**Peoples Liberation Army Navy Surface Force**

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Flag of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN)

The **People's Liberation Army Navy Surface Force** is a branch of the [People's Liberation Army Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army_Navy). It consists of all [surface warships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surface_combatant) in operational service with the PLAN, with its submarine counterpart being the [People's Liberation Army Navy Submarine Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army_Navy_Submarine_Force). The Ships are organized into three [fleets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_fleet): the [North Sea Fleet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Sea_Fleet), the [East Sea Fleet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Sea_Fleet), and the [South Sea Fleet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Sea_Fleet). The People's Liberation Army Navy is turning away from its traditional focus on coastal and littoral warfare and instead prioritizing the development of [blue water](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue-water_navy) capabilities. This has led to a significant reduction in fleet numbers as the PLAN replaced a larger number of smaller ships with a smaller number of larger and more capable ships, including aircraft carriers, large destroyer, amphibious warfare ships and large auxiliary assets.

**Aircraft carrier**

*Liaoning* (before refurbishment)

The People's Liberation Army Navy Surface Force currently operates one aircraft carrier:

* [Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_aircraft_carrier_Liaoning) **(NATO designation Liaoning)** - In active service.

**Development**

The 67,000 ton [*Liaoning*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_aircraft_carrier_Liaoning) is currently the sole operational aircraft carrier in service with the PLAN. *Liaoning*, previously known as the *Varyag*, is an [Admiral Kuznetsov-class aircraft carrier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admiral_Kuznetsov-class_aircraft_carrier) which the Chinese purchased from [Ukraine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine) in 1998 through a private tourist venture in [Macau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macau). At the time, *Varyag* was only 70% completed and stripped of all military equipment as well as her propulsion. After the purchase, *Varyag* was towed to [Dalian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalian), where she underwent extensive refurbishment, coordinated by the [Dalian Shipbuilding Industry Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalian_Shipbuilding_Industry_Company). On 10 August 2011, it was announced that the refurbishment of the new *Liaoning* was complete, and that the ship was undergoing [sea trials](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_trial). *Liaoning* was finally commissioned on September 25, 2012.

In July 2011, a senior researcher of the [Academy of Military Sciences](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_of_Military_Science_%28People%27s_Republic_of_China%29) said China needed at least three aircraft carriers for its fleet. During the same month, another Chinese official announced that two aircraft carriers were being built at the [Jiangnan Shipyard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiangnan_Shipyard) in [Shanghai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai), the aircraft carriers are reportedly based on a similar design to the *Liaoning*, suggesting a displacement of approximately 65,000 tons. A new Chinese variant of the [Sukhoi Su-33](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukhoi_Su-33) fighter aircraft, known as the [Shenyang J-15](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_J-15) (or *Flying Shark*) are expected to fly from the new aircraft carriers.

In 2013, Chinese media reported that the PLAN is designing and planning to build a 110,000 ton 'super aircraft carrier'. Media reports also stated that the current aircraft carriers under construction are based on the *Liaoning*, but would be larger and would displace around 80,000 tons. The PLA Navy plans to establish three aircraft carrier battle groups by 2020. The *Liaoning* and China's first domestically built carrier, currently under construction, will be part of the battle groups. One of the battle groups is to be deployed in the East China Sea, while the other two are to be deployed to the South China Sea.

On 31 December 2015, it was announced that China was building a second carrier in STOBAR configuration, weighing around 50,000 tons.

**Amphibious warfare ships**

Type 071 amphibious transport dock (Yuzhao-class)

The PLAN operates many types of amphibious vessels of various sizes and capabilities:

* [Type 071 amphibious transport dock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_071_amphibious_transport_dock) **(NATO designation Yuzhao-class)** - 4 in active service, 1 under construction, 1 more ordered.
* [Type 072A-class landing ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_072A-class_landing_ship) **(NATO designation Yuting III-class)** - 15 in active service.
* [Type 072III-class landing ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_072III-class_landing_ship) **(NATO designation Yuting II-class)** - 10 in active service.
* [Type 072II-class landing ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_072II-class_landing_ship) **(NATO designation Yuting-class)** - 4 in active service.
* [Type 072-class landing ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_072-class_landing_ship) **(NATO designation Yukan-class)** - 3 in active service.
* [Type 073-class landing ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_073-class_landing_ship) **(NATO designation Yudao, Yudeng and Yunshu-class)** - 13 in active service.
* [Type 074A-class landing ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_074-class_landing_ship#Type_074A-class_landing_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)** - 6 in active service.
* [Type 074-class landing ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_074-class_landing_ship) **(NATO designation Yuhai-class)** - 12 in active service.

**Development**

The recent construction of the large Yuzhao-class [amphibious transport docks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amphibious_transport_dock) (LPDs) (*pictured*) indicates an important shift toward blue water capabilities for the PLAN. However, the [Landing Ship, Tanks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing_Ship%2C_Tank) (LSTs) of the 072 series still constitute the core of PLAN amphibious capabilities. With approximately 26 confirmed in service, the PLAN possesses the capabilities to conduct amphibious operations in the [littoral waters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Littoral_zone) of the South East Asian region, as well as a limited capability in outer sea landings. Most vessels are only capable of transporting troops while some are capable of transporting limited numbers of armored vehicles.

In late 2012, it was reported that China may be developing a class of 40,000 to 48,000 ton [landing helicopter docks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing_helicopter_dock) (LHDs). They will possibly be known as the Type 081 class.

*For a list of smaller landing craft of the PLAN, see:* [*List of active People's Liberation Army Navy landing craft*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_active_People%27s_Liberation_Army_Navy_landing_craft)

**Destroyers**

Type 052C destroyer (Luyang II-class)

Destroyers are the largest principal surface combatants in the People's Liberation Army Navy. Since its humble beginnings in 1949, impressive advances have been made over the past two decades, with modern Chinese destroyers now generations ahead of their earlier counterparts. These destroyers are in no way built in such great numbers as the US [Arleigh Burke-class destroyers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arleigh_Burke-class_destroyer). However, China's rapidly expanding military and shipbuilding capacity should be able to keep pace with PLAN requirements:

* [Type 052D destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_052D_destroyer) **(NATO designation Luyang III-class)** - 3 in active service, 2 in sea trials. 5 under construction. 2 more ordered.
* [Type 051C destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_051C_destroyer) **(NATO designation Luzhou-class)** - 2 in active service.
* [Type 052C destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_052C_destroyer) **(NATO designation Luyang II-class)** - 6 in active service.
* [Type 052B destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_052B_destroyer) **(NATO designation Luyang I-class)** - 2 in active service.
* [Project 956E/956EM destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovremenny-class_destroyer) **(NATO designation Sovremenny-class)** - 4 in active service.
* [Type 051B destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_051B_destroyer) **(NATO designation Luhai-class)** - 1 in active service.
* [Type 052 destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_052_destroyer) **(NATO designation Luhu-class)** - 2 in active service.
* [Type 051 destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_051_destroyer) **(NATO designation Luda-class)** - 6 in active service.

**Development**

The People's Liberation Army Navy had traditionally focused on the principles of coastal defense. With this came a series of warship designs based on the [Soviet Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Navy)'s own destroyers and frigates. The first PLAN destroyers were the [*Anshan* class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anshan_class_destroyer), directly purchased from the Soviet Union. These were armed with torpedoes and various surface- and air-warfare guns. The *Anshan'*s effectiveness in naval warfare was significantly enhanced with the torpedo tubes being replaced by anti-ship missile launchers. Although retired from the active service, the Anshan class destroyers remain on PLAN's list and act as training ships and perform public relations duties.

The *Luda* class followed from the 1970s onwards, with many similarities to the Soviet *Kotlin* class. The *Luda*s are armed with six anti-ship missiles and various guns and [ASW](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-submarine_warfare) weapons. Both the *Luda* and *Anshan* were key vessels to PLAN's coastal defense doctrines, as small coastal defense destroyers. These ships were all armed with mostly manually operated air defense artillery with no surface-to-air missiles and no ASW torpedoes. One *Luda* class ship, 160, was lost in an accident. By the mid-1990s, all *Anshan* class destroyers were retired. The PLAN focus shifted in the 1980s. With the import of Western systems, and a focus on blue-water multi-role operations, the *Luhu* class emerged. The first vessel, *Harbin* (112) (seen and commissioned by the early 1990s), was a significant shift from traditional Chinese warship design. There was much more focus on air defense and ASW warfare, including the installation an 8-celled [*Crotale*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crotale_missile) launcher, a short range missile system later indigenously produced as [HQ-7](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HQ-7). A second vessel, the *Qingdao* was launched later in the mid-1990s. Towards the end of the 1990s, the *Luhai* class was introduced as an enlarged version of the *Luhu*. These ships were the first truly modern combat vessels with blue water and multi-role operations in mind. These destroyers were still obsolete by Western standards, and delays in their construction resulted in just three being built. Since the late 1980s, the older *Luda*, and later the *Luhu* and *Luhai* classes have been through various upgrade and refit programs. Both 112 and 113 of the *Luhu* class, and 167 of the *Luhai* class have undergone major refits. All three now carry sixteen YJ83 Anti-ship missiles, improved HQ-7 SAM (Based on the Crotale), and enhanced electronic, sensor and weaponry capabilities. Upgraded to the *Luda* class have been more sporadic. One vessel was refitted with a double hangar and helicopter deck. At least four others have been upgraded with HQ-7 short range SAM, new automatic air defense artillery (as opposed to the old manual mounts), torpedoes and sixteen YJ83 anti-ship missiles. Though the other remaining ships continue to retain original weaponry, they have all undergone major refits to extend their surface lives. All *Luda*s are being fitted with satellite communications and navigation systems to allow them to operate beyond coastal waters.

In 1996, China signed a deal with Russia for the purchase of two *Sovremenny* class destroyers. The first ship arrived in January 2000 and the second in January 2001. These ships significantly improve the PLAN's fighting capabilities. Each ship displaces 7,940 tons full loaded. Weaponry included ASW torpedoes and mortar launchers, [AK-630](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AK-630) automatic [CIWS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Close-in_weapon_system) cannons, two twin mountings of 130 mm rapid fire cannons, the short-medium ranged [SA-N-12 *Grizzly*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-N-12) Surface to Air Missile and the [SS-N-22 *Sunburn*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS-N-22) supersonic sea-skimming anti-ship missile. Two improved *Sovremenny* class vessels were acquired in 2002, and include a longer range SS-N-22 missile, improved air defense missiles, and the Kashtan CIWS cannon and missile combination.

Since 2003, three new classes of indigenous destroyers have emerged. The [Type 052B destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_052B_destroyer) was the first, and features a stealthy design, modern layout, and adopted many Russian and indigenous weapons and sensors. Its armament included two indigenously designed [Type 730 CIWS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_730_CIWS) (first of its kind in China), sixteen [YJ83](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-802) anti-ship missiles, two [SA-N-12](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-N-12) *Grizzly* air defense missile launchers (48 missiles, 50 km range), torpedoes, anti-submarine rockets, a 100 mm artillery mount, and a hangar to hold one [Kamov KA-28](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamov_Ka-27) ASW helicopter. This was followed by the [Type 052C destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_052C_destroyer), which included 4 statically mounted [phased array](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phased_array) radars of indigenous design, providing the ship with continuous 360 degree coverage for search, tracking and direction for multiple SAM missiles. The Type 052C destroyer was the first PLAN warship to utilize a [Vertical Launching System](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertical_Launching_System), with [HQ-9](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HQ-9) long range air defense missile (48 missiles, 200 km range, similar to the Russian S-300 missile). It is also armed with a new anti-ship cruise missile known as the [YJ-62](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-602). The third class was the [Type 051C destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_051C_destroyer). This class uses the same hull and layout as the [*Luhai* class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luhai_class_destroyer). Initial construction was delayed by the slow acquisition of the Russian [S-300FM](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S-300_%28missile%29) long range SAM. The ship uses [VLS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertical_Launching_System) launchers with 48 rounds of the [S-300FM](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S-300_%28missile%29). The S-300FM is capable of engaging low to high altitude targets as far as at least 150 km. The most recent class to be developed is the new [Type 052D destroyers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_052D_destroyer). Currently the future [Type 055 destroyer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_055_destroyer) is being developed, with its systems undergoing extensive electronic testing.

**Frigates**

Type 054A frigate (Jiangkai II-class)

Frigates are the most numerous principal surface combatants in the People's Liberation Army Navy. In spite of the more recent trend to construction of larger warships, like destroyers, this status is unlikely to change in the near future:

* [Type 054A frigate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_054A_frigate) **(NATO designation Jiangkai II-class)** - 22 in active service, 4 under construction
* [Type 054 frigate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_054_frigate) **(NATO designation Jiangkai I-class)** - 2 in active service
* [Type 053H3 frigate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_053H3_frigate) **(NATO designation Jiangwei II-class)** - 10 in active service.
* [Type 053 frigate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_053_frigate) **(NATO designation Jianghu-class)** - 13 in active service.

**Development**

Frigates were the first large surface combatants made available to the PLAN. The Soviet Union sold several frigates to the PLAN in the 1950s, including the [Riga-class frigates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riga-class_frigate). These frigates became the foundation of Chinese built designs, such as the [Type 053 frigates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_053_frigate). These ships were mostly armed with naval guns, though later designs managed to replace torpedo tubes with a twin launcher for SS-N-2 Styx anti-ship missiles.

Initial attempts to fit anti-aircraft missiles to frigates resulted in a single ship known as the *Jiangdong*. The ship was completed in 1970 carrying two twin launchers for the HQ-61B short ranged SAM, this vessel served as the sole PLAN SAM capable frigate until the 1990s. Its effectiveness in engaging missiles and aircraft was thought to be limited. The same hull was later used for the [*Jianghu* class (Type 053H)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_053_frigate) class. During the 1970s the PLAN introduced the *Jianghu* class. Essentially, a scaled down version of the *Luda* class of destroyers, this large class of missile frigates would have many follow-on variants. The first hull, 515 *Xiamen* was completed in 1975, and mass production followed until 1996. All *Jianghu* class ships are armed with four SY-2 anti-ship missiles (indigenous and improved versions of initial Soviet SS-N-2 Styx). Gun armaments vary across the class, including a single 100 mm mount or a more modern Type 79 100 mm twin mounts. The latest eight hulls (built during the early 1990s) feature automatic twin 37 mm Type 76A AA guns. One *Jianghu*, hull 516, was refitted recently to carry a battery of 122 mm rockets, fixed on stabilized launchers. A total of 27 *Jianghu* Is were built, and they remain in use today with various upgrades and refits to extend their service life. The vessels are deficient in modern anti-aircraft, anti-ship and anti-submarine fighting capabilities.

The first Chinese frigate to carry a helicopter was a modified *Jianghu* II, the *Siping* 544, dubbed as the *Jianghu* IV class. Only one ship was modified, despite great optimism that most of the class would follow suit. The *Siping* is believed to perform more as a test ship, with a single helicopter hangar and a new single 100 mm gun mount similar to the French [Creusot-Loire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creusot-Loire) rapid fire main gun. Its fighting capabilities have been retained with twin SY-2 missiles and AA guns. The fitting of the helicopter hangar meant the sacrifice of the aft SY-2 missile launchers. A further step for the *Jianghu* class was made by the appearance of the *Jianghu* III/V class, first commissioned in 1986. These ships are the first to have air conditioning onboard Chinese warships. They feature heavy Western influence, and instead of using the SY-2 missiles, they are armed with the YJ8 series. The *Jianghu* V class carries the YJ82 with extended range. There are three ships in the *Jianghu* III class and six ships in *Jianghu* V class.

The *Jiangwei* I class was launched in 1991 and represented a shift away from the old *Jianghu* concept. Major features included a sextuple HQ-61B SAM launcher, modernized electronics and radar, six YJ8 missiles, automatic Type 76F anti-aircraft guns and a hangar and helicopter deck for one French AS 565 or Z-9C helicopter. Four of the *Jiangwei* I were built between 1990 and 1994. Though a great versatile design, it suffered the same weaknesses in air defense, as its SAM had to be manually reloaded as well as unsatisfactory performance. The four ships have been refitted since for life extension, and continue to serve the PLAN. The HQ-61 SAM system was later replaced by HQ-7 SAM systems during refits. The first *Jiangwei* II was launched in 1997. This has a similar design layout to the *Jiangwei* I but has incorporated major improvements. These included eight (not six) YJ82/3 missiles, octuple HQ-7 SAM (replacing the HQ-61B), improved fully automated main gun, and a redesigned aft structure. Ten *Jiangwei* IIs have been built, the last ship commissioned in 2005. All *Jiangwei*s have since been refitted with a stealthier gun casing for their 100 mm main guns.

In 2005, The *Jiangkai* I [Type 054 frigate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_054_frigate) entered PLAN service (hulls 525 and 526). The Type 054 is considerably stealthier than all previous PLAN frigate designs. The Type 054 *Ma'anshan* class is armed with an HQ-7 octuple launcher, eight YJ83 anti-ship missiles, a 100 mm main gun, four AK630 CIWS turrets, ASW torpedoes and rocket launchers, carries one Ka-28 Helix or Z-9C, and displaces 3,400 tons. This represents a new generation of frigate design in the PLAN, and a shifting focus on larger multi-role platforms. The air defense missile armament is no better than the *Jiangwei* II class although this may be upgraded later. The Type 054 has now been superseded by the *Jiangkai* II [Type 054A frigate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_054A_frigate), which is in series production. The 054A features a number of important improvements over the original 054. The main air defense armament has been upgraded to a 32-cell [VLS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertical_Launching_System) [HQ-16](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HQ-16) medium-range SAM system, giving area air-defense capability for the first time to PLAN frigates. In addition, the four AK630 CIWS have been replaced by two autonomous [Type 730 CIWS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_730_CIWS). The Type 054A is altogether a well-balanced and stealthy frigate design, with considerable firepower and multi-role versatility.

**Corvettes**

Type 056 corvette (Jiangdao-class)

Corvettes are the smallest principal surface combatants in the People's Liberation Army Navy. Traditionally the PLAN operated extensive fleets of missile and gun boats for defense of its littoral waters. However, as the PLAN moved towards developing blue water capabilities, there is a growing need to replace a larger number of smaller vessels with a smaller number of larger and much more capable vessels:

* [Type 056 corvette](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_056_corvette) **(NATO designation Jiangdao-class)** - 24 in active service. 2 more on sea trials. At least 30 planned.

**Development**

Following the designing and building of the [Pattani class corvette](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTMS_Pattani) for the [Royal Thai Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Thai_Navy) in the mid-2000s, speculation of a domestic variant of the design was rife. The speculations were confirmed in November 2010 during a visit by Maj. Gen. Wang Junli, Deputy commander of the [Hong Kong Garrison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong_Garrison) and the [Hong Kong University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong_University)'s Vice-Chancellor [Tsui Lap-chee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsui_Lap-chee) when a model of the Type 056 was presented. The first ship was launched in May 2012.

Though the Type 056 appears in the 21st century, the design concept can be referred to as early as the 1980s, when the PLAN were considering developing a larger patrol ship to replace the Type 037 to improve the living conditions on the ship, which was firstly called by Type 038. However, this concept was not realized until the appearance of Type 056 in 2012 due to the shortage of funds.

The Type 056 has a stealthy hull design with sloped surface and a reduced superstructure clutter. There is a [helipad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helipad) at the stern for a light helicopter but has no organic helicopter support facilities. The main anti-ship armament consists of [YJ-83](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YJ-83) sea-skimming [anti-ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-ship_missile) [cruise missiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cruise_missile) in two twin-cell launchers. The primary anti-aircraft armament is one FL-3000N short range missile system with 8 rounds. A 76 mm main gun based on a Russian [AK-176](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AK-176) is mounted forward. 2 triple torpedo tubes are mounted for ASW operations. Type 056 is the first Chinese warship with modular design, which makes it cover the roles from OPV to multi-role frigate. The PLAN used versions may include patrol type, ASW type, ASuW type, AAW type and commander type; while the export versions can be quite differently fitted according to consumer's requirement. For the moment, at least 3 variants of Type 056 for export exist with the same design of hull but varying bridge designs and armament layouts. A total of 20 corvettes are initially planned, but it is expected that anywhere up-to 60 corvettes could be eventually brought into active service.

**Missile boats, submarine chasers and gunboats**

Type 037II missile boat (Houjian-class)

With increasing acquisition of destroyers, submarines, frigates and auxiliary support assets, missile and gun boats mostly disappeared from the PLAN fleet, with numbers reduced dramatically. However new classes of missile attack boats continue to be built to replace older types:

* [Type 022 missile boat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_022_missile_boat) **(NATO designation Houbei-class)** - 83 in active service.
* [Type 037II-class missile boat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_037_corvette#Type_037II-class_missile_boat) **(NATO designation Houjian-class)** - 6 in active service.
* [Type 037IG-class missile boat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_037_corvette#Type_037IG-class_missile_boat) **(NATO designation Houxin-class)** - 20 in active service.
* [Type 037I-class submarine chaser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_037_corvette#Type_037I-class_submarine_chaser) **(NATO designation Haiqing-class)** - 27 in active service.
* [Type 037-class submarine chaser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_037_corvette#Type_037-class_submarine_chaser) **(NATO designation Hainan-class)** - 67 in active service.
* [Type 062I-class gunboat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_062-class_gunboat#Type_062I-class_gunboat) **(NATO designation Shanghai III-class)** - 17 in active service.

**Development**

The PLAN's main focus until the 1980s was a sharp emphasis on coastal defense and littoral warfare. This was influenced from early engagements where the Communist forces found the value of small maneuverable craft against larger, better armed but slower Nationalist ships. Early littoral craft in the PLAN's inventory included riverine craft and gun boats converted from various ships. This was later added to in the 1950s by Soviet-designed gun and torpedo attack craft. Such gun craft included the *Kronstadt* class heavily armed gun boats which served the PLAN until the 1980s. Soviet missile attack craft were later added to the fleet, including the Komar and Osa type fast attack missile craft. Although most littoral designs bore Soviet influence, there were quite a few indigenous designs or copies of Soviet-type craft. Hundreds of vessels were deployed by the fleet, serving as the backbone of the PLAN until a higher emphasis was placed upon blue water naval operations. Despite availability of frigates and destroyers, the brunt of PLAN involvement in small-scale conflicts have been borne by the littoral forces. For instance, the various naval engagements between Chinese and Vietnamese naval forces were carried out by PLAN littoral craft.

Today missile boats compose of the *Houjian*, *Houxin* and *Houbei* classes. The 478-ton *Houxin* design is based on the Hainan-class hull, but with a redesigned superstructure, new systems, two automatic twin-37 mm guns and four YJ8 series anti-ship missiles. Around 28 are in service, built since the 1990s. A much more sophisticated and stealthy design is the 520-ton *Houjian* class. Main armament of the Houjian design is the twin 37 mm mount, two 30 mm twin turrets, and six YJ8 series anti-ship missiles. The *Houjian* is far more capable, larger and more flexible than the *Houxin*, being based primarily in Hong Kong. The total number produced is not certain, but six craft are in service.

The latest generation missile attack craft is the 220X (*Houbei*) design. Seen since 2005, its most distinctive feature is its trimaran hull that can achieve maximum wave piercing performance at high speeds. The stealthy design has two missile-houses, that can possibly be fitted with various ordnance. Eight missiles of the YJ83 anti-ship missiles are believed to be carried, as well as a single AK630 CIWS for self-defense. Four hulls emerged by 2005, with another eight to twelve others being constructed as of 2006.

Submarine chasers are plentiful in the PLAN and serve to screen China's territorial waters against submarine incursions. The *Hainan* class has proven itself to be a reliable design in many roles. Its main armament is two twin 57 mm guns, and two 25 mm AAA. The Hainan is also armed with anti-submarine multi-barreled rockets and depth charges. There is provision for the fitment of four YJ8 series anti-ship missiles as well. The *Haiqing* class is a second generation improvement over the Hainan, with redesigned superstructure, automatic 37 mm AA guns and newer generation sonars and ASW equipment.

**Mine countermeasures**

The People's Liberation Army Navy operates three mine countermeasure classes and a single mine layer class:

* [Type 918 class minelayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolei-class_minelayer) **(NATO designation Wolei-class)** - 1 in active service. Reported to have been decommissioned
* [Type 081 mine countermeasure vessel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_081_mine_countermeasure_vessel) **(NATO designation Wochi-class)** - 10 in active service.
* [Type 082II mine countermeasure vessel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_082_mine_countermeasure_vessel#Type_082II_mine_countermeasure_vessel) **(NATO designation Wozang-class)** - 2 in active service.
* [Type 082 mine countermeasure vessel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_082_mine_countermeasure_vessel) **(NATO designation Wosao-class)** - 17 in active service.

**Development**

Despite the extensive use of mines as a strategically important defensive and offensive weapon, the PLAN operates only a small number of mine warfare ships. These boats comprised mine-laying and mine-sweeping types. The PLAN operates a single *Wolei* class mine-layer. This ship was commissioned in 1988 and displaces 2,300 tons full load. It can carry and lay up to 300 mines. There is little need of a dedicated mine-laying type however, as most PLA surface and submarine combatants can lay minefields.

Minesweepers have served the PLAN since its founding. Currently two new classes of minesweeper have emerged since the late 1980s (Type 082 and Type 082II) and a single class since the 2000s (Type 081). Coastal minesweeping is primarily conducted by the Type 082 class. Blue-water minesweeping is fulfilled by the Type 082II and Type 081 classes.

**Fleet replenishment**

Type 905 replenishment ship (Fuqing-class)

Fleet replenishment has been an expanding element in PLAN auxiliaries. The PLAN view the need of replenishment ships as vital for blue water fleet operations:

* [Type 904 general stores issue ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_904_general_stores_issue_ship) **(NATO designation Dayun-class)** - 6 in active service.
* [Type 903 replenishment ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_903_replenishment_ship) **(NATO designation Fuchi-class)** - 8 in active service.
* [Type 908 replenishment ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_908_replenishment_ship) **(NATO designation Fusu-class)** - 1 in active service.
* [Type 905 replenishment ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_905_replenishment_ship) **(NATO designation Fuqing-class)** - 2 in active service.

**Development**

Since the 1970s, underway replenishment has been widely practiced by destroyer and frigate combatants. In many overseas visits, a tanker has traditionally accompanied the visiting ship. The first replenishment ships built for the dedicated task of fleet refueling were the Fuqing-class replenishment ship, of which two remain in service. The next fleet replenishment vessel was purchased from Russia in the 1990s, being the single *Nancang* (Fusu-class). This ship is significantly superior to the Fuqing-class in terms of refueling systems and the storage capacity. Two new hulls of the indigenous Fuchi-class were commissioned into service by 2005. With five ships (and possibly a sixth vessel), the PLAN's ability to operate further away from home has been significantly enhanced. The demands of modern-day warfare has meant that logistic support ships in the navy are becoming vital.

**Auxiliaries**

The PLAN operates a very large number and variety of auxiliary vessels that are capable of supporting fleet and military operations both in a coastal and ocean theatres of war. PLAN auxiliary vessels are present in all three fleets, stationed in many naval bases and have increasingly exercised frequently alongside combatants. PLAN auxiliaries include tugboats, freighters, submarine tenders, research, survey ships, missile and satellite monitoring platforms, ice breakers, repair and communications, electronic warfare and monitoring, transport and training ships. The following is a list if auxiliaries thought to be in service with the PLAN as of 2014-2015. However no list can be entirely accurate and may contain significant inaccuracies.

Hospital ships

Type 920 hospital ship (Peace Ark)

* 1 [Type 920 hospital ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_920_hospital_ship) **(NATO designation Peace Ark)**
* 1 [Chinese medical evacuation ship Zhuanghe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_medical_evacuation_ship_Zhuanghe) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 1 [Qiongsha-class ambulance transport](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qiongsha-class_cargo_ship) **(NATO designation Qiongsha-class)**

Icebreakers

* 1 [Type 210 icebreaker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_210_icebreaker) **(NATO designation Yanbing-class)**
* 3 [Type 071 icebreaker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_071_icebreaker) **(NATO designation Yanha-class)**

Barracks ship

* 1 [Chinese barracks ship Xu Xiake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_barracks_ship_Xu_Xiake) **(NATO designation unknown)**

Troop transport/ferry & cargo

* 5 [Qiongsha-class cargo ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qiongsha-class_cargo_ship) **(NATO designation Qiongsha-class)**
* 1 [Beidiao 990](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beidiao_990)

Training ships

Type 679 training ship (Daxing-class)

* 1 [Type 679 training ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_679_training_ship) **(NATO designation Daxing-class)**
* 1 [Type 0891A training ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_0891A_training_ship) **(NATO designation Shichang-class)**

Cargo transport

* 3 [Yantai-class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_072-class_landing_ship#Yantai_class) **(NATO designation Yantai-class)**
* 5 [Type 081 cargo ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_081_cargo_ship) **(NATO designation Hongqi-class)**
* 13 [Danlin-class cargo ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danlin-class_cargo_ship) **(NATO designation Danlin-class)**
* 4 [Dandao-class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danlin-class_cargo_ship#Dandao_class) **(NATO designation Dandao-class)**
* 2 [Galați-class cargo ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gala%C8%9Bi-class_cargo_ship) **(NATO designation Galați-class)**

Coastal oil tankers

* 9 [Leizhou-class tanker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leizhou-class_tanker) **(NATO designation Leizhou-class)**
* 8 [Fulin-class oil tanker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulin-class_oil_tanker) **(NATO designation Fulin-class)**
* 2 [Shengli-class oil tanker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shengli-class_oil_tanker) **(NATO designation Shengli-class)**
* 7 [Fuzhou-class tanker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuzhou-class_tanker) **(NATO designation Fuzhou-class)**
* 3 [Jinyou-class oil tanker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jinyou-class_oil_tanker) **(NATO designation Jinyou-class)**

Ballistic missile tracking

Yuan Wang-class ballistic missile tracking ship

* 6 [Yuan Wang-class tracking ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuan_Wang-class_tracking_ship) **(NATO designation Yuanwang-class)**

Intelligence gathering

Type 815 spy ship (Dondiao-class)

* 1 [Type 813 spy ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_813_spy_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 1 [Type 814A spy ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_814A_spy_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 5 [Type 815 spy ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_815_spy_ship) **(NATO designation Dondiao-class)**

Oceanographic surveillance ships

* 2 [Type 595 ocean surveillance ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_595_ocean_surveillance_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 1 [Type 639 oceanographic surveillance ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_639_oceanographic_surveillance_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**

Oceanographic research, meteorological and hydrographic survey ships

* 1 [Chinese oceanographic research ship Xiangyanghong 5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_oceanographic_research_ship_Xiangyanghong_5) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 1 [Type 645 oceanographic research ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_645_oceanographic_research_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 8 [Type 625 research vessel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_625_research_vessel) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 5 [Type 614 research vessel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_614_research_vessel) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 5 [Type 635 hydrographic survey ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_635_hydrographic_survey_ship) **(NATO designation Yanlai-class)**
* 3 [Type 636 hydrographic survey ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_636_hydrographic_survey_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 1 [Type 988 hydrographic survey ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_988_hydrographic_survey_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**

Submarine support

Type 925 submarine support ship (Dajiang-class)

* 1 [Type 930 submarine rescue ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_930_submarine_rescue_ship) **(NATO designation Hudong-class)**
* 3 [Type 946 submarine rescue ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_946_submarine_rescue_ship) **(NATO designation Dazhou, Dadong-class)**
* 3 [Type 925 submarine support ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_925_submarine_support_ship) **(NATO designation Dajiang-class)**
* 3 [Type 926 submarine support ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_926_submarine_support_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 1 [Type 648 repair ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_648_repair_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**

Torpedo trials/retriever

* 1 [Type 906 torpedo trials craft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_906_torpedo_trials_craft) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 1 [Type 907A torpedo trials craft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_907A_torpedo_trials_craft) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 7 [Type 917 torpedo retriever](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_917_torpedo_retriever) **(NATO designation unknown)**

Weapons trials

* 3 [Type 909 weapon trials ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_909_weapon_trials_ship) **(NATO designation Wuhu-B-class)**

Sonar trials

* 1 [Chinese sonar trials ship Beidiao 993](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_sonar_trials_ship_Beidiao_993) **(NATO designation Beidiao-class)**

Experimental ships

* [Chinese target ship Experiment 216](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_target_ship_Experiment_216) **(NATO designation unknown)**

Rescue and salvage

* 6 [Type 922 rescue and salvage ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_922_rescue_and_salvage_ship) **(NATO designation Dalang-class)**
* 2 [Type 917 rescue and salvage ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_917_rescue_and_salvage_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**

Dive tender

* 2 [Type 904 dive tender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_904_dive_tender) **(NATO designation unknown)**

Tug boats

* 4 [Tuozhong-class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuozhong-class_tug) **(NATO designation Tuozhong-class)**
* 1 [Daozha-class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuozhong-class_tug) **(NATO designation Tuozhong-class)**
* 15 [Type 802 tug](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_802_tug) **(NATO designation Gromovoy-class)**
* 3 [Type 830 tug](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_830_tug) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 18 [Type 837 tug](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_837_tug) **(NATO designation Hujiu-class)**
* 19 [Type 852 tug](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_852_tug) **(NATO designation Roslavl-class)**

Degaussing & deperming

* 2 [Type 911 degaussing/deperming ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_911_degaussing/deperming_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**
* 8 [Type 912 degaussing/deperming ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_912_degaussing/deperming_ship) **(NATO designation unknown)**

Cable laying

* 1 [Type 890 cable layer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_890_cable_layer) **(NATO designation Youzheng-class)**
* 7 [Type 991 cablelayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_991_cablelayer) **(NATO designation Youdian-class)**

Buoy tenders

* 6 [Type 744 buoy tender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_744_buoy_tender) **(NATO designation Yannan-class)**
* 1 [Type 999 buoy tender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Type_999_buoy_tender) **(NATO designation unknown)**

**Nomenclature**

Ships of PLAN are named per [Naval Vessels Naming Regulation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Vessels_Naming_Regulation) (中国海军舰艇命名条例) that was first issued by the [Central Military Commission (CMC)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Military_Commission_%28China%29) on November 3, 1978, and subsequently revised July 7, 1986. Per CMC convention, warships of the size of a cruiser or larger are named by [General Staff Department](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Staff_Department), and others are named by PLAN, in accordance with the following table:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ship** | **Named after** |
| Cruisers | Chinese provinces |
| Destroyers | Major Chinese cities |
| Frigates | Major Chinese cities |
| Nuclear submarines | Long March followed by a number |
| Ballistic and cruise missile armed conventional submarines | Expedition followed by a number |
| Conventional submarines | Great Wall followed by a number |
| Mine warfare | Chinese prefectures |
| Submarine chasers | Chinese counties |
| Dock & tank landing ships | Chinese mountains |
| Other landing ships | Chinese rivers |
| Replenishment ships | Chinese lakes |
| Research ships | Chinese scientists |
| Training ships | Chinese naval officers |

A distinct difference between PLAN and most western navies is that unlike its western counterparts, PLAN does not use [ship prefixes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ship_prefix) internally. However, a system of ship prefixes similar to that of west has been developed by many internet sources for similar classification:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Service** | **Prefix** | **Meaning** |
| [People's Republic of China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) | [People's Liberation Army Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army_Navy) (PLAN) | PLANS | People's Liberation Army Navy Ship: Commissioned ships in PLAN, mostly warships & some auxiliaries. China does not use ship prefixes internally. |
| PRCNS | [People's Republic of China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) Naval Ship: PLAN owned ships manned by civilians, including most [research ships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_vessel). China does not use ship prefixes internally. |
| [China Coast Guard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_Coast_Guard) (PRCCG) | PRCCGS | People's Republic of China Coast Guard Ship. China does not use ship prefixes internally. |
| Governmental Agencies | PRCS | People's Republic of China Ship: ships owned by various Chinese governmental administrative and regulatory bodies, all of which are subject to naval deployment. China does not use ship prefixes internally. |
| Merchant Marine | PRCMV | People's Republic of China Merchant Vessel. China does not use ship prefixes internally. |

**See also**

* [Naval Vessels Naming Regulation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Vessels_Naming_Regulation)
* [People's Liberation Army Navy Submarine Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Liberation_Army_Navy_Submarine_Force)
* [List of active People's Liberation Army Navy ships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_active_People%27s_Liberation_Army_Navy_ships)
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