

**Welcome speech by MAJ(NS) Jayson Goh, President, 160 AA Alumni, at the unveiling ceremony of Heritage Board at 450 Seletar East Camp, in celebration of 160 Squadron 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, SG50 and SAF50 – 23 May, 2015 (Saturday)**

Good afternoon

Mr Chan Chun Sing, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office;

Mr Desmond Lee, Minister of State for National Development;

Major General Hoo Cher Mou, Chief of Air Force;

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen; thanking for taking time to join us today at the unveiling ceremony of the Heritage Board for 450 Seletar East Camp;

And to all 160 Gunners! Welcome Home to Seletar!

Today's event is a dream come true for many of us and an emotional one indeed. As you know, Seletar East Camp was the first home for 160 Squadron when it was founded in 1970. In fact, this very spot where we are all seated, was the parade square where the last parade was held in honour of the gun squadron as we bade farewell to our first home for 32 years. And this building behind us – Block 450, more fondly known as Alpha, was home to many generations of AA Gunners.

We are deeply grateful to our colleagues at the URA (Huey Jiun, Prasad and Kelvin), who had chosen to conserve Block 450 as part of their overall conservation efforts, to preserve the military and aviation heritage of Seletar Camp. Given that 160 Squadron is the first and longest serving air defence unit in the RSAF, you have helped to conserve not just the first home of the AA Gunners, but more significantly, the birthplace of Singapore's air defence fraternity.

With the launch of the Heritage Board, Block 450 will become a physical focal point not only for our servicemen to come and reminisce about the good old days in Seletar East Camp, but also for future generations to visit and learn more about Singapore's heritage.

When we mention Singapore's air defence fraternity, one will always remember a few key personalities strongly associated with it, we are very fortunate that they are here with us today.

In 1968, Prof Lui Pao Chuen, then the technical lead from Mindef, did the assessment and recommended the procurement of the 35mm Oerlikon Guns system, all for one critical reason – its superb firing power! That decision gave birth to 160 Squadron and the rest were history. Thank you Prof Lui for choosing the 35mm Guns 47 years ago, and we are glad you could join us today.

Another key pioneer of the air defence fraternity is Col (Ret) Tan Jer Meng. Col (Ret) Tan was our first Commander SADA, who led the team in the early years to build a solid foundation for us to grow from. We are very fortunate to have Col (Ret) Tan join us here today as well.

As we celebrate the squadron's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary, SG50 and SAF50, it is very meaningful to have our pioneers and retired servicemen coming back for this big reunion, as what we have achieved was built on the solid foundation they laid. This is a small way to show our appreciation for what they have done for us and Singapore. A few other pioneers of the squadron include Mr Henry Cheong, Mr Quah Seng Kee, Mr Patrick Peh and Mr Khoo Keh Tiang, who in 1970, went to Switzerland to be trained in the gun systems, and subsequently returned to train the platoons and built up the squadron. Can you please join me to give these pioneer gunners a round of applause?

In the last 45 years, 160 Squadron has grown, achieved a high level of operational proficiency and played a key role in Singapore's integrated air defence. All these were achievable because of the exceptional people as well as the visionary leadership of the squadron. We are fortunate that the unit has always had strong emphasis on engaging our NSmen. This effort has over the years, helped build up a closely knitted family. As NSmen, we always feel this sense of belonging and identity whenever we come back to the squadron. In year 2000, this effort was

given a boost when the 160 AA Alumni was officially formed. For this, may I invited you to join me in recognizing LTC(Ret) Hsien Yong Kin, the 9<sup>th</sup> Commanding Officer of the squadron, Mr Daniel Lim, the founding President, and Mr Arthur Tay, the founding Vice-President, for taking the lead to set up the 160 AA alumni, thank you Sirs for paving the way for us!

In the last 15 years, the alumni has been playing a key role in connecting our servicemen and curating the heritage of the squadron. Similarly for today's celebration, I would like to thank the alumni exco and many NSmen who have once again come forward to show their commitment, taking time at night after work and over many weekends in the last 6 months to research, collate and put up the Heritage Walk exhibition in Block 450. We would also like to express our gratitude to our Commanding Officer, LTC Loh Woon Liang and his team from the squadron for your partnership and support, in organizing today's anniversary event. Together as a team, we have once again showed that the gunners' spirit of 160 Squadron is alive and burning strong!

We are also thankful to our many partners, the URA, SLA, JTC, NHB, RSAF, Mindef and many other agencies, which have in one way or another, helped us in making today's event possible. Thank you for your joint effort to create this historic moment for our squadron, and the many useful history lessons for future generations of Singaporeans.

To conclude, as we all gather here at "Home" today, I would like to share a quote from Mr Lim Siong Guan, who was the project director in Mindef, tasked to set up 160 Squadron in 1968.

In his definition, HOME, stands for HOPE and MEMORIES. Today, either through your interaction with fellow gunners, catching up with your buddies, or walking down the Heritage Walk exhibition, I hope all these they will bring back sweet emotions and fond memories. May these memories translate into strength and passion that will motivate us to build bigger hopes for 160 Squadron, as well as a more secured and exciting future for Singapore!

Thank You and Alert Always!