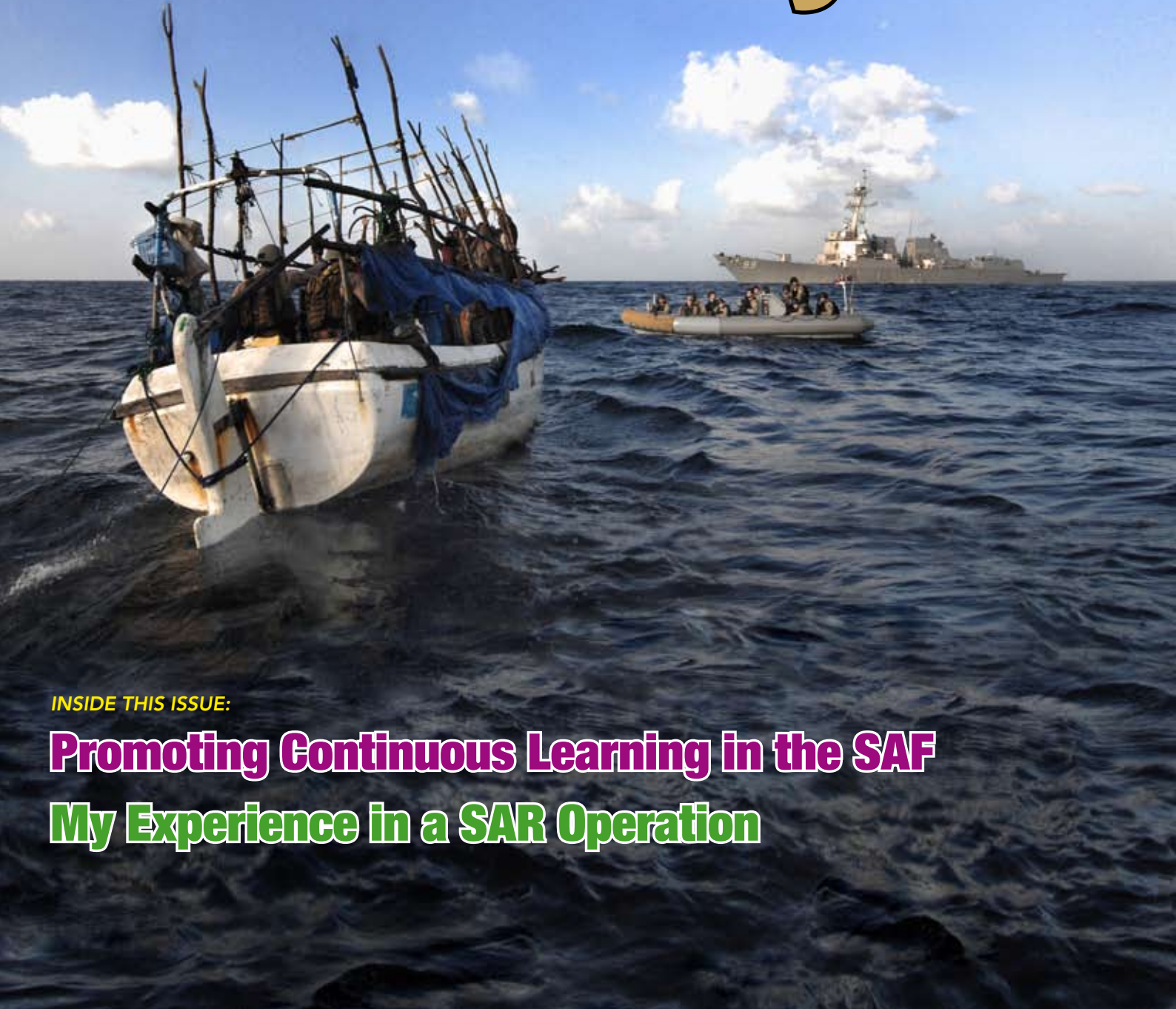


NAVY news

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ISSUE 01 2010

RSN at the Helm & Heart of CTF 151



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My Experience in a SAR Operation

Navy News

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Photo by
USS FARRAGUT,
home of the SAF
team in command
of CTF 151



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Photo by CFC (NS) Lai Jun Wei
Text by PTE Low Jun Feng
Extracted from his song
"What Would You Do"
written for TRACOM
Total Defence Day 2010

A Word from CNV



RADM Chew Men Leong
Chief of Navy

The sea lines of communication (SLOC) are what interconnects the world, and Singapore has long believed that the security of those lines is the responsibility of the whole international community. As a country at the crossroads of international trade and shipping, our role, not only as a user state, but as a responsible member of the international community means that we have to do our part in ensuring Maritime Security. A continued example of our commitment is our role in the international counter-piracy efforts of the Combined Task Force 151 off the coast of Somalia.

RADM Bernard Miranda took over command of CTF 151 on 20 Jan and is currently leading the command team, comprising officers from across the SAF. Officers from partner navies like the United States Navy, the Republic of Korea Navy, the Royal New Zealand Navy and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Navy have also been incorporated into the team to expand the level of international collaboration.

The SAF command team has a wide role to play in helping the international community fight the scourge of piracy in that area. Apart from having to optimise the deployments of available naval assets to ensure the safe transit of ships through the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor, the command team also has to be ready to move into action with partner navies should pirates remain undeterred.

It is clear that the wide range of experience that the SAF gained from previous overseas deployments have allowed our team to hold their own while operating in such a dynamic environment. This is also in no small part due to the initiative and resourcefulness of our people, intrinsic qualities which when coupled with training of the highest quality, produces a fighting force much greater than the sum of its parts.

More than just ensuring that our Navy personnel are sent for training in their respective vocations, there are also opportunities for personal upgrading. Recently, 77 of our own took up the SAF's offer and received Continuous Learning Academic Study Scheme (CLASS) awards, 21 for degrees, 36 for diplomas and 20 for ITE/Higher NITEC courses. It is a record number of awards for the RSN. It is my sincere hope that more will join their ranks.

MINDEF and the SAF will continue to expand these opportunities for self-development as we believe that higher qualifications and skill sets translate to enhanced operational outcomes. A comprehensive Continuing Education framework is being formulated for our Officers in the Enhanced Officers Scheme, our Military Experts in the new Military Domain Experts Scheme (MDES) and Warrant Officers in the Enhanced Warrant Officers Scheme. Fundamental to this scheme is the development of talented and capable uniformed personnel with deep specialisation in specific military competencies.

A majority of our naval personnel, including many of our long-serving warrant officers, will be embarking on this new journey as Military Experts come 1 Apr. I am glad that they have opted to embark on MDES and remain committed to providing their leadership, expertise and experience in the realisation of the 3rd Generation Navy.



Courtesy Calls



ADM Khamthorn Pumhiran
Commander-in-Chief
Royal Thai Navy



ADM Jacques Launay
General Inspector for Joint Forces
France



VADM Andrea Campregher
Deputy Secretary General of Defence and
Deputy National Armaments Director
Ministry of Defence Italy



VADM Ferdinard S. Golez
Flag Officer in Command
Philippine Navy



RADM Hardiwan
Assistant Chief of Staff (Logistics)
Indonesian Navy



RADM Michael Mollenhauer
Deputy Commander-in-Chief, FLEET
German Navy



RADM He You
President,
Aeronautical Engineering College
People's Liberation Army (Navy)

QuickRep



NDU 38th Anniversary and Appreciation Day

Naval Diving Unit (NDU) commemorated its 38th Anniversary and Appreciation Day on 11 Dec 09. Its staff celebrated with a visit to the Battle Box at Fort Canning Hill, the Civilian War Memorial and the Civil Defence Heritage Gallery. The celebration was rounded off with a cake-cutting ceremony to mark the anniversary of NDU.



40th JWOC Graduation Ceremony

CNV RADM Chew Men Leong graced the 40th Joint Warrant Officer Course (JWOC) graduation ceremony held at the Chevrons on 17 Dec 09. 52 Master Sergeants were promoted and joined the ranks of the Naval Warrant Officers Corp. MSG Eric Chua of Naval Plans Department (NPLD) did the RSN proud by bagging the course's Book Prize award.

Graduates of the 1st SFQC!

On 18 Dec 09, three RSN personnel were among the 17 graduates who received the coveted Special Forces tab from CNV RADM Chew Men

Leong at the graduation ceremony of the inaugural Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC).



Commander 3rd Flot Change-of-Command Ceremony

COL Li Lit Siew took command of the 3rd Flotilla from outgoing Commander COL Bernard Miranda on 18 Dec 09. The Change-of-Command ceremony was witnessed by FLEET Commander RADM Joseph Leong at the FLEET auditorium.

62nd MIDS Commissioned

52 midshipmen of the 62nd Midshipman Course were

commissioned on 19 Dec 09 by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Mr Teo Chee Hean at SAFTI-MI. 2LT Bernard Toh received the coveted Sword-of-Honour. The recipients of the Swords-of-Merit were 2LT Nelson Chua, 2LT Tan Jin Chuan, 2LT Leow Tien Leng and 2LT Lim Wei Yuan.





Spreading the Festive Joy!

The Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) marked the end of the year together with the residents of the Society for the Aged Sick on 23 Dec 09. Almost 240 personnel from the various squadrons gathered to bring laughter and Christmas cheer to the residents of the home.



NALCOM 24th Anniversary

Navel Logistic Command (NALCOM) celebrated its 24th Anniversary on 24 Dec 09 at the SAFRA Yishun. The event was marked with all NALCOM units putting together a "Symbol of Unity", comprising mechanical gears to represent the different NALCOM units working together as one in support of the RSN.



CDF visits on New Year's Eve

CDF LG Desmond Kuek paid a visit to the MSTF on New Year's Eve. He

spent some time with the crews of RSS FEARLESS and RSS RESILIENCE, who were scheduled to conduct patrols over the New Year holiday period.



RSN OSH Day cum OH Seminar

CNV RADM Chew Men Leong was the Guest-of-Honour at the 21st RSN Occupational Safety and Health Day cum Occupational Health Seminar held at the FLEET Command Building on 4 Jan. Three categories of awards—the RSN Safety Commendation Awards, the RSN Outstanding Safety Awards and the RSN Safety Poster Competition Awards were presented during the event.

RSN Mental and Dental Health Seminar

HQ RSN and NDU came together to raise awareness of the range of health and dental benefits available to RSN personnel at the Mental & Dental Health seminar on 15 Jan at the FLEET auditorium. The importance of maintaining good mental & dental health was also highlighted.

Continuing Education Awards Ceremony

Minister for Education and 2nd Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen presented the Continuous Learning Academic Study Scheme (CLASS) awards to 74 SAF warrant officers and specialists, among which 22 were from the RSN, at the Continuing Education Awards Ceremony held

at The Chevrons on 18 Jan. The recipients will be pursuing their studies at various universities. - *More details on page 8.*

OOTW Seminar

More than 400 personnel got an overview of non-conventional warfare operations, Operations Other Than War (OOTW), at a seminar held at the FLEET auditorium on 18 Jan. CNV RADM Chew Men Leong was the Guest-of-Honour.



MSTF 1st Anniversary

19 Jan marked the 1st Anniversary Celebrations of the MSTF. Personnel from HQ MSTF, 180 Squadron, 182/9 Squadron and 194 Squadron celebrated with a one-day sports gala held at Tuas Naval Base.

NMS Visit to NEWater Visitor Centre

Personnel from the Naval Medical Service (NMS) left with a better appreciation of the strategic importance of Singapore's water master plan after a visit to the NEWater Visitor Centre on 21 Jan. During the visit, they learnt about the challenges faced by Singapore in managing this critical resource and the four national taps – Local Catchment, Imported Water from Johor, NEWater and Desalinated Water.

RSN Welfare Talk

Navel Warrant Officers Council (NAVWOC) organised the inaugural RSN Welfare Talk at FLEET auditorium on 26 Jan to raise awareness amongst RSN personnel of the available welfare benefits in the SAF. Topics included Will preparation, SAF group insurance scheme and SAF welfare benefits.

the celebration were the Phua Chu Kang Pte Ltd style sitcom and a Total Defence Day song. What made it even more special was that both features were done by trainees, SCT Kunalan who wrote, choreographed and directed the sitcom script and PTE Low Jun Feng who composed the Total Defence Day song.



FLEET Total Defence Day

The FLEET Total Defence Day was held on 19 Feb at both Changi and Tuas Naval Base Auditorium. All participants penned down their thoughts by making a pledge on the "I Will" cards which were pasted on the Singapore map outline. The collective efforts in both bases saw a total of about 500 "I Will" pledges.



SAFSA Track & Field

Team Navy managed to come in as the 1st runner-up in this year's SAFSA Track & Field meet held at the Air Force Training Command stadium on 29 Jan. The team managed a total of 135 point and PTE Kunasheelan from MSTF was the top performer for the team. He clinched gold medals in the 400m, 800m and 1500m individual events as well as the 4 X 400m relay.



TRACOM Total Defence Day

Training Command (TRACOM) celebrated Total Defence Day on 12 Feb. This year, two special features of

NPLD gives back to society

In conjunction with the Lunar New Year, 28 personnel from NPLD embarked on a mission on 12 Feb to brighten the lives and flats of the less fortunate living in the Toa Payoh area. The staff and officers helped to make the homes of these elderly folks sparkling clean to usher in the Lunar New Year.

191 SQN Cohesion Day

For the NSmen of 191 SQN, they marked the end of their In-Camp Training with a Cohesion Day event. Held amidst the lush nature within Hort Park on 22 Feb, it provided an opportunity for NSmen to bring their loved ones to meet the 191 SQN family, and for many to simply catch up with one another in an informal setting.



Where We've Been



MILAN

RSS KATONG and RSS PUNGGOL participated in MILAN from 30 Jan to 11 Feb. Joining navies from 13 other countries, they discussed issues relating to maritime security, marine environment and disaster management in Port Blair, India.



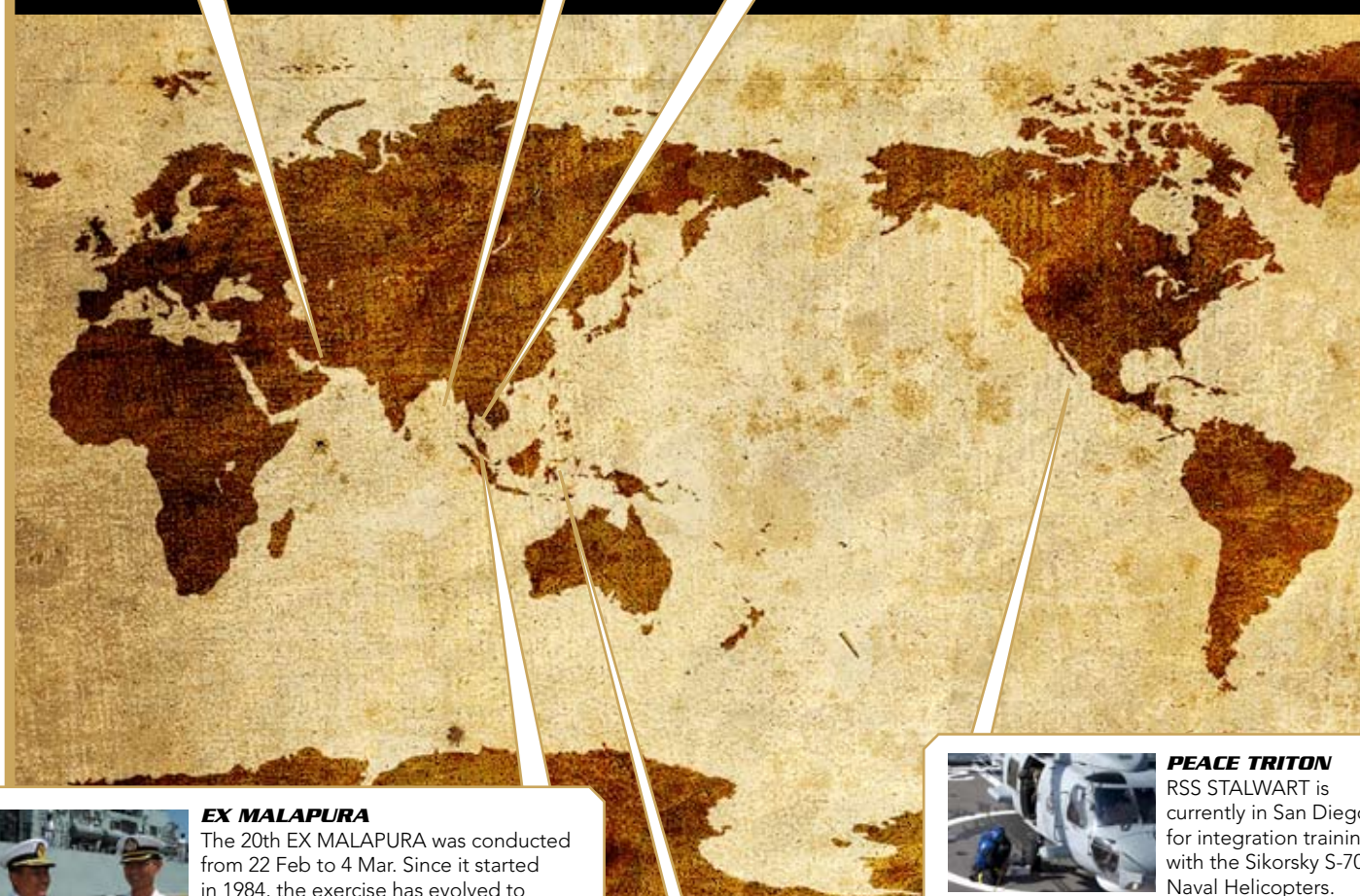
Operation Blue Sapphire

RADM Bernard Miranda took over command of the Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 on 20 Jan on board USS Hopper while pier-side in Manama, Bahrain. A send-off ceremony for the command team was held at Changi C2 Centre on 5 Jan. - More details on pages 10-13.



EX COBRA GOLD

A 132-strong SAF contingent, which included 11 RSN personnel, participated in the multinational EX COBRA GOLD in Pattaya from 1 to 11 Feb. Hosted by the Royal Thai Armed Forces, participants discussed issues relating to peace support operations and civilian evacuation.



EX MALAPURA

The 20th EX MALAPURA was conducted from 22 Feb to 4 Mar. Since it started in 1984, the exercise has evolved to include maritime security serials. It has also enhanced defence relations and interoperability with the Royal Malaysian Navy. Participating ships from the RSN included RSS STEADFAST, RSS VICTORY and RSS DARING.



PEACE TRITON

RSS STALWART is currently in San Diego for integration training with the Sikorsky S-70B Naval Helicopters.



MSTD 63/10

Midshipmen of the 63rd Batch aboard RSS PERSISTENCE called on Manado from 23 to 27 Feb. The midshipmen and crew also helped to spruce up a local secondary school and distributed stationery and sports equipment to a local primary school.

Onwards and Upwards

MSG Tay Thiam Kate (left) receiving the CLASS (Degree) award from Minister for Education and 2nd Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen (right)

Promoting Continuous Learning in the SAF

Story and Photo by Gabriel Ong

Most of us are familiar with the phrase: "He who stops learning, stops living". Indeed, learning should be a continuous process for all of us. To help our servicemen achieve their goals, the SAF provides various awards for them to further their studies at the diploma and degree levels. One such award is the Continuous Learning Academic Study Scheme (CLASS).

In his opening address at the Continuing Education Awards Ceremony on 18 Jan, Minister for Education and 2nd Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen encouraged SAF servicemen to continually pursue professional and personal development. He said: "We look forward to extending these opportunities to many more deserving warrant officers and specialists in the years to come. We believe that by developing and grooming our people, they will be better equipped to contribute to building a strong and credible SAF."

MSG Tay Thiam Kate, who received a full-time CLASS award to pursue a degree in Electronic and Electrical Engineering (EEE) in Nanyang Technological University, remarked excitedly: "I'm very honoured and

grateful to the SAF for sponsoring me twice! Pursuing this degree will allow me to engage in a deeper specialisation of EEE, thus enhancing my capability to perform at work [as a Weapon Control Specialist]." MSG Tay had earlier completed his diploma through the Joint Polytechnic-SAF Diploma Scheme.

"With my newly gained skills and knowledge, I can assist my officers in staff-related jobs and apply what I've learnt aboard submarines to rectify issues and problems more efficiently and effectively."

- 2WO Tan Boon Huat, NLD

One aspect of the new Military Domain Expert Scheme (MDES), which starts in April, is to develop the expertise of these military experts. 2WO Tan Boon Huat, an Engineering Warrant Officer from NLD has chosen to further his knowledge through studies. He received a part-time CLASS award in 2009 and is currently pursuing a degree in Engineering

(Electronics) at the SIM University (UniSIM).

"With my newly gained skills and knowledge, I can assist my officers in staff-related jobs and apply what I've learnt aboard submarines to rectify issues and problems more efficiently and effectively," 2WO Tan shared.

The SAF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UniSIM in Feb 09 on the Strategic Partnership on Continuing Education. Under the partnership, non-graduate SAF personnel can take up any UniSIM part-time undergraduate course and gain credits for their SAF Professional Military Education courses simultaneously.

Despite having to juggle work, family and studies, 2WO Tan has been able to achieve excellent results for his first year. "Fortunately, I have a very understanding family, and a very supporting and encouraging wife. My boss and officers have been very helpful too, often clarifying any queries I have even if it is regarding academic enquiries. When there's a will, there's a way. So long as you set a goal and work hard for it, nothing is impossible," 2WO Tan asserts.



My Experience in a SAR Operation

Story by CPT Goh Zi Jin Eric Photo: File Picture

While on a regular patrol in the Singapore Strait on 6 Jan, my ship (RSS FEARLESS) was diverted to respond to a maritime incident that occurred about 14nm east of Horsburgh Lighthouse. The Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) Watchfloor alerted us that a Singapore-registered tugboat, MV OCEAN LARK, with 13 crew members aboard, had taken in water and was in danger of capsizing.

My ship immediately swung into action and headed towards the location of the incident. We found MV OCEAN LARK nearly submerged, with just the stern visible. Knowing that swift action and time was critical, we gritted our teeth and prepared ourselves for the conduct of a Search and Rescue (SAR) operation.

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) declared the area around MV OCEAN LARK a Search

and Rescue (SAR) area and assumed the role of SAR Mission Commander. In addition, the MPA also made regular navigation broadcasts to alert passing merchant ships to keep a lookout for survivors. The MSTF immediately mobilised air and sea units from the RSAF and the RSN to join in the SAR operations and alerted the Indonesian Navy about the incidents, through its linkages with them.

By that evening, the Indonesian Navy responded positively by despatching their ships to assist in the SAR operation. RSS BRAVE and a RSAF Super Puma helicopter joined my ship and we worked tirelessly to comb the area. Passing merchant ships also slowed down to keep a lookout for any survivors. We were encouraged when we heard that a merchant vessel, MV PACIFIC PROTECTOR, had earlier picked up two survivors while transiting through the area.

The SAR operation continued on into the night. Though hopes of finding more survivors dwindled with each passing minute, we remained optimistic, seeing the involvement of many concerned parties. The Navigating Officer of RSS BRAVE, CPT Raymond Koh shared: "This was an unfortunate incident. Even if chances are slim, we have to remain focused and continue searching. Their families would expect that from us."

The MPA made the painful decision to call off the SAR operation on 12 Jan, after careful consideration of the situation. In the end, only seven bodies were recovered. Though everyone had hoped for a brighter outcome, the whole SAR operation brought new and real meaning to what I do in the Navy and in the Patrol Vessel Squadron. I believe that is a sentiment shared by many of my crew-mates and the others involved in the operation.

RSN at the Helm & Heart of CTF 151

Story by Gabriel Ong

Photos by MAJ Roger Lim & Courtesy of Pioneer & USS FARRAGUT

No matter where it happens around the world, incidents of piracy always gets the world's attention. The world's sea routes and seafarers form an important network of trade on which many people depend on, and members of the international community are doing all they can to ensure the security and safety of these routes. Singapore is no different, and this year, She took on a bigger role in the world's efforts by taking over the helm of the Combined Task Force (CTF) 151. The CTF was set up in response to the piracy attacks of the shipping routes of the coast of Somalia.

"Singapore recognises that sea lines of communications are interconnected. We firmly share the concerns of the international community regarding piracy. As a country dependent on international trade and shipping, a user state and a member of the international community, Singapore supports the international counter-piracy efforts made by the US-led CTF 151, Standing North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Maritime Groups,

European Union Naval Forces and countries on national tasking," said CNV RADM Chew Men Leong during the Change-of-Command ceremony for CTF 151.

RADM Bernard Miranda took over the reins from RDML Scott E. Sanders from the USN on 20 Jan with a command team comprising 29 SAF personnel

the USS HOPPER while pierside in Manama, Bahrain.

In his speech, RADM Miranda said: "While the focus of my command is to deter and disrupt piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Basin, I will also put emphasis on the readiness and optimisation of all assets and the well-being of all people involved in the day-to-day tasks of this onerous mission."

Even before taking over the watch, little effort was spared to ensure that the command team would be ready in all aspects. Discussions with the previous CTF command team and CMF began back in 2009, soon after Singapore had accepted the offer to take over command

of CTF 151. RADM Miranda shared: "Our motto is Mission Ready-Mission Excellence, our belief is that with more effort in preparation, the better we will be able to perform. I am happy with what we've done and in the words of my predecessor RDML Sanders, he has not seen a team better prepared for the mission."



RADM Bernard Miranda (left) being congratulated by RDML Scott Sanders (right) upon taking command of CTF 151

and six military personnel from the Royal Australian Navy, the French Navy, the Republic of Korea Navy, the Royal New Zealand Navy and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Navy. Commander Combined Maritime Force (CMF) VADM William Gortney and Chief of the Royal Bahrain Navy BG Al Mansoori were also present to witness the ceremony on board

Preparations were not limited to merely understanding the operations of CTF 151. In fact, a number of naval officers also had to undergo training to take on new roles. CPT Kim Jixian, who has taken on the role of a military lawyer, was even attached to MINDEF Legal Services for two-weeks on top of pre-deployment meetings with legal advisers in CMF. “Balancing our legal obligations under international law with operational realities is a key challenge that I have to overcome

on a daily basis. This requires us to be creative in discussing the *“...in the words of my predecessor RDML Sanders, he has not seen a team better prepared for the mission.”*

- RADM Bernard Miranda

various options available to ensure compliance with our legal obligations, in a way that minimises operational

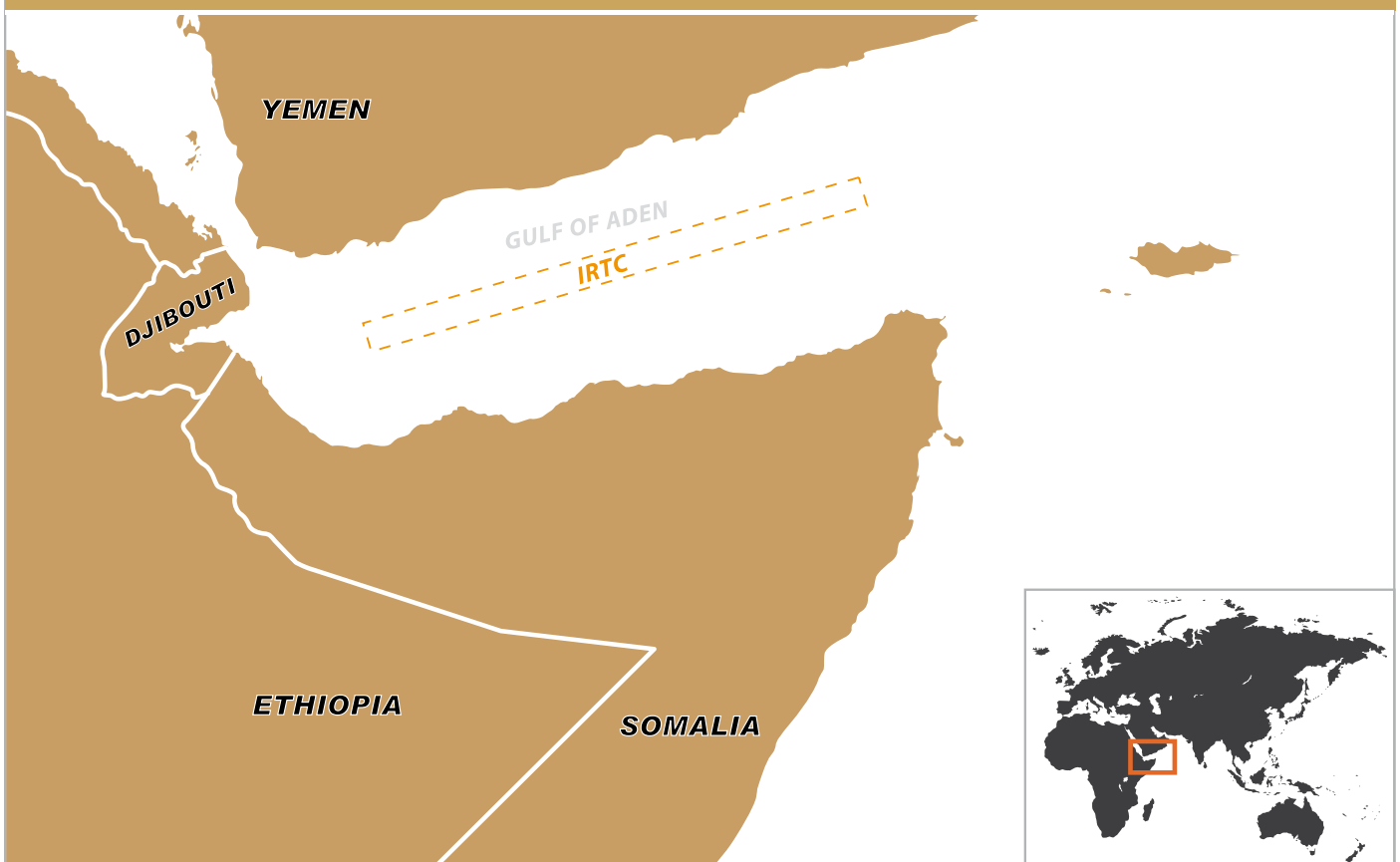
impact,” commented CPT Kim. “This mission gave me a first hand insight into the legal constraints that modern armed forces operate under in an Operation Other Than War.”

Working from the CTF 151 Flagship, the USS FARRAGUT, the command team was called to action soon after the change of command ceremony. On 29 Jan, the command team received a distress call from MV JOLLY BIANCO when

Planning counter-piracy operations with multi-national partners



The Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) off the coast of Somalia.



Now Hear This!



CTF 151 Command Team

she experienced severe engine failure while transiting through the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden.

The command team immediately co-ordinated with the Pakistani naval ship PNS KHAIBAR, who was the naval ship nearest the distressed vessel. PNS KHAIBAR was tasked to watch over the damaged MV JOLLY BIANCO while the crew carried out repairs. PNS KHAIBAR subsequently handed over the watch to the ROKS CHUNG MUGONG YI SUN-SHIN, a Republic of Korea naval ship.

Suspicious dhows and skiffs were sighted in the vicinity during the 18-hour repair, but the naval presence from CTF 151 clearly proved to be an effective deterrent to potential attack.

Just two days later, pirates attempted to attack MV ANDINET as she was transiting westernly along the IRTC. The alert Master of MV ANDINET quickly sent out a distress message, which was received by the USS FARRAGUT. She promptly deployed a SH-60B helicopter to pursue the skiffs, whilst USS PORTER gave chase



to prevent any further attacks. USS FARRAGUT finally caught up with the skiffs and sent a boarding team to stop and board the skiffs.

Another incident that came through the command team's hands was the successful prevention of the hijack of the Tanzanian-flagged MV BARAKAALE on 22 Feb. CTF 151's prompt deployment of a SH-60B helicopter and a boarding team from the USS FARRAGUT led to the capture of eight suspected pirates following the receipt of a distress call from the vigilant Master.

Though the increased presence of naval forces in the area have helped to

prevent and deter numerous attacks, the self-defensive measures of the merchant ships themselves have also played their part in reducing the number of successful attacks.

Deputy Commander Combined Maritime Forces CDRE Tim Lowe, who is from the Royal Navy, mentioned: "The importance of merchant vessels undertaking security measures to prevent pirate attacks cannot be underestimated. Although there is a significant international naval presence in the Gulf of Aden, these warships cannot be everywhere and may not always be close at hand to prevent an attack. It is therefore imperative that merchant vessels



continuously prepare for a potential attack when transiting through dangerous waters.”

Despite being a veteran in numerous overseas deployments, RADM Miranda still feels that much has been learnt during the initial weeks of the deployment: “On a daily basis we have to closely watch the force flow to ensure that the IRTC is well covered. We have to closely watch the work-rest cycles, replenishment-at-sea needs, port visits and individual ships’ readiness to balance the deployment of ships and aircraft efficiently and effectively. Everyday is a tough day as we have to be watchful 24/7 in a large and porous area. What I tell everyone is that we are ensuring the safety of an area more than a thousand times the size of Singapore.”

The learning has not only been one-way. True to form, the command team has been introducing and fine-tuning systems to help in the counter-piracy operations. These include a systematic method of marking skiffs that have been disrupted and the preparation of a planning guide for new ships that will be joining CTF 151.



Even though the command team has been putting in 18-hour workdays since joining CTF 151’s flagship, the team has managed to find time to integrate with the USN ship crew and experience some unique aspects of life on board. “Living aboard a US warship has been an interesting cultural experience for me, from the nightly movie screenings to the weekly Sunday BBQ on the flight deck. We even managed to catch the

US Super Bowl on TV!” said CPT Kim.

SSG Angela Chan Wen Hui, an operator in the Future Operations Cell summed it up for everyone. “This has been a great experience. We have learnt a lot of procedures and planning when it comes to anti-piracy operations. I am sure it will serve us all well when we return to Singapore.”

The SAF team returns home in April.



Human Resource – It's His Passion

People in Human Resource (HR) departments always have their hands full managing, not only the manpower demands of the organisation, but also, and more importantly, the varied needs and wants of the people therein. For the person at the reins, this job is even more challenging. On 25 Jan, Navy News had an exclusive interview with our very own Head Naval Personnel, LTC Alan Goh.

Story and Photos by Gabriel Ong



Thanks for this opportunity Sir. Maybe you could start off by telling us what you do:

My job entails taking charge and being responsible for the HR chain of the RSN; everything from recruitment, to sending people on scholarships, to planning for their career progression, to postings, to welfare benefits, all the way to a person's retirement. We (Naval Personnel Department) also work closely with MINDEF Manpower Division and Joint Manpower Division to work out policies that are fair and in the best interests of our people. Eminently, we strive to work with people to show them we really care for each of them and that they are not just a number to the organisation.

What are some of the challenges you face at work?

One of the biggest challenges is a lack of trust. When people do not get something they want, it's very easy to blame HR and say we (HR) didn't look out for their welfare or interests. Another challenge I have is to explain to people why certain difficult (and often unpopular) decisions that were made, had to be made.

How do you manage this challenge?

I train my staff to be the best service provider they can be. Sometimes in HR, you can have the right logic but communicating the wrong way can worsen the situation.

Can you tell us what you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy working in the best interests of our people. We are a small navy and being small gives you the chance to know people better. It's really satisfying when we do something for our people and they go away knowing that the Navy really takes care of them. Also, being in a conducive work environment where everyone looks forward to coming to work is a plus point for me.

Sounds like the RSN keeps you very busy. How do you strike a work-life balance?

It's all about having good time management. Set your priorities right and be clear on what is the most important task on hand that needs to be completed and just get down to it.

Let's go back a bit. Can you share with our readers on why you joined the navy?

I love the sea and I did lots of sea sports when I was younger. I joined the Navy in BMT because I felt I had a natural affinity with the sea. When I attended the recruitment talks 15 years ago, I knew that this was going to be something different from a "normal" job. And 15 years later, I'm glad it has turned out the way I had hoped it would.

Can you share with us what you did on your last holiday?

My wife and I went to USA last December. We visited California, San Francisco and drove to the Grand Canyon from Las Vegas. The sight (of the Grand Canyon) was beautiful. There were vast lands all around; it's like seeing nature blown up all around you. We also caught Cher in concert at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas.

And what do you like to do in your free time? What are some of your hobbies?

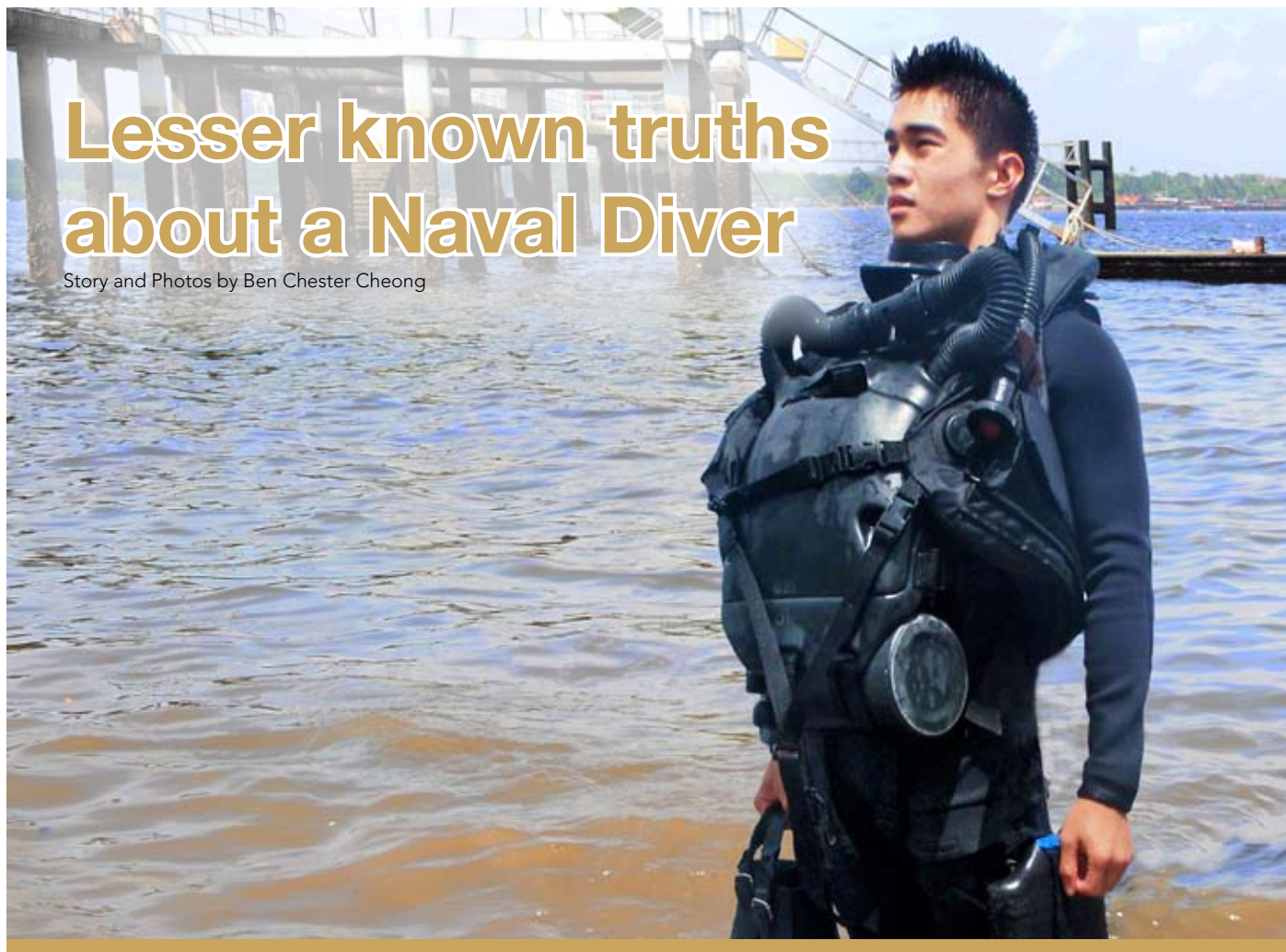
I like to catch up on sleep (laughs), exercise and play sports like basketball, soccer and ultimate frisbee. My wife, Stephanie, and I exercise together and we try to take leisure strolls in the evenings along the beach at least once a week. I also love travelling and exploring new places, reading history books and mystery novels like Robert Ludlum's Bourne trilogy. I also play computer games. In fact, I've been playing Championship Manager since secondary school!

Do you mind sharing with us what you would be doing if you didn't join the Navy?

If I wasn't in the Navy, I would probably be a Mathematics teacher!

Lesser known truths about a Naval Diver

Story and Photos by Ben Chester Cheong



Meet 3SG (NS) Daniel Chia – a naval diver with the Underwater Demolition Group (UDG). Daniel enlisted in 2008 and was happy to have been selected to undergo training as a diver. He has a strong background in sports, having been a school athlete, and then going on to representing Singapore in gymnastics in 2000 and 2002. Even though he no longer actively participates in these sports, he continues to cycle, run, swim and play soccer regularly. “I just prefer activities that are physical,” he quips, so while he found the training tough, the camaraderie was memorable.

UDG is one of three operational units within NDU and its divers

work in teams of eight, scouting out underwater conditions to locate and neutralise underwater obstacles. Divers from UDG constantly hone their skills so that they can carry out their role swiftly in times of need. One such exercise was an evaluation exercise to assess the divers’ competency to carry out a search and rescue operation. “It was held at Pulau Senang, where the sea conditions were a lot tougher, making it much more difficult to complete our tasks,” recalled Daniel.

A complete mission can take close to two hours and a majority of that time is spent underwater where the divers will be alone. “As the water can be murky, it is not possible to

see anything, let alone your buddies. So you’ve got to remind yourself to be calm underwater as there can be no room for error,” explained Daniel.

The parallel development of mental strength is often overlooked when one thinks of the training of a diver. But that is exactly what is needed in tough times, sometimes more so than mere physical strength. “During Team Building Week, all the trainees are in sufficiently good shape to put up with the physical challenges, but what sets many apart is the ability to bear it out mentally as well,” shares Daniel.

Outside of NDU, Daniel finds balance in life through penning down his

thoughts in poetry. At his young age, he is already a published author. He has written two books, the first one, entitled "teenY Thots" was done when he was just 15. The second, entitled "Growing Thots", was published just five months before he ORD-ed on 18 Jan. The first book is a collection of poems on his views of life, school and family as a teenager,

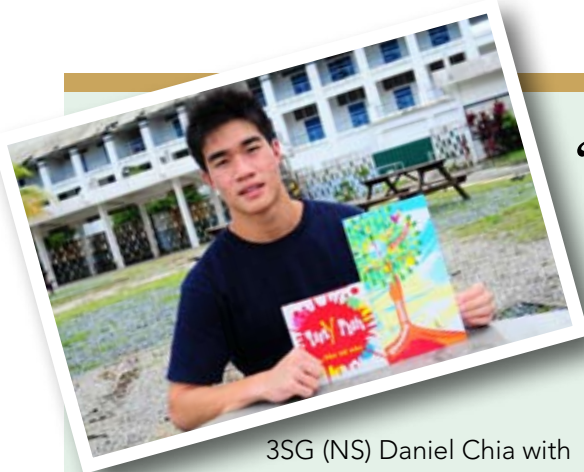
while the second book shows how his views and thoughts have changed and matured over the years.

"Publishing the book of poems about my personal thoughts was daunting. I had to bare myself to the world. It was just uncomfortable and I did not like the thought of doing so. There were many times I

wanted to give up because it was so difficult cracking my brain and searching deep within myself for the words and ideas," reminisced Daniel. However, he persevered by remembering his father's challenge to him to do something seemingly impossible and let it take fruit.

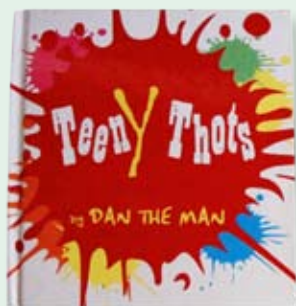
Daniel's life is always full of colour. Currently, he is employed with the Singapore Zoo as a show presenter. For now, he says it is too early to decide what he would do on a long term basis, but he intends to make his stint as a show presenter a memorable and satisfying experience, notwithstanding the long working hours and the highly unusual working environment. Clearly this is one naval diver who shows that the deeper into life you immerse yourself, the deeper you will enjoy it.

3SG (NS) Daniel Chia with his 29th Diver batch
(back row, 8th from left)



3SG (NS) Daniel Chia with
two of his published books

*"It's always others before self
Each individual's his concern
His main intention's to serve
Without expecting in return"*



This is an excerpt from Daniel's second book, Growing Thots, revealing his personal belief in servant leadership – a management leadership model that believes leaders are meant to serve the needs of the organisation's members. Daniel, as a NSman section commander, would certainly have to put these words of his into practice as he leads his UDG team to achieve the assigned mission.

Improvisation leads to Innovation for these Killer Whales

Story by Ben Chester Cheong
Photos by SSG Ang Wee Yeoh



The Killer Whale Team

The most effective suggestions are often the fruit of dire circumstance. During a regular patrol in the Singapore Strait in Aug 08, a valve aboard RSS FREEDOM gave way without warning, causing the ship's bilge to fill with water. While the ship's pumps automatically started to de-water the ship, one concern of SSG Ang Wee Yeoh, Chief Engineering Naval Specialist, was how to gauge the effectiveness of the pumps. Excessive sea water in the ship could potentially damage the ship's equipment and compromise her operational readiness.

If the pumps were adequate, then the water level would fall steadily. Currently, water levels are estimated based on the crew's training and experience. Fortunately, the valve was quickly replaced and the ship completed the patrol without further incident.

Once back alongside, SSG Ang and his WITs Team "Killer Whale" knew that there had to be a better, quicker, safer and more accurate way

to estimate water levels in the bilges. They began by pasting coloured tapes at regular intervals on the bulkhead of the bilges to indicate the water level. However, they found that the tapes were difficult to actually see in the dark bilges. They improved on their first effort by then using a "glow-in-the-dark" material for the tapes and the Damage Control Level Indicator was born.

"11 of these Damage Control Level Indicators have already been implemented aboard RSS FREEDOM, and there are plans to equip all the Patrol Vessels in the squadron by Apr 10," explained a proud SSG Ang. "The accuracy of the water level is important not only to the ship, but also to our headquarters. Better and more accurate information can help them decide if secondary support is needed in an emergency."

Damage Control Level Indicator in the light



Damage Control Level Indicator in the dark



Keeping the RSN Ensign Flying High

Story by Jesse Leow Photos courtesy of respective individuals



CPT Zheng Tian Yuan (centre)



LTA Shane Soo (1st from right)



MAJ Gary Ow (2nd from right)

Apart from the usual exercises and deployments, RSN sailors have also seen the world by attending foreign naval courses. While the courses aim to help the RSN build ties with our foreign friends, our sailors frequently do the RSN proud by excelling academically. Recently, three more have joined the honours roll.

LTA Shane Soo had been training at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) since 2007. Although it was a challenge to balance his military training with his academic studies, he managed to clinch the Chief of Navy award at the ADFA graduation parade in Dec 2009, becoming the sole foreign naval officer to receive such an award.

LTA Soo shared: "I feel both happy and proud. Representing Singapore in a foreign military establishment has taught me to maintain discipline

and professional standards at all times. More importantly, it has taught me how to relate to my Australian counterparts better which has contributed to my understanding of regional security."

Echoing his view is Commanding Officer RSS GALLANT MAJ Gary Ow, who had completed the Indonesian Naval Command and Staff Course in 2009. "This course also gave me the chance to build personal relationships with the Indonesian Navy's Officers. This could be invaluable in future efforts to enhance the linkages between our navies. It has also expanded my scope to look beyond the South-East Asian region." MAJ Ow's academic paper for the course was recognised as the best amongst the foreign students.

Although he was filled with trepidation when he was nominated

for the Royal Brunei Armed Forces Junior Staff Course from Sep to Dec 09, CPT Zheng Tian Yuan from Changi Maintenance Base still did his best and did the RSN proud. He reflected: "As an engineering officer, I had initial reservations about the ops-focused course. During the first week of the course, I had to complete three papers in 24 hours and another 2500-word Service paper in just two days." Despite having to adapt to living in Brunei and a heavy course load, CPT Zheng managed to win both the Best Service Paper and the Best Research Essay.

LTA Soo summed up the attitude of these officers best: "I did what was required of myself as an officer of the RSN and did not think that I was doing anything special."

Besting the Singapore Biathlon

Story by Jesse Leow Photo: File Picture

Come 13 Mar, a large number of sports enthusiasts will be gathered at the East Coast Park to take part in the biggest biathlon in the local sporting calendar – the Singapore Biathlon, jointly organised by the Naval Diving Unit (NDU), the Singapore Sports Council and SAFSA, a gruelling race comprising a 1.5km open sea swim followed by a 10km run.

In this issue's Dog Watch, Navy News speaks to some veteran competitors from NDU for training and racing tips.

Effective Training

"As the event approaches, the volume of training should decrease while its intensity increases. The focus should be on race specific training at race pace," shares 3SG Lim Lu Kai. "Brick training sessions should be done – i.e. run immediately after your swim to provide race simulation training."

Energy Distribution

3SG Lim adds: "The race is rarely won from the swim. The more energy used in the water, the less energy there is available for the run. Hold back a little and end it strong." "Swim using the stroke you are most comfortable in at an effort of 70% to 85% of your maximum," offers 1WO Tan Hong Boon. SSG Tan Teck Loong, an instructor at NDU Dive

School, adds: "You should learn how to glide well in the swim and use those periods to rest your muscles. You can actually reduce your timing by a good margin."

Drafting

"Learn how to draft – it's an easy and effective way to enhance your swim time," 3SG Lim shares. This is where a swimmer overcomes the drag effect of the water by swimming closely in the wake of another.

Rest well and Have fun!

But probably the most important tip for having a successful biathlon came from 1WO Tan. "Give your body time to recover from your training in the last few days just before the race. Light stretching and activities will suffice. Remember that your experience in the Singapore Biathlon should be both challenging and fun. A 1.5km swim and 10km run is really achievable for almost anyone. Enjoy your race rather than worry about how you will do."

Transitions are the most unique part of the sport of biathlon. 3SG Lim shares "Transition has to be literally just 'in' and 'out' as it is way easier to cut off minutes from the transition than from either the swim or run."

1. Visualise and practice your plan

Have a plan of exactly what you are going to do when you enter transition and practice it. By race day, you should be on autopilot.

2. Be a minimalist

The fewer tasks you have to do in the transition area, the faster you will go. Try skipping the socks and get rid of anything you don't absolutely need. Clutter will slow you down.

3. Race Day Set-up

On race day, arrive early enough to survey the transition area and actually do your run-ups and exits so you know exactly where to go. Lay out your gear and make sure everything is where you need it and ready for your transition.

4. Multi-task

Learn how to do a few things simultaneously to keep moving in a fluid motion, like taking off your swim cap and goggles while on the run-up. Similarly, putting on your cap and sunglasses as you run is equally efficient.

And to those of you who will be sweating it out at this year's Singapore Biathlon, the editorial team wishes you the best of luck!

Backpaddle

Since its launch in 2001, the rate of participation of the Singapore Biathlon has steadily increased from approximately 860 to a record 2295

last year. Originally an initiative by the RSN, SAFSA and the Singapore Sports Council to promote the sport to Singaporeans, it has since grown

into something widely recognised as a well-organised, premier regional sporting event.

Formidable's Fabulous Langkawi Fiesta

Story by Ben Chester Cheong
Photos courtesy of crew of RSS FORMIDABLE

Fringed with long, sandy beaches yet filled with an interior of jungle-clad hills and picturesque paddy-fields, it is easy to see why Langkawi is the crown jewel of Kedah. Conjuring images of tropical romance and carefree days under swaying coconut palms, the 478.5 sq km Pulau Langkawi is the only island amongst the group of 99 islands belonging to Malaysia with any real settlement. The crew of RSS FORMIDABLE had the chance to spend some time there when they participated in the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA) exhibition last Dec.

Even with a hectic port schedule, the crew managed to catch the awe-inspiring views of Langkawi's rainforests, which are still teeming with eagles, hornbills, among many other exotic flora and fauna. A 'highlight' of the excursion was the cable car ride up Mount Mat Cincang, with a top station situated 708m above sea level. CPT Aaron Ng, who was attached to the ship for the deployment, shared: "Visitors are given the option to take walks on two separate platforms - Middle Station and Top station, where you can see the beautiful 360 degree panoramic view of Kedah and even southern Thailand." Another attraction that the crew visited at Mount Mat Cincang was Telaga Tujuh (Seven Wells) waterfalls, a collection of seven intertwined natural pools fed by seven separate waterfalls.

A vacation in Langkawi cannot end without a sumptuous feast of the local fare. The island's speciality, Laksa, can be found in stalls everywhere on the island. CPT Ng reminisced: "Made up of a fish assam base, it comes with thin rice noodles, cucumber and eggs, leaving a tangy feel with the first mouthful. The Laksa should best be taken with their own Chendol Pulut, which is bound to leave one feeling satiated and satisfied." For Navigating Officer CPT Pravin Nagarajah, it was the Nasi Campur and Nasi Kampong that left the strongest impression.



Langkawi also boasts cheap and fresh seafood, like succulent giant king prawns and lobsters. The crew happily tucked in to the sumptuous and affordable spread before moving on to the Eagle Rock Cafe for a relaxing evening of live music.

Sports enthusiasts will also find something to relish. While Langkawi plays host to the annual Ironman Malaysia competition, the less cardio-inclined can find respite at the Gunung Raya Golf Course. The

Ship: RSS FORMIDABLE

Where: Langkawi Island, Malaysia

When: 1-5 Dec 09

Purpose: To participate in the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA) exhibition, an extensive showcase by aerospace and maritime manufacturers targeting the Asia Pacific markets in the defence, enforcement and civil sectors. A total of 94 warships from Australia, India, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand and the United States of America participated.

golf course is located within an environment filled with nature. "It was an exhilarating experience. I got a chance to get very close to nature. Eagles were flying around while we enjoyed a game of golf," said Chief Weapon Electronics Specialist 2WO Teo Yeong Chiah.

Langkawi also boasts many spas and retreats where one can soothe tired muscles after a long day out. Some of the crew pampered themselves at the Sun Spa, located at Pantai Cenang near the airport. "It leaves one's skin glowing and refreshed at an affordable rate of about S\$100," said CPT Ng who experienced the full spa package. "I would remember the Langkawi escapade as an unforgettable experience."

My Sea Bag

Story and Photos by Ben Chester Cheong

Since 4 Jan, SSG Lia Chii Wen has been an Unmanned Systems Specialist with the Specialised Craft Group, HQ 1st Flotilla. His duties include actually 'driving' the Unmanned Surface Vessel or the weapon system aboard. His previous appointment was a Gunner Technician in the Ordnance and Electrical Workshop of NALCOM,

specialising in the maintenance and servicing of the Typhoon and Oto Melara weapon systems.

His most recent (and longest) sojourn at sea saw him deployed as part of the Operations Blue Sapphire Task Group as a Subject Matter Expert for the weapon systems. Some of

his other overseas deployment have brought him to the Northern Arabian Gulf, Banda Aceh, New Zealand, Australia and Thailand.

Navy News caught up with SSG Lia and asked him "What's in your sea bag?"

1



Gerber Multi-tool Plier

As a technician, this is essential as it gives me a convenient way to the tools I need to reach the defect area. For example, unscrewing electrical panels. At the same time, the built-in knife can be used in an emergency, for instance, to cut entangled ropes.

2



MityLite Submersible Torchlight

This is a waterproof torchlight, and I can even use it underwater. I attach a red filter to it so that I can use it on the bridge at night. This is important as we need to maintain light discipline at night, especially so during operations.

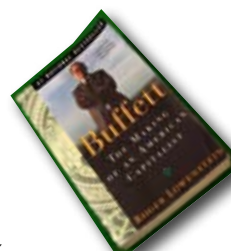
5



Eye Mask

During sailings, we share bunks. There are instances when we are resting and the lights are still on. With an eye mask, I can have a better sleep.

3



Book

I love to read before I sleep. I will spend 20-30 minutes to reading every night. I am currently reading "Buffet – The Making of an American Capitalist by Roger Lowenstein". Warrant Buffet is a successful investor in the stock market and this book gives me a better understanding of his investment tactics.

4



Sewing Kit

In case a button on my uniform drops off or there is a tear on my clothes, I can quickly sew it back. This is very convenient instead of having to buy new clothes, which can be difficult to do so during deployments.

Dana Design Backpack

This is a waterproof bag. I got this backpack from a shop in City Hall. I like it because it has a back support which makes it comfortable even with heavy loads.

Navy Speak

Spoke with our ship crew and don't understand what they meant? Fret not, let us shed light on some navy slang.

Scuttlebutt (noun)

Slang for gossip or rumour

A butt (cask) which had been scuttled by making a hole in it so the water could be withdrawn. In the past, butts of potable water had to be brought along for any voyages. Sailors used to gather around the scuttled butt to exchange gossip.



"The scuttlebutt among the crew members is that even though their CO was in a good mood, their lateness would not escape his attention."

Quiz

A cool prize package awaits the first person, below the age of 16, to send the correct answer to navynews@starnet.gov.sg. Send in your entry together with your full name, birth certificate/NRIC number and contact number.

The answer can be found on our RSN Internet website at www.navy.sg



Which year did the 1st Operation Blue Orchid take place and which LST was deployed for it?

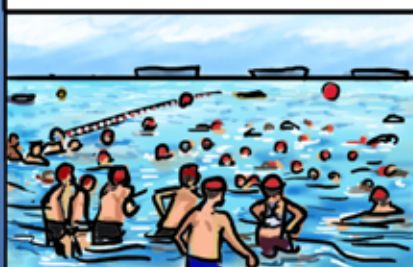
Coming Soon..



SINGAPORE BIATHLON

by Zhu Chuan

The Singapore Biathlon (which consists of a 1.5km swim and a 10km run) is held annually & is the largest and most competitive event of its kind in Southeast Asia.



Here's a guy who races ahead of the rest of the competitors.



I'm gonna be crowned this year's champion!

That should be the buoy where I make my turn!



...why's the buoy drifting further and further away?



*Should our country ever fall
would you risk it all?
Would you stay and fight
for all that is right?
Our Singaporean way of life
Our way of life!*

