

# The Korean War and Japanese Ports: Support for the UN Forces and Its Influences

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## Introduction

When the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950, Japan had been under the occupation of the Allied Forces. Nevertheless, Japan achieved its role as a rear base for the supply and transit of soldiers and materials. What linked the Korean Peninsula—the battlefield—and Japan—the rear base—were the sea and air transport routes, and what supported the sea transport routes were the Japanese ports. These ports in fact constituted important hubs connecting the battlefield and the rear base.

During the same period, new laws pertaining to ports were established. These were the Port and Harbor Law (Law No. 218 of 1950) and the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law (Law No. 220 of 1950). The Port and Harbor Law established on the principle that the ports should be managed by local administration.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the aim of the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law was to establish a peaceful Japan by converting the former naval bases<sup>2</sup> into industrial port cities. Therefore, right when Japanese ports were changing to new ports, the nation was thrown into the Korean War, which set back their efforts.

The Korean War had a decisive influence on the path of post-war Japan,<sup>3</sup> which prompted studies on its political and economic influences, its history, and on the rearmament of Japan. However, although some literature exists on Japan's support to the Korean War,<sup>4</sup> no studies have ever tried to focus on ports. This article discusses the role Japanese ports played during the Korean War and how they were affected by the war. With more than half a century having elapsed since the Korean War, this may be an opportune time to reexamine the support Japanese ports provided and their influence.

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<sup>1</sup> Kazuo Kokubu, *Shittemoraitai Nihon no Minato (Guidebook on Japanese Ports)* (Tokyo: Kindai Bungeisha, 2000), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Imperial Naval Districts based in Yokosuka city, Kure city, Sasebo city and Maizuru city.

<sup>3</sup> Fuji Kamiya, *Chosen Sensou-Bei Chuu Taiketsu no Genkei (Korean War-Origin of Discord between U.S. and China)* (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1966), p. 178.

<sup>4</sup> Hideo Miki, "Shien to Iu Na no Bouei Senryaku (Defense Strategy as Support)," *Bouei Daigakkou Kiyō (The Studies of Humanities and Social Sciences)*, Vol.51 (September 1985). Shizuo Yamasaki, *Shijitsu de Kataru Chosen Senso Kyouryoku no Zenyou (Whole Aspect of Cooperation with the Korean War from Historical Facts)*, (Tokyo: Hon no Izumisha, 1998). Hisao Tsuruta, "Senryouka Nihon de no Chosen Senso Koho Shien (Korean War's Logistical Support in Occupied Japan)," *Boueigaku Kenkyu (Defense Studies)*, Vol. 27 (June 2002). Tsuneo Tanaka, "Chosen Senso ni Okeru Nihon no Kokurengun eno Kyouryoku-Sono Kihon Shisei to Yakuwari (Japanese Support to the United Nations Forces in the Korean War)," *Bouei Daigakkou Kiyō(The Studies of Humanities and Social Sciences)*, Vol. 88 (March 2004).

## 1. Ports on the Eve of the Korean War

### (1) Establishment of the Port and Harbor Law and the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law

Administration of ports was based since the Meiji era on the concept that they are national structures that should be administered by local governors, and they were administered on the basis of unwritten rules.<sup>5</sup> However, the Port and Harbor Law brought a fundamental change to this tradition. Under the orders of the General Headquarters (GHQ), administrative bodies were, as required by law, to be established at major ports as of December 16, 1949. The Port and Harbor Law, whose purpose was to grant full regional autonomy regarding administrative operation of ports and to provide local authorities with the right to establish port and harbor administrative bodies that best meet the national and regional benefits,<sup>6</sup> was promulgated and implemented on May 31, 1950.

Meanwhile, occupation forces were also stationed at the Yokosuka Port, Kure Port, Sasebo Port and Maizuru Port where they had requisitioned major facilities. Later, the port facilities were partially returned to Japan, and the building of industrial ports began, starting with the use of former military facilities by private companies. To facilitate this end, the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law was established on June 28, 1950.

### (2) Damage of Ports Caused by World War II and their Restoration

This section looks at the removal of sunken ships and clearance of mines to examine the damage caused by World War II.

Due to the damage caused by the war and lack of maintenance, the country's capacity to manage ports had significantly decreased. Bombing targeting ports mainly hit ships, as a result of which sunken ships needed to be removed from ports and sea routes. At the end of the war, more than one million tons of ships had either sunk or were stranded.<sup>7</sup> Removal of sunken ships at major ports was completed in 1948.

At the end of the war, approximately 55,000 moored mines laid by the Imperial Japanese Navy and 6,500 influence mines laid by the U.S. Forces remained in seas close to Japan, hindering navigation. Clearance of these mines was carried out by Japan under the instructions of the GHQ. A Department of Mine Sweep was created within the Ministry of the Navy, and by October 1945, a systematic clearance program was introduced, consisting of 348 vessels and about 10,000 personnel. Following the abolishment of the Ministry of the Navy, mine sweeping was carried out by the 2nd Demobilization Agency, the Mobilization Agency, the Marine Transportation Bureau, the Ministry of Transport, and ultimately by the Japan Coast

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<sup>5</sup> Daido Tsushinsha, ed., *Kowan Nenkan (Annual Report of Port) 1954 version* (Tokyo: Daido Tsushinsha, 1954), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Eiji Takemae and Takafusa Nakamura, *GHQ Nihon Senryo Shi (GHQ History of Japanese Occupation)*, Vol. 54, Marine Transportation, (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 1998), p. 66. In Yokosuka, 371 sunken ships with a total of 20,998 G.T. while in the Shimonoseki Strait, 36 sunken ships with a total of 65,963 G.T. remained.

Guard.<sup>8</sup> Mine clearance was promptly carried out to ensure the safety of sea routes, and in 1948, the major Japanese ports were declared to be safe for navigation.<sup>9</sup> Later, personnel and organizations engaged in mine sweeping were reduced by order of the GHQ. Although clearance workers were exempted from deportation as specified in the *Kyu Syokugyou Gunjin Tsuihourei* (Purge of Former Military Officers Act), the clearance personnel had decreased to approximately 1,400 in 1949, and 79 vessels used in clearance remained in June 1950.<sup>10</sup>

### (3) Requisition of Ports by Occupation Forces

When World War II ended, there were a total of approximately 600 ports in Japan. The major ones among them including the Yokohama Port, Kobe Port, Kanmon Port, Tokyo Port and Hakata Port, and former naval bases including those in Yokosuka, Kure, Sasebo and Maizuru had been requisitioned by occupation forces. This section focuses on the situation surrounding the requisition of the Yokohama and Kobe ports.

As a major base during the Japanese occupation, many of Yokohama's lands, buildings and port facilities had been taken over to be used for the occupation forces' military purposes.<sup>11</sup> The requisition of the Yokohama port was carried out on September 2—the day the formal Instrument of Surrender was signed—and 3, 1945. In addition to full requisition of piers such as the government-owned Osanbashi Pier and Shinko Pier, and the city-owned Takashima Pier and the Yamanouchi Pier, the occupation forces also requisitioned the buoys, anchorages, control over the restrictions applied to navigation lights in the harbor, storage shelters, and storehouses. The requisition of all major public facilities in the port zone put the Yokohama Port in a state of virtual paralysis.<sup>12</sup> The process of returning these facilities was excessively slow, and in March 1950, following a series of partial returns and reoccupation, 84% of the public harbor facilities were still under occupation.

Meanwhile, the Kobe Port was requisitioned at the end of September 1945. The main port facilities including the Shinko Pier No. 1 to Pier No. 6, the Naka Pier and the Hyogo Pier, as well as Kawanishi, Sumitomo, Mitsubishi and Mitsui storehouses were under occupation.<sup>13</sup> Although the Hyogo Pier and Naka Pier were returned to Japan between 1946 and 1947, the main port facilities were still under occupation in 1950.

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<sup>8</sup> Operations and Plans Department of Maritime Staff Office, ed., *Kouro Keikai Shi (History of Sweeping the Sea Route)* (Tokyo: Maritime Staff Office of Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, 1961), pp. 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> Takemae and Nakamura, *GHQ Nihon Senryou Shi*, Vol. 54, Marine Transportation, p. 64.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>11</sup> Yokohamashi Somu Kyoku Shishi Hensyushitsu, ed., *Yokohama Shishi, Dai 2 Kan, Ge (History of Yokohama City, Vol. 2, Part 2)* (Yokohama: Yokohama City, 2000), p. 327.

<sup>12</sup> Yokohamashi Somu Kyoku Shishi Hensyushitsu, ed., *Yokohama Shishi, Dai 2 Kan, Jyo (History of Yokohama City, Vol. 2, Part 1)* (Yokohama: Yokohama City, 1999), p. 321.

<sup>13</sup> Teruo Kobayashi, *Nihon no Minato no Rekishi (History of the Japanese Port)* (Tokyo: Seizando Syoten, 1999), p. 86.

#### (4) Administration of Japanese Ships

During World War II, Japan implemented a wartime economic system by managing the personnel and supplies for the prosecution of the war and seeking tighter government control. Under the National Mobilization Act, the government also strengthened the control policy in the area of transportation. In marine transportation, the Maritime Union Act, the Shipping Control Act, the Port Shipping Industry Control Act, and the Wartime Shipping Control Act were promulgated, and in April 1942, the *Senpaku Unei Kai* (Merchant Marine Commission) was established, which undertook overall management of marine transportation.

Following Japan's surrender on August 26, 1945, all Japanese ships were ordered to stop and those at sea to berth at a nearest port.<sup>14</sup> On September 2, that is, the day the formal Instrument of Surrender was signed, an order was issued forbidding all ships to anchor. The following day, administration by the GHQ of more than 100 G.T. of ships was confirmed. As a result, Japanese ships were placed under the control and supervision of the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Although at first the GHQ fleet liaison department undertook the administration of the ships, the establishment of the Naval Shipping Control Authority for Japanese Merchant Marine (SCAJAP) within the GHQ on October 10 resulted in the creation of an overall management system for the operation, construction, modification, repair and disposal of Japanese ships.<sup>15</sup>

On November 9, 1945, the GHQ ordered the establishment of a Civilian Merchant Marine Committee (CMMC) represented by people such as Japanese shipowners, agencies, longshoremen, port suppliers and fuel suppliers. The government proposed to have the existing the *Senpaku Unei Kai* serves as the CMMC, of which the GHQ approved. The *Senpaku Unei Kai* existing due to the provisional extension of the Wartime Shipping Control Act was also now under the supervision of the SCAJAP. Although the establishment of such an organization that undertakes overall management of the operation of merchant ships may seem like a slight deviation from democratization, that is, the basic principle of occupation, this was simply one realistic way to address the complex situation at the time.<sup>16</sup> On April 1, 1950, the Japanese ships were released from the control of the *Senpaku Unei Kai* and were granted the freedom to operate in the private sector. The *Senpaku Unei Kai* was thus renamed the *Syousen Kanri Iin Kai*.<sup>17</sup>

#### (5) Loan Ships from the United States

World War II left the Japanese merchant fleet at a total size (sum of ships with 100 G.T. or more) of approximately 1,200,000 G.T. from the pre-war figure of 6,100,000 G.T. The loss of

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<sup>14</sup> Yoshiya Ariyoshi, *Senryouka no Nihon Kaiun (Japanese Marine Transportation under Occupation)* (Tokyo: Kokusai Kaiun Shimbunsha, 1961), p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> Yoshikazu Miwa, *Senryouki no Nihon Kaiun (Japanese Marine Transportation during Occupation Period)* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha, 1992), p. 88.

<sup>16</sup> Takemae and Nakamura, *GHQ Nihon Senryou Shi*, Vol. 54, Marine Transportation, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Transport, ed., *Kaijyo Roudo Jyunenshi (Ten Years History of Marine Labor)* (Tokyo: Kaijyo Roudou Kyokai, 1957), p. 37.

ships had reached almost 8,300,000 G.T. in total, including hastily-built ships during the war.<sup>18</sup> The number of navigable ships was 658, with 915,408 G.T.<sup>19</sup>

Confronted with such devastating situation of Japan's marine transport industry, the GHQ urgently needed to secure the ships tonnage required for deployment of occupation troops, repatriation transport, and keeping domestic economy. In order to compensate for the lack of ships, the United States loaned 215 ships to Japan in January 1946.<sup>20</sup> These ships were gradually retrofitted and used for repatriation with Japanese seamen serving as crewmembers. Repatriation carried out smoothly, and in 1946, 1947 and 1948, 5,090,000 men, 740,000 men and 300,000 men were repatriated, respectively, putting an end to that mission in just about 3 years.<sup>21</sup>

As the repatriation operations progressed, there was tonnage to spare and thus the unnecessary Liberty ships and Landing Ship Tanks (LST) were gradually sent back to the United States. By 1950, a few cargo ships and 39 LSTs were active under the *Syousen Kanri In Kai*.

#### (6) U.S. Forces in Japan and Military Sea Transportation Services

Following World War II, the occupation forces had a total strength of 400,000 men, but this figure had been reduced to 110,000 on the eve of the Korean War. The U.S. Army stationed in Japan consisted of four divisions of the 8th Army and one regiment in Okinawa. The units of the 8th Army, the total number of which was 55,000, were dispersed and stationed across a wide area from Hokkaido to Kyushu.

The U.S. Navy stationed in Japan right before the Korean War consisted of surface forces under the control of the Commander Naval Forces, Far East and no aviation forces. Japan served as the base for Task Force 96, which was composed of 17 vessels. In addition, Task Force 90, composed of 5 vessels, had just arrived at Japan for the exercise of amphibious operations.<sup>22</sup>

The base facilities of the U.S. Navy in Japan were kept to a minimum. With no logistic base, there were also no facilities for Pacific Fleet support units that dealt with planning and coordination. The Yokosuka base had a small repair facility, but not technical plant that would repair torpedoes or electronic devices. There were approximately 5,000 soldiers, a supply depot to support their families, a weapons site with 3,000 tons of ammunition and a naval hospital. At the Sasebo base, there were only 5 officers and 100 petty officers, but the base

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<sup>18</sup> Takemae and Nakamura, *GHQ Nihon Senryou Shi*, Vol. 54, Marine Transportation, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82. The 215 ships are composed of 100 Liberty Class ships, 100 Tank Landing ships, 6 Hospital ships, 9 small auxiliary ships.

<sup>21</sup> Miwa, *Senryouki no Nihon Kaiun*, p. 84.

<sup>22</sup> Saseboshi Shi Hensan Inkaei, ed., *Sasebo Shishi: History of Military Port*, Vol. 2, (Sasebo: Sasebo City, 2003), pp. 418-419. The Task Force 96 was composed of 1 light cruiser, 4 destroyers, 1 submarine, 10 minesweepers and 1 frigate ship of the Australian Navy. The Task Force 90 was composed of 1 amphibious command ship, 1 amphibious transport dock ship, 1 attack cargo ship, 1 tank landing ship and 1 fleet tug.

was left with a good port and immense dock built by the Imperial Japanese Navy.<sup>23</sup>

In the United States, the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) was established in October 1949, based on the National Security Act of 1947. The MSTS later became a global shipping organization, with plans to establish headquarters in London, New York, San Francisco and Tokyo. In January 1950, Captain Alexander F. Junker—the deputy commander of the MSTS in charge of the western Pacific—arrived in Tokyo to establish the command headquarters, set to take place on July 1. The ships under his command were not suited for shipping purposes, consisting only of 10 cargo ships with carrying capacity of 500 tonnages, 2 coastal transport ships able to transport 100 men and 6 LSTs.<sup>24</sup>

## 2. Support for the UN Forces and Conditions of the Ports

Around the time when the Port and Harbor Law was established in June 1950, Japan had completed the most urgent tasks of repairing the damage caused by World War II involving their major ports such as removal of sunken ships and clearance of mines. Other operations such as the transportation of occupying troops and repatriation transportation were also almost complete, and Japan was gradually returning the ships loaned by the United States. The Constitution of Japan, which went into effect on May 3, 1947, was established based on the principles of pacifism and democratization. Efforts toward democratization were thus made for port and harbor administration as well as management of seamen and ships. Unfortunately, the process of returning to Japan the ports necessary for the activities of the occupation forces was not moving forward.

The outbreak of the Korean War thus greatly affected the Japanese ports. Occupation forces across Japan were soon dispatched to the Korean Peninsula as UN Forces. The following section describes how and under what circumstances Japanese ports supported the UN Forces. This article focuses on the two major ports, namely the Yokohama Port and the Kobe Port, followed by the Kanmon Port (Kitakyushu Port and Shimonoseki Port<sup>25</sup>) situated close to the Korean Peninsula. It then focuses on the Sasebo Port, Yokosuka Port and Kure Port, which pursued to rebuild themselves as industrial port cities.

### (1) Yokohama Port

Yokohama Port, developed as the central station of Japan, had many of its port facilities requisitioned by the occupation forces following the end of World War II. Its return to Japan was significantly delayed due to the outbreak of the Korean War, resulting in its complete paralysis as a commercial port. Although the numbers of takeovers in Yokohama City showed

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<sup>23</sup> James A. Field, Jr., *History of United States Naval Operations Korea* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 46-47.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup> In accordance with the Port and Harbor Law, the Kitakyushu Port (Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka) and Shimonoseki Port (Shimonoseki City, Yamaguchi) together form the Kanmon Port. The Kitakyushu Port is the combination of Moji Port, Kokura Port and Dokai Port, established with the birth of Kitakyushu City following the merger of Moji City, Kokura City, Yawata City, Wakamatsu City and Tobata City in 1963.

an upward trend until 1951, with the conclusion of the peace treaty, they were gradually returned to Japan from 1952 onward, reducing the occupied area.<sup>26</sup> The city-owned Yamanouchi Pier was returned in December 1951, and in February 1952 the Osanbashi Pier was released. However, the Shinko Pier and Mizuho Pier—serving as the most important piers—were still under occupation.<sup>27</sup>

With fierce attacks from the North Korean Forces in early July 1950, the U.S. Forces decided to dispatch reinforcement units. The 1st Cavalry Division—stationed in Asaka City in Saitama Prefecture—was sent from Yokohama Port on July 15, arriving in Pohang City from July 18 to 22.<sup>28</sup>

Yokohama Port was not only a transport terminal for armed personnel but also became a logistical base of the UN Forces, and the Mizuho Pier was the space for ammunition carried out from the U.S. Forces ammunition depot. The Japan Logistical Command (JLC) was established on August 25, 1950. Its tasks included logistics and administration support to the UN Forces in the Korean Peninsula and to the combat troops and port units stationed in Japan, as well as cooperation with the Far East Naval / Air Forces and the GHQ.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to railway transportation, a railway transportation office under the 3rd Rail Transport Command of the 8th Army was established at each major station, which was used for the transportation of men deployed toward Kyushu. From late July 1950, 15-car freight trains were running regularly from Yokohama to Sasebo ports, and the operation of “the Red Ball Express” began, which connected Sasebo and Pusan. In addition, during the times of the impending Inchon amphibious landing operations, Korean soldiers were transported from Korea to the Fuji training range via Yokohama Port, and then transported back to Korea via the same port.<sup>30</sup>

Regardless of the fact that the majority of the port facilities were requisitioned by the occupation forces, Yokohama Port served as an international trade port handling mainly imports, and remained the principal port of Japan, surpassing Kobe Port both in terms of tonnage tax income and scale of overseas passenger and cargo transportation.<sup>31</sup> However, physical distribution consisted of transportation by barge because the piers were occupied.

Possibilities of attacks by North Korean Forces could not be denied even in Yokohama

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<sup>26</sup> Yokohamashi Somu Kyoku Shishi Hensyushitsu, ed., *Yokohama Shishi*, Vol. 2, Part 1, pp. 223-224. The occupied area of all facilities was approximately 8,620,000m<sup>2</sup> in 1945, approximately 12,050,000 m<sup>2</sup> in 1951 and approximately 9,710,000 m<sup>2</sup> in 1956. The occupied areas were particularly vast in Naka-ku and Kanagawa-ku which included the port district.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332.

<sup>28</sup> Hisao Tsuruta, “Senryouka Nihon de no Chosen Senso Koho Shien (Korean War Logistical Support in Occupied Japan),” *Boueigaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 27 (June 2002), p. 36.

<sup>29</sup> Yokohamashi Somu Kyoku Shishi Hensyushitsu, ed., *Yokohama Shishi*, Vol. 2, Part 2, pp. 58-59.

<sup>30</sup> Nihon Kokuyu Tetsudo Gaimu Buchou, ed., *Tetsudo Syusen Syorishi (History of Railroad after War)*, (Tokyo: Japan National Railways, 1957), p. 263. From August 19 to 23, 1950, they were taken from Yokohama Port to Soubudaishita Station, from which they were sent to Gotemba, Fujiyoshida and Nishikoizumi (17 trains, 73 cars). From September 7 to 8, they were sent to Yokohama Port from Gotemba, Fujiyoshida and Nishikoizumi (21 trains, 46 cars)

<sup>31</sup> Yokohamashi Somu Kyoku Shishi Hensyushitsu, ed., *Yokohama Shishi*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 328. The tonnage tax income in 1951 was 29,200,000 yen for Yokohama and 23,600,000 yen for Kobe. The scale of overseas passenger and cargo transportation in 1951 was 26,837 persons in Yokohama and 9,363 persons in Kobe.

which was located far away from the Korean Peninsula. In October 1950, in preparation for air defense and disaster planning, the JLC requisitioned parks in Negishi, Koyasudai, Okamura and Hanamidai where they established anti-aircraft artillery positions.<sup>32</sup> Douglas MacArthur had declared the United States would bomb South Manchuria including the railway bridge over the Yalu River, and thus air defense measures were devised to gear up for a counter attack against bombings.<sup>33</sup>

## (2) Kobe Port

Another port equally as important as Yokohama Port is Kobe Port. Just as with Yokohama Port, many facilities were requisitioned by the occupation forces. The return of the main facilities to Japan was slow, and even Pier No. 5 which was returned to allow for food imports was once again under occupation.<sup>34</sup> In 1952, although other facilities including Piers No. 1 to 4 were returned, Piers No. 5 and 6, the base of Pier No. 1 and Takahama Quay remained under occupation.

Kobe Port was also involved in the transportation of men for the deployment of ground troops. The 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division (stationed in Izumi City, Osaka) was sent from Kobe Port on July 8, 1950 and landed at Pusan on July 10. Meanwhile, the 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division (stationed in Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture) was sent from Kobe Port on July 13 and landed at Pusan on July 15.<sup>35</sup>

Attacks of the North Korean Forces continued in August 1950, and the UN Forces were eventually driven to an area near Pusan on the south end of the Korean Peninsula. In response, plans to execute the Inchon amphibious landing proceeded, and embarkation preparations of the landing forces were moving ahead at Kobe Port. Preparations to transport the 1st Marines and military supplies were executed and LSTs, transport ships and cargo ships left Kobe Port by September 12.<sup>36</sup> Forty-seven LSTs (of which 30 LSTs had Japanese men on board) and 66 cargo ships were on route to Inchon as the Tractor Group of the amphibious forces.<sup>37</sup>

In 1951, the Kobe City Government became the port administrator and established a campaign policy to promote the return of port facilities to Japan. On July 12, a petition on the return of the Kobe Port area was submitted to the JLC, the Kobe Base Command and the Department of Transportation's port authority,<sup>38</sup> after which the city government, led by the mayor of Kobe City, continued to lobby the U.S. Forces and Japanese Government.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>33</sup> Yokohamashi Somu Kyoku Shishi Hensyushitsu, ed., *Yokohama Shishi*, Vol. 2, Part 2, p. 62.

<sup>34</sup> Kobe Shi Komu Soukyoku, ed., *Kobe Kou Shi Gaisetsu (General History of Kobe Port)* (Kobe: Kobe City, 1961), p. 189.

<sup>35</sup> Tsuruta, *Senryouka Nihon de no Chosen Senso Koho Shien*, p. 36.

<sup>36</sup> Roy E. Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1961), p. 501.

<sup>37</sup> Field, *History of United States Naval Operations Korea*, p. 187.

<sup>38</sup> Kobe Shi Komu Soukyoku, ed., *Kobe Kou Shi Gaisetsu*, p. 187.



(3) Kanmon Port (Kitakyushu Port, Shimonoseki Port)

Perhaps the Korean War felt closest to the those living in the Kitakyushu area and western Yamaguchi Prefecture which are Japan's nearest points to the Korean Peninsula. On June 29, 1950 at 10:15 p.m., an unidentified aircraft was flying in the vicinity of Kitakyushu, as a result of which air-raid alerts were sounded and blackout was enforced in Kokura, Tobata, Yawata and Moji. The alerts were turned off at 10:55 p.m., but the U.S. troops patrolled around Fukuoka City on several trucks equipped with loudspeakers and put the people on alert.<sup>39</sup>

Following the amphibious landing at Inchon, the U.S. troops needed boats and men to unload supplies. Although Japan cooperated during this period using motorized sailboats, these sailboats were concentrated at Moji Port. A charter contract was signed between Tozai Kisen Kabushiki Kaisha and the JLC, securing 120 motorized sailboats, one mother ship and one repair ship (total of approximately 1,300 crew members). Motorized sailboats thus gathered at Moji Port on September 18, 1950. Along with the mother ship and repair ship, 97 motorized sailboats departed from Moji Port and arrived at Inchon via Pusan on October 2, where they were engaged for 4 days in operations of unloading from the transport ships all supplies, military goods and daily necessities.<sup>40</sup>

Before the amphibious landing at Wonsan, Japan sent minesweepers at the request of U.S. Forces, which were driven by the necessity to sweep mines. Shimonoseki Port was chosen as the gathering port for minesweepers. In early October 1950, 19 minesweepers and one minesweeper tender gathered at Moji to organize the Special Minesweep Flotilla.<sup>41</sup> The Special Minesweep Flotilla swept 27 mines at Wonsan, Kunsan, Inchon, Haeju and Chinnampo, offering the vessels of the UN Forces banner freedom of navigation. Finally, a total of 1,450 men contributed, with 1,200 men participating in on-site minesweeping operations and 250 men engaged in communication, resupplies and structural repairs on home ground.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, the horrors of war such as the mass escape of U.S. soldiers<sup>43</sup> and transportation of the bodies of soldiers who died on the Korean Peninsula<sup>44</sup> were deeply affecting the people

<sup>39</sup> Fukuoka Ken Keisatsu Honbu (Police of Fukuoka), *Fukuoka Ken Keisatsu Shi (History of Fukuoka Police)*, Syowa Zenpen (the First Half of the Showa Period), (Fukuoka: Fukuoka Prefecture, 1980), p. 842.

<sup>40</sup> Eiji Takemae, Tsuyoshi Ozaki, and Kaori Tanaka, "Syougen, Sengo Syoki Kaiun Hishi—Chosen Senso to Kitamura (Testimony, Secret History of Marine Transportation Just After WWII)," *Tokyo Keizai Daigaku Jinbun Shizen Kagaku Ronshu (Tokyo Keizai University Journal of Humanities and Natural Sciences)*, No.105 (February 1998), pp. 141-142. Tozai Kisen, ed., *Tozai Kisen Jyunen no Ayumi (Ten Years History of Tozai Shipping Co.)*, (Tokyo: Tokyo Keizai University, 1951), pp. 77-87.

<sup>41</sup> Takeo Okubo, *Uminari no Hibi (Days of Sea Rumble)*, (Tokyo: Kaiyo Mondai Kenkyusyo, 1978), pp. 209-210.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>43</sup> Fukuoka Ken Keisatsu Honbu, *Fukuoka Ken Keisatsu Shi*, Syowa Zenpen, pp. 848-856. On July 11, 1950, when the 24th Infantry Regiment that was stationed in Gifu City arrived at Kokura Camp (current Jono, Kokurakita-ku, Kitakyushu) to invade the Korean Peninsula, some 200 fully-armored U.S. soldiers escaped. They were involved in at least 70 crimes consisting of assaults and robberies.

<sup>44</sup> Kenichi Yanagimoto, *Gekido 20 Nen-Fukuoka Ken no Sengo (Turbulence Twenty Years-History of Fukuoka after War)* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbun Seibu Honsha, 1965), pp. 168-169. With the establishment of the Graves Registration Center at Camp Kokura, remains were being sent in starting around November 1950, reaching a total number of approximately 60,000 remains. After identification, they were shipped back to the

living around Moji Port and Kokura Port.

#### (4) Hakata Port

Hakata Port, situated in the northern Kyushu region and thus near the Korean Peninsula, provided much support following the outbreak of the Korean War. At the center of Fukuoka City, trucks were regularly seen going back and forth from Hakata Port to the U.S. military hospital in Arato Town, carrying wounded soldiers sent back from the battlefield.

Whether on ground or at sea, Hakata Port swarmed with people engaged in the transportation of soldiers and ammunition, or in loading or unloading LSTs and hospital ships, and was thus under extreme tension because it served as a major transport base to the Korean Peninsula. The Hakata Harbor Police Station conducted coast guard activities from June 27, 1950, focusing on tightening border security against illegal intruders.<sup>45</sup>

In terms of railway transportation of UN Forces in Japan, 87 extra trains toward Kyushu and Kansai areas were in operation between July 1 and 8, 1950. These trains consisted of 619 passenger cars and 1,816 freight cars.<sup>46</sup> Military transportation volume of this operation during two weeks reached the record high in the history of the National Railways' military transportation.<sup>47</sup> The National Railways had opened the Hakata — Pusan sea route for withdrawal and repatriation purposes, and from July 3, three ships that were in service on this sea route were engaged in the transportation of UN Forces.<sup>48</sup>

#### (5) Sasebo Port

Ever since the Imperial Japanese Navy opened the Sasebo Naval Base in 1889, Sasebo Port has developed as a military port. After the war, Sasebo City promoted the development of an industrial port city through the mayor's Peace Declaration in January 1950, but the outbreak of the Korean War resulted in the requisition by the allied forces of most of the port facilities.

The outbreak of the Korean War was followed by the evacuation of Americans living in Korea, and Sasebo Port was designated as the port of refuge. From June 26 to 29, 1950, 1,527 Americans left Korea and sought refuge in Japan. Among these people, there were 809 refugees who flew in and 718 refugees who arrived by ship, many of which (682 of them to be precise) were women and children aboard the *Reinholt*, the Norwegian fertilizer ship, who traveled from Inchon Port to Sasebo Port.<sup>49</sup>

As the U.S. Naval and Air Forces joined in, Sasebo Port was pressed to expand its functions as a military base. On June 28, 1950, Sasebo base was designated as the home base of Task Group 96.5 (composed of four destroyers) and assumed the role of supplying ammunition to

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United States from Moji Port.

<sup>45</sup> Fukuoka Ken Keisatsu Honbu, *Fukuoka Ken Keisatsu Shi*, Syowa Zenpen, pp. 842-843.

<sup>46</sup> Nihon Kokuyu Tetsudo Gaimu Buchou, ed., *Tetsudo Syusen Syorishi*, p. 260.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262. The number of trains was 245, consisting of 7,324 passenger cars and 5,208 freight cars.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 796-797.

<sup>49</sup> Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War*, p. 39.

ships and providing food enough to feed 7,500 men for 30 days.<sup>50</sup> At the time, the base functions of the U.S. Navy in Japan were concentrated at Yokosuka base, followed by Sasebo base. At the Sasebo base, there were only 7 officers, 96 petty officers, and 669 Japanese employees on June 26, but seven months later, there were more than 60 officers and 1,000 petty officers. Although at first there was no stored ammunition, by mid August, Sasebo was handling more than 5,300 tons of ammunition.<sup>51</sup>

With the deployment of ground troops, the 24th Infantry Division whose headquarter was in Kokura City, Fukuoka Prefecture was called out. On July 1, the 34th Infantry Regiment (stationed in Sasebo City) was dispatched from Sasebo Port and landed at Pusan on July 2. On July 3, the main force of the 21st Infantry Regiment (stationed in Kumamoto City, Kumamoto Prefecture) along with the field artillery battalion (stationed in Kasuga City, Fukuoka Prefecture) were dispatched from Sasebo Port and landed at Pusan on July 4.<sup>52</sup> In the initial phases of the war, Sasebo Port was used as a transport base for the admission of refugees and transportation of army soldiers stationed nearby, weapons and ammunition.

As the war spread, the numbers of vessels in port became significantly high.<sup>53</sup> Five pilots were stationed at the U.S. Navy Operational Office and provided support to the vessels entering and leaving port. At the Tategami Pier, supplies were being loaded night and day. Assistance for entering and leaving port by the tug boats, handling the rope, fueling and water supplies for U.S. Naval vessels were performed by the Port Department of the U.S. Naval Base, and for the other nations vessels were performed by the tug boats and water barges of the Sasebo City Port Department. The tug boats of the Sasebo Heavy Industries Co., Ltd. (generally called SSK) and the water barges of the *Syousen Kanri Iin Kai* had been under the control of the U.S. Navy Operational Office.<sup>54</sup>

Most of the port facilities were once again requisitioned, and in particular, the fact that the berths for foreign trade ships could no longer be used drastically decreased foreign currency transaction volume from 250,000 tonnages in 1948 to 30,000 tonnages in 1951, almost completely losing its role as a commercial port. The Korean War led to an economic boom in the city of Sasebo but also caused corruption of public morals. While the war injected new life to the shipbuilding industry, the iron industry, the car repair industry and even the service industry such as department stores, the hearts of young U.S. soldiers sent to the battle front were wild and thus night life in town was in utter chaos, leading to corruption of public morals.<sup>55</sup>

Circumstances at the time sparked unrest across the naval base as people feared it would once again lead to hostilities with the Korean Peninsula. On June 29, 1950, an air-raid

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<sup>50</sup> Saseboshi Shi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Sasebo Shishi: History of Military Port*, Vol. 2, p. 421.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 418.

<sup>52</sup> Tsuruta, *Senryouka Nihon de no Chosen Senso Koho Shien*, p. 36.

<sup>53</sup> Saseboshi Shi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Sasebo Shishi: History of Military Port*, Vol. 2, p. 493. The numbers of naval ships in port in 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953 and 1954 were 2,409, 2,208, 3,562, 2,334, 1,709 and 1,402, respectively.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

<sup>55</sup> Yanagimoto, *Gekido 20 Nen-Nagasaki Ken no Sengo*, p. 188. The number of women who attended soldiers and enjoyed night life in town with them was somewhere between 1,400 and 1,500 in 1949, but that figure rose to approximately 8,000 a year later.

warning sounded in Sasebo City, and on July 8, the Sasebo city hall and municipal hospital were instructed to appoint fire fighters and emergency support personnel. A Blackout Official Regulations of Sasebo City was also established.<sup>56</sup> In addition, in mid August, people were warned of the intrusion of a submarine into Japanese waters, following which operations to lay an anti-submarine net began on October 3.<sup>57</sup>

#### (6) Yokosuka Port and Kure Port

Yokosuka Port has developed as a military port since the Imperial Japanese Navy opened the Yokosuka Naval Base in 1884. After the war, it aimed at converting its former military facilities and took a fresh start as an industrial port city.<sup>58</sup> However, Yokosuka Port, equipped with large ship repairing facilities and berths for vessels, was still under occupation. The grant of these former military facilities was proceeding in a positive direction with the establishment of the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law.

Due to the outbreak of the Korean War, the former U.S. Naval Air Facility in Oppama, which was returned to Japan, was once again requisitioned, becoming the U.S. Army's arsenal of Oppama. Along with the auto manufacturers, the city was again assuming the appearance of a military city.<sup>59</sup> Minesweepers and destroyers stored at the Yokosuka base were put into commission, increasing its workload.<sup>60</sup> When the Korean War broke out, although some 2,000 to 3,000 tons of ammunition of various types were stored at Yokosuka base, there were no anti-submarine weapons. These were sent from Guam and Pearl Harbor and were brought in to Yokosuka base from mid July 1950.<sup>61</sup>

Kure Port has developed as a military port since the Imperial Japanese Navy opened the Kure Naval Base in 1889. Just as with Yokosuka Port, it aimed after the war at converting its former military facilities and reestablished itself as an industrial port city. During times immediately following the war, the port was under U.S. occupation, but from February 1946, the British Commonwealth Occupation Force<sup>62</sup>, based at Kure, moved into Chugoku and Shikoku districts. The special procurement demand due to the Korean War and the introduction of the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law attracted companies to the land where the former naval arsenal used to be, creating a wave of prosperity around 1951.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, the number of Japanese employed by the British Commonwealth Occupation Force reached close to 20,000 at its highest, which constituted an effective measure against unemployment. On the other hand, the number of crimes such as murder, sexual assaults and robbery committed by members of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force was

<sup>56</sup> Saseboshi Shi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Sasebo Shishi: History of Military Port*, Vol. 2, p. 422.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 436.

<sup>58</sup> Yokohamashi Somu Kyoku Shishi Hensyushitsu, ed., *Yokohama Shishi*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 621.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 623.

<sup>60</sup> Field, *History of United States Naval Operations Korea*, p. 58.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>62</sup> BCOF (British Commonwealth Occupation Force) consists of the Australian, British, Indian and New Zealand military forces.

<sup>63</sup> Kureshi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Kure no Rekishi: Kure Shisei Hyaku Syunen Kinen Ban (History of Kure: One Hundred Year Anniversary)* (Kure: Kure City, 2002), p. 307.

particularly high during the Korean War.<sup>64</sup>

Both Yokosuka Port and Kure Port have evolved as the Imperial Japanese Naval base, but with increased attraction of enterprises as a result of the implementation of the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law, they have been affected by the benefits from the procurement demands and by the deteriorating security situation due to the use of the base by the UN Forces, and appeared more like military ports.

### 3. Roles Ports Have Played and How They Have Affected Them

#### (1) Roles of Japanese Ports during the Korean War and Its Aftereffect

The ports that provided support to the UN Forces can be classified broadly into two categories: those that served as the home base of ships and vessels and those that served as the transport base of soldiers and supplies. Examples of the former category include Sasebo Port, Yokosuka Port and Kure Port. Examples of the latter category are those where they were temporarily used as commercial ports, including Yokohama Port, Kobe Port, Kanmon Port (Kitakyushu Port and Shimonoseki Port) and Hakata Port. Some of the literature reviewed for this article also contained fragmentary information confirming the involvement of other ports such as Muroran Port, Otaru Port, Shiogama Port, Nagoya Port and Naha Port. Although this article did not discuss ports in Okinawa because at the time, Japan did not have administrative right over Ryukyu Islands as they were under the United States Civil Administration, future studies should discuss these ports.

Just as Sasebo Port, Yokosuka Port and Kure Port were about to turn a new leaf and become commercial ports following the establishment of the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law, they became embroiled in the Korean War. These ports were used as home bases for U.S. Navy vessels and MSTs ships because they already possessed various functions as naval bases and were equipped with facilities necessary for the maintenance and repair of ships and for the storage of fuel and ammunition.

Yokohama Port and Kobe Port had from long ago developed as Japan's major ports and thus their potential capabilities as transport bases were tremendous. Although their facilities as commercial ports (moorings institution, disposal of goods institution, harborside transportation facility, navigation supporting institution, etc.) incurred damage during the war, they were quickly restored and were aiming to get back on track as commercial ports. In particular, Yokohama Port, the largest base of the occupation force with the main facilities of the Allied Forces, had also become the base for the distribution of military supplies by the establishment of the JLC.

Because Kitakyushu Port (Moji Port, Kokura Port), Shimonoseki Port and Hakata Port were all geographically situated near the Korean Peninsula, they were the best ports in terms of transportation efficiency. Among these, Moji Port evolved as a commercial and transit port, and starting from November 1950 when the Hakata Port and Sasebo Port railway

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337.

transportation volume began to exceed their capacity, its role became more significant.

How was it possible that Japan could provide support to the UN Forces using their ports in difficult post-war times? One of the reasons is that, under unusual circumstances of being under occupation, the UN Forces requisitioned the ports necessary for the execution of their military operations and used them exclusively. The occupation forces, which attempted to introduce liberal policies into the administration of ports, changed the existing policies and monopolized the administration as UN Forces.

In addition, even with regard to the solution to shortage of ships, the ship chartering department of the *Syousen Kanri Iin Kai* (the *Senpaku Unei Kai* had served as the parent organization during the war) assisted the newly established MSTs. During times when large amounts of soldiers and supplies needed to be transported by sea, having access to all LSTs and commercial ships through the *Syousen Kanri Iin Kai* proved to be beneficial for Japan, whose ships had just returned to the private sector, to establish a system of support. They had realized a unified administration system of ships.

Another reason may be that Japan used the knowledge and experience it had gained from various post-war operations. These operations include transportation of occupying troops to their assigned locations, transportation of demobilized Japanese soldiers who were sent abroad, transportation of civilians who withdrew from foreign countries and minesweeping operations to secure sea routes around the ports. With regard to securing sea routes, despite that the crews of the minesweepers were put in the difficult position of being purged; they accumulated knowledge and experience through minesweeping. Ironically such knowledge and experience gained in post-war operations worked to the advantage of the UN Forces.

## (2) The Korean War's Effects on Ports

How were the ports of Japan affected by the Korean War? Commercial ports saw their commercial activities being affected by the requisition, which inhibited their development as viable ports. If we compare the rate of increase in terms of total volume of exports and imports between Japan's major ports at the time, namely Yokohama Port, Kobe Port and Moji Port and other ports during the same time such as Kawasaki Port and Tokyo Port, the rate of increase for the major ports was very low.<sup>65</sup>

There are estimates, although for a limited number of ports, regarding the economic impact the occupation had on them. If we take for example Yokohama Port, according to 1959 estimates by Yokohama City regarding lost earnings and costs of building replacement facilities as a result of the takeover of the port's most important areas which are the Shinko Pier and Mizuho Pier, the total was approximately 1.7 billion yen.<sup>66</sup> Considering that

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<sup>65</sup> Daido Tsushinsha, ed., *Kowan Nenkan 1954 version*, pp. 168, 229, 331. The total volume of exports and imports at Yokohama Port was 10,690,000 tons in 1953, showing an increase of 57% compared to the 6,820,000 tons in 1950. At Kobe Port, the total was 9,790,000 tons in 1953, showing an increase of 44% compared to the 6,820,000 tons in 1950. At Moji Port, the total was 3,180,000 tons in 1953, showing an increase of 63% compared to the 1,950,000 tons in 1950. During the same times, the rates of increase at Kawasaki Port and Tokyo Port were about three-fold and two-fold, respectively.

<sup>66</sup> Yokohamashi Somu Kyoku Shishi Hensyushitsu, ed., *Yokohama Shishi*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 340. The estimates

Yokohama City's general account expenditure around 1953 was approximately 8 billion yen, we can see how enormous the above amounts were. The construction of piers to replace those under occupation needed to be not only municipally financed but also nationally financed. For example, the Japanese government paid 550,230,000 yen for the construction of the Yamashita Pier which began in 1953.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile, Sasebo Port and Yokosuka Port, which had evolved as military ports, were barred from starting afresh as an industrial city under the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law. Following the Korean War armistice and conclusion of the peace treaty, as many of their facilities that were used for military purposes saw their status shift from "being occupied" to "being stationed," they also shifted from "requisition" to "provision," and turned into U.S. military facilities and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force bases.

Japan made lucrative economic gains from U.S. procurement orders during the Korean War. Various technical and service industries that supported the ports showed profit rate increases, which contributed to the financial recovery of the workers. In addition, employment rates at the bases increased, as a result of which ports were thriving. However, crimes committed by UN soldiers before going to the battle front, caused deterioration of security and corruption of public morals. At ports in the northern part of Kyushu close to the Korean Peninsula, people feared attacks by North Korean Forces and sounded air-raid warnings. Security was tightened against illegal immigrants around the ports, wounded soldiers and dead soldiers were brought in and handled on a regular basis, which brought back the nightmares of the war.

## Conclusion

During the Korean War, the ports of Japan assumed the roles of "home base" and "transport base." These ports included Sasebo Port, Yokosuka Port and Kure Port which were former naval bases, and Yokohama Port, Kobe Port, Kanmon Port (Kitakyushu Port and Shimonoseki Port) and Hakata Port. These ports can also be regarded as having assumed the role of logistic routes for the UN Forces.

Part of the ports that were attempting to change under the Port and Harbor Law and the Old Naval Base City Conversion Law saw themselves once again under occupation with the outbreak of the Korean War. Following the Korean War armistice and conclusion of the peace treaty, the process of return moved forward, allowing some ports to start afresh as commercial ports, some to shift their status from "requisition" to "provision" and remain as U.S. Forces facilities in Japan, and others to transform themselves into Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force bases. Port facilities that were not returned to Japan took on financial burdens and also required enormous budgets to build replacement facilities. Even today, Yokosuka Port and

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related to incapability of storage in storehouses, storage shelters and moorings institutions for the period between 1951 and 1956 were 519,500,000 yen. Reinforcement costs of the Yamashita Pier, which is the replacement facility for the occupied piers, were 350,650,000 yen, the costs of construction for the replacement facility for the Mitsui storehouse within Shinko Pier and the refrigerated storehouse of Shinko storehouse were 604,000,000 yen, and the costs to build a moorings institution to replace the occupied Mizuho Pier were 765,850,000 yen.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337.

Sasebo Port are used as the home ports of the U.S. 7th Fleet. Just as the fact that at Mizuho Pier in the center of Yokohama Port, a port facility called Yokohama North Dock whose size is approximately 12 times the size of Tokyo Dome still remains, there are still 10 port facilities across Japan that continue to exist.

As the Korean War progressed, the U.S. Forces were able to exclusively use on their own terms the ports and ships of the occupied Japan. At the time, many Japanese saw the Korean War as simply “someone else’s problem.” Under such circumstances, Japan’s ports were able to assume their intended roles as they were supported by the knowledge and experience of the many people who offered their expertise in post-war operations. As a result, they provided much support for the UN Forces but on the other hand are still continuing to pay the price.