

Guns, grenades and iPads for Singapore soldiers

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File photo shows Singaporean soldiers in the city state. New recruits to the country's military, air force and navy are to get a new standard-issue item of equipment besides their rifle - the iPad.

New recruits to Singapore's military, air force and navy are to get a new standard-issue item of equipment besides their rifle -- the iPad.

The [defence ministry](#) said Monday it will be issuing "about 8,000" of the sleek, touch-screen [tablet computers](#) -- already wildly popular with the city-state's tech-savvy youth -- to recruits from November.

The ministry said it was also planning to issue the devices to other

servicemen next year. The cheapest iPad2 device currently retails in Singapore for Sg\$668 (\$538).

Defence chief Neo Kian Hong said adopting the [iPad](#) would allow the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) to take advantage of the technological abilities of the city-state's youth.

"By exploiting the use of popular and current information and communications technology, we are able to harness our advantage of today's technologically savvy servicemen," the Straits Times newspaper quoted him as saying.

Troops can use the iPad's built-in camera to take photos and video clips in the field which can be uploaded to the SAF's online platform, LEARNet. Soldiers can use these photos and videos to carry out post-mission assessments, the newspaper said.

Soldiers can send questions to their commanders through a live [messaging system](#) and group chat discussions can be held, it added.

The SAF said it was working with private contractors to design apps -- micro-programs tailor-made for mobile devices with a wide range of functions -- for servicemen.

Singapore maintains a conscript-based military and its armed forces are among the best-equipped in Asia. Every able-bodied male citizen and permanent resident aged 18 and above must undergo two years of [military training](#).

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