

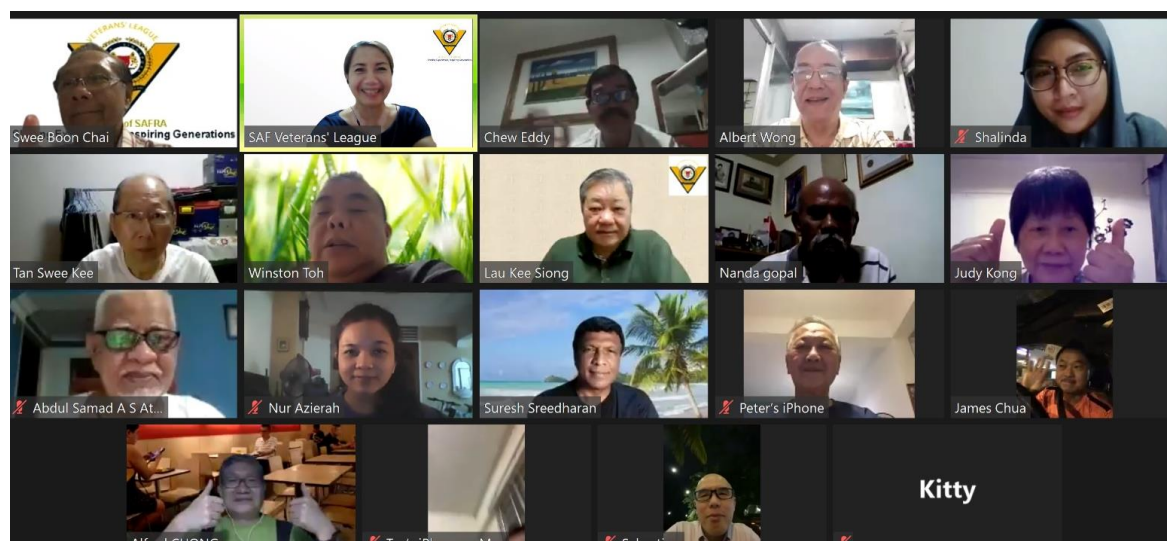


SINGAPORE ARMED FORCES VETERANS' LEAGUE

ANNUAL REPORT – 1ST APRIL 2020 TO 31ST MARCH 2021

INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 was a tumultuous period for Singapore and so were we in SAFVL. Whilst preparing for the 2020 Annual Meeting news on Covid-19 came and we had to call it off. The Management Committee held our monthly meetings online. Even now, we need to be cautious, as all of us are in the cautionary group. We planned to have the Annual Meeting this year limiting to only 50 of us and the rest join us online in your respective homes. Even this could not be achieved and we had to call it off. SAFVL and everybody hopes this can be over, so that we can have activities where we can meet and interact. Meanwhile stay home and stay safe.



SAFVL Management Committee Members - Monthly Meeting Online

PART 1 - SAFVL 30TH ANNIVERSARY (1990-2020)

SAFVL commemorated its 30th Anniversary in 2020. Earlier plans to have an anniversary dinner for our members to celebrate the milestone were abandoned with the outbreak of COVID-19. The Management Committee then decided in January 2020 to produce a pictorial coffee-table book to mark the occasion. The last time such a book was done, was in 2010 when the SAFVL celebrated its 20th Anniversary.



**The SAF
Veterans'
League
30 years
(1990 – 2020)
Anniversary
Commemorative
Book**

A six-member committee was immediately formed to produce the 100-page book.



**(Back row, from
left) MAJ (RET)
Frank Chang,
2WO (RET) Derek
Yeo, MAJ (RET)
Abdul Samad;
(Front row, from
left)
2WO (RET) Tina
Goh, LTC (RET) Tan
Swee Kee, SLTC
(RET) James Suresh**

30th Anniversary Book Committee

The book team met mostly over Zoom, guided throughout the production by President SAFVL BG (RET) Winston Toh and Vice President COL (RET) Lau Kee Siong. Some SAFVL members also volunteered views and suggestions.

The book was published in September 2020. The first copies were presented by BG (RET) Winston Toh at MINDEF HQ on 7 October 2020 to Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen, Senior Minister of State Mr Zaqy Mohamad and Chief of Defence Force LG Melvyn Ong.



**SAFVL
President BG
(RET) Winston
Toh presenting
a personal
copy of the
book to
Defence
Minister Dr Ng
Eng Hen,
SMS Mr Zaqy
Mohamad and
CDF LG Melvyn
Ong**

BG (RET) Winston Toh also visited LG (RET) Winston Choo to present to him a personal copy.

**LG (RET)
Winston
Choo
receiving his
personal
copy from BG
(RET)
Winston Toh**



Copies were also sent to senior MINDEF appointment holders, Service Chiefs and senior Army, Navy and Air Force commanders, and VECONAC (Veterans Confederation of ASEAN Countries) members.

All SAFVL members also received their personal copies through special door-to-door delivery by NinjaVan courier.



**MC Members
LTC (RET)
Desmond Ee and
MAJ (RET) Peter
Soh helping to
prepare the
books for door-
to-door delivery
to members**

ST Engineering generously sponsored \$20,000 towards the production of 1000 copies of the book.

PART 2 - REMEMBRANCE DAY – 8 NOV 2020

SAFVL had all along had strong relationship with the British High Commission and have been assisting them in the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Kranji War Memorial. In view of Covid-19 restrictions the British High Commission seek the views of SAFVL to have a pre-recorded version of the ceremony which will then be posted on Facebook. The idea was to enable more people to observe this ceremony. SAFVL agreed and assisted with the recording on site at the War Memorial. Though done with Covid-19 restrictions in mind it was as solemn and meaningful as it could be. It appeared on UK in Singapore Facebook at 10.40am ended at 11.10am, to coincide with the Armistice of World War 1, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918.

The recording can be viewed at SAFVL Facebook: <https://fb.watch/4PXK8OvCLV/>.

Pictures were downloaded from the video recording



***British High Commissioner
Kara Owen, CMG***



***British Defence Adviser
Commander Martin Moore, RN***



Laying The Wreath



We Shall Remember Them



Lest We Forget



Last Post by NCC Band Bugler

At the ceremony the British High Commissioner to Singapore, Her Excellency Kara Owen, CMG in her speech said: "Today we are paying respect to the fallen, and to remember the sacrifice of those who fought and died. We promise to remember their services and reaffirm the values that they fought: to preserve, and to acknowledge the courage for those who fought so hard for their country." She added "Peace and freedom cannot long be separated, without them there can be no enduring peace and without peace no enduring freedom."

PART 3 - CIVILIAN WAR MEMORIAL – 15 FEB 2021

Every year on 15th Feb, this ceremony was organised by Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry assisted by SAFVL. This year it went through the full ceremonial rites abiding to safe distancing measures and inter-mingling restrictions. It also marked the 79th anniversary of the surrender of Singapore by the British to the Japanese, on 15th Mar 1942. The ceremony was first unveiled by our founding Prime Minister, the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew in 1967. In 1984, the date “15th March” was designated as Total Defence Day by MINDEF, and a siren was sounded to mark the occasion.

At the ceremony SCCC President Mr Roland Ng said in his speech: “We hope our future generations can fully understand the importance of freedom and peace because of the lessons learnt from the Japanese occupation, reiterating the importance of staying united, defending our country and being prepared for danger in times of peace”. At the ceremony, the Guest of Honour, Education Minister & 2nd Finance Minister, Mr Lawrence Wong launched an e-book, entitled “The Story Behind the Civilian War Memorial” providing information on how the memorial was constructed, and the various events thereafter. It was for the benefit of our younger generation to know and understand the atrocities of war and thus the need to defend our motherland.



**CIVILIAN
WAR MEMORIAL**



**PRESIDENT & MEMBERS OF SAFVL with
DIRECTOR NEXUS MINDEF, COL JERICA GOH.**

PART 4 - KONFRONTASI MEMORIAL – 10 MAR 2021

The Konfrontasi Memorial Ceremony is another occasion to remind this generation and the generations to come not to take peace for granted, said our Guest of Honour LG (RET) Winston Choo at the ceremony at Dhoby Ghaut Green opposite MacDonald House on 10 March 2021. LG (RET) Winston Choo, who was the first Singapore Armed Forces, Chief of Defence Force from 1974 to 1992 said, “standing up in the defence of our home and loved ones is the ultimate sacrifice we can give to our nation.”

SAF Veterans’ League President, BG (RET) Winston Toh, in his opening address, said “The memorial service was to remember those who lost their lives and those who suffered. It is also to honour those who fought valiantly for the survival of our nation during Konfrontasi.” He reminded us, “In our ongoing fight against terrorism, there is no room for complacency. We need to strengthen our Total Defence pillars and brace ourselves to response to any attack on our sovereignty.”

The ceremony held on 10th March every year since its inauguration in 2014, was attend by 50 guests this year to adhere to COVID-19 safety requirements. They included our veterans who participated in Konfrontasi, NCC Cadets, Commanders of 1 and 2 SIR, stakeholders and the public.



Guest of Honour LG (RET) Winston Choo



Guests at the Ceremony



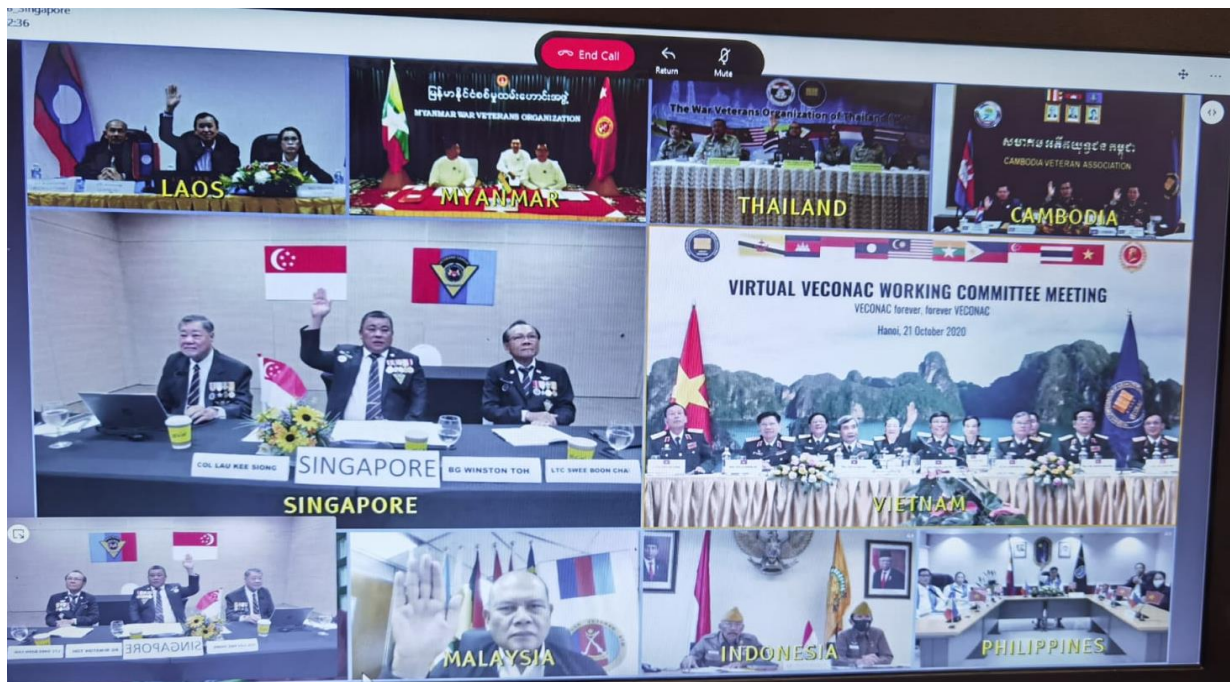
1 & 2 SIR Past & Present Commanders



LG (RET) Winston Choo and next generation

PART 5 - VETERANS CONFEDERATION OF ASEAN COUNTRIES (VECONAC)

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, SAFVL Office Bearers attended a Virtual VECONAC Working Committee Meeting on 21 October 2020. Along with Leaders of the 10 veteran associations of ASEAN countries, the show of camaraderie amongst the veterans of ASEAN countries was commendable given the difficult times. In view of the pandemic the host country Vietnam proposed that the General Assembly for 2020 be done virtually. But the meeting was of the opinion that we should meet physically so that we could interact and maintain our strong bonds and ties with each other. All present at the virtual meeting also agreed spontaneously and unanimously for Vietnam to continue the Presidency of VECONAC for another year in 2021.



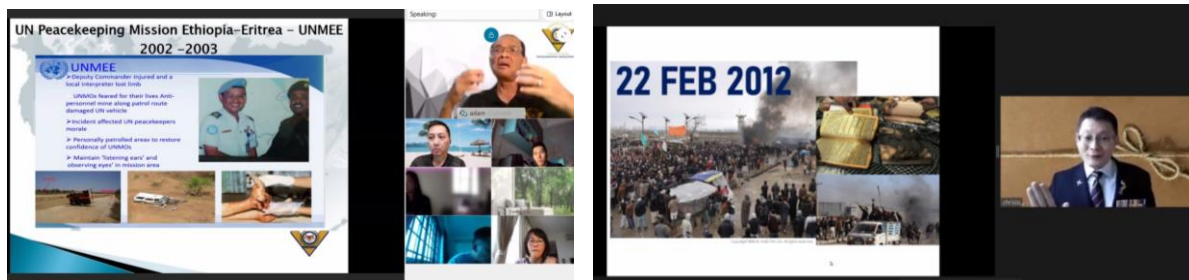
VECONAC WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING - ONLINE

PART 6 - COMMITMENT TO DEFENCE PROGRAMMES

Our Commitment to Defence (C2D) programmes continue to go on adhering to the current limitations. Schools and SAF Units continue to engage C2D Ambassadors (C2DAs) through online talks. In FY 20/21 we had 15,167 participants spread over 152 sessions, majority of them online. We were fortunate to have the services of Singapore Discovery Centre organising classes teaching our veterans who are C2DAs how to conduct online talks.



Commitment-to-Defence Ambassadors – Online Talks



Peacekeeping talks by our C2D Ambassadors

Our C2D ambassadors have been using Covid-19 as a tool to bring home the message how Total Defence helped us work as one united people. We had 72 C2DAs and after a new round of recruitment we now have 87 C2DAs, including 5 retired ladies in the team. Among the new C2DAs are younger veterans and some have been to Peacekeeping Missions. This is encouraging as there were more interest and more requests for talks on overseas peacekeeping missions.



Commitment-to-Defence Lady Ambassadors In Action

Item 7 Collaboration Programmes

ARMY DAYS PROGRAMME. Besides the talks at schools and SAF camps, SAFVL was in collaboration with Singapore Discovery Centre (SDC) providing a very interesting and inter-active programme in the premises of SDC. Organised groups attend 3 segments on a round robin system. One segment was a guided tour of SAFTI Military Institute. The second segment was the Singapore Story, depicting our early days as well as our darker days like the Fall of Singapore, Separation from Malaysia, Konfrontasi, Racial Riots, SQ 117 Hijack and Cable Car incident. Our C2DAs does the third segment showing the visitors how the SAF equipment evolved, improving the combat readiness of our solders with safety aspects, comfort and the wellbeing of our soldiers in mind. Visitors get to touch the equipment, feel the weight and see how our soldiers' pack improved over time. They also see the Temasek Green cotton uniform used in 1960s, to the thick camouflaged print and now the cool and light pixelated camouflaged fabric. The new uniform material also reduces the likelihood of heat stroke. Visitors get the fun of using the camouflage stick and taste the combat rations. This brought great interest among the younger generation and provide them a sense of confidence of our SAF Military Defence. This programme will be open to other groups, besides the schools and SAF units. Corporate organisations, new citizens and the public may be invited to attend these sessions.



Uniform: TG to Camouflage to Pixel



Camouflage Stick for soldiers' concealment



From the old Heavy Steel Helmet - To current Light Weight Kevlar Helmet

PART 8 - MY FIRST SKOOL INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMME

SAFVL started a pilot run of the Intergenerational Programme (IGP) with My First Skool (MFS) of NTUC First Campus in 2019.

A ground-up initiative by SAFVL, the collaboration was launched in June 2019 with 10 C2D Ambassadors engaging mainly 4 – 6 years old pre-schoolers from K1 to K2 at 10 MFS centres. The pilot run ended in October 2019, and while plans were still being worked out to extend the programme, COVID-19 struck in January 2020.

Subsequently, SAFVL and MFS decided to hold the programme in abeyance while MFS went into immediate lockdown to protect the children and staff. As at end-April 2021, it still seems unlikely that the SAFVL-MFS IGP will resume anytime soon, not even by the end of the year.

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected plans to start a similar programme with NurtureStars Preschool of SAFRA.



President Halimah Yacob looking on as 1WO (RET) Haniffa engages the children of My First Skool centre at Jurong West



LTC (RET) Wong Ko Foon with My First Skool children at the Holland Drive centre

PART 9 - SAF GRADUATION CEREMONIES

For the entire year SAFVL members were not allowed to attend the graduation ceremonies due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, the graduation ceremonies went on abiding to safe distancing rules, yet maintaining its grandeur. Graduations were done indoors and in groups of 20 to 30 cadets. They were then spread over a few days depending on the size of the cohort.



PART 10 - HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND SPORT.

The Healthy Life Style and Sports Committee was not able to organize any mass events since the start of covid restrictions in March 2020. Our attempt to organise a bowling event also did not materialize. Nevertheless, we went on with smaller group activities.

Vice President of SAFVL, COL Lau Kee Siong led a group of active cyclists, cycling once a week from SAFRA Punggol clubhouse using the Punggol Waterway Park Connector Network, spreading out to various venues in different direction each time.

Chairman Healthy Lifestyle and Sports SLTC (RET) James Suresh led another group jogging at Upper Peirce Reservoir every Saturday. We encourage members to join us, by contacting our SAFVL Secretariat office.



Joggers at Upper Pierce Reservoir



Punggol PCN



Marina Barrage



Marina Bay Sands



Bishan PCN



Changi Beach End

SAFRA Explore SG Virtual Challenge 2021. We also participated in the SAFRA Explore SG Virtual Challenge 2021, with a team of 14 consisting of 6 walkers and 8 cyclists. The participants could choose to walk or cycle a route, nearby one or all six of SAFRA clubhouses. Those who participated were acquainted with all the SAFRA clubhouses in Singapore and in the process also learnt about the 6 pillars of Total Defence.



Toa Payoh Clubhouse



Jurong Clubhouse



Mount Faber Clubhouse



SAFVL Office

PART 11 - SAFVL WELFARE COMMITTEE

Chairman SAFVL Welfare Committee MWO (RET) Tye Lee Sun and SAFVL MC members in action, visiting our Veterans, wishing them speedy recover.



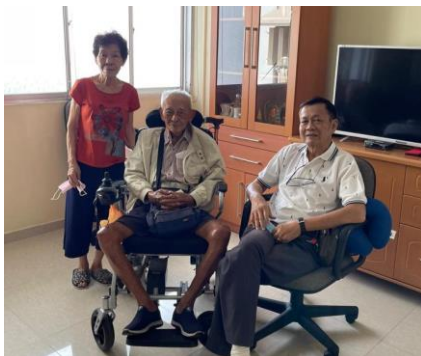
LTC (RET) Wong Geok Seam



2WO (RET) Derek Yeo



LTC (RET) Syed Ibrahim



CPT (RET) Tham Keng Chin



MAJ (RET) John Leong



SWAN (RET) Judy Tham



SGT (RET) Amin Kasiran



MAJ (RET) John Ee



CPT (RET) Amasha

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