

Volume 13, Issue 15

Friday, February 17, 2012

The WIRE

An award-winning
JTF journal

Lighting
up the
night
with Polynesian
dance in the
Caribbean

GTMO's Taco Tuesday Wednesday
Valentine's Day survivors

REAR ADM. DAVID WOODS

COMMANDER, JTF GUANTANAMO

What is the forecast?
I'm not talking about the weather, which is nice right now as "Guantanamo Jay" the banana rat saw his shadow Feb. 2 and forecasted "six more weeks of Caribbean winter!" The forecast which I am referring to is the forecast for the future of the U.S. military, our services and the Department of Defense. This forecast is not difficult if you understand, recognize and interpret the information that is available to all of us.

First, President Barack Obama, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey announced last month a new Defense Strategy titled: "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," which will direct the course of our military in the future. Here is the link so you can read it for yourself:
www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf

The new strategy recognizes the strategic pivot point our nation is reaching as we have transitioned control of Iraq to the Iraqi government and we execute the plan for the drawdown of our troops in Afghanistan. It also acknowledges the economic environment of the nation and the need for a strategy-driven defense budget. It is truly designed to bind the demand and expectations then balance against supply and resources. So if you want to know the defense forecast on what our military will be designed to accomplish, read this strategy.

Second, last week the Department of Defense budget was submitted. This budget is the first installment of what we need to resource the defense

strategy. You will see a lot of press trying to interpret the budget for you. In many cases the reporting will be too narrow in scope or will compare the budget request with the current budget. Again, the key to an accurate forecast is to understand that our budget is driven by the new strategy and is a paradigm shift.

So this is pretty lofty stuff and you probably want to know, "What is the connection to me as a Trooper,

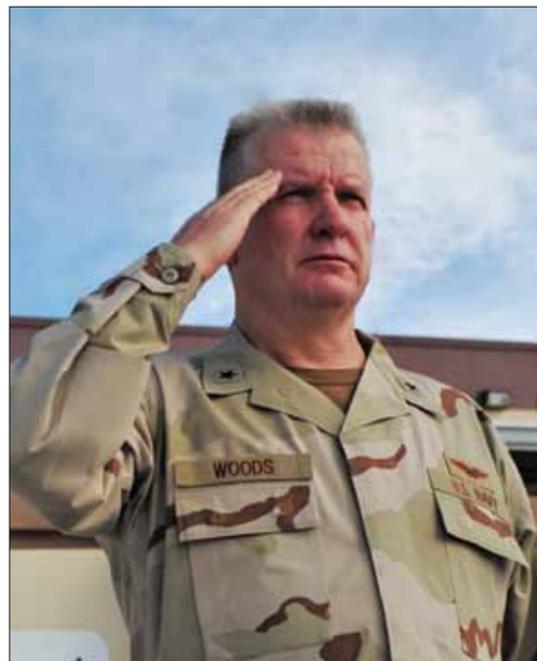
The new military strategy recognizes the pivot point our nation is reaching, and acknowledges the nation's economic environment.

government civilian or contractor at Joint Task Force Guantanamo?" The connection is that it provides the roadmap to the future. There will be significant changes to the size of our force. Some skill sets will be in less demand while others will increase in demand. Force reductions will be executed using a number of tools. In the Navy's case, as we have seen, they take the form of Early Release Boards, Selected Early Retirement Boards, Continuation Boards and/or Perform-To-Serve reviews. In the case of the Army they will be limiting reenlistments as part of their plan to shape the force. Other services will be using similar measures.

Bottom line: your ability to control your destiny out in the future will be based on strong performance and preparation. The Active Component, Reserve Component, National Guard and Civil Service will be looking to retain top performers. Even if you decide not to stay in the service your performance and preparation while you are in the service will go a long way toward setting you a part from the competition. Take the opportunity each day to put forth your best effort and make your future happen! Honor Bound!

Cover: Fire dancer "Chief" Kahui of a Polynesian dance troupe fired things up Feb. 11 for U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay families and Joint Task Force Guantanamo Troopers. Kahui is a native of Maui, just one of the many enchanting islands of the Polynesian Triangle.

—photo by Mass Communication Spc. 1st Class Ty Bjornson



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UFC at GTMO!

UFC Fighters Keith Jardine and Matt Brown will visit Guantanamo Bay tomorrow. Their first stop is at Camp America at Kittery Cafe at 4:30 p.m., then a visit to the Camp America Liberty Center, and then O'Kelly's Irish Pub at 7 p.m. for autographs and a meet-and-greet.

The two fighters will also demonstrate their grappling moves at Denich Gym Sunday at 6 p.m.

For more information, call 2010.

Virtual career fair

Service members, veterans, and military spouses will have the opportunity to meet and interact, the convenience of their home, with recruiters and hiring managers from dozens of military employers. The career fair will be at Feb. 24 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

You must register to reserve your space at www.veteranscareerfair.com.

NLSO tax assistance

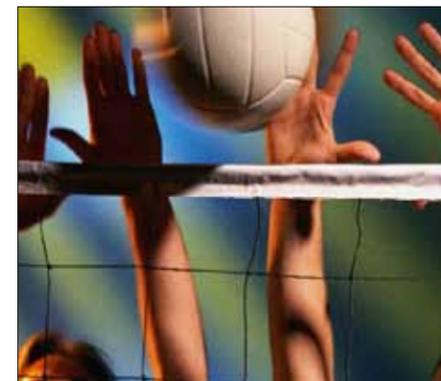
The Navy Legal Services Office is ready to help Guantanamo residences through tax season. The naval station location will be open 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Mon-Fri., and the JTF Trooper One Stop office 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Appointments are now available.

For more information, call 4692.

Sand volleyball tournament

Grab some friends and some sunscreen for this holiday weekend's Blizzard Sand Volleyball tournament!

For more information, call 2113.



Black & White Gala

The Black Heritage Organization will put on the Black & White Gala on Feb. 25 at the Windjammer. The event honors African-American Women's history and culture. The dress code is semi-formal, but military attire is acceptable. Tickets are \$30 and will be available at the NEX atrium from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for the next two weekends.

Command Fitness Leader cert course

Are you looking for a chance to take the lead on your command's physical training? Enroll in the Command Fitness Leader Certification Course. Register online by March 9 at the following address:
www.navyfitness.org/fitness/cfl_information

The course runs from March 26 to March 30. For more information, call 2157.

Discount recreation in February

Golf cart rentals will be half price every Wednesday in the month of February. \$5 covers one person and \$7.50 covers two people. Boat rentals will be 25 percent off every Monday-Thursday this month. Prices vary based on the boat. For more information, call 2345.

Hospital galley closure

The U.S. Naval Hospital galley will be closed Monday, Feb. 20 in observation of George Washington's birthday.

Specialty care at USNH

Specialty care providers will be available for appointments at U.S. Naval Hospital Guantanamo in the upcoming months:
GI – March
ENT – March/April
Audiology – April
Dermatology – April
Podiatry – April
Urology – April

For a referral, schedule an appointment with Primary Care Clinic at 72110.

Special thanks to Julie Latrell for last week's Treasures and Trivia photo!

Library poetry contest

Share your thoughts, words and feelings with the Guantanamo Bay community. The MWR Community Library is holding a Valentine's Day poetry contest. The library will accept submissions until Feb. 21. A prize will be awarded for the winners of each group: 2nd-6th grade, 7th-12th grade and adults. The winners will also be published in the Guantanamo Bay Gazette.

For more information, call 4700.

Bart Walker Band to play Marine Hill

The Marine Corps Security Force Company will sponsor a performance by the Bart Walker Band at the Marine Hill Parade Deck Feb. 25 at 6 p.m.

If you can't make it on Saturday, the band will also play Feb. 26 at O'Kelly's Irish Pub at 5 p.m.

For more information, call 2114.

Pool tourney practice

Maybe you won't become a shark, but you can improve your pool skills at any Liberty Center on Monday nights in preparation for the pool tournament Feb. 27. Liberty MWR is also looking for volunteers to teach people the techniques and strategy of pool. Get volunteer hours for playing a game you like. To schedule a practice session, or to volunteer your time, call 2010.

Tricare office relocated

The Tricare office has temporarily relocated to building H-11, behind the hospital barracks complex.

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Trooper to Trooper

loyalty is inspired by trust

MASTER SGT. JULIO ESPINET

COMMISSIONS LIAISON OFFICE NCOIC

Akin to the four cardinal points, north to south and east to west, loyalty is a part of our principles and way of life. On and off duty, it is an image of who we really are; because, no matter the situation, we best perceive loyalty from within ourselves.

Put yourself in a leader's position and ask, "What inspires Troopers to be loyal?" Once the academic answers are sifted through, there remains a single theme which forms the answer to that question – trust.

If a senior leader can inspire trust, he will also inspire loyalty. Without trust, he may be able momentarily to compel compliance with his orders, but this compliance will not be the same as loyalty. Loyalty is not compelled; it is inspired and earned. Where loyalty exists, commitment, respect and obedience to orders are characterized by a special kind of superior-subordinate relationship.

Loyalty is sometimes misunderstood or worse, misused, not only in the military but also in the civilian world. Loyalty to the service, to your unit, superiors and finally to yourself is a key part of our learning process. On the other hand, loyalty to subordinates and peers is absolutely essential and part of the equation.

By nature, it is a process to give and gain trust. The realization of trust is only obtained if integrity is evident in the demonstration of one's loyalty. A Trooper may obey you if he is afraid of you, but his obedience is a weak and fleeting thing. Remove the immediate grounds of his fear and you have removed his sole reason for obeying. If that same Trooper is loyal to you, his obedi-



ence will have been ensured in a much more lasting way, for the attitude of loyalty is a stronger stimulus than the attitude of fear.

Our actions speak louder than words and they demonstrate our true character. We should not ask others for things that we ourselves are unwilling to do. Live and act in a similar manner, and you will discourage those naysayers from ever thinking that you can be drawn into their web of deceit and their cowardly, illegitimate evocation of your loyalty for foul ends.

Lead by example and do what's right even when it appears no one sees you. Because there's always someone watching – the real you. Loyalty can be inspired, in a manner that the military goal of discipline can be achieved along with the social goal of having individuals who are reflective, morally-aware individuals. This conception of loyalty is one of loyalty inspired by trust, where that trust resides in the moral integrity of senior leaders. "My loyalty is my honor" – my loyalty resides in a person of integrity, to whom I give my trust.

JTF Guantanamo commander to take helm of Strike Force Training Pacific within year

Congratulations to Rear Adm. David Woods on the announcement of his next assignment as Commander, Strike Force Training Pacific, San Diego, Calif.

His selection by the Navy to command Strike Force Training Pacific is consistent with the career progression of Navy Flag Officers who possess Woods' scope of knowledge, judgment, maturity, training and experience. His selection for this position of responsibility in the Navy is a reflection of the high degree of confidence the Navy has placed in him as a senior military leader and distinguished naval officer.

"Adm. Woods has done a superb job leading the men and women under his charge and commanding a mission that contributes daily to our shared security," said Gen. Douglas Fraser, Commander, U.S. Southern Command. "I could not be more pleased with the job he has done in a very complex and high visibility position."

Woods' replacement has not been named yet and no change of command date has been set; however, once his relief is identified the timeline will be worked in order to offer appropriate continuity and overlap between the Commander and Deputy Commander of the Joint Task Force.

Budget would keep Navy, Marine Corps 'expeditionary'

By Karen Parrish

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The Navy and Marine Corps will be leaner and smaller, but still rapidly deployable under the fiscal 2013 budget request President Barack Obama sent to Congress today, the Navy's budget chief said.

Rear Adm. Joseph P. Mulloy, the Navy's deputy assistant secretary for budget, told Pentagon reporters today the sea service, which also administers the Marine Corps' budget, will trim spending by \$58.1 billion by the end of fiscal 2017. The Navy's proposed fiscal 2013 budget is down \$9.5 billion from fiscal 2012.

"We think all of our investments here are aligned to the strategic priorities and goals as set out by the president," the admiral said.

As required by the Budget Control Act, the Defense Department budget request includes \$487 billion in spending cuts for fiscal years 2013 to 2017.

The budget request sets Navy active and reserve end strength for fiscal 2013 at 385,200 -- 1.7 percent less than fiscal 2012. In fiscal 2017, the end strength will be 376,600, a 3.9 percent reduction from fiscal 2012.

Marine Corps active and re-

serve end strength in fiscal 2013 is 236,900 under the proposal -- 2 percent less than fiscal 2012. In fiscal 2017 the end strength will be 221,700, an 8.3 percent reduction from fiscal 2012.

"The Navy has come down almost 6,000 people over the last 10 years," the admiral noted. Marine Corps end-state reductions, like the Army's, are in line with planned troop reductions in Afghanistan, he added.

Mulloy noted sailors and Marines will lose "not a dollar" under the budget request, though pay increases will slow after 2014.

In force structure changes through fiscal 2017, the Navy will eliminate seven cruisers and two dock landing ships. Next fiscal year, the service is slated to add seven and drop 11 from its list of combat-capable ships.

The Navy will gain a nuclear attack submarine, a transport dock, a dry-cargo ammunition ship, a littoral combat ship, two joint high-speed vessels and one mobile landing platform. The service will retire one aircraft carrier, six frigates and four cruisers.

Mulloy noted Navy officials don't expect the fleet size to

see BUDGET page 6

PROTECT YOUR INFO! PSEC SPECIAL ALERT: Hot Tips from the Interagency OPSEC Support Staff (IOSS)

Be aware of geotagging!

What is geotagging?

A new function of many computing devices-including smart phones, some digital cameras, and even portable game systems (in some cases)-is the ability to track your location to near-GPS precision. While this feature is for "location services," which can be fun or useful, they also present a risk. In particular, many devices add location data to photos by default. Called "Geotagging," the data becomes part of the image file and goes wherever the image goes. By uploading or

sending such images to the Internet, you may have provided an adversary with critical information.

Consider:

1. Public sharing sites like Flickr or Google Maps are public. An adversary can search by location to see who takes photos there and research the users who took the photos.
2. Even profiles that are set to "private" could compromise photos if the privacy controls are not set or used properly. The hosting service itself could sell or lose your data as well.
3. Pictures taken at sensitive locations can lead adversaries directly to supply depots, command centers, or our troops.

4. If many photos are available from the same user or a collection of related users (several people in the same military unit, for example), the adversary may be able to determine patterns of your activities.

What to do:

1. Be Aware. Now that you know about this capability, think twice before taking and sending photos. You can test to see if you have geotagging capability by taking a photo and checking properties in Windows® Vista, or higher. Some photo editors

as several custom programs allow for the viewing and manipulation of location data as well.

2. Evaluate the Need.

Do you have a specific point or purpose to tagging photos? If not, it's far simpler to disable the feature instead of trying to remember to "clean the photos later." Instructions for doing so can be easily found by searching for the model of your phone with the keywords "disable" or "geotag."

Think before you upload!

TROOPER FOCUS

By Mass Communication Spc. 2nd Class Jon Dasbach

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 2nd Class Sheldon Popo works in Camp Justice as the housing and billeting noncommissioned officer. Originally the housing and billeting NCO were held by two different people, but now Popo has both responsibilities and performs with professionalism and dedication to succeed.

As part of his job, he takes care of all the housing arrangements for the Office of Military Commissions personnel when they come to Guantanamo Bay not only for commissions, but other official visits as well. Depending on the nature of the visit, the housing varies from tents in Camp Justice to rooms in the combined bachelor quarters.

"Any and everything that has to do with billeting and housing is my responsibility," said Popo. "Anything that needs to be done, I make it happen."

Popo makes sure that whatever type of room is needed, all the arrangements are prepared and taken care of prior to arrival, as well as inspects the rooms to make sure they up to standard.

If the visitors have any problems, or if anything needs to be fixed with the rooms during the visit, Popo is the first to be contacted and he

makes sure the problem is solved.

"He does everything down there," said Master Sgt. Julio Espinet, Popo's leading supervisor. "We work every day, even the weekends. I would like people to know, the housing, the billeting, all the stuff that he takes care of. We don't just work during commissions, we work all the time."

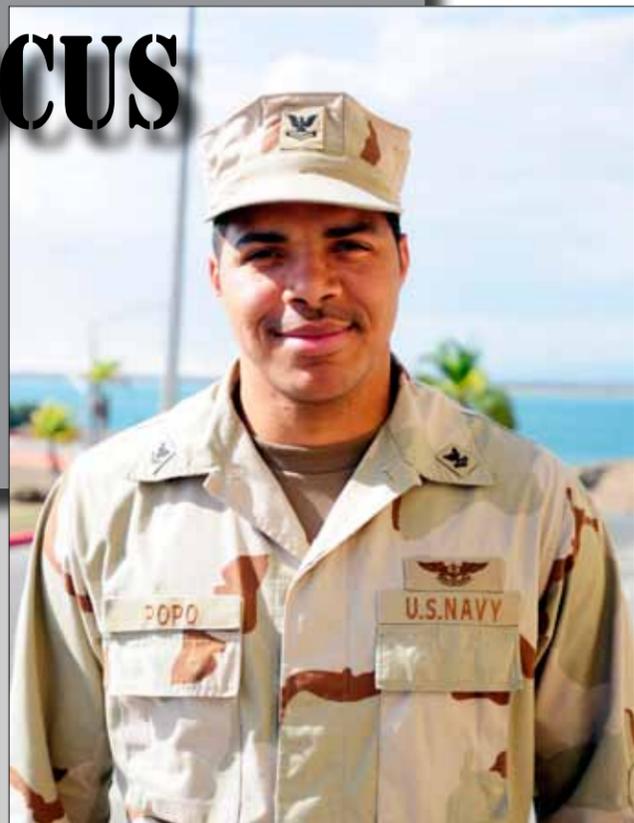
Part of Popo's job is to be available for visitors 24 hours a day. He has to be knowledgeable about what to do with any problem or situation and how to fix it fast and efficiently. From visitors being locked out to the air conditioning going out, he is the one who is in charge of getting it fixed.

The help that he provides is not only recognized by his supervisor, but by the visitors who have been here and seen firsthand what a great job Popo is doing.

Espinet and Popo actually met prior to being stationed together here in Guantanamo.

"He helped me in Jacksonville, and he didn't even know at that time he would be coming here and

see FOCUS next page



BULLET BIO

Time in service: 8 years

Hobbies: Taking care of his family

The boss says: "I'm proud to have him. He's like a son."

Advice to junior Troopers: "What you put into the military is what you are going to get back."

Did you send or receive anything on Valentine's Day?



"I sent a bouquet of flowers to my mom."

Spc.
Corey Davidson



"I sent my wife a Facebook message, so I'm spending Valentine's Day with the iguanas and banana rats."

Hospitalman 3rd Class
Leotis Dixon



"I plan on sending a card to my wife and kids to say I miss them."

Sgt.
David Sutton



"I'm getting a special delivery. My girlfriend is coming down next week!"

Fire Control Technician
2nd Class Jorge Carpio

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

FOCUS cont.

I would be his supervisor," Espinet said. "He provided help to everybody."

Popo is on six month individual augmentee orders and is currently stationed at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla.

"His job here is a change from his specialty and from his job in Jacksonville, but he grasped it quickly and has been doing an outstanding job," said Espinet.

As for what Popo does when he has a chance to break away from his busy work schedule, he likes to snorkel, jog and take care of his family.

For Valentine's Day, Popo says he bought his wife an iPad 2. She is also active duty Navy, and is currently stationed on the USS Enterprise.

"We really don't get to see each other that much so, I try to spoil her a little bit. That's all I can really do," said Popo.

BUDGET cont.

change much over time, though the number of ships will drop slightly for a few years.

"We're forecasting that in 2017 we'll have the same number of ships that we have now," he said.

"We have 37 ships under construction ... and nine more ships to award this year," the admiral added.

The Marine Corps will eliminate an infantry regiment headquarters, five infantry battalions (four active and one reserve), an artillery battalion, four tactical air squadrons (three active and one reserve), and a combat logistics battalion.

Mulloy acknowledged the budget request call for delaying several Navy and Marine Corps programs and postponing some purchases. Operations and maintenance are essential, he said, and too-deep force cuts carry unacceptable risk, so "where do you take the cuts?"

Navy planners and leaders looked at long-term programs as the best source of cost reduction, he said, adding "The real driver here was, 'What do we need to have?'"

The proposal delays for two years the planned "SSBN-X" ballistic missile submarine program, which will develop a replacement for the Ohio-class submarines.

The Ohio-class subs will begin to reach the end of their service life in 2027, according to Navy officials. A two-year delay in developing the multibillion-dollar replacement, which will

form part of the nation's nuclear triad, represents an "acceptable risk," officials said.

The Navy also proposes reducing procurement of joint high-speed vessels from 18 ships to 10, and a scheduled MV-22 Osprey purchase by 24 aircraft through 2017.

The Navy will also slow buys of two joint strike fighter variants, deferring until after 2017 purchase of 69 of the aircraft. The service will terminate its Medium-Range Maritime Unmanned Aerial System, as Navy officials said other unmanned systems show demonstrated capability.

Spending for Navy and Marine Corps green energy initiatives will remain fairly steady, Mulloy said, calling them a key component for the department for "tremendous tactical reasons."

For Marines on the ground and ships and planes afloat, minimizing fuel transport and fueling operations means reducing risk, he noted.

"Everything you can do to [reduce] energy use and drive the same tactical output ... is important," the admiral said.

The Navy and Marine Corps' emphasis on renewable energy ensures more "safety for personnel and efficiency for our forces," Mulloy added.

The budget proposal will mean "a leaner, smaller force, but we're still rapidly deployable and expeditionary, and we're manned and led with the highest quality of individuals,"

MONEY MATTERS

A Fleet & Family guide to staying ahead of deployment finances

By Walter Barrett

Fleet and Family Services Center

Deployments can be exciting as well as stressful. The more prepared you are, the less stress you will likely experience. Deployments provide an opportunity to reevaluate and update important documents such as power of attorneys, next of kin designations, wills, DEERS enrollment and ID cards, and update beneficiary information for SGLI and TSP.

Determine how best to pay bills while on deployment. Allotments, automatic debits from checking/savings accounts can be easily setup. If married, communicate with your spouse about these arrangements.

Establish a written spending plan that takes into account money for both (if married) while on deployment. Contact a Family Assistance Center for help in setting up your spending plan. Developing a realistic and flexible spending plan prior to deployment will help increase your spending power by as much as 10 percent. A good plan can help minimize or eliminate financial stress and can help prepare you for any unexpected events. Incorporate allowances and incentive pays such as family separation, imminent danger pay, or reenlistment bonuses into your spending plan too.

There are a number of ways for you to help manage your finances while deployed, but the primary thing to understand is different pays will start and stop when going on or returning from deployment, so check your MyPay account often. Many service members have had to repay money they weren't entitled to and for most it came at an inconvenient time. Consider the following in preparation for deployment: allotments (good for installment loans such as mortgage and car payments), split pay (if married, money needs to move to the top of the communication agenda – how much does the stay behind spouse need to take care of the day-to-day living expenses and debts and how much you need while deployed, etc.) and online banking.

Do your own financial "preventative maintenance" by being proactive. Contact your financial institutions to let them know you're deployed, so they don't mistakenly turn off your credit card when a charge posts from somewhere not in the United States. Alert your credit card companies or freeze extra cards. For more information, see the Federal Trade Commission's website at: www.ftc.gov or anyone of the three major credit report agencies: Trans Union, Equifax or Experian.

As part of a financial plan for deployment, consider the following on how to handle credit. First, obtain a free credit report. Congress mandated that we, the consumer be given access to a free credit report annually from those three major credit reporting agencies. Second, review your report for any discrepancies; report any error(s) directly to the agency that has it listed. Credit is a wonderful and useful tool if managed correctly. Financial issues and particularly credit misuse is the number one reason for security clearance revocation.

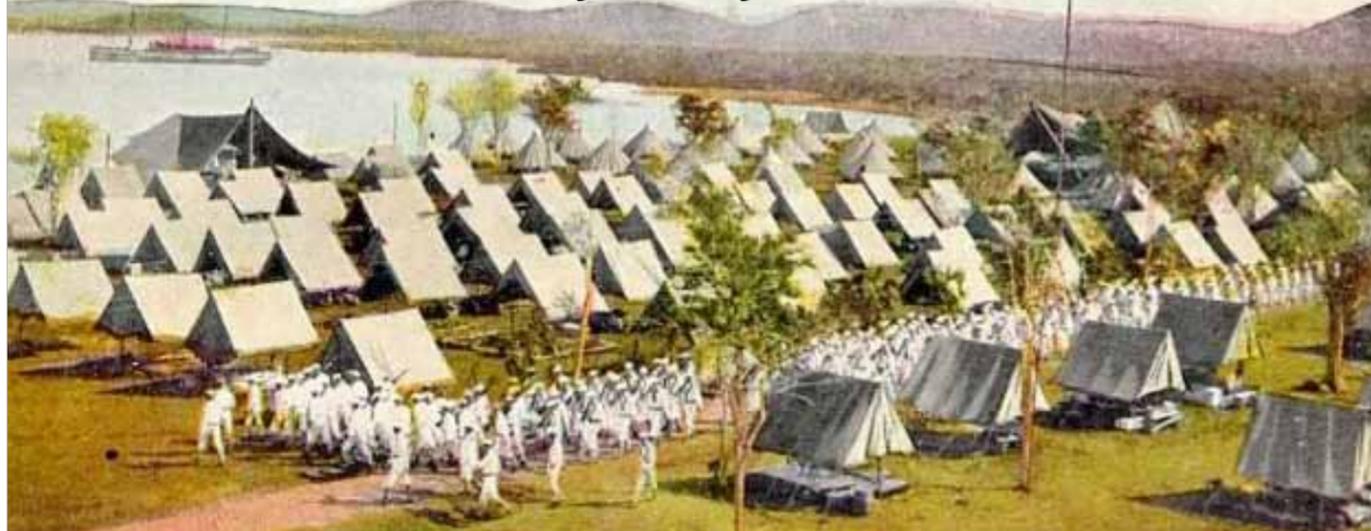
By doing so, you'll help yourself and your family by eliminating money stress and starting the process of becoming a "Millionaire on Military Pay."

Fast boat teams assigned to the United States Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team (MSST) San Diego applied their tactics training in Guantanamo Bay Feb 12. The Opposing Forces (OPFOR) boat (far right) simulated a breached 500 yard security zone of a high valued asset and the Reaction and Screen vessels go in and determine the OPFOR's intent. MSST San Diego provides 24-hour security to both the Joint Task Force and Naval Station.
 —photo by Mass Communication Spc. 2nd Class Kilho Park

HIGH SPEED TRAINING



This week in Guantanamo Bay History



U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay is the oldest U.S. military base on foreign soil, and this week we celebrate its 109th anniversary. On Feb. 23, 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the original lease agreement with Cuba for Guantanamo Bay. This was the first lease between the United States of America and Cuba for use of this bay as a U.S. Naval Station.

President Roosevelt had been the Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1898 when the USS Maine blew up in Havana harbor. He was instrumental in preparing the Navy for the upcoming Spanish-American War. After resigning from the Department of Navy when war was declared, he became a U.S. Army colonel and led the infamous "Rough Riders" in the Battle of San Juan Hill, on the outskirts of Santiago de Cuba, and was nominated for the Medal

of Honor for his bravery that day. After he was elected president in 1901, his administration's negotiations with the new government of Cuba established this bay as a U.S. naval station.

The 1903 agreement reads in part:
 "To enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the Cuban Government will sell or lease to the United States the lands necessary for coaling or naval stations, at certain specified points, to be agreed upon with the President of the United States."

Above: do the hills overlooking the encampment at Deer Point look familiar?

—courtesy Sgt. 1st Class Michael Shimer

Every holiday counts for those away from home

By Army Sgt. Saul Rosa

When Troopers are deployed they miss many holidays with their family and friends. Support is widespread during major holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving but holidays like Valentine's Day can be lonelier.

For Troopers in a relationship or recently out of one, Valentine's Day can be a very difficult holiday. Fortunately, for Troops deployed to Guantanamo Bay there are organizations that offer help during those difficult times.

The Joint Stress Mitigation and Restoration Team, or JSMART, offers Troopers an informal atmosphere to talk about their problems and deal with their issues before they become a chance to affect mission readiness.

"For some service members this is maybe the first time they've been away from their spouse or significant other," said Hospitalman 3rd Class Dominique Cannon of JSMART.

"We try to talk to these service members and let them know that missing a holiday is not the end of the world."

The Chaplains' Office is another asset in a service member's arsenal for dealing with the stress of being separated from a loved one. The Chaplains made a special effort to wish Joint Task Force Troopers a Happy Valentine's Day.

They also offer different ways to strengthen a relationship while Troopers are

separated from a loved one.

"One of the things we offer to Troopers is the 'United Through Reading' program," said Air Force Chaplain Lt Col. Alan Chouest. "Troopers can make an appointment and sign out a video camera and record a message to loved ones."

The Chaplains' Office also offers individual counseling for service members who wish to talk about their relationship or the pain of being separated from loved ones.

"Anytime someone wants to come in and talk about their relationship we are more than happy to do so," said Chaplain Navy Capt. Bradley Thom. "All four of the Joint Task Force chaplains are married, and we're people who are seasoned at military deployments. We know what it's like to be apart and what it's like to be reunited."

Chaplain Thom also explained that communication is important during a deployment. For those seeking to improve their communication with their loved ones Thom suggested the book "The Five Languages of Love."

"We all hear messages differently and we relate to different things," said Thom. "We hear words differently and interpret actions differently. It's important to understand this."

During a deployment away from a spouse or significant other, holidays like Valentine's Day can emphasize the difficulty of being separated. However, remember this too shall pass.

"For those of you in a relationship continue to work on the things that fuel it, whether its letters, e-mails, instant messaging or video chatting," said Thom.

Alooooooha Guantanamo!



By Army 1st Lt. Amelia Thatcher

Hula dancers graced U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Feb. 11, bringing the motions of the South Pacific to the Caribbean. The performers were right at home in the tropical Cuban climate, with one reptilian exception.

"If it were not for the iguanas, it would be just like Hawaii," Maui native and emcee Nathan Pokipala said.

Tiki torches flickered in the windy evening as Naval Station families and Joint Task Force Guantanamo Troopers first partook in a traditional pig roast, complete with Hawaiian rice, fruit, and pineapple upside down cake with coconut beverages.

"We might have a second seating next year, because of the popularity," said Amice MacDonnell, Morale Welfare & Recreation community activities director. "It happens every year; the tickets go really fast."

MacDonnell added that new to this year's program were 50 youth tickets, all of which also sold out quickly, and pre-dinner luau games including beanbag toss, limbo, hula hoops, and coconut bowling.

Dr. Cardoo made his third visit to Guantanamo Bay, with his magic bag and bone headdresses in tow.

"It's magic I do, mostly," the faux witch doctor said through his thick grass wig and mask of face paint. "It's a great chance to come to the forbidden island."

Dr. Cardoo has traveled to military posts including Eglin Air Force Base, Panama City, Jacksonville, Fla., and Mobile, Ala.

"Would you believe it, there's a Tiki Bar in Iowa!" he added, mid-photo op with a straw hat-bedecked group of Troopers.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Jade Fitzwater adjusted the orange flowers in her hair and awaited the show with some friends.

"It's something different to do," she said. "We're mingling with everyone else in the community at one of the more unique events."

As the sun set and the pig roast stocks dwindled, the musicians took their places. Their instruments included the toete drum, made of rare milo wood; a taller drum called a faatete, beaten with drumsticks and traditionally stretched with sharksin; a guitar, and a ukulele. But the first sound of the dance came from the sea.

"At every traditional Polynesian luau, the blowing of the conch shell symbolizes the beginning of the dance," Pokipala intoned across the Tiki Bar patio. "Chief" Kahui, the lone male dancer, signaled the others of the Polynesian troupe to begin.

Clad in colorful outfits which they changed between dances, Leilani, Elena, Mahea swayed and hula'd to the beat of the toete drum. Each far-flung island of the "Polynesian Triangle" has its own style, and the dancers' moves and

see LUAU next page

LUAU cont.

clothing reflected its mood: a Tahitian version of the hula in red and yellow cloth skirts; bright blue headdresses and long strands of seed pearls transported the crowd to New Zealand; and white crepe with the familiar coconut shell bra reminisced of Hawaii.

“The hands tell the whole story from the islands of Tahiti,” Pokipala said as the female dancers weaved across the stage. “But in Hawaii, the men were first taught to hula, years before the women.”

Pokipala also billed the Samoas, both American and the sovereign Western Samoa, as the most fun-loving of the islands.

“Chief” Kahui finished the initial dance routine in a blaze of fire, leaping and juggling a flaming staff. A dancer since the age of seven, this is his third trip to Guantanamo Bay. Previous military stops include shows at Camp Pendleton and Nellis Air Force Base.

“The hottest fire dancer around!” Pokipala crowed.

After a short break, children of Naval Station-based families then received a lesson in hula. More than a dozen kiddos, one decked out in a long grass skirt and a long flower-crowned wig, followed along with the dancers as they demonstrated some simple moves.

The lesson for Guantanamo adults, including Joint Task Force Trooper Lt. Erin Graham, included a many of the dances from the show. It was also an uncommon sendoff for Marine Corps Security Forces Company 1st Sgt. Richard Anderson and his wife April, who took the stage last.

But it won't be the last visit for the Polynesian troupe, which has been to more than 100 countries but have yet to tire of traveling and spreading the love of their song.

“Where have we not been?” Pokipala laughed. “The MWR treats us well here, and of course we'd come back.”

Left: Nathan Pokipala and Brown, from Tonga, performed their Polynesian dance troupe's popular luau.
Bottom: Leilani, Elena, and Mahea dance a traditional Tahitian hula for the audience.
—photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ty Bjornson



The mystery of Taco Wednesday

By Army Sgt. Saul Rosa

Whether they eat in a galley, chow hall, or dining facility, many service members worldwide look forward to a favorite weekly tradition, Taco Tuesday. However, Troopers deployed to Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay get to experience Taco Wednesday instead.

“I'm from the Southwest,” said Hospitalman 2nd Class Amber Craig. “I'm a Mexican food fiend, so I enjoy the taco bar, but I guess they never heard of Taco Tuesday here.”

Like many things in the military, to understand the way something works you have to look at the whole system.

Every galley, from Joint Task Force to the Naval Station side of Guantanamo Bay, is run under the same chain of command. Therefore, no matter which galley you go to the menu will be the same.

Master Chief Petty Officer Patrick Campbell, the assistant food service officer, explained that the Navy galleys use a 21-day menu. Meals are selected based on nutrition and popularity. The three-week structure allows the Navy chefs to determine if a meal will be used again, based on a formula using the amount of food distributed and the leftovers Troopers discard.

“It's our goal to provide the troops at Guantanamo Bay the healthiest meals possible,” said Campbell. “But we don't limit the options available to only healthy food; sometimes Troopers just want a burger.”



Taco fiend Hospitalman 2nd Class Amber Craig builds a burrito, or soft shelled taco, at Seaside Galley.
—photo by Army Sgt. Saul Rosa

In addition to the 21-day menu the galleys at Guantanamo Bay also offer a specialty bar Monday through Friday every week.

“We wanted to offer our Troopers more options, in addition to our daily menu,” said Campbell. “These specialty bars are something that troops can look forward to every week.”

The specialty bar for Wednesday happens to be the Taco Bar, while on Tuesday it's the

soup bar.

“When I was back in the states, we had Taco Tuesday,” said Campbell. “Taco Wednesday was here before me and it was popular, so I didn't want to change it.”

So why does Guantanamo Bay have Taco Wednesday? Well, it seems that like Guantanamo Jay, things are a little different here on the island and our twist on Taco Tuesday is now a Guantanamo Bay tradition.

How does it work?

Are you curious about how things happen at Guantanamo Bay?
Contact The Wire with your questions, and we will try to find out!

Use the comment boxes or email thewire@jftgtmo.southcom.mil

IN THE FIGHT

Cobra Gold 2012: Royal Thai Marines educate U.S., ROK forces in jungle survival techniques

By Cpl. Jonathan G. Wright

31st Marine Expeditionary Unit

RECON CAMP, Kingdom of Thailand – Royal Thai Reconnaissance Marines instructed their U.S. and South Korean brothers how to survive in an isolated jungle environment.

In the 31st iteration of exercise Cobra Gold 2012, a multi-lateral training event where numerous countries in the Asia-Pacific region work together in a multitude of exercises, the jungle survival portion placed the Royal Thai Marines in the role of instructor while Company B, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, and Republic of Korea Marines were the pupils.

“The Thais are showing us a lot of tools as well as resources available to us in the jungle that we will be able to exploit to survive in that environment,” said 1st Lt. Zachary Duncan, platoon commander for first platoon, B. Co., BLT 1/4, 31st MEU. “This class is the first step in a succession of training we’ll be going through, the end result being that our eyes will be open to see the jungle environment as plentiful as it is.”

With hundreds of U.S., Thai and S. Korean Marines in a semi-circle around a presentation area, Sub-Lt. Pranom Yodrug, a Thai reconnaissance Marine, with the aid of a translator, outlined the wide variety of edible foliage and fruits there are to be found in the Thai wilderness and how to properly prepare each item. Following this, bamboo shoots fashioned into makeshift trays were passed around with cooked insects, further exemplifying the fact that there is more to eat in the jungle than fruit.

While the U.S. Marine Corps has various locations around multiple bases suitable for jungle survival training, it is not something every Marine will have the opportunity to benefit from. S. Korea is even at less of an advantage with the country being a cold-weather region, but the humidity and wild-life in the jungle setting is something every Thai Marine is familiar with.

“We’re originally stationed on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, which doesn’t have any jungles to train in,” said Lance Cpl. Aaron Lende, squad automatic weapon

gunner with Co. B., BLT 1/4, 31st MEU. “The heavy humidity alone can cause rapid dehydration, so being here and having the Thais teach us these skills, which we may one day use, is valuable.”

The second part of the day’s instruction was on various traps and crude instruments to be made and utilized in the capturing of larger food opportunities. Examples were shown for catching fish and snaring lizards or other small animals.

The main attraction of the class, however, was the techniques of killing and field stripping chickens and cobras. Procedures for the quick capture and humane killing of both were demonstrated to the Marines, and volunteers from all sides practiced their hands at their newly-learned survival techniques.

“It may not be pretty, but in a situation where you must survive off the land, it is either you or the chicken,” said Yodrug. “That is why we are teaching the other Marines these skills, because they do not have the proper environments to regularly train in jungle survival. When we all combine forces again, everyone will know how to live in the jungle.”

As the survival instruction concluded, the U.S. and ROK Marines showed their appreciation to their Thai counterparts and asked for stories of jungle warfare. While current U.S. conflicts do not require jungle training, the skill set increases the tactical readiness of Marines.

“If I was in a jungle environment and some kind of resupply was lost, I would be able to live off the land until I was able to be resupplied,” said Lance Cpl. Joshua Johnson, a rifleman with Co. B., BLT 1/4, 31st MEU. “It might be unlikely, but it adds to our overall preparedness.”

Cobra Gold 2012 demonstrates the resolve of the U.S. and participating nations to increase interoperability and promote security and peace throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

The 31st MEU is the only continuously forward-deployed MEU and remains the nation’s force in readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.

ON THE GROUND

Wood fuel innovation saves Fort Stewart money, reduces consumption

By Elvia Kelly

Fort Stewart Public Affairs

FORT STEWART, Ga. – Cost-effective, energy-reduction strategies are what the home of the Third Infantry Division is all about. And one directorate at Fort Stewart is doing just that – saving money and reducing energy one wood chip at a time.

The Directorate of Public Works Forestry Branch and Central Energy Plant, or CEP, works in conjunction towards the Chip and Haul Program, which recycles otherwise unusable lumber debris and converting the debris into a sustainable resource.

“We’re really involved in the Chip and Haul process from the very beginning,” said Jeff Mangun, chief of the Forestry Branch for DPW. “What we do is conduct commercial timber sales. We’re able to go out with our technicians and our foresters and select harvest the trees we want removed. After that is done, our forestry crews follow in after the loggers are completed. We go to these sites where they’ve hauled the logs and bring our equipment to the piles of debris that are left. We chip the [wood], blow it in the back of the chip vans, which are just big semi-trailers, and haul the chips to the Central Energy Plant here on post.”

The resulting energy produces steam for the CEP and chilled water and hot water for approximately 25 to 30 percent of the installation. Facilities that receive energy produced from the CEP include Winn Army Community Hospital, buildings in the 200 block and buildings in the 500 through 800 blocks.

“We’re probably going to save about a million dollars a year,” said Robert Baumgardt, director of DPW. “I’m really proud of that. The Chip and Haul has never been done here at Fort Stewart before. We looked at the resources. We knew that we needed wood fuel to run our Central Energy Plant. We knew we had a lot of slash out in the woods. We kind of combined the two ideas and said maybe we can do something and save some money.”

see WOOD next page



COAST TO COAST

Coast Guard CPO receives special operations award for counter-piracy mission

By 11th Coast Guard District Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – A Coast Guard chief petty officer was honored Tuesday for his superior service while deployed in support of overseas combat operations.

Chief Petty Officer Lee Conroy, a maritime enforcement specialist, assigned to Maritime Safety and Security Team San Diego, was presented the 2011 National Defense Industrial Association Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict Award for his actions in support of the counter-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden.

This award honors one member from each of the five armed services who has distinguished him or herself while supporting special operations, low-intensity conflicts or irregular warfare.

“I am honored to be recognized alongside our DOD brethren,” said Chief Petty Officer Lee Conroy. “But the true recognition belongs to my shipmates at MSSS San Diego. Without their dedication and sacrifice I wouldn’t be receiving this award.”

Chief Conroy was sighted for his leadership, superior judgment and operational knowledge. He successfully led an eight-person advanced interdiction team during a 120-day overseas deployment to Central

Command for operations Enduring Freedom and Riptide. As part of the anti-piracy Task Force 151 Chief Conroy instructed training sessions with 80 Navy Vessel Board, Search and Seizure team members in Close Quarters Combat and mission planning in anticipation of joint boardings. Chief Conroy’s professionalism and leadership resulted in the removal of 18 pirates from the Gulf of Aden during four joint Coast Guard and Navy counter-piracy boardings.

“We are extremely proud of Chief Conroy,” said Coast Guard Capt. Jeffrey Novotny, Deputy Commander of the Coast Guard’s Deployable Operations Group. “His accomplishments epitomize the capability and adaptability our deployable specialized forces bring to operational commanders at home and abroad.”

Conroy and his fellow honorees were presented the award Tuesday evening before a crowd of nearly 600 special operations soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and their families. The banquet featured a number of distinguished guests, including Adm. James A. Winnefeld, Jr., USN, Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, who delivered the keynote address.

WOOD cont.

Once the wood chips arrive to the CEP, it is collected and utilized as a renewable, sustainable energy resource.

“We receive the chips from the DPW Forestry [Branch],” said Randy Parks, Quality Assurance evaluator for the CEP. “[The chips] come in on tractor trailer trucks. We weigh them, check the moisture contents of the wood and dump the trucks in the truck dumper. Thereafter, it goes up a conveyor system and out onto the stock out yard. From there, we move it with front end loaders. We feed wood into a hopper that brings it up to the boiler.”

And, the “smoke” that can be seen coming from the plant is not smoke after all. It is the steam that the CEP produces, which is strictly produced for the plant.

“Using wood that we get from Fort Stewart is a lot cleaner,” Mangun said. “It burns cleaner. There are fewer problems at

the energy plant. The scrubber system stays cleaner. There’s less maintenance involved. The sediment ponds stay cleaner. So, it’s just good all around. The wood chips are high quality, so they’re more energy efficient.”

In terms of future money-saving innovations, Baumgardt said that they are primarily trying to save money and energy – even if it’s just the small things.

“We’re going down the path of trying to save money,” he said. “As we go down this path, it’s really a path of discovery. You’ll see some initiatives that we have going on like maybe putting exterior window blinds in buildings that keep the heat outside of the room outside, so we can cool the buildings a little bit easier. We’re working on some other ideas. So, we have some things that we are working on. It’ll take a little bit of time to implement, but it’s coming down the pike.”

ON THE WING

Star Trek fan becomes first female African-American U-2 recon pilot

By Armed Forces News Service

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, Md. – By the time Merryl Tengesdal graduated from the Navy’s flight aviation program in 1994, the early female aviation pioneers like Besie Coleman, Janet Bragg, Willa Brown and Mae Jemison had pretty much broken the barriers for race and gender.

But after the Bronx native switched to the Air Force a decade later, she helped rewrite the aviation and Air Force history books by becoming the first African-American to fly the U-2 reconnaissance plane.

Inspired as a young girl by the Star Trek movies of the 1970s and ‘80s, Tengesdal went on to excel in math and science in high school and took that interest into college where she earned a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from the University of New Haven, Conn.

After graduating from college, Tengesdal traveled to San Diego to the Navy’s flight aviation program. She would spend the next 10 years as a helicopter pilot flying the SH-60B Sea Hawk on missions in the Middle East, South America and throughout the Caribbean.

In 2004 Tengesdal switched to the Air Force where she made a dramatic change from helicopters to flying at altitudes of as much as 70,000 feet for hours at a time flying the U-2 reconnaissance plane.

“I was one of five women in my class and the only female that graduated,” said Tengesdal. “I just stayed focused as I went through the training process.”

Tengesdal said the U-2 is one of the more difficult aircraft to fly.

“When you land, you actually have to stall the aircraft at two feet because of the wings,” Tengesdal said that some of her best moments as a U-2 pilot have come during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, along with Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa where she was able to provide troops on the ground with information obtained from her flights.

Tengesdal is a senior pilot with more than 3,200 flying hours, with more than 330 of those in combat. She is currently a lieutenant colonel assigned to Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

STUDENT OF THE GAME

Lintelligent design

A Lingend in the making?



Linsert more Lin puns here. So the far the Linternet has rounded up a (well-Lintentioned) Lintany of Linsane, Lincessant, Lincredible, Linconceivable, and just plain Linane comments about this Harvard graduate's Linnate abilities and Linderella story. Linning! -NBA photo

By Army Sgt. Landis Andrews

If, for some reason, you haven't heard of the Asian sensation sweeping the National Basketball Association, let me introduce you to Lin Shūháo, better known as Jeremy Lin. This undrafted, second year player has led the New York Knicks to five straight wins without superstar teammates Carmelo Anthony and Amar'e Stoudamire. He capped off his sixth consecutive win with a game-winning three point shot.

In Lin's first career start, he scored 28 points and dished out eight assists, numbers not seen since Hall of Fame point guard Isiah Thomas' first start in 1981. Lin set scoring records by racking up 89, 109 and 136 points in his first three, four and five starts respectively, becoming the first player

to do that since the NBA merged with the American Basketball Association. He is the first player in NBA history to have 20 points and seven assists in each of his first five career starts.

Lin was born in Los Angeles, Calif. to a Taiwanese father and a Chinese mother, making him the first American-born person of Chinese or Taiwanese descent to play in the league. Since it is Black History month and the media are prisoners of the moment, Michael Luo, a New York Times reporter, describes Lin's success as a "Jackie Robinson moment."

Linsanity is a great story: he's great for the league (who will capitalize on the Chinese market after losing Yao Ming to retirement), he's great for the Knicks (who finally have the point guard that can run coach Mike

D'Antoni's fast paced offense) and he's great for Nike (who had the business sense to sign Lin before he played his first NBA game), but let's not confuse two racial firsts with comparable stories.

Jackie Robinson was drafted into the U.S. Army, completed Officer Candidate School and was court-martialed for not moving to the back of an unsegregated Army bus. Lin went undrafted by the NBA.

Robinson was badgered, belittled and racially insulted by the owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers and that was just to see if he had the intestinal fortitude to handle the pressures of integrating the MLB. Lin didn't get an athletic scholarship offered to him by his dream college, Stanford, and pundits called it racial profiling. Lin had to settle for an economics degree from Harvard.

Robinson received death threats in the mail and heard fans threaten his life as well as that of his family every time he took the field in his first season. Lin's fanfare has made his shirt the top seller on NBA.com, increased Knicks' online store traffic by 3,000 percent and spiked Madison Square Garden's public stock value 70 percent, putting it at a 52-week high, according to the business section of the ABC news website.

Robinson's presence caused people to denounce the Brooklyn Dodgers, boycott games and lose faith in the sport of baseball. Linsanity has the press box stuffed to the brim with American, Canadian, Chinese and Taiwanese media and has set season highs in attendance with the feeling of new life for the New York Knicks.

I'm not downplaying the efforts and accomplishments of what could be the missing link to the Knicks' playoff run, but I think Linsanity is more along the lines of Tebowmania. A kid that no one believed in has become the beacon of hope for his underperforming team.

This 23-year-old has a lot of learning and a lot of basketball in his future, so let's concentrate on the present and future before we put him in the pages of our history books. Now is the perfect time to celebrate the steps our society continually takes toward racial equality. But, let's not overstate anything. I, too, have been declared legally Linsane, but I'm not crazy enough to think Jeremy Lin is our generation's Jackie Robinson.

Mind, Body & Spirit

Reflections of a guard

by Petty Officer 3rd Class
Erin Phillips
NEGB



Before I arrived in Guantanamo Bay, there were stories. What to expect was unknown, and what was here was never expected. There were warnings about Guantanamo Bay activist groups, the immense stress caused by working around the detention camps, and how significant the impacts of a place such as this may cause. Still I was not prepared for the stress and frustration I would encounter and unfortunately the ways to overcome it can be all too easily overlooked.

Deployments can cause much stress that seems to creep up and pounce when least expected. A detention operations deployment creates and increases stress unique to its nature that can be extremely difficult to deal with. However if we can control how we feel about this experience we can benefit as described in Psalm 37:8, "Do not fret—it only causes harm."

Many of the Navy guards such as myself are out of their typical job fields or are new to the military, and have limited experience in detention operations. In the beginning, the long days began to blend together. I quickly found myself beginning to slip into a shell of myself, never smiling, focusing on the negative, and finding little enjoyment and satisfaction in my life. Every day life became exponentially more complicated, increased by the debates that surround Guantanamo Bay and the detainees housed here.

Any small complaint regarding the work of a guard has the potential to become a large

issue, therefore we must use extra precaution when dealing with anyone who may spread rumors about what our job entails. Sometimes it feels as if the work fails to yield visible results. Negative events, regardless of their size, compound and magnify to the point of affecting our abilities to deal with stress. Before you know it, the situation becomes overwhelming and a feeling of hopelessness reigns.

Although we will come out on top, while dealing with so much stress and discontent it is easy to become frustrated and angered when faced with deployment and then added outside contributors. Hearing fellow citizens back in the States denigrate our hard work and sacrifices quickly becomes disheartening. In many instances, it was not a choice to work here. Frustration continues to build when forced to deal with normal stress that comes with the military and being deployed, working detention operations, and added to this, the backlash of misinformed people who contribute to the outside negative views. But then I remember Romans 5:5, and that we can find "glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."

I believe that there is a greater purpose, and our work here has reason. I believe that this experience will not only affect the good of the United States of America and the ones we love, but also help us personally. It will

help us grow and learn as people and shape us into the best human beings we can be. I am able to grow and learn from the words of John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The consequences of the work here may not be directly seen, but there is a reason for everything and God has a greater purpose. If this job were not being done and being done well, imagine what could be done; what terrible acts could be committed. It may not be what we see, but what we don't see.

People say a place is what you make it. I say the opposite. Guantanamo Bay has changed me significantly. It has helped me grow as a person and overcome challenges. My religion has helped me become a stronger person and has helped me survive through the time spent in the camp as a guard. I was able to reach out and break beyond the walls of despair and see the good. Although there are many forces that are working against us, we are the good in Guantanamo Bay.

Sleep soundly knowing that our country and families are safe because of our dedication and continuing hard work. We make a difference every day and nothing can change that or take that away from us. Regardless of your faith group, I Corinthians 16:13 speaks beyond religious boundaries: "watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong" for your country, for your family, and for yourself.

ONLY AT GTMO

by Mass Communication Spc. 1st Class Keith Simmons





EXTREMELY LOUD & INCREDIBLY CLOSE

By Mass Communication Spc. 1st Class Ty Bjornson

Like last week's "Hugo," "Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close" tells the story of an adolescent who loses his father to a horrible tragedy and then seeks a special message from him to cope with the loss. Coincidentally, both films are contenders for the Best Picture Oscar on Sunday, Feb. 26.

The protagonist of "Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close" is Oskar (Thomas Horn), a high functioning child who lacks social graces. At one point, Oskar mentions that it's possible he may even have Asperger's syndrome. This makes sense, given his erratic behavior and intellectual amplitude.

Oskar's father Tom (Tom Hanks, "Larry Crowne") knew Oskar to be a very bright lad. Through flashbacks, we see Tom regularly engaging Oskar in activities that stirred his mind and kept him thinking. Their relationship was very idealistic and portrayed as a little corny: if only everyone had a father like Thomas Schell, the world would be a better place.

Unfortunately, the world isn't a better place. We learn that Tom Schell was one of more than 3,000 victims who perished at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001. His body was never recovered. At his funeral, an empty coffin is buried, much to the dissatisfaction of his young son.

Oskar has great difficulty coping with his father's death. His mother Linda (Sandra Bullock, "The Blind Side") is beyond grief over losing her husband and dealing with the self-imposed social isolation of Oskar. She worries about Oskar deeply. Oskar tells her he wishes she was the one to die on 9/11 instead of his father. He engages in self injury, pinching himself all over his body to deal with his calamity.

One year later Oskar is able to set foot in his father's bedroom again. When he does, he is looking to find a connection to his father. That's when Oskar discovers the mysterious key in an envelope labeled "Black." What is this key? What does it mean? Why was it in his father's possession?

Convinced the key must have a significant meaning, and a possible message from his late father, Oskar is on a quest to discover what the key opens. He meets the film's most interesting character who is

known simply as "The Renter" (Max von Sydow, "Shutter Island"). He's an elderly gentleman who lives with Oskar's grandmother (Zoe Caldwell) in secret. He hasn't spoken a word since experiencing the Holocaust firsthand. Here is a man who hasn't been able to cope much with the world around him, similar to Oskar. He's seen his fair share of unhappiness, though he does find compassion for Oskar and aids him to find out what the key is for.

It's nice to see the friendship develop between the two. "The Renter" helps bring the fearful Oskar out of his "shell." It's a unique dynamic the two share as they bond. As their time together continues, we discover the secret Oskar has kept since the final moments of his father's life and who "The Renter" really is.

"Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close" is a rather strange film. The subject matter is the most serious of its kind: dealing with the emotional toll on those who are the survivors of the victims of Sept. 11. At the same time, the film gets a little whimsical in its quest to make sense of loss. The key, the elderly mute fellow and a tambourine are bizarre elements in a story of a young boy dealing with, adapting and ultimately coming to the terms of events in life beyond our control. Not that I would normally mind whimsy in movies about youth and discovery, but this is a story that uses Sept. 11 as a major plot device. After I finished watching this picture, I talked with one moviegoer who felt it is still too soon for a film to be this breezy with Sept. 11 as a backdrop. Maybe she's right. Many might consider the horrible events of that fateful day too inappropriate to be used as a springboard for this kind of film.

This feature is based on the book of the same name by Jonathan Safran Foer. The critics of that book echoed many of the same concerns I had with the film version. Harry Siegel of the New York Press titled his review "Extremely Cloying & Incredibly False: Why the author of 'Everything Is Illuminated' is a fraud and a hack," believing Foer was exploiting Sept. 11 for his personal financial gain. Anis Shivani with The Huffington Post went as far to add Foer to the list "The 15 Most Overrated Contemporary American Writers."

see REVIEW next page

Review continued

In contrast, The Spectator felt "the book is a heartbreaker: tragic, funny and intensely moving."

The book was adapted into the screenplay by Eric Roth, who also scripted "Forrest Gump" and "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button." Like "Extremely Loud," those are films about unique characters in unique circumstances. One can assume this kind of movie might be Roth's screenwriting "calling." Behind the camera directing is Stephen Daldry, who brought us the acclaimed post-

Holocaust drama "The Reader." Daldry has a penchant for real life events being the catalysts for the characters in his films to grow and develop over time. You would think with these two talents as the driving forces behind "Extremely Loud" you would have a thoughtful and intriguing picture.

What do you get from "Extremely Loud" when it's over? There's no denying the first rate acting. Max von Sydow even received an Academy Award nomination for Best

Supporting Actor for his role. That's saying something about a character who says nothing. The pacing is reasonable and the conclusion is what it is. You have a decent picture, but not much else. Perhaps the whimsy doesn't mix well with the most horrible national tragedy from the last decade.

"Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close" is a likeable and watchable film with some great moments. It just doesn't resonate with you afterwards. You are left asking yourself, what was this about and why? After some thought, I suspect it's about coping with dramatic change and growing beyond comfort zones. But shouldn't a film framed within the aftermath of Sept. 11 be something more? One would think.

NAVSTA Main Chapel

Daily Catholic Mass
Tues.-Fri. 5:30 p.m.

Vigil Mass
Saturday 5 p.m.

Mass
Sunday 9 a.m.

General Protestant
Sunday 11 a.m.

Gospel Service
Sunday 1 p.m.

Christian Fellowship
Sunday 6 p.m.

GTMO Religious Services

Ash Wednesday worship
Feb. 22

Main Chapel
12 p.m. – Ecumenical worship
5:30 p.m. – Holy Mass

7 p.m. – Protestant worship with
Communion

Each service will include
imposition of ashes.

For other services,
contact the NAVSTA
Chaplain's Office at 2323.

JTF Trooper
Chapel

Protestant Worship
Sunday 9 a.m.

Bible Study
Wednesday 6 p.m.

For more information,
contact the JTF Chaplain's
Office at 2305.

	17 FRI	18 SAT	19 SUN	20 MON	21 TUE	22 WED	23 THU
Downtown Lyceum	Journey 2: Inner Core (NEW) (PG) 7 p.m. War Horse (PG-13) 9 p.m.	We Bought a Zoo (PG) 7 p.m. Safe House (NEW) (R) 9 p.m.	Alvin and the Chipmunks (G) 7 p.m. Mission: Impossible (PG-13) 9 p.m.	New Year's Eve (last showing) (PG-13) 7 p.m.	The Sitter (last showing) (R) 7 p.m.	Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (PG-13) 7 p.m.	Adventures of Tintin (PG) 7 p.m.
Camp Bulkeley	Hugo (PG) 8 p.m. Safe House (NEW) (R) 10 p.m.	Journey 2: Inner Core (NEW) (PG) 8 p.m. War Horse (PG-13) 10 p.m.	Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (PG-13) 8 p.m.	The Sitter (last showing) (R) 8 p.m.	New Year's Eve (last showing) (PG-13) 8 p.m.	We Bought a Zoo (PG) 8 p.m.	Mission: Impossible (PG-13) 8 p.m.

Call the movie hotline at 4880 or see <https://intranet/movies.html> for more information.

happy valentine's day from Guantanamo bay!

Background: We're gonna need a bigger boat. High Speed Vessel Swift 2 pulled into Guantanamo Bay Feb. 14 to receive supplies in support of Operation Handclasp. —photo illustration by Mass Communication Spc. 2nd Class Kilho Park

