

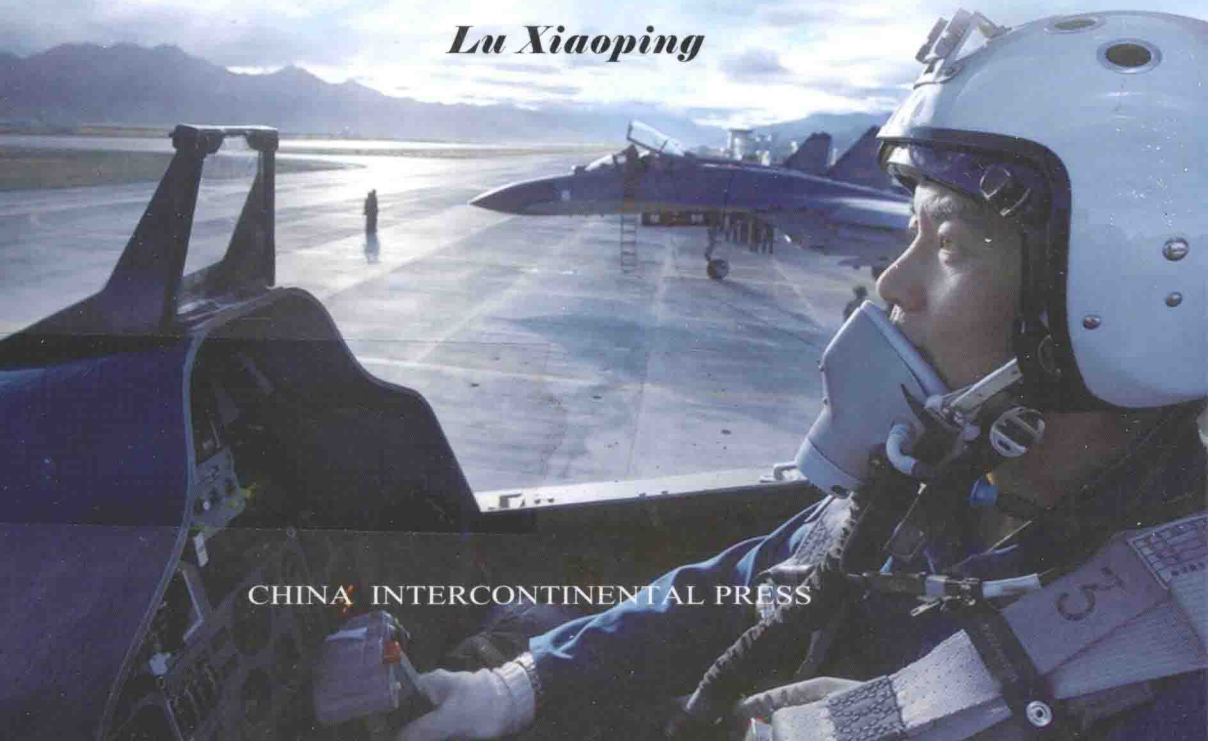


Series of Chinese Army



The PLA Air Force

Lu Xiaoping



CHINA INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

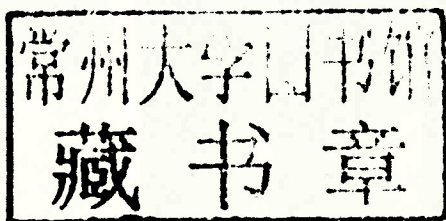
The PLA Air Force

Lu Xiaoping

Ma Quan

Li Xiaosong

Chai Shan



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策 划: 耿雁生 杨宇军

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Preface

Since the start of the 21st century, with the rise of China's overall national and military strength, China's defense policies, military strategy and military development have increasingly become a hot spot of the world's attention, and many books have been published overseas about the Chinese army. Unfortunately, due to some authors' lack of first-hand accurate information, some of their publications have been somewhat debatable.

What kind of an army is the PLA? What stage of development are the various branches of the Chinese armed forces in? What a level of development does military weapons and equipment have reached? These questions have spurred a lively discussion of great concern to the international community and some overseas media. For this reason, we believe that writing a vivid and accurate series of the Chinese army, for both domestic and foreign readers, would be very pertinent.

There are three books in the first series of books on the Chinese Army, namely *The People's Liberation Army*, *The PLA Navy*, and *The PLA Air Force*; the second series of three are *The PLA Aviation Corps*, *The PLA Marines*, and *The PLA Airborne Force*. The third series contains four volumes: *The Chinese Maritime Escortion*, *Chinese Peacekeepers Overseas*, *The Chinese Army and International Security Cooperation*, *The Chinese Army and Humanitarian Relief*. Each volume has from 50,000 to 100,000 words, with hundreds of valuable pictures. The series attempts to focus on the Chinese armed forces' history, current situation and future development in the context of its growth, through the use of many

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interesting examples and details, to show the overall face of the People's Liberation Army from multiple angles.

Throughout the process of planning and writing the series, we invited experts from PLA relevant departments, military academies, and research institutions to participate in order to ensure its authority and accuracy. This series has also had strong support and guidance from the Information Office of the Ministry of National Defense. We believe that the active participation of the military personnels has made the series much more profound.

Due to the knowledge limitations of the editor, in the process of attempting to reflect this great theme of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, inevitably there are some omissions and deficiencies. Readers' criticisms and corrections on these points are welcome.

Editor

January 2012

Introduction

On October 1, 1949 in the East, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established. The New China was born during a post-World War II era of global political upheaval; it was also born during a great transformation in the military field. After World War II, the importance of air power in war was firmly established, creating an enormous wave of development and rapid progress; the skies became a major battlefield in international military struggles.

The new Republic faced internal and external threats from enemies on land, in the air and at sea; the People's Liberation Army (PLA) emerged from a land war to face a completely new challenge in three-dimensional land, sea and air war. In these conditions, Chairman Mao Zedong and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) resolutely decided to form the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF). On November 11, 40 days after the birth of the Republic, the establishment of the People's Liberation Army Air Force was officially announced. Chairman Mao Zedong wrote a dedication to the PLA Air Force: "Establish a strong People's Air Force to defend the motherland and be ready to defeat invaders." Whether in the history of China's national defense or the world's military aviation history, this was a significant event.

In its early period, the PLA Air Force not only overcame the scarcity of various materials, but professional staff lacked expertise, and there were many other hurdles. They successfully resolved the major problem of "constructing an Air Force on the foundation of the Army", a splendid

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achievement in the history of the world's air forces. The first group of People's Air Force pilots trained in the difficult conditions at the Northeast Democratic Coalition Aviation School, and some of them later became world-class ace pilots, and some became generals in China's Air Force. In the many air combats during the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Korean War) and the fights for territorial air defense, the Chinese military's bravery and resourcefulness were fully utilized; their tenacious and courageous style overcame the difficulties of being the "underdog" in both skill and equipment, achieving great victories that shocked the world.

From building a mechanized Air Force on the foundation of a backwards agricultural society, to building an informationized Air Force on the foundation of an undeveloped industrial society, the PLA Air Force has always resolutely overcome the difficulties along its path. In late 2006, the new domestic J-10 fighter made its first public appearance, marking the achievement of a milestone in China's aviation industry and weapons development capabilities; China had become capable of independently developing a world-class fighter aircraft. From purchasing aircraft to manufacturing imitation aircraft, and then designing and developing aircraft, the PLA Air Force's equipment is constantly developing in leaps and bounds; alongside this development, the strategic functions of the PLA Air Force will continue to change.

After entering the new century, the Air Force established the "unified air offensive and defensive" strategy, executing a comprehensive planning system for the use of combat and long-term development, making a full leap forward in its comprehensive development. According to the needs of strategic transformation, the Air Force has focused more on informationized training; military training has gradually moved towards base training, simulated, networked and confrontational. Transformations in strategic thinking and changes in training concepts have greatly promoted the PLA Air Force's combat capability, and provided a definite long-range precision strike capability for aviation troops. Ground air defense units possess long-range interception and echelon strike

capability, as well as anti-highly-maneuvering targets, anti-jamming and anti-destruction capacity; radar units have multi-target warning and multi-target guidance capability.

Continuing on the long journey, struggling in the highest reaches of heaven, facing the storms. Through decades of trials and hardships, the People's Air Force is standing at a new historical starting point. From flying decrepit old aircraft that had been seized from the enemy, it has already developed into an air power with aviation, air defense, airborne, communications, radar, ECM (short for electronic countermeasures), and other arms and units; it is a modern air power capable of offensive and defensive operations under informationized conditions.

This book provides an objective chronicle of the development of the People's Liberation Army Air Force as its base; it strives to provide accurate historical data organized into sections, providing a panoramic overview, and comprehensive and vivid descriptions.

Abbreviations

AAA	antiaircraft artillery
AAM	air-to-air missile
AAW	antiair warfare
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
CPC	Communist Party of China
CCCCP	Central Committee of Communist Party of China
CMC	Central Military Commission
CPV	Chinese People's CPVs
EW	electronic warfare
GPS	Global Positioning System
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
KMT	Kuomintang(Chinese Nationalist Party)
MR	Military Region
MRAF	Military Region Air Force
OCA	offensive counterair
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PRC	People's Republic of China
SAM	surface-to-air missile
SOF	special operations force
SSM	surface-to-surface missile
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
USAF	U.S. Air Force
USN	U.S. Navy

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Chapter 1

Persistence and Courage

The Birth of the People's Liberation Army Air Force

On October 1st, 1949, at the grand parade for the founding 1985 Since ceremony of the People's Republic of China (PRC), there were not only infantry, artillery and other ground 1985 forces, but the air force formation also contained fighter planes, bombers, transporters, training planes and more. When the fleet of planes with a bright red "August 1" emblem painted



On October 1st, 1949, a PLAAF flight team for inspection in the founding ceremony of PRC.

on their wings passed slowly over Tiananmen Square, the crowd gathered there burst into cheers, filled with excitement and pride at the new China's own guardians of the air. However, they did not know that the young contingent flying through the sky did not yet have a commander, and

could not be called the true People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF).

But at that moment there was someone, though far away in the Soviet Union and unable to witness the air fleet's heroic flight at the founding ceremony, who was holding this newborn fleet in his heart and mind. He was about to take office as the first air force commander of the new China: Liu Yalou.

"Newborn" - Liu Yalou Assigned to Build Air Force

On May 4th, 1949, six KMT bombers flew over Beijing and bombed the Nanyuan airport. Huge explosions shook the city, but further shook the hearts of the Communist Party of China (CPC) leaders, who had just entered Beijing. Without a strong Air Force, no matter how powerful the army was, they could not ensure the safety of their homeland. In order to defend the airspace of the motherland, to seize Taiwan and achieve reunification, it was necessary to build their own Air Force.



Liu Yalou, the First Commander of PLAAF.

Then who should this important position of Air Force commander be given to? After giving it great thought, Mao Zedong put forward a candidate: Liu Yalou 14th Army Corps Commander of the Fourth Field Army.

Liu Yalou joined the Red Army at the age of 17, and all his great successes in battles large and small were due to superior leadership abilities and command; at 25 he became a division commander, and at 28 he went to the Soviet Frunze Military Academy, after which he also served as the president of the Northeast Democratic United Army Aviation Academy . This

Chapter 1 Persistence and Courage

combination of command, strategy and administration in one person, fluent Russian as well as experience in the air force, made him the clear choice as air force commander.

On July 11th, the Central Military Commission (CMC) summoned Liu Yalou, and he was formally confirmed as the first commander of the PLA Air Force, and instructed to propose candidates for central leading cadres, and to form an organizational plan.



Fleet of CPV Air Force

On November 11th, 1949, the CMC made the announcement: the People's Liberation Army Air Force Command was officially established. Starting then, the Air Force became an official branch of the People's Liberation Army, and the PLA Air Force began its glorious history starting from nothing, from weakness to strength.

In 1950, in the smoky North Korea skies, the young PLA Air Force fearlessly and relentlessly entered into a thrilling battle with the United States Air Force (USAF), repeatedly damaging their opponent. The whole world was shocked: how could the PLA Air Force become such a power-

ful force in just one year?

As everyone knows, the visionary members of the CPC had taken a difficult first step towards 20 years earlier, even in the midst of hardship, preparing the way for the building of the air force.

“Planting the Seed” - The CPC’s First Pilots and Aircraft

In the spring of 1930, a KMT Air force “Kese” type biplane (U.S-made) was forced to land on a river bank near a small village in Hubei Province due to fog and fuel exhaustion after a reconnaissance mission. The pilot Long Wenguang was also detained by the local Red Army.

Borrow a hen to lay an egg: training the first core group

In September 1924, Sun Yat-sen founded the Guangzhou Aviation School in Dashatou, Guangzhou. The CPC, only three years old, seized this opportunity and sent a number of party members to the school to study aviation technology. They completed nearly one year of study and training in the country, and after gaining a grasp of basic aviation skills, were sent to the Soviet Union for further studies. During 1925 and 1926, a total of nine Communist Party students went to the Soviet Union to pursue advanced studies. They were the CPC’s first group of pilots, the result of the Central Committee’s “borrow a hen to lay an egg”: training Communist Party aviators in a KMT school.

The Sino-Japanese War officially began in July 1937 when the Marco Polo Bridge Incident occurred. At the critical moment when the Chinese people were in danger, the Communist Party and the KMT decided to join hands in fighting a common enemy, achieving a second KMT-CPC cooperation. In this context, at the end of 1937, 43 students were chosen from among the Communist forces and schools, and transferred to the Xinjiang Airlines Training Course run by the KMT warlords in their golden age.

It was not easy for CPC students to enter the KMT aviation schools,