

# Battles of the Great Wall

by Ah Xiang

*Excerpts from "Resistance Wars: 1931-1945" at <http://www.republicanchina.org/war.html> For updates and related articles, check <http://www.republicanchina.org/RepublicanChina-pdf.htm>*

## Japanese Invasion of Jehol

Shortly after the Shanghai Ceasefire Agreement, Japan's militarists staged a coup d'état on May 15th, 1932, and killed their dove-faction prime minister. Declaring the inseparable relationship between Jehol [Rehe] and Manchuria in "Manchukuo independence proclamation" in Feb 1932, Japanese Kwantung Army commander took the coup as a green light for encroaching onto Jehol. Initially, Japanese intended to pacify Jehol by converting the provincial chair Tang Yulin. Having failed to buy over Tang Yulin, Japan resorted to military attacks by moving the bulk of its Kwantung Army towards Jehol border.

In Jehol, Zhang Xueliang, as chairman of the Peiping branch of the KMT Military Committee, had deployed four infantry brigades and three cavalry brigades, about 17,000 troops, in Chaoyang, Kailu, Lingyuan, Chifeng and Chengde. Beginning from Oct, Zhang Xueliang, under the support of Premier TV Soong of the Administrative House, began to build two fortified defense lines inside of Jehol.

Japan, citing the 1901 boxer protocol, had stationed about 200 garrison force in both Shanhaiguan Pass and Qinghuangdao. For distracting Chinese forces, Japan orchestrated two provocations at the Pass of Sea and Mountain in Oct and December of 1932. On the night of Jan 1st, 1933, Japan's Shanhaiguan garrison commander made up an incident by exploding grenades and firing a few shots, and then demanded with Chinese for pulling out troops. The next day, Japanese 8th Shidan rode over on four armoured trains and three armored vehicles. Japanese, with the support of five planes, continued the attacks through 5 pm. From the sea, Japanese Second Overseas Fleet, which had a total of one dozen warships, also blasted at the Shanhaiguan citadel. 626th Regiment commander Shi Shian retreated through Xishuimen Gate with remnants after 1st Battalion commander was killed in battle.

On Feb 11th, TV Soong, the acting premier for the Administrative House and the finance minister, led his cabinet ministers to Peiping for discussions with Zhang Xueliang as to Jehol defense. The entourage included foreign minister Luo Wengan and interior minister Huang Shaohong as well as Heh Yingqin the minister for the Board of Military Administration under the Military Committee. On 18th, Zhang Xueliang's Northeastern

Army generals, together with Northwestern Army generals, issued a proclamation of self-defense.

Zhang Xueliang, in coordination with Heh Yingqin, devised a plan to organize northern China's troops into eight Corps-conglomerates and one backup Corps-conglomerate. For Jehol, Zhang Xueliang divided Wan Fulin's 4th Corps-conglomerate [53rd Corps], Tang Yulin's 5th Corps-conglomerate [55th Corps], Zhang Zuoxiang's 6th Corps-conglomerate [Sun Dianying's 41st Corps], Feng Zhanhai's 63rd Corps and various guerrilla troops into two blocks, to be in charge of northern and southern Jehol centered on the Beipiao-Chaoyang-Lingyuan-Pingquan-Chengde Highway.

On Feb 17th, Kwantung Army issued the order attack. On 23rd, Japanese initiated the three-route attacks while having its embassy simultaneously relay a memorandum in request of an immediate evacuation of all Chinese troops from Jehol. The middle route, consisting of two Ryodan under 8th Shidan, cavalry Rentai, cannons Rentai, engineering Daitai, armored vehicle unit, Port Arthur (Luushun) heavy artillery Daitai, truck unit and Li Shoushan's puppet 1st Brigade, went on to attack Chaoyang after taking over Beipiao earlier. The northern route, with two Ryodan under 6th Shidan, 4th Cavalry Ryodan, cavalry Rentai, field gun Rentai, Zhang Haipeng's puppet security force and Cheng Guorui's puppet Preparatory 2nd Corps, attacked towards Chifeng from two directions. The southern route made the move on Feb 24th when 14th Mixed Ryodan attacked towards the defense line held by Wan Fulin's 4th Corps group troops.

In northern Jehol, 36th Ryodan of 6th Shidan and 4th Cavalry Ryodan attacked from Kailu-Balin direction, while 11th Ryodan of 6th Shidan attacked from Zhangwu direction. On Feb 23rd, 4th Cavalry Ryodan and two puppet cavalry brigades circumvented towards the north of Chifeng via Lindong and Linxi, while 36th Ryodan of 6th Shidan attacked along Kailu-Xiawa line. On March 1st, encountered fierce resistance from 117th Brigade of Sun Dianying's 41st Corps at Haladaokou, to the east of Chifeng. Sun Dianying mounted a night time counter-attack against Japanese 6th Shidan, and at one time penetrated to the proximity of Japanese command center. On March 2nd, Japanese and puppet cavalry, which pushed to the north of Chifeng the previous day after fighting against 41st Corps and Northeastern Loyal and Brave Army's guerrilla forces for one week, mounted an attack at Chifeng, and took over Chifeng. In middle and southern Jehol, Japanese 8th Shidan took over Chaoyang on Feb 25th, and Japanese 14th Mixed Ryodan fought against Yang Zhengzhi's 108th Division and Sun Dequan's 119th Division under 53rd Corps to the east of Lingnan on Feb 27th. On 2nd, combined Japanese force pressed on to take over Lingyuan. The bulk of 14th Mixed Ryodan then detached from 8th Shidan and attacked south toward Lengkou Pass via Qinglong. At 11:50 am, on March 4th, Japanese cavalry intruded into Chengde. Japanese emperor congratulated Japanese Kwantung army and called Rehe [Jehol] by the term "province".

After the fall of Jehol into Japanese control, Chiang Kai-shek discussed with Zhang Xueliang about resisting Japanese invasion in Baoding of Hebei Province on March 9th. Seeing that Zhang Xueliang was very much addicted to drugs, TV Soong suggested to Zhang Xueliang to step down for a medical treatment as well as for appeasing national resentment. On 12th, Zhang Xueliang resigned the post of chairman for Peiping Branch of the Central Committee to Heh Yingqin.

## BATTLES OF THE GREAT WALL

On March 4th, 16th *Ryodan* of Japanese 8th *Shidan* pushed west towards Luanping from Chengde, while the bulk of its forces attacked southwestward towards Gubeikou Pass, i.e., an ancient protruding mountain pass separating the Yanshan Mountain to the north. Towards the eastern segment of the Great Wall, Japanese 14th Mixed *Ryodan* took over Lengkou Pass after Lingyuan, and on 5th, its two *Daitai* contingent, departing from Lamadong, took over Chapeng.

Song Zheyuan's 29th Corps, from March 2nd, began to converge upon Xifengkou Pass. On March 4th, Zhang Zhengfang's 107th Division of 67th Corps was dispatched towards Qingshiliang-Huangtuliang area for impeding the advancement of Japanese 8th *Shidan*; and Shang Zhen's 32nd Corps, which was digging defense positions on two banks of Luanhe River, was ordered to recover Lengkou Pass from Japanese 14th Mixed *Ryodan*. Huang Guanghua's 139th Division, with three prongs, mounted a night time march towards the pass. To reinforce the defense of the Great Wall, the military committee relocated Guan Linzheng's 25th Division of 17th Corps to Tongxian on March 5th and subsequently Miyun on 8th. Huang Jie's 2nd Division of 17th Corps followed through to Tongxian on 7th.

139th Division, after two days of fighting, recovered Lengkou Pass on the early morning of March 7th. Towards Gubeikou Pass, Zhang Zhengfang's 107th Division, after four days' fighting, abandoned Huangtuliang on the afternoon of March 9th. Near the pass, Zhang Tingshu's 112nd Division resisted Japanese for one day, and retreated to Nantianmen Gate (southern heavenly gate), an important link point on the 25-kilometer wide wall of Gubeikou Pass. 73rd Brigade and 75th Brigade under Guan Linzheng's 25th Division of 17th Corps, still wearing straw saddles and barefoot, arrived at the spot on the morning of 10th. At 3 pm, on 10th, Japanese launched a short duration probing attack at Gubeikou Pass. On March 11th, at dawn, Japanese 8th *Shidan* attacked the pass, and by 10 am, wrestled over the control of the entry area from 112nd Division. Japanese then attacked 25th Division and surrounded 145th Regiment of 73rd Brigade. Guan Linzheng personally led 75th Brigade to the relief from eastern gate of Gubeikou Town. In the ensuing short distance battle, Guan Linzheng was seriously wounded, regiment commander Wang Lunbo died, and 73rd Brigade commander Du Yuming took over the job of acting division chief.

Herald 109th Brigade under 37th Division of 29th Corps, upon arrival at the Xifengkou, immediately took control of Panjiakou Pass sitting above Luanhe River to the left and Tienmenguan-Dongjiakou passes to the right. To route the Japanese attack force, 29th Corps Chief Song Zheyuan ordered Zhao Dengyu's 109th Brigade and Tong Zeguang's 113th Brigade to circumvent to the right and left flanks of the Japanese for a raid into Japanese camps on the night of 11th. Past midnight, Zhao Dengyu's brigade, with blades, swept through Japanese camps at a dozen locations, and by 4 am, destroyed Japanese command center and cannons at Baitaizi. (It was said that General Zhang Zizhong, frontline general director for Xifengkou Campaign, first organized the famous "Broad Sword Contingent" of Northwestern Army.)

Song Zheyuan sent Liu Jingshan's 219th Regiment of 37th Division and Qi Guangyuan's 228th Regiment of 38th Division to the aid of Provisional 2nd Division Chief Liu Ruming. On 17th, Japanese attacked Luowenyu-Shanzhayu passes for a whole day. At night, Liu Ruming sent out a battalion against Japanese left flank and then counterattacked Japanese for the whole night. On the night of 18th, 1st Brigade commander Li Jintian led one battalion on a stealthy attack at Japanese from Shaopoyu, to the southwest of Shanzhayu Pass, while Qi Guangyuan's 228th Regiment slipped out of Yujiayu to the northeast of Luowenyu Pass. Liu Ruming issued an order of general attack overnight and pushed back Japanese by ten kilometers.

Japanese 33rd Mixed Ryodan, pushing against Jielingkou Pass on March 11th, launched the attack at Miao Zhengliu's 116th Division at dawn of 16th. On the morning of 24th, at neighboring Yiyuankou Pass, one regiment under 116th Division of 53rd Corps, at one time on 15th, lost the pass to Japanese. Then, one regiment under Yao Dongfan's 115th Division of 57th Corps guarded the pass till March 21st. At Lengkou Pass, Japanese 14th Mixed Ryodan mounted a new attack on March 19th. On April 5th, Liu Kan's 83rd Division came to Gubeikou replace Wang Yizhe's 67th Corps. On the night of April 11th, 2nd Division and 83rd Division were ordered to raid into Japanese hind positions in Bakehuiying, to the northeast of Gubeikou. 29th Corps evacuated from Xifengkou Pass on April 8th. On April 11th, Japanese retook Lengkou Pass after dozens of seesaw fighting.

At Lengkou Pass, Japanese 14th Mixed *Ryodan* mounted a new attack on March 19th. By March 22nd, Shang Zhen's 32nd Corps defeated Japanese after numerous counterattacks and pushed back Japanese by one dozen kilometers. On 23rd, part of Japanese 6th *Shidan* and independent garrison troops from Chifeng arrived at the area to the north of Xifengkou Pass and Lengkou Pass. On March 27th, Nobuyoshi Muto ordered a new round of attacks at the passes along the Great Wall in the attempt of cutting into the area to the south of the Great Wall and east of Luanhe River. On April 1st, Japanese 33rd Mixed *Ryodan*, reinforced by 6th *Shidan*, took over Shimenzhai and Haiyangzhen from Yiyuankou direction, and pressed Heh Zhuguo's 57th Corps to coastal Qinhuangdao. At Xifengkou,

29th Corps fought against Japanese in over twenty wrestling fights, with Northwestern Army soldiers, one blade per person, peeling off Japanese heads by hundreds during each engagement.

Japanese 6th *Shidan* traced behind Chinese troops and took over Lulong, Funing and Changli. After Anglo-American navy forces landed in Qinhuangdao and Tangshan in the name of protecting foreign nationals, Japanese emperor ordered a halt of Luanhe River campaign on April 19th, and withdrew troops back to the Great Wall on 21st. In Shanghai, Whang Jingwei, who had just returned from overseas and taken over the premier post from TV Soong, authorized the Sino-Japanese peace talks effective 19th. In Peiping, Heh Yingqin shrank his defense perimeter to the Peping outskirts by relocating 32nd Corps to Tongxian-Sanhe-Pinggu, Fu Zuoyi's 59th Corps to Changping from Kalgan, and Xiao Zhichu's 26th Corps to eastern Peiping. Japanese took over Duolun on May 11th and subsequently Guyuan by taking advantage of the relocation of Fu Zuoyi's 59th Corps.

At Gubeikou Pass, i.e., important link between Chengde and Peking, 25th Division and 2nd Division of 17th Corps, consecutively, had been fighting Japanese 8th *Shidan* since March 10th. On April 5th, Liu Kan's 83rd Division came to replace Wang Yizhe's 67th Corps which was rerouted to the defense of area to the west of Luanhe River. On the night of April 11th, 2nd Division and 83rd Division were ordered to raid into Japanese hind positions in Bakehuiying, to the northeast of Gubeikou, for echoing the Lengkou battles.

On April 20th, 16th *Ryodan* of Japanese 8th *Shidan* launched a general attack at Gubeikou and surrounding heights after four days' plane reconnaissance. On the night of 2nd, 2nd Division pulled back to second line positions. On 24th, Japanese attacked the main Chinese defense position, Height 421.3, in central Nantianmen Gate. At dusk, 2nd Division, after repelling Japanese attack, yielded the positions to Liu Kan's 83rd Division, while 25th Division came forward to take control of the right flank vacated by 83rd Division. On 25th, Corps Chief Xu Tingyao took over the post of 8th Corps-conglomerate commander from Yang Jie.

Simultaneous to the attacks at Gubeikou, 4th *Ryodan* of Japanese 8th *Shidan*, about one *Daitai*, together with 5000 around puppet troops, attempted to attack Xinglong and the concave segment of the Great Wall to the east and southeast of Gubeikou. Corps Chief Xiao Zhichu organized a cavalry contingent on basis of 5th Cavalry Division and three infantry contingents on basis of Wang Jinyong's 4th Independent Brigade and Yu Zhaolong's 132nd Brigade for a raid on the morning of April 27th. Having intruded into Xinglong, Chinese troops attacked and isolated Japanese into two blocks inside county administrative building and on a hilltop. Under continuous Japanese plane bombing, 26th Corps failed to sack Japanese fortified positions and retreated back to Qiangzilu segment of the Great Wall on April 29th.

Peace talks in Shanghai continued into early May. Whang Jingwei was commented to have stopped advocating for war with Japan after generals at Gubeikou informed him that Japanese cannons and firepower could reach Chinese soldiers while Chinese weapons did not even have the range to hit Japanese positions. However, Chinese side refused to accept the ceasefire precondition of withdrawing troops from the Great Wall. On May 3rd, Nobuyoshi Muto adopted the approach of pressing for a peaceful settlement by.<sup>1</sup> 28th *Ryodan* of Japanese 14th *Shidan* was rerouted south from Amur (Heilongjiang) Province for a new offensive.

On May 7th, reinforced Japanese troops launched attacks across the Great Wall line, from Gubeikou Pass to Shanhaiguan Pass. On May 14th, Japanese took over Luanzhou. 29th Corps withdrew west on 15th. On 16th, Japanese further took over Fenglun and Zunhua. To thwart Chinese resistance, Japanese changed their tactic and took over Luanhe area to the east of Peking, causing the collapse of KMT defense line at the Great Wall. On 22nd, Japanese pushed further to Yutian, Pinggu and Sanhe, and eastern bank of Jiyunhe Canal.

From Gubeikou, Japanese 8th *Shidan* raided 17th Corps's positions at Xinkailing, about 10 kilometers to the southwest of Gubeikou, on the night of 10th. After three days' fighting, Japanese further took over Shixia, a strategic town about 30 kilometers to the northeast of Miyun. On 19th, Japanese took over Miyun. Fu Zuoyi's 59th Corps was sent to Huairou for assisting Xiao Zhichu's 26th Corps in defending Peiping. 26th Corps pulled back to Shunyi from Qiangzilu; 40th Corps to Sanhe from Malangan; 67th Corps to Baodi; and 57th Corps to Ninghe. Additionally, Chiang Kai-shek shipped Feng Qinzai's 42nd Division and Central Army's crack force of 87th Division and 88th Division towards Peiping. On May 23rd, Fu Zuoyi's 59th Corps engaged with Japanese 8th *Shidan* at Huairou and [[??Feng Qinzai's 42nd Division ]] at Shunyi. On the same day, Japanese offered a ceasefire to Huang.

Portion of the treasures from Peking's Forbidden City were shipped to the south in four batches from Feb 6th to May 15th, 1933. About 80 boxes of selected treasures from Forbidden City and Shanghai-Nanking areas were then shipped to Changsha on Aug 14th 1937 and consecutively were moved to Huayandong Cave in Anshun-xian county of Guizhou Province. During the time period of Nov 20th to Dec 8th 1937, 9369 boxes of Forbidden City treasures were shipped to Chongqing and then pulled onto Mt Leshan, and another 7286 boxes were shipped to Baoji after an elapse of 48 days via transportation over railway and trucks. About 2900 boxes were stranded in Nanking city.

Saved as pdf on May 6th, 2007 on basis of <http://www.republicanchina.org/war.html#Chang-Cheng-Zhi-Zhan>

---

<sup>1</sup> Guo Rugui p 1:212 citing Kwantung Army Operation Order 503.

