

RELEASABLE UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY

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Speech by Dr Goh Keng Swee, Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister of Defence, at the opening of the SAF
NCO Club at Beach Road on 17th March 1974 at 9.30 am

This club, situated near the centre of the city, can be very useful to our NCOs. Most of them work in units, air bases, training institutions and logistics bases located in the rural areas. When they come to town, they will find this club a congenial place where they can have a wide choice of meals as well as a wide range of facilities and recreation.

A great deal of thought has gone into the planning of the club's facilities, and I want to thank the members of the SAF NCO Club Working Committee for the work they have done. I want to thank the Management of Mandarin Hotel for making available its expertise in planning the club's catering and accounting systems. It is attention to little details like these that often decides whether a venture is successful or not.

At present, it is the intention of the club to limit weekend use to regular NCOs and their families. However, if it turns out that facilities are under used, it is the intention of the club to allow NSF NCOs to come in as well.

As you have heard from the Permanent Secretary, this piece of real estate is very valuable and we have to ensure that there will be no under utilization. We shall know what is the position after the club has been running for a few months.

Members of the SAF are charged with the ultimate responsibility of defending the republic as an independent sovereign state. Their work is an exacting one; they do not get overtime

pay, for instance, when they go out for night training. They are expected to maintain high standards of conduct and bearing when in uniform.

No one will grudge the allocation of the property and the expenditure of a large sum of money to refurbish it, and furnish and equip the buildings so that members and their families can have a decent place to go to during their leisure hours.

On a previous occasion, I said that there is some good news awaiting reservists. This seems an auspicious occasion on which to announce the good news.

The government has decided reservists will receive preferential treatment in the allocation of sales of Housing Board apartments. Reservists may apply on their own behalf, or if they are unmarried, and are staying with their parents, on behalf of their parents.

A certain percentage of Housing Board apartments will be set aside each year for allocation to reservists and their families. Where applications exceed the number of apartments allocated, preference will be given to reservists according to the number of years they have served in the reserves, the number of annual training camps they have done, the number of national day parades and such like matters. Families who have two or more sons having done or doing national service, will get preference over those who have only one.

Full details are available in the Reservists Association and reservists are advised to go there for details of the scheme.

Special staff will be attached to the Association to help reservists in filling up application forms.

A similar scheme applies to regulars of all ranks who have applied for Housing Board apartments. They should get further details from their unit manpower officers.