Welcome to Singapore

From the Admiral:

Congratulations on your orders to Singapore, one of the most unique and sought-after duty stations in the Navy! A tour of duty here offers much to see and do, as Southeast Asia provides a wonderful place to live, work and share the culture with your family and friends.

Each of the commands at Singapore is focused on providing the best logistics and maintenance support for ships in the 7th Fleet area of responsibility. In addition, we plan, coordinate and execute the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) bilateral exercise series. It is a huge responsibility, but the talented and dedicated professionals that make up our Sembawang community are up to the task.

The commands in Singapore have diverse responsibilities, but share a common goal: Providing the best logistics and maintenance support for ships in the 7th Fleet area of responsibility. Our commands actively support major regional exercises, such as Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT).

We are a vibrant, joint community located on what was once a Royal Navy base, where U.S. servicemembers live and work alongside counterparts from Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Our families enjoy spacious leased housing consisting of British colonial bungalows, duplexes and flats, and unaccompanied personnel enjoy multi-room flats. When combined with our exceptional medical care, MWR facilities and programs, including monthly fun runs and a variety of field trips, the Sembawang community enjoys a quality of life that's second to none. Whether you come here with your family or you are single, there are countless opportunities for travel, education, and personal and professional growth.

Singapore is among the most prosperous nations in the world, and our Singaporean hosts and neighbors are warm and friendly. Singapore is a safe, tolerant and diverse society, representing a rich mixture of eastern and western cultures, but that's not to say you won't face some unique challenges here. We provide this guide to answer many of the questions you may have about your new home, as well as ensure you have a smooth transition here. I recommend making early and frequent contact with your sponsor, as they can provide answers to your detailed questions and walk you through the transition process.

On behalf of our entire Sembawang community, welcome to you and your family! I look forward to serving with you.

Rear Adm. Nora W. Tyson
Commander,
Logistics Group Western Pacific
Singapore Area Coordinator

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About Singapore & Singaporean Culture

Welcome to Singapore!

Despite its small land area of less than 700 square kilometers (about 3 times the size of the District of Columbia), Singapore is a modern, thriving city-state of 4.6 million people. Boasting one of the world's most advanced economies, efficient transportation networks and a tolerant mix of cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds, Singapore is often referred to as one of the most cosmopolitan locations in the world in which to live and work.

An eight-meter tall merlion statue stands guard over Merlion Park near the mouth of the Singapore River. The mythical beast, half lion and half fish, is a widely recognized symbol of Singapore.

History and Culture

Although Singapore's history dates from the 11th century, the island was little known to the West until the 19th century, when in 1819, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles arrived as an agent of the British East India Company. In 1824, the British purchased Singapore Island from the Sultan of Johor and Temenggong, and by within a few years Singapore was recognized as a major regional port. In 1867, Singapore was made a British Crown Colony, an arrangement that continued until 1946.

In the 20th century, the automobile industry's demand for rubber from Southeast Asia and the packaging industry's need for tin helped make Singapore one of the world's major ports. In 1921, the British constructed a naval base at Sembawang, which was soon supplemented by an air base. Days after the attack at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attacked Singapore, capturing the island in February 1942. It remained under their control until September 1945, when the British returned.

In 1946, Singapore became a separate British Crown Colony, and shortly after Singapore experienced a twelve-year "State of Emergency" when the Malayan Communist Party attempted to seize control of the penisnsula. In 1959, Singapore became self-governing, and became an independent nation on August 9, 1965.

Today, Singapore is a diverse melting pot of cultures and religions. Singaporeans of Chinese ancestry make up the majority of the population (76%), with Malay (14%), Indian (8%) and British, other European and North Americans (2%) as minorities. Religious tolerance is stressed in Singapore, with Buddhism the predominant religion (42%), followed by significant Muslim (15%), Taoist (9%), non-denominational Christian (8%), Catholic (5%) and Hindu (4%) populations.

Language

English is the official language of Singapore; all government and most private business is conducted in English. However, many Chinese, Bahasa and Tamil speakers have blended their native tongue with English, to create versions of "Singlish," which is often used in social settings and in the city's smaller shopping districts. In any event, communicating in English usually poses no problems in Singapore.

Singapore's literacy rate is among the highest in the world, with 95% of the population able to read and speak at least one language.

The Sembawang MRT station is a few minutes walk from housing, taking you nearly anwhere in Singapore.

Climate

Situated one degree north of the Equator, Singapore enjoys a tropical climate. The lowest temperature ever recorded at Singapore was 66 degrees Fahrenheit. Year round, Singapore is hot, humid, and rainy. There are two distinct monsoon seasons - Northeastern monsoon (December to March) and Southwestern monsoon (June to September). Between monsoon seasons, afternoon and early evening thunderstorms are commonplace.

"Little India" is a popular and diverse shopping area.

Politics

Singapore is a parliamentary republic with an elected president who serves as chief of state, and a strong prime minister heading the government. Following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or leader of the majority coalition is usually appointed prime minister by the president; deputy prime ministers are appointed by the president.

The 84 members of Singapore's unicameral (single-house) parliament serve five-year terms; the president serves six-year terms.

Economy

Singapore has a highly developed and successful free-market economy. It enjoys a remarkably open and corruption-free environment, stable prices, and its per capita GDP of $52,000 USD per year is 9th in the world, slightly higher than the United States.

The economy depends heavily on exports, particularly in consumer electronics, information technology products, pharmaceuticals, and a growing service sector. In recent years, Singapore has attracted major investments in pharmaceuticals and medical technology production - and the government is expected to continue efforts to establish Singapore as Southeast Asia's financial

and high-tech hub.

The currency unit here is the Singapore dollar (cents are the sub-unit), with bills coming in denominations of $2, 5, 10, 50 and 100. Though it fluctuates greatly, the exchange rate typically ranges from $1.3-1.5 SGD:$1 USD.

Transportation

Singapore boasts one of the world's most efficient public transportation networks, comprised of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) train network that laces through the island, and is incredibly easy to use; a vast bus system, and plentiful and inexpensive taxis.

Reusable "Transit Link" fare cards can be purchased for $5 SGD, and used on MRT trains and busses. To ride the trains or bus, just tap your card on the turnstile reader and the fare is automatically deducted. MRT train rides typically cost $1.50-2.80 SGD each way, while bus fares start at $.80 SGD. A taxi ride from the airport to Sembawang, which takes approx. 40 minutes, runs around $35 SGD, depending on traffic.

Food in Singapore Culture

Eating is a favorite pastime in Singapore! Given its diverse cultural background, Singapore offers a wide variety of Asian, European and fusion restaurants, to fit all budgets. "Hawker Stalls" are common at either the top floor or basement of most every mall, and in open-air markets, where full meals can be had for as little as $2 SGD. Alternately, some of Asia's finest dining can be found downtown.

Meal times are similar to those in the United States-lunch is typically between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., with dinner typically from 6 to 8 p.m.

Sanitary standards in Singapore are world-class. Singapore's National Environment Agency conducts periodic inspections of all eateries, and grades (A, B or C) must be clearly posted by law.

U.S. Military in Singapore

History

While there is no U.S. base in Singapore, the U.S. Navy has had a presence in Singapore since 1968. Then, the U.S. Navy Regional Contracting Center (NRCC) Singapore maintained a small office here to coordinate maintenance of U.S. Navy ships throughout Southeast Asia.

In 1990, the governments of Singapore and the U.S. signed a Memorandum of Understanding, allowing the U.S. Navy to utilize certain Singapore Ministry of Defence facilities. Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific (CLWP) moved to Singapore in July 1992, following the closure of the U.S. Navy base in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines.

Through most of the '90s, the Navy maintained a presence of approximately 150 uniformed and civilian personnel in Singapore. The U.S. Air Force, which has a small number of personnel working from Paya Lebar Air Base, provided support services to U.S. military personnel and aircraft transiting through Singapore.

In 2007, Navy Region Center Singapore was officially established, and the Navy assumed all administrative and facility support functions from the Air Force, including housing, family support services, force protection, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, among others.

Today, the Singapore-based U.S. military community includes more than 800 active duty, civilian personnel and family members, distributed among 15 commands.

Singapore's water is flouridated and safe to drink from the tap island-wide.

Singapore Area Commands & Missions

Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific (COMLOG WESTPAC) is the U.S. 7th Fleet's principal logistics agent. COMLOG WESTPAC coordinates the resupply of food, ordnance, fuel and repair parts for U.S. Navy ships deployed to the 7th Fleet area of operations. To accomplish this, COMLOG WESTPAC has operational oversight of more than 40 Military Sealift Command ships on any given day. The command's area of responsibility spans 51 million square miles of the Pacific and Indian Oceans-stretching from the mid-Pacific to the east coast of Africa, and from the Kuril Islands in the north to the Antarctic in the south. COMLOG WESTPAC provides voyage repairs to U.S. Navy ships through contracted commercial repair facilities throughout Southeast Asia, and acts as 7th Fleet's agent for diving, salvage and towing.

In its capacity as the bilateral exercise coordinator for Southeast Asia, COMLOG WESTPAC conducts advance planning, organizes resources and directly supports the execution of training exercises with Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

Located inside the PSA (Port of Singapore Authority) Sembawang Terminal, COMLOG WESTPAC has approximately 90 military and civilians assigned and is the largest command in Singapore.

Navy Region Center Singapore (NRCS), in its capacity as Singapore Area Coordinator, is considered the "host command" for all military units in Singapore. NRCS is responsible for coordinating and managing shore support activities for Department of the Navy (DoN) and other Department of Defense (DoD) services in Singapore, and administers family housing, facilities, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs, as well as family support services.

Military Sealift Command Far East (SEALOGFE) operates government-owned and contracted ships to provide direct fleet support, platforms for special projects and strategic sealift and transportation operations for the United States Pacific Command and its components.

The command plays a vital role in the eastern Pacific and Indian oceans by operating an average of 48 ships that replenish fuel and supplies to U.S. Navy forces at sea, move military cargo between ports and perform special operations such as responding to humanitarian crises. SEALOGFE also supports Department of Defense agencies and the Department of State, as requested.

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command Ship Support Unit Singapore (MSFSC SSU) provides engineering, logistics and information technology support to government-owned, government-operated ships in Southeast Asia. SSU Singapore routinely contracts with commercial shipyards in several Asian countries,

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including the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Korea and India to provide emergency or voyage repairs to Military Sealift Command ships.

Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS) maintains a field office in Singapore, and manages NCIS offices in five locations in the Southeast Asia region. Special agents, physical security specialists and field analysts maintain relationships with law enforcement and security services in foreign ports. Their work directly supports U.S. Navy port visits throughout the region.

U.S. Sailors here work and live side-by-side with those from the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.

Fleet Industrial Support Center, Detachment Singapore (FISC) manages husbanding agent services throughout Southeast Asia. FISC responsibilities include traditional supply functions such as household goods management, postal services, fuels management and material warehousing and transportation. Regional FISC detachments led by the FISC Det Singapore support these efforts.

U.S. Coast Guard Detachment Singapore conducts inspections of U.S.-flagged vessels repaired or operated in Asia, as well as inspections of foreign-flagged ships that conduct commerce with the United States. The detachment conducts investigations for maritime casualties involving U.S. vessels, and Coast Guard documented and licensed Merchant Mariners.

515th Air Mobility Group, Detachment 2; 497th Combat Training Squadron The U.S. Air Force presence in Singapore is located at Paya Lebar, a Republic of Singapore Air Force base. The Detachment coordinates and moves military personnel and cargo in and out of Singapore, and to other regional lcoations.

The 497th Combat Training Squadron coordinates bilateral air-to-air exercises between the U.S. and Singapore Air Forces. These exercises take place about four times each year.

Other Commands in Singapore include an Army Veterinary Services detachment, a small boat team unit, Defense Contract Management Agency, and Special Operations Command Pacific Logistics Support Facility.

Preparing for Transfer

Overseas Screening

Upon receiving orders, you should immediately begin the process of overseas screening for you and your family at your current command. This typically includes medical exams and an interview with a command representative per OPNAVINST 1300.14D. Your command's admin department will have details on the screening process, so contact them immediately. If you or your family needs to be enrolled in the EFM program, do so at your present command, as this is part of your overseas screening process.

You have 15 days from the receipt of your orders to complete your screening. Once your screening is completed, your command or Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) will need to make a report of your overseas

screening (either satisfactory or unsatisfactory) in BUPERS Online (BOL). If you have family members accompanying you, a dependent entry request message must be sent by your parent command to COMLOG WESTPAC, per instructions found at http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/DistributionManagement/Procedures/Dependent+Entry+Approval.htm. Once received, COMLOG WESTPAC admin will send a dependent entry approval message, which you will need before picking up your airline tickets and initiating your PCS move.

Passports/Visas

You WILL need a passport to come to Singapore! Please read the following information carefully, and apply for your required passport(s) at least 8 weeks before your desired PCS transfer date to allow time for processing (active duty persons may travel to Singapore with a valid military ID and orders, though passports are strongly recommended).

Active duty personnel PCSing to Singapore are required to have an official passport (brown cover) in their possession, and are strongly encouraged to have a tourist passport (blue cover) as well. Family members are required to have a "no-fee" passport upon arrival, and are strongly encouraged to have a tourist passport (both have blue covers). When you arrive at immigration at Singapore's Changi Airport, present one or both of your passports to the agent, and they'll stamp it with a visitor's permit valid for 90 days.

No-fee passports are required for all family members, and military members should have an offical passport.

When you check in to your command, all passports for you and your family will be collected; Customer Service Detachment (CSD) takes them to the Immigration and Checkpoint Authority, where each is given a special Foreign Identification Number stamp (FIN). The FIN serves as proof that you're legally in Singapore, and is valid through your projected rotation date (PRD) as stipulated on your orders. Presenting your passport with FIN stamp is mandatory to start many services in Singapore, such as cable/internet service, getting a library card, or opening a bank account. Also, with your FIN in your passport, you no longer need to complete immigration cards when traveling into/out of Singapore. You pass through the Residents line instead of the Visitor line and merely present your passport to the immigration officer, who makes a computer notation, and you're on your way.

Visas are not required for U.S. citizens to enter Singapore, but they are required to visit nearby countries (Indonesia and the Philippines, for example). Before visiting any country, always check that country's embassy Web site for any visa requirements.

Power of Attorney

A power of attorney may be useful or necessary, especially if the service member will be absent from home for extended periods of time. A power of attorney may be tailored and limited to fit your particular needs, enabling the holder (usually a spouse or trusted friend) to act on behalf of the member.

General powers of attorney are strong documents which enable another person to act on your behalf in all matters, and should only be used in limited circumstances. A judge advocate can provide advice on whether to get a general or special power of attorney. If you need a power of attorney before transferring, contact the nearest Legal Assistance Office.

Medical Requirements

As noted earlier, you and your family members are required to undergo overseas medical and dental screenings immediately upon receipt of orders to an overseas location. Detailed guidance is found in NAVMED 1300.1. The screening must be completed in the timeline and process as noted in the "Overseas Screening" section above.

Singapore's Sembawang military community has a limited medical staff. There is no military hospital, but the Medical Aid Station care team is comprised of a contract physician assisted by an independent duty corpsman. A Navy dentist is also resident on staff. Cases that cannot be handled by the medical team are sent to physicians or hospitals in the civilian community, where the standard of care meets or exceeds that available in the U.S. under the military TRICARE system.

For family members with chronic health problems or who require long-term or specialized treatment, please ensure these are addressed during your overseas screening. If the physician completing your screening has any questions, please have them contact the Sembawang Medical Aid Station staff at commercial (+65) 9672-2643 regarding the availability of certain treatments. Failure to divulge this information could adversely impact your health and the well-being of your family members if the required care is not available in Singapore. Additionally, such failure may result in the early return of your family members at your expense, and may subject you to charges under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Preparing Financially

Relocating costs money, much of it up front. Though you will be reimbursed for many of these expenses, plan on spending between $1,000 to $3,000 for the move. This may require your starting a savings account early. Some anticipated costs may include:

-Traveling expenses such as meals, drinks, taxi fares, rental cars, hotels, etc.

-Pet quarantine expenses & veterinary fees

-Expenses for dining out while waiting for temporary or permanent housing. Although you will be able to file for TLA, you will need to pay up front for lodging until you are assigned military housing.

-Money for the purchase of a car

-Auto insurance (most companies in Singapore require a year's premium up front, which can be $600-1,500 SGD, depending on your policy and particulars)

-Car registration fees

-Deposits for telephone, cable and internet services (may be waived in certain cases)

Post Office Box

In Singapore, you'll receive your mail at a post office box at our military postal facility. With a copy of your orders, your sponsor can obtain a PO box for you 90 days before your transfer. This is encouraged, as it allows you time to make change of address notifications for your bank, utility companies, investment managers, mail-order companies and magazine subscriptions before you leave. Additionally, if you exceed your baggage limits for your airline flight, you can mail excess items ahead to yourself.

The command's official mailbox is only to be used for official mail and not for personal mail.

Sembawang is served by a full-service U.S. Post Office.

Household Goods Shipments

Contact your detaching command's personal property office (PPO) early for a full explanation of your entitlements, and to make appointments for household goods pickup (see more on this topic under *Personal Property*, page 12).

Temporary Lodging

Singapore's Temporary Lodging Facility (TLF) is the Gateway Inn, which is operated by NRCS and is located within the Sembawang housing area. These units are 2 and 3 bedroom, fully-furnished, apartment-style flats. Each flat has a multisystem color television, full kitchen facilities including microwaves, pots, pans and table settings for six. Irons (220 volts) and ironing boards are available in each apartment, as are washers and dryers. If you have children, it is recommended that you mail or MPS a package with favorite toys, games, etc., to your sponsor a few weeks before departing for Singapore.

No pets are allowed in temporary living quarters; given Singapore's mandatory quarantine, this is usually not a problem because your pet will be in quarantine for 30 days and you likely will have settled in your housing unit before your pet is released from quarantine. You can make temporary lodging reservations at the Gateway Inn by calling 1-877-628-9233, commercial (+65) 6752-8245 or online at www.dodlodging.net.

Preparing for the Flight

Regardless of your carrier and routing, the flight to Singapore is long--more than 28 hours if traveling from the East Coast! Making connections, clearing customs, tracking luggage--all become arduous when crunched into a couple of days, especially with the time zone changes. Get ready and rest up!

Good preparation makes the trip easier. Ensure luggage has identification tags (but avoid using military rank). If traveling with infants or young children, bring extra diapers and toys to keep them occupied, plus a change of clothes for any 'accidents.' To avoid jet lag, drink lots of water during the flight and avoid alcohol. Bring a sweater and wear pants with socks and close-toed shoes, as the planes often get very cold during the long trip.

If coming from CONUS, your plane will cross the Pacific and stop in either Tokyo or Hong Kong for refueling before continuing to Singapore. Most flights from the United States arrive late at night at Singapore's Changi Airport, usually around midnight. Your sponsor should meet you at the airport; if he/she does not, contact the COMLOG WESTPAC Battle Watch Officer at (+65) 6750-2594 for assistance.

Personal Property

Shipping Household Goods

Generally, people transferring to Singapore are eligible for three personal property shipments: an express shipment of non-furniture items (may include clothing, bicycles and small appliances); a main household goods shipment; and a shipment of bulky items to go to non-temporary storage in the U.S. (washers, dryers, excess furniture, etc.).

Household goods shipments typically take 45-60 days to arrive from CONUS; shipments from Europe can take up to a month longer. Again, it's imperative to work with your personal property office (PPO) as early in the PCS process as possible.

For additional info on what to include in your household goods shipment, see *What Should I Bring to Singapore?* on page 12.

Express Shipment

You are entitled to one express shipment (sometimes called unaccompanied baggage). This shipment travels by air freight and typically takes 14-21 days to arrive in Singapore, depending on the point of origin. This shipment is limited to 1,000 pounds, excluding professional material, and may not include furniture.

Current Navy Region Center Singapore policy requires that all uniformed personnel reside in government-leased housing. Assignment to your permanent, government-leased quarters typically takes less than one month. If assigned to government quarters before your household goods arrive, loaner furniture and hospitality kits, containing dishes, cookware and utensils, are available for you to use for up to 90 days while awaiting your household goods.

With this in mind, items you may want to include in your express shipment are: bed linens, towels, a small TV (220V or multi-voltage desired), a 60-90 day supply of prescription medications, an extra pair of glasses/contacts, professional books, uniforms and equipment needed in the performance of official duties, a computer, alarm clocks, bicycles, toys, swimwear and pool toys, video games and board games, sidewalk chalk for younger kids, comfortable walking shoes, hand tools, an iron and ironing board, clothes hangers and any additional items that will make your family comfortable during the transition.

Vehicle Shipments Not Authorized

You will NOT be entitled to ship a privately owned vehicle (POV), motorcycle or moped to Singapore, due to the country's strict customs laws and restrictions on vehicle imports. This import restriction applies regardless of where your vehicle was purchased.

Temporary loaner furniture and hospitality kits are availble for short-term use if you arrive before your household goods shipment.

You may be entitled to have your vehicle stored at government expense (in a government-contracted storage facility, or at a facility of your choice/location) for the duration of your tour here. If overseas, your PPO can arrange to ship your vehicle to CONUS at government expense, where it can then be stored. Contact your PPO for details. (For more info on vehicles, see *Driving in Singapore*, page 17).

What Should I Bring to Singapore?

All electrical outlets in Singapore homes (to include those in the Sembawang housing area) are 220-230 volt, 50 cycle, with three-prong outlets. If your appliances, TV, computer and other items aren't dual-voltage, they must be plugged into a transformer, which the housing office will provide. To determine if your item is dual-voltage, check the cord: it will usually indicate if the item is 110V only, or if it can safely operate within a voltage range, usually 110-240V.

Your U.S. television will work with the free cable TV system in the Sembawang housing area, or with the StarHub cable TV box (should you opt for this pay service).

Particular Items to Bring

You can find most any grocery, home and clothing items you want in Singapore-though sometimes at a much higher price. You might want to consider bringing certain consumable items with you if you're unsure of their availability here. For example, if your child will only eat a certain brand of canned soup, you can include a supply of these in your household goods.

Other items you might want to consider bringing include: vitamins, personal hygiene products, baby food and baby products, spices, particular ethnic products, an oven thermometer, uniforms (the NEX only stocks a few uniform items), limited winter clothing for traveling, panty hose (larger than size 8), women's clothes (sizes stop at size 6-8), men's clothes (if you're larger than a 34 waist/32 inseam, or a 42 chest), shoes (ladies' sizes stop at 8 and men's at 11 and neither have wide widths), Tupperware (or similar) containers, shelving, bookcases (keep in mind the floor plan you are assigned), storage units, tools, a gas grill (grills are expensive here-gas tanks are easy to get, and adaptors to match your U.S. grill are available), outdoor furniture, area rugs, a Christmas tree and decorations including lights, heartworm pills for pets, multiple shower curtains and liners (it takes two for one shower as they are not a U.S. design), vacuum cleaner belts, children's games and toys, lawn and garden tools, bike parts, extra children's clothes, cosmetics, hair products, sewing and crafts supplies, and any other canned or dry food items (cake mixes, etc). If in doubt of a product's availability in Singapore, ask your sponsor.

Before plugging an item in, ensure it is 220-230 volt capable.

What Should I NOT Bring to Singapore?

Because of storage limitations, you're strongly discouraged from shipping major appliances (washers, dryers, chest freezers, dishwashers, refrigerators and stoves) to Singapore. The housing office will provide these. If authorized to live off base, many homes have appliances included as part of the lease.

Several items are prohibited from importation into Singapore, and should not be included in your household goods. If discovered, you could face stiff fines ranging into thousands of dollars, or even jail time. These include:

-Alcoholic beverages. Though alcohol is legal in Singapore, it must be purchased in-country from authorized retailers (the Navy Exchange at Sembawang carries a wide selection of beer, wine and spirits).

-Controlled drugs and psychotropics (LSD, heroin, cocaine, ecstacy, mescaline, marijuana, etc). The penalty for importation is death.

-Pornography. Singapore has strict censorship laws regarding pornography in video, print and software formats. Many movies that merit an R or NC-17 rating due to sexual content might be considered obscene under Singapore law, so if in doubt, leave them behind.

-Chewing gum. Though legal in Singapore, gum is a controlled item. It must be purchased from a pharmacy (no prescription required), and buyers must sign a ledger and provide their FIN number.

-Tobacco products. These are legal, but must be bought here

-Plants, their seeds, or soil (to include bagged potting soil)

-Products made from endangered species

-Fireworks, explosives, and ammunition

-Firearms, bows-and-arrows, BB guns and paintball guns (basically, anything that fires a projectile - excluding Nerf-style toys - could fit this category. If in doubt, ask your sponsor).

-"Pirated" DVDs, CDs, and copyrighted items

-Cigarette lighters in the shape of revolvers or handguns

-Radio equipment, such as HAM radios, CBs or walkie-talkies (special permits are required)

-Seditious or treasonable materials.

Pets

Before You Bring Pets

Singapore requires you to coordinate shipment to a booked quarantine space for your pet(s). Bringing pets into Singapore is expensive (often $1,000 USD or more) and time-consuming, but it can be done. You can either do the work yourself, or hire a pet agent to complete the import arrangements (for a fee, of course). Check with the agent to make sure the services he/she offers match your needs. If you use such a service, usually you will need a pet agent from your country of origin, plus another pet agent from Singapore. If you hire a pet agent from Singapore, they can act as a liaison between you and the Quarantine Station (again, for a fee) and the AVA (Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore). They can assist with processing necessary forms, scheduling fee payments, booking a quarantine space, arranging for ad-

ditional transportation, and delivery of your pet upon completion of a 30-day quarantine period.

Shop around online for pet agency services. Two examples are Pet Movers www.petmovers.com.sg and The Pet Hotel, www.pethotel.com.sg/export.htm. There are more out there, so check around. No private pet agents are endorsed by the U.S. government.

If you're contemplating bringing a pet, read the following pages carefully and then visit the AVA Web site at www.ava.gov.sg for the latest requirements, fees, and required forms.

Types of Pets Allowed

While you may bring pets to Singapore, there are several things to consider regarding types and sizes of pets. According to Singapore law, only dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, mice, chinchillas, red-eared sliders (a type of terrapin), and many types of ornamental birds and fish may be kept as pets. It's illegal to keep reptiles such as snakes and lizards, exotic animals (tigers, lynx), monkeys, spiders, insects or any endangered species as pets.

Additionally, certain breeds of dogs are considered dangerous, and their import into Singapore is prohibited. These breeds, called "Category A" dogs, include:

-Pit Bull Terriers (including the American Pit Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, American Bulldog and Staffordshire Bull Terrier)

-Akita

-Tosa (also called Tosa Inu)

-Neapolitan Mastiff

-Any cross of any Pit Bull, Akita, Neapolitan Mastiff or Toas

Certain other breeds are known as "Category B" dogs. These animals can be imported into Singapore, but must be leashed and muzzled at all times when in public. These breeds include:

-Bull Mastiff

-Bull Terrier

-Doberman Pinscher

-German Shepherd or related breeds

-Rottweiler

-Perro de Prensa Canario

In Sembawang's government-leased housing, pets are limited to dogs, cats, caged birds and fish, provided the total number doesn't exceed two animals. Animals kept in housing must be registered; simply complete a form in the housing office before bringing your animal home. For those residing on the economy, many landlords will impose similar limits on pets.

Importing Pets into Singapore

Singapore is a rabies-free country, and the law requires most animals coming into the country to undergo a rabies quarantine period, ranging from 10 to 30 or more days, depending on country of origin and types of rabies tests performed.

The requirements are exacting, and the process can be expensive. Below is a list of requirements one must satisfy to import a dog or cat into Singapore (prices are current as of Fall 2009).

Preparation prior to arrival:

(1) The first thing you need to do is confirm that you have a quarantine space for your pet. Then make a pet reservation for your animal on the airline that's bringing you to Singapore. Pets are often accepted on a first-come basis, and slots are limited. For small breed animals, airlines have a two-per-flight limitation for carry-on (inside cabin) pets. This can cost you as little as $125 USD for cabin space. Costs for pets brought on as excess baggage or cargo can be significant (often $200-$500 USD) depending on the airline, size of your animal, and distance traveled. Some airlines place restrictions on shipping animals based on temperatures at origin, destination or any stops in between; others require specialized crates depending on animal type. Check with your airline for details. If carrying pets inside the cabin, ask to be routed via Japan versus Hong Kong, as pets are prohibited during layovers in Hong Kong.

(2) Ensure your animal has a current rabies vaccination that will be valid when it arrives in Singapore. This vaccination must be given at least one month before arrival. Keep the label from the vaccine bottle. Your animal must also have a microchip; ensure you note where it's implanted, and keep its registration number handy.

(3) At least 30 days after vaccination, your veterinarian must complete a Rabies Antibody Titre Test. Ensure you get a copy of the results. If your vet clinic's lab facilities cannot perform this test, Kansas State University's lab does. Learn more at http://www.vet.ksu.edu/depts/dmp/service/rabies/index.htm.

(4) At least 90 days before arrival, reserve a space for your pet at the Sembawang Animal Quarantine Station (about 10 min. drive from the Sembawang housing area). For the necessary reservation forms, call the quarantine station at (+65) 6227-0670. About a month prior to your arrival, the quarantine station will supply you with a quarantine reservation code, which you'll need to apply for a pet import license. The cost of the 30-day quarantine in an air-conditioned room is $926 SGD (note: this is a reimbursable item with a maximum of $500 USD that should be submitted to CSD Singapore as a supplemental claim after the pet has been released from quarantine and a certificate of successful quarantine has been issued).

(5) The next step is the most complicated. Your animal must be examined by a licensed government veterinarian at your current location. Your animal will be classified as Category A, B, C or D depending on where you're originating from. All animals originating in Japan, Hawaii or Guam will be "Category B" animals; those originating anywhere else in the U.S. are "Category C" animals. On the AVA website, find the appropriate "Veterinary Conditions for Importation of Dogs/Cats" form for your country, and print it out. This form has detailed instructions for your veterinarian, who must complete and stamp it.

(6) Exactly 30 days prior to arrival, you'll want to apply for an import license from the AVA. You can complete this form online at www.ava.gov.sg (under "Animals and Plants Section"). You'll need to have your quarantine reservation code to complete this step. Be sure to include copies of the Rabies Antibody Titre Test, vaccination certificate, label from vaccine bottle, microchip ID code, and contact info for the veterinarian administering the vaccine. The cost for this license is $50 SGD.

(7) Five days before arrival, notify the Changi Airport Animal and Plant Quarantine Station of your flight details. Call them at commercial (+65) 6545-7522.

Steps upon your arrival

If using a Singaporean pet agent, he/she will meet you at the airport. Items (1), (2), (3), (5), and (6) should be covered in your contract agreement with the agent.

(1) Upon arrival, your pet(s) will be examined by a Singapore AVA veterinarian at Changi Airport. If your flight arrives during office hours, this cost is approx. $80 SGD; if after hours, the cost can be as high as $200 SGD.

(2) If cleared by the veterinarian to enter Singapore, your animal(s) is transported by government truck to the Sembawang Animal Quarantine Station. The cost of this trip is $74 SGD.

(3) Your animal(s) will receive another rabies shot soon after arrival in Singapore. The cost of this vaccination is $65 SGD.

(4) Your animal(s) will likely spend 30 days at the Sembawang quarantine station; you may visit during designated visiting hours (Mon-Sat, 4-5:30 p.m.).

(5) Upon completing quarantine, you must obtain a Singapore Animal License for your pet(s). The cost is $14 for sterilized animals, and $70 for intact animals.

(6) With license in hand, you're free to bring your pet home!

Rules are subject to change at any time. Please check the AVA Web site at www.ava.gov.sg for the latest requirements. For further assistance, call the AVA at commercial (+65) 6227-0670, or e-mail them at AVA_Import&Export_Animals@ava.gov.sg.

Driving in Singapore

A New Way of Driving

Driving in Singapore can be daunting to the newcomer, though it becomes easy with a little practice. Traffic in Singapore moves on the left side of the road, as it does in England; steering wheels are on the right hand side of the car. Traffic signs are similar to those found in Europe or Japan. Before arriving, it's advised you familiarize yourself with Singapore's traffic laws and road signs (a good site is http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Road_signs_in_Singapore)

Driver's Licenses

By agreement with the Singapore government, U.S. military personnel, family members and civilians can drive vehicles in Singapore with a valid U.S. driver's license upon completing a one-day driver's orientation course (free, conducted by the NRCS Public Safety Department at newcomers' orientation). Graduates receive a driver's card that expires concurrently with their stateside license; drivers must keep this in their possession at all times.

Those who desire to ride a motorcycle in Singapore must have completed a Navy-approved motorcycle safety course, have a valid stateside motorcycle license, and apply for a Singaporean Motorcycle License. A driver's card does not permit a person to operate a motorcycle legally in Singapore. Navy-approved motorcycle safety courses are not offered in Singapore; this requirement would need to be satisfied before leaving your current location and updated as required at your own expense.

For more information on driving requirements and the driver's orientation course, contact Public Safety at DSN (315) 421-2535, commercial (+65) 6750-2535.

Finding a Vehicle

As discussed in the Personal Property section, customs regulations prohibit the importation of privately owned, left-hand-drive vehicles into Singapore.

Normally, purchasing a vehicle in Singapore is very costly, due to the Certificate of Entitlement (COE) program. This plan, implemented by the government to reduce the number of cars on Singapore's roads, requires one to obtain a COE before purchasing a vehicle. Costs of COEs vary, from a few thousand SGD, to more than $30,000 SGD. And that's just to get permission to buy a car!

Fortunately, U.S. military personnel and civilians are allowed to own one COE-exempt vehicle in Singapore. You can purchase a vehicle used from a departing service member or U.S. Embassy employee, or you can purchase one new. Vehicle purchase costs vary based on ve-

In Singapore, space is at a premium and street parking is rare. Paid parking garages under shopping malls are commonplace. Because of the tight spaces, most people find smaller vehicles easier to own.

hicle condition/age/type, ranging from $1,000 USD for a decade-old sedan to $40,000 USD and up for a new SUV. Your sponsor can provide more information on vehicle options.

Auto Insurance

You must obtain liability insurance to operate a vehicle in Singapore. Most stateside carriers (including USAA) do not write auto policies for Singapore, so you must obtain insurance from a local carrier. Your sponsor can help you with this. Most insurance companies in Singapore require a year's premium up front, which can be $600-1,500 SGD, depending on policy particulars.

Many U.S. insurance carriers (including USAA) will keep your stateside policy in force for as little as $5 USD a year. This covers you when you drive in the States on leave or TAD, and maintains policy continuity for future discounts when you return to the States. Contact your insurance carrier to see if this service is offered.

Auto Registration and Taxes

Registering a vehicle in Singapore can be a time-consuming and complex affair requiring multiple trips to different government agencies. Many people find it convenient to hire a local vendor to do this for them. Should you choose to do it yourself, the legal services office in Bldg. 7-4 will provide you with step-by-step detailed instructions.

Vehicles in Singapore are required to undergo an annual inspection, and road taxes are due every six months (approx. $800-1,200 SGD depending on vehicle size/age) but are reimbursable by the government. Again, you can do this yourself, or use a local vendor to accomplish this. Talk with your sponsor for details.

A Sembawang three-bedroom bungalow

Housing

Navy Region Center Singapore currently has a mandatory government-assigned housing policy for all uniformed personnel. Upon arrival in Singapore, all personnel (officer and enlisted) are assigned to government-leased housing, based on rank and family size.

Should adequate government-leased housing not be available, you will be authorized to find a home in the community. The housing office provides those authorized to reside off-base with a referral list for off-base rentals and agencies. For more information, contact housing at DSN 315-241-2718.

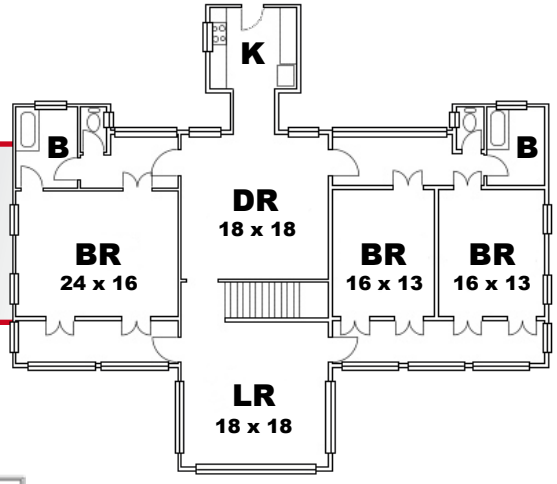
Family and Unaccompanied Housing

The housing office manages 113 family housing units and 52 unaccompanied personnel units within the Sembawang housing area. All housing is leased from the Singapore Ministry of Defence (MINDEF). These residences, all built between 1920 and 1950, are of four varieties: British Colonial Bungalows (3 bedroom), Brick Bungalows (2 bedroom), British Colonial Duplexes (2 or 3 bedroom), and three-story flats (3 bedroom for accompanied, 2 bedroom for unaccompanied personnel).

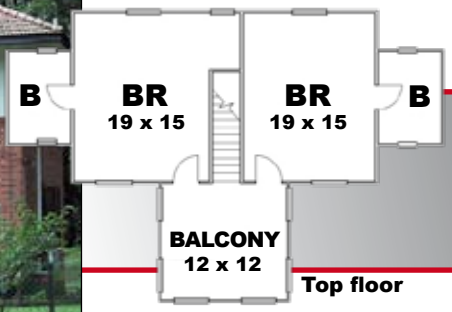
Sembawang Housing

3BR Bungalow

(see previous page for photo)

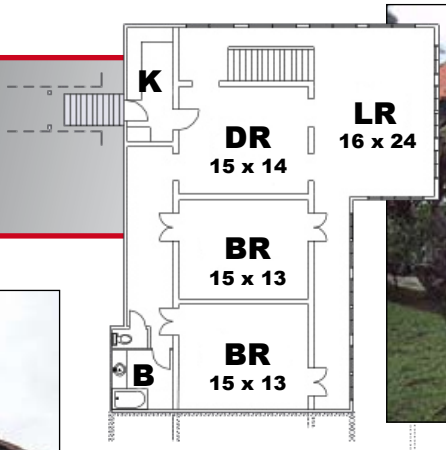


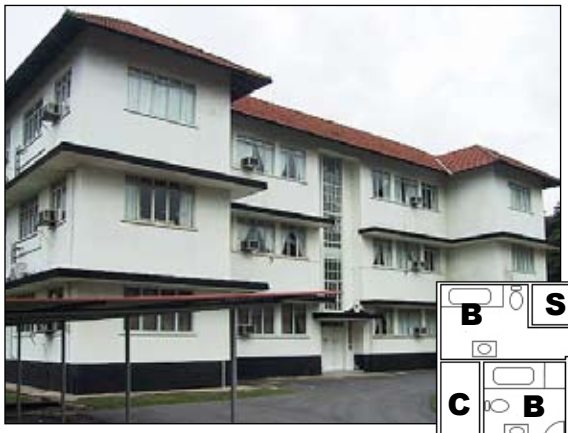
2BR Bungalow



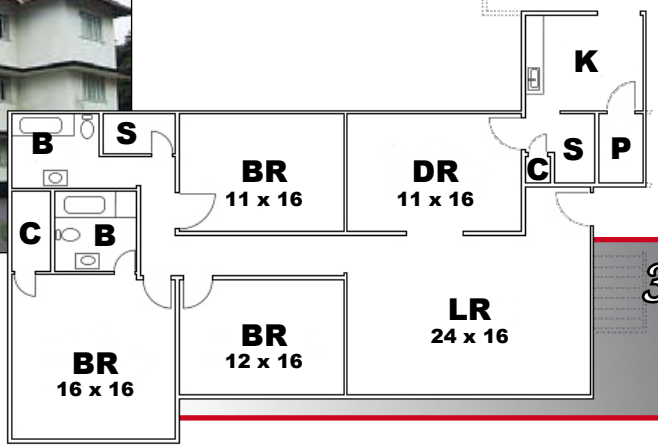
Top floor

2BR Duplex





3BR/2BR Flat



欢迎新加坡

PAYGRADE	3BR BUNGALOW	2BR BUNGALOW	2BR DUPLEX	3BR FLAT
O6/GS 15 YC-YA 03	X			
O5/GS 13-14/YC-YA 03	X			
O4/GS 12/YC-YA 03	X	X	X	X
O3E/GS 9-11/YC-YA 02	X	X	X	X
O3/GS 9-11/YC-YA 02		X	X	X
O2/GS 8-9/YC-YA 02		X	X	X
O1/GS 8-9/YC-YA 02		X	X	X
W4-W5	X	X	X	X
W1-W3		X	X	X
E9	X	X	X	X
E7-E8		X	X	X
E1-E6		X	X	X

All military community houses are equipped with washers, dryers, refrigerators, gas stoves/ovens, air conditioners, in-ceiling lighting and cable TV outlets. Bungalows and duplexes also have fenced yards. The electrical system in Singapore, including military-leased houses, is 220 volts/50 cycle, so many electronic items purchased in the States require transformers to function. The housing office provides some transformers to occupants based on housing type.

Housing units have cable TV boxes carrying six Armed Forces Network (AFN) channels free of charge. Telephone and internet service, as well as commercial cable TV, are available through commercial providers StarHub and SingTel, among others.

Most housing types do not have closets (using wardrobes instead), and storage space is quite limited. There are no government facilities in Sembawang for storing excess furnishings, and the facilities on the economy can be expensive. It's best to leave bulky or rarely used items in the States, in a long-term storage facility as arranged by your current personal property office.

Housing Eligibility

Once you have orders to Singapore in hand, ask your sponsor to provide housing with your est. arrival date and family composition, so they can begin preparing a unit for you. You will submit an application for housing upon your arrival. The effective date on any waiting list is determined by the date of detachment from the last permanent duty station. Applications, available at the housing office, must be accompanied by a copy of PCS orders, a detaching endorsement and a copy of the Record of Emergency Data (Page 2) to verify family members.

Housing assignments are made according to the above eligibility matrix. Availability, family size and configuration are primary considerations regarding whether a 2 or 3 bedroom unit is assigned.

Getting Settled in Singapore

When you arrive in Singapore, your sponsor will meet you and your family at Changi Airport and bring you to the temporary lodging facility, the Gateway Inn. In the event something should occur and your sponsor cannot meet you, go to the taxi line (or queue) and tell the taxi driver to take you to 213 Lagos Circle in Sembawang. The taxi fare from the airport to Sembawang is approximately $35 SGD (about $25 USD). You may want to get Singapore Dollars from a money changer or ATM before leaving the airport. There is no ATM near the lodging facility.

Tell the taxi driver to take the SLE to the Yishun exit. Continue straight until you reach Sembawang Road; turn right on Sembawang. Turn left onto Admiralty Road East. Turn left on Canada road (2nd left), then turn left onto Lagos Circle. Navy Gateway Inns and Suites will be on the right side of the road at 213 Lagos Circle.

You may wish to ask the taxi to wait, as your room may be quite far from check in.

The phone number to the Gateway Inn is commercial (+65) 6752-8245.

You may be jet-lagged for a few days, but some find the best way to acclimate is to jump in and begin exploring their new neighborhood.

Singapore's Changi International Airport consistently ranks as one of the world's best airports in annual surveys.

Here are a few things you'll want to know during your first days here.

Sembawang Community Shuttle

Navy Region Center Singapore (NRCS) operates a shuttle bus which runs every 30 minutes from 6:30 am to 6:30 p.m., Monday-Friday through the housing area. The shuttle begins and ends each run at Bldg. 7-4 in the Sembawang Port area, making it convenient for those carrying groceries or packages. Look for the van with a "Community Shuttle" placard on the dash, and be prepared to show your ID card on demand.

Newcomers' Orientation

The NRCS family services office (FSO) routinely schedules a day-long newcomers' orientation. During the orientation, Sembawang families (children are welcome) get an overview of all the services available to them. In the afternoon, those with valid stateside licenses get a drivers' orientation course, take a written driving exam, and leave with their Singapore Driver's Card. For details, call the FSO at DSN 315-421-2314, commercial (+65) 6750-2314.

Customer Service Detachment

All administrative needs for personnel are handled by the CSD, in Bldg. 7-4. Similar in function to a PSD, the CSD can issue active duty and family member ID cards, process TLA claims, make service record entries, and address military pay issues. A small scheduled airlines travel office (SATO) operates at the CSD.

The CSD is among the first stops you'll make, as you'll want to drop off all of your family's passports to get them stamped with Foreign Identification Numbers (FINs). You'll submit receipts and complete a TLA claim every 10th day you're in temporary lodging. For questions about CSD services, call DSN 315-421-2671, commercial (+65) 6750-2671.

Taxis

(Mass public transportation is covered on page 5) If you need a taxi, you can request door-step service by calling City Cab (6552-2222) or Comfort Transport (6552-1111). There is a small surcharge for booking a cab by phone.

When hailing a cab from the street, if there is a red sign ("on-call" or a neighborhood indicating where he lives) in the window, the taxi driver can refuse to take you to your destination. Without this sign, he is obligated to take you, and if he refuses, make a show of noting his taxi number. If that doesn't change his mind, taxi companies are happy to take reports of unhelpful cabbies.

All taxis in Singapore are metered, and most cabs can also accept credit cards. Though rare, if a cab driver tries to take you without using the meter, insist that it be used or you'll report the incident, or if you prefer, take another cab.

Civilian Clothing and Uniforms

Americans are advised to wear off-base attire that blends with local society. Though some Singaporeans do dress in shorts and flip-flops, long pants and buttoned shirts are common. Dress, in general, is a bit more formal than in the States.

Military personnel may wear uniforms off base when transiting to/from home and work, or when visiting other locations on official business (the Embassy or Changi Naval Base, for example). Uniforms are not considered appropriate liberty attire in Singapore. Due to the tropical climate, summer uniforms are prescribed year round.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are widely accepted in Singapore, but some grocery stores and smaller shops will only accept cards issued by local banks, if at all. It's a good idea when going out that you carry an ATM card or cash for any purchases that cannot be made with a credit card.

ATMs are plentiful in Singapore, and most all are members of the Plus, Cirrus, or other global networks. ATM fees can be steep, up to $5 SGD per withdrawal, so consider using them sparingly.

You and the Law

All U.S. military personnel, civilians and their family members are subject to Singaporean law and generally come under Singaporean jurisdiction for most criminal offenses. There is no immunity from prosecution granted under the Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. and Singapore.

As guests, we are obliged to comply with and refrain from activities inconsistent with Singaporean law. Further, we must refrain from involvement in Singaporean politics or internal matters.

As has been mentioned, Singapore has very stiff penalties of high fines or jail time for offenses considered minor in the States. Jaywalkers can receive on-the-spot fines of up to $500 SGD; littering or spitting chewing gum on the ground can incur a fine of $1,000 SGD. Vandalism of property can earn one a fine of $5,000 SGD, caning, jail time, or a combination of the three. Trafficking or selling drugs carries a mandatory penalty of death.

Officials of both governments cooperate in investigating and prosecuting criminal offenses. Singaporean police have the power to arrest you. If you are apprehended by local law enforcement, follow this guidance:

-Comply with police orders; do not resist arrest.

-Go willingly with Singaporean police authorities.

-Politely request the presence of a U.S. Embassy or command representative and/or a U.S. government-provided attorney prior to making any statements.

Should you find yourself in any kind of involvement with civilian law enforcement (even tickets), it is imperative you notify your chain of command immediately.

Domestic Workers

"Should My Family Hire an Amah?"

Many families in Singapore retain the services of a live-in maid (amah), finding the convenience of full-time help well worth the cost. Though individual contracts vary, amahs often handle a variety of household duties including all cleaning, cooking, child care and light yard work such as raking. Some amahs do additional duties, such as grocery shopping, pet walking and cleaning the family car. Family housing in Sembawang has amah's quarters in a detached building behind the home, complete with full bath, which makes the arrangement convenient.

Amahs can be found one of three ways: you can retain an amah from a family that's departing; you can work through a local agency to find an amah already in Singapore; or you can use an agency to bring an amah to Singapore from another country.

In any case, there are certain expenses you will incur, based on your amah's experience level, duties or source:

-Amah's salary. These typically range from $400-600 SGD per month, depending on the amah's scope of duties and experience level.

-Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) Levy. This monthly levy of $265 SGD is payable to the Singapore government, and is required to legally employ a foreign employee. This payment is deducted monthly from your local bank account, a must if you wish to employ an amah.

-Insurance. Employers must maintain $40,000 SGD personal accident insurance, a $5,000 SGD security guarantee bond, and $5,000 SGD medical insurance coverage per employee. Any local insurance agency can provide these, and costs typically run between $150-250 SGD per year. Amahs from certain countries (the Philippines, for example) are also required to post a bond with their native government, which the employer is expected to pay.

-There are additional costs to consider. Employers typically provide the amah's meals, which can certainly impact your monthly budget. Some agencies may pass along fees such as commissions/travel expenses, and passport processing costs.

If you're considering an amah, it's best to talk to a family that currently employs one. In addition, Singapore's Ministry of Manpower requires first-time FDW employers to attend a three-hour workshop to familiarize themselves with all the responsibilities and costs. For more information on amahs, visit the Ministry's website at www.mom.gov.sg, and click on "employer," then "hiring foreign domestic workers."

Sembawang bungalows and duplexes have Amah's quarters behind them, which can also be used for storage.

Force Protection and Crime

Living and working overseas carries its own force protection considerations beyond those in the States. You should always be mindful of the potential for terrorist attacks, and military members must always remain particularly vigilant.

Singapore is quite peaceful given its population density. Violent crime is very rare--Singapore reported just 17 murders in all of 2006 (Los Angeles, with a smaller population of 3.8 million, reported 480). Violent crimes such as assault, rape and robbery are equally rare. Petty theft incidents (pick-pocketing, purse snatching) are also rare, though it's still advised to exercise caution with your belongings when out and about. Remember: low crime does not mean no crime. As anywhere, always be alert to your surroundings, trust your instincts, and chances are you'll be fine.

The Singapore Police Force is ranked in the top five most reliable police services in the world.

Importing or merely possessing illegal drugs is punishable by death in Singapore and many other Southeast Asian countries. "Cheating," which includes shortchanging or borrowing without returning, is illegal and vigorously prosecuted. Unwanted touching of a woman can result in charges of "outraging the modesty of a female." Jaywalking, littering and minor traffic offenses all carry stiff fines, and vandalism of property can result in jail time or caning. Contrary to what you might have heard, chewing gum is legal in Singapore, but its sale is relegated to pharmacies where you must present ID and sign a ledger to purchase it.

Before visiting other Southeast Asian countries, you'll need a country-specific force protection brief. Travel to certain countries can be restricted periodically due to heightened threat conditions. The force protection office can help you with these areas.

As part of your overseas screening, you and your adult family members must complete a level one force protection brief. Newly arriving personnel also receive additional information about Singapore's laws during their newcomers' brief.

Educational Opportunities

Navy College Office

Singapore does not have a resident Navy college office. Educational services, such as tuition assistance, are provided through Navy College Office in Yokosuka, Japan, DSN 315-243-7749.

University of Maryland University College

A selection of undergraduate courses is offered throughout the year by UMUC, on a five-term calendar. Courses range from Chinese language classes to business and liberal arts selections. Class availability varies by term and is subject to instructor availability. For information on current offerings, contact the UMUC office at DSN 315-241-2306.

Elementary and High Schools

There is no Department of Defense Dependents School (DoDDS) in Singapore. Parents have the option of sending their school-age children to any number of world-class public or private schools in Singapore, with the DoD Educational Activity (DoDEA) paying all expenses for enrollment fees, tuition and busing. Uniforms are required at all Singapore schools, public or private, and it is the responsibility of the parents to provide them.

While you are free to send your children to any school, the majority of Navy families attend one of three schools: Singapore American School, International Community School, and Australian International School in Singapore. Details on each school are below. Talk to your sponsor and other families

in the community to determine which school best fits your child's needs.

Your sponsor can help you with the necessary enrollment paperwork. Regardless of the school you select, you'll have to re-enroll your child each year, and provide the schools officer (admin officer at COMLOG WESTPAC) a completed DoDEA form 610 for each child enrolled. The school is then paid directly by DoDEA. If you have any questions about this process, please contact the schools officer at DSN 315-421-2432, commercial (+65) 6750-2432.

Singapore American School (SAS)

Located on a sprawling 37-acre campus in northwest Singapore, 15 minutes from the Sembawang housing area, SAS is an independent, non-profit, co-educational day school offering an American-based curriculum for preschool through grade 12 expatriate students. More than 3,800 students representing 50 nationalities make up SAS's diverse student body.

SAS, which has both a reputation for rigorous academics and a full program of afterschool sports and clubs, enrolls the largest number of military children of any school in Singapore.

Learn more at http://www.sas.edu.sg.

International Community School (ICS)

ICS is the Christian school in Singapore, serving more than 400 students from pre-school through grade 12. ICS offers popular sports such as soccer and basketball, plus a variety of clubs and extracurricular activities. ICS is situated on the southwest part of the island. Learn more at http://www.ics.edu.sg.

Australian International School in Singapore (IASS)

Located downtown, IASS is an International Baccalaureate Organisation World School that offers the Primary Years Programme (PYP) in preschool, junior school and primary school. With an enrollment of nearly 2,300, IASS provides a challenging educational program for young people of all nationalities.

Learn more at http://www.ais.com.sg.

Stamford American International School (SAIS)

A new school that opened in 2009, SAIS provides an American curriculum for students 2 years and up. Learn more at http://www.sais.com.sg.

The majority of Navy children attend Singapore American School, located in the Woodlands neighborhood approximately 15 minutes from Sembawang. The school, located on a massive 37-acre campus, serves more than 3,800 students preschool-12th grade.

Most schools offer busing for students. Check with your school for details.

The Fleet Gym is one of two fitness centers; another is located in the Community Center in the housing area.

Services and Quality of Life Programs

Banking

Navy Federal Credit Union maintains a small member service center on the first floor of Bldg. 7-4. Services include check cashing (U.S. currency only), IRAs, CDs, loans, account transfers and VISA services. Membership is open to military and DoD personnel stationed in Singapore. Hours are 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Mon-Fri, excluding U.S. holidays. Contact NFCU at commercial (+65) 6750-2352.

Singapore Banking Facilities

If you employ an amah, you'll need to open an account at a local banking institution in Singapore. Check out the institutions for their specific services. There is a minimum balance required to keep an account open, and minimums vary from bank to bank. When opening a local account, you'll likely need at least $500 SGD and your passport with its FIN number. Most institutions will accept a U.S. check, but it will take 3-6 weeks to clear and there will be a fee for this service.

ATMs are available all over the island. The service charges vary by bank, and balances are listed in Singapore dollars not U.S. dollars.

Navy Cash Cage

The Navy operates a cash cage on the first floor of Bldg. 7-4, where you can cash Navy Federal drafts and checks from U.S. banks ($2,000 daily limit), and exchange U.S. dollars for Singapore dollars. The cash cage is open from 10 am-3:30 p.m. Mon-Fri, but closes from 12-12:30 p.m. for lunch.

SATO Travel

A small commercial travel office is located on the first floor of Bldg. 7-4, next to the personnel services customer service desk. This office can assist in booking official TAD travel, and Funded Environmental and Morale Leave (FEML). Accompanied military and DoD civilian personnel in Singapore and their families are authorized two FEML trips per tour; unaccompanied personnel are authorized one FEML trip. For details on FEML, contact your command's admin department. Contact SATO at commercial (+65) 6750-2622.

Navy Exchange

The Navy Exchange (NEX) system operates a small 7,000 square-foot store located in Bldg. 7-4. The store carries a wide range of line items, including dry, canned and frozen foods, milk/dairy products, household cleaning supplies, toiletries, household items (towels, brooms, etc.), and a limited selection of clothing.

You will be able to purchase the necessities from the NEX. If you use specialty items for your favorite recipes, or special hair care needs or make-up lines, these should be purchased and shipped with your household goods.

There is no Military Clothing Sales store in Singapore, though the NEX maintains a small selection of some uniform items (covers and belts, etc.). You can order items through the military clothing sales catalog or online.

The NEX is open from 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon-Sat, and 9:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. on Thurs. Contact the NEX at commercial (+65) 6750-2409.

The NEX will process special orders for goods from their stores in Japan; delivery can take up to six weeks. The NEX accepts Singapore or U.S. dollars, credit cards, and STAR cards.

Hair & Nail Care, Dry Cleaning

A unisex family salon run by two sisters, Kim and Shirley, provides hair care at reasonable prices (a military haircut runs $12 SGD), comparable to economical shops in the states. Additional hair care facilities can be found in Sembawang Shopping Center, Northpoint Shopping Center, Holland Village and in other areas. Prices are slightly higher than at beauty shops in the States.

Kim and Shirley also run a dry cleaning operation, offering competitive prices. Their shop is located in Bldg. 7-4.

Post Office

The Fleet Industrial Support Center runs a military post office adjacent to Bldg. 7-4 in the PSA Terminal. Manned by Navy Logistics Specialists, the post office offers all services found at stateside post offices, from Postal Money Orders to buying stamps and mailing packages. First class letters to/from CONUS typically take 6-8 days; packages can take a bit longer as they must clear a customs gateway. The post office accepts packages bound for offices/bases via the Military Postal System (MPS) free of charge as long as guidelines are followed; check with the post office for details.

Medical Aid Station

The Sembawang Medical Aid Station (MAS) consists of a Navy dentist and independent duty corpsmen, who along with a contracted Singaporean physician, provide primary medical and dental care to active-duty members and their families.

For patients with requirements beyond what the MAS can provide, referrals will be made to an appropriate clinic in town or one of two provider hospitals, either Gleneagles Hospital or Mount Elizabeth Hospital. The standards of medical care in Singapore are among the best in the world, and you should feel comfortable using facilities if you're given a referral.

Singapore is a TRICARE Global Remote Overseas (TGRO) location, and referral and billing services are provided by International SOS, a third party contractor. Families in Singapore will be enrolled in TGRO by the benefits coordinator at the MAS. All medical care is coordinated through the MAS, which is the primary care manager.

The MAS is open 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon-Fri, with same-day appointments often possible. Contact them at commercial (+65) 6257-4233.

Family Service Office

Navy Region Center Singapore's Family Service Office (FSO) offers several classes to make your transition to Singapore easier. Classes include newcomer's orientation, stress relief, relocation assistance and more.

In addition, the FSO provides assistance to spouses who desire to work while in Singapore. Though opportunities are very limited, don't let that discourage you-spouse employment is a topic that's addressed during newcomers' orientation. Call the FSO at DSN 315-421-2314, commercial (+65) 6750-2314.

Chapel

The Sembawang community offers a robust ministries program, offering services, counseling,

bible studies, Christian education and regular fellowship events. Operating from a small 120-person chapel, the chaplain's office conducts Protestant services each Sunday at 9:30 a.m., with a local priest holding Catholic Mass at 11:00 a.m. During religious holidays such as Easter and Christmas, additional services are added to the schedule.

The COMLOG WESTPAC chaplain's office can be reached at DSN 315-421-2317, commercial (+65) 6750-2317. After hours, the chaplain's duty number is (+65) 9825-5200.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)

Singapore's MWR programs and facilities are among the finest in the Navy. MWR offers a myriad of programs for the whole family. MWR facilities include:

-Youth Center: A leisure and recreation center for youths aged 5-18, the youth center offers a variety of hands-on and recreational activities and classes for kids of all ages. The center, located in the Sembawang housing area Community Recreation Center (CRC) building on Lagos Circle, is open from 3-8 p.m. Mon-Thurs, from 3-10 p.m. Fri-Sat, and 12-6 p.m. Sun. Contact the youth center at commercial (+65) 6752-8273.

-Fitness Centers: MWR operates two gyms. The CRC fitness center is air-conditioned, with a modern gym and aerobics room with the latest weight and cardio machines, including treadmills

and elliptical trainers. Hours are from 5 a.m.-9 p.m., seven days a week.

-The Fleet Gym offers both air-conditioned and covered freeweight areas, cardio machines (treadmills, bikes and elliptical machines), along with covered tennis, basketball and racquetball courts. Hours are 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Mon-Fri, 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Sat, and Sundays 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Extended hours are posted when ships are visiting.

-Terror Club: The Terror Club (named after the British Royal Navy discovery vessel HMS Terror) is Singapore's all-hands club, open to U.S., British, Australian and New Zealand Sailors, government civilian employees and their families. Situated in a tropical setting around a 30-meter pool, the Terror Club offers a full-service restaurant and bar, along with games and wi-fi internet, with menu prices far below what you'd pay in town. Open from 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Sun-Thurs, and 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Fri-Sat., the Terror Club can be reached at commercial (+65) 6759-3694.

-Sports Complex: Adjacent to the Terror Club is the sports complex, which includes lighted tennis and basketball courts, a multipurpose field for softball, football or soccer and a sand volleyball court. Fields and courts may be reserved at the Terror Club entrance desk.

-One Degree North: The One Degree North facility caters to visiting Sailors. Located next to the Fleet Gym, it hosts a free laundry facility, free internet cafe, TV lounge, recreation area and male and female locker rooms.

-Child Development Center: There is no child development center at Sembawang, nor are there any approved provider homes. Most families either rely on a stay-at-home spouse, employ a live-in amah for this purpose (see page 22), or use a commercial provider on the economy.

-First Street Cafe. Located on Pakistan Road, First Street Cafe seves a wide variety of Asian and American favorites. Open for lunch and dinner, First Stree also delivers. Call (+65) 6755-1476.

-Veterinary Services: There are no government vet services available for pets in Singapore. Commercial vets are used for all treatments.

Community Groups and Clubs

The **American Association of Singapore** (AAS) is a non-profit organization established to enhance the well-being and living experience of Americans residing in Singapore, and to promote relationships, both business and social, between Americans and those of other nationalities.

AAS has several popular events and programs. Each July, they sponsor the July 4th Freedom Festival in Sembawang, and their annual "Music in the Park" event, along with the annual George Washington Ball, are always popular. The Career Resource Center for Expatriates (CRCE) conducts interview and resume workshops and is a great way for working spouses, or spouses seeking employment, to network with Singapore's business community. Learn more at www.aasingapore.com.

The **Sembawang Spouses' Association** is an independent, non-profit group that gets together regularly to acquaint newcomers with Singapore, and to gather for group trips to take part in Singapore's most popular pastime: shopping!

Contact any member for details, or call the FSO at (+65) 6750-2314.

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