

Keeping in Touch

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From the Editor

Well another year has passed. We started the new year by providing emergency coverage at the Valletta Waterfront event. We also took part in CHOGM and in the festivities concerning the newly elected Bishop for Gozo. It has been decided that the newsletter will be issued every three months. Any views and comments about the newsletter are more than welcome. This year we have also produced our official website.

www.rcgozo.org Official Web Site

~ Mario Saliba web master

The Malta Red Cross Gozo Branch Official Web Site was launched in the beginning of this year and since then it has been visited 354 times till the 6th March. The web site's purpose is to make the general public more aware of the Red Cross contribution to the Gozitan society by providing information about the different courses we offer and the type of services we do.

On the website there is a list of courses that are offered at the Malta Red Cross Gozo Branch. Also this web site offers the possibility to fill an application form to become either a Red Cross Volunteer, the Youth Red Cross or to become a Red Cross Member.

Our entire thanks goes to Venew Group who are sponsoring the hosting of the web site. Karkanja Group also gave their support by buying some advert space on our web site.



Youth Red Cross

~ Joseph Tabone Youth member

It's been almost a year since the Malta Red Cross Gozo Branch started the Youths Section. In the Malta Red Cross Gozo Branch Youth Red Cross, we are about 26 youths of different ages and gender and are divided in 3 squads, each of which with a leader.

During our weekly meetings, we learn:

- First Aid
- Basic Disaster Preparedness
- Radio Telephony (learnt and also practised phonetic alphabet etc)
- Moulage (First Aid makeup)
- Message relay
- Art and drama
- Out door life
- Social commitment
- And now also the crafts (paper and clay)

We all look forward and eagerly wait for the next meeting with sense of unity. Here we nourish our knowledge with extremely interesting information. I'm really satisfied by joining and encourage other youths to follow. We meet every Saturday from 5 to 7pm at the Brach premises



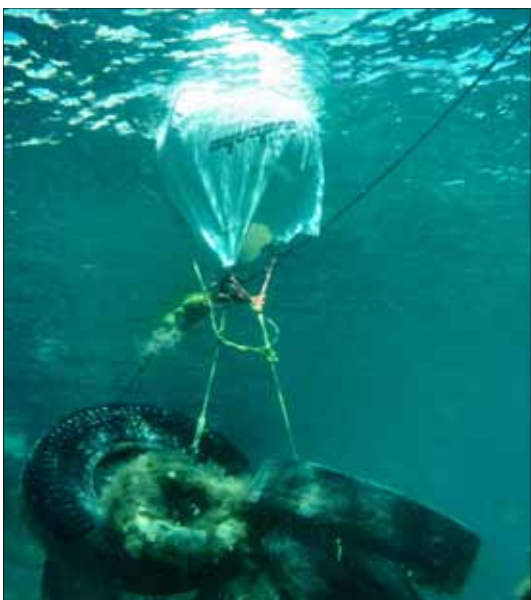
 Hike




 Practicing first aid

GASRT

~ Etienne Micallef



GASRT stands for Gozo aquatic search and rescue training. This is another European union program that the branch has embardeked in. This is a Leonardo mobility project which consists in sending 4 beneficiaries to Italy for training this coming September. The area of training in is diver rescue. Gozo is a very popular dive site and the Red Cross had deiced to start investigated the possibility to start operating in this area that is by building up a team of highly trained rescue divers and dive medics.


 Search and recovery

EYSF (European Youth and Sport Forum)~ **Edmond Formosa**
 The group

I was lucky enough to be the only Maltese citizen among the 110 participants from European member and applicant states chosen to attend the EYSF (European Youth and Sport Forum) for the year 2005 organized by ISCA (International Social and Cultural Association). The forum was held in Stoke Mandeville, outskirts of London from the 19th till the 24th of November. The main theme of this forum was *'building a culture of volunteering and active citizenship throughout Europe'*. The forum had three basic areas of discussion:

- Volunteering and active citizenship,
- Combating discrimination through sport, and
- Health and sport

The output of these areas would then be compiled into a declaration that was then presented to the UK sports minister, who in turn presented the declaration and recommendations at a European Presidency level. My main interest from these topics was the volunteering and active citizenship section, where I tried to contribute with my views upon citizen volunteering as well as learn from others how different countries approach this


 Edmond addressing the forum

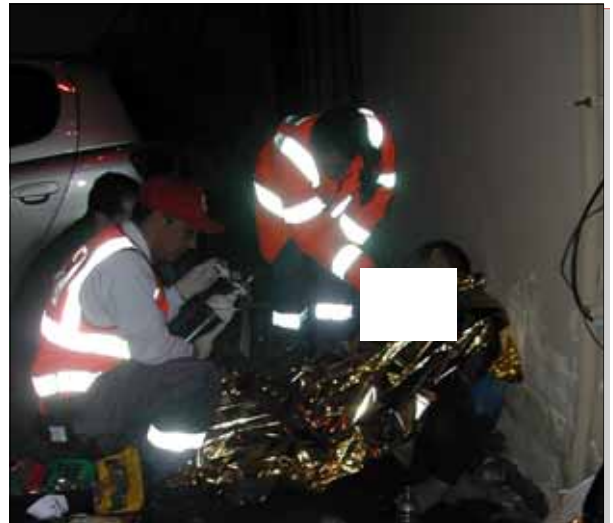
subject. I was, in fact, lucky to be chosen as the editor for the final version of this subsection of the declaration. From the discussion (and sometimes debate!) it was concluded that volunteering teaches responsibility, leadership skills, tolerance, and democratic values. Volunteering also is a good means to combat social problems by channeling youth's energy to a positive use. There was a general agreement among all participants that the volunteer needs to be given more recognition and respect. It also emerged from the discussions that the government should promote volunteering within its citizens since they represent a low investment with a big effect. Funding for volunteer NGOs was also raised in the discussion. The full declaration can be viewed from ISCA's webpage at www.isca-web.org/declaration-eysf2005.pdf.

Overall, I consider my attendance to the EYSF as a very positive experience, and I have to admit that I was impressed upon how different cultures can leave behind those discriminatory differences and work together to achieve a common objective. I would also like to thank those that gave me this opportunity as well as the organizers of the activity who worked thoroughly to ensure that the whole event ran seamlessly and successfully.

■ New year`s eve

~ Jean Paul Bajada

New Year's Eve is universally associated with celebrations for the birth of a new year, where drinks flow abundantly. To ensure safety for those who celebrate this occasion, organizations are mobilized to provide safety services. One of the organizations which provided such services was our own Gozitan Branch, which this year was entrusted to offer first aid service at an event which was organized at the Valletta Water Front. The team consisted of paramedics and ambulance technicians, with ambulance RGA2 and the emergency vehicle RGV1, offering support. We were all prepared for all the types of cases that one could encounter and associate with an open bar party.



■ Assisting a casualty

Briefly, I can say that we were quite busy that evening. We had the opportunity to help a considerable amount of people and use various medical techniques that we don't use on a day-to-day basis. Fortunately, an update course was done in the past days before the occasion to refresh the techniques done in the EMT-B course, and I can say that we managed quite good. In behalf of the Gozitan Branch of the Malta Red Cross, I wish to thank the organizers, which gave us the opportunity to offer our service at their venue, and all the volunteers which participated and gave a very useful hand in the goings of this event.

■ Water world

~ Etienne Micallef



■ Fracno one of the red Cross divers

Water world is one off the projects that the Gozo Branch will be embarking on the coming summer. It consists of integrating disabled persons into sports, to be more precise into the sports of diving. Our idea is to introduce disabled persons to the sport of diving. Currently a team of senior youth volunteers are undergoing preparations so as to be able to run this project. All participants will be given a participation certificate, besides a photo/video of the occasions. It is being planned that this is not a one off event but a regular activity being held thought the summer months. Special thanks goes to Atlantis diving Centre of Marsalfon Gozo for offering support towards this event. Water world is funded by an European union projects– youth initiatives.

CHOGM and visit by His Royal Highness Prince Philip ~ Franco Vella



The CHOGM Logo and flag

Malta Red Cross Gozo Branch were once again called into action by the department of health to act as stand by paramedical technicians for the recent Royal visit to Gozo. RGA2 was stationed outside the Emergency department of Gozo General Hospital. Luckily, the state visit went without a hitch, and many visitors had the opportunity to see HRH Prince Philip.

This years Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting was held in Malta. Security was on high alert throughout the conference, with all public servants pulled in from days off and leave were cut short. Once again Malta Red Cross were proud to be able to offer their services to this historical event.

We were called upon by the Health department to shadow dignitaries that were coming to Gozo for a day.

The day was a brisk autumn day, were we went to the Gozo General Hospital where we were accompanied by Dr. Marlene Attard and by Nurse Anthony Zammit. We then embarked on our way to the Radisson Golden Sands Resort. Where we were met with the security post that was in charge of all security for the event. After which we waited for our guests to board their respective busses and made way to Cirkewwa.

The Gozo Channel staff were also called into service and held a private ferry for this crossing. We also had a naval presence that shadowed the ferry crossing. (Well done to all concerned).



At the Ggantija temples

Once on land, we proceeded to Ggantija where our guests of honour had a tour around the temple. After which we then made our way to The Gozo Heritage. A luncheon was held at Ta Cenc Hotel then it was time to say goodbye to our guests. As we escorted them back to the hotel. We also had a backup unit standing by at the Gozo General Hospital RGV1 was fully loaded and at the ready should the need arise. A similar set up was adopted during the commonwealth youth forum held in Gozo.



Exhibition set up at the sports complex



The clinic set up at the sports complex

Christmas get together

~ Marita Micallef

Almost all volunteers , members, supporters and their respective families attended this years Christmas get together. All those present enjoyed the good food and the nice atmosphere. This year event took place at Calypso hotel.



Christmas dinner



Confirmation of the new bishop

~ Carmel Micallef

Sunday 22nd January was a red letter day for our branch. It was when Mons. Mario Grech was ordained Bishop of Gozo. As early as 6.30 in the morning Franco opened the Red Cross head office. Volunteers began to arrive some afterwards.

Both ambulances and emergency car hand been checked for everything including equipment the day before. At 7.30 am the volunteers (33 in total assembled in the hall. A operational brief was delivered by Etienne. Volunteers were divided into teams. By 8.00am we left for the Cathedral. Soon we were putting up the first aid post and clinic. This was situated in the crafts museum,. There we had equipment and stores to cater for more then a hundred people.

I was appointed as operation officer. It was my duty to see that all runs smoothly. I explained to the team leaders where their place was. In fact there were 3 teams in the Cathedral, 2 in the square and one team in the first and post/clinic. Apart for this there were the ambulances and emergency car with their respective teams. As operation officer my place was on he bastions overlooking the square. Dr A Abea offered her assistance in case of need. Overall there were three casualties and was case was transported home. Members of our youth Red Cross also came into action that day. 8 youths participated with the volunteers. They were allocated one with each team and 2 in the first aid post. Their job was to help the volunteers in the administration of the posts and to act as radio communicators.



The front line ambulance was stationed at castle hill



Tony by the first aid post

EMT-FR and EMT-B update

~ Etienne Micallef



An Update and training session was organized to all paramedic basics and first responders. The training update aimed in refreshing the key skills to all volunteers besides training on new equipment that the branch has bought.



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