

**Commodore J. V. Bainimarama, CF(Mil), OSt.J, MSD, jssc, psc**

**Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics, Public Service, Peoples Charter for Change and Progress, Information, iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Lands and Mineral Resources**

**Speech at the RFMF 01/13 Passout Parade**

**Force Training Group Fri 12th July, 2013**

**NASINU 1000 Hours**

**The Commanding Officer of the Force Training Group;**

**Parade Commander and the Training Team;**

**Invited Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Bula Vinaka and Good Morning to You All.

I am indeed privileged to be invited as Chief Guest to a very special and memorable occasion where we gather to witness the Passing Out Parade of 207 young men into the RFMF.

First of all, I would like to thank the men on parade this morning, for a fine display of marching and arms drill.

I must commend you for the effort in the preparation of this Passing Out parade.

Three months ago, you walked into the training school as young men unsure of what lay ahead, but today, you will march out as proud soldiers ready to serve Fiji, its people and its interest. I would like to congratulate you for having successfully completed the period of training, for which to most of you would have been a challenging and yet very rewarding lifetime experience.

Indeed, today is the culmination of your successful completion of a rigid thirteen weeks program of vigorous training in classroom lectures, skills training and jungle exercises. Without doubt, the training you have gone through has instilled in you discipline, good behavior, and obedience which are important to be demonstrated at all times. This will make a huge impact in your career within the RFMF to ensure that you carry out your tasks with your utmost ability.

After today, some of you will join the Regular Force as Specialist soldiers; some will proceed with your training with the Corp of Fiji Engineers as part of the Trade Training School while a few of you will join the Naval Division.

There are also some Territorial Forces amongst you who will be called in to assist the Regular soldiers in carrying out any RFMF tasking locally and abroad. Some of you considered as potential Officer Cadets, will continue with your studies in order to become Commissioned Officers within the RFMF.

Let me, therefore, remind you that greatness in the RFMF is not measured in your years of service or the rank you attain, but will be measured by the sacrifice one is willing to make for the good of our nation. As members of the RFMF, it is your duty to keep the oath of allegiance which you have affirmed to uphold at all times.

As you are all aware, next year we will hold the first genuine democratic election in Fiji’s history of one person, one vote, one value. It is pleasing to see that more than half of our population have already registered electronically to vote.

And we will soon introduce a new Constitution that gives voice to our collective aspirations and guarantees political and social rights for individuals.

Do not allow yourselves to be easily manipulated by external pressures and influences around you.

Be just, be firm and steadfast. In trying times that we are facing in our country, the RFMF plays a vital role in maintaining law and order in internal security situation. There are many obstacles in our path, and your enlistment into the RFMF today, is of great assistance to our cause. We must sacrifice for our future and those of our children, as we all deserve a better Fiji.

The RFMF has just answered another call of the Global community to serve as UN Peacekeepers. You may have well been updated that the RFMF had already deployed 180 troops last month for Peacekeeping Duties to the Golan Heights. They are there as part of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) to maintain the ceasefire between the Israeli and Syrian forces and to supervise the implementation of the disengagement agreement.

Another 318 troops with 10 Staff Officers who are currently undergoing their training are expected to leave our shores on the 22nd of this month to join our comrades in the Golan Heights.

Additionally, the Cabinet has approved the conduct of another Basic Recruit Course this year with an anticipated number of 450 personnel. This is scheduled to be conducted next month. Another two recruits of 450 personnel each are scheduled for next year. This comes as a result of our commitment to the Golan Heights where we will need personnel to supplement the Territorial Forces here at home and also personnel to conduct relieving duties to the Regular soldiers away in Sinai, Iraq, and Syria.

Plan is also underway for the revival of our Officer Cadet Training programme that now needs to be conducted yearly. This is due to the fact that reduction in offers from Officer Cadet Training Institutions overseas has had a major impact in the shortage of commissioned Military Officers within the RFMF.

Our soldiers are putting their lives on the line on the other side of the world. Not waging war but keeping the peace, ensuring the safety of others.I will not be surprised to see some of you here today being called up for peacekeeping duties in the not too distant future.

Remember you are now part of a Service renowned all over the world for its gallantry servicemen and women who have graced the battle fields of the past World Wars and Peacekeeping Operations in volatile areas of the world.Put your months of endurance and pain into practice and go forth to uphold the high ideals forged through the years by your predecessors.

It is not so much an occupation, but rather a calling to serve your country with dignity, pride and at heart.

I once again congratulate the recipients of various awards presented today. To the hardworking staff of the RFMF Force Training Group, thank you for the efforts in training these fine young men into soldiers of the RFMF. To the Fiji Police Force Bandmaster and the Band, thank you for your presence and for the superb display you have showed us today.

To family and friends, I would also like to acknowledge your assistance and endless support to make this day eventuate for your children and loved ones. I ask for your continued support as they turn a new chapter today in their military career.

Vinaka Vakalevu and God Bless you all.

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