

## “Strongmen” in the Headquarters!

Written by AG

Thursday, 18 June 2009 09:52

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**Immense effort, competition, sweat and overcoming one’s weaknesses – it was all about “the Challenge” mounted by Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Markos to all soldiers and civilians working at Baltic Barracks.**

It has not been easy at all. Seven gruelling sports events, such as 25 pull-ups, 50 box jumps, 500 metre row, 50 kettlebell cleans and presses, 50 deadlifts, 50 wall ball shots and 400 metre run in body armour were joint into one competition, which was supposed to be performed as fast as possible. Taking into account high number of repetitions within each of the event and the actual weight to be lifted, it was the real challenge...

### **The Challenge**

17 June 2009, 1 o’clock sharp. After several weeks of intensive preparations, 11 brave souls from 6 nations turned up for “the Challenge” at the Corps Gym. Competitive spirit was felt in the air. Apart from the sportsmen, there were numerous supporters present and several “officials” who were counting the time and making sure all events were performed accurately.

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It was not about medals, certificates or podiums, though. It was about satisfaction of overcoming one's weaknesses and facing "the Challenge". The competitions were conducted in two weight categories: light and heavy. How fierce the rivalry was proved the fact that only a few seconds decided upon the victory in the heavy category. Polish Lieutenant Colonel Wojciech Wiśniewski achieved the best result with 17 minutes and 24 seconds, whereas American Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Markos was only 10 seconds slower. *"I am very satisfied with the fact that I won but, at the same time, I know I could have done better"*, Lieutenant Colonel Wisniewski commented on his result. This, in fact, leaves an option of future competitions and improvement of results open.

In the light category Slovak Captain Marcel Trojan triumphed with the time 20 minutes and 42 seconds. Just after the competition he said: *"It was a gift for my son who is 7 months today. Although I feel more like a football player and do not spend much time in the gym, I just wanted to try it. And I did my best"*, he added.

### The Concept

It was Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Markos' idea to introduce "the Challenge" to the Headquarters, and afterwards, to face it as one of the participants. This American officer has even created a special website presenting the whole process of his preparations for this particular competition. In fact, "the Challenge" was composed of such events that work for the soldier's benefit and allow for the improvement of skills useful on the battlefield. *"I think training like this is relevant to combat"*, Lieutenant Colonel stated. He also explained that soldiers do not usually run 5 km in combat. But it is more probable for them to run short distances with a load, for example. Lieutenant Colonel Markos got inspired by the fitness movement Cross Fit popular among the uniformed in the US as well as by one of the films, for which actors playing the Spartans had to train intensively to be in good shape. Among other things, they had to face a challenge, in which there were 300 repetitions of different exercises. However, it is easy to count that in the Corps' Challenge repeating actually exceeded 300...

Already after the competition, Lieutenant Colonel Markos expressed his satisfaction with the interest in "the Challenge": *"What I am happy with is that a lot of guys worked really hard, some of them trained harder than others, but when they got here, with everybody watching, then they were really motivated to do their best"*. The American officer also revealed his plan to create a sports club to train together on a regular basis and prepare for other challenges.

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