



**POLICE  
LIFE**

THE SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE MAGAZINE

2018 / ISSUE 08/09

# STAR of the Force

Our UNwavering Commitment in Peacekeeping

A Harrowing Escape



# CONTENT SPOTLIGHT



## Our UNwavering Commitment in Peacekeeping

It has been 20 years since our Singapore Police Force (SPF) United Nations Peacekeeping Force (UNPKF) was officially established. To commemorate this occasion, a celebratory event was held at the Special Operations Command, where both past and present UNPKF members gathered and reminisced their experiences. Read on to find out more about the tough, and sometimes life-threatening experiences that they faced during these missions.

P10-15



## STAR of the Force

The Special Tactics and Rescue (STAR) unit's role is to equip the SPF with the highest level of tactical armed response. Ever wondered what it takes to be one of them? Find out more about these masked men in black as veteran STAR operator, Station Inspector 'J', shares with our readers the challenges and sacrifices of being a STAR operator.

P22-25



## A PCO's Journal: Two Weeks in Canada with over 60 'strangers'

The SPF Combined Band makes history as the first Asian band to perform at the prestigious 2018 Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo in Halifax, Canada! Our Public Communications Officer had the rare opportunity to spend two weeks in a foreign country with the SPF Combined Band. Read all about the eye-opening performance in her journal entry.

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ON THE COVER: Photo by Mr Dominique Andre

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A PCO's Journal: Two weeks in Canada with over 60 'strangers'

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# Let's Get Social!

By Irwan Shah

With our social media followers growing in numbers, the Singapore Police Force (SPF) has been working hard to bring you the latest developments and updates! If you are not connected with us online, check out some of these popular happenings that the *Police Life* team has captured for you!

Singapore Police Force  
4 July · 🌐

## SG\$1.2 MILLION SEIZED IN POLICE OPERATION AGAINST ILLEGAL GAMBLING ON WORLD CUP

In an operation against unlawful World Cup remote gambling conducted on 2 July 2018, police officers from the Criminal Investigation Department, Police Intelligence Department and the Special Operations Command mounted simultaneous raids at multiple locations islandwide. 31 men aged between 22 and 74 were arrested for their suspected involvement in illegal football betting under the Remote Gamblin...  
[See more](#)



👍👍👍 Yeo Tong Ming and 2K others 374 Comments 4.1K Shares 303K Views

Chua Swee Hua Thank you for the SPF. They had done much for the country  
Like · Reply · 8w · Edited 2

Neo Yueteng You are the world's most respectable police force. Being hard when you have to be hard, and keeping the country orderly and safe. Thank you SPF!!!  
Like · Reply · 8w 14

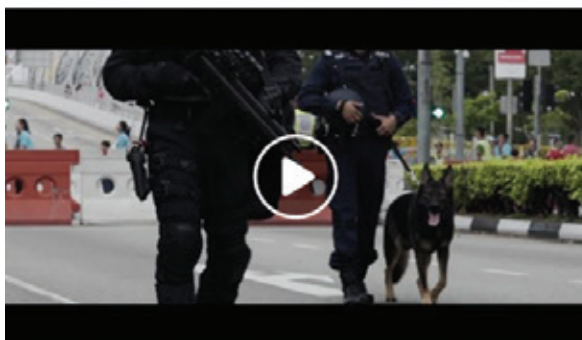
Solomon Tan Awesome! Job well done. Thank you for your contribution to the security of Singapore.  
Like · Reply · 8w 2



Singapore Police Force  
9 August · 🌐

## Happy National Day, Singapore!

The Singapore Police Force is all ready for the parade. So have fun, stay safe and enjoy the nation's birthday celebrations!  
[#WeAreSingapore](#)



👍👍👍 1.3K 64 Comments 455 Shares 26K Views

Kaalea Mahna Keep up the good job, sons and daughters of Singapore!  
Like · Reply · 1w

Charlene J Fernandez God Bless, SPF! Thank you for all you do to keep Singapore and all who live here, safe and secure. Blessed & Happy National Day to all of us!  
Like · Reply · 3w 3

Ged Yong Thanks all officers for working to keep the peace and sporting great smiles. Happy National Day SPF! Job well done!  
Like · Reply · 3w



Singapore Police Force  
20 July · 🌐

The Police Coast Guard was joined by CNA on a training sail to Brunei. Check out the video below for a glimpse of life at sea 🌊



CHANNELNEWSASIA.COM

## Singapore Police Coast Guard undergo endurance test in rough seas | Video

👍👍👍 333

12 Comments 90 Shares

Alice Long Great respect for SPF. Thank you.  
Like · Reply · 6w

Alvin Kuo I saw it, got a pack of 6 buns like those red bean ones at the Captain's watch. 😊 The food looks nice and great camaraderie.  
Like · Reply · 6w

Lim Li Thank for sharing.SPF  
Like · Reply · 6w

Singapore Police Force  
13 August at 11:38 · 🌐

## HOME TEAM CONTINGENT DEPARTS FOR LAOS TO AID IN DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS

A 32-member Home Team contingent, comprising 14 officers from the Singapore Police Force (SPF), three victim recovery dogs from the SPF K9 Unit, and 18 Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) officers, departed this morning for Attapeu Province, Laos, on a Republic of Singapore Air Force C-130 transport aircraft from Paya Lebar Air Base.

The SPF officers, led by Superintendent Mohamad Sofian Bin Salleh, will ... [See more](#)



👍👍👍 547

28 Comments 66 Share

Ako Si Lolo Fendil be safe and best of luck  
Like · Reply · 1w 2

Seng Sengkham Big thanks from Laos 🇱🇦  
Like · Reply · 1w 1

Ananda Sarker best of luck Singapore police force  
Like · Reply · 1w

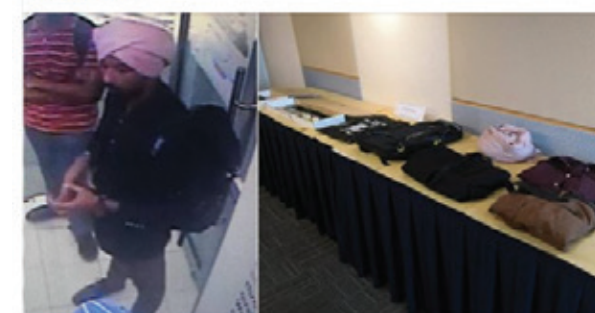
Singapore Police Force shared a post.  
2 August at 12:22 · 🌐

The Police have arrested a 29-year-old Bangladeshi man for attempted armed robbery and exhibiting an imitation firearm while committing a scheduled offence after he allegedly threatened to blow up a pawn shop following a failed robbery attempt.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Investigation & Intelligence) concurrent Director of the Criminal Investigation Department, Florence Chua said, "The man went to great lengths to conceal his identity and cover his tracks to evade detecti... [See more](#)

Channel NewsAsia  
2 August at 11:06 · 🌐

"He didn't think we had caught on to his disguise," said the Singapore Police Force.



CHANNELNEWSASIA.COM

## Suspect who tried to rob Boon Lay pawn shop is a Bangladeshi who overstayed

👍👍👍 Jody Ong and 658 others

161 Comments 273 Shares

James B Wright-Brown Well done SPF and thank you for keeping us safe  
Like · Reply · 3w 8

Jassie Sohi Thank you SPF for clearing our Sikh community name out of this incident.  
Like · Reply · 3w 58

Xlara Anjeru Well done all officers involved for keep Singapore a safe place called home.  
Like · Reply · 3w 21





# NATIONAL DAY PARADE 2018

Photos: Public Affairs  
Department





# MAINTAINING A HIGH LEVEL OF OPERATIONAL READINESS

By Operations Department (Photos: Public Affairs Department)



In recent years, the threat of terrorism has significantly increased with many terror attacks occurring in many countries. Singapore is not immune and we currently face the highest level of terror threat in recent years. The Singapore Police Force (SPF) has prioritised efforts to tackle these terror threats to ensure that we are ready to respond when an attack happens in Singapore. Other than building up frontline capabilities, such as the setting up of the Emergency Response Teams (ERT) and In-Situ Response Teams (IRT), it is critical that we maintain a high level of operational readiness to ensure that the Police's response would be swift and effective.



The London Bridge attack in June 2017 emphasised the crucial need for an operationally ready emergency response force. The quick deployment of specialist forces, closure of Tube stations and evacuation of civilians allowed the City of London and the Metropolitan police to neutralise the threat within eight minutes of the initial emergency call. One of the contributing factors to this swift and coordinated response was the regular counter-terrorism exercises by the London police, which has trained their officers to respond effectively to any threats presented.

To maintain a high level of operational readiness, the SPF has a dedicated team of police officers conducting regular ground deployment exercises to prepare our frontline emergency response officers to effectively and efficiently respond to such an attack. These exercises focussed on the SPF's operational response to both public security and public order incidents.

## The Exercise and Readiness Division (ERD)

At the ERD in Operations Department, we recognise the importance of preparing our frontline officers to respond to public security or public order incidents. ERD was formed in April 2016 and has taken on the responsibility of maintaining the SPF's operational readiness through the rigorous conduct of exercises. Realistic exercises simulating mass shooting of civilians, suicide bombing or vehicle ramming are painstakingly planned and conducted to provide a safe learning platform for our officers to test and validate operational plans. This would not have been possible without the strong support from the Special Operations Command (SOC), Gurkha Contingent (GC), Training Command, SPF specialist units, various divisions within the Operations Department as well as other agencies over the past few years.

### Exercises Conducted/Coordinated by ERD

Exercises conducted by the ERD can be categorised into Readiness exercises, Major-Event exercises and Demonstrative exercises.



## Readiness Exercises

Readiness exercises aim to assess the knowledge and competencies of the SPF officers from various units such as the Land Divisions, SOC and GC. From these exercises, the officers are able to familiarise themselves with the operational plans for different scenarios. Assessments are made of their responsiveness, competencies and capabilities. These assessments play a critical role in identifying strengths and particularly, areas for improvement in current operational plans.

***"The ability to work well with various public and private stakeholders is critical to ensuring an effective response to any attack,"*** said Director of Operations, Senior Assistant Commissioner How Kwang Hwee

Therefore, readiness exercises are not restricted to only SPF resources. Multi-agency exercises are conducted to evaluate the coordination effectiveness with external agencies such as the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) and private stakeholders, which include commercial establishments and schools. The interoperability of agencies, tactics used to manage the various types of incidents, command and control effectiveness are also put to stringent tests during such exercises.



## Demonstrative Exercises

Last but not least, a biennale demonstrative exercise allows the SPF to showcase its counter-terrorism capabilities, as well as those of our partnering agencies, to the public. One of such exercises is "Exercise Northstar X" which was conducted at Changi Airport on October 2017. This exercise involved more than 650 personnel from the SAF, SCDF, SMRT, Changi Airport Group and other agencies. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was also invited to observe the exercise.



## Major Event Exercises

Major-event exercises aim to prepare SPF officers for key large-scale events such as the National Day Parade, Formula 1 race, the historic Trump-Kim Summit and the 32nd ASEAN Summit hosted in Singapore earlier this year. These exercises are tailored to validate and enhance operational readiness for such major events. In addition, these exercises have been instrumental in ensuring operational, competency and logistical readiness for these major events.



## The Road Ahead

The combination of exercises led by the ERD has allowed us to obtain invaluable insights to improve the SPF's operational plans, coordination between units and agencies, and equipping. However, this cannot be achieved by the ERD alone. ERD will continue to work closely with the SPF units and its external partners and stakeholders to ensure that we will always be operationally ready to safeguard Singapore every day!



# OUR UNWAVERING COMMITMENT IN PEACEKEEPING

By Hadi Hafidz (Photos: Singapore Police Force)

20 years have passed since the formation of the Singapore Police Force (SPF) United Nations Peacekeeping Force (UNPKF). Established in 1998, the SPF UNPKF is dedicated and committed to the call of service in contributing to world peace. As a secondary unit in the SPF, the SPF UNPKF ensures that there will always be a pool of officers who are ready to be activated for international peacekeeping missions. To date, the SPF UNPKF has carried out more than 10 peacekeeping missions in various regions across Asia.

To commemorate its 20th Anniversary, a celebration was held at the Special Operations Command on 28 June 2018. Graced by Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations) Tan Chye Hee, the event allowed both past and present SPF UNPKF members to come together to share and reminisce about their experiences. To thank its pioneer officers who are still serving in the SPF UNPKF for their dedication and commitment over the years, these officers were each presented with a token of appreciation.



Police Life took the opportunity to speak to several of the officers to find out more about their experiences during the peacekeeping missions – some of which began even before the SPF UNPKF was officially set up in 1998. Below are some of their episodic accounts, which were indeed unforgettable, yet at times, terrifying as well.



## Namibia 1989

One of the pioneer members of the SPF UNPKF, 54-year-old Superintendent of Police (Supt) Mohammad Amir, vividly recounted the Namibia 1989 general elections where the United Nations Transition Assistance Group sought for Singapore's assistance to help the local police in dealing with human rights violations, during the pre-UNPKF days. After expressing his interest for the mission and going through the rigorous training, he was deployed to one of the polling stations in Namibia to monitor the voting process to ensure that there was no form of intimidation by political parties towards the voters during the general elections.



*"When I woke up in the morning, I saw the locals sitting around the polling station, drinking muddy water from their plastic bottles. While that was shocking, I was also bewildered*

*when I found out from one of the staff that they had to walk for a few days before arriving at the polling station. The extreme level of poverty that the people lived in made me realise how fortunate we are back home,"* shared Supt Amir.

Supt Amir also shared that the weather was very hot and humid during the day, and during the night, it was so pitch dark that he would not have even been able to see a hand being placed in front of his face. Despite the harsh operating conditions, Supt Amir was thankful for the experience and was glad that he had the opportunity to contribute to the peacekeeping efforts.



## Cambodia 1992



In February 1992, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was set up to help restore peace and civil government in a country ruined by decades of civil war. The SPF UNPKF was one of Singapore's peacekeeping forces deployed to Cambodia to support the UNTAC's mission. 59-year-old Senior Station Inspector (SSI) Lu Pak Sum from the Airport Police Division was part of the second batch of SPF UNPKF deployed to Cambodia in 1993.

*"One of my roles during the mission was to patrol the village and handle human rights incidents such as physical abuse of the villagers by rebel groups. I was manning one of the police stations on one of the evenings when we heard a loud explosion. My partners and I immediately took cover and we started hearing gunshots at a nearby military compound. When it turned silent, we got up and rushed over to the military compound and saw two of the personnel injured,"* shared SSI Lu.

## CAMBODIA

## Cambodia 1998

Following the United Nations' call for member states to have well-qualified and trained police personnel readily available for rapid deployment in crisis situations, the SPF UNPKF was formally established on 27 June 1998. With this set up, a group of qualified SPF officers were pooled together to standby for any peacekeeping missions. This was vastly different from the pre-UNPKF period where strict selection processes were carried out, specifically for individual missions. 57-year-old Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Lim Sin Bin was part of the SPF UNPKF team deployed to Cambodia to provide peacekeeping support for the Cambodia general elections. DSP Lim shared that although things went smoothly most of the time, there was one nervy moment which he could remember vividly.

*"It was the last day of the mission. While travelling back to our accommodation from one of the polling stations along a paddy field, a group of more than 20 soldiers in black uniforms with weapons appeared from the sides, about 100 meters in front of our vehicle. Our interpreter signalled to the driver to slow down, and they both started to look nervous. I began thinking about my next course of action in case the situation turned hostile. Thankfully, after staring at us for a brief moment, they moved out of the way and allowed us to pass through,"* shared DSP Lim.

As he travelled past the paddy field, DSP Lim heaved a sigh of relief as he could not imagine how bad the situation would have been if the soldiers had turned hostile. While reflecting on his Cambodia peacekeeping journey, he realised that the hardship faced during the mission was not the peacekeeping duties. It was actually the hard living conditions at his accommodation in the village area as there were no electricity nor clean running water. This experience has certainly made him more appreciative of what he has back at home.





## Iraq 2003



In 2003, SPF UNPKF officers were deployed to help train Iraqi police officers in Baghdad. The contingent, consisting of officers from the various SPF units, equipped the Iraqi police officers with the necessary skills to carry out patrol duties and to secure key administrative buildings.

One of the officers deployed, 45-year-old Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Bernard Koh from the Central Division, recalled an incident that occurred during one of the training sessions.

*"We were in the midst of training when we heard a loud explosion. We could see from the trainees' facial expressions that they were worried. We were equally worried but we maintained our composure and informed the participants to remain calm and stay in the classroom while we investigated the situation. We eventually found out that a*

*vehicle bomb had exploded just outside the training college,"* shared ASP Koh.

Operating in a terrain where life-threatening situations are a daily norm is certainly not easy. Having gone through such experiences have definitely helped our SPF UNPKF officers to become more resilient and be better prepared for their peacekeeping missions.

IRAQ

## Jordan 2004



Similar to the Baghdad mission, SPF UNPKF officers were also deployed to Jordan to train Iraqi police officers. 53-year-old Station Inspector (SI) Lim Wei Seng from Training Command, who was one of the officers sent in 2005 for the mission, shared an incident which he holds close to heart even till today.

Staying in the heart of the city where weddings in the evenings were frequently accompanied by fireworks, those explosive sounds became familiar. However, one night, the explosions were followed with sounds of sirens.

*"I was in my apartment with another officer when we heard the sirens of several ambulances. I looked out of the window and saw ambulances speeding past. I soon realised that the explosions were not from celebratory fireworks. Shortly after, I learnt from the news that two bombs went off at a location which was about a 10-minute drive away from my apartment. 52 people died, including locals and foreign volunteers,"* shared SI Lim.

Within minutes, SI Lim received a call from one of the staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who wanted to check if he was safe. Since the incident, whenever SI Lim and his colleagues travelled to the city area for grocery runs, they would do so hurriedly. He also added that, as a result of that incident, he was extremely cautious whenever he approached his vehicle which was parked outside of his apartment building.

*"I would always use a torchlight every morning to check if there are any explosive devices planted beneath the car before entering. I had to be more cautious as my vehicle had a green number plate – an indication that it was a foreign vehicle – thus, an even bigger target,"* shared SI Lim.

Until this day, SI Lim is still very much affected by the incident. Whenever he comes across a deafening noise, he will always feel the need to take cover. Nevertheless, regardless of how perilous the mission was, SI Lim continued to stay on to complete his mission.

JORDAN



## Nepal 2015



An earthquake struck Nepal on 25 April 2015. The first worry that came to our SPF officers' minds was if any of their friends from the Gurkha Contingent and their family members in Nepal were affected. Several SPF UNPKF officers, including 53-year-old Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Puteh Shariff from the Traffic Police, were activated to provide disaster relief assistance. DSP Puteh, who was part of the advance team, was there for two weeks to recce the place and make arrangements for the necessary aid required by Nepal.

When DSP Puteh arrived in Nepal, she settled in a tent with other female volunteers from Singapore and other nationalities who were there to render assistance. DSP Puteh added that they did not have the luxury of clean water during their stay and could only 'dry clean' themselves. The limited clean water supply that they had was only enough for washing their faces and brushing their teeth.

A few days into the mission, DSP Puteh was re-deployed to one of the affected villages with other SPF officers to continue collating the villagers' aid requirements before disseminating the information back to Singapore.

*"Along the journey, reality sank in when we saw the heaps of debris from collapsed houses lying along the streets. As we were carrying out our mission, we met a teenage girl who mentioned that*

*she was thankful that even though the earthquake had destroyed her house, her family members were all safe and relocated to a nearby tent. It made me realise that the everyday problems that we faced in Singapore seemed so insignificant compared to hers,"* shared DSP Puteh.

Another officer, 33-year-old Senior Staff Sergeant (SSS) Knagesvaran from the Special Operations Command, who was also part of the SPF team in Nepal, shared how he coped against the cold weather conditions in Nepal.

*"The weather was so cold that we would wake up in the middle of the night shivering, even with a blanket on. We had to put on additional layers of clothing to keep ourselves warm. Apart from the weather, we also had to get used to sleeping on safari beds. We definitely missed the comfort back home. But as an SPF UNPKF member, we had to learn to adapt quickly to the environment around us,"* shared SSS Varan.

Extreme weather conditions and harsh living conditions are common norms experienced by the SPF UNPKF officers. Despite the adversities, the SPF UNPKF team continues to render aid to any countries in need as they are bounded by a common belief that they are making a difference to the lives of people in need.



NEPAL

## Laos 2018



44-year-old Supt Sofian Salleh from the Police National Service Department first read about the 'Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy' Dam tragedy in Laos in the local news. The incident left Supt Sofian feeling empathetic towards the families of the victims who had lost their loved ones. Several days later, he was informed that he had been selected to lead a team comprising officers from the SPF UNPKF and the Police K-9 unit for a search and recovery effort in the disaster. With the blessings and support from his family members, Supt Sofian readily took on the mission. Supt Sofian described his experience as the monsoon rain persisted throughout his stay.

*"I remembered that it was our second day there. While we were rounding up our operational recce at one of the affected locations, the rain started pouring profusely. As we were driving away from the location, we noticed the water levels rising rapidly. Our vehicle convoy moved cautiously, but when we arrived at a river crossing, we realised that the temporary bridge was submerged five metres beneath the water surface. As there were no alternative routes, we had to consider our last resort, which was the makeshift bridging service,"* shared Supt Sofian.

Aided by a local construction company, the makeshift service required our officers to drive their vehicles onto a floating metal platform. The platform was then pulled across the river

crossing with a rope attached to an excavator. Despite the risk involved in using the makeshift service, Supt Sofian knew that he had to take up the option to avoid getting trapped. After all their vehicles had crossed over, Supt Sofian heaved a sigh of relief and was glad that he had made the right call.

Supt Sofian added that although their time was heavily spent on disaster relief efforts, the SPF UNPKF and K-9 officers set aside time to visit a local hospital to cheer the victims up. "I vividly recalled the smiles on the children's faces as my officers were giving out snacks. It really warmed our hearts. They reminded me of my children whom I had to be away from during the Hari Raya Haji period. However, I knew that back at home, my family is proud of my team and I for helping others in times of need," shared Supt Sofian.

## LAOS

These are just some of the eye-opening experiences that our SPF UNPKF officers faced over the years. As distressing and treacherous as their stories may seem, these officers are committed in their missions as they strongly believed that their sacrifices are worth it! Fueled by the passion for helping others in need, their efforts are a testament to the SPF's values and unwavering commitment in international peacekeeping efforts.





# SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY

IN TIMES OF CRISIS...



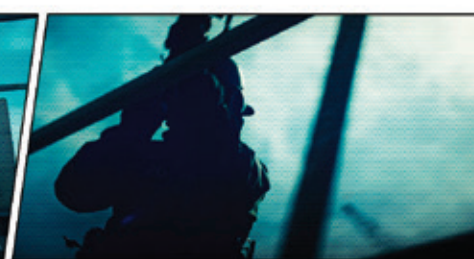
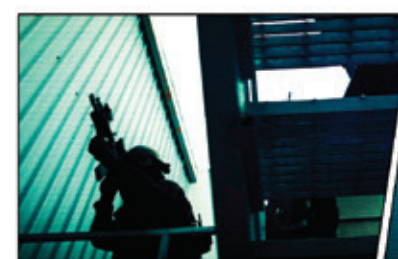
WHO WILL STAND UP FOR YOU?



WHO WILL LEAD THE WAY?



WHO WILL PROTECT YOU?



WHO WILL FIGHT FOR YOU ...



AND RESTORE OUR PEACE?



WHO ELSE?

"ENGAGE."

Every day, officers of the **Singapore Police Force** give their utmost to prevent, deter and detect crime. They are our protectors - outstanding men and women we can count on to keep us safe and secure. More than just a job, it is a career that makes a real difference by safeguarding every day.

JOIN THE SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE.

Watch the video here





Photos courtesy of Ahmad Najib Mohamed Naim



## THE RESOLVE: STORY OF COURAGE, METTLE AND STRENGTH

By Denise Luo (Photos: Public Affairs Department)

As an inhabitant on the pacific 'ring of fire' region, Indonesia is at the mercy of natural disasters that often strike so quickly and fatefully, leaving victims barely seconds to react and make that life-and-death decision. Caught in a 6.9 magnitude earthquake that hit Indonesia's picturesque island of Lombok on 5 August 2018, the Singapore delegation who was there for a security conference at Mataram – the worst-hit region – was fortunate to have made it out safely with the protection of a group of Singapore Police Force's (SPF) officers who took the lead in ensuring the delegation's safety. This was also an incident that tested the resolve of our SPF officers to fulfil their mission despite the chaos and immense challenges posed by this disaster. An experience that must be shared, *Police Life* caught up with this group of men in blue to learn more about their harrowing encounter!

### The Police Instincts

Ensuring the personal security of the Minister for Home Affairs & Minister for Law, Mr K Shanmugam, was the primary mission of the Police Security Command's (SecCom) Personal Security Officers (PSOs) who were part of the Singapore delegation attending the security conference at Mataram. Well-trained and highly

dedicated, the security team, which comprised Inspector (Insp) Andy Peh, Senior Station Inspector (SSI) Gavin Tan and Sergeant (Sgt) Tan Yi Loong, coordinated seamlessly as they made incisive decisions on the go and took cues from one another amidst the chaos.

***"The building was shaking very violently. Just as how we assessed the building to be unsafe, Minister, who shared the same sentiment, was already at the door when we dashed over to his room. We immediately escorted him out. As the situation was too chaotic, we made use of sign language to communicate with one another. We knew exactly what our next***

***course of action was as we made eye contact and read each other's signals,"*** said security team leader Insp Peh who has 26 years of experience in the field.

With the clarity of mission and a presence of mind, the PSOs also relied on their strong police instincts to protect their principal and retrieve his essential materials and belongings.

***"As we were evacuating and making our way to the ground level via pre-identified escape routes, we shielded Minister from the falling debris with our hands and bodies until we were out of the building,"*** recounted SSI Tan.



***"His safety was our main priority and concern,"*** the trio said unanimously.

Grateful for the rigorous SecCom trainings which have equipped them with the relevant skillsets to defend and shield their principals from danger, it was also the thorough preparatory work which they did prior to the conference that contributed to the success of this mission. ***"It has always been our core training principle that we must be prepared for all types of situations,"*** asserted Sgt Tan.

Besides sending an advanced security team to Lombok to familiarise with the local terrains and conditions, the PSOs also worked closely with the team of delegates from the Ministry of Home Affairs to dovetail contingency plans, which were carefully thought through to navigate various types of scenarios.

### The Interlocutor

While the PSOs were instrumental in ensuring the safety of their principal and the Singapore delegation, Superintendent (Supt) Ahmad Najib



Mohamed Naim, an SPF attaché based in Jakarta, also played a key role in helping to secure assistance from the local police, which greatly mitigated the predicament that the delegation was caught in.

As a police attaché, Supt Najib's role is to establish, build and maintain a good relationship between the SPF and the Indonesian National Police. Although it has been less than a year since Supt Najib assumed his position, he has cultivated strong networks and built friendships even in the far-flung capital of Mataram.

***"It is important to understand the local police culture and how things are done in Indonesia. Knowing and understanding the language and local lingo also help to facilitate clear communication, especially when conversing with the local police,"*** explained Supt Najib.

As an interlocutor, Supt Najib who speaks their vernacular, not only facilitated the advance security team's recce efforts, but more importantly, he was resourceful in helping the delegation gain access to the local

Photo courtesy of Ahmad Najib Mohamed Naim



airport police post for refuge after evacuating the hotel. As a testament to Supt Najib's networking efforts, the delegation was also accorded local police protection, which was imperative as the island was in disarray in the aftermath of the quake. Without the bridge that Supt Najib has built between the two police forces, the Singapore delegation would not have been able to make it home safely within a short span of time. Supt Najib also stayed on in Lombok until 9 August to assist the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officers as they offered consular assistance to the Singaporeans who were stranded in Lombok.

### The True Spirit

Looking back at what they went through in Lombok, our PSOs and police attaché have indeed embodied the true spirit of the police force with their staunch work ethics. Many a time, we see them putting others before themselves. While trainings and preparations are important, no amount of it can adequately prepare one for a natural disaster like the Lombok earthquake. Given the uncertainty of the situation, many decisions had to be made instinctively, even if it meant changing the plans. Our SPF officers who were there, survived this ordeal. Not only did they overcome the adversity with courage, mettle and strength but what was also commendable was their strong sense of loyalty and commitment to their work.

Kudos to the team!



# A Harrowing Escape

By Irwan Shah  
(Photos: Police Coast Guard)



9 July 2018 would be a memorable night for the 45 passengers and crew of an Indonesia-flagged ferry, Sri Kandi 99, which ran aground in Singapore waters. The ferry was bound for Pasir Gudang, Johor, when it was stranded near Pulau Tekong after colliding with rocks along the island during low tide. Owing to the swift rescue efforts by the Singapore Police Force's (SPF) Police Coast Guard (PCG), all 45 of them were rescued and made it to their destination safely.



PCG's Station Inspector (SI) Lee Kuan Seng, Crew Commander of patrol boat PT 78, was conducting their routine patrol when he spotted a vessel entering Singapore territorial waters and heading towards Pulau Tekong. What followed was a night of intense action which saw 15 PCG officers in three vessels conducting a delicate rescue operation in pitch darkness!

As SI Lee's boat approached the vessel, he realised that the ferry had ran aground and was at risk of capsizing. The first thing that came to his mind was to quickly rescue as many people as possible while waiting for reinforcements. Using night vision equipment and searchlights, he and his team scanned the ferry and waters to ascertain the number of passengers on board and to ensure that there was no one in the pitch dark waters.

*"My first concern was to see whether there was anyone in the water. We moved our vessel closer to the sinking ferry to take a closer look but we had to be careful not to run aground ourselves due to the rocks near the shore,"* explained SI Lee on the complexity of the situation.

Seeing that five passengers were trapped at the stern of the ferry, SI Lee called out to them to find out why they had remained on board while the rest had gone ashore. The five passengers then informed SI Lee that they were unable to swim and did not know how to get off the vessel. Upon knowing their predicament, SI Lee then instructed his crew to carefully align their vessel to the sinking ferry to allow the five passengers to walk over his vessel safely.



*"We had to ensure that our vessel was close enough for the five individuals to walk over safely,"* exclaimed SI Lee.

SI Lee shared that the operation was very challenging as they were operating in low visibility and had to also ensure that they themselves would not get grounded. The operation was further complicated by the fact that the accident occurred on reclaimed land which meant that land reinforcements would not be available as land vehicles could not directly access the area.

Meanwhile, the PCG officers who were deployed on the two rescue vessels arrived and attended to the remaining 40 victims who made it to shore. Two men

sustained light injuries while the rest, especially the elderly victims, were shivering from the cold. Some of the victims were still crying as they were in a state of shock.

*"While some of us assured them that they were in safe hands, calmed their nerves and distributed rations to them, a group of officers were focussed on coordinating the evacuation efforts,"* Staff Sergeant Muhammad Ramdan Ismail recounted.

Thanks to the PCG officers' swift response and excellent teamwork during the rescue mission, all 45 passengers and crew members had a harrowing escape!





# STAR OF THE FORCE

By Hadi Hafidz  
(Photos: Mr Dominique Andre)

Situated amidst a Housing Development Board (HDB) estate in the eastern part of Singapore, lies an abandoned building that has been cordoned off, and inaccessible to the public. The eerie silence of the vicinity was broken when a team of officers in tactical gears and heavy weapons rappelled down into one of the units in the desolate building as part of a simulated hostage rescue exercise.



This is a scene that you would often see in movies where heavily armed specialised tactical troops stormed buildings to take down the bad guys!

And yes, this team is none other than the Singapore Police Force's (SPF) Special Tactics and Rescue (STAR) unit. Their job – to provide the SPF with the highest level of tactical armed response!

The STAR unit comes under the SPF's Special Operations Command (SOC). Decked out in a mysterious 'masked men in black' ensemble, these STAR officers – or professionally known as STAR operators – are deployed for highly-specialised operations. They are highly-trained in handling armed criminal situations such as hostage rescue, and well as high-risk protective security operations.



Due to the nature of their job, STAR operators need to be exceptionally strong, both physically and mentally, to see their missions through to the end. They must also be highly adaptive and flexible to respond to the ever-changing environment that every mission entails. Most importantly, STAR operators have to be team players, discharging their duties professionally and seamlessly taking on another role when the need arises. Every operator is a crucial part of the unit, each with a role to play. They rely on each other, trust each other with their lives, and are always on standby, 24/7.

There is no doubt about it. To become a STAR operator, one needs to overcome numerous daunting challenges, both mental and physical. In this issue of *Police Life*, we get an exclusive interview with one of the STAR operators who shared with us the challenges and motivations to be in STAR. Known only as Station Inspector (SI) 'J', this STAR operator, who was formerly an SOC Trooper before joining the STAR unit, has since served in the unit for a decade.





### Aspirations

As a person who is always game for extreme challenges, SI 'J' has always known that being a STAR operator is the answer to his calling. When he first saw the operators training in their full gear within the SOC compound, he was immensely impressed by their fitness and agility. Particularly, how they were able to execute tactical movements swiftly and skilfully while carrying almost 20 kilograms of equipment on them. As he aspired to be like them, he would often join the STAR operators for runs around the SOC training compound in his early days as an SOC Trooper.

***"They were always wearing their distinct black STAR unit singlets during their running sessions. The black STARs were constantly taking the lead, and I was never able to keep up with them even though I constantly clocked my 2.4 kilometres (km) run at about nine minutes, which is quite a feat for most people. I wanted to be just as fit and tough like them and that is what motivated me to join the STAR selection process,"*** SI 'J' recalled.

### What Does it Take

This is not your usual selection process whereby you can just

enrol for it and go for the selection. Candidates will have to undergo a one-day physical fitness test to assess their fitness levels. Only qualified candidates will be able to go through the eight-month long STAR Main Course, which consists of the basic and intermediate phases of STAR's core skills training. At any point during the course, those who fail to meet the level of proficiency required, will be asked to leave. This is to ensure that only those who has what it takes will be able to make it as a STAR operator.

When he entered the STAR Main Course, SI 'J' recalled that it was a gruelling experience and that no training could have prepared him for the stamina, strength and speed required for these sessions. SI 'J' further shared that the 'Hell-Week' was the toughest of them all! Despite the tough training he has gone through as an SOC trooper and his relatively high level of fitness, he recalled that there were many moments where the extreme pain and exhaustion made him doubt his physical and mental capacity, even to the brink of giving up. But his determination to achieve his aspiration spurred him on. Ultimately, the pain and sweat paid off when he was officially presented with the STAR insignia badge at his passing out parade.



### Life Behind the Mask

Getting into STAR is just the beginning. To be able to trust each other with their lives, it is critical for the team to function effectively as one. In order to achieve such effectiveness, one critical success factor would be the fitness level of all the operators. To ensure that his fitness level is on par with his teammates, SI 'J' maintains a rigorous workout routine. On a daily basis, SI 'J' will start

his day with a morning run and hit the gym or perform static exercises for another 30 minutes during the day to complete his daily workout regime. On top of that, he also does rock climbing about three times a week to train his agility.

When they are not out for operational duties, life in STAR is all about training, day after day, to prepare for every conceivable contingency. SI 'J' explained that whenever they are activated for a mission, the situation will be intense as everyone will be rushing to gear up, knowing that lives are at stake. As they headed towards the mission's location, a single thought often dominated his mind.

***"What would I do if the victims are my loved ones who needed to be saved? By constantly asking myself this question, I am able to treat every situation with the same urgency,"*** explained SI 'J'.

Whenever a mission is accomplished, SI 'J' feels relieved knowing that everyone is safe and that they have made a significant impact on lives that were entrusted to them.

### The Pillar of Support

Although it may seem that a career with the STAR unit is an unstoppable priority in his life, SI 'J' did in fact consult his family before signing his commitment to the unit.

***"My wife was initially worried not only about the risks involved during training, but also the missions that I would be sent for. But she knew that it was my aspiration and gave me her blessing. I am really grateful to my wife as she is the pillar of support for my family when I am away for training or operations,"*** shared SI 'J'.

Apart from his wife, SI 'J' shared that his children have also been very understanding towards his job commitments, which, at times require him to be away for nights. Even though his younger daughter's birthday falls on National Day, she never complains whenever SI 'J' is deployed for work on that day. In fact, she is happy as long as SI 'J' is able to celebrate her birthday on another day when he is off duty.

While having family support is important to SI 'J', he also strongly believes that workplace camaraderie matters. In parting, SI 'J' shared words of advice to fellow police officers and members of the public who wish to join the STAR unit.



***"STAR is a close-knit unit and we only want those who will have our backs. The officer must also be someone who never gives up and has the discipline to upkeep his fitness at all times,"*** said SI 'J'.

Life in the STAR unit is about being mission ready at all times. Officers are on standby, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so that they are always prepared to provide the highest level of tactical armed response when called upon.

**\*This article is part of a three-piece profile feature of our STAR officers in celebration of the 25th anniversary of STAR unit.**

**For SPF officers who are interested to be part of the STAR family, the STAR unit will be recruiting officers for the 20th batch of the STAR unit, from November 2018 to January 2019.**

**For members of the public who are interested to be directly enrolled into the STAR unit, do visit our Singapore Police Force's Facebook page to sign up for the STAR selection course.**



# MORE THAN JUST NATIONAL SERVICE

By Syam Roslan and Kajol Nar Singh (Photos: Public Affairs Department)



The roles of Full-time Police National Servicemen (PNSF) have evolved over the years. Today, the PNSFs work alongside regular officers to fight crime and maintain law and order. To further enhance their National Service (NS) experience and to make their NS stint more purposeful and meaningful, PNSFs are now given the opportunity to assume leadership and specialist positions. Given their many contributions to the Singapore Police Force (SPF), it is only befitting that the PNSFs' achievements and accolades

are celebrated by their peers and loved ones.

To mark the completion of the Police National Service (PNS) Basic Training Course for the 171st intake of PNSF trainees, a Graduation Parade was held on 12 July 2018 at the Home Team Academy. Graced by Ms Sun Xueling, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs & Ministry of National Development, the parade also saw the presentation of awards to outstanding trainees. At the event,

four officers from different vocations were each accorded the NSF of the Year Award for their exceptional contributions and commitment during their NS stint. *Police Life* also caught up with the PNS Statuette Award recipient, the overall best trainee in this intake, who shared with us his hopes and expectations for his next phase of NS life.

Read on to find out more about these outstanding officers!

## NSF OF THE YEAR

Inspector (NS) Melvin Ong Yew Sheng  
Deputy Team Leader  
Public Transport Security Command (TransCom)



### What is your job scope?

As a Deputy Team Leader in TransCom managing over 170 PNSFs, I assist the Team Leader in the execution of my team's shift work plans, performing supervisory checks on officers on patrols. In addition to my job scope, I also join my team on patrols.

### What is the most memorable case you have worked on?

Definitely the first arrest with my team! Upon receiving information about a suspect who may be involved in an outrage of modesty case, we quickly linked up with the investigation officer assigned to this case. Travel patterns of the suspect were established as we began to work out

details for the ambush. As this was my first time being involved in an investigation, it was nerve-wracking but also exciting. With the guidance from more experienced officers, it helped to make me feel more assured and confident of what needed to be done. Eventually, the ambush operation went as planned and the suspect was detained.

### What challenges did you face in your course of duty?

I have never had such a big responsibility in my life! Managing a team of 170 PNSFs was definitely my biggest challenge. Everyone had their unique personalities. It was not easy to understand every single one of them and to address their needs. Further, all of us are performing duties that are crucial in the safety and security of our people. Thus, it was important to better understand them by trying to see things from their perspectives before I could seek out suitable solutions. I was also thankful for the guidance that I have received from my supervisors and seniors which had helped me a lot in the management of my team.

### What was the one valuable lesson you learnt throughout your NS stint with SPF?

During my NS stint, I had the opportunity to experience the different facets of policing work. When I was deployed on the ground, I met people from all walks of life. I learnt how to handle situations in a calm and composed manner, without being too quick to pass judgements. Often, there is more that lies behind what we see on the surface. When you don on the police uniform, the public expects your highest level of professionalism, regardless of whether you are an NSF or a regular.

## NSF OF THE YEAR

Sergeant (NS) Hafiz Bin Mohamad Hamzah  
Ground Response Force Officer  
Yishun North Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC)



### What is your job scope?

My core duty is to conduct patrols to prevent, deter and detect crime. In the course of my duty, I am also the first responder to any incident and crime scene. When I arrive at an incident location or crime scene, I have to take precaution and follow Police procedures to ensure that the incident has been dealt with appropriately, including the preservation of the crime scene to facilitate further investigations.

### What is the most memorable case you have worked on?

I have attended to family disputes, traffic accidents and even a false alarm about a gunman incident at a hospital! While all these cases were memorable in their own ways, there was a particular incident that stands out for me. I had



to learn how to communicate with a deaf person on the spot in order to guide him home. He was brought to me by a commuter who sought my help. Having never learnt sign language, I had to figure out quickly how to effectively communicate with the person. Eventually, I managed to communicate with him through typing the message on my mobile phone and showing it to him. This incident was particularly memorable not only for the learning experience but also from the gratitude that I had received from that man. With no words being said, I can truly feel the appreciation from the man's expression. I think you can also call this a truly "heartfelt" appreciation.

**How did you feel when you were notified about the award?**

It was honestly unexpected and exhilarating for me. When I was serving NS, my focus was to carry out my work

diligently and to stay out of trouble until the day I completed my service. Nonetheless, I am grateful for my team leader's guidance which also helped me in successfully apprehending perpetrators and receiving compliments from members of the public during my NS stint.

**What kept you going at work?**

My team was always there to inspire me to work harder and to be the best officer that I can be. Although we had our individual roles and responsibilities, we managed to work together effectively by fulfilling our respective duties well. Teamwork was at its best! Seeing how hardworking and committed my teammates were in carrying out their duties, certainly motivated me to work harder.

## PNS STATUETTE AWARD WINNER

Trainee Special Constable (TSC)  
Douglas Daniel Choi Ming Tak  
Overall Best Trainee for PNS 171st Intake

**How did you feel when you were notified about the award?**

I was shocked but happy to get this award. Receiving the PNS Statuette Award is a huge honour as it means that you are the overall best trainee in your entire intake! To be able to receive this award is definitely not easy. Several components, such as leadership qualities within your squad, law and order knowledge, marksmanship and physical fitness, were taken into account for the assessment for the award.

**What challenges did you face?**

The main challenge which I faced together with my team was having to adapt to the regimental lifestyle. Fresh out of school, many of us were used to a more carefree and flexible lifestyle. For me, my stint as a National Cadet Corps in secondary school has trained me to better cope with NS life. However, helping the others to adapt was tough. There were times when the morale of my team was low, but through mutual encouragements and pep talks, we managed to pull through together.



**What motivated you to strive for the best?**

I wanted my parents to be proud of me. They guided and supported me every step of the way and were always there for me when times get tough. I wanted to give them something to look back on and be proud of as part of my growing up.

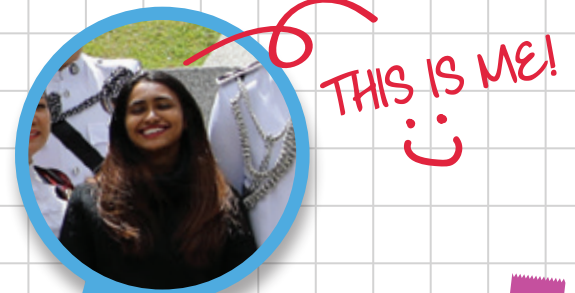
**Any particular posting you are looking forward to in your next phase of NS?**

Definitely a frontline position! It would be cool to be posted to the Protective Security Command as I can play an active role to safeguard strategic events and locations during both peacetime and national emergency. But I am excited to see what lies ahead for me in the SPF.

## A PCO's Journal: Two weeks in Canada with over 60 'strangers'

By Khairunnisa Abdul Jabbar  
(Photos: Public Affairs Department)

*As someone who loves music and grabs any chance to watch my favourite bands and artists perform live, I was beyond ecstatic when I was offered the opportunity to accompany the Singapore Police Force Combined Band to Canada for the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo 2018 – lauded as the world's largest indoor show featuring bagpipes, military and innovative performances such as acrobatics, dances and displays – held between 26 June 2018 to 2 July 2018. I relished in the idea of touring with the combined band and being their publicist while they were making the Force and the country proud. No fixed desk, music all day, and meeting other similar bands – what could be better!*



*Preparations for the event were in full swing the moment the approval was received for a Public Communications Officer (PCO) to be the publicist for the band. Anxious to be spending two weeks with more than 60 strangers, I knew it was important to quickly break the ice and get to know these officers. Also, I needed to get a clear picture of their preparations before their performance in Canada.*

*I met the team for the first time in the Home Team Academy's Harmony Hall when they were in the midst of their full-dress rehearsal. Director of Music, Superintendent of Police Amri*

*Amin, was sharpening the choreography from the second level overlooking the main hall, and I was trying to figure out the story that was being presented. It was when I managed to catch the full performance that I was convinced this was a set that the no one should miss. So fittingly titled 'The Little Red Dot', the storytelling of Singapore's history, the carefully thought-out formations, the music, transitioning from sombre to fast-paced, was executed so perfectly that it made my hair stand!*

*Before we knew it, we were already at the airport in the early morning of 21 June, bidding farewell to our families. Despite the long journey to Halifax, it was heartening to see our officers taking the opportunity to practise at any chance they got – the pipers (with only their recorders of course!) and the dancers with their formation.*

Music



What amazed me during the trip was the band's tenacity and professionalism. With less than five hours of rest upon arrival at our accommodation, we made it to Scotiabank Centre bright and early the same day to begin rehearsals. The day unfolded with a quick safety drill, followed by a short recce of the performance stage. Then, it was down to housekeeping where instruments and uniforms were quickly unpacked, followed by a full, four days of tightly-planned rehearsals in between locations.

In addition to our own performance, the combined band was also involved in various other segments in the tattoo. For example, the Women's Police Pipes and Drums (WPPD) and the Gurkha Contingent Pipes and Drums (GCPD) were involved in three mass pipe segments with other countries' pipes and drums groups, as well as the tattoo's military dancers. As for the band itself, they provided instrumental support together with other military bands for three other segments in the show – titled Women in Service, Battle of the Atlantic and

the finale. Surely, that was a lot of scoresheets to memorise for the officers!

What followed the intense rehearsals was six days' worth of performances. To make the experience particularly meaningful and exciting, the band also had the chance to entertain the audience during Canada Day on 1 July 2018.

Although the band comprised officers with varying experiences, from full-time national servicemen to regulars who have joined the band since the 80s (with this performance likely to be their last), there was something that is similar among them. It is none other than that sparkle in their eyes when they spoke of their various experiences and the non-hesitance at doing this all over again. It was somewhat inspirational.

What I took back from this experience with the band was – the importance of passion and the love for your craft. Regardless of the situation; be it working on tight schedules, adapting to time zones or being away from their families for two

weeks, the officers never failed to greet me with a gleaming smile on their faces when we meet for breakfast at 8am, and on bus rides back to our hostel at 10pm. I was informed that they were used to it. Despite the numerous overseas trips, what was refreshing for me was how it seemed that their love for the band does not seem to dip. Their strong camaraderie was hard to miss, and their energy was so infectious that it was easy to feel back at home. The numerous pins and badges which were exchanged and attached on their lanyards marked new friendships formed with other countries' bands. This was also a testament to their passion for the job, putting SPF's name on the international stage.

It was a strenuous two weeks for an officer who is not attuned to the pace of work while overseas. But, likewise for the band, it was a two weeks experience that I would repeat in a heartbeat. It has been an absolute pleasure to be with and to get to know the SPF Combined Band at a much closer level, and to appreciate the work they do. Thank you for the wonderful time and being so accommodating!

If you have missed the performance, check out the video here:



# Coaching the Young National Basketballers

By Irwan Shah (Photos: Koh Meng Koon)



**Understand that you are currently coaching the National Basketball Team on weekends. What inspired you to take on this role?**

I have learnt a lot over the years playing for the National Team. By taking on this role, I believe that I can impart my knowledge and skills to other aspiring basketball players. In addition, I would also like to share life lessons learnt from my work as a police officer and inculcate the 'right' values in my players so that they would not be caught up in the pursuit of winning and forget the spirit of sportsmanship.

**How do you manage your commitments?**

In order to juggle between my work, family and basketball, I have to maintain a high level of discipline and be very clear with my priorities. As far as possible, I will schedule my training sessions such that they do not clash with my work commitments and still allow me to have time with my family. Apart from my own self-discipline and supportive family, I am also blessed with colleagues who will always be there to support me when the need arises.

**What is the biggest challenge that you face?**

The inculcation of the 'right' values in these young players. In sports, players may 'lose' themselves if there are only fixated on winning. Albeit the importance of winning, I want my team to also focus on the process; what have they learnt from that experience. It is always important to be an earnest and humble learner.

**What are your learning lessons as a coach?**

I have learnt to be patient and understanding when I am coaching the young players. Even at work, this experience has helped me to better guide the Full-Time Police National Servicemen who are attached to my team.

**Share with us some of your proudest moments.**

I was over the moon when I became the Most Valuable Player for the Six Nations Basketball Good Will Meet 2002 in Myanmar and subsequently winning the Nike Best Shooter Award in the 12th Super Kung Sheung Basketball Championship 2003 in Hong Kong. It felt especially rewarding since I started out as a benchwarmer and slowly worked my way up through years of sheer hard training and determination.

**How did your basketball journey begin?**

It all started when my friend invited me to join them for a basketball game when I was 17. One game led to another and my love for basketball grew stronger with each game. Playing the sport together was also a means for us to catch up with one another as we were often tied down with our own schooling commitments. Apart from my own interest, my friends did to some extent, also influenced my decision in taking up the sport. With their encouragement, I eventually joined the Mountbatten Community Sports Club and participated in local tournaments.

A year later, at one of the tournaments, I was scouted by the selection committee from the Basketball Association of Singapore. After several trials, I eventually made it to the National Team. Since then, I have represented Singapore for 15 years.







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