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The Japanese Army 1931–45 (2)

1942–45

ilip Jowett • Illustrated by Stephen Andrew

Men-at-Arms • 369

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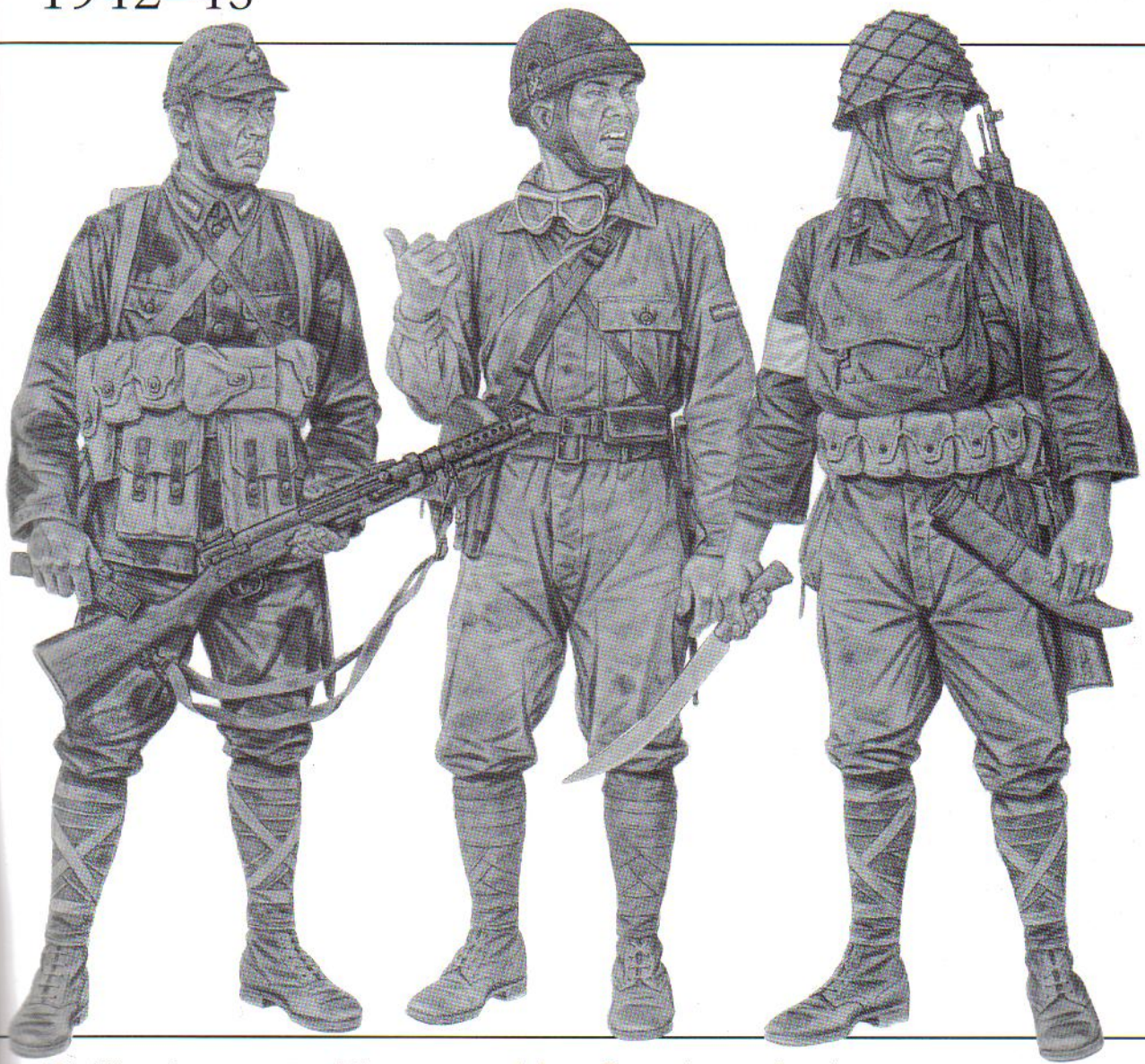

Philip Jowett • Illustrated by Stephen Andrew

Series editor Martin Windrow

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Dedication

To my family

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Author's Note

The 14-year period covered by the two books in this study saw a great deal of change in the Japanese Imperial Army. Although the two books are meant to be of value and interest individually, some overlap between them has been inevitable. Although the division is basically chronological, it has not been possible to be entirely consistent in this scheme. The first book, MAA 362 *The Japanese Army 1931–45 (1): 1931–42*, includes a good deal of material on uniforms and insignia which applies equally to this later period, and goes into much more detail on the background, character, organisation and weapons of the Japanese Imperial Army than could sensibly be duplicated in the present book.

Errata

MAA 362: for *Kempei-tei* read *Kempei-tai*.
For *nitto-hei*, read *nito-hei*.
Page 3 caption, for 'New Guinea' read 'Leyte, Philippines'.

Artist's Note

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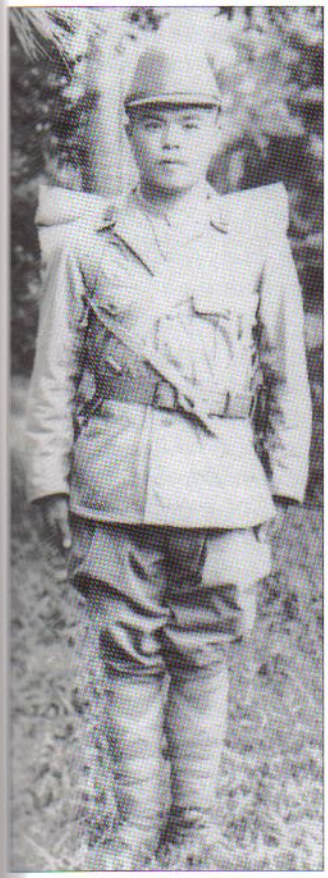
THE JAPANESE ARMY 1931–45 (2) 1942–45



This private first class is wearing an early pattern tropical tunic with pleated patch pockets and flapped ventilation slits at each side – under magnification the button of the vent flap is just visible under his right arm. Underneath the tunic he wears a cotton shirt. His field cap is an early pressed wool type which looks brand new; it will soon lose its smart appearance with wear. (Ryuta Chino Collection)

THE JAPANESE ARMY ON THE DEFENSIVE

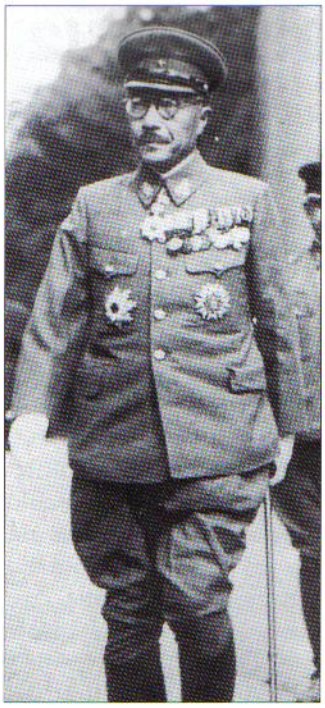
THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL ARMED FORCES had hugely extended the Empire by conquest in a spectacular six-month campaign. Almost from the moment that their advances in the Pacific ceased they found themselves having to defend their gains against Allied counter-offensives – slow and weak at first, but steadily growing in power and confidence. This was a defence for which Japan was tactically, but not strategically, equipped. After initial setbacks an Absolute National Defence Sphere was defined, encompassing Burma, Malaya, the East Indies, Western New Guinea, and the Caroline, Marianas and Kurile Islands. For the next three years the Japanese would defend it with a ferocious determination which shocked all who fought them; but the end result was never really in doubt.

With its troops dispersed at the end of impossibly long supply lines which were increasingly threatened by Allied air and sea power, Japan soon lacked not only the means, but also the materiel to supply its garrisons. The Empire was simply overwhelmed by the capacity of the USA to produce guns, tanks, ships and aircraft – and to man them. In the last year of the war Japan's already inadequate industrial production was drastically reduced by heavy US bombing. For instance, in 1940 Japan built 1,023 tanks; in 1945, only 94 – and even these were technically completely outclassed.

The disparity between US and Japanese war production is perhaps best summed up by one extraordinary statistic: for every Japanese soldier in the Pacific there were 2lbs of equipment, while for every US soldier there were 4 tons… . Nevertheless, the unique character of the Japanese military enabled them to defy these hopeless odds. Although their grim defensive battles achieved nothing but huge loss of life, there were still well over two million servicemen preparing to defend the 'home islands' from Allied invasion when the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 finally convinced the Imperial government that further resistance was futile. (Even then there was an attempt by a group of officers to sabotage Hirohito's surrender broadcast.)

Even in the small space available here, the special nature of these campaigns must be outlined, however briefly. By mid-1942 Japan's Army had earned a reputation approaching invincibility amongst shocked Allied troops; but as soon as the Allies began to fight back – on Guadalcanal, and in New Guinea – its weaknesses began to appear, and as time passed they would be exploited with lethal effect.

Beyond a doctrine of attacking at any cost, most Japanese commanders lacked imagination; and when the attack failed, they tended simply to repeat the attempt until whole units had been thrown away. In their



Gen.Tojo Hideki[1], the effective leader of Japan for most of the war, is pictured wearing general officers' Type 98 uniform with visored cap and riding breeches. The awards and medals on his chest testify to his long service in the Army since he was commissioned into the infantry in 1902. A leading member of the 'war party', Tojo became the C-in-C of the Manchurian Army in 1936, before becoming Japan's minister of war in 1940. Prime minister from 1941, simultaneously keeping the war ministry and also the ministry of the interior, he was centrally responsible for his country's decision to attack the Allied powers. After a series of defeats in the Pacific he was forced to resign in July 1944, but continued to exert considerable influence over the regime. When Japan surrendered he attempted suicide, but failed. Tried as a war criminal by the international military tribunal, he was hanged in Tokyo in December 1948. (US National Archives)

1 Japanese names in this text are printed in the Japanese style, i.e. family name first, followed by personal name.

intensely hierarchical society, the officer corps feared losing face by admitting difficulties or failures, so reports were often over-optimistic. Commanders gave orders, but did not take pains to supervise their execution. The Army was weak in heavy artillery and incompetent in its use – all emphasis was on direct infantry support. In this, as in the use of tanks, the Allies soon and decisively overtook them. The quality of most Allied equipment improved steadily; that of the Japanese mostly remained at early 1930s levels – and in quantity the gap became hopelessly wide.

Logistic planning and execution were poor from the outset; by winter 1942/43 in New Guinea tens of thousands of Japanese troops were more or less abandoned to starve – not for the last time. There was intense rivalry between Army and Navy, which had damaging consequences for campaigns in which inter-service co-operation was so obviously vital. The Japanese air superiority of 1941/42 was soon challenged, and then lost, with disastrous strategic, tactical and logistic consequences. In the face of the US advance across the Pacific the Japanese high command could formulate no more promising strategy than simply to dig in, hold every foot to the last man, and inflict as many casualties as possible. To the Western mind this was a counsel of utter despair; to the Japanese mind, honourable death for the emperor was a prize.

Against all these weaknesses, the Japanese Army had great tactical strengths which they demonstrated almost to the end. The most formidable enemy is the soldier who genuinely does not care if he lives or dies – and that culture seems to have prevailed throughout the Imperial forces. The Allies found that it was almost impossible to take Japanese prisoners; 'death before surrender' was a genuine ruling principle, not just a slogan. When all means of resistance was gone, they killed themselves in their foxholes. Before 1945 the tiny numbers of prisoners taken among defeated Japanese forces – a few score of mostly wounded men, among the thousands of dead on any battlefield – are believed never to have included any officer above the rank of major. Consequently, on every battlefield each Japanese position had to be taken individually, with shellfire followed by tanks, machine guns, satchel charges, flame-throwers and grenades. This was terribly costly in Allied lives; and it is not surprising that after a taste of this kind of fighting very few Allied infantrymen made the slightest effort to take prisoners.

The field positions which the Japanese held to the death were usually numerous, well sited and solidly constructed. Their talent for camouflage and concealment was of the highest order, and their fire discipline was excellent. They learned from their failures. At Tarawa they fortified the whole perimeter of the island; when the US Marines landed on the opposite coast from where they had been expected a large part of the defensive plan was wasted, and there was no central redoubt from which counter-attacks could be launched in any direction. On Peleliu and thereafter that lesson was applied; most of the later garrisons were deployed in extensive and complex inland systems of gun emplacements, deep bunkers, interconnecting tunnels and improved natural caves. Although basically defensive, Japanese tactics always involved immediate and desperate counter-attacks to retake any lost ground. Japanese soldiers were courageous, disciplined and cunning; they were skilled at night fighting, infiltration, trickery, booby-traps and ambushes.

CHRONOLOGY

Because of the many fronts on which the Japanese Imperial Army fought, a brief general overview is followed by separate campaign summaries, for clarity.

PACIFIC & SE ASIA CAMPAIGNS, 1942–45

1942

4–6 June Sea/air battle of Midway; Japanese Navy loses four aircraft carriers and hundreds of experienced aircrew, a blow from which it never recovers, and which will rob Japan of much of the strategic initiative. While most Japanese forces consolidate their hold over their newly won empire and prepare for possible Allied counter-offensives, two further offensive operations are launched:

7 June 1,800 Japanese troops land on Attu and Kiska in Aleutian Islands off Alaska.

21 July Japanese 18th Army begins landings at Buna, New Guinea.

7 August Solomon Islands: US landing on Guadalcanal leads to prolonged ground and naval battles as both sides strive to reinforce and supply their troops.

September–December New Guinea: Australian and US reinforcements force Japanese onto defensive.

17 December Start of British/Indian offensive on Arakan coast of NW Burma.

1943

22 January New Guinea: Japanese resistance around Buna ends. First major Allied land victory against Japan.

1–9 February Solomons: Japanese evacuate Guadalcanal.

February–March Burma: British advance in Arakan stalls, but first 'Chindit' raid penetrates Japanese rear areas.

8 March China: Japanese offensive across Yangtze River into Hupeh & Hinan Provinces.

April–May Burma: British forced back from Arakan.

18 April Adm.Yamamoto, C-in-C Japanese Combined Fleet, shot down and killed by US aircraft off Bougainville, Solomons.

30 May Aleutians: fierce Japanese resistance to US landings on Attu ends in suicidal counter-attack.

June–July Solomons: US landings on New Georgia.

15 August Aleutians: US task force lands on Kiska, to find that Japanese had been evacuated.

25 August Solomons: Japanese cleared from New Georgia.

The Japanese high command now decide on a 'New Operational Policy', to hold a perimeter defending Burma, Malaya, Borneo, the Philippines, western New Guinea, the Carolines, Marianas, Bonin, Ryuku and Kurile Islands – though other conquests will also be defended to the last by sacrificial garrisons, to win time and maximise Allied casualties.

US strategists define three separate drives in the Pacific. Gen.MacArthur (SW Pacific) will continue to clear New Guinea; Adm.Halsey (S Pacific) will take the northern Solomons, the Bismarck and Admiralty Islands, leaving the main Japanese base at Rabaul on New Britain isolated; both will then combine to liberate the Philippines. Adm.Nimitz (Central Pacific) will 'island-hop' through the Gilbert & Ellice and Marshall Islands to the Marianas. On the India/Burma border, British/Indian forces will continue to build up for an eventual liberation of Burma, meanwhile probing Japanese defences. The Allies will continue to supply Chiang Kai-Shek's Chinese forces, hoping to bring them into meaningful joint operations in northern Burma.

October Japanese offensive in central China.

1 November Solomons: US landings on Bougainville.

20–23 November Gilbert & Ellice Islands: 18,000-strong US Marine force captures Tarawa Atoll; Japanese garrison fights to the death, inflicting 3,000 US casualties.

15–26 December Solomons: US landings at Cape Gloucester, New Britain.

1944

January Burma: British advance in Arakan. New Guinea: Australians clear Japanese from Huon Peninsula.

31 January–4 February Marshall Islands: US landing forces capture Kwajalein, Roi-Namur and Majuro.

18–23 February US forces capture Eniwetok Atoll.

Infantry cross a swampy area of the Mayu Penisula, on the Arakan front in Burma, autumn 1943. They wear shirtsleeve order; a variety of different shades of khaki can be seen. On the left sleeve of the superior private (left) note the alternative form of displaying rank – a single relocated collar bar, in this case sewn onto a square patch above another illegible insignia. Three men have knapsacks, while the superior private has a canvas holdall pack – cf Plate F3. (George Forty Collection)

Japanese soldiers climb the slopes of the Shupii Mountains, Burma, in March 1943 during operations against the first British 'Chindit' raid. They wear a mixture of garments. All have the field cap with sun flaps; some have put their tropical tunics in their packs and march in their shirts. The man at the head of the column with an injured arm has improvised a sling from a personal 'rising sun' flag. Japanese soldiers were well used to advancing through terrain like this; even where there were usable roads they were always short of transport. (George Forty Collection)

6–26 February Burma: 'Ha-Go' counter-attack on British in Arakan fails.
29 February–20 March US landings on Admiralty Islands. Final 'mopping up' takes ten weeks: Japanese casualties 3,280 dead, 75 captured.
5–12 March Burma: start of second 'Chindit' operation behind Japanese lines. *8 March* Start of Japanese 'U-Go' offensive towards Imphal.
22 April US landings at Hollandia, New Guinea.
April China: start of Japanese 'Ichi-Go' offensive.
15–17 June Marianas Islands: US landings on Saipan.
9 July Saipan secured.
11 July Burma: Japanese 15th Army begins withdrawal after failed 'U-Go' Imphal/Kohima offensive. *21–24 July* Marianas: US landings on Guam and Tinian.
1 August Effective resistance on Tinian ceases, and *10 August* on Guam.
15 September Palau Islands: US landings on Peleliu, defended from elaborate inland positions.
12 October 'Assault phase' on Peleliu declared over.
October Burma: British/Indian 14th Army begins unbroken eight-month advance, driving Burma Area Army south and east towards Siam (Thailand).
20 October Philippines: first US landings on Leyte. *23–26 October* Remaining Japanese naval strength virtually destroyed in battle of Leyte Gulf.
November–December Philippines: slow US advance on Leyte against bitter resistance in monsoon weather.
27 November Palaus: Peleliu finally secured.
15 December Philippines: US landings on Mindoro.
25 December Japanese evacuation of Leyte ordered.

1945

9 January Philippines: first US landings on Luzon, in Lingayan Gulf. *29 January* Further US landings on west coast. *31 January* US airborne landing south of Manila Bay.
4 February Philippines: US advances reach east coast of Luzon – cutting island in two – and outskirts of Manila.
4 February–3 March Street fighting for Manila. *15–16 February* US landings on Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor.
19 February Bonin Islands: US landings on Iwo Jima.
8 March Philippines: US landings on Mindanao.
March–August Remaining Japanese pockets on Luzon and Mindanao sealed off.
27 March Iwo Jima finally secured.
1 April Ryuku Islands – last Japanese defences before home islands: US landings on Okinawa initially unopposed, but strong inland fortifications held by Japanese 32nd Army.
29 May Key positions in Shuri Line defences fall.
19 June For the first time, sizeable numbers of Japanese troops voluntarily surrender. *30 June* Effective resistance on Okinawa ends.
6 August USAAF drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima, causing 80,000 deaths and similar numbers wounded.
8 August USSR declares war on Japan. *9 August* Second atomic bomb dropped, causing 40,000 dead and 60,000 wounded at Nagasaki. *14 August* Japanese Empire agrees to unconditional surrender. *15 August* Emperor Hirohito broadcasts announcement of surrender to nation.
2 September Formal signature of instrument of surrender on board USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.

CHRONOLOGIES OF MAJOR CAMPAIGNS

Burma, 1943–45

December 1942 British/Indian offensive down Arakan coast of NW Burma.

1943

February–March Advance in Arakan stalls; but a British/Indian brigade makes first 'Chindit' raid, penetrating Japanese rear areas before withdrawing successfully (though with high casualties).
April–May Japanese 55th Inf Div counter-attack in Arakan recaptures Maungdaw, and forces British back into India.

1944

January Probing British advance in Arakan. *7 January* Japanese high command approves plan for 'U-Go' offensive by 15th Army towards key British base at Imphal, with secondary 'Ha-Go' counter-attack by 55th Div in Arakan.
6–26 February 'Ha-Go' fails, due to resistance of surrounded British/Indian units resupplied by air.

A machine gun section in China is caught in the early morning light advancing through an abandoned building. All wear the Type 98 summer tunic with lightweight trousers and puttees, and canvas helmet covers with or without netting over the top. The man in the centre can just be seen to wear the red infantry branch 'reversed W' chevron above his right breast pocket. Of particular interest is the M1918A1 Browning Automatic Rifle in the foreground, captured from Chinese Nationalist troops. (Author's collection)

6 March Gen.Stilwell's Chinese forces successful against 18th Div in Maingkwan, Wallawbaum area, northern Burma.

8 March Start of 'U-Go'; 33rd Div strikes towards Tiddim, 15th towards Imphal, 31st for key position of Kohima. For this vital offensive the Burma Area Army is so short of transport that the Japanese train 15,000 cows as pack animals. *5–12 March* Second 'Chindit' operation opens; Gen.Wingate air-lands first two British brigades (of four) behind Japanese lines on Irrawaddy River, diverting part of 18th Div from Stilwell.

5 April–late June Small British force surrounded at Kohima holds out until reinforced on *18 April*; savage fighting with 31st Div continues for two more months. *19 April–late June* Stopped short of Imphal, 15th Div goes onto the defensive.

22 June Imphal–Kohima road reopened. *26 June* Chindits capture Mogaung.

11 July With its rear lines threatened, and losses of 60,000 men (against 17,000 British), Japanese 15th Army, very short of supplies, begins to withdraw.

3 August Stilwell captures Myitkyina.

24 September FM Terauchi, C-in-C Southern Army, orders Gen.Kimura's Burma Area Army to hold southern Burma, though he must not expect any supplies: Gen.Honda's 33rd Army to hold Lashio and Monglong Mountains (Operation 'Dan'); Gen.Katamura's 15th Army, Mandalay, Meiktila and upper Irrawaddy ('Ban'); and Gen.Sakurai's 28th Army, lower Irrawaddy from Yenanyaung to Rangoon ('Kan').

October 1944–May 1945 The turning point in Burma has come. Gen.Slim's British/Indian 14th Army now goes over to the offensive and advances throughout the monsoon season. On the British left flank Chinese forces also make some movement southwards; and from January 1945 a British corps pushes down the Arakan coast on the right flank. Repeatedly outmanoeuvred, and never able to hold up the British for long, the dwindling, half-naked and starving Japanese units still show stubborn resistance, making determined counter-attacks to cut their way free of encirclements.

3 December 14th Army crosses Chindwin River at three points.

1945

7 January 14th Army reaches Shwebo. *14–16 January* 14th Army establishes bridgeheads across Irrawaddy. *22 January* Burma Road reopened to supplies from India to Nationalist China.

3 March Meiktila falls, threatening Japanese route south from Mandalay. *4–28 March* 33rd Army makes heavy counter-attacks around Meiktila. *9–20 March* Mandalay falls. Part of Slim's forces now advance south down Sittang River, cutting off 28th Army to the west.

6–20 April 33rd Army cut off and almost destroyed around Pyawbwe. *23–30 April* Toungoo and Pegu, on approaches to Rangoon, fall.

6 May 14th Army and Arakan forces link up and cut off Japanese forces west of the Sittang.

3–11 July Remains of 33rd Army launch diversionary attack on Waw, to assist 28th Army's break-out at Toungoo. Both fail; of 18,000 men only some 6,000 cross the Sittang, in pitiable condition.

11–12 September Formal surrender of Japanese Southern Army at Rangoon and Singapore.

China & Manchuria, 1943–45

Large Japanese forces are tied down on occupation duties in NE China and coastal enclaves further south, harassed by guerrillas (including Mao Tse-tung's Communists in Yunnan to the west), but periodically mounting offensives against Nationalist armies of Chiang Kai-Shek in south. Chiang has US air support, and is dependent on US supplies, but reluctant to accept US advice via Gen.Joseph Stilwell to commit major resources against Japanese in northern Burma. (Chiang is preoccupied by his struggle against the Communists – only nominally suspended in face of common threat from Japan.) In north, Japan's

Kwangtung Army still controls puppet state of Manchukuo. Cost of Chinese campaign in Japanese lives will reach 1,140,000 dead, 240,000 missing and 295,000 wounded by mid-1945.

1943

8 March Start of Japanese offensive across Yangtze River towards Hupeh, Hunan rice-growing regions. Chinese Nationalist Army diverts forces intended for Burma.

1944

April–September 'Ichi-Go' offensive across Yellow River by 250,000 Japanese troops moved from north and 50,000 transferred west from Canton; fighting eventually involves about a million Chinese and Japanese soldiers. One objective is to destroy US B-29 bomber airfields in Kwangsi Province. Japan's China Expeditionary Army makes deep advances in Hunan Province despite US air support for the Chinese, capturing Changsha in *June* and Hengyang in *August*. However, B-29 bases are soon transferred to the Marianas, the first raids on Japan being mounted from Tinian in *October*.

1945

5 April USSR gives Japan a year's notice of renunciation of non-aggression pact.

(6 August US drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima.)

8 August USSR declares war against Japan; on following day Manchukuo is invaded by 76 Russian divisions with 4,500 tanks in three-pronged offensive from east, north-west and west. Red Army makes rapid progress against Kwangtung Army despite pockets of determined resistance. Mao Tse-tung's Communist 8th Route Army advances from Yunnan to meet Russians on Sino-Manchurian border.

21 August Final surrender of Japanese Kwangtung Army in Manchuria.

Pacific, South & South-West

Solomon Islands:

1942

7 August US 1st Marine Div land on Guadalcanal, establishing bridgehead round Henderson Field airstrip. Little resistance by 2,200-strong Japanese, mainly construction troops. *18th* Col.Ichiki's 2nd Bn/28th IR from 7th Div lands east of bridgehead, and 500 men of 5th Yokosuka SNLF to west. *21st* Ichiki's force repulsed and annihilated on Tenaru (Ilu) River. *29th* First reinforcements shipped from 17th Army, Bougainville: Gen.Kawaguchi's 3,000-strong 35th Bde (three bns. 28th & 124th IRs); Gen.Hyakutake, 17th Army, takes overall command.

12–14 September Kawaguchi repulsed at 'Bloody Ridge'. *October* First elements of Japanese 2nd and 38th Divs land. *23–25 October* Attacks on Henderson Field perimeter repulsed.

9 December US Army 23rd Div relieves Marines, followed by rest of 14 Corps.

1943

8–24 January US offensive round Mt.Austin and Matanikau River pushes Japanese survivors into western tip of Guadalcanal.

1–9 February Japanese evacuate Guadalcanal, after losing 25,000 casualties from 40,000 men during seven-month campaign.

21–25 August Island of New Georgia taken by US troops at cost of 1,094 dead; Japanese losses, 2,500.

1 November First of 62,000 US troops land on Bougainville, held by 40,000-strong Japanese 17th Army, concentrated inland. *15–26 December* US Marines land on New Britain, held by 10,000-man garrison. Large bridgehead around airfield at Cape Gloucester captured, but fighting continues in interior for many months.

Japanese ski troops on patrol on Chishima, Kurile Islands, which formed the northern defence lines of the Japanese home islands – a reminder that the Japanese Army faced extremes not only of heat and humidity, but also of cold and exposure in such stations as northern China, Manchuria and the Aleutians. These men wear white parkas over their Type 98 uniforms and appear to have white helmet covers. Although Japanese ski units often featured in propaganda publications of the period, they had no combat role during the war. (Private collection)

An officer inspects infantrymen in the jungles of Burma. They wear standard tropical shirt-sleeve uniforms; and note that although they, too, carry knapsacks, the two men in the foreground wear only their undershirts. All have fixed foliage camouflage to their field caps and packs. The man at far right is carrying a saw for cutting timber; the soldier fourth from right is armed with a captured Thompson sub-machine gun, and third from right with an elderly 6.5mm Type 11 light machine gun; the rest carry Arisaka rifles. (Mainichi Newspaper Company)

1944

8–24 March Japanese counter-attacks on Bougainville by 15,000 men repulsed with loss of 8,000 dead. Survivors withdraw inland; although mopping-up and skirmishing continue until final surrender in September 1945, Bougainville declared secure in May 1944.

Gilbert & Ellice Islands:

1943

20–23 November 18,000-strong reinforced US 2nd Marine Div captures Betio, main island of Tarawa Atoll. The 2,600-man Japanese naval infantry garrison is well dug in around the beaches, but with little defence in depth. They fight almost literally to the last man, inflicting US losses of 1,000 dead and 2,000 wounded, about half of them during initial beach landings. Both sides learn lessons from this first major experiment in opposed amphibious landings; in future the Japanese will construct their interlocking defensive positions further inland. Simultaneously, a US Army division captures Makin Island against light resistance.

New Guinea:

1942

8 March Japanese landings at Lae on NE coast.

4–8 May Japanese invasion force sailing from Rabaul to Port Moresby, vital Australian base on south coast, recalled after Japanese naval defeat in Coral Sea.

21 July 13,500 men from 20th & 51st Divs, 18th Army, begin landings around Buna on north coast. They advance toward Port Moresby through Owen Stanley Mountains over infamous Kokoda Trail, in some of the worst terrain on Earth. Savage, close-quarter jungle combat and severe supply difficulties will characterise whole campaign.

16–31 August Small Australian force fights desperately to delay Japanese advance; part 7th Australian Div arrives in support. Japanese landings at Salamaua, near Lae.

26 August–6 September Japanese landings by 2,000 naval infantry at Milne Bay repulsed.

6 September Japanese force Australians back from Kokoda to Imita Ridge.

23 September Australians counter-attack from Imita Ridge. Japanese ordered to fall back to northern coastal enclaves. Fighting retreat by troops already suffering hunger and sickness.

October 32nd US & part 6th Australian Divs land.

23 December Buna falls to Australians.

1943

January 41st US & 41st Japanese Divs land. *22 January* Allies enter Sanananda.

May–August Australians attack around Lae and Mt.Tambu.

11 & 15 September Salamaua and Lae fall; Japanese confined to Huon Peninsula. By September, 9th Australian Div lands.

2 October Finschhafen falls to Australians. *16–19 October* 20th Div counter-attacks at Wareo and Sattelberg are repulsed.

November–31 January 1944 Australian advance and US landings break resistance of 20th & 51st Divs, forced out of Huon Peninsula and inland; of 13,000 troops in October they have lost 3,100 dead, 5,000 wounded, and thousands more will starve or die of disease during retreat into interior. In *December 1943*, 36th Div arrives, to be followed by 35th in April 1944.

1944

22–24 April Start of leap-frogging Allied offensive north-westwards along northern coast and off-shore islands. US landings at Hollandia; Madang falls to Australians. *27 May* Heavy resistance to US landings by 11,000-strong garrison on Biak Island; declared secured on *30 June*, it is not finally cleared until *20 August*.

Impotent to affect events, Japanese survivors in the mountainous interior are largely ignored until the final surrender in September 1945. At least 148,000 Japanese die on New Guinea, from a total of perhaps 170,000. A soldier[1] from 79th IR, 20th Div, has stated that his regiment left Pusan, Korea, on 1 January 1943 with 4,320 men; that including reinforcements some 7,000 served in its ranks; and that he was one of 67 survivors to return.

Philippines:

1944

20 October US 6th Army, 200,000 strong, begins landings on Leyte island. *23–26 October* Remaining Japanese naval strength destroyed in battle of Leyte Gulf.

The recently arrived Gen.Yamashita commands 14th Area Army with 300,000 troops, of whom only 20,000 of Gen.Suzuki's 35th Army are initially on Leyte. US failure to achieve air supremacy during monsoon season allows 45,000 reinforcements to be landed; Leyte fighting eventually involves elements of six Japanese divisions plus independent units. *November* Rain, boggy terrain, bitter defensive fighting and aggressive counter-attacks slow US advances through inland valleys and ridges.

6/7 December Japanese airborne attacks on US-held airfields; and start of final US offensive in both north and south. *10 December* US forces capture Japanese reinforcement port of Ormoc.

15 December US landings on Mindoro. *19 December* Gen.Suzuki informed that no further supplies or reinforcements can be sent from Luzon. His last 15,000 men are driven into far north-west peninsula. *25 December* Gen.Suzuki ordered to evacuate what men he can; Gen.MacArthur announces end of organised resistance on Leyte, although fighting continues in four-month mopping-up campaign.

The battle for the main island, Luzon, will involve more Japanese troops than any other Pacific island, and more US troops than any World War II campaign except that in NW Europe. Luzon is defended by some 250,000 Japanese, though many units are under-strength and short of food, ammunition and transport. Gen.Yamashita plans to abandon central plains and Manila, concentrating on delaying actions in three strongholds: 'Shobu Group' (152,000 men) defends Baguio, Cordillera Central and Cagayan Valley in north;

1 Former Sgt.Ogawa Masatsugu, in Haruka T. & Theodor F.Cook, *Japan at War*. His account confirms cannibalism by starving Japanese soldiers.

A flame-thrower squad of the 33rd Inf Div moves cautiously forward along a trench during the Imphal offensive in May 1944 – the abortive 'march on India' whose defeat finally turned the tide in Burma. The foreground man is carrying a metal platoon water container on his back, with its tap just visible at the bottom; thirsty soldiers would fill their water-bottles as he moved from position to position. His personal waterbottle is of the older pattern. (George Forty Collection)

'Shimbu Grp' (80,000 – including strong Manila Defence Force of naval infantry, not under Yamashita's direct control) to hold hills east of Manila; and 'Kembu Grp'(30,000), hills west of Clark Field, running south into Bataan Peninsula. As always, troops, artillery and tanks are well protected and concealed in intricate systems of field fortifications.

1945

9 January First landings by US 6th Army in Lingayen Gulf on west coast. 14 Corps strikes south for Manila against light initial resistance; 1 Corps' hook east and north is slower and more costly.

23 January 14 Corps runs into stubborn defence by Kembu Grp at Bamban, and later in hills west of Clark Field. *28 January* 1 Corps, resisted by Shobu Grp in Cabaruan Hills, beats off major counter-attack at San Manuel; Japanese 7th Tk Regt destroyed. Shobu Grp confined, incapable of strategic threat to US left

flank. *29 January* US 11 Corps lands on west coast north of Bataan. *31 January–2 February* Clark Field falls. US 11th Abn Div dropped south of Manila Bay.

1–8 February 6th & 10th Tk Regts destroyed at Munoz and Lupau. San José falls; US 1 Corps reach east coast, cutting island in two. *3 February* US 14 Corps reach northern outskirts of Manila. *4 February–3 March* Savage street fighting almost destroys Manila, fortified and defended (against Gen.Yamashita's orders) by 17,000 naval infantry under Adm.Iwabuchi. Japanese lose 16,000 dead; US casualties, 1,000 killed and 5,500 wounded; 100,000 Filipino civilians killed by shellfire and Japanese atrocities. *15 February* US landings on Bataan Peninsula. *16 February* US airdrop and landings on Corregidor, defended by 5,000 naval troops. *28 February* Corregidor falls; 19 Japanese taken alive.

8 March US landings on Mindanao, defended by 43,000 Japanese.

With Manila Bay and Clark Field secured for Allied use, remaining Japanese forces in all three defensive areas of Luzon and on Mindanao will be sealed off in the wilderness until the general surrender in August. They continue to suffer heavy casualties; only about 60,000 of the original 250,000-man garrison will survive to surrender. US ground casualties in Philippines will reach 8,000 dead and 30,000 wounded.

Gen.Yamashita Tomoyuki (right) greets war minister Field Marshal Sugiyama Hajime on his arrival at an airfield in the Philippines. Sugiyama wears Type 98 officers' service uniform with the general staff aiguillette on his right shoulder. Yamashita is wearing officers' tropical uniform – here spotted by a rain shower – with a superior version of the cork sun helmet; note the gold metal star badge on the front.

At the head of the 25th Army for the invasion of Malaya in 1941/42, Yamashita showed himself to be probably Japan's best field commander of the war (notwithstanding the incompetence of the local British commanders). Although he was appointed to the vital Philippines command in autumn 1944, his conduct of the defence was hampered until December – when Leyte had already been lost – by interference from FM Count Terauchi, the C-in-C of Japan's whole 'Southern Army', from his HQ in Saigon. In view of the US decision not to pursue figures such as Gen.Ishii Shiro, director of the infamous 'Unit 731', Yamashita's execution after the war has been criticised; he was condemned for atrocities which were largely committed by Adm.Iwabuchi's naval troops, in a street-by-street defence of Manila which Yamashita had expressly forbidden. In all some 4,000 Japanese were arrested for war crimes in the Pacific and Asian theatres, of whom 1,068 were executed or died in prison between 1946 and 1951. (D.Y.Louie Collection)

Central Pacific:

1944

31 January–4 February US landing forces capture Kwajalein, Roi Namur and Majuro **(Marshall Islands)**. Japanese garrison on Kwajalein is 1,750, plus 5,000 labourers prepared to fight; Roi-Namur has 2,000, of whom only 600 trained, and 1,000 labourers; Majuro is undefended. US casualties are 1,800, Japanese around 8,000.

18–23 February US landing forces capture Eniwetok Atoll; 3,500-man garrison fights to the last, inflicting about 1,200 US casualties.

15–17 June US landings on Saipan **(Marianas Islands)**, defended by up to 43,000 Japanese. Fierce resistance and counter-attacks.

7 July Desperate *banzai* attack by 4,000 Japanese on Saipan causes heavy US casualties, but 3,000 Japanese die. *9 July* Saipan secured, at cost of 3,674 US Army and 10,437 USMC casualties; of Japanese garrison only 2,400 are taken alive. Japanese authorities also urge local civilians to commit suicide, and some 4,000 men, women and children out of a civilian population of 8–10,000 take their own lives.

15 September US landings on Peleliu **(Palau Islands)**, held by 10–12,000 men from 14th Div plus naval units, in a honeycomb of concealed and heavily protected positions. They fight fanatically from the waterline onwards, resisting landings and counter-attacking with tank support. When US Marines reach the ridge positions inland they have to take them one by one, with tank and flame-thrower support. In the first week, US 1st Marine Regt alone takes 1,749 casualties. Peleliu – just six miles by two – is neutralised by *12 October*, but not finally secured until *27 November*. Only 361 Japanese are taken alive.

1945

19 February First 30,000 men of three US Marine divisions land on **Iwo Jima**, Bonin Islands, which engineers have thoroughly prepared for defence in depth by 21,000 men of 109th Div and strong naval units under command of Gen.Kuribayashi.

23 February The dominating Mt.Suribachi is taken, but fierce fighting for strong defensive bunker and cave systems continues.

4 March While fighting rages, first US B-29 bomber lands on captured airfield.

14 March Iwo Jima declared secure.

27 March Final resistance is crushed. A volcanic rock some 5 miles long by 3 miles wide has cost the US some 25,000 casualties including nearly 7,000 dead. Just over 1,000 Japanese are taken alive.

1 April 50,000 troops of Gen.Buckner's US 10th Army – the first of 183,000 in seven Army and Marine divisions with supporting units – land almost unopposed on east coast of **Okinawa** (Ryuku Islands), which Japanese high command has designated as last defensive battlefield short of home islands – and thus last chance to weaken Allied resources before final invasion. Most of Gen.Ushijima's 80,000-strong 32nd Army – mainly 24th & 62nd Divs, with independent and strong naval units, and up to 30,000 *Boeitai* home guard and civilian volunteers – are dug in behind elaborate 'Shuri' defence line in southernmost ten miles of 60-mile long island. US progress is rapid in first week (although offshore, massed *kamikaze* attacks on fleet cause heavy naval losses). Two airfields operational by *7 April*.

9 April Start of attacks by three divisions on Shuri Line, strong system of interconnected blockhouses and bunkers which defies artillery, air and naval bombardment. Bitter defence and repeated counter-attacks.

16–21 April Capture of Ie Shima Island off west coast; 5,000 Japanese casualties.

20 April Occupation of northern Okinawa completed.

3–5 May Major counter-attacks in south, co-ordinated with air operations, fail at cost of 5,000 Japanese dead. 27th Tk Regt destroyed.

22 May Heavy rains begin, hampering US progress.

22 February 1946, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya: taking part in this surrender ceremony are (left to right) Gen.Itagaki Seishiro, commander of the 7th Area Army; his chief-of-staff Lt.Gen.Ayabe Kitsuji; and three staff officers. All wear tropical uniforms of dark green cotton with field caps of a lighter khaki shade. They are about to present their swords to Allied officers; the first three have wrapped theirs in decorated bags as a sign of respect. Ceremonies like this took place throughout the former Japanese Empire over many months following the capitulation of September 1945, as the Japanese armed forces formally acknowledged their defeat.

Some never did, of course; tales of old men hiding out in the jungle for the rest of their lives have become legendary. 2nd Lt.Onoda Hiroo surrendered on Lubang Island in the Philippines in 1974 only after a direct appeal from his former CO; and Tanaka Kiyoaki and Hashimoto Shigeyuki gave themselves up in Thailand only in January 1990. (Lt.Col.West, courtesy Peter Eyers Collection)

27 May Okinawan capital of Naha falls.

29 May Key position in central Shuri Line falls. 62,500 Japanese dead counted so far by US units. Survivors – including 11,000 infantry – withdraw to Yazu Dake.

4 June US Marines land behind left of Japanese defensive line on Oroku Peninsula.

18 June Lt.Gen.Buckner killed by artillery fire (most senior US officer killed in action during war).

19 June Under relentless US attack, first voluntary surrenders by Japanese troops are reported – about 340 men.

21 June Some 10,200 Japanese have now surrendered.

22 June Gen.Ushijima commits suicide. The battle is effectively lost, although scattered fighting in last week of June will cost another 9,000 Japanese dead and 2,900 captured. Total Japanese casualties on Okinawa variously reported as 110,000–129,700, the great majority of them killed. As on Saipan, the number is swollen by civilian suicides coerced by Japanese military authorities. US 10th Army casualties reported as 7,613 killed and missing, 31,807 wounded.

A major of the 47th Inf Regt poses for a studio portrait wearing the woollen Type 98 officers' uniform. Interestingly, he has the Arabic numerals '47' behind the rank bars on his collar – although mentioned in regulations, unit numbers were seldom seen in use. The infantry branch is identified by the red cloth 'inverted-W' zig-zag chevron above his right breast pocket. The 47th Inf Regt was part of the 6th (Kumamoto) Inf Div until 1940, when it was transferred to the 48th (Formosa) Inf Div; this formation ended the war in Borneo. (Philip Pangborn Collection)

ORGANISATION

The basic organisation of Japanese Imperial Army field formations and units is covered in MAA 362 *The Japanese Army 1931–45 (1): 1931–42*. As the war dragged on, with a progressive deterioration in the strength and preparedness of Japan's forces on some of her far-flung fronts – and with the formation, at least on paper, of many new divisions for the eventual defence of her home islands – any attempt to generalise about details of organisation and scales of equipment becomes less useful.

Armoured units

Unlike the wartime Western armies, the Japanese made no significant progress in mechanisation. Their armies remained essentially infantry forces supported by medium artillery, and much of their transport continued to rely upon horses and mules. Despite the impressive success of tank units during the drive down Malaya in early 1942, armour continued to be dispersed for infantry support, as little more than mobile pillboxes. There was little interest in the independent use of massed armour for manoeuvre – with some exceptions on the Manchukuo front facing the USSR. After their severe handling by the Red Army in Outer Mongolia in summer 1939 the Japanese did concentrate their dispersed tank regiments into larger tank groups (*sensha dan*), but these were not all-arms formations. In July 1942 the groups in Manchuria were finally amalgamated into the 1st and 2nd Armoured Divisions; each had two tank brigades of two regiments, plus a motorised infantry and a motorised artillery regiment, with an official strength of 87 light, 249 medium and 40 reserve tanks. The 3rd Armd Div was formed in China later that year, and the 4th at the Chiba tank school in Japan. Only the 2nd and 3rd saw action as divisions, in the Philippines in 1944–45 and China in 1944 respectively – and on Luzon the 2nd was committed as three separate regimental groups.

Infantry

The standard infantry division remained the Type B (*Otsu*), a 'triangular' formation built around three infantry regiments each of three battalions, with supporting arms and services. By 1944 the establishment had dropped from about 20,000 to 16,000 men; actual battlefield strength varied widely, depending upon local circumstances. Extra support units were often attached, as available or required, from the assets of higher commands.

1944 Type B Standard Infantry Division

Total: 16,000 men, 3,466 horses/mules, including:

3 infantry regiments	each 2,850 men
1 field artillery regt	2,360 men
1 reconnaissance regt	440 men
1 engineer regt	900 men
1 transport regt	750 men

Weapons: 6,867x rifles, 273x light & 78x heavy machine guns, 264x 50mm grenade dischargers, 14x 37mm or 47mm anti-tank guns; 18x 70mm battalion guns, 12x 75mm regimental guns; 36x field guns/howitzers – 75mm, 105mm, 150mm; 16x armoured cars or tanks.

Note the absence of mortars from the standard division, presumably

A group of tank crewmen share out *sake* to toast their success in a coming operation. All are wearing the summer version of the crash helmet, adjusted by lacing at the sides, with tankers' goggles. The men at right and centre have name tabs on the left breast.

The light opposition Japanese tanks faced in China gave little impetus for the development of modern types and tactics. Though effective in 1941/42 against Allied troops lacking proper tank and anti-tank support, the 7.5-ton Type 95 *Ha-Go* – with a 37mm gun and maximum armour of 12mm – was outclassed even by the US M3A1 Stuart light tank; and the 15-ton medium Type 97 *Chi-Ha*, with a 57mm gun and 25mm armour, was completely overtaken by the M3 Lee and M4 Sherman fielded by the Allies in 1943–45. Although a handful of improved Type 97*kai Shinhoto Chi-Ha* armed with the 47mm anti-tank gun did reach the Philippines in May 1942, it would be June 1944 before they faced the Allies in any numbers. Profiting from harsh lessons, the US and British armies in Asia and the Pacific built up their tank units to play a very significant 'bunker-busting' role on all fronts. The Japanese continued to employ tanks in unimaginative and usually more or less static defensive roles, and consistently weakened their potential by dispersing them in 'penny packets'. Their largest armoured counter-attack, by the Type 97*kai* of 9th Tank Regt on Saipan, involved just 44 tanks. (D.Y.Louie Collection)

believed unecessary because of the inclusion of a company of 4x 75mm guns in each infantry regiment, and a platoon of 2x 70mm guns in each battalion. Mortars of various calibres were widely used, but normally in separate battalions controlled by higher commands. In some instances, however, mortars were added to or substituted for some of the guns of divisional artillery regiments.

The order of battle also included many independent infantry and mixed brigades. Major-generals' commands, these were configured and equipped to suit particular missions or deployments – everything from garrison and internal security duty in quiet areas of China, to front line combat in Burma or the Pacific. They could vary between about 3,000 and 6,000 men, armed with everything from small arms alone up to integral artillery, and might have additional mortar, artillery, anti-aircraft and tank units attached. The US intelligence appreciation gave the following representative examples:

Independent Infantry Brigade

Total: 5,580 men, including:

5 infantry battalions	each 931 men (each 4 rifle cos. plus 1 heavy wpns.co.; each 36x LMGs, 36x 50mm grenade dischargers, 4xHMGs, 4x 20mm cannon)
1 artillery unit	360 men (2 gun or mortar cos.; each 4x 75mm or 105mm guns, or 4x 150mm mortars, or 8x 90mm or 81mm mortars)
1 engineer company	180 men
1 signals company	178 men

Independent Mixed Brigade

Total: 3,800 men, including:

5 infantry battalions	each 580 men (each 3 rifle cos. plus 1 heavy wpns.co.; each 12x LMGs, 16x 50mm GDs, 8x HMGs, 2x 37mm AT guns, 2x 70mm guns)
1 artillery unit	415 men (3 cos., each 4x 75mm or 105mm guns)
1 engineer company	221 men
1 signals company	128 men

DEPLOYMENT

As in all World War II armies, the range of units committed to a particular area or operation was far greater than is suggested by a list of the infantry divisions deployed. For instance, a representative list is given for the 18th Army in the SW Pacific early in 1943 by George Forty in his *Japanese Army Handbook 1939–45*, quoting the US Army manual TM-E 30-480. It includes three divisions and part of a fourth, plus one independent mixed brigade; but also extra-divisional units such as one anti-tank, two mortar & six field artillery battalions; two automatic cannon, four anti-aircraft and six searchlight companies; an engineer group and ten engineer regiments plus smaller sapper units of various kinds; two naval base forces and four lines-of-communication garrison units; plus numerous units of

Deployments, Army formations & Naval Landing Forces, mainly September 1945

Formations listed immediately after Area Armies are those known to have been directly under Area Army control; those listed thereafter and prefixed '(A?)' are thought to have been in the command area but their Army affiliation is uncertain.
'IIB' & 'IMB' = Independent Inf & Independent Mixed Bde
'IGU' = Independent Garrison Unit
'IR' & 'Tk R' = Inf & Tank Regts
'SNLF', 'NBF' & 'NGU' = Special Naval Landing Force, Naval Base Force & Naval Guard Unit – some other combinations of these initials will also be found.

Borneo – see Indian Ocean

Burma & Siam (Thailand)

Burma Area Army – 24th & 72nd IMBs; *28th Army* – 54th Div; *33rd Army* – 18th, 31st, 49th, 53rd, parts 2nd & 4th Divs, 105th IMB; *15th Army (Siam)* – 15th, 33rd, 56th Divs
18th Area Army, ex-39th Army (Siam) – part 4th, 22nd, & 37th Divs, 29th IMB.

China

6th Area Army – 27th, 47th, 64th? & 68th? Divs, 7th IIB, 22nd IMB; *11th Army* – 34th? & 132nd Divs, 85th & 88th? IMBs, 5th, 11th & 12th IIBs; *20th Army* – 13th, 58th & 116th Divs; 81st, 86th & 87th? IMBs, 2nd IGU
N.China Area Army – 118th, 3rd Armd Divs, 1st, 8th, 21st IMBs; (A?) 66th? IMB, 2nd & 10th IIBs; *1st Army* – 114th Div, 3rd IMB, 14th IIB, 5th IGU; *12th Army* – 110th & 115th? Divs, 4th Cav Bde, 92nd IMB, 6th & 13th IGUs; *43rd Army* – 5th & 9th IMBs, 1st IIB, 9th, 11th, 12th IGUs; *Mongolia Garrison Army* – N.China Special Garrison Force, 2nd IMB, 4th IGU
China Expeditionary (Area) Army – (A?) 6th IIB; *13th Army* – 60th, 61st, 69th, 70th & 133rd Divs, 6th, 62nd & 89th? IMBs; *6th Army* – 3rd, 34th?, 40th, 65th & 161st? Divs, 84th IMB; *23rd Army* – Hong Kong & Hainan Defence Forces, 104th, 129th, 130th & 131st Divs, 19th, 22nd & 23rd IMBs, 8th & 13th IIBs.

Formosa

10th Area Army – 9th, 12th, 50th, 66th & 71st Divs, 12th, 75th, 76th, 102nd & 103rd IMBs.

Indian Ocean

7th Area Army – 46th Div, 26th IMB; (A?) 25th IIR, 4th IMR, 2nd NGU; *37th Army (Borneo)* – 56th & 71st IMBs; *16th Army (Java)* – 48th Div, 27th & 28th IMBs; *25th Army (Sumatra)* – 2nd Guards Div, 25th IMB; *29th Army (Malaya etc.)* – 94th Div, 35th, 36th, 37th & 70th IMBs.

Indo-China

38th Army – part 2nd, 21st, part 22nd & 55th Divs, 34th IMB.

Indonesia – see Indian Ocean

Japan

5th Area Army: 27th Army – 7th, 42nd, 88th, 89th & 91st Divs, 43rd & 69th IMBs
11th Area Army – 72nd, 142nd, 222nd & 322nd Divs; (A?) two IMBs; *50th Army* – 157th & 308th Divs
12th Area Army – 321st Div; (A?) seven IMBs; *36th Army* – 81st, 93rd, 201st, 202nd, 209th & 214th Divs, 1st & 4th Armd Divs; *51st Army* – 44th, 151st & 221st Divs; *52nd Army* – 3rd Guards, 147th, 152nd & 234th Divs; *53rd Army* – 84th, 140th & 316th Divs; *Tokyo Defence Army* – 1st Guards Div; *Tokyo Bay Corps HQ* – 354th Div
13th Area Army – 153rd & 229th Divs; (A?) three IMBs; *54th Army* – 73rd, 143rd, 224th & 355th Divs
15th Area Army – 144th & 255th Divs; (A?) four IMBs; *55th Army* – 11th, 155th, 205th & 344th Divs; *59th Army* – 230th & 231st Divs
16th Area Army – 25th, 57th & 216th Divs; (A?) 4th, 98th, 107th, 118th, 122nd, 125th & 126th IMBs; *56th Army* – 145th, 351st & 312th Divs; *57th Army* – 86th, 154th, 156th & 212th Divs; *40th Army* – 77th, 146th, 206th & 303rd Divs.

Korea, South

17th Area Army – 120th, 150th, 160th & 320th Divs; *58th Army* – 96th, 111th & 121st Divs.

Malaya – see Indian Ocean

Manchuria & North Korea

1st Area Army – 122nd, 134th & 139th Divs; *3rd Army* – 79th, 112th, 127th, 128th Divs; *5th Army* – 124th, 126th & 135th Divs; *4th Army* – 119th, 123rd & 149th Divs, 80th IMB
3rd Area Army – 108th & 136th Divs; *30th Army* – 39th, 125th, 138th & 148th Divs; *44th Army* – 63rd, 107th & 117th Divs
34th Army (N.Korea) – 59th & 137th Divs.

South & South-West Pacific

8th Area Army: 17th Army – 39th? IMB; *Solomon Is.* – *Bougainville* 6th Div, 38th IMB, plus ex-Guadalcanal and Kolombangara units inc. parts 13th & 229th IR; *New Britain* 17th & 38th Divs, 39th & 65th IMBs; *New Ireland* 40th IMB; *New Georgia* 229th IR from 38th Div, 6th Kure SNLF – 'Nanto' Detachment, destroyed by Oct 1943. *Tarawa, Gilbert Is.*
7th Sasebo SNLF, 3rd NBF, destroyed Nov 1943.

New Guinea & 'North Australian Front'

2nd Area Army: 18th Army – New Guinea 20th, 35th, 36th, 41st & 51st Divs, 2nd & 5th SNLF; *Biak Is.* 222nd IR, 19th NGU, 28th SNBF, destroyed June 1944 *2nd Army – Ambon etc.* 5th Div; *Halmahera* 32nd Div; *Celebes* 57th IMB.

Philippines

14th Area Army – (A?) 61st IMB; *35th Army – Leyte & Mindanao* 1st, 16th, 26th, 30th, 100th & 102nd Divs, 54th, 55th? & 68th IMBs, 32nd NBF; *Luzon* 'Shobu' Group – 10th, 19th, 23rd & 103rd Divs, 2nd Armd Div, 58th & 79th IIBs; 'Kembu' Grp – 1st Raiding Grp, 39th? IR from 10th Div, 2nd Mobile IR; *41st Army* – 'Shimbu' Grp – 8th & 105th Divs, plus 31st Manila Naval Defence Force .

Central Pacific

31st Army – 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd & 53rd IMBs; *Bonin Is. (Iwo Jima)* 109th Div, 2nd IMB, 145th IR, 17th MIR, 26th Tk R, NGF, destroyed March 1945; *Marianas* 43rd Div, 1st & 3rd Yokosuka SNLF, 47th IMB, 55th NGU, destroyed Saipan, July 1944; 29th Div, 5th & part 135th IRs, destroyed Guam & Tinian respectively, Aug 1944; *Palau Is.* 14th Div, destroyed Oct 1944; *Truk, Caroline Is.* 52nd Div; *Kwajalein, Marshall Is.* 6th NBF, destroyed Feb 1944; *10th Area Army: 32nd Army, Ryuku Is. – Okinawa* 24th & 62nd Divs, 44th IMB, 'Ota' SNBF, 27th Tk R; *elsewhere* 28th, 45th, 59th, 60th & 64th IMBs (32nd Army destroyed by end June 45).

communications, transport, construction, ordnance, medical and other specialist services. Nevertheless, although only a partial 'snapshot' summary is possible in a work of this size, some basic notes at divisional, brigade and occasionally regimental level are included in the table above. They apply to deployments either at the time of Japan's defeat in September 1945; or at earlier dates when the formation was effectively destroyed in place. This material is drawn largely from the more detailed

Infantry sprint across an open field led by an officer with a drawn *shin-gunto* sword. All are in shirtsleeve order, the two privates wearing the usual 1932 steel helmet and the officer the later model cork sun helmet. All carry the minimum of equipment in action. (Author's collection)

tables published by Richard Fuller in his *Shokan – Hirohito's Samurai*; essentially a reference to the careers of Japan's wartime general officers and admirals, his book is also highly recommended for much valuable additional material.

SPECIAL UNITS

Military police – *Kempei-tai*

The Japanese Imperial Army's infamous *Kempei-tai* performed the same tasks as the military police of other nations; however, their additional responsibilities and powers were much more far-reaching. As well as performing the normal MP role of controlling and disciplining Japanese soldiers, they had been responsible, since their formation in 1881, for controlling the populations of occupied Asian territories. By 1937 they had expanded to 315 officers and some 6,000 men. As they took over the policing of the newly conquered territories from 1942 their strength increased to nearly 35,000 officers and men, of whom roughly 10,700 were stationed in Japan; 18,300 in Manchukuo, China and Korea; 480 in Indo-China, 1,100 in Malaya, 940 in Siam, 540 in Burma, 830 in the Philippines, 1,080 in the Dutch East Indies and Borneo, 745 in Formosa, and 90 in the Pacific islands.

Kempei-tai activities included the supervision of all Allied POWs and civilian internees, superseding the powers of local camp authorities. They were responsible for the sniffing out and elimination of all anti-Japanese activity and sentiment among local populations; for setting up spy networks; for issuing all travel permits; for requisitioning goods, and impressing labourers; and for supplying women for forced prostitution in military brothels. Responsible for anti-guerrilla operations and reprisals in China and throughout SE Asia, Kempei-tai units continued and extended the long-standing practice of recruiting local auxiliaries to assist them in these duties. (Local recruits were treated badly by their Japanese superiors, however, and could not rise above the rank of *so-cho*, sergeant-major.)

During 1942–45 the Kempei-tai were responsible for some (but by no means all) of the most bestial atrocities inflicted on civilian populations and Allied prisoners alike. They enjoyed considerable independent power (being authorised to arrest other Japanese personnel up to three ranks senior to themselves); at their hands extremes of torture and summary execution were commonplace. They were also involved in a number of straightforwardly criminal activities, including traffic in narcotics and forgery of currency. One of their more notorious crimes was their part in running the bacteriological warfare establishment Unit 731 (the 'Ishii Unit') at P'ingfang near Harbin in Manchukuo, where fatal experiments were routinely carried out on living prisoners.

Personnel were drawn from all branches of service. Graduates of the one-year officers' and six-month NCOs' wartime courses at Kempei-tai schools were ranked as *sa-kan*, 'field officers'; *kashi-kan*, non-commissioned officers; and *joto-hei*, superior privates. If required, more junior privates from other branches were attached for local duties. Kempei-tai units were small, and of three basic strengths. Each Area Army had a

Kempei-tai HQ under a major-general or colonel. Two or three 'field Kempei-tai' were attached to each Army; these each had an establishment of 22 *sa-kan* and 352 enlisted men, commanded by a lieutenant-colonel. These were divided into *buntai* or sections of 65 enlisted men commanded by a captain or lieutenant; and further into *bunkentai* or detachments, of 20 rankers under a second lieutenant or warrant officer.

The Japanese Imperial Navy had its own equivalent of the Kempei-tai known as the ***Tokei-tai***, responsible for performing the same roles, since the Navy was given the task of garrisoning many of the outlying conquests. The Tokei-tai had a lower profile than their Army counterparts but were no less brutal, and their treatment of the population of Borneo was particularly notorious. Tokei-tai units often operated alongside the Kempei-tai, and one 50-man unit was raised in Singapore to counter Communist guerrilla activity.

A posed shot of a couple of *Kempei-tai* military police officers aiming their Type 14 pistols for the camera – photographs of this secretive branch of the Army are rare. Both wear tropical uniform with field caps of varying shades. Unusually, they are not wearing the normal white identifying armband with two red *kanji* characters – see Plate A3. When displayed, the *Kempei-tai* branch of service colour was black. Like most Japanese officers they are wearing high brown leather boots; in the *Kempei-tai* these were usually of cavalry pattern.

Naval Landing Forces

The Japanese Navy had no marine corps as such, but members of ships' companies were chosen to act as landing parties when required. These parties were then combined into Naval Landing Forces or *Rikusentai* of about 2,000 men, usually comprising four companies, each with six rifle platoons. NLFs were first employed in large numbers during the fighting in Shanghai in 1932 and in various other actions on the Chinese mainland during the 1930s (see MAA 362). They were not normally up to Army standards of training, but they often provided badly needed manpower.

At the start of the Pacific War 'special' NLFs were formed for specific attack missions. One example of these task forces was the 1st Maizuru SNLF, with a strength of about 750, which took part in the capture of Wake Island. Some SNLFs were larger, some much smaller – the Bandasan SNLF which took part in the invasion of Davao had only 60 men, taken from the crews of the destroyer *Kuroshio* and the light cruiser *Jintsu*.

After the successful occupation of a Pacific island the NLF assigned to the operation was often given the task of garrisoning it in preparation for the expected Allied attacks. These forces were divided into different types of units with various tasks, from front-line combat to construction; the latter units were second-line troops whose main role was as labourers, but they were armed to act as combat troops in the event of an invasion. The types of Naval Landing Force were:

Tokubetsu Rikusentai Special Naval Landing Force	746 to 3,251 men.
Tokubetsu Konkyochitai Special Naval Base Force	1,000 to 3,000 men.
Konkyochitai Naval Base Force (or Unit)	1,000 to 3,000 men.
Keibitai Naval Guard Force (or Unit)	200 to 2,000 men.
Bobitai Naval Defence Unit	200 to 500 men.

As in the Japanese Army, the standard of SNLF personnel deteriorated during the course of the Pacific War. The units tasked with the defence of the various Pacific islands often had relatively poor

ABOVE **Naval troops man 13mm Type 93 dual-mounted heavy machine guns in a timber-lined emplacement on one of the Pacific islands; these proved effective all-purpose defence weapons, though the constant need to change magazines could slow down their operation in heavy combat. The men are wearing tropical uniform of lightweight cotton shirts and half-breeches; note the gunner's name tag above his right breast pocket, and the NLF anchor badge on his canvas helmet cover. (Robert Hunt Library)**

infantry training. However, in the defence role they were equipped, as available, with a wide variety of artillery and automatic weapons, and they often profited from the brilliance of Japanese field engineering. That they could perform heroically and effectively when well led was dramatically illustrated at Tarawa Atoll on 20–23 November 1943.

The defenders of Tarawa were 1,497 men of the 7th Sasebo SNLF and 1,100 men of the 3rd Special Base Force (the redesignated former 6th Yokosuka SNLF). Also present were 1,247 men of the 111th Construction Unit, and a detachment of 970 from the 4th Fleet Construction Department – these being mostly Korean labourers, of dubious combat value. Under the energetic leadership of Lt.Murakami, CO of the 111th, the Japanese and Koreans constructed many mutually supporting field fortifications all around the perimeter of Betio Island. Some were made of treetrunks and sand, with overhead cover up to seven feet thick; others were of reinforced concrete up to 16ins. thick. These defences were linked by and covered from open trenches and machine gun emplacements, and partially protected by wire, mines, log and concrete obstacles and anti-tank ditches. More than 50 guns of between 37mm and 205mm calibre, and about 30 single and dual 13mm heavy machine guns, were emplaced around the shoreline, apart from the normal infantry support weapons carried by the rifle companies. Seven Type 95 *Ha-Go* light tanks were dug into concealed positions. Most emplacements seem to have survived the US naval and air bombardment well, and the garrison resisted the landings by US 2nd Marine Div with ferocious determination for three and a half days. For less than one square mile of coral and sand, the Marines paid a price of 1,005 dead and missing and 2,296 wounded. Of the total garrison of 4,836 men just 136 were taken alive – and 129 of those were Koreans. This particularly bitter battle proved that at least some of the NLF units were capable of performing as well as the best of their Army comrades; and their fanatical devotion to their emperor's cause was proved by the fact that many committed suicide in their positions during the final stage of the fighting.

Throughout the rest of the Pacific War, Naval Landing Forces were to make up a sizeable proportion of Japanese island garrisons. On Saipan, paratroopers of the Yokosuka 1st and 3rd SNLFs were combined into a single unit which was destroyed fighting as conventional infantry. NLF troops – largely gun crews – were included in the garrison of Iwo Jima. Some 10,000 of them formed part of the Okinawa garrison, where the unit under the command of Rear-Adm.Ota fought particularly hard in defence of the Oroku Peninsula and inflicted 1,600 casualties on their attackers. As mentioned above (Chronology, Philippines), some 17,000 naval troops fought savagely in defence of Manila – and were responsible for many of the civilian casualties. As the Allies advanced across the Pacific they by-passed many of the smaller or less strategic islands, whose NLF garrisons eventually surrendered after the capitulation of Japan in August 1945.

Army and Navy paratroops

Both services developed their own airborne forces in the late 1930s, and the programme gained impetus after the high command was impressed by the German use of airborne troops during the Blitzkrieg campaign of 1940. By the end of 1941 Japan had some 14,000 trained airborne troops.

The main operation by the Army paratroopers took place during the invasion of the Dutch East Indies, at Palembang, Sumatra. On 14 February 1942, 425 men of 1st Parachute Raiding Regt were dropped over the airfield while the 2nd Regt landed around Palembang town, where there were important oil refineries.

The Navy's airborne troops – organised as part of the Naval Landing Forces – were in fact stronger than the Army units. The first unit was the Yokosuka 1st Special Naval Landing Force, raised in September 1941, with a strength of 520 men. This unit made a successful drop at Menado airfield on Celebes, DEI, on 11 January 1942 (see MAA 362, Plate F3). The Yokosuka 2nd SNLF, formed in October 1941 with 746 men, was never used in the airborne role. The Yokosuka 3rd SNLF, formed in November 1941 with 849 men, saw action during the invasion of Dutch West Timor on 20 February 1942, when 630 men were dropped over Usua. The mission against the Australian and Dutch defenders of the island was a success, but was achieved at a high cost: Japanese losses were 550 dead – 87 per cent.

Detail from a group photo of a unit of Navy paratroopers, possibly after the capture of Kupang in 1942. They are dressed for service as infantry and wear their steel jump helmets with standard NLF green field uniforms, their ranks displayed on navy blue cloth discs on the right sleeve. This date is probably too early for their weapon to be the Type 2 paratroop carbine, a 'take-down' version of the 7.7mm Type 99 'short' rifle; they seem to be armed with the latter. The machine gun is a Type 92. Note the paratroopers' special canvas bandoliers; and the rank patches – ordinary seaman (crossed red anchors), and able seaman (red anchors below yellow cherry blossom) – cf Chart 2 on page 38. (Tadao Nakata Collection)

In common with the airborne forces of the Allies and the other Axis powers, Japanese paratroopers suffered disproportionate losses in airborne operations; and it was decided that these losses in highly trained men, who could not easily be replaced, were too high a price to pay for the results achieved. Like Germany, Japan decided to employ them thereafter simply as elite light infantry. The naval paratroops saw service in defence of Pacific islands. As already mentioned, paratroopers of the Yokosuka 1st and 3rd SNLFs were combined into a single unit which was destroyed while fighting on Saipan in June–July 1944. A 1st Raiding Group formed from the first two regiments of the Army airborne brigade was sent to fight as infantry in the Philippines in December 1944. The Group had an integral Air Brigade – always short of aircraft; and four weak Raiding Regiments – *Teishin Rentai* – two of paratroops and two of glider infantry, with a total strength of 5,205 men. The airborne raiding regiment of 1944 had an HQ platoon (80 men) and signal platoon (30), three rifle companies (each 155) and a heavy weapons company (125 men). It was from this 1st Raiding Group that the *Giretsu-Kuteitai* or airborne commando units were formed for special attack missions.

Giretsu airborne commando units

From late 1944 Army paratroopers formed *Giretsu* commando units, whose main mission was attacking US airfields. The air superiority enjoyed by the US in most of the Pacific and Asian campaigns of 1944–45 was rightly felt to be decisive; but the idea that local raids could seriously

A Japanese acting corporal alights from a bus in Indonesia, while its female driver bows in the manner demanded by the occupying forces in Asia. He is wearing a khaki summer overshirt with his rank chevron just visible on the left sleeve, and his branch colour zig-zag chevron above the right breast pocket. Under the shirt he wears a plain white shirt whose opened collar obscures his collar rank patches. His trousers are the riding breeches type and are worn with what appears to be a deep cavalry pattern sword belt. (Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie)

alter the balance was obviously fanciful. Nevertheless, under th command of Lt.Gen.Kyoji Tominaga, these commando units were to b inserted onto target airfields either by parachute or by crash-landing transport aircraft or converted bombers. The first Giretsu operation, o the night of 6/7 December 1944, was undertaken by 750 men from th 1st Raiding Group who were flown – 13 men per plane – in Ki-3 transports assigned to land on various Philippine airfields, including tw targeted on Dulag and two on Tacloban, Leyte. These were essential suicide missions; they were ordered to destroy as many US aircraft possible and then defend their positions to the last man. Although a tot of 300 commandos were landed on one target, the rest of the aircra were shot down. The men who did manage to land put up a few hour stiff resistance before being killed without causing much real damage.

The most renowned operation of the Giretsu units took place on th night of 24/25 May 1945, when nine Mitsubishi Ki-21 bombers took off attack Yontan airfield on Okinawa, each plane carrying 14 commando Although four aircraft were shot down the other five managed crash-land on the airfield. During the attack the Giretsu raiders – arme with sub-machine guns, phosphorus grenades and explosive charges managed to destroy 70,000 gallons of aviation fuel, wrecked nine U aircraft and damaged 26 others.

A massive attack against B-29 bases on Saipan, Tinian and Guam i the Marianas was planned for 9 August 1945, involving 200 transpor carrying 2,000 Giretsu commandos, but this was cancelled when th aircraft assembled for the mission were destroyed on the ground.

FOREIGN AUXILIARIES

Takasago Raiding Companies

Japanese society was deeply racist, and all *gaijin* or foreigners wer regarded as intrinsically inferior to even the lowliest Japanese. Th Imperial Army was loath to employ Japan's subject peoples; but on

Capt.Okuyama of the Army Air Force greets a group of *Giretsu* assault commandos at Kumatomo airfield, where they are about to embark for a suicide mission. The commandos' uniforms have self-applied painted camouflage patches – cf Plate G2. The canvas holster fitted to the right hip of the special Type 2 bandolier equipment can be seen at left. A high proportion of these units carried Type 100 sub-machine guns. A unique short jacket with extra pockets on the upper arms and on the front was also seen worn by the *Giretsu*. (Mainichi Newspaper Company)

exception was the formation of raiding units from amongst the Takasago, an aboriginal highland tribe on Formosa who were noted for their fieldcraft skills. Takasago tribesmen were enlisted into 1st and 2nd Raiding Companies under Japanese cadres, and were trained in guerrilla warfare at the Nakano military school. After training the 2nd Co was sent to Morotai Island off New Guinea to act as jungle trackers and guides and to pursue guerrilla tactics. The 1st Co was stationed on the Philippine island of Luzon *en route* for New Guinea when US forces landed on Leyte in October 1944. For once US air superiority over the battlefield was not a foregone conclusion: operations were badly hampered by the monsoon rains and the soft terrain of most airstrips, and Japanese squadrons from the other Philippine islands contended control of the skies with determination. The Japanese command decided to use the 1st Raiding Co to attack Brauen airfield, the main American air base. The plan was for this 'Kaoru Unit' to be crash-landed onto the airfield and for the commandos to destroy as many US planes as possible. In the event the mission went badly and only a few aircraft were blown up; the Takasago raiders were either killed on the spot or disappeared into the jungle, never to return.

Koreans in Japanese service

Korea had been a Japanese dependency since 1910 when its people became subjects of the Empire. Predictably, Koreans were regarded by the Japanese with open racial contempt, and there was a reluctance to employ them in any military role. By 1942, however, the manpower shortages which the Imperial armed forces were beginning to face led to a reconsideration; some 200,000 Koreans were examined by Japanese conscription boards, and about 130,000 were drafted. Most Koreans were used strictly in support and construction roles and were usually employed in labour units preparing defences or airfields on the Pacific islands. These Koreans served mainly in *Kaigun Kenchiku Shisetsu Butai* – Navy Civil Engineering & Construction Units – of 1,000 men, commanded by a Japanese officer with about 100 armed Japanese overseers.

Other Koreans were also employed on the Japanese mainland in supporting roles which freed Japanese recruits for combat service. They were regarded by the Japanese as workers rather than soldiers, and were seldom issued with rifles. As the manpower shortage became acute, however, some small units of Koreans did fight alongside the Japanese Army during the later stages of the war in New Guinea and Burma.

Distinct from these labourers were the Korean *Gunzoku* – 'militarised civilians' who served in the Japanese armed forces in support roles and wore their own uniforms and insignia. Although Japanese civilians were usually ready to volunteer for this kind of service, Koreans had to be conscripted. The total number of Koreans conscripted into the Gunzoku during the war was 150,000, of whom some 80,000 served in the Navy and 70,000 in the Army.

Before conscription of Koreans began a small number had volunteered to serve the Japanese, and from these approximately 3,000 served as guards at Allied prisoner-of-war camps. These Korean auxiliaries were given extremely low status by their Japanese masters and were brutally treated – even by the harsh standards endured by all Japanese soldiers. In their turn they earned a reputation among Allied POWs for being particularly brutal and cruel. Camp guards were regarded

Men of the Formosan Takasago Raiding Companies pose for the propaganda cameras, wielding their traditional tribal weapon – the *giyuto* or 'loyalty and courage sword'. They wear fatigue overalls in lieu of proper tropical uniform, with the standard 1932 steel helmet. On their chests they wear canvas haversacks for grenades and explosive charges to blow up Allied aircraft – cf Plate G3. (Mainichi Newspaper Company)

Korean guards from an Allied prisoner-of-war camp pose in a studio in the Japanese-occupied Dutch East Indies. They are unusually well turned out, in summer shirts with tropical breeches and field caps; two have the collars of white cotton undershirts folded outside in the Japanese fashion. Above the left breast pockets they wear their name tabs, and on their left shoulders the red-on-white insignia of *kanshi-hei* – the lowly basic rank for *Gunzoko* camp guards – cf Plate A1. (Utsumi Aiko, Chiba)

as beneath the level of the lowest ranking Japanese soldier, and units of Koreans could be commanded by NCOs; e.g. at one camp a Korean unit of 30 guards was commanded by a Japanese lance-corporal.

MANCHURIA & JAPAN, 1945

The Kwangtung Army

The Kwangtung Army which faced the Soviet invasion of Manchukuo in August 1945 was a shadow of its former self. Most of its better units and heavy equipment had been moved to the Pacific theatre. From February 1944 the Kwangtung Army had seen 12 of its divisions transferred, including its 2nd Armd Div which was sent to the Philippines. Two other divisions were transferred to Formosa and Central China respectively. At the same time most of the Kwangtung Army's airpower was transferred to the Philippines.

On paper the Kwangtung Army was still fairly impressive, with over 700,000 men on strength, but any closer examination revealed its many weaknesses. Reinforcements for this theatre were made up of relatively elderly or physically sub-standard men previously deemed unsuitable for military service. Others came from the civil service, or were young students, or older colonists who had settled in Manchukuo after their previous military service. One telling statistic was the fact that 25 per cent of the men who faced the Soviet invasion had been conscripted in the previous ten days! These units, full of poor human material and with little equipment, were of no real combat value and would only be able to offer token resistance. Out of a 'paper' force of 24 divisions the actual strength of the Kwangtung Army in August 1945 was equivalent to about eight divisions. Morale was at an all-time low; the new recruits called themselves *nikudan* – 'human bullets'; *gisei-butai* – 'victim units'; 'Manchurian orphans', and 'the pulverised ones'.

Preparations for the invasion of Japan, 1945–46

The planned Allied invasion of the southern Japanese island of Kyushu, code-named 'Olympic', was scheduled for November 1945. This was only to be followed by 'Cornet', a landing on Honshu, on 1 March 1946. Involving more than 3,000 ships, this would be one of the largest amphibious operations in history. US forces earmarked for 'Olympic' included the 6th Army made up of three Marine, one armoured and nine infantry divisions. US Army strategists estimated that the invasion of both Kyushu and Honshu – collectively, Operation 'Downfall' – would cost at least 250,000 casualties; the Japanese could be counted upon to defend their homeland with suicidal fanaticism.

Operation *Ketsu-Go* – 'Decision' – was to encompass the whole nation

With the motto 'One Hundred Million Will Die for Emperor and Nation' as their rallying cry, the men and women of Japan were to prepare themselves to fight to the last. They were saturated with propaganda promising them the most barbaric treatment at the hands of the Americans if they were captured alive, and were encouraged to die usefully instead, becoming guardian spirits to be worshipped at the national shrine. The grip of such propaganda on the Japanese mind had already been proved in the most tragic fashion on Saipan and Okinawa.

The forces raised to defend the home islands were certainly impressive in sheer numbers. There were approximately 2,350,000 officers and men of the regular Army and Army Air Force in Japan, including the following formations: 53 infantry divisions, 25 infantry brigades, 2 divisions and 7 brigades of armour. The emphasis on anti-aircraft defence was indicated by another four divisions of AA troops; and expected internal security problems led to an expansion of the military police to 20,000 men. In addition to the regular Army there were 2,250,000 Army Labour Troops, 1,300,000 Navy Labour Troops, and a 250,000-strong Special Garrison Force.

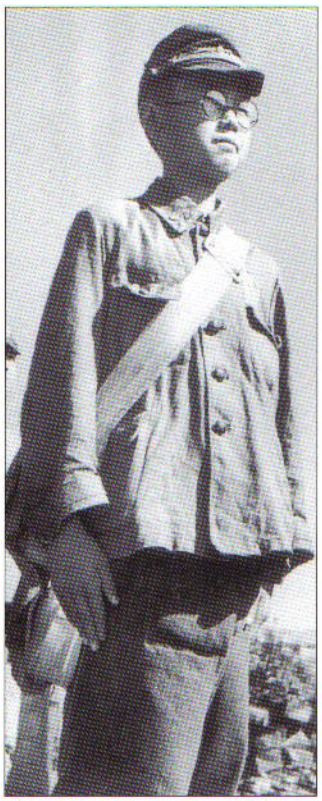
These monstrous numbers did not tell the whole story, however. Weapons were in very short supply; as the war drew to a close under skies filled with US bombers, very few new rifles were coming off the production lines. The available weapons were rationed: there was only one rifle for every ten new soldiers conscripted, and these were given to the most experienced reservists. Most new conscripts were put on labour duties while they waited vainly for weapons. Japanese strategic planners hoped that if weapon production could be kept up, enough rifles, machine guns and artillery would be available to equip the new draftees by February 1946.

1944–45: an Army NCO drills a group of female defence volunteers with sharpened bamboo spears, in preparation for the expected Allied invasion. He is dressed in basic 1938 uniform with brown leather ankle boots and high leggings. His only visible weapon is an aluminium-hilted 1935 pattern NCOs' *shin-gunto* sword (note the buttoned jacket tab supporting it), although he may have a pistol holster on his right hip. (J.Jackson Collection)

Plans were put in place to continue resistance after an Allied invasion, with Tokyo to be defended to the last man. The Imperial Palace was at the centre of a defensive system to the west of the city. In June 1945 a Tokyo Defence Army was established to provide the garrison of the capital. A site was chosen for a Provisional Imperial Palace in Nagano city, from where it was planned that the emperor would lead further resistance. Although no work was begun on this project, a huge underground Imperial Army General Headquarters was under construction in the Matsushiro Caves on Honshu, with six miles of tunnels dug before the end of the war. Many of the Japanese plans were to remain purely theoretical, due to the almost complete breakdown of the logistic system throughout the devastated country.

The militia

Besides the regular Army units there was mass conscription of all able-bodied civilians, who were formed into various militia units with a



1945: Child 'volunteers' would have been urged to throw themselves into battle as part of the defending forces in the event of an Allied invasion of the home islands. This boy wears threadbare para-military uniform including the ubiquitous field cap with a winged badge of some sort; and note he has another badge and two bars pinned to his collar. The canvas haversack might contain the 'Molotov cocktails' which would probably be the only weapons available. (Imperial War Museum NYF77630)

total strength on paper of 28,000,000 men and women. There were three basic levels of militia:

Special Guard Forces – made up of men with previous service in the regular armed forces, which were attached to regular units to perform labour and other support roles. In the event of invasion they would have had to fight with whatever weapons they could lay their hands on.

Independent Companies – drawn from the reserve list, these again were basically labour forces which would be expected to fight as combat troops when the invasion came.

Civilian Volunteer Corps – basically a mobilisation of the whole adult population, of men between 15 and 60 years of age and women bettween 17 and 40 years. They were to perform any task required by the government, including acting as a sort of 'land army' to produce crops. Again, when the Allied invasion came they would be thrown into battle with whatever weapons they could find or improvise.

It has been argued, in rebuttal of post-war critics of the US use of the atomic bomb in 1945, that the number of civilian deaths which resulted from their use would have been multiplied several times over among the US and British Commonwealth soldiers, marines, sailors and airmen who would have been killed and maimed had they been forced to invade the home islands – and, indeed, among a Japanese civilian population galvanised into a suicidal resistance. One might add that the murder of all surviving Allied prisoners of war had been ordered, and was in some cases carried out. In view of what actually happened on Okinawa and elsewhere, this argument has obvious force.

UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT, 1942–45

Tropical uniforms

The Imperial Army was to fight most of its campaigns in tropical climates, and a lightweight tropical uniform was developed during the 1930s. While the 1930 (Type 90) uniform simply had a lightweight summer version, the summer version of the 1938 (Type 98) uniform was developed into a specifically tropical uniform.

This consisted of a cotton tunic worn with various types of trousers and shorts, and a lightweight version of the field cap. Tropical tunics had an open collar, two breast and two waist pockets; breast pockets might be either concealed or visible, but the flaps were always external and fastened with wooden or plastic buttons. There were five front buttons, the top one usually being left unfastened with the collar folded open. In either flank of the tunic there was a ventilation flap which allowed air to circulate; when closed this flap fastened with a small button, and resembled a vertical pocket. Rank insignia in the form of cloth bars were worn on the upper collar of the tunic; although initially of the same dimensions as those on the wool Type 98 winter tunic they were often reduced in size as the war progressed.

Tropical shirts were made of lightweight cotton and were loose-fitting to allow air circulation. These too often had a ventilation slit in either side, fastened with a small button. Rank insignia were normally worn on the collar, but sometimes these were replaced by one rank bar above the left breast pocket or on the left sleeve.

OCCUPATION FORCES

1: Korean guard, Allied POW camp; Surabaya, DEI, 1943

2: Captain, veterinary unit, 54th Inf Div; Burma, 1943

3: Warrant Officer, Kempei-tai; Malaya, 1942

SOLOMONS & NEW GUINEA, 1942–43

1: Superior Private, 20th Inf Div; New Guinea, 1943

2: Private 2nd Class, 2nd Inf Div; Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, 1942

3: Sniper, 124th Inf Regt; Guadalcanal, 1942

CHINA, 1942–44

1: Captain, 63rd Inf Div, 1944

2: Sergeant, cavalry, 110th Inf Div, 1944

3: Private 2nd Class, 40th Inf Div, 1942

BURMA & CHINA, 1944–45

1: Major-General, 33rd Army; Irrawaddy battles, Burma, January 1945

2: Captain, 55th Inf Div; Arakan, Burma, February 1944

3: Superior Private, infantry, China Expeditionary Army; Yellow River, April 1944

PACIFIC ISLANDS, 1943–44

1: Private 2nd Class, 91st Inf Div; Kurile Islands, summer 1944

2: Major, 38th Independent Mixed Bde; Bougainville, Solomon Islands, 1943

3: Acting Leading Seaman, 7th Sasebo SNLF; Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands, autumn 1943

PHILIPPINES & BURMA, 1944–45

1: Sergeant, tank crewman, 2nd Armd Div; Luzon, Philippines, January 1945

2: 2nd Lieutenant, 54th Inf Div; Sittang River, Burma, July 1945

3: Private 1st Class, 10th Inf Div; Luzon, January 1945

PACIFIC DEFENCE, 1944–45

1: Private 2nd Class, 109th Inf Div; Iwo Jima, February 1945

2: Corporal, *Giretsu* unit; Okinawa, May 1945

3: Private 1st Class, 1st Takasago Raiding Co; Leyte, Philippines, November 1944

DEFENCE OF JAPAN, 1945

1: Sergeant, 1st Imperial Guards Division, Tokyo Defence Army

2: Cadet volunteer, Field Artillery School, Chiba

3: Superior Private, 155th Infantry Division

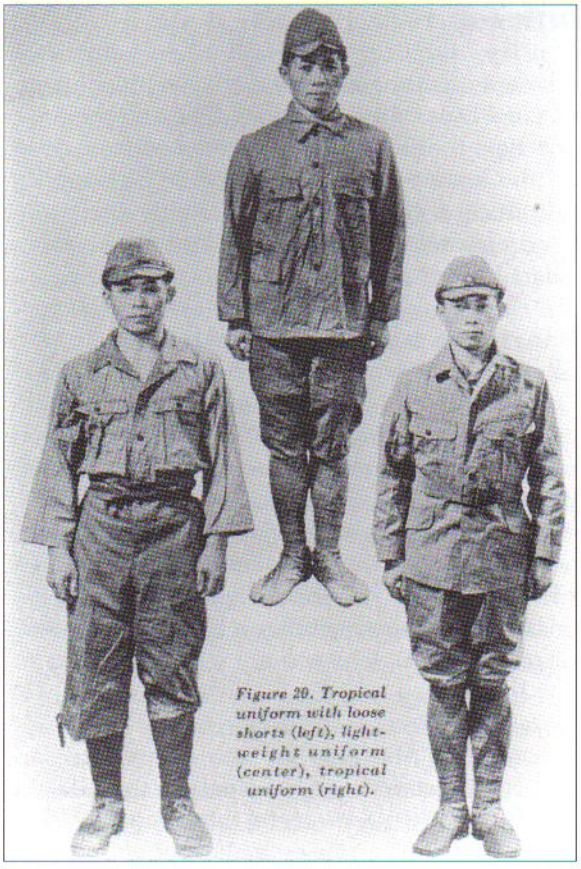


Figure 20. Tropical uniform with loose shorts (left), lightweight uniform (center), tropical uniform (right).

In posed studio shots taken from the US Army *Handbook* we see three different combinations of the tropical uniform (left to right): tropical shirt, and half-breeches left untucked from puttees (sometimes called 'long shorts'); tropical shirt worn loose, half-breeches confined by puttees, with *tabi* shoes; and tropical tunic, shirt, and half-breeches with puttees. What the individual wore often depended on what the overstretched commissariat department could supply. (US National Archives)

Trousers worn with the tropical uniform were either a lightweight version of the standard half-breeches or a pair of shorts. Although most soldiers wore their breeches laced closed at the lower leg and tucked into the puttees, they also wore them loose. When breeches were worn loose they were often described as 'long shorts', and were worn with a pair of medium-length socks. True shorts were usually of a standard length, reaching to just above the knee; they too were made in various shades of cotton.

Headgear was usually a lightweight cotton version of the standard field cap, which consequently often had a crumpled appearance. Leather chinstraps were often of low quality or were replaced by cloth straps due to wartime shortages. The cap was commonly worn with the four-flap sun curtain attached.

Footwear was either the standard brown pigskin ankle boots, the light black canvas and rubber *tabi*, or sandals. Out of the front line the Japanese soldier wore whatever footwear was most comfortable; in the front line or on the march the leather boots were necessarily used.

The colour of the tropical uniform was officially a khaki drill, but due to various factors it varied greatly in practice, in a range of shades from light sand khaki to dark jungle green. Variations in design and colour were usually the result of shortages of central supplies. As the widely dispersed garrisons became isolated they often had to rely on local suppliers, accepting whatever qualities and colours of material were available.

Officers' tropical uniforms

These consisted of a tropical tunic, shirt, and breeches worn with either officers' shoes and puttees or high leather boots. The tunic was essentially the same as the Type 98 winter model but made of a much lighter material. It was worn open at the neck, with four visible front buttons made of green or brown plastic. Rank bars were normally worn on the smaller lower lapels and were usually of slightly reduced dimensions. Underneath the tunic a white cotton shirt was worn with the collar folded open outside the tunic collar (thus the lower placing of the rank bars). Officers' breeches were made of the same lightweight material.

In the field officers usually wore shirtsleeve order, with their rank generally displayed on the collar of a khaki shirt. On active service they often wore half-breeches with puttees and officers' versions of the enlisted men's ankle boots. As with the enlisted ranks, officers' uniforms varied in colour but the favourite shade was a green-khaki. Officers bought their own uniforms and were often able to have new ones made up locally wherever they were stationed; consequently they were able to maintain a smarter appearance than the lower ranks.

Philippines, 1942: a group of happy Japanese officers pose for a photograph in front of a memorial in occupied Manila. All are wearing tropical shirts with collar ranking, the man on the left over a white undershirt. They display name tabs above the left breast pocket. Two officers at the front wear brown leather leggings, which suggests that they may be from a mounted unit – or perhaps even a *Kempei-tai* detachment? (Author's collection)

Officers' 1943 (Type 3) tunic[1]

Japanese uniform remained largely unaltered throughout the war apart from the changes dictated by wartime shortages. One exception was the Type 3 officers' tunic introduced from 1943. Of the same design as the Type 98, this saw the introduction of new cuff rank insignia which were worn concurrently with the collar rank bars (see Chart 1, page 37).

Shortages and improvisation

All uniforms deteriorate quickly in the humid atmosphere of a tropical jungle, which has the effect of rotting the cloth. If Japanese units were not regularly supplied with new uniforms – and this became ever less common as the war progressed – then they ended up dressed in rags. One unit in New Guinea returned from an operation dressed in rice sacks after their uniforms had rotted away. The Japanese made up for some shortages by wearing captured Allied items; this would of course have been limited by the small stature of the average Japanese soldier, who was not usually much more than 5ft.3ins. tall.

Garrisons whose supply lines were increasingly cut by the Allied offensives soon found themselves short of all new equipment and uniforms, and the worst affected were those stationed on the far-flung islands of the Pacific. Almost from the moment these outposts were established they were essentially cut off, and soon had to depend on local resources. Shirts and shorts would be made from any available material, and field caps were often made out of woven grass. The units in New Guinea from early 1943, and some in Burma during 1944–45, also suffered chronic shortages of all necessities.

Even for troops whose lines of supply to central sources were still intact, from 1942 a range of substitute materials were used for the manufacture of personal equipment. Leather was in particularly short supply, and various types of rubberised fabric were used to make belts and pouches from the beginning of the war. (Given the damaging effects of humidity on leather, these materials were actually more practical.)

Jungle equipment

The Japanese soldier was at first well supplied with special jungle protection gear, equipment and medicines. A soldier's kit included a water purification set, mosquito head net, gloves and insect repellent. The water purifier was a piece of tube which sucked contaminated water through a filter into the soldier's canteen; the accompanying phials of chemicals could be used to purify larger amounts of water in a hurry. Mosquito head nets and gloves were essential in swamp-jungle conditions; the gloves were made of lightweight material and had slits in the palms to allow the wearer to fire his rifle. Needless to say, this special equipment tended to vanish from the front lines as the war progressed and the

1 Until 1941 the model numbering system followed the last two digits of the year according to the traditional Japanese calendar: i.e. AD 1938 was the Japanese year 2598 and its products were 'Type 98'. From 1941, year 2601, a new system adopted the final digit only: i.e. the 1943 tunic was 'Type 3'.

logistic system increasingly failed to provide the troops even with basic necessities such as food and medical supplies; Japanese troops suffered very badly from the full range of tropical diseases, for which they received a low level of care.

Swords

Early pattern Army *shin-gunto* swords dating from 1934 were to remain in service until the end of the war, but a few new models were introduced. The 1945 NCOs' *shin-gunto* reflected wartime shortages of materials and in particular of aluminium; it was a utility version of the former model with factory-produced steel blades and wooden grips. This model seems to have been issued to troops on the Japanese home islands and was part of the last-ditch preparations for its defence. Economy versions of the officers' *shin-gunto* were also introduced in both 1944 and 1945; basically unchanged, their main difference appears to have lain in having iron mountings.

Kempei-tai uniforms

Kempei-tai *sa-kan* usually wore standard Type 98 officers' uniform in either winter or tropical versions depending on location. Originally they had worn the uniform of the cavalry, with riding breeches and high black leather riding boots. One item common to all types of dress was a white or light khaki cotton armband with the Japanese characters for *ken* ('law') and *hei* ('soldier') in red – see Plate A3. On the collar of the Type 98 tunic Kempei-tai officers sometimes wore a small gold metal eight-pointed sunburst emblem behind the rank; this *hakkou* comprised a 32-rayed sun with eight long and 24 short rays.

Native auxiliaries or *Kempei-cho* recruited in occupied Asia wore the basic tropical uniform with shorts. Those raised in the former Dutch East Indies had their own distinctive armbands; these bore the usual *kanji* characters for Kempei-tai with the addition of the letters 'MP' below them for 'military police' in Dutch.

Uniforms of Naval Landing Forces

The special landing uniforms worn by the NLFs from the early 1930s were made of a 'sea green'-coloured cotton material, in three basic types for officers, petty officers and ratings. The basic uniform consisted of the NLF version of the field cap, open-collared tunic, half-breeches, puttees and 'landing shoes' – ankle boots. Steel helmets worn from the mid-1930s were of the 1932 pattern, fastened with a special naval system of tapes, and painted olive green; embossed on the front was an anchor, the design of which altered slightly in 1942. Canvas covers were often worn over helmets, with cloth yellow anchor badges sewn to the front. Field caps also displayed the yellow anchor badge stitched to an oval piece of green cloth. Cork sun helmets covered in the same 'sea green' material as the tunic were also worn by NLF officers, with a brass anchor badge.

The 1933 **officers' tunic** was open-collared, with two pleated breast pockets and two waist pockets, four brass front buttons, and rank displayed on shoulder boards (see Chart 3, page 41). When the 1935 and 1937 model tunics were introduced there was very little change, but they

A young second lieutenant photographed with his family while home on leave, wearing the Type 3 (1943) officers' uniform – note the brown braid ring, and embroidered gold star on a brown disc, on his tunic cuffs. He belongs to the 48th Inf Regt, as indicated by the small Arabic numerals behind the rank patches on his collar. This regiment came from Fukuoka and served with the 12th (Kurume) Inf Div; in 1945 this formation was on Formosa as part of 10th Area Army. Interestingly, the single gold star on the collar patches is worn towards the front instead of in the usual central position. (Ryuta Chino Collection)

were now worn with a green cotton shirt and black necktie (some sources show the 1933 tunic worn with a bow tie). The introduction of the 1940 pattern tunic saw the rank insignia move from the shoulder boards to the upper collar; later manufacture examples had smaller rank bars attached on the lower lapels. The 1940 tunic also had a deep cloth false belt at the rear.

Trousers worn with all four versions of the officers' uniform were of a pantaloon or half-breeches type which fastened around the lower leg with seven small buttons; these were normally covered by high black leather gaiters worn over a pair of black officers' 'landing shoes'. High black leather boots were also used.

Petty officers wore a similar jacket to the officers' pattern, and the same alterations may be traced throughout the 1930s. The 1933 model had shoulder boards, but rank was displayed on the right sleeve, on a circular black (very dark blue) cloth badge with gold-embroidered crossed anchors. The 1933 pattern had a single collar, but the 1935 and later models saw the introduction of conventional lapels. The 1937 model still displayed the rank on the right sleeve, but now with the addition of brass metal anchors to the shoulder boards. When the 1940 tunic was introduced the shoulder boards disappeared and the metal anchor badges were moved to the collar or lapel; and from November 1942 new right sleeve patches were introduced. Shirts worn under the petty officers' tunic were either the white ratings' vest with black tape around the square neck (1933 & 1935 patterns), or the buttoned shirt with collar (1937 & 1940 patterns). Petty officers' half-breeches were worn with green woollen puttees and brown leather ankle boots.

Both the 1933 and 1935 jackets for **enlisted men** were short and fastened at the waist, on the earlier version by a button and on the later by cloth tapes. The 1937 and 1940 tunics were of standard length, with two breast and two waist pockets, and rank was again displayed on the right sleeve. Shirts worn under the 1933, 1935 and 1937 tunics were the naval ratings' white cotton vest with black tape around the neck. A standard button-collar cotton shirt in green or light tan was normally worn with the 1940 tunic. Trousers worn with the 1933 and 1935 jackets were of straight-legged 'overall' type with two small pockets on the back; they fastened at the lower leg with tapes, and were tucked into green woollen puttees. Pattern 1937 and 1940 uniform trousers were of the standard half-breeches type, again worn with woollen puttees and brown leather boots.

Tropical uniform consisted of a shirt, shorts and field cap in various shades of khaki or green. Uniform colour varied from the original 'sea green' to olive green but, as with Army uniforms, it is hard to describe a standard colour. By the last years of the war very few of the original 'sea green' garments survived. The new systems of rank insignia introduced in 1940 and 1942 were worn by officers on the lapels of their tunics or shirts, and by petty officers and ratings on their right sleeves.

When going into action NLF troops wore standard Army issue brown leather belt and pouch equipment, but there was also a brown canvas bandolier with 16 pockets for rifle charger clips. Field equipment usually consisted of a knapsack, haversack and water bottle; the bags and the canvas cover of the water bottle were officially made of a bluish-khaki colour instead of the greenish Army shade, but later in the war the NLF received standard Army issue.

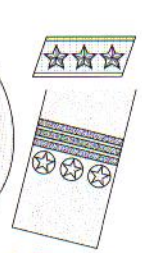
OPPOSITE **In this photograph a bicycle-riding and still remarkably cheerful soldier in Burma shows how ragged many of the emperor's men had become by the latter stages of the war. With little or nothing in the way of supplies arriving at the front, the ordinary soldier usually had to repair his own uniform. This man is wearing a barely recognisable cork sun helmet which has taken on the shape of a bush hat, but retains its brass star badge. His tropical shirt is in rags. (Robert Hunt Library)**

Chart 1: Imperial Army rank insignia, 1938–45

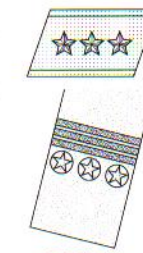
Officers & warrant officers class 1 wore rhomboid-shaped collar patches, of two models introduced 31.5.1938 (18mm x 40mm) and 12.10.1943 (generals, 39mm x 45mm; others, 25mm x40mm); rank stars were symmetrically placed. Enlisted ranks wore rectangular 18mm x 40mm patches 1938–45; stars were added asymmetrically from the front of the collar. From 1941 some patches had an additional bottom stripe in branch-of-service colours (see MAA 362, p.23). From 1943, officers additionally wore cuff ranking, where obtainable and practical.

Sho-kan – general officers **(1–4):** Gold braid patch, gold metal inner & red cloth outer edging; three to one silver metal stars. Three brown braid cuff rings; three to one gold braid stars.
(1) Coloured enamel right breast badge.
Sa-kan – field officers **(5–7):** Red cloth patches, gold metal edging; two medium width gold braid stripes; three to one silver metal stars. Two brown braid cuff rings; three to one gold braid stars.
I-kan – subaltern officers **(8–10),** & *Junshi-kan* – WO 1s **(11):**
Red cloth patches, gold metal edging; one medium gold braid stripe; three to one, or no (11), silver metal stars. One brown braid cuff ring, three to one, or no (11), gold braid stars.
Kashi-kan – NCOs **(12–15):** Red cloth patches; one medium yellow cloth stripe; three to one, or no (15), silver metal stars.
Hei – men **(16–20):** Red cloth patches; three to one gold metal stars. Red and yellow (16), and red, edged white (18) upper sleeve chevron.
NB Dates in captions below refer to collar patches only.

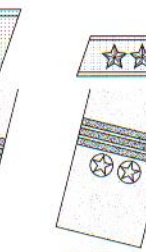
1. *Gen-sui* (Field Marshal) 1938



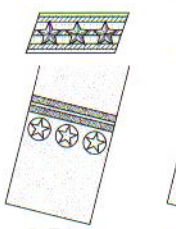
2. *Tai-sho* (General) 1943



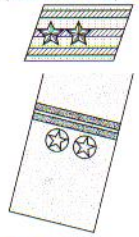
3. *Chu-jo* (Lieut.Gen.) 1938



4. *Sho-sho* (Maj.Gen.) 1943

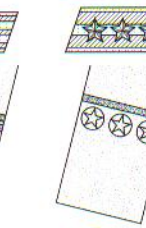


5. *Tai-sa* (Colonel) 1938



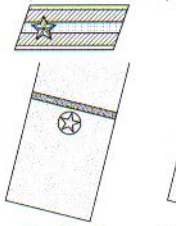
6. *Chu-sa* (Lieut.Col.) 1943

7. *Sho-sa* (Major) 1938



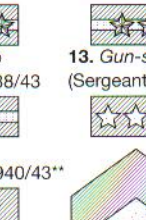
8. *Tai-i* (Captain) 1943

9. *Chu-i* (Lieutenant) 1938



10. *Sho-i* (2nd Lieut.) 1943

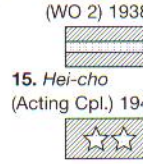
11. *Jun-i* (WO 1) 1938*



12. *So-cho* (WO 2) 1938/43

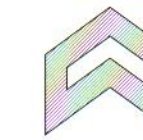
13. *Gun-so* (Sergeant) 1938

14. *Go-cho* (Corporal) 1943



15. *Hei-cho* (Acting Cpl.) 1940/43**

17. *Joto-hei* (Superior Private) 1938/43



18. *Joto-hei kimmu sha* (Acting Sup.Pte) 1938***

16. *Go-cho kimmu joto-hei* (Acting Cpl.) 1938***

19. *Itto-hei* (Pte.1st Class, trained) 1943

20. *Nito-hei* (Pte. 2nd Class, recruit) 1938

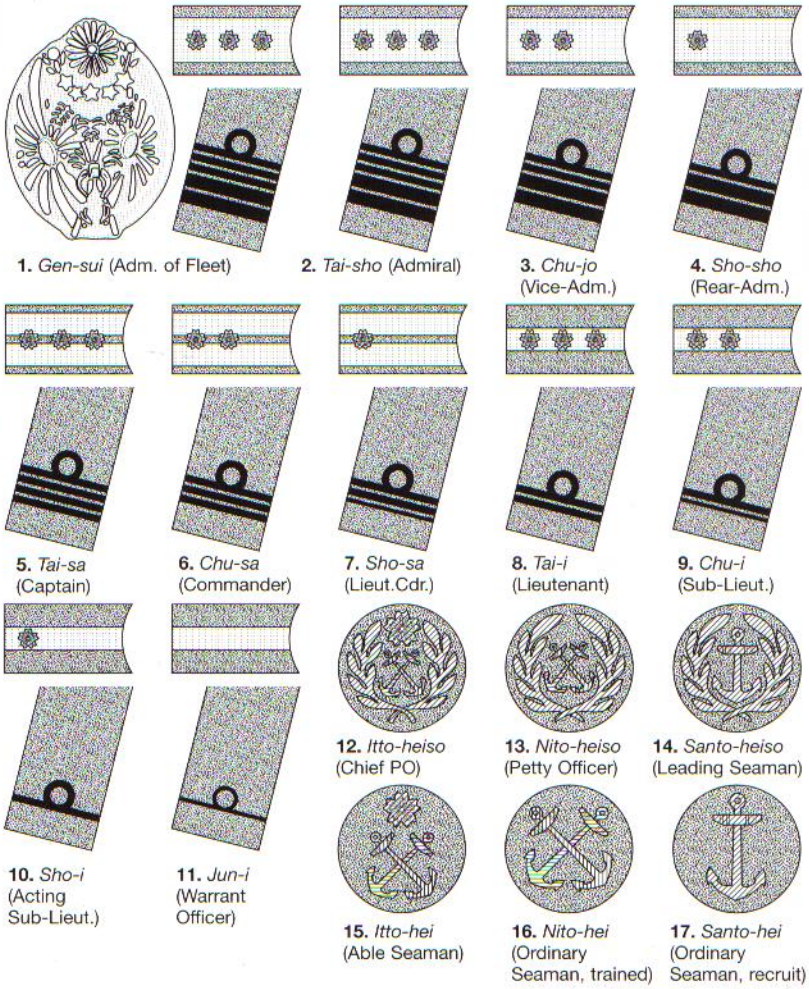
Notes:
* = Before 15.9.40 – *Toku-mu so-cho*
** = Introduced 15.9.40
*** = Abolished 15.9.40

Chart 2: Imperial Navy officers' collar & cuff rank insignia, 1931–45; petty officers' & seamen's sleeve rank insignia, 1931–42

The same rank titles were used as in the Army, but prefixed by *Kaigun* (Navy) as opposed to *Rikugun* (Army). Officers and warrant officers wore collar patches and black braid cuff rings, with a 'curl' in the upper ring, on their blue service tunics and landing uniforms until 1933; and collar patches on their 1940 pattern green field tunics until 1945.

Petty officers and seamen of Naval Landing Forces wore rank patches on the upper right sleeve of their green pattern 1933 shirt and 1937 & 1940 field tunics. The design of these changed from November 1942.

Sho-kan – flag officers **(1–4):** Dark blue patch, wide gold braid; three to one silver metal cherry blossoms. Two wide and three to one medium black cuff rings. (1) Enamelled right breast badge.
Sa-kan – senior officers **(5–7):** Dark blue patch with two medium gold braids; three to one silver metal blossoms. Four to three medium, two medium plus one narrow black cuff rings.
I-kan – junior officers **(8–10),** and *Junshi-kan* (warrant officers) **(11):** Dark blue patch with one medium gold braid; three to one, and no (11), silver metal blossoms. Two medium, one medium plus one narrow, one medium, and one narrow black cuff rings.
Kashi-kan – petty officers **(12–14):** Red braid blossom, branch badge (here anchors = seamen's branch) and wreaths on dark blue disc.
Hei – seamen **(15–17):** Red braid blossom and branch badge on dark blue disc.



1. *Gen-sui* (Adm. of Fleet)
2. *Tai-sho* (Admiral)
3. *Chu-jo* (Vice-Adm.)
4. *Sho-sho* (Rear-Adm.)
5. *Tai-sa* (Captain)
6. *Chu-sa* (Commander)
7. *Sho-sa* (Lieut.Cdr.)
8. *Tai-i* (Lieutenant)
9. *Chu-i* (Sub-Lieut.)
10. *Sho-i* (Acting Sub-Lieut.)
11. *Jun-i* (Warrant Officer)
12. *Itto-heiso* (Chief PO)
13. *Nito-heiso* (Petty Officer)
14. *Santo-heiso* (Leading Seaman)
15. *Itto-hei* (Able Seaman)
16. *Nito-hei* (Ordinary Seaman, trained)
17. *Santo-hei* (Ordinary Seaman, recruit)

OPPOSITE **A Naval Landing Force machine gun squad photographed on the beach of the tiny Pacific island of Nauru, whose 3,700-man garrison surrendered to US forces on 14 September 1945. They appear to be wearing the later Army-style SNLF jacket in khaki cloth which had hidden waist pockets; the colour of NLF clothing in the later war period varied from the original 'sea green' to olive khaki. On the front of three of the field caps the later embroidered yellow anchor badge can be seen. The men are armed with Arisaka rifles and a Type 96 LMG with a Type 30 bayonet fixed; their belt equipment shows a mixture of leather and (left) rubberised fabric. (Mainichi Newspaper Company)**

OPPOSITE **Many Japanese garrisons were allowed to continue to bear arms after their official surrender, since they were the only organisation available to keep public order until relieved – sometimes many weeks later – by the Allied forces. This patrol of NLF personnel, armed only with wooden staves, are acting as a police force under Allied supervision. They are dressed in various shades of tropical uniform; the anchor badge on the field caps and the November 1942 rank patches on the right sleeves are clearly visible – see Chart 3. (US National Archives)**

Uniforms of Army paratroops

The Army paratrooper had a number of special garments which were worn in different combinations. Special clothing consisted of a jump suit, a sleeveless jump smock, a crash helmet and high-leg lace-up jump boots. Jump suits were single-piece overalls with elasticated cuffs and ankles; they had an attached canvas belt, and a single zip-fastened pocket on the left chest. Rank was displayed on the collar; a white or khaki circular badge with a red motif was worn on the left sleeve (this has been illustrated as resembling a long-stemmed cross breaking the top edge of a circular rim); and on the right breast was an embroidered yellow eagle with outstretched wings, the symbol of the Army paratroopers.

Over the top of the jump suit was worn the sleeveless jump smock, based on the sleeved German model. Almost knee length, the smock had an arrangement of split skirts which could be fastened tightly around the legs by a series of press-studs to form short over-trousers. It fastened down the front with five press-studs, and the collar fastened tightly by the same method. On the front of the thighs were two horizontal zip-fastened pockets. Rank insignia were worn on the smock collar; and some examples had a circular parachute badge sewn on the right breast.

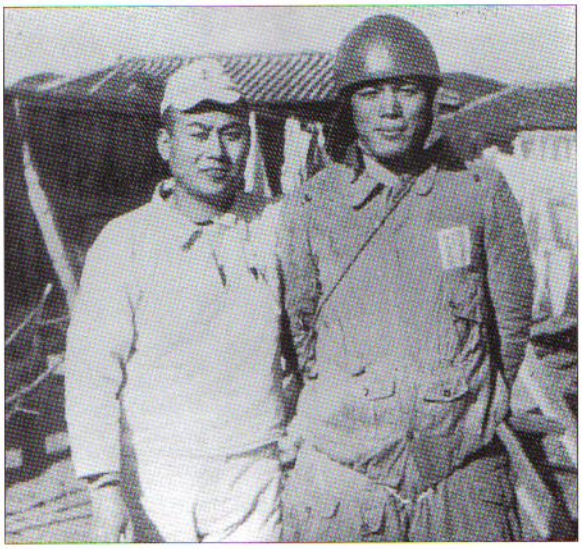
Army paratroopers wore a number of different types of jump helmet. The first model was rimless and made of fibre, covered in canvas. A second, steel model was again covered in canvas, with a yellow star badge on the front. Reports also say that German steel jump helmets were issued to the Japanese in small numbers. To help identify officers during night operations a white circle was painted on the rear of their helmets. Equipment worn by the paratroopers included canvas bandoliers.

Uniforms of Navy paratroops

Naval paratroopers wore a two-piece 'sea green'-coloured jump uniform (see MAA 362, Plate F3). The jacket had an open collar, concealed buttons, two pleated breast pockets with flaps, and four small waist pockets at the front and sides. The only insignia worn was the rank, in normal naval style on the right sleeve. A variation of the jacket had a large pocket on the right breast and an angled pistol pocket on the left breast. The trousers, supported by canvas braces (suspenders), had a pleated pocket with buttoned flap on the outside of each thigh; on the fronts of the legs were a smaller pocket on the left and a long, narrow magazine pocket on the right. The steel jump helmet was the usual 1932 'pot' painted dark green, with improved internal fittings and the Navy anchor embossed on the front. Under it a special field cap, with attached ear flaps with a cut-out for the ear, was usually worn. The high

lace-up jump boots were of brown leather for enlisted ranks and black for officers.

Equipment included broad canvas bandoliers worn crossed over the chest; and a special bag which fastened to the front of the parachute harness to carry the 8mm Type 100 sub-machine gun during the jump.



Giretsu-Kuteitai jacket

The airborne assault commandos wore a jacket unique to these units (see Plate G2). Made of green-khaki cotton cloth, and fastened with four wood or plastic front buttons, it was fairly crudely hand-painted with a mottled dark green and brown camouflage pattern. There were two breast pockets, and four waist pockets – larger at each side and smaller at the front.

Uniforms of Takasago Raiding Companies

These Formosan troops wore standard Army tropical uniform without special insignia; the only concession to their nationality was the carrying of the traditional tribal *giyuto* sword (see Plate G3). When the 1st Co was formed into the special 'Kaoru Unit' they dyed their tropical shirts dark green; some also wore working gloves dyed black. Their leaders sewed white bands around their sleeves, and painted a band at the back of their helmets with white radium fluorescent paint, for night recognition. Other ranks wore a white cloth armband on the right sleeve.

Uniforms of Koreans in Japanese service

Whether serving as armed forces auxiliaries or in the *Gunzoku*, Koreans wore the basic tropical uniform. Because of their low status they were usually given the worst quality uniforms and could expect little in the way of replacement clothing as shortages began to bite. No national insignia were worn by the Koreans serving in the Japanese Army and Navy; although they were not generally given formal ranks these would have been the same as the Japanese. Gunzoku serving as guards over prisoners of war were given a basic rank of *kanshi-hei*, 'watch soldier', and this was usually shown by a white cloth disc on the left shoulder bearing a red five-pointed interlinked star (see Plate A1). This was also the symbol for the lowest rank within the Gunzoku, which translated as simply 'enlisted man'.

The Kwangtung Army, 1945

Large numbers of new recruits received little in the way of military dress. Any kind of available uniform garment was worn in combination with civilian clothing; boots were very scarce, so recruits

OPPOSITE **Two Navy paratroopers pictured in their quarters. The left-hand man wears the Navy's white 'clean work' clothes, while his friend wears the two-piece jump suit made from hard-wearing green cotton.**
Compare this picture with MAA 362, Plate F3. There seems to have been some variation in the number of pockets on the jacket and trousers of the jump suit, and presumably not all were used in combat. His jump helmet carries the embossed badge of the Navy – an anchor with a cherry blossom on the shank – and under it he wears the field cap complete with neck flaps. (Tadao Nakata Collection)

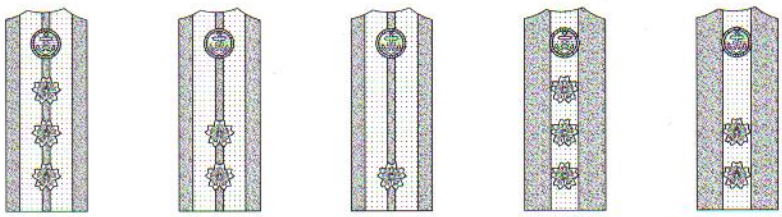
OPPOSITE **One of the Japanese cadre – apparently a *so-cho* or warrant officer class 2 – of the 'Kaoru Unit' of Takasago raiders drinks to success before a mission in the Philippines. He is wearing standard tropical uniform, but has dyed his shirt dark green to make him less visible at night – cf Plate G3. On the cuffs of the shirt he has added white bands, which conversely are to make him more visible to his men. Across his chest he has the 'death-defying sash', to show that he is willing to die for the emperor. He is armed with a *shin-gunto* sword, whereas the Formosan enlisted men of this unit carried their native shortswords. (Masuo Fujita Collection)**

Chart 3: Imperial Navy officers' shoulderboards, 1931–45; petty officers' & seamen's sleeve rank insignia, 1942–45

Officers and warrant officers wore stiff dark blue cloth shoulder boards on the white summer service tunic until 1945, and on the green field tunics until 1940, when they were replaced by the collar patches shown in Chart 2.
From November 1942 petty officers and seamen wore these altered rank patches on the upper right sleeve of their white, green and blue uniforms.

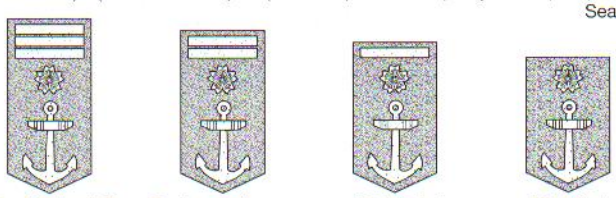
Sho-kan – flag officers **(1–4):** Dark blue board, wide gold braid; three to one silver metal cherry blossoms. (1) Enamelled right breast badge.
Sa-kan – senior officers **(5–7):** Dark blue board, two medium gold braids; three to one silver metal blossoms.
I-kan – junior officers **(8–10),** and *Junshi-kan* (warrant officers) **(11):** Dark blue board, one medium gold braid; three to one silver metal blossoms. (11) One narrow gold braid.
Kashi-kan – petty officers **(12–14):** Three to one yellow cloth bars, wreath and branch badge (here anchor = seamen's branch), and blossom in branch colour (yellow = seamen's) on dark blue shields.
Hei – seamen **(15–18):** Two, one and no yellow cloth bars and branch badge, blossom in branch colour, on dark blue shields.

1. *Gen-sui* (Adm. of Fleet)
2. *Tai-sho* (Admiral)
3. *Chu-jo* (Vice-Adm.)
4. *Sho-sho* (Rear-Adm.)



5. *Tai-sa* (Captain)
6. *Chu-sa* (Commander)
7. *Sho-sa* (Lieut.Cdr.)
8. *Tai-i* (Lieutenant)
9. *Chu-i* (Sub-Lieut.)

10. *Sho-i* (Acting Sub-Lieut.)
11. *Jun-i* (Warrant Officer)
12. *Joto-heiso* (Chief PO)
13. *Itto-heiso* (Petty Officer)
14. *Nito-heiso* (Leading Seaman)



15. *Hei-cho* (Acting LS)
16. *Joto-hei* (Able Seaman)
17. *Itto-hei* (Ordinary Seaman, trained)
18. *Nito-hei* (Ordinary Seaman, recruit)*

Note: * = No badge from Nov 1942 until this badge introduced 1944.

A squad of Japanese schoolgirls are drilled by an instructor from a military academy during the last year of the war, in preparation for the expected Allied invasion. Although the photograph is not clear enough to indicate which academy the instructor is from, it is most likely the Army Cadet School, whose staff wore a brown woollen uniform with a visored cap with red band. (Lisa Tomecek Collection)

had to supply their own footwear or make do with straw sandals. Field caps were worn if available, but steel helmets were severely rationed and seem to have been restricted to officers. The Kwangtung Army struggled to provide its new conscripts with any kind of weapon. Even rifles were in short supply, and any available source of firearms was utilised. Many of the sidearms and machine guns that were issued came from the limited number held by training schools. Many of the men were armed with home-made swords and knives, and even sharpened bamboo poles were in short supply. Nevertheless, much faith seems to have been placed in the use of this prehistoric weapon by Gen.Araki, who boasted that the Japanese could defeat the Soviets if only they could be issued with three million bamboo spears!

As on other fronts, the troops were also issued with home-made Molotov cocktails, 'lunge charges' (see Plate G1), and other suicidal last-ditch weaponry. Heavier equipment was almost non-existent, with locally produced mortars being the main weapons of most artillery units; others were equipped with elderly museum pieces (literally), which were more dangerous to the crews than to the enemy.

The Militia

The militia forces raised inside Japan in 1944–45 were dressed in any type of quasi-military uniform available. Because Japan was a highly uniformed society, many militiamen would have some sort of official clothing from organisations such as the Civil Defence Guards and University Students, mostly made from poor quality wartime materials. Large numbers of the militia, especially female volunteers, received no issued items and were dressed in their own clothes. Women volunteers were advised by the authorities, with the blessing of the empress, to wear *mompei*, the baggy pantaloons worn by peasants in the rice fields. The only distinguishing mark worn by most of the militia was a simple white armband.

Priority for all kinds of weapons was obviously given to regular Army units. In most cases there was only one elderly rifle available for every ten militiamen, and even then with limited ammunition. Most were armed with a simple sharpened bamboo pole; others carried swords, pikes, halberds and bows-and-arrows which harked back to Japan's feudal past. People were also encouraged to practise their martial art skills so that if necessary they could kill Allied soldiers with their bare hands... . Some Japanese genuinely believed that if the whole nation were prepared to fight with whatever arms were available, and were willing to sustain unlimited casualties, they could defeat an Allied invasion.

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The Japanese commander of the Aleutian island of Attu poses with his staff. Most of them wear the Type 98 uniform with rank displayed on the fall collar; interestingly, the officer second from right is wearing the old Type 90 uniform with a stand collar, and rank still worn on transverse shoulder bars. Although the old uniform continued to be worn for some time after the 1938 regulations, it should have been out of service by summer 1942 when this picture was taken.

The Aleutians were of little real strategic value to Japan, though they were presumably seized as a possible staging post for further advances. Although isolated 650 miles from the nearest naval base, at Paramushiro in the Kuriles, the garrisons on Attu and the larger island of Kiska were reinforced to some 2,600 and 8,000 men respectively. When US forces landed on Attu on 30 May 1943, Japanese resistance was fanatically determined, ending with a mass *banzai* charge; 2,351 Japanese died, only 28 being taken prisoner – an early lesson to the Allies that the true military value of a position was irrelevant if Japanese troops had been ordered to take or hold it. On 15 August a US/Canadian task force 34,000 strong landed on Kiska – only to find that the entire Japanese garrison (apart from four dogs) had been evacuated on 28 July. (Author's collection)

THE PLATES

A: OCCUPATION FORCES

A1: Korean guard, Allied prisoner-of-war camp; Surabaya, Dutch East Indies, 1943

This common guard's rank of *kanshi-hei* is indicated by the white cloth disc with an interlocking red five-pointed star motif. A name tag is sewn above his left pocket. He is lucky to have been issued with a fairly smart uniform of tropical shirt, trousers and field cap and a pair of brown ankle boots. His rifle is a 6.5mm Type 30 of 1897 vintage, as often issued to second-line and auxiliary units. On his non-standard leather belt he has one ammunition pouch and his scabbarded bayonet.

A2: Captain, divisional veterinary unit, 54th Infantry Division; Burma, 1943

This *tai-i* – whose branch of service reminds us of the heavy use of animal transport still made by the Japanese Army – illustrates the tropical service dress worn by officers. His cork sun helmet is of the earlier, conventional pattern similar to those worn by European colonial troops. The tunic bears his rank patches on the lapels, and butted up against their lower edge a small strip of cloth in the branch colour – in this case, purple. With the tunic he wears a white cotton shirt, black tie, tropical breeches and high black leather officers' boots. He is armed only with a Type 98 *shin-gunto* military sword.

A3: Warrant Officer, Kempei-tai; Malaya, 1942

A *sa-kan* field officer of the dreaded military police, leading a 20-man section hunting for Communist guerrillas in newly occupied Malaya. He wears a tropical uniform of shirt, trousers and field cap with brown

Smartness was not a high priority for the ordinary Japanese soldier, and this private second class is wearing a pretty basic Type 98 cotton summer uniform; locally manufactured, this appeared in colours which varied from area to area. His field cap is a later type, of three-piece construction, and does not appear to be particularly well made. (Ryuta Chino Collection)

leather high boots; his rank of *jun-i* is displayed on the shirt collar. on the left arm he wears the Kempi-tai armband of white cloth with the blood-red characters for 'law' and 'soldier'; sometimes these were stencilled, sometimes appliquéd, and the brassard was also seen in khaki drill. Apart from a small metal badge sometimes worn behind the collar rank, the armband was the only distinctive insignia. He is armed with a Nambu Type 14 semi-automatic pistol and a Type 94 warrant officers' sword.

B: SOLOMONS & NEW GUINEA, 1942–43

B1: Superior Private, 20th Infantry Division; New Guinea, 1943

A soldier setting out on the terrible retreat of the 20th Inf Div in New Guinea in 1943, when at least 10,000 men died. He is wearing a rather dishevelled tropical shirt and shorts with khaki woollen puttees, and black canvas-and-rubber *tabi* shoes with their characteristic separated big toe. His field cap has the four-flap sun curtain attached. The rank patch of *joto-hei* is worn on each side of the shirt collar. As the gunner of a Type 96 light machine gun team he has the tool kit in its slung pouch; his defensive sidearm is a Type 14 pistol.

B2: Private 2nd Class, 2nd Infantry Division; Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, 1942

This *nito-hei* serves in a special assault party and carries minimal equipment – the belt with two 30-round cartridge pouches (a 60-round pouch was worn at the back), and slung water bottle and haversack. He is wearing typical tropical uniform of shirt and half-breeches made from lightweight cotton; note that his rank is worn above the left breast pocket instead of on the collar. Around his body he displays a white cloth sash, signifying to both his enemies and his comrades that he is prepared to die for his emperor. He is armed with a 7.7mm Type 99 'short' rifle, which was far more suitable for jungle fighting than its longer version.

B3: Sniper, 124th Infantry Regiment; Guadalcanal, 1942

This was a unit of Gen.Kawaguchi's 35th Bde, rushed in from Rabaul as reinforcements at the end of August. The Japanese Army placed great emphasis on concealment in defence and, initially at least, provided its snipers with special camouflage clothing, based on the centuries-old design of a rice straw raincape. Over standard tropical clothing this sniper is wearing the two-piece matted grass suit, made up of a bodice which laces closed down the front and a deep cape which covers the shoulders. His Arisaka 6.5mm Type 97 rifle has a x2.5 telescopic sniper sight set well back to allow for the short arms of the average Japanese soldier. He has attached hessian and foliage around the muzzle. Snipers might also be issued with 'tree-climbers'; simple metal frames mounting two pairs of spikes, which were strapped under the shoes, these – together with the equivalent of a telephone lineman's belt – enabled riflemen to get up into the forest canopy quickly. They would usually tie themselves into a tree top with a safety rope, and lie in wait for advancing Allied troops, engaging them from front or rear at medium or close range and fighting until killed, with no thought of retreat. Snipers also operated from carefully camouflaged 'spider holes' at ground level. Two men in each rifle section were supposed to be trained as snipers.

Wartime shortages were felt in Japan as early as 1942, and went on to greatly affect the dress of the armed forces. This private first class has a cotton winter uniform with doubled reinforcements added at the shoulder, elbows and knees to try to prolong its life. The tunic and trousers are lined with a substitute wool material with a cotton shell, and were manufactured in about 1943; although a substandard uniform it was reportedly warm to wear. His belt is of rubberised fabric, reflecting the shortage of leather. The dark mark is damage to the photograph. (Ryuta Chino Collection)

C: CHINA, 1942–44

C1: Captain, 63rd Infantry Division, 1944

It should be remembered that the bulk of Japan's forces were still committed to the fighting in China until 1945. This *tai-i* of a 44th Army division in Manchukuo or North Korea is wearing the officers' version of the old Type 90 double-breasted greatcoat with detachable hood, and rank moved from the shoulders to the collar, over his Type 98 winter tunic and breeches. Field caps worn by officers were of the same pattern as worn by enlisted men, but were slightly stiffer and were made of better material. White officers' gloves and high black officers' boots complete the uniform. His standard field equipment includes officers' binoculars slung over the right shoulder and holstered semi-automatic pistol over the left. The waist belt supports a pistol ammunition pouch; sword belts were usually worn underneath the coat, as here, with the sling strap of his Type 94 sword, in its leather combat scabbard, passing through a slit in the cloth.

C2: Sergeant of cavalry, 110th Infantry Division, 1944

Mounted cavalry were still employed in the Chinese theatre, with its vast open spaces. This *gun-so*, serving with the divisional reconnissance unit of one of the 12th Army divisions stationed in northern China, wears the special winter coat with removable lower sleeves, which was made from heavy sailcloth with fur collar and cuffs. He displays his rank as a single bar on the right sleeve. His fur-lined hat is of a much smarter, more uniformly made model than the type worn in the early 1930s; it has the usual yellow star national badge sewn to the front. He also has winter mittens, with

This superb photograph was found by British tankers in a captured Type 95 *Ha-Go* light tank on the Arakan coast road in Burma in March 1945, and shows one of its four-man crew. He wears the summer version of the tanker's overalls with a cork crash helmet and tanker's goggles, with woollen puttees and leather gloves – cf Plate F1. The canvas haversack would carry his personal possessions while on campaign, and presumably would be stowed inside the tank. (Regimental Headquarters, Duke of Wellington's Regiment)

separate index fingers; his boots are the brown leather cavalry pattern and are worn with metal spurs. His weapons are the 1911 6.5mm Type 44 cavalry carbine with folded-back bayonet, and an 1899 model cavalry sabre. Ammunition is carried in a single leather belt pouch of a special pattern used only by the cavalry.

C3: Private 2nd Class, 40th Infantry Division, 1942

A soldier of a 6th Army formation, part of the China Expeditionary Army, this *nito-hei* is equipped for guard duty in winter weather. His single-breasted Type 98 greatcoat has its large detachable hood pulled up over his field cap. Under it he would be wearing the Type 98 winter tunic and special thermal trousers. Note his fur-lined overboots; and his slung water bottle, which has a special lined winter cover to stop the contents freezing. Basic brown leather belt kit, a canvas haversack, and the standard 6.5mm Arisaka Type 38 rifle – nearly always carried with bayonet fixed when on active service – complete his equipment.

D: BURMA & CHINA, 1944–45

D1: Major-General, 33rd Army; Irrawaddy battles, Burma, January 1945

This *sho-sho* of the 33rd Army – perhaps the commander of an independent brigade, or a division's infantry group – during the fighting against the British 14th Army on the Irrawaddy River, wears officers' service dress with the 1943 (Type 3) tunic. On the cuffs he displays the new type of rank insignia worn on service dress in conjunction with the collar bars – in this case three rings of brown braid above one gold five-pointed star. On his Type 94 *shin-gunto* sword he has the two fist straps of a general officer: one plain red, the other brown with gold zig-zag stitching and yellow tassels. Although many higher ranking officers acquired the Type 3 tunic, more junior grades often had difficulty obtaining the new pattern if stationed in remote combat zones.

D2: Captain, 55th Infantry Division; Arakan, Burma, February 1944

By 1944 shortages of every kind had begun to affect all aspects of the Japanese war effort, including uniforms. The 1943 tunic was of the same basic pattern as the 1938 model but used inferior material and less of it. This captain, perhaps with privileged connections, has managed to order one; note his cuff rank insignia are one brown ring above three gold stars. The matching breeches of 1943 pattern were also made from inferior material. He wears high black leather gaiters with black officers' ankle boots – which, surprisingly, were worn in tropical conditions. His sword hilt – hidden here – would have the brown and blue strap of company grade and warrant officers.

D3: Superior Private, infantry, China Expeditionary Army; Yellow River, April 1944

This *joto-hei* is taking part in the great 'Ichi-Go' offensive of spring/summer 1944. He is well kitted out for a soldier in the Chinese theatre, which did not always enjoy priority for new supplies. His uniform is the woollen Type 98 winter pattern, with a 1932 model steel helmet. On his back he carries the late pattern canvas knapsack, which has a horizontal fabric chest strap uniting the shoulder straps; visible over his shoulder is the disassembled entrenching spade, attached to the knapsack in its canvas cover. His light machine gun is the 7.7mm Type 99, introduced in 1939 and the best model used by the Japanese during the war. Note the small folding monopod under the butt; this was believed to give stability when firing. A folding-butt version of the Type 99 was also issued in small numbers to paratroopers. This gunner carries a pistol, pouch and bayonet on his double waist belts – the muzzle of the LMG took the standard Arisaka bayonet.

E: PACIFIC ISLANDS, 1943–44

E1: Private 2nd Class, 91st Infantry Division; Kurile Islands, summer 1944

The forces which garrisoned the isolated islands of the Pacific spent most of the war digging, in anticipation of Allied attacks. This soldier, taking a breather from working on an anti-tank ditch during the brief summer on the bleak Kuriles of the northern Pacific, wears typical fatigue dress. On his tropical shirt his rank is worn above the left breast pocket. His tropical trousers are worn loose and without puttees,

fastening at the waist with a tied fabric belt. His tropical field cap has the four-flap neck curtain. He wears traditional Japanese *waraji* home-made straw sandals, as worn by Japanese peasants in the rice fields of their homeland for centuries.

E2: Major, 38th Independent Mixed Brigade; Bougainville, Solomon Islands, 1943

This *sho-sa* inspecting defensive positions wears a later pattern tropical tunic (note cuff ranking) and breeches, with white cotton open-neck shirt and brown leather boots. His rank patches are worn on the lower lapels of the tunic – the shirt collar sometimes obscured them; and note that collar bars of ranks with a single star occasionally had it mounted at the forward end rather than central. His late model cork sun helmet is covered with white cloth but has a khaki cloth rim and band; the yellow star is mounted on a piece of khaki cloth. The arms carried are a Type 94 *shin-gunto* sword in a leather scabbard, its two slings passing under the tunic to a waist belt, and a Type 94 semi-automatic pistol in a leather holster. Officers were often responsible for buying their own sidearms, and had sometimes purchased foreign types before the war. His holster is worn on a green treated fabric belt in place of leather; this steadies his slung field equipment – binoculars, and (hidden behind him) an officer's water bottle and despatch case.

E3: Acting Leading Seaman, 7th Sasebo Special Naval Landing Force; Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands, autumn 1943

This *hei-cho* of Rear-Adm.Shibasaki's garrison, during the preparations to defend the island, is hardly distinguishable from an Army soldier apart from the yellow anchor badge on his field cap; the earlier, distinctive 'sea green' colour of NLF uniforms was now giving way to a wide range of khaki and green shades. The rank patch on his right sleeve is of the series introduced in November 1942. Under the camouflage netting of his 1932 pattern steel helmet can just be seen the embossed naval anchor badge. His 'landing shoes' (ankle boots) are black, as normally worn by naval infantry instead of Army brown; his basic belt equipment is of standard brown leather type, however. Small arms were also common to Army and Navy troops.

F: PHILIPPINES & BURMA, 1944–45

F1: Sergeant, tank crewman, 2nd Armoured Division; Luzon, Philippines, January 1945

He wears the summer version of the tankers' overalls, a one-piece garment of lightweight cotton. The rank of *gun-so* is worn on the left sleeve (although it might also be worn on the collar). His canvas-covered cork crash helmet, adjusted by means of laces at the side, gave adequate protection against knocks and jolts inside the moving tank despite its light weight – although it obviously offered no ballistic protection. Woollen puttees are wound round the legs of the tank suit, above standard brown leather ankle boots. Around his neck he wears a pair of tankers' goggles; his sidearm is an elderly Type 26 revolver, first issued in 1893 – and note its lanyard cord worn diagonally round the torso. Oddly for a tank crewman, he also carries a bayonet as a weapon of last resort. This division's 6th, 7th and 10th Tank Regts, mainly equipped with 200-plus 47mm Type 97 *kai Shinhoto Chi-Ha* tanks, were destroyed piecemeal in a series of dispersed actions in late January–early February.

F2: 2nd Lieutenant, 54th Infantry Division; Sittang River, Burma, July 1945

This division was the main remaining element of 28th Army; trapped west of the Sittang by the rapid advance of the British 14th Army, they tried to break out of Allied encirclement, but only about a third of them got across the river. This officer's appearance is in fact unusually smart for one of the survivors fighting their way through the jungle; most of this division were in rags by the end of the operation. His tropical combat uniform is conventional. His breeches are worn with woollen puttees and officers' brown ankle boots. The rank patch for *sho-i* is attached above his right breast pocket instead of on his collar. His steel helmet is carried on his back, fastened across his chest by means of its untied tapes. Note the officers' felt-covered water bottle with cup; the pistol lanyard worn around his torso; and two waist belts for his Type 14 pistol and Type 98 sword. The latter's grip is protected by a white cloth cover.

F3: Private 1st Class, 10th Infantry Division; Luzon, Philippines, January 1945

This illustrates the type of field equipment used by many soldiers in the later years of the war. The canvas holdall was worn around the body as a substitute for the old-fashioned knapsack; two long tapes crossed on the chest. His other equipment comprises a gasmask bag, a later model water bottle, and a metal mess tin which is attached to the holdall by cotton tapes. At the back of the leather belt note the third, larger ammunition pouch for 60 rounds. On the left sleeve of his tropical shirt he wears a single rank bar with a name tag underneath. His helmet has a canvas cover, and is worn over his field cap, complete with sun flaps. His footwear are *tabi* shoes with separated big toes. He is armed with the popular 7.7mm Type 99 'short' rifle.

This young cadet from the Army Financial School wears the basic uniform which was worn in different versions by all the various military academies – cf Plate H2. He wears the winter version of the uniform in heavy brown wool cloth, with his rank displayed on both his collar and shoulder boards. From somewhere he has managed to acquire a pair of leather gaiters, which were not standard wear for cadets. (Ryuta Chino Collection)

A US serviceman searches prisoners after the surrender of the Japanese garrison in Korea. They are all wearing typical tropical uniforms, which although not in pristine condition are still remarkably tidy for autumn 1945. The tall soldier at left foreground has his rank patches on his shirt collar folded outside his tunic collar; the man being searched wears a name tag over his left breast pocket; and all seem to have a small square tag on the right breast, bearing a *kanji* character and '2'. (US National Archives)

G: PACIFIC DEFENCE, 1944–45

G1: Private 2nd Class, 109th Infantry Division; Iwo Jima, February 1945

This soldier of Gen.Kuribayashi's garrison is preparing to make a suicidal attack on a US Marine Sherman tank approaching his unit's positions during the slow reduction of the island. He is armed with an anti-tank mine mounted on a pole as a 'lunge charge', which he will thrust against the tank to detonate it. His very basic tropical dress features a late-pattern, one-pocket, short-sleeved shirt with his rank on the collar, and a pair of cotton half-breeches worn loose over puttees and *tabi* shoes; the latter came in a variety of models, with or without separated toes, but were of the same basic plimsoll design. The field cap is locally produced from poor quality canvas material and has no chin strap. He carries a haversack full of hand grenades with which he hopes to inflict casualties before making his final attack.

G2: Corporal, Giretsu air-landing unit; Okinawa, May 1945

This airborne suicide commando recruited from the Army paratroopers wears a special hand-painted camouflage uniform, with standard cap, puttees and brown leather boots. His canvas Type 2 bandolier-type pouch set allows him to carry extra grenades and magazines for his Type 100 sub-machine gun. The bandolier has four pockets for Type 99 grenades, a holster for the Type 94 pistol and a central pouch for spare pistol magazines, above four pouches for SMG magazines.

G3: Private 1st Class, 'Kaoru Unit' (1st Takasago Raiding Company); Leyte, Philippines, November 1944

This Formosan highland tribesman wears a tropical shirt which he has dyed dark green in preparation for his mission. On the right arm he wears a white band which, along with a fluorescent stripe painted on the back of his helmet, will help night identification by his comrades. His field cap with sun flaps is worn under the helmet. He has an explosive charge in a haversack worn on his chest, and a canvas cavalry-type ammunition bandolier round his waist. These special troops had no distinctive insignia, but were allowed to carry their *giyuto* tribal swords. His more conventional weapon is an old 6.5mm Type 38 carbine; some of these were fitted with hinged butt-stocks for paratrooper use.

H: DEFENCE OF JAPAN, 1945

H1: Sergeant, 1st Imperial Guards Division, Tokyo Defence Army

This NCO is in charge of training civilian volunteers in anticipation of Allied invasion. His uniform reflects some of the austerity measures of the late war years; of inferior material, the tunic has only one flapless breast pocket. He is armed with a Type 14 pistol and a 1945 model NCOs' sword, of inferior materials and workmanship. Note the wreathed star cap badge of the Guards.

H2: Cadet volunteer, Field Artillery School, Chiba

This teenage cadet, being trained to play his part in the final defence of Honshu, wears a summer version of the military school uniform worn with the old-fashioned visored service cap. The collar insignia are small brass crossed cannons worn behind a plain red patch. Cadet tunics had red piping on the cuffs and the long edges of the otherwise plain shoulder boards. His equipment is basic in the extreme; due to shortages he has no ammunition pouches and must carry everything in his canvas haversack. Otherwise he has only a water bottle and a Type 30 bayonet. Given the chronic shortage of firearms he is very lucky to have been issued with an 1880-vintage Murata 11mm Type 13 rifle – a single-shot bolt-action weapon, but still better than a sharpened bamboo pole.

H3: Superior Private, 155th Infantry Division

This squad leader of a 15th Army formation wears a tropical uniform in one of the variety of differing shades seen late in the war, with his rank bars on the collar; he also displays a marksman's badge on the left sleeve – black crossed rifles under a white star, all in a red wreath, on a khaki cloth disc. His rifle is the 7.7mm Type 99; he also holds a Type 99 smooth-cased grenade, one of a variety of types in service.

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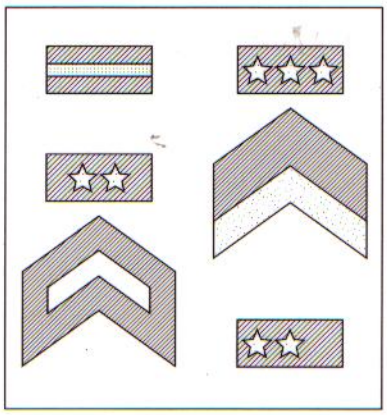

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