

(JOSHUA LI YIJIE) NS Experience

1 NS is something every man in Singapore must undergo. Before enlistment, I had a fear of NS, but after my peers in church recommended me for a pre-NS camp hosted by MCF where I learned that going through it with the right mindset would result in a fruitful and meaningful experience. The MCF camp prepared me mentally to expect the challenges, and my church friends who went through NS trained with me to prepare for IPPT, shared their experiences, and prayed for me throughout my stint in NS.

2 NS consists not only of physical but mental training. Regarding people, I had acquaintances with both the wonderful and the obnoxious, and struggled not to get influenced by the latter, who utilise expletives in every sentence, lie or exaggerate about their duties, had a habit of spreading gossip and pushing blame on others, and refuse to put effort into their duties since NS is not a choice. Meanwhile, NSF's who hold a positive mindset and show willingness to learn new skills often face ridicule from the former.

3 My faith played a considerable factor in my NS duties and friendships. Despite some duties which I disliked and considered unnecessary, I tried to carry it out with a cheerful spirit and encouraged my buddies as well, not because I wanted my supervisor to put in good words for my future promotion, but because my faith instructed me to perform my duties for GOD. **“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters”**, says Colossians 3:23. Not everything you do in life is enjoyable, and NS is one of them. Time is from GOD, Who never meant it to go to waste. Thus, in my humble opinion, the best way to undergo NS as a Christian is to:

- a) prioritise Biblical devotions and church
- b) don't slack or engage in meaningless talk/gossip

- c) make the best use of your time and learn useful life skills
- d) carry out your duties as a male citizen with a cheerful and humble attitude, learning to persevere
- e) be a helpful friend to your buddies and a witness for Christ

4 Later on in my NS, a supervisor of another religion informed me that simply due to my cheerful attitude, prayer before meals, and requesting for free time on Sundays due to the need to attend church convinced him that I was an officer he could trust! **“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God”** (Heb 13.16). As Jesus encourages us to help one another, whether Christian or non-Christian, I found this aligned with our duties as an NSF in the police force.

5 I am thankful for the GOD-given opportunities to help my fellows. Once, during basic training, a bunk-mate had an extremely painful migraine that disabled him from even walking! As it happened close to curfew, the medical centre had closed and the other NSFs, unable to assist, left him in a corner and went to play games. I took the pocket-sized Bible issued by MCF, went up to him, and said “I’m a Christian and I would like to pray for you.”, which he gratefully agreed to. Next morning, the migraine had completely healed, and he no longer needed assistance walking! I’m sure it was the Lord’s help. This incident is just one of the times GOD used me to help people through prayer.

6 My greatest takeaway from NS is that I gained a deep trust in Jesus Christ. Due to our hectic routines, I would wake earlier to read my little MCF Bible, and many times the verses directly spoke, encouraged, or warned me regarding experiences I would later face that day! During the toughest times when I thought I couldn’t make it, GOD sent help to me in the form of friends, some of whom were absolute strangers who felt the need to help me, and these experiences encouraged me to do my best and not to fear anything.

7 To those who are awaiting enlistment, I have some suggestions. Firstly (for Christian NSFs), strive for daily Bible devotion, for NS is the time when you will transition from a child to an adult, a very important time to know what GOD has to say to you.

8 Secondly, choose your company wisely; do not try to fit in with people who lie, talk expletives, casually joke about sexual stuff, smoke, or drink, because a man is judged by the company he keeps. Hanging around these people, it will be hard not to pick up their habits, which will be hard to break once taken up. Make worthy friends, from whom you can learn and ingrain good habits such as diligence, tidiness, or workplace communication.

9 Lastly, be responsible for taskings assigned by your supervisor and stay away from lying or spreading gossip.

10 Pray for GOD to provide you with wonderful buddies and understanding supervisors, with whom you will spend a meaningful time, learning useful skillsets and sharpening your abilities for NS and beyond. Pray that GOD will grant opportunities to help and serve others going through their darker days. Above all, pray continuously for more understanding of His Word, more fortitude in maintaining good character, and more patience to deal with the toxic people you will meet. My faith helped me to experience an exciting and memorable NS, and I hope you will, too!