



SPEECH

BY

**THE PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF
OF THE ZIMBABWE DEFENCE FORCES, HIS
EXCELLENCY, DR E. D. MNANGAGWA**

ON

**THE COMMISSIONING PARADE OF REGULAR
OFFICER CADET COURSE 3/39/22**

**GWERU
3 MAY 2024**

Honourable Minister of Defence; Cde O. C. Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri;

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs responsible for the Midlands Province, Cde Hon. O. Ncube;

Other Honourable Ministers here present;

Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr M. Rushwaya;

Permanent Secretary for Defence, Cde A. D. T. Nhepera;

Commander Zimbabwe Defence Forces, Gen. P. V. Sibanda;

Commander Zimbabwe National Army, Lieutenant Gen. A. N. Sanyatwe;

Commander Air Force of Zimbabwe, Air Marshall J. J. Nzvede;

Commissioner General of the Zimbabwe Republic Police, Commissioner General T. G. Matanga;

Commissioner General of the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services, Commissioner General M. Chihobvu;

Director General of the President's Department, Amb. I. Moyo;

Vice Chancellor Midlands State University,
Professor V. Muzvidziwa;

Vice Chancellor and Commandant, Zimbabwe National
Defence University, Air Vice Marshal M. T. Moyo;

Commandant Zimbabwe Military Academy, Brig.
Gen. C. M. Nduku;

Our Traditional Leaders;

Chiefs of Staff, General and Air Officers;

Senior Officers, men and women from the Uniformed
Forces;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Defence
Attachés;

Graduands of Regular Officer Cadet Course Number
3/39/22;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my singular honour and privilege to address you all
as we celebrate the remarkable achievements of the
young officers of Regular Officer Cadet Course 3/39/22

who have completed their rigorous cadet training programme. They are now ready to embark on a new chapter in their lives and service to our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe. We say to them **Makorokoto, Amhlophe, Congratulations.**

This event marks the 39th Commissioning Parade of the Regular Officer Cadet Course, and signifies the institution's adherence to its mandate of injecting well trained young and professional officers into the Zimbabwe National Army.

The past 21 months have seen these young cadets on parade, undergo a gruelling period of unique mental, physical and intellectual training. Throughout the period, graduands have demonstrated great resolve, determination and commitment to meet the required training standards of this Academy and indeed the Zimbabwe National Army.

The Regular Officer Cadet Course Number 3/39/22, graduating today, commenced training on 18 July 2022 with an initial enrolment of 220 candidates comprising 54 females (24%) and 166 males (76%). I have been briefed that 38 or 17% of students dropped from the course due to ill health, voluntary resignation and indiscipline, leaving 182 officer cadets that include 44 females who are graduating today.

As per the norm, the course's training programme was divided into 3 distinct phases in order to systematically accomplish the desired training objectives. Overall, the syllabus develops the officer cadets' character, command and leadership skills as well as evaluates their officer potential in military service as regular officers in the Zimbabwe Defence Forces.

Subjects covered by the Course include Drill, Skill at Arms, Map Reading, Field Craft, Voice Procedure, Leadership, Command and Administration, Military Law, Law of Armed Conflict, Conventions of Service

Writing, First Aid, Civil Military Relations and
Introduction to Information Communication
Technology.

Science, technology and innovation are critical cogs to the modernisation of the Defence Forces. I challenge the Zimbabwe Defence Forces across its training institutions, departments and agencies to scale up focus on innovation and technology development to leap forward and broaden our capabilities within the military sector.

Training on Information Communication Technology (ICT) undertaken during this Course was meant to enhance the officer cadets' computer literacy and introduce appropriate ICT concepts. Capabilities in this regard will go a long way towards enriching the understanding of computerised military equipment and the impact of technology in the realm of modern warfare by our young officers, especially in view of developments in artificial intelligence.

The inclusion of the Civil Military Relations package is crucial for a strong and disciplined Defence Force. As our future military leaders, it is essential that you have a deep understanding and appreciation of our national values and ethos. More so that our military is a unifying force, which comes from the people as well as protects them and defends our national identity, rich history, unity, peace and harmony.

It is pleasing that the Zimbabwe Military Academy continues to facilitate visits by cadets to liberation war shrines, with this group having toured Chimoi in Mozambique and Freedom Camp in Zambia, as well as the Kamungoma Battle Site in Gutu. In line with the ongoing recognition and memorialisation of historic aspects of our liberation war heritage, I challenge the Defence Forces to broaden the number of sites visited and extend the opportunity of such tours to already serving members.

Such exposure must serve as a constant reminder of the need to jealously guard and bravely defend our independence, freedom and democracy for perpetuity.

The graduating course before us is the 12th intake to graduate with a Diploma in Military Training and Education, which is offered in association with Midlands State University. As Chancellor, I urge Midlands State University to continue providing academic guidance to the Academy, anchored by our Heritage Based Education 5.0 model, in running the Diploma programme.

Graduands;

The resolve to achieve your aspirations along with the leadership qualities you exhibited during training have earned you the right to be commissioned in the Zimbabwe National Army. Your decision to join the Defence Forces in the *officers' corps* is commendable and a noble calling which should never be taken lightly.

As Commander in Chief, I demand unflinching patriotism and loyalty, while discipline, sacrifice, dependability and selflessness must be exhibited at all times.

Serving in the Defence Forces is a life of service to our great nation and entails placing the interests of our people and country ahead of personal interests. This calls for the highest standards of honour and integrity amongst you. Always remember that you are not just joining an organisation; you are becoming part of a broader family which also thrives on honour, respect, courage, decisiveness, dependability, initiative and tact.

The Zimbabwe Defence Forces should always defend the secure and stable environment, which is necessary for the attainment of our Vision to become an upper middle-income economy by 2030.

Following this graduation, huge responsibilities, associated with the ranks of officers, are reposed on you to command men and women whose duty is to safeguard the independence, territorial integrity and prosperity of our country.

I urge you to embrace the responsibilities that come with your commission. The end of today's journey marks the beginning of a new, exciting and yet demanding one. As you stand on the verge of your military careers, be encouraged by the fact that we believe in you and look up to you with hope and confidence. Go forth to your various stations and lead with unwavering integrity, boldness and compassion.

The road ahead will, at times, be tough, but exciting, and rewarding, helping to develop sound character and resilience. Be humble, lead with your heart, and serve with purpose. I have every confidence that you will be able to "Lead, Excel, and Overcome", in line with the Oath of Allegiance you have taken today.

Meanwhile, women play an equally important role in the defence and security of the country, and their inclusion in the leadership strata of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces is an acknowledgement that both young female and male cadets can realise their full potential within our national security architecture. I, therefore, recognise the tremendous efforts being made by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces to raise the enrolment figures of female officer cadets undertaking this prestigious course.

Well done to the Commandant, Zimbabwe Military Academy and his staff, for shaping these young cadets into the competent officers graduating before us today. Your guidance has been instrumental in preparing them for duties and responsibilities that lie ahead. Congratulations.

To the families and loved ones here gathered today, I thank you for the unwavering support that you provided to our graduands for them to reach this

milestone. Your sacrifices and encouragement have played a vital role in their success.

You moulded and nurtured them throughout their young years and selflessly surrendered them to serve our nation. We thank you.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Gweru community and other stakeholders who have rendered support to the Zimbabwe Military Academy and these young officers throughout their Course. Your various partnerships are a testament of the deep bonds that exist between our military and the communities within our nation.

Finally, I once again remind the graduands of Regular Officer Cadet Course Number 3/39/22, that for over 4 decades, generations of Zimbabwe National Army officers, men and women have stepped up to the call of duty and served with dedication and integrity. Today, the torch is passed on to all of you, as you join the ranks of the *officers corps*.

As you move forward into the next phase of your chosen profession, know that you carry the hopes and aspirations of this Great Nation. Live up to the proud tradition of those who came before you.

I wish you all the very best as you embark on this exciting and fulfilling career as members of the *defence corps*. Makorokoto. Amhlophe. Congratulations.

God bless you.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.