



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Service Academy participation in Annapolis-to-Newport Race is long-standing tradition**

### **Naval Academy, Coast Guard Academy already entered for 2015, race committee challenges other academies to join battle for SURFLANT Prize**

ANNAPOLIS, MD (January 16, 2015) – Service academy teams have a long, storied history of competing in the Annapolis-to-Newport Race. The tradition dates back to the inaugural race in 1947 when the Naval Academy entered *Highland Light* and *Vamarie* in Class A along with *Resolute* and *Alert* in Class B.

The Coast Guard Academy came aboard in 1953 with a boat named *Arion* while the Merchant Marine Academy made its first appearance in 1959 with *Ice Fire*. All three academies would become regular participants in the biennial event, prompting organizers with Annapolis Yacht Club to establish a perpetual trophy that promoted competition among them.

The SURFLANT Prize is awarded by the Commander Surface Forces Atlantic to the service academy yacht that posts the best corrected time in the Annapolis-to-Newport Race. That prestigious trophy will be up for grabs again in 2015 with the Naval Academy and Coast Guard Academy having committed to competing.

Navy has already entered five boats – the TP52 *Constellation* (HPR class) and J/122 *Dolphin* (IRC) as well as 44-footers *Defiance*, *Integrity* and *Swift* (all PHRF). Coast Guard intends to race its J/44 *Glory*.

“Our midshipmen have always enjoyed the Annapolis-to-Newport Race, which is one of the great offshore challenges,” said Jahn Tihansky, head coach of the Varsity Offshore Sailing Team at Navy. “Considering the race starts right on our back porch, it’s only natural that we would participate.”

Annapolis-to-Newport is an important part of the summer training program for the Naval Academy offshore sailors and serves as a launch point for other key regattas. After getting its fleet to the New England region, Navy will compete in such events as the Marion-to-Bermuda Race and Block Island Race Week.

Tihansky said the 475-nautical mile voyage, which starts in the Chesapeake Bay and finishes at the entrance of Narragansett Bay with an Atlantic Ocean passage in between, provides ideal training for midshipmen.

“It’s a very strategic race because of the combination of inshore and offshore elements. There are a lot of critical decisions that need to be made along the way,” Tihansky said. “It requires solid preparation, sound execution and strong navigation.”

Navy is currently conducting winter classroom training for its offshore sailors, who will kick off the spring season in early March. Tihansky has already announced skippers for the summer regattas with second class midshipmen Charlie Morris (*Corsair*), Dax Ansley (*Dolphin*), Kyle Briggs (*Swift*), Jared Valeske (*Defiance*) and Tom Wester (*Integrity*) leading the Annapolis-to-Newport Race crews.

*Swift*, one of Navy’s older McCurdy and Rhodes-designed 44-footers, has captured class honors for the Annapolis-Newport Race on two occasions (1993, 2011). *Defiance* and *Integrity* are part of Navy’s fleet of Mark II 44-footers that were designed by David Pedrick.

“We will have crews with a range of experience levels. Some of the midships will have gone offshore before while others will be making their debuts,” Tihansky said. “For the newbies, there is no greater trial by fire than the Annapolis-to-Newport Race. You join an exclusive club of sailors once you have completed this particular race.”

Annapolis Yacht Club has established two trophies specific to the Naval Academy. The Gerber Cup is awarded to the Navy entry that posts the best corrected time while the Cary Arthur Memorial Trophy goes to navigator of the Navy entry with the best corrected time.

Coast Guard Academy will have 10 cadets aboard its old warhorse *Glory*, which has competed in Annapolis-Newport four times and enjoyed success. Lt. Robert Lally skippered *Glory* to victory in IRC II during the 2007 edition of the race.

“Those are huge events for our team in terms of getting our kids offshore to expand their experience and skills,” Coast Guard Academy head coach Jack Neades said. “There is a lot of value to doing a passage such as this. Over the years, we have found the Annapolis-to-Newport Race to be a tremendous challenge for our sailors and they very much look forward to competing.”

Neades, in his eighth season at Coast Guard, knows all about the prestigious SURFLANT Prize and is eager to see the coveted piece of hardware return to the service academy located in New London, Connecticut.

“One of these years we hope to take that trophy away from *Swift*,” Neades said. “*Swift* is a boat that sails very well to its rating and always has a secret weapon aboard in (assistant coach) Pete Carrico.”

There is a possibility the United States Military Academy could join the fray in the future. Army, which has participated in offshore sailing regattas such as the Shields Regatta and McMillan Trophy over the years, recently acquired *Invincible* – one of Navy's Mark I 44-footers.

“We consider the SURFLANT Prize to be one of the prestigious perpetual trophies associated with the Annapolis-to-Newport Race so the committee strongly encourages all service academies to field an entry,” said co-chairman Dick Neville, adding that Annapolis Yacht Club would like to see such institutions as SUNY-Maritime and Massachusetts Maritime also participate.

The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of the Annapolis-to-Newport Race will start June 5 and 6, 2015 on the Chesapeake Bay. The official event website, [annapolisnewportrace.com](http://annapolisnewportrace.com), serves as one-stop shopping for participants.

###

For more information, please contact:

Margriet Mitchell  
Media Chair, A2N  
[media@annapolisnewportrace.com](mailto:media@annapolisnewportrace.com)

Linda Ambrose  
AYC Regatta Manager  
[info@annapolisnewportrace.com](mailto:info@annapolisnewportrace.com)