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PRESS RELEASE

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Success for Gibraltar Firefighters at the European Fire-fighter Combat Challenge (FCC).

A team of four fire-fighters from the Gibraltar Fire & Rescue Service have been dedicating themselves to extreme, high-level intensity training to take part in what is said to be the 'toughest two minutes in sports', and it seems our lads from our local fire service have been making an impact!

This year, Firefighter's Coulthard, McGrail, Abudarham and Pratts formed a national team to compete on the European circuit of the Fire-fighter Combat Challenge (FCC) event.

The FCC was devised by the fire service and consists of five physically challenging activities combined into one event which firefighters throughout the world participate in and try to complete with the fastest time. The competition includes a five-storey stair climb with a high-rise pack, hose hoist, forcible entry, hose advance, and a victim rescue; aptly referred to by competitors as the five stages of pain. Each stage is tough to compete in its own right but add to that full firefighting kit and breathing apparatus and you truly see how the competition has earned its reputation as the toughest two minutes in sports!

The primary purpose for the Firefighter Combat Challenge is to promote physical fitness and awareness, an essential part of structural firefighting, and highlights the tremendous physical demands that are faced by firefighters on a daily basis as presented to them in the line of duty, which is ultimately to save life and protect property.

The Gibraltar team have taken part in three competitions in which they have gained course practice and vital experience, culminating in a hard fought and well-earned European Team Bronze medal in Germany.

The team are thrilled with their performance, which not only earned them an invitation to compete in Slovenia with the European champions but also an invitation to the World Championships to be held later this year in Montgomery, USA.

The competitors said 'We cannot believe how well we have done considering the short space of time we have been together as a team; we are so glad that the hard work and hours of

training has paid off. We are so grateful to be able to take part in this event and to be able to fly the flag for Gibraltar high and proud, again showing that we may be a small nation but we can compete with the best in the world'.

'We have been humbled by the support shown to us; the fact that we are self-funded demonstrates that Gibraltar has such an amazing community spirit. We would like to say thank you to all the friends and companies that have supported us with backing and funding, allowing us to get to the competitions. Without their help this achievement would not have been possible'.

'We would like to express our appreciation to Dean Chipolina of DGM (Direct General Metalworks) for making and giving us a Keiser Force Machine - an essential part of the competition that has been an invaluable part of our training - and to Karl Roberts from Hydrographics for providing us with our unique designer-finish helmets. Thanks also to Holland & Barratt, Southern Point Roofing, SportOn, GibProtein, Safety Solutions, Brian Zammit Group of Companies and Excel Scaffolding for their amazing support. We would also like to say a massive thank you to our families who have had to put up with us disappearing to train in the early hours of the morning or late at night!'

'We are proud of what we have accomplished to date but we are not going to become complacent. We want to improve and grow as a team and are already in full training mode with the intention to be able to compete at the World Championships and see what we can achieve on the world stage'.

If you would like to follow the team during their training and competitions you can find them on their Facebook page 'Firefighter Combat Team Gibraltar'. Any messages of support are greatly appreciated.