

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE, MR. JEK YEUN THONG, AT THE COMMISSIONING PARADE OF ENGINEER OFFICER CADETS AT GILMAN BARRACKS ON SATURDAY, FEB. 8, 1975 AT 7 P.M.

I am pleased to be invited to review this Commissioning Parade of the Combat Engineer Officer Cadets.

This is an occasion for pride -- both for yourself and for the Singapore Armed Forces. The 13 weeks of intensive training that you have just gone through is only an initiation process -- a process to make you proficient in handling field engineering tasks and at the same time attain the maturity and status of an officer.

You are now given the task to train and lead the men that will be placed under your command. This is a very important responsibility. The way you behave and the way you carry out your duties will have great influence upon the men, in particular the national service soldiers. For men learn fast by example. What then is the example that you must set then?

True, you must show yourself to be a leader who knows the needs, capabilities and limitations of his men. But there is what I think a more important trait that calls for your attention. This is pride in good work done: and linked with this, pride in the things you do. Lately, Singapore workers have come to be seen as people who are slipshod in their work performance and who adopt a couldn't care less attitude towards their trades. This is certainly not true of every Singapore worker. But the observation is not without basis. This lack of pride in one's trade and in good work done should not be allowed to happen in the Singapore Armed Forces.

If you respond positively to your role as a Combat Engineer Officer and show interest in your specialised duties, you will have a following of men who will be keen, dedicated and proud. And one way to tell how successful you have been as a model to your men is how many national service soldiers will on their own want to become regulars irrespective of whether the Singapore Armed Forces can absorb them or not. Let this then be your objective.

It now remains for me to congratulate you on your commissioning.

FEBRUARY 8, 1975.

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