

# Visit to Civil Defense Academy

On 15 October 2007, a group of our eager members visited the Civil Defense Academy (CDA). A light drizzle did not mar their enthusiasm.



Led by our President Ong See Hee and Honorary Secretary Ngiam Tong Yuen, the group was welcomed by Major Ivan Sin and his staff. Members first gathered at a conference room for an overview of SCDF – what it does and how it contributes to the safety and security of Singapore. The briefing included a video that showcased civil defense officers in action, doing what they do best – saving lives and property.

Many of us were awed by the training regime at the CDA. Trainees are put through a systematic series of stringent and rigorous training before they can become full-fledged fire-fighters and rescuers. Fitness is heavily emphasized by the academy and SCDF because of the simple fact that "if you are not physically fit, how then can the lives of others and properties be dependent upon you?"



The academy has an exchange program where SCDF officers train in other countries or participate in relief missions while officers from its counterpart in other countries come over to CDA for training.

Members were still digesting the information from the briefing and video when Major Ivan Sin and his team invited us to proceed to the "live demo" area.

A special tent had been set up with seats at the parade square and located at a safe distance for the visitors to view a treat of "fire works". This was no ordinary fire works. It was a display of the fire-fighting techniques for various types of fire situations that could occur in industrial settings. One moment there was flame shooting out from above storage tanks, the next moment we saw an "oil" fire occurring within a mock up chemical plant



facility. We could not help but be amazed at the depth of detail that the CDA employed/ deployed to make its training as realistic as possible. Kudos to CDA!

The highlight of the visit was the experiential demo in the "furnace" – a **15-storey building** in which simulations of different fire scenarios (discotheque, karaoke lounges, industrial warehouse, etc) can be created for training. All of us were literally heated up (more like being grilled, actually) while watching each simulation.



We witnessed the fitness test stations that CDA uses to ensure the fitness of its field officers. After seeing the various fitness tests that SCDF officers have to pass on an ongoing basis, it is no wonder that these CD officers do not pant or crumble under the weight of equipment during a real life emergency.



The visit ended with some light refreshments at the Officers' Mess. Our President presented a memento to Major Sin in appreciation of the CDA's hospitality.

*By Dennis Tay*