



## 260 NMAA trainees graduate, become cadets

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**K**ABUL, Afghanistan – Though the day was cold and rainy, cadets at the National Military Academy of Afghanistan did not allow the weather to put a damper on their hopes for a brighter future.

Distinguished guests from the Afghan National Army, coalition forces, and academy staff gathered March 20 to watch as NMAA trainees graduate from basic training, formally becoming NMAA cadets.

“I am the honest and legal son of the people of Afghanistan,” cadets said as they recited the NMAA oath. “By entering the Army, I swear to be a well-disciplined student, to defend the territory, integrity, national sovereignty and values of Afghanistan.”

More than 1007 top high school students from various provinces across Afghanistan vied for the opportunity to join the ranks of cadets at the four-year institution. Following a medical assessment, an interview, and a challenging pre-university exam prepared by Kabul



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mason T. Lowery

**National Military Academy of Afghanistan trainees place their hands on the Koran and swear allegiance to Afghanistan.**

University, NMAA faculty members narrowed their selection to a diverse group of 260 applicants.

Those selected count their blessings for the unique opportunity to

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— Col. Mohamed Amin,  
head of the NMAA Military  
Training Department

rebuild Afghanistan through their future service as officers in the Afghan National Army.

Cadet Gujer Khan Fakermad, a second-year student at NMAA, was encouraged by his family to join the academy in order to seek more opportunities than his small community of Kuner had to offer.

“I want to serve my country because it is in need of rehabilitation,” Fakermad said. “The young generation has to study and work for our country. NMAA is a liberal place that belongs to members of every ethnic



Photos by Staff Sgt. Mason T. Lowery

**NMAA trainees stand in formation during their graduation ceremony.**

group in Afghanistan. My goal is to graduate and serve my dear country, Afghanistan.”

Despite problem provinces like Helmat, Zabul, and Paktia, where coalition forces continue to face marked Taliban resistance, the academy successfully recruits top high school students from across the country.

Maintaining an ethnically balanced student population is one of the considerations NMAA faculty members kept in mind when selecting cadets.

“When cadets are brought here, we explain that Afghanistan is a big country,” said Col. Mohamed Amin, head of the NMAA Military Training Department. “One thing that creates pride is the feeling of belonging to one nation, not a province or an ethnicity.”

NMAA helps students to overcome financial burdens while



**Trainees place their hands on the Koran and swear allegiance to Afghanistan.**

equipping them with a good education and an Army commission. Without an NMAA education, Amin says that most of the cadets would face work as farmers or would have to leave Afghanistan to seek employment in other countries.

“These young leaders will serve as professional officers of the ANA,” Amin said. “With the best uniforms, the best training, way of life and education, they make me confident in the success of a brighter future for Afghanistan.” 