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District 3 firefighters Bryce Lyshol, Scott Carscadden, Pete Williams and Mike Cotton take part in the recent Firefighter Combat Challenge in Seattle.

Photo courtesy of Hannah Cotton

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## South End firefighters take the Firefighter Combat Challenge

By [ROY JACOBSON](#)  
South Whidbey Record Reporter  
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Four members of South Whidbey Fire District 3 took part in the two-day Firefighter Combat Challenge

at the recent Pioneer Square Fire Festival in Seattle.

It was the first time Fire District 3 firefighters participated in the annual event, said Deputy Chief Mike Cotton.

“It was July and it was hot,” Cotton said. “It was in the 80s. We were wearing 40 pounds of gear designed to keep the heat out, but it keeps the heat in there, too.”

The four who participated — all members of the district’s fire and rescue team — were Scott Carscadden, Bryce Lyshol, Pete Williams and Cotton.

The Challenge seeks to encourage fitness and demonstrate professional rigor to the public, Cotton said. It rotates from among more than 25 cities. This year, it was part of the commemoration of the Great Seattle Fire. On the afternoon of June 6, 1889, an overturned carpenter’s glue pot started the most destructive fire in the city’s history.

Carscadden and Lyshol took part in the first day’s event. Wearing full-bunker gear and breathing apparatus, they raced other pairs in climbing a five-story tower; hoisting, chopping and dragging hoses; and rescuing a life-sized, 175-pound “victim” in a race against the clock.

There was a separate individual event for women, who could also join the men in the team event.

The victim was Rescue Randy, a fully articulated mannequin dressed in firefighter clothing, a rescue tool already used by the district.

Carscadden and Lyshol finished in about three minutes each, Cotton said. The winner was an entrant from Hayward, Calif., who completed the test in 1 minute, 32 seconds.

“They get guys from all over the West Coast, East Coast and Canada,” Cotton said. “Some of them have been doing this for years. It’s amazing how fast those guys can go.”

The next day, Williams and Cotton joined Carscadden and Lyshol in the team-relay event. Besides performing the required tasks, they had to pass a flashlight between them.

They competed with a team from Grants Pass, Ore., and made it into the second round before losing to a team from South Bay in Thurston County, Cotton said.

Winners of the relay were the “Men in Black” from the Vancouver, B.C. Fire Department.

Cotton said District 3 is planning to enter the event again next year.

He said the Challenge is expanding to countries throughout the world, including New Zealand, Germany, Argentina, Chile and South Africa.

“It was fun,” Cotton said. “And we learned some lessons about how to prepare ourselves for next year.”

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