

COMMANDANT'S GOODWILL MESSAGE
TO STAFF AND CADETS AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE 2013 / 2014 TRAINING YEAR

1. I warmly welcome all staff and cadets back to the Academy after the sessional break. I also seize this opportunity to congratulate the entire Academy community for the successful graduation activities that culminated in the Passing-Out-Parade and Convocation of cadets of 60 Regular Course and postgraduate students on 14 September 2013. For the second time in 3 years, we were honoured to host the President Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in NDA. This is a rare privilege and a reflection of the confidence Mr President has in the Academy. We must reciprocate with much more determination to produce the finest materials for our Armed Forces. Similarly, the Academy played host to the second foreign Head of State, President Allasaine Ouattara of Cote d'Ivoire, who was awarded a honorary doctorate degree by the Academy. I commend you all for the hard work that you put in to produce a successful outing for the Academy.

2. I also specially welcome the newest members of the Academy community, the cadets of the 65 Regular Course. While congratulating you for earning a place in this prestigious institution, I urge you to take advantage of your stay here to make your dream of becoming professional military officers come true. I am glad to note that for the third year, we have female cadets being part of the new entrants. Like I have advised new cadets before you, you should be resilient and be of good conduct as you progress in your training. None of you should contemplate abandoning the training as you would not only have lost out of being part a noble profession but also short-changed your state by the reduced number. The Academy is difficult but not impossible! The faint-hearted will fail; only the tenacious will succeed. Also, time moves very fast in the Academy. The staff and older cadets will help you settle down quickly and will also be available to guide you through these early days which will certainly be the most challenging for you.

3. I wish to commend all military and non-military staff for your brilliant performance in the last training year which climaxed with the successful graduation activities. I have noticed the remarkable improvements in the discipline and performance of all our staff in the last year. The high ideals for which the Academy is renowned has found reflection in your attitude, conduct and output. In particular, I commend all military instructors for the noticeable commitment in the discharge of their responsibilities. Similarly, I commend the teaching, administrative and technical staff who, in spite of being non-military personnel, have continued to exhibit exceptional devotion to work. Your individual and collective efforts, which resulted in the success of the last training year, is much valued and appreciated. You cannot afford to rest on your oars.

4. Be reminded that our joint enterprise is to produce excellent quality officers for the Armed Forces of Nigeria. All staff should keep in view the mission and vision of NDA. I therefore demand a renewed zeal and commitment to your work which will ferry us into our ultimate destination as a world-class military academy and citadel of learning. For all military and civilian teaching staff, I urge you to be guided by the words of the poet Mark Van Doren who said *"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."* You should apply creative and innovative ways of facilitating teaching and learning and challenge the exploratory minds of our cadets and postgraduate students. On the part of the Academy, we will continue to provide opportunities for staff training and development through local and foreign conferences, seminars, workshops and other training courses. Beneficiaries of these training will be expected to apply their knowledge in facilitating their assignments in the Academy.

5. The Academy has in the last year invested heavily in providing learning resources and promoting a conducive teaching and learning environment. It has also gone to great lengths to introduce ICT into teaching and learning by cadets. Considerable effort has been put into upgrading the classrooms and lecture theatres with modern ICT-based teaching aids, including multi-media devices, modern furniture and general facilities upgrade. NDA is proud to be one of very few universities in Nigeria where classrooms and lecture

theatres are fully equipped with electronic smartboards. We have thus successfully transited from manual to digitized lecture rooms. I am glad to observe that our academic staff have familiarized themselves with these new devices and have been putting them to optimal use. Training and re-training on the use of the devices will continue during the current session.

6. The military training of cadets has also received considerable attention in the last training year with a view to giving the cadets the required foundational depth necessary for future military professional development. For example, a lot more realism has been brought into military training, especially in field exercises. With the assistance of the Services, NDA has been able to deploy Armoured Personnel Carriers, tanks, combat helicopters, fighter aircraft and other weapons platforms in the major camps undertaken by Army cadets. Similarly, Naval and Air Force cadets now have the benefit of training on state-of-the art ship and flight simulators that give the real operational feel. This is aside from the professional training received by Fifth Term Cadets at their respective bases. These and other training facilities help to shore up the quality of instruction given to the cadets. The gains from this innovation have been unprecedented as the cadets have the opportunity to relate theory with practice through simulation of real life scenarios during training. This training year, we aim to improve on our successes in the military training of cadets.

7. In addition, the ICT-based Education Management System (EMS) or edu-Portal has matured in the second year of usage. This robust infrastructure for teaching and learning incorporates such features as personal profiles for all cadets, PG students and staff, an e-Learning zone, virtual library, google apps and other solutions. The online course registration has been conducted for 2 semesters by cadets and one semester by PG students using the portal, while the cadets e-Dossier is at an advanced stage of development. The edu-portal rides on the back of the broadband wireless internet facility available in the Academy. The Academy has secured an increased bandwidth that would allow for fast and efficient internet connectivity by all users. Fully complementing these, the newly revised military training precis have been issued to all cadets in both

hard and electronic copies on the prescribed scale for every regular course. These précis have resulted in improved performance by cadets in their military subjects. The Academy will spare no expense in continuing to improve standards for training in accordance with global best practices and international standards.

8. You will recall that the Academy was designated a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) centre in 2012, following the approval of the NDA Council. This was in pursuit of the drive to refocus towards science and engineering. NDA has thus run the STEM curriculum for the first year. The admission profile has accordingly reflected 50 percent Engineering, 30 percent Sciences and 20 percent Arts. We must build capacity in this regard and become a credible vehicle for the technological revolution of our armed forces. The first year of running STEM is only foundational, and even at that the Academy has recorded modest achievements during this period. I therefore urge both staff and cadets to aggressively undertake research and promote knowledge in these disciplines. The Academy should therefore explore areas of collaboration with institutions, agencies and research centres in a bid to entrench the STEM programme in NDA.

9. In line with the town and gown philosophy of universities, NDA has been providing educational services to the public through our Postgraduate School. It is elating to note that all the programmes in the PG School have been approved by the National Universities Commission. The NDA PG School is fast becoming very popular and highly sought after. This is no doubt a result of the quality of the School but also for the obvious added advantages of its being a military institution where academic programmes suffer no interruption. I wish to emphasize that we must keep our PG School compact and very effective in the dissemination of knowledge for higher degrees in military – strategic and national development disciplines for the benefit of our nation and the Armed Forces.

10. At this juncture, I congratulate all cadets who have progressed to the next class. In a tough and highly demanding environment such as NDA, your promotion is no doubt a product of diligence, hardwork and observance of the rules and regulations guiding

officer cadets in the Academy. I therefore urge you to maintain a high standard of discipline at all times and commitment to your training. Always remember that as officer cadets, you are officers-in-training! You must therefore carry yourselves with the pride and dignity befitting the persons of officer cadets and exude confidence at all times. Like Robert Kiyosaki said, "*Confidence comes with discipline and training*", therefore pay serious attention to your military and academic training as well as your discipline. You can only fulfil your dreams of having a brilliant military career if you open yourself up to imbibe in full measure the training you are being put through. Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain captured this succinctly when she remarked thus: *It's all to do with the training; you can do a lot if you are properly trained.*" On discipline, you must be above board at all times. Be guided by the Honour Code and treat your subordinates with the respect and dignity they deserve. All cadets are reminded of the Academy's policy of zero tolerance for brutalization nor will other ills which negatively impact cadets' life be condoned. The Academy has expended huge resources toward the training and administration of cadets. The welfare of cadets will therefore be pursued with greater vigour in the new training year. Matters affecting the well-being of cadets will not be compromised. I expect the cadets to reciprocate with more diligence and commitment to training. Every cadet should equip himself to succeed by purchasing the prescribed reference books that you require for your degree course work. I enjoin you all to study hard to make excellent grades as hard work pays all the time.

11. This training year is unique and indeed very significant. In January 2014, the Academy will clock the Golden Age of 50. Thus, the Academy intends to organize a grand celebration to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of its existence. A year long celebration is planned beginning with a week-long activities in February 2014 and culminating in the POP and Convocation in September 2014. It is envisaged that the activities to be mounted will capture NDA's history and values while projecting its uniqueness as both a military academy and a university. An Organizing Committee for the NDA Golden Jubilee Celebrations has already been constituted and have done much work in this respect. As it were, adjustments have been made on the Calendar of Events

some of which demand that sacrifices be made by every staff and cadet to ensure the success of the Celebrations. For instance, you have experienced shortened periods of Academy breaks in order to gain time for the Celebrations next year. We all are therefore fortunate to be in the Academy at such an auspicious season and have the opportunity to be part of the epoch making events. You must therefore work hard to ensure the success of our Golden Jubilee Anniversary Celebrations as NDA in effect hosts the world.

12. In conclusion, I wish to appreciate all our partners involved in the training of cadets and PG students. Our thanks go to the Chairman of NDA Council, the Chief of Defence Staff and Service Chiefs for their support in the training year. I also thank formations and units who have proved invaluable in executing training of cadets. We couldn't have done it without them. For us in the Academy, we must face the new training year with renewed vigour, an absolute determination to improve our performance and a deliberate consciousness to pursue excellence in our work. We will need to consolidate the gains of the past and chart a course for the future. The year ahead will be a tasking one. The calendar is certainly extra-loaded especially on account of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations. I therefore once again urge all staff and cadets to be mentally prepared for the task ahead.

13. The year ahead certainly promises to be an exciting one. We shall have the opportunity to celebrate not only our history but also our achievements. Beyond that, we have the chance to project the milestones the Academy wishes to attain in the next 50 years. I wish to assure you of quality leadership that would crystallize our collective effort to transform NDA into a world class university and military academy. From recent reports, NDA has entered into the bracket of Top 10 universities in Nigeria. We should nudge ahead to be in the first 3 by the end of the current year. More than ever before, attention will be paid to welfare and administration of cadets and staff within available resources. We will all need to be innovative to break new grounds. I also count on your discipline and cooperation. We can achieve a lot if we paddle together. The future lies before us. Let us seize it with hope and determination! I wish you all a brilliant year!