



Korean People's Army – Special Operations Forces



U.S. ARMY



Korean People's Army Special Operations Forces

(U) This infographic provides an overview of the Korean People's Army – Special Operations Forces. North Korea's special operations forces (SOF) are trained to infiltrate South Korea and launch attacks in the rear area. They are also prepared to defend North Korea against foreign attacks. The SOF consists of specialized units, including reconnaissance, airborne and seaborne insertion, and commando squads. The core doctrine of the SOF emphasizes speed of movement and surprise attacks to achieve their missions.



(Revised) Korean People's Army Special

Composition and Mission

- 12x Light Infantry/Mechanized Light Infantry Brigades. These units are attached to regular units; Special Operations Forces (SOF) light infantry brigades are elite shock troops.
- 3x Reconnaissance brigades. Reconnaissance brigades operate behind enemy lines.
- 3x Airborne brigades. Airborne brigades operate as blocking forces to stop ROK units from overwhelming KPA beachheads.
- 3x General sniper brigades. Sniper brigades are to infiltrate ROK defenses and operate from the rear.
- 2x Navy sniper brigades. Like other sniper units, navy snipers aim to incite rebellion and have the ability to utilize high-speed boats and LCACs (Landing Craft Air Cushion).
- 2x Air Force sniper brigades. Air Force sniper brigades will attack ROK airbases and disrupt their operations.



US and ROK intelligence estimates that the total KPA SOF strength is roughly 200,000. Some SOF units are attached to regular army units, most are organized in 4,000-5,000 strong SOF brigades. Western intelligence discerned 25 brigades, organized into the 11th Storm Corps.



North Korea's special operations forces (SOF) have been specifically trained to infiltrate South Korea, launch attacks on rear area targets, and defend against foreign attacks on North Korea. The SOF members operate in specialized units, including reconnaissance, airborne and seaborne insertion, and commando squads. The core doctrine of the SOF emphasizes swift movement and surprise attacks to achieve their objectives.



Sources: [North Korea Military Power](#) (DIA)
[North Korea Army Special Operations Forces](#) (Wikipedia)
[North Korean Special Forces](#) (Grey Dynamics)