



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Milestones of The Republic of Singapore Navy

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### Introduction

The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) has come a long way since its humble beginnings 50 years ago. Today, the RSN is a vital force in the defence of Singapore, protecting its sea lines of communication (SLOC) and contributing to regional peace and security.

### Early Years of The Singapore Navy

The RSN, then called the Singapore Naval Volunteer Force, was established on 5 May 1967 when the Singapore Navy Ensign was raised for the very first time. At its birth, the RSN had just two wooden ships - RSS *Panglima* and RSS *Bedok*. Its mission was largely constabulary and focused on patrolling Singapore's waters.

Date	Milestone
<b>1970s</b>	
1969 and 1972	To augment the two wooden boats, more ships were needed to better safeguard Singapore's seaward defence. The <i>Independence</i> -class patrol craft and <i>Sea Wolf</i> -class missile gunboats were acquired in 1969 and 1972 respectively.
27 Jan 1974	With more ships, the Navy needed a proper base. Brani Naval Base was opened by founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew.
Mar 1974	The Singapore Navy achieved a first in the region when it successfully fired an anti-ship missile, the Gabriel missile, from RSS <i>Sea Wolf</i> .
1975	RSN ships rendered assistance to Vietnamese "boat people" during Operation Thunderstorm, by providing them with food, fuel and water, as well as the setting-up of

Date	Milestone
	quarantine areas and manning an SAF Field Hospital at Bedok Jetty to provide medical aid.

## Building The 2nd Generation RSN

By the 1980s, it became clear that Singapore's continued survival, security and success was highly dependent on the freedom of access to the SLOC. Singapore had by 1982 become the world's busiest port in terms of shipping tonnage. As a result, the RSN started investments in ships capable of SLOC operations.

Date	Milestone
<b>1980s</b>	
1981	12 <i>Swift</i> -class coastal patrol craft were commissioned, relieving the missile gunboats, which were previously used for coastal patrols, to hone their warfighting skills.
1986 to 1988	The missile gunboats were upgraded with Harpoon missiles.
<b>1990s</b>	
1900 to 1991	The Navy started to acquire and develop more capabilities. The <i>Victory</i> -class missile corvettes were commissioned.
22 Aug 1991	The RSN embarked on farther deployments. Two <i>Victory</i> -class missile corvettes set sail for the RSN's longest and furthest sea-deployment then, for Exercise Southern Friendship. It was a 10-week deployment that covered 22,000 kilometres.
2 Sep 1994	The RSN's second naval base, Tuas Naval Base, was opened by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.
1995	Four <i>Bedok</i> -class mine countermeasure vessels were commissioned.
1996	The first batch of RSN submariners were sent to Sweden for training.
1996 to 1998	The locally designed and built <i>Fearless</i> -class patrol vessels were commissioned.
19 Feb 1997	The <i>Fokker-50</i> Maritime Patrol Aircraft attained full operational capability.

## Realising the 3rd Generation RSN

As the RSN entered the new millennium, all the key components of its 3rd Generation force structure started to come together. Amongst them, three new platforms transformed the RSN's profile and operational capability - the *Endurance*-class landing ships tank (LSTs), the *Formidable*-class frigates and the submarines.

The new LSTs and frigates enabled the RSN to deploy further. Before the RSN acquired these ships, operations were confined largely within Southeast Asia with occasional forays beyond the region. With the new LSTs and frigates, the RSN was in a stronger position to

safeguard the SLOC and operate beyond the region to engage partners in ways which were previously not possible.

The submarine force conferred the RSN with a strategic capability. Beyond its utility as a deterrent force, the RSN's submarine force is also a useful engagement tool, and has been deployed for exercises with other navies in bilateral and multilateral settings. The submarines have raised the RSN's professional standing and stature, and are a sought-after partner during exercises with established navies.

Date	Milestone
<b>2000s</b>	
5 May 2000	RSS <i>Endurance</i> set sail for the RSN's first round-the-world voyage in Sail Navy 2000. The ship visited nine ports over a four-month deployment, and sailed through the Panama and Suez canals.
22 Jul 2000	RSS <i>Conqueror</i> , the first of four <i>Challenger</i> -class submarines, was commissioned.
2003 to 2008	The LSTs deployed five times to the Northern Arabian Gulf to join multinational reconstruction efforts in Iraq for operation Blue Orchid. The RSN protected the Al Basra Oil Terminal, trained Iraqi personnel and provided medical assistance to locals.
21 May 2004	Changi Naval Base was opened by Prime Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong.
31 Dec 2004	For approximately 2 months, the RSN deployed three LSTs to Aceh and Meulaboh in Indonesia, and Phuket in Thailand, to assist in the Boxing Day Tsunami, codenamed Operation Flying Eagle.
3 Apr 2008	RSS <i>Intrepid</i> conducted the inaugural firing of the Aster missile system in Toulon, France.
2009	The RSN deployed to the Gulf of Aden to join international counter-piracy operations under the ambit of multinational Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 for the first time. [The RSN has to date deployed five Task Groups, including a maritime patrol aircraft detachment, to the Gulf of Aden, and taken command of CTF 151 four times.]
<b>2010s</b>	
2 Dec 2011	RSS <i>Archer</i> , the first <i>Archer</i> -class submarine, was commissioned.
15 May 2012	The <i>Sikorsky S-70B Seahawk</i> naval helicopter squadron attained full operational capability.
14 Jul 2012	RSS <i>Formidable</i> successfully conducted a simultaneous time-on-target Harpoon missile firing at the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise, the largest maritime exercise in the world. In a display of precision and coordination, the RSN successfully landed two missiles on the same target within seconds of each other.
Jul 2016	RSS <i>Steadfast</i> was the first non-US Navy ship to command a multinational group sail to Hawaii for RIMPAC.

## The RSN at 50

The RSN at 50 is a force that punches above its weight in terms of its capabilities, reach and influence. At home, together with our partner agencies, the RSN protects Singapore's waters

against seaborne threats. Abroad, RSN ships and personnel have made valuable contributions, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in Aceh, and in multinational counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. In addition, the RSN has developed strong relationships with navies in and beyond the region through exercises and professional interactions. The RSN has also helped to advance regional and international collaboration in areas of shared interest, such as in maritime security, information sharing and submarine operational safety.

As with its founding, Singapore's future will continue to be a maritime story. And at 50, the RSN is proud to be the maritime force for maritime Singapore.

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