

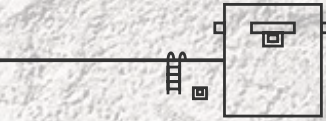


# SHANGHAI 上海碉堡 BUNKERS

## FORGOTTEN SYMBOLS OF RESISTANCE



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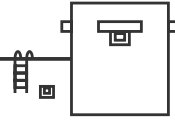


Version 241002

Mural by unknown in the Changhong Community of Changning District



# PROLOGUE



I was shown my first bunker in Shanghai during a training as a tour guide in the autumn of 2012. It was (and still is) located opposite the city's former slaughterhouse, next to the old incinerator's chimney, and was used for storage. I was told it was built by the Japanese during WWII (which I now know is incorrect...), but not much else, and I didn't think much more of it.

Fast forward to the height of the Covid pandemic in 2021 and I was exploring Shanghai's suburbs, researching new locations and stories I could offer as day trips since China's rigid zero Covid policy made it near impossible to venture beyond the city's borders. On one such excursion, I came across a fort-like structure in Songjiang district. When looking for more information online, I found several articles about fortifications scattered across town, and on social media many others have shared their bunker pictures, yet very little historical context is available and very few people know about their existence. The majority of these fortifications have been demolished during China's rapid modernisation; hundreds still survive but their conditions vary greatly: some have been re-purposed or integrated into their surroundings, a few are kept for 'educational purposes' but most are left to be forgotten.

For the past three years, I have been researching these bunkers, trying to locate and document the remaining ones, and have invited others to join me in what has become a bit of a passion project. This document is an enthusiast's attempt to piece together and preserve the curious history of Shanghai's bunkers.

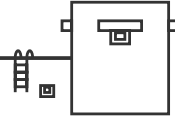
Maxime Tondeur  
Shanghai, October 2024



*In the bowels of a Cold War era bomb shelter.*



# INTRODUCTION



Before diving into history, let's start with the basics: a **bunker** is a defensive military fortification, designed to protect people and valued materials from ground or aerial attacks. Bunkers are partly or completely underground, in contrast to **blockhouses**, which are mostly above ground and are designed as a defensive strong point against enemy attacks.

Not all bunkers serve the same purpose: a **pillbox** is dug-in guard post with gun ports (or loopholes) for active defence and a **casemate** is like a pillbox, but much bigger to fit artillery pieces. An **ammunition dump or depot** serves as a munitions storage along the front-line, while an **air-raid or bomb shelter** provides solid protection against (aerial) bomb strikes, but is less suited for an active defence against ground assaults.

For the sake of simplicity, I have chosen to refer to all types of military fortifications as bunkers, even though some of them are not. My research is focussed only on the fortifications built within Shanghai's city limits, which I categorized into five distinct periods:

- ◆ Between 1935-1937, by the governing Chinese Nationalists to defend Shanghai against an imminent Japanese invasion.
- ◆ Between 1938-1945, by the Japanese invaders to control and protect their interests in occupied Shanghai.
- ◆ Early 1949, by the governing Chinese Nationalists to prevent the advancing Communists from liberating Shanghai.
- ◆ Between 1950-1968, by the governing Chinese Communists to defend Shanghai against Nationalist attempts to retake the mainland.
- ◆ Between 1969-1978, by the governing Chinese Communists to shelter people and materiel from potential bombing raids by the Soviet Union.



*A rather creative reconstruction of a sentry built by militia in 1951 near Jinshanzui fishing village. Eleven of these were erected along Shanghai's southern coastline in Jinshan to monitor enemy activities on the sea and in the air.*





# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

## *1935-1937*



# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

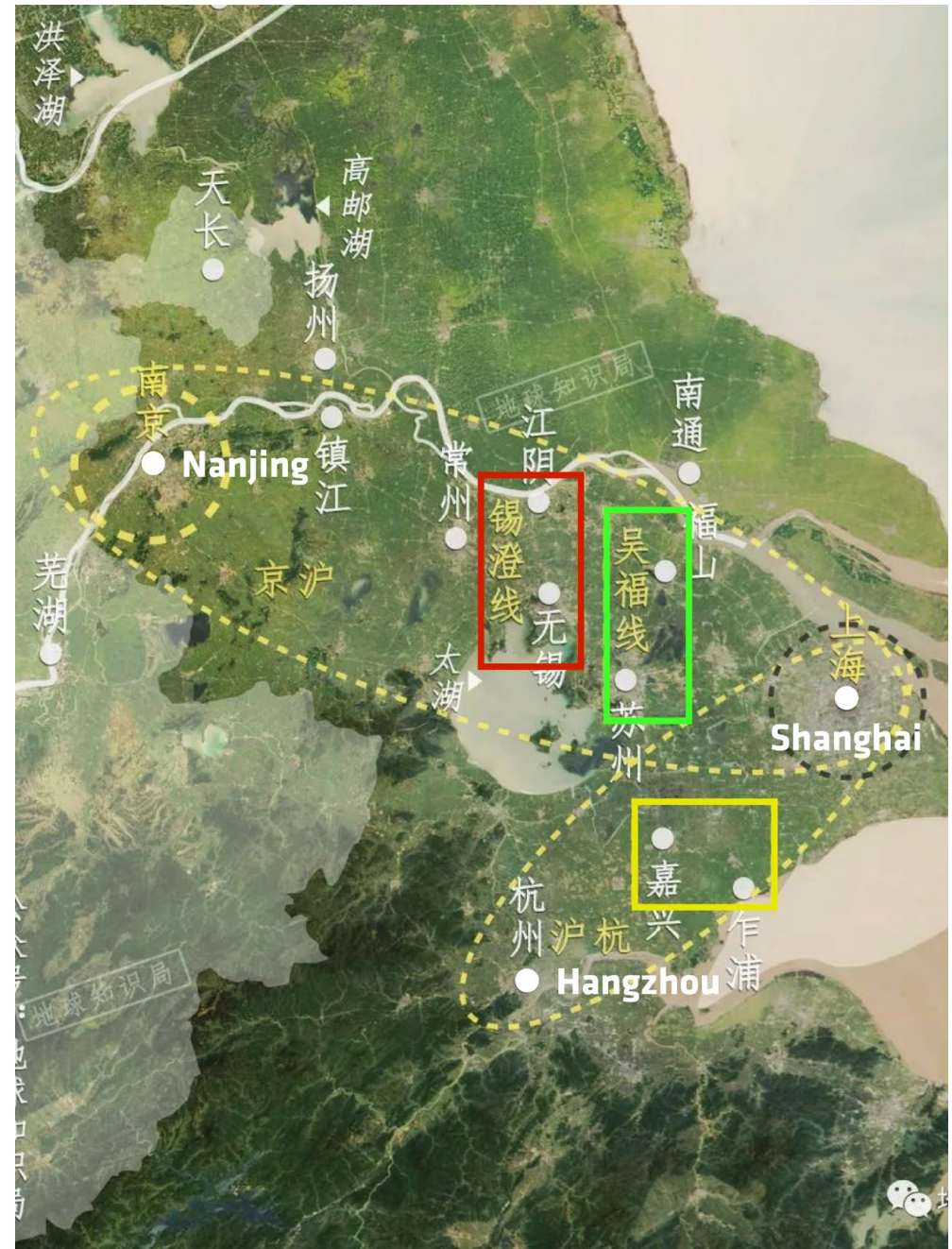
1935-1937

Under the leadership of generalissimo [Chiang Kai-Shek](#), the Chinese Nationalists or Kuomintang would construct thousands of fortifications in and around Shanghai on two separate occasions: between 1935-1937 and again in 1949, but against two very different opponents.

Almost right up until the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Chiang applied the strategy of “first internal pacification, then external resistance” and was focussed on eradicating the Communists under Mao Zedong, rather than resisting the increasingly belligerent Japanese, despite the advice from his generals and military consultants.

Between 1928-1938, Chiang was aided by a German military mission to modernise his Nationalist army and help defeat the Communists. In 1933, the new head of the mission [Hans von Seeckt](#) urged Chiang to fortify the lower Yangtze valley against a possible Japanese invasion. Consisting out of the capital city Nanjing, Suzhou, Hangzhou and Shanghai, the Yangtze Delta, or Jiangnan, was China's richest and most industrialised region, as well as Chiang's political power base. However, the generalissimo choose to ignore this in favour of pursuing the Communists. Only after the [Xi'an Incident](#) in 1936, when Chiang was kidnapped by his own generals, did he reluctantly make truce with the Communists and started preparations for the inevitable war with Japan.

The retired German general [Alexandervon Falkenhausen](#) was Chiang's main military advisor from 1934 to 1938. He argued the newly trained Nationalist army wasn't ready to face the Japanese and instead recommended a war of attrition, reasoning the Japanese could not sustain a long-term military involvement in China. He therefore advised to construct large defence works in strategically important regions to stall a Japanese offensive and to bide time. And just as von Seeckt did, von Falkenhausen identified the lower Yangtze valley as a prime target for a Japanese assault.



The map shows the three major defence lines that make up the 'National Defence Project' in the lower Yangtze valley: Haijia (yellow), Wufu (green) and Xichang (red). (source: 地球知识局)



# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

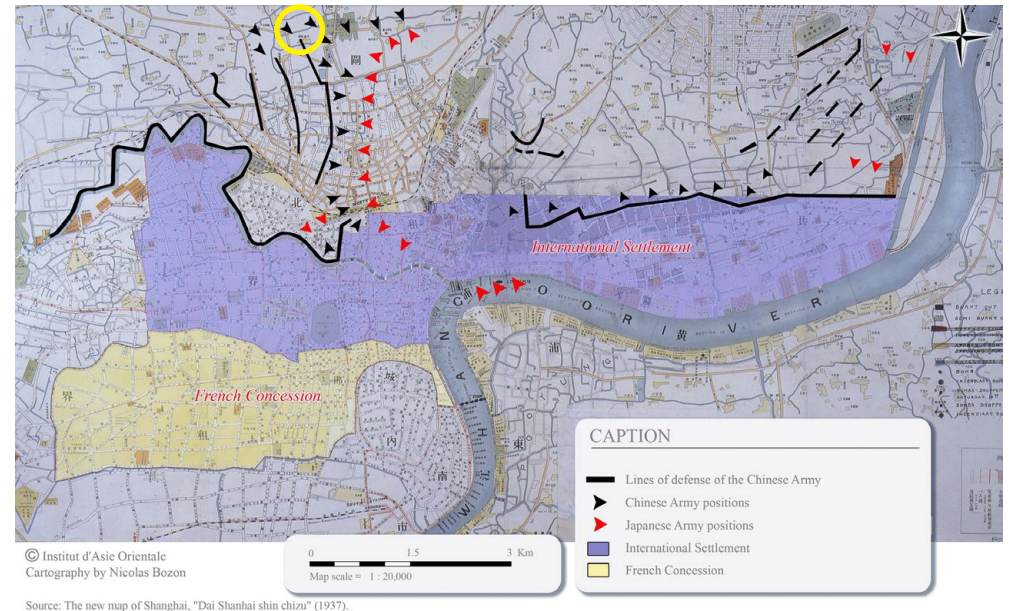
## 1935-1937

While the reconstruction of existing coastal defences had already been carried out since 1932, the “National Defence Project” for the lower Yangtze valley was initiated in 1935 but it wasn’t until after Chiang Kai-Shek’s visit to the defence lines between Shanghai and Nanjing in January 1937, and his subsequent realisation very little had come about, that large-scale construction finally started.

The defence works involved three heavily fortified lines, which were erected to the west of Shanghai, running from the Yangtze River south to the East China Sea. The first defence line (Haijia Line) ran from the Hangzhou Bay to Taihu Lake and guarded the western flank to Hangzhou. The other two lines (Wufu Line and Xichang Line) were erected north of Shanghai, between Taihu Lake and the Yangtze River, and covered the approaches to Nanjing. These permanent fortified lines were supplemented by semi-permanent forward positions in Shanghai’s northern and western suburbs, referred to as the Songhu Line, and along its Pudong coastline.

Thousands of concrete pillboxes in different sizes and shapes, and with just one or multiple gun ports, as well as dozens of casemates with a 70 degree angle gun port to fit artillery pieces imported from Germany, and reinforced observation posts to direct a Chinese counter attack were built. In addition, zigzagging (anti-tank) trenches, protected from assault by barbed wire, connected the various bunker groups to each other. Among western observers, the defence works were reminiscent of the large-scale fortifications built by the Germans during WWI and were therefore colloquially called the “Chinese Hindenberg Line”.

The lines’ main purpose was to protect Nanjing, and to isolate the Japanese already stationed in Shanghai. If Shanghai should be lost, the Nationalists could retreat to the next fortified line and continue their resistance. Neutral western powers could then be tempted to join, or at least openly support, China’s war with Japan a hopeful Chiang reasoned.



The above map shows the defence lines and troop positions of the Japanese and Chinese armies at the advent of war. Pictured below are two square-shaped, Nationalist pillboxes in Zhabei Park. Their location (yellow circle) corresponds to the northern defence lines in the former district of Zhabei, now Jing'an.



A spade-shaped Nationalist pillbox from 1937, located near Fengjing in Jinshan district. Its gun ports are aimed at a canal intersection and the Shanghai-Nanjing Railway on the opposite river bank.

Inset shows the interior of the pillbox. The indentation with four identical holes around each gun port would indicate they came equipped with a metal hatch.



# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

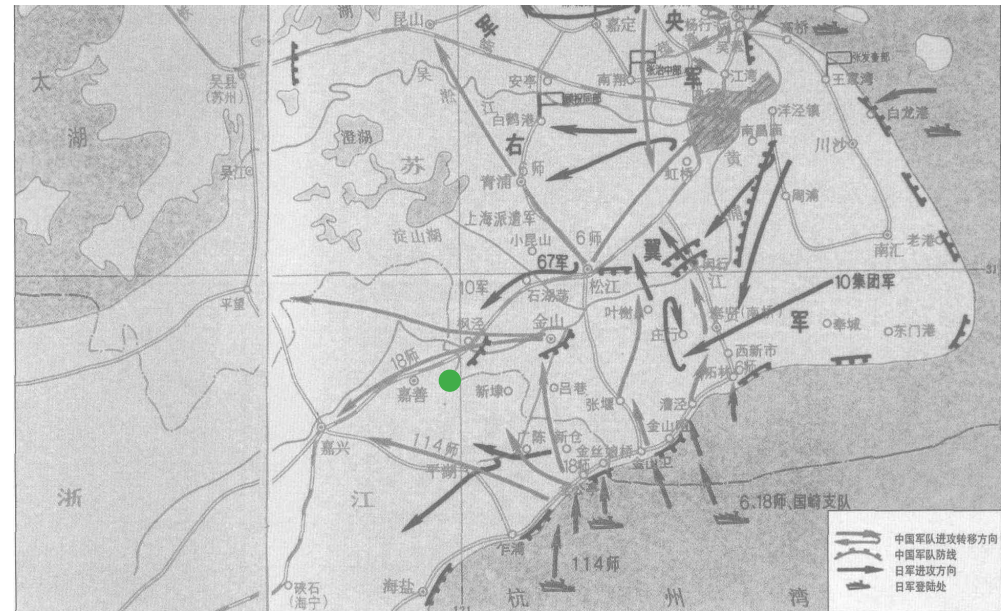
## 1935-1937

The heightened tensions after the [Marco Polo Bridge incident](#) near Beijing led directly to full-scale war between Japan and China in early August 1937. To deal with Japan's troop superiority and the limited Chinese capability to transport troops to North China, Chiang Kai-Shek decided to open a second front in the south and ordered his crack troops, trained and equipped by the Germans, to attack Japanese positions in Shanghai on 14 August 1937. When the fighting broke out, the National Defence Project of Jiangnan was estimated to be 70% completed.

Despite the fact the Chinese put up a proper fight, the [Battle of Shanghai](#) was lost by the end of November 1937. Although the three defensive lines were still intact, sadly their planned use was not put into effect: after the fall of Shanghai, the news of the heavy losses and the demoralising sight of the retreating crack troops, led to many of the lines' defenders abandoning their positions. Previously, Chang Kai-Shek had boasted to domestic and foreign press the National Defence Project would stall the Japanese for at least half a year, but it took the Japanese a mere two weeks to cross the 300+km distance between Shanghai and Nanjing without much opposition.

However, the failure of the defence works should not be solely blamed on its defenders. The lines were undermanned and lacked artillery, which got held up en-route from Germany to China. Many bunkers were made with inferior concrete, that "could be crushed by hand", and had crucial flaws: oversized gun ports left the defenders inside exposed and protruding rooftops made them easy to spot. And pillboxes with only one front-facing gun port could be simply neutralised by encirclement.

Lastly, the endemic corruption rooted amongst all ranks of the Nationalist army meant a substantial amount of the 30 million (originally 14 million) yuan budget was siphoned off, and must have contributed to the many construction delays prior to Chiang's site inspection in January 1937.



Map showing Chinese defensive positions (▼) during the Battle of Shanghai in 1937. The bunker group in Jinshan district (green circle) pictured below was probably part of the Haijia Defence Line, stretching from Hangzhou Bay to Taihu Lake.



I located eleven turtle-shell Nationalist pillboxes, positioned on a NW-SE axle south of a waterway. Most gun ports are facing north towards Shanghai.

The inset shows the construction date found in all pillboxes. 中華民國廿六年建, which translates into "26th year of the Republic of China" (1937).

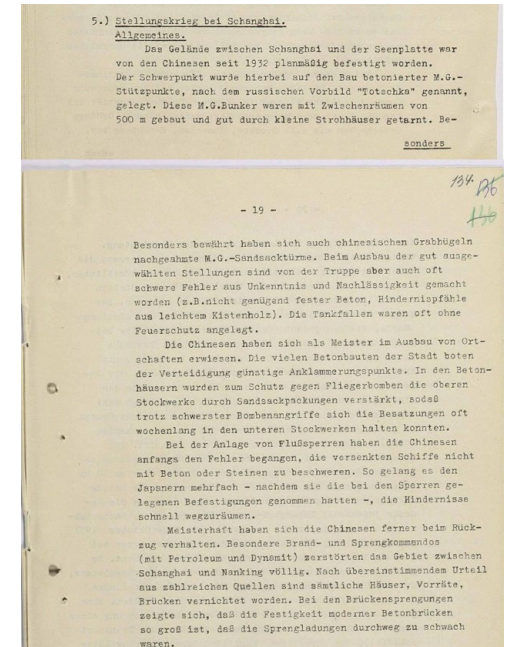
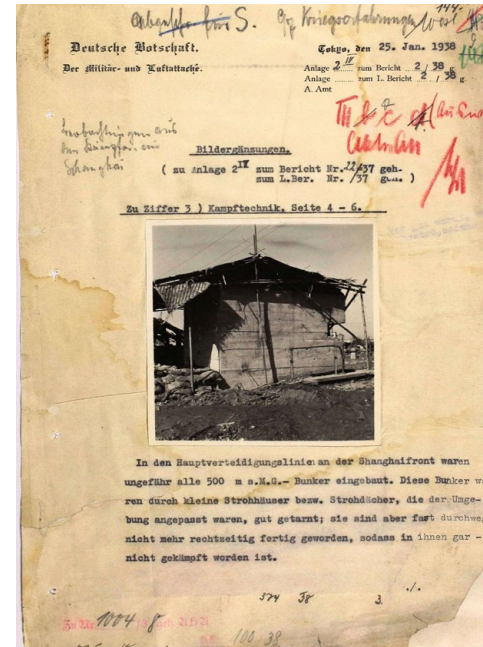
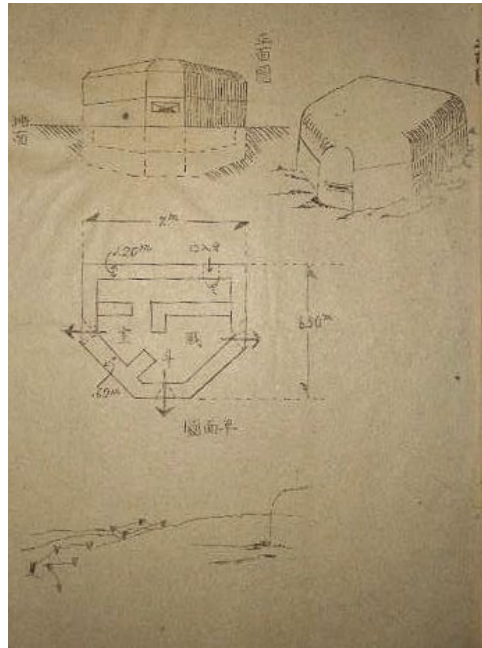
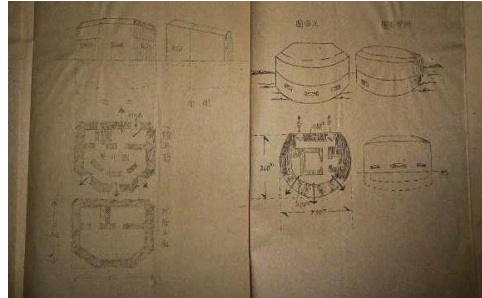
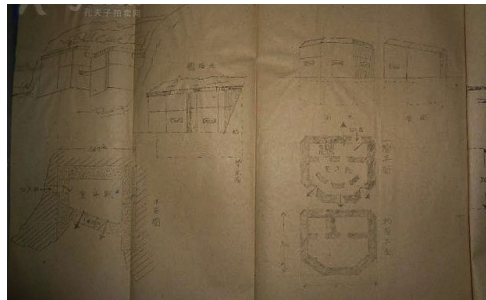
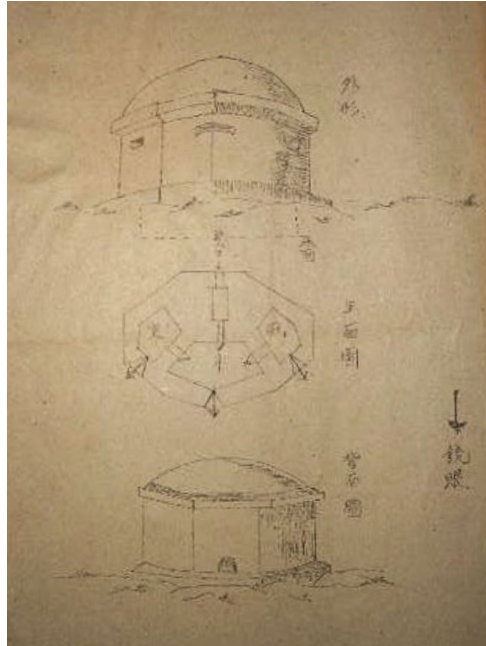




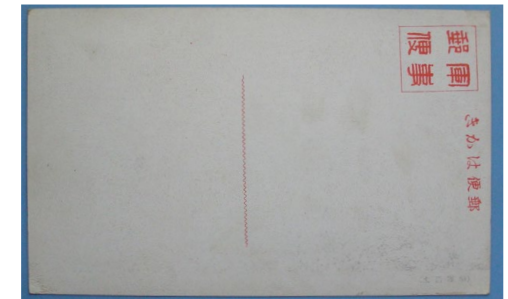
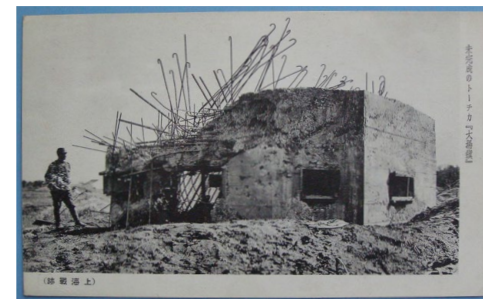
# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

1935-1937

Drawings of Chinese pillboxes on a marketplace website. Since the link is no longer available, and I can't find any additional information, I don't know who drew them: a Chinese artist before or during their construction between 1935-1937, or a Japanese artist after capture in 1937 or later. The notes are in (traditional) Chinese characters, but the Japanese would also use the same characters (Kanji). The drawings do offer valuable information on the design of the different types of pillboxes the Nationalist built, and can help with identifying unmarked bunkers during field research (source: [www.kongfz.cn](http://www.kongfz.cn))



In 1938 Adolf Hitler recalled Chiang Kai-Shek's German advisors to favour his new ally the Empire of Japan. With help from the Japanese army, a report on Japan's combat experiences in China by the German military attaché was published on 25 January 1938. The detailed report (excerpts above) included pictures and described how Chinese pillboxes were positioned about 500m apart, often camouflaged as local houses with thatched roofs, but also notes on the poor quality of the concrete (source).



After the Battle of Shanghai, pictures from the battlefield were made into postcards by the victorious Japanese, which could be sent home as part of the wartime propaganda. The above postcard depicts a Japanese soldier next to an unfinished Nationalist bunker (source).



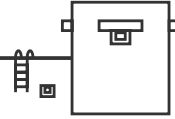


# JAPANESE INVADERS 1938-1945



# JAPANESE INVADERS

## 1938-1945



Within six months of launching their full-scale invasion of China in the summer of 1937, the Japanese had taken control of the Yangtze River Delta and by the middle of 1938, they sought to consolidate and control their newly conquered territories with a minimum amount of troops. The Japanese would therefore construct a series of blockhouses along strategic points, such as railways, water crossings, and main roads. These masonry fortifications had multiple layer brick walls, which offered enough protection against the type of small arms any remaining pockets of Chinese resistance could yield.

Initially victorious, the Japanese war machine lost its momentum and by the beginning of 1943, Japan found itself on the defensive. By now, most western nations had declared war on Japan, while the Chinese managed to hold out in Central and West China, with material and financial support from the Americans and the Russians. From unoccupied Chinese territory, Allied bombers could now target Japanese positions in the Yangtze River Delta, while simultaneously the Americans were pushing back the Japanese in the Pacific. Against this changing backdrop, a shift in the Japanese defences can be detected when lightly fortified brick blockhouses gave way to dug-in positions made from reinforced concrete.

Expecting an overland attack by the advancing Chinese, supported with coastal landings by their American allies, the Japanese would construct an unknown number of reinforced concrete fortifications along the city's edges. However, on 15 August 1945, the Empire of Japan surrendered unconditionally before the anticipated attack. Most of the recently constructed bunkers were never needed and the thousands of Japanese soldiers stationed to defend Shanghai, were left as prisoners of war. While awaiting repatriation, many of them were made to demolish by hand the fortifications they, and others, had previously built in Shanghai.



*A brick-built Japanese blockhouse with watchtower (not visible, but see page 5) opposite the former Fengjing Railway Station along the (still in use) Shanghai-Nanjing Railway in Jinshan District.*

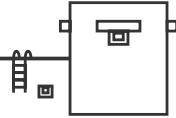


*While awaiting repatriation in 1945-1946, Japanese prisoners of war were made to demolish the fortifications they, and others, had built in Shanghai during the war (pictures by William Dibb).*



# JAPANESE INVADERS

1938-1945



Out of all the belligerents involved, the number of remaining Japanese bunkers is the lowest: out of the 246 fortifications located so far (August 2024), only 10 appear to be Japanese.

For most of their 13-year military involvement in Shanghai, the Japanese were on the offensive and major defence works did not fit in their vision of conquest. The revival of the centuries-old “Bushido” (way of the warrior) doctrine by nationalist militarists at the beginning of the 20th century, was very influential on contemporary military tactics and Japan’s military leadership favoured (honourable) attack to (cowardly) defence. But when faced with modern weaponry and overwhelming fire power, the way of the warrior doctrine no longer leads to victory. Not pure bravery or honour, but the ability to provide protection underground or in concrete boxes would be a decisive factor in modern warfare.

But this low number has likely a more practical explanation: throughout most of the war, the Japanese army was short on supplies and simply did not have the materials needed to construct large-scale defence works. After the war Japanese prisoners of war were made to demolish the (masonry) fortifications they had built in streets and suburbs of Shanghai. And perhaps revengeful Chinese, who were keen on eliminating any reminders of Imperial Japan’s brutal occupation, did their part as well.



*Aerial view of the location of Xinbang Fort (yellow dot) along the original track (red line) compared to the current track (blue line) of the Shanghai-Nanjing Railway in Songjiang District.*



*Xinbang Fort, a Japanese masonry blockhouse at a former railway river crossing in Songjiang district. The small holes are not loopholes, but were to uphold the supports for a wooden floor. Inset shows interior.*



# JAPANESE INVADERS

## CASE STUDY

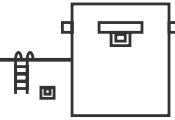
Few sources are available, but I reason this bunker was a Japanese casemate built in the later stages of the Second Sino-Japanese War (between 1943-1945).

This bunker is much bigger than a regular pillbox and would be large enough to accommodate the commonly used 37mm AT gun, which could fire either high-explosive (infantry) or armour-piercing rounds (lightly armoured tanks). The large, sloped opening might be confused for an entrance, but is actually a loophole identifiable by the stepped embrasures, which minimise the risk of ricochet shots and are typically used for gun ports that don't have a door or hatch.

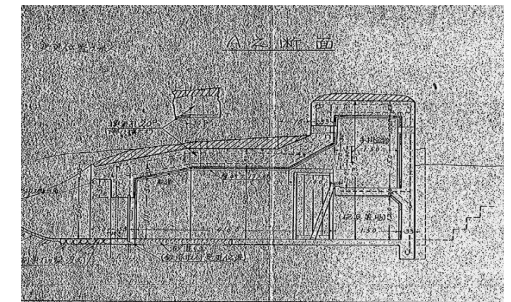
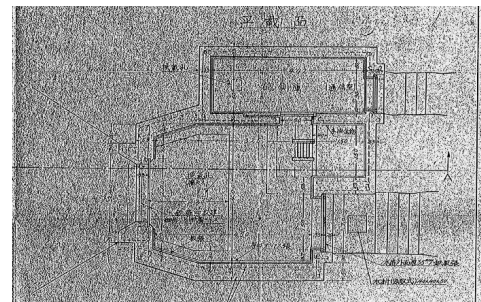
Also typically for a casemate, it has much thicker walls (approx. 1m thick side walls and a 2m thick roof) compared to a common pillbox since it had to better withstand heavy fire as it would often be a prime target by an attacking enemy. The observation tower may have been used for defensive purposes, but it looks too small to effectively wield any type of weapon and more likely was used for battlefield surveillance and to direct the gun crew aiming the artillery piece below.



As for who built it and when, all gun ports face east, indicating the area to its west had to be protected. The bunker (white dot) [is located](#) just outside the eastern border of Japan's core area "Little Tokyo" in the International Settlement. Looking at its location on historical maps, the artillery could be used safeguard the main approach (red dotted line) to downtown from Wusong, Shanghai's major port on the Yangtze River and where the Japanese expected coastal landings by American troops.



A Japanese casemate in the Xing'er community in Hongkou district. It is fenced off and is adjacent to 6-storey tall apartment buildings, which were built around it in 1989. The main room is flanked by two small rooms, which may have been used to store ammunition rounds or as living quarters. According to an elderly resident, a migrant family from neighbouring Jiangsu province used to live in the structure in the late 1990s and early 2000s.



Comparison between the bunker's interior and a similar type of casemate constructed on the Pacific islands. The main room is flanked by two small rooms, which may have been used to store ammunition rounds or as (temporary) living quarters.





# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

## 1949



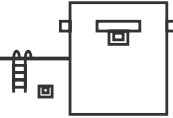
# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

1949

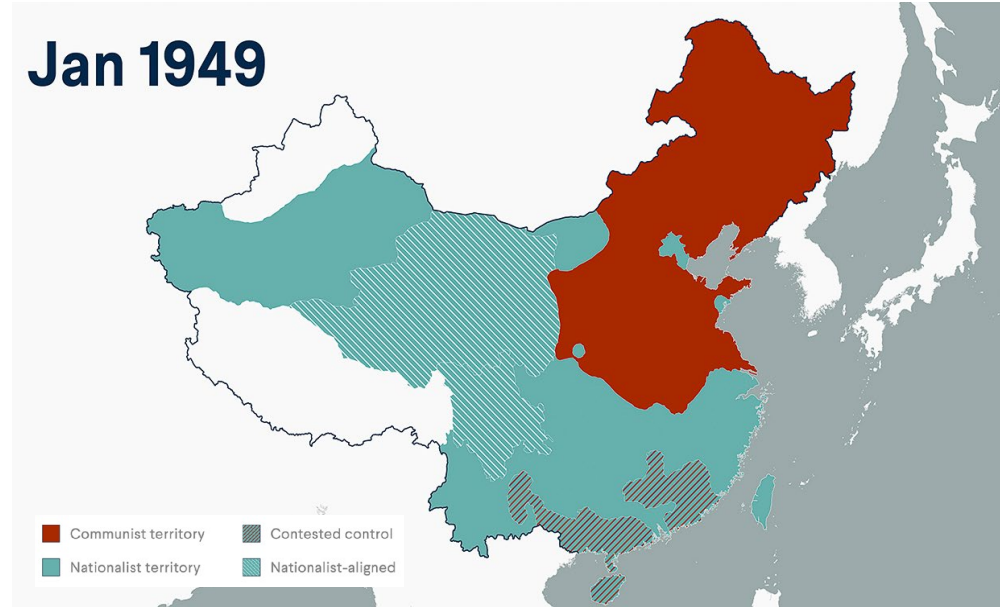
After Japan's surrender in 1945, and so with the common enemy gone, it didn't take long before the uneasy alliance between the Nationalists and the Communists collapsed and the fight for control of China resumed in 1946. Whilst the Nationalists had the upper hand before 1937, the tide had turned in favour of the Communists at the end of the Second Sino-Japanese war: Chiang Kai-Shek had exhausted his troops fighting the invaders in major battles across the country whereas the Communists engaged in small-scale guerrilla warfare and sabotage while simultaneously building up strength at their base in Yan'an. By 1946, the Red Army had grown to more than one million men and was supplied with captured Japanese weapons by the Soviet Union. Crucially, the Communists had the people's support: their initiated land reforms attracted massive numbers of landless poor to the Communist cause, providing an almost unlimited supply of manpower for both combat and logistical purposes, and many disillusioned but well-equipped Nationalist troops joined the Red Army too.

After successive major Communist victories in North China, the situation for the Nationalists started to look increasingly dire by the autumn of 1948. In December of that year, Chiang Kai-Shek appointed [Tang Enbo](#) the commander-in-chief of the Nanjing-Shanghai-Hangzhou Garrison and made him responsible for the defence of Shanghai, still China's economic centre and from where Chiang hoped to regain the upper hand.

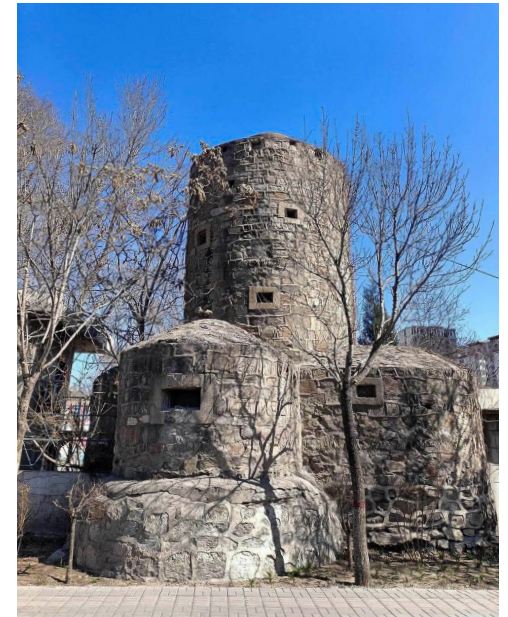
Following Chiang's instructions, Tang set up the "Shanghai Fortification Construction Committee" late 1948 and ordered his engineers to start work on the city's defences in January 1949. The fortifications would be based on those built by [Yan Yishan](#), a northern warlord supportive of the Nationalists, around the Shanxi capital of Taiyuan. [Anticipating a Communist assault](#), Yan had built more than 5,000 bunkers over the surrounding rugged natural terrain in 1948. Outnumbered almost three to one, Yan managed to hold out for more than six months before Taiyuan was captured late April 1949.



Jan 1949



Map above shows control of territory at the time of construction of Shanghai's large-scale defences. Pictured below are examples of the fortifications Yan Yishan had built around Taiyuan and after which Tang Enbo would model his for Shanghai. Taiyuan's fortifications were mostly above ground (rugged terrain) and made with stones (easy access) rather than concrete (coloured pictures by [Wu Gendong](#)).





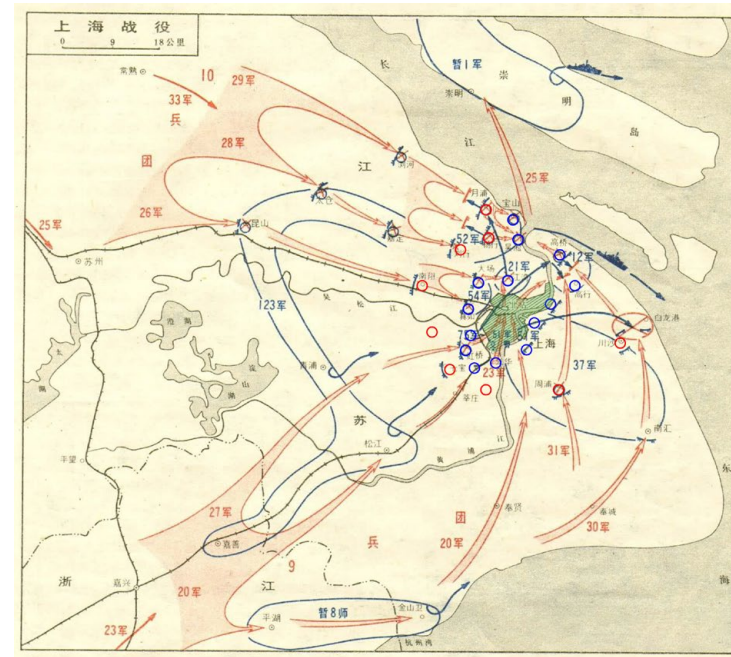
# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

1949

The “Greater Shanghai’s Line of Defence” consisted out of three components: the outlying positions in the outer suburbs would protect the approach to Shanghai, the main positions on the city’s borders would guard entry into the city and the core positions in downtown Shanghai would allow for the city’s defence until the bitter end. Tang planned to build more than 4,200 reinforced concrete bunkers in four types: A (甲), B (乙), C (丙) and a main fortress (主堡). I believe these types refer to a smaller and a larger version of the same type of pillbox (子堡), a two-storied command post (母堡), and an ammunition depot (弹药库).

The small and large pillbox, both dug-in machine gun fortifications, were called “sub fortresses” (子堡) and at least 3,042 of them were built. The core of the pillbox was round shaped with a rectangular extension, from where it could be entered. It had at least five gun ports, with stepped embrasures and protective eaves, covering every approach. The rectangular extension usually had two entrances, one on the side and one on top, which could be shut with steel lids or doors. The top had three or four small square holes for ventilation. Each pillbox would be manned by four to eight gunners.

Several pillboxes were usually arranged around a command post, called a “mother fort”, and formed a bunker group. The multi-storied fortress acted as the group’s command and observation post and was made up from three pillboxes (without the rectangular extension) merged together as the base level, with an another pillbox as the second level and a lookout on top. At least 78 of these command posts are known to have been built, but only six remain. The bunkers were often camouflaged, connected by trenches, and protected by rows of barbed wire, mines, and sharpened bamboo stakes. Each bunker group deployed at least one platoon (30-40 men), armed with various weaponry, and was strategically positioned near key infrastructure and important access routes.



## Outlying positions

Yuepu 月浦 (Baoshan)  
Yangzhan 杨行 (Baoshan)  
Liuhan 刘行 (Baoshan)  
Nanxiang 南翔 (Jiading)  
Huacao 华漕 (Minhang)  
Qibao 七宝 (Minhang)  
Huangji 华泾 (Xuhui)  
Zhoupu 周浦 (Pudong)  
Chuansha 川沙城 (Pudong)

## Main positions

Baoshan 宝山 (Baoshan)  
Wusong 吴淞 (Baoshan)  
Jiangwan 江湾 (Baoshan)  
Dachang 大场 (Baoshan)  
Zhenru 真如 (Putuo)  
Beixinjing 北新泾 (Changning)  
Hongqiao 虹桥 (Minhang)  
Meilong 梅陇 (Minhang)  
Longhua 龙华 (Minhang)  
Beicai 北蔡镇 (Pudong)  
Tangqiao 塘桥 (Pudong)  
Yangjing 洋泾 (Pudong)  
Gaoxing 高行 (Pudong)  
Gaoqiao 高桥 (Pudong)

## Core positions

Map of the “Greater Shanghai’s Line of Defence” with the outlying positions (red circles), main positions (blue circle) and core positions (green) marked.

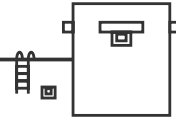


The four types of fortifications as part of the Greater Shanghai’s Line of Defence (l.r.t.b.): a small and a large pillbox (similar in design but distinguishable by the differently sized rectangular extensions), a multi-storied command post and an ammunition depot. The latter is actually two-storied and has been moved from its original location to be buried in a vacant corner of the community at the time of its construction in 1999. The sign also incorrectly attributes it to the Second Sino-Japanese War.



# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

1949



The construction of these fortifications fell to the Lugenji Construction Company (陆根记营造厂), which was already linked to the Nationalists through its owner, [Lu Genquan](#). Lu came from the same village as Du Yuesheng, Shanghai's most famous gangster and a known Nationalist collaborator. Before Nationalist projects became its primary focus, Lu's construction company built various banks, hospitals, and residential projects in Shanghai, as well as the The Paramount, the city's largest (and most notorious) ballroom with sprung wooden dance floor.

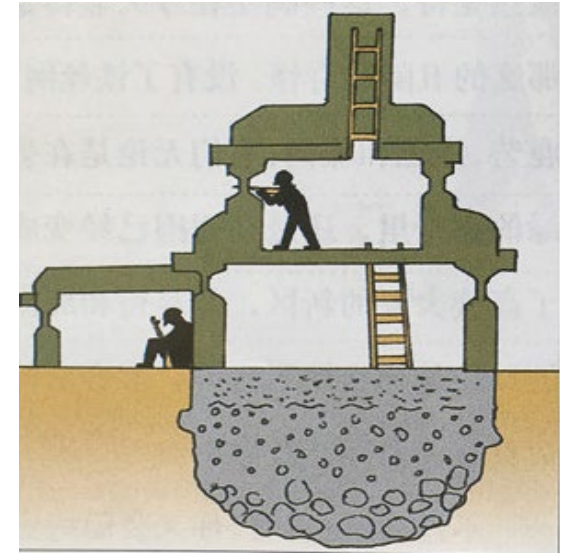
Lu Genquan partnered with two former employees, who had set up their own firms, and divided the construction work between them. Under the watchful eye of Nationalist troops, thousands of workers, as well as large numbers of civilian conscripts, were made (often at gunpoint) to clear land, destroy crops, and tear down any buildings, even graves, within a radius of three "huali" (roughly 1.5 kilometre) where the fortifications had to be built. Some of the more corrupt supervisors would ask the locals for bribes not to have the planned defences run through their neighbourhood. If they paid up, the line would be moved away, but if they did not, they were forced to destroy their own homes and property. Hundreds if not thousands of farmers and city dwellers were evicted and lost everything.

By exploiting and intimidating the local population, Tang Enbo managed to complete his Greater Shanghai's Line of Defence by April 1949, and bragged that Shanghai, with its "unbreakable" defences, would be like a "second Stalingrad", where the Communist advance will "hit a wall of steel and concrete". In a speech to his troops, Tang said Chiang Kai-Shek had asked him to defend the city for at least half a year, something he believed they would easily succeed in as long as they persist. Chiang himself arrived on 27 April [to boost morale](#) and to personally take command of the city's defences, and more importantly, to show his western Allies the Nationalists were not a lost cause.



Illustration (left) of a bunker group, with a command post flanked by two pillboxes, connected by trenches, and protected by sharpened bamboo stakes and barbed wire.

An illustrated cross section of a command post (right). First a hole for the foundation was dug, which was filled with large stones and then topped off with a layer of gravel. Its shape was achieved by linking rebar (steel bars) of various thickness and use wooden boards as supports to cast concrete (a mixture of stone chips, sand and cement) around it. The result was a reinforced concrete wall of at least 30cm thick.



From ballrooms to bunkers, the Lugenji Construction Company sure left its mark on the skylines of Shanghai (right picture by Harisson Foreman).



# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

1949

Neither Tang's self-confidence nor Chiang's presence could help prevent Shanghai falling into Communist hands within a mere three weeks. Not really helping either were the low morale among the defending Nationalist troops, the lack of support by most of the local population and the Communists' knowledge of the bunkers' positions: [Yao Huiquan](#), who grew up in the same village as Lu Genquan but was sympathetic to the Communist cause, used his relationship with Lu to have a middle man secretly obtain a copy of the map with the locations of the bunkers the Lugenji Construction Company had built in the suburbs of Shanghai.

During the "[Shanghai Campaign](#)" the Nationalists would lose three-quarters of their 210,000 strong army: several thousands were killed and more than 100,000 soldiers were either captured by or defected to the rapidly advancing Red Army. The surviving troops, including commander-in-chief Tang Enbo, escaped via the sea, while Chiang hopped on a plane to Guangdong. In December 1949, the game was up and Chiang Kai-Shek, along with two million of his soldiers and supporters, fled to the island of Taiwan, from where he would continue to lead the Nationalist government in exile and vowed to retake the mainland from the Communists. Chiang Kai-Shek never set foot on mainland soil again.



*In 1957, the Shanghai Chinese Academy of Painting appointed several artists to create eight commemorative hand scrolls themed the 'Liberation of Shanghai'. Seven scrolls have survived of which three depict Nationalist bunkers.*

*The top painting is called "Attack of the Enemy's Last Bunker" by Wu Qingxia and the painting below is called "Battle of Liuxing" by Pan Zhiyun ([source](#)).*





# CHINESE NATIONALISTS

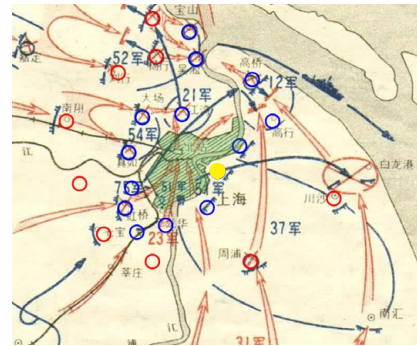
## CASE STUDY

Besides the difficulty in reviewing Chinese historical (military) records, very few of Shanghai's remaining bunkers come with any context and if they do, the description is usually overgeneralised or even wrong. Take for example the Jinjiaqiao Shelter in Pudong, its sign reads: "constructed in 1968 as part of the second line of defence along the coast of Shanghai in the 1960s-1970s". I argue this description, even its name, is incorrect.

Just by simple observation, one can tell its structure is identical to the larger variant of pillbox built by the Nationalists early 1949, still the most common and arguably the best documented bunker in Shanghai. The two bottom pictures are of the same type of pillbox in Minhang, with a sign that [dates it to this time period](#). When compared to a map of the "Greater Shanghai's Line of Defence", [its location](#) matches the Yangjing position (yellow dot), part of the Nationalist defences guarding entry to downtown. Even if this pillbox was displaced, which is not uncommon, it cannot have been moved much, alluded by the presence of two nearby pillboxes belonging to the same bunker group.

And lastly, this bunker type does not match its description, even though the correct terminology is otherwise used for similarly shaped fortifications. Unlike the suffix 掩蔽部 (troop shelter) implies, the Jinjiaqiao Shelter is actually a pillbox 碉堡, recognisable by the multiple gun ports providing a 360° view of its surroundings. A shelter is designed to withstand aerial or artillery bombardments and therefore has walls at least 0.5 to 1m thick and no gun ports, through which shell fragments or other harmful debris could enter. Although the Communists would indeed build many types of shelters [in the 1960s-1970s](#), they would also not copy Nationalist designs.

However, it is entirely possible the Jinjiaqiao Shelter, originally built by the Nationalists in 1949, was re-purposed into Communist defence lines later on and is therefore referenced as such.







# CHINESE COMMUNISTS *1950-1968*



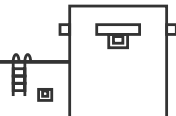
A photograph of a long, arched stone tunnel. The walls and ceiling are made of large, light-colored stone blocks. The floor is dark and appears to be dirt or concrete. At the far end of the tunnel, there is a bright, glowing light source, possibly an opening or a window, which illuminates the interior. The perspective is from the entrance, looking down the length of the tunnel.

# CHINESE COMMUNISTS

## 1969-1978



## BE PART OF IT



If you want to visit the bunkers yourself, or help us find more, you can join (for free) our “Shanghai Bunkers Wechat group”, where we discuss our latest findings and you can find the full list of all the 250+ bunkers we have located so far.

You can also support further research by booking one of our downtown bunker tours to help fund this project. Guided visits to bunkers in Shanghai’s outlying suburbs are available on request.

Since this is a work in progress, feel free to reach out if you’ve spotted a (spelling) mistake or you can help us with our research.

## CONTACT



go (at) explorebeyondchina (dot) com  
[www.explorebeyondchina.com/shanghaibunkers](http://www.explorebeyondchina.com/shanghaibunkers)

## EXPLORE BEYOND REFINED ADVENTURES IN CHINA



### DISUNITY, CONFLICT & SPECULATION *WHEN SHANGHAI DIGS IN FOR A FIGHT*

#### - INTRODUCTION -

We bet you didn’t know thousands of bunkers had been built in Shanghai between the 1930s and 1970s. While most have been removed in recent decades, hundreds can still be found scattered across town, often in plain sight, yet very little is remembered about these fortifications. Hop on a (shared) bicycle and visit three different bunkers for a dive into Shanghai’s forgotten symbols of resistance.

- ♦ Available all year | duration 2.5 hrs. ♦
- ♦ +-9km of cycling w. limited walking | in Jing’an & Hongkou districts ♦
- ♦ Includes water & snack | (shared) bicycle **NOT** provided ♦
- ♦ 250 RMB per person | 4 to 8 people ♦