Dr. J. D. Morgan Bureau of Mines - 634-1330 1 December 1983

STRATEGIC MATERIALS IN WORLD WAR II

The occupation of Manchuria by the Japanese in the 1930's led to the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo, in which the exploitation of coal, iron, wheat, and timber were priority activities. Later invasion of southeast Asia by the Japanese was prompted by their needs for rubber, tin, tungsten, petroleum, rice, vegetable oils (coconut, palm, tung), and other materials. The occupation of Ethiopia and Libya by the Italians was likewise caused by their desire for raw materials. The eastward expansion of Germany and their desire to reacquire colonies lost in World War I was sparked by the need for raw materials. In the latter part of the 1930's, as Britain and France rearmed, they placed orders in the United States for both military materiel and for raw materials. Despite all these warning signals, U.S. preparation for war was totally inadequate. Prewar estimates of military requirements led to a limited stockpile program that was initiated in 1939 by Public Law 117, 76th Congress. However, the pre-World War II stockpile was concerned almost exclusively with imported materials such as natural rubber and tin. The status of the stockpiles at the start of World War II is shown in Table I, which indicates the objectives were small, and that even these were far from being attained in most cases.

Table I. The Status of Selected Major Metals and Minerals in the Pre-World War II Stockpile Program.

Material	Stockpile Objective as of June 1941 (Short Tons)	On Hand in Stockpile as of Jan. 1, 1942 (Short Tons)
Chromite	1,950,000	320.000
Соррег	500,000	69,000
Lead	100,000	18,000
Manganese ore	3,696,000	572,000
Tin	271,000	56,000
Tungsten ore	29,000	7,000
Zinc concentrates	150,000	89,000

In World War II the United States and its Allies faced a combination of nations which were generally deficient in supplies of most basic raw materials essential to war. Germany, Japan, and Italy had few colonies and but slight raw material wealth within their own borders. In the first years of the war sinking of Allied shipping exceeded new construction (see Figure 1), and United States imports of raw materials from Africa and the Western Hemisphere were severely threatened. The United States was forced to uneconomical expansion of domestic sources of raw materials. For example, the synthetic rubber program was necessitated by failure of the Allied nations to stockpile sufficient natural rubber, although

the world sources of natural rubber were in the hands of the Allied Nations throughout the prewar period. At the start of the war domestic mine production was accelerated, and maximum rates were achieved in the early war years which, in the face of losses of skilled labor, insufficient supplies of machinery and equipment, and inadequate reserves of developed ore, could not be maintained. United States mine production of copper exceeded one million tons in 1942 and 1943, but by 1945 had fallen below 800,000 tons. United States mine production of lead reached almost 500,000 tons in 1942 but declined steadily to less than 400,000 tons in 1945, while United States mine production of zinc which had reached nearly 770,000 tons in 1942 fell to less than 620,000 tons in 1945 (see Figure 2). Table 2 demonstrates the degree to which the United States was forced to rely upon imports in war, although the nation had been virtually self-sufficient in these materials in the preceding period of peace. The significance of imports in meeting needs of all metals and minerals in World War II is shown in Table 2. It is to be noted that most metals or minerals for which importing to the extent of 25 percent or more was required are now included in the stockpile program.

TABLE The Dependence of the United States on Imports of Metals 2 and Minerals in the War Years 1942, 1943, and 1944.

			-
0% to 25% Imported	25% to 50% - Imported	50% to 75% Imported	75% to $100%$ Imported
Aluminum Natural Asphalt# Barite* Bauxite Boron* Bromine* Cadmium* Calcium Chloride* Cement* Clays* Coal* Emery* Feldspar Fluorspar* Natural Gas* Gravel* Gypsum Iron Ore* Lime* Lithium* Magnesite* Magnesium* Scrap and Ground Mica*	Arsenic Copper Ilmenite Kyanite Lead Mercury Peat Iridium Vanadium Zinc	Antimony Celestite Gold Manganese Sheet and Punch Mica Platinum Rutile Silver Tin @ Tungsten	Asbestos# Beryllium# Chromite# Cobalt Columbium# Corundum# Cryolite# Diamond# Natural Graphite Monazite# Nickel# Natural Nitrates# Palladium Osmium. Rhodium, and Ruthenium Quartz Crystal# Radium# Tantalum# Zircon#
Molybdenum* Petroleum* Phosphate Rock*		10% was impor	
Potash* Pyrite		 (a) the remainder of secondary recovery 	
Salt* Sand* Selenium Stone* Sulfur* Talc, Pyrophyllite, and Soapstone* Vermiculite*		∮ indicates that n 90% was impor	

3

Even before the U.S. entered the war, the control of shipping was perhaps the most important factor in allocating supplies of materials from the African colonies of the Allied Nations and from Latin America and other accessible sources. Ships were assigned to move high priority cargoes of materials and manufactures, and the withholding of shipping controlled less essential economic activities. During World War II price controls were in effect in the U.S., and foreign suppliers of raw materials were usually paid off at the controlled prices because many foreign sources were subsidiaries of vertically integrated U.S. firms. Further, Allied shipping controls kept foreign nations from trying to obtain exorbitant prices. However, where necessary to expand production, at home or abroad, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), chartered earlier in the depression, made necessary contracts through several subsidiaries including the Defense Plant Corporation, the Defense Supplies Corporation, and the Metals Reserve Company. The Foreign Economic Administration assisted in procuring foreign materials. War plants, including materials production, were eligible for rapid tax writeoffs authorized by Section 124A of the Internal Revenue Code. War plants received priorities for materials, energy, labor, and machinery, and a special mining machinery division was established in the War Production Board.

The need for domestic metal production was so severe in the early part of World War II that the U.S. Government deliberately closed the gold mines in an attempt to force skilled western hard-rock miners into western base metal mines, and the U.S. Army returned drafted miners to civilian status to resume work in the western metal mines. Forced-draft production of several less satisfactory domestic substitutes for imported agricultural materials was also required: for example, domestic abaca to replace Philippine abaca in hawsers, milkweed floss to replace Far Eastern kapok in life jackets, and atabrine to replace quinine as an antimalarial drug. The Jamaican bauxite deposits were discovered by accident by British soil scientists who were seeking to expand food production on the island.

Adequate supplies of energy were essential to the successful prosecution of the war. Coal was still a major sources of energy as well as an important metallurgical reducing agent as coke used in steel and other metal production, and also a source of coal-tar chemicals used in plastics and explosives. Fortunately the U.S. Government had been deeply involved with the coal industry prior to the start of the war, because in the depression the Bituminous Coal Commission had been created to form regional coal cartels to establish minimum prices and limiting production quotas. These government-industry cartels were quickly converted by the Solid Fuels Administration for War to establish maximum prices, production expansion programs, and allocations to priority uses. Despite labor unrest, coal production rose 6 percent from 643 million tons in 1942 to 684 million tons in 1944. As for petroleum we "floated to victory on a sea of oil" as government-industry cooperation through the Petroleum Administration for War mobilized every phase of the industry: exploration, production, refining, and rail, barge, and tanker transportation. Despite a whole series of domestic price and other controls, from 3.9 million barrels per day (bbl/d) in the first quarter of 1942,

4

domestic crude oil production rose 23 percent to 4.8 million bbl/d in the first quarter of 1945. Other Western Hemisphere oil production also rose 22 percent from 0.9 million bbl/d in 1940 to 1.1 million bbl/d in 1944. Availability of gasoline rose 20 percent from 2.0 million bbl/d in 1942 to 2.4 million bbl/d in 1945. Petroleum was also required for butadiene feedstocks for the synthetic rubber industry and the alcohol distilling industry was mobilized and expanded to provide ethanol for butadiene for synthetic rubber production. U.S. natural gas production rose 31 percent from 4.5 trillion cubic feet (tcf) in 1942 to 5.9 tcf in 1945.

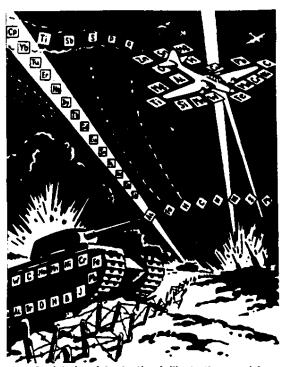
The U.S. Gross National Product rose 23 percent from \$462 billion (in 1972 dollars) in 1942 to \$569 billion (also in 1972 dollars) in 1944. Raw steel production, basic to defense, peaked at 90 million tons in 1944, refined copper peaked at 1.5 million tons in 1943, and aluminum peaked at 1.0 million tons also in 1943. Table 3 details military items produced, and the following pages provide more details on mineral commodities of current interest.

Voznesensky, Deputy Premier of the U.S.S.R. and Chief of the State

The Soviet World War II experience was summarized by Nikolai A.

Planning Commission, as follows:

"The creation of reserves in production and distribution, in production capacity and in finished goods, and in manpower and in machinery, is a most important sign of mature planning and production organization. The Soviet government, and especially Comrade Stalin, ascribe exceptional significance to the accumulation of state commodity reserves. A program for the accumulation of state and mobilizational reserves, and especially of oil products, ferrous metals, and foodstuffs, was worked out and carried out prior to the Patriotic War under direct instructions from Comrade Stalin. Experience has shown that in modern warfare victory depends upon the possession of reserves of production capacity, manpower, raw materials, and other commodities. * * * At the start of the Patriotic War these state commodity reserves, including foodstuffs and fuel, were moved to the eastern regions of the USSR. State reserves rendered great help to the Soviet Army and to the economy of the USSR during the Patriotic War."



Soviet chemistry textbook illustration, 1948

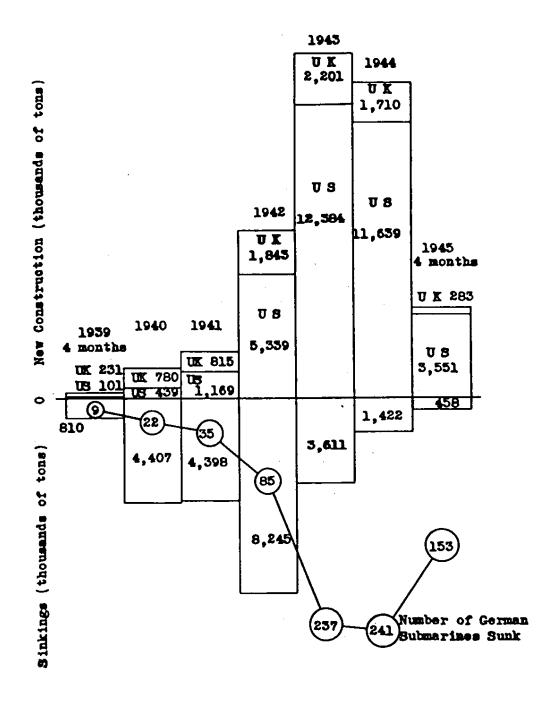
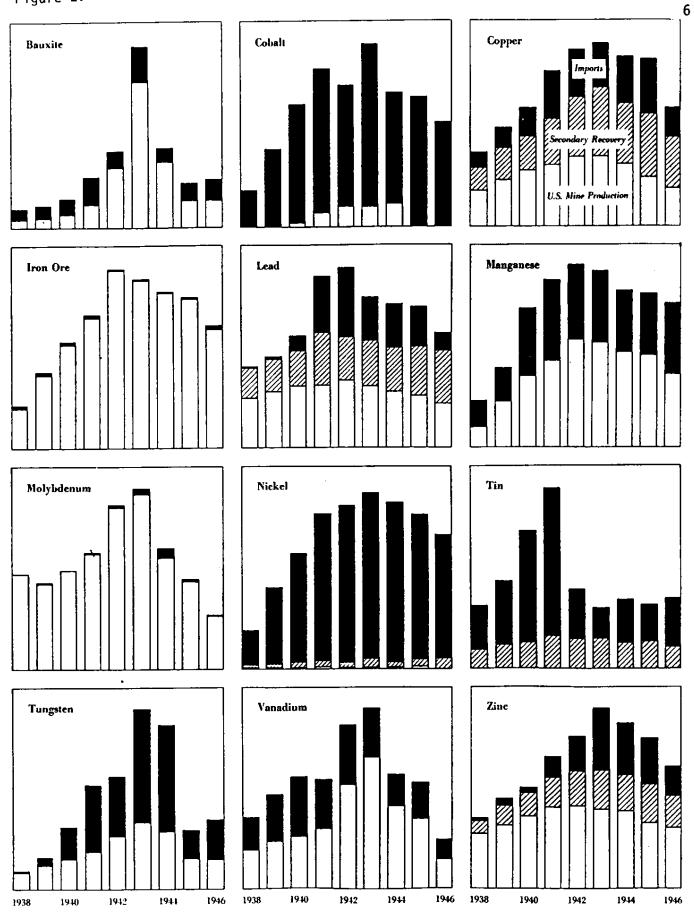


Figure 1. The Battle of the Atlantic in World War II - Vessels Sunk Compared to New Construction.



U.S. Imports (black), Secondary Recovery (crosshatched) and Mine Production (white) of 12 Important Metals and Ores

PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MUNITIONS ITEMS-July 1, 1940-July 31, 1945 (1945 preliminary)

Table 3

			'	•			
ITEM	UNIT	July 1, 1940, through Decem- ber 1941	1942	1943	1944	Jan. 1, 1945, through July 31, 1945	Cumu- lative July 1, 1940, through July 31, 1945
·							
ircraft:		1				1	
All military airplanes and special purpose aircraft	Number	00.040	826	U . 0 . 0	26 210		206 .0
special purpose aircran	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)					43,137	296,42
Taral assubas	Number				*	•	2,474,27
Total combat			24,864		74,135	35,157	199,33
	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)					413,827	
Bomber	Number	4,730	12,627		35,003	15,042	96,76
**************************************	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)			422,942		298,131	1,538,75
Heavy, long range	Number	0	0	92	1,161	2,188	3,44
**	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.) Number	1	0	4,426	55,835	105,696	165,95
Heavy, 4-engine,		J 45.	2,576		14,884	3,767	30,97
medium range.	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.) Number	1		224,189	353,522	89,788	7,359,57
Patrol	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)	1 44-	890	2,340	1,840	1,288	6,79
\$4.4	Number	1 '	14,186	35,639	31,943	24,768.	112,63
Medium		, , ,	3,270	5,411	5,228	1,586	15,97
T *1	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.) Number	1	42,803	75,519	72,648	21,252	218,47
Light		1 0	5,891	12,119		6,213	39.57
7° 1.	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)	1	44,589	83,187	95,288	56,627	305.77
Fighter		1 2.2.	10,769	23,988	38,873	19,478	98,68
	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)	1		121,850	215,536	113,079	519,45
2-engine		211	1,323	2,246	4,733	2,010	10,52
	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)	1	10,462		42,902	19,085	92,38
1-engine		5,367	9,446	21,742	34,140	17,468	88,16
.	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)			103,501	172,635	93,994	427,07
Reconnaissance		790	1,468	734	259	637	3,88
T . 1 .	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)	1	5,119	3,882	1,029		14,65
Total transport		696	1,984		9,834	4,135	23,66
**	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)				113,618	66,997	
Heavy	Number	8	116	536			
3.6.11	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)		2,667	12,605	45,080	46,806	107,45
Medium	Number	,	1,236	2,906	4,927	1,431	10,86
T . 1 .	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)	1	14,051	33,978	59,715	17,586	129,06
Light	Number	"	632	3,570	3,042	745	8,31
Translation	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)	1	1,531	8,919	8,826	2,605	22,82
Total trainer	Number		17,631	19,939	7,577	1,247	57,56
Total communication	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)		39,293	47,061	19,060	3,267	130,16
Total communication	Number	1 .	3,174	4,377	3,691	1,983	13,49
Total anasial	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)		1,870	2,957	2,649	1,671	9,50
Total special purpose	Number		183	493	1,081	615	2,37
aircraft.	Airframe weight (1,000 lbs.)	1 0	119	1 428	1,320	542	1 2,40

Table 3 cont.

PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MUNITIONS ITEMS—Continued July 1, 1940-July 31, 1945 (1945 preliminary)

							
Item	Unit	July 1, 1940, through December 1941	1942	1943	1944	Jan. 1, 1945, through July 31, 1945	Cumula- tive July 1, 1940, through July 31, 1945
Army guns and equipment:				. ((-			7,803
Heavy field artillery (com-	Number	65	647	2,660	3,284	1,147	7,803
plete equipment).		ا		222	3,601	4,321	8,245
Spare cannon for heavy	do	٥	ĭ	323	3,001	4,3	*,-4,
field artillery.	ے ا		0	120	2,035	1,882	4,037
Spare recoil mechanisms		ļ			-, 35	ĺ	
for heavy field artillery. Light field and antitank	do	4,705	20,536	6وه,ون	7,685	4,345	56,367
-		7,,-,	,,,,		` -		
guns. Tank guns and howitzers	do	6,787	43,368	34,711	19,991	11,735	116,592
Guns for self-propelled	do	"	8,811		2,981	2,113	27,060
carriages.							
Bazooka rocket launchers.	do	. 0			215,177	95,739	476,628
Mortars	do	9,518			24,842		110,348
Heavy	do	2,508				1	37,438
Light	do	7,010					72,910
Machine guns	do	87,172					
Heavy	do,	57,563					
Light	do	29,609					
Submachine guns	do	216,811	651,063	686,410			
Rifles (excluding carbines)	do		1,425,920	2,723,696	1,400,000	886 000	6,049,851
Carbines	do	5	115,813	2,959,336	1,088,09/		2.744.595
Pistols and revolvers	do	71,854		843,236 5,676	21,059		
Portable flame throwers	do	23	2,799	5,070	6 812 754		
Gas masks	do	13,761,730	4,200,525	7 640 000	704 000	7.040.000	22,618,000
Helmets (ground)	do	. 324,000	ις,ωι,ω <i>ι</i>	7,049,000),,, 04 ,000	3134-1	,
Naval guns:	Carratan arrambling	. 213	966	1,912	3,363	1,239	7,693
5-inch and over	Complete assemblies.	. 213 317	1				_
3- and 4-inch	do	915		1			142,631
20-mm, 40-mm, and 1.1- inch.] 3,,,,,	Ί΄,	'3''	<u> </u>	
Army ammunition and bombs				Ì	ļ		
Ground artillery animuni-	•	. 57,476	678,203	799,850	1,447,016	1,262,140	4,244,685
tion.		3,,,,,					ŀ
Heavy field, weight	do	. 42,949	303,899	274,529			1,766,112
Light field, tank, and					939,432	624,985	2,478,573
antitank, weight.						_	
Heavy field, rounds	. Thousand rounds					1 _	
Light field, tank, and	do	. 2,169	70,881	86,025	85,639	48,985	293,695
antitank, rounds.		1	1	_			375 500
Mortar shells	. Short ton		35,000		1		
Bazooka rockets							1
Small arms ammunition.	. Million rounds	. 1,177	9،791 أر	8l 19,800	6,578	31 4,232	41170)

PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MUNITIONS ITEMS—Continued July 1, 1940-July 31, 1945 (1945 preliminary)

ltem	Unit	July 1, 1940, through December 1941	1942	1943	1944	Jan. 1, 1945, through July 31, 1945	Cumula- tive July 1, 1940, through July 31, 1945
			0	-0 -			
Naval ships (new construc-	Number		8,035	18,434	29,150	14,099	71,061
tions).1	Thousand displ. tons		847	2,562	3,223		8,243
Combatants	Number		128	537	379	110	1,201
	Thousand displ. tons		431	1,402	1,047		3,560
Landing vessels	Number	, ,,,,	3 6,902	16,∞5	27,388		
	Thousand displ. tons		2 211	706	1,513	_	2,905
Patrol and mine craft	Number		775	1,156	590		-
	Thousand displ. tons	•	117	199	160	, ,	
District craft	Number	1 3	235	543	521		
	Thousand displ. tons	•	43	94	128		
Auxiliaries and other	Number	1 1	55	193		- 1	
	Thousand displ. tons		45	* 161	375		
Total Maritime Commission	Number		760	1,949	1,786		
ships.	Thousand DWT	1	8,090	19,296	16,447		
Standard cargo	Number	1 ''1	49	156	124		
	Thousand DWT	1 '-'1	444	1,519	1,209		
Emergency cargo	Number	1 '!	597	1,238	826		
	Thousand DWT	1 ' 1	6,402		8,927		
Liberty	Number	1 1	597	1,238			2,686
	Thousand DWT		6,402	13,361	7,798		
Victory	Number		0	0	104		
	Thousand DWT		0		1,129		
Other dry cargo (exclud-	Number	_			94		
ing AKA).	Thousand DWT	. 148	. 89		392	642	1,395
Standard tankers	Number		62		229		
	Thousand DWT	. 574	999	3,481	3,739	1,954	
Military types	Number	. o	19	125	. 375		
	Thousand DWT	. 0	63	330	़ा ,928		
Transport attack, APA	Number	. 0	0	7	141	26	174
•	Thousand DWT	. 0	o	44	775	122	941
Cargo attack, AKA	Number	. 0	Ö		52	32	84
j	Thousand DWT		0	٥	355		495
Other military	1		19	118	182		351
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Thousand DWT	. 0	: م		798	230	1,377
Other types	Number				138	4	303
1	Thousand DWT		l .	t	252	: I	827
	· ·	1					<u></u>

¹ Excluding small, rubber, and plastic boats.

² Excluding Maritime-constructed LST's—15 in 1942 and 60 in 1943.

^a Excluding 2 Maritime-constructed APA's.

Table 3 cont.

PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MUNITIONS ITEMS—Continued

July 1, 1940-July 31, 1945 (1945 preliminary)

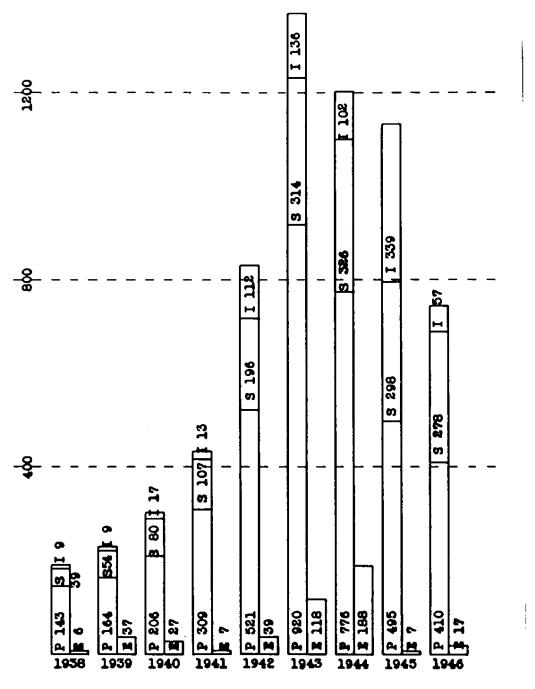
Îtem	Unit	July 1, 1940 through December 1941	1942	1943	1944	Jan. 1, 1945, through July 31, 1945	Cumulative July 1, 1940, through July 31, 1945
Army Ammunition and Bombs—Continued			;				
Land mines	Thousands	0	1,332				
Grenades, all types	do	1,222	15,977				
Aircraft bombs (Army	Short tons	45,000	630,∞∞	1,548,000	1,953,000	1,646,000	5,822,000
and Navy).	• • •						,
General purpose and demolition.	do	42,000	493,000	1,005,000	956,000	1,068,000	3,564,000
	do		38,000			1 1	-
Fragmentation	do	·	10,000				• •
<u>-</u>	do	3,∞∞	89,000	ვ∞,∞∞	137,000	54,000	583,∞∞
other.	•						
Naval ammunition:	,					-0	
Gun ammunition and	do	35,192	1∞,589	277,300	524,058	408,932	1,346,071
rockets.	do		38,082	60 201	168,056	126,967	
Surface fire	do	15,659	2,286				
	do		23,185		,		
	do		9,922	_ * : :			31,403
cial common.			<i>313</i> -	-,	, , 4	-,5-	3-74-3
	do	365	2,689	5,644	10,660	9,610	28,968
Antiaircraft	do	19,533	62,090				724,538
	do		417	8,625		134,214	207,045
Torpedoes, all types	Number	2,319	4,524	15,599	24,015	6,804	53,261
Depth charges	do	17,152	140,886	147,340	169,652	53,915	528,945
Marine mines	do	41,	380	45,054	24,516	5,507	116,457
Combat and motor vehicles:]				•
Tanks			23,884				86,333
Armored cars			191				16,438
Scout cars and carriers	1 .	1 ,, 0	16,892				88,443 16,018
Tank chassis for self- propelled guns.		٩	3,100	9,035	² ,934	949	10,010
	do	208,034	647,342	648,404	620,532	331,652	2,455,964
	do	9,108	24,593				
tons).		,,,,,,,	-41333	371-1-	,,,,,,	3.7.77	
•	do	64,975	190,779	202,994	230,645	149,485	838,878
	do	50,136	148,753				450,412
der 21/4-ton).			,50				
Light (under 11/2 tons)	do	83,815	283,217	263,626	247,113	128,167	1,005,938
Tractors	do	111	14,886		47,356		
Communication and elec-	Million dollars	253	1,512	3,043	3,739	2,119	10,666
tronic equipment.							
Radio			823				4,417
Radar			365				3,731
Other	Thousand miles		324	659		•	2,518
(included in "Other").	a nousand miles	226	906	968	1,608	1,555	5,263

PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MUNITIONS ITEMS—Continued July 1, 1940-July 31, 1945 (1945 preliminary)

ltem	Unit	July 1, 1940 through December 1941	1942	1943	1944	Jan. 1, 1945 through July 31, 1945	Cumula- tive July 1, 1940, through July 31, 1945
Other equipment and supplies:							
Clothing (Army):							
Boots, service combat.	Thousand pairs	اها	147	605	12,653	12,940	26,343
Drawers, cotton shorts.	<u> </u>	27,041	36,121	32,940	46,658	34,660	177,420
Jackets, field M-1943.	1	0	J-,	275	7,470	5,263	13,008
	do	9,351	10,487	13,669		10,227	52,407
Overcoat, wool melton, olive drab.	do	2,705	5,857	5,025	538	1,786	15,911
Socks, wool, light and heavy.	Thousand pairs,	38,368	29,651	60,606	73,212	57,933	259,770
Equipage (Army):							
Bag, wool sleeping	Thousands		0	253	5,749	2,819	8,821
Blanket, wool M-1943	do	8,528	13,706	15,265	5,983	8,512	51,994
	do		٥	18	229	506	753
	do	203	11,299	3,621	3,803	5,746	24,672
Medical supplies (Army):	•						
	do			· .	2,171,752		4,421,152
	do		135,994				1,581,562
Sodium penicillin (100,000 oxford units).	Thousand ampules	(,)	(1)	* 72	10,276	12,621	22,968
Navy clothing:						· !	
Shoes, leather, black, low.	Thousand pairs	845	3,229	6,351	10,206	4,825	25,456
Overcoat, kersey	Thousands	297	1,017	1,601	1,331	475	4,721
	do		11,085	,			93,440
shorts				·			
Trousers, blue	do	761	2,237	5,017	3,232	828	12,075
	do		850				6,208
	do		5,203	12,757	19,063	15,246	53,126

¹ Not available.

² Fourth quarter.

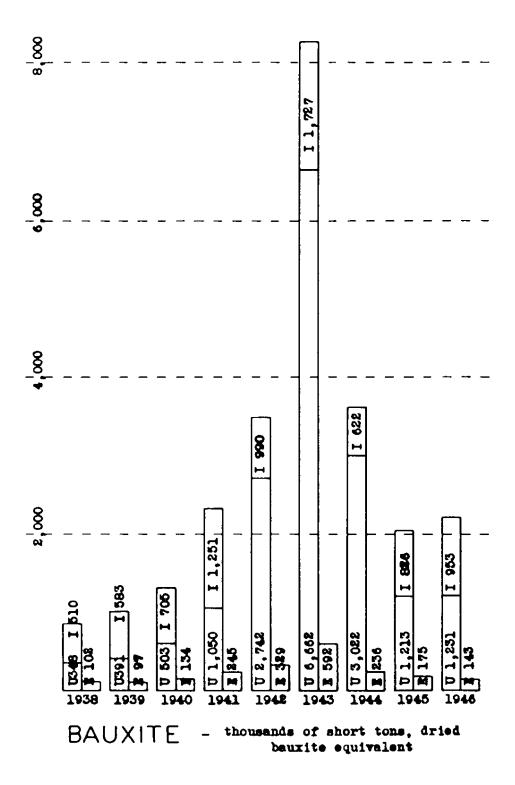


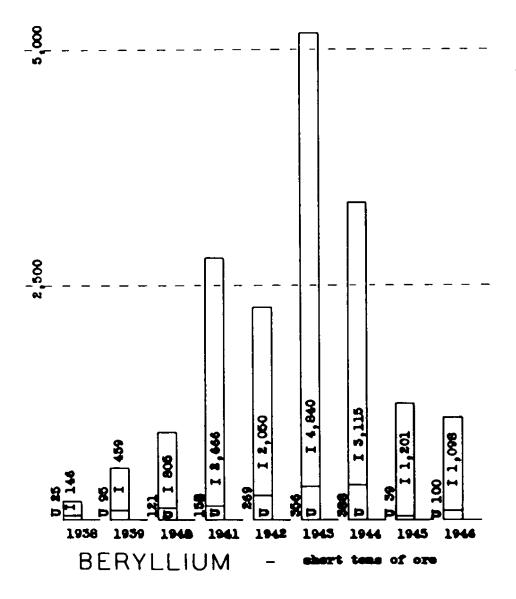
ALUMINUM - thousands of short tons of metallic aluminum

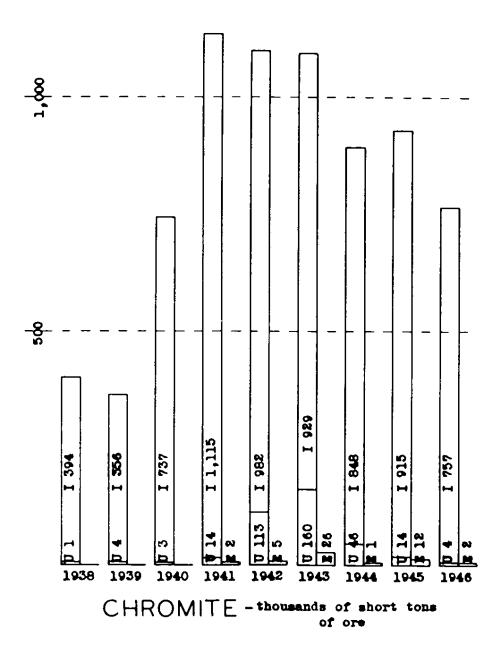
Note: In using this and the following figures care must be observed in that specifications and units in some cases may not be directly comparable to current stockpile units.

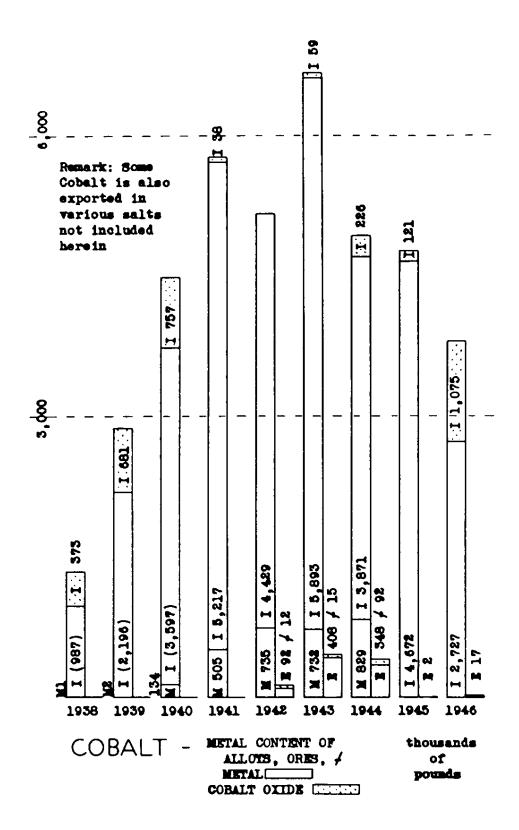
Key: M - Mine Production: actual mine figures.
P - Production: not actually specified as mine production.
U - Used or Sold: figures available only on a material used or sold basis, rather than a production basis.

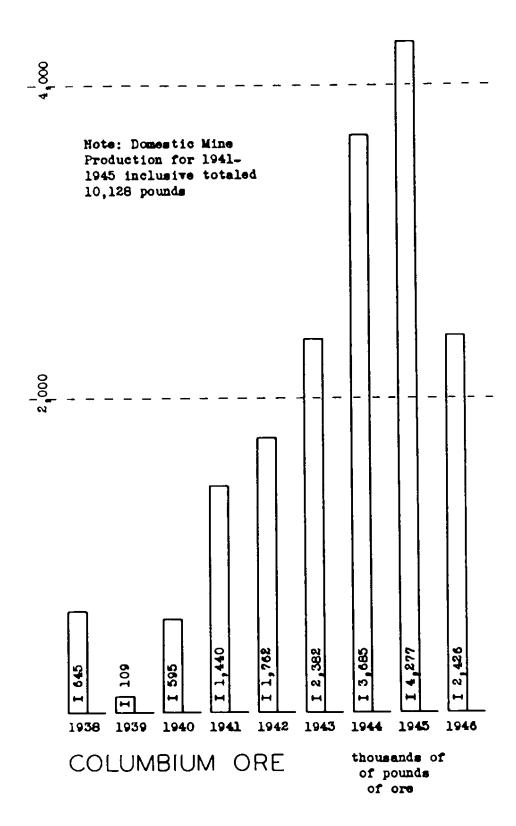
S - Secondary: material recovered from scrap or other secondary sources.
I - Imported.
E - Exported.

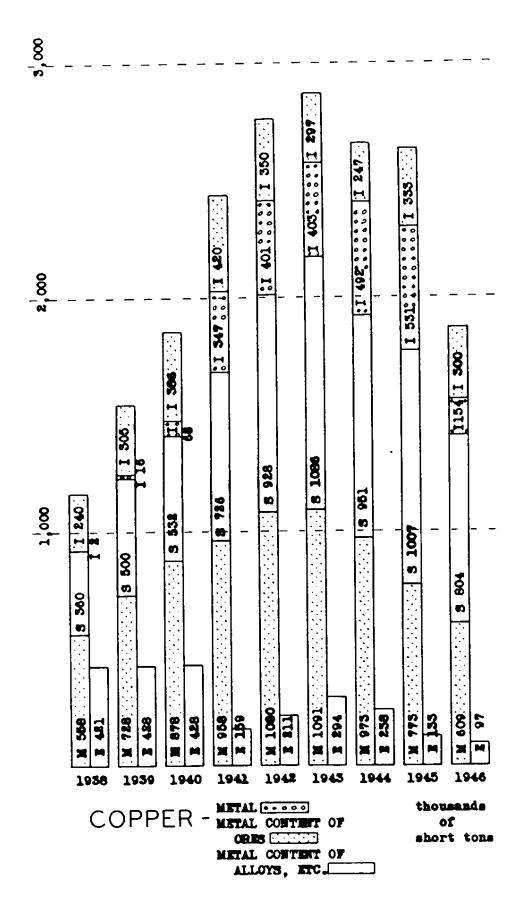


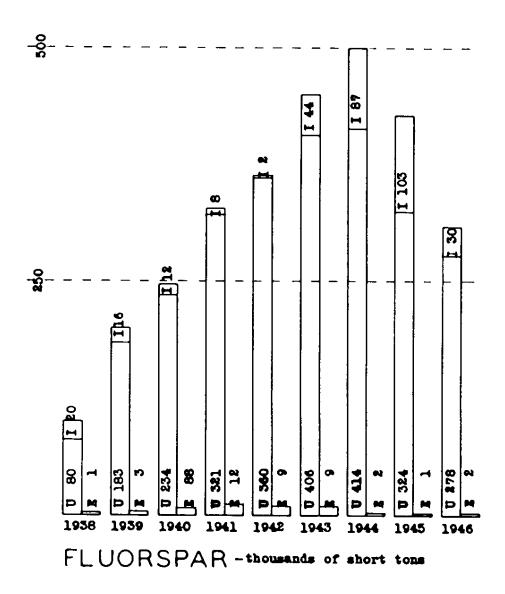


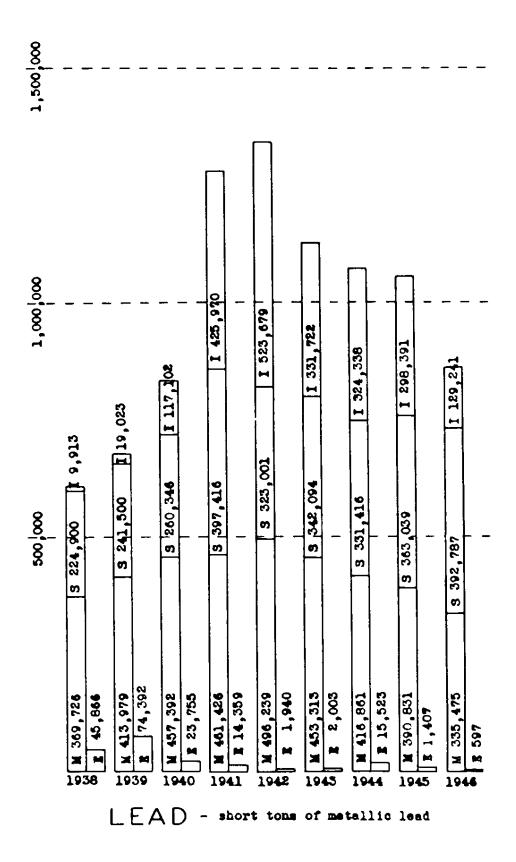


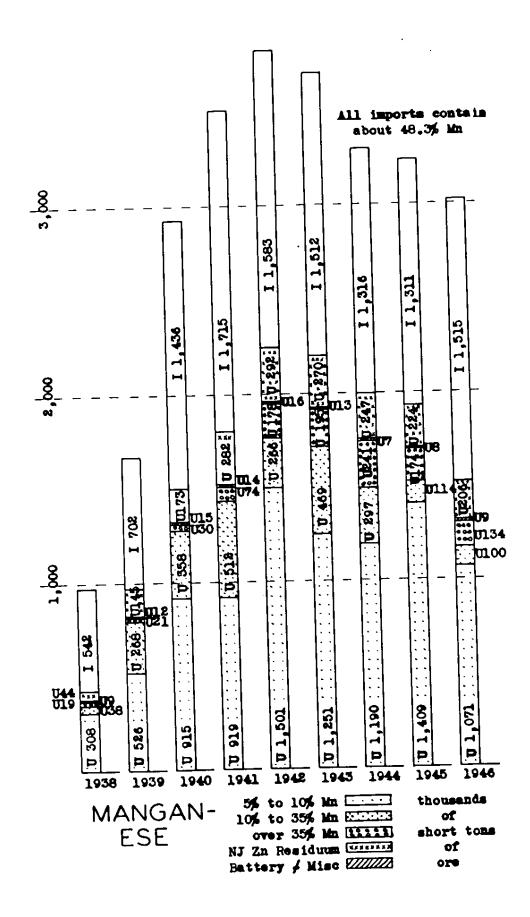


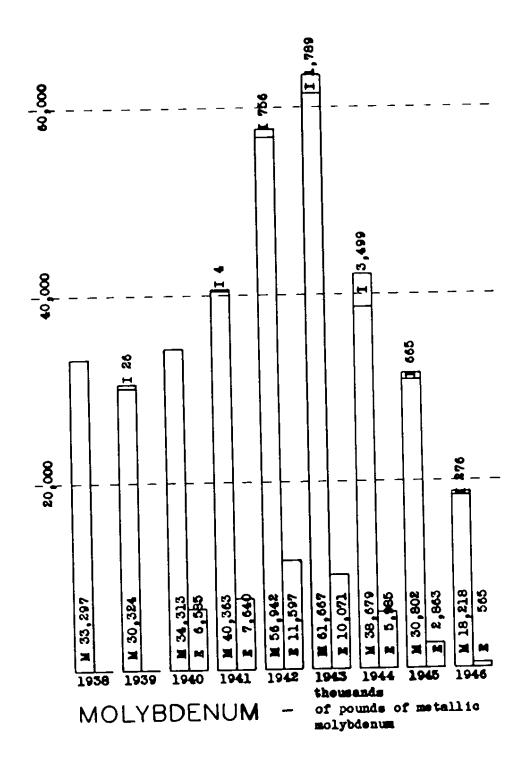


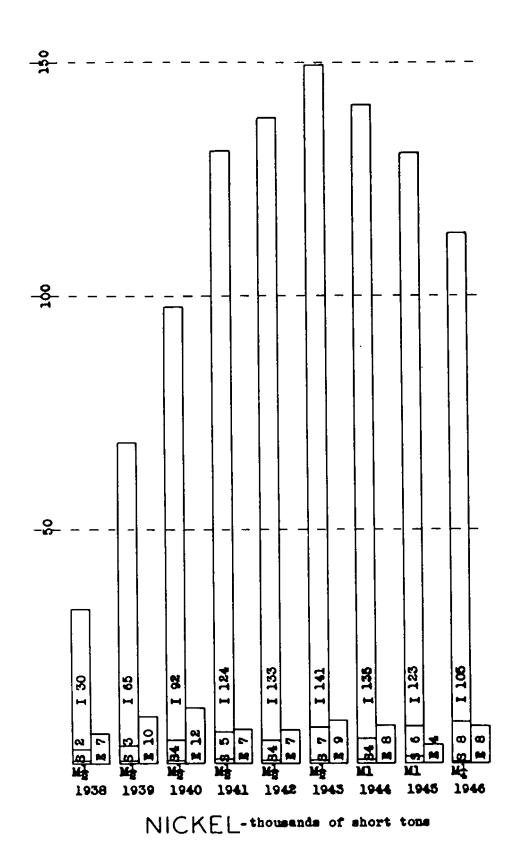












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