



Intermediate Staff Course 20/2020

The latest ISC 20/2020 news, views and highlights



In This Issue:

Week 01 - 04

LEADERSHIP

NON-OPERATIONAL STAFF DUTIES

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Features

Leadership Reflections

Tetramap ®

Research Paper Writing

Non-Operational Staff Duties

International Security Lectures

Highlights

Opening Ceremony of ISC 20/2020

Commanding Officer's Conference

Islamic Leadership Talk

ISC Teambuilding Activity

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Opening Ceremony of ISC 20/2020

TANAH JAMBU, Friday, 11 September 2020 – 49 officers from the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) and one officer from the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF) are currently attending the Intermediate Staff Course 20/2020 (ISC 20/2020). The course is currently held from 31 August 2020 until 04 December 2020 at the Leadership and Management Centre (LMC), Defence Academy, RBAF (DA RBAF).

ISC is an opportunity to enhance skills in staff duties and operational planning but also in personal development.

The 14-week course serves to prepare officers at Captain or equivalent rank for middle management level posts in the future and is a mandatory course to being promoted to the rank of Major/Lieutenant Commander. The course covers subjects ranging from leadership, staff duties, international relations, national government, and operational planning. By the end of the course, the officers are expected to be capable of being staff officers in their units as well as gain a better understanding of the security environment that forms the nature of their work.

Islamic Leadership

The course participants also had a lecture on Islamic Leadership by Dr Mikdar Rusdi from Seri Begawan Religious Teachers University College (Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan). He delivered his insights on the aspects and traits of leadership as derived from the Al-Quran and inspired by key historical figures from Islamic history. He also highlighted the importance of *amanah* and exercising fairness in leading subordinates with Allah as a perpetual guide and judge.



Leaders are bound by the Amanah that is bestowed on them, and they must be Adil in carrying this out

Opinion

RETENTION OF PERSONNEL is one of the contributing factors to RBAF's manpower issues. Retention is important to preserve morale and unit readiness. Personnel leave due to lack of vision, recognition and congenial work environment. What can be done? Proper talent management and creating a psychological safety net within the workplace. Likewise, establishing an effective human resource management ran by a centralised department dedicated for tackling these issues.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION IN BRUNEI is such that we are seeing an ageing population as life expectancy rate increases due to better healthcare and healthier lifestyle as well as a lower birth rate. What this means for us is that we need to be prepared for future challenges in managing our personnel and the policies we have in place in preparing our retirees for a good life beyond service.

MENTAL HEALTH is a national dilemma that is also felt in the RBAF. We have seen a rise in cases of depression as well as suicide attempts in recent years. Perhaps us as leaders must learn to be more empathetic to those facing these issues rather than stigmatising them. As a nation, we must learn to recognise the implications of not addressing mental health properly and promote ways for people to seek help.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT should be seen as a serious threat to our discipline in the RBAF. It destroys the cohesion of the unit and department as well as degrades the person being harassed. We need to ensure that the mechanisms in place to prevent and punish such behaviours are effective. Additionally, we need to remind everyone, from the leadership to the followers, that sexual harassment in any form is not tolerable.



Leadership Reflections

In the first two weeks, the officers were engaged in several activities built on the ideas of team building, self-reflection and leadership practice. Such activities include ice breaker sessions, analysis of personal timeline, Tetramap ® and Team Building Team Learning (TBTL) activities. In preparation for the coming weeks, the officers also visited the Ministry of Defence Library at Bolkliah Garrison to be introduced to the services offered by the library.

Managing people as leaders is all about understanding their behaviours



Commanding Officers' Conference

The officers also had the opportunity to engage with several Commanding Officers from across the RBAF during the Commanding Officers Leadership Forum. During the forum, Lieutenant Colonel Haji Rony Zai bin Haji Zaini, Commander Rasman bin Puteh, RBN and Lieutenant Colonel (U) Awg Muhammad Amiruddin bin Haji Tuah each presented their views on several aspects of leadership with particular attention given to the challenges of a generational divide and its impact on leadership practice today.



Every leader must have his or her own leadership philosophy in trying to reconcile traditional leadership wisdom with the new generation

Staff Duties Phase

During the Staff Duties phase, the cohort had lectures on Research Essay Writing Skills and Non-Operational Staff Duties to enhance their understanding on conventional writing methods which will be assessed through research essays and service papers. Both papers are aimed to test the course participants' abilities to conduct research and critically analyse ideas on their topics that are related to international relations or national policies. Apart from that, the lectures also included an overview of the non-operational staff duties for staff officers as it serves to equip the course participants with skills for their future middle management staff post.

ISC 2020 Teambuilding Activity 01: Bowling



The first ISC 2020 Teambuilding activity was organised by Syndicate 1 and was a bowling tournament at Grand Bowling Company. The activity sought to achieve greater team cohesion and foster competitive spirit in a fun setting. This week, Syndicate 3 brought home the winners prize.

International Security Phase



Achieving comprehensive security is built on understanding the threats surrounding us

During this week, the cohort learnt about the causes of ethnic conflicts and explored various case studies of ethnic conflicts during a lecture presented by the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS). A representative from the Royal Brunei Land Force presented his views on Peacekeeping operations and highlighted the importance of RBAF's active and participative role in supporting peacekeeping operations with international partners. The cyber-security lectures were presented by IT Protective Security Services (ITPSS) who explained the objectives of cyber-security and the way forward on capability developments. Moreover, the course participants also had the opportunity to have virtual conferencing sessions with Dr Andree-Anne Melancon from Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) who presented on the contemporary security environment, nature of security and terrorism with various reflection questions which sparked fruitful discussions amongst the cohort.