



**POLICE
LIFE**

THE SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE MAGAZINE



A FORCE FOR THE NATION

The Singapore Police Force

POLICE WEEK 2013

Police Life Special Edition

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FOREWORD



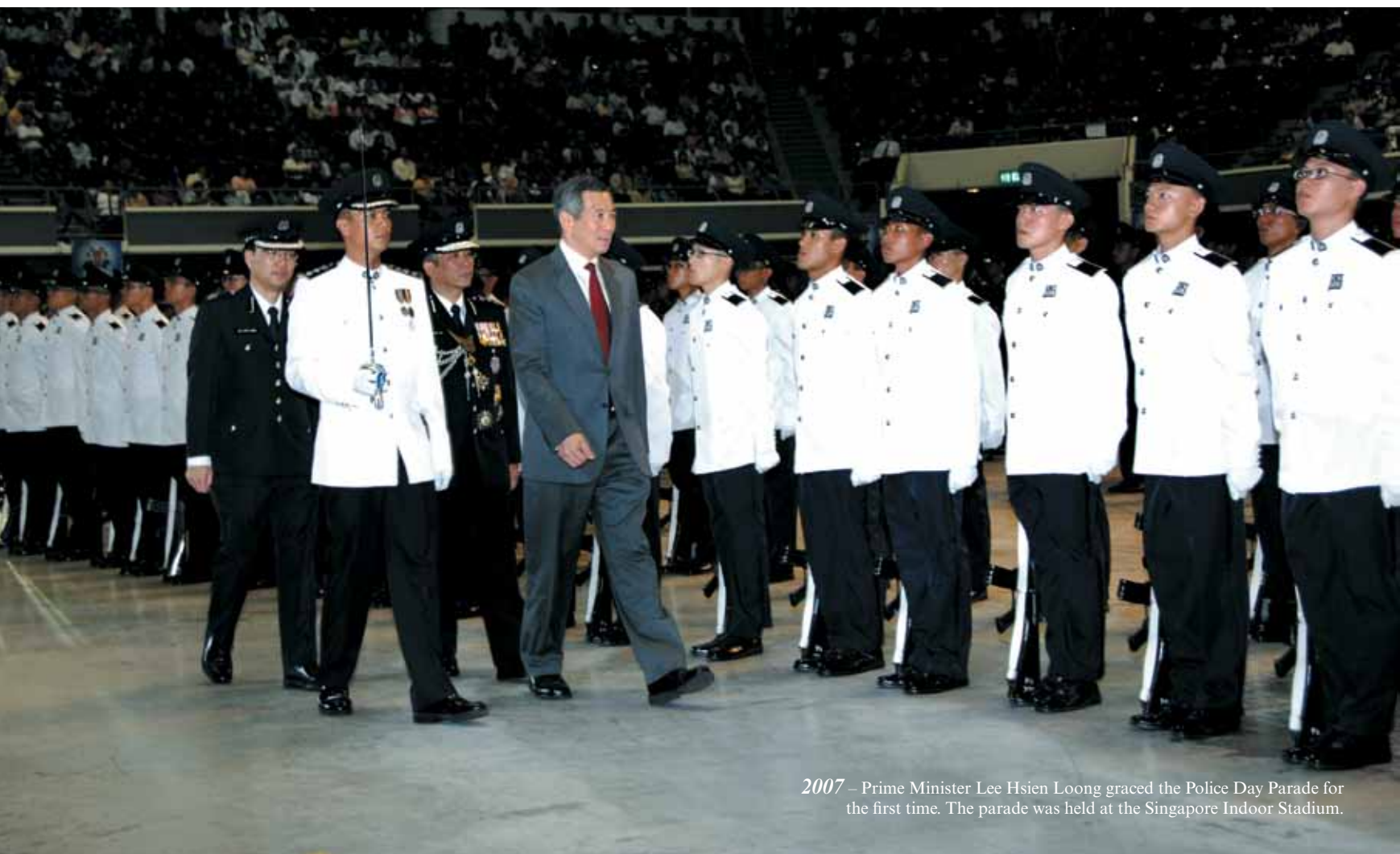
As a Force for the nation, we are relentlessly working on preventing, deterring and detecting crime. Every June, we take time out to reaffirm and celebrate our contribution to the community.

The Police Day Parade is one event where we honour our past and rededicate ourselves to the service of the nation. Our officers' good work is recognised during the Commissioner of Police's Commendation Ceremony. Not forgetting the important role our community partners and stakeholders play in crime-fighting, we thank them during the Annual Police Dinner.

The *Police Life* team has put together this special edition to commemorate this year's celebrations. Start with a glimpse of some of our parade's past milestones. Then share in our officers' pride as they talk about their work both frontline and behind the desk. We have teams of officers from the Traffic Police Department, Neighbourhood Police Centre and the Commercial Affairs Department introducing what they do on a day-to-day basis. You can also "hear it from the horse's mouth" by viewing the video interviews with some of them in our iPad and iPhone app versions. Rounding off this issue is a look into what the future holds for the 15,700-strong Force.

As it is said, change is the only constant. The *Police Life* Editorial team is working on a new look and feel for *Police Life*. So keep a lookout for our future issues!

AC Ng Guat Ting
Police Life Editorial Advisor
Director of Public Affairs Department



2007 – Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong graced the Police Day Parade for the first time. The parade was held at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

The Police Day Parade – Snapshots at Milestones

By Mr Lam Sin How

The Singapore Police Force (SPF) held the annual Police Day Parade on 3 June 2013 at the Home Team Academy. The Police Day Parade is the most important parade of the year for Police officers, as we reaffirm our core values of Courage, Loyalty, Integrity and Fairness, and rededicate ourselves to the service of the nation.

This parade is steeped in tradition. A quick review of the milestones makes for an interesting read.



2001 – The Police Day Parade was held in the Singapore Indoor Stadium for the first time.



2000 - DSP (NS) Yeo Chak Khiam, NS Commander of Bedok Police Division, was the first NS officer to command a Police Day Parade.



1958 – Governor Sir William Goode inspected the first Annual Police Review held in public, at the Padang.

On 12 July 1958, the last Governor of colonial Singapore, Sir William Goode, inspected a parade comprising 1,170 members of the Force and 48 vehicles. Held at the Padang, it was the first Annual Police Review that was held in public. The following year, on 3 June 1959, the Singapore Order-in-Council came into operation after we achieved internal self-government with full government powers except over defence and foreign affairs. With full control over internal affairs, the government named the Force as “Polis Negara Singapura”. Therefore, 3 June has been observed as the Police Day.

After 1958, it was not until 13 years later in June 1971 that the next Police Review was conducted. The intervening 13 years were a tumultuous period in our nation’s

history, experiencing the birth pangs of post-colonialism and strife. The Police Review was part of the wider outreach to enlist public support to fight crime. Four years later, on 3 June 1975, we have the first records of Police Day Commemoration Parades held at all command, divisional and unit headquarters, where all officers recited the Police Code of Ethics and renewed their loyalty to the nation. This milestone was built upon in 1993 – when the first centralised Police Day Parade was held on 3 June, which would henceforth be staged as part of every Police Week. All SPF units were represented in the parade.

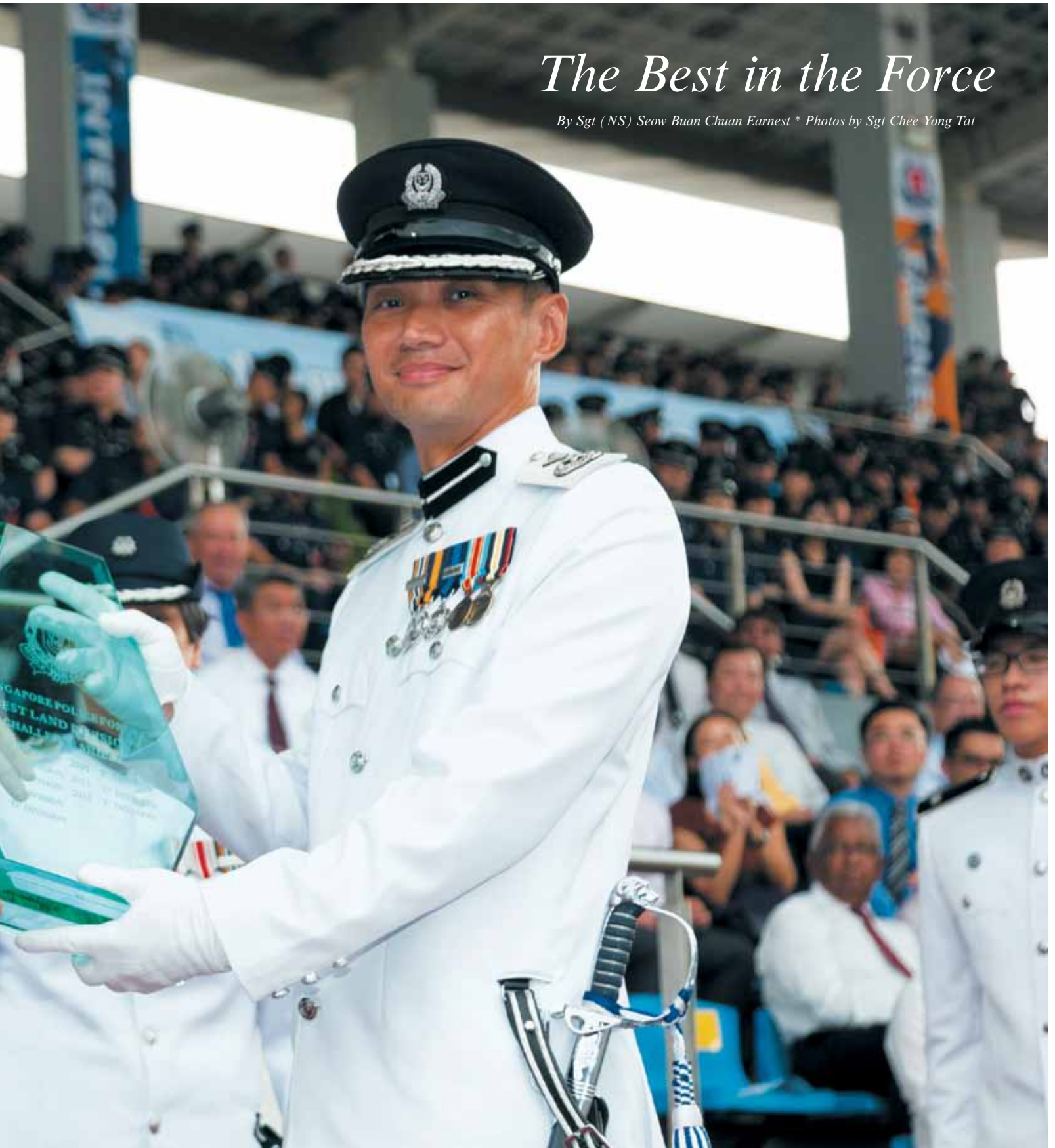
On 3 June 2000, then Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) (NS) Yeo Chak Khiam, National Service (NS) Commander of Bedok Police Division, created history by becoming the first NS officer to

command a Police Day Parade. It was an affirmation of the contributions of our NSmen to national safety and security. The following year, on 2 June 2001, the parade was held for the first time in the Singapore Indoor Stadium. Six years later on 3 June 2007, it was again held in the Singapore Indoor Stadium, but the Reviewing Officer and Guest-of-Honour was Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who graced the occasion for the first time. What a proud moment it was for the participating officers, and the Force! They were equally proud on 3 June 2013, when Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, Co-ordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Home Affairs, graced the Police Day Parade at the Home Team Academy.



The Best in the Force

*By Sgt (NS) Seow Buan Chuan Earnest * Photos by Sgt Chee Yong Tat*



Awards were presented at the Police Day Parade held on 3 June 2013 to the top three winners of four prestigious competitions. Here are the champions' thoughts on their win:

Best Land Division Award

Ang Mo Kio Police Division was awarded the Best Land Division Award for FY2012. The division's commander, Assistant Commissioner of Police Keok Tong San, shared the following:

Q What are your thoughts on winning the Best Land Division Award?

I'm elated, myself, to win this, and the officers are quite jubilant. The Best Land Division Award recognises each Land Division's performance in key areas of policing, and our win is indicative of the hard work we put in. Having said that, this award does not pre-occupy us, and we are focused on our core mission of preventing and detecting crime, and creating a safer environment for the community. The award is a very nice achievement, but good service to the residents is what we truly want to deliver.

Q Are there particular areas that you feel the Division did exceptionally well in?

I cannot pinpoint any category in particular; rather I think it was a great performance by us all-around. In fact, we take a rather 'old-school' approach, nothing spectacular, to policing. I have always advocated our officers being in uniform on the ground to project a strong presence with the aim of deterring criminal behaviour. If crimes do happen, and they will, we will investigate the cases earnestly and take the criminals off

the streets. We also spend a lot of time educating the residents about crime prevention, securing their homes and properties, crime trends, as well as encouraging them to join Citizens-On-Patrol. This is because prevention is always better than cure.

Q Is there anything you would like to say to your officers?

Winning this award is a great honour for me, or any commander for that matter. It is also recognition of the efforts of all the officers and staff in the Division, from the frontline officers to the investigation branches and office staff. I want to congratulate all of them. We must take care though, to stay focused and not rest on our laurels, as our job is never done – there will always be crime.

Best Key Installations Unit

Stellar performances in the Individual Physical Proficiency Test and shooting tests, as well as high standards of discipline during deployments have landed the Airport Police Division (APD) Key Installations (KINS) unit its second Best KINS Unit Award in a row.

The award recognises performance in areas such as operational readiness, skill proficiency, and administrative excellence, amongst others, and aims to motivate KINS troopers through friendly competition between units to improve efficacy in their duties.

Commanding Officer, APD KINS, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) (NS) Benjamin Chew, noted the importance of regular meetings with the KINS troopers, and their active engagement during their recall periods in motivating them to take

their National Service obligations seriously.

DSP (NS) Chew also shared, "I feel really glad that the Division has won this award. This is our second win in a row, and it shows that some of our key initiatives are working well. It is recognition for the dedication and commitment of our NSmen and their leaders."

Best National Service Operationally Ready Unit

After being first runner up for two years, the Central Police Division ('A' Division) has come out tops in FY2012, winning the Best National Service Operationally Ready Unit Award (BNSORUA). A strong showing across 12 performance indicators from the three categories of operational readiness, professionalism, and administrative excellence, as well as the Individual Physical Proficiency Test and shooting tests had paved the way for 'A' Division to clinch the first BNSORUA under the new assessment criteria.

Previously named the Best Police National Service Land Division Award, a review of the competition criteria in FY2011 led to it being renamed the BNSORUA, with the aim of achieving greater alignment with the SPF's vision and mission.

'A' Division's win was the result of the sound management of their Police National Service (PNS) contingent. The Division's leaders, PNS staff and National Service Key and Command Appointment Holders regularly hold discussions to devise ways to manage work process more efficiently.



▲ (From left) AC Keok Tong San (Commander Ang Mo Kio Division), DSP (NS) Benjamin Chew (CO, Airport KINS), DAC (NS) Lionel Chai (NS Commander, Central Police Division)

National Service Commander, 'A' Division, Deputy Assistant Commissioner (NS) of Police Lionel Chai, hailed the professionalism and commitment of this contingent towards National Service for the Award.

Best Volunteer Special Constabulary (VSC) Unit

This year, the winner of the Best VSC Unit goes to the VSC unit in Bedok Police Division, headed by Superintendent of Police (Supt) (V) Tham Wai Kee. An excellent

showing in areas such as volunteer resource productivity & operational effectiveness, skills competency (IPPT and shooting), and Professional Integrity have landed the Division's volunteer corps the Best Volunteer Special Constabulary (VSC) Unit Award for FY2012 after finishing second in the competition for five years straight.

Their win can be attributed to the strong support from the regular officers in the Division, who made a conscientious effort to involve

the VSC officers in all major deployments and operations, as well as the Divisional welfare events. This helped to forge a strong sense of belonging in the VSC officers towards the Division.

In addition, discipline was a key factor in their success. Despite being volunteers, they fully understand that it is imperative for them, in a regimental unit, to discharge their duties with utmost discipline.

In celebration of the Police Week 2013, *Police Life* asks some members of the Singapore Police Force (SPF) “What it means to me to be a Force for the Nation?”

By Ms Chew Si Lei Jinnie

“And I ask you, every one of you, to keep faith with our honourable mission; to stand with me as we build a better future for our police force, so that we can make our country, Singapore, the safest place in the world, as only a Force for our Nation can.”

– Commissioner of Police Ng Joo Hee at the Police Workplan Seminar 2013

“As a Force for the Nation, we serve and defend not only our fellow countrymen, but also ourselves and our loved ones.”

– SC/ Sgt Mikhail Wee

“To me, being a Force for the Nation truly represents how everyone in the SPF works as a team, be it directly or indirectly, to make Singapore a home we can be proud of.”

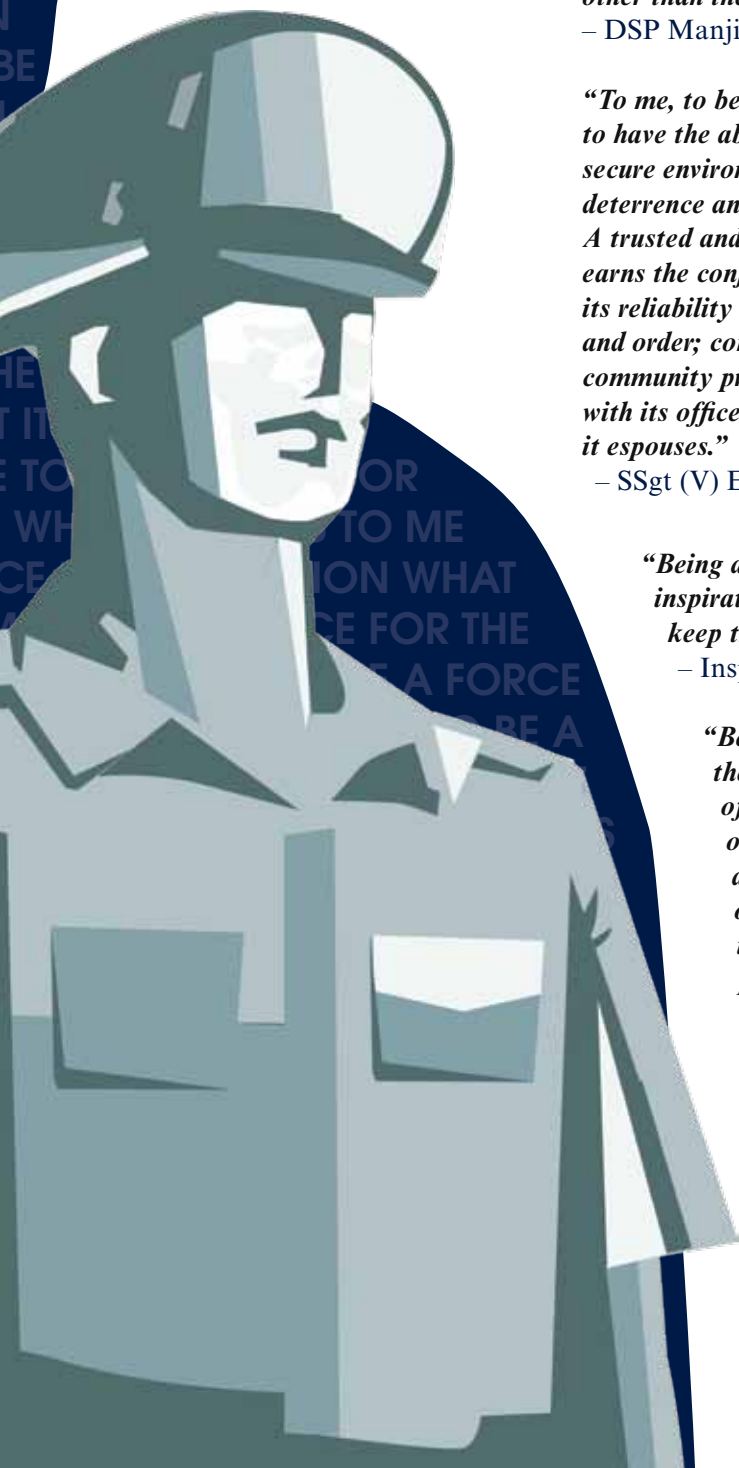
– Ms Shanaz Thoufeekh

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME TO BE A FORCE FOR THE NATION WHAT IT MEANS TO ME TO BE A FORCE FOR THE NATION
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“Being a Force for the Nation means the life to me. Although I am in the last lap of my career, I still have the same passion to serve as I did when I joined in March 1975. The desire to always remain relevant and valid drives me to give the best of my abilities in what has been a remarkable and really extraordinary career. I would definitely not change or wish for a career other than the one I have proudly lived.”

– DSP Manjit Singh

“To me, to be a Force for the Nation is to have the ability to provide a safe and secure environment through detection, deterrence and prevention of crime. A trusted and respectable Force that earns the confidence of the nation on its reliability in the enforcement of law and order; connects actively with the community promoting racial harmony; with its officers embracing the high values it espouses.”

– SSgt (V) Esther Wong

“Being a Force for the Nation is my inspiration and motivation to help keep this Nation safe and sound.”

– Insp (V) Tan Wee Beng, Daniel

“Being part of a Force for the Nation, gives me a sense of social responsibility and obligation in making a difference to improve the lives of others. As a civilian officer in the Force, I have always performed my task with integrity and due diligence. I am honoured to be part of the Force that safeguards the safety of its citizens and stability of the country.”

– Ms Hafizah Bte Zailanee

“To me, SPF as a Force for the Nation is empowered to encourage our fellow countrymen to join us in the fight to prevent, detect and deter crime.”

– Sgt (NS) Faizal Farouk

“Being an officer in the Force for the Nation goes beyond the surface. It is always worth the effort for every smile and appreciation that we receive from the Public. After all, Singapore is our homeland and every obstacle that the officers go through, is for the safety of our loved ones.”

– Sgt Muhd Adam

“I feel honoured and proud to be a Force for the Nation, people around me always tell me how great an impression they have of the Police. It compelled me to do even more for them.”

– SC Tan Wen Hao Terry

“Call it unfinished business but coming from a family of three generations of police officers, being a Force for the Nation to me is continuation of a cycle and a legacy.”

– DSP David Lim

“As a police officer, I am honoured to be part of a dynamic force that has made Singapore one of the safest cities in the world. Policing is what I chose to do and essentially to make life better for my family and everyone in Singapore. I am positive that we, as a Force for the Nation, will make Singapore an even safer home for all of us.”

– Insp Hamzah Bin Mohd Hussein



Parade formed up and ready for inspection ◀



Special Operations Command water cannon drive past ◀



The Parade

By SSgt Edwin Lim Jia Zhong

Held at the Home Team Academy on 3 June 2013, the latest edition of the parade saw Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, Co-ordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Home Affairs, as the reviewing officer. Set against the glowing skies of dusk, 850 participants comprising officers from the various police divisions and units as well as the National Police Cadet Corps marched and sang in the parade segment. About 1,500 Singapore Police Force officers and invited guests attended the event. *Police Life* brings you the picture highlights.



▶ Singing of the National Anthem



Parade Guard-of-Honours ◀



March past by the Police K9 unit ◀

They Prevent. They Deter. They Detect.

*By Sgt (NS) Faizal Bin Farouk * Photos By SSgt Edwin Lim jia Zhong & SC Muhammad Idaffi Othman*



▲ *Community Liaison & Preparedness Team, Serangoon Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC)*



Check out the iPhone/iPad edition
of *Police Life* for their video



In line with Police Week 2013, outstanding teams from across the Force have been awarded with the Commissioner of Police (CP) Commendation Award for their outstanding performance in 2012. *Police Life* sat down with three of these teams to understand what keeps them going for more successes.

Community Liaison & Preparedness Team, Serangoon Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC)

Future Leaders in You (FLY) project, Project Green Leaf, Industry On Alert (IOA) - you name it, they've done it. The Community Liaison and Preparedness (CLP) team from the Serangoon NPC is a jack-of-all-trades when it comes to the three key elements of prevention, deterrence and detection.

One of their most outstanding Community Safety & Security Programmes (CSSP), the FLY project, has produced a bountiful harvest. Their collaboration with uniformed groups from secondary schools has resulted in students interacting with the officers on a daily basis.

"The students are even giving us information about vices in their school like who is smoking contraband cigarettes and all that," shared Senior Staff Sergeant (SSSgt) Wong Yukang.

With the implementation of FLY, cadets from the uniformed groups are given leadership roles in organising crime prevention initiatives with grassroots members and have assisted Police in organising and setting up crime prevention booths at community events. Serangoon NPC has created opportunities for students and their own officers to grow.

It isn't always so easy though.



▲ *Fatal Accident Investigation Team (FAIT), Traffic Police Department (TP)*

Sergeant (Sgt) Tay Yu Qiang and Corporal (Cpl) Muhd Iskandar Zainal shared that when dealing with youths at risk in Project Green Leaf, parents and schools are often reluctant to acknowledge that their students are at risk or even potential delinquents.

The IOA is another CSSP project to educate foreign workers in the Ang Mo Kio industrial park. It equipped the workers with basic crime prevention skills such as spotting a suspicious person and the

modus operandi of criminals. The Police presence in the industrial estate also acts as a deterrence to potential criminals within the industrial park.

Juggling these responsibilities on top of daily policing duties, is a tough act. Staff Sergeant (W/SSgt) Patricia Pal Kaur, however, mentioned that the passion and drive that the officers in the Serangoon CLP team possess spur them on to do their best each time. Kudos to the CLP team officers as they rotate their duties willingly!

Fatal Accident Investigation Team (FAIT), Traffic Police Department (TP)

Previously recognised as the Specialist Major Team, the FAIT was formed in 2004. FAIT is, as mentioned by Senior Station Inspector (SSI) Mohd Jamal Marzuki, the “cream of the crop” of the investigation team in TP. They have handled cases of fatal, hit-and-run and high profile road traffic accidents.

CELEBRATING OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Some examples include the accident involving the Romanian Diplomat on 15 December 2009 and the triple-fatality case at the junction of Victoria Street involving a 30-year-old Ferrari driver, 41-year-old taxi passenger and 52-year-old taxi driver.

When asked about the most challenging task when investigating fatal traffic accident cases, FAIT's Officer In-charge, Inspector (Insp) Clement Tan Chee Sing, stated that the hardest part of the job is to convey the unfortunate news to the bereaved next-of-kin or family members. It is not always an easy task. Officers have to be empathetic and must possess strong emotional resilience.

One significant case was apparently still lingering in their hearts and minds when Insp Tan and SSI Mohd Jamal recollected the team's efforts. On 13 June 2011, a toddler was killed by his mother as she reversed her car at their home in Jalan Binchang, Bishan. The unfortunate housewife did not see her son, who was playing at the front gate, and ran him over.

To solve this case, the FAIT collaborated with the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) to determine the important factor of blind spot. This blind spot factor which the HSA provided expertise on was an important factor that resulted in the mother not being charged with causing death by a rash and negligent act. By taking the initiative to acquire the expertise of the HSA, they addressed this case to the Attorney-General's Chambers. A decision was then made not to prosecute the mother.

Exceptionally outstanding teams are also recognised with the Minister for Home Affairs Operational Excellence Award. During the last ceremony held at Home Team Academy on 21 November 2012, 102 teams from various Home Team departments received the award from Mr Masagos Zulkifli Masagos Mohamad, Senior Minister of State for Home and Foreign Affairs, for demonstrating excellence in their respective operations. Here are two outstanding operations by the Singapore Police Force (SPF).

Operation Hawkeye

New Crime Pattern

Between March and April 2012, the Airport Police Division (APD) detected a new crime pattern happening on-board Singapore Airlines (SIA) flights. Plane passengers were losing cash, varying from hundreds to thousands of dollars, during their flight. APD's investigations showed that the culprits, who were from Henan province in China, bought plane tickets from Hong Kong to other Asian countries, transiting briefly in Singapore. The culprits only spent a few hours in their destination before travelling back to Hong Kong after the successful theft operations.

Challenges Faced

Since the theft took place in-flight, it was not feasible for APD to deploy officers on every flight from Hong Kong. Not only would this be costly, it would also require too much manpower to cover all flights. Many officers were also involved in tracking down the culprits' details from the long list of travellers in the various flights to identify suspects with similar travelling pattern.

Overcoming Challenges via Community Policing

The uniqueness of this operation was that officers from APD engaged the SIA cabin crews to detect, question and finally establish enough facts for the culprits to be handed over to APD upon arrival in Singapore.

The cabin crews were given guidance by the APD officers to detect these culprits through behavioural patterns even before boarding the plane, observe their hand-carried bags, and follow their movements in the plane to ensure that they are caught when they try to open another person's bag.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Patrick Lim proudly iterated, "this tag-team worked very efficiently, with all information derived from the investigations being shared with airline managers."

Continued on page 17



▲ General Fraud Branch (GFB), Commercial Affairs Department (CAD)

**General Fraud Branch (GFB),
Commercial Affairs Department
(CAD)**

Phantom passengers, false insurance claims and staged accidents. These are terms associated with elaborate and complex motor insurance fraud. To add to the mix, Automated Teller Machine (ATM) skimming cases, lottery or lucky draw scams, transnational scams are also under the GFB's purview.

The GFB ensures that criminals do not have access to fast, easy and dirty money. The 13-men team headed by Superintendent of Police (Supt) Triana Ridwen is stamping their anti-fraud authority.

As most of their investigations can possibly stretch to more than a year, the GFB officers collectively agreed that teamwork is crucial and that it helps when all officers look at one case as a unit. They work by the motto "An officer's weakness can be covered by another officer's strength."

Not only does the team fulfil the mission of the Force by preventing and detecting crimes, specifically fraud, they do their part in deterring such acts through several outreach programmes. An example is how they collaborated with remittance agents and financial institutions. They took the initiative to conduct courses and talks with the staff from these agencies so that the staff would be trained to detect tell-tale signs of cheats. This has helped in many ways as there were cases where eagle-

CELEBRATING OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

eyed remittance staff saved misled individuals thousands of dollars, just before they were about to remit money to overseas cheats.

A case that the GFB can vividly remember was the case involving Phang Choon Meng. Phang was the mastermind of a motor insurance racket. He tried to claim nearly \$96,000 in compensation for staged traffic accidents. Phang was jailed for 27 months, thanks to the team which persevered for about 32 months to crack the case. This goes to show the complexity of a single case where investigation can branch out to numerous leads, requiring to be addressed.

Supt Triana and her team took the opportunity to remind readers “If the deal you are offered is too good to be true, it probably isn’t true.”

Police Life congratulates all recipients of the CP’s Commendation Awards. May the award be an inspiration for others to excel in their respective areas of work.

GFB’s motto:

*“An officer’s
weakness can
be covered
by another
officer’s
strength.”*

Success of this Tag-team

This collaboration between APD and the SIA cabin crews bore fruitful results. All four culprits, believed to be a part of a syndicate, were caught red-handed by the cabin crews. Such hand-in-hand co-operation with external agencies could accelerate the time taken to bring culprits to justice.

Operation Hollywood Heist

Crime Pattern

On 9 January 2012, officers from Tanglin Police Division were alerted to a case of Housebreaking And Theft By Day at an entertainment outlet at River Valley Road. Two safes containing cash and valuables worth \$79,120 were carted away about an hour before midnight.

Challenge Faced

Investigations revealed that the culprits were former staff of the club. They were extremely skilled in covering their tracks and knew how to carry out their mission swiftly yet cautiously. This posed a great challenge to the officers in getting on-site clues like fingerprint marks.

The only way to capture the culprits was to identify their getaway vehicle and identify the driver from the vehicle registration number.

Overcoming Problems

The officers’ dogged perseverance resulted in only three days taken to review the numerous CCTV footages, interview the present staff as well as combing a list of past staff of the entertainment club.

Success of the Operation

On 13 January 2012, the officers got a breakthrough. They managed to identify the getaway van that was used by the suspects. The driver and three other Chinese men involved, were subsequently convicted of Housebreaking And Theft By Day.

“The solution of this case is testament to a well-coordinated effort of the various police units, each excelling in its area of expertise,” said Senior Staff Sergeant Edwin Choong.

There is no doubt that the three pillars of crime-solving - Forensic, Investigation and Intelligence - resulted in the expeditious solving of this case. The officers involved had displayed a high level of passion, tenacity and commitment. Well done!



▶ (From left) Station Inspector Jasfrey Choy, Sergeant Tan Siow Peng (with earpiece linked to a walkie-talkie) and Station Inspector Adrian Chua (armed with a Heckler and Koch USP 9MM compact pistol).



Master of Chaos

*Source: The Sunday Times, 10 March 2013.
Reproduced with Permission*

Deep within the Singapore Police Force are select groups of men and women trained to handle high-risk operations such as hostage rescue, counterterrorism and VIP protection. This week, The Sunday Times finds out what it takes to be an officer in the Police Security Command, an elite unit of handpicked officers assigned to protect the President, ministers and other VIPs.

Station Inspector Adrian Chua knows every move that the minister he is assigned to protect makes, or is about to make, when he is having a good or bad day, and even his shoe size.

The 32-year-old says that as an officer with the Police Security Command (SecCom), it is imperative, even inevitable, that he learns the smallest details of his protectee.

At public events, he looks to these little details, like a furrowed brow or a flinch, to decide when he should step in to disengage a handshake from an over-zealous constituent or even steer the VIP away.

Otherwise, he keeps mostly in the shadows, close enough to act when called upon but never obtrusive.

Station Inspector Francis Joseph, 58, who has been in the job for 30 years, sums it up as such: “We have to decide how best we can perform daily while still allowing the VIP to meet residents and the electorate.”

The two officers are among more than 300 from the unit, handpicked to protect Cabinet ministers and visiting foreign dignitaries.

It is a task that requires a delicate balance between being protective and not overly aggressive, they say.

“We need to be firm to protect them, but we also need to care about their image,” said Station Inspector Jasfrey Choy, 40, who has been with SecCom for 17 years.

This is partly why these officers leave their police uniforms at home and report for duty in civilian attire. It allows them to blend in better with the crowd, whether at a black-tie

dinner or grassroots events.

At formal dos, they are usually dressed in standard-issue suits made with more give around the waist, to accommodate their service pistols and other tools of the trade, which hang off their belts.

To make sure they can fight just as well no matter what they wear, the officers train in all their different get-ups regularly.

Aside from being on personal protection duty, training takes up most of a SecCom officer’s day at work. Whenever they are not accompanying VIPs, they are at the gym, practising close combat martial arts in a dojo, or running.

These officers also go through hundreds of hours of training at the shooting range in their Toa Payoh headquarters to maintain their marksmanship skills.

Aside from the physical drills, SecCom officers also go through deportment and dining etiquette classes. While their counterparts in other elite units are training to use lethal weapons, they are learning which knife to use for buttering bread, and which to use for cutting a piece of steak.

“We act like a model, and fight like a warrior,” quipped Station Inspector Chua, a nine-year veteran of the unit. “Soft skills are important because we need to blend in and be presentable.”

But a typical officer with the unit would already have passed through rounds of physical fitness and psychometric tests before being selected for SecCom training.

None of them, however, has had to draw his gun or throw his body

between a VIP and a bullet or attacker.

This means they have done their jobs well, said SecCom officers The Sunday Times spoke to in a rare interview with the media recently.

Although it is their duty to sacrifice their lives for the people they protect, it is also their responsibility to ensure it never comes to that.

“We will take a bullet if we have to but prevention is our main job,” said Sergeant Tan Siow Peng, 25, who has been with SecCom for two years.

Before their protectees go anywhere, SecCom officers will be busy making sure the places they are heading to are swept for bombs and bugging devices.

Major public events where many VIPs turn up at the same time present the biggest security risks, said Deputy Superintendent David Lim, SecCom head of planning and organisational development. For the National Day Parade, for example, they will have to secure the viewing gallery and also check surrounding buildings for open windows where snipers may hide, and plan evacuation routes in case there is a need to escape.

Last September, they worked closely with the security detail of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, when Prince William and his wife Catherine visited.

SecCom officers also evaluate any e-mail and online threats addressed to their protectees, working closely with the Internal Security Department and the Police Intelligence Department to investigate such cases.

After the Sept 11 terror attacks in 2001, some of the officers have also

MY SAFETY WAS THEIR MISSION

taken on the roles of air marshals. They are sent incognito on flights operated by local airlines, to prevent similar attacks.

But it is hard not to notice them at public functions. Often, they are given away by the earpieces they wear as they scan the crowd to spot gatecrashers and potential troublemakers.

Despite the many hours that he has to stay alert, Station Inspector Chua finds the job challenging but interesting. The most stressful task, in fact, is when he is sitting down at a table full of VIPs, eating with them during official functions.

“I do feel stressed during those moments, and I can’t eat much,” he quipped.

▼ *Reporter Jalelah Abu Baker, acting as a VIP, being whisked away from danger by Police Security Command officers during a training drill.*



“This way, ma’am,” said the female officer from the Police Security Command (SecCom).

I was not expecting it at the time, but what followed those three words were 90 seconds of heart-thumping, frantic action as I played the role of a protectee in a SecCom training drill.

I remember walking into an open hall with my “bodyguards” from the unit, when a “gunman” appeared wanting to assassinate me. Everything went by in a flash in the next minute or so as my detail of SecCom officers – including the female – formed a protective ring around me.

I did not even get a glimpse of the shooter during the commotion as I was literally whisked off my feet by the officers and brought into the safety of a room.

I learnt later that we were there to regroup as the officers prepared an evacuation plan, which did not take long.

Just seconds later, I was rushed out again, this time down two flights of stairs at lightning speed.

Even at that pace, the SecCom officers were mindful of my safety, careful that I did not trip or fall along the way.

Steps were pointed out, as were algae spots that were potentially slippery. I was told later that if I fell and hurt myself or was immobilised, the entire mission initiative would have to be altered.

I was more or less shoved into a white getaway car, with my personal SecCom officer close behind, before we sped off.

The journey from the SecCom headquarters in Toa Payoh to the Old Police Academy in Mount Pleasant Road, where the officers’ training facilities are located, was not an ordinary one.

I was treated to a full VIP motorcade consisting of five cars and two police motorcycles.

A SecCom counter-assault team rode in a sport utility vehicle (SUV) directly in front of the lead car. Behind it was my “VIP car”, followed by a back-up vehicle and another SUV carrying a second counter-assault team.

The cars kept close together, ensuring the convoy was not broken up, and their occupants communicated with one another through their near-invisible earpieces.

The devices, which give the men and women of the unit an air of secrecy, help to keep the whole detail connected wherever its members are.

The scenario I was put through, while exciting and a first for me, was the kind of controlled chaos that SecCom officers spend years perfecting.

What seemed like a blur of activity was actually precise, calculated and coordinated moves by the elite officers entrusted with the safety of, among others, the President, ministers, visiting heads of state and other diplomatic VIPs.

The simulation exercise played out too fast for me to register exactly what was going on.

But behind their dark sunglasses, which are in fact protective eyewear in the event of a shooting, the officers are always alert, scanning the crowd for threats. There is never a dull moment.

They see what others do not see, and hear what others do not hear, but the focus of their mission is never lost for these men and women from SecCom.

As Sergeant Tan Siow Peng, 25, puts it: “The VIP’s safety before ours, always. That’s our mission.”



Geared Up To Act and Protect

Source: The Sunday Times, 3 March 2013. Reproduced with Permission

Deep within the Singapore Police Force are small groups of men and women trained to handle high-risk operations like counter-terrorism, hostage-rescue and intercepting smugglers at sea. The Sunday Times looks inside the Special Task Squadron, to find out what it takes to be an elite officer from the Police Coast Guard.

It is no secret that police officers who volunteer for the Special Task Squadron (STS) are expected to be ultra-fit, strong swimmers and sharpshooters.

Most who apply to join the unit, which was set up within the Police Coast Guard (PCG) to intercept intruders at sea, would already have those boxes checked.

But a fair share of the candidates, who hail from different divisions in the Singapore Police Force, would stumble during selection because of a memory test.

Details of the test, along with the selection process for the STS, are classified but The Sunday Times understands it is designed to identify men who have an ability to remember details while under stress.

The test involves memorising a body of text and details such as the names and positions of various items placed on the ground. In real-world operations, these may be locations of buoys, popular fishing areas, shipping lanes and routes used by smugglers at sea.

To simulate mission fatigue, the candidates are made to run up stairs or sprint a short distance after they receive the information that they need to memorise and recall.

A candidate repeats the drill if he makes even a single mistake and has only 30 minutes to successfully pass the test.

The drill, said squadron members, not only sharpens their memory but also builds up their resilience, which would allow them to think clearly under pressure.

“When I was going through selection, I thought this test was just to see

how well I can remember things,” said a 31-year-old sergeant who has been with the unit for five years. “But after I became a member of the STS, I realised that our missions often require us to remember certain details of the operation or description of suspects... after we are physically taxed.”

The sergeant, like all members of the squadron, cannot be named because of the nature of their duties.

The STS was set up under a cloak of secrecy in 1994 to intercept smugglers and illegal immigrants. But like most other elite police units, it has expanded its scope of operations to include counter-terrorism since the Sept 11 attacks in the United States in 2001.

Squadron members are trained to use deadly force to protect Singapore waters. But veterans say a keen knowledge of various elements at sea is what keeps them and people on other vessels safe when they are out executing high-risk operations.

This includes understanding sea conditions and what lies on the waters around the island state.

An in-depth knowledge of Singapore’s waters will help STS officers, who have to make split-second decisions when in pursuit of intruders at sea, often in the dark. They say these suspects, who usually travel in dimly-lit speedboats at night, have nothing to lose.

“During a chase, they sometimes lead our boats into areas where there are civilian vessels or obstacles such as a kelong or a water buoy,” said a squadron member.

“This not only puts us at risk of a collision but also endangers the lives of others, which is why it is critical for us to know the terrain.”

Like the police Special Tactics and Rescue (STAR) unit, selection for the STS is said to involve a myriad of physical and mental challenges designed to push candidates to their limits.

Training involves long-distance swimming and running, sometimes while hauling a stretcher, as well as memory drills, similar to the ones used during selection.

Besides being physically and mentally sharp, squadron members are also highly adept at shooting at moving targets from speedboats bouncing over choppy waters.

In January, the STS took The Sunday Times team out to sea in one of its PK Class speedboats – which can reach a maximum speed of about 50 knots – to observe a training exercise.

Five squadron members, comprising a radar operator, lookout, gunner, captain and coxswain, set out on the interceptor craft.

Once at sea, they spot a suspicious vessel speeding towards land and give chase.

The gunner fires a flare as a warning to stop but when the intruders’ vessel continues on its path, the expert marksman takes aim and fires at the offending vessel’s “engine”, marked by a barrel, hitting it spot-on from about 3m despite travelling at over 45 knots.

“This is a fast-paced job and operations are never the same, so our training needs to mimic that,” said a 34-year-old squadron member who has been with the STS for seven years.

To be effective against smugglers and terrorists, the STS will need to remain at the sharp end of the spear. That, however, does not mean the squadron



► A gunner from the Special Task Squadron taking out the “engine” of a vessel that is speeding towards land as part of a simulation exercise



is prepared to throw caution to the wind and take the safety of its men and civilians for granted, he added.

“A high-speed chase in open water is very dangerous, especially when we need to get close enough to trigger a ‘reaction’ from the intruder without crashing into him.”

The tactic, called ‘clipping’, involves using STS speedboats to knock the stern of intruder boats at high speed to disable their outboard engines.

Usually, clipping is attempted only after a suspect ignores repeated police warnings to stop, and it becomes even more dangerous when the chase is conducted at high speed at night, or when the intruding boat travels in a zig-zag fashion in a bid to evade the STS.

The squadron came under the media glare in 2007, after a high-speed chase of a boat carrying six illegal immigrants ended in a collision that left two of its officers dead. Of the six illegals, three were rescued, one found dead, and the remaining two, unaccounted for.

The squadron’s 41-year-old commanding officer, who spoke to The Sunday Times in a rare interview recently, said the STS never compromises on the lives of its men or members of the public. In fact, safety remains a key pillar of the squadron’s training doctrine today.

Referring to the 2007 incident, the Deputy Superintendent of Police said:

“We have to recognise that it’s been over five years... but we have evolved. We go out together for a mission, we come back together.”

The Special Task Squadron

PAST OPERATIONS

Late 2012: The STS laid an ambush for four illegal immigrants who were waiting under a flyover at Pandan River for a boat to pick them up, so they could leave Singapore.

When the boat arrived, STS officers closed in and arrested the illegal immigrants without firing a shot.

April 2010: Three illegal immigrants were nabbed at a reclamation area in Tuas after STS officers, who were positioned at a few strategic points, used an entangler to disrupt the boat’s propeller to stop them from fleeing.

April 2007: STS officers were in pursuit of a boat carrying six illegal immigrants in the sea off Tuas. They had attempted to “clip” the offending vessel but it resulted in a collision, and both boats capsized. As a result, two STS officers, who were trapped in their speedboat, died.

March 2004: The STS captured one of three armed robbers in one of the most high-profile cases in its history. The fugitive had evaded capture by more than 700 members of the police and army involved in the manhunt.

STS officers, however, managed to nabbed the suspect in Pulau Tekong after two days.



Check out the iPhone/iPad edition of *Police Life* for more photos

COPS: Knowing Their Neighbourhood Inside Out

*By Charissa Tan, Home Team News * Photos By Cheryl Low, Home Team News*



Singapore Police Force (SPF) Officers Station Inspector (SI) Mohamad Shafiee (*above right*) and his partner Corporal (Cpl) Muhammad Khairuddin Bin Alias (*above left*) are a welcome sight in the Tampines Central neighbourhood.

Wearing polo shirts, shorts and black sports shoes, the two officers often draw curious stares from many.

Unlike other passers-by who sidestepped the duo, 58-year-old Madam Judy Toh welcomed them excitedly into the traditional Chinese medicine shop where she works at.

“I see the Police officers patrolling this neighbourhood often. It is really good that the officers come around frequently. They are able to assist residents on the spot when they need help,” shared the shop supervisor.

“I’ve expressed my frustration to the officers about many cyclists speeding past our shop front without stopping, especially in the mornings. It’s really dangerous as there are quite a few elderly passers-by,” she added.

“Thankfully, the situation has improved since (the increase in officers patrolling the area), and the cyclists tend to slow down, get off their bicycles and walk, or avoid the shop fronts totally now.”

As part of the Community Policing Unit (CPU) under the Community Policing System (COPS) which was launched on 20 May 2012, SI Shafiee and his partner perform their daily rounds on foot around shop-houses to engage the various stakeholders in the area, such as the shop owners.

CPU officers are assigned to specific neighbourhoods and will conduct foot and bicycle patrols to cultivate closer and more extensive relationships with community stakeholders.

When Home Team News sought the

patrol team out, SI Shafiee and his partner were speaking to the shop owners at Tampines Central to better understand if they had any security concerns, and gather their contact details.

“This database of contacts would come in really handy should there be an emergency such as a fire or burglary in the middle of the night,” said SI Shafiee.

“In a previous emergency that happened in the wee hours of the morning, we had difficulty establishing the owner of a particular shop and were not able to enter the shop to find out more. It really took up a lot more time in settling the case. Hopefully, this initiative to gather contacts will help this problem.”

As part of the new community policing initiative, both officers regularly attend the monthly Residents and Neighbourhood Committee meeting of the different housing estates within Tampines Central.

During the meetings, the Committee members also bring up any issues related to the safety and security of the housing estates.

This approach helps to deter and detect criminal conduct much faster than before.

For CPU officer Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Toh Wee Boon, having had 10 years with the Tampines NPC has helped him build strong rapport with the residents of the area, especially the elderly residents in the area.

Going from door to door to introduce the new COPS system and the new uniform, while handing out pamphlets with emergency contact numbers to older residents, is part of

the routine he enjoys.

“We old people don’t know anything! But when these Police officers come around, we feel very comforted especially when they ask after us and interact with us,” shared Mdm Lua Quee Eng, 83, who lives alone with a domestic helper in the area.

Laughter and friendly reminders to lock the front gates and doors echoed through the corridors as SSgt Toh and his partner Cpl Haris Bin Sidik made their way down from the top floor of the residential housing blocks.

As part of his community engagement and due to his bond with the residents of the block, SSgt Toh also works closely with the elder-care centre, EverGreen Circle.

SSgt Toh shared:

“It’s important to get to know the community and work with them, so that they also have a sense of ownership of keeping their neighbourhood safe and secure.”

“Should there be crime cases or issues, the residents would hence be more forthcoming in providing information and assistance.”

Mdm Lua also agreed that for elderly residents, the increase of engagement by Police officers is necessary.

“There is a sense of security when they are around more, and as we (elderly residents) frequently go to the centre for assistance, it’s heartening to know that the officers work closely with them.”

Ready for the Future

*By SC Muhammad Alif Bin Sapuan * Photos by Sgt Chee Yong Tat*

Mr S Iswaran, Minister In Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister For Home Affairs And Trade & Industry, outlined three broad thrusts that the Singapore Police Force (SPF) will adopt in response to the increasingly challenging operating environment, in his keynote address at the Annual Police Workplan Seminar.





Mr Iswaran
and Deputy
Commissioner of
Police Mr T. Raja
Kumar being briefed
on the 3D laser
scanner

Firstly, the Police will continue to leverage on technology to boost SPF's operational effectiveness.

Redesigned Neighbourhood Police Posts (NPPs) delivering automated services round the clock, leveraging heavily on technology will be piloted at Marsiling, Radin Mas and West Coast in the second half of 2013.

Secondly, the SPF will enhance its operational capabilities by investing in officers and capabilities. A new Police Divisional Headquarters in Woodlands will be established in the next five years. Two new Neighbourhood Police Centres (NPCs) will also be established in Geylang and Bartley. The Community Policing System (COPS) will also be rolled out at Changi, Choa Chu Kang, Geylang, Hougang, Pasir Ris and Toa Payoh NPCs by the end of 2013.

Lastly, community engagement and partnership will be further strengthened so that the community can play an active role in keeping their neighbourhoods safe and secure. Timely information on crime trends will be shared via Police's mobile applications and Facebook page.

Highlights on Workplan Seminar exhibits

Body Scanners by the Airport Police Division (APD)

The body scanner introduced by the APD will assist security screeners to identify and locate threat items concealed on the passengers' body.

Objects concealed on the body will appear as yellow marks on the screen.

3D Laser Scanner by the Criminal Investigation Department

The 3D laser scanner is a newly acquired equipment that is used to assist crime scene specialists in documenting scenes of crime. It takes a few minutes for the scene to be scanned and it preserves the crime scene in 3D exactly the way it is.

With the ability to change the unit measurement settings for distance, the scanner provides accurate measurement. This helps the investigators to revisit the scene and carry out post-scene analysis and crime scene reconstruction.

Also, it works in all conditions – daylight or complete darkness, rain or shine.

Hawk Eye Remote Observatory System (HEROS) Camera by Operations Department

With a zoom in function of up to more than 60 times, the HEROS camera is mounted on tall buildings in city areas – where major meetings and events occur. The images captured, such as a person's facial features or a car plate number, are crystal clear.

HEROS camera also has the capability of panning, tilting and zooming up to 800 metres. It will complement the existing Public Camera Zone cameras installed island-wide.



A FORCE FOR THE NATION