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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.

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Customer Reviews

Volume 1 of Osprey's Men-at-Arms title on the Japanese Army in Second World War is the first of two thin volumes that will cover this often-neglected subject. While the color uniform plates are excellent as always, the rest of the volume is rather bland and without much unique detail. For readers interested in Japanese uniforms of the Second World War, this volume is quite good but for the military historian, it is a disappointment. The volume begins with a brief background on the Japanese strategic situation and the nature of Japanese soldiers. An excellent 4-page section covers the organization of Japanese army units from army-level down to platoon. Unfortunately, six pages are then wasted in a generalized chronology that astounds the reader with facts like Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941. Osprey seems not to grasp the fact that anyone having

enough interest in the Japanese army in the Second World War to purchase this volume will probably be aware of the basic chronology of the war and prefer the limited space to concentrate on the subject. Another 11 excruciatingly dull pages are spent discussing the finer points of Japanese army uniforms and ancillary items, including minutiae like armbands and optional footwear. Only three quick pages cover all weaponry, from pistols to artillery; tanks are ignored. There is virtually no discussion of Japanese tactics or doctrine, except for one or two paragraphs intermixed in the chronology section, and this is an unpardonable error in this kind of volume. The fact that the author buries the reader under a mass of near-useless information about various types of Japanese field jackets and then neglects to mention how these troops were trained or fought is ludicrous.

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