Sailors celebrate Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur at sea

Story and photo by MC3(SW) Devon Dow, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

The Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, was observed by Sailors aboard *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) (*GW*) Sept. 21 in the ships chapel.

GW welcomed Cmdr. Joel Newman, who is one of only six rabbis in the U.S. Navy and the only one located in the Pacific, to lead a prayer service for Jewish Sailors on one of the holiest days in the Jewish faith. Yom Kippur consists of a 25-hour fast, starting at sundown the day prior. The holy day is a time of the year when Jewish people seek forgiveness for sins committed against God.

To the sounds of launching aircraft from overhead on the ship's flight deck, Jewish crew members, led by Newman, celebrated Yom Kippur by conducting a traditional evening service.

"Holding this service on ships for Sailors, especially when they are underway gives them a piece of home," he said. "This is the big time of the year for the Jewish community. For many who celebrate this holiday, life stops; children do not go to school, adults do not go to work; they go to the synagogue. Here on the ship today for these Sailors, life temporarily stopped. I think when you come into a chapel like this; it recreates what home feels like because the prayers are so universal."

Newman has traveled to many aircraft carriers in the fleet, but it was a first for him visiting *GW*. He said he enjoyed the hospitality of the crew and was honored to give the service to what he called a wonderful community that is committed to the Jewish faith.

(Right) Cmdr. Joel Newman, based out of Camp Pendleton, Calif., leads a prayer for Sailors during a Yom Kippur service held in the ships chapel on board *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Sept. 21. Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, is one of the holiest days in the Jewish faith. Newman, a guest onboard the carrier, is one of only six rabbis in the U.S. Navy and the only one located in the Pacific.

"We had a great turnout which is why they invited me, otherwise this would not have been able to happen," he said. The chaplains were very accommodating and had all of the supplies we needed for this High Holy Day service."

Due to the significance of Yom Kippur to *GW* Jewish crew members, many are now thankful to have Newman on board to lead the service as it served as a unique opportunity while at sea for the Sailors to worship with their own spiritual leader.

For Aviation Ordnanceman Ezra Brabham from Long Island, N.Y., the service was greatly appreciated.

"This was amazing. I have nothing but great things to say and feel about what has taken place here today," he said. "I was really shocked that they were going to have a Yom Kippur service. Next year, for this service, this would be great for us to have again; it really is a good way to raise the morale of the Sailors of the ship who are interested in continuing practicing their faith while underway. For the CRMD (Command Religious Ministries Department) to be able to put a service like this together today was great."

"This was a great service that Cmdr. Newman provided to our crew for Yom Kippur," said Lt. Benjamin Howard, a *GW* chaplain."As chaplains, our mission is to serve the men and women in uniform and Cmdr. Newman is a great example of that commitment we all share."

Following the service, The *GW* CRMD took Newman on a personal tour of the carrier which gave the Navy rabbi a chance to meet and greet senior leadership and other members of the crew.

Sailors worldwide can float the vote as 2010 elections draw near

By MC2 Robert Stirrup, Commander Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

Sailors assigned to commands throughout the world are encouraged to register to vote and request their absentee ballots for the 2010 elections in November.

The Navy encourages personnel to carry out the obligations of their citizenship through voting, enabling their participation in the democratic process, regardless of location.

Lt. Cmdr. Kathleen Elkins, judge advocate general and voting assistance officer for Commander Navy Region Hawaii, explained some of the things that Sailors can do to ensure they are registered to vote.

"In order to register to vote and, or request an absentee ballot, Sailors and their families can go to www.fvap.gov and use their online registration and absentee ballot assistant. It is a quick and easy way to complete the forms. Using this method, they can submit an absentee ballot request to their state," said Elkins.

"The states will begin mailing ballots out 45 days before the general election, which is on Nov. 2," Elkins added. "If they have not received their ballots by Oct. 2, they should use the federal write-in absentee ballot (FWAB) as a back-up. Again, they will still need to go to www.fvap.gov and use the automated assistance to complete the FWAB."

For deployed shipboard Sailors, all forms and ballots should be mailed as early as possible in anticipation of the extended transit time for mail sent from areas outside the continental United States. Although individuals might be overseas at the time of an election, absentee voters are afforded the same rights as those who currently reside at in the United States.

Elkins also explained the importance of making sure Sailors exercise their right to vote.

"As U.S. citizens we enjoy many freedoms, but to maintain those freedoms, we also have a responsibility as citizens to vote and elect officials we feel will make our country better and safer," said Elkins. "We sometimes take for granted our freedoms without realizing what price was paid for us to enjoy those rights."

For more information about registering or re-registering to vote, requesting an absentee ballot or how to obtain election information, visit www.fvap.gov or contact the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka installation voting assistance officer at 243-3372.

The editor asks:

"***Did you know***, of all the drunk drivers involved in alcohol-related fatal crashes, approximately one half are between the ages of 21 and 34?

"People between the ages of 21-34 are:

• More likely than any other age group to have been intoxicated at the time of the crash.

• Responsible for more alcohol-related fatal crashes than any other age group.

• More likely to have the highest blood alcohol concentration (BAC) in fatal crashes.

• About twice as likely as other drivers to have experienced a prior crash.

• Four times more likely to have had their licenses suspended or revoked.

• The most resistant to changing their drinking and driving behavior.

"Young men who need to drink more than others to "get a buzz" face a higher risk of alcoholism as they approach their 30s. A study of 450 men also confirmed observations that alcoholism runs in the family. Men with alcoholic fathers were nearly three times more likely to become alcohol-dependent than men who's fathers were not alcoholics.

"Is this where you want to be? If so, have poor planning. Drink and drive. Your getting arrested is the best thing that could occur! Killing a shipmate, family member or someone out in town is a nightmare you do not want! You must have a safe and effective plan, before you start to drink.

"If you have any questions contact your primary care physician, command Drug and Alcohol Prevention Assistant (DAPA), chaplain or your chain of command."

This "Did you know" was provided by STGC(SW) J.J. Millaway and MAC(SW) Mike Marino.

Got a "Did You Know" you want to share in "The editor asks" column? Send your submissions to seahawk-umitaka@fe.navy.mil. A legitimate fact source must be provided with the submission before it will be considered for publication. Contact the Seahawk-Umitaka editor at the e-mail address mentioned above for more information.