

From camp to campus

After serving for more than 10 years in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), he decided to go back to school.

Third Warrant Officer Cheah Kok Kiang told The New Paper: "I was concerned as I didn't know if I could manage studying full time for three years without experience in basic design, but I looked forward to the new challenge."

Supported by the SAF's Continuous Learning Academic Study Scheme, Mr Cheah, 36, decided to take up industrial design in the School of Design in Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) after being inspired by the student project presentations at the school's open house.

"I was in awe of how the de-



Third Warrant Officer Cheah Kok Kiang.
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sign students were able to illustrate, from conceptualisation to the actual aesthetic product," he said.

Initially, he was worried about the age differences with his younger classmates, but he quickly bonded with them through sharing his experiences in the SAF, said Mr Cheah.

"When I first introduced myself, some of my classmates found me intimidating since I am from the army. But after more interaction, we bonded well.

"Lecturers also gave everyone equal opportunities to excel. No one got any special treatment."

In his second year, his wife gave birth to his first child.

"It was a challenge to juggle school and family, but my classmates, lecturers and wife helped me out.

"I am glad I made that decision to go back and study, and to chase my passion in drawing and design," said Mr Cheah, who topped his cohort with a grade point average of 3.97.

— LIN HUI HUI