

# prisonnews

JULYISSUE 2021

**CAPTAINS OF LIVES**  
REHAB • RENEW • RESTART

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# SPS 75

TRANSFORMING LIVES WITH YOU

## 75 YEARS OF TRANSFORMING CORRECTIONS IN SINGAPORE

MAIN FEATURE



SINGAPORE  
PRISON SERVICE

SPS Annual Report 2020 is available for download!



# RESILIENCE IN CORRECTIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



DOWNLOAD NOW



INTERACTIVE VERSION

(recommended for computers)

OR



SCAN TO READ

STANDARD VERSION

(recommended for mobile devices)

Dear Captains of Lives,

The past year has been unprecedented. Yet, we have risen to the challenge, displaying remarkable resilience as we advanced our work.

We are pleased to share with you SPS's Annual Report 2020, which highlights our journey and collective achievements in the past year. We wish you a pleasant and inspiring read.

Together, we shall emerge stronger. Keep well and stay safe!

Yours sincerely,  
SPS ANNUAL REPORT COMMITTEE



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# EDITOR'S NOTE

## Dear Readers

This year is significant for the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) as we celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (SPS75). Since SPS' inception as a government department in 1946, the past 75 years have seen progression from a custodial agency to a leading global correctional agency.

To commemorate this milestone, Prison News will incorporate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary theme in all of the issues this year, starting with this one. In this issue, we take a closer look at **SPS' 75-year transformation journey**, dating from 1946 all the way to the present times. Our transformation over the years is reflected in our rehabilitation and reintegration approach for offenders today as well as our operational efficiencies. Hence, in the **'A Day in the Shoes of...'** segment, we follow a Housing Unit Officer and a Work Programme Officer, as they go about their duties at Institution B4.

Technology has played an integral part in SPS' transformation. In this issue, we interviewed the **Director of Transformation & Technology Division**, DAC Soh Beng Koon, to learn more about SPS' journey in adopting technology in our work. Finally, read about our **former Directors and Commissioners of Prisons** in our 'Throwback' segment! Each of them has played a key role in our transformation journey and we have the responsibility to go further in our journey to prevent re-offending for safer Singapore!

Do put aside time to read the articles in this issue, which have been curated with great effort by our team of reporters.

Happy reading and stay safe!

ASP Muhammad Sadiq Bin Sa'ad  
Editor, Prison News

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TRANSFORMING LIVES WITH YOU

75 YEARS OF

# TRANSFORMING CORRECTIONS IN SINGAPORE

Reported by  
RO Jasmine Oh

The Singapore Prison Service (SPS) was formally established as a government department in 1946. This year, SPS commemorates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary (SPS75).

SPS has since progressed to become a leading correctional agency, keeping our prisons safe and secure, delivering evidence-informed rehabilitation programmes and carrying out effective community supervision of released offenders. This article takes a look at SPS' transformation journey over the years.

## PRISONS PRE-INDEPENDENCE (1946–1963)



Mr Devan Nair, Chairman of the Prisons Enquiry Commission, presenting the Commission's Report to Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Yusof Ishak in 1959.

After the Second World War, a dedicated Prisons Department (now known as Singapore Prison Service) was instituted in 1946 to oversee the various prison facilities in Singapore.

In 1948, a Prisons Inquiry Commission was formed to review and improve prison conditions. The Commission convened in 1959 and recommended several changes, among which was a change in prison designations of prison officers to titles less connected to 'retributive treatment'. Instead, reformatory methods were used to guide the training of new officers, and the wider penal philosophy of Singapore. In addition, the Commission called for the recruitment of more local prison officers, and the construction of new prison institutions for different types of inmates.

## BUILDING OUR CORRECTIONAL CAPABILITIES (1966–1994)

After Singapore gained independence, SPS continued to build on its correctional capabilities to ensure the safe and secure custody of inmates. Several purpose-built prison institutions, such as the Queenstown Remand Prison, Tanah Merah Prison and Changi Women's Prison / Drug Rehabilitation Centre were developed to manage the needs of different categories of inmates.



Queenstown Remand Prison was built to house remand and short-term inmates. In 2009, it ceased operations and inmates were transferred to Cluster B of the Changi Prison Complex.



The Special Action Prisons Unit was founded in 1977 with a strength of 20 officers. Later in 1990, it was subsumed under the Singapore Prisons Emergency Action Response (SPEAR) unit.

As SPS' responsibilities grew, specialised units were created from the 1970s. For example, a Research and Statistics Unit was established in 1971 to enhance SPS' data processing and research capabilities. To enhance operational capabilities, the Special Action Prisons Unit was formed in 1977.



A specialised counselling branch was set up within SPS in 1988 to look after inmates with different needs, provide aftercare services, and monitor their progress after their release from prisons.

Alongside efforts to strengthen the rehabilitation of inmates, SPS also implemented various measures in the 1980s to improve professionalism and enhance service excellence.

## SETTING THE STAGE FOR TRANSFORMATION (1995–2003)

In 1995, SPS' mission statement and operations philosophy were revised, focusing on the contribution of prisons towards a safer Singapore. By the turn of the millennium, rehabilitation became a key feature of SPS with the re-visioning of prison officers as 'Captains of Lives', who play an instrumental role in steering offenders towards being responsible citizens with the help of their families and the community. A new rehabilitation framework was also charted to focus on the

different stages of an inmate's incarceration, namely incare, halfway care, and aftercare.

Since then, SPS has embarked on many initiatives to strengthen its operational efficiencies and expand its rehabilitation capabilities. The Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders (CARE) Network was established in 2000 to strengthen inter-agency partnerships and collaborations with the community.



One of the SPS recruitment posters in the 2000s.



The CARE Network comprised eight core members in 2000. Today, the Network has grown to nine core members and more than 100 partnering agencies.

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PURSuing EXCELLENCE IN PRISON SECURITY AND INMATES' REHABILITATION (2004-2021)

SPS has progressed on various fronts during this period. The resources to provide rehabilitation and reintegration programmes and services for inmates during incare as well as aftercare phase have expanded over the years.

At the same time, SPS underwent a series of major infrastructural developments and technological advancements. Standalone prison institutions located all over Singapore were clustered at the Changi Prison Complex with the launch of Cluster A in 2004 and Cluster B in 2010. These developments boosted SPS' operational efficiency and allowed prison officers to engage inmates under their care meaningfully.

In 2017, SPS adopted the 'Prison Without Guards' strategy, leveraging technology to augment security, supervision and rehabilitation efforts. Through the 'Learning Prisons' and 'Prison Without Walls' initiatives, SPS aims to make prisons a transformative place for inmates to take ownership of their lives and strengthen rehabilitative efforts beyond prison walls through community corrections.



The integration of technology in prisons, such as biometric authentication (left), virtual programmes and e-learning (middle), and inmates' electronic letters (right), allows for greater operational efficiency, strengthens rehabilitation efforts and at the same time, empowers inmates to take charge of their own learning and rehabilitation journey.

The community support that SPS receives over the years has also grown since the launch of the Yellow Ribbon Project (YRP) in 2004 by the CARE Network. The purpose of the YRP is to foster greater community support by creating awareness, promoting acceptance and rallying action. Since then, many initiatives and events

such as Yellow Ribbon Prison Run, Yellow Ribbon Culinary Competition and Yellow Ribbon Community Arts & Poetry Exhibition, have been organised successfully with the support from society, community partners, ex-offenders, as well as Singapore leaders who graced these events.

SPS will strive to excel in its mission of enforcing secure custody and rehabilitation of inmates, for a safer Singapore.

**Happy 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary to all past and present Captains of Lives!**

Today, Singapore has one of the safest and most efficiently run prisons in the world.

Watch this video to learn more about SPS' 75 years of transformation!



<https://go.gov.sg/sps75-heritage-video>



For more information on SPS' transformation timeline, please visit [www.sps.gov.sg/sps75](http://www.sps.gov.sg/sps75).



The recent opening of Selarang Park Complex on 22 April 2021, an integrated facility that incorporated advanced technology, was another milestone for SPS.

Scan the QR code or click the link to find out more about Selarang Park Complex.



<https://go.gov.sg/sps-video-spc>

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SPS-YRSG Corporate Advance 2021:

# TOGETHER — PREVENTING RE-OFFENDING; TRANSFORMING LIVES

Reported by  
RO Jasmine Oh

The annual SPS-YRSG Corporate Advance (CA) 2021 was digitally launched by Minister for Communications and Information and Second Minister for Home Affairs, Mrs Josephine Teo, to showcase the achievements of the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) and Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG). Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, SPS identified opportunities in leveraging technology to enhance our transformative efforts.

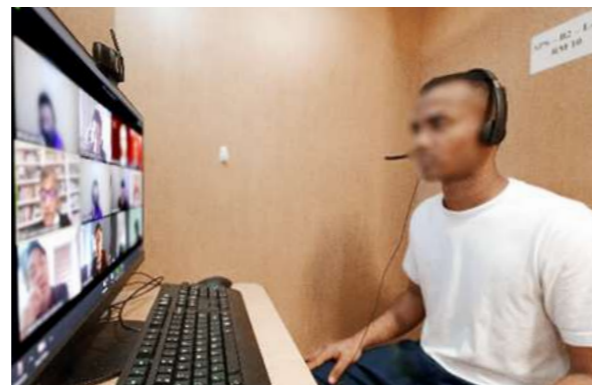
Here are the key highlights from this year's CA.

**Family Connectedness** remains an integral part of inmates' lives. During the height of the pandemic in 2020, SPS facilitated approximately 3,400 phone calls for the inmates and allowed the inmates to send more e-letters, in view of the restricted visitations. This allowed inmates to continue re-building their relationships with their loved ones, despite limitations brought about by the pandemic.

05



Selected family members also get to meet their loved ones over video conferencing on Children's Day.



Re-enactment of an inmate using Zoom to attend a court hearing remotely.

**Technology**, such as Zoom, allowed inmates to attend virtual court sessions, as well as virtual interview sessions with employers to secure employment before their release. In 2020, approximately 4,500 remote court hearings were conducted for inmates. Inmates were also able to continue with their rehabilitation programmes through tablets and virtual classes.

Selarang Park Complex (SPC) was officially opened by Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, Mr K Shanmugam, on 22 April 2021. In line with the 'Prison Without Guards' concept, SPC uses facial recognition to monitor inmates' movements, allowing prison officers to have more time for meaningful engagements with inmates.



Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, Mr K Shanmugam, being given a tour of the SPC premises.



Inmates in the Multi Media Hub undergoing a practical class on camera operations as part of their media training.

The rebranding from SCORE to Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG) helped the community better identify the organisation as champions of inmates' rehabilitation by working on case management of inmates and assisting them in their job search. YRSG also launched a new initiative called 'Train And Place (TAP) and Grow', where YRSG partners, trade associations and training institutions establish career progression pathways for inmates and ex-offenders. Inmates are equipped with in-demand skills, such as media and precision engineering, to open up new employment opportunities for them upon release.

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The past year has been tough, but exceptional. We are encouraged by the resilience and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners. Our inmates and ex-offenders had also contributed back to society through various Yellow Ribbon initiatives like mask-making for migrant workers and baking of cookies for frontline workers from healthcare institutions and Home Team Departments. Together, with everyone's support, we have emerged stronger!

The new work year ahead will be another exciting one, and we look forward to continuing collaborations with everyone to '**Prevent Re-offending, Transform Lives**' and contribute to a safer Singapore.

— Commissioner of Prisons, Ms Shie Yong Lee & CEO YRSG, Mr Matthew Wee



**WATCH:** Emerging Stronger: Our Aspiration, Our Change

The mission of preventing re-offending and transforming lives is a challenging but noble one.

Our work is never done.

We need to remain steadfast, focusing our hearts and minds on our shared mission.

To all staff from SPS and YRSG, community partners, volunteers and employers, I thank you for your relentless efforts and time, in rehabilitating and reintegrating inmates and ex-offenders. In so doing, we build a more inclusive society.

— Mrs Josephine Teo, Minister for Communications and Information and Second Minister for Home Affairs



**WATCH:** Speech by Mrs Josephine Teo, Minister for Communications and Information and Second Minister for Home Affairs



Singapore Prison Service  
March 24, 2021



### President Halimah Yacob's Visit to Selarang Halfway House

President Halimah Yacob visited the Selarang Halfway House (SHWH) and learnt about the key programmes that help the ex-offenders with rehabilitation and reintegration into the community after their release from prisons. SHWH provides a 24-hour secular and step-down residential facility for ex-offenders undergoing the Mandatory Aftercare Scheme (MAS). She shared, "Singapore Prison Service and Yellow Ribbon Singapore cannot do this alone. We, as a caring and inclusive society, must continue to create opportunities for ex-offenders who hope to improve their lives by strengthening key reintegration factors such as accommodation, employment, family and social support, and motivate them to make positive and lasting changes to their lives."



Singapore Prison Service  
April 20, 2021



### Inmates' Dialogue with Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim

Minister of State for Home Affairs and Minister of State for National Development, Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, held an engagement session with inmates at the Tanah Merah Prison School. During the dialogue, inmates shared their struggles and aspirations, and appreciated the opportunity to continue their studies in the prison. Associate Professor Faishal applauded them for their positive attitude and their hard work in preparing for their upcoming examinations.

After the session, Associate Professor Faishal and inmates broke fast together with dried dates and bottled water. He shared that "this modest fare was a reminder that the simple things can be the spur we need to see us through challenging times."



WHAT'S THE  
**BUZZ?**

Reported by RO Alvin Tan  
GET UP TO DATE WITH OUR  
CAPTAINS OF LIVES!

CLICK ON THE POSTS  
TO FIND OUT MORE!

Each issue, we select trending posts from our @SingaporePrisonService social media accounts to provide a peek at what our Captains of Lives are up to. #ICYMI

Follow us! @SingaporePrisonService



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### Opening Ceremony of Selarang Park Complex

The Selarang Park Complex (SPC) was built as an integrated hub for the throughcare rehabilitation of inmates. The low-to-medium security in SPC has the infrastructural capability to support rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, as well as provide vocational training opportunities for over 3,000 inmates and supervisees.

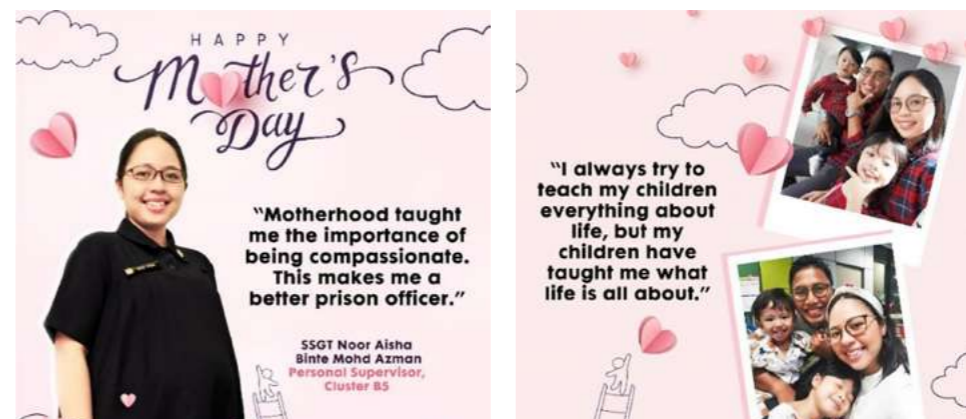
Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, Mr K Shanmugam, graced the opening ceremony of SPC on 22 April 2021 and shared that the opening "signals an important step in the transformation of prisons."

In line with SPS' 'Prison Without Guards' strategy, the development of SPC presents new opportunities to leverage technology for greater operational effectiveness and efficiency that enables not only Prison Officers but also inmates to be more focused on rehabilitation.



### Happy Mother's Day

On Mother's Day, a Personal Supervisor, SSGT Noor Aisha Binte Mohd Azman, takes the spotlight. As a mother and a COL, she has the opportunity to be a role model to not only her children but also to the inmates under her care. She shared on qualities such as compassion, kindness and empathy that are crucial for inmates looking to make better life choices; and for her children to grow up to be wonderful individuals.



### Happy Father's Day: My Journey as a Prison Officer

This Father's Day, SPS paid tribute to father-son duo, SCW Teng Jan Kim and RO Teng Pang Ann. RO Pang Ann shared his inspiration behind his decision to become a Captain of Lives – and it's all because of the meaningful work by his Pa! RO Pang Ann also recalled a time where he had difficulties with an inmate and sought advice from his Pa. His Pa told him to exercise patience, be there for the inmate, and the foundation of trust will start to build. Today, RO Pang Ann still lives by that simple yet powerful advice!



### Happy 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, SPS!

2021 signifies a momentous milestone for SPS since it was established as a government department in 1946. Throughout the past 75 years, SPS had embarked on various initiatives to strengthen our operational efficiencies and expand our rehabilitation capabilities. Minister for Communications and Information and Second Minister for Home Affairs, Mrs Josephine Teo, also expressed her appreciation to all Captains of Lives and community partners for the unwavering resolve in transforming lives and contributing to a safer Singapore. Click to watch our SPS75 video and find out more about our transformation journey!

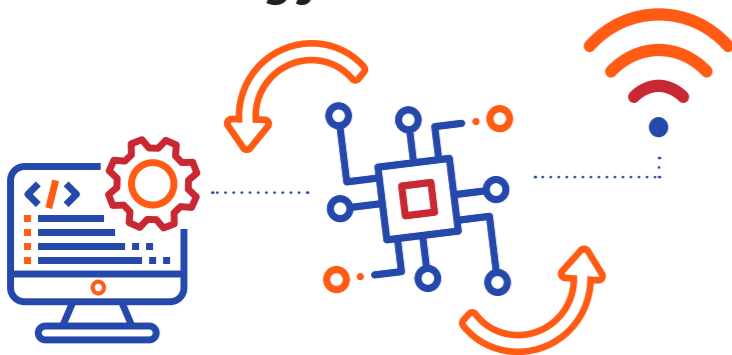


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CONVERSATION WITH...

# DAC SOH BENG KOON

Director (Transformation & Technology Division)



Reported by  
RO Leticia Koh

From a lock-and-key custodial agency to technology-enabled correctional agency, Director (Transformation & Technology Division), DAC Soh Beng Koon, shares some exciting highlights from his experiences as a young Prison Officer, and how Captains of Lives (COLs) have moved past their initial skepticism and gradually adapted to the effective use of technology in their daily work today.



**Q1** WHAT IS ONE THING THAT MOST OFFICERS MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I actually have an interest in photography. During my university days, I aspired to be a photojournalist to tell stories through the photos I take. However, the practical side of me decided to pursue a different career.

Although I did not pursue my aspiration to be a photojournalist, I still dabble with photography occasionally. I am fortunate to be staying near the Pasir Ris Park mangrove boardwalk, where my wife and I love to capture photos of the wildlife there. It has now become our favourite haunt and weekend pastime.

**Q2** WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE A CAREER AS A CAPTAIN OF LIVES?

I have always liked the uniformed service and the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) was naturally one of my career considerations. I had applied for the Singapore Police Force and Central Narcotics Bureau, but SPS had replied to my application first. I was also intrigued by the happenings behind the prison walls and wanted to find out if supervising inmates was a career fit for me.

It has never crossed my mind that I would stay in this service for this long. I remember getting replies such as 'bad luck' and 'fate' when I asked some of the inmates on why they had ended up in prisons. In my case, I made a choice and it has since been a satisfying and rewarding journey. I have also made many friends and some of them are of great support which I cherish.

**Q3** WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS AS A YOUNG PRISON OFFICER?

At first, it was daunting for me to see the inmates with their 'ang gong' (tattoos), especially when I was serving my four-month attachment period at Changi Prison before undergoing my basic training. The prison culture back then was very different, where the main focus of Prison Officers was mainly on security, with very minimal interactions with inmates.

Nonetheless, the early 2000s was an exciting time when the 'Captains of Lives' vision was newly-minted and the



DAC Soh Beng Koon with his family on a trip to Melbourne.

work on planning and construction of Cluster A had just started. I would say that period was a new chapter in SPS' history and I am privileged to be part of it.

**Q4** WHAT WAS ONE CHALLENGING TASK YOU FACED IN YOUR CAREER, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT?

Every posting has its challenges and I am fortunate to be able to experience a variety of appointments and portfolios. The hectic work schedule and the different and difficult types of inmates during my posting in Queenstown Remand Prison right after my basic training were the key highlights. I had the privilege of working with very experienced officers who were willing to share their knowledge with me, and I am still in touch with some of them who had retired. They made work easier for me, although some of the solutions would not be applicable in today's context.

The setting up of Cluster A was another challenge as transitional planning and operationalisation of a cluster-concept prison were very new to me. However, back then we had a great team of young officers guided by a level-headed leader, Mr Teo Tze Fang, who had blazed the trail.

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**Q5 THIS YEAR MARKS SPS' 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY. HOW HAS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMED PRISON OPERATIONS OVER THE YEARS?**

Technology has been a game changer for SPS. It has helped to simplify many of our work processes, which save time and effort. I remembered the challenges we faced when the Prison Management System — the forefather of our current Prisons Operations and Rehabilitation System (PORTS) inmate management system, had to be replaced with a paperless system. It was challenging then, when officers were **'digital immigrants'** and had to adapt to the use of computers and technology. There were scepticism and mistrust in the new unknown and I could sense the palpable reluctance in staff to transit to a new system.

We have made much progress over the years and our officers are now **'digital natives'** — adaptable to changes and to the use of technology. I believe that our work and efficiency would be severely impeded if we stopped using technology for just one day — and this is how reliant we have become on this key lever. Technology is a force multiplier in our lean organisation.

**DIGITAL IMMIGRANT**

*noun*  
A term coined by Marc Prensky in 2001 to describe a person who grew up before the era of widespread digital and info-comm technology.

**DIGITAL NATIVE**

*noun*  
A person who is the opposite of a digital immigrant; born in the era of ubiquitous technology.

**TIPS**

Immigrants or natives, what is more important is for us to adopt an open mindset in the fast-paced and ever-evolving world that we live in today.



**Check out some of the wildlife captured through the lens of DAC Soh's camera!**



Common flameback woodpecker



Crested honey buzzard



Brown-throat sunbird



White-collared kingfisher

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A DAY IN THE SHOES OF...

# PRISON OFFICERS IN INSTITUTION B4

Reported by  
RO Ryan Christopher Lee and RO Gary Loh

Institution B4 is one of the five institutions of Cluster B, situated within Changi Prison Complex. Also known as the Pre-Release Centre (PRC), Institution B4 houses inmates who are at the tail-end of their sentences before they are released into the community. This PRC also comprises several workshops, such as the Visual Arts Hub (VAH), which provides rehabilitative opportunities for inmates. Just like in other institutions, Prison Officers in Institution B4 perform more than just operational work. They often work together with other stakeholders to provide rehabilitative programmes that establish a throughcare ecosystem for inmates in Institution B4.

Prison News caught up with two officers from Institution B4, RO Abdul Rahman Bin Mohamed Yusoff and SGT Raymond Toh Yong Chong. RO Rahman is a Housing Unit Officer (Casework), or HUO (Casework) in short, while SGT Raymond Toh is a Work Programme Officer (WPO) at the Visual Arts Hub (VAH).

We catch a glimpse at what they do in their day-to-day duties and how they contribute towards preparing inmates for their release.



TELL US MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU DO.

**RO Rahman:** As a HUO (Casework), I support daily operational work of the Housing Unit, while leading my team of Personal Supervisors (PS). I ensure the smooth running of the Housing Unit routines, such as facilitating their out-of-cell activities and meal distributions, arranging for visit sessions and scheduling them to attend rehabilitation programmes.

With my casework team, I work closely with key stakeholders, particularly the Correctional Rehabilitation Specialists (CRS) and Reintegration Officers (ROs), to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates. For example, I participate in case conferences with the CRS and ROs on a regular basis. I also conduct **My Action Plan (MAP)** interviews with inmates to map their needs and ensure that follow-up actions are carried out to meet their needs. In addition, I also facilitate rehabilitative classes, such as **'Looking Forward'**, for inmates with the objective of motivating them towards positive change.

Whenever an inmate encounters issues that he is unable to resolve by himself, such as managing conflict, I work with the CRS team to formulate intervention plans to help the inmate. At the end of the day, we hope to create a safe space for inmates to express themselves, realise their intrinsic motivation to turn over a new leaf and help them to become better individuals than they were yesterday.

**MY ACTION PLAN (MAP)**

A structured planning tool that guides inmates to chart their goals and journey of change throughout their incarceration. MAP helps inmates take ownership of their rehabilitation, which complements efforts of officers in facilitating the inmates' learning and change.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

A motivational programme that guides inmates to examine the reasons for their offending behaviors and strengthen their resolve to change. Facilitated by prison officers, it provides a structured and open platform for meaningful interactions between the officers and inmates.



RO Abdul Rahman, Housing Unit Officer (Casework), Institution B4



RO Rahman also conducts training sessions for his fellow officers. This picture shows RO Rahman (centre) conducting the '7 Habits of Effective COLs' training. (Photo taken before COVID-19)

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**SGT Raymond Toh:** I oversee the running of day-to-day operations of the VAH and coordinate with our stakeholders on the art projects which the VAH is taking on. I also manage and engage the inmate artists in the VAH and oversee their schedule to attend work programme and training. Inmates in the VAH have the opportunity to attend art courses and they can continue to hone their skills in the VAH after their courses.

Overall, I would say that as a COL performing the role of a WPO, my responsibility is to guide the inmates on their rehabilitation journey through their interest in arts. My hope is that through this endeavour, inmates can take away important values such as patience, discipline and perseverance, that will aid them in their reintegration into society.



SGT Raymond Toh, Work Programme Officer at Visual Arts Hub (VAH), Institution B4



SGT Raymond supervising the VAH inmate artists.

VAH is one of the workshops which inmates can attend as part of their work programmes in prisons, and it provides inmates the opportunities to explore their talents in visual arts such as painting and pottery.

To find out more about the Visual Arts Hub, check out the **SPS Facebook page** where we featured it during World Art Day!

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE WORKING IN B4?

**RO Rahman:** As B4 houses mostly inmates who are about to be released, I have encountered many inmates who expressed anxiety in returning to society after spending many years in the prisons. This is when our officers can take the opportunities to engage them and provide some assurance, as well as reinforce some of the learnings that the inmates have picked up during their reintegration and personal development classes in the prisons.

As a HUO leading a team of staff, I also ensure that our officers have made the necessary referrals to ensure the inmates' needs, such as accommodation and employment, are followed-up before inmates' release. These are important factors that aid in inmates' reintegration. While we conduct various rehabilitation programmes and facilitate interventions for inmates, we must not neglect these basic needs.

**SGT Raymond:** For VAH, our main challenge is the project deadlines that our inmate artists need to meet. These deadlines may also fall within the same month and it can be quite hectic for our inmates. However, through this real-life experience of meeting deadlines and collaborating with external stakeholders, inmates gain useful life skills, such as proper time management and work prioritisation, that enhance their employability when they are eventually released. We also emphasise positive traits and values to inmates, such as staying focus and remaining calm under pressure.

### HOW HAS TECHNOLOGY IMPACTED THE WORK YOU DO?

**RO Rahman:** When the COVID-19 pandemic started last year, my team faced a lot of challenges because our usual way of running programmes via face-to-face classes was disrupted. It forced us to think and be creative and consider harnessing technology as a solution to ensure the continuity of our programmes.

We place strong emphasis on building familial ties as we recognise that strong family support is crucial in an inmate's reintegration journey. Instead of ceasing all family visits last year, we explored video conferencing platforms for family engagements. Although the physical human touches were curtailed, we ensured that inmates continued to build their relationships with their family members. Even now, we continue to finetune our work processes to see how technology can help us achieve our objectives in more efficient manners.

**SGT Raymond:** During my day-to-day operations at the VAH, I use the **mPORTS** to manage inmates' requests or access information while on the go. mPORTS makes my job easier as I do not need to be at a computer terminal or laptop to access information. It saves me time and allows me to spend more time engaging the inmates under my care.

There is also another system, the ASEC (Automated Security Cabinet), which we use for the issuance of security equipment. With the ASEC, staff can individually withdraw their equipment when they report for duty, and the best part is that I do not need to queue to withdraw my security equipment since there are sufficient terminals for us to do so. ASEC is another good example of how we leverage technology to minimise time wastage on the ground; time that allows us to do more meaningful work.

### WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO KEEP PERFORMING YOUR BEST AT WORK?

**RO Rahman:** Our COLs, especially the more senior staff, are the ones who inspire me at work. I joined the service 12 years ago, and I can see that SPS has transformed over the years. Our older staff came from a vastly different era, yet they are able to keep up with the younger generation of COLs and translate their experiences to fit into the current operating landscape. That is truly inspiring for me!

**SGT Raymond:** The extensive application of technology, and the innovation culture in SPS inspires me to do my best. As a Department, I find that we are constantly reviewing our work processes and introducing new technologies to improve the way we do things. This is a very good practice that we have as an organisation.

As COLs, we are encouraged to be innovative, and the culture of innovation in SPS is something that we can all be very proud of. Our officers are involved in innovative initiatives and we are often encouraged to come up with creative ideas and new solutions to streamline or improve our work processes. Innovation and technology have allowed me to focus on higher order work which leads to positive impacts in the lives of inmates.



### MOBILE DEVICE FOR PRISON OPERATIONS AND REHABILITATION SYSTEM (mPORTS)

A smart phone that contains certain applications for ease of officers on operational duties. With mPORTS, officers can capture information on the go. Some of the applications include facilitating inmates' requests and checking visit records.

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OUR CAPTAINS OF LIVES

# OUTSTANDING CAPTAIN OF LIVES (OCOL)

2021

The Outstanding Captain of Lives (OCOL) award is a prestigious annual award to recognise staff who have been exemplary role models at work, especially in these unprecedented times.

This year, seven of our COLs have been awarded the OCOL award. Prison News chatted virtually with them to find out about what they do at work, how they overcome challenges, and what keeps them motivated to perform their best.



Watch our OCOLs and YRSG's HOPE Award 2021 winners in this video here!

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MX Muhammad Hariz Bin Husaini

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**ASP NG RIYING**  
Staff Officer (Career Development), Staff Development Division



My job scope includes overseeing civilian and uniformed staff postings, organising dialogue sessions and working with the various Clusters and Divisions on staff-related matters.

The most challenging period for me was last year in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. I was still relatively new in my current post and I found the work to be overwhelming, to say the least. With the help of my colleagues, we managed to pull through. From this experience, I have learnt the importance of remaining calm and taking time to appreciate the situation before reacting to the problem.

**OCOL trait:**

Despite facing many challenges, ASP Ng Riying has never once allowed work to overwhelm her, and she even shares her experiences with those around her.

Having good team-mates and colleagues help me stay positive at work too. I am so grateful to have supportive colleagues from other units who never fail to lend me a helping hand or share their experiences whenever I face challenges at work. I would like to thank all my team-mates and colleagues for the help and support rendered. I truly appreciate it!

**Fun fact about me:**

I enjoy going for Muay Thai classes, and I have recently started attending Brazilian Jiu Jitsu classes as well.

There is a quote by Elizabeth Edwards which I would like to share with everyone — *Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it's less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you've lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that's good.*

**CW LEONG LIAN DER**  
Work Programme Officer (Kitchen Operations), Cluster A



As a Work Programme Officer at Institution A5 Kitchen, I manage the day-to-day running of kitchen operations and oversee the deployment and training of our inmate workers.

When we were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic last year, it was very challenging for the team to ensure the continuity of kitchen operations. There were so many uncertainties at that time, and this made our job an even more difficult one. We had to review our work processes and at the same time, maintain the safety of all our staff, inmates and partners. Fortunately, with the patience and perseverance of my colleagues, including staff from the Yellow Ribbon Industries, we managed to overcome the multiple challenges that came our way.

**OCOL trait:**

CW Leong Lian Der is no stranger to tackling uphill challenges and has managed the COVID-19 crisis head-on multiple times in his line of duty.

I take inspiration from my colleagues, peers, and supervisors whom I work with every day. In our line of work, it is important to work together as a team. As team leaders and leaders within our own circles of influence, we also need to lead by example.

**Fun fact about me:**

I was recently posted to the Psychiatric Housing Unit at Institution A3. I look forward to this exciting and challenging chapter in my career.

I appreciate each and every one of my colleagues and supervisors, for being my inspiration in giving my best at work each day.

To all Captains of Lives, remember to work hard, have fun, and create lasting memories along the way!

**CW THOMAS CHOW CHEE KIN**  
Programme Officer, Cluster B



I'm currently at Institution B5 where I perform the role of an Institution Programme Officer. My main role is to schedule programmes for the Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC) inmates.

I recall an incident some time ago when I was a Personal Supervisor in a Housing Unit. An altercation between some inmates had occurred in the yard of the Housing Unit, and we had to quickly bring the situation under control. It was a tough but memorable one for me as it was my first experience in dealing with such a situation, but I had the support from my colleagues and we worked together to manage the situation. In our line of work, it is important for us to work together as a team.

I also believe in speaking to someone if we face any problems or challenges. I find that talking to my colleagues and supervisors helps me to consider other perspectives, better manage my work and make informed decisions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone whom I had worked with, or working with now — bosses and colleagues, who have moulded me and gave me the opportunities to learn so I can be who I am today.

**OCOL trait:**

CW Thomas Chow always contributes his views and suggestions openly with colleagues and encourages others to do the same.

**Fun fact about me:**

*I enjoy exercising and spending time with my family. I also enjoy doing housework!*

**CW KHAIRUL BIN SANIF**  
Reintegration Officer, Community Corrections Command



As a Reintegration Officer, my work involves monitoring the reintegration progress of the supervisees under my care. I also engage them on their well-being and work with them if they have any issues throughout their emplacement on the community-based programmes.

Working with the supervisees can be a challenge at times, but I always put my best effort to persuade them to persevere and complete their programme. Some of the supervisees may not be appreciative of my efforts at first, but I always remind myself to try to empathise with them and consider their perspectives.

I think it's important to maintain good relationships with colleagues and to look out for one another at work. Additionally, we should also try to take time off work whenever we can to recharge ourselves for the long run.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all my colleagues, especially to my team members and mentors in the Mandatory Aftercare Scheme team, for their continuous support and guidance.

Finally, I would like to encourage all COLs to hang in there, and do not be discouraged when facing challenges!

**OCOL trait:**

CW Khairul has a deep sense of duty and has a great desire to do good for the supervisees under his care, and also those around him.

**Fun fact about me:**

*I am recently into Korean dramas. I am currently watching 'Taxi Driver'.*

**DSP DESMOND TAN TECK KIAT**  
Officer-in-Charge (Training & Development), Cluster C



As the OC (Training & Development) at Cluster C, I lead a team of four staff, and we assist the Assistant Commander (Staff Development) in the planning and administration of training and welfare activities for staff in our cluster.

I would have to say that the Selarang Park Complex (SPC) Opening Ceremony was one of the more challenging assignments I've undertaken as every detail needed to be attended to within the shortest possible time. Eventually, we conquered our challenges through sheer perseverance and teamwork. Every challenge can be overcome if we put our heart and soul into solving it.

One advice I can offer is that if you are facing any issues at work or at home, just talk it out! Speak to people whom you are comfortable with, and you will be surprised by the good advice and ideas that others can offer you.

I would like to thank my supervisors in Cluster C and importantly, the Cluster C Staff Development team, who are such wonderful people to work with. They are genuine, selfless, understanding and fun-loving people. This award will not be possible without them!

**OCOL trait:**

DSP Desmond Tan leads his team with charisma and pride, and overcomes challenges with determination and hard work.

**Fun fact about me:**

*I like collecting foreign currencies when I go travelling. I am particularly fond of the Swedish Krona, as Sweden was the farthest place I had been in my travels. I am really looking forward to the day when I can travel with my family again.*

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**CW MOHAMAD RIDZAL BIN ABDUL RAZAK**  
Team Leader (Complex Escort Unit), Operations & Security Command



As the Team Leader of Complex Escort Unit at the Operations & Security Command, I oversee the deployment of our Prison Officers and Auxiliary Police Officers (APOs) for our external escort assignments. I also oversee the maintenance of our Complex Escort Unit facilities. In addition, I am also a certified Tactical Trainer, Training Safety Officer, Home Team Simulator (HTS2) instructor, Associate Evaluator for Contingency Exercises, and a C.A.R.E Officer.

In my 23 years of service with SPS, I have had my fair share of ups and downs. I believe that when we are faced with challenges, we must always be calm and maintain our composure.

**OCOL trait:**

Affable and friendly to those around him, CW Mohamad Ridzal's sense of duty extends beyond his role as a COL.

At work, I am motivated by the trust my supervisors give me to work on projects and assignments. I am very blessed to have very supportive and dedicated supervisors who are always there to provide support. I am also motivated by my team members who display a high level of cohesiveness when performing their tasks.

I think it is very important to manage our stress and look after ourselves. For me, I go for long walks or slow jogs in the evening to relieve my stress and rejuvenate.

Throughout my 23 years in service, I have seen how SPS has grown into a leading correctional agency. The Department's vision, mission and core values have always been my guiding principles, and I am very proud to be called a COL!

**Fun fact about me:**

*I volunteer with the Yellow Ribbon Community Project (YRCP) in Woodlands Division and I am also upgrading myself by pursuing a diploma in Correctional & Management Studies.*

**MX QUAH FENG LING**  
Lead Specialist (DRC), Psychological & Correctional Rehabilitation Division



Working with a team of Correctional Rehabilitation Specialists in Selarang Park Complex, my work comprises the design, assessment, formulation, and delivery and implementation of rehabilitation programmes in support of offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration journey. I also conduct training and provide counselling support for our staff.

At one point in time, I think I suffered from Imposter Syndrome, where I was having so much self-doubt about my own capabilities. I realised that it is important for us to find meaning and value in the work we do. It is also important to have a good sense of self-awareness of who we are and acknowledge our own strengths and weaknesses.

While it feels like a roller-coaster ride at work sometimes, I enjoy being able to provide support to my colleagues and peers to fulfil their potential. By providing a listening ear to help them dissect their challenges, by helping them to remove their roadblocks or linking them with resources, we help them achieve their objectives and shine!

I am truly grateful for, and humbled by, the huge amount of support I received from the people around me, both past and present. My fellow team members, my supervisors — they have been my source of inspiration and encouragement, in many ways.

**OCOL trait:**

MX Quah Feng Ling actively supports her colleagues and hopes to motivate and uplift others, just like how others have uplifted her in her own times of need.

**Fun fact about me:**

*Among the many other things I do in my free time, I enjoy 'Reddit-ing' — surfing and sharing content on the popular online forum, Reddit.*

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On behalf of all SPS staff, Prison News would like to thank our OCOLs for their outstanding contributions, and for showing the way as exemplary role models. We would also like to thank all COLs, who continue to display dedication and resilience amidst these challenging times, to inspire everyone, at every chance, towards a society without re-offending.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR  
OUTSTANDING CAPTAINS OF LIVES!**



# #Throwback

Reported by  
RO Alson Tan

▶▶ Meet our former Directors / Commissioners of Prisons and find out how they have contributed towards shaping the identity of SPS.

## ▶ 1946–1953

**MR G. E. W. W. BAYLY**  
*Commissioner of Prisons*

In 1946, Singapore became a Crown Colony of the British and the Prisons Department (now known as Singapore Prison Service) was instituted as a government agency. Mr G. E. W. W. Bayly became the first Commissioner of Prisons.

Mr Bayly recognised the need for inmates to be purposefully engaged during their sentence. He introduced reformatory activities such as educational classes and vocational training for inmates.

## ▶ 1953–1957

**MR W. L. P. SOCHON**  
*Commissioner of Prisons*

Mr W. L. P. Sochon had supported the idea of a 'prison without bars', which relied on private businesses and the public to do their part to accept inmates into society.

## ▶ 1957–1963

**MR P. L. JAMES**  
*Commissioner of Prisons*

During his tenure, Mr P. L. James had recommended for the Department to shift its focus from custodial care to rehabilitation. He was known to grant political detainees leave on Chinese New Year.



## ▶ 1963–1966

**MR FRANKIE LEE SIEW KWONG**  
*Acting Director of Prisons*

Mr Frankie Lee Siew Kwong served as the Acting Director of Prisons during Singapore's merger with Malaysia.

As the former Administrative Officer of Changi Prison, he was well-acquainted with the operation and administration of the penal system.



## ▶ 1966–1973

**MR YEOW KOON POH**  
*Acting Director of Prisons*

Mr Yeow Koon Poh was Acting Director of Prisons for five years after Singapore's independence in August 1965.

Prior to his appointment, Mr Yeow was a distinguished police inspector who was involved in a number of high-profile drug raids and theft cases.



## ▶ 1973–1987

**MR QUEK SHI LEI**  
*Director of Prisons*

During Mr Quek Shi Lei's stint, the Prison Education Service was formally established. It was staffed by 12 teachers under the supervisory control of a Senior Education Officer.

Several units such as the Special Action Prison Unit, Dog Unit, Provost Unit, and the Logistics Unit were founded. The Specialised Rehabilitation Unit was also started in the early 1980s to provide counselling programmes for inmates.

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## 1988–1992

**MR TEE TUA BA**  
*Director of Prisons*

Under Mr Tee Tua Ba's directorship, the Department promulgated its first service mission, operations and management philosophy which formed the guiding principles on inmate management.

Mr Tee also spearheaded the establishment of the Prison Scheme of Service to boost staff morale and attract new recruits of higher calibre to join the Department.



## 1992–1998

**MR POH GEOK EK**  
*Director of Prisons*

During Mr Poh Geok Ek's tenure, the Department achieved various milestones such as the opening of the purpose-built maximum-security prisons — Tanah Merah Prison and Changi Women's Prison / Drug Rehabilitation Centre.

Mr Poh had also introduced the use of technology to enhance the operational efficiencies in running the prisons.



## 1998–2007

**MR CHUA CHIN KIAT**  
*Director of Prisons*

Mr Chua Chin Kiat was instrumental in transforming the Department and led the staff in the review of the Department's mission and vision. He also coined the term 'Captains of Lives' for Prison Officers, and unveiled the Department's core values — Honour, Excellence, Agile, Respect and Teamwork (HEART).

Under his leadership, Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex-offenders (CARE) Network, Prison School, Prison Link Centres, and Yellow Ribbon Project were initiated. Cluster A of the Changi Prison Complex was also operationalised during his tenure.



## 2007–2009

**MR NG JOO HEE**  
*Director of Prisons*

Mr Ng Joo Hee took lead of the process reviews of the changes over the years to strengthen the operational and rehabilitation capabilities of the Department and its staff.

Mr Ng oversaw the expansion of the Changi Prison Complex with the operationalisation of Cluster B. He was also instrumental in the planning of the new Prison Headquarters.



## 2009–2016

**MR SOH WAI WAH**  
*Director of Prisons*

Under the leadership of Mr Soh Wai Wah, community corrections were expanded. He led the implementation of community-based sentences (i.e. Short Detention Order and Day Reporting Order) and Mandatory Aftercare Scheme. The enhanced drug rehabilitation regime was also implemented to include the community-based programmes as part of its regime to facilitate inmates' reintegration into society. With the expanded roles of prison staff in the aftercare, the supporting systems and structures, and capabilities of staff were strengthened.

During his tenure, the vision and mission were reviewed, and the Director of Prisons was re-designated as the Commissioner of Prisons.



## 2016–2020

**MR DESMOND CHIN**  
*Commissioner of Prisons*

Mr Desmond Chin played a critical role in driving the implementation for the 'Prison Without Guards', 'Prison Without Walls' and 'Learning Prison' initiatives. During his tenure, the new Prison Headquarters and Selarang Halfway House were operationalised.

Mr Chin also unveiled the Department's revised core values, the 'Shared Values in Corrections (SVIC) — Synergy, Vigilance, Integrity and Care'.



## DID YOU KNOW?

# THE PRISON MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PMS)



Computerisation was introduced to the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) in the early 1980s and was then used mainly to automate administrative functions, such as finance and personnel administration. By the 1990s, a Strategic Information Technology (IT) Masterplan was developed to help SPS leverage on IT to support its corporate objectives and operational demands.

A key component of the Masterplan was the Prison Management System (PMS), introduced in 1999. This was essentially a database that stored information of

inmates from the time of his or her admission, to the time of release. Inmates were also issued with bar-coded wrist-tags that were scanned by officers to track their movements. PMS enabled fast and accurate processing and retrieval of inmate information.

In 2009, the PMS was replaced by the Prisons Operations and Rehabilitation System (PORTS). A mobile version of PORTS was subsequently developed in 2010. This web-based application allowed officers to access information via touchpad devices and complete various tasks on the go.



The SPS75 logo incorporates key design elements such as the old Changi Prison entrance and the yellow ribbon symbol. The old Changi Prison entrance is an icon of SPS' heritage and symbolises the transformations that had taken place over the past 75 years. The yellow ribbon symbolises second chances and new beginnings. The intertwined yellow ribbon demonstrates the collaborative efforts between SPS and the community to transform offenders' lives and that of their families over the years.

The SPS75 tagline — "Transforming Lives with You" captures SPS' mission of transforming the lives of offenders, ex-offenders and their families. Importantly, it signifies a sense of inclusivity and close collaboration with the community at large, who play a key role in our rehabilitation efforts.

As part of the SPS75 commemoration, we are inviting you to send your well-wishes to SPS. This can be messages of congratulations, appreciation, or hopes and dreams for SPS as we forge ahead into the future. Feel free to share with us your photos too!

We will compile your messages and feature them in the December 2021 issue. Also, the top 3 most inspiring posts will receive an attractive prize from us!

If you would like to contribute, please drop us an email at [thePNeditor@pris.gov.sg](mailto:thePNeditor@pris.gov.sg)

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