

NAVY

news

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Issue 04 2006

Safe In Our Wake

KEEPING SEALANES MINE CLEAR

"We have to continue to work hard to ensure that our waters remain safe."

AGE NO MILLSTONE, JUST MILESTONE

"Starting out with something small can take you beyond even your own expectations."



Republic of Singapore Navy



■ **RADM Ronnie Tay**
Chief of Navy

A Word from CNV

THE RSN's mine-countermeasure capabilities have come a long way since we first operated the wooden hull minesweepers of old some three decades ago. Today, our MCMVs play a vital role in keeping our searlanes open and our waterways safe for international shipping. As in other areas of warfare, minehunting has over the years undergone a transformation of its own, with new MCM technologies and mine-hunting concepts being developed and introduced. MCM may still be a 'slow' operation in many respects, but this is precisely because detecting and identifying underwater dangers amidst the murky depths requires careful attention to detail. It remains an onerous task that places high demands on seamanship, patience and professionalism. To hone their skills, our MCMV crews participate in a host of internal and foreign exercises each year. The recent 3rd WPNS MCMEX/DIVEX 2006 hosted by the Royal Malaysian Navy in the South China Sea is one good example. The 14 navies of the WPNS that took part this year put in much effort in enhancing inter-operability with one another, thus building our capacity

to come together to respond to a mine incident in the region. Since its inception in 1988, the WPNS has provided an invaluable forum for the exchange of professional ideas and practices, as well as the promotion of naval co-operation with one another. As part of that, the RSN recently had the privilege of hosting the 2nd WPNS Maritime Security Information Exchange Seminar in August. It proved to be another invaluable learning and sharing experience on a subject that is of key concern to all of us today. Indeed, the fact that the WPNS has grown from just 12 members from its inception to 22 members and observer navies today, and is set to grow further, speaks volumes of the grouping's continued relevance in fostering knowledge sharing and enhancing inter-operability. Such collaboration and co-operation among navies is crucial, even as we seek to keep our common maritime domain secure and, to borrow the words from our MCM Squadron's motto, safe in our wake.

Chief of Navy's Message



◀ *Cover Page:*
Photo by
CPT Eric Ang



◀ *Back Page:*
Text by LTC Irvin Lim
Photo by
LCP Chua Jun Liang

Courtesy Calls



■ **COL Francisco de Cruz Jr,**
Defence Attache,
Philippines



■ **ADM Michael G. Mullen,**
Chief of Naval Operations,
United States Navy

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RSN BEST SHIP 06 - Back with a Vengeance!

THIS year, the RSN Best Ship Award went to RSS Vengeance. This is the second time the ship is receiving the award, having won it previously in 2004.

LTC Lee Weng Foo (right), CO RSS Vengeance, attributed the win to the co-operation and hard work that his 60-member crew have put in: "We are honoured to be accorded this prestige. We have always maintained a high level of operational readiness and efficiency.

The award is testimony to the hard work, commitment and sacrifice of each member of the Vengeance family. It is a bonus that will further motivate the crew to continue to strive for excellence," he said.

1SG Vicknesh, Leading Weapon Control Specialist on RSS Vengeance, was proud to be part of the crew of the winning ship. Attesting to the ship's operational capability was her successful firing of the Barak missile at the recent



■ Always on the lookout for the next challenge

Ex Carat with the US Navy. As one of the key console operators, he attributed the success to the meticulous planning and systematic training that have been put in place.

On the ship's formula for success, MAJ Chua Lu Fong, Ops Officer RSS Vengeance, said: "The crux of a high performance unit is teamwork. Winning the award adds no additional pressure to the crew members as they have always been keen to go beyond the status quo. We have a culture that rejects mediocrity onboard. I am confident that our crew will continue to go beyond the call of duty in all that we do."

- Article contributed by CPL Alton Neo

Merger of 191 & 195 SQN

AS part of the RSN's continuous efforts to enhance its capabilities and operational readiness, 191 SQN and 195 SQN were merged into a new, larger 191 SQN during a ceremony at Tuas Naval Base on 31 Jul. CNV RADM Ronnie Tay and members of Naval Staff were present to grace the occasion.

The merger of the two squadrons will enhance the RSN's ability to respond

to a wider spectrum of operations, and a single headquarters will yield greater operational efficiency and enhance inter-operability. With the increasing number of operations involving both the LSTs and the Fast Crafts, a merged squadron will enhance the synergy between the two types of vessels and expedite the deployment of task groups for overseas missions.



The re-structured 191 SQN will be under the command of COL Bernard Miranda (above right). "By merging the squadrons, the interface between the LST and the craft will improve... LST personnel will have opportunities to train on the Fast Crafts while the Fast Craft personnel can be rotated to other appointments based on their vocations," he said.

2LT Roger Lim, an NSF in 195 SQN, looks forward to the cross-platform training: "Personally, I'm looking forward to life onboard a ship... It's a chance to be exposed to more of the Navy, to things that not every NSF experiences."

-/N





ALWAYS SAFE IN OUR WAKE!

Story by Joel Ng

Photos contributed by CPT Eric Ang

“EIGHT fishing boats and two police marine vessels are adrift and paralysed, damaged by underwater explosions in the South China Sea. Our regional waterways have also been mined by an unknown terrorist group, severely disrupting port operations and crippling the vital sea lines of communication.”

In nasty scenarios such as these, the RSN's 194 SQN with its four Mine Counter Measure Vessels (MCMVs) will be sent into harm's way to deal with the threats. Singapore's prosperity and economic well-being is heavily dependent on the security of the nearby sea lines of communication, and the presence of underwater mines and explosive devices could pose a serious threat to our country's livelihood. In our context, there is certainly a great need for modern mine-hunting vessels like

the MCMVs to ensure the security of our sea-lanes.

Fortunately, the above was just the exercise scenario posed to the 14th Western Pacific Naval Symposium navies for the 3rd Western Pacific MCMEX/DIVEX, held from 5 to 17 Jun. The bi-yearly exercise aims to enhance the interoperability of the participating navies to facilitate the deployment of a multi-national MCM task force in the event of maritime mining incidents. The RSN group comprised 21 divers and two MCMVs, RSS Katong and RSS Punggol. For MCMEX, a week-long harbour phase that included topical presentations and harbour preparations was followed by a four-day sea phase, in which the ships conducted surveys and MCM operations along designated Q-routes. For DIVEX, briefs on topics like Explosive Ordnance Device/Improvised Explosive Device

Disposal were conducted. Subsequently, operations such as Beach/Surf Zone/Boat Lane operations were carried out.

In the very same month, the RSN and TNI-AL conducted a bilateral joint mine-clearance exercise, code-named Joint Minex 9/06, off the coast of Bintan from 19 to 25 Jun. This was the ninth in the series between the two navies since it was inaugurated in 1997. Joint Minex serves to enhance professional relations between the two navies' MCM squadrons. RSS Katong and RSS Punggol were deployed once again in this exercise, meeting two TNI-AL minesweepers, KRI Pulau Rengat and KRI Pulau Rangsang.

The successful completion of these exercises has allowed the RSN to gain experience and knowledge in operating professionally with other navies in MCM operations. This places



■ MCMEX/DIVEX Participants - Standing united to keep our waterways secure



the RSN in better stead for future multi-national exercises and operations.

While participating in exercises to improve its proficiency in MCM operations, 194 SQN also constantly seeks to raise awareness of the MCMVs' operations and capabilities. To this end, our MCMs regularly host visits like the recent one when BG Bernard Tan, Director Joint Intelligence Directorate visited on 24 Jul, amongst many others. CO RSS Bedok, LTC Steven Tan says: "During such visits we show to our guests how new technologies, such as the Remote Environmental Monitoring Units (REMUS) we are operating, further the MCMVs' mine-hunting capabilities. We also take the opportunity to explain how Mine Disposal Vehicles are used for the detection and disposal of mines."

This year is especially momentous for 194 SQN as they mark their 30th year as an operational RSN squadron. The squadron celebrated this occasion in a fun-filled and educational celebration at the Singapore Discovery Centre

on 5 Aug. The event served to fortify the importance of national education, cohesion and resilience among the servicemen.

During the celebrations, LTC Tan said, "We will face more challenges as the global security climate continues to be uncertain and volatile... We have to continue to work hard to ensure that our waters remain safe and our maritime trade remains uninterrupted." Indeed, the MCMVs of 194 SQN have come a long way from humble beginnings, and their crews' unstinting devotion and vigilance will no doubt continue to keep our waters safe.



MCM Back Paddle

THE RSN's MCM capabilities began in 1975, with the acquisition of RSS Mercury and RSS Jupiter, two 'Bluebird' class minesweepers from the US Navy. On 7 Oct 95, the current four 'Bedok' class MCMVs, RSS Bedok, RSS Kallang, RSS Katong and RSS Punggol, were commissioned. This greatly enhanced the RSN's ability to

handle the intricate operations of mine-hunting and mine-disposal and thus better ensure the safety of our sea lines of communication. Today, MCMV crews from 194 SQN work closely with the Naval Diving Unit to disable mines, and participate regularly in exercises with other navies to increase their operational capabilities.



Ex Singaroo 2006

THE annual bilateral exercise between the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), code-named Ex Singaroo, was held off Darwin, Australia from 24 Jul to 2 Aug. The exercise was aimed at enhancing bilateral ties between the two nations and promoting understanding and interoperability between the two navies. RSS Victory and RSS Vigilance, together with HMAS Adelaide, HMAS Darwin and HMAS Arunta from the RAN, participated in this exercise.

The shore phase featured coordinated Fire Fighting and Damage Control training and a Compliant

Boarding Forum. "The training was very beneficial and the exchange of experiences and perspectives has widened our horizons," said CPT Bernard Wong, ASWO, RSS Victory.

One of the sea phase's highlights was the RSN's successful compliant boarding of the HMAS Arunta (simulating a merchant vessel), which followed after an extensive search-and-locate operation by the Surface Action Groups from both navies.

Reaffirming the excellent training opportunity of Ex Singaroo for both navies, RSN Fleet Commander, RADM Tan Kai Hoe added, "We will do well



to continue to leverage on such training opportunities as a foundation for taking on new challenges posed by our current operating environment."

- Article contributed by LTA Cai Peida



Ex Singsiam 14/06

THE Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) took part in a 9-day bilateral exercise codenamed Ex Singsiam from 12 to 20 Jul. The exercise comprised three phases: an initial harbour phase in Singapore, a sea phase in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, and a final shore phase in Sattahip, Thailand. The 14th biennial exercise was aimed at increasing cooperation and interaction between the two navies, covering areas such as maritime security.

About 200 personnel from both navies participated in this exercise. Three RSN ships, RSS Vengeance, RSS Dauntless and RSS Sea Tiger, and two RTN ships, HTMS Chonburi and HTMS Witthayakhom, participated in the exercise.

One of the firsts in this exercise was the introduction of the ACCESS system, a command and control tool that uses satellite communications to allow ships to share essential information

on own force position and contacts of interest.

"Ex Singsiam has strengthened the bilateral relations between our two

countries," said COL Wellman Wan, CO 185 SQN, in his opening address on 12 July. This sentiment was echoed by CAPT Narong Ninlagarn, Deputy Comd, Patrol Squadron, RTN, "Ex Singsiam provides a great opportunity for our two navies to work hand-in-hand... and to better understand each other."

- JN



Ex SEACAT 2006

ON 26 May, RSS Sovereignty and RSS Justice shadowed a “suspected” Roll-on/Roll-off merchant vessel along the Singapore Straits and subsequently boarded her in the waters off Changi Naval Base. The boarding operation was part of Ex SEACAT (South East Asian Cooperation Against Terrorism) 06 held from 20 to 29 May.

Since 2002, COSCOM has participated in this US-led annual multi-lateral anti-terrorism exercise with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. It provides liaison officers from the regional navies the opportunity for professional exchanges regarding maritime interdiction issues.

Each participating navy was required to localise and track Critical

Contact of Interests (CCOIs) – US warships posing as merchant vessels suspected of aiding terrorist activities. The various navies conducted Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations on the CCOIs as they transited through their respective territorial waters.

One of the highlights was the boarding of MV Sergeant William R Button by a 16-man team from the RSN. Prior to the exercise, team members had undergone rigorous boarding training as part of their shipboard evolutions. CPT Eugene Goh, the boarding officer of RSS Justice, said: “This boarding has been a valuable experience for the team.”

Ex Seacat 06 concluded with a hot wash-up on USS Tortuga. LTC Lee Khai Leong, CO 180 SQN, welcomed

such professional interaction: “We look forward to continuing such exercises as they sharpen our capabilities and strengthen our cooperative ties in tackling regional maritime challenges.”

- Article contributed by CPT Vincent Goh



2nd WPNS Maritime Security Information Exchange Seminar



NAVIES play a crucial role in enhancing maritime security. “No country or organisation has the wherewithal to tackle the plethora of maritime threats alone. The key

lies in international and interagency cooperation. Navies play a critical role “in this,” said CNV RADM Ronnie Tay in his keynote address at the launch of the 2nd Western Pacific Naval Symposium

(WPNS) Maritime Security Information Exchange Seminar hosted by the RSN at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel from 2 to 3 Aug.

This year, 38 representatives from 18 WPNS navies attended the seminar. The seminar’s theme “Information Sharing For A More Secure Maritime Domain” reflects the increasing need for information sharing among the WPNS navies.

The seminar series provides an invaluable platform for the professional sharing of different regional maritime security perspectives and development of tactical and operational approaches, both at the national and multilateral levels, to deal with maritime threats. Informal interactions and dinners also allowed for the sharing of ideas and views, and the forging of friendships between the Western Pacific navies.

- Article contributed by Ms Angela Chu

Indo-Sin Bhakti Sosial (ISBS) 13/06

THE RSN displayed another facet of its close ties with our neighbours through the recent 13/06 ISBS mission. The latest mission led by LTC Tan Suan Jow, CO 182/189 SQN, was successfully conducted in Gunung Kijang, Pulau Bintan from 26 to 30 Jun. Personnel from the Coastal Command (COSCOM), RSN Medical Service and Preventive Medicine Branch, the Police Coast Guard (PCG) and our Indonesian counterparts provided socio-civic assistance to the inhabitants of the Riau Archipelago in the villages of Teluk Bakau and Malang

Rapat to improve their quality of life.

Supported by the local health and government agencies, the team provided medical and dental consultations for the residents and gave lectures on personal hygiene and anti-mosquito breeding measures at schools. In addition, items such as sports equipment, stationery and dental kits were presented to the schools. Basic renovation works, such as painting and minor repairs, were carried out on communal facilities.



■ Helping people one person at a time

- Article contributed by MAJ Jason Lee

Officers' Promotion Ceremonies

A total of 79 regular and NS officers were promoted at the RSN Officers Promotion Ceremony 06, held at the Victory Hall in RSS Panglima on the evening of 27 Jun. The Officiating Officer, CNV RADM Ronnie Tay, presented the rank of MAJ to 52 CPTs and the rank of CPT to 27 LTAs.

CPT Lee Kok Seng, MEO on RSS Endurance, commented on his promotion to the rank of MAJ: "I'm very happy that the RSN has recognised my efforts... this promotion is a further motivation for me to strive onwards to

another level, another goal."

Two days later, the annual Officers' Promotion Ceremony was held at the MINDEF Building on the evening of 29 Jun. Minister for Defence, Mr Teo Chee Hean and CDF, LG Ng Yat Chung presented the Certificates of Promotion to the promoted senior officers. Of the 459 SAF officers promoted, 33 were from the RSN. The event also saw the promotion of Fleet Commander, COL Tan Kai Hoe (right) to the rank of RADM (One Star).

-/N



SAF Warrant Officers' Promotion Ceremony



30 Warrant Officers from the RSN were promoted at the annual SAF Warrant Officers' Promotion Ceremony held at The Chevrons on 21 Jun. CDF LG Ng Yat Chung presented the newly-promoted Warrant Officers with their new ranks.

Of those promoted, 20 were promoted from 2WO to 1WO while nine were promoted from 1WO to MWO. MWO Phui was the only one promoted to SWO, the pinnacle rank of the Warrant Officers, Specialist and Enlistees (WOSE) Corps.

Having served in the Navy for 31 years, SWO Phui said, "This is the happiest moment of my career. The Navy has developed me into who I am today by giving me the opportunities to serve where I best fit. This promotion to SWO gives me much pride and satisfaction."

-/JL

SAFOS & SMS Scholarship Award Presentations

THIS year, four outstanding midshipmen and one naval officer received Singapore Armed Forces scholarships to pursue their studies in various prestigious institutions in the US and UK.

SAF Overseas Scholar (SAFOS) MID Bertram Ang received his award and ceremonial sword from Minister for Defence, Mr Teo Chee Hean at Temasek Club on 12 Aug. He was also one of the four recipients of the President's Scholarship at the Istana on 11 Aug.

"It's a great privilege and a heavy responsibility. As a SAFOS, I am



■ MID Bertram Ang



■ 2LT Lau, MID Tung, MID Su and MID Thung

expected to be the role model for all my peers and juniors. This expectation of me is even higher given the fact that I am a President's Scholar as well," MIDS Ang.

The four SAF Merit Scholars are MID Tung Wanling, MID Su Yuanyao Karl, MID Thung Yee Meng and 2LT Lau Jianmin Jamin. They were presented with their scholarship awards and ceremonial swords from Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Defence, Dr Ng Eng Hen at Temasek Club on 15 Aug.

MID Tung Wanling, who will be pursuing Biomedical Science in the

University College London (UK), said: "I see the Navy as a career which is full of opportunities and challenges and is the best platform to accomplish my three goals in life – expose, explore and experience." She felt that joining the Navy would allow her to gain a wide exposure to life, and to explore many new challenging possibilities while experiencing different cultures, especially during the keenly anticipated visits to the many ports-of-call in an exciting seafaring career.

-/JL

NAME	COURSE	UNIVERSITY
MID Ang Chun Hou Bertram	Political Science	Stanford University, USA
MID Tung Wanling	Biomedical Science	University College London, UK
MID Su Yuanyao Karl	Psychology and Philosophy	Brown University, USA
MID Thung Yee Meng	Politics with International Studies	Warwick University, UK
2LT Lau Jianmin Jamin	Economics	London School of Economics, UK

33rd JWOC Promotion Ceremony and Dining-In



■ Rank upon rank of new Warrant Officers

141 MSGs were promoted to the rank of 2WO during the Joint Warrant Officers' Course (JWOC) Promotion Ceremony on 29 Jun. The graduates, 35 of which were from the RSN, received their new ranks from the Guest-of-Honour, Chief of Army, MG Desmond Kuek.

The ceremony, held for the first time at the new Leader's Hall in Pasir Laba Camp, featured the largest graduating class in the history of SAF Warrant Officers' School (SAFWOS). After the new ranks were presented, graduates' spouses were invited to put the new ranks on the shoulders of the proud graduates. Another highlight was the Concoction Ceremony and the mixing of Warrants' Prestige, symbolic of the synergy and spirit of the three services.

2WO Andrew Ho from NSuWC, TNB was the winner of the RSN Book Prize Award. "This course gives us the opportunity to interact with the other services... to gel together and learn from each other," he said. "It's a chance for me to network and make new friends."

-/JN

SAF Day Parade 2006

THE Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) celebrated SAF Day with a parade officiated by Minister for Defence, Mr Teo Chee Hean, at the SAFTI Military Institute on 1 Jul. About 1,500 active servicemen and NSmen attended the parade.

For the first time, the parade was preceded by a special Pre-parade Segment, in which an impressive display of music and choreography from the SAF Band was accompanied by a spit and polish drill performance by the Silent Precision Drill Squad, SAF Provost Unit.

The entry of the marching contingents marked the beginning of the parade proper. The Colours party and Guard-of-Honour contingents then followed, led by the Parade 2IC, MAJ Foong Kok Pun from TRACOM. After Minister Teo's inspection of the parade, Chief of Defence Force, LG Ng Yat Chung, led the Service Chiefs and all servicemen present in reciting the SAF pledge. A minute of silence was then

observed to honour Singapore's sons and daughters who had lost their lives in the line of duty.

At the parade, Minister Teo presented the Best Unit and Best NS Unit awards to 22 units. This year's Best Ship award went to RSS Vengeance; it last won the award two years ago.

At a separate rededication ceremony held at Suntec City Convention Centre, Minister Teo, in his SAF Day speech, said: "The Singapore Armed Forces has helped to ensure another year of security and growth for Singapore. We stand ready to defend our nation against threats to our sovereignty and to deal with other challenges to our peace and security."

"The core of the SAF's strength lies in the fighting spirit, professionalism and commitment of our people. Your readiness to defend Singapore, and to serve with courage and distinction, ensures that Singapore will always be a safe and secure home for all Singaporeans."



National Day Parade 2006: "Our Global City. Our Home"



■ Awesome aerial feats above...



■ A magnificent parade below...

AMID deafening shouts of joy and the crackling dazzle of fireworks, Singapore celebrated her 41st birthday on 9 Aug. 60,000 spectators and 6,500 participants gathered for the biggest party in Singapore and to bid farewell to the National Stadium.

The parade segment wowed the crowd with all-time favourites such as the F-16 flypasts, accompanied by parade firsts like the debut of the AH-64D Apache attack helicopters. Energetic dance items, intricate mass formations and mesmerising lighting effects entertained and inspired spectators and home-viewers during the show segment. A spectacular fireworks display capped off the celebrations, lighting the skies and warming the hearts of Singaporeans near and afar.

The Naval Diving Unit represented the RSN in the Guard-of-Honour, supported by a combined contingent from the Fleet, NALCOM, TRACOM and COSCOM. Together with the rest of the parade, they displayed truly spotless precision drills with a smart march-past.



■ Everybody's favourite part of the show...



■ Truly something for everyone!

- J/N

We Wear 'em Ribbons with Pride!

- SAF Service Medals

CLOSE to the heart of every SAF serviceman is the row of medals that he pins each day on his uniform, with each medal bearing special significance. But just what does each of the myriad medals on display mean? Navy News tracked down two senior RSN servicemen to discover the meaning behind some of the medals that RSN personnel wear.

"Military awards and medals are symbolic of a serviceman's service term and achievements...they accord him due and proper recognition," says SWO Chow Yoon Siong (below left), Chief Warrant Officer, Fleet. SWO Chow proudly wears his Good Conduct and Long Service medals, indicative of his sterling service over 5, 12, 22 and 30 years respectively.

SWO Chow finds the Efficiency Medal (Military), which recognises his efforts as a pioneer of various RSN initiatives, most significant of them all. He tells us it was in part awarded to him in recognition of his efforts in marshalling resources and developing methods to expedite the training and operational efficiency of RSN personnel.

LTC (RET) Gregory Goh (below right), former CO, 195 SQN, who recently retired from service earlier this year, was at his retirement arguably the most

decorated serving commissioned officer in the RSN. In addition to the various Long Service Awards, he also received the SAF Tsunami Relief Operation 2004 Medal for his efforts during the Boxing Day tsunami disaster. "The mission was very successful and well-appreciated by those we helped. It also gave everyone a better understanding of the operational readiness, strong spirit and capabilities of the RSN and SAF that can be quickly activated to help those in need in times of crisis," LTC Goh says.

LTC (RET) Goh was also awarded the Public Administration Bronze Medal (Military) on National Day in 2005. "It was a result of my role as CTG of the naval task force in the tsunami relief mission... My past records were also scrutinised, to judge whether I have been a constant and good contributor to the RSN," he says.

However, LTC (RET) Goh feels that the most memorable medal to him is the Overseas Service Medal for the United Nations INTERFET peace-keeping mission in East Timor in 1999. "We had to make RSS Excellence operationally-ready within 24 hours. We then spent a very demanding three whole months away for the mission... As a side issue, I think the medal looks the nicest!"

-/N



■ LTC (RET) Goh's many medals

SIDEBAR

WITH effect from 1 Jul, changes have been made with regard to the awarding of SAF Service Medals. The Good Conduct Medal will continue to be awarded after 5 years of service. However, the Long Service and Good Conduct (10 years) Medal, will replace the one awarded after 12 years. After 15 years, a clasp will be added to this medal.



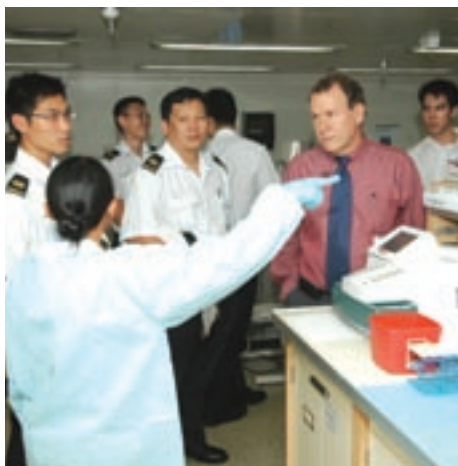
Also, a new Long Service and Good Conduct Medal has been introduced to mark the 20th year of service. A new state award, the Long Service Medal (Military), will be awarded after 25 years. After 30 years, a 30-year clasp will be added to the Long Service and Good Conduct (20 years) Medal.

SAF Medical Personnel Visit USNS Mercy Hospital Ship

ABOUT 40 SAF medical personnel, mostly from the RSN, had the opportunity to tour the USNS Mercy, a United States Navy (USN) hospital ship, at the Sembawang Naval Wharves on 26 Jun.

During the visit, our medical personnel were acquainted with the various special features of the 272-metre long converted supertanker, like its X-ray capabilities, CAT scan unit and surgical suites. The impressive ship has a room for 1000 beds, has its own laboratory, and maintains 5000 units of blood.

The visit was a lead up to the vessel's subsequent humanitarian deployment



in early July, where a team of six SAF medical personnel accompanied the ship to Indonesia. MAJ (DR) Tang Kong Choong, an anaesthetist in this team, said: "This is a very good opportunity to contribute to this humanitarian mission and to interact with members of the military medical community from other navies." The 4½ week deployment was the latest in a series of humanitarian deployments in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific region by the ship.

The USNS Mercy, which had previously provided assistance to victims of the Asian tsunami disaster, is well-equipped to cope with demanding support missions. "It's equivalent to our local hospitals in many aspects. It can even tend to adults and children simultaneously," said CPT (DR) Siew Tuck Wah.

-/N

Memories Of Our Maiden Voyage - A Cadet Reflects

OUR hands felt heavy as we waved goodbye to our loved ones from the deck of the RSS Endurance, navigating out of Changi Naval Base on 3 Feb for our six week-long Midshipman Training Deployment (MSTD). Many of us were anxious for the events to come and knew that we had to meet demanding training standards.

The first hurdle was a mental one as the big ship began to roll as it entered the South China Sea. Nevertheless, we quickly overcame our initial discomfort and worked hard to complete assignments and meet demanding deadlines. Teamwork, determination

and mutual encouragement helped us through.

"Wake up! It's your turn for watch now!" was an oft-heard but unpopular phrase in the wee hours of almost every morning. It was not easy to pull ourselves out of bed after a long and hectic day. Bridge voice procedures that once sounded alien to many of us were polished through the watches. The watches were also good opportunities for us to practice on our chartwork and learn more about watchkeeping.

MSTD did have its share of fun and laughter. While in Bangkok, we fostered stronger bonds with our

instructors during adventure training. Inter-mess games allowed us to 'sweat-it-out' and were also an avenue for spirited interaction. Also, I will not forget the cold wind on our faces as we tried to get our kites flying on the approach to Zhanjiang, China.

The call at Zhanjiang was arguably the most memorable because we were allowed to proudly don our No. 5 uniform as we entered port. Seeing children cheering and waving, a military band performing and a smartly-dressed contingent assembled at the wharf as we came alongside, we felt immensely proud to be part of the RSN.

"What is tough to endure will be sweet to remember." Even though we were anxious to get home and meet our loved ones, many of my midshipman-mates said that they would miss MSTD. The sense of satisfaction gained after meeting demanding training standards and the pride of sailing onboard a warship is indescribable. Living in common quarters, sharing common facilities and learning about each other's habits at sea was a world apart from our shore training in OCS.

The guidance of our instructors and the crew of RSS Endurance, as well as that of the RSS Resolution, was invaluable to our MSTD learning process. Thank you MIDS Wing, RSS Endurance and RSS Resolution for a memorable experience that will make us stronger and more capable future RSN officers.

- Article contributed by MID Leong Mingjie



■ Forming up on the deck as we pull into port at Zhanjiang

2005 CDF Essay Competition

THE Republic of Singapore Navy fared well in this year's CDF Essay Competition, with five naval officers emerging in the list of 19 winners. Coming in second was CPT Guo Jing Hua with his essay titled "The Laments of Cassandra: Reflections on Warning Intelligence in the Information Eden".

CPT Guo says, "I have always been very interested in intelligence and I simply decided to organise my thoughts for this essay... my essay explores the interaction between the human mind and the technology that we use, as well as the way that we use this technology." For his efforts, CPT Guo took home \$1000 cash prize and a plaque.

CDF LG Ng Yat Chung and POINTER Advisory Board members were on hand to present the winners

their awards at a prize presentation ceremony that was held at the SAS auditorium in SAFTI MI on 21 Jun.

- SW



Farewell, Fair Winds & Following Seas, RADM Sim!

IT was a night for reminiscing and reflection as some 350 members of the Navy family came together at the Conrad Centennial on 26 Jun to bid Chief of Staff-Naval Staff (COS-NS), RADM Sim Gim Guan (right) farewell as he prepared to depart the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).

RADM Sim, 42, was enlisted into the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) on 22 Dec 82. After receiving the SAF Overseas Scholarship, he pursued his undergraduate studies at Oxford University and subsequently obtained a Master in Business Administration from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In his 23½ years of dedicated service, RADM Sim has notched up many significant achievements and been

a key player in numerous initiatives. They include the launch of the frigate programme and the implementation of the Coordinated Maritime Aircraft Patrol initiative, termed “Eyes in the Sky”.

CNV RADM Ronnie Tay shared his thoughts on RADM Sim with the audience at RADM Sim’s farewell dinner. Said RADM Tay: “We all know RADM Sim to be humble and approachable. He is a very innovative person, always looking for new ideas, and I have learnt to trust his judgment and sound advice. Thank you for your contributions to the Navy. You’re a true friend and fine colleague.”

A visibly touched RADM Sim said in his farewell speech at the dinner, “Thank you for your friendship, guidance, counsel and time spent together all through the



years... While I may hang up my uniform, my heart will always be with the Navy.”

Navy News wishes RADM Sim all the best for his future endeavours. He will always be a member of the Navy family.

- SW

121,000 Accident Free Flying Hours for 121 SQN

121 SQN celebrated her double achievements of 33 Years and 121,000 Flying Hours Accident Free Records at Changi Air Base on 21st Apr.

This safety achievement, a record in the RSAF, shows that safety can be maintained despite expanding operational envelopes and an increasingly complex and diverse spectrum of operations.

RSN personnel work closely with their RSAF counterparts to preserve a strong tradition of safety culture at 121 SQN. The Navy specialists are some of the Squadron-appointed “Safety Warriors” who police the ground and scrutinize the flying operations on a daily basis to highlight safety concerns and stop unsafe acts. SSG Ken Ooi, a Sensor Operator, said: “Crew combination is always scrutinized before every sortie to ensure that the crew’s collective experience and competency are commensurate with the mission. 121 SQN believes that safety is



everyone’s responsibility.”

121 SQN has also implemented a blame-free open reporting system in which “there shall be no criticism” where safety matters are concerned. This has encouraged individuals to report incidents and share lessons learnt to avoid future occurrence. The spirit of

Crew Resource Management (CRM) is also very strong in the 121 SQN. As MSG Terrence Tay (Sensor Operator 2) put it: “We take care of one another by carefully checking each other and making sure we always go about our work with safety in mind. This place is like family to me.”

—Article contributed by CPT Goh Kar Hock

Inaugural MINDEF “Innovation-in-Action” Seminar

SAF and MINDEF personnel gathered for the “Innovation in Action” Seminar organised by the MINDEF Innovation and Transformation Office (MITO) at the SAF Yacht Club on 19 Jul. CNV RADM Ronnie Tay, chairman of the MINDEF Innovation Council, was the Guest-of-Honour.

This seminar allowed SAF leaders to better understand how innovation can increase organisational capability and how this capability can be built.

The guest speaker, Mr. Tan Kee Hian spoke on “Blue Ocean Innovation”, a new approach to strategy and innovation designed to deliver sustained performance growth. Discussions were held to further develop the participants’ understanding of innovation.

RADM Tay said: “Innovation is a strategic competency for us to meet our operational and organisational challenges.”



- SW

RSN Inter-group Hockey Tournament

This year's RSN Inter-Group Hockey Tournament was held at Bedok Camp II hockey pitch on 13 Jul. Under a scorching sun and a cloudless sky, the players displayed their sportsmanship, deft skills and professionalism.

In the final showdown, defending champions HQ RSN/NDU achieved a 2-0 win over FLEET, retaining the title for another year.

Congratulations to team NDU & HQ RSN and BRAVO ZULU to the organiser and team managers for a fun filled competition.

- Article contributed by LTA Calvin Loh



■ Fast-paced action on the pitch

30th South East Asia Age Group Swimming Championship 2006



SSG Low Hoo Chung (above centre) from IMOS has been appointed by the Asia Swimming Federation as one of the four Technical Officials in the 30th South East Asia Age Group Swimming Championship. The Championship was held in Jakarta, Indonesia from 2 to 4 Jun. A total of 225 swimmers from 10 countries participated in this event. The Singapore Swimming Association nominated SSG Low for his consistent and excellent performance as a Technical Official.

"I am honored to represent Singapore as an official in this annual event," said SSG Low. "Besides gaining valuable experience, I am privileged to witness some of the SEA's future star swimmers in action."

- Article contributed by 1WO Ong Hock Lai

We Have Moved NLD to Maju

A HQ RSN Staff Department located in an Army Camp? Since May 06, the white-and-blue uniforms of the Navy have been a common sight in Maju Camp as personnel from the Naval Logistics Department (NLD) vacated their office spaces in MINDEF Building and shifted to their new premises along Clementi Road. The move is part of the MINDEF-wide effort to reorganise

office spaces in Gombak Base with the objectives of improving functional integrity, maximising work synergies and creating reserve office areas for future expansion.

The stay will only be a temporary one as NLD is expected to be back in Gombak Base in a few years' time to be co-located with the other services' logistics departments. NLD will continue

to support the Navy as part of the HQ RSN family regardless of her location.

- Article contributed by LTA McMartin Wan & SSG Andy Choo

ERRATUM

In "RSN Officer Bags Admiralty Binoculars Award" (Issue 03, 2006), we said that LTA Chew Cheong Chew had won the Admiralty Binoculars Award. In fact, the winner of the award was LTA Chew Chun Cheong. We sincerely apologise for the error.

Age No Millstone... with more Birthday Milestones to Surpass

- Ironman in Langkawi Race

Story by Joel Ng

Photos contributed by 2WO Chan Mun Hong

TO some, reaching the mid-life milestone age of 35 may be synonymous with the start of a physical downhill run. This, however, was not the birthday wish of 35-year-old 2WO Chan Mun Hong from the Naval Diving Unit (NDU) when he recently completed the grueling Ironman Race in Langkawi, Malaysia – the third toughest course in the Ironman series of races worldwide.

Why would anyone choose to punish himself on his birthday with a 3.8 kilometre sea swim, a punishing 180 kilometre bike ride along undulating coastal roads, and a torturous 42.2 kilometre run up inclines as steep as Mount Faber? Without skipping a beat, 2WO Chan says: "I wanted to do something special and memorable on my birthday and to personally commemorate the anniversary of my cherished unit, NDU, which will also be turning 35 years old this December!"

As early as 4.30am on the morning of his birthday, 26 Feb, 2WO Chan was already warming up at the starting line along with 300 participants from around the world. Although the race was scheduled for 7.30am, the holding area was already cramped with participants, driven by the fervor of the race. When it finally started, 2WO Chan had to face

milky brown waters filled with nibbling sea bugs. As he exited the water 1h 28mins later, he was encouraged by the sight of a large number of swimmers still behind him as he transitioned to the cycling leg of the race.

Lesser participants would have been stopped by the merciless scorching sun and the high temperatures of 36°C, but not 2WO Chan. Pumping his legs like pistons, he managed an average speed of 30-35 km/h. Only a third through the 180 km leg, however, his bike's chain derailed three times while ascending steep slopes. Left with only a single gear operational, 2WO Chan forced himself to cycle harder, suffering agonising leg cramps in the last 60 km of the cycling leg. Every pedal stroke was a mental challenge as he quelled the negative thoughts brewing in his mind, stretching and encouraging himself during long, lonely stretches of road. Meanwhile, the blazing sun turned cool isotonic drinks into hot liquids and melted energy bars into mush.

Finally, after 7h 19mins, 2WO Chan dismounted his bike and began his painful 42.2-kilometre journey on foot. Soon, 2WO Chan passed by race participants who had overtaken him during the bike ride. Along the



■ Swimming, Biking & Running his way to Victory



way, he recalls passing by roadside restaurants filled with people having relaxed dinners. As he passed a satay stall, a group of diners hollered out to him that his 'dinner was ready!' Wanting badly to finish what he started, 2WO Chan fought the temptation to quit and remained focused on the race.

Soon, he was on the home stretch where bright lights and the sound of his name through the loudspeaker carried him through the finish line. A grand finale reception awaited participants. 2WO Chan recalls the heady feeling of finishing, "Everyone would cheer for you and even complete strangers would come over to shake your hand and congratulate you." 2WO Chan clocked a total time of 14h 50mins, achieving his target time of 15 hours and even ranking 38th amongst the men in his age group.

Truly, on his 35th birthday, 2WO Chan has proven that he is far from passing his prime. "In the journey ahead, anything can be achieved if the will is there. Similarly, while NDU has reached a milestone with its 35th anniversary, its prime still lays in the future," he quips. "You would be surprised how starting out with something small can take you to something bigger beyond even your own expectations," he exhorts.

2WO Chan is already training to better his timing at the next Ironman Race.



■ Ironman 2WO Chan - Ready for any challenge!

*Cool Whites before a sea of Feisty Red
Yet never more... True Blue
Our Guards of Honour, our Sons of the Sea*

