



PRESS RELEASE

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MINISTER COSTA REPRESENTS GIBRALTAR AT ROYAL MARINES TRAINING CENTRE

Gibraltar's many links with the Royal Marines were brought even closer over the weekend. The Hon Neil Costa MP was in Devon where, on Thursday, he was present when a piece of Gibraltar Rock was unveiled on the Royal Marines' training area and on Friday he took the salute at a Marines' passing out parade.

The piece of Rock forms a new memorial on Woodbury Common, an upland area which, since World War 2, has been used by thousands of trainees from the nearby Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) Exton.

The project was the brainchild of retired Royal Marines Lt Col Alastair Rogers. "I was walking on the Common and I thought: I trained here and thousands of other people have trained here yet there's nothing on the common to show that we've done that" says Alastair.

"The Governor of Gibraltar Sir Jim Dutton who is a former Commandant General Royal Marines convinced the Chief Minister that it was a good idea," says Lt Col Rogers. "The Rock of Gibraltar is British because of that action by the Royal Marines over 300 years ago and as it was our 350th birthday last year the Gibraltarians were keen to present something."

Speaking at the unveiling, Minister Costa said: "It's a real pleasure to represent the Government and people of Gibraltar here today. Gibraltarians do not part with our homeland lightly but we had no hesitation in giving a piece of our Rock to the Royal Marines. It was an Anglo Dutch force that captured the Rock in 1704 and so it is a very valued relationship that we have with you."

The following day, Minister Costa was the Inspecting Officer at the Pass Out Parade of 189 Troop King's Squad at the Commando Training Centre. Other VIPs present were Councillor George Gribble (Chairman of Devon County Council), Lieutenant Colonel Alistair Rogers RM (Retd) and Colonel Kevin Oliver (Commandant of CTCRM).

The Marines on parade had successfully completed an intense 32 week course, one of the longest and toughest basic training courses anywhere in the world. 189 Troop arrived at CTCRM on 23 June 2014 with a total of 38 recruits but, by the end of the course, only 17 Marines passed out on parade. This is normal rate for such a tough course: around 40% of recruits drop out and many others fail to complete the course because of injuries sustained. To pass the course, each recruit had to complete four exhausting physical tests in as many days, including a 30 mile 'yomp' with full kit and weapon, together weighing 32 lbs. One of the other tests is a tough endurance course on an area which is now overlooked by the Gibraltar Rock monument.



Watched by the Marines' friends and families, Minister Costa presented the Commando Medal to Marine Archer for showing throughout training that he possessed Unselfishness, Cheerfulness Under Adversity, Courage and Determination. Minister Costa also presented the King's Badge to Marine Edworthy for being the best all-round Marine.

In his speech to the young Marines, Minister Costa said: 'For the last 187 years, every Marine has worn a capbadge that carries just a single word – that of GIBRALTAR. I think it is therefore right and special that a Gibraltarian should speak to and, indeed, celebrate our special relationship and shared history.....May I also welcome your friends and families to this parade and, on your behalf, thank them for their support and encouragement that will have been so important to you over these last gruelling months. Courage, Determination, Unselfishness and Cheerfulness - the very qualities that define the Commando spirit. I have no doubt that you will live and breathe these words.'





























