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Japanese Army 1931-45 (Volume 1, 1931-42)



Synopsis

During Japan's devastating Pacific offensive of the 1941-42 period of World War II, the Allies paid a high price for their failure to take seriously an army which had already been fighting in Manchuria and China for ten years. That army was a unique blend of the ancient and the modern and its up-to-date equipment and resourceful tactics served an almost medieval code of unquestioning obedience and ruthless aggression. This first of two titles covers the organisation, equipment, uniforms and character of Japanese ground forces in the Chinese and early Pacific campaigns, illustrated with insignia charts, many rare photographs, and eight meticulous uniform plates.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Although the book is very brief in its description of the JIA's military background, organization and character (due to that information being kept within the series' previous installment), its brilliant artwork coupled with detailed descriptions is a treasure trove for any modeller interested in the subject.”
—Chas Young, Armorama (March 2008) --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Packed with specially commissioned artwork, maps and diagrams, the Men-at-Arms series is an unrivalled illustrated reference on the history, organisation, uniforms and equipment of the world's military forces, past and present.

The Japanese Army 1931-1945 (1-1931-1942) Osprey Man at Arms series has done it once again with this compact booklet by Philip Jowett and illustrated by Stephen Andrew. Jowett has authored other Osprey books. He gives us a solid 20 pages of text on the organization of the Imperial Army in the years up to 1942 with each division located at particular times, weapons descriptions and so on but he also gives us some understanding of the odd political situation in Japan at the time where the armed forces often acted as a government unto themselves. The rest of the book us take up with the 24 color drawings by the talented Mr. Andrew, who by the way has illustrated several other Osprey books, including another co-project with Mr. Jowett. Very detailed text describes the uniforms and equpage of the soldiers and officers. The special uniform items issued to the troops stationed in frigid Manchuria are not neglected nor are the pith helmets of the men in tropical climes. In common with all of the Osprey offerings that I have examined, the quality of the text and photos are high. Jowett manages to give a great deal of factual information in a few pages. I now have enough information to know some of what I don't know. I can delve further in the Imperial Army with a good deal more confidence having been exposed to this small but important book.

Nice compilation of Japanese army uniforms of the early and bulk of World War II years. Comes with good pictures and an English text which is easy to read. This book traces the early years of the 1930's into the 40's when Japan became an aggressive juggernaut in the Far East..

This like the other titles in Osprey's "Men at Arms" series is devoted to the minutia of the soldiers' equipment, uniforms, and life in the military. The difference in quality between these various volumes is quite small- they are all packed with information. None of them pretend to be histories of campaigns or wars. This particular volume covers well, the pre- WWII era to early war of the Japanese Army. It is not a subject on which a great deal is written. I was hoping for some more photos of the Manchurian army and Nomonhan event in particular, than was included in this book. Stephen Andrew's illustrations are among the better in Ospreys' series, but I do think he could do better faces. And I have found some contradictory photo evidence to the descriptions of the uniforms. One last point, since many of us who purchase these volumes use them for reference in modelling and painting would be that they include fairly accurate color samples of the uniforms and equipment rather than descriptive words like brown and khaki which are just too generic; or at least some assurance the color artwork is based on some substantial evidence. All in all this is a really great volume and I would highly recomend it to anyone interested in the Japanese soldier of the

30's and early WWII.

Awesome series

I thought that this was one of Osprey's better books in the "Warrior" series. Some excellent information on unit structure and the various uniforms worn by the Japanese soldiers of this period that is hard to come by in English language references. A previous reviewer criticized the book for spending too much time on the "minutia" of Japanese military uniforms and not enough on tactics. This is, however, akin to complaining that an apple does not taste like an orange; these books are not meant to discuss tactics or campaigns, but are intended to focus on the "minutia" of uniforms and personal equipment. The brief format does not really allow the subject matter to range too far. Anyone interested in more information on Japanese tactics in WW2 should consider some of the excellent Osprey "Campaign" series of books, including ones on Iwo Jima and Peleilui.

I was highly fascinated with Letters from Iwo Jima so I got this little book and its companion in order to understand what I was seeing in the film. Unlike the German army there really isn't that much information available on the Japanese forces of WWII. I suppose Germans make better villains whereas the Japanese have always been copiers throughout the twentieth century though their atrocities in the field were among some of the most savage of the war. This book and its companion are highly informative in regards to uniforms, equipment and organization. As such I would say it is a must for those interested in the subject. However I wish they had put more out on the Gunzoku auxiliaries other than what they had on Korean prison guards since both Army and Navy had them as civilian Labor troops and other auxiliaries. (Perhaps another book on this subject might be produced). Overall I would say these two are good books to have.

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