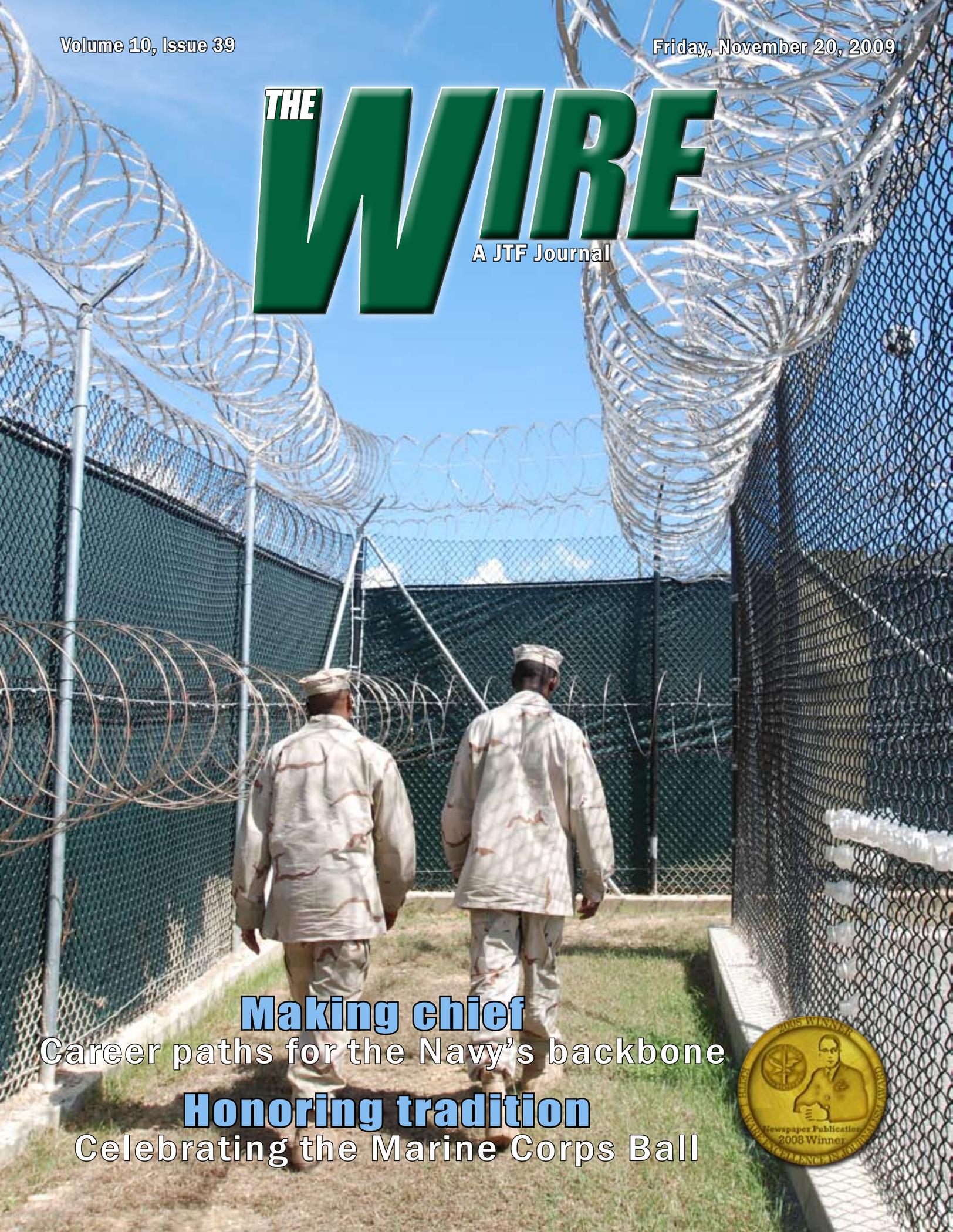


# THE WIRE

A JTF Journal



**Making chief**  
Career paths for the Navy's backbone

**Honoring tradition**  
Celebrating the Marine Corps Ball



# Military values

**Army Master Sgt.  
David Rodriguez**

JTF Guantanamo J-6 NCOIC

Our Armed Forces have many different traditions but what each has in common are values. Webster defines values as a principle or quality intrinsically valuable or desirable. Values can be measured by how a person reacts and conducts oneself when put into different situations. Some values that the military has adopted are:

LOYALTY – Being faithful and committed to a cause

DUTY – Fulfilling your obligations

RESPECT – Treating people as you would want to be treated

SELFLESS-SERVICE – Putting the welfare of the nation and institution before your own

INTEGRITY – Doing what is right both legally and ethically

PERSONAL COURAGE – Facing fear, danger, or adversity

HONOR – Living up to all the values

I have listed honor as the last value because, by its own definition, all of the others flow from it. In old Japanese culture, family honor was the most important treasure and was protected at all cost. In the Bible, the wise Solomon says to honor thy father and mother and you shall have a long prosperous life. There is no magic to these words; it's just plain common sense. If you listen to your elders you can learn a lot of valuable life lessons and draw from their past experiences. This could save you from wasting time and, better yet, might even save your life someday. In a marriage, a man and woman make a legal contract in front of a religious leader or a judge, committing themselves to honor and cherish each other in sickness or in health, for richer or poorer, till death do them part. These few words cover all the values mentioned above. If no respect, loyalty or integrity exists between partners, then a strong bond has not been formed by the couple.

None of the values listed above were invented by the military, but have been core family values brought into the military and used by superiors to measure a person's conduct and worth. In basic training, the drill sergeant would yell and scream to make Soldiers do pushups when they do something wrong. This is done for two reasons; to get them to acquire a tolerance for stress and so that they remember the correct way of doing things. Senior Troopers are respected not only for the position or rank they hold, but for the wealth of information and knowledge they can pass down to younger troopers.

Adapting to military values is like a savings account, the more you put in, the more interest you'll receive at the end of the year. In the military, awards, certificates, decorations and promotion recommendations are a way of rewarding Troopers and showing them how important they are to the mission. Adapting to military values results in a strong nation of strong families. We as citizens must honor the country; because as a military community, it is not only our honor to protect and guard our families, but our duty as well. 🇺🇸



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### COVER:

**Navy Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Terry Armstrong and Navy Chief Petty Officer Jamarcus Lowery with the Navy Expeditionary Guard Battalion perform a security check at Camp Iguana, Nov. 12.** – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Emily Greene

### BACK COVER:

**A palm tree looms over the Windjammer Pool.** – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black



The WIRE is the official news magazine of Joint Task Force Guantanamo. It is produced by the JTF Public Affairs Office to inform and educate the Troopers of JTF Guantanamo through news, features, command guidance, sports and entertainment. The WIRE seeks to provide maximum disclosure with minimum delay with regards to security, accuracy, propriety and policy. This DoD news magazine is an authorized publication for the members of the Department of Defense. Contents of The WIRE are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or Joint Task Force Guantanamo. It is printed by the Document Automation & Production Service with a circulation of 1,000.



**Seabees with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 25 break old cement in the parking lot of the G.J. Denich Gym during a restoration project. Improvement projects around the naval station provide a higher quality of living for Troopers at Joint Task Force Guantanamo. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Emily Greene**

# Problems, fixed

**Army Pfc. Christopher Vann**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

From pressure washing the Tierra Kay housing complex, to improving the drainage at the Seaside Galley and much more, the Joint Task Force Guantanamo engineering department is working hard to improve conditions for the personnel deployed to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, in support of Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

The engineers for JTF work diligently to upgrade and improve both living and working conditions for its personnel, through maintenance and repairs.

“Maintaining and improving facilities at Joint Task Force Guantanamo contributes to the safety and the living conditions for both detainees and Troopers. We will continue to maintain this quality of life for those here until the last detainee and the last Trooper leave,” said Navy Rear Adm.

Tom Copeman, commander of Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

“We have a few projects getting ready to start up, as well as some ongoing ones,” said Navy Chief Petty Officer Jason Marino, engineering lead petty officer, “to improve the conditions here.”



**I believe an engineer has one of the most important missions at the JTF and abroad.**

– Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael Hanson

The overall mission for the engineers is to provide a safer environment for the Troopers, as well as the detainees.

“Our biggest concern is the well-being and safety of our Troops,” said Navy Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael Hanson, JTF Guantanamo assistant lead petty officer of engineering, “I believe an engineer has one of the most important missions at JTF and abroad.”

Road work construction for extending

the sidewalk on Kittery Road leading to the access gate at Joint Task Force Guantanamo, and improving its drainage, is scheduled to begin in the following weeks. The street’s draining issue is being addressed to prevent the build up of water after it rains, which can be a driving hazard.

Along with the sidewalk, re-striping of the traffic lanes throughout JTF will be done. The re-striping is to ensure proper lane maintenance, thus preventing possible collisions.

The pressure washing of Tierra Kay housing has already begun, to give the Troops a more suitable living environment, free of exterior dirt and debris.

One of the major projects ahead is the building of two large pre-fabricated facilities for U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team 91103 Los Angeles/Long Beach’s administration department. This will give them an adequate workspace to complete their missions in a more productive manner. ☆

**Army 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Davis Dumeng, with the 480<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company of the Puerto Rico Army National Guard, cases his unit's guidon during a transfer of authority ceremony at Joint Task Force Guantanamo, Nov. 12.** – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. David McLean

## From one island to another

**Army Staff Sgt. Blair Heusdens**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 480<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company of the Puerto Rico National Guard handed over responsibility for their external security mission at Joint Task Force Guantanamo to the 115<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company of the Rhode Island National Guard during a ceremony, Nov. 12.

During their tour which was just short of one year, the 480<sup>th</sup> conducted security operations in order to protect friendly forces and detainees from surveillance, sabotage and attack. The external security mission at the JTF provides the first line of defense for the safety and security of both Troopers and detainees by providing entry control access, roving patrols and observation from both guard towers and observation posts throughout the task force area of operation.

Army Lt. Col. Alex Conyers, the commander of the 525<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion, which the 480<sup>th</sup> falls under at JTF Guantanamo, praised the efforts of the Soldiers of the 480<sup>th</sup>.

“A little over a year ago, you assembled from all over Puerto Rico, from 17 different units to train and serve as one unit,” said Conyers. “You have successfully completed a challenging mission in a dynamic environment.”

Army Capt. Edwin Cruz, commander

of the 480<sup>th</sup>, spoke of the training required for the unit to deploy and the continuous efforts of the Troopers to maintain a high level of proficiency at their jobs.

“I want to congratulate the Soldiers from 480<sup>th</sup> for a job well done, as individuals and as a unit,” said Cruz. “We made several accomplishments throughout this year and [these accomplishments] were made possible by Soldiers’ commitment and dedication to our mission.”

During the ceremony, Cruz and 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Davis Dumeng cased the unit guidon, signifying the successful completion and release from the JTF external security mission. The 115<sup>th</sup> MP Company commander, Capt. Nicholas Pacheco, and 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Thomas Burdick unfurled their unit guidon, signifying assumption and responsibility for the JTF mission.

“We have provided you with the tools necessary to continue the mission and to be successful and we did it with professionalism and to the best of our abilities,” Cruz said as he addressed the incoming unit.

The 115<sup>th</sup> will continue the mission at JTF Guantanamo at a time when plans are underway to close the facility. The external security mission will remain a critical part of JTF operations until all of the detainees are released or transferred.

“You have a tough job ahead of you, but I have no doubts that you will excel,” said Conyers. “The challenges will increase, but just as in 1638 when the training band of Rhode Island’s first colonial defense force

was formed in Portsmouth as a militia, subject to call and expected to perform certain military duties in the protection of the people; you too, in 2009 and 2010 will rise to the occasion.” ☆



**Army Capt. Nicholas Pacheco, left, and Army 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Thomas Burdick, right, unfurl the guidon for the 115<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company of the Rhode Island Army National Guard.** – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. David McLean

# For Corps and Country

□ *Honoring Marines past, present and future*

**Army Staff Sgt.  
Blair Heusdens**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Months of hard work and planning came together for the Marines of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay's Marine Corps Security Force Company, who hosted their annual Marine Corps Ball for the Guantanamo community, Nov. 14.

November 10, 2009, marked the 234<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps. The first formal Marine Corps ball was celebrated in 1925. Since then, Marines have celebrated the birth of their service by holding a formal ball, filled with tradition and ceremony.

"We are bound by our history and traditions which, in my opinion, are the things that separate us from the other services," said Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Kenneth Waterman.

One of those traditions, the cake-cutting ceremony, symbolizes the passing of knowledge between the older generation and the younger generation of Marines when the first slice of cake is given to the oldest Marine present, who in turn hands it off to the youngest Marine present.

Attendees also joined Marines around the world in viewing a video message from Marine Corps Commandant, Gen. James T. Conway, highlighting the heroic contributions of Marines past and present, and joined in a toast.

The Marines of Guantanamo Bay put hard work and determination into preparing for the Ball. A committee of non-commissioned officers spent almost nine months planning each detail of the Ball and the ceremonial detail spent hours practicing the intricate drill and movements of the ceremony.

"It was a team effort by all to get it done," said Waterman.

The Marine Corps Ball represents more than just an opportunity to get dressed up and spend a night out with friends; it's a chance to share in the camaraderie that comes with being a Marine.

"The Marine Corps Ball is a time for Marines to come together and celebrate our heritage and lineage with fellow Marines," said Marine Corps Cpl. Jacob Gateman. ☆



**The color guard prepares to post the colors during the Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Marine Corps Ball, Nov. 14.** - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Blair Heusdens



**Marines wait for the official ceremony to begin at the Marine Corps Ball, Nov. 14.** - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Blair Heusdens



**The cake detail rolls out the Marine Corps Birthday cake for the cake-cutting ceremony at the Marine Corps Ball, Nov. 14.** - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Blair Heusdens



**Members of the GTMO Latinos men's volleyball team pose with championship trophies at G.J. Denich Gym, Nov. 12. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Tiffany Addair**

# Latinos crowned league champions

■ *GTMO Latinos defeat GTMO Assassins; winning 2009 Captain's Cup volleyball championship*

**Army Spc. Tiffany Addair**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

After 12 regular season games, the Naval Station Guantanamo Bay men's volleyball tournament kicked off Nov. 9 and came to a close Nov. 12. The GTMO Latinos and the GTMO Assassins, 8-4 for the regular season, defeated both opponents during the single-elimination tournament, landing them a spot in the championship match.

In early round play of the tournament, the GTMO Latinos defeated W.T. Sampson High School and the GTMO Assassins defeated the JTF Iguanas. During the second round of the tournament, the GTMO Latinos beat the P.I. Ballaz, landing them a spot in the final game. The GTMO Assassins beat the GTMO Hawgs to seal their spot in the final game against the GTMO Latinos.

The final match-up in the single-elimination tournament took place at G.J. Denich Gym, Nov. 12, between the two teams. The third-seeded GTMO Assassins won the first game 25-14. The fourth-seeded GTMO Latinos came back in the second game with a 25-17 win. The GTMO Latinos took the championship by taking the third game 16-14.

"The season was great," said Army Capt. Eric Bey, a chaplain with the 525<sup>th</sup>

Military Police Battalion, assigned to Joint Task Force Guantanamo. "We started [the tournament] in fourth position and then we won all of our games and won first place."

For Army Sgt. Raul Fuster, property book non-commissioned officer for JTF Guantanamo, this tournament was memorable.

"This was my last tournament because I leave at the end of this month, so it was emotional," Fuster said. "Winning the championship was a good send-off."

Throughout the final games, the GTMO Latino fans cheered enthusiastically as their team made a comeback. Fans stomped their feet and clapped their hands in support of their team.

The final men's league standings were P.I. Ballaz finishing in first, Hospital Hitters in second and the GTMO Assassins in third place. The GTMO Latinos, W.T. Sampson Pirates, JTF Iguanas and GTMO Hawgs finished fourth through seventh.

Prior to the tournament, the final women's league standings were Sparkle Monkey's finishing in first, 525<sup>th</sup> MP Battalion in second and W.T. Sampson Lady Pirates in third.

Though the current indoor volleyball season is over, organized sports continue through the Morale, Welfare and Recreation sports office. For more information, call ext. 2113. ★

**GTMO Latinos and GTMO Assassins shake hands before playing the championship game at G.J. Denich Gym, Nov. 12. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Tiffany Addair**



**Navy Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Carlos M. Galarza hits the ball over the net during the final game of the championship at G.J. Denich Gym, Nov. 12. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Tiffany Addair**



# Bah Humbug!



**Navy Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class  
Joshua Nistas**  
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

For a movie starring Jim Carrey (“Yes Man,” “Liar Liar,” “Ace Ventura: Pet Detective”), I was expecting more laughs from “A Christmas Carol.” Actually, I was expecting a comedic movie in general, but I was left wondering how this was from Disney.

I was looking forward to this movie when I first saw the trailer for it. The reader might remember “Beowulf,” which I was reminded of by the movie’s life-like, realistic, computer-generated animated style. This I will give Disney points for: the scenes were very life-like, almost too much in some cases. However, in some instances I thought they went overboard. This was a Disney movie. I was not expecting to see gum disease in its finest from the 1800s, with black gums and missing teeth. When I think of Disney movies, I think of dancing, singing crabs and talking bunnies. It seemed like they were trying to show how lifelike they could be, with as much disturbing detail as they could put into one movie. Overall, I was slightly disgusted by the scenes provided.

Then there were the characters. I didn’t know at the time that I was watching it, but Jim Carrey plays more than just

Ebenezer Scrooge; in fact, he plays all three Christmas spirits. The thing that stayed with me after the movie was the Ghost of Christmas Present, whose laughter annoyed me greatly, and whose exit was very disturbing (I won’t spoil it for you).

For anyone who has seen “A Christmas Carol” – and who hasn’t, in one form or another – the story is pretty straightforward; Scrooge is a greedy old man who only thinks of money. Through the visitation of spirits he’s able to change his ways. For me, the only good part of the movie was at the end. The people that watched with me, thought the movie was a great hit and we spent some time talking of why I didn’t like it. My opinion was that Disney is a family company, and it shouldn’t disgust people when they go see a Christmas classic. I recommend that if you want to see a movie for this season, and you have no other movie choices, this movie might do the trick; you might like it, you might not, but I think I’ll stick with “The Muppet Christmas Carol,” or better yet, “Scrooged” with Bill Murray. ☆

**PG**

**96 minutes**

**Rating:** ★★☆☆☆



# A celebration of tradition

JTF Guantanamo photos by  
Army Staff Sgt. Blair Heusdens



Marines from the Marine Corps Security Force Company and residents of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay attended the Marine Corps Ball in celebration of the 234<sup>th</sup> Marine Corps Birthday.

A ceremonial cake-cutting, a message from Gen. James T. Conway, commandant of the Marine Corps, and remarks from guest speaker Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia marked the evening's ceremonies.





Newly pinned Navy Chief Petty Officers stand in a formation during their indoctrination ceremony. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Andrew Hilegass

# Making Chief

## Navy Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Shane Arrington

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

“I am charged with a leadership role like no other in the world.” - a quote from the Chief Petty Officer Pledge.

April 1, 1893, the U.S. Navy established the rank of chief petty officer. This rank is considered the most significant promotion within the enlisted naval ranks. Sailors rising through the petty officer ranks focus on high exam and performance marks to get advanced. For a chief however, the main hurdle is to be accepted by fellow chiefs. The end decision of who puts on the anchors that symbolize a chief petty officer comes down to a board made up of senior chief petty officers and master chief petty officers.

It's with this in mind that freshly anchored Navy Chief Petty Officer Jedidiah Yisrael, Joint Intelligence Group Administration, decided to put together a chief's advisory lecture to educate first class petty officers assigned to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and Joint Task Force Guantanamo on just what the selection board looks for in prospective chiefs.

“I believe giving back to the Navy

and the junior Sailors is one of the main responsibilities of a Chief,” said Yisrael. “Some of the key topics I put into this lecture are leadership, information on performance evaluations and the things the selection board looks for.”

“One of the main things I tell junior Sailors is not to just sit under the radar. I'm not saying they have to be perfect Sailors, just well rounded and dedicated. Filling up your performance evaluation is a good indicator of a hard worker, but you have to know what to fill it up with. Key things are numbers and cause and effect, how many things you did that had a positive impact on you, your Sailors, and the Navy.”

Yisrael said when the board is looking over the countless packages while looking for the next batch of chiefs, they're looking for more than the obvious. Sure, education, solid collateral duties and volunteer work can help set hopeful chiefs up for success, but they must also keep in mind who they're going up against.

“Just because a Sailor is the best at their command doesn't mean they're the best in the Navy,” said Yisrael. “Take the hard jobs, don't try to skip that sea duty and get those warfare pins, there's always something out there to help you shine, you just have to be hungry.”

## Chief Petty Officer Pledge

“I serve my country and her people with pride and honor.  
I seek no special favors.  
I make things happen, and do the best I can do.  
I am charged with a leadership role like no other in the world.  
I develop junior officers and mold my Sailors.  
I acknowledge full responsibility for the actions of my Sailors, because these Sailors are the seeds of future Chief Petty Officers.  
I live by the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment.  
I set the example.  
I establish the standards of performance.  
My sailors are students and I am their teacher.  
I guide and influence the lives of these young men and women.  
In the final analysis, I will determine the quality of these Sailors.  
They look up to me because I treat them with dignity and respect.  
Because they need a leader, I am there for them.  
After all ...  
**I AM A CHIEF PETTY OFFICER IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY!**”

Members of a swimming club at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and Joint Task Force Guantanamo arrive at the beach for a weekly swim, Nov. 14. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Edward Flynn



# Swim club provides a culture of fitness

**Navy Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class  
Edward Flynn**  
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

For Army Col. Doris Acevedo, Joint Task Force Guantanamo command Inspector General, swimming is not just an exercise; it is a way of life.

With her arrival at Joint Task Force Guantanamo in October 2007, Acevedo was instrumental, along with several current and former JTF and Naval Station Guantanamo Bay personnel, to ensure their love of swimming continues on the island through a loosely organized swim club, affectionately called by at least one member, "The Breakfast Club." Many club members credit

swimming with staying physically fit and helping them stay alert and mentally prepared to do their job.

"I learned to swim at the age of 10, but was not a competitive swimmer until many years later," said Acevedo. "When my meniscus started hurting from running, I replaced running with swimming. It's a great way to stay in shape."

Swimmers in "the club" range from junior enlisted to senior ranking officers, along with civilians throughout the base and even some high school students. The overall philosophy of the swim club is to have fun while ensuring safety. Although the club has no formal membership requirements or rules per se, safety is one theme that is continuously stressed.

"We swim as a group and have fun," said Mr. Mike Hall, a regular swimming participant and the facility manager of the athletic department at Morale, Welfare and Recreation. "Safety is always a concern when swimming and we frequently discuss ways to ensure it is not compromised."

The club practices on Sunday mornings and the swim can be as short as a half-mile to several miles at length. To stay in peak physical shape, many swimmers also utilize the base pool throughout the week.

Swimming by the caves or seeing the Lighthouse in the distance as the hot Cuban sun rises brings a unique perspective to the island. Splashing sea turtles, dolphins and exotic fish are not uncommon for a swimmer to encounter on the journey.

Acevedo not only uses her hard work, commitment and determination as a swimmer to achieve high personal and military standards, but also as a motivational factor assisting other unit members.

"I like the fact that I can use my experience to help others stay physically fit. I think it's an excellent form of exercise; but like everything, you have to both like it and be disciplined to maintain a regular schedule for it to really help you stay fit," said Acevedo. ★

Army Col. Doris Acevedo, Joint Task Force Guantanamo command Inspector General, enters the water at Phillips Dive Park at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Nov. 14. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Edward Flynn



# Trooper's dream of flight comes true

**Army 1<sup>st</sup> Lt.  
Joshua Frye**

525<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion

Joint Task Force Guantanamo's Army Sgt. Charles Verax Jr. has always wanted to be a pilot. His 20/400 vision stopped him from joining the military as a pilot, but it hasn't stopped his love of flying.

Determined to fly helicopters, Verax has made continuous steps toward his goal such as learning to fly remote control helicopters, getting surgery to fix his vision and taking lessons to get his FAA helicopter license. His goal finally became reality in late September when Verax passed the FAA oral and practical exam, officially becoming a helicopter pilot.

Several roadblocks and challenges slowed Verax's progress along the way. Verax completed all the required flight hours prior to his deployment to Joint Task Force Guantanamo as an engineer early this year, but he was unable to take the exam before he left. During his deployment to Guantanamo, Verax kept his skills up by flying remote control helicopters, helping to maintain his cyclic skills and hand-eye coordination. He made plans to finally take his exam in September during his leave.

With a narrow window to complete his task, Verax worked to get his skills back up to speed. A low pressure system, bringing seven days of almost non-stop rain almost grounded the whole plan; but with the help of an instructor, Verax took to the skies to practice whenever there was a break in the weather. Verax used a Schweizer 300C helicopter for training, the same helicopter used from 1964 until 1988 to train Army pilots.

"The Schweizer 300C is an agile and maneuverable little helicopter and an awesome trainer," said Verax.

Many of the maneuvers necessary to control a helicopter are difficult to master. According to Verax, it takes the average person about seven or eight hours of flight time to learn how to hover.

"Hovering is by far the most difficult thing to learn because the four separate controls are very sensitive and you must manipulate them simultaneously," Verax said. "At first, it is very frustrating because it seems impossible to hold the helicopter in one spot, but after awhile, it becomes second nature."



**Federal Aviation Administration designated examiner Dale Williamson, left, congratulates Army Sgt. Charles Verax after completing his check ride for his helicopter license. - JTF Guantanamo contributed photo**

Finally, on Sept. 19, Verax was able to take the FAA exam from a certified examiner who once flew UH-60 Blackhawks in the Army.

"The oral exam is stressful because it is similar to military promotion boards where senior NCOs make sure that Troopers have the knowledge they need to succeed at their jobs," Verax said.

After passing the oral exam, Verax was required to complete a practical exam, testing his knowledge of flight maneuvers. Verax says the most important maneuver a helicopter pilot learns is to perform an autorotation. In the rare event of an engine failure, the pilot immediately reduces the pitch in the blades to reduce drag on the rotor system. The pitch, coupled with the upward flow of air through the rotor system from the descent, keeps the blades spinning. As the helicopter nears the ground, the pilot flares the nose up to slow the speed and levels off. Done right, this maneuver will allow for a safe, controlled landing.

At 2,000 feet during the flight portion of his practical exam, the examiner slowly closed the throttle, simulating an engine failure. Verax then performed a safe autorotation. After successfully completing all of the other FAA required flight maneuvers, Verax flew the helicopter back to Denton Municipal Airport where



**The instrument panel of a Schweizer 300C helicopter. - JTF Guantanamo contributed photo**

See **VERAX/15**



## Jump right in

Soldiers of the 115<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company, with the Rhode Island Army National Guard, bound into the Windjammer Pool to tread water for 10 minutes as part of required water survival training, Nov. 17. The 115<sup>th</sup> recently arrived at GTMO to provide external security in and around the joint task force. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black

## Boots on the Ground

by Army Spc. David McLean

*What are you thankful for?*

**Air Force Staff Sgt.  
Aaron Rushing**



**"I am thankful for my family."**

**Coast Guard Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Class John White**



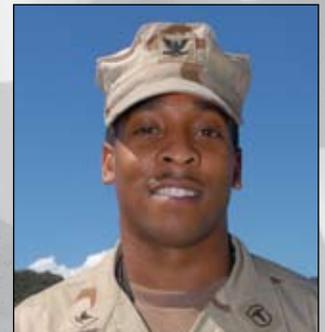
**"I am thankful for having a good family."**

**Army Pvt. Roy Almazon**



**"I am thankful for serving my country. It is the best country in the world."**

**Navy Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class  
Woodrow Scott**



**"I am thankful for my health because I work in the medical field."**

# Inspired by Saints



**Navy Lt. Cmdr.  
Lee Hellwig**  
NEGB Chaplain

A few years ago, a science fiction drama series entitled “Heroes” debuted on television. If you have seen it, you know that the people on the show were shown to have various powers making them capable of doing things beyond any sort of scientific possibility. There is a man who flies without wings or any sort of propulsion. There is a man who walks through walls. Another one stops time and travels through time. Many people are fascinated with the ability to do that which seems to be beyond the physically possible. Movies such as “The Fantastic Four,” “Spiderman,” “Superman” and many television shows also build on this fascination.

The hagiographers, the biographers of saints of the past centuries, also built on this fascination. Many times, saints were presented as having all sorts of preternatural powers, powers beyond that of normal human beings. In the Catholic liturgical calendar, November is the month to remember the canonized saints as well as all those who have died. Since I am a Catholic priest, many people have asked me what the deal is with saints.

Many of the world’s religions bestow special status on people who demonstrate a faithful life of perfect virtue. Religions differ on the title assigned to these people. The Catholic Church calls them saints. The process by which someone becomes a saint is called canonization. The Catholic Church has canonized a number of people. However, the exact number of saints in Heaven cannot be known because not all saints were officially canonized.

According to the Catholic Church, the designation of sainthood only recognizes what the Divine has already provided in the life of that person. For centuries, saints were chosen through public opinion and acclamation. In the 10th century, Pope John XV developed an official canonization process. Canonization has been revised in the last 1,000 years, most recently by Pope John Paul II in 1983. Pope John Paul II canonized more than 280 people and made several procedural changes to the canonization process.

The process of becoming a Catholic saint is very lengthy, often taking decades or even centuries to complete. There are a number of the steps that must be followed. A local bishop investigates the candidate’s life and writings for evidence of heroic virtue. The information uncovered by the bishop is sent to the Vatican. A panel of theologians and the Cardinals of the Congregation for Cause of Saints evaluate the candidate’s life. If the panel approves, the Pope proclaims that the candidate is venerable, which means that the person is a role model of Catholic virtue.

The next step toward sainthood is beatification. Beatification allows a person to be honored by a particular group or region. In order to beatify a candidate, it must be shown that the person is responsible for a posthumous miracle. Martyrs, those who died for their religious faith, can be beatified without evidence of a miracle. In order for the candidate to be considered a saint, there must be proof of a second posthumous miracle. If there is, the person is canonized. These alleged miracles must be submitted to the Vatican for verification. Once a person is recognized as a saint, he or she serves as an example of a faithful life to believers and is recommended to the entire Catholic Church for veneration. And that is pretty much the deal about the saints.

What should impress us about the saints is that they were common people who lived ordinary lives. Yet they were able to accomplish extra-ordinary things in their lives due to an uncommon valor and faith. They oriented their lives on service to their God and were able to not merely meet the daily challenges of life, but to excel and make an outstanding example of their accomplishment and service to those who knew them. They are therefore able to serve as a positive example to those who follow them.

As Troopers assigned to the JTF, we can all achieve a similar high level of accomplishment in service to our nation if we use the spiritual strength we receive from our own religious faith to live the core values of our respective services. Then we can continue to reach beyond the merely acceptable and strive for that which will make us outstanding servants of our nation and the military mission it would have us successfully complete here in this place or any place it sends us to defend freedom with honor. ✪

## JTF CHAPEL SCHEDULED PROGRAMS

**Catholic Mass**  
**Sunday - Friday:**  
6:30 a.m. Mass

**Spanish Catholic Mass**  
**Sunday:** 5 p.m.  
at NAVSTA Chapel

**Protestant Worship**  
**Sunday:** 9 a.m.

**Spanish Protestant**  
**Worship**  
**Sunday:** 11 a.m.

**Bible Study**  
**Sunday:** 6 p.m.  
**Wednesday:** 7 p.m.

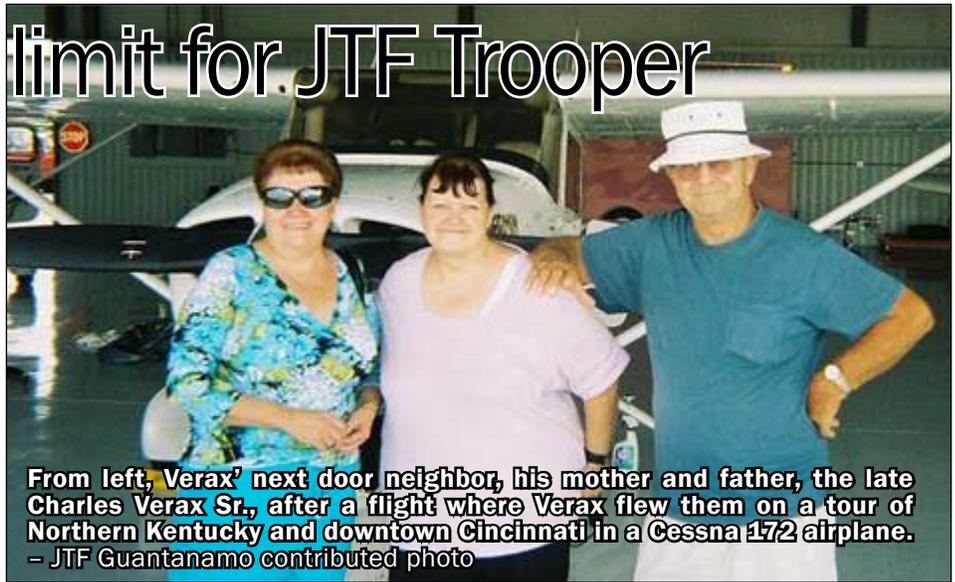
# The sky's the limit for JTF Trooper

VERAX from 12

the examiner shook his hand and told him he had passed.

Verax looks at his private helicopter license as a license to learn and build experience until he can get his commercial add-on rating. Pursuing his dreams was always important to not only him, but his family. Verax spent time with his parents in Kentucky after passing his exam. His parents were very proud of him, especially his father, who unexpectedly had a heart attack as Verax was on his way back to Cuba and passed away days later.

"I am especially thankful for the



From left, Verax' next door neighbor, his mother and father, the late Charles Verax Sr., after a flight where Verax flew them on a tour of Northern Kentucky and downtown Cincinnati in a Cessna 172 airplane. - JTF Guantanamo contributed photo



precious two weeks that I got to spend with my dad because he unexpectedly passed away Oct. 9," Verax said.

Verax is currently working on his warrant officer packet with the hopes of being accepted into the Army flight training program. Because of his age, he will need a waiver to be accepted, but feels he can overcome any challenges that may lay in his way.

"I don't have anything to lose by trying and I know my dad would have wanted me to keep moving forward and to never give up on my goals," said Verax. "At the end of the day, I am still happy because I have realized one of my life's dreams by becoming a helicopter pilot. I can think of no better way to honor my dad than to live my life to the fullest and keep striving for my dreams." ☆

Army Sgt. Charles Verax, left, and certified flight instructor Chris Creamer pose next to a Schweizer 300C helicopter. Creamer certified Verax to take his check flight. - JTF Guantanamo contributed photo

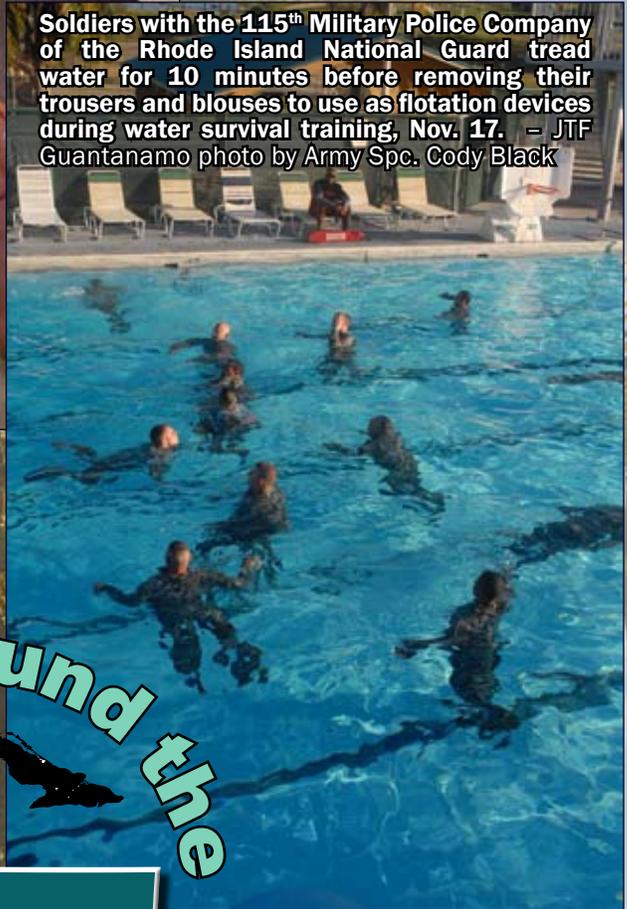
## RETHINKING DRINKING:

Low-risk drinking limits	MEN	WOMEN
	<b>No more than</b> <b>4</b> █ █ █ █ drinks on any <b>day</b>	<b>No more than</b> <b>3</b> █ █ █ drinks on any <b>day</b>
	<b>**AND**</b>	
<b>Per WEEK</b>	<b>No more than</b> <b>14</b> █ █ █ █ █ █ █ █ █ █ █ █ █ █ █ █ drinks per <b>week</b>	<b>No more than</b> <b>7</b> █ █ █ █ █ █ █ drinks per <b>week</b>
<b>To stay low risk, keep within BOTH the single-day AND weekly limits.</b>		

"Low risk" is *not* "no risk." Even within these limits, persons can have problems if they drink too quickly or have underlying health problems. Based on your current health and how alcohol affects you, you may need to drink less or not at all. If you think you have a drinking problem, contact the NAVSTA hospital at ext. 72650.



Army Sgt. Lee McClure, a medic with the 525<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion, administers a Typhoid vaccination to Army Spc. John Suprenant at the Joint Troop Clinic, Nov. 16. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black



Soldiers with the 115<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company of the Rhode Island National Guard tread water for 10 minutes before removing their trousers and blouses to use as flotation devices during water survival training, Nov. 17. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Aaron Haas loads his belongings onto a pallet with the rest of Maritime Safety and Security Team 91101's gear as they prepare to return to their home station, Nov. 12. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black



# Around the

# JTF



Army Spc. Matthew Perez, a member of the Rhode Island National Guard's 115<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company, and Army Spc. Johnathan Rifas with the Puerto Rico National Guard's 480<sup>th</sup> MP Company, participate in a friendly rivalry, playing Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2, at the Camp America Liberty Center, Nov. 13. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black