

= Boshin War =

The Boshin War (1868-1869 , Boshin Sensō , " War of the Year of the Yang Earth Dragon ") , sometimes known as the Japanese Revolution , was a civil war in Japan , fought from 1868 to 1869 between forces of the ruling Tokugawa shogunate and those seeking to return political power to the Imperial Court .

The war found its origins in dissatisfaction among many nobles and young samurai with the shogunate 's handling of foreigners following the opening of Japan during the prior decade . Increasing Western influence in the economy led to a decline similar to other Asian countries at the time . An alliance of western samurai , particularly the domains of Chōshū , Satsuma and Tosa , and court officials , secured control of the imperial court and influenced the young Emperor Meiji . Tokugawa Yoshinobu , the sitting shogun , realizing the futility of his situation , abdicated political power to the emperor . Yoshinobu had hoped that by doing this , the Tokugawa house could be preserved and participate in the future government .

However , military movements by imperial forces , partisan violence in Edo , and an imperial decree promoted by Satsuma and Chōshū abolishing the house of Tokugawa led Yoshinobu to launch a military campaign to seize the emperor 's court at Kyoto . The military tide rapidly turned in favor of the smaller but relatively modernized imperial faction , and after a series of battles culminating in the surrender of Edo , Yoshinobu personally surrendered . Those loyal to the Tokugawa retreated to northern Honshū and later to Hokkaidō , where they founded the Ezo republic . Defeat at the Battle of Hakodate broke this last holdout and left the imperial rule supreme throughout the whole of Japan , completing the military phase of the Meiji Restoration .

Around 120 000 men were mobilised during the conflict , and of these about 3 500 were killed . In the end , the victorious imperial faction abandoned its objective to expel foreigners from Japan and instead adopted a policy of continued modernization with an eye to eventual renegotiation of the Unequal Treaties with the Western powers . Due to the persistence of Saigō Takamori , a prominent leader of the imperial faction , the Tokugawa loyalists were shown clemency , and many former shogunate leaders and samurai were later given positions of responsibility under the new government .

When the Boshin War began , Japan was already modernizing , following the same course of advancement as that of the industrialized Western nations . But Japan protected its vulnerable economy by rejecting Western -enforced free trade . And since those Western nations , especially Britain and France , were deeply involved in the country 's politics , the installation of Imperial power added more turbulence to the conflict . Over time , the war has been romanticized as a " bloodless revolution " , despite its large number of casualties .

= = Political background = =

= = = Early discontent against the Shogunate = = =

For the two centuries prior to 1854 , Japan had severely limited exchange with foreign nations , with the notable exceptions of Korea via Tsushima , Qing China via the Ryūkyūs , and the Dutch through the trading post of Dejima . In 1854 , Commodore Perry opened Japan to global commerce with the implied threat of force , thus initiating a period of rapid development in foreign trade and Westernization . In large part due to the humiliating terms of the Unequal Treaties , as agreements like those conveyed by Perry are called , the Shogunate soon faced internal hostility , which materialized into a radical movement , the sonnō jōi (literally " Revere the Emperor , expel the barbarians ") .

The Emperor Kōmei agreed with such sentiments , and ? breaking with centuries of imperial tradition ? began to take an active role in matters of state : as opportunities arose , he fulminated against the treaties and attempted to interfere in the shogunal succession . His efforts culminated in March 1863 with his " Order to expel barbarians " . Although the Shogunate had no intention of

enforcing it , the order nevertheless inspired attacks against the Shogunate itself and against foreigners in Japan : the most famous incident was that of the English trader Charles Lennox Richardson , for whose death the Tokugawa government had to pay an indemnity of one hundred thousand British pounds . Other attacks included the shelling of foreign shipping in Shimonoseki .

During 1864 , these actions were successfully countered by armed retaliations by foreign powers , such as the British Bombardment of Kagoshima and the multinational Bombardment of Shimonoseki . At the same time , the forces of Chōshū , together with rōnin , raised the Hamaguri rebellion trying to seize the city of Kyoto , where the Emperor 's court was held , but were repelled by Shogunate forces under the future Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu . The Shogunate further ordered a punitive expedition against Chōshū , the First Chōshū expedition , and obtained Chōshū 's submission without actual fighting . At this point initial resistance among the leadership in Chōshū and the imperial court subsided , but over the next year the Tokugawa proved unable to reassert full control over the country as most daimyo began to ignore orders and questions from Edo .

== Foreign military assistance ==

Despite the bombardment of Kagoshima , the Satsuma domain had become closer to the British and was pursuing the modernization of its army and navy with their support . The Scottish dealer Thomas Blake Glover sold quantities of warships and guns to the southern domains . American and British military experts , usually former officers , may have been directly involved in this military effort . The British ambassador Harry Smith Parkes supported the anti @-@ Shogunate forces in a drive to establish a legitimate , unified Imperial rule in Japan , and to counter French influence with the Shogunate . During that period , southern Japanese leaders such as Saigō Takamori of Satsuma , or Itō Hirobumi and Inoue Kaoru of Chōshū cultivated personal connections with British diplomats , notably Ernest Mason Satow .

The Shogunate also was preparing for further conflict by modernizing its forces . In line with Parkes ' designs , the British , theretofore the Shogunate 's primary partner , proved reluctant to provide assistance . The Tokugawa thus came to rely mainly on French expertise , comforted by the military prestige of Napoleon III at that time , acquired through his successes in the Crimean War and the War of Italy .

The Shogunate took major steps towards the construction of a modern and powerful military : a navy with a core of eight steam warships had been built over several years and was already the strongest in Asia . In 1865 , Japan 's first modern naval arsenal was built in Yokosuka by the French engineer Léonce Verny . In January 1867 , a French military mission arrived to reorganize the shogunal army and create the Denshōtai elite force , and an order was placed with the United States to buy the French @-@ built ironclad warship CSS Stonewall , a relic of the American Civil War . Due to the Western powers ' declared neutrality , the Americans refused to release the ship , but once neutrality was lifted , the imperial faction obtained the vessel and employed it in engagements in Hakodate under the name Kōtetsu (" Ironclad ") .

== Coups d'état ==

Following a coup within Chōshū which returned to power the extremist factions opposed to the Shogunate , the Shogunate announced its intention to lead a Second Chōshū expedition to punish the renegade domain . This in turn prompted Chōshū to form a secret alliance with Satsuma . In the summer of 1866 , the Shogunate was defeated by Chōshū , leading to a considerable loss of authority . In late 1866 , however , first Shogun Iemochi and then Emperor Kōmei died , respectively succeeded by Yoshinobu and Emperor Meiji . These events , in the words of historian Marius Jansen , " made a truce inevitable " .

On November 9 , 1867 , a secret order was created by Satsuma and Chōshū in the name of Emperor Meiji commanding the " slaughtering of the traitorous subject Yoshinobu " . Just prior to this however , and following a proposal from the daimyo of Tosa , Yoshinobu resigned his post and authorities to the emperor , agreeing to " be the instrument for carrying out " imperial orders . The

Tokugawa Shogunate had ended .

While Yoshinobu 's resignation had created a nominal void at the highest level of government , his apparatus of state continued to exist . Moreover , the shogunal government , the Tokugawa family in particular , would remain a prominent force in the evolving political order and would retain many executive powers , a prospect hard @-@ liners from Satsuma and Ch?sh? found intolerable . Events came to a head on January 3 , 1868 when these elements seized the imperial palace in Kyoto , and the following day had the fifteen @-@ year @-@ old Emperor Meiji declare his own restoration to full power . Although the majority of the imperial consultative assembly was happy with the formal declaration of direct rule by the court and tended to support a continued collaboration with the Tokugawa (under the concept of " just government " (????, k?giseitai)) , Saig? Takamori threatened the assembly into abolishing the title " shogun " and ordering the confiscation of Yoshinobu 's lands .

Although he initially agreed to these demands , on January 17 , 1868 , Yoshinobu declared that he would not be bound by the Restoration proclamation and called for its rescission . On January 24 , he decided to prepare an attack on Kyoto , occupied by Satsuma and Ch?sh? forces . This decision was prompted by his learning of a series of arsons in Edo , starting with the burning of the outerworks of Edo Castle , the main Tokugawa residence . This was blamed on Satsuma ronin , who on that day attacked a government office . The next day shogunate forces responded by attacking the Edo residence of the daimyo of Satsuma , where many opponents of the shogunate , under Takamori 's direction , had been hiding and creating trouble . The palace was burned down , and many opponents killed or later executed .

= = Opening conflicts = =

On 27 January 1868 , Shogunate forces attacked the forces of Ch?sh? and Satsuma , clashing near Toba and Fushimi , at the southern entrance of Kyoto . Some parts of the 15 @, @ 000 @-@ strong Shogunate forces had been trained by French military advisers , but the majority remained medieval samurai forces . Of those samurai forces there were the Shinsengumi . Meanwhile , the forces of Ch?sh? and Satsuma were outnumbered 3 : 1 but fully modernized with Armstrong howitzers , Minié rifles and a few Gatling guns . After an inconclusive start , on the second day , an Imperial banner was remitted to the defending troops , and a relative of the Emperor , Ninnajinomiya Yoshiaki , was named nominal commander in chief , making the forces officially an imperial army (?? , kangun) . Moreover , convinced by courtiers , several local daimyo , up to this point faithful to the Shogun , started to defect to the side of the imperial court . These included daimyo of Yodo on February 5 , and the daimyo of Tsu on February 6 , tilting the military balance in favour of the Imperial side .

On February 7 , Tokugawa Yoshinobu , apparently distressed by the imperial approval given to the actions of Satsuma and Ch?sh? , fled Osaka aboard the Kaiy? Maru , withdrawing to Edo . Demoralized by his flight and by the betrayal by Yodo and Tsu , Shogunate forces retreated , making the Toba @-@ Fushimi encounter an Imperial victory , although it is often considered the Shogunate forces should have won the encounter . Osaka Castle was soon invested on February 8 (on March 1 , Western calendar) , putting an end to the battle of Toba @-@ Fushimi .

At the same time , on 28 January 1868 , the naval Battle of Awa between the Shogunate and elements of the Satsuma Navy took place . This was Japan 's second engagement between two modern navies . The battle , although small in scale , ended in favour of the Shogunate .

On the diplomatic front , the ministers of foreign nations , gathered in the open harbor of Hy?go (present day Kobe) in early February , issued a declaration according to which the Shogunate was still considered the only rightful government in Japan , giving hope to Tokugawa Yoshinobu that foreign nations (especially France) might consider an intervention in his favour . A few days later however an Imperial delegation visited the ministers declaring that the Shogunate was abolished , that harbours would be open in accordance with International treaties , and that foreigners would be protected . The ministers finally decided to recognize the new government .

The rise of anti @-@ foreign sentiment nonetheless led to several attacks on foreigners in the

following months . Eleven French sailors from the corvette Dupleix were killed by samurai of Tosa in the Sakai incident on March 8 , 1868 . Fifteen days later , Sir Harry Parkes , the British ambassador , was attacked by a group of samurai in a street of Kyoto .

= = Surrender of Edo = =

Beginning in February , with the help of the French ambassador Léon Roches , a plan was formulated to stop the imperial court 's advance at Odawara , the last strategic entry point to Edo , but Yoshinobu decided against the plan . Shocked , Léon Roches resigned from his position . In early March , under the influence of the British minister Harry Parkes , foreign nations signed a strict neutrality agreement , according to which they could not intervene or provide military supplies to either side until the resolution of the conflict .

Saigō Takamori led the victorious imperial forces north and east through Japan , winning the Battle of Kōshū at Katsunuma . He eventually surrounded Edo in May 1868 , leading to its unconditional defeat after Katsu Kaishō , the Shogun 's Army Minister , negotiated the surrender . Some groups continued to resist after this surrender but were defeated in the Battle of Ueno on 4 July 1868 .

Meanwhile , the leader of the Shogun 's navy , Enomoto Takeaki , refused to surrender all his ships . He remitted just four ships , among them the Fujisan , but he then escaped north with the remnants of the Shogun 's Navy (eight steam warships : Kaiten , Banryū , Chiyodagata , Chōgei , Kaiyō Maru , Kanrin Maru , Mikaho and Shinsoku) , and 2 000 members of the navy , in the hope of staging a counter attack together with the northern daimyo . He was accompanied by a handful of French military advisers , notably Jules Brunet , who had formally resigned from the French Army in order to accompany the rebels .

= = Resistance of the Northern Coalition = =

After Yoshinobu 's surrender , most of Japan accepted the emperor 's rule , but a core of domains in the North , supporting the Aizu clan , continued the resistance . In May several northern daimyo formed an Alliance to fight Imperial troops , the coalition of northern domains composed primarily of forces from the domains of Sendai , Yonezawa , Aizu , Shōnai and Nagaoka , with a total of 50 000 troops . An Imperial Prince , Kitashirakawa Yoshihisa had fled north with partisans of the Tokugawa shogunate and was made the nominal head of the Northern Coalition , with the intention of naming him " Emperor Tobu " .

Enomoto 's fleet joined Sendai harbour on August 26 . Although the Northern Coalition was numerous , it was poorly equipped , and relied on traditional fighting methods . Modern armament was scarce , and last minute efforts were made to build cannons made of wood and reinforced with roping , firing stone projectiles . Such cannons , installed on defensive structures , could only fire four or five projectiles before bursting . On the other hand , the daimyo of Nagaoka managed to procure two of the three Gatling guns in Japan and 2 000 modern French rifles from the German weapons dealer Henry Schnell .

In May 1868 , the daimyo of Nagaoka inflicted high losses on the Imperial troops in the Battle of Hokuetsu , but his castle ultimately fell on May 19 . Imperial troops continued to progress north , defeating the Shinsengumi at the Battle of Bonari Pass , which opened the way for their attack on the castle of Aizuwakamatsu in the Battle of Aizu in October 1868 , thus making the position in Sendai untenable .

The coalition crumbled , and on October 12 , 1868 the fleet left Sendai for Hokkaidō , after having acquired two more ships (Oe and Hōmei , previously borrowed by Sendai from the Shogunate) , and about 1 000 more troops : remaining Shogunate troops under Ōtori Keisuke , Shinsengumi troops under Hijikata Toshizō , the guerilla corps (yugekitai) under Hitomi Katsutarō , as well as several more French advisers (Fortant , Garde , Marlin , Bouffier) .

On October 26 , Edo was renamed Tokyo , and the Meiji period officially started . Aizu was besieged starting that month , leading to the mass suicide of the Byakkotai (White Tiger Corps)

young warriors . After a protracted month @-@ long battle , Aizu finally admitted defeat on November 6 .

= = Hokkaid? campaign = =

= = = Creation of the Ezo Republic = = =

Following defeat on Honsh? , Enomoto Takeaki fled to Hokkaid? with the remnants of the navy and his handful of French advisers . Together they organized a government , with the objective of establishing an independent island nation dedicated to the development of Hokkaid? . They formally established the Republic of Ezo on the American model , Japan 's only ever republic , and Enomoto was elected as President , with a large majority . The republic tried to reach out to foreign legations present in Hakodate , such as the Americans , French , and Russians , but was not able to garner any international recognition or support . Enomoto offered to confer the territory to the Tokugawa Shogun under Imperial rule , but his proposal was declined by the Imperial Governing Council .

During the winter , they fortified their defenses around the southern peninsula of Hakodate , with the new fortress of Gory?kaku at the center . The troops were organized under a Franco @-@ Japanese command , the commander @-@ in @-@ chief ?tori Keisuke being seconded by the French captain Jules Brunet , and divided between four brigades . Each of these was commanded by a French non @-@ commissioned officer (Fortant , Marlin , Cazeneuve , Bouffier) , and were themselves divided into eight half @-@ brigades , each under Japanese command .

= = = Final losses and surrender = = =

The Imperial navy reached the harbour of Miyako on March 20 , but anticipating the arrival of the imperial ships , the Ezo rebels organized a daring plan to seize the K?etsu . Led by Shinsengumi commander Hijikata Toshiz? , three warships were dispatched for a surprise attack , in what is known as the Battle of Miyako Bay . The battle ended in failure for the Tokugawa side , owing to bad weather , engine trouble and the decisive use of a Gatling gun by Imperial troops against samurai boarding parties .

Imperial forces soon consolidated their hold on mainland Japan , and , in April 1869 , dispatched a fleet and an infantry force of 7 @,@ 000 to Ezo , starting the Battle of Hakodate . The Imperial forces progressed swiftly and won the naval engagement at Hakodate Bay , Japan 's first large @-@ scale naval battle between modern navies , as the fortress of Gory?kaku was surrounded with 800 remaining men . Seeing the situation had become desperate , the French advisers escaped to a French ship stationed in Hakodate Bay ? Coëtlogon , under the command of Dupetit @-@ Thouars ? from where they were shipped back to Yokohama and then France . The Japanese requested that the French advisers be given judgement in France ; however , due to popular support in France for their actions , the former French advisers in Japan were not punished for their actions .

Enomoto had resolved to fight to the end , and had sent his valuables to his adversary for safekeeping . These included the Naval Codes he had brought back from Holland , which he entrusted to the general of the Imperial troops , Kuroda Kiyotaka , but Otori convinced him to surrender , telling him that deciding to live through defeat is the truly courageous way : " If it 's dying you want you can do it anytime . " Enomoto surrendered on June 27 , 1869 , accepting the Meiji Emperor 's rule , and the Ezo Republic ceased to exist .

= = Aftermath = =

Following victory , the new government proceeded with unifying the country under a single , legitimate and powerful rule by the imperial court . The emperor 's residence was effectively transferred from Kyoto to Edo at the end of 1868 , and the city renamed to Tokyo . The military and political power of the domains was progressively eliminated , and the domains themselves were

soon transformed into prefectures , whose governors were appointed by the emperor . A major reform was the effective expropriation and abolition of the samurai class , allowing many samurai to change into administrative or entrepreneurial positions , but forcing many others into poverty . The southern domains of Satsuma , Chōshū and Tosa , having played a decisive role in the victory , occupied most of the key posts in government for several decades following the conflict , a situation sometimes called the " Meiji oligarchy " and formalized with the institution of the genrō . In 1869 , the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo was built in honour of the victims of the Boshin War .

Some leading partisans of the former Shogun were imprisoned , but narrowly escaped execution . This clemency derives from the insistence of Saigō Takamori and Iwakura Tomomi , although much weight was placed on the advice of Parkes , the British envoy . He had urged Saigō , in the words of Ernest Satow , " that severity towards Keiki [Yoshinobu] or his supporters , especially in the way of personal punishment , would injure the reputation of the new government in the opinion of European Powers . " After two or three years of imprisonment , most of them were called to serve the new government , and several pursued brilliant careers . Enomoto Takeaki , for instance , would later serve as an envoy to Russia and China and as the education minister .

The Imperial side did not pursue its objective to expel foreign interests from Japan , but instead shifted to a more progressive policy aiming at the continued modernization of the country and the renegotiation of unequal treaties with foreign powers , later under the " rich country , strong army " (富国強兵 , fukoku kyōhei) motto . The shift in stance towards the foreigners came during the early days of the civil war : on April 8 , 1868 , new signboards were erected in Kyoto (and later throughout the country) that specifically repudiated violence against foreigners . During the course of the conflict , Emperor Meiji personally received European envoys , first in Kyoto , then later in Osaka and Tokyo . Also unprecedented was Emperor Meiji 's reception of Alfred , Duke of Edinburgh , in Tokyo , " ' as his equal in point of blood . ' "

Although the early Meiji era witnessed a warming between the imperial court and foreign powers , relations with France temporarily soured due to the initial support by France for the Shogun . Soon however a second military mission was invited to Japan in 1874 , and a third one in 1884 . A high level of interaction resumed around 1886 , when France helped build the Imperial Japanese Navy 's first large @-@ scale modern fleet , under the direction of naval engineer Louis @-@ Émile Bertin . The modernization of the country had started during the last years of the Shogunate , and the Meiji government ultimately adopted the same policy .

Upon his coronation , Meiji issued his Charter Oath , calling for deliberative assemblies , promising increased opportunities for the common people , abolishing the " evil customs of the past " , and seeking knowledge throughout the world " to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule " . Prominent reforms of the Meiji government included the 1871 abolition of the domain system , by which the feudal domains and their hereditary rulers were replaced by prefectures with governors appointed by the emperor . Others included the introduction of compulsory schooling and the abolition of Confucian class distinctions . The reforms culminated in the 1889 issuance of the Meiji Constitution . However , despite the support given to the imperial court by samurai , many of the early Meiji reforms were seen as detrimental to their interests : the creation of a conscript army made of commoners , as well as the loss of hereditary prestige and stipends antagonized many former samurai . Tensions ran particularly high in the south , leading to the 1874 Saga Rebellion , and a rebellion in Chōshū in 1876 . Former samurai in Satsuma , led by Saigō Takamori , who had left government over foreign policy differences , started the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 . Fighting for the maintenance of the samurai class and a more virtuous government , their slogan was " new government , high morality " (新政府、高 morality , shinsei kōtoku) . It ended with a heroic but total defeat at the Battle of Shiroyama .

= = Later depictions = =

In modern summaries , the Meiji Restoration is often described as a " bloodless revolution " leading to the sudden modernization of Japan . The facts of the Boshin War , however , clearly show that the conflict was quite violent : about 120 @, @ 000 troops were mobilized altogether with roughly 3

@, @ 500 known casualties during open hostilities but much more during terrorist attacks . Later Japanese depictions of the war tended to be highly romanticized , showing the Shogunal side fighting with traditional methods , against an already modernized Imperial side . Although traditional weapons and techniques were used , both sides employed some of the most modern armaments and fighting techniques of the period , including the ironclad warship , Gatling guns , and fighting techniques learned from Western military advisors .

Such Japanese depictions include numerous dramatizations , spanning many genres . Notably , Jir? Asada wrote a four @-@ volume novel of the account , Mibu Gishi @-@ den . A film adaptation of Asada 's work , directed by Y?jir? Takita , is known as When the Last Sword Is Drawn . A ten @-@ hour television jidaigeki based on the same novel starred Ken Watanabe . The 2001 Goryokaku film is another jidaigeki highlighting the resistance in Hokkaid? . Among Japanese anime , Bakumatsu Kikansetsu Irohanihoheto in part dramatizes the Boshin War , while Rurouni Kenshin is set 10 years after . The Rurouni Kenshin OVA Trust & Betrayal is set during the Boshin War and depicts several events of the war (such as the raid on the daimyo of Satsuma 's residence and the failed boarding of the K?tetsu at the Battle of Miyako Bay) .

Western interpretations include the 2003 American film The Last Samurai directed by Edward Zwick , which combines into a single narrative historical situations belonging both to the Boshin War , the 1877 Satsuma Rebellion , and other similar uprisings of ex @-@ samurai during the early Meiji period . The elements of the movie pertaining to the early modernization of Japan 's military forces as well as the direct involvement of foreign (mostly French) forces relate to the Boshin War and the few years leading to it . However , the suicidal stand of traditionalist samurai forces led by Saig? Takamori against the modernized Imperial army relate to the much later Satsuma Rebellion .

The main campaign in the 2012 expansion to Creative Assembly 's game Total War : Shogun 2 : Fall of the Samurai depicts the Boshin War . Players can choose from various historical clans , such as the Imperial Satsuma or the Shogunate Aizu .

= = Weaponry of the Boshin War = =

The forces of Ch?sh? and Satsuma were fully modernized with Armstrong guns , Minié rifles and one Gatling gun . The Shogunate forces had been slightly lagging in term of equipment , although the French military mission to Japan (1867 ? 1868) had recently trained a core elite force . The Shogun also relied on troops supplied by allied domains , which were not necessarily as advanced in terms of military equipment and methods , composing an army that had both modern and outdated elements .

= = = Individual guns = = =

Numerous types of more or less modern smoothbore guns and rifles were imported , from countries as varied as France , Germany , the Netherlands , Britain , or the United States , and coexisted with traditional types such as the Tanegashima matchlock .

Most Shogunate troops used Büchse (Gewehr) smoothbore guns , which had been imported in Japan since around 1840 , initially from the Netherlands by Takashima Akiho . These guns were rather ancient and had limited capabilities , with an effective lethal range of about 50 meters , and a firing rate of about 2 rounds per minute . The Daimyo of Nagaoka however , an ally of the Shogun , possessed two Gatling guns and several thousand modern rifles . The Shogunate is known to have placed an order for 30 @, @ 000 modern Dreyse needle guns in 1866 . Napoleon III provided Tokugawa Yoshinobu with 2 @, @ 000 state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art Chassepot rifles , which he used to equip his personal guard . Antiquated Tanegashima matchlock guns are also known to have been used by the Bakufu however .

Imperial troops mainly used Minié rifles , which were much more accurate , lethal , and had a much longer range than the smoothbore Gewehr guns , although , being also muzzle @-@ loading , they were similarly limited to two shots per minute . Improved breech @-@ loading mechanisms , such as the Snider , developing a rate of about ten shots a minute , are known to have been used by

troops of the Tosa Domain against the Shogunate's Shōgitai, at the Battle of Ueno in July 1868. In the second half of the conflict, in the northeast theater, Tosa Province troops are known to have used American-made Spencer repeating rifles. American-made handguns were also popular, such as the 1863 Smith & Wesson Army No 2, which was imported to Japan by the Scottish trader Thomas Blake Glover and used by the Satsuma forces.

=== Artillery ===

For artillery, wooden cannons, only able to fire 3 or 4 shots before bursting, coexisted with state-of-the-art Armstrong guns using explosive shells. Armstrong guns were efficiently used by the troops of Satsuma and Saga throughout the war.

=== Warships ===

In the area of warships also, some of the most recent ironclads such as the *Kotetsu* coexisted with older types of steamboats and even traditional sailboats. The Shogunate initially had a rather strong edge in warships, and it had the vision to order the state-of-the-art French-made *Kotetsu*, although the ship was blocked from delivery by foreign powers on ground of neutrality once the conflict had started, and was ultimately remitted to the Imperial faction shortly after the Battle of Toba–Fushimi.

=== Uniforms ===

Uniforms were Western-style for modernized troops (usually dark, with variations in the shape of the helmet: tall conical for Satsuma, flat conical for Chōshū, rounded for the Shogunate).

Officers of the Shogunate often wore French and British uniforms. Traditional troops however retained their samurai clothes.

Some of the headgear for some of the Imperial troops was quite peculiar, involving the use of long, colored, "bear" hair. The "red bear" (??, shaguma) wigs indicate officers from Tosa, the "white bear" (??, haguma) wigs officers from Chōshū, and the "black bear" (??, koguma) wigs officers from Satsuma.