



## Recruit Training Extended for New PLA Recruits to Increase Readiness

**OE Watch Commentary:** After years of experimentation, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) ground forces are adopting an extended training course for new recruits. The authors of this accompanying excerpted article visited the 71st Group Army [71集团军, Eastern Theater Command, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province) and interviewed several officers about the new training regime. The reporters observed a distinct difference in professionalism between groups that had undergone extended training versus those that had not. Additional time is given to technical skills, and class sizes are smaller.

A major concern had been that units were overly burdened with too many untrained recruits still adapting to military life and learning basic skills, rather than being prepared to be an effective part of their parent units. An unnamed leader from the Army Staff Department Training Bureau (陆军参谋部训练局) noted that the new training method “lays a solid foundation by training recruits at the source, which will greatly enhance the quality of recruits. This will enhance the overall quality of combat units, ensuring that they will be at full strength throughout the year and able to take on missions at any time.” The conscription system (征兵) will continue to play a crucial role in the makeup of the PLA. Most conscripts will go on to serve two years; however, it is believed that programs such as this one to extend and enhance training, paired with ongoing emphasis on building a strong NCO corps, will greatly improve the core competency of most units. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



Soldiers of an honor guard of the People's Liberation Army at their base in Nanjing, China, on June 18, 2009.  
Source: By Demetrio J. Espinosa, U.S. Marine Corps (http://www.marines.mil; VIRIN: 080618-m-2361E-011) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Honor\_guard\_of\_the\_People%27s\_Liberation\_Army.jpg

*“Now the new recruit training is more effective, and they will be allocated to combat units after being fully trained to the standard of a qualified soldier.”*

**Source:** “30余年探索今定锤！陆军新兵训练时间由3个月延长至6个月 (After 30+ Years of Deliberation, Ground Forces’ New Recruits’ Training Extended From 3 Months to 6),” *PLA Daily*, 13 September 2018. [http://www.81.cn/lj/2018-09/13/content\\_9280979.htm](http://www.81.cn/lj/2018-09/13/content_9280979.htm)

*The new recruits will be trained on professional skills before they are allocated to different companies, which have their own schedules and pace for professional skills training, the PLA Army announced on its WeChat account on Thursday. The announcement said new recruits could not keep pace with veterans, and veterans are not receiving enough training. The problem has influenced and stunted the sustainable development of the PLA Army’s combat capability, an anonymous official of a training bureau was quoted as saying in the announcement. “Now the new recruit training is more effective, and they will be allocated to combat units after being fully trained to the standard of a qualified soldier.”*

*The enrollment period has been held in summer and autumn since 2013. It was previously held during winter. The change in 2013 allows new recruits to join the PLA Army in September, and also helps increase the proportion of university graduates among the recruits. The new recruits are placed alongside veterans in March after six months of training.*