



NEWS RELEASE

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New Colours Reflect Pride and Loyalty of Soldiers

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President Ong Teng Cheong will be presenting new Colours to two formations and the Best Combat Unit during the SAF Day Parade at SAFTI Military Institute (MI) on 1 Jul 97. The formations receiving the Regimental Colours are Divisional Air Defence Artillery Brigade (DAB) and the Naval Diving Unit (NDU). (Brief write-ups of the Colours awarded and histories of the Formations are attached). The SAF State Colours will be presented to Third Battalion Singapore Infantry Regiment (3 SIR), for being the Best Combat Unit for workyear 96/97. This is the first time that 3 SIR has won this honour.

The Colours Presentation segment of the SAF Day Parade involves a blessing of the Colours by religious leaders from the major faiths in Singapore. This blessing takes place to empower the Colours with the respect and honour it deserves and to give good luck to the unit which holds the Colours. Thereafter, the President will present them to the respective Commanders during the Colours presentation segment of the parade. This will be followed by a Trooping of the Colours. This ceremony is a solemn affair, filled with pomp and pageantry and is a reflection of the pride and respect the Colours invoke.

Colours have traditionally been symbols of unit cohesion and esprit de corps. They help instill in the men and women of a unit a sense of pride, belonging and unity. In the SAF, Colours are awarded to units in recognition of their achievements in the field of combat, training, administrative efficiency and service to the community.

Currently, there are two types of Colours in the SAF - the State Colours and the Regimental Colours. Regimental Colours are awarded to the Services, Formation or Units about 5 years after their formation. State Colours are usually given 2 years after the award of Regimental Colours. Presently, there are a total of 34 Regimental Colours (3 Services and 31 Formations/Units) and 24 State Colours in the SAF. As both types of Colours serve a common purpose of instilling pride and loyalty, the SAF has streamlined the award of

Colours. Henceforth, Regimental Colours shall be awarded to Formations and Units and State Colours to the Services and SAFTI MI. The current SAF Regimental Colours, that is presented annually to the Best Combat Unit, will be upgraded to State Colours. SAFTI MI will retain the State colours, as it is the home of the Officer Corps and a national institution. All other State Colours as well as Regimental Colours of the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) and Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) will be retired at this 1997 SAF Day Parade.

History of Colours

Colours originated as banners of lords and barons at a time when it was a tradition for fighting men to rally around their leader's banner. The reason for its existence arose from the need to have some mark of distinction between families, tribes and armies, and a conspicuous rallying point in battle. In war, for example, the badge of each tribal chief was hoisted onto a pole so that it could be seen at a distance, and not just in close combat. Later, these became flags of distinctive colours in a battlefield for marking of positions. And through constant usage, the term "Colours" is often taken to mean all classes of military flags which are known differently as standards, guidons and banners.

In the past, when Colours were carried on active service, they stood as the rallying-point of the regiment, and the scene of its last stand. As long as the soldiers could see their own flags flying high, they knew all was well. It was a powerful factor in maintaining morale. Many would die just to keep the Colours flying high. And although Colours are not carried by armies into battle in the way they used to, they still retain all the tradition, glory, honour and pride of the past. They are still raised, paraded and trooped in today's armies.

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