

# NAVY

news

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Issue 04 2005



## Rolling Deep Impact!



**1st PSI Exercise in SEAsian Waters**

*"the collective will...to tackle this urgent threat of WMD proliferation."*

**Formidable Moves Ahead:**

*"...what you see on the surface of it is a ship but ..."*



Republic of Singapore Navy



■ RADM Ronnie Tay  
Chief of Navy

## A Word from CNV

The month of August saw the conduct of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Exercise code-named Exercise Deep Sabre, with shore activities in Singapore and a scenario-driven maritime interdiction exercise in the South China Sea from 15-19 August. The RSN played a key role as Sea Exercise Coordinator for this first-ever PSI exercise in this region, with the participation of 10 ships and 6 maritime patrol aircraft, as well as customs and other agencies from 13 countries.

The threat of proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is today more immediate and acute with the emergence of global terrorism and the greater ease of acquiring WMD and related materials in our globalised and highly inter-connected world. Given Singapore's size, openness and vulnerability, it is important that the RSN works closely with our domestic agencies as well as navies and agencies from other countries to enhance our capability in countering the threat of WMD proliferation. I am proud to see the exercise successfully conducted with strong leadership from the Fleet in coordinating the efforts from multiple agencies and navies. As a navy, we

have no doubt benefited from the close multilateral cooperation and professional sharing experienced during the exercise, all of which will contribute to the security of our seas and region.

Just a month before that, the RSN witnessed another milestone event in our history: the arrival of the first of our new frigates - RSS Formidable - from France, after a 39-day voyage stretching over 12,000nm. She will be undergoing a rigorous series of combat system trials, as will the other locally built frigates as they are progressively introduced into the Fleet. When operational a few years from now, the frigates will strengthen our Navy's capabilities and form a significant component of our transformation voyage as part of the 3G SAF.

RSS Formidable also joined our other ships at anchor off Marina South as part of the National Day Carnival. Many of our people were involved in our nation's 40th National Day celebrations, both at the National Day Parade at Padang as well as the Carnival at Marina. I would like to thank all who contributed to these celebrations, for their fine efforts, hard work and commitment in putting up a proud display for our fellow Singaporeans. Well done!

Chief of Navy's Message

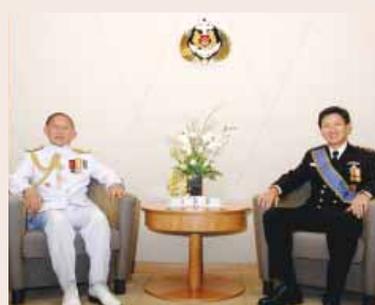


◀ Cover Page:  
Photo courtesy of  
Naval Diving Unit



◀ Back Page:  
Text by LTC Irvin Lim  
Photo courtesy of  
Changi Defence Squadron

## Courtesy Calls on CNV



■ ADM Sampop Amrapala,  
Commander-In-Chief,  
Royal Thai Navy



■ ADM Datul Ilyas Bin HJ Din,  
Chief of Navy,  
Royal Malaysian Navy

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# SAF DAY PARADE 2005



**THE** SAF Day Parade 2005, which was held at SAFTI MI on 1 Jul, marked the 40<sup>th</sup> year of the Singapore Armed Forces. His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Singapore, S R Nathan was the reviewing officer for the event. Also present at the event

were Minister for Defence Mr. Teo Chee Hean and Chief of Defence Force (CDF) LG Ng Yat Chung.

Mr. Teo presented RSS Resolution with the Best Ship Award at the parade. The Landing Ship Tank (LST) had returned earlier in the year after 6

months in the Gulf as part of Singapore's role in the multinational reconstruction efforts of Iraq. The ship was amongst the 23 SAF units that had achieved the Best Unit and Best National Service (NS) Unit Awards.

At the post-parade reception, RSN's three LSTs, RSS Endurance, RSS Endeavour and RSS Persistence received the Meritorious Service Award while 3<sup>rd</sup> Flotilla and the Naval Diving Unit received the Commendable Service Award. The President presented the awards to 33 units for their contributions in Operation Flying Eagle (OFE)

A highlight in the military calendar, the SAF Day Parade is a reminder of the importance of Military Defence. It is an occasion to renew the allegiance to the President and the Country, to remember comrades who lost their lives in the course of service in the SAF, and to give recognition to the best in the Armed Forces

-YK

# COSCOM Change of Command



**COL** Tan Wee Beng took over the command of Coastal Command from COL Chng Teow Hiang at a Change of Command Ceremony held at Tuas Naval Base on 8 July. Chief of Navy, RADM Ronnie Tay witnessed the ceremony.

In his inauguration address, COL Tan said: "COSCOM's mission

is seaward defence and ensuring the security of the Singapore Strait. It is an important mission that is crucial to the well-being of our country . . . I look forward to working closely as a team with everyone from COSCOM, and also with our partners from MPA, PCG, ICA and DSTA to achieve the mission."

COL Tan also paid tribute to the numerous achievements of COL Chng and thanked him for his contributions to the Formation. "We are fortunate to have you as the 7th COSCOM Commander, particularly as the maritime security environment has been a challenging one," COL Tan affirmed.

Prior to his new appointment as Commander COSCOM, COL Tan served as Commander Naval Diving

Unit and more recently Head of Naval Intelligence.

In his farewell speech, COL Chng said: "Given [COL Tan's] varied experience and academic achievements, I am sure that he will transform COSCOM to become a 3G organization in tandem with the SAF vision of a 3G force . . . A big thank you to everyone in COSCOM for giving your best and in so doing making my tour in COSCOM a rewarding and successful one. "

COL Chng will retire from the SAF after a meritorious 30 years of service in the RSN. He will transit to a second career with the Maritime and Port Authority.

-SW



# FAREWELL, OLD LADY!!!

**THE** date was 11 August 2005. There were no farewells, and little did the many of the onlookers know that it was the last voyage which would ever be undertaken by the Ex-RSS Intrepid (L203). The vessel was making its last voyage to a scrap yard in Chittagong, BANGLADESH.

L203 was bought from the USN by RSN in 1975 together with 4 of her sister LSTs. The ship set off on its maiden voyage with the RSN to Kaoshiung, Taiwan on 11 Jun 1977.

L203's illustrious career in RSN has seen notable operational deployments such as Ops Surya Bhaskara Jaya, a socio-economic operation that saw it deployed to various parts of the Indonesian Archipelago to participate in humanitarian operations. It also took part in International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) operations in East Timor.

L203 was finally decommissioned on 23 Nov 2000 after 23 years of sterling service with the RSN.

# RSN's Formidable move ahead



## Launch of RSS Tenacious

The Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) fourth frigate, RSS Tenacious, was launched on 15 Jul by Mrs. Lalitha Jayakumar, wife of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Law, Prof. S. Jayakumar, who officiated the ceremony. Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Defence Dr. Ng Eng Hen as well as Chief of Navy (CNV) RADM Ronnie Tay were also present for the ceremony.

In his speech, Prof. Jayakumar said that the RSN's new frigates "will be able to make a significant contribution to the defence of our nation as well as the safety and security of international waterways in our region".

Prof. Jayakumar added: "Preserving safety in navigation, combating piracy and preventing acts of terrorism – all these are the roles and responsibilities that the RSN, together with regional and extra-regional partners would have to increasingly shoulder in peacetime."

Following the launch, Prof. and Mrs. Jayakumar took a tour of the

interior of the stealth frigate.

RSS Tenacious is the third frigate to be built locally. RSS Tenacious will be undergoing harbour and sea trials following the launch.

## Enter the Formidable

After extensive periods of harbour and sea trials in France, RSN's first "Formidable" class stealth frigate, RSS Formidable made its maiden journey around the Cape of Good Hope before arriving at Changi Naval Base (CNB) on 8 Jul. CNV RADM Ronnie Tay and members of the Naval Staff were at hand to welcome the frigate and her crew.

RADM Tay and other invited guests then stepped onboard the ship for the first time and were given a tour of the various parts of the ship, and had a first-hand look at the stealth frigate's capabilities.

RADM Tay then officially unveiled the new squadron logo for 185 SQN.



Story by Mervyn Lim

Photos by Mervyn Lim, Gerald Neo & Sterling Wong



## The New 185 SQN – The Formidable Squadron

The arrival of RSS Formidable marks the start of a new beginning for 185 SQN, which has been renewed to become the new frigate squadron. The squadron has also adopted a new logo and motto.

The trident, made up of the arrows, the ship and the black wake, symbolizes supremacy at the sea. The prongs of the trident depict the capability of the frigate to engage in all three dimensions of naval warfare, namely the anti-air warfare, underwater warfare and surface warfare. The ship silhouette reflects its stealth, and the naval helicopter represents its air capability.

The new motto for the frigate squadron is "Forward with Fortitude".

## Defence Minister visits RSS Formidable

Minister for Defence, Mr. Teo Chee Hean, sailed onboard RSS Formidable on 5 Aug.

Mr. Teo was briefed on the advanced capabilities and the operational concept of the ship, as well as on the various advanced shipboard systems, weapons and sensors on board.

Commenting on how the RSN's frigates would enhance the operational capabilities of the RSN, Mr. Teo said: "the Formidable represents also one of the transformational capabilities of the SAF because what you see on the surface of it is a ship but the most important part of the ship is really the combat systems. She's able to network with other ships, aircraft, her own helicopter and shore facilities so she's really a node in the whole network warfare concept we are developing for the SAF."





# Exercise Deep Sabre 2005:

Story & Photos by Sterling Wong

## RSN Hosts One of the largest Anti-Proliferation EX

**WHAT** happens when a rogue merchant ship carrying an illegal shipment of chemicals that could be used for the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) sets sail for a portentous destination and is detected near the shores of Singapore?



That was the scenario faced by participants of Exercise Deep Sabre (XDS), a multinational maritime interdiction exercise under the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) from 15 – 19 Aug. Hosted by the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), it was the 17<sup>th</sup> such exercise of the PSI series and was also the first to be held in Southeast Asia.

Officiating at the Opening Ceremony of XDS at Changi Naval Base (CNB) on 15 Aug, Guest-of-Honour Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean said: "PSI provides the international community with a useful means of plugging the gaps in the existing counter-proliferation system. When domestic systems of export controls fail, and when the treaty regimes are circumvented, PSI creates an effective mechanism for states to work together to interdict WMD-related cargoes that

are already in transit by sea, air or land."

XDS was one of the largest PSI exercises to date, including some 2000 military, coast guard and customs personnel from 13 countries with a total of ten surface vessels, six maritime patrol aircrafts (MPAs), nine boarding teams including numerous experts and observers. The RSN fielded 400 personnel, 3 ships and two MPAs for the exercise. Among the ships involved were RSS Endurance and RSS Vigour.

Besides Singapore, other participating PSI nations included Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Observers from Asian countries like Brunei, Malaysia, Pakistan and Vietnam were also invited to the 5-day long exercise to join in the proceedings.

Participants of XDS engaged in an intensive series of activities, including a shore-based table-top exercise covering discussions on international law and inter-operability with harbour training in ship-boarding exercises.

The intensive two and-a-half day sea phase of the maritime interdiction exercise began with the collection of intelligence on the rogue ship. Participants from the PSI nations then set up a Combined Coordination Centre (CCC) in CNB where they met and deliberated on the options they could take in order to search for and interdict the vessel that was suspected of carrying WMD-related material.

Sea-phase participating countries (Singapore, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America) then deployed their maritime and air assets





to detect and trail the rogue ship transporting the shipment of dual-use chemicals which was found traveling in the international waters of the South China Sea. When the request for the ship to voluntarily divert to Singapore's port for a search was rejected, flag state consent was sought and given for the ship to be interdicted and diverted to Singapore for the port search.

A team from the RSN's Naval Diving Unit (NDU) was first to board the vessel. After the ship was secured by the NDU team, follow-on forces from the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Explosive (CBRE) Defence Group, the Japan Coast Guard and Australian Customs Service boarded the vessel and conducted a preliminary search and investigation.

Following indications of a suspicious cargo on board, the ship was then escorted back to Pasir Panjang Port for a more extensive by domestic enforcement agencies.

Speaking to the media, Exercise Director RSN Fleet Commander RADM Chew Men Leong said: "The gathering of assets here [for the exercise] is really a demonstration of the collective will of PSI nations in coming together to tackle this urgent threat of WMD proliferation. And we hope XDS can help contribute to enhance the ability of PSI nations to come together, work together in a cooperative and coordinated manner to tackle the issue of WMD material proliferation."

The event concluded on 19 Aug with a Closing Ceremony where commanders of the participating ships and aircrafts and heads of the various agencies were presented with a commemorative plaque each by Chief of Navy RADM Ronnie Tay.

"I have participated in many exercises throughout my career and this is the smoothest ever. Everything happened right on time, right on schedule!" said CDR Andrew Cully, Captain of USS John Paul Jones.



## JOINT MINEX 8/05



THE Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and the Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) conducted a bilateral mine-clearance exercise in the waters off Pulau Bintan and the Philip Channel from 18 to 22 Jul 05. The RSN deployed two 'BEDOK' Class Mine Countermeasure Vessels (MCMVs), RSS BEDOK and RSS PUNGGOL, with the TNI-AL sending two 'KONDOR' class minesweepers, KRI PULAU RIMAU and KRI PULAU RAIBU to participate in the exercise.

EX Joint Minex was first initiated in 1997 with a focus on MCM training. Over the years, the exercise has expanded in depth and scope achieving greater operational capabilities and enhancing bilateral relations between the two navies' MCM Squadrons. This year's exercise scenario saw the two navies conducting MCM operations in a combined effort to ensure that shipping through the waterways are not endangered by mines laid by terrorist groups.

The RSN and the TNI-AL share warm and friendly defence relations. Ex Joint Minex 8/05 has once again enhanced professional interaction and helped to foster mutual understanding and friendship between the two navies.

- Article contributed by LTA Qua Kian Chun

# National Day Parade 2005:

Story by Lin Yuankai  
Photos by Gerald Neo,  
Sterling Wong & Mervyn Lim

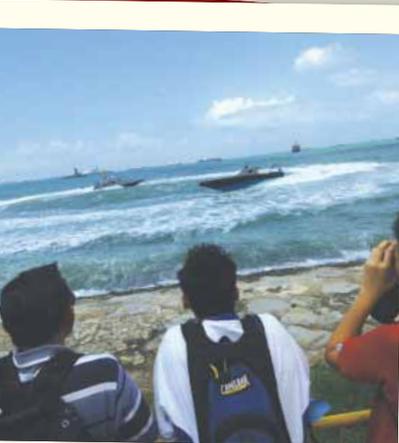
## Celebrating 40 Years of Nation Building!

**BACK** to the Padang for a Birthday Bash!

Singaporeans were treated to an intense and thrilling array of performances at the Padang on 9 Aug to celebrate our nation's 40th birthday. Centred around the theme '40 Years of Nation Building', NDP 2005 aimed to showcase the pride and patriotism of all Singaporeans as we reflect upon our last 40 years of nation building and achievements. NDP 05 paid tribute to our elder generation of citizens as well as celebrate the vitality and dynamism of our younger generation.

A special feature of this year's parade was a series of large-scale celebrations which were also held simultaneously at Yishun, Tampines, Jurong East and Marina South. 'Live' feeds allowed all the spectators at different venues to interact via real-time visuals and sound as they watched the entire event comprising of an array of performances such as the show segment, the parachuting of the Red Lions, the fly-past by the RSAF and the crowd-favourite armoured mobile column which is a regular feature on occasions when NDP was held at the Padang.

The impressive parade and dazzling displays ended with the big bangs of iridescent fireworks shooting skywards to light up the cloudy canopy above as nightfall beckoned on the happy island.



## All Aboard 'Naval Country'!

As part of the Total Defence showcase at the Carnival@Marina, a 'Naval Country' comprising of the different classes of RSN ships were anchored offshore at Marina Bay. The public also had a chance to catch a glimpse of RSN's first state-of-the-art frigate, RSS Formidable.

More than 50 000 members of the public were estimated to have visited 'Naval Country' and the exhibition booths set up by the RSN. Around 17 000 rode onboard the Fast Craft Utility (FCU) and Fast Craft Equipment and Personnel (FCEP) on their journey to tour the Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs) - RSS Endurance and RSS Persistence.

Those who did not get the opportunity to participate in the tours did not leave 'Naval Country' disappointed either. Members of the Naval Diving Unit (NDU) demonstrated their operational capabilities to the public, simulating an assault on a terrorist ship carrying bio-hazardous materials. From their skilful handling of their Interceptor craft to their fearless boarding of the target ship, members of the public watched in awe through the sea of gasps and applause, especially from the little ones.

The displays were a focal point of the Total Defence showcase at the carnival. Not only did they feature the cutting-edge hardware and capabilities of the RSN, they also demonstrated the overall operational readiness and resilience of our personnel.

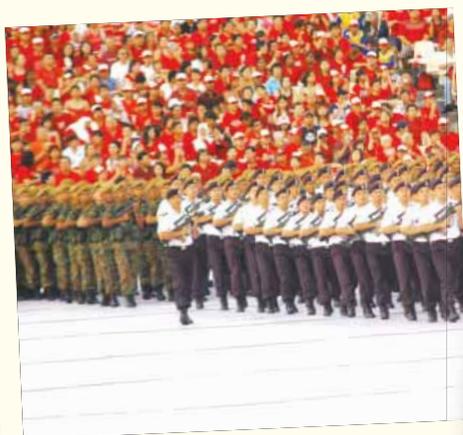
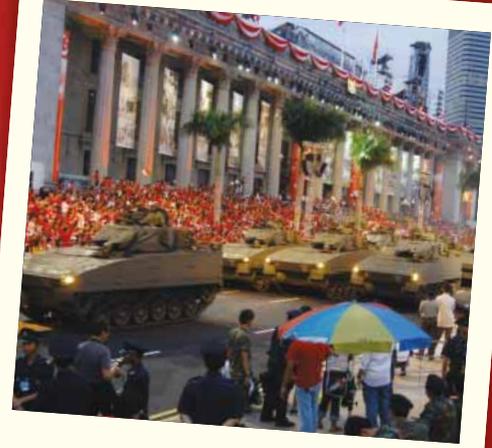
## Words from our Parade Commander

'Practice makes perfect' may be the ultimate cliché but it is one that this year's National Day Parade Commander truly believes in. Deputy Commanding Officer 185 SQN LTC Choon Soon Onn elaborated: "Every rehearsal and walkthrough is a different experience due to the ever-changing variables such as the weather conditions and even the sound system. However, the training and preparation helped to condition me to overcome any anxiety or nervousness that could have set-in."

LTC Choon is no newcomer when it comes to such events. He also had the honour of being also been RSN's Guard-of-Honour Contingent Commander back in 1992. Therefore, he is quick to attribute the success of the event to "not only the men and women you see on television but also the sheer hard work and sacrifices by the unsung heroes who have always been working behind the scenes."

Having to juggle the duties of a Parade Commander and a senior commander in the RSN is certainly no easy task for any individual. LTC Choon explained that time management was of the utmost importance as he had to manage his schedule efficiently.

Last but not least, he expressed his utmost gratitude to his wife Caren who has been "actively supporting him through this 'NDP Journey' and also CNV RADM Ronnie Tay for allowing him to experience the momentous occasion."



# SAFOS & SMS Scholarship

**THE** Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) annually awards highly talented men and women with scholarships to pursue their studies, with the aim of recruiting the brightest to serve in MINDEF and the SAF. These young scholars not only shine academically but they have proved themselves as well-rounded leaders as well.

This year, two Midshipmen were awarded the prestigious SAF Overseas Scholarship (SAFOS) and another two Midshipmen were awarded the SAF Merit Scholarship (SMS).

MIDS Colflesh Khoon Liat Robert and MIDS Ng Zi Ming were both presented the SAFOS on 13 Aug by Minister for Defence, Mr. Teo Chee Hean at a ceremony held in Temasek Club.

When asked why he decided to sign on with the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), MIDS Colflesh, who will be pursuing a degree in Economics & Government at the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom (UK), said: "I've an interest in the Navy and I've always wanted to join the Navy and with that interest in me, I feel that my contribution towards the RSN in the future will come naturally."

MIDS Ng, who will be reading Economics at University College London, UK, felt thankful to be awarded the scholarship. He also spoke on his time as a Midshipman. He said: "Being in the MIDS wing has given me the opportunity to experience something very different from the rest, especially so in terms of peer leadership, which is

unique to the MIDS wing itself. There were many challenges we faced in getting people to agree to what you say. But through these experiences, my character got refined and it has enabled me to develop better leadership skills."

MIDS Neo Wei Siong and MIDS Winnie Tan were two out of the six recipients of the SMS this year. They received their swords and certificates from Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Defence, Dr. Ng Eng Hen on 15 Aug.

MIDS Neo will be doing his degree in Psychology at University of Michigan in the United States of America. He said: "This scholarship is actually a bonus to me. From a very young age, I wanted to sign on with the Navy as I was very interested in the defence of Singapore and I wanted to play a part in it. I'm also attracted to the culture that the Navy has, which is very much more family oriented. I'm a person who believes strongly in relationships between people, so that suited my life values. There is also the fact that the Navy has a big exposure to other countries when we go sailing which allows me to experience and learn from people of other cultures and backgrounds."

Having represented her college in sailing, joining the RSN seemed to be a natural path for MIDS Tan to take. "When I first considered a military career, joining the Navy was always the first thing on my mind. I felt that this is where I could develop myself the most and hence contribute the most and be

able to serve the nation the best in the Navy." MIDS Tan will be pursuing a degree in Sociology in London School of Economics, UK.

*Navy News* wishes all the best to our 4 scholars.

- ML



■ SAFOS Scholars MIDS Colflesh Khoon Liat Robert (left) and MIDS Ng Zi Ming



■ SMS Scholars MIDS Winnie Tan (left) and MIDS Neo Wei Siong

# SAF NSmen of the Year Award

**THE** Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) NSmen of the Year Awards were given out on 22 Jul at the Raffles City Convention Centre. The event was graced by Minister for Defence, Mr. Teo Chee Hean.

Introduced in 1994, the award is given out in recognition of the outstanding NSmen who have displayed professionalism and commitment beyond their call of duty.

CPT(NS) Lee Kit Tong, 41, is the sole recipient of the award from the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).

CPT(NS) Lee left the RSN 11

years ago and has been an engineer with ExxonMobil ever since. On winning the award, CPT(NS) Lee credits his current job for helping him "bring in a fresh perspective" when he is back with the RSN for his reservist training.

CPT(NS) Lee said: "Things have changed now from the time when I was in the RSN, so my experience in the private sector has helped me tackle the problems presented to me in a different perspective."

Along with CPT (NS) Lee, there were 12 winners for the SAF NSmen of the Year Award 2005.



■ CPT (NS) Lee with his wife at the award ceremony

- ML

# Operation Flying Eagle Medal Presentation

THE SAF Tsunami Relief Operation 2004 Medal Presentation Ceremony was held at the Fleet Command Building Auditorium in CNB on 25 Jul 05. In recognition of the efforts and sacrifices of the men and women of the RSN in Operation Flying Eagle, CNV RADM Ronnie Tay presented the SAF Tsunami Relief Operation 2004 Medal to 246 personnel deployed for the mission. In addition, Letters of Commendation and Certificates of Appreciation were also presented to 50 individuals for their support.

RADM Tay not only praised the fine men and women of the RSN for their "hard work, professionalism and

determination" but also gave thanks to their families, loved ones and friends as all their "sacrifices and support were crucial to the peace of mind that our people needed to carry out their mission single-mindedly."

OFE, the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operation in response to the Boxing Day Asian tsunami, was the largest mission ever undertaken by the SAF. The award recipients were from various RSN units, namely the 3 Landing Ship Tanks -RSS Endurance, RSS Persistence and RSS Endeavour, 3<sup>rd</sup> Flotilla HQ, 195 SQN, NDU, NALCOM and the Naval Medical Service.

- YK



# 53rd Batch Midshipmen Commissioning Parade

Some 315 officer cadets (OCTs), including 26 Midshipmen (MIDS), from the Singapore Armed Forces were commissioned as officers on 24 July in a parade graced by Minister for Home Affairs, Mr. Wong Kan Seng held at SAFTI MI.

The parade marked the successful completion of 42 weeks of rigorous training. This was the third cohort of OCTs to be commissioned this year, and seven were awarded Swords-of-Honour as recognition of their noteworthy performance during their course.

Among them was MIDS Sword of Honour 2LT Lim Lek Wee who

reflected: "Because the course was very intense and there was a lot of studying involved as well, I have learnt to be more disciplined and to know how to manage my time well".

The newly commissioned naval officers will be assigned to combat, instructional or staff appointments in the various units of the RSN. 2LT Lim said: "it's great to finally graduate, but at the same time, I feel a little sad because this is be the last time our batch of MIDS will all be together for one course. After this many of us will go our separate ways."

Also present at the parade were Chief of Defence Force LG Ng Yat



Chung, Chief of Army MG Desmond Kuek and Chief of Navy RADM Ronnie Tay, Members of Parliament and grassroots leaders.

- SW

# 31<sup>st</sup> JWOC Promotion Ceremony and Dining-In

29 Jun signified the graduation of 109 personnel from the 31<sup>st</sup> Joint Warrant Officer Course (JWOC). Chief of Air Force MG Lim Kim Choon was the Guest of Honour for the Promotion Ceremony and Dining-In held at Orchid Country Club.

16 specialists from the RSN were promoted to the rank of 2WO after passing this course. WO Jaysankar from Tuas Defence SQN was chosen to be the Course Leader. He mentioned: "This well-designed course incorporating learning approaches such as, Sharing of Experiences, Experiential, Problem-based, Scenario-based Learning have equipped and instilled in me with the know-how and essential knowledge to be an effective Warrant Officer."



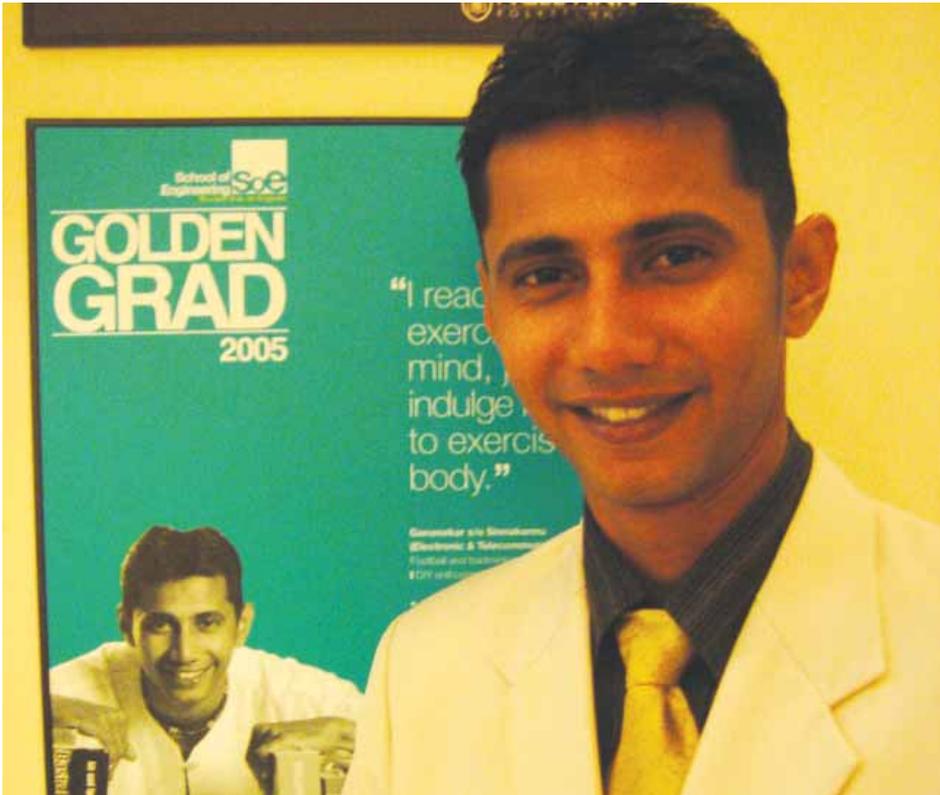
Navy News would also like to congratulate 2WO Koh Ah Beng from 188SQN HQ as the RSN's recipient for the book prize. He said: "This course, besides providing opportunity for networking with our comrades from the Army and Air Force also make better understand, work and view things in a wider perspective".

The 9 week JWOC, conducted by Singapore Armed Force Warrant Officer School (SAFWOS), aims to equip the graduates with leadership qualities and relevant skills to be effective Warrant Officers, essential for serving as vital linkages between the higher management and sailors in our naval ships and establishments.

-Contributed by MWO Lim Chock Sing

# Never Too Old, Never Too Late

Story by Mervyn Lim,  
Photos courtesy of SSG Gana Sekar



■ SSG Sekar with a poster of him which is displayed on the walls of the school.

"**ONE'S** never too old to learn in this life-long journey". This is especially apt for SSG Ganasekar, Chief-Radar Navigation System on board RSS Resilience.

SSG Sekar, as he is better known as, has just graduated with a diploma in Electronics and Telecom Engineering (ETE) from Ngee Ann Polytechnic, where he studied under the Joint Poly-SAF Diploma scheme at the age of 31.

At the age where most people would be already thinking of settling down, why would SSG Sekar think of hitting the books once again?

SSG Sekar, who had only an O-Level qualification prior to his diploma, said: "My grades then were good enough to enter a polytechnic, but I wasn't interested then."

But after having a career and a family, SSG Sekar felt that he wanted to achieve more. He said: "From young, I wanted to achieve many things. Another thing that kept me going was my daughter. I wanted to set an example for her that you can achieve whatever you set out to do as long as you stay focused."

SSG Sekar said that at the initial stage of his polytechnic education, he felt rather weird as he was at least a decade older than most of his peers. However, he managed to fit in eventually and he was someone they looked up to as a leader due to his

work experience.

"I even ended up being "Counter-Strike" buddies with them," he said with a laugh as he recounted on how he used to go LAN gaming with his classmates.

As hard as he played, he also had to juggle between his family and his school work as well which was nothing short of sheer hard work and determination.

"I really want to thank my wife for being so understanding because most of the time I would be hitting the books," SSG Sekar said. "I also had to spend time with my daughter. From the time that I come home after school, which is usually about 5 p.m., I would play and spend time with my daughter as she was only two years old then. Once she goes to sleep at about ten, I would start my revision which would go all the way till 2 a.m. and I would have to go back to school in the morning."

As hectic as his daily routine was, he never gave up and his hard work paid off. SSG Sekar achieved 30 distinctions and five As out of the 35 modules he took over the three years and was awarded the Micron Gold Medal Award, which was presented to the top graduate in his course. He was also awarded the M1 Prize (overall outstanding academic performance in ETE course), the SIAE prize (most

outstanding academic prize in the Avionics Option), a Silver Certificate of Achievement for his involvement in Co-Curricular Activities, 11 Module prizes, 3 Overall Best Performance Awards, three Outstanding Academic Awards and a STAR Award for academic excellence.

And as a testament of his willingness to help his fellow course mates, SSG Sekar was also awarded the kindness award for rendering academic help to weaker students.

SSG Sekar thanks his former Commanding Officer, COL Choo Ah Choon, now Project Director with Frontier Project Office for his support during his three years of studies. He said: "COL Choo was very helpful and he kept giving me lots of encouragements. This really made me really want to shine in my studies and to live up to expectations."

SSG Sekar's achievements truly show that his naval work experience and the maturity that comes with age can be winning assets when it comes to seeking excellence through life-long learning!



■ SSG Sekar receiving his award from Mr Uwe Fisher, Senior Manager of NSITE Test Systems, CISCO Systems Inc.



■ A shot of the Micron Gold Medal Award for the top graduate of the ETE Course

# Asia's First 'Perisher' Survives!

Story by Lin Yuankai,  
Photos courtesy of LTC Foo



***"SOME missions were meant to be 'aborted'..."***

*- LTC David Foo, Commanding Officer of RSS Centurion and first Asian graduate of the 'Perisher' Course*

Ducking under charging warships as they surge forward above at 30 knots.

Navigating through dangerous obstacle courses.

Being under extreme pressure.

Because one mistake may lead to the end of their submarine careers.

Welcome to an action-packed (and definitely not for the faint-hearted) day in internationally sponsored Netherlands Submarine Command Course (SMCC). Navies from around the world send their prospective submarine commanders to undergo this four-month course, which assesses their tactical ability, stamina and leadership to command a submarine. The SMCC is far from a 'guaranteed-pass' course. In fact, it is internationally nicknamed the 'Perisher' course because an average of almost 40% of the participants fail to graduate from their batch.

Meet LTC David Foo. The Commanding Officer of RSS Centurion who graduated from the 2005 batch of

SMCC. Making his feat more impressive is the fact that LTC Foo remains the only Asian who has successfully completed the course!

Despite his impressive achievement, LTC Foo is quick to point out that the SMCC was far from a piece of cake. He explains: "All the students had to sleep in modified torpedo beds and had to stand in a limited space for planning and preparations. There was always sleep deprivation as the workload was continuously demanding, given that most operations were given at short notice in a multi-dimensional high-threat environment"

Presently, LTC Foo remains the only RSN participant of the 'Perisher' course. However, LTC Foo believes that the SMCC is beneficial to the RSN as it "subjects a RSN submariner to evaluation by an internationally recognised training and assessment system for submarine commanders."

In most of the other navies, the 'Perisher' course is a career requirement for submarine officers. However, LTC Foo firmly believes that he has personally benefited from the course as well. Not only has he gained more insight into aspects of leadership and management, but he has also learnt to "recognise his own limitations." He explains: "You need to not only possess determination to do well in the SMCC but also self-discipline. Some

of the missions were designed for the commander's judgement to confirm if it was dangerous to continue. They were meant to be aborted. Even the nature of the missions could have had double meanings in them."

Given the high failure rates and the demanding standards of the 'Perisher' course, would LTC Foo still recommend his colleagues to attempt to follow in his footsteps?

"Go for it!" He exclaims without hesitation. He elaborates: "There is no other submarine course that has the same legendary status as the SMCC. Furthermore, you'd be hard-pressed to find another course that can match the amount of resources and effort devoted to the 'Perisher'."

Radiating a quiet, but calm and confident aura throughout the interview, LTC Foo's words highlighted his confidence in his fellow RSN submariners: "We have all been imbued with the 'Never Say Die' attitude. Quitting is never an option. Coupled with our high training standards, I believe that every one of my colleagues has the potential to survive the 'Perisher'!"



# Making New Waves – RSN’s First Female LTCs

Story by Sterling Wong  
Photos courtesy of featured individuals

**THROUGHOUT** their careers, they’ve created history and these two ladies have done it once again. With their recent promotions, which took effect in July, LTC Tay Poh Ling and LTC Lam Ee Her became the first two ladies to achieve the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel (LTC) in the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).

Both ladies were amongst the first Female Naval Officers (FNO) in the RSN, with LTC Tay having enlisted as part of the first batch of FNOs in late 1990 and LTC Lam the second batch in 1991.

LTC Tay, the Deputy Commanding Officer of 121 SQN and LTC Lam, currently a student at the Singapore Command and Staff College, were amongst the first female Commanding Officers of RSN vessels. LTC Tay was the very first FNO to hold command of RSS Fearless, an anti-submarine patrol vessel (APV) and she subsequently took command of RSS Sea Scorpion. LTC Lam was first FNO to hold command of RSS Freedom, a patrol vessel (PV).

When asked how she felt about being the first female LTC, LTC Tay expressed her thanks for “the wonderful crew that [she] had onboard RSS Sea Scorpion, who worked tirelessly in all the tasks assigned. Some examples were their successful hit during a Missile firing in 2003, their 57mm gun shooting down the towed target during two routine Anti-Air firing exercises,

LTC Lam attributed her success to “a good working environment and excellent support from colleagues and

superiors at INTO, TRACOM and also COSCOM, with whom I have worked closely with and have learnt much from over the years and I am very thankful for the knowledge and experiences they have shared with me, their guidance, advices and support, especially from my previous Commanding Officers, Col Choo Ah Choon and LTC Alex Yit”.

Looking ahead, LTC Lam said that the promotion was not going to change the way she worked because “as officers, we always play our part to be the best we can be”, but she “looks forward to giving back even more to the RSN”.

LTC Tay elaborated: “The promotion is not ‘the end’; it merely marks another phase of my journey here with the RSN. It’s definitely a phase with even greater responsibility and challenges.”



■ LTC Lam Ee Her



■ LTC Tay Poh Ling and her former crew of RSS Sea Scorpion

## Back Paddle



**FEW** may know about the presence of female personnel in the Navy stretches back to the days when the Royal Navy was in charge of Singapore’s defence.

In 1939, when war seem inevitable, the Admiralty decided that women’s service auxillary would go a long way in solving manpower shortage problems within the Navy. Hence the Woman’s Royal Naval Service was formed. Female personnel undertook tasks such as dispatch riders

and wireless telegraphists, the latter vocation being the first group of female personnel to be based overseas in Singapore.

In 1967, after the separation of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia, the Navy or the Singapore Naval Volunteer Force as it was known then, had a strength of 89 mobilised personnel and 278 volunteer officers and men. This group included women from the Singapore Women’s Auxillary Naval Service, and better known simply as the SWANS.

-YK

# FINA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS



THE 11<sup>th</sup> FINA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2005 was held in Montreal, CANADA from 24-31 Jul 05. 1WO Ong Hock Lai from Naval Diving Unit was appointed by FINA (Federation Internationale de Natation) as one of the Technical Officials. This prestigious appointment is accorded to FINA qualified officials who were nominated by their National Swimming Associations. A total of 1784 swimmers from 144 countries participated in this event.

"I am honored to represent Singapore to officiate in this bi-yearly Swimming Championships. Besides gaining experience, I also had the privilege to witness some of the world class swimmers breaking a total of 9 world new records." said 1WO Ong, who was one of the 26 judges appointed by FINA to officiate in this Swimming Championship. The next championships will be held in Melbourne, Australia in 2007.

*Article contributed by MAJ Tan Hong Teck*

## Inter-Formation Hockey Tournament 2005 RSN Clinches Second Spot



**THIS** year's Inter-Formation Hockey Tournament was held over three weeks in the month of July, with servicemen from throughout the navy coming together to play under the banner of Team NAVY.

Convincing wins against last year's champions MINDEF, SIGNALS and 6<sup>th</sup> DIV teams confirmed Team NAVY's position at the top of the table in the group round, thus pitting them against 3<sup>rd</sup> DIV in the semifinal round.

The semifinal against 3<sup>rd</sup> DIV started out with both teams trying unsuccessfully to penetrate each others' defenses in the first half. In the second half, a brilliant drag-flick from LCP Jeremy Leong gave Team NAVY the goal they deserved and this was

followed by goals from LTA Clement Zhao and CPT Damien which sealed the game, putting them in the finals.

Team NAVY's season came full circle when they met MINDEF again in the finals of the tournament. An early goal from MINDEF rattled the team but despite their fighting spirit, no equalizer was found in the second half. Just when it seemed like it was all over, Team NAVY found a last-minute equalizer through LTA Jeremy Wang, bringing the game to penalty flicks. Unfortunately, all three of Team NAVY's flickers failed to hit the target while MINDEF's third flicker found the net, giving them a 2-1 win.

Despite the disappointment of coming so close to victory this time,

Team NAVY is already looking forward to next year's tournament where they are determined to go even further than they did this year.





"Safe Harbours  
In the shadow of 911  
Nothing is set and drift...  
You know the drill."