Mustin Sailors celebrate centennial of naval aviation

Story and photo by MC3 Andrew Ryan Smith,
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Sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyer *USS Mustin* (DDG 89) celebrated 100 years of naval aviation with a ceremony honoring one of the ship's namesakes, Capt. Henry Mustin, Dec. 7.

USS Mustin was named for the Mustin family, Henry Mustin's children and grandchildren continued the families naval service.

Mustin became one of the Navy's youngest commanding officers in 1898 during the Philippine Insurrection. At the age of 39, Mustin learned to fly and became one of the first officially recognized naval aviators in what would come to be a long and prestigious line that continues to this day.

"Henry Mustin was one of the initial naval aviators, and this ship was named after him and his children who continued his legacy to commemorate his accomplishments," said Rear Adm. John Haley, Commander Task Force 70. "One of his most recognizable achievements was to be the first person to make a shipborne catapult launch of an aircraft from the battleship USS North Carolina (AB 2) in 1915. In a time when flying was uncommon, he had the vision to innovate and adapt."

Haley reminded the Sailors that even though their ship's primary purpose is not aviation support, they still play a vital role in the carrier task force and that naval aviation can only exist with a strong surface element.

"Today we celebrated the ship's namesake, Henry Mustin, a founder of naval aviation," said Cmdr. Scott Tait, commanding officer of *USS Mustin*. "I think it is important for the crew to know their heritage and know that what they do is more than just a job."

Among his many accomplishments, Mustin helped design the internationally recognizable gold aviator's wings, worn by all naval pilots and served as the first commandant of Aeronautic Station Pensacola, now Naval Air Station Pensacola.

Sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyer *USS Mustin* (DDG 89) parade the colors during a ceremony commemorating the centennial of Naval Aviation Dec. 7. *USS Mustin* is named in honor of the Mustin family, which includes Capt. Henry C. Mustin, one of the pioneers of Naval Aviation who made the first shipborne catapult launch in history.

USS George Washington Sailors enjoy command picnic

Story and photos by
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USS George Washington (CVN 73) Sailors and their families took part in a command picnic at Purdy Gym on Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Dec. 9.

The event gave more than 3,000 *George Washington* Sailors a chance to socialize with each other and enjoy games and food during the holiday season.

The picnic was an opportunity for the command to award its Sailors after their successful summer deployment and to mark the end of another successful year as the Navy's only permanently forward-deployed nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

Family members of Sailors from the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) enjoy a fun competition at the ship's winter picnic inside Purdy Gym aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan Dec. 9.

Although inclement weather brought the event indoors, the ship's Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) division's Fun Boss, Rebekah McKoy said the event still gave the crew an opportunity to build camaraderie.

"Events like these help to boost morale and give Sailors and their families something to do in the winter time," said McKoy.

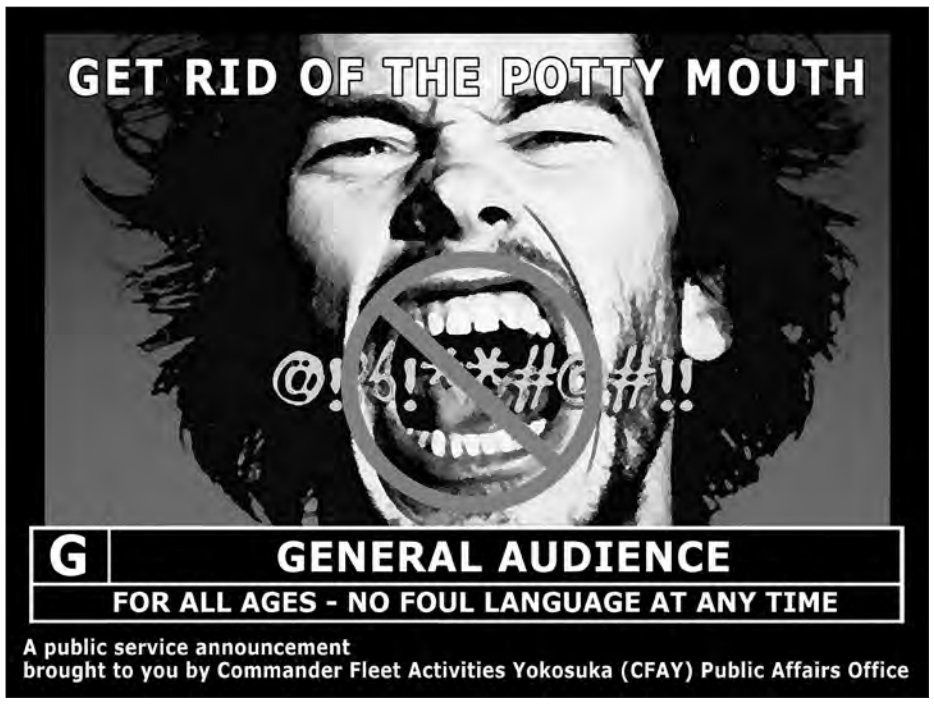
While MWR provided many different carnival style amusements, the inclusion of "Re-Ball", a type of indoor paintball played with reusable rubber balls, proved a hit for all hands.

Joe Billa, an MWR Recreation Assistant for outdoor recreation, said everyone seemed to be having a really great time.

"I love sitting around listening to players recap their games in totally unrealistic ways. People tend to claim to have done amazing things in there, the adrenaline must throw things askew. It's really fun to listen to," said Billa.

Aviation Electronics Technician Airman Kaden Andrews, from Wichita Falls, Texas was thankful that the ship hosted an event for the ship's company and their loved ones.

"It was a blast, and the fact that the command was willing to plan an event like this really shows their appreciation for the crew," said Andrews.

Sailors from Supply Department, MWR and the First Class Petty Officers' Association helped make the get-together possible. Many of them donated time to set up, cook food and clean-up the picnic.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Airman Jeffery M. Alleman from Finlayson, ME and stationed aboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) enjoys a game of bean bag toss at the ship's winter picnic inside Purdy Gym aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Dec. 9.