

日独戦役における海軍病院船「八幡丸」の医療活動

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(Medical Operation of The Hospital Ship “Yawata-maru” in The German-Japanese War (1914-1915))

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Abstract

The Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) had operated 13 hospital ships in total, hiring converted merchant ships from civilian shipping companies in each war, from the Sino-Japanese war to the World War II. Among them, the medical operation of IJN, especially about the hospital ship, in the German-Japanese War (1914-1915) has rarely been investigated until the centennial anniversary of the declaration of war against Germany.

We found the only official record of medical operation performed by IJN, including the hospital ship “Yawata-maru”, in the War, titled “The History of Medical Affairs of the Imperial Navy in the War during 1914-1915” (『大正三、四年戦役海軍衛生史』), at the Library of Congress (USA) for the first time after the World War II, and obtained a copy of it. Comparing all the records in various aspects with other hospital ships of proximate generations (“Hakuai-maru”, “Kosai-maru”, and “Kasado-maru”), the detail about the medical operation performed aboard “Yawata-maru” has been elucidated precisely.

Finally, “Yawata-maru” was found to have been a turning point, from the thalassic to the pelagic, in the history of hospital ships operated by IJN, providing sufficient medical support not only to the 2nd fleet of IJN in the Yellow Sea around Tsingtao but also to battle groups in the South Pacific en route to Fiji, as the first Japanese hospital ship dispatched over the equator.