

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

"GROUND FORCES"

Quick Reference Guide

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U.S. ARMY TRAINING AND DOCTRINE COMMAND



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PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY *Theater Commands (TC)*

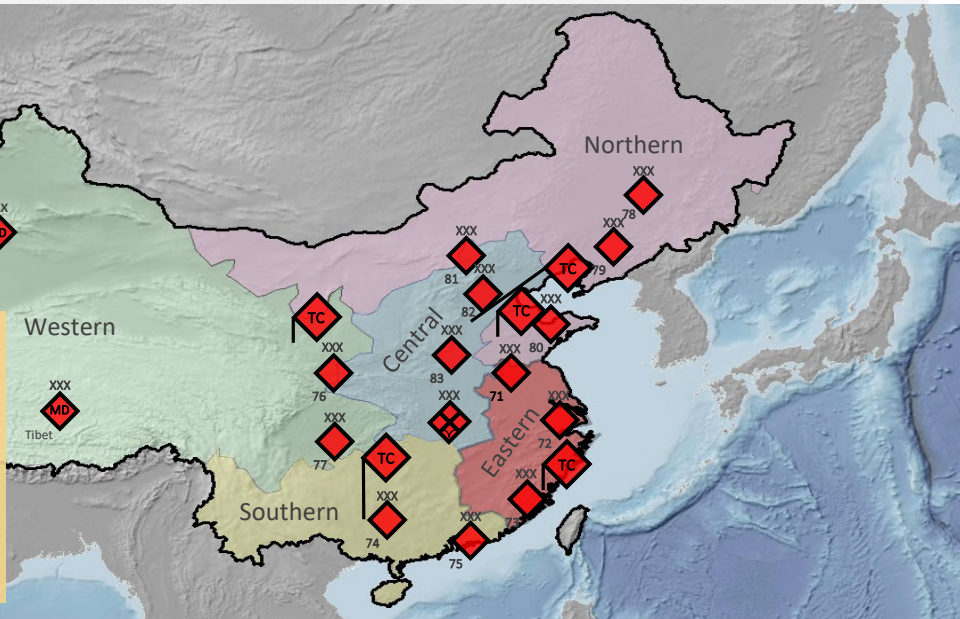
The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is a historically army-centric organization, and for years bureaucratic intransigence limited their ability to transform into a modern joint force.

In 2016, China enacted major reforms to organization and operations that included the most comprehensive restructuring of forces in its history. The purpose of these reforms is to create a more mobile, modular, lethal ground force capable of being the core of joint operations and able to “fight and win wars.”

People's Liberation Army Army (PLAA)

Theater Command (TC) Group Armies

In line with China's national reforms, the PLA restructured to strengthen administrative control and establish a joint command system capable of routinely organizing and directing operations consisting almost entirely of brigades.



Flattening the corps-level command structure with TC reforms, anticipates faster communications both horizontally among joint force elements and vertically up the command chain. TC branches report to two entities-their TC and HQ. For example, the Western TC Army reports to the TC and PLAA HQ.

PLAA

Typical Combined Arms Brigades (CA-BDE)

*All totals are per CA-BN



Three Distinct types of CA-BDEs

1. **Heavy** (armored)
2. **Medium** (mechanized)
3. **Light** (motorized)

The PLAA describes the differences between motorized and mechanized infantry in how supporting vehicles are employed: motorized units are only transported by their assigned vehicles, while mechanized forces employ their vehicles as combat platforms that support the infantry. The PLAA employs a variety of APCs and IFVs that feature a broad range of firepower and protection; some are tracked, some are wheeled, and there is considerable overlap. As such, one must look at how the unit intends to fight, rather than its composition and equipment, when assessing a unit as motorized versus mechanized.

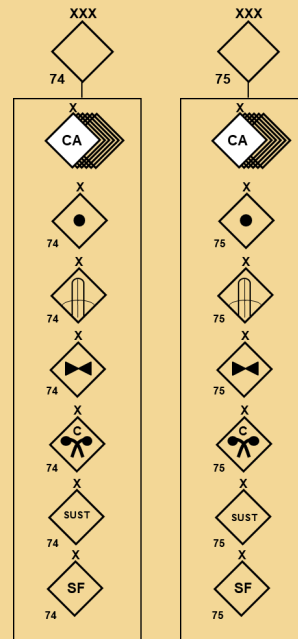


PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY ARMY

“Ground Forces” & Order of Battle

The Eastern Theater Command is oriented toward Taiwan and the East China Sea. The command executes operational control over national defense matters related to Taiwan and Japan, including contingencies in and around the Taiwan Strait and the Senkaku Islands.

PLAA SOUTHERN

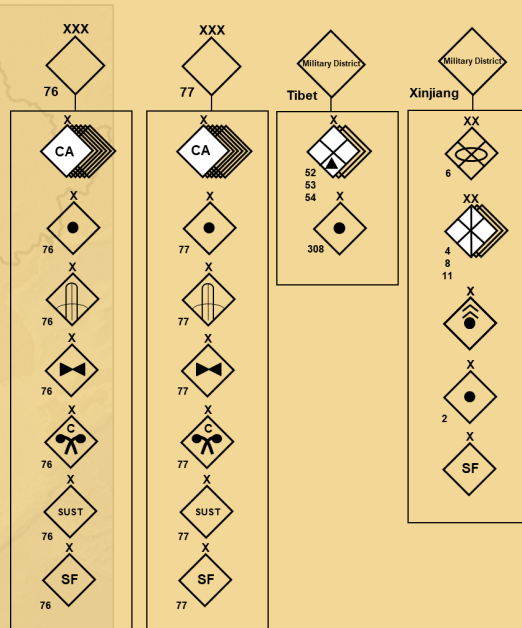
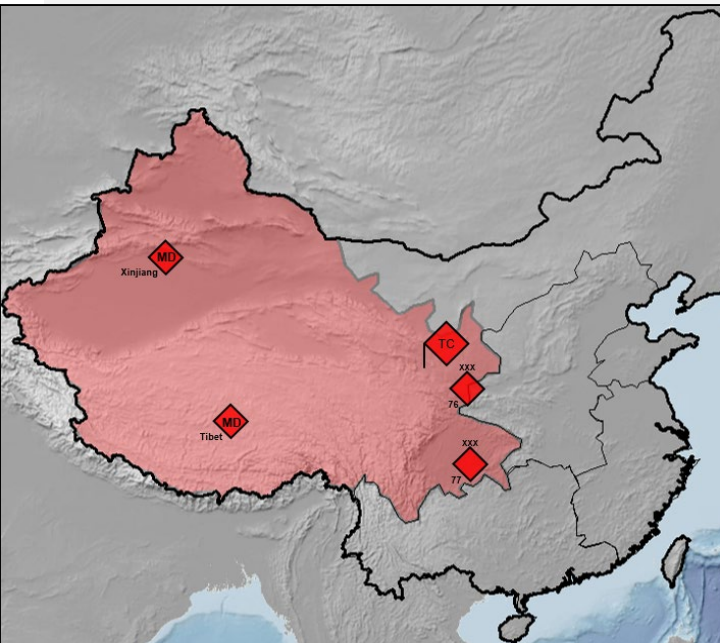
TC Group Armies

The Southern Theater Command is oriented toward the South China Sea, Southeast Asia border security, and territorial and maritime disputes. This geographic area implies the command is responsible for securing the South China Sea, supporting the Eastern Theater Command in any invasion of Taiwan, responding to territorial disputes, and assuring the security of sea lines of communication (SLOCs) seen as vital to China's global ambitions.

PLAA WESTERN

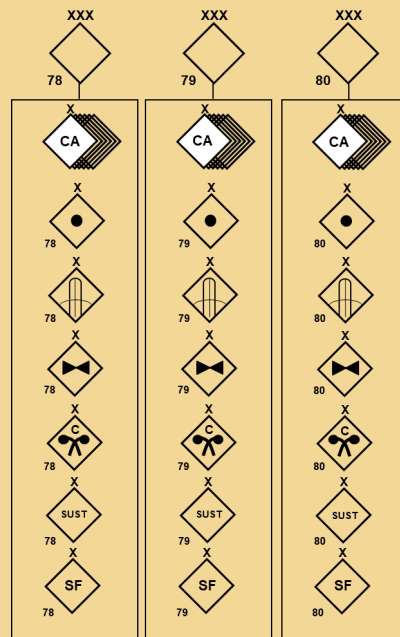
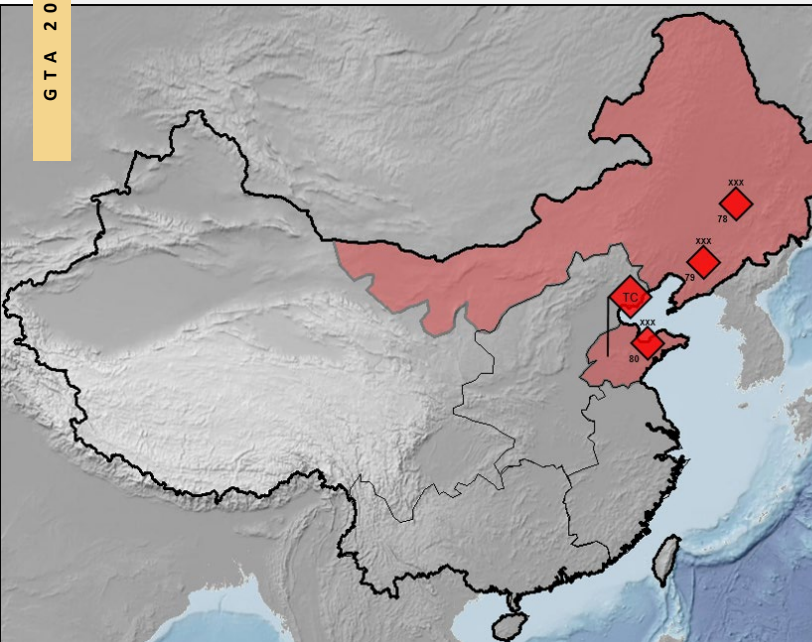
TC Group Armies

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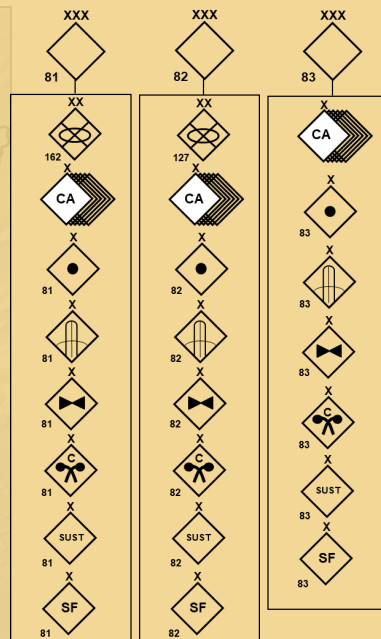
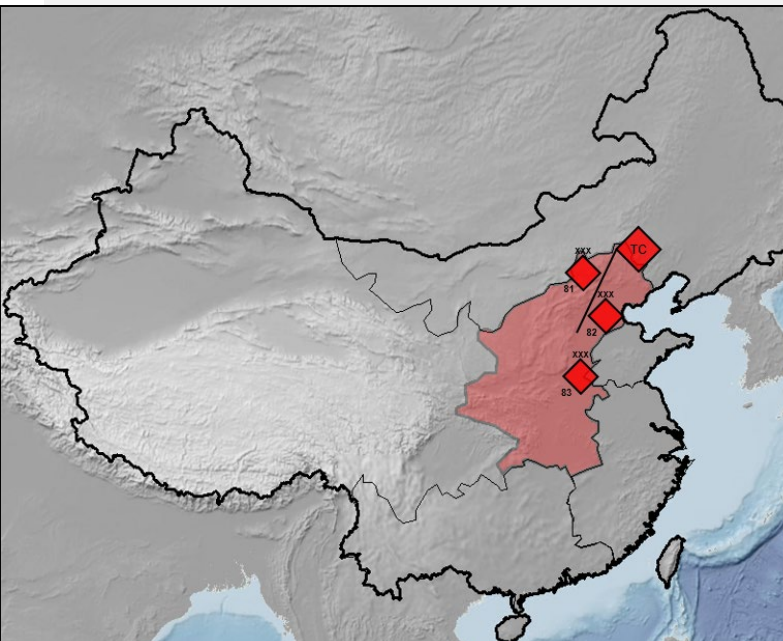
The Western Theater Command is oriented towards India and “counterterrorism” missions along western borders. It is geographically the largest theater command within China and likely responsible for responding to conflict with India and terrorist and insurgent threats to and within Western China. Within China, the command additionally focuses on the Xinjiang and Tibet Autonomous Regions where there is a perceived threat of separatism and terrorism.

PLAA NORTHERN

TC Group Armies

The Northern Theater Command is oriented toward the Korean Peninsula and Russian border security. The area of responsibility includes the majority of China's borders with Mongolia and Russia, North Korea, and the Yellow Sea. The theater is responsible for operations along China's northern periphery and conducting border stability operations associated with a North Korean contingency and northern border contingencies involving Mongolia or Russia.

PLAA CENTRAL

TC Group Armies

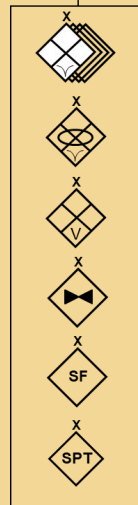
The Central Theater Command is oriented toward capital defense and providing surge support to other theaters. The command is responsible for the defense of the capital, providing security for CCP leadership, and serving as a strategic reserve to the other theater commands. The area of responsibility stretches from the Bohai Gulf to the interior of China, connecting the other four theater commands.

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY AIR FORCE(PLAAF)

Airborne Corps



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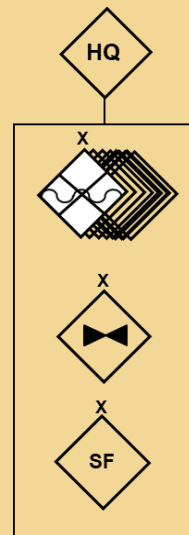
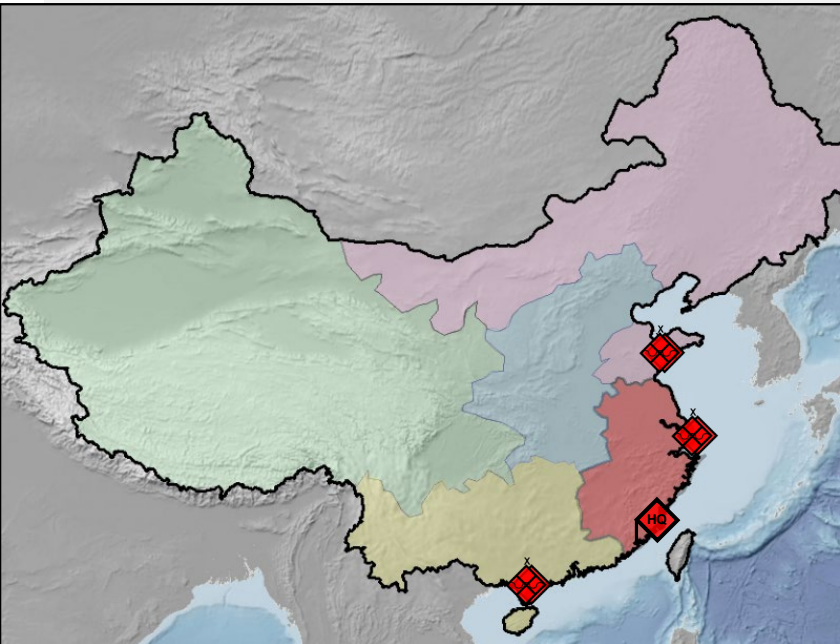


The PLA has made efforts to improve its ability to insert forces by air, restructuring the Airborne Corps and establishing Army air assault units, which would seize key terrain. Airborne brigades continue integration and parachute and heavy drop training, while the air assault brigade emphasizes air landing operations, rapid force projection, and integration into airborne operations.

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY NAVY MARINE CORPS (PLANMC)



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The PLANMC's roles and missions principally include defending PLA bases in mainland China, the South China Sea and abroad, conducting amphibious operations to seize and defend small reef and island outposts, and conducting non-war military activities (NWMA). Their roles under NWMA support the PRC's efforts to protect its overseas interests including resources, infrastructure, and citizens abroad.



PLA COMBAT EQUIPMENT

SMALL ARMS

QSZ-92Type 95/QBZ-95Type 03/QBZ-03QBZ-191QBZ-88Type 88/QJY-88Type 89/QJZ-89Type 02/QJG-02

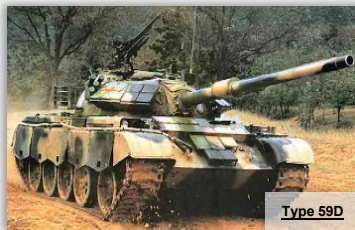
Weapon System	QSZ-92 (Pistol)	Type 95/QBZ-95 (Assault Rifle)	Type 03/QBZ-03 (Assault Rifle)	QBZ-191 (Assault Rifle)	QBZ-88 (Sniper Rifle)	Type 88/QJY-88 (Light Machinegun)	Type 89/QJZ-89 (General Purpose Machinegun)	Type 02/QJG-02 (Heavy Machine Gun)
Caliber (mm)	5.8x21	5.8x42	5.8x42	5.8x42	5.8x42	5.8x42	12.7x108	14.5x114
System Weight (kg)	.76	3.4	3.5	3.4	4.1	7.6	26	75
Max Effective Range (m)	50	400	500	400	800	800-1000	1600	1000-2000
Rate of Fire (per min)	40	650	750	750	3-30	650-700	450-600	500-600
Rounds per magazine	20	30	30	30	10	Belt Fed/200 per Cartridge Case	Belt Fed/200 per Cartridge Case	Belt Fed/50 per Belt



MAIN BATTLE TANKS (MBT)



Type 15/ZTQ 15



Type 59D



Type 80/88



Type 98



Type 96A/ZTZ 96A



Type 99A/ZTZ 99A

Weapon System	Type 15/ZTQ 15	Type 59D	Type 80/88	Type 98	Type 96A/ZTZ 96A	Type 99A/ZTZ 99A
Combat Weight (tons)	33-36	38	41	54	46	54
Max Speed (km/h)	70	55	60	75	65	70
Main Armament (mm)	GP105 GLATGM	GP105 GLATGM	GP105 GLATGM	GP125 GLATGM	GP125 GLATGM	GP125 GLATGM
Secondary Armament	12.7mm AA HMG 7.62mm MG	12.7mm AA HMG 7.62mm MG	12.7mm AA HMG 7.62mm MG	12.7mm AA HMG 7.62mm MG	12.7mm AA HMG 7.62mm MG	12.7mm AA HMG 7.62mm MG
Max Effective Range (km)	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5
Rate of Fire (per min)	6-10	4	7	6-8	4-8	8
Crew	3	4	4	3	3	3

INFANTRY FIGHTING VEHICLES (IFV)



Weapon System	Type 86	ZBD 04	ZBD 03	ZBD 05	ZBD 04A
Combat Weight (tons)	13	22	8	26.5	24
Max Speed (km/h)	65 (road) 8 (water)	70 (road) 13 (water)	65 (road) 6 (water)	65 (road) 25 (water)	70 (road) 7 (water)
Main Armament (mm)	73	100	30	30	100
Max Effective Range	3km with HJ-73C	5km with GP105	3km with HJ-73C	3km with HJ-73C	5km with GP105
Rate of Fire (per min)	8-10	8-10	330	330	8-10

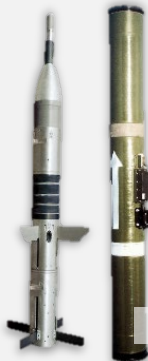
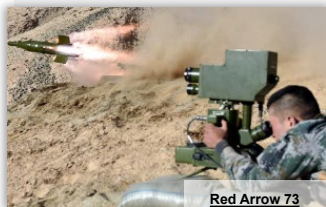


ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS (APC)



Weapon System	ZSL 10	ZZH 09 (Command Vehicle)	ZSL 92B	Tiger 2065	ZBL 08	ZSL 92A
Combat Weight (tons)	21	21	17	6.5	21	16
Max Speed (km/h)	100 (road) 8 (water)	100 (road) 8 (water)	100 (road) 8 (water)	115	100 (road) 8 (water)	100 (road) 8 (water)
Main Armament (mm)	12.7 HMG	12.7 HMG	30 (2A72)	12.7 HMG	30 (2A72)	12.7 HMG
Max Effective Range (km)	1.5	1.5	3km with HJ-73C (ATGM)	1.5	3km with HJ-73C (ATGM)	1.5
Rate of Fire (per min)	500	500	330	500	330	500

ANTI-TANK GUIDED MISSILES (ATGM)



Weapon System	Red Arrow 73 (HJ-73, RA-73)	Red Arrow 8 (HJ-8, RA-8)	Red Arrow-9 (HJ-9, RA-9)	Red Arrow-10 (HJ-10, RA-10)	Red Arrow-12 (HJ-12, RA-12)	Blue Arrow Series (BA-7/9/11/21)	GP105	GP125
Missile Caliber (mm)	125	130	152	180	140	178 (BA-7)	105	125
Max Effective Range (km)	3	4	5	10	2-4	7 (BA-7), 6 (BA-9), 10+ (BA-11, BA-21)	5.5	5
Min Effective Range (km)	.5	.1	.1	2	UNK	1	UNK	UNK
Armor Penetration (mm)	800	800-1000	1200	1300+	UNK	1400	650	UNK
Guidance System	SACLOS	SACLOS	SACLOS	Command Terminal Homing (IIR, TV)	Passive Homing (IIR, TV)	SAL (all), Active RF (BA-21)	LBR	LBR
Crew	Varies based on launcher; 2-3 with dismounted launcher	Varies based on launcher; 3-5 with dismounted launcher	2-3	4-5	2-3 with dismounted launcher	Varies based on launcher	Varies based on launcher	Varies based on launcher



AIR DEFENSE



Weapon System	FN-6	QW-2	HQ-6D	HQ-7	HQ-16	HQ-17A	HQ-22	Yitian
Missile Weight (kg)	11	11	33	85	165	180	1300	20
Missile Max Speed	600 m/s	>600 m/s	Mach 1	Mach 2.3	Mach 2.8	Mach 3	Mach 3.5	Mach 2.2
Warhead	HE FRAG	HE- FRAG	HE-FRAG	HE- FRAG	HE-FRAG	HE-FRAG	HE-FRAG	Expanding Rod
Guidance	IR Homing	IR Homing	SARH/ARH	Command + EO	SARH	AESA	SARH	IR
Effective Range (km)	.5-5.5	6	18	8.6-12	3.5-40	45-90	170	8-18

ARTILLERY



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PLL 05



PLL 09



PLZ 07



PCL 171



PCL 181



PLZ 05

Weapon System	PLL 05	PLL 09	PLZ 07	PCL 171	PCL 181	PLZ 05
Combat Weight (tons)	16.5	24	22.5	14	39	48
Max Speed (km/h)	85	100	65	120	100	55
Main Armament (mm)	120	122	122	122	155	155
Basic Load or Stowage	36	40	40	14	30	30
Rate of Fire (per min)	10	6-8	6-8	6-8	6	7
Max Effective Range (km)	9.5 HE/13 RAP	18 HE/27 RAP	18 HE/27 RAP	18 HE/27 RAP	30 HE/70 EXTD	30 HE/70 EXTD



MULTIPLE ROCKET LAUNCHERS (MRLS)



Weapon System	PCL 191	PHL 03	PHL 11	PHZ 11	SR 7	Type 63-1
Combat Weight (tons)	45	42	20	36	12	.6
Max Speed (km/h)	60	60	90	55	120	Can be Truck Mounted
Main Armament (mm)	300/370	300	122	122	122	107
Basic Load or Stowage	10/8	12	40	40	20	24
Rate of Fire (per min)	10/8	12	40	20	20	12
Max Effective Range (km)	150/280	150	50	50	50	8

AVIATION (ROTARY)

**Z 9W****Z 19****Z 10****Z 8L****Z 20****Z 18J**

Weapon System	Z 9W (Attack)	Z 10 (Attack)	Z 19 (Attack/Recon)	Z 8L (Transport)	Z 20 (Transport)	Z 18J (Airborne Early Warning)
Combat Weight (tons)	4.25	6	4.25	15	10	13
Max Speed (km/h)	285	300	280	275	360	336
Armaments	Red Arrow 8 16x 57mm Unguided Rocket Pods	Blue Arrow 7/9 16x 57mm Unguided Rocket Pods	Blue Arrow 7/9 16x 57mm Unguided Rocket Pods	57mm Unguided Rocket Pods	-	YJ-83 Anti-Ship Cruise Missile
	Twin 12.7mm MG PL/TY 90 Air-to-Air	1x 23mm chin gun turret	23mm cannon pod PL/TY 90 Air-to-Air	12.7mm MG	-	YJ-9 Anti-Ship Missile 32x Sonobuoys
Crew/Troops	2	2	2	3/27	2/15	2/27



PLA COMBAT UNIFORM & RANK STRUCTURE

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY NAVY MARINE CORPS (PLANMC)

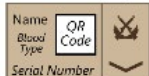


New Combat Uniform (2019)

QR-code
Dog Tags



Rank
Insignia



IR
Reflector

QBZ-181
5.8×42mm
Assault Rifle

QSZ-92
5.8x21mm
Pistol

"Wilderness"
Starry Sky
Camo Pattern



STARRY SKY CAMOFLAGE



JUNGLE

WOODLAND

DESERT

WILDERNESS URBAN

In 2019, the Chinese military started issuing a new set of new combat uniforms to replace the previous Type 07s with a new set of digital camouflage patterns. This changed the previous practice of giving each armed forces component its own distinct pattern. Instead, the PLA uses a common set of patterns based on the terrain.

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (PLA)

Rank Structure

PLA Ranks

Note: While their English translation may differ, all Chinese ranks are the same across all services

Officer Ranks

Officer Cadet 学员	2nd Lieutenant 小尉	1st Lieutenant 中尉	Captain 上尉	Major 少校	Lieutenant Colonel 中校	Colonel 上校	Senior Colonel 大校	Major General 少将	Lieutenant General 中将	General 上将

Enlisted Ranks

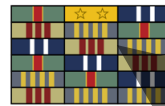
Private 1st Year Conscript 列兵	Private 2nd Year Conscript 上等兵	Corporal 下士	Sergeant 中士	Staff Sergeant 上士	Master Sergeant, 4th Class 四级军士长	Master Sergeant, 3rd Class 三级军士长	Master Sergeant, 2nd Class 二级军士长	Master Sergeant, 1st Class 一级军士长

Grade & Years of Service Ribbons



Top center ribbon represents grade, others show years of service

Example: PLA Ground Forces Commander Han Weiguo



Full Theater Grade, 44 Years of service

Central Military Commission Member



★ ★ = Full Grade
★ = Deputy Grade

Theater Grade



Corps Grade



Division Grade



Regiment Grade



Battalion Grade



Company Grade



Platoon Grade



The terms "rank" and "grade" are basically synonymous in the U.S. military. In the PLA, however, grades, which are based on an officer's position, are more important than ranks. As a result, PLA usually refer to officer positions or grades and have few references to ranks. Within the PLA, an officer's grade, not the rank, reflects authority and responsibility across service, branch, and organizational lines. Thus, while rank is a key indicator of position within the hierarchy of foreign militaries, grade is the key indicator within the PLA.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX A SYMBOLOGY KEY

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28



Anti-Aircraft



Anti-Aircraft Missile-Artillery



Air Assault



Airborne



Airborne (Mechanized)



Anti-Tank



Armor



Artillery



Chemical



Combined Arms



Marines



Mechanized Infantry



Motorized Infantry



Mountain Infantry



Multiple Rocket Launcher



Reconnaissance



Rotary Wing



Self-propelled Artillery



Special Forces



Support



Sustainment



APPENDIX B SYMBOLS



Emblem found on all
PLA military equipment



PLAAF
emblem



PLA Ground
Force emblem



PLANMC emblem



People's Republic of China



PLA



PLAA



PLAAF



PLAAN



PLAAF Airborne patch



NOTES



NOTES





TRADOC



ODIN



China Products



Mad Scientist



Operational Environment Enterprise