

Defending Nanking: An Examination of the Capital Garrison Forces

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1. Introduction

Through the winter of 1937, as the Japanese Central China Expeditionary Army (*Naka Shina hōmengun* 中支那方面軍), victorious in the Shanghai campaign, rushed towards Nanking, the capital of Nationalist China from 1927 until shortly after hostilities broke out in late 1937, and as an air campaign that had started in August was intensified, the civilian population of the city poured out of the city.¹ The Chinese military authorities were forced to address the issue of whether to make a stand at Nanking or abandon the city and move further inland. This decision was made in an environment where it was clear that the city could not be held for long and where the geography meant that, once surrounded, escape would be extremely difficult. Moreover, the best troops available to Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887-1975) had already been expended in Shanghai. If Nanking was to be held, it would have to be held by soldiers exhausted after long running battles over hundreds of miles from Shanghai to Nanking, who had suffered heavy losses and whose morale was rock bottom. According to the memoirs of the Kwangsi warlord and leading strategist, General Li Tsung-jen 李宗仁 (1891-1969), he had argued at a meeting called by Chiang Kai-shek and attended by his main military advisers in mid-November that:

Strategically speaking, Nanking was a dead end. The enemy could surround it from three sides, while to the north the Yangtze cut off any possibility of retreat. It was impossible for a newly defeated army to hold an isolated city for very long.... [O]ur troops were suffering from the recent defeat [in Shanghai] and lacking in morale. Moreover, no reinforcements could be brought in to help.²

Although written after the event, and perhaps with more than a little hindsight, it is clear that Chiang's advisers, including the highly professional Germans, opposed the decision to defend the city. Even the foreign community of Nanking was aware of this: on December 6, for instance, John Rabe (1882-1950) wrote in his diary that "General von

1 I have described the depopulation of Nanking in David Askew, "The Nanjing Incident: An Examination of the Civilian Population," *Sino-Japanese Studies* 13.2 (March 2001), pp. 2-20. The Central China Expeditionary Army, organized on November 7, 1937, consisted of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army (the nucleus of which was the 16th, 9th, 13th, 3rd, 11th, and 101st Divisions) and the Tenth Army (6th, 18th, and 114th Divisions).

2 Te-kong Tong and Li Tsung-jen, *The Memoirs of Li Tsung-jen* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), p. 327. General Li gives the date of the meeting as November 11; other accounts put it a few days later.

Falkenhausen [1878-1966] and all the German advisers have pointed out that this [the defense of the city] is hopeless.”³ On the other hand, the surrender of Nanking without a fight might have threatened Chiang’s political future. It was also possible that the Japanese might be forced to pay a heavy price for the city.⁴ In reply to those arguing that a decision to make a stand would be a mistake, General T’ang Sheng-chih 唐生智 (1889-1970), graduate of the Paoting Military Academy, devout Buddhist, ex-warlord, and one-time rival of Chiang Kai-shek, made an emotional plea to fight, saying:

The enemy is approaching the nation’s capital, which is also the site of the mausoleum of the National Father [Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 or Sun Wen 孫文, 1866-1925]. If, when the enemy is at our door, Nanking does not sacrifice one or two big generals, how can we account for ourselves before the soul of the National Father in heaven, and how can we discharge our duties before the supreme commander? I advocate defending Nanking to the end and fighting the enemy to the death.⁵

3 John Rabe (ed. Erwin Wickert, transl. John E. Woods), *The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1998), p. 52. I have discussed Rabe in Askew, “Nanking 1937-38: The Evidence from the Diary of John Rabe,” *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, vol. 9 (September 2002), pp. 95-122. For the German Advisory Team (Deutsche Beraterschaft in China), see Billie K. Walsh, “The German Military Mission in China, 1928-1938,” *Journal of Modern History* 46.3 (September 1974), pp. 502-13; and Hsi-Huey Liang, *The Sino-German Connection: Alexander von Falkenhausen Between China and Germany, 1900-1941* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1978), chapter 7. For the influence of Germans in Nationalist China, see William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984).

4 W. Plumer Mills at least thought that this might have been the case. “It was perfectly clear...that the Chinese could not hold the city, though not so clear that they might not be able to make it somewhat costly for the Japanese [to take it].” Letter of Mills to his wife, January 24, 1938, in Martha Lund Smalley, ed., *American Missionary Eyewitnesses to the Nanking Massacre, 1937 – 1938* (New Haven: Yale Divinity School Library, 1997), p. 46, and in Zhang Kaiyuan, ed., *Eyewitnesses to Massacre: American Missionaries Bear Witness to Japanese Atrocities in Nanjing* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), p. 247. Mills here was echoing General T’ang Sheng-chih 唐生智, who had proclaimed “that the capture of Nanking will cost the enemy dearly.” F. Tillman Durdin, “Yangtze Blockade Planned By China,” *New York Times*, November 28, 1937, p. 30.

5 Tong and Li, *The Memoirs of Li Tsung-jen*, p. 327. This account is corroborated by General Liu Fei 劉斐, Head of the First (Operations) Bureau of the Chinese General Staff 軍令部 (*chün-ling-pu*), “K’ang-chan ch’u-ch’i te Nan-ching pao-wei-chan” 抗戰初期的南京保衛戰 (The defense of Nanking in the early stage of the war of resistance), in *Yuan Kuo-min-tang chiang-ling k’ang-Jih chan-cheng ch’in-li-chi: Nan-ching pao-wei-chan* 原国民党將領抗日戰爭親歷記: 南京保衛戰 (The personal experiences of former Nationalist generals in the war of resistance against Japan: The defense of Nanking) (Peking: Chung-kuo wen-hsueh ch’u-pan-she, 1987) (henceforth *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*), pp. 6-13, at p. 9. T’ang Sheng-chih has also left an account in which he agrees that he was in favor of fighting, but only to buy enough time for the rest of the army to retreat. See T’ang, “Wei-hsü Nan-ching chih ching-kuo” 衛戍南京之經過 (How Nanking was defended), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 1-5, at p. 3.

The arguments in favor of withdrawing were overruled by Chiang Kai-shek, perhaps in the hope that the Trautman initiative would bear fruit, and perhaps thinking that he could save face by having troops put up a brief resistance before withdrawing.⁶ General Tang was appointed commander of the forces entrusted with the task of defending the capital and inflicting as much damage as possible on the Japanese. One aspect of the story of the Nanking Incident that has not been adequately analyzed to date in the English language literature is the size, structure, and fate of the Capital Garrison Forces (Shou-tu [or Nan-ching] wei-shu-jun 首都（南京）衛戍軍) ordered to defend the city from the approaching Japanese.⁷

In a previous paper, I have demonstrated that, according to the primary sources, the civilian population of Nanking was roughly 200,000 as of December 13, 1937 when the city fell, with a subsequent increase in population to 250,000. Of the two main groups of Chinese in and around Nanking when the city fell—the military and the civilian population—this paper attempts to determine the size of the army defending Nanking. The story of what happened to this army will have to be left to a future [article](#).

Although there is much debate and little consensus in the literature about the size of the Chinese army left in Nanking, its structure is well known. General Tang was eventually entrusted with the forces outlined in Chart 1 below. This was a strange mix of

6 For the Trautman initiative, see James T. C. Liu, “German Mediation in the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-38,” *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 8.2 (February 1949), pp. 157-71. Chiang Kai-shek had earlier decided to postpone withdrawing his troops from Shanghai in the hope that the Nine-Power Treaty conference about to start in Brussels would decide to impose sanctions on Japan. “In order to gain the international sympathy and support that will be of use to our cause,” he informed his high-ranking officers from divisional commander up, “the battle in Shanghai must be continued for at least two [more] weeks.” Sung Hsi-lien 宋希濂, “Nan-ching shou-ch’eng chan-i ch’in-li-chi” 南京守城戰役親歷記 (An account of the battle to defend Nanking), in *Wen-shih tzu-liao hsüan-chi ti-12-chi* 文史資料選輯第十二輯 (Collected materials from *Wen-shih tzu-liao*, vol. 12), ed. Chung-kuo jen-min cheng-chih hsieh-shang hui-i ch’üan-kuo wei-yüan-hui 中国人民政治協商會議全國委員會 and Wen-shih tzu-liao yen-chiu wei-yüan-hui 文史資料研究委員會, p. 14, cited in Kasahara Tokushi 笠原十九司, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun” 南京防衛戦と中国軍 (The battle to defend Nanking and the Chinese army), in Hora Tomio 洞富雄, Fujiwara Akira 藤原彰, and Honda Katsuichi 本多勝一, eds., *Nankin dai gyakusatsu no kenkyū* 南京大虐殺の研究 (Research into the great Nanking massacre) (Tokyo: Banseisha, 1992), pp. 217-18.

7 I have relied heavily on the following research for the Chinese military in Nanking. Itakura Yoshiaki 板倉由明, “Nankin senshi to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku” 『南京戦史』と南京事件の数量的把握 (*Nankin senshi* [A history of the battle of Nanking] and a mathematical grasp of the Nanking Incident), in Itakura, *Hontō wa kō datta Nankin jiken* 本当はこうだった南京事件 (The truth of the Nanking Incident) (Tokyo: Nihon tosho kankōkai, 1999); Kasahara Tokushi, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun”; and Nankin senshi henshū iinkai 南京戦史編集委員会, ed., *Nankin senshi* 南京戦史 (A history of the battle of Nanking), expanded and revised edition (Tokyo: Kaikōsha, 1993), particularly the two sections entitled “Nankin bōei jinchi to haibi heiryoku” 南京防衛陣地と配備兵力 (The defense positions in Nanking and the military force dispositions) and “Nankin bōei Chūgoku gun no yukue” 南京防衛中国軍の行方 (The fate of the Chinese army defending Nanking), pp. 45-64, 346-66.

elite, German-trained and equipped units (the 36th, 87th and 88th Divisions), a super-elite unit (the Training Brigade [*chiao-tao tsung-tui* 教導總隊]⁸), other central divisions, paper divisions (by the time it reached Nanking, the 103rd had been reduced to a mere one or two thousand soldiers), and provincial troops.

Chart 1: Chain of Command, Capital Garrison Forces (Nanking, 1937)⁹

	72 nd Corps (Sun Yüan-liang 孫元良)	88 th Division (Sun Yüan-liang)
	78 th Corps (Sung Hsi-lien 宋希濂)	36 th Division (Sung Hsi-lien)
	74 th Corps (Yü Chi-shih 俞濟時)	51 st Division (Wang Yao-wu 王耀武)
		58 th Division (Feng Ching-fa 馮經法)
	66 th Corps (Yeh Chao 葉肇)	159 th Division (T'an Sui 譚邃)
		160 th Division (Yeh Chao)
T'ang Sheng-chih, Commander, Capital Garrison Forces	71 st Corps (Wang Ching-chiu 王敬久)	87 th Division (Shen Fa-tsoo 沈發藻)
	2 nd Army (Hsü Yüan-ch'üan 徐源泉)	41 st Division (Ting Chih-p'an 丁治磐)
		48 th Division (Hsü Chi-wu 徐繼武)
	83 rd Corps (Teng Lung-kuang 鄧龍光)	154 th Division (Wu Chien-hsiung 巫劍雄)
		156 th Division (Li Chiang 李江)
	C-in-C, Capital Garrison	103 rd Division (Pai Hui-chang 栢輝章)
		112 th Division (Huo Shou-yi 霍守義)
		Training Brigade (Kui Yung-ch'ing 桂永清)
		MP units (Su Shan-ling 蕭山令)
		Chiangning Fortress (Shao Pai-ch'ang 邵百昌)

Although the structure of the Capital Garrison Forces is well known, it is far more difficult to say with confidence what its size was. In this paper, I have attempted to construct as objective an estimate as possible of the total strength of the Capital Garrison Forces. In addition to the various primary sources, the secondary material includes the estimate of Brigadier-General T'an Tao-p'ing 譚道平, a staff officer close to the Chinese Commander-in-Chief, General T'ang Sheng-chih, who must have enjoyed privileged access to information on troop numbers.¹⁰ Other sources include estimates made by the Japanese army and Western observers, as well as the research published on this issue.

8 The Training Brigade, also known as the *Lehrbrigade* 教導旅 (*chiao-tao lü*), was founded in 1933 on the advice of General Hans von Seeckt, one-time commander-in-chief of the Reichswehr, and was modeled on Hitler's *Schutzstaffel*. See Kasahara, "Nankin bōeisen to Chūgokugun," pp. 224-25. Also see F. F. Liu, *A Military History of Modern China, 1924-1949* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), pp. 91-94.

9 From Hsu Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai, et al., eds., *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)* (Taipei: Chung Wu Publishing Co., 1971; second edition), p. 201, Chart 19. Note that this work mistakenly gives the 155th Division as the 144th, the 112th as the 121st, and the Training Brigade as the Training Division. A *chün* 軍 (corps) is sometimes translated in the literature as "army" and a *chün-t'uan* 軍團 (army) as "army corps." Also see Masahiro Yamamoto, *Nanking: Anatomy of an Atrocity* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), pp. 292-93.

10 See T'an Tao-p'ing, *Nan-ching wei-shu-chan shi-hua* 南京衛戍戰史話 (A history of the defense of Nanking) (1946), cited in Sun Chai-wei 孫宅巍, "Nan-ching pao-wei-chan shuang-fang ping-li te yen-chiu" 南京保衛戰双方兵力的研究 (The estimated military strength of both sides in the battle to defend Nanking), in Chiang-su-sheng li-shih hsüeh-hui 江蘇省歷史学会,

A completely accurate estimate is made impossible by a number of factors. First, many units of the army that defended Nanking fought a running battle with the Japanese over an enormous territory from Shanghai to Nanking. Battle losses in a situation like this meant that an accurate calculation of the size of at least some of the units when they arrived in and around Nanking would have been impossible (this is especially true for those units that arrived in dribs and drabs). Second, Chinese (and, for that matter, Japanese) armies conscripted coolies to provide labor, and the numbers of these were less important than the number of front-line fighting troops and so were perhaps not as accurately counted. Third, there is no universal agreement about either the geographical definition of Nanking or the definition of the period during which the battle for Nanking occurred.¹¹ Fourth, as the defense of Nanking collapsed, senior officers abandoned their troops and ran.¹² There was no formal surrender, and large segments of the Chinese army either attempted to escape from Nanking or changed into civilian clothes and hid among the civilian population. The exact number of troops who managed to successfully escape will never be known. Coolies and soldiers press-ganged into service may well have escaped and headed for their homes rather than regroup, and at least some appear to have taken up banditry around Nanking. Neither the Japanese nor the Chinese had a firm grasp of exactly how many troops were in the area, nor of how many survived. Finally, commanders frequently inflated the reported number of troops under their command. In the armies of Nationalist China in 1937, pay was determined by how many troops one had under one's command, and was handed over in a lump sum to commanders to distribute to their troops. There were, thus, very strong financial incentives to inflate the numbers.¹³

Researchers are therefore left with no choice but to make educated guesses about what the size of the defending army was.

2. The Size of the Defending Army: A Macro Approach

As is the case with the civilian population, a number of markedly different estimates of the size of the Chinese army defending Nanking exist. These range from 20,000 to 150,000.

One reason for these differences may be that some estimates did not include auxiliaries. Another may be that some estimates were taken at relatively early dates: it is possible that once battle losses suffered by the Chinese 83rd Corps and the 87th Division

ed., *K'ang-Jih chan-cheng shih-shih t'an-so* 抗日戰爭史事探索 (Essays on the War of Resistance against Japan) (Shanghai: Shanghai She-hui k'o-hsüeh-yüan ch'u-pan-she, 1988), pp. 115-28. Also see T'an Tao-p'ing, "Nanking wei-shu-chan" 南京衛戍戰 (The battle for Nanking), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 14-32.

11 Thus, there is no agreement about whether, for instance, Tanyang 丹陽 (45 miles or so from Nanking) or Soochow 蘇州 (120 miles) should be viewed as part of Nanking: if included as part of the city, the commencement of the battle for Nanking can be pushed back into November.

12 See Durdin, "Butchery Marked Capture of Nanking," *New York Times*, December 18, 1937, pp. 1, 10, at p. 10.

13 Frank Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War, 1937-41: Marco-Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor* (New York: Macmillan, 1945), p. 8. Dorn stated that "[s]ince a military career in China was considered a means of self-enrichment...commanders parceled out monies received as they saw fit and pocketed the rest."

in Chinkiang (or Chen-chiang) 鎮江 roughly 40 miles from Nanking are taken into account, at least some of the gaps between the estimates of T'an and *Nankin senshi* 南京戰史 (A history of the battle for Nanking) that are discussed below might disappear.¹⁴ Needless to say, since the Chinese army fought a long campaign over several months in and around Shanghai, and then from Shanghai to Nanking, the longer the time frame is pushed back, the larger the Chinese army becomes. In Japan, members of the group known as the Great Massacre Faction (*daigyakusatsuha* 大虐殺派) have pushed the time frame back three months in some cases and counted casualties suffered tens if not hundreds of miles away from Nanking as part of the Nanking massacre. Kasahara Tokushi 笠原十九司, for instance, argues that the “broadly defined” battle for Nanking began on November 19, 1937.¹⁵

I have seen one suggestion that Nanking could be defined as all of China, and the time of the Nanking Incident extended to fifteen years, from 1931 to 1945, rather than the usual six weeks, to give a total of 10 million victims (in a city with a civilian population of 200,000-250,000 plus an army of perhaps 81,500).¹⁶ This seems patently absurd: the battle for the outer ring of defense positions (eight to twelve miles outside the walls of Nanking) did not start until December 6-7.¹⁷ Moreover, the battle around the walls of Nanking itself and the various strongholds surrounding the city (one to three miles outside the walls of Nanking)—the key positions were Yuhuatai 雨花台 (the Rain Flower

14 Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” p. 183. Note that the *Nankin senshi* estimates are as of December 6 or 7, whereas Chinese sources are usually as of December 4, when the Japanese army reached the vicinity of Chū-jung 句容 (about 25 miles from Nanking) and T'ienwang Temple 天王寺 (about 30 miles from Nanking). See Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” p. 181.

15 Kasahara, “Nankin Bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 240. On November 19, the Shanghai Expeditionary Army occupied Soochow, and the Tenth Army occupied Kashing (Chia-hsing) 嘉興. Ch'angshu 常熟 also fell on this day. Elsewhere, Kasahara has argued that the date could be pushed back to August. See his “Nit-chū sensō to Amerika kokumin ishiki: Panaigō jiken Nankin jiken o megutte” 日中戦争とアメリカ国民意識: パナイ号事件・南京事件をめぐって (The Sino-Japanese War and American public opinion: An examination of the *Panay* and Nanking Incidents), in Chūō Daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo 中央大学人文科学研究所, ed., *Nit-chū sensō: Nihon Chūgoku Amerika* 日中戦争: 日本・中国・アメリカ (The Sino-Japanese War: Japan, China, America) (Tokyo: Chūō Daigaku shuppanbu, 1993). The geographical implication is that Nanking is defined as the entire Yangtze delta encompassing Shanghai.

16 Takashi Yoshida, “A Battle over History: The Nanjing Massacre in Japan,” in Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 70-132, at p. 117, notes that “the death toll could be expanded to more than ten million, depending on how the space and scope of the Massacre are defined.” As Yoshida acknowledges, this figure can only be reached if “Nanking” is defined as being synonymous with China, and the time span is stretched to fifteen years.

17 This outer ring included strategic positions at Ch'ishashan 栖霞山, Tangshan 湯山, Chunhuachen 淳化鎮 and Niushoushan 牛首山. *Nankin senshi*, p. 48. When Durdin, “Chinese Make Stand,” *New York Times*, December 8, 1937, p. 1, talks of “positions along a semi-circular front about ten miles from the city,” he is (I am assuming) referring to this line. Also see Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War*, p. 90.

Terrace) and the Purple Mountain or Tzuchin 紫金山—did not begin until December 9.¹⁸ When the Central China Expeditionary Army was ordered to attack Nanking on December 1, it was still 44 to 93 miles away from the city.¹⁹ The Battle Report of the Capital Garrison Forces also begins from December 9. For the purposes of this paper, therefore, Nanking will be defined as the actual city and its suburbs, and the battle for Nanking will be defined as the period from December 6-7 until December 13.

2.1 A Rough Calculation

Central divisions in Nationalist China were quite different in character from provincial divisions. The central divisions in Nanking were the 36th, 51st, 58th, 87th, and 88th, together with the Training Brigade (which, it will be assumed here, was the size of a division), whereas the 41st, 48th, 103rd, 112th, 154th, 156th, 159th, and 160th were provincial divisions that were not as well equipped nor as well trained as the Whampoa-led central divisions.

A quick and easy (but highly inaccurate) calculation of the size of the Capital Garrison Forces can be made as follows. Under normal circumstances, (central) Chinese army divisions averaged about 9,000 men each in 1937. Since brigades seem to have averaged 3,000 each, one division usually consisted of three brigades.²⁰ However, many of the divisions defending Nanking consisted only of two brigades, which implies that the fighting strength of each was 6,000.²¹ The total theoretical strength of the fourteen

18 This was the so-called Fu-kuo Line 複廓陣地 (multiple positions line) which consisted of five encampments: (1) the position encompassing the Ichiang Gate 挹江門, Hsiakwan 下關, and Lion Head Mountain 獅子山 (including the river fortress); (2) an encampment with two wings at Mt. Mufu 幕府山 and Red Mountain (Hongshan) 紅山; (3) the positions including Purple Mountain and Chungshan Gate 中山門 (including the Fuguishan 富貴山 gun-battery); (4) an encampment including positions at Hongmaoshan 紅毛山, Kwanghua Gate 光華門, and T'ungchi Gate 通濟門; and finally (5) Yuhuatai and Chunghua Gate 中華門. *Nankin senshi*, p. 48.

19 Itakura, “*Nankin senshi to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku*,” p. 181.

20 H. G. W. Woodhead, ed., *The China Year Book, 1938* (Shanghai: The North-China Daily News & Herald Ltd., 1938), p. 411. However, both Evans Fordyce Carlson, *The Chinese Army: Its Organization and Military Efficiency* (Westport: Hyperion Press, 1940; reprint 1975), p. 27, and Liu, *A Military History*, p. 126, give the size of central divisions as 10,000. Both Hsu Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai, et al., eds., *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*, p. 172, and Sun Chai-wei, “Nan-ching pao-wei-chan,” p. 121, state that a (reorganized) central division was 10,923 strong. Kasahara, “Nankin bōeigun no hōkai kara gyakusatsu made” 南京防衛軍の崩壊から虐殺まで (From the collapse of the Capital Garrison Force until the massacre), in Hora Tomio 洞富雄, Fujiwara Akira 藤原彰, and Honda Katsuichi 本多勝一, eds., *Nankin dai gyakusatsu no genba e* 南京大虐殺の現場へ (To the scene of the great Nanjing massacre) (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1988), p. 234, and “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 312, relies on oral history to argue that a brigade consisted of 5,000 and a division of three brigades and 16,000 men. As will be demonstrated in this paper, Kasahara’s figures in particular are highly misleading when applied to the various units in Nanking.

²¹ George F. Nafziger, *The Growth and Organization of the Chinese Army (1895-1945)* (West Chester: The Nafziger Collection, 1999), p. 82, writes that the central divisions consisted of two brigades of 4,609 men and officers each, but appears to suggest that this larger brigade emerged in 1938, after the fight for Nanking had finished.

divisions (counting the Training Brigade as a division) under General T'ang's command therefore could have been as many as 126,000 (14 divisions \times 9,000) or as few as 81,000 to 93,000 (roughly 27 to 31 brigades \times 3,000).²² This assumes that all brigades and divisions were at full-strength when the battle for Nanking began, which is clearly false.

There are other ways of calculating the size of the army divisions in Nanking. Masahiro Yamamoto cites a G-2 report from August 1937 that gives 97,000 as "the total manpower of the thirteen divisions that were later to join the [capital] garrison [force]."²³ This gives an average of 7,462 per division. When the Sino-Japanese War broke out, the central Chinese army had roughly 300,000 troops in 40 divisions (7,500 per division), of which ten were elite German-trained and equipped divisions with a total strength of 80,000 (8,000 per division).²⁴ In October, the Nationalists had poured roughly seventy-one divisions (plus five artillery regiments) and 500,000 troops into the Shanghai campaign (roughly 7,042 per division).²⁵ By the end of the Shanghai campaign, eighty-three divisions with about 700,000 troops had been committed to the fight against the Japanese (8,434 per division).²⁶ The above suggests a total strength in Nanking (at fourteen divisions) of roughly 98,600 to 118,100.

However, these calculations provide only a very rough guideline. Many of the various army divisions defending Nanking only had two brigades for a reason: almost all had been heavily mauled in months of fighting in and around Shanghai and had retreated to Nanking closely pursued by the Japanese. Casualties were, in some units especially, extremely high. For instance, some researchers doubt that either the 103rd or 112th Divisions should be counted at all.²⁷ When the 66th Corps arrived in Nanking, it had been reduced to less than half of its original size, and its two divisions were each

22 Only the 36th, 87th, and Training Brigade had three brigades, the rest had two or less. I have calculated as follows: 88 D (2 brigades) + 36 D (3) + 51 D (2) + 58 D (0-2) + 159 D (2) + 160 D (1-2) + 87 D (3) + 41 D (2) + 48 D (1-2) + 156 D (2) + 103 D (0 [3 Regiments]) + 112 D (2 brigades) + TB (3) = 23 - 27 brigades + 3 Regiments (6,000, the equivalent of two brigades) + 154 D (which it will be assumed was two brigades) = 81,000-93,000. Kasahara, "Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun," pp. 243-47, gives a similar chart to Chart 1 above which includes the number of brigades in each division, with several exceptions (he does not give any for the 154th Division, for instance). This gives a total of twenty-three brigades (including three in the Training Brigade), with the possibility of another four to six. Also, see *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 329-31, which gives twenty-six brigades with another possible five.

23 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, pp. 48, 73 note 45, citing a G-2 report, no. 9582, August 5, 1937, compiled by Joseph W. Stilwell, pp. 9-12, M1444-17.

24 Liu, *A Military History*, pp. 100, 112, 147. It is frequently assumed in the literature that the size of a Chinese infantry division was 10,000. Thus, for instance, Carlson, *The Chinese Army*, pp. 23, 30, gives 300,000 troops in thirty divisions; and it was sometimes thought that there were only eight of the elite German-trained divisions. See also Hsi-sheng Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse, 1937-45* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982), p. 37.

25 See Hsi-sheng Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War*, p. 42; and Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War*, p. 74.

26 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 42; and *Nankin senshi*, p. 4.

27 *Nankin senshi*, p. 60, gives a total strength of about 1,000 for the 103rd and even fewer for the 112th Division by the time the battle for Nanking began.

reorganized into two *regiments*!²⁸ In order to derive a more accurate estimate, then, it is necessary to examine the various primary and secondary sources.

2.2 35,000 to 50,000

Several sources suggest that the size of the defending army was less than 50,000. First, Rabe and the *New York Times* give an estimate of 20,000, although this is only of troops within the walls of Nanking.²⁹ The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* also gives the same figure, but does not specify where they were.³⁰ This figure may derive from the belief that “at least two divisions in Nanking” were “virtually trapped” in the city, with another ten divisions outside the city walls.³¹ Second, intelligence data of the Tenth Army headquarters indicated that the Capital Garrison Forces totaled 35,000 troops.³² Hata Ikuhiko 秦郁彦 cites an official history of the battle published in Taiwan which also states “there were originally 100,000, and between 35,000 to 50,000 when the city fell.”³³

An interesting aspect of the debate about the Chinese army is that most neutral foreign observers appear to have reached a consensus about its size. International observers in Nanking were convinced that the defending army was 50,000 strong. In his report to the U.S. government, Vice-Consul Espy, who was in a position to know, estimated that the city was “defended by not over fifty thousand men if, in fact, that many.”³⁴ A U.S. Army intelligence report of December 5, 1937 estimated a force of

28 “Lu-chün ti-66-chün chan-tou hsiang-pao” 陸軍第六十六軍戰鬥詳報 (Battle report, Army 66th Corps), in Chung-kuo ti-2 li-shih tang-an-kuan 中国第2歷史档案館 (Number Two Historical Archives of China), ed., *K'ang-Jih chan-cheng cheng-mian chan-ch'ang* 抗日戰爭正面戰場 (The battlefield in the War of Resistance) (Nanking: Jiang-su ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 433-36; and Ye Chen-chung 叶振中, “Lu-chün ti-160-shih chan-tou hsiang-pao” 陸軍第一六〇師戰鬥詳報 (Battle report, Army 160th Division), *K'ang-Jih chan-cheng cheng-mian chan-ch'ang*, pp. 436-46. Also see Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 271.

29 Rabe, “Hitoraa e no jōshinsho” ヒトラーへの上申書 (Report to Hitler), in *Nankin no shinjitsu: Raabe no nikki o kenshō shite* 南京の真実 (The truth of Nanking: The diary of John Rabe) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1997), p. 302. See also “Japan Welcomes ‘Shift’ in Nanking,” *New York Times*, December 8, 1937, p. 4, an article which states that these 20,000 troops were led by Generals Pai Ch'ung-hsi 白崇禧 (1894-1966) and Chang Fah-kwei 張發奎 (also known as Chang Fa-k'uei, 1896-1980), neither of whom remained in Nanking, and both of whom were far too able for Chiang Kai-shek to have been able to entrust with a front command. Most units did in fact end up in the city.

30 *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, December 17, 1937. This article is reprinted in translation in *Nankin jiken chōsa kenkyūkai* 南京事件調査研究会, ed., *Nankin jiken shiryōshū* 南京事件資料集 (Materials on the Nanking Incident) (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1992), pp. 523-24.

31 Durdin, “Spy Aids Japanese at Gate of Capital,” *New York Times*, December 11, 1937, p. 3.

32 This was as of December 3, 1937, a relatively early date. The data is cited in Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 46.

33 Hata Ikuhiko 秦郁彦, *Nankin jiken: “Gyakusatsu” no kōzō* 南京事件: 「虐殺」の構造 (The Nanking Incident: The structure of a “massacre”) (Tokyo: Chūkō shinsho, 1986), p. 208.

34 Vice-Consul Espy, “Report on Conditions at Nanking, December 13, 1937-January 24, 1938,” in R. John Pritchard and Sonia Magbanua Zaide, eds., *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1987), p. 4,568. The U.S. Embassy in Nanking, and especially the

40,000 to 50,000.³⁵ In his insightful analysis of the fall of the city, the journalist F. Tillman Durdin noted that “[s]ome observers” had estimated that there were sixteen divisions defending Nanking. He continued that “Chinese divisions even in normal times have an average of only 5,000 men,” but the “battered divisions that defended Nanking” had been reduced to 2,000 to 3,000 troops each. Therefore, he concluded, “[i]t is fairly safe to say that [the Capital Garrison Forces consisted of] some 50,000 troops.”³⁶ During the Tokyo Trials, it was again reported that the Capital Garrison Forces had been 50,000 strong.

The Japanese army believed that the number of troops defending the city was between 50,000 and 100,000, and captured Chinese documents suggesting that 50,000 was the actual number.³⁷ On December 10, Second Lieutenant Maeda Yoshihiko 前田吉彦 of the 45th Infantry Regiment wrote in his diary that the Capital Garrison Forces consisted of about 60,000 troops.³⁸ The Japanese media also reported that it was 50,000 strong.³⁹

There appears to have been a suggestion that 75,000 troops were defending the capital. This was reported by the *London Times*, but rejected by the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* which stated that, given the quick collapse, it was highly unlikely that so many troops could have been there, and (as noted above) claimed that in the end only 20,000 troops were defending the city.⁴⁰

2.3 65,000 to 81,000

A second set of larger figures is provided when each individual unit is examined. It is possible that the figure 50,000 derives from the 49,000 “fighting troops” given by T’an (see Table 1), and that the “auxiliaries” were simply not counted. Western journalists had sources within the Chinese Nationalist army, so if this interpretation is correct, it is not surprising that the figures match. Since the auxiliaries were not viewed as “fighting troops,” they may not have been included in any official count of the

assistant military attaché, Captain Frank Roberts, it can be comfortably assumed, had close contacts with the Chinese military.

35 “Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division Relating to General Political, Economic and Military Conditions in China, 1918-1941,” cited in Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 46.

36 Durdin, “Japanese Atrocities Marked Fall of Nanking after Chinese Command Fell,” *New York Times*, January 9, 1938, p. 38. Durdin had earlier written that after being “[d]riven back within the wall [of Nanking], 50,000 Chinese at first put up a stiff resistance.” See Durdin, “Butchery Marked Capture of Nanking,” *New York Times*, December 18, 1937, pp. 1, 10, at p. 10. Also see the interview with Durdin in the *Sankei shinbun* 産経新聞, August 31, 1989.

37 Hata, *Nankin jiken*, p. 208.

38 “Maeda Yoshihiko shōi nikki” 前田吉彦少尉日記 (Diary of Second Lieutenant Maeda Yoshihiko), in Nankin senshi henshū iinkai 南京戦史編集委員会, ed., *Nankin senshi shiryōshū I* 南京戦史資料集1 (A history of the battle of Nanking: Collected materials, vol. 1), revised and expanded edition (Tokyo: Kaikōsha 1993), pp. 345-62, at p. 348.

39 See the *Yomiuri Shinbun* 読売新聞, second evening edition, December 13, 1937, cited in Honda Katsuichi, *The Nanjing Massacre: A Japanese Journalist Confronts Japan’s National Shame* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 166, 169.

40 “Nanking Holding Out: Defenders’ Numbers,” *London Times*, December 13, 1937, p. 12; and *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, December 17, 1937, in *Amerika kankei shiryōshū*.

defending army. It should be emphasized that the auxiliaries were used behind the lines, were unarmed, and were frequently coerced into working.⁴¹ In one article Durdin notes “boy camp followers” (i.e., auxiliaries) who were “10 to 12 years old.” These “uniformed regulars serving as messengers, bearers and cooks, and sometimes in the very front lines... seem to enjoy war as a game.”⁴² Other adults worked as coolies carting food and ammunition. T’an estimates that there were 32,000 such auxiliaries in Nanking.

Another possible explanation is that the figures do not include the new recruits press-ganged into the Capital Garrison Forces who were counted as “fighting troops” but who, in many cases, had to be taught how to fire their weapons. As can be seen from Table 1, T’an believes that there were 30,400 new recruits, who were added to a force of 50,600.

In either case, T’an’s figures can be reconciled with most Western estimates. His estimate is based on a detailed micro-level examination of each of the units that made up the Capital Garrison Forces. It also helps to explain the ease and surprising quickness with which the Japanese, with a force themselves of not much more than four divisions and roughly 50,000 men, broke through heavily entrenched positions and, with relatively small losses (1,558 dead and 4,619 wounded), took the city.⁴³

Table 1. Soldiers Defending Nanking⁴⁴

Unit	T’an Tao-p’ing				Documents and Memoirs	<i>Nankin senshi</i> Chapter 2
	Fighting Troops	Auxiliaries	Total	Of which new recruits		
2 Army (41D, 48D)	12,000	6,000	18,000	14,400		13,000-14,000
66 C (159D, 160D)	4,500	2,500	7,000		160D approx. 9,000	5,000-6,000
83 C (154, 156D)	4,000	1,500	5,500			approx. 3,500
36D (78 C)	4,000	3,000	7,000	2,000	11,968	approx. 7,000
51D	4,000	2,000	6,000	2,000	74 Corps	7,000-7,500
58D	4,000	3,000	7,000	2,000	approx. 17,000	7,000-7,500
87D	3,500	3,000	6,500	2,000	approx. 10,000	3,000-3,500
88D	4,000	3,000	7,000	3,000	approx. 6,000	approx. 6,000
TB	7,000	4,000	11,000	5,000	approx. 35,000	5,500-6,000
103D, 112D MP units C-in-C units	2,000	4,000	6,000		103D 2,000 MP 5,490	103D approx. 1,000 MP 3 - 3,500 4,500-5,000
Total	49,000	32,000	81,000	30,400	96,458	65,500-70,500

41 Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” p. 183.

42 Durdin, “Chinese Fight On to Slow Invaders,” *New York Times*, December 7, 1937, p. 12.

43 As Matsui Iwane 松井石根 (1878-1948) noted in his diary on December 11-13, the main units that took Nanking were the 6th, 9th, 16th and 114th Divisions. See “Matsui Iwane taishō jinchū nikki” 松井石根大將陣中日記 (General Matsui Iwane’s field diary), in *Nankin senshi henshū iinkai*, ed., *Nankin senshi shiryōshū II* 南京戰史資料集II (A history of the battle of Nanking: Collected materials, vol. 2), revised and expanded edition (Tokyo: Kaikōsha 1993), pp. 1-188, at p. 139. The sizes varied, with (as of November 20, 1937) the 16th at 19,036 strong and the 9th at 13,182. See Hata, *Nankin jiken*, p. 93. As other units, such as the main body of the 3rd Division, which did not arrive in time to take part in the capture of Nanking, started to move into the city, the number of Japanese troops quickly increased to 70,000, although the battle was by then finished.

44 From Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” p. 182. Itakura in turn has used Sun, “Nan-ching pao-wei-chan.” Also see *Nankin senshi*, p. 60.

C= Corps, TB = Training Brigade, D = Division, MP = Military Police, C-in-C units = units directly attached to the Commander-in-Chief

Table 1 gives estimates from three sources. The first is T'an, the second is a collation of (some of the) various documents and memoirs from the individual units posted in Nanking, and the third is one of the main Japanese sources, *Nankin senshi*. Since T'an's figure of 49,000 "fighting troops" matches the estimates of the size of the Chinese army made by many Western observers in Nanking, and taking into account his privileged position as a member of the staff of the Chinese Commander-in-Chief, General T'ang, it might be thought that his figures are the most accurate. In this paper I have reexamined the various sources and concluded that this is in fact the case, although I do have several minor reservations, the major one being that it does not seem likely that the Training Brigade could have had as many as 11,000 troops. Before examining the primary sources, however, it is necessary to mention a third set of figures.

2.4 Other Figures: 100,000 to 150,000

Several Chinese estimates put the size of the defending army at ten to about fourteen or fifteen divisions with a strength of 100,000, more than 100,000, or 110,000 plus.⁴⁵ These estimates seem to derive from a quick back-of-the-envelope calculation similar to my own rough estimate of 81,000-93,000 to 126,000 for the size of the defending army (see section 1.2 above).

General Liu Fei (also known as Liu Wei-chang), Head of the First (Operations) Bureau of the Chinese General Staff, wrote that in all there were more than 100,000 soldiers in the Capital Garrison Forces.⁴⁶ General Li Tsung-jen wrote many years later that the army was "more than 100,000 men."⁴⁷ General Sung Hsi-lien (78th Corps) gave a figure of more than 110,000.⁴⁸ The breakdown of this estimate is of interest. According to General Sung, the 36th, 87th, and 88th Divisions, the 66th, 74th and 83rd Corps, the Second Army, the two MP units, and the Training Brigade combined were 70,000 strong.⁴⁹ T'an's figure is 75,000. Sung believed that a further 40,000 soldiers were sent to reinforce this group. As can be seen from Table 1, however, the only other units were the heavily depleted 103rd and 112th Divisions, and these could not possibly have provided reinforcements on this scale. In his memoirs, General Sun Yuan-liang (72nd Corps) does not even bother to count these last two divisions, merely stating that the Capital Garrison Forces consisted of eight units, which were "said to be 100,000 strong."⁵⁰ In his diary (November 28), General Hsü Yung-chang (1889-1959), wrote that

45 See the various sources listed in Kasahara, "Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun," pp. 248-49.

46 Liu Fei, "K'ang-chan ch'u-ch'i te Nan-ching pao-wei-chan," p. 11.

47 Tong and Li, *The Memoirs of Li Tsung-jen*, p. 328.

48 Sung Hsi-lien, "Nan-ching shou-ch'eng-chan" 南京守城戰 (The battle to defend the city of Nanking), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 228-39, at p. 233.

49 Sung Hsi-lien, "Nanking shou-ch'eng-chan," pp. 232-33. Sung's estimate gives an average of 5,833 per division and 2,590 per brigade for these units which were larger and healthier than the 103rd and 112th, while T'an gives 6,250 and 2,778.

50 Cited in Suzuki Akira 鈴木明, *Shin "Nankin dai gyakusatsu" no maboroshi* 新「南京大虐殺」のまぼろし (The illusion of the "great Nanjing massacre": A second chapter) (Tokyo: Asuka shinsha, 1999), p. 251. The eight units must have been the 2A, 66C, 83C, 36D, 74C, 87D, 88D

the Capital Garrison Forces consisted of “about ten divisions,” which also seems to indicate that he did not view the 103rd and 112th as proper divisions.⁵¹

In addition to these Chinese estimates, some Japanese army sources also give 100,000 as the size of the opposing forces. Major-General Iinuma Mamoru 飯沼守 (1888-1978), the chief of staff of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army, wrote in his diary on December 17 that the Chinese had “about twenty divisions and 100,000 men in Nanking and its environs.”⁵² The Commander of the 30th Infantry Brigade, Major-General Sasaki Tōichi 佐々木到一 (1886-1955), wrote on January 5, 1938 that a total of 100,000 had been ordered to defend Nanking.⁵³ Colonel Nakazawa Mitsuo 中沢三夫 (1892?-1980), chief of staff of the 16th Division, wrote that the main Chinese force defending Nanking was made up of eight or nine divisions in total. At the time, he continued, a “division consisted of 5,000 men each.” However, given the fact that these divisions had been entrusted with the task of defending Nanking, Nakazawa suggested that they might have been reinforced: “If they had been increased to 10,000 each, the defending army would be 80,000 to 90,000.” Although it was possible that as many as ten defeated divisions might also make their way to the city, he went on, these extra divisions would not be much more than 2,000 or 3,000 strong, and therefore there may have been an extra 20,000 to 30,000, for a total of 100,000 to 120,000.⁵⁴

There seems to have been a consensus among the Japanese that the strength of a single division was about 5,000 on average, with some divisions only 2,000 to 3,000 strong, and that there were 20 divisions. As noted above, Durdin also believed that “even in normal times” Chinese divisions averaged only 5,000 men, and the divisions in Nanking had been reduced to 2,000 to 3,000 troops each. Since there were only fourteen divisions, one possible conclusion is that the force defending Nanking was less than 70,000 strong.

One of the most authoritative (and problematic) of the secondary sources is perhaps that of Sun Chai-wei 孫宅巍, a researcher who gives 150,000 as the number of Chinese troops. Sun starts with the figures given in the “Documents and Memoirs” column in Table 1. There are no estimates for several units, and so Sun has added various figures given in T’an for these units. This produces a “minimum” of 125,458.⁵⁵ Sun next compares the figures given by T’an that are also given in the various surviving documents and memoirs. For these units, T’an gives a total of 52,000, whereas the “Documents and Memoirs” column gives a total of 96,458. Sun divides the two ($96,458 \div 52,000 = 1.85$), and then assumes that the figures given for units by T’an but not by “Documents and Memoirs” also need to be increased by a factor of 1.85 to give a total of

and either the TB or the C-in-C units (see Table 1), and would therefore have consisted of eleven divisions and the Training Brigade.

51 Cited in Suzuki, *Shin “Nankin dai gyakusatsu” no maboroshi*, p. 237.

52 “Iinuma Mamoru nikki” 飯沼守日記 (Diary of Iinuma Mamoru), in *Nankin senshi shiryōshū I*, pp. 1-196, at p. 159.

53 “Sasaki Tōichi shōshō shiki” 佐々木到一少将私記 (Notes of Major-General Sasaki Tōichi), in *Nankin senshi shiryōshū I*, pp. 263-76, at p. 276.

54 Nakazawa Mitsuo, cited in *Nankin senshi*, p. 347. Nakazawa died in 1980 at the age of 89. See *Asahi Shinbun* 朝日新聞, evening edition, November 29, 1980.

55 $96,458 + 18,000 (2A) + 3,500 (159D) + 5,500 (83C) + 2,000 (112D) = 125,458$.

150,108.⁵⁶ Sun's next step is to look at the theoretical full strength of this army. At full strength, Sun claims, each infantry division was 10,923 soldiers strong and each regiment roughly 2,200.⁵⁷ The army that defended Nanking, he continues, consisted of thirteen divisions and seventeen regiments, so on paper would have been 180,400 strong.⁵⁸ Sun argues that 180,000 is too large, and 120,000 is too small, and therefore settles for about 150,000.⁵⁹

The problems with this methodology are self-evident. First, Sun has taken two estimates of the same army, and added part of one estimate to the entire second estimate to produce a much larger figure (his "minimum"), and then increases parts of one estimate by 1.85 and adds this to the entire second estimate to give an even larger figure, and finally looks at what the size of the army defending Nanking could theoretically have been (if all divisions were elite central divisions and if all were at full strength) to produce an even larger figure (his "maximum"). Although he eventually settles on the middle figure, it must be emphasized that the means used to produce this figure are extremely problematic. The Second Army, for instance, becomes 33,300 strong (18,000 × 1.85), a size justified by nothing in any of the literature. Secondly, Sun has not critically examined the various individual estimates for each unit given by the "Documents and Memoirs" column but accepts them at face value, despite the fact that these estimates were made at various different times by different people. T'an's estimates are at least arguably just as valid, if not more so, but Sun accepts the larger set of figures.⁶⁰ In some cases, these figures are clearly highly misleading. Third, the notion that divisions were at full strength is not tenable: the primary sources all indicate that divisional sizes were far short of full strength. Chinese POWs had informed the Japanese as early as late October that many divisions had been reduced to 1,000 men, one-tenth the size assumed by Sun (both the 103rd and 112th Divisions in Nanking were about this size).⁶¹ Moreover, Sun assumes that each division consisted of three brigades, but in reality most were only two. Fourth, Sun's estimates do not fit in with the accounts given by contemporary Western estimates, whereas one of the major advantages of accepting T'an's figures is that it becomes possible to explain the estimates given by the various Western observers. Fifth, as noted above, the figure of 10,923 was the theoretical strength only of the ten elite German-trained divisions out of the almost 200 divisions in the Nationalist military: the strength of other divisions was roughly 50% of this.⁶² The total theoretical *maximum* size therefore was closer to 109,230—smaller even than Sun's

56 $96,458 + (18,000 [2A] \times 1.85) + (3,500 [159D] \times 1.85) + (5,500 [83C] \times 1.85) + (2,000 \times 1.85 [112D]) = 150,108$.

57 Sun, "Nan-ching pao-wei-chan," p. 121. According to the *China Year Book, 1938*, p. 411, these figures were in fact 9,000 and 1,000 respectively. Moreover, as I have argued, many of the divisions in Nanking were only 6,000 strong.

58 Sun, "Nan-ching pao-wei-chan," p. 121.

59 Kasahara's argument for a total size of 150,000 seems to have been made out of deference to Sun.

60 Itakura, "Nankin senshi to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku," p. 192.

61 "Inuma Mamoru Nikki," October 30, 1937, *Nankin senshi shiryōshū I*, p. 110.

62 Hsu Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai, et al., eds., *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*, p. 174. Also see Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War*, pp. 7-8, who stated that other divisions "averaged about 4,000 to 6,000 men."

“minimum”!⁶³ Sixth, Sun’s figures are even larger than the largest contemporary estimates of 100,000 plus. Finally, the larger the Chinese army becomes, the more difficult it is to explain the quick and decisive Japanese victory.⁶⁴ As noted above, the main force that attacked and took Nanking consisted of only four divisions (the 6th, 9th, 16th, and 114th).⁶⁵ Japanese losses, despite the fact that they were attacking heavily fortified positions, were a little over 1,500 dead.⁶⁶ Unless an enormous Japanese army that did not exist is magically conjured up *à la* Wu Tien-wei, the Japanese victory becomes impossible to explain.

Finally, even the above figures of 100,000 or more appear to be exaggerations. As already noted, the combined strength of thirteen of the fourteen divisions that were committed to the defense of Nanking was 97,000 in August 1937.⁶⁷ This data is too early to be conclusive, but does shed some light on the various figures discussed in this paper. The battle for Shanghai was about to start when these calculations were made, so it seems reasonable to suggest that, after several months of fierce fighting, none of these units could have been much larger than they had been in early August even with reinforcements. If the Training Brigade is added (and assuming that it was the same size as the other divisions), this would suggest a total initial strength in August of roughly 104,500. Even without examining the history of each individual division, it can be safely assumed that heavy losses would have meant that the army would have been much smaller than this by the time the battle for Nanking started.

Moreover, even given the large number of new recruits, I am unconvinced that an army of 100,000 well dug in, operating on home ground, with an enormous supply of food, water, and ammunition and in many cases equipped with modern armaments could have been overcome so easily by a relatively small enemy operating so far ahead of its supply lines.

A macro approach to the size of the Capital Garrison Forces which examines the various accounts given in the primary and secondary sources thus provides a confused picture: the size of the army defending Nanking appears to have been anything from 20,000 to 150,000, with the more convincing estimates falling between 50,000 and 100,000. I am led to believe that, even in theory, the army at full strength could not have

63 Six central divisions (at 10,923) plus eight other divisions (at 50% of this) gives a total of 109,230.

64 One way to maneuver out of this bind is to vastly inflate the number of Japanese soldiers who participated in the attack on Nanking. Tien-wei Wu gives 150,000 as the size of the Capital Garrison Force, but also states that the Japanese army consisted of “seven-and-a-half divisions numbering nearly 200,000”! See Tien-wei Wu, “Nanjing Massacre (1937),” in Wang Ke-wen, ed., *Modern China: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1998), p. 224.

65 “Matsui Iwane Taishō jinchū nikki,” p. 139. Also see Hata, *Nankin Jiken*, p. 92; and Bōichō bōei ken shūjo senshishitsu 防衛庁防衛研修所戦史室, *Shina jihen rikugun sakusen 1: Shōwa 13-nen 1-gatsu made* 支那事変陸軍作戦 1: 昭和十三年一月まで (Army strategy in the China Incident, 1: Through January 1938) (Tokyo: Chōun shinbunsha, 1975), pp. 422-38, especially map at p. 426.

66 Hata, *Nankin Jiken*, p. 93; and *Nankin senshi*, p. 306.

67 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 48. Note that even at this early stage, before fighting broke out in Shanghai, divisions were not 9,000 strong.

been much larger than 100,000, and the various units that were committed to the defense of Nanking seem not to have been much more than 100,000 before the savage fighting in Shanghai broke out. A macro approach to the entire army thus seems to indicate the actual size was 75,000, plus or minus 25,000. Although this macro-level estimate is suitable for making a very rough calculation, it can be made more exact by a micro-level examination of each of the various units in Nanking.

3. The Size of the Defending Army: A Micro Approach

Apart from the Second Army (41st and 48th Divisions), the army that defended Nanking had retreated from Shanghai closely pursued by the Japanese.⁶⁸ The provincial troops of the 66th and 83rd Corps, together with the 103rd and 112th Divisions, bore the brunt of the running battle. As can be seen from Table 1, they did not arrive in Nanking in time to take on new recruits and were therefore far from full strength when the battle for Nanking began. According to T'an's figures, of the central divisions, the 36th, 51st, and 58th took on 2,000 new recruits each, the 88th took on 3,000, and the Training Brigade took on 5,000 upon arriving in Nanking (the 87th took on its 2,000 before arriving in Nanking). If these figures are correct, all apart from the Training Brigade would have been reasonably close to full strength in terms of numbers, although not in terms of strength.⁶⁹

It is important to note that the units that took on new recruits upon arriving in Nanking were the central divisions, while the provincial troops, who were used to protect the retreating central units, were not replenished.⁷⁰ The second point that needs to be stressed is that these new recruits frequently had no military training.⁷¹

Since the vast bulk of the 16,000 new recruits used to replenish the central divisions were male residents of Nanking rounded up and sent with little training to the front lines around the city (with the exception of the 2,000 taken on by the 87th Division in Chinkiang), it might be assumed that those who were able returned to their homes after the Capital Garrison Forces collapsed.⁷² In addition, according to T'an, 80% of the

68 The Second Army was dispatched from Hankow and arrived in Nanking by boat.

69 In an official analysis of the causes for the collapse of the Capital Garrison Forces, it was noted that the new recruits had no training: some, it seems, broke and ran at the sight of a tank, while others panicked on mistaking smoke for gas attacks.

70 Chiang Kai-shek used the provincial troops as cannon fodder, perhaps in order to weaken the power of potential rivals, perhaps to protect the central divisions loyal to him. Central government divisions were frequently used as supervisory divisions and placed behind the front lines with orders to shoot any who abandoned their positions. See Hallett Abend, "Japan Lays Gains to Massing of Foe: Best Troops Threatened Others," *New York Times*, December 9, 1937, p. 4. The 36th Division was entrusted with this task in Nanking.

71 See "Nan-ching pao-wei-chan chan-tou hsiang-pao" 南京保衛戰戰鬪詳報 (Battle report, defense of Nanking), in *K'ang-Jih chan-cheng cheng-mian chan-ch'ang*, pp. 405-14, at p. 414, also in translation in *Nankin senshi*, p. 614. New recruits in at least the 41st Division practiced firing their weapons from the boats that transported them to Nanking. See Itakura, "*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku," pp. 184-85. The Japanese troops, on the other hand, while middle-aged reservists, were trained troops.

72 Chen I-ting and Kasahara Tokushi, "Chin Itei san no shōgen" 陳頤鼎さんの証言 (Chen I-ting's testimony), in Hora, Fujiwara, and Honda, eds., *Nankin dai gyakusatsu no genba e*, pp. 233-42, at p. 234. Also see Chen I-ting 陳頤鼎, "Ti-87-shih tsai-Nan-ching pao-wei-chan chung"

Second Army consisted of new recruits. These joined the Army in Hankow before reaching Nanking.

All three sources in Table 1 agree (roughly) on the size of one unit of the Chinese army. The elite 88th Division is given as 7,000 (Tan), approximately 6,000 (“Documents and Memoirs”), and approximately 6,000 (*Nankin senshi*). The different estimates (respectively: 13,000, approximately 17,000, and 14,000 to 15,000) for the 74th Corps (51st and 58th Divisions) may be due to differences in the time when the estimates were made. In several cases, however, there are major differences, with the “Documents and Memoirs” column giving significantly larger estimates than the other sources.

3.1 An Examination of the Discrepancies

The Second Army

T’an gives 18,000 for the Second Army (41st and 48th Divisions). This is significantly larger than the estimate given in *Nankin senshi*.

As of August 5, the 41st had 8,000 and the 48th 10,000 men.⁷³ It might be assumed that, as the only unit not to be involved in the fighting around Shanghai, these numbers were maintained. However, 80% of the Second Army were new recruits, replacing junior officers and troops used to replenish other units savaged in the fighting with the Japanese. According to Han Chün 郭浚, Commander of the 144th Brigade, 48th Division, more than 10,000 were siphoned off.⁷⁴ Since 80% of the Second Army consisted of new recruits, this suggests the entire army was at least 12,500 strong.⁷⁵ In a secret telegram to Chiang Kai-shek, General Hsü Yüan-ch’üan 徐源泉, C-in-C of the Second Army, listed his losses (5,078) and clearly stated that this amounted to “more than one-third” of his total forces, which suggests an original size of about 15,000.⁷⁶ The *Nankin senshi* estimate of 13,000 to 14,000 is thus not unreasonable. However, General Hsü also stated in the same telegram that these losses (dead and wounded) left a total of 11,844, which suggests that the true size was 16,922. The figure of 16,922 to 18,000 will therefore be accepted here, although these numbers may have to be revised downwards.

The 66th Corps

One of the largest discrepancies concerns the 66th Corps. While T’an and *Nankin senshi* give 7,000 and 5,000-6,000 for the entire Corps, the “Documents and Memoirs” column gives approximately 9,000 for the 160th Division alone. This must have been calculated at a very early date. In the Nationalist Army at the time, 9,000 was effectively full strength for a division, but the 160th was involved in some of the heaviest fighting

第八十七師在南京保衛戰中 (The 87th Division in the battle to defend Nanking), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 152-58

73 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 73 note 43.

74 Han Chün, “Ti-2 chün-t’uan chi-yüan Nan-ching shu-yao” 第二軍團馳援南京述要 (On the support provided by the Second Army for Nanking), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 137-40, at p. 137.

75 Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no süryōteki haaku,” p. 185.

76 “Hsü Yüan-ch’üan tao Chiang Chieh-shih mi-tien” 徐源泉到蔣介石密電 (Secret telegram from Hsü Yüan-ch’üan to Chiang Kai-shek), December 23, 1937, in *K’ang-Jih chan-cheng cheng-mien chan-ch’ang*, pp. 416-19, at p. 418. Also cited in Kasahara, “Nankin bōisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 278; and Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no süryōteki haaku,” p. 185.

with the Japanese during the Chinese retreat to Nanking. By November 18 (a relatively early date) it had been reduced to fewer than 3,000 men.⁷⁷

Moreover, the 66th Corps did not have the time to take on new recruits in Nanking. It arrived late on December 10, by which time it had suffered so badly that its two divisions were each reorganized into two regiments (by my calculations, this suggests a size of 4,000). The entire 66th Corps combined was less than a division.⁷⁸ It is inconceivable that the 160th could have been at full strength when the battle for Nanking began. The estimate of 7,000 given by T'an for the entire 66th Corps (159th and 160th Divisions combined) is far more plausible, as is the 5,000 to 6,000 given by *Nankin senshi*.

Furthermore, the two divisions combined were only 12,000 strong (6,000 each) as of August 5.⁷⁹ The 160th consisted of two (not three) brigades (the 478th and 180th), which were usually 3,000 men each. The 9,000 given as the total for the 160th Division must therefore be rejected. I can accept the figure of 7,000 for the entire Corps although, since the 66th Corps was said to be less than a division in size, 5,000 to 6,000 is perhaps a more accurate estimate.

The 83rd Corps

The 83rd Corps left Hankow on November 13 and, after fighting in various areas such as Soochow and Wusi 無錫, retreated to Chinkiang in early December. From December 7, together with the 66th Corps, it fought around Chinkiang and Chü-jung 句容, and retreated to Nanking from about December 8. It suffered severe battle losses, and was smaller than the 66th when it arrived in Nanking.⁸⁰ Durdin mentions the 83rd Corps in one of his articles. He reported on December 9 that he had witnessed Japanese troops surround 300 Chinese soldiers "at the summit of a cone-shaped peak...twelve miles from Nanking" and annihilate these "almost to a man during a dramatic engagement lasting throughout yesterday." These Chinese soldiers "were remnants of the 154th and 156th Cantonese Divisions."⁸¹ In peacetime, the 83rd Corps boasted 12,000 or so men (two divisions with two, not three, brigades of 3,000 each).⁸² T'an's figure of 5,500, and especially *Nankin senshi*'s figure of 3,500, illustrates how horrendous the losses suffered by units such as this were during the flight from Shanghai to Nanking. When the 83rd arrived in Nanking, it was no longer able to operate as an independent army: the 156th

77 Ye Chen-chung, "Lu-chün ti-160-shih chan-tou hsiang-pao," p. 436; Itakura, "Nankin senshi to Nankin jiken no süryōteki haaku," p. 185; Kasahara, "Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun," p. 270; and *Nankin senshi*, p. 62.

78 See "Lu-chün ti-66-chün chan-tou hsiang-pao"; and Ye, "Lu-chün ti-160-shih chan-tou hsiang-pao." Also see Itakura, "Nankin senshi to Nankin jiken no süryōteki haaku," p. 185; and Kasahara, "Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun," p. 271.

79 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 73 note 43.

80 Itakura, "Nankin senshi to Nankin jiken no süryōteki haaku," p. 186.

81 Durdin, "300 Chinese Slain on a Peak Ringed by Fires Set by Foe," *New York Times*, December 9, 1937, pp. 1, 5, at p. 1. Note that Durdin claimed that only "remnants" of the 83rd Corps remained at this relatively early stage. It is clear that it had suffered enormous losses.

82 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 73 note 43, gives 6,000 for each division as the strength in early August.

was placed under the command of the 66th Corps and the 154th under the 72nd Corps,⁸³ an indication of how heavy the losses were. Both were paper divisions only, which demonstrates the perils of making assumptions about the theoretical size of divisions and calculating the size of the defending army on this basis. The figure of 5,500 will be accepted here.

The 36th Division

The commander of the 36th Division, General Sung, was promoted for his efforts in Shanghai from divisional commander with the rank of Lieutenant-General to army commander (*chün-chang* 軍長) with the rank of General.⁸⁴ He thus commanded the 78th Corps which, in normal circumstances, would have meant an increase in men under his command (a corps consisted of one to five divisions). However, there were no extra troops to give him. The 78th Corps thus consisted of a single division, the 36th (which consisted of three brigades, or, in theory, 9,000 men).

Tan and *Nankin senshi* agree that the 36th Division was roughly 7,000, whereas “Documents and Memoirs” gives 11,968, which appears to be too large even for peacetime and contradicts the account left by its commander. When the battle for Shanghai began in August, the 36th was, according to General Sung, about 10,000 strong (note that, as of early August, the size of the 36th was 8,000), but, in over two months of fighting, suffered 12,000 casualties, and was replenished four times.⁸⁵ It had been reduced to 3,000 men when it arrived in Nanking on November 22, where it was again replenished with 4,000 men.⁸⁶ Many of these men did not know how to use their weapons and were taught (quickly) as the Japanese approached. It seems clear that 7,000 is the correct size of this division. Again, T’an will be accepted.

The 74th Corps

In early August, the 74th Corps boasted a strength of 18,000.⁸⁷ After more than two months fighting in and around Shanghai, it arrived in Nanking on November 28, from where it was sent to an area about ten miles from the city along a line stretching from Chunhuachen 淳化鎮 to Niushoushan (Cows Head Mountain) 牛首山 where fighting started on December 4.⁸⁸ The lines crumbled on December 9, and it retreated to Nanking.⁸⁹

83 Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 294.

84 Sung Hsi-lien, “Nan-ching shou-ch’eng-chan,” p. 232.

85 Sung Hsi-lien, “Nan-ching shou-ch’eng-chan,” p. 228; Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 73 note 43; Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 297.

86 Sung Hsi-lien, “Nan-ching shou-ch’eng-chan,” pp. 229, 232. See also “Lu-chün ti-78-chün Nan-ching hui-chan hsiang-pao” 陸軍第七十八軍南京會戰詳報 (Battle report, Fight for Nanking, Army 74th Corps), in *K’ang-Jih chan-cheng cheng-mien chan-ch’ang*, pp. 419-26; Ouyang Wu 歐陽午, “Nan-ching ch’e-tui zhui-yi” 南京撤退追憶 (Memories of the retreat from Nanking), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 240-42, at p. 240; Itakura, “Nankin senshi to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” p. 186; and Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 297.

87 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 73 note 43.

88 Wang Yao-wu 王耀武, “Ti-74-chün ts’an-chia Nan-ching pao-wei-chan ching-kuo” 第七十四軍參加南京保衛戰經過 (The participation of the 74th Corps in the defense of Nanking), in *Nan-*

The size of the 51st Division had been “halved” by the time it first reached Nanking (a drop to roughly 4,000).⁹⁰ If the 58th Division had suffered similar losses, the 74th Corps in all would have been roughly 9,000 strong, which is T’an’s estimate. Even with the addition of 4,000 new recruits, a total strength of 17,000 is not possible.

The 74th Corps was lucky enough to have secured a boat for itself and used it to ferry first officers and then men across the Yangtze as the defense of Nanking crumbled. A total of 5,000 made it across.⁹¹ This suggests that it had been reduced to 5,000 by this time. T’an gives 13,000 for the 74th Corps. Since the two (not three) divisions in turn consisted of only two (not three) brigades each, I cannot see how it could have been larger than this. The 17,000 given by “Documents and Memoirs” is not plausible.⁹²

The 87th Division

There is also a large discrepancy in the estimates for the 87th Division. The figure of 10,000 given by the “Documents and Memoirs” column must have been calculated at an early date even for a division with three brigades. The size was 8,000 as of early August.⁹³ After a long running battle over close to 200 miles of territory, 10,000 is clearly not a plausible figure. The 87th was one of the first units to become involved in the fighting in Shanghai, fought continually from August 14, and did not withdraw until November 9.⁹⁴ It was replenished four times, each time with 2,000 to 3,000 men, and suffered in total more than 16,000 casualties (a figure larger than its original size).⁹⁵

There is also a large difference in T’an’s estimate (6,500) and that of *Nankin senshi* (3,000 to 3,500). After carefully examining the sources, Itakura Yoshiaki (who was involved with the *Nankin senshi* project) has accepted T’an’s figures and gives 6,000 or more as his estimate for the size of this Division.⁹⁶ One account of the withdrawal of the 87th Division from Nanking does indeed suggest this figure as the total strength. One of the Chinese divisions not informed about the decision to withdraw, the 87th Division, began to pull back to Hsiakwan at 2 a.m. on December 13.⁹⁷ By this time, the 87th had lost 3,000 dead or wounded, and 400 of the most severely wounded who could not walk

ching pao-wei-chan, pp. 141-47, at pp. 141, 142; Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” pp. 273-74.

89 Wang, “Ti-74-chün ts’an-chia Nan-ching pao-wei-chan ching-kuo,” p. 144; and Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” pp. 274-75.

90 “Ti-51-shih chan-tou hsiang-pao” 第五十一師戰鬪詳報 (Battle report, 51st Division), in *K’ang-Jih chan-cheng cheng-mien chan-ch’ang*, pp. 426-29, at p. 426. Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 274, states that “more than half” of the officers and men in the 74th Corps had been killed or injured during the fighting in Shanghai. Also see *Nankin senshi*, p. 61.

91 Wang, “Ti-74-chün ts’an-chia Nan-ching pao-wei-chan ching-kuo,” p. 147; Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 276.

92 The source for this estimate is Wang, “Ti-74-chün ts’an-chia Nan-ching pao-wei-chan ching-kuo,” p. 141.

93 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 73 note 43.

94 Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 283.

95 Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” p. 187; and Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 283.

96 Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” pp. 188, 189.

97 Chen I-ting, “Ti-87-shih tsai-Nan-ching pao-wei-chan chung,” p. 156.

were left behind.⁹⁸ Kasahara has interviewed a surviving officer of the 87th who stated that more than 3,000 reached Hsiakwan but discovered there were no more boats (this suggests a total original strength of 6,000, though there may be some double counting as some of the wounded, it might be assumed, would have been able to get as far as Hsiakwan).⁹⁹ I will therefore assume that the 87th consisted of 6,000 to 6,500 troops.

The 88th Division

As was the case with the commander of the 36th Division, the commander of the 88th Division, General Sun Yüan-liang, was also promoted to General and put in charge of the 72nd Corps (which again consisted of only a single division, the 88th) but not given extra divisions. As noted above, all three sources are in rough agreement about the 88th Division. This was an elite unit, and was involved in the fiercest fighting in Shanghai from August 13.¹⁰⁰

On arriving in Nanking, the main strength was placed at Yuhuatai outside the city walls, while the new recruits were positioned at Chunghua Gate. The main body was hit with great strength by the Japanese 6th and 114th Divisions, was eventually overcome, and effectively wiped out. Between December 10 and 11, of four regimental commanders (*t'uan-chang* 團長), three died, as did both brigade commanders (*lü-chang* 旅長), which demonstrates how fierce the fighting was.¹⁰¹ The Japanese 6th Division—probably the toughest division deployed by the Japanese in Nanking—suffered 306 dead (884 wounded) and the 114th Division 260 dead (790 wounded) in taking Nanking, which again underlines how fierce the resistance offered by the 88th was.¹⁰² The Japanese 6th Division then turned its attention to the new recruits, who began to pull back and triggered the collapse of the defending army.¹⁰³

The 88th had enjoyed a strength of 9,000 in early August.¹⁰⁴ However, according to General Sun Yüan-liang, it had been reduced to 4,000 (of whom half were new recruits) by the time it arrived in Nanking from Shanghai.¹⁰⁵ According to T'an, another 3,000 new recruits were then added to bring the 88th up to 7,000. The Battle Report of the 88th, however, gives its entire size as 6,000 plus (and states that all—with, one assumes, the exception of the author of the report and others who clearly survived, such

98 Kasahara, "Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun," p. 285. Chen I-ting, "Ti-87-shih tsai-Nan-ching pao-wei-chan chung", p. 156, states that "dozens" of wounded from his brigade were left behind.

99 Kasahara, "Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun," p. 286.

100 Kasahara, "Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun," p. 279.

101 Sun Yüan-liang 宋希濂, *Ying-ch'üan Chiang-chün* 鷹犬將軍 (A hired thug general) (Peking: Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1986), also translated and cited in Suzuki, *Shin "Nankin dai gyakusatsu" no maboroshi*, pp. 251-55, at p. 253 (Sun here gives three out of six brigade commanders, a mistake). Kasahara, "Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun," p. 280.

102 The 6th Division's figures are from "Shidan senji junpō" 師團戰時旬報 (Division wartime report), December 3-13, the 114th's from "Sentō shōhō" 戰鬪詳報 (Battle report), December 6-14, both cited in *Nankin senshi*, p. 306.

103 Itakura, "Nankin senshi to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku," p. 189.

104 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 73 note 43.

105 Sun Yuan-liang, *Ying-ch'üan Chiang-chün*, in Suzuki, *Shin "Nankin dai gyakusatsu" no maboroshi*, p. 252.

as General Sun Yüan-liang—died).¹⁰⁶ I believe that 6,000 is a more accurate figure and will assume that the 88th Division was 6,000 to 7,000 strong.

The Training Brigade

The largest difference in Table 1 is seen in the figures given for the elite Training Brigade (modeled on the German *Lehrbrigade*), with 11,000, 35,000, and finally 5,500 to 6,000 as the three estimates.¹⁰⁷

The issue of the Training Brigade is one that requires further study. Several Chinese sources seem to agree that its strength was 30,000 or more, but I am convinced that this could not be correct.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, even if each brigade had been a division, and the Training Brigade viewed as consisting of three divisions, it is still hard to see how it could have been 30,000 (let alone 35,000) strong. According to Itakura, this elite body was “promoted,” with regiments (*t’uan* 團) becoming brigades (*lü* 旅), and battalions (*ying* 營) regiments immediately before the fighting for Nanking began, but this promotion was not accompanied by a large intake of new soldiers.¹⁰⁹ Thus the Training Brigade, on paper, consisted of three brigades, but in reality was only the size of three regiments and seven battalions.¹¹⁰ If this is correct, then the *Nankin senshi* estimate of 6,000 seems reasonable.¹¹¹ Moreover, even assuming that the promotion was accompanied by a large intake of new troops, at 3,000 per brigade, the Training Brigade (three brigades and seven regiments) at full strength would still have been 16,000 strong.

106 Cited in Lu Wei-san 盧畏三, “Ti-88-shih E-shou Yu-hua-t’ai Chung-hua-men p’ien-tien” 第八十八師扼守雨花台中華門片斷 (Aspects of the defense by the 88th Division of the strategic points of Yuhuatai and Chunghua Gate), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 164-65, at p. 165, footnote. The battle report states that “all 6,000 plus officers and men of the division died a heroic death for their country.” Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 280, uses this to claim that 6,000 died, but not that the 88th Division was only 6,000 strong.

107 The *New York Times* referred to one unit (which I assume must be this one) as follows: “Arrayed within Nanking’s battlements was a special brigade which China’s German advisers had organized, trained and equipped to serve as a model for China’s new modernized army.” See “Chinese Resistance Spirited,” *New York Times*, December 10, 1937, p. 10.

108 See Li Hsi-k’ai 李西開, “Tzu-chin-shan chan-tou” 紫金山戰鬪 (The battle of Tzuchin [Purple] Mountain), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 170-75, at p. 170 (more than 30,000); and P’eng Yüeh-shuo 彭月朔, “Ts’ung chien-shou chen-ti tao pei-ch’e Ch’ang-chiang” 縱堅守陣地到北撤長江 (From the defense of the fort to the retreat across the Yangtze), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 176-79, at p. 176 (more than 30,000).

109 Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” pp. 189-90. However, see Yan K’ai-yün 嚴開運, “Nan-wang te chan-tou” 難忘的戰鬪 (The unforgettable battle), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 195-200, at p. 195, who claims that the Training Brigade was promoted to three infantry brigades from three infantry regiments after receiving reinforcements. To promote three regiments to three brigades would require an extra 6,000 troops, which roughly matches T’an’s account of 5,000 new reinforcements.

110 According to Li Hsi-k’ai, “Tzu-chin-shan chan-tou,” p. 170, the Training Brigade consisted of three brigades (six regiments) and seven battalions. Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 288, gives three brigades (nine regiments) with an extra seven regiments.

111 Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” pp. 189-90.

Yamamoto cites several Chinese sources that state that the Training Brigade consisted of “more than 13 regiments.”¹¹² At 1,000 per regiment, this suggests a size of 13,000 plus.

Kasahara notes that the Training Brigade was based on the German system, and therefore the size of each regiment was different from the norm in the Chinese army.¹¹³ It is certainly true that the organizational structure of the Training Brigade was patterned on the German infantry, but I still cannot see how there could have been 30,000 or more in this unit. According to Li Mu-ch’ao 李慕超, a squad (*pai* 排) commander in the 9th Company of the Training Brigade, his “entire company (*lian* 連) consisted of 70 plus men”.¹¹⁴ This is the size that would have been expected in the Nationalist Army: if the size of a company was the same, there is perhaps reason for assuming that the size of larger units would also have been the same.¹¹⁵

The three brigades in the Training Brigade consisted of two regiments each.¹¹⁶ At full strength, this would suggest 6,000 in the three brigades and 2,100 in the seven battalions, a total of 8,100 (if the seven battalions had also been promoted to regiments with reinforcements, a total of 13,000). However, not only does Li Mu-ch’ao suggest that his company (the 9th) was 30% below full-strength, Liu Yung-ch’eng 劉庸誠, a staff officer (operations) of the Training Brigade, stated that the Training Brigade “on average was 15% below full strength.”¹¹⁷ This would suggest a total strength of 6,885 (or 5,670 at 30% below strength). This indicates that roughly 6,000 to 7,000 is a much more accurate estimate of the size of this division.

Of the three Training Brigade regiments, two were sent to fight in Shanghai. It has been suggested that these alone consisted of 7,500 troops (3,750 per regiment, easily equivalent to a brigade in all other military units). Of this number, more than 4,000 died or were wounded in battles from November 5 to November 9 alone.¹¹⁸ This figure explains T’an’s estimate: two of three regiments were sent to Shanghai, which indicates an original size of 11,250. T’an’s estimate of 5,000 troops used to replenish the Training Brigade may have been to replace these losses. This indicates a size of roughly 11,000.

112 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 47. This suggests that three brigades consisted of two (rather than three) regiments each; thus, with another seven regiments, the total would indeed have been thirteen regiments.

113 Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” pp. 288, 310.

114 Li Mu-ch’ao, “Hsüeh-chan pai-ku-fen” 血戰白骨墳 (The bloody battle and graves of white bones), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 192-94, at p. 192.

115 A company consisted of three squads and would have ninety-plus troops. I have assumed that a company was 100 strong; that three companies made a battalion of 300 men; and that three battalions made a regiment that was 1,000 strong.

116 See Liu Yung-ch’eng, “Nan-ching k’ang-chan chi-yao” 南京抗戰紀要 (On the Nanking war of resistance), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 180-89, at pp. 180-81.

117 See Liu Ying-ch’eng, “Nan-ching k’ang-chan chi-yao,” pp. 180-81.

118 Li Mu-ch’ao, “Tsai Hu-ning k’ang-chan te jih-tzu-li” 在滬寧抗戰的日子里 (Days in the war of resistance in Shanghai and Nanking), in Chung-kuo jen-min cheng-chih hsieh-shang hui-i Jiang-su-sheng chi Nanking-shi wei-yuan-hui wen-shih tzu-liao yen-chiu 中国人民政治協商會議江蘇省暨南京市委員會文史資料研究委員會, ed., *Jiang-su wen-shi tzu-liao hsüan-chi Ti-16-chi* 江蘇文史資料選輯第16輯 (Nanjing: Jiang-su ku-chi ch’u-pan-she, 1985), pp. 81, 85, cited in Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” pp. 219-20.

Equipped with modern German arms, the Training Brigade was assigned the task of defending its home ground, Purple Mountain. The Japanese 16th Division was ordered to attack their heavily entrenched positions, but also ordered not to use artillery because Purple Mountain was the location of important cultural sites such as the tomb of a Ming Emperor and the mausoleum of Sun Yat-sen. This meant that Japanese casualties were far higher than they would have been under normal circumstances.¹¹⁹ The 16th Division reported on December 24 that it had lost 505 men in action with an additional 1,689 injured from the time it arrived in central China in mid-November, of which the fighting in the Purple Mountain did not start until December 9-10.¹²⁰ While a horrendous figure, and even assuming that all these casualties were inflicted in the few days of fighting in Purple Mountain, it does raise serious questions about whether an elite, highly-trained, well-equipped, and deeply entrenched force could have been routed without inflicting heavier losses than this.

T'an states that the Training Brigade took on 5,000 new recruits in Nanking to bring it up to 11,000. It is possible that the original Training Brigade was 6,000 strong and was increased to 11,000 with the new recruits. This may explain the difference between the *Nankin senshi* estimate and T'an. There is still, however, an enormous difference between 11,000 and 35,000. Moreover, the relative ease with which the Training Brigade was overrun suggests that even 11,000 is too large a figure. Nevertheless, I can accept the estimate of 6,000 to 11,000 for the purposes of this paper.

103rd and 112th Divisions, MP Units

The 103rd and 112th Divisions defended the Chiangyin 江陰 Fortress, from which they began to withdraw on December 1 after a fierce battle that lasted five days and in which they suffered severe losses. They were also the last units to leave Chinkiang, arriving in Nanking on foot on December 10 and 12. Originally 6,000 strong each, Itakura believes that these were, by mid-December, divisions on paper only.¹²¹ Other sources agree. The 103rd was reorganized into a mere three regiments: at full strength, this would suggest a total of 3,000 men. The 2,000 given for the 103rd by the "Documents and Memoirs" column, which consistently gives higher estimates than the other sources, indicates how fierce the fighting leading up to the battle for Nanking actually was.¹²² The 112th was, on paper, slightly healthier with two brigades, but *Nankin senshi* believes that it was even smaller than the 103rd.

119 See Nakazawa Mitsuo's evidence given in the Tokyo Trial (IMTFE, pp. 32,622-23). Also see "Dai-16 Shidan 'Sakusen keika no gaiyō'" 第十六師団「作戰経過ノ概要」 (An outline of operations, 16th Division), January 10, 1938, in *Nankin senshi shiryōshū I*, pp. 472-74, at p. 474; *Nankin senshi*, p. 97; and Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 65.

120 "Dai-16 Shidan 'Jōkyō hōkoku'" 第十六師団「状況報告」 (Report on current situation, 16th Division), December 24, 1937, in *Nankin senshi shiryōshū I*, pp. 471-72, at p. 472; and "Shidan jōkyō hōkoku" 師団状況報告 (Report of current state of the division), November 13-December 24, cited in *Nankin senshi*, p. 306.

121 Yamamoto, *Nanking*, p. 73 note 43; Itakura, "*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku," p. 190.

122 The 103rd was perhaps only 1,000 to 2,000 strong, which again demonstrates how misleading it is to calculate a division as being 10,923 (Sun), let alone 16,000 (Kasahara), and

Accounts of the MP units vary. The Battle Report issued by the Capital Garrison Forces, the Taiwanese *History of the Sino-Japanese War*, and General Sung all state that there were about two regiments.¹²³ According to Kasahara, there were three MP regiments, two MP battalions and one company. Itakura gives four regiments and one battalion. According to Itakura, a single MP regiment was about 1,400 strong and the total was therefore roughly 6,000.¹²⁴ Kasahara gives a more exact figure for the total, 6,452, as does “Documents and Memoirs,” 5,490.¹²⁵ Since army regiments were 1,000 and battalions 300 strong, I am led to believe that the size might have been considerably smaller than this. However, T’an’s is the startling figure: he gives a combined total of 6,000 for the 103rd, the 112th, the MP units, and other units directly attached to the C-in-C. Of all elements of the Nanking Defense Force, this was the one with which a member of General T’ang’s staff would have been most familiar, so his figure is the most plausible.

Finally, there were a number of smaller units, such as two tank companies with fifteen tanks, the only mechanized unit in the Capital Garrison Forces.¹²⁶ In the army, a company consisted of three squads of thirty men each, so an infantry company would have ninety-plus troops. The tank companies (the 1st and 3rd companies) may therefore have been 200 strong. There was also a single artillery battalion (1st battalion, 42nd regiment) that consisted of three companies, or perhaps 270 to 300 men.¹²⁷ Although these units may have been attached to the C-in-C, and so included in T’an’s figure of 6,000, they will be counted separately.

4. Conclusion

This paper has examined the various surviving sources in an effort to determine the size of the Capital Garrison Forces. While further research is required to clarify exactly what the fate of this army was, I have reached some conclusions that provide important insights into the tragic events that occurred in and around Nanking during the winter of 1937-38.

First, we have demonstrated that the notion (often seen in the secondary literature) that the strength of the Chinese army was 150,000 is highly implausible, and the methodology used to derive this figure is deeply problematic. Second, a brief examination of each of the units that made up the Capital Garrison Forces reveals that

then giving an estimate of the entire defending army by increasing this number by the number of divisions.

123 “Nan-ching pao-wei-chan chan-tou hsiang-pao”, p. 406; Hsu Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai, et al., eds., *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*, p. 201, Chart 19; and Sung Hsi-lien, “Nanking shou-ch’eng-chan,” p. 231.

124 Itakura, “*Nankin senshi* to Nankin jiken no sūryōteki haaku,” p. 191.

125 Kasahara, “Nankin bōeisen to Chūgoku gun,” p. 300.

126 Du Yü-ming 杜聿明, “Nan-ching pao-wei-chan chung te chan-che pu-tui” 南京保衛戰中的戰車部隊 (The tank unit in the battle to defend Nanking), in *Nan-ching pao-wei-chan*, pp. 212-15, at p. 212.

127 Another tiny division, the 102nd, which consisted of only four regiments (on paper, 4,000 men, in reality, perhaps similar in size to the 103rd) was posted on the opposite side of the Yangtze to guard the major escape route. It was not involved in the fight for the city and is not usually mentioned in the literature.

some of the figures given in Table 1 by the “Documents and Memoirs” column are obviously wrong. Depending on the date when each figure was given, the estimate of the size of the army will fluctuate considerably. If it is accepted that the Nanking Incident took place in and around Nanking, these estimates for the size of the Chinese army will have to be revised downwards considerably. Of the various estimates given by the “Documents and Memoirs” column, the 35,000 for the Training Brigade in particular is far too large. The best existing estimate, I believe, is therefore that provided by T’an, although some of his figures may be too high. Table 2 summarizes my own estimates for each of the individual units in Nanking, which gives a total of 73,790 to 81,500, or 77,645 plus or minus 3,855.

Table 2. The Size of the Capital Garrison Forces

No.	Unit	Size
1	2 Army (41D, 48D)	16,922-18,000
2	66 Corps (159D, 160D)	7,000
3	83 Corps (154D, 156D)	5,500
4	36D	7,000
5	74 Corps, 51D	6,000
6	58D	7,000
7	87D	6,000-6,500
8	88D	6,000-7,000
9	TB	6,000-11,000
10	103D, 112D, MP, C-in-C	6,000
11	Others	470-500
	Total	73,790-81,500

Although it is impossible to be certain, it might be assumed that the figure of 50,000 used by many observers indicated front-line fighting troops alone, and did not take the auxiliaries into account. The most accurate estimates that can be drawn from the various primary sources and other materials for the civilian and military populations in Nanking in mid-December 1937 are 200,000 to 250,000 civilians, and 73,790-81,500 military personnel, a total of 273,790 to 331,500 individuals. I am convinced that these figures are the best that can be drawn from the primary sources. Needless to say, however, as more primary sources emerge, it may become necessary to revise these figures.