

News story: Afghan National Army Officer Academy celebrates 10th graduation

Afghan Officer Cadets have passed out of the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) today as part of the 10th graduation ceremony held at the site in Qargha, on the western outskirts of Kabul.

UK personnel, working with mentors from Australia, New Zealand and Denmark, are helping to train the next generation of Afghanistan's military leaders through mentoring the Afghan training staff and instilling the Sandhurst ethos at the academy.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The 10th graduation marks an important milestone in the academy's short but successful history. It has trained thousands of Afghans from all over the country, which is testament to our enduring commitment to Afghanistan.

Keeping Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorism helps keep our streets safe too. We are dedicated to building a capable and professional Afghan Army that will be the foundation of a strong and secure Afghanistan.

With UK support over 3,000 cadets have commissioned from ANAOA since September 2014. The training of female Officer Cadets is progressing well, with much of their training integrated with their male colleagues. The 10th graduation will mean over 100 female Officer Cadets have now commissioned.

This year signals a milestone in the academy's history with the first female Officer Cadet awarded the 'Duntroon Sword' for the best overall Officer Cadet to commission from the Academy. Somaiya, 24, has excelled in a range of traditional military areas such as Skill at Arms and field craft and is extremely proud to have worked with the British Army and will be travelling to the UK next year to further her Officer training.

In addition to helping to train the next generation of Afghanistan's leaders at ANAOA, UK personnel play a leading role in NATO's Resolute Support mission. They lead the Kabul Security Force, which provides force protection for NATO staff in Kabul, and advise members of the Afghan Air Force in vital areas such as air-to-ground integration, command and control, and Training and Exercises.