



NEWS RELEASE

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Speech by Senior Minister of State for Defence Mr Chan Chun Sing, at the 4/13 Senior Military Experts' Appointment Ceremony

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Chief of Defence Force,
Chief of Navy,
Servicemen and women of the SAF,
Families and Friends,
Good evening to all of you.

Let me first congratulate the graduates of the 4th Senior Military Experts Course. This must be a proud moment for you and your families. I am also very proud of you and your achievements.

This moment would not have been possible without your hard work. It would also not have been possible without the support of your fellow servicemen and women; and most importantly, the support of your families. This is your achievement as much as theirs. This is the reason why we want you to share this moment with your loved ones and your fellow servicemen and women.

Three years ago, we made a bold step to emphasise the three critical leadership traits necessary for current and future military leadership. First, the ability for broad strategic understanding, operational planning and mustering of finite resources for effective execution. Second, the ability for effective combat leadership, force preparation and training. Third, the ability to understand and possess deep technical competencies and innovation leadership.

We desire and we expect all SAF leaders to possess these 3 necessary traits. We also accept that it will be difficult for each and every one of you to excel and be equally strong in all three areas. But we believe each individual will have his or her own strengths and

can excel in their respective strengths if we develop them systematically. We also believe that each leadership team must have people with all 3 traits. Hence, we made a bold step to have one leadership team with three specialisations.

We therefore evolved our system into today's SAF leadership corps of Officers, Warrant Officers and Military Experts.

We expect each leadership team to have the three different types of desired traits - operational thinking and planning; combat leadership and technical leadership.

We expect all Officers, Warrant Officers and Military Experts to work together as a team, each contributing their areas of specialisation to effectively achieve the mission.

We also expect each Officer, Warrant Officer and Military Expert to have some appreciation of the areas that they may not specialise in. Only so, can they appreciate each others' strengths and leverage on each others' respective strengths to form effective combat teams. So just now, when I was mingling with you all, some of you wondered why you were exposed to areas beyond your immediate job scope, and this is the reason. For each of you to understand and appreciate what is required in your leadership partners in the Officer corps, the Warrant Officer corps, and so forth.

So for all Military Experts present today, you are more than a technical expert in a specific area of combat duties. You are also part of the SAF 3-in-1 leadership team.

Anthony who topped the local Tri-Service Warfighter Course exemplifies this. He was also the Distinguished Honour Graduate in the United States Combined Logistics Captain Career Course. He was also conferred the Demonstrated Senior Logistician by the International Society of Logisticians for his competence and knowledge. As a Military Expert, he has done us proud. He has done well, in his own technical area of competency.

At the same time, he has also demonstrated his appreciation and understanding beyond his own technical area of competency.

The SAF Mission has not changed over these years. The circumstances which the SAF has to operate, has and will continue to change.

To do well, I urge all SAF leaders to continue learning and innovating. To not learn, we risk repeating our own and other people's mistakes. To not innovate, we risk applying yesterday's solutions, tactics and techniques to today's and tomorrow's challenges.

If we ever do so, we fail in our duty to discharge our duties to our nation. So it is incumbent upon every generation of SAF leaders to continue to learn and to innovate. The mark of our success is not our ability to solve yesterday's problems. The mark of our success is our ability to pre-empt tomorrow's challenges.

I was very encouraged to hear the story of ME4 Koh Ping Wah, who is graduating with you today. He has done well to win the coveted Sword of Merit, despite being the oldest on the course. He also exemplifies the spirit of continuous learning - he enlisted with a Diploma in Nursing in 1995, and has gone on to obtain an advanced diploma as well as a bachelor degree. This is the type of attitude I hope all of you will have as you continue to seek new knowledge and put your best into everything you do.

Finally, operations succeed or fail; battles are won or lost, not by machines but by leaders and their people.

Leaders who can command the respect of the men and women under his charge. Leaders who can best understand his own strengths and weaknesses vis-a-vis his opponent. Leaders who dare to innovate and make a difference.

So may I urge all SAF leaders present today, including the Military Experts here with us today to remember three things. First, remember your role as part of the SAF leadership. Second, remember to keep learning and innovating to stay ahead in order to fulfil the SAF's mission and our promise to safeguard our future. And finally, remember that it is leaders like you, and not machines, that will make a difference at the end of the day to the SAF mission and to the lives of the men and women under your charge.

I wish you all the very best in your onward journey to serve in the SAF, in service of our nation.

Thank you very much.

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