North Korean People's Army Equipment

Not much is known about the NKPA. There is much speculation as to the exact numbers and modifications that North Korea has made to various imported weapons systems. In the 1970s and 1980s, North Korea decided to produce as much military equipment as possible, indigenously.

T-62(Ch'onma-ho 2) 

Ch'onma-ho 3 

Ch'onma-ho 4

The standard T-62 initially obtained by NKPA may have been Soviet T-62Ds which had the fledgling active defense system known as Drozd. Drozd tended to cause as much damage to friendly units as it did to incoming ATGMs. A Syrian T-62 arrived sometime in the 1970s. North Korea began to produce the Ch'onma-ho (CHO) series of tanks based on the T-62. The Ch'o 1, though based on the T-62, had thinner armor. The Ch'o 2 was upgraded with a laser range-finder. It is believed that the Ch'o 3 had a further armor upgrade and side skirts added. The Ch'o 4 is upgrade with ERA (explosive reactive armor) bricks to the side of the turret. The Ch'o 5 is believed to be upgraded to T-72 standards after the North Koreans received several models in 1992.

T-55

The Soviet T-55 was such a successful design that production continued into the late 1970s well after the T-62 ceased production. It is a much modified design and has been re-armed in some countries with the British L-7 105mm cannon. The North Korean model is the basic T-55.

Type 59

The Type 59 is the Chinese produced model of the Soviet T-54. Late model Type 59s have improved armor, laser range-finder, weapon stabilization and infra-red night vision.

PT-76

Long replaced in Soviet/Russian service by the BMP, the PT-76 served as a reconnaissance and amphibious units. Mounting a 76mm cannon and 7.62mm coax mg, the PT-76 while amphibious, is slow by modern standards.

PT-85

The PT-85, also referred to in North Korea as the Type 82 or Type 85, is more than an upgrade of the Chinese Type 63. Initially developed in China as the Type 63 with a more powerful engine, slightly improved armor and an 85mm cannon, the North Koreans added a launch rail for the Sagger ATGM.

SU-100

The venerable SU-100. Basically the same vehicle used in WW2 and turned over to the North Koreans. The last model was produced in the 1950s. The SU-100s appear to be grouped into Elite Training Unit (Armor Regiments) Assault Tank Battalions.

Type 63

Built by China as an amphibious successor to the Type 62, it’s design was based somewhat on the Soviet PT-76 with a 85mm cannon. The North Korean PT-85 is based on the Type 63.

Type 62

The Type 62 was developed by China for use in rough, mountainous terrain. Basically, a downscaled T-59, on which it is based. It has a smaller hull and turret and mounts a similar 85mm gun as the Type 63. They were known to have been used by North Korea as late as 1990 and were possibly withdrawn from service in 1995, more than likely replaced by the home-built PT-85.

BTR-50

Still in use at least as late as 2005, the BTR-50 was a Soviet APC developed from the chasis of the PT-76. The NKPA received 50 of the vehicles in 1967. The North Korean version is armed with a 7.62mm mg.

YW531

This Chinese APC, armed with a 12.7mm mg, was imported to North Korea in the late 1960s early 1970s and became the basis for the North Korean V-323 series.

VET

The VET is the nickname for the V323, North Korea's homegrown version of the Chinese YW531. In this incarnation, the VET is armed with a twin 14.5mm mg mounted in a turret, a Sagger ATGM launcher, and a SA-7 or SA-16 launcher with 4 missiles. The VET version of the V323 first entered service in the mid-1970s.

V323

The V323 is the basic North Korean copy of the YW531 and the most numerous armored personnel carrier in the NPKA. This base model has a single 14.5mm mg with a 7.62mm coax mounted in the turret.

BTR-152

Entering service with the Soviet military in 1950, the BTR-152 has been replaced as an APC but continues to find service in command, reconnaissance, logistic roles.

M1981

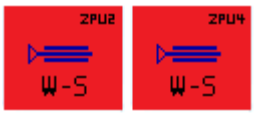
The best way to describe this weapon system is to think WW2 and SU-122. Utilizing the same Soviet M-1938 122mm howitzer, this version was produced by the Chinese as the T-54 Self Propelled Howitzer and sold to the North Koreans.

ZSU-57

Entering service in 1950, the ZSU-57 SPAAG mounts two 57mm cannon in an open top lightly armored turret on the chassis of a T-54. The North Korean models are actually mounted on the T-59 chassis. The weapon tracks targets optically with no radar system available. While lacking in the anti-aircraft role, the weapon system has performed well in a ground attack role.

T-63 107mm MRL

This 18 tube 107mm MRL was developed by China. In addition to the towed version, the North Koreans also mount it on the VTT-323 tracked; vehicle and the wheeled M-1992.



ZPU2; ZPU4

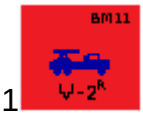
These towed Anti-aircraft guns, are Soviet KPV14.5mm heavy machineguns. The ZPU-4 is a quad mount and the ZPU-2 utilizes 2 machineguns side by side. These systems, like the ZSU-57, are manually operated with no radar tracking systems.

B-11

The B-11 is a recoilless rifle of Soviet manufacture. This 107mm smoothbore weapon entered Soviet service in 1954 and has long since been replaced in Soviet service by the RPG. It fires HEAT out to an effective range of 450m (2 hexes) and an HE round out to 1400m (6 hexes)

M42

The M-42 is actually the towed Soviet Zis-3, 76 mm divisional gun. In North Korean service, it is used in the anti-tank role, firing AP, HEAT and HE ammunition

BM-21 

BM-11

The BM-21 (40 round launcher) and the BM-11 (30 round Launcher) are 122mm Multiple Rocket Launchers. The BM-11 is of North Korean manufacture and features two banks of 15 tubes mounted on an Isuzu truck.

M1975

This is a Chinese copy (T-59) of the Soviet 130mm M-46 field gun. The North Koreans mounted it on a tracked chassis.

M1978

Totally of North Korean manufacture, the 170mm M-1978 “Koksan” gun is somewhat of a mystery outside of North Korea. It is believed to be mounted on the Type 59 tank chassis. The gun itself maybe a copy of an old Soviet coastal artillery gun; but according to Jane’s “though the Soviet/Russian navies are not known to have used this caliber intermediate between their usual 152mm and 180mm calibers. Pre-1945 German armed forces did, however, so perhaps this weapon was designed to use Soviet-supplied stocks of captured German wartime ammunition. “