



## IRIDIUM® PUSH-TO-TALK PROVIDES ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS IN A HISTORIC YACHT RACE

*When the organizers of the Japan-Palau Goodwill Yacht Race needed a reliable way to communicate with its participants, Iridium and Icom partnered to deliver weather-resilient group communications over the only truly global satellite communication network. Using the Iridium Push-To-Talk (PTT) service, the Icom IC-SAT100 device enabled critical safety and status communications among race officials and participants.*

### THE CHALLENGE

When Ken Ando sought to organize a yacht race in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Palau's independence, he knew communications among the racers, skippers, and organizers would be important – not only leading up to the race, but as it progressed.

In late 2019, after months of preparations, the Goodwill Yacht Race took place, with seven competitors sailing over 3,000 kilometers, from Yokohama, Japan to Palau over the course of nearly a month.

In order to ensure participant safety, the organizers held a twice-daily roll call for the race yachts and escort ship to report their locations, wind direction, and conditions of their boats. While skippers could have used satellite

### COMPANIES

- **Icom** is a communications equipment manufacturer that produces radio solutions for terrestrial, maritime, and aviation markets.
- **Iridium** is the owner and operator of the world's only truly global satellite communications system.
- **FURUNO** develops navigation and communications equipment and focuses on safety and efficiency in vessels' operation and sustainable fishing.

### CHALLENGES

- Yacht race organizers needed a reliable solution for fast communications in all weather conditions.
- Very High Frequency (VHF) marine radios are vital for inshore connections, but cannot provide communication over the horizon.
- Although traditional satellite phones work well over long distances, they are not well-suited for rapid group communications.

### BENEFITS

- Iridium PTT provides weather-resilient group communications anywhere in the world.
- Icom's IC-SAT100 features a rugged, water-proof design with built-in GPS for extreme situations.
- The Iridium PTT service enables real time communications.

phones to complete the roll call, the phones would be limited to one-to-one communication, prohibiting real-time information-sharing. Additionally, some satellite phones are enabled by Geostationary (GEO) networks, which require users to manually point the handset antenna toward a communication satellite's fixed location, causing further delays in receiving critical communications at sea.

VHF marine radios can be used for inshore maritime communications, for example contacting a local coast guard, but they are not a viable option given the long length of the race. Plus, some radios require complicated license applications.

The organizer needed a dependable communication tool that would provide connectivity over the air for quick and easy sharing of information between all yachts and that would work even in adverse weather conditions.

## THE SOLUTION

The organizers of the Goodwill Yacht Race chose to work with Japanese communications equipment manufacturer Icom, who recommended the Iridium Connected® IC-SAT100 for real-time, weather-resilient PTT services.

With just a push of a button, the IC-SAT100 allows one person to instantly connect with a talkgroup of a virtually unlimited number of people over the Iridium network.

Iridium's Low-Earth Orbit satellites constantly revolve around the planet, ensuring a connection is available. Additionally, the Icom PTT radio does not require a license, qualifications, or registration, making it a simple, ready-to-use solution for racers and organizers.

Throughout the month-long race, the yacht skippers



IC-SAT100



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Service Provider: Icom, FURUNO  
Enabling Product: Icom IC-SAT100  
Embedded Iridium Product: Iridium Core 9523 (PTT)  
Enabling Service: Iridium Push-To-Talk & Iridium Short Burst Data

used the IC-SAT100 to respond to roll calls twice a day, taking advantage of Iridium's simple, fast push-to-talk service, and allowing race participants to quickly share information with facilitators and fellow competitors.

A few days into the race, a severe storm neared the racing boats. Organizers on shore were able to warn participants of the weather quickly over the IC-SAT100, and continue to share real-time updates as the storm continued, keeping them all safe.

In addition to push-to-talk services, the race crews used a vessel-tracking system provided by Iridium partner FURUNO. Location data was automatically transmitted through Iridium's Short Burst Data® service and displayed on the race's official website so fans could track the boats online in real time.

## THE IMPACT

Iridium PTT was an essential part of the success of the Japan-Palau Goodwill Yacht Race, allowing organizers and participants to easily communicate and share crucial logistical and safety information.

Additionally, the location information visible on the IC-SAT100 during roll call allowed competitors to see their real-time rankings twice each day, and the high-quality audio kept the excitement alive throughout the race path.

## TAKE AWAY

Iridium Push-to-Talk and Icom's IC-SAT100 helped make the Japan-Palau Goodwill Yacht Race a success. According to race organizer Ken Ando, Iridium PTT is "an epochal system that can timely grasp the position information of yachts and immediately share it with everyone."



Yacht Racers

