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Fact Sheet: Strong Emphasis and Sound Safety Management in the SAF: External Report

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The External Review Panel on SAF (Singapore Armed Forces) Safety (ERPSS), convened in October 2013, has successfully completed its three-year term for the review of the SAF's safety system. During this period, the panel visited 14 SAF formations, units and exercises to observe their safety practices and recommend improvements. The ERPSS was headed by Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Press Holdings, Mr Alan Chan, and supported by nine prominent safety experts and professionals from a variety of backgrounds.

The panel found that (i) there was strong emphasis on safety by SAF leaders; (ii) there have been substantial investments in safety resources; (iii) the SAF's safety management systems are sound and aligned with external industry standards; and (iv) the SAF provides good medical support and healthcare to its servicemen.

Strength	Description
Strong Command Emphasis on Safety	The Service Chiefs and their Inspectorates were very active in driving their respective safety programmes. Commanders at the formation and unit levels paid substantial attention to setting up unit-level safety policies and implementing ground-level safety measures.
Substantial Investments in Safety Resources	Since 2013, the Singapore Army has invested in 44 new full-time unit safety officers and now has 56 full-time unit safety officers on the ground. These safety officers, who are experienced ex-servicemen, play key roles in ensuring safety compliance. To improve the quality of training and supervision provided to the trainees, the SAF is also in the process of recruiting additional regulars to serve as field psychologists, trainers and supervisors.

Sound Safety Management Systems	The SAF's safety management systems are aligned with external standards, such as the international occupational health and safety management system specification OHSAS 18001, and best practices advocated by organisations such as the Ministry of Manpower and the International Civil Aviation Organisation. Key processes such as risk assessments, supervision, audits, inspections, communication of the SAF's values, policies and expectations; education and open-reporting are also widely practiced.
Good Medical Support and Healthcare	<p>The SAF's doctors and medics were observed to be sufficiently trained and competent. Their training includes mandatory postings at public hospitals for exposure to areas of specialty (such as emergency medicine and anaesthesia) and advanced accredited training (such as trauma life support, cardiac life support and airway management). The SAF Medical Corps collaborates extensively with leading medical experts from the public sector to provide good advice on key medical policies and practices.</p> <p>Over the last three years, the SAF has also introduced initiatives such as refinement to its pre-enlistment screening process, and enhancements to the mental health and psychological care for its servicemen.</p>

The panel also highlighted several opportunities for improvement, including (i) the need to continue strengthening the safety culture and deepening soldiers' internalisation of safety as a personal value; (ii) further promoting the open-reporting of accidents via the range of channels that are in place; (iii) sharing best practices across SAF units, so that units are able to learn from each other's strengths; and (iv) adopting a more integrated approach towards health and safety. The SAF has accepted the findings and is in the process of implementing the various opportunities for improvement.

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Speech:

- Speech by Second Minister for Defence Mr Ong Ye Kung at the Committee of Supply Debate 2017 on 3 March 2017 (MINDEF_20170303003_2.pdf)

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