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Fleet Week fire drill

Sailors douse live fires in contest

April 27, 2011 | By Robert Nolin, Sun Sentinel

Shooting flames, flooded chambers, bodies in smoke-filled rooms: These were some of the challenges facing about 50 sailors during an emergency training competition Tuesday at Port Everglades.

Teams of disaster specialists from three Navy warships in port for Fleet Week — the USS Iwo Jima, USS Normandy and USS Ross, an amphibious assault ship, cruiser and destroyer, respectively — showed off their skills in the 10th annual Damage Control Olympics at Resolve Maritime Academy at Port Everglades.

"These are realistic scenarios that might be encountered on the ship," said Martha Lord, the academy's marketing manager.

Participants had to extinguish fires on open decks and closed rooms, "rescue" a mannequin from a smoky room, and patch a ruptured pipe before it could flood a chamber. There also were relay races by team members in full firefighting gear.

"It's an opportunity for them to do an exercise with real fire — on a ship they can't do that," Lord said.

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