



NEWS RELEASE

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New GPC-DFA Given Insight into RSAF Training and Capabilities

07 May 1997

This morning, 7 May 97, the new Chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Defence and Foreign Affairs (GPC-DFA), Dr Ong Chit Chung, and his committee members visited the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) Sembawang Air Base (SBAB). This visit was hosted by the Minister of State for Defence, Mr Matthias Yao Chih. (The list of GPC-DFA members present at today's visit is attached.)

As part of the visit programme to familiarise the new GPC-DFA and its resource panel members with the RSAF and its operations, the visitors viewed an aerial demonstration of the RSAF's capabilities in Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations in the speedy evacuation of casualties in mishaps, allowing these casualties to receive expert medical attention in the shortest time possible. The visitors also had a hands-on experience of the hi-tech training Super Puma pilots go through at the Helicopter Simulator Centre.

One of the major advantages offered by the Super Puma Simulator is that it enables the RSAF to overcome the problem of limited flying space in Singapore. Pilots can be trained in the handling of emergencies, formation flying, all weather and day and night flying activities. The simulator was introduced to complement the existing flying and ground training programmes for RSAF helicopter pilots.

The GPC-DFA members were briefed on the roles and organisations of the RSAF and on role of SBAB in support of the SAF. They also viewed a static display of the helicopters operated by SBAB: the UH-1H, AS332 Super Puma, AS550 Fennec and Cougar.

Sembawang Air Base

SBAB houses all the rotary-wing squadrons in the RSAF providing the SAF with SAR capabilities and airmobility. Rotary-wing aircraft have the advantage of vertical take-off and landing ability allowing them to fly and land in areas inaccessible to fixed-wing aircraft. They can provide a mobile firing platform for missiles, rockets and guns, and airlift troops into combat zones, perform reconnaissance, emergency and medical evacuation missions and

provide logistics support. SBAB has a full complement of support units, which are made up of a ground and air logistics element, a field defence squadron and a flying support squadron.

SBAB is made up of 120 Squadron (Sqn) which operates the UH-1H; 123 and 124 Sqns which operates the Fennec; 125 Sqn which operates the Super Puma; and 126 Sqn which operates the Cougar. The UH-1H performs utility tactical support tasks; the Fennec is used for light training and air reece/observation roles; while the Super Puma and Cougar perform troop lift, paradrop, logistics resupply, transport and casualty evacuation tasks, and are mainly utilised in Search and Rescue Operations.

Search and Rescue Operations

The RSAF is part of the national search and rescue organisation committed to providing SAR in the Singapore Flight Information Region. The 126 Sqn is always operational with a SAR crew on twenty-four hours standby. They are expected to plan and takeoff within 15 minutes of receiving any search and rescue mission. The SAR mission order is essential to civil aviation and to Singapore's position as an international sea and air terminal. The RSAF's provision of the SAR role is regarded by the international merchant marine as an important factor in the safety of the narrow and congested sea lanes off Singapore.

The rotary-wing squadrons operational readiness have been attested in the successful casualty evacuation operations during the cable car rescue operation off Sentosa island in 1983 and the Hotel New World collapse in 1986.

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