



## SAF Veterans' League

Sharing Experiences, Inspiring Generations

### SINGAPORE ARMED FORCES VETERANS' LEAGUE

#### ANNUAL REPORT – 2018/2019

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In line with Singapore's objective to promote racial harmony, SAF Veterans' League (SAFVL) had always been at the fore front promoting racial integration and cohesion. Every year, we organised festivities covering our four diversified racial groups, which was well attended by all four racial groups. This year in particular after the overseas trip to VECONAC meeting in Laos we saw our members' spouse and lady members becoming a cohesive group. We have also been very successful in our contributions towards our national education efforts on national defence, and the number of assignments had been very encouraging. All these events were well supported by members with their active participation and contribution.

1.2 Like in previous years, SAFVL had been very focused on our objectives and continued to work towards the following areas:

- Remaining engaged, relevant and current to the SAF and the Nation.
- Be a responsible member of our international and regional veterans' community.
- Be a role model and ambassador towards National Education.
- Imbue in our members the concept of active aging.
- Caring for our veterans.

1.3 Our ties with the Singapore Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence remain strong and we are looking forward to elevate the status of SAFVL and contribute more meaningfully to both our parent organisations and be appropriately recognised.

##### 2. INTERNATIONAL VETERANS EVENTS.

#### **VETERANS CONFEDERATION OF ASEAN COUNTRIES (VECONAC) 18<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT LAOS, VIENTIANE 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

2.1 A total of 44 SAFVL members and spouses attended the General Assembly in Laos. We had a total of 19 ladies in the group, of which 16 are spouses and 3 lady members. We had an enjoyable and fruitful trip, and would like to thank LVF for their kind hospitality.





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2.3 At Laos we learnt two significant features. First was the huge reservoir on top of the mountain area, where dams were developed and water was used to create numerous dams producing hydroelectric power, generating an income of US\$610 million annually. The Nam Ngum Reservoir became a recreation and tourist spot, where we were brought for a visit. We were treated to a two-hour water ride on ferry boats and served with very delicious Laotian cuisine. The lunch was super and the sight was very scenic.

2.4 The other thing we learnt was the continued presence of bomblets (or undetonated cluster bombs) in one third of the country and the population is still burdened with this misfortune of people maimed or killed by them. Using this as an illustration of atrocities of war, we educate our people the importance of living in a safe environment, and continue in our efforts to help build a strong SAF through National Service.

2.5 The most significant and memorable happening about this trip was the strong bonding among our ladies. They were seen moving around together and there was a great sense of cohesiveness amongst them. More interestingly, this bonding was brought home and we could see the cohesiveness grew in our subsequent events in Singapore.

### **3. SAFVL COMMITMENT TO DEFENCE AMBASSADORS (C2DAs)**

3.1. A total of 72 members were specially selected and trained to provide National Education engagements focusing on National Defence. The main audience are students from our education schools, as well as servicemen and new enlistees in Basic Training School, Specialist Cadet School and Officer Cadet School. This programme has been the hallmark of SAFVL's contribution to the SAF and the nation, and had been successful and well received. Since its inception in 2015 we have engaged 79,361 students, servicemen and SAF enlistees. We are now in the process of moving into the larger community, in particular permanent residence as well as pre-schoolers.

### **4. NATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES for PRE-SCHOOLERS.**

4.1 SAF Veterans League initiated a programme to develop values on caring, empathy and respect, and an understanding on the need of National Defence among pre-schoolers in our Kindergarten. The pilot programme was well received by many fronts including the Ministry of Education. SAFVL Veterans had to lower the level of understanding among the kids through simple personal stories and pictorial illustrations. The Veterans found it very satisfying as the kids were very attentive and active during the talks.





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### 5. PARADES

5.1 SAFVL continues to keep in close touch with the SAF on its activities and in particular the graduation parades. Our Veteran members attend all 12 SAF graduation parades as shown below.

- a. 4 X BMT (Basic Military Training) Graduation Parades.
- b. 4 X SCS (Specialist Cadet School) Graduation Parade.
- c. 4 X Officer Cadet Commissioning Parades.

5.2 At the SAF RSM and Army RSM changing of appointment ceremony the Chief of Defence Force, noted the presence of SAFVL Warrant Officers, in his speech. He then cited SAFVL's efforts and recognizing SAFVL members' interest in what is going on in the SAF and be relevant to the organization.

### 6. MEMORIAL SERVICES - LEST WE FORGET

#### KRANJI WAR MEMORIAL SERVICE

6.1 On the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of 1918 an armistice was signed to end the hostilities of World War 1. Every year on the nearest Sunday of 11<sup>th</sup> of November Commonwealth countries conduct a ceremony to remember those who sacrificed their lives during the two world wars. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission honours 1.8 million men and women who perished in World War I & II, and ensure they will never be forgotten. Their remains are in 23,000 cemeteries and memorials spread over 150 countries. The memorial in Singapore called Kranji War Memorial is among the major ones. Every year the British High Commission organised the ceremony, which is always supported by SAFVL.

6.2 SAFVL took this opportunity to not only invite Veterans but also students from Uniformed Groups of our schools. At the end of the ceremony, SAFVL Veterans brought the students to four battles sites and related to them the atrocities of war and the need for Singaporeans to stay united and defend our motherland ourselves.

#### CIVILIAN WAR MEMORIAL CEREMONY

6.3 Another memorial ceremony is at The Civilian War Memorial. This monument is dedicated to civilians who perished during the Japanese Occupation of Singapore (1942-45). The structure comprises 4 tapered concrete columns symbolising the merging of our four racial and cultural streams merging as one united people. During our development in 1950s more than 40 mass graves were uncovered all over Singapore. About 40,000 remains of the massacred civilians were cremated and their ashes placed in the memorial. SAFVL is again the co-organiser of this ceremony. And again we brought another batch of students, telling them the sufferings of our people and imbued in them the need to defend the nation.





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### **KONFRONTASI MEMORIAL CEREMONY**

6.4 SAF Veterans League mooted the idea of creating a memorial to remember our darker days and to honour those who risked their lives in the defence of our country and the innocent victims who perished during Konfrontasi. It also serves to remind our younger generation that the peace and freedom we enjoy today, should never be taken for granted. This year we have the honour of having a senior Veteran who fought during Konfrontasi to share his life experience to the cadets and students present. Present at the ceremony were also families of the victims. To all Singaporeans, it is a reminder that we must always be self reliant in the defence of our country, be reminded of the ongoing fight against terrorism and our resolve to stay united as one people. SAFVL had been organising this memorial ceremony since 2015 to commemorate those who risk their lives in the defence of our country and those who perished during those dark period. We also conduct short National Education talk by a surviving veteran to students attending the ceremony. The Veterans share their experiences and remind the students not to take for granted the peace they enjoy to day.

### **7. FESTIVE OCCASIONS.**

7.1 As in previous years we organized events to celebrate the four different festive occasions in keeping with our national effort of being a nation of racial mix but living together as "One People, One Nation". The festive occasions this year are:

- a. Hari Raya Celebrations (Muslim Festival) - 22 Jun 2018
- b. Deepavali Celebrations (Hindu Festival) - 17 Nov 2018
- c. End of Year Christmas Celebrations - 30 Dec 2018
- d. Lunar New Year Celebrations (Chinese Festival) - 9 Feb 2019

7.2 At each of the function we have items depicting the various cultural groups like Malay Dance for Hari Raya, Festival of Lights for Deepavali, Santa Claus and log cakes for Christmas and God of Fortune and Lion Dance for Chinese New Year. Members were also treated to games and lucky draw for the day. Apart from these ethnic celebrations, we also organize commemorative celebrations like ur National Day.

### **8. HEALTHY LIFESTYLE & SPORTS.**

8.1 Our Healthy Life Style and Sports Committee coordinates healthy life style events such the SAFVL's participation in the SAFRA Bay Run-AHM (Army Half Marathon), walk-a-jogs as well as Fun Bowling Events.

8.2 WALK-A-JOG. On 19 May 2018, we conducted a walk-a-jog cum Qi Gong exercise at the





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8.2 WALK-A-JOG. On 19 May 2018, we conducted a walk-a-jog cum Qi Gong exercise at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. At this event one of our members taught our members on how to perform Qi Gong exercises to warm up and improve blood circulation.

8.3 SAFRA Bay Run-AHM18. This event was held on 26 August 2018, and we created a slogan for our T-shirts our members wore, that read:

***'Old Soldiers, Young Hearts, Healthy Minds'***.

The slogan emphasized that although we are senior in age, we keep fit through exercise which helps maintain a healthy body and mind.

### **9. WELFARE**

9.1 The SAFVL Welfare Committee visits members who are not well and have made a total of 12 visits for the year. They are accompanied by other members, to cheer up our comrades.

### **10. FUTURE DIRECTION OF SAFVL**

10.1 The SAFVL Management Committee spent two days discussing the future direction of SAFVL. Over the past few years we have seen numerous improvements in our events and activities and are beginning to see traction. We are beginning to see better recognition both locally as well as in the international arena, including and especially members support and commitments.

10.2 We reckoned the way forward is to build upon the recognition we are receiving now and project SAFVL as an organisation with a value proposition which SAF, the nation and members can be proud of. The proposed action plans will be discussed and unfurled as we progress along.

### **11. SAF (WOMEN)**

11.1 We have a group of SAF (Women) which started as a volunteer force, established in 1967. Though more than 50 years had passed, the women continued to relive their shared experiences and camaraderie at their regular get-together. They were a valiant defence force who saw Singapore through the tumultuous early years of our nationhood. We are delighted to have some of them joining us in our SAFVL activities and we are making effort to get more of them to be part of SAFVL.





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### 12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The Management Committee greatly appreciates members' participation in our programmes and activities as well as their meaningful contributions. We want to bring the organisation to a higher platform, and hope to garner members' continuous support and contributions and make SAFVL an organisation we all can be proud of.

Prepared by: Honorary Secretary, SAFVL  
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(SAFVL report will be presented through a 12 minutes slide and sound programme.)

