



SPEECH

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Transcript of Speech by Chief of Navy Rear Admiral Ronnie Tay at RSN's 40th Anniversary Parade & Commissioning Ceremony of RSS Formidable

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Good morning, Minister, Second Minister, Ministers of State, Excellency, Permanent Secretaries, Chief of Defence Force, distinguished guests, members of the Navy: I would like to first, on behalf of all of us in the Navy, express our sincere appreciation to our distinguished guests for joining us this Saturday morning at the RSN's 40th Anniversary Parade and Commissioning Ceremony of RSS Formidable. We are indeed honoured to have Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean officiate this event as the Guest of Honour. I would also like to express my thanks to the Fleet, and especially 185 Squadron, for organising this morning's activities and to the men and women at the parade today.

Exactly this day forty years ago, the Navy ensign was raised at the Telok Ayer Basin for the first time, marking the birth of the Republic of Singapore Navy. At our beginning in 1967, the Navy had just two wooden boats and a handful of volunteers.

With the withdrawal of British forces East of the Suez in 1971, the need for a Navy was clear. To secure Singapore's waters and safeguard its sovereignty, six Patrol Craft followed by six Missile Gun Boats were acquired by the mid 1970s. These were later joined by a squadron of County class LSTs and a pair of minesweepers. To relieve the MGBs from the task of daily patrols, twelve Coastal Patrol Craft were added to the RSN in the early 1980s.

With the recognition that the Navy has a vital role in ensuring Singapore's seaward defence and protecting its Sea Lines of Communication, the RSN went on to develop a range of capabilities. The two decades up to the turn of the century saw the rapid growth and development of the RSN, with the acquisition of Missile Corvettes, Minecountermeasure Vessels, Maritime Patrol Aircraft, Patrol Vessels, Endurance class LSTs and Challenger class submarines. Today, the Navy is a balanced force of about 35 ships operating out of Tuas and Changi Naval Bases, with a set of elite divers from the Naval Diving Unit. They are well supported by a robust training, logistics and medical support system that gives depth and sustenance to our fighting capabilities. A little later, we will be watching a video produced by LTC David Foo and his team, which will highlight the developments and capabilities of the RSN.

This morning, the Fleet will be joined by its newest member, RSS Formidable, the first of

class of the RSN's frigate programme that was contracted in March 2000. Launched on 7th of January 2004 in Lorient, France by Mrs Teo Chee Hean, Formidable arrived in Singapore in July 2005 after a journey of 39 days. After undergoing platform and system trials since then, she is now ready to be commissioned into operational service in the RSN. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and congratulations, to all our partners from DCN, DGA, DSTA, DSO and defence industry including Singapore Technologies, for your support and co-operation, as well as to those in the RSN who have worked so hard in this programme. We will be presenting awards this morning to the winners of the various unit competitions, in recognition of their excellent performance over the past year. We will also be presenting long service awards to a number of our servicemen who have given decades of dedicated service to the Navy. Thank you for your fine contributions. On the occasion of our 40th Anniversary, we are launching our commemorative book Onwards and Upwards. I would like to thank the team led by LTC Timothy Lo for writing and producing this book, as well as the many people who contributed stories and photographs to make it more interesting and insightful. This book is dedicated not only to Singapore's "Sons of the Sea" - past, present and future - but also to our families, whose support and encouragement have allowed us to go about our duties diligently and wholeheartedly. We are pleased to have all our former Chiefs of Navy sign a copy of this book, which will be an invaluable addition to our Navy Museum's collection. Rear Admiral James Leo sends his greetings as well as apologies for not being able to join us this morning as he is currently overseas, so he has signed the book earlier this week.

Finally, as we in the RSN celebrate the proud and joyous occasion of our Navy's 40th Anniversary, we all look forward with excitement and anticipation to the future. Let us continue to work hard together, to ensure that we will always be a Navy that is committed, strong and ready.

Thank you.

News Release:

- Republic of Singapore Navy Turns 40 and Commissions its First Frigate RSS Formidable (MINDEF_20070505001.pdf)

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