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SAF's Best Units Display World-Class Operational Readiness

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A first-class Armed Forces shines in all aspects of combat proficiency and management of logistics, manpower and security. This ensures that the Armed Forces is well equipped to defend the country from the enemy. These are the same factors through which the SAF assesses its Army, Navy and Air Force units for its Best Unit Competition.

The Third Battalion Singapore Infantry Regiment (3 SIR), RSS Sea Dragon and the 141st Squadron (141 Sqn) have outshone themselves and proven their operational capabilities this year. Their high performance standards, as well as those participating units over the years reflect not only the state of operational readiness of the SAF but also clearly indicates the success of the SAF in its pursuit for excellence.

The Army

The coveted Best Combat Unit Award goes to 3 SIR this year. 3 SIR, commanded by Major (MAJ) Anson Lim, displayed their high level of operational readiness, outshining all participating Army units particularly in areas such as combat proficiency, logistics and security. This is an especially great achievement for 3 SIR as the elite Red Berets have won this award consecutively for the last five years. Receiving the Best Combat Unit for the third time (the first in 1967 and the second in 1971), 3 SIR's excellent performance and achievements are also reflected through its winning the Best Infantry Unit and achieving the top position in the Logistics Readiness Inspection under the Combat Unit group this year.

As an infantry unit, 3 SIR's main operational role is to execute operations such as attack, defence, advance and retrograde missions. In peacetime, 3 SIR ensures that training is carried out to maintain the operational readiness of the Army.

Six other Army units also received SAF Best Unit Awards in the respective arms. They are:

Best Support Unit	36th Battalion Singapore Combat Engineers
Best Infantry Unit	3rd Battalion Singapore Infantry Regiment
Best Armour Unit	40th Battalion Singapore Armour Regiment
Best Artillery Unit	21st Battalion Singapore Artillery
Best Engineer Unit	36th Battalion Singapore Combat Engineers
Best Signal Unit	2nd Signal Battalion
Best Logistics Unit	9th Direct Support Medical Battalion

Besides the Best Unit Competition, which is organised for active units, the SAF also organises a Best National Service (NS) Competition to enhance the operational readiness of NS battalions in the Army and promote greater esprit-de-corps among NS units and NSmen.

The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN)

Winning the 96/97 Best Ship Award is RSS Sea Dragon from 185 Squadron. Commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Cheong Keng Soon, the Missile Gun Boat (MGB) demonstrated a high level of operational and administrative efficiency. Its performance and the proficiency of its crew in operating the weapons, sensors, engineering and other shipboard systems were consistently of the highest standards among all the ships which participated in this competition.

Commissioned in 1975, RSS Sea Dragon is one of the strike craft acquired by the RSN to patrol and protect our sea lines of communications. To perform its tasks, RSS Sea Dragon, like all the other MGBs, is fitted with the Harpoon and Gabriel anti-ship missiles, the MISTRAL surface-to-air missiles, a 57 mm BOFORS gun and state-of-the-art command, control, communications and electronic warfare equipment.

Every year, the RSN selects the ship worthy to be conferred the Best Ship Award from among the Missile Covettes, Missile Gun Boats, Landing Ship Tanks, Mine Counter-Measure Vessels, and Patrol Craft. In recognition of its excellence and outstanding, the Best Ship displays the letter "E" on its superstructure throughout the year.

The Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF)

The Best Fighter Squadron from the RSAF for work year 96/97 is 141Sqn. The squadron of F-5 Tiger II fighter aircraft, led by MAJ Foo Jong Suan, met stringent requirements in areas like mission readiness, safety management, logistics support, and administrative functions to win this award.

As a F-5 Squadron in the RSAF, 141 Sqn's role is two-fold: in air-to-air operations, it is

employed to patrol and maintain the sovereignty of Singapore's air space; perform RSAF's strike missions; escort missions and intercept hostile aircraft. In air-to-ground operations, it is employed to strike vital ground installations, ships and military targets; suppress the enemy's air defence; and provide firepower support for friendly troops. Besides this primary role, the 141 Squadron also conducts the pilot conversion course where RSAF pilots are trained to become F-5 pilots.

The other two Air Force Units which received the SAF Best Unit Awards in their respective areas are:

Best Tactical Squadron	121st Squadron
Best Air Defence Systems Division Unit	165th Squadron

The SAF Best Unit Competition

The SAF organises the annual Best Unit Competition where the Army, Navy and Air Force units can pit their combat and administrative effectiveness against one another. To maintain the high level of operational readiness, the SAF Best Unit Competition assesses the units on factors such as combat proficiency, whereby soldiers undergo a field exercise to test their tactical skills; marksmanship; individual physical proficiency; performance in the standard obstacle course and unarmed combat; security and manpower matters; logistics readiness; and state of vehicles belonging to the units.



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