

At Sasebo Port

# Fireman, U.S. Sailor Die in Ship Explosion

SASEBO, Nagasaki Pref. (Kyodo) — A Japanese fireman and an American crewman were killed and 12 others were injured, three of them seriously, in a gasoline explosion aboard the U.S. Navy tanker Piscataqua, 6,000 tons, in the port here about 2:30 a.m. Tuesday.

The Japanese fireman killed was identified as Tetsuo Wakuta, 42, deputy leader of the Japanese fire fighting squad for the U.S. military base. The American victim was not identified.

Koichi Haraguchi, another member of the squad, was in critical condition. Two others were also seriously injured.

The injured men were treated at the U.S. Navy Hospital at the base.

The explosion occurred while Japanese firefighters and some of the 33 crewmen of the tanker were fighting the blaze aboard the vessel which broke out about 1:50 a.m.

The fire appeared to have been controlled but a sudden explosion occurred. The blast toppled about 15 Japanese firefighters and American crewmen.

The fire-explosion occurred in the western part of the port used exclusively by the U.S. military and is off-limit to Japanese police and labor standard bureau officials.

## U.S. Base Nixes Ship Blast Probe

SASEBO, Nagasaki Pref. (Kyodo)—U.S. military authorities Wednesday rejected a Japanese request for permission to make on-the-spot investigations of an explosion aboard a U.S. Navy tanker here Tuesday morning that claimed the lives of three persons.

The explosion occurred aboard the 6,000-ton Piscataqua early Tuesday when Japanese firemen and American crewmen were fighting a blaze aboard the ship. One American sailor and one Japanese firefighter were killed and 12 others were injured. One of the injured Japanese died Wednesday.

The U.S. authorities said they would study the Japanese request after a U.S. investigation party led by Capt. William B. Muncy arrives from Yokosuka.

The U.S. authorities agreed, however, to transfer the injured Japanese firemen to Japanese hospitals if their condition permits.

The injured, including Japanese firemen, are being treated at the U.S. Navy hospital inside the U.S. base here.