**Korean People's Air Force**

**From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**

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| **조선인민군 공군Korean People's Air Force** |
| **Founded** | 20 August 1947 |
| **Country** | [Democratic People's Republic of Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_People%27s_Republic_of_Korea) |
| **Size** | 110,000 personnel1,600-1,700 aircraft |
| **Part of** | Ministry of Defense |
| **Anniversaries** | 20 August |
| **Engagements** | [Korean War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War), [Vietnam war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_war) |
| **Commanders** |
| **Commander-of-KPAF** | [Colonel General](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonel_General) [Oh Gum-chol](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oh_Gum-chol&action=edit&redlink=1) |
| **Insignia** |
| **Roundel** |  |
| **Aircraft flown** |
| [**Attack**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_aircraft) | [SU-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukhoi_Su-7) **·** [SU-17](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukhoi_Su-17) **·** [Nanchang Q-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanchang_Q-5) **·** [SU-25](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukhoi_Su-25) |
| [**Bomber**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bomber) | [Harbin H-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harbin_H-5) **·** [Ilyushin Il-28](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-28) |
| [**Fighter**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fighter_aircraft) | [Chengdu F-7B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chengdu_F-7B)  **·** [Shenyang F-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_F-5)[Shenyang F-6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_F-6)  **·** [MIG-21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIG-21)  **·** [MIG-23](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-23)  **·** [MIG-29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIG-29) |
| [**Trainer**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trainer_%28aircraft%29) | [L-39](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aero_L-39) **·** [MIG-15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-15) **·** [Nanchang CJ-6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanchang_CJ-6) |
| [**Transport**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cargo_aircraft) | [IL-76](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-76) **·** [AN-24](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonov_An-24) **·** [AN-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonov_An-2) |

The **Korean People's Air Force**, ([Korean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_language): 조선인민군 공군, [Hanja](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanja): 朝鮮人民軍 空軍), is the name of the unified aviation forces of [North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea). The KPAF is the second-largest branch of the [Korean People's Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_People%27s_Army) with an estimated 110,000 personnel. It possesses between 1,600 and 1,700 aircraft of different types, mostly of Soviet and Chinese origin. Its primary task is to defend North Korean airspace. When the [People's Army Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=People%27s_Army_Group&action=edit&redlink=1) was formed, the aviation unit became its air force branch on August 20, 1947. [North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea) celebrates August 20 as the Air Force Foundation Day.

**History**

[Kim Il-sung](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim_Il-sung) set up the Aviation Association branches in Pyongyang, Sinuiju and other parts of the country right after the liberation of the country. In December Juche 34 (1945), he merged them into the Aviation Association of Korea. The air force became a separate service in 1948. The KPAF incorporates much of the original Soviet air tactics, as well as North Korean experience from the UN bombings during the [Korean War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War). In 1990-91, North Korea activated four forward air bases near the [DMZ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_Demilitarized_Zone).

**Organization**

**Operational doctrine**

North Korean [Ilyushin Il-10](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-10) at [Kimpo International Airport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimpo_International_Airport), [South Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea), on 21 Sept 1950.

Given North Korea's experience with heavy U.S. bombardments in the [Korean War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War), its aim has been mainly to defend North Korean airspace. The heavy reliance on fighter aircraft, [SAM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surface-to-air_missile) and [AAA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-aircraft_warfare) reflects this. However, since nearly all of North Korea's aircraft inventory consists of aging and obsolete Soviet and Chinese aircraft, the primary goal of the air force may have changed in the last years to providing ground support for the land forces and threatening South Korean population centers and military targets with a massive air attack. In this way, North Korea could try to maintain military parity with South Korea by using its air force as a deterrent, much like its ballistic missiles, instead of trying to maintain a technological parity in aircraft types for individual air to air roles. This seems to be confirmed by the recent redeployment of 120 mostly obsolete fighters, bombers and transport aircraft closer to the demilitarized zone, however they also have 440 modern aircraft near the DMZ. Keeping in mind the production, storage and use of a vast chemical, biological and possibly nuclear weapons inventory by North Korea, this change in doctrine is even more meaningful and significant.

**Personnel and training**

The KPAF is estimated to possess a total strength of 110,000. Personnel for the KPAF are obtained through voluntary enlistment, conscription and assignments from other branches of the KPA. The selection criteria for the KPAF are higher than for the ground forces or navy. This has resulted in a force which is qualitatively above the national average in the level of education, technical proficiency, political reliability and ideological conviction. In general, [Non-commissioned officers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-commissioned_officer) and privates of the KPAF are required to serve three years and those with technical specializations serve four years. Officers serve for 20–30 years and are usually discharged only for physical disability, illegal activities or political reasons. All pilots are believed to be members of the [Korean Workers' Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_Workers%27_Party). Base pay is determined by duty assignment and rank rather than by rank alone. All officers receive longevity pay and pilots are given several additional allowances. Pilots receive a higher rate of flight pay for hours flown during adverse weather or at night. Enlisted ground crews receive only base pay. Air crews probably receive base pay plus small allowances.

The pilots receive better treatment than officers of the same rank in the KPAF or equivalent ranks in the other armed forces. In spite of the severe shortage of food within [North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea) during the 1990s, pilots - although they do not receive a full ration - had priority for food in their units. Pilots' food rations in 2000 consisted of about 850 Calories per day. This is increased to 950 Calories during periods of flight training. On national holidays pilots also receive special rations, including [buckwheat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buckwheat) and [beef](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beef). Pilots receive an extra- clothing allowance, although alcohol and cigarettes are strictly rationed. Pilots and support personnel assigned to overseas deployments live in sharp contrast to their companions at home, enjoying the use of cars, television, refrigerators and easy access to food and consumer goods. The morale among the KPAF pilots is high relative to their [ground force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea_Ground_Force).

From 1978 to 1995 General [Jo Myong-rok](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jo_Myong-rok&action=edit&redlink=1) was the commander of the air force. In October 1995 he was promoted to vice-marshal and appointed Chief of the KPA General Political Bureau and a member of the [Korean Workers' Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_Workers%27_Party) Central Military Committee. His place as commander of the Air Force was taken by Colonel General [Oh Gum-chol](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oh_Gum-chol&action=edit&redlink=1).

**Training**

In general, pilot education is conducted under a plan by which fighter pilots are trained by the type of aircraft they will fly, then assigned to units having that type of aircraft. Transport and helicopter pilot training follows a similar pattern. The KPAF's two primary schools are the Kim Ch'aek Air Force Academy located at [Chongjin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chongjin) and the Kyongsong Flight Officers School. In addition to these, there are a number of smaller specialized schools and courses. For example, during the mid-1990s the Kim Ch'aek Air Force Academy could not meet the demand for officers and so a short-term course was established at the KPAF headquarters located at Chunghwa-kun, Pyongyang-Si. It was a one year course for senior enlisted personnel which concentrated upon command and administration. Courses typically last four years. The majority of the cadets enrolled in the pilot training program are graduates of high schools or colleges and come from families with reliable political backgrounds (to reduce the risk of defection).

**Annual flying hours**

The number of annual flying hours (AFH) per pilot is, like almost every other aspect of the KPAF, very hard to estimate. Most sources on the subject abstain from giving hard numbers, but all of them estimate the average annual flying hours per pilot as being 'low' to 'very low'. The number of annual flying hours is of course very important in estimating the individual skill and experience of the pilots of an air force and the general rule of thumb is 'the more the merrier'. Most estimates present a rather grim picture: AFH per pilot for the KPAF are said to be only 7, 15 or 25 hours per pilot each year - comparable to the flying hours of air forces in ex-Soviet countries in the early 1990s. In comparison, most NATO fighter pilots fly at least 150 hours a year. Ground training, both in classrooms, on instructional airframes or in a flight simulator can only substitute for 'the real thing' to a certain degree, and the low number of modern jet trainers in the KPAF arsenal points to a very modest amount of flying time for the formation of new pilots.

There is a number of possible explanations for the low AFH: concern over the aging of equipment, scarcity of spare parts - especially for the older aircraft - difficulties with worn airframes, fear of defection and the scarcity of fuel are all contributing factors. It is very likely however that some 'elite' pilots and regiments receive considerably more flying hours. Especially those equipped with modern aircraft and tasked with homeland defense - like the 57th regiment flying MiG-29s and the 60th regiment flying MiG-23s - are receiving multiple times the average AFH per pilot; however, aging equipment, the scarcity of fuel and the general economic crisis in the DPRK will affect these regiments as well, and keep their AFH low compared to NATO AFH.

**Structure**

Following is a list of bases where North Korean Air Force aircraft are permanently based.

**Air bases**

Northwestern area

[**Uiju**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uiju)

* 24th Air Regiment - operating transport aircraft;

**Panghyon/Naamsi**

* Air Regiment - operating MiG-17F/J-5, F-5/FT-5;

[**Taechon**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taechon)

* 5th Air Transport Regiment
* [**Kaech'on**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaech%27on) - Headquarters, 1st Air Combat Command. 35th Air Regiment (MiG-19/J-6). Fighter base with 2500 m runway. [Google Earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Earth) confirms presence of MiG-19 aircraft.
* [**Pukch'ang**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pukch%27ang&action=edit&redlink=1) - 60th Air Regiment (1 ACC) (MiG-23ML/MiG-23UB/MiG-15UTI); Air Transport Regiment (5 TD) (H500D/H500E/500D).
* **Samjangkol** - Air Transport Regiment (6 TD) (Mi-2).
* [**Sunchon**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunchon%2C_North_Korea) - 55th Air Regiment (1 ACC) (Su-25K/Su-25UBK/Su-7BMK) (MiG-29 suspected). The [Google Earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Earth) imagery shows what appears to be MiG-21s and Su-25s. Runway length is 2500 m.
* **Kanch'on** - Air Transport Regiment (6 TD) (Mi-4/Z-5/Mi-8/Mi-17/Mi-2).

West Coast and Pyongyang area

* **Onchon** - 57th Air Regiment (1 ACC) (MiG-19/J-6/MiG-29/MiG-29UB).
* [**Hwangju**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hwangju) - Headquarters, 3rd Air Combat Command. 56th Air Regiment (3 ACC) (MiG-21U/MiG-21PF/J-7).
* [**Kwail**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kwail)**/**[**Pungchon**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pungchon&action=edit&redlink=1) - 4th Air Regiment (3 ACC) (F-6/FT-5/MiG-19) (MiG-17/J-5 suspected). ([38°25′00″N 125°01′00″E﻿ / ﻿38.4166667°N 125.0166667°E﻿ / 38.4166667; 125.0166667](http://toolserver.org/~geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Korean_People%27s_Air_Force&params=38_25_00_N_125_01_00_E_type:airport))

* [**Taetan**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Taetan&action=edit&redlink=1) - Air Regiment (3 ACC) (F-5/FT-5/H-5). [Google Earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Earth) imagery shows what appears to be two entrances to an underground storage area to the south-west of the airfield joined by taxiways.
* [**Pyongyang Sunan International Airport**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunan_International_Airport) - Air Transport Regiment ([Air Koryo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Koryo)) (Tu-134B/Tu-154B/Il-62/Il-76MD/Il-14/Il-18/An-24).
* **Mirim** - This airfield served as a light transport base and closed sometime in the 1990s.

DMZ area

* [**Chunghwa**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chunghwa) - Headquarters, Air Command.
* [**Koksan**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koksan) - 86th Air Regiment (3 ACC) (MiG-21PF/MiG-21U) (Q-5) (J-7 suspected).
* **Hyon-ni** - Air Regiment (F-5/FT-5).

East Coast area

* [**Toksan**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Toksan&action=edit&redlink=1) - Headquarters, 2nd Air Combat Command. Air Regiment (2 ACC) (MiG-21PF/J-7/F-7).
* [**Sondok**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sondok) - Air Transport Regiment (Y-5/An-2). [Google Earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Earth) imagery shows what looks like an old, unused runway to the south-east of the airfield.
* [**Kowon**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kowon) - Air Transport Regiment (6 TD) (Z-5/Mi-4/Mi-8/Mi-17).
* [**Pakhon**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pakhon&action=edit&redlink=1) - Air Transport Regiment (6 TD) (Z-5/Mi-4/Mi-8/Mi-17/Mi-2).
* [**Wonsan**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wonsan) - Air Regiment (2 ACC) (F-6/FT-5) (about 30 MiG-19/J-6 suspected).

Far Northeast area

* [**Samjiyon**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samjiyon) - Training Regiment (8 AD) (MiG-15UTI) (J-2/MiG-15 suspected).
* [**Hyesan**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyesan) - Training Regiment (8 AD) (An-2/Y-5).
* **Hwangsuwon-ni** - 72nd Air Regiment (2 ACC) (A-5/FT-5) (MiG-19/J-6 suspected).
* [**Kilchu**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilchu) - Training Regiment (8 AD) (Mi-2).
* [**Orang**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orang_%28North_Korea%29) - Headquarters, 8th Air Division. Training Regiment (8 AD) (MiG-15UTI/J-2/MiG-15). Air Regiment (H-5).
* [**Changjin**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Changjin_%28North_Korea%29)**-up** - Training Regiment (8 AD) (CJ-6) (Yak-18 suspected).

**Aircraft Inventory**

It is very difficult to create a reasonable overview of the North Korea Air Force aircraft inventory. There is only very limited information coming out of North Korea, and there are only very few credible sources of information on this subject on the internet or in the open literature. Since these sources do not completely agree with each other, it is best to take notice of all of them, and to accept a rather large margin of error. Although Google Earth or other satellite photography can be useful, it is best to keep in mind that North Korea has built very extensive underground storage facilities for its aircraft. Also it is very likely to use dummies to deceive aerial and satellite intelligence, and to create a diversion in case of hostilities. Although many of the aircraft in this inventory are obsolete and would not be of much use on a modern battlefield, there are still reasons to believe they are kept in use, and until reliable sources suggest they aren't, they should be taken into account.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Aircraft** | **Origin** | **Type** | **In service (Source 1)** | **In service (Source 2)** | **Notes** |
| [Harbin H-5 / Ilyushin Il-28](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-28) |  [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China)  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | bomber | 80 | 80 | H-5 is a Chinese copy of [Ilyushin Il-28 Beagle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-28), some Soviet manufactured Il-28's are thought to be part of this number.  |
| [Shenyang J-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_J-5) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) | fighter | 107 | 107 | Chinese copy of [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-17 Fresco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-17) |
| [Shenyang J-6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_J-6) |  [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) | fighter | +100 | 100 | Chinese copy of [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-19 Farmer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-19) |
| [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21PF/PFM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-21) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | fighter | 120 | 160 |  |
| [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21bis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-21) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | fighter | 30 | 30 | illegally imported from Kazakhstan in 1999 |
| [Chengdu F-7B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chengdu_J-7) |  [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) | fighter | 40 | 40 according to other sources | based on [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21F Fishbed-B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-21) |
| [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21U](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-21) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | fighter-trainer |  ? | 30 |  |
| [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-23ML](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-23) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | fighter | 46 | 46 |  |
| [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-23P](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-23) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | fighter-bomber | 10 | 0? |  |
| [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-23UB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-23) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | fighter-trainer | 0 | 10 |  |
| [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-29S](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan_MiG-29) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | fighter | 35 | 35 | For Defending [Pyongyang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyongyang) Aerospace |
| [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-29UB-12](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan_MiG-29) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | fighter-trainer | 5 | 5 | For Defending [Pyongyang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyongyang) Aerospace |
| [Sukhoi Su-7BMK](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukhoi_Su-7) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | attack | 18 | 18 |  |
| [Sukhoi Su-22M5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukhoi_Su-17) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | attack | 30 | 30 |  |
| [Nanchang Q-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanchang_Q-5) |  [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) | attack | 40 | 40 |  |
| [Sukhoi Su-25K](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukhoi_Su-25) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | attack | 36 | 36 |  |
| [Sukhoi Su-25UBK](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukhoi_Su-25) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | attack-trainer |  ? | 4 |  |
| [Aero L-39C](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aero_L-39_Albatros) |  [Czechoslovakia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czechoslovakia) | trainer | 12 | 12 |  |
| [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15UTI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-15) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | trainer | 30 | 30 |  |
| [Nanchang CJ-6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanchang_CJ-6) |  [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) | trainer | 187 | 180 |  |
| [Ilyushin Il-76MD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-76) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | transport | 3 | 3 | in service with [Air Koryo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Koryo) |
| [Tupolev Tu-154B-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tupolev_Tu-154) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | airliner | 4 | 4 | in service with [Air Koryo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Koryo) |
| [Tupolev Tu-134A-3](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tupolev_Tu-134) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | airliner | 2 | 2 | in service with [Air Koryo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Koryo) |
| [Tupolev Tu-204-300](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tupolev_Tu-204) |  [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) | airliner | 1 | 1 | in service with [Air Koryo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Koryo), 1 more on order |
| [Ilyushin Il-62M](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-62) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | airliner | 4 | 2 | 2 more in service with [Air Koryo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Koryo) |
| [Ilyushin Il-18](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-18) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | airliner | 2 | 2 | in service with [Air Koryo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Koryo) |
| [Antonov An-24](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonov_An-24) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) /  [Ukraine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine) | airliner | 6 | 12 | 5 more in service with [Air Koryo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Koryo) |
| [Antonov An-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonov_An-2) |  [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) [Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland) [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) [North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea) | utility transport | ~200 |  | fleet grounded due to high fuel costs |
| [Mil Mi-24](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-24) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | attack | 24 | 20 |  |
| [Mil Mi-26](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-26) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | transport helicopter | 4 | 0? |  |
| [Mil Mi-8](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-8) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | transport helicopter | 15 | 15 |  |
| [Mil Mi-14](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-14) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | [ASW](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-submarine_warfare) helicopter | 10 | 10 |  |
| [Harbin Z-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harbin_Z-5) |  [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) | utility helicopter | 48 | 48 | Chinese copy of [Mil Mi-4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-4) |
| [Mil Mi-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-2) |  [Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland) | utility helicopter | 140 | 140 |  |
| [MD Helicopters 500D](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MD_Helicopters_MD_500) |  [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) | scout helicopter | 87 | 86 | imported from Germany |

Total aircraft holdings according to source 1 is approx. 1,500 and total aircraft holdings according to source 2 is approx. 1,200. Some types may no longer remain operational with the KPAF, but likely remain in reserve storage:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Aircraft** | **Origin** | **Type** | **In service** | **In service 2** | **Notes** |
| [Ilyushin Il-14](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-14) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | personnel and cargo transport |  ? |  ? |  |
| [Yakovlev Yak-18](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yakovlev_Yak-18) |  [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) | single engine propeller trainer |  ? |  ? |  |

**Aircraft subtypes and capabilities**

A North Korean MiG-29S, 2003

A captured MiG-17F

**Fighters**

* **MiG-17F/F-5**: The [Shenyang F-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_F-5) is a subsonic fighter. North Korea operates the basic variant, armed with 1 x 37 mm cannon and 2 x 23 mm cannons, with a total round supply of 200 rounds. There is no provision for AA missiles, although the fighter could be modified to carry two [AA-2 Atoll](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AA-2_Atoll). It is obsolete because of its low maximum speed and a lack of radar and any sort of modern avionics, yet its agility and powerful cannons make it a serious dogfight threat.
* **F-6B/MiG-19**: The [Shenyang F-6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_F-6)B is a Chinese clear-weather, day fighter version of the Soviet [MiG-19](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-19). It has a supersonic capability, and is armed with two [AA-1 Alkali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AA-1_Alkali) missiles. Along with the F-5 and the MiG-21. It is equipped with a radar; despite having a low maximum speed and obsolete avionics. Though the aircraft is clearly obsolete, the F-6B is very agile in low altitudes and has a remarkable rate of climb.
* **MiG-21**: North Korea operates a large number of [MiG-21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-21)PFMs, which are the country's most numerous fighter. The MiG-21PFM is one of the later versions of the original MiG-21, with many improvements over earlier models. It includes systems such as a [Radar warning receiver](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radar_warning_receiver) and [Identification friend or foe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identification_friend_or_foe), which are necessary to wage a modern air war (other more modern components lack on this fighter, though). The PFM is armed with a [GSh-23](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GSh-23) cannon with 200 rounds, two AA-2 Atoll missiles, and has a provision for a [Kh-66](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kh-66) missile. At least 200 MiG-21s, including 30 built in China, are generally accepted as having been delivered to the KPAF. By 1966-67, 80 **MiG-21F-13** were delivered, with the first 14 arriving in or before 1963. 65 **MiG-21PFM** were delivered 1968-1971 and 24 more in 1974. According to the US DIA, by 1977 there were a total of 120 MiG-21s in DPRK, but by 1983 this number had dropped to 50; 150 MiG-21PFM and **MiG-21MF** were reportedly delivered in 1985. According to one estimate, 150 MiG-21s are in service. 50 MiG-21 trainers of different variants were delivered, of which 30 are believed to be in service. In 1999, 38 **MiG-21bis** *izdeliye 75A* were delivered from Kyrgyzstan.

As of 2007, units known to be operating MiG-21s are:

* One squadron of 46th Air Regiment at [Wonsan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wonsan)
* Three squadrons of 56th Air Regiment at [Toksan](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Toksan&action=edit&redlink=1), flying [J-7B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chengdu_J-7), MiG-21PFM and MiG-21bis, but it is not known if the types are mixed or not.
* One squadron of 60th Air Regiment at [Pukch'ang](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pukch%27ang&action=edit&redlink=1)
* Three squadrons of 86th Air Regiment at [Koksan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koksan) flying MiG-21PF and MiG-21U
* Three squadrons of an unidentified Air Regiment at [Hwangju](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hwangju) flying MiG-21PF and MiG-21U
* An unidentified reconnaissance/electronic warfare regiment.
* **F-7B**: The [Chengdu F-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chengdu_F-7)B is an improved Chinese-made copy of the Soviet MiG-21, armed with [PL-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PL-7) AA missiles.
* **MiG-23ML**: The [MiG-23](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-23)ML is a third-generation fighter with many improvements over previous models. It has a look-down capability and effective longer-range radars, as well as other more modern avionics. The ML is very maneuverable and has a large payload, and with proper maintenance and good pilot quality can be on par with most modern fighter aircraft.

An [R-77](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R-77) AA-12 Adder missile

* **MiG-29S**: The [MiG-29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-29) is the KPAF's most modern fighter, possessing all types of modern avionics and weaponry. The S-version is a further improvement over the original MiG-29, having improved computer systems, [Built-In Test Equipment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Built-In_Test_Equipment), [ECM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ECM) systems, advanced [Phazotron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phazotron) radars, BVR capability and many others, as well as up to 3,500 kg of payload, including long-range [Vympel R-27](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel_R-27) and [R-77](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R-77) missiles. North Korea operates 40 MiG-29S, which are in flying condition and are used mostly for the defense of Pyongyang's airspace.

**Bombers**

* **Il-28/H-5**: Having been developed in the late [1940s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1940s), the Il-28/H-5 represents an old generation of bomber aircraft. North Korea originally received 24 Il-28 Beagles in 1960, and after that deliveries of the Chinese H-5 copy continued. The H-5 is a simple, robust, jet-engined bomber, capable of carrying up to 3,000 kg of bombs, including conventional, biological, chemical or nuclear. Its range is about 2,400 km, capable of hitting targets in most of [Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan) and all of [South Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea). The bomber is supplied with a special aiming radar for the bombardier for precise targeting during poor visibility. Despite these advantages, it has a few grave drawbacks - a low maximum speed (900 km/h) and a fairly low ceiling (about 13,000 m), which renders the aircraft very vulnerable even to older types of SAMs and jet fighters. Despite this, it provides North Korea with a fair medium-range weapons platform.

**Ground attack aircraft**

* **Su-7BMK**: One of the first mass-produced Cold War-era Soviet ground attack aircraft, the Su-7BMK is a swept-wing aircraft for bombing missions and with a limited fighter capability. It is easy to maintain, but requires very long airfields due to its wing configuration. The Su-7 is generally obsolete. It can carry up to 2,000 kg of armament and is armed with 2x 30 mm cannons.
* **Su-17**:
* **A/Q-5II**:
* **Su-25K**:

**Attack helicopters**

* **MD 500D**: The MD Helicopters 500D is a civilian helicopter which North Korea imported in 1985 by circumventing United States export controls. Ironically, the airframe of the 500D was manufactured in South Korea, was assembled in the United States, and was purchased through a German export firm. The 500D has no attack capabilities, but it can be easily modified to assume the role of a gunship. Of the 87 500Ds North Korea imported, at least 60 are said to be modified in this manner. Although a modified 500D would be effective in the anti-personnel role, it only has a marginal chance of deterring lightly armored vehicles, so it is likely that the 500D would be used in a defensive role or employ guerrilla tactics. With a range of 605 km, the 500D should be capable of scouting much of the Korean Peninsula. However, as the civilian version lacks a radar, its role as an observation helicopter would be limited. The ROKA operates a military variant of the 500D known as the 500MD, which could lead to deceptive operations by the North Koreans if their 500Ds were painted with ROKA livery and infiltrated South Korea. Although there are slight differences between the airframes of the 500D and the 500MD, it would be difficult to differentiate between them if a soldier is unfamiliar with the differences or if the helicopter were flying at high speeds. However, this problem could be resolved if an IFF system is implemented, thereby further limiting the 500D's role as an observation helicopter.
* **Mi-2**: light transport and light combat helicopter. The Mi-2 can be armed with PK M.Gs and 57mm rocket pods and was able to provide close air support. 140 in service with the Korean People's Air Force and 7,200 of these aircraft were produced. This aircraft worked well as a transport and light utility helicopter with the ability to hold up to 8 fully armed men and a pilot. But the Mi-2 was not much more than that with its light armor it was vulnerable to small arms fire.
* **Mi-14**: Derived from the flexible Mi-8 Hip design, the Mi-14 Haze is a naval development of the Mi-8, capable of ASW, mine sweeping and SAR roles. It is unclear what the KPAF's ASW arsenal consists of, but it is unlikely that their inventory contains equipment that are feasible in anti-submarine roles by modern standards. It is much more likely that the Mi-14 will be used in the SAR role, as it is unclear which variant of the Mi-14 the KPAF possesses.
* **Mi-24**: Also a development from the Mi-8 design, the Mi-24 Hind is a very feasible gunship with troop-transport capability. Although it is unknown which variant of the Mi-24 the KPAF possesses, it is likely to be the Mi-24D Hind-D variant, the most common type of Mi-24 in service around the world. It can be internally equipped with a 12.7 mm Gatling gun, a door mounted machine gun, and has a payload capacity of 1500 kg that can consist of anti-tank missiles, gunpads, rocket launchers, bombs and IR guided AAMs. While the KPAF's anti-tank arsenal is unknown, they are likely to have at least a limited inventory to fit the Mi-24 as a capable attack helicopter. The Mi-24 also has a passenger compartment capable of accommodating up to 8 passengers, with armored plates protecting this section. The flight performance of the Mi-24 is far from agile, and its mobility would further diminish when carrying the extra passengers. The Mi-24 has a range of 450 km, making it a capable attack helicopter that can cover much of the South Korean peninsula even with a feasible combat load. The Hind would be an excellent complement to the Su-25 Frogfoot ground attack aircraft, along with escort fighters. Because it is capable of transporting troops into the front lines, the Mi-24 Hind may also rescue injured soldiers to transport them for treatment. The Mi-24 is also capable of carrying R-60 "Aphid" IR guided AAMs for self-defense. Despite its age, the Mi-24 is still very much capable as a gunship and an anti-Armour helicopter.

**Special Forces**

* **An-2**: The [Antonov An-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonov_An-2) is propeller driven cargo and utility aircraft, the world's largest biplane. Although primarily used in the civilian role as an agricultural and firefighting aircraft in other countries, the An-2 is capable of transporting up to 14 passengers in its rear compartment. The North Korean Special Forces possesses around 300 of these aircraft, and due to its 845 km range, it may be used by the KPAF to deploy special forces agents well behind the South Korean front lines. Because the An-2 is almost silent and can operate at very low speeds, the An-2 may also be used as a light bomber in addition to its ability to paratroop special forces agents. Since the An-2 is a STOL aircraft that requires minimal runway space, the airfields for the An-2 are less vulnerable compared to others and may be placed discreetly along North Korea.

Aircraft of the KPAF operate the following missiles:

**Soviet/Russian AAM**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Manufacturer** | **Notes** |
| [Kalinigrad AA-1 Alkali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaliningrad_K-5) | [Kaliningrad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaliningrad) | used on [MiG-17](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-17) and [MiG-19](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-19); probably withdrawn? |
| [Vympel AA-2 Atoll](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel_K-13) | [Vympel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel) | used on [MiG-21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-21) |
| [Vympel AA-7 Apex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel_R-23) | [Vympel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel) | used on [MiG-23](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-23) |
| [Molyniya AA-8 Aphid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molniya_R-60) | [Molniya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molniya) | used on [Su-25](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Su-25), [MiG-21bis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-21), [MiG-23](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-23) and [MiG-29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-29)? |
| [Vympel AA-10 Alamo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel_R-27) | [Vympel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel) | used on [MiG-29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-29) |
| [Vympel AA-11 Archer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel_R-73) | [Vympel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel) | used on [MiG-29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-29)? |

**Chinese AAM**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Manufacturer** | **Notes** |
| [PL-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vympel_K-13) | Hanzhong Nanfeng Machine Factory (Hanzhong Air-to-Air Missile Factory)? | Chinese copy [AA-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AA-2) Atoll, used on [F-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chengdu_J-7) |
| [PL-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PL-5) | Hanzhong Nanfeng Machine Factory (Hanzhong Air-to-Air Missile Factory) | improved version of [PL-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PL-2), used on [F-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chengdu_J-7)? |
| [PL-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PL-7) | Factory 331 (Zhuzhou Aeroengine Factory) | Chinese copy of [Matra R-550 Magic 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R550_Magic), used on [F-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chengdu_J-7)? |

**Air Defense**

North Korea has deployed a wide range of SAM and AAA systems. SAM systems are entirely of Soviet origin, while AA artillery is from both Soviet and local suppliers. The DPRK has one of the densest air defense networks in the world, with air defense pads deployed virtually around every town and major city. SAM systems vary from the oldest Soviet examples - SA-1 Guild to modern and highly accurate short-range mobile systems such as the SA-13 Gopher, the medium-range SA-6 Gainful and SA-17 Gadfly. SA-5 Gammon long-range systems are also deployed. MANPADS are used extensively, with over 5,000 units fielded.

* [SAM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surface-to-air_missile) system summary:
	+ 24 long-range SA-5
	+ Up to 440 medium range SA-1, SA-2 and SA-3
	+ Unknown number of medium-range SA-4, SA-6 and SA-17
	+ At least 5,000 MANPADS

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Manufacturer** | **Notes** | **Number** | **Range** |
| [SA-1 Guild](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S-25_Berkut) | [KB-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KB-1) | Probably used to defend Pyongyang | 72 launchers delivered in 1961  | 35 km |
| [SA-2 Guideline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-2) | [Lavochkin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavochkin) |  | up to 240 launchers | 45 km |
| [SA-3 Goa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-3) | [Aleksei Mihailovich Isaev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksei_Mihailovich_Isaev) |  | 32 batteries (128 launchers) | 35 km |
| [SA-4 Ganef](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-4) | [Kalinin Machine Building Plant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalinin_Machine_Building_Plant) |  | Unknown | 55 km |
| [SA-5 Gammon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-5_Gammon) | [NPO Almaz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NPO_Almaz) |  | 24 launchers | 300 km |
| [SA-6 Gainful](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-6) | [Ulyanovsk Mechanical Plant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulyanovsk_Mechanical_Plant) |  | Unknown | 24 km |
| [SA-7 Grail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-7) | [KBM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KBM), [Kolomna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolomna) | Local variant, known as Hwasung-Chong in use |  | At least 3,5 km |
| [SA-13 Gopher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9K35_Strela-10) | [KB Tochmash](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=KB_Tochmash&action=edit&redlink=1) |  | Unknown | 5 km |
| [SA-14 Gremlin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-14) | [KBM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KBM), [Kolomna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolomna) |  |  | 4,1 km |
| [SA-16 Gimlet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-16) | [KBM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KBM) | Produced locally | 550+ | 5,2 km |
| [SA-17 Gadfly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-17) | [Almaz-Antey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Almaz-Antey) | Produced locally |  ? (500 missiles manufactured, no. of launchers unknown)  | 30 km |

* [Anti-aircraft artillery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-aircraft_artillery) (11,000 units)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Type** | **Number** |
| [KS-30](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KS-30) | Heavy 130 mm AA gun |  |
| [KS-19](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KS-19) | Heavy 100 mm AA gun | 500 |
| [KS-12](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=KS-12&action=edit&redlink=1) | Heavy 85 mm AA gun | 400 |
| M-1985 | SP Medium 57 mm AA gun |  |
| [ZSU-57-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZSU-57-2) | Twin SP Medium 57 mm AA guns |  |
| [S-60](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/57_mm_AZP_S-60) | Medium 57 mm AA gun |  |
| M-1992 | SP Medium 37 mm AA gun |  |
| M-1939 | Medium 37 mm AA gun | 1,000 |
| M-1992 | Light 30 mm AA gun |  |
| M-1992 | Light 23 mm AA gun |  |
| [ZSU-23-4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZSU-23-4) | Multiple 23 mm SP AA gun | >100 |
| [ZU-23-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZU-23-2) | Twin 23 mm AA gun | 1,500 |
| M-1984 | Multiple SP 14,5 mm AA machine gun |  |
| [ZPU-4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZPU-4) | Multiple 14,5 mm AA machine gun |  |

**Capabilities**

The KPAF operates a wide range of fighter and attack aircraft. North Korea is one of the few nations still operating the obsolete [MiG-17](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-17) and [MiG-19](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-19) fighters, yet it operates the more modern and highly capable [MiG-23s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-23) and [MiG-29s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-29). The KPAF's most numerous fighter is the [MiG-21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-21), which is somewhat obsolete but still a worthy foe in air-to-air combat, if maintained properly and crewed by experienced pilots. An assessment by US analysts GlobalSecurity.org reported that the air force *"has a marginal capability for defending North Korean airspace and a limited ability to conduct air operations against South Korea."* Yet, North Korea operates a wide variety of air defense equipment, from short-range MANPADS and [ZPU-4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZPU-4) machine guns, to long-range [SA-5 Gammon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-5_Gammon) SAM systems and large-caliber AA artillery guns. DPRK has one of the densest air defense networks in the world. [Ilyushin Il-28](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-28) Beagle bombers provide a medium-range attack platform, despite being generally obsolete. A large part of the ground attack aircraft are kept in heavily fortified hangars, some of which are capable of withstanding a nearby nuclear blast.

**Defections**

Due to the political condition of North Korea, several disillusioned North Korean pilots from the KPAF [defected](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defection) with their jets. These incidents include:

* On September 21, 1953, 21-year old [No Kum-Sok](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Kum-Sok) a senior [lieutenant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant), flew his [MiG-15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-15) across to the South and landed at Kimpo Air Base near Seoul. Considered an intelligence bonanza, since this fighter plane was then the best the Communist bloc had, No was awarded the sum of $100,000 ($733,813 in 2006 dollars) and the right to reside in the United States. He is now a [U.S. citizen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_nationality_law).
* On August 5, 1960, a [Shenyang J-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_J-5) landed at Kimpo, the second time a J-5 appeared in South Korea. This aircraft was kept by South Korea and was briefly flown in South Korean markings before being scrapped.
* In February 1983, Lee Ung-Pyong used a training exercise to defect and landed his [Shenyang J-6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_J-6) at an airfield in [Seoul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seoul). According to the then common practice, he received a commission in the South Korean Air Force eventually becoming a [colonel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonel) and taught at the [South Korean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea) academy until his death in 2002. He received a reward of 1.2 billion [South Korean won](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korean_won).
* On May 23, 1996, [Captain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_%28land_and_air%29) Lee Chul-Su defected with another [Shenyang J-6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shenyang_J-6) numbered 529 to Suwon Air Base, [South Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea). He reportedly left behind his wife and two children. Lee was rewarded 480 million [South Korean Won](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korean_Won).

**See also**

* [Korean People's Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_People%27s_Army)
* [North Korean Ground Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korean_Ground_Force)
* [North Korean Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korean_Navy)

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