

BLUE BERET



Thrills at the 2016 Winter Military Skills Competition

Following a week's delay due to inclement weather, UNFICYP's much anticipated Military Skills Competition took place on 7 December 2016, with the eight competing teams eagerly awaiting the Force Commander's horn, a tradition that signifies the start of the event. First was an Endurance Run, where all eight teams ran together in full combat kit carrying a 12kg load across a 5km long trail within 60 minutes. They then rotated between another six stands where their various military skills were tested.

At the next stand, all teams had to prove their map-reading skills and OPFOR Recognition skills, followed by the Driving Skills stand, where teams were required to negotiate the driving course, demonstrate correct guiding skills and find all failures while fulfilling the car check list sheet. The Marksmanship stand tested the teams' shooting skills in a number of firing positions, with an emphasis on accuracy.

The Incident Reaction stand tested teams' responses to a scenario linked to a possible incident within the buffer zone; the emphasis was on situational awareness, teamwork, command and control, casualty management and communication. Teamwork and communication were again tested by the Command Task stand, where teams carried two different loads through a river and a hypothetical minefield. The final event was

the Assault Course stand, with teams, laden with heavy loads, negotiating the course against the clock. Sector 4's Team Captain, Lt Christian Santiago (Argentina), said he found the competition difficult, but enjoyed the experience, particularly competing with troops of different nationalities. Sector 2 B team member, Private Debby Whitby, said the competition highlighted the importance of teamwork and teambuilding to success. Once all tasks were accomplished, Force Commander Major General Mohammad Humayun Kabir handed awards to the top three teams; this year's competition was extraordinarily close, with the top three teams all finishing with 540 points. This meant that the final scores were calculated by factoring in the times achieved by each team; Sector 2's A team finished in the 3rd place, just behind Sector 4's A team.

The overall winner of the 2016 Winter Military Skills Competition was the mixed team from the Force Mobile Police Unit (FMPU). Congratulations to the winners and all the participants! In his remarks, General Humayun praised the high level of skill displayed, the excellent organisation of the event and the spirited competition the teams showed. Sincere thanks to Lt Col Cesar Fragni and WO2 Neill Cogram from the Military training cell, as well as all those who participated in the preparation for the competition.



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