

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

MC.JUN.37/75(CUL)

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE, MR. JEK
YEUN THONG. AT THE COMMISSIONING PARADE OF MIDSHIPMEN
AT TERROR BARRACKS ON SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 1975 AT 5 P.M.

The Midshipman School is one of the latest additions to the ranks of key training establishments in the Singapore Armed Forces. Established on April 1, 1974, just over a year ago, the school has graduated to a fully-fledged Midshipman School and has proved itself to be a viable training establishment. The past year has seen intensive activity and concentrated efforts by all concerned to raise this school to standards comparable with other overseas naval schools.

The establishment of the Midshipman School brings a new training capability to our Armed Forces in three major ways. Firstly, local training of naval officers now make the Singapore Navy independent of overseas naval colleges. Secondly, it enables us to evolve a course of Midshipman training geared to our specific needs. Thirdly, it makes possible the introduction of a naval officer training scheme for full-time national servicemen thereby affording national servicemen an opportunity to serve with the navy.

You, today, form the first intake of this school. You have all fulfilled the stringent academic and physical requirements at entry; you were selected in competition with many other fine young men of GCE 'A' level; and you have been put through a comprehensive training programme. You may not have enjoyed every facet of your training, but there is no doubt that your personal commitment to your training course over the last 18 months must have been complete. Through the serious and lighter sides of this training you have acquired an orderly way of living and the habits of discipline and self-restraint. These I am sure, will remain with most of you for the rest of your lives, either as a naval officer or as a civilian. You must all now feel a special sense of satisfaction in knowing that you have measured up to an exacting system, both of selection and of training. You can therefore justly take pride in the gold stripes you have earned for yourselves on your shoulders.

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I should remind you, however, that though one crucial phase of your career is now over, your education and training as a naval officer continue as long as you are with the navy. The naval profession has many dimensions. What you have been equipped with are the foundations and basic skills of that profession. It is not enough for a naval officer of today to be a good seaman and a leader of men. Just as important, you will also have to know something of economics, politics and history besides strategy, tactics and logistics. You will also have to know everything you can about sea and naval powers and above all the limits of these powers.

Throughout history the sea has offered a challenge of adventure and opportunities and its only toils are skill, courage and determination. The sea plays an important part in our national lives. The prosperity and security of our island Republic are intimately linked to the sea. Service with our navy is, therefore, a mission truly worthy of the best of our able-bodied male citizens. Those of you who are passing out today are no doubt aware of the mantle you wear as new members of a growing naval officer cadre and the onus is on you to set a model for those who come after you. I am confident you will accomplish all that you have to do in the line of duty. I congratulate you for successfully qualifying to naval officer commissions and compliment you for a very smart parade and turn-out.

JUNE 28, 1975.

(Time issued: 1400 hours)
