



# China's Military Mental Health System in Transit

Zi Yang

China Programme

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Nanyang Technological University

Singapore

# Gaven Reef Incident (南熏礁案件)

Gaven Reef

10 November 2016



Outpost Length: 0.47 miles  
Area: **36 acres**

- Fixed-weapon position
- Communication facility

© 2016 DigitalGlobe









解放军画报





铁血男儿

王冠军·摄

# PLA Mental Health

- What is the state of mental wellbeing in the PLA? What are the trends and patterns? What are the challenges facing leaders seeking to ameliorate the situation? How are the challenges being addressed amid China's comprehensive military reform?
- Importance? Mental health is critical to morale, combat capability and war readiness, especially in high tempo, high pressure modern wars.



# 第三軍醫大學學報

DI-SAN JUNYI DAXUE XUEBAO

Journal of Third Military Medical University

2018年5月30日 第43卷 第5期

Vol.43, No.5 May 30, 2018

2017年度中国军医学领域学术成果奖



中国科技核心期刊  
中国科技论文统计源期刊  
RCCSE中国核心学术期刊  
英国《化学文摘》(CA)收录期刊  
英国《国际农业与生物科学研究中心》(CABI)收录期刊  
美国《乌利希国际期刊指南》(网络版)收录期刊  
全军优秀医学期刊

ISSN 1009-2595



# 華南國防醫學雜誌

HUANAN GUOFANG YIXUE ZAZHI

MILITARY  
MEDICAL  
JOURNAL  
OF  
SOUTH  
CHINA

ISSN 1009-2595

CN 42-1602/R

CODEN HGYZAA

1  
2018

2018年1月 第32卷 第1期

Vol.32 No.1 Jan. 2018

广州军区联勤部卫生部 主管  
广州军区医学科学技术委员会 主办

ISSN 1001-5248  
CN 32-1108/R  
CODEN JYFZDQ

# 解放军预防医学杂志

JIEFANGJUN YUFANG YIXUE ZAZHI

JOURNAL OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE OF  
CHINESE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY



2018年5月 第36卷 第5期

May 2018 Vol.36 No.5

军事医学科学院卫生学环境医学研究所

ISSN 1001-5248





# Source Assessment

- Author: background and qualifications.
- Quality: amount of details. Organization and presentation of information. Methodology.
- Audience: to whom the author/s is talking to? Foreigners? Domestic average Joe? Specialists?
- Timeliness of information: the more recent, the better.



DOI: 10.16016/j.1000-5404.201607007

## 我国军人症状自评量表 2016 版常模的建立

冯正直<sup>1</sup>, 胡 丰<sup>1</sup>, 刘云波<sup>1</sup>, 陈 骁<sup>1</sup>, 张 睿<sup>1</sup>, 赵梦雪<sup>1</sup>, 王立菲<sup>1</sup>, 王晓霞<sup>1</sup>, 张 晋<sup>1</sup>, 祖 霞<sup>1</sup>, 郑飞宇<sup>1</sup>, 王开发<sup>2</sup> (400038 重庆, 第三军医大学: 心理学院行为医学教研室<sup>1</sup>, 生物医学工程学院数学与生物数学教研室<sup>2</sup>)

**摘要** 目的 建立我国军人症状自评量表 (symptom check list 90, SCL-90) 2016 版常模。方法 采用 SCL-90 量表, 按照随机分层整群抽样对我军陆军、海军、空军、火箭军和战略支援部队 53 847 名军人进行测评, 并建立相应的常模。结果 ①军人心理问题的发生率为 29.7%; 女军人心理问题的发生率 (36.5%) 显著高于男军人 (28.6%); ②本研究建立的常模与 1999 年常模相比, 差异有统计学意义 ( $P < 0.01$ ), 与 2005 年的样本差异不明显; ③军人 SCL-90 常模具有性别、军种、人员类别差异, 表现为男军人、战略支援部队、学员心理健康水平高。结论 军人 SCL-90 2016 版常模具有时代性和差异性。

**关键词** 军人; 心理健康; SCL-90; 常模

**中图分类号** R395; R821.2

**文献标志码** A

**Establishment of norm of Symptom Check List 90 (2016 Edition) for Chinese military personnel**

# 2016 Standard

- 53,847 PLA service members interviewed.
- PLAA constitute the largest sample of 34,768 (male 33,693, female 1,075), followed by PLASSF of 13,594 (male 8,031, female 5,563), PLAAF 2,570 (male 2,505, female 65), PLAN 1,610 (male 1,198, female 412), and the PLARF of 1,305 (male 1,114, female 191).
- Incidence rate of psychological problems at 29.7 percent.
- Men>women. PLASSF>PLAA>PLAN>PLAAF>PLARF. Cadets and officers>NCOs and enlistees. Countryside>urban. Family with siblings>only child. Highly educated>poorly educated.

# Individual Units and Environmental Stressors

- Natural, artificial, social and psychological, operational.
- The plateau environment takes the greatest toll on military mental health, followed by tropical, oceanic, overseas, acceleration, frigid, cabin, tunnel and airtight environments.







解放军画报







## RUNWAY IN MISCHIEF REEF (PANGANIBAN REEF)

PHOTO TAKEN 30 DECEMBER 2017

Radome

RUNWAY : Usable Cemented/  
Concrete

With control tower,  
weather radar and huge hangars  
Length of runway 3.1 km  
(approximate)

HANGAR

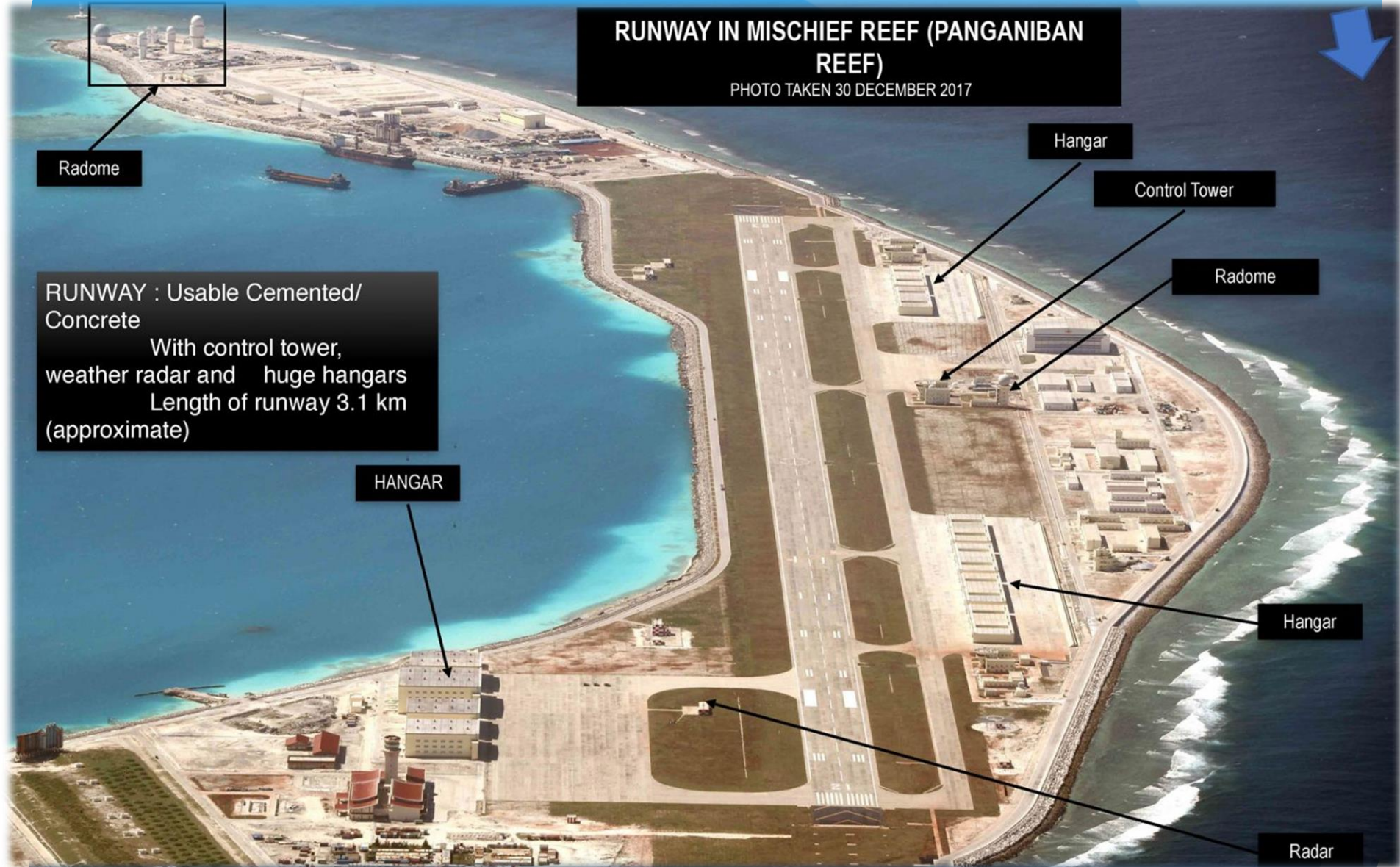
Hangar

Control Tower

Radome

Hangar

Radar





# Tropical Maritime Environment

- Heat, social isolation, constant state of alert.
- Island defenders lack social support. Mental health levels lower than warship and submarine crew.
- 165 male soldiers on Fiery Cross Reef—mentally healthier than PLA norm, but less than People's Armed Police average.
- 299 from seven SCS island defense units—26.76 percent believes they have mental problems.



中华人民共和国成立70周年  
The 70th Anniversary of the Founding of  
The People's Republic of China

# 科技 兴军

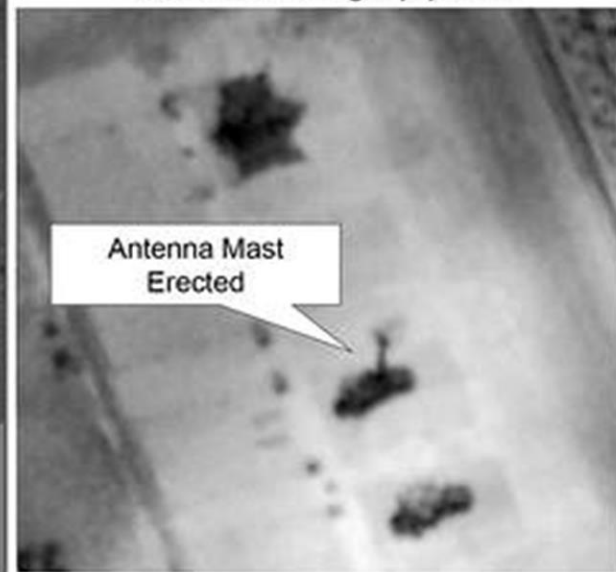


联播+

CCTV.com 央视网



Possible Jamming Equipment



© 2018, DigitalGlobe

# EW in the SCS

- Radar and communications jamming systems installed on SCS islands.
- Prolonged exposure to complex electromagnetic environment can be detrimental to one's physical and mental health.
- Study of 460 electronic warfare troops and 180 air defense communication specialists, one researcher finds the incidence of depression as high as 45.1 percent.
- Study of 89 members of an electronic warfare regiment shows higher than PLA average scores in somatization, anxiety and depression.
- Further complicates the environment for units operating in an already taxing natural setting.



sina 新浪军事

学习军团

# Life Underground

- Worst service in terms of mental wellbeing according to 2016 survey.
- Work stress, environment, and a poor diet.
- Uncomfortable environment. Cold and damp. Toxic gas above national health standards in some complexes.
- Underground units 22 percent more likely to get sick than above ground units.
- Food (1/3) and oxygen (80% of normal levels) reduction during exercises.
- Unwholesome diet (May 2019): too much meat and vegetable oil. Not enough grain, vegetable, fruits, eggs, seafood, and soy intake. No milk at all. Deficiency in protein, zinc, iodine, vitamin B and D.

# Rocket Force Engineering Corp

- 6 day workweek. 8 to 14 hours a day or more. 75 percent say labor demands somewhat or very tiring.
- 65 percent see their health as “okay or bad.”
- Dust, noise, toxic gases, dampness, poor ventilation.
- 37 percent unhappy with quality of protective gear.
- Almost one-third feel depressed.





# Challenges and Reform

- CMC support. 2018 Routine Service Regulations A.284 requires regular mental health services in units.
- Current approach underlines TCs experiment.
- Shortage of quality professionals.
- Political work establishment's continual influence on mental health affairs.
- Military-civilian mental health cooperation.
- Focus on relaxation, strengthening team spirit and mental resilience training.
- Use of social media and online platforms.











