



# OBON SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

January 2025

Iwo Jima, California Wildfires & the M69

*Part Four: Aftermath*

The California Wildfire is now labeled as the most destructive and costly natural disaster to ever hit an American city. It is an ongoing crisis, so the full extent of the damage will not be known for many months.



The firefighters admit they were overwhelmed. Orange County Fire Chief Brian Fennessy said, during an interview with CBS News, that the fire was "unstoppable." The 90 MPH winds made a situation beyond human ability to control.



Orange County residents like Chief Fennessy are probably the only people in America who can truly comprehend what the people of Japan must have felt when the low-flying B-29 planes suddenly appeared overhead and dropped jellied gasoline across their cities.



A B29 over Osaka, Japan looks for an undamaged part of the city to unload their M69 firebombs.

Only the concrete remained after the fires burned themselves out.



The city of Osaka was attacked on four separate occasions. One squadron reported on May 31st that their four hundred and fifty-eight B29s spent 92 minutes over the target before every plane had the opportunity to unload their payloads.



Many Los Angeles residents felt overwhelmed after searching through the rubble.

Most Japanese cities were built entirely of wood. The fires consumed everything.



A few Japanese survivors roam the streets in search of family and food.

Despite the availability of heavy equipment like trucks and front-end loaders, the people of Los Angeles will face years of rebuilding their homes, schools, businesses and communities.



Sixty-four Japanese cities were burned to the ground in 1945.



Stunned survivors huddled together in a burned Japanese city. A young woman is seen wearing her hand-quilted fabric hood known as "boku-zukin." Every woman possessed these shoulder-length hoods which served as their only defense against flying embers. The hood shielded their long flammable hair, and also the baby that was frequently strapped across a young mother's back.

The news on January 12 reported that 16 people had tragically perished in the Los Angeles fires. More were reported missing but their whereabouts were unknown. By comparison, the American military reported more than 100,000 Japanese had burned to death in one single attack.



In an interview with CBS News Fire Chief Brian Fennessy said, "These fires are going to be an impact on the community...the family...people...for many, many years to come. This is one of those fires, if not the fire, that they're going to be telling their grandchildren about."



The Japanese silently buried the dead, cleaned up the rubble and rebuilt their cities and homes. The survivors of those B29 attacks never spoke of the horror; their grandchildren were never told what occurred.

Coming next  
Part Five: **Conclusion**