



SPEECH

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Speech by Senior Minister of State for Transport & Health, Dr Lam Pin Min, at the 38/18 Specialist Cadet Graduation Parade

21 Feb 2019

Graduands of the 38/2018 Specialist Cadet Course,
Parents and loved ones,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good evening to everyone. I am honoured to be here with all of you today. I would like to first extend my heartiest congratulations to all the graduands on your completion of your Specialist Cadet Course. The strength and resilience that you have displayed over the past 22 weeks are truly commendable. You have earned the right to don the Chevrons on your sleeves, joining those before you to be Warfighters, Trainers and Leaders of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). You now bear the responsibility and honour of leading your men and women to protect Singapore and safeguard our way of life. I have full confidence that you will rise to the challenge.

Building Our Defence

The SAF has been a cornerstone of our nation-building since Singapore's independence. From two Infantry Battalions, two wooden hull boats and no air force to speak of, we have come a long way in building up the SAF. Our forefathers, who saw Singapore through the Japanese Occupation and the Konfrontasi, recognised the importance of being self-sufficient in defending our homeland. Amidst competing demands for public infrastructure, schools,

healthcare, and more, they devoted resources to building a strong SAF. Today we reap the benefits of their foresight, which laid the solid foundations that enabled the peace and prosperity Singapore enjoys today.

Through steady and prudent investments in defence, long-term planning and continual support for National Service (NS), the SAF today is an effective and professional force that is capable of protecting Singaporeans and our national interests.

SAF and the Evolving Security Environment

A strong SAF is particularly important in the complex and challenging security environment we live in today. Terrorism continues to be a key concern of many governments in the region, including ours. Terrorists have also turned to new tactics, as seen in last year's Surabaya bomb attacks, where two terrorists co-opted their families into their suicide bombing missions. To safeguard the peace and stability of our nation, the SAF continues to work closely with the Home Team to tackle terrorism. Over the years, the SAF has set up a range of units and task forces to counter terrorism, such as the Army Deployment Force (ADF), which complements the Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) and the Island Defence Task Force (IDTF).

The nature of cyber threats is also ever-evolving, with attacks being launched across state boundaries, potentially resulting in nation-wide disruptions. As part of the efforts to constantly strengthen our cyber defence capabilities, the SAF inaugurated the SAF C4 Command in 2017, to coordinate and implement C4 (Command, Control, Communications and Computers), augmenting our cyber defence operations and capabilities. The Cyber NSF scheme was also launched last year to employ the skills of full-time National Servicemen (NSFs) with talent and expertise in this area to help defend Singapore against cyberattacks. More recently, the SAF launched two cyber expert schemes, the Defence Cyber Expert (DCX) and C4 Expert (C4X) schemes, and opened the Cyber Defence School (CDS) to bolster cyber defence efforts through recruitment and training. The SAF will continue to take active steps to stay ahead of cyber challenges through investing in our people and capabilities.

An Ever-Ready SAF

We witnessed the SAF's operational readiness during the Kim-Trump Summit last year, where regulars and National Servicemen (NSmen) were deployed to form a protective dome

around Sentosa Island. The Air Defence Task Force protected the skies with our fighter jets, Apache helicopters, G-550 Airborne Early Warning aircraft and Ground-Based Air Defence (GBAD) systems. The Maritime Security Task Force secured our waters with more than ten naval vessels guarding the sea lanes south of Sentosa Island. The Island Defence Task Force safeguarded our land, with the Special Forces, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Explosives (CBRE) teams, and 2nd People's Defence Force (2PDF) activated to deter potential malicious acts. Despite the complexity of the operations and the limited preparation time, the SAF succeeded in providing a safe and secure environment for the Summit. Their success is testament to the SAF's readiness to activate quickly in the face of emergent and complex challenges.

For most Singaporeans, the most salient impact of the SAF lies in the ordinary – the ability to go about our daily lives as per normal, without fear or disruption. During the past two months, many Singaporeans spent the Christmas and New Year holidays with their families and loved ones; some visited friends and soaked up the festive mood at events around Singapore; some rested in the comfort of their homes. All these would not have been possible without the SAF and the other security agencies guarding our nation's peace round-the-clock, even on holidays. Even as I speak, the SAF continues to stand guard over our waters, airspace and key installations all day and night.

Leaders of the SAF

Today's graduation parade marks the beginning of your journey as Leaders of the SAF. As you assume the role of Leaders and Specialists, you will realise that your responsibilities will increase many-fold. You will bear the responsibility of leading your soldiers to safeguard Singapore's sovereignty, to stand strong and resilient against any challenges that might arise. You will be entrusted with the lives of your soldiers, to guide and shape them into men and women who will step up to defend Singapore. Always lead by example through your character and competence, empathise with their differing needs and inspire their commitment through care and engagement.

Train your soldiers hard, but always keep their safety as a top priority. The SAF will remain committed to ensuring the safety of each and every soldier, and as commanders you have a duty to uphold this core value of safety. Care for your soldiers and show concern for their needs; through that, may you gain their respect. The journey ahead will be arduous but

rewarding. Trust the training that you have been given and always be grounded in the SAF core values.

Closing

Graduands, today is a day of celebration for the hard work that each and every one of you have put in. As you celebrate, please take time to honour those who have seen you through the various milestones of your life. Express appreciation for your loved ones who have showered you with love and support through your tough training. To all the families who took time off to be part of this celebration, thank you. Thank you for your unwavering love and support.

Once again, congratulations to our newly minted Specialists of the SAF. I wish you all the best as you serve our country, protecting us and keeping us safe. **With Pride We Lead!**

Thank you.

News Release:

- 1,058 Graduate as SAF Specialists (MINDEF_20190221002.pdf)

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