

## COMMISSIONING OF 81st CADET CLASS

The Minister for Defence, Mr. Willie O'Dea T.D. and the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, Lieutenant General Jim Sreenan, attended the commissioning ceremony of the 81st Cadet Class at the Military College, Defence Forces Training Centre, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

The 53 members of the class, including 12 females, and representing 21 counties, commenced training in October 2004. They completed 21 months of intensive training and were commissioned as Second Lieutenants, 50 to the Army, 2 to the Air Corps and 1 to the Defence Forces Equitation School. Cadet Gemma Fagan from Dublin received the ARCO Sword, which is presented to the Cadet who achieves first place in the class.

At the ceremony the Minister of Defence, Mr. Willie O'Dea T.D., made his speech congratulating the cadets, pointing out that 'As the Defence Forces continue to modernise across all



areas, so too does its training function. These new officers have already benefited from the constant development and updating of training in the Cadet School. Earlier today, they all received their Bachelor of Arts degree in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies and I congratulate them on that accomplishment.'

He went on to stress the importance of women applying for positions in the Army and was pleased that the Defence Forces have doubled the percentage intake of female Cadets to 20% over the past five years.

He also mentioned that research into recruitment and retention in the military was in the planning stages and the results should be available some time in the autumn.

The Minister also made the point that 'These newly commissioned officers take up duty at a time of exciting change for the Defence Forces. We are now more than half way through the implementation of the White Paper on Defence. This is transforming the capacity of the Defence Forces to meet the challenges of the modern era at home and abroad. The continuing programs of investment in new equipment and infrastructure have had a positive impact on all areas of the Defence Forces

Today is a celebration of real achievement and marks the passing of a great milestone in the lives of these new officers. The dedication and commitment of those who have moulded these young men and women into officers over the last 21 months must be acknowledged and I would like in this regard, to thank the Commandant of the Military College, Lt Col Colm Campbell, the Class Officer Captain Larry Heffernan, Company Sergeant Eddie Whitford and all of the personnel of the Cadet School, for their fine work.'

