

President of SAF Veterans' League on having the privilege of volunteering with SAFRA.

BY YONG SHU CHIANG

**B**rigadier-General (NS) Winston Toh is grateful to have been offered the chance to volunteer with SAFRA.

"I want to thank SAFRA and for the way they have cared for their volunteers so well," he said.

The current President of the Singapore Armed Forces Veterans' League (SAFVL) had started volunteering with SAFRA while still in active service, where he was impressed by SAFRA's management of volunteers.

"When the opportunity came for me to volunteer with the SAFVL, I took it," said the 57-year-old father of two, who has served in the SAFRA Management Committee since 2011.

This year, BG (NS) Toh was a recipient of a National Day Award, the Public Service Medal, also known as the Pingat Bakti Masyarakat, or PBM. He was further acknowledged for his contributions to SAFRA at the 14th SAFRA Awards, with the Meritorious Service Award (Gold) and Long Service Award (10 Years).

### DEDICATED TO SAFVL

"I am happy to be recognised by SAFRA for my contributions. The medal is dedicated to all my SAFVL volunteers who've worked very hard and contributed to society."

The SAFVL was formed in 1990 to foster and maintain the spirit of camaraderie among ex-regulars. SAFVL regularly participates in veterans community events at the international and regional level. Furthermore, SAFVL volunteers are active in their partnership in National Education, where they share their rich operational and life experiences with students, national servicemen and regulars.

Having volunteered with SAFRA for more than 10 years now, one of BG (NS) Toh's fondest memories with the SAFVL involved watching some of the most senior veterans- some in their 80s - wearing their first-generation Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) uniforms and marching in front of the old City Hall as part of the 2015 National Day Parade.

Another memory he holds dear is the compilation of SAFVL's 25th anniversary book, *Old Soldiers Don't Fade Away/ They Tell Stories*, whereby veterans were engaged to submit their personal stories of their service to motivate, inspire and engage Singaporeans young and old.

As Chief Marketing Officer for ST Kinetics, a company of ST Engineering, BG (NS) Toh travels frequently on business, and time management is crucial in juggling work, volunteering and having time for the family.

"We will try to get at least a meal together each week," he says of his family, adding that SAFVL meetings usually take place after office hours.

### ARMY EXPERIENCE

If he were to do it over again, BG (NS) Toh, whose past appointments include being Head of NS Affairs Department, would still choose the SAF as his first-choice career.

"The SAF is a 'people organisation' that has allowed me to support and raise my family, and also grow my leadership and professional skills. Best of all, I have established a big network of friends and colleagues," he said.

Looking forward, BG (NS) Toh aims to expand the SAFVL pool of volunteers, to help out in their Commitment to Defence (C2D) Ambassadors Programme, which empowers the next generation to become good, responsible citizens guided by positive values and strengthens community support for defence and security.

"What is important is the heart, and willingness to give and contribute unconditionally," he added. ■

# THANKFUL TO SERVE



ABOVE: BG (NS) Winston Toh, President of the SAFVL, addressing guests at the annual Konfrontasi Memorial Ceremony on 10 Mar 2017.