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翻译

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Inscribing Loyalty While Endeavoring to Advance into the Deep Blue¹

A Chronicle of the Party Committee of the [Type 055] *Nanchang* Forging a Strong Maritime Combat Collective (Part 1)



Qian Xiaohu, Mo Xiaoliang, Wang Guanbiao, and Liu Bin

The sea and sky blend into a singular shade, with starlight accompanying the ship's voyage.

Somewhere the vast Pacific, the Chinese Navy's aircraft carrier formation is organizing to train, and the destroyer *Nanchang*, joining a carrier formation for the first time, is tasked with escort duty. Suddenly, two foreign vessels turn a wide arc one after the other and speed toward the carrier formation.

“This is Chinese Navy Ship 101, please keep a safe distance from me and inform me of your intentions.” *Nanchang* quickly maneuvers and firmly maintains its position in the carrier formation. Simultaneously, the ship's officer of the deck shouts a warning. The foreign vessels

¹ 钱晓虎 [Qian Xiaohu], 莫小亮 [Mo Xiaoliang], 王冠彪 [Wang Guanbiao], and 刘彬 [Liu Bin], 奋斗深蓝写忠诚 [“Inscribing Loyalty While Endeavoring to Advance into the Deep Blue”], 当代海军 [Navy Today], no. 1 (January 2025), pp. 10-13.

Translator's Note: *Navy Today* is an official magazine of the PLA Navy.

make several unsuccessful attempts to cross the formation but have no choice in the end except to resentfully turn away and depart the area.

Endeavoring to advance into the deep blue, in each thrilling and important mission, the *Nanchang*'s Party Committee team is always ensuring that "The ship is maneuvered by us, and we listen to the guidance of the Party," leading the officers and sailors as they repeatedly overcome risks and challenges faced. The leaders of the *Nanchang*'s Party Committee told reporters, "only a combat formation that is loyal to the Party while being tough and powerful can route all enemies and prevail in all engagements."

Forging a Spirit

"Be a good warrior in the new era, and be ready to fight at the front."

In the room of honor aboard the *Nanchang*, a bright crimson Party flag is displayed in a prominent location, a witness to history and a portent of the future.

In June 2017, the temporary Party Committee of the naval destroyer *Nanchang* convened its first

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meeting, formally organizing the ship's company for the nation's first 10,000-ton class destroyer. Five months later, in front of the memorial hall of the First Congress of the Communist Party of China, the bright crimson Party flag was unfurled, and *Nanchang*'s young sailors faced the Party flag to take their solemn oath.

Today, this Party flag has accompanied the *Nanchang* for seven years and sailed more than 100,000 nautical miles. In the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, in busy shipping channels, and in perilous front lines of conflict, each member of the destroyer's crew has stood before the Party flag and made a solemn oath. The sailors aboard the vessel say the Party flag is a witness to the steadfastness and sincerity with which the Party Committee leads the officers and sailors—with full hearts turned forever toward the Party.

"The Party entrusted us with such an advanced ship of war, and we bear the expectations and love of billions of our countrymen; this is not only a historical mission, but also the highest honor. How do we forge a tough force that obeys and follows the Party?" Members of the first Party Committee team on the *Nanchang* still remember clearly the establishment of the temporary Party Committee, while facing novel vessel construction requirements and mountainous responsibilities for mission fulfillment, coming to unanimous ideological agreement on the thought process for the effort ahead to "forge the spirit before forging the sword."

Align and follow to cohere loyalty. The destroyer's Party Committee took the lead in heeding the call to "be a good warrior for the new era, and be ready to fight at the front," and the first Party class held for the ship's crew was to study the Party's theories on innovation. They continued to hold topical practical exercises, and guided the officers and the sailors to internalize the powerful message of cohesive loyalty through collective oath-taking, topical presentations, and topical discussions, etc.

Armed in theory to strengthen Party loyalty. The Party Committee initiated “wardroom discussions,” “battle-station classrooms,” and “P-way academies,” leveraging officers’ studies of theory, officer-enlisted exchanges, and deep analyses in small group settings to guide officers and enlisted sailors to consciously arm their intellects with the Party’s innovative theories. Clear understanding of theory is key to ensure political steadfastness, which will forge a “loyal ship” with steeled hearts toward the Party, a “tip of the spear ship” capable of winning wars, a devoted “seed ship,” and a “benchmark ship” to set the standard.

Mission driven to sharpen loyalty. The *Nanchang* widely promoted the inculcation of [the slogan] “sharpening the fighting spirit, shouldering the mission to win in combat” and invited heroic veterans of maritime combat to share war stories, exhibited artifacts of vessels involved in combat, and organized broad discussions on questions such as “How can we better think about combat?” “What do we need to dare in combat?” “What are we capable of when engaging in combat?” and “Are we capable of winning in combat?” as related to fulfilling the mission and sharpening loyalty.

The ship’s crew still remember vividly their lesson by the shores of the Yellow Sea.

In summer of 2020 the *Nanchang* sailed to and anchored near Liugong Island. The Party Committee lined the entire crew up to gaze at Liugong Island, and launched into a narrated lesson on the annihilation of the Beiyang Fleet in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). Looking upon the site of the Sino-Japanese War, recalling the Century of Humiliation, the ship’s crew steeled their resolve: “As a new generation of sailors, we must resolutely follow the Party’s command, and take up the important task of strengthening the military in the new era!”

Since the *Nanchang*’s commissioning, its Party Committee has united the ship’s crew in the vast blue water, and has been honored by the Navy five times, awarded the collective second-class meritorious recognition, and honored by the Central Military Commission as a “standard-setting unit of the PLA for striving toward the goal of strengthening the PLA,” and the officers and sailors have lived their oath of loyalty to the Party through action, obeying and executing the Party’s orders.

Raising the Ensign

“Heroic city, heroic ship, heroic warriors; the first shot, the first ship, the first person.”

“Warships, like people, possess a spirit. What kind of spirit does *Nanchang* have?” The night before taking up his new post, *Nanchang*’s first Party Secretary could not sleep and walked down to the pier alone. He told us that he imagined the *Nanchang* flying its flag proudly as a leading warship, setting the standard.



The *Nanchang* holds a pledge and mobilization meeting before commencing its mission.

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Members of *Nanchang*'s Party Committee discuss operational plans while underway.



The *Nanchang* holds an awards ceremony for personnel who have made significant contributions.

This is a history-making warship.

After the *Nanchang* was delivered, the Party Committee began an educational series entitled “unity of heart, unity of force, and unity of organization,” which joined together officers and sailors from diverse specialties and ratings. During the day, all toiled together with shipboard laborers in the cabins, familiarizing themselves with shipboard systems; at night, all worked overtime to study their specializations, engaging in navigational plotting, walking through every shipboard compartment and sorting through hundreds of kilometers of shipboard cables, drafting thousands of schematic diagrams, and training and qualifying for theoretical and practical assessments.

Upon delivery of the ship, in the absence of guidance from a training outline and with no historical experience from which to draw, *Nanchang*’s crew managed to complete hundreds of systems checks, ran hundreds of combat simulations, and completed its certification ahead of schedule, forming combat power in the same year that it was commissioned, thereby setting the training standard for ships of the same class.

This is a warship that does not dishonor its mission.

Stepping into *Nanchang*’s P-ways, we saw slogans drawn up by the ship’s crew affixed to bulkheads. Three of these were particularly eye-catching: “be the vanguard and fight first, and write a good first chapter in the ship’s history,” “be the standard, and be the top ship in the fleet review,” and “be the seed to set an example, and fire the first salvo for experimental vessels.” They correspond to the different stages of the ship’s construction and development, and serve as witness to the growth of the crew and the splendor of the warship.

After being honorably reviewed by Chairman Xi, *Nanchang* sailed over the horizon, leaving the sight of leadership. From sailing far into the Bering Sea to combat patrols in the Pacific Ocean, *Nanchang* course has traversed over 40 latitudes, projecting the image of a heroic ship in far seas and distant oceans.

This is a warship with many talents.

With *Nanchang* being China's first 10,000-ton class destroyer, its Party Committee firmly adhered to the idea that "the first crew is the seed crew," in terms of talent cultivation, and developed a four-step method for talent retention tailored to each sailor's specific situation based on their "readiness file," distinguishing between different levels and engaging in targeted measures to develop sailors.

When conducting interviews at one unit, we frequently encountered former members of *Nanchang*'s crew. More than 20 officers who served aboard the *Nanchang* are believed to have been selected for important posts afterward, and the *Nanchang* delivered more than 50 qualified crew members to its brother ships, truly living up to its reputation as a "seed ship."

"Without a crew, the ship is just a steel hull; without a strong Party organization, the crew is but scattered sand; without the heroic daring to be first to fight, it is difficult to bear the responsibility as the first ship of its class." Just as the *Nanchang*'s crew said, the Party Committee leverages strong organizational force to forge the "steel structure" for this steel warship.

"Heroic city, heroic ship, heroic warriors; the first shot, the first ship, the first person."² The plank owner crew composed this couplet, which immediately caught our eyes as we walked through the main passageway of the *Nanchang*, instilling in our hearts the heroic spirit of the ship. These 18 characters have since become the *Nanchang*'s motto, permeating the crew's heart blood, an ensign flying high and stimulating the spirit for the continued striving for a strong military.

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Strive to Be Number One

"The motherland called me to be number one, and I will give my number one effort to repay the motherland."

It was late autumn in the north, and the ship's whistle sounded. The *Nanchang* pulled slowly away from the harbor, returning once again to the deep blue. The ship's hull number "101" was particularly dazzling in the sunlight.

"The motherland called me to be the number one, and I will give my number one effort to repay the motherland." On the eve of departure, *Nanchang*'s leadership motivated the crew to take pride in being "101" and to expend 101 percent effort in completing the mission. *Nanchang*'s

² **Translator's Note:** This slogan is referring both to the ship itself and its namesake, the city of Nanchang, which holds an important place in CCP history.

crew trained during the entire voyage, demonstrating strong will and excellent combat ability, truly living up to the name of “the number one ship.”

Over the years, *Nanchang*’s Party Committee has taken to heart the objective to be “number one,” widely promoted activities geared toward “learning from experience to become the sharpest warriors,” continued to sharpen the will to fight and win, upheld the strictest requirements and highest standards, and led the crew to successfully complete their first critical missions and inculcated the spirit of “striving to be number one” in the crew, internalizing the creed within each officer and sailor.

While serving as pioneers, we have the strictest requirements

In 2017, *Nanchang* received its plank owner crew. Even though they lived in aging and dilapidated berthing, their living spaces were tidy and personal items were displayed in an orderly fashion; although they worked overtime every day to study and train on the ship’s systems, the crew demonstrated high morale and high spirit, loudly calling cadence and marching in formation.

“Strict discipline from beginning to end; discipline on the *Nanchang* is stricter than in basic training.” Xu Lei, an original crew member, recalled that all the work of the *Nanchang*, from implementation of training programs and equipment operations to the daily policing of the areas to the maintenance of each single screw, was meticulous with strict attention to detail.

While striving to be number one, we have the highest standards.

Following the launching of the *Nanchang*, the crew was in a race against time, constantly in a state of work overload. In the face of brand new and unfamiliar systems, they had no training materials, and had to start from zero, figuring out the path forward to familiarize themselves with systems operations. Facing a complex and unforgiving situation of maritime struggle, they had to compress their training timeline, setting a precedent...

On April 23, 2019, a naval review was held in Qingdao to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Navy. The *Nanchang*, leading the surface combatant formation, was the first to be reviewed. To ensure the successful completion of this mission, *Nanchang* exhibited the highest standards, completed its pre-commissioning tasks ahead of time, repeatedly made good its heading and speed, and implemented multiple risk mitigation measures. In the end the *Nanchang* was in optimal condition when it led the naval review, making a flawless debut.

In recent years, under the leadership of the ship’s Party Committee, *Nanchang* and its crew have completed multiple major missions and won laurels in multiple battle effectiveness competitions. The ideation of “first-rate warship, first-rate standards, and first-rate missions” is now fully internalized and put into conscious action by *Nanchang* and its crew.



The *Nanchang* holds a flag raising ceremony.