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Fighter jets to soar over hospitals, heartland in tribute to front-line, essential workers



From left: Captain Adam Eng Jun Chao, a weapon systems officer (fighter); Lieutenant Shidan Swah Yepeng, a pilot; Captain Daniel Heng Jing Xing, National Day Parade airspace management coordinator; and Lieutenant-Colonel Tan Boon Hong, deputy chairman of air participation, in front of an F-15SG. Six jets will be performing the Roar Of Unity over the island. ST PHOTO: MARK CHEONG



F-15 fighter jet fly-past route for NDP 2020



Source: NDP2020 EXCO STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Goh Yan Han

To pay tribute to front-line and essential workers giving their all amid the Covid-19 pandemic, six F-15 fighter jets will be soaring over the heartland as part of this year's National Day Parade (NDP).

The fighter jets will be performing the Roar Of Unity, a 30-minute segment that will see the planes cover the island, so that the public will be able to see and hear them from their homes.

The well-loved aerial display will make its entrance at 10.45am this Sunday at the Padang, where the morning parade will take place.

Flying in a tight Delta formation, which is shaped like an arrowhead, they will fly past eight hospitals – Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Sengkang General Hospital, Changi General Hospital, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, National University Hospital, Alexandra Hospital and Singapore General Hospital. They will then make three passes around the heartland before returning to Paya Lebar Air Base at around 11.15am.

“The Roar Of Unity signifies the nation is remaining united as we celebrate National Day,” said Lieutenant-Colonel Tan Boon Hong, 46, who is deputy chairman of air participation and flying display marshal. “We want to give tribute to our front-line fighters and essential workers that keep us going during this period and we salute them for their resilience, dedication and sacrifice.”

At 170 nautical miles, this will be the longest route ever for a fighter jet segment during a National Day celebration, as the fly-past is usually localised to where the parade is, such as the Padang.

It is a special segment for Lieutenant Shidan Swah Yepeng, 26, who is taking part in his first NDP and is the youngest pilot in the formation.

He will be paying particular tribute to his parents, both 58 and stalwarts in the healthcare industry

for more than 30 years each.

His father is a senior consultant at a polyclinic, while his mother is seconded from the National Healthcare Group to the Singapore Nursing Board as an executive secretary. They were also involved in the fight against severe acute respiratory syndrome in 2003.

“It’s quite meaningful to me that I’m able to overfly (Tan Tock Seng Hospital),” said Lt Swah, who has fond childhood memories of accompanying his mother to the hospital where she spent much of her career.

It will also be the first time in an NDP for weapon systems officer (fighter) Adam Eng Jun Chao, 29.

One of the challenges of this year’s route is its length, said Captain Eng, as it requires a lot of concentration and finesse to be manoeuvring at such fast speeds and in close proximity to the other planes.

There is about a 2m to 3m gap between the wingtips of each plane in the Delta formation as they fly at close to 600kmh.

Another challenge is bad weather. Cpt Eng said: “Weather will compromise the integrity of the six-ship Delta formation... (it) kind of plays with your senses because you are then not able to visually see where the horizon is.”

The jets will be flying at a height of 457m to 610m, though there is a buffer of 152m to 762m in case of adverse weather.

Maintaining smooth control of the airspace above Singapore is also key, as the fighter jets will be sharing the airspace with the six helicopters that will be flying the state flag around.

Captain Daniel Heng Jing Xing, 26, will be in the team helping with control of the airspace as an air traffic controller.

He said: “Our role as the main controller is to obtain the airspaces (in a timely manner) so that once we have the airspace, our fighters can operate safely throughout.”

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Aerial display in the heartland



SCAN TO WATCH




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