

Xu-Beng Campaign [Huai-Hai Campaign]

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Before the Liao-Shen Campaign rolled to the end, CCP Eastern China Field Army completed the campaign against the Jinan city with the help of Wu Hualong's defection. Liu Zhi's Xuzhou Pacification Office, having concentrated onto the cities of Shangqiu, Xuzhou and coastal Lianyungang and along the railway lines of Jin-Pu & Long-Hai, failed to give the relief to Jinan the provincial city of Shandong Province.

Mao Tse-tung continued the communist strategy of attacking one outpost while impeding or eliminating the enemy relief. To link up the 'liberated' area of Shandong Province and northern Jiangsu Province as well as to cut off the right arm of Liu Zhi's army in Xuzhou, Mao Tse-tung proposed to first attack Huang Baitao's army group that was in charge of the area between Long-Hai Railway to the north and the Huai-he River to the south and between coastal Lianyungang to the east and Xuzhou to the west. For sake of taking out Huang Baitao's army, Mao Tse-tung instructed that **more than half of CCP Eastern China Field Army, about 300,000, should be deployed against the relief armies of Qiu Qingquan and Li Mi**. As synchronized actions, undercover Communist generals, Heh Jifeng, who provoked the July 7th, 1937 Marco Polo Bridge Incident, was asked to defect to the communist at the exact moment when Huang Baitao was en route to Xuzhou. During the campaign, the original communist plan changed midway when Huang Wei's army group came north and Liu Zhi's army abandoned Xuzhou, culminating in an expanded Huai-Hai Campaign that would suck in Huang Wei & Du Yuming's army groups. Huai-Hai Campaign1, i.e., Xu-Beng Campaign in perspective, would eliminate hundreds of thousands of Chiang Kai-shek's crack troops from Nov 6th 1948 to Jan 10th 1949.

A communist "zong dui" was anywhere from 30,000 in 1946 to 100,000 in 1949. Liu Bocheng's CENTRAL PLAINS ARMY, though cut in half after the DABIESHAN incursion, regrouped into about 9 plus "zong dui" and more, and having absorbed new recruits, swelled to **200,000-250,000** troops, **to be halved again to 120,000 after the HUAI-HAI CAMPAIGN**. Chen Yi and Su Yu's EASTERN CHINA ARMY had always maintained 13+ "zong dui" and special "zong dui" (artillery or cannons units shipped from the seas by Russians). The ranks could be **600,000 +** for the EASTREN CHINA ARMY.

By the autumn of 1948, Liu Ruming, after attending a meeting in Xuzhou, learnt of the decision of abandoning Zhengzhou & Kaifeng. Liu Ruming first made arrangement for the family members of the officers and soldiers to leave for Changzhou, to the south of Yangtze River. When students from Henan University requested for assistance with relocation, Liu Ruming allocated 4 out of 5 trains for Henan University while ordering his troops travel by foot. One train was left for a regiment of city defense soldiers and himself. Liu Jixue, provincial council speaker, first objected to shipping out the university library and instruments and then objected to students' riding on the train. Liu Ruming managed to get Liu Jixue onto the train, and prevented Liu Jixue from slipping away at Guide station. Ultimately Liu Jixue slipped away at Nanking. At Guide, Liu Ruming's train caught up with the trains carrying Henan University

students and their families. Seeing refugees and students riding on top of carriages in cold October weather, Liu Ruming ordered that student trains depart first before his train went through. Upon arrival at Xuzhou, commander-in-chief Liu Zhi [Liu Jinggong] for Xuzhou Pacification Office immediately ordered that Liu Ruming's 55th & 68th Corps depart for Bengbu of Anhui Province. Liu Ruming explained that he had allocated 4 trains to about 10,000 students, and requested for a delay himself for 2 days in order for 4 regiments of foot-walking soldiers to arrive.

CCP Eastern China Field Army attacked Huang Baitao's troops on Nov 6th. Three days earlier, Huang Baitao, at Xuzhou military meeting attended by communist mole Guo Rugui, had suggested to Liu Zhi to have all troops converge upon Xuzhou since evidences showed that communist field armies of both Eastern China and Central China flanks had come towards Xuzhou. Liu Zhi did not make a quick decision on the pretense that Du Yuming was not present. On Nov 5th, Gu Zhutong came over with Chiang Kai-shek's approval. On 6th, Huang Baitao, on the way to Xuzhou, was ordered to pause at Xinanzhen town for 44th Corps to join Huang Baitao's 7th Army Group in lieu of a retreat to Shanghai over sea – a communist trick by undercover spies Guo Rugui and Liu Fei. Meanwhile, communists faked some attacks on Xuzhou. On the night of 6th, Li Yikuang & Li Yannian came to Huang Baitao's command center. Huang Baitao blamed Guo Rugui and other officers at Nanking's defense department for erratic change of orders. At midnight, Bai Baitao woke up Li Yikuang with information that **Chen Yi's Eastern China Field Army of 300,000 communist troops were apparently closing in on him**. The next day, Huang Baitao evacuated from Xinanzhen after the long column of 44th Corps and civilians and refugees, numbering 100,000, came over.

However, while crossing the Canal, 63rd Corps, 25th Corps, 44th Corps and 100th Corps went into disarray under communist bombardment. 44th Corps was burdened with about 100,000 administrative staff and refugees from coastal Haizhou & Lianyungang while fleeing west; under communist bombardment, 25th Corps, on Nov 8th, lost majority of its troops while competing with refugees and 44th Corps at the canal bridge; 44th Division of 100th Corps, having abandoned the rear support task, would cross the canal for Baiyiji on its own accord, only to get destroyed by communist troops; after losing 152nd Division at Yandouzhen, 63rd Corps Chief Chen Zhang, wounded during the river crossing, committed suicide under further communist attacks. **On Nov 8th, Xu Shiyu's communist Shandong Army Group breached the Hanzhuang-Taierzhuang defense line, crossed the Canal, and pressed against Jiawang**. At Jiawang, to the northeast of Xuzhou, Heh Jifeng & Zhang Kexia, i.e., two moles, taking advantage of Feng Zhian's absence, led 59th & 77th Corps or 23000 soldiers for a defection to the communist camp. Three communist "zong dui" hence walked through to take over the Longhai Raiway and cut off Huang Baitao's path right on.

Heh Jifeng & Zhang Kexia steering away 59th & 77th Corps or 23000 soldiers proved another point: Nationalist Army division was around 10,000 on paper. In later stages of the war, Nationalist troops were reduced to 60-70% ranks as had happened at the beginning of the 1937-8 resistance wars, without adequate replenishment or funding. General Liu Yuzhang's army did not get replenishment till 2 years into battles in Manchuria, e.g. One reason that generals were not eager for replenishment was that they were still paid the salaries on basis of original 10k division headcount and used the extra money to compensate for underfunding or hyperinflation. By early 1948, Nationalist army generals did not face annihilation in whole by communist counterparts.

Things changed for worse from mid-1948 and forward when hundreds to thousands of Russian-supplied cannons and artillery pieces rolled in.

Staying at Feng Zhi'an residency at night, Liu Ruming was awoken by a phonecall to Feng Zhi'an. It turned out that two subordinates, Zhang Kexia & Heh Jifeng, who were undercover communists, had defected to the communist camp overnight by taking advantage of the vacancy of corps chief Liu Zhensan & Wang Hai. Feng Zhi'an remnants, about one division, was then re-organized under Wang Hai for subordination to Sun Yuanliang.

After the loss of Jinan and Kaifeng, railway line to the south of Xuzhou was no longer immune to communist attack and sabotage. Liu Ruming's troops had to fight their way along the Jin-Pu Railway, and arrived at Bengbu by the end of October. Liu Zhi's pacification office relocated to Bengbu as well. At Bengbu, Liu Ruming was suspected of a possible rebellion. Qin Shaowen, undersecretary of Defense Department came over from Nanking around Nov 20th and diffused the rumor. At one time, Liu Ruming, together with railway bureau chief, rode on armored train to inspect on the battle of recovering Guzhen iron bridge from the communist troops.

Meanwhile, communist radio propaganda invoked Li Dequan, i.e., Mme Feng Yuxiang for psychological warfare. Mme Feng Yuxiang talked about the death of her husband in a fire accident on a Russian ship. Li Lianhai, a brother of Li Dequan, was dispatched to Bengbu for instigating Liu Ruming. Liu Ruming asked his staff to send him away with 300 yuan currency. Liu Ruming had heard, from someone who returned from US, a different story to the effect that Stalin had deliberately murdered Feng Yuxiang for avenging on the killing of a Russian in 1926. Thereafter, communists sent over the father of Sun Liangcheng [Sun Shaoyun] with a letter. Liu Ruming, after checking with officials and officers from Liu Zhi's pacification office, proposed to win back Sun Liangcheng from communist captivity. Five days later, Sun Liangcheng and two communist agents, including someone called Zhou Gao who previously defected to the communist camp. Liu Zhi, with curiosity, went to Tianjiaan station to pick up the band. Tianjiaan was said to be the ancient battlefield for the Battle of Si-sui River between Eastern Jinn Dynasty and Anterior Qin Dynasty. The two communist agents were sent to Nanking where they were executed. Sun Liangcheng explained that he was not sent to the hind for brainwashing because communists wanted to use him for winning over Liu Ruming.

From the east, 27th Division of **9th “zong dui”** of Eastern China Field Army followed behind Huang Baitao's troops along Long-Hai Railway, and by Nov 9th, caught up with Huang Baitao's 152nd Division at Yandouzhen and eliminated it. At Zhanzhuang, only 64th Corps and 44th Corps managed to converge intact. Liu Zhi, from Xuzhou, ordered that Qiu Qingquan and Li Mi's army groups went eastward to lend support to Huang Baitao.

CCP Central established a general frontline commissariat for directing the Huai-Hai Campaign, with inclusion of senior leaders such as Liu Bocheng, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yi, Su Yu and Tan Zhenlin. Before Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yi came over to eastern China, they had wrapped up a Zhengzhou Campaign in Henan Province. At this time, communist troops, under deputy commander Su Yu and deputy political commissar Tan Zhenlin, had already encircled Huai Baitao's remnants out of 120,000 troops in Zhanzhuang area. Four communist “zong dui” [corps equivalent echelons] of **1st, 3rd, 4th & 9th from CCP Central Plains Field Army**, after sacking Zhengzhou & Kaifeng of Henan Province, came to attack Xuzhou of Shandong Province. Departing from Shangqiu of Henan Province, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yi, with four

corps of **1st, 3rd, 4th & 9th**, penetrated to Linhuanji, to the southwest of Xuzhou, for segregating Huang Baitao's army from those inside of Xuzhou city. Deng Xiaoping & Chen Yi's instructions to corps chief Yang Yong, Chen Xilian, Chen Geng & Qin Jiwei would be, at any cost and even exhausting to the last soldier, to cut off the Xu-Beng segment of Jin-Pu Railway, to impede Sun Yuanliang's army group from coming east, and to clip Huang Wei's army group coming northward. Chen Yi recited Ming Emperor Jiajing's poem to expedition generals as an encouragement for his generals.

On Nov 15th 1948, Deng Xiaoping & Chen Yi's army campaigned southward and launched a sudden attack at Suxian county, hence cutting off the two incoming army groups led by Li Yannian & Liu Ruming. Li Yannian & Liu Ruming were impeded at Guzhen, and failed to go north to Xuzhou. After ten hours' fighting, 4 communist corps penetrated into **lightly-defended** Suxian and caught Jin-Pu Railway commander Zhang Jiwu alive. (Zhang Jiwu was sold out to communists.) Liu Bocheng, after giving control of his armies to chief of staff Li Da in western Henan Province, also came to the Huai-Hai Campaign.

On Nov 17th, 100th Division was eliminated outside of Zhanzhuang; on 18th, 150th Division Chief Zhao Biguang of 44th Corps surrendered to the communist troops; and on 19th, communist troops took over the train station of Zhanzhuang and caught 44th Corps Chief Wang Ze and his 162nd Division Chief Yang Zili. At dusk, communist troops launched a general attack by continuously blasting at positions, and then mounted multiple pontoons. By 10:00 pm, communist troops, i.e., Jinan 1st Regiment, penetrated into the city. Meanwhile, communist 74th Regiment crossed the river in southwestern Zhanzhuang. With communist **9th & 8th “zong dui”** pouring into Zhanzhuang and penetrating the inner city defense line, Huang Baitao, with 64th Corps and remnant 25th Corps, fled to Dayuanshang & Xiaoyuanshang villages. On Nov 22nd, 159th Division Chief Zhong Shiqian of 64th Corps surrendered under heavy artillery attacks by 26th Division of communist **9th “zong dui”**. Huang Baitao's army escaped from Dayuanzhuan after seeing the defection of 159th Division at Xiaoyuanzhuan. With Qiu Qingquan's army group impeded to the north while Huang Wei's army group encircled to the south, Huang Baitao committed suicide near Xiaohuangzhuang village. Ensuing from 15 days of continuous wars, communist troops eliminated Huang Baitao's army group. On Nov 25th, Mao Tse-tung sent over congratulation to Huai-Hai Campaign commissariat.

Phase II of Huai-Hai Campaign would be to target Huang Wei's 12th Army Group that had come northward along Zhengyang-Xincai Highway from Queshan and Zumadian of Henan Province. On Nov 21st, Huang Wei crossed The Wo-he River after departing Mengcheng. On 23rd, Huang Wei's 18th Corps attacked Nanpingji and forced the **4th “zong dui”** of CCP Central Plains Field Army into a retreat. Communist forces combined Eastern China Field Army with Central Plains Field Army against Huang Wei. Communist **4th, 9th “zong dui” and Yu-Wan-Su independent brigade** then induced Huang Wei's troops further towards the north of Kuai-he River for a piecemeal elimination. Meantime, communist forces impeded troops in four clusters of Xuzhou, Bengbu, Haizhou & Shangqiu for sake of preventing them from lending support to Huang Wei. **4th, 9th and 11th “zong dui”** of CCP Central Plains Field Army pushed southwestward from Dongpingji and Shaoweizi; **6th “zong dui”** of CCP Central Plains Field Army and **12th Brigade of Shen-nan [southern Shenxi Province military district]** pushed northward; and **1st, 2nd & 3rd “zong dui”** of CCP Central Plains

Field Army pushed eastward. Additionally, **7th, 3rd & 13th “zong dui”** of CCP Eastern China Field Army joined in to campaign against Huang Wei, with two corps allocated for the task of impeding Liu Ruming's relief forces.

Huang Wei's army group was compressed to Shuangduiji, with a radius of 10 kilometer east to west and 7.5 kilometers south to north. **6th “zong dui”** of CCP Central Plains Field Army and **12th brigade from Shen-nan military district**, under the command of Wang Jingshan, sealed the bag. Chen Yi instructed to chief of staff Zhang Zhen of CCP Eastern China Field Army as to impeding Du Yuming's troops. After crossing Wo-he River, 18th Deputy Corps Chief Wang Yuanzhi admonished Huang Wei as to a fast breakout of the communist encirclement for the south. Huang Wei, with order to lend support to Huang Baitao to the north, declined it. Huang Wei's army group was cut off from water supply from Kuai-he River and completely surrounded by the communist's so-called people's war, i.e., 'human sea strategy'.

Du Yuming, for lending support to Huang Wei, abandoned Xuzhou city for Woyang-Huyang area to the south. At Yongcheng, Su Yu and Tan Zhenlin's CCP Eastern China Field Army encircled Du Yuming's troops. Communist troops set Xiaolijia village as its command center, which was right in the heart of all routes of forces. To the east of Xiaolijia village, Li Yannian's army group was impeded as well. With two communist moles [i.e., Liu Fei & Guo Rukui] working independently inside of Chiang Kai-shek's command center in Nanking, each move by any army group was known to the communists before the order was delivered to army group involved. On Nov 24th, frontline commissariat issued the order of general attack. Two echelons of two brigades each attacked Banqiaoji & Zhaoji from Mengcheng area. On 25th, communist forces marched towards Shuangduiji.

Huang Wei's army group retreated to the south bank of Kuai-he River, with a forerunner division breaking out towards Dayingji to the southeastern direction. 12th Brigade of CCP Eastern China Field Army took over several villages in southeastern Shuangduiji, while 17th brigade took over villages to the southern and southeastern of Shuangduiji. In cooperation with CCP Central Plains Field Army, communist troops completely surrounded Huang Wei's troops at Shuangduiji. On midnight of 25th, four companies of 18th Corps briefly penetrated communist 17th brigade position at Xiaomazhuang Village, only to be beaten back hours later. On 26th, three regiments from 11th & 3rd Division, with tanks, took over Xiaoliuzhuang village from communist 12th brigade at one time. Huang Wei made the arrangement for a breakout on early morning of Nov 27th with four divisions as herald troops. However, 110th Division Chief **Liao Yunzhou**, who had been a communist in early life, had dispatched a messenger for a defection on the night of 25th. At daybreak of 27th, when three divisions followed the footprint of Liao Yunzhou, they were promptly ambushed by the communist troops. troops attacked Lizhuang and Yangzhuang villages, with positions changing hands multiple times. At Lizhuang, communist 12th brigade beat back troops seven times, and at Yangzhuang, reinforced communist troops retook the village by 17:00 pm. On Nov 28th, three regiments from 18th Corps changed direction to attack 17th brigade position at Xiaomazhuang village to the southwest. Reinforced communist troops drove out the forces by dusk after wrestling positions five times during the day.

By early Dec, Huang Wei had lost 30,000 troops, with two of his four corps incapacitated. Huang Wei had to rely on airdrops for supplies. Du Yuming left Xuzhou with three army groups to the relief of Huang Wei, and Li Yannian pushed northward under the pressure of Chiang Kai-shek. Communist frontline commissariat decided to launch a final push against Huang Wei at dusk on Dec 6th. The reserved communist troops, i.e., **7th, 13th “zong dui”** of CCP Eastern China Field Army as well as a cannons column, were thrown in. Three clusters of communist armies were organized for attacking Huang Wei from east, south and west. At 17:00 pm, on 6th, **6th “zong dui”** of CCP Central Plains Field Army, **7th “zong dui”** of CCP Eastern China Field Army, and **12th Shen-nan Brigade**, from south, attacked positions at Lishilou and Xiaozhouzhuang. On 8th, forces failed to take back Lishilou after 6 futile counterattacks. At dusk, on Dec 9th, **7th “zong dui”** of CCP Eastern China Field Army penetrated into Dawangzhuang village after hours of cannons bombardment. At night, forces retook Dawangzhuang. At 4:00 am, the next day, four columns of reinforced communist troops invaded the village again. At 8:00 am, two regiments from 18th Corps attacked Dawangzhuang after blasting the village for almost one hour. After ten hours of fightings, reinforced communist troops once again retook the Dawangzhuang village. At neighboring Xiaowangzhuang village, two regiments of 23rd Division surrendered at 8:00 pm on Dec 10th. On Dec 12th, Liu Bocheng & Chen Yi issued an ultimatum to Huang Wei. Huang Wei and deputy commander Hu Lian still attempted a breakout with chemical weapons. [[?? Communist claim]] Communist frontline commissariat reallocated **3rd, 13th corps** from Eastern China Field Army for a coordinated attack at Huang Wei. Chen Shiju, Wang Jingshan and Du Yide were put in charge of brigades from two field armies. At dusk, on 14th, communist troops, including Xiangyang Siege 1st Battalion and Luoyang Siege Battalion from two field armies, attacked Huang Wei's positions at northeastern Shuangduiji. 17th Brigade Chief Li Desheng from CCP Central Plains Field Army personally inspected on Shuangdeji concrete works. **Over 100 Communist cannons and bomb throwers were deployed against positions.** One platoon from Xiangyang Siege 1st Battalion had dwindled to three soldiers. By 17:00 pm, communist troops took over a height overlooking Huang Wei's cannons position, trucks and airport runway.

The next day, Huang Wei remnants, during the flee, were completely destroyed by communist troops. By Jan 10th 1949, Huai-Hai Campaign was completed. Du Yuming was caught alive; Qiu Qingquan was killed near the end of the battle; and Huang Wei, Wang Yuanzhi & Wu Shaozhou etc were captured by the communist troops. Ten days later, Chiang Kai-shek resigned the presidency to proxy president Li Zongren.

