

feature



Pillar of confidence

Story by Sebastian Yang / Pictures by Aloysius Tan and courtesy of 6 AMB

A strong and reliable pillar ever ready to support the combat units of the Army, the 6th Army Maintenance Base (6 AMB) has come a long way since its humble beginnings in the late 1970s. PIONEER checks out the battalion's recent achievements.

Four areas of expertise spread over three camps, guided by two models of Organisational Learning (OL) for the functioning of one unit – that pretty much sums up the working principles behind the operations of 6 AMB.

Formerly known as the 6th Direct Support Maintenance Battalion (6 DSMB), 6 AMB has undergone a facelift in a bid to enhance its organisational effectiveness and operational readiness.

The past year has seen numerous accolades for its exceptional human resource practices and logistical competencies. The battalion has progressed from winning the special commendation award in previous years to clinching the distinguished MINDEF Excellence Award in 2006.

6 AMB has also continued to maintain high safety standards, securing safety awards for consecutive years. Most notably, it achieved an A in the unit's Logistics Readiness Inspection last year.



► Small arms technicians show commitment and concentration during weapon inspection and troubleshooting to ensure that the weapons under their charge are in perfect working order.

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So what is the unit's formula for success? Commanding Officer (CO) of 6 AMB LTC Adrian Toh believes that the two OL models – relationship-building for a positive work experience and using experience and learning to help achieve performance objectives – have helped him spur on the people in his unit.

“Once I took over as CO, the first thing I did was to build up a culture of strong leadership at every level,” he said.

“I believe that our men and women are responsible and trustworthy, so if you treat them well, they'll do their best for you.”

Besides giving out the best commander and best soldier awards, letters of appreciation are also presented to unit personnel for their exemplary performance and outstanding contributions.

Eager to provide a platform to showcase the creative abilities of NSFs in 6 AMB, LTC Toh roped in one of them to design the template for the appreciation letter.

With the decentralisation of the unit, 6 AMB's technicians are now located in various workshops across the island. This inevitably poses a challenge to the unit in terms of command and control of workflow and manpower resources.

Said LTC Toh: “Now that we're delayed, it reflects the level of trust commanders must place in individual soldiers.”

“A lot more trust is placed upon our NSFs, engineers and regulars to go to the different units to get their jobs done well. The beauty of it all is that we get to see the competencies of our technicians,” he added.

Besides making regular visits to the various zones to address the issues his staff are concerned with, sending out personal emails to all the personnel in his battalion has also become a norm for LTC Toh.

“Once in a while, I send out messages to my guys to tell them of what we've achieved so far, to send them my regards and to give recognition,” he said.

Beyond work, LTC Toh and his management team have engaged external agencies like the Adam Khoo Learning Technologies Group to create personal mastery workshops for boosting the morale and motivation of every individual in the battalion.

Driven by his belief in the need to tap on the resources of 6 AMB and understand the strengths of his people, LTC Toh spearheaded the unit's newsletter and a book modelled after the famous *Chicken Soup* series.

LTC Toh shared: “Newsletters are great ways to store history and memories in a vivid form.

“As for the book – which is affectionately called the ‘soul book’ – it has allowed our technicians to detail their experiences and inspire the rest of our guys.”

In an ongoing attempt to engage his people through creative literary means, LTC Toh remains committed in conveying his vision for the unit to his servicemen and women.

“It's essential for them to realise that whatever we do as a unit, we're keeping the flag of 6 AMB flying high – that's the identity of the battalion.”

Sharing his sentiments is Head, Base Engineering Branch MAJ Don Swee. “When the men know what their commanders want, they'll react in ways that are consistent with that shared vision,” said MAJ Swee.

LTC Toh constantly reminds his staff of the need to provide optimal logistical support to the best of their abilities. “I always tell my guys it's important that we are a pillar of confidence to the combatants, and I always emphasise that every equipment they service must be in the best working condition.” ■