



People's Liberation Army Soldiers' Pocket Handbook

(PLA Handbook)

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■1. The Leading Party

The Burma Communist Party (BCP).

■2. Party Founding Day

August 15, 1939 — 85 years ago.

■3. The Party's Class Line

The Party leads the working class to exercise dictatorship as the vanguard and representative of the working class. It fights to establish a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The working class's own line is to lead and command the class struggle — it is the leading class.

The working class's line in alliance is to form alliances with the peasantry — it is the most reliable ally.

The working class's line in united front is to form a united front with all strata — to lead the middle classes, intellectuals, and national bourgeoisie through the united front to fight together and build the new democratic state. Therefore, it leads the workers, peasants, and all classes of the people — including the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie (in the anti-imperialist period) — uniting with the masses in the revolutionary united front.

Those who belong to the proletariat are to be led by the democratic revolution toward becoming the socialist revolutionary class.

■4. The Party's Programme

The Party fights to accomplish the revolutionary task of the people's democratic revolution, moving forward to ultimately achieve the goal of socialism and communism.

The people's democratic revolution fights under the leadership of the proletariat, guided by Marxism-Leninism, to overthrow imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism simultaneously, and to establish a people's democratic republic. After the people's democratic revolution is accomplished, it will move toward the socialist revolution and build a socialist society.

■5. The Party's Ideological Basis

Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought — these constitute the Party's ideological basis.

■6. The Party's Organizational Principle

Democratic centralism is the Party's organizational principle.

■7. The Party's Three Work Styles

1. Integrating theory with practice.
2. Close ties with the masses; serving the people.
3. Criticism and self-criticism in close connection with the masses.

■8. Three Magic Weapons

1. Party building — having a principled, ideologically sound, politically disciplined party, closely linked to the masses, leading the united front.
2. Party-led armed forces — the People's Liberation Army.
3. Party-led united front — unity of workers, peasants, and all exploited and oppressed strata; the Party leads the political and military organizations representing these strata, with the ability to mobilize the masses; maintaining a unified front against imperialism and feudalism.

(Summary: Party — Army — United Front)

■9. The Enemies of the Current Revolution

Imperialism (U.S. imperialism, British imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism) and their lackeys in Burma — the fascist military clique — are the enemies of the current people's democratic revolution.

■10. The Driving Forces and Friends of the Current People's Democratic Revolution

The working class (the urban proletariat) is the driving force of the revolution, and the leading class.

The peasantry — including landless and poor peasants, middle peasants, and rich peasants — comprises the main body, the most reliable and largest ally.

The urban petty bourgeoisie — including street vendors, small traders, small producers, and intellectuals (students, teachers, lower-ranking civil servants, lower-level employees) — along with the national bourgeoisie, all belong to the working people as the driving forces of the revolution. The petty bourgeoisie is a reliable ally and a friend.

The national bourgeoisie is also a driving force of the revolution. Although it has a dual nature (vacillating and compromising due to its class position), it opposes imperialism and feudalism and can participate in the revolution and join the united front.

Therefore, all classes of the people that are exploited by imperialism and feudalism constitute the driving forces of the revolution.

■11. The Party's Rural Class Line

Rely on the poor peasants and farm laborers; firmly unite with the middle peasants; win over the rich peasants (but not the feudal landlord class); overthrow the feudal landlords and reactionaries who oppose the revolution.

In revolutionary base areas: rely on the poor peasants and farm laborers; firmly unite with the middle peasants; restrict the rich peasants; confiscate the lands of all landlords and distribute them among the peasantry; eliminate feudal exploitation.

■12. The Aim of the Revolution

Based on Marxism-Leninism, the aim of the revolution is to completely liberate the people from exploitation, oppression, and poverty. The Communist Party leads the working class to achieve this aim.

Concretely: to overthrow imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism; to establish a people's democratic republic; to build socialism and communism.

■13. The Strategic Method of the Revolution

To overcome the strong with the weak — to surround the cities from the countryside, and to finally seize them by armed force.

To overcome the strong with the weak means: where the enemy is strong, do not engage; where the enemy is weak, do engage and annihilate.

To create favorable conditions through victory in guerrilla warfare — that is the strategy of surrounding cities from the countryside.

■14. Strategic Military Guidelines of the Revolution

- Surround the cities from the countryside; seize state power by armed force.
- Mobile warfare as primary; supplemented by guerrilla warfare.

When the enemy advances, we retreat; when the enemy halts, we harass; when the enemy tires, we attack; when the enemy retreats, we pursue — these are the basic tactics of protracted guerrilla war.

Strategies for protracted guerrilla warfare:

- As the enemy advances, create a fluid front line; avoid engagement.
- Use the revolution's areas and liberated areas to leverage the enemy's advances and withdrawals, disrupting the enemy's plans to hold territory.
- In the PLA's counterattack operations, use local areas to develop the economy and recruit troops to expand the liberated areas.
- The tactics of the PLA's political work are to raise mass consciousness and mobilize them into the war effort.
- To mobilize the masses, the army must learn from the masses and teach the masses.

■15. Mission of the People's Liberation Army

The Burma People's Liberation Army (PLA) is an armed force established to fight for the revolutionary cause of the Burmese people under the leadership of the Burma Communist Party.

It faithfully serves the interests of the revolution. It serves as the military arm to protect the people. Under the leadership of the Burma Communist Party — the vanguard of the Burmese people — it serves as a fighting force and an armed organization to liberate the people and achieve national liberation. It fights against imperialist aggression.

■16. Aim of the People's Liberation Army

To mobilize the entire people as a fighting force, liberating the masses of people from oppression and exploitation so that they can become the true masters of their destiny — to build a democratic state — this is the PLA's ultimate purpose.

■17. Mutual Relations Among PLA Soldiers

There are two types of revolutionary comradeship: comradeship in military life, and mutual assistance in political matters. The relationship between officers and soldiers and among soldiers is one of revolutionary comradeship.

■18. Three Main Tasks of the PLA

1. Combat duty.
2. Mobilizing the people for work on behalf of the revolution.
3. Production duty.

■19. Glorious Traditions of the PLA

- Ideologically and politically: guided by Marxist theory, always advancing.
- Materially: maintaining morale and courage; living simply and working hard.
- In practice: always putting the people first; love of homeland and of the people; bravery in battle and skill in fighting; unity among officers and soldiers.

■20. The PLA's (3-8) Work Style

Three Main Rules of Discipline:

1. Obey orders in all actions.
2. Do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the people.
3. Turn in everything captured.

Eight Points for Attention:

- Speak politely; do not swear.
- Pay fairly for what you buy.
- Return everything you borrow.
- Pay for anything you damage.
- Do not hit or swear at people.
- Do not damage crops.
- Do not take liberties with women.
- Do not mistreat prisoners.

These Three Rules and Eight Points together constitute the PLA's (3-8) work style.

■21. PLA Discipline

- (a) Party rules, party regulations, and party resolutions — all PLA soldiers must study them thoroughly.
- (b) PLA soldiers must know and abide by the Three Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention.

■22. Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention

Three Main Rules:

1. Obey all orders.
2. Do not take anything from the people.
3. Turn in all captured goods.

Eight Points for Attention:

1. Speak politely to the people.
2. Pay fairly for what you buy; do not haggle.
3. Return everything you borrow.
4. Pay for anything you damage.
5. Do not hit or swear at people.
6. Do not damage crops.
7. Do not take liberties with women.
8. Do not mistreat prisoners.

■23. Required Discipline Mindset

Discipline is not only external but must come from within — soldiers must understand discipline, embrace it willingly, and practice self-discipline. This requires the following discipline mindset:

- Be absolutely loyal to the people, party, and the revolutionary cause.
- Discipline for the revolution — sacrifice individual interest for collective benefit.
- Be absolutely opposed to any anarchist tendency; have a strong sense of collective life.
- Always maintain dignity of character; do not resort to bribery, coercion, or privilege.

■24. PLA Three Democracies

1. Political Democracy

Officers and soldiers in the same political organization must have equal political responsibility. Officers lead, but political discussions and debates should be conducted through a democratic process. Officers must not use their political authority to oppress or silence soldiers.

2. Economic Democracy

All basic financial accounts for the unit are decided by a collective body — the company-level soldiers' committee — with no officer monopoly. Financial records and expenditures must be reviewed and approved by the soldiers' committee to ensure transparency. Officers must not embezzle unit funds, engage in corruption, or misappropriate soldiers' wages and allowances.

3. Military Democracy

Soldiers may make suggestions about military tactics and operational methods to their superiors. Officers and soldiers must study military knowledge together and exchange battlefield experiences. When working out military plans, officers must share plans with soldiers so they are mentally and physically prepared. Officers must not hide tactical secrets from soldiers.

■25. Officer-Soldier Relations in the PLA

Officers care for and respect their soldiers, while soldiers obey and love their officers — this is the basic principle.

1. Officers must care for soldiers like brothers or close comrades. Within the spirit of protecting the soldiers' political rights, officers must look after soldiers' needs — including food, clothing, rest, and medical care. They must be fair and just, and must not discriminate between soldiers.
2. If an officer is a direct supervisor, they must act with fairness and be reasonable. They must acknowledge errors, be willing to self-criticize, and ensure criticism is constructive. Soldiers' collective voices must be listened to, discussed, and acted upon.
3. Soldiers must obey their commanders promptly and correctly. Officers and soldiers in the PLA must coordinate battle plans and share responsibilities to win.

■26. Soldiers' Rights to File Complaints and Appeals

Filing complaints and appeals is a right and a lawful form of political activity for PLA soldiers.

A complaint must be filed level by level, not skipping levels. The receiving officer must not suppress it. A complaint may only be rejected if it is found to be groundless; the grounds for rejection must be stated. If the soldier still disagrees, the case may be escalated upward.

Any officer who suppresses a valid complaint commits a serious error. The officer who receives the complaint must treat it fairly and investigate it.

■27. PLA Soldiers' Love for the People

The most fundamental reason PLA soldiers love the people is class feeling — the soldiers themselves come from the exploited classes, so loving the people is natural and heartfelt. There are five additional reasons:

1. The people are the source of supply and the source of soldiers.
2. The people are the source of revolutionary fighters.
3. The relationship between the army and the people is like that of fish and water.
4. The people's struggle against imperialism must be supported.
5. The people are the masters of the country.

The people also love the army in return — just as the fish depends on water, the army depends on the people for its existence.

■28. The Party's System of Leading the PLA

The fundamental principle is: the Party commands the gun; the gun must never command the Party.

The PLA is an instrument of the Burma Communist Party to carry out its line and policies. Wherever the PLA goes, the Party organization follows. The Party committee at each level leads the PLA. "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" — but the Party must always control the gun.

The highest level of the Party within the PLA is the Party committee. Below it are Party branches, and below those are Party groups. The Party committee controls all work of the military unit — military, political, economic, and logistical.

■29. The PLA's Political Work System

Political work is the lifeline of the PLA. Its function is to ensure the political loyalty of the soldiers and strengthen combat effectiveness.

The political commissar system, under the Party, is the core of the PLA's political work system. The Party committee makes major decisions on both military and political matters. Political officers at all levels lead political work and are responsible to the Party committee of their respective level.

■30. Three Principles of Political Work Within the Troops

(1) Officer-soldier unity.

Officers and soldiers must be united as a class. Officers must not treat soldiers as subordinates from a lower class.

(2) Army-civilian unity.

The PLA must love the people and be the servant of the people. It must work within local communities and among the masses, protect local institutions, and maintain a close relationship with the masses.

(3) Winning over enemies.

The PLA must be willing to work to win over enemy soldiers who are willing to surrender and join the revolutionary side.

■31. Four Main Organizational Principles of the PLA

1. Obedience of the individual to the organization.
2. Obedience of the minority to the majority.
3. Obedience of the lower level to the higher level.
4. Obedience of all party organizations throughout the country to the Central Committee.

■32. Company-Level Party Organization

A company-level Party branch must be established. The Party branch is the core leadership of the company. The Party branch secretary is the executive leader of the branch.

The company-level Party branch holds meetings to resolve any issues in the company. Membership meetings are held to discuss and decide important matters. Standing committee meetings are held to resolve daily operational questions.

Each company-level Party branch must develop Party members from among the soldiers. Soldiers who are politically reliable, diligent in military matters, and who love the people and the party are candidates for Party membership.

■33. The Company-Level Revolutionary Soldiers' Committee

All companies in the PLA must have a soldiers' committee. The soldiers' committee represents the rights and interests of all soldiers in the company. The Party branch leads the soldiers' committee, which carries out its work under the Party branch's guidance.

Each company must have one soldiers' committee. Its functions include: organizing soldiers' political discussions, overseeing economic management, addressing complaints, organizing cultural activities, and providing morale support.

The soldiers' committee also has a duty to oversee the officers. If the officers act improperly, the soldiers' committee has the right to submit a report to the relevant Party committee.

■34. Basic Duties of PLA Soldiers

There are two types of duty:

1. Military duty — protecting the people from the enemy; following orders; carrying out combat missions with bravery and skill.
2. Political duty — studying and implementing the Party's political line; defending the Party and the revolution; building revolutionary morale.

When fulfilling these duties, soldiers must also carry out production and support the local economy whenever possible.

■35. Soldiers' Rights to File Complaints and Appeals

Filing complaints and appeals is a political right of all PLA soldiers. Complaints may be filed in the following situations:

1. If Party regulations, party resolutions, or the policies of the PLA are violated.
2. If the rights or interests of the soldiers are infringed.
3. If any illegal or unjust act occurs within the unit.
4. Regarding current conditions, problems with military life, or important political events.
5. Regarding the behavior or actions of officers or other soldiers.
6. To report on hidden problems within the PLA.
7. Regarding any other issue that affects the mission, welfare, or morale of the PLA.

Filing a complaint includes: the right to complain, the right to appeal, the right to suggest, the right to criticize, and the right to correct errors — all as defined in these regulations.

■36. Secrecy Regulations for PLA Soldiers

Secrets must be strictly protected for the following categories of information:

1. Party — political work, organizational matters, and national security information.
2. Revolutionary — tactical, intelligence, and communication security.
3. Personnel — identity, location, and assignment of personnel.
4. Military communications and encryption.

Soldiers must be especially careful about revealing secrets accidentally. They must never discuss classified matters in public or in front of civilians.

A soldier who knows they have revealed a secret — whether intentional or accidental — must report it immediately to their superior. The discipline for violating secrecy is serious. Intentional leaking is treated as treason.

■37. Basic Education for PLA Soldiers

1. Political education — party ideology, party resolutions, and the principles of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought.
2. Military education — weapon handling, tactical formations, guerrilla warfare.
3. Class education — understanding the history of class struggle and the nature of enemies and allies.
4. Basic general knowledge education — literacy and numeracy.
5. Cultural education — to build discipline and solidarity.
6. Revolutionary combat education — bravery, tactics, and battlefield conduct.
7. Revolutionary military tactics — studying seven areas of revolutionary military tactics.

■38. The PLA's Seven Military Tasks

1. The PLA is the armed force of the people's liberation movement — protecting the people's national liberation struggle.
2. The PLA fights through armed struggle to free the people from oppression and to establish a new people's democratic state.
3. The PLA has the responsibility to carry out the three tasks: fight, mobilize, and produce.
4. The PLA has the mission to fight for the cause of "sovereignty and national liberation of the people."
5. The PLA must in all its actions act in accordance with the discipline and moral standards of a revolutionary army.
6. The PLA is "for the people, by the people, and from the people" — it must act as an armed organization of the people's liberation movement.
7. The PLA is armed with weapons and with ideology — it must fight on all fronts.

