

The Atomic Bomb Ends World War II

The atomic bomb was developed during the course of World War II. It was the result of the scientific discovery that an explosion powerful enough to destroy an entire city could be caused by splitting an atom. Many theories of Albert Einstein were the foundation for developing the bomb, and Einstein was the first to recognize that an atomic bomb could be made. Afraid of what might happen if such power wound up in the hands of Germany and Hitler, Einstein wrote to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt about the bomb. Roosevelt then set up the Manhattan Project.

The objective of the project was to research and develop an atomic bomb. Many of the scientists involved in the Manhattan Project had defected from Germany. The project succeeded, and the first atomic bomb was tested in the New Mexico desert on July 16th, 1945. The power of the explosion was equivalent to 18,000 tons of TNT. Scientists estimated that at its center, the explosion was three times hotter than the center of the sun.

Germany had already surrendered by this time, and World War II had ended in Europe. But though Japan was also defeated, they refused to surrender. The U.S. considered an invasion, but it was estimated that Allied casualties would number between half a million and a million soldiers. Instead, Truman decided to drop an atomic bomb.

An atomic bomb called Little Boy was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan on August 6th, 1945. The city was destroyed and thousands of people were killed. Three days later, when Emperor Hirohito still refused to surrender, a second atomic bomb, called Fat Man, was dropped on the city of Nagasaki. Japan surrendered to U.S. forces almost a week after the destruction of Nagasaki. The Japanese surrender officially ended World War II.

