

BLUE BERET



UNFICYP WINTER SPORTS DAY 24 JAN 2018

By Capt Gary Stephen Williams

The UNFICYP Winter Sports day was held on the 24 Jan 18 within the Tennis Courts on Blue Beret Camp and at the old Hockey Pitches on UNPA. This competition was the 2nd of its kind, adopting a centralised theme similar to the format of the Summer Sports Day held in July 17. Teams from Sector 1, 2, 4, HQ and FMPU, MFR, Force Engineers and the civilian component all competed for the coveted prize as UNFICYP champions.

As teams gathered for the initial registration, the event organisers were frantically hoping that the heavens wouldn't open as heavy rainfall was forecast; however despite a few instances of slight trickles, the weather proved to be a considerable ally on the day.

The first event was orienteering, kindly organised by Mrs Diana Bridger from UNPOL. Multiple teams of three runners spread to the four winds of the course to find orienteering controls which were marking ditches, hedgerows and other distinct geographic features within UNPA. The first team to pass the finish post (without penalties) was the civilian component with a fantastic time of 24 minutes and 40 seconds, beating the elite HQ team by only 19 seconds. This was particularly great news for the civilian component as it was the first time they had entered teams into the Sports Day.

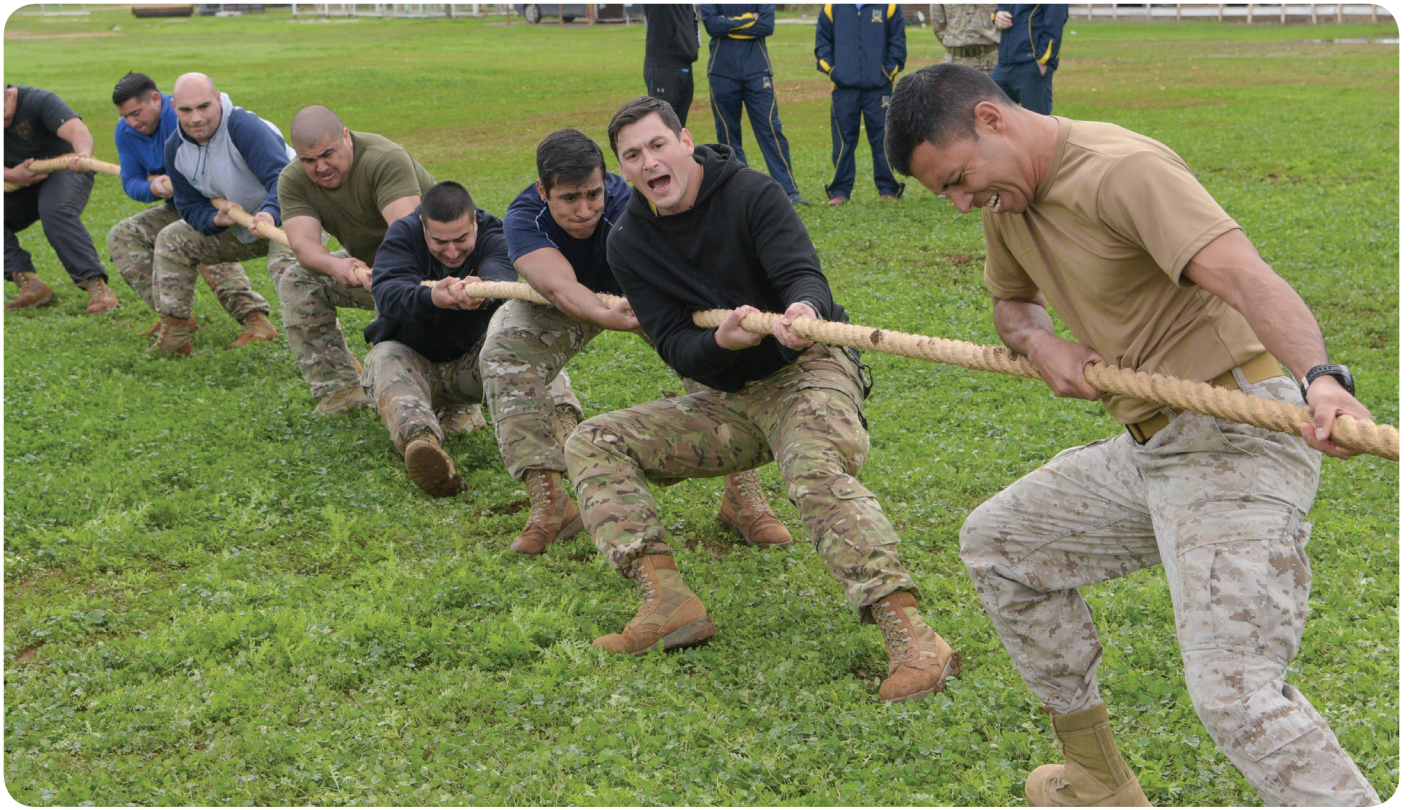
With hardly a pause, the competition switched to the Hockey ball and Tug of War events which were being coordinated concurrently by Sector 2 and Sector 4. The Tug of War was hugely contested and consisted of the missions "Big Guns" frantically pulling each other in every direction (but predominately in a straight line). MFR just missed out on a final spot, but it was to be the mighty Sector 2 who were crowned champions beating Sector 4 in the final round. The Hockey ball also proved to be a well fought competition and it was evident early on that the

Slovakian members of the mission had the distinct edge, playing every match like it was the World Cup Final. Eventually and unsurprisingly The Force Engineers took on Sector 4 in the final and overcame them to win the final match; however the award for best endeavour clearly went to the HQ team who used sheer grit and determination to claim 4th place. The teams Most Valued Player (MVP) Maj Oliver Straka was quoted as saying "he was retiring from the sport he last played at primary school at the end of the competition".

After a well-earned lunch break, the teams reassembled to compete in the competition Finale – the Strength Endurance Event; this involved each team member (6 members overall) completing 5 minutes of 5 different cross fit exercises. Not to be underestimated, this event proved to be a real decisive tough event, where even the mightiest of the missions' strongmen were exhausted afterwards. The stars of this event, were again, the civilian component who proved they had as much might and determination as the military and even managed to smile throughout the gruelling exercises. Each event however, needs a champion and it was the MFR who narrowly beat Sector two's overall repetitions to be crowned the Strength Endurance champions.

After a quick collation of scores, the Force Commander was invited to announce the winners of each event and the tournament champions. Congratulations to Sector 2 who finished with the most points overall and are now the UNFICYP Winter Sports Champions for 2018. The winter themed event proved to be a great day of sporting excellence which was enjoyed by both spectators and competitors and all eyes are now clearly fixed on the summer competition later in 2018.





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