

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY DR RICHARD HU, MINISTER FOR FINANCE AT THE
32/98 OCS COMMISSIONING PARADE ON 3 APR 99 AT 6.00 PM AT
SAFTI MILITARY INSTITUTE

Graduands, parents, ladies and gentlemen,

National Archives of Singapore

For you, the graduands, this commissioning parade marks the beginning of a new chapter in your lives. Today, you will be vested with the duties and responsibilities of an SAF officer. You have done much to earn this privilege because you have demonstrated mental toughness and fighting spirit in staying the course of what has been many months of arduous training. This puts you in good stead for the many challenges ahead.

The challenges and trials you have been put through will leave a lifelong imprint in your lives. Your values, character and approach to life have undeniably been shaped by your experiences here at SAFTI. This is a moment to savour for each one of you. You are the cream of our country's most precious resource.

Singapore has distinguished itself as a bastion of economic success and political stability in the Asia-Pacific region despite the current financial turmoil. We have

maintained our position among the league of financially sound and stable nations with our strong and transparent national institutions. Among these institutions is the SAF.

Peace and stability in Singapore do not exist by chance; it is through our continual efforts to build up and to maintain an effective and credible deterrent force that has enabled peace and stability to prevail. In the midst of the evolving political and economic climate around us, there is one constant: peace and stability must be nurtured and built upon. They must not be taken for granted. The past one to two years bear testimony to the harsh reality of how tensions can arise between countries when domestic difficulties are encountered. Your duty as such is clear: you must diligently carry the torch of continued vigilance in the defence of our nation and our people. In doing so, you join thousands of loyal Singaporeans in giving credibility to the deterrent capability of the SAF.

Deterrence is achieved by demonstrating the resolve by our people to defend Singapore. Deterrence is achieved by a highly trained and ready SAF. Tough and realistic training helps in maintaining an effective deterrence. When you train with your men, never forget your role as their leader and mentor. Never forget that you are responsible for their training, morale, and discipline. How well you live up to your responsibilities will have a direct bearing on their ability to defend Singapore.

To be an effective leader, you must constantly keep abreast of developments in military doctrine and tactics. Be eager to learn from others as you train with them. Acquire the habit of self-learning as you should not rely on your superiors to teach you all that you need to know. Continue to work hard to improve yourself mentally and physically.

When dealing with challenges, hold firmly to our core values, and draw inspiration from the SAF Officer's Creed. Let the Creed guide you from the easier wrong towards the harder right. As you embark on your responsibilities as an SAF officer, maintain the high standards of professionalism, leadership, discipline and ethics which the SAF expects from you. Maintain the unquenchable fighting spirit that you have developed here in SAFTI to overcome the challenges that will confront you. Remember always the SAFTI motto: To Lead, To Excel, To Overcome.

Remember also, that good soldiering goes beyond being able to handle advanced technology and sophisticated equipment. We need to motivate and to develop the fighting men who make up the SAF. Military hardware alone will not ensure success on the battlefield; it is the man behind the machine that makes the difference. I therefore urge you to go forth and to impart in your men the same values that you imbibed in OCS. When men are trained on strong foundations, they become a force to be reckoned with.

As you train with your men, take the opportunity to understand their concerns and motivations. Explain to them the rationale behind the tough training you put them through. Show a genuine concern for their welfare, but always remember that this must not be at the expense of tough and realistic training. It is such training that will prove to be decisive in critical situations.

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This commissioning parade marks your admission into the SAF officer corps. With this, you are now entrusted with the responsibility to lead in the defence of our country, our people, our way of life, and to ensure that Singapore remains our home.

Finally, let me congratulate you on having earned your commission. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Thank you.

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