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Dr Mahathir awarded Green Beret for his `true commando spirit'

MALACCA, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was today awarded the Honorary Green Beret by the Special Forces Regiment which cited him for his "true commando spirit" in contributing to the country and the regiment.

The beret is the symbol and identity of the elite commando force.

It was brought by a trooper who parachuted from a CN-235 transport aircraft accompanied by nine commandos, and then handed to Army Chief Jen Datuk Seri Hashim Hussein who presented it to Dr Mahathir.

The citation for the award singled out Dr Mahathir's sacrifices, professionalism and bravery towards putting Malaysia on par with the developed countries.

"His resilience and courage, which does not know the meaning of giving up, is something all Malaysians can be proud of. This is the true commando spirit. These characteristics serve as a model not only to the Armed Forces but to all Malaysians."

The presentation was one of the highlights of Dr Mahathir's four-hour visit to the regiment's base in Sungai Udang.

Speaking to about 2,500 people, who were mostly members of the Armed Forces and their families, Dr Mahathir said that he did not feel he deserved the award.

"I know the members of the regiment have sacrificed a lot more," he said.

Among those present were Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Shafie Apdal, Defence Ministry secretary-general Datuk Hashim Meon, Armed Forces Chief Jen Tan Sri Mohd Zahidi Zainuddin and Special Forces Regiment chairman Brig Jen Ahmad Rodi Zakaria.

Later, Dr Mahathir, clad in army fatigues, presented certificates for excellent service to 17 former commandos.

They included six of the force's former chairmen - Jen (rtd) Tan Sri Borhan Ahmad, Mej Jen (rtd) Datuk Harun Taib, the late Brig Jen Datuk Hasbullah Yusof, Mej Jen (rtd) Datuk Mohd Ramli Ismail, Mej Jen (rtd) Datuk Paduka Ghazali Ibrahim and Brig Jen (rtd) Datuk Pahlawan Daud Ariffin.

The others were PW I (rtd) Ariffin Mamat, the late Trooper Rasali Buang, the late Lans Kpl Saimon Tarikat, PW II (rtd) Makmor Said, Mej (rtd) Baharin Abdul Jalil, Trooper (rtd) Sigai Nawan, the late Lt Kol Ahmad Abdul Rashid, Staff Sjn (rtd) Md Ali Ahmad, the late Sjn (rtd) Zaki Nordin, Staff Sjn (rtd) Mui Ahmad and the late Kpl Ismail Ahmad.

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