



**Extensive
HeartSine AED
News and Media Coverage
in Singapore**

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Mindef equips camps with more medical devices

It buys 1,900 defibrillators, on top of more than 1,000 already purchased

By HOE PEI SHAN

THE Ministry of Defence has purchased 1,900 more automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on top of "more than 1,000" it has already bought to equip its 30 military camps.

Mindef revealed the figures to The Straits Times yesterday after it launched a drive to install defibrillators at Singapore Armed Forces camps last June.

The new batch was bought earlier this month from Irish manufacturer HeartSine, which said in a statement: "Due to the increasing number of sudden cardiac arrest fatalities in army camps... Mindef sought to implement a comprehensive AED programme."

Between 2007 and 2012, there were two reported fatal heart attacks involving national servicemen. In the last six months, at least two other servicemen re-

portedly suffered cardiac arrests. One ended up in an intensive care unit and the other died a few days after.

All 30 military camps now have the defibrillators, which help to "jump-start" the heart by evaluating its rhythm and jolting it into action with an electric current.

They have been installed in areas where physical training is conducted such as gymnasiums, swimming pools and running tracks. They are also located in busy locations like dining halls.

Since 2010, all full-time servicemen have been trained in basic life support and certified to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation and to use AEDs.

"The decision to make AEDs widely available in our military facilities will improve the chances of survival for our servicemen and women in the event of sudden cardiac arrest," said Dr Ben-

jamin Leong, a senior consultant in the emergency medicine department at the National University Hospital. "Without life-saving interventions, every passing minute reduces the chance of this person surviving by 7 to 10 per cent."

Medics also carry the devices to all training activities with risk of drowning or heart trauma, including physical fitness tests, route marches and river-crossing exercises.

Neither HeartSine nor Mindef would reveal how much the deal cost, except to say it was a "multi-million dollar contract". The usual price for each unit of the 500P model purchased is \$2,990, according to the brand's official distributor here, HTM Medico.

Mindef said the introduction of defibrillators in SAF camps "will enable SAF personnel to have quick and early access to AEDs, and this will enhance the first responder's ability to administer basic life support... in line with national and international best practices".

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