



# SPEECH

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## **Speech by Senior Minister of State for Defence Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman at the 10th SAF Senior Military Expert Appointment Ceremony**

27 Nov 2015

A very good evening

Chief of Defence Force,

Senior Commanders,

Graduates of the 10th SAF Senior Military Expert Course,

Families of all the graduates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are here this evening to witness the induction of 105 graduates from the 10th Senior Military Expert Course into the Military Expert Corps as Senior Military Experts. This marks a new phase in your military profession as well as signifies the valuable addition of deeper domain expertise to the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating all our graduates.

Today's ceremony also marks a milestone in the history of the Military Experts Corps. There are 20 amongst you who are from the first batch of Operationally Ready National Servicemen to be presented with ceremonial swords in recognition of your contributions as Senior Military Experts. Doing so empowers our NSmen possessing specialisation in critical domains to assume leadership appointments within the SAF. NSmen joining

this corps, bring with them valuable civilian expertise that can enhance the SAF's operational capabilities.

ME4(NS) Jayakumar S/O K. Bala Supramanian is one such example. As a Naval Warfare Systems Engineer, he will contribute to the nation and serve in our Navy by leading a team of Master of Troop Transport Ship, bringing with him 15 years of valuable work experience in the mercantile maritime sector as well as his expertise in leading crude carriers.

The SAF is a stronger and more potent fighting force because of the diverse experiences, knowledge and skills that each domain expert brings to the SAF. Through the Military Domain Experts Scheme, we build up professional expertise and valuable experience in critical domains such as engineering and intelligence. Your role gives the SAF the cutting-edge and enables the SAF to function at its optimum. Military Experts are therefore the SAF's strategic capability. Together with the Officer Corps and the Warrant Officer Corps, you ensure that the SAF is always operationally ready and achieves success in each mission it undertakes. Continue to strengthen the relationship with the Officer and the Warrant Officer Corps and together, build an even stronger SAF so that the people of Singapore can continue to live in a safe and secure home, and enjoy peace and prosperity in an uncertain world.

We cannot take for granted the peace that we have enjoyed for many years. In our interconnected world, Singapore is not immune to global and regional developments. The terrorism threat has grown more severe. The recent terror attacks in Paris are a grim reminder of how we must remain vigilant and operationally ready to protect our loved ones. Foreign fighters in the region who had gone to Syria and returned to their countries pose a significant threat to us. In the South China Sea, tensions continue to grow and various countries have become more assertive of their claims. Although we are not a claimant state, it is in our interest that disputes are settled peacefully and we continue to have freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. Recent developments in Malaysia remind us that race and religion are still deeply sensitive issues in this region and any incidents there may have spill over effects here. Domestically, falling birth rates augurs new challenges for us. We must develop foresight and creativity to formulate solutions for tomorrow's challenges. To ensure that the SAF's fighting edge remains sharp, we depend on you, the Military Experts, to drive continuous innovations - develop and deliver expert solutions. As leaders, the task falls upon you to model and lead in creating and sustaining innovative culture within the communities and teams that you are part of.

Today's sword presentation ceremony is a clear demonstration of our trust in you. It is a symbol of authority within the SAF and a sober reminder of your responsibility as a leader at an epochal period in our nation's

history. It is no coincidence that we commemorate Singapore's 50th year of independence and the SAF's 50th anniversary in the same year. Singapore's success is intertwined with the SAF's success. Without a strong and credible defence force standing guard over Singapore, the sovereignty of our nation cannot be guaranteed.

The SAF today is in a position of strength because of the pioneering spirit of those before us. What they lacked in resources, they made up for with creativity and grit. Our SAF Pioneers pushed boundaries, broke new ground, and worked hand-in-hand, and laid a solid foundation for our SAF with each nut, bolt, and screw they put in place.

We stand upon the shoulders of giants as we forge the path towards ensuring Singapore's continued success in the next 50 years and beyond. The pioneering spirit that transformed Singapore from Third World to First World is the same spirit that will continue to keep the SAF strong and steady as we march towards SAF100. ME4 Eugene Low is an example of one who embodies this spirit. His desire to improve himself professionally led him to pursue advanced studies in the domain of Information Systems. Besides having to overcome the inertia of going back to school, he had to work doubly hard to engage and fit in with his much younger classmates. At 45 years old, he is the oldest tertiary student to be enrolled in Singapore Management University's 15-year history and to be awarded a bachelor degree. As a senior Military Expert in the Imagery Support Group, he will be able to apply the knowledge that he has acquired in schools, such as business analytics, big data, and project management, into his line of work. Likewise, amongst you, is ME4 Toh Zi Xiang, Jonathan, inspired by his commanders and intrigued by the role and capabilities of the Medical Corps, also took a leap of faith by forgoing a sponsorship from the National University Hospital as a state registered nurse and signing on as a Military Medical Expert.

The commitment to organisational and professional excellence is also seen in ME7 Lim Kim Hai, widely regarded by his peers as the RSAF's engineering doyen. ME7 Lim began his SAF career as a technician. His continuous quest for deep engineering expertise led him to further his education and apply his engineering knowledge to conceptualise and implement innovative solutions for the RSAF, including the design and development of the Chaff and Flare Dispensing System training kit, which has resulted in cost savings of over a million dollars. Throughout his career, ME7 Lim took on numerous engineering appointments, including Head Avionics Branch, where he led numerous weapon system acquisition programmes. Earlier this year, he was appointed Head of Electronic Warfare and Sensors Centre responsible for approving technical assessment on

## Electronic Warfare and Sensors Capabilities.

ME5 Kelvin Yap from the Army's Headquarters Maintenance & Engineering Support is another example of resourcefulness and initiative. He resolved an obsolescence issue in our Bionix Armored Fighting Vehicle by partnering a local engineering firm to build up production and maintenance capability that has led to significant improvements in system performance. Similarly, ME4 Muhammad Saleh Bin Ahm, who was a graduate from the 2nd SMEAC, well respected amongst his peers as the maintenance guru for Army Wheeled Platforms has been a source of inspiration for his juniors. Other than constantly looking at better ways of performing diagnostics, he also actively translates his ideas into maintenance procedures and training standards.

We must maintain our resolve in ensuring that the SAF is always ready for its next mission and commit to seeking out the best approaches to maximise the SAF's capabilities. It is by doing so that the SAF can continue to make a difference and punch above its weight. Over the years, many Military Experts have contributed significantly in major SAF operations. In Operations Blue Ridge, our military experts in the Imagery Analyst Team served with distinction by providing useful and timely intelligence that benefited our coalition partners; our Army Engineers also pushed the SAF's capability envelope in an unfamiliar terrain, stretching the operational deployment of our radar systems in the harsh desert conditions in Afghanistan. Similarly, the efforts and sacrifices of our military experts from both the Air Force and Navy in Operations Blue Orchid, where both the RSAF and RSN contributed to the security and rebuilding of Iraq after 2003, were also instrumental in garnering international respect for our SAF. More recently, in Nepal, our Medical Military Experts moved swiftly into action within short notice and overcame operational uncertainties associated with humanitarian

assistance and disaster relief mission. These examples, testifying to the SAF's professionalism, have not gone unnoticed by our international partners. Aspire to these examples of resourcefulness and resolve and continue to fly the Singapore flag high.

We will count on you as Senior Military Experts to achieve mission success and to scale new heights, to serve with integrity and passion as well as to inspire and motivate your team to do their best. We expect your utmost and I am confident that all Senior Military Experts here today will be able to rise to the occasion and do the SAF and Singapore proud. I look forward to many more others to draw inspirations from all of you and walk the journey that you have so bravely walked. Once again, my congratulations to all of you.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all the family members who are here with you today. You are the reason our servicemen and women serve tirelessly and your strong support allows them to focus on the mission and do their best every time. For this reason, the success and achievements of our graduates today also belong to you - their families. So ladies and gentlemen, please join me in expressing our appreciation to our loved ones.

Thank you and have a pleasant evening.

**News Release:**

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