State primary elections near, Sailors urged to register to vote

By Ben Avey, CFAY Public Affairs

As the memory of past elections fades from our national consciousness, it's time to re-spark the fire of election fever and once again begin the challenging task of electing our country's leaders.

With the Illinois state primary election in our wake and the balance of the state primaries ahead, the time has come to register or re-register to vote and request an absentee ballot for Sailors, family members and civilians on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY).

According to CFAY Assistant Voting Assistance Officer Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 1st Class (AW) Adrian Lawrence, fulfilling your civic duties is simpler than ever with Standard Form (SF) 76-A, otherwise known as the Registration and Absentee Ballot Request - Federal Post Card Application.

"You can register to vote and request an absentee ballot by filling out an SF-76 and sending it to your local election official," said Lawrence. "When you change duty stations, you will also use an SF-76 to update the address you want your absentee ballot sent to."

SF-76 is easily obtained by visiting the Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site www.fvap.gov and clicking on the link for uniformed military service members and their families. Simple directions will guide you to a page tailored specifically to the requirements of your state of legal residence where, if you are over the age of 18 and a U.S. citizen, you will be able to register to vote. Once you have filled out the required information on SF-76, click on the link to find the address of your local election official and mail in your request. In some states, you may have the option of sending in the request via fax.

For non-military civilians who are living overseas, the same Web site will guide you through the process; simply follow the initial link for citizens living outside the United States. Instead of registering by your legal address, you register based on the address of your last legal American residence.

Due to the differences in rules and schedules of each state, the Web site also lists state election schedules and provides key information on important rules, such as when a ballot must be received by election officials in order for your vote to be counted.

For shipboard Sailors who are underway and those on board CFAY, all forms and ballots should be mailed as early as possible in anticipation of extended transit time for all mail sent from overseas.

However, although you are overseas, as an absentee voter, you will be afforded all the same rights as those who currently reside at your home of residence.

"Being stationed overseas, many Sailors feel out of the loop when it comes to government issues," said Lawrence. "Absentee voting gives them the opportunity to voice their opinion and help decide who runs the government."

For more information about registering or re-registering to vote, requesting an absentee ballot or how to obtain election information, contact Lawrence at 243-5770 or e-mail to adrian.lawrence@fe.navy.mil, visit your command Voting Assistance Officer or go online to www.fvap.gov.

Primary Election Calendar

Alaska, Aug. 24
Arizona, Aug. 24
Arkansas, May 18
California, June 8
Colorado, Aug. 10
Connecticut, Aug. 10
Delaware, Sept. 14
Florida, Aug. 24
Georgia, July 20
Guam, Sept. 4
Hawaii, Sept. 18
Idaho, May 25
Illinois, Feb. 2
Indiana, May 4
Iowa, June 8
Kansas, Aug. 3
Kentucky, May 18
Louisiana, Aug. 28
Maine, June 8
Maryland, Sept. 14
Massachusetts, Sept. 14
Michigan, Aug. 3
Minnesota, Sept. 14
Mississippi, June 1
Missouri, Aug. 3
Montana, June 8
Nebraska, May 11
Nevada, June 8
New Hampshire, Sept. 14
New Jersey, June 8
New Mexico, June 1
New York, Sept. 14
North Carolina, May 4
North Dakota, June 8
Ohio, May 4
Oklahoma, July 27
Oregon, May 18
Pennsylvania, May 18
Rhode Island, Sept. 14
South Carolina, June 8
South Dakota, June 8
Tennessee, Aug. 5
Texas, March 2
Utah, June 22
Vermont, Sept. 14
Virgin Islands, Sept. 11
Virginia, June 8
Washington, Aug. 17
Washington D.C., Sept. 14
West Virginia, May 11
Wisconsin, Sept. 14
Wyoming, Aug. 17

The Primary Election Calendar is provided by the Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site www.fvap.gov.

Explosive ordnance disposal Sailors educate Sullivans students

Story and photo by MCSN Mike R. Mulcare, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Sailors from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Five (EODMU 5) paid a visit to The Sullivans Elementary School at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Feb. 17.

The visit was in conjunction with a career sharing program between the school's 2nd and 3rd-grade social studies classes and several other Yokosuka-area commands.

Sailors from EODMU 5 entertained and educated the children with displays, including the very popular "Pac Bot," which is a remote controlled robot used to dispose ordnance. Students also witnessed the donning of an EOD 9 bomb protection suit – the protective equipment worn while disarming ordnance.

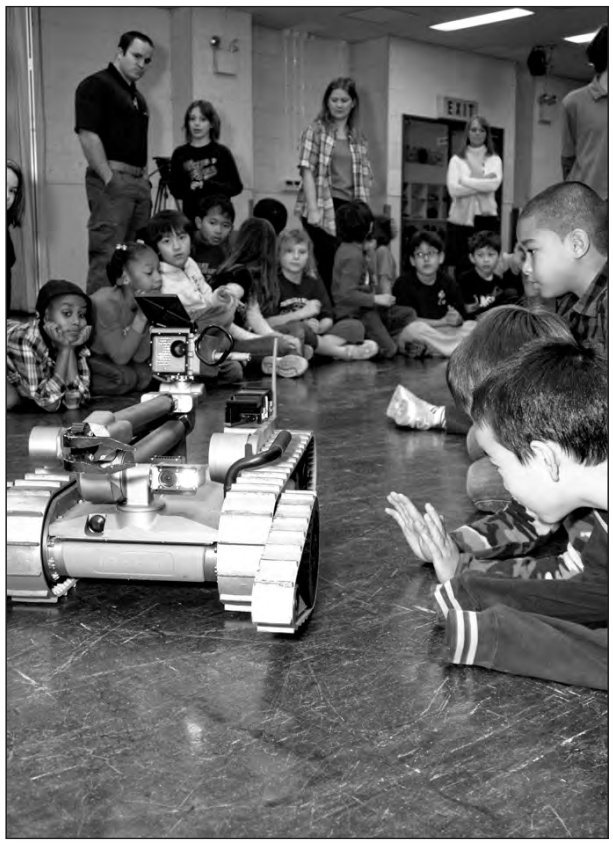
"Today we showed the kids our Pac Bot and let them drive it a little bit," said Yeoman 1st Class (AW) Anthony Duran. "We also did a demonstration of our bomb suit and showed them the importance of it."

The Pac Bot demonstration showed its mobility and usefulness, as operators navigated it through the room, where it found and picked up a water bottle.

"I really liked it when it picked up the water bottle and gave it to Mrs. Parker," said student Shamil Forde. "That was awesome!"

Duran says he enjoyed adding a real-life perspective to the curriculum of local social studies classes, which teaches students about careers within the local workforce.

"Coming out here with the kids was a wonderful experience," said Duran. "We enjoyed putting a smile on their faces by letting them play with the robot and letting them see what some of their parents do."



Children from The Sullivans Elementary School examine an explosive ordnance disposal "Pac Bot" during a demonstration given by EODMU 5 Sailors for the school's career sharing program Feb. 17.

Camp Zama Half Marathon – The 14th annual Camp Zama Half Marathon will be held at Sagami Depot Sunday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Additionally, there will be a men's and women's 5K and 10K run and a parent-child 2K run for parents with child in grades 1 - 4. All events are free to Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) sponsored ID card holders and there will be special awards for SOFA participants. The cutoff date for registration is March 20. Call 263-7980 or 263-5995 for more information or to obtain a registration form.