THE UNFINISHED WAR

THE DEMOBILIZATION AND FATE OF JAPAN'S SECOND WORLD WAR VETERANS, 1945-1950

By

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Dissertation Abstract

For Japan's seven million soldiers and sailors, peace and the opportunity to return to civilian life proved elusive in the aftermath of the Second World War. In the "Unfinished War," I argue that the demobilization of Japan's military was protracted and incomplete, and that public hostility toward former servicemen and Occupation policies prevented veterans' successful reintegration and rendered them marginalized members of postwar society. This dissertation seeks to understand what happened to this generation of servicemen after Japan's surrender. Bewilderingly, Japanese and Western historians have largely erased this generation from the history of postwar Japan and the Occupation's efforts to demilitarize Japanese society. However, demilitarization was a process fundamentally predicated on transforming a generation of servicemen into civilians as much as it was about education, social and political reform. Only by reinserting the story of demobilization into the history of postwar Japan is it possible to understand how Japan abandoned militarism and ultimately embraced pacifism.

For millions of Japanese servicemen in mainland Asia, there was no clean break between wartime and postwar. Suffering from manpower shortages, the Allies delayed the demobilization of millions of servicemen for up to three years in China and Southeast Asia for use as forced laborers and auxiliary soldiers to suppress communist and anti-colonial insurgencies. Between 1946 and 1948, the majority of overseas Japanese servicemen returned to Japan and underwent the process of demobilization. To the horror of many servicemen, Japanese citizens treated them with hostility and often blamed them for defeat and their wartime suffering. Widespread antimilitary sentiment, fear that servicemen were prone to criminality, along with Occupation policies aimed at isolating veterans from civil society, led to the ostracism of veterans from

public life, and disastrous rates of unemployment and poverty. Consequently, by 1950 when the Japanese government declared demobilization to be complete, most veterans felt disillusioned by their failure to reintegrate, and remained excluded from mainstream society. I conclude my study by arguing that Japan's demobilization was left incomplete and even partially reversed, as not only were hundreds of Japanese soldiers still fighting in China as organized units until 1949, but the Japanese government also coercively remobilized thousands of veterans and civilians for service in the Korean War. Using a wide range of primary materials including, Occupation intercepts of Japanese veterans' mail, diaries, Kenpeitai and civil police reports, and the Imperial Japanese Army's internal demobilization reports, my dissertation uncovers the postwar voices and lives of Japan's seven million veterans.

My dissertation overturns the standard paradigm for discussing the Imperial Japanese military. Rather than accepting August 15, 1945, as the end of pre-surrender Japanese military history, my work demonstrates the critical need to consider the process of demobilization as equally important to that of studying how the Imperial Japanese military mobilized and prosecuted wars. Furthermore, whereas prior histories have largely overlooked the motivations and thoughts of Japanese servicemen in wartime and peacetime, my research pushes the field of Japanese military history to treat servicemen as important historical actors and place them within the center of the drama of postwar Japan's birth.

Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation may be a solitary act, but the process of producing a dissertation is a collaborative effort. From the beginning, this project has been a result of various individuals and institutions providing significant help in the form of invaluable advice, funding, resources, and that most precious of commodity: patience and time. It is humbling to reflect on the people and places that have made my dissertation evolve from a vague idea to a finished product. It is my sincere hope that "The Unfinished War" repays the trust and support of those who have invested their time in making this dissertation possible.

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Professor Yoshida's advice or his generous lending of materials, it is doubtful if I would have found many of the sources that made this dissertation feasible.

I am deeply indebted to the archivists and librarians at Japan's National Diet Library and Shōwa-kan, as well as many other institutions, whose work and assistance made it possible to find and copy thousands of pages of documents. No less important to my work was my time spent at the café, Very-You, nestled in the western Tokyo suburb of Kodaira. What began as an accidental discovery, turned into a regular place of relaxation, study, and enlightening conversation about Japan and my work with co-owners, Moto and Kaori. Thank you!

I would also like to thank my aunt, Laurie Kellogg, who nearly five years ago asked the question that launched me upon this intellectual odyssey: "What happened to Japan's Second World War veterans?" To my amazement, I quickly found out after a bit of researching that nearly nothing existed on the subject. It may have only been a simple question, but sometimes that is all the inspiration required to begin a project of this length.

I am forever appreciative of the mentorship of Professor Andrew Gordon, who helped set me down the path of studying Japanese history as far back as middle school.

It was a long journey to this point. Six years of coursework, research, teaching, grant writing, and dissertation writing. I know that I could not have completed these difficult trials or overcome frequent bouts of self-doubt without the encouragement, wisdom, and love of my wife, Briana Porter. Thank you Briana, without you the last six years would have been an unbearably lonely path to walk by myself.

To my parents who inspired my passion for history and storytelling.

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Introduction

The Meaning of Defeat

Between 1945 and 1950, seven million soldiers and sailors of the Imperial Japanese military returned home to an embittered Japan traumatized and transformed by defeat.[1] The Imperial Japanese military, having demanded of Japan's civilians total sacrifice for total victory, instead delivered unfathomable misery. Millions of civilians had lost their homes or their lives from Allied bombing, while many more battled destitution and hunger. In place of once thriving towns and cities were now debris-strewn fields and shoddily built shanties. For demobilized soldiers returning to Japan for the first time in years, few failed to succumb to the profound pall of defeat and depression that permeated Japan's landscape and people. "When I first breathed the air of my homeland again," a demobilized soldier recalled of his first impressions of his return from overseas to Japan in the autumn of 1946, "I fell into a very complicated state of mind. It was really indescribable, disillusion, dissatisfaction, sorrow, and unrest of soul such as I had never experienced before."[2]As numerous servicemen discovered upon their return to Japan, home was little more than an idea or place that existed only in memory. What remained was a country and people whose character bore little resemblance to the nation that sent them off to war.

Japan's demobilized servicemen were losers, and the Japanese public refused to let them believe otherwise. There were no parades, flag waving crowds, or solemn ceremonies of appreciation to mark the return of Japan's servicemen. If crowds bothered to gather along

[1]Rikusengakkai, ed., *Kindai sensōshi gaisetsu: shiryōshū* (Tokyo: Rikusengakkai, 1984), 98.
[2]Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 1 maki* (Tokyo: Kabushikikaisha gendaishiryō shuppan, 2001), 222.

quaysides to greet servicemen disembarking from their ships, it was often in silence tinged with hostility and apathy. One soldier recalled such a scene with great bitterness:

> And so when we were demobilized, and landed in Japan after so long, we found the people at home assumed a cold attitude toward us. Nobody greeted us with the words, "Thank you so much for your trouble." They only cast a cold glance at us and then looked away.[3]

Rather than eliciting thanks or sympathy, the influx of millions of bedraggled veterans inspired indifference and frequent outbursts of disdain. For civilians fed up with a military that had failed to produce victory after so many broken promises, demobilized servicemen offered an easy and tangible target to blame for defeat. No longer inhibited by fear or deference, civilians increasingly took to disparaging all military men as "defeated soldiers" in public on the street and inside crowded trains.[4]

Although returning servicemen keenly resented their stigmatization as "defeated soldiers," many struggled to cope with defeat and strong feelings of guilt for having survived. In some cases, servicemen reproduced the public's insults of being defeated soldiers by internalizing Japan's defeat as a personal failure. "…[W]e have failed Japan," reflected one distressed demobilized soldier. "I couldn't free myself from the sense of crime in having let our glorious history of 2,600 years go to ruin."[5] Another soldier, wracked by survivor's guilt, wrote, "The faces of my dead comrades constantly appear before my eyes… But we have failed them."[6] While civilians proved capable of coping with the shock of defeat by deflecting responsibility for defeat onto the shoulders of politicians and the military, many demobilized servicemen did not

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[3]Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 1*, 223.
[4]For one veteran's experience of being labeled a "defeated soldier," see: Toshiaki Tanba, *Kōfukugunjin monogatari: shingapōru de horyo ni natta ippeishi no taiken* (Tokyo: Self-Published, 2004), 82.
[5]Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 1*, 223.
[6]Ibid.

enjoy this benefit. For many, defeat remained an indelible personal failure, which they could not hope for Japanese society to forgive.

Defeat and demobilization triggered ceaseless questions of what the war had been about and a new awareness of the futility of Japan's war effort. One demobilized servicemen troubled by the war's meaning wondered, "For what and why did we take part in this war? This question still puzzles us."[7] Echoing this sentiment, another former soldier angrily reminisced about the loss of his youth to war: "The spring-time of my life was taken from me by the long useless war which they called 'Seisen" or Holy War…"[8] For those demobilized soldiers who had suffered wounds and faced imminent death, doubt about the war's purpose and the hostility of civilians resulted in deep disillusionment. "When I receive cold-hearted treatment from people in my native land, I cannot help wondering for whom we were injured, for whom some of us were killed in action as members of suicide units."[9]

Yet a considerable number of demobilized servicemen felt proud about their service and were unwilling to assume a repentant stance despite public condemnation of servicemen and the military. Looking back on his military service with nostalgia, one soldier wrote: "For me, it was the purest period of my life; one in which I sacrificed everything within me for my country."[10] Many former servicemen succumbed to a sense of aimlessness and loss of a sense of purpose in the early postwar. One former naval officer overcome by the transition to civilian life reflected: "I enjoyed easy times when I was in the Navy. Now as a mere employee of a company, I cannot find any happiness. When I was a naval officer, I was absorbed in one thought, one aim; namely,

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[7]Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9]Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 1,* 224.
[10]Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 1,* 223.

the war… I have been thrown into a vortex of conflicting ideas. I am groping in darkness."[11] For numerous servicemen, military service was onerous and cruel. But few could escape the memories of their service and deny that it had molded their characters. "I can't forget the front," wrote one such soldier unable to disconnect himself from his wartime experience. He continued, "…for me, [it] is full of various memories. I have no doubt but that the front will remain deeply impressed upon my mind all through my life."[12]

This dissertation tells the story of the demobilization of the soldiers and sailors of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy between 1945 and 1950. The process of demobilization entailed the surrender, disarmament, repatriation, and processing of servicemen upon their return to Japan. As evidenced in the preceding testimonies, Japan's defeat produced a plethora of interpretations and responses among its servicemen. This was because Japan's surrender played out in drastically different ways for servicemen stationed across Japan's empire. However, the process of demobilization and return to civilian life conferred a common identity of disgruntlement and hardship to servicemen that defined their relationship with civilians and the postwar state. Whether or not they harkened for military life, or felt acutely deceived by their government and the war effort, most demobilized servicemen experienced an unhappy and difficult demobilization. The encounter with a hostile homeland and people, as well as struggles to find employment and happiness as regular citizens without the prewar privileges of military men colored the early experiences of demobilized servicemen's reentry to civilian life. Demobilization, therefore, was not only a process by which servicemen came to understand the ramifications of defeat and its implications for their lives, but also the critical process by which

[11]Ibid.
[12]Ibid.

Japanese society for the first time interacted with uniformed men as social equals, and grappled with the question of what place ought former servicemen occupy in a defeated Japan.

Histories of early postwar Japan are notable for their resounding silence on the postwar lives of the men who fought in the Second World War. This is not so much a reflection of reality as it is a result of a legacy of Western and Japanese historians who desired to write about a Japan unfettered from its militaristic past. Regrettably, these works have all but erased the presence of Japan's Second World War veterans from early postwar Japanese history and memory. Nevertheless, for those alive in early postwar Japan, it was simply not possible to ignore Japan's former servicemen. How could they? Demobilized servicemen comprised ten percent of Japan's population.[13] It is likely that many Japanese families had at least one member in uniform returning home from the war. Whether in the country or in the city, demobilized servicemen, instantly recognizable by their newly issued uniforms denuded of rank and decorations, were ubiquitous in the years after surrender. In time, many of these men became the workers who made Japan's phoenix-like economic recovery and reconstruction possible, while many others became prominent educators, businesspersons, and politicians. While histories have largely ignored this generation's continued existence into the postwar era, these men never disappeared from sight in Japanese society. Continued scholarly silence on this topic is problematic, because these veterans' experiences of reintegration and Japanese society's efforts at formulating an appropriate response to their return constituted a critical transitional period bridging the wartime and postwar eras.

[13]*Kindai sensōshi gaisetsu: shiryōshū* (Tokyo: Rikusengakkai, 1984), 98.

Revising our Chronology

Historians of early postwar Japan typically conceive of the postwar period beginning immediately after Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945. This clean denouement of wartime Japan and the start of a post-conflict Japan makes for an attractive chronological structure for its simplicity, but it obfuscates the existence of a period of protracted drawn-down from a state of eight years of mobilization of servicemen and civilians for total war. This process did not happen overnight. But in histories of this period, such as John Dower's seminal account of the occupation of Japan (1945-1952), *Embracing Defeat*, the experiences of veterans and Japanese society's struggle to figure out how to handle their reintegration amid aggressive efforts at demilitarizing Japan receives scant attention.[14] How then did Japanese society come to disassociate itself from a prewar state and cultural tradition steeped in militarism? I contend that it is impossible to understand this process without first studying how Japan's mass wartime conscript army was demobilized and how Japanese society reacted to its return home from war.

The scholarship of Professor Adam Seipp, who studies the demobilization of British and German First World War veterans, forms a major inspirational basis for this project. In his monograph, *The Ordeal of Peace,* Seipp argues for the recognition of a distinct period that bridges the gap between wartime and postwar, especially in societies that underwent mobilization for total war.[15] In accordance with Seipp's theory, I view the years of 1945-1950 as representing a critical bridging period between wartime Japan and the emergence of postwar Japan. This period is bookended by the start of the demobilization of Japanese forces and the

[14] John Dower. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II,* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 58-61.
[15] Adam Seipp, *The Ordeal of Peace: Demobilization and the Urban Experience in Britain and Germany, 1917-1921,* (London: Ashgate, 2009), 6.

repatriation and demobilization of the last major group of soldiers held captive by the Soviet Union. During this period, Japanese civilians and veterans engaged in a contentious struggle to determine where veterans belonged within a new postwar Japanese state, and how the relationship between former serviceman and civilian should be demarcated. Lastly, I also view this period as concluding in 1950 because of the Japanese government's limited and illegal remobilization of Japanese veterans and civilians for the Korean War. With Japan's backslide into war, and the return of veterans to a warzone, I posit that the process of demobilization was only imperfectly realized at best.

State of the Field

Until recently, historians of Japan generally ignored the topic of demobilization and the challenges faced by veterans reintegrating into civilian society. Instead, scholars showered significant attention on subjects such as the mobilization of society for total war, the individual's experience of battle, and how states prosecuted wars. This trend among military and social historians of Japan produced a skewed history of the Japanese military that over emphasized wartime issues at the expense of serious conversation of the lasting consequences of war upon those called up to fight. However, over the past ten years, Western and Japanese historians have gradually begun to shed light on the postwar lives of Japan's veterans. Although these scholars have generally refrained from engaging in a mutual conversation, their works as a whole loosely form a nascent field of Japanese demobilization and reintegration studies. As a result, this field comprises a critical foundation on which I have built my research.

English language scholarship on Japanese veterans and the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military are few in number and narrow in scope. In English, only four scholars have

devoted serious attention to Japanese veterans. Yoshikuni Igarashi's monograph, *Homecomings,* stands out for its moving exploration of the challenges of return encountered by seven individual Japanese veterans who experienced either captivity in the postwar or chose to not to initially demobilize and return to Japan.[16] However, since Igarashi intentionally eschews exploration of the larger demobilization and reintegration process, his work does not attempt to present conclusions that are applicable to the experiences of the majority of veterans. One of the most unique works on Japanese servicemen, is Lee Pennington's groundbreaking study of wounded Japanese soldiers, *Casualties of History*.[17] Pennington's work provides an invaluable look at how wounded soldiers navigated the path toward recovery and reentry into military and civilian life between 1937 and 1945, as well during the early postwar. Although primarily focused on wartime, Pennington's exemplary final chapter on the postwar tribulations of wounded soldiers navigating Japan's broken medical care system provides an important example for the kind of scholarship that can be done on demobilized servicemen.[18]

Focusing on the postwar lives of Japanese prisoners of the Soviet Union, Andrew Barshay's *The Gods Left First* provides a damning account of the 500,000 Japanese soldiers in Soviet gulags and the psychological and physical trauma that they suffered.[19] Similar to Igarashi, Barshay generally sacrifices scope and wider context for intimacy by focusing on the lives of a few individuals. Wholly different in approach and style is Stephen Connor's *Mountbatten's Samurai*. Focusing on the experiences of Japanese forces as colonial military auxiliaries, forced laborers, as well as their protracted repatriation, Connor provides the most far-ranging work on

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[16]Igarashi Yoshikuni, *Homecomings: The Belated Return of Japan's Lost Soldiers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016),6-10.
[17] Lee K. Pennington, *Casualties of History: Wounded Japanese Servicemen and the Second World War*, (London: Cornell University Press, 2015), 16-19.
[18] Pennington, *Casualties of History,* 195-198.
[19] Andrew Barshay, *The Gods Left First: The Captivity and Repatriation of Japanese POWs in Northeast Asia, 1945-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 8-30.

the Japanese Imperial Army in the postwar period.[20] Collectively these works shed light on the little known postwar lives of Japan's soldiers. But these works also leave a number of large questions unanswered: how do Soviet internees' lives fit into a larger picture of veterans experiences? What happened to the Japanese military after Japan's surrender beyond Southeast Asia? How did veterans become civilians once again, and how did their experiences fit into a larger cohesive narrative of early postwar Japanese society?

While Japanese historians have yet to answer all of the above questions, their works have taken a number of steps toward telling larger stories than their Western peers. Yutaka Yoshida's *Heishitachi no sengoshi* (*A Postwar History of Soldiers*), is especially important for its expansive exploration of Japanese veterans' associations and the role of veterans in political and historical memory debates from the 1950s through the present era.[21] Although Yoshida does not devote significant attention to the experiences of demobilized servicemen and their reintegration experiences, his work remains the only history to examine the influence of veterans upon postwar Japan. Focusing on the demobilization of Japanese soldiers in Southeast Asia is Professor Masuda Hiroshi's lengthy research paper, *Nihon kōfuku ni okeru nanpōgun no fukuin katei : 1945nen ~1948nen* (*The Proceedings of the Demobilization of the Southern Theater Army within Japan's Surrender*). While rarely straying from the level of diplomatic historical analysis of Anglo-American-Japanese negotiation to repatriate Japanese soldiers in Southeast Asia, Masuda's work remains the only work of its kind in Japanese to provide a detailed analysis of the demobilization of Japanese troops outside of the Soviet Union.[22]

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[20] Stephen Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai: Imperial Japanese Army and Navy Forces Under British Control in Southeast Asia, 1945-1948* (London: Seventh Citadel, 2018), 10-42.
[21] Yutaka Yoshida, *Heishitachi no sengoshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2011), 1-7.
[22] Hiroshi Masuda, "Nihon kōfukugo ni okeru nanpōgun no fukuin katei : 1945nen ~1948nen," *Gendai kenkyūshi* 9, no. 9 (March 2013): 2-4.

Somewhat similar to Barshay, is Ryoji Nagase's *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi* (*A Complete History of Siberian Internees*) [23] Whereas Barshay provides a highly personal history, Nagase presents a lengthy and all-encompassing look at the daily life of prisoners on a scale and depth unfound elsewhere. Finally, there is Takeshi Tomita's critical book, *Shiberia yokuryū no sengo* (*Siberian Internees' Postwar*), which addresses the lack of scholarship on the postwar lives of returnees from Soviet captivity in postwar Japan. Using hitherto unknown survey data of Siberian internees, parliamentary records, memoirs, and documents from the Allied occupation, Tomita constructs a picture of demobilized servicemen whose lives became inextricably linked with Cold War politics and paranoia.[24] Altogether, Japanese scholarship on veterans and the postwar Japanese military is remarkable for its ambitious scope and exploration of veterans beyond that of the hyper-individual level. Yet, Japanese historians as well as Western scholarship, lack a unifying vision. How do all of these disparate narratives of Soviet internees, demobilized soldiers in Southeast Asia, and veterans organizations fit together? This question frustratingly remains unanswered by the present crop of scholarship in Japan and the West.

Argument and Chapter Outline

In the "Unfinished War," I argue that the demobilization of Japan's military was protracted and incomplete, and that public hostility toward soldiers and Occupation policies prevented veterans' successful reintegration and rendered them marginalized members of postwar society. This dissertation charts the journey of demobilization for Japanese soldiers and sailors at home and overseas following Japan's surrender. Traditionally, the Japanese and American governments have portrayed the demobilization of Japan's military as a quick and

[23] Nagase Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi* (Tokyo: Harashobo, 2013), 1-10.
[24] Takeshi Tomita, *Shiberia yokuryūshatachi no sengo* (Tokyo: Jinbunshoin, 2013), 16-30.

relatively uneventful endeavor. While it is true that considerable numbers of servicemen were repatriated and demobilized within the first two years after Japan's defeat, this fact hides a more complicated story. Across Asia, hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers remained under arms and continued to fight until 1946 and in some cases, even as late as 1949. With the start of the Korean War in 1950, hundreds of Japanese nurses and sailors, many of whom were veterans of the Second World War, underwent remobilization for yet another conflict. From start to finish, violence and danger, as well as international politics obstructed and marred the process of demobilization for many of Japan's servicemen. However, just as demobilization was far from a straightforward affair, so too did demobilized servicemen struggle to find an easy path to reintegration once back in Japan. Stripped of benefits and political rights by the Allied Occupation and frequently deprived access to work due to discrimination by the Japanese public, demobilization left Japan's former servicemen embittered and often unadjusted to civilian life and postwar society. For Japan's seven million soldiers and sailors, peace and the opportunity to return to civilian life proved elusive in the aftermath of the Second World War.

The "Unfinished War" provides a unified narrative of the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military. This dissertation covers a vast range of topics and issues, not limited to: military operations, captivity, forced labor, repatriation, reintegration, crime, politics, and the reintegration struggles of wounded servicemen. By covering this broad swath of topics, my goal is to offer as complete an overview as possible of the diverse experiences of demobilization encountered by millions of soldiers and sailors in the years after Japan's defeat. By no means is this narrative complete. In many cases, I have had to leave out important and substantial topics from the story told in the following pages. In most cases, the lack of sources determined these decisions, as in the case of the lives of Soviet internees who returned to Japan after the war. In

other cases, I decided to omit topics that diverted the attention of the narrative from examining issues that directly affected the daily lives of demobilized servicemen. Thus, I intentionally avoid becoming bogged down in discussion of the bureaucratic side of demobilization that involved negotiations between the Japanese government and the Allied Occupation. Generally, I have chosen to prioritize the telling of the story of demobilization by examining the voices of individuals through using memoirs and letters as much as possible. Nevertheless, I also provide critical discussion and analysis of macro military-political issues, such as in Chapters One and Five. Therefore, it is my hope that this dissertation provides a well-balanced and comprehensive source for information on Japanese veterans' experiences of demobilization after the Second World War.

The five chapters of this dissertation constitute thematically linked episodes presented in a chronological fashion. From start to finish, the five chapters tell the collective story of surrender, demobilization and return, reintegration, hardship, and the remobilization of Japanese veterans. The format of these chapters intentionally mimics the archetypical experience of veterans after the war. By doing so, I attempt to simulate for the reader the bewildering experiences of surrender, demobilization and reintegration encountered by millions of veterans. Critically, my chapter scheme also seeks to convey the circular trajectory of demobilization back to remobilization – in other words, the incomplete process of demobilizing Japanese veterans of one war and the shocking remobilization of thousands for yet another conflict.

Chapter One explores how the Imperial Japanese military's involvement in Asia did not cease following its surrender on August 15, 1945. Beginning with Manchuria, I trace the Soviet Union's capture of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and their incarceration as slave laborers in Siberia through 1949. In contrast, I explore how Japanese forces in China and Southeast Asia

continued to play a major military role in postwar Asia. In China, I examine how the Imperial Japanese Army and the Chinese Nationalist government delayed the full disarmament of Japanese forces between 1945 and 1946 in order to stave off the conquest of northern China by Communist forces. This little-known episode led to the deaths of tens of thousands of Japanese and countless Chinese civilians and soldiers. To the south, I look at the British military's decision to employ Japanese forces as military auxiliaries to combat Indonesian independence fighters, and as virtual slave laborers in the reconstruction of Britain's colonial infrastructure in Malaya. The use of Japanese soldiers as colonial auxiliaries and laborers led to avoidable deaths and a significant delay in the demobilization of overseas Japanese soldiers until 1948. For the Imperial Japanese Army in Asia, the war did not end on August 15, 1945. Instead, it merely entered a new stage that caused untold agony to Asian civilians and homesick Japanese soldiers.

Chapter Two challenges official Japanese and American government accounts' depictions of the demobilization of the Japanese military as a relatively uneventful process. In this chapter, I argue that demobilization destabilized civil-military relations and produced drastically different reactions and modes of behavior among domestic Japanese forces and servicemen repatriated from overseas. In the chapter's first half, I explore how defeat triggered the collapse of the Imperial Japanese military's internal cohesion and morale within Japan. Specifically, I explore how thousands of servicemen and officers deserted their posts before they were properly demobilized, and how thousands more properly demobilized personnel engaged in looting across Japan to the point that this behavior made civilians scornful of both the military and common servicemen. In the second half, I look at how overseas servicemen awaited their return and demobilization with anxiety and great anticipation. However, I demonstrate that the actual process of return triggered violence between officers and their men as well as arousing

deep disillusionment as many encountered a public already disdainful and hostile toward demobilized servicemen.

Chapter Three examines the early reintegration experiences of demobilized servicemen and why this process largely failed. In the chapter's first half, I argue that a civil-military split emerged within Japanese society following defeat, where fear and divergent experiences of war and defeat incited hostility towards former servicemen and impeded their reintegration. Additionally, I examine the reactions of demobilized servicemen to their treatment through the lens of private correspondence. In the second half of the chapter, I argue that the Occupation deliberately pursued policies with the goal of reducing the public prestige and rights of demobilized servicemen. Specifically, I look at measures that stripped demobilized servicemen of access to pensions, employment assistance, among other services. Ultimately, I claim that these Occupation policies contributed to the impoverishment and ostracism of demobilized servicemen.

Chapter Four argues that popular perceptions of demobilized servicemen as criminals and of wounded servicemen as beggars produced widespread fear of demobilized servicemen as threats to social stability and as being incapable of successfully reintegrating to civilian life. Section One looks at how catastrophic unemployment and deepening poverty caused numerous demobilized servicemen and large numbers of civilian men to resort to crime for survival between 1945 and 1949. As part of this section, I determine just how many demobilized servicemen actually engaged in crime as well as the factors that led these men to become criminals. I also argue that among demobilized servicemen, former kamikaze pilots were especially stigmatized by the Japanese public as delinquents and particularly prone to criminal behavior. As a result, these perceptions construed all demobilized servicemen as posing a threat

to the rule of law and social order of postwar Japan. Section Two considers how wounded servicemen, often easily recognizable by their white kimono uniforms, struggled to receive proper medical care and public sympathy for their plight. Forced to rely on hospitals suffering from acute shortages of all items and no longer beneficiaries of assistance programs eliminated by Occupation decree, numerous wounded servicemen resorted to begging for survival at various points during their recovery. Although most wounded servicemen ultimately trickled back into mainstream society, I conclude by demonstrating how the continued presence of wounded servicemen begging in public spaces into the early 1950s provoked visceral disgust and hostility from civilians as well as other wounded servicemen.

Chapter Five challenges the notion that the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military was entirely successful. I argue that not only did hundreds of soldiers fail to demobilize and continue fighting in mainland Asia, but that the Japanese government intentionally remobilized thousands of men and women for service in yet another war in Asia just five years after Japan's defeat. In the chapter's first half, I discuss the story of the *Tokumudan*, a postwar unit of former Imperial Japanese Army soldiers in China's Shanxi province that continued to fight until 1949 under the belief that it had not received orders to demobilize. Paying particular attention to the political machinations behind the retention of Japanese troops in postwar Shanxi, I argue that the *Tokumudan*'s story demonstrates how ideology and deliberate acts of deception threatened the integrity and completeness of Japan's demobilization. The second half of this chapter examines the Japanese government's secret and unconstitutional remobilization of Japanese Red Cross nurses and Maritime Safety Agency sailors for assisting the United Nation's war effort in the Korean War. In particular, I investigate how nurses made sense of their illegal postwar mobilization for war and how crews of Japanese minesweeping vessels coped with their

deployment to combat zones off the North Korean coast. In both cases, these stories highlight the vulnerability of demobilized servicemen and nurses to further remobilization for military service, and the postwar Japanese state's continued capacity to remobilize its citizens for war.

My Intervention

My project makes four key interventions in the fields of Japanese military and postwar history. Foremost, my dissertation provides a unified history of the demobilization and reintegration of Japanese servicemen into post-Second World War Japan. I accomplish this by integrating wherever possible the findings of prior scholarship with my extensive collection of previously unused memoirs and government documentation from Japanese military and civilian archives. My intent is to provide a coherent narrative arc to a wide array of processes, developments, and events that have otherwise been studied in isolation of each other.

Who were Japanese servicemen beyond the battlefield? What did they think about Japan's defeat and the emergence of a postwar demilitarized Japanese society? How did they cope with the return to civilian life? These questions are largely unanswered in Western scholarship. This has resulted in the emergence of a one-dimensional view of Japanese servicemen as combatants with little identity or presence in Japanese history beyond the strict confines of wartime. My dissertation aims to counteract this unfortunate trend with three unique types of sources. Unlike prior scholars who have used a very limited number of memoirs, my project relies upon a full set of published and non-published first person accounts acquired from archives across Japan in order to give a complete picture of veterans' postwar experiences. Next, my project goes beyond the "public" voice of veterans to discover what they thought about postwar life in private. Pulling upon the Allied occupation's Civil Intelligence Section's

intercepts of Japanese citizens' mail, I provide a revealing look at the often raw and unvarnished views of demobilized servicemen. Lastly, I offer a unique picture of demobilized servicemen's collective views on various social, economic, and political issues. I accomplish this by using recently declassified Japanese government survey data of returning demobilized servicemen in 1946. With these sources, "The Unfinished War" presents the most detailed portrait of Japanese servicemen's experience of demobilization and reintegration.

This project is not just a story about former Japanese servicemen becoming civilians. My third intervention is in the field of Japanese military history. My work challenges a long-held assumption among historians of Japan that the history of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy ended on August 15, 1945. I directly challenge this position in two ways. Using an array of little-known records produced from Japanese forces in China after the war and firsthand accounts, I show how Japanese forces engaged in large-scale fighting in northern China on behalf of the Nationalist government, and aided the British in suppressing Indonesian independence fighters in 1945 and 1946. Lastly, I explore how Imperial Japanese military forces remained active in postwar Asian conflicts long after the Imperial Japanese military returned home from overseas. Building upon the work of Japanese scholars, I demonstrate how the Japanese government secretly carried out a limited remobilization of veterans and civilians to assist United Nations forces in the Korean War. This forgotten history of Japanese military involvement in early postwar Asia further complicates the narrative of the Allied occupation and demilitarization of Japan.

Although this project is specifically about events that occurred in Japan after the Second World War, it would be a mistake to believe that the challenges faced by Japanese veterans upon demobilization and the ways in which the Japanese public responded to their return were wholly

unique. In the wake of the Second World War, tens of millions of men and women in uniform returned home either as members of the victorious Allies or as remnants of the defeated Axis regimes. Each group of veterans and their societies encountered circumstances unique to their situations. However, the challenges of reintegration, the travails of physically and psychologically wounded veterans and the ire of a public unsure how to welcome home a generation of young adults seared by encounters with mass-violence played out wherever veterans and civilian societies encountered each other. As such, the experiences of Japanese veterans are revealing in what they show of the impact of defeat upon millions of servicemen returned from war and their society in a modern industrial nation. Finally, I firmly believe this project goes beyond the scope of the mid-20th Century. Over the past nineteen years, hundreds of thousands of American veterans have undergone a constant rolling process of demobilization from wars in Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. I hope that the stories and themes explored within my project provoke questions not just about the past, but also about the contemporary relationship between veterans, the state, and society during a time of protracted war.

A Note on Nomenclature

Throughout "The Unfinished War," I have deliberately avoided wherever possible calling former Japanese soldiers and sailors, "veterans." Instead, I employ the phrase, "demobilized serviceman." The phrase, demobilized serviceman, is derived from the Japanese word, *fukuinhei*, which former servicemen used to describe themselves and which civilians and bureaucrats used to call most former servicemen who were not career officers between 1945 and 1950. It is worthwhile noting that there was no equivalent Japanese term for veteran used with any

frequency during this period. Therefore, my decision to use the phrase, demobilized serviceman, is not merely lexical fidelity, but an attempt to reflect a critical truth about the early postwar identities of Japan's former soldiers and sailors. By insisting on calling themselves demobilized serviceman, these men drew attention to their confused identities during the early postwar years. Demobilized servicemen were no longer soldiers and sailors, but neither did many of them feel as if they were truly civilians, and nor had Japanese society fully accepted them as such. For some, perhaps the phrase gave a sense of belonging and communal identity now that the familiar camaraderie of military service was gone. Yet, it is a fact that the phrase garnered a pejorative connotation as the years progressed. So long as former servicemen remained known as demobilized servicemen, they could not properly move past the war and fully reenter Japanese society. This is a central theme of "The Unfinished War."

Chapter One
Geographies of Defeat

Introduction

Following Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945, the Japanese government and Imperial Japanese military faced a seemingly impossible task: demobilizing and repatriating 3,553,600 Japanese soldiers and sailors from across Japan's former empire and occupied territories.[25] Confronted by this enormous task, Japanese government officials fell into despair. Bringing back home all of Japan's overseas servicemen, along with 3,240,000 colonists was akin to asking for the impossible. There were simply not enough ships. Within Japan's empire, there remained just 420,000 tons of shipping suitable for transporting soldiers.[26] The remainder of Japan's merchant marine fleet lay sunk at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. Even with the ships Japan had left, Japan did not possess sufficient fuel for their operation.[27] These were sobering facts. For a country that had once deployed millions of men across the Pacific and the Asian continent, it no longer possessed the ships, let alone the fuel, to bring them home. For the time being, Japan's overseas servicemen would have to wait.

The vast majority of Japan's overseas forces were stationed in Asia at the time of Japan's surrender. In the last week of the war, the Soviet Union took 575,000 soldiers prisoner in Manchuria, southern Sakhalin Island, the Kurile Islands, and northern Korea. In southern Korea, 335,900 soldiers, yet to participate in fighting, continued performing occupation duties. In China, there were a staggering 1,124,900 soldiers spread across the entire country locked in a stalemated

[25]*Kindai sensōshi gaisetsu: shiryōshū* (Tokyo: Rikusengakkai, 1984), 98.
[26]Yōko Katō, "Haisha no kikan: Chūgoku kara no fukuin hikiagemondai no tenkai," *Kokusaiseiji* 109, (1995): 110.
[27] Ibid.

war against the Chinese Nationalists and Communists. Further to the south, there were 750,000 soldiers stationed across Indochina, Thailand, Malaya, Burma, Singapore, and Indonesia.[28] Unfortunately, for Japanese forces in Asia, overcoming transportation limitations and geography were not the only factors inhibiting their swift demobilization and repatriation.

On September 2, 1945, Japanese dignitaries signed the formal instrument of surrender to the Allies, marking Japan's acceptance of the critical set of Allied demands known as the Potsdam Declaration. Issued on July 26, 1945, by the Allied powers, the Potsdam Declaration included key demands for Japan's political reorganization. Among these, the most important for the Imperial Japanese military was Article 9, which laid out the official Allied policy for the dismantling of Japan's armed forces. Article 9 of the declaration stated, "The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives."[29] For the Imperial Japanese military and many regular servicemen and officers, the meaning of Article 9 was clear: the Allied powers would gurantee the complete demobilization and repatriation of Japanese forces to Japan. In principle, the Allies shared this reading of Article 9. But in reality, the Allied powers handled the disarmament and processing of surrendered Japanese servicemen with little concern for the language of the Potsdam Declaration. Across North and Southeast Asia, the Soviet Union, Nationalist China, and Britain quickly discovered that Japanese forces provided an irresistible source of cheap physical labor, and in some cases, even a source of badly needed military manpower. Within weeks of Japan's surrender, the Allies openly violated the Potsdam

[28] Rikusengakkai, ed., *Kindaisensōshi,* 98. See also: Kōseishō, ed., *Hikiageengo: sanjyūnen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Kōseishō Engokyoku, 1978), 39&52

[29] "Potsdam Declaration," Birth of the Japanese Constitution, Government of Japan, Last Revised 2004, http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c06.html.

Declaration in order to make use of Japanese prisoners until their return could be prolonged no further.

The postwar experiences of Japanese forces in Asia and their treatment by Allied forces did not conform to Article 9 of the Potsdam Declaration. The unique geopolitical conditions of where Japanese forces surrendered and the immediate postwar objectives of the Allied nation that received their surrender shaped the immediate postwar experience of Japanese servicemen in Asia. For tens of thousands of Japanese, these "geographies of defeat" determined whether or not they returned to postwar Japan alive. In Manchuria, Japanese soldiers captured by the Soviets faced years of hard labor in Siberia. In China, tens of thousands of soldiers died in needless fighting as the Imperial Japanese Army intervened in China's civil war at the urging of the Nationalist government. Finally, in Southeast Asia Japanese soldiers found themselves caught between anti-colonial independence fighters and Britain's acute need for military manpower to pacify postwar Indonesia and laborers to repair its damaged colonies. Focusing on these three regions, Chapter One addresses how postwar Allied ambitions entangled the Imperial Japanese military in protracted captivity and postwar conflicts that led to the unnecessary deaths of tens of thousands of Japanese soldiers, and a severe delay in their repatriation.[30]

Prisoners of the Soviets: Manchuria

Catastrophe

In August 1945, Japan's Kantō Army in Manchuria was a ghost of its former self. What was once an elite formation was now little more than a wartime replacement depot for Japan's

[30] This chapter does not cover the story of all overseas Japanese servicemen. However, I have chosen these three regions because they contained more than two thirds of Japan's overseas forces at war's end.

beleaguered armies. Between 1942 and 1944, Japan's Imperial General Headquarters requisitioned most of the Kantō Army's veteran soldiers, tanks, and air planes to counter Allied advances in the Pacific.[31] In the summer of 1945, the Kantō Army just mustered 700,000 men, 200 tanks, and 200 outdated planes after an emergency effort to prepare for an impending Soviet invasion.[32] To bring itself up to strength, the Kantō Army had to scrape the bottom of the barrel by relying upon third-rate garrison divisions from China, forty-year old draftees from Japan, Korean conscripts, and 150,000 Japanese colonists.[33] Often their training amounted to that of only a few months; the quality of their equipment was abysmal.[34] Many soldiers lacked modern uniforms, having to assemble a mishmash of prewar items.[35] Due to a lack of rifles, many newly conscripted Koreans and Japanese colonists were issued only antitank mines. These recruits were instructed in techniques for digging "octopus jar" holes in the ground in which they would blow themselves up as enemy tanks drove over their positions.[36] Yamazaki Shukichi, a Kantō Army veteran, sourly observed that such tactics were akin to "…digging one's own grave."[37] Ultimately, these inadequate forces were charged with an impossible mission: the defense of an area larger than the combined territory of Britain, France, and Germany.[38]

The Kantō Army's demise began at 3 AM on August 9, 1945. Invading from three directions, 1,740,000 Soviet soldiers, 5,250 tanks, and 5,711 planes swarmed across the Soviet-Manchurian border.[39] Although Japanese troops initially offered stiff resistance, the shortage of antitank weaponry, tanks, and planes, quickly began to tell. Soviet armored columns and

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[31] Takashi Nakayama, *Sorengun shinkō to nihongun: Manshū – 1945.8.9* (Tokyo: Kokusho Hakkōkai, 1991), 32.
[32] Nakayama, *Sorengun shinkō to nihongun*, 34.
[33] Nagase Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi* (Tokyo: Harashobo, 2013), 32; Takashi Nakayama, *Sorengun shinkō to nihongun*, 48.
[34] Nakayama, *Sorengun shinkō to nihongun*, 32-33.
[35] Tsutomu Fuse, *Shiberia tōbōki* (Tokyo: Kokusho Hakkōkai, 1982), 23-24.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Shukichi Yamazaki, *Shiberia no akumu zenmu* (Tokyo: Tokyo Gakushu Shuppansha, 1980), 29.
[38] Nakayama, *Sorengun shinkō to nihongun*, 29-30.
[39] Nakayama, *Sorengun shinkō to nihongun*, 34 & 40-41.

accompanying infantry broke through Japanese lines, encircling whole units and severing Manchuria's road and railway networks.[40] To the south, Soviet forces overcame paltry defenses in northern Korea, thus cutting off the Kantō Army's route of escape. Even around the eastern fortified city of Mudanjiang, the center of the fiercest of fighting, numerous Japanese forces entered into a wholesale retreat that in many cases devolved into a chaotic rout.[41] Communications officers Morino Katsugorō and Tagusari Gen'ichi, both stationed around Mudanjiang, and army secretary Ōnishi Atsuko, stationed in Hunchun, witnessed countless vehicles and stockpiles of equipment and food abandoned along roadsides by retreating Japanese troops as well as episodes of commanding officers descending into hysterical behavior.[42] By the time of Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945, organized Japanese resistance in Manchuria had all but collapsed. However, in an often-overlooked epilogue to World War II, on the islands of Sakhalin and Shumushu fighting between Soviet and Japanese forces continued until August 26.[43]

There exists no agreed upon number of losses suffered by the Kantō Army. Official Soviet statistics claim as many as 84,000 Japanese deaths, while Japanese military sources

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[40] Nakayama, *Sorengun shinkō to ihongun,* 43-46.
[41] Ibid
[42] Gen'ichi Tagusari, *Uragirareta heitai* (Tokyo: Chishikisha, 1948), 3-6. See also Katsugorō Morino, *Wa ga yokuryūki* (Tokyo: Bungeisha, 2002), 17; Atsuko Ōnishi, *Sorengun ga manshū ni shinnyū shita hi: Nihongun joshishokuin ga mita soren heishitachi* (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūsho, 1990), 74.
[43] Soviet forces invaded Japanese ruled southern Sakhalin Island (Karafuto) on August 12. In the face of unexpectedly stubborn resistance by the Japanese 88th Division, Soviet victory was delayed until August 25. At battle's end, 1,062 Japanese soldiers lay dead while 4,062 civilians were killed. Further afield, the so called last battle of World War II unfolded on the island of Shumushu, a forlorn rock off the coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula. Between August 18 and August 23, ferocious fighting erupted when local Japanese forces disobeyed orders to surrender and decided to resist the landing of Soviet occupation forces. In a period of five days over 1,500 Japanese and anywhere between 1,000 and 4,500 Soviet soldiers were killed. For a history of the battle of Sakhalin Island, see Fujjimura Takeo's mammoth tome, *Karafuto shūsenshi: Shirarezaru hondo kessen*. For an analysis of Russian and Japanese sources on the battle of Shumushu Island, see Itani Yutaka's article, "Shumushu 1945 nen 8 gatsu."

asserted that 21,000 soldiers died.[44] Yet a third set of numbers, this time published by the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1963, estimated that over 26,000 soldiers and civilians in military employment perished as of August 15, 1945, and that another 28,000 soldiers were killed in unspecified circumstances after Japan's surrender.[45] But there is reason to believe that the Kantō Army's losses may have been far greater than suggested by Soviet and Japanese statistics. In the weeks after August 15, Soviet forces took a total 436,000 Kantō Army prisoners in Manchuria.[46] Regardless of which set of Japanese losses one accepts, the Soviet's final prisoner tally implies that nearly 200,000 soldiers of the Kantō Army's original strength of 700,000 cannot be accounted for. Perplexingly, Japanese historians and government agencies who handled the repatriation of Japanese prisoners do not make mention of these missing soldiers. How might we explain these missing soldiers? First, there is a distinct possibility that actual combat deaths between August 9 and 15 were far higher than those given in Japanese sources, and perhaps greater than even the Soviet tally. Second, it is probable that tens of thousands of more soldiers than the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare's figure of 28,000 died due to fighting, disease, or hunger amid the chaos of postwar Manchuria.[47] Finally, it is not impossible that some soldiers ultimately settled down in Manchuria or were miscounted during the tallying of final prisoner figures. While it may not be possible to know definitively the fate of

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[44] David Glantz, *The Soviet Strategic Offensive in Manchuria, 1945: August Storm* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 340. Glantz notes that Soviet figures for Japanese deaths likely included local Japanese settler militiamen among their final tally. See also: Takashi Nakayama, *Sorengun shinkō to nihongun*, 48.

[45] *Hikiageengo no kiroku zokuzoku* (Tokyo: Kōseishō, 1963), 187.

[46] Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 81.

[47] Despite Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945, Manchuria remained an extremely dangerous place for Japanese civilians and soldiers. In the months after Japan's surrender alone, 140,000 Japanese colonists were killed by Soviet forces, vengeful Manchurian partisans, and local peasants. Many Japanese stragglers, often unaware of the war's end or in spite of it, continued to fight as isolated units. It is unknown how many Japanese fell into this category, but it is likely that many died as members of such units. Though it is not impossible for the majority of Japanese missing soldiers to have died in the weeklong period of regular warfare in Manchuria, I believe it unlikely. Due to the complete lack of records maintained by the Kantō Army during this period, the Ministry of Health and Welfare's figure of post-battle 28,000 military deaths only represents presumably those individuals whose deaths can be verified. Unfortunately, no explanation or sources are provided for how these numbers were originally ascertained. *Hikiageengo no kiroku zokuzoku,* 187.

these soldiers, it is certain that official Japanese statistics hide the true catastrophic scale of the Kantō Army's human loss.

Spoils of War

Following the end of formal hostilities on August 15, 1945, Soviet forces gathered 575,000 Japanese prisoners from Manchuria, northern Korea, Sakhalin, and the Kurile Islands into 44 "concentration zones" for disarmament, processing, and eventual repatriation.[48] Over the following months of confinement before transportation to the Soviet Union, an estimated 15,986 Japanese prisoners are thought to have died – presumably due to poor sanitation and lack of food and medical supplies.[49] Even so, for many Japanese, there was good reason to have believed that the worst of the war was behind them. After all, their Soviet captors repeatedly told them they would soon, in the oft repeated phrase of Russian soldiers, "Tokyo damoi," return to Tokyo.[50] Were these reassurances cruel attempts to distract Japanese soldiers from the fate that awaited them? Perhaps, but initially it is very likely that some of these reassurances were sincere expressions of what Soviet soldiers in Manchuria believed to be the truth. On August 16, Lavrenti Beria, the Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), sent orders to the commander of the Soviet Far Eastern Army that stated: "[You] will not bring Japanese soldiers into Soviet territory."[51] But in a surprise reversal, the Soviet Far Eastern Army received a new directive a week later commanding them to ignore Beria's instructions and prepare to convey Japanese prisoners to Soviet territory. One can imagine the confusion this must have provoked among Soviet forces. Whatever their complaints, these orders could not be ignored.

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[48] Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 78-79.
[49] Takeshi Tomita, *Shiberia yokuryūshatachi no sengo* (Tokyo: Jinbunshoin, 2013), 16.
[50] Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 92.
[51] *Sengo kyōseiyokuryūshi: dai yon maki* (Tokyo: Heiwa kinen jigyō tokubetsu kikin, 2005), 98.

On August 23, Stalin issued the National Defense Committee Top Secret Directive 9898, which called for the organization of 500,000 Japanese prisoners into labor battalions and their dispatch to the Soviet Union and allied Communist states.[52] It is unclear why Stalin made this decision, since no written or oral record of his decision process survives. Some Japanese and Russian historians believe that Stalin's decision was retaliation for President Truman's refusal to permit a Soviet occupation of the northernmost Japanese island of Hokkaidō. Others argue that Beria's order was simply an effort to prepare for the collection of prisoners in camps prior to their dispatch to the Soviet Union.[53] Whichever the case, Stalin's decision to use Japanese prisoners for labor projects was in line with prior Soviet treatment of Axis prisoners. Having suffered at least 25 million dead and suffered enormous losses to industry and infrastructure, Stalin and the Soviet Union viewed Axis prisoners' potential labor as a legitimate form of war reparations. Already in August 1945, 2,389,560 German, 513,767 Hungarian, 187,370 Romanian, and 156,682 Austrian prisoners of war were incarcerated in labor camps across Soviet territory.[54] What of the Potsdam Declaration? As far as the Soviets were concerned, the Japanese had traded away the Potsdam Declaration's protections. On August 18, Japan's General Imperial Headquarters (IGHQ) issued Order 1385, which declared that Japanese soldiers would henceforth "not be recognized as prisoners."[55] This order was issued so as to ensure that Japanese soldiers, trained to believe surrender was an unbearable shame, would cease fighting at a time when thousands of Japanese personnel were still engaged in combat. From August 23 onward, the Soviets reclassified Japanese prisoners as "internees." In a seemingly innocuous change in terminology, the Soviets effectively stripped Japanese prisoners of all rights accorded

[52] Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 79, 83-84.
[53] *Sengo kyōsei yokuryūshi: dai yon maki,* 97-98; Nagase Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 81-82.
[54] Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 181.
[55] Akira Yamada, "Nihon no haisen to daihon'eimeirei," *Sundaishigakkai* 94, (1995), 147.

to them under the Geneva Convention and the Potsdam Declaration.[56] As will be seen later in this chapter, this was not the last time an Allied power reclassified Japanese prisoners of war to circumvent Article 9 of the Potsdam Declaration.

In compliance with Stalin's orders, the Soviet Far Eastern Army initiated the transportation of Japanese prisoners to the Soviet Union in the late summer and autumn of 1945. Out of the total 575,000 Japanese prisoners in Soviet custody, 499,807 were ultimately transferred into Soviet territory. Among these prisoners were 166 generals, 21,345 commissioned officers, and 478,296 non-commissioned officers and privates.[57] From this number, the Soviet Union sent to the fledgling Chinese Communist authorities in Manchuria 30,000 prisoners who were too sick to work, injured, or suspected of war crimes committed in China.[58] Not all Japanese prisoners were men, or necessarily "Japanese," for that matter. Among the prisoners brought into Soviet territory were more than 200 Japanese army and Red Cross nurses, as well as 2,192 Koreans, 190 "White" Russians, 151 Taiwanese, two Mongolians, and one Buryati.[59] Upon arriving in the Soviet Union, prisoners were distributed across 1,145 regular internment camps and 284 special labor battalion camps. These camps were dispersed across European Russia, Central Asia, the Russian Far East, Siberia, and Outer Mongolia.[60] However, of the 499,087 prisoners brought to Soviet territory, 365,058 were incarcerated in Siberia and the

[56] It should be noted that neither Japan nor the Soviet Union signed the Geneva Convention. However, certain Japanese scholars argue that the Soviets were beholden to treating Japanese prisoners under international standards. These scholars point out that not only had the Soviet regime not repudiated the 1907 Hague Convention, which Tsarist Russia was a signatory of, but that the 1907 Hague Convention formed the basis for the Geneva Convention's stipulations on the treatment of prisoners of war. Takeshi Tomita, *Shiberia yokuryūshatachi no sengo*, 18.
[57] *Sengo kyōsei yokuryūshi: dai yon maki,* 99.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Upon the founding of North Korea on September 25, 1948, all Korean prisoners excluding war crimes suspects were promptly repatriated to North Korean territory. Nagase Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 91; Takeshi Tomita, *Shiberia yokuryūshatachi no sengo*, 16-17.
[60] Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 188.

Soviet Far East.[61] Summer camps these were not. The conditions, as the prisoners rapidly discovered, were utterly appalling.

The Soviet Union was wholly unprepared for the arrival of so many prisoners. Due to the strained Soviet economy, food, medical supplies, and basic items of all categories were in short supply. Consequently, few Japanese prisoners received their daily allotment of food as prescribed by Soviet regulations.[62] The housing situation for prisoners was hardly better. Most prisoners lived in crudely constructed wooden barracks. But in many cases, newly arrived prisoners discovered there were no buildings for them to live in. One fourth of all prisoners found themselves in a race against time to build their own housing before the arrival of winter.[63] This was of little concern to Soviet authorities, who hurriedly put Japanese prisoners to work, leaving them little time or energy to construct their own living quarters. For most prisoners, their daily schedule was occupied by hard labor: mining, infrastructure repair projects, logging, and railway maintenance work.[64]

Exacerbating already primitive conditions was the annual onset of winter. In camps in the Soviet Far East and Siberia, winter temperatures frequently hovered around negative 40 degrees Celsius.[65] Arriving in only summer uniforms, no prisoners were prepared for Soviet winter temperatures. Such conditions continued even into 1946, when Soviet officials recorded that among prisoners in Khabarovsk, 36% lacked winter pants, 24% lacked winter jackets, and 16% lacked winter boots, and 6% did not possess warm hats.[66] Hobbled by malnutrition and disease, frigid temperatures proved to be too much for the compromised immune systems of thousands of

[61] Tomita, *Shiberia yokuryūshatachi no sengo*, 16.
[62] Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 206-209.
[63] Ibid, 134-136.
[64] Ibid, 231-235.
[65] Ibid, 114-116
[66] Tomita, *Shiberia yokuryūshatachi no sengo*, 27.

prisoners. In January 1947, a Soviet doctor's survey of camp conditions revealed that disease, hunger and tuberculosis regularly accounted for more than half of all deaths per month.[67] Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of prisoner deaths occurred in the initial winters of 1945 and 1946.[68] After 1946, conditions at camps incrementally improved as the Soviet economy recovered from World War II. Still, thousands of prisoners continued to die from neglect and disease up until the last prisoners were repatriated to Japan in 1950.

In a tragic twist of irony, more members of the Kantō Army officially died and experienced greater emotional and physical duress in postwar captivity than during eight years of war. All told, Soviet mistreatment and neglect resulted in the death of 46,300 prisoners in Soviet captivity. [69] What happened to those who made it back to Japan alive? In the end, the Soviets let them go. Beginning with the weak and infirm, and only then begrudgingly letting go of the unwounded ones, the Soviets repatriated approximately 473,000 Japanese prisoners to Japan between 1946 and 1950.[70] However, thousands more would not be released until as late as the mid 1950s. Although the subject of the third chapter, it suffices to say, few returnees found solace in their initial return home. Returning under a cloud of Cold War paranoia and anti-communist hysteria, repatriates from the Soviet Union faced workplace discrimination and constant surveillance by the Allied occupation. As a tragic coda to their postwar nightmare, few of these men would enjoy the chance to rebuild their lives and acquire a sense of normalcy as citizens of postwar Japan.

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[67] Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 268.
[68] Ibid, 197.
[69] This figure does not include those who died in captivity before being shipped to Soviet territory. Ryoji, *Shiberia yokuryū zenshi,* 197.
[70] *Sengo kyōsei yokuryūshi: dai yon maki,* 108-110; "Shiberia yokuryūchū Shibōsha ni kan suru Shiryō no Chōsa ni tsuite," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Government of Japan, Accessed August 9, 2018, https://www.mhlw.go.jp/seisaku/2009/11/01.html.

Finally, it is necessary to confront the nature of the Soviet Union's enslavement of its Japanese prisoners. From Japan's defeat until the last prisoner was returned to Japan, the Soviet government intentionally ignored the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration pertaining to the demobilization of Japanese prisoners of war. Instead, the Soviets sought to exploit the physical labor potential of Japanese prisoners to rebuild the Soviet Union's war-ravaged economy. It is critical to note that the conditions of Japanese prisoners, like those endured by other Axis prisoners of war, were especially awful and unequivocally those of slave laborers. Yet, if the Soviets were unique in the callousness of their treatment of prisoners, they were hardly alone in their cynical efforts at circumventing the Potsdam Declaration to exploit Japanese prisoners. Both the Chinese and British governments proved to be more than willing to employ and exploit Japanese soldiers and prisoners in schemes that directly violated the Potsdam Declaration.

"Dying a Dog's Death:" The China Expeditionary Army's Violent Postwar

Strange Defeat

Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945, arrived as a shock to the 1,055,700 soldiers of Japan's China Expeditionary Army (CEA). As far as the soldiers of the CEA were concerned, they were winning the war. If the war was lost, it had occurred elsewhere.[71] Since 1937, Japanese forces and their local puppet allies had continuously overcome countless Nationalist and Communist armies except for a few notable occasions. Moreover, most of China's cities and large swathes of its wealthy eastern seaboard remained under direct Japanese rule as of August

[71]Seibun Katō, "Kokkyō naisen shita no sengo nicchū teikei – shiina hakengun to kokumin seifu," in *Nicchū shūsen to sengo ajia no tenbō,* ed. Sumio Hatano, Akira Kubo, and Motoya Nakamura (Tokyo: Keio University Publishing, 2017), 68.

1945. Organizationally, the CEA remained a dangerous foe with the capacity for offensive action. Despite mounting Japanese military disasters in Burma and the Pacific, the CEA delivered a rude shock to the Allies when it mustered the strength to launch two major offensives in the spring and fall of 1944 and in late spring 1945.[72] Nonetheless, the situation was not entirely in the CEA's favor at war's end. The CEA in the summer of 1945 was no closer to breaking eight years of stalemate in China than at any point earlier in the war. More troubling, Communist insurgent activity in northern China continued to grow and tied down numerous Japanese soldiers. Still, the fact remained: the CEA had yet to suffer a single debilitating defeat. Therefore, how would the CEA respond to Japan's surrender? Would its officers and soldiers fight on, or would it quietly swallow its pride and march off peaceably into captivity?

The immediate post-surrender experience of soldiers in the CEA was largely determined by what part of China they ended the war in. In central and southern China, the surrender of Japanese soldiers and their subsequent demobilization was generally peaceful and devoid of post-surrender military clashes. Reflective of this state of affairs are the experiences of soldiers of the 6th Field Army based around the central Chinese city of Wuhan. According to the 6th Field Army's commander, Major General Nakayama Sadatake, the greatest challenge confronted by his men as prisoners were thefts of personal property at night.[73] Not mentioned by Nakayama, but perhaps more pressing to his men than stolen keepsakes, was the general lack of food and increasing rates of hunger among troops due to a breakdown in the local food supply network caused by Japanese wartime policies.[74]

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[72] Tokushi Kasahara, *Nicchū sensōzenshi: nicchū zenmensensō kara ajia taiheiyōsensō haisen made* (Tokyo: Kōbunken, 2017), 294-295.
[73] Kazufumi Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 5 maki* (Tokyo: Yumanishobō, 2009), 231-238.
[74] Kazufumi Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 12* maki (Tokyo: Yumanishobō, 2009), 186.

Along the coast near Shanghai, Japanese troops found themselves beset by boredom and political unrest. According to 69th Division reports, Japanese soldiers played cards, and engaged in karate and haiku writing competitions to pass the months while waiting for their repatriation.[75] Meanwhile, soldiers stationed inside Shanghai remained heavily engaged in maintaining martial law as if Japanese rule in China had yet to cease. In one such instance, Japanese soldiers resorted to the use of violence in the suppression of a Communist inspired strike by 50,000 workers that sought to cripple postwar Japanese administration in the city.[76]

Further south in Guangzhou, soldiers of the 129th Division, not only surrendered to and befriended local Communist forces, which was almost unheard of within the CEA, but they also volunteered to work on repairing local infrastructure – acts, which if Japanese reports are to be trusted, left the local population saddened to see the departure of Japanese forces in 1946.[77] Based on the above anecdotes, as well as countless other divisional and field army level reports, it is tempting to assume that the Japanese surrender in central and southern China was mostly benign. However, this narrative, mostly written down by divisional and army commanders years after the war's end, omits numerous details that suggest the CEA's surrender in central and southern China was far more violent than previously believed.[78]

Large-scale atrocities and inhumane treatment of civilians marred the CEA's occupation of China between 1937 and 1945. As revealed by Nationalist records, this state of affairs continued unabated in sporadic form after the surrender of Japan. According to provincial reports submitted to the Nationalist military, on September 9, 1945, local officials reported that 70,000

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[75] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 5 maki*, 500.
[76] Donald G. Gillin and Charles Etter, "Staying On: Japanese Soldiers and Civilians in China, 1945-1949," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 3 (May 1983): 501.
[77] In October of 1945, the Nationalists' highly trained and American equipped New First Army, arrived in southern China and took over the role of managing surrendered Japanese forces. Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 12 maki,* 195.
[78] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 12 maki,* 181.

retreating Japanese soldiers committed atrocities on their way from Jiujiang County in Jiangxi province toward Shanghai. According to eyewitnesses, Japanese discipline was "extremely bad," and that soldiers engaged in wanton acts of "arson and murder" as well as thefts.[79] Another report states that on September 15, 1945, a column of 10,000 Japanese soldiers passing through Jiangsu province "arbitrarily stole the valuables of civilians, carried out acts of arson, and committed violent acts such as raping women…"[80] These episodes were not isolated events.

As late as October 1, 1945, General He Yingqin, the Commander in Chi ef of Nationalist China's military, complained of further atrocities in an urgent message sent to his Japanese counterpart at the head of the CEA, General Okamura Yasuji. He's message informed Okamura that he had received reports that soldiers from a force of 56,000 Japanese troops withdrawing from He county in Anhui province assaulted and raped local civilians. In a reflection of the inability of Nationalist forces to exert effective control over surrendered Japanese soldiers two months after the war's end, He then beseeched Okamura to promptly ensure that Japanese troops refrained from further attacks on Chinese civilians.[81] These reports are important because they demonstrate that soldiers of the CEA, particularly in non-combat zones such as southern China, remained a menace toward Chinese civilians for at least two months after the end of the war. Furthermore, these reports call into question the veracity of Japanese military documentation from this period, which earnestly trumpets the "strict military discipline" of the CEA in post-surrender China. If nearly 100,000 Japanese soldiers engaged in the above atrocities, how many more did so in cases not reported to the Nationalist military leadership? It is no leap of the imagination to assume that more soldiers in the CEA than

[79] Kengo Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 38* (Tokyo: Misuzushobō, 2004), 366.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 38,* 365.

reported perpetrated further acts of cruelty on a civilian population it treated with scant regard in wartime.

In contrast to central and southern China, elements of the North China Field Army in northern China continued to engage in combat operations. Local commanders, such as General Nemoto Hiroshi, commander of the Inner Mongolia Garrison Army, Major General Takeuchi Yasumori, commander of the Independent Mixed 8th Brigade at Gubeikou along the Great Wall clashed with forces of the Chinese Communist Eighth Route Army and the Soviet Far Eastern Army and their Mongolian allies.[82] Additionally, Chinese Communist partisans continued to conduct military operations against Japanese forces across northern China, particularly in Shanxi, Hebei, Jinan and Shandong provinces in a coordinated campaign lasting until the spring of 1946.[83] By September 10, at least 1,000 Japanese soldiers had been killed while an unknown number were wounded.[84] In northern China, Communist forces either sought to forcefully compel the surrender of Japanese units in order to capture their weapons or sought to persuade Japanese soldiers to surrender and hand over their weapons. Even though Japanese commanders might have avoided bloodshed, they deliberately refused to hand over their weapons and soldiers to Communist forces under the pretext that only Nationalist forces were authorized to take their surrender.[85] These decisions were neither spontaneous nor the arbitrary actions of local commanders; rather, they were the direct result of a deliberate series of choices by the head of the CEA to provide military support for the Nationalist cause and to cooperate with Nationalist demands.

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[82] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 5 maki,* 199-203; 599-602.
[83] Gillin and Etter, "Staying On: Japanese Soldiers and Civilians in China, 1945-1949," 501.
[84] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 5 maki,* 353.
[85] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 5 maki,* 217; 601-602.

Negotiating Surrender

Japan's sudden defeat in August 1945 plunged China and the CEA into a series of uncomfortable political and military dilemmas. The first dilemma facing the CEA and the Nationalists was what was to become of more than a million Japanese soldiers in China. Under the Potsdam Declaration's Article 9, Chiang was responsible for the speedy demobilization and repatriation of the CEA's personnel. But there was one significant problem. There were no ships available to repatriate Japanese forces. The Nationalist military possessed neither a navy nor a merchant marine. Moreover, American mining of Japanese harbor entrances impounded Japan's few remaining transports in Japanese ports.[86] In light of this, the Nationalists delegated repatriation responsibility to the United States Navy (USN), which possessed thousands of transport ships. But the USN was busy with its own task: expediting the return of demobilized American servicemen at a furious pace to satiate the demands of an American public anxious for the return of their children.[87] As shipping calculations were drawn up and negotiations conducted, the Americans concluded that it would be almost a year before Japanese troops could depart China. For all intents and purposes, the CEA was marooned in China.

The second dilemma was determining who would receive the surrender of Japanese forces and acquire their valuable stockpiles of weapons, munitions, and vehicles. Both Chiang's Nationalist armies and Mao Zedong's Communist Eighth Route Army viewed Japanese weapons, and in many cases, Japanese personnel, as critical for bolstering their postwar forces in preparation for fighting to reunify China under their rule.[88] Accordingly, both leaders' armies aggressively raced each other to take the surrender of Japanese forces and their weapons.

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[86] Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 39* (Tokyo: Misuzushobō, 2004), 568.
[87] Katō, "Haisha no Kikan," 114-115.
[88] Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 38,* 340.

Suddenly, Japan's armies in China had transformed nearly overnight from a menacing enemy into an irresistible prize that promised whoever could take their surrender the means to secure a decisive military advantage in the struggle for postwar China.

As ostensible head of the Second United Front, Chiang decreed that only Nationalist forces were authorized to receive the surrender of Japanese forces.[89] In reality, Chiang's political and military writ did not extend much further than central China. While there were Communist forces operating in China's northern and eastern provinces, there were no Nationalist forces at hand to receive the surrender of the CEA.[90] Consequently, Chiang and the Nationalist government viewed securing the cooperation of the CEA as critical in preventing a Communist takeover of eastern China and necessary for the reestablishment of Nationalist rule of China. All of this placed the CEA into a dangerous military and political predicament. Whichever course of action they adopted would influence the political future of postwar China. Surrender to Communist forces could easily be construed as a violation of Chiang's legal prerogative as theater commander to solely receive the surrender of Japanese forces. However, refusal to surrender to Communist forces promised the likelihood of bloodshed. What would the CEA do? To the relief of the Nationalists, the CEA and the Japanese military leadership, from almost as soon as the war ended, decided to throw their weight behind the Nationalist cause.

Perhaps nobody within the CEA was more dedicated to rendering military assistance to the Nationalist's postwar cause than the CEA's commander in chief, General Okamura Yasuji. This must have been highly surprising at first for the Nationalist's leadership, since Okamura was behind wartime policies that had frustrated China's war effort and was responsible for

[89] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 5 maki,* 216.
[90] In fact, the bulk of Nationalist armies were stationed in central China, around the Nationalist capital of Chongqing, nearly a thousand miles from the coast. For places such as Beijing, it would take almost four months before Nationalist forces arrived on scene in sufficient numbers to receive the surrender of Japanese forces.

countless atrocities committed in the name of the "Burn to Ash Strategy" anti-partisan campaign in northern China. Yet, over the course of only three days after Japan's defeat, Okamura underwent a startling ideological transformation from implacable enemy of China to advocate for the rebirth of a unified Nationalist Chinese state. This transformation was undoubtedly a shrewd political move to align the CEA with the victor's interests. Nonetheless, it is also possible to see Okamura's transformation as a reflection of his extreme anticommunist views that inspired many of his wartime policies.[91] Even after Japan's surrender, Okamura envisioned a continuation of a Japanese military role in postwar China for the purpose of combating communism. In an August 18 document titled, *Heiwachokugo Taishishoriyōkō* (*A Guideline Toward the Disposition of China Directly After Peace*), Okamura called for Japanese forces in China to exert all efforts to "ease the way for the unification of China under the Chongqing central government and cooperate with the construction and recovery of China… and to punish Yan'an (Chinese Communists) in the occasions that it takes up an anti-Japanese and insulting attitude."[92] Okamura's manifesto does not read as a document written by a defeated nation. By recommending that Japan and the CEA not only render support for the Nationalists, but also suppress Communist forces in China, Okamura's vision is tantamount to a barely watered-down attempt to maintain Japan's prewar political and military influence in postwar China. The idea that a defeated and destitute Japanese state could contribute significant resources to China's

[91]The "Burn to Ash Campaign," more commonly known now as the "Three Alls (Kill All, Burn All, Loot All),"campaign was conceived in part due to the perceived need among North China Field Army officers to redress the humiliation of the bloody nose that Japanese commanders received during the 8th Route Army's surprise offensive in 1940, known as the Battle of the One Hundred Regiments. The campaign's stated goals were the suppression of Communist 8th Route Army insurgents and the terrorizing of communities that presumably provided them assistance. As a result of the campaign, thousands were killed and numerous farms and villages, along with crops, were looted and destroyed between 1941 and 1942. Years after the campaign's conclusion, numerous regions were left entirely depopulated and economically crippled. In light of Okamura's vindictive fixation on combating Communist forces in northern China, it is perhaps unsurprising that he ultimately chose to cooperate with the Nationalists to continue what the CEA seems to have viewed as its unfinished battle with Chinese Communists. Tokushi Kasahara, *Nihongun no chiansen: nicchūsensō no jissō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2010), 112-115; 202.
[92] Kengo Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 38,* 377-378.

recovery is in retrospect absurd. But Okamura's insistence that Japanese forces could "punish" Communist forces on behalf of the Nationalists would prove to be far from delusionary. In the ensuing months, this is precisely what he accomplished.

Between August 22 and 23, Okamura's Vice Chief of Staff, Major General Imai Takeo, and his Chinese Nationalist counterparts entered into negotiations over the surrender of the CEA at the city of Zhijiang. Despite eight years of bitter fighting, the talks hardly resembled a conversation between longtime foes.[93] In what amounted to frequently cordial conversations, Imai and his Chinese counterparts quickly found common cause over a shared antipathy toward Mao's Communists. From the conference's beginning, Imai asserted that the CEA would maintain its weapons for "self-defense." Moreover, Imai announced that no weapons or territory would be transferred to Communist forces – certainly to the great pleasure of the Nationalists.[94] Of course, the Nationalists had no forces of their own in northern and eastern China to accept the CEA's surrender. Therefore, it was entirely to the advantage of Chiang's government that Nationalists forces, as one Chinese general put it, would "refrain from obstructing efforts [by the CEA] to exercise self-defense."[95] The Nationalist's vague language could not hide the implied subtext: the Nationalists were content to permit soldiers of the CEA to retain their weaponry so long as it might be used against Communist forces. In follow up talks in Nanjing, the Nationalist and the Okamura reaffirmed the agreements made at Zhijiang and reached a final surrender settlement on September 9, 1945. The result of Zhijiang and subsequent talks was the transformation of the CEA's North China Field Army, then currently engaged in fighting with Communist forces, into a quasi-ally of the Nationalist military and the prolongation of the suffering of China's war-weary populace.

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[93] Katō, "Kokkyōnaisen shita no sengo nicchū teikei – Shiinahakengun to kokuminseifu," 71-72.
[94] Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 38,* 340.
[95] Katō, "Kokkyōnaisen shita no sengo nicchū teikei – Shiinahakengun to kokuminseifu," 72.

The decision by the CEA to employ military force against Communist forces in coordination with the Nationalists complied with orders issued by Japan's Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) in Tokyo. In the week after Japan's surrender, IGHQ released two directives that sanctioned Japanese forces in China to continue to engage in combat operations in northern China. On August 16, 1945, IGHQ issued Order 1382, which in addition to calling for an end to aggressive operations also stated: "…while holding negotiations for a ceasefire, [we] will not hinder unavoidable military action for the sake of self-defense against assaults made by the enemy."[96] On its face, Order 1382 permitted the continued use of military force by Japanese soldiers in the ambiguous situations deemed as "self-defense" against "enemy assaults." As for which enemies and what situations the second directive applied to, IGHQ provided no clarifying explanation. This changed on August 25, when IGHQ issued Order 1388. Order 1388 explicitly declared: "However, it is permissible for the China Expeditionary Army to take measures of local self-defense on the occasion of lawless action by Yan'an (Communist) or Chongqing (Nationalist) armies."[97] In one short sentence, IGHQ clearly condoned the right of the CEA to engage in military operations it deemed as self-defensive in nature. Despite the inclusion of the Nationalists within Order 1388, the CEA's leadership only viewed one Chinese faction as its enemy: the Chinese Communist Party. Over the remainder of the year, Order 1388 provided the official military legal basis for Japanese operations against Communist forces in coordination with the Nationalist government.

The War with no Name

[96] Yamada, "Nihon no haisen to daihon'eimeirei," 144.
[97] Yamada, "Nihon no haisen to daihon'eimeirei," 150.

Between August 1945 and January 1946, the North China Field Army engaged Communist forces in numerous small-scale battles across northern China. Unfortunately, there is little surviving documentation for the battles fought in this period beyond a number of sparsely detailed military reports, and anecdotes from two memoirs of soldiers who fought in this period. Available evidence suggests that most of the fighting occurred in the provinces of Shanxi, Hebei, Jinan and Shandong provinces, as well as parts of southern Manchuria. Fighting occurred in these specific provinces because the Communist 8th Route Army had previously established a large presence of partisans and regular soldiers in these areas, and remained the only Allied force in these areas until late 1945.[98] Due to the CEA and the Nationalists desire to keep Japanese weapons and positions out of Communist hands, more than half of all Japanese divisions and independent mixed brigades remained under arms in northern China until the end of 1945. [99] Fighting after Japan's surrender developed along lines similar to that of Japanese operations in northern China between 1937 and 1945: Japanese soldiers occupied strategic cities and towns while guarding critical lines of communication, such as railways and telephone and telegraph lines. Waiting to be relieved by the plodding advance of Nationalist forces, Japanese garrisons came under withering attack. Communist forces devoted much of their energy to severing rail lines, isolating Japanese garrisons, and ambushing patrols.[100] Surviving accounts of fighting

[98] Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 38,* 384.

[99] Unfortunately, due to the paucity of records from the months after October 1945, it is difficult to determine an accurate record of the location and number of battles fought as well as other relevant details. This is not to say that we know nothing of the fighting, or what units might have been involved. Disarmament tables compiled by the CEA's officers after the war suggest a substantial number of independent units potentially participated in fighting. In fact, no less than 21 out of 31 divisions and independent mixed brigades in the North China Field Army remained armed until December 1945, while a significant number of units did not disarm until at least January 1946. In a few instances, some formations even remained under arms until February 1946, while the 14th Independent Mixed Brigade of 1st Army in Shanxi province continued to fight through March 1946. In total, it is likely that hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers remained under arms until the end of 1945.Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 38,* 426-429.

[100] Ibid.

indicate that most battles were small engagements by comparison with those fought before August 1945.

Nonetheless, the small scale of postwar engagements did not make these battles any less horrible and terrifying. Sergeant Kondō Ken'ichi, the author of an exceptionally rare eyewitness account of this period, barely survived one such small battle nearly five months after Japan's surrender. Kondō and his company of 100 men served as guards at a train station and barracks along the strategically vital Qindao-Jinan line at Changyi in Shandong province.[101] So far, Kondō's company had not suffered any significant attacks since surrender. This was fortunate, since Kondō's company commander's disdain for the fighting ability of Chinese had led him to neglect the proper fortification of Changyi – leaving just a brick parapet as the only obstacle protecting the Japanese barracks from attack.[102] Finally, on December 7, 1945, intelligence came in that local Communist forces from the 8th Route Army were preparing an attack.[103] However, many of the Japanese troops were lulled into a semi-state of unpreparedness when no attack came before sunset.[104] Exploiting the darkness for maximum surprise, soldiers of the 8th Route Army assaulted Changyi around 11:30 PM on the night December 7.[105] Having gone to bed in his uniform pants with the expectation of an attack, Kondō awoke suddenly to the sound of fighting and the cries of alarm by his fellow soldiers. The following is a heavily edited excerpt of the ensuing battle from Kondō's memoir, *Tōjihō*.

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[101] Ken'ichi Kondō, *Tōjihō* (Tokyo: Sōeishuppan, 1994), 46.
[102] As noted by Kondō, other units in the vicinity of Changyi constructed pill boxes, trenches, and other field fortifications around their positions adjacent to rail lines. These defenses proved successful in deterring Communist attacks, or succeeded in repelling their assaults. In the case of Changyi where no such defenses existed, Communist forces easily overwhelmed Japanese defenses. Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 66; 50.
[103] Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 51.
[104] Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 52.
[105] Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 58.

I must have been asleep for some time. [But[I leapt to my feet when I [heard] the sound of a violent explosion go bang and [felt] the earth shake. A sentry yelled out, "enemy attack, enemy attack!"

I felt as if I were dreaming and that this was not happening in reality. In the darkness, I put on my uniform [jacket], [laced up] my boots, took a rifle from gun the wrack placed there by Corporal Itō, and jumped outside. But at the [building's] exit I decided that I ought to wear a helmet that I glimpsed, so I returned inside and put on a helmet before going back outside… The enemy energetically poured on mortar fire. Tracer bullets from a Czech machine gun passed high above my head and impacted, immediately dropping and hitting a brick wall. The [enemy's] fire was accurate. As expected, the enemy were attacking from the north.

In the absolute darkness, nothing was visible, least of all the figures of the enemy. Even so we kept on shooting. Still, I did not feel as if any of this was happening in reality… I felt as if another "me" was watching my actions…

I was worried about how my squad was doing. Hunching over, I dashed over to the rear of some soldiers shooting from a parapet… As I went closer to my squad's barracks, I shouted out one after another the names of soldiers, "Ōshima!" "Satō!" A soldier near me angrily exclaimed, "First squad took a direct hit from [the enemy's] mortars. They've been annihilated."[106] The door to the room then suddenly blew open, and bricks crumbled into the entrance… [A]nyways, nothing was visible, as the middle of the room grew dark.

Making a whizzing sound, bullets started to fly in from the western side [of the building]… With every bullet I loaded into my rifle, I continued to fire back…

A massive explosion roared from the vicinity of the parapet on the western side. A massive hole had opened up below the parapet. The hole grew bright as 8th Route Army soldiers broke through while holding a torch in their left hand and grenades in their right hand. The 8th Route soldiers threw their torches into the middle of the barracks [and] threw their stickhandle grenades at us. Climbing over the parapet, I escaped. One after another, soldiers of the 8th Route suicide corps continued their attack after passing under the hole [in the parapet]. There was little but 30 meters between me and the 8th Route soldiers. I shot my rifle at the enemy as he emerged from the hole. I missed. The surrounding area lit up as the barracks went up in flames… Overwhelmed by the enemy's strength, there was nothing more to do than fall back to the eastern flank. [However,] [t]here were also some dumbfounded soldiers who merely stood petrified, as if they had forgotten to shoot their guns…

Here and there, soldiers lumped together in groups – almost nobody was firing their guns. Everyone stood around in silence with an expression on their face of not knowing what to

[106] Kondō was part of a seven-man squad. A day after the battle he learned that the first mortar shell launched by Communist soldiers killed all six of his squad mates while they were asleep in their quarters. Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 67.

> do. The company commander was nowhere to be found, and neither was Lieutenant "O" for that matter. It was unclear who was taking charge of the battle…[107]

With the breakdown in the command structure, Kondō and his comrades became disorganized and demoralized to the point that organized resistance all but collapsed.[108] Before the sun had risen, Communist forces successfully overran all remaining Japanese positions, killing or capturing most of the Japanese defenders. Wounded by shrapnel, Kondō barely avoided capture by pretending to be dead before slipping away to the safety of Japanese lines.[109] To his horror, Kondō discovered that only 40 men of his company remained while another 60 had been killed, wounded, or gone missing. In the course of just one night, a nameless small skirmish unrecorded by historians nearly wiped out an entire Japanese company.[110] For as fierce as the fighting was at Changyi, it was hardly exceptional. All around northern China, particularly in the Shandong region, similar battles unfolded as Communist forces sought to seize Japanese territory before the arrival of Nationalist armies.[111]

Japanese units were not solely involved in defensive combat. In Shandong, Japanese forces engaged in a series of offensives to recapture strategic ground and secure critical lines of communication ceded to Communist forces after Japan's surrender.[112] Yet another offensive took place along the Manchurian border. On November 16, 1945, General Okamura mobilized Japanese forces for an offensive to reinvigorate the Nationalist Army's stalled advance into southern Manchuria.[113] Lieutenant Tanaka Haruo, a participant in this offensive, vividly recalled that on the way to the front he and his company were greeted with joy by despondent retreating

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[107] Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 52-57.
[108] Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 57-58.
[109] Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 58-64.
[110] In the end, a number of stragglers hidden by local Chinese civilians returned to Kondō's unit. Kondō reckons that between 15-16 were killed, while 20 soldiers listed as missing were taken prisoner. It is unclear how many were wounded, since he does not provide a number for this category.Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 64-65.
[111] Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 38,* 483.
[112] Gillin and Etter, "Staying On: Japanese Soldiers and Civilians in China, 1945-1949," 501.
[113] Haruo Tanaka, *Haisen: wa ga seki he no isho* (Nagoya: Self-Published, 1997), 55.

Nationalist soldiers who went so far as to embrace his men – a scene utterly unimaginable three months earlier.[114] After days of ferocious fighting, Tanaka's unit was finally pulled off the line in a state of exhaustion and anger. The fighting in Manchuria proved to be as bad as anything Tanaka experienced before Japan's surrender. Of the 78 soldiers of Tanaka's unit that fell in this operation, 28 came from his company. It does not appear Japanese forces engaged in any more offensive operations in 1946. However, intermittent fighting continued in the area of Shandong and Jinan provinces, as Communist forces persisted in trying to force the surrender of Japanese soldiers and seize their equipment. Altogether, the combat experienced by Japanese soldiers in postwar China was occasionally equal to the intensity of fighting conducted before Japan's surrender.[115]

In January 1946, the CEA's military assistance to the Nationalists finally ended as American Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, sought to prevent the Nationalists and Communists from sliding into full-scale civil war. Whether or not Japan's active military role in China ended due to direct intervention by Marshall at this time is unclear. Regardless, orders were issued by the CEA's leadership to complete a full disarmament of Japanese troops by January 14, 1946.[116] On the following day, the soldiers of the CEA finally heard the news many of them had long waited for: they could finally begin to go home. After five months of negotiations, and three false starts, on January 15, 1946, Sino-American-Japanese negotiators reached a final agreement on a joint-repatriation scheme for the CEA. The plan provided perhaps as many as 100 LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) and Liberty Ships, along with numerous disarmed Japanese warships and merchant vessels, to be crewed mostly by Japanese sailors.[117] Over the

[114] Tanaka, *Haisen,* 56.
[115] Tanaka, *haisen,* 58-62.
[116] Katō, "Haisha no kikan," 123.
[117] Katō, "Haisha no kikan," 119; 123.

ensuing months, hundreds of thousands of Japanese forces either marched by foot or were transported by rail to cities across China's eastern seaboard for preparation for departure and processing.[118] By August 21, 1946, the long-delayed repatriation of the CEA was over.

The soldiers of the CEA's North China Field Army suffered grievously to satisfy the ambitions of Okamura and the Nationalist government. Based on preliminary casualty tallies secretly produced by a CEA general staff officer for Emperor Hirohito in 1946, at least 28,135 Japanese soldiers lost their lives due to various causes between August 15 1945 and January 1946. Of this, 3,280 are listed as having died in battle while another 6,996 died due to diseases contracted from fighting. Inexplicably, another 17,740 died due to unknown causes, which one may presume included, murder, sickness, possible death in combat, and suicide. Finally, 119 are noted as having been killed in accidents.[119] As terrible as these figures are, they are likely far too low. Further studies on postwar Japanese casualties made by Japanese scholars in the 1980s suggest that the actual total postwar deaths of the CEA were at least as high as 51,100.[120] If this were correct, then this would mean that the period after Japan's surrender produced a number of losses roughly equal to 12 percent of all deaths suffered by the CEA during the Second Sino-Japanese War.[121] In other words, what ought to have been a period of relative peaceful disarmament and repatriation, was instead one of the deadliest periods experienced by the soldiers of the CEA.[122]

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[118] Ibid.
[119] Deaths due to unknown causes are categorized under "other." Tomie, ed. *Gendai shishiryō 38,* 436.
[120]Tadao,Ōba. *Sengo senshisha gomannin no nazo wo toku* (Tokyo: Hon no Izumisha, 1999), 113.
[121] Total Japanese military losses amount to 404,600. *Kindai sensōshi gaisetsu: shiryōshū* (Tokyo: Rikusengakkai, 1984), 98.
[122] Basic figures for postwar Chinese Communist military and Chinese civilian deaths due to clashes with Japanese forces are wholly absent within Japanese language sources. It is my hope that future scholars in possession of Chinese language abilities will provide a more complete account of this period using available sources from Chinese state archives.

"Nothing Other Than Sentimentalism"

Responsibility for this extraordinary loss in life rests at the feet of the Japanese military and the Nationalist government. As the Allied theater commander, Chiang was responsible for arranging a swift and timely disarmament and demobilization of Japanese forces in China in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration. Instead, Chiang deliberately ignored, if not outright violated the Potsdam Declaration. By forbidding Communist forces from taking the surrender of Japanese forces when Nationalist armies were sometimes thousands of miles away from eastern China, the CEA was placed into a bizarre position where it would have to continue to fight until the appropriate Chinese army arrived to take its surrender. Similarly, Okamura and IGHQ are equally responsible for the failure of the CEA's timely and total disarmament and surrender. As ideological opponents of Communism, both IGHQ in Tokyo and CEA's commander, Okamura, cooperated with Nationalist postwar aims by ensuring that the North China Field Army would not only use force to resist all entreaties to surrender by Communist forces, but also in limited instances take offensive action in coordination with Nationalist armies. In doing so, Okamura ensured that unknown numbers of Chinese civilians and soldiers, along with tens of thousands of Japanese soldiers would needlessly die for a war that was officially over.

If Okamura and his subordinates could justify their postwar actions through the lens of ideology and politics, many of their soldiers found no such solace. In the end, few soldiers of the CEA ever found meaning in a forgotten war fought long after Japan's surrender and occupation by Allied armies. "What," asked sergeant Kondō, who remained traumatized by the loss of his company at Changyi into old age, "should we make of the meaning of those who died in battle on the cusp of demobilization and the postwar?... Is it okay to declare that they absolutely died a

dog's death? Did they simply die from bad luck? Even now, searching for meaning in these deaths is probably nothing other than sentimentalism." [123]

Soldiers of Misfortune: The Japanese Demobilization in Southeast Asia

Insufficient Forces

Although Japanese forces were in the midst of a chaotic rout in Burma in August 1945, for the vast majority of the 750,000 soldiers of Japan's Southern Front Army, stationed in Indochina, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaya and Thailand, the war's end was anticlimactic.[124] Ever since the rapid collapse of the febrile British and Dutch armies in 1942, occupation duty had provided much tedium and little excitement. By August 1945, no Allied armies had emerged off the coasts of Malaya, Indochina or the main Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra, despite frantic preparations for what local commanders assumed to be imminent invasions. And so when Japan's IGHQ informed its Southeast Asian commanders to stand down and surrender on August 15, 1945, a strange and troubling realization set in among soldiers and officers alike: the war had been fought and lost elsewhere.[125] So unwilling were some Japanese officers in Southeast Asia to stand down that Prince Kanin was dispatched on August 20 to Saigon to assure Field Marshal Count Terauchi Hisaichi, commander of Japan's Southern Front Army, that indeed the emperor had willingly surrendered without coercion.[126] Gradually, the Southern Front Army's officers and soldiers acquiesced to defeat, quietly submitting themselves to their unknown fates.

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[123] Kondō, *Tōjihō,* 81-82.
[124] Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War* (London: Dent Publishing, 1984), 638.
[125] Ken'ichi Goto, *Tensions of Empire: Japan and Southeast Asia in the Colonial and Postcolonial World* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003), 187-188.
[126] Stephen B. Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai: Imperial Japanese Forces Under British Control, 1945-1948* (London: Seventh Citadel Publishing, 2015), 7.

Nonetheless, surrender was not in the immediate offing for many soldiers. Due to distances and logistical difficulties, Japanese units throughout Southeast Asia would not see Allied forces in some cases for another month.[127] Fearing an outbreak of anti-colonial nationalism, the British ordered Japanese garrisons across Southeast Asia to do what they had done for the past three years, wait for the imminent arrival of Allied forces and maintain civil order.[128]

Although British forces were well prepared to fight the Japanese, they were not prepared to handle postwar occupation and peacekeeping duties. Britain's Lord Louis Mountbatten, commander of Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) and his soldiers faced a daunting challenge after Japan's surrender. Somehow, they would have to secure all Japanese occupied territory in Southeast Asia and then feed, house, and repatriate 750,000 Japanese soldiers. Three immediate problems impeded Mountbatten's efforts at receiving the surrender of Japanese forces in Southeast Asia. The first issue was that of geography. In July of 1945, America's General Douglas MacArthur went against Mountbatten's wishes and transferred occupation duties of the Netherlands East Indies and French Indochina to SEAC, thereby saddling Britain with two combustible regions of anti-colonial sentiment along with the additional responsibilities of finding and caring for 100,000 Allied prisoners of war and the disarmament of 207,900 Japanese soldiers.[129] The second problem was that of shipping. The American government's termination of lend lease supplies to Britain on August 20 cut Britain off from valuable American foodstuffs, vehicles, and most critically, merchant shipping necessary for ferrying soldiers and repatriating Japanese personnel.[130] The immediate consequences were that Britain lacked adequate shipping

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[127] Andrew Roadnight, "Sleeping with the Enemy: Britain, Japanese Troops and the Netherlands East Indies, 1945-1946," *History,* 87, no. 286 (April 2002), 250.
[128] Stephen B. Connor, "Side-stepping Geneva: Japanese Troops Under British Control, 1945-7," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 45, no. 2 (April 2010), 394.
[129] Roadnight, "Sleeping with the Enemy," 248; *Kindai sensōshi gaisetsu: shiryōshū,* 98.
[130] Connor, "Side-stepping Geneva: Japanese Troops Under British Control, 1945-7," 393.

to transport soldiers to far-flung Japanese posts and repatriate British demobilized soldiers, let alone repatriate Japanese soldiers to Japan. And then there was the problem of manpower. With the onset of peace, the majority of British soldiers were set to be demobilized according to Prime Minister Clement Attlee's Labour government policy, thus leaving SEAC denuded of its veteran soldiers at a time when their expertise was most needed. Consequently, SEAC was forced to primarily rely on Indian army divisions, whose postwar availability was increasingly becoming less likely as India rapidly moved towards independence.[131]

All of this culminated in one giant question: how would British forces adequately occupy and maintain order in Southeast Asia and begin the process of rebuilding the region's infrastructure with so limited of resources? For Mountbatten, the answer was simple: Japanese forces where necessary would maintain order on behalf of the British and would work as laborers where needed. According to Article 31 of the 1929 Convention Relating to Prisoners of War, prisoners of war were forbidden from carrying out duties that aided the execution of military operations.[132] However, on August 15, 1945, SEAC decreed that Japanese prisoners taken after Japan's surrender would henceforth be labeled as Japanese surrendered personnel (JSP), rather than the legal classification of prisoner of war (PW).[133] This move had an additional, if not unmentioned benefit: as JSP, prisoners no longer had to be paid wages for any work rendered to the British.[134] In defense of their actions, the British government and Mountbatten disingenuously insisted that the JSP designation legally freed Japanese prisoners from the 1929 Convention Relating to Prisoners of War. In truth, Britain's Foreign Office suspected the JSP

[131] Roadnight, "Sleeping with the Enemy," 248; Connor, "Side-stepping Geneva, 1945-7," 391.
[132] Connor, "Side-stepping Geneva," 395.
[133] Yoshihito Kita, "Eigun ni yoru kōfuku nihon gunjin no toriadzukai: nanpōgun shūsen shorishi no ichidanmen," *Gunjishigaku* 35, no. 2 (1999), 34.
[134] Kita, "Eigun ni yoru kōfukunihongunjin no toriadzukai," 41.

designation was woefully illegal.[135] In any case, the decision to reclassify Japanese prisoners was not a novel idea, but already common practice in Europe since Germany's surrender.[136] Moreover, General MacArthur, having already reclassified Japanese prisoners taken by American forces, gave Mountbatten his blessing to deal with prisoners as he saw fit as long as he did not delay their repatriation in accordance to the Potsdam Declaration. While Mountbatten gladly accepted MacArthur's offer of freedom of action, he would blithely ignore his rejoinder to honor the Potsdam Declaration's Article 9.[137]

At first, the Japanese government and military favored the JSP category, since it made surrender palatable by saving its soldiers in Southeast Asia from suffering the humiliation of being labeled as prisoners. Unfortunately, for Japanese personnel, by being labeled as JSP, they lost all legal protections and guarantees for rations, medicine, and payment legally mandated by PW status. Perhaps sensing what was to come, Japanese negotiators pressed their British counterparts in surrender negotiations on August 26 at Rangoon for the right for Japanese forces to disarm and confine themselves to internment camps supplied with adequate rations. The British flatly refused.[138] In peace, the JSP would not be left to their own devices. Over the following months, SEAC ordered, and cajoled tens of thousands of JSP to serve as armed auxiliaries alongside British forces and hundreds of thousands more to work as forced laborers. Deficient in manpower and assigned an excessively large occupation zone, SEAC was in no rush to disarm and repatriate its Japanese prisoners of war in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration.

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[135] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 83-84; 86.
[136] Britain had already implemented a similar model in May 1945. At the time of Germany's surrender, Britain reclassified German prisoners of war as surrendered enemy personnel (SEP) in order to use German prisoners as guards and laborers, while America also carried out a similar policy towards many of its prisoners as well. Kita, "Eigun ni yoru kōfukunihongunjin no toriadzukai," 36.
[137] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 85.
[138] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 11-12.

Colonial Auxiliaries: The Case of Java and Sumatra

On August 17, 1945, Indonesian nationalists unilaterally declared Indonesia independent of Dutch and Japanese colonial rule. Hoping to find an ally among their former occupier, Indonesian nationalists on the islands of Java and Sumatra sought out Japanese assistance in the form of demanding weapons to fight against the arrival of Allied forces and their former Dutch colonial masters.[139] These moves placed the Japanese 16th Army, in charge of the densely populated island of Java, into a particularly difficult position. Before Japan's surrender, Japanese forces not only provided immense rhetorical support for Indonesian independence but had also trained and led Indonesian militia units (*giyūhei* and *heiho*) in preparation for resisting an eventual Allied invasion.[140] But after Japan's surrender, the Allies expected the Japanese to maintain control of Java in advance of the arrival of Allied occupation forces. In what must have come as a shock to pro-Japanese Indonesian nationalists, the 16th Army formally ceased providing support for Indonesian nationalists and disbanded and disarmed all Indonesian militia units.[141]

To what degree did the 16th Army and its commander, Lieutenant General Nagano Yūichirō aim to assist the Allied occupation of Java is unclear. Based on comments made by Nagano as well as his later actions, there is sufficient evidence to believe that he sought to cooperate with the Allies' main goal of securing and repatriating Allied PWs and civilian internees. Beyond this, it appears Nagano sought to avoid becoming entangled in any confrontations between the Allies and Indonesians. This is evidenced in Nagano's August 21 Army Operational Order No. 1120, which ordered all Japanese army forces to assemble in

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[139] Kazufumi Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 6 maki* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2010), 191-194.
[140] Shizuo Miyamoto, *Jawa shūsenshoriki* (Tokyo: Jawa shūenorikikankōkai, 1973), 50-51.
[141] Ibid; Goto, *Tensions of Empire: Japan and Southeast Asia in the Colonial and Postcolonial World,* 190.

internment camps located in the countryside along with their weapons and supplies – essentially a virtual abandonment of Javanese population centers to Indonesian nationalists.[142] In reality, it appears few Japanese units carried out such a move with much gusto or speed. When Allied forces did arrive, many Japanese units had yet to pull out from their original positions.[143] Had this order been carried out it would have likely strengthened the Indonesian nationalists' military situation in Java. Nonetheless, there is no evidence that Nagano intended to undermine the viability of SEAC's occupation by issuing this order.

The security situation in Java and the adjacent island of Sumatra progressively worsened from late August through early October as pro-independence groups sought to arm themselves in anticipation of the arrival of British and Dutch colonial forces. On Java, Indonesian nationalists and *pemudas* (Republican youth militias) demanded that Japanese units transfer their weapons and supplies to Indonesian control.[144] In many cases, Japanese units refused to accede to these demands. In a few notable exceptions, such as in central Java and northern Sumatra, Japanese units willingly transferred considerable amounts of weapons to nationalist groups. But by no means was this norm.[145] By September, frustration with Japanese intransigence turned violent, as once peaceful demands for Japanese weapons were progressively replaced by the use of force.

Throughout Java, Japanese soldiers guarding weapons stockpiles and camps housing Dutch civilians came under sustained attack, leaving numerous wounded and dead. Although the

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[142] This was followed by Army Operational Order No. 1127 on August 29, which instructed all soldiers on Java not involved in maintaining civil order to deposit their weapons in Japanese arsenals while those performing constabulary duties to carry no more than five rounds of ammunition. Many Western scholars, particularly from the Netherlands, view Operational Order No. 1120 as indicating that all Japanese units proceeded to disarm. Indonesian scholar, Han Bing Siong argues that Japanese records show that combat units did no such thing and retained arms and ammunition either on their persons or in storage in case of need. Furthermore, he argues that only auxiliary units, such as antiaircraft units that had no utility in the postwar proceeded to completely disarm. Han Bing Siong, "Captain Huyer and the Massive Japanese Arms Transfer in East Java in October 1945" *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde,* 159, no. 2/3 (2003): 310; 298-299; 303.

[143] Siong, "Captain Huyer and the Massive Japanese Arms Transfer in East Java in October 1945," 303-304.

[144] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 8 maki,* 110-111.

[145] Siong, "Captain Huyer and the Massive Japanese Arms Transfer in East Java in October 1945," 318-319.

16th Army ordered its soldiers to rearm on September 18 in response to increasing attacks on Japanese soldiers, in reality this did not lead to a more confrontational stance by Japanese forces toward Indonesians nationalists.[146] Among the Japanese there simply existed little enthusiasm to play the role of postwar colonial enforcer for the Allies. In many places, such as Jakarta, Japanese forces proved reluctant to use force to prevent seizure of territory and property by Indonesians, or for that matter, prevent the disarming of Japanese units.[147] In total, Indonesian forces succeeded in acquiring from the Japanese through theft and secret weapon transfers at least 26,000 rifles, 1,300 machine guns, 340 artillery pieces of all types, and over 2,400 trucks and cars.[148]

The 16th Army ceased being a neutral bystander in postwar Indonesia with the gradual arrival of British-Indian forces in Java beginning on September 29 and on Sumatra on October 9.[149] Recently appraised of Java and Sumatra's breakdown in civil order and keenly aware of its insufficient manpower, SEAC explicitly ordered its forces to employ Japanese soldiers for the maintenance of law and order.[150] This dramatic move placed Japanese officers and men within the British military chain of command, thereby diminishing the ability for Japanese commanders to avoid violent confrontations with Indonesian nationalists. For the vast majority of the soldiers who became British auxiliaries, this service amounted to dangerous constabulary duties in areas with strong Indonesian militia activity. But in a number of critical instances, Japanese troops served in direct battles with militia forces both alongside British-Indian forces and by themselves.

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[146] Siong, "Captain Huyer and the Massive Japanese Arms Transfer in East Java in October 1945," 311.
[147] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 36-39.
[148] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 6 maki,* 150.
[149] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 29-30.
[150] This was made possible by the reclassification of 16th Army personnel as JSP following the 16th Army's surrender conducted on the HMS *Cumberland* off of Jakarta on September 15.Ibid.

Establishing control over the island of Sumatra was a critical priority of SEAC due to 100 million pounds worth of British investment in Royal Dutch Shell oil refineries on the island.[151] It was thus an ironic twist that the Japanese 25th Army, originally dispatched to seize Sumatra's oil fields, was soon tasked with their defense on behalf of the West following the arrival of the 23rd Indian Division at the port of Medan on October 9. Due to Sumatra's immense size and the paltry number of British forces on Sumatra, British commanders resorted to impressing the service of 27,000 soldiers of the 25th Army's 59,000 soldiers for service between October 1945 and November 1946.[152] Over the course of the following months, Japanese forces were deployed in a defensive perimeter around the cities of Medan and Palembang, the centers of critical oil refining operations.[153] Between November 1945 and November 1946, Japanese forces came under constant attack by Indonesian nationalist militias seeking to sabotage oil-refining operations and seize Japanese weapons.[154] In addition to these duties, Japanese forces also were employed in suppressing a massive uprising by Acehnese tribes in November 1945.[155] In the absence of firsthand accounts of this period, it is difficult to gauge the reaction of Japanese soldiers to being placed in the line of danger on behalf of British interests. Still, there appears to have been some degree of discontent, despair, and rebellion. According to the 25th Army's report on its postwar activities, 33 soldiers committed suicide while 606 deserted or went missing in action.[156] While British praise of Japanese actions on Sumatra was effusive, it is clear that not all Japanese soldiers were keen on risking their lives for their former enemy.

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[151] Roadnight, "Sleeping with the Enemy," 247.
[152] Kazufumi Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 8 maki* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2010), 165.
[153] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 8 maki,* 167-168.
[154] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 8 maki,* 170.
[155] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 8 maki,* 165.
[156] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 8 maki,* 164.

By early October, British-Indian forces were heavily engaged in fighting with *pemudas* in western Java. Altogether, the British employed as many as 10,500 Japanese as guards and soldiers to assist their efforts at maintaining control over Java.[157] In the first half of October, Japanese forces proved instrumental in securing Jakarta and fending off numerous attacks on weapons stockpiles and camps holding Allied civilians and PWs, while in Bandung, Japanese soldiers along with Japanese tanks assisted British Ghurkas in clearing the city of Indonesian government militia units of the Badan Keamanan Rakyat (BKR, *People's Security Organization*).[158] In subsequent fighting in Bandung in November, Japanese artillery was employed in the bombardment of Indonesian held positions.[159] The direct intervention of Japanese forces in Indonesian affairs did not go unnoticed among Indonesians. Unsurprisingly, anti-Japanese sentiment erupted across Java. Not only did attacks on soldiers increase, but violence toward civilians also broke out, resulting in the massacre of 86 Japanese civilians seized from a train on the way to an internment camp on October 19.[160] But of all of the clashes between Japanese and Indonesians, none was more violent and consequential than the events that transpired in Semarang.

Between October 15 and the 19, Japanese forces without direct orders acted as proxies for British forces by attacking *pemuda* forces in the northern Javanese port of Semarang in what became the bloodiest Japanese-Indonesian clash of the postwar period. There exists considerable confusion over the origins of this battle. Contrary to erroneous accounts that claim the massacre of Japanese civilians at Semarang's Boeloe prison sparked the Japanese attack on Semarang, the

[157] Roadnight, "Sleeping with the Enemy," 251.
[158] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 40.
[159] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 8 maki,* 117.
[160] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 36.

battle had its origins in the events of the preceding days.[161] Just days before the battle *pemduas* succeeded in persuading a Japanese garrison at nearby Magelang to surrender their weapons and had successfully seized 60,000 rounds of ammunition from Japanese stockpiles in Semarang.[162] At the same time, *pemuda* forces clashed with soldiers under the command of a Major Kido Shinichirō, the commander of Kido Butai (a Special Infantry Battalion) and a training school, and demanded the handover of his unit's weapons.[163] Kido flatly rejected to comply with these demands. Not only had Mountbatten strictly forbidden the surrender of weapons by JSP, but it was a personal affront to a career officer such as Kido to surrender weapons with the emperor's personal seal, the chrysanthemum, still emblazoned upon their barrels.[164] Finally, Kido was gravely concerned by rising violence and credible threats to the safety of Allied PWs and civilians waiting to be repatriated in camps outside of Semarang. In fact, Kido justified his decision to use force to his soldiers by citing the need to keep "international faith."[165] Thus, it may be said that humanitarian and political concerns, perhaps even more than that of professional honor, were the chief motivating factors that drove Kido to take unilateral action to reassert control over Semarang.[166]

On the early morning of October 15, Kido Butai launched a two-pronged assault on the southern edge of Semarang with the intention of encircling BKR and *pemuda* positions. On the first day of fighting, Kido Butai successfully secured the outskirts of Semarang at the cost of 20 Japanese soldiers killed and an unknown number of Indonesian dead.[167] However, on October 16, the fighting took an uglier turn when local kenpeitai (Japanese military police) liberated

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[161] Han Bing Siong, "The Secret of Major Kido: The Battle of Semarang, 15-19 October 1945"*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 152, no. 3 (1996), 390.
[162] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 44.
[163] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 43-44.
[164] Siong, "The Secret of Major Kido: The Battle of Semarang, 15-19 October 1945," 404-405.
[165] Siong, "Captain Huyer and the Massive Japanese Arms Transfer in East Java in October 1945," 313.
[166] Siong, "The Secret of Major Kido: The Battle of Semarang, 15-19 October 1945," 407.
[167] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 45.

Semarang's Boeloe prison where they freed Dutch and Japanese hostages and discovered the mutilated bodies of 130 Japanese civilians who had been massacred by the *pemuda*.[168] Elsewhere in Semarang, *pemuda* carried out further massacres of as many as 250 Japanese civilians, leaving their bodies left behind in the city's parks.[169] The discovery of murdered Japanese civilians, especially at Boeloe prison, so enraged Kido's soldiers that it made them go "fighting mad."[170] Describing Kido's forces following their discovery of murdered Japanese civilians a British eyewitness recounted,

> They swept through the town, regardless of dangers or their own losses like one of the Mongolian hordes of Genghis Khan or Tamerlane. They took no prisoners and everyone with arms or suspected of carrying arms was captured and killed. Whole lorry loads of prisoners with their hands tied behind their backs were driven out into the countryside and never heard of again.[171]

After five days of fighting, Kido's forces completed the pacification of Semarang on October 19 and were relieved by the arrival of a battalion of British Ghurkas. Kido Butai's losses were 130 dead, while the British estimated that at least 2,000 Indonesians were killed.[172] However, considering that an unknown number were summarily executed and the paucity of records, there is no authoritative figure for Indonesian losses.[173] Kido's victory saved the lives of hundreds of Japanese civilians; not counting the lives of thousands of unarmed Allied PWs and civilian internees. A British officer present in Semarang was so impressed with Kido's actions that he recommended him for a Distinguished Service Cross (DSO).[174] Having earned the admiration of the British, Kido and his men repeatedly participated in further combat operations alongside British and Indian forces, most notably in the seizure of the towns of Magelang and Ambarawa

[168] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 46.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Siong, "The Secret of Major Kido: The Battle of Semarang, 15-19 October 1945," 390.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 46.
[173] Siong, "The Secret of Major Kido: The Battle of Semarang, 15-19 October 1945," 390.
[174] Siong, "The Secret of Major Kido: The Battle of Semarang, 15-19 October 1945," 415.

during the remainder of 1945.[175] Yet, the nature of Kido's victory raises serious concerns about his leadership and his soldiers' conduct.

The killing of prisoners by Kido's forces amounted to acts of war crimes in Semarang. Although the discovery of the Boeloe prison massacre provoked Kido's men into a state of inconsolable violent rage that produced a series of atrocities, evidence indicates that Japanese extrajudicial killings of Indonesians began before this revelation. On October 15 and the morning of the 16th, long before the discovery of the Boeloe massacre, Kido's men began to shoot Indonesians taken prisoner. Chinese and Indonesian civilians recount having seen streets littered with executed Indonesian militiamen as well as militiamen being led to ravines to be presumably shot.[176] Supposedly, there were no formal instructions for how Japanese forces should handle prisoners. Kido has denied responsibility for the killings, stating in a 1988 letter that local commanders were given full discretion in how to dispose of prisoners.[177] Yet, whether or not the decision to kill prisoners was predmediated, it is difficult to believe that Kido was completely ignorant of the actions of his subordinates.

The Japanese atrocities in Semarang were indistinguishable from those that led the Allies to convict and execute hundreds of Japanese for war crimes in the postwar and they seriously call into question the wisdom of Britain's use of Japanese auxiliary forces. What is remarkable is that these atrocities were committed on behalf of the Allies, not against them. Japan was not a signatory of the Geneva Convention and so did not adhere to its rules on the treatment of prisoners of war. But Kido Butai, along with all Japanese forces in Indonesia in the postwar, was officially classified as JSP under British regulations. As a signatory nation of the Geneva Convention, British forces were obligated to uphold the Geneva Convention. Since JSP served

[175] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai: Imperial Japanese Forces Under British Control, 1945-1948,* 47.
[176] Siong, "The Secret of Major Kido: The Battle of Semarang, 15-19 October 1945," 391.
[177] Ibid.

under British command, it follows that they too should have been expected to obey the Geneva Convention. Few of Kido's men took any pride in their behavior. In fact, some expressed fear of being prosecuted for their actions.[178] However, the British made no moves to prosecute Japanese soldiers for the extrajudicial killings in Semarang. British inaction suggests that either that local British commanders tacitly approved of Japanese soldiers' actions, or that they might have feared that bringing charges would have provoked international scrutiny into their use of JSP as colonial as combatants. Although SEAC did not order Kido Butai's deployment, SEAC created the conditions where the events that transpired in Semarang were possible. In light of British fury at Japanese mistreatment of Commonwealth prisoners during wartime, British silence on Kido Butai's behavior is strikingly hypocritical.

At the start of 1946, SEAC continued to rely on Japanese soldiers for key military operations on Java and Sumatra. Without sufficient numbers of Dutch troops in theater to take over from SEAC forces, Mountbatten and the British foreign office were in no rush to cease taking advantage of available Japanese manpower.[179] However, as Dutch forces began to arrive in increasing numbers throughout 1946 and American politicians expressed displeasure at the tardiness of repatriation in Southeast Asia, SEAC began to disarm and repatriate JSP personnel in Java and Sumatra. Although Japanese soldiers in Java ceased military duties by the spring of 1946, Japanese soldiers would continue to provide security to British, Dutch, and American oil installations on Sumatra and suffer losses until the repatriation of the last Japanese soldiers on November 17, 1946.[180] But not everyone went home. Thousands of Japanese soldiers who had rendered military service to British forces in Indonesia between 1945 and 1946 would end up

[178] Siong, "The Secret of Major Kido: The Battle of Semarang, 15-19 October 1945," 390.
[179] Roadnight, "Sleeping with the Enemy," 260.
[180] Ibid, 256; 260-261.

among the tens of thousands languishing in as forced laborers in Britain's Southeast Asian colonies.[181]

Forced Labor

The vast majority of Japanese prisoners employed by the British did not serve in combat or security roles. Instead, a more tedious, if no less arduous fate awaited these soldiers: forced labor. From August 1945 through June 1947, the British government illegally forced Japanese prisoners to work in dangerous and often inhumane conditions that amounted at times to slave labor. The original pretext for the formation of Japanese labor battalions was that Britain lacked the labor and resources to repair the damage incurred to its colonies' infrastructure by the Japanese occupation.[182] Accordingly, Japanese prisoners represented an irresistible source of physical labor to solve this problem. Citing international law and the August 26, 1945, Rangoon Agreement's terms on surrender of Japanese forces in Southeast Asia that rendered Japanese no longer prisoners, but JSP, the British claimed they could demand labor from their Japanese prisoners.[183] The first recorded instance of using Japanese prisoners as forced laborers occurred at Singapore, when local commanders issued orders for the assembly of a labor battalion of 600 men and 5 officers on September 6, 1945. Nevertheless, large-scale use of Japanese forced labor did not commence until early 1946.[184] At its peak, perhaps as many as 395,000 Japanese prisoners were organized into labor battalions in Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Singapore, Indochina, and Indonesia between late 1945 and the summer of 1946.[185] However, as Britain began

[181] Connor, "Side-stepping Geneva," 402.
[182] Ibid, 399.
[183] Kita, "Eigun ni yoru kōfuku nihon gunjin no toriadzukai: nanpōgun shūsen shorishi no ichidanmen," 37-38.
[184] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 91.
[185] Hiroi Masuda, "Nanpoku nihonjin yokuryū no kokusai hikaku" *Gunjishigaku* 53, no. 3. (December 2017), 9.

repatriating JSP to Japan in 1946, SEAC retained at least 105,000 forced laborers until the summer of 1947.[186]

There were few jobs that the British did not assign to Japanese prisoners. Many prisoners worked as farmers. But many others worked on constructing roads, draining swamps for land reclamation, repairing irrigation and drainage systems, repaving airport runways, constructing buildings, and repairing railways.[187] In addition to these physically exhausting jobs were tasks that placed prisoners in direct danger. For instance, in Thailand 7,600 Japanese railway soldiers were retained to maintain the infamous Thai-Burma railway and to guard it from attack by bandits.[188] In other instances, Japanese prisoners were ordered to assume dangerous tasks for which they likely received little training. On the Malay Peninsula and in Singapore, for example, prisoners were forced to clean gas lines, clear minefields and defuse unexploded ordnance.[189] Data for this region shows that 373 prisoners died from accidents as of September 1947. Notably, among these numbers seven are listed as having died from burns, 12 died from explosions likely the result of improper ordnance disposal another seven died from drowning, 56 died due to reasons listed as "other," while another 256 died when their ship hit a mine on December 2, 1945.[190] Similarly telling are statistics for those injured while on the job. For the same period, 16,622 prisoners were injured seriously enough to warrant medical treatment or hospitalization.[191] These numbers demonstrate that Japanese prisoners faced an exceedingly dangerous work environment that often resulted in serious injury and death.

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[186] Connor, "Side-stepping Geneva," 402.
[187] Kita, "Eigun ni yoru kōfuku nihon gunjin no toriadzukai: nanpōgun shūsen shorishi no ichidanmen," 41.
[188] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 129.
[189] Kita, "Eigun ni yoru kōfuku nihon gunjin no toriadzukai: nanpōgun shūsen shorishi no ichidanmen," 40.
[190] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 6 maki,* 133-134.
[191] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 6 maki,* 134.

In certain regions, indifference and occasional outright cruelty characterized British treatment of Japanese prisoners. In the immediate aftermath of the war, food was exceedingly scarce in Southeast Asia. Among groups prioritized for receiving food, Japanese prisoners unsurprisingly ranked near the bottom. Reflecting on the food situation he and his comrades faced in Burma, one former Japanese forced laborer wrote in 1947, "We were engaged in heavy labor and worked from 7 AM to 4 PM. The rationed food was so meager that we went to bed hungry at night."[192] Another former forced laborer recently returned from Malaya in 1947 wrote, "… In Malaya, Japanese work from early morning till late afternoon… Provided with insufficient food, they must till their fields after work in order to get enough to eat."[193] In wartime, Japanese soldiers received 3,700 calories on average per day in Southeast Asia. Under British care as of August 1946, laborers received a comparatively paltry sum of 1,700 calories each day.[194] This was hardly enough for peacetime work, let alone for daily hard labor carried out by prisoners such as those quoted above. In Malaya, Java, and Singapore, where rations were acutely lacking, morale plummeted among Japanese troops.[195]

As troubling as it must have been for many prisoners, insufficient rations were sometimes the most benign form of hardship experienced on a daily basis. According to postwar Japanese army reports, forced laborers in Singapore and on the Malay Peninsula appear to have suffered considerable abuse and violence at the hands of their British guards. Many of these soldiers were combat veterans who had fought against the Japanese and bore deep grudges against their former foe.[196] Beatings seem to have been a typical form of abuse. Data for this region shows that

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[192] Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 4 maki* (Tokyo: Kabushikikaisha gendaishiryō shuppan, 2001), 24.
[193] ibid.
[194] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 6 maki,* 73.
[195] Ibid, 72-73.
[196] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 149-151.

British guards killed five Japanese prisoners and physically wounded another 198 to the point that they required serious medical treatment.[197] British guards also found novel ways to torment prisoners on work details. Apparently, guards frequently refused prisoners permission to drink water or take breaks while on long marches to and back from work. [198] Additionally, guards intentionally detoured labor details through Singapore's Chinatown, whose citizens having suffered extraordinarily under Japanese occupation, gleefully pelted Japanese prisoners with rocks and insults.[199] Whether due to intentional abuse or a serious lack of medical supplies, at least 1,700 Japanese prisoners alone died of Malaria in Singapore.[200]

The worst cases of British abuse of Japanese prisoners significantly dropped by October 1946. Some scholars posit that this was likely a result of considerable improvement in SEAC's supply situation and with the demobilization of British combat veterans.[201] But to what degree was this truly the case? Anecdotal evidence from 1947 suggests otherwise. One prisoner in southern Malaya in 1947 wrote: "We are very hungry and feel dizzy on a meal of rice gruel every day. The British authorities seem to drive us hard as long as possible."[202] Another prisoner who spent his days cutting grass "as tall as a man's head" complained: "I can hardly bear such hard work with only five ounces of food a day."[203] Yet another prisoner from the same period alluded to physical violence in a letter voicing his desire to go home, "We are enduring whippings, hunger and intense heat, but we await eagerly the day of our repatriation."[204] If the food supply situation had truly improved, why did complaints of hunger dominate the letters of

[197] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 6 maki,* 134.
[198] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 6 maki,* 129.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 6 maki,* 132.
[201] Ibid; Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 151.
[202] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 4 maki,* 440.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.

Japanese prisoners writing home? Certainly, these letters from various regions imply that the British continued to withhold or were unable to provide proper rations for Japanese prisoners. What is more, complaints about physical assault also appear in these letters. It is clear that even with the demobilization of British combat veterans, intentional neglect and physical abuse of prisoners continued well into 1947. In the end, it was the slim sliver of hope of returning home that carried many otherwise miserable and malnourished prisoners through seemingly endless days of captivity, suffering, and crushing pessimism.

In May 1946, Japanese forced laborers received news that they could finally return home. Since the war's conclusion, SEAC had argued that it lacked sufficient shipping to repatriate its Japanese prisoners – a task which it predicted would take five years with available British shipping in the Pacific.[205] A sudden infusion of American shipping changed the situation overnight. With the transfer of 100 Liberty ships, 85 LSTs, and six hospital ships, Britain repatriated around 600,000 Japanese prisoners between May and September 1946 as part of Operation NIPPONOFF.[206] Nevertheless, there was a catch. Not all prisoners could go home. Mountbatten and the Dutch insisted on retaining 132,000 Japanese personnel indefinitely, because the British military and colonial administrators had become wholly reliant on Japanese manpower for maintaining military and port facilities, among other duties.[207] While this may have been true, there were other cynical reasons at play as well. British officers noted that Japanese prisoners worked far harder than local hired labor, and best of all, they did not have to pay Japanese soldiers for their work, or paid them barely at all.[208] To the horror of many

[205] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 144-145.
[206] Masuda, "Nanpoku nihonjin yokuryū no kokusai hikaku," 11.
[207] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 206-207.
[208] Masuda, "Nanpoku nihonjin yokuryū no kokusai hikaku," 14.

prisoners, those who had worked hardest and shown the least resistance to British orders were denied repatriation.[209]

Although the British resumed repatriations in March 1947, many would have to wait in suspense while continuing to carry our forced labor. Meanwhile, Japanese prisoners fell into despair when informed of their prolonged servitude.[210] One embittered prisoner informed of his delayed repatriation wrote home:

> It is only because we expect we shall be able to return home some day that we are tolerating all insults and any hard labor, but it seems that our repatriation will not be realized soon… [T]here are no laborers so easy to manage as we, who are just a band of coolies easily controlled without a penny of wages.[211]

By the summer of 1947 fury at the British decision to delay repatriation had boiled over among prisoners impatient to return home. In Malaya and Singapore, some prisoners began carrying out a campaign of sabotage against British property and while others plotted protests of their conditions.[212] In other cases, soldiers expressed a desire to harm British officers, while others described a state of open loathing and the frequent occurrence of violence between prisoners and British personnel. In an especially alarming letter, one prisoner described the perilous atmosphere in Singapore thusly: "Thefts, murders, and acts of revenge occur daily. Such being the case, unless we are repatriated at the earliest possible moment, we may hear shots fired, even though we are disarmed."[213] Despite statements by some authors attesting to a state of near-revolt among prisoners in British captivity, there is no evidence that anything akin to an uprising broke out among prisoners in the final months of 1947. After numerous delays and false starts, even prisoners in Singapore finally received permission to return to Japan in late 1947.

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[209] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 105.
[210] Connor, *Mountbatten's Samurai,* 183.
[211] Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki* (Tokyo: Kabushikikaishagendaishiryōshuppan, 2001), 451-452.
[212] Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 5 maki* (Tokyo: Kabushikikaishagendaishiryōshuppan, 2001), 346.
[213] Ibid.

Nevertheless, the British were reluctant to stop using Japanese prisoners as forced laborers until the end. Only in January 1948 did the last prisoners set foot back on Japanese soil.[214]

The Final Tally

Postwar forced military and labor service for the British exacted a heavy toll on the lives of the soldiers of Japan's Southern Front Army. Service to the British on Sumatra proved to be especially costly for Japanese soldiers. According to army records extending only through February 1946, Japanese units suffered 198 killed in action.[215] Further postwar studies, extending through November 1946, suggest total losses in this period were much higher, amounting to as many as 700 dead.[216] Remarkably, these losses equaled nearly one-half of the 2,000 dead suffered by Japanese forces in Sumatra in wartime.[217] By the time Japanese forces ceased active participation in the fighting on Java in February 1946, 800 Japanese soldiers and sailors had died from all causes.[218] By comparison, the British lost 77 dead and 30 missing, while Indian troops suffered heavy losses amounting to 550 killed and 300 missing for roughly the same period.[219] The near equivalent number of losses between both Japanese and British and imperial troops provide compelling evidence for the lengths to which SEAC heavily relied on Japanese manpower for pacifying postwar Java. Yet, for as terrible as these losses were, the number of

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[214] Masuda, "Nanpoku nihonjin yokuryū no kokusai hikaku," 14.
[215] Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 8 maki,* 166
[216] This number presumably includes all causes of death in addition to that from fighting.
[217] *Rikusengakkai, ed., Kindai sensōshi gaisetsu,* 98.
[218] I have derived the figure of 800 dead from the research conducted by the Japanese scholarly study group, *Rikusengakkai. Kindai sensōshi gaisetsu: shiryōshū,* 98. By contrast, contemporary sources cite total postwar losses in Java as 507 soldiers and military contractors (*gunjingunzoku*). For these numbers, see: Hamai, ed. *Fukuin kankei shiryō shūsei Dai 8 maki,* 43. However, Stephen Connor cites a third set of figures for Japanese losses in Java up through February 1946 as 384 dead and 307 wounded. Connor, "Side-stepping Geneva, 1945-7," 401.
[219] Roadnight, "Sleeping with the Enemy," 267.

Japanese who died as forced laborers in Britain's Southeast Asian colonies was far greater. By 1947, a staggering 9,000 had perished in captivity before they could return home.[220]

Between August 1945 and June 1947, Japanese soldiers of the Southern Front Army performed essential labor service and military duties for the British military across Southeast Asia. It is perhaps not altogether objectionable that Japanese forces should have been made to contribute to the recovery of Southeast Asia. After all, Japan's wartime occupation of the region resulted in the direct and indirect deaths of millions of civilians who perished from artificially induced famine, wartime enslavement, and through the use of terror and violence. It can also be argued that that Japanese work on labor projects contributed far more than the incarceration of prisoners ever could. Nonetheless, how Britain used and treated its Japanese prisoners was neither legally acceptable nor right. British use of Japanese prisoners violated international law and contravened the spirit of the Potsdam Declaration's Article 9 by not repatriating all Japanese prisoners in 1946. Furthermore, Britain showed that its use of Japanese prisoners was far less about justice then it was about self-serving interests. By illegally using Japanese prisoners as soldiers, the British compelled tens of thousands of Japanese to reprise their defunct role as colonial enforcers for British interests and inadvertently placed Japanese troops in a position where they committed atrocities that ought to have been impossible in the postwar period. Finally, by retaining prisoners as virtual slave laborers under poor conditions, British policy resembled aspects of the Soviet Union's exploitation of prisoners in Siberia. In life and body on and off the battlefield, Britain's Japanese prisoners paid dearly.

Conclusion

[220] Kita, "Eigun ni yoru kōfukunihongunjin no toriadzukai: nanpōgun shūsenshorishi no ichidanmen," 34.

In the telling of the story of the Second World War in Asia, August 15, 1945, enjoys the status of an unassailable ending point to the war's fighting. Before this date, the Imperial Japanese military in Asia stood implacably defiant in the face of surging Allied superiority in men and material. After August 15, however, the soldiers and sailors of Japan vanish into the ether of history, as if Emperor Hirohito's surrender address had snuffed out their existence with his solemn words. Of course, no such thing happened. Unlike Nazi Germany, Japan's surrender did not coincide with the defeat and of all of its soldiers and sailors. This distinction is critical in understanding the violent and chaotic events that enveloped Japanese servicemen across Asia following Japan's surrender.

For Japan's soldiers in Asia, home to the majority of its overseas forces, their struggles, and in some cases, even their war, did not end on August 15, 1945. In Manchuria, the war dragged on for weeks after Japan's surrender. When the fighting finally ceased, there was no peace waiting to welcome the soldiers of the Kantō Army. Instead, they were enslaved and lived in appalling conditions, far worse than anything experienced in wartime. In northern China, Japan's surrender did not bring a cessation to hostilities but, paradoxically, an intensification of fighting that killed tens of thousands of Japanese soldiers through the early months of 1946. Although Japan's surrender brought a rapid end to fighting in central China, Japanese troops still committed acts of brutality against Chinese civilians while marching towards the coast to be demobilized and repatriated. Certainly, many Chinese civilians must have wondered whether the war had actually ended. In Southeast Asia, surrender placed tens of thousands of Japanese in the defense of a new empire, while condemning hundreds of thousands to forced labor projects for the restoration of British colonial authority. Why did all of this happen?

Wherever Allied armies had yet to secure in Asia and the Pacific, Japanese military control and organization remained firmly intact. And even those regions where Japanese forces were pursued by vengeful Allied armies, the challenge of what to do with Japanese forces in the postwar remained a pressing problem. With the signing of the Potsdam Declaration on July 26, 1945, the Allies agreed to the speedy demobilization and repatriation of Japanese forces. Instead, the opposite occurred. Japan's armies remained a potent ally in settling postwar Asia's immediate future, if not a valuable prize for exploitation and profit. Consequently, the repatriation of Japanese forces in Asia was neither timely nor straightforward. The Soviet Union, Nationalist China, and Britain could not resist the temptation to exploit Japanese manpower to further their postwar military, colonial, or economic goals. By willfully violating Potsdam Declaration, the Allies severely delayed the return of Japanese servicemen to civilian life and caused the needless deaths of more than 100,000 soldiers.

Chapter Two
"With What Honor Did You Return?"
The Troubled Demobilization and Return of Japanese Soldiers

Introduction

In 1978, bureaucrats from the Japanese government's Ministry of Health and Welfare published *Hikiage to engo sanjyūnen no ayumi* (*The Progress of Thirty Years of Repatriation and Assistance*), a 460-page doorstopper-sized official history of government assistance provided to former soldiers and colonists after the Second World War.[221] At the time of its publication, it is likely that some of its authors had directly participated in the demobilization and repatriation of soldiers, sailors, and colonists. For the Ministry of Health and Welfare and its bureaucrats, this book must have been a labor of love. Finally, here was the story of how Japan's military and empire came home told by those who had made it happen. Naturally, this was not a book for asking hard questions, picking at old scabs, or for inquiring into how servicemen and civilians really felt about the process of demobilization. In these pages, there would simply be facts and a tale of government triumph. Stunningly, even today *Hikiage to engo sanjyūnen no ayumi* and a number of other works published by Japanese prefectural governments remain the most detailed sources on the demobilization of domestic and overseas Japanese forces.[222] Unfortunately, this is highly problematic.

Much of *Hikiage to engo sanjyūnen no ayumi'*s treatment of the demobilization of the Japanese military is simultaneously accurate and astoundingly misleading. In terms of numbers and dates, *Hikiage to engo sanjyFūnen no ayumi*'s depiction of demobilization of Japanese

[221] Kōseishō, ed., *Hikiage to engo sanjyūnen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Kōseishō Engokyoku, 1978).
[222] For a prefectural level bureaucratic history of demobilization, see: Gunmakenken minseikatsubu seiwakei ed., *Gunmaken fukuin engoshi* (Tokyo: Gunmaken, 1974).

forces within and outside of Japan is more or less statistically correct. But outside of this narrow parameter, the book obfuscates the true nature of the demobilization of Japan's armed forces after August 15, 1945. Reading this account, one would not realize that the domestic demobilization of Japanese forces was riddled with controversies, or that the behavior of soldiers provoked a swell of anti-military sentiment among civilians. Similarly, one would not learn of the true feelings of soldiers upon their return to Japan, that the repatriation process became a stage for numerous violent attacks on officers, or that the Japanese public treated the return of overseas soldiers with considerable coolness. On all of these matters, this history remains disturbingly silent. Maybe this should come as no surprise. After all, the demobilization of servicemen within and outside Japan was one of the most disruptive, raucous, and embarrassing episodes in Japan's military history. A true accounting would have had to admit that ill-disciplined servicemen undermined the integrity of domestic demobilization, the public displayed little affection for returning servicemen, and that the Japanese government and Imperial Japanese military wholly failed to prepare adequately for these problems. None of this makes for a particularly laudatory history.

Chapter Two tells the story of two demobilizations: the demobilization of domestic Japanese soldiers and sailors and the repatriation of forces from overseas. The first half of Chapter Two examines how the sudden onset of Japan's defeat triggered a cascading wave of despair, desertion, violence, and theft on an unprecedented scale among the roughly four million servicemen in Japan awaiting demobilization.[223] I argue that the actions of common soldiers and sailors, as well as those of officers in the wake of defeat fundamentally poisoned the Japanese public's view of the military, which would directly affect the treatment of servicemen returning from overseas in subsequent years. The second half of Chapter Two explores the experience of

[223] Rikusengakkai, ed., *Kindai sensōshi gaisetsu:* 98.

demobilization and return for servicemen who returned home from overseas. Unlike the domestic demobilization process, instances of unrest were few among overseas units awaiting return. Many overseas servicemen earnestly looked forward to the moment they would become civilians once more. Nonetheless, the return and demobilization of overseas servicemen was rife with surprises and difficulties. Upon landfall, many demobilized servicemen struggled to come to grips Japan's destruction and learned to their shock that civilians cared little for their experiences and often treated them with coldness or open hostility. Thus, I argue that the encounter with a shattered homeland and a cold welcome from a mistrustful public engendered strong feelings of dejection and alienation among servicemen who returned home from abroad.

Part One: An Uncivil Demobilization

Postwar accounts of Japan's demobilization whitewash a humiliating final chapter in the Imperial Japanese military's history. Between August 15 and the late autumn of 1945, units awaiting demobilization within Japan experienced a near total collapse in morale and discipline. Using police reports from the Kenpeitai (military police) and the *Tokkō* (The Higher Thought Police), I reconstruct the Imperial Japanese military's chaotic demobilization in post-surrender Japan. Specifically, I examine this event through three phenomena: the refusal of some servicemen to surrender, widespread desertions, and a torrent of looting by servicemen of all ranks. I argue that the general misbehavior of demobilized servicemen in the two months after Japan's surrender provoked a large outpouring of hostility among civilians. Whereas servicemen and the military were once revered and accorded great deference in public, increasingly they became the targets of derision and even physical or verbal violence in August and September 1945. The lawlessness and chaos of the demobilization of Japanese military personnel in the

Japanese home isles not only poisoned the public's view of its military, but also convinced many civilians that their nation's servicemen were little better than thieves.

The Standard Narrative

Before examining the collapse of the Imperial Japanese military within Japan, it is worth reviewing a timeline of its demobilization. Between August and December 1945, the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) and Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) completed the demobilization of their personnel over the course of a staggered three-stage process. The demobilization of IJA personnel within Japan (including the Ogasawara Islands) officially commenced on August 18, 1945. Awaiting demobilization were approximately 2,109,000 soldiers divided into three theaters of command. The First Theater consisted of the 11th, 12th, and 13th Area Armies, which were based in Sendai, Tokyo, and Nagoya respectively. The Second Theater consisted of the 15th and 16th Area Armies, based out of Fukuoka and Hiroshima. Collectively, these accounted for 62 divisions and 36 independent mixed brigades.[224] Planning for a staggered demobilization of army personnel over four intervals between August and October 1945 went into effect as of the week following Japan's surrender. The first period began on August 25, and lasted until September 10. During this period, the IJA demobilized approximately 1.28 million soldiers. This was followed by three subsequent periods ending on September 20 (449,000 soldiers), September 30 (230,000 soldiers), and October 15 (150,000 soldiers). By November 1945, the last major units of IJA personnel finished their demobilization.[225]

Demobilization of Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) personnel in Japan also started in August 1945. At war's end there were 1,972,000 sailors spread across Japan (including the

[224] See back page fold out map of post-surrender IJA dispositions in: Kōseishō, ed., *Hikiagesanjyūnen no ayumi.*
[225] Kōseishō, ed., *Hikiagesanjyūnen no ayumi,* 44.

Ogasawara Islands). Formal orders for the demobilization were issued to all IJN units within Japan on August 21, 1945.[226] Similar to that of the army, the navy's demobilization was also executed through a series of staggered stages. Interestingly, due to concerns that kamikaze aviation units near Tokyo Bay and on the southern main island of Kyūshū would not peaceably stand down when Allied occupation forces arrived, the IJN expedited the disarmament of planes and the demobilization of kamikaze pilots in August. The first of three formal stages of demobilization began in late August and lasted right up through the arrival of the first elements of Allied occupation forces on September 2.

During the first stage of demobilization for the IJN, laborers, injured and sick sailors, female personnel, citizen reservists, draftees, and mobilized students received priority for demobilization.[227] During the second stage, which lasted through the end of September, the IJN demobilized the majority of sailors, including, commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). Sailors employed in transportation, however, were transferred over to the Ministry of Transportation, while cadet pilots were reassigned to the national police.[228] In the final stage of demobilization, which continued through the autumn of 1945, the IJN demobilized reservist officers, warrant officers, special duties officers, civilian contractors, and volunteer sailors. Additionally, the Ministry of Education gave naval school cadets utmost priority for entry into civilian schools of equal standing.[229] Thus, as 1945 ended, the IJN and IJA ceased to exist within the Japanese home isles. Unfortunately, the above account is incomplete. Nowhere in this official narrative is there any intimation of the degree that chaos enveloped the demobilization of domestic forces in Japan.

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[226] Kōseishō, ed., *Hikiagesanjyūnen no ayumi,* 61.
[227] Kōseishō, ed., *Hikiagesanjyūnen no ayumi*, 62.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Kōseishō, ed., *Hikiagesanjyūnen no ayumi,* 64.

Never Surrender

On August 15, 1945, there was little reason to believe the war would end. Surely, the Allied invasion would arrive any day. The IJA had stockpiled food and munitions across the country in numerous silos to ensure that its soldiers and the civilian population could endure the inevitable bitter struggle to be fought across every valley and mountain of Japan's four islands. Soldiers and sailors – 2.1 million in total – stood guard at beaches and mountain passes awaiting the landing of enemy soldiers. Thousands of kamikaze pilots and *kaiten* (suicide submarine craft) crews waited for the signal to sally forth and immolate themselves against the hulls of enemy landing craft and warships. The bombing of Japan's cities continued at a feverish pace, with two bombs of rumored unprecedented power dropped on southern Japan. Every soldier and sailor prepared themselves for the inevitable invasion. Finally, their turn to *fight* would arrive, and it would be their role to fight for the defense of their native soil. But then something out of the ordinary occurred. On August 15, 1945, newspapers announced that at noontime citizens were expected to listen to an important broadcast.[230] Certainly, this would be a message of defiance! Without fail, the broadcast occurred. Yet, it was not a call to arms. It was a call for unconditional surrender by no less than Emperor Hirohito himself.

Emperor Hirohito's surrender speech arrived as a severe shock for the Imperial Japanese military. But perhaps nowhere did this shock of defeat so acutely manifest itself than among the soldiers and sailors who believed that they were their nation's last line of defense against foreign invasion. For them, Japan's surrender undermined the entire ideological basis of the sacrifices they and the Japanese people had made for attaining victory. This was the end of their world, as they knew it. Petty Officer Ujie Mitsuo, stationed in Kyūshū at the war's end, was one such

[230] "Kyō shōgo ni jyūdaihōsō kokumin kanarazu genshuku ni kikaseyo," *Asahi Shinbun*, August 15, 1945, 1.

sailor who struggled to accept the implications of Japan's surrender. "For what did we strive for up until now," wondered an embittered Ujie. Was the war all for nothing? Ujie continued:

> I put up with being hit and kicked by superiors, and accepted the worst of insults; I did my best for the sake of my country and his imperial majesty. I lost many comrades. The figures of kamikaze pilots who died throwing their bodies into the enemy come to mind. It was all for victory, for my country, and above all else, to protect my family – but everything because of unconditional surrender has come to nothing. Looking at the Petty Officer rank patch on my right arm I cannot stop shedding tears of frustration. Entering the navy from the most rural corner of Abashiri,[231] I gave up all of my youth for the dreaming up until now that I would become an admiral leading a fleet... I am just an unimportant soldier. Will I return to my hometown with a sign on my back reading: "defeated soldier?"[232]

Ujie's anguished reflection upon defeat is particularly revealing of the degree to which he and other servicemen had become invested in Japan's war effort. In Ujie's case, the war had provided him a chance to escape poverty and obscurity. Moreover, military service gave him a career that promised respect and status. All that defeat offered for an ambitious young man his age was a return to the life he had escaped. Although Ujie ultimately overcame his post-surrender depression and embraced life after the war, others simply could not accept defeat. For these servicemen, emotions of shame, fear, or anger crystallized into either outright defiance or suicidal behavior.

At Komono Airfield in Mie prefecture, a base for kamikaze pilots, the shock of defeat and fear of surrender proved too much for some to bear. In the wake of the Emperor's declaration of surrender, discipline fell to the wayside. Alcohol flowed freely. The sobbing of soldiers resounded across the base. Some soldiers swung their swords at pine trees to vent their despair.[233] A singular fear gripped the minds of the base's kamikaze pilots: would they be tried

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[231] Abashiri is a small, isolated town on the northern tip of the island of Hokkaido.

[232] Mitsuo Ujie, *16sai no senjō: abashiri, yokōsuka, taiwan. Kaigun kokunen shōhei no kiroku* (Tokyo: Kyōdōbunka kai, 2005), 184-185.

[233] Kenichirō Ōnuki and Kō Watanabe, *Tokkōtai shinburyō: shōgen・kikanhei wa jigoku wo mita* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2009), 242.

as war criminals? Did not the Americans think kamikaze tactics were "crazy?"[234] On the following morning, three pilots walked around the airfield one last time before climbing into their planes and blowing themselves up over Ise Bay. Later that night, three more pilots, stating that they feared execution by the Americans, committed suicide with their pistols.[235] In a similar incident across the Sea of Japan, six pilots committed suicide by blowing up their bomber in midflight near Pyongyang, Korea.[236] Largely, it appears that suicide remained primarily a recourse pursued by kamikaze pilots as well as officers. On August 19, authorities discovered the bodies of three officers at Ueno station in Tokyo. One apparently committed suicide, while two others appeared to have been murdered.[237] In a ghastly public display at 11:05 A.M on August 24, thirteen officers formed up in four rows and committed suicide near the Imperial palace at a major intersection in Iwaidamachi.[238] In the remaining days of August, a minority of officers and regular servicemen continued to take their lives across Japan. But for as showy as these acts of self-destruction were, they were vastly outnumbered by demonstrations of defiance, riot, and violence pursued by servicemen who chose to actively defy orders to surrender.

The Japanese government's sudden decision to surrender produced a political and ideological vacuum during the weeks between Japan's surrender on August 15, and the arrival of Allied occupation forces on September 3, 1945. Although the wartime Japanese government remained in charge and continued to enforce wartime laws, various forms of political dissent progressively emerged. One particularly unnerving manifestation of this newfound freedom of expression took the form of servicemen unwilling to accept Japan's defeat. Within a day of

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[234] Ibid.
[235] Ōnuki and Watanabe, *Tokkōtai shinburyō*, 243.
[236] Kentarō Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2: haisenchokugo no seiji to shakai* (Tokyo: Daitsukishoten, 1980), 61.
[237] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 53.
[238] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 54.

Japan's surrender, pamphlets, posters and leaflets authored by servicemen materialized across Japan calling on the Japanese people to continue the war. While there is no data on how many engaged in these activities, it is likely that a small but proactive minority of recalcitrant servicemen saw fit to appoint themselves as propagandists. Using a wide range of means from airplanes, to trucks and physical urban surfaces, these soldiers vainly sought to appeal to a war-weary nation's sense of patriotism while ignoring the reality that few wished to continue the war.

Despite orders to ground all planes in the aftermath of Japan's surrender, the use of planes to spread pro-war propaganda was especially prevalent. On August 16, an army plane dropped leaflets in the night over Nagano city that proclaimed the IJA had "firm belief in certain victory." The next day, a navy aircraft at 3:30 P.M. rained papers over Tokyo stating: "Henceforth, it is war for the navy. There will be absolutely no surrender."[239] On August 18, navy planes flew over various parts of Kyūshū distributing pro-war leaflets, while on the afternoon of August 20, an army plane dropped approximately 200 pro-war leaflets over Chiba prefecture.[240] Elsewhere on the same day over the skies of Gunma prefecture, multiple planes dispersed leaflets stating that the "the probability of the ceasefire agreement ending is high…" and that civilians should "continue producing munitions."[241] On August 21, eighteen army pilots brazenly flew a heavy bomber over the city of Nagoya in broad daylight, dropping leaflets calling on soldiers to return to their units and fight.[242] In the midst of defeat, these aerial propaganda campaigns must have provoked immense confusion and bewilderment. Only days before, American planes flew over Japan dropping bombs and leaflets. Now, Japanese planes flew over Japan dropping leaflets ordering citizen to return to the war! Was the war really over?

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[239] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 59.
[240] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 51 & 56.
[241] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 57.
[242] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 56.

Were the IJA and IJN standing down? At a time when Japanese society was awash with rumors and the Japanese government's prestige was low, these acts must have caused considerable confusion.

Why did nobody stop pilots from using military aircraft for personal political purposes at a time when hostilities were over? The fact that these incidents happened with semi-frequency in the early days of defeat would suggest the possibility that many more individuals in positions of authority and perhaps even a considerable number of servicemen at airbases were committed to seeing the war continue. Indeed, reports from the Kenpeitai indicate that airbases were hotbeds of pro-war sentiment. As of August 20, pilots at Atsugi Airbase in Kanagawa prefecture, one of the largest airfields in Japan, expressed great enthusiasm to fight the Americans and were in no mood to stand down.[243] Atsugi Airbase was not alone. To the exasperation of the Kenpeitai, multiple other airfields refused orders to disarm their aircraft and render their engines inoperable as a sign of continued desire to fight.[244] In light of these reports, it is evident that personnel on airbases were inclined to continue fighting and would likely have been willing to disobey orders to stand-down their aircraft. Therefore, these conditions made it possible for extremists to commandeer aircraft to conduct aerial leafleting of Japanese communities.

Efforts to encourage servicemen and civilians to continue to fight were not limited to aerial leafleting. Across Japan's prefectures, soldiers and unknown actors placed posters on telephone poles and distributed leaflets calling for continued resistance. On August 18, posters calling on all soldiers, volunteers, and subjects in eastern Japan to "resist" appeared near Tokorozawa train station in Saitama prefecture. In a display of anti-Semitism, the posters' authors concluded their call to arms by cautioning the people of Japan to "…wake up and do not

[243] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 54.
[244] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 66.

be misled by Jewish flattery."[245] In central Japan, 200 army officer cadets stole seven trucks on August 19 and drove through Karuizawa to Nagano city, spreading leaflets as they went that read: "Refuse the peace treaty!" On August 20, three officers of unknown rank and four soldiers commandeered a truck in Gifu city and proceeded to plaster posters on telephone poles while an airplane flew overhead dispersing leaflets in a possible act of coordination. Resorting to a combination of shaming and outright distortion of facts, the leaflets read,

> If you do not fight, the Yamato people will inevitably be ruined. Soldiers who have left their units and thrown their weapons away: return to your units! There is no surrender for us… There are tens of thousands of kamikaze. The air force will certainly attack the enemy.[246]

Further to the north, unknown individuals plastered sixty posters on telephone poles in the towns of Iwanuma and Masuda in Miyagi prefecture urging continuation of the war.[247] In an act that nearly ended in bloodshed, a first lieutenant and 67 men occupied a radio station in Kawaguchi, Saitama prefecture, with the intent of calling on the nation to resist the Allied occupation, but were persuaded to surrender by Kenpeitai officers.[248]

By admitting defeat, the Japanese state inadvertently ceded space to extremists who rejected the notion of surrender and wished to persuade their fellow citizens to resume hostilities. In almost every case, the identities of these self-appointed propagandists remain unknown. As exemplified by the army cadets in Nagano prefecture who drove around shouting pro-war slogans, the actions of these individuals reflected their inability to come to terms with defeat and the implication that their careers were over. Although the total number of individuals who pursued these actions may have been small, the wide geographic spread of the incidents examined above suggests that these extremists were present in units across all of Japan.

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[245] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 53.
[246] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 55.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 62.

Furthermore, the profusion of these incidents and the widespread use of military vehicles and printing presses suggest that morale among Imperial Japanese military was collapsing and that authorities were losing their ability to prevent egregious breaches of discipline. In the end, it is not clear how many servicemen responded positively to these propaganda efforts. However, there is evidence that a small number of servicemen did decide to take action beyond dispersing leaflets, but whether or not this was in response to these propaganda efforts is entirely unclear.

For some servicemen, it was impossible to accept that the fight was over. For them, only talk of resistance or direct action would suffice. In a Kenpeitai report from August 25, normally peaceful army reservists in Shikoku expressed a deep desire to fight Allied soldiers as soon as they landed in Japan.[249] For those determined to fight, Japan's ubiquitous mountains offered a perfect redoubt from which to pursue a campaign of guerilla warfare. At Suzuka Airbase in Mie prefecture, seventy kamikaze pilots on August 19 left their posts and headed into the mountains to fight a war of resistance upon the arrival of American forces.[250]At the port of Sasebo in Kyūshū, a non-commissioned officer (NCO) and 70 sailors from a *kaiten* unit announced their refusal to surrender on August 18. Instead, they headed to the mountains from where they would look out for "illegal behavior" by Allied occupation forces.[251] In a more ominous incident on August 23, four army lieutenants of the 7th Air Transportation Unit deserted with an army truck laden with machine guns lifted from their mounts on fighter planes, along with ammo, food and rifles, and vowed to kill Americans before committing suicide.[252] Interestingly, not all servicemen who pursued acts of resistance remained dedicated to their cause. On August 17, a group of 40 soldiers deserted their airbase in Gifu prefecture and fled into the mountains of

[249] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 69.
[250] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 52.
[251] *Kaiten* units consisted of suicide "midget" submarines laden with explosives. Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2*, 56.
[252] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 67.

Nagano where they promised to resist the Allied occupation. However, by August 25 all but ten of these soldiers eventually returned to their units and expressed remorse for their behavior.[253] Certainly, a level of empty bravado pervaded the actions of some of these servicemen. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it does not appear that any group succeeded in carrying out any major attacks on Allied personnel. Despite this apparent lack of success, a minority of servicemen were committed to resistance and in doing so presented a dangerous threat to the stability of post-surrender Japan and the coming occupation.

By early September, the danger posed by groups of recalcitrant servicemen reached a perceived point of national crisis within Japan's security apparatus. On September 3, the Kenpeitai issued Military-Civil Police Report 368, "Orders Concerning Measures for Prevention of Terrorism," which sought the apprehension of servicemen and civilians intent on perpetrating violence toward Allied forces. The Kenpeitai's chief targets included far right radical elements among returnee soldiers, particularly officers, high ranking civilian officials, and former members of kamikaze units. Fears of violence by armed rightwing radical ex-servicemen were not overblown. In fact, on August 18 an army lieutenant in Miyazaki prefecture distributed rifles, pistols, and grenades among eight soldiers who were to return home and wait for orders to assassinate American Army officials if occupation forces caused disturbances. The plan additionally called for an elaborate uprising of various former army units in the Kanto region. In the end, the Kenpeitai foiled the plot.[254] On August 20, an officer and two men armed with grenades, pistols, and rifles, were apprehended before they could murder the commander of the Imperial Guards division in Tokyo.[255] For as menacing as the displays of defiance by recalcitrant troops were, the actions of these troops never achieved any level of coordination beyond small

[253] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 78.
[254] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 80.
[255] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 54.

groups of individuals. In the absence of further discussion of such incidents among Kenpeitai records, one may assume that further plots likely met similar ends, or collapsed on their own accord. Ultimately, the danger posed by rebellious servicemen was greatly overshadowed by another growing problem after August 15: the profusion of desertions and acts of theft by non-demobilized and demobilized servicemen.

Desertion and Theft

In the face of total defeat, the IJA and IJN proved to be all too human. As soon as the shock of defeat wore off, officers and servicemen alike awoke to a world where their lives were once more theirs. With the war over, what was the point of submitting oneself to frequent arbitrary beatings by officers, tedious sentry and fatigue duties, and miserable pay? Why wait for demobilization orders to escape oppressive military life? Perhaps defeat was a blessing. For some soldiers and sailors awaiting demobilization orders, defeat suddenly provided the chance to do the previously unthinkable: desert and become a free citizen once more. For thousands of servicemen, defeat replaced a sense of loyalty to the Japanese state with a desire to seize military property as compensation for wartime service or out of pure greed. In the course of weeks, thousands of servicemen and officers stole weapons, cars, airplanes, clothing, food, and innumerable other items for their personal use or to resell for a profit in Japan's bourgeoning black markets.

Whereas a minority of servicemen loudly proclaimed their determination to defy Japan's surrender but rarely ever did so, thousands of servicemen silently planned their escapes and succeeded in following through with their schemes. These acts of desertion comprised one of the most egregious forms of resistance against Japanese military and state authority. Military service represented the most important form of service that a male subject owed to the Imperial Japanese

state. Since 1873, the Imperial Japanese state used conscription as a key means to socialize its citizens alongside a nationally managed school system. By choosing willfully to desert, soldiers and sailors rejected a key prerogative of the Imperial Japanese state and repudiated the notion that a subject's body and mind was the property of the state. Although Kenpeitai reports do not indicate that deserters made political statements about their decisions, we should not readily assume such acts were without political significance to the government and the police. For a military that suffered a negligible number of desertions before surrender, this phenomenon was nothing short of disaster for its image and legacy.

Frustratingly, no comprehensive statistics survive for military desertions. Nonetheless, Kenpeitai reports indicate that desertions peaked around August 25 and once more resumed at alarming levels following the arrival of Allied forces on September 3.[256] In order to understand the scale of desertions it is worth looking at a number of examples from Kenpeitai reports across Japan in August 1945. Ironically, the first reported case of desertion did not involve servicemen at a base, but patients at an army hospital. So profound must have been the desire to escape military life that not even wounds and sickness impeded an army sergeant and 43 other soldiers who escaped from the Kyōto Number Two Army Hospital on August 16.[257] Far to the south, 100 NCOs and soldiers deserted the 2750th Troop in northern Nagasaki prefecture on August 17, while 30 armed soldiers led by their company commander fled their garrison on the isolated Iki Island to Nagasaki prefecture on two stolen ships.[258] On August 19, 100 men in Niigata deserted the Eastern Department's 38th Troop and forcibly boarded a local train to head home.[259] On August 21, a startling 1,800 soldiers of the 45th Telegraph Regiment at an undisclosed location

[256] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 88.
[257] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 68.
[258] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 56.
[259] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 54.

left their posts and returned home with weapons and ammo after an illegal dismissal by their commanding officer. Elsewhere on the same day, a lieutenant and 35 men deserted their unit after borrowing a local resident's truck to make their getaway.[260]

In Chiba prefecture on August 21, seven navy and army lieutenants stationed at a kamikaze airbase in Chiba prefecture decided to flee aboard three of their planes toward Kochi prefecture and return home upon learning of their commanding officer's desertion.[261] On August 25, a sergeant and twenty other kamikaze pilots of the "Nihara" kamikaze unit in Toyama prefecture deserted their lodgings at a local school and fled into the nearby mountains.[262] In Tokyo, a group of seventy-three soldiers deserted by train from Kozōji Station on the Chūō Line in an orderly fashion upon purchasing the requisite tickets.[263] In the city of Ōtsu in Shiga prefecture, a company commander and 268 men deserted their posts, while another company commander and 527 of his men fled their base at an unnamed location.[264] In Yamanashi prefecture, 510 soldiers of the 11th Military Police Battalion fled their posts, while 400 soldiers of the 4,100th Troop in presumably the same region deserted as well. To the south, 700 soldiers and their officers calmly finished their breakfast on the morning of August 23 and deserted their base in Shizuoka prefecture.[265] While in no way comprehensive, these examples are illustrative of the scale and nature of desertion in military units following Japan's surrender.

There are three general conclusions that can be made from the above sampling of desertions. Foremost of these is that desertion tended to be a collective action involving numerous members of a given unit. While individuals appear to have frequently deserted,

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[260] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 63.
[261] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 77.
[262] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 78.
[263] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 63.
[264] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 68.
[265] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 75.

especially in the case of pilots, it is remarkable that many recorded episodes involved hundreds, and sometimes thousands of soldiers leaving their posts. These numbers ought to give us pause. Such figures represent entire companies, and in a few cases, entire battalions melting away. Certainly, these examples demonstrate the degree to which disillusionment pervaded among servicemen of all backgrounds but they also raise questions about whether or not Allied intelligence grossly overestimated the willingness of soldiers and sailors in Japan to fight until the end. Second, it is notable that a diverse array of army and naval units suffered desertions. Units ranging from rear echelon formations, to coastal defense units, to suicide units, and even the very military police whose task it was at maintaining order, all appear to have suffered from dramatic examples of mass desertions. Finally, what helped make some of these desertions possible was the close cooperation of NCOs and regular officers. Whereas one might have expected that the professionalism and seniority of officers would have prevented such behavior, Kenpeitai records show that in a number of prominent cases officers and NCOs planned desertions, fled their posts, or illegally demobilized their men. Together, these observations attest to the precarious state of morale in units across Japan and the determination of servicemen of all ranks to return home immediately rather than wait for official demobilization orders.

While most demobilized servicemen received little more than a train ticket home and enough money to buy a few sweets, thousands of servicemen ensured that they returned home with a separation bonus of their choosing. On September 24, a report from Japan's Home Ministry observed the following of looting in Hokkaidō prefecture:

> With the swift turn of circumstances [due to the war]… it is understood that among various garrison units military supplies was promptly seized. [O]n the other side of this confusion, regular soldiers, from privates to officers, have brought about a state of chaos to an extreme degree, while on the other hand the releasing of military supplies without a

> plan has provoked neighboring villagers to take advantage of circumstances and repeatedly commit crimes of theft of military items and such… [266]

What occurred in Hokkaidō occurred many times over throughout Japan in the summer and autumn of 1945. Just as in this example, most looting occurred at or around military bases. Many bases across Japan housed vast stockpiles of not only military equipment, but large amounts of civilian goods, such as food and clothing. In the case of Allied invasion, the military was supposed to distribute these items to beleaguered civilians. In the aftermath of defeat, efforts to guard and manage these stockpiles simply ceased as guards either walked off the job, commanding officers abandoned their posts, or as in many other cases, the commandants of bases simply opened up their base's stockpiles to servicemen and civilians alike to take whatever they wished. As a result, theft of these items by common servicemen, and to a lesser degree by civilians, became common place in the months after Japan's surrender.[267]

Looting of military and civilian goods by servicemen began almost as soon as Japan surrendered. On August 15, perhaps within hours of the announcement of Japan's surrender, an army major and 600 of his men on an unnamed base sensed the chance for personal profit. The major and his underlings proceeded to sell uniforms in their possession for a then tidy profit of 10,000 yen to local civilians.[268] Overcome by the spirit of entrepreneurship, a sergeant from the same unit went AWOL with an army car laden with gasoline for resale.[269] In Chiba prefecture where authorities noted that morale was especially low, there were more than 300 reported cases of theft by soldiers and NCOs.[270] Horses proved to be a valuable commodity for sale in a country where humans and animals mostly performed agriculture work, and automobiles were in short

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[266] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 114.
[267] Ibid; Takuji Kimura, "Fukuin: gunjin no sengo shakai he no hōsetsu," in *Sengo kaikaku to gyakukōsu: nihon no jidaishi; 26,* ed. Yutaka Yoshida (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Hiroshi Bunkan, 2004), 92.
[268] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 63.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 83.

supply. In a typical incident on August 25, an NCO and 21 men illegally sold army horses to local civilians.[271] Many soldier-turned thieves sought to sell looted items in Japan's thriving black market. In Sakada city in Yamagata prefecture, navy officers and sailors who were part of a ship repair unit stole huge quantities of food for resale on the black market.[272] To the south in Niigata prefecture, the Kenpeitai received reports of a sophisticated smuggling operation run by officers using cargo trucks to transport and resell stolen food and cooking supplies.[273] None of these acts were in the least bit remarkable in the weeks following Japan's defeat.

In some extreme cases, demobilized soldiers freely engaged in the theft of weapons and military vehicles. On August 27, 1945, an anonymous Kenpeitai officer submitted an exasperated report about looting by soldiers and sailors.

> With the end of the war and the disbandment of army and navy units and the dissolution of military service, and amid the extreme state of collapse of control and chaos according to Kenpeitai reports, [soldiers] from units demobilized by the mistaken orders of their commanders are…carrying away and concealing weapons (pistols, machine guns, bullets, and various dangerous items)…In addition to these weapons, there is the fact that soldiers upon their return home are abandoning automobiles, airplanes, and other items…[274]

Representative of such incidents was one episode that transpired in the city of Kanazawa, where soldiers and officers of a transportation unit stole trucks and cars for personal use.[275] Elsewhere in Kanazawa, perhaps as many 19 vehicles went missing from local army motor pools between August 20 and September 4.[276] In one remarkable episode, a corporal on August 18 deserted from his unit in Chiba prefecture with an armored vehicle and drove for six days to his home in Nagano prefecture.[277] This was hardly the most outlandish example of theft. On August 20, a navy pilot aggressively liberated his base's stores and flew his plane back home to Ibaraki

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[271] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 115.
[272] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 82.
[273] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 115.
[274] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 97.
[275] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 81.
[276] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 93.
[277] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 83.

prefecture where he proceeded to drop parcels of sweets, rice, clothing, and sugar by parachute near his house.[278] Shockingly, these incidents were not altogether rare. In Toyama prefecture, a pilot set fire to three aircraft before deserting to his home with a stolen plane.[279] At a military air force academy in Ueda in Nagano prefecture, more than 100 personnel received permission to use the base's aircraft as they saw fit.[280] Just as those recalcitrant servicemen who rejected surrender avidly exploited planes for spreading propaganda, those fed up with the war and eager to profit from defeat made equal use of aircraft for their own purposes.

Not only utilitarian goods like food found their way onto the black market. To the distress of the Kenpeitai, and later to the Occupation authorities as well, soldiers commonly stole weapons and medicine, items with great value on the black market. In some cases, soldiers brought home with them weapons, as in the case in Tokushima prefecture where 100 soldiers returned home with 96 pistols and 200 grenades after illegally receiving permission to do so by their commanding officer.[281] In other instances, demobilized units distributed weapons among local civilians presumably for self-defense against Allied forces, such as in the case of an IJN airbase in Shikoku on August 21.[282] But just as often, servicemen liberated weapons from their bases out of the belief that they deserved a memento of their service.[283] In an alarming report, the Kenpeitai observed that numerous soldiers passing through Tokyo possessed various types of weapons or weapon-related material.[284] Medical supplies also proved to be a valuable target for theft. Exploiting their positions, some military doctors found they were unable to resist stealing medical supplies to sell on the black market, as in the case of one doctor caught stealing

[278] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 116.
[279] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 81.
[280] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 83.
[281] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 60.
[282] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 64.
[283] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 82.
[284] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 83.

medicine in Hokkaidō.[285] Looking back at this period of chaos, one former soldier noted that despite the vast quantities of items pilfered by demobilized soldiers, the Occupation only ever displayed concern for recouping stolen weapons.[286] To the chagrin of many civilians, this blasé attitude ignored the staggering scope of theft of government property by Japanese servicemen.

For as illustrative as these vignettes are, they fail to convey the sheer magnitude of looting committed by demobilized servicemen across post-surrender Japan. On September 24, 1945, the Japanese government's Home Ministry published an internal report on the pilfering of military goods that occurred just within Hokkaidō prefecture. While the list far exceeds the limit of rational quotation, it is worthwhile noting a number of items: 5,477 bales of rice, 2,732 containers of miso, 45 automobiles, 20,464 iron plates, 500 coils of telephone wire, 70,000 tools, 253,062 pairs of shoes, 9,922 blankets, 32,124 uniforms, 3,532 drums of heavy fuel, 235 drums of machine oil, and 218,166 units of medicine.[287]All of these items came from military bases and storage facilities in one of the most rural prefectures of Japan. It is easy to imagine that such lists were far greater for populous prefectures. By the winter of 1945 when the demobilization of Japanese forces within Japan was complete, demobilized servicemen accomplished a scale of theft unrivaled in Japanese history. According to Japanese government estimates at the time, Japanese servicemen sold on the black market five billion two hundred-million-yen worth of goods stolen from military bases and stockpiles.[288] It is then perhaps one of the greatest ironies of the war that the Imperial Japanese military, which carved a rapacious path across East and Southeast Asia, bade its final farewell to Japan with one last act of grand pillage.

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[285] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 115.
[286] Masao Kamitomai, *1932 nikkan no guntai* (Tokyo: Tokyo tosho shuppankai, 2005), 232.
[287] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 114.
[288] Kimura, "Fukuin: gunjin no sengo shakai he no hōsetsu," 92.

Civilian Anger

For eight years of total war the Japanese military demanded profound sacrifices from the Japanese public. Begrudgingly, but obediently, the Japanese people made what they thought were necessary sacrifices to help achieve what the military assured was "certain victory." When certain victory became total defeat, the public lost much of its admiration for the Imperial Japanese military. In some cases, civilians openly expressed their disdain for their military's defeat by explicitly haranguing soldiers and officers in public spaces or in refusing to obey commands. In a few instances, civilian anger toward the military manifested itself in the form of physical assaults upon servicemen. However, nothing quite turned the public against its own soldiers and sailors more than the acts of mass theft committed by demobilized servicemen. For Japanese civilians left destitute, malnourished, and often homeless by Allied bombing, the sight of servicemen returning home with piles of stolen goods, ostensibly set aside for civilian use, provoked a profound outpouring of hostility and loathing for demobilized servicemen and the military as a whole.[289]

Whether it was anger over the military's defeat, or disgust with putting up with years of hardship, the Japanese people harbored great animosity toward the military. According to Kenpeitai reports, incidents of civilians insulting and occasionally assaulting servicemen were commonplace following Japan's defeat.[290] In a rural town in Aichi prefecture not long after Japan's surrender, farmers brutally attacked a demobilized soldier.[291] On August 20, in the town of Izumi in Osaka prefecture, three soldiers took it upon themselves to tell ten townspeople dancing in the streets for the Obon Festival to go home because of the late hour. This invited an

[289] Ibid.
[290] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 53.
[291] Ibid.

acerbic backlash: "Soldiers, what right do you have to say anything? Shut up! You lost the war."[292] Aboard a train in Kanazawa, passengers expressed their disgust at the IJA's wartime performance by yelling at an army lieutenant: "Mr. Soldier, throw away your sword!"[293] On August 24 at Aomori Station, a civilian man reportedly shouted at a demobilized soldier, "Since you lost the war, how about selling that uniform?" This so enraged the soldier that he promptly stabbed his insulter and a station worker, who rushed to intervene, with his army knife before being apprehended by local Kenpeitai officers.[294] In a similar undated incident in Osaka prefecture, a civilian man came upon an army captain and cried out: "Defeated officer!" Angered by this offense, the officer drew his sword and proceeded to fiercely beat the man.[295] Further to the south, on the island of Shikoku local Kenpeitai officers observed that the people "understood the viewpoint of soldiers." However, here too they noted that a portion of citizens "criticized and assaulted" soldiers.[296] Looting and other lawless behavior by demobilized servicemen only enflamed civilian anger toward Japan's military over subsequent weeks.

As demobilized servicemen trickled home throughout the late summer and early autumn of 1945, civilians were shocked at the quantities of stolen goods that they carried on their backs, on the beds of army trucks, or in the cramped cockpits of fighter planes. Such scenes prompted a common refrain of derision toward demobilized soldiers: "Naturally, just like defeated soldiers."[297] For some civilians, scenes of servicemen returning home by truck or trekking home with backs weighed down by stolen goods seemed comical and infuriating all at the same time. But by and large, few found much to laugh about. One witness to such scenes wondered aloud:

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[292] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 69.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 65.
[295] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 69.
[296] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 65.
[297] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 83.

"In short, the military supplies and goods kept by the military are the things that the people offered up for victory by forgoing eating and drinking. That is to say, these are things given by the people. Even now, having lost the war…the arbitrary disposition of these goods like they're the possessions of a single soldier is unjustifiable…"[298] One anonymous civilian held choice words for an army officer who lived next door: "…for up to one year he slept and ate, and using soldiers and a truck he brought home quantities of food and other items… For the officers who perpetrated the recent confusion, I see them merely as idiots, not citizens."[299] Even some former soldiers were shocked at the actions of their comrades. After seeing the behavior of demobilized soldiers in Japan, a veteran of the China front pronounced their actions as "absurd." Whatever disciplinary mechanisms had once kept scurrilous behavior among servicemen in check had long since fallen to the wayside in the aftermath of defeat.

Many civilians in the weeks after surrender wondered what happened to the Japanese military that once took pride in its steely discipline and its enforcement of obedience through violence. A man in Tottori prefecture was incensed by witnessing officers at Yonago Airbase clandestinely transport rice and other goods home by truck at night. For this, he demanded to know: "What happened to the army with the world's greatest military discipline? Victory in war should not be hoped for by an army led by such despicable officers."[300] Yet another civilian remarked, "War is not about a single soldier. If the army has lots of things, why don't they give them to families of dead soldiers or our soldiers overseas?"[301] One anonymous observer noted in resignation: "That our soldiers, instilled with much talk about military discipline, did such things,

[298] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 120.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 186.
[301] Ibid.

has nothing to do with a soldier's spirit – it is naturally a result of losing war."[302] Enraged by witnessing a Kenpeitai officer of all soldiers partake in looting, a construction worker in Tottori prefecture complained: "The people endured inconveniences and supplied the army…even now I am completely shocked at the Army's disorder."[303] The power of defeat warped the morals of officers and lowly servicemen alike. It took once disciplined men and turned them greedy or indifferent to the plight of their nation and fellow citizens.

In certain instances when demobilized servicemen were ordered to hand over goods to civilians, they reportedly picked through the choicest items before handing the rest over.[304] At other times when servicemen complied with handing over supplies to civil authorities, they did so in such a way that permitted government officials to take for themselves what they desired before passing on a bare minimum of supplies to the local populace. In such instances, civilians held the military responsible.[305] Other acts, such as conspicuous consumption of food by soldiers infuriated civilians. In some cases, soldiers awaiting demobilization orders feasted on the large stocks of food stored around their bases. In one notable episode, soldiers of a regiment in Shizuoka prefecture who had received inadequate rations before surrender made it their mission to feast for every meal now that they had access to reserve food stocks. It was hard enough for local residents suffering from malnourishment to watch soldiers gorge themselves on food while they went hungry. Yet what particularly aroused the ire of locals was the fact that these soldiers insisted on eating only white rice and left large amounts of half-eaten food strewn about after their meals.[306] For a civilian population in desperate need of all things, such episodes must have

[302] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,*120.
[303] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,*186.
[304] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,*119.
[305] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 113.
[306] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 119.

been incomprehensible and a further sign of the military's indifference to the wellbeing of regular citizens.

In some cases, soldiers subscribed to rumors that farmers were behind major food shortages, a belief no doubt born from the fact that farmers possessed easier access to food than urban dwellers.[307] One lieutenant recently returned from Manchuria even went so far as to blame peasants' unwillingness to give up their produce as the cause of Japan's defeat.[308] Farmers were outraged by the military's wasteful consumption of rice in the wake of defeat. Was it not farmer-peasants, many asked, who gave their all to produce the food the army ran on?[309] In certain parts of Japan, civilians, and particularly farmers, decided to seize from the military what they viewed as rightfully theirs. In one such case, civilians near a naval airbase at Tsu, Mie prefecture, stole a significant amount of fuel drums, which they proceeded to hide in nearby mountains. To the north in Miyagi prefecture, on August 27 local civilians attacked an airbase where they proceeded to dismantle seven fighter planes for their parts.[310] A similar incident occurred at the Kakagamihara Airbase in Gifu prefecture where farmers stole 20,000-yen worth of metal tubes and automobile tires.[311] One thing was clear: the behavior of demobilized and soon to be demobilized servicemen in many parts of Japan had alienated elements of the military's traditional base of support.

In a number of extreme cases, local garrisons not only harassed farmers and plundered their homes, but even murdered civilians in cold blood. In one case, twenty soldiers came to the house of the head of Kamiegawa village in Tochigi prefecture and forcibly took his coal, cooking

[307] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 211.
[308] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 185.
[309] Ibid.
[310] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 81.
[311] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 82.

oil, and sacks of rice.[312] In another incident, soldiers from the Eastern District 1901st Troop garrisoning an airbase in Niigata prefecture barged their way into the homes of a nearby village. After forcibly demanding food from villagers, they proceeded to frighten them by claiming that American soldiers would steal their clothing and food as well as rape their daughters.[313] Nevertheless, the most egregious incident of soldiers harassing farmers and civilians occurred at the village of Koyama in Tottori prefecture's Ketakagun district. On September 11, 1945, demobilized soldiers of the 542 Air Troop distributed surplus uniforms among Koyama's villagers. Shortly afterwards they received a telegram from Tokyo informing them that Allied occupation authorities wanted the uniforms returned. In an act of inexplicable violence, the soldiers turned their guns upon the village, massacring a number of villagers hiding inside their homes after spraying houses with machine gunfire. Afterwards, with no concern for the victims of his actions, the unit's commander proceeded to instruct the villagers to hand over both their valuables and mundane possessions.[314] It comes as little surprise that the Kenpeitai officer recording this event noted this massacre instilled profound fear in the civilian population of the region and engendered enormous anger toward the army.[315] Soldiers, once fighting to defend their country, now willingly shot their own people for uniforms and common household goods.

Although the massacre at Koyama is potentially the only event of its kind to have occurred, it is startlingly akin to the brutality that the IJA commonly directed against Chinese civilians. Whether in China or elsewhere, the IJA treated civilian lives with scant regard. Even though there is no evidence that any of these soldiers had served overseas, their actions suggest that the dehumanizing attitudes applied toward civilians overseas were present even among

[312] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 191.
[313] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 78.
[314] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 186.
[315] Ibid.

soldiers stationed in Japan. Nonetheless, the behavior of these soldiers is not particularly unusual. In the end, the decision to loot Koyama's households of their belongings fits within the larger pattern of looting by servicemen across post-surrender Japan. Against this backdrop, the what occurred at Koyama was merely an extreme expression of an increasingly criminal mindset among thousands of servicemen toward state and private property.

By the end of September 1945 when nearly 70% of domestic Japanese military forces had demobilized, civil-military relations were at rock bottom.[316] So infuriated were civilians by the behavior of demobilized servicemen that even the sight of wounded soldiers no longer automatically elicited sympathy.[317] It is telling that in the prefecture of Niigata, a conservative rural bastion, such attitudes had taken hold among the general populace. In a September 29 report, Niigata's branch of the *Tokkō* (*Higher Thought Police*) summarized the views of civilians and particularly farmers thusly:

> The criticism by the common people is extremely frank and scathing toward soldiers who took military supplies without permission during demobilization. [They say] the true form of the military, which ought to have pulled off its crowning glory [after all was done and finished], is not even mediocrity. In this way the fact that the military's leadership has not answered the peoples' criticism is evidence of their approval [of the military's behavior]…[A]t a time of great shortages, [the people] cannot quietly assent to the monopolization of scarce goods by a military that has given only itself the special right to take what it wants.[318]

What is astonishing about this report is the palpable sense of disappointment and perhaps even betrayal felt by civilians toward their military. For decades, the Imperial Japanese military had trumpeted its lofty role as the nation's premier institution and bastion of morality. In wartime, civilians were commanded to make immense sacrifices on behalf of the military and their nation. Now that the war was over, the military repaid these sacrifices through acts of selfishness that

[316] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 211.
[317] Ibid.
[318]Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 211-212.

embodied its descent into a depraved state of amorality. Worst of all, the military's leadership did nothing. Rather than exercise whatever power they retained over their servicemen, they tacitly condoned acts of looting by refusing to acknowledge publicly the issue. The silence of the military's leadership in this moment of supreme crisis demonstrated the vacuity of the military's claim to moral authority. How could Japanese civilians not feel disgusted and betrayed?

Broken Trust

Certainly, numerous Japanese civilians desired, even demanded, that demobilized servicemen who engaged in looting be held accountable. The anger in Niigata was so great that farmers strongly wished for the police, and even the Kenpeitai, to enter forcibly the homes of demobilized servicemen and officers to search for contraband.[319] Ultimately, it does not appear that the police ever took such drastic actions. Shockingly, only a few members of the military across Japan were ever brought to justice. In total, military tribunals and civilian courts tried just 76 soldiers for crimes related to looting between August 15 1945 and May 1946. Of these, 52 were officers or NCOs.[320] These numbers are not particularly surprising. After all, the military leadership failed to find the courage to denounce publicly the behavior of servicemen flaunting military discipline in the months after surrender. Of course, not all demobilized servicemen partook in illegal behavior. But even in the absence of any hard numbers on how many servicemen participated in illegal actions, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that a general state of panic, despair, and chaos took hold of a sizable portion of soldiers and sailors in the months following Japan's defeat.

[319] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 212.
[320] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 92.

For Japan's civilians, the military had doubly humiliated itself by losing the war and through its behavior in the immediate aftermath of Japan's surrender. While there was certainly great anger at the military leadership that led Japan into defeat, it was the behavior of demobilized soldiers that became the most common target for anti-military sentiment. Scenes of servicemen behaving as thieves would remain an indelible image in the imagination of Japanese society in the early postwar. These images would later feed into a wider narrative of demobilized soldiers as naturally disposed to anti-social behavior and violence. Consequently, soldiers were no longer heroic figures, but common criminals, lowlifes, and delinquents. Worst of all, they were seen as losers who had the audacity to behave otherwise. So profound was the public's anti-military sentiment that few civilians would find the capacity to welcome servicemen retuned from overseas battlefields with warmth or kindness. In many cases, these servicemen encountered outright hostility.

Part Two: A Cold Welcome Home

There was no mass collapse of morale among overseas Japanese servicemen, nor was there a profusion of looting and desertion. Remarkably, as explored in Chapter One, Japan's surrender changed little in the short-term for many of Japan's 3,553,600 soldiers and sailors stationed overseas. Unlike their domestic comrades, overseas servicemen could not simply desert their unit and catch a train home. In most cases, thousands of miles of ocean, and often times months, and in some cases years of waiting, separated most garrisons from Japan. Therefore, the quickest way home was simply to wait patiently for one's turn on a demobilization ship. For some, as in the case of those from the Soviet Union, their return would not happen until almost

five years after defeat. However, the majority of overseas servicemen, especially those stationed in China and Southeast Asia would ultimately begin their journey home almost a year after Japan's surrender in 1946. As a result, this section examines primarily those servicemen who returned in 1946 from these two regions.

The process of demobilization for servicemen returning to Japan from overseas was a deeply unsettling experience. Although many servicemen excitedly anticipated their return to Japan, a pall of anxiety and fear hung over numerous servicemen as they contemplated what form of welcome awaited their arrival. For some servicemen, the journey home was an opportunity to correct wartime injustices by seeking revenge against particularly despised officers aboard demobilization ships and ashore at demobilization centers. However, once ashore many servicemen discovered that Japan was hardly the place they remembered. To the utter dismay of many, familiar streets, towns, and entire cities where they had lived their prewar lives were nothing more than ruins or ungainly mazes of hastily constructed shanties. Everywhere, Japan's physical environment reminded them of the totality of their defeat. Perhaps even worse was the fact that few war-weary civilians felt gratitude for their sacrifices and that more often than not many civilians showed cold indifference or outright hostility to their circumstances. Confirming the fears of many servicemen the cold welcome of Japan's civilians instilled a sense of disillusion and bitterness in the minds of numerous newly returned servicemen. In the end, it was the reunion with families and loved ones that mattered most for countless demobilized servicemen. But even in this moment of joy, some servicemen discovered that the war continued to haunt them.

The Geography of Repatriation

The repatriation and demobilization of overseas Japanese forces was more complicated and protracted than the demobilization of forces in Japan. Due to shipping shortages and lack of fuel, as well as Allied delays in repatriation of prisoners, the repatriation of overseas forces was not completed until 1950. Upon arrival in Japan, servicemen disembarked for demobilization at one of ten demobilization ports spread across Japan. While not all ports exclusively served a particular region, many of the ports ultimately served servicemen hailing from specific theaters. For instance, the port of Sasebo in northwestern Kyūshū processed servicemen mainly from China, the Wakayama prefecture port of Tanabe received mostly servicemen from Indonesia and New Guinea, and Kyoto prefecture's port of Maizuru on the Sea of Japan almost exclusively handled servicemen from Korea and the Soviet Union. In addition to processing servicemen, these ports also doubled as ports of entry for repatriated Japanese colonists. In total, these ten ports processed as many as 3,553,600 soldiers and sailors.[321]

The vast majority of overseas servicemen were repatriated and demobilized between 1945 and 1947. The first servicemen repatriated from overseas were 1,628 starving and sick soldiers from the garrison on Woleai in the Caroline Islands in late 1945.[322] In subsequent months, servicemen from other ill-supplied Pacific islands as well as soldiers from the Korean peninsula received priority for repatriation and demobilization in 1945 due to their poor conditions, or due to the relative ease of repatriation as in the case of the Korean peninsula. The year 1946 was the busiest for repatriation of overseas servicemen, with perhaps as many as two million soldiers and sailors arriving in Japan primarily from China and Southeast Asia.[323]

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[321] For references, see insert charts titled "Hikiagesha ukeiri sōshutsu getsubetsu tōkei," "Shōwa nijyūnendo kyokubetsu hikiage shasū," "Shōwa nijyūichinendo kyokubetsu hikiage shasū," "Shōwa nijyūninendo kyokubetsu hikiage shasū," "Shōwa nijyūsannendo kyokubetsu hikiage shasū," "Shōwa nijyūyonnendo kyokubetsu hikiage shasū," in Kōseishō, ed., *Hikiage engo no kiroku* (Tokyo: Kuresu shuppan, 2000).)

[322] Kōseishō, ed., Hikiage to engo sanjyūnen no ayumi, 63.

[323] See insert, Shōwa nijyūichinendo kyokubetsu hikiage shasū," in Kōseishō, ed., Hikiage engo no kiroku.

Beginning in 1947 and lasting through 1950, almost all returning servicemen were former prisoners of the Soviet Union and the British Empire.[324]

Uncertainties and Anticipation

Whether it was for a few days or for a few weeks, the demobilization ship (*fukuinsen*) became the transient home for millions of servicemen as they departed the battlefields of the past and made their way to a home that few had seen in years. The journey home was fraught with complicated emotions. Within their metal homes in the solitariness of the vast Pacific Ocean, servicemen found time to contemplate the meaning of their return. For some, the demobilization ship, often times an American vessel, represented a stark reminder of defeat and the shame of returning home as a loser. Other servicemen found their journey home unsettling as they anxiously imagined how civilians would receive them upon arrival. But for all of the servicemen overcome by pessimism, there were also many who were filled with a profound excitement of finally returning to a country they had come to dearly miss. Rumors – especially those of the destruction of Japan's towns and cities – abounded within the cramped confines of demobilization ships. Many wondered, would there even be a home left standing when they returned?

For some returning servicemen, the journey home to Japan was filled with ambivalence and an acute sense of dejection and defeat. Furushō Kaneharu and his comrades, veterans of the war in China, began their journey home to Japan with a shock in January 1946. When they assembled at Shanghai's harbor, they quickly noticed that their ship was not Japanese, but an American manufactured vessel. "The demobilization ship was some American landing ship

[324] See inserts, "Shōwa nijyūsannendo kyokubetsu hikiage shasū" and "Shōwa nijyūyonnendo kyokubetsuhikiageshasū," in Kōseishō, ed., Hikiage engo no kiroku.

(LST). Amid our complicated emotions, we assumed steadfast postures before boarding, and gave a salute to the stars and stripes flag and then boarded the ship."[325] Once aboard, Furushō felt overcome by an overwhelming sense of gloom. In the form of a *waka* poem, Furushō reflected upon his emotional state: "When I ride a ship while laden with the misery of defeat, I feel no happiness despite returning home."[326] It was not necessarily the fact that the ship was American that was truly at issue for Furushō and his comrades. Instead, it was the fact that they were returning home under the pall of defeat. "An American ship, no, even if it is a Japanese ship, the feelings among those returning home were all the same. The sound of small waves crashing against the gunwale is also that of sorrow." [327] Having survived the war and lived to return home was not in and of itself a sufficient reason for joy. For Furushō and fellow soldiers, home appears to have been distant from their hearts when compared to their immediate feelings of failure and grief.

Although some servicemen felt conflicted about returning home, others felt unbridled joy. On the island of Celebes in the Indonesian archipelago, Saitō Jirō and his comrades could not wait to go home. Rumors that America had lent ships for their return and that wounded soldiers had already gone home ricocheted across the island.[328] "When is it our turn?" some soldiers wondered.[329] Despite the excitement of their impending departure, some of Saitō's comrades turned contemplative. It had been years since some soldiers had seen home. Thoughts turned to spouses and grown children. "Will my kid recognize my face?" asked countless soldiers worried about their long absences from home.[330] Finally, the day of departure arrived. The rumors were

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[325] Kaneharu Furushō, *Seishun no kumo wa nagarete: Tatakaikizutsuki namida shita kokoro no shi* (Tokyo: Kigenshas huppan, 1977), 223.
[326] Ibid.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe* (Tanabe: Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, 1986), 24.
[329] Ibid.
[330] Ibid.

true. The vessel waiting to take Saitō home was an American Liberty ship. That night Saitō headed above deck to escape the stifling heat inside the ship. Alone under the night sky Saitō was overcome with emotion: "…[T]ears fell [down my face] as I thought of all of the battles and hardships and happy things [that had happened] until now, and especially my comrades killed in battle who could not return home with this ship."[331] But sadness quickly turned to happiness as the ship's engine roared to life. "With this [sound], I am really returning to Japan!" realized Saitō.[332]

It was not just Saitō whose spirits lifted as the ship departed for Japan. Old habits of nervously looking out for enemy submarines and airplanes, standing watch, and other military regulations quickly fell to the wayside as it dawned on servicemen across the ship that their war was finally over. Suddenly, a jubilant mood "…akin to the feeling of being on an elementary school fieldtrip…" swept across the ship.[333] Soldiers, only earlier fretting about the future and their long-awaited reunions with loved ones, now could only talk about one thing: food. "When I get home, I am going to eat until my stomach is stuffed!" was a common refrain among servicemen on Saitō's ship.[334] Although some servicemen viewed their return home as darkened by the shame of defeat, for others, such as Saitō and his comrades, the journey home was an occasion for celebrating the joy of life and the possibilities of the future.

As demobilization ships neared Japan's coast, rumors of life in Japan proliferated while servicemen's emotions increasingly fluctuated between anger and excitement. Takahata Yoshitsugu and his comrades were a sorry and disheveled looking bunch of soldiers. Their uniforms were a mucky mess and their physical health was poor after years with little food and

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[331] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe,* 25.
[332] Ibid.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Ibid.

contact with the wider world on the South Pacific island of Bougainville.[335] To Takahata's disgust, the crew of their ship, former IJN sailors, wore uniforms without rank insignia. Takahata and his comrades' uniforms might have been nearly in tatters, but they still wore their ranks with pride.[336] It was from one of these seemingly emasculated sailors that Takahata learned of his first news of the demobilization of servicemen in Japan during the summer of 1945. The sailor, a former navy fighter pilot, informed him that Japan fell into chaos as soldiers and sailors demobilized after Japan's surrender. To Takahata's disbelief, the sailor nonchalantly recounted that in fact he had loaded his aircraft with items stolen from his airbase and dropped them by parachute over his home before returning to his base. Perhaps implying that he had shown some restraint, he added that he only stole his aircraft's cockpit clock as a souvenir before finally demobilizing. No matter how many times he heard such stories, Takahata refused to believe these stories held any truth.[337]

Rumors of Japan's destruction from Allied bombing slowly spread among servicemen in the holds of demobilization ships. At first, the news must have seemed unbelievable. All of Japan's cities were gone. Would there even be a home left to return to? Lieutenant Okumura Akira, returning from Celebes, first learned of the fate of Japan's cities from his ship's Japanese crew. "We were informed for the first time by the ship's crew of the terrible bombing of Tokyo and the scenes of hell of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Soldiers, not knowing whether or not their wives and children were alive or dead, gulped at the realization that they might be returning home to just ruins; it seemed that it came as a big shock [for

[335] Yoshitsugu Takahata, *Akumu no bōgenbiru: kaigun daiichi tsūshintaiin no shuki* (Shizuoka: Self-Published, 1967), 205-208.
[336]Takahata, *Akumu no bōgenbiru,* 205.
[337] Ibid.

everyone].”[338] Amid this state of fear and uncertainty, wild and unsubstantiated rumors spread among some servicemen. Some of the ship’s crew claimed that not all servicemen returned home. In some cases, they claimed, Japanese prisoners of war had been thrown overboard to their deaths before setting foot on Japanese soil. But Okumura could not bring himself to believe such stories, noting that “…such fear and unease came from ignorance.”[339]

At first, it was just a smudge on the horizon, nothing more than a formless, dark-hued blot. But then it gradually took on a definite shape and slowly revealed itself as a familiar form: the mountains of Japan – home. A wave of emotions overcame servicemen as Japan and its distinct topography came into view for the first time in many years. “It was at noon, or so,” recalled Sofue Kōji, an army pilot on a ship returning from the Korean peninsula, “that the blue mountain ranges of Japan came closer [to us].” Likening a defeated Japan to that of a vanquished nation in a stanza from a classical poem, ‘My country, fallen into ruins, the mountain rivers…’ Sofue continued, “I welled up with emotion as I realized that I had returned to Japan.”[340] For Saitō and his comrades, approaching the undamaged port of Tanabe, their first sighting of the mountains and trees of Wakayama prefecture’s coastline was no less emotional than that of Sofue’s experience. “Moment by moment, as the folds of mountains distinctly grew larger and came closer, one could not see [evidence] of ghastly bombing… At last, as we got closer the white sand of the shore and the green of the pines came sharply into view… Feeling they ‘had returned to Japan,’ everyone broke into tears.”[341] However, not only Japan’s natural landscape inspired an emotional response from soldiers on their first sighting of home. As Funagoshi Katsuji’s ship approached the port of Tanabe, an anonymous soldier screamed aloud, “Hey, look

[338] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe,* 38-39.
[339] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe,* 39.
[340] Kōji Sofue, *Aa shounenhikohei: Watashi no seishun* (Jimokuji: Self-Published, 1994), 131.
[341] Sofue, *Aa shounenhikohei,* 26.

over there, you can see tiles, you can see roof tiles!" Another shouted, "It's true, it's true, we've finally returned to Japan!"[342] For Funagoshi and his friends, mundane things such as roof tiles were what made them feel that they were truly home.

Not all servicemen were overcome with awe upon the eve of their arrival in Japan. This certainly was the case for Takahata and his fellow soldiers as their ship entered Japan's Inland Sea.[343] The night before they made landfall, Takahata and his fellow soldiers complied with orders to get rid of any military insignia. Reluctantly, they tore off their rank insignias from their threadbare uniforms, and unceremoniously tossed them into the ocean.[344] The removal of rank insignias was akin to stripping away a critical marker of their wartime identities in preparation for return to civilian life. Nevertheless, for Takahata and those around him, this final act sparked a torrent of fear and anxiety toward civilians. How would they be treated? Would their sacrifices be acknowledged? One soldier solemnly stated, "The people at home, they will not welcome us demobilized servicemen with their hearts. I will punch anyone who comes up to me and asks: how did you lose while you were at the front?"[345] Such comments were common on Takahata's ship.[346] Takahata was not immune to this wave of anger. Fuming to himself, he wondered,

> We, who fought by putting our lives on the line have only returned home with our bodies. Will they believe me? I who once had [a weight of] 18 kan, now have ten kan; who among us will have to explain that our eyesight grows weak at night and that we cannot walk, how many among the people at home will accept us?[347]

Servicemen's fears of rejection by civilian society were well founded. They, as well as Japan's civilians, had grown up in a culture steeped in condemnation of prisoners and soldiers returning home in defeat. Aware of what to expect upon return, Takahata and his comrades pledged that

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[342] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe*, 57.
[343] Takahata, *Akumu no bōgenbiru,* 206.
[344] Takahata, *Akumu no bōgenbiru,* 207.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid.

very night to form a group to fight anyone who threatened their honor as soldiers. "…[I]f by some chance we meet some guy, we will beat him to death." Despite being weakened by malnutrition and hobbled by wounds and injuries, their "…spirit," Takahata observed, "was still very much alive."[348]

A Time for Revenge

The spirit for violence was indeed alive and well among many servicemen returning to Japan. However, unlike Takahata and his comrades, many servicemen directed their ire not at imaginary civilians but at incompetent and sadistic officers who had routinely made their lives a living hell on and off the battlefield. These "lynching" incidents, as servicemen termed them, typically took place within the confined spaces of demobilization ships in the Pacific's vast expanse.[349] One large case of anti-officer violence broke out on a ship carrying survivors of the especially brutal campaign on New Guinea. Fukatsu Shingi, a soldier aboard this ship, witnessed these events firsthand. He recalls that as men took turns beating up various despised officers they shouted, "The military is no more. Officers are no more. We are equal citizens. We'll get even with you for all of the horrible things you've done to us!"[350] After years of war and witnessing their nation's defeat, many servicemen were utterly fed up with the militaristic culture that had brutalized them. Although their actions were extrajudicial acts of revenge, for many servicemen, one suspects that it was the closest that many would come to seeing justice served. In a subversion of the term "war criminal," newly minted by the Allies in the postwar period, Japan's

[348] Ibid.
[349] Yoshida, *Heishitachi no sengoshi*, 25-26.
[350] Shingi Fukatsu, *Teppō wo ippatsu mo utanakatta: Ojiisan no nyūginia senki* (Tokyo: Keizai shinbun shuppansha, 2003), 222.

largest newspaper, the *Asahi shinbun*, in a July 1946 article labeled attacks by common servicemen against their officers as "justice for war criminals."[351]

Attacks on officers were not exclusively confined to the spaces of demobilization ships. In fact, they seem to have occurred with some regularity as units made landfall at ports like Tanabe in Wakayama prefecture to await demobilization. These attacks appear to have typically occurred at night in the large temporary camps housing servicemen awaiting their turn for formal demobilization. As an officer, Lieutenant Okumura had the double misfortune to have been both a witness to and a victim of numerous attacks that occurred on the night of June 15, 1946, in a camp at Tanabe. Although he had heard of attacks on officers occurring aboard demobilization ships, no such incidents happened on his ship.[352] However, the night before his demobilization Okumura witnessed a group of soldiers assaulting an officer as he returned to his tent at around 8 P.M. After chasing off this group of soldiers, he managed to rescue a badly injured lieutenant. Okumura was appalled by these attacks. Afterwards, Okumura attempted to wind down for the night. However, this was impossible. Increasingly, cursing voices and the sounds of fists hitting bodies filled the night air, only to then die back down into silence. Just as Okumura finally fell asleep during one of these lulls, the sounds of fighting once more woke him up.[353]

Suddenly, a soldier outside Okumura's tent yelled out, "Here! Come out, lieutenant!" And then it was Okumura's turn. By his own admission, Okumura had "never hit a soldier" or a subordinate.[354] Perhaps these soldiers misidentified him. He could not recognize their faces and neither did they state why they were attacking him. Regardless, they proceeded to mercilessly attack him with their fists and an iron pole. Nearly unconscious, and drenched in blood,

[351] Yoshida, *Heishitachi no sengoshi*, 26.
[352] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe*, 42.
[353] ibid.
[354] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe*, 43.

Okumura was saved by the intervention of another officer who ultimately brought him back to his tent.[355] Throughout the rest of the night, Okumura continued to hear the sounds of fighting and conversations of soldiers plotting further attacks on officers: "Shall we go lynch sergeant Noma?" "He stole watches from soldiers…" "What tent is he in?" "Let's go!"[356] Battered and frightened, Okumura lay on his cot for the remainder of the night and wondered, "Are officers really hated to this degree? …[A]re all officers demons from hell?"[357] For Okumura, and perhaps many other officers and NCOs, it must have been shattering to have realized that so many soldiers held nothing but contempt for their superiors. When morning came it was as if all the violence had been a nightmare. Units formed up in neat ranks for inspection. Sporting cuts and bruises from the previous night, officers stood at the front of their formations without making any remarks about the previous night's terror. Then the orders for dismissal came, and soldiers who had only attacked officers in an orgy of violence hours earlier, obediently listened to orders one final time "like children" and made their preparations to proceed to the local demobilization center.[358]

Despite his privileged position as an officer, Okumura took a self-reflective historical view of the attack he and his fellow officers suffered. Although the military formally forbade the use of violence to punish soldiers for infractions, it was an unspoken rule for decades that officers and superiors of any rank could treat their subordinates as slaves within the Imperial Japanese military.[359] Thinking more deeply on the matter, Okumura decided that it was not just the military, but the very education system founded by the Meiji state that had produced a culture

[355] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe*, 47-48.
[356] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe*, 49.
[357] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe*, 50.
[358] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe*, 52.
[359] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe*, 46.

where such wanton violence was permissible.[360] Although he found it impossible to forgive attacks on officers, Okumura was unique in so far as he was an IJA officer who recognized that the institution he served was constructed atop a tradition of sadism.

Arrivals

From a distance, Japan looked unchanged by years of war. Its mountains and forests were as they always had been. Even its towns and cities seemed unchanged. For a brief moment, it looked as if Japan was untouched by the war and that the tales of its destruction were just rumors. But as demobilization ships pulled into ports across Japan, the true state of the country came into view. Evidence of defeat was everywhere one looked. Buildings lay in ruins while the faces of civilians looked depressed. American soldiers, often the first any returning serviceman had seen, lined the quays awaiting their disembarkation. The familiar was gone, replaced by scenes that few servicemen could have imagined. Only now did the magnitude of Japan's defeat finally sink into the minds of returning servicemen

There were no Japanese warships in the northern Kyūshū port of Hakata to escort Ōyama Iwao's transport into its birth. That is not to say there were no Japanese warships in Hakata. To Ōyama's surprise, the rusting hulks of half-sunken submarines, merchant vessels, and warships lay scattered across Hakata's inner harbor.[361] As if making a mockery of the carcasses of the Japanese warships, there sat a string of American warships, "as pretty as chocolate," docked in a neat line. Hakata itself was in no better shape than the sunken Japanese vessels. Laid waste by bombing, the city center was little more than a field of "charred dirt."[362] Distressingly, for many

[360] Ibid.
[361] Iwao Ōyama, *Nihonguntai no kiroku* (Tokyo: Sōgōbunkasha, 1957), 141.
[362] Ibid.

returning servicemen, Hakata's destruction was unremarkable in a country replete with similar scenes of devastation.

In December 1945, Yamamoto Shichihei's ship pulled into the port of Sasebo in northwestern Kyūshū. A biting cold rain and a grim overcast sky established a fitting backdrop to scenes of ruin that greeted Yamamoto's eyes.[363] Along the quays lay massive toppled cranes in piles of twisted metal, felled by Allied bombs. Strewn about the shallow harbor waters were the hulls of sunken warships. The cold, wet wind penetrated Yamamoto's skin as he surveyed the scenes of his country's ruin.[364] Sasebo appeared no better. Its black tile roofed homes looked "impoverished and sad," while smoke from cars burning wood for fuel trailed in the sky.[365] While incarcerated in the Philippines, Yamamoto had heard stories of Japan's destruction. But this did little to prepare him. "…[S]till, these cold scenes were a shock. To myself I muttered, 'Japan has become this kind of country!'"[366] Sasebo made no better of an impression on Sakamoto Ichirō as his ship pulled into its berth in June 1946. Peering out at the city, he was amazed to see that amid the endless ruins where streets ought to have been there were only patches of green grass.[367] Finally, the time for disembarkation arrived. However, a cold, distant, throng of children, women, and old men now replaced the once exuberant crowds that bade farewell to soldiers leaving for war years earlier. "Maintaining stone-like expressionless [faces], everyone stared up [at us on the ship's deck] in silence. 'Do they hate servicemen,' I thought. My chest nearly ripped asunder…Japan was different from before."[368]

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[363] Shichihei Yamamoto "Aru kakyū shōkō no fukuin taiken," *Bungei shunjyū* 66, no. 10 (August 1988), 131.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Ibid.
[367] Ichirō Sakamoto, *Shounansenri* (Tokyo: Bokusho, 1964), 236.
[368] Sakamoto, *Shounansenri* 237.

The scene was the same at every demobilization port. Struggling under the weight of massive rucksacks, servicemen picked their way down the gangways from their ships onto land.[369] Once ashore, a delegation of Japanese port staff and American soldiers commonly awaited disembarked Japanese personnel. Kobayashi Umanojō, unlike other servicemen, had a cheerful return to Sasebo in September 1946 that was only marred by the verbosity of Japanese port officials. Filled with excitement to get ashore, Kobayashi, and the rest of the servicemen on his ship, were forced to curb their enthusiasm and endure a solemn speech by a nervous Japanese official flanked by American soldiers.[370] "You have returned to your fatherland, which was defeated in the war," began the official in a quivering voice. "Without being a slave to illusions of the past and with the joy of return engraved in your hearts, we pray that you will be encouraged to bravely rebuild your fatherland."[371] Few servicemen were in the mood to be lectured by civilians on the meaning of the war. After years of war and two weeks at sea, Kobayashi was simply overcome by the thrill of being back home. "Alive, I was filled with deep emotion at my fate to walk on Japanese soil."[372]

The changes that defeat wrought on Japan were sometimes more than returning servicemen could handle. The first moments ashore at Sasebo were not happy ones for Takahata and his comrades. Takahata, reliant on a makeshift cane due to his wounds, and "unable to walk in a straight line," barely made his way to shore on his own strength. Many of Takahata's comrades were so weakened by disease, hunger, and wounds that they needed to be carried ashore by two nurses clad in long white dresses.[373] These were the first women that any of them had seen in years. However, nothing prepared them for what came next. A Japanese woman,

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[369] Umanojō Kobayashi, *Nihon wa ikiteita!* (Ōmiya: "Maibukku" Saabisu, 1986), 108.
[370] Ibid.
[371] Kobayashi, *Nihon wa ikiteita!*, 109.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Takahata, *Akumu no bōgenbiru,* 208.

wearing pants and red lipstick, suddenly emerged from a harbor building together with an American soldier.[374] Worse, Takahata and his comrades thought, she clung to the shoulders of the American in a sign of intimacy atypical of Japanese prewar culture. For Takahata, this was the epitome of defeat and humiliation. A Japanese woman fraternizing with an American soldier in front of feeble and emaciated Japanese soldiers was an insult to their wounded pride and masculinity. Trading glances of seething anger, Takahata swore that "if the American soldier hadn't been there, we would have…beaten her up, no, we would likely have killed her."[375] These violent and misogynistic responses were distressingly all too common among returning servicemen confronted with changes to Japanese society brought about by defeat.[376] Ignorant of what to anticipate upon returning home, these servicemen's gut reaction was anger and for at least a time, an unwillingness to accept reality as it was. From this point forth, Takahata resolved in his heart "…that he would neither see anything nor feel anything…" until he had returned home.[377]

Once ashore, servicemen underwent a standardized program of demobilization and processing at their respective ports. The first stage of the demobilization process involved inspections of personal belongings. Many servicemen had already undergone preliminary inspection for illicit items, such as weapons, before embarking to Japan. In reality, many Allied soldiers took advantage of these moments to steal innocuous personal possessions, such as watches.[378] Once in Japan, soldiers yet again presented all of their belongings for a new round of inspection. To the dismay of some servicemen, newly acquired American gear, such as aluminum mess kits, canteens, and clothing, had to be turned in so as to not be mistaken as stolen

[374] Ibid.
[375] Ibid.
[376] For similar reactions see: Furushō, *Seishun no kumo wa nagarete*, 230.
[377] Takahata, *Akumu no bōgenbiru,* 208.
[378] Sofue, *Aa shounenhikohei*, 128.

items or sold on the black market.[379] Next, servicemen were doused in white DDT disinfectant powder before entering a communal bathhouse for what was likely their first proper washing in months.[380] Washed and deloused, servicemen were ready for the final stages of their demobilization.

Many servicemen after coming ashore were desperate to know the fate of their hometowns. In demobilization centers such as that of Tanabe, servicemen could look up information about their hometowns on massive wall-sized maps of Japan. Villages, towns, and cities that had been bombed were circled in bright red ink. As crowds of servicemen scanned the map for their hometowns, comments like "My place?" "Wow! They really did it in!" were commonplace.[381] Saitō was one such serviceman looking at these maps for news of his home. "What the heck would they have bombed in Mizusawa?" wondered a stunned Saitō as he discovered that his village in Iwate was among those obliterated communities on the map ringed in red ink.[382]

Before they could depart for train stations, there was one last matter of great concern for many servicemen: their final pay. Most servicemen below the rank of officer received 300 yen along with a special pre-paid rail ticket to bring them home.[383] Compared with their prewar pay, 300 yen was an incredible sum for most servicemen. In fact, so embarrassed were some servicemen by their seemingly good pay that they remarked: "Is it okay for us to have lost and returned home and be paid like this?"[384] This sense of genuine amazement, however, disappeared quickly as demobilized soldiers and sailors sought to buy common goods. Finally, the time for

[379] Yamamoto "Aru kakyūshōkō no fukuintaiken," 131.
[380] Kobayashi, *Nihon wa ikiteita!,* 110.
[381] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe,* 28.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Ibid.
[384] Ibid.

farewells arrived. On quaysides and parade grounds, servicemen assembled in their units for one final review. With the order to disperse, their demobilization was completed at last.[385] All that remained was to head to the nearest train station and begin the journey home.

A Cold Welcome

Not long after arriving at their local train station, numerous demobilized servicemen quickly discovered that their pay was practically worthless. At a confectionary store in front of Ōtake Station in Yamaguchi prefecture, Takahata found the allure of fresh oranges irresistible. To his disbelief, four oranges cost ten yen, an inconceivable sum under prewar prices.[386] Resigning himself to the shocking state of postwar inflation, Takahata left the store with his hands in his pockets, and with the conviction that "it was best to buy nothing at all."[387] Other servicemen were not as careful with their money as Takahata. Matsumoto Yūkichi had not been paid for three years while on New Guinea, a not altogether uncommon state of affairs for Japan's servicemen in isolated Pacific posts.[388] Eager to supplement his Spartan rations of two days' worth of hardtack, he indulged himself at a custard pastry stand inside Kyoto Station. With a pastry in hand, Matsumoto realized to his horror that he had spent the last of his army separation pay.[389] Humbled by inflation and the sudden return to civilian life, Matsumoto expressed sentiments applicable to all too many servicemen recently returned from overseas: "…[I]t was a fact that [we] had completely forgotten any sense for money and prices…For almost all

[385] Sofue, *Aa shounenhikohei,* 131.
[386] Takahata, *Akumu no bōgenbiru,* 210.
[387] Takahata, *Akumu no bōgenbiru,* 211.
[388] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe,*106.
[389] Ibid.

demobilized servicemen, struggles of essentially the same nature began from this day onwards."[390]

After years away from Japan, many demobilized servicemen had forgotten how to interact with civilians, or at the very least, what to make of their military service in the wake of defeat. These were issues that Kamitomai Masao, recently returned from China in May 1946, grappled with as he sat among Japanese civilians in a train car for the first time in almost five years.

> The passengers all at once looked at my direction. Complicated emotions ran through me: pride-like emotions and embarrassment. My present figure was not the appearance of a heroic soldier. Unarmed, with a knapsack slung over my back, and wearing a soiled uniform, I was no different than that of a defeated soldier. Amid the stares of passengers, I sat down in a corner of the car.[391]

A year after the war, Kamitomai was already a relic of the past. A curiosity, an object of pity, or perhaps a target for derision as was the case for some demobilized servicemen. Yet, for as unsettling as his first experience with being back among civilians was, Kamitomai was relatively fortunate. Noticing his dejected figure, an elderly man asked Kamitomai where he had fought, and then thanked him for his hard work. Because it had been years since he had spoken to civilians, all Kamitomai could muster was a sheepish reply of "thanks." Yet it was this simple friendly act that made Kamitomai suddenly feel as if the "stares of passengers toward demobilized servicemen were that of appreciation…"[392] Despite Kamitomai's experiences, it appears that more times than not, servicemen found that the intimate space of cramped train cars frequently fostered altercations between demobilized servicemen and civilians.

Even in the initial years after the war, a large number of Japan's exhausted and impoverished civilians remained bitter towards their nation's military. This resentment

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[390] Ibid.
[391] Kamitomai, *1932 nikkan no guntai*, 230.
[392] Kamitomai, *1932 nikkan no guntai*, 231.

manifested itself in acts of verbal abuse and patronizing behavior. Tanba Toshiaki was aboard a special demobilization serviceman-only train car when a civilian attempted to board at Kyoto Station. When one soldier informed the man that he could not board the car, this prompted an angry outburst that violently shook Tanba and his comrades for its naked ferocity. "Since you soldiers lost the war, you made everyone, including us people on the home front, go through miserable times. You bastard defeated soldiers!"[393] Up until this point, Tanba, recently a prisoner of the British in Singapore had never thought of himself as a "defeated soldier." After all, he and his comrades had laid down their weapons by Imperial decree before they could even fight the British in August 1945.[394] But perhaps most distressing for Tanba was the realization that some civilians viewed regular servicemen as responsible for Japan's defeat. This would leave a searing impression on Tanba for the rest of his life.[395]

Hatano Kōsaku, back home after eight years in China and Indonesia, endured a particularly harrowing gauntlet of abuse by civilian passengers on his train ride home from the port of Uraga. Unaccustomed to Japanese civilians, Hatano felt as if his whole body was frozen as fellow passengers' eyes ogled him.[396] Suddenly, one passenger accosted him, "With what honor did you return home?" Another then spoke up: "It's because all of you were shirking your duties that Japan lost!" Finally, an elderly man turned to Hatano's face and spat out, "stupid servicemen!"[397] Hatano was shocked and scarred by the "coldness" of Japan's civilians. After years of fighting on behalf of his country, it felt like a betrayal to be treated as an enemy upon returning home. How could one's fellow citizens treat their own servicemen in such a way? In an

[393] Tanba, *Kōfuku gunjin monogatari*,82.
[394] Tanba, *Kōfuku gunjin monogatari,* 83.
[395] Ibid.
[396] Taketoshi Yamamoto and Yoshikazu Nagai, ed., *Senryō kiseikatsu sensōshi shiryo 1* (Tokyo: Shinyosha, 2014), 159.
[397] Ibid.

instant, Hatano's desire to "rebuild Japan" and his aspirations for the postwar crumbled into nothing.[398]

It was hours into a long train ride that had taken Satō from Kyūshū into Honshu that he had his first conversation with a civilian. Traumatized by the sinking of his demobilization ship due to its grounding on a shoal, a little kindness would have gone a long way in raising his spirits.[399] Instead, a man who Satō surmised was one of those "newly made rich" citizens from the thriving black market, decided to lecture him on the importance of living frugally.[400] "Just because you're a demobilized serviceman," began the man in a preaching tone, "you mustn't be spoiled." Attempting to keep his calm, Satō replied, "Yes, I understand well. People at home had it the hardest…" However, inside, Satō fumed. How could demobilized servicemen be pampered? How were they responsible for defeat? Were civilians not also responsible?[401]

Not all demobilized servicemen chose to remain as quiet as Satō when they felt they were insulted by civilians. In what was likely a genuine accident, the power cut out on a train carrying Honma Matsukichi and his comrades, who had just returned from China.[402] When the power did not quickly return, Honma and a friend became livid. "Bring out the station master! Don't screw with us demobilized soldiers!" shouted Honma's companion. Brimming with a level of arrogance and haughtiness characteristic to soldiers of the prewar era, Honma boasted, "We are victorious soldiers of the China front!"[403] For civilians worn out by defeat and accustomed to a new order where servicemen were no longer reverential figures, such martial tantrums of self-righteousness likely inspired little awe.

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[398] Ibid.
[399] Yamamoto and Nagai, ed., *Senryō kiseikatsu sensō shishiryo 1*, 149-150.
[400] Yamamoto and Nagai, ed., *Senryō kiseikatsu sensō shishiryo 1*, 157.
[401] Ibid
[402] Yoshida, *Heishitachi no sengoshi*, 50.
[403] Ibid.

Home from War

At last, their journey home came to an end. There were no more seas to cross and no more train rides to endure. All that remained was the final walk to one's house, or whatever remained of it amid the rubble and ruins of Japan's towns and cities. For many demobilized servicemen, this final leg of the journey home was among the most difficult. As they walked to their homes from the local train station, old anxieties quickly returned to haunt them. They had endured battle, captivity, and even the slights of fellow citizens upon return. But what if their parents or their wife and children had moved, or even died in one of the many bombing raids? What if their house was no longer even there? How would they begin to rebuild their lives?

All of these fears afflicted Takemoto as he picked his way home through the rubble-strewn neighborhoods of Wakayama city. How could he not have been afraid? After all, Wakayama was little more than a "burnt out field." More than 80% of the city lay in ruins a year after the war.[404] What chances were there that his home still stood or that his family was still alive? Nonetheless, Takemoto was fortunate. Miraculously, his family's house and his old neighborhood remained untouched by bombs. With his heart aflutter "like rolling waves," he opened his house's door.[405] There inside were his wife and daughter. For a brief moment, they stared at Takemoto's disheveled figure, perplexed at whom the odd-looking uniformed man was, but then confusion turned into joyful recognition. Tears, hugs, and shouts of happiness reverberated throughout the house.[406] But in the middle of this supreme moment of joy, Takemoto was overcome by pangs of darkness. How was it "…that he had lived to return home

[404] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe,*102.
[405] Ibid.
[406] Kinan Bunkasai Kenkyūkai, ed., *Hikiage minato tanabe,*103.

from the nightmarish world of New Guinea?"[407] How could it be that he was now standing once again in front of his family? Despite the joyfulness of return, his memories of war refused to fully recede.[408] Takemoto had survived to return home to his family, but so too had the war.

Thankfully, many servicemen found that their loved ones were still alive after years of war, even if their homes and towns had long since been destroyed by American bombs. But if Takemoto's story is indicative of anything, it is telling in its honesty of the reality of the bittersweet nature of return experienced by so many demobilized servicemen. Simply surviving the war and returning home, no matter how wonderful an experience, did not necessarily equate to the resumption of regular life, or even a break with the traumatic past of the wartime years. The war, almost as if it were a living entity, relentlessly refused to let demobilized servicemen move on with their lives. They had survived, but the war would always remain a part of them.

Returning home was only the first step along a meandering road toward rebuilding one's life. It is important to remember that it was a path with no perceptible middle or end. Lacking the foresight of postwar Japan's economic and social trajectory, many servicemen were likely overwhelmed by the thought of what came next. Unfortunately, as was so often the case with many Japanese servicemen in the early postwar, plenty more misery and disappointment awaited them as they attempted to reclaim their place within Japanese society.

Conclusion

There are no heroes in the story of the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military. There are few feel-good episodes that inspire smiles. This was not a period in Japanese history

[407] Ibid.
[408] Ibid.

where great deeds were done and a nation found meaning through hardship and suffering. Instead, the story of the demobilization of the Japanese military and the return of overseas servicemen is a tale of chaos, violence, and ostracism. It is a story of how many servicemen chose to plunder their country in the aftermath of defeat, and it is also a story that raises unsettling questions about the capacity of civilians to show basic empathy toward those who had experienced unimaginable horrors on the battlefield. Nobody comes out of this period with a great deal of respectability intact. Both civilians and servicemen managed to become victims and victimizers at various points during the demobilization process. It is little wonder then that this period remains largely forgotten by historians and the Japanese public.

In the ensuing decades after defeat, Japanese society elected to forget the controversies surrounding the demobilization of the Japanese military. Although there were works released on the topic, such as the government history mentioned at the start of the chapter, these publications remained the only public sources of information on the period for decades. Scholars shunned revisiting the controversies of demobilization, perhaps out of fear for what dormant questions they might awaken. By doing so, they perpetuated a conspiracy of silence on the subject that began with the Japanese media's avoidance of the matter as early as August 1945. So effective has Japan's forgetting been that Japanese and Western scholarship of early postwar Japan treats these events as mere marginalia. That these events remain to this day nearly forgotten is simply remarkable considering the intensity of scholarly scrutiny given to postwar Japanese history.

The story of the demobilization of the Japanese military matters a great deal and needs to be studied in further detail. The misbehavior of demobilized servicemen in this period, the struggles of returning servicemen, and the anger that demobilization provoked among Japanese civilians were enormous and long lasting. Hitherto, Japanese and Western historians have largely

assumed that the postwar Japanese public's embrace of pacifism and anti-militarism was a product solely of its wartime defeat. Although this narrative possesses much truth, it is incomplete. The Imperial Japanese military was one of the founding institutions of the modern Japanese state. Millions of men served in the military through peacetime conscription even before the outbreak of the Second World War. How did the stature and prestige of soldiers and sailors fall so low in the eyes of the Japanese public? How did Japan become not just anti-military, but anti-serviceman as well?

As discussed here, part of the answer lies in the very behavior of the military and its servicemen within Japan in the first months after defeat. The surge in desertions, disobedient behavior, looting, violence, and disregard for civilian well-being among domestic soldiers and sailors undoubtedly shocked to the core the Japanese public's image of regular servicemen and the military. These acts of selfishness and lawlessness disproved whatever claims to higher moral authority the military made in the prewar and wartime years. In this way, the public came to view not just the military, but individual servicemen as well, as culpable for defeat and deserving of criticism, and even hatred. In light of these facts, it is difficult to avoid wondering whether the Imperial Japanese military's own behavior in defeat did more to turn the Japanese people against their own military and militarism than the Allied occupation ever could have hoped to have achieved on its own.

For servicemen returning home from overseas, few had an inkling of the chaos of domestic demobilization or the anti-military sentiment it had inspired. Consequently, servicemen who were already embittered and scarred by their wartime experiences overseas became disillusioned and angered by the Japanese public's seemingly callous and cold response to their return. The public's behavior likely appeared arbitrary and inexplicable. Over the subsequent

years, servicemen that returned from overseas increasingly felt maligned and ostracized as their plight and wartime suffering attracted little sympathy from a public exhausted by years of total war. The Japanese public had simply had enough of war and soldiers in the wake of the demobilization of the military. There was certainly no longer any desire to show deference to former servicemen, not even those who had survived battle on behalf of Japan.

Chapter Three
Becoming Civilians Once More: The Struggle for Reintegration

Introduction

On February 26, 1946 Prime Minister Shidehara Kijūrō delivered a speech to assembled government officials at the Regional Government Secretaries Conference. There were many national crises facing Japan that Shidehara might have addressed, such as Japan's blossoming unemployment rate, Japan's housing shortage, and the need to find funds to rebuild Japan's infrastructure and industrial base. But on this day, one problem above all others was on the mind of Shidehara: the reintegration of demobilized servicemen and their treatment by civilians. Six months after Japan's surrender, more than three million soldiers and sailors were successfully demobilized. Nevertheless, the same could not be said for their reintegration into everyday civilian society. What were the causes of these problems, as understood by Shidehara?

> The range of activities [enjoyed] by demobilized servicemen on various fronts is being snatched away by the directives of the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces Headquarters, while people returned from overseas are somehow being treated by the public as troublemakers and receiving a cold reception….We are anguishing and suffering over the bitter ordeal of defeat, but where is our social obligation of complaining to ordinary demobilized servicemen? In the homeland…even when [demobilized servicemen] seek jobs in private business, they are shut out…[H]ow can they go on living? Becoming desperate, it is evident that [things] finally lead to [demobilized servicemen] either having extreme thoughts, or committing crimes concerning morality or the law…[409]

In his address, Shidehara highlighted two problems at the heart of why demobilized servicemen struggling to reintegrate. First, Shidehara pointed out that Occupation policies actively curtailed the scope of rights and actions available to demobilized servicemen. Second, and perhaps most

[409] Niigataken Seiji Keizai Kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan* (Niigata: Niigata Nippōsha, 1947), 58-59.

alarming, was that the Japanese people were taking out their anger at defeat upon returning demobilized servicemen. As a result, poor treatment of demobilized servicemen was driving many into despair and turning others towards a life of crime. The message of Shidehara's speech was clear. The Japanese people along with policies of the Occupation were actively thwarting the ability for many of Japan's demobilized servicemen to reenter civilian life.

The Japan that Shidehara spoke of was all too familiar to many demobilized servicemen. In the years after the war, the efforts of demobilized servicemen to rejoin Japanese society elicited little sympathy and much hostility from a large segment of the Japanese public. As explored in Chapter Two, many civilians felt enraged and embittered at the behavior of servicemen and were disgusted by their failure to secure victory on the battlefield. These feelings were not a momentary phenomenon. In the years after 1945, Japanese society remained consistently uninterested in facilitating the reintegration of demobilized servicemen. Frequently, Japanese civilians acted upon their feelings by actively discriminating against demobilized servicemen in the workplace or in various small and large ways. At the same time, the Occupation promulgated a series of policies beginning in 1945 that aimed to isolate demobilized servicemen from mainstream Japanese society. It was therefore against this backdrop that millions of demobilized servicemen commenced the process of what proved to be a difficult and often seemingly impossible process of reintegration into civilian society.

Chapter Three tells the story of how demobilized servicemen began the process of reintegrating into Japanese society and why this process was largely unsuccessful in the early years after defeat. Due to source limitations, this chapter covers the years from 1945 to 1947 and

is therefore by no means definitive.[410] In the first part of Chapter Three I argue that differences of experience, memory, and allocation of blame for defeat rendered Japanese society hostile to the reintegration of demobilized servicemen. Using newspapers articles and the private correspondence of demobilized servicemen, I examine why a civil-military split emerged in the months after defeat and how demobilized servicemen reacted to their treatment by the Japanese public. In the second part of Chapter Three I argue that the Occupation sought to diminish the stature of demobilized servicemen in the eyes of the public. As part of its efforts to demilitarize Japanese society, the Occupation enacted policies aimed at stripping away privileges enjoyed by demobilized servicemen, such as the Military Pension, as well as programs specifically aimed at their economic rehabilitation. Furthermore, I demonstrate that the actions, or in some cases, the lack thereof by the Occupation, undercut the Japanese government's efforts to help demobilized servicemen and directly contributed to their impoverishment.

Part One: Strangers to Each Other

In the aftermath of defeat, Japan's civilians and former servicemen shared little in common. In war, the government and media told them that they comprised a singular *kokutai*, or national body, united in purpose and sacrifice in the prosecution of Japan's war against the Allies. Now the *kokutai* was shattered, leaving little behind that tied civilians and newly demobilized servicemen together in a community of shared experience. Amid the detritus of defeat, an unprecedented civil-military split emerged in Japanese society. Memories of the *kokutai* and wartime, rather than providing a shared language of emotion and experience, became the fodder

[410] Regrettably, one of the most fascinating and important stories that I have had to leave out due to an insufficient amount of source materials are the experiences of demobilized soldiers who returned from the Soviet Union and faced tremendous discrimination under the pall of suspicion of being Communists.

for intense division and antipathy. After years of war, servicemen and civilians had grown apart from each other, in effect experiencing separate wars and enduring separate forms of suffering. In other words, Japan's demobilized servicemen and civilians were strangers to one another, divided by a chasm of mutual indifference, misunderstanding, and most alarmingly, hatred. In this section, I make three basic arguments. Within this rancorous environment, Japanese newspapers, sought to heal these rifts by making tepid appeals to the public to show compassion for demobilized servicemen reentering civilian life, while veterans, unwilling to remain passive bystanders, penned columns soliciting sympathy from the cold public. Ultimately, however, countless veterans in privacy expressed deep despair over their belief that the Japanese public hated servicemen and did not wish to welcome them back into civilian society.

Reaching Out

In the study of early postwar Japan, there is a frustrating lack of direct evidence produced by civilians testifying to their views on demobilized servicemen and the Japanese military. As such, it is difficult to recreate a nuanced picture of the Japanese public's thoughts on their nation's defunct military. Perhaps the most effective tools for accomplishing this is a reading of the types of articles Japan's national newspapers wrote about civil-military relations in the months after defeat. Admittedly, this method necessitates the analysis of civilians through the interpretive lenses of companies that possessed an agenda of their own. As a result, the picture of civilian views of demobilized servicemen is unavoidably general and simplistic. However, in the total absence of other mediums, the narrative that emerges is both revealing and of important historical value in the recreation of civil-military relations in the aftermath of Japan's defeat.

Between August and December 1945, Japan's leading national newspapers, the *Asahi shinbun* and the *Yomiuri shinbun*, as well as regional dailies, took a keen interest in the public's interaction with demobilized servicemen. During this period, the *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* respectively printed 285 and 180 articles each on the topic of demobilized servicemen and their treatment by the public.[411] Both the *Asahi* and the *Yomiuri* adopted an editorial stance of criticizing the public's treatment of demobilized servicemen, and printed articles that sympathetically portrayed their return to civilian life. Due to reasons that will be covered in Chapter Four, this period of positive coverage came mostly to an end by December 1945. In this section, I make the case that the consistency in these papers' publication of headlines admonishing civilian interactions with servicemen reveals a public that was increasingly unwelcoming towards demobilized servicemen.

In the initial months after the war, Japan's leading newspapers, the *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* printed numerous articles exhorting the public to welcome demobilized servicemen. By examining the wording of these headlines, it is possible to infer an emerging hostile attitude towards servicemen and the military among the Japanese public. Only days after surrender, the *Asahi* sensed a shift in the public's unwillingness to share Japan's meager resources with a new generation of veterans. On August 22, 1945, the *Asahi* printed a headline sternly proclaiming: "Expand Servicemen's Assistance – Even in the Postwar do not lose a Sense of Appreciation."[412] On the same day, the *Yomiuri* was no less aggressive in reminding the public to correct its behavior toward returning servicemen. On August 22, the *Yomiuri* printed a story on its front page titled: "Welcome Returnee Servicemen with Warm Feelings - Japan Political Conference

[411] This information was obtained through the use of the *Asahi shinbun*'s digital archive, Kikuzō II and the *Yomiuri shinbun*'s digital archive, Yomidasu Rekishikan.
[412] "Gunjinengo wo kakujyū sengomo ushinauna kansha no nen," *Asahi shinbun*, August 22, 1945, 2.

Directive."[413] The following day, the *Yomiuri* directly appealed for friendly treatment of demobilized servicemen in the sternly titled story: "Make Your Speech and Conduct Upright – Welcome Demobilized Servicemen with a Warm Heart to One's Hometown."[414] For papers to devote considerable print space to lambasting their readers over their treatment of demobilized servicemen indicates a swell of popular indifference and resentment towards members of Japan's defeated military. But why were the Japanese people so upset at their servicemen? It is noteworthy that articles admonishing the public pointedly avoided addressing the reasons for why civilians harbored ill will toward demobilized servicemen. However, the police reports examined in Chapter Two provide the critical missing subtext that *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* editors chose to leave out. Consequently, it is possible to read these as well as later articles examined below as indirect comments on the public's response to the behavior of thousands of demobilized servicemen in the months after Japan's surrender.

Demands for the public to improve its treatment of servicemen continued well into the autumn as the first overseas soldiers began to arrive in Japan. Beginning in the early weeks of October, the *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* ran stories detailing nightmarish conditions of soldiers in disease and starvation ravaged Pacific island garrisons.[415] Whereas in normal times these stories would have sparked an outpouring of sympathy and outrage, there seems to have been no such response by either paper's readers. As a testament to the public's indifference, on October 23, the *Asahi* published the story, "Warmly Welcome Demobilized Servicemen," which sought to direct the public's attention to the plight of servicemen awaiting repatriation in Asia and the Pacific.[416]

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[413] "Kikan shōhei ni onjō de sesseyo nisseikaitsūtatsu," *Yomiuri shinbun*, August 22, 1945, 1.
[414] "Gendō ha kōmeiseidai ni fukuingunjin, kyōkan ni atatakai kokoro de mukaeireyo," *Yomiuri shinbun,* August 23, 1945, 2.
[415] For an example of one such article in the Yomiuri, see "Mirejima kara fukuinsen uraga he 2600mei kotogotoku byōjin," *Yomiuri shinbun*, October 8, 1945, 2. A good example of such stories published by the *Asahi* is: "Mōtorokkujima no shōhei kaeru," *Asahi shinbun,* October 30, 1945, 2.
[416] "Fukuin gunjin, atataku mukahen," *Asahi shinbun,* October 23, 1945, 1.

Ultimately, such calls did not resonate with the Japanese public. Living with daily shortages of all basic items and foodstuffs, it is likely that much of the Japanese public had little time to spare or the capacity to ponder the abstract deprivations of overseas soldiers. Entering November, this attitude showed no sign of change. Throughout the late fall, soldiers began returning to Japan from the Philippines, a battlefield marked by particularly vicious combat and starvation as Japanese logistics entirely collapsed in the final months of the war. If such soldiers thought a sympathetic and warm welcome awaited them, they were surely sorely disappointed when they stepped ashore. On November 17, the *Yomiuri* printed an article titled, "Cold Fatherland, Overseas Demobilized Soldiers Lament," which described soldiers' shock at the public's indifference to their circumstances.[417] In the months after defeat, it was clear that the Japanese public could not be moved to great displays of affection, even for those soldiers who had endured unimaginable privations.

Yet another way in which it is possible to measure deteriorating post-surrender civil-military relations is through newspapers' eagerness to portray demobilized servicemen's return to civilian life in a positive light. One such example is an August 27 *Yomiuri* editorial, "The Importance of Demobilization," which was notable for its sober discussion of the hardships facing soldiers transitioning from military service to civilian life.[418] Such pieces, though certainly aimed at former servicemen, likely also sought to provoke sympathy from civilians by opening their eyes to the difficulties of the reintegration process. Editorials were hardly the only way in which newspapers drummed up support for demobilized servicemen. In some cases, the *Asahi* printed large pictures of demobilized servicemen that showed them as readjusted to civilian life and productive members of society. On one occasion the *Asahi* displayed a picture of men

[417] "Tsumetai sokoku nageku gaichifukuinhei," *Yomiuri shinbun,* November 17, 1945, 2.
[418] "Fukuin no jyūdaisei," *Yomiuri shinbun,* August 27, 1945, 1.

fishing at a beach on September 17 captioned, "Greeting Demobilized Servicemen, The Bustle of the Seashore."[419] A few days later, the *Asahi* printed a picture of a soldier, still in uniform, threshing rice on his farm while surrounded by his sons. For readers, both pictures unambiguously presented images of demobilized servicemen as readjusted and hardworking members of society.[420] Similarly, the *Yomiuri* produced articles that depicted demobilized servicemen as enthusiastically contributing to the rebuilding of war-damaged Japan. Articles, like "Demobilized Servicemen Build Peace," accomplished this by regaling readers of former soldiers actively reconstructing the destroyed houses of their communities.[421] The message of these articles could hardly have been lost on their readers: *demobilized servicemen are constructive members of Japanese society*. But for a public already infuriated by defeat and the misbehavior by some demobilized servicemen, it is unlikely that these stories were particularly persuasive.

A yawing divide had emerged between civilians and servicemen beginning in the final weeks of August 1945. This fissure is incontrovertibly evident in the way that Japan's newspapers commented on the public's treatment of military personnel and the initial reintegration of demobilized servicemen into civilian life. In the absence of polling data, it is not possible to have a numerically accurate picture of just what was the true extent of anti-military sentiment among civilians. However, the similar style of coverage in Japan's two major national papers combined with the reports of the Kenpeitai from Chapter Two suggest that either a plurality or a majority of citizens had become cold, if not outright uncaring toward the plight of demobilized servicemen.

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[419] "Fukuin no wakōdo wo mukaete hama no nigiwai," *Asahi shinbun,* September 17, 1945, 2.
[420] "Fukuin no musuko wo kakonde kyōshūtsu isogu inekoki," *Asahi shinbun,* September 23, 1945, 2.
[421] "Fukuinhei, heiwa wo kizuku," *Yomiuri shinbun,* September 17, 1945, 2.

The fraying of civil-military relations is particularly startling when one considers the fact that Japanese society and the military were intimately linked to each other through a complex web of relationships that remained largely unchallenged until Japan's defeat. The implications of this transformation in public attitudes towards the military are tremendous. Since the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), reverence of soldiers in political, educational, and entertainment materials was ubiquitous. Moreover, military service was often seen as a rite of passage into adulthood for males across society, while education in Japan's many youth officer cadet schools and the promise of a military career provided a means for social advancement for boys of poor rural families. On a local level, civilians and the military were tied together through veteran and civil-military organizations, such as the *Zaigōgunjinkai* (*Imperial Japanese military Reservist Association*) and its subsidiary youth chapters. As of 1937, the *Zaigōgunjinkai* could boast a membership of three million veterans and civilians across Japan.[422] In other words, Japanese society was habituated to absorbing demobilized servicemen from previous conflicts and peacetime service. That the Japanese public, which undoubtedly included hundreds of thousands of men who possessed prior military service, became so hostile toward demobilized servicemen after Japan's defeat is nothing short of a seismic cultural shift. Was this transformation simply a result of disillusionment triggered by defeat? Alternatively, were there signs of a breakdown in civil-military relations in existence long before 1945 that historians have failed to notice? It is safe to say that the relationship between prewar Japanese civilians and the military was more complicated than has been typically portrayed by scholars.

By December 1945, newspapers across Japan largely ceased printing stories depicting demobilized servicemen in a sympathetic light. Beginning as early as November 1945, Japan's

[422] Nihon bunka chūōrenmei ed., *Nihon bunka dantai nenkan shōwa jyūsannenhan* (Tokyo: Nihon bunka chūōrenmei, 1938), 169-171.

national dailies, the *Yomiuri* and the *Asahi* increasingly ran stories that criticized demobilized servicemen by associating them with rising levels of crime and anti-social behavior in Japanese society. This volte-face likely realigned newspapers with their readers' views on the military and servicemen. Yet all of this raises another question: why did Japanese newspapers provide favorable coverage of demobilized servicemen between August and December 1945?

Japan's newspapers remained under government censorship through September 3, 1945. Therefore, critical coverage of the military and its personnel was not possible. After September 3, newspaper coverage fell under censorship of the Allied Occupation. During this period, censors likely did not wish for intense discussion of the misbehavior of demobilized servicemen. Such discussion might have called into question the ability of the Occupation to assert effective civil control over Japan. At the same time, the Occupation's censors are unlikely to have viewed encouraging positive treatment of demobilized servicemen as a priority. After all, such efforts ran against Occupation efforts to demilitarize Japanese society and strip former servicemen of their position of respect in society. How do we explain the editorial stances of the Japanese press? Before September 3, it is likely that a good portion of stories on demobilized servicemen were a reflection of newspaper editors and journalists anticipating the coverage desired by Japanese censors. But it would be naïve to believe their coverage was simply a product of this alone. As elite institutions for crafting public opinion, newspapers, especially the *Asahi* and *Yomiuri*, served as arbiters of public opinion and morality. Consequently, the positive coverage of demobilized servicemen in 1945 is perhaps best understood as a genuine reflection of these papers' editors' attempts to rectify the public's behavior and to mediate fraying civil-military relations.

In their Own Words

Before Japan's defeat, servicemen commonly penned articles for magazines and newspapers for the purpose of promoting support for the military detailing their experiences returning home upon the end of their enlistment period.[423] Continuing this tradition, demobilized servicemen between 1945 and 1946 took it upon themselves to voice the thoughts of a generation returning home from war in Japan's newspapers. Yet everything about the language and motivations of these pieces made them unprecedented in Japanese history. Whereas wartime pieces reassured the public of the wisdom of the war, these pieces lambasted Japanese people for their indifference and ignorance of what millions of young men endured on foreign battlefields. Whereas wartime pieces by ex-servicemen called for greater support of the war effort, postwar demobilized servicemen desperately appealed to the Japanese public to stand witness to their poverty and wretchedness. By directly addressing their fellow countrymen, demobilized servicemen thrust themselves into the heart of public debate about their reintegration into civilian society. But would the Japanese public listen?

On October 31, 1945, an anonymous demobilized serviceman sought to explain the difficulties of reintegration to civilian life to the *Asahi*'s readership in an article titled, "The Voice of a Demobilized Serviceman." The author, struggling to rebuild his life after demobilization, introduced himself with words that likely resonated with many unemployed demobilized servicemen and young working age Japanese civilians alike. "I am one defeated soldier who has returned…to this impoverished fatherland…[H]owever, the only thing that

[423] For one striking example of this, see: Kōare kisen shayūshikai ed., *Kikanhei no koe* (Tokyo: Kōare kisen shayūshikai setsuritsujyunbikai, 1940), 11-31.

welcomed me home was unemployment." [424] Furthermore, the author sullenly continued by stating that his former workplace was "shuttered" and his home was destroyed by American bombs. [425] By emphasizing such details, the author squarely placed his experiences, and implicitly that of other demobilized personnel, alongside those of millions of unemployed and homeless civilians.

But there was a limit to the similarities between civilians and soldiers. As the author wrote next, the shock of return to a nation made unfamiliar by defeat threw many servicemen into a state of spiritual listlessness and dejection solely unlike that experienced by civilians.

> We are people who fought bravely on foreign battlefields and came home. Unlike people on the home front, we cannot comprehend the present condition of society. Returning to our fatherland that is utterly different from the front, we are the same as blind people who have been abandoned to stand alone in society."[426]

Within the author's description of grief and feelings of abandonment is a stark vision of an unbridgeable division between servicemen and civilians. According to the author, it was demobilized servicemen who were abandoned, or perhaps even betrayed by their own people. In contrast to Japan, the front is celebrated as a place of familiarity and comprehensibility. Thus, the author painted himself and other former servicemen as possessing a shared consciousness and identity that marked them as separate from civilians. By emphasizing such distinctions, the author likely undermined his case of soliciting civilian readers' sympathies. Was it not the case that civilians also suffered egregiously from similar problems enumerated by the author? Had they not suffered death, made sacrifices, and grown disillusioned? Instead of addressing these possibilities, the author doubled down on the suffering of demobilized servicemen. Claiming that

[424] "Fukuinsha no Koe," *Asahi shinbun,* October 31, 1945, 2.
[425] Ibid.
[426] Ibid.

demobilized servicemen in their present state of abandonment by society were incapable of successfully finding work, the author declared that they required government efforts to prioritize their reemployment – something not available for regular civilians.[427] Ending on a foreboding note, the author warned that if assistance was not forthcoming from the Japanese people, "…then just what in the world are we demobilized servicemen supposed to do?"[428]

For some demobilized servicemen, the end of the war meant freedom from the Imperial Japanese military's tyrannical discipline and horrors of combat. But due to censorship, the postwar Japanese public knew little about the realities of military life and even went so far as to see regular servicemen as indistinguishable from the military leadership that began the war. Such views made many demobilized servicemen feel misunderstood and persecuted when they themselves understood their wartime service as having been rendered for the sake of their fellow citizens or as a form of suffering imposed upon them by a draconian military. As a result, some demobilized servicemen took it upon themselves to educate their civilian counterparts about the truth of military service and why demobilized servicemen were war victims and responsible citizens, not coconspirators in Japan's defeat. One prominent example of this was a series of letters by three demobilized soldiers that was published as a single collection by the *Asahi* on December 13, 1945, under the headline, "The Minds of Demobilized Servicemen."[429]

"Demobilized servicemen! War comrades! We are liberated! We have returned from the sad and gloomy barracks and the bloody battlefield!"[430]So, began Kumagai Yoshihiro's stirring appeal to fellow soldiers and the Japanese public. Brimming with passion and language utterly unprintable only months before, Kumagai's denunciation of military life likely still retained the

[427] Ibid.
[428] Ibid.
[429] "Fukuin no shinri," *Asahi shinbun,* December 13, 1945, 2.
[430] Ibid.

power to shock even four months after Japan's surrender. Kumagai, like many other demobilized servicemen, eagerly looked forward to his return to civilian life. He and his comrades had endured nightmarish experiences that had turned them against the war and a military that had mistreated them. Certainly, the Japanese public would acknowledge their service and suffering. This was not what Kumagai experienced. "…[A]ll that awaited us were the sharp eyes of citizens who resented the military clique and our hometowns made desolate by the horrors of war."[431] For Kumagai, being associated with the defunct military leadership was intolerable. Addressing his civilian audience, Kumagai proceeded to proclaim that army life exposed him to a system of inequities: arbitrary labor, private use of soldiers as servants by officers, "oppression by officers, and the realization that officers' boasts of patriotism were empty.[432] Still, Kumagai was deeply cognizant of the prevalent views of demobilized servicemen as antisocial elements in the months since surrender. It is true, Kumagai admitted, that increasingly the term "demobilized serviceman was said to be a synonym for depravity." But for this reason, Kumagai concludes, demobilized servicemen "must be an indefatigable vanguard for building a peaceful Japan…"[433] If only the Japanese people would give former soldiers and sailors the benefit of the doubt, then they would prove they were capable of being productive members of society.

It was not just Kumagai who firmly believed that the Japanese public was quick to mistakenly conflate common servicemen with the military leaders who plunged Japan into war. Suzuki Kō, another of the three authors, reproved the Japanese people for their hostile treatment of demobilized servicemen. Why, Suzuki wondered, did the Japanese people associate demobilized servicemen with the military authorities who bore responsibility for the war? Servicemen "…were not like them," he insisted. Instead, Suzuki asserted that servicemen had

[431] Ibid.
[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid.

fought for their country, and "were only pure patriots."[434] Do you, Suzuki then incredulously asked his readers, think servicemen "threw away their lives and fought on battlefields or in the South Sea for the sake of greed?[435] For Suzuki, as perhaps with many other men like him, they genuinely believed they endured wartime hardships for the sake of their nation. Their spirit of sacrifice and patriotism is intensely personal, as evidenced by Suzuki's disgust with civilians associating common servicemen with the military's disgraced leadership. Upset by the public's reception of demobilized servicemen, Suzuki ended his letter with an earnest request that echoed the headlines of newspapers: "More so than you have done already, I want you to extend feelings of warmth towards demobilized servicemen."[436]

Not all servicemen were able to suppress their bitterness towards civilians. Aika Takashi, recently returned from the Philippines, accusingly demanded of the *Asahi*'s readers in a short letter: "Have you ever thought of the bleached corpses of our countrymen in the Solomon Islands? Have you given thought to our comrades who died of hunger in the mountains of the Philippines?"[437] By calling attention to the suffering of soldiers in the Philippines, Aika proclaimed the victimhood of common soldiers. In doing so, Aika said to the Japanese people, look at our suffering, and bear witness to the horrors inflicted upon us in our service to *all of you.* For civilians, such demands must have hit an uncomfortable nerve. Of course, few of them had ever thought of such things. The scale of Japan's military losses and the nature of the battles fought by its soldiers were unknown in wartime and in the immediate postwar. Only in the autumn of 1945 did the details of Japan's defeats begin to be discussed openly for the first

[434] Ibid.
[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Ibid.

time.[438] Yet, it is likely that some of the *Asahi*'s readers wondered if Aika's questions could be asked of Japan's demobilized servicemen. Had Aika and his comrades ever thought of the hundreds of thousands of civilians incinerated in their homes by American incendiary and atomic bombs? Had they ever considered the privations endured and the sacrifices made at home at the behest of Japan's war effort?

The authors who published letters in newspapers sought to build sympathy for the postwar struggles of reintegration faced by demobilized servicemen. As far as these letters' authors were concerned, the case for showing servicemen sympathy was self-evident. They had all fought overseas for the defense of Japan and made sacrifices that no civilian had ever had to make. Moreover, they had been forced to give up their youth, interrupt their schooling, and exchange their dreams and ambitions. Having returned home to a war-ruined nation, the authors felt aggrieved that demobilized servicemen were cast aside with scant regard for their service and their suffering. Did they not deserve at least a friendly welcome and a few words of thanks, if not material or financial assistance in restarting their lives? It is not clear, however, that the plight of demobilized servicemen was ever so self-evident to Japan's public. Had not the soldiers and sailors of the IJA and IJN boasted of their unparalleled tenaciousness in the face of adversity? Was not the ability to endure extreme hardships, violence, and even death a celebrated hallmark that distinguished Japanese servicemen from the militaries of foreign nations? For Japan's public, drowned in such hyperbolic rhetoric, the post-surrender profusion of stories by servicemen decrying their suffering must have provoked conflicted emotions of disgust, disdain, and pity. Was it reasonable to expect the public to feel genuine sympathy for demobilized servicemen in such an environment?

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[438] Ibid.

Amid widespread poverty and millions of stories of suffering and hardship, why did demobilized servicemen deserve special sympathy, let alone prioritized employment? After all, demobilized servicemen were only one constituency of suffering among numerous groups claiming victimhood in Japan. The Japanese people were no less affected by the war than Japan's soldiers and sailors. Millions of civilians in Japan's countryside and cities endured relentless aerial bombing and strafing by carrier-based fighters. In total, American bombing killed perhaps as many 331,509 civilians and wounded another 513,041, while also leaving more than two million homes destroyed.[439] Although civilians did not share the degree of danger that many soldiers faced, for those survivors of bombing raids it must have seemed irrefutably obvious that they too had suffered no less directly the horrors of modern war. And so, it must have been especially vexing to civilians to have noted that in all of the pieces by demobilized servicemen, not once was their suffering and sacrifices ever acknowledged. In fact, it may have appeared to some that demobilized servicemen's fixation on their victimhood constructed a hierarchy of public suffering that prioritized military over civilian experiences. Demobilized servicemen's tendency to exclusively insist on acknowledgement of their wartime experiences was not unusual. Until Japan's defeat, veterans and wounded servicemen were accorded with enormous respect and deference by civilians in public spaces. But in the changed dynamics of post-surrender Japan, civilians no longer felt obligated to display reverence towards servicemen and embrace them as fellow war victims.

"Why on Earth do they Despise Us?"

[439] *Asahi keizai nenshi: nihon keizai no minshuka shōwa nijyū – nijyūichi nenhan* (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1946), 190.

By 1946, efforts by demobilized servicemen and newspapers to change the public's treatment of former military personnel had failed. For many demobilized servicemen, there appeared to be no hope of persuading the wider public to take an interest in their struggles. In fact, many began to believe that the public was outright hostile to their participation in the reconstruction of Japan. This change in demobilized servicemen's attitudes occurred mainly out of view of the public. The most effective way to trace this transformation is by examining the Occupation's Civil Intelligence Section's collection of intercepted letters written by demobilized servicemen between 1946 and 1948.[440] In these letters demobilized servicemen increasingly turned their energy to expressing their worries about reintegration through private correspondence with close acquaintances. Three themes particularly stand out among the various issues expressed in the correspondence of demobilized servicemen: the cold reception of servicemen, a belief that the Japanese people despised all servicemen because they held them responsible for Japan's defeat, and a desire among some to be given the chance to help lead the reconstruction of Japan. These letters are significant not only for their value as contemporaneous records of the thoughts of demobilized servicemen, but also as astonishing examples of a degree of emotional vulnerability and honesty that was unlikely to have been expressed by these young men in public.

The frosty reception by civilians that greeted demobilized servicemen upon their return was not a momentary aberration. In September 1946, for instance, nearly every letter by former servicemen read by the CIS complained about the "coldness" of civilians and a belief that they hated servicemen.[441] One anonymous demobilized serviceman upset at their treatment wrote:

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[440] It is important to note that the identities of all authors of letters reprinted in CIS reports were kept anonymous.
[441] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 1 maki,* 222.

"…[O]f course we had not expected to be welcomed by the people with the song, 'We Owe Everything to the Soldiers;' we never expected such a thing. But they don't have to look down upon us."[442] This was not a solitary viewpoint. A different author lamented, "…We have long yearned to return to Japan to build her anew. Why on earth do they despise us?"[443] For so many demobilized servicemen, the shock of being rejected by civilians was exceedingly hurtful and wholly unexpected. Why did they not have a right to return to civilian life and prove that they could constructively participate in the rebuilding of Japan? This question unsettled the hearts and minds of many demobilized servicemen over the coming years, so much so that numerous authors in the letters intercepted by CIS would speak of a feeling of depression and abandonment.[444]Another author summed up this feeling best when he stated in a letter: "All of us are complaining of this. They won't give us a chance to rebuild Japan."[445] These attitudes, rather than a fleeting pique of anger, remained constant beyond the fall of 1946. In fact, a survey conducted of letters intercepted in 1947 showed that the vast majority of all correspondence expressed deep dissatisfaction at treatment by civilians and the process of reintegration.[446]As the months wore on and demobilized servicemen settled into the uneasy life of peace, it was painfully obvious to many that a sizable portion of the Japanese public did not wish for them to rejoin regular society.

Between 1945 and 1947, a significant number of demobilized servicemen wrote in their letters of persistent discrimination on the basis of their wartime service. So great was the issue of

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[442] Ibid.
[443] Ibid.
[444] Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 7 maki* (Tokyo: Kabushikikaishagendaishiryōshuppan, 2001), 33.
[445] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 1 maki,* 222.
[446] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 7 maki* (Tokyo: Kabushikikaishagendaishiryōshuppan, 2001), 33.

discrimination that it is one of the most common themes written about in the period of CIS surveillance. For many civilians, the very fact that demobilized servicemen had served in the military was sufficient reason to hold them responsible for Japan's disastrous defeat and ostracize them from certain sectors of society, such as the workforce. Furthermore, demobilized servicemen were living embodiments of the hollow promises and humiliating failure of Japan's military. They were nothing more than losers. One demobilized serviceman in 1946 that experienced this kind of discrimination firsthand, observed: "Just because we were in the army, people will not hire us. For this reason, we will probably suffer more than others from the shortage of food and from unemployment."[447] Such treatment was unfortunately typical. For many, the public's naked hostility was akin to betrayal, since only years earlier many civilians had lavished soldiers and sailors with praise and displays of support. One demobilized serviceman who experienced such thoughts while struggling to put his life back together wrote:

> When I returned home after five years' military service, I found all my possessions lost and my wife's whereabouts unknown. I went here and there, seeking a job, but all in vain. The people who gave us hearty cheers when we departed have now completely changed… [T]hey attribute the cause of surrender to our incompetence.[448]

A wounded soldier writing from a hospital in Shizuoka wrote of encountering similarly shocking treatment to the previous author.

> The Minato Hospital which I entered last month was formerly a naval hospital and its facilities are very good. The villagers harbor antipathy towards us, however, openly saying at the village meetings that the defeat of Japan was due to the weakness of us, soldiers, and therefore we have no right to receive any ration or service from them.[449]

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[447] Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 2 maki* (Tokyo: Kabushikikaishagendaishiryōshuppan, 2001), 24.
[448]Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 1 maki*, 222.
[449]Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 2 maki*, 23.

Unsurprisingly, many servicemen felt sorely wronged by the Japanese public. More to the point, they felt that the public had forgotten they had supported the war and the military's actions and chosen to make common servicemen scapegoats for Japan's defeat.

Not all civilians rejected demobilized servicemen because of their perceived dismal wartime performance. In the months after surrender, newspaper articles about Japanese wartime atrocities proliferated. While there is evidence that some civilians discounted such stories as Allied propaganda, and some even dismissed the atrocities as normal occurrences in war, many civilians were so disturbed by the stories that they entirely lost their faith in the Japanese military and its soldiers and sailors.[450] One demobilized serviceman who felt the ire of his civilian peers recounted that upon his return home, "People looked at me with cool-hearted eyes as if I were a war criminal."[451]Another wrote: "Even our relatives take us for war criminals. It makes me miserable when nobody will give me a job. I am trying hard to get a chance to make it all up to them but they won't let me."[452] Surprisingly, it was not simply strangers who discriminated against demobilized servicemen. As the second excerpt shows, debates about war responsibility raged even within the families of demobilized servicemen, the one place where many likely expected to find love and sympathy. Furthermore, as the second author emphasizes, the belief that he and others were war criminals prejudiced employers to the point that they were unwilling to hire former servicemen. Whether or not the author had committed war crimes, it is telling that he, and perhaps many others like him, felt a level of responsibility to show they were deserving of a second chance. For a vast majority of authors of letters intercepted by the CIS, the most commonly expressed way in which demobilized servicemen who hoped to "make it all up" to the

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[450] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 207-208.
[451] Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki*, 25.
[452] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 1 maki,* 222.

Japanese people was to work and contribute to Japan's recovery. Unfortunately, the hostility and anger of the Japanese public and the poor state of the Japanese economy prevented millions of demobilized servicemen from returning to the workforce in the early years of the Occupation.

The above letters raise a number of important issues about civilians and how defeat was understood in post-surrender Japan. First, it may have seemed ludicrous to demobilized servicemen for civilians to conflate being a conscript or NCO with the authority wielded by career officers who had led Japan to defeat. Most demobilized servicemen had fought as infantrymen, rear-echelon support staff, pilots, and sailors. Did the public consider their mere survival as evidence of cowardice or failure? Second, these letters raise serious questions about the motivations behind why civilians treated demobilized servicemen with such coolness. The rush by civilians in the months after surrender to place responsibility for defeat upon the shoulders of regular servicemen was perhaps disingenuous at best. Many civilians had enthusiastically embraced Japanese overseas expansionism and militarism, while also lending their support to civil and military leaders who plunged Japan into war so long as their policies brought victories. Commenting on this very issue, one demobilized serviceman in 1946 wrote:

> …[A]ll Japanese – with exception of those few who raised objections to the war – are equally responsible. We must atone for our grave error of judgment in striving to with all our might for the rejuvenation of science, thought and economy.[453]

But it was perhaps not as simple as this author understood it. After all, the sudden onset of defeat must have produced a sense of shock and betrayal among the Japanese public. For decades, the prewar Japanese state inundated its people with propaganda about the invincibility of the Imperial Japanese military, even more so as the war became increasingly desperate. While it does not excuse their behavior, this context is certainly important for attempting to understand

[453] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 2 maki*, 23.

why civilians made demobilized servicemen their target for expressing outrage at the military's defeat.

Not all demobilized servicemen saw themselves as blameless. Whether out of shame or a sense of duty, a vocal minority of servicemen expressed a firm belief in not just their capacity to rebuild a new and democratic Japan, but the necessity that they be allowed to do so. Their reasoning was simple. They had directly experienced, and in many cases, willingly took part in the worst excesses of prewar Japanese militarism. Now that the war was over, many of these men felt a keen sense of liberation and intellectual clarity in the wake of Japan's defeat. One demobilized serviceman wrote: "During the heyday of militarism, we sang its praises and devoted ourselves to its cause. We were blind; we knew nothing about things outside of Japan."[454] Another author reflected deeply upon his complicity in perpetuating the values of militarism in prewar Japan:

> Looking back upon my long Army life, I feel my heart swell with pain. I had to deceive myself and submit to the dogmatic notion that my sole happiness lay in giving myself up to formal military discipline, and against my conscience, I passed on this hypocritical education to my soldiers.[455]

For other demobilized servicemen, the feeling of guilt was a powerful motivating factor for their desire to actively participate in Japan's reconstruction. "It is we ourselves who are to blame for throwing Japan into the present crucible of affliction. We must, therefore, take the responsibility of reconstructing our fatherland."[456] It is tempting to wonder how some civilians might have modified their treatment of demobilized servicemen if these views were expressed in public mediums rather than private letters. Could there have been a space for a deeper dialogue based

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[454] Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 4 maki*, 21.
[455] Ibid.
[456] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki*, 130.

on discussion of mutual responsibility, or for that matter, at least one that involved former servicemen discussing their role in supporting Japan's militarist culture? Alas, few if any demobilized servicemen seem to have felt compelled to have expressed these views in magazines or newspapers.

Despite their heartfelt expressions of contrition and responsibility, these voices are not representative of all demobilized servicemen. Many, as examined in prior chapters, felt shame at defeat, and even anger towards the military's leadership and at the time they spent in the military. Still, it needs to be pointed out that many demobilized servicemen, whatever their views on defeat or postwar Japan, retained a strong sense of pride in their military service.[457] In fact, analysis of the letters collected by CIS indicates that a sizable minority of former soldiers even remained unrepentant militarists.[458] What can be concluded is this: while most demobilized servicemen desired to rebuild Japan, there existed a plethora of views on the issue of responsibility for defeat.

An Unbridgeable Divide

What solidarity existed in wartime, whether heartfelt or fostered by propaganda, did not survive in a meaningful form beyond Japan's defeat. As the years wore on after Japan's surrender, demobilized servicemen and civilians remained largely estranged from each other by a lack of a common language of suffering and a shared narrative of the war. Although both groups fought the same war, their struggles, privations, and direct encounters with the violence of industrial warfare produced two separate experiential narratives of sacrifice and suffering. As

[457] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 2 maki,* 133..
[458] Ibid; Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki,* 306.

demobilized servicemen began to reenter Japanese society in late 1945, neither side possessed a shared understanding of the war that could provide a common language for making their experiences mutually intelligible. Regrettably, this state of affairs birthed an atmosphere of deep resentment and anger toward common servicemen among civilians that manifested itself in the form of every day discrimination. This popular anger undermined demobilized servicemen's efforts to navigate postwar society and find a sense of belonging and community. Naturally, many former servicemen turned inwards and increasingly felt despised and ostracized. Consequently, it is difficult to speak of what demobilized servicemen underwent in the initial years after defeat as reintegration. While reintegration rarely has an end for many veterans, it typically has a tangible start. But in the case of many Japanese demobilized servicemen, Japanese society did not offer conditions conducive for even the start of a meaningful process of reintegration into civilian society.

Part Two: No Home for Young Men: The Occupation's Reduction of State Assistance for Demobilized Servicemen and its Consequences

Few policies were pursued by Allied Occupation authorities in Japan with as much vigor and zeal as the demilitarization of Japanese society. After nearly four years of war, civilian and military leaders and thinkers from the Western Allied powers had decided that it was Japan's military and culture of militarism that had misled its people into supporting policies of aggressive expansionism. On November 15, 1945, the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) formalized this policy within "The Basic Directive for Post-Surrender Military Government in Japan Proper," a series of far-ranging instructions for the governance of occupied Japan to

General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers.[459] Concerning the issue of demilitarization, the JCS informed MacArthur that his duty was to ensure that militarism, and the institutions, culture, ideologies, and people who perpetuated it, would be eliminated so as to guarantee that Japan never threatened its neighbors again.[460] Over the ensuing years, the Occupation adopted numerous measures for suppressing militarism within Japan's media, the arts, entertainment, and politics, as well as in Japan's schools. But in Japanese society, there existed an inconvenient and overt reminder of Japan's prewar past in the bodies and minds of its millions of demobilized servicemen. The Occupation's policies towards these men and the impact these actions had on their efforts to reintegrate are the focus of this final section.

Among the various policies adopted to realize the demilitarization of Japan was a concerted effort to ensure that demobilized servicemen in postwar Japan did not occupy positions of privilege or become agents for perpetuating militarism. It was perhaps not just a fear of Japanese militarism, albeit simplistically conceived by Allied soldiers and diplomats, which spurred these policies. It is probable that many Occupation officials were acutely aware of the catastrophic role that First World War German veterans groups, such as the far-right paramilitary *Freikorps* (*Free Corps*) and various nationalistic veterans associations, such as the *Stahlhelm, Bund der Frontsoldaten* (*Steel Helmet, League of Front Soldiers*), played in undermining the

[459] "The Basic Directive for Post-Surrender Military Government in Japan Proper," National Diet Library, last modified 2004, https://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryo/01/036/036tx.html.

[460] The relevant section from the JCS's orders read as follows: "By appropriate means you will make clear to all levels of the Japanese population the fact of their defeat. They must be made to realize that their suffering and defeat have been brought upon them by the lawless and irresponsible aggression of Japan, and that only when militarism has been eliminated from Japanese life and institutions will Japan be admitted to the family of nations. They must be told that they will be expected to develop a non-militaristic and democratic Japan which will respect the rights of other nations and Japan's international obligations. You will make it clear that military occupation of Japan is effected in the interests of the United Nations and is necessary for the destruction of Japan's power of aggression and her war potential and for the elimination of militarism and militaristic institutions which have brought disaster on the Japanese…" Ibid.

civil order of Weimar Germany.[461] As a result, the Occupation adopted a series of policies aimed at severing the bonds that mutually tied demobilized servicemen with civilians and the Japanese state along with measures constricting their range of permissible political and social activities. Ultimately, these policies successfully prevented demobilized servicemen from organizing themselves into a bloc that presented a threat to the demilitarization and democratization of Japanese society. But this success came at a steep price. The Occupation's actions directly, or indirectly, led to the impoverishment and unemployment of demobilized servicemen and their families, as well as resulted in a considerable number of young men resorting to black market activity to support themselves and their families.

The Discontinuation of the Military Pension

In prewar Japan, only two categories of citizens were entitled to state pensions, or single time payments for early retirement: civil officials and servicemen. Of the two, the so called "Military Pension," as it was colloquially known, gradually became the most significant form of social welfare paid by prewar Japanese state. Initially created in 1875, the Military Pension system went through a series of major revisions over the course of its existence.[462] In its earliest iterations, the pension provided minimal assistance for veterans below the rank of commissioned officers, while also providing inadequate help for wounded servicemen and war widows. In many cases, veterans were forced to rely on local charities in their communities for post-service financial support.[463] However, on June 21, 1890 the Japanese government enacted the Army and Navy Pension Law (*Gunjin Onkyū-hō*), which provided for the first time a military pension to

[461] Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 72-75.
[462] Tetsuya Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor: Japanese Pacific War Disabled Veterans from 1945 to 1963," (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2011), 21-22.
[463] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 22.

servicemen of all ranks, albeit in the form of single lump payments to most servicemen.[464] In 1923, the Japanese government updated the military pension system with the passage of the Pension Act (*Onkyū-hō),* which would remain in place until the end of the Second World War. Unlike the 1890 law, the 1923 revised law granted ex-servicemen of all ranks the right to receive an annual regular pension (*futsūonkyū*) after completing a prescribed amount of years of service.[465]At its core, the Military Pension system existed in order to incentivize and reward those who made a career out of serving in the IJA and IJN.[466] Nevertheless, as the pension system expanded over the course of its existence, it assumed the trappings of a vast and costly proto-social security system for millions of retired servicemen and their dependents.

By the time of the Second World War, the Military Pension was broken into multiple categories and covered servicemen of all ranks. At its basic level, there was a graduated scale of payments for servicemen who fell into five categories: generals and admirals, field officers, warrant officers, NCOs, and privates. Each category was further subdivided into specific grades for each rank.[467] The earliest one might leave the military and collect an annual pension was at the eleven-year mark, while fifty years was the longest one might serve. The degree of disparity in financial compensation was considerable between the highest and lowest ranks. For example, a senior private in the IJA received an annual pension of 165 yen after 11 years of service, while a general or admiral received 2,500 yen for the equivalent period.[468] It is important to note that the eleven year minimum requirement for pension qualification did not necessarily mean that a soldier or sailor had to have served a full 11 years. For instance, every month served in an active

[464] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 23.
[465] Yoshihiko Ebihara, ed., *Hyakumannin no fukken daikōshin: gun'on undō no rekishi* (Tokyo: Gyōsei, 2009), 9-19; 88-89.
[466] Ebihara, ed., *Hyakumannin no fukken daikōshin,* 9-19.
[467] Ebihara, ed., *Hyakumannin no fukken daikōshin,* 83.
[468] Ibid.

war zone counted as three months served, thereby incentivizing participation in combat.[469] Nonetheless, since most common servicemen were conscripts, the pension system in peacetime largely benefited those who pursued careers as NCOs and commissioned officers. In addition to the above categories, there existed special pension rates for servicemen incapacitated by sickness incurred while on duty, and for those wounded in battle. In these two categories, the Japanese pension system was especially generous.[470] The final major category for pension payments was that for bereaved family members of fallen soldiers. Under this classification, living kin, such as widows, parents, and children, could qualify for pension payments.[471]

By the end of the Second World War, the Military Pension system was a vast and costly financial safety net for millions of Japanese. In 1946, the Niigata prefectural government estimated that across Japan fifteen million citizens were financially dependent on the Military Pension as of the time of Japan's surrender. Of this number, three million were ex-servicemen, and twelve million were dependent family members.[472] In other words, 21% of all Japanese citizens were intimately tied to and relied upon the military and its pension system. In essence, the military not only provided career opportunities, but also a quasi-social security system for millions of Japanese families, many of whom were of low-income backgrounds. In this way, the Military Pension indirectly inculcated financial dependency and popular support for the perpetuation of the Imperial Japanese military and militarism in general.

The importance of the Military Pension did not escape the notice of the Allied Occupation. Within months of the occupation of Japan, Occupation authorities singled out the

[469] In contrast, every month spent away from a warzone during wartime was counted as just equaling half a month of service towards qualifying for the Soldiers' Pension. Ebihara, ed., *Hyakumannin no fukken daikōshin,* 67.
[470] Ebihara, ed., *Hyakumannin no fukken daikōshin,* 84.
[471] Ebihara, ed., *Hyakumannin no fukken daikōshin,* 68-69.
[472] Niigataken seiji keizai kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan,* 62.

Military Pension for elimination. The decision to abolish the Military Pension was first articulated in the aforementioned JCS's instructions for MacArthur in November 1945.[473] Within days of these orders, Occupation officials began drafting a formal proclamation announcing the end of the Military Pension.[474] A number of justifications lay behind the Occupation's decision. Foremost among the reasons was a belief that the pension sustained popular support for militarism and encouraged consecutive generations of young men to seek careers in the IJA and IJN.[475] In effect, this produced families who made military service into a quasi-hereditary occupation, thereby creating a separate class of citizens whose livelihoods and families' wellbeing were wholly tied to the military's fate. Nonetheless, there were other reasons as well. According to one anonymous American Occupation official involved with the decision-making process, the Military Pension was excessively expensive at a time when the Japanese government needed all of its resources for reconstruction. Furthermore, the official highlighted the topic of fairness. Displaying deep empathy for the Japanese people, the official cited the fact that the Military Pension was deeply unfair, as it financially rewarded only servicemen and their families while ignoring the considerable sacrifices made by the entire population in a time of total war.[476] It is difficult to find fault with this last point. For a society that was deeply scarred by the war and a civilian population already resentful of demobilized servicemen, exclusive payment of pensions to former servicemen would likely have become especially unpopular as Japan's postwar economic situation worsened. As a result, special privileges for soldiers and sailors had no place in a postwar democratic and demilitarized Japanese society.

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[473] "The Basic Directive for Post-Surrender Military Government in Japan Proper," National Diet Library, last modified 2004, https://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryo/01/036/036tx.html.
[474] SCAPIN-338 was the official order which announced the end of the Soldiers' Pension.
[475] Yoshihiko Ebihara, ed., *Hyakumannin no fukken daikōshin,* 98; 101-102.
[476] Yoshihiko Ebihara, ed., *Hyakumannin no fukken daikōshin,* 100-101.

On November 26, 1945, newspapers informed the Japanese public of the Occupation's decision to abolish the Military Pension.[477] Crucially, the actual end of the pension would not take effect until February 1, 1946.[478] In the meantime, news of the looming end of the Military Pension caused great concern for those dependent on its payments for daily necessities. For war widows and elderly, or invalided parents of fallen soldiers in particular, the end of the pension meant that they would become bereft of what was likely a major part of their income, if not their sole source of financial security.[479] One striking example of this is that of Saitama prefecture. According to one Japanese government survey, out of 3,781 bereaved families in Saitama prefecture in 1946, 932 families became impoverished with the elimination of the Military Pension.[480]

Of course, the loss of the pension hit soldiers hard as well. At a time of catastrophic unemployment, the pension provided a valuable source of stability. Without it, many retired and demobilized servicemen, along with their families, fell into grave financial insecurity.[481] It is not the case that some of the Occupation officials involved with the pension's elimination were blind to the punitive nature of their actions. However, they rationalized their actions by insisting they were necessary to suppress the resurgence of militarism in Japanese society by ensuring nobody saw military service as a financially rewarding.[482] But for one category of servicemen the pension remained in place. In a rare decision, the Occupation decided to retain the Military Pension for wounded servicemen for purported humanitarian reasons. However, Occupation officials, ever thinking about how to save money, deemed it only necessary to provide wounded

[477]"Gunjin no onkyū wo kinji," *Asahi shinbun,* November 26,1945, 1.
[478] Niigataken seiji keizai kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan,* 62-63.
[479] "Tōzatsu 'gunjinonkyū' to narikinzei wo kataru," *Asahi shinbun,* November 26, 1945, 2.
[480]*Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō: shōwa nijyūichi nen san gatsu nijyūyon nichi – shōwa nijyūichi nen roku gatsu jyūyokka* (Tokyo: Dai ni Fukuinkyoku, 1946), 1271-1272.
[481]*Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō,* 1271.
[482] Ebihara, ed., *Hyakumannin no fukken daikōshin,* 100.

servicemen with the barest minimum of financial assistance.[483] As will be discussed in Chapter Four, this gesture proved to be wholly inadequate for the needs of many wounded servicemen and was ultimately discontinued as well.

Curtailing Political Rights

Allied Occupation authorities viewed the presence of millions of demobilized servicemen as posing a significant political and security risk to the stability of postwar Japan. In the prewar Japanese state, the Imperial Japanese military wielded outsized influence over party and local politics as well as the governance of the Japanese state. However, in the new liberal democratic Japan to be built by the Occupation, there was little willingness to countenance the risk of former servicemen playing even a moderately influential role in Japanese politics. Rules for political parties and veterans' associations stipulated that no more than one fourth of membership could be comprised of former officers and special military unit personnel.[484] Ironically, this may not have been necessary. As of 1947, Occupation intelligence analysts discovered that a significant portion of demobilized servicemen exhibited little enthusiasm for party politics. No doubt, pervasive anti-military and anti-soldier sentiment among civilians likely played a critical factor in dissuading demobilized servicemen from engaging in politics. Analysts also found that mainstream parties made little to no effort to recruit demobilized servicemen into their ranks.[485] Perhaps further compounding the issue of disinterest in party politics among demobilized servicemen was the lack of effort made by parties to address their needs. Although the Progressive Party and Social Democrats made some attempts to appeal to former servicemen by

[483] Ibid.
[484] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki,* 306.
[485] Ibid.

calling for concrete rehabilitation programs, these efforts seem to have not amounted to much other than vague promises that rarely materialized into actual programs. Succinctly summarizing this situation, one soldier wrote in the spring of 1947: "Despite the statement of politicians on relief for demobilized servicemen, we are still neglected."[486]

While it is significant that many demobilized servicemen appear to have eschewed active participation in party politics, the question remains why did political parties feel capable of ignoring demobilized servicemen? It is possible that political parties' lack of concern for obtaining demobilized servicemen's support was a manifestation of anti-military sentiment. Certainly, some parties, especially those on the left had a good reason to be averse to including former servicemen and officers within their groups. After all, junior officers from the IJN and IJA frequently engaged in political violence and antidemocratic organizations that contributed to the end of prewar civilian governance and the abolition of political parties. That said, perhaps a more plausible explanation is the Occupation's policies, which prevented the formation of political associations by demobilized servicemen. Such groups would have allowed the creation of a cohesive electoral bloc. In fact, when such groups did become legally permissible after the Occupation's end, veterans' associations organized as political pressure groups proved to be highly influential. The most powerful of these groups succeeded in restoring the Military Pension and making itself into an invaluable voter turnout machine for conservative politicians.[487] But before 1952, demobilized servicemen had yet to gain the legal ability to do any of this. While the Occupation tacitly permitted the existence of hundreds of self-help groups and quasi-legal commemorative associations that typically hewed to the far right, none of these groups could

[486] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 4 maki,* 290.
[487] Aiko Kurazawa, et al., *Senjō no shosō: Iwanamikōza ajia taiheiyōsensō 5,* (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2006), 364-369.

legally engage in political activities. Perhaps just as importantly, none of these groups staked out policy positions or pretended to speak for all former servicemen.[488] Thus, in the pre-1952 political environment, Occupation policies ensured that demobilized servicemen remained politically disunited and a low priority for catering to by political parties.

Unemployment and Despair

As millions of young men returned to civilian life between 1945 and 1947, many found that a life of economic hardship awaited them upon their return. Unlike the United States, there was no equivalent piece of legislation to the GI Bill for Japan's demobilized servicemen. There were no grants to enable veterans to go back to school, and there certainly was no system in place to help young men acquire loans to purchase a house of their own. Programs for assisting with employment were minimal at best, and in some cases, actively suppressed by the Occupation. In the immediate aftermath of defeat, so bad was Japan's unemployment that it rivaled, and even occasionally surpassed levels seen in the Great Depression. As a result, unemployment, hunger, and homelessness became common deprivations endured by numerous demobilized servicemen. While evidence suggests that many demobilized servicemen eventually found work and built livelihoods years after Japan's defeat, many struggled with unemployment and extreme poverty in the years before the end of the Occupation in 1952.

Officially, the Japanese government did not keep statistics on demobilized servicemen. By Occupation decree, former servicemen were to be treated no different from civilians for

[488] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki,* 237.

official purposes following their demobilization.[489] In many cases, the Japanese government complied with this order, leaving large gaps in the statistical record regarding the lives of demobilized servicemen. However, for reasons that are unclear, between 1945 and 1947 the Japanese government contravened Occupation policy by maintaining a minimal amount of data on demobilized servicemen concerning unemployment. Based on this data, it is possible to construct an informed, albeit imperfect view of the economic conditions facing demobilized servicemen in the years after Japan's surrender.

For millions of Japanese working men and women, perhaps the most tangible change to their lives following Japan' defeat was their sudden loss of work. In the days and weeks that followed August 15, 1945, the Japanese economy came to a crashing halt. Since 1938, the Japanese economy had operated under Japanese government control for the facilitation of Japan's expanding war with China, and then for its wider war with the Western Allies. During this period, millions of workers produced munitions and materials needed for Japan's war effort. But defeat suddenly rendered these materials redundant, and threatened to put 4,130,000 factory workers out of work.[490] Furthermore, more than seven million servicemen would soon become unemployed, while another 3,240,000 colonists from Japan's defunct empire would begin to arrive home and be in need of employment.[491] In total, the Japanese government estimated that at war's end that as many as 13,240,000 people were unemployed or likely to become so.[492] As a percentage of Japan's post-surrender population, such a figure accounted for a staggering 18% of all Japanese citizens. Finally, it is worth emphasizing that demobilized servicemen comprised the

[489] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki*, 303.
[490] Niigataken seiji keizai kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan,* 70.
[491] Ibid.
[492] The astute reader may notice that these numbers do not add up to the formal tally provided in the text. If tallied up, the number soldiers, colonists, and factory workers equals 14,980,000. However, the numbers listed above are as printed by the Japanese government.

single largest category of citizens who faced the prospect of imminent unemployment. Therefore, Japan's postwar spiraling unemployment crisis was as much a problem of economic reintegration of demobilized servicemen as it was a question of putting civilians back to work.

Just what was the official scale of unemployment among demobilized servicemen in 1945? According to survey data from October 1945, approximately 3,960,000 servicemen in Japan had demobilized or would shortly commence their demobilization.[493] What is interesting to note is that of this total, 2,540,000 are listed as "able to return to prior job," while 1,420,000 are labeled as "unemployed persons." What about the 3,650,000 servicemen stationed overseas? Most of these men would not return to Japan until 1946. Despite this, the Japanese government included them in its formal unemployment numbers for 1945. Unlike servicemen, in Japan, only 1,420,000 are listed as having the possibility of returning to their old jobs. In contrast, 2,230,000 are formally listed as unemployed.[494] It is important to note that despite its label of "able to return to prior job,", the name of the first group for domestic and overseas servicemen did not mean that those individuals could, would, or wanted to return to their prewar jobs. Additionally, it is not clear if data for this first group is based on information provided by servicemen or from employers. As such, it is difficult to judge whether servicemen of the first group actually had realistic prospects of reemployment. Nevertheless, two things stand out from these figures. First, overseas servicemen likely had far less chances of obtaining reemployment at their former workplaces because of their time spent away from home and the difficulties of communication. Second, though it is probable that a good portion of soldiers of the first grouping were able to find reemployment, we must keep in mind that it is equally likely that many others did not.

[493] Niigataken seiji keizai kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan,* 70.
[494] Ibid.

Within this context, what did the Japanese government and ultimately the Occupation do to counter unemployment among demobilized servicemen?

In the years after Japan's surrender, demobilized servicemen often complained that the Japanese government failed to provide them economic assistance.[495]Although these perceptions are an accurate representation of conditions after 1945, this was not the case for the first months after defeat. As soon as the war ended, the Japanese government adopted two main programs to combat unemployment among demobilized servicemen. On September 1, 1945, the Ministry of Health and Welfare announced the start of a nationwide effort to prioritize the reemployment of demobilized servicemen. According to the official order, employers were strongly encouraged to accept applicants of military backgrounds.[496] The government's campaign of prioritized hiring of demobilized servicemen received favorable coverage and publicity in major dailies, such as the *Yomiuri shinbun* and *Asahi shinbun*, as well as in regional papers such as in the *Tokyo shinbun* and *Kyoto shinbun*.[497] It is impossible to gauge to what degree this program might have improved the lives of demobilized servicemen, since it ran afoul of the Occupation's efforts to ensure that the Japanese state did not confer special privileges upon former soldiers. On November 1, 1945, General MacArthur issued a decree that ordered the Japanese government to cease all measures that prioritized the employment of demobilized servicemen.[498] Moreover, the order instructed the Japanese government to cease counting demobilized servicemen as a distinct

[495] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 2 maki,* 134.
[496] Niigataken seiji keizai kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan,* 56.
[497] For an example, see: "Zenshoku fukki to yūsen saiyō kikangunjin no shūshoku assen sochi kimaru," *Asahi shibun,* September 1, 1945, 1; "Kikan gunjingunzoku no shyūshoku taisaku," *Yomiuri shinbun,* September 1, 1945, 1.; "Kikangunjin, chōyōsha ni wa yūsenteki ni shokugyō wo assen," *Tokyo shinbun,* August 22, 1945, 2; "Gunjin chōyōkō nado yūsenteki ni fukushoku," *Kyoto shinbun,* August 28, 1945, 1.
[498] Niigataken seiji keizai kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan,* 57.

category of unemployed citizens.[499] Henceforth, demobilized servicemen largely disappeared from Japanese economic statistics.

In addition to employment assistance schemes, the Japanese government adopted a second initiative aimed at providing land to demobilized servicemen of all ranks. On September 15, 1945, the Japanese government announced a system of formal land grants. The initial order specifically provided land for bereaved families, wounded servicemen, retired servicemen, and demobilized servicemen.[500] The Japanese government distributed parcels of land with the intent that their new owners would construct homes on the properties and develop the land for various industries: husbandry, agriculture, fishing, and logging.[501] This was not the only land grant scheme. Other Japanese government ministries, such as the Finance Ministry, assumed control over former military bases by placing them in the ownership of the Board of State Properties. Starting in October 1945, the Board of State Properties allowed prefectural governments to prioritize the distribution of plots of varying acreage to demobilized servicemen solely based on the size of their families and if they had nowhere else to live.[502] It is not clear how many demobilized servicemen took up these offers, but Occupation reports suggest that these efforts along with a number of prefectural initiatives to provide loans for businesses remained modest in scale.[503] It should be noted that in some prefectures, grants of highly undesirable land were leased out on a yearly basis to mainly former officers and demobilized soldiers. Due to a lack of expertise and knowhow, many of these men struggled to cultivate their land and heavily relied on

[499] Ibid.
[500] Niigataken seiji keizai kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan,* 56.
[501] Ibid.
[502] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki,* 304.
[503] Ibid.

local government assistance.[504] Unlike the Japanese government's efforts to prioritize employment of demobilized servicemen, the Occupation did not obstruct the Japanese government's prioritized distribution of land for veterans. However, Occupation records indicate that the above efforts proved largely to be the extent to which the Japanese government and prefectural governments engaged in providing formal assistance to demobilized servicemen.[505]

Despite rising concern over the growing number of unemployed demobilized servicemen, the Occupation took few steps to alleviate this problem. On January 4, 1946, the Occupation indirectly contributed to the growing problem of unemployment by the promulgation of the directive, SCAPIN 550. [506] This directive banned from public office all regular IJA, IJN, and Special Volunteer Reserve officers, as well as commissioned and non-commissioned officers, along with all regular personnel who served in army and navy military police and intelligence organizations.[507] In total, approximately 182,000 soldiers and sailors of varying ranks lost their jobs or access to careers they might have intended to enter.[508] The Occupation purged these servicemen due to their political beliefs or their association with organizations that likely made them unsupportive of policies of demilitarization and democratization. Broadly speaking, SCAPIN 550 reflected the Occupation's general attitude towards Japan's demobilized servicemen. The main concern of the Occupation was to ensure that the vestiges of prewar militarism ceased to exist in Japanese society and that the servicemen of the Imperial Japanese military were disarmed, demobilized, and removed from positions of political and cultural

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[504] Ibid.
[505] Ibid.
[506] "General Headquarters/Supreme Commander of Allied Forces, SCAPIN-550: Removal of and Exclusion of Undesirable Personnel From Public Office 1946/01/04," Kokuritsukokkaitoshokan dejitarukorekushon, https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/9885619.
[507] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 5 maki,* 286.
[508] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 5 maki,* 287.

influence. The broader question of how millions of regular demobilized servicemen would successfully rebuild their lives and return to civilian life appears to have been an afterthought, if it was ever given serious consideration at all. Still, the Occupation was not wholly unmoved by the plight of demobilized servicemen. On June 27, 1946, the Occupation ordered the Ministry of Health and Welfare to commence a program to retrain each year upwards to 600,000 munitions workers and former servicemen for work in civilian industries.[509] Frustratingly, it is unclear what effect this effort had. Nonetheless, this program represents perhaps the only major effort by the Occupation to combat unemployment among demobilized servicemen. In the end, Occupation authorities did not view improving the economic conditions of the demobilized servicemen as a pressing priority.

In the years of 1946 and 1947, the last for which there are labor statistics for veterans, unemployment continued to plague demobilized servicemen. During this period, Japan's unemployment worsened as Japanese society absorbed the return of the vast majority of overseas soldiers and sailors. In 1946, Japan's official unemployment number fell from a high of 13 million in the autumn of 1945 to four million in the summer of 1946.[510] By the summer of 1947, this dramatically rebounded to eight million, slightly over one seventh of the population.[511] In this period, the return of around two million servicemen from China and Southeast Asia most certainly contributed to the resurgence of unemployment numbers. But unlike 1945, it is difficult to accurately measure the scale of unemployment among demobilized servicemen. Although the government maintained statistics for the number of demobilized servicemen who wanted or had found work between 1946 and 1947, no numbers were kept for those who were formally

[509] Niigataken seiji keizai kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan*, 61.
[510] "Shitsugyōsha yonhyakuman toppa," *Yomiuri shinbun*, February 8, 1946, 1.
[511] "[Shasetsu] Shitsgyō hoken to shitsgyō taisaku," *Yomiuri shinbun*, June 19, 1947, 1.

unemployed or had altogether ceased looking for work.[512] Therefore, these numbers hide far more than they reveal. For the year 1946, the Japanese government officially noted that 433,953 demobilized servicemen desired a job, while 230,990 had found work.[513] For 1947, 165,328 demobilized servicemen were actively looking for work, compared with 92,451 who had found work.[514] Percentagewise, 53% of demobilized servicemen seeking work in 1946 found employment, while in 1947 this number marginally rose to that of 55%.

A number of things jump out from the Japanese government's figures. The first is that these statistics beggar the question of what happened to the millions of other demobilized servicemen not included in these numbers. Recall that in late 1945, there were already 1,420,000 officially unemployed demobilized servicemen, in addition to two million others who may or may not have found their old jobs waiting for them. Additionally, two million overseas servicemen were listed as having no prospect of returning to their prewar careers.[515] By 1947, there were around six million demobilized servicemen in Japan.[516] When unemployment data for domestic and overseas-demobilized servicemen in 1945 is taken into account, it is likely that millions of these men were without work due to the overall abysmal state of the economy. Further complicating the above numbers is the question of how many demobilized servicemen simply ceased searching for work in the formal economy, thereby removing themselves from overall unemployment counts. It is probable that many turned to the informal economy for survival, such as Japan's flourishing urban black markets, or simply ceased looking for work altogether out of despair and frustration. Possible evidence for this phenomenon is visible in the government's data. In 1947, the number of those looking for work is roughly one fourth of that

[512] Monbushō, ed., *Kikansha hikkei: atarashiki shuppatsu he* (Tokyo: Monbushō, 1949), 333.
[513] Ibid.
[514] Monbushō, ed., *Kikansha hikkei,* 333-334.
[515] Niigataken seiji keizai kenkyūsho ed., *Niigataken rōdō nenkan shōwa 22 nenhan*, 70.
[516] Ibid.

in 1946, despite the fact that only half of those in 1946 found work.[517] We must assume that the missing jobseekers in 1947 dropped out of the formal economy and sought work elsewhere. While there are no statistics for this issue, ancillary evidence suggests that by 1946 and continuing through the beginning of the economic recovery brought about by the Korean War, a sizable portion of demobilized servicemen made their living through the thriving informal economy.

The inability to find work, whether due to discrimination or the prevailing economic crisis that afflicted Japan in the years after defeat, undermined the confidence of demobilized servicemen that they could ever succeed in becoming fully-fledged members of Japanese society. In the absence of legal work, one of the only recourses that were barely palatable for many was becoming a black market merchant. Already during the war, the black market had become an important resource for Japanese seeking food and household items unobtainable elsewhere.[518] In the wake of defeat, black markets thrived as their open-air stalls sprouted up among the rubble of bombed out towns and cities. For many demobilized servicemen, it was hunger, unemployment, or inflation that drove them to seek work in the black market. One demobilized serviceman in Osaka lucky enough to have work wrote in a letter intercepted by the CIS: "We are so poorly paid we cannot support ourselves. I cannot buy anything I want. I cannot even buy a pair of socks for my baby."[519] Another, living in Gunma prefecture, described his poverty thusly: "On my way home, if I stop for a drink with a friend, my whole month's income will disappear like a dream." Faced with such privations, many demobilized servicemen ultimately sought out

[517] Monbushō, ed., *Kikansha hikkei*, 333-334.
[518] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki*, 334.
[519] Ibid.

employment or supplemental income in black market work.[520] Overall, it seems that demobilized servicemen found considerable success as black market merchants, with Occupation analysts observing that former servicemen ran a number of impressively large black market enterprises.[521] The decision to work in the black market, however, was not an easy one for those who were raised with a belief in the rule of law.

Having to resort to illegal work for survival reinforced a powerful sense of disillusionment and anger among demobilized servicemen. By choosing to work on the black market, one was tacitly accepting that a legal means of life was not available. Consequently, the prevailing sense of ostracism among demobilized servicemen only strengthened as more and more young men felt compelled to work outside the law to merely survive. Acutely aware of the moral implications of black market work, one anonymous demobilized serviceman from Aichi prefecture wrote: "We can hardly live honest lives anymore. He who clings to existence is obliged to live unjustly to earn a living though he is conscious of his own corruptness."[522] Survival, above all else, was the main motivator for such work. Another anonymous demobilized serviceman having spent the last of his money wrote:"[I am] thinking of starting a black market business, which is easy and profitable work... It is our ideal to establish a new Japan, but at the same time we are confronted with the sad realities of having to eat and exist!"[523] Yet others felt compelled to engage in black market work, because of their loss in faith in society and their former role models. Another anonymous serviceman explained this state of mind thusly:

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[520] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 5 maki,* 286.
[521] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 5 maki,* 287.
[522] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki,* 130-131.
[523] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki,* 305.

"[Having] lost faith in my parents, the Emperor, God, and all things, I have come to the conclusion that there are only two ways to live – as a black marketer or a robber."[524] While a vast majority of demobilized servicemen, like the above individuals, pursued nonviolent, albeit illegal work in the black market for survival, it is impossible to ignore that these same authors also considered resorting to more extreme forms of crime to survive.

What, if any responsibility, did the Occupation believe it held for the phenomenon of demobilized servicemen turning to illegal work for survival? The answer is, little to none at all. Occupation officials showed great concern over the rise in crime in postwar Japanese society and followed the emergence of the black market with great interest. Nevertheless, there appears to have been little sense of urgency or indeed, any measures taken to alleviate the root causes that were compelling so many young men to work on the black market for survival. So long as demobilized servicemen did not threaten the political and security goals of the Occupation, their suffering was largely of little importance.

A Policy of Negligence

There is every reason to believe that the Occupation viewed its policies towards Japanese demobilized servicemen as a success. From the start, the Occupation sought to carry out a program of demilitarization across all elements of Japanese society and life. Instrumental to this goal was the removal of demobilized servicemen from positions of influence and privilege. Demobilized servicemen represented the strongest manifestation of prewar militarism for most Japanese citizens due to their ubiquity in all parts of the country in the years after the war. The complete demilitarization of Japanese society would only be achieved when the Japanese people

[524] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 7 maki*, 33.

did not look to their former military and servicemen for guidance, or with a sense of admiration and awe. This context is necessary for understanding why the Occupation abolished the Military Pension, curtailed political rights, and impeded or provided the barest minimal aid for alleviating unemployment.

For the Occupation, the successful reintegration of Japan's demobilized servicemen was not an important objective. While it was crucial to ensure that demobilized servicemen did not form organizations that were anti-democratic or which aimed to resist the Occupation, it was of little concern whether or not these men successfully became functioning citizens or fell into poverty. Conversely, the rapid acceptance and reintegration of demobilized servicemen might have presaged an unwillingness of Japanese society to embrace demilitarization and democratization. The Occupation stayed true to its policies of demilitarization by officially neglecting the needs of demobilized servicemen. In this way, the Occupation ensured they did not receive preferential treatment unavailable to regular citizens. Thus, the wellbeing and reintegration of demobilized servicemen was at best ancillary to the successful rehabilitation and reconstruction of Japanese society.

Conclusion

In the years after Japan's defeat, demobilized servicemen returned in their millions to civilian society. As explored in this chapter, their first experiences of social and economic reintegration were defined by a long series of encounters with an unfriendly civilian population and an overwhelming perception of being despised. The extreme levels of anti-military and anti-soldier sentiment directed at demobilized servicemen represented an unprecedented moment in

modern Japanese culture. We do not know what percentage of the population felt this way but the extensive volume of newspaper coverage of the issue and the ubiquity of demobilized servicemen's public and private discussion of their treatment by civilians strongly suggests that Japanese society as a whole underwent a fundamental change in its relationship with uniformed men. Instances of protest, riots, and other forms of resistance to military service and militarism had occurred in the decades before Japan's defeat. Why did Japanese society turn so decidedly against its former servicemen and why did so many treat these men with hostility?

Beginning in 1947 the Allies conducted war crimes trials to hold Japanese politicians and military men accountable for subjecting Asia to nearly a decade of war. The justice meted out in these tribunals perhaps provided more closure for the Allies than it did for the Japanese people. In the aftermath of defeat, many Japanese citizens were more interested in assigning blame for defeat than litigating who was responsible for starting the war. For large segments of Japanese society, demobilized servicemen were to blame for defeat. Demobilized servicemen were losers. They and the entire Imperial Japanese military promised victory and asked for the Japanese peoples' total confidence. In the end, they delivered total defeat and foreign occupation. As the living manifestations of the prewar regime and its dominant culture, demobilized servicemen presented the most tangible reminder of Japan's defeat. Their failure to stave off defeat by the Allies had resulted in the destruction of millions of homes and the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians. Had not the Japanese people done their part? Clearly, the military and its millions of men had let the Japanese people down. The losers needed to be punished. Therefore, the Japanese civilians' humiliation and mistreatment of demobilized servicemen in the years after surrender should perhaps be understood as a collective form of popular justice. But in doing so, the Japanese people also collectively whitewashed their own

responsibility for defeat. They too had once been enthusiastic supporters of military adventurism. By turning against their military and its soldiers in the years after the war, Japanese civilian society produced a self-serving narrative of victimhood lasting to this day that has placed full responsibility for defeat upon those it had frequently cheered on so long as they delivered victories.

In the building of a new postwar identity based on pacifism, democracy, and antimilitarism, there would be no space for those men of the Imperial Japanese military. Their presence was neither desired, nor was it to be celebrated. While this was certainly the view of many Japanese citizens, it was also the formal policy of the Occupation. In its efforts to enact sweeping demilitarization reforms throughout all levels of Japanese society, there could be no place for demobilized servicemen to enjoy the respect and confidence of the Japanese nation. The elimination of the Military Pension, the curtailment of their political activities, and the active hindrance and neglect of policies to prevent unemployment among demobilized servicemen represented a concerted effort to remove the sinews that bound Japanese society together with its formers soldiers. In light of the Japanese peoples' responses to the presence of demobilized servicemen in their midst, it is questionable whether or not the Occupation need have worried. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there were no protests by the Japanese people over these actions. These policies were popular because they further erased the divisions between former servicemen and civilians and paved the way for realizing a society where all citizens were equal under the law for receiving government financial and medical assistance.[525]

While the Occupation's policies certainly contributed to eliminating militarism, they also were at times clumsily implemented and resulted in the impoverishment of many demobilized

[525] "Onkyū hotondo kyūwari ga gunjin kitai sareru shakai hokenseido," *Asahi shinbun*, November 26, 1945, 2.

servicemen and their dependents. Reintegration for so many demobilized servicemen was defined by poverty and unemployment. Throughout the years explored in this chapter, the Occupation displayed little concern for how policies affected the lives of demobilized servicemen so long as they did not threaten the Occupation's political interests. Certainly, such neglect was viewed as justifiable by an Occupation that perceived itself as serving the Japanese people, not the men who had taken up arms to wage aggressive war against the Allies. Amid a ruined economy and spiraling unemployment, numerous demobilized servicemen found themselves cast adrift into a life of poverty, often having to resort to illegal means as the only way to stay alive. The need of so many of these men to seek livelihoods through illegal means would only further convince an unsympathetic Japanese public of the depravity and inability of demobilized servicemen to rejoin mainstream society as responsible law-abiding citizens.

Chapter Four
Criminals and Beggars

Introduction

Months after Japan's surrender, the social fabric of Japanese society appeared to be coming apart. Amid rampant poverty and unemployment, crime soared across Japan's cities and towns to unprecedented levels not seen since the early years of the Great Depression.[526] Who was behind this unprecedented crime wave? For many citizens, the millions of demobilized servicemen flooding into Japan's cities and towns were the obvious culprits. After all, newspapers were full of stories detailing their atrocities overseas and their involvement in antisocial behavior at home. Whether through newspapers or through gossip and rumors, in the early years after surrender an enduring popular association of demobilized servicemen with criminality and delinquency took root in the imagination of the Japanese public. In the end, it did not matter that most demobilized servicemen were law-abiding citizens. The Japanese people already knew they were prone to being lawbreakers. This was enough.

No less of a concerning sign of societal malaise for the Japanese public was the profusion of wounded servicemen begging in city squares and aboard train cars across the country beginning in 1947. Driven to desperation by deplorable conditions at some hospitals and the reduction of benefits, thousands of wounded servicemen turned to begging in their white hospital gowns as a means to eat and pay for hospital fees. At first, wounded serviceman beggars elicited pity and sympathy from the Japanese people. Their missing limbs and scarred bodies spoke to

[526] For comparison, crime averaged around 130,000 incidents per year between 1929 and 1936. This was significantly higher than reported crime for years before 1929 and for the period between 1936 and 1945. Takamine Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 5 maki*, 267.

their wartime sacrifices and rekindled memories of wartime veneration of these men as "white gown heroes." However, as years passed, the Japanese public progressively viewed these men as unwilling to rehabilitate and rejoin society and as a strain on public services. In reality, wounded serviceman beggars never comprised more than a small fraction of all wounded servicemen. Nevertheless, because of the seemingly ubiquitous presence of these wounded servicemen beggars in public spaces, encounters with such men formed perhaps one of the only meaningful experiences Japanese citizens had with wounded servicemen. As a result, much like perceptions of demobilized servicemen and crime, the Japanese public remained fixated in its belief wounded servicemen beggars represented the majority of all wounded servicemen in postwar Japan.

In the end, a minority of demobilized servicemen engaged in crime while a similarly small number of wounded servicemen resorted to long-term begging. However, in both cases former servicemen who engaged in crime and begging did so for strikingly similar reasons. Poverty, unemployment, a lack of family support networks, and discrimination, were among the many-shared factors that compelled these men to resort to extreme measures for survival. In Chapter Four, I argue that the actions of these few demobilized servicemen fueled Japanese society's beliefs that at best demobilized servicemen were maladjusted to civilian life and at worse, were unwilling to become law abiding and productive citizens.

Part One: A Putative Crime Wave

Beginning in late 1945, Japan experienced its second most serious and prolonged crime wave that did not abate until well after the end of the Allied Occupation in 1952. During this period, Japanese society and the media commonly accepted as fact that demobilized servicemen were the leading cause for the upsurge in crime and that military service had habituated

servicemen to violent and wanton behavior. But to what degree were demobilized servicemen really involved in Japan's postwar crime surge? Careful analysis of crime statistics reveal that the actual level of criminal activity attributed to demobilized servicemen was nowhere as high as popularly believed and that those who did engage in crime often did so due to poverty and despair. However, the Japanese public viewed one group of demobilized servicemen as particularly dangerous and ill suited to rejoining civilian society: *tokkōtai* soldiers and sailors. [527] Although venerated as god-like heroes in wartime, postwar society washed away its responsibility for coercing these men into suicide units by treating them as delinquent youth who were drawn to antisocial behavior. Given little recourse for a normal postwar life, evidence suggests that many of these men indeed turned to crime for survival.

"A Synonym for Rascal or Burglar"

Japan's crime rate remained generally flat during the years of the Second Sino-Japanese and Second World Wars (1937-1945). Total criminal offenses during this period hovered just above 100,000 cases per year.[528] A number of factors likely contributed to these circumstances: mobilization of the workforce for a total war economy, the steady annual conscription of young men for military duties, and the intense surveillance of citizens' lives maintained by Japan's military and civil police forces. If anything was particularly noteworthy about those who committed crimes in these years, then it was that the average criminal was a male aged

[527] These "special attack units" comprised the eponymous kamikaze as well as other forms of suicide attack units, such as "midget submarines."

[528]The total number of crimes per year is as follows: 1937: 105,938; 1938: 105,404; 1939: no data; 1940: 106,025; 1941: 109,631; 1942: 95,620; 1943: 118,598; 1944-1945: no data. Ryūichi Hirano and Shigeru Morioka, "Fukuinsha no hanzai." *In Honpō senji sengo no hanzai genshō: dai ippen*, ed. Kenji gakuken kyūkai (Tokyo: Hōmu daijin kanbōchōsaka, 1954), 217.

somewhere between 30 and 59 years of age.[529] However, the shock of defeat and the collapse of Japan's economy ushered in an unprecedented wave of crime that reached its highest levels between 1945 and 1949. In 1946, the total number of crimes was double that of 1945, while the number of robberies alone was six times greater than those committed in early 1945.[530] At its apex, the number of criminal offences peaked at 225,311 cases in 1948.[531] Most postwar criminals did not look like their predecessors during the wartime years. Following Japan's surrender, crime rates plunged among adults, while crime rates surged among youth and young men aged between 14 and 29 years of age. Demobilized servicemen just so happened to fall into the age range of the average criminal.[532] For a Japanese public deeply shaken by defeat and the collapse in civil order, this coincidence did not go unnoticed.

Who was to blame for this sudden rise in crime? For average Japanese citizens, and increasingly newspapers as well, the culprit was obvious: demobilized servicemen. In the months after defeat, scenes of undisciplined soldiers and sailors deserting from their bases or returning home with looted items from military installations were commonplace across Japan.[533] Therefore, it likely seemed highly probable, if not wholly logical for many civilians, that these same demobilized servicemen were also responsible for the growing number of robberies and violent crimes in urban areas. On August 15, 1947, a Civil Intelligence Section (CIS) analyst working for the Occupation duly noted that the "relation of veterans to crime… [is] a common perception among the general public."[534] Although much of the public's views were based on impressions and circumstantial evidence, this was more than sufficient for many to uncritically conclude that

[529] Ibid.
[530] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 5 maki,* 287.
[531] Hirano and Morioka, "Fukinsha no hanzai," 217.
[532] Ibid.
[533] Kimura, "Fukuin: gunjin no sengo shakai he no hōsetsu," 92.
[534] Hirano and Morioka, "Fukinsha no hanzai," 217.

demobilized servicemen were indeed behind Japan's crumbling civil and social order. These views soon found affirmation in stories published by Japan's newspapers.

Beginning in November 1945, Japanese national and regional newspapers increasingly took an interest in crime. Stories by the *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* in particular, left little doubt as to who was behind the ongoing crime wave. Frequently, large headlines boisterously declared that a demobilized serviceman, or as commonly was the case, a gang of such men, were responsible for the latest outrage.[535] In one brazen episode, Japanese papers reported that a gang of 109 demobilized servicemen in Saga prefecture had become train robbers.[536] Participation of demobilized servicemen in organized crime was a fact in this period. Nonetheless, the above example is as illustrative of this point as it is highly exceptional among the list of recorded incidents of its kind. Coinciding with these stories of domestic crime was a growing stream of stories throughout the autumn of 1945 explicitly detailing wartime atrocities committed by Japanese overseas servicemen.[537] These stories confirmed the suspicions of a wary public. Not only were demobilized servicemen prone to committing theft and other forms of common crimes, they were also dangerous killers who had murdered civilians abroad and now posed a real risk to the bodily safety of Japanese civilians. The ability to single out a minority of citizens for postwar Japan's social woes must have been comforting for many civilians at a time of so much instability and uncertainty. But for demobilized servicemen, this unquestioned wisdom that they were connected to Japan's surging crime was infuriating and disheartening.

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[535]For examples, see: "Fukuinkuzure no 7ningumi," *Yomiuri shinbun,* January 1, 1946, 3; "Fukuingunjin no kyōkatsudan," *Asahi shinbun,* November 7, 1945, 2.
[536] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 5 maki,* 287.
[537] For examples, see: "Hitō nihonhei no bōjō: beigunshireibu kara happyō," *Tokyō shinbun,* September 15, 1945, 1; "Hitō no bōjō wo wabiru," *Asahi shinbun,* September 18, 1945, 2; "Nichigun parawan de horyo gyakusatsu," *Kyoto shinbun,* October 1, 1945, 1.

By early 1946, the public's perceptions of demobilized servicemen possessing a link to criminality reached such mania-like proportions that it deeply affected the way civilians interacted with former servicemen. Indicative of this development is a report by the First Ministry of Demobilization issued to a group of 400 soldiers arriving at the port of Uraga from various Pacific islands between December 1945 and January 1946.[538] As reported by the *Kyoto shinbun* on January 21, 1946, this report warned soldiers of Japanese civilians' "coldhearted" treatment of demobilized servicemen. Fascinatingly, the report's author solely blamed the "trend of rising crime by demobilized servicemen" for the public's behavior.[539] It is worth emphasizing that the report made no effort to qualify the above statement. Rather than present the rise in crime by demobilized servicemen as a putative phenomenon, the report presented links between demobilized servicemen and postwar crime as an established fact.

Accusations of criminality and war crimes by civilians and newspapers greeted some demobilized servicemen nearly as soon as they stepped ashore in Japan. For Nishikawa Ho, a demobilized soldier, and his comrades that arrived in Uraga at the start of 1946, the specter of criminality haunted their first days back in Japan.[540] In a letter printed in the *Asahi* on February 15, 1946, Nishikawa described his experiences to the newspaper's readers:

> When we returned to our native country that we never thought we would ever return to, we only burned with a pure ardor to rebuild our fatherland. And yet, as if like we had been robbers or had done some bad job up until today, the chief of the Uraga [demobilization processing center] addressed [us] by shouting out, "As soon as possible do [us] the favor of working in a legitimate occupation!" [541]

[538] Raita Nakajima,"Kasetsu Fukuinsha no seishin: sengo seishinshi no genten toshite," *Shinbungaku: bunka to komyunikeishon 8,* (May 1986): 15.
[539] Ibid.
[540] Nakajima,"Kasetsu Fukuinsha no seishin," 16.
[541] The Japanese word used in the letter is *shūyōsho,* which is typically translated as "internment camp" in English. However, the English translation for the word conveys a negative connotation that does not fully reflect the reality of the location. Demobilized soldiers were not held against their will at these locations and were frequently quickly discharged within a day or two of their arrival. Therefore, I have used the word demobilization processing center.

> When I read newspapers after this, I saw that every day there were stories written up in an exaggerated fashion about crime done by demobilized servicemen… I do not want [newspapers] to give the nation the impression that the entirety of demobilized servicemen's nature is thus. I want [newspapers] to honestly accept demobilized servicemen's ardor for rebuilding their fatherland. I am greatly troubled [by the fact] that if supposing you frankly say, "[I] returned from the Philippines," in an instant it is said [by everyone] as if you were a war criminal, "Mr. Soldier you did terribly awful things in the Philippines, didn't you?" I shout out that those abominable incidents were crimes of the military clique, not the crimes of soldiers... I encourage people in the homeland to reconsider what they think.[542]

Collectively, Nishikawa's experiences vividly illustrate the pervasiveness of views about demobilized servicemen's predisposition to criminality in Japanese society. Nishikawa's encounter with a civilian government official that implored returning servicemen to find a "legitimate occupation" suggests that not only regular civilians, but some government officials who regularly dealt with servicemen as well believed that these men were predisposed to criminality. Moreover, Nishikawa's anger at newspapers running daily stories of demobilized servicemen committing crimes suggests that these stories resonated with readers, and perhaps served to confirm beliefs they already had formed. No less striking is Nishikawa's exasperation toward civilians who assumed everyone returning from the Philippines was a war criminal. This final comment speaks to the dramatic change in the Japanese public's views of their military's image. After years of propaganda touting their soldiers and sailors' heroism, many now readily believed only the worse: that all servicemen had committed terrible atrocities.

Neither Nishikawa's experiences nor his decision to write about them was unique. Many other demobilized servicemen felt compelled to write about experiences in regional and national papers, such as the *Kyoto shinbun,* or national dailies like the *Asahi shinbun* and *Yomiuri*

[542] Nakajima,"Kasetsu Fukuinsha no seishin,"16-17.

shinbun.[543] For these demobilized servicemen, just the suspicion of criminality was enough to cause episodes of immense despair and anger. As a result, a constant thread ran through many of these pieces: indignation at postwar Japanese society's smearing of all demobilized soldiers as criminals and a desire to be treated as upstanding citizens. This issue was not only discussed in public. As evidenced in a private letter from February 1947 intercepted by the CIS, one anonymous soldier in Chiba prefecture bitterly complained about the public's views of demobilized servicemen and crime. "The newspapers have come to use the phrase 'demobilized serviceman' as a synonym for rascal or burglar. Do people believe that the Japanese armed forces consisted only of such villains?"[544] It seems as if the author knew the answer to his question. Of course, the public increasingly believed that men like himself were a menace to Japan's public safety. If demobilized servicemen, like this author, were prone to crime, then was this not proof enough for a suspicious public that demobilized servicemen as a whole were a threat to the safety of regular Japanese citizens?

Exaggerated Fears?

What proof, if any, exists that demobilized servicemen were predisposed to crime, let alone responsible for postwar Japan's crime wave? If we are to rely simply on anecdotal and testimonial evidence from the early postwar period, one might easily conclude that certainly demobilized servicemen comprised an enormous segment of criminals. Certainly, Japan's news media believed this to be so, as did civilians, and some government officials. Against all of this, the voices of demobilized servicemen can come off as sounding somewhat defensive. Maybe the

[543] Nakajima,"Kasetsu Fukuinsha no seishin," 15-17; "Fukuin gunjin to shakai*," Yomiuri shinbun,* January 9, 1946, 2; "Aru fukuingunjin he," *Yomiuri shinbun,* March 26, 1946, 2.
[544] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 3 maki,* 448.

predominant view of demobilized servicemen's involvement in crime was correct. How could such a widely held opinion have been so wrong? It is here that we need to take a step back from the rhetoric of the time and look at what little data exists on crime and demobilized servicemen from the Occupation period.

Ascertaining with any precision the exact number of demobilized servicemen involved in Japan's postwar crime wave is exceptionally difficult. This is an inadvertent consequence of the Occupation's directives for the Japanese state to treat demobilized servicemen as regular civilians. In their efforts to comply with this order, Japanese police did not make any official recordings within their logs as to whether or not suspects were former soldiers and sailors.[545] However, it is possible to construct a more nuanced and evidenced based picture of demobilized servicemen's role in postwar crime through data collected in a 1946 government report and from a paper authored by two Japanese criminologists in 1954.

In 1946, the Japanese government's Second Demobilization Bureau published a collection of documents titled, *Materials Related to Domestic Demobilization* (*Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō*), which included at its end a report from June 1, 1946 called, *Concerning the Trend of Crime by Demobilized Servicemen* (*Fukuinsha no hanzaikeikō ni tsuite*).[546] In light of the police not collecting data on demobilized servicemen, it is unclear how this report's author compiled their information. While the report only covers demobilized servicemen crime statistics from three prefectures, of which only two are named and examined in detail, the report's author explicitly states that it is possible to use the data to surmise larger nationwide trends.[547] So what does this document reveal? Apparently, in an unnamed prefecture between August 15, 1945 and

[545] Kawashima, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō – Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary– dai 5 maki,* 287.
[546]*Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō,* 1333.
[547]*Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō,* 1334.

January 25, 1946, there were 1,955 people apprehended for criminal activities. Of this number, the report identified 444 individuals, or about 22% as demobilized servicemen.[548] While significant in number, demobilized servicemen by no means comprised an overwhelming portion of this prefecture's criminals.

Additionally, this report examined data from the rural prefectures of Gifu and Fukushima, between the dates of August 15, 1945 and April 20, 1946. While the report provides data for the number of demobilized servicemen apprehended, it does not include information on the total number of people arrested in both prefectures for the given period. Simply using the raw numbers of those arrested, how does Gifu and Fukushima's numbers compare to that of the previously unnamed prefecture? In Gifu's case, 234 individuals were identified as demobilized servicemen, whereas in Fukushima 331 suspects were classified as demobilized servicemen.[549] Despite not knowing what the total numbers of criminals were for either of these prefectures in the period surveyed, it is noteworthy that the raw numbers generally reflect those of the first unnamed prefecture. If we assume that the total number of criminals in all three prefectures was roughly similar, then we can estimate that demobilized servicemen likely made up somewhere around a fifth to a quarter of all criminals in Gifu and Fukushima. Once more, while statistically significant, these numbers do not suggest that demobilized servicemen played an outsized role in crime.

Yet another source that is invaluable in figuring out the scale of demobilized servicemen's involvement in crime is a study authored by criminologists, Hirano Ryūichi and Morioka Shigeru. In 1954, Hirano and Morioka published a paper titled, "Crime by Demobilized

[548] Ibid.
[549] *Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō,* 1340.

Soldiers (*Fukuinsha no hanzai*)," in the volume, *The Crime Phenomenon in our Country in Wartime and Postwar: Volume 1* (*Honpō senji・sengo no hanzai genshō: dai ippen*). Hirano and Morioka's study analyzed the age profiles of criminals across Japan in the immediate postwar years and surveyed the backgrounds of inmates in one prison. Hirano and Morioka's work is the only academic study of its kind on the connection between demobilization servicemen and crime.[550] While the data available to Hirano and Morioka was far from complete, they found that there was no basis for the popular belief that demobilized servicemen were disproportionally involved in Japan's postwar crime wave.[551] However, a close analysis of the data shows that these scholars' conclusions are somewhat tenuous.

To understand how Hirano and Morioka reached their conclusion, I will briefly explore some of the datasets they examined and draw conclusions of my own. Due to incomplete data, Hirano and Morioka could only compile complete statistics for age-breakdown of criminals for the years of 1947 and 1949. For both years, 148,717 and 121,733 male citizens respectively were charged for criminal behavior. It is possible to make a rough estimate of the number of criminals who were demobilized servicemen based on the age of those arrested. To do so, we need to consider when the war began (1937) and the fact that the Imperial Japanese military dramatically expanded the age of conscription to allow those as young as 17 into the IJA and IJN by the final year of the war. A soldier who in 1937 was 18 could have been 28 or 29 in 1947. Similarly, a demobilized soldier who was 19 in 1947 could have been a 17 year old conscript in 1945. With these extreme ages in mind, the most relevant age brackets provided from government data for

[550] It is interesting to note that Hirano and Morioka mention in their chapter's introduction that many public prosecutors-in-training have sought to study demobilized servicemen's connection to crime. However, both authors note that these efforts have all come to nothing due to a lack of hard evidence.
[551] Hirano and Morioka, "Fukinsha no hanzai," 213.

1947 are those for criminals aged: 18-19 (12,304), 20-24 (37,123), and 25-29 (22,553). Unfortunately, there are no data breaking down the age of all demobilized servicemen, but it is likely the median age of demobilized servicemen was in the low 20s. Regardless, if we use these rough parameters then a maximum of 71,981 criminals, or 48%, could potentially have been demobilized servicemen. Of course, this percentage assumes that every criminal from these age categories was a demobilized serviceman. Certainly, this was not the case, as some would have been disqualified for service due to a litany of reasons. Yet, we can assume that a significant proportion of these criminals were former servicemen due to scale of Japan's mobilization of its society for war by 1945.

In addition to collecting national crime statistics, Hirano and Morioka conducted in August 1953 a survey of inmates' backgrounds at the Chiba Prefecture Prison. The results of this survey showed that far fewer criminals were demobilized servicemen than can be discerned through using incomplete national crime statistics. Hirano and Morioka found that out of the prison's 1,183 inmates, 752 prisoners had served in the military.[552] But crucially, among this number only 339 inmates, or roughly 28%, were soldiers and sailors who had demobilized after August 15, 1945.[553] Could so few of criminals been demobilized servicemen? Recall that the percentage of demobilized servicemen criminals in the unnamed prefecture from the 1946 Japanese government report examined previously was 22%.[554] Both percentages are relatively close to each other. Although, Hirano and Morioka showed a preference for these figures, they are particularly problematic. Between 1945 and 1949, the vast majority of criminals were

[552] These men are listed as having begun their service after the start of the "China Incident (the Second Sino-Japanese War)" in 1937, and then demobilized before Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945. In contrast, the other inmates with military background are those who demobilized following Japan's surrender. It is typically these men who are described as demobilized soldiers in postwar parlance.
[553] Hirano and Morioka, "Fukinsha no hanzai," 228.
[554] *Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō,* 1334.

arrested for non-violent offenses, such as theft.[555] In light of this, it is unlikely that many of those arrested from the mid to late 1940s would have still been in prison as of 1953. Furthermore, this prison merely but one out the entire nation. Without an additional prison to compare it to, it is difficult to ascertain if the background of its inmates are representative of overall prison populations. Consequently, Hirano and Morioka's prison statistics do not provide a persuasive alternative to using the limited national statistics from 1947 as a means for determining the number of early postwar criminals who were demobilized servicemen.

While it is not possible to ascertain the exact figure of how many criminals were demobilized servicemen, I believe it is reasonable to estimate that the proportion of criminals in 1947 who were demobilized servicemen was somewhere between 40%-48%.[556] Despite the absence of hard numbers for other years, it is likely that this percentage range applied to other years as well, albeit likely higher in 1948 when total arrests peaked at 225,311.[557] At best, demobilized servicemen comprised a numerically significant number of criminals, perhaps even a plurality. In other words, Japanese society had some basis for viewing criminals as likely to possess a military background. By this measure, it is easy to see how civilians could easily interpret the occurrence of high number of crimes being committed by demobilized servicemen as a reflection of the overall behavior of former servicemen. Nevertheless, this data suggests that demobilized servicemen were justified for their protestations that the vast majority of their numbers were lawful citizens. If indeed a maximum total of 71,981 (48%) criminals in 1947 were demobilized servicemen, then at most 1% of all veterans engaged in criminal activity in a single year. If we apply this proportion to the remaining years of Japan's demobilization (1945-

[555] Hirano and Morioka, "Fukinsha no hanzai," 221.
[556] Hirano and Morioka, "Fukinsha no hanzai," 217.
[557] Ibid.

1950), then perhaps as many as 5% of veterans engaged in crime during the immediate postwar years. While a sizable number, by no means do these estimates lend credence to pervasive popular views in early postwar Japanese society that all demobilized servicemen were profoundly prone to engaging in crime.

Motivations

Although the vast majority of demobilized servicemen were lawful citizens, the actual number of those who participated in crime was still troublingly high. Just what motivated these men to turn to a life crime? A combination of firsthand evidence and data collected by Hirano and Morioka's study and the Japanese government suggest that poverty, despair, family trouble, and public hostility were main factors that drove thousands of demobilized servicemen to become criminals.

The story of one demobilized serviceman's brief foray into crime is illustrative of the various factors that compelled thousands of others to become criminals. On June 9, 1946, a most unusual letter appeared in the *Asahi.* In a great outpouring of emotion, an anonymous demobilized serviceman from northern Osaka recounted his descent into a life of crime and his miraculous redemption by a kind-hearted police officer.[558] The reasons that compelled the author to become a criminal were problems distressingly familiar to countless demobilized servicemen. On May 20, 1946, the author returned to Japan to find he had no home and seemingly no future. "…[M[y house was burnt down, my wife and child were missing, and I spent my little amount of money on high prices; I had become a deplorable figure."[559] To make matters worse, he felt

[558] Haruo Ueno, ed., *Koe 1: 1945-1947* (Tokyo: Asahi Bunko, 1984), 191.
[559] Ibid.

shunned by civilians who did not say "one kind word" to him and could not find work.[560] Utterly desperate, he "…became the devil's prisoner…" and decided to try his luck with extorting young students for money.[561] As it so happened, his first victim was an undercover police officer.[562] To the author's immense surprise, instead of being promptly arrested, the police officer showed him immense sympathy by listening to his life's story, and even going so far as to give him a new change of clothing and some money as well.[563] Moreover, the officer assured him he had a productive role to play in the reconstruction of Japan and that he would always find help at the local police station. Utterly moved by this experience, the author vowed to turn his back on crime.[564]

It is doubtful that many other criminal demobilized servicemen encountered such understanding and persuasive police officers. Nonetheless, the above story is indicative of the role that despair and poverty, as well as social isolation, played in transforming former servicemen into criminals. In fact, not only did many law-abiding demobilized servicemen suffer from these same problems, but also many thought it understandable that some of their comrades resorted to crime for survival. In a letter to the *Kyoto shinbun* on January 8, 1946, one demobilized serviceman wrote about the relationship between poverty and crime. Noting that despite having secured an office job, the author despaired over the fact that he would still "just end up waiting to starve to death" on his "meager pay" because of inflation. It is at this point that the letter's author pleadingly asks of his readers, "for demobilized servicemen employed and living off of the same meager salary [as me], would you not agree with turning to the black

[560] Ibid.
[561] Ueno, ed. *Koe*, 192.
[562] Ibid.
[563] Ibid.
[564] Ibid.

market or theft [for survival]?"[565] Indeed, for some demobilized servicemen the turn to crime was a consequence of the failure to succeed in surviving amid Japan's disastrous early postwar economy. Amid rampant inflation and unemployment, many Japanese faced hunger, if not starvation, regardless if they were employed. Having just survived years of war, resorting to crime for survival must have seemed far more attractive than the prospect of dying from hunger in one's own country.

Poverty was not the only force driving some demobilized servicemen to take up crime. For another demobilized serviceman who wrote to the *Kyoto shinbun* on February 13, 1946, it was the behavior of the Japanese public that forced some of his former comrades to turn to crime for survival. The author began his letter with a simple question: "Recently, why are there so many criminal demobilized servicemen?" Turning to his own life, the author recalled: "I worked as a clerk at a government agency, but I resigned because of ostracism of servicemen. After that I became lost and looked for openings here and there, but it was all in vain…"[566] But, as the author reminded his readers, it was servicemen like himself who "shed blood and labored" for Japan in overseas battlefields. Then, assuming an accusatory tone, the author directly addressed his civilian readers and demanded, "Who made so many demobilized servicemen become criminals and black market merchants? Everyone, please think about it."[567] Just like those servicemen examined in Chapter Three, this author encountered a growing atmosphere of anti-soldier sentiment among coworkers and the wider public. Hounded by an unfriendly public, demobilized servicemen felt driven into the margins of respectable society. While the author ultimately found

[565] Nakajima,"Kasetsu Fukuinsha no seishin," 16.
[566] Ibid.
[567] Ibid.

work in a factory, this letter leaves little doubt that the author firmly believed that many others ended up as criminals due to the real and perceived hostility of the public.[568]

Just like some demobilized servicemen, the Japanese government also took an interest in discerning why some of its former soldiers and sailors became criminals. Yet again, there is a major lack of source material on this matter. Fortunately, the 1946 report examined earlier in this chapter devoted some of its space to theorizing on the factors behind crime committed by demobilized servicemen. This report offered a list of six explanations for why demobilized servicemen engaged in crime. The explanations are as follows: 1) to obtain money for living expenses; 2) difficulties finding work; 3) congenital thief ; 4) former student soldiers who lost their interest in studies after the war; 5) a need for money to cover entertainment expenses, such as drinking and visiting prostitutes; 6) psychosis due to life difficulties.[569] Out of these six explanations, it is significant that the report concluded that the first two were the most common factors compelling demobilized servicemen to become criminals. Both explanations emphasized the prominent role of poverty and unemployment in the decision of former servicemen turning to crime for survival. Critically, these two explanations align with the arguments made in public by demobilized servicemen who highlighted the roles of poverty, unemployment, as well as emotional despair and the public's hostility in forcing some of their comrades to become criminals. Alone, these two economic explanations make considerable sense. The data collected by both the government report and by the criminologists Hirano and Morioka demonstrate that the vast majority of all criminals were thieves.[570] This gives credence to the theory poverty influenced the decision by many of these criminals, including those who had military

[568] Ibid.
[569] *Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō,* 1336.
[570] Hirano and Morioka, "Fukinsha no hanzai," 220.

backgrounds, to engage in criminal activity. Nonetheless, to what extent did the Japanese government think the public's hostility was responsible for making some demobilized servicemen into criminals?

In a stinging rebuke of regular Japanese citizens, the report argued in a section labeled "Findings" that the public's treatment of demobilized servicemen immediately after the war compelled many to resort to crime for survival.[571] Before defeat, the report observed, Japanese civilians treated servicemen and their families with great respect. Following defeat, however, the report accused civilians of progressively looking down upon demobilized servicemen and their families as troublemakers and criminals. Such treatment, as the report notes, resulted in demobilized servicemen becoming unable to find work.[572] At its most extreme, the report claims that discrimination by civilians led demobilized servicemen to lose their jobs at factories and offices, while others were thrown out of work in the police force, the railways, and government due to the Occupation's purge of military men. In this situation, many former servicemen fell into a state of self-abandonment and despair.[573] Up until defeat, the report continues, demobilized servicemen thought of themselves as the defenders of Japan and as elite members of society due to their military service. But stripped of the respect accorded them before defeat and the opportunity to rebuild Japan's economy, these men were now listless and compelled to enter a life of crime.[574]

While enumerating various solutions, such as increasing government support for helping former servicemen find work, the report ultimately leaves little doubt that it views average civilians as largely culpable for the descent of so many demobilized servicemen into a life of

[571] *Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō,* 1337.
[572] Ibid.
[573] Ibid.
[574] Ibid.

despair and crime.[575] Yet, it is necessary to keep in mind that this report makes no mention of the profusion of thefts and general acts of misbehavior committed nationwide by servicemen in the early months after surrender. This notable absence certainly makes its reproving tone of civilian ingratitude towards their defunct military galling, if not especially hypocritical. Nevertheless, there is much truth in this report's observations on the Japanese public's behavior and motivations. As evidenced in prior chapters, civilian anger at demobilized servicemen was widespread, and it had serious effects on the emotional wellbeing of demobilized servicemen as well as their ability to return to civilian life. While it is not possible to quantify, it is a certainty that the public's treatment of former servicemen played an important role in contributing to the phenomenon of criminal demobilized servicemen.

The vast majority of demobilized servicemen, regardless of the enormous difficulties endured, never became criminals. In fact, if we accept that many of these men, as the above report suggests, thought of themselves as "elite" members of prewar society, it is startling that so many meekly melted into the background of the tumult overtaking postwar Japanese society. Evidence abounds that considerable numbers of demobilized servicemen were aggrieved with almost every aspect of their new postwar lives. Many of these men felt disillusioned with their treatment by the Japanese public and pessimistic at the prospect that they would ever find work. By all counts, many demobilized servicemen fit the profile for those who might have engaged in criminal behavior. For these reasons, it is by far more remarkable that these men did not act on their deep-seated feelings of alienation and resentment, but remained on average law-abiding and peaceful citizens.

[575] *Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō,* 1338-1339.

Fallen Eagles

Among demobilized servicemen, no group suffered more from the insinuation of criminality than the pilots and sailors of Japan's suicide *tokkōtai* (special attack units) units. Nearly as soon as the war ended, former *tokkōtai* personnel experienced immense ostracism and became a favorite target for accusations of delinquency and criminality. Unlike other demobilized servicemen, the Japanese public specifically singled out *tokkōtai* personnel as criminals. What drove the Japanese public to turn on these former servicemen so quickly after defeat? Why did these young men become the ultimate symbol of postwar criminality and the incapability of demobilized servicemen to resume successfully a peaceful and law-abiding life?

As Allied forces were poised to invade the Philippines in 1944 and closed in on Japan itself, the IJA and IJN commenced the formation of air and naval *tokkōtai* units. These units comprised so-called kamikaze pilots, as well as their lesser-known naval counterparts who operated a range of suicide submersible craft. Tens of thousands of young men either volunteered, often under pressure, or were forcibly conscripted into these units. In wartime, Japanese society celebrated *tokkōtai* pilots in particular, framing their service as a sincere expression of patriotism and the sacrifice of their lives as selfless acts for the security and future of the Japanese people. These so-called "eagles (*washi*)," as newspapers popularly likened *tokkōtai* to, would save Japan from invasion by crashing their planes full of explosives into Allied warships.[576]

[576] The following wartime articles from the *Yomiuri* newspaper are exemplary of this language and thinking: "Seikūken waga kamiwashi ni," *Yomiuri Shinbun,* October 31, 1944, 2; "Aa manda no kamiwashi yukite kaerazu," *Yomiuri Shinbun,* November 14, 1944, 2.

Postwar Japanese society was unsure as to how it should treat *tokkōtai* personnel who survived the war. Although approximately 3,700 *tokkōtai* died in the war, thousands more remained alive at war's end, yet to have had the chance to attack the Allied invasion that never arrived.[577] This posed a problem. These men were supposed to have died. They were supposed to have saved Japan from defeat through selfless sacrifice of their bodies with no hope of survival. By remaining alive, they were a living proof of their failure. Worse still, the presence of these men was an uncomfortable reminder to the Japanese people of their complicity in accepting and celebrating the sacrifice of their youth in futile acts of suicide in the defense of Japan. Nevertheless, it was not merely feelings of shame that the *tokkōtai* elicited from Japanese civilians. More so than regular soldiers, *tokkōtai* underwent far more extreme forms of psychological conditioning to prepare them for their grim fates. These facts inspired fear and unease among civilians. How could such men resume life so soon after believing themselves surely dead? Would they not resent civilian society, and perhaps for those guilty consciences, some might have asked, exact revenge? From such thoughts it became easy to not only ostracize such men, but to believe that among demobilized servicemen former *tokkōtai* were particularly unsuited to resuming civilian life and prone to criminal behavior.

In the space of only just days following Japan's surrender, Japanese local governments and citizens began the process of vilifying *tokkōtai*. Across Japan, kamikaze pilots were a particularly popular target of civilian fear and ire. The experiences of Lieutenant Ōnuki Kenichirō, a kamikaze pilot stationed at Komono Airbase in Mie prefecture, are illustrative of this phenomenon. On August 21, 1945, a delegation from a nearby village, consisting of the village head, his aide, the police chief, and branch chief of the local *Zaigōgunjinkai* (*Imperial*

[577] Reiko Tsuchiya, "Shohyō Fukuma Yoshiaki chō "jyunkoku to hangyaku – 'tokkō' no katari to sengoshi," *Soshioroji* 54, no. 166 (October 2009): 133.

Japanese military Reservists Association), arrived at Komono Airbase.[578] To Ōnuki's bewilderment and that of the base's personnel, the delegation requested that they leave immediately because of fears that the Americans would investigate anyone associated with the *tokkōtai*. Reflecting on this turn of events, Ōnuki bitterly recollected, "In an instant, we had become troublemakers…"[579] The civilians around Komono Airbase no longer wanted to have anything to do with *tokkōtai*. Rumors abounded that *tokkōtai* would be executed by the Americans as war criminals.[580] By ordering Komono Airbase's kamikaze to leave, the local village delegation sought to accomplish two things. First, they demonstrated that they held these men in low esteem and saw them merely as a threat to their own postwar safety. Second, they wished to disassociate themselves from the formation and support of kamikaze, or the *tokkōtai* as a whole. After all, if these men might be war criminals, certainly it was because they had done something wrong. In this way, parts of the Japanese population had already begun in late August 1945 to ostracize and place a stigma of criminality upon the figures of surviving *tokkōtai.*

Ōnuki had nowhere to go home when demobilization orders belatedly arrived at the end of August 1945.[581] Like many other kamikaze pilots in his unit, his parents were colonists overseas, but he had received no word about their status in a long time.[582] Destitute and listless, he traveled to Tokyo where he wandered among the city's ruins like a "stray dog."[583] No matter how hard he tried, Ōnuki could not find work except as a rickshaw driver carrying American soldiers to brothels, a job he found especially degrading.[584] Unfortunately, Ōnuki's daily existence was no better. Overcome by depression, and regularly spending all of his scant income

[578] Ōnuki and Watanabe, *Tokkōtai shinburyō*, 243.
[579] Ibid.
[580] Ōnuki and Watanabe, *Tokkōtai shinburyō*, 242-243.
[581] Ōnuki and Watanabe, *Tokkōtai shinburyō*, 245.
[582] Ibid.
[583] Ōnuki and Watanabe, *Tokkōtai shinburyō*, 246.
[584] Ibid.

on alcohol, Ōnuki was homeless and forced to sleep rough every night amid the rubble of Tokyo.[585]

Finally, Ōnuki could take no more of this sordid lifestyle. Desperate for purpose and community, Ōnuki contacted a fellow officer who had earlier proffered help in finding work after Japan's surrender.[586] As it turned out, the work was with the Matsuda-gumi, a yakuza organization (organized criminal group) of hundreds of gangsters running the local black market stalls in Tokyo's Shinbashi neighborhood.[587] After being rejected by regular society due to his status as *tokkōtai,* Ōnuki unhesitatingly accepted this job offer, and ultimately found purpose and belonging as a member of the Matsuda-gumi.[588] To his delight, fellow gang members looked to him for advice and even took to deferentially calling him the "*tokkōtai* lieutenant."[589] For Ōnuki, such acts further tightened his bonds to the yakuza and reinforced his alienation from a Japanese society that deemed his background as a mark of shame. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to see Ōnuki's story as a happy turn of events. Ōnuki's embrace of a life of crime was a direct result of the common prejudice *tokkōtai* faced from the Japanese public in the early postwar years. Regrettably, Ōnuki's story was not unique. In fact, anecdotal evidence from newspapers suggests that many other former *tokkōtai* engaged in crime after having trouble with finding work and acceptance. Unlike Ōnuki, their experiences were far worse

Unlike regular demobilized servicemen, *tokkōtai* did not benefit from a period of sympathetic coverage in the initial months after Japan's surrender. Mostly they remained absent from the Japanese press until the late autumn of 1945. This may well have been a result of

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[585] Ibid.
[586] Ibid.
[587] Ibid.
[588] Ōnuki and Watanabe, *Tokkōtai shinburyō*, 247.
[589] Ōnuki and Watanabe, *Tokkōtai shinburyō*, 248.

Occupation censorship efforts. However, beginning in November 1945, Japanese newspapers began to run stories about crimes committed by *tokkōtai.*[590] The *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* in particular often went out of their way to ensure that articles about crimes by demobilized servicemen explicitly stated in their headlines whether the culprits were former *tokkōtai*.[591] Between the autumn of 1945 and spring of 1946, stories of gangs led by former *tokkōtai* committing thefts across downtown Tokyo's were typical.[592] What is more striking than the brazen crimes detailed in these articles is the fact that the *tokkōtai* culprits in these articles shared a powerful level of trauma, dejection, and desperation. One example of this is a story of a gang of 13 youths, led by three former *tokkōtai* who went on a spree of armed robberies across downtown Tokyo in December 1945 before being caught. Perhaps due to the gang's size and the moving story of one of the gang's former members, the incident received considerable coverage in the *Yomiuri*.[593]

The background of the chief ringleader of the gang, a 24-year-old former kamikaze named Aoki [first name illegible], is especially noteworthy for the degree to which it mirrors Ōnuki's story and for what it reveals about why some *tokkōtai* became criminals. Intriguingly, Aoki had not always been a *tokkōtai*. In fact, he was a veteran fighter pilot who fought in the battles of the Mariana Sea and Philippines Sea in 1944.[594] Only in April 1945 did he become a kamikaze. Although fortunate to have survived until war's end, he returned home to neither love nor sympathy. In an interview with a *Yomiuri* reporter, Aoki spoke of the mental trauma he and other kamikaze suffered as they were conditioned into "slaves," and how those of his comrades

[590] "Naishō wo osō: tōkyo naimushō no rōka," *Yomiuri shinbun,* November 9, 1945, 2.
[591] See: "Moto tokkōtaiin ga oihagi," *Yomiuri shinbun,* December 26, 1945, 2; "Tokkōtaiin ga tsujigōtō ni tenraku su akuyū ni sasowarete naitekataru 'tsumi no shinkyō'," *Asahi shinbun,* December 26, 1945, 2.
[592] "Chinpira gōtōdan torawareru," *Yomiuri shinbun,* June 23, 1946, 2.
[593] "Aku no shuyaku wa 3kamiwashi 13ningumigōtō torawaru," *Yomiuri shinbun,* January 4, 1946, 2.
[594] Ibid.

who had families that recognized their "beaten up personalities" were truly fortunate.[595] Sadly, Aoki was not one of those men. Upon returning home he was quickly turned out by his mother who told him there was not enough food to feed him, while his elder brother's wife callously informed him that he was getting in the way.[596] Homeless, he wandered around Ueno Station stealing food to survive until he fell in with the gang that he ultimately came to lead.[597] Revealing the profound psychological wounds affecting him and likely many other *tokkōtai* due to their vilification by the public, Aoki told the *Yomiuri* that it would have been better had he died in battle than have returned to the life he now led.[598]

The poverty and desperation that drove Aoki, as well as Ōnuki, and likely many others to a life of crime was not born from an innate criminal character, or some personality flaw. Instead, it was a product of the reception he and others received at the hands of a society that viewed them with fear and suspicion. Aoki in particular had fought for years as a pilot and then had volunteered to be a kamikaze pilot at war's end. It is difficult to imagine a more dedicated, albeit, zealous soldier in the service of wartime Japan. Having miraculously survived the war to only be thrown out of one's home by his parents must have left him devoid of any faith he could expect any help from Japanese society. It is therefore all too easy to comprehend why Aoki and others like him turned to crime for survival. Sadly, such actions only reinforced the public's mistrust of *tokkōtai* and demobilized servicemen.

By late 1945, the Japanese public firmly associated the image of *tokkōtai* with criminality and delinquent behavior. Whereas phrases such as "living gods," were once bandied about in

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[595] "Jyubaku sareta tokkō seishin nichigoto kichi no mubō kōfun kamiwashi wa naze tenraku shitaka," *Yomiuri shinbun,* January 10, 1946, 2.
[596] Ibid.
[597] Ibid.
[598] Ibid.

discussing *tokkōtai*, now civilians and newspapers alike commonly used derisive terms such as *tokkōkuzure* (has-been *tokkōtai)*.[599] More than simply a popular insulting name for former *tokkōtai*, *tokkōkuzure* was used to imply that these former soldiers possessed a uniquely warped moral character due to their wartime training. Fueling such views were rumors, such as those shared in two separate letters to the *Asahi,* which claimed that kamikaze pilots engaged in debaucheries involving alcohol and prostitutes at their bases while waiting for their orders to fly to their deaths.[600] Perhaps civilians viewed such behavior as acceptable in wartime. However, for postwar moralizing civilians, this behavior was sufficient reason for explaining why they looked down upon and feared *tokkōtai.*[601]

Disturbingly, such views extended even to the institutions of the Japanese government in charge of the demobilization process. On December 27, 1945, in a small article about crime and demobilized servicemen, the *Asahi* quoted the First Ministry of Demobilization[602] as officially stating that among former *tokkōtai*, "there were many of low character."[603] With this statement, the Japanese government threw in its support behind popular efforts at denigrating the young men coerced into becoming *tokkōtai.* Moreover, this comment was particularly pernicious because it implied that the young men conscripted into *tokkōtai* units were unworthy, and were therefore expendable in the service of saving other citizens deemed to be of greater value. For former *tokkōtai*, such comments must have reinforced the impression that Japanese society wished them ill. Indicative of the degree to which *tokkōtai* suffered from insinuations of

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[599] See usage of term in articles: "Jyubaku sareta tokkōseishin nichigoto kichi no mubō kōfun kamiwashi wa naze tenraku shitaka," *Yomiuri shinbun,* January 10, 1946, 2; "Tokkōkuzure*," Asahi shinbun,* January 13, 1946, 2;
[600] "Tokkōtai saikyōiku," *Asahi shinbun,* December 16, 1945, 2; "Iranu saikyōiku," *Asahi shinbun,* December 22, 1945, 2.
[601] Ibid.
[602] The First Ministry of Demobilization was the successor ministry to the Army Ministry. The Second Ministry of Demobilization assumed responsibility of that of the Navy Ministry.
[603] "Soshitsuteika mo ōi, 'tokkōtai' ni dai ichi fukuinshō dan," *Asahi shinbun,* December 27, 1945, 2.

antisocial behavior, a Japanese government report in 1946 concluded that *tokkōtai* experienced higher levels of ostracism and unemployment than regular demobilized servicemen did.[604]

By the autumn of 1945, discussions arose around the question of whether or not *tokkōtai* needed to be "reeducated," as one letter writer to the *Asahi* suggested.[605] Inspired by a sense that these men had been let down by Japanese society, this writer called for the Japanese government and society to take responsibility for undoing the harmful training imposed on these young men and to prepare them for postwar civilian life.[606] While this letter appears to have sparked a lively conversation among civilians and former *tokkōtai* over whether or not "reeducation" was required, this does not seem to have resulted in any measures to render special assistance to *tokkōtai.*[607] Undoubtedly, this was a result of Occupation policies blocking aid exclusively directed at helping demobilized servicemen as discussed in Chapter Three.

Although stories of crime by *tokkōtai* largely disappeared by 1950, it appears that popular prejudice towards *tokkōtai* remained alive and well. Emblematic of this was a July 19, 1950 letter to the *Yomiuri* written by Kaneyama Isamu, a former *tokkōtai.*[608] Only weeks after the start of the Korean War, Kaneyama was enraged to have read that two prominent intellectuals callously suggested that Japan ought to form a volunteer unit composed of "*tokkōkuzure*," and send them to aid the American military in Korea.[609] Such comments horrified Kaneyama, and rightfully so. Such casual and callous calls by educated citizens for the dispatch of former *tokkōtai* to yet another war demonstrated a prevailing indifference toward the wellbeing and humanity of former *tokkōtai.* Clearly, these men were better expended as cannon fodder than

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[604] *Kokunai no fukuin kankei shiryō,* 1337.
[605] "Tokkōtaisaikyōiku," *Asahi shinbun,* December 16, 1945, 2.
[606] "Tokkōtaisaikyōiku," 2.
[607] "Iranu saikyōiku," 2.
[608] Isamu Kaneyama,"Tokkōtaikuzure," *Yomiuri,* July 19, 1950, 2.
[609] Ibid.

become the concern of Japanese society. Speaking on behalf of all former *tokkōtai*, Kaneyama asserted that he and his comrades originally fought out of patriotic duty to Japan.[610] But in response to the suggestion that former *tokkōtai* be sent as "volunteers" to Korea, he declared: "…we will absolutely never go to war anymore! Never in my dreams did I think that [someone would] call for volunteer soldiers."[611] Finally, Kaneyama demanded that these intellectuals read the book, *Kike, wadatsumi no koe*, which was comprised of final testimonies of *tokkōtai* that spoke about their passion for peace and their repudiation of war.[612] Kaneyama's letter is a powerful reminder that even five years after Japan's defeat, demobilized servicemen, and especially former *tokkōtai,* remained indelibly linked to postwar societal-ills and targets of public ridicule.

Contemporary Japanese culture frequently hails *tokkōtai* as venerable heroes that were living embodiments of Japanese nationalism and martial valor. These narratives are so popular that many recent Japanese war films have focused primarily on *tokkōtai.* To a lesser extent, narratives that decry employment of *tokkōtai* as wasteful and cruel coexist alongside such heroic narratives in historical scholarship and museums. Nonetheless, whether depicted as victims or as heroes, such popular interpretations of the lives of *tokkōtai* are problematic. Missing from both narratives is any discussion of Japanese society's deplorable demonization of *tokkōtai* as criminals and delinquents, and the implications of these actions. Instead, *tokkōtai* have served as a useful and malleable symbol so long as they have remained wartime dead. To remember those who survived the war would necessitate an uncomfortable degree of introspection. In essence, both narratives exonerate Japanese society of its mistreatment of demobilized *tokkōtai* for the

[610] Ibid.
[611] Ibid.
[612] Ibid.

sake of deifying or mourning their wartime roles. It is therefore bitterly ironic that as the memory of *tokkōtai*, or at least a facsimile of one, enjoys immense cultural currency in contemporary Japan, the postwar experiences of these soldiers and their treatment by the Japanese people remains consigned to oblivion.

A Clearer Picture

In the years after its defeat, crime rates surged across Japan as the nation's economy and social order collapsed. Millions of Japanese were left homeless, and millions more were unable to secure employment in the formal economy. For many, the only means of survival was to look to the black market or work in the informal economy. But for hundreds of thousands of Japanese, especially young men from their early teenage years through their late twenties, criminal activity became the main source for supporting themselves. Critically, the vast majority of these Japanese men who engaged in crime were civilians who had not recently demobilized from military service following Japan's surrender.

Japanese society sought to assign blame for defeat and apportion responsibility for the torrent of crime sweeping across its ruined towns and cities. For much of the Japanese people, the culprits in both of these instances were the same: Japan's demobilized servicemen. This belief was likely inspired in part by the Japanese military's behavior in Japan right after war, as well as fueled by actual incidents of crime perpetrated by demobilized soldiers that appeared in the Japanese press. Further fueling this belief were newly publicized stories of wartime atrocities committed by the IJA and IJN as well as the Japanese population's anger over their military's performance. For millions of civilians, it seemed only natural that those who had let their nation down and led it to destruction were responsible for the collapse of law and order.

In reality, there is no evidence that supports the theory that demobilized servicemen comprised a majority of criminals in the early postwar period. Based on government and prison data, it is probable that somewhere between 22% and 28% of postwar criminals may have been demobilized soldiers. Perhaps this figure comprised a slim plurality, but by no means does it suggest that demobilized servicemen were responsible for postwar Japan's crime wave. Consequently, popular views of demobilized servicemen as criminals were based primarily on erroneous assumptions. Nevertheless, these views inflicted real harm on some demobilized soldiers. Many found themselves unable to find work or acceptance in society in the early postwar years because of the association between demobilized soldiers and crime. Far worse, however, was the level of discrimination specifically directed at former *tokkōtai*. Subjected to relentless ostracism and commonly identified as especially prone to criminal behavior, this subset of demobilized soldiers suffered grievously due to the Japanese public's erroneous conviction that demobilized soldiers were responsible for Japan's crime wave. While anecdotal evidence suggests some *tokkōtai* engaged in crime, there exists no data that can prove or disprove this contention.

Part Two: The Maligned Wounded

Nothing went right for Kaneko Jinroku on August 15, 1945. Despite his best efforts, he remained alive. In defiance of Japan's surrender, Kaneko and his fellow kamikaze pilots took to the skies over Okinawa in search of American warships. But before they could find a vessel to

attack, Kaneko and his comrades were shot down.[613] Miraculously, Kaneko survived his explosives-laden plane's crash. Covered in burning aviation fuel, Kaneko slipped into unconsciousness as fires lapped at his body while trapped in his cockpit.[614] Then the unthinkable happened. American sailors frantically worked to free Kaneko from his plane. Kaneko was alive, but his body was a mangled mess. Blood sprouted from numerous wounds caused by shrapnel. His right hand and left foot's heel were gone. His ears, eyebrows, nose, and everything down to his lips were burnt.[615] Rushed off to an American military hospital in Okinawa, Kaneko received immediate surgery that ensured his survival, though as he would describe it, the process was akin to torture.[616] Ultimately, the Americans repatriated Kaneko to his family in Shikoku in November 1946 where he lived at their home and eventually found gainful employment after a nightmarish journey to spiritual and physical recovery.[617] As Kaneko began his recuperation at home, tens of thousands of wounded servicemen across Japan were falling into poverty and received minimal care from Japan's undersupplied hospitals. Although it was not readily apparent, compared to the experiences of other wounded servicemen, Kaneko was lucky.

The early postwar years in Japan witnessed the near-total collapse in medical and societal support for wounded servicemen as well as a rise in their discrimination. Impoverished, frequently homeless, and reluctant to leave the relative safety of hospitals, wounded servicemen were the most vulnerable of all demobilized servicemen. Just like the pernicious belief that demobilized servicemen were inherently prone to criminality, so too did wounded servicemen suffer under similar stigmas. But in their case, wounded servicemen suffered accusations of laziness and entitlement while also enduring trauma and isolation due to their physical and

[613] Jinroku Kaneko, "Okinawa kara no michi wa nagakatta!," *Bungei shunjyū* 33, no. 15 (August 1955): 276.
[614] Ibid.
[615] Ibid.
[616] Ibid.
[617] Kaneko, "Okinawa kara no michi wa nagakatta!," 277.

psychological injuries. Often denied employment because of their physical disabilities or saddled with rising medical care costs, some wounded servicemen turned to begging for survival. During the late 1940s and through the succeeding decades, these men became the most visible face of wounded demobilized servicemen as they panhandled on trains and city streets. Due to their ubiquity, Japanese society increasingly associated these men with all wounded servicemen. Consequently, by the early 1950s, Japanese society viewed most wounded servicemen as freeloaders who took government aid while refusing to rehabilitate, even though most wounded servicemen could not find work and only a relatively small fraction engaged in panhandling.

White Gown Heroes

The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) was Japan's first conflict that produced a significant number of wounded veterans. In the war's aftermath, many of Japan's 55,000 severely wounded veterans suffered from poverty, poor medical care, and discrimination by the public. At the time, the Japanese Army's medical facilities were wholly inadequate for treating soldiers. Stunningly, at most there were only enough beds for just 0.3% of all wounded servicemen. This miserable state of affairs was not an accident. Rather than viewing the provision of medical care to servicemen as a duty of the state, the Japanese government insisted that private charities and local communities should assume this role.[618] These inadequate medical care measures alongside a dearth of rehabilitation assistance and vocational training resulted in a significant portion of Russo-Japanese War wounded veterans becoming impoverished. Tragically, in the war's aftermath, civilians across Japan commonly treated disabled veterans with contempt

[618] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor, 24-27.

because of their inability to find work and live independently.[619] Measures taken by the Japanese government in 1923 and 1931 slightly ameliorated these conditions. In 1923, the Japanese government amended the military pension system. As a result, wounded and non-wounded servicemen who served eleven or more years were eligible for an annual pension, while those who served less than 11 years could receive a one-time payment.[620] The Japanese government took additional measures to help wounded servicemen in 1931 with the passage of the Law of Vocational Security for Soldiers (*Nyuseisha Shokugyō Hoshō-hō*), which mandated employers prioritize hiring wounded soldiers.[621] While these measures were a step in the right direction, major improvements in the care of wounded soldiers did not occur until after Japan's invasion of China in 1937.

With Japan's invasion of China in 1937, the issue of treating casualties once more became an issue of concern for the Japanese government and military. Following lengthy deliberations in 1938, the Japanese government radically reformed its system of care for wounded servicemen. Departing with the past, the government now took full responsibility for rehabilitating wounded servicemen by implementing a program of vocational training, as well as monetary and medical assistance for wounded servicemen and their families.[622] Now, wounded servicemen could receive free medical care through military hospitals as well as seek out care from civilian clinics near where they lived. The Japanese government also took active efforts to address the mistreatment of wounded servicemen by ensuring that they enjoyed special seating in trains and theaters, as well as displays of deference by the public. Additionally, the government sought to sponsor public events aimed at expressing gratitude to wounded servicemen while also

[619] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 48.
[620] Neither the one-time payment nor the pension was intended to be a sufficient substitute for regular income.
[621] Unfortunately, this law had one major flaw: employers were not required to hire disabled servicemen if they could not complete a task as efficiently as a non-wounded worker could. Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 31-32.
[622] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 45.

revising school textbooks to include passages celebrating their sacrifices.[623] Coinciding with these efforts, convalescing wounded servicemen, clad in specially issued white kimono, were commonly referred to as "white gown heroes," a move likely taken to combat discrimination and contempt of wounded and disabled soldiers.[624] With these initiatives, Japanese servicemen wounded between 1938 and 1945 came to expect a high degree of government assistance and respect by the Japanese public. Gone, or so it must have seemed, were the days of poor treatment and outright public displays of contempt toward wounded servicemen in the years following the Russo-Japanese War. But in the aftermath of Japan's defeat, wounded veterans would return to a level of existence little different than that faced by their predecessors 40 years earlier.

The Second World War produced an unprecedented number of physically disabled Japanese servicemen. While Japanese government estimates in 1947 placed the total number of wounded at 324,622, revised estimates in 1955 placed the total at 228,140. [625] Wounded servicemen suffered from a wide range of grievous injuries. According to Japanese government records: 2,944 (1.3%) had wounds affecting their speech; 5,930 (2.6%) had hearing damage or were deaf; 16,983 (7.5%) suffered from blindness or various injuries to their eyes; 130,747 (57.3) were physically handicapped; and finally, 71,537 suffered from various wounds categorized as "other."[626] These numbers were overwhelming for a country whose economy and society were devastated by bombing, starvation, and a dearth of basic medicines and consumer goods.

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[623] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 41.
[624] These kimono did not signify their wearer as having been discharged from active duty. Most white gown soldiers, assuming their injuries were treatable, returned to military duty. Masumi Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka: kōseishō zenkoku jisshi chōsa ni miru shōigunjin no sengo," *Machi kaneyama ronsō* 39, (2005): 32.
[625] Pennington, *Casualties of History,* 197; Fusako Honbashi, "Gaitō ni tatsu shōigunjin," *Josei kyōiku* 198, (July 1955):23.
[626] Ibid.

Public expressions of gratitude or sympathy towards wounded servicemen were in short supply after Japan's surrender. Before Japan's surrender, many wounded servicemen likely grew accustomed to preferential treatment and public displays of gratitude encouraged by the Japanese government. However, overt displays of kindness and appreciation toward wounded servicemen disappeared as popular opinion soured towards demobilized servicemen after the war. Deprived of the distinction of public commemoration and celebration of civilians killed and maimed by Allied bombing, many Japanese civilians were likely tired of lauding wounded servicemen for their sacrifices.[627] One wounded serviceman described this dramatic transformation of public attitudes thusly:

> On the occasions when we went outside in our white gowns in the middle of the war, people did the favor of bowing their heads at us. Moreover, we received priority seating on transportation, but after the war the state of everything completely changed – indeed [everyone] is indifferent… In other words, even the collars of our hospital gowns are worn out as you can see. During the war there were a lot of fine hospital gowns, but now there are few. If people take no notice in this way, how will we, the wounded, be able to go on living?[628]

Such experiences were hardly exclusive to the above author. Another wounded serviceman expressed similar misgivings in an impassioned letter to the *Asahi*'s readership in April 1946.[629] In many ways, the experiences of wounded servicemen in their encounters with the public mirrored those of unwounded demobilized soldiers. Nevertheless, in one key respect they differed. Whereas unwounded demobilized servicemen often lacked visible wounds that attested to their suffering, wounded soldiers wholeheartedly believed that they had suffered their wounds on behalf of their fellow citizens. At the very least, wounded servicemen expected words of

[627] Pennington, *Casualties of History*, 194.
[628] Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka," 33.
[629] "Shōisha no kangeki," *Asahi shinbun,* April 16, 1946, 2.

appreciation; at most, they expected the state to care for their wellbeing. In the end, wounded servicemen would be disappointed on both fronts.

Wounded servicemen faced a litany of new challenges upon Japan's surrender as the Occupation dismantled the prewar military medical care and support system. Before Japan's surrender, wounded servicemen in Japan typically received treatment at one of 102 IJA hospitals or 17 IJN hospitals, which possessed a collective 81,819 hospital beds. While numbers do not exist for 1945, as of August 31, 1944, there were 72,464 wounded servicemen seeking treatment in Japan's military hospitals.[630] From 1938 through the autumn of 1945, wounded servicemen enjoyed exclusive access to these premier medical facilities and benefited from the free medical care provided at the expense of civilian taxpayers. But this came to an end following Japan's defeat. As part of the Occupation's efforts at demilitarizing Japanese society and privileges enjoyed by demobilized servicemen, the Occupation ordered the nationalization of Japan's military hospitals by December 1, 1945. With this order, Japan's military hospitals became part of postwar Japan's system of 166 "national hospitals," which were open to all citizens.[631] Consequently, wounded servicemen lost their right to expect and receive prioritized medical care. Yet it is important not to overstate the immediate effects of this policy. Despite these measures and the discharge of servicemen from some hospitals after surrender, 90% of all patients in Japan's national hospitals in July 1946 were wounded servicemen.[632]

The quality of medical care at former military hospitals was in a state of disarray in the initial years after Japan's defeat. Medicines of all kinds were in short supply, and the provision of even adequate food for patients was increasingly becoming difficult. Much of this was

[630] Pennington, *Casualties of History*, 200.
[631] Ibid.
[632] Ibid.

undoubtedly due to the wartime blockade of Japan. Unfortunately, wounded servicemen and civilian repatriates from Japan's colonies returning home only exacerbated these shortages.[633] The situation was so bad at some hospitals that some wounded servicemen resorted to selling their personal belongings or searching for food on the black market for survival. One anonymous wounded serviceman reflecting on deplorable conditions at his hospital recalled:

> Everyone, you've recently seen wounded servicemen wearing dirt-smeared white gowns at the black market buying food vegetables and fish, right? This is because hospital supplies don't have the "calories" to cure the injuries and sicknesses [of their patients], so 23 wounded and sick servicemen are jointly pooling their money for illegal purchases. This is the very best relief the government gives to those who stood on the battlefield and were wounded, or fought intense heat in sweltering lands and were toppled by sickness in place of their fellow citizens.[634]

For this wounded serviceman, it was beyond unforgiveable that he and others receiving medical care in hospitals had to stave off starvation by going to the black market for survival. Worse, he likely recognized that such scenes reflected badly on wounded servicemen. Why, some civilians might wonder, were wounded servicemen buying food in the black market when government money supposedly was being spent on their care? Sadly, evidence suggests that theft and corruption were also responsible for shortages of medicines in hospitals. In one instance, on August 25, 1945, local civilians raided the Yokohama branch of the Yokosuka Naval Hospital, where they assaulted two guards and pilfered medicine, food, and household items from six storerooms.[635] Similar incidents appear to have occurred at hospitals elsewhere, where thieves stole even hospital blankets and army doctors were caught selling their medicine on the black

[633] Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka," 33.
[634] Ibid.
[635] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 70.

market.[636] In the early postwar, hospitals provided at times the bare minimum in care, treating their charges less as patients and more as occupants of a Victorian British poorhouse.

The dismantling of the prewar medical care system for wounded servicemen did not stop with the nationalization of military hospitals. In November 1945, the Occupation severely curtailed pension privileges enjoyed by wounded servicemen as part of their overall elimination of the military pension system. Under the new guidelines, the single lump sum discharge payment and various annuities were eliminated, while only the most seriously physically handicapped of servicemen were permitted to receive a vastly reduced annual pension. Much to their chagrin, this pension was now equal to only that paid out to civilians disabled by non-military accidents.[637] This pension overhaul especially hit wounded servicemen and their families hard. The loss of income placed many further into economic distress and provoked great resentment toward the Occupation.[638] What little money was doled out barely covered medical costs, and did little to defray the loss of the main wage earner for families of wounded servicemen. Causing further difficulties for wounded servicemen was the enactment of the October 1946 Daily Life Security Bill (*Seikatsu Hogo-hō*), which formally eliminated remaining military pension benefits and privileges for wounded soldiers. These instead were replaced with a nationwide system that provided relief for all citizens on an equal basis.[639] Thus, wounded servicemen no longer existed as a distinct legal category of beneficiaries of state aid and could not expect to receive preferential treatment.

White Gown Beggars

[636] Awaya, ed., *Shiryō nihon gendaishi 2,* 92 & 115.
[637] Pennington, *Casualties of History*, 202.
[638] Masumi Ueno, "Sengo nihon no shōigunjin no mondai: senryōki no shōigunjin engo wo megutte," *Minshūshikenkyū* no. 71, (2006): 4.
[639] Pennington, *Casualties of History*, 207.

In 1947, wounded servicemen from a single hospital in Kanagawa prefecture began to do something that until recently had been exceptionally rare: beg for money in public spaces. Driven by rising medical expenses and desperation, these men donned their white gowns and appealed to their fellow citizens for alms. In the ensuing months, thousands of wounded servicemen would follow suit and take up begging as their chief means of survival. Over time, these so-called "white gown beggars" became increasingly visible panhandling on trains and in city squares and streets. Although a vast majority of wounded servicemen did not engage in begging, Japanese society came to view these men as representative of all wounded servicemen.

Overtaxed and incapable of adequately serving the needs of 55,000 wounded servicemen, hospitals across Japan increasingly sought out ways to reduce the number of patients and to pay for their care.[640] In December 1946, Sagamihara National Hospital in Kanagawa prefecture forcibly discharged 200 wounded servicemen, an act that many other hospitals would soon replicate to reduce their patient rolls and to make space for newly arriving wounded servicemen repatriated from overseas.[641] For many of these discharged servicemen, life outside of the hospital was terrifying. Few had a home to stay in, while many had no prospect of work or family to support them. For these men, a forced discharge was akin to being sentenced to a life of destitution.[642] In 1947, life became ever more difficult for those wounded servicemen still living in hospitals. In search of new ways to defray costs, hospitals in June 1947 began to bill wounded servicemen for their medical care, to the tune of 35 yen a day. These new charges rendered medical care prohibitively expensive for many patients, as many wounded servicemen relied on

[640] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 60.
[641] Ibid.
[642]Sumie Tanaka, "Sagamihara no shōigunjintachi," *Chūōkōron* 67, no. 13 (1952): 146-147.

their government subsidies to pay for food and other necessities.[643] How effective were these measures at chasing wounded servicemen out of hospitals is difficult to say. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the number of wounded servicemen in hospitals fell to 20,000 in May 1947 and then fell even more precipitously to only 5,000 in 1949.[644] While this precipitous reduction in patient numbers is probably partially a result of many wounded servicemen no longer needing daily care, it is also likely that the policy of forced discharges and newly imposed out of pocket medical care fees played a major role in this development.

By the late spring of 1947, wounded servicemen across Japan began organizing themselves into patients' associations to protest the terrible conditions in Japan's hospitals.[645] One of the first groups of to do so was a group of 180 wounded servicemen from Sagamihara National Hospital in Kanagawa prefecture. In May 1947, wounded servicemen at Sagamihara struggled to pay for their daily necessities and medical care, and wished to raise funds to build a dormitory and workshop to construct artificial limbs.[646] Unable to afford any of these expenses, the group decided to take drastic measures. Heading to the Sūkiyabashi neighborhood of Tokyo in their white hospital gowns, the members of the group commenced begging for money from passing pedestrians.[647] Until this point, it was rare to see wounded servicemen begging. Therefore, the appearance of wounded servicemen from Sagamihara begging on Tokyo's streets marked the first major instance of wounded servicemen begging in their iconic white gowns. Following ten days of begging, the group suspended its activities. Their efforts were a resounding success. Not only had they garnered considerable public sympathy, they also

[643] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 61-62.
[644] Ibid; Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 63.
[645] Pennington, *Casualties of History*, 211.
[646] Pennington, *Casualties of History*, 212.
[647] Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka," 34.

succeeded in shaming Tokyo's city assembly into fully funding their dormitory and workshop.[648] However, the decision to beg was highly controversial among other wounded servicemen and regular patients' associations across Japan. "[You've] injured the pride of wounded servicemen, though it seems you are able to collect money by other means, begging on the street ought to be the final measure," some complained.[649] In response, wounded servicemen from Sagamihara retorted, "For us, the 'final' has come."[650] Despite their critics' accusations, Sagamihara's wounded servicemen did not resort to begging out of laziness. Confronted with rising medical care costs and hospitals that could not even reliably provide adequate meals and medicine, begging was a rational, if not extreme response, to the extraordinary difficulties that they faced.

The success of Sagamihara's patients attracted the attention of wounded servicemen elsewhere in Japan. Struggling to make ends meet, perhaps thousands of wounded servicemen emulated their peers from Sagamihara by taking to the streets and even to the insides of train cars, to beg for money. At first, wounded servicemen often chose to stand in silence with placards asking for money. Nevertheless, as years passed, they became more confident and engaged in shouting out pleas for money, while others turned to playing popular songs on various instruments, such as accordions and guitars, to catch the attention of pedestrians.[651] The emergence of white gown beggars was not a passing phenomenon. While they reached the peak of their visibility in the early 1950s, their presence in Japanese cities continued well up through the 1970s.

For a while, the public remained sympathetic to the actions of white gown beggars. But overtime, public opinion became divided over what to do with these men. While some expressed

[648] Ibid.
[649] Ibid.
[650] Ibid.
[651] "Shōigunjin no bokin mondai," Shūkan shakai hoshō 5, no. 3 (1951): 35.

sympathy, many others voiced outright disdain of the seeming ubiquity of wounded servicemen in their white gowns begging across cities. For those historically astute citizens, the existence of white gown beggars harkened back to a previous age of maltreatment of wounded veterans. Sympathetic to the plight of postwar wounded soldiers, a journalist for the magazine, *Shūkan shakai hoshō,* drew parallels between wounded soldier beggars in postwar Japan and that of wounded Russo-Japanese veterans who became famous as bedraggled door-to-door salespersons.[652] Far from being an obscure reference, some wounded servicemen also looked to such comparisons to their predecessors in the Russo-Japanese War when making sense of their lives.[653] However, not just journalists turned a sympathetic eye towards the plight of white gown beggars. In a February 1953 letter titled, "National Shame Wounded Soldiers (*Kokujoku shōigunjin*)" to the magazine *Jitsugyō no sekai*, a concerned citizen wrote:

> There are many awful things in the world. Especially after defeat such things are not few in Japan. Among these the most unpleasant are wounded soldiers even now standing in steam ships, electric trains, locomotives, soliciting money for rehabilitation, or [doing the same] in Edonihonbashi, Kyōbashiginza… I feel it is unseemly to see white gown heroes standing in a group of 23 soliciting for rehabilitation money…What on Earth are Japan's politicians doing?[654]

For some citizens, the fact that wounded servicemen were still begging indicated a failure on the part of the Japanese state and Japanese society. Moreover, for the above author, who was unusual in still calling these men "white gown heroes," their presence was a shameful reminder of the unhealed scars of Japan's defeat and the failure of Japanese society to care for its former servicemen. Such views, however, were not in the majority.

For as many Japanese citizens who felt moved by the sight of white gown beggars, there were plenty of others who were disgusted by the fact that wounded servicemen engaged in

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[652] Ibid.
[653] Tanaka, "Sagamihara no shōigunjintachi," 149.
[654] "Kokujoku shōigunjin," *Jitsugyō no sekai,* 50, no. 2 (1953): 55.

begging. In newspapers and magazines, one typically came across stories and letters complaining about what was dubbed, "the wounded soldier fund-raising problem."[655] The proliferation of white gown beggars on trains became a particular point of contention and irritation for many citizens who dealt with solicitations on their daily commutes. Typical of those angered by the presence of wounded servicemen begging on trains was the author of s letter written to the *Asahi* on October 1, 1950:

> When I ride the train, white gowned former servicemen are frequently aboard as well. Generally, in a group of two, one will give a speech and the other one will request contributions from passengers while carrying a paper box. Since they repeat this [often], the speech is well honed. Most people put around ten yen each into the box. However, there are those who have nothing to give in their wallets. Riding here and there to earn a meager income are war widows, repatriated colonists, and victims of war damage. They also ride the low wage train. There are people who are more wretched than those [wearing] white gowns… [W]e must taste the shame of those who cannot give money. Should those who take long trips be forced against their will to give more than twice to white gown groups?[656]

By no means did wounded servicemen have a monopoly on suffering. Why, as this letter's author implores, did white gown beggars not seek out work like other war victims who went to great lengths to make a paltry income? For this author, like a growing number of the Japanese public, the continued presence of white gown beggars was a sign of the unwillingness of these men to rehabilitate and earn money by respectable means. Moreover, it was galling that with so many other victims cluttering Japanese society, why should white gown beggars see themselves as more deserving than their peers? After all, what had they ever done to think they deserved such sympathy?

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[655] Shōigunjin no bokin mondai, 35.
[656] "Shōigunjin no hakui ni nayamu jōkyaku," in *Koe 2: 1948-1950*, ed. Haruo Ueno (Tokyo: Asahibunko, 1984), 320.

For some, the solution was simple: expel white gown beggars from wherever they operated. In another letter to the *Asahi* on October 5, 1950, an exasperated reader demanded to know why the police did not simply kick these men off trains, since they were violating prohibitions against soliciting. In reality, it so happened that railway police officers were sympathetic to wounded servicemen and generally permitted them to beg so long as they did not cause undue problems.[657] Still, this desire to expel wounded servicemen from public and private spaces was hardly an isolated sentiment held by this letter's author.

It was popularly believed that most white gown beggars hailed specifically from Sagamihara National Hospital.[658] After all, patients from Sagamihara were the first to popularize begging among wounded servicemen. In reality, not only was this was not the case, but perhaps no more than 16% of all wounded serviceman beggars still lived in hospitals by 1953.[659] Even so, Sagamihara and other hospitals were increasingly eager to rid themselves of these few remaining troublesome patients. As far as hospitals were concerned, wounded servicemen occupied beds needed by more deserving patients, which prevented hospitals from serving the public.[660] Moreover, these patients were a nuisance in their view, since they regularly left hospital premises to beg for money and appeared reluctant to leave. By insisting on staying and demanding care that the hospitals deemed required by other patients, these men seemingly displayed an unwillingness to rehabilitate and learn to live on their own.[661] The Japanese government's Ministry of Health and Welfare, in charge of handing all disabled citizens' affairs, not only agreed, but also viewed the actions of these men as selfish and rooted in a prewar militarist mindset. In an interview with a journalist from the magazine, *Chūōkōron*, the vice-

[657] "Shōigunjin wo shachū kara tsuihō shiyō," in *Koe 2,* ed. Ueno, 320.
[658] Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka," 35.
[659] Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka," 43.
[660] Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka," 34-35.
[661] Ibid.

minister of the Ministry of Health and Welfare harshly condemned wounded servicemen remaining in hospitals:

> Anyways…Japan experienced an unprecedented defeat. 800,000 repatriates (colonists) are coming back to our narrow country… The land is scorched all across our country. People who were not combatants also had their homes destroyed and lost their lives. At that time (of defeat) the military authorities did bad… no… all they think is it's not my fault… and I have the right for you to treat me better, anyways, I want them (wounded servicemen) to go about with a rehabilitation consciousness.[662]

Wounded servicemen were not the only war victims deserving of care. However, to civilians serving in government and administering hospitals, it appeared as if wounded servicemen still in hospitals only viewed themselves as the most important of war victims and most deserving of care. In other words, wounded servicemen, or at least those in hospitals, were exploiting the largesse of the Japanese people in order to avoid rejoining society and finding a steady job.

In reality, the reasoning behind wounded servicemen's decisions to continue to reside in hospitals or to engage in begging was due to a combination of psychological, economic, and social factors. For those wounded servicemen still living at hospitals, leaving to find work was exceedingly dangerous. Many supposedly healthy patients had left to find work only to discover nobody would hire them.[663] Nevertheless, because they had left the hospital, they were no longer qualified for readmission. As a result, many wounded servicemen still in hospitals felt incentivized to beg for money rather than risk looking for work and losing the relative security of hospital life.[664] In other cases, wounded servicemen felt despondent about life outside of the hospital. Some feared returning home because they believed they would quickly become a nuisance to their wives and children.[665] Many simply had nowhere to go or anyone to care for

[662] Tanaka, "Sagamihara no shōigunjintachi," 154.
[663] Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka," 35.
[664] Tanaka, "Sagamihara no shōigunjintachi," 149.
[665] Tanaka, "Sagamihara no shōigunjintachi," 150.

them. Others, thoroughly depressed by their disabilities and bereft of hope, thought it best if they had come home dead.[666] All possessed, or at least did so at one time, the hope of obtaining work. These men were not simply slothful ingratiates living off the charity of others. In a fit of wistfulness, a 27-year-old soldier in Sagamihara, who had suffered injuries from a British bomb blast in Burma, aspired to become an office worker and commute to work each day in Western clothing.[667] Yet for him, and his colleagues, an air of impossibility seemingly hung around these dreams.

Numerous wounded servicemen wished to find work, but simply wanting a job was not enough to secure employment. As unemployment reached catastrophic levels in early postwar Japan, wounded servicemen perhaps struggled more than any other constituency to find work. In 1946, half of all wounded servicemen were unemployed. This was twenty times the number of wounded servicemen who were unemployed in September 1945.[668] Up through 1947, the final year with available data, this general trend continued as wounded servicemen remained shut out from the workforce.[669] At a time when demobilized servicemen in general suffered from terrible unemployment rates, this was not wholly exceptional. Nonetheless, unlike other demobilized servicemen, wounded servicemen faced more barriers to finding employment. For some wounded servicemen, they felt as if their wounds rendered them incapable of finding work when there was an overabundance of unwounded young men and women seeking work.[670] Why, some wondered, should they even bother? Sadly, this was not an unfounded attitude. Discrimination against wounded servicemen was rife among employers. Many outright refused to hire wounded

[666] Ibid.
[667] Ibid.
[668] "Shōigunjin no hansū wa shisshoku," *Asahi shinbun,* April 15, 1946, 2.
[669] Monbushō, ed., *Kikansha hikkei,* 333-334.
[670]Honbashi, "Gaitō ni tatsu shōigunjin," 26.

servicemen, while others fired employees as soon as they learned of their backgrounds.[671] Against this dismal backdrop, it ought to have come as no surprise to Japanese society that a small, but visible group of wounded servicemen turned to begging for survival.

The Desire for Acceptance

What is remarkable about early postwar public debate about wounded servicemen is the degree to which it was fixated on those engaged in begging. Lost amid the cacophony of this debate was the fact that these men were not by any means representative of the majority of wounded servicemen. Despite this, Japanese society's conception of who were wounded servicemen remained doggedly centered around those engaged in begging. This was especially ironic. In 1953, the Japanese government's Ministry of Health and Welfare conducted a survey of white gown beggars to ascertain their numbers and motivations.[672] Perhaps one of the most surprising results of the survey was the fact that the government only identified 542 wounded servicemen as beggars![673] In the end, the Japanese public's perception of wounded servicemen as mostly beggars reflected the Japanese people's general ignorance about the lives of demobilized servicemen.

It is unknown how many wounded servicemen engaged in begging at the height of such activity. But it is likely that government legislative initiatives contributed to the reduction in the overall number of wounded servicemen reliant on begging. In 1949, the Japanese government passed the Law for the Welfare of Physically Disabled Persons (*Shintai shōgaishafukushi-hō*), which provided funds to cover the cost of all disabled citizens' medical expenses and a lump sum

[671] Tanaka, "Sagamihara no shōigunjintachi," 146.
[672] Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka," 37-39.
[673] Ueno, "'Hakuibokinsha' to wa dareka," 38.

payment to veterans still suffering from wartime injuries.[674] In addition, the law outlawed discrimination of those with physical disabilities and most importantly, established a national network of rehabilitation centers for vocational training for disabled persons. While not advertized as such, these centers welcomed disabled servicemen. Moreover, the law directed prefectures to establish "work-providing facilities" for those disabled citizens who remained unemployed.[675] Altogether, these initiatives recreated a number of the healthcare provisions provided to prewar servicemen, but on a vastly more democratic basis.[676] Even after the passing of these provisions, the continued existence of wounded serviceman beggars only further seemed to prove the reticence of all wounded servicemen to rehabilitate. That many wounded servicemen were seeking to take advantage of the programs established by the 1949 law either was of little interest or went unnoticed by the public. For all intents and purposes, these men were invisible to the public's eye.

Despite these significant efforts, Japanese society remained wedded to viewing wounded servicemen as mainly beggars. For many wounded servicemen who did not beg, the public's fixation on this image became an extremely sore point. This was especially the case for the Japanese Disabled Veterans Association (*Nihonshōigunjinkai*) (JDVA), which formed in 1952, after the end of the Allied occupation.[677] The JDVA devoted much of its early energy to discrediting these views and attacking the integrity of wounded servicemen who begged for survival.[678] Quoted in an article for a women's magazine that lamented the unwillingness of wounded servicemen to rehabilitate, a representative of the JDVA stated his group's case:

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[674] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 62.
[675] Pennington, "Casualties of History," 217.
[676] Ibid.
[677] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 88.
[678] Fujiwara, "Restoring Honor," 97-101.

> We, anyways, brave hardship and try our best to work. But the public instantly thinks white gown beggar when they think of wounded soldiers, and so looks upon us with cold eyes. As to what degree is our desire to work obstructed by this, I do not know. Why do they not stop such precarious lives and seriously try to work? They probably provide various reasons but if you make us say it, it is because in short they are lazy people… Those people who have the spirit to rehabilitate have already rehabilitated a long time ago![679]

For the representative of the JDVA and by extension, for many other wounded servicemen as well, their acceptance as "normal" members of society was at stake so long as the public regularly associated all wounded servicemen with beggars. These views threatened the success of those who had already made efforts to "rehabilitate." Thus, wounded servicemen, many suffering from discrimination, nevertheless paradoxically sought to align themselves with mainstream prejudices toward wounded soldier beggars in the hope of winning acceptance and recognition of their own efforts at rehabilitation. This final act, the turning of not just regular citizens, but wounded soldiers as well, against wounded serviceman beggars, represented a culmination of postwar Japanese society's changing views of the white gowned wounded serviceman. By publicly turning on their own brethren, these wounded servicemen inadvertently legitimized public discrimination of wounded serviceman beggars, and likely did little to improve society's overall views of wounded soldiers. If nothing else, this desperate act further demonstrated the enormous challenges of reintegration that confronted all wounded servicemen seeking acceptance by Japanese society in the early postwar period.

Hidden Wounds

Japan's wounded servicemen suffered from a myriad of easily identifiable injuries: missing limbs, burns, and scarred faces, and visual or auditory impairments. But some wounds were not so obvious. At a time when war wounds were strictly defined as physical, countless

[679] Honbashi, "Gaitō ni tatsu shōigunjin," 24-25.

physically wounded and unwounded servicemen suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but remained undiagnosed and bereft of treatment. Kaneko Jinroku, whose story of miraculous recovery from his mangled plane began this section, was one such soldier. Not only did he suffer grave physical disfiguration, he also suffered from acute depression and PTSD.[680] From the moment he woke up from his life-saving surgery, Kaneko felt overwhelmed by the horror of his own wounds, which left his face unrecognizable. Upon his return home to his family's village in Shikoku in 1946, Kaneko's father only compounded his son's mental anguish and isolation when he asked Kaneko to wear a cloth veil to hide his face so as to not upset strangers.[681] At home, Kaneko lived for nearly three years in complete isolation, scared to go out into public. But life at home offered little to ease his trauma. Tormented by survivor's guilt, he was unable to sleep alone and when he fell asleep suffered from relentless nightmares about the death of his fellow kamikaze pilots.[682] Although Kaneko ultimately discovered a tremendous inner strength that led him to overcome his fears and obtain work, he was certainly far from alone in his battles with depression and trauma.[683] How many other demobilized servicemen suffered similarly, but failed to find the power to overcome their mental wounds without outside help? Undoubtedly, far more wounded servicemen returned home to Japan than either the Japanese government or people have ever officially acknowledged.

Conclusion

Few demobilized and wounded servicemen engaged in criminal activity and begging. Despite this fact, the actions of this minority exerted an oversized influence upon the Japanese

[680] Kaneko, "Okinawa kara no michi wa nagakatta!," 278.
[681] Kaneko, "Okinawa kara no michi wa nagakatta!," 277.
[682] Kaneko, "Okinawa kara no michi wa nagakatta!," 278.
[683] Kaneko, "Okinawa kara no michi wa nagakatta!," 282-284.

public's imagination of demobilized servicemen. With just enough examples from newspapers and daily life to provide affirmation of these narratives, it became received wisdom that demobilized servicemen were a threat to postwar Japan's law and order and that wounded servicemen, rather than being war victims deserving of sympathy and public support, were simply pitiful figures averse to honest work and rejoining society. These crude twin stereotypes of demobilized servicemen offered an easy and pernicious means for understanding these men and their place in postwar Japan. More importantly, these narratives inflicted considerable harm upon demobilized and wounded servicemen who found themselves increasingly locked out of work and isolated due to a constant barrage of negative media coverage and rumors that demeaned their persons as a threat to postwar Japanese society.

Stripped of many of their rights and benefits by the Occupation and burdened by the pall of defeat, demobilized servicemen provided an easy and plausible scapegoat for Japanese society to assign blame for postwar Japan's crime wave. In the months after defeat, newspapers shocked readers with stories of atrocities committed by Japanese forces. These stories, added with the earlier precedent of criminal behavior by domestically demobilized servicemen, combined to produce a vision of a military whose soldiers and sailors were capable of committing horrendous crimes. Thus, it took little imagination for the Japanese public to believe that these same demobilized servicemen were responsible for postwar Japan's surging crime wave. So widespread were such views that even government employees, as discussed earlier in this chapter, felt compelled to chide demobilized servicemen upon their return to lead a lawful life. By framing servicemen's perceived proclivity to commit crimes as a function of their wartime behavior, Japanese civilians rendered themselves as among the latest victims of a violent and lawless Imperial Japanese military. Of course, there was a basis of truth to the narrative of

demobilized servicemen's connection to crime. In the years after Japan's surrender, police arrested tens of thousands of demobilized servicemen for various crimes. But through piecing together various sets of data it is clear that these numbers never amounted to little more than around a fourth of all criminals. In the end, the narrative of demobilized servicemen as criminals was not one of facts, but of perception, and above all else, a reflection of Japanese society's mistrust and fear of uniformed men and the Imperial Japanese military.

Initially, wounded servicemen received better treatment from Japanese society than that accorded to their unwounded peers. Due to their injuries suffered on the battlefield, wounded servicemen could make a legitimate claim to victimhood status. Unlike their unwounded comrades, their injuries spoke of their sacrifice and suffering, providing a veneer of protection from accusations of responsibility for defeat. But what little goodwill and sympathy there was for these men ultimately ran out as expectations for improved medical care and antimilitary sentiment took hold in postwar Japanese society. No longer compelled to display a slavish reverence for uniformed men, Japanese society increasingly viewed the treatment of wounded servicemen in nationalized hospitals as a denial of finite resources to deserving civilians who had been refused the care accorded to servicemen during and after the war. The Occupation's move in 1946 to abolish pensions for wounded servicemen merely validated such opinions. Having grown accustomed to a high level of care during wartime, wounded servicemen proved unable to understand the public's criticism while some resorted to begging to pay their hospital bills. Although these actions won initial sympathy, in the long-term, these efforts fed into a bourgeoning narrative of wounded servicemen as indolent and unwilling to rehabilitate and find regular jobs. In postwar Japan, wounded servicemen were just one constituency of war victims, alongside bereaved families, former colonists, and victims of Allied bombing. Although their

needs were real and urgent, so too were the medical needs of citizens who until Japan's surrender had been overshadowed and ignored.[684]

Alarmingly, the Japanese public showed scant interest in what drove some demobilized and wounded servicemen to become criminals or beggars. All too frequently, the Japanese public readily believed the worse about demobilized servicemen, uncritically accepting as fact that former soldiers and sailors' wartime backgrounds gave them a predilection to crime or that it made them reluctant to rehabilitate from their wounds. In reality, the driving forces behind these individuals' actions were firmly rooted in the conditions of early postwar Japan. Testimony from demobilized servicemen in the form of private letters, public appeals in newspapers, as well as contemporary data and studies provide ample evidence that it was discrimination, despair, and most of all, poverty that drove many to engage in criminal behavior and begging to survive. None of this ought to be surprising, though it likely would have been for the Japanese public at the time. As shown in this chapter, there is little evidence that demobilized and wounded servicemen took to crime and begging as their first means for survival. Many demobilized servicemen sought out various legal means for survival, and only then turned to crime when they found themselves hungry and in despair. Similarly, wounded servicemen, confronted with the need to pay for medical care and the challenge of competing with a surplus of unwounded workers, looked to begging as one of the only ways in which to secure an income. It is therefore ironic that Japanese society viewed the phenomenon of crime and begging by demobilized servicemen as evidence of the depravity of all soldiers. In truth, these actions were frequently a result of postwar Japanese society and the Occupation's deliberate efforts to exclude and deny demobilized and wounded servicemen access to basic services and legitimate employment.

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[684] Pennington, *Casualties of History*, 193-194.

Chapter Five

Japan's Incomplete Demobilization

Introduction

By 1947, the demobilization of the vast majority of Japanese soldiers and sailors was nearly finished. Except for those prisoners still languishing in Soviet captivity, more than six million servicemen had now completed their demobilization. Therefore, it is easy to see 1947 as marking the definitive end of the Imperial Japanese military and a future where the Japanese people would be free of war. Sadly, this was not entirely true for all servicemen and women. This chapter examines how a number of individuals, whether they were insubordinate IJA officers in China seeking to fight in China's civil war, or postwar nationalist Japanese bureaucrats and politicians seeking to cooperate with America in the Korean War, secretly and successfully obstructed the process of demobilization for thousands of servicemen and nurses of the Imperial Japanese military. None of the men and women ensnared in these schemes sought to remain in uniform or return to active duty. Yet, through coercion and deception, thousands of servicemen and nurses became unwitting or unwilling participants in new conflicts between 1945 and 1953 that rekindled old traumas and inflicted new wounds.

Part One examines the strange afterlife of the IJA in northern China and the scheming by IJA officers that prevented thousands of soldiers from demobilizing. Unknown to early postwar Japan's citizens, between 1946 and 1949 thousands of Japanese soldiers in the northern Chinese province of Shanxi continued to fight Chinese Communist soldiers at the cost of hundreds killed and wounded. Tricked by their officers into believing that they were under orders not to demobilize, I argue that these soldiers and their superiors viewed themselves as soldiers of the IJA fighting to restore the prewar Japanese state. In the end, it was only deception that kept many of these homesick men in uniform long after all of their comrades had demobilized and returned home.

Under Japan's new postwar Constitution, the Japanese state renounced the right to make war and to send its citizens overseas into conflict zones. Part Two considers how the Japanese government violated its own newly minted constitution to secretly remobilize thousands of former sailors and civilians for service alongside United Nations (UN) forces in the Korean War. Specifically, this section looks at the parallel experiences of former IJN sailors deployed to Korean War combat zones for clearing mines and the coerced conscription of Japanese Red Cross nurses to serve in a UN field hospital. For many of these men and women, the experience of being remobilized triggered profound confusion and anger. Already demobilized once, none of these individuals believed themselves susceptible to remobilization, especially under Japan's new pacifist constitution. In a display of the degree to which even veterans now embraced pacifism, many of these sailors and nurses condemned their remobilization as an unconstitutional act by the Japanese state – an act of criticism and expression of political and individual rights nearly unthinkable by Japan's servicemen only five years earlier. So long as thousands of Japanese servicemen and civilians found themselves deceived by their officers or compelled by the Japanese government to participate in wars long after Japan's surrender, Japan's demobilization remained incomplete.

Part One: The Last Soldiers of the Empire

Long after most Japanese soldiers had returned to Japan, thousands of soldiers continued to fight and die in the belief that their war was not yet over. In the following section, I explore the story of the 2,600 soldiers of Japan's 1st Army in China's northern Shanxi province who were ordered by their officers to continue fighting for the local Nationalist warlord, Yan Xishan until 1949. I argue that the commanding officers of the 1st Army and Yan Xishan conspired to

deceive thousands of Japanese soldiers into continuing the war against Communist forces out of the belief that they would create a strategic resource base for Japan's recovery and form the nucleus of a restored IJA. Having received formal orders from 1st Army to continue fighting beyond 1946 when the majority Japanese forces returned to Japan, most of these men sincerely believed they were fighting under actual orders and were not supposed to demobilize. In the end, the lives of these men became little more than game pieces in a struggle whose contours were frequently beyond their understanding. In the face of overwhelming Communist power and a drastically altered Chinese postwar political landscape, this final campaign of the IJA proved to be as delusional as it was wasteful in the lives of its own soldiers and the countless Chinese who would die in battle with them.

A Note on Sources

In the following section, I generally rely on an assortment of secondary sources to tell the story of the IJA in postwar Shanxi. The three main sources I use are Yonehama Yasuhide's *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* the most detailed account of the Shanxi conspiracy, Kaoru Ikeya's *Ari no heitai,* a companion book to his groundbreaking documentary of the same name, and *Sansei zanryū no jissō,* a compilation of articles and first-hand accounts compiled by an organization for survivors of the events in postwar Shanxi. All three sources contain transcriptions of key conversations and testimonies, as well as information from Chinese language sources that are inaccessible to this author. Of course, each of these sources emphasizes different dimensions of the story, thereby presenting different interpretations of events. As a result, I have used my judgment and reading of the sources to synthesize these narratives together to produce a holistic account that reconciles any major discrepancies. I have also used a

number of key primary sources in addition to these three texts, ranging from memoirs to personal testimonies and reports compiled by staff officers of Japan's China Expeditionary Army headquarters. By bringing these sources together, I provide for the first time in English an analysis of Japanese sources on the IJA's activities in postwar Shanxi.

A Mad Conspiracy

Endowed with immense mineral wealth, productive farmland, and perhaps China's most developed industrial sector outside of Manchuria, the landlocked province of Shanxi was an extraordinarily valuable prize. However, in the closing months of the Second World War, Shanxi's future lay in doubt. Shanxi's territory lay divided among three forces: the Japanese 1st Army, who controlled the province's large towns and cities as well as its mines and rail lines, the warlord and dubious Nationalist general, Yan Xishan, whose beleaguered army resided in his former province's mountainous hinterlands, and the Communist 8th Route Army, which was increasingly taking control of Shanxi's countryside.[685] As Japan's defeat loomed on the horizon of the summer of 1945, all three factions coveted Shanxi's resources as indispensible for achieving their postwar ambitions. Whereas the Communist sought to expel the Japanese from Shanxi and all of China, both the Japanese 1st Army's leadership and Yan Xishan concocted plans in parallel for Shanxi's future that envisioned a sizable Japanese military presence long after Japan's imminent defeat.

In the summer of 1945, various members of 1st Army's leadership set about in secret drafting two plans independent of each other that aimed at making Shanxi province the heart of

[685] Kaoru Ikeya, *Ari no Heitai: Nihonhei 2600nin sanseishō zanryū no shinsō* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2008), 27-28; 45.

postwar Japan's economic and military recovery. Both of these plans shared the common premise that it was right to exploit Shanxi's wealth for the benefit of Japan and that the retention of Japanese troops was necessary for this goal. The first and most grandiose of these postwar plans was that of General Sumita Raishirō, commander of the 59,000 soldiers of 1st Army.[686] Seeking to construct a final redoubt for the Japanese military and for the Imperial family, Sumita set about constructing fortifications, housing for Japanese civilians, and numerous radio communications towers and other necessary infrastructure for such a contingency.[687] However, Japan's sudden surrender on August 15, 1945, rendered these plans irrelevant. Although Sumita was perhaps the first to envision a postwar Japanese military presence in Shanxi, he appears to have abandoned such plotting following Japan's surrender. Less vulnerable to the vicissitudes of surrender was a second plan created by Jōno Hiroshi.[688] Jōno was a talented Chinese linguist who arrived in China in 1937 as a reservist first lieutenant and worked his way up to becoming the Japanese political aid to Shanxi's occupation government.[689] Jōno, an ardent anticommunist, was a dyed-in-the wool ideologue who believed in Japan's preeminence.[690] Unlike Sumita, Jōno did not intend for Shanxi to be a place of final resistance, but a springboard for Japan's postwar recovery.

Throughout the summer of 1945, Jōno met in secret with Sumita's chief of staff, Major General Yamaoka Michitake and Major Iwata Kiyokazu to discuss his plans. Central to Jōno's

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[686] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 27.
[687] Hiroshi Jōno, *Sōkoku fukkō ni tatakatta otokotachi: Shūsengo, yonnenkan mo chūgoku de tatakatta nihonjin no kiroku (*Tokyo: Fumidōshuppan, 2010), 47.
[688] Jōno is the only conspirator to have written a memoir detailing his motivations and thoughts regarding the creation of the *Tokumudan* as well as his personal ideological convictions. Jōno's memoir provides excellent insight into his own character and serves as an important source for some of the events that occurred in Shanxi between 1945 and 1949. However, on the topic of the legality of the creation of the *Tokumudan* and the question of whether or not many of its soldiers were in fact volunteers, Jōno's record is evasive and misleading. For these reasons I have avoided relying on Jōno's written record beyond a few instances.
[689] Yasuhide Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū": kokkyō naisen ni honrō sareta yamashita shōi no sengo* (Tokyo: Ōraru Hisutorii Kikaku, 2008), 83.
[690] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 84.

plans was the desire to preserve the IJA for the sake of one day restoring the Imperial Japanese military and recovering Japanese power in Asia.[691] All three men believed that the inevitable Allied occupation of Japan would result in the IJA's abolishment, the impoverishment of the Japanese people, and even possible partition by the Soviets and Western Allies.[692] As a result, Japanese military forces alongside thousands of Japanese civilians would transform Shanxi into an industrial base akin to Manchukuo and provide the necessary raw materials that a Japan stripped of its empire would desperately need.[693] Seeking historical precedence to affirm their actions, Jōno, Yamaoka, and Iwata looked back to the Prussian generals who fled to Russia in 1807 and returned in 1813 to liberate their country from Napoleon and restore the Prussian military.[694] In their case, Jōno anticipated that a third world war would soon break out between the United States and the Soviet Union and create the circumstances conducive for their return. Thus, just like those Prussian officers, so too would they return to free Japan with their intact cadre of soldiers and reestablish the prewar Japanese state and military.[695] Of course, all of this would take the willing cooperation of thousands of Japanese soldiers, and perhaps more importantly, considerable luck and the cooperation of the Chinese. On the last point, at least, Jōno and his fellow conspirators had an obliging partner in the form of Shanxi warlord, Yan Xishan.

Much of the 1st Army's ambitions for postwar Shanxi relied on the intentions of Yan Xishan, the warlord of Shanxi. Before Japan's invasion, Yan had ruled Shanxi as a virtual independent state, exploiting Shanxi's rich coal veins to build up a considerable industrial base

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[691] Jōno, *Sōkoku fukkō ni tatakatta otokotachi*, 50.
[692] Jōno, *Sōkoku fukkō ni tatakatta otokotachi,* 51.
[693] Jōno, *Sōkoku fukkō ni tatakatta otokotachi,* 56.
[694] Jōno, *Sōkoku fukkō ni tatakatta otokotachi,* 51.
[695] Ibid.

in his capital of Taiyuan and field a sizable army.[696] Technically, Yan was a general for the Nationalist government who remained implacable foes of the Japanese. But things were not quite so simple for Yan. At heart, Yan was a Japanophile who possessed a deep appreciation for Japan and respected its military since his days spent as a cadet at Japan's Army Officer Academy in 1904.[697] Consequently, Yan only half-heartedly engaged in fighting the Japanese.[698] In fact, Yan frequently rendered covert assistance to the Japanese in the form of intelligence and the transfer of thousands of soldiers to fight the Communists, even though Japan had dispossessed him of his beloved capital city and had rendered his once powerful army into a feeble shadow of its former self.[699] Whatever desire for vengeance Yan may have nurtured against the Japanese, Yan proved willing to set these aside upon war's end. Following Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945 Yan, by virtue of being the only Nationalist general in Shanxi, was appointed theater commander by Chiang and found himself with the legal authority to dispose with 1st Army as he wished.[700]

On August 30, Yan clandestinely returned to Taiyuan by train under Japanese military escort through Communist territory and subsequently met with Sumita and Yamaoka for talks at

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[696] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 52-53.
[697] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 52.
[698] Ultimately, Yan viewed his erstwhile Communist allies as a greater threat than the Japanese. Reflecting his split loyalties, Yan went so far as to regularly maintain communications with 1st Army, and even send them reports on Communist troop movements. In one infamous episode, Yan even had his leading general and his troops intentionally surrender to Japanese forces so that they could clandestinely cooperate in suppressing Communist partisans. Recognizing early on Yan's lack of enthusiasm for fighting Japan, 1st Army repeatedly tried through multiple negotiation sessions to turn him into a client ruler. But Yan proved too proud to accept the loss of prestige that would come with being an outright collaborator. Regardless, the collapse of talks in 1942 prompted 1st Army to publish embarrassing photos of him shaking hands with his Japanese counterpart and even declared that he was an official friend of Japan. Needless to say, this infuriated the Nationalist leader, Chiang Kai-shek as well as the Communists, who remained forever suspicion of Yan's intentions. Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 31-32.
[699] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 54-59.
[700] In fact, on August 17 Yan ordered 1st Army not to disarm and to continue to guard urban centers and railways against Communist partisans and await further instructions. As subsequently explained, Yan followed up these orders on August 31 with a formal request for 1 Army to maintain a presence in Shanxi in the postwar. Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 101; Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 51.

1st Army headquarters on the evening of August 31.[701] Much of what we know about this conversation is due to the transcription of Yan and Sumita's words by Yan's top general, Chōzui.[702] Rather than discussing the details of 1st Army's surrender, as Sumita likely expected, Yan made a startling proposition.

> I, chief officer for accepting surrender in the Second Theater of War, request, if possible, for the arrangement of the reorganization of all Japanese military forces in Shanxi province. The Japanese Army will stand by as they are in their garrisons, and after doing so will strive for the complete destruction of the Communist Army in cooperation with us [Shanxi Army] of the Second Theater of War. How does this sound?[703]

This request appears to have taken Sumita completely by surprise, as it was the first time he had heard of Yan's plans for 1st Army to remain in Shanxi. Expressing cautious interest in the plan, Sumita refused to make a final decision there and then. "I think that your Excellency's plan is very good, but the details are extremely important. Since I want to study the particulars, I cannot give you an immediate response."[704] However, Sumita's prevarication was due to disagreement with Yan's proposal. Aware that the Potsdam Agreement called for the immediate disarmament and repatriation of Axis soldiers, Sumita would incur the wrath of the Allies by following through with Yan's request. Further troubling Sumita was the fact that the Allies had recently declared him a war criminal, along with chiefs of staff Yamaoka and Iwata, and so did not wish to embellish this charge with new "crimes."[705] Still, Yan was furious that the Japanese, now a defeated power, had the gall to withhold immediate cooperation with his demands. "Damn it, do the Japanese think even now that that they still have power?... [N]o matter what it takes, I must

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[701] It should be noted that Yan met privately with Yamaoka during the day on August 31 where he informed him of his desire for 1st Army to maintain its security duties and for numerous Japanese civilians to continue to reside in Shanxi. Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 101.
[702] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 51.
[703] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 52.
[704] Ibid.
[705] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 52-53.

borrow Japan's military strength to annihilate the Communist army."[706] Fortunately, for Yan, his vision of continuing the fight against Communists resonated with Sumita, and likely contributed to his fateful decision on September 1.

Sumita gave Yan his answer the following day. While unwilling to allow all of 1st Army's personnel be kept behind in Shanxi, Sumita granted that it was allowable for "some soldiers" as well as civilians to be retained for cooperation with Yan's forces.[707] However, Sumita insisted that all soldiers and civilians who remained must choose to do so voluntarily. Yan then clarified his intent for the use of Japanese soldiers by stating that he would employ them for guarding Taiyuan.[708] Finding this agreeable, Sumita replied, "If until the period when the Japanese Army is repatriated, there will be no problems. As far as moral principles are concerned, it is reasonable to cooperate for maintaining security and protecting Taiyuan from Communist assault."[709] However, the problem of Potsdam remained, since Sumita reminded Yan that as commander of 1st Army he remained responsible for the consequences of retaining Japanese soldiers in Shanxi.[710] Alleviating Sumita and his subordinates of any worries, Yan promptly announced that he would make them official advisers, thereby providing the necessary cover to prevent either the Japanese or the Allies of accusing them of rogue behavior. Moreover, Yan promised that he would assume responsibility for all that subsequently occurred. With this assurance in hand, Sumita agreed to the provision of a yet undefined number of Japanese troops to assist Yan in continuing to engage in open hostilities with Communist forces despite the end

[706] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 53.
[707] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 53-54.
[708] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 103.
[709] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 54.
[710] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 54-55.

of the war.[711] Ironically, this was to be the end of any significant role played by Sumita in the conspiracy.

After September 1, 1945, Sumita's chiefs of staff, Yamaoka and Iwata, as well as the political officer, Jōno, took charge of planning with Yan. On paper, both parties held divergent aims. Imperial revanchist ambitions motivated the Japanese conspirators, while a desire to reassert control over Shanxi undergirded Yan's postwar actions. Still, both sides found common ground in their shared hatred of communism and more importantly, the belief that Japanese soldiers had an important role still to play in Shanxi. For this purpose, over the course of a secret meeting held between the early morning hours of September 4 and September 9, Yan, Yamaoka, Iwata, and Jōno formed a six-point plan that laid out the basis for recruiting Japanese soldiers to serve in an exclusively Japanese military unit under Yan.[712] To entice potential recruits, the conspirators agreed upon the following: all who joined would do so as "volunteers;" every volunteer would be promoted up to three ranks above their wartime rank; all volunteers would receive preferential treatment; housing would be provided while volunteers were permitted to live in private residences; volunteers could send remittances to their families in Japan; lastly, Yan would arrange for the return of all volunteers at the end of two years of service.[713] Together these points formed the core roadmap that the conspirators followed in recruiting soldiers from 1st Army.

Out of all of these points, two points are of particular note. First, is the fact that in flagrant disregard for Sumita's insistence that troops remain in Shanxi only until the repatriation of all Japanese forces, the provision for a two-year term of service demonstrates that Japanese

[711] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 104.
[712] Due to his Chinese language abilities, Jōno was both a participant and acted as the official interpreter. Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 105.
[713] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 56-57.

soldiers could, as they ultimately would, serve beyond the IJA's repatriation from China. Second, but most critical and consequential for the soldiers of 1st Army was the plan's first point. Yan and his Japanese counterparts agreed that all Japanese soldiers would be discharged from service at their current location (*genchijotai*) before formally volunteering for service with Yan.[714] By insisting that these "volunteers" were discharged soldiers, the conspirators sought to disavow any responsibility held by 1st Army's leadership for the actions of these men.[715] With these guidelines established, all that remained was to persuade 1st Army's soldiers that remaining in Shanxi was more important than returning to Japan as soon as possible.

Persuading the Troops and the Formation of the Tokumudan

In February of 1946, the fruit of Yan and the Japanese conspirators' dreams at last came into being. This was the so-called *Tokumudan*, a unit of roughly 10,000 Japanese soldiers.[716] The *Tokumudan* was a product of a calculated campaign of half-truths and abject deceptions carried out between September 1945 and February 1946.These efforts primarily took the form of political pamphleteering, speeches to gatherings of troops, and more insidiously, intense pressure applied through coercion and acts of violence. In order to accomplish these tasks, Yan established the so-called *Gōbōsha*, an office for disseminating "pro-remain" propaganda to 1st

[714] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 56.
[715] No Japanese troops overseas at any location had been discharged from service, let alone demobilized without direct orders from either Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo or by the Allied powers. In other words, these officers did not possess the authority to demobilize their men and release them for service with another military.
[716] There is considerable confusion behind the *Tokumudan*'s overall size. Yan asked for 10,000-man unit to be created from Japanese troops. The Japanese conspirators decided to set the unit's authorized strength at 15,000, representing on paper the ideal number of troops they wished to recruit. It is unclear if in fact the *Tokumudan* ever mustered 10,000 soldiers, let alone 15,000, at the height of the conspiracy before its discovery on March 9, 1946. Records from February 1946 indicate that at this time only about 6,600-6,700 soldiers were part of the *Tokumudan*. As of March 1946, the unit might have achieved its original intended strength of 10,000. In the absence of contradictory evidence, I use the figure 10,000 throughout this paper, but it should be noted that it is most certainly not a definitive number. Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,*121.

Army soldiers.[717] At the head of the office was Yan's top general, Chōzui, however, it was Jōno and Iwata, as well as the civilian Kōmoto Daisaku who played the most important day-to-day role in spreading propaganda by penning various political pamphlets. [718]

Demoralized by Japan's sudden surrender, and cut off from reliable communications with Japan, the soldiers of 1st Army knew little about loved ones and life conditions in Japan. Sergeant Hashimoto Saburō, a former soldier in 1st Army, recalled that all sorts of rumors circulated among his unit. Reflecting Japanese soldiers' fears that they would not make it alive to their repatriation ships, one rumor said: "Even if we are to be demobilized, wouldn't we all be killed by the Communist Army?"[719] Even worse, Hashimoto heard another rumor that expressed the belief that only death and destruction awaited them in Japan. "Even if we return home, it seems that all men are either castrated or killed, women are either being raped or made to work, the land is just burnt fields, and there is no food to be had," ran another piece of wisdom circulating among camp.[720] While these rumors represented a distorted version of reality, they also possessed a kernel of truth. The Communist 8th Route Army was indeed attacking Japanese soldiers across northern China in the months after surrender, while at home in Japan economic and social conditions were utterly dire. In the end, many soldiers simply wished to go home, whatever the rumors. Yet, amid a state of fear and ignorance, many soldiers in 1st Army were also vulnerable to manipulation and propaganda that promised them a chance to continue to fight for Japan's recovery and liberation from occupation.[721]

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[717] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 106.
[718] Ibid.
[719] Kikomi Yamaguchi, *Shūsengo no sanseishō zanryū: moto dai ichi gun tokumudan jitsuroku* (Aizuwakamatsu: Zanryū Tokumudan Jitsuroku Henshūiinkai, 1989), 60.
[720] Ibid.
[721] *Sansei zanryū no jissō: shiryo sono ni* (Tokyo: Zenkoku Sanseishō Zairyūshadantai Kyōgikai, 1991), 16.

In the early autumn of 1945, numerous propaganda leaflets and pamphlets urging soldiers and civilians to remain in Shanxi circulated across the ranks of 1st Army's personnel and the Japanese civilian popluation.[722] Assuming the role of propagandist, Jōno published one of the most important pro-remain pamphlets of this period, "The Standpoint of the Japanese," with the support of the 1st Army's official printing press.[723] Addressed to the soldiers of 1st Army, Jōno's pamphlet sought to present a series of three paths that postwar Japan might follow. Jōno began by laying out two grim visions of a postwar Japan that exploited soldiers' fears of what might befall their prostrated and defeated homeland. The first path, dubbed "Americanization," envisioned a future where an occupied Japan is "culturally colonized," its economy suborned, and the whole nation made into a "branch store" of America. The second path, "Sovietization," painted a vision of a Japanese society overcome by domestic leftist forces and transformed into a socialist republic.[724] Yet, these frightening visions of the future were not inevitable.

A third path remained for Japan, one that promised a rejuvenated Japan that was both prosperous and powerful. This so-called, "The Path of Japanese Independence," would require the soldiers of 1st Army in Shanxi to ensure its realization.[725] Imploring his readers to consider this last path, Jōno made his case thusly:

> And then Japan will speedily recover its independence, and in order to achieve the revival of the fatherland, we must strive to build an independent economy and seize the main raw resources for economic reconstruction for Japan, along with planning for the rapid withdrawal of the occupying armies. This is the correct path for the restoration of the fatherland. As for us staying in Shanxi, first off, cooperating with Yan Xishan is for achieving this purpose. After the war, the Soviet Union and America will surely come into conflict with each other; it will be difficult to avoid World War Three. At that time

[722] Yamaguchi, *Shūsengo no sanseishō zanryū,* 60.
[723] Jōno, *Sōkoku fukkō ni tatakatta otokotachi,* 85.
[724] It is unclear when this pamphlet was published and distributed during the autumn of 1945. Ibid.
[725] Ibid.

> we, as the army staying behind in Shanxi will be the vanguard for rebuilding the Japanese Army, and shall fight while hoisting high the banner for Japan's recovery.[726]

Seen from hindsight, Jōno's tract reads as a thoroughly delusional vision, but in certain respects, it eerily predicted certain developments of politics in postwar Asia. For 1st Army's soldiers, unaware of the magnitude of Japan's defeat, or for that matter the evolving trajectory of Chinese politics in 1945, Jōno's pamphlet provided a rousing message that asserted their primacy as the "vanguard" in restoring the IJA and the rebuilding of a strong Japan. In other words, everything was up to them. They would be the heroes of a revived Japan. All they had to do was stay in Shanxi, aid Yan, and secure natural resources necessary for Japan's economy. It was exceedingly vague how all of this would come to fruition. Moreover, Jōno glossed over the likelihood of Japanese soldiers becoming involved in postwar fighting between Nationalists and Communists. Such topics, if Jōno had discussed them, might have revealed the scheme's flimsy foundations and dissuaded soldiers from postponing their return home. But this was the scheme of Yan and his Japanese conspirators in its barest essence: a plan that balked at reality and saw the lives of 1stArmy's soldiers as merely a useful means to an end.

Soldiers were not the only target of propaganda efforts. No less important for the conspirators' goals was the securing of the cooperation of the 20,000 Japanese civilians in Shanxi, of whom many resided in Taiyuan.[727] In charge of this effort was Kōmoto Daisaku, a former disgraced IJA officer and the head of the Taiyuan Japanese Residents' Association.[728]

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[726] Jōno, *Sōkoku fukkō ni tatakatta otokotachi,* 86.
[727] *Sansei zanryū no jissō: shiryo sono ichi*, (Tokyo: Zenkoku Sanseishō Zairyūshadantai Kyōgikai, 1991), 32.
[728] Kōmoto Daisaku was a veteran of conspiracies by the time of 1945. A former intelligence officer in the Kwangtung Army in Manchuria, Kōmoto made his name as one of the key schemers who arranged for the assassination of Manchurian warlord, Zheng Zuolin in 1928 by bombing his private train. Kōmoto had hoped that the incident would then provoke a Japanese takeover of Manchuria, but to his surprise, both the Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi and a young Emperor Hirohito reacted with disgust to the incident and condemned Kōmoto and his fellow plotters. Kōmoto was subsequently forcibly retired from military service. In 1942, he rose to prominence again in the new role of chief supervisor of Shanxi's mines and factories. During the Shanxi conspiracy, he

Interestingly, Kōmoto's efforts began long before Sumita had agreed to cooperate with Yan's schemes. As far back as August 17, Kōmoto, possibly on his own volition, began agitating for Japanese soldiers to remain in Shanxi.[729] Marshaling the resources of his organization, Kōmoto produced numerous propaganda flyers, which were posted on the door of every Japanese resident's house. Crucially, these flyers promoted the idea that Japan's defeat was only partial, and that some Japanese soldiers should stay and fight to suppress Communist forces in Shanxi. Ultimately, Kōmoto's efforts met with considerable success, cultivating a strong pro-remain mood among the regular Japanese populace in Taiyuan by the autumn of 1945.[730]

In contrast to Kōmoto's efforts, by December 1945, the pro-remain campaign had achieved only moderate levels of success among 1st Army soldiers. Soldiers of 1st Army were increasingly divided into two camps: pro-remain, and pro-return.[731] The former was more numerous and enjoyed the support of 1st Army's leadership. However, the desire to return and a growing consciousness of the Potsdam Declaration's provisions for the speedy repatriation of Axis soldiers produced considerable reluctance among the latter to stay in Shanxi, and even accusations that the scheme was illegal among a tiny minority of NCOs.[732] Further complicating matters were fundamental disagreements between Yamaoka and Jōno regarding what duties this Japanese force should assume and how large it needed to be. The inability to reach an agreed upon plan on these matters undermined their recruitment efforts.[733]

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persuaded thousands of Japanese civilian engineers and their families to remain in Shanxi and to continue to operate much of the province's industry. Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 109-111.

[729] *Sansei zanryū no jissō: Shiryo sono ichi,* 25-26.

[730] Ibid.

[731] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 112.

[732] *Sansei zanryū no jissō: Shiryo sono ni,* 25-26.

[733] It so happened that this issue came to the fore at a meeting of young officers in November 1945 called by Jōno and Yamaoka. Yamaoka believed that whatever Japanese unit was created its role ought to be one solely in the form of military advisers for assisting Yan's army in its fight against the 8th Route Army. As a result, this force did not need to be especially large. In contrast, Jōno expressed his belief that it was meaningless if the unit to be not of

Sensing that his Japanese counterparts were failing to produce timely results, Yan suddenly announced on December 11 the house arrest of Sumita and numerous other 1st Army officers accused of war crimes by the Allies. Additionally, Yan announced that no soldiers would return to Japan unless 1st Army raised a force of at least 10,000 men to remain in Shanxi.[734] As the authority responsible for the fate of 1st Army, Yan could claim the right to make this call, though it certainly violated the Potsdam Declaration. In any case, Yan's actions had the desired effect of prompting a flurry of activity by Yamaoka and Iwata. At the end of December, Yamaoka and Iwata decided to surpass Yan's demands by planning for the formation of a 15,000-man unit called the *Tokumudan,* which would be comprised of one third of all soldiers from every division in 1st Army.[735] Yan's drastic decision was a blessing in disguise. By ordering publicly 1st Army to raise troops for the *Tokumudan,* Yan provided the conspirators with a powerful new argument. Now, the conspirators could claim that staying in Shanxi was a direct order of the person in charge of 1st Army's collective fate and the most direct way to ensure the repatriation of the majority of 1st Army's personnel.

It is at this point two remarkable events occurred. In early January 1946, Yamaoka traveled to Beijing where he informed Japan's China Expeditionary Army's (CEA) leadership of the *Tokumudan*'s creation and obtained its blessing after carefully framing its formation as solely in compliance with the demands of Yan. Consequently, the CEA became a coconspirator, unwittingly or not.[736] The second event was one that transpired unbeknownst to 1st Army's soldiers and its conspirators. On January 20, Chiang Kai-shek proclaimed that all Japanese civilians and soldiers had the right to return home if they desired to do so. This proclamation

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significant size, since its purpose was not to fight Communists in Shanxi, but to form the nucleus of a restored Imperial Japanese Army. Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 64-65.

[734] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 65.

[735] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 65-67.

[736] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 69-70.

undermined the entire legal basis for Yan's decision to retain any of 1st Army's soldiers for his use. Realizing the danger of this order, Yan decided to withhold this order from all 1st Army personnel, including even Yamaoka, Iwata, and Jōno.[737] Whether this news would have changed their minds is unclear, but it certainly would have weakened their subsequent recruitment drive for the *Tokumudan.*

Only a few days earlier on February 1 Yamaoka, Iwata, and Jōno invited 200 officers, NCOs, and selected representatives of soldiers to a conference marking the formal creation of the *Tokumudan*.[738] During this event, Iwata delivered an especially persuasive speech reframing the reason for 1st Army soldiers to remain in Shanxi as one of taking on the critical role of a rearguard to protect the IJA's demobilization. Unfortunately, there is no surviving transcript of the speech. What follows is a postwar reconstruction from memory by a soldier who was present for Iwata's speech.

> As for the organization of the *Tokumudan*, for the time being, its role of acting as a rearguard to accomplish the work for demobilizing one part of the army is also vital. Serving in the capacity of the Japanese government and in light of international law, we must demobilize the entire army. However, as for the present situation in Shanxi province, because the Communist army in these regions has sought to prevent the Nationalist army from entering important territory hitherto occupied by the Japanese army, it is destroying train tracks in various places. Because of this, even for us, this will cause the constant obstruction of the running of trains for repatriation and demobilization. Thus, by all means, it is necessary for a force to firmly provide security in order to ensure that [we] safely make progress [with demobilization and repatriation].[739]

In a break with past propaganda efforts, Iwata's speech depicted the *Tokumudan*'s soldiers those as a "rearguard" to defend key railways against Communist attack to ensure the successful demobilization and withdrawal of 1st Army personnel.[740] Furthermore, by framing the decision

[737] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 69.
[738] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 119.
[739] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 71.
[740] Ibid.

to keep troops behind in Shanxi as enabling Japan's obligation to demobilize its military under international law, Iwata provided the *Tokumudan* a false veneer of legality.[741] Collectively, these two new approaches to justifying the *Tokumudan*'s organization and mission allayed many fears and won over skeptical soldiers and NCOs. Following the conference's success, special propagandists were trained and dispersed to various 1st Army units to persuade more soldiers to join. Through these efforts, propagandists recruited thousands of soldiers and NCOs.[742]

Yet, speeches and pamphlets proved ineffective for recruiting enough soldiers needed to meet Yan's quota.[743] Ultimately, acts of coercion were required to compel soldiers and officers to stay in Shanxi. In the final stages of recruitment for the *Tokumudan*, commanding officers selected which of their subordinates would remain in Shanxi. This process inadvertently displayed the hollowness of the notion that the *Tokumudan* was solely comprised of volunteers as quite a few volunteers were either ordered to join, or believed that that they were being instructed to do so. Oki Iwaya, a warrant officer in the 114th Division, recalled that his major gathered him and twenty fellow officers who had volunteered to stay to tell them that the choice to stay or leave was not theirs to make, "You will not volunteer to remain. In accordance with the Army's operation orders you will [perform] important duties and remain as a rearguard."[744] As this episode demonstrates, despite believing they were volunteering, Oki as well as other officers were in certain instances explicitly informed that there were formal orders instructing them to stay in Shanxi. In fact, on February 2, 1946, Yamaoka had issued written orders for the formation of a "Railway Repair and Construction Unit (*Tetsuroshūrikōsakubutai*)," which in

[741] Ibid.
[742] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,"* 72.
[743] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,"* 72.
[744] *Sansei zanryū no jissō: shiryō sono ichi,* 17.

reality served as cover for the *Tokumudan*.[745] It does not seem that these written orders were distributed beyond a small range of high-ranking officers. In most cases, as in the example above, the *Tokumudan'*s leaders and relevant officers passed along orders orally. In either case, this unusual process of passing along orders strongly implies that Yamaoka and his coconspirators sought to render ambiguous the question of whether or not there were standing orders for soldiers to join the *Tokumudan* in order to mask their direct responsibility for the entire affair.

In addition to the issuing of orders, officers recruited "volunteers" by various other methods. In many cases, commanding officers avoided outright ordering soldiers to stay and instead made their entreaties for volunteers in the form of a request. Since "requests" by superiors in the IJA were traditionally understood as being indistinguishable from an order, most soldiers felt compelled to comply with these requests.[746] Yet quite a few officers and regular soldiers alike resorted to pleading with their superiors to receive permission to return to Japan out of concern for the wellbeing of loved ones who they felt an obligation to help support now that the war was over, or simply refused to volunteer because they believed the *Tokumudan* was illegal.[747]

In cases where soldiers proved to be unwilling to volunteer, some commanding officers resorted to peer-pressure. One illustrative case is that of First Lieutenant Yamashita of the 244 Battalion. Like many other 1st Army officers, Yamashita's battalion's major summoned him and his peers to a meeting to discuss joining the *Tokumudan*.[748] The major announced that he and the other officers all intended to stay and wished to know Yamashita's decision. When this effort at

[745] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 76-77.
[746] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 74.
[747] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 89.
[748] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 124-125.

peer pressure and a later intense argument ultimately failed to compel Yamashita to willingly volunteer, the major angrily resorted to issuing an order for Yamashita to remain.[749] Finally, Yamashita relented. In a sign of his submissiveness, he proceeded to select 26 additional "volunteers" from his own subordinates to remain with him.[750]

Similar incidents played out elsewhere when a propaganda officer seeking 1,000 volunteers in mid-February visited Private Ota Hiroshi's unit, the Independent 7th Infantry Battalion. Knowing that demobilization was only a month and a half away, neither Ota, nor a single soldier in his company volunteered. Just as in Yamashita's case, saying no was not always enough to avoid becoming a volunteer. Seeking to makeup recruitment shortfalls in March, NCOs forcibly recruited Ota and his comrades into the *Tokumudan.*[751] In some cases, opposition proved to be so strong among some soldiers that pro-remain partisans made threats of arresting such holdouts as war criminals or disallowing their demobilization.[752] In this way, the pro-return camp within 1st Army was subdued. By the end of February, nearly 10,000 soldiers were recruited either willingly or through various forms of coercion and subsequently assembled in isolation from the rest of 1st Army. One soldier who experienced this process, Lieutenant Sagara Keiji, likened being sequestered from the rest of 1st Army as being placed in "confinement."[753] Despite what the *Tokumudan*'s creators said, it was not an army of volunteers.

The Hidden Army

[749] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 126-127.
[750] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 128.
[751] Yamaguchi, *Shūsengo no sanseishō zanryū,* 92-95.
[752] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 122-123.
[753] Yamaguchi, *Shūsengo no sanseishō zanryū,* 51.

At its moment of apparent triumph, the conspiracy to create the *Tokumudan* nearly collapsed. Due to Yamaoka's prior report of the *Tokumudan*'s creation back in January, the CEA's leadership was vaguely aware of events in Shanxi. By February, the CEA's headquarters was increasingly concerned that 1st Army's actions were in direct violation of the Potsdam Declaration and recent orders by American General George C. Marshal ordering the prompt disarmament and repatriation of the CEA.[754] As a result, Colonel Miyazaki Shun'ichi, in charge of ensuring the successful demobilization of Japanese forces in northern China, received permission from the CEA's headquarters to fly to Taiyuan on March 9 to investigate 1st Army's activities.[755]

Upon arrival in Taiyuan, Miyazaki quickly uncovered the magnitude of 1st Army and Yan's conspiracy. Since Miyazaki felt personally responsible for ensuring the safe repatriation of Japanese personnel in northern China, Miyazaki was infuriated to discover that 1st Army's leadership was actively scheming to retain thousands of their soldiers in Shanxi.[756] Consequently, Miyazaki engaged Yamaoka in a fiery debate with Sumita and other officers in attendance.[757] What followed was a debate that touched on the fundamental question of who had authority over Japanese soldiers' fate, and the need to ensure the full repatriation of all Japanese forces. The meeting began with Yamaoka detailing the 1st Army's situation while carefully avoiding any mention of the *Tokumudan*. But this is not what Miyazaki came to hear. Angered, Miyazaki demanded, "What about the *Tokumudan*," and proceeded to lecture Yamaoka that General Okamura Yasuji, the head of Japanese forces in China, intended to repatriate all Japanese forces

[754] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 134-136.
[755] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 97-99.
[756] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 99-100.
[757] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 101.

in 1946."[758] In order to grasp the heated tone of the ensuing exchange, it is worth quoting at length from a partial transcript of the meeting compiled by Major Maekawa Kunio.

> **Yamaoka**: But according to orders at war's end, it was decided that 1st Army would carry end of war dispositions according to the head of receiving surrenders, General Yan. If General Yan says, "Leave behind some men as technical advisers," we must obey.[759] That is to say it is impossible to return home without leave behind one soldier… [We] must think about how through the sacrifices of some [soldiers] the main force can return home. Due to unconditional surrender, is it not so that it cannot be helped?
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> **Miyazaki:** There are no other instances of making large numbers of combatants stay behind under the pretext of being technical advisers outside of Shanxi… It's nothing more than General Yan exploiting the Japanese Army as much as he can to protect himself. Presently, there are orders from Nanjing's (Nationalist China) Supreme Commander, General He Yingqin, instructing 1st Army to assemble at areas for embarkation [of repatriation ships] by May.
>
> **Yamaoka:** I have yet to receive such orders from General Yan. Since we must act according to General Yan's orders, no matter what it will not make a difference.
>
> **Miyazaki**: I am stumped by your weak attitude. Even according to the Potsdam Declaration, no matter which victor nation it is, they have no right to forcefully keep any soldiers who do not have any intent to stay behind. Is it the case you cannot help but obey?
>
> **Yamaoka:** But you, if the officer in charge of surrender gave an order, would it not be the case that you must obey?[760]
>
> **Miyzazaki:** Your Excellency staff officer: would you, staff officer, intend to kill the Emperor if Yan Xishan said, "Kill the Emperor?"[761]

It was at this point in the debate that Maekawa noted that the room fell silent and then filled with murmuring voices of shocked attendees. In a matter of minutes, Miyazaki decisively dismantled the rhetorical defenses of the *Tokumudan* conspirators by revealing the Nationalist government's January orders permitting all Japanese to return home. Suddenly, Maekawa observed in his notes

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[758] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 100.
[759] One way that Yan sought to camoflauge the *Tokumudan*'s true character as a military force was to classify its members as civilian technical advisers. Elsewhere in China, thousands of Japanese civilian engineers remained in Nationalist and Communist territory to provide valuable help in restoring war-damaged infrastructure.
[760] Yamaoka is showding his naked disdain for Miyazaki by calling him "*kimi*," or "you," which is especially rude in Japanese culture.
[761] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 100-102.

of the debate, the previously emasculated pro-return camp suddenly emerged triumphant with Miyazaki's intervention. Sumita, sitting in the room the entire time, could do little more but look on in aggrieved silence. That night, a number of soldiers from the pro-return camp confided to Maekawa over drinks, "Today, Miyazaki seemed to be a god!"[762]

By the end of the debate, Miyazaki deftly toppled Yamaoka's arguments one after another. At this point, Miyazaki ordered the conspirators to disband the *Tokumudan*.[763] Not content with his success, Miyazaki proceeded to hold numerous meetings with other officers, and even met with Yan to tell him that his actions were illegal.[764] In a biting moment of irony, Yan was forced to swallow his pride as an officer of a defeated army lectured him on what he was allowed to do.[765] The effects of Miyazaki's visit were nearly instantaneous, as awareness of the ramifications of Yan and 1st Army's leadership's duplicity triggered a wave of fury, mistrust, and even violence towards those linked to the pro-remain camp.[766] Faced with opposition from Chiang and the Nationalist government in Nanjing, and the anger of common soldiers, Yan and 1st Army's leadership finally set in motion the process of dissolving the *Tokumudan* and the evacuation of 1st Army.[767] Upon his departure on March 14, Miyazaki had every reason to believe that he had succeeded in his mission of securing the repatriation of every 1st Army soldier.[768]

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[762] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 104.
[763] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 102-103.
[764] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 105.
[765] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"*152-153.
[766] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"*162.
[767] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 122-123.
[768] At the time Miyazaki failed to discover the entire scope of the conspiracy in Shanxi. As it turned out, Miyazaki neither met with Jōno nor realized that he was one of the central conspirators on the Japanese side. It would not be until 1965 when Jōno published his memoir of the conspiracy that Miyazaki learned of his mistake to his deep regret. If he had spoken with Jōno, Miyazaki may have succeeded in uncovering the 2,600 1 Army soldiers secretly sequestered outside of Taiyuan, and thereby prevented numerous needless Chinese and Japanese deaths. Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"*156.

Unfortunately, Miyazaki's optimism proved to be naive. In May, Yamaoka sent a telegram to Miyazaki declaring that the evacuation of all 1st Army troops other than war criminals and the personnel in charge of their care was complete.[769] In reality, this was a total lie. Around the time of Miyazaki's visit Yan ordered Iwata and Jōno to contrive an elaborate deception to preserve the *Tokumudan,* but in a considerably reduced form.[770] Unknown to Miyazaki or later observers dispatched to Shanxi, a group of 2,600 *Tokumudan* soldiers were successfully hidden in villages outside of Taiyuan in March where they remained in total ignorance of Miyazaki's trip and its fallout.[771] Meanwhile, Sumita, Yamaoka, and Iwata maintained the appearance that that they were disbanding the *Tokumudan.* On April 15, they issued orders backdated to March, which called for the disbandment of the *Tokumudan* and the return of all volunteers to their original units no later than March 25 on the threat of being labeled deserters.[772] By backdating their orders, 1st Army's leadership gave the illusion of having complied with Miyazaki's instructions and also retroactively rendered the *Tokumudan*'s remaining 2,600 men as "deserters," thereby absolving 1st Army's leadership of any responsibility for the future actions of these men. Though much reduced in size, the conspirators finally succeeded in securing a Japanese army to aid Yan's ambitions and to serve as the vanguard for the restoration of the Imperial Japanese Army and a liberated Japan.

From its inception in 1946, the officers and men of the *Tokumudan* never believed they had been demobilized and were therefore still soldiers of the IJA. For these soldiers to have been demobilized, they first would have to have undergone the process of disarmament. This was not the case for 1st Army soldiers in the *Tokumudan*. One former *Tokumudan* soldier, Kikuchi Ichirō,

[769] There is no date for this telegram. Since 1st Army completed its evacuation in May I have assumed this to be the general period when the telegram was composed and transmitted.Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"*169.
[770] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"*172-173.
[771] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 121-122.
[772] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 116-117.

recalls that Communist soldiers only disarmed him and his comrades for the first time on April 24, 1949! [773] Yet another indication for these men that they were not demobilized was the fact that they believed 1st Army had issued them orders remain in Shanxi.[774] Ignorant of the machinations of their superiors, it is possible these men interpreted their orders to stay out of the belief that Imperial General Headquarters had sanctioned their mission. Be as it may, it was not just the lack of demobilization orders that convinced soldiers that they still fought for the IJA. In some cases, officers insisted to their men that they were indeed soldiers of prewar Japan's army. Sasaki Yuiharu recalls that when orders came for Japanese soldiers to trade their uniforms in for Chinese uniforms and to use Chinese names with Shanxi residents, his commanding officers admonished Sasaki and his comrades: "…[D]o not forget that you are soldiers of the Japanese Army!"[775] Rather than being isolated brazen pronouncements, language adopted by the leadership of the *Tokumudan* substantiated and validated such statements.

In order to inspire their men, the officers of the *Tokumudan* engaged in using political discourse and symbolism to maintain the belief among their men that they were soldiers of the IJA. The most evocative example of this was the decision by the *Tokumudan*'s vice commander, Colonel Imamura Hōsaku, to write and publish, *Regulations and Duties for All Units* (*Sōtaibufukumukitei*) on July 1, 1947.[776] Patterned off prewar IJA manuals, *Regulations and Duties for All Units* reproduced the same strictures and viewpoints found in prewar IJA manuals for soldiers. Like its prewar predecessors, this document conveyed an ideological vision to its readers. Before Japan's surrender, manuals insisted that soldiers were soldiers of the Emperor, and fought to preserve his rule. In contrast, Imamura's manual answered the question of why the

[773] *Zanryū no jissō*: *shiryō so no ichi* , 23.
[774] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 281-282; *Zanryū no jissō*: *shiryō so no ichi,* 17-18.
[775] *Zanryū no jissō*: *shiryō so no ichi,* 31.
[776] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai,* 139.

Tokumudan's soldiers fought with the following statement: "To return once more to the Emperor's army."[777] Furthermore, the manual claimed that the *Tokumudan* fought to realize again a Japan ruled by the Emperor and to project his power.[778] In these brief statements, Imamura's manual unambiguously stated the purpose of the *Tokumudan* and left no doubt as to who these soldiers were. Doubling down on this statement, Imamura issued the *Tokumudan* in 1947 a banner to be carried into battle that provocatively read: "The Emperor's Army."[779] There could be no confusion; the *Tokumudan* fought under the pretense that it was still a unit of the IJA.

Between March and May 1946, the 2,600 soldiers of the *Tokumudan* remained hidden in disparate groups across various Shanxi villages. These soldiers, however, were not alone. Joining these men were their Japanese or Chinese spouses, along with their children. As a later precaution, Yan transferred the *Tokumudan* and their families to Shanxi Army barracks in order to pass the men off as Shanxi soldiers. Although the rationale for removing the *Tokumudan* to the countryside was one of preventing news of their existence from leaking out, it does not appear that the daily lives of the of *Tokumudan*'s soldiers and their families were all that constricted.[780] To take up their time, soldiers constructed schoolhouses for their children and put on regular plays for entertainment. During the evenings, the men engaged in drills for repelling assaults by the 8th Route Army.[781] This period of hiding came to an end when Yan granted the *Tokumudan* the right to live in Taiyuan after the last of 1st Army's troops departed in May 1946. From this point forward, the *Tokumudan*'s soldiers and families lived in the open as Japanese and freely bought property and intermingled with the local population. But before too long, this

[777] Ibid.
[778] Ibid.
[779] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 144.
[780] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 173.
[781] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 174.

strange, quasi-idyllic life came to an end. In the years to come, there would be no shortage of battles to be fought.[782]

A detailed description of *Tokumudan*'s military operations between 1946 and 1949 goes beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice to say, beginning in the summer of 1946, the 2,600 soldiers of the *Tokumudan* found themselves once more back at war as civil war erupted again between the Nationalists and Communists. Over the course of fighting that lasted through 1949, the *Tokumudan* participated in large set-piece battles as well as innumerable small skirmishes with the Communist 8th Route Army in the plains and mountains of Shanxi.[783] Despite its small size, the *Tokumudan* proved to be especially effective fighters and served as an important morale booster to Yan's forces. Yet, the *Tokumudan*'s fighting was not without significant controversy. In the Jinzhong campaign of June 1948 Japanese forces plundered Chinese villages and witnessed war atrocities committed by Shanxi soldiers,[784] and later on in the climactic battle of Dongshan, Japanese forces employed poison gas artillery shells that claimed the lives of at least 500 of the total killed 18,000 Communist soldiers.[785] By the time that the *Tokumudan*'s remaining soldiers surrendered[786] on April 24, 1949 in the smoldering ruins of Taiyuan, the *Tokumudan* had suffered approximately 560 combat deaths and 550 taken as prisoners.[787] It is a

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[782] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 174-175.
[783] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 132; 135-136; 145-146; 152-157; 166-167.
[784] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 150-151.
[785] Yonehama, *Nihongun "Sansei zanryū,"* 210.
[786] Missing from this final surrender were Yamaoka and Sumita. In June 1948 Yamaoka left Shanxi ostensibly to search for new Japanese volunteers in Japan at the behest of Yan. While Yamaoka never left behind any form of testimony explaining his postwar actions, what is known is that he never returned to Shanxi. It is telling that the remaining *Tokumudan* soldiers never knew until after the war about Yamaoka's escape. Yamaoka was not the only conspirator to escape the consequences of his scheming. Sumita, the commander of 1 Army, departed on February 10, 1949, while even Yan, the ostensible reason that the *Tokumudan* existed after March 1946, fled for Nanjing and then Taiwan on March 29, 1949. Years after his escape and speaking from the safety of Taiwan, Yan would later claim that no Japanese forces had ever served him. In the end, only Iwata and Jōno remained to the bitter end.
[787] Ikeya, *Ari no heitai*, 132; 135-136; 145-146; 152-157; 166-167. These numbers are rough estimates only, based on the memory of participants and documents preserved from this period.

testament to the value and significance of the *Tokumudan* that had it not been there then Yan's forces likely would have succumbed to Communist forces long before April 1949.

Postwar Rebels

The story of the *Tokumudan* is profoundly unsettling. It is not a story of a few beleaguered holdouts in the Philippines or on an isolated Pacific island fighting as individuals. For three years after the Second World War's end, officers of the IJA deceived Japanese soldiers into forming a special military unit with the trappings of a regular IJA formation. Over the course of this period, these men continued to fight as an organized body and ultimately died in the same battlefields they had fought on for the previous eight years. The *Tokumudan*'s foundation and subsequent military activity between 1946 and 1949 challenges our established narratives and timelines of Japanese postwar military history.

The creation of the *Tokumudan* demonstrates the degree to which average soldiers no longer wished to return home after defeat, and the ease by which a dedicated group of rebellious officers could successfully subvert the process of demobilization and entrap thousands of soldiers. Like most soldiers of the IJA in all theaters of the war after Japan's surrender, the men of 1st Army had little enthusiasm to remain in China and fewer still desired to experience combat again. Simply put, many simply wished to go home and reunite with their families and return to civilian life now that Japan was was defeated. Yet, the *Tokumudan* could not have been formed without the use of deception. Confronted with such a mass of unwilling collaborators, the Shanxi conspirators resorted to playing upon soldiers' fears of postwar life, withholding information, the creation of fake orders, and the use of coercion to persuade thousands of soldiers to remain in

Shanxi. Through the combination of these acts, the conspirators succeeded in recruiting at least 10,000 soldiers by March 1946. If not for the fortuitous intercession of Lieutenant General Miyazaki, instead of 2,600 soldiers, more than a division's worth of soldiers would have remained under arms and become combatants in China's civil war for years to come. In the end, even a truncated *Tokumudan* was responsible for thousands of Chinese soldiers' deaths and suffered more than 500 losses of its own. In light of these facts, it is sobering to reflect on how close the Shanxi conspirators came to achieving their goals and seriously undermining the integrity of Japan's demobilization.

The goals and methods employed by the conspirators fit within a well established pattern of calculated insubordination and adventurism pursued by Japanese officers in China and Japan throughout the 1930s. Before the Second World War, Japan suffered numerous episodes of officers disobeying civilian and military authority to pursue conspiracies that either resulted in wars, such as in Manchuria in 1931, northern China, 1933-1936, Mongolia (Nomonhan Incident), 1939, or in a botched coup in Tokyo in 1936. Throughout these incidents, mostly young officers justified the deception of their superiors and circumvention of rules and laws out of the name of acting as patriots. In many cases, these actions resulted in great bloodshed and entangled Japanese soldiers in unsanctioned conflicts. Perhaps the most important precedent for the Shanxi conspirators was that of Ishiwara Kanji, the architect of the conspiracy for the conquest of Manchuria in 1931. Critically, Ishiwara trumpeted that only Manchuria's industry and natural resources could provide the necessary resource base for Japan's economic survival and competition against its neighbors. Such views were ultimately echoed in the rhetoric of the Shanxi conspirators. Instead of Manchuria, now the conspirators touted Shanxi province as the main means to facilitate Japan's postwar economic recovery. Consequently, the Shanxi

conspirators' channeled a tradition of rebellious behavior within the Imperial Japanese military in their creation of the *Tokumudan.* But by doing so in the wake of defeat, they also set themselves up as rebels against the new postwar order by rejecting Japan's defeat.

The founders of the *Tokumudan* not only rejected Japan's defeat but also the validity of the entire postwar order. Of course, the Japan for which the *Tokumudan* fought no longer existed. Its founders imagined their return to Japan to throngs of adoring people awaiting their liberation and the feasibility of constructing what amounted to a colony in China. But both Japan and Asia were utterly transformed by the war and Japan's defeat. The Japanese people had had enough of war and deference to uniformed men. If anything, the public backlash to the domestic demobilization of Japanese forces and the cold treatment of servicemen returning from overseas proved beyond a doubt this fact. The age of empire and prewar militarism was over in Asia. Jōno's visions of remaking Shanxi into a colony patterned off of Manchukuo were an anachronism of another an era, laid to rest by the Second World War's 60,000,000 dead. Simply put, the Japan and Asia imagined by the likes of Jōno and company ceased to exist on August 15, 1945.

Part Two: Japan's Remobilization for the Korean War

May 3, 1947, marked the start of a fundamental change in the character of the Japanese state and the political identity of its people. On this day, Japan's postwar "Peace Constitution" went into effect, ushering in radical democratic and social reforms that upended Japanese politics and daily life. Among these changes, one of the most revolutionary was the Constitution's Article 9, which declared Japan's renunciation of the right to wage war and maintain armed

forces.[788] While the meaning of this article remains one of the most contested pieces of writing in postwar Japan to this day, numerous regular citizens avidly embraced Article 9 and interpreted it as a literal abandonment of war powers by the Japanese state.[789] For millions of young men and women who had served in the war either overseas or at home, Article 9 meant freedom from the recent horror-filled past. For the first time, neither they nor their children could be forcefully conscripted again or have to face the prospect of going to war. Article 9, meant to these veterans, as it did to countless others too young to have served in the Second World War, a chance to enjoy the dividends of peace without fear.

But not even those veterans demobilized in Japan enjoyed absolute security from war. Just three years after renouncing the right to wage war, Japan became a critical partner of America's war effort in the Korean War (1950-1953). Japan is not recognized as an official co-belligerent in the Korean War. Officially, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces never served in Korea nor did any Japanese citizen serve in a combat zone or facilitate the conduct of military operations. Nonetheless, in the following section I argue that the Japanese government at the behest of American Occupation authorities clandestinely remobilized more than 8,000 citizens for direct service in the frontlines and in rear-echelon areas of the Korean War. Specifically, I examine this postwar remobilization through the prism of the dispatch of former IJN sailors in dangerous minesweeping operations on the Korean coastline and the conscription of Japanese Red Cross nurses for caring for wounded American soldiers a at a UN hospital in Japan.

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[788] "Japan: Article 9 of the Constitution," Library of Congress, last modified September 29, 2015, https://www.loc.gov/law/help/japan-constitution/article9.php.

[789] For an excellent in-depth discussion of varying interpretations of Article 9, see: "Japan: Interpretations of Article 9 of the Constitution," The Law Library of Congress September, Global Research Center, last modified August 8, 2016, https://www.loc.gov/law/help/japan-constitution/interpretations-article9.php.

This experience of remobilization proved to be deeply upsetting and traumatic for many of these men and women. However, they were not passive or ignorant victims. I also argue that these sailors and nurses were keenly aware of their rights and the state's powers under Japan's new constitution. While many sailors opposed their remobilization as an unconstitutional act and a violation of their rights, critically, some succeeded in terminating their remobilization altogether through open defiance. By doing so, these men and women powerfully demonstrated the degree to which even veterans had come to identify with the political values of the postwar order and embrace the necessity and validity of Japan's demobilization and demilitarization.

The Final Sortie of the Imperial Navy

On October 17, 1950, a Japanese sailor named Nakatani Sakatarō died off the North Korean port of Wonsan when his minesweeper sunk upon contact with a Soviet mine. Neither Nakatani's death nor the mission he was a part of ever appeared in the Japanese media or received acknowledgement by the Japanese government. The truth, if it had been revealed, would have sparked a constitutional crisis and called into question the completeness of Japan's demobilization. Caving into pressure from the United States, the Japanese government dispatched a fleet of minesweepers from its Maritime Safety Agency (MSA) to clear mines off the Korean peninsula between summer of 1950 and the end of the war in 1953. In an echo of the Second World War, the majority of the 1,200 sailors of the MSA were former IJN sailors. Heading back to war for a second time in five years, many sailors felt deceived by the Japanese government, which had kept the purpose and scope of their mission secret. Consequently, officers and regular sailors came to view their mission as unconstitutional at worst and of dubious legality at best. Despite assurances that their activities would not amount to aiding the

UN war effort or place them into danger, the sailors of the MSA were repeatedly placed on the frontlines of the Korean War at sea. By relying on veterans of the Second World War to fight in the Korean War, the postwar Japanese state betrayed it commitment to upholding its foundational principle of pacifism, and most alarmingly of all, constructed a disturbing thread of continuity in violence and military action that tied itself to its prewar predecessor.

Japan's participation in Korean War naval operations is rooted in the incomplete demobilization of the IJN at the start of the occupation of Japan. At the start of the Allied occupation of Japan, tens of thousands of Japanese and Allied mines infested Japanese ports, coastlines, and key shipping channels.[790] So dangerous was this problem that between 1945 and 1953, some 90 vessels sunk due to mines, at times only a few hundred feet from Japan's shore. In total, postwar collisions with mines accounted for an appalling 2,294 killed and 424 injured.[791] Indicative of how seriously the Allies took the threat of these mines, on September 2, 1945, the Occupation issued General Order Number 1, which in addition to calling for the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military, ordered the IJN to comply with orders for clearing mines. This was followed by SCAPIN Order Number 2, which included instructions for the Japanese government to take charge of all minesweeping duties in Japanese and Korean waters.[792] Execution of these orders ultimately necessitated the retention of thousands of IJN personnel. Inadvertently, this would lead to a delay in the full demobilization of Japan's navy and the creation of an organization that would preserve in miniature the skills and personnel of the IJN.

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[790] By war's end, the IJN had placed 55,347 mines around the Japanese coastline to hinder any Allied invasion efforts. In addition, the United States Navy submarines and airplanes had dropped 6,546 motion detector mines in key shipping channels and ports in order to interdict Japanese shipping. Yasunobu Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen: saigo no senshisha* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2013), 35.
[791] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen*, 36.
[792] Ibid.

On September 16, 1945, the Japanese government established the Minesweeping Bureau in the Navy Ministry's Military Affairs Office. This was followed by the creation of six regional commands that oversaw a force of 10,000 IJN sailors and 385 minesweeping vessels of varying types.[793] Commanding minesweeping operations were mine warfare specialist, Captain Tamura Kyūzō, and 713 other IJN officers who were granted special protection from the Occupation's purge of military officers from public service in 1946.[794] At a time when IJA and IJN officers underwent demobilization or were purged from public service, the Minesweeping Bureau became a rare refuge for such men. However, in 1948, the Minesweeping Bureau was significantly reduced in size to just 1,508 personnel and 53 boats when it was placed under the control of the Maritime Safe Agency (MSA). Critically, Murata remained the head of the minesweeping operations, while his personnel were still mainly former IJN sailors.[795] By 1950, after nearly five years of clearing Japan's waterways, Murata and his crews were arguably the most experienced minesweepers in the Western Pacific.[796] This fact would not escape the attention of the United States Navy (USN) in the early months of the Korean War.

Deeply troubled by its shortage of minesweepers for clearing North Korean mines for its upcoming landing at the northeastern North Korean port of Wonsan in October 1950, the USN looked to Japan's MSA for help. [797] On October 2, 1950, USN Vice Admiral Arleigh Burke met with Ōkubo Takeo, head of the MSA, and ordered him to mobilize his vessels for service with the USN's 7th Fleet. Ōkubo flatly rejected this demand, insisting such an action was

[793] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen*, 37-38.
[794] Ibid.
[795] Ibid.
[796] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen*, 40.
[797] As of this time, the majority of American minesweepers in the Pacific were stationed in California. Further worsening matter was the fact that Britain, Canada, and Australia, failed to contribute minesweepers of their own to the war effort.

unconstitutional. He further added that only Japan's Prime Minister, Yoshida Shigeru, could make this decision.[798] Seeking advice, Ōkubo swiftly secured a meeting with Yoshida.

To Ōkubo's surprise, Yoshida expressed willingness to cooperate with Burke's order. Hitherto, Yoshida had resisted American pressure to dispatch Japan's *Yobitai* (National Police Reserve) to the Korean peninsula on constitutional grounds, but had promised to provide considerable non-military aid.[799] The reasons for Yoshida's volte-face were twofold. As an occupied nation, Yoshida could only resist American pressure so long before losing the confidence of the Americans and the Occupation. More importantly, however, Yoshida had his eyes on the future and did not wish to jeopardize ongoing negotiations for a peace treaty with America.[800] In the end, Yoshida seems to have made the wager that the price of retaining America's confidence was worth the dispatch of MSA vessels to Korea. Yoshida's decision was not unprecedented. Since June, Japan had cooperated with the Occupation and the USN in conscripting nearly 138 merchant marine ships and upwards to 7,750 sailors to ferry UN troops and war materials to Korea. Shrouded in secrecy, it is unlikely that Ōkubo was aware of this fact, or that some of these sailors had landed marines at Inchon in the face of North Korean fire.[801] Still, it appears Yoshida was sensitive to the illegality of dispatching minesweepers to Korea, and therefore repeatedly warned Ōkubo that he was to keep the MSA's deployment "top secret."[802] Whether Yoshida dwelled on the implications of his orders for the lives of the MSA's sailors is unclear. What is certain is that his instructions would place IJN veterans and Japanese citizens once more into a warzone without the benefit of a proper justification.

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[798] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen,* 31.
[799] Ibid.
[800] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen,* 30-31.
[801] Yōji Kasawa, "Dai yon shō chōsen sensō to nihonjin sen'in: gunyōsen nado no jōsōin toshite," *Kaiin,* no 10. (October 2007): 91.
[802] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen,* 29.

Disturbed by the unconstitutional nature of the whole affair and lack of any formal orders, Ōkubo refused to comply until Occupation authorities issued written orders. On October 4, 1950, Ōkubo received written orders that finally paved the way for sending Japanese sailors back to war.[803] Specifically, Ōkubo desired for the Occupation to reissue SCAPIN Order Number 2, which MacArthur issued at the start of the Allied occupation. Critically, this order instructed the Japanese government to take charge of clearing mines from Japanese and *Korean* waters. Although drafted for the explicit purpose of clearing Japanese and Allied mines from the Second World War, the order's inclusion of Korean waters provided a pretext for deploying Japanese minesweepers in 1950 to Korea. By reissuing this old order, Ōkubo and the Americans shielded their real intentions behind the fig leaf of dispatching Japanese minesweepers in accordance with preexisting orders. If there were mines left over from the Second World War, it would have been impossible to discern if they were Japanese, Allied, or North Korean. Certainly, this ambiguity was the whole point.

On October 6, 1950, 20 minesweepers and five other assorted vessels of the MSA gathered at Karato base in the port of Shimonoseki in Yamaguchi prefecture. That same day, the commander of the MSA's minesweeper force, Captain Tamura, revealed to his subordinate commanders for the first time orders commanding their deployment overseas.[804] Due to its ambiguous language, these orders caused considerable confusion and anger. To the frustration of all those assembled, the orders did not say where the MSA would deploy to, but merely stated that the MSA would deploy in four squadrons to "Korean waters." This open-ended instruction left much for interpretation. More troubling was the next set of orders. All MSA vessels were henceforth under the jurisdiction of the USN's 7th Fleet and were to remove any identifying

[803] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen*, 33.
[804] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen*, 71.

markings that could attribute them to the Japanese government and fly the international signal "E" flag, used for commercial shipping. Ominously, pay would be doubled while in Korean waters, surely a sign of danger to come, and would be handled by the USN, yet another indicator that this mission was of dubious legality.[805] Although the orders did not reveal the destination of the MSA's deployment, it was sufficiently obvious to all they would deploy to an active warzone.

Dread and unease overcame the gathered officers now that they knew they were heading to war. In a fit of anxiety, a number of officers peppered Tamura with questions about the legality of their orders. One officer, pointing out that their orders would certainly make them participants in the war, demanded of Tamura, "If that's so, isn't it unconstitutional?"[806] But Tamura was unable to provide a satisfying answer to either this question or others that followed. Instead, he insisted that they stick to their jobs and perform their duties.[807] Unsatisfied with Tamura's responses, a number of captains and their subordinates decided to draft a list of four conditions that would dictate their cooperation with the Americans. Of these conditions, the most pertinent was the third, which stated that they agreed to only clear mines in waters below the 38th parallel where combat was no longer ongoing.[808] Tamura, made aware of these conditions, gave his word that nobody would serve in North Korean waters.[809] Tamura's officers would not forget the contents of this agreement over the course of the coming weeks.

Similar to their officers, confusion and anxiety pervaded among regular MSA sailors as news of their upcoming mission spread. Although many of the MSA's personnel were former IJN sailors, they were firm believers in postwar Japan's new identity as a pacifist nation and

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[805] Yōichi Hirama, "Sōkaitei haken: chōsen sensō ji no kyōkun," *Chūōkōron* 106, no. 6 (June 1991): 128.
[806] Ibid.
[807] Ibid.
[808] Ibid.
[809] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen*, 149.

sought to uphold their new constitution.[810] For these men, going to war again was not only inconceivable, but an abject violation of their nation's constitution. Citing these points, one anonymous MSA sailor angrily denounced the deployment to Korea thusly:

> Since Japan abandoned war due to its newly established constitution, at this point in time there is no reason to go and expose our lives in dangerous places for the sake of another country's war. Moreover, we are no longer servicemen, [we are] state public servants and administrative officials… [With] the mission to rebuild Japan, [we] have willingly striven to carry out domestic mine sweeping missions for reconstructing Japan. [We] cannot assent to going to war for the purpose of clearing mines in another country. If it is an order of the Occupation Army, then is it not the case that the Japanese government has no choice but to comply?[811]

As expressed above, many MSA sailors were personally disgusted with the prospect of their mission. Despite their backgrounds as demobilized servicemen, these sailors no longer believed they were legally obligated to perform military duties. However, they also felt entrapped by their status as mere sailors and government employees who had no formal say on what they were ordered to do. In reality, it was difficult for many of these men to consider abandoning their posts, since few had employment prospects if they left and the work dues to its dangerous nature paid comparatively high wages.[812] Tied by a sense of obligation and financial reasons, all but two MSA sailors ultimately complied with orders to serve in Korean waters.[813] The remaining men, wracked by doubt about the legality of their mission and their personal safety, prepared to go once more to war.

The MSA's deployment to Korea would prove to be far more dangerous than either the MSA sailors or their officers anticipated. Of the four MSA squadrons at Shimonoseki, three were dispatched to South Korean waters, but the Second Squadron, led by Tamura in his flagship

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[810] Hirama, "Sōkaitei haken," 129.
[811] Ibid.
[812] Nobuyuki Kanō, "Nihon sōkaitai no chōsen sensō sanka," *Gunjishigaku* 34, no. 1 (June 1982): 82.
[813] Hirama, "Sōkaitei haken," 129.

Yūchidori, received drastically different orders: they were to proceed beyond the 38th parallel and rendezvous with American warships and transports of the USN's 7th Fleet off of Wonsan.[814] The real intention of this mission, as the MSA's men now learned, was to land American and South Korean troops on the beaches of Wonsan. However, the 7th Fleet's timetable fell apart from the outset.[815] On October 12, the discovery of ultimately what amounted to 3,000 mines necessitated the postponement of the landings until October 26.[816] In the meantime, minesweepers would need to clear sufficiently sizable sea lanes to allow transports room to safely land on Wonsan's shoreline. Joining the Japanese squadron was an American detachment of four minesweepers and a destroyer, as well as a South Korean frigate, YMS 516.[817] Far from clearing mines in a noncombat zone, as many MSA officers had agreed only to do, they and their squadron were now serving on the frontlines of the war.

From the start, minesweeping at Wonsan proved to be deadly. On the afternoon of October 12, the American detachment made first contact with Wonsan's minefield. While taking evasive maneuvers, the minesweeper USS *Pirate* struck a mine and sunk within minutes, instantly killing six of its crew. The *Pirate*'s 60 survivors soon came under shell fire from North Korean shore batteries, which then turned their attention to the minesweeper, USS *Pledge*, which was severely damaged and then sunk after hitting a mine as well. Five more sailors were killed in this incident. Coming to the aid of the stricken sailors was the minesweeper, USS *Redhead*, which suffered extensive damage before the North Korean batteries were finally destroyed. In

[814] Second Squadron consisted of four minesweepers, three patrol craft, as well as Tamura flagship, which is listed as an airplane tender. All vessels were built for the IJN during the Second World War. Ibid
[815] Ibid.
[816] It is a testament to the prodigious amount of mines and the difficulties encountered in removing them that by the time UN forces landed, South Korean units had already advanced over land and secured the beachhead. Thus, the Wonsan landings proved to be redundant. However, a few months later the clear of mines in Wonsan would prove invaluable in permitting the evacuation of UN forces fleeing advancing Chinese armies. Ibid.
[817] Shizuo Yamazaki, *Shijitsu de kataru chōsen sensō kyōryoku no zenyō* (Tokyo: Hon no izumisha, 1998),254-255.

total, 12 Americans were killed and 43 wounded. Without any weapons other than small arms, the Japanese minesweepers were of little use in the ensuing battle and were forced to be passive observers - a fact that likely was agreeable to all of the Japanese sailors.[818] With half of the American minesweeping force either sunk or critically damaged on just the first day, much of the minesweeping duties would fall to the MSA.

Just five days after the sinking of the *Pirate* and *Pledge,* disaster struck the MSA among Wonsan's troubled waters. On October 17, Japanese minesweeper, MS 14, collided with a mine during routine minesweeping operations and disappeared in a funnel of water and a cloud of falling debris. At the time of the sinking, the boat's cook, Nakatani Sakatarō, was killed instantaneously while preparing lunch for MS 14's crew. In addition to Nakatani, two more sailors were seriously injured and 13 others suffered injuries of varying degrees.[819] The worst had happened: Japanese sailors were once again dead and wounded due to hostile action in a war. This was not supposed to have been possible in postwar Japan. After Japanese and American vessels rescued MS 14's shocked survivors from the sea, Tamura called a meeting on his flagship where around half his captains proceeded to demand that they promptly return home. "[We] do not want to get caught up any further in this war. Stop the minesweeping. [820][We] should return to Japan," complained one captain.[821] Reminding Tamura of the previously agreed upon conditions for taking part in the mission, another captain stated, "The four conditions for our participation and cooperation from before our departure have all fallen apart… [We] were tricked."[822] Although their American counterparts were willing to accept injury and death as

[818] Kanō, "Nihon sōkaitai no chōsen sensō sanka," 81.
[819] Hirama, "Sōkaitei haken,"129.
[820] Ibid.
[821] Ibid.
[822] Ibid.

reasonable risks, this was not part of the job description for civilian employees of the MSA. Wonsan was an active warzone and the MSA's officers and sailors had no desire to remain any longer in a position where their lives were at risk.[823] With morale perilously low, it was no longer tenable for Tamura to stay the course.

Nevertheless, Tamura attempted to salvage the MSA's mission. Resisting pressure to scupper the mission altogether, Tamura tried to negotiate a deal to allow for some of his crews to go home and replace them with fresh replacements before resuming minesweeping operations.[824] Although the American commander of minesweeping operations agreed to this request, the commander of the American landing force, Rear Admiral Allen Smith was furious. Claiming there was no time for such measures, Smith threatened Tamura that either Japanese vessels resumed minesweeping the following morning, or he would fire on them if they did not depart for Japan within 15 minutes.[825] With memories of the war fresh on both sides, Smith's ultimatum only enraged Tamura's captains, who learned the news from a visibly shaken and angry Tamura.[826] Already intent on discontinuing their mission, the MSA's captains decided against Tamura's wishes that it was better to disobey orders than continue serving in a situation that could lead to the deaths of more of their men.[827] Thus, three vessels of MS 14's original unit, MS 17, MS 06, and MS 03 deserted their posts on October 18 and arrived at Shimonoseki on October 20.[828]

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[823] Yamazaki, *Shijitsu de kataru chōsen sensō kyōryoku no zenyō,* 260.
[824] Hirama, "Sōkaitei haken,"129.
[825] To this day, there remains considerable disagreement over whether or not Rear Admiral Smith actually threatened to fire upon MSA vessels.
[826] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen,* 153.
[827] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen,* 148.
[828] Hirama, "Sōkaitei haken,"129-130.

Although the crews of the three boats that deserted Wonsan managed to escape suffering repercussions for their actions, their captains were not so lucky. Upon the USN's insistence, the Japanese government fired all three captains shortly after their landfall.[829] It is difficult to find fault with the MSA's sailors who deserted Wonsan. For many of these men, having survived the Second World War in the IJN, few were desirous to become victims of an undeclared and unconstitutional war that they had not signed up to fight. For this, if no other reason, these men and their crews disobeyed orders. Prewar Japanese history is replete with acts of military disobedience, though these frequently took the form of violent and criminal behavior. It is therefore significant that at the birth of postwar Japan, its sailors mutinied in the name of preserving the postwar Japanese state's avowed principles of pacifism when their government proved willing to betray them.

In the end, Tamura, and the three remaining patrol craft stayed on station and would continue their work after receiving reinforcements of further MSA minesweepers in October and November.[830] Yet Wonsan remained a dangerous battlefield for those involved in minesweeping. In a confirmation of the worst fears of those MSA sailors who deserted Wonsan, on October 19, a mine sunk the South Korean frigate, YMS 516, with the loss of four dead and 13 missing.[831] Nearly a month later, on November 15, a transport crewed by Japanese sailors collided with another mine, killing all but one of its 26 crew.[832] Following the Wonsan operation, Japanese MSA vessels continued to carry out minesweeping duties around the Korean peninsula until the war's end in 1953. However, these operations were not without further incident. Off the southern

[829] Hirama, "Sōkaitei haken,"130.
[830] Ibid.
[831] Stephen Dwight Blanton, "A Study of the United States Navy's Minesweeping Efforts in the Korean War" (MA Thesis, Texas Tech University), 133.
[832] Anzō Ishimaru, "Chōsen sensō to nihon no kakawari: wasuresarareta kaijōyusō," *Senshikenkyūnenpō* 11, (March 2008): 35.

South Korean port of Mokpo, yet another MSA minesweeper sunk, but miraculously with no loss of life.[833] Compared to the Second World War, the MSA's deployment was relatively bloodless. Yet for those who participated, the risk of death and injury was real as were the losses suffered by Japanese and UN sailors due to North Korean mines and shellfire.

To this day, the experiences of these men sit awkwardly outside the ken of standard Japanese history. Officially, no Japanese citizen has died in action in service of postwar Japan. Taking their cues, few military and standard histories of Japan have bothered to record the experiences of the last Japanese citizens who went to war. This state of affairs is no large part due to Yoshida's refusal after the Korean War to acknowledge the MSA's deployment in the face of questions by opposition Diet members and the failure of successive governments' to speak frankly about the matter. What did the Japanese government think about the MSA's deployment? At war's end, both Ōkubo and Yoshida congratulated the MSA's sailors by proclaiming that their efforts greatly contributed to international security and the establishment of a "new Japan."[834] It is especially telling that both figures saw this act of military action as critical to Japan's rebirth. Despite the official narrative of postwar Japan's break with its prewar militaristic past, the prime minister and one of his government's top bureaucrats firmly believed that Japan's citizens participation in war served as critical act in defining the identity of the new postwar Japanese state.

The deployment of the MSA represented a serious breach of Japan's postwar constitution and demonstrated the ease to which the Japanese state could remobilize Japanese citizens for war. In a telling twist of language, the USN justified the use of Japanese crewed vessels by classifying

[833] Shirōchi, *Shōwa nijyūgonen,* 213.
[834] Hirama, "Sōkaitei haken,"130-131.

them as "contracted" minesweepers.[835] In this way, the USN sought to erase the nationality of these ships and the political and social ramifications for deploying Japanese ships to a warzone just five years after Japan's surrender. Yoshida appears to have been no less willing to play along with this ruse despite protestations of feeling bad about sending veterans back to war.[836] In reality, Yoshida's actions and that of his government amounted to a remobilization of Japanese citizens, many of whom were IJN demobilized sailors, for an unconstitutional war. In withholding the true purpose of the deployment to Korea from the MSA's sailors, the Japanese government showed scant regard for the wellbeing of its veterans and a disturbing willingness to use them as disposable pawns in a war that was never theirs to fight.

Twice Conscripted: Japanese Red Cross Nurses in the Korean War

The experiences of Japanese Red Cross (JRC) nurses stands out as one of the most perplexing and chilling examples of the Japanese state's mobilization of its citizens for the Korean War. In an episode with no parallel in the postwar, JRC officials illegally reissued wartime-era draft papers instructing nearly 100 JRC nurses to tend to wounded American GIs at a UN field hospital between December 1950 and the winter of 1952. Under Japan's postwar constitution, these orders amounted to a dubious use of Japanese citizens during wartime since the nurses rendered assistance to facilitate the American war effort by helping soldiers recover and return to fighting. Throughout their wartime service, many of the JRC nurses firmly believed the JRC's actions to be illegal under Japan's constitution. In order to secure the compliance of JRC nurses, the JRC and the Japanese government resorted to using coercion, fear, and outright

[835] Hirama, "Sōkaitei haken,"133.
[836] Kanō, "Nihon sōkaitai no chōsen sensō sanka," 78.

deceptions regarding who had ordered their mobilization. For JRC nurses, many of whom were drafted during the Second World War or had just finished their training at war's end, the experience of being compelled to serve in yet another war revealed how little Japan's new constitution and the postwar state protected its citizens from the threat of illegal remobilization for war.

The 1950 call up of JRC nurses fit within the JRC's prior pattern of close cooperation with the Imperial Japanese military in the Second World War. The JRC's mandate, as it was with its parent organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, was to serve as a neutral humanitarian relief organization in times of disasters and war. However, the JRC repeatedly amended its bylaws between 1903 and 1922 to permit the mobilization and dispatch of nurses overseas in conjunction with the Imperial Japanese military as well as requiring nurses to serve for 12 years upon graduating the JRC's nursing school.[837] Between 1937 and 1945, 31,450 JRC nurses received summonses to serve alongside the IJA and IJN in Japan and overseas.[838] Like regular servicemen, these notices took the form of the notorious red paper (*akagami*) draft notices.[839] Reflecting their integration into the overall wartime military hierarchy, JRC nurses were commonly referred to as *Jyūgun kangofu* (military service nurses), a term that was also typically used as a label for nurses trained by the Imperial Japanese military.[840] During their service, JRC nurses frequently came under fire during their work tending to wounded soldiers on the battlefield and in military hospitals. In total, 1,120 JRC nurses died during the Second World War, while an unknown further number perished while caught up in postwar fighting in Asia.[841]

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[837] Keiko Kawaguchi, "Jyūgun kangofu e no michinori ni kan suru kenkyū nōto (4): dai niji sekai taisensō to sono ato," *Ōsakaken kōfukushi tankidaigaku kiyō*, no. 5 (March 2007): 94.
[838] Kawaguchi, "Jyūgun kangofu e no michinori ni kan suru kenkyū nōto," 97.
[839] Konoe Yamazaki, *Hozutsu no hibiki: aru Jyūgun kangofu no kiroku* (Tokyo: Kōchishinbunsha, 1980), 38-39.
[840] Kawaguchi, "Jyūgun kangofu e no michinori ni kan suru kenkyū nōto," 96.
[841] Kawaguchi, "Jyūgun kangofu e no michinori ni kan suru kenkyū nōto," 97.

For those nurses who survived to return to Japan after the war, it is likely that none wished to experience war ever again. Yet perversely, their mobilization and sacrifices, instead of serving as an argument against wartime service, established a precedent for the remobilization of JRC nurses for the Korean War.

JRC nurses had no reason to fear that the JRC or the Japanese government might call them up for service in the Korean War. Since 1947, Article 9 of Japan's overwhelmingly popular postwar Japanese Constitution forbade the Japanese state from exercising the right to make war or to raises forces of any kind for such activities.[842] In this context, it was reasonable for nurses to believe any such order for their wartime mobilization would conflict with Article 9. Additionally, there was the issue of the JRC and the Japanese government's power to compel nurses to serve. At the start of the Allied occupation of Japan, Occupation authorities abolished the Japanese government's power of conscription, thereby freeing all Japanese citizens from the fear of compulsory wartime service.[843] Thus, Japan could not constitutionally provide assistance to United Nations' forces in Korea via the JRC and neither could it legally call up and compel JRC nurses to engage in such activity. It is only against this backdrop that it is possible to appreciate the shock that some JRC nurses underwent when they discovered that none of this mattered.

On December 8, 1950, JRC chapters in each of the prefectures of the southern Japanese main island of Kyūshū issued summonses to around 100 nurses calculated to instill an equal measure of fear and obedience.[844] For JRC nurses in Saga prefecture, the only prefecture where

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[842] "The Constitution of Japan," The Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, accessed November 4, 2019, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html.
[843] Kawaguchi, "Jyūgun kangofu e no michinori ni kan suru kenkyū nōto," 99.
[844] The prefectures are as follows: Nagasaki, Saga, Fukuoka, Ōita, Kumamoto, Kagoshima, and Miyazaki. Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi* (Saga: Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu , 1991). 338.

substantial records of the subsequent events exist, the summonses were equally unexpected and upsetting. Makiko Chieko, a nurse from Saga working in a hospital in Fukuoka prefecture, learned of her call up when hospital staff ordered her and fellow JRC nurses to go to their manager's office in the middle of the night.[845] Once assembled, the manager announced that Makiko and her colleagues had received summonses from the JRC, and proceeded to hand over something that ought never to have existed in postwar Japan: a reissued red colored wartime draft slip emblazoned with the large words: "Call Up Notice (*Shōshū reijō*)."[846] Below this was a laconically written order: "On December 10 at 1 PM, be present at your branch office." These extraordinary orders overwhelmed Makiko with fear.[847] Despite Japan's official embrace of pacifism and its thorough demilitarization, there was a wartime red draft paper with her name on it. Makiko had just avoided serving in the Second World War when Japan surrendered before her graduation from the JRC's academy. But, now all she could think to herself was, "Will I be sent to Korea?"[848] Makiko was thrown into confusion. What should she do? She knew that Article 9 was in effect and that these orders were likely unconstitutional. Yet she recalled her senior peers who served in the war instructing her upon graduation that she must absolutely submit to call up orders from the JRC. Despite feeling conflicted and upset, Makiko complied with her call up paper's orders and reported for duty the next day.[849]

Fear and unbridled anger pervaded Makiko and her fellow 19 other nurses and hospital workers who assembled at the JRC Saga headquarters on December 9.[850] Among those gathered were nurses who had served in the Second World War. One such anonymous veteran had

[845] "Watashi wa chōsen sensō ni shōshū sareta," *Min'iren shinbun,* May 21, 2002, 1.
[846] Ibid.
[847] Kawaguchi, "Jyūgun kangofu e no michinori ni kan suru kenkyū nōto," 99.
[848] "Watashi wa chōsen sensō ni shōshū sareta," 1.
[849] Ibid.
[850] Ibid.

participated in the disastrous battle for Guadalcanal in the South Pacific where Japanese soldiers fell to bullets and disease in the thousands in unrelenting heat.[851] Having no illusions about the realities of war, the thought of being remobilized was both a terrifying and unbearable prospect. Crying tears of anger, she said, "I just returned home from military service in the south, and now a draft notice came…"[852] Fed up, she and other veteran nurses took out their red draft notices and ripped them up while declaring, "I won't go!" They then turned to Makiko and other nurses who did not serve in the war and yelled, "You all don't have to go either!"[853] Although a number of veteran nurses ultimately refused their call up orders, Makiko and 16 other nurses did not. Whether out of fear or as in Makiko's case, duty, they decided to comply with the JRC's orders without knowing what awaited them.[854]

Confronted by the inconceivable postwar scenario of being drafted for wartime service, JRC nurses in Kyūshū likely wished to know who had ordered their mobilization. The most telling clue for answering this question was a sentence written on a sheet of paper that accompanied every draft notice. This statement read as follows, "Due to instructions from the [JRC's] headquarters, [which are] based upon orders by the Allied Army General Headquarters, it has been decided that you are ordered to be called up."[855] The above sentence explicitly implicates the American Occupation as the main party that ordered the JRC's mobilization. It is unclear what prompted the Americans to request the JRC's help in December 1950. However, a likely explanation was the need for more medical personnel to cope with rising UN casualties

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[851] "Bundan, kirihanasenu nihon (chōsenhantō・kyūsen hanseki: 5)," *Asahi shinbun,* July 29, 2003, 6.
[852] "Watashi wa chōsen sensō ni shōshū sareta," 1.
[853] Ibid.
[854] Ibid.
[855] Kawaguchi, "Jyūgun kangofu e no michinori ni kan suru kenkyū nōto," 99.

because of China's recent entry into the war.[856] Regardless of the Occupation's motivations, this order contravened the constitution America gave Japan. What then were the Japanese government and the JRC's role in the issuance of this order?

The role of the Japanese government and JRC in the mobilization of JRC nurses remains ambiguous to this day. In the case of the Japanese government, there exists so far only one known instance where it discussed on record the deployment of JRC staff for the Korean War. Long before the Occupation ordered the mobilization of JRC nurses, the Japanese government considered the costs and benefits of such a move. In a committee hearing conducted by the Japanese Diet's House of Councilors on July 21, 1950, the Japanese government's Minister of Health and Welfare expressed little enthusiasm for unilaterally deploying JRC nurses for the Korean War since Japan was an occupied country and neither of the two Koreas was a signatory of the International Red Cross Convention. Critically, however, the minister admitted that on the first point, the government's stance might change towards engaging in "international activity" if it had "positive support" presumably from foreign powers.[857] The content of the Minister of Health and Welfare's remarks provide strong evidence that the Japanese government exercised close supervisory powers over the JRC and that it was potentially amendable to deploying JRC nurses if it received outside support. It is therefore credible to assume the Japanese government was closely involved, if not outright supportive of the Occupation's order for the mobilization of JRC nurses in December 1950. As for what were the JRC's views, it is impossible to know since their records on this matter remain unavailable to the public.[858] However, the actions of the JRC

[856] Yamazaki, *Shijitsu de kataru chōsen sensō kyōryoku no zenyō*, 148.
[857] Ibid.
[858] "Watashi wa chōsen sensō ni shōshū sareta," 1.

upon the departure of its nurses for deployment suggest that its members, if not its leadership, were supportive of the Occupation's orders.

On December 11, Makiko and 15 other JRC nurses participated in a series of sendoff ceremonies eerily reminiscent of those that took place in wartime Japan. For reasons that struck Makiko and other nurses as inexplicable, if not suggestive of militarist sympathies among their superiors, orders were issued that they don their wartime formal black uniforms, as well as wear their rucksacks, mess kits, and canteens as if they were heading off to a battlefield.[859] Thus attired in their wartime uniform and kit, the nurses gathered at Saga City Hall to hear a speech by the city's mayor. There, the mayor informed the nurses of the UN's deteriorating position in Korea, and that they would deploy to a UN hospital to care for wounded soldiers. The mayor concluded his remarks by reminding his listeners that he wanted them to "show sufficient spirit of humane benevolence" in their duties.[860] This was followed up by yet another speech, this time by a senior JRC nurse from Saga, who once again reminded the gathered nurses: "Now that you have received your orders, demonstrate the values of Japanese people without forgetting the spirit of benevolence."[861] The heavy-handed wartime language and symbolism was not lost on the nurses. Calls for the nurses to show "benevolence" invoked wartime sexist propaganda that emphasized the purity of women and their actions. Even the speeches themselves as well seemed to mimic wartime pep talks for sending conscripts off to war. If the intent of the speakers was to instill pride among their listeners, then such efforts were a complete failure. Five years after Japan's defeat and the death of 2.7 million soldiers and sailors, none of the nurses had any

[859] Ibid.
[860] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi*, 338.
[861] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi*, 339.

patience for bombastic martial exhortations.[862] Nonetheless, the wartime theatrics continued unabated.

As the ceremony moved outside, JRC officials ordered the gathered women to line up in formation and march to the local Shintō shrine to pray together before their departure. Such an act was nothing short of an overt political statement. The pageantry of women marching in formation in wartime uniforms to a Shintō shrine was an unmistakable reenactment of countless similar acts done by servicemen and dignitaries in wartime. Most alarming, however, was the symbolism of praying at the shrine. After Japan's surrender, the Occupation issued the so-called "Shinto Directive" on December 15, 1945, which abolished "state Shintō," the official state-approved form of Shintō that placed worship of the Emperor as a god at the center of ritual at shrines.[863] Thus, by having the nurses pray at a shrine, the JRC officials demonstrated their recalcitrant views on wartime religious practices and dragooned the nurses into brazen performance of political theater and historical reenactment.

But it was not enough for the JRC officials to have the women march to the shrine in formation. To the disgust of all 16 nurses, the local branch office manager ordered them to sing the wartime tune, "The Military Woman's Song" as they marched.[864] Although Makiko and her fellow nurses had submitted to their call up orders, the day's ceremonies had only increased their anger at being deployed for dubious purposes. Now, asked to sing a wartime song, it was impossible to ignore the militaristic nature of their mobilization. In a pointed sign of their displeasure, not one woman opened her mouth to sing as they marched on their way to the

[862] Ibid.
[863] Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York, Oxford University Press: 2017), 445-446.
[864] "Watashi wa chōsen sensō ni shōshū sareta," 1.

shrine.[865]After a day of unpleasant martial ceremonies, many of Saga's nurses felt that Occupation authorities and the JRC had violated their rights in order to send them off to war. Embodying this view was one anonymous nurse who during the sendoff ceremonies observed: "Our opponent, the Occupation Army, is stronger than the constitution."[866] As the day's events concluded, JRC and prefectural dignitaries bid the nurses a final farewell at Saga City's train station.[867] .

Certainly, the peculiar sight of nurses wearing wartime uniforms marching through Saga City must have raised suspicions among local residents no longer accustomed to seeing fellow citizens wearing military uniforms. However, any curious citizen would have found no discussion or reporting of the day's events in the media. By orders of the JRC's national executive vice-president, newspaper and radio reporters, as well as photographers, were banned from covering the departure of Saga's nurses.[868] It is likely that the JRC's leadership was deeply cognizant of the embarrassment that would ensue if it was reported that it was cooperating with United Nations' war effort and wished to avoid inconvenient questions being asked of the Japanese government's role in the affair. As a result, no media organ in Japan covered the day's events. If similar ceremonies were held elsewhere in Kyūshū, it is likely that press bans were also enforced, since there are no stories of other JRC sendoff ceremonies.

The JRC nurses' wartime deployment proved to be harrowing and degrading. Between December 1950 and January 1952, JRC nurses spent their wartime deployment helping care for 1,500 wounded American soldiers at the United Nations Army 141st Field Hospital in the village

[865] Ibid.
[866] Ibid.
[867] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi,* 339.
[868] Ibid.

of Shigamura, Fukuoka.[869] Although the nurses were relieved to be serving in Japan, they soon realized that life at the 141st Field Hospital would not be easy.[870] Upon their arrival, the nurses learned that they lacked the freedoms enjoyed by their Western peers and that their work environment was not safe. Unlike American staff, the JRC nurses did not have permission to move freely or leave the hospital's premises.[871] Worse still, the hospital did not provide the nurses adequate housing. Although the hospital was comprised of a mix of permanent and temporary prefabricated structures, the nurses lived in small tents for the length of their service. Further complicating matters were language differences and differing approaches to nursing among the American and Japanese nurses.[872] But of all the challenges, the most troubling was the behavior of American soldiers and medical staff. Although records only obliquely reference these incidents, it appears that JRC nurses feared and endured sexual harassment and violence during their work.[873] If any nurses pursued or received legal recourse for such behavior, there is no evidence for it. Already having been victimized by their own government, the JRC nurses were particularly vulnerable to being taken advantage of due to their unofficial status and the daunting barrier of having to navigate a foreign cultural and linguistic workplace at a military base in a time of war.

During their time at the 141st Field Hospital, the JRC nurses carried out duties ranging from those that utilized their training to those that were menial in nature. Typical of some of the work performed by the nurses were duties carried out by Makiko. Makiko found herself working at the surgical theater where she commonly witnessed wounded American soldiers brought in

[869] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi,* 340.
[870] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi,* 339.
[871] "Watashi wa chōsen sensō ni shōshū sareta," 1.
[872] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi,* 340.
[873] Ibid.

tears suffering from broken bones, frostbite, and psychological trauma.[874] Makiko assisted with preparing patients for surgery and with applying disinfectant on their wounds. Despite American pledges to "recognize JRC nurses as proper nurses," it frequently happened that this was not the case. In fact, American nurses often assigned JRC nurses various menial and undesirable tasks, such as washing the bodies of wounded soldiers, giving them massages, and laundering their linens.[875] For those who did not serve in Second World War, such as Makiko, the duties at 141st Field Hospital must have been difficult and unpleasant. But for those nurses who were already war veterans, what must have it been like for them to treat American soldiers after having braved American shells and bullets while tending Japanese wounded just five years earlier? What these nurses thought, we can only guess in the absence of any testimonies. Surely, their time in the Korean War rekindled traumatic memories that they had only barely begun to lay to rest.

After nearly a year of work, many JRC nurses were fed up with their work conditions and were increasingly worried about losing their peacetime jobs after being informed by their employers that their jobs would likely be filled by new hires.[876] Despite lodging numerous protests with the JRC, the JRC made no efforts to ameliorate the nurses' conditions or to terminate their deployment. Finding their situation intolerable, a number of nurses, including Makiko, approached the American management at the hospital to ask for help in January 1952.[877] In a stunning development, the Americans informed her that all JRC nurses were contracted employees and were free to quit at any time without consequence.[878] In the wake of this

[874] "Watashi wa chōsen sensō ni shōshū sareta," 1.
[875] As unpleasant at these tasks were, there were far worse duties carried out by other Japanese workers at the hospital. According to one nurse that Makiko spoke with, non-JRC Japanese workers were paid the truly spectacular sum of 10,000 yen per day to remove internal organs from the bodies of dead American soldiers for shipment back to America. Ibid; "Bundan, kirihanasenu nihon (chōsenhantō・kyūsen hanseki: 5)," 6.
[876] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi,* 340.
[877] Ibid.
[878] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi,* 341.

revelation, 11 Saga nurses, including Makiko, secured an end to their call up and left the 141st Field Hospital on January 30, 1952. Most nurses would soon follow suite in the coming months. However, it would not be until the war's end in 1953 that the final nurses returned to civilian life.[879]

From the moment their call up notices arrived, JRC nurses believed that they had been conscripted and were obligated to continue working for the 141st Field Hospital for as long as the war lasted. However, the JRC nurses' discovery that they were merely contract workers exposed the lengths by which the JRC had gone to deceive them. It is implausible that the JRC was not aware of the fact that its nurses were individually contracted as workers at the 141st Field Hospital. Since there is no evidence the JRC ever claimed that the Occupation or anyone else misled them about their nurses' employment status, it is likely that the JRC arranged for the nurses' contracts with the 141st Field Hospital. If true, this makes the JRC's decision to issue draft notices appear all the more callous. In other words, this decision appears to have been little more than a cruel charade intended to intimidate nurses into accepting an unconstitutional call up order that lacked any legal basis of enforcement. Consequently, the JRC's actions conferred its nurses with the unenviable honor of becoming Japan's last wartime conscripts.

The mobilization and deployment of JRC nurses in the Korean War remains shrouded in secrecy. In March 1952, the JRC informed the nurses that the details of their work were classified, and they were forbidden to talk about any aspect of their experiences.[880] It is doubtful that this gag order, like those call up papers sent to JRC nurses, had any basis for legal enforcement. Nevertheless, the JRC's attempt at suppressing knowledge of its nurses' activities

[879] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi,* 338.
[880] Nihon sekijyūjisha sagaken shibu ed., *Hyakunen no ayumi,* 341.

was a success. Makiko, the nurse who appears extensively in this section, remains the only nurse to have ignored the JRC's gag order and provided testimony about the JRC's involvement in the Korean War. Besides Makiko's testimony, the only historical evidence for the JRC nurses' wartime deployment is a few brief documents from JRC chapters, such as the one in Saga. Tantalizingly, there are still questions as to whether or not other JRC chapters were activated, and if so, were some of their nurses deployed to the Korean peninsula. Scholars are unlikely to answer these questions anytime soon. Frustratingly, the JRC adamantly refuses to open up its archives on its activities in the Korean War. While Japanese government archives have not objected to inquiries on the matter, this author has yet to find any relevant documents. The JRC and the Japanese government's silence on this matter mean that the Japanese public will remain largely ignorant of the JRC's involvement in the Korean War. This is a shame, since the mobilization of JRC nurses and the coercive means used for this end call into question the early postwar Japanese state's allegiance to pacifism.

Yet, we should also not lose sight of the fact the Makiko and her fellow nurses represented perhaps one of the highest ideals of postwar Japanese citizenship. While Makiko and fellow nurses ultimately complied with the JRC's orders, it was not without protest or a keen sense of injustice. From the beginning these women demonstrated an awareness of their individual rights under Japan's new constitution and showed a willingness to criticize their government. Furthermore, Makiko and her comrades took charge of their fate by terminating the conditions of their service through their own initiative. Amid the confusion of intentional deception by the JRC, these actions required grit and bravery due to the unknown consequences their actions entailed for their professional lives. Only a few years earlier at the height of the Second World War, such behavior would have been nearly unthinkable. Surely, the actions of

these women embodied the ideal form of citizenship enshrined in Japan's postwar constitution, even if their behavior was not what the Japanese state desired of them.

A Precedent for Remobilization

The experiences of the MSA sailors and JRC nurses in the Korean War remain obscure footnote in histories of postwar Japan. This is particularly unfortunate, because these examples were not anomalous but a part of a larger and disturbing pattern of remobilization that the Japanese government carried out during the Korean War. Although falling outside of the purview of this chapter, it is necessary to note that Japanese government mobilized 7,550 of its own merchant marine sailors to crew transports that landed UN troops on contested beaches and ferried war supplies to the Korean peninsula. Even more striking was the acquiescence of the Japanese government in permitting the raising of an ethnic Korean volunteer unit among former Japanese citizens that participated in numerous battles throughout the war.[881] Alone, the mobilization of MSA and JRC personnel for the Korean War represented dangerous acts of direct participation in the Korean War. But when placed into this larger context, these acts become a part of a wider concerted Japanese policy of covert direct intervention in the Korean War.

The experiences of the MSA sailors and JRC nurses provide powerful evidence of the ways in which the postwar Japanese state retained the capacity and willingness to mobilize its citizens for war. At a time when memories of the Second World War were still fresh and

[881] Before Japan's surrender, Koreans, as well as other colonial subjects, possessed citizenship under the Meiji Constitution (1889-1947). Japan's postwar constitution stripped non-ethnic Japanese off their citizenship, rendering them at best permanent residents, a condition which continues mostly unabated to this day. Hisao Ōnuma, "Chōsen sensō ni okeru nihonjin no sansen mondai." *Sensō sekinin kenkyū* 31, (Spring 2001): 2-4.

antimilitary sentiment was widespread, the Japanese state successfully forced thousands of its own citizens in secret to go to war. It is telling that though aspects of these events have existed in the public sphere for decades, historians and the wider Japanese public have largely ignored these events and continued to cling to a narrative of Japanese postwar pacifism. But the Japanese state's behavior in the Korean War suggests a much darker system of latent capacity for coercion and violence exists below the veneer of postwar Japan's pacifism. This history of using force to mobilize citizens for war and the successful evasion of responsibility to this day produce a disturbing link that ties the postwar Japanese state with the behavior of the prewar Japanese state.

Conclusion

How complete was the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military? Numerically speaking, demobilization was a success. Almost all of Japan's seven million surviving soldiers were back in Japan and out of uniform by 1950. On this basis alone, Japan's demobilization is commonly judged as an unqualified success. Yet, the events explored in Chapter Five's first half provide powerful evidence that Japan's demobilization was not as complete as is generally believed. The formation of the *Tokumudan,* the postwar unit of Japanese soldiers in China's Shanxi province, demonstrates the degree to which it was possible for Japan's demobilization to be circumvented and the deadly consequences that existed for those soldiers who were tricked into remaining in China. Despite orders for all Japanese soldiers to be repatriated and demobilized in China, the leadership of CEA's 1st Army in Shanxi conspired to prevent many of their soldiers from returning home. Although the *Tokumudan* ultimately came to comprise just 2,600 soldiers, if not for a fortuitous inspection visit by one IJA officer, a force of at least10,000 soldiers, nearly an equivalent to an entire IJA division would have remained under arms in

northern China beyond 1946. Even as a much smaller force, the *Tokumudan* engaged in numerous battles from 1946 to 1949 that killed hundreds of Japanese soldiers and left dead thousands of Chinese soldiers and civilians. This was the consequence of an incomplete demobilization.

The story of the *Tokumudan* is chilling. The conspirators behind its creation acted out of a desire to revive the prewar Japanese state and military. Their aims entailed nothing less than constructing the nucleus of a future Imperial Japanese military that would one day spearhead the rebirth of Japan's empire. Certainly, much of what these conspirators dreamed of was beyond their means to bring about. Still, the continued existence of such ambitions and an actual force of thousands of soldiers who thought of themselves as members of an unbowed IJA represented a threat to the integrity of Japan's demobilization and its liberation from its prewar militaristic past. For this reason, it is difficult to claim that Japan's demobilization was complete. So long as soldiers remained in the field through deception or under the belief that they fought and killed in the name of the IJA, the Imperial Japanese military's demobilization remained unfinished.

Just as Chapter Five's discussion of the *Tokumudan* questions the completeness of Japan's demobilization, the chapter's second half undermines the notion that Japan's citizens within Japan remained free from the threat of remobilization for war in the postwar. With the ratification of Japan's postwar constitution and the thorough demilitarization of Japanese society and the demobilization of its military, Japanese citizens had every reason to think they no longer had to fear being sent off to war. But under pressure by the American government, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru's government secretly compelled the mobilization of thousands of citizens for service in the Korean War. Two such examples of this was the dispatch of hundreds of MSA sailors for clearing mines in Korean waters and the JRC's remobilization of almost 100

nurses through the issuance of illegal wartime draft notices for work at a UN field hospital in Japan. In each of these cases, Japanese citizens, many of them veterans of the Second World War, were coerced into serving in a war that they understood to be unconstitutional. Moreover, coercion was regularly used to secure the compliance of these men and women who viewed their remobilization as unconstitutional and violation of their rights. None of what happened to these men and women in the Korean War should have been possible in postwar Japan. Nonetheless, these men and women were compelled to go to war again in an act that amounted to a temporary reversal of Japan's demobilization. Such acts demonstrated the postwar Japanese state's willingness to remobilize illegally its citizens for war, but more disturbingly, reflected the fragility of a constitution designed to prevent such an outcome from ever occurring.

In 1950, five years after Japan's surrender, the Imperial Japanese military appeared all but finally gone, while the threat of Japanese citizens going back to war seemed to be a danger of the past. However, the stories of the *Tokumudan* and Japan's mobilization of MSA sailors and nurses during the Korean War challenge our understanding of the totality and finality of Japan's demobilization. 1950 did not mark the culmination of an entirely successful or complete demobilization. For the previous four years, Japanese soldiers of the *Tokumudan* continued to kill and die in large numbers in northern China. Their demobilization, when it came, occurred either at the bottom of a trench or as prisoners of the newly founded People's Republic of China. Similarly, by the end of 1950 thousands of Japanese citizens were at war once again as sailors of the MSA or as nurses of the JRC who were dragooned into a war they did not wish to fight. Placed at the frontlines of the Korean War in Wonsan Bay, sailors of the MSA suffered North Korean mines at the risk of their lives and helped make possible the landing of UN ground forces. In Japan, JRC nurses received illegal draft notices, treated wounded American soldiers and

helped them recover so they could return to fighting. These actions constituted an act of remobilization as well as direct participation in a new war. Nevertheless, for most Japanese citizens, the *Tokumudan* and the service of their fellow citizens in the Korean War occurred wholly outside of their knowledge. This was no coincidence. Unifying both events examined in this chapter were acts of deliberate deception enacted to keep Japanese citizens ignorant of their compatriots' involvement in wars at a time when postwar Japan professed to have abandoned the right to make war. It was against this backdrop of lies and secrecy that demobilization seemingly concluded upon a note of resounding success.

Conclusion

A Story that Transcends Defeat

Is there a post-surrender history of the Imperial Japanese military? This question served as the guiding principle throughout "The Unfinished War." By beginning "The Unfinished War" at the point of defeat, August 15, 1945, I have attempted to expand the traditional chronology of the Imperial Japanese military's history beyond its demise on the battlefield. Although Japan surrendered on August 15, its defeat was wholly unlike that of Nazi Germany. Much of its territory and empire remained intact. Its military was vastly larger than at the beginning of the war. In terms of resources and capabilities, however, Japan was thoroughly defeated. The decision to surrender was an acknowledgement of this reality. Nonetheless, a majority of Japan's armed forces remained intact. Thus, the Imperial Japanese military enjoyed the strange distinction of being the only Axis power whose military survived past defeat. Due to its sheer size and wide geographic dispersion, the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military lasted for years into the postwar and coincided with the rise of a new Japan state and society. In other words, the story I have told over the course of five chapters is one that fundamentally transcends the traditional bounds of wartime and postwar. So yes, there is indeed a post-surrender history to the Imperial Japanese military. Unfortunately, very few historians have paid it much attention.

My dissertation is a response to Japanese and Western historians' depictions of Japan's defeat as marking the beginning of a rapid and relentless process of demilitarization and demobilization. Within these accounts, there are little traces of Japanese society's mobilization for eight years of total war. Frustratingly, this story, no matter if told by Japanese or Western historians, largely goes the same way: demilitarization was a process that happened primarily among civilians, in popular culture, in government, and in school classrooms. Historians of postwar Japan, most notably, the renowned John Dower, give little more than passing attention

in their scholarship to former servicemen in their detailed discussion of demilitarization. This approach is ubiquitous – yet it is extremely intellectually unsatisfying, and it is an incomplete portrayal of what actually occurred. Lost in the rush to explain the emergence of a pacifist and democratic Japan of the present, most historians forgot to ask a fundamental but essential question, where did all the soldiers and sailors go? Of course, they did not disappear. Between 1945 and 1950, seven million servicemen lived out the process of demilitarization as they came home and underwent the process of demobilization.

Before Japan could demilitarize, it had to demobilize. The process of demobilization was one of the most significant social transformative processes that transpired in postwar Japan. Not only did it entail the dismantling of the largest institution within Japan, the Imperial Japanese military, it also meant that seven million citizens were out of work and became social pariahs due to their backgrounds as soldiers and sailors for a defunct government and discredited cause. As a singular event, demobilization ought to occupy an important place within Japanese history. Demobilization brought about a seismic change in civil-military relations and social order only topped by that of the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the dissolution of the samurai class (1876). For the second time in less than a century, millions of Japanese soldiers and the system that sustained them ceased to exist. While demilitarization involved substantially varying forms of retooling Japanese culture, as numerous historians have insightfully explored, we must not lose sight of the fact that the success of demilitarization rested upon the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military.

Throughout this dissertation, I argued two main points: demobilization was protracted and violent, and the Japanese public treated returning servicemen with hostility, fear, and ambivalence. Between 1945 and 1950, demobilization played out as both an international and

domestic process. It is a grim irony that both the Allies and Japanese society were ill-prepared to cope with the burden of demobilizing and absorbing seven million soldiers and sailors. Abroad, the Allies failed to live up to their promises to carry out a swift repatriation and disarmament of Japanese forces. At home, the Japanese public quickly discovered it had liked its soldiers and sailors far better when they were far from home and out sight. What began as a joyful occasion for some eager to return home ultimately turned into a process that embittered millions of demobilized servicemen and sparked strong anti-soldier sentiment among Japan's public. Therefore, it bears restating that demobilization was not a unifying process for a shattered Japan. Instead, it was a process that magnified emerging unbridgeable divisions between civilians and servicemen, and marked the birth of a Japan that no longer felt obliged to revere men in uniform.

In Chapter One I demonstrated how nearly three million soldiers did not enjoy a speedy demobilization as promised by the Potsdam Agreement. Across Northeast and Southeast Asia, these soldiers remained mired in fighting until 1946, or languished as forced laborers of the British and Soviets as late as 1950. This story is both a tale of delayed demobilization, but it is also that of the Imperial Japanese military and Japan's continued legacy in its former empire. It bears emphasizing this final part, because our histories of Japan after surrender almost unanimously present Japan after August 15, 1945 as little more than the four main islands of Japan. Such an approach renders the existence of millions of overseas Japanese soldiers and colonists as little more than mere footnotes. A history of demobilization and a history of early postwar Japan must not reproduce the fallacy that Japan divested itself of empire and war the moment it surrendered. To do so is to give credence to those Japanese politicians and intellectuals in the early years after surrender who sought to redefine postwar Japan and Japanese nationality along narrow ethnic lines that ignored its imperial and militarist past.

The domestic dimension of demobilization was an acrimonious process that laid bare the emotional and ideological fissures emerging between Japanese civilians and those in uniform. Postwar Japan was ruined. Unemployment, poverty, hunger, and homelessness pervaded Japanese society. Into this volatile environment arrived a steady influx of millions of young men in uniform without jobs and often ignorant of the privations faced by civilians during and after the war. As discussed in Chapter Two, disorder broke out across domestic garrisons throughout Japan in the aftermath of surrender. To the disgust of the Japanese public, thousands of servicemen exhibited an attitude of entitlement and disregard for civilians by looting government and public property for their own enrichment. For many, these acts engendered longlasting hostility toward common servicemen and antimilitary sentiment. Few demobilized servicemen who returned home from overseas failed to become embittered by their encounter with the Japanese public's coldness and acts of discrimination. As explored in Chapter Three, demobilized servicemen increasingly became ostracized from public life due to the Occupation's deliberate efforts at curtailing veterans' benefits. Moreover, facing discrimination in the workplace and in regular life, many demobilized servicemen gravitated to the black market for survival. Chapter Four explored how the public and Japanese media perpetuated harmful myths that demobilized servicemen were behind soaring crime, and that wounded soldiers were mostly beggars that refused to rehabilitate and become productive citizens. Many demobilized servicemen, unwounded and wounded alike, sought to push back against these negative depictions. However, such views remained indelibly lodged in the popular imaginations of the Japanese public.

Although the vast majority of seven million servicemen completed demobilization by 1950, the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military was nonetheless incomplete. Chapter

Five looked at how rogue officers in China's Shanxi province between 1945 and 1949 succeeded in preventing the timely demobilization of thousands of soldiers, while Japanese politicians facilitated the illegal and secret remobilization of former IJN sailors and JRC nurses for service during the Korean War. In both cases, the usage of deception and coercion secured the cooperation of thousands of men and women who otherwise wished to return to civilian life or remain demobilized. So long as Japanese soldiers continued to fight in China long after the IJA's full demobilization and so long as former sailors and JRC nurses endured the trauma of remobilization for a new war, Japan's demobilization remained unfinished.

Lingering Questions

"The Unfinished War" is by no means the final word on the subject of the demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military. Throughout the course of writing, I had to omit various topics, either due to the limitation of sources I had on hand, the unavailability of sources in Japanese, or due to the narrative focus I settled upon. While I firmly believe my interpretation of the events examined in my five chapters presents a thorough depiction of demobilization, it is important to consider what areas require further attention by future historians.

Regrettably, I did not succeed in portraying the ethnic diversity of those servicemen who underwent demobilization. Before the Second World War, the Imperial Japanese military was largely an ethnically Japanese force, despite its "imperial" appellation. Yet in the Second World War, the Imperial Japanese military finally lived up to its name. Hundreds of thousands of Koreans, ethnic Chinese from Taiwan, and Taiwanese indigenous peoples served as soldiers and sailors. In the postwar, efforts to redefine Japanese nationality on ethnicity legally erased the citizenship and memory of these imperial soldiers. Like their "pure" Japanese peers, they too

underwent a process of demobilization. In the midst of clamor for independence and the chaos of the collapse of Japanese colonial rule, their experiences must have been no less unsettling and confusing than that of their Japanese peers. Most sources on these soldiers' lives exist within Chinese and Korean language archives. Hitherto, Japanese and Western scholars have yet to show any interest in these materials. Unfortunately, due to my lack of Korean and Chinese linguistic capabilities, I have not been able to retell the story of these colonial soldiers' demobilization experiences within this dissertation. So long as this remains the case, my account of the Imperial Japanese military's demobilization remains incomplete. But, this does not have to be the case for future scholars. For historians who are fluent in multiple East Asian languages, the topic of demobilization offers numerous new ways to reconsider how the Imperial Japanese military's dissolution affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of Korean and Taiwanese citizens and shaped postwar Asian politics and society.

Like their Korean and Taiwanese peers, so too have I underrepresented the experiences of Japanese soldiers held in Soviet captivity. The experiences of these men were not trivial. In total, there were nearly a million such men held by the Soviets. Although I began this dissertation with their story, I do not speak about their experiences after their return to Japan. The decision to do this was not an easy one. Perhaps no veterans wrote more about their experiences than those who survived appalling conditions in Soviet gulags. Yet peculiarly, none of these memoirs discusses what life was like after returning home. Similarly, there are many secondary sources about the lives of captives, but few display interest in what happened to these men after returning to Japan. During my research I uncovered many offhanded remarks that suggested returnees from the Soviet Union experienced enormous discrimination in Japan due to fears that they were Communist agitators. Intrigued, I spent considerable effort trying to uncover sources to

substantiate these claims. However, to my disappointment, I failed to find any sources. As a result, I decided to leave the stories of those who returned from the Soviet Union out of my main narrative. It is my hope that future scholars will uncover sources that I overlooked and tell this critical story of demobilization.

Demobilization was not only a process that affected the lives of soldiers and sailors. For the spouses and children of these men, demobilization was likely a source of immense joy and sorrow. I originally began this project with the intent to examine in-depth the impact of demobilization on domestic life. What did it mean for veterans to come home to a destroyed house, or to discover a loved one had died from bombing while they had served at the front? What did it mean to have a parent who was haunted by the stigma of defeat? How did this experience shape their behavior towards their spouses and children? These questions and many more remain as pertinent now as when I began my work. Unfortunately, I once more ran into the insurmountable barrier of the archive. While I uncovered a scattering of references to domestic drama, these stories were largely absent from letters and memoirs. My failure to find these stories is not indicative of their non-existence. It is quite possible that other sources, such as memoirs written by family members that I did not explore, contain key insights into this intimate dimension of demobilization.

Unfinished Stories

"The Unfinished War" appears to end largely where it began: with Japanese men and women in uniform engaged in military duties and an open-ended question as to whether or not

demobilized servicemen could find acceptance in postwar Japan and become reintegrated. This is an intentional decision. Although one can measure when demobilization began and roughly, when it ended, it is not the case for something as personal, nebulous, and intangible as reintegration. Reintegration does not occur in the same way or at the same time for all veterans. For some, reintegration began as soon as they returned home, but for many others, I suspect it began, if at all, long after they took their uniforms off. Further complicating this subject is the question of whether or not veterans can reintegrate into civil society, but remain emotionally and spiritually apart from mainstream society. Having grown up in an era with countless young veterans demobilized from overseas deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq, I would argue that this is undoubtedly the case.

But what happened to the lives of Japanese veterans beyond the confines of this dissertation? Constrained by the theme of demobilization, I chose a set of years (1945-1950) that excludes the vast majority of the postwar lives of those at the center of my study. I selected this timeframe since it encapsulates the period of demobilization of the Imperial Japanese military. However, veterans continued to grapple with the meaning of their identity amidst postwar Japan's dramatic changes as well as play a prominent role within Japanese society beyond the years examined in this dissertation. To varying degrees, veterans achieved a modicum of reintegration into postwar Japanese society. With the end of the Occupation in 1952, prohibitions on veterans' political and organizing rights went away. Amid their newly acquired freedoms, veterans formed a constellation of organizations that agitated for their recognition as a constituency in Japanese society. The most successful of these was the *Gun'on renmei zenkoku rengōkai* (*The National Alliance of the Military Pension League*), which successfully pressured the Japanese government to reinstate the Military Pension in 1953 and subsequently formed a

powerful electoral turnout machine for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.[882] Similarly, veterans formed hundreds of commemorative organizations on the divisional, regimental, and company level (s*enyūkai*) for various army and navy units beginning in the 1950s.[883] During this same period, veterans, especially those who entered the literary and academic world, increasingly became aware of themselves and their fellow veterans as comprising a distinct wartime generation (*senchūha*). Stressing their shared experience of conscription and their ill-treatment by older generations these figures expressed for the first time a collective voice for a generation largely rendered silent by the stigma of defeat.[884]

By the 1960s, veterans achieved successful careers from the arts, to business and politics. Numerous veterans went on to pen memoirs and histories that found considerable popularity among readers, a significant number of whom were too young to have had any meaningful memory of the war or of defeat. By all appearances, it likely seemed that Japan's former demobilized servicemen were now integrated members of society. Yet none of these apparent examples of success conferred a definitive sense of personal reintegration for countless veterans. While veterans took pride in contributing to Japan's economic rise in the postwar, many also felt incapable of truly fitting in with a society that was intent on forgetting the war, and erasing any traces of the traumatic early years of defeat that colored the lives of millions of demobilized

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[882] The *Gun'on renmei zenkoku rengōkai* achieved considerable success by generally avoiding all political subjects other than that of pension reform. This is not to say that it was not an especially conservative organization. However, by choosing its public battles wisely, *Gun'on renmei zenkoku rengōkai* succeeded in accomplishing its legislative goals without becoming ensnared in debates over war memory, or sidetracked on other contemporary questions such as rearmament, constitutional revision, among many others, Others veterans' groups, such as *Nihon gōyūrenmei* (*The Japan League of Hometown Friends*), which sought to become a successor organization to the defunct pre-surrender and nationalistic, *Zaigōgunjinkai* (*Imperial Reservists' Association*), failed to find significant support among veterans or sympathy among the wider public. Other prominent groups of note included the *Kaikōsha*, an organization that served the interests of former army officers, and the *Suikōkai*, which served the interests of former naval officers, and continues to this day in its new form as an association for retired officers of the postwar Japanese Maritime Self Defense Forces. It bears observing that both groups were successor organizations to their prewar counterparts of the same name. Yoshida, *Heishitachi no sengoshi,* 59, 67, 168-169.

[883] Yoshida, *Heishitachi no sengoshi,* 107.

[884] Yoshida, *Heishitachi no sengoshi,* 84-86.

servicemen. For veterans, the war simply refused to go away. Living in a society that was resolutely pacifist and forward looking, the memories and experiences of veterans forever remained alienated from the values and principles of postwar Japan.

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