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# PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(HOME AFFAIRS), AT THE SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE RESCUE  
BADGE PRESENTATION CEREMONY AT THE NEE SOON CAMP,  
MANDAI ROAD ON THURSDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 1986 AT 11.00 AM

It has been some months now since the collapse of the Hotel New World, a tragedy which is still vivid in the minds of many of us. By studying why a building could collapse, we can help to prevent a similar occurrence, but we can never tell what other forms of calamities could occur in future. It is therefore important for us individually, and as a nation, to be prepared to respond to any crisis and help each other.

It is for this purpose that the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) was set up to mobilise manpower and resources to protect and save lives and property in any major disaster. Looking back, it must be acknowledged that the hotel collapse was in fact a baptism of fire for a fledgling organisation like the SCDF which was set up only in 1982. Although SCDF personnel have been building up their rescue capabilities over the last few years, I do not think anything could have prepared them for a situation such as this. However, despite their lack of experience, it is heartening to note that SCDF personnel had not spared any effort to do their best and utmost to rescue the unfortunate victims.

To commemorate the SCDF's first major experience in handling disasters and to serve as an emblem of the operational experience gained by its personnel, the SCDF is today awarding a Rescue Badge to its personnel and that of the Singapore Fire Service who were involved in various aspects of the Hotel New World rescue effort. The Badge serves as a reminder of the successful mission undertaken by the SCDF and should spur every one of its members to treat their role of rescuers as being the first and foremost of their duties. In this way, the SCDF will then build up among its ranks a strong sense of mission and a preparedness to cope with any disaster. The Badge is also being awarded to officers and men of the Singapore Fire Service in recognition of their part in the rescue effort and demonstrates the close operational links between these two services in responding to emergencies.

In presenting the Badge today, I am very glad to note the collective efforts of the Civil Defence and Fire Service personnel during the week-long rescue. Many of you had put aside your fears and anxieties of personal safety and undertook dangerous work in a public-spirited mission and with the noble desire to free the victims as quickly as possible. I would like to commend you on your good work and urge you to keep it up in the continual effort to provide for our nation's safety and protection.

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