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Speech by Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Transport, Assoc Prof Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim at the 15/2013 Specialist Cadet Graduation Parade

21 Jun 2013

Graduates of the 15/2013 Specialist Cadet Course,
Parents,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
A very good evening.

To the graduands on parade, let me congratulate all of you on successfully completing the Specialist Cadet Course. It was a tough and rigorous course which tested your physical and mental abilities. You are here today because you have passed that test. All of you have shown the ability, drive and determination to push the limits and excel. At the same time, I also want to recognise all the people who helped you to reach this milestone - your parents, brothers, sisters and loved ones who have stood behind you every step of the way of your training. And I should not forget your commanders, who showed very high, I would say, compassion and care towards you. They shared with me how the parade has to be done here, because of the current situation that we have - the haze. The crux of what they shared with me was all about caring for your safety. Coming from the Ministry of Health, I am very happy that commanders have such priorities in place for their men. And as you graduate, you'll become commanders where at times, you will have to make such difficult decisions for your men. And at the crux of the matter - it is important to ensure the safety and health of your men are being looked after. I understand that you had to make some adjustments to this, but I hope you will understand the situation that the commanders had to go through, and make the decision.

Today's parade marks the beginning of the service you have pledged to give to our nation

and which you have been trained for - to lead men and women into battle when called upon, to defend Singapore and to protect your families and friends. This is something that no one but we ourselves can undertake. Every generation of Singaporeans has to take responsibility for defending our country and our loved ones. It is only with this commitment that we can secure our nation's future.

While threats, military tactics and technologies have evolved over the years, your roles as Specialists remain unchanged. Our Specialists and Warrant Officers continue to form the backbone of the SAF, representing and demanding the highest military virtues of dedication and discipline.

As leaders, you bear the heavy responsibility for the men and women under your charge. They will look to you for leadership, guidance and support. Lead with conviction and lead by example. You must be prepared to do what you expect your men to do, and achieve the standards that you set for your men. Show genuine care and concern like your commanders. While you train and push them hard, look out for their safety and well-being. Spend time with your soldiers, and be their guide, friend and mentor. Talk to them, understand their challenges, as you also help them understand what the SAF expects of them. You are the critical link between the soldiers and the SAF leadership.

As Specialists in the 3rd Generation SAF, you will also face new challenges and take on greater responsibilities in an increasingly complex operating environment. For instance, as leaders of small units, you will be equipped with networked systems to call upon the full resources of the rest of the SAF. For you to make tough decisions on the ground, you will require not just your deep expertise in specialised skills, but also a good understanding of the big picture and mission imperatives.

Know your job well and forge a strong partnership with your officers, in order to lead the men under you. Always be mindful of the training you have received and the values that have been instilled in you. These will put you in good stead to lead with pride, excel in your field, overcome adversity with your fighting spirit and serve in this new role with honour and integrity.

The men and women under your charge will come from diverse backgrounds. Some may take Singapore's stability for granted. Your challenge as a leader is to help them to understand the deeper purpose behind National Service, and to instil in them the belief that each and every one of them has to take ownership of National Service and be committed to defending our home and our way of life. It is only with this ownership and commitment that our nation's security can be sustained. Nor will you be alone in this undertaking. This task is one which requires a nation-wide effort, as highlighted by MINDEF's convening of the Committee to Strengthen National Service. This Committee

will consult widely with the public on how to strengthen National Service, the critical institution for Singapore's success and survival.

Today's Graduation Parade represents a significant milestone in your journey in National Service and the SAF. I am confident that the Specialist Cadet Course has equipped you with a strong foundation of leadership and combat skill. The rank that you are about to wear is an affirmation of the nation's trust and confidence in you. Perform your duties to the best of your abilities and live up to the Specialists' creed of excellence, leadership by example and dedication to Singapore. I welcome all of you as Specialists of the SAF, and wish you all the best as you serve our country, and keep it safe for all of us.

With PRIDE WE LEAD

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