

## **High-5 and Take-5 on Total Defence Day 2022**

**31 January 2022 (Monday)**

**Tan Javier (4B) & Davis Zhang Wei (4F)**

**Javier:** Good morning School Leaders, teachers, staff and fellow Gessians, I am Staff Sergeant Javier.

**Davis:** And I am Staff Sergeant Davis. We are from the National Police Cadet Corps and are here to share with you about Total Defence.

**Play “Important Message” siren**

**Davis:** Do you know that 80 years ago people living in Singapore heard the siren to warn them of air raids from 8 December 1941 to 14 February 1942, the eve of the Lunar New Year. Yes, it was 80 years ago where Lieutenant-General Arthur Ernest Percival signed the surrender documents before Lieutenant General Tomoyuki Yamashita, at Ford Motor Factory on 15 February 1942, the first day of Lunar New Year. The Japanese Occupation lasted 3 years and 7 months – the darkest period of Singapore history.

**Javier:** Each year Total Defence Day is commemorated on 15 February. It marks Singapore's fall to the Japanese in 1942 and seeks to remind us of the suffering endured by people during the Japanese Occupation. It also serves to remind us of the need for a strong defence against external threats. We must be responsible for our own defence.

**Davis:** The peace and harmony that we now have does not come easily. It is due to the resilience and hard work of our forefathers. The commemoration of Total Defence is to familiarise our people with the modern defence strategy of "Total Defence" which Singapore has adopted to ensure our continued survival and security. We must not take safety for granted and we must work hard to protect Singapore. We must ourselves defend Singapore.

**Javier:** To play our part to keep Singapore strong, you can find out more from the posters on the notice boards at the classroom blocks. Do participate in the Total Defence Quizzes. Quiz 1 starts today and ends on 6 February. The top three scorers will be announced on 7 February.

**Davis:** Now, let's move on to our Chinese New Year celebration where we reunite with resilience and gratitude.

**Both:** Thank you!

## **7 February 2022 (Monday)**

### **Davis Zhang Wei (4F) & Akilan Murugan (4G)**

**Davis:** Good Morning School Leaders, teachers, staff and fellow Gessians, I am Staff Sergeant Davis.

**Akilan:** And I am Staff Sergeant Akilan. We are from the National Police Cadet Corps. The song that you have just heard before the National Anthem is the Total Defence Song. The Total Defence song "There's a Part for Everyone" was written in 1984 by Gerald Png, along with the introduction of Total Defence in Singapore. In 2016, MINDEF refreshed the song by updating the lyrics and music arrangement, while retaining that familiar, nostalgic tune. The song was rearranged and performed by home grown band QuickPick. We will now share with you about Total Defence.

### **Play "Important Message" siren**

**Akilan:** Do you remember that 80 years ago people living in Singapore heard the siren to warn them of air raids from 8 December 1941 to 14 February 1942? So, how was life during the Japanese Occupation after the British had surrendered to the Japanese on 15 February 1942?

**Davis:** All schools were closed due to World War II even before the surrender. During the Japanese Occupation, the Japanese saw the learning of the Japanese language as central in inculcating the Nippon Spirit and culture among the people of Singapore. Students had to learn the Japanese language in schools and even adults who were working in the government agencies or Japanese corporations had to pick up the language if they wanted to be employable or get a promotion.

**Akilan:** Then what about Gan Eng Seng School?

**Davis:** Mr Percival Frank Aroozoo was the headmaster of Gan Eng Seng School from 1938 to 1955. In 1941, the school building at Telok Ayer was declared unsafe by the Public Works Department. An immediate evacuation was ordered and the school took up temporary accommodation at the Sepoy Lines Malay School in Park Road and in Pearl's Hill School. Before long, the school closed due to World War II. During the Japanese Occupation, Mr Aroozoo lost the ability to hear in his right ear. The injury was thought to have been caused by either a bomb explosion or an incident where he was hit by Japanese soldiers. Despite losing hearing in his right ear, Mr Aroozoo was so brave and exhibited resilience in the opening of the new Gan Eng Seng School building at Anson Road in 1951, and oversaw the school's transition from a primary school to a secondary school.

**Akilan:** What about life in Singapore during the Japanese Occupation?

**Davis:** In general, living conditions in Singapore during the Japanese Occupation was bad due to the scarcity of many basic necessities. Rice, salt, cooking oil and cloth were some of the essential

items that had to be rationed. To overcome the scarcity, learning to creatively recycle and reuse old items became the norm. As the war progressed, rations dwindled substantially: monthly rice rations fell from 12 kilograms per person in 1942 to just 4.8 kilograms per adult male at the end of the war. A typical adult eats 5.4 kilograms of rice which makes up 25 % of a balanced diet monthly.

**Akilan:** I heard that they used “banana money” introduced by the Japanese. As the war progressed, problems like scarcity, shortages and inflation became more prevalent, and cash became useless. People preferred to barter trade than to carry bags of “banana money” to buy daily necessities. By June 1945, packages wrapped in brown paper, each containing a thousand ten-dollar notes, had to be used to purchase anything. 600 grams of rice cost \$5 000 in Japanese currency, up from just \$5 (Straits dollar) in December 1941. An electric bulb that cost 41 cents in December 1941 was priced at \$210 by August 1945. As cash became practically worthless, doctors, teachers and other professionals took rice and eggs instead as payment for their services, or charged their fees based on the prevailing price of rice.

**Davis:** You’re right. During the Japanese occupation in 1942 to 1945, rice was rationed. Even years after the occupation ended, rice was only available for the rich. Tapioca, however, was for the masses. It was easy to grow anywhere and required no maintenance, making it naturally suited for times of hardship and scarcity. Those days, it was not unusual to find tapioca growing in abundance in the jungles surrounding rural villages. Another benefit of steamed tapioca was that it gave the consumer a full stomach. It was very filling and cheap, allowing many people to go on just a few of them each day.

**Akilan:** Wow, weren’t our forefathers exhibiting resilience? I can’t imagine myself eating steam tapioca daily. If we had strong military defence and economic defence, the Japanese would not be able to invade us easily and we won’t need to pay \$210 for an electric bulb.

**Davis:** Yes, we must ourselves defend Singapore as no one else is responsible for our security and well-being. No one owes Singapore a living. We find our own way to survive and prosper, turning challenge into opportunity.

**Akilan:** To play our part to keep Singapore strong, you can find out more from the posters on the notice boards at the classroom blocks. Do participate in the Total Defence Quizzes!

Let us all play our part in keeping Singapore safe!

**Both:** Thank you!

## **14 February 2022 (Monday)**

### **Akilan (4G) & Rayhan (4B)**

**Akilan:** Good Morning School Leaders, teachers, staff and fellow Gessians, I am Staff Sergeant Akilan.

**Rayhan:** And I am Staff Sergeant Rayhan. We are from the National Police Cadet Corps and are here to share with you about Total Defence.

### **Play “Important Message” siren**

**Rayhan:** Do you know the meaning of this siren which you’ve been hearing for the past few Mondays? This is sounded to alert the population to an important broadcast on the radio. Total Defence was launched in 1984 to rally Singaporeans together in responding to challenges that threaten Singapore’s independence and well-being, such as terrorism, SARS and economic downturns. The “Important Message” signal will be sounded through the island-wide network of the SCDF Public Warning System sirens and the SGSecure mobile application at 6.20 p.m. on 15 February, the time at which the British surrendered Singapore to the Japanese Imperial Forces in 1942. This reminds us that we need to stand resilient and do our part to protect Singapore and our future. So, what are the six pillars of Total Defence?

**Akilan:** They are Military, Civil, Economic, Social, Digital and Psychological Defence.

**Rayhan:** I know I will serve my National Service when I turn 18. Military Defence is having a strong Singapore Armed Forces to deter aggression and protect the country from other threats. It also involves citizens doing their part to support the military. People who protect the country are in the army and the Singapore Police Force. They protect our country from threats even in the sea. We will protect Singapore as no one owes us a living.

**Akilan:** Before COVID-19, my seniors could attend a one-day course on Civil Defence where they went to Alexandra Fire Station to learn how to put out a fire and how to perform CPR. Civil Defence provides for the safety and basic needs of the whole community so that life may go on as normally as possible during emergencies. An example of who they are is Singapore Civil Defence Force, or SCDF for short, and SCDF can provide first aid training for civilians. We can see SCDF in action during emergency-preparedness exercises. Remember to RUN, HIDE, TELL when you encounter a terrorist attack. You can download the SG Secure app to report an emergency.

**Rayhan:** Times are bad, especially during COVID-19. The government gives Singaporeans of age 18 and above \$100 worth of Rediscover Singapore Vouchers to promote local tourism. At the end of 2021, every Singaporean household is given \$100 worth of CDC vouchers that we can spend in hawker centres and neighbourhood shops. This is about Economic Defence where the government,

business and industry organise themselves to support the economy at all times. Individuals can contribute to Economic Defence by working hard and meeting the challenges of development. Those who continually improve themselves to stay relevant play an even bigger role so that Singapore can stay competitive in the world.

**Akilan:** Other than being competitive, we also focus on Social Defence where people live and work together in harmony and spend time on the interests of the nation and community. For example, some people participate in volunteer work on weekends or during the school holidays.

**Rayhan:** Do you know fraud and scams are the most prevalent *crimes in Singapore*? Digital Defence was introduced in 2019 and added as one of the pillars for Total Defence. Every individual is the first line of defence against threats from the digital domain. Digital Defence is about protecting oneself in the internet. There are ways to protect yourself in the internet. For example, avoid spreading fake news, practise good habits in the internet, like avoid giving bad or vulgar comments. Be secure. Be alert. Be responsible.

**Akilan:** Stress level in Singapore is very high. In April 2021, it was found that 7 in 10 Singapore employees felt stressed by COVID-19 in the past six months. This is where Psychological Defence is important. Psychological Defence is about having faith and pride in Singapore where each person's commitment to and confidence in the nation's future is high.

**Rayhan:** To play our part to keep Singapore strong, you can find out more from the posters on the notice boards at the classroom blocks.

**Both:** Thank you! ONWARD Singapore!