

AFM drill team marches again

Kurt Bugeja Coster

An Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) drill team last night marched along Republic Street, Valletta, something that has not been done for over two decades.

Ten soldiers, including a woman, from all the AFM's units, kept their chins raised as they performed a series of rifle and foot drill movements, at times creating their own cadence with their boot heels' stomping or with their rifle-handling, besides keeping step to the beat of the AFM band's bass drum behind them.

A group of tourists and locals assembled at the perimeter of the St George's Square, watching in awe and clapping after each manoeuvre.

The AFM commander, Brigadier Carmel Vassallo, who watched the drill team from a balcony at the President's Palace, explained that this was the first time an AFM drill team has paraded in Valletta since he assumed command of the AFM.



Photo: Jason Borg.

He said the AFM band is being reorganised after the retirement of a number of its members, who had completed their minimum period of service and left the force earlier this year. Since then, three new members joined the band and a further 11 will be taken on after completing the basic military training course. The band should be at full complement within a year's time.

Captain Mark Mallia, band secretary and HQ AFM's staff officer in-charge of ceremonial, said the aim of the drill team is to feature together with the band during national ceremonies. It is composed of soldiers of all ranks who have been training for the past four months, he explained.