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The Technical Backbone: Analyzing the 2025 Targeted Training NCO Recruitment Plan

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The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is transforming its non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps from traditional "senior enlisted leaders who act as the link between soldiers and officers" into a professionalized backbone force of technical specialists proficient in advanced technologies.[1] The targeted training NCO [定向培养军士] program enables the PLA to recruit NCOs directly from educated civilians, using technical training at civilian institutions to reduce the burden of training junior enlisted ranks in the expansion of the NCO corps.[2] The 2025 recruitment plan of the targeted training NCOs provides us with a glance at the PLA's system of human resource allocation in the preparation for future intelligent and multi-domain warfare. It discloses the modernization paths of the PLA Army (PLAA), PLA Navy (PLAN), PLA Air Force (PLAAF), and PLA Rocket Force (PLARF), which aim to collaborate and complement one another to build an integrated joint operations system. In addition, the allocated recruitment quota for the newly created Aerospace Force (ASF), Cyberspace Force (CSF), and Information Support Force (ISF), for the first time, paints a picture of these future new-quality combat forces, revealing their combat missions as both a support command to leverage the resources within the PLA and as a pioneer force to explore force employment with its unique talent acquisition strategy. The 2025 recruitment data reveals that the PLA is undergoing personnel restructuring, prioritizing a highly specialized NCO corps to directly support the new strategic forces and accelerating the development of high-quality technical personnel in key warfighting domains.

The Four Recruitment Pathways for the PLA's NCO Corps

From Conscripts to NCOs: The Traditional Pathway to Select NCOs in the PLA

The PLA first adopted the NCO system in 1988. Since then, the enlisted force has been divided into conscripts and an NCO corps. Junior enlisted troops are designated as conscripts with a two-year service obligation, while NCOs are a volunteer force who serve as senior enlisted leaders selected based on their experience, although these NCOs have historically been criticized for their limited education. The PLA's NCO corps has undergone a series of reforms in

the past three decades as a part of the PLA's modernization efforts, including the establishment of a structured NCO career system in the 1990s, the expansion of NCO roles in leadership and technical positions in the 2000s, and the more recent development of NCO education and professionalization programs, steadily shifting the PLA's reliance from short-term conscripts to its more professional NCOs.

Prior to 2001, all NCOs were selected from the conscript pool, either through promotion within their units or through NCO schools that were established in 1986. Although the PLA has since introduced new recruitment channels, direct promotion remains a critical pipeline today. Units evaluate conscripts at the end of their two-year service, determining their promotion eligibility by prioritizing combat training performance. NCOs who rise through the ranks, usually at the company level, are considered homegrown NCOs who possess stronger ties to the troops and are more likely to pursue a career path as management NCOs. Often highlighted in *PLA Daily* articles for their excellent leadership, coordination, and military proficiency, these junior NCOs typically assume functional roles such as squad leaders and directly support the company commander and political instructor. However, high-level management positions are associated with more emphasis on educational background and lower requirements for combat skills, leaving limited potential for these management NCOs to advance and increasing the likelihood of being discharged before finishing intermediate NCO positions.

In addition to direct promotion, NCO schools also serve as a channel for conscripts to become NCOs. Conscripts with more than one year of service and corporals with less than one year in rank can apply to the PLA's NCO schools where they study specialized skills for three years and graduate with an associate's degree.[i] Their military assignments after graduation align with their field of study, and their primary career track focuses on their specialty as technicians or NCO staff. These technical NCOs generally have a steady promotion path up to sergeant second class, which brings them to 12 years of service and qualifies them for guaranteed government employment after separation.

Regardless of the specific path, NCOs selected from conscripts are primarily high school graduates from rural areas with no prior work experience, resulting in limited education and low skill levels. Although the proportion of college students and graduates has increased in the past decade, the PLA still spends a significant amount of time developing its NCOs with conscript backgrounds into proficient technical specialists. Due to the short two-year service term for conscripts, some units, particularly those equipped with advanced technologies, often struggle to develop and retain technical experts.[3] To reduce the burden of specialized training, the PLA began to directly recruit civilians with technical skills in 2001. This practice leveraged civilian

[i] The PLA had a program for NCOs to advance their education from associate's degrees to bachelor's degrees through attending NCO schools full-time. The PLA discontinued the program in 2019 to increase the operational availability of NCOs, preferring them to pursue military professional education while on duty. However, in 2024, the PLA launched a pilot program and recruited 380 NCOs with associate's degrees to complete their undergraduate education. Source: http://www.81.cn/jx_208569/9906013.html.

institutions to relieve the shortage of specialized technical training centers within the military, targeting critical positions filled by NCOs. This marked the establishment of the PLA's primary pathways for building its NCO corps: selecting conscripts who had completed their conscription terms, appointing graduates from the PLA's NCO academies, and recruiting civilians with specialized skills.[4]

Direct Recruitment Program: Introducing Civilian Expertise to Enhance the Education Level

On September 9, 2001, the *Regulations on Conscription Work (2001 Revision)* (征兵工作条例) stipulated that the PLA "directly recruits NCO from non-military departments" to "enhance the overall quality of the NCO corps and boost the force's combat capability."[5] Two years later, the PLA piloted a program of "direct recruitment of NCOs from civilians with specialized technical skills from non-military departments" (hereinafter referred to as "directly recruited NCOs" (直接招收军士)) in the Jinan Military Region, Nanjing Military Region, PLAN, PLAAF, Second Artillery, and General Armaments Department.[ii] This program required applicants to have two-year or three-year associate's or four-year bachelor's degrees in military-civilian dual-use specialties such as marine mechanics, electrical systems, hydraulic control and fault diagnosis, computer applications, navigation, mechatronics, and inland river piloting.[6] The directly recruited NCO program allowed the military to recruit the technically skilled personnel required for its modernization in order to maintain and operate advanced weapons and equipment. As shown in Figure 1, direct recruitment of NCOs continued to be an important recruitment source for the NCO corps, and it was integrated into the annual military recruitment work, typically running in parallel with the second recruitment cycle of conscripts.

[ii] Jinan Military Region and Nanjing Military Region were dissolved in 2016 as a part of the PLA's military structure reform. Nanjing MR now falls under the Eastern Theater Command, while Jinan MR is split between Northern Theater Command and Central Theater Command. The General Armaments Department was also disbanded in 2016, and its functions were largely absorbed by the CMC's Equipment Development Department.

Figure 1: National Military Recruitment Website

Although the PLA has not released specific data on its directly-recruited NCO program, public discourse suggests that this program failed to encounter an enthusiastic response from college graduates, especially those with bachelor's degrees. For example, among the 119 recruits in the Nanjing Military Region in 2003, only one directly recruited NCO had a bachelor's degree, whereas 84 of them had two-year and 34 had three-year associate's degrees.[7] Compared to conscripts with four-year college degrees that were prioritized for officer commissions, directly recruited NCOs were not eligible to become officers. The gap in prestige between officers and NCOs in the Chinese military discouraged many college graduates from pursuing a career as an NCO, particularly when they cannot get a commission.

Another strong indication supporting the speculation that the recruitment of directly recruited NCOs was likely low was their ineligibility for the most attractive separation benefit—a guaranteed government job. The pyramid structure of the NCO corps limited senior NCO billets, which forced most NCO separations to happen before reaching senior NCO ranks. The PLA stipulated a minimum of 12 years of service before a veteran can be assigned to a government position. However, directly recruited NCOs often fail to meet the service

requirements because they entered the military at the rank of corporal or sergeant[iii] and only served eight or ten years before hitting the bottleneck in NCO promotion.[8]

Furthermore, difficulties in transitioning directly recruited NCOs into the military resulted in deficiencies in their military and political competence that made them unpopular in their assigned units.[9] Therefore, the PLA shifted its NCO recruitment focus from college graduates to high school graduates and established a targeted training NCO (定向培养军士) program[iv] in 2012 by collaborating with vocational colleges across the country. This program contractually secured prospective graduates in selected majors to ensure a sufficient supply of personnel with higher education credentials to directly enter the military as NCOs.

Targeted Training Program: Cultivating Specific Talents to Meet the PLA's Need

In 2012, the PLA's General Staff Department and the People's Republic of China (PRC) Ministry of Education (MOE) issued a *Notice on the Pilot Program for the Targeted Training of Directly Recruited Non-Commissioned Officers* (关于做好定向培养直招士官试点工作的通知), which launched a pilot program to recruit NCOs through targeted training programs at ten civilian colleges.[10] The targeted training NCO program is a three-year associate's degree track. The designated partner colleges were responsible for the first 2.5 years of academic education in pre-determined specialized coursework, after which candidates underwent a final round of physical and political screening and were formally enlisted.[11] They spent their final six months as paid interns in their units where they underwent military training and pre-assignment skills training, receiving the same benefits and allowances as conscripts.[12] Upon completion, they received associate's degree diplomas through their units and were awarded the rank of corporal, second year (下士). At this time, these newly promoted NCOs are reimbursed by the PLA for the tuition they paid to attend college.[13]

Despite differences in recruitment process and initial training, the targeted training NCO program followed the *Provisions on the Directly Recruited NCOs from Non-Military Departments* (直接从非军事部门招收士官工作规定). This regulation stipulated that both directly recruited NCOs and targeted training NCOs must "at a minimum, serve the full term of service required for the next rank level," which consisted of the remaining two years as a corporal and three years as a sergeant (中士), resulting in a minimum service term of five[v]

[iii] Graduates with four-year bachelor's degrees enter the service at the rank of corporal (下士) with two years of time-in-grade. Graduates with three-year associate's degrees enter the service at the rank of corporal (下士) with one year of time-in-grade.

[iv] Please refer to Daniel Salisbury and Kenneth Allen's paper *"Made-to-Order NCOs: The PLA's Targeted Training NCO Program* for more details about the program. Source: https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/CASI/documents/Research/CASI%20Articles/2022-02-28%20Targeted%20Training%20NCO%20Program.pdf for more details.

[v] Due to the difference in seniority when entering the service as corporals (下士), graduates with four-year bachelor's degrees have a minimum service obligation of four years, and graduates with three-year associate's degrees must serve at least five years.

years.[14] Targeted training NCOs typically served in specialized technical positions in their respective branches, which were determined when admitted in the program. Those with outstanding performance had the opportunity to be promoted to mid-to-senior level sergeant major positions. Upon demobilizing or retiring, a portion of these NCOs opted for careers in local state-owned enterprises, public service institutions, and local civil service.[15]

Although targeted training NCOs cannot transition to officers due to their lack of a bachelor's degree, they can still apply for military academies within the first three years of their service and finish the four-year bachelor's degree at a military academy to be commissioned as PLA officers.[16] The PLA also introduced a vocational and technical education program for NCOs to upgrade their associate's degrees to bachelor's degrees in 2024, which also provided a new path for targeted training NCOs to become officers.[17] The tuition reimbursement, paid internship, and commission opportunities has made the targeted training program more attractive, and the expanded educational opportunities with civilian education institutions has contributed to the success of its recruitment efforts.

As described, the PLA selects its NCO candidates from the enlisted forces and the civilian sector, shown in Figure 2. PLA regulations stipulate that conscripts must complete pre-selection training before their selection as NCOs. In the "unit promotion" pipeline, approval authority lies in the next higher command level, and thus the assessment criteria vary by unit. This track primarily focuses on selecting management NCOs, and the historical data for this pipeline is not available in open sources. Conscripts can undergo the alternative route through vocational training at 30 internal PLA institutions to become either technical or management NCOs. In 2025, the PLA enrolled approximately 14,000 soldiers into these NCO schools. From the civilian sector, graduates holding an associate's degree or higher in relevant fields can enlist as technical NCOs through the direct recruitment program, which is managed directly by the Ministry of National Defense's (MND) Conscription Office, causing the annual quotas to be undisclosed. Meanwhile, admissions offices from 48 participating schools indicated that the targeted training NCO program recruited 21,000 high school graduates in 2025. This program focuses on technical majors to cultivate a professional NCO corps, representing an initiative by the PLA to accelerate the generation of combat capabilities.

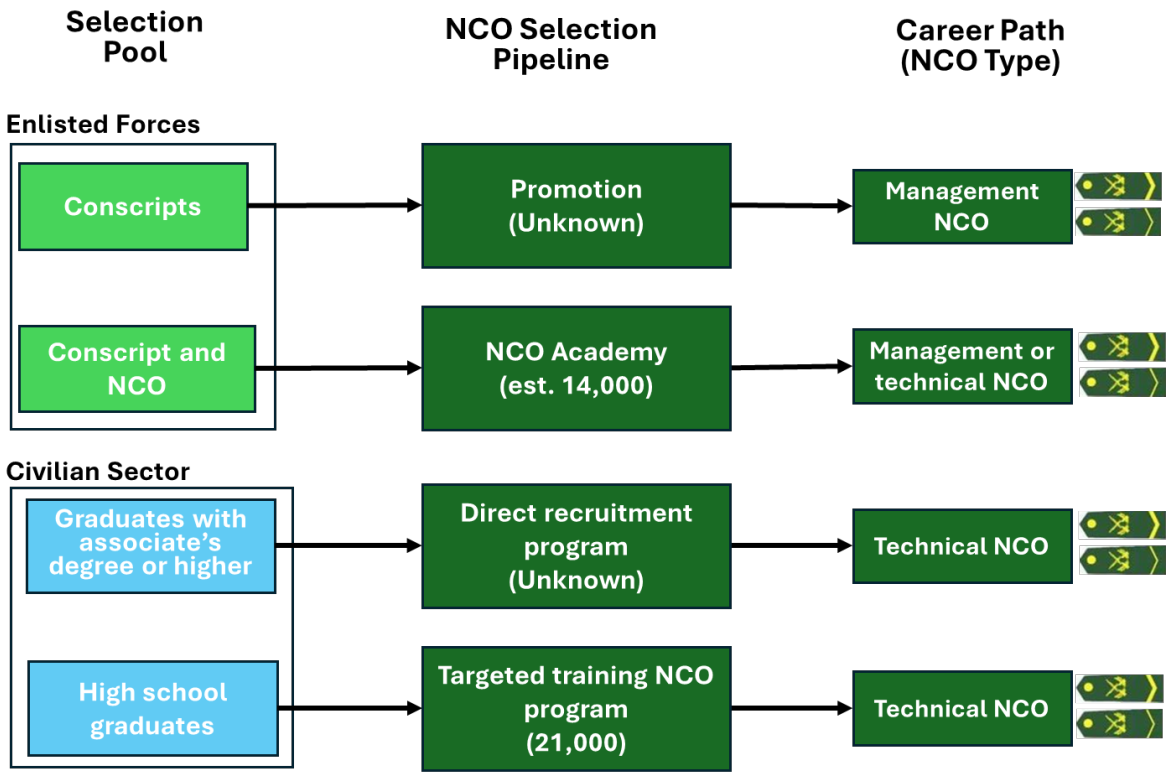

Figure 2: NCO Selection Pipeline and Career Path[vi]

An Interpretation of the PLA's 2025 Targeted Training NCO Recruitment Plan

While a general understanding of the PLA's NCO recruitment channels offers a broad overview of its NCO corps, it does not permit a precise analysis of its composition and structure. The key avenues for becoming an NCO, such as the promotion of conscripts, admission to NCO academies, and the directly recruited NCO program, are managed as internal military matters by PLA units or by the MND's Conscription Office. Citing military secrecy, the PLA does not publicly disclose the composition of its forces. Moreover, annual quotas and their allocations are adjusted in response to force structure reforms, equipment modernization, and evolving strategic mission requirements, making it nearly impossible to obtain precise data on the yearly influx of new NCOs. Nevertheless, the targeted training NCO program is an exception, as it openly recruits high school graduates. Its published data on quotas, technical specializations, and unit destinations allows for an assessment of the technical and knowledge-based composition of these newest and most formally trained NCO candidates. This also offers a basis for making informed inferences about the development of the PLA's strategic theory for its service branches and its shifting priorities in combat readiness.

[vi] Recruitment number for the 30 NCO academies in 2025 is an estimated number, announced by the Recruitment Department of CMC. Source: http://military.people.com.cn/BIG5/n1/2025/0618/c1011-40503343.html.

When the targeted training NCO program was first launched as a small-scale pilot in 2012, it started with just 830 candidates recruited from seven provinces to attend 11 participating schools.[18] In the following decade, it expanded significantly to include 48 participating schools and an applicant pool across 31 provinces. In 2025, it recruited 21,000 students in 63 different professional fields, representing a nearly 2,400 percent increase in total enrollment since its inception. Although the 2025 enrollment figure is 2,600 lower than that of 2024, this decrease follows a major reform last year that expanded the program's recruitment scope from 17 provinces to 31 provinces, ending a limit that had been in place since 2016. It reflects the PLA's confidence in this program, marking the decision to transition from a pilot program conducted in key regions to full-scale nationwide implementation. The PLA creates a larger and more diverse selection base for its NCO corps by expanding the potential applicant pool, which enables the PLA to recruit the most qualified college graduates from across the country who best fit the needs of specific technical positions. This ultimately improves the overall structure of NCO recruitment and the quality of targeted training NCOs entering the PLA.

NCOs are regarded as the "direct managers, educators, and leaders of enlisted soldiers," and the PLA considers the quality and capability of its NCO corps to be a critical factor directly influencing the outcome of future warfare.[19] Beginning with the *Plan to Further Reform the NCO System* in July 2009, the PLA has progressively expanded its NCO ranks to "nearly 900,000 personnel, a quantitative increase without exceeding the total authorized strength for enlisted forces."[20] In addition to the expansion, the PLA has also adjusted the structure of its NCO corps, notably by increasing the direct recruitment of graduates with associate's degrees from vocational colleges. The 11 percent reduction in 2025 after the sustained period of growth from 2020 to 2024 reflects the PLA's higher threshold for personnel recruitment. It signifies that the PLA has preliminarily achieved the goal of recruiting or training sufficient NCOs and has begun to adjust the structure and ratio of the military force to align with the PLA's ongoing defense and military reforms, which aim to build a modern military force that is leaner and highly capable.[21]

Despite the PLA's expansion of its selection pool and efforts to promote fairness in recruitment and education opportunities, there is still a major gap between the allocated quotas for male and female applicants. Although the program did not provide a specific quota for women when it was first established, data from 2022 to 2025 shows that female targeted training NCO enrollment accounts for 0.92 to 1.45 percent. Nearly half of all provinces do not have any slots for female applicants. Furthermore, even in those provinces that do accept female applicants, the majority of specialties are limited for male candidates only. The fields that are open to women are generally focused on technical or support functions, including communication, information technology, medical services, and languages.

Year	Number of Recruiting Provinces	Number of Participating Schools	Recruitment Total	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
2025	31	48	21,000	20,783	98.97%	217	1.03%
2024	31	48	23,600	23,383	99.08%	217	0.92%
2023	17	48	23,225	22,918	98.68%	307	1.32%
2022	17	48	22,565	22,237	98.55%	328	1.45%
2021	17	48	21,755	21,430	98.51%	325	1.49%
2020	17	48	20,615	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
…	…	…	…	…		…	…
2012	7	11	830	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 1: 2020 – 2025 Targeted Training NCO Recruitment Quota[vii]

Chinese authorities did not release a comprehensive national recruitment plan for the 2025 targeted training NCO program. Instead of a centralized national announcement, the recruitment information is disseminated on a provincial basis, jointly released by local education authorities and provincial conscription offices. The final details on enrollment quotas and academic majors are published by the individual vocational colleges on their official school websites and WeChat official accounts. The specific data for 2025 is detailed below.

Service	Recruitment Number
PLAA	4000
PLAN	4000
PLAAF	3805
PLARF	3795
ASF	370
CSF	270
ISF	520
JLSF	200
PAP	3880
CMC NDMD	160
Total	21000

Table 2: 2025 Targeted Training NCO Program Recruitment Plan

In the 2025 academic year, the targeted training NCO program has a total enrollment quota of 21,000. It should be noted that since China's active-duty armed forces are composed of both the PLA and the People's Armed Police (PAP), this recruitment goal also fulfills the requirements of the PAP. However, given that the PAP is primarily a domestic security and law

[vii] Data collected from the official recruitment notification on the websites and WeChat accounts of provincial education examination authorities.

enforcement force, the following analysis of the PLA is exclusive of the PAP data and will focus solely on the PLA overall forces. After accounting for the 3,880 recruits designated for the PAP and the 160 for the Central Military Commission's (CMC) National Defense Mobilization Department (NDMD), the PLA enrolled 16,960 NCO candidates for its four services and four forces in 2025.[viii]

Assessing the PLA's Technical Demand for NCO Development in Future Warfare

The PLA's targeted training NCO recruitment priorities show a strategic shift away from its traditionally largest service. Despite the PLAA accounting for nearly half of all military personnel, its share of new NCO recruits has fallen to just 23.58 percent. This figure is now comparable to the more technologically advanced services, with PLAN at 23.58 percent, PLAAF at 22.44 percent, and PLARF at 22.38 percent. These branches are far smaller in total force size, making their recruitment percentages highly significant. This trend is driven by the development of military technologies, as automated systems and intelligent equipment progressively replace tasks traditionally performed by humans. For example, the PLA's significant investment in recruitment of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) personnel signifies that these platforms are increasingly undertaking reconnaissance and patrol missions, reducing the historical demand for infantry and scouts. The demand for NCOs is also affected by the technological requirements. The PLAN, PLAAF, and PLARF have a great need for technical NCOs, while the PLAA, as a more manpower-intensive service, still requires more management NCOs to handle administration and logistics.

The targeted training NCO recruitment quota also reflects the PLA's modernization progress and its priorities. The PLA's allocation of highly educated NCOs shows a targeted, rather than equal, investment across its four services. When comparing the recruitment quota to total force size, it is clear that the PLA places its most skilled technical personnel into key strategic domains that can decide the outcome of future conflicts and tailors its allocation based on each branch's specific role in the PLA's overall modernization.

[viii] The PLA's four services include PLAA, PLAN, PLAAF, and PLARF. The PLA's four forces include ASF, CSF, ISF, and JLSF.

Service	Recruitment Number	Recruitment Percentage	Estimated Force Size[ix]	Estimated % of Total Force	Recruitment to Force Ratio
PLAA	4000	23.58%	965,000	47.42%	0.41%
PLAN	4000	23.58%	260,000	12.78%	1.54%
PLAAF	3805	22.44%	395,000	19.41%	0.96%
PLARF	3795	22.38%	120,000	5.90%	3.16%
ASF	370	2.18%	295,000	14.50%	N/A[x]
CSF	270	1.59%			N/A
ISF	520	3.07%			N/A
JLSF	200	1.18%			N/A
Total	16960	100.00%	2,035,000	100.00%	

Table 3: 2025 Targeted Training NCO Recruitment within the PLA

The Four Services: Prioritizing Technology over Size to Build an Integrated Combat System

In 2025, the PLAA is tied with the PLAN for the highest absolute number of new NCOs at 4,000. But due to its massive total force size, its recruitment ratio is the lowest at just 0.41 percent. Its needs are concentrated in key future warfare fields, particularly UAV application technology, aircraft maintenance, electronic information engineering, and modern communication technology. The focus indicates that the PLAA is accelerating its transformation into a modern force capable of expanding from single-domain superiority into multi-domain advantage.[22] UAVs are being integrated into the PLAA's combined arms battalions and brigades as a standard ISR component.[23] Similarly, the emphasis on aircraft maintenance talent reflects the ongoing expansion of the PLAA aviation corps providing rapid mobility and maneuver. The PLAA also has a demand for NCOs in applied meteorology and geodetic surveying and mapping as these skills are critical for the PLAA's long-range precision strike operations. NCOs with expertise in these fields provide the precise geographic and atmospheric data directly to the PLAA's artillery and tactical missile units, making the PLAA's long-range kill chain more independent. The PLAA is transitioning away from a traditional ground force towards a modernized multi-domain combat force that depends on high-quality enlisted forces to prepare for the informatized and highly mobile future battlefield.[24]

The PLAN's recruitment quota is 4,000 targeted training NCOs in 2025, and it has a recruitment ratio of 1.54 percent compared to its 260,000-force size, which is significantly higher than that of the PLAAF and PLAA. Its total recruitment number is also the highest, which is designed to fulfill the talent cap as the PLAN continues to commission high-tech platforms such

[ix] Estimated number from 2020 China Military Power Report. Latest version of DOD's Annual Report to Congress on China's Military and Security Development did not provide a breakdown of the PLA. The estimated total of 2,035,000 and PLAA's size of 965,000 are accurate according to latter report.
[x] Information is unavailable due to recent restructuring in April 2024.

as aircraft carriers, destroyers, and nuclear submarines.[25] The targeted training NCO recruitment reveals the PLAN's modernization efforts in expanding the fleet's size and upgrading its combat systems. For example, the PLAN allocates the largest recruitment quota in marine engineering technology. Combining with recruitment in traditional maritime fields like navigation technology and marine electrical and electronic technology, the PLAN has built an increasing pool of crews for sailing and managing vessels. Recruitment emphasis on electronic information engineering, electrical automation, and applied electronics ensure naval crews have the technical skills to operate and maintain the advanced combat and command systems now standard on its warships.

Simultaneously, the PLAN is recruiting NCOs in UAV application technology and missile maintenance. Its particular partnership with the specialized aviation institutions indicates that the PLAN recognizes the advantages of incorporating UAV systems onto large-scale vessels to maximize efficiency through long-range reconnaissance and strike operations.[26] By extending the ISR range of individual warships and by ensuring the reliability of missile systems, the PLAN aims to complete its modern C4ISRK operational framework to increase regional control while exploring ways to become an expeditionary force. Furthermore, the PLAN Marine Corps also recruits nursing and medical service NCOs for medical support, preparing the PLAN to employ its Marine Corps as an amphibious force in its global operations. These recruitment trends in platform engineering, advanced combat systems, and logistical support prove that the PLAN has transitioned from a coastal defense service into an independent, high-tech, blue-water combat force.

The PLAAF's recruitment quota is 3,805 technical NCOs, concentrating its talent intake in aircraft maintenance fields such as aircraft electromechanical equipment maintenance, aviation engine assembly, and aircraft electronic equipment maintenance, and combat support fields, notably UAV application technology, missile maintenance, and electronic information engineering. The demand is driven by the large-scale induction of advanced platforms into the PLAAF, including 5th-generation fighters, long-range bombers, and various special mission aircraft. Given the complexity of these modern aircraft, a professionalized NCO corps is essential to ensuring high sortie rates and overall combat effectiveness.

UAV application technology ranks the highest in the 2025 recruitment plan, and PLAAF's heavy investment in UAV talent implies that it is actively exploring manned-unmanned teaming (MUM-T) combat models. PLA recognizes the inherent difficulties in MUM-T techniques, namely command-and-control, support requirements, and human casualty impacts.[27] The recruitment of UAV talents, along with missile maintenance talents that provide support for both air-to-air and ground-based air defense missiles, shows that the PLAAF has been adjusting its training cycles to tackle the challenges during its modernization and to reinforce its fundamental strategy of "integrated air and space operations with both offensive and defensive capabilities."[28] Additionally, the PLAAF recruits specialty fields such as petrochemical technology and nuclear and radiation detection and protection, which directly proves its commitment to the air leg of the nuclear triad by developing its nuclear-capable

bomber force. Taken as a whole, it is clear that the PLAAF has moved beyond simple expansion and has entered a mature stage to refine the highly specialized skills for its strategic missions.

The PLARF has an allocation of 3,795 targeted training NCOs against a total force of approximately 120,000, for a recruitment ratio of 3.16 percent, making it the highest ranked among all four services. The PLARF is, as expected, the service branch that has undergone the most rapid technological upgrades and thus possesses the most urgent demand for elite technical specialists. The recruitment ratio underscores the PLARF's role as the core of China's strategic deterrence. Its top three most-recruited NCO specializations are mechatronics, electrical automation, and electronic information engineering, covering the critical aspects of modern missile weapon systems, including the mechanical control of launch platforms, automatic control of power supply, and communication and guidance systems. Other core personnel requirements are concentrated in mission-critical technical fields that directly support its combat operations, such as missile maintenance technology and nuclear and radiation detection and protection. Recruitment of personnel in fields such as applied meteorology and specialized engineering surveying also ensures the accuracy of its missile launches, while specialists in automotive inspection and repair provide support to the mobile platforms in its transporter erector launcher fleet.

Besides the talent demands focusing on the maintenance and operation of its strategic weapons, the PLARF's recruitment plan includes another unique aspect in its talent search in construction engineering and sports training. The PLARF commands the PLA's only corps-level engineering unit that is tasked with building and maintaining the vast network of underground facilities, often called the "underground Great Wall," designed to store and protect China's strategic weapons.[29] Serving in remote and enclosed subterranean environments, along with the demanding nature of this strategic force, imposes physiological and psychological stress on personnel, which explains the need for NCOs with expertise in sports training.[30] The PLARF recognizes the psycho-physical condition of its operators as critical as the technical reliability of its equipment, and thus it incorporates scientific programs to maintain the physical and mental health of its service members to build an elite force of technical experts who are also resilient warfighters.

Service	Recruitment Number	Number of Majors	Top Three Majors (Recruitment Number; Percentage within Service/Forces)
PLAA	4000	35	1. UAV application technology (890; 22.25%) 2. Automotive inspection and repair technology (360; 9%) 3. Electronic information engineering technology (290: 7.25%)
PLAN	4000	23	1. Marine engineering technology (960; 24%) 2. Electronic information engineering technology (300; 7.5%) 3. Electrical automation technology (280; 7%)
PLAAF	3805	25	1. UAV application technology (420; 11.04%) 2. Aircraft electronic equipment maintenance (340; 8.94%) 3. Electronic information engineering technology (320; 8.41%)
PLARF	3795	28	1. Mechatronics technology (390; 10.28%) 2. Electrical automation technology (380; 10.01%) 3. Electronic information engineering technology (370; 9.75%)
ASF	370	13	1. Computer network technology (55; 14.86%) 2. Modern communications technology (50; 13.51%) 3. Computer application technology (50; 13.51%)
CSF	270	11	1. Big data technology (30; 11.11%) 2. Modern communications technology (30; 11.11%) 3. Electronic information engineering technology (30; 11.11%)
ISF	520	10	1. Modern communications technology (80; 15.38%) 2. Computer application technology (80; 15.38%) 3. Computer network technology (70; 13.46%)
JLSF	200	4	1. Modern logistics management (60; 30%) 2. Modern communications technology (60; 30%) 3. UAV application technology (40; 20%)

Table 4: Top Three Specializations of Each Service/Force[xi]

The Four Forces: Developing an NCO Corps of Highly Skilled Professionals for the Joint Force

The ASF, CSF, and ISF were established in April 2024, and there is little publicly available information regarding these three new strategic forces. However, the 2025 targeted training NCO recruitment data offers an opportunity to observe how these forces are building their basic talent pipelines. Compared to the four traditional services, their absolute recruitment number appears relatively small, but their personnel requirements are clear, with a focus concentrated on cultivating talents to operate and dominate in the digital battlefield.

The ASF is tasked to "strengthen the capacity to safely enter, exit, and openly use space, enhance crisis management and efficacy of comprehensive governance in space, and promote the peaceful utilization of space," as stated by China's MND at its inception.[31] As a branch built on

[xi] See Appendix A 2025 Targeted Training NCO Recruitment Plan for the allocated recruitment numbers of specific service/arm and specialization.

the former Strategic Support Force's Space Systems Department, the ASF inherited a wide range of responsibilities, such as satellite launch, telemetry, tracking, and command (TT&C), space based reconnaissance, navigation, and communications, and counter-space operations.[32] In 2025, the ASF recruits a total of 370 NCOs, with top five specializations in computer network technology, modern communication technology, computer application technology, electronic information engineering, and UAV application technology. The demand in both information technology and automation highlights the NCOs' role in managing and maintaining the ground infrastructure for China's aerospace assets. These NCOs will work from ground control stations, data processing centers, and launch sites to ensure uninterrupted and stable operation of China's space-based assets. The recruitment of UAV specialists suggests that the ASF's mission is expanding beyond traditional satellites to include new combat platforms like high-altitude, long-endurance UAVs. Due to technical similarities in operating and maintaining UAVs and spacecraft, the ASF is highly likely to become the core enabler for the PLA's future unmanned systems operations, providing superior ISR fidelity and information dominance.

The CSF's official mission is to "reinforce national cyber border defense, promptly detect and counter network intrusions and maintain national cyber sovereignty and information security."[33] Its 2025 recruitment of 270 targeted training NCO candidates indicates that the CSF, born from the SSF's Network Systems Department, has a dual mission of cyber warfare and intelligence. The two primary categories are cutting-edge technical specialists in fields like applied information security and computer networking, and foreign language specialists in applied Russian, Japanese, and Korean. The technical NCOs are responsible for building and defending military networks, developing cyber weapons, and repelling external attacks, forming the foundational technical corps of the cyber warfare force. Meanwhile, the recruitment of language specialists indicates that the CSF is also tasked with intelligence collection and confrontation in cognitive domains. The language choices also reveal a clear geostrategic focus on China's neighboring countries. The combination of technical and intelligence capabilities positions the CSF to play a central role in the PLA's reconnaissance, infiltration, and battlefield preparation in the cyberspace prior to any large-scale military operations.

The ISF, according to the official statement from China's MND, is "a brand-new strategic arm of the PLA and a key underpinning of coordinated development and application of the network information system." The core mission of this force is to build, manage, and maintain a unified military information network to ensure the secure and stable data flow in different operational domains and combat units across all services. The ISF's 2025 recruitment plan of 520 targeted training NCO candidates confirms this position. Its personnel requirements are concentrated on the core specializations needed to build and operate the information infrastructure, including computer network technology, modern communications, AI application technology, and big data, highlighting its primary role as the creator and operator of the PLA's unified network. Additionally, the large-scale recruitment for UAV application technology and artificial intelligence indicates that the ISF's responsibilities extend beyond traditional networks to include integrating the data links of UAVs and leveraging AI for data fusion and decision

support. This enables the ISF to provide the technical foundation for the PLA to transition to an intelligentized force.

The 2025 Officer Recruitment Plan: Reinforcing the PLA's Emphasis on "Quality over Quantity" for the New Strategic Forces.

The PLA's force structure has changed not only in the NCO corps but also among its officers. A direct reflection of this change is the PLA's military academies reform in May 2025. The MND announced that the CMC has established three new military academies[xii] dedicated to recruiting PLA officer cadets from high school graduates to "adapt to adjustments in force structure and military personnel development needs."[34] The later published 2025 military academy enrollment plan further refined PLA officer training pathways. It adjusted the number of universities affiliated with each service branch and stipulated specific majors and enrollment quotas for each academy, clarifying the training priorities for future personnel across branch-specific institutions. The evolution from 67 academies in 2011, to 37 in 2017, and now 43 in 2025 indicates that the PLA has consistently viewed academy education as a critical part of "preparation for military struggle," reflecting a training focus centered on the battlefield, the troops, and the future.[35] Of the 43 institutions identified in 2025, 21 are designed as professional military education institutions, exclusively for active-duty personnel focusing on advanced officer development or specialized branch promotion training. The remaining 22 academies open their recruitment to high school graduates and serve as the primary accession source for military officers. Their enrollment quota directly reflects the annual intake volume and the special technical specializations of the PLA's newly commissioned officer corps.

In 2025, the PLA initiated a major reform of the military academies and consolidated the number of institutions that admit high school graduates from 27 down to 22.[xiii][36] Despite overall recruitment being reduced by 3.6 percent from 17,343 in 2024 to 16,710, the PLA established dedicated universities for the new ASF, CSF, ISF, and Joint Logistics Support Force (JLSF) to realign the officer production efforts, allocating recruitment quotas to each force: 376 for the ASF, 1,277 for the CSF, 401 for the ISF, and 603 for the JLSF.[xiv] Another core change is that graduates, particularly those in technical fields, can pursue a master's degree immediately, bypassing the previous mandatory service period.[37] This education path, likely tied to a longer service obligation, can attract more elite talents, offer more career options, and reduce the loss of mid-career technical officers.

Besides the changes in assigned majors, officer career tracks are another angle to analyze the PLA's force organization. The PLA eliminates the traditional distinction between "command"

[xii] The CMC established Army Academy of Armored Forces, ISF Information Engineering University, and JLSF Engineering University in May 2025.
[xiii] Refer to Appendix 4: Changes to PLA Military Academies (2024 – 2025)
[xiv] Refer to Appendix 3: 2025 PLA Officer Cadet Recruitment Plan for High School Graduates for details.

and "non-command" tracks of officer cadets during their training process. Instead, cadets have their career paths clarified upon matriculation, either trained to be junior command and technical officers (JCTOs) or junior technical officers (JTOs), both with specific expertise.[38] JCTOs, in addition to their combat command duties, must possess a deep technical background required for cyber, space, and information warfare. In contrast, JTOs are pure specialists, expected to focus on highly technical work in research, development, and analysis. The 2025 recruitment quota for the ASF's Space Engineering University (ASF SEU), the CSF's Information Engineering University (CSF IEU), and the ISF's Engineering University (ISF EU) are shown below.

Service Schools	Total Recruitment	Junior Command and Technical Officers	Percentage of JCTOs	Junior Technical Officers	Percentage of JTOs
ASF SEU	376	120	31.90%	256	68.10%
CSF IEU	1277	569	44.60%	708	55.40%
ISF EU	401	341	85.00%	60	15.00%

Table 5: 2025 Officer Recruitment[xv]

The ASF Space Engineering University (ASF SEU) has the smallest recruitment quota. It was allocated only 376 recruits for 12 specializations, with a focus on space situational awareness, satellite operations and control, and aerospace system design and research. The CSF Information Engineering University (CSF IEU) has the highest recruitment quota at 1,277 cadets, followed by the ISF EU with 401. The significant difference in scale, as well as in allocation of officer types, compared to the ASF SEU is due to their post-graduation assignments: graduates from the CSF IEU and ISF EU are assigned to units across the entire PLA to provide specialized support to all services and forces. The CSF IEU's specializations are centered on network defense and security, offensive cyber operations, data science and intelligence, and electronic warfare, showing a more active combat role. The ISF EU concentrates on fundamental PLA-wide infrastructure, with skills in information and communications engineering, data infrastructure and optical communications, and network planning and architecture.

The PLA's personnel structure creates a clear distinction between its officers and NCO corps, which is also reflected in their education and training pathways. Officers receive a theoretical, system-level education that prepares them for high-level command, strategic planning, and systemic engineering. NCOs, in contrast, typically go through practical training

[xv] Similar to the sourcing for NCOs, there are four production pipelines for the PLA's officers: promotion from the enlisted forces, military academy admission from enlisted personnel, direct commissioning of university graduates, and military academy admission from high school graduates. In 2025, the PLA's military academies admitted estimated 3,000 enlisted soldiers and 16,710 high school graduates for pre-commissioning officers. These numbers do not include pilots. Refer to Appendix 2: 2025 Military Academy Recruitment Plan for ASF, CSF, and ISF Officers for details.

that allows them to operate and maintain certain types of equipment or network nodes. The NCOs' applied work ensures the stable operation of individual systems, in response to the officers' command and control of the overall system.

A comparison of the NCO and officer recruitment quotas shows distinct personnel structure across the services and forces, as shown in Table 6. The most notable difference lies in the PLARF and the CSF. In 2025, the PLARF recruited significantly more NCOs than officers, with a ratio approaching three to one. Its high-end technological development relies on a small core of research institutions, often collaborating closely with state-owned research institutes. By leveraging military civil fusion for cutting-edge technology, the PLARF has a lower demand for junior technical officers but a much higher demand for standardized and reproducible technical NCOs to operate and maintain advanced equipment, leading to a heavy reliance on the targeted training NCO program to develop those specialists. In contrast, the CSF's high need for technical officers, with officer recruitment nearly four times the NCO number, suggests that it is prioritizing officer-led research, development, and offensive/defensive cyber capabilities at the early stage. The complexity of cyberspace operations implies creativity, planning, and confidentiality of its personnel, requiring officers with higher education to fulfill the CSF's core functions in this evolving warfare domain.

Service	Recruitment Number of NCOs in 2025	Recruitment Number of Officers in 2025
PLAA	4000	3815
PLAN	4000	2140
PLAAF	3805	2468
PLARF	3795	1304
ASF	370	376
CSF	270	1277
ISF	520	401
JLSF	200	603

Table 6: Comparison of Recruitment Billets of NCOs and Officers

The PLA's recruitment of both NCO and officer candidates shows a decline in overall numbers, but also an increase in the targeted specializations. It has adopted a targeted strategy in which the PLA leverages both civilian schools and military academies to build its unmanned, intelligentized, and networked warfighting capabilities. This approach not only shortens the development cycle for technical personnel and reduces the training burden on the PLA but also increases the overall efficiency of talent cultivation. Ultimately, it provides the PLA with a sustainable pipeline of high-quality specialists.

Conclusion

The 2025 targeted training NCO recruitment plan is a key component of the PLA's broader strategic blueprint for military reform and modernization. The data it provides offers a clear window into the PLA's systemic strategy, confirming that the PLA's main combat force is shifting from manpower-intensive to technology-intensive and that the PLA's new-quality combat forces have begun to build their talent pipelines for the space, cyber, and information domains. The NCO recruitment plan contributes to the PLA's broader personnel reform to recruit talents with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education background, pushing for both technically proficient NCOs and officers certified for joint operations. These reform efforts, starting from the force reorganization and recruitment focus change, indicate that the PLA is driving towards a leaner force that is built upon a smaller corps of more elite and highly specialized personnel.

Appendix 1: 2025 Targeted Training NCO Recruitment Plan

Appendix 1 represents the recruitment allocations for 63 academic majors across each service and force in the 2025 targeted training NCO program. The data is ranked in descending order of allocation size within each major.

Majors	PLAA	PLAN	PLAAF	PLARF	ASF	CSF	ISF	JLSF	PAP	CMC NDMD	Total
UAV application technology	890	260	420	145	30	20	40	40	250	0	2095
Marine engineering technology	120	960	0	0	0	0	0	0	700	0	1780
Electronic information engineering technology	290	300	320	370	35	30	40	0	0	0	1385
Automotive inspection and repair technology	360	200	230	160	15	0	0	40	100	0	1105
Electrical automation technology	170	280	150	380	30	0	30	0	0	0	1040
Mechatronics technology	160	160	290	390	30	0	0	0	0	0	1030
Modern communications technology	160	80	50	170	50	30	80	60	320	0	1000
Navigation technology	60	280	0	0	0	0	0	0	510	0	850
Computer network technology	120	80	50	200	55	30	70	0	0	160	765
Applied electronic technology	110	220	100	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	730
Aircraft electronic equipment maintenance	100	200	340	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	640
Intelligent engineering machinery application technology	60	0	130	40	0	0	0	0	350	0	580
Missile maintenance technology	25	160	285	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	550
Marine electronic and electrical technology	60	180	0	0	0	0	0	0	300	0	540

Computer application technology	60	0	0	50	50	30	80	0	90	0	360
Clinical medicine	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	0	350
Aircraft maintenance technology	100	0	150	0	0	0	0	0	80	0	330
Aircraft digital manufacturing technology	0	160	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	310
Sports training	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	200	0	300
Artificial intelligence technology application	100	0	0	40	0	0	60	0	50	0	250
Automotive manufacturing and testing technology	80	0	80	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	250
General aviation aircraft maintenance	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	150	0	250
Nuclear and radiation detection and protection technology	35	0	50	160	0	0	0	0	0	0	245
Applied meteorology technology	40	40	0	160	0	0	0	0	0	0	240
Big data technology	0	60	0	100	0	30	40	0	0	0	230
Hydraulic and pneumatic technology	30	0	100	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	220
Road and bridge engineering technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	0	200
Atmospheric detection technology	40	0	130	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	180
Aircraft electromechanical equipment maintenance	30	0	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	180
Engineering surveying technology	0	0	0	170	0	0	0	0	0	0	170
Construction engineering technology	0	0	0	100	20	0	40	0	0	0	160
Mechanical design and manufacturing	100	0	0	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	160

Aviation engine assembly and commissioning technology	30	0	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	150
Petrochemical technology	0	0	140	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	140
Applied Korean	30	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	80	0	130
Marine electrical engineering technology	0	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	130
Industrial robot technology	40	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	120
Water supply and drainage engineering technology	0	0	0	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	120
Information security technology application	0	40	0	0	10	20	40	0	0	0	110
Modern logistics management	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	60	0	0	110
Mechanical manufacturing and automation	40	0	0	40	25	0	0	0	0	0	105
Traditional sports	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Internet of things (IoT) application technology	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
Aviation engine maintenance technology	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
Nursing	0	0	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	90
Modern mobile communication technology	0	0	50	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	90
Cadastral surveying and land management	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80
Digital media technology	0	0	0	0	10	20	0	0	50	0	80
Surveying and geographic information technology	0	0	0	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	80
Electric power system protection technology	0	0	0	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	80
Road maintenance and management	0	0	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80

Nursing - marine corps	0	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60
Applied Russian	30	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	50
Applied chemical technology	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
Rehabilitation therapy technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	50
Film and television animation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	50
Software technology	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
Medical laboratory technology	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
Architectural electrical engineering	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
Intelligent control technology	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
Port machinery and intelligent control	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
Railway locomotive operation and maintenance	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
Applied Japanese	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	20
Total	4000	4000	3805	3795	370	270	520	200	3880	160	21000

Appendix 2: 2025 Military Academy Recruitment Plan for ASF, CSF, and ISF Officers

Appendix 2 represents the 2025 cadet recruitment allocations for the ASF, CSF, and ISF, categorized by academic major and office type.

ASF		
Officer Type	**Specialization**	**Quota**
Junior technical officers (286)	Aerospace communication and network security	40
	Data management	35
	Optical measurement and situational awareness	35
	Radar measurement and situational awareness	35
	Aerospace equipment	30
	Aerospace telemetry, tracking, and control (TT&C)	30
	Flight vehicle operation and control	30
	Aerospace propulsion	26
	Intelligent spacecraft management and control	25
Junior command and technical officers (90)	Information confrontation	30
	Aerospace test and launch	30
	Aerospace remote sensing	30
Total		376

CSF		
Officer Type	**Officer Type**	**Officer Type**
Junior technical officers (708)	Network security	145
	Information analysis and processing	70
	Wireless sensing & processing, communication equipment design	55
	Cryptography technology and application	50
	Remote sensing & mapping, image interpretation	47
	Quantum communication, quantum computing	40
	Network security and advanced computing equipment research and development (R&D)	40
	Network security innovative application	40

	Intelligent information processing, intelligent equipment R&D	35
	Surveying & mapping technology, temporal-spatial information support	35
	Network electronic warfare	26
	Big data governance and analysis	25
	Cryptography research	20
	Unmanned systems application	20
	Environment simulation, effectiveness evaluation & situation deduction	20
	Target information processing and analysis	20
	Geographic information support, geographic & terrain analysis	10
	Geospatial data management	10
Junior command and technical officers (504)	Information security technology and application	91
	Network defense	60
	Cryptographic systems engineering	59
	Cryptographic science research	50
	Special-purpose integrated circuit (IC) design and application	40
	Intelligent counter-unmanned systems	40
	Comprehensive intelligence studies	33
	Network cognitive security	31
	Secrecy management	29
	Electronic information processing and analysis	26
	Underwater information sensing and processing	25
	Navigation time-frequency support, navigation security	20
Total		1212[xvi]

ISF		
Officer Type	**Specialization**	**Quota**
Junior technical officers (60)	Command information systems construction, application, and support	50
	Datalink design, development, and organization management	10
	Communication networks	61

[xvi] It does not include the 65 Junior Command and Technical Police Officer Cadets for the PAP.

Junior command and technical officers (341)	Optical communication	49
	Network planning, construction, operation and maintenance management	44
	Electromagnetic spectrum management	42
	Data and information technology and application	41
	Intelligent vision systems construction and management	38
	Network security	34
	Software analysis, design, and development management	32
Total		401

Appendix 3: 2025 PLA Officer Cadet Recruitment Plan for High School Graduates

Appendix 3 presents officer recruitment allocations from 2021 to 2025.

Year	Number of Schools	Recruitment Total	Male	Female %	Female	Female %
2025	22	16,710	15,575	93.21%	1,135	6.79%
2024	27	17,343	16,308	94.03%	1,035	5.97%
2023	27	17,438	16,543	94.87%	895	5.13%
2022	27	15,318	14,461	94.41%	857	5.59%
2021	27	13,559	12,788	94.31%	771	5.69%

Appendix 4: Changes to PLA Military Academies (2024 – 2025)

Appendix 4 presents the PLA's military academies that recruit officer cadets from high school graduates. The total number of academies decreased from 27 in 2024 to 22 in 2025. Two schools were removed from both the PLAA and PLARF, shown crossed out. A few institutions within the PLAA and JLSF underwent mergers. As a result, the CMC now administers one academy, the PLAA five, the PLAN five, the PLAAF four, and the PLARF one. Additionally, the ASF, CSF, ISF and JLSF now each administer one officer academy.

Service	2024 School Names	2024 Recruitment Number	2025 School Names	2025 Recruitment Number	Comments
CMC	National University of Defense Technology	2,448	National University of Defense Technology	2,076	N/A
PLAA	Army Engineering University	1,283	Army Engineering University	1,154	N/A
	Army Infantry College	410	Army Infantry College	655	N/A
	Army Institute of NBC Defence	167	Army Institute of NBC Defence	177	N/A
	Army Medical University	407	Army Medical University	412	N/A
	Army Special Operations Academy	230	~~Army Special Operations Academy~~[xvii]	0	No recruitment quota for high school graduates
	Army Academy of Border and Coastal Defence	154	~~Army Academy of Border and Coastal Defence~~	0	No recruitment quota for high school graduates
	Army Academy of Armored Forces	371	Army Arms University	1,417	Merged
	Army Academy of Artillery & Air Defense	670			
PLAN	Naval University of Engineering	787	Naval University of Engineering	754	N/A
	Dalian Naval Academy	518	Dalian Naval Academy	552	N/A
	Navy Submarine Academy	167	Navy Submarine Academy	165	N/A

[xvii] Academies that are crossed still exist within the PLA, but they are no longer accepting applicants from high school graduates. Instead, they recruit directly from the current servicemembers in the PLA.

	Naval Aviation University	300[xviii]	Naval Aviation University	259	N/A
	Naval Medical University	373	Naval Medical University	410	N/A
PLAAF	Air Force Engineering University	2,263	Air Force Engineering University	1,647	N/A
	Air Force Aviation University	80[xix]	Air Force Aviation University	62	N/A
	Air Force Early Warning Academy	406	Air Force Early Warning Academy	349	N/A
	Air Force Medical University	345	Air Force Medical University	410	N/A
PLARF	Rocket Force University of Engineering	1,262	Rocket Force Engineering University	1,304	N/A
ASF	Former Strategic Support Force Space Engineering University	407	Aerospace Force Space Engineering University	376	Name Changed
CSF	Former Strategic Support Force Information Engineering University	1,340	Cyberspace Force Information Engineering University	1,277	Name Changed
ISF	Former Information Communication College from National University of Defense Technology	0	Information Support Force Engineering University	401	Newly Established
JLSF	Former Army Logistic University	313	Joint Logistics Support Force Engineering University	603	Merged
	Former Army Military Transportation University	339			
PAP	People's Armed Police Engineering University	946	People's Armed Police Engineering University	1,307	N/A
	People's Armed Police Officers College	792	People's Armed Police Officers College	943	N/A
	People's Armed Police Special Police College	352	~~People's Armed Police Special Police College~~	0	No recruitment quota for high school graduates
	People's Armed Police Coast Guard Academy	213	~~People's Armed Police Coast Guard Academy~~	0	No recruitment quota for high school graduates
Total		17,343[xx]		16,710	

[xviii] Recruitment number does not include the recruitment of PLA Naval Aviation's pilot officer cadets.
[xix] Recruitment number does not include the recruitment of PLA Air Force Aviation's pilot officer cadets.
[xx] Actual admission number is slightly different from the published recruitment plan.

Endnotes

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