

1820 — 2020

COURAGE  
LOYALTY  
INTEGRITY  
FAIRNESS



# SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY

200 Years of the  
Singapore Police Force

KOH BUCK SONG



**SINGAPORE  
POLICE FORCE**  
SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY







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THIS PAGE: Citizens on Patrol members conducting  
patrols alongside Community Policing Unit officers to  
disseminate crime prevention advisories at Pek Kio  
Market and Food Centre in January 2020.



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## FOREWORD



**LEE HSIEN LOONG**  
Prime Minister

The Singapore Police Force (SPF) is one of Singapore's oldest public institutions. It has a distinguished history, stretching back to our earliest colonial days.

Since its humble beginnings, the SPF has grown from strength to strength. With each phase of Singapore's development — from Straits Settlements to Crown Colony, then self-government and finally independence — the SPF upgraded its capabilities and role in society to meet the changing needs of the times.

This book celebrates the SPF's history, and the courage and contributions of generations of police officers. It reminds us that peace and security can be achieved only through deliberate, painstaking effort, and must never be taken for granted.

Today, the SPF is a modern, professional Force of regular officers, civilian staff and Full-time National Servicemen, augmented by volunteer officers and Operationally Ready National Servicemen. They have helped make Singapore one of the safest cities in the world, ensuring that our people can live, work and play with peace of mind.

To remain an outstanding Force, the SPF must constantly rejuvenate and refresh itself, and adapt to the changing threats and operating environment. It must learn from its own experiences and from others, and exploit technology fully, so that its capabilities stay ahead of the threats.

Most importantly, the SPF must retain the trust of the people it is sworn to protect. This requires officers to enforce the law firmly, fairly and justly, without fear or favour, and to always conduct themselves with courage, loyalty and integrity. The rule of law, and a capable and trusted police force to enforce it, are vital to a nation's progress and prosperity.

Congratulations to the SPF on its bicentennial year. On behalf of all Singaporeans, I thank all the men and women of the Force, past and present, for your dedicated service. I am confident that you will continue to keep us safe and secure for years to come.

## MESSAGE



**K SHANMUGAM**  
Minister for Home Affairs  
and Minister for Law

The Singapore Police Force (SPF) turns 200 this year. It started out as a small unit of 12 officers in 1820. Today, it is a world-class, highly respected Force of more than 15,000 officers.

The SPF's mettle has been tested time and again. It has learned from several hard lessons, each time improving its operational approach. It has looked ahead, and built new capabilities to take advantage of advances in technology. It has constantly adapted to the changing security threats and social landscape, both locally and globally. The SPF dealt with secret societies and communal unrest during Singapore's colonial days. Today, its main challenges are the terror threat and cybercrime. The floating police station that fended off pirates in 1866 is now the Police Coast Guard that protects Singapore's coastline.

The SPF has been steadfast in its mission, yet nimble operationally and organisationally, evolving with the times and challenges, and in this way, remained at the top of its game.

Internationally, the SPF has earned respect. It is a key member of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations National Police (ASEANAPOL). In 2015, Singapore earned the honour of hosting the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation, through which the SPF collaborates with foreign law enforcement counterparts on cross-border crimes, and the sharing of knowledge, intelligence and best practices.

Today, Singapore is one of the world's safest cities, and the SPF has played a key role in that. Among Singaporeans and other residents, the SPF enjoys an extremely high level of trust and support, because it has carried out its mission fairly, justly and effectively. It has a clear sense of mission, and the commitment, dedication and professionalism of its officers are well known.

Congratulations to the guardians of our home, on this occasion of their bicentennial!



## MESSAGE



**HOONG WEE TECK**  
Commissioner of Police

The Singapore Police Force (SPF) marks 200 years of policing in 2020. It started off as a 12-man team in 1820, protecting a trading post. Since its humble beginnings, it has surmounted challenges and progressed to become a professional police force of more than 15,000 officers.

Singapore is today one of the safest cities in the world. This achievement did not come about by chance. It is the result of the hard work of generations of men and women of the Force, as well as our community partners who have been an integral part of our policing journey. The strong partnership with the community is a cornerstone of the SPF's policing strategy. Since the inception of the first Neighbourhood Police Post in 1983, the SPF has been working closely with the community to boost its crime-fighting efforts, especially more so in recent years due to the heightened terror threat. The SPF will continue to evolve, transform and innovate, and work even closer with the community to deal with future challenges.

At the heart of the SPF is our officers. From those who donned the old khaki to those who have worn the modern signature blue uniforms, generations of officers have built a professional police force, which the people trust to protect them and to deliver justice. It is important that our officers remain guided by a strong sense of mission to safeguard our nation and uphold our core values. To this end, the SPF is committed to attracting passionate and talented officers, and will develop them to their fullest potential.

This commemorative book pays tribute to past and present SPF officers for their contributions and sacrifices in safeguarding Singapore. I hope the stories in this book will encourage and inspire present and future generations of SPF officers to remain resilient and steadfast towards keeping Singapore safe and secure every day, for many years to come.

I thank all past and present SPF officers, including our volunteers and Police National Servicemen, for their hard work, dedication and sacrifice. I also thank the family members of our officers and our community partners for their continuous support for the SPF. Together, we will continue to make Singapore the safest and most secure home for all.



**SPF200 has been a magnificent journey for the Singapore Police Force since its humble beginnings. The SPF had transformed Singapore, where crimes were once rife and secret societies and gangsterism dominated our streets, into one of the safest cities in the world. May the SPF continue to advance in the service of our nation.**

**TEE TUA BA**  
Commissioner of Police (1992–1997)



**The SPF has evolved from a reactive Force to a proactive community partner, resulting in fewer physical crimes, greater public trust and an unparalleled sense of personal safety, while developing talents for the nation. Congratulations as the SPF continues to be a Force for the Nation and an inspiration to the world!**

**KHOO BOON HUI**  
Commissioner of Police (1997–2010)



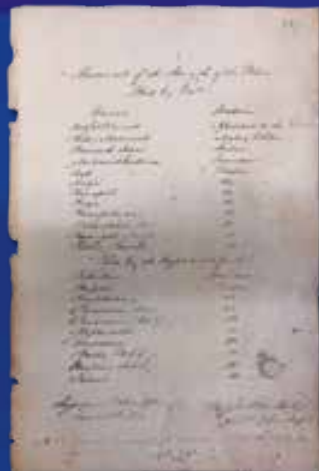
**The SPF is a most venerable institution. But it is also forever young. Every generation of Singapore's finest, while inspired by a long and distinguished tradition, is also impatient to blaze a new trail for modern law enforcement. The safest place in the world deserves to have the best police force. Happy 200th birthday, SPF!**

**NG JOO HEE**  
Commissioner of Police (2010–2015)



TIMELINE  
OF KEY MILESTONES, 1820 — 2020

1820



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

William Farquhar established a 12-man police force led by his son-in-law, Francis James Bernard.

1826

The British formed the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Penang and Malacca).

1846



The first set of rules and regulations for the police force was passed.

1857



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

The Police Force Act was passed. Thomas Dunman was appointed as the first full-time Commissioner of Police.

1866



Picture: Singapore Police Force Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore

The Detective Department was formed. It was reorganised as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in 1916.



Picture: Singapore Police Force Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore

The Marine Police was formed. It was reorganised as the Marine Branch in 1916, Marine Division in 1951, and Police Coast Guard (PCG) in 1993.

1872



The Straits Settlements Police Force, headed by an Inspector-General of Police, was established.

1914



The Traffic Office was formed. It was reorganised as the Traffic Branch in 1918 and is known as the Traffic Police (TP) today.

1929



The Police Depot was formed. It was renamed the Police Training School (PTS) in 1945 and upgraded to the status of a Police Academy in 1969. In 2005, police training moved into the Home Team Academy (HTA).

1931



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

Under Inspector-General of Police Harold Fairburn, an extensive building scheme was undertaken between 1931 – 1934 to exert police presence.

1945



Picture: Singapore Police Force Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore

After the end of the Japanese Occupation, the Straits Settlements Police Force in Singapore was renamed the Singapore Police Force in 1945 and headed by Colonel R. E. Foulger.



The police force began trialling the use of scavenged radio equipment left over from World War II in 1945 and made the first radio car, using a makeshift bamboo pole to support an antennae. The Radio Branch that was formed in the same year expanded into the Radio Division in 1948.

1946



Singapore became a Crown Colony and the scroll on the police crest was changed to bear the words, Singapore Police Force.

The Volunteer Special Constabulary (VSC) was also formed.

1947

The '999' Police Emergency Hotline was launched.

1949



Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

The first batch of female police officers was recruited.



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

The Gurkha Contingent (GC) was formed.

1950



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

The Security Squad was formed. It was expanded into the Security Section in 1953, renamed the Security Branch in 1965, and reorganised as the Security Command (SecCom) in 2000.

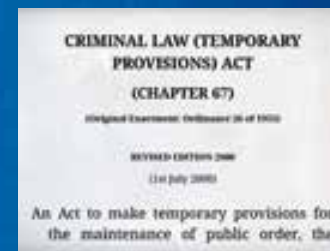
1952



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

The Riot Squad was formed after the Maria Hertogh riots. The squad was renamed the Reserve Unit in 1952, Police Task Force (PTF) in 1980 and Police Tactical Unit (PTU) in 2005.

1955



The Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Act was introduced.

1956



The Combined Operations Room was built to serve as the base command for police and military communications. Renamed the Police Operations Command Centre (POCC) in 2015, it serves as the nerve centre of the SPF today.

1958



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

The Kallang Park Road Safety First Playground was the first road safety park built. It was later relocated to East Coast Park in 1981 and it has since become known as the Road Safety Community Park.

1959



On 3 June 1959, Singapore attained self-governance and gained control of its internal affairs, including its police force. In 1971, the government designated 3 June as Police Day, to reaffirm the fact that the Police is part of the society and is responsible to an elected government, and that the maintenance of law and order is a service to the community. The Singapore Police Force was renamed Polis Negara Singapura.



# TIMELINE

OF KEY MILESTONES, 1820 — 2020

1963



Polis Negara Singapura became a component of the Royal Malaysia Police after Singapore's merger with the Federation of Malaya. John Le Cain became the first Asian Commissioner of Police in Singapore.

Konfrontasi (Confrontation) began from 1963 and lasted till 1965.

1965



Singapore gained independence on 9 August 1965. The police force was renamed the Polis Republik Singapura (Republic of Singapore Police) and came under the Ministry of Interior and Defence (MID). MacDonald House was bombed by Indonesian saboteurs on 10 March 1965.

1967



Police National Service was introduced. It included part-time service in the Special Constabulary and Vigilante Corps. Part-time service was phased out in 1981.

1968



INTERPOL

Singapore was admitted to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

1969

Polis Republik Singapura became known as the Singapore Police Force (SPF).

A blue uniform was adopted in line with the international colour of policing.



1970



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

The Airport Police Division (APD) was established.

The MID was separated into two ministries: the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The MHA took charge of the SPF.

1973

The Criminal Intelligence Unit was set up within the CID. The unit was upgraded to a division within the CID in 1988 and was named the Police Intelligence Department (PID) in 1996.

The Arms Offences Act was introduced.

1975



Following the Laju Incident in 1974, full-time Police National Service was introduced in 1975.

1978



The Police Tactical Team was formed within the Police Reserve Unit. It was named Special Tactics and Rescue (STAR) in 1993.

1981



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations National Police (ASEANAPOL) was formed and Singapore became a member.

1983



Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

Community policing was introduced. The Neighbourhood Police Post (NPP) system was launched with the opening of Khe Bong NPP in Toa Payoh Division.

1986



Picture: Mediacorp

Crimewatch was launched.

1989



The SPF sent its first contingent to take part in a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission, the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. The SPF UN Peacekeeping Force (UNPKF) was officially formed in 1998.

1992



Picture: National Archives of Singapore

The Special Operations Command (SOC) was created to combine the Police Task Force, the Police Tactical Team and the Police Dog Unit under one command.

1997



The Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC) system was launched with the opening of Queenstown NPC in Clementi Division.

2000



Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

Formerly under the Ministry of Finance, the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD), which was set up in 1984 to fight white-collar crime, was restructured and transferred to the SPF.

2001



In the wake of the September 11 attacks, enhanced security measures were put in place immediately. Police National Service Key Installations (KINS) troops were deployed en masse for the first time.

2002



The SPF became the first public service organisation to attain the Singapore Quality Award (SQA). In 2007, the SPF was awarded the SQA with Special Commendation and again scored this top honour in 2019.

2005



The Police MRT Unit was formed in the wake of the 2005 London bombings. The unit was upgraded to a full-fledged command known as Public Transport Security Command (TransCom) in 2009.

2008



Commissioner of Police Khoo Boon Hui was elected as the 25th President of the INTERPOL.

2010



Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

Singapore gained unanimous support to establish the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) at the 79th INTERPOL General Assembly.

2012



The Community Policing System (COPS), an enhancement of the NPC system, was launched.

2015



An updated police crest was unveiled in 2015.

2016



To enhance the SPF's counterterrorism capabilities, Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) and Rapid Deployment Teams (RDTs) were formed. The Protective Security Command (ProCom), comprising largely Full-time Police National Servicemen officers, was formed to protect critical infrastructure, security-sensitive locations and events during peacetime and national emergencies. SGSecure, a movement to prepare Singapore's community response to the threat of terrorism, was launched.

2019



The Woodlands Division, the SPF's seventh Land Division, was established.

2020



The SPF commemorated 200 years of policing in Singapore.



Police officers in dark blue  
serge uniforms, circa 1880s.

## SECTION 1

### ORDER & ORGANISATION

# THE FOUNDATIONS OF SECURITY

The bicentennial history of modern Singapore, from British colonial times till today, also embraces the story of the basic foundations of safety and security, reflecting the evolving needs of state and society, as captured in the development of the Singapore Police Force.

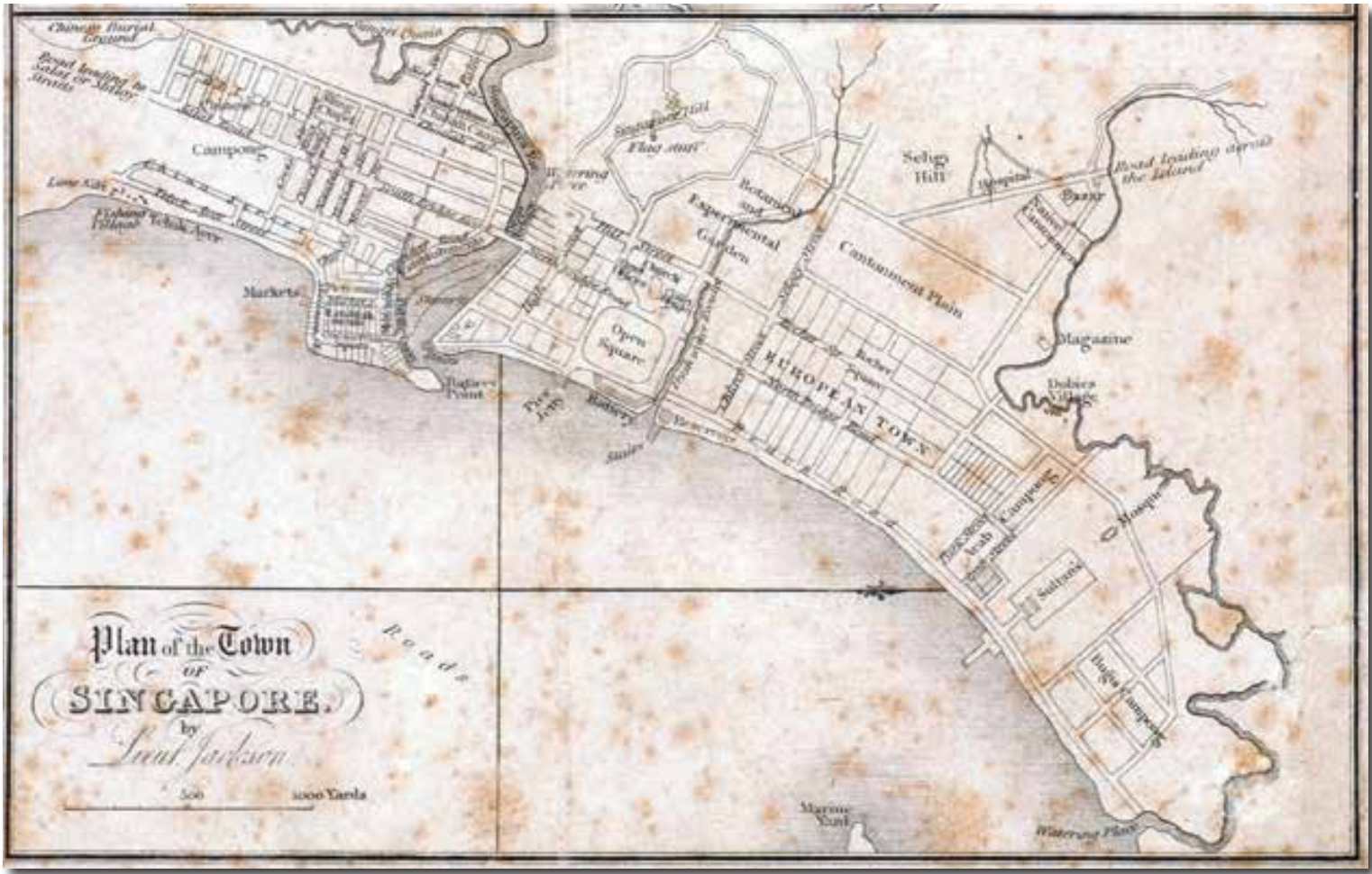


SINGAPORE'S FIRST POLICE FORCE, 1820

Singapore was a hub of international commerce between the 14th and 15th centuries, and thereafter, a trading settlement until around 1600, as part of the Johor-Riau sultanate. In the late 1700s, the British and the Dutch jostled for dominance in this region, until January 1819, when Sir Stamford Raffles and Major William Farquhar landed in Singapore.

On 6 February 1819, Raffles, representing the British East India Company (EIC), signed a treaty to set up sea trading facilities in Singapore with the Temenggong, Abdul Rahman, and Hussein Mohamed Shah, who had just moved from the Riau islands to be recognised by the British as Sultan of Johor.

Administering law and order in the new port, with its fast-growing population, soon became a pressing challenge for Farquhar, the first Resident of Singapore. At first, Farquhar proposed that David Napier, a merchant who had moved to Singapore from India, head the Police Department, but Raffles objected to this because he thought the Resident himself should act as the police chief and magistrate.



First Singapore town plan in 1822. Picture: National Archives of Singapore

Farquhar was given only a slim budget for the administration of the settlement, and no clear revenue source, with Singapore’s status as a free port. So, he proposed to finance the new police force through taxes on opium and gambling, but, once again, Raffles disagreed, as such taxes would run counter to Singapore’s free port principles. He objected also because Singapore was primarily meant to be a military post rather than a fixed settlement at that point.

In May 1820, Farquhar appointed his son-in-law, Francis James Bernard, to the post of Assistant in the Police Department — an appointment that Raffles confirmed only three months later. Bernard had earlier been appointed by Raffles as the Acting Master Attendant and Marine Storekeeper. And so, the first rudimentary form of a police force was established, marking the start of 200 years of development into what is today, the Singapore Police Force (SPF).

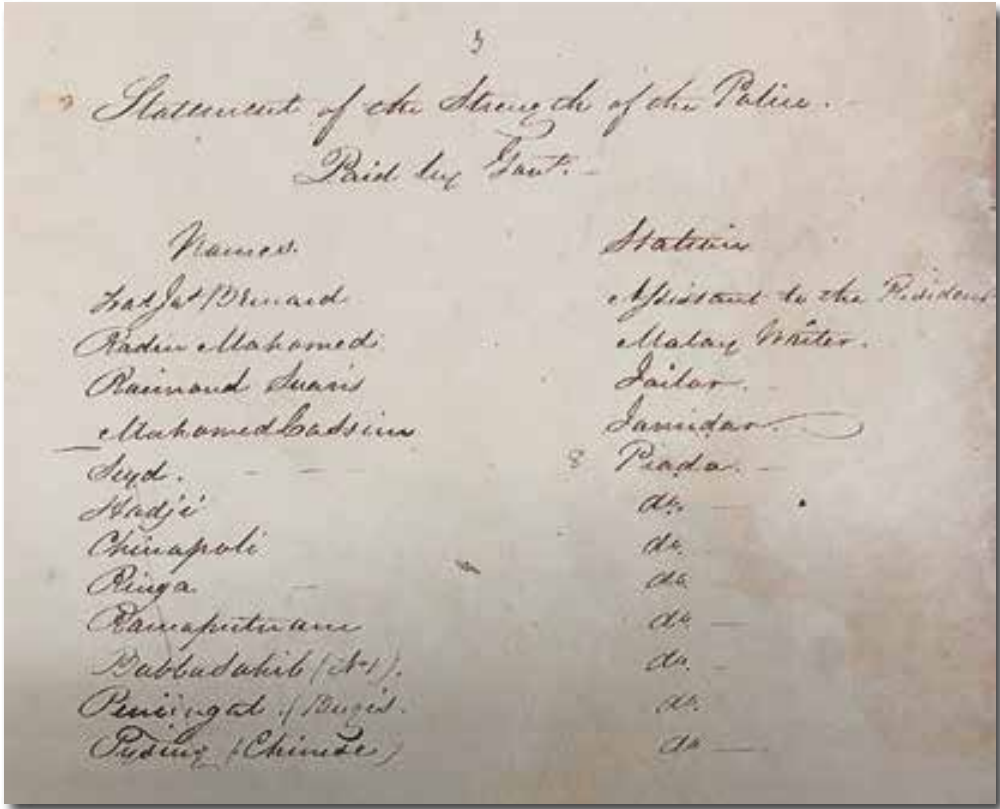
Bernard’s main job was to mind the European quarter and port. His duties included maintaining public order, arresting criminals, witnessing contracts registered at the Police Office, overseeing the auction of licences, supervising the jail and settling disputes.

However, in the eyes of the British, Singapore was of relatively less importance compared to the other neighbouring British territories of Bencoolen (Bengkulu in present-day Indonesia) and Penang in Malaya (present-day Malaysia). Hence, Bernard was given only a shoestring budget to operate the Force, severely limiting its authority and ability to maintain public order.

A document he submitted, a “Statement of the Strength of the Police Paid by the Government”, listed the names of the 12 men (including himself) on the British government payroll, which included a writer, jailor, *jemadar* (sergeant) and eight *peada* (constables). These were the island’s only

“official” security personnel, apart from the men of both the Sultan and the Temenggong. The police force of those days was but a mere skeleton crew compared to today’s Force of 15,000 regular officers, civilian staff and Full-time Police National Servicemen (PNSFs), augmented by volunteer officers and Operationally Ready Police National Servicemen (PNSmen), which shows how much the SPF has grown since then.

The 1819 treaty gave the EIC only a licence to set up a port in the central part of Singapore town. For outlying areas, keeping the peace became a shared duty for the police force and the village chiefs. Bernard worked closely with Farquhar and the *kapitans* (headmen of the ethnic communities) to maintain public order and to settle disputes.



A cropped facsimile of a document from Straits Settlements Records, showing the names of the first 12 officers in the police force. Picture: Straits Settlements Records Volume L5, page 367, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



Naturally, Bernard was anxious to show that the policing situation was under control. In a government report, credit was already taken for the fact that from July 1820 to July 1821, 47 cases of robbery and theft were brought to the police force, with two cases of attempted theft of slaves.

Nonetheless, Singapore's first police force was quite outnumbered by the volume of rampant crime and public order incidents. The early years were marked by practically daily crime and occasional public disorder. After initially disagreeing with Farquhar on the need to boost police resources, Raffles came to see the inadequacies of the existing policing system, not least of which were the lack of clear regulations on crimes and penalties, and that of defined guidelines on when British laws should be applied and when native laws should be respected.

In his town plan of 1822 for the systematic development of Singapore, Raffles gave instructions that "each street should receive some appropriate name and it will become the duty of the Police to see them regularly numbered. Each street or division should also have a portion set apart for a police station". He placed the administration of Singapore under the Bengal government in India instead of Bencoolen, and also drew up regulations specifically for policing and administration of justice.

This enhancement of police powers and organisation was timely, as the year 1823 saw the first recorded police casualty. A man in custody named Syed Yassin, who had a *kris* that police officers had neglected to confiscate, stabbed and killed the Hindu constable escorting him and escaped. While the officers were searching for him, he stabbed and injured Farquhar, before being felled himself. This case highlighted the inadequacies of the existing police force, which had failed to protect even

its officer. The dead body of Yassin was hung in public view, to send a stern warning against what the colonial authorities saw as civil unrest within the local community.

The continuing tensions between Raffles and Farquhar led to the latter's replacement by Dr John Crawfurd, who arrived in Singapore in May 1823. A medical doctor by training, he had also served as an administrator and diplomat in Penang and Java under Raffles, and took a tougher stand on policing as the second Resident of Singapore. The police force was, at this time, maintained also by voluntary contributions from the European residents and local merchants.

After Farquhar was dismissed, Bernard continued to act as Assistant in the Police Department until March 1824, when he was replaced by William Campbell, a relative of Crawfurd. Crawfurd successfully negotiated with the Malay chiefs a second treaty in 1824, which ceded not just the port, but the whole of Singapore to Britain through the EIC. By then, the colony had proven its worth, business was excellent, and immigrants were pouring in from all over the world.

However, the size of the police force in the 1820s and 1830s remained insufficient in dealing with rampant criminal activity. Chinese secret societies were gaining a foothold while murder, piracy, slavery and robberies were commonplace. In 1831, the Force had only 18 men. Through a gradual expansion of manpower, by 1841, the police force now consisted of the sitting Magistrate as Superintendent of Police, three European Constables (a higher rank at that time under the British system), six sergeants, eight corporals and 110 other police officers.

The growing crime situation would demand more attention and action to build up the police force in the years that were soon to follow.

## THE EARLY POLICE OFFICES

During the period 1819 – 1823, there were three distinct sites used as police offices. From May 1820, the first documented site was the house of Francis James Bernard, located in the Cantonment Plain (the area approximately in front of Victoria Concert Hall today).

From Bernard's correspondences, the first purpose-built police office was constructed in December 1820, where police charges could be lodged. In February 1823, the EIC began renting warehouses near the Ferry Point at the mouth of Singapore River for public offices, including housing the Store Keeper and Civil Stores. Under orders from Raffles, the Store Keeper's offices were then requisitioned for the police force to occupy. The exact location is unclear, but, from descriptions in later years, it is established that the police station was located facing the sea.

In the 1930s, driven by Inspector-General of Police Harold Fairburn, who lobbied for new facilities and expanding the police

presence, the British colonial government embarked on one of the most extensive building schemes in Singapore's policing history. The police headquarters at Central Police Station on South Bridge Road was redeveloped at a cost of \$144,000, with the addition of new reinforced concrete three-storey blocks, architecturally modelled after Hong Kong's Central Police Station.



Central Police Station, built in 1931.



Bukit Panjang Police Station, built in early 1900.

Strategically located close to Chinatown and the secret societies that operated there, the new blocks housed an armoury, detention cells and recreational rooms for officers. In 1934, nearly half a million dollars were spent on the construction of the Hill Street Police Station at the junction of River Valley Road and Hill Street, making it the largest

police barracks in British Malaya and Singapore's largest pre-war government building. At six storeys high, the station was regarded as a modern skyscraper at that time, complete with electric lifts and living quarters.

Later, new stations, depots and staff quarters were erected at Thomson Road, Maxwell Road, Beach Road, Havelock Road, Tanjong Pagar, Bukit Panjang, Sepoy Lines, Kandang Kerbau, Joo Chiat and Woodlands.



Hill Street Police Station and Barracks, built in 1934.



### POLICING A THRIVING TOWN, 1826 – 1871

In 1826, the colonial authorities merged Singapore, Penang and Malacca to form the Straits Settlements. As Singapore boomed, police resources could not match the corresponding rise in the crime rate. Colonial records in 1827 show that there were jail rooms right under the Police Office in the early years — another indication of the still-limited funding for police operations at that time.

From 1826 to 1871, the police force, with their limited resources, worked with improvised arrangements to secure law and order, increasing police presence throughout the island and mobilising voluntary assistance of the public when there were civil disturbances.

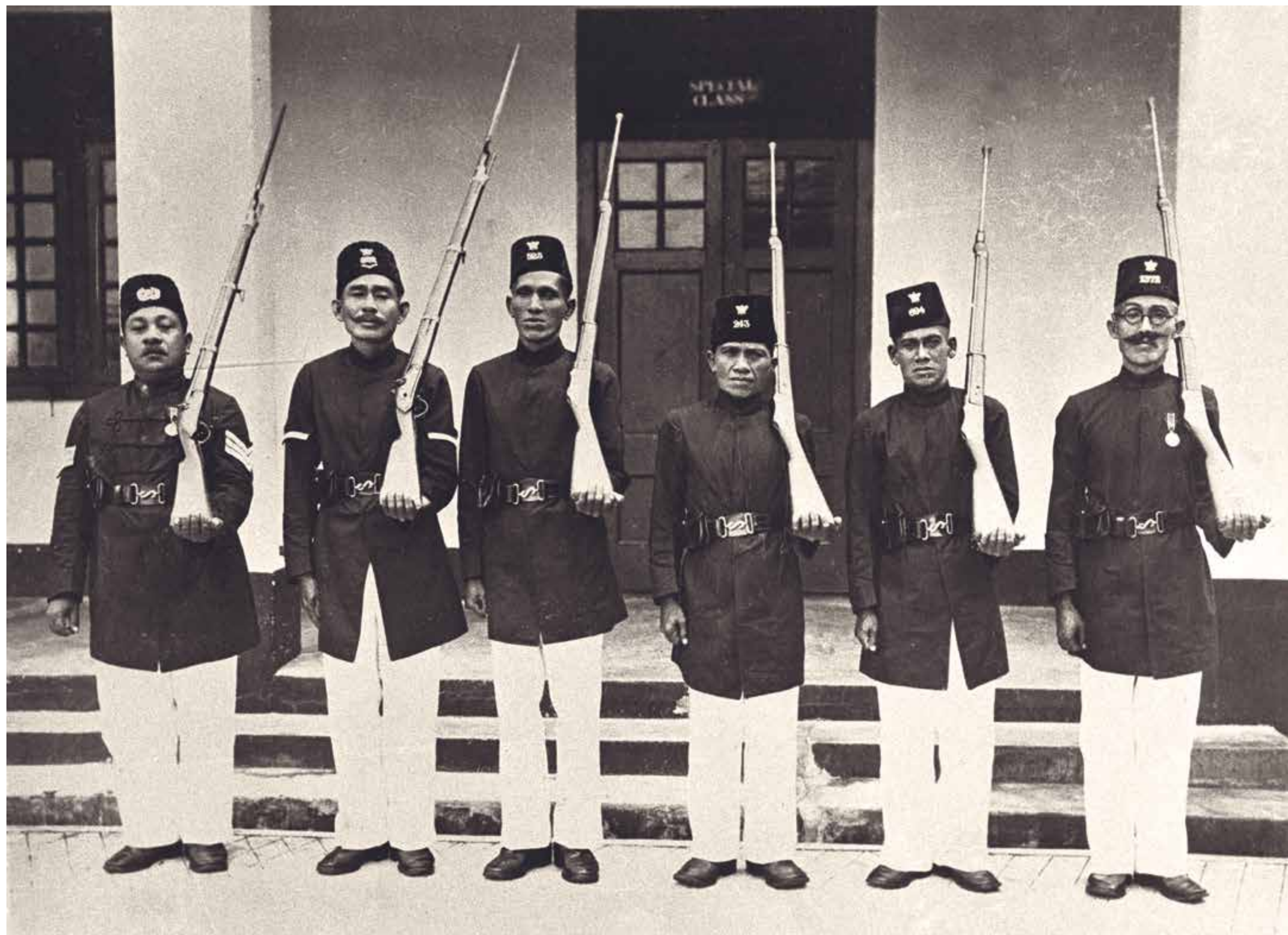
Nineteenth-century Singapore was marked by lawlessness, according to various sources. As the British historian, C. M. Turnbull, author of *A History of Singapore 1819-1975*, wrote: “Throughout the 1830s, burglaries by gangs of 50 or 100 men were so common that people feared to live on the outskirts of town.” Riots were also frequent and often linked to Chinese secret societies, including the first major riot in 1846, involving thousands of secret society members in disturbances related to a funeral procession, and the 1854 clashes between Hokkiens and Teochews, sparked by a trade dispute.

In seeking to establish law and order, the British colonial administration, naturally, borrowed from British ideas when applying them to the local conditions in new territories like 19th-century Singapore. In his 1952 book, *The Colonial Police*, British senior civil servant Charles Jeffries wrote of the British concept of a policeman, based on four principles: that the police are a civilian, unarmed body; that the sight of the police uniform deters criminals and reassures the public; that each policeman is an independent agent exercising the authority of the law; and that the police force is a separate and independent authority.

By the 1840s, the state of lawlessness had become so severe that a public meeting was called on 10 February 1843 to discuss the issue. From the resulting resolutions, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, George Bonham, argued strongly with the British colonial administration in Calcutta for the police force to be expanded and for regular recruitment of policemen from Madras.

However, only one improvement was sanctioned: the creation of a new post of Deputy Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, which went to Thomas Dunman, an energetic young man of 29. He proved to be well suited for the role, although he could devote all his time to police work only after 1846, when the Justices of the Peace, eager for improvement in tackling the crime situation and defying the Resident Councillor, appointed him as full-time Superintendent.

In 1846, there were 192 “peace officers”, as police officers were then known, made up of five constables (equivalent to inspectors of later years), six *jemadars* (sergeants), 11 *duffadars* (corporals), nine acting *duffadars* (lance-corporals), and 161 *peons* (patrolmen). The constables were Europeans while the other ranks were made up of Indians and Malays.



Malay policemen wearing *songkoks* for ceremonial guard duties, 1875. Picture: Singapore Police Force Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore





Police officers in dark blue serge uniforms, circa 1880s.

There were five police stations. Telok Ayer or 'A' Station, Bukit Pasoh or 'B' Station, Police Office (later Police Headquarters) or 'C' Station, Kampong Kerbau or 'D' Station, and Rochor or 'E' Station. This is probably the earliest indication of denoting policing areas under a convenient, easy-to-remember alphabetical system. Each station was headed by a constable, who was supported by a sergeant. One other station at Kampong Bencoolen was headed by a sergeant, covering the role of a constable. There were also four outstations at Orchard Road (under 'C' station), Bukit Timah Road ('D'), Serangoon Road ('E') and Changi ('E').

Policemen patrolling the government buildings and European quarters were generally armed with fusils or carbines, while those patrolling other areas were armed with swords or spears. The day uniform for Indian policemen was made up of a red turban, blue frock coat, white trousers, police belt and baton. The day uniform for Malay policemen was made up of a dark *batik* headkerchief, blue jacket, *sarong* worn short over white trousers, police belt and baton. At night, they wore black jackets and trousers with lascar's (sailor's) caps.

## POLICE UNIFORMS THROUGH THE DECADES

From the borrowed styles from Britain to adaptations to Singapore's heat and humidity, police uniforms have undergone many rounds of enhancement. The uniforms have become progressively more comfortable, lighter and more durable, enabling SPF officers to perform to the best of their abilities.

The 200-year history of the SPF is mirrored in the introduction, discontinuation and return of shorts as part of the police uniform in Singapore. In the early years, policemen wore dark serge coats and long trousers of heavily woven fabric, a design imported from what would naturally be worn in a temperate country like Britain. Despite Singapore's quite different weather, it was to take many more years before adaptations to the tropical heat and humidity came to have a bearing on the police uniform.

In 1893, the Force went for a lighter khaki material in shirts and shorts, black puttees and black boots. From the post-WWII period until 1969, this was changed to a two-tone outfit of grey flannel shirt and khaki shorts with long socks.

In 1969, the 150th anniversary of Singapore's modern founding, the SPF took the occasion to refresh its entire look. The 6,000-strong Force put the colonial-era uniforms into the museum and donned the all-navy blue look still used today, recognised the world over as the classic "police colour".

Today, shorts have come full circle in the SPF. In 2005, the island patrol uniform was introduced, consisting of a bicycle helmet, dark blue polo top and bermuda shorts for Police Coast Guard officers performing bicycle patrol duties on Pulau Ubin. In 2012, shorts became a trademark feature of the Community Policing Unit (CPU), dedicated to deepening engagement with the community. As part of their engagement efforts, CPU officers conduct interactive foot and bicycle patrols in the neighbourhood in their distinctive white police polo shirts and dark blue bermuda shorts.

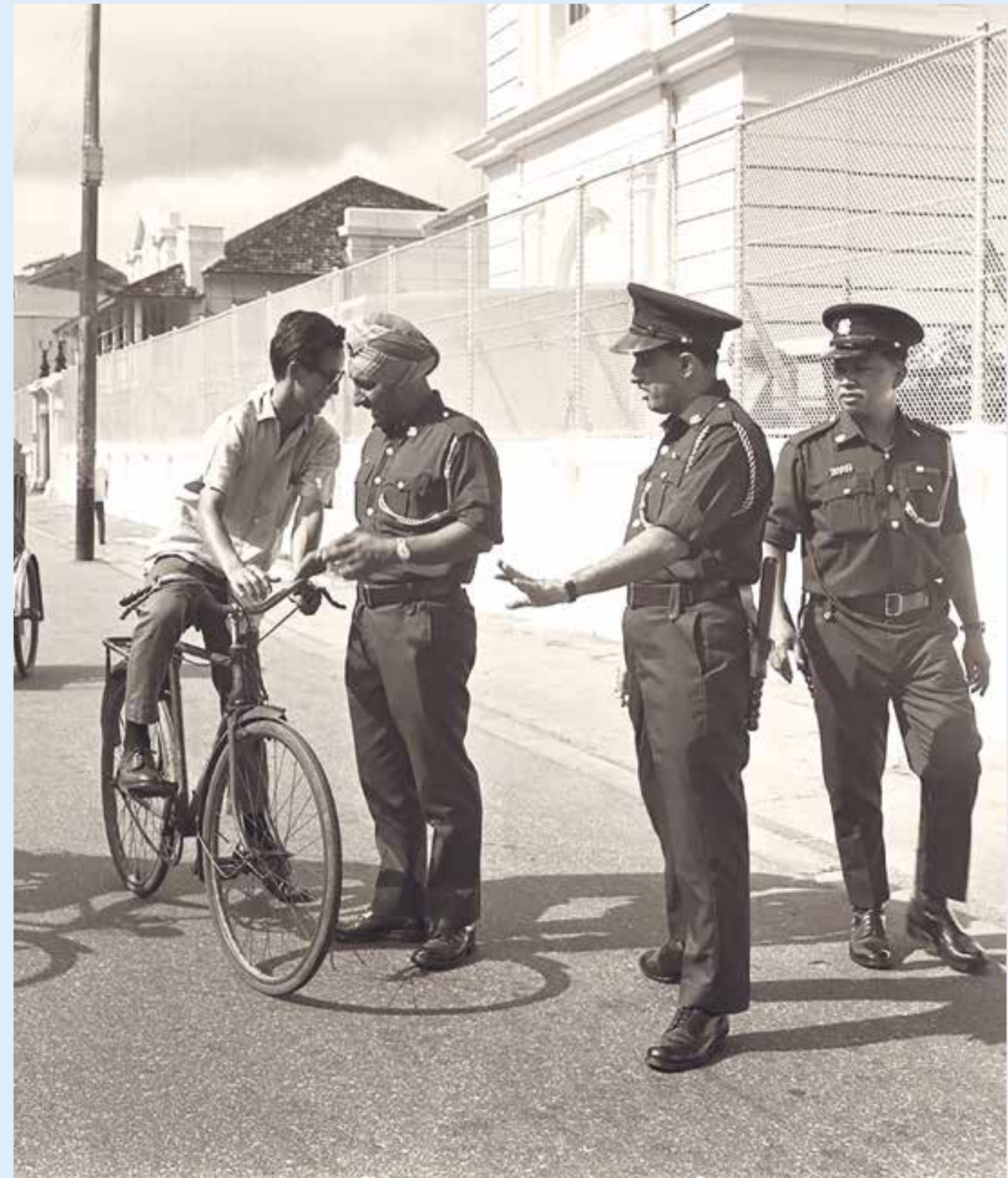
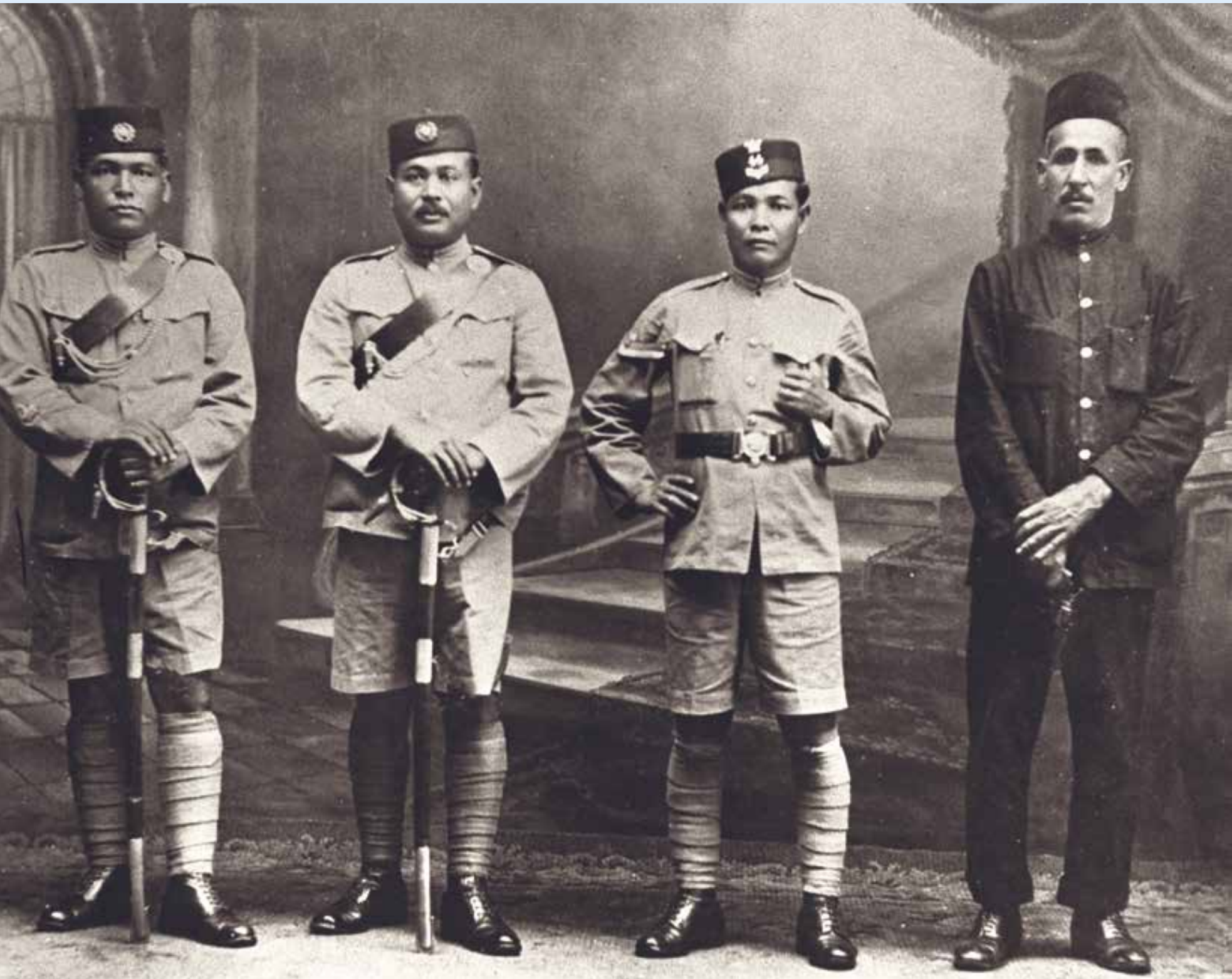
Since April 2018, SPF officers have been donning new uniforms. Whilst still sporting its signature blue, the new uniform has been redesigned to help officers beat the heat and humidity. Made of 98 per cent polyester and 2 per cent spandex, the new fabric allows for faster drying and better absorption of perspiration. The ongoing enhancements to the uniform help to improve the officers' operational effectiveness.



**Top:** Asiatic Inspectors Song Kok Hoo and Mohamed Yusoff donning ceremonial uniforms, 1937. Picture: Singapore Police Force Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore

**Bottom:** Police team in ceremonial attire, 1863.





**Left:** Policemen in uniforms made of lighter khaki material in the 1930s. Picture: Singapore Police Force Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore

**Right:** The police uniform was changed in 1969 with the signature dark blue police colour. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings





Gambling den circa 1880s. Picture: National Archives of Singapore

## SUPPRESSING GAMBLING

One issue that plagued the island was that of gambling. The British historian, C. M. Turnbull, wrote that under the Police Act of 1857, gambling could not be prosecuted at all if it took place offshore, so many boats on the rivers and in the harbours became notorious gambling dens, while on land the gaming houses were often “like little fortresses, with three, four, and sometimes even seven, strong thick doors to break through and concealed holes in the walls for the gamblers to escape”.

Penalties for gambling were stepped up in 1861 but rewards paid to informers were meagre. Spies were often murdered and found it safer and more profitable to keep watch on police officers on behalf of gaming house keepers. In 1870, one case illustrated the ends to which the police officers had to go to in order to apprehend those running gambling dens. To ensure a

successful raid on a gambling den at Pahang Alley, Kampong Gelam (present-day Kampong Glam, near the Bugis area), the police officers went in palanquins (sedan chairs) covered with kadjan leaves, similar to those in use by native women, and so, were able to approach without causing alarm.

In the late 1800s, the police force further clamped down on gambling. The Chinese petitioned for the Government to suppress a popular lottery that was then widespread all over town. As a result, the Gaming Ordinance of 1870 was passed in exceedingly strict terms. However, by 1886, gambling had become so rampant that a Commission of Enquiry was appointed, leading to an even stricter ordinance, passed in 1888. The Gambling Suppression Department was instituted in 1889 to carry out its provisions. The *Police Annual* reports, however, continued to acknowledge that stamping out gambling completely was practically impossible.

The policemen were each employed on a three-year term, and if any failed to complete the term or left the Force without the permission of the Superintendent of Police, he was to pay the Force 85 Spanish dollars in compensation.

In October 1846, Dunman established the first set of rules and regulations for Singapore’s police force. The rules and regulations also spelled out various duties and the conduct demanded of the policemen at various stations. The duties included supervising the police jail, lodging information against the use of non-standard weights and measures, and dealing with public nuisances, such as food vendors occupying highways, selling unwholesome meat, throwing rubbish into rivers or canals, and even preventing persons from bathing, or washing clothes, at the wells situated at the foot of Government Hill.

There was also a consciousness of the propriety and prime objective of this branch of public service. Policemen were to be civil and attentive to every person, while being prepared to act with decisiveness and boldness. In addition to fighting crime and maintaining law and order, police officers were also burdened with other non-policing duties such as helping to fight fires and clear the streets after floods.

The Police Act to define the functions and powers of the police was passed by the Legislative Council of India on 13 June 1856 and applied to Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and the Straits Settlements. From 1857, the police force operated under the Police Act, controlled by the local executive government. Later, in 1870, the Act was amended to further define the powers and functions of the Commissioner of Police, to give the police more authority to operate.

In May 1857, the government of India agreed to appoint a separate Commissioner of Police for Singapore, as in the Indian Presidency towns, and in June 1857, Dunman was appointed to this office. He was to battle hard to reform the police force. He fought for higher wages for his men, with gratuities and contracts of service, cut down hours of work from 14 to 10 a day, and organised classes in reading and writing for them since fewer than a third of the Force were literate. Meanwhile, the challenges of rising crime persisted.

In 1859, William Orfeur Cavenagh assumed the position of Governor of the Straits Settlements, the last to be appointed from India. He took a strong interest in policing, for example, personally selecting sites for police stations on the northern coast to check piracy and authorising a Marine Police, as well as the closing down of many taverns, where drunken sailors and brawls had been regular features of Singapore’s nightlife.

Between 1859 and 1867, a few major developments took place for the police force. Police stations were established along the Johor Straits, for the suppression of acts of petty piracy. A floating police station was established for the protection of ships in port, the beginnings of marine police that is today the Police Coast Guard (PCG).



## PROTECTING THE COASTLINE

Practically a pirates' playground — that was what 19th-century Singapore was becoming, with the flourishing sea trade sparked by the arrival of the British in 1819. In her book, *A History of Singapore 1819-1975*, British historian C. M. Turnbull wrote: "Piracy brought legitimate trade almost to a standstill along the east coast of the Malay peninsula in the 1830s. Singapore merchants were increasingly reluctant to entrust goods on credit for fear they would be lost to pirates."

By the 1840s, opinions were expressed regularly in the press on the need for a marine police. In 1849, a letter to *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* highlighted the thievery taking place along the shoreline and urged that "the necessity of a Marine Police is daily more apparent". The pieces necessary for Singapore's marine security began to fall into place only into the 1850s.

In 1850, the police force was authorised to purchase a boat, and engage the services of six able and qualified boatmen. In

1855, it was reported that the Municipal Committee maintained a marine police of three boats, which were on guard at night and were always available in case of disturbances.

In 1866, the Marine Police was established to combat petty crime along the shoreline and in stretches of water in harbour areas and the Singapore River. In 1916, it was renamed the Marine Branch. In 1924, it built its headquarters at the mouth of the Singapore River at Cavenagh Bridge. The Marine Police came into its own with some 26 boats and a complement of 238 men. This held out at least until the Japanese Occupation in 1942, when the Japanese confiscated all the vessels.

After World War II, Singapore experienced rapid growth in the shipping community and shipping-related activities. The need to patrol the shallower waters, therefore, was imperative. In 1951, the Marine Branch was reorganised and expanded as the Marine Division. By this time, sub-bases had been established at Tanjong Kling, Pulau Ubin and Pulau Tekong.

Following the reorganisation of the police force in 1952, the number of boats in the Marine Police was increased to 68 and during the time of Konfrontasi with Indonesia in the 1960s, the number went up to 70.

After Singapore became independent in 1965, the confrontation situation with Indonesia softened and anti-infiltration patrols were reduced. As the shipping and maritime sector was still growing, there was a need to upgrade policing technology and expand its reach and presence. Thus, in 1970, a new headquarters was built at Kallang (later moved to Pulau Brani), manpower was stepped up, and more vessels were purchased to meet the diverse and intensified operational needs.

The piracy-free waters of Singapore, the low crime rate within port limits, as well as the drastic reduction in the numbers of illegal intrusion into territorial seas, are the fruits of these pioneers of policing at sea.

In more recent decades, the Marine Police, which underwent a massive restructuring in 1993 to upgrade itself into the Police Coast Guard (PCG), has become much better equipped for greater policing roles at sea, including joint operations with the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), anti-illegal migrant operations, handling foreign government vessel intrusions and guarding Horsburgh Lighthouse in the Singapore Straits.

Today, Singapore's coastline is protected against threats such as illegal immigrants by a multi-pronged approach that includes surveillance, patrolling and putting preventive measures in place to deter illegal intrusions and landings. Land and sea barriers are some of the deterrence measures, while sophisticated surveillance camera system and unmanned aerial vehicles aid detection of suspicious activities. To augment its response capabilities, the PCG is also trialling the use of unmanned surface vessels to perform patrols.



**Left:** Marine Police officers on patrol in the 1960s.

**Right:** Marine Police officers training at Empress Place, circa 1935. Picture: Singapore Police Force Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore



In 1866, a Detective Department was set up, mainly to address the threats posed by secret societies. Working in plain clothes, the detectives were initially all non-Chinese, because it was believed that this would allow them to function more effectively, as the members of secret societies were almost all Chinese. This unit would later develop much more, into today's Criminal Investigation Department. Other measures undertaken included co-opting the headmen of contending parties of secret societies, with their "insider knowledge", as "special constables" to work closely with the plainclothes detectives to quell secret society disturbances. A code of regulations was also drawn up to guide police officers on their duties and conduct.

Overall, there were significant gaps in the working conditions of police officers during colonial times that were never fully addressed under the British authorities. The police force was still very much overworked, understaffed and underpaid.

In the 19th century, a major point holding back the development of the police force was the colonial administration's lack of funds. In 1863, only \$2.75 was allotted to each man for uniforms annually, when they needed at least two suits a year, costing \$3 each. Before that, it was even worse — policemen had to pay for their own uniforms.

Despite many rounds of reforms, improvements could not keep up with what was really needed for a force that was properly staffed so that it could do its best work. The low salaries and poor working conditions led to a rise in the incidence of corruption among the police ranks — an issue that was to be resolved when these root problems were addressed after independence.

Since independence, corruption has been managed with what has come to be known as Singapore's long-standing system of zero tolerance of corruption among public servants at all levels. As Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew said in a speech at the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute's World Ethics and Integrity Forum in 2005: "We have to keep our own house clean. No one else can do it for us." Singapore's steadfast stance on corruption is the basis of how the SPF would later build a strong reputation for incorruptibility.

### THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS POLICE FORCE, 1872 – 1942

A new phase in the history of the Straits Settlements began in 1867, when the three territories of Singapore, Penang and Malacca, originally administered from British India, became a crown colony under direct British control. Shortly after the new crown colony was established, a committee of enquiry was established to study and report on the administrative functioning of the colony.

The main issue was how to improve the operational capabilities of the police force to deal with persistent problems including secret societies and major crimes. One recommendation was that the grades and salaries of police officers should be raised, as this was the main reason that not enough competent men could be attracted to the Force.

In August 1871, upon the retirement of Dunman, the government appointed C. B. Plunket as Chief Commissioner of Police, but soon after, instead of "Commissioner", the term "Inspector-General" was used. In 1872, the Straits Settlements Police Force was established. Plunket was thus the first Inspector-General of Police of the Straits Settlements.



Crest of the Straits Settlements  
Police Force (1872 – 1942).



As a snapshot of the crime situation in the 1870s, in 1878, when the population was around 100,000, the total number of offences registered by the police force was 3,184. The key offences were theft (1,424 cases), housebreaking (250 cases) and assault (222 cases). By 1899, when the population had grown to around 150,000, there were 11,932 offences registered, the majority of which were petty offences.

In 1879, a police commission was set up to study the establishment of the police force of the Straits Settlements and to make recommendations for its improvement. The lack of Chinese officers in the Force due to earlier guidelines proved problematic, as the Chinese formed the great bulk of the population in almost every part of the Straits Settlements, and yet police officers generally did not speak any Chinese dialect. Hence, the recommendations included proposing that a Chinese station officer be appointed at the principal stations in the city where there were large numbers of Chinese, speaking the dialect of the majority of those around him as well as Malay. Some of the eventual reforms included a boost for training and a reduction in shift duration from six to four hours.

Yet another reform was the establishment of a Sikh contingent, given the earlier success of such a unit in Hong Kong. In March 1881, 54 Sikhs landed in Singapore from Punjab, India, and were housed at Sepoy Lines. By the mid-1940s, the contingent had grown to be 500-strong, until it was disbanded soon after the war by 1946. In 1949, the Gurkha Contingent took over the key policing functions earlier performed by the Sikh policemen.

In 1888, another commission was set up with a similar aim as the 1879 commission, to review all aspects of the Force including recruitment and performance, and to recommend improvements. Its report was issued in May 1889, and yet another commission was appointed shortly afterwards to report upon the efficiency of the Force. As a result of the findings, the police force also began experimenting with employing more Chinese, representing an increased willingness by the British to trust the Chinese and include them in policing efforts. Then, there were six Chinese constables at Kreta Ayer and a few in the Detective Department.





Detectives from the Straits Settlements Police Force in 1906. Picture: Singapore Police Force Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore



## THE SECRET SOCIETIES AND THE CHINESE PROTECTORATE, 1877

In colonial times, the management of community relations was mostly indirect, with the authorities relying on prominent community leaders to act as intermediaries between them and Chinese residents. This is quite different from the SPF's community policing today, where engagement is conducted directly, from policeman to civilian.

Before 1869, the inability to deal effectively with the Chinese led the Straits Settlements authorities to rely on influential Chinese leaders to act. Businessman and philanthropist Tan Tock Seng frequently arbitrated faction fights among the Chinese. Businessmen Tan Kim Seng and Seah Eu Chin assisted the authorities in stopping the 1854 riots, and in the 1857 disturbances, businessmen Hoo Ah Kay and Tan Kim Ching (Tan Tock Seng's son) were appointed to assist the Governor in preventing further bloodshed.

To solve “the Chinese problem”, the authorities had undertaken several efforts, including passing the Dangerous Societies Ordinance in 1869 and recruiting Chinese into the police force. Besides secret societies, there were also other issues specific to the Chinese population, such as the abuse of coolies, gambling, prostitution and trafficking of women.

In 1876, a committee was appointed to consider and take evidence on the condition of Chinese labourers in the colony. The committee proposed, among other recommendations, that Protectors of Chinese, who were to be Europeans conversant with Chinese dialects, should be appointed in Singapore and Penang. Largely as a result of the committee's report, the Chinese Protectorate was set up.

On 23 March 1877, the Chinese Immigrants Ordinance and the Crimping Ordinance were passed. The ordinances provided for a Protector of Chinese Immigrants and a Protector of Chinese Emigrants in each of the settlements. William Alexander Pickering was made the first Protector of the Chinese in Singapore in 1877. He spoke Hokkien, Cantonese, Khek and Teochew, and had arrived in Singapore in 1872, originally to take up the new post of Chinese Interpreter for the Straits Settlements Government.



William Alexander Pickering, the first Protector of the Chinese in Singapore. Picture: National Archives of Singapore

As soon as the Protectorate was started, with an office in a shophouse on North Canal Road, the registration and control of secret societies were transferred to it, and Pickering was soon able to restore order. The passing of the Preservation of the Peace Act in 1869 and its subsequent multiple extensions gave the police force the authority to banish anyone deemed dangerous for the settlement. With the enhanced police powers of arrest, dedicated manpower to this problem and a focus on enforcement, the police force gained effective suppression of secret society-related riots, and by the late 1870s, the situation had improved.

It was only in later decades that police powers and operations were boosted to deal even more decisively against the secret societies. In 1954, the Hokkien and Cantonese Branches of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) were combined with the Malay and Indian branches to form the Secret Societies Branch (SSB). In 1955, the Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Ordinance was enacted, providing wider powers to the police force, such as allowing more junior officers to certify a person as a secret society member, to facilitate arrest. To further toughen the stance against secret societies and gangsterism, the Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Ordinance was amended in 1958 to allow for detention and police supervision of those involved in criminal activities. Secret societies continued to be a threat into the 1960s and 1970s.

## POLICING IN PRE-WAR 1900S

The early pre-war years of the 20th century saw continued efforts to enhance the operational capabilities of the Force, leading to several reforms that led to more efficient policing.

In 1900, the Criminal Procedure Code was introduced to help officers develop self-reliance and initiative, by giving the police proper powers of summoning witnesses and taking statements compulsorily. However, it would take until the 1920s before some resources were in place — for example, for officers in charge of divisions to be given their own offices, clerks and interpreters, and for their responsibilities to be more defined.

Manpower, a key asset, was, of course, high on the agenda. In 1901, it was noted in the *Police Annual* report that sweeping reforms were needed for the Detective Department as there were not enough experienced European supervisors. In 1903, the Inspector-General of Police drew up a scheme for the reorganisation of the Detective Department, which provided for an increase in special pay and allowances, and the creation of new posts for Chinese policemen. In 1904, the scheme went into effect. The new post of Chinese Sub-Inspector was created, and Tay Kim Swee was appointed.

Appointments as officers in the Force were made by transfers of officers from other colonial police forces, and by nomination by the Colonial Office until 1904, when a new system was introduced:



The gazetted police officers, 1906.





The Detective Branch's charge room, 1931.  
Picture: National Archives of Singapore

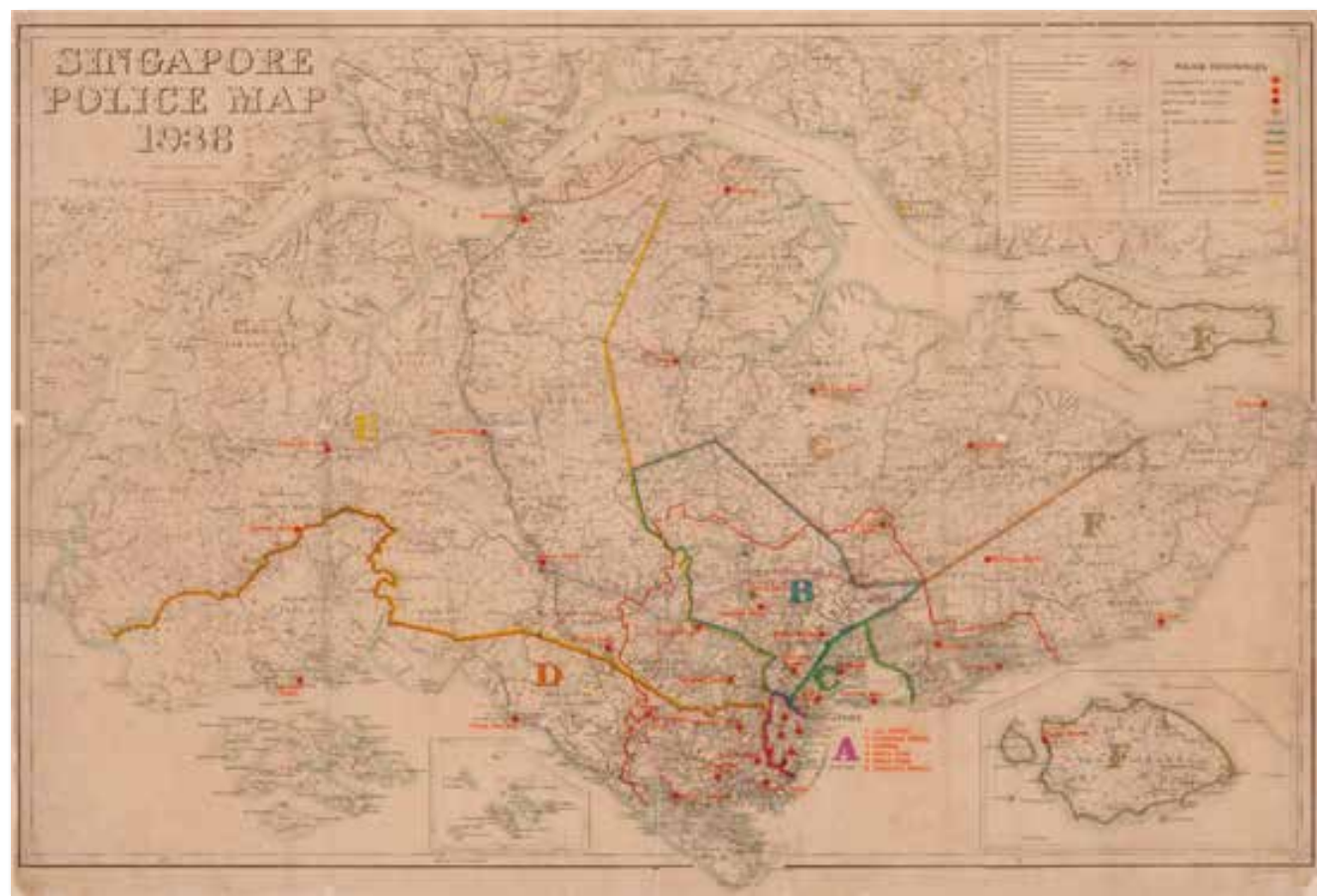
the police probationer system. Entrance to the commissioned ranks would be gained only after examination and probation. This raised the quality of officers, who would be more qualified and also more familiar with the local situation.

Many of the probationers were sent to China to study the Chinese language, to equip them to deal with the secret societies, whose members were almost all Chinese. Later in 1928, Chinese translators were appointed to the Criminal Investigation Department and Detective Branch, which enabled accelerated investigation.

Police techniques received a boost for more effective tracking and identification of criminals when the Criminal Registration Department was started in 1901, and the fingerprint system was introduced in 1903. A regional facet was added in 1910: a central fingerprint registry was created in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which further improved the efficiency of criminal detection.

One societal change during this period sparked the development of a major aspect of police work. A rise in the motor vehicle population, with the invention of the modern automobile in 1886, and the consequent surge in road accidents prompted the setting up of the Traffic Office in 1914, the beginnings of today's Traffic Police.

Police facilities were also significantly enhanced during this period. Under Inspector-General of Police Harold Fairburn, who assumed the post in 1925, a new building scheme was launched. The scheme included rebuilding key police stations, and rehousing the Force in new barracks. A new building at Robinson Road was also constructed for the Detective Branch. By 1934, the building scheme was completed. Following the scheme, existing police divisions were rezoned.



A map showing police establishments in 1938. Picture: National Archives of Singapore

**In the East, anyone who would pit his European brains, unaided by such men, against the machinations of Asiatic schemes is doomed to failure.**

Inspector-General of Police Rene Onraet, on exemplary local officers of the Special Branch, 1952

## INTELLIGENCE GATHERING: THE INDIAN MUTINY AND SPECIAL BRANCH



Inspector-General of Police Rene Onraet.

In 1901, the formation of a criminal investigation department was first advocated to enhance the intelligence-gathering capabilities of the police force. However, the question of organising intelligence did not arise until the Indian mutiny of 1915.

World War I left Singapore largely untouched, but one significant ripple did reach its shores. The Singapore mutiny (or Sepoy mutiny), which started on 15 February 1915, saw the Right Wing of the 5th Light Infantry (Indian Army) revolting, with some 850 Indian soldiers slaughtering almost 50 British and local soldiers and civilians. Two Sikh guards at the Central Police Station were killed by the mutineers.

Officers and men at the Sikh Police Barracks, as well as Special Constables, were mobilised to deal with the mutiny. The mutiny had arisen because of misunderstanding about the British declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire.

The lack of intelligence about such subversion and their political influences led to the eventual creation, in late 1918, of the Special Branch (also referred to then as the Criminal Intelligence Department until 1933, and the forerunner of what would later become the Internal Security Department under the Ministry of Home Affairs).

The Special Branch would later be given credit for making possible the freedom from subversive communist actions which Singapore enjoyed before World War II.

In 1952, it was reported in the news that Rene Onraet, who had joined the Force in 1907, was the "father of the Special Branch". He was one of the first to recognise the dangers posed by the spread of communist ideology. He gave credit to exemplary local officers for their indispensable local knowledge, such as V. G. Savi, the first Director, who could speak Malay, Hokkien, Hindi and Punjabi.



A group of sepoy (Indian troops in the British Army) in 1915.  
Picture: National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board

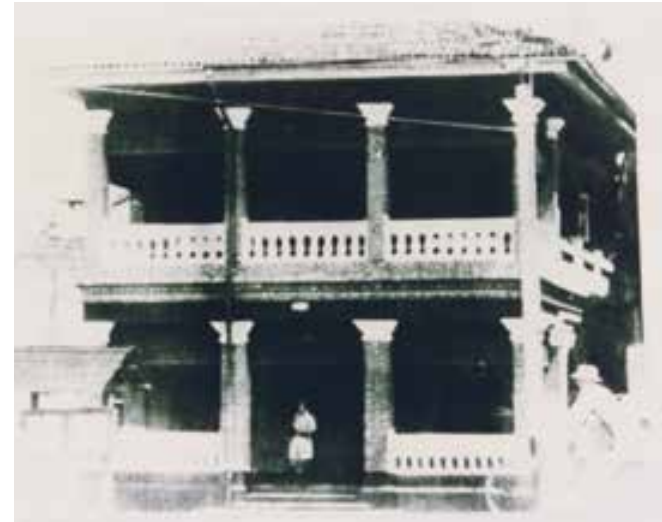


## POLICING AMIDST WORLD WAR II

In the years leading to World War II in the Pacific region, the police force had begun preparations for the security of Malaya. Singapore, rather than Kuala Lumpur, was the centre where war plans tended to originate, and coordination was helped by the fact that the Governor of the Straits Settlements, at that time Sir Shenton Thomas, was also High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States. The two Inspectors-General of Police, E. Bagot in Kuala Lumpur and Arthur H. Dickinson in Singapore, worked in the closest collaboration.

At the outbreak of war in 1939, the principal danger came from the Chinese communists. Ostensibly, they were anti-Japanese; in practice, opportunistic as was their custom, they did all that they could to undermine the war effort. Anti-British propaganda was intensified, and in 1940, serious labour troubles once more developed. On 1 May 1939, attempts were made to hold a mass open-air meeting involving 20,000 people in Singapore; many thousands were prevented by police officers from attending, but two people were shot in the clash that took place.

When Malaya was invaded by the Japanese on 8 December 1941, internment plans were put immediately into operation. Armed police rounded up the enemy aliens in every part of the country, and within six hours, the great majority of the Japanese male population had been arrested. By the evening of 9 December 1941, nearly all of them were on their way by road, sea or rail to the



Kreta Ayer Police Station, location of the 1927 shootings. Picture: Courtesy of the Internal Security Department Heritage Centre

## A STORY OF RESISTANCE

During the Occupation, there were police officers who resisted the Japanese. Eurasian police officer Halford Boudewyn was one of them. Boudewyn escaped internment, as he looked “local”. He then joined an Allied spy ring and disguised himself as a vegetable seller supplying produce for British Indian Army Prisoners Of War in Upper Serangoon. He smuggled handwritten copies of Japanese military plans, contributing to the Allied defence of India. Boudewyn also monitored news from foreign radio stations, and secretly spread word of Allied victories.

For his sacrifice and service to the Allied cause, Boudewyn was conferred the Colonial Police Medal.



Halford Boudewyn receiving the Colonial Police Medal (Silver) in 1948. Picture: Halford Boudewyn Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

Police officers in different attires, 1945. Picture: National Archives of Singapore



internment camp at Port Swettenham (Port Klang in present-day Malaysia). The police task was now slightly eased by the action of the communists, who approached the Government offering all-out cooperation against the Japanese. This offer was accepted.

The police officers from Malaya retreated to Singapore as the Japanese invaded. The British and Asian police officers, who had retreated to Singapore from both the Federated and the Unfederated Malay States, now placed themselves under Mr Dickinson. He was unable to absorb them all in the Straits Settlements Police, and a number were seconded to the army.

Some Malayan officers were killed in action, but the majority fell into Japanese hands when Singapore surrendered.

On 11 February 1942, as defeat loomed over Singapore, Dickinson issued the following orders to the Straits Settlements Police Force: “Do not resist the enemy by force of arms. Our sole duty is the maintenance of internal order... the civil population could best be served by placing our organisation at the disposal of the Japanese Commander, should he wish to make use of it.”

Singapore fell to the Japanese on 15 February 1942. Among the known police casualties were Inspector Goh Tiauw Tiong, Sergeant Dalip Singh, and Mervyn Llewlyn Wynne, Director of the Special Branch. The known police internees included Inspector-General of Police Arthur H. Dickinson.

## POST-WAR DISORDER, 1945 – 1959

World War II came to an end on 2 September 1945. In Singapore on 8 September 1945, it was reported that the civil police had taken over control of all regular police duties except in cases of rioting or looting.

Following the liberation of the island, Inspector-General of Police Arthur H. Dickinson, who was one of the prisoners of war during the Japanese Occupation, left on a repatriation ship as his ill health prevented him from resuming duty. Colonel Robert E. Foulger was appointed as the new police chief and the new designation used was Commissioner of Police. After serving in the British army in World War I, he served in the colonial police force overseas, including in the Straits Settlements from 1920 to 1922 and in Australia and Nigeria, before being posted to Singapore.

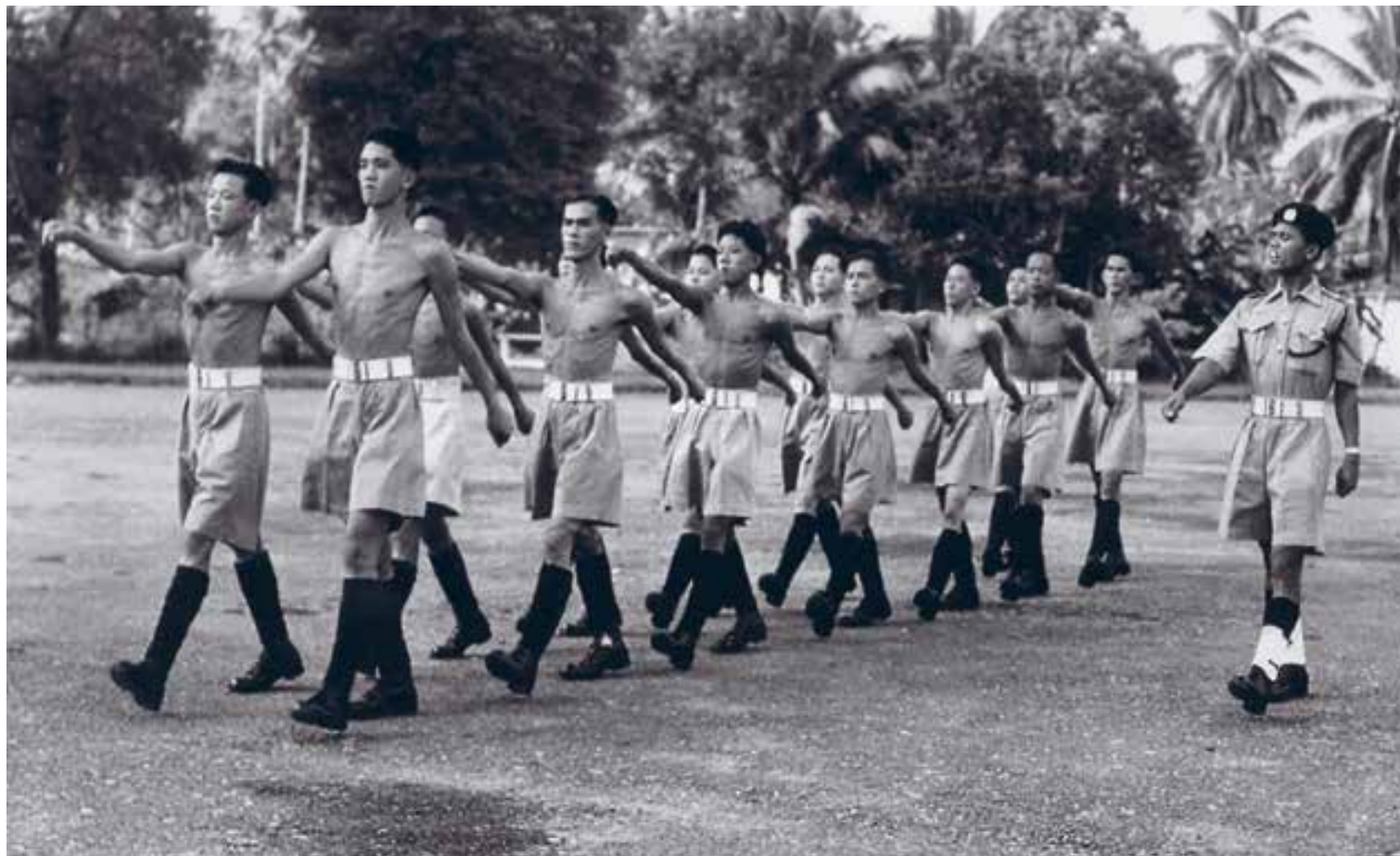
In the post-war period, police morale was low. When Foulger returned to Singapore on 5 September 1945, he had a staff of just one other trained police officer, a customs officer and an army officer. Prior to the surrender of Singapore, there had been about 60 trained European police officers here. Post-war, the rank and file had hardly any uniform at all, the barracks were in a filthy condition, and malnutrition was rife.



The Force was later strengthened with the arrival of three former members of the Malayan Police Force and a former officer of the Force. A number of service personnel also joined the Force subsequently. In September 1945, the 5th Parachute Brigade arrived in Singapore, and the officers and Drill Instructors gave their assistance. Three officers opened up the Training School and the first batch of 100 members of the Force were sent there for a month's refresher course in discipline, squad drill, physical training, care of arms and unarmed combat.

In November 1945, it was reported that the police force, now more than 1,700 strong, was receiving free food rations in the same manner as the army. It was noted to be the first time in the history of the police force that, in addition to free quarters, members were receiving free daily meals.

Commissioner of Police Foulger, writing in an article, "Return to Singapore", in the *Police Journal* of 1946, gave his assessment of the post-war policing environment that the Force was understaffed, ill-equipped and had lost the confidence of the public. By contrast, criminals were well-armed and opportunities for looting throughout the whole island were immense. "It was a sad picture. If ever a Force with a fine reputation has been systematically degraded, it is the Singapore Police."



Trainees marching at the Police Training School in the 1950s. Picture: National Archives of Singapore



Trainees at the Police Training School, 1950. Picture: National Archives of Singapore



## THE BIRTH OF A MODERN SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE

Just two months after the end of World War II, the modern Singapore Police Force (SPF) came into being.

Commissioner of Police Foulger wrote in the *Police Journal* of 1946: “November 13th 1945 — many people find this a lucky number, we certainly do — can be called the birthday of the SPF — there is no longer a Straits Settlements Police Force.” On that day, Lieutenant-General Sir Frank Messervy, General Officer Commanding Malaya, inspected more than 300 rank and file officers of the Force, including members of the Special Constabulary.

The uniforms worn then were jungle green bush shirts and shorts — the former being a shade lighter than the latter — white web belts, blue putties, black boots and blue berets with the silver police badge. The parade was held on the Padang opposite the Municipal Building (later renamed City Hall and part of the National Gallery Singapore today). Soon after, the police uniform was changed to a blue-grey flannel shirt, brown khaki short pants, dark blue hosetops, black boots and leather belt, and a navy blue whistle lanyard. This uniform became the primary police attire until it was phased out in 1969.

In 1946, the Straits Settlements were officially dissolved, to allow Singapore and the new Malayan Union to prepare for eventual self-government. Reorganising the Force to perform in the post-war policing environment was critical. In 1946, former Commissioner of Police (1935 – 1939) Rene Onraet, then working as an adviser to the police force, made a few recommendations. As a result, by August 1946, the European Inspectorate was abolished to increase the number of gazetted officers. The headcount for Asian inspectors was also increased — from 41 to 86 — primarily for cost savings.

Onraet also proposed making the Special Branch pan-Malayan with its headquarters in Singapore. The rationale, he argued in his 1946 report, was that all Malayan crime then was governed by the success or failure of the police force. This was because Singapore was then considered the de facto administrative centre of all activities, governmental and non-governmental, including the management of police functions. “The detectives in Singapore should therefore be the best available, and to encourage this excellence, a ‘Singapore detective allowance’ should be granted.”

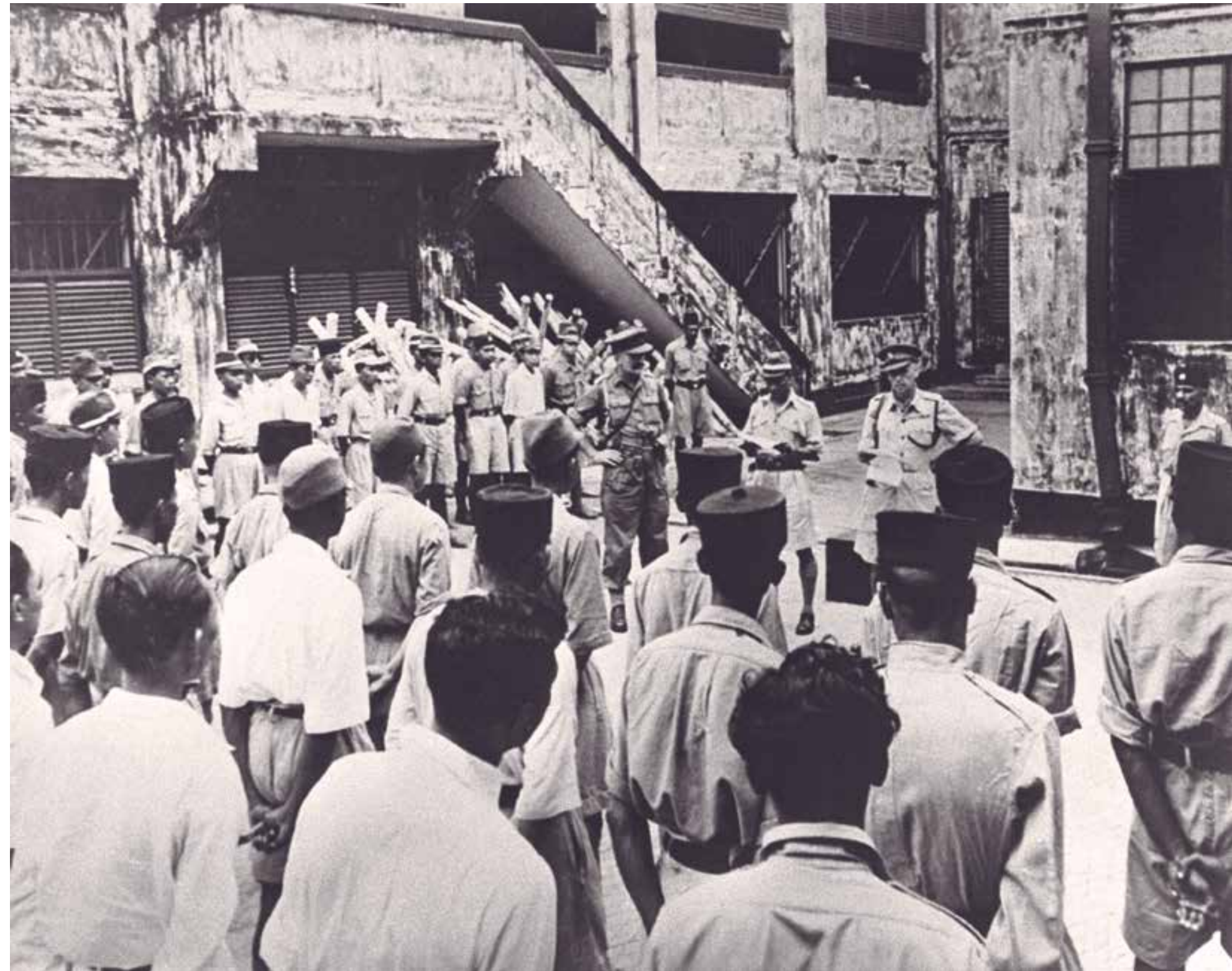
A State of Emergency was declared in Singapore on 24 June 1948 to deal with the communist insurrection in Singapore and Malaya, a week after a similar situation in the Federation of Malaya following a spate of violence by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). Under the Emergency regulations, the police force was granted the powers to detain suspects without trial. This gave the police force more powers to deal with secret societies as well.

However, the growth of the gangs continued unabated. By 1951, it was estimated that there were some 300 secret societies with membership from Hokkien, Teochew and Hokchia clans and about 58 with Cantonese and Hainanese members. The gangs were known to extort money from prostitutes, gambling houses, small business and coffee shops.

A different source of unrest emerged on 11 December 1950, in what later came to be known as the Maria Hertogh riots. A procession approached the Supreme Court on St Andrew’s Road from Bras Basah Road, carrying white cloth banners with slogans and a green flag, and took up position on the Padang, as more people gathered. Reinforcements from a Gurkha riot squad were called. The interracial riots lasted three days and caused the deaths of 18 people. It became clear that the police force’s resources and readiness to respond to riots and other disturbances were inadequate.



Crest of the Singapore Police Force (1946 – 1959).



Colonel Foulger addressing surviving members of the Straits Settlements Police at the Central Police Station in September 1945. Picture: Singapore Police Force Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore



## THE GURKHA CONTINGENT

One of the recommendations in the organisational review of the police force was to form the Gurkha Contingent (GC) for specialist security tasks. The Gurkhas had served in the British Indian Army since 1815 and established a fearsome reputation. The SPF's GC was formed in 1949, comprising 149 men. The GC's first camp was at Duxton Plain, near the city centre. After the unit played a key role during the Maria Hertogh riots in 1950, its unit strength was increased to 300. In 1956, the GC moved to its new premises at Mount Vernon.

The GC's reputation for neutrality was displayed in its unflinching efforts to quell the Hock Lee Bus riots (1955) and Chinese Middle Schools riots (1956).

After more than 70 years of service in Singapore, the GC remains an important strategic asset for the SPF. The traditional qualities of the Gurkhas remain highly valued and the GC continues to recruit its Gurkhas predominantly from the hills of Nepal. Gurkhas can be seen protecting key locations and providing security coverage at major events. Less conspicuously, the GC also plays an important role in supporting frontline police response to public order and security incidents.



The Gurkha Contingent in 1949. Picture: National Archives of Singapore





The Reserve Unit, initially named the Riot Squad, training at Jalan Eunus in 1952. Picture: National Archives of Singapore

The Maria Hertogh riots was the trigger event that led to the setting up of a specialist unit that has evolved into a key component of the Special Operations Command today. In June 1952, the Riot Squad was formed with 60 policemen of different races — Pakistanis, Punjabis, Mahrattas, Chinese and Malay officers. By December that year, the squad had become operational, under the charge of Assistant Superintendent of Police J. H. Davies.

In October 1952, the Riot Squad was renamed the Reserve Unit. It comprised three squads of 50 men each, to supplement the land divisions in their patrol duties. It was specifically trained for riot suppression, with secondary functions including flood rescue, extrication of victims from car crashes and collapsed buildings, and crowd control, including at the scene of three major fires in Bukit Ho Swee, Kampong Tiong Bahru and Kampong Henderson.

The creation of the Reserve Unit proved to be timely, as the problem of communalism was superseded by communism for the rest of the 1950s. In 1955, the Reserve Unit was certainly needed to prevent further damage and disorder, as it was called on 283 times in what was later dubbed the “Year of Labour Unrest”. Among the calls it responded to were disturbances protesting the government’s actions against pro-communist organisations, especially the Hock Lee Bus riots in May that year, when four people, including two police officers, died, and the Chinese Middle Schools riots in 1956, when 13 people were killed.





**Left:** Strikers attempting to block buses from leaving the depot during the Hock Lee Bus riots, 1955.

**Right:** The Riot Squad charging at the rioters during the Hock Lee Bus riots in 1955.

Pictures: Singapore Press Holdings







**Left:** The Hock Lee Bus riots in May 1955 resulted in the deaths of four people, including two police officers.

**Right:** Banners displayed outside the Chinese High School during the Chinese Middle Schools riots in October 1956.

Pictures: Singapore Press Holdings



## CALLING '999'

Communication is crucial for the command and control of any incident. Certainly, in policing, it is of utmost importance. While radio was used by the police internationally from the 1930s, it was used for policing in Singapore only after the end of World War II.

The Radio Division had its origins as the Gangs and Radio Sub-Branch (also known as Police Radio Branch) under the CID, formed in October 1945 at the CID Building on Robinson Road. Shortly after World War II, Singapore faced a sudden increase in the incidence of armed robbery across the island. In attempts to curb this rise, the Gangs and Radio Sub-Branch was formed to speed up the police force's response using radio communication.

In the early days, the first radio test car was a Ford V-8 with pieces of bamboo tied to the sides for aerials, in an improvised application of this "disruptive technology" for its time. The upper storey verandah of the CID was used as a workshop for radio maintenance. According to the SPF's internal report, the unit was likely to have become operational in January 1946 when eight Army '22' sets were obtained and four Police Constables and 16 Special Constables were transferred to the Radio Branch for training as operators. As there was no money for the new unit, all equipment was sourced from the British Armed Forces, Japanese dumps and the US Army Signal Section in Singapore.

On 15 February 1946, the Radio Branch proved its worth when a small squad of policemen tried to disperse a crowd taking part in a banned procession held by the General Labour Union. The crowd charged at the police officers, who then summoned the radio car to call for reinforcements. Police reinforcements, ambulances, and the Commissioner of Police and Deputy Commissioner of Police were contacted through the Operations Room within eight minutes, and the crowd was dispersed successfully.

In 1948, the Gangs and Radio Sub-Branch was re-equipped and expanded into a self-contained unit known as 'R', or Radio Division. It was responsible for all communications in the Force. The year before, '999' calls had been introduced to allow the public to call for police assistance in case of emergencies, and be linked directly with the Radio Control Room. In 1949, there were 1,643 calls received, and by 1951, there were 8,607 calls.



Officers in the Combined Operations Room in the 1960s.

By the mid-1950s, the division was able to operate with 13 radio networks and a fleet of 60 patrol cars. Due to the division's strategic central location at Eu Tong Sen Street, the police force could easily dispatch its radio cars for islandwide operations.

However, the Radio Control Centre was swamped with panic calls during crises, such as the Maria Hertogh riots, and so, in 1954, construction began on a new Radio Control Centre, annexed to Pearl's Hill Upper Barracks. For years to come, it was from Pearl's Hill that police response to public calls and emergencies was coordinated. Launched in 1956 by Chief Minister David Marshall, this Combined Operations Room (COR) served as the base command for police-military communications. COR handled domestic crimes such as riots, kidnapping, armed bank robberies, and secret society activities. It also served as a hub for early police intelligence gathering.

In more recent decades, the SPF's communicative capabilities have been enhanced significantly, thanks to the extensive advancements in telecommunications technology. This culminated in the establishment of a Police Operations Command Centre (POCC), launched in 2015, to be the new nerve centre of the SPF.



Crest of the Police Negara Singapura (1959 – 1963).

## POLIS NEGARA SINGAPURA, 1959

On 3 June 1959, Singapore achieved internal self-government, with a proclamation by outgoing Governor William Goode. With Singapore gaining self-government, the police force would have to be accountable to the people as the law enforcement agency of an elected Government. No longer a crown colony, Singapore had become a state. In December 1959, the police force changed its name to Polis Negara Singapura (State of Singapore Police), to reflect the new-found status of the island.

In 1959, the immediate mandate of the police force after Singapore's self-government, as recorded in the *Police Annual* report (1960 – 1961), was to maintain law and order throughout the State and its territorial waters, as well as all other police duties. The main challenges the police force faced then were subversion under communist direction and intimidation by secret society gangsters; maintenance of the impartiality of officers; and provision of adequate training.

From 1960 to 1965, the Polis Negara Singapura faced diverse challenges as it transitioned from being the police force of a newly self-governing state to becoming a component of Polis Di-Raja Malaysia (Royal Malaysia Police) after Singapore's merger with Malaya. Crime, political unrest and communalism were some of the main challenges the Force had to deal with.

The more sensational types of crimes included incidents from secret society activities, murders, kidnapping for ransom and motor vehicle thefts. As part of the "Malayanisation scheme" following self-governance, more Asians took over top positions within the police force as expatriate officers retired. The last expatriate Commissioner of Police was Alan Edmund Grove Blades. In 1963, John Le Cain, a Eurasian, became the first Asian to assume the position.

To empower the police force, ordinances were enacted that impacted police powers and functions, including the Road Vehicles (Special Powers) Ordinance, No. 8 of 1960, to give police officers powers to stop, search and seize motor vehicles suspected of being used for the commission of scheduled offences.

## POLICE DAY – 3 JUNE

From 1971, 3 June would come to be observed every year by the Singapore Police Force (SPF) as Police Day. This is the day that officers of the SPF celebrate their achievements, recognise the contributions of past and present officers, and renew their pledge to continue to serve the nation and to carry out their duties with courage, loyalty, integrity and fairness. At the opening of "Police Week" on 3 June 1971, Professor Wong Lin Ken, Minister for Home Affairs, said: "The Government has designated 3rd of June to be Police Day, to reaffirm the fact that the Police is part of our society, responsible to an elected government, and the maintenance of law and order is a service to the community."



Police officers observing the Police Day ceremony on 3 June 1971. Picture: Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



On 1 September 1962, the Singapore National Referendum was held to allow the people of Singapore to vote on the question of merger with the Federation of Malaya. The police force was involved in keeping law and order during the 13 days of canvassing in the run-up to the referendum. In the days leading to 16 September 1963, the day the Federation of Malaysia was established, the police force was heavily involved in keeping public order and preventing “anti-Malaysia” elements from creating disorder. In July 1963, at the opening of the police quarters at Duxton Plain, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew reminded the police officers in attendance that the police force had a vital role to play in the success or failure of Malaysia, especially by maintaining public order. For example, on 25 August 1963, the police force was activated to disperse a mass rally of more than 120,000 participants at the Padang calling for wartime compensations, for the government to give something to those who had suffered during the war.



**Top:** A Gurkha officer escorting an election official on Referendum Day in 1962.

**Bottom:** Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew visiting Tanjong Pagar Police Station after taking office in 1959.

Pictures: Courtesy of Superintendent of Police (Retired) Niaz Mohamed Shah



## LAW BEFORE ORDER, OR ORDER BEFORE LAW?

The turbulence of the 1960s — both external and internal — formed the historical backdrop to the main guiding philosophy towards the maintenance of law and order in Singapore. In a speech to the University of Singapore Law Society on 18 January 1962, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, argued that while in “a settled and established society, law appears to be a precursor of order”, in emerging ones wrecked by violence and subversion, the reverse was often the case: “Without order, the operation of law is impossible.”

At the time of this speech, Cold War tensions were headed towards a dangerous end, with the world caught in a state of political and military friction between the United States and its allies, and the Soviet Union and its allies, from 1947 to 1991. Singapore and Malaya were then very much on the front line in the ideological and geopolitical conflict between the Western and Eastern blocs.

With this wider backdrop in mind, Mr Lee added that the “realities of the sociological and political milieu in Malaya and of the world of 1962 are that if you allow these shibboleths of ‘law and order’ to be uttered out of context”, without reference to “the actual social and political conditions we are in”, disaster

might strike, simply because in “the last analysis, if the state disintegrates, then the rules of all laws must vanish”.

For Mr Lee, the lesson from fighting the communists in the 1950s and 1960s was clear: Singapore needed order as the wellspring of everything else — especially the economic security that a polyglot, immigrant and multiracial society needed as an initial basis for gluing its disparate elements together. Some have argued that, after more than five decades of independence, Singapore has become established enough as a society to review such ideas about the pre-eminence of order over law. But, in more ways than one, the mindset and outlook framed by this notion still continue to influence the approach and application of measures to maintain order and law in Singapore — a key duty of the police to this day.

**Without order, the operation of law is impossible.**

Mr Lee Kuan Yew,  
Prime Minister, 1962



Crest of the Police Di-Raja Malaysia (1963 – 1965).

### POLIS DI-RAJA MALAYSIA, 1963

On 16 September 1963, the Federation of Malaysia was formed, consisting of Singapore, Malaya, Sarawak and Sabah. From the day of merger till independence two years later in 1965, the SPF acted as a component of Polis Di-Raja Malaysia. Security functions, including authority over the Police, were handed over to the Federal Government in Kuala Lumpur.

Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, in his Motion on the Malaysia Agreement in the Legislative Assembly on 30 July 1963, said: “One second past midnight, I hand over security, police, prisons, army. I will no longer have an Infantry Regiment to salute me. They will only line up outside this Assembly by leave and licence of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaysia.”

All the police officers were to be paid by the Federation. Singapore had 5,000 officers, compared with the Federation’s 20,000. On 16 September 1963, a new police flag with the new emblem of the Polis Di-Raja Malaysia, was raised in all 14 states of the new Federation to mark the birth of the new police force.

In Singapore, the former flag of the Police Negara Singapura was lowered at the Pearl’s Hill headquarters and the new Polis Di-Raja Malaysia flag was hoisted. A 100-strong contingent was on parade in front of guests. Prime Minister Lee, Minister for Home Affairs Ong Pang Boon, Inspector-General of Police of the Royal Malaysia Police Dato C. H. Fenner and the Federation of Malaysia’s Minister of Internal Security, Dato Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman, were present.



Police officers arresting two Indonesian saboteurs who hid in mangrove swamps off Pasir Panjang, December 1964. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings



**Top:** Raising of the new Malaysia Police flag at Police Headquarters, Pearl's Hill, Singapore, on 16 September 1963.

**Bottom:** Dato Dr Ismail, Minister of Internal Security, addressing Singapore police officers during the flag-raising ceremony.

The first batch of police recruits to graduate as members of the Royal Malaysia Police did so on 26 September 1963. Comprising 235 recruits, it was the largest batch up to that point to graduate from the Police Training School. With the integration, training was also transferred to Kuala Lumpur in 1964. On 30 April, the Police Training School at Thomson Road held its last march-past. It was then renamed Advanced Training School, Polis Di-Raja Malaysia, and was to concentrate on specialist training for policemen all over Malaysia.

Following the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, Singapore was to face severe unrest, especially because of Konfrontasi, a policy of regional disruption, initiated by the government of Indonesian nationalist leader Sukarno. Konfrontasi hit Singapore's shores, most famously in the MacDonald House bombing on 10 March 1965. The Reserve Unit and Traffic Police were activated to divert traffic along Penang Road and Tank Road. Within four days, marine police arrested two Indonesian marine commandos responsible for the bombing, who were attempting to escape Singapore by sea.

The Reserve Unit also had to act to quell the prison riots on Pulau Senang in July 1963 and the riots in 1967 protesting against National Service in various parts of Singapore by groups of placard- and banner-carrying youth.

With the merger, the Reserve Unit had expanded in strength from four to 15 troops with the addition of manpower from the Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) of Malaysia. The FRU was heavily deployed for the racial riots sparked by political tensions in 1964, with clashes between Malays and Chinese, which led to nationwide curfews and left 36 dead, some 560 injured and 5,000 arrested.







**Left:** Federal Reserve Unit policemen cordoning off the streets along Kallang and Geylang Roads, during the 1964 race riots. Picture: Courtesy of the Internal Security Department Heritage Centre

**Right:** The Reserve Unit lined up across the width of Bras Basah Road in 1969 when a race riot threatened to spill over from Malaysia into Singapore. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings







Rioters being rounded up by police officers on Pulau Senang in 1963. Picture: National Archives of Singapore



## POLIS REPABLIK SINGAPURA, 1965

Singapore's merger with Malaysia was to be short-lived. Following the communal violence as well as intense political disagreements between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, Singapore left the federation on 9 August 1965. Likewise, the police force also separated from the Polis Di-Raja Malaysia, and the Polis Repablik Singapura (Republic of Singapore Police) was formed.

Singapore's sovereignty was born out of difficult circumstances. Security and the maintenance of law and order were critical once news of separation from Malaysia broke. The police force was forewarned of the critical transition two days ahead to prepare for any disturbances or unrest resulting from the news.

The proclamation of Separation was made at 10am on 9 August 1965. That evening, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew had a meeting with Commissioner of Police John Le Cain to discuss the necessary precautions to be taken, and also with Special Branch Director George Bogaars, to make sure the Special Branch was on the alert for any trouble.

As it turned out, there were fireworks — literally. The news that spread swiftly through the city after the radio announcement was greeted with thunderous explosions of fire-crackers in some places. Police patrols throughout the island were intensified. In a letter to Commissioner of Police Le Cain, dated 7 August, Dato (Dr) Ismail bin Dato Haji Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's Minister for Home Affairs, had said: "I herewith instruct you as from 9 August 1965, to take orders from Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore, in order to enable him to discharge his responsibility for the internal security of Singapore."

In a speech in 1966, Minister for Defence Goh Keng Swee said: "The Police Force is no longer a colonial police force which is an instrument of colonial rule. The Police Force belongs to the people of Singapore and it is trained and disciplined to protect them from criminals and evil-doers. Our Police Force works under strict discipline. Its actions are regulated by law and no police officer has the authority to do anything outside the limits of the law."

In 1965, the police force was placed under the Ministry of Interior and Defence. It was reported that a special police advisory group, headed by Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police Tan Teck Khim (who later served as Commissioner of Police from 1971 to 1979), was set up at the ministry to facilitate the expansion of the police force and to assist in implementation of general policies on internal defence. Later in 1970, when the Ministry of Interior and Defence was split into separate Defence and Home Affairs portfolios, the police force was placed under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In the immediate years after Singapore became independent, the police force continued to face a challenging policing environment that became more prominent with the changing demographics and the shift to high-rise housing. The police force had to continue to deal with subversion, labour and political unrest, secret societies, racial disturbances and international terrorism. Even violent crimes such as armed robberies, murders and kidnapping saw a sharp increase. Battling gunmen also became part and parcel of the police officer's duty.



Crest of the Police Repablik Singapura (1965 – 2015).

**The Police Force  
is no longer a  
colonial police  
force... the Police  
Force belongs  
to the people of  
Singapore.**

Dr Goh Keng Swee,  
Minister for Defence, 1966



Minister for Defence Goh Keng Swee inspecting the guard of honour at the passing out parade of the Singapore Vigilante Corps at the Police Training School in April 1967. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings



With Singapore's independence in August 1965, and the FRU from Malaysia suddenly withdrawn, there was a void that needed to be filled. The unit was renamed the Police Reserve Unit (PRU) and the mass training of officers kicked off right away. By late 1966, there were five units of the PRU with 15 troops. The late 1960s saw three units of the PRU occupying two newly built bases at Jalan Bahar and Queensway, and with the first batch of part-time NSmen, the unit expanded to 20 troops.

One of Singapore's biggest communal riots occurred in May 1969, which again involved the Chinese and Malay communities, with racist rumours around the Malaysian general election results triggering a domino effect in Singapore, and resulting in four deaths and 80 injured.

Throughout Singapore's first decade of independence, recruitment of police officers continued to be a challenge. In 1968, the SPF launched a mass recruitment drive and branded the Force as an employer with promising careers for all Singaporeans. However, the problem of manpower appeared to persist. More women were also recruited to offset the shortage of men. In November 1973, the Force even lowered the recruitment age from 17 to 16 in a new large-scale campaign to attract school-leavers to the Force. Despite these efforts, recruitment and retention of staff continued to be a challenge during the period.



Part-time  
Police National  
Servicemen  
on the march.



Acting Commissioner of Police Cheam Kim Seang inspecting a unit of new female constables during their passing out parade on 29 October 1968.

In 1969, the Force, once again, underwent reorganisation. The command structure was altered to conform to modern concepts of management and could be divided into three categories: the staff, with advisory and coordinating responsibilities; the operational units, with command responsibility, and the specialists, with advisory and command responsibilities. To give effect to this, the "Areas", "Detachments" and "Personnel and Training" Commands and the duty posts of Area Superintendents were abolished and the Force was restructured into six departments (the Criminal Investigation Department and Internal Security Department, as well as those for administration, operations and planning, training, and national service) and 17 operational units (including the Traffic and Marine Divisions).

The elimination of intermediate levels of supervision and links in the chain of command placed greater responsibility on the commanders of operational units who became directly responsible to the Commissioner of Police. This applied particularly to the commanders of the land divisions who were charged with the day-to-day policing of the Republic.



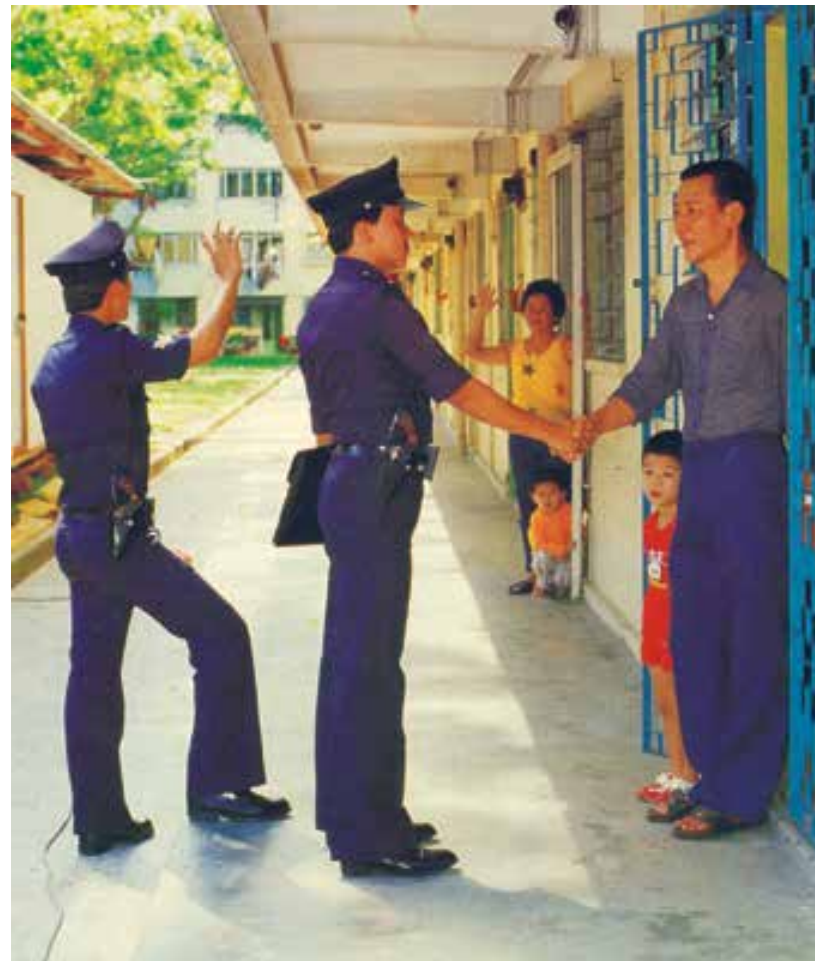
### IMPROVEMENTS IN THE 1970S

In 1970, the persistent difficulties in recruiting men and women for the Force prompted the government to appoint a six-man team headed by Dr Lee Soo Ann, an economics lecturer at the University of Singapore, to review the salaries and recruitment issues of the police force. At the end of 1970, the committee's report estimated that the Force was short of 500 men, after 230 had quit that year. The report also noted that, with young men becoming better-educated and having more career opportunities, it could become even more difficult for the police force to compete with other employers for staff.

In 1972, the Lee Soo Ann Committee's recommendations for improved salaries and conditions of service of Junior Officers were implemented. That year's *Police Annual* report noted that the reorganisation of the rank structure of Junior Officers involved a considerable devolution of responsibilities and duties on to Sergeants and Constables. These duties had formerly been performed by Inspectors and Sergeants respectively. A new training programme designed to develop and increase the capacity of Junior Officers to fulfil these functions was implemented.

The new structure also led to changes in training programmes at the Police Academy, the new name for the upgraded Police Training School. Following the report, the Miscellaneous Amendments Bill was passed in 1973 to grant officers of the rank of Station Inspectors and Sergeants with the powers to perform investigatory functions, which were previously granted only to officers of the rank of Inspector and above. Team policing was also introduced, with four-man patrol teams using police cars and two-way radios for communicating with one another and with the headquarters division. The teams provide 24-hour coverage of crime-prone areas for faster response to calls for assistance.

In efforts to better tackle crimes that involve the use of firearms, the Arms Offences Act, enacted in 1973, criminalised the illegal possession of firearms and ammunition and the carrying, trafficking, and usage of firearms. Under the new law, the attempted or actual use of firearms for criminal offences was made punishable by the death penalty. Efforts to modernise police operations continued. By 1975, investigations were no longer confined to physical observations and the retrieving of objects. The police force was then tapping into the use of forensics and technology to aid investigations. The Scene of Crime Unit, which would later be known as the Forensics Division, was set up in 1975 to streamline and improve the processes of searching for, recovering and documenting evidence at the crime scenes.



Police officers forging ties with the residents, circa 1970s.

To further strengthen the internal defence of post independent Singapore, the police force introduced full-time National Service in 1975, eight years after the start of part-time Police National Service (PNS). The first intake of 211 Full-time Police National Servicemen enlisted on 24 July 1975, where they supplemented the regular Force by assisting in policing duties that included protection of key installations, team policing and station duties.

In the 1970s, newfound economic growth also brought along social changes and new challenges in policing. At the same time, the Force continued to grapple with recruitment difficulties. To make the policing career more attractive to potential employees, the SPF Scholarship was launched in 1978. In 1983, recruitment criteria were relaxed, and those who wore glasses could be recruited, as long as their lens prescription did not exceed 300 degrees. Prior to that, only officers with the rank of Inspector and above were exempted from the no-glasses rule.

During this period, among the issues that were highlighted for rethinking and planning were patrolling, manpower deployment, the recruitment of higher-calibre police officers, training, tackling of the growth of white-collar crimes and drug-related crimes, and increased usage of computers. To meet the new policing challenges, the Force began rethinking policing strategies into the next decade of the 1980s.

One issue in particular — high-rise living in Singapore — received added attention, as it was assessed to have led to a rise in the crime rate, if only because high-rise flats gave criminals more places to hide. Large areas in HDB estates were not accessible to vehicles, and vertical policing of corridors of blocks of flats was as important as policing on the ground level. Patrolling had become challenging in the new urban environment. Increased police presence on the ground had been effective in deterring and preventing crime in general, but with the new operating terrain of high-rise, high-density new towns, this approach to patrols had to be reassessed. This was a precursor to the later development of community policing.

### STEADFAST IN SAFEGUARDING SINGAPORE

The rest of this book will highlight two major facets of the SPF story over the last two centuries — the dedicated personnel of the SPF, and the major areas of the SPF's work, from the 1980s up to the present day.

Section 2 will put the spotlight on the men and women of the SPF through 200 years. Section 3 will cover the sweep into the 21st century across major areas of the SPF's work, with extensive technological progress and societal changes presenting a very different policing environment.

As an organisation, the SPF has gone through many phases of development and restructuring. But through it all, as it marks 200 years since 1820, the Force has remained steadfast in its duty to safeguard the nation every day.

Over this time, the SPF has constantly adapted to change with far-sighted and effective strategies adopted and implemented, enabling it to achieve the exceptional results of earning the public's trust and making Singapore one of the safest cities in the world.



SECTION 2

PERSONNEL & PUBLIC SERVICE

THE CALL OF DUTY

The Singapore Police Force’s core values  
— Courage, Loyalty, Integrity, Fairness —  
are lived through the men and women  
of the Force who are committed to  
serving the community and dedicated to  
safeguarding Singapore every day.



In 1820, the British authorities in India believed they should allocate only limited resources to policing Singapore, then just a fledgling trading post in a vast empire. This changed, as Singapore gained importance as a thriving port and a primary hub of the Straits Settlements.

Since then, two centuries of the Singapore Police Force (SPF) have mirrored the story of Singapore itself. Through the years, the SPF's greatest asset has been its people. This section salutes the men and women who have lived the Force's core values every day, to serve the nation and to protect their fellow citizens.

LEADERSHIP

Police Chiefs through the Years

1820 – 1824

FRANCIS JAMES BERNARD

Singapore's First Police Chief

Francis James Bernard — the son-in-law of William Farquhar, the first Resident of Singapore — took charge of the first police force of just 12 men. His official designation was Assistant in the Police Department, as the Colonial Office in India was unsure that the new trading post warranted a higher appointment for overall security. The earliest years of policing Singapore were very challenging, with extremely limited resources and rising crime. Bernard Street was named after him, to recognise his foundational role in running the first police force in Singapore.

1824 – 1843

WILLIAM CAMPBELL

Establishing Security for a New Port

A relative of John Crawfurd, the second Resident of Singapore who succeeded Farquhar, Campbell took over from Bernard in 1824. He established essential security for the port of Singapore to grow quickly during this time. The major policing concerns that were tackled then related to the rapid influx of immigrants, many of whom were destitute and prone to crime.



Thomas Dunman, the first Commissioner of Police.  
Picture: National Archives of Singapore

1843 – 1871

THOMAS DUNMAN

First Full-time Commissioner of Police

In 1843, 29-year-old Thomas Dunman was appointed Deputy Magistrate and Superintendent of Police. In June 1857, after the passing of the Police Act, he became Singapore's first full-time Commissioner of Police. Dunman worked hard to professionalise the Force, with the first set of rules and regulations introduced in 1846. He raised efficiency and morale, and improved the calibre of policemen by enabling them to learn to read and write. He also fought for better working conditions and wages, shorter hours and a pension scheme for his men. Dunman Road in Katong and two schools — Dunman High and Dunman Secondary — were named after him.

1871 – 1875

CHARLES BUSHE PLUNKET

First Straits Settlements Inspector-General of Police

After Dunman's retirement, the designation of the police chief was changed and Plunket became the first Inspector-General of Police for the whole Straits Settlements, including Penang and Malacca. His term was marked by a constant battle with the secret societies and dealing with rioting, thuggery and abuse of immigrants.



1875 – 1891

SAMUEL DUNLOP

Dealing with Secret Societies

From the experience gained in quelling riots, the colonial authorities thought that the police force needed someone with military training background to better lead the Force in maintaining public order. Samuel Dunlop, then an artillery captain serving in Hong Kong, was posted to Singapore to take on the top police post. Inspector-General of Police Dunlop worked with William Pickering, the first Protector of the Chinese, as joint Registrars of Societies to put an end to large-scale secret society disturbances. Dunlop's term also saw official recognition for the need for specialist forces, with the European and Sikh contingents formed in 1881. In recognition of his contributions, the Indian community named Dunlop Street in Little India after him.



**1891 – 1895****ROBERT WALTER MAXWELL****Stern Actions against Triads**

Like his predecessors, Inspector-General of Police Maxwell had to focus on managing the threat posed by secret societies. He advocated stern police actions against the headmen, and for more effective penalties such as heavy fines on these societies for gang robberies committed by their members.

**1895 – 1906****E. G. PENNEFATHER****Moves towards Professionalism**

Inspector-General of Police Pennefather's term saw moves towards greater professionalism of the Force. During his tenure, a Malayan Police Cadet Service was set up to train officers from the local ranks. Plainclothes Chinese detectives were appointed for the first time. Other significant developments included establishing a Criminal Registry in 1901 and a Fingerprint Bureau in 1903. Pennefather Road in Katong is named after him, reflecting his community ties with the Eurasians.

**1906 – 1914****WILLIAM ANDREW CUSCADEN****Contending with China's Influence**

During Inspector-General of Police Cuscaden's term, the law and order issues of the early 20th century were different from the previous century. They were influenced more by external events, including political developments in China's Qing dynasty that provoked disquiet among Chinese immigrants here. Cuscaden worked with the Chinese Protectorate and prominent members of the Chinese Advisory Board to keep the peace. Cuscaden Road in the Orchard Road area was named after him to remember his leadership in community partnership, especially with the business community.

**1914 – 1923****A. R. CHANCELLOR****Boosting Internal Security and Traffic Control**

Under Inspector-General of Police Chancellor, the Criminal Intelligence Department (forerunner of the Internal Security Department) was set up in 1918 to deal with political subversion, after the 1915 Indian mutiny. His term saw a rise in the motor vehicle population, with the invention of the modern automobile in 1886. The consequent surge in road accidents prompted the setting up of the Traffic Office in 1914, the beginnings of today's Traffic Police.

**1923 – 1925****G. C. DENHAM****Security and Ceremony**

With his secret service background, Inspector-General of Police Denham further developed the capabilities of the Criminal Intelligence Department. This helped to tackle criminal activities that had, by then, moved more underground amidst a less turbulent political backdrop. Among the milestones of his term was the formation of the first Straits Settlements Police Band in 1925, with 32 musicians recruited from Punjab, India. It was renamed the Singapore Police Force Band in 1945.

**1925 – 1935****HAROLD FAIRBURN****First Malayan-trained Chief**

Inspector-General of Police Fairburn was the first gazetted officer from the Malayan Police Cadet Service to head the Force. From the mid-1920s, he oversaw major infrastructural projects, including the Police Depot in 1929, the Hill Street Police Station in 1934 and the Upper and Lower Barracks in 1934. Providing policemen with accommodation fostered morale and facilitated mobilisation for emergencies. The Special Branch began to work on communists infiltrating schools and trade unions. Innovations at the Traffic Branch included the introduction of traffic lights as well as "wings" for traffic policemen to direct traffic, a feature on Singapore's roads until the 1940s. The Cooperative Thrift and Loan Society was set up in 1926 to provide staff welfare for policemen.



Hill Street Police Station, 1934. Picture: National Archives of Singapore





Sikh traffic policeman with the iconic “wings” in the 1930s.



**1935 – 1939**

**RENE ONRAET**

**Suppressing ‘Imported’ Sedition**

Earlier in his police career as Director of Criminal Intelligence, Inspector-General of Police Onraet was already active in uncovering communist underground activities influenced by foreign agencies. Fluent in Hokkien, Onraet would even disguise himself as a rickshaw puller to gather intelligence. He also led raids, including one on a Balestier Road bomb-making factory in 1928. Onraet Road, near the old Police Academy, was named after him, reflecting his hands-on leadership of the Force.



**1939 – 1942**

**ARTHUR HAROLD DICKINSON**

**Caught Up in World War II**

Inspector-General of Police Dickinson was the last to serve before the Japanese invasion of Malaya in World War II. His responsibilities included overseeing political intelligence in the run-up to the war. Just before the British surrender on 15 February 1942, a grenade attack on Central Police Station seriously injured him. He regained consciousness three days later, and was a prisoner of war for three-and-a-half years during the Japanese occupation of Singapore.



**1946 – 1951**

**ROBERT EDWARD FOULGER**

**Restoring Security after the War**

In September 1945, Colonel Foulger led a team to Singapore to restore security, together with one other trained officer, a customs officer and an army officer, a stark contrast to more than 60 European officers before the war. His efforts to rebuild the Force included providing police officers with free meals, just like in the army, as well as uniforms and sports facilities at the training school. He declared “13 November 1945” as the “birthday” of the post-war Singapore Police Force, marked with a parade of more than 300 men, including members of the Special Constabulary. He was officially appointed Commissioner of Police in 1946, and went on to play a key role in the Malayan Emergency from 1948.



**1951 – 1952**

**JOHN P. PENNEFATHER-EVANS**

**Regaining Calm after the Hertogh Riots**

Commissioner of Police Pennefather-Evans, who had served previously in Hong Kong, took over in Singapore in 1951 on a one-year contract to reorganise the police force. During his term, a six-day week and higher salary scale were introduced. Through his efforts, the Force won back the faith of the rank-and-file policemen, which had been adversely affected by the 1950 Maria Hertogh riots.



Police officers on duty quelling a rioter with a flag, 1950. Picture: National Archives of Singapore.





**1952 – 1957**  
**NIGEL G. MORRIS**  
**Battling the**  
**Malayan Communists**

Deputy to Pennefather-Evans, Morris took over as Commissioner of Police in 1952 and saw through the fight against the Malayan Communist Party, which had infiltrated schools and trade unions. Major incidents included the Hock Lee Bus riots of 1955 and the Chinese Middle Schools riots of 1956. To deal with the disturbances, the police force worked closely with the armed forces at a combined operations room at the Police Headquarters to restore public order.



The Combined Operations Room in the 1950s.



Police officers restoring order during the Hock Lee Bus riots, 1955.  
 Picture: Singapore Press Holdings



Police officers using water cannons to keep potential rioters at bay during the Hock Lee Bus riots, 1955. Picture: National Archives of Singapore



**1957 – 1963**  
**ALAN EDMUND GROVE BLADES**  
**Continuing to Combat Communism**

As former director of the Special Branch, Commissioner of Police Blades was well aware of the threat posed by the communists. In the mid-1950s, he was active in advocating pre-emptive action against anti-government activities, which culminated later in the Operation Coldstore roundup of communist sympathisers in 1963. As part of the efforts to overcome these security threats, he proposed the idea of establishing a Police Cadet Corps (PCC), forerunner of today's National Police Cadet Corps (NPCC). The objectives of having the youth corps were to bridge the gap between the community and the Police, help strengthen discipline and civic responsibility, build character in young people, and hopefully encourage more students to join the Force as a career.





1963 – 1967

**JOHN LE CAIN**

**First Asian Police Commissioner**

After acting as Commissioner of Police for 15 months, Le Cain was promoted to the rank in July 1964. The press made much of the fact that he, as a Eurasian, was the first Asian to be appointed police chief in Singapore, a role previously held only by British officers. His tenure bracketed the most turbulent period in Singapore's history — Indonesian Konfrontasi, merger with Malaya in 1963, independence in 1965, race riots, communist-led student and labour unrest, and kidnapping gangs.



1967 – 1971

**CHEAM KIM SEANG**

**First Constable to Become Commissioner**

When Le Cain retired in 1967, Cheam became Acting Commissioner of Police. Two years later, he was made Commissioner of Police, making history as the first Police Constable to rise through the ranks to take on the top post. On his watch, the SPF embarked on a massive reorganisation in 1969 into six departments and 17 operational units, with greater emphasis on operations, planning and public relations. The Police Training School was elevated to a Police Academy in 1969, and the khaki uniform replaced with the dark blue uniform still used today. To enhance cooperation with the community, he revived two initiatives shelved since 1958 — the Crime Prevention Campaign and Police Week.



1971 – 1979

**TAN TECK KHIM**

**Expanding Crime-fighting Capabilities**

In 1953, Tan was one of the first two Asian officers who joined the police force after World War II as a Police Constable, and subsequently promoted to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police. Put in command of the Police Reserve Unit in 1956, he was awarded the Colonial Police Medal for Meritorious Service for combating the violent riots that year. In 1971, his first year of office as Commissioner of Police, he launched the SPF's first two national campaigns to keep Singapore crime-free and accident-free. He then embarked on a comprehensive reorganisation to improve the Force's crime-fighting capabilities, including establishing a Commercial Crime Division.



1979 – 1992

**GOH YONG HONG**

**Introducing Community Policing**

The legacy of Commissioner of Police Goh lives on in today's Community Policing System. He changed the policing philosophy towards greater community engagement, to counter a rise in the incidence of housebreaking and theft. New initiatives to partner the people were launched between 1981 and 1983, including Neighbourhood Watch Groups formed by residents, Police Boys' Clubs for youth, the National Crime Prevention Council for business and community leaders to work on anti-crime measures, and Neighbourhood Police Posts manned by officers on foot and bicycle patrols.



1992 – 1997

**TEE TUA BA**

**Building Stronger Community Trust**

Commissioner of Police Tee further developed community policing to earn and keep the support and trust of Singaporeans. To develop a more operationally-attuned Force, he strongly advocated the concept of empowerment for more initiative and discretion by frontline officers. New units established included the Special Tactics and Rescue (STAR) unit, formed in 1993 for serious incidents and hostage situations, and a full Police Intelligence Department, formed in 1996. The most all-encompassing change under his watch was in organisational culture in 1996 with the introduction of the learning organisation framework for leadership and people development. The SPF's Service Pledge was launched in 1997 as a commitment to service excellence. He also oversaw the review of the Neighbourhood Police Post system to introduce more streamlined Neighbourhood Police Centres in 1997.



The aftermath of a time bomb explosion at the MacDonald House during Konfrontasi, March 1965. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings





**1997 – 2010**  
**KHOO BOON HUI**  
*Inspiring the World*

Commissioner of Police Khoo's tenure saw the SPF develop in a few important areas: developing community partnership, especially after the global impact of the 9/11 terror attacks in the US in 2001; enhancing operational capability in areas such as coastal security and technology-related crime investigations; and strengthening internal resilience. He led the Force through the transition from having Neighbourhood Police Posts to Neighbourhood Police Centres, to better utilise police resources. In organisational development, he adopted new management and development tools and practices in organisational learning, benchmarking organisational and service excellence, corporate communications and human resources programmes. These enhancements helped the SPF to earn the Singapore Quality Award (SQA) in 2002 and the first SQA with Special Commendation in 2007. Khoo was also elected the 25th President of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) in 2008 and served until 2012, helping the SPF to realise its vision to be a police force that inspires the world.



**2010 – 2015**  
**NG JOO HEE**  
*Community Policing and Record Low Offending*

Commissioner of Police Ng will always be known for making police officers wear "shorts" again. The renewed Community Policing System that he championed and implemented placed officers — in polos and bermudas — back on the beat in communities all over Singapore. The increased interactions between police and citizenry that resulted helped to increase trust and enhance the SPF's partnership with the public to deter and detect crime. His resolve to tackle the unlicensed moneylender situation saw the SPF adopt multifaceted measures to thwart what was becoming a public menace. These efforts led to a consistent fall in the number of debtor harassment cases from 2010 to 2014. Ng also steered efforts to strengthen the SPF's collaboration with foreign counterparts in areas that included investigations, maritime security operations, information sharing and training exchanges. These international alliances provided the SPF with a solid foundation to deal with crimes that were becoming increasingly complex and transnational in nature. Under his leadership, Singapore recorded its lowest crime rate in 30 years in 2013.



**2015 – present**  
**HOONG WEE TECK**  
*Becoming the World's Safest Place*

Commissioner of Police Hoong assumed the role of Commissioner after distinguished stints in top positions in the investigation and intelligence fraternity. As Commissioner of Police, he has pushed through key milestones in transforming the SPF to be future-ready, overseeing the development and implementation of new capabilities in analytics and autonomous technologies. Most notably, Hoong integrated the Police Operations Command Centre as the nerve centre for sense-making, analytics, and command and control for enhanced incident response and decision-making. Frontline officers were equipped and trained for counterterrorism, leading to the formation of Emergency Response Teams and In-Situ Reaction Teams. With a strong focus on care for officers, Hoong enhanced the SPF's career and development schemes. The Police Unified Rank Structure and Expert Career Track were implemented, and the Career Transition Office was set up to strengthen support for retiring officers. During his tenure, the SPF attained the SQA with Special Commendation in 2019 in recognition of its management and organisational excellence. Under Hoong's leadership, the SPF continues to enjoy strong public trust and confidence, with Singapore ranking first in research firm Gallup's 2020 *Global Law and Order* report, for the seventh consecutive year.

**ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

**The Origins and Key Concepts of the SPF's Core Values**

Under British colonialism, the values of the police force were derived from the traditions of policing in Britain, modified and applied to the local context of each overseas colonial location. It was only when Singapore moved from self-government to independence that this aspect of the organisational values of the SPF became increasingly more prominent in recent decades. Being a police officer has evolved from an occupation and means of livelihood to much more than that — a calling of national duty and public service.

The SPF motto "Setia dan Bakti" ("loyalty and service" in Malay) was adopted after independence. The motto, currently no longer in use in prominent public communications but still a vital piece of organisational heritage that is a call to service among SPF officers, states that the tradition of protecting life and property and maintaining law and order requires from each officer the utmost in loyalty to country and service to the community.

The SPF's organisational core values have evolved over the decades. In 1960, Home Affairs Minister Ong Pang Boon said in a speech that a police force that wanted to be held in high regard by the public would need these qualities: Honesty, integrity, efficiency, impartiality and a capacity to deal politely but firmly with the public. These qualities, together with the motto "Setia dan Bakti", would serve the SPF well for the next three decades.

Into the 1990s, leadership development began to gain significance as part of the SPF's organisational development. In 1994, the SPF's top leadership highlighted three main qualities:

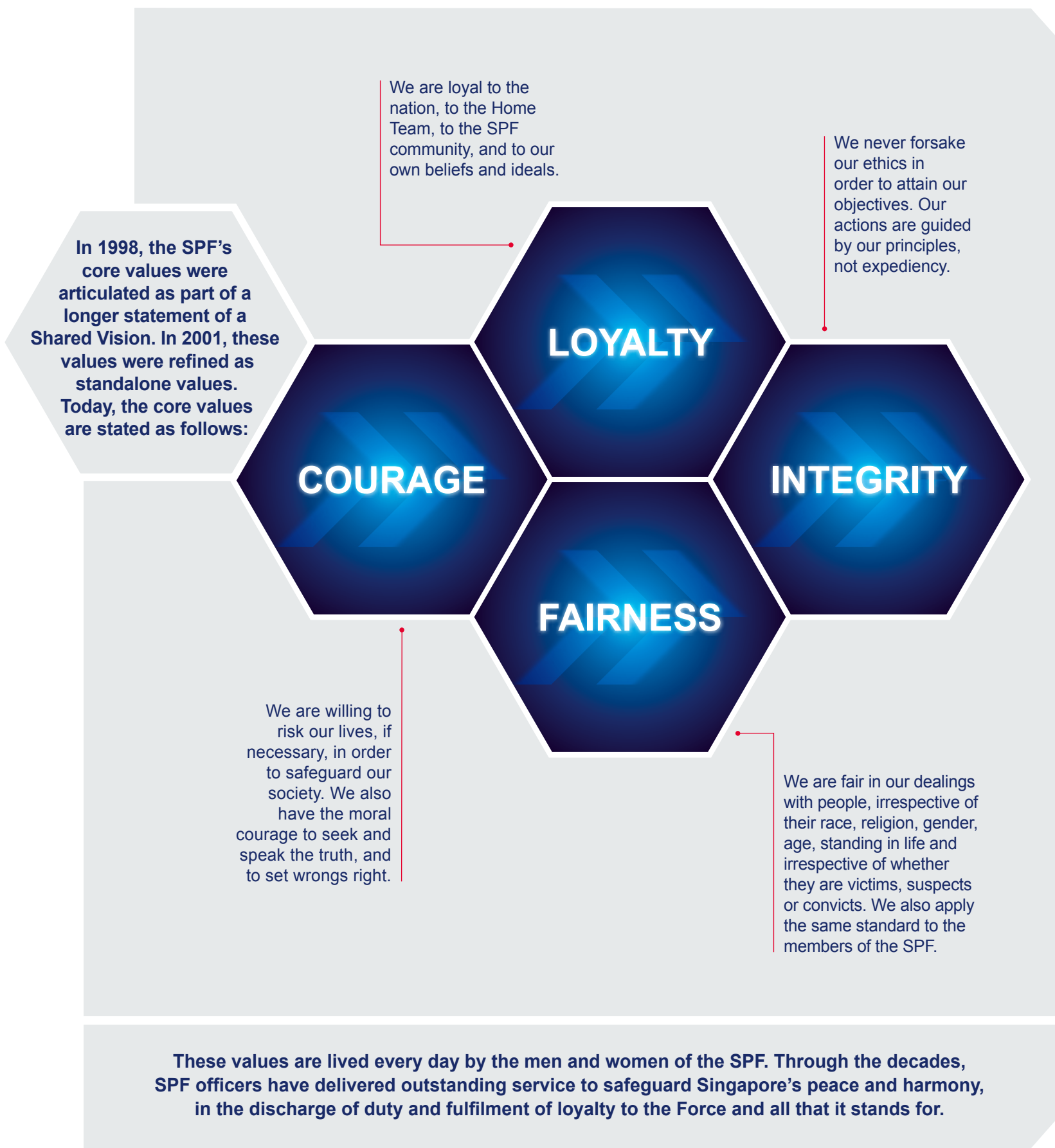
- (1) Integrity — being fair and honest, of impeccable character and exemplary conduct, and seeking always to uphold the honour of the office;
- (2) Professionalism — being disciplined and courageous, with knowledge of process and understanding of purpose, being friendly and helpful yet resolute in exercising authority, and serving with a sense of duty; and
- (3) Creativity — being receptive to feedback and open to ideas, adopting innovative and pragmatic measures, seeking always to improve and upgrade through learning from experience and mistakes.

In 1995, Home Affairs Minister Wong Kan Seng unveiled the SPF's five core values:

- (1) Professionalism and courage, diligently seeking the truth, with knowledge of process and understanding of purpose;
- (2) Fairness and impartiality, acting without fear or favour or prejudice to the rights of others, while tempering justice with compassion;
- (3) Providing quality service, being prompt, courteous, helpful and responsive;
- (4) Striving to be an organisation of excellence, being proactive, showing initiative and willingness to change; and
- (5) Serving the nation with loyalty and integrity, to uphold the honour of the office with exemplary conduct and discipline to maintain public trust and confidence.

The SPF's values were further developed around and after 1996, when CP Khoo established the application and practice of the Learning Organisation (LO) framework throughout the SPF. Upon assuming his role as CP, he initiated the Shared Visioning Exercise in 1997 to allow officers to surface their shared aspirations and vision for the SPF. Upon completion of the exercise, the SPF Shared Vision of being "a police force that inspires the world" was created and proved to be a powerful tool in inspiring SPF officers to work towards their common goal of becoming a world-class organisation.





## LIVING THE SPF'S CORE VALUES – IN THE LINE OF DUTY

On the frontlines of safeguarding the nation, SPF officers are often called upon to put themselves on the line. Below are some of their harrowing stories.

### 1950S

#### Facing off the Maria Hertogh Rioters: “They Knew I Meant Business”

“Charge!” Sabeer Zain yelled as he ran towards the 200 rioters outside the Cold Storage supermarket on Orchard Road. As some in the crowd ran off, he turned around and stopped short. “I realised that I was charging alone. They just stood there.”

His team of constables refused to move. They watched as the rioters closed in on their Inspector. In those tense moments in December 1950, he knew that if he made a mistake, he would die. He had six bullets in his revolver. There were dozens of rioters. “From my face, the rioters knew I meant business. They were cowards. They ran away.”

He knew the protestors were angry not with the police force, but with the British for deciding that the Dutch child known as Maria Hertogh would be sent to the Netherlands. The atmosphere was explosive. Almost all uniformed policemen then were Malay Muslims, who felt their loyalties torn between their community and their British supervisors. Most did not want to act against fellow Muslims. But there were also many Malay Muslims, like him, who believed the police force had to be neutral, to enforce the law and stop the violence. “The police force did a good job, otherwise there would have been bloodshed.”



A huge crowd gathering outside the Supreme Court two days before tensions escalated into full-blown riots, 1950. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings



## 1960S

### Sheltering Children from Race Riots: “Never Take Peace for Granted”

Thambiah Letchamanan was on leave on the day of the racial riots in July 1964. He was recalled to the Beach Road Police Station, where he found himself in command as Senior Inspector, because the other senior officers were attending to a riot in Geylang Serai.

When another riot started at Queen Street, he did not have much time to react as the rioters were becoming more violent, and students of Raffles Girls’ School were caught in the middle of hundreds of people fighting.

Prioritising their safety, he called for army trucks to transport the girls home safely and opened his station as a temporary shelter. “The kids were stranded, so it was the most obvious choice to me to use the station as a shelter. We made calls to the now closed Satay Club to have them come over and provide food for people in the shelter.”

He also sent officers to a Boyanese settlement at Crawford Street at risk of being attacked by Chinese rioters. “The Boyanese people were the minority in an area that was populated by the Chinese. It was our responsibility to make sure they were protected.”

For his handling of the riots — which went on for almost two weeks — he was promoted to Acting Deputy Superintendent of Police of Beach Road Police Station, where he set up three police posts in racially sensitive areas like Gammon Road and Jalan Senang to make sure peace was kept between the Chinese and Malays.

He retired as Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Police in 1988, but he still keeps his police uniform hanging proudly in his wardrobe. “One thing I’ve learned from all those years is to always stay alert and never take peace for granted.”

## 1960S

### Gallantry at Dawn:

#### “You Won’t Know When Bad Things Happen”

On 5 August 1965, a notorious kidnapper and then most wanted man, Morgan Teo (also known as “Ah Hiap” or “Ah Khoon”), was shot dead by police officers in a shootout in Siang Lim Park, off Lorong 40 Geylang. The police raid at dawn involved 40 men from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and two troops of the Reserve Unit (now known as the Police Tactical Unit, Special Operations Command).

Deputy Superintendent of Police Theodore Edward Ricketts (Officer-in-Charge of the Reserve Unit) and Sergeant Paramasivam Doraisamy were injured by shrapnel when two hand grenades were lobbed at the officers by Teo. Teo, who was known to have trained in Indonesia for sabotage work under Confrontation, had been hiding in the house. Three SPF officers stormed the house and shot Teo dead. After his time in the SPF, Mr Ricketts was one of five officers seconded to the Singapore Armed Forces to train the first batch of SAF Officer Cadet Trainees and Non-Commissioned Officers.

The Straits Times,  
6 August 1965,  
Page 1. Picture:  
Singapore Press  
Holdings

### THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

It is an accepted fact that the job of a policeman carries risk and some of them were prepared to take on the full extent of such risk in the line of duty. Here are three of them:

#### 1965 — Inspector Allan Lim

The police raid on the notorious kidnapper and then-most wanted man Morgan Teo in Geylang claimed the life of Inspector Allan Lim, who co-led the operation. As the police officers surrounded the house in Geylang at dawn, he called out to Teo in Teochew to surrender. A gun battle ensued and he was shot in the head, and died in hospital later that day.

His death sent shockwaves through the nation. He was just 28 years old when he left behind his young wife and their nine-month-old infant son, David. Inspector Lim was buried with full police honours.

David Lim went on to become a Superintendent of Police (Supt), following a family legacy that began in 1934 when his grandfather, Lim Choon Seng, joined the Straits Settlements Police Force as a Constable.





OFFICERS WHO DIED  
IN THE LINE OF DUTY

1901

Det 611 Lim Soo Hay  
Det 392 Lim Ah Koon

1914

Det 559 Goh Ah Seng

1919

L/Cpl 042 Yeo Ah Hin

1921

Det 092 Teng Chok

1922

Det 001 Teo Ah Moi  
Det 066 Chong Ah Yong

1923

PC 660 Pir Khan

1925

Det 079 Paw Peng Seng

1928

PC 300 Abdul Malik

1929

PC 803 Painda Khan  
Det 057 Lam Weng Yuk

1932

PC 748 Tan Kee Chuan

1934

Insp A. E. Popejoy

1936

Det 035 Mohamed Ali

1942

Det Sub Insp Tan Boo Ling  
Det 001 Quek Ah Kee  
Det 003 Kho Kee Thiam  
Det 019 Lim Ah Kow  
Det 036 Yip Keng Sam  
Det 066 Tan Ah Kee  
Det 086 Tee Boon Hye  
Det 099 Tan Chan  
Det 102 Lim Keng Seng  
Det 104 Sim Kim Hock  
Det 112 Ng Kim Hock  
Det 117 Eng Yong Khoon  
Det L/Sgt 135 Chang Hak Joe  
Det 136 Chan Wai Wah  
Det 143 Tay Teng Liong  
Det 169 Low Peng Hai  
Det 179 Tan Sam Tuck  
Det 195 Lim Kian Siong  
Det 4447 Tan Kim Hock

1945

Det 208 Koh Wan Wee  
Det 170 Soh Chwee Seng  
Det 145 Teo Bah Cheo

1946

Det L/Sgt 13 Shaik Noor Mohd  
Det 41 Lee Koh Beng  
PC 2444 Abdul Rajis Bin Yusof

1947

Det 426 Mohamed Bin Che Dol  
Cpl 2054 Mohamed Gul  
PC 3776 Atan b. Haji Sirap  
SC 5221 Teo Kim Swan  
Det 809 Cheong Ngit Cheong

1948

SC 5194 C. S. Dascen

1950

PC 2083 Ali Bin Mat Jani  
SSgt 4098 Mahadhoj Limbu  
PC 1526 Jantan Bin Ngah  
PC 1876 Mohd. Diah b. Abd. Hamid  
PC 2583 Osman Bin Said  
PC 790 Mohd. Senin b. Arkim  
Det PC 646 Sim Tian Peng  
Insp A. Retnasingham

1951

Det PC 280 Ang Beng Siong  
Det Cpl 3066 Yap Beng Teck  
Asst Comdt (SC) Abdul Rahman Bin Abdul Aziz  
PC 790 lthnin bin Hakim  
PC 630 Mohd. Din bin Merah

1952

PC 1797 Zainal Abidin Bin Haji Ahmad  
Det 108 Tan Toa Tee

1954

Det Sub Insp Tan Ah Seng  
DPC 291 Johnson Lee  
DPC 41 Wong Siew Wah  
DPC 495 Toh Keng Hwa

1955

VSC Officer 1039 Andrew Teo Bock Lan  
Det Cpl Yuen Yen Pang

1964

DPC 2802 Reddy Melvyn Douglas

1965

Insp Allan Lim Kim Sai

1968

DPC 6603 Monisaimy Naidu

1970

PC 6459 Omar Bin Hussin

1972

PC 8610 Tan Chin Swee

1973

DPC 3393 Ng Poh Hock  
DPC 0110 Ong Poh Heng  
PC 8358 Mohamed Sanusi bin Siraj

1974

PC 1657 Abu Habir B Kassim

1975

PC 8835 Low Tong Seng  
PC 1750 Lim Ah Huat

1976

PC 3031 Chan Ban Thian

1977

PC 3881 O Patpanavan

1978

Cpl 8210 Abu Kasim B Katon  
PC 0944 Loh Teng Hock  
SC Lee Kim Lai  
Sgt 7571 Toh Say Tin

1979

Sgt 1288 Mohd Saad Bin Omar  
PC 2446 Soon Say Boon

1980

PC 2620 Lim Kok Hui

1982

PC 9334 Tankabahadur Rai

1983

PC 8726 Ab. Rahman Bin Ab Kadir

1984

SC Abdul Rahman Bin Bujang  
PC 2816 Supayah s/o K Marimuthu  
PC 8627 Wahid Bin Ahmad  
Sgt 3370 Chin Ah Kow

1985

PC 7365 Mohamed Sarwar s/o Mohamed Afzal  
PC 3649 Goh Ah Khia

1989

Cpl 2977 Mirza Abdul Halim Bin Mirza Abdul Majid

1990

Cpl 8951 Tan Tiang Hwa

1991

Cpl 7290 Ong Chin Woo  
VC Kannan s/o Pinnasamy

1994

Sgt 8210 Hoi Kin Heng  
SI 344 Boo Tiang Huat

1996

Cpl 7531 Asri B Mohd Jalil  
SSSgt 2415 Ng Beng Huat

1997

Cpl 2176 Lim Kok Seng

1998

SSgt 9858 Mohd Asri Bin Amin

1999

SC/Cpl Kwah Choon Khiat  
Sgt 98574 Ho Boon Chee

2000

SI 1576 Yap Kin Lai  
SC/Cpl Sam Cheok Yeen

2001

Sgt 98227 Tan Chew Leong Benny  
SC/Cpl Dzulkhair Bin Basri  
NSPI Ranasasni Bin Mohd Salleh  
Sgt 96782 Quek Yew Ming

2002

SI 8996 Ong Kah Kiong  
SC/Cpl Muhammad Syakir Bin Ishak

2003

Sgt 99308 Sri Norashikin Binte Ishak

2004

SSgt 2578 Ong Guan Chuan

2005

SSgt 4199 Noranzor Bin Abdul Latif  
SI (V) 1104 Seah Ben Hur

2007

SSI 2459 Mohd Khalid Bin Muhamad  
SSSgt T01217 Heah Khim Han

2008

Cpl T07260 Abdul Halim Bin Abdul Samad  
TSC Roslan Bin Saharo

2009

ASP Cheng Kok Peng

2017

SSgt T09574 Nadzrie Bin Matin

The statue of a saluting officer paying tribute to fallen officers, whose names are inscribed on a plaque in the Commemorative Gallery in the Police Headquarters at New Phoenix Park.



### 1985 — Police Constable Goh Ah Khia

Police Constable (PC) Goh lost his life during an arrest, 20 years and 10 weeks from the day he first joined the Force. He was attending to what had appeared at first to be a routine robbery case, when he was shot in the chest and killed by the notorious gunman “Ah Huat”. PC Goh was known to be a courageous and dedicated officer, willing to take on additional responsibilities voluntarily. He held exacting standards to his performance, earning the respect of his superiors.

### 1994 — Station Inspector Boo Tiang Huat

While on anti-housebreaking rounds along Newton Road, Senior Staff Sergeant (SSSgt) Boo Tiang Huat was set upon by a man wielding an axe, and tragically lost his life. SSSgt Boo, who was promoted to Station Inspector posthumously, was known to be unwavering in his drive, highly reliable and self-motivated.

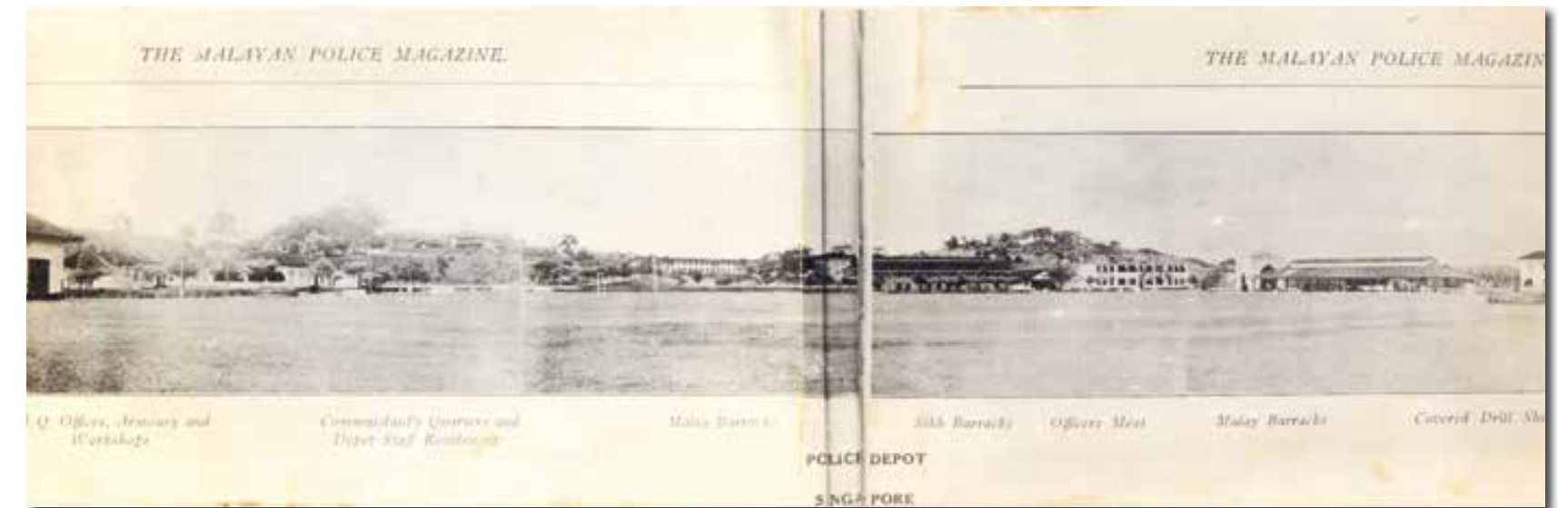
## PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

### Police Training through the Years

In his 1965 book, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, the historian Charles Burton Buckley noted that the police action in 1854 to quell the biggest Chinese riots of the 19th century would probably have been more effective if the men had been better trained. But even after this incident, police training did not see quick improvement. It was holistically revamped only after a report by Inspector-General of Police Samuel Dunlop in 1880, with police schools started thereafter in 1881.

During the Straits Settlements era, between 1905 and 1922, training of officers was carried out in a school in Malacca. In 1923, police recruits received training in Singapore for the first time at a temporary police depot converted from a disused exhibition site where Shenton Way is today. In 1929, training was formalised for the first time with the setting up of a proper police depot building on Thomson Road. This depot was responsible for the basic police training of officers, and became the home of generations of police trainees for the next 76 years.

Singapore's brief two years as part of the Malaysian Federation from 1963 brought about a few major changes to police training. The Police Training School became incorporated into the Federation's network of police training facilities and was known as the Sekolah Latehan Polis. In 1964, it was decided that all police training would be centralised in Kuala Lumpur, and on 30 April, the Police Training School at Thomson Road held its last march-past. It was then renamed Advanced Training School, Royal Malaysia Police. The plan was for it to concentrate on specialist training for policemen from all over Malaysia.



The building of the Police Depot during its early days.

More reorganisation was to follow from Singapore's independence in 1965. Needing to build up a self-sufficient police force for Singapore alone, the SPF launched one of its largest recruitment drives, aiming to accept up to 850 young men over six months that year. The Commandant of the Police Training School, Superintendent of Police Othman Omar, said that the expansion of the Force followed the growth in population, trade and general living facilities for a better livelihood for the people.

Police recruits heading home after a week's training at Sekolah Latehan Polis Singapura, 1965.











Assistant Commissioner of Police  
Othman Omar inspecting the police  
recruits at their Passing-out Parade,  
1968. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

The next major advancement for police training was in 1969, when the Police Training School was elevated to a Police Academy. Improvements to the campus were carried out in 1972 to include a 20-room classroom block, lecture theatre, mock court, library, museum and gymnasium. In 1973, subjects such as basic psychology and management principles were included in the training of recruits.

In 1977, a multimillion-dollar plan was announced to give a new look to the Police Academy. The plan included modern multi-storey dormitories, an underground shooting range and a new administrative building.

In late 1980, the Police Academy conducted a comprehensive review of the training courses, standards of training, staffing requirements of the Academy and teaching techniques. The recommendations included having advanced courses conducted by the Police Academy to be structured along areas of professional specialisation rather than along ranks, and building up a “core of personnel” with the requisite experience and proficiency in instruction so that standards of instruction could improve. In January 1981, a Training Development Unit was established within the Training Department to restructure courses, rewrite training literature and to constantly review and upgrade such literature.

The newly built  
swimming pool at  
Police Academy,  
1977. Picture:  
National Archives  
of Singapore





## A MASTER TRAINER

“*Ke belakang pusing* (About turn)!” That was a command no police trainee wanted to hear while marching back to his or her barracks after a long day of drill practice at the old Police Academy parade square.

Station Inspector (SI) Sri Kanthan Chelliah, a police trainer who retired in 2004, had no qualms bellowing those words if he spotted a squad of trainees whose steps were out of order, arms not straightened, or backs not stiff and upright while marching. The strict drill master was the man responsible for the training of police officers taking part in major events such as the National Day Parade.

One of the few officers given the designation Field Instructor First Class, he was qualified in all instructor-level courses, including field, firearms, drill and swimming. Throughout his career, he held the posts of SI Field, which meant he was in charge of all field training, as well as SI School and Chief Drill Instructor.

He also trained teachers overseeing National Police Cadet Corps units in their schools, conducted in-service training for Traffic Police officers by day, and Special Constabulary and Volunteer Special Constabulary squads in the evenings. “Discipline... that is what made me to be what I am now,” he said.



Station Inspector (SI) Sri Kanthan Chelliah retired as a police trainer in 2004.



Sri Kanthan Chelliah during his heyday as a police trainer.

In response to the changing operating landscape, training became more specialised for officers to build up certain required expertise. One such example was the setting up of the School of Criminal Investigation in 2000, the CID's training arm responsible for training all levels of investigators. Training also became more structured and longer-term. For example, each Key Installations Command (KINS) Unit (made up entirely of Operationally Ready Police National Servicemen) had to undergo a 10-year training programme within which they are required to complete four years of establishment and operational training before they are ready for deployment.

To further build competencies in criminal investigation capabilities, the SPF led the setting up of the Home Team School of Criminal Investigation (HTSCI) in 2011 through expanding the scope of the CID School of Criminal Investigation. The HTSCI provides training to all investigation, forensic and investigation support officers in the Home Team and other law enforcement agencies both in Singapore and overseas. HTSCI also runs programmes for investigation supervisors and leaders at various levels, as well as specialised courses in areas such as financial and technology-related crime investigation and forensics.



The entrance of the Police Academy in the 1970s.



**Left:** The shooting range in the Police Academy in the 1980s.



**Right:** The bunk beds on which the police recruits slept after a day's training in the 1990s.



Forming the abbreviation, 'HTA', during a parade at the Home Team Academy, 2005.

In December 2005, a new Home Team Academy (HTA) was opened in Choa Chu Kang to integrate training for all Home Team departments. This closed a significant chapter of the early history of training in the SPF's old Police Academy at Thomson Road.

Currently located in the HTA, the Police Training Command (TRACOM) is now the SPF's primary training institute for all police officers before they assume duty in the units. TRACOM conducts foundation courses, milestone commanders' courses as well as generic vocational courses that include aspects of field training. It also covers skills maintenance and refresher courses for serving officers, and develops content for workplace training. TRACOM, being located within the HTA, has shared facilities such as the Home Team Training Village, where recruits experience realism in scenario-based training using mock-ups of a Neighbourhood Police Centre and residential apartments.

The Home Team Tactical Centre (HTTC), commissioned in 2015, combined the SPF's and SCDF's tactical training facilities into a single complex, providing more opportunities for Home Team units to train together, familiarise themselves with each other's contingency protocols, tactics and capabilities, to improve inter-operability in missions. The HTTC provides realistic, situational training such as tactical firearms, close quarter battle, methods of entry and vehicle tactics. These are skills and knowledge required in counter-terrorism, public order and security operations.

Increasingly, the SPF has also been leveraging technology to enhance training methods. For example, Virtual Reality (VR) technology has been applied in training systems such as the HTSCI's Virtual Reality On Scene Investigation (VR OSI), as well as Firearms & Use of Force Simulator (FUOFS) and Ground Response Force OSI (GRF OSI) training by TRACOM. In addition, PCG also uses technology in maritime training such as the Boarding and Search Trainer (BST), a "ship mock-up" resembling a coastal cargo vessel, which provides realistic training in areas including vessel boarding procedures, water survival, handling of firearms, and rescue and medical evacuation skills.

Into the 21st century, the refreshed training philosophy is that officers should receive even more specialised training for the jobs they are deployed for, and that training can take place anytime and anywhere. Individual officers must take responsibility for their own training, and leaders must take ownership of workplace learning to reinforce the mindset that training is mission-critical.







The SPF has leveraged technology such as virtual reality to train and augment frontline capabilities.

To support such a training philosophy, the concepts of In-Shift Training (InST) and Official Admin & Learning (OAL) were formalised in 2019 to provide officers with training and admin time even during their shift hours. There is a Home Team Learning Management System (HTLMS), which empowers individuals to take responsibility for their own training at their own pace through e-learning. An HTLMS mobile application is also being developed to allow access to e-learning modules on the go via police smartphones.

As Singapore evolves, the SPF is also continuously upskilling its officers. SPF trainers now gain professional adult learning certification, such as Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) Advanced Certificate in Learning and Performance (ACLP), through the Trainers Competency Development Roadmap (TCDR). There are also plans to accredit more police courses, such that officers will go through courses matching standards recognised by Workforce Singapore (WSG) and other Institutes of Higher Learning, thereby opening up more pathways for officers to further their education.

**Building Career Paths**

In colonial times, policing in Singapore was a career choice that called for commitment, dedication and some sacrifice, given limited organisational resources and the demanding work of tackling the serious security threats of those times. Substantial improvement was introduced with efforts

from the 1950s onwards. In the 1960s, the police force launched a few rounds of promotional campaigns, but even into the 1970s, recruitment continued to be a challenge.

Since then, the career paths and prospects for police officers have been reviewed and improved many times over. Today in the SPF, career development has come a very long way. In 2016, a holistic review was completed of the police career scheme. Three major changes came about:

**(1) Single Police Scheme**

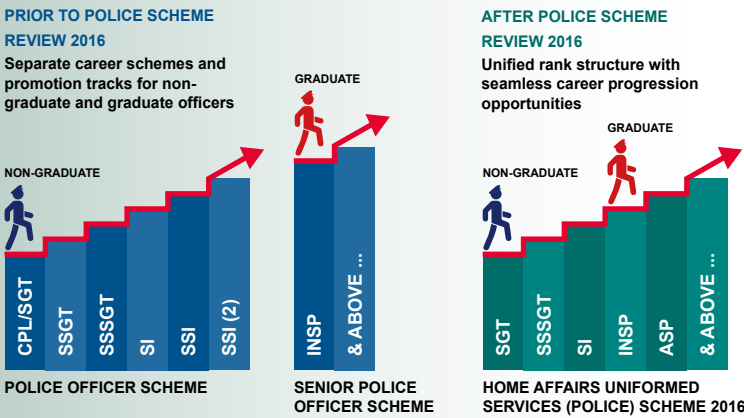
The single scheme of service was introduced to provide deserving officers with faster and more seamless progression opportunities. Under the single scheme, progression is based on demonstrated performance and potential, with reduced emphasis on academic qualifications. All officers, graduates and non-graduates alike, can look forward to advancement up the same ranks if they are assessed to have the same performance and potential. High-performing officers can also look forward to accelerated promotion into the more senior ranks within their first few years of service.

**(2) Introduction of Expert Career Tracks and the Establishment of the Career Transition Office**

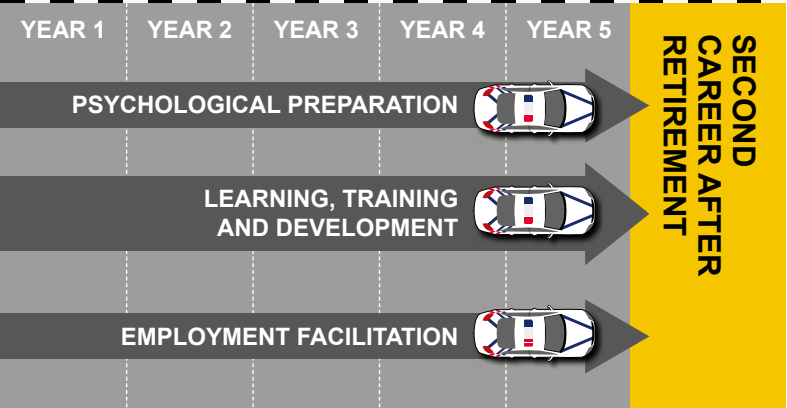
Expert career tracks were introduced to create more career pathways for deep specialisation in niche areas of expertise. Officers can rise from senior specialists to experts, in recognition of their technical competencies and deep expertise in critical domains such as investigations, special operations and intelligence.

The Career Transition Office was established to ensure the continued employability of retired officers. Commencing five years before officers' retirement, the career transition programme

**UNIFIED POLICE SCHEME**



**FIVE-YEAR CAREER TRANSITION ROADMAP**



provides officers with resources and support to facilitate their smooth transition into a second career beyond the Force.

**(3) Enhanced Learning and Development Opportunities**

To promote learning and lifelong employability, SPF officers can take up to 10 weeks of professional development leave for training or attachments in relevant organisations. They can also benefit from a learning and development scheme that helps fund personal learning-related expenditures.



### NEW VOLUNTEER CONSTABULARY FOR SINGAPORE

A SPECIAL constabulary is to be formed of volunteers from the various communities to assist the Singapore Police in combatting the present wave of housebreaking, theft, burglary and looting of godowns and stores.

Armed with suitable weapons, the Volunteer Constabulary will accompany the regular police on mobile patrols, guard godowns and stores and patrol residential districts, with the full powers of regular policemen.

"The numbers are unlimited," said the Commissioner of Police, Mr. R. E. Foulger, to the Straits Times yesterday, "and I want to get this Constabulary going as quickly as possible."

Men anxious to fight looters and thieves and help the police to bring down the crime graph are asked to communicate with the Commissioner.

This latest step follows the discussion in the Straits Times last week that British firms in Singapore were contemplating forming their own guards for their stores and godowns.

#### As In War-Time

Conferences took place at Government House between the Governor, Sir Franklin Gimson, the Commissioner and leading members of the community on the possibility of forming a recognised organisation of voluntary patrols and guards.

This invitation is now extended to public-spirited citizens to come forward once again. As they did during war-time, when they formed the Volunteer Police Reserve.

If sufficient numbers are forthcoming, it is not anticipated that the duties will be onerous. Almost all of it, though, will be at night.

It is intended to cover the various districts with patrols formed from their own residents. Men from the various business houses will guard their own stores and godowns, interspersed with mobile patrol work.

#### No Special Uniform

The Special Constables will be given powers for the preservation of peace, the prevention of offences, the apprehension of offenders and for all other purposes, which they will also enjoy the same protection and immunities as police officers of corresponding rank.

They will not wear any special uniform, but will be provided with armbands. They will be under the orders of a commandant who is yet to be appointed, with a regular police officer acting as liaison officer.

Further details will be published immediately the response to this invitation is known. Applications from re-members of the pre-war Special Constabulary are invited.

There is in Singapore a Special Constabulary assisting the Singapore police, but this is formed of paid regulars. The Volunteer Special Constabulary will not of course receive any salary.

The Straits Times, 1 October 1946.  
Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

Volunteer Special Constabulary

The Volunteer Special Constabulary (VSC) was formed in October 1946 to augment the SPF's manpower. The work of VSC officers has since been complementing that of regular police officers in various land divisions and specialised units.

The emergence of civilian volunteers can be traced back to the Hokkien-Teochew riots of May 1854. Around 70 European and merchant vessel commanders were sworn in as special constables to help quell the riots.

Following this, more people volunteered with the police force to help maintain peace and order, and to deal with civil unrest situations. The contributions of this pool of volunteers eventually led to the creation of the Volunteer Police Reserve in 1937. This reserve was disbanded during the Japanese Occupation.



The officers from the Volunteer Special Constabulary taking their police oath in the 1960s.

After the war, an appeal for volunteers was made in *The Straits Times* on 15 September 1945. This resulted in the formation of the Special Constabulary (SC) in October 1945, with 100 full-time officers who were paid a monthly salary. In 1946, the Special Constabulary was restructured into an Extra Constabulary of full-time salaried officers and a VSC of part-time unpaid volunteers. The VSC was especially active during the turbulent years of the 1950s, including the Maria Hertogh riots of 1950 and the Hock Lee Bus riots of 1955.

When part-time Police National Service (PNS) was introduced in 1967, the VSC was reorganised into the Special Constabulary (SC) — comprising National Servicemen — and the Special Constabulary (Volunteers) or SC (V) — comprising volunteers. SC (V) officers were called upon by the Singapore Government to help train the first batches of SC officers, before a regular corps of trainers was established. When part-time PNS was discontinued in 1981, the SC (V) became independent from PNS and returned to being known as the VSC.

Throughout the years, VSC officers played an integral role in keeping Singapore safe and secure. To meet the VSC officers' aspirations and ensure that SPF's regular and volunteer officers work in tandem, many changes were introduced, for example, aligning the uniforms and providing more posting choices for VSC officers.

In 2018, after almost 72 years, the VSC was expanded with a new vocation called VSC (Community). It was conceived with the main objective of projecting unarmed uniformed presence in areas with high human traffic such as markets and other community areas. VSC (Community) officers also carry out engagements at community events and roadshows. They also facilitate crowd and traffic regulation and assist with evacuation where needed. The new vocation has a shorter training duration — trainees undergo nine weeks of non-residential training, with lessons conducted three times a week, to cover police procedures, police defence tactics and first aid. VSC (Community) officers are deployed at Neighbourhood Police Centres, and conduct at least eight hours of patrol duty each month.

VSC (Community) officers on patrol.



The Straits Times, 15 September 1945.  
Picture: Singapore Press Holdings







Unlike VSC officers who can be armed, VSC (Community) officers do not carry arms, but are equipped with handcuffs, a baton and a communications set. They wear blue polo T-shirts (similar to those worn by NPC Community Policing officers), black cargo pants and soft caps.

### Vigilante Corps

The Vigilante Corps (VC) was established in 1964 as an informal organisation to support the police force in guarding against sabotage operations during the Konfrontasi period. The VC took over the securing of vulnerable installations and reported suspicious characters to the Police. Within two weeks, with the extensive media coverage and support from the People's Association and other grassroots organisations, the police force helped to gather and organise about 13,000 men over the age of 18 to volunteer in the VC.

**Left and right:** Vigilante Corps during their patrol duty at Bukit Panjang, 1964. Pictures: National Archives of Singapore



From 1964, the VC members began patrolling the housing estates and villages after undergoing a week's crash course on subjects including basic law and first aid. Their duties extended to the patrol of Singapore's coastline in 1965 when saboteur attacks were intensified. In addition to carrying out their patrol duties, they also helped to seize anti-Malaysia pamphlets.

When Konfrontasi ended, the role of the VC was confined mainly to being the "eyes and ears" for the police force against threats from gangsters and illegal immigrants. In 1966, full-time civilian instructors were engaged to enhance the VC members' efficiency and effectiveness in areas such as unarmed combat and maintenance of public order.

In March 1967, the VC became part of the National Service (NS) scheme. According to the principal provisions of the National Service (Amendment) Bill, introduced in Parliament in March 1967, National Service includes service in the VC and every person of 18 years of age and above is liable to be called up for service in the VC.

In 1967, when part-time Police National Service (PNS) was introduced, the VC became part of the National Service scheme. The VC was reorganised to comprise both National Servicemen and volunteers supporting the SPF in the maintenance of law and order, preservation of public peace, prevention and detection of crime, and apprehension of offenders. While the organisation was affiliated with the SPF, the VC did not have police powers.

The VC came under the newly formed PNS command, which comprised the VC and SC wings with a regular police officer as the VC Commandant.

Today, the VC continues to be a component of PNS, together with the SC.





Police enlistees boarding the bus en route to the Police Academy in 1975.

## NATIONAL SERVICE

### Citizens as Everyday Guardians

When Singapore assumed control of its own security and defence in 1965, Assistant Commissioner of Police Tan Teck Khim — who had been on the planning staff of the Inspector-General of Police of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur — was seconded to the Ministry of Interior and Defence in Singapore to serve as its first Director of General Staff. He became one of the key officers responsible for the implementation of a sound defence policy that included the birth of mandatory National Service.

Although AC Tan never had any formal military training, he brought to bear his experience of running the Police Training School, Reserve Unit and CID to the crash build-up of the Singapore Armed Forces, working closely with Minister for Defence Goh Keng Swee.

Life changed for all male Singapore citizens and second-generation permanent residents from 14 March 1967, when the National Service (Amendment) Bill was passed in Parliament to allow for conscription. Part-time Police National Service (PNS) was then introduced in 1967.

Acting Superintendent of Police Tee Tua Ba negotiating with two hijackers of the *Laju* ferry near Pulau Bukom, 1974. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

The first batches of part-time Police National Servicemen, enrolled at the Central Manpower Base, were posted to various training centres, including the Police Academy, Gan Eng Seng Secondary School, Tanglin Integrated Primary School, Rangoon Road Secondary School and Dunman Government Chinese Middle School. The men had to serve on a part-time basis for 12 years.

Even with part-time PNS in place, the need for even more manpower resources was to be felt soon enough. In the *Laju* terrorist incident of 1974, Japanese Red Army terrorists managed to hijack the ferry boat, *Laju*, at Pulau Bukom jetty and held its five crew members hostage. After eight days of negotiations with the Singaporean and Japanese governments,





the hijackers agreed to release the hostages in exchange for safe passage to Kuwait. The episode highlighted the importance of securing vital installations and protecting important industries. The regular SPF would not have enough manpower to perform these protection tasks. The best solution was to boost Singapore's security manpower with full-time PNS.

On 22 February 1975, full-time PNS was introduced. On 24 July, the SPF enlisted its first intake of 211 Full-time Police National Servicemen (PNSFs). They served for a period of 2 – 2.5 years. Since then, newly enlisted PNS trainees go through the Police Officers' Basic Course, where they learn about the Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and relevant criminal laws, police operations and procedures, weapons and police defence tactics. The first batch of police officer cadets was enlisted on 22 January 1976 and appointed as National Service Probationary Officers (NSPIs) upon completion of a nine-month course.

In 1977, the first batch of PNSFs became Operationally Ready Police National Servicemen (PNSmen), and was deployed for general policing duties in the evenings between 7pm and 11pm on a bi-monthly basis. By then, the total Special Constabulary strength had grown to 9,640 officers, including PNSmen and volunteers. The deployment strategy was revamped over time as Police National Servicemen proved themselves more than capable in their roles. Among the adaptations of PNS deployment was "vertical policing" of multi-storey blocks of flats.

From August 1980, NSPIs became more involved in frontline policing roles, as well as assisting in crime investigations. In-Camp Training (ICT) was introduced for PNSmen who had completed full-time PNS, and they underwent training at the Police Reserve Unit Base on Jalan Bahar.

In 1981, part-time PNS was discontinued, and the red lanyard worn previously by them was phased out.

Maintaining public order was a major aspect of PNS work. In the 1980s, Police National Servicemen from the Police Task Force, later known as the Special Operations Command (SOC), handled crowd management and anti-crime patrols at major events such as Swing Singapore (a regular street party at Orchard Road at that time), and Malaysia Cup football matches at the National Stadium, which often attracted capacity crowds of 55,000. They also supported the Land Divisions in anti-vice and anti-gambling operations.

In 1994, PNS was reorganised to focus on specialisation, integration and operational readiness. At the same time, the uniforms of Police National Servicemen were changed to be the same as those



First group of Full-time Police National Servicemen saluting for the camera, 1975.



Police officers interacting with a member of the public during a routine visit to HDB housing blocks.





Routine patrols by KINS officers to deter potential perpetrators.

of regular officers. Previously, PNS officers wore white name tags. Henceforth, they started wearing the same black name tags as the regular officers, reflecting their greater responsibilities. That year, the NS Key Installation and Protection Unit (KINS) was formed to protect vital installations throughout Singapore. The term, 'Reservist', was replaced by 'Operationally Ready Police National Servicemen' (PNSmen) to better reflect the frontline duties of NS officers.

At the national level, efforts remained untiring in further enhancing the capacity of NSmen to serve the country. In 2014, the Government accepted 30 recommendations by the Committee to Strengthen National Service to provide NSmen (in the SPF, the Singapore Civil Defence Force and the Singapore Armed Forces) with more opportunities to better serve Singapore and Singaporeans. The entire PNS training system was boosted with additional SPF regular officers to improve training and to inculcate organisational values more effectively. PNS will become more fulfilling, with greater deployment flexibility for NSF's, by taking into account their individual preferences even more, with accrediting of the skills gained during PNS to make them more applicable to civilian life after PNS.

To enlarge the frontline roles of PNSmen and PNSFs, they have been deployed to help meet the security demands of an expanding public land transport system. Originally called the Police MRT Unit and part of the SOC, officers began patrolling the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) network from August 2005. As Singapore's public transport network grew, so did the security demands. To better manage the ongoing changes and future growth, this unit was reorganised into an independent SPF specialist line unit called the Public Transport Security Command (TransCom) in 2009. It now manages all policing efforts throughout the entire public land transport network including rail and bus networks. The basic unit of TransCom's frontline resources is the Foot Patrol Group, for high-visibility patrols to deter crime and terrorism.



The TransCom officers patrol all major public transport nodes, including MRT stations, in Singapore.



In 2013, the Police National Service Department engaged relevant stakeholders on the PNS Master Plan to better harness the operational effectiveness of PNS Officers and to create meaningful NS experiences.

The PNS Master Plan also aims to maximise the potential of Police National Servicemen in the SPF to be motivated and driven in serving the SPF mission, as well as to be equipped to succeed in life. This is done by tapping the energy and talent of Police National Servicemen to contribute to Singapore's security, while giving them more opportunities to assume leadership positions.

Under the Master Plan, one of the key initiatives include the operationalisation of the Protective Security Command (ProCom), a specialist line unit comprising largely of Police National Servicemen, to protect critical infrastructures, security-sensitive locations and events during peacetime and national emergencies.

To enable PNSmen to serve beyond their statutory age, the Voluntary Extension of Service Scheme was introduced in 2015. This allows PNSmen to continue contributing their expertise to the SPF, by serving as mentors and trainers beyond 40 years of age for PNSmen whose rank was below that of Inspector, and 50 years of age for PNSmen whose rank was that of Inspector or above.

One of the roles of PNSmen has always been that of a vital bridge between the SPF and community. With these and more enhancements to come for PNSmen, the work of the SPF will become even more integrated with partnership with, and participation from, the community.

ProCom officers during one of their training exercises in 2018.







ProCom officers patrolling the city centre to maintain the peace.





The first NPCC Annual Parade in 1966.

## NATIONAL POLICE CADET CORPS - NURTURING YOUTH TO BE ACTIVE CITIZENS & COMMUNITY LEADERS

As a uniformed group affiliated with the SPF, the National Police Cadet Corps (NPCC) has played a vital role in the police force’s community engagement strategy. The NPCC has helped to develop its cadets to be active citizens and community leaders, by working in partnership with the SPF, to fight crime and keep Singapore safe. Through this strong partnership, the SPF’s purpose and core values are instilled in NPCC members and shared with the wider community through the NPCC’s community outreach programmes.

The NPCC story began on 8 May 1959 when 30 students joined the first “experimental unit” in Bartley Secondary School, led by Mr Victor Seah, a Chief Inspector from the Training Office of the VSC. Against a backdrop of communal disquiet in a city-state with newly gained internal self-government in 1959, the Police Cadet Corps (the NPCC as it was known then) was formed with the following aims:



First batch of teachers undergoing Officer Training in 1961

- (1) Cultivate a strong sense of civic-mindedness amongst the youth;
- (2) Provide a platform to forge a closer collaboration with the youth and to allow them to learn more about the work of the police force;
- (3) Promote loyalty and service to the nation; and
- (4) Provide incentives for educated youth to join the Force.

On 2 June 1961, the Police Cadet Corps was inaugurated with the Police Cadet Corps Ordinance, with 100 cadets. The year 1964 saw the first intake of girls, who made up nearly half the corps. In 1969, the army, sea, air and police cadet movements came under a common structure, which was subsequently given the new name of National Cadet Corps (NCC). In 1971, the NCC (Police) was separated from the NCC and was renamed the National Police Cadet Corps (NPCC). The 1970s saw the rapid growth of the Corps, and the pioneer batch of Cadet Inspectors (CIs) were recruited in 1970. The passion and commitment of the Teacher Officers and adult volunteers like the CIs and Honorary Officers (HOs) are the core source of the NPCC’s strength in training and nurturing the youth.

With volunteerism at the heart of the NPCC, since 1982, NPCC Open Units have been set up in universities and polytechnics to encourage post-secondary youth to contribute towards various social causes through the NPCC platforms. These units have collaborated with the SPF and university clubs such as the Criminal Justice Club to create programmes for secondary school cadets. In April 2019, a parade was held at the Home Team Academy to mark the 60th anniversary of the NPCC.

Today, the NPCC continues to play a significant role in a whole-of-community approach in tackling challenges such as terrorism and cyber-threats. The NPCC has included SGSecure training in the enhanced Home Front Security Programme, allowing cadets to better understand Singapore’s security threats, and equipping them with emergency response skills. With the increasing need for digital defence as a new, sixth pillar of Total Defence, NPCC has also collaborated with the SPF CyberCrime Command to pilot the CyberCrime Prevention Programme in schools.



**Top:** Viewing of the NPCC Standard CSI Package by Acting Minister for Education (Schools) Ng Chee Meng in April 2016.

**Middle:** The NPCC Annual Parade 2019, marking the 60th anniversary of the NPCC, was graced by the guest-of-honour, Second Minister for Education Indranee Rajah.

**Bottom:** NPCC Cadets visiting residents as part of their Police Youth Ambassador Programme.

Pictures: National Police Cadet Corps



## WOMEN IN POLICING

### No Glass Ceiling

During British colonial times, when mindsets about gender roles were quite different from those of today, it would have been inconceivable even to imagine a woman as a police officer, let alone a commander. Probably the first official suggestion for women to serve full-time in Singapore's police force came in 1941 from Ms S E Nicoll-Jones, a British Police Inspector posted from Burma, in her report on the prostitution situation in Singapore. From her extensive ground interviews conducted, she was convinced that female police officers would be better at managing female criminals and victims of crime.

World War II interrupted any fuller consideration of Nicoll-Jones' recommendation. When the idea of having women in policing full-time surfaced again in 1945, it was dismissed as a joke at first. However, poor living conditions in post-war Singapore led to more destitution and crimes such as prostitution and those involving juveniles. Female and juvenile offenders were not screened by male officers then. It was a common practice for Police Constables to escort these offenders to the station to be screened by the constables' wives, who were paid \$1 per search. This unsurprisingly had many flaws, as suspects could easily discard evidence on the way back to the station. Moreover, the wives of these constables were also unqualified to testify in court.

The urgency to recruit female police officers to assist in the screening of suspects only increased with the declaration of the Malayan Emergency in 1948, with communist guerrillas and subversive elements coming in all guises from the Malayan jungles. In March 1949, 10 female police officers were accepted for the first time — on an experimental basis. To further enhance their effectiveness, the initial two months of training were increased to three months in 1949 and six months by the 1960s, on par with the training for male officers.

By August 1949, another 10 female police officers were recruited. The female officers who joined in 1949 donned calf-length skirts of thick khaki drill, heavy grey shirts, navy blue berets and laced-up shoes. These pioneer policewomen initially worked normal office hours and their roles included guarding women held in custody, carrying out anti-vice routines and handling telephone and radio communication duties.

In 1949, as the newspapers reported on the new experimental women's unit in the SPF, debates raged behind closed doors and in public about the suitability of women for police work.

Mary Voon (later better known by her married surname Quintal) was one of the first 10 female police officers. Within five months, she was promoted to



Mary Voon during her four-month visit to England, 1950.



Policewomen standing at attention in the 1950s. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

Sub-Inspector in recognition of her potential for higher responsibilities, demonstrated through her capabilities for policing work. To further develop her potential, she went to England as part of a police scholarship for a four-month training attachment in 1950, where she was greeted by photographers and journalists on arrival in London. Her stint was widely publicised in the media, with admiring comments on her well-spoken English. In 1953, she was promoted to Inspector; and in 1961, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP). ASP Quintal continued to be the face of female police officers in Singapore until her retirement in 1974.

In 1964, 15 female officers were deployed to the Radio Control Room at Pearl's Hill for the first time. At the nerve centre of police operations, these officers answered '999' calls, produced reports, and dispatched patrol cars via radio to respond to crimes. Female officers proved so effective on the job that the management of the entire Radio Control Room, save for the Duty Officer and Assistant Duty Officer, was eventually handed over to them in 1972. Those who answered '999' calls came to be known as "Triple Niner Girls". Subsequently, female officers made their way into other postings such as crime prevention officers, lock-up women Police Constables, traffic control officers, as well as in specialised roles where a female presence was required, such as when handling female suspects in anti-vice operations.

Another area where female officers played an active role was in the Traffic Police (TP). They were originally deployed as traffic wardens, and later as enforcers. Although the scope



The first all-female mobile squad, 1971.  
Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

of work was limited, it was one of the few early avenues for female officers to be seen in public carrying out police duties. In 1971, female TP officers broke into another all-male domain, when the women's mobile squad was formed despite initial concerns that it was "unfeminine" for women to ride motorbikes.

Since the early 1970s, recruitment levels had been falling and the Force started to face a manpower shortage. To address this situation, recruitment for female officers was stepped up to comprise around 12 per cent of the Force. They were also gradually given more active roles. Female officers rose to the occasion and proved themselves more than capable. Promotion opportunities increased, as the Force embarked on a programme to open up more middle-hierarchy appointments to female officers in 1977. That year saw multiple promotions of female officers to the rank of Inspector and the first female Duty Officer in the Radio Division. In 1979, the designation of OC Women Police ceased to exist, as efforts were made to unify the career development schemes for male and female officers alike.

Since then, female officers have slowly but surely made bigger inroads, displaying strong leadership qualities as they moved into positions previously helmed only by men. As the Force modernised, by the 1980s, female officers were also deployed in the divisions as investigators and crime prevention officers, as bodyguards to VIPs, as police dog handlers and on plainclothes duties in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). In October 1980, 44 female officers were trained for the first time on riot and crowd control tactics and a Women's Task Force was thereafter established.

Female officers also began taking on more field and investigative roles. In 1982, Assistant Superintendent of Police Mandy Goh became the first head of the Anti-Vice Enforcement Unit. She was then the highest-ranking female officer in the Force and had worked her way up from Police Constable.







Policewomen from the Women's Task Force undergoing anti-mob training, 1980. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings





In 1984, the recruitment of female graduates as direct-entry Inspectors began, paving the way for women to enter the senior ranks of the Force. Since then, female officers have continued to achieve many firsts, and many from the core group of leaders who entered in the 1980s and early 1990s continue to serve with distinction today. From leading Land Divisions and HQ departments, to patrol and investigative duties, female officers have proven their capabilities wherever they are deployed. In 2007, the SPF formed its first Special Women's Task Team of 23 officers, trained in specialised public order skills. One of their roles is to deal with women, children and the elderly in large-scale events, should the crowd turn violent, among other situations.

**Left:** Sergeant Fiona (not her real name), photographed in 2019, was part of the first batch of female officers to join the Police Coast Guard's elite Special Task Squadron.

**Right:** Emergency Response Team Leader ASP Fionie Chan patrolling with her team along Merlion Park in 2017.

Pictures: Singapore Press Holdings

At an event to celebrate 70 years of women in policing in March 2019, Mrs Josephine Teo, Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Home Affairs, shared how she found the courage to enter public life because of her mother, Madam Leow Chee Chu, who served for more than 20 years in the SPF in the radio, traffic and criminal investigation departments.

***"It was my mother's first and only career... Her feisty character and resilience must have rubbed off on me."***

Mrs Josephine Teo,  
Minister for Manpower and Second  
Minister for Home Affairs, March 2019



DCP Florence Chua reciting the police pledge with fellow female officers at the '70 Years of Women in Policing' celebration in 2019.

As of 31 December 2019, there are close to 1,800 female officers serving in the SPF. On 1 June 2018, the highest achievement of women in policing in Singapore was reached when the SPF welcomed its first female Deputy Commissioner of Police (Investigation & Intelligence) and Director of CID, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Florence Chua. "There's really no glass ceiling," she said in a media interview. "Now you see female officers in almost every job and post, even leading our Emergency Response Teams to respond to terrorist incidents."

### SERVING IN THE SPF INTO THE THIRD CENTURY

The men and women of the SPF have dedicated a lot and contributed much to keeping Singapore safe and secure over the last 200 years. From individual officers, the leadership has been strong and far-sighted over the decades, and the sense of duty has been exemplary. As an organisation, the SPF has consistently invested much into enhancing the operational capabilities and resources of its officers.

The ongoing work of the SPF, in collaboration with all its partners in the community and with the general public, continues to be guided by its core values and sense of commitment to the organisation and service to the nation. By all accounts, it is safe to say that Singapore can look forward to an evolving generation of law enforcers to deal with the ever-changing security climate and security threats, as the SPF's work moves into its third century.



## SECTION 3

### RESPONSE & RESILIENCE

# ADAPTING TO NEW CHALLENGES

Over the last 200 years, as Singapore's security threats changed, the Singapore Police Force has responded in agile, innovative ways, always honing its capabilities, ready to tackle any challenges of the future, so as to keep this nation safe and secure.



## THE POLICE STORY OVER 200 YEARS

**T**he context of the SPF's work in terms of fighting crime, and ensuring public order, public security and road safety, has been transformed over the last 200 years. Policing demands have evolved greatly, intertwining closely with the growth of Singapore. In response, the adaptations in police operations to deal with these changes have been swift, decisive and effective.

The story of Singapore's police force since 1820 is one of development in a few vital areas, supported by three key enablers of policing.

First, the basis of all effective policing is that everyone accepts, and abides by, the rule of law. The SPF has consistently demonstrated to the people of Singapore its resolve to uphold the rule of law to deliver justice so that everyone is treated fairly and equally before the law.

Second, there is a high level of public trust in the SPF, which it has earned over many years of exemplary performance. What this trust translates into is a culture of respect for the law and its enforcers.

Third, the work of the SPF is backed by active community support. The result from the SPF's work has enabled Singapore to be ranked as one of the safest cities in the world. The high level of public trust is the basis for strong community partnership with the SPF in all areas of society.

## FIGHTING CRIME

The colonial era was marked by rampant crimes and the police force then was severely under-resourced in many areas. Through the decades since then, the SPF has upgraded its capabilities and roles in society to keep crime in check through its proactive, innovative, collaborative and community-centric approach to crime-fighting.

To cite one example that was a major worry in the colonial era: secret societies (including all the more modern forms of gang activity) have been kept under tight control by the SPF through the two-pronged approach of enforcement and prevention.

On enforcement, the SPF conducts regular checks to deter and detect gang activities or members and swift action will be taken to arrest suspected secret society or gang members found congregating.

As for prevention, the SPF works with several partners to tackle the issue of impressionable youth getting involved in street gangs. The SPF reaches out to school staff, parents and public servants in the social sector to educate them in detecting early signs of youth participation in gang-related activities. The SPF also maintains a strong emphasis on rehabilitation and there are various initiatives such as the Streetwise Programme for wayward youth to seek counselling and voluntary curfew to withdraw from gang-related activities.



Secret society initiation rites.

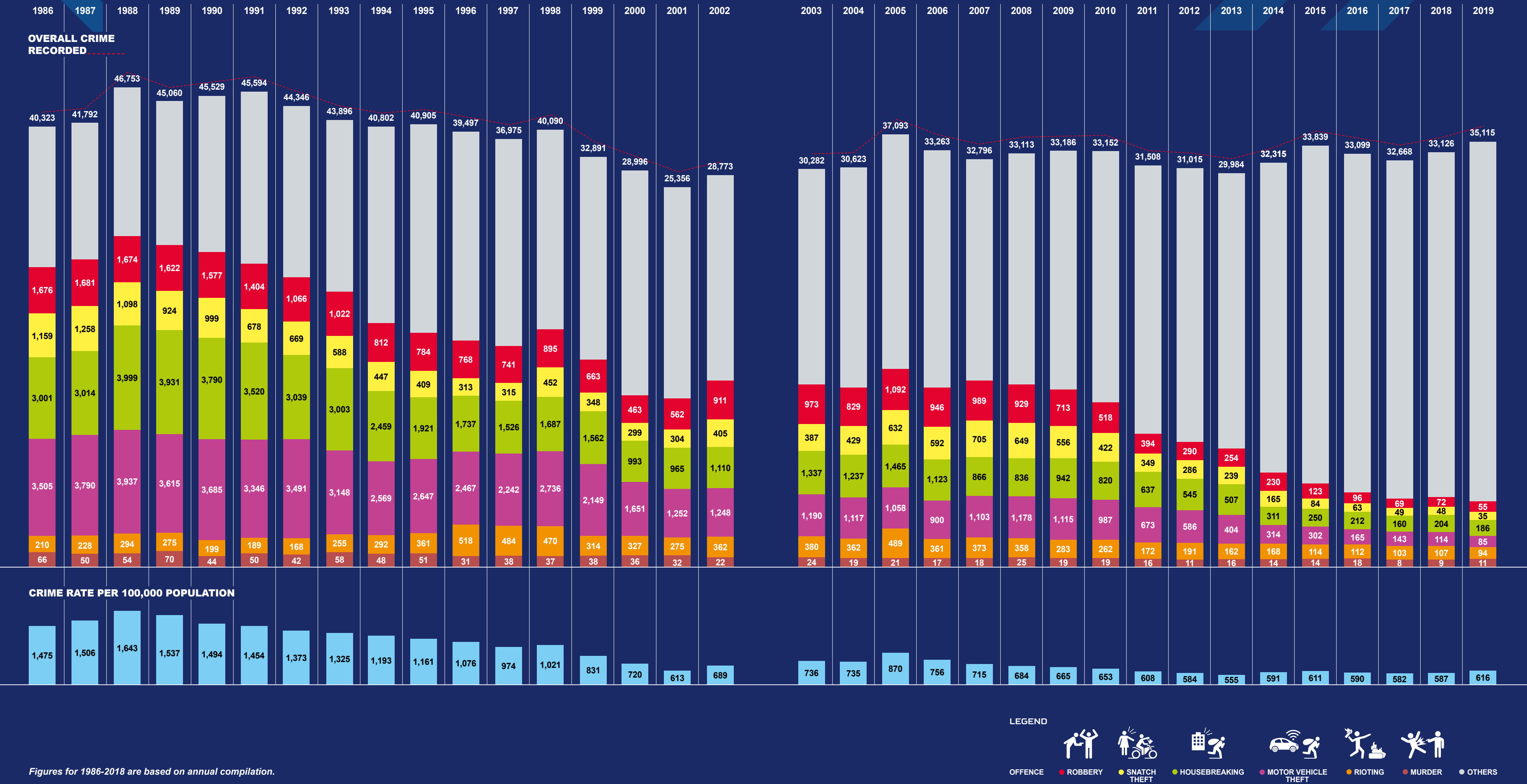
As the forms of crime changed over time, the SPF also adapted in response. In the 21st century, the integration of digital technologies into everyday life has probably been the most powerful force of change. Online communication has become so easily accessible and efficient that criminals are exploiting it to their advantage. For example, gambling has become more remote by going digital, without needing gamblers to gather in person, and extended in scope far beyond the simple Chinatown gambling dens of 19th century Singapore. Gambling in the form of sports betting has also become more rampant in recent years. Crackdowns are now linked to major events like the World Cup, with hundreds of millions of dollars involved, through police operations across more than 10 countries for one tournament.

Another major facet of cybercrime is white-collar crime, which, in the 19th century, would have happened on a much smaller and less sophisticated scale — perhaps a trader attempting to cheat another merchant. As Singapore's economy developed in the 20th century, white-collar crime also became more extensive and sophisticated. In the 21st century, the typical criminal has morphed from being someone like a tattooed gangster to include an innocent-looking office worker capable of taking away a lot more, even hundreds of millions of dollars at a time.

Even though crimes have evolved since independence, it remains notable that the SPF's concerted efforts to modernise and partner the community in crime prevention have brought about a decline in crime rates from the 1980s. From 1,475 cases per 100,000 population in 1986, the crime rate has since fallen sharply over the years to 616 per 100,000 population in 2019. The year, 2013, recorded a historic low to date, with 555 cases per 100,000 population.



# OVERALL CRIME RATE & CASES REPORTED FOR 6 MAJOR OFFENCES 1986 — 2019



Figures for 1986-2018 are based on annual compilation.



THE COMMERCIAL  
AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT:  
BUSTING WHITE-COLLAR CRIME

Set up to fight white-collar crime in 1984, the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) was restructured and transferred from the Ministry of Finance to the SPF in 2000. This was done in anticipation of increasingly sophisticated criminals targeting Singapore's financial system. Over the years, the CAD has dealt with a wide range of commercial crimes, from corporate fraud to counterfeit credit cards, insurance fraud and counterfeit currency, among others. Today, the CAD is the principal white-collar crime investigation authority, responsible for safeguarding Singapore's integrity as a world-class financial and commercial centre.

To tackle the rise in white-collar crime, the CAD underwent a comprehensive reorganisation in 2013 and beefed up resources to better position the department to combat new threats such as those related to casinos, drug trafficking and terrorism. The reorganisation also included the deployment of dedicated resources for the deepening of investigation expertise in specialised areas of financial crime, the expansion of the CAD's role in anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, as well as the early detection of investment fraud targeting large numbers of victims.

Besides enforcement work, the Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office (STRO) of the CAD processes financial intelligence reports. The STRO, which is the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of Singapore, and the central agency in Singapore that receives reports on suspicious transactions, analyses the information and disseminates financial intelligence to law enforcement agencies and foreign FIUs in order to combat money laundering and terrorism financing in Singapore and abroad.

In 2017, the CAD launched the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Industry Partnership (ACIP) with the Monetary Authority of Singapore, bringing together key industry players and public sector representatives to identify, assess and mitigate money laundering and terrorism financing risks. The CAD has achieved a number of tangible outcomes under the



Mr David Chew, Director CAD, speaking at the ACIP Industry Dialogue on 14 May 2018.



**Cyber-enabled scams are a global phenomenon. Many scammers are taking advantage of the anonymity of the internet and social media to target unsuspecting victims. The Police will continue our enforcement efforts to pursue the scammers and the money.**

**While the Police will continue to work to educate the public on the crime prevention measures they can take, the public has a part to play to use this information to protect themselves, their families and friends from falling victim to scams.**

Mr David Chew,  
Director of Commercial Affairs Department, 2019

ACIP framework. They include two best practice papers on countering "Trade Based Money Laundering" and the "Misuse of Legal Persons in Singapore". In addition to financial institutions, the CAD has made a conscious effort to involve professional intermediaries like lawyers, accountants and corporate service providers (CSPs) in the ACIP working groups, culminating in the two best practice papers. These touch points play a key role in detecting and reporting suspicious activities to the STRO.

In recent years, scams remain a major concern due to evolving modus operandi of scammers who take advantage of the anonymity of the internet and social media to perpetrate scams.

To keep a watchful eye on the scam situation, the CAD first set up the Transnational Commercial Crime Taskforce (TCTF) in 2017 to pool police resources to disrupt foreign criminal syndicates that target unsuspecting victims in Singapore. Since its set-up, the TCTF has worked with the Royal Malaysia Police and the Hong Kong Police in

six joint operations on internet love scams reported in the three jurisdictions, and solved at least 270 cases involving \$27.6 million.

In response to the sharp rise in the number of e-commerce scams, the CAD formed the E-Commerce Fraud Enforcement and Coordination Team (E-FECT) on 1 November 2018. E-FECT targets serial e-commerce scammers by identifying, arresting and charging them.

To better fight scams, the CAD set up the Anti-Scam Centre (ASC) on 18 June 2019. The ASC focuses on disrupting scammers' operations and mitigating victims' monetary losses through close collaboration with business operators such as financial institutions, telecommunication companies and digital platform owners.

In November 2019, the ASC worked with the Association of Banks in Singapore to shorten the time for the banks to provide PayNow transactions details to the Police, from weeks to just a few days. This increases the chances of recovery of monetary loss for the victims.



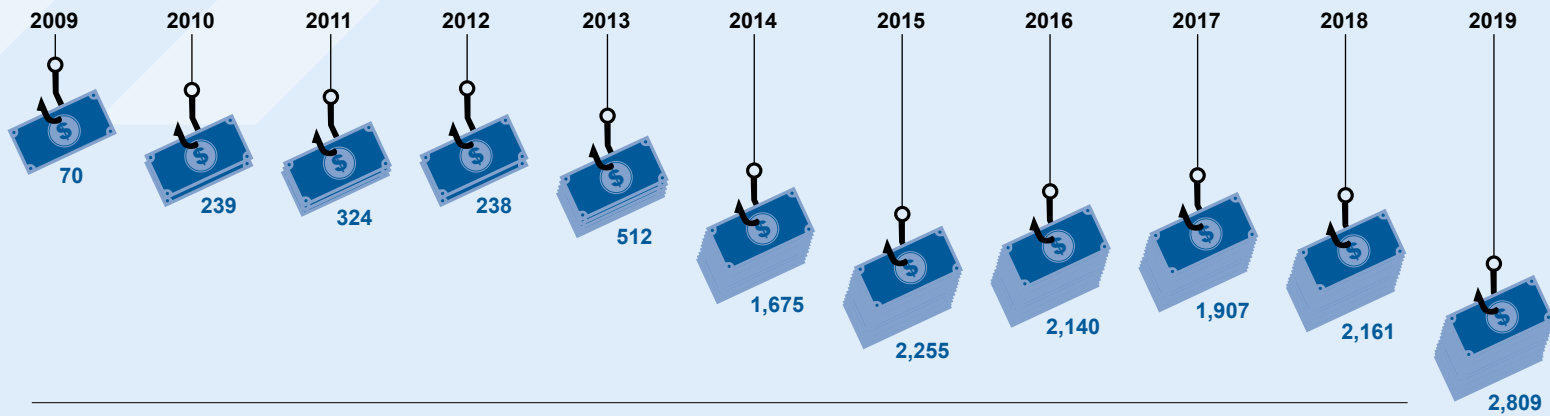
The staff of the Anti-Scam Centre in the Police Cantonment Complex in 2019.



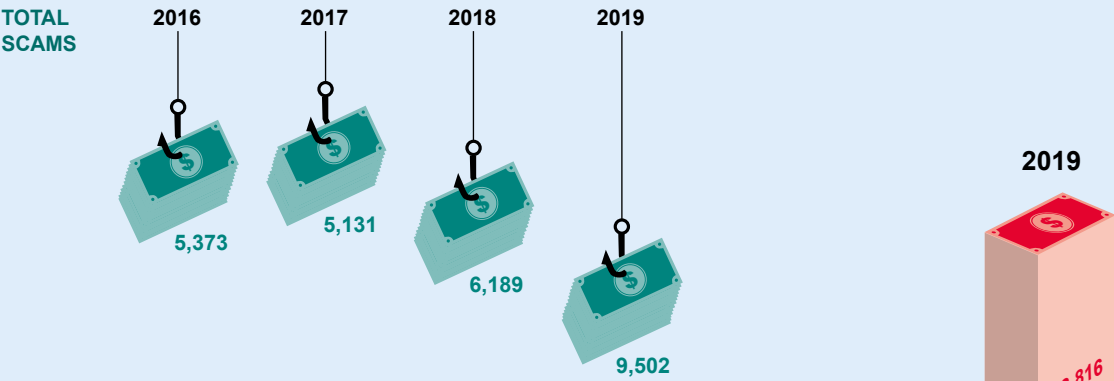
E-COMMERCE SCAM STATISTICS FROM 2009 – 2019

(Only e-commerce scams were tracked from the year, 2009)

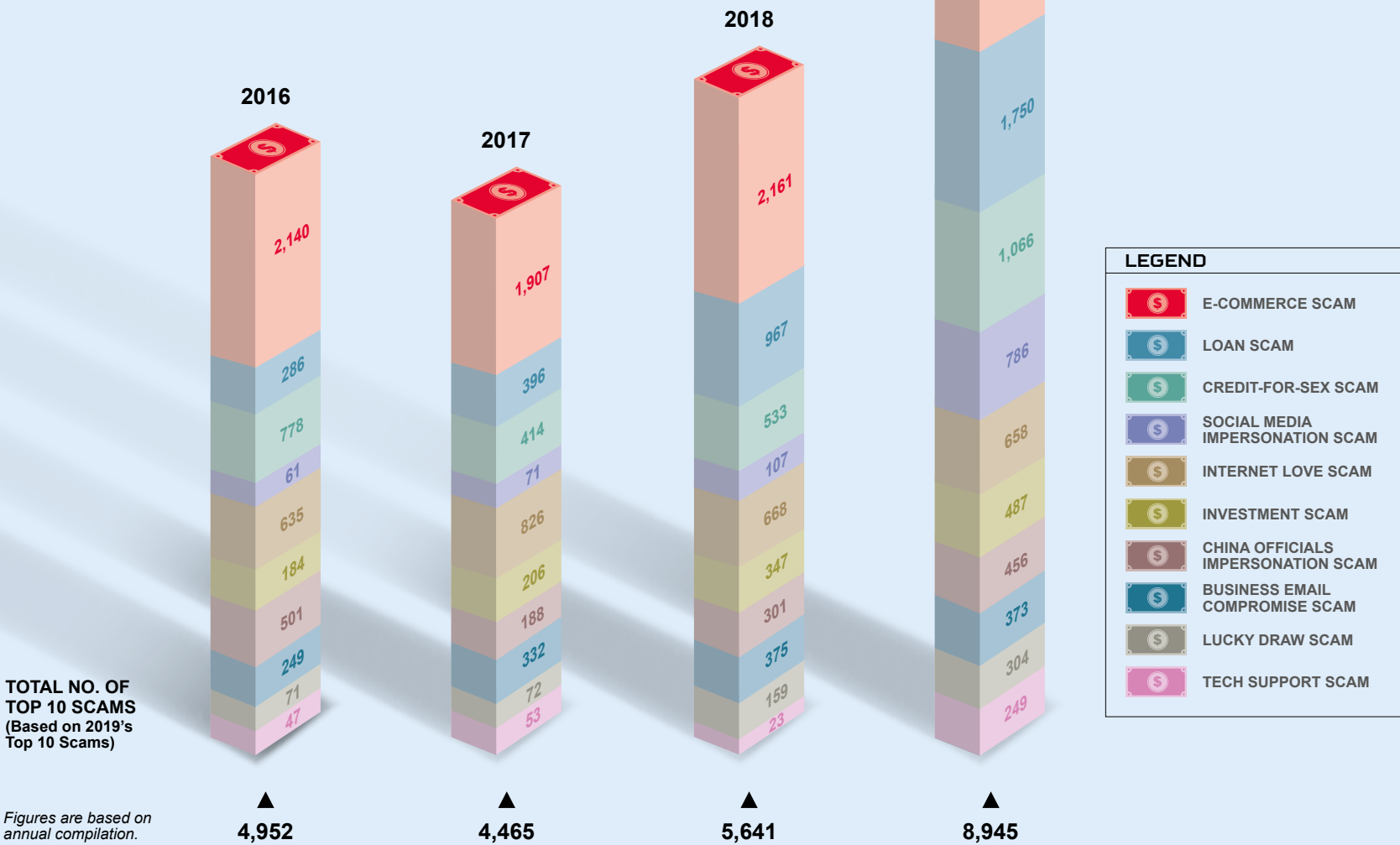
E-COMMERCE SCAMS



TOTAL NO. OF SCAMS FOR 2016 – 2019



TOP 10 SCAMS FOR 2016 – 2019



This picture of low crime rates has continued to brighten further in more recent times. This is the backdrop to the use of the advertising slogan “Low crime doesn’t mean no crime”, which was used by the SPF for many years in the 1990s, and is still regularly cited in the mainstream and social media. The slogan is a reminder of Singapore’s unique situation, which it has become known for internationally.

COMMUNITY POLICING  
A Game-changer in Crime-fighting

A police force cannot work well alone. It is most effective when it has the support of the community to help prevent, deter and detect crime.

However, prior to the 1980s, interactions between the SPF and the community were minimal, as the policing strategy then was largely reactive in nature. While this traditional model of policing was considerably effective in eliminating common crimes, changes including urbanisation and economic transformation in the 1970s and 1980s led to a rise in crime.

To enable the police force to better fight crime, community-based policing strategy was introduced via the Neighbourhood Police Post (NPP) system in 1983. Adapted from Japan’s Koban system, the NPP system focused on proactive policing tactics such as establishing and leveraging community support in the areas of crime prevention and detection. The NPP system has brought the SPF closer to the community. From a feared enforcer to a trusted partner, the police force certainly took a big step forward to build rapport and earn the public’s trust through such a policing strategy.

Community policing soon cemented its position as a game-changer in the SPF’s policing strategy. Following a review of the NPP system, the Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC) system was introduced in 1997 as a one-stop policing centre, offering a wider range of

Over 99% of people are law-abiding. If this 99% are united against the 1% or fewer of potential criminals, we can achieve together what each of us alone cannot. To be united, we must build trust and consensus, both between the authority and citizens, and among citizens.

Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Finance, at the Administrative Service Promotion Ceremony, 2018





Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Home Affairs and Trade and Industry S Iswaran (third from the left), launching COPS at Block 201D, Tampines Avenue 2, in May 2012. Looking on were (from the left) Commissioner of Police Ng Joo Hee, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Education Heng Swee Keat, and other Tampines GRC Members of Parliament Irene Ng and Baey Yam Keng. As part of COPS, police officers under the Community Policing Unit traded their uniforms for polo t-shirts, bermudas and mountain bikes in a bid to be more approachable and build rapport with residents.

police services as compared to the earlier model. Community collaborations also expanded as the NPCs could work closer with community partners in addressing local safety and security concerns.

The first NPC at Queenstown, with 150 officers, was opened in 1997. At the NPC's opening, Home Affairs Minister Wong Kan Seng said: "The public can expect faster response, more immediate investigation, better counter service, more frequent patrols and a sharper community focus from such NPCs."

The SPF has continued to grow its community 'force' further. In a bid to enhance its community policing strategy and strengthen partnerships with the community, the Community Policing System (COPS) was launched in 2012.

Under COPS, the NPCs were restructured. The Community Policing Unit (CPU) and Crime Strike Force (CSF) were established within the NPCs. The CPU works closely with the community to encourage joint ownership and shared responsibility in fighting crime and countering terrorism. On the other hand, the CSF tackles localised crimes and focuses on crime-control capabilities.

As part of COPS, the SPF also leverages technology as a force multiplier to support police work. One notable technological enhancement to aid in the deterrence, detection and analysis of crime is the installation of Police Cameras (PolCams), starting from 2012, at public areas such as HDB residential blocks and multi-storey carparks.



A police camera in operation.

Under the PolCam 2.0 programme from 2016, the SPF expanded the installation of cameras to public areas in town centres, neighbourhood centres, hawker centres and linked walkways leading to transportation nodes such as MRT stations and bus interchanges. Selected cameras are now equipped with video analytics capabilities, and are designed to detect anomalous events such as fights, and the sudden congregation or dispersal of crowds. The system will automatically alert the Police Operations Command Centre, and police resources can then be dispatched much earlier if necessary. The system can also identify suspects and allow officers to quickly search for images to facilitate their investigations.

To date, there are nearly 80,000 fully operational police cameras installed. Such large-scale implementation of police cameras in public areas is possible only because of the high level of public trust in the SPF. Since 2012, the PolCam network has greatly aided investigations, with more than 6,700 pieces of footage processed, leading to the solving of more than 3,700 cases, including unlicensed moneylending harassment incidents.

To better serve the community, some NPPs have been redesigned and enhanced with technology to offer automated services, with touch-screen self-help kiosks. Members of the





Community Policing Unit officers patrolling the Toh Guan neighbourhood on bicycles in 2015. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings





Automated services, such as the Found Property Drop Box, were made available at the Woodlands Division, which opened in 2019, to better serve members of the public.

public can access police services round-the-clock to report crime, return lost property that has been found and apply for licences and permits, among other services. The redesigned NPP will also allow police officers to be redeployed to the ground, to better serve the community.

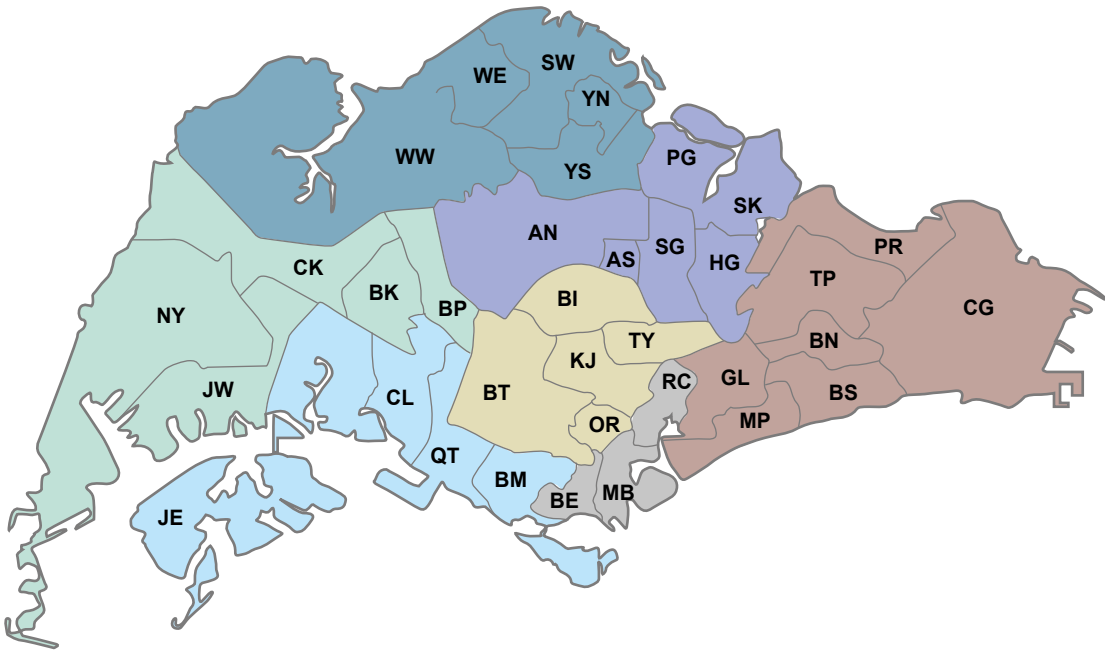
Riding the waves of technological developments, residents in HDB estates can receive the latest crime alerts via text messaging by signing up for the Community Alert Service (CAS) or reading updates in the electronic message boards situated at the lift lobbies. There is also a mobile application, Police@SG, which allows members of the public to access useful information on the go. They can read about the latest crime news and police appeals for information or missing persons, or submit information and respond to police appeals via the info submission portal “I-witness”.

Community policing has also been enhanced by advancements in the operationalisation of the SPF’s regional bases across the country. In March 2019, Woodlands Division, the SPF’s seventh Land Division, became operational. With this new division, the SPF will be able to better serve the residents living in the northern parts of Singapore through a network of five NPCs and four NPPs.

Woodlands Division, and the opening of this new building, is another important milestone in the SPF’s strategy. I would like to congratulate the men and women of this Division on this special occasion. But really, more than any physical infrastructure, it is the spirit of professionalism of our SPF officers that is critical.

Mr K Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, at the opening of Woodlands Division in 2019

## LAND DIVISIONS



- ANG MO KIO DIVISION**
  - AN Ang Mo Kio North NPC
  - AS Ang Mo Kio South NPC
  - SG Serangoon NPC
  - SK Sengkang NPC
  - HG Hougang NPC
  - PG Punggol NPC
- BEDOK DIVISION**
  - PR Pasir Ris NPC
  - TP Tampines NPC
  - BN Bedok North NPC
  - BS Bedok South NPC
  - GL Geylang NPC
  - MP Marine Parade NPC
  - CG Changi NPC
- CENTRAL DIVISION**
  - RC Rochor NPC
  - MB Marina Bay NPC
  - BE Bukit Merah East NPC
- CLEMENTI DIVISION**
  - JE Jurong East NPC
  - CL Clementi NPC
  - QT Queenstown NPC
  - BM Bukit Merah West NPC
- JURONG DIVISION**
  - NY Nanyang NPC
  - JW Jurong West NPC
  - CK Choa Chu Kang NPC
  - BK Bukit Batok NPC
  - BP Bukit Panjang NPC
- TANGLIN DIVISION**
  - BI Bishan NPC
  - BT Bukit Timah NPC
  - OR Orchard NPC
  - KJ Kampong Java NPC
  - TY Toa Payoh NPC
- WOODLANDS DIVISION**
  - WW Woodlands West NPC
  - WE Woodlands East NPC
  - SW Sembawang NPC
  - YS Yishun South NPC
  - YN Yishun North NPC

The 10-storey divisional headquarters is the first Land Division to introduce redesigned workflow processes and tech-enabled systems to enhance the provision of policing services to the public. These changes allow police officers to deliver more efficient services to members of the public. The new operational advantages include more efficient management of information and ground resources, so that the SPF can respond faster and more effectively to the needs of residents.

The SPF has come a long way in community policing since the inception of the NPP system in 1983. While maintaining and strengthening the strong foundation of trust and partnership built over the years, the SPF will continue to build collaborative relationships with the community and enable members of the public to take ownership of their own safety and security in the community.

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

#### Crime-fighting Collaborations

The high level of community partnership with the SPF is the fruit of many decades of effort since the 1970s, when the SPF started working in earnest to promote community participation in crime prevention.

First, the challenge was to shift the old mindset of “every man for himself” towards looking out for the rest of one’s neighbourhood. As Mr Chua Sian Chin, Minister for Home Affairs, said in a speech in 1973, at an event at Beach Road Police Station: “If you want your neighbour to come



to your assistance in times of need, you must in turn be prepared to come to his aid when he needs it.”

This was the backdrop against which the SPF introduced the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme (NWS) in 1981 to encourage mutual care and help among neighbours by having residents keep an eye on each other's premises, discuss initiatives to mitigate crime concerns and share crime prevention messages amongst a tight-knit community.

Within this scheme, groups of households known as Neighbourhood Watch Groups (NWGs) were formed to look out for one another within their neighbourhood. NWG members will call for police assistance if they detect any crime in progress or when they spot suspicious activities or persons. This is critical in early detection and intervention, before criminals can cause any injury to persons or damage to properties.

Over time, both the NPP system and the Residents' Committees (RCs) have grown in scope and sophistication. Thus, the NWS was reviewed in 1996 to leverage the strengths of the existing grassroots network to enhance its effectiveness. On 27 April 1997, a revised Neighbourhood Watch Zone (NWZ) scheme was launched, in which NWGs were reorganised into NWZs, formed under the RCs or Neighbourhood Committees (NCs) of the respective zones. Liaison officers were appointed to work closely with NPC officers to coordinate and implement crime prevention activities. The scheme has more than 800 zones and 4,000 volunteers to date.

At the national level, other major initiatives were implemented. In 1981, the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) was set up as a non-profit organisation committed to promoting public awareness of, and concern about, crime, and to propagate the concept of self-help in crime prevention. The Council comprises representatives from the commercial and industrial

The National Crime Prevention Council works closely with the SPF to roll out crime prevention campaigns, including those in public spaces, such as the NCPC Year-End Crime Prevention Roadshow at ION Orchard in November 2019 (left), and the Anti-Scam Campaign in MRT cabins in November 2015 (right).

sectors, as well as from the public sector and the SPF. It acts to examine, develop and recommend crime prevention measures suitable to the public, and to coordinate efforts of organisations in crime prevention.

Working closely with the SPF, the Council holds the annual festive season crime prevention campaigns, as well as regular exhibitions and talks on crime prevention. With the SPF's support, the Council also trains volunteers to act as “Crime Prevention Ambassadors” to engage the public at crime prevention roadshows and exhibitions, as well as with children at school talks.

The partnership between the SPF and the NCPC also culminated in the long-running youth engagement programme, Delta League. Started in 2011, the biannual programme engages youth through football during the June and December school holidays to keep them meaningfully occupied. Besides playing football, the youth are involved in activities designed to enhance their crime prevention awareness and inculcate a sense of social responsibility, teamwork and discipline.

Now in its 18th edition, the Delta League is a national competition that attracts almost 1,000 players in each edition. In the December 2019 edition, the youth were also involved in the production of videos to educate others on scams and the dangers of gangs. The winning entries were screened during the Grand Finals and were also posted on the Delta League's Facebook page: <https://facebook.com/DeltaLeagueSG>.



Top and bottom: Anti-scam campaigns rolled out by the NCPC in 2017.







The Delta League engages youth through football during school holidays, as pictured in 2017.



The NCPC also provides financial support for the popular monthly TV programme, *Crimewatch*. The programme re-enacted action-filled cases and showed how the SPF solved the cases and delivered justice. The programme is also used as a platform to disseminate crime prevention tips and the latest crime trends. *Crimewatch*'s debut episode in November 1986 attracted 1.3 million viewers, significantly higher than the average viewership of about 850,000 for prime-time favourite shows then. Since then, *Crimewatch* has been regularly ranked among the top 10 info-education dramas across all the four free-to-air vernacular channels — Channel 5, Channel 8, Suria and Vasantham.

To engage the business sector, the SPF launched the Security Watch Group (SWG) scheme in November 2003. Buildings are grouped into SWG clusters, and within each cluster, buildings undergo the three-step process of threat

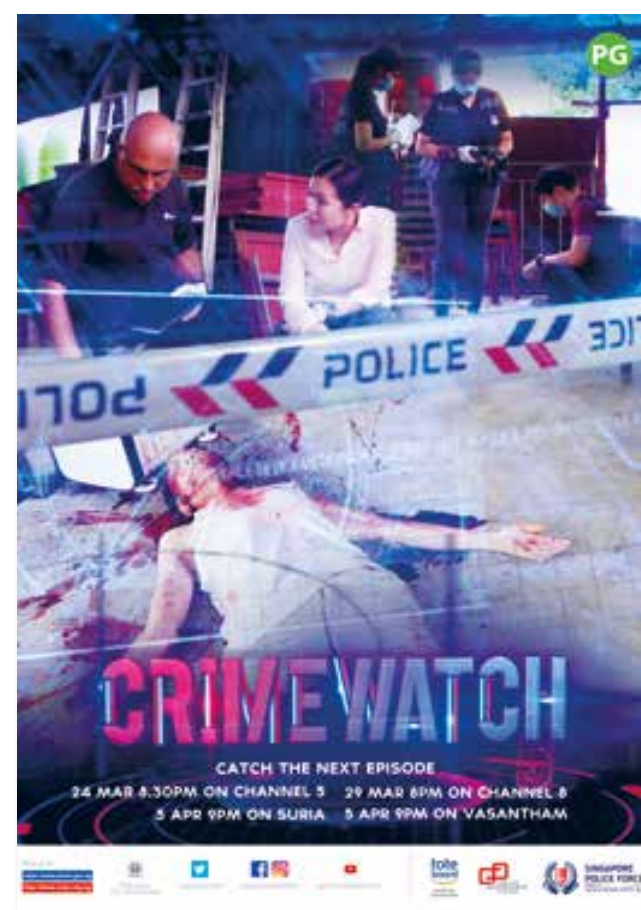
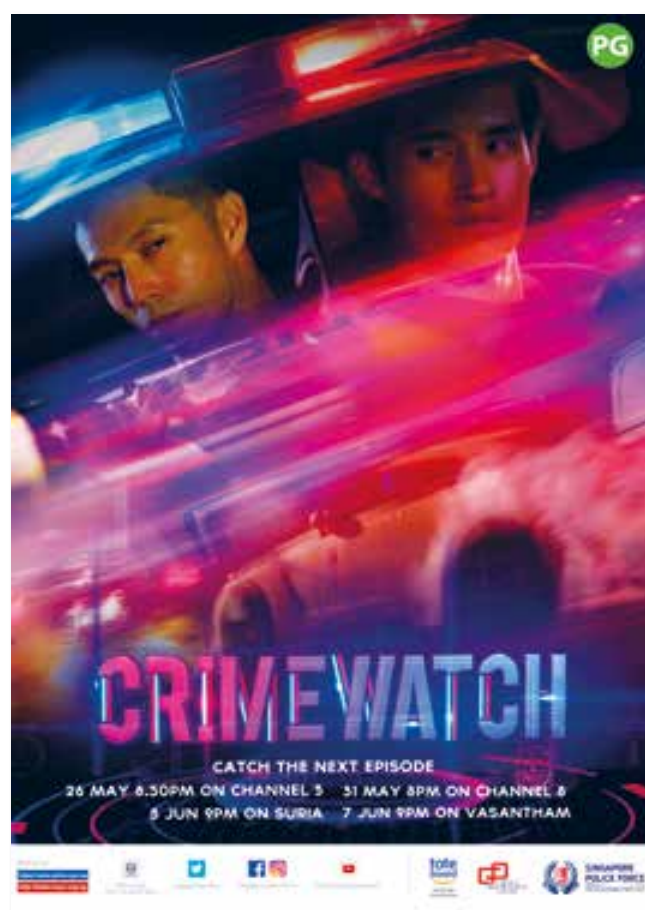
***Crimewatch* has been effective in raising the awareness that many crimes can be prevented if we do our part and stay vigilant. The public has become more trusting of our Police's efficiency and capabilities in law enforcement.**

Mr Gerald Singham,  
Chairman of National Crime Prevention Council, 2020

assessment, the auditing of systems and the streamlining of operations through the pooling of resources such as security cameras and personnel. In November 2006, the SWG Scheme underwent an upgrading exercise to incorporate both safety and security aspects of the SPF and the SCDF, and was officially introduced as the Safety and Security Watch Group (SSWG) Scheme. Through this conversion, the business community became better equipped with measures to fight crime and deal with terror threats more effectively.

For businesses at the industry level, the SPF worked with key associations representing selected industry sectors, to form Industry Safety and Security Watch Groups (iSSWGs) to develop standards, programmes and initiatives to fight crime and terrorism. The six industry sectors, each with a partner association, are: chemicals (Singapore Chemical Industry Council), financial (Monetary Authority of Singapore), hotels (Singapore Hotel Association), retail (Orchard Road Business Association), manufacturing (Singapore Manufacturing Federation) and public entertainment (Singapore Nightlife Business Association, Singapore River One).

Ordinary citizens have also come on board in community partnership with the SPF. Since 1999, volunteers of the SPF's Citizens on Patrol (COP) programme have helped make residential neighbourhoods even safer. Sporting dark blue vests, COP volunteers support the SPF's mission on the ground, as its additional "eyes and ears". COP members are attached to an NPC



Posters for the 2019 season of the popular TV programme, *Crimewatch*.



Senior Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Health Amrin Amin officiated the launch of the Public Entertainment iSSWG in October 2019, during the second year of the Smart Clubbing campaign.





CPU officers  
interacting with a  
family at Punggol  
Waterway in 2019.



and are trained in crime prevention and community emergency preparedness, as part of the SGSecure movement. After their training, they are deployed to conduct patrols and disseminate crime prevention advice to residents. As of December 2019, there are around 5,000 COP members.

Another notable large-scale community partnership initiative is the Vehicles on Watch (VOW) programme. Started in 2015, the SPF partners car owners with in-vehicle video recording cameras to act as additional 'eyes' in the community. Footage from participating VOW members is available to be shared with the SPF to assist in investigations.

Further expanding the SPF community partnership collaboration, the Riders-On-Watch (ROW) volunteer scheme was launched by the Public Transport Security Command (TransCom) to involve commuters to play an active role in keeping Singapore's public transport network safe and secure. ROW volunteers are the first to receive SMS messages on the SPF's latest crime information alerts affecting the public transport system, enabling them to keep a lookout for suspicious persons or activities as they commute on the public transport network. Since its launch in 2019, the ROW scheme has attracted more than 48,000 volunteers.

The Police Community Roadshow (PCR), which began in 2016, is one of the SPF's largest community engagement events. Held biennially in the heartlands, the PCR seeks to engage and enable members of the public to appreciate the latest police operational vehicles, gadgets and gears, as well as new developments in police operations and crime-fighting techniques. The interactions between the SPF and the public at the PCRs also go a long way towards building and maintaining the public's trust in the SPF, as well as establishing good rapport with the officers they may meet every day in their neighbourhoods.

The Police Community Roadshow 2018 was held over three consecutive weekends across Singapore as part of the SPF's continual efforts to foster stronger community relationships with the public through its interactive and engaging activities.





### THE SPF'S PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS

As community engagement gained in importance in the SPF's priorities, its public relations efforts have also become more involved and sophisticated. In earlier decades, reports in the mainstream media would have been the primary means of communicating with the public, first through newspapers, then radio and television. Most of the time, the physical presence and public behaviour of police officers served as a means to project and build a public image for the Force.

Coordinated public relations activities formally began in the 1970s. In 1973, the SPF's new Public Relations Department was set up to manage and respond to public feedback. To expand on this, one mode of eliciting greater participation from residents and members of the public was crime prevention campaigns. That year, the SPF held talks and exhibitions at community centres to disseminate crime prevention messages and to educate the public on safety dos and don'ts, such as avoiding alleys and back lanes, and unnecessary displays of wealth.

In 1974, the month-long "Keep Singapore Crime-Free" campaign was launched to raise awareness on crime trends. The first "Crime Prevention Week" was also held. At the opening of the campaign and Police Week at the Victoria Memorial Hall, Commissioner of Police Tan Teck Khim said that by engaging the public in crime prevention, the authorities hoped that the public "would become the source of a powerful force for joint action with the Police in the fight against crime".



Minister for Health and Minister for Home Affairs Chua Sian Chin speaking at the "Keep Singapore Crime-Free Campaign" and "Police Week 1974" at the Victoria Memorial Hall. The aim of this first nationwide campaign was to emphasise the vital role of the ordinary citizen in the fight against crime. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

Since then, the SPF's efforts to build its image and relations with the public have extended their outreach even further. One of the most prominent and engaging means is the role model dramatisations in television drama shows such as the popular C.L.I.F. drama series on Channel 8, which debuted in 2011, with its fifth season aired in 2019. Other initiatives include collaborations with popular social media influencers to create crime prevention videos, such as those related to scams, and featuring celebrities as ambassadors for the SPF's anti-crime messaging.

With the rise in usage of social media, the SPF's community relations now have a digital dimension that is growing on online platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. The year 2011 even saw the first 'Facebook arrest', when a netizen responded to an appeal for information on a loanshark harassment suspect in the Bukit Merah area. The SPF's Facebook page has one of largest followings among those of the government agencies' Facebook pages.



**Top:** Poster for the fifth season of the C.L.I.F. drama series, which aired in 2019. Picture: Courtesy of Mediacorp  
**Bottom:** Filming of the fifth season of the C.L.I.F. drama series in 2019.



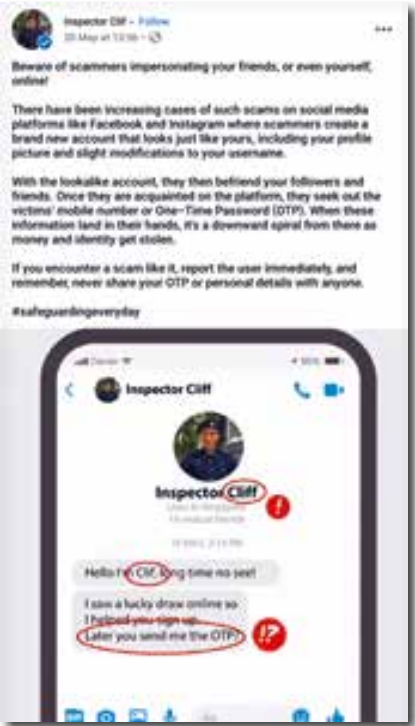
To further engage Singapore's netizens, the SPF launched Inspector Clif, an online police avatar, in 2019. The inspector's name is derived from the acronym of the SPF's core values — **C**ourage, **L**oyalty, **I**ntegrity and **F**airness — and the avatar adopts the persona of a real police officer by adopting a more conversational tone and an approachable demeanour during its engagements online.

Inspector Clif helps to augment crime prevention and deterrence efforts by making the SPF's online presence more recognisable, relatable and personable. Through personal anecdotes about the day-to-day life of a police officer, and engaging other Facebook pages to offer advice and addressing issues of concern such as property-related crimes, scams and traffic-related matters, Inspector Clif helps to reinforce the SPF's messages to the public on matters concerning the safety and security in Singapore.

Given the speed with which information can be transmitted in today's digital universe, the channels that the SPF now has to engage with the public are crucial. This is especially important at a time when trust in an information source is now even more critical in tackling threats such as deliberate fake news intended to destabilise society. The trust that the SPF has earned over 200 years is now its greatest, and most precious asset.



To further engage Singapore's netizens, the SPF launched Inspector Clif, an online police avatar, in 2019.



Inspector Clif offers crime prevention and security-related advice to the public through posts on his Facebook page. To access the page, scan the QR code.

### PRESERVING PUBLIC ORDER

The first basis for any society to flourish is to maintain social order. Not only was colonial Singapore plagued by rampant crime, but the lack of a strong and effective police force also led to new waves of challenges. After World War II, as Singapore worked to restore public order and security, political and social unrest stemmed from racial and religious divides. Later, communist activities became flashpoints in society.

The Maria Hertogh riots of 1950 first prompted the need for the police force to be equipped with more effective public order response capabilities. The first Riot Squad was formed in 1952. Subsequent public order clashes, notably in the 1960s, such as the Pulau Senang prison riot, further compounded the need to expand the anti-riot capability in the police force. The Riot Squad, eventually grew into today's Police Tactical Unit (PTU) in the Special Operations Command (SOC).

In 2002, a two-tier public order force concept was adopted, with the SOC being the primary response force. When required, the SOC will be supported by Divisional Tactical Teams (DTTs) drawn from the Neighbourhood Police Centres (NPCs). The DTTs are trained by the SOC to handle smaller-scale protests and riots in the Land Divisions.

From the berets, batons and rattan shields of yesteryear, SPF officers tasked with preserving public order are much better equipped today, donning riot helmets, arm and shin protectors, tactical vests, fire retardant attire, gloves, boots and riot shields that have been designed specifically to provide maximum protection in a riot situation.

The PTU's Tactical Vehicles (TAVs) are purpose-built for different operational scenarios. It is more nimble and better equipped than the previous anti-riot bus, otherwise fondly known as *ang chia* in Hokkien. The TAVs are equipped with a wide range of special features such as protection against fire and projectiles, as well as camera systems for surveillance and appreciation of situations.

**Left:** The Rapid Deployment Troops (RDTs) from the SOC will be deployed to support first responders during a riot or terror incident.

**Right:** Officers from the Police Tactical Unit of the SOC undergoing public order training.





As part of the SPF's enhancement in incident response capabilities, the SOC's Rapid Deployment Troops (RDTs) were operationalised in 2017 to provide a swifter tactical response during a public order or public security incident. Riding on Tactical Response Motorcycles, these officers are specially trained to execute tactical manoeuvres to overcome traffic gridlocks, and even navigate through uneven terrain to arrive at their destinations.

The SOC may also be supported by other tactical forces during peacetime contingencies or even during national emergencies. These include the Crisis Negotiation Unit (CNU), where officers are specially trained to defuse life-threatening situations through crisis negotiation techniques.

The Special Women's Task Team (SWTT), formed in 2007, is an all-women unit that complements the SPF's public order operations, especially in large-scale civil disobedience incidents and demonstrations. The SWTT works with other public order forces, including the DTT and PTU. The SWTT's focus is to effect arrests on passive protesters (specifically female offenders) and to extract vulnerable groups (such as women, children or elderly persons). The team today has 65 active officers from various land divisions and specialist departments. The female officers, who all volunteered to be in this unit, serve it while holding their main appointments concurrently.

Over the years, as Singapore's status as one of the safest cities in the world grew, the city-state has been hosting an increasing number of international events such as the 2009 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting, Singapore Grand Prix races since 2008, and most notably, the inaugural United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea (US-DPRK) Summit held in 2018. These events often require the deployment of dedicated public order forces to not only ensure the safety and security of the participants, but also the smooth execution of the events.

To further augment the SPF's public order capabilities, Operationally Ready Police National Servicemen (PNSmen) from the SOC are trained as public order troops to provide added capacity during national



Officers from the Security Command with US President Donald Trump during the US-DPRK Summit held in Capella Singapore on Sentosa in 2018.

emergencies. During peacetime, PNSmen Public Order (PO) troops will maintain their PO skills and perform anti-crime patrols when they are recalled for their Operational Ready National Service stints. Besides being recallable for national emergencies, they may also be recalled for planned major events where there are public order concerns.

In addition to the SOC, the Public Order Response Force (PORF) is another arm of the SPF that is typically deployed during major events (such as the US-DPRK Summit and the 33rd ASEAN Summit) to respond to any potential public order situations. The PORF provides an initial response at the onset of a potential public disorder. These PORF officers are selected from different police units in the Land Divisions, and have to undergo a comprehensive training regime before they are operational.

Overall, a key factor contributing to the SPF's ability to fulfil the public order tasks effectively is the organisation's relentless efforts in enhancing its public order capabilities to adapt to the ever-changing global security climate.

## THE POLICE K-9 UNIT

The Police K-9 Unit's dogs provide support in public order incidents and frontline operations. The unit was reorganised in 2003 from the previous Police Dog Unit, which was first formed in 1955 during colonial times.

For frontline operations, the K-9 dogs help in the conduct of regular police patrols, crime scene pursuit and dealing with criminal violence. For border security, they are a vital capability especially in the detection of explosives and smuggled drugs.

In these and other ways, the K-9 dogs contribute to the operations of other Home Team agencies, including the Singapore Prison Service, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority and Central Narcotics Bureau.



Officers from the Special Operations Command deployed during major security events, such as the 33rd ASEAN Summit, held at Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre in 2018.



A K-9 officer (left) arriving at the scene after Belgian shepherd Diezel locates a 'target' during a training session in 2014. Dogs are playing a bigger role in fighting crime in Singapore.  
Picture: Singapore Press Holdings





Officers from the SOC demonstrating the SPF's public order capabilities during a visit by journalists to the Home Team Tactical Centre in 2018.





### MAINTAINING PUBLIC SECURITY

In contrast to the last century and earlier, terrorism of the 21st century has been qualitatively different. Since the 9/11 terror attacks in the US in 2001 and the ensuing global ‘war on terror’, counterterrorism has become a policing priority internationally. Singapore is acutely aware of this latent threat. A terror attack on this small, multiracial island would not only be a severe disruption to the economy and normal life, but would also leave lasting damage to the social fabric.

To counter this threat, the SPF made significant responses, including key structural enhancements. For example, in 2005, the Police Task Force in the SOC, formerly known as the Reserve Unit responsible for riot control, became the Police Tactical Unit (PTU). The PTU is the largest specialist unit under the direct command of the SOC, trained and equipped to handle both public order and public security incidents, from quelling civil disturbances and violent riots to neutralising incidents involving active gunmen. PTU officers are often seen patrolling high-profile areas such as Holland Village, Clarke Quay and Orchard Road, considered potential targets of terror groups.

Almost two decades later, the terror threat remains latent. The Ministry of Home Affairs’ assessment report of 2019 stated that terrorism threat in Singapore remains high. While there has been insufficient credible or actionable intelligence of an impending attack against Singapore since the 2019 report, the SPF takes no chances and is constantly working behind the scenes round-the-clock to keep Singapore safe and secure.

To test and validate Singapore’s response plan in the event of terrorist attacks, large-scale multi-agency exercises involving SPF personnel are regularly conducted at locations considered to be potential sites for terror attacks. The scenarios include responding to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), marauding gunmen and even hostage-taking in a barricaded situation.

The SPF has also strengthened its response capabilities through the commissioning of more specialised response teams such as the Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) in 2016. The ERTs are made up of frontline officers specially trained and equipped to deal with armed attacks. These officers not only increase the police presence on the ground but also prepare stakeholders such as the management of shopping malls for public security incidents. In addition to strengthening response capabilities on land, every frontline Police Coast Guard (PCG) officer is also ERT-trained to neutralise armed terror attacks within Singapore’s territorial waters (including offshore islands and fish farms).

To further enhance the SPF’s counterterrorism capabilities and response time to public security incidents in iconic areas with high footfall, such as Orchard Road and Marina Bay, In-situ Reaction Teams (IRTs) were operationalised in December 2017 to complement existing Ground Response Forces (GRFs) and the ERTs. The IRTs — comprising mostly Full-time Police National Servicemen from the Protective Security Command (ProCom) — are specially selected, trained and armed with high-powered weaponry to perform high-visibility deterrence patrols and respond immediately to any public security incidents at the locations they are deployed at. Follow-on forces such as the GRFs, ERTs and the SOC’s Armed Strike Teams (ASTs) will also be activated to reinforce the IRTs and resolve the situation.



The SPF has also strengthened its response capabilities through the commissioning of more specialist teams such as the Emergency Response Teams in 2016.



The Police Coast Guard flanking a small boat carrying 'terrorists' targeting an oil refinery on Jurong Island, during a maritime exercise in 2009. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings







## STAR: THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF TACTICAL ARMED RESPONSE

The STAR Unit provides the SPF with the highest level of tactical armed response. Officers in the STAR Unit, also professionally known as STAR operators, are specially trained and equipped to apprehend armed criminals and conduct hostage rescue operations on land and at sea. It has formidable firepower and all-terrain mobility, and is capable of helicopter-borne insertion. Besides dealing with highly dangerous criminals, STAR operators are also involved in high-risk protective security operations and prisoner escorts.

Upon the completion of their baseline training as Assaulters, selected STAR operators are further developed to take on additional specialised roles such as Sniper or Assault Diver. In 2016, the STAR Unit responded to two separate barricaded situations in Ang Mo Kio and Sembawang, where both stand-offs lasted for over 10 hours. The STAR operators successfully breached and entered both flats to safely rescue the occupants, achieving mission success.



**Left:** A STAR diver climbing onto a vessel during training.

**Middle:** STAR operators undergoing the Live Hostage Snatch Confidence Shoot Drill, which tests their personal confidence to take multiple head shots at a threat with a live hostage in close proximity. The hostage was role-played by former Commissioner of Police Ng Joo Hee, who was also the first Commanding Officer of the STAR Unit.

**Right:** STAR assaulters attempting to breach one of the units of an abandoned building as part of a simulated hostage rescue exercise.





A STAR officer taking  
aim, ready to fire.





In addition to keeping Singapore's land and territorial waters safe and secure, the SPF also plays a crucial role in Singapore's civil aviation security, which is critical to the sterling international reputation of the Singapore Changi Airport. The Airport Police Department (APD) is responsible for the maintenance of law and order for the Singapore Changi Airport and Seletar Airport. The APD works closely with its partners such as the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS), Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA), Changi Airport Group (CAG) as well as airline operators, ground handling agencies and other private organisations operating within the airport to perform its duties effectively and professionally.

To ensure the airport's security, APD officers conduct high-visibility joint patrols with soldiers from the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) round the clock in public and restricted areas of the terminals. To prepare their stakeholders in counterterrorism measures, the APD involved them in exercises such as Exercise Northstar so as to validate their response plans against terror attacks.

The SPF's role in counterterrorism has also expanded in helping to foster the resilience of the people — a vital element of overall public security, given the unpredictable, civilian, ubiquitous nature of extremism. In 2016, the Ministry of Home Affairs launched SGSecure, a national movement to help boost vigilance and prepare the people against potential threats.



**We are in the process of building up and continuing to refine a robust counterterrorism capability... We need to go, as a community, well beyond where we are now to be prepared. We need a culture where people automatically step forward to help one another.** //

Mr K Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, at the Police Workplan Seminar, 2019

Airport Police Division officers using Segways while patrolling in Changi Airport.



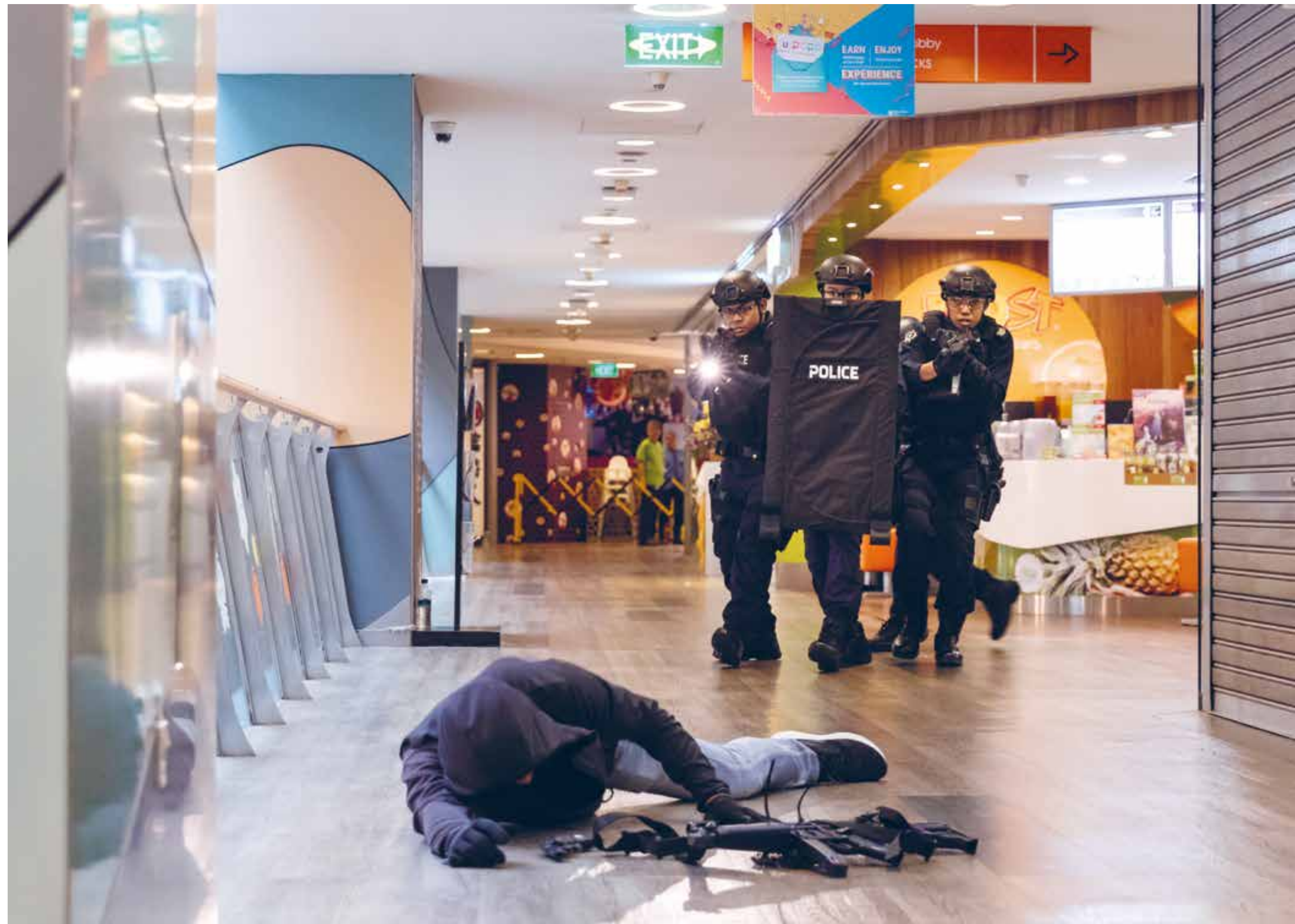


Community Policing Unit officers engaging with members of the public to spread the SGSecure message.

The SPF's CPU officers routinely visit and engage residents in the community, to help them become Prepared Citizens, who are aware of SGSecure and terror threats, recognise the importance of safeguarding Singapore's social fabric and are equipped with the relevant skills to protect themselves and their families in the event of an attack. To date, more than 470,000 households have at least one Prepared Citizen.

The SPF collaborates with the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) and the workplace community to validate their crisis response plans through the conduct of ground deployment exercises, such as Exercise Heartbeat. Simulated terror attacks are staged in different locations, which have previously included a polytechnic, hotels or shopping malls. The community stakeholders execute their contingency response plans based on the scenarios, and practise their SGSecure skills as part of a concerted joint response.

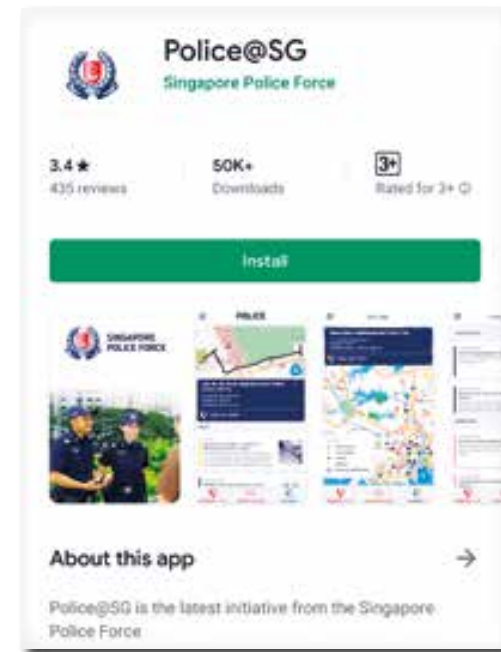
Another key SGSecure engagement effort is the Emergency Preparedness (EP) Day, which is organised jointly by the SPF with the SCDF and People's Association. Through exercises simulating terror attacks and exhibition booths, residents in public housing estates learn more about counterterrorism measures, and are trained in emergency response skills and learn life-saving skills with hands-on training. To reach out to more people, SGSecure roadshows were launched in major population centres, such as heartland shopping malls and town centres islandwide, providing a multi-sensorial simulated terror attack experience to test visitors' responses if they were to be caught in an emergency situation. During these roadshows, CPU officers educate the community on various skills, such as how to detect suspicious behaviour and items, and how to "run, hide and tell" in an armed attack. In addition, led by MHA, SPF also partners SCDF, People's Association and Sport Singapore to conduct SGSecure outreach in the private estates in the form of Safety and Security Days, to promote safety and security in the community.



The SPF participating in Exercise Heartbeat, held at Velocity @ Novena Square on 15 November 2019.



The Police@SG app enables members of the public to report suspicious activity and get updates on the various SGSecure efforts.



The Police@SG app enables members of the public to report suspicious activities and facilitates public engagement on SGSecure, thereby engaging the public and raising its security consciousness digitally.

As the SPF strengthens and develops its capabilities to adapt to the ever-changing security environment, tackling terrorism and maintaining public security will require relentless police efforts in three areas: (1) prevention, (2) protection and preparedness, and (3) responses and recovery, overlaid with community response. As a Force for the Nation, the SPF does not let its guard down; it has been working hard at securing the public's trust, developing new capabilities, stepping up its training and sharpening its security responses, to keep Singapore safe and secure every day.



In addition to spreading awareness on SGSecure, the SPF also shares crime prevention messages, such as those against bicycle theft, at Emergency Preparedness Day.



**Top:** An Emergency Response Team officer staying vigilant during a live simulation of an armed attack, while volunteers demonstrated essential survival and first aid skills, on Emergency Preparedness Day at West Coast in 2018.

**Bottom:** Emergency Response Team officers showcasing their capabilities by subduing attackers during a live simulation of an armed attack at the same event.





ENSURING ROAD SAFETY

Apart from crime-fighting, another major responsibility of the Traffic Police (TP) department is Singapore’s road safety. The progress of Singapore over the past 200 years has brought significant transformation to the road infrastructure and traffic landscape, as well as the behaviour of road users.

Traffic offences have also changed with the times. In the 1970s and 1980s, illegal street racing by thrill-seeking youth, dubbed as ‘hell-riders’, was one of the main traffic offences. Today, the problem is less prevalent, and new offences such as the use of mobile communication devices while driving have emerged. Acts of speeding and red-light running continue to be of concern.

To ensure that Singapore’s traffic situation continues to be safe for all road users, the TP adopts a three-pronged strategy of education, engagement and enforcement.

On public education, the TP works closely with the Singapore Road Safety Council (SRSC) and various stakeholders to produce road safety advisories, including creative road safety posters and videos. The TP also believes that the inculcation of the right road usage attitudes and behaviours in road users should start from their childhood. The Road Safety Community Park (RSCP), formerly known as the Kallang Park Road Safety First Playground, was built in 1958 to teach school children about road safety and positive road usage habits. In later years, after the RSCP shifted to East Coast Park, the Shell Traffic Games held there became synonymous with teaching the young about road safety habits.

While public education materials are helpful in disseminating useful road safety advisories and tips, the TP recognised that it is equally important to engage the different groups of road users to better understand their concerns,

The road traffic situation in Singapore
 has improved significantly over the years
 and we would not be able to achieve this
 without the strong support from Traffic
 Police and the various stakeholders.

Mr Bernard Tay,  
Chairman of Singapore Road Safety Council, 2020



Various road safety campaigns have been rolled out through the years to educate members of the public.



The Patrol Unit of the Traffic Police, pictured on Tanah Merah Coastal Road in 2019, plays a vital role in ensuring daily enforcement of road traffic laws.



so as to co-create solutions to effect sustainable change in road usage attitudes and behaviours. In 2015, the TP, together with the SRSC, launched the Use Your RoadSense movement to encourage safe and courteous road use by Singaporeans as an instinctive and habitual practice. For example, a Road Master Test Kit was rolled out to help elderly people understand the changes in their reflexes as they age and the precautions to take when using the roads. Since its launch, the TP and its partners have conducted more than 3,400 engagement sessions with different road users, reaching out to almost 900,000 members of the public.

In 2019, the second edition of “Use Your RoadSense” was launched with the theme, “Take the Road to Responsibility”, aimed at getting road users to exercise responsibility, graciousness and courtesy during their daily commute. As part of the campaign, the TP conducted a nationwide study on road-use attitudes and behaviours. From this study, the TP derived a RoadSense Index, which provided a collective gauge on how gracious and responsible road users are. This index helped the TP track changes in attitudes and behaviours, which in turn, will enable the TP to tailor future road safety measures for different road users.

Following the theme, the TP also introduced eight characters, known as ‘The Responsibles’. These characters represent the different groups of road users in Singapore and exemplify the values and behaviours that all road users should have.



Implementation of the Average Speed Camera (ASC) in 2018 along a stretch of Tanah Merah Coast Road.

### FATALITY RATE (PER 100,000 POPULATION) FROM YEAR 2000 – 2019



\*Statistics provided are correct as at 1 April 2020.



The Straits Times reported on the Traffic Police's efforts in undertaking covert operations to nab errant motorists in 2019. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

For enforcement, in addition to the regular roadblock operations and deployment of covert TP officers, the TP has also been actively leveraging technology to enhance road safety and boost enforcement against errant road users. One example is the implementation of the Average Speed Camera (ASC) in 2018 along a stretch of Tanah Merah Coast Road. The ASC is a two-point camera that detects and computes the average speed of vehicles on entry and exit from an enforcement zone. Through such speed camera technology, the TP aims to shape the behaviour of motorists and to sustain speed enforcement over a stretch of road rather than at a single point.

Moreover, to reinforce the TP's stance on educational and enforcement efforts to deter precarious motorist behaviours, enforcement cameras have not only been given a facelift to enhance their visibility with fresh coats of bright orange paint, but these cameras' locations have also been made public on the SPF's website. These measures aim to alert motorists to be more cautious when driving. Meanwhile, the TP is also looking to deploy blinkers along the warning camera signage following a successful trial in 2018 to enhance road safety measures.

From what was mostly a matter of cat-and-mouse between the TP and the public in colonial Singapore, today, close partnership with the community is one of the TP's best strategies to keep Singapore's roads safe and secure.



## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND POLICING

### INTERPOL: A Global Duty

As criminal activities grew increasingly transnational in a globalised world, the SPF enhanced its international policing work stream and cooperation with its foreign counterparts. To this end, the SPF's International Cooperation Department (ICD) assumes the role of the INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) in Singapore. The NCB Singapore is the designated contact point with the INTERPOL General Secretariat, regional offices and the bureaus of the other 193 member countries on transnational police cooperation, including investigations, operations and capability building. It also serves as the gateway for the exchange of security information and intelligence, as well as the facilitation of cooperation between the SPF and other Singapore enforcement agencies vis-à-vis foreign counterparts.

In 2008, the SPF's involvement in international policing work was elevated to a new level when Commissioner of Police Khoo Boon Hui was elected the President of the INTERPOL by an overwhelming majority vote. Khoo was the first Singaporean elected to the post and the second Southeast Asian to hold the position in 28 years. In his four-year term, he played a major role in raising awareness of, and galvanising action against international security threats. For example, at the INTERPOL's European Regional Convention in Tel Aviv, Israel, in 2012, he noted that 80 per cent of crime committed online was now connected to organised gangs operating across borders. He also suggested that many criminals worldwide were abandoning conventional theft in favour of going online due to the high payoff. For example, banks in the US at that time were losing US\$900 million a year to conventional crime but US\$12 billion to cybercrime.

During Khoo's stint as the President of the INTERPOL (2008 – 2012), he supported the proposal mooted by the INTERPOL to establish a complementary global facility to the INTERPOL Headquarters in Lyon, France. This eventually led to the INTERPOL's decision to set up the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) in Singapore in 2015. The building, which houses more than 150 officers from over 50 countries, is located on the former site of the Tanglin Division headquarters on Napier Road. The IGCI also houses the organisation's



INTERPOL President and Singapore's Commissioner of Police Khoo Boon Hui, receiving the INTERPOL passport from the INTERPOL Secretary General, Mr Ronald K. Noble, in 2009.

**It is this spirit of collaboration in a global network of law enforcers that will help us stand against the criminals who exploit the growing complexities of our operational environment.**

Mr Khoo Boon Hui, INTERPOL President, in his outgoing speech in Rome, Italy, 2012



Exterior of the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) at 18 Napier Road, which opened in 2015. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings



first digital crime centre. The presence of this international policing organisation within Singapore also helped to set the stage for the growth and development of a related research and academic ecosystem in Singapore. The IGCI complements the INTERPOL's headquarters in Lyon, France, and works to enhance its presence in Asia to support national and international policing efforts to tackle new and emerging crimes around the world.

In the SPF's early history, it would have been unthinkable for Singapore's police force to be able to contribute anything substantial to international policing, given its limited resources to manage even domestic challenges. Two centuries on, the SPF is one of the leading police forces in the world, playing a significant role in international crime-fighting efforts.

#### ASEANAPOL: Safeguarding Southeast Asia

For the immediate region of Southeast Asia, the SPF has contributed to transnational safety through the ASEANAPOL since 1981, when the regional body was established to foster collaboration among ASEAN police forces to fight transnational crime. Annually, ASEAN police forces and international law enforcement agencies get together at the ASEANAPOL Conference to interact and exchange knowledge on law enforcement and transnational security issues.

At the 37th ASEANAPOL Conference hosted by the SPF in Singapore in 2017, the electronic ASEANAPOL Database System 2.0 was launched to facilitate better exchange of information among ASEAN law enforcement agencies. Such a system is crucial in facilitating closer regional coordination between the police forces in terms of information exchange and sense-making.



The electronic ASEANAPOL Database System 2.0 was launched at the 37th ASEANAPOL Conference in Singapore in 2017, to facilitate better exchange of information among ASEAN law enforcement agencies.



Attending the 37th ASEANAPOL Conference in Singapore in 2017 were: (from the left) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Mohd Jammy Bin Haji Muhd Shah Al Islam, Commissioner of Police of Royal Brunei Police Force; Police General Kirth Chantharith, Deputy Commissioner-General of Cambodian National Police; Police General Muhammad Tito Karnavian, Ph.D., Chief of Police of Indonesian National Police; Police Brigadier General Thonglek Mangnomek, Chief of Police of Lao Police Force; Tan Sri Dato' Sri Mohamad Fuzi Bin Harun, Inspector-General of Police of Royal Malaysia Police; Singapore's Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law K Shanmugam; Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean; Singapore's Commissioner of Police Hoong Wee Teck; Police Brigadier General Aung Htay Myint, Head of Division against Transnational Crime of Myanmar Police Force; Police Director General Ronald Marapon Dela Rosa, Chief of Police of Philippine National Police; Police General Sutep Dechruksa, Deputy Commissioner General of Royal Thai Police; and Police Lieutenant General Tran Van Ve, Acting Director-General of Viet Nam Police General Department. Picture: Ministry of Home Affairs



### International Peacekeeping

For decades, the SPF has been extending its contributions beyond Singapore's shores to international peacekeeping. The SPF United Nations Peacekeeping Force (UNPKF) was established in 1998 with the aim of deploying specially trained officers to perform policing duties in overseas peacekeeping missions. Even before the SPF UNPKF was formed, the SPF had been contributing to peacekeeping missions since 1989, spanning across the globe in distant countries such as Namibia and South Africa. Since 1989, the SPF has participated in 18 overseas operations, including 10 United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions and three humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. The remaining deployments were for post-conflict nation-building. In all, the SPF contributed 623 police officers in such deployments.

#### SPF officers deployed in peacekeeping missions contributed in three main areas:

- Maintaining peace and security through executive policing;
- Building law enforcement capacity and capabilities by imparting policing knowledge and skills; and
- Building community confidence through engaging the people.



**In our globalised world... when we commit police peacekeepers to rebuild failed states, promote good governance and foster sustainable peace, we are also contributing to our own security.**

Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore, at the INTERPOL General Assembly in Singapore, 2009

The SPF sent its first contingent to take part in a United Nations peacekeeping mission, the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), in Namibia in 1989.

The SPF's first UN peacekeeping force in May 1989 to Namibia was a 21-strong police contingent led by Acting Superintendent of Police Lee Kok Leong, for a one-year tour of duty. They formed part of a 1,500-strong police component of the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG). Serving alongside peacekeeping officers from 24 other countries such as Australia, Barbados, Fiji, Hungary and Sweden, the Singapore police officers carried out policing duties including daily bush patrols and the settling of communal and industrial disputes.

In the region, the SPF also contributed to peacekeeping missions, such as those in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. More than 250 SPF officers were deployed for three UN peacekeeping missions in Timor-Leste between 2000 and 2012, with officers deployed in the last mission from 2006 till 2012.



**Top:** SPF United Nations Peacekeeping Force (UNPKF) at Cambodia in 1993.

**Bottom:** Acting Superintendent of Police Sng May Yen during one of her peacekeeping efforts at Timor-Leste in 2008.



Singapore places a high level of importance on its peacekeeping duties because in a globalised world, disorder or a breakdown of political authority in one country threatens regional and international security.

Besides peacekeeping missions, the SPF also deployed officers in humanitarian missions in the region, which included those that helped in the aftermath of the Nepal Earthquake in 2015 and in Laos in 2018 when a dam collapsed. The SPF's K-9 sniffer dogs were also deployed for search and recovery for the first time in the mission in Laos.

Over the decades, the SPF's contributions to global policing have become more extensive and also intensive — being deployed in more places across the world, and involving more personnel and resources. It is a reminder of how much greater scope the work of the SPF has grown since 1820.



The SPF's K-9 sniffer dogs in action during a search and recovery mission in Laos in 2018.

## THE POCC: NERVE CENTRE FOR POLICE OPERATIONS

The SPF's incident management capabilities have improved significantly, owing to the implementation of advanced technologies, such as live streaming of camera footage, video analytics and screening systems.

In 2001, the Combined Operations Room (COR) was moved to the Police Headquarters at New Phoenix Park.

In 2015, the COR moved into a purpose-built building and rebranded as the Police Operations Command Centre (POCC). In 2017, liaison officers from SCDF, ICA and CNB were deployed, and the Real-Time Intelligence Centre and Investigation Operations Coordination Centre were set up as part of the POCC. This marked the start of the transformation of the POCC into the nerve centre for police operations. With the ability to play back and view live footage from the wide network of police cameras, access to screening facilities, and the support of intelligence and investigation elements, the POCC gained the capability to conduct sense-making and run joint operations-investigation-intelligence operations at the Watchfloor. This provided better support to ground resources in managing incidents.



The Combined Operations Room was moved into a new building and renamed the Police Operations Command Centre in 2015.

In mid-2018, all Land Division Operations Rooms were absorbed into the POCC to achieve a 'Single Watchfloor' in the SPF. All divisions were able to have on-demand access to the wide network of camera systems and screening systems, share the common situation picture and get the support of the whole Watchfloor in incident management.

## TECHNOLOGY IN POLICING Becoming a 'Smart Force'

The extensive use of police cameras across Singapore has been instrumental in the SPF's crime-fighting efforts. It is a highly visible and prominent example of how technology is a key enabler for the SPF to enhance its operational capabilities in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and productivity.

Apart from the use of PolCams and traffic cameras, the SPF also enhances its frontline crime-fighting capabilities through the use of Body Worn Cameras (BWCs). Since their implementation in 2015, officers performing frontline operations in NPCs have been donning these devices that enable the recording of officers' surroundings and interactions while the officers are on patrol or attending to incidents. The introduction of BWCs has not only strengthened the SPF's reputation for fairness and transparency but has also benefitted the SPF in other crime-fighting aspects, such as the deterrence of public order-related offences and the facilitation of post-incident investigations.

As criminals increasingly exploit technology and slip into the anonymous, borderless universe of the Internet, the SPF, like its counterparts around the world, is also innovating and leveraging new technology to boost the SPF's capabilities. In 2019, the Ops-Tech Department was set up as a new specialist staff department to work with the private sector to explore and test new technological approaches and conduct rapid prototyping.





An officer trying out the Enhanced Live Firing Range System — which improves shooting capabilities through real-time analysis — in the Police Workplan Seminar 2019.

Technology has also significantly transformed the efficacy and experience of SPF officers' training, making it a lot more immersive and realistic, with training simulators and new technology, such as augmented and virtual reality to simulate terror attacks and other operational scenarios. For example, the SPF is exploring the use of the Enhanced Live Firing Range System to help officers to improve their shooting capabilities by analysing the impact point of their shots and providing suggestions for improvements, all in real time.

The Impact Measurement Trainer is another system that would be trialled to enhance Police Defence Tactics training. Trainees are able to improve their techniques through the immediate feedback provided by the system.

The SPF is constantly exploring new ways to enable its officers to do more when they are on the ground, faster and more effectively. To achieve this outcome, the SPF's



**The contest between police and criminals is never-ending. There is a Chinese saying — ‘道高一尺, 魔高一丈’. Roughly translated, it means ‘when good gains a foot, evil adds a yard’. As you upgrade your knowledge, skills and equipment, you can be sure that criminals are doing the same. //**

Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore, at the INTERPOL General Assembly in Singapore, 2009



The Impact Measurement Trainer is a new system that aims to enhance Police Defence Tactics training by providing immediate feedback to trainees, helping them to improve their techniques.

vast information resources have been integrated better to facilitate more effective incident responses on the ground. Known as JARVIS, this one-stop screening platform functions like a Google search on the SPF's network. JARVIS allows investigation officers to make searches across multiple police databases with a single query at the click of a button, taking only up to five minutes per search. Before JARVIS, such searches were done through accessing many individual databases, taking up to almost 20 minutes per search.

To further enhance operational efficiency and capabilities of officers, the SPF has also been working closely with its industry partners to explore the use of robotics and artificial intelligence to automate routine tasks so that officers can focus on high-value crime-fighting work.





The first variant of the M.A.T.A.R. 3.0, being trialled at the 33rd ASEAN Summit, held at Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre in 2018.

ROBO COPS

Robots are now a reality for the police force. These robots further enhance the operational efficiency of officers through robotics automation.

MULTI-PURPOSE ALL TERRAIN AUTONOMOUS ROBOT [M.A.T.A.R.] 3.0

M.A.T.A.R. 3.0 comes in two variants, which were unveiled in 2019. It is meant to augment the SPF’s boots on the ground and streamline work processes through robotics automation to allow officers to focus on higher value work.

The first variant:

- It is equipped with an extendable Pan-Tilt-Zoom Camera that can be elevated to a maximum height of two metres to better project police presence and allow remote observations of activities of interest.
- It has a two-way communication feature allowing police officers in the command post to communicate with people on the ground.

The second variant:

- It is equipped with a tethered Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).
- The UAV can fly up to 30 metres, or about 10 storeys high.
- Its aerial surveillance capability provides an enhanced situational picture for better decision-making and sense-making.

The tethered UAV on this M.A.T.A.R. 3.0 variant — in action in the Police Workplan Seminar at the Singapore University of Technology and Design in 2019 — can fly up to 30 metres, providing aerial surveillance capabilities for better decision-making and sense-making.



The Unmanned Surface Vessel can patrol Singapore waters autonomously over a set route, and can help project police presence and detect any intrusions.

PCG’S UNMANNED SURFACE VESSEL [USV]

This unmanned boat is designed to patrol and project presence in Singapore Territorial Waters. The PCG has commenced several trials to validate the effectiveness and robustness of this cutting-edge technology in its operational terrain. This is a green-field development, requiring sufficient tests to be conducted before actual deployment can be considered.



In 2018, the SPF launched the Police Smartphone, an operational device that is issued to all frontline officers across the operation, investigation and intelligence units. This specialised smartphone contains custom-built applications that will allow officers to communicate securely and receive real-time information on the ground 24/7, enabling them to respond faster and more effectively to any incidents, even when they are off-duty. Going beyond incident management, the Police Smartphone includes applications that aid in decision-making across all frontline functions, fulfil administrative and training functions, and assist in better public engagement. One notable capability of the Police Smartphone is blue force tracking, which allows the SPF's central operational nerve centre to have an overall view of the specific locations of its officers out in the field. With this capability, officers can be deployed even more swiftly and effectively to deal with incidents.



Another major technological advance is the Police Smartphone, an operational device launched in 2018, which is used by more than 12,000 operational officers. Pictures: Ministry of Home Affairs

The adoption of drone technology by government organisations all over the world has been on the rise. Likewise, the SPF is also leveraging such technology to develop its aerial capabilities to aid crime-fighting, and public order and public security incident management. The Sky Aerial Response Command (SkyARC) is one such example. The SkyARC is the SPF's mobile Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) response force that is equipped with a variety of advanced aerial surveillance capabilities. Launched in 2019, the SkyARC can deploy UAVs with different capabilities to support frontline operations, pre-planned security events, search



The SkyARC, launched in 2019, is equipped with three UAVs that can stream photos and videos back to the Police Operations Command Centre. Picture: Singapore Press Holdings

missions and incidents requiring aerial surveillance. Such aerial capabilities will also enhance the SPF's sense-making capabilities through the aerial situational images and videos captured remotely and livestreamed back to the SPF's POCC.

While technology has certainly helped to boost the overall effectiveness of the force, the SPF is keenly aware that at the heart of its success will always be its people and its partnership with the community.

### THE SAFEST PLACE IN THE WORLD

The SPF's vision is to be a "A Force for the Nation — To Make Singapore the Safest Place in the World". And because the SPF has earned and retained the public's trust for many decades, this has also been borne out in numerous surveys and rankings.

In the 2019 annual quality of living survey by consulting firm Mercer, Singapore ranked highest for personal safety.

In research firm Gallup's 2020 *Global Law and Order* report, Singapore topped the law and order index with a score of 97 out of a possible 100. Notably, 97 per cent of adults here said that they felt safe walking alone at night, compared with the worldwide average of 69 per cent.

In the *World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2020* by the World Justice Project, an independent advocacy group based in the US, Singapore ranked No. 1 out of 128 countries in order and security, as measured by how well a society ensures the security of persons and property. It has topped this category since 2016.

Keeping Singapore safe can be possible only with a firm foundation of organisational and operational excellence, honed over many decades. The continuous development of the SPF's efficiency and effectiveness has been recognised for such excellence. In 1999, the SPF embraced



Launched in 2019, the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle becomes the police's eyes in the sky — providing real-time situational images to the Command Centres during police operations.



the Singapore Quality Award (SQA) framework to guide the SPF's efforts towards continuous improvement. After putting in place sound systems and structures, the SPF was awarded the SQA in 2002 for having matured into a world-class organisation. Being the first government department to win the SQA, the SPF paved the way for other government agencies to follow suit.

In 2007, the SPF went one step further, being conferred the SQA with Special Commendation. In 2019, the SPF was once again conferred the SQA with Special Commendation. Winning the award reaffirms the high standards and robustness of SPF's processes.

Today, Singapore's overall crime rate remains one of the lowest in the world. To continue to uphold Singapore's ranking for safety and security, the SPF will always need the collaboration and trust of the community.

Safeguarding Singapore is a never-ending responsibility, requiring vigilance in service and dedication to loyalty. This looks set to remain the true calling and key contribution of the Singapore Police Force, as it has been every day for the last 200 years.



An incredible number of the public holds the Police in high regard. All of this reflects the extraordinary level of faith and trust Singaporeans have in the police force... Many law enforcement agencies around the world envy this. //

Mr K Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, at the 2017 Budget debate in Parliament, crediting the heightened police presence and quick arrest of criminals as some reasons for the high score, 2017.



The SPF receiving the Singapore Quality Award with Special Commendation in 2019.

As the Force comes together to mark Police Day and to commemorate our 200 years of history in the midst of uncertain times, we will always keep in mind our fundamental role as a Force for the nation — to maintain law and order, to protect life and property, and to serve our community. We will remain steadfast in our values of courage, loyalty, integrity and fairness and build upon our strong foundation, as we work as one Force to safeguard our nation's future, for many generations to come. //

CP Hoong Wee Teck, Commissioner of Police, at the Police Day Observance Ceremony, 2020



**SALUTING  
THE PAST.  
SAFEGUARDING  
THE FUTURE**



**SPF200**

SALUTING THE PAST • SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE



(From the left) Senior Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of National Development Sun Xueling, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law K Shanmugam, President Halimah Yacob and Commissioner of Police Hoong Wee Teck launching the Police Bicentennial (SPF200) at Singapore Sports Hub on 11 January 2020, to commemorate 200 years of policing in Singapore.



More than 3,200 SPF officers and their family members, as well as beneficiaries from the Community Chest, were at the final lap of the SPF200 Run at the Marina Barrage on 11 January 2020.









