

Chinese Army in the Chinese Front: 1937-1945

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Central Army

24th or 25th (1935 or 1936) Year type New Divisions

In 1937, the best Chinese soldiers were Chiang Kai-shek's Central Army troops, trained and equipped along German lines, under German military advisors. Chiang had planned to reform and re-equip 60 'Germanized' divisions, but by mid-1937 only about 20-30 such divisions had been upgraded; moreover, many of these did not have the full complement of equipment. These troops were trained in the Germans military doctrine of 'elastic defence-in-depth' and 'infiltration' tactics and were Chiang's pride and joy, but these troops suffered substantial losses in the battles of attrition around Shanghai and Nanjing in the latter part of 1937.

Platoon Force Rating:

Regular: +2

Command Dice: 5

Platoon Headquarters	
<i>Zhong wei</i> (First Lieutenant) or <i>Shao wei</i> (Second Lieutenant) with a MP or SMG, Senior Leader.	
<i>Shang shi</i> (Colour Sergeant) with a MP or SMG, Senior Leader.	
LMG Squads One and Two	
<i>Zhong shi</i> (Sergeant) with a rifle, Junior Leader.	
LMG Team: ZB vz.26 or SIG KE7 with three crew	Rifle Team: Six riflemen
Rifle Squads Three to Five	
<i>Zhong shi</i> (Sergeant) with a rifle, Junior Leader.	
Rifle Team: four riflemen	Rifle Team: five riflemen

New Division Year 24 or 25 Support List
List One
Medical Orderly
Minefield
Satchel Charge
Barbed Wire
Entrenchment for one Team
Roadblock
Pioneer Mine Clearance Team, 3 men
Pioneer Wire-Cutting Team, 3 men
Pioneer Demolition Team, 3 men
Rifle grenade launcher Type 28
Upgrade a Squad with the Diehards rule as "Dare-to-Die" Suicide Troops (Max. 2)
Guerrilla
Two additional SMG to allocate as desired
Equip a Rifle Squad with a ZB vz.26 LMG (requires 1 gunner and 2 crewmen, Max. 1)

Optional Rule: Replace a Senior Leader with a <i>Shao xiao</i> (Major), Ranking Senior Officer*
List Two
Tank Killer Team, 2 men
Pre-Game Barrage
Ruse
Sniper Team
Anti-Tank rifle Team, 2 men
FT-17 MG with Junior Leader
FT-17 37mm with Junior Leader
Carden Lloyd tankette or Renault UE with Junior Leader
Armoured Car with Junior Leader
Type 27 Grenade Launcher and two crew (Max. 2)
List Three
Pak 36 37mm Anti-Tank Gun with five crew and Junior Leader
Type 24 MMG on tripod mount with five crew
Panzer IA with Junior Leader
Fiat Ansaldo L3/35 with Junior Leader
One Green Rifle Squad with a Junior Leader and thirteen riflemen
57mm infantry gun with five crew and Junior Leader
List Four
13.2mm Hotchkiss HMG in Tripod with five crew
47mm Bohler PAG with five crew and Junior Leader
75mm cannon with five gun crew and Junior Leader
SdKfz 222 Armoured Car with Junior Leader
Oerlikon or Madsen 20mm Machine Cannon with five crew
Vickers Armstrong Mk B with Junior Leader
List Five
Forward Observer Team with fixed line telephone and 82mm mortar section

26th or 27th Year (1937 or 1938) type Division

War broke out in 1937 with the planned reforms far from finished. Chiang and many of his generals were immediately taken with the effectiveness of the Type 89 grenade discharger. They demanded that it be reverse-engineered and that, of course, mandated a new set of organization tables to incorporate the weapon into the force structure. The result was the 26th Year type infantry division.

In 1938 (27th Year), the divisional artillery battalion was abolished, and the artillery moved up to the army level, increasing production of the easy-to-make 82mm mortar made it possible to begin equipping divisions without artillery with a mortar battalion, although this was far from universal even by the end of the war. At the lower levels it proved possible to equip the rifle platoons with grenade launchers, either the Type 27 hand-held version or the Type 28 rifle grenade launcher.

Platoon Force Rating:

Green: -5

Regular: -1

Command Dice: 5

Platoon Headquarters	
<i>Zhong wei</i> (First Lieutenant) or <i>Shao wei</i> (Second Lieutenant) with a MP or SMG, Senior Leader.	
<i>Shang shi</i> (Colour Sergeant) with a MP or SMG, Inferior Senior Leader.	
LMG Squads One and Two	
<i>Zhong shi</i> (Sergeant) with a rifle, Junior Leader.	
LMG Team: ZB vz.26 with three crew and three riflemen	Rifle Team: Seven riflemen
Rifle Squad Three	
<i>Zhong shi</i> (Sergeant) with a rifle, Junior Leader.	
Rifle Team: six riflemen	Rifle Team: seven riflemen

Division Type Year 26 or 27 Support List
List One
Minefield
Satchel Charge
Barbed Wire
Entrenchment for one Team
Roadblock
Pioneer Mine Clearance Team, 3 men
Pioneer Wire-Cutting Team, 3 men
Pioneer Demolition Team, 3 men
Rifle grenade launcher Type 28
Upgrade a Squad with the Diehards rule as "Dare-to-Die" Suicide Troops (Max. 2)
Guerrilla
Two additional SMG to allocate as desired
Optional Rule: Replace a Senior Leader with a <i>Shao xiao</i> (Major), Ranking Senior Officer*
List Two
Tank Killer Team, 2 men
Ruse
Sniper Team
Anti-Tank rifle Team, 2 men
FT-17/31 MG with Junior Leader
FT-17/31 37mm with Junior Leader
Carden Lloyd tankette or Renault UE with Junior Leader
Any Armoured Car with Junior Leader
Renault ZB with Hotchkiss MMG and Junior Leader
Type 27 Grenade Launcher and two crew for the Platoon HQ (Max. 2)
List Three
Fiat Ansaldo L3/35 with Junior Leader
Pak 36 37mm Anti-Tank Gun with five crew and Junior Leader
Type 24 MMG on tripod mount with five crew
One Green Rifle Squad with a Junior Leader and thirteen riflemen
Renault ZB with Hotchkiss HMG and Junior Leader
57mm infantry gun with five crew and Junior Leader

List Four
13.2mm Hotchkiss HMG in Tripod with five crew
47mm Bohler PAG or Soviet 45mm anti-tank gun with five crew and Junior Leader
BA-3, 6 or 10 Armoured Car with Junior Leader
Renault ZB with 37mm gun and Junior Leader
T-26 with 45mm gun with Junior Leader
75mm cannon with five gun crew and Junior Leader
Oerlikon or Madsen 20mm Machine Cannon with five crew
List Five
Forward Observer Team with fixed line telephone and 82mm mortar section

Provincial troops from the “Warlords” or Communist Armies

This troops represents the semi-autonomous Chinese armies integrated by the political allies of Chiang Kai-Shek, all of them had different organization tables and equipment. From the fierce Muslim soldiers in the deserts of the North to the brave but opium plagued troops of Sichuan, and from the ideologized army of Mao Zedong in Yan’an to the British and French influenced armies of Guangxi and Guangdong, the Provincial armies formed a heterogeneous group of fighters with different interests and goals. This template gives you plenty of options to make your own “Warlord” force.

Platoon Force Rating:

Regular: -5

Green: -9

Command Dice: 5 (Regular), 4 (Green)

Platoon Headquarters
<i>Zhong wei</i> (First Lieutenant) or <i>Shao wei</i> (Second Lieutenant) with a MP or SMG, Senior Leader.
Rifle Squads One to Three
<i>Zhong shi</i> (Sergeant) with a rifle, Junior Leader.
Rifle Team: five riflemen
Rifle Team: five riflemen

Provincial Armies Support List
List One
Minefield
Satchel Charge
Barbed Wire
Entrenchment for one Team
Roadblock
Pioneer Mine Clearance Team, 3 men
Pioneer Wire-Cutting Team, 3 men
Pioneer Demolition Team, 3 men
Rifle grenade launcher Type 28
Upgrade a Squad with the Diehards rule as “Dare-to-Die” Suicide Troops (Max. 2)
2 Additional SMG/MP to allocate as desired

+3 riflemen to a Rifle Squad (Max 1 per squad, distribute among the teams as desired)
Guerrilla
A Lathi M1926, FN FM1930 or SIG KE7 Automatic Rifle (requires 1 gunner and 1 crewmen)
A Bren, DP, Maxim-Tokarev or ZB vz.26 LMG (requires 1 gunner and 2 crewmen)
Adjutant
Replace a Senior Leader with a <i>Shao xiao</i> (Major), Ranking Senior Officer
Optional Rule: Replace a Senior Leader with a <i>Shao xiao</i> (Major), Ranking Senior Officer*
List Two
Tank Killer Team, 2 men
Ruse
Sniper Team
Anti-Tank rifle Team, 2 men
One Green Provincial Rifle Squad with a Junior Leader
FT-17/31 MG with Junior Leader
FT-17/31 37mm with Junior Leader
Carden Lloyd tankette or Renault UE with Junior Leader
Any Armoured Car with Junior Leader
Renault ZB with Hotchkiss MMG and Junior Leader
Type 27 Grenade Launcher Team, 2 men (Max. 2)
<i>Shang shi</i> (Colour Sergeant) with a MP or SMG, Inferior Senior Leader.
List Three
Pak 36 37mm Anti-Tank Gun with five crew and Junior Leader
Type 24 MMG on tripod mount with five crew
One Regular Provincial Rifle Squad with a Junior Leader
Renault ZB with Hotchkiss HMG and Junior Leader
57mm infantry gun with five crew and Junior Leader
List Four
13.2mm Hotchkiss HMG in Tripod with five crew
47mm Bohler PAG or Soviet 45mm anti-tank gun with five crew and Junior Leader
Steyr ADGZ or similar Armoured Car with Junior Leader
Renault ZB with 37mm gun and Junior Leader
Oerlikon or Madsen 20mm Machine Cannon with five crew
75mm cannon with five gun crew and Junior Leader
List Five
Forward Observer Team with fixed line telephone and 82mm mortar section
One Squad of White Russian Guards (Max. 1, can't be upgraded to "Dare-to-Die" Suicide Troops)

White Russian Guards Squad	
Sergeant with a rifle, Junior Leader.	
LMG Team: a Lewis gunner with two crew Two riflemen	Rifle Team: five riflemen

Historical examples of Provincial Armies Organization

Mao's Communist Forces from the 8th Route Army (18th Army Group) or 4th New Army (Ness & Shih, 2016, pág. 181)

As early as the December 1935 Wayaobu Resolution Mao had called for a million regulars in the Red Army, required both to vanquish the KMT and defend against the depredations of the Japanese.

The regular and guerrilla units used the triangular unit structure. A rifle platoon had three squads, each of up to 16 men, while a rifle company consisted of three such platoons for a strength of about 130 men. Rifles were provided for only about nine men per squad. When available a light machine gun would be assigned to each squad, otherwise the allotment was one per platoon. A grenade discharger was also allotted to each platoon if available. An infantry battalion was made up of three such rifle companies plus, if available, a small machine-gun platoon with two medium machine guns.

Regiments came in a variety of configurations depending primarily on the availability of manpower and weapons. The taxonomy used by US intelligence at the time is probably as useful as any; this grouped them into three categories: Types A, B, and C. The Type A regiment was defined as a full-strength unit with three infantry battalions (each fully equipped with light and medium MGs and grenade dischargers), a headquarters company with signal, mortar, supply, and medical platoons, and trains. The mortar platoon would be equipped with four 82mm mortars or 70mm or 75mm infantry guns. Such a regiment would have a nominal strength of 1,763 men. The Type B regiment was similar, but lacked one infantry battalion and the mortar platoon, for a nominal strength of 1,163. The Type C regiment consisted simply of a headquarters company (signal, supply, medical, and service platoons) and four or five rifle companies, for a total of 866 men.

The regiments were grouped into brigades, and brigades into the existing divisions of the 18th Group Army and New 4th Army. In some cases, "columns" were inserted as intermediate HQs between the brigade and the division. There were no artillery or other heavy units in the communists' force structure, as they avoided direct conventional combat.

Li Zongren's Guangxi Army (Ness & Shih, 2016, pág. 89)

In 1929, the 4th Army Group of General Li Zongren, had 79 divisions built around the former Guangxi Army, a tough and well-regarded force that had performed ably during the Northern Expedition. Their standard division should have 3 brigades, each of 2 infantry regiments. Each regiment would have 3 battalions each of 4 companies; each company to consist of 3 platoons each of three 11-man sections. The regiment would also include a machine-gun company, a mortar company, a telephone squad, and a stretcher-bearer squad. Division support would be provided by an artillery battalion of three batteries and a telephone squad, a signal detachment, and a guard battalion.

The Guangxi Government had access to various squad support weapons, with stronger British and French influence than their northern allies, thanks to Hong Kong and Indochina. LMGs such as Hotchkiss and Bren could be incorporated in their squads instead of the more numerous SIG KE7 or ZB vz.26.

Yan Xishan's Shanxi Army (Ness & Shih, 2016, págs. 164-165)

In 1929, the 3rd Army Group of 23 divisions and 9 brigades was under the command of General Yan Xishan, the boss of Shanxi province. The 1930 organization report showed the Shanxi forces organized their rifle companies as three platoons each of three 14-man sections, each with a light machine gun. A battalion had three rifle companies and a heavy weapons company, and the regiment three battalions. The heavy company had two machine-gun platoons, each with two 10-man squads, and a mortar platoon with two 82mm mortars with 11-man squads. The division had two brigades each of three regiments. Yan had a total of 107 such regiments, along with a machine-gun regiment, this having three battalions, each of four 6-gun companies.

By 1944 each of his divisions had an authorized strength of 702 officers and 7,502 enlisted, divided into a headquarters, a medical platoon, a "special mission" company, a scout unit, and three infantry regiments. An infantry regiment was made up of a headquarters, a machine-gun/mortar company, a signal platoon, a scout unit and a medical platoon, along with the three infantry battalions. The battalion had a headquarters and four rifle companies. Each of the rifle companies consisted of a headquarters, a small train element, and three platoons, each of three sections, each of a sergeant, two corporals, 12 privates, a cook, and a laborer/porter. The sections were well armed, being divided into two squads, one provided with a Taiyuan-made Thompson submachine gun and the other a light machine gun, along with their rifles. Each platoon HQ included a Type 27 or Japanese grenade launcher.

Long Yun's Yunnan Army (Ness & Shih, 2016, pág. 169)

A late-war Yunnan rifle company consisted of three platoons each of three sections. Each section consisted of a section leader, a four-man light MG team with a Belgian-made BAR (FN FM1930), and an eight-man rifle team. Three rifle companies plus a machine-gun company (including a 60mm mortar platoon) made up the infantry battalion. The regiment consisted of three battalions, a 300-man transport company, a mortar company (six 81mm or 82mm mule-packed weapons), a signal platoon, and a medical detachment.

*Many times in the war, the lack of officers forced captains and majors to take direct command of troops in the frontlines. In 1936 the Chinese Army had 136,474 officers, from which 70% had professional military education (31,6% from the Whampoa Military Academy, 4,8% from the Baoding Imperial Military Academy and 1,4% from foreign academies) and 29,1% were raised from ranks. During the war, this proportion fell to just 20 percent of formally educated officers. (Chang, 2011, pág. 101).

The most famous example is the lieutenant general (acting general) Zhang Zizhong, who was killed in the battle of Yichang leading his surrounded troops from the front, dying from grenade, bullet and bayonet wounds.

Chinese National Characteristics

German Infiltration Doctrine

The Chinese soldiers of the 24th and 25th Year type New Divisions were trained in the stormtrooper tactics by their German Advisors. The signal to attack with a volley of grenades and then get stuck in with the sword or bayonet from the squad leader. To reflect this, when a Leader attached to a Team or Squad uses two Command Initiatives, he may lead a charge against any enemy within 12"

preceded by a hail of grenades. Roll 1D6, subtracting 1 if the enemy is in light cover, 2 if in hard cover. On a roll of 1 or 2, one hand grenade has hit the target unit; on 3 or 4, two grenades hit; on 5 or 6, three grenades hit the target. Roll for the effect of these and the Team or Squad may then move with up to 3D6 to try to initiate Close Combat.

Massed assault

Many of the conscripts and 'Warlords' infantry soldiers had little training and their only advantage was their numbers, as they closed with the enemy, the last push would be made with an overwhelming assault. At their leaders' command, the soldiers would charge the enemy, their bayonets fixed or sword in hand, with their battle-cry rising over the battlefield.

These wave attacks were effective when they caught the enemy by surprise or without proper support weapons but many times, they made little or no gain for terrible cost in men. A 25th, 26th Year type Division or Provincial Army Senior Leader may order a Massed Assault, by using all his Command Initiatives to order all the sections within his Command Distance that haven't been activated yet in that Phase, to assault the enemy. Any troops so activated will move with 4D6 straight towards their chosen enemy, each squad dicing for its own movement. They halve their Shock for the Movement purposes (rounding up). Any Squad or Squads which gets within 4" from enemy initiates Close Combat.

Limited Armoured Support

A Chinese 26th or 27th Year type Division or Provincial force can't deploy more than one vehicle from the support list.

Defending the Middle Kingdom

Chinese armies defend the cities with extreme stubbornness, in this urban zones the full Japanese firepower could be mitigated. In consequence, Shanghai, Wuhan and similar cities witnessed massive attritional battles.

Chinese troops defending a built up-area where four or more buildings are adjacent to each other, will automatically upgrade one to become a 'Keep', that is a strengthened command point which serves as the core of their defence as well as becoming an additional Jump-Off Point. The Keep will be upgraded by one level, so if a brick building normally offering hard cover, this will become a bunker. The Chinese player must deploy at least one unit to the Keep. If abandoned this will count as a 'Support Unit Routed' for Force Morale purposes.

Chinese Options

Guerrilla

Chinese Guerrillas are never deployed on the table, but may attempt to frustrate enemy troops as they attempt to deploy onto the table. When an enemy player declares that he is deploying a unit to the table, the Chinese player may declare that they have come under fire from Guerrillas. Roll a D6. On a roll of 6, this is ignored and the Enemy may deploy the unit without delay removing the Guerrillas from play. On a roll of 1 to 5, the unit is delayed and no troops may deploy from that Jump-Off Point in this Phase. On subsequent Phases, troops attempting to deploy from that Jump-Off point must roll a D6. On a roll of 1 to 3 the Jump-Off Point remains blocked. On a roll of 4 to 6, the Guerrilla is dispersed and removed from the game.

Ruse

The Chinese were no respecters of the European view that wars should be fought according to certain legal rules and principles. Consequently, they were happy to use any number of tricks, ruses and general deceptions to gain an advantage over their opponent. As the war progressed their foes grew wise to these, but to reflect their ability to wrong-foot their enemies in the early stages of the war the option of a Ruse will allow the Chinese player to either deploy one unit an additional 6" further from a Jump-Off point than would normally be the case (15" for regular troops, 18" for elite troops) OR to move a jump-off point up to 18" in any direction, so long as it is further than 12" from any enemy troops or Jump-Off Point.

Chinese Arsenal

Infantry Weapons					
WEAPON	FIREPOWER	CLOSE	EFFECTIVE	NOTES	
Lathi M1926, FN FM1930 or SIG KE7	4	0-18''	Over 18''	Reroll 1s	
Lewis Gun	5	0-18''	Over 18''	Can't move and fire	
ZB vz.26, Bren, Madsen, DP-28 or similar LMG	6	0-18''	Over 18''		
Maxim Tokarev LMG	7	0-18''	Over 18''	Can't move and fire	
AFVs and Tanks					
VEHICLE	ARMOUR	A.P.	H.E.	SPEED	NOTES
Renault UE or Carden Loyd Tankette	2	-	MG	Average	Small, Low Profile, No turret
FT-17 MG	2	-	4	Slow	Small, Low Profile, 1MT, Unreliable, No Radio
FT-17 37mm	2	3	3	Slow	Small, Low Profile, 1MT, Unreliable, No Radio
L3/35	2	-	Twin MGs	Average	Small, Low Profile
Panzer IA	2	-	Twin MGs	Average	Small, Low Profile
Renault ZB with MMG	2	-	MG	Fast	Small, Low Profile, Unreliable
Renault ZB with HMG	2	1	HMG	Fast	Small, Low Profile, Unreliable
Renault ZB with 37mm	2	4	6	Fast	Small, Low Profile, Unreliable
T-26 with 45mm	3	5	4	Slow	Co-axial MG
Vickers Armstrong Mk B	3	5	3	Average	Co-axial MG
Rolls Royce, BA-64 or similar Armoured Car	2	-	MG	Wheeled	Small, Low Profile
Shanghai Armoured Car	2	-	MG	Wheeled	Small, Low Profile, Rear-mounted MG
BA-3/6/10	3	5	4	Wheeled	Co-axial MG

SdKfz 222, Steyr ADGZ or similar Armoured Car	2	3	6	Wheeled	Co-axial MG, Small, Low Profile
Artillery and Antitank guns					
Gun	A.P.			H.E.	
Pak 36 37mm Anti-Tank Gun	5			3	
47mm Bohler PAG	6			4	
45mm AT gun, M32, 37 and 38	5			4	
57mm Infantry Gun	2			4	
70mm mountain gun	3			5	
75mm Field Gun	4			6	
Boys AT Rifle	2			1	
Oerlikon or Madsen 20mm Autocannon	4			6	

Rules Additions

Unreliable Vehicles

Unreliable vehicles are either those with particular design faults or those which are simply old or are in poor running order. Either way, vehicles classed as Unreliable will break down if they ever roll two or more 1's when moving. The vehicle cannot move for the rest of the game but the crew may still use any weapons and may traverse the turret if present. The crew will immediately suffer a permanent loss of one morale point.

'1MT' One man turret

Vehicles with turrets that can house only one man relied on the tank commander to not only direct the actions of his vehicle but also to serve as gunner and loader. For some light vehicles, such as those armed with a single machine gun or self-loading cannon, this was not a problem. However, for vehicles with a gun capable of firing H.E. and A.P. shells the commander was severely over-worked and this affected the performance of the entire crew.

When firing the main gun, the Leader is unable to issue any other commands nor is he able to rally Shock from the crew. However, while the Leader is serving the main gun in such a manner, the driver and any secondary crew position may still be activated on a Command Dice roll of 1, as though it were an un-commanded vehicle.

Lacking Radio

Many AFVs in the early war period lacked radios. On the advance towards the enemy this lack of communications was often overcome by the use of flags or signal rockets. However, once in action there was little time for, and much danger attached to, exposing a Leader outside the turret to make such signals. As a result, AFVs without a radio may never issue commands by radio as outlined in Section 11.4 of the main rules. All such vehicles may only activate individually.

Fixed Line Telephones

One major difference between the early war and the late war forces covered in the main rules is the restriction imposed by fixed line telephones for communication. As in the Great War, most armies relied on fixed telephone lines which had to be run to headquarters and points used by observers for both artillery and mortars. In Chain of Command the impact of this is largely limited

to Forward Observation Officers who are attached to mortar units where we need to differentiate between observers restricted to static line telephones and those with the luxury of radio contact.

To reflect this difference, Forward Observers with a radio are able to operate as covered in the main rules and may change their position without affecting their link with the mortar unit. For an observer operating with a static line and telephone, once placed on the table he may not move without breaking contact with the mortars. Additionally, only the Forward Observer may control mortar fire on a Command Dice roll of 1 and not a Senior Leader as happens with later war radio equipped forces.

Mortar fire may only be called on to a point which the Observer Team can see from their location. However, it may be subsequently adjusted to fall out of line of sight providing other friendly troops can see the target.

If the Forward Observer moves for any reason the mortars will cease fire immediately and any troops under the barrage will become unpinned at the end of the Phase. The Observer may not attempt to re-establish contact until the next game Turn, representing the time required to run fresh cable to his telephone.

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