

Discuss historical event , what is your opinion? 800 words.
Submission at the end of semester.



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Ming Great War - The early wars

In 1368, the Hongwu Emperor which existed between 1368–98 ousted the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty from China to inaugurate the Ming dynasty. The Mongols fled back to Mongolia, but even after numerous campaigns, the Mongol problem remained.

During his early reign, Hongwu set up the eight outer garrisons close to the step and an inner line of forts more suitable for defence. The inner line was the forerunner to the Ming Great Wall. In 1373, as Ming forces encountered setbacks, Hongwu put more emphasis on defence and adopted Hua Yunlong's suggestion to establish garrisons at 130 passes and other strategic points in the Beijing area. More positions were set up in the years up Hongwu's death in 1398, and watchtowers were manned from the Bohai Sea to Beijing and further onto the Mongolian steppes. These positions, however, were not for a linear defence but rather a regional one in which walls did not feature heavily, and offensive tactics remained the overarching policy at the time. In 1421, the Ming capital was relocated from Nanjing in the south to Beijing in the north, partly to better manage the Mongol situation. Thus, defenses were concentrated around Beijing, where stone and earth began to replace rammed earth in strategic passes. A wall was erected by the Ming in Liaodong to protect Han settlers from a possible threat from the Jurched-Mongol Oriyangan around 1442. In 1467–68, expansion of the wall provided further protection for the region from against attacks by the Jianzhou Jurchens in the northeast.

Meanwhile, the outer defenses were gradually moved inward, thereby sacrificing a vital foothold in the steppe transitional zone. Despite the withdrawal from the steppe, the Ming military remained in a strong position against the nomads until the Tumu Crisis in 1449, which caused the collapse of the early Ming security system. Over half of the campaigning Chinese army perished in the conflict, while the Mongols captured the Zhengtong Emperor. This military debacle shattered the Chinese military might that had so impressed and given pause to the Mongols since the beginning of the dynasty, and caused the Ming to be on the defensive ever after.

The deterioration of the Ming military position in the steppe transitional zone gave rise to nomadic raids into Ming territory, including the crucial Ordos region, on a level unprecedented since

the dynasty's founding. After decades of deliberation between an offensive strategy and an accommodative policy, the decision to build the first major Ming walls in the Ordos was agreed upon as an acceptable compromise in the 1470s. From 1429–1489 first proposed constructing a wall in the Ordos region in August 1471, but not until 20 December 1472 did the court and emperor approve the plan. The 1473 victory in the Battle of Red Salt Lake by Wang Yue deterred Mongol invasions long enough for Yu Zijun to complete his wall project in 1474. This wall, a combined effort between Yu Zijun and Wang Yue, stretched from present day Hengcheng in Lingwu to Huamachi town in Yanchi County, and from there to Qingshuiying in northeastern Shaanxi, a total of more than 2000 meters long. Along its length were 800 strong points, sentry posts, beacon-fire towers, and assorted defenses. 40,000 men were enlisted for this effort, which was completed in several months at a cost of over one million silver taels. This defence system proved its initial worth in 1482, when a large group of Mongol raiders were trapped within the double lines of fortifications and suffered a defeat by the Ming generals. This was seen as a vindication of Yu Zijun's strategy of wall-building by the people of the border areas. By the mid-16th century, Yu's wall in the Ordos had seen expansion into an extensive defence system.

Following the success of the Ordos walls, Yu Zijun proposed construction of a further wall that would extend from the Yellow River bend in the Ordos to the Sihaiye Pass (四海冶口, in present-day Yanqing County) near the capital Beijing, running a distance of more than 700 kilometres which is around 430 miles. The project received approval in 1485, but Yu's political enemies harped on the cost overruns and forced Yu to scrap the project and retire the same year. For more than 50 years after Yu's resignation, political struggle prevented major wall constructions on a scale comparable to Yu's Ordos project.

However, wall construction continued regardless of court politics during this time. The Ordos walls underwent extension, elaboration, and repair well into the 16th century. Brick and stone started to replace tamped earth as the wall building material, because they offered better protection and durability. This change in material gave rise to a number of necessary accommodations with regard to logistics, and inevitably a drastic increase in costs. Instead of being able to draw on local resources, building projects now required brick-kilns, quarries, and transportation routes to deliver bricks to

the work site. Also, masons had to be hired since the local peasantry proved inadequate for the level of sophistication that brick constructions required. Work that originally could be done by one man in a month with earth now required 100 men to do in stone. Great Wall is the evidence which have lived up to today carrying thousands of China historical events.