

From April next year, new recruits who want to study computer science, computer engineering, or data science and artificial intelligence can apply for a Work-Learn scheme where they can study for their undergraduate degree while serving their full-time NS. ST PHOTO: JASON QUAH



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front-line roles. NSmen with civilian expertise in certain areas, such as law, can also be redeployed at any point during the reservist cycles if their skills meet Mindef and the SAF's needs.

\$2,000 MORE FOR COMPLETING NATIONAL SERVICE MILESTONES

From April, NSmen will get \$2,000 more in cash credits for completing their three NS milestones – \$1,000 after finishing full-time NS, \$500 at the mid-point of the reservist cycles, and another \$500 upon entering the Mindef reserve.

This is on top of previous transfers that mostly went into CPF accounts at these three stages.

The cash credits will be disbursed in the form of LifeSG credits that can be used at all merchants that accept "Scan and Pay".

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDY WHILE SERVING NS

From April next year, new recruits who want to study computer science, computer engineering, or data science and artificial intelligence can apply for a Work-Learn scheme where they can study for their undergraduate degree while serving their full-time NS.

The selection process, which Mindef said will be rigorous, will start one year before enlistment, and those selected will then serve either three or four years with Mindef or the Singapore Armed Forces as cyber specialists.

This builds on existing programmes, including one focusing on logistics and supply chain management. About 500 NSF's are expected to be enrolled in such schemes each year come 2025.

INSURANCE COVERAGE DOUBLED

From next year, life and personal accident insurance coverage for all Mindef and Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) servicemen will increase from \$150,000 to \$300,000 per person.

NEW HEAT RESEARCH CENTRE

As temperatures rise, a new Heat Resilience and Performance Centre will be set up at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Researchers, including from the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine at NUS and the DSO National Laboratories, will develop solutions to prevent heat injury in soldiers.

They will also look for new factors that could influence whether or when heat injury may occur. This could lead to infrastructural improvements to reduce the heat stress of soldiers during training.

OPENING OF HOMETEAMNS@BEDOK CLUBHOUSE

This sixth clubhouse under the HomeTeamNS umbrella will open at the end of the year in the east, fronting the Bedok reservoir.

The first phase of the OneNS platform, a one-stop platform for all NS-related services, will also be launched in the latter half of this year.

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Extra \$2,000 for NSmen; more insurance cover for servicemen

Mindef unveils several new initiatives to improve the national service experience

Clement Yong

From better deployment of new recruits with existing injuries to automating make-up pay for operationally ready national servicemen (NSmen), the Ministry of Defence (Mindef) yesterday unveiled several new initiatives to improve the NS experience.

During a 1½-hour debate in Parliament on Mindef's budget, MPs such as Mr Mohd Fahmi Aliman (Marine Parade GRC) asked how the ministry has been updating its medical classification system; Mr Gan Thiam Poh (Ang Mo Kio GRC) asked what Mindef is doing to make the NS experience better for servicemen and women; while Dr Wan Rizal (Jalan Besar GRC) focused on training safety, getting the ministry to elaborate on its use of the latest technologies to protect those serving the country.

RESERVIST MAKE-UP PAY TO BE AUTOMATED, \$1,600 BASE PAY FOR ALL REGARDLESS OF RANK

This has long been a bugbear for some NSmen, especially self-employed persons and platform workers whose incomes are harder to calculate or prove.

Previously, the onus was on individual NSmen or their employers to submit documents to make claims.

From the second half of this year,

Mindef will begin drawing data from the Income Revenue Authority of Singapore and the Central Provident Fund Board to automatically compute make-up pay amounts.

NSmen and employers will be asked to review this before the sum is paid out, and they can submit additional documents if they want a recalculation. Those with income data not captured in the systems will automatically receive \$1,600 for a month of reservist activities, regardless of rank.

BETTER DEPLOYMENT FOR RECRUITS WITH SPORTS INJURIES, BONE, MUSCLE ISSUES

Rather than immediately deeming them as non-combat-fit, the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) will from this year incorporate further tests during these recruits' pre-enlistment medical screening.

These "functional assessments" will cover range of motion, stability and strength. Doctors will then decide whether they can be deployed to a wider range of front-line roles.

SAF has been trialling this for drivers of military vehicles and will now include more vocations in the scheme. For instance, servicemen of different physical capabilities can now become medics as the job has been redesigned.

The Home Team will also adjust its operational requirements so that more NSmen can take on