



Above: Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen presenting the State Colours to Lieutenant-Colonel Fabian Pwi, Commanding Officer of the 1st Commando Battalion, which won the Best Combat Unit award this year. Left: Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant-General Melvyn Ong, leading the recitation of the SAF pledge at the Safti Military Institute's Ceremonial Hall. The ceremony was broadcast live via videoconferencing and live-streaming on Mindef's social media channels. PHOTOS: MINDEF

Servicemen mark SAF Day with live-streamed ceremony

Dominic Low

Unlike in previous years, no parade was held this year to mark Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Day.

In the light of the Covid-19 situation, a ceremony officiated by Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen was held yesterday at Safti Military Institute instead. A small group of military personnel, including the Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant-General Melvyn Ong, was also present.

The ceremony, which was live-streamed on the Ministry of Defence's (Mindef) social media channels, saw operationally ready national servicemen, full-time national servicemen and regulars joining in remotely. The video on Facebook had 53,000 views as of 6pm.

Various trade chambers as well as organisations such as the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises also held their own in-house ceremonies, joined in Mindef's ceremony via videoconferencing or

viewed its live stream.

At the ceremony, Lt-Gen Ong led SAF personnel in reciting the SAF pledge to reaffirm their loyalty to the country and their commitment to the defence of Singapore.

In his SAF Day message, Dr Ng commended the SAF for carrying out its duties diligently and effectively in the national fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Highlighting tasks such as contact tracing and health surveillance, Dr Ng said these were not what SAF

soldiers had been trained for, but they had nonetheless risen to the occasion and successfully completed every mission assigned to them.

"Because of their professionalism and dedication, and close collaborations with other contributing agencies, Singapore's public healthcare system had been preserved and many Singaporean lives were saved," he added.

Dr Ng noted that the months ahead will be challenging for all countries, including Singapore, as

the world grapples with the aftermath of the destruction wrought by the Covid-19 crisis.

"At the same time, existing threats such as terrorism, cyber attacks or maritime disputes have not gone away," he said.

The minister said that the SAF will have to remain alert to this wider spectrum of threats and be nimble to respond to each threat decisively.

"Let us face the future together with confidence and optimism de-

spite the global pandemic. A strong SAF provides that solid foundation to look forward to a brighter future," he added.

Dr Ng also presented the State Colours to this year's best combat unit, the 1st Commando Battalion.

The 29 best unit and best national service unit awards were handed out by the Chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force in separate ceremonies held on the same day.

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2 of 2 Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen presenting the State Colours to Lieutenant-Colonel Fabian Pwi, Commanding Officer of the 1st Commando Battalion, which won the Best Combat Unit award this year. PHOTOS: MINDEF

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/servicemen-mark-saf-day-with-live-streamed-ceremony>

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