Yokosuka Sailors compete in annual George I. Purdy RHIB race

Story and photo by MCSA Michael Mulcare, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Sailors from afloat commands at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) faced off at the annual George I. Purdy Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) Race at Green Bay Marina Sept. 28.

The annual race provides every forward-deployed unit here the opportunity to show their deck seamanship, navigation and engineering skills. Commands participating in the fun, team-building event include *USS George Washington* (CVN 73), *USS Fitzgerald* (DDG 62), *USS Shiloh* (CG 67) and *USS Mustin* (DDG 89).

Sailors assigned to *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) position their rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB) to the starting line for Yokosuka's annual George I. Purdy RHIB race Sept. 28. The *George Washington* RHIB crew won the 2009 competition.

Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Kevin McCollum from the *George Washington* squad said competitions like this bring out great camaraderie.

"We're all one team, but it's fun to show a little competiveness from time-to-time," said McCollum.

Distinguished guests at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation hosted event included CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed, *George Washington* Commanding Officer Capt. David Lausman and Madori Purdy, the widow of George Purdy, the namesake of the yearly competition.

"It's a tradition every year going back to the 1970s," said Seaman Michael Turner of the *George Washington* team. "They have all the ships on base get their search and rescue boats and we race them."

Turner says the competition also tests a RHIB operator's ability to properly maneuver the boat and the crew's ability to control movement without power. During the race competitors must complete a 100-meter row, followed by a 400-meter motorized movement. After reaching the final checkpoint, each boat crew turns off its engines and paddles the RHIB past the seawall and to the finish line.

Keeping in the spirit of heritage and good-natured fun, the *George Washington* RHIB team arrived in garb reminiscent of colonial Sailors, even mimicking the famous crossing of the Delaware made by America's founding father and command namesake – George Washington.

After a neck-and-neck race against a skilled and motivated *Shiloh* team, the crew of *George Washington's* RHIB won by half of a boat length.

"I feel pretty good about winning," said McCollum. "I'm not going to lie, I was pretty confident we were going to win. We came out pretty fiercely, as we always do."

After winning the event, the *George Washington* RHIB crew accepted the 2009 George I. Purdy RHIB race trophy from Weed and Purdy.

George I. Purdy was an influential force in the Yokosuka community. Purdy served as commander of an LST-542 class Tank Landing Ship, LST-973, in World War II. He also served in Gen. Douglas MacArthur's occupation government in Tokyo. In 1972, he founded the Commodore Perry Council of Tokyo and the Navy League of the United States in Japan. In 1985, the Emperor of Japan awarded him the Third Class Order of the Sacred Treasure in recognition of his post-war era contributions to relations between Japan and the United States.

Participants endure Yokosuka Salty Dog Sprint Triathlon series

By MC3 Charles Oki, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Yokosuka Sailors and community members wrapped up the Salty Dog Sprint Triathlon series at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Sept. 26.

The Salty Dog Sprint Triathlon consists of a 400 meter swim, 10.5 mile bike ride and 5 kilometer run and is the last of three events held this season.

Kyle Rhodus, CFAY athletic director and triathlon participant with a finishing time of 1 hour and 7 minutes, spoke about how events like the sprint triathlon can help people stay in shape and live a healthier lifestyle.

"I think the biggest thing about the triathlon is that it's typically a lifestyle change for people," said Rhodus. "When people get into triathlon, they usually can't just come out and do it, they need to train to do it. That involves a lot of swimming, running and biking. Just by training to do a triathlon you get yourself in shape. If people just want to give it a try, they can make a team with a different person taking part in each of the three legs of the race."

While most people recognize that the Navy's culture of fitness entails more than just successfully completing a physical fitness assessment twice a year, many Sailors have found that events like sprint triathlons and road races are great options to judge and improve physical fitness.

"Physical fitness is a key element to the U.S. Navy," said Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW/AW) Broward Maryan, a Dallas native, who finished with a time of 1 hour and 9 minutes. "We are part of the military and just because we're the maritime branch doesn't mean we should value fitness or our physical capabilities any less than anyone else. Just last year, on the [USS] *George Washington*, we experienced something that required everyone to be in the best physical shape possible," Maryan said of a shipboard fire the crew battled in 2008.

Maryan also added that events like this are a great way to enjoy a weekend outdoors.

Yokosuka Sailors and community members swarm Green Bay Marina to start the 400-meter swim portion of the Salty Dog Sprint Triathlon Sept. 26. The Salty Dog Sprint Triathlon tests participants physical and mental stamina through a 400 meter swim, 10.5 mile bike ride and a 5 kilometer run.

Photo by Kazuyuki Takagi

"Most of the people out here are here to have fun," added Maryan. "It's great just to get out on this beautiful day, jump in the water, go for a bike ride and then go for a run - if you like to be in shape it's a combination of stuff that can't be beat."