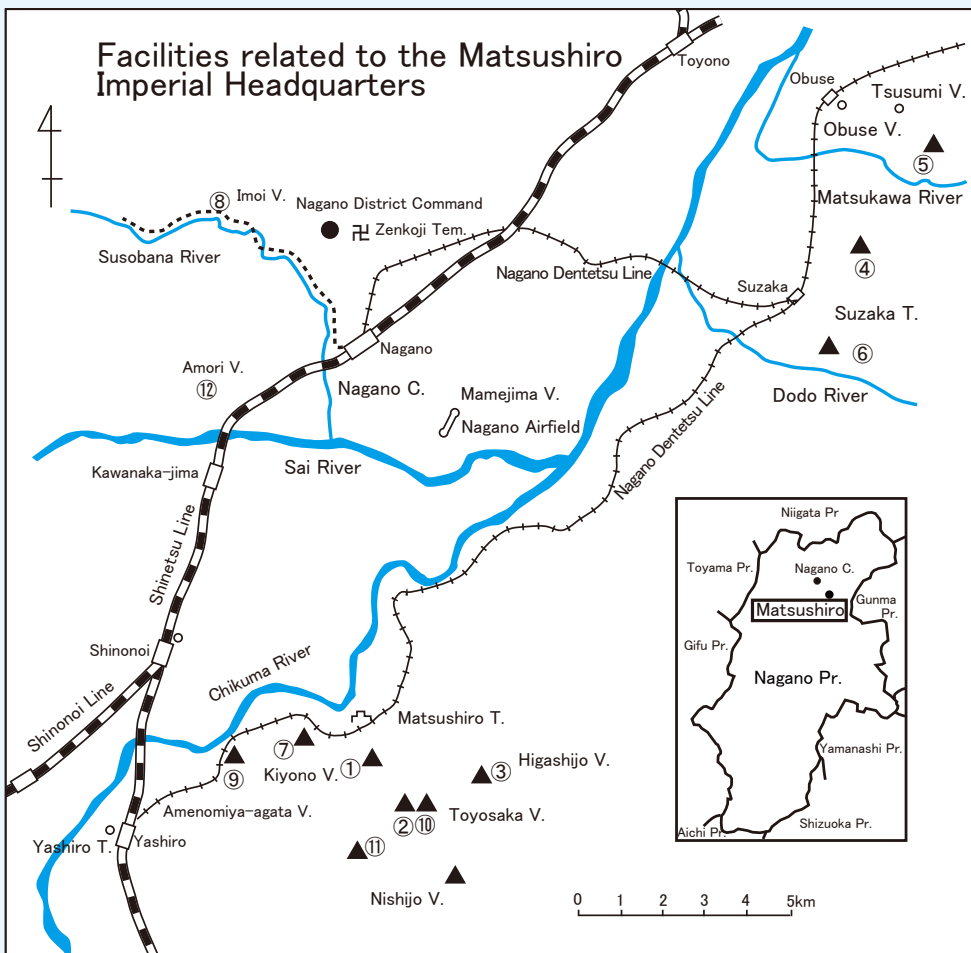


# 松代大本営

The Matsushiro Imperial Headquarters



Overview of the construction

	warehouse names	location	construction order date	usage
①	"i" storehouse	Matsushiro T.	1944.10.4	the government. NHK. telephone station
②	"ro" storehouse	Nishijo V.	1944.10.4	the Imperial Headquarters
③	"ha" storehouse	Toyosaka V.	1944.10.4	food storage
④	"ni" storehouse	Suzaka T.	1945.3.23	broadcasting facility for sending
⑤	"ho" storehouse	Tsusumi V.	1945.6.8	broadcasting facility for sending
⑥	"he" storehouse	Suzaka T.	1945.6.8	broadcasting facility for sending
⑦	"to" storehouse	Kiyono V.	1945.3.23	broadcasting facility for receiving
⑧	"chi" storehouse	Imoi V.	1945.7.12	the prince, the empress mother
⑨	"ri" storehouse	Amenomiya V.	1945.7.12	printing bureau
⑩	temporary Imperial Palace	Nishijo V.	1945.3.23	the emperor and empress, Ministry of the Imperial Household
⑪	"kashiko-dokoro"	Nishijo V.	1945.7.12	a palace sanctuary
⑫	Navy tunnel	Amori V.	1945.6.23	Ministry of the Navy, Imperial Japanese Army General Staff



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## ●What is “Daihon’ei” ?

“Daihon’ei” was the supreme headquarters under the supervision of the Emperor, the Supreme Commander of the Japanese Army and Navy. It commanded Japan’s armed forces in times of war, set the strategy for the Army and the Navy, and issued orders to the soldiers.

When the Japanese army fought and defeated the enemy, the Imperial Headquarters exaggerated the accomplishment, and when the Japanese army lost and suffered damage, it did not report it at all. Thus, Daihon’ei hid the true nature of the war and encouraged the people to go to war.

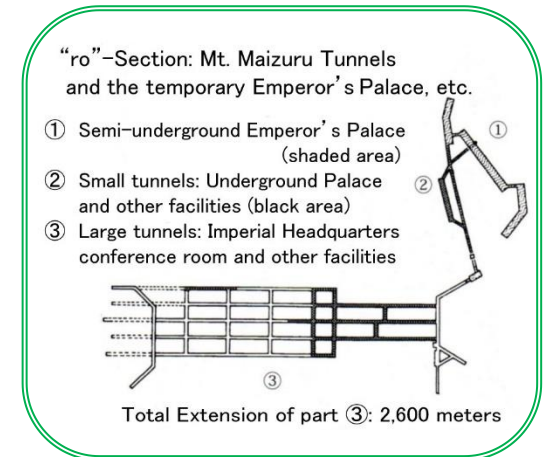
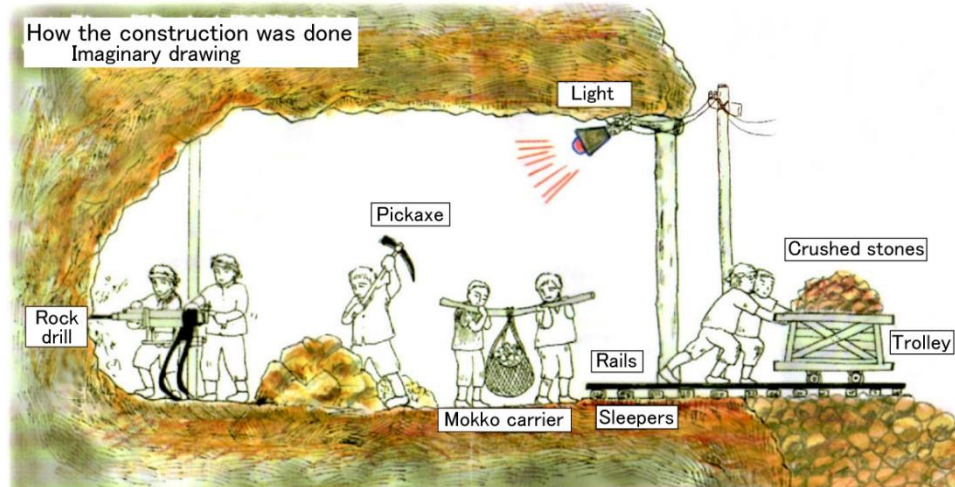
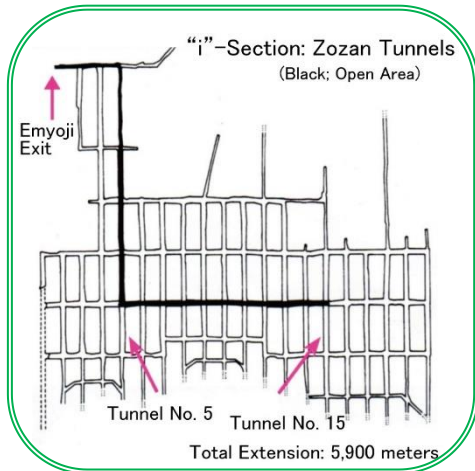
## ●Why was Matsushiro in Shinshu(Nagano Prefecture) chosen?

1. Geographical reason: it was neither too far nor too close to the capital Tokyo, and an airport was located nearby.
2. Geological reason: it had hard, solid bedrock that could withstand the bombs of enemy air raids.
3. Topographical reason: it is in a basin surrounded by mountains, making it difficult to bomb. Also, there is enough area to build vast facilities underground.
4. Mobilization: Shinshu(Nagano Prefecture) had a comparatively abundant labor force for the construction work.
5. Name Shinshu: The word Shinshu (信州), or the old name of Nagano Prefecture, is read in the same way as another Shinshu(神州), or the land of God. The name has a dignity and nuance suitable for the relocation of the emperor.

## ●What was the decisive battle on the mainland?

In 1944, the Japanese military, having lost control of the seas and air, decided to fight the “decisive battle on the mainland.” In July of the same year, the U.S. military succeeded in establishing bases for B-29 bombers on the Pacific island of Saipan and other locations. From January of the following year, not only military facilities throughout Japan but also all large and medium-sized cities were thoroughly bombed indiscriminately.

The people lived in fear of the air raids almost every night. In preparation for the “Hondo Kessen,” or the decisive battle on the mainland, even women and children were trained to fight with bamboo spears instead of weapons, being told to be the last person standing; in other words, to sacrifice their lives for the Emperor.



## ●Why was a large bunker dug in Matsushiro?

Around the end of the Asia Pacific War, Japan had little chance of winning the war against the United States, the UK, China, and other allied nations. The Imperial Headquarters was located in the Imperial Palace in the capital city of Tokyo, but as air raids on the mainland were imminent, it was decided to move the headquarters to a safer location in the countryside. It was planned that the emperor, the military, and government officials would be able to stay in underground tunnels and continue to lead the war.

The government, NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), and the Central Telephone Station were to be built underneath Mt. Zozan, the Imperial Headquarters and temporary Imperial Palace were to be built underneath Mt. Maizuru, and an area for food storage was to be built underneath Mt. Minakami. Those were all planned for the protection of Japan’s national polity.

Preparations began in 1944, and construction began on November 11 of that year. The construction of the tunnel leading to a ‘warehouse’ was carried out, and the fact that it was for “the Imperial Headquarters” was a top secret. It was about 80–90% complete in nine months, but construction was halted in August 1945 when Japan lost the war.

## ●Who dug the tunnels?

Many Japanese and Koreans were recruited to dig the tunnels. Around 6,500 Koreans, including those forcibly brought from the Korean peninsula, then Japan’s colony, were forced to live in unsanitary houses in Matsushiro with no freedom. They were forced to do dangerous work day and night. It is estimated that in April 1945, about 10,000 people were involved in the construction work, including Labor Service Corps and school children.

## ●How was Matsushiro related to Okinawa?

On April 1, 1945, the U.S. troops landed on the main island of Okinawa, and the only ground battle in Japan involving noncombatant residents went on until June 23 (now Okinawa Memorial Day), where a quarter of the prefecture’s population were killed. It is said that this three-month battle was a way to buy time to prepare for the eventual battle on the mainland, and the time for the completion of the tunnels at Matsushiro.

The Potsdam Declaration was issued on July 26, forcing Japan to surrender unconditionally, but the Japanese government ignored it and continued the war. An atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6 and on Nagasaki on the 9 respectively, and the Soviet Union joined the war. On August 14, Japan finally accepted the Potsdam Declaration, and the next day on August 15 the Emperor announced the end of the war to the nation with a radio broadcast called the Emperor’s address.