

# Days of Peace and Remembrance: August 6 and 9, 2020

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of July 27, 2020)

This Historically Speaking column is from: Niki Stephanie Nicholas who is Site Manager of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in Oak Ridge as well as the Superintendent of Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area and Obed Wild & Scenic River. Please consider participating in the events she announces for August 6 and 9, 2020.

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The legacy of the Manhattan Project is complex and powerful. The secret cities of Oak Ridge, Los Alamos, and Hanford exemplified a massive wartime effort that allows us to reflect on the extraordinary lengths to which people and nations go to protect their futures. The Project resulted in a revolutionary science and engineering effort that fueled the race to create the world's first atomic bomb, provides a powerful illustration of technological innovation and collaboration, and offers us guidance and insight into solving today's complex problems.

We must also recognize that the Manhattan Project and the many complex decisions that led to the dropping of the bomb prompt us to confront the profound choices and consequences that we continue to struggle with today. Ultimately the Manhattan Project thrust humanity into the nuclear age and forever changed the world.

The Manhattan Project National Historical Park was established in November 2015, seventy years after the end of World War II. One of the challenges of managing a historical National Park Service unit is that the stewards must maintain its relevancy; otherwise park visitors will be less likely to care deeply about the historical event. Given the enormity of the impact of World War II across the globe,

I think that almost all of us have some personal resonance with that war. The linkages for me and my husband are many. My father-in-law came to Oak Ridge in 1943, fresh out of college with a degree in chemical engineering, as a member of the Special Engineer Detachment. After the war he spent his entire career at what would become Oak Ridge National Laboratory but always refused to work on weapons-related projects.

My grandparents were in occupied Europe during the war and my paternal grandmother spent months in a prisoner-of-war camp. After she was released, she never spoke a word of what happened to her during that terrible time.

And so, with that personal and individual resonance for that difficult point in time, we now approach a very important anniversary. Seventy-five years ago, the atomic bomb "Little Boy" was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945 at 8:16 am Japan local time, resulting in the death of tens of thousands of people. It was the first of the two times an atomic weapon has been intentionally used on a human population.

The second atomic weapon was dropped over Nagasaki, Japan, on Aug. 9, 1945, also killing tens of thousands. World War II came to an end less than a week later with the surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945. The surrender became official on September 2, 1945, six years and one day after World War II began when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.

Seventy five years later our nation is again dealing with complex and powerful issues. This upcoming anniversary reminds us that we need to remember our past and hopefully the remembrance can provide some salve for current day issues. The Manhattan Project National Historical Park will be commemorating the momentous events of August 6 and 9 in 1945 in several ways and we want to invite all to participate.

The origami crane is a traditional Japanese symbol of resilience, strength, and peace. On August 6, 1945, two-year old Sadako Sasaki was at home in Hiroshima, Japan. While Sadako sustained no obvious injuries in the bombing, ten years later she developed leukemia (called atomic bomb disease by some in

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Hiroshima) and was hospitalized. A Japanese legend says that folding a thousand origami cranes grants the folder a wish and so Sadako set to work creating her cranes. From her hospital bed, Sadako folded hundreds of cranes before her death just months later.

To celebrate those values of resilience, strength, and peace and to recognize the historical trauma of the atomic bombings, the park is soliciting paper cranes with messages of peace from the public. We invite all who may be interested to submit an origami crane with a personal message of peace written on it.

These cranes will be saved in a time capsule and opened in 2045 on the 100th anniversary of the atomic bombings. Visit <https://www.nps.gov/mapr/learn/historyculture/origami-cranes.htm> for more information and folding directions. Send your crane and message of peace by August 5, 2020 to the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, 461 W. Outer Drive, Oak Ridge, TN 37830.

To mark the important anniversary of 75 years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki in a ceremony that is meaningful and sensitive to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in Oak Ridge hopes to provide an opportunity for healing during a very turbulent time in our nation's history.

On August 6, the Park will host a sunrise ceremony at the Friendship Bell in Bissell Park with music from an Oak Ridge Civic Music Association quartet. Members of the public are invited to take turns ringing the bell. Each person can ring the bell for whatever reason that speaks to them. They can ring the bell for lives lost; they can ring the bell for social justice; they can ring the bell for service and sacrifice; they can ring the bell for peace.

After each bell-ringer has rung the bell, they are invited to record the reason why they rang the bell. Small pieces of paper and pens will be provided. Bell-ringers will then place the paper in a receptacle, and park staff will later catalog the papers for historical purposes.

We understand that not everyone who wants to ring the bell will be able to come to the August 6 event.

Therefore we have developed a virtual bell ringing option on the park's webpage (<https://www.nps.gov/mapr/learn/historyculture/75th-commemoration.htm>) which will be available from 6 am EDT on August 6 through midnight on August 9. Virtual bell-ringers will also be able to document their reason for ringing the Friendship Bell.

So, fold a crane with your message of peace for the ages or ring the Friendship Bell for your wish for world inspiration. We invite all to participate in some way. As for me, I will be folding a crane message of safe homelands for all and I will be ringing the bell for hope for the future.

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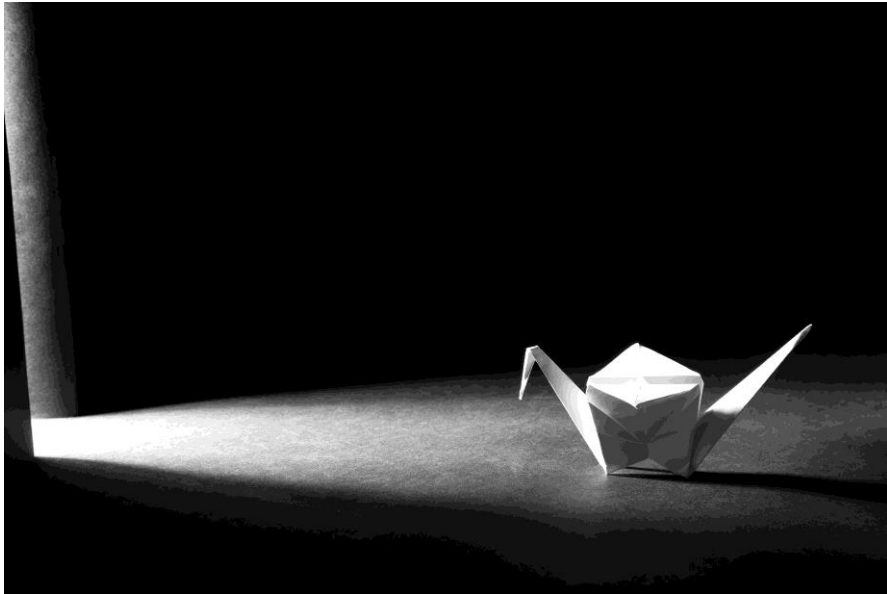
We are fortunate to have Niki leading the implementation efforts of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in Oak Ridge. It is my pleasure as Oak Ridge City Historian to be asked periodically to assist with historical aspects of the various initiatives she undertakes.

As you may know, I have been fortunate enough to have been involved with the creation of the park since before it was officially established and was able to serve on the Scholar's Roundtable as well as testify before Congress. So, I have a personal pride in the progress being made and am so thankful for Niki's leadership.

Please do participate, as appropriate for you during this awful pandemic, in the commemorative events being held by the Manhattan Project National Historical Park of Oak Ridge!

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Example of an origami crane – write your personal message of peace on one, fold it and contribute to the peace messages being collected by the Manhattan Project National Historical Park



The Oak Ridge International Friendship Bell in the Peace Pavilion of A. K. Bissell Park, which has become a community gathering place for peace – come join the events on August 6 and 9, 2020