

Inaugural ASEAN HADR Exercise

Story by Jonathan Chan / Photography by Matthew Tan / Photos contributed by SAF Film Unit & 2CSH



Medics from the SAF and TNI practising the evacuation procedure

When a natural disaster strikes, untold sufferings are often inflicted. In a show of friendship and empathy, many unaffected nations would rally to deliver Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) assistance to the afflicted region. Recognising the importance of such efforts, the inaugural ASEAN Militaries' HADR Exercise (AHX) co-hosted by Singapore and Indonesia, was held from 12 to 14 July. During the exercise, the ASEAN nations learnt to better integrate and streamline the HADR processes so that the region's armed forces can respond swiftly and effectively should the need arise.

The exercise aimed to foster greater cooperation among the ASEAN militaries. The first two days held in Singapore included a workshop and academic discussions. This enabled participants to learn and better understand HADR operations, including the military-to-military and military-to-civil coordination required in the use of military capabilities. A draft standard operating procedure (SOP) was also developed by the participants, and this was practised and further refined during a subsequent Table Top Exercise. The third day of the

exercise was held in Indonesia, involving the deployment of military capabilities in a simulated HADR mission.

In conjunction with the exercise, a joint SAF-TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) Medical Task Force carried out a medical socio-civic assistance programme in Cilidong District, Jakarta, from 12 to 14 July. This was the first time that the SAF had deployed selected NS Combat Service Hospital (CSH) elements in a multilateral exercise of this level, demonstrating the commitment and professionalism of our NSmen.



Commanding Officer, 2CSH, LTC (NS)(DR) Aymeric Lim (left), who is also the Chief of Medical Board at National University Hospital (NUH), shared, "We have a developing 3rd Generation CSH with the latest equipment. It serves as an excellent platform for us to perform our tasks. But any new system must be tested and integrated, and work processes need to be smoothened." He added, "Through this exercise, my confidence in our Army medical services has been strengthened. I'm very impressed by our ground staff and medics who were professional and well-equipped. We also learnt much from our counterparts who shared their experience with us, especially in the area of crowd control."



Participating in an overseas mission or exercise is a huge sacrifice for NSmed doctors who must cope with their busy schedule and medical practices. For CPT (NS)(DR) Tan Wah Tze (left), an anaesthetist from NUH, this was not his first time

as he had previously participated in an SAF overseas mission to Afghanistan. He espoused, "As an NSman, I am part of the SAF's operationally-ready force. I have a duty to contribute my expertise when called upon." CPT (NS)(DR) Tan felt his time spent was worthwhile, "I had the opportunity to test out our new anaesthetic machine which is in sync with the anaesthetic machines currently used in our hospitals. It performed well. Operating alongside our counterparts in TNI, we forged good working relationships and friendships. This will make for smoother cooperation in the future."

Another participant, CPT (NS)(DR) Tan Ying Chien, who is in private practice, was the only plastic surgeon involved and he brought his niche area of expertise to the table. He shared, "I was happy to contribute to the team through my area of speciality. I am now more familiar with my functions and how I integrate with others. This makes me more comfortable and confident in my role."



CPT (NS)(DR) Tan Ying Chien (left) performing a cleft lip surgery

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