
Article 4.

Public Relations of the Japanese Navy in the Prewar Period: The Case of Boarding a Warship

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Abstract

In this paper, the interaction between the military and the people in modern Japanese society is discussed from the perspective of communication, using the concept of PR. As a specific research subject, this paper focuses on the boarding of a warship conducted by the Navy for the purpose of public relations in the prewar period.

From May 1919, the Japanese Navy allowed civilians to board a warship for PR purposes. The main targets were local officials, school teachers, and members of the Seinendan (青年団) and Zaigo-Gunjinkai (在郷軍人会). The members of the Seinendan of an age to include Navy volunteers, and local officials and school teachers were in a position to guide the Seinendan. At a time when the number of Navy volunteers was on the decline, the Navy began allowing boarding a warship as a way to disseminate Navy ideas in order to gain the understanding and cooperation of society.

After that, the allowing of civilians to board warships expanded rapidly. There was a cooperative relationship with private organizations. The boarding of a warship, which was requested by the Kaikoku-Shonensha (海国少年社), which was working to spread the idea of maritime affairs, was very successful in guiding schools around the country and being reporting on in newspapers. Since then, the Navy, with the voluntary cooperation of the people, has carried out boardings and tours of warships involving thousands of citizens throughout the country.

The boarding of a warship in the prewar period was a product of two-way efforts by the Navy authorities, who expected an increase in Navy volunteers, and various organizations that promoted maritime ideas for some purpose. The results from these analyzes indicate that the boarding of a warship served as PR aimed at building good relationships between military organizations and society.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine the cooperative relationship-building between the Japanese Navy and the public in the prewar period. The paper focuses on “boarding a warship” as a public relations (PR) activity¹.

Over the past few years, many studies have explored communication between the Japanese Navy and the public in the prewar period.

One is on the Navy Military Extension Commission (海軍軍事普及委員会)², established in May 1925 to make the public more aware of and better understand the Navy; in December 1940, the commission was reorganized and incorporated within the Ministry of Army Information Department (陸軍省情報部) by the Information Bureau (情報局). In the prewar period, it was responsible for propaganda and speech control. Another study is on the Navy

1. This manuscript is based on a part of my book (Shinpei, Nakajima. *Public Relations of the Japanese Navy and Public Opinion in the Prewar Period*. Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan) published in 2020.

2. Sakaguchi, Tasuke. ‘Propaganda Activities of the Imperial Japanese Navy during the Interwar Years’ *Shiso: the journal of historical studies* 94 (2016): 21-36.

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Association, which is an external organization of the Navy³. These studies proved that collective efforts contributed to the spread of “Navy thought” and the recruitment of volunteers through diverse modes of communication.

Traditionally, research on communication between military organizations and society in modern Japan has mainly focused on the Army from the perspective of political influence and widespread engagement with local communities. Thus, studies on Navy communication expand the scope of Japanese military history.

However, it should be noted that most research on Navy communication defines its activity as “propaganda”; in short, the problem with such studies seems to be the lack of a clear definition of the word. “Propaganda” is a concept that is different from “advertisement” and “PR.” However, it was not until the 2000s that attention was paid to these conceptual distinctions in the study of modern Japanese history⁴. Until then, modern Japanese history, especially military history, had used the concept of propaganda, which means a one-way political communication process, for communication between the military and the public. This was in line with the course of postwar history, whose purpose was to prove the leadership role of the military during the war.

However, recent military research, especially “military and community” research, has focused on the mutual regulatory relationship between the military and society⁵. Therefore, it is important to use the bidirectional concept in research on communication between the two. To that end, this paper focuses on the concept of PR. According to *Effective Public Relations*, the difference between “PR” and “advertisement” or “propaganda” is an interactive concept⁶. That is, PR can be defined as a concept representing two-way communication for an organization to build a good relationship with society.

Based on the above concerns, the author has focused on the Navy Memorial Day Lecture (海軍記念日講話) and examined Navy PR activities during the prewar period⁷. However, analysis of the lecture was limited to clarifying the Navy’s daily PR activities, as the Navy Memorial Day was set on May 27th. Therefore, this paper focuses on the Navy’s PR activity called “boarding a warship”. For example, “*A memorial magazine about student boarding and tours of the Combined Fleet*” (『聯合艦隊学生便乗見学記念誌』), published in September 1925, illustrates the specific situation:

April 4, Taisho 14, the Japanese Combined Fleet, with Mutsu as the flagship commanded by General Okada, majestically berthed outside the port of Lushun. The number of warships is about 60, and the number of naval personnel is 10,000. It was an unprecedented sight in Manchuria. [...] As an opportunity to spread Navy thought among the people, for the citizens of Lushun and Dairen, *Manchuria Nichinichi Shimbunsha* (満州日日新聞社) and the Dalian Maritime Association (大連海務協会) sought permission and were allowed to board a warship⁸.

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3. Tsuchida, Hiroshige. ‘The propaganda of the Navy in the 1930s and the Concept of Developing a National Organization: The Development of the Navy League and its Activities’ *Bulletin of the National Museum of Japanese History* 126 (2006): 53-66, and Kimura, Miyuki. ‘Propaganda by the Naval Association and the Draft for the Navy Volunteers in Prewar Japan (1932-1945)’ *Historia: journal of Osaka Historical Association* 267 (2008): 1-27.
 4. Sato, Takumi. ‘Propaganda Century and Public Relations Range: Fascist public sphere and Nazi public relations’, Tsuganesawa, Toshihiro and Sato, Takumi, ed. *Public relations / advertising / propaganda*. Kyoto: Minerva Shobo, 2003 conducted a study that focused on the political and historical nature of concepts such as propaganda, PR, and advertising, and promoted awareness of their conceptual distinctions and mutual relationships.
 5. Representative examples of the new “military and community” studies include those by Arakawa, Syoji. *Military and Community*. Tokyo: Aoki Syoten, 2001, and Ueyama, Kazuo ed. *Imperial capital and military: From the perspective of the community and the people*. Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyouronsha Ltd., 2002.
 6. Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center, and Glen M. Broom. *Effective Public Relations (9th Edition)* Trans. Japan Society for Corporate Communication Studies. Tokyo: Pearson Education Ltd., 2008.
 7. Nakajima, Shinpei. *Development of public relations activities of the Navy and the people in the prewar period: a case of Navy Day lecture*. Osaka City University, 2013.
 8. Dairen Kaimu Kyokai (Dalian Maritime Association) ed. *A memorial magazine about student boarding and tours of the Combined Fleet*. Dairen: Dairen Kaimu Kyokai, 1925, Preface.

On the 9th, more than 5,000 students and citizens boarded the warships, and observed military exercises and how the soldiers lived onboard.

PR activities using warships were also conducted by the Maritime Self-Defense Force, which were well received. Some studies have claimed that the Japanese Navy used warships to draw attention to the Navy during the prewar period⁹. However, the purpose was to generate revenue, and therefore the PR target was politicians and business people. There are, however, few studies on PR activities using warships open for citizens. In that regard, the memorial magazine mentioned above wrote about “boarding a warship” for citizens as follows:

In recent years, Japan is pleased that the Navy has made efforts to promote warships among the people and spread knowledge about the Navy in accordance with the times. Even before World War I, some educators and students were allowed to board a warship, but recently, the activity was extended to the public at large¹⁰.

In this way, around the end of the Taisho era, the Navy threw warships open to citizens for the purpose of disseminating maritime ideas. Therefore, this paper focuses on the activity of boarding a warship and uses official Navy documents to examine the actual state of the Navy’s PR activities during the prewar period.

1. Rules for boarding a warship

In May 1919, regulations regarding boarding a warship were issued by the Navy Deputy Secretary of State to the chief of the naval station and commander of the fleet. These were as follows:

Matters about boarding a warship and accommodation at naval facilities, vis-à-vis local officials.

Recently, an increasing number of local officials have been requesting a tour of the Navy’s facilities, as well as expressing the wish to stay at these facilities or board a warship. As long as they do not interfere with the work, they will be provided access, and permission may be granted in accordance with the following policy¹¹.

In other words, since the number of people who wished to visit the Navy troops was increasing, which included those wanting to board a warship, an instruction on allowing access was issued as long as it did not hinder work. However, it was stipulated that the activity of boarding a warship should “follow the minister’s instructions each time.” The reason for this, it can be presumed, was that a warship was a highly confidential weapon. In addition, not everyone was allowed to stay in the unit or board one. It was limited to local officials, faculty and staff, and members of the young men’s association (青年団), with youngsters and women excluded.

In November 1926, this regulation was changed. Based on the revised content, the change in the Navy’s approach to PR can be clarified thus:

1. Boarding a warship or lodging within a unit is permitted only for regular navigation on ships that does not interfere with the operations of the fleet or units. Generally, boarding aircraft carriers and submarines is not permitted.
2. The following people are allowed to board a warship and stay among troops:
 - A) Government officials
 - B) School staff and students
 - C) Members of veterans’ associations and young men’s associations or a similar group

9. Ogura, Norihiko. ‘Invited event by the Navy after the Russo-Japanese War: Establishment of the annual naval review’ *Nihon Rekishi (History of Japan)* 827 (2017): 57-72.

10. Dairen Kaimu Kyokai ed. *A memorial magazine about student boarding and tours of the Combined Fleet*. Dairen: Dairen Kaimu Kyokai, 1925, Purpose of compiling a commemorative magazine.

11. Ministry of the Navy ed. *History of the Navy System 11th*. Tokyo: Navy Minister’s Office, 1940, 1126-1127.

D) Newspaper reporters

Accommodation in the unit is limited to men unless it is unavoidable.

3. The Secretary of State will appropriately permit boarding a warship and regular accommodation within the unit for less than one day. In this case, the Secretary will report to the Minister of the Navy after the activity¹².

Compared with the 1919 regulations, the 1926 ones were more relaxed, including the *ex post facto* approval of the Minister of the Navy (hereinafter “Navy Minister”) in some cases, and gradually allowing more civilians to board a warship. It is inferred from these changes that boarding a warship became more common.

At that time, how was this activity carried out? The Navy’s official documents contain material on this because the 1919 regulations required the Navy Minister’s permission for it, while the 1926 ones mandated an *ex post facto* report to the Minister. Utilizing these, this paper considers the PR activity of allowing the boarding a warship by the Navy, keeping in mind the interaction with the public. For example, as in the case of the Dalian Maritime Association, it is presumed that boarding a warship was carried out to facilitate interaction between the Navy and various groups. How did the Navy shape this as an efficient PR activity through interaction with the public? Let us begin our discussion by considering the start of allowing the boarding of a warship by the Japanese Navy.

2. The start of “boarding a warship” as public relations

According to *History of the Navy System* (『海軍制度沿革』), in the 1890s, there were multiple cases of non-military personnel boarding a warship¹³. For example, in 1891, the Navy allowed seven researchers to board the warship Hiei headed for Australia and the Central Pacific, based on a request by the Foreign Minister to the Navy Minister. Their purpose was to study the indigenous customs and culture of the locals in these places. However, owing to the small size of the ship, only six researchers could board it. Thus, it is nevertheless possible to confirm the boarding of a warship by researchers for the purpose of research, and engineers and Army and Navy soldiers for inspection and movement.

When did the Navy start allowing civilians to board warships for PR purposes? The answer is May 1919 onward, following the enactment of the rules mentioned above. The start saw an inquiry from the Maizuru Naval District to the Ministry of the Navy:

May 2, Taisho 8

From Maizuru Naval District Chief of Staff Taguchi Hisamori

To Ministry of the Navy Military Affairs Director Ide Kenji

Accommodation on or boarding of a warship by local officials and schoolteachers in the fleet and marine corps.

In recent years, the number of local officials, students, and young men’s association members who wish to visit the military port has increased. I am very pleased that interest in the Navy is growing in rural areas. The Maizuru Naval District also gives them as much preferential treatment as possible and assists them in acquiring an understanding of the Navy. However, it is just a superficial introduction. It is not enough for local officials, young men’s association executives, and teachers, who are enthusiastic about the reality of the Navy and contribute to the spread of Navy ideas, to do so. In fact, it falls on them to increase interest in the Navy in rural areas, especially considering that the young men’s association, since its establishment, has strongly influenced the ideas of the youth and general public. If they can be familiar with, understand, and like the Navy, it will be very effective in recruiting Naval Academy students and volunteers. This is of particular importance, as the number of Navy applicants is declining. The number of people wishing to observe the daily life of the naval staff is increasing; hence, allowing them to stay in naval facilities and board a warship can increase their interest in the Navy in the future. Therefore, if the Commander-in-Chief approves,

12. Ministry of the Navy ed. *History of the Navy System 11th*. Tokyo: Navy Minister’s Office, 1940, 1126-1127.

13. Ministry of the Navy ed. *History of the Navy System 15th*. Tokyo: Navy Minister’s Office, 1942, 568.

please make adjustments to allow this as much as possible¹⁴.

It was important that the target of the activity be local officials, young men's association executives, and teachers, and the purpose of the PR was to increase the number of Naval Academy applicants and volunteers. Why though? The reason can be understood by associating the characteristics of the young men's association, *Seinendan*, with the purpose of the PR.

The *Seinendan* was established by the ministries of Education, Interior, and Army after the Russo-Japanese War. In the Taisho era, the *Seinendan* was clarified as a training organization as per the directives of the ministries of Education and Interior, and set up all over the country. According to the 1915 *Seinendan* Regulations, it comprised boys aged under 20 who had completed compulsory education. In addition, the principal of an elementary school and mayor of a municipality were considered to be leaders of the *Seinendan*. Municipal officials, teachers, police officers, and local military personnel were instructed to cooperate with these leaders¹⁵.

In short, members of the *Seinendan* included those who were stipulated in the Navy Volunteer Ordinance (17 to 21 years old) and those who were qualified to apply to the Naval Academy (16 to 19 years old). In addition, local officials and teachers were in a position to cooperate with the *Seinendan* executives who guided them. Furthermore, for the Army, the *Seinendan* was positioned as an organization connected to the *Zaigo-Gunjinkai* (the local military personnel association). Therefore, it was an organization for military-led national mobilization that led to the *Zaigo-Gunjinkai*¹⁶, and thus, the most suitable one for the Navy to carry out the activity of allowing boarding a warship to disseminate Navy ideas. In other words, boarding a warship as a PR activity can be seen as a way of halting the decline in the number of Navy volunteers, which had become prevalent as a result of World War I.

After that, on June 1st, the Maizuru Naval District actually allowed the boarding of a warship for the purposes of PR. The specific plan was as follows:

May 21, Taisho 8

From Maizuru Naval District Commander-in-Chief Nomaguchi Kaneo

To Navy Minister Kato Tomosaburo

The case of boarding a warship as an outsider

On June 1, when volunteers join the Marine Corps, we will board the warship Katori with local officials and their families who are attending the school. After that, we would like to take the initiative near the bay mouth to observe the training, so please give us permission¹⁷.

In response, on May 28, the Navy Minister allowed an attendant to board the warship. Attendants started engaging in this activity from the 1930s onward; they were considered an important medium of PR for building good relations between the community and the Navy¹⁸. At Maizuru Naval District, boarding of the Katori was carried out on June 19th and 21st.

May 31, Taisho 8

...Local ministers from various regions will board the warship for the purpose of disseminating the Navy's ideas, when the Katori cruises along the Hokuriku coast. To that end, in accordance with the following standards, we seek

14. JACAR (Japan Center for Asian Historical Records) Ref. C08021317300 (11th to 13th images), "Boarding" (The National Institute for Defense Studies). In the following, citations from JACAR will be described in accordance with the practice of "citation to papers" recommended by JACAR.

15. Dainihon Seinendan (Youth Association of Japan) ed. *History of Dainihon Seinendan*. Tokyo: Dainihon Seinendan, 1942, Appendix 200th page.

16. Yui, Masaomi. *People's integration by the Military: From the Sino-Japanese War to the Manchurian Incident*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009.

17. JACAR. C08021317300 (29th image), "Boarding" (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

18. Oyacho History Editorial Board ed. *History of Oya Town*. Hyogo: 2010.

permission for the same.

Approximately 50 military personnel, educators (including school staff), *Zaigo-Gunjinkai*, and *Seinendan* leaders¹⁹

In fact, the officials of Ishikawa and Fukui prefectures on the 19th, and Fukui and Kyoto prefectures, on the 21st were boarding the warship at the request of local ministers. Although the number is unknown, an analysis of the warrant from the Governor of Ishikawa Prefecture to the Navy Minister suggests that local officials such as the military affairs officer boarded warships. The military affairs officer was responsible for encouraging Navy applicants in each municipality. The Navy knew that the number of applicants in the community would depend on the perceptions and motivations of the military personnel in each region. It is presumed that they attempted to deepen their understanding of the Navy and improve their motivation by taking military officers, who directly encouraged Navy applicants in the community, onto warships. It is also presumed that the reason educators were selected for this activity was that teachers' contribution to students choosing the Navy as their career path would be significant²⁰.

3. Expansion of “boarding a warship”—collaboration with private organizations

In 1919, the number of warship rides undertaken to disseminate the Navy's ideas was three. In 1920, the number increased to 17, some of which were carried out for *Seinendan* executives and schoolteachers, as originally envisioned by the Navy²⁰.

However, what attracted attention in 1920 were the requests for permission from *Kaikoku-Shonensha* (海国少年社), a private organization—from the 17 requests for as many rides in that year, six were from *Kaikoku-Shonensha*, the most by any group. Moreover, information on the warship rides *Kaikoku-Shonensha* carried out was disseminated through newspapers and educational institutions, resulting in a huge number of applicants. In this section, we will look at *Kaikoku-Shonensha*'s request to board a warship, and clarify the actual situation of collaboration between the Navy and private organizations in PR activities.

In January 1920, Kawai Syuei (河合秋平), the owner of *Kaikoku-Shonensha*, sent a request to the Ministry of the Navy to board a warship. The contents were as follows:

Based on the principles of *Kaikoku-Shonensha*, we would like to take applicants on warships on both April 3rd and 4th in order to disseminate practical maritime knowledge to our readers, the boys. To that end, we are planning a trip from Yokosuka to Shimizu Port in Shizuoka Prefecture, so please give us special consideration²¹.

There have been few studies focusing on *Kaikoku-Shonensha* and Kawai Syuhei. However, it can be confirmed from the advertisement section of the newspaper that the magazine *Kaikoku-Shonen* (『海国少年』) had been published since 1917. The first issue has not been confirmed until now, but the purpose of its publication can be confirmed in the “Claims” section of Volume 4, Issue 8:

The purpose of “*Kaikoku-Shonen*” is to spread the idea of the Navy. Based on the idea of patriotism and ancestor worship since ancient times of the empire, the principle is to foster young people who will play an active role for the nation in the future with sound maritime thought, and cultivate a strong spirit and tastes²².

In other words, “*Kaikoku-Shonen*” was first published mainly for the purpose of disseminating maritime ideas

19. JACAR. C08021317300 (32th image), “Boarding” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

20. Kaigun Showa Hachinenkaishi (History of the Association of People who Volunteered for the Japanese Navy in 1933) Editorial Board ed. *History of Kaigun Showahachinenkai*. Tokyo: Kaigun Showa Hachinenkai Secretariat, 1991.

21. JACAR. C08021562300 (20th images), “Boarding (1)” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

22. “Claim” *Kaikoku Shonen* 4. 8 (1920), 1.

to children. In fact, the majority of articles were cartoons and novels on the theme of the sea. The names of naval officers can also be found among the authors of true stories about the sea. In 1920, *Kaikoku-Shonensha*, which had been promoting maritime ideas through such publishing activities, organized a *Kaikoku-Shonen-Dan* whose members were the children of the readers. The rules and specific activities of the group are unknown at this time, but it is speculated that the purpose was to disseminate maritime ideas to children. As we saw earlier, *Kaikoku-Shonensha* had requested the Navy for permission for a warship ride for children who were readers of *Kaikoku-Shonen*. Subsequently, as a result of coordination between the Ministry of the Navy and Yokosuka Naval District, the Navy decided to allow boarding on the warship Tsugaru, which was scheduled to sail from Yokosuka to Toba, on April 2–4; accordingly, on March 2, the Ministry issued a permit to *Kaikoku-Shonensha* for the same, along with the schedule, name of the warship, and destination. At that time, on finding out that the Tsugaru crew members were planning to visit the Ise Shrine (伊勢神宮), *Kaikoku-Shonensha* rebranded the plan to call it an “Ise Shrine worship trip.”

After that, *Kaikoku-Shonensha* made efforts to advertise by not only notifying in magazines but also issuing a circular to elementary school directors nationwide²³. In relation to the newspaper, it can be confirmed from the Navy’s materials that several reporters stationed at the military port and correspondent Yokosuka applied for coverage:

We heard that there is a plan to spread the idea of the Navy by taking the *Kaikoku-Shonen-Dan* sponsored by the *Kaikoku-Shonensha* on a warship. For reporters stationed at the naval port who are constantly striving to spread the idea of the Navy, boarding a warship is a great opportunity to study the Navy, so we would like to ask for permission to accompany them²⁴.

An article entitled “Boys and Warships” was published in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* on March 10, which shows that the mass media, too, was paying attention to this novelty.

Consequently, this event had a significant social impact. According to a thank-you note sent by Kawai Syuhei to the Navy Minister, the event attracted more public attention than expected, with 2,243 applications for 50 slots.

It can be inferred from the analysis so far that the activity of boarding a warship, aimed at disseminating “Navy Thought” and “Marine Thought”, was the result of efforts from both the Navy and the public. Of course, it is evident that groups of people who were not strictly civilians, such as local officials and school officials, sometimes asked for permission to board a warship. However, an official Navy document from 1922 states that “Kawai Syuhei, the leader of the *Kaikoku-Shonen-Dan*, is enthusiastic about spreading maritime ideas, so he is allowed to board a warship and special mission ships whenever possible²⁵”. It is speculated that the Navy had high expectations from the spread of people’s independent maritime ideas.

4. The Navy and public in “boarding a warship”

Gradually, the scale of the activity of boarding warships expanded. As we saw earlier, in 1925 more than 5,000 people boarded warships. PR using warships expanded further. For example, during the period between June 25th and July 29th, 1925, when the warship Nisshin (日進) belonging to Yokosuka Naval District was cruising along the Sanriku and Hokkaido coasts, many warships were boarded multiple times²⁶. The warship Nisshin returned to Yokosuka after anchoring at 14 ports, including Tateyama, Onagawa, Ominato, and Hakodate, having been boarded 12 times, collectively by about 4,500 people. In addition, warship tours were held at 10 locations, attracting more than 60,000 people. It is presumed that such a series of PR activities had a great impact on the local people. The following is a report from Yokosuka Naval District on the warship tour in Ogatsu Village, the second port of call:

23. JACAR. C08021317300 (63rd to 68th images), “Boarding (1)” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

24. JACAR. C08021562300 (49th to 53rd images), “Boarding (1)” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

25. JACAR. C08050455500 (26th image), “Boarding (7)” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

26. JACAR. C08051409500 (22nd to 40th images), “Boarding 2 (3)” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

At the time of anchoring, there were several ships in the vicinity that were full of visitors. Immediately after the anchoring, the mayor, village mayor, village council member, and chairman of the local military personnel association visited. General tours were allowed until 1:00 pm, during which the military band performed. The arrival of warships was unprecedented here, and some people came all the way from distant villages, seeing the sea for the first time²⁷.

In addition, it is stated that boarding the warship had a great impact on the local community as a PR activity—for example, “On the mountains and coasts of nearby islands, the islanders are waving the Japanese flag and welcoming them²⁸”.

There is also a report that mentions the role of local organizations in such activities. The following is a report on a warship tour in Onagawa Village, which was attended by more than 20,000 visitors:

In Onagawa, the *Kaiyukai*, which is presided over by Hachiro Kimura and comprises Navy soldiers, was organized. This time, it was a great attraction for the visitors, but the *Kaigun-han* (Organization of Navy Veterans in the Imperial Veterans Association) has not yet been organized. By cooperating with business corporations, the Patriotic Women’s Association (愛国婦人会), and government, tens of thousands of visitors were able to visit, with the event running smoothly without any accidents²⁹.

Similarly, it was reported that the activity of boarding a warship was an opportunity to increase public interest and understanding of the Navy. The following is a report on the boarding of a warship between Hakodate and Otaru. In addition to 12 faculty members and students from a commercial school in Hokkaido, 89 people, including youth groups, local military personnel, and officials, participated:

Participants are enthusiastic like never before. Many people visited the engine section of the ship. Thick fog was encountered before entering Otaru, and it seems that the impression of observing navigation through it was particularly deep³⁰.

Conclusion

The PR activity of boarding a warship, which was started as a measure to halt the decline in the number of Navy applicants, was further expanded after withdrawal from the Naval Treaty. As a general rule, it was ensured that the use of warships would be within the scope of regular missions and would occur as long as the mission was not hindered. Furthermore, for organizations (from public to private) working to disseminate “Navy Thought” and “Marine Thought,” boarding a warship was a great opportunity to make a strong impact on the participants.

This activity, in the prewar period, was a result of two-way efforts by the Navy, who expected an increase in volunteers, and various organizations that promoted maritime ideas for some purpose. Thus, this paper indicates that the boarding of a warship served as PR aimed at building good relationships between military organizations and society. However, this does not mean that the ideal relationship desired by both was easily established. Navy records state that some participants boarding a warship were merely using it as a means of transportation, while others were found drinking alcohol onboard—in other words, these people were unsuitable for Navy PR. What measures did the Navy take then to make the activity more effective as a means of PR? This needs to be explored and answered. In addition, further study of how the relationship between the Navy and society, especially the approach of society to the Navy, changed as Japan strengthened its tendency toward militarism after the Manchurian Incident, should be conducted.

27. JACAR. C08051409500 (24th image), “Boarding 2 (3)” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

28. JACAR. C08051409500 (25th image), “Boarding 2 (3)” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

29. JACAR. C08051409500 (26th image), “Boarding 2 (3)” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

30. JACAR. C08051409500 (34th image), “Boarding 2 (3)” (The National Institute for Defense Studies).

It is hoped that the findings presented in this paper will contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between military organizations and society in the prewar period of Japanese society, from a new perspective.