

First Changsha Battle

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In July 1939, Prof Fu Sinian pointed out that Chinese army had become stronger and stronger while Japanese army had become weaker and weaker.

On Aug 15th, Eleventh Army devised the guidelines to launch a south-of-Yangtze campaign across 250 kilometers, ranging from Xiangjiang River to Ganjiang River. Germany's attack on Poland on Sept 1st exacerbated the Japanese motivation to deal a blow to China's resisting will so as to pave the way for the establishment of Whang Jingwei's puppet government in Central China region. Lacking adequate troops, Okamura Yasuji, other than garrison needs, had to arrange to have troops from 6th *Shidan*, 33rd *Shidan*, 3rd *Shidan* and 13th *Shidan* to launch attacks in Hunan-Hubei area, and troops from 106th *Shidan* and 101st *Shidan* attack Gaoan and Xiushui (Tonggu) area as a distraction.

On Sept 13th, Okamura Yasuji moved his command center to Xianning. On the night of Sept 14th, Nakai Ryotaro's 106th *Shidan* attacked westward against Wan Baobang's 184th Division of 60th Corps from north of Fengxin. On 15th, [[zuozhi]] *Shitai*, based on 102nd *Ryodan* of Saito Masatoshi's 101st *Shidan*, from Dacheng, attacked Mt Lianhuashan and Gaoan area which was defended by Kang Yongliang's 141st Division of 32nd Corps and Liu Zhengfu's New 10th Division of 58th Corps. After taking over Gaoan, bulk of Japanese forces went northwest to attack Sandu and Xiushui. Wang Yaowu's 74th Corps (51D, 57D & 58D) and Song Kentang's 32nd Corps (139D & 141D), after recovering Cunqianjie on 19th, took advantage of Japanese shift to have recovered Gaoan on 22nd.

On Sept 18th, Inaba Shiro's 6th *Shidan* and Nara *Shitai* began to mop up Chinese positions north of Xinqianghe River. By 22nd, 52nd Corps, other than one stronghold north of the river, pulled back majority of its forces. On Sept 22nd, Japanese attacked the hill of Caoxieling near Xinqianghe where a platoon under 195th Division of 52nd Corps had been hitting off Japanese charge for a dozen times and defending the hill for 2 days. When battalion chief dispatched another platoon chief by the name of Guan to the hill, he found out that only one new recruit, by the name of Ren Lianzi, was defending the position. Platoon chief Guan told Ren Lianli he would stay with him till last drop of blood, and the two beat off Japanese charges three more times.

On Sept 23rd, at dawn, 6th *Shidan* and Nara *Shitai* forcefully crossed Xinqianghe River under heavy artillery support. At about 6:20 am, Uemura *Shitai* simultaneously landed at Yingtian, near Xiangjiang and Miluojiang rivermouths under the cover of warships and planes. At Yingtian, Luo Qi's 95th Division of 37th Corps fought Uemura *Shitai* landing from Dongting Lake, and incurred a casualty of 3 regiment commanders.

With Japanese campaigning against Changsha area. Ninth War Zone adopted the approach of letting in Japanese for an ambush opportunity near Changsha. The bulk of troops relocated towards Zhuzhou, Liuyang, Liling and Pingxiang while retaining a portion of 52nd Corps near Xinshi and Wukou and deploying 73rd Corps in the area to the east of Jinjing and Fulinpu.

On Sept 28th, Chinese forces attacked Japanese in Fulinpu area. On Sept 29th, part of 6th *Shidan* was ambushed and impeded by Chinese troops at Jinjing; and another part, after crossing Laodaohe River at Fulinpu, came under attacks by Liang Zhongjiang's 60th Division of 37th Corps and Tan Yizhi's 195th Division of 52nd Corps. On Sept 30th, Chinese forces attacked Japanese in Shangshanshi and Xinqiao area. On this day, Okamura Yasuji issued a general retreat order. On 30th, Nara *Shitai*, after converging with Amakasu Shigetaro's 33rd *Shidan* at Xianzhong to the east of Pingjiang, came under encirclement by Xia Chuzhong's 79th Corps and Yang Hanyu's 20th Corps.

On Oct 1st, Japanese began to retreat after suffering heavy losses. Herald troops of 6th *Shidan*, which had intruded into Changsha outskirts, pulled back across Laodaohe River. Acting group army commander Guan Linzheng immediately ordered 52nd Corps and 73rd Corps on a pursuit of Japanese, with initial target set at Miluojiang river bank. On 3rd, General Xue Yue ordered a general counter-attack to catch up with Japanese to the south of Yueyang and Chongyang. Chinese troops chased Japanese to Jinjing and Fulinpu. Chinese planes bombed Wuhan's Japanese airfield on the same day. On 4th, Chinese troops recovered Miluo and Xinshi. On 5th, Chinese forces shot down a Japanese plane and located Okamura Yasuji's retreat order. At the Dongtinghu lakeshore, near Yingtian, Sheng Fengyao's New 23rd Division of 54th Corps attacked Japanese warships.

On 8th, Japanese fell back to the northern bank of Miluojiang River. 195th Division of 52nd Corps chased across Xinqianghe River and recovered former forward positions as well as launched nightly raids into Xitang and Yaolin. By Oct 10th, all lost territories in northern Hunan Province, southern Hubei Province and northern Jiangxi Province were recovered.

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