

# EDITORIAL

We are pleased to kick off our Pointer Supplement for 2016 with an Air Force-themed issue. The theme is 'Beyond the Horizon: Forging the Future Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF)'. The essays in this supplement explore issues related to the RSAF in the future, the possible changes in the operating context and the strategic challenges faced. These essays will also discuss the preparation required to exploit opportunities and create capacity within the organisation. Overall, the supplement aims to engender a sense of aspiration and excitement about the possibilities of the future and a sense of ownership of the challenges that will need to be dealt with collectively.

The first essay, 'Future Trends and the Strategic Imperatives for Change in the RSAF' is by LTC Wong Khiong Seng and CPT Nichola Goh. According to the authors, to remain at the forefront, the RSAF has to anticipate and address the many external and domestic challenges that it can expect to face in the future. In this essay, the authors outline various developments that are of interest to Singapore and the RSAF, including developments in our neighbouring countries, the expanded spectrum of threats the RSAF can expect to deal with in the future and the domestic resource challenges that the RSAF would have to overcome. The essay then concludes by outlining the holistic strategy that the RSAF will adopt to ensure it remains relevant and effective in the face of these challenges.

The second essay, 'Sustaining a Strong and Capable RSAF for the Future' by ME6 Sreekanth Shankar, LTC James Phang, MAJ Ng Guo Feng and CPT Tan Peng Yu, discusses the key shifts required to sustain the RSAF as a credible deterrent force for the future. The essay argues for the RSAF to continue its emphasis on employing advanced fighting concepts enabled by an innovative force structure and exploring cross domain capabilities, to maximise its resource pool by enhancing flexibility in capabilities and skillsets and to strengthen our internal and public engagement efforts with a more deliberate and targeted communication strategy.

LTC Tan Hwee, Roy, MAJ Oh Wai Mun, Lance and CPT Tan Xi Jie present their perspective on 'Moving Beyond the 1-0 Paradigm: Enhancing the RSAF's Value in Peace'. Their essay explores the RSAF's roles in peace and the potential areas that the RSAF could further contribute in, as the RSAF's operating context evolves. According to the authors, the RSAF, in maintaining a high state of operational readiness and sharpening its combat edge, contributes significantly to the defence of the country. This in turn underpins the peace and stability that Singaporeans enjoy, the foundation of which our national success, both economic and social, is built upon. However, the

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RSAF is not just a critical tool for war, but also a vital instrument in peace. While the RSAF must continue to anchor the deterrence mission, there is scope and need to contribute beyond the defence area. The authors conclude that in moving beyond the RSAF's 1-0 paradigm, we can strengthen the RSAF, strengthen the SAF and strengthen Singapore. This will in turn enhance Singapore's peace and security, the springboard on which we can build Singapore's future success story.

The fourth essay, 'Human Capital Challenges for the RSAF' by LTC Tee Pei Ling, MAJ Tjong Wei Chee and ME5 Wong Chong Wai provide insights on the opportunities and challenges for the RSAF in dealing with future human resource trends. The authors highlight that the national manpower challenges that arise as a result of a low birth rate will be one of the many constraints that the RSAF will have to work with, moving forward. The rising national educational standards and individual aspirations among our Operationally-Ready National Servicemen (NSmen) and Regulars will enable the RSAF to leverage on technology as they can be trained more effectively and operate more sophisticated weapon systems. This essay seeks to provide clarity on the manpower challenges that the RSAF will face within the next 15 years. It will explore and seed new ideas in maximising the potential of the well-educated workforce to a thinking and technologically savvy fighting force capable of a full spectrum of operations.

LTC Tan Cheng Wee, Mark, MAJ Cumarran K. and ME4 Ng Wei Rong in their essay, 'RSAF 2030: Evolving Our Culture for Future Challenges' examine the importance of culture to the RSAF's success and the key organisational attributes required to sustain success. The essay focuses on the determinants of culture, its intrinsic importance in driving organisational behaviour and the pitfalls if culture does not evolve with an organisation's changing strategy, objectives or operating environment. It scrutinises the current RSAF culture to identify what has enabled mission success thus far and discusses how a culture shift must be evoked to support future warfighting concepts while engendering key organisational attributes and strengths for the future.

The final essay is entitled, 'Black Swans need not be Black: Preparing the RSAF to Succeed in Spite of Future Uncertainties'. Written by LTC Goh Sim Aik, ME4 Soon Yi Xiang, Andrew and CPT Lim Peixian, Vanessa, the essay delves into how the RSAF can prepare for 'Black Swan' events and put in measures to handle them. 'Black Swan' events are game changing events that cannot be reliably foreseen. While the RSAF has robust plans in place to guard against uncertainties, the key to guard against 'Black Swan' events lies in the adaptability and nimbleness of the RSAF, to not only absorb the impact of 'Black Swan' events, but also to triumph over them. This essay explores what the RSAF must do to prepare itself to deal with 'Black Swan' events effectively. It also suggests measures that the RSAF could adopt, especially in the areas of personnel development and organisational culture.

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