

NAVY NEWS


ISSUE 02 2015

MARITIME FRIENDSHIPS

Highlights of IMDEX Asia 2015

BETTER TOGETHER

Bilateral ties through foreign exercises

 [singaporenavy](#)

 [singaporenavy](#)



IN GOOD BOOKS

Tales of the sea

FROM THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

Chief of Navy on our Navy Family

REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE



BEYOND HORIZONS



YOU RELISH A CHALLENGE.
WE'LL TEACH YOU TO RISE ABOVE IT.
GO BEYOND YOURSELF AS A NAVAL WARFARE SYSTEM EXPERT



navycareers.gov.sg



NAVY NEWS CONTENTS

ISSUE 02 2015

Advisor

RADM Timothy Lo

Editor

SLTC Chew Chun-Liang

Deputy Editor

Clara Lock

Editorial Coordinator

PTE Jonathan Ryan

Photojournalists

CPL Hans Lim

PTE S Mitra

PTE Jonathan Ryan

PTE Harry Sin

Contributing Members

Jessica Teo

Sara Shamini

LTC Terence Tan

LTC Gary Ow

MAJ Ong Willie

CPT Adrian Teo

ME5 Nagara

ME4 Conrad Fung



COVER PAGE

Photo by
Kenneth Lin

02 Quickrep

08 Onwards & Upwards

- From the people, for the people: Chief of Navy on our Navy Family
- Better together: The RSN enhances bilateral ties through exercises with foreign navies

18 Photo story

- One Navy Family: Celebrating the RSN's 48th birthday
- Maritime Friendships: Highlights of IMDEX Asia 2015

28 Now Hear This

- Stronger, united: Regional cooperation for maritime security
- To defend our home: Navy volunteers from the Singapore Armed Forces Volunteer Corps complete their training

36 Know Your Navy Family

- Iron men: RSN buddies participate in Putrajaya Half Ironman Triathlon

38 Dogwatch

- The lion spirit: Meet RSS RSS *Stalwart's* lion dance troupe

40 Port Brief

- Go back in history: Visit the Navy Museum

42 Free Gangway

- In good books: Tales from the sea

44 Lookback

- Stories from our pioneers

The mission of the RSN 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 at sea. The RSN will ensure Singapore's seaward defence, secure our sea lines of communication, and maintain a high level of operational readiness and a broad spectrum of capabilities to support our national interest.

NAVY NEWS is a publication of the Republic of Singapore Navy. The views expressed by its writers do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Navy or the Ministry of Defence. NAVY NEWS is not to be reproduced in whole or in parts without the written consent of the RSN. For enquiries and comments, please call 6768 3367 or email us at navynews@defence.gov.sg or Navy News, NIC, NOD (OA email).

QUICK REP



Naval Junior Officers' Course

29 RSN personnel graduated from the 12th Naval Junior Officers' Course on 19 Mar. ME3 Mark Sathanathan was the second Military Expert to graduate from the course. LTA Soh Guo Zhong topped the course, while LTA Soh Kah Lok emerged as the distinguished graduate.

Intra-RSN Basketball Championship

Naval Diving Unit emerged as champions of the Intra-RSN Basketball Championship, which concluded on 30 Mar. Fleet came in as first runner-up.



RSN Safety Seminar

The RSN Safety Seminar, which was held on 10 Apr at Tuas Naval Base, brought together various safety practitioners from across the Navy to communicate safety initiatives and focus areas for the work year. It recognised units and individuals for good safety practices and staying accident free. The seminar also featured the signing of the RSN Safety Policy by Chief of Navy RADM Lai Chung Han and formation commanders to reaffirm the leaderships' committee to safety.



Naval Diving Unit 42nd Batch Graduation

70 divers from the 42nd Combat Diving Course were declared combat-ready in an underwater graduation parade held at Sembawang Camp on 10 Apr.

Advanced Specialisation Course Graduation

23 Military Experts graduated from the Advanced Specialisation Course on 17 Apr at Naval Military Experts Institute. The 14-week course comprises a leadership development and professional military education phase and a vocational specialisation phase.



SAF Appreciation Dinner for KAHs, ROVERs and volunteers

The RSN hosted the Nation Cadet Corps (Sea) Affirmation Ceremony 2015 at RSS Panglima on 21 Apr. The affirmation ceremony is an annual event to induct first-year NCC Sea Cadets into the NCC family. 346 new student cadets and 21 teachers also toured the Navy Museum and landing ship tank, RSS *Endeavour*.



SAF Appreciation Dinner for KAHs, ROVERs and volunteers

An appreciation dinner was held at Gardens by the Bay for Key Appointment Holders, Reservist on Voluntary Extended Reserve Service (ROVERS) and volunteers in the SAF on 21 Apr. Four RSN personnel received certificates of appreciation from Chief of Staff – Naval Staff RADM Jackson Chia.



Master Chief Fleet Change of Command

ME5 Wong Fook Lam handed over command of Master Chief Fleet to ME4 Ng Soon Chye at a ceremony held on 27 Apr at Changi Naval Base.

44th Naval Warfare Officers' Course Graduation

17 naval officers graduated from the 44th Naval Warfare Officers' Course on 24 Apr. The 20-week course equips officers with the relevant knowledge and skills to assume the role of Principal Warfare Officer. CPT Tan Shing Ee emerged as the top graduate in strike warfare while CPT Desmond Tan was the top graduate in specialised warfare.



Navy Day

The Republic of Singapore Navy celebrated its 48th birthday at Sembawang Camp on 5 May. This year's event was themed "Our Navy Family, Our Naval Heritage". Navy personnel explored a heritage trail that included the former Midshipman School and the iconic Seng Fatt Hairdressing Saloon – an all-in-one barber, tailor and provision shop. Participants also took part in a "we-fie" contest, where they took photographs with friends and Navy pioneers. Read more about it on page 18.



Intra-RSN Badminton Tournament

Fleet emerged as the champion of the Intra-RSN Badminton Tournament held on 13 May at Changi Naval Base Sports Complex. Maritime Training and Doctrine Centre came in as the first runners up.



Honorary Aide-De-Camp Appointment Ceremony

11 RSN personnel, including one Operationally Ready National Serviceman, were appointed Honorary Aides-De-Camp (HADC) by the President of the Republic of Singapore, Dr Tony Tan. The ceremony was held at the Istana on 13 May.

Keel Laying for Littoral Mission Vessel

The keel of the RSN's second of eight Littoral Mission Vessels (LMVs) was laid on 14 May. The ceremony, which took place at Singapore Technologies Marine in Benoi Shipyard, was officiated by Chief of Defence Force LG Ng Chee Meng. The LMVs will replace the existing Fearless-class patrol vessels. They will enhance the RSN's abilities to provide seaward defence of Singapore and secure Singapore's sea lines of communication.

Chief Naval Medical Officer Change of Appointment Ceremony

COL (DR) Tang Kong Chong handed over command of Chief Naval Medical Officer/Commander Force Medical Protection Command to LTC (DR) Chow Weien at a ceremony held at Changi Naval Base on 14 May.



Signing of Submarine Rescue Joint Standard Operating Procedures with the United States Navy

Fleet Commander COL Lew Chuen Hong signed the Submarine Rescue Joint Standard Operating Procedures with United States Navy's Commander, Submarine Force, US Pacific Fleet RADM Phillip G Sawyer on 19 May. Chief of Navy RADM Lai Chung Han and Vice Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michelle J Howard were the witnessing officers.



Appreciation ceremonies for AirAsia QZ8501 Search Operation

SAF personnel involved in the search for Air Asia flight QZ8501 were recognised for their contributions at two ceremonies. On 15 May, 26 personnel received certificates on behalf of their units from Chief of Navy, RADM Lai Chung Han, at Changi Central Mess. 42 personnel received their Overseas Service Medals on 8 Jun at the MINDEF auditorium from Second Minister of Defence, Mr Lui Tuck Yew.



International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (IMDEX) Asia 2015

The RSN co-hosted the tenth International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (IMDEX) Asia 2015. The event was held from 19 to 21 May at the Changi Exhibition Centre and Changi Naval Base. IMDEX Asia 2015 brought together navies and coast guards for conferences, exercises and warship displays. Read more about it on page 22.



Operationally Ready National Servicemen Employers' Visit to IMDEX

Employers of RSN Operationally Ready National Servicemen visited Changi Naval Base on 21 May, as part of IMDEX Asia 2015. They were given a tour of our frigate RSS *Intrepid* and Indian Navy Ship INS *Satpura*, and learnt about overseas operations that the RSN participated in.

37th Tri-Service Warfighter Course Graduation

14 RSN personnel graduated from the Tri-Service Warfighter Course on 22 May. CPT Choy Weijie Gabriel emerged as the top student of the course, while CPT Tan Zhi Zhong Eugene was one of the distinguished graduates.



Joint Leadership Course

137 Warrant Officers and Military Experts graduated from the Joint Leadership Course on 26 May. There were 29 participants from the Navy. ME2 Michael Ong emerged as distinguished graduate and also took home the award for best knowledge.



Naval Advanced Officers' Course

24 officers graduated from the Naval Advanced Officers' Course on 29 May, where they were trained to take up shipboard Assistant Operations Officer roles. Officers were taught naval warfare and trained as a Action Officer-of-the-Watch. They also qualified as Visual Gun Direction Officers and Aircraft Control Officers. LTA Darrick Ang emerged as the top graduate while CPT Alvin Tan was the distinguished graduate.



Appreciation Dinner for Retirees

The Navy paid tribute to retired personnel at an appreciation dinner on 5 Jun. Chief of Navy, RADM Lai Chung Han was the guest of honour for the event. Read more on page 45.



Navy Women's Career Seminar

The second Navy Women's career seminar was held on 6 Jun for women to gain a better understanding of the Navy. 120 women attended the seminar and spoke to female Naval Officers and Naval Warfare System Engineers.

SAF Central Welfare Fund Bursary and Merit Bursary Awards

The SAF Central Welfare Fund Bursary and Merit Awards Ceremony was held on 11 Jun at The Chevrons. The awards were given to 132 children of in-service personnel to recognise their academic achievements and provide them with financial support in pursuing their studies.



NALCOM Family Day

Naval Logistics Command (NALCOM) held their Family Day event on 12 Jun at Sungei Buloh. Commander NALCOM, ME7 Andy Tay, was the guest of honour.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN



RSS Resolution in Shanghai

Landing ship tank RSS *Resolution* called into Wusong Naval Base in Shanghai on 11 Apr as part of the 73rd Midshipman Sea Training Deployment. Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, who was in Shanghai on a working trip, visited the ship.

Ex Bersama Shield

The RSN participated in Ex Bersama Shield from 6 to 18 May. Ex Bersama Shield is a Five Power Defence Arrangements exercise designed to enhance regional security and foster cooperation among its member countries, namely Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

📍 Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX)

This year marks the 22nd instalment of Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) with the Indian Navy. The exercise, which ran from 20 to 26 May, saw frigate RSS *Supreme* and submarine RSS *Archer* taking part in conventional warfare exercises, such as anti-surface and anti-submarine serials. Singapore hosted the shore phase while the sea phase of the exercise was held in the South China Sea.



📍 Ex Maritime Cooperation

RSN's frigate RSS *Intrepid* and missile corvette RSS *Valiant* and PLA(N)'s Yulin participated in the inaugural Ex Maritime Cooperation between the RSN and People's Liberation Army (Navy), or PLA(N), which took place from 23 to 25 May. The exercise was opened by RSN Fleet Commander, COL Lew Chuen Hong, and PLA(N) South Sea Fleet Commander, RADM Shen Jinlong, on 20 May. The ships conducted serials such as gunnery firings, encounter exercises and manoeuvring exercises.



Courtesy calls on CNV

Australia

VADM Tim Barrett, Chief Of Navy

Belgium

RADM Georges Heeren, Chief Of Navy

Brunei

FADM Dato Seri Palahwan Abdul Aziz Bin Haji Mohammad Tamit, Deputy Commander, Royal Brunei Armed Forces

COL Pg Norazmi Bin Pg Hj Muhammad, Commander Royal Brunei Navy

Germany

VADM Andreas Krause, Chief Of Navy

Greece

VADM Evangelos Apostolakis, Chief Of Hellenic Navy

Indonesia

ADM Ade Supandi, KASAL

Malaysia

ADM Datuk Mohd Amdan Bin Kurish, Director General, Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency

Papua New Guinea

Commander Thomas Ponjom, Director Maritime

South Africa

VADM M.S. Hlongwane, Chief Of South African Navy

United Arab Emirates

Staff Major General Ibrahim Salim M. Al Musharrakh, Commander Of The United Arab Emirates Naval Forces

Uruguay

ADM Leonard Alonso, Commander In Chief

FROM THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

Story by Clara Lock

Photos by CPT Leow Tien Leng and Kenneth Lin

Close to a year into his role as Chief of Navy, RADM Lai Chung Han talks about the people powering Team Navy, and how he keeps his team motivated.

“ Being Chief, you are responsible for the whole, but you are dependant on the parts. ”

– RADM Lai Chung Han



Chief of Navy RADM Lai Chung Han doesn't want people of the Navy to stand on ceremony around him.

He prefers, instead, to understand them.

When RADM Lai served as Fleet Commander from 2011 to 2012, he would accompany the engineers during their rounds when he sailed on various ships during the fleet exercise.

He would dispense with the Executive Officer, Coxswain and the rest of the crew who might be following him, and together with the engineers, they would go for rounds – crawling through passageways and engine rooms, checking dials and oil levels.

"I would say, let me see what you do. And one-on-one, in engineering spaces, they're happy to tell you anything and everything," he said.

He wants to understand his people because to him, they are like family – an extended family that he both gives himself to and draws strength from.

"Being Chief, you are responsible for the whole, but you are dependant on the parts," said the 42-year-old.

Punching above it's weight

He is dependant because the Navy relies on its people to do big things. Bigger things, it would seem, than the small defence force of an island nation should be expected to.

But RADM Lai said it is imperative that the RSN continues to punch above its weight.

"The only reason why people – the Americans, the Chinese, the Japanese will talk to us is that we have the capability. When they exercise with us, it's not just notional or about defence relations. They get professional training from working with us... we become a partner of choice," he said.

It is an important position to have as a maritime nation, in a maritime region, where a complex operating environment means the RSN must juggle multiple balls without dropping any of them.

There are piracy hot spots to patrol, maritime security to ensure, and search and rescue operations that Singapore contributes to.

To fulfil all these roles, the Navy demands much of the already leanly manned RSN, which has frigates run with just 72 personnel.

Most navies around the world crew ships similar in size and capabilities with at least twice that.

And declining birth rates in Singapore mean the pool of Full-Time National Servicemen that the RSN recruits from will decrease by 25% come 2025.

Meeting the Navy's needs

Even as the Navy looks to double the current 7% of women in service, it must also make the RSN a conducive place to work by respecting the life cycle needs of existing personnel.

"In the past we used to say, get your professional development done in the first four, five, six years," said RADM Lai.

But he now asks if the Navy can be more flexible and sensitive to servicemen – not just women – who are young parents.

Earlier shore postings are one option, but commanders on ships should also “make time and space” for people to attend to their families.

He is quick to caution that this is only feasible up to a “certain extent”. But he says it is important to offer servicemen flexibility in their career progression, because of what the Navy asks of them.

“Our jobs are demanding (and) our work takes us away from home,” said RADM Lai, who served on board the missile corvettes (MCVs) during his younger days.

To lead and serve

He speaks of resilience when he recounts his shipboard tours, of keeping his chin up when things are tough or frustrating – something many of his former ship crew can attest to.

COL Ong Chee Wei, Deputy Head Naval Operations, recalls a deployment to Guam they both took part in.

MCV RSS *Valour* was tossed about badly in waves measuring up to three metres, recalls COL Ong. The crew, most of them seasick, only stayed awake during their watches before retiring to their bunks to tide over the journey.

Only then-Executive Officer RADM Lai stayed up, poring over exercise instructions and manuals in preparation for a harpoon firing, one of the main exercise missions.

When the ship was eventually unable to carry out the firing because they lacked a clear range to fire safely, crew morale was low after the difficult journey they had been through to get there.

But RADM Lai said: “(When things don’t go right), I think the crew looks to you to see

whether you are discouraged, whether you are disillusioned, whether you are dispirited, whether you show resilience.”

Resilience in tough times

Even today he can recall, verbatim, the message he received on the night Fearless-class patrol vessel RSS *Courageous* collided with container ship ANL *Indonesia* in the Singapore Strait, killing four Navy servicewomen.

‘Courageous is sinking,’ read the message, just after midnight on 4 January 2003.

MCV RSS *Valiant* was on standby that night and as then-Commanding Officer he drove from his home in the east to Tuas Naval Base, thoughts about the collision racing through his mind.

“It was a very low moment for the Navy, but you could also see the Navy coming together – to grieve for the families, but also to recover from the



episode,” said RADM Lai.

But if there were dark days, there have been good ones, too, and there is satisfaction he derives from service.

When he meets the servicemen from the various units they share with him what defending Singapore’s everyday means to them.

It is defending this nation for their families, for their loved ones.

It is a cause that the father of two – RADM Lai’s daughter is 14 this year, while his son is 12 – can identify with.

Family man

During the week, his wife, a homemaker and former schoolteacher, takes care of their children, and on weekends it is RADM Lai’s turn to shuttle them to and from various activities and classes.

He cherishes his time in the car with the children, he says, because it is when they tell him things.

The couple, who have been married for 15 years, first met in secondary school.

They were both prefects – he, from Raffles Institution, she from Raffles Girls Secondary. They dated in Raffles Junior College, when both were in the Student Council.

Today he calls her his best friend, and soul mate; the self-assured speaker pausing in

contemplation when he talks about his wife and family.

It is for them that he serves. It is through them that he finds meaning in service.

“For us (servicemen), we do what we do in service of the country. When you think country, you think family; you think about our way of life. You think about your children, you think about their future. You think about your fellow shipmates; you think about those who serve with you.”

You think – and he does, often – about your Navy family.



BETTER TOGETHER

Story by Harry Sin and S Mitra

Photos by Jonathan Ryan, Harry Sin, MSG Roger Chan and courtesy of the Indian Navy

The RSN cements trust and mutual understanding with navies around the world through exercises that they take part in together. Navy News finds out how.

The Z-9 Haitun, a helicopter from the PLA(N)'s Jiangkai-II class frigate Yulin, approaches the flight deck of RSS Intrepid for a cross-deck landing. The cross-deck landing was part of Exercise Maritime Cooperation (XMC), an inaugural bilateral exercise between the RSN and PLA(N).



Since the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) first took place 22 years ago, the exercise has evolved in scope and complexity.

This May was the first time an Archer-class submarine took part in the exercise, which also featured ships RSS *Supreme*, INS *Satpura*, INS *Kamorta* and a RSAF F50-Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

For CPT Kenneth Kok, Assistant Operations Officer on submarine RSS *Conqueror*, it was his third time participating in SIMBEX – and his first time as a sea rider on the Indian Navy ship.

He paid particular attention to the anti-submarine warfare serial, where ships and aircraft from both navies hunted for submarine RSS *Archer*.

“When I was on board INS *Kamorta*, I saw how SIMBEX has brought our two navies together, how we follow a common standard operating procedure and learn from each other,” said CPT Kok.

This standard operating procedure allows navies to speak a common operational language, making it easier to communicate during serials such as firing. It is established over time, as two navies grow more comfortable with operating together.

In the same month, the RSN also took part in Exercise Maritime Cooperation, the inaugural bilateral exercise with China’s People’s Liberation Army Navy, or PLA(N).

This set the wheels in motion on a similar path of trust, interoperability and understanding.

Frigate RSS *Intrepid* and PLA(N)'s Jiangkai II-class frigate *Yulin*, together with missile corvette RSS *Valiant*, conducted serials such as surface firings and air defence exercises in the South China Sea.

It was a chance for both sides to standardize procedures such as firing. "During harbour rehearsals we tied down things such as firing ranges, communications and safety procedures with our PLA(N) counterparts," said ME2 Gary Eng, a weapons control systems supervisor on RSS *Intrepid*.

Enhancing trust through interaction

It was not the first time the two frigates had operated together. Last year, RSS *Intrepid* made a port call in Zhanjiang, where

both navies conducted a passage exercise that included exercise planning, a manoeuvring exercise and ship visits.

The RSN has also interacted with the PLA(N) during multinational counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden – coincidentally it was the same ship, RSS *Intrepid*, that was deployed for the operation in 2012.

Executive Officer MAJ Chuah Meng Soon, who was then a staff officer in the task group, recalls how the RSN and PLA(N) conducted cross deck interactions.

Speaking a common language as the Chinese helps both navies to build trust, said MAJ Chuah, who sailed on *Yulin* as a sea rider during the exercise.





Personnel from 11 nations came together for this year's Western Pacific Naval Symposium Multilateral Sea Exercise, where they carried out maritime security operations such as sea boarding, seen here on MV Swift Rescue.

“ When I was on board INS *Kamorta*, I saw how SIMBEX has brought our two navies together, how we follow a common standard operating procedure and learn from each other. ”

– CPT Kenneth Kok

And this trust looks set to continue. Commander Task Group of the exercise COL Ken Cheong said both navies are looking to generate an exercise procedure document for future exercises, and intend to move towards more complex evolutions such as anti-air warfare serials.

“The exercise procedure document will set the format and structure of things like communication and how we plan for an exercise, so that we can make the planning process simpler, and spend more time exercising,” said COL Cheong.

Cooperation for maritime security

Besides conventional warfare serials, countries also come together to strengthen maritime security.

The 5th Western Pacific Naval Symposium Multilateral Sea

Exercise (WMSX), held in conjunction with the International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference Asia 2015, saw participants from 11 navies engage in maritime surveillance and interdiction operations.

This is the first time the WMSX involved the Conduct for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), an agreement signed by 14 Pacific nations last year.

CUES, while non-binding, is a guide to the maritime community to prevent the escalation of tensions among militaries at sea.

Back on shore, this year's Maritime Information Sharing Exercise (MARISX) and Exercise Bell Buoy would also help navies speak a common tongue when tackling maritime security threats.

Operational centres tested their speed and communication in a simulated crisis, honing



Frigate RSS Supreme and submarine RSS Archer, together with INS Satpura and INS Kamorta, participated in the 22nd Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) in May. This was the first time the RSN's Archer-class submarine took part in SIMBEX.

transnational communication to respond quickly in the face of real danger.

MARISX participants also collated information through focus group discussions that will be collated into an informal standard operating procedure by the end of the year.

The initiative will allow nations to codify information sharing practices, said Exercise Director and Commander of the Maritime Security Task Force, RADM Frederick Chew.

RADM Chew added: “Truly, we are better together.”

Foreign exercises such as Exercise Maritime Cooperation allow RSN personnel to share best practices and learn from the counterparts in foreign navies.





Crew of the RSS Intrepid tip their hats to Yulin as both ships pass one another in a farewell sail-past that concludes the inaugural exercise.



29 nations took part in this year's Maritime Information Sharing Exercise, where they shared and analysed information to unearth a simulated maritime terrorism plot.

ONE NAVY FAMILY

Photos by Navy News and CPT Leow Tien Leng

The Navy turned 48 on 5 May with a party at the Naval Diving Unit in Sembawang Camp that was attended by pioneers and present servicemen alike.



This year's Navy Day celebration was themed "Our Navy Family, Our Naval Heritage", and was held at Sembawang Camp – first home to the School of Naval Training, and then the former Midshipman School that trained naval officer cadets.





1 Servicemen and women took part in the RSN's first "we-fie" (the group equivalent of a selfie) competition, snapping shots with crew and colleagues.

2 RSN pioneers were also invited to the celebrations, and shared anecdotes about their time in the Navy with present-day personnel during a heritage trail through Sembawang Camp.

3 Members of the Navy Family celebrated as their units were named awards such as Squadron Best Ship and Top Gun.

4 Ex-Chief of Navy RADM (Ret) Kwek Siew Jin visited Seng Fatt barber and gift shop, which was set up back in 1968. The shop not only gives Naval Diving Unit recruits their buzz cut upon enlistment, but is also a tailor and provision shop.





MARITIME FRIENDSHIPS

Story by Clara Lock

Photos by Navy News, ME1 Benjamin Lim, MSG Roger Chan, ME2 Jasper Ong

In a maritime region, the seas divide, but they can also unite. Singapore brought together navies, academics and industry for the 10th edition of the International Maritime Display and Exhibition (IMDEX) Asia 2015 – a platform to discuss naval and maritime security issues, an exhibition of military hardware, and cross-cultural interaction.





20 warships from 12 countries berthed at Changi Naval Base during IMDEX, and were open for tours during the exhibition.

- 1 Navy leaders from around the world came together for a dinner at Resorts World Singapore, which was hosted by Chief of Navy RADM Lai Chung Han.
- 2 The exhibition brought together more than 180 companies from 28 countries, which showcased a range of technologies such as surveillance systems, missiles and unmanned systems.





3 Visiting personnel took part in the fifth edition of the Maritime Information Sharing Exercise (MARISX), where they made sense of seemingly unrelated information to unearth a simulated terrorist plot in the region.

4 Crew of the BNS *Dhaleshwari* from the Bangladesh Navy welcomed visitors on board their ship with fanfare during the warship tours.





5 The International Maritime Security Conference featured a panel of speakers such as (extreme left) RADM Shen Jinlong, Commander of the South Sea Fleet from the People's Liberation Army Navy. He spoke about establishing mutual respect among participating nations in establishing maritime security in the region.

6 Cocktail receptions, such as this one hosted by the Indonesian Navy's Kri *John Lie*, gave personnel from various navies a chance to interact over a taste of each other's culture, food and drink.

7 The 5th Western Pacific Naval Symposium Multilateral Sea Exercise also took place during this year's IMDEX Asia, where participating nations carried out maritime security operations such as maritime surveillance, boarding and interdiction operations.

STRONGER, UNITED

Story by S Mitra

Singapore teams up with regional partners to guard the sea trade in and around our waters. Navy News explores how maritime security is enhanced when nations come together and collaborate.



When the pirates attacked product tanker MT *Ai Maru* in Jun 2014, it was beneath the blanket of night, in the lower reaches of the South China Sea.

Seven pirates, armed with firearms and knives, approached in three speed boats.

When the captain of the ship activated the ship security alarm system, the owner of the Japanese-registered vessel called in the incident to Singapore's Information Fusion Centre (IFC).

On a day-to-day basis the IFC is constantly on the lookout for any information that might have a bearing on the maritime security of the

region – gathering, sense making and sharing this information through networks of regional navies, merchant shipping companies, and other maritime security enforcement agencies such as the coast guards. The IFC also culls information from open sources such as newspapers and news channels in the region.

When threats such as the pirates attacking MT *Ai Maru* are surfaced to the IFC, they can cue the relevant authority and agency to coordinate operational responses.

In the case of MT *Ai Maru*, six ships from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia came to the aid of the beleaguered vessel – including patrol vessel RSS *Gallant* from the RSN.

“ It is a worthwhile endeavour with tangible rewards, to participate in the Malacca Straits Patrols. ”

– MAJ Wesley Hum

A collaborative effort

Given the amount of shipping that passes through the Singapore and Malacca Straits, it is perhaps unsurprising that these waters need to be closely guarded.

A third of the world's shipping passes through these waterways each year, including most of the trade between Europe and Asia.

Almost all crude oil required by economic giants China, South Korea and Japan must also traverse the Singapore and Malacca Straits en route to their destination.

This means the piracy threat has wider implications on the global community, with the potential to drive prices of fuel up through higher insurance, lost cargo and extra compensation for crews, according to a 2014 CNBC report.

Countries as far away as France, New Zealand and the United States are taking note, attaching International Liaison Officers (ILOs) to work with the IFC.

These ILOs act as a link between the IFC and their home country, sending and receiving information directly from their country's operations centres. This improves response time to incidents in situations where mere minutes can mean the difference between apprehending pirates and missing them completely.

LTC Eric Ng, who heads the IFC said: “The navies’ decision to send their ILOs to the IFC reflects the desire of like-minded partners’ willingness and determination to address MARSEC issues collectively and effectively.”

Keeping an eye out

Besides the IFC, countries bordering the Singapore and Malacca Straits – Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand – have stepped up their efforts to counter regional piracy.

It is, after all, the waters of their back yard.

The Malacca Straits Patrols (MSP), an open arrangement among these four nations, facilitates air and sea patrols coupled with an information sharing element to enhance the security of the straits.



“ It is our business to ensure that the world’s business arrives on time and without interruption. If we don’t do this, nobody will. ”

– VADM Tim Barrett, Royal Australian Navy

All four nations contribute six to eight flights per month to air patrols of these waters, and the RSN flies the Fokker-50 Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

While flying patrols, which are coordinated with other countries, the combined mission patrol team looks out for any suspicious behaviour in the water, such as small boats heading towards large cargo vessels at speed.

Spotters relay such activity to the pilot, who informs the country’s navy or maritime action agency for them to respond.

Participating nations also share information pertaining to maritime security, such as recent trends in piracy hotspots, so that more targeted responses and patrols can be planned.

Next year will be the tenth anniversary of the MSP. “It is a worthwhile endeavour with tangible rewards, to participate in such a mission. The drop in piracy rates since the inception of the MSP is self-evident,” said MAJ Wesley Hum, who was the Singapore Co-Secretary of MSP in 2014.

At the International Maritime Security Conference, held as part of this year’s International Maritime Display and Exhibition, Chief of the Royal Australian Navy Vice Admiral (VADM) Tim Barrett addressed the collective responsibility of navies to cooperate and ensure maritime security.

VADM Barrett said: “It is our business to ensure that the world’s business arrives on time and without interruption. If we don’t do this, nobody will.”


TO DEFEND OUR HOME

*Story and photos by Jonathan Ryan
Additional photos by MSG Roger Chan*

The first Navy volunteers in the Singapore Armed Forces Volunteer Corps (SAFVC) qualified as bridge watchkeepers this April. Navy News finds out about their journey from civilians to servicemen.

SV1 Michael Li is one of the first Navy volunteers from the Singapore Armed Forces Volunteer Corps (SAFVC). The first two volunteers will serve as bridge watchkeepers, augmenting existing navigation teams on RSN vessels to spot and identify vessels or objects with the vicinity of their ship.





When SV1 Michael Li and SV1 Gao Jing stood on the bridge of landing ship tank RSS *Endeavour*, it was their first time on an RSN ship.

But the first two Navy volunteers under the new Singapore Armed Forces Volunteer Corps (SAFVC) scheme will soon be serving alongside their counterparts in active duty.

The duo completed their three-week training in April and are qualified to serve as bridge watchkeepers.

SV1 Gao, who received her Singapore citizenship a year ago, hopes to better understand what male citizens go through during their National Service. “I want to serve my new home,” said the 32-year-old SV1 Gao.

Her rank SV1 refers to that of SAF volunteers and ranges from SVT (Trainee) to SV4.

The former citizen of the People's Republic of China has been residing in Singapore for the past 12 years, ever since she received a scholarship to study Civil and Environmental Engineering in Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

“After you spend the first six years here, you don’t want to leave any more,” said the petite SV1 Gao, who speaks fluent English and works in commodity trading.

It is those like her – new citizens, permanent residents and Singaporean females – that the SAFVC is meant for, people not mandated to do national service but who still want to volunteer. The first batch, which enrolled in March, comprised 68 people.

Grounding the basics

Together with the first SAFVC cohort, SV1 Li and SV1 Gao underwent a two-week Basic Military Training (BMT) Course at Maju Camp.

The course, which included a three-day field camp and the shooting and handling of a Singapore Assault Rifle 21 (SAR21), was a basic introduction into soldiering.

They then went through five days of qualification and two days of advanced training at the Naval Military Experts Institute (NMI).

This involved an orientation into the history of the RSN and theory lessons that covered topics such as basic seamanship.

The volunteers also learnt how to report contacts and what to look out for as bridge watchkeepers, before putting this into practice in the Full-Mission Ship Simulator.



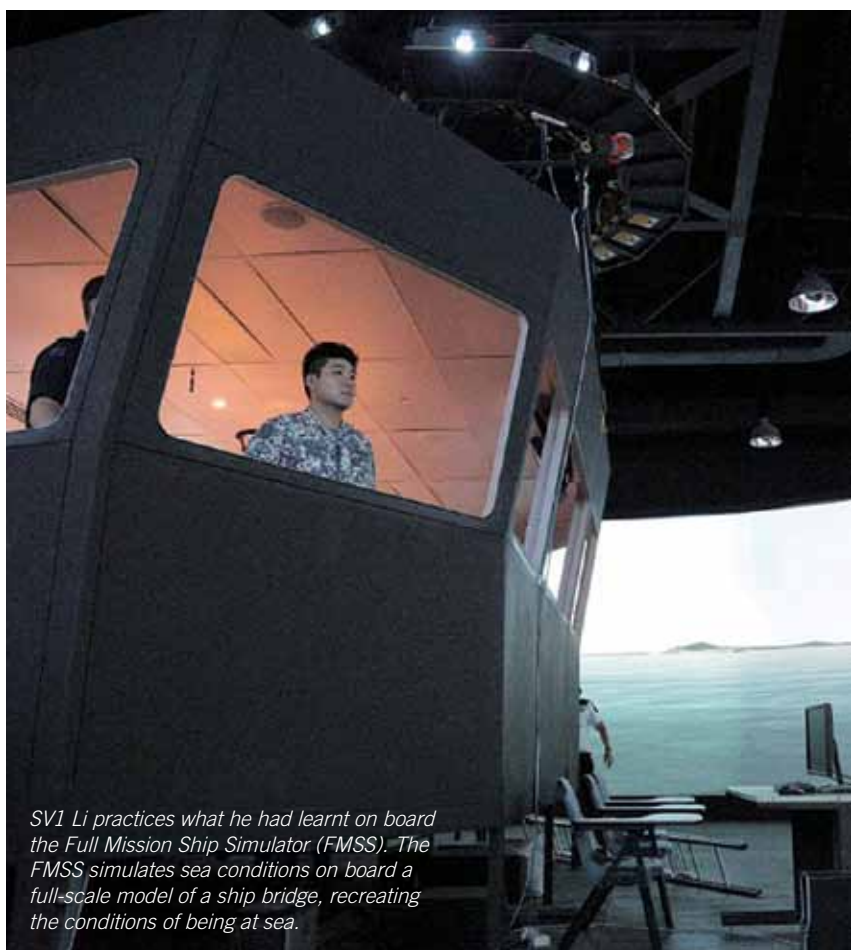
As part of their week long qualification training, SV1 Li and SV1 Gao Jing took part in the daily naval tradition of colours with trainees from the Naval Military Expert Institute (NMI), where they observed the raising of the state flag and naval ensign.

Their training culminated in a sailing on STET *Polaris*, where they had their final assessment while sailing along the Singapore Strait.

But their training was not without its challenges. SV1 Li conceded that he would like to get fitter, while SV1 Gao struggled with seasickness on STET *Polaris*.

The training ship can be a challenging vessel to sail on for new sailors – it is small and sits low in the water, making it susceptible to wind and wave movement.

“I had a moment of weakness where I regretted signing up when I was seasick. But having overcome it, I am proud that I made this decision to sign up for SAFVC,” said SV1 Gao.



SV1 Li practices what he had learnt on board the Full Mission Ship Simulator (FMSS). The FMSS simulates sea conditions on board a full-scale model of a ship bridge, recreating the conditions of being at sea.



SV1 Gao (left) and SV1 Li were given an orientation to the Navy when they toured the Navy Museum learning about the traditions and history of the RSN. Volunteers were given learning objectives and then allowed to explore on their own.



“ I am proud that I made this decision to sign up for SAFVC. ”

– SV1 Gao Jing

The drive to serve

For SV1 Li, who has a 15-month-old son, serving in the SAFVC means they will have a shared experience when the time comes for him to do National Service.

“I will be able to give him tips about preparing for BMT,” said SV1 Li, who is also a new citizen of Singapore. He added: “I will tell my son to train and prepare, if not it will be tough.”

When the time comes he hopes his son will be as enthusiastic about serving the nation, and being part of the regular force which SV1 Li is augmenting.

The first batch of volunteers will be eligible for call-ups as early as September this year. They will be required to serve seven days per year for four years, with the option to extend their service for another five years where they will serve as trainers for future batches of SAFVC trainees.

Future batches of RSN volunteers will also contribute in other areas such as legal services and information media.

Course commander ME5 Richard Goh said “The volunteers are now an important part of our force. I am very happy that there are people who would volunteer to serve our nation.”

IRONMEN

Story by Harry Sin

Photos courtesy of Putrajaya Half Ironman Triathlon

Five RSN buddies took part in this year's Putrajaya Half Ironman Triathlon, a race that tested all of them physically and mentally.

For as long as he can remember, MAJ Leonard Tan has been called fat.

But the 35-year-old can also call himself fit. This year, MAJ Tan completed the Ironman, a triathlon that involves a 1.9km swim, 90km bike ride and 21km run.

"I did this race because I want people to know that I have the discipline to train for an Ironman," said MAJ Tan, who was among five RSN buddies who signed up for the race together.

Three of them, including MAJ Tan, were first-timers.

But the race was a challenge for both the newbies and the old hands.

MAJ Tan pushed through cramps in his knee, while MAJ Eric Ang took a fall off his bicycle in the first 15km of the 90km bike leg.

Meanwhile, experienced triathlete LTC Charles Teng battled a flu and sore throat as he pressed on during the race.

They were slowed but not halted by illness and injury.

Unlike most marathons, the Putrajaya Half Ironman required participants to complete the race within a stipulated time in order to get a medal and a finisher's tee.

Forging the iron

Coming together for the race not only made it easier for the men to complete it – it made the training process more fun, too.

The team got to know each other through various races – marathons and biathlons – and decided to take their passion for endurance sports to the next level.

"The Navy is a very small and tight family, so you will know who is active and it will be easy to encourage each other" said LTC Teng.

During the five to six months leading up to the race, the team met every week during their lunch breaks to train for the swimming leg.

They would also train individually before and after work – LTC Teng, for instance, clocked an average of 55km of biking every week.



MAJ Eric Ang recovered from a fall during the cycling leg to complete the Half Ironman, which involved a 1.9km swim, 90km bike ride and 21km run.



LTC Charles Teng, the most experienced triathlete in the team, trained with his buddies while providing advice and support in the lead up to the race.

There is an easy friendship among the group, and banter is aplenty during the interview.

They laugh about trying again, even after all of them asked themselves why they had subjected themselves to the Ironman during the course of the race.

But for the buddies, who intend to take part again next year to try and better their timing, their motivation to challenge themselves comes from the team.

“The Ironman slogan is ‘Anything is Possible’, as long as you put your heart and mind to it,” said MAJ Ang, an expert staff for maritime security in the Doctrine and Readiness Group.

He intends to share his experience with his men to encourage a healthy lifestyle in the Navy.

The five-man team comprised (L-R) LTC Terence Ho, MAJ Eric Ang, MAJ Leonard Tan, MAJ Dickson Kuak and LTC Charles Teng (Not pictured)

Having completed the Half Ironman Putrajaya 2015, MAJ Tan thinks that the race has given him the confidence to overcome physical challenges and push past the finish line.

He said: “It doesn’t matter what people think of you – all that is important are the challenges you can overcome for yourself.”





The troupe, which can do both the lion and dragon dance, performs at RSN functions including Chinese New Year.

THE LION SPIRIT

Story by Hans Lim and photos courtesy of ME2 Alvin Ng

The lion dance troupe from frigate RSS *Stalwart* has taken the sport far beyond our shores, performing at port calls and cocktails abroad. Navy News finds out more about the team.

When commanders from the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) climbed the gangway of frigate RSS *Stalwart* during Exercise Malapura this year, they were greeted with a salute – followed by the clash of cymbals, the rhythm of drum beats, and two prancing lions.

The performance marked the start of a cocktail the ship hosted during their port call in Lumut Naval



The lion dance troupe performing in welcome of Malaysian RADM Dato'mohamad Roslan on board RSS Stalwart during Exercise Malapura 2015.



The troupe performed for Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and the Defence Minister of New Zealand on board RSS Stalwart in 2012 in Wellington, New Zealand.

Base, and delighted members of the RMN.

The lion dancers, comprising members of the ship's crew, are used to spicing up events and cocktails with Singaporean flavour.

They had their first overseas outing in 2009, a year after the troupe was formed. That year, the ship was deployed to San Diego in the United States of America, where

they hosted multiple cocktail receptions.

ME2 Alvin Ng, who founded the lion dance troupe, was then a Navigation System Supervisor and one of the main cocktail coordinators during the deployment.

He suggested that the troupe perform during cocktails, to showcase an element of

Singaporean culture to foreign visitors.

The troupe went on to perform at other local and overseas events, including the 2013 instalment of the International Maritime Display and Exhibition Asia, formation and squadron events and the RSN's Chinese New Year celebrations.

The lion drills

Performing the lion dance requires strength, stamina and agility.

The front half of the lion needs to support and move the lion head, which can weigh up to 10 kg, while the back person must remain bent over for long periods of time, while executing the moves.

He or she also acts as a base for the front during certain moves, elevating the lion into the air.

Meanwhile, the team playing the instruments trains separately, rehearsing their ability to keep time as a squad and to sustain the same beat throughout the entire performance.

This is particularly crucial as the lion dancers follow the cue of the instrument team when executing their moves.

Pride of lions

Rehearsing for performances sometimes means the troupe has to stay back after hours to train.

When the ship is at sea, members come together even when they are off watch to rehearse. But it is time well spent for the crew.

ME1 Zheng Song, who has taken over training of the troupe, said: "It is the passion, friendship and camaraderie of the troupe that makes me enjoy training with the crew. It allows us to bond as a team and cherish each other more."

GOING BACK IN HISTORY

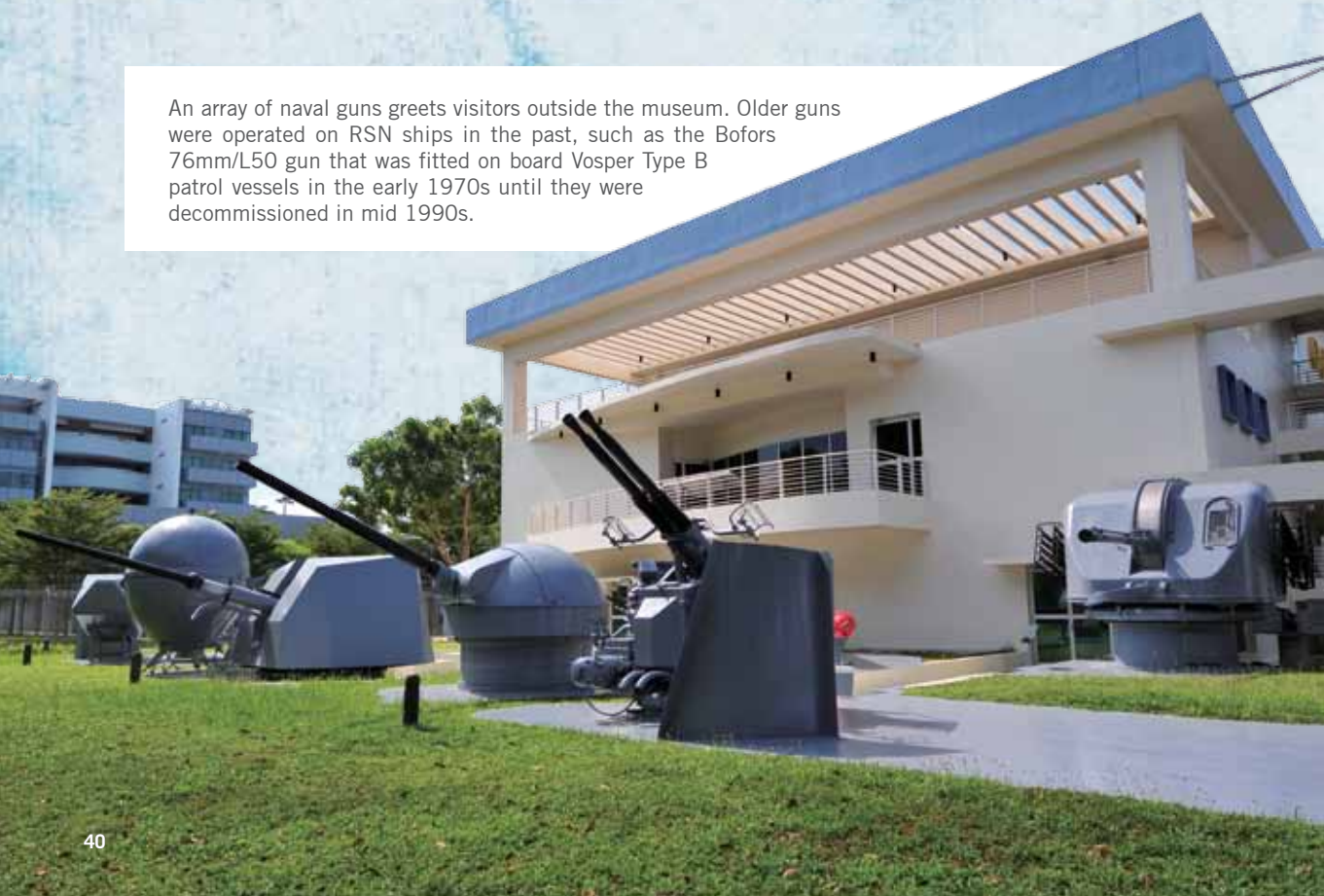
Story and photos by Hans Lim

Pay a visit to the Navy Museum to commemorate the RSN's 48th anniversary this year. Learn about how the RSN has transformed from a Navy with just two wooden ships into a modern and balanced force through films, simulators and games.



A mini cinema screens all ten episodes of *The Passage*, a video series showcasing the training that midshipmen go through during their Midshipman Sea Training Deployment. Watch the naval officer cadets pick up skills such as astronavigation, firing and fire-fighting and damage control during the six-week deployment, and fly the Singapore flag high during a port call at Fremantle, Australia.

An array of naval guns greets visitors outside the museum. Older guns were operated on RSN ships in the past, such as the Bofors 76mm/L50 gun that was fitted on board Vosper Type B patrol vessels in the early 1970s until they were decommissioned in mid 1990s.





Get a glimpse into how a ship's combat information centre is run through the interactive video game, Naval Raider. Fire away and destroy enemy planes by sending missiles towards the target, and understand how battles are fought at sea.



The Singapore Strait is one of the busiest waterways in the world, and navigating through this maritime highway takes skill and alertness. Try your hand at steering a ship in this simulator, which lets visitors try navigating to a designated destination. Reach there as quickly as possible, without compromising the safety of the ship.

Take a seat at the barrel of the Single Barrel Oerlikon gun that was on board the Navy's first two wooden-hull vessels - RSS *Panglima* and RSS *Bedok*. Users can assume the role of as a gun operator and test their marksmanship by aiming and firing the interactive gun display.



IN GOOD BOOKS

Story by Jonathan Ryan

Every sailor has their share of tales from the sea – here are some notable ones worth reading about.

1 The Perfect Storm

In 1991 a storm hit North America, and took the crew of fishing boat *Andrea Gail* down with it. There were no survivors.

Sebastian Junger uses this as a starting point to explore what could possibly have happened to the boat. The vessel was never found, and there was limited evidence to go on. So Junger weaves in accounts of other vessels lost at sea, the history and livelihoods of people in the fishing industry, and the science behind the storm and fury of the ocean.

He writes grippingly, his vivid depictions of drowning in cold waters recreating the terror that the crew of the *Andrea Gail* might have gone through. The book, which was made into a movie at the turn of the millennium, is both thrilling and informative, giving a sense of how it feels to be at the mercy of nature's force.



2 Blue Latitudes: Boldly Going Where Captain Cook Has Gone Before

Captain James Cook: Many of us have heard the name, but few may be familiar with what the great explorer did; where he sailed to; what he found.

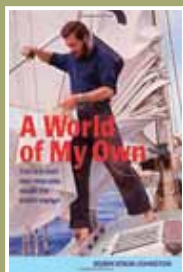
Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Tony Horwitz devotes this book to finding this out, and he volunteers as a deckhand on the replica of HMS *Bark Endeavour*, a ship that follows in the footsteps of Captain Cook, a British navigator and a captain in the Royal Navy.

Horwitz weaves his own adventures with that of Cook's life, painting a biographical account of the navigator through interviews with communities that Cook touched. Cook, who joined the Royal Navy as a teenager in 1755, sailed three voyages through largely uncharted areas of the globe and mapped lands from New Zealand to Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean in detail and scale not previously achieved.

Horwitz's book is a light, easy to follow account of the explorer, and how his voyages have influenced our lives today.



3 A World of My Own: The first ever non-stop solo round the world voyage



On 14 Jun 1968, Robin Knox-Johnston set out to achieve what no man has done before. Steering the *Suhaili*, he slipped off from Falmouth, United Kingdom, to enter the Sunday Times Golden Globe Race. He returned triumphantly back to a fantastic reception becoming the first man to sail round the world without stopping.

Out of nine sailors who attempted this, Knox-Johnston was the only competitor to complete this voyage. His journey was fraught with difficulties, from polluted water tanks, smashed cabin tops and a collapsed boom to lost self-steering gear – and all these happened before he had even reached the half way mark of the race.

A World of My Own is a gripping, uninhibited, moving account of a great sea adventure.

4 Ninety percent of everything

Shipping, writes journalist Rose George, makes up ninety percent of the world's economy, and yet we know so little about it. To uncover what goes on in the shipping industry, George immerses herself in various facets of the shipping industry.

She rides on the *Maersk Kendal*, a giant container ship, from Rotterdam in Holland, to Suez in Egypt, to Singapore for five weeks. She patrols the Indian Ocean with a counter-piracy task force, she joins seafaring chaplains, and investigates the harm that ships inflict on endangered whales. *Ninety Percent of Everything* reveals the workings and perils of an unseen world as George explores the vital world of global shipping.

George sketches the big picture of what the shipping industry is like, then she follows up by colouring in the details – there are stories of the seafarers and their families, told through pixelated Skype conversations; the challenge of boredom the men face keeping watch out at sea when there are only miles of water around. The book is readable, each one of the chapters depicting a different slice of life in the industry that drives our modern economies.



PIONEERING SPIRIT

Story by S Mitra and Jonathan Ryan

Photos by Jonathan Ryan



The RSN turned 48 this year, where pioneers and servicemen alike turned out to celebrate Navy Day in Sembawang Camp. In the second of a four-part series, Navy News speaks to the men who shaped the RSN into the force that it is today.



“ I am really happy to see the RSN grow from two boats to now having choppers on board our ships. During my service, I was posted to the School of Naval Training. When I retired at 50, I was appointed the first curator of the Navy Museum. Back then, the Navy Museum was at Sembawang Camp and only consisted of a single floor. I am very proud to see that the current Navy Museum has three fully air-conditioned levels with impressive exhibits showcasing the success and capability of our RSN.

– SWO (Ret) Wee Cheng Leong William

“ We were both buoy jumpers during our early years of service. Buoy jumpers are sailors who climb up on to buoys to attach mooring lines. When the ship docked, we would jump from the ship to the buoy. The heaving line would then be thrown to us and we would tie it to the buoy. We spent

our entire careers with the RSN together and even now we are close friends. Even with all the advances the Navy has made, it is a joy to see traditions still being observed and the spirit of unity being kept alive within this Navy Family. ”

– 2SG (Ret) Thomas Yeo (left) and SSG (Ret) Bathmanathan S/O Munusamy



A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

Story by S Mitra



The RSN paid tribute to retired personnel at an appreciation dinner held on 5 Jun. The retirees, who have all been in service for at least 15 years, received tokens of appreciation from Chief of Navy RADM Lai Chung Han. Recipients included (clockwise from top) SLTC (Ret) Karuna Ramanathan, ME5 Roger Seow and MWO (Ret) Tan Hong Boon.

SLTC (Ret) Karuna, who described his experience in the Navy as a rewarding one, said, "The Navy taught me to see things in a very different way. We are trained to deal with uncertainties. Even if you have a perfect passage plan for navigation out at sea, you must realise that the sea is unpredictable. And that is where we learn to tolerate a certain level of uncertainty, which is a very useful lesson in life."

**OUR SAF :
GIVING STRENGTH TO OUR NATION**

SAF50@ISTANA



**26 July 2015
8:30am to 6:30pm
Istana**

**Admission is free
Register now at**

www.saf50years.sg/saf50atistana

**Plan a day out with your family!
Celebrate SAF50 at the Istana!**

Take this opportunity to explore the Istana grounds! Relax on the Istana lawn and sing along to your favourite tunes with the SAF Music and Drama Company. Reminisce on the good old days with various SAF artefacts on display. Dedicate messages of support to your peers and loved ones. There are also activities for the kids! Get their faces painted, take a photo in our SAF uniforms, or have fun on the bouncy castle.

Come join us for an unforgettable experience at SAF50@Istana!

Terms & Conditions apply. Registration is open to Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents only. For more information, visit www.saf50years.sg/saf50atistana