George Washington Rugby Club helps raise more than $20,000

Story and photo by MC3(SW) Devon Dow,
***USS George Washington* Public Affairs**

USS George Washington (CVN 73) (*GW*) Rugby Football Club helped raise more than $20,000 at the 7th Fat Boy 10's Invitational, an annual charity event held at Clark Airbase on Challenger Field, Sept. 4.

The Fat Boy 10's Invitational is a weekend-long golf and rugby tournament held in Angeles City, Republic of the Philippines, aiming to raise money for local orphanages. This event also helps develop the sport of rugby in the Philippines.

The invitational was hosted by a participating team based out of Hong Kong, The Pot Bellied Pigs. The Pigs are a social rugby club and charitable organization committed to expanding rugby in Asia.

AESN Andrew Matyas makes a play during a rugby match at the 7th Fat Boy 10's Invitational, an annual charity event held at Clark Airbase on Challenger Field Sept. 4. At the two-day event, 14 social rugby teams from Southeast Asia took part in the charity event and raised more than $20,000 for local orphanages.

This year, 14 social rugby clubs from around southeast Asia competed. Children from local orphanages attended the event participating as ball boys and playing their own games during intermissions during the tournament. The *GW* Rugby Football Club finished top in their division and were presented with a team trophy at the charity dinner held later that evening.

"This has been a once in a lifetime experience I will never forget," said Electrician's Mate 3rd Class Chris Ford, one of *GW* rugby team captains. "It's been a great opportunity to come out and support a great cause while playing the sport we love."

The *GW* Rugby Football Club is comprised of enlisted Sailors and officers who in their personal time, practice, train and when in port, participate in rugby tournaments. The club has played rugby matches in South Korea and Singapore during the ship's summer patrol. To make it to the tournament on time, the rugby club was flown off *GW* a day before the ship arrived in Manila.

"I am very proud the *GW* had the opportunity to have itself aligned with such an organization and event," said Lt. Cmdr. Sean Ricks. "Doing events like these only helps *GW* and the Navy as we continue strengthening our partnerships in the Pacific."

The president of the Pot Bellied Pigs, Anson Bailey, said he was impressed by the quality of play from the *GW* rugby club and that their presence in the tournament was a great addition.

"It's very exciting for us to have the boys from the *GW* here today. They are truly ambassadors who have represented their ship and their country well," he said. "It's the first time we had a U.S. club in the tournament and it is the first time we have had a Navy ship take part in it as well, it's a first for us in many ways and we could not be happier."

During the tournament, the mayor of Angeles City, Edgardo D. Pamintuan, visited to say a few words to the teams and to show his appreciation for the charitable work being done at the event. While there, members of the *GW* rugby club got the opportunity to meet him and presented him with one of the ship's challenge coins.

"It was an honor and a privilege to see Sailors from the *USS George Washington* out here at this event today supporting a great cause," he said. "The annual event is surely a great way to help our youth and provides them with opportunities to excel. I hope to see the *George Washington* club return to take part in this event."

Bailey said with the success of this year's tournament he would love to see the *GW* rugby club return to participate in the future.

"It would be great to have the team come back every year and get even more involved if possible," he said. "We welcome rugby players from all over the globe and hopefully we will be welcoming the *GW* gentlemen back for the 8th Fat Boy 10's Invitational."

Safest summer on record concludes for U.S. Navy, Marine Corps

By April Phillips, NSC Public Affairs

Labor Day marked the traditional end of summer for Sailors and Marines and also the end of the Naval Safety Center (NSC) annual summer safety campaign, "Live to Play, Play to Live."

Although mishap reports for the long weekend are not complete, it appears that both the Navy and Marine Corps enjoyed the safest summer since NSC started keeping these statistics.

However, that still means that 14 Sailors and 14 Marines lost their lives between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. Nonetheless, this is a considerable improvement from 2009, when 39 Sailors and Marines lost their lives during the same period.

While that is an achievement to be proud of, NSC is not declaring victory, especially in light of the fact that one Sailor and one Marine died during Labor Day weekend. Mishap reports indicate that both deaths may be related to alcohol.

"There have been a lot fewer cases of DUI (drinking under the influence)," said NSC Command Master Chief (AW/SW) Dominick Torchia. "However, there may be some complacency about the dangers of over-consumption in general. We're seeing cases of Sailors and Marines basically drinking themselves to death."

While most people seem to be getting the message about designated drivers and safe ride programs, leaders need to continue educating their Sailors and Marines about the health risks of alcohol, including alcohol poisoning and reduced inhibitions that may lead to risky behavior, said Torchia.

Although the summer 2010 has ended, Torchia urged renewed focus on risk management, so the positive mishap trends of the summer will continue into the cooler seasons.

"Many of the risks are actually the same," said Torchia. "There are just different conditions. We think of people traveling for their summer vacations, but they are also on the road for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The folks who are out there participating in summer sports will probably also take part in winter sports. We ask them to take the same risk management mentality and adapt it to the new conditions."

To that end, Torchia recommends "winterizing" homes and vehicles now, rather than waiting until weather conditions deteriorate. He also encourages everyone to get in shape now for winter sporting activities such as skiing, snowboarding or even football.

"Prepare and train before you go out and try something like that. If you haven't skied before, take a course before you hit the slopes," said Torchia.

While many risks remain consistent through all four seasons, fire dangers do escalate in fall and winter, due to faulty heating systems, unsupervised fireplaces and dangerous space heaters.

"Now is the time to prepare your home. Weatherproof your house and have annual maintenance performed on your fireplaces and heating systems," Torchia said. "Doing this now will keep you ahead of the game."

While Sailors and Marines prepare for fall and winter, he also warned them to continue being vigilant about hurricanes in the states and typhoons in Japan. The East Coast of the United States was recently spared when Hurricane Earl remained off the coast, but the season runs through November and Torchia encouraged everyone to stay on guard against these dangerous storms.

He also pointed out that a new school year is underway and drivers should pay special attention for kids who might dart out into the street.