



SINGAPORE ARMED FORCES VETERANS' LEAGUE (SAFVL) COUNTRY REPORT 2021

VECONAC 20th GENERAL ASSEMBLY 15 December 2021

Honourable VECONAC President,
Honourable VECONAC Vice Presidents,
Ladies & Gentlemen.

INTRODUCTION

In a dynamic and constantly changing environment, we strive to be a relevant, responsible and valuable member of the community and society.

FORGING AHEAD IN THE DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT

SAFVL keeps up with the progress and continue to be relevant. SAFVL remains adaptive. It constantly seeks innovative ways to deliver our values in these changes including the COVID-19 pandemic. SAFVL adopts the framework of International (WVF & VECONAC), National (Singapore), Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), Veterans, and Future Leaders (Youth and Children) to guide us in our operations.

INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

STRATEGIC FOCUS

At international level, SAFVL is the link of SAF in military diplomacy, building good relationship among veterans globally through friends in WVF & VECONAC. Singapore was a founding member of the Veterans Confederation of ASEAN Countries (VECONAC). SAFVL will continue to be an active participant at VECONAC forums. We hope to be an effective and constructive partner within the confederation to enhance network, relationship, and meaningful conversation with our VECONAC counterparts.

OUR ACTIONS

In this respect, we strive to do the followings:

- a. To be the interlocutor, upon invitation, to facilitate effective and meaningful conversations at VECONAC forums.
- b. Provide support to VECONAC members in their efforts in terms of VECONAC website and other adhoc needs.
- c. Assisting high profile national bodies in commemorating events to instill national character and values.
- d. Attending WVF meetings and engagements.

NATIONAL LEVEL

STRATEGIC FOCUS

Our veterans have invaluable and readily accessible resource of significant service knowledge. As a very young country, their first-hand experience in many respects shaped the history and development of the SAF and our nation. At the National level, SAFVL's strategic focus is to support our national progress, through our veterans' inherent value.

OUR ACTIONS

SAFVL has been actively participating in the followings:

- a. Participating in Total Defence and National Education. We exploit the experiences and knowledge of our veterans to engage the needs of our society and communities.
- b. At every opportunity we archive our Veterans' experiences and knowledge as the ready resources for the needs of posterity.
- c. Assisting various major NGAs in Singapore such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in organizing commemoration ceremonies, etc.,.
- d. We gather school uniform groups, Military Units, and the public to strengthen our Total Defence efforts and our sovereignty.
- e. Active participation of national events such as National Day Parade.
- f. Promoting racial harmony, and national solidarity through active participation in programmes of One People, One Nation, One Singapore.
- g. SAFVL Veterans as 'Special Advisors' to New Citizens. Our veterans are best placed to share on what it means to be a Singapore Citizen. This is an initiative with relevant government agencies and stakeholders to better integrate our new citizen into our society and communities.

SINGAPORE ARMED FORCES LEVEL

STRATEGIC FOCUS

SAFVL is closely knit to Singapore Armed Forces through our SAF Reservist Association (SAFRA), a special relationship that comes with shared experiences from our veterans, our operationally ready reservists and the guiding direction of the central management committee of SAFRA. SAFVL continues to support SAF in its Total Defence concept, especially on the Military Defence. SAFVL actively organizes National Defence education efforts via storytelling, talks, workshops and tour guides to various battlefield sites in Singapore. Another strategic focus is for SAFVL to be a continuum of the SAF as a caring organisation.

OUR ACTIONS

SAFVL has been engaging SAF units and participate in military events:

- a. National Defence education for SAF units – These engagements drive home the purpose of national service as the backbone of military defence. It helps to inspire them to be committed and play their role in defending our nation. It also helps to strengthen their positive experience during their fulltime national service that has great downstream impact to our national defence system.
- b. We take cognizant that our nation's demographic profile has seen an increase in the employment of women in our ranks. Now 50 years since the birth of our Nation, we are witnessing women of significant seniority and operational experience retiring as veterans.
- c. We have operational pilots and Commanding Officers of ships, both of whom have served in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. The impact made by their participation was greatly felt when they speak to young Singaporeans through our programmes.
- d. This provides a positive influence not only among the potential young defenders but opened a new understanding of how to utilize the other 50% of our population who up to now has only been perceived in the very domestic role.
- e. Participation in SAF Events and Ceremonies eg. SAF Day, Military Leadership Graduation Ceremonies and attend talks of the various arms and services in the SAF.

SAFVL LEVEL – OUR VETERANS

STRATEGIC FOCUS

Veterans are the backbone of the SAFVL. Meaningful engagements, with care and support is SAFVL's strategic focus at Veteran level. SAFVL is committed to enrich the quality of life for our veterans by encouraging them to stay socially active and healthy through our various activities to help them 'age' gracefully, meaningfully, and healthily. The engagement and care are multi-faceted and holistic. Beyond taking care of our veterans' physiological and psychological well-being, SAFVL also provides engagement and learning platforms to enrich our veteran's experiences in the continue connection to the progress of our nation.

OUR ACTIONS

SAFVL is supporting our members via the following:

- a. Through the SAFVL welfare committee, we provide care and concern to our fellow veterans through visitations.
- b. Organising regular healthy lifestyle and sports events to encourage our veterans to go outdoor and be active.
- c. Organising regular social and learning events. Beyond socialization, SAFVL also organized learning events like workshop on how our society is being 'digitised' and how to cope with new ways of doing things.
- d. Increasingly we conduct online engagements to effectively re-orientate and teach our older veterans to use different virtual platform and interactive tools for engagement in daily social interactions.
- e. SAFVL and fellow veterans also extend a comforting hand to the Next-of-Kins of the deceased veterans through online and periodic interactions.

FUTURE LEADERS LEVEL (OUR YOUTH AND CHILDREN)

STRATEGIC FOCUS

Our youths and children are our future. It is imperative that they are inculcated with the right values and attitude towards national defence and nation building.

OUR ACTIONS

Engaging our youths and children is our commitment towards sustaining our nation building efforts. These are the several initiatives:

- a. National Defence Education programmes for Schools (Primary, Secondary, Junior Colleges and Tertiary Institutions).
- b. SAFVL recruited and trained 86 veterans, ready to be deployed for such programmes.
- c. From 2016 – 2021, the programme conducted a total of 1228 sessions and engaged 104,594 participants. The disruption of Covid-19 Pandemic did not deter our effort in engaging our future leaders of Singapore.
- d. SAFVL was quick to adapt our delivery mode and engagement approach. Instead of halting our physical engagement, SAFVL was able to develop new content (eg. Total Defence and Covid-19 Pandemic) and offer virtual engagements to our educational institutions and SAF units.
- e. Training sessions and many informal coaching sessions were conducted for those not-so-tech-savvy veterans to assist them in these virtual engagements.
- f. Intergenerational Programme (IGP). SAFVL started a pilot run of the IGP with My First Skool (MFS) – a kindergarten organisation in 2019.

- g. It was a ground-up initiative by SAFVL, engaging pre-schoolers (age 4 – 6 years) at 10 pre-schools. The theme hinges on the young audience listening to stories told by "grandfathers and grandmothers" (our veterans), a great example at "primary socialization".
- h. More engagement collaboration with national agencies for youth are being explored currently.

CONCLUSION.

SAFVL believes that retirement from military service does not deter our veterans' commitment to defence. The talents and gifts within our veterans can play a pivotal role in shaping a strong, resilient, and cohesive society through storytelling, thought-provoking conversations and interactive workshops both physically and virtually. SAFVL is prepared to share our learning with our VECONAC comrades.

VECONAC FOREVER... FOREVER VECONAC.