

Inaugural batch of Navy Marine Battalion graduates

DARSHANA SANJEEWA REPORTING FROM MULLIKULAM

Turning a new leaf in the history of the Sri Lanka Navy, the first ever batch of the 'Navy Marine Battalion' graduated from the Naval Institute at SLNS Barana in Mullikulam yesterday.

The passing out ceremony was held under the patronage of President Maithripala Sirisena.

The marine force was established under a visionary concept of Navy Commander Vice Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne adopting the model of United States Marine Corps.

Six officers and 158 sailors had undergone the Marine training since September 26, 2016 at the institute.

The marine training includes Endurance and water survival, urban warfare, jungle warfare, amphibious warfare, naval and land indirect fire support, marine tactical operation planning.

This Marine Corps possesses many distinct combatant capabilities and skills and they have perfectly trained to face any enemy attack to land area from the sea as well as to attack any enemy targets by travelling through sea to land area. They are highly skilled Marine Corps in urban, forest and river related operations.

With the training received from the institute, Sri Lankan marines would be able to lead sailors of the other countries' navies especially at UN level peacekeeping groups.

Today, marine soldiers from other countries such as the US



Six officers and 158 sailors had undergone the Marine training since September 26, 2016 at the institute

marines lead sailors including that of Sri Lankan navy soldiers in UN peacekeeping troops. Speaking at the passing out ceremony, President Maithripala Sirisena thanked the US for providing training to our forces.

The President said most of the military training received from foreign countries was halted during the past regime.

"We were able to strengthen our bilateral military relationships and therefore, countries like China, India and the US provide training to our armed forces," he said.

He said after being elected, the current government has taken several steps to provide welfare facilities and grant benefits to the war heroes throughout the last two years. "With that the government will not be complacent and will continue to take every possible action for their welfare in the future too," he said.

The President also commended the specific mission rendered by Sri Lanka Navy during the conflict. He also commended their valued contribution being made for the national and regional security with utilization of the modern technology.

State Minister of Defence Ruwan Wijewardene, US Ambassador in Sri Lanka Atul Keshap, Chief of Defence Staff and Tri forces Commanders participated in the ceremony.

**PIX BY
PRESIDENT'S MEDIA**