

# Sea of Galilee & Nazareth Tour

## Following the Footsteps of Jesus

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Public Affairs

Reading through the New Testament, you'll see places and names that have survived in the hearts of many people throughout many nations.

For Sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) these locales became more than just a name from the Bible during a recent port visit to Haifa, Israel, July 2. GHWB's Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) organized a tour of the Sea of Galilee and Nazareth, allowing Sailors to go on a journey through biblical history.

"It's a once in a lifetime experience to go and see where Jesus walked and I wanted to put my feet there," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Amie Maychzak. Sailors visited the Mount of the Beatitudes, the ancient city of Capernaum, Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, the Jordan River, and where Jesus fed the 5,000 at the Sea of Galilee. "I've now been here, I was able to see all the places I heard and read about growing up," said Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Derrick Bunts, assigned to the "Lancers" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 131. "The nostalgia of it all, this being an important part of my life and my faith, it was an unforgettable experience."

Religion and spirituality crosses all borders and can bring people together and bring a feeling of familiarity, even far from home. "I'm Catholic and getting to go to these places made me feel at home no matter where I was, even though I am so far from home here," said Maychzak. "Every church I went into made me feel like I was at my hometown church."

Through tours like this, the Navy and MWR provide an avenue for Sailors to see the world and have experiences others only dream of. "This tour was extremely unique and exciting and it makes me want to bring my wife and kids here one day," said Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Joseph Miller, assigned to the "Tridents" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9. "It's just one of those once-in-a-lifetime things, it was amazing."



# Dead Sea & Masada Tour

**A Tour Through the Desert to the Lowest Point on Earth  
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The lofty heights of Masada, only a few feet away from Herod the Great's bath house, keep watch over the Dead Sea's landscape, drawing tourists from around the world.

Sailors from USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) visited the Fortress of Masada and the shores of the Dead Sea as part of a tour sponsored by the ship's Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) program during a port visit in Haifa, Israel, July 4.

The tour began with a three-and-a-half-hour bus ride across Israel where Sailors found themselves surrounded by nothing but dirt and the heat of the Judean Desert. Upon arrival at their destination, they were dropped at the entrance of the fort where they waited for a cable car to take them up the isolated rock plateau. Here they would begin touring the site of Masada itself.

Masada was the last fortress where the Israeli rebels made their last stand against the Roman Empire.

"It was very interesting to see how people were able to survive in a place like this for so long," said Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 3rd Class Forrest Pritchald about the site where Herod and his servants lived until his death in 31 B.C.

Sailors, then traveled to the shores of the Dead Sea where they enjoyed a lunch and swam in the waters that are so saline that it's hard to submerge. "My favorite part of the tour was the food. It was amazing and they had really good hummus; back home in Puerto Rico we also make hummus and it was almost the same thing," said Electronics Technician (Nuclear) 2nd Class Alan Roviratorres. "It was really cool to see how both cultures intertwine with each other in a really delicious way." Many Sailors enjoyed the Kosher buffet that was offered at the restaurant, but for many, the main reason they came they on the tour was to swim in the Dead Sea. "The highlight of the day for me was to float in water," said Pritchald. "Normally, I can't float and it was very exciting for me to be able to float for once."

From marveling at the elegant structures of the Fortress of Masada to exploring the Dead Sea, Sailors made memories of a lifetime.

"I went on this tour because I thought it would be something interesting to explore the Dead Sea, especially floating in water that is almost half salt," said Pritchald. "This tour it was definitely worth my money. I would do it again because it was awesome; I met some cool friends and I made some memories that I don't think I'll ever forget." The George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group is conducting naval operations in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national security interests.

