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Ex-senator bestowed Russian award

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - A former Malaysian senator has become the second Malaysian to be bestowed with the Russian Order of Friendship by President Vladimir Putin.

Lt-Kol (rtd) Datuk Abdul Hamid Ibrahim, 64, the World Veterans' Federation (WVF) president, received the award from Russian Ambassador to Malaysia, Vladimir Nikolaevich Morozov, at the Russian National Day celebration at Nikko Hotel tonight.

The award is in recognition of his contribution to the development of the international veterans' movement as well as strengthening friendship and co-operation between the people.

Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad received a similar award from Putin last year.

Abdul Hamid described the award as an honour for all Malaysians and the veterans' fraternity from all over the world in recognition of the services and sacrifices of soldiers.

"I am proud to be bestowed with such a prestigious award by a prominent world leader like Putin," he said. He said he hoped that it would spur more Malaysians to serve the world for peace and harmony.

Abdul Hamid was the first non-European to be elected WVF president for a three-year term in 2000. He was re-elected unopposed for a second term last December.

The WVF was established in Paris, France, in 1950 and represents over 30 million veterans and their dependants in more than 170 veterans' organisations in 85 countries.

Abdul Hamid, from Johor Baru, was commissioned as a second-lieutenant with the Royal Malay Regiment in 1956 after attending the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, England.

He subsequently attended the Army Staff College in Camberley, England, and the Joint Services Staff College in Canberra, Australia.

After retiring from the armed forces in 1974 to go into business, he devoted his time to the veterans' movement locally and internationally, serving in various capacities including as WVF vice-president (1988-1997) and treasurer-general (1997-2000).

He became president of the Royal Malay Regiment Officers Club in 1993, president of the Malaysian Armed Forces Veterans Council in 1999, Malaysian Armed Forces Veterans Affairs Advisory Council member in 2001 and Malaysian Government Pensioners' Association council member in 2002.

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