

Editorial

We are pleased to feature in this third issue of *POINTER* for 2013 a commentary written by LG (Ret) Winston Choo on his personal insights of his years in the army and of National Service (NS). LG (Ret) Choo emphasises the importance of NS with his final comment, *“Singapore is what it is today because our fathers, brothers, uncles and cousins served NS. Every generation has to step up to do their duty. Old soldiers like me have done our turn; now it’s up to the next generation to carry on this duty.”*

As Minister of Defence, Dr Ng Eng Hen stated in his speech at the Committee of Supply Debate 2013, *“We in this house appreciate the commitment of our NSmen and the sacrifices they make. All of us recognise that if we do not defend Singapore ourselves, no one else will. Each of us has to uphold our duty to serve NS.”* We would like to pay tribute to all National Servicemen who have contributed so much to our nation’s defence.

This issue of *POINTER* covers a wide variety of topics, ranging from a discussion on a philosophy of command, to how to engage our servicemen, to innovative leadership, as well as an examination of the merits of outsourcing in the SAF.

In his article, “Philosophy of Command,” BG Yeo See Peng, Commander, 6th Division (6 Div) shares tenets of his command philosophy, which has served as a guide in his leadership of 6 Div. Using classical command examples from history, he hopes to share this philosophy and its applications in practical operational circumstances with a wider audience. BG Yeo concludes that it is important to adapt and develop one’s own style and philosophy in command.

In the article “Reclaiming Engagement in the SAF: Building Strong Relationships and Honest Communication,” MAJ Lawrence Leong stresses that the SAF should define the concept of “engagement” and then explain how it can be properly implemented by “commanders at every level.” MAJ Leong explains

that since the concept of “Engagement” was first introduced by then-Chief of Defence Force, LG (Ret) Desmond Kuek as one of his visions for the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), the concept has been used interchangeably to mean various terms such as commitment to defense, unit cohesion, morale levels and inspiring leadership. In his article, MAJ Leong explores two ideas of engagement—working relationships and communication. He then further discusses some of the measures that can be taken by both the individual and the organisation to advance engagement in the SAF.

“A Swift and Decisive Victory: The Strategic Implications of What Victory Means” is written by CPT Chong Shi Hao. In this article, CPT Chong discusses what victory means in our mission statement, *“The mission of MINDEF and the Singapore Armed Forces is to enhance Singapore’s peace and security through deterrence and diplomacy, and should these fail, to secure a swift and decisive victory over the aggressor.”* According to CPT Chong, the mission statement serves as a guide for SAF’s defence policy and its transformation efforts. He stresses that it is important to be clear about what this “victory” entails. The adjectives “swift and decisive” help to further illuminate the nature of this victory. CPT Chong also aims to add clarity to what this victory should be, in the light of recent events and the evolution of modern warfare.

MAJ Mohamed Rizal’s article on “Achieving Competitive Advantage Through Outsourcing in the SAF” examines the benefits and risks of outsourcing for the SAF. MAJ Mohamed gives a detailed summary of the benefits and risks as well as provides some case studies of how outsourcing has influenced the supply chain industry. He highlights the motivations behind outsourcing, which are cost-driven, strategy-driven and politically driven and warns of the many significant risks resulting from outsourcing, if not properly managed. MAJ Mohamed feels that there is a need for the SAF to review in detail the actual

extent of outsourcing benefits and risks periodically. Analysing the risks, benefits and strategic issues will help SAF leaders reap the full potential of outsourcing in the supply chain industry.

CPT Bertram Ang's article on "Innovative Leadership – A Case Study of Tal Afar and Implications for the SAF" discusses the significance of adaptive leadership in the SAF and its importance to the Generation Y soldiers in its ranks, defined by him as junior leaders who have the ability to bring the culture of creativity and innovation into battlefield situations. CPT Ang concludes that it is imperative for leaders in the SAF modify their mindset towards Generation Y servicemen in order to meet our needs for the future. He feels that Generation Y soldiers can help the SAF to cement itself as a Third Generation force with their huge potential in creativity and innovation.

In "Thinking Paternalism: Benefits for the Third Generation SAF in Management and Leadership," CPT Gabriel Choy takes a critical look at the idea of Libertarian Paternalism. According to CPT Choy, Libertarian Paternalism was originally intended as a paradigm shift in thinking for political philosophy and public-policy making, among others. He explores this concept and discusses the potential it holds for

the Third Generation SAF. He evaluates Libertarian Paternalism as a political-philosophical idea and follows up by explaining the rationale for its introduction into the SAF. He presents two particular manifestations of Libertarian Paternalism in action—both in management and leadership—and ends off with the hope that the idea will catch on and truly benefit the organization.

Finally, in "Ethical Conduct in the Future of Unmanned Warfare," CPT Daxson Yap Chin Teck discusses how unmanned combat systems will be the next leap in military technology, promising greater lethality at a lower human cost. CPT Yap argues that as the SAF moves to develop and deploy unmanned systems, it is timely to examine the ethical implications that will arise from the advent of unmanned warfare. This is a critical issue to explore for the SAF because the rapid pace of technological development has outstripped the evolution of the laws which govern armed conflict. He warns that if the issue is left unaddressed at the organizational level, the propensity for unethical and therefore unlawful conduct in war is high, and Singapore cannot afford such mistakes.

The *POINTER* Editorial Team