



# SPEECH

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## **Speech by Chief of Army, MG Desmond Kuek at the 9th Division/Infantry Merger Parade, Held at Selarang Camp**

30 Jul 2004

### **A NEW DAWN FOR 9 DIVISION AND INFANTRY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Commander 9th Singapore Division, Chief Infantry Officer, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Today's parade marks a new beginning for 9 Division and the Infantry Formation. It is also a significant milestone in the Army's transformation journey.

#### **CHANGES IN THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT**

The Army has begun to transform itself over the last few years in response to the changes in the strategic environment. A number of key factors drive the momentum for change in both the Army and the SAF.

First, the security environment has fundamentally changed since the event of 9/11 in 2001. We felt the direct impact of global and regional terrorism here at home when we uncovered the Jemaah Islamiyah movement. The Army's mission has extended beyond the preparation for hotwar to include the need to be responsive and ready to deal with a whole new range of missions in peace such as counter-terrorism, low-intensity conflict and operations other than war.

Second, is the impact of new and emerging technologies on military warfare and operational concepts. Our combined arms operations, urban fighting and infantry drills need to be reviewed and strengthened with new developments in Info-technology, Sensors, Precision,

remote and unmanned technology.

And thirdly, the demographics of our people have changed. Our regulars and our NSFs are better educated, more savvy and better able to contribute in their own capacities, as individuals as well as soldiers. We need to engage them and to provide them with the right experience to achieve the right effects.

## **ORGANISING FOR CHANGE**

To meet these challenges, the Army will be reorganised in peacetime to meet both high operational readiness demands and the training and generation imperatives of the Army. Forces on high readiness will be task-organised for better integration and mission responsiveness. The rest of the Army will need to be organised to train and generate our forces more efficiently and effectively. The merger of 9 Division and the Infantry Formation is a big step in the direction of greater resource efficiency and stronger training and operational effectiveness.

## **ROLES OF 9 DIVISION/INFANTRY**

You will be entrusted with 3 key responsibilities: to maintain the combined arms capabilities of 9th Singapore Division, to ensure effective training of our Infantry forces and to develop the capability of the Infantry into the future.

As a Combined Arms Division, you will be a critical component of the 3G manoeuvre force against any potential adversary. While there may be some changes to the operational concepts and structures, the ability to conduct combined arms and integrated operations will continue to be a major competency.

As the Infantry Senior Specialist Staff Headquarters, you will also oversee the management of all Infantry vocationalists in the Army. Many of our regulars, NSFs and NSmen also pass through the doors of the training institutions in the Infantry. These include the Army's recruits, Basic Section Leaders, Warrant Officers and Operationally Ready NS Infantry Battalions. You must deliver a positive experience that will strengthen their commitment and competency. The formation of the Specialist and Warrant Officer Institute (SWI) and the Infantry Training Institute (ITI) will help to strengthen the professional training and development of our Warrant Officers, Specialists and our NSmen, as we prepare for the new challenges ahead.

And thirdly, we will allocate more resources to build new capabilities for the Infantry to take on the demands of the future battlefield. The development of urban operations and the Advanced Combat Man System will be critical. 3 SIR will be re-organised to conduct experiments to develop new concepts in urban fighting and to generate the future enhanced urban operations force.

In the midst of these changes, some priorities remain constant. At the top of my mind is the need for our soldiers to continue to be imbued with a strong foundation of clear mission focus and sound basic soldiering skills. The professional knowledge of the weapons and equipment which they operate, the need for both physical and combat fitness and the ability to execute good individual fieldcraft continue to be essential for an Infantry soldier, in fact, for all soldiers. A new Infantry Badge will be introduced to acknowledge the infanteers who have achieved the highest standards in these areas. The introduction of the Infantry Badge is a strong statement of the commitment of 9 Division/Infantry to ensure that fundamentals remain a core competency and priority amidst the transformation. It helps to emphasise the commitment of the Army towards stronger leadership, discipline and professionalism.

## **CONCLUSION**

This parade also marks the successful command of the Chief Infantry Officer, COL Chiang Hock Tew. During his command, he has been pivotal in refining the requirements of the future Infantry, the development of urban operations, and the merger of 9 Division and Infantry. I have no doubt that he is handing over significant successes to the new Chief Infantry Officer.

Under the able leadership and vision of COL Winston Toh, as both Comd 9 Division and Chief Infantry Officer, I am sure that the Division and the Infantry formation will achieve even greater heights and continue to play a major role in our transformation towards the 3G Army.

This is a new beginning for 9 Division and Infantry. There is a rich heritage that both formations bring to this merger. I am confident that with clarity of vision, commitment of our people and conviction of our goal and purpose, the new 9 Division/Infantry Headquarters will carry the hallmarks of excellence of both these distinguished Formations. With your leadership and dedication, you will "forge ahead to new heights of professionalism and excellence".

I wish you all the best in this endeavour.

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