

SPEECH BY DR LEE CHIAW MENG, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY, AT THE COMMISSIONING PARADE OF OFFICER
CADETS AT NEE SOON CAMP ON 13TH JUNE 1975 AT 1730 HOURS

In all human endeavours communication has always played an important role. This is more so in military affairs, the speed with which vital information is passed through the command channels plays a crucial part in any war. Thus messengers have been employed in war ever since ancient times. Great early empires developed elaborate systems of relay to transmit messages. Genghis Khan used homing pigeon. Electrical signalling fought the first decisive war during the Indian Mutiny just 13 years after the invention of telegraph by Morse in 1844. Since then military signal has developed into an exact and demanding discipline among the various military corps requiring high calibre of the signal personnel. Recent conflict in Indo-China has brought about significant changes and advances in military communication. Notwithstanding the technological breakthrough it is the man behind the machine who ultimately decides the outcome of war. Thus, as Signals Officers, you have a very important role to play in ensuring that an important communication system is not subverted by human inertia in transmitting vital information.

You have been trained in basic ways and means of providing the various types of communication links essential to a number of likely situations. In order to ensure that your communication system is reliable and efficient, you would have to insist on a high standard of performance by your subordinates and ensure that your equipment are well maintained. In other words, you must accept nothing but the best.

On your posting to units as Signals Officers, you should check on mediocre practices and performance. Individual operation skills must be critically assessed and improved through constant drilling and training till excellence is achieved and maintained.

In order to carry out training effectively, you must judiciously apply the techniques taught to you on good methods of instruction and make full use of training aids provided. In line with this objective I am told that Headquarters, Communications and Electronics would be setting up an inspectorate to monitor and check on the standard of signals training throughout the SAF and you as Signals Officers would have an important part to play in this.

As officers of the SAF and leaders of men, you must get a good example for others to follow. You must have the courage to shoulder responsibilities and take the initiative and make correct decisions. Only in this way are you able to earn the respect of your men. Finally, I wish to congratulate you on your successful completion of the Signals Officers' Course and wish you all the best for the future.
