

# Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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S3-0058-82

Release No: 54/NOV  
06-3/83/11/21

SPEECH BY DR TAY ENG SOON, MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION,  
AT THE NATIONAL CADET CORPS (NCC) ANNUAL DINNER AT SBMT  
OFFICERS' MESS, NEE SOON CAMP, ON MONDAY,  
21 NOVEMBER 1983 AT 7.30 PM

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1983 is the second year of the NCC reorganisation. The total cadet strength now stands at 9,000 compared with 19,000 two years ago. This is a much more manageable strength. The resources in our schools and the SAF can be put to much more effective use for improving the quality of training and activities of the cadets.

I have been following closely the activities of the "new look" NCC. The corps has achieved the higher standard and quality of training that we had hoped for. It is now more able to provide a wide range of adventurous and vigorous outdoor activities for those who are attracted to join the NCC. These activities include airborne or parachute training, outward bound courses, Tae-Kwon-Do training and attachments to SAF camps. All these activities help to develop self-discipline, leadership and team spirit amongst the cadets.

The parachute training was at first met with apprehension by the cadets and their parents. Only 60 cadets applied for the first course in June 1982. This is quite understandable. But at the fourth airborne course which will be held in December, there are 220 cadet applicants. I have never jumped in a parachute. But I am told that the rigorous training culminating in a jump does something special to a person's self confidence **and**

courage. After a jump, you feel 10 feet tall and feel you belong to an exclusive club. We can expect more cadets to apply for parachute jumping in the years ahead.

Likewise, improvements have been registered in rifle shooting and orienteering. In this year's rifle meet, the cadets achieved an overall improvement of 15 per cent in marksmanship compared to the previous year. In orienteering, 10 cadets returned a perfect **score** of 100 points compared with only four last year. The sea NCC cadets have carried out their round-the-island canoe expeditions and the air cadets have spread their wings through our exchange programmes with Australia, Hong Kong, India and the USA. There is in fact much now to attract the adventurous student in school to join the NCC.

Some people have lamented that our youth are lapsing into becoming soft city dwellers. I am not so pessimistic especially when I read about the adventurous exploits of some of our young people. Not long ago, a team of primary school pupils led by their teachers went to Malaysia to scale Gunong Tahan. Another group of students, this time from the Ngee Ann Polytechnic are going mountain climbing in Nepal in the Himalayas. Other adventure groups scale Mount Ophir or organise trips to Mt Kinabalu. These and other healthy outdoor pursuits such as excursions and sports should be encouraged. They are certainly preferable to having motorcycle racing gangs or seedy massage parlours. As we become more affluent, we **can** afford to encourage more of our young people to stretch their limbs and to reach out for adventurous and rugged pursuits. Exposure in the NCC and in the other uniform groups in our schools is a good start. Through your activities, you are helping to develop the character and leadership of our young people and to fight the tendency of sliding towards a soft life. The "new look" NCC has started well. Please keep it up!

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