

## **Giving Singaporeans a Precious 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance to Choose a Fulfilling Seafaring Career**

Since the introduction of the Tripartite Nautical Training Award Programme (TNTA), close to 300 Singaporeans have benefitted from being given a second chance to choose a fulfilling career at sea. The TNTA is having its Cohort 12 Pre-sea Graduation and Cohort 13 Investiture Ceremony next Monday where approximately 150 shipping representatives, guests and families of the cadets are expected to attend.

Many Singaporeans from different walks of life have chosen this path less travelled. But many of them have this in common -- that the programme was a rare second chance for them to truly do what they love and an opportunity to take charge of their career. Take the example of 23 year-old Benjamin Yip who had only another 6 more months before he finished his diploma in health science. But he had to give up as his lecturers and him felt that it was not a career path for him. Benjamin went on a soul searching journey and found the TNTA programme. Not only did he ace all his TNTA subjects, better yet, he organised study groups for his other classmates so that he could help those who are academically weaker. Benjamin will be receiving the Top Cadet Award next Monday, an accolade for cadets who not only excel in their studies but exhibit strength in character.

Another cadet who is given a second chance is 25 year-old Navendran S/O Rajandran who re-took his 'O' levels twice so that he could meet the Poly criteria for Nautical Studies, but to no avail. Navendran eventually got a diploma in the engineering field and went on to finish his national service. But when he found out about the TNTA programme, he jumped into it as his first dream has always been a seafarer. The pre-sea graduation for cadets of TNTA Cohort 12 is only the beginning of an exciting career at sea. These cadets will now embark on another 18 months of ship-board training while the cadets of TNTA Cohort 13 will be starting their 6 months of classroom training.

In February this year, Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) and Second Minister for Defence had announced that Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) is contributing S\$1.2 million to shipping companies that have collective agreement with the union to encourage the provision of training berths for Singaporean seafaring cadets in the TNTA amidst the current volatile shipping situation. The S\$1.2 million will be contributed over a period of two years and up to 240 Singaporean cadets are expected to benefit from it. This is the latest contribution from SMOU to the shipping companies ever since the maritime industry started facing some headwinds last year. Since then, the Union has been actively seeking ways to help lighten the financial load of the shipping companies. In total, the Union has pledged to contribute S\$3 million to help maintain shipboard welfare and training, as well as quality lodging for the seafaring officers and building the Singapore maritime core.

Guest-of-Honour, Mr Melvin Yong, MP of Tanjong Pagar GRC commended SMOU and WMI during the ceremony, for their continual efforts in championing meaningful programmes such as the TNTA and Tripartite Engineering Training Award Programme (TETA), to strengthen the Singapore Core in the maritime industry by building a bigger pool of qualified maritime officers.

Captain Anthony Khoo, Chairman of TNTA Advisory Committee, introduced the Tripartite Maritime Training Award (TMTA) website, a new website that contains comprehensive information on both the TNTA and TETA programmes.

Launched in 2010, the TNTA Programme is a ground-breaking initiative by SMOU, Workforce Singapore (WSG), and NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), to train Singaporeans for the Certificate of Competency (CoC) Class 3 qualifications issued by Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), thereby allowing the trainees to pursue a nautical career at sea as nautical deck officers. This programme is supported by MPA, Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) and various shipping companies. Moving forward, SkillsFuture Singapore will replace WSG to provide financial support to this programme. Thus far, more than S\$28.6 million has been invested in this initiative.