

HEADQUARTERS  
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY  
(PACIFIC)  
APO #234  
C/O POSTMASTER SAN FRANCISCO,

INTERROGATION NO. 44

PLACE TOKYO  
DATE 14 Oct. 1945.

Division of Origin MANPOWER, FOOD & CIVILIAN SUPPLIES

SUBJECT: Transportation Labor.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Mr. Kazutaka SHIRAISHI - Head of Bureau of Crews,  
Transportation Ministry.  
( 3 assistants)

Where interviewed his Office

Interrogator Lt. Comdr., DEWOLF

Interpreter Lieut. McCoy

Allied Officers Present None

Summary: Prewar and war training of merchant seamen, Navy requirements Armed Guard procurement, Merchant Marine Wages, Losses of Merchant men by submarine.

1. Mr. SHIRAIISHI, head of the Bureau of Crews, Transportation Ministry and three assistants---Mr. Kogor YAMAZAKI, Chief of Maintenance; Mr. Y. ASA, Chief of Labor Section, and Mr. H. SHIKUYA, Chief of Education Section---were interviewed for approximately two hours on 13 October at the office of Mr. SHIRAIISHI. Lt. McCoy acted as the interpreter, none of the Japanese speaking more than a few words of English.

2. Background of Mr. SHIRAIISHI: A graduate of the Naval Academy, SHIRAIISHI rose through the ranks to Rear Admiral before retiring to private life and undertaking his present job in October 1944. He commanded the Cruiser FURUTAKA in 1939, the Battleship KIRISHIMA in 1940, was the Chief of Staff of the SECOND Fleet in 1941 with rank of Rear Admiral, and Instructor in the Naval Academy and C-inC of a 10,000 ton Cruiser Division in 1943.

3. Pre-War Merchant Marine Training: Prior to the war, men volunteered for the merchant marine and those accepted were trained in one of three types of schools. The first type, consisting of two schools, was for the development of officers. The second, consisting of seven schools, was for the training of ordinary seamen to become petty officers. The third, consisting of seven schools, for common seamen. In addition, there were several training schools for various specialists. Yearly pre-war output was 500 for the first type schools; 300 for the second, and 1,120 for the third type. In addition, there were the graduates of the special schools and men who worked their way up from apprentices to a seaman status.

4. Wartime Training: Wartime conditions forced the Japanese to make several drastic changes in their training program. They enlarged classes in the first and second type schools and expanded the third class from seven to 23 schools. The period of instruction in the first type was reduced from 5½ years to two years, nine months; the second type from six years to three years, six months; and in the third type it remained at one year for the seven original schools and three months for the sixteen new ones.

5. General Narrative: At the outset of the war, Japan had between 130,000 and 140,000 men in their merchant marine. This included crewmen on all types of ships down to and including 20-ton auxiliary sailing vessels. The officials said this number was satisfactory to carry on Japan's peacetime commerce and this seems borne out by the length of instruction in the schools and the fact that the first two types enrolled only selected students. Prior to the war, the Bureau of Crews had cognizance only of some phases of the training program. Shortly after the beginning of the war, however, the Bureau took over control of all men on ships of 500 tons or more.

With the taking over of this control, the Bureau immediately launched campaigns to recruit more men for the merchant marine. They used posters, newspaper and moving pictures, advertisements, and later on extra rations of clothing, food, beer, etc., to entice men into the service. And although the merchant marine increased from 130,000 - 140,000 at the outset of the war to 210,000 at the time of Japan's surrender, the officials did not consider the recruitment successful. Overwork resulting in a loss of efficiency, sickness (also the result of overwork and lack of nutrition) marooning of crews whose ships had been sunk and the actual loss of and injury to crewmen, actually created a shortage in merchant crews, the officials said. This shortage began to be felt in 1942 and reached its most acute stage in the period of April to Sept. 1944. This situation, officials said, was created by the extended lines of communication, U.S. submarine and aircraft attrition, increased production of small craft requiring some experienced crewmen, and the lack of volunteers for maritime service because of the increased violence of the war. Between Sept. 1944 and the end of the war, the crew problem was eased by the heavy Japanese shipping losses.

Despite the labor shortage, officials stressed that it was carried on at all times on a voluntary basis and that they never resorted to conscription. Queried on use of foreign seamen, they declared the number was very small and there was no impressment. They likewise said that rather than reduce the size of crews, they were forced to increase them in many cases because of the inefficiency of the green hands. For example, an average 6,000 ton Japanese cargo ship normally would carry a crew of 50, less armed guard. Because of the wartime conditions, this number had to be increased 20% to efficiently sail the ship.

6. Navy Requirements: The officials said that the Navy was not too unreasonable in its drafting of merchant sailors. Although the Navy desired men of 10 or more years experience, the backbone of the merchant marine, they apparently co-operated to some extent with the Bureau of Crews in allowing these men to remain on merchantmen. When the merchant marine reached its desperate period of September 1944 the Navy drafted no men from the merchant marine, the officials declared. No figures were obtained immediately as to the number of merchant sailors drafted by the navy.

7. Armed Guard: Armed Guardsmen, spotters, etc., were all furnished by the Navy and were not under the cognizance of the Bureau of Crews. Figures on the number of men in the merchant marine, used elsewhere in this report, do not include Armed Guardsmen or other military men furnished by the Army or Navy to protect the ships. The officials said that from the mid-war period on, only ships of 5-6,000 tons or more normally carried armed guards whereas earlier all ships of any size carried them. Asked if there was any program to train crewmen on smaller ships to defend themselves from air and submarine attacks, the officials replied in the negative.

8. Merchant Marine Wages: Although trouble was experienced in obtaining volunteers for maritime service because of the danger and because wages were lower in comparison with land jobs, nothing was done about increasing wages until March 1945. At that time the basic wage of officers and engineers was raised 12½ percent and that of ordinary seamen 16.6 percent. However, increases in bonuses and rations, etc., made the overall increase for officers, 48 percent and that of ordinary seamen 59 percent.

9. Marine Transport Overall Management Bureau of the Imperial Headquarters: In June 1945, because of the immense shipping losses, it was decided to place the merchant marine and all army and navy transports under the control of the Marine Transport Overall Management Bureau of the Imperial Headquarters (Kaiun Sokau Bu.) The officials claimed that this move was unsuccessful, largely because the new bureau could not solve the complexity of the marine transportation situation.

10. Wartime losses: A table of estimated losses in the merchant marine is appended to this report as Appendix A. In addition, the officials estimated that between 8-10,000 merchant sailors were incapacitated by illness at the termination of the war.

11. Submarines most feared: Asked which contributed most to the demoralization of merchant sailors, the officials named the submarine. Seamen were in constant fear, night and day, of submarine attacks, they said. Aircraft were feared to a lesser degree because (1) if the ship was radar-equipped, they had advance warning and (2) inaccuracy of bombing. Mines were the least feared of all.

12. Evaluation: When the several charts, including employment figures since 1931, are produced it seems likely that the maritime phase of the manpower survey will have been adequately covered. Care was taken to go into considerable detail with regard to the merchant marine because of its importance in Japan's wartime economy. Some records which might be of local interest were either not kept or destroyed, but it is believed that all pertinent data has either been obtained or is now being prepared. The four officials were cooperative in every respect. SHIRAIISHI is available, as are the other officials, for additional interviews, if required, and asks that he be given at least three days advance notice so that he can make his plans accordingly.

ESTIMATED MERCHANT MARINE CREW CASUALTIES FOR BOMBING, ETC.,  
IN GREAT EAST ASIA WAR.

SOURCE: Bureau of Crews, Transportation Ministry.

Type of Action	Number Dead And Missing	Wounded	Others*	Total
Air	8,100	1,200	25,500	34,800
Submarine	16,200	2,400	51,000	69,600
Mines	2,700	400	8,500	11,600
Total	27,000	4,000	85,000	116,000

\* Marooned, Ill or suffering from minor wounds.