

GARDENS and Fort Canning Park (see FORT CANNING AND PARK), and is the trustee for the various nature reserves. As Singapore's scientific authority on nature conservation, it monitors and coordinates measures to ensure the health of designated nature areas.

The history of NParks can be traced to 1967 when the Parks and Trees Unit was formed within the Public Works Department. The emphasis then was to plant roadside trees and to build parks. In 1976, it became the Parks and Recreation Department and was tasked with implementing the Garden City Campaign. In 1990, management of the Botanic Gardens, Fort Canning Park and the nature reserves were removed from the department and given over to the newly-formed National Parks Board. The board's mission was to develop, manage and promote these parks and spaces as resources for recreation, conservation, research and education. In July 1996, the Parks and Recreation Department merged with National Parks Board.

national pledge See box.

National Science and Technology Medal

Originally known as the National Science and Technology Award, the medal is given to individuals who have made a significant contribution to Singapore through the promotion and management of research and development. The award is conferred by the AGENCY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH (A*STAR). Recipients of the National Science and Technology Medal receive a specially designed gold medal and a citation. In 1991, Professor Louis Chen of the Department of Mathematics at the National University of Singapore was the first recipient, being rewarded for his research on probability and statistics. A*STAR also gives out the National Science Award to reward basic research leading to the discovery of new knowledge or the development of scientific methods; and the National Technology Award which recognises research that leads to industrial application.

NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MEDAL: RECIPIENTS	
1991	Louis H.Y. Chen
1992	Chan Soh Ha
1992	Frank Cloutier
1993	Christopher Y.H. Tan
1995	Goh Hak Su
1995	Herbert Eleuterio
1997	Sim Wong Hoo
1998	Chua Nam Hai
1999	Leo Tan
2000	Hang Chang Chieh
2001	Frans Carpay
2001	Bill Chen
2002	Lui Pao Chuen
2003	Su Guanng
2004	Low Teck Seng
2004	Kay Das

Source: Agency for Science, Technology and Research

National Service After SEPARATION from Malaysia in 1965, Singapore needed to build up its own defence force. It decided on the model of a citizen army similar to Israel, Finland and Switzerland. Singapore attempted to get assistance from India and Egypt to build up its armed forces, but was unsuccessful. In the end, Singapore accepted Israel's offer of assistance. On 14 March 1967, the National Service (Amendment) Act was passed and four months later, the first batch of 900 National Servicemen reported for duty.

Apart from a defensive role, national service (NS) is also seen as a nation-building tool, fostering ties between young men of diverse backgrounds. Enlistees are usually conscripted at age 18, but a fraction of draftees (mainly those who leave school early) are enlisted at 16 or 17. Some are exempted for medical reasons.

Operationally fit enlistees go through a Basic Military Training (BMT) phase which includes drill, physical, weapons and fieldcraft, training. BMT ranges from 9 to 26 weeks, depending on an individual's physical fitness. Enlistees who are not operationally fit take on modified training schemes that match their medical status.

After BMT, recruits are posted to combat, technical or service vocations based on their performance and aptitude. Those with leadership potential are selected for officer or specialist training. Some full-time national servicemen get posted to the Air Force or Navy, while about 15 per cent of them are placed in the Police or Civil Defence Force.

Under the NS (Amendment) Act of 1967, officers had to serve three years of NS while non-officers had to serve two years. The Enlistment Act of 1970 provided for 30 months of NS liability for those ranked corporal or above while all other servicemen continued to serve for two years. Since 2004, all full-time National Servicemen (NSF) serve two years of NS, regardless of rank. This reduction was due to the move towards a technologically advanced third-generation force.

On completion of mandatory full-time military service, NSF become Operationally Ready National Servicemen (NSMen). They were previously known as 'reservists', but the name was officially changed to emphasize their front-line status. After completing full-time service of two years, they serve in the reserves for a maximum of 40 days per year until the age of 40. Officers serve until the age of 50.

NSMen form the bulk of Singapore's military might. Their mobilization boosts the total strength of the SINGAPORE ARMED FORCES (SAF) to 350,000 men; the strength of the full-time ARMY is 50,000. Active units and reserve NS units are integrated within the same divisions.

From 1983, the NSMen training cycle was 13 years. The cycle includes 'high key'



national pledge Pledge of loyalty, written in 1966 by S. RAJARATNAM, Singapore's then minister for foreign affairs. Rajaratnam was a strong believer in multiracialism. With the 1964 race riots fresh in his mind, he included in the pledge the words, 'one united people, regardless of race, language or religion'. The texts below are in English and Malay.

The pledge

We, the citizens of Singapore, pledge ourselves as one united people, regardless of race, language or religion, to build a democratic society based on justice and equality so as to achieve happiness, prosperity and progress for our nation.

Ikrar Kita

Kami, warganegara Singapura, Sebagai rakyat yang bersatu padu, Tidak kira apa bangsa, bahasa, atau ugama, Berikrar untuk membina suatu masyarakat yang demokratik, Berdasarkan kepada keadilan dan persamaan untuk mencapai kebahagiaan, Kemakmuran dan kemajuan bagi negara kami.

in-camp trainings (ICT), each at least a week long, and 'low key' ICTs, lasting no more than six days. Those who complete their training cycle are put on the MINDEF (Ministry of Defence) Reserve List. In 2006, the training cycle was reduced to ten years.

In order to keep NSMen fit, MINDEF

National Service: NSMen training

