

CHENNAI, September 19, 2010

Chennai cadet creates history at OTA passing-out parade

Divya Ajith Kumar, first woman to receive the best cadet prize



Memorable day: Chief of Army Staff General V K Singh congratulating Divya Ajith Kumar who won the Sword of Honour, awarded to the best cadet passing-out of Officers Training Academy, St.Thomas Mount, on Saturday. — Photo: K.Pichumani

A total of 244 cadets, including 63 women, were inducted into the Indian Army on Saturday on completion of their training at the Officers Training Academy (OTA) in St. Thomas Mount here.

Divya Ajith Kumar of Chennai became the first woman in the history of the Indian Army to receive the coveted 'Sword of Honour' prize, which is awarded to the best cadet.

Chief of Army Staff General VK Singh presented the prize to her at the passing-out parade. "It was my dream to enter the Army. I am happy to receive this prize," she said.

Addressing the cadets on the occasion, General Singh said the gentlemen and lady officers should be ready to face various challenges and motivate their team wherever they are posted. The 244 cadets would be inducted into various regiments of the Indian Army.

This passing-out parade will also be memorable for 18 gentlemen cadets from the Afghan National Army and two lady cadets from Lesotho who underwent training at OTA. Speaking to *The Hindu* after the ceremony, Ahmed Shahpoor Nooristani from the Nuristan province in Afghanistan, said "Back home there isn't enough military training facilities or instructors. This was a golden opportunity for us." The men from various provinces, including Logar, Ghazi and Kandahar, who are alumni of Afghan Military School, will be heading to Kabul via Delhi on Saturday night to join their army as officers. Fourteen more Afghan cadets are undergoing training in OTA.

The ceremony concluded with the cadets marching out of the parade ground and a chopper showering petals on them.