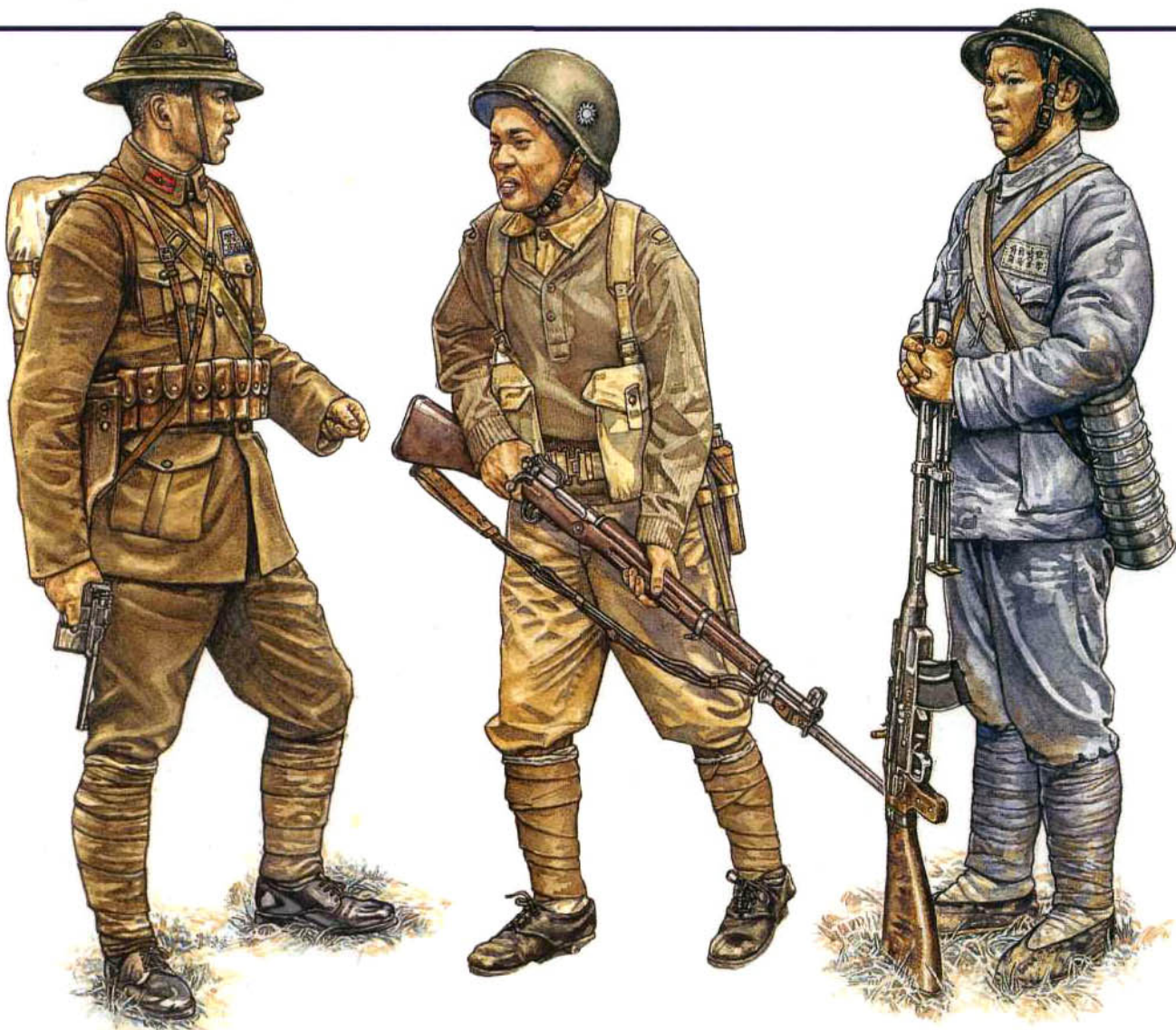


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The Chinese Army 1937–49

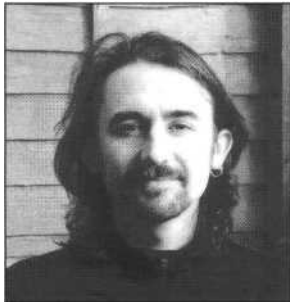
World War II and Civil War



Philip Jowett • Illustrated by Stephen Walsh



PHILIP JOWETT was born in Leeds in 1961 and has been interested in military history for as long as he can remember. His first Osprey book was the ground-breaking *Men-at-Arms 306: Chinese Civil War Armies 1911-49*; he has since published a three-part sequence on the *Italian Army 1940-45* (*Men-at-Arms* volumes 340, 349 & 353). A rugby league enthusiast and amateur genealogist, he is married and lives in Lincolnshire.



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Series editor Martin Windrow

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Dedication

To my family

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Editor's Note

For clarity, Chinese place names in this text are spelt according to the conventions employed in the 1940s, as being more familiar to Western readers - e.g. Peking rather than Beijing, Canton rather than Guangzhou, etc.

Artist's Note

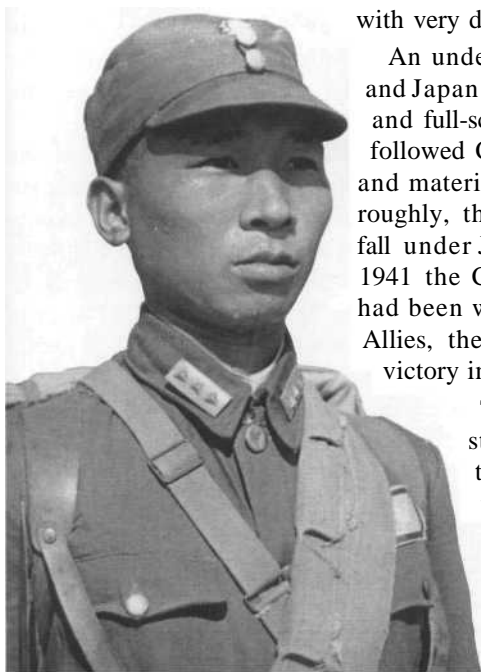
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THE CHINESE ARMY 1937-49

A soldier of the early 1940s, remarkably well kitted out for the Chinese Army, with a knapsack as well as a haversack and canvas ammunition bandolier. The almost universal Kuomintang sunburst badge, in white on blue enamel, is pinned to his cap. His rank, equivalent to lance-corporal or private first class, is indicated by the three triangles on his coloured metal or plastic collar patches; the small white cotton personal identification patch above his left breast seems to be bordered in blue, which is now thought to have denoted all ranks junior to major. The khaki colour of Chinese uniforms varied greatly; this man's two-button 'ski'-type field cap and tunic seem to be of one of the darker greenish or brownish shades.



INTRODUCTION

DURING WORLD WAR II, China was an important partner in the fight against the Japanese Empire. Although often overlooked today as an ally of the United States and the British Empire, China had already been fighting Japanese armies on her own soil for four and a half years when the attack on Pearl Harbor opened hostilities between Japan and the Western Allies in December 1941, and thereafter this so-called Sino-Japanese War became absorbed into the wider conflict. It has been estimated that in the period 1937-45 some 14 million Chinese served in the armed forces, losing about 1,400,000 dead and 1,800,000 wounded. (Total Chinese civilian casualties are, of course, incalculable, but a figure of around 800,000 dead has been suggested.)

While the United States provided the government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek with generous financial and material aid, air support, staff assistance, and training for a proportion of his forces, only a small minority of China's troops served in direct co-ordination with the British Empire forces in South-East Asia. Nevertheless, the stubborn resistance against the Japanese in China itself tied down more than a million Japanese troops throughout the war - troops who would otherwise have been free for massive reinforcement of the southern armies facing the British on the Burma/India border and the US forces in the Pacific, with very damaging results.

An undeclared state of hostilities had already existed between China and Japan since the latter's invasion of Manchuria in September 1931, and full-scale war had broken out in July 1937. During the years that followed Chinese armies were to suffer catastrophic losses in both men and material, and huge tracts of territory and most of the major cities - roughly, the entire northern and eastern half of the country - were to fall under Japanese occupation. By the outbreak of the Pacific war in 1941 the Chinese Army was exhausted, and its ability and will to resist had been worn down; however, encouraged and funded by the Western Allies, the nation and army continued to fight until the final Allied victory in August 1945.

The Chinese Army was to emerge from the war seemingly stronger than ever in both numbers and equipment. However, the fragility of this outward strength was soon to be exposed by their Communist adversaries in the resumed Civil War of 1946-49. Severe weaknesses in strategy, morale and leadership were to lead to the final defeat of the Nationalist forces in late 1949, and their flight to the island of Formosa (Taiwan).

The huge size and diversity of Chinese forces in this period, the weakness of central control, the essentially regional



Chinese troops moving up to the front north of Peking in 1937 to face the invading Imperial Japanese Army. All wear the M35 German helmet and light khaki cotton uniforms with woollen puttees. Some appear to be armed with the Chinese version of the Mauser Gewehr 88 rifle, and the man at right foreground carries a ZB26 light machine gun in its canvas cover.

nature of their command and operations, and the lack or loss of records, all contribute to prevent any but the briefest accounts of organization and campaign history in this text. However, enough information and images are available to allow a concise study of their uniforms, insignia, equipment and weapons - the core concerns of the Men-at-Arms series.

* * *

From the Wuchang rising of 1911 which toppled the last emperor, until the mid 1930s, the Chinese Republic was riven by revolutions, revolts and civil wars. For a

decade after 1917 the country was fragmented between regional warlords, but from the mid 1920s the armies of the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party, KMT) emerged as the strongest contenders for power.¹

The KMT, led in the early 1920s by Sun Yat-sen, was originally based in Canton, Kwangtung province, on the south-east coast, but its influence spread rapidly. It promised unification, modernization, and an end to foreign interference. Although suspicious of the then weak Chinese Communist Party (CCP), for pragmatic reasons the KMT accepted Soviet Russian advisers to help in its task; and the USSR, for its part, sought to infiltrate Communists into the KMT. After Sun's death in 1925 the Communists stepped up their efforts to take control of the KMT, but were frustrated by Sun's military chief Chiang Kai-shek, who took over both political and military leadership in 1926.

General Chiang soon established KMT dominance south of the Yangtze river, and purged the Communists; in 1927 a KMT government was set up in Nanking, and the Russian advisers were expelled, soon to be replaced by a German military mission. The Communist Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA - a title adopted only in 1946) dates its birth to the mutiny of Gen Chu Te's 24th Division of the KMT army in August 1927. Subsequent Communist risings against the KMT in several areas were crushed, and in October 1934 the Communists were driven out of the southern provinces and began their 6,000-mile 'Long March' west and north across deserts and mountains to Yen-an in ShensS province, in the north-west. Reduced from about 100,000 fighters to a hard core of 20,000, this 8th Route Army - now led by Mao Tse-tung, a rural Communist from Hunan province - devoted itself to building a strong base of loyalty and practical support among the peasantry of northern China. Upon this foundation they would develop, codify and practise a sophisticated strategy of rural guerrilla warfare - at first

¹ See MAA 306, *Chinese Civil War Armies 1911-49*

against the KMT, and subsequently against the Japanese invaders. In future years this guerrilla doctrine was to have enormous influence on conflicts elsewhere in the world, and the ultimate failure of the KMT armies to defeat it taught parallel lessons.

Japan and Manchuria

While the Kuomintang campaigned successfully against its remaining warlord rivals and the Communists in the early 1930s, elements in the Japanese ruling class were planning the seizure of Manchuria - the huge and underpopulated region in the north of China.

Since Japan's victory there over Russia in 1905 she had exercised influence in Manchuria, planting settlers in the southern part of the region and garrisoning it with her Kwantung Army. Rich in the natural resources which Japan needed for her industrialization and exploding population, Manchuria was essentially a no-man's-land nominally ruled by the last great Chinese regional warlord, Marshal Chang Tso-lin, whom the Japanese at first supported. However, extremist right-wing factions in the Imperial Japanese Army were conspiring to dominate the Tokyo government and to secure for Japan the resources of Manchuria. In June 1928 they assassinated Marshal Chang by blowing up his train; in September 1931 they created an incident at Mukden which gave the Kwantung Army a pretext for moving in to 'restore order', in defiance of orders from Tokyo; and in January 1932 they renamed Manchuria as the new state of Manchukuo, ostensibly ruled by the puppet Chinese emperor Pu-Yi, but actually by the Kwantung Army.

Japan was in turmoil during the early 1930s; there were a series of assassinations and coup attempts, during which the army steadily increased its influence and support. When the League of Nations belatedly protested against her aggression in Manchuria, Japan simply left the League in March 1933. Further violations of Chinese territory saw fighting in and around the city of Shanghai in 1932, the Japanese invasion of Jehol province in 1933, and a clandestine campaign in Suiyuan in 1936. In November 1936 Japan and Germany signed the Anti-Comintern Pact; and the following month President Chiang Kai-shek was reluctantly forced to agree to a 'united front' with the Communists to concentrate on fighting the invaders. The campaigns of 1932-36, although bitterly fought, had been relatively small scale affairs, and were to be overshadowed by the outbreak of all-out war in July 1937.

That war would destroy the structure of society throughout much of the country, weakening the political authority and military control of the Kuomintang government. It would also empty the regime's coffers, and reduce much of the population of an already chronically backward country to beggary and starvation: between 1937 and 1945 hyperinflation would see prices rise by 2,500 per cent.

An artillery officer uses a periscopic rangefinder during the early fighting of 1937. He is wearing a light khaki cotton uniform with a French Adrian steel helmet, which appears to have a gloss finish in this and accompanying photographs. Later in the Sino-Japanese War the Adrian was mostly associated with troops from the far southern provinces bordering French Indochina. (Imperial War Museum, CHN 11)





In the crisis of 1937 women were recruited into volunteer units; this young girl soldier of the Citizen Training Corps guards a trench in late September 1937. She wears the baggy peaked cap of the CTC, a light khaki shirt and breeches with puttees, and canvas and rubber 'basketball'-type boots. Canvas ammunition bandoliers worn around the waist and over the left shoulder seem to be her only equipment. (Adeq Historical Resources Inc)

CHRONOLOGY

Sino-Japanese War 1937-41

1937:

7 July A provocation at Lukuochiao on the outskirts of Peking - the 'Marco Polo Bridge incident' - is used as a pretext by Japan to invade China.

July Japanese occupy Peking.

13 August Fighting breaks out in Shanghai, where a Chinese army of 500,000 men in 71 divisions face 200,000 Japanese troops. Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist China and the USSR sign a non-aggression pact.

3 September Fall of Kalgan, Inner Mongolia.

12 November Fall of Shanghai, with estimated Chinese losses of 300,000 men.

13 December Fall of Nationalist capital, Nanking, to Japanese troops, followed by several weeks of pillage, massacre and atrocity; scores of thousands of Chinese civilians are killed, and eyewitness reports arouse anti-Japanese indignation in the West.

1938:

March-April Chinese victory at Taierhchuang by forces led by General Li Tsung-jen; at about 16,000, the losses suffered by the Japanese 10th Div and the Chinese forces are roughly equal.

May Fall of coastal cities of Amoy and Foochow.

6 June Fall of Kaifeng.

October Fall of Canton; and of Wuhan - defended 'on paper' by 107 Chinese divisions totalling 800,000 men. Nationalist government withdraws to south-western city of Chungking.

December President Roosevelt's US government makes loan of \$25 million to Chiang Kai-shek.

1939:

10 February Hainan Island occupied by Japanese.

27 March Fall of Nanchang.

22 June Port of Swatow, south China, taken by Japanese.

14 September First battle of Changsha - Japanese fail to take the city.

November-December Chinese winter offensive ends in defeat.

1940:

30 March Japanese install Wang Ching-wei at head of puppet 'Reorganized Government' in Nanking, to govern occupied China.

10 June Japanese take Ichang on Yangtze river.

July Refused US support, Britain is forced to agree to Japanese demand to close the 'Burma Road', Nationalist China's only supply route from Burma, India and the West (12th). Moderate Japanese government of Adml Yonai replaced by that of Prince Konoye (16th). US government announces limited iron, steel and fuel embargoes on Japan in gesture of support for Chiang Kai-shek (26th).

August Vichy French regime forced to agree to Japan installing garrisons in northern French Indochina, threatening Nationalist positions in Kwangsi province.



This young soldier of the Shanghai garrison in 1937 has two cloth-and-tape pockets for carrying stick grenades in addition to his basic bandoliers. German grenades were imported and also copied locally by numerous small arsenals. The soldier's small stature is emphasized by the fact that his Mauser 98k rifle is nearly as tall as he is.

27 September Announcement of Tripartite Pact by Japan, Germany and Italy.

October Chinese recapture Nanning in Kwangsi. British re-open Burma Road supply route.

1941:

January 'New 4th Army' incident - Nationalist attacks on Communist units under their command lead to *de facto* end of united front against Japan.

Thereafter, throughout World War II, the Allies would be concerned that Chiang Kai-shek was devoting more resources and attention to the threat from the Communists than to operations against the Japanese. Since 1937 about 250,000 Nationalist troops had been allocated to contain the Communists around Yen-an. The CCP, for its part, would continue to infiltrate previously Nationalist regions in north-east and central China, creating 'liberated' base areas for the future struggle against the KMT.

April US Lend-Lease Act (8 March) allows export of 100 P-40B fighters to China, to be flown by Air Volunteer Group set up by retired USAAF Col Claire Chennault, Chiang Kai-shek's air adviser. By executive order, US pilots and ground crew are permitted to enlist in AVG.

26 July US government freezes all Japanese assets, followed by Britain and Netherlands; these embargoes cut off 90 per cent of Japanese oil imports.

8 September Second battle of Changsha; Japanese again fail to take city.

11 October Chinese briefly retake Ichang.

1 November Chinese retake Chengchow.

World War II 1941-45

December Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor US Navy base, Hawaii (7th), leads to American declaration of war on Japan; China formally declares war on Tripartite Pact (9th); Japanese capture Hong Kong (18th). In China, third battle of Changsha opens.

1942:

January Chiang Kai-shek named Supreme Allied Commander, China (4th). Third battle of Changsha ends in yet another defeat for Japanese 11th Army, with heavy losses. Japanese advance into Burma begins (15th).

January-May Far-reaching Japanese victories over Allied forces in Philippines, Borneo, Malaya, Dutch East Indies, etc.

19 March US LtGen Joseph W. Stilwell appointed senior US military representative to the Nationalist Chinese government. Chiang Kai-shek appoints Stilwell as his chief-of-staff, with command of Chinese 5th & 6th Armies fighting around Mandalay and Toungoo in northern Burma.

March Stilwell arrives in time to lead his Chinese troops in a long retreat into India, while others retire into China. Chinese withdrawal from Toungoo (30th) without destroying Salween river bridge aids Japanese advance.

29 April Japanese capture Lashio, Burma, thus cutting the Burma Road to China.

May Japanese capture important communications hub of Myitkyina, Burma (8th). Gen Stilwell crosses into Assam state, north-west India,

after 140-mile retreat on foot (15th); his 22nd & 38th Divs will later form the core of 'X-Force'. Last British Empire troops leave Burma (20th).

July Stilwell appointed to command new US China-Burma-India Theater.

1943:

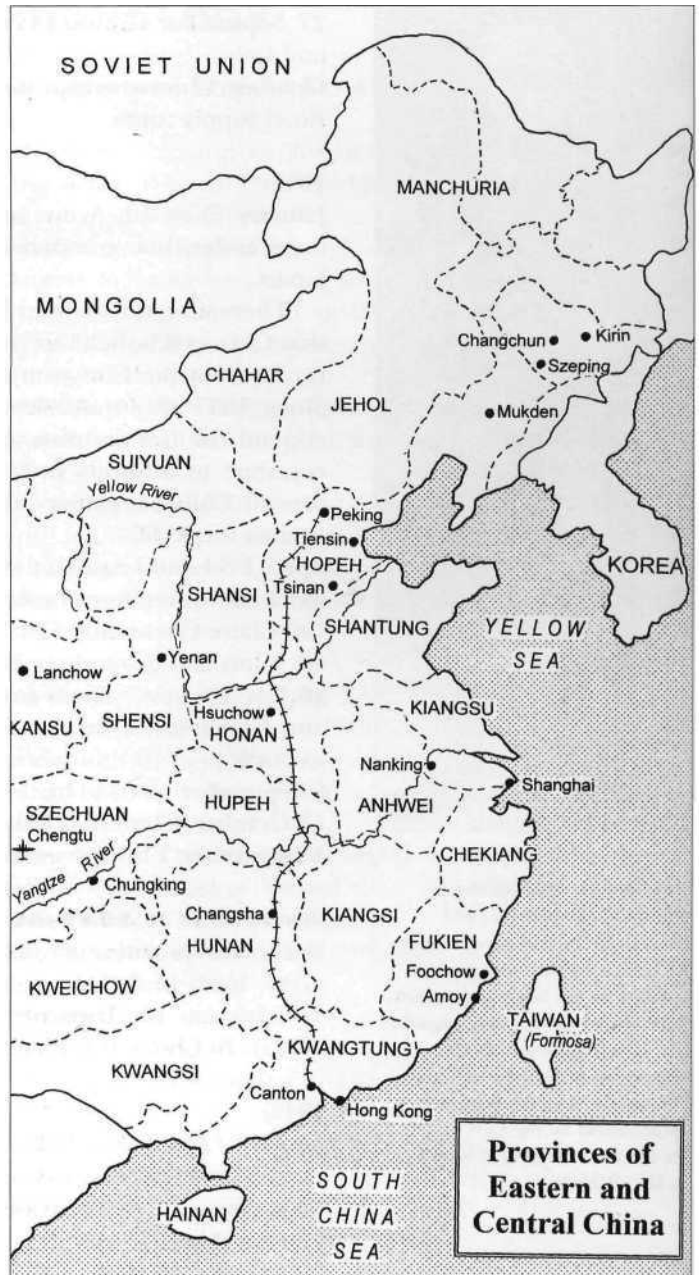
March Gen Chennault is appointed to command new US 14th Air Force in China.

Throughout year, Gen Stilwell supervises reorganization, re-training and re-equipment programme around Ramgarh, in Bihar state, India, for Chinese troops from Burma. From **October** reinforcements are flown back from China on transport aircraft returning empty to Ledo, Assam, from supply flights 'over the Hump' to Kunming. Since these are now the only Allied means of supplying Chiang Kai-shek, it is easier to bring Chinese troops to the supplies than to take the supplies to China; and by the end of the year four effective Chinese divisions have been built in India. Meanwhile, working forward from Ledo, engineers under US Gen Lewis Pick construct a road to link up eventually with the Burma Road. In October Stilwell's forces slowly advance south-eastwards into the Hukawng Valley in north central Burma.

2 November-25 December In China, battle of Changteh in Hunan province: an offensive by 100,000 Japanese troops is pushed back to its start line in a costly Chinese victory, whose heavy casualties include three divisional commanders.

1944:

January Since Chiang Kai-shek insists upon Allied offensives in Burma to re-open his supply lines before his armies can make any real contribution to Allied strategy, British Adml Mountbatten (Supreme Allied Commander South-East Asia Command, SEAC) plans with Gen Stilwell the joint Operation 'Thursday'. Stilwell's Chinese X-Force are to advance against the Japanese 18th Div to seize Shaduzup, Mogaung and Myitkyina in north central Burma, before swinging north-east into China; and the Ledo Road will be pushed forward. South of the Chinese, several British/Indian 'Chindit' brigades will be inserted by air to cut the rear lines of the Japanese facing Stilwell. Meanwhile, in north-east Burma, Gen Wei Li-Huang's Chinese Y-Force from Yunnan is to advance





ABOVE LtGen Joseph W. Stilwell (1883-1946). 'Vinegar Joe' was an obvious choice to be senior US military representative in China; he had studied the language in Peking in the 1920s, and had been US military attache 1935-39. Arriving in March 1942, he was also appointed chief-of-staff by Chiang Kai-shek and immediately sent to extricate hard-pressed Chinese forces in Burma. After the exhausting retreat into India he had to struggle with several simultaneous tasks: to re-equip and re-train the troops in India; to oversee the always overstretched airlift of supplies to China; to liaise between the US government and Chiang over the conduct of the war; and eventually, to lead the Chinese forces back into Burma. Although a hard-working and able officer, Stilwell had few man-management skills; he resented President Roosevelt's orders, was almost openly contemptuous of Chiang, quarrelled with USAAF Gen Chennault, and was sullenly suspicious of the British allies who were carrying by far the greater burden in Burma. In October 1944 his ultimatum that he must take complete command of Chinese forces led to his recall. (US Signal Corps)

against the Japanese 56th Div on the Salween river front, to open the Burma Road between Lashio and Kunming.

5-6 March Stilwell's Chinese (and 'Merrill's Marauders', 5307th Composite brigade, the only US Army combat unit in SE Asia) defeat Japanese at Maingkwan and Walawbaum.

5-12 March Chindit brigades are flown into Kawkwe Valley; they set up strongholds, beat off Japanese reaction, and cut Mandalay-Myitkyina railway.

7/8 March Unsuspected by the Allies, Japanese Gen Mutaguchi's 15th Army (33rd, 15th & 31st Divs) launches *U-Go* Offensive against British Gen Slim's 14th Army on Chindwin river front in north-west Burma - a major thrust into Assam to seize the vital base at Imphal before pushing on into India.

March-June In fierce fighting around Tiddim, Tamu, Imphal and Kohima, Slim's forces defeat Japanese with heavy losses.

April Chindits pass under Stilwell's command. His X-Force makes slow progress against Japanese north of Mogaung and Myitkyina.

In China, the Japanese *Ichigo* Offensive (with objectives including seizure of US bomber bases) captures large areas of territory in Hunan and Kwangsi provinces.

11-12 May Y-Force opens Chinese offensive on Salween front, but fails to re-open Burma Road.

17 May Merrill's Marauders capture Myitkyina airfield, but the Japanese reinforce the town, and the fighting bogs down into a siege.

June In China, first USAAF B-29 raid on Japan from airfields around Chengtu near Chungking (15th). First major Japanese offensive since 1938, by 11th & 23rd Armies, captures Changsha (18th). In Burma, Stilwell sacrifices the exhausted Chindits to capture Mogaung (26th).

11 July Defeated and starving, Japanese 15th Army is ordered to retreat from Assam.

3 August Stilwell's X-Force finally captures Myitkyina.

8 August In China, Hengyang falls to Japanese.

19 October Gen Stilwell is recalled to the USA, through political machinations by Chiang Kai-shek.

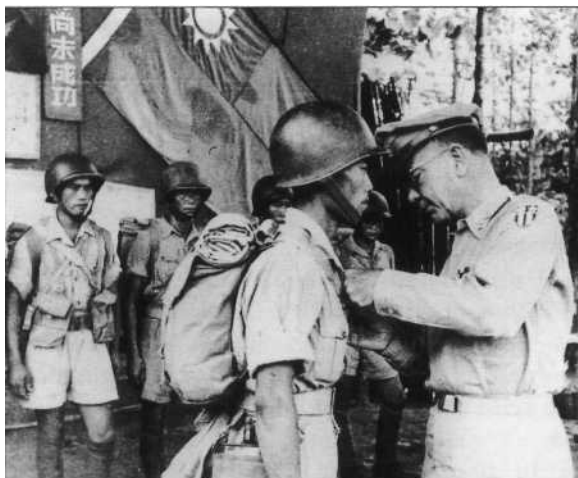
31 October Chinese counter-offensive begins in China.

In Burma, the chain of command is re-organized. US Gen Albert Wedermeyer takes over liaison with Chiang Kai-shek. Gen Daniel Sultan takes command of Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) - Chinese New 6th Army (Gen Liao Yao-hsiang: 14th, 22nd & 50th Divs), New 1st Army (Gen Sun Li-jen: 30th & 38th Divs), plus British 36th Div and US Mars Force (former Merrill's Marauders). Gen Raymond Wheeler becomes Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, SEAC.

The next phase of operations is planned to trap and destroy Japanese 33rd Army (Gen Honda) in north central Burma, by Gen Slim and Gen Sultan making simultaneous advances from the north-west and north; meanwhile Y-Force will again attack from the north-east, these Chinese advances finally allowing the linking of the Ledo and Burma roads.

1 November Y-Force retakes Lungling.

15 December Chinese 1st Army enters Bhamo.



US LtGen Daniel I.Sultan (right) took over from Stilwell in October 1944 as commanding general of US forces in the CBI theatre of war and of the combat command NCAC. Here he awards medals to members of the Chinese expeditionary force in Burma, who wear M1 helmets, British KD shirts and shorts, and British 37 pattern webbing with 08 large packs.

1945:

January In the north-west, British 14th Army makes rapid progress into central Burma, reaching Irrawaddy river and threatening Mandalay. In the north-east, Chinese 1st Army and Y-Force meet, and Ledo and Burma roads are joined at Mongyu (27th).

21 February British 36th Div, operating as NCAC's right flank, captures Myitson.

March Y-Force, advancing down Burma Road, captures Lashio (7th). Division from Chinese 6th Army links with Y-Force at Hsipaw on Burma Road (24th).

This essentially marks the close of active Chinese operations in Burma.

August USAAF drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima (6th) and Nagasaki (9th). USSR finally declares war on Japan, and invades Manchuria (9th). Sino-Russian treaty signed (14th), recognizing Chiang Kai-shek's government and agreeing to withdraw Soviet troops from Manchuria after Japanese defeat. Emperor Hirohito broadcasts surrender announcement (15th).

Almost immediately, US forces begin to transport by sea and air nearly 500,000 Nationalist troops to strategic ports and cities in Manchuria and northern China. This allows the Nationalists to move into areas that had been lost to the Communists during the Japanese occupation.

August 1945-January 1946

America, fearful of future Soviet involvement in a Chinese civil war, attempts to broker a peace between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists and Mao Tse-tung's Communists. Both sides pay lip service to the plan while actually preparing to resume outright war. Meanwhile, the USSR delays withdrawal from Manchuria, transferring captured Japanese weapons to the Communists and allowing them to consolidate their hold in many areas. There is constant low level fighting between Nationalists and Communists in Manchuria. In November 1945, against US advice, Chiang decides to commit his best Allied-trained and equipped troops to Manchuria as soon as the Soviets withdraw.

The Civil War 1946-49

1946:

13 January Ceasefire in Manchuria brokered by US peace mission headed by Gen George C.Marshall.

15 January Despite ceasefire, KMT forces capture Mukden.

April Communists capture Changchun and Harbin.

May KMT defeat Communists south of Sungari river, retake Changchun and capture Szeping. Communists adopt tide of People's Liberation Army (PLA).

June Marshall mission negotiates another brief truce.

July General civil war breaks out between KMT and PLA.

The broad strategies of the two sides are opposed. In simplified terms, Chiang's KMT armies - with an initial numerical advantage of about 3 million to 1 million - will seek to control north-south communications,

confident of dividing the PLA and pushing it westwards into the wilderness for final destruction. In 1946-47 the KMT will invest far too heavily in occupying and holding cities in Manchuria and northern China, tying down men and resources in positional defences which the Communists can afford to ignore, at the end of a precarious 1,000-mile supply line through the strongest areas of Communist support.

Outside Manchuria, the PLA intend to thrust eastwards from Shensi province to reach the coast and separate the KMT forces in north and south for destruction in detail. They will increasingly dominate the countryside, isolating and strangling KMT centres. Meanwhile a crumbling away of support and losses in men and equipment will reduce Chiang's numerical advantage and lift the PLA to equality in materiel by mid-1948; and by early 1949 the PLA will achieve superiority in both men and weaponry.

1947:

January-March PLA forces under Gen Lin Piao mount series of attacks on Nationalists along Sungari river south of Harbin, Manchuria. Best KMT troops, with motorized equipment, are tied down guarding cities and railways in deep, narrow salient. This stretches north-east from Peking and Tientsin into Manchuria, via Chinchow to Mukden, Szeping, Changchun and Kirin.

14 March Symbolic but otherwise pointless victory for Nationalists when they take old pre-1945 Communist capital of Yanan.

May Gen Lin Piao's 270,000 PLA troops drive Nationalists back 150 miles and inflict heavy casualties.

December PLA cut rail links into Mukden and isolate all KMT garrisons in Manchuria.

1948:

March Nationalist commander in Manchuria, Gen Liao Yao-hsiang, orders KMT garrisons withdrawn from Kirin and Szeping to Mukden. That city, held by Gen Wei Li-Huang with 200,000 men, and Changchun, with 40,000 under Gen Cheng Tung-kao, are now only KMT holdings in Manchuria north of Chinchow railhead and supply base.

September After feinting towards Mukden, Lin Piao threatens Chinchow. Further south, PLA attack key city of Tsinan on the Yellow river in Shantung province, held by 80,000 KMT troops (14th). 200,000 PLA troops encircle Mukden (17th). Tsinan garrison surrenders (24th), many joining the PLA. Mukden garrison ordered to relieve Chinchow with 15 divisions (25th), but Gen Wei hesitates.

October Gen Wei sends 11 divisions in sortie from Mukden towards Chinchow (9th), ordering Gen Cheng to break out of Changchun and withdraw on Chinchow; latter order never acknowledged. At Chinchow, KMT 93rd Div defect; city falls (15th). Gen Liao Yao-hsiang killed in



6 March 1945: M4A4 Sherman of the Chinese Provisional Tank Group crossing the Nam You river during Y-Force's advance on Lashio. The crew wear ski-type field caps with KD clothing. Note the colourful 'tiger face' painted on the mantlet and turret front, and the 'claws' on the armour plate in front of the driver's position. (US Signal Corps)



A column of soldiers singing patriotic songs march along a dirt road during a winter offensive. They wear winter-weight ski-type caps with the ear flaps tied on top. Their wadded cotton jackets and trousers are in different shades of blue-grey. Most of these men are armed with the Hanyang 88 but two men at the front have later Mauser models.

PLA attack on his HQ. Chiang Kai-shek flies from Nanking to Peking to take personal command, but his direct orders to individual divisional commanders add to confusion. Changchun falls, after defections from garrison (19th).

Gen Wei's sortie defeated west of Mukden (27th). Disintegration of KMT armies in Manchuria.

2 November Mukden falls; huge numbers of men and KMT weapons and supplies captured.

5 November Port of Yingkow falls, after only about 20,000 KMT troops manage to reach

it and take ship south. The Manchurian campaign has cost the Nationalists about 300,000 men and vast resources.

November-December Decisive battle for Hsuehchow, vital hub of north-south/east-west railways, commanding movement from Peking to Nanking and south to the Yangtze. Helped by treachery of KMT general staff officer Gen Liu Fei, PLA 2nd & 3rd Field Armies (Gen Chen Yi), about 500,000 strong, manoeuvre to envelop KMT Gen Tu Yu-ming's 150,000-strong garrison from west, south and east. Overall KMT field operations around Hsuehchow, by four army groups totalling 300,000 men, are commanded by incompetent political appointee Gen Liu Ch'ih. Early **December**, Hsuehchow itself abandoned, and to south of it 140,000 KMT troops surrounded at Suhsien, where attempt at relief defeated with great loss (6th).

1949:

January Nationalist forces surrender south of Hsuehchow (10th); PLA claim 327,000 prisoners, and total KMT casualties in campaign are about 500,000. Many prisoners will join PLA after 're-education'. PLA take Tientsin (15th), and Peking (20th), on which date Chiang Kai-shek resigns presidency to Li Tsung-jen.

February-March General advance by PLA southwards to Yangtze river. KMT government under Sun Fo move to Canton, and attempt negotiations with Mao Tse-tung. Still director general of KMT party, Chiang transfers gold reserves to Formosa, and prepares Nationalist redoubt on that island.

April Negotiations break down (19th). PLA cross Yangtze at several points. Fall of Taiyuan; and of Nanking (23rd).

27 May Fall of Shanghai.

June-December The rest of mainland China and Inner Mongolia are overrun by the PLA against only light resistance.

1 October In Peking, Mao Tse-tung proclaims the People's Republic of China.

15 October Fall of Canton. KMT government flees to Chungking, then Chengtu.

8 December Chiang Kai-shek and KMT leadership withdraw from mainland to Taipei, Formosa.



A Nationalist sentry stands guard against Communist attacks during the Civil War. He wears the usual summer-weight uniform, with belly pouches for four magazines for his Thompson M1A1 (here still with the muzzle compensator, rarely seen by this date). This sub-machine gun was one of the most popular of all imported US weapons and was copied in local arms factories. (Popperfoto)

THE NATIONALIST ARMY 1937-45

Strength, organization and qualities

At the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in July 1937 the Nationalist Army expanded to about 1.7 million men; its official order of battle included 182 infantry divisions, 46 independent brigades, 9 cavalry divisions, 6 independent cavalry brigades, 4 artillery brigades and 20 independent artillery regiments. A division had (again, officially) 2 infantry brigades, each of 2 regiments; an artillery battalion or regiment; an engineer and a quartermaster battalion, and small signals, medical and transport units.

In practice, the provision of support and service elements varied greatly from division to division, as did their field strength. The average strength of a division as described above was around 9,000-10,000 men; but this only applied to the ten German-trained divisions re-organized in 1937. The great majority, as well as newly raised or temporary divisions, would average only about 5,000 men. Independent brigades might have about 4,500 men, while their temporary equivalents were perhaps 3,000-strong.

China in 1937 was still a deeply divided country, and the KMT government could not rely on all its nominal forces equally. Rebellions and other disloyalties by various regional military commanders throughout the

1930s had made Chiang Kai-shek very suspicious of a large part of his forces. The most loyal and therefore best-trained and equipped troops were approximately 380,000 men of Chiang Kai-shek's own pre-1934 army, most of whom had been trained by German instructors. They were commanded by graduates of the Whampoa Military Academy in Canton, which Chiang had himself commanded in 1924, creating an educated and politically reliable officer corps for the KMT army.

Another 520,000-odd men belonged to formations that were traditionally loyal to Chiang, though not of his own creation. Together with his hard core, these gave him a strength of 900,000 men that the government could rely upon. Beyond these armies there existed another class of so-called 'semi-autonomous provincial troops' that could sometimes be mobilized in the KMT government's interest, totalling perhaps another 300,000 men divided between the provinces of Suiyuan, Shansi and Shantung in the north, and Kwangtung in the south-east.

The rest of the Nationalist army was made up of troops led by commanders who, while having no real loyalty to Chiang Kai-shek, were willing to fight alongside him against the common enemy, Japan. The fighting quality of these troops of questionable loyalty varied from very good to extremely poor. For instance, the 80,000 soldiers and 90,000 militia of the far southern province of Kwangsi were well-led, equipped and

Nationalist Army Field Organization

Army group, <i>Chi Tuan</i>	=	2 or more armies
Army, <i>Chun Tuan</i>	=	2 or more corps
Corps, <i>Chun</i>	=	2 or more divisions
Division, <i>Shih</i>	=	2 or more infantry brigades



disciplined; while the 250,000 soldiers of Szechuan in the south-west were described as the worst-trained and equipped, most undisciplined and disloyal of all Chinese Nationalist troops.

During World War II the five divisions of Gen Stilwell's X-Force (later, the NCAC), and some of the Yunnan-based Y-Force, were raised to a quality largely unknown among the rest of the Chinese armies. Eroded by casualties - particularly among the trained pre-1937 officer corps - and by poverty of resources, and denied the modern equipment provided by the Allies for the Burma campaigns, most of these formations were under strength, badly fed, badly cared for, badly clothed and equipped, and badly led, with a combat value comparable to that of the marauding peasant levies of an earlier century. Historically, China's brutal military culture had given the peasant soldier no reward for victory beyond the opportunity to pillage, and no real emotional stake in any cause beyond his own immediate unit. Caution and cunning were admired; self-respect did not depend upon initiative and dash in the attack or endurance in defence. Unless success came quickly they tended to fall back; on the other hand, even after a headlong retreat in the face of the enemy the long-suffering peasant soldiers could sometimes be brought back to their duty after a short respite.

Weapons 1937-45

With an army which quickly rose to over 2 million men, and only a number of small local arsenals and arms factories, the Nationalist army faced a constant problem in arming its troops. By the early 1930s a bewildering array of rifles and machine guns from all over the industrial world had been imported at one time or other by the Chinese. With no central policy on arms purchasing, the various military regions and the virtual warlords who commanded them imported at whim for their own troops. This chronic lack of standardization was only partly addressed by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his deputy chief-of-staff General Pei Hsung-hsi (left), reviewing high-ranking Nationalist officers in Chungking, 1944. All wear standard Chinese Army officers' uniform with Sam Browne belts and, in most cases, breeches with high leather boots. Chiang is wearing his version of the service dress with the addition of an officer's mantle or cloak.

OPPOSITE A Home guardsman on sentry duty at Pihu, Fukien province, in 1944. He wears a basic winter-weight uniform with a US M1917A1 steel helmet; this and the very similar British Mk I were not much worn by first-line troops by this date. This shows good detail of the typical waist-and-shoulder bandoliers; and note that he has been issued a knapsack of the type used only by the better equipped units in the 1930s. (IWM IB 4045C)



Two 18-year-old conscripts, photographed in November 1942 firing a ZB26 light machine gun. Called up in July, these boys would have enjoyed only brief and sketchy training before being sent to the front; the high attrition rate in the Chinese Army demanded a constant supply of new fighters. The colour of the soldiers' winter-grade uniforms appears to be a dark shade of khaki rather than the more common faded blue-grey.



By 1937 the predominant rifle of the Chinese armies was the 7.92mm German Mauser 98k which had been recommended by their German advisers in the early 1930s. The Mauser, imported in large numbers and soon under production in Chinese arsenals, was commonly known as the 'Chiang Kai-shek' rifle. Other rifles based on the Mauser design were also imported from Belgium and Czechoslovakia, as the FN24 and VZ24 in their rifle and carbine forms. The older Mauser Gewehr 88 was also widely used by China, and was produced as the Hanyang 88 in Chinese factories.

Many different types of machine gun were also imported during the 1930s - indeed, China was in several instances the only export customer for some of the more obscure European weapons. If an arms dealer could not sell his wares to the KMT government, he could always try his luck with one of the provincial army commanders. The predominant Chinese light machine gun was the excellent Czechoslovakian ZB26, imported and copied in large numbers. Other models imported included the Swiss ZE70, the Finnish Lahti, and the Soviet DP26. Machine guns were always in short supply and even the best Chinese forces only had about one-third the allocation per division enjoyed by the Japanese troops.

The Chinese had historically been poor in modern artillery, and most field guns were of the light and mountain classes. This shortage is illustrated by the fact that in 1941 there were only 800 artillery pieces in the entire Chinese Army. During his early campaigns Chiang Kai-shek had acquired the habit of keeping as much of the artillery as possible under his own control, to weaken any potentially mutinous subordinates. Traditionally the shortfall in conventional artillery had been partly offset by the use of mortars of all calibres. The American 75mm pack howitzers and 105mm howitzers provided after 1942 were only allocated to the divisions trained in India, and to a few other hand-picked formations.

The Nationalists used a number of armoured trains in their internal campaigns, but only a handful of light tanks and other armoured vehicles had been imported from Britain, Germany, Italy and the USSR in the 1920s-30s, mainly Renault FT17 tanks and Carden Loyd carriers. Japan's own light and outdated armour in China was used entirely for dispersed infantry support; the motley Chinese inventory had little impact on the fighting, and most soon broke down or were destroyed. The performance of the crews of US-supplied Stuarts and Shermans in Burma from 1944 proved that when properly trained, Chinese armour crews were at least a match for their Japanese adversaries.

Nationalist guerrillas 1937-45

Contrary to popular belief, China's numerous anti-Japanese guerrillas were not drawn solely from the Communist forces; a large Nationalist guerrilla movement existed for much of the war. In Japanese-occupied regions such groups were often organized by local KMT officials, or by Nationalist officers sent from Chungking. These guerrilla groups often had to operate in areas which were also stalked by hostile Communist bands as well as Japanese and Chinese puppet troops.



The Chinese Army in general was pitifully short of modern heavy weapons, and any modern equipment was invariably given to the units most loyal to Chiang Kai-shek. This 3.7cm German Pak 36 anti-tank gun was photographed in 1937, when it could still offer a useful defence against Japan's obsolescent tanks. (Joseph T.C.Liu)

Some of the Nationalist guerrillas became well organized, setting up small-scale local production of arms, uniforms and equipment; but in most cases, if cut off from government sources of supply they struggled to survive. Consequently they were often obliged to throw in their lot with local Communist forces, either being absorbed by force or persuaded by propaganda. While KMT cadres would be executed by the Communists in such cases, the rank and file were welcomed into the fold.

THE NATIONALIST ARMY 1945-49

Strength and organization

The Nationalist army had been reduced in size from 3 million men in August 1945 to 2.6 million in 1946 as an economy measure. Out of this total about 870,000 were service and logistical troops of little combat value, leaving a paper fighting strength of about 1.73 million. By late 1946 the field armies were built around a core of 30-plus divisions that had been trained and equipped largely by the US in India and western China since 1942, with a divisional establishment of just under 11,000 men. By late July 1945 the US training programme had given 13 weeks' instruction to 11 Chinese divisions and had begun training another 22, and Lend-Lease supplies - of weapons, uniforms, equipment and vehicles - were flooding in.

The five divisions of the New 1st and New 6th Armies, trained at Ramgarh under the inspiration of Gen Stilwell and more or less fresh from fighting in Burma, were the best Nationalist formations. In fact, so different were they from the normal run of troops that they were often mistaken for foreigners by the civilian population, and

A unit in full battle gear in early 1945. Armed with locally manufactured 'Chiang Kai-shek' Mauser rifles and a few Thompson SMGs, these soldiers are reasonably well equipped. Note the blankets rolled up from each end and lashed together to form backpacks, no doubt with personal gear inside; and the shovels carried by men in the right foreground. Their caps are a more 'relaxed' version of the ski-type cap, as supplied to troops on the Burmese front. The usual KMT white sun badge is displayed, unusually, on a squared blue cloth patch. (US National Archives)





The crew of a camouflaged German 20mm anti-aircraft gun, wearing the M35 helmet. Most modern equipment like this gun was supplied to the ten German-trained divisions that formed the backbone of the army in 1937, and were destroyed in the early fighting.

BELOW A Chinese soldier on the Burma front in 1944 poses proudly with his US 75mm M1A1 pack howitzer on an old M1 carriage. These ingeniously designed mountain guns, which could be broken down into six loads for animal transport and were easily air-transportable, were one of the mainstays of the Chinese artillery right through to the end of the Civil War. Weighing 3411lb, they fired a 14lb HE shell out to 9,610 yards.



their elite status was reflected in their nickname - 'The Best Army under Heaven'. However, their deployment to Manchuria in 1945-46 wasted their potential in static defence. These and some other good units began the Civil War with high morale, but this was soon diluted by bad leadership, neglect, and the dispiriting effects of having to serve alongside less competent and motivated troops.

Other good formations and units did exist, their quality being dependent on the stewardship of outstanding individual commanders. Unfortunately for the Nationalists such able leaders were few in number, and even they were often sidelined for some perceived lack of personal loyalty to Chiang. The better forces included the Kwangsi Armies under Gen Li Tsung-jen, the Northern Armies under Gens Fu

Tso-yi and Sun Lien-chung, and the North-Western Armies under Gen Ma Hung-ku'ei. The latter included a large number of elite Muslim cavalry who were said to be a match for any Communist unit.

The organization of formations during the Civil War was extremely loose, and both nominal brigades and divisions might have strengths of approximately 10,000 men. Often the only support element within these formations was a battalion of artillery. When compared with its US Army equivalent, a Nationalist division had about two-thirds of the personnel and about one-third of the artillery. A Nationalist army comprised three divisions; it was numerically roughly equivalent to a US corps, but had only the same artillery strength as a single US division.

Weaknesses

By September 1948 the Nationalist army had been reduced to about 1,500,000 men, of whom only about 500,000 could be considered first line troops. In a period of four and a half months of 1948 the Nationalists lost 45 per cent of their strength through death or desertion. Just as in World War II, the vast majority of their divisions were of poor quality and were usually under-strength; less than half had over 50 per cent of their establishment. The Nationalists had begun the war with a three-to-one numerical advantage over the Communists in both men and equipment, which if properly marshalled should have seen them achieve final victory. However, many weaknesses permeated the Nationalist armies from top to bottom.

By the outbreak of the real fighting in 1946 these armies had been fatally weakened by eight years of devastating war against Japan. Although the war inside China had settled down into something of a stalemate in 1942, this had been broken by a number of savagely fought campaigns, notably in summer 1944. The Nationalists had already suffered catastrophic losses in 1937-41; by 1945 some 100,000 of their trained officer corps

had been lost, with particularly damaging effects on the efficiency of the army. A high proportion of the remaining commanders were KMT appointees who owed their ranks and postings to supposed political loyalty rather than to professional competence. Such men had no culture of disinterested national service, care for their troops' welfare, or collective mutual solidarity; mentally, they were soldiers from a previous age of the world.

Chiang Kai-shek was not blind to the weaknesses of his army. His frank analysis of his officers recognized their lack of professional skills, their neglect or ill-treatment of their men, and their endemic personal corruption. His intentions were frustrated by senior commanders failing to co-operate with one another, each protecting his own army's assets like some jealous warlord, unwilling to risk his own men (or more importantly, his equipment) to help a neighbouring commander who was under attack. Chiang had a grudging respect for the unified command, discipline, and solidarity of purpose displayed by the Communists, but was unable to instil these qualities into his own commanders and their men.

Despite his occasionally clear-sighted view of Nationalist weaknesses, Chiang Kai-shek began the Civil War blinded by an over-confidence that was shared by most of his subordinates. Like a 19th-century Chinese army seduced by their own flags and gongs but neglectful of weapons training and logistics, they were over-impressed by their riches of new American weapons and vehicles. Impatient to crush the apparently much weaker PLA, they failed to take the time to train the troops thoroughly in their use. Much of the modern equipment was never employed to its full potential through simple ignorance.

As already mentioned, strategically the Nationalists wasted their best divisions, which had a potential for mobile operations, by nailing them down to defend towns, railways and roads while the Communists outmanoeuvred them in the countryside. Many cities held by the Nationalists became, effectively, prison camps for their garrisons. Chiang Kai-shek insisted on maintaining the prestige of his regime by trying to impose his power over the whole of China simultaneously. This was against the advice of his best Chinese officers and his US advisers, who urged that the Nationalists should first consolidate their control of southern and central China.

The static campaign in Manchuria and northern China also had disastrous effects on morale and popular support. Although welcomed at first as liberators from the Japanese, most of the troops sent to that front were from southern and central provinces, and when surrounded by elusive guerrilla enemies they began to mistreat the northern peasantry badly. The steady growth of popular support for the PLA led to increasingly damaging rates of desertion from Nationalist units.

Paramilitary organizations

In addition to the regular army there were three para-military services responsible for protecting lines of communication and small towns. These were the Railway Police, Traffic Police, and Peace Preservation Corps - the latter being by far the most numerous. Railway and Traffic Police were described collectively by the Communists as the 'Communication Police Corps'. All three of these lightly armed organizations were easy prey for

Communist guerrillas and became a ready source of weaponry for them. A Nationalist village militia also existed, but was militarily negligible except as a source of booty for local guerrillas.

The Peace Preservation Corps was raised on a local basis to support the regular Nationalist army. While the Railway & Traffic Police were limited to protecting Nationalist lines of communication, the PPC had a more general militia role. Its units were assembled into brigade-size formations; though only lightly armed and poorly equipped, these were regarded by the Communists as a valuable source of captures. When employed in battle alongside regular units the PPC were regarded by Nationalist generals as being there simply to make up the numbers.

An agreement regarding the strength of the PPC was reached between Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung in late August 1945, during the period of ostensible peace negotiations. This called for the size of the local PPC to be governed by the population of the province; no province's PPC should exceed 15,000 men, and their armaments should be limited to pistols, rifles and automatic rifles. This agreement was of course ignored once the Civil War broke out. At the start of the conflict the PPC and other local forces amounted to about 1.5 million men.

Weapons 1946-49

Small arms used by the Nationalists included all previously acquired Mauser 7.92mm rifle types, both imported and locally made. Additional rifles came from among the large number of Japanese 6.5mm and 7.7mm Arisakas captured in 1945. The .30cal Springfield M1903 and Enfield M1917 rifles had been supplied in large numbers by the USA pre-1945; but while significant numbers of M1 carbines were provided, as far as is known no Garand M1 rifles were supplied. Sub-machine guns were usually either .45cal Thompsons (imported, or various copies), Canadian-made 9mm Stens, or the Chinese Type 36 copy of the US .45cal M3 'grease gun'. Light machine guns used during the Civil War were the Czech-designed 7.92mm ZB26 and a Canadian-made 7.92mm Bren gun. The most common heavy machine gun throughout the war was the archaic-looking Type 24, a copy of the 7.92mm German MG08 Maxim. This mix of so many types of weapon taking at least six types of ammunition must have made the lives of ordnance officers and quartermasters a hell on earth.

Roughly speaking, about 30 per cent of Nationalist small arms were of US origin, 30 per cent captured Japanese, and the remainder from various Chinese sources. Huge numbers of Japanese weapons had been captured in August 1945, including 629,544 rifles and 27,745 light and heavy machine guns. In their turn, the Nationalists were to lose equally staggering numbers of weapons captured from them by the

Nationalist troops march through their barracks, c1948, well clothed for winter in wadded cotton jackets, trousers, hats and double-breasted greatcoats. The two officers (right) have added shoulder boards to their wadded jackets. They are wearing the US-style peaked service cap with the larger cap badge - the KMT sun bordered in red, in a gold wreath (see Plate H1). The original caption claims that these men are former Communists. (US National Archives)



PLA. One US military source states that between September and November 1948 the Nationalists lost 230,000 rifles to the Communists; by the start of 1949 the total figure had reached over 400,000, of which at least 100,000 were US types.

The Nationalist artillery was equipped mainly with Japanese pieces, of which some 10,300 had been captured; among the more modern US guns the 75mm pack howitzer was the most common type. Even though large numbers of US 105mm and some 155m howitzers had been sent to China the artillery in the field still relied heavily on mountain and light field guns.

Armour was poorly utilized. The Nationalists had only one armoured brigade, equipped with Stuart M3A3 light tanks and commanded by Chiang Kai-shek's son. Other armour included more than 300 outdated Japanese captures, and even some older leftovers such as the Soviet T-26. Any armour not on the strength of the single armoured brigade was distributed piecemeal among the various Nationalist commanders. Armoured trains were still in use by the Nationalists, in usually futile attempts to defend their vulnerable supply lines.

In February 1949, as the Nationalist cause falters, a unit of infantry march through the streets of Shanghai. They are dressed in padded winter uniforms with grey cotton ski-caps. The front rank are armed with Thompsons, and the second rank with US M1 carbines and a Belgian Mle 30 automatic rifle. Further back in the column are men armed with Mauser rifles and ZB26 light machine guns.

UNIFORMS 1937-45

The uniform of the Chinese Army in 1937 was practical, reflecting the down-to-earth nature of the ordinary fighting man. Parade-ground smartness was rarely insisted upon outside the occasional elite or bodyguard units. Six years of experience in small scale campaigns against the Japanese on the Manchurian borders had taught the Chinese how to kit out their troops from the limited resources of a poor nation, in utility uniforms for both summer and winter conditions. The high turnover of manpower meant that many millions of Chinese

soldiers had to be dressed and equipped during the course of the war. These huge demands are exemplified by production figures from 1945. During that year Chinese government factories supplied 5 million suits of summer clothing and up to 4 million winter uniforms, plus 10 million sets of underwear. In addition, 1 million military blankets were produced (which gives pause for thought - was only 1 soldier in 4 issued with a new blanket?), Much of the cotton and other material needed for the uniforms had to be imported from India.



Summer uniforms

At the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War the Chinese Army wore both a lightweight summer and a heavier winter uniform. Generally speaking, the summer uniform was made up of a light cotton jacket and trousers worn with puttees, and either a peaked (visored) service cap, a peaked 'ski-type' field cap, or various models of helmet.

The standard summer tunic during the Sino-Japanese War was a light khaki cotton jacket with a stand-and-fall collar, four pockets and five front buttons; both the breast and waist pockets had buttoned flaps. The buttons were made of anything from wood to plastic and every other material in between. Although usually described as light khaki, the tunic varied widely in both colour and quality, with many shades of khaki, brown and green seen in use. Because the Chinese Army relied far more than most armies upon dispersed local manufacture, the type and quality of cloth used were as varied as the colour. However, the basic design of the jacket does seem to have been adhered to in most cases. Rank patches were displayed on the collar, and the soldier's identification patch above the left breast pocket (see 'Insignia', below).

Most soldiers wore cotton trousers, cut baggier in the thigh than the calf, which were confined by puttees of woollen or other cloth tied with tapes at the top. Generally the trousers would be issued in the same cloth as the jacket, and seem to have faded uniformly. Long, baggy shorts were also worn; these came to just above the knee, and were also usually worn with puttees, leaving the knees exposed.

Boots were not usually worn by Chinese soldiers during the 1937-45 period, the most common form of footwear being brown or black leather shoes. Other than for parade and guard units these were usually left unpolished. The traditional Chinese black canvas plimsoll-type shoes were also very widely worn, as they had been by soldiers for many generations; these were worn in summer without socks and in winter with white stockings. Soldiers are often seen with a spare pair of canvas shoes strapped to their packs, so they must have been cheap and easily obtainable. In summertime homemade straw sandals were also worn by very many soldiers, either for comfort, to save wear and tear on shoes, or because nothing else was available.

The X- and Y-Force units which were trained in India and Western China by the Allies received a mixture of British and US uniform clothing. British khaki drill (KD) was the most common, and could be made up of a KD shirt with either long trousers or shorts. More often than not the soldiers continued the practice of wearing puttees with both trousers and shorts. Many types of Indian-made uniform items worn by the British in Asia found their way into use by the Chinese, including woollen pullovers. The Chinese were at the back of the queue for the new British purpose-made jungle green (JG) uniforms, but may have received the green-dyed KD clothing which preceded these as a stop-gap.

Uniform headgear

The Chinese Army of the early to mid 1930s wore two types of cap, a peaked service cap being most popular in the north and a ski-type field cap being worn in the south. However, in the Chinese context there are no hard and fast rules; one unit was photographed near the Burmese border in the far south of China wearing the service cap in July 1937.

1938: Nationalist soldiers armed with the famous Mauser 'broomhandle' pistol - in this case, to judge from the numerous ammunition pouches, the Spanish Astra or German R713 *Schnellfeuer* model capable of fully automatic fire, of which tens of thousands were imported before 1937. The clip-on holster/stock makes the Mauser a comfortable weapon, without noticeable recoil. However, fully automatic fire at 15 rounds per second is absurdly inaccurate - it is almost impossible to maintain the aim on a man-sized target at even 25 yards' range. These soldiers take aim on parade, without magazines fitted. They are more smartly turned out and better equipped than the average Nationalist soldier, and are almost certainly a bodyguard unit. Their 'polo'-type pith helmets would presumably have been replaced by steel helmets for combat, if available. Such non-regulation items as these headgear were purchased by local commanders to improve the appearance of their elite units. See Plate B1. (Robert Hunt Library)



At the outbreak of the fighting in the north that month, many of the troops facing the Japanese still wore the service cap. This came in summer cotton and winter wool versions, and had a black or brown leather peak and chin strap, with an enamelled KMT sunburst badge on the front. After the virtual destruction of the northern Chinese armies in 1937 the service cap went out of common use.

By far the most common type of headgear worn by the Chinese Army throughout the period covered by this book was the ski-type field cap, based on caps worn by alpine troops of the German and Austro-Hungarian armies. The cap had a cloth peak and a fold-down side curtain, which was usually worn fastened up and held in place at the front by one or two buttons. A one-button version was more common in the early 1930s, and the two-button variety was seen most commonly from the late 1930s onwards. Field caps were made from a variety of materials, but normally from light cotton for summer wear and heavier cotton or wool for winter. The standard KMT enamelled badge of a white sunburst on a circular blue background was worn at the front of the crown above the buttons. This cap was in continuous service from 1930 until the final defeat of the Nationalists in 1949, but became less common after 1942.

Another type of stiff field cap, based on the German Nazi SA kepi, was used by some Nationalist troops in the early 1930s. This had a leather peak and a single small metal button at the front, again with the KMT sun badge. This type of cap was mainly seen worn by soldiers during the 1933 Jehol campaign, and seems to have been more or less phased out by the mid 1930s. A softer cloth-peaked version of this cap was worn during the 1940s, but not widely.

Heavier duty versions of the ski-type field cap were worn with the winter uniform, and were made of quilted or wadded cotton. This was

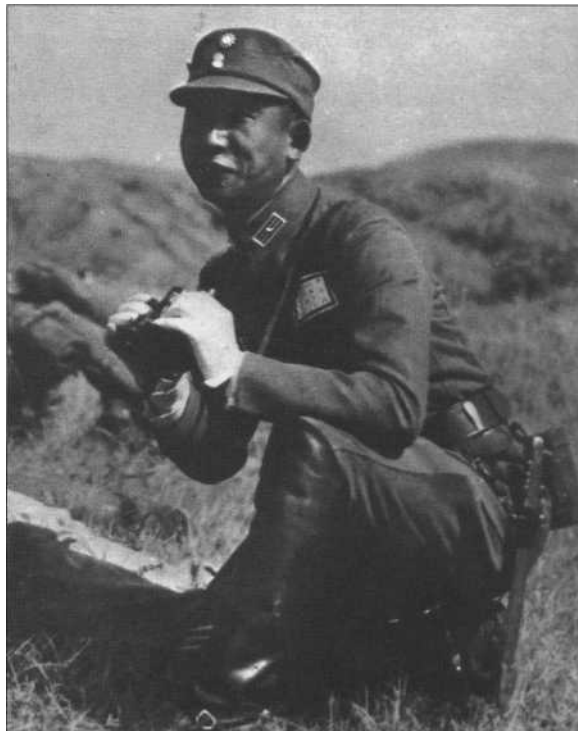
basically a bulkier version of the summer cap but with a substantial fold-down side curtain to protect the ears, cheeks and neck. The side-pieces were normally worn fastened on top of the crown with a button or tapes. The standard winter version of the cap, in woollen cloth, had the same two buttons at the front as the summer model. Various versions were in service with different units; one pattern with a quilted lining and no front buttons was worn by troops of the 29th Army.

Steel helmets

The history of steel helmets worn by the Chinese Army in the 1930s-40s is

complicated by the wide range of types in service, especially before 1937. The main types used before 1937 were the British Mk I or its American M1917A1 counterpart. Although other models are seen, these two almost identical types were by far the most commonly worn during the fighting of 1931-37.

Three other types were worn by Nationalist troops. The first was the 'plum blossom' model, which was based on the Japanese helmet of very similar design (see Plate B2)². A second model had a pot-shaped skull with a brim that was slightly wider at the front, giving it the appearance of having a peak; this type seems largely to have gone out of use by 1937, but probably survived in some units. Finally, a third model of distinctive Chinese design (see Plate A3), similar in shape to a flattened German 'coalscuttle' helmet, was seen in use from 1932 until 1937. This model was unique in shape, but may have been based on the US experimental Model 2A design which was later developed into the M1 of World War II fame.



The steel helmet that was really representative of the Chinese Army of 1937-45 was the German M35. This model was introduced after the arrival in China in 1933 of the German training mission under Colonel-General Hans von Seeckt. German advisers were quick to recommend their own country's armament industries to supply much of the modern weaponry and equipment bought by the Chinese during the 1930s. These included approximately 250,000 M35 helmets imported before 1936, when all exports of the helmet ceased. They were used to equip the ten German-trained divisions which formed the backbone of the Nationalist Army. Although the vast majority of Chinese soldiers did not receive steel helmets, those that did during the period 1937-45 were normally issued the M35. The M35 in Chinese use retained its field-grey factory paint finish, with a white-sun-on-blue-sky KMT decal on the left hand side; it was identical to the German model apart from having a different liner.

Another model in fairly widespread use by Nationalist troops was the French Adrian, which was seen on a few fronts in 1937. After the initial fighting, however, most Adrian helmets were worn by troops in the south-west of the country, away from the main war fronts. In Yunnan province in the far south-west, adjacent to the border with French Indochina, the local warlord Yung Lun imported large numbers of them. Nationalist insignia on the Adrians varied from a standard KMT enamel badge to a white stencilled sun surrounded by a rice-plant wreath.

The Allied-supplied soldiers of X- and Y-Forces wore a mixture of British Mk II and US M1 helmets. The former was usually worn with Indian-made camouflage netting, while the latter bore a KMT decal on the left side.

Although in the field, this major is immaculately turned out in the smartest service dress uniform with breeches and riding boots, and white parade gloves - out of place, even if this is a peacetime exercise. Hanging from his Sam Browne belt on his left hip is the officers' dress dagger.

² See also MM 362, *The Japanese Army 1931-45*(1)



A cadet at a Central Military Academy is pictured on parade with a Czech ZB26 on his shoulder. His uniform is made from heavy woollen cloth, and has the academy's disc insignia on the collar instead of rank patches. Above his left breast pocket is the identity patch displaying service and unit information; the left panel appears to display the single triangle of either a corporal or a second lieutenant. This cadet presumably comes from a reasonably affluent family - note the Parker fountain pen protruding from his pocket. (IWM, CHN 418)

Other headgear

Some Nationalist soldiers wore a distinctive cork pith helmet of polo style, which appears to have been varnished. The polo helmet was smaller than the standard pith helmets in use with European colonial armies, and its brim was the same width all around instead of being drawn out at the back to protect the neck. An enamel Nationalist sun badge was attached to the front. A pith helmet of more conventional shape is seen in newsreels of the time, and this was sometimes painted for camouflage and covered with netting. The British supplied their 'India pattern' pith helmet to X-Force during its training at Ramgarh; it bore the usual KMT badge on the front and had a brown leather chin strap. Reportedly, US pith helmets were also issued to X-Force officers after being declared to be 'limited standard' or obsolete by the US Army in 1941. Broad straw sun or 'coolie' hats were widely worn, usually carried in addition to the steel helmet or cap and slung on the soldier's back when not in use. The exact design of the straw hat depended on the region of China that the soldier (or the hat) came from. Sometimes these were painted in camouflage patterns or festooned with foliage; conversely, other troops decorated them with patriotic slogans in Chinese script, or had the KMT sun badge stencilled on them. Some helmet-shaped headgear made of basketwork were also used (see photographs on pages 33 and 45).

Officers' uniforms 1937-45

The materials and tailoring of Chinese officers' uniforms were of a much higher standard than those of the lower ranks. Officers were normally responsible for providing their own uniforms, and since most came from wealthier families this was reflected in the quality of their dress. Officers wore a service dress of khaki wool comprising a ski-type cap, a tunic, and either riding breeches with topboots or leggings, or straight slacks worn with brown leather shoes. Their brown leather belts were of 'Sam Browne' style, and supported a pistol holster and an officer's dress dagger.

Caps were of the same basic pattern as those worn by enlisted men but of better qualities, depending on the rank of the individual. During the war a few higher ranking Army officers were seen wearing the US officer's peaked service cap, but these were normally worn only by Air Force personnel.

The tunic had a stand-and-fall collar, four pockets, and five brass front buttons. Although there were variations of colour, the normal shade was, in British terms, a brownish khaki, or in American usage a brownish olive drab. Rank insignia were displayed on plastic or metal

(continued on page 33)



CHINA 1937

1: Private, 72nd Div, 7th Army Group; north China, Aug 1937

2: Corporal, 88th Div; Shanghai, 1937

3: Private, 56th Div; Shanghai, 1937

4: Sergeant, 37th Div, 29th Army; Peking, July 1937

CHINA 1938-39

1: Corporal, 154th Div, 12th Army; Canton, May 1938

2: Private 1st Class; Wuhan, Oct 1938

3: Private 2nd Class, 7th Div; winter 1939



CHINA 1939-41

- 1: Captain, 14th Artillery Regt; Honan, Jan 1940
- 2: Major, 183rd Div, 60th Corps; Changsha, Sept 1939
- 3: Regimental standard-bearer, 12th Div, 3rd Corps;
Shansi province, May 1941



BURMA 1943-45

1: Private, 112th Regt, 38th Div, New 1st Army; northern Burma, May 1944

2: Lance-Corporal, 22nd Div, New 6th Army; Hukawng Valley, March 1944

3: Private 1st Class; Ramgarh, India, Aug 1944

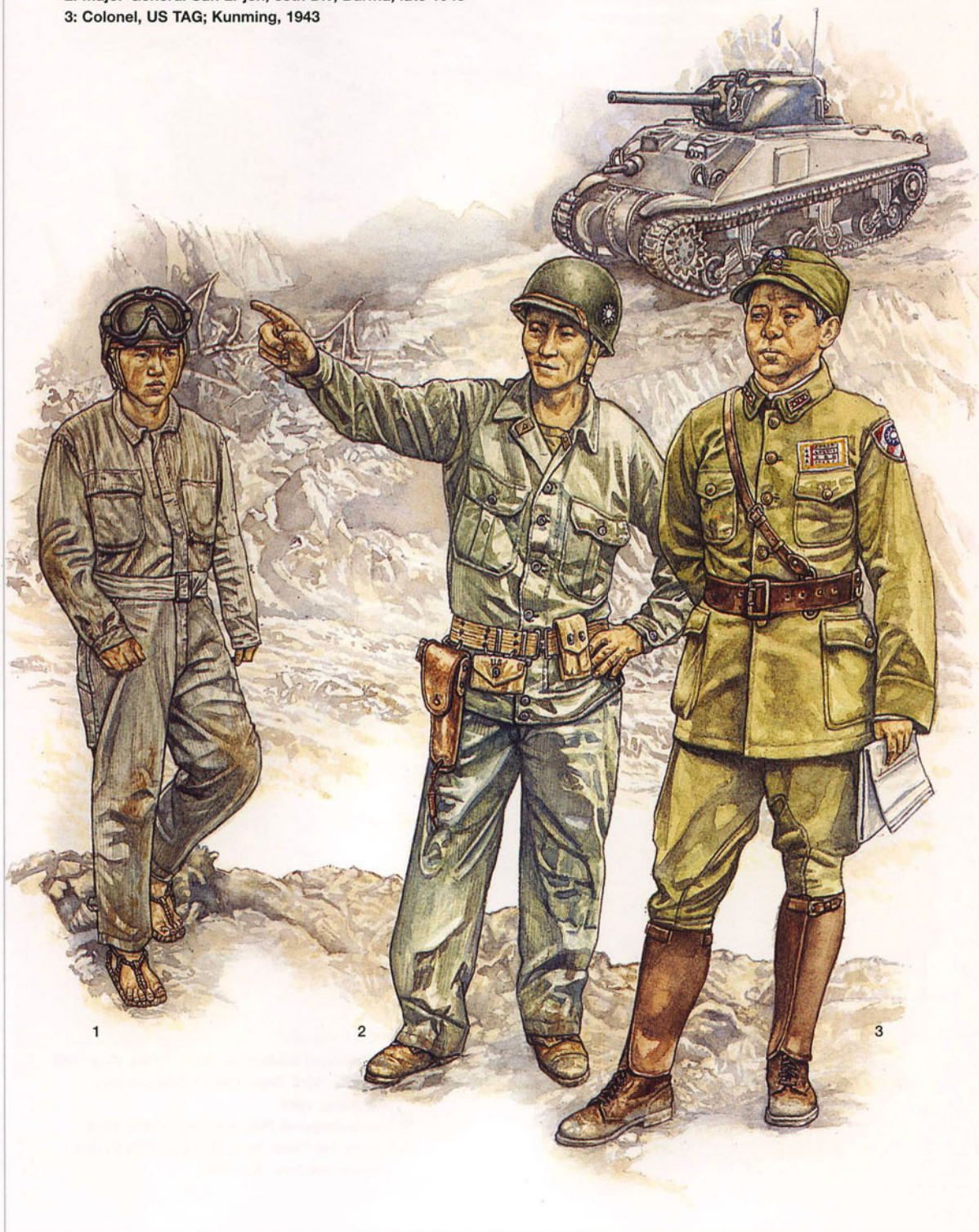


CHINA & BURMA 1943-45

1: Tank commander, (1st) Provisional Tank Group; Burma, 1944-45

2: Major-General Sun Li-jen, 38th Div; Burma, late 1943

3: Colonel, US TAG; Kunming, 1943



1

2

3



CHINA 1944-45

- 1: OSS-trained soldier; southern China, Aug 1945
- 2: Guerrilla, 43rd Regt, 15th Mobile Column; Shantung, 1944
- 3: Lance-corporal; Pihu training centre, 1944
- 4: Private 1st Class, New 19th Div, 46th Corps; Kweilin-Luichow, Apr 1945

CIVIL WAR 1946-49

1: Lieutenant, 123rd Corps; Shanghai, Apr 1949

2: Private 2nd Class, 4th Corps; Canton, Oct 1949

3: 2nd Lt, Engineers, 7th Div; Shihchiachuang, Oct 1948

4: Volunteer, Peace Preservation Corps; Kaifeng, June 1948





CIVIL WAR 1946-49

- 1: Lieutenant, 69th Div; Feb 1947
- 2: Private 1st Class, 207th Youth Div;
Mukden, Oct 1948
- 3: NCO, 12th Army Group;
Shwangchiaoichi, Nov 1948
- 4: Corporal, 73rd Army; Manchuria, Nov 1947

collar patches, and personal identification patches were usually worn above the left breast pocket (see 'Insignia', below).

Full-cut straight slacks were generally worn with the service uniform. A popular alternative were riding breeches, worn with either high brown leather boots or high leggings and shoes. Field uniforms were usually the same as those worn by lower ranks in both summer and winter versions. Trousers worn with both seasonal uniforms were often worn with puttees as an alternative to the high leather boots or leggings. Winter field clothing was of wadded cotton in blue-grey shades, similar to that worn by lower ranks. A double-breasted khaki wool greatcoat had two rows of five buttons. An officers' cloak or mantle of khaki woollen cloth had a deep collar and five chest buttons.

Items of US and British uniforms were worn by some officers of the units trained in India and western China. These included officers' versions of the British KD uniform, mostly made in India, complete with the India-pattern four-pocket belted bush jacket. American items worn by Chinese officers included the short 'M1941' or 'Parsons' field jacket in light olive drab. The wearing of foreign items seems to have been an individual choice, and in these units some more traditional officers retained Chinese uniforms right up to 1949.

Winter clothing

A double-breasted khaki wool greatcoat was seen in limited use, especially in the mid to late 1930s; but for the most part the winter clothing of the Nationalist Army was based on the everyday clothing worn by most peasants in China during cold weather. This consisted of a loose-fitting padded ('wadded') jacket of heavy cotton. Most jackets were originally dyed a blue colour (roughly the shade of unwashed blue denim in the West). In most cases the poor quality of the dye meant that after being exposed to snow, rain and sun the blue colour quickly faded to a lighter blue-grey shade - this is sometimes described in the West as 'bright' blue. Matching trousers made of heavy duty cotton, again lined and padded, gave the wearer an ungainly appearance. They were worn with thick woollen puttees, and extra insulating materials could also be wrapped around the legs and feet. Locally acquired fur-lined boots were worn by troops in the coldest areas.

Special cold weather clothing was issued to the northern Chinese troops in 1937-38; fur-lined coats and surcoats of various types were issued to a fortunate few, with goatskin being the most frequent lining.

Fur- and fleece-lined winter hats had been a feature of Chinese winter clothing since the introduction of modern uniforms after 1910. During the fighting in northern China and Manchuria in the early 1930s several types were used, lined with varying amounts of yak, goat, lamb or rabbit skin. Some of these, with copious amounts of fur on the inside and the ear flaps, gave the wearer a very untidy look.

By 1937 most fur hats worn by Chinese soldiers were rather smarter and more uniformly made.

Sgt Tung Chi-yuan, claimed in the original caption to have killed 100 Japanese during the fighting on the upper Yangtze river in May-June 1943. Armed with a Chinese Mauser, he wears a simple cotton shirt and shorts with straw sandals, and the usual canvas bandoliers. Note that he has a basketwork sun helmet with the KMT badge on the front.





Gen Sir Claude Auchinleck, Allied C-in-C India, inspects a Chinese mortar crew in training. The weapon is a US 4.2in mortar, the uniforms and web equipment are British, though worn with woollen puttees. In the right background stands a Chinese instructor wearing a British solar topi or pith helmet of Indian pattern. (IWM IND 3775)

Branch colours:

General Staff	= gold
Infantry	= red
Cavalry	= yellow
Artillery	= blue
Engineers	= white
Commissariat	= dark red
Medical	= green
Supply Train	= black
Military Police	= pink

Identification patches

The most important form of insignia worn by the Chinese Army in 1937-49 was the unique system of identification patches. A white cloth patch was worn above the left breast pocket, displaying various information about the wearer and his unit. A standard patch was divided into six panels - a vertical panel at each side flanking four equal horizontal panels. In these horizontal spaces black Chinese characters described different aspects of the individual's service. The top panel gave the divisional number and the individual's rank; the second gave the soldier's regiment and battalion; the third bore the name of the soldier's battalion commander; and the bottom panel gave the date of the soldier's enlistment. The right hand vertical panel, as viewed, displayed the soldier's name; the left hand panel bore black rank symbols, if any were appropriate.

A smaller and simplified version of this patch was divided horizontally in half, with the man's brigade number in Chinese

Regional variations did persist, however, including black lambswool lining in hats worn by the 29th Army stationed near Peking in 1937. Another model was worn that September by soldiers of the 'Suiyuan People's Army', which despite its title was a regular Nationalist force defending Suiyuan province. This hat was made of wadded cotton with a peak and padded cotton ear flaps, and a black fur section visible on the front below the cap badge.

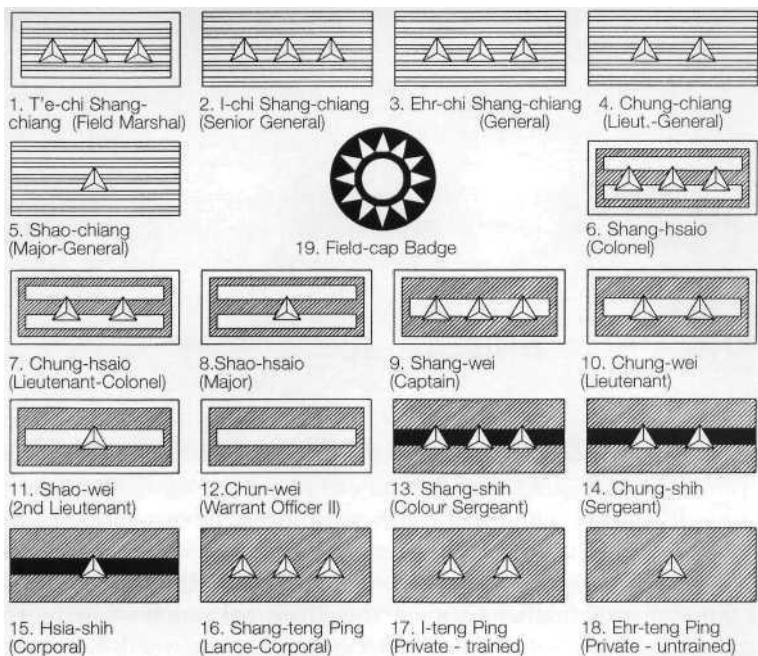
INSIGNIA

Collar patches

The Chinese Army had never had a complicated system of insignia, and official unit or regimental badges did not exist. Official insignia were limited to rank and identification patches, with in some cases a divisional sign on the arm.

Ranks were usually shown by a system of rank bars with 1-3 triangles, mounted on coloured collar patches (see the accompanying chart). Below general officers' rank the bars and triangles were displayed on patches of the wearer's branch colour. Rank symbols were usually made of either metal or plastic and were worn on both sides of the collar.

Rank insignia, Nationalist Army 1937-46



1 Gold collar patch edged gold, 3 gold triangles. 2-3 Gold patch, 3 gold triangles (ranks only distinguishable by different gold insignia on cuff of dark blue ceremonial tunic). 4-5 Gold patch, 2-1 gold triangles. 6-8 Branch-colour patch edged gold, 2 gold bars, 3-1 gold triangles. 9-12 Branch-colour patch edged gold, 1 gold bar, 3-0 gold triangles. 13-15 Branch-colour patch, dark blue stripe, 3-1 gold triangles. 16-18 Branch-colour patch, 3-1 gold triangles. 19 Cap badge: silver or white on blue.

characters in the top half, and in the bottom panel his divisional number and rank.

Around the edges of some but not all of these patches were borders in various colours, which were either in the branch colour or related to the man's rank. Western sources have always maintained that these showed branch colours, but recent Chinese sources now state that a different system applied, with the borders being blue for all ranks below field officers, yellow for field officers and red for general officers. Black and white photographic evidence confuses this issue by seeming to show officers with darker borders. Perhaps the truth is that the two systems operated at the same time in different units. Certainly, the design of the patch varied greatly from region to region and army to army, so there seems no particular reason why the border colour sequence should have been common to all.

Arm badges

Another form of insignia worn by some of the better organized armies was a cloth patch worn on the left upper sleeve, which usually denoted the wearer's division. These came in different designs but the standard pattern bore black Arabic numerals for the division and a capital 'D', e.g. '128D' for 128th Division. These were marked on a white oval, set on a blue or black background with a white border. In Chinese characters at the bottom of the patch was written the wearer's date of

Chinese infantry from Yunnan watch shelling on the central Salween river front in June 1943. All are dressed in light-coloured cotton uniforms and have improvised backpacks, with doubled blanket rolls surrounded by a waterproof sheet.



enlistment. Earlier patches of the same design bore black Chinese characters rather than Arabic numerals to denote the division, and these probably continued in use concurrently with the new design.

A simpler and smaller form of the divisional patch worn by some units was a white field with a black border, bearing in the centre the Arabic divisional number and 'D'.

Some patches of the same design as the first divisional type bore instead Roman numerals which indicated the war zone in which the wearer was serving, e.g. 'V' indicated the 5th War Zone. Sources suggest that these patches may have been worn only by headquarters staff.

A camouflaged Chinese infantryman, with bayonet fixed and his Mauser rifle tucked under his arm, runs through the Burmese jungle near Pyu, south of Toungoo, in 1942. He wears shorts and puttees, and has a regulation knapsack and blanket roll.



Unit badges

Some units also had their own unofficial badges, usually worn as enamel pins on the breast pocket flap. Although few examples of these survive, and none seem to have been documented at the time, they were usually round or oval in shape and incorporated the colours of the national flag - red, blue and white - with e.g. '12D' for 12th Division superimposed. Other units had unofficial cloth patches which would have been issued on the whim of their commanders.

Armbands

The armband had traditionally been used in China to indicate the allegiance of soldiers, especially during civil conflicts. In the Nationalist Army they seem only to have been worn to denote that the wearer belonged to a special unit. Military police were recognisable by the crimson-pink background to their collar patches, but also wore a distinctive armband. This was made of white cloth and worn on the upper left arm, bearing in red the Chinese characters for 'MP'. Chemical troops had no branch colour of their own, so were distinguished by a white armband with red characters stating their special role.

Field equipment

As for so many other aspects of Chinese Army practice, the official should be distinguished from the actual. Regulations called for the Chinese soldier to be equipped with a leather or canvas knapsack, with a blanket fastened around the sides and top by means of leather straps. A waterproofed tent quarter which doubled as a rain poncho was also fastened on top of the pack. A brown leather waist belt supported three ammunition pouches on each side, holding charger clips for the Chinese version of the Mauser 98k rifle. These pouches were similar to the German M1933 model, and at least initially were manufactured in Germany. Other equipment included a canvas 'bread bag' or haversack, a water bottle (which came in two models), and a gas mask in a long metal canister with horizontal ribbing. The bayonet scabbard hung from the belt by means of a leather frog.

This field equipment was worn by a limited number of Chinese troops, mainly from the German-trained divisions that were virtually destroyed in the fighting of 1937-38. For the vast majority of Chinese soldiers the typical equipment included a pair of canvas ammunition bandoliers, one worn over the left shoulder and the other around the waist over a simple leather belt. A simple canvas haversack might carry the soldier's entire personal gear. Canvas chest pouches, to carry one German-type stick grenade on each side, were also widely worn. An improvised backpack was often made by stowing the soldier's personal kit in a blanket, rolled from both ends until it met in the middle, then lashing the two rolls together. In many cases a rolled shelter quarter or groundsheet was attached round the sides and top of this improvised pack, and pairs of sandals or shoes and/or a plate or mess tin are often seen fastened to the back. A simpler 'horseshoe' blanket roll worn around the torso was also commonly used.

The haversack, chest pouches and homemade backpack were easily produced at a local level, but the average Chinese soldier would have considered himself lucky to be issued with them. Various types of water bottle were also issued, the two main models being based on those used by the German Army. Widespread use was also made of any captured water bottles, and some had been imported from Japan before the outbreak of war.

The forces trained by the Allies in India for the Burma front mostly received standard British 37 pattern webbing equipment, much of it locally manufactured and generally of rather flimsier materials and construction than the UK-made originals.



A lone Chinese sentry stands guard over a section of the Burma Road in 1944, dressed in a wadded cotton winter jacket with normal lighter weight trousers and puttees, and an Adrian pattern helmet. His kit includes a substantial backpack, bandoliers and two stick grenade pouches.



The crew of a Stuart M3A3 light tank of the Provisional Tank Group in Burma; note the lavish application of wire mesh to attach camouflage. The driver and hull gunner wear US overalls with fibre crash helmets and goggles. Their tank commander has a British KD shirt and his light khaki cotton Chinese Army field cap.

Armoured crew uniforms

The Chinese Army had only a small number of armoured vehicles in 1937, and these were not grouped in large units as they were in other armies, but dispersed in support of infantry. Armoured crewmen were nevertheless issued with their own uniforms and equipment, and these - like their vehicles - came from various foreign sources. Before large-scale Allied assistance from 1943, armoured crewmen wore a mixture of German and Italian clothing. All wore simple one-piece linen overalls, which were probably supplied from Italy. Two types of crash helmet worn pre-1943 were the German 1937 and the Italian fibre model covered with black leather. A number of Soviet T-26 light tanks were supplied to the Chinese in the 1930s, and these probably arrived with supplies of Russian black overalls and brown leather crash helmets. After 1943 all new Chinese armour was supplied by the US and the crews were issued with US herringbone twill overalls and fibre crash helmets.

Militia & guerrilla uniforms

During the Japanese invasion various local auxiliaries fought alongside the regular army as village guards, coast guards and town militias, dressed in quasi-military or civilian clothes. Where uniforms were not available the militiamen wore patriotic armbands and badges on their own clothing. Headgear was more often than not the straw coolie hat. One coastal patrol force in Kwangtung province, were issued with coolie hats made in the same shape as the British steel helmet. Nationalist guerrillas gained no benefit of concealment by wearing civilian clothes - Japanese anti-guerrilla operations routinely involved the killing of any civilians found in the target area.

Uniforms were often manufactured in guerrilla-held territory, however, and one foreign observer noted a unit which produced its own summer and winter uniforms as well as heavy overcoats and shoes. Better uniforms would have been reserved for the 'regular' guerrillas of the more active and mobile bands, rather than being made for second line Village Self Protection Corps fighters. Any available firearms were employed, with the Mauser C96 'broomhandle' range of semi-automatic

A Chinese commando is pictured just after completing a parachute jump as part of his training by the American OSS in June 1945. When properly trained and cared for the average Chinese recruit made an excellent soldier. However, the vast majority of Nationalist conscripts were not well trained, well clothed, well fed, well cared for or well led, and their performance during World War II and the Civil War naturally reflected this neglect by their officers. (US National Archives)



pistols being favoured by unit leaders - as much for the cachet imparted by a pistol as for its useful firepower. Others had to make do with hunting guns, *da-dao* swords and even bamboo spears.

UNIFORMS 1946-49

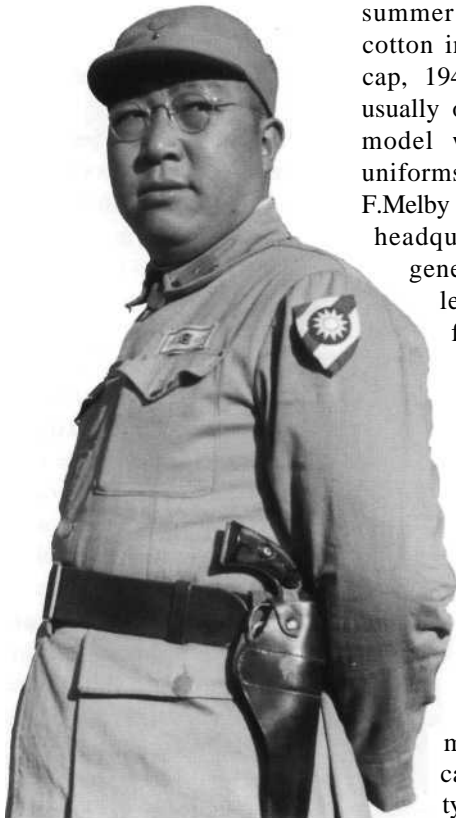
The uniforms worn by the Nationalists during the Civil War were a chaotic mixture of old and new. Although new uniforms had been introduced after 1945 a large number of Nationalist troops still looked identical to those who had first fought in 1937. In the aftermath of the Japanese surrender the Chinese and US governments concluded an agreement whereby large US surplus uniform and equipment stocks in the Pacific theatre could be purchased at knockdown prices. Huge stockpiles of equipment of all kinds had been built up on the Pacific islands in anticipation of Operation 'Olympic', the projected invasion of the Japanese home islands in 1946. Needless to add, many of these items never reached the ordinary Chinese soldier, since they were diverted and sold on by corrupt officers and KMT officials. However, any pre-1945 US Army or Marines uniform item could and probably did find its way into Nationalist service.

Individual units would still have relied upon the influence or open-handedness of their commanders in the matter of clothing issue, and some officers had the means to clothe and equip their units better than others. While there was a marked lack of standardization, units did tend to wear the same types. As with the pre-1945 army, there were distinct summer and winter uniforms. The summer uniform was again in light cotton in various shades of khaki and was worn with either the old ski-cap, 1946 model peaked cap, or steel helmet. Winter uniforms were usually of grey wadded cotton worn with either a peaked cap or new model winter hat (see below). Very few mentions of Nationalist uniforms are found in eyewitness reports of the time. However, John F. Melby in his book *Mandate From Heaven* noted during a visit to the headquarters of Gen Wang Yao-wu's 96th Army that the discipline and general condition of the men he saw on parade indicated a very well led unit - although about half the men were unarmed and very few had steel helmets.

Headgear

The ski-type field cap continued in use throughout the Civil War but was gradually replaced by other types. Prominent during 1946-48 was the US summer/tropical peaked service cap in light khaki, either stiffened or with its stiffening removed to make it 'crushable'. This cap was worn in summer and winter alike, but was often adapted for cold weather. These improvised winter hats were produced by sewing woollen ear flaps to the band, worn tied up above the crown in warmer weather. Although described as being of US origin, many of these peaked caps may have been copies manufactured in Chinese factories. Other types of US surplus caps were also worn, including the soft fatigue cap and several types of baseball caps.

A rather portly major of the US-led Training Advisory Group based at Kunming, wearing a superior quality cotton tunic and ski-type cap. He has the usual collar rank patches, an abbreviated chest ID patch, and the left shoulder patch of the TAG - the KMT sun superimposed on red and white diagonal stripes (see Plate E3). His revolver appears to be the short-lived US 1908 .45cal Colt Army Special. (US National Archives)



The US M1 **steel helmet** was imported in large numbers and was one of the most common models in use. During the Civil War the KMT insignia was usually placed at the front rather than the left hand side. The German M35 was still seen in service until the end of the war in some regions, e.g. Shanghai in 1949, but it seems to have been more commonly issued to the various paramilitary units. The old 'plum blossom' helmet was still in limited service at the start of the war. Given the parlous state of some Nationalist units, any available type would have been pressed into service. Large numbers of Japanese M32 helmets were certainly worn by Nationalist troops, although not on the same scale as by the Communists. Some Japanese helmets had a KMT sunburst badge attached to the front, and if these were not available then the Japanese Army five-point star emblem would have been removed or defaced. Second model Japanese cork sun helmets were also widely worn, especially by support troops, with the brass star emblem removed.

'Model 1946' winter clothing

While most Nationalist soldiers continued to wear the old blue-grey wadded clothing, a new and more uniformly manufactured suit of grey cloth with a padded lining was also worn in large numbers and seems to have been produced in state workshops. Although no official date for this item is known, it did appear after the start of the Civil War and was probably introduced in 1946. In 1949 units of rather hastily enlisted KMT troops are often pictured wearing this smarter padded jacket and trousers with a distinctive new model winter hat (see Plate H, and H2 for the hat). The matching trousers were often worn without puttees. The fact that these last-ditch conscripts were well uniformed suggests a considerable stockpile of these garments. Large units are seen wearing them, suggesting mass production at least in the last year of the war.

A padded grey cotton double-breasted greatcoat was also issued to some soldiers, either with or without fur collars. The Japanese sailcloth winter coat with detachable sleeves and fur collar was also worn; Chinese workshops may well have copied it, although substantial numbers of them must have been captured in 1945.

During the Civil War, a Nationalist crew prepare their Chinese Type 24 water-cooled heavy machine gun - the local copy of the old, heavy, but reliable MG08 Maxim, which was used right up to 1949. They are all dressed in the new grey winter clothing, and the hat with ear cut-outs in the flaps (see Plate H2); the No.2 has woollen gloves.



Insignia

In May 1946 the rank system in the Nationalist Army was changed, basically to conform with the US system. Although the new insignia were seen in use by some officers during the Civil War, most officers and other ranks continued to wear the pre-1946 sequence illustrated on page 35. The following insignia were worn on the shoulder straps of the tunic:

Special Ranking General	=	5 gold stars forming a circle
General of the Army	=	4 gold stars forming a square
General	=	3 gold stars forming a triangle
Lieutenant-General	=	2 gold stars
Major-General	=	1 gold star
Colonel	=	3 gold plum blossoms forming a triangle
Lieutenant-Colonel	=	2 gold plum blossoms
Major	=	1 gold plum blossom
Captain	=	3 silver bars
Lieutenant	=	2 silver bars
2nd Lieutenant	=	1 silver bar
Warrant Officer	=	1 silver bar

Under the post-1946 system the branch-of-service colours were replaced by a US-style system of gold metal badges:

Staff	=	crossed batons
Infantry	=	crossed rifles
Cavalry	=	crossed sabres
Artillery	=	cannon
Armour	=	tank
Engineers	=	castle
Signals	=	crossed flags
Military Police	=	crossed pistols
Quartermaster	=	wheel

Officers below general rank wore the branch device on the left side of the collar with a gold plum blossom on the right side. Generals wore a plum blossom on both sides of the collar with no branch insignia. Piping on officers' uniforms was red for general officers, yellow for field officers and blue for company officers.

Officers' uniforms

The mixture of pre- and post-1946 uniforms was also evident in the dress of Nationalist officers. Officers had a better chance to acquire US uniforms, and photographs suggest that the decision to do so was often an individual choice. Photographs of officers of the same units show some wearing ski-caps and pre-1946 field uniforms while comrades wear post-1946 US-type uniform. The difference, perhaps surprisingly, does not appear to have depended on the age of the individual, and may have been a question of wealth.

Nationalist soldier armed with a Thompson SMG guarding a dejected group of Communist prisoners; the Civil War was not a continuous series of Communist victories, and the Nationalists achieved several notable successes. The soldier wears a fur-lined cap, wadded winter clothing, and what seem to be good leather boots. It would often have been difficult to tell the adversaries apart, especially as the Communists sometimes wore captured Nationalist uniforms. (US National Archives)



Paramilitary uniforms

The uniforms of the various paramilitary and militia forces were usually indistinguishable from those of the regular army. The PPC and the other militarized police and militia had a low priority for new uniforms and weapons. Photographs suggest that most PPC soldiers wore the US-type khaki peaked service cap along with nondescript winter grey or summer light khaki uniforms. Police units were usually seen in dark blue uniforms with either peaked caps or the German M35 steel helmet.



Shanghai, July 1947: well turned-out soldiers of one of the Nationalist Youth Divisions, photographed shouting patriotic slogans. The Youth Divisions, formed from student volunteers, were among the best Nationalist troops and still retained some of the old fervour lost by the majority of Chiang Kai-shek's soldiers. All these men have been issued with captured Japanese M32 steel helmets with added KMT emblems, and have been lucky enough to receive US double-buckle boots. (Time & Life Pictures)

THE PLATES

A: CHINA 1937

A1: Private, 72nd Division, 7th Army Group; Peking-Suiyuan railway, China, August 1937

This private of one of the formations which took the brunt of the early fighting against the Japanese is wearing what is often described as the 'Northern Chinese' uniform. His peaked service cap, of German shape, is made of light cotton with a brown leather peak and chin strap. His tunic and trousers are made from a slightly different shade of light khaki cotton, and his puttees from strips of the same cloth. His very light equipment is limited to an early type of Chinese water bottle, and magazine pouches for his German MP 28-II sub-machine gun; this was imported in large numbers by the KMT government. The leather pouches, with a pocket for a loading tool, are supported by both the belt and a neck strap.

A2: Corporal, 88th Division; Shanghai, 1937

The best German-trained divisions of the Nationalist Army were sacrificed in the brave but futile defence of Shanghai, and the 88th was one of these. As a member of one of Chiang Kai-shek's most loyal divisions this soldier is as well dressed and equipped as the limited resources of the KMT government allowed. His German M35 steel helmet has the white-on-blue sunburst decal on the left side. Below his rank collar patch can just be seen the edge of his cloth identification patch giving details of his unit, enlistment date and commander. His large canvas waist pouches carry magazines for his Czech-made ZB26 light machine gun.

A3: Private, 56th Division; Shanghai, 1937

This steel helmet is of a type peculiar to the Chinese Army and seen most often on this front. Roughly resembling a 'flattened out' German helmet, it was crudely made and did not always conform to exactly the same shape. Some but not all had the sunburst badge embossed on the front. The rest of the soldier's light summer uniform is unremarkable. The apparent blanket roll over his left shoulder is in fact made from grey cotton and contains his food supply. His canvas haversack accommodates his few personal items, and because of his lack of a canvas bandolier it also has to hold ammunition for his Hanyang 88 rifle.

A4: Sergeant, 37th Division, 29th Army; Marco Polo Bridge, July 1937

The 29th Army were stationed in the vicinity of Peking when fighting broke out with the Japanese. This soldier belongs to one of that army's elite 'big sword' units, which were slaughtered in large numbers when they tried to attack Japanese troops emplaced with machine guns; some troops were seen going into action with their sword in one hand and a pistol in the other. This sergeant has his blue-striped red rank patches with two gold triangles on the collar of his light cotton tunic, and the usual KMT sun badge on his field cap. As well as his local 'Chiang Kai-shek' copy of the Mauser 98k rifle and bayonet he is also armed with a two-handed *da-dao* fighting broadsword which he carries in its leather scabbard on his back. These large chopping swords featured in many of the propaganda photographs of the time, but their practical use was naturally limited; they were



A major of the 29th Army displays some distinctive insignia on his light khaki cotton officer's uniform. He has the usual rank patch on his left collar, with one gold triangle on two bars set on his branch-of-service colour. However, on the right patch he displays pin-on metal numerals '29A' for 29th Army. This form of insignia seems to be unique in the photographic record, and may have been peculiar to the staff of this army. The major also has an unusual triangular cloth patch above the conventional identification patch on his left breast, also bearing '29A' in black below what seems to be a bird-shaped symbol. His ID patch appears to be bordered in yellow, and the left vertical panel bears the single black triangle of his rank. (Robert Hunt Library)

a throwback to the warlord period when several armies had elite 'dare to die' units armed with this weapon. The simple personal equipment comprises a couple of canvas ammunition bandoliers worn at shoulder and waist.

B: CHINA 1938-39

B1: Corporal, 154th Division, 12th Army; Canton, May 1938

A member of an elite bodyguard unit, this NCO is wearing a smart woollen uniform with regulation collar and chest patches, with a non-regulation 'polo'-type pith helmet. Unusually, this unit has also been provided with knapsacks,

This soldier photographed in 1937 carries the massive traditional *da-dao* broadsword, which was widely used during the first years of the Sino-Japanese War - see Plate A4. Around his waist a broad brown leather belt supported by a cross strap carries ammunition pouches for his Mauser pistol, whose distinctive butt can just be seen protruding from its wooden holster/stock in front of his right hip - see Plate B1. The large leather pouch slung untidily behind his left shoulder is unidentified. His helmet is either a British Mk I or a US M1917A1. (Joseph T.C.Liu)



of unknown origin, worn complete with a rolled and strapped blanket. The 7.63mm Mauser C96 series of semi-automatic pistols, with their distinctive wooden holster/clip-on shoulder stock, had been very popular in China since the early 20th century. They were widely copied by foreign manufacturers, notably in Spain and China, in 9mm and .45cal as well as 7.63mm. This *Schnellfeuer* selective fire version (i.e. capable of fully automatic fire, and in fact originated by Astra in Spain) took either 10- or 20-rd detachable magazines; it is unloaded here, but the numerous leather belt pouches are clearly for 20-rd clips.

B2: Private 1st Class; Wuhan, October 1938

A member of the garrison of this strategic city, scene of a decisive action in 1938. His steel helmet closely resembles the 'plum blossom' model in use by some Japanese troops in the early 1930s. It has a KMT badge mounted on the front, and is fastened by means of chin tapes in the Japanese fashion. His light khaki cotton tunic is worn with shorts and puttees, and he has been lucky enough to receive a new pair of brown leather shoes. Backpacks were virtually unknown in the Chinese Army, and he carries his kit in a roughly made haversack. The scabbarded bayonet fragged to his belt is for his German *Karabiner 98a* rifle - one of the less popular types in service with the Chinese, but almost any available rifle in 7.92mm was imported during the 1930s in an attempt to supply the large army.

B3: Private 2nd Class, 7th Division; winter 1939

Taking part in the Nationalist winter offensive, he wears typical Chinese cold weather clothing. Of heavy cotton, it is thickly padded and lined ('wadded') but does not show exterior stitching ('quilting'); originally blue, it has faded in use to a grey shade. It is worn with puttees, and Chinese slip-on cloth shoes over thick stockings. His British Mk I or US M1917A1 steel helmet has the KMT sun stencilled on the front. Apart from the roughly made name patch above the breast pocket he has no insignia. Equipment is limited to a canvas bandolier, a slung water bottle or haversack hidden here on his right side, and a Chinese issue gas mask in its unusually long metal canister - this presumably accommodated a spare filter? The light machine gun is a Finnish Lahti Saloranta M26, one of many types imported in the 1930s. China was the only export customer for this unremarkable but sturdy weapon, which was converted to 7.92mm from the Finnish 7.62mm; it continued in use into the 1940s.

C: CHINA 1939-41

C1: Captain, 14th Artillery Regiment; southern Honan province, January 1940

This officer wears the same grey wadded cotton winter uniform as the other ranks but of a better quality - most officers could afford to have their field uniforms made up by local tailors. His chest patch is of the simple two-panel type and has no coloured border. He wears nondescript grey-brown woollen puttees and officer's black shoes. His collar rank insignia are on the blue background patch denoting the artillery branch. His Mauser pistol hangs from a strapped cover around its holster/stock. Binoculars were purchased privately, and like many items acquired in the 1930s may well have been made in Japan.

C2: Major, 183rd Division, 60th Corps; First Battle of Changsha, September 1939

Perhaps a battalion commander, this infantry field officer wears standard officer's service uniform in a pale brownish khaki woollen material, with a stiffened ski-type cap in the same cloth. The colours and materials of officers' uniforms varied greatly depending on local conditions. His ID patch on the left chest is bordered in yellow, which is now believed to show that he is a field officer. The straight-cut slacks could be replaced in the front line by breeches worn with puttees, topboots or leather leggings. From his Sam Browne belt hangs the officer's dress dagger or dirk, which was for purely decorative purposes and shows the German influence on the Chinese Army of the 1930s; these were quite highly decorated on the scabbard, and had a KMT sun on the hilt.

C3: Regimental standard-bearer, 12th Division, 3rd Corps; southern Shansi province, May 1941

As a regimental standard-bearer on parade this corporal is well turned out and has been issued with the best available uniform. His ski-cap, tunic and trousers are made from finely woven cotton in a brown-khaki colour, and white parade gloves and a Sam Browne belt complete what is a particularly smart uniform for the Chinese Army. The plastic rank insignia on his collar show a single triangle over a dark blue line on a red background. As well as the identification patch on his left breast he has a divisional patch on the left sleeve: on a white oval, a black Arabic '12D' for 12th Division, set on a dark blue or black backing on a larger white patch, with his date of enlistment in Chinese characters along the bottom. Chinese Army standards were all of the same basic design, differenced here by the unit details in black characters on the white vertical panel. Unit standards usually had a yellow fringe when possible. Smaller guidons used as company and other sub-unit flags were about half the size of the regimental standards.

D: BURMA 1943-45**D1: Private, 112th Regiment, 38th Division, 'New 1st Army'; northern Burma, May 1944**

This US-trained and Allied-equipped soldier of Gen Stilwell's X-Force has a US M1 steel helmet with the KMT sun decal on the left side. His British 'khaki drill' shirt is worn under a button-neck pullover; these appeared in both drab khaki and grey shades. Much of X-Force's - and the British Army's - uniforms and equipment issued in the SE Asia theatre was made in India. The KD trousers are confined by khaki woollen puttees in the usual Chinese fashion. Boots seem rarely to have been issued to the Chinese troops by the Allies, and most are seen wearing straw sandals or lightweight shoes, like this soldier. He has British 37 pattern webbing equipment with an 08 pattern water bottle carried in an open strap holder.



A jubilant soldier of Gen Stilwell's British-clothed X-Force celebrates the crossing of the Tanai river in the Hukawng Valley, northern Burma, in March 1944. He is wearing Indian-made KD overalls over an aertex shirt; the overalls have a single breast pocket and a fly front, and were designed to be worn for general duties as well as by motorized and armoured troops. Chinese troops in India were grateful for a better level and standard of field equipment than they had ever before received; for example, Indian-made mosquito hoods would have been a welcome novelty.

Chinese soldiers were usually issued with this US 'Enfield' M1917 rifle, and commonly carried the bayonet fixed.

D2: Lance-Corporal, 22nd Division, 'New 6th Army'; Hukawng Valley, northern Burma, March 1944

The designation 'new' was usually applied to divisions and larger formations which had taken the numbers of the many Chinese formations destroyed in the first years of the Sino-Japanese War. Apart from his Chinese puttees and shoes this junior NCO (who displays no insignia) is dressed exactly like a British soldier in Burma in 1942, in KD shirt and shorts, a British Mk II steel helmet with netting and foliage camouflage, and 37 pattern webbing equipment. His weapon is the Bren, outwardly the standard British section light machine gun, but here a variation manufactured in Canada by Inglis in the standard Chinese 7.92mm calibre. These saw widespread service until 1949.

D3: Private 1st Class; Ramgarh training centre, Bihar, India, August 1944

This soldier undergoing training at the Chinese centre north-west of Calcutta is dressed in British KD with the addition of Chinese insignia. His identification patch has a blue border and bears his unit and personal details in Chinese characters. The India-pattern pith helmet - one of several different types of British *solar topi* issued - bears the KMT badge on the front. His webbing is Indian-made British 37 pattern, made from a coarser material with rather fragile brass fittings. Thompson sub-machine guns had been popular in Chinese service for many years, but this new M1A1 is from US stocks.

E: CHINA & BURMA 1943-45

E1: Tank commander, (1st) Provisional Tank Group; Burma, 1944-45

The Chinese armoured force in Burma was equipped with US Sherman M4A4 medium tanks, Stuart M3A3 light tanks, White scout cars, and British Universal carriers. Tank crewmen were drawn from different provinces of China and were one of the few examples of soldiers from different regions serving together. The crews' clothing, like their tanks, was provided by the US. This commander is wearing a US herringbone twill (HBT) one-piece overall suit, as issued to mechanics, and the tanker's fibre crash helmet. The only Chinese items are his homemade straw sandals, which must have been quite comfortable in the heat of a tank in tropical conditions.

E2: Major-General Sun Li-jen, commanding 38th Division; Burma, late 1943

General Sun Li-jen was a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, and one of the most able of the Chinese commanders. He led the 38th Division in Burma in 1942, and after its retreat to India during its re-equipment and re-training in 1942-43. He fought again in Burma in 1943-45, latterly in command of the New 1st Army. General Sun favoured simple, soldierly uniforms; he is wearing the US Army first pattern M1942 olive drab HBT two-piece fatigues. Apart from the KMT sun decal on the left of his M1 helmet, his only insignia are his major-general's gold one-star rank patches fixed to the open lapels of the jacket. His brown leather 'rough-out' boots are standard US Army issue, as is the Colt M1911A1 .45cal semi-automatic pistol holstered on his M1936 web pistol belt. Apart from US weapons, Chinese



This resolute-looking soldier squints through the sights of his Type 24 HMG; the reversed swastika on the brass manufacturer's plate was an ancient Oriental good luck symbol. The gunner has a unit patch on the left sleeve of his light summer uniform, and a broad basketwork sun helmet, with a paper or cloth KMT badge, on top of his field cap. (IWM, PLP 2448C)

officers were armed with pistols from Canadian and most European arms manufacturers.

E3: Colonel, attached to US Training Advisory Group; Kunming, 1943

This colonel at the training area for Y-Force (Y for Yunnan) wears standard Chinese Army officer's uniform in one of the many differing shades of khaki cotton used for tailoring officers' clothing. Although not visible here, the brass buttons bore the KMT sun design. Besides the usual rank and identification patches - the latter bordered in yellow for a field grade officer - he displays on his left shoulder the sign of the US Training Advisory Group, worn by US and Chinese personnel alike. His breeches are worn with brown leather leggings and officers' shoes as an alternative to officer's riding boots.

F: CHINA 1944-45

F1: OSS-trained soldier; southern China, August 1945

The US Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner to the CIA, trained a limited number of Nationalist troops in China towards the end of the war. Some OSS-trained troops were issued with US tropical uniforms, but the majority seem to have retained their Chinese clothing, like this simple khaki cotton uniform and slip-on fabric shoes. His US-supplied kit is limited to an M1 helmet, web M1923 cartridge belt, and a .30cal Browning M1919A6 machine gun. (This adaptation of the tripod-mounted M1919A4 medium MG, with a bipod, shoulder stock and pistol grip, was rather heavy in its intended role as an infantry squad/section weapon.) The Chinese troops who were trained by US and British instructors during the war often went on to become the Nationalist Army's best units during the Civil War, 1946-49.

F2: Nationalist guerrilla, 43rd Regiment, 15th Mobile Column; northern Shantung province, 1944

This guerrilla fighter belongs to the 2,000-strong elite regiment of a 10,000-strong force - a reminder that 'guerrillas' were not always members of small, ragged bands dispersed around the countryside. The 15th Mobile Column was a very well organized formation, and had 20 factories producing all types of small arms. Uniforms were also produced, and this lucky fighter has a newly issued blue wadded cotton winter uniform that has not yet had time to fade. His equipment is the same as that worn by many regular soldiers, and includes a couple of canvas bandoliers and chest pouches for stick grenades. Such German-type grenades were made in small arsenals all over China, and can often be distinguished by their roughly carved wooden shafts. As a bodyguard to the unit's commander, Yu-min, this man is well armed with one of the numerous Chinese copies of the Thompson sub-machine gun.

F3: Lance-corporal; Pihu military training centre, 1944

This young NCO receiving combat training at the Pihu centre is well kitted out. He has covered his light khaki cotton ski-type field cap with foliage camouflage. His rough cotton tunic and breeches and puttees are all of the same cloth. Many soldiers found the familiar homemade straw sandals more comfortable than boots or shoes; they were cool in summer, and actually gave a better grip in mud. Unusually, he has a regulation issue leather knapsack and blanket roll, with the wooden shaft of a small pick thrust under its straps. A canvas haversack and a water bottle are slung to his left hip, where his belt supports the bayonet frog; his brown



ammunition pouches are local copies of the German originals. The carbine is a Belgian FN24, one of many Mauser-type rifles and carbines in 7.92mm that were imported during the 1930s.

F4: Private 1st Class, New 19th Division, 46th Corps; Kweilin-Luichow, April 1945

This soldier operating in south-west China is an example of the diverse sources of uniforms and weaponry during the war. He has a locally made uniform in a grass-green shade, with shoulder straps and scalloped pocket flaps. His insignia include a simplified divisional patch on the left sleeve. The KMT badge is displayed on his helmet, of the French Adrian model worn by a number of Chinese units from the mid-1930s - this, despite the fact that the 19th Div is described as being supplied by the US (note his M1923 cartridge belt). Further evidence of the cosmopolitan nature of Chinese procurement is provided by his Belgian FN Mle 30 heavy automatic rifle.

G: CIVIL WAR 1946-49

G1: Lieutenant, 123rd Corps; Shanghai, April 1949

This officer is wearing a very faded example of an olive drab US Army surplus M1943 combat jacket and trousers, with a pair of US Army double-buckle boots. His field cap is the old fashioned ski type made of light khaki cotton, with the usual KMT badge. He has acquired a pair of war booty Japanese officer's binoculars, and a US M1936 pistol belt and suspenders. Despite its immediate resemblance to the old Mauser C96, his pistol is in fact a Canadian-made Inglis Type 1 version of the Belgian M1935 FN Browning Hi-Power, carried inside a Mauser-type wooden holster/stock fixed to the belt by a canvas hanger.

G2: Private 2nd Class, 4th Corps; Canton, October 1949

Even in the very last days of the Civil War this soldier, shipping out of Canton for Formosa, has a surprisingly old-fashioned appearance. The trousers of his US Army surplus khaki cotton 'Class C chino shirtsleeve uniform are confined by puttees; and he wears a captured Japanese cork sun helmet, seen in quite widespread use during the war. The brass five-point star badge of the IJA has been removed but not replaced with a KMT sun. Many soldiers wore these basketball-type boots in canvas and rubber, either imported or locally made. His only equipment is the American M1923 cartridge belt. This Johnson M1941 semi-automatic rifle, though not taken up by the US Army, was exported to several countries. It is unclear if the light machine gun version was also acquired by the Nationalists.

G3: 2nd Lieutenant of Engineers, 7th Division; Shihchiachuang, October 1948

The 1946 uniform regulations included a new system of rank and branch insignia which followed the US Army

MajGen Sun Li-jen (see Plate E2), photographed during a meeting with Gen Frank D. Merrill of the 5307th Composite Unit - 'Merrill's Marauders'. On this occasion the commander of the Chinese 'New' 38th Div was wearing a US Army field jacket, a British JG shirt and sweater and KD slacks, and a light khaki ski-type cap. General Sun, one of the most able Chinese commanders, went on to lead the New 1st Army in the Burmese advance of 1944-45. (Merrill's Marauders Association)

model. This officer wears the new US-type peaked service cap with a new woven officers' cap badge featuring an oval foliate wreath; the white-on-blue sun was sometimes outlined with a red ring, but this was not universal. On his service tunic the Engineers' fortress branch insignia is worn in brass on his left collar and a plum blossom on the right; his silver US-style rank bar is pinned to the shoulder straps. He retains the traditional identification patch above the left breast pocket. Slacks seem to have been the most common trousers worn with the 1946 uniform. The Sam Browne belt supports the commonly seen US-supplied Colt M1911A1.

G4: Volunteer, Peace Preservation Corps; Kaifeng, June 1948

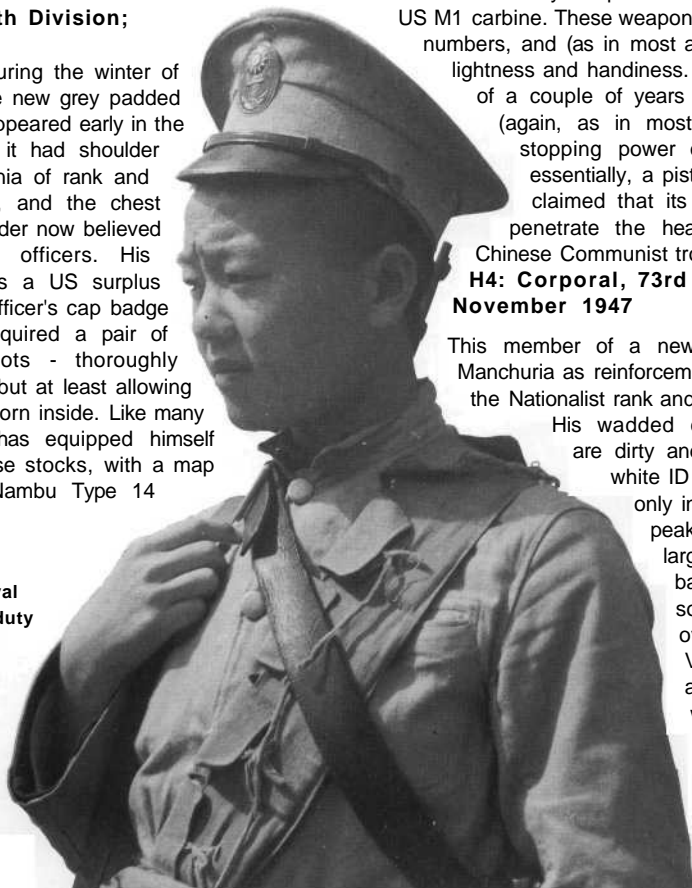
This is a member of a 50,000-strong force of PPC and other auxiliary units committed to the battle of Kaifeng, which lasted from the end of May to the beginning of July 1948. PPC volunteers had no really distinctive uniform; this man is wearing a holly-green tunic and trousers with brown woollen puttees. His cap is the standard KMT type but made from war booty Japanese uniform cloth. Black canvas shoes - here, a laced type - were still worn by many Nationalist troops alongside imported boots. Equipment is minimal, with brown canvas bandoliers and a haversack to carry his personal gear. The second-line status of the PPC is demonstrated by his elderly captured Japanese 6.5mm Type 30 carbine.

H: CIVIL WAR 1946-49

H1: Lieutenant, 69th Division; February 1947

This officer pictured during the winter of 1946/47 is wearing the new grey padded winter uniform which appeared early in the Civil War; for officers it had shoulder straps. Old-style insignia of rank and identity are still worn, and the chest patch has the blue border now believed to indicate company officers. His peaked service cap is a US surplus model, with the new officer's cap badge in metal. He has acquired a pair of US Army jungle boots - thoroughly inadequate for winter, but at least allowing extra insulation to be worn inside. Like many Chinese soldiers he has equipped himself from captured Japanese stocks, with a map case and an 8mm Nambu Type 14 semi-automatic pistol.

A young Nationalist naval infantryman on sentry duty during the Civil War, wearing an old fashioned-looking peaked service cap. Morale in the Navy was lower than in the Army, and corruption was particularly rife among naval officers. (Robert Hunt Library)



H2: Private 1st Class, 207th Youth Division; Mukden, October 1948

The Nationalists had suffered enormous losses during their campaign in Manchuria. This young volunteer soldier serves with one of two brigades of the 207th which were left to defend the city of Mukden by October 1948. He is dressed in the new grey winter uniform; the new model winter hat has ear cut-outs in the flaps, surrounded by extra padding. US-supplied basketball-type boots were popular, although most soldiers had to take what they were given or could buy for themselves on the black market. This soldier's basic equipment includes a leather belt on to which he has fastened locally made canvas pouches with tape-and-toggle fastening, to hold spare magazines for his Chinese-made Type 36 copy of the US .45cal M3A1 'grease gun'. This sub-machine gun was produced at the government arsenal in Mukden.

H3: NCO, 12th Army Group; Shwangchiaoichi, November 1948

He wears the grey wadded cotton winter uniform with puttees and traditional canvas shoes. His M1 helmet has the KMT sun badge on the front; although the M1 was supplied in large numbers there were never enough to go round, and many captured Japanese and older Chinese helmets were still used. Insignia on his jacket would be limited to the simplest black-on-white cloth name and unit patch over his left breast pocket. He carries three stick grenades in a cloth carrier from his belt. His only other equipment is a canvas bandolier crudely adapted to take spare magazines for his US M1 carbine. These weapons were supplied in quite large numbers, and (as in most armies) were popular for their lightness and handiness. However, in the Korean War of a couple of years later there were complaints (again, as in most armies) about the lack of stopping power of its short .30cal round - essentially, a pistol cartridge. Some GIs even claimed that its bullets sometimes failed to penetrate the heavy padded jackets of the Chinese Communist troops.

H4: Corporal, 73rd Army; Manchuria, November 1947

This member of a newly arrived division sent to Manchuria as reinforcements wears uniform typical of the Nationalist rank and file during Civil War winters.

His wadded cotton jacket and trousers are dirty and worn. A simple black-on-white ID patch on the left chest is the only insignia. His US Army surplus peaked service cap displays a larger than usual metal KMT badge. Footwear is a pair of soft black Chinese shoes worn over thick white stockings. Very large quantities of Japanese arms and equipment were used by both sides during the Civil War; this soldier has an unwieldy old 6.5mm Arisaka Type 38 rifle, and Japanese brown leather ammunition pouches on his belt.

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The uniforms, equipment, history and organization
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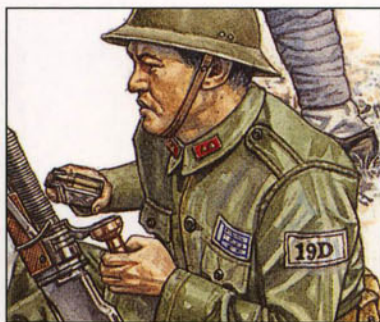
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