

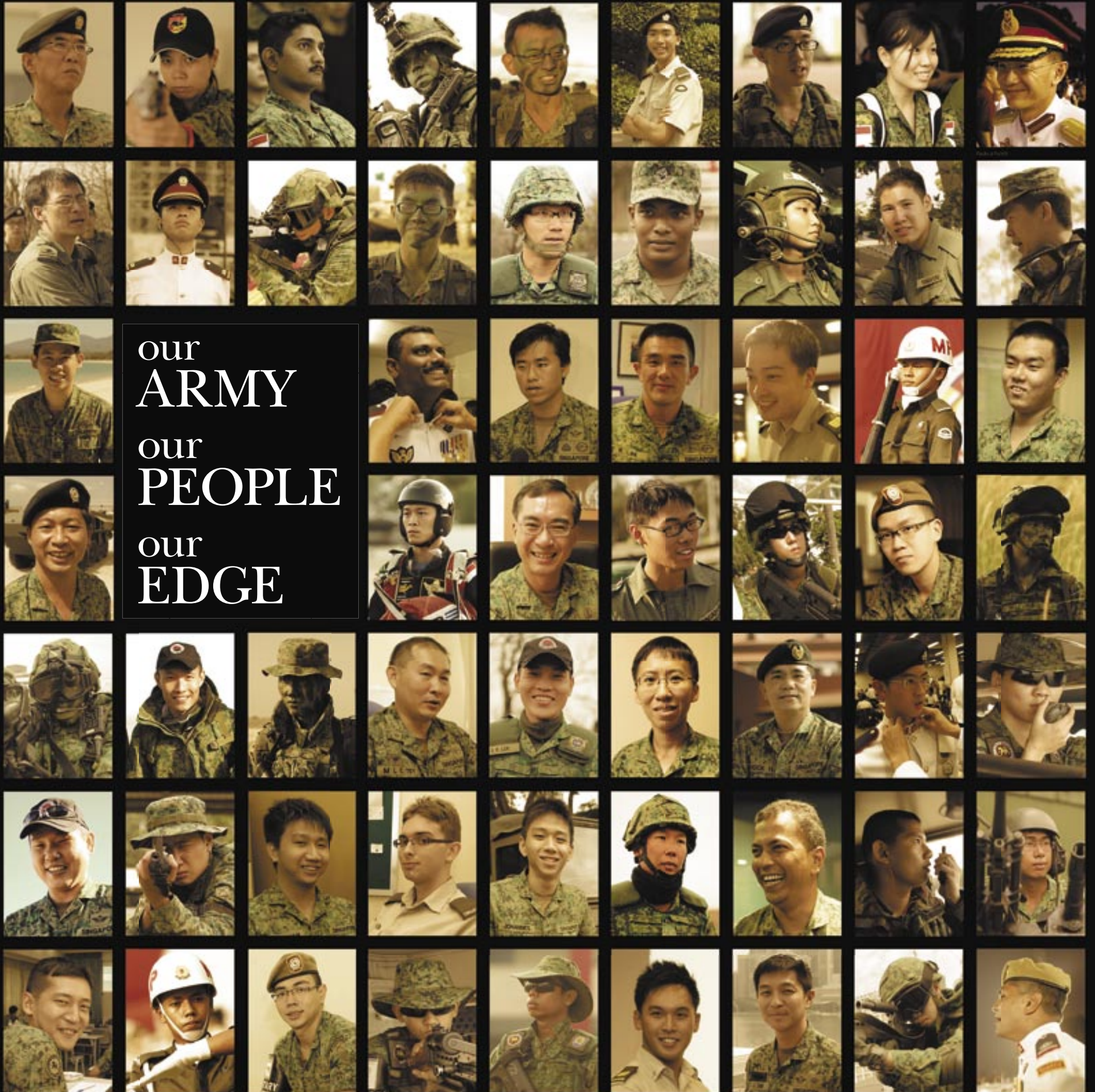
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pulse of the army



our
ARMY
our
PEOPLE
our
EDGE



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40 Years of
Honour and Glory

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Countering the CBRE Threat with Greater Operations-Technology Convergence

Story by Samuel Cheam / Photography by Mark Ng

“No country is immune from the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Explosives (CBRE) threat or can deal with these issues on its own. Countering the CBRE threat therefore requires international collaboration. We cooperate with other countries as well as international organisations because we recognise that there is much synergy to be reaped from cooperation by sharing knowledge, building expertise and enhancing interoperability.” This need for firm action against CBRE threats was emphasised by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean at the opening ceremony of the 6th Singapore International Symposium on Protection Against Toxic Substances (6th SIS-PAT) and 2nd International CBRE Operations Conference (2nd ICOC) on 8 December.



DPM Teo viewing one of the DSO exhibits at the conference

The 6th SISPAT and 2nd ICOC were jointly organised by the SAF CBRE Defence Group (CBRE DG) and DSO National Laboratories (DSO). The two conferences were held concurrently to better support this year's theme of 'Countering the Evolution of CBRE Threats through Strengthening Operations-Technology Convergence'. Held from 8 to 11 December, they attracted 339 participants, comprising defence scientists, researchers and military personnel from 23 countries.

During the conferences, participants heard from various distinguished speakers including COL Lee Heok Chye, Commander SAF CBRE DG. The speaker sessions were divided into several categories like CBRE Medical Countermeasures and CBRE Individual and Collective Protection. Discussions held after the presentations enabled participants to share their insights.



Participants from various armies sharing their experiences and knowledge on CBRE related issues

A major focus at the conferences was harnessing technology for more effective CBRE operations. Supporting this was an exhibit featuring CBRE technology from various companies including DSO. A wide variety of technologies were on display, including protective suits and robots that defuse explosives. One noteworthy exhibit was the Indoor Dispersion Modelling software jointly created by DSO and the SAF CBRE DG.

To understand its usefulness, imagine this scenario. A deadly chemical agent like Sarin gas has just been released by terrorists inside a hotel. Evacuation is tricky as

guests may accidentally be moved into areas already contaminated. The new software, using essential information such as the building's floor plan and the type of chemical agent, will enable the CBRE DG personnel to accurately predict the spread of the deadly agent. This facilitates the speedy and safe evacuation of people away from the danger areas.

Commenting on the software, COL Lee said, “It is important that we are able to deal effectively with a chemical attack as Singapore is highly urbanised and densely populated. Using this threat assessment technology and operations modelling, the SAF CBRE DG is better equipped to predict various attack scenarios, formulate preventive measures and mitigation plans, and develop emergency responses to deal with the threat should it happen.”

Working together with the SAF, DSO is looking to further improve this software. Mr Tan Peng Yen, Senior Member of Technical Staff (Agent Research Laboratory) DSO explained, “This version is an early prototype. In future we're looking at combining existing chemical agent detection systems with the software for even faster and more effective prediction.”



The Joint-Capability Demonstration showed how casualties affected by harmful contamination would be treated swiftly

On the second day, participants were treated to a thrilling joint-capability demonstration by the SAF CBRE DG and the US Army Pacific at Pasir Laba Camp.

In the demonstration scenario, an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) with a chemical agent was set off, injuring two guards and leaving possible chemical agents in its wake. The

combined US Army Pacific and SAF forces demonstrated their inter-operability by displaying how they would jointly decontaminate the area, detect and defuse the explosive devices found and evacuate the casualties. The successful execution of the demonstration was a great confidence booster for both armies as 2LT Pearle Surface, Platoon Leader with the 71st Chemical Company, US Army Pacific shared, “We learned that regardless of any CBRE threat anywhere, we can work together to mitigate these threats.”

The successful execution of such a complex demonstration was also the result of many training and sharing sessions undertaken by the SAF and US Army Pacific units. Both sides benefited enormously from each other's expertise and experience. Specialist Jeremy Sluss from the 71st Chemical Company was operating the Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Unmanned Ground Vehicle (CUG-V) during the demonstration. He said, “We realised from our interactions with the SAF that our decontamination facilities were positioned too far away from the site of operations and we'll be implementing changes to bring it closer.” Similarly, SAF personnel also picked up useful information from the US Army Pacific. 3SG Chen Zhen Wei, a team commander with 39th Battalion Singapore Combat Engineers who was operating the SAF's Trinity Robotics Suite during the demonstration revealed, “From the US Army Pacific forces, our personnel have learnt to use a Long Range Directional Antenna to significantly extend the range at which our operators can control their robots.”

In an age where terrorists are increasingly armed with CBRE weapon, the successful conduct of the 6th SISPAT and 2nd ICOC was a strong affirmation of the desire and determination of the participating countries, armed forces and agencies to stay ahead and be ready for all challenges. The SAF and DSO will continue to pursue technologically advanced platforms and systems to remain effective against future CBRE threats.



2LT Pearle Surface was confident in the inter-operability between the SAF CBRE DG and the US Army Pacific forces



During the demonstration, 3SG Chen Zhen Wei (left) operated the SAF's Trinity Robotics Suite while Specialist Jeremy Sluss controlled the CUG-V

Protecting Our Peace and Security Always

Story by Marcus Ho / Photography by Mark Ng



COA encouraging our commandos on operational duties to be ever vigilant despite the festive season

While many servicemen were looking forward to the long weekend break and ushering in the New Year with their families and friends, soldiers from the 1st Guards Battalion (1 GDS) and 1st Commandos Battalion (1 CDO) were busy with their operational standby duties to protect our country's key installations. Their efforts and sacrifices were recognised by Chief of Army, MG Neo Kian Hong during his New Year's Eve visit to the men at the Sembawang Wharves and Hendon Camp. In exhorting the troops, he said, “For a country to do well, its military forces have to always be vigilant. So do not underestimate any potential disruptions to the safety of Singapore. Every soldier has to do his duty. Do it well so that your fellow Singaporeans can celebrate in peace and security.”



COA (third from left) visiting the Guardsmen on duties at Sembawang Wharves

Not Forgetting Our Overseas Servicemen



At Hendon Camp, COA and senior commanders took the opportunity to engage our soldiers currently involved in overseas deployment in Afghanistan via teleconferencing. Besides exchanging New Year greetings, the overseas servicemen also updated COA on their mission status.



Recent overseas incidents have convinced 2LT Tan on the need to deal with any threat swiftly

2LT Tan Ban Hao, a Platoon Commander from 1 GDS is one soldier who usually spends the New Year's countdown with his family members. Even though he had to forgo it this year, he looked on the bright side, having understood that it is every soldier's duty to be always vigilant. He said, “Reports have shown that threats are likely to occur during festive seasons, like the most recent incident where a US-bound plane was nearly bombed.

Hence, it is crucial to be vigilant so any threats to the country can be dealt with swiftly and effectively. As a Force Commander at Sembawang Wharves, I feel that it is our job to safeguard this place, so that our fellow friends and family members can celebrate in peace.”

Sharing his sentiments was LCP Mohammed Taufik, a Rifleman from 1 GDS, “Like the Guards motto says – Ready To Strike. Even though I gave up a countdown party, a soldier has to do what a soldier has to do. I'm proud to do my job wholeheartedly. Furthermore, it will also be a very memorable experience for me, knowing that I've done my part to protect the country, so that everyone else out there can have a jolly good time counting down to 2010.”



CPL Kumar was very encouraged by COA's presence and his words

For CPL Satish Kumar, a Weaponman from 1 CDO, COA's words were highly motivating. He shared, “I feel honoured that COA came down to visit us today. The fact that he chose to visit us on the eve of a public holiday shows how much he cares about us. He also mingled with us, and we got to share our feelings about standing by on duties even during the festive season. I found that to be very meaningful and motivating.”

Even though protecting the country is very serious business, there were also some festivities and lighter moments for the Commandos. Through the facilitation of the Army Information Centre, SAFRA Radio was present to conduct some games in the afternoon. SAFRA Radio had also arranged for lunch sponsored by McDonald's. CPT Alan Tan, a Detachment Commander commented, “While we are mindful not to compromise any operational readiness, I feel that such arrangements will be beneficial and meaningful to my men. At least, it can serve as a cohesion gathering. I also spent time sharing with my men on the relevance of our duty with respect to our Army's mission of deterrence.”

Overseas Mission Participants Honoured

Story by Chia Han Sheng / Photography by Mark Ng

One measure of how far our 3rd Generation SAF has progressed is its abilities to conduct a wide spectrum of operations, including overseas missions. To recognise the efforts and contributions of our servicemen involved in such overseas missions, the Overseas Medal Presentation Ceremony was held on 25 November 2009 for servicemen who had participated in the stabilisation reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, peace support operations in Timor-Leste and the disaster relief operation in Indonesia.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean graced the occasion and in his speech, he articulated the importance of our international contributions. He said, “Our deployments to the various multinational peace and security operations reflect the widening range of operations that the SAF has to undertake to ensure peace and stability in the region and beyond. This underscores the increasing inter-connectivity of the world that we live in.” For the servicemen involved in these three overseas operations, the time spent in helping a needy overseas community was highly meaningful.

The 6-man engineering team that was deployed in the Bamiyan province of Afghanistan for example, oversaw the construction of a Paediatric and Women's Ward extension and a security wall around the Provincial Admin-



LTC (DR) Colin Teo receiving the Overseas Service Medal from DPM Teo

istrative Building. SSG Low Jing En shared, “Helping the people in Bamiyan, whether through enhancing security, reconstruction or simply giving out stationary to the children at the orphanage, was very meaningful. It has made my stint there very worthwhile.”

While operating in Afghanistan has its security risks, the team led by LTC Desmond Yeo from the Army Officers' Advanced School was well prepared to face any potential

threats. LTC Yeo shared, “We had force protection measures, rehearsals, and often varied our site inspection timings. We didn't go out at the same time every day and varied our routes.” With all these measures, the team was able to complete their tasks safely.

For the medical team that responded swiftly to the earthquake in Sumatra, rendering much needed medical aid to victims in dire need was both fulfilling and professionally enriching. LTC (DR) Colin Teo shared, “When we arrived, we wanted to make sure we could be of the most help to the areas that really needed us to be there. Working closely with local authorities and the TNI, we managed to find a place where we could really contribute.” To LTC (DR) Teo, the ability to determine exactly where to deploy our expertise, facilities and supplies was a major professional takeaway for the team.

With their valuable contributions to regional and international peace and security, our servicemen have certainly done the SAF proud. This was underscored by DPM Teo who said, “All of you have successfully completed your missions with the highest standards of discipline, professionalism and commitment. Our commitment to duty reinforces the SAF's strong ethos of service to the nation.”

Commissioned to Lead

Story by Samuel Cheam / Photography by Chia Han Sheng

For 494 young officer cadets, Saturday 19 December 2009 will always be etched in their memories. Braving inclement weather, they were commissioned as new officers in the SAF before a huge crowd of family members and friends present. Gracing the commissioning parade was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean.

New Zealand Cadet Completes Officer Training

Among the 494 newly commissioned officers was LTA Daniel Vruink who hails from New Zealand. LTA Vruink,



DPM Teo congratulating LTA Vruink on his successful completion of the Officer Cadet Course

a member of the New Zealand Defence Force, attended the Infantry Officer Cadet Course in Delta Wing, Officer Cadet School (OCS). Coming from a country with wide open landscapes, a different climate and culture, he adapted remarkably well during his training here.

Along with his fellow cadets from the SAF, LTA Vruink completed nine months of gruelling infantry training which included platoon tactics and the daunting Jungle Confidence Course. Relating his experience, LTA Vruink said, “The SAF is a citizen army whereas the New Zealand Army is a regular army. The challenges of leading men are different here.” But it was precisely this difference that helped LTA Vruink develop critical skills in man management. He further shared, “Working with NSF’s has been one of my most valuable experiences. It has taught me to appreciate the importance of communication skills and helped me to develop new and better ways to motivate my men.”

LTA Vruink also found the peer review process in OCS a highly useful tool. He explained, “It’s extremely valuable because it’s the most honest kind of feedback you can get.”

Our local cadets also benefited from LTA Vruink’s presence in the course. 2LT Vincent Goh, who trained with LTA Vruink explained, “Initially, it was difficult because we couldn’t even understand what he was saying! But after a while, we got used to it and we were able to pick up tactics from LTA Vruink like how the New Zealand Army deploys and manoeuvres their infantry sections.”

LTA Vruink’s OCS stint has certainly left an indelible impression on him as is evident in his parting words, “It has been a great experience. Working with the SAF is just like being back home. Everyone here is very professional.”

Countering IED Threats

This parade also witnessed for the first time, the wearing of the Basic EOD Badge by newly commissioned Engineer officers. They had completed a training programme aimed at imparting an understanding of the basic principles of countering threats posed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The increased threat from IEDs is evident in recent overseas military operations and conflicts where more than half of the casualties suffered were caused by such devices used by terrorists and insurgents.

During the training, cadets were introduced to the use of robotics technology for reconnaissance, preventive search techniques and counter IED reactionary drills. MAJ Jon Pang at HQ Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Explosives Defence Group (CBRE DG) commented, “What we hoped to impart to the cadets is an understanding of universal principles behind IEDs. With a good grasp of the fundamentals, they can apply this knowledge to a variety of situations they may face in operations.”



2LT Low now better appreciates the threats posed by IEDs

2LT Jonathan Low who successfully obtained the Basic EOD badge enthused, “The course gave me a basic understanding of how IEDs work and regardless of what specialisation I have as a Combat Engineer officer, this understanding is crucial in ensuring the safety of our forces.”

CAT: Preparing Specialists for New Challenges

Story by Samuel Cheam / Photography by Mark Ng

The strength of our 3rd Generation Army depends greatly on how the different formations like Signals, Armour and Infantry are able to synergise and fight as one. For this to happen, it is imperative that servicemen from the various formations possess adequate knowledge and understanding of each other’s roles and areas. To achieve this, the School of Infantry Specialists (SISPEC) recently introduced a Combined Arms Term (CAT) for the latest batch of specialists who graduated on 4 December. Present at this very first Combined SISPEC Graduation Parade was Chief of Army, MG Neo Kian Hong.

This is a significant departure from the previous practice in which specialist cadets would proceed from the Basic Section Leaders Course (BSLC) to their respective formation courses and then graduate as specialists from there. With the CAT, specialist cadets return to SISPEC for two weeks before graduating as a single cohort.

The significance of the change goes beyond the symbolic importance of graduating as one. During the two weeks, specialist cadets from different formations will share extensively with each other on their formation training and roles. This helps the cadets understand their individual roles in relation to the Army at large. Signals specialist 3SG Edward Neo Feng Rui explained, “As a signals specialist, I support the communication needs of various units. This CAT has allowed me to understand the requirements that other formations would need in operations. For example, I

learnt from the artillery specialists that their fire observers will require a rebroadcast station due to their distance from the target area.”

The CAT also helps to strengthen leadership training with the introduction of the ‘ABCDE’ model. LTC Luis Phay, Commander SISPEC, explained, “The ABCDE model refers to Assuming command, Building a team, Cohesion development, Development of individuals and Emergency and crisis management. These are the common leadership areas that they will face when they take command.” Lessons were taught on these areas to better prepare the new specialists for the challenges they might face in their units.



The CAT enabled specialists from different formations to learn from each other and graduate together with pride

BMTC School 3 Inaugurated

Story contributed by HQ 9 DIV/INF



COL Lim unveiling the BMTC School 3’s logo

On 12 December 2009, BMTC School 3 was inaugurated in a parade officiated by Commander 9th Singapore Division/Chief Infantry Officer, COL Lim Hock Yu. CO BMTC School 3, LTC Ng Chee Sing, presented the company flags to the various Officers Commanding as a symbol of their empowerment. With BMTC School 3, all the schools in BMTC have improved commander-recruit ratio to enable more effective training and better understanding of recruits needs. Each school will now command seven companies instead.

When our Army came into being more than four decades ago, it was nothing more than two infantry battalions thrown together to protect a fragile future. Not only did our nation and Army survive, together they made huge strides forward to become what they are today. As an integral part of the 3rd Generation SAF protecting our “Little Red Dot”, our Army today is a sophisticated war-fighting machine capable of integrated strikes and precision fire. Beneath its tough layers of steel, technology and firepower, our Army is powered by real blood and flesh. These are our people who make the difference at the end of each day.

Collectively, these people constitute the real cogs to drive a well-oiled machine. Each person has a story to share. As we close the 2009 chapter, Army News pays tribute to a small selection of our unsung heroes who have made Our Army tick. Our people excellence is manifested in this story’s five segments featuring how they drive our system, the importance of every soldier, their commitment, their care for people, and their passion in serving. While it is not impossible to acknowledge everyone, wherever we are, let us stand with them and be counted.

Our Army, Our People, Our Edge

Story by Kelvin Kow, Chia Han Sheng, Samuel Cheam & Marcus Ho
Photography by Wan Zhong Wei, Jonathan Ong, Derrick Heng & Mark Ng
Cover Design by Jonathan Ong

Our People Drive Our System

Just as the finest rifles fire only as true as their riflemen, our cutting edge combat systems are only as effective as the people who drive them.

Practice Makes Perfect



(from left) LCP Soh, PTE Soh, CPL Heng and 3SG Zheng

It has a 120mm main gun capable of obliterating targets four kilometres away. Despite its weight, this hefty 55-tonne behemoth can cover up to 77 kilometres in an hour. With its thick hide of steel, this machine seems almost impervious to the world outside. This is the mighty Leopard 2A4 Main Battle Tank. While the Leopard MBT may be a fearsome fighting vehicle, it needs the skills of a well-drilled crew to be truly lethal. The men from 48th Singapore Armour Regiment (48 SAR) who operate the Leopards exemplify how our people drive our systems.

“I would say chemistry is the most important trait in a tank crew” said CPL Joshua Heng, a Leopard MBT Gunner. “We need to know and accommodate each other’s level of expertise to achieve the best result. For example, I must understand how long my loader takes at his job because this will affect my rate of firing.” In the heat of a battle, the ability to achieve a high rate of firing can make the difference between life and death. The competence of each team member and the collective chemistry of

the crew are therefore key aspects in Leopard MBT training.

This competence and chemistry is often built up even before the crew get to actually operate the tank. With advanced simulation systems, our soldiers practice drill after drill until they meet the coveted REDCON 1 standard. LCP Soh Boon Chye, a Leopard MBT loader shared that the secret to being a competent crew member is practice. He said, “The loader just keeps on loading, the gunner keeps on engaging the enemy, and I just keep doing it until I can load the round in six seconds.”

This training certainly paid off for the crew during the last Exercise Wallaby held in Australia. CPL Heng shared, “We were positioned behind some trees lying in wait for an approaching convoy. They didn’t see us and we were able to take down five vehicles consecutively. This was highly fulfilling because I know this high level of skill is the result of our rigorous training.”

Professionalism and Pride



3SG Toby Toh in the Trailblazer

The Trailblazer Counter-Mine Vehicle (CMV) is a sophisticated armoured vehicle that requires a well-trained crew to push it to its limits. To effectively operate this life-saving machine, its 2-man crew undergoes two months of solid training. Trailblazer Commander 3SG Toby Toh shared, “Professionalism and pride are the most important traits for trailblazer operators. While we operate only a support vehicle, our pride stems from the knowledge that the fire-power of other armoured platforms cannot be harnessed without our mine-clearing capabilities. This is something that I constantly reinforce in the new trainees.”

In fact, 3SG Toh and his fellow commanders are so committed to their work that they have



2SG Lee Jia Yan

voluntarily created a training software to teach trainees how to operate the Trailblazer’s systems. The software has an interactive interface which simulates the Trailblazer’s dashboard, complete with its complex buttons and knobs. Instructors are also able to inject simulated problems that the trainees may face while operating the trailblazer. This teaches them to think on their feet and problem solve. 2SG Lee Jia Yan, a Trailblazer Platoon Sergeant shared, “Operators can face many different problems on the ground. They need to know whether the ground is soft or hard, and understand the undulation of the terrain they are working on.”

Unwavering Commitment

"I am never enamoured by all the high tech stuff, I am rather hard-nosed and I say in the end, we must make sure that our people are committed, every one of them."

MG Neo Kian Hong
Chief of Army

Committed to Excellence

MSG Ryan Goh, a Platoon Sergeant from the 6th Army Maintenance Base, was a member of our Army's Forward Support Group (FSG) during Exercise Forging Sabre last year, during which the live-firing of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) was much publicised. Working hard and quietly behind the scene to ensure the success of this complex exercise was a small band of FSG personnel, including MSG Goh. On many occasions, the 30-year old went beyond his primary duties as a HIMARS technician to help out his fellow colleagues. He shared, "It was quite tough to be part of FSG largely because we were quite short-handed. There were only 30 of us to support over 400 troops, and a lot of logistics preparation was required for the exercise. Even though I was from the FSG maintenance team, I felt that it was necessary to help the supply and transport teams whenever possible. We are after all, one FSG!



In his free time, MSG Goh diligently maintains his equipment

"I also tried to keep the team's morale up by encouraging them and getting to know each other better. It was surprising to see how fast we got bonded to one another throughout the exercise."

MSG Goh recalled with pride the numerous challenges faced during the exercise and cited a last minute requirement to build partitions in the Division Strike Centre, which was about the size of four basketball courts. He said, "It was quite tough on our part. Firstly, we did not have the materials and the know-how to build the partitions. As such, we had to do research and conduct trials on how we could build partitions which were stable and cheap. I remember all of us were staying up

Everyone Has a Part to Play

Each cog has its role and we all bring something different to our Army. Together, we are the whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Singapore is my Home



As a vehicle technician, LCP Hadi ensures that vehicles like the 5-tonners are ever ready for deployment

Getting a job, going to university, pursuing your passion. These are but a few things that most NSF's have to put on hold while serving with their National Service. But LCP Johannes Hadi could have chosen not to. Born in Jakarta in 1990, LCP Hadi is a Permanent Resident (PR) and as such had the choice of surrendering his PR status in exchange for not having to serve National Service. Nonetheless, he chose to stay and serve.

Although an Indonesian citizen, LCP Hadi is as Singaporean as one can get, "I've lived here most of my life," he explained, "and although I have family ties in Indonesia, Singapore is where I have made my life for the past 20 years. This is my home."

After completing his post-secondary education, LCP Hadi aimed to study Law at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom but he made the choice to put that aside

as he received his call up to do National Service. It was a daunting choice to make as LCP Hadi explained, "I've never been one for regimentation so military life sounded pretty difficult to me. Furthermore NS meant that I would have to give up two years of my life, two years that could be spent at university or chasing my other dreams like being a stage actor."

Despite these sacrifices LCP Hadi made the choice easily when he thought of his life here, "I've benefited immensely from Singapore. I had a good education, enjoyed safety and prosperity all because of Singapore. I felt it

is only right that I give back to the country that has helped make me who I am."

Currently serving as a Vehicle Technician with the 3rd Army Maintenance Base, LCP Hadi has a plan for his future, "All my friends and my immediate family are here and Singapore is definitely the place where I will settle down. But I don't think you can call somewhere your home unless you're both willing and prepared to defend it. And that's why I chose to serve."

Importance of ASAs

When one thinks of the Army, a picture of a rifle-wielding soldier charging up a hill comes to mind. But just as important to our Army's ability to function are the numerous office-bound Administrative Support Assistants (ASAs) who make

sure things run smoothly. One such ASA is LCP Joshua Cao from HQ Signals and Command Systems.

"I mainly handle NSman matters," LCP Cao explained, "When they come for In-Camp Training (ICT), I make sure that their in-processing goes smoothly. When they complete their ICT, I ensure that the out-processing is done and they can all go back quickly." In addition to these roles, LCP Cao assists with the administration behind the change-of-command of NSmen commanders.

LCP Cao's duties ensure that the administrative needs of various NS units are met on time and expediently. If his work is not done on time, it could result in time wasted and administrative confusion, hindering NS units from getting their jobs done. LCP Cao commented, "I don't always see the impact my work has but I know that in my own way, I'm contributing to the SAF's mission of defending Singapore."



Thanks to LCP Cao's work, NS units have a smooth and trouble-free ICT

till 1am in the morning just to finalise the prototype, and eventually everything was completed within a short span of one and a half weeks!"

For MSG Goh, the 6-week stint at Exercise Forging Sabre was also an enriching learning experience. He shared one takeaway through his interactions with the US soldiers, "Sometimes, we do not realise the importance of our live-firing exercises. But after the US soldiers had shared with us stories on how their trainings came into play when they were deployed in war zones, I've learnt to better appreciate the kind of trainings that we go through everyday. After all, we can be called to action any time and we have to be ready for it."

Committed to Action

Commitment means that when the button is pressed, we go. To most people, these are just words that are often said and heard with no further action. But for 1SG Kumaravel of the Singapore Combat Engineers, he meant every single word. When the button was pressed because our neighbours in West Sumatra needed help, he really dropped everything and went.

Just a day or two after the 7.6-magnitude earthquake struck West Sumatra on 30 September 2009, 1SG Kumaravel (or "1SG Kumar" as he is affectionately known) and his men already began to pack their stores in anticipation of being deployed. Sure enough, the orders came and on 10 October 2009, 1SG Kumar was on a plane to West Sumatra – a man on a mission.

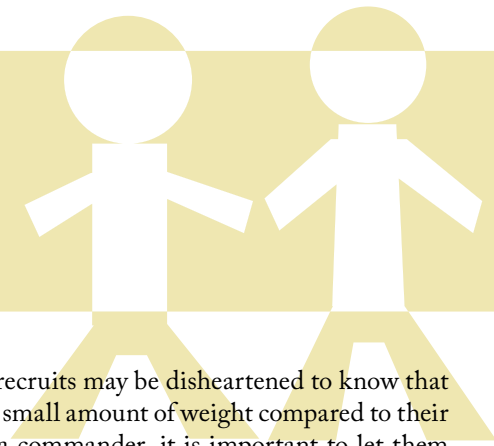
1SG Kumar was married for less than a year when he flew to Sumatra on the relief mission, experiencing first-hand what commitment to Our Army really meant. He had to leave his young wife behind, each missing out on what should have been their first Deepavali festival together. In Hindu culture, a new couple's first Deepavali together is a significant event as the couple has to take part in certain traditions and practices, including visits to the temple and the home of the new wife's parents. But 1SG Kumar was instead in West Sumatra, leading the construction of a structure to replace a collapsed clinic, fulfilling his duties as a Platoon Sergeant in Our Army.



1SG Kumar reunited with his wife, Yasotha after arriving home from West Sumatra

Taking Care of Our People

If all of the blade were the hard, brittle steel used for its cutting edge, it would shatter under stress. Like the blade's softer steel core, our Army's softer approach towards caring for its soldiers is key to our strength.



A Nurturing Leader

Every leader is bestowed with certain power over his people. But the term 'power' comes from the Latin word, posse which means to change, influence or effect. To have power is to possess the capacity to control or direct change. For LTC (VOL) Koh Tong Seng, Head of National Servicemen Services Centre (NSSC), this means the ability to nurture and positively influence his staff who are largely Full-time National Servicemen (NSFs).

One challenge faced by many commanders is building professionalism and commitment in today's NSF's. LTC (VOL) Koh explained, "If given a choice, most people would choose not to spend two years doing NS. However, I would always tell my NSF's that since they do not have a choice, then they should at least make the best out of these two years to learn something beneficial."



LTC (VOL) Koh has positively touched the lives of many NSF's

Indeed, many NSF's at NSSC have benefited greatly from LTC (VOL) Koh's close guidance and learnt valuable life skills upon completion of their 2-year National Service. For example, those manning the front desk service learnt to be patient and confident in answering various queries from NSmen. But what is LTC (VOL) Koh's success formula for nurturing his men? "As a boss, it is always necessary to be very supportive of my staff," he said. "I would always take the full responsibility whenever my staff make any mistake. Conversely, if you put them in the front line of fire for their mistakes, then they wouldn't really have much motivation to work any more. But of course, it is also important for them to let them understand their mistakes in order for them not to repeat the same mistakes again."

However, LTC (VOL) Koh does not have it easy for every NSF's under his charge. He fondly recalled one particular NSF

who had been living abroad all his life, and had returned to serve his National Service. LTC (VOL) Koh said, "When he first came in, he put very little effort into his work and did not have a positive perspective on NS. However, it was through lots of personal counselling sessions with him, support and understanding from his peers and superiors that we eventually saw a vast improvement in him making the best use of his time by serving to the best of his abilities. It was also very heartening to see him being very grateful to his peers and superiors after he left."

In the example cited, the NSF's mother was so concerned that her son was being unjustly treated that she flew back from Canada to see LTC (VOL) Koh. But shortly after the NSF had completed his full-time service, the mother wrote to LTC (VOL) Koh, sharing that her son "has grown much in adaptability and sense of responsibility towards people around him" and she is grateful for the "crucial foundation NS has given to him". For LTC (NS) Koh, this is what made it all worth it.

Moulding Recruits into Fighting Soldiers

With more than 10 years of experience in training soldiers, 2WO Vennu Regupathy is indeed the right man for the job. As a Platoon Commander for Gryphon Company, Basic Military Training Centre School 1, 2WO Vennu is often seen as a fatherly figure amongst recruits. "I always put myself in the shoes of the recruits when they are undergoing their Basic Military Training (BMT)," 2WO Vennu said. "When they first enlist, their lives change entirely. Suddenly they're wearing green uniform, holding rifles and learning to march. So it is always important to understand them personally. I try to motivate them as much as I can through my interview sessions with them."

2WO Vennu shared his secrets in ensuring that the BMT experience was fun, meaningful and memorable, "Encouragement must always be given to them, ideally on a daily basis. Even if they had a negative experience, I would turn that experience into a positive one. One way to do that is to let them know that they have already achieved something, even though they may not have reached their desired standards.

Despite his sacrifices, 1SG Kumar is ever ready to go should the button be pressed again. Perhaps the most heartening revelation was his response on what would happen if another similar call to duty is made. He said directly and without hesitation, "Everybody in this company – if you ask whether they want to be deployed, they will say yes."

For example, obese recruits may be disheartened to know that they have only lost a small amount of weight compared to their peers. However, as a commander, it is important to let them understand that they have already lost weight, and that is already a good result. Plus, their morale will be boosted again if they know I'm also happy with that small result."

As a trainer who occasionally manages obese recruits, 2WO Vennu endorsed the changes that were recently implemented in the BMT system. He said, "I think the introduction of a single BMT programme for obese enlistees is a very positive move. Compared to the old 26-week programme, the shorter 19-week programme is especially beneficial to the enlistees who are extremely obese. Past experiences have shown that these recruits were able to lose as much weight as the lesser obese recruits in the same amount of time. So this new BMT system will help save a lot of time for the extreme obese recruits."

Besides training recruits to be competent in their foundational military skills, 2WO Vennu also imparts numerous crucial life skills to his trainees. He commented, "I always highlight the importance of positive thinking to them. If they are punished to do push-ups, they ought to take the punishments in such a way that it helps them to regain their fitness. Without positive thinking, not only will their entire NS experience be miserable, but they won't be leading very happy lives as well."



2WO Vennu addressing his recruits

Our People Serve with Passion

It is said that those who serve with passion, and with their passions, never have to work a single day in their lives. There is no lack of passion in our service.

Proud to be a Ranger

The Ranger course is known by many as the toughest in the SAF. The 2-month course puts trainees through rigorous training that pushes their physical, mental and psychological limits. This tough training develops their core soldiering competencies to a whole new level and prepare them to be better small unit leaders. To endure the pains and rigours, having a passion to serve helps a lot.

For CPT Chan Eng Soon, a staff officer in G1-Army, wearing the prestigious Ranger tab has been a long time dream, “Since entering the Army, I’ve had various commanders including my instructor at Officer Cadet School who were Ranger-trained. They exhibited qualities that I wanted to emulate. These leaders inspired me to go for the course.”

The training was certainly tough as CPT Chan explained, “For me the first two weeks were really difficult. Getting used



CPT Chan's soldiering passion has enabled him to persevere through the Ranger course

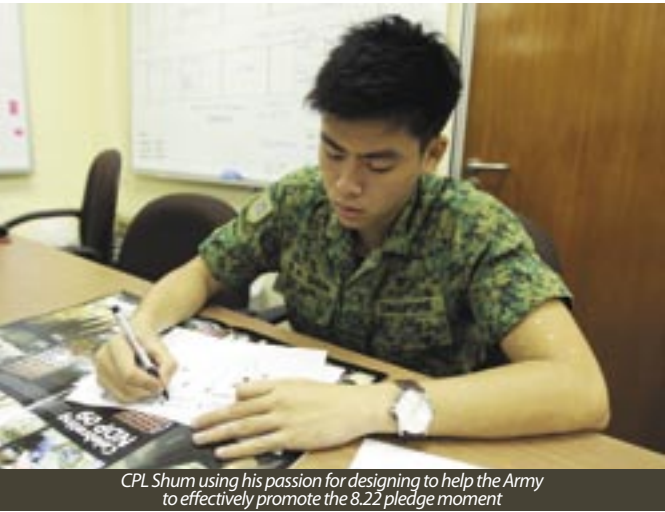
to being a trainee again, getting very little sleep and having to learn skills that I was not trained in before were all obstacles that I had to overcome.” During the two months, CPT Chan picked up new skills like demolitions and commando small unit tactics.

Although CPT Chan’s current appointment does not require him to utilise some of the soldiering skills picked up from the Ranger course, his passion for pursuing the course has helped him learn lessons that are applicable anywhere. CPT Chan elaborated, “Being a Ranger is a journey that goes beyond the course. It’s a process that demands you hold yourself to a higher standard because now you’re a Ranger.” CPT Chan’s dogged completion of the Ranger course exemplifies a true passion for soldiering. Today, he savours the honour of being called a Ranger.

A Rare Opportunity to Service

One thing that was unique about the National Day Parade (NDP) in 2009 it would be the 8.22 pledge moment where Singaporeans here and around the world came together to affirm their loyalty and dedication to the country. One factor responsible for its smashing success was the extensive publicity and advertising done to promote it.

CPL Shum Qihao, a Signaller at HQ, 3rd Singapore Division Artillery, has good reason to recall the pledge moment with pride and satisfaction. Trained in graphic design as he was heavily involved in its publicity, a big departure from his normal work in maintaining the unit’s signal sets and computer servers. Having performed his primary duties, CPL Shum continued to pursue passion for art, “I’ve loved design from a young age and pursued a diploma in Visual Communication when I was undergoing my tertiary education.”



CPL Shum using his passion for designing to help the Army to effectively promote the 8.22 pledge moment

Aim for Success

Quick on the draw and deadly accurate with a pistol, 2WO Pheong Siew Shya would have done just fine in the Wild West. The Senior Marksmanship Coach is one of the female pistol shooters who represented the SAF at the Association of South East Asian Nations Armies Rifle Meet (AARM) last year. Her illustrious shooting achievements are another demonstration of how our people can find their passion while in service.

2WO Pheong began her military career in 1993. But it was only in the year 2000 when she was posted to the Military Police (MP) Command that she discovered her true calling. She shared, “When I was in MP Command, they brought down one of the New York Police Department’s top shooters to train us and I won the Top Gun award amongst the trainees. That’s when I realised I had a talent for shooting.”

Since then, 2WO Pheong has continuously honed her skills, leading to numerous achievements in the shooting world. Last year she won the Women’s Pistol Match 1 for the



2WO Pheong is an expert pistol shooter and has the Army to thank for introducing her to the sport

Singapore Shooting Contingent at AARM and was placed third overall amongst a pool of talented female pistol shooters from around the region. 2WO Pheong’s exploits are not

confined to only military shooting competitions. One of her Army colleagues introduced her to sports shooting which eventually culminated in her participation at the South East Asian Games in Vientiane, Laos last year.

For 2WO Pheong, her life as a soldier and her passion for shooting are inseparable and in many ways complementary. She explained, “Shooting requires a great deal of discipline, discipline that my time in the Army has helped me to develop. Also, my experience in Immediate Action (IA) drills to remedy weapon stoppages in the Army has enabled me to clear my weapon in competitions much faster.” Conversely, her training as a shooter has also helped her work better in her Army job, “Shooting in competition requires you to be calm and we undergo a lot of training to develop mental skills to achieve that. I apply these skills at work too so when difficult situations arise I can deal with them better.”

With her deep passion, don’t be surprised if 2WO Pheong one day achieves her dream of competing in the Olympics.

40 Years of Honour and Glory

Story by Chia Han Sheng / Photography by Derrick Heng

An elite unit like no other. A stealthy force behind enemy lines. A lethal team of counter-terrorist experts. Bearing these fearsome descriptions, the Commando Formation commemorated their 40th anniversary with pride on 8 December 2009. Demonstrating why they are the elite force, the day’s events included a freefall jump by the Red Lions, heli-roping by Special Operations Force troopers and a display of Special Forces platforms. The event, which was graced by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean and Chief of Defence Force (CDF) LG Desmond Kuek, was a meaningful time for all in the Commandos family. New recruits from the 1st Commando Battalion (1 CDO) joined seasoned veterans such as past formation chiefs to commemorate a rich tradition of being the very best.



DPM Teo congratulating the Red Lions for another magnificent display

From Humble Beginnings

Despite its current standing, the Commando Formation has a humble beginning. It was first formed in 1969. Spearheaded by then Minister for Defence, Dr Goh Keng Swee, the first Commando unit started with just 29 regulars trained in unconventional warfare. Over the years, the unit has kept pace with the demands of the evolving security landscape and leveraged on technological developments to truly become a world class special forces.

From just 29 regulars, the unit has expanded into a full fledged formation. HQ Commandos now has the SAF Parachute School, School of Commando Training, and Special Operations Force under its umbrella. The Commando Training Institute was also established in Pasir Ris Camp to better raise, train and sustain our elite forces.



COL Yeo is glad to see that today's Commandos are fighters and system operators

Reflecting on the many changes of the past 40 years, former Chief Commando Officer COL Yeo Eidik shared, “From the day I joined to now, we have made a big leap forward in terms of organisation and technology. I look at the Commandos now and they are a lot more sophisticated. In the past, Commandos were fighters, now they are system operators. And that’s a huge difference that is very much in line with the 3rd Generation SAF.”

The Best Never Rest

In his address to the formation, CDF lauded the Commandos for their past 40 years of growth and reminded them to remain ever vigilant and steadfast in their mission. He said, “The achievements [of the formation] bear testimony to your high levels of operational readiness, dedication and professionalism. But being the top, respected and elite force in the SAF is not a birthright, it’s not a given. To reach there and to stay there requires diligence, perseverance and vision.”

The commanders and men have certainly exemplified these traits over the years. 1st Commando Battalion (1 CDO) has been relentless in its pursuit of excellence, clinching the Best Combat Unit title for the 23rd time in 2009. At the or-



The speedy Light Strike Vehicle, which was on display, is just one of the many modern platforms in the commandos' arsenal for securing a swift victory

ganisational level, the recently launched Special Operations Task Force provides greater integration among the three Services, enabling our special forces to effectively tackle a wider range of threats.

Exercise Northstar VII, held in July 2009, incorporated the lessons learnt from the Mumbai terrorist attacks. Held just seven months after the incident, it demonstrated the SAF’s responsiveness to emerging security threats in the region. This also underlined the Commandos’ determination to stay ahead and not rest on their laurels, so as to continue to earn their place as the best in the SAF.



LTC (RET) Tan believes that the Commando spirit has remained unflinching over the years

The Unflinching Commando Spirit

The Commando’s tough fighting spirit will never waver. LTC (RET) Clarence Tan who is affectionately known as the “father of the Commandos” proudly explained that to him, the title “Commando” is merely an acronym for “Combination of Muscle, Mind And Nerve During Operations.” This steely

image of mind, body and spirit being forged into a lethal soldier captures the very essence of being a Commando. 2SG (NS) Chia Chun Keong from an NS Commando Battalion elaborated, “We’re put through a very strong ‘can do’ culture and spirit. There’s something in us that convicts us to accomplish the task once we set our mind on it.”

For COL Yeo, this conviction was put to the test before a free fall jump on a pitch dark night. He recalled, “I was jumping out of the aircraft in Australia and there was a lot of fear. I asked myself why am I doing this? Why am I taking the risk? And I said to myself it’s because I believe that I need to develop this skill so that when the call of duty comes, I can answer it. It takes a lot of conviction, not just courage, but conviction and belief in what you are doing.”

With their unflinching spirit, our Commandos will certainly remain committed and steadfast to their cause. CDF underscored the importance of this when he said, “We have every confidence that the *must do, can do and will do* spirit in the SAF Commandos will continue to fire us all up. We have every reason to be proud that you will continue to uphold your unwavering sense of mission, your unstinting adherence to the Commando core values and your unbreakable bonds of loyalty to your people, each other and the SAF.”



The display of the latest platforms demonstrated how far special forces equipment have come over the years

Change in CDF and COA in March

MG Neo Kian Hong, currently Chief of Army (COA), will take over from LG Desmond Kuek as Chief of Defence Force (CDF) on 31 March. BG Chan Chun Sing, currently Chief of Staff - Joint Staff, will assume the appointment of COA on 26 March. LG Kuek will be returning to the Administrative Service. These changes are part of the continuing process of leadership renewal in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF).

The outgoing COA, MG Neo joined the SAF in 1983. Since his appointment as COA in March 2007, MG Neo has built a networked Army with strong emphasis on people excellence, cutting-edge technologies and enhanced fire power. Under his leadership, Our Army has continued to strengthen its cooperation with other regional armed forces through exercises and professional exchanges, and played a significant role in the SAF's participation in international peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

The incoming COA, BG Chan, joined the SAF in 1987. He was awarded the SAF (Overseas) and President's Scholarship in 1988. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons 1st Class) (Economics Studies) from the University of Cambridge, UK and a Master of Arts (Economics) from Christ's College, University of Cambridge, UK. He also holds a Master of Business Administration from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA. His previous appointments include Commander 10th Singapore Infantry Brigade, Head Joint Plans and Transformation Department, Commander 9th Singapore Division/ Chief Infantry Officer.



Outgoing COA MG Neo Kian Hong



Incoming COA BG Chan Chun Sing

Strengthening Students' Commitment to Defence

Story by Marcus Ho / Photography by Mark Ng

Every year, the SAF invites students from Junior Colleges (JCs) to attend its MINDEF Internship Programme (MIP). This engagement programme affords them an invaluable opportunity to have a taste of military life by interacting with our commanders and getting a close-up look at the latest fighting platforms. This year was no different, with 80 JC1 students and 70 JC2 students participating in MIPs held from 24 to 26 November and 1 to 3 December respectively. Jointly organised by the MINDEF Scholarship Centre (MSC) and the recruitment centres of the three Services, the MIP aims not only to create better awareness of military life, but also to raise their commitment to defence. MAJ Kelvin Lau, Head of MSC elaborated, "JC students have very little opportunities to experience military life. As such, the MIP serves as an avenue for engaging them early. I believe it is also important for them to understand the 3rd Generation transformation of the SAF and that we are very advanced now and will always be moving forward. Additionally,



The hands-on experience provided at MIP was thoroughly fun and enlightening

this event could also plant the seeds of interest in them to consider a career with the SAF."

For Thomas Chai of Raffles Junior College, one of the highlights of the JC1 programme was the opportunity to fire the SAR21 rifle and to gain a better understanding of how Our Army protects key installations throughout the nation. He said, "This event has been a huge eye opener since we could try out the various weapons and participate in mock missions, which enabled me to understand how the Army operates in protecting our key installations. I feel very relieved to know that they are always being well protected."

Participants from the JC2 programme had a taste of what Our Army operations entailed by taking part in a hostage rescue mission – from the planning to execution at Murai Urban Training Facility. Adam Adil from Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) shared his experiences, "I feel very privileged to have such an engaging experience. Previously I did not have a very positive image of the Army due to what I had heard from my seniors. But my participation in the mock hostage rescue mission, which was the climax of my MIP experience, has enabled me to see the Army from a different perspective. There were so many challenges that had to be overcome. For example, two of our men were down before the mission started and we had to quickly change our plans in order to carry out a successful mission. I'm looking forward to overcoming more of such challenges when I enlist next year!"

Dialogue sessions were conducted to help the participants better understand strategic defence issues and also make a more informed decision in considering a career with the SAF. Chief of Staff - Joint Staff, BG Chan Chun Sing chaired the JC1 session while the JC2 session was helmed by Chief of



COA sharing his thoughts and insights with the JC2 participants

Army, MG Neo Kian Hong and Permanent Secretary (Defence Development), Dr Tan Kim Siew. Cephas Ong from Victoria Junior College commented, "I've wanted to become an Army officer since young. Such sessions have really helped reinforce my decision to sign on because I feel that an Army career is really suited for me. It is appealing since the Army is very people-centric. Even though there is a rank hierarchy in every unit, everyone is still part of a family where they are so close to one another. I would also get the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life and bring the best out of them. I find that very fulfilling."

Another participant from Hwa Chong Institution, Alfred Wan, also found his commitment to defence strengthened by the MIP. He said, "Recently, I've been reading up a lot on World War II and the atrocities of the Japanese occupation. Being here at MIP has helped me to better understand the importance of having a strong defence force to deter any threats. This is also one of the reasons why I'm very excited to join the Army."

150 Kilometres in 30 Hours

Story by Samuel Cheam / Photography by Jonathan Ong



MAJ Lim triumphantly crossing the finishing line after 30 long hours of running

In 30 hours you could get a good 10 hours of sleep, spend another 10 at work and have hours of time left over for leisure and recreation. Or, if you were MAJ Lim Thong on New Year's Day you could do just one thing – run.

From 0300 hours on 1 January to 0900 hours on 2 January MAJ Lim, a Staff Officer from G5-Army, ran non-stop to raise funds for the President's Challenge. At the start in Bedok Reservoir, she covered six laps (26 kilometres in 3 hours) before continuing her run through the various Park Connectors in Bedok North, Eunos, Paya Lebar and Macpherson. MAJ Lim's 30-hour run ended at Macritchie Reservoir and covered an amazing 150 kilometres by the time she crossed the finishing line.

MAJ Lim's road to the run began in September 2009 as she explained, "I am approaching 40 years of age and I wanted to leave a mark before I hit 40. I was having this crazy idea of pushing myself to run beyond 24 hours, which is the longest I have done so far, and do some charity. So I thought, why not do a 30-hour run and at the same time answer the President's call to do my part for the less fortunate in society?"

To fulfil her challenge, MAJ Lim roped in her friends from all walks of life to help her. Together, they named the organising committee of her charity run, 'Click-4-Klick'. Appeal letters were sent to their networks of friends and colleagues. Appeals were also sent to servicemen in the SAF, Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) and members from the local running commu-

nity to pledge their donations. They could pledge a lump sum or specify the amount for every kilometre covered. Inspired by MAJ Lim's efforts, more than \$42,000 have been raised for the President's Challenge to date, with more than one-third of the donations coming from SAF personnel.

MAJ Lim is no stranger to long distance running and began attempting ultra-marathons (marathons exceeding 42 kilometres) in 2006. In training for the 30-hour charity run, MAJ Lim focused on pushing her endurance based on time rather than distance. "A lot of people train based on distance. So they set out to complete a specific distance in a week," elaborated MAJ Lim, "But for ultra marathons, it is more effective to adopt time-based training and focus on intensity. It is indirectly related to one being older. If a fast runner and a slow runner both completed a 2-hour training at the same intensity, for example 80% of their respective heart beat, they will both reap the same benefit. Hence if both these runners run 20 kilometres each at the same intensity, the slower runner is deemed to have put in more 'mileage'. This could potentially lead to injury for the older runners." To maintain her fitness level for the 30-hour event, MAJ Lim participated in several races prior to the run like the Taipei Marathon and two back-to-back marathons in the USA.

Despite her training and experience, the run was still a challenge as MAJ Lim explained, "I started running at 0300hrs so by 1400hrs in the afternoon it was an incredible challenge to keep my eyes open and stay balanced." MAJ Lim attributed her ability to

overcome this difficult period to the presence of supporters and pacers from her running club who supported her throughout the 30 hours. She elaborated, "Besides encouraging me, the pacers helped me to look out for dangers along the way. I am very fortunate to have two friends who volunteered to plan and co-ordinate the route and the logistics for the run. I would like to thank CPL(NS) Chia Tee Lee and LTA(NS) Tay Yong Wei. They did an excellent job. Without their meticulous planning and support of the pacers, I am sure I would not have been able to complete the 30-hour challenge. They even ensured that I had my foot powder, towels, water and food replenishment. I would like to dedicate my success in this event to them."

MAJ Lim has some parting words for our servicemen, "Never be afraid of challenges. Always challenge yourself and fulfil your dream. At the same time, we must not forget the less advantaged in our society."

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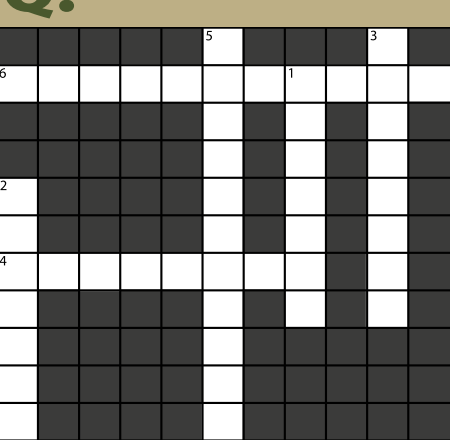
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Quiz Of The Month - NOV / DEC

Send us the correct answer and win a pair of Golden Village movie vouchers. There will be 5 winners!

Q: Closing Date : 12 February 2010



Across

4. The _____ formation celebrated their 40th anniversary on 8 December 2009.

6. LTC Desmond Teo was one of our servicemen who participated in operations in _____.

Down

1. LCP Joshua Cao is an Administrative _____ Assistant.

2. SAF CBREDG units and US Army _____ units worked together at the joint 6th Sispat & 2nd ICOC.

3. The SAFFC are nicknamed the _____.

5. The Mindef _____ Programme gave students a taste of military life.

Rank / Name:

Unit:

E-mail:

NRIC:

Contact No:

1. This contest is open to all Army personnel except the executive staff of Army News Section.
2. Each person is allowed one entry.
3. Prizes are not exchangeable for cash. Winners can either collect their prizes from Army News or arrange for mail delivery.
4. The judge's decision is final. Please send us your entries via mail or email us at armynews@starnet.gov.sg
5. Prizes not collected within a month of notification will be forfeited.

OCT / NOV Quiz

A: 1. Rockhampton
2. Brigade
3. Artillery

4. APEC

5. Forging

6. Defence

OCT / NOV Winners

1) MS SHELLEY CHAN
2) MSG NOR RAHMAN
3) SGT SEBASTIAN SPOONG HUI
4) CPL (NS) LIM YONG JIANG
5) MSTEOH GIM YANG

NRIC: S0000645G
NRIC: S0000458F
NRIC: S0000604E
NRIC: S0000418I
NRIC: S0000301I

Winners are to contact Army News at 6427 0642 for collection of prizes.

Warriors Gun for More Success in New Season

Story by Samuel Cheam / Photography by Jonathan Ong

The SAF Football Club (SAFFC) was established in 1996 to compete in the S-League, Singapore's premier football competition. Since then, SAFFC has grown from strength to strength, having won eight S-League titles, four Singapore Cup Championships and seven Best Fan Club awards.



SAFFC were the S-league champions in 2009 (Picture courtesy of SAFFC)

Truly a force to be reckoned with both on and off the field, the SAFFC has benefited immensely from Our Army's support since its inception. In the early years, Fitness Specialists, then known as Physical Training Instructors (PTIs), would volunteer to serve as technical staff in the team. Now a fully professional team with a top class support staff, the SAFFC still retains ties to the SAF. This is evident from the presence of active and retired servicemen, and NSmen in the Management Committee alongside other volunteers. BG Tung Yui Fai, Assistant Chief of the General Staff (Operations), currently chairs the SAFFC's committee.

Nicknamed the 'Warriors', the SAFFC enters the new year and season with a revamped team and a fresh playing style. National team players like Indra Sahdan are being brought into the Warrior's fold along with foreign players like Taisuke Akiyoshi, a signing from Albirex Niigata. Army News brings you a look at how the SAFFC Warriors are shaping up for the coming season.

Strong leadership and forward planning are crucial for success. Appointed as its General Manager in 1998, LTC (RET) Kok Wai Leong has since guided the Warriors to seven S-League titles. In 2010, the Warriors will bid a fond farewell to stalwarts like striker Aleksandar Duric and midfielder Masahiro Fukasawa and welcome 10 new players into the team. This was not a light decision to make given that the previous team brought in four consecutive S-League titles from 2006 to 2009. LTC (RET) Kok, however feels that the move to renew the team

is a risk worth taking, "We need to refresh ourselves to stay relevant and competitive. That being said, we are aware that changes do not guarantee success. But we've done our homework and brought in players with a mix of experience and youth who can do well." As a former Army serviceman, LTC (RET) Kok believes that it is the strong unity within the Warriors that sets them apart from the rest and will make success this year possible.



Mr Kok believes that our Army's values like fighting spirit have given the Warriors an extra edge on the pitch



Mr Bok has coached the SAFFC to four S-League titles

Mr Richard Bok, the Warriors' Head Coach, has a simple training philosophy - 'Hard work and no shortcuts'. It is an effective philosophy that has powered the Warriors to S-League glory in the past four years and bagged him three Coach of the Year awards. A former player with SAFFC, Mr Bok revealed the direction that the team will be taking, "This year we'll be playing more attacking football with fluid passing and movement. Of course this will not be easy and we'll have to work greatly on our technical skills to achieve this." As defending S-League Champions, the Warriors will be keeping an eye on Home United, a team Mr Bok believes has a good set of local players who are always dangerous on the field.

"Leadership on the field is just like leading in the Army. You have to lead by example." said Shahril Jantan, the Warrior's first pick goalkeeper and team captain for the coming season. Wearing the captain armband for the first time, Shahril knows he has a daunting task ahead of him, "We have a lot of new players this season so we have to work quickly to gel together both on and off the pitch. But with some help from the senior players, I hope to be able to both rally the team and play well at the same time." Shahril's passion for football was ignited when his father brought him to the Malaysia Cup games in the 1990s. He related how he ended up being a goalkeeper instead of his original desire to be a striker, "I attended a selection trial at one

of the clubs hoping to be selected as a striker. But when I arrived, I saw many players vying for the striker position, compared to only four for the goalkeeper. So I figured I would have a better chance as a keeper!" This decision had led to Shahril being who he is now, a first-class goalkeeper who won the Warrior of the Year award in 2009.

But even with its outstanding manager, coach and players, the Warriors still need one more crucial factor for success this year - you. "Fans play an important role for us," explained LTC (RET) Kok, "they can be the '12th player' on the pitch. What more so if they were all soldiers. With their fighting spirit, they can create a motivational atmosphere for the players." Commanders who are looking for a unique cohesion activity at a high-octane football match can email the club at info@saffc.org for more details. With the SAFFC looking to retain the S-League title and perform well at the regional Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League, your support can make a big difference in 2010. So come down to cheer on the SAF's Warriors! For details on the match schedule, visit the SAFFC's website at www.safwarriors.com.sg



Shahril Jantan will captain SAFFC in their campaign to retain the S-League title this year



"All the training, practice runs and drills come together in an instant when you are faced with a real casualty."

"I started with the army when I accepted the scholarship offered to me under the Joint Polytechnic-SAF Diploma Scheme (JPSDS) in 2001. Since then, I've done a lot of things. As a combat medic I've spent time in the infantry, trained as a paramedic and served overseas in Indonesia and Afghanistan. After my tour in Afghanistan I was posted to SAF Medical Training Institute as an instructor. I am honoured to represent my country and the SAF in overseas missions and this has opened my eyes to the world. I don't think any other scholarship or company could have offered me all of this. I'm grateful about it."

You can read the full version of this story and find out what real soldiers have to say about life in our Army @ facesofsteel.army.gov.sg

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