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PRESS RELEASE

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Promotions at the Gibraltar Fire & Rescue Service

The Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) has two new additions to the Senior Management team. Former Sub Officer Matthew Payas has been promoted to Divisional Officer Operations and Training, and Former Station Officer Colin Ramirez has been appointed as Deputy Chief Fire Officer. Both officers will be supporting the recently appointed Chief Fire Officer Anthony Yusifredo, in the ongoing development of a Fire and Rescue Service that is ambitious, modern and proficient in making Gibraltar a safer community.

Divisional Officer (DO) Matthew Payas joined the Fire Service in 1998 as a Fire-fighter at the Defence Fire and Rescue Service at RAF Gibraltar. After successfully completing a basic fire-fighting course at RAF Manston in the UK, in domestic and aircraft fire-fighting, he was awarded the silver axe for best overall recruit. In August 2000, he joined the GFRS, formerly the City Fire Brigade, where after completing the foundation course in fire-fighting, rope rescue and diving (SCUBA) he also obtained the award for best overall recruit. During his initial years at the GFRS he undertook and successfully passed all his statutory qualifications. In October 2009 he was promoted to Leading Firefighter, and subsequently to Sub Officer in June 2011, serving in the Operations Department since. During this period DO Payas has attended various Firefighting courses at the Fire Service College in Moreton-In-Marsh, Gloucestershire including; the Incident Command Crew and Watch Commanders course, tactical ship fire-fighting course, Road traffic Collision Instructor's course, and heavy vehicle rescue course. He has also been trained as a Rope Rescue Supervisor by Outreach Training instructors. During his time in the operations department, DO Payas was responsible for the Brigade's Hydraulic rescue equipment, and was part of the servicing and maintenance teams for both Holmatro hydraulic rescue tools and Draeger Breathing Apparatus.

DO Payas has also been actively involved as project manager in the elaboration of an implementation strategy for the future development of the organisation. He now faces the challenge of heading and ensuring that the performance and competence of this department is maintained at the level of professionalism and efficiency required to serve the citizens of Gibraltar.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Ramirez has been a member of the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service since January 2000 and was also awarded best overall recruit after completing the

16-week Fire-fighter Development Programme. During his career, DCFO Ramirez has completed a variety of specialised courses and obtained professional qualifications that have helped him gain the knowledge and experience necessary to now form part of this new leadership team. Within the first five years of his career he showed his commitment to the Fire Service and obtained all the statutory qualifications that made him eligible for promotion. In little over three years since November 2007, DCFO Ramirez went from obtaining his first promotion as Leading Fire Fighter to Station Officer, where he proudly served and lead the men of Blue Watch for over four years prior to joining the GFRS Senior Management team. Throughout his fifteen years in the Service, he has received training locally in fire-fighting, rope rescue techniques, road traffic collisions, incidents involving hazardous materials, diver rescue, and ambulance first responder. In addition, DCFO Ramirez has attended the Fire Service College in Moreton-in-Marsh on various occasions and has obtained qualifications in Watch Command, Hazmats Command, Tactical Ship Fire-fighting, Advanced Incident Command and a Multi-Agency Gold Incident Command course that is to do with strategic incident command and control. In July 2012 and July 2013 respectively, he took the initiative and passed the Institution of Fire Engineers Member level examinations in Strategic Human Resource Management and, Civil Emergency and Disaster Management for the Fire and Rescue Service.

DCFO Ramirez has recently formed part of a steering group tasked with performing an extensive review of the department's current structure and resources with a view to further enhance and continue the development of the organisation. He will be overall responsible for discipline, welfare, budget, and the performance in general of the various sections that form the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service.

The Minister with responsibility for the Fire Service, the Hon Gilbert Licudi QC, has congratulated Deputy Chief Fire Officer Colin Ramirez and Divisional Officer Matthew Payas and said that he looked forward to working with the new Senior Management Team led by Chief Fire Officer Tony Yusifredo.

We wish both officers the best of luck in this new phase in their careers.