



ADDRESS

By

MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

**MAJOR GENERAL (Ret'd)
THE HONOURABLE EDMUND DILLON**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
MILAT ACADEMY GRADUATION PARADE FOR
INTAKE 1601**

DATE: Saturday 23 June, 2018

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

VENUE: Teteron Barracks, Chaguaramas

Good afternoon

It is indeed a pleasure for me to address you this afternoon on this significant occasion as we celebrate together the successful completion of the Cadets' two-year tenure at the Military-Led Academic Training Programme under the purview of the Ministry of National Security and administered by the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force.

To the seventy-two (72) graduating Cadets of Intake 1601, I extend hearty congratulations on achieving this milestone. I want to specially commend you for your hard work and for staying the course of the programme.

The Ministry of National Security's MiLAT programme is conducted in accordance with the Ministry's crime fighting strategy, which includes providing alternative opportunities for socialisation and training for our nation's young people. It is Government's mission to ensure that no young person is left behind. Our young people are the future of this nation and they must be nurtured by way of instilling into them a renewed mental and social consciousness that guides them to proudly serve their country.

The Military-Led Academic Training Programme's combination of para-military, academic and life skills training ensures that positive values and behaviours are imparted in our nation's youth towards building a progressive society and a disciplined workforce. This is consistent with Government's efforts in creating the conditions for

social advancement across all segments of the population, particularly the youth.

Ladies and gentlemen, this programme is a living example of our Whole of Government Approach in action as it operates in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services and other Government agencies.

In addition to MiLAT, parents and guardians also have access to several support services offered by various Government Ministries and Agencies such as:

- The Ministry of Education's Student Support Services Division; and Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP),
- The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs' Youth Programme Activities; and
- The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts' Community Mediation Division.

Cadets, after completing a rigorous training period consisting of academics, physical training and life skills, you have indeed finished strong under the guidance of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force and the team of behavioural counsellors, social workers, military instructors and academic staff.

In this regard, I recognise the contribution of the MiLAT programme director Major Cheryl Richardson and her team of managers,

academic staff, instructors and support staff for a job well done in preparing you for today and indeed, for your future. Ladies and gentlemen, these custodians and mentors do a great service in seeking to understand the challenges faced by the young men in their charge and are to be commended for maintaining the desire to help them find answers and preparing them for the world of work and national service.

I must also thank the family, friends and well-wishers for the support and encouragement you have provided to today's graduating cadets. I urge you to continue to stand by them so that they will be well positioned to meaningfully contribute to national development. Understand you have a significant role to play by providing meaningful examples to these graduates and taking an active role in their lives.

Graduates, many of you will now either make your way into the world of work or continue your education. Many of you are leaving here today with passes in your subjects and I know that Major Richardson beams with pride at this fact. This is commendable indeed, however I strongly encourage you to continue educating yourself and pursue tertiary studies. Learning is a never-ending process that is not limited by age. Keep improving your knowledge and gathering new skill sets, so that you can be an asset not only to yourself and your family, but also to your country.

I encourage you to practice what you have learnt in this programme. Guide your mind to produce only positive thoughts and perform only positive deeds. Seize every opportunity to develop yourself - academically and vocationally so that you can contribute productively to the nation. Respect humanity and the institution of our community. Respect and obey your parents, guardians, elders, teachers and authority figures. Respect your country with full patriotism. Associate with individuals who seek to uplift you, stay away from negative and criminal influences and elements. Most importantly, stay on the right side of the law.

Always remember that your choices have consequences. You all made the right choice to persevere through this programme; this is why today you are able to reap the benefits of success. Continue to make the right choice as you go forward.

Once again I congratulate you Intake 1601 on your achievements and extend wishes for your continued development with the On-the-Job component of this Programme. I wish you a bright and productive future.

May God bless you all and may God bless our nation.

I thank you.