



PRESS RELEASE

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New firefighters join the Gibraltar Fire & Rescue Service and Airport Fire & Rescue Service

The Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service, in conjunction with the Airport Fire and Rescue Service, would like to welcome five new recruits to their ranks after jointly completing their Firefighter Foundation and Development Programme (FFDP), a first for the Services' illustrious history.

Originally, this was to have been an eight-week course, held at the Fire Service College in Moreton-In-Marsh, Gloucestershire, UK. However, due to the extensively reported crisis, GFRS firefighters Liam Wilding, Jaydan Fortunato and Steven Soussi together with AFRS firefighters Alain Pons and Julian Lopez had to be hastily returned to Gibraltar in anticipation of tougher lockdown measures being enacted by the U.K. Government.

During their initial five weeks of a mentally and physically demanding course, the new entrants were assessed on all aspects of Fire Service activities. This included practical and theoretical assessment of basic skills such as ladders, hose drills, knots and lines. Subsequent phases covered instruction on the all-important Breathing Apparatus and Compartment Fire Behaviour Training, including Search and Rescue procedures, as well as the recognition and mitigation of potential fire phenomena such as a flashover or backdraft.

The remaining three FFDP practical and theoretical modules were subsequently conducted locally. These included Road Traffic Collisions, encompassing vehicle cutting techniques for the extrication of trapped casualties, complemented by the Emergency Medical Responder course and Hazardous Materials awareness input.

Each Fire Service will now concentrate their efforts towards more specific skills, commensurate with their own areas of expertise. GFRS personnel will complete a two week diving course for sub surface diver rescue and a further two weeks of Rope Rescue Level One Operator's course.



AFRS personnel will continue with a five-week development programme into Aviation Fire Fighting and Working at Height Rescue, also to be held locally, before the firefighter recruits can be deemed operationally ready.

The GFRS and AFRS would like to express our gratitude to all external agencies involved in making this local training possible, especially at such short notice, including Gibraltar Ambulance Service, and Admiral Security.

A final word of appreciation also goes towards the GFRS and AFRS instructors, Sub/Officers Karl Sciortino and Karim Afzan and Leading Fire Fighter Jarvis Davis. Their exemplary dedication and professionalism, ensured the recruits' instruction and training attained the necessary standards, despite the difficulties posed by the current climate.

The GFRS and AFRS Senior Management Team wish our new fire fighters a safe and successful career with the Fire Service.

Minister Licudi, with responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Services, also added; "I would like to congratulate our new firefighters on successfully completing their initial training. They now become part of our front line emergency services with a clear objective, keeping our community safe. At a time of a national emergency where we are advising everyone to stay home and stay safe, knowing that we have committed and dedicated first responders can give us all peace of mind. My congratulations also to all who have contributed to the training of these firefighters despite the UK course having been cut short. We really have two Fire and Rescue Services which we can all be proud of."