



SPEECH

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Speech by Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education And Skills) & Senior Minister Of State, Ministry of Defence, Mr Ong Ye Kung, at the 04/15 BMT Graduation Parade, at The Float @ Marina Bay

10 Dec 2015

Chief of Army,
Soldiers on parade,
Parents,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Congratulations to all the graduating soldiers from the SAF Basic Military Training Centre and the 4th Battalion, Singapore Infantry Regiment on (the) completion of your Basic Military Training! Your presence here, today, is evident of your ability, drive and determination to push your limits and excel. All of you have worked hard over the past months, endured and overcome physical and emotional challenges, and now, you have fitter bodies, tougher minds.

You come from all walks of lives. Regardless of where you live, where you work, where you studied, what language you speak, or what faiths you follow, National Service makes us work and sweat side by side. Today, you all and we all, stand committed, and ready to serve in the defence of our country. You join the 900,000 national servicemen before you, who went through the rite of BMT, and now all of us share this common experience as fellow Singaporeans.

The next chapter of your NS journey will soon begin. You will learn to use the latest weapons and equipment

and you will be well trained as soldiers of the Singapore Armed Forces. Behind that identity is a deep sense of pride. The SAF is a professional, strong and credible armed force, well-respected around the world. It has been the bedrock of Singapore's defence and security for the past 50 years, and helped provide the safe and stable environment for us and our loved ones to live in, to grow up, to grow old in. These did not come about by chance. Rather, it was through the dedication, sacrifice and commitment to defence of all the national servicemen who have served NS.

Every single one of the national servicemen, matters. Each of us chips in to keep Singapore peaceful and prosperous. Our pioneer generation were our first batch of soldiers, and they understood this truth that only we can defend ourselves. They were determined to succeed through hard work and did not allow the turbulent post-independence years to derail them. They emerged tougher from the threats of communism, from Konfrontasi, and learnt that we can never take our safety and security for granted. They were determined to build a strong and free Singapore, so that their children, their grandchildren can grow up in a safe and secure Singapore. That is why as a country, we honour them with the status and privileges of being (the) Pioneer Generation. I urge the recruits who are graduating from BMT today to carry on this pioneering spirit in the defence of Singapore.

It is important that you continue to carry the torch of Singapore's defence. Because the world we live in has become complex and uncertain. The threats today are different from the days when our pioneers had to defend Singapore. Just this month, 14 lives were lost in a shooting rampage in Southern California, USA. Last month, 130 lives lost in the coordinated terrorist attacks that took place in Paris. Hence, as soldiers and even more so as Singaporeans, we must all remain vigilant and strong as one people, to withstand and recover from any threats that might come our way.

Each of us can contribute to a strong SAF - that remains nimble, sharp, operationally-ready to conduct a range of operations and tackle complex challenges at a moment's notice. Many people do not realise this, but the SAF is operational. Just this year alone, the men and women of the SAF contributed to several Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief missions, such as the earthquake in Nepal and the forest fires in Indonesia. Our navy is constantly monitoring, surveilling, regional waters, keeping it safe and secure. The SAF was also involved in organising the state funeral of the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew, as well as the National Day celebrations to commemorate SG50, our Golden Jubilee, managing crowds that were tens of thousands strong. The SAF was able to execute each task successfully only because its people are committed, professional and ready to answer the call of duty.

And as you move on to the next stage of your training, I hope you remember the lessons and the friendships formed. Stand tall and proud of your achievements and use these to spur yourselves to greater heights, not just in

NS, but throughout your lives.

To the award winners today, I congratulate you on your outstanding performance in BMT.

To parents, grandparents and loved ones, thank you for your strong support and encouragement to our servicemen. Many of them, many of you, can pull through this because you know your loved ones and your families are behind you.

And to all of you on parade today, be proud of your uniform and be proud of serving the country. Your commitment to National Service is testament that Singapore stays and stands united for the security of our home, a nation that is strong and secure. I want you to know that as you serve your national duty, the whole nation is grateful for your service. I wish you all the best in the journey ahead. Thank you.

News Release:

- Senior Minister of State for Defence recognises the contributions of National Service to Singapore's peace and security (MINDEF_20151212001_1.pdf)

National Archives of Singapore