

Issue 258/2019

ARMY NEWS

PULSE OF OUR ARMY



**WHAT TO EXPECT
DURING YOUR
BMT**

**SHOOTING TO
VICTORY**

**KOPITALK WITH
COMD 9 DIV/
CHIEF INFANTRY
OFFICER**

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Guest Editor Speaks



Hello everyone!

It has been a hectic few months since the last issue as we have moved out of Defence Technology Tower B, and we are now residing in Bukit Panjang Camp. Do take note of our new address below!

As we are preparing for a new year ahead, we will be looking into our Infantry training, starting from Basic Military Training (BMT). Pre-enlistees can read to find out what they can expect during BMT to better prepare themselves for it. We will also see what it takes for our Infantry troopers to earn their green berets.

We also had the chance to speak to our CPT Nicole Tan, who shared about her journey that led to her victory in Female Pistol at AARM this year.

In our column on Kopitalk with Commanders, we spoke to Commander 9th Singapore Division/Chief Infantry Officer, and found out about what our Infantry does, how they fit into the broader aspect of our Army, we also got to know what goes behind the commonly misunderstood impressions of the Infantry. We also spoke to our Infantry trainers, who share about the things that they do to support our Infantry in their training and operations.

Ng Li Pin
Guest Editor, Army News

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What To Expect During Your BMT?

Basic Military Training (BMT) may not sound foreign to many, however, it still strikes fear in many pre-enlistees as they transit from civilian to military life. We spoke to one of our soldiers, PTE Muhammad Shafiq Bin Ahmad, who has recently completed his BMT and has some insights to share.

Here are things you can expect during your BMT:



Weapon Presentation

This was the first real taste of a parade. It was filled with emotions, especially when everyone joined up with the Singapore flag and recited the weapon creed.



Basic Close Combat Training

This may not seem useful at first, but once you have mastered the techniques and the rifle combat techniques, you will be able to apply what you have learnt to use in situations where you may not have a weapon.



Individual Physical Proficiency Test (IPPT)

It is a standard physical fitness test that everyone will have to take. It consists of 3 stations - 2.4km run, push-ups and sit-ups.



Progressive Physical Training

It plays an important role to ensure that everyone can cope with training, making sure your bodies get accustomed to the increasingly strenuous activities.



Outfield

Insects, animals, sleeping in the jungle for 3 nights might be the first things that come to mind when you hear the famous word – Outfield. Digging your own shell scrape to sleep in will be a tiring yet unforgettable experience. Regarding food, combat rations were actually enjoyable – the black pepper cheese pasta tasted like freshly made pasta at that point in time.



PTE Shafiq



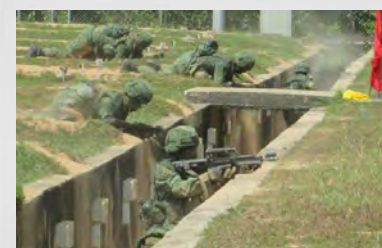
Weapon Technical Handling Training & Range

Learning about all the Singapore Assault Rifle - 21st Century (SAR 21) drills, from assembly to maintenance, as well as stoppages and immediate action drills, we gained confidence to fire it in both day and night conditions. "When the first trigger was pulled, the feeling was exhilarating – the recoil of the weapon against your shoulder, the muzzle flash as each round exited the barrel, the echoing sound once the round was released, I will never forget it".



Close Quarter Battle

Urban areas and population have grown significantly, greatly impacting and influencing military operations. This was the first real taste of the tactical aspect in urban operations.



Battle Inoculation Course

The aim of the battle inoculation course is to provide recruits with the psychological experience in a simulated battlefield environment, with live rounds and Blast Effect Simulators to simulate artillery bombardment.



Hand Grenade Package

It may sound intimidating to hold a destructive item in your hands, but there will be practice to ensure that everyone knows what they are doing before throwing a live grenade.



Progressive Combat Fitness

This is essential to build up your strength and power as the distance and weight of the equipment you carry slowly increases over time during BMT. It will prepare you for the 24km route march towards graduation!



BMT Graduation Parade

The sight of families and friends seated at the stands might make you nervous, but the extensive rehearsals will ensure that you are prepared for this. "I felt goosebumps all over my body as the long-awaited moment was finally here. I threw my jockey cap high into the sky and feelings of relief and accomplishment rushed through me."

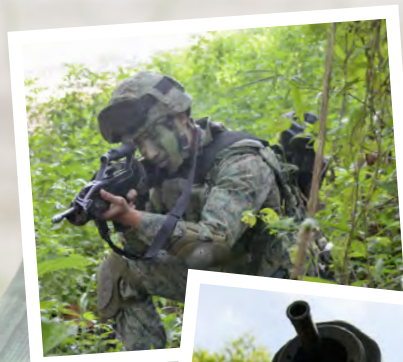
Written By: PTE Douglas Toh
Photography By: Army News

Infantry Training – How to Earn Your Green Beret?

Written By: PTE Douglas Toh
Photography By: Army News

The Infantry formation is renowned for their courage, tenacity, discipline and brotherhood. They are trained to engage enemies in face-to-face combat in all weather conditions, terrain profiles, during both day and night, and this is how Infantrymen earn their green beret.

In order to earn the green beret, Infantrymen will have to undergo 4 weeks of Vocational Fitness Training (VFT) after graduating from BMT. VFT consists of largely physical and combat fitness training, as well as close combat training.



Following that, servicemen will embark on 8 weeks of Infantry Vocation Training (IVT). They would be trained to operate section weapons, such as the Section Automatic Weapon (SAW), M203 Grenade Launcher and the Man-portable Anti-Tank, Anti-DOoR (MATADOR). They would also learn enhanced buddy aid to be able to perform medical aid to their buddy outfield.

Vocational Fitness Training

4 Weeks

8 Weeks

BMT

Infantry Vocation Training



At the end of 12 weeks, they are trained Infantrymen, and are presented with their green berets! The Infantrymen would continue to hone their warfighting competencies and subsequently strive to attain the coveted Combat Skills Badge (CSB). Attaining the CSB is a testament to their quality of training and readiness for operations.



For Motorised Infantry Battalions, they have an additional Motorised Support Company (MSC). While the Rifle Companies undergo IVT, the Infantry Carrier Vehicle (TERREX) Operators from the MSC would undergo the ICV Operator Course to learn how to operate the TERREX.



Have some burning questions about our Infantry?
Watch our Infantry video to find out more!

Green Beret Presentation



KOPITALK WITH COMD 9 DIV/ CHIEF INFANTRY OFFICER

Photography By: CPL Joel Tan Written By: CPL Gershwin Lim, CPL Teo Hao Yu

As we look into the Infantry Formation, COL Chua Jin Kiat, Commander, 9th Singapore Division/Chief Infantry Officer (Comd 9 Div/CIO), took time out of his schedule to sit down and answer some of our burning questions, providing us insights into him and his formation. He shared what it takes to be an Infantryman and what he has in mind moving forward. He also cleared up some common misconceptions about our Infantry.

Q: What do you do in the Infantry, and how does it fit into the bigger picture of the Army?

A: The baseline of our Army is the Infantry. From when you enlist in Pulau Tekong, you've already come under the ambit of the Infantry, and it continues to form the baseline of our Army's training. We govern the training, development and doctrine tactics. We also look into equipping in HQ Infantry, so everything the soldier wears and uses comes under our purview. We also believe that if the Infantry becomes better, our Army becomes better, because we are raising the baseline.

Q: Can you share more on how the Infantry remains as our most critical manoeuvre arm and driving force behind our Army's key operations?

A: As long as our Army has a mission to seize and hold ground, that is where the Infantry comes in. We go to places where vehicles can't go, we walk the most daunting terrain to get to where we need to, and then we capture and hold it open for follow-on forces to do their job. We continue to develop boys to soldiers, whether it is helping them adjust and acclimatise to military life or ensuring they get fundamentals correct.

Q: As part of the Infantry leadership, what is your vision for this formation?

A: I think the heart and soul of a soldier does not change no matter which generation of the Army we are in. It is very difficult to build Infantry units because you are building a camaraderie, a cohesiveness, a spirit, a DNA, a culture – you are building intangibles. We can be more tech-savvy, we can do things differently, we can do things smarter, we can innovate, we can fight smarter, but the fundamental training of a soldier is not about his skills, but the training of his heart and mind, his willingness to stand up and be counted, and that is something I think we should never lose.

Q: How do you achieve this vision?

A: If I may be absolutely honest, it is getting harder. It is getting harder because the profiles of soldiers today are changing. Things that appealed to us 20 years ago does not appeal to soldiers today. I think we have to better connect with the soldiers, explain to them in their words what this whole thing means. I can sit here and give you a spill about duty, honour and country, but if you can't relate, you can't relate. We don't just have to train differently, we have to connect differently, even if it is third-gen, fourth-gen or whatever gen, I think it is something we need to think about and continue to improve.

Q: What do you think is an important trait that an Infantryman should possess?

A: I think he must believe in something – it might not be a value, but he must believe in something. In my time, we believed in the notion of a country (defending a country), we believed in the loyalty towards our unit. So if you are part of a company, or a battalion, you believe in that. We also believe in our loyalty towards our leaders, so soldiers are able to align their value system with, and follow them.

Q: Is there anything in the Infantry that is commonly misunderstood?

A: There is nothing in the Infantry that is rocket science; some things we do are very basic and fundamental. The hardest thing to build in the Army are the intangibles. Skills are easy to train – if you want to be good at shooting, just keep practising to improve your fundamentals, you will become a better shooter. However, the intangibles are what makes up a soldier – giving him something to believe in, something to fight for, and these things are hard to build.

The other thing people tend to misunderstand – they think that being an Infantryman is simple and anybody can do it. I spent 22 years of my life doing this, and I can tell you that there is nothing simple about it. Doing Infantry work is easy, but there is nothing simple about building a unit. We have 22-year-old platoon commanders, expecting them to build good platoons, but it is actually extremely difficult for the platoon commander because he is leading his peers. We have equipped him with the leadership skills and warfighting skills, but he still needs to apply it. Across the whole Army, we are reliant on every single platoon commander to build platoons everywhere, that is the hardest part of being an Infantry unit.

Our Trainers - BMTC

Written by: **PTE Douglas Toh**
Photos contributed by: **CPT Gabriel Yap**

CPT Gabriel Yap is the Officer Commanding (OC) of Pegasus Company, Basic Military Training Centre (BMTC), School 3. As the OC, CPT Gabriel juggles mentoring junior commanders, planning the company's training schedule, as well as ensuring safety is of the utmost priority. Let us have a chat with him about the work he does!

How would you describe your experience as a commander?

My journey has been both meaningful & memorable; I have had the opportunity to witness the transformation of fresh young enlistees to confident soldiers and young adults. Every soldier I have had the opportunity to interact with has brought with him or her a lesson for me. I've learnt that it does not make us poorer commanders to take advice from our subordinates or juniors, and it has made this journey all the more fruitful and memorable.

What are some of the most memorable experiences that you have?

When I was taking my first cohort in BMT, I recall thinking to myself "this is BMT, how tiring can it be?", so together with my platoon commanders, we trained with the recruits. Halfway through Combat Circuit, I realised that basic training does not mean "easy" training. The recruits saw us being tired, but also saw us enjoying ourselves together. I recall them spurring each other on and challenging each other to crawl faster - that was a profound moment.



CPT Gabriel (second from right) with his trainee at BMTGP

How would you describe your relationship with your men?

I've always seen myself as an elder brother to them. We want them to learn the military skills, and grow to be responsible adults. I remind myself that everything we do is potentially something they will emulate in the future. As an "elder brother", sometimes we punish them, not because it is something we take pleasure in, but it stresses the importance of learning from their mistakes.

Our Trainers - MTI

Written by: **PTE Douglas Toh**
Photos contributed by: **CPT Xavier Cheong**

Previously training officer cadets in School of Motorised Infantry Leaders (SMIL), **CPT Xavier Cheong**, who is now a Platoon Trainer in Motorised Infantry Battalion Training Centre (MBTC), had a chance to witness his cadets grow as Platoon Commanders. As a trainer, his bonds with his men are the same as every Infantry Unit: simple, yet strong and unyielding. Let's read on to find out about his journey as a trainer!

Can you describe your role in MTI?

I am a Platoon Trainer in MBTC where I train NS and Active Motorised Infantry Battalions. Here, I can see my "fruits of labour" as I am training my former cadets who are now Platoon Commanders. As their trainer, I appreciate it when they apply what they have learnt-both hard and soft skills in their daily dealings. This allows me to intervene and coach them.

How would you describe your experience as a trainer?

I would describe my experience and journey as a trainer a challenging yet fulfilling one. Like our motto, "Sharpening Our Edge", we play an important role in training the men and commanders under us. In order to do so, we need to constantly hold ourselves to high standards and lead by example. As a Trainer from Motorised Training Institute (MTI), we are expected to focus on training people, as well as understand the capabilities given to us by our platform. We have to continuously hone our skills, so that we can continue to be credible trainers.

What are some challenges that you face?

I have always struggled with juggling between my primary job and secondary tasks, which include developing Tactics, Techniques and Procedures necessary for the Infantry's transition to full Motorisation. However, I have also been blessed with extremely understanding superiors who have taken their time to guide me and ensure that I am able to cope whilst delivering good quality work.



CPT Xavier (left) with his cadet 2LT Jeremy Thay at his commissioning parade.

Our Trainers - ITI

Written by: PTE Douglas Toh
Photos contributed by: 3WO Andy Ng

3WO Andy Ng, an Assistant Platoon Trainer from Infantry Training Institute (ITI), trains NSmen on weapons and combat skills. As an assistant platoon trainer, 3WO Andy also guides platoon commanders and platoon sergeants when they come for their ICT. Let's find out more about his experience as a trainer!

How would you describe your experience and journey as a trainer?

In ITI, we have a culture of a close-knit family. When it is time to work, we work hard, but when it's time to play, we play harder. Overall, my journey in ITI has been a fulfilling one with a strong sense of camaraderie with both NSmen and fellow trainers. I am constantly learning updated training methodologies. These enable me to deliver the best training to my NSmen.

What are some challenges that you face and how did you overcome them?

The main priority is refreshing NSmen on their weapon handling proficiency. Deliberate preparation is essential to conduct the training effectively and patiently so as to ensure they execute live-firing safely and objectively. During Army Training Evaluation Centre (ATEC) evaluation, I need to ensure their skills are proficient and that they execute their missions safely.

How would you describe your relationship with your men? Any specific examples to show this?

My relationship with my junior commanders is that of an elder brother. They share their happiness, anger and sorrow with me when we talk during our free time. As for NSmen, I'm a trainer and coach that helps facilitate the training for them.

How does it feel when a group of NSmen completes their NS journey?

I'm happy and proud to see NSmen complete their 10 cycles of training and I thank them for their contribution towards our nation.



Our Trainers - CESP

Written by: PTE Douglas Toh
Photos contributed by: 2WO Kelvin Lee

Managing NSmen going for their IPPT is no small task, and getting the best out of them is challenging. **2WO Kelvin Lee**, the Chief Trainer (CT) at Maju Fitness Conditioning Centre (MFCC), Soldier Fitness Centre (SFC), ensures that he is able to motivate NSmen to do their best during in-camp training, whilst maintaining a safe training environment. Let us understand more about his role and responsibilities at the Centre of Excellence for Soldier Performance (CESP).

Can you describe your role in CESP?

Working together with a team of Integrated Workforce Trainers and my assistant CT, we oversee the conduct of all tests & training. Physical proficiency tests are done efficiently and safely for the varying fitness conditions of our servicemen.

What does CESP do, and how does it fit into the broader picture of training?

CESP is a one-stop centre established to develop and realise the full combat potential of every soldier. We want to provide them with the best training methods, rehabilitation techniques, along with the latest fitness equipment available by leveraging on science and technology. CESP brings together sports science, nutrition, psychology, physiotherapy and human factors to strengthen our soldiers' fitness, mental resilience, injury management and rehabilitation.

What are some challenges that you face and how did you overcome them?

Our NSmen come from all walks of life with varying motivation and fitness conditions. Motivation and perspective on fitness is a constant challenge. Common responses from them about not having enough time, training is painful, having no drive etc. We overcome this by introducing variety in training, conducted in a short and effective manner, ending with a fitness sharing session. This directly impacts the outcome of a positive NS experience for our NSmen.



Shooting To Victory

Written By: CPL Goh Gen Sheng
Photos Contributed By: CPT Nicole Tan



The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Armies Rifle Meet (AARM) is an annual rifle, pistol and machine gun competition aimed to foster friendly competition and strengthen ties between Armed Forces of the member states of ASEAN. During this year's edition in Indonesia, CPT Nicole Tan stunned the competition and emerged champion in the Women's Pistol Event for Singapore. So who is CPT Nicole? How did she manage to beat the home favourites and clinch first place for Singapore? We spoke to CPT Nicole to find out more about her journey to AARM Gold.

CPT Nicole is currently a platoon trainer in the Motorised Training Institute under Infantry Vocational Training School. She and her fellow trainers conduct training to equip our soldiers with the necessary skills and knowledge to operate the TERREX and utilise the various onboard weapon and equipment during missions.

AARM training started as early as June for CPT Nicole and her team. Their regular training includes live-firing at range and physical training to ensure that they are in peak condition to perform. An average of 300-400 shots are clocked each range day!

Although a senior at the sport, CPT Nicole still finds it tough to control her nerves during high-pressure situations, especially during the competition. She shared, "The competition is healthy and friendly, but because the level of sportsmanship and performance is so high, even a senior shooter like myself will still feel the anxiety and nervousness, and sometimes the fear of not doing well." Although CPT Nicole initially faced this obstacle, she has since learned methods to cope with the anxiety and perform during her shoots.



CPT Nicole's passion for shooting does not stop at AARM. She is also a member of the National Team, representing Singapore in Air Pistol and Sport Pistol. CPT Nicole trains for the National Team during her free time during weekends and evenings too!

This year's AARM victory marks the 8th time that CPT Nicole has been a participant of this event. Even so, she shared that she still feels honoured and privileged that she is able to represent Singapore in AARM. Amongst the myriad of emotions she felt to be able to win, CPT Nicole shared that she feels very blessed and thankful. However, she shared that she felt "mostly humbled by this year's win" due to the amount of effort that was put in by her team, management and commanders.

With this win, CPT Nicole shared that she is very thankful for the support and encouragement from her family for not only her passion in shooting but her role in National Defence.

"They always give me words of encouragement and praise. But I think what's most important to me is that I know that they are proud of me and what I do when I don the SAF uniform."



Secrets of Our Camp:

Selarang Camp

Written By: PTE Douglas Toh
Photography By: PTE Jovan See



Photos of Selarang Barracks during the colonial years

Colonial Years

Starting out as a densely-forested swamp landscape, Selarang Camp is now home to the 9th Singapore Division/Infantry (9 Div/Infantry). Much like Singapore, the area has gone through multiple changes as Singapore has developed, undergoing a massive infrastructure growth whilst under British colonial rule, serving as barracks for British and Australian troops. During World War II, Selarang Barracks, as it was known then, was used by the Japanese, where thousands of Prisoners-of-War (PoW) endured hardship and suffering.

It wasn't until 1971 when Selarang Camp was officially handed over to the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF).



Colonial building bearing symbol of the Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom

Untouched Heritage

Still standing regal and proud after more than 70 years, the Officers' Mess building is the best-preserved colonial building on site. It bears details such as the symbol of the Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom above the main entrance, as well as the initials "G.R", referring to King George VI, etched onto the symbol.

A Place of Solace

Amidst the ordeal of being PoWs, a place of solace was constructed within Selarang Barracks, where prisoners would be able to find peace, even if for a fleeting moment. The Saint Francis Xavier Chapel was constructed mainly of bamboo and attap built by PoWs. Complete with an open-air seating gallery, an altar and most importantly, painted images of Jesus Christ, the chapel symbolised hope among chaos, and attendance for masses was always full.

After the war, the wooden construct was replaced by one of brick and mortar, but the new Selarang Garrison Church too was demolished in 1987, leaving the church bell as the sole remnant of a symbol of hope from a time gone by.

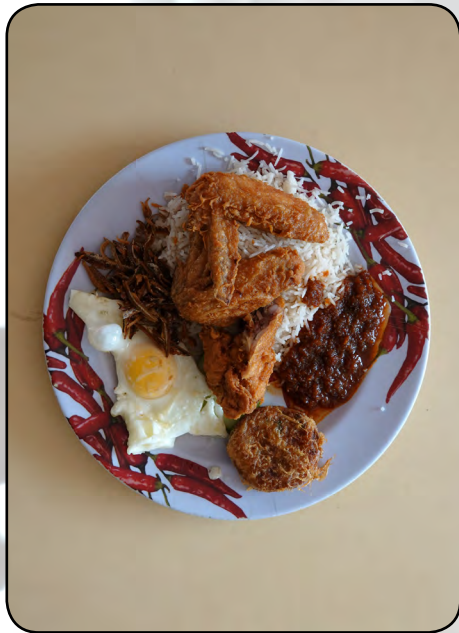


Remnant of Selarang Garrison Church - Church Bell

Book Out Makan

Written By: **PTE Jovan See**
Photography By: **CPL Joel Tan**

In this edition of Book Out Makan, we are featuring foodie spots near Selarang Camp! Do drop by and give them a try when you're in the area as it'll definitely be worth it!



Mizzy Corner Nasi Lemak
Address: 2 Changi Village Rd, #01-26
Singapore 500002
Opening Hours: 8AM – 11:45 PM
(Mon – Sun)
Price: From \$3.50

The first location on this list is none other than the Changi Village Hawker Centre, the home of many affordable yet mouth-watering dishes! While we were there, we decided to try Mizzy Corner Nasi Lemak. The chicken wing was definitely the star of the show as it was extra crispy. Another dish that we got to try was the Weng Kee Ipoh Hor Fun, which comes with a fried chicken cutlet, instead of the regular shredded chicken. Not only does this dish carry a twist to the traditional Ipoh Hor Fun, it also boasts the crunch from the chicken cutlet which pairs extremely well with the gravy. Do head down to Changi Village Hawker Centre to try these dishes for yourself, but do take note that the stalls tend to have snaking queues during peak hours, but this is just testament to how great the food is!



Weng Kee Ipoh Hor Fun
Address: 2 Changi Village Rd, #01-19
Singapore 500002
Opening Hours: 10:30AM – 11PM (Mon – Fri), 8AM – 12AM (Sat – Sun)
Price: From \$3.50

The next location, Pranakorn Thai Food features fusion Thai cuisine, with flavours that are slightly more distinct as compared to what you would usually get in Singapore. This time, we tried the Dry Tom Yam Sticky Noodles with Minced Pork, Pork Cake with Century Egg, Thai Milk Tea and Thai Cendol. The dishes were savoury and flavour-filled to the brim! What surprised us the most, however, was the Pork Cake. It was so tender - almost tasting like fish cake, and when paired with the creamy texture of the century egg, it forms a wonderful unison of taste and texture! Definitely do head down to try their authentic Thai cuisine for yourselves!



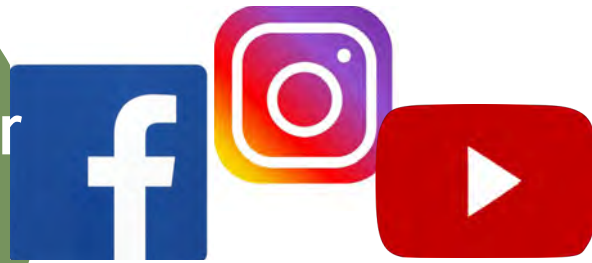
Pranakorn Thai Food
Address: 4 Changi Village Rd, #01-2086
Singapore 500004
Opening Hours: 11.30AM – 9.30PM, (Tue – Sunday)
Price: From \$5.80



The Coastal Settlement
Address: 200 Netheravon Rd
Singapore 508529
Opening Hours: 10.30AM – 12AM, (Tue – Sunday)
Price: From \$7++

Lastly, for a sweet treat, we went for dessert at The Coastal Settlement. Tucked in the outskirts of Changi, this quaint restaurant is the home to many vintage items such as cars and bicycles. Here, we tried their TCS Waffle Stack and a scoop of Peanut Butter and Jelly ice cream. Fluffy waffles and thick chocolate ice cream could not have been better! Their gelato ice cream has a great consistency as well, and is definitely worth a try! Though on the pricier side, this place has an amazing vibe and setting as well as a wide variety of food to cater to different palettes so do come down and try it for yourselves!

#mostpopular ON OUR PAGES



In case you missed it, we've sussed out some of our most popular posts on our social media pages for the past quarter of the year. Click away and catch up on any events you've missed out!



Commando Golden Jubilee - For Honour and Glory!



Every Singaporean Son - The Animated Series



Guards Workout of the Day



The Road to Honour and Glory



1st Battalion Singapore Guards Completing ATEC Evaluation



04/19 Enlistment Day



For Honour and Glory!



Secrets of Our Camps: Pulau Tekong



SAF EOD successfully disposed WWII UXO