



# GIBRALTAR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

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## PRESS RELEASE

No: 668/2016

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016

### Local Firefighters proudly represent Gibraltar at the World Championships of the Firefighter Combat Challenge

A team of four local firefighters from the Gibraltar Fire & Rescue Service travelled to Montgomery, Alabama to represent Gibraltar in the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Firefighter Combat Challenge.

The competition consists of five individual disciplines linked in one race replicating real-life demands of a firefighter at a fire incident. The head-to-head race consists of the following disciplines:

- 1) Ascending a 5-storey tower with 20kg hose pack and then hoisting an additional hose pack using a rescue line
- 2) A forcible entry simulation using a Keiser machine and sledge hammer
- 3) Slalom run
- 4) Charged 90mm Hose drag with fire-fighting simulation
- 5) Rescuing a life-sized 80kg "casualty" while wearing full firefighter kit, including breathing apparatus, as they race against their opponents and the clock.

The race has been aptly named the 'Toughest two minutes in Sport' by ESPN.

The aim of our team of local firefighters, comprising of Matt Coulthard, Julian McGrail, Dylan Pratts and Dyron Ford was to gain valuable experience and make it past the qualifiers. What followed exceeded all expectations; not only did the team achieve their goal of making it past the preliminaries, they battled their way to the world finals, finishing in a fantastic 2<sup>nd</sup> place and bringing home the silver medal.

The team's spokesman stated: 'We are thrilled at what we have achieved; we went with the intentions of trying to qualify for the final knock out stages, but to make it to this stage and then all the way to the final is beyond our wildest dreams. To finish second in the world, coming from such a small nation with a limited number of firefighters and only having competed in this sport for a couple of years is such an amazing feeling'.

Our firefighters have not only achieved a remarkable Silver at the world championships, but are very proud that three of the team members, Julian McGrail, Matt Coulthard and Dylan Pratts, were inducted into the 'Lion's Den': an elite club of the world's fastest finishers. This

tremendous achievement not only makes them the first Gibraltarians but also the first ever British firefighters to have this honour bestowed upon them in the 25 years since the inception of this competition.

The team would like to take this opportunity to thank their families for their patience throughout their preparation for this event. A massive thank you to the team sponsors and the other team members that were unable to make to the World Championships, Eric Abudarham and Bernie Vaughan.

A special mention must be given to our work colleagues, management and our Chief Fire Officer. Their support and cooperation has been a vital component in the team's road to success.

The team hope that their success will help promote health and fitness as part of work and an active lifestyle.