

PINGXINGGUAN BATTLE & PINGXINGGUAN CAMPAIGN

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On Sept 4th, Japanese North China Front Army ordered 5th *Shidan* to Weixian County for preparation of the Campaign of Baoding Plains. On 6th, 5th *Shidan*, with three prongs, pushed against Weixian from Xuanhua, Xinbaoan and Huailai. On 10th, 68th Corps abandoned Weixian on the pretext of joining 1st Group Army’s battle of order on Tientsin-Pukow Railway.¹ Tang Enbo immediately sent a regiment from Gao Guizi’s 17th Corps to Weixian. On 11th, Japanese 5th Cavalry *Rentai* took over Weixian ahead of the Chinese regiment. Meantime, Japanese 41st *Rentai* pushed to the north of Laiyuan. Xu Yongchang of the First War Zone dispatched one regiment of Zeng Wanzhong’s 3rd Corps to Laiyuan.

As a synchronized action, Japanese Kwantung Army pushed along the Peiping-Suiyuan Railway. On Sept 3rd, Japanese 15th Mixed *Ryodan* probed 61st Corps’s positions till dusk. On 4th, Japanese, under the cover of planes and cannons, attacked two mountains to the east of Tianzhen for another whole day. On 6th, Japanese took over Mt Panshan to the southeast of Tianzhen. On 7th, 61st Corps abandoned Tianzhen by leaving 299th Regiment inside of the city. On 8th, Japanese planes bombed Yanggao, and 15th *Ryodan*, with the addition of backup 11th *Rentai*, attacked towards Yanggao with two prongs. On 10th, Japanese laid the siege of Yanggao where Chinese 414th Regiment lost the city after incurring heavy loss. On 11th, Tianzhen was lost after Japanese blasted apart northeastern citywall. At Datong, three brigades were retained around the mountains as impediment. Yan Xishan’s scheme of inducing Japanese for Datong Campaign hence aborted.²

On Sept 11th, Yan Xishan realigned the defense by moving troops to the southern bank of Sangganhe River. New 2nd Division of Yang Chengyuan’s 34th Corps, Jiang Yuzhen’s 196th of 33rd Corps and Liang Jiantang’s 203rd Brigade of 34th Corps, Li Fuying’s 61st Corps, and Wang Jingguo’s 19th Corps were to defend the segment from Houshikou to Wengchengkou to Yingxian County. Guo Zongfeng’s 71st Division and Chen Changjie’s 72nd Division, retained as reserves, pulled back to Fanshi and Daixian, respectively. Zhao

¹ Guo Rugui, p 1:384

² 61st Corps Chief Li Fuying abandoned Tianzhen without a fight. On Oct 3rd, Li Fuying was executed by Yan Xishan for dereliction of duty. [[?]]. PINGXINGGUAN-by-Hu QUANfu: Li Fuying’s daughter, who was a member of communist front “National Liberation Pioneers”, had visited her father twice, at Yan Xishan’s headquarters in Taiheling Ridge and in Taiyuan city, after conflicting newspaper reports about the execution in late September. Hu Quanfu claimed that Yan Xishan and the military tribunal sentenced Li Fuying to death after Tang Shengzhi, from Nanking, requested an “extradition”. P 313, 320 – Tang Shengzhi.

PINGXINGGUAN HU QUANFU- p 322-325 Yan Xishan news release: Regiment Chief Li Shengren failed to defend Mt Panshan. Bad defense works. No report of Japanese attack till after the loss. But the abandonment of Datong was related to Liu Ruming’s relinquishing Weixian before communist Eight Route Army was to arrive.

Chengshou's cavalry withdrew to Shuoxian and Shenchi from Suiyuan Province. On Sept 13th, Yan Xishan ordered New 2nd Division to Dawangcun for providing cover to Guangling where Tang Enbo, with Gao Guizi's 17th Corps and Liu Fengbin's 73rd Division, were resisting Japanese 21st *Ryodan* of 5th *Shidan* since Sept 11th. Separately, at Lingqiu, 3rd Independent Brigade of 33rd Corps was resisting portion of Japanese who diverted southward from Weixian County. Japanese 5th *Shidan*, after Guangling, pursued Chinese troops towards Hunyuan and Lingqiu with four *Daitai*.

On Sept 15th, Yan Xishan divided the armies of the Second War Zone into two halves, with Fu Zuoyi in charge of left flank consisting of 61st Corps, 34th Corps, 19th Corps and 35th Corps, and Yang Aiyuan and Sun Chu in charge of right flank consisting of 33rd Corps, 17th Corps, and 15th Corps to the right. Communist-controlled 18th Group Army, 71st Division and 72nd Division acted as reserves.³ After Li Fuying was put under arrest, Chen Changjie assumed the post of 61st Corps Chief.

On Sept 19th, Japanese 5th *Shidan* commander Itagaki Seishiro, after receiving order to move the bulk of troops to Baoding Campaign, sent 9th *Ryodan* to the takeover of Laiyuan for clearing the path. On 20th, Itagaki ordered 21st *Ryodan* to the takeover of Lingqiu. After Lingqiu, Itagaki set his next target on the Chinese troops on the Inner Great Wall, ending in an subsequent Japanese strategic shift towards thrusts at Taiyuan the provincial city of Shanxi.

The route from Lingqiu to Pingxingguan that Japanese was to take is an east-southwest arc that parallels the Hutuohe River flowing between Hengshan Mountain and Wutaishan Mountain. At the entrance was Pingxingguan Pass, while Yangfangkou Pass and Yanmenguan Pass sit just to the north of Yuanping the southwestern end of the arc. After Yuanping, Hutuohe makes a 180-degree turn for the southeast while Datong-Puzhou [Yongji] Railway extends straight southward to Taiyuan city.⁴

On the Chinese part, Yan Xishan wavered over a duel around Pingxingguan Pass versus Yanmenguan Pass, which led to unconcerted actions by subordinate generals.⁵ On Sept 21st, Japanese 21st *Ryodan* commander, with two *Daitai*, pursued Chinese 73rd Division along Lingqiu-Pingxingguan Highway. On 22nd, Japanese encountered small units of Chinese forces that were sabotaging the road and providing rearguard support. Japanese 21st *Rentai*, minus the *Daitai* which joined the Lingqiu team, came over from Hunyuan to join the fight and attacked positions to the north of Tuanchengkou. On the night of 22nd, the two Japanese *Daitai* from Lingqiu attacked heights around Xipaochi and Dongpaochi, between Tuanchengkou and Pingxingguan, and took over one height to the south of Dongpaochi which Gao Guizi's 84th Division wrestled back on behalf of Meng Xianji's 8th

³ Guo, p 1:411

⁴ Datong-Puzhou Railway was completed - the segment from Puzhou to Yuanping

⁵ Guo Rugui, p 1:415

Independent Brigade; and on the morning of 23rd, Japanese circumvented Caijiayu to attack Tuanchengkou. At 1 pm, Sun Chu sent over reinforcements to retake the heights around Xipaochi and Dongpaochi. Japanese stopped attacking Tuanchengkou at 4 pm.

On Sept 23rd, CCP leader Zhou Enlai authorized 115th & 120th Divisions in assisting Yan Xishan's army. Zhu De, Peng Dehuai & Ren Bishi reported the deployment plan to Mao; however, Mao refrained from approving the plan till after Lin Biao & Nie Rongzhen's 115th Division, during at the Battle of Pingxingguan Pass, ambushed a Japanese logistic column from 21st *Ryodan*.

On Aug 24th, Japanese launched frontal attacks throughout the day. Gao Guizi's 17th Corps, at a casualty of thousands, defended the positions till a forced withdrawal without replenishment and ammunition in sight.⁶ Earlier in the day, Yan Xishan and Yang Aiyuan had devised plans for a proactive attack for the dawn of 25th, with orders to the following effect: 71st Division (Chen Guangdou's 202th Brigade and Zhao Jin's 214th Brigade) and Jin Xianzhang's New 2nd Division were to act as main thrusting force through Tuanchengkou area; Independent 8th Brigade was to assist 71st Division; and 115th Division, which arrived near the pass on Sept 19th, was to attack Japanese positions from the hind by penetrating the northeast of Pingxingguan.

On 25th, Fu Zuoyi revised the assault plan by ordering 71st Division to the recovery of lost positions previously held by 17th Corps. At dawn, Guo Zongfeng's 71st Division attacked Japanese who had taken control of Tuanchengkou and Yaozijian. By noon, 71st Division took over several hills and heights, including a height to the south of Yaozijian. By evening, 71st Division, with the help of two brigades from Chen Changjie's 61st Corps, recovered most of the territories and pressed about 1000 Japanese remnants on the highway into a valley between Dongpaochi and Xipaochi.

In lieu of attacking Japanese at Pingxingguan, Lin Biao's 115th Division, with three Regiments from 343th & 344th Brigades, ambushed a Japanese logistic column as well as a troop transport column from 21st *Ryodan*. While Japanese troop transport column from 6th Military Station was going west-to-east from Guangou, a 150men logistics column from 21st *Rentai*, commanded by 3rd Logistics *Shyoutai* commander of 12th *Chutai*, was traveling east-to-west from Lingqiu. At about 9 am, both Japanese columns, 2.5 kilometers away from each other, entered the ambush zone of the Lingqiu-Pingxingguan Highway. At Xiaozhaicun the southwestern end, two Japanese transport *Chutai* of over 80 trucks, over

⁶ Pingxingguan Fengyun – p 219-220 – Gao Guizi wired to Chiang Kai-shek about over one height to the south of Dongpaochi which Gao Guizi's 84th Division wrestled back on behalf of Meng Xianji's 8th Independent Brigade, his 84th Division officer attrition by 60-70%, death of 820 and wounded 985 soldiers within three days, and 250th Brigade possessing 2,000 remnants.

PINGXINGGUAN HU QUANFU- p 322-325 Yan Xishan news release: After Chahar Campaign, Shanxi Province Army lost half of nine divisions. Gao Guizi's army was frustrated by Japanese as a result of the disengagement of Liu Maoen's 15th Corps for relief to Ruyuekou Pass.

200-250 staff, an infantry *Shyoutai* and a convoy guard *Shyoutai*, which arrived a day earlier to deliver supplies and ammunition, encountered heavy casualties at about half and lost majority of trucks within 2-3 hours due to lack of heavy equipment. Japanese logistics commander was killed. Hearing of the ambush, Japanese 3rd *Daitai* then sent over troops from 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th *Chutai* for assisting with the transport column. At Guangou, Yang Dezhi's 685th Regiment of 115th Division impeded Japanese who later in the day rerouted the bulk of relief force back to Pingxingguan when Fu Zuoyi's troops initiated counter-attacks at Pingxingguan. At Caijiayu, the northeastern end, 115th Division, by 3 pm, completely routed the Japanese Luggage *Daitai* [of 21st *Rentai*] and two luggage teams [from two *Daitai* under 21st *Rentai*], about 70 horse-pulled carts, 15 soldiers, 70 convoy staff, a Takahashi cavalry *Shyoutai*, and a few wounded soldiers returning to duty.⁷ 115th Division, rather than pressing against Japanese who rerouted to Pingxingguan front, withdrew from Guangou on the morning of 26th and effectively ended the first and last trench warfare against Japanese under the Nationalist Government command.

Upon the news of Pingxingguan ambush, Itagaki sent over 42nd *Rentai* from Weixian. While Japanese 5th *Shidan* had taken two routes of Lingqiu-Pingxingguan and Hunyuan-Tuanchengkou Pass from northern and northeastern directions, Kwantung Army, with 1st Mixed *Ryodan*, 2nd Mixed *Ryodan* and 15th Mixed *Ryodan*, undertook attacks for Yingxian-Ruyuekou, Hunyuan-Xiaoshikou and Shuoxian-Yangfangkou along three routes from northern direction.

15th Mixed *Ryodan*, which arrived at Yongxian on 25th, attacked Ruyuekou Pass on 26th.⁸ Yan Xishan ordered that 7th Group Army Yang Chengyuan hold back Japanese at Ruyuekou, Yang Aiyuan, with ten regiments of troops, fought zigzag wars with Japanese, with Ruyuekou Pass lost and recovered three to four times. Japanese reinforced troops with truck transportation.

2nd Mixed *Ryodan*, leaving Hunyuan on 25th, took over Xiashe, a position near Xiaoshikou, on 26th. A Japanese detachment from Kwantung Army's 2nd Mixed *Ryodan* joined 21st *Ryodan* in attacking the area around Tuanchengkou.⁹ On 26th, 71st Division

⁷ Guo Rugui, p 1:417-421 - continued the line, stating that one *Daitai* destroyed: 1000 killed, 2000 wounded, 100 trucks destroyed, one cannon, 300 rifles, 20 machineguns, and 3000 shells of mountain guns. furthermore, attacked Japanese at Tuanchengkou to lend support to besieged 71st Division.

关于平型关战斗的史实重建问题（修订）-杨奎松个人网站2005年09月11日: Communists same number casualties as Japanese loss of about 400-500.

PINGXINGGUAN HU QUANFU- p 225-239 - Nie Rongzhen's MEMOIRS mentioned Japanese 'fleeing' towards Dongpaochi and they destroyed the "snake-head"; LI TIANYOU, 686th Regiment Chief, claiming to have encircled '4000' Japanese, and finished off Japanese with the aid of Zhang Shaodong's 687th Regiment; communist 687th Regiment war history was very much a made-up.

⁸ PINGXINGGUAN HU QUANFU- p 322-325 Yan Xishan news release: After Chahar Campaign, Shanxi Province Army lost half of nine divisions. Gao Guizi's army was frustrated by Japanese as a result of the disengagement of Liu Maoen's 15th Corps for relief to Ruyuekou Pass.

⁹ Guo Rugui, p 1-418

and 8th Brigade engaged with Japanese at a height near Tuanchengkou. Yan Xishan ordered 6th Group Army Commander Fu Zuoyi and 18th Group Army Commander Zhu De on a counter-attack. Though, Lin Biao's communist-controlled 115th Division already withdrew from Guangou area; Chen Changjie's 61st Corps was ordered to push to the front by 27th. On 27th, 71st Division fell into Japanese encirclement. Fu Zuoyi ordered that 217th Brigade attack Japanese who were encircling Chinese troops at Jiandou. After Jiandou, 217th Brigade attacked Japanese who were encircling Mihui. Japanese counter-attacked 217th Brigade. 61st Corps then sent over 208th Brigade to impeding Japanese. 71st Division was relieved of Japanese encirclement. Hence, the two sides confronted with each other at Dongpaochi. On 28th, Chen Jixian's 434th Regiment recovered Yaozajian and a height nearby. At Dongpaochi and Xipaochi heights, Japanese had wrestling fights with 208th Brigade. Japanese reinforcement from Tuanchengkou and Guangou retook Yaozajian where Regiment Chief Chen Jixian died in battle. On 28th, Yan Xishan came to Daying command center for organizing a counter-attack, but the loss of Ruyuekou Pass forced a change of plan. 71st Division, Independent 2nd Brigade and 61st Corps persisted in the area till Yan Xishan ordered a pullback on the night of Sept 30th.