No one even with only a casual interest in Chinese history can be unaware that China's capacity for war in the last few centuries has proved truly awesome. In the middle of the eighteenth century Qing armies numbering some 150,000 troops marched into central Asia. After many campaigns some of which continued for nearly two years, they rid China finally of the menace from the desert that had caused so much havoc in the past. In the process they exterminated the Zunghars as a people. In the nineteenth century, China fought wars with nearly all the major powers: England in the Opium War of 1839–42 and several times thereafter; France in the 1880s; and Japan in the 1890s. In 1900 it took on all of them at the same time. Civil war too was a frequent occurrence. The Taiping Rebellion of 1852–64 exacted casualties that should be counted in the tens of millions, and this was merely the most devastating of a series of rebellions. The scale of war in the twentieth century has proved even more spectacular. Warlord wars, fighting between the nationalists and communists, and the War of Resistance against Japan ravaged China until the communist victory in 1949.

The idea that Chinese culture was one of peace is partly a Confucian aspiration, partly an Enlightenment image produced when dynastic wars ravaged Europe, and finally partly a notion that was given new life after World War I by those in the East and West who wrote about pacifistic Eastern Cultures as an alternative to violent Western ones. Leaving aside the issue of what a Chinese cultural essence might be or if such a thing exists, it is plain that China's history has in fact been at least as violent as Europe's. But how war has shaped China is not yet at all clear. Few historians have seriously explored the issue. The present collection of articles seeks to make a beginning with this important task.
That the articles collected here have been inspired and influenced by scholars of European warfare will be obvious and this influence should be readily acknowledged. Historians of European warfare now examine how war-making has remade states, shaped national identities, transformed organizational and managerial practices, and propelled important social, demographic, economic, and cultural developments. Collectively hallowed as the New Military History, a term that unsurprisingly has proved difficult to define, these studies have reintegrated war into mainstream academic history. It was to evaluate the new scholarship on European warfare and to explore how it might enrich our understanding of war in Chinese history that the present authors formed a group. The articles presented here are their first product.

Collectively the articles illustrate first the range of topics in the study of war and the variety of the possible approaches. This is why the papers are not arranged chronologically but in groups illustrating major issues. The first group of articles examines the connections between war, state, and politics. It includes articles by Peter Perdue on the eighteenth-century campaigns of the Qing in Central Asia, Edward McCord on the emergence of an anti-warlord ideology in the late Qing and the Republic, and my own on the public finance, militarization, and the emergence of warlordism. The second group includes articles on war and culture. Joanna Waley-Cohen discusses the Qianlong emperor motives and aspirations in fashioning the commemoration of the eighteenth-century wars in which he had been involved. Hung Chang-tai explores the creation and use of popular war music by the Chinese communists during the Sino-Japanese War. Stephen MacKinnon describes how the Siege of Wuhan of 1938 created a fleeting but exciting culture of political openness and unity in the city. Finally Arthur Waldron explores the commemoration of the most prominent casualty of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–45, Zhang Zizhong, to investigate cultural attitudes towards the nation and violence. The third group of articles investigates battles. Lyman Van

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3 Stephen MacKinnon organized the first conference in Tempe, Arizona in 1992. Realizing that researchers in various places were beginning to undertake research on China’s military history, he brought many of them together to discuss sources, approaches, and topics. Future workshops and seminars are planned to discuss the history of strategic thought, war and memory, the impact of war on the state-building, and battles in modern Chinese history.
Slyke uses new sources to investigate the famous Battle of the Hundred Regiments of 1940, the main battle that the Chinese communists fought with the Japanese. Allen Fung reopens the debate on the actual strength and weaknesses of the late Qing military by analysing the real causes for the Chinese defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. Chang Jui-te’s article on changes in the quality of senior and lower level Nationalist officers, finally, is not only important for suggesting that the usual Western verdicts about the quality of these two groups of officers cannot be sustained. Its careful consideration of the evidence, furthermore, suggests that a great deal of work remains to be done before we have any real sense of the nature of the Nationalist military.

The articles in this volume are also significant because they probe the larger question of how war has shaped the course of Chinese history. This has been the central subject of the group’s discussions. In the remainder of this introduction I attempt to summarize what I believe to be the most important points that have so far been suggested either in the articles that follow or in discussions among the authors. At present we can do no more than advance some initial thoughts for consideration. After all, we remain largely ignorant even about the basic course of most of the various wars on which so much effort, energy, resources, and human life has been expended. No good treatment exists even of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–45, let alone of combat during the Taiping Rebellion or the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. The warlord wars and the wars between the nationalists and communists too have yet to find their chroniclers. Fundamental questions about technology, strategy, tactics, and command remain to be answered.

It follows that it is still early to raise more complex issues, such as how logistics has shaped the Chinese state, war moulded Chinese identities, or managerial techniques practised in the military came to shape civil life as well. I have nonetheless attempted to discuss matters such as these, for it is only when war is considered in the context of these larger questions that the deep impact of war on our societies comes sharply into focus.

The Decisiveness of Battle

Historians in recent decades have scorned the study of battle. Yet the real comprehension of battle is not simple: it requires the historian to be attuned to structural changes that may have taken place over
a considerable time-span and affected the ability of a society or a group therein to develop its organized, armed strength. It also requires a close consideration of a host of other factors that determine the outcome of a war, from the weather and the terrain, to morale, leadership, technology, attitudes toward warfare, and so forth. As von Clausewitz recognized, the outcome of a war can hinge on unpredictable and uncontrollable factors. Yet wars can make or break a nation or revolutionary movement; lead to drastic changes in leadership and government policy; or change the national mood and public opinion decisively.

The value of studying one battle is made clear by Allen Fung’s discussion of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. The war has usually been depicted as a symbol of everything wrong with China’s leadership at the time and the self-strengthening policies of the preceding period. Fung makes clear that the war itself was more closely fought than usually assumed and that the Chinese had reason for confidence especially in their navy. He shows that the defeat cannot be explained as the inevitable consequence of a failed self-strengthening movement, incompetence, corruption, factionalism, and lack of resources. Some troops fought well, but late mobilization, in the hope of gaining international support, as well as the lack of a well-trained officers’ corps, led to China’s defeat. With most scholars in agreement that China’s navy was superior to the Japanese in terms of size and technology, the explanation that the Empress Dowager Cixi’s embezzling of naval funds caused the defeat does not stand up. China’s defeat at sea may have been a matter of improper tactics, as some argue. In any case, as of yet the verdict remains open and further research will have to be done before the issue can be settled.

Fung’s article, and those by Peter Perdue and Joanna Waley-Cohen, make clear that the questions of when and why China became vulnerable to foreign invasion remain to be answered on the basis of reliable archival research. European military history suggests that China’s weakness was perhaps less a matter of Qing military ineptness than of an enormous advance in the West’s military capabilities in the course of the nineteenth century. In an examination of

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The technologies that helped make empires possible, Daniel Headrick has pointed out (in a study that also underscores the value of studying battles) that only very recent technological advances, especially the steam-driven gun boat, gave Britain a decisive advantage during the Opium War and allowed its navy to sail up China’s rivers. Even if they were clearly no match for Western powers in the late nineteenth century, the idea that Qing armies deteriorated quickly after the founding of the dynasty may be more of a late nineteenth-century legend, created by nationalistic anti-Manchu historians, than a fact. On land, it seems, China became weak vis-à-vis the West probably only in the second half of the nineteenth century. Then industrialization and bureaucratization made Europe’s modern armies much more powerful, modern means of communication allowed the mobilization of large numbers of troops and their transportation to distant lands, modern technology made weapons more lethal, and modern medicine safeguarded Western soldiers from diseases. China’s rebellions indicate that the Qing found it difficult to maintain the peace internally, so domestic developments were relevant too. Still the idea of a Qing China that had been weak for centuries and a West that would have inevitably won any conflict at any time is an untenable myth.

The Sino-Japanese war also is a good example of the importance of battle because the consequences of China’s defeat were plainly enormous. Had China’s army and navy performed better, its history would have been different. Surely Liang Qichao was right when he wrote in the early 1900s that foreign powers flocked to China ‘like flies to rank meat’ only when they had been shown how weak China really was. And just as certainly, Yuan Shikai’s programme of building up China’s infantry forces first after 1895 and then with redoubled vigour after the Allied Expedition to relieve the Boxer Siege in 1900 would not have occurred were it not for the common and by then patently justifiable perception of a deep crisis in which China’s very existence was at stake. It was in this context that the Self-Strengthening movement was rejected as a failure and radical policy

8 Liang Qichao, Xin min shuo (On the renewal of the people) in Yinbinshi congzhhu (Collected writings from the Ice Drinker’s Studio) (Shanghai, Commercial Press, no date), vol. 1, p. 8.
changes became possible: new men and new policies came to the fore, and the build-up of China's infantry became a priority. Warlordism would not have developed without the latter.

The defeat also led to a switch in strategy, from one in which the development of a blue water navy had an important place to one that concentrated on the development of modern infantry forces. A naval strategy was first propagated by Wei Yuan after the Opium War. Having witnessed British naval capacity, Wei concluded that China's greatest weakness was in its naval capabilities. While convinced that Western powers did not have the means to make large-scale invasions into China, he recognized the importance of the new naval threat. Because it would take time to develop a strong fleet, he proposed that China first focused on the defence of harbors and important inland waterways. At the same time, advanced naval vessels should be purchased abroad and modern industry should be built up. Non-military industries should be fostered as well, to make China wealthy and strong. The end-goal was a navy that could repel enemies before they landed on China's shores. This thinking was especially influential during the self-strengthening movement.

Counterfactual history cannot prove anything. But it is useful as a reminder that given outcomes were not necessary outcomes but that they nonetheless had enormous consequences. The abandonment of the navy was a fateful choice of China's post-1895 leadership. Only now are China's strategists reconsidering the importance of the navy.

China's recent history has been shaped in key ways by other battles as well. I later discuss a few features of the Qing victory over the Ming in which several contingent factors, such as the betrayal of the Ming by one of its generals, proved decisive. The Qing victory in


central Asia led to the extermination of the Zunghars but also had important consequences for the Chinese state. In the historiography of twentieth-century China the battles of the Civil War have decided who would rule a fifth of mankind for the second part of this century, with very important consequences. It used to be assumed that a CCP victory was virtually inevitable, if not by the late 1930s, then certainly by the time of the Japanese surrender. Lyman Van Slyke's article in this volume shows that the CCP's leadership feared for its survival in the early 1940s, and the recent biography of Deng Xiaoping by his daughter hints that after the Japanese surrender too it was on occasion deeply worried about its future.12 Stephen Levine has also made clear that the CCP success in Manchuria was not at all secure by 1945.13 How the CCP was able to build up its forces and turn them into several disciplined army groups each of nearly a million troops is not known, nor is it clear exactly how they defeated the KMT armies during the battles of the Civil War period.

Battles have been important in other ways as well. They can bring about the ascendancy of one political party or one group of officials. Following the Opium War, a conservative group dominated the court and prevented reform; after the Allied Expedition that lifted the Boxer Siege, a reformist group of officials gained the ascendancy and instituted a very radical reform drive.14 Van Slyke's article also shows that the outcome of the Battle of the Hundred Regiments may not have begun in diverging strategic views, but certainly helped create sharp cleavages among the communist leadership subsequently. In a recently published article in the Journal of Military History, Arthur Waldron develops the idea that the civil war among warlords after the death of Yuan Shikai in 1916 made China's population, especially in urban areas, weary of the men who then governed China and caused so much violence. Nationalist and Communist propaganda

12 Deng Maomao, *Deng Xiaoping, My Father* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), pp. 401–2. Verification by independent archival research is not now possible, but will need to take place before Deng Maomao's suggestion can be accepted as accurate. The manoeuvres of the Second Front Army, however, and especially the dash toward the Dabie Mountains suggest that the Chinese communists did see the situation as requiring audacious measures.
against warlords and imperialism had a ready audience and the parties grew quickly in this atmosphere. The May Thirtieth Movement of 1925, he suggests, would not have happened without it. That movement led eventually to the end of warlordism and the creation of the Nanjing Government. The Chinese Communist Party exploited it to extend their membership and influence in Chinese society.

It is important to study battles not only because their outcomes have had vast consequences. Battles are important elements of the human experience and as such surely deserve much more attention. The experience of the soldier but also of the officers and the commander-in-chief; the impact of technological and organizational changes on warfare; and subsequent human reflections on battle and violence are all important subjects for historical exploration.

Modern Warfare

Modern warfare has affected China not just by making foreign powers with modern forces, such as Western ones in the nineteenth century and Japanese in the twentieth, capable of invading and occupying it, and making warfare in China ever more destructive. The organization of society, the state, political models and values, the economy, as well as ideals and ideologies were all affected one way or the other. Changes in the nature of China’s ruling elite indicate the scale of the impact of the rise of the modern army in just one area. In the mid-nineteenth century people like Zeng Guofan dominated China militarily and politically. They were steeped in Confucianism, wedded to the Qing dynasty, and had no specialized military knowledge. Anti-military attitudes dominated the bureaucracy. Half a century later China was ruled by people who had been trained primarily as military experts, believed in military values, and were known mostly for their military position.

18 John Keegan, The Face of Battle (London: Pimlico, 1976) discusses strategy, tactics, and various experiences of three great battles in European history, namely Agincourt (1415), Waterloo (1815), and the Somme (1915). It is a splendid example of what battle history can be.
In the following paragraphs I set out how historians of Europe have described modern warfare, as this will facilitate the discussion of its effect on China. Modern warfare is industrialized, bureaucratized, and nationalized. Some trace its beginnings to the rise of the infantry in the sixteenth century when Maurice of Nassau of the Low Countries and Gustaphus Adolphus of Sweden demonstrated the superiority of drilled infantry over cavalry and thereby ended the domination of the battlefield by the feudal knight. The bureaucratization of warfare advanced gradually in the eighteenth century. Possessing the largest army, France took the lead. As European states expanded, armies increased in size and supply needs grew. In recruitment, officials signed contracts with soldiers for a fixed term of service. The spirit of bureaucratic rationality came to dominate. Appointments were less and less bought or inherited. Merit and examinations increasingly determined promotion. Armies were divided in standard size divisions combining different branches of the army such as engineers, infantry, cavalry, signalmen, etc. Roads improved in the same period, helping commercialization but also increasing the mobility of the army. Map-making abilities advanced greatly, improving the commanders' ability to control troops and use them effectively. Staff officers were trained at a staff college in the logistical and command skills required to co-ordinate the increasing numbers of troops that the bureaucratized army allowed to be deployed. Face-to-face command, dependent on voice or bugle, made way for command at a distance, with orders written down and eventually prepared in advance.

The French revolution turned war into a national endeavour. The 1793 levée en masse for the first time made military service compulsory and a national duty. The earlier bureaucratization of the army was a precondition for the Revolution's mass national army; the managerial skills developed earlier were necessary to control the movement and enable the supply of so many. The availability of officers trained in military academies made it possible to decentralize command. The

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spirit of the revolution and the nature of the new recruits led to new tactics. The soldiers of the revolutionary armies were not professional soldiers or mercenaries, and thus were less skilled in drill and establishing formations. Perhaps because officers did not have to be quite so mindful of discipline in a national revolutionary army, as some have suggested, but perhaps also because there was no choice, the French armies did not fight in traditional close formations but engaged in skirmishing and relied on aggressive tactics.21

The industrialization of war changed the face of battle. Rifled gun barrels were used in the eighteenth century, but it became possible to supply rifles to all soldiers only with the invention of breech-loading, conical-cylindrical bullets, and the application of mass manufacturing techniques; this took place only during the second half of the nineteenth century. Tactical and strategic changes followed. Breech-loading allowed soldiers to crouch or lie down. Bullets came with gunpowder in one unit, allowing for much more rapid reloading and eliminating misfiring. Assaults in densely massed formations became simply suicidal, so soldiers fought further apart. Command headquarters moved further and further to the rear. The battlefield widened and deepened. Digging oneself into the ground was quickly discovered to be an effective form of defence and trench warfare was the result. Industrialized means of transport, beginning with the railroad, made it possible to move troops and supplies rapidly and mobilize for war in short order. The telegraph allowed for rapid communication between front and rear.22

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 first illustrated clearly to Europeans what the industrial revolution had done to warfare. Governments throughout Europe and the world were shocked by the effectiveness of the Prussian army, mobilized by railroad, against the French who had been presumed to possess the strongest army in Europe.23 Even if developments such as the machine gun (known during the American Civil War but important first in the Russo-Japanese War), the tank (a World War I product), airplanes (ditto), and nuclear weapons would change warfare profoundly many times more, by the late nineteenth century the modern army with its dependence on the existence of a manufacturing industry and a state

apparatus possessing sophisticated managerial abilities had emerged recognizably in Europe.

Following the German victory in 1870 many European states rushed to imitate the German example.\(^\text{24}\) Shortly afterwards other countries including Japan, China, and the Ottoman Empire (which has rather interesting similarities in this context to China) also began to remould their armies according to the European example to various degrees. The chain of developments set into motion by the emergence of the modern army has reshaped societies around the globe, in every case in very profound ways.\(^\text{25}\) There is a vast array of topics to be explored. Modern armies were expensive and thus the fiscal consequences of military modernization were substantial. Efforts to increase revenue had substantial political but also social and economic consequences. The attempt to create modern armies necessitated the introduction of new technologies and manufacturing techniques, but because the modern infantry army was supposed to have a medical corps, it may also have helped the introduction of Western medicine. Managerial skills, education, and many other matters, including even perhaps dress and diet, were affected by the attempt to recreate the European army.

The political ascendancy of military experts was one important consequence of army modernization in China. Li Hongzhang laid the institutional foundation for the transformation of China’s ruling elite by establishing China’s first Military Academy, the Wubei Xuetang, in 1885. After the Sino-Japanese War and the Boxer Rebellion, the number of military academies rapidly multiplied under Yuan Shikai’s stewardship. It was Yuan who made the Baoding Military Academy into the most important institution for military training for the late Qing and early Republic. Chang Jui-te’s article in this issue makes clear that even if the academy’s political influence ebbed after the establishment of the Nationalist Government, its military influence continued well into the Second World War. Many KMT generals were Baoding graduates.

The military academies produced many of the men who led China throughout the Republican period. Further research may show that


a military ethic was fostered in them that led the military to think of themselves as a leading modernizing force in a backward country, with commensurate obligations. Military manuals and foreign military advisors stressed the importance of technology, science, rational administration, discipline, and nationalism. The German example could, furthermore, be taken as illustrating the close connection between the creation of a modern army and the transformation of a backward and divided country into a modern and strong nation. Yuan Shikai was assisted by German advisors when he began to construct the Beiyang Army. The rise of warlordism had many causes, including political breakdown and the need to secure fiscal resources. But it is possible that, surrounded by all this modernity and inspired by a certain sense of mission, the modern military believed that their duty lay in taking charge in a time of crisis such as the 1911 Revolution.

Republicans were inspired by a militarized version of republicanism. They believed that China could attain strength only if the entire population was drawn together in a disciplined state. The new citizens of China had to be civic-minded, disciplined, capable of self-sacrifice, aggressive, and rational. Education was to include physical and military training. Classes were to discuss national history and create a national consciousness. Military service was to become compulsory. Liang Qichao, Cai E, Huang Xing and many others presented the new citizens as different from traditional Chinese in that of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 114–72 for a preliminary discussion of the impact of army modernization in China and Japan.


On German influence, see Udo Ratenhof, Die China Politik des Deutschen Reiches, 1871–1945 (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1987); Qingdai dang’an ziliao congbian, vol. 10, pp. 221–90; Guo Rugui et al. (eds), Zhongguo junshishi: Disi juan: bingfa, vol. 4, pp. 412–25; William Kirby, Germany and Republican China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983) notes that Wang Tao wrote a book on the Franco-Prussian War that shocked the Self-Strengthening establishment and led to the use of German advisors both by Yuan Shikai and Zhang Zhidong as well as the purchase of new equipment including from the Krupp factories.

they were disciplined, martial, and patriotic. This kind of republicanism was influential within the military as well; the support of important elements in the army for the 1911 Revolution is unsurprising.

The Chinese Communist Party (and the KMT at least in the early 1920s) followed Leninist organizational principles that were shaped by organizational models and values that derived from the modern military. Discipline was deemed to be all-important. Members were to accept orders unquestioningly. The Politburo was like a general staff: surveying the shape of the terrain and the strategic position of the enemy and its own organization, it then developed a doctrine that was reviewed continuously but that also had to be obeyed throughout the party. The party cadres or professional revolutionaries were like army officers and the rank-and-file members like soldiers. The whole structure was thought to relate to society much like the army: although separate culturally and organizationally as the vanguard, its success depended on mobilizing the population. No wonder that political struggle became conceived of and expressed in military language.

The revolutionary perception of change, as Benjamin Schwartz has argued, is a violent and militarist one. Influenced by social Darwinism, German militarism, and late Victorian ideas about the ‘improving’ qualities of struggle, already Marx, to some extent, but very clearly Lenin reduced the whole problem of transforming a capitalist society into a socialist one to a struggle that required a military-like violent assault on old political structures thought to be preventing the realization of the socialist good. The Leninist party was the product of organizational principles that were closely connected with the modern military and attitudes toward change in which struggle, discipline, and the mobilization of large numbers of people were all important.

The CCP’s style of government in the base areas before 1949 and in mainland China thereafter were shaped by the party’s military tradition. The command economy was an attempt to run an economy like a modern army. The principles of rational management and bureaucratic allocation were applied to the entire economy. The same devices that had brought revolutionary as well as national victory on

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the battlefield were mobilized to bring about revolution in Chinese society, economy, and culture. The creation of work units, production teams, brigades (and later communes where the family was abolished and people ate in a common mess-hall), as well as the use of production campaigns were militaristic ways of realizing revolution. The Cultural Revolution itself sought to remake all Chinese in the image of the communist guerrilla.

The attainment of military efficiency drove much public effort in China in this century and military principles of organization, styles of behaviour, and personal attitudes were deeply influential. China’s disastrous experiences with the disintegration of central authority not just in the last two centuries but throughout Chinese history was taken to render the provision of security—at the local level to till the land or engage in one’s trade and nationally to prevent invasion and keep the peace—a political good that justified the imposition of autocratic forms of rule. Autocracy of course tends to strengthen the military.

Nonetheless resistance against the complete dominance of military goals has run deep. Edward McCord makes clear that a powerful anti-warlord movement prevented the rise of full-blown militarism after the death of Yuan Shikai in 1916, even at the time when civil officials and politicians too were widely despised. The movement was not just the result of World War I, although that war’s destructiveness shocked Chinese just as it had Europeans. Important too was the fact that China’s military proved unable either to protect the country from foreign invasion or to safeguard the unity of the country. In Europe militarization was connected to German and Italian unification and strengthened nationalism in most countries. This was true for Japan too. In China disunity and bloody civil war was the result. Modern war may have militarized much of Chinese society; but its divisiveness and destructiveness worked against the emergence of full-blown militarism.

**War and the Mind**

In recent years much has been written about how collective recollections of war shape the imagination and mould identities. Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory* has become a classic. Fussell discusses the deep impact of World War I on modern consciousness. He also illustrates how the war shaped the culture of Britain as a
nation. In Britain, Fussell shows, ‘the texture of daily life could be said to commemorate the [Great] War’. Pub closing hours, only recently abolished, were instituted during the war to make sure that munitions workers would be sober and productive on their jobs. The publication of death notices in newspapers too was a World War I product. National Poppy Day is a conscious commemoration of the war; many in Britain buy a paper or plastic poppy in order to support war casualties or their families. Eggs and chips became popular during the war because meat was scarce and what there was would have been sent to the front. The effects on language too were profound.

It is because modern wars in Europe were national in character that they have had such a pervasive effect on modern European nation-states and imagination. Modernity may atomize society, break down communities, and scatter work in distinct and separate professions, but modern war was shared by all, even if experienced differently. In European wars bullets did not distinguish on the basis of race, religion, or class but of nationality. Wars defined nations, and with them an important element of subjective identities. In the trenches of World War I Britain’s class differences were perhaps not overcome but nonetheless a common bond was forged between the scions of the aristocracy and industrial workers. It was also during World War I that Europe’s ruling elites finally had to let go of their hold on power. Universal suffrage was the price for compulsory service in the mass armies that modern war required. In this secular and sceptical age, public commemorations of war remained until recently (and for many remain) one of the few honest ritual occasions during which nationhood, even if complex and disputed, was brought into being and revalidated.

In China, the experience of modern war and its role in building up a national identity has been radically different. Bullets did distinguish first on the basis of region during the warlord period, and then after the 1920s when communists and nationalists began to fight each other, also on that of ideology and to some extent even class. War and the memories of it sustained in public rituals, literature, and the media have divided and continue to divide Chinese society. The partition of China is an apt symbol. Arthur Waldron’s article in this issue opens up the whole question of how war and the memory of it

33 Ibid., pp. 315–20.
shape Chinese identities. It is important for signalling that the authorities in Peking now are promoting a nationalistic interpretation of past war. By turning Zhang Zizhong, the highest National Government officer to die in combat, into an approved and desirable object of commemoration, an image of China and Chinese history is advanced that is different, for instance, from that of the Cultural Revolution operas which painted all Nationalist generals as deeply evil. National unity, sacrifice for the nation, and interestingly enough, a view of war in which past violations of ethical standards and norms of nationalism can be overcome and made good by sacrifice for the country stand central now.

Until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, Zhang Zizhong had not shown himself a loyal patriot. But in standing firm against the Japanese and sacrificing his life on the battlefield, so current commemorations suggest, Zhang became a full human being (chengren) and a real Chinese. It was during the Sino-Japanese War that China came together, it is suggested, and the positive and admirable virtues of Chinese culture prevailed over the destructive ones that had dominated the period before. The unrevolutionary qualities and patriotic attitudes that are now stressed stand in clear contrast not just to the Cultural Revolution but a century of thinking in which violence was seen as necessary and justifiable to bring about the birth of a new China. The change is a profound one.

To what extent the Anti-Japanese War will come to overshadow the memory of other wars in China’s past is a matter for the future. The many statues of generals and admirals that litter European capitals as well as the Qianlong stele rediscovered by Waley-Cohen make clear that the authorities cannot control what places, rituals, or memories stand central in the collective commemoration of war. Anti-Japanese sentiments run strong in China and it would be naive to believe that the many volumes of reportage literature (baogao wenxue) that describe the Anti-Japanese War or the television dramatizations of famous battles of the war lack an audience. It would be equally naive to believe that various episodes of civil war and revolution have simply been forgotten or that the Anti-Japanese War can subsume them.

34 Some examples of the new genre are Ran Huaidan and Zhu Haiyan, Beifang you zhanhuo (The smoke of war in the north) (Peking: PLA Press, 1993); Guo Qingping and Xu Yuanshang, Baituan Dazhan (The hundred regiments offensive) (Peking: PLA Press, 1993); Wang Dikang et al., Disiyezhanjun nanzheng jishi (The southern campaign of the Fourth Field Army) (Peking: PLA Press, 1993); Wang Yubin and
These wars did happen and people made enormous sacrifices for them. Enmities were created and bonds were forged that will not be easily unmade. One key-note speaker at a recent conference in Nanjing gave a paper that argued that the principal contradiction in the Republican Period was between China and Japan and that the KMT and the CCP had both contributed to saving the nation. But the CCP had always been braver and more dedicated than the KMT. It had fought the Japanese harder, while the KMT had carried on with fighting the communists even during the Japanese War.\(^{35}\) For this speaker at least, the CCP remained 'us' and the KMT 'them'.

To point out that modern warfare has shaped identities, rituals, and mentalities in fundamental ways is one of the most exciting aspects of recent studies of warfare. It makes it possible to connect the study of past wars with our own time, our routines of daily life, and the habits of mind characteristic of our culture. There are many memoirs, national festivals, diaries, and works of art and literature that could be explored to discuss such issues in the Chinese case. The result should be new and insightful approaches to twentieth-century cultural history. In the same way that modern war affected China's state and society differently than Europe's, the same is no doubt true for its cultural consequences as well.

**The Importance of the Periphery**

The importance of wars on the periphery even several centuries in the past can be readily grasped from the fact that national identity is determined in part by the space on the map that one's country occupies. It was only in the eighteenth century, as China's forces occupied what are now considered the Chinese parts of central Asia, that China's current borders became defined at least in outline.\(^{36}\) To defend the geographical extent of China's size achieved at that time, or reoccupy lost territories, moved China repeatedly to engage in military action, even when it barely had the means for the campaigns.


\(^{36}\) See the articles by Peter Perdue and Joanna Waley-Cohen in this issue.
Zuo Zongtang’s costly recovery of Xinjiang in the 1870s was an example.

The periphery made China in more complicated ways as well. Peter Perdue argues that the Qing victory in central Asia was possible in part because of a highly developed logistical capability. In her study of the Grand Council, Beatrice Bartlett argues that the consolidation of the Grand Council (Junjichu: literally ‘military planning office’) was the result partly of the central Asian campaigns whose success depended on a well-managed logistical operation. Much more research needs to be done about the question of how warfare in central Asia shaped approaches to managerial and fiscal issues, but the high cost of these wars and the profound changes that took place in the organization of the Chinese state at the same time suggest an important link. In a commercialized but regionally diverse and populous society, it seems, the state apparatus was centralized but considerable space was left for regional autonomy. The state made arrangements with provinces and powerful groups, depended fiscally partly on state monopolies, and directly controlled strategic industries, such as arsenals, and horse pastures. No attempt was made to tax each Chinese individually; the attempt to carry out cadastral surveys and implement the land tax according to the statutes was quickly abandoned in the face of resistance. Of course, commercialization and greater mobility of the population affected such developments as well. But the impact of war on the periphery surely was relevant especially at a time when the military took the lion’s share of the state budget.

The Ming–Qing transition provides a further example of the importance of the periphery. After the Ming army, headed by Wu Sangui, went over to the Qing, the approach to Peking was open and the Qing forces could sweep into north China. It is possible, as William McNeill suggests, that the balance of power between the Ming and the Qing was decisively tipped in favour of the Manchus because of their quick adoption of European gunpowder and cannon-making technologies. McNeill argues that these new technologies—which

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39 McNeill, *Pursuit of Power*, pp. 98–9. See also Frederic Wakeman, J., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 75–82, 168–70. The Ming was able at first to exploit European artillery technology to create defences that the
owing to their cost and technological difficulty could be monopolized by a relatively small and cohesive group—made it possible for a group that did so successfully to establish control over large areas. European colonization (using superior guns on naval vessels to wipe away maritime and land-based defences), and also the Muscovite, Ottoman, and Mughal Empires (using cannon on land to destroy the defences of their opponents) may have come into existence as a result of their control of new military technologies.  

The ruling elites in these empires had to centralize power so as to safeguard their position. They also had to constitute a closed military elite, often defined along caste, class, or ethnic lines. The Qing situation needs further study, but the Banner Armies may well have been the Qing equivalent of a military that was dominated by a traditional aristocracy of Europe and Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire. It is possible that modern nationalism, especially the idea that it means a liberation from domination by one class or by outsiders, emerged in part as a reaction against this background.

The study of war in China has, I believe, the potential of providing new insights into China’s history. Once warfare is readmitted as a proper subject of research, new perspectives are opened. Not only different events, such as the first Sino-Japanese War, but also different processes, such as military modernization and technological invention, and also places such as China’s peripheries, take on a new significance. Above all, it becomes clear that war, far from being unfortunate but irrelevant, has not just marked but very much made history. Without a much better understanding of battles and war, our grasp on Chinese history will be deficient.

The claims advanced in this introduction for the significance of war have been bold. It should be noted, in qualification, that none of the authors here want to reduce history once more to warfare, let alone battle. Most of the articles in fact attempt to integrate social and economic analysis with the study of war. To do this well is the

Manchus were not able to breach. But the capture of artillery troops and experts by the Qing and their own acquisition and manufacture of European cannon changed the balance of forces decisively. The Qing also depended on their great cavalry speed. See also Wei Zhenfu et al., Zhongguo junshishi: diyiuan: Bingqi (Military history of China: vol. 1: weapons) (Peking: PLA Press, 1983), pp. 129–35.

41 Ibid., pp. 98–9. For the technological, industrial, and managerial developments that were basic to the rise of the Muscovite empire, see Fuller, Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600–1914, pp. 23–5, 56–84.
challenge. War is not the determining factor in history; it always occurs in the context of demographic changes, technological inventions, commercialization, and the development of organizational skills.

But neither should war, qua war, be neglected. Peter Paret issues an important warning in a review of writings on warfare in the West. Historians of war, Paret argues, should not only study the connection of war with state-building, the family, demographic change, and social values. The study of war also quite properly includes the analysis of battles, of strategy and tactics, command, and weapons.42 Important differences exist between wars and their consequences in China and Europe, and of course between these and other areas in the world. As John Fairbank wrote two decades ago: 'Among China's contributions to today's world is a distinctive military record that has been too little studied.'43 This volume is offered in the hope that it makes a beginning with this.

42 Paret, 'The new military history,' in Understanding War, p. 222.