George Washington follows strict waste disposal guidelines

By MCSN Marcus Mince,
***USS George Washington* Public Affairs**

With the population of a small town, *USS George Washington* (*GW*) (CVN 73) boasts all the services of one, including sanitation services provided by the *GW* Engineering Department for more than 5,000 residents, collecting some 3,000 pounds of plastics a week.

Because the U.S. Navy is concerned about the environment, *GW* follows Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, including trash separation, when disposing of items at sea, said Senior Chief Machinist's Mate (SW/AW) Chris Royal, the engineering department leading chief petty officer.

"Trash separation prevents the accidental dumping of plastics over the side, burning of plastics, and disposal of plastics in the pulper," said Royal.

He said to streamline the process, every department on *GW* separates trash based on categories: for burning, metals, for pulping and for holding until back in port.

"It is crucial that all trash is disposed of responsibly," said Royal. "It is unacceptable for plastics to be thrown into the improper receptacles and placed with other classifications of trash. This can cause great damage to the ocean and sea life."

When waste reaches the processing site, plastics are condensed using compressed melt units, metals are shredded and palpables, which is anything that can be broken down by adding water, is pumped overboard.

Plastics are shredded, compressed, and melted into manageable pucks and held on board until they can be offloaded.

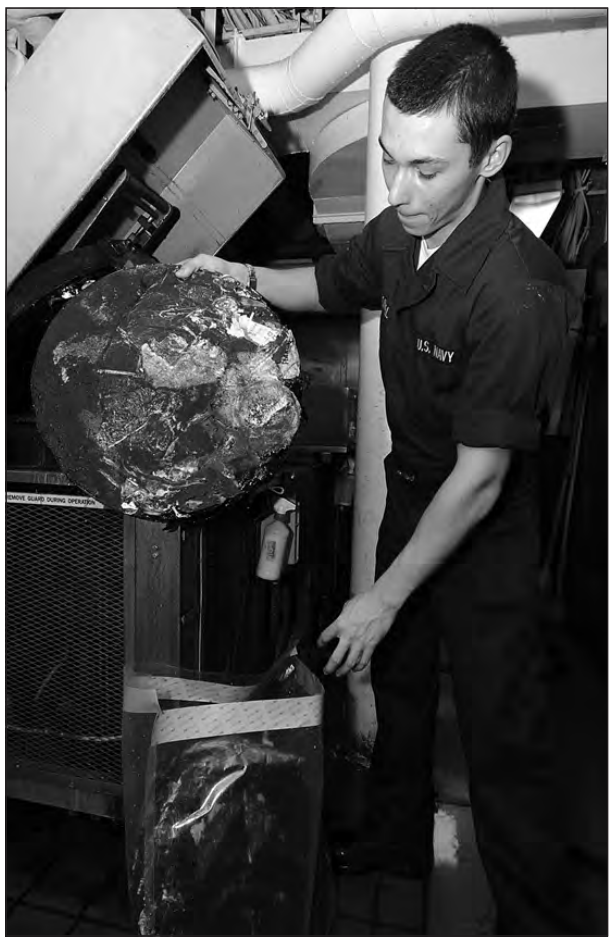
Items that cannot be disposed of at sea include boots, rubber products, batteries and plastic foam. Departments are responsible for holding these items until they can be properly disposed of while in port.

GW Environmental Waste Processing Leading Petty Officer Machinist's Mate 1st Class Anthony Wilson said the ship enforces waste disposal policies by posting watches to inspect everything that is sent overboard.

"If the trash is not separated you will be turned away — no exceptions," said Wilson, explaining that ships caught violating the rules face heavy penalties from the EPA.

"The ship is ultimately responsible for following the stringent guidelines the EPA sets," said Wilson. "The guidelines we follow ensure the ship does not receive a fine for illegal dumping."

Royal said *GW* produces about five tons of waste per day and that it is every Sailor's responsibility to sort items for proper disposal to keep the world's oceans clean.



HTFN Ryan Konkol removes melted plastic from a compressed melting unit aboard the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Nov. 7. Because the U.S. Navy is concerned about the environment, the ship follows strict Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) waste disposal regulations, including trash separation, when disposing of items at sea.
U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Rachel N. Hatch

ATGWP volunteers improve Army veteran's quality of life

By ITC(SW) Ben Tomlin, ATGWP Public Affairs

Afloat Training Group Western Pacific (ATGWP) recently spent a day joining forces with Yokosuka VFW Post 1054 to assist a disabled Army veteran. ATGWP Chief Engineman (SW) Timothy Wilson coordinated with Junior Vice Commander of Yokosuka VFW Post 1054 Terrance Noonan, to get volunteers together to assist Peter Vazquez and his wife Mako perform landscaping and weatherproofing for their residence in Chiba prefecture.

Vazquez spent six years in the U.S. Army from 1984 to 1989, later becoming disabled with a non-service related illness which confined him permanently to a wheel chair. Vazquez made a request through the VFW for assistance because his property was overgrown with thick weeds which buried the brick patio in the front yard. Additionally, hedges were overgrown up against the front of the home and Vazquez was unable to use his walkway because it wasn't wide enough for a wheelchair.

Volunteers pulled weeds and roots from the property filling up eight large bags. After digging up the brick patio, the dirt was shoveled up, removing rocks and other obstacles, and then leveled. The bricks were then carefully replaced to rebuild the patio. Volunteers also performed the tedious task of trimming two large hedges, improving the appearance of the property.

The walkway was widened by laying bricks on both sides, enabling Vazquez to more easily access his property via wheelchair without difficulty. Other work to the home included new weather stripping installed on the doors and windows to seal out the cold drafts and prevent heat-loss.

According to Vazquez, there is a considerable improvement in appearance, accessibility and efficiency of the home. "We appreciate what you did for us very much… we won't forget it," Vazquez said.

7th Fleet achieves social media milestone with 5,000th Facebook hit

By U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs

When Maudy Ramadhani clicked the "Become a Fan" icon on the 7th Fleet's page Nov. 22, the Facebook user from Indonesia became the 5,000th person to actively follow the 7th Fleet on the world's largest social networking site, and further demonstrated the power of social media to connect.

More than 65 percent of 7th Fleet fans on Facebook are international, with India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan and Singapore accounting for the top 10, according to data provided by the site. Of those users, 54 percent are age 24 and under.

"One of the fleet's persistent priorities is to build partnerships, and that requires us to promote transparency and foster goodwill," said Vice Adm. John Bird, 7th Fleet commander. "Social media has dramatically increased our ability to engage with people and tell them not only that we are here, but also to show them why we are here and how our presence promotes regional stability, enables prosperity and fosters cooperative security."

USS George Washington (CVN 73) also experienced rapid success with the launch of its Facebook page Nov. 12. Just 10 days after launching, it accumulated more than 1,300 fans.

Rear Adm. Richard Landolt, 7th Fleet's Amphibious Force commander, actively used both Facebook and Twitter to inform the public about U.S. Navy humanitarian assistance operations in Indonesia in the weeks following a devastating 7.6-magnitude earthquake that struck near Padang Sept. 30.

"Amazing response by Sailors and Marine volunteers who came ashore to help," he wrote Oct. 9. "The Indonesians thanked them all! Sama-Sama (you're welcome)."

Landolt's once-to twice-daily "tweets" helped not only inform the public at large, but also helped to rapidly disseminate practical information in real time to local residents, government officials and non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives, many who spoke only limited English.

"I tried to use Twitter as a way to try to talk to somebody, say in the 5th grade," said Landolt. "As I learned something that I thought was useful, I would [send a 'tweet'] out and post it; a factoid on what we were doing or what kind of capacity a CH-53 helicopter has, for instance."

For more information about U.S. 7th Fleet, and for links to its social media pages including Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, MySpace and YouTube, visit www.c7f.navy.mil.