the atomic bomb was terrible.

I think I'm very happy to live every day in peace. I should not forget that I can have this peaceful life based on the victims of the war and the atomic bomb.

I Visited Hiroshima

Nishiura Elementary School 5th Grade

Syo Kuzuno

I went to Hiroshima and visited the Atomic Bomb Dome and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum during last Golden Week with my family. My image of the buildings in Hiroshima was that they'd be run-down a little. However, it was different. The city of Hiroshima today was very calm and peaceful as if they didn't have the atomic bomb. Children played at the park, and adults went to work. It was a very peaceful city. However, my mind was changed when I arrived at the Atomic Bomb Dome. It was run-down like my image. I couldn't say anything.

When I was close to the Atomic Bomb Dome, it was solid-looking. I said to it, "You suffered from the atomic bomb. Must hurt so much.

" After looking at the Atomic Bomb Dome, I went to the museum. There were many pictures of the atomic bomb. My mind hurt every time I looked at a picture. My mother started to cry. All the people at the museum seemed to be hurt in their minds. I was scared to look at the next picture. I was scared more when I went downstairs. There were clothes with blood and pictures of the first-aid station. I was so scared and felt so bad.

I took a rest on the sofa and thought about one thing. We, the Japanese people, and American people are now very friendly, but people at that time had to have the war with American people. I imagined how hard it was for people at that time.

I moved to the place with a thousand paper cranes. There were so many paper

cranes. I rang the bell with my family and wished that the same thing would not happen again and all countries would live together in peace.

The thing I was impressed by the most was the thousand paper cranes. That is because they were made by many people all wishing for peace. They held many people's feelings.

Today is very peaceful even though there were many people that died in the war. I think many people now and then wish for peace. I feel sorry about the victims of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. On the other hand, I also feel that I am very lucky that I am not one of them. It is very hard for me to lose my life and family. I learned fear and sorrow of the war. I wish for peace forever.

Past and Future

Nishiura Elementary School 6th Grade

Ayaka Endo

Just one person can control and kill millions of people.

There are no animals scarier than human being.

The World War II occurred more than 70 years ago. Genocide of the Jewish people was done at that time. I think that the people could solve the problem by discussion not having the war. Some people ignored everyone's wishes. Bitter feelings and hatefulness became bigger and bigger. At last, the power effected children, too. They were taken away from their parents, houses, and towns and collected at concentration camps. They were forced to work while being shouted at angrily and treated violently. Things they could get for their works were more painful and fear, and one-way ticket to Auschwitz as a result.

I couldn't imagine what children at the concentration camps were thinking and how they were living at that time. However, if I were them, I would live every day being depressed.

Children there went to bed saying, "Good night. Let's talk about it tomorrow again," each other with smiles. However, some of them were lost to the world the next morning. This kind of thing was not a rare case at the concentration camps. Their hearts crying, "Help me," didn't reach anyone.

I'm so scared to imagine. If my friends who smiled until a while ago were lost to the world. If my parents who promised me to play together tomorrow were lost to the world. Who did crush people's lives? People did.

Someone would help me since I am alive in Japan today. However, what if nobody helped me? What if there was nothing but long a life in front of me, even though I

didn't have a house to live in and food to eat? I just imagined, but I was so depressed and couldn't control my feeling. I couldn't help feeling afraid. Who made that life come true? People did.

We have today because we had the past. We can have a future because we had past. People have the ability to take millions of others' lives away. On the other hand, people also have the ability to save millions of others' lives. There is no reason to pile up more victims on top of the previous victims of the war. We should imagine the fears of the victims and try not to repeat the same fear for people. If there were more people thinking like this, the lives taken away at the war would not be wasted.

I decided to keep thinking and imagining victims' sorrow and the inhumanity people could have for not wasting the victims' lives and not feeling the same fear again.

There are no animals scarier than human beings.

However, I think there are no animals which have the ability to live brightly more than human beings.

Fear of Atomic Bomb

Nishiura Elementary School 6th Grade

Rina Sugiyama

I researched about atomic bombs for my independent research during the summer vacation last year. I already read some books about the war before I did the research because I was interested in the war.

I watched the TV program about the Battle of Okinawa. The story was about a 7-year-old girl that had to separate with her family and live by herself during the war. I was very surprised with the story. She was younger than me, but she had to live by herself. I think it would be impossible for me. There must have been lots of victim's bodies on the street. There must have been many maggots in the river. I don't think I could survive that situation by myself.

I watch the news about Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6th every year. However, until the year before, I didn't know about the ceremony or even care about it. Last year, I noticed there was the ceremony and started to be interested in it. The ceremony last year got more attention because President Obama attended it.

I had some questions at that time such as "Why did President Obama attend the ceremony?" and "What is the atomic bomb?" Then, I decided to research about it on my own.

The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima by America on August 6th in 1945. About 140,000 people were killed by it. I was very scared of America and other

countries when I knew one atomic bomb could kill that many people at once. America might be able to make new atomic weapons which are capable of big damages if they try to now. Also, I worry about any wars that might be started anytime.

I learned things happened during the war in other countries. I am studying the story about Jew-baiting by Germany in my Japanese class. First thing I thought when I read the story was why Jewish people had to be treated like that. Children and women were also persecuted.

I imagined that Jewish children were very sad because they couldn't go to school, parks, or amusement parks where we can go anytime normally. I appreciated that I could go to school every day.

Jewish people at that time were killed if they didn't work. They couldn't talk. They couldn't do anything we can do today. It must have been very hard for them. I can't tell exactly how they felt at that time because I have never experienced their life, but I don't want to have a life like that.

There are many countries with atomic weapons. There are also many countries having wars. It is difficult for me to understand how people feel and how the war was terrible because I don't have experience of the war. However, I still don't want any wars to occur again. I can't prevent all wars from starting by myself, but I would not forget what I learned such as fear, sadness, and sorrow of the war. Then, I will share these things as much as possible. I believe it can be the first step for preventing wars.

The Summer I Learned the Fear of War

Nishiura Elementary School 5th Grade

Kenta Yoshizawa

I studied about life in old times in social studies class when I was in 3rd grade. At that time, I asked my grandfather to tell me about the war. He said, "I don't remember well about the war because I was too young at that time. I heard there were two air-raid shelters in the neighborhood." I also asked my other grandfather living in Kawasaki and he said, "We often ate vines of sweet potato. The air-raid shelter was built in my yard and the family put some food in there. When we had the Great Tokyo Air Raid, I could see the flame in the area of Tokyo. It was very scary."

Since my birthday is the same as the anniversary of the end of the war, I would like to know more about the war. I went to Hiroshima during the summer vacation.

When I visited the Atomic Bomb Dome, I learned the reason why it is still there. It was to show exactly what happened when the town got bombed to people in the future. When I visited Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb

Victims, I watched the movie about the experiences of the atomic bomb survivors. I thought their suffering and sorrow must be beyond my imagination. When I visited Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, I learned Hiroshima was the first place the atomic bomb dropped in the world, and many people's lives were taken away in a moment. I also learned there were many people who were still suffering from the damages.

The thing I was shocked the most in this trip was the truth that there were victims who were burned because they drank black rain which contained radioactivity. I was also shocked with the mother who was trying to save her children even though her skin was coming off. I really cried for those victims. Since I had a chance to visit Hiroshima, I would like to share my idea with everyone. We should not have nuclear weapons as well as wars. We should care for each other, and meet each other halfway. I think they are very important things for us to keep from having wars again.

For Our Own Country

Sawada Elementary School 6th Grade

Chinatsu Ishihara

I researched about “the war,” which is deeply related to “peace,” during this summer.

I focused on “suicide attack unit” above all. I watched the movie about those soldiers. They charged the American battle ship with their aircraft in the movie. I also watched the interview of the person who was in the suicide attack unit and survived because he became sick right before charging.

According to the interview, the unit was called “Shinpu” means God's wind. He also said that he became a member of the unit because he wanted to die. I thought he could say such things because he fought “for his own country.” I also started to think what “for our own country” means at the same time.

I didn't understand why he wanted to die. I wondered if it was because he was born and lived in the time of the war.

Japan is a peaceful and well-maintained country today. It is hard to imagine that we had the war 72 years ago. The number of people who experienced the war is decreasing every year and the peaceful life we have now is getting ordinary more and more. It is becoming hard for us to talk about the war.

I have heard about the war from my great grandmother. Her house was built in the mountains, so she didn't have a chance to be attacked. However, she often saw many battle planes flying in the sky. My great grandfather went to the war, she said.

Recently, we often hear the news about the relationship between North Korea and America. Their relationship is going bad and we're afraid of having World War III. I wish we could solve the problem without wars. If they start a war, Japan would be affected. I think our life would be very inconvenient and there would be many victims.

It is an inconceivable goal for all people in the world to live in peace. It is like a dream. I think no one can explain the meaning of world peace and what that state is it.

However, if all people living in the world try to do something for peace such as thinking of small peace, cooperation with each other, and thinking of good politics and trading equilibrium, the scale of peace could be balanced.

It might be impossible for us to balance everything well. However, I think it is very important for us to think “for peace,” not “for our own country.”

My Grandmother and the War

Ookaminami Elementary
School 4th Grade

Miyu Muramatsu

My grandmother means my great grandmother.

She will be 89 years old this year.

She experienced the war. The war she experienced was World War II. She was 14 years old at that time. She lived in Nagoya at that time. America started to attack Japan after World War II began. She said Nagoya was one of the big cities, so it was a very dangerous place.

Since one of her relatives managed the big factory called “Fuji Seisakujo” in Numazu, she and her family evacuated to Numazu. The factory was a munitions factory.

A munitions factory was a facility to develop, repair, stock, and supply military items such as weapons and ammunitions.

In other words, it was the facility to make, repair, keep, and hand off the things used for the war.

“Fuji Seisakujo” made machines for producing weapons.

My great grandmother worked at its office and first-aid room.

There was only one nurse, so she helped her. They had many people who were injured or burned every day. Her job was very busy.

The bombing of Numazu occurred around 1 o'clock in the morning on July 17th in 1945.

My great grandmother was in the strong and safe building on that day.

There was a rice field behind the factory. One woman and her baby were evacuated in to the rice field. However, the bomb was dropped there and they got burned. My great grandmother said she can't forget that moment.

While she was evacuating during the night, she looked at the flame in the direction of Atami which was behind Mt. Hakone.

I knew about the war from news or books before. I thought it was a story in different world and not related to me. I had never thought of people who were suffering from wars. The only things I felt about them were “Wars are very hard” and “They are very poor.”

However, the story of my great grandmother inspired me a lot after hearing from her in tears.

Japan is a pacifistic country which will not have wars.

The idea we should not have wars came from the people who experienced sad and painful feelings because of the war like my great grandmother did. That is why I can live peacefully in Japan without wars.

I think many people now don't know about the war and have forgotten about it. I decided not to forget my great grandmother's story and the war.
