

Japanese Bombing in Beibei Chongqing and the Response of Soldiers and Civilians in Beibei During the Anti-Japanese War

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Abstract

During the Anti-Japanese War, Beibei was an important political, economic and cultural rear area. In 1940, the Japanese troops bombed Beibei four times, bringing heavy disaster to the local people. In order to reduce casualties and property losses to the minimum, Beibei set up a special protection mechanism, built a large number of air defense facilities, while paid attention to the expansion of public education, organized air defense relief, and actively responded to the Japanese bombing.

Key words: Anti-Japanese War; Japanese bombing; Beibei in Chongqing; Response

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INTRODUCTION

In late 1938 after the Japanese troops occupied Wuhan and Guangzhou, as the Nationalist government retreated to the inner mainland China persevering in resistance, the Sino-Japanese war gradually entered into a strategic stalemate phase. To tie in with the ground offensive, while destroying the will of Chinese soldiers and civilians in the war, from February 1938 to December 1944, the Japanese

troop conducted a protracted undifferentiated bombing to the capital of China, Chongqing during wartime. Around Chongqing Bombing, scholars have carried out many studies surrounding losses resulting from the bombing, the psychological changes of the people caused by the bombing, the impact of the bombing on urban development, domestic and foreign media's coverage of the bombing and the nationalist government's air defense measures and other aspects and have achieved fruitful results (Huang, 1992; Pan & Zhou, 2011; Wang, 2011; Pan, 2005; Zhou, 2009; Zhang & Gao, 2009; Lu & Liu, 2009). In contrast, there are relatively few researches in the academic circles which start from the microscopic point of view and select a relatively small town to study the Japanese bombing it suffered and its response. This paper intends to start from the perspective of microscopic science, based on a large number of newspapers and archives to analyze the bombing that Beibei suffered and the response it organized.

1. THE DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF BEIBEI DURING THE WAR

Beibei is located in the northwest of urban Chongqing, to the east of Yubei District, south of Shapingba District, west of Bishan District and north of Hechuan District, located in the downstream of the Jialing River. It is an important land and sea traffic thoroughfare between Chongqing and the north of Sichuan.

1.1 The Development Status of Beibei Before the War

To strengthen the security management, in 1916, the eastern Sichuan Dao Yin set Jiang-Ba-Bi-He special group river gorge garrisons; in 1923, it was changed into gorge protection bureau, residing in the former Wenchang Palace in Beibei township in Ba County. In 1927, industrialist Lu Zuofu took over the post of Secretary of

gorgeous protection bureau. He actively carried out rural construction after taking office. Under his presidency, Jialing River Hot Springs Park, Civilian Park, People's Stadium, Jian Shan Middle School, Western China Academy of Sciences, Beichuan Railway, the Three Gorges Dyeing Factory and Tianfu Coal and others were built in Beibei. He also required refurbishment of streets, the development of trade, governance of rapids and dredging waterways. Up to 1936 when Beibei Jialing River Rural Construction Experimental Area Department has been set up, Beibei has developed into a small western town of certain economic strength and relatively developed education and culture.

1.2 The Political and Cultural Development Status of Beibei During the War

Beibei really developed rapidly during the war. At that time, the nationalist government moved its capital to

Chongqing. Since Beibei has beautiful scenery and is just dozens of kilometers away from downtown Chongqing, and there are waterways along Jialing River and Bei-Qing road to pass, it was soon identified as an important resettlement area. In a short time, in Beibei and nearby towns, a large number of government agencies, research institutions, universities and cultural institutions moved in. Yu Youren, Sun Ke, Ma Yinchu, Lao She, Liang Shiqiu, Yan Yangchu, Guo Moruo, Tao Xingzhi, Liang Suming, Jian Bozan and other politicians, scientists, educators, writers and artists once worked and lived in Beibei. Since then Beibei has become well-known and it is known as *Little Second Capital*. According to the 1940 census statistics, the experimental area had a population of 97,349 with a net increase of 32,065 compared with that in 1936 (Local History Compilation Committee, para.3, 1989).

Table 1
Nationalist Government Agencies and Scientific, Educational, Cultural and Healthy Institutions Moved to Beibei During the War

Category	Name of the Institutions Moved in
Government agencies	KMT Central Committee Ministry of Organization, the KMT Central Ministry of Overseas, the Nationalist Government the Judicial Yuan, the Nationalist Government Legislative Yuan, the Nationalist Government Ministry of Justice and Administration, the Supreme Court, the Supreme Prosecutor Office, the Administrative Court, the Central Military Commission Battlefield Party and Government Committee, Central Civil Service Disciplinary Committee, the Central Executive Committee of Revolutionary Exploit Review Committee, the Nationalist Government Accounting and Statistics Bureau, the Ministry of Finance Tax Office, the Ministry of Finance Non-smoking Inspection Office, the Ministry of Economic Affairs Commodity Management Office, the National Bureau of Weights and Measures, the Volume Management Department Supreme Council of the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of War the Ordnance Department Beibei Office, the Executive Yuan Water Resources Commission Water Conservancy Demonstration Project Office, the Ministry of Transportation Chongqing Public Transportation Management Office, the Ministry of Economy Jialing River Coal Management Office, the Ministry of the Interior the First Shelter for Enemy People, the National Congress Election Office, the Executive Yuan Extraordinary Period Field Service Group and etc.
Scientific research institutions	The Academia Sinica Institute of Zoology, Academia Sinica Institute of Botany, Academia Sinica Meteorological Institute, Academia Sinica Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica Institute of Psychology, Institute of Biological Science Society of China, some departments of Central Industrial Research Institute, Ministry of Economy Mining and Metallurgy Research Institute, the Ministry of Economy of the Central Geological Investigation Institute, the MAF Central Agricultural Laboratory Institute, Institute of Chinese Geography, Pharmacy Institute of Military Ministry, Institute of Oil of Military Ministry, the Central Institute of Philosophy, Institute of Township Construction, Xiaozhuang Institute, Soil Science Society of China, Chinese Society of Forestry, and other endemic disease protection institutes in western China
Educational institutions	National Fudan University, National Jiangsu Medical College, National Art Sports Teachers College, National Opera School, National Theatre Academy, National Institute of Social Education Audio - Visual Education Special Training Course, National Chongqing Normal School, Central Measuring School of Department of Military Command, Central Military Supplies School of Department of Military Command, Private Chinese Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Private Lixin Accounting College, World Buddhist Sino - Tibetan Teachings Academy, Mianren College, Yucai School, Private Cottage Chinese Culture School and etc.
Literature, art, editing and publishing units	Zhongshan Cultural Education Center, Ministry of Education Textbook Compilation Committee, the Chinese Educational Book Codification Department, National Institute of Compilation, Chinese Dictionary Department, National Ritual Department, Chinese Historical Map Compilation Committee, Popular Books Publication Press, the Soviet Culture magazine, Literature and History magazine, the All-China Federation of literary and art circles for enemy-resisting Office, Western China Museum, North Springs Museum, the Chinese Education Film Studio, Beibei Local Records Commission, Beibei Local Records Museum, Han Ju Enemy-resisting Propaganda Team and etc.
Health care, sports and social welfare institutions	Affiliated Hospital of The National Jiangsu Medical College, China Almshouse, China Glider Federation Beibei Station, the National Federation of Women's Consolation Honorable Military Autonomy Experimental Zone, the World Red Cross North Springs Ciyou School, Ministry of Social Affairs Beibei Child Welfare Experimental Zone, Relief Committee Chongqing Third Educational Academy and etc.

Note. Source: Beibei Library in Chongqing (1980). *Draft of Beibei History*.

1.3 The Social and Economic Development Status of Beibei During the War

During Anti-Japanese War, Beibei was not only an important political and cultural rear area, but also an important energy base, textile industrial base and the testing bases of a number of important industries of the second capital, Chongqing. According to the statistics in 1945, there were Tianfu, Baoyuan, Huaying, Quanji, Fuxinglong, Sancaisheng and other large and small coal mines with a total number of more than 60 in Beibei. Coal employed 20,000 people with an annual output of raw coal 0.70 million tons. It was the most important coal production base in the big rear area. After the outbreak of the war, the Beibei Three Gorges Dyeing Factory established in 1930, the moved-in Changzhou Dacheng Weaving Factory and Hankou Longchang Dyeing Factory merged to form the Daming Dyeing Co., Ltd.. Its own developed and produced Daming blue cloth was cheap and of quality, very popular in the southwest. In addition, in Beibei, there was Southwest Linen Co., Ltd the Third Factory, Private Xiexing Dyeing Factory, Chongqing Shuhua Cloth Factory Beibei Factory, Beibei Huangjue Cotton Factory. During the war, Beibei was also identified as a demonstration area to support farmers and an honored military autonomy experimental area (Ibid.).

During the Anti-Japanese War, Beibei made important achievements in political, economic and cultural construction, together with the fact that it's on the only way when Japanese troops bombed Chongqing, so Japanese troops carried out several inhuman undifferentiated bombings in Beibei.

2. JAPANESE BOMBING BEIBEI SUFFERED DURING THE WAR

The Japanese bombings of Beibei were concentrated in 1940 with a total of four times, which brought heavy disaster to people in Beibei.

2.1 The First Bombing Beibei Suffered

The first bombing occurred on May 27, 1940. Around 09:00 in the morning, Area Air Defense branch office issued the air raid sirens. At that time, the KMT Eighteenth Army Sports Games were being warmly held. Faced with the risk of such a temporary incident, the Games were calmly ended. All troops were to evacuate people and urban residents were also well prepared and got evacuated in order. A quarter of an hour later, authorities issued an emergency warning again and the warning continued until 15:20 before removed. Around 14:00, 27 Japanese aircrafts were hovering over Beibei and dropped over a hundred bombs, most of which fell along the Beibei Stadium, Jialing River and Huangjue. Then the city of Beibei was suddenly full of flying shrapnel and the fire spread. The bombing caused destruction of 55 residential households with the loss of about 190,594 yuan, 23

businesses with the loss of about 68,340 yuan; 101 people were killed; 68 people were seriously injured and 58 people had minor injuries (Wang, 1940, p.5).

2.2 The Second Bombing Beibei Suffered

On June 24, 1940, the Japanese aircrafts launched the second bombing to Beibei. After 11:00, Chongqing sent a message to the Area Air Defense branch office, saying that there were two groups of enemy aircrafts entering Sichuan and having passed Wushan. Area Air Defense branch office immediately sent air raid alerts and at noon issued an urgent alert. Urban people had to immediately be evacuated to the countryside and the protective groups and rescue teams were on standby. At about 13:45 or so, 27 Japanese aircrafts flew over Beibei and soon after another 27 enemy aircrafts overflew Jinyun Mountain and entered into the low altitude. They began bombing and machine-gun fire. Jingang Monument, Orchard Shuilan Ya, Pond Bay, Maobeituo and urban Beibei were successively shot. The enemy aircrafts also dropped a few incendiary bombs along the river. Bombing triggered 27 small and big flames and the entire Beibei instantly became a hail of bullets and a sea of fire. The entire bombing caused the destruction of 216 residential households with a loss of about 262,417 yuan and 11 businesses with a loss of about 291,800 yuan; it also caused a loss of 171,250 yuan of others including government offices, schools, factories and hospitals and other institutions; 44 people were killed; 16 people were seriously injured, and 12 people were slightly injured (Ibid.).

2.3 The Third Bombing Beibei Suffered

On 31 July 1940, the Japanese aircrafts carried out a bombing for the third time to Beibei. At noon, Area Air Defense branch office according to the telecommunications learned that two groups of enemy aircrafts would fly to Sichuan Province, and then it immediately suspended a preventive alert flag. People had to pack clothes, shut the doors and windows and got ready to flee. At 12:15 in the afternoon, according to the telecommunications from Hechuan and other neighboring counties, Beibei noted that these places had issued the air raid alerts. To ensure safety, Beibei followed them to issue alerts. Another ten minutes later, according to reliable sources, it then issued an emergency alert. Although the alarm time was some hasty, most people had been transferred to the countryside and the rest of the people escaped into air-raid shelters. At 12:45, after 36 Japanese aircrafts flew over Jinyun Mountain and started low-flying, they dropped more than 30 bombings over Beibei. May Bookstore on Nanjing Road, Chinese Culture Service and the Third Police Station were bombed. The National Chongqing Normal School Physical Education Department suffered the biggest loss of the front gate of which was bombed by a sulfur bomb dropped by a Japanese aircraft. The fire brought disaster to the Queen Studio, Jianguo Bookstore and Asian Hotel and etc.. The

property and houses were burned in the fire. In addition, the next door of New North Bookstore was hit by a bomb and the national corps independent unit was hit by a bomb. Houses collapsed, and fragments were flying; combining with the machine gun fire of Japanese troops, a number of people were killed or injured at the mouth of this dugout. The third Japanese bombing to Beibei caused the destruction of 54 residential households with the loss of about 65,650 yuan, 33 businesses with the loss of about 303,763 yuan and other losses totaling 204,351 yuan; it killed 27 people, seriously injured 25 people and slightly injured 39 people (Ibid.).

2.4 The Fourth Bombing Beibei Suffered

The fourth Japanese bombing that Beibei suffered happened on October 10, 1940. At 10:30 in the morning, Area Air Defense branch office based on various sources learned that there were Japanese aircrafts harassing Sichuan, and it immediately issued a pre-alert. After a quarter of an hour, it issued the air raid sirens, and at 11:25 it issued an emergency alert. By then, people had evacuated to the countryside and people who stayed in the city also entered the dugout. At 11:40, 27 enemy aircrafts were divided into three batches coming from Xishanping and springs parks. The aircrafts were only three hundred meters from the ground. The air and bamboos were shaking and the enemies in the aircrafts were clearly visible. The first batch of enemy aircrafts dropped over 30 light and severe explosive bombs and incendiary bombs in Huangjue Town. The second and third batches dropped over 20 incendiary bombs and over 50 explosive bombs in Beibei with a total of more than 100 bombs. Around the District Department, more than 20 bombs shot this place. The staff quarters were hot by an incendiary bomb. The District Department, power house and Daming Dyeing Factory was all destroyed by the bombs. There were many incendiary bombs falling on the river bank which did not spread. The bombing resulted in severe loss of 36 residential households and mild loss of 59 household; Daming Factory were shot by ten bombs, one of which weighed 500 kg, causing very huge loss of plant and machinery; the loss of the District Department was about 50,000 yuan in housing; Beibei Power house suffered a loss of about 10,000 yuan; schools and residential houses suffered a loss of about 100,000 yuan; all adding up, it was a total loss of about 0.40 million yuan. Bombing also killed 4 people. Nine people were seriously injured and 17 were slightly injured (Ibid.).

3. THE RESPONSE OF BEIBEI SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS TO JAPANESE BOMBING

Faced with Japanese aircraft bombing, to reduce casualties and property losses, soldiers and civilians in Beibei took

measures from the following four aspects to respond positively and effectively.

3.1 To Establish Protection Agencies and Strengthen the Leadership of Anti-Air Attack Fights

Given the fact that Japanese aircrafts carried out indiscriminate bombings in undefended cities, early in September 1937, Chongqing established Air Defense Command. In order to strengthen the leadership of the air defense work, in February 1940, Beibei also set up anti-aircraft branch office and protection group, responsible for promoting the various issues of air defense in the area. There were 4 protection officials and the township set up protection sub-groups. In the area, there were 1759 guards in protection groups in the whole area. In addition, each section had 24 protection members who carried out military training for a period of three months (Local History Compilation Committee, para.3, 1989). To assist the work of protection groups, a volunteer protection team was also formed. The major task of the protection team was fire suppression. The formation was that each section formed a team; each region formed a squadron; each town formed a group. They were all formed with young men. Once there was an alarm, they immediately gathered and were ready to go. After the formation of protective groups, they played an important role in the rescue in several bombings. As long as an air raid alert was lifted, protective group members would join the rescue and fire-fighting with others and treat the injured as well as checking inventory losses and distributing relief funds and so on (Li, J. R., & Li, H., 1940, p.3).

3.2 To Expand Publicity and Education and Raise the Awareness of Anti-Air Attack Protection

In order to raise the awareness of the anti-air attack fight of soldiers and civilians in Beibei, after the Beibei Air Defense branch office was set up, it immediately began to promote air defense publicity and education. Its purpose was to let people know about the dangers of Japanese air raids and the necessity of air defense to reduce unnecessary losses. First, it organized air defense publicity teams in schools at all levels. Students in the publicity teams used their spare idle and rally occasions and vacation time to carry out air defense publicity and organize air defense education in the form of theater performances, rally speeches, paintings and comics, posting banners of various air defense and singing performances taking turn to the streets of the towns, and the inhabitants of the dugout trenches and resident concentrating places. Second, to expand the impact of air defense publicity, on the evening of April 1, 1940, Beibei also held a torch procession so that people had more real awareness of the knowledge of the air defense and the effectiveness was quite obvious (Ibid.).

3.3 To Build Air Defense Facilities and Resist Japanese Aircraft Bombing

Construction of air defense facilities is an effective way to reduce losses during the Japanese air raid. In the spring of 1939, Japanese forces dispatched a large number of aircrafts to attack places around Sichuan and Chongqing. Watching this situation, local authorities of Beibei launched an emergency mobilization to build dugouts in a rush. In view of the fact that some dugouts built in other places could not stand up to the Japanese bombs causing the collapse, or some air-raid shelters because of lack of air caused suffocation deaths, or people at the dugout mouth suffered the death due to

Japanese aircraft machine gun fire, when building the air-raid shelters, Beibei paid special attention to the following points: First, when selecting the site of the bomb shelters, they were all dug in the rocks on the mountainside; second, more holes were dug. Third, after digging five meters at the dugout mouth, turn into the right angle; fourth, use big materials as the framework and ceiling of the dugout; fifth, build two protective walls at the mouth. Through these five measures, they greatly reduced the risk of air-raid shelters. After six months of hard work, Beibei built 11 dugouts which could accommodate a total of more than 4,800 people (Ibid.). Details are shown in the table below:

Table 2
The Air Defense Facilities

No.	Region	Depth (meter)	Width (meter)	Height (meter)	Area (cubic meter)	Accommodation (people)
1	Miaozui Heilongtan	33.8	2	2	135.5	276
2	Miaozui merchant boat dock	84.2	2	2	336.9	674
3	North spring road tunnel	Note: After digging, it was changed into a road tunnel and it was not used as an air-raid shelter.				
4	Opposite to the new town brickyard	61.25	2	2	245	490
5	Opposite to the new town brickyard	103.85	2	2	415.4	831
6	Back mountain of the new town telephone office	32.25	2	2	161.25	323
7	Back mountain of the new town telephone office	25	2	2	100.1	202
8	Back mountain of the new town telephone office	20	3	3	90	180
9	New town Gaokan	75.5	2	2	302	604
10	Side of Beibei primary school	91	2	2	364	728
11	Back mountain of the stadium	20.1	2	2	281.8	562

In addition to digging air-raid shelters, in order to solve the problems that the existing hospital buildings were too narrow, patients were usually too many, and the hospital was too close to downtown and the risk was significant, Beibei authorities built a hospital for the seriously injured in the suburb, accommodating more than 100 people with convenient transportation. It was used for a recuperation place for people who were seriously injured by enemy bombings (Ibid.).

3.4 To Organize Anti-Air Attack Relief and Reduce Social Problems

Large-scale air raids often result in casualties and property losses as well as a large number of refugees. If we cannot timely organize relief, it is easy to bring a lot of social problems. After Beibei suffered four bombings, the authorities were able timely organize air defense relief. After the first bombing alert was lifted, the Chief Executive of the District Lu Ziyang immediately led the staff of the District Department and Beibei protection groups to devote into rescue. More than 40 people from Jiangsu Medical College Affiliated Hospital and the Red Cross Sichuan First Flow Air Raid Medical team also dispatched to the suffering region for the implementation

of health care. Chongqing Aerospace Defense Command, General Protection Group, Air Raid Emergency Relief Joint Office, Relief Committee and the China Red Cross Society sent representatives to rush to the scene to inspect the disaster. China Red Cross Society also sent a pair of stretchers, 16 nurses and a doctor to come to participate in the rescue work. In the second bombing when the enemy had not gone, the Chief Executive of the District Lu Ziyang had led the staff and officers in the District Department to suppress the fire. Public servants from protection groups, the youth corps, the Executive Yuan Special Time Service Group, Chengjiang protection sub-group, Xiema protection sub-group and other organs also rushed to the disaster relief. Medical teams such as Jiangsu Medicine School, Medicine Clinics and Chinese Medicine Relief Hospital all went out to participate in rescue work. Meanwhile, Chongqing Air Raid Emergency Relief Joint Office also conducted a service truck to Beibei for rescue. In addition, elderly people were not far behind. They sent tea and bottled water to support firefighting. Teachers and students of Fudan University actively received refugees. They set up a ghostwriter station at the campus for refugees to write letters, distribute rice porridge to refugees and help them

arrange accommodation. After Beibei suffered the third bombing from Japanese aircrafts, the protection groups immediately put into the rescue work seven minutes later when the aircrafts flew away. Gendarmerie, the Youth League and guard personnel from four rural towns all rushed to the scene to assist. The Chief Executive of the District Lu Ziyang stood in the front of the stadium to direct the rescue work. District health clinic ambulance corps, and Chinese medicine relief hospital and Jiangsu medical school attended the rescue work (Wang, 1940, p.5). In the fourth bombing, only a quarter of an hour later when the Japanese planes flew away, all employees of Beibei District Department, military personnel, Red Cross rescue teams, Beibei protection groups immediately dispatched to rescue people. They carried suffering compatriots to Jiangsu Medical School and District clinic seriously injured hospital for treatment. The District Department cooked porridge that night at the Guest Services, carried it to the affected area, provided for compatriots affected by the disaster. The relief lasted for several days until the room and board of suffering compatriots were resolved. In addition, all circles in the community also had a helping hand, made donations and tided over the difficulties with suffering compatriots.

CONCLUSION

The history of Japanese bombing of Beibei Chongqing tells us that if we don't well develop, we will be invaded and our national defense must pay attention to anti-aircraft defense. We must never forget the lesson and we should strengthen crisis management in the anti-air attack fight, do organizational and coordination work well, overcome the paralysis of peaceful thought, promote the national defense awareness of the whole society, and form a good atmosphere of whole society participating in national defense construction.

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