



THE WIRE



Honor Bound To Defend Freedom

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15 Minutes of Fame, pg. 11

Nurses provide quality care

By Army Sgt. Todd Lamonica

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

The Nurse Corps has been around for 100 years. As early as the War of 1812 volunteers performed nursing duties in dangerous places. The Nurse Corps is not restricted to females. Thirty-six percent of nurses are male, most have been prior enlisted as corpsman and have made the jump to become nurses.

The requirements for becoming a military nurse are stringent. Personnel must be a graduate of an accredited U. S. nursing education program that grants a bachelor of science degree in nursing. In addition, they must also pass a difficult exam administered by the National Council Licensing Examination in order to become a Registered Nurse.

Male and female nurses work together at the medical facilities inside Camp Delta.

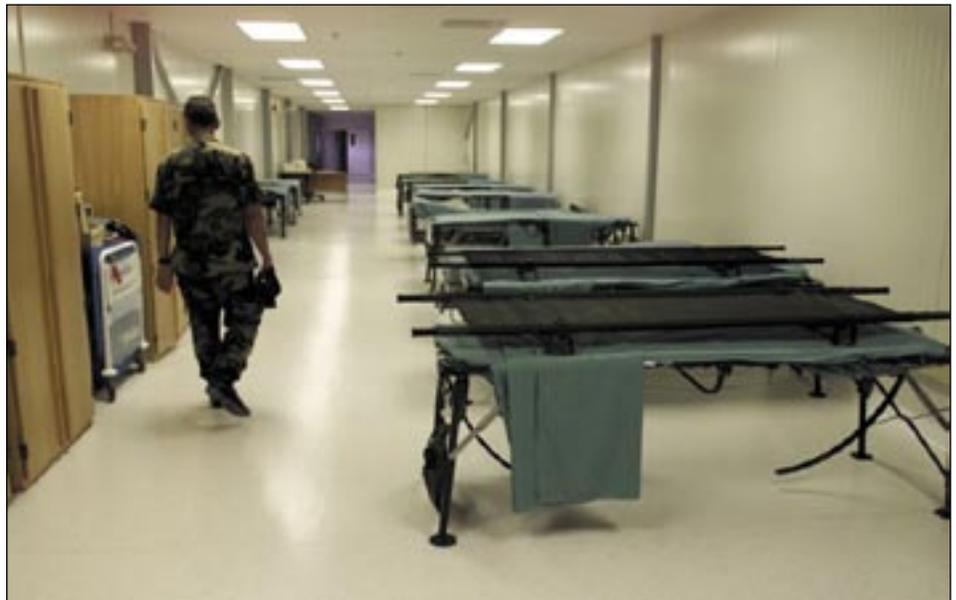


Photo from JTF PAO archives

A view of the JTF-GTMO detention hospital. The medical care available at the hospital is equal to that of any small US medical facility.

Nurses describe working inside the wire:

Some duty days and nights are just like any other hospital with basic routines or sometimes patient care can be quite challenging.

Navy Lt. j.g. Kimberlee Flannery, JTF-GTMO detention hospital, has been a Navy nurse for three years “Being a nurse at the hospital and the clinics, I deal with many instances that involve language barriers between myself and the detainee. Most of the time an interpreter is brought in to make the translation. It can be frustrating because some things do not translate that well. Some detainees are grateful for the treatment they are receiving and will thank you. Often, there

are instances where male nurses must be used because of the strict Muslim beliefs.”

Flannery got some first hand experience treating POW’s while serving aboard USNS Comfort during the invasion of Iraq. She felt that as a nurse here, she had a solid previous medical experience, which contributed greatly to her preparation to her current assignment treating detainees.

Flannery’s coworker, Navy Lt. Stacy Barton, JTF-GTMO detention hospital, who has been a Navy nurse for nine years, is another member of the exceptional nursing staff at Camp Delta. “Some of the biggest problems we face are with languages, we do

not always have the convenience of having an interpreter around, but during emergencies there is a mutual understanding between the nurse and the detainee that they are providing medical care. I think the JTF works fabulous together. There have been instances when I have had to shrug situations off and not take things to heart. I joined the Navy as a nurse and I will perform the mission to the best of my ability, I have no regrets for that.”

These two nurses represent the kind of skilled medical staff that makes the Camp Delta Detention Hospital a leader in professionalism. ■

Christmas and the Gift of Life

By Navy Capt. Stephen Hooker

JTF-GTMO Detention Hospital OIC

People in the medical profession are known for having a high regard for human life. Life, for many of us, is considered sacred; something to preserve, protect and promote, by whatever means are available.

We often use the term "health" as a measurement of the quality of one's life. But, what is "health," and what does it have to do with Christmas?

In 1978 the World Health Organization, along with representatives from 134 countries and 67 organizations, had a conference in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, to discuss this idea of "health." The conference affirmed that health "is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity..." This, of course, sounds good, but it is not always easy to achieve, particularly, with the challenges we face day in and day out.

However, striving to achieve and maintain a "balance" in life is essential in our quest for "health." Key ingredients to this "balance" are constructive relationships, moderation in food and drink, regular exercise, adequate sleep, a deep sense of identity and importance, and contributing to the world around us to make it a better place to live.

The Christmas season reminds us of the value that God has placed on life and health. For those who worship an extraordinary man born on the streets of Bethlehem and raised in an obscure village called Nazareth, Jesus becoming a man is an amazing endorsement of the value of human life on earth, and through His death and resurrection, the value of life after death. "In Him was life, and this life was the light of men." John 1:4.

As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote in his wonderful poem:

"A Psalm of Life"

Tell me not in mournful numbers,
"Life is but an empty dream!"
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
"Dust thou art, to dust returnest,"
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us further than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,

Be not dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act -- act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'er head!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait,



Photo by Army Sgt. Todd Lamonica

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This is the season of life and health. Strive for the best "balance" in every dimension of your life: spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental. Your life and health are sacred and of immeasurable value. Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year. ■

Combat Stress assists troop quality care

By Spc. Jeshua Nace

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

Combat stress teams originate from the Surgeon General of the Army during World War I. The Surgeon General recommended that the United States Army use a British policy stating that Soldiers with battle fatigue or war neurosis be returned to duty as rapidly as possible.

The British Army also had a three echelon system that we adopted for treating Soldiers with battle fatigue. The first echelon included treating the Soldiers in their division area. By labeling them, "not yet diagnosed, nervous" it kept Soldiers from thinking they were crazy, by not using psychiatric terms. By using these systems, a large percentage of Soldiers were returned to duty.

During World War II, war neurosis was officially changed to combat exhaustion.

Specialized teams were created during the Korean War. These teams were trained to deal with medical and psychiatric problems. After the teams were implemented, 70 to 85 percent of battle fatigue cases were returned to duty within three days, while only five percent were sent back to America for further aid.

Studies have found that Soldiers with stress need to stay together with their units or somewhere nearby and continue to be active in some way that makes them feel they are still part of the mission. Those who

stayed active had a much higher chance of returning to their regular duties. The Soldiers who were sent to hospitals in safe areas, who didn't stay active, felt useless to the mission and, in most cases, never returned to their duties.

"You don't need a command referral and what you tell us is confidential."

--Janice Hickman

"I think the biggest misconception is that we are a behavioral health clinic. We aren't. Our mission is not to sit in our air-conditioned office and wait on troops to come to us with problems. Our mission here is to offer support to troops in a proactive manner, rather than reactive. Another misconception is that we 'diagnose' people or that people come to us out of weakness or that they have psychiatric problems," said Army Sgt. Natasha Monroe, combat stress non-commissioned officer.

"We don't do that at combat stress. We are not 'head shrinks', and we do not 'analyze' you. We are here to support you. The name "combat stress" confuses people. Yes, we are well aware that no bullets are flying here at GTMO, not of the metal variety anyway, but we do want to help people combat their stress here. Our focus is acknowledging what troops are going

through and being a source of support and sometimes guidance through those things," said Monroe.

Some Troopers might feel that they will be shunned for going to combat stress, but the fact is, many people go to combat stress or just speak with our staff, in the office and on the street, all the time for many different reasons. "Sometimes, I am approached by individuals on or off duty and asked for advice on a situation they are facing," said Spc. Kay Izumihara, combat stress specialist.

"The prevalent themes I see are concerns about job-related stress, dealing with the detainees, not feeling supported by chain of command, complications with co-workers, fears of discipline from mistakes, sleep deprivation and physical reactions to stressors," said Monroe. "The next big thing would be relationship issues back home, marital and other family. I also see people referred by their NCOs who are concerned about something that's been going on."

"Anyone can visit, just walk in or call for an appointment. You don't need a command referral and what you tell us is confidential. I'm the only civilian counselor and some Troopers feel more comfortable talking to someone not in uniform. Currently, I am at combat stress all day Tuesday and Thursday and at Kittery Beach Joint Aid Station on Friday afternoons. Come in and vent, it's okay and I don't judge people," said Janice Hickman, JTF and NAVSTA counselor. ■

Military Commission Charges Referred

WASHINGTON-- The Department of Defense announced Dec. 1 that charges were referred to a military commission in the case of Omar Ahmed Khadr by the Appointing Authority John D. Altenburg Jr. Altenburg previously approved charges on Khadr on Nov. 4, 2005. Referral is the step in the military commission process where the appointing authority designates the presiding officer and panel members who will hear a particular case. A trial date has not yet been set.

Khadr's case was referred as a noncapital case to a panel consisting of six members and two alternate members. Marine Col. Robert S. Chester was selected as the presiding officer for this case. Chester has 23 years of experience as a judge advocate and seven years of experience as a military judge. The remaining panel members consist of three Air Force colonels, two Army colonels, a Navy captain, a Navy lieutenant commander, and a Marine Corps lieutenant colonel. In the

near future, the presiding officer will be contacting attorneys in the case to set an initial trial schedule.

Khadr is presumed innocent of any criminal charges unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt at a military commission. Military commission procedures provide for a full and fair trial to include: the presumption of innocence; a requirement for proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt; representation by a military defense counsel free of charge with the option to retain a civilian defense counsel at no expense to the U.S. government; an opportunity to present evidence and call witnesses; no adverse inference if an accused chooses not to testify; and an appeal to an independent and impartial review panel. Military commissions have historically been used to try violations of the law of armed conflict and related offenses. ■

--Official DOD news release

Creative holiday gift ideas

By Army Sgt. Jessica Wilson

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

During the holidays, many people go over their budget and overspend on gifts for their family and friends. It may take months to break free from debt accrued over the holiday season. In order to prevent overspending, a creative aspect in gift giving may be the solution. Also, people may have a hard time finding the perfect gift for the loved one on their list who seems to have everything. If this is the case, think about your relationship with that person and create a heartfelt gift they're sure to cherish.

There are many creative, inexpensive ways to make your loved ones happy. If you are artistic, think about scrapbooking. The main ingredient for this personal gift includes favorite or meaningful photos. The photos should be arranged to chronicle a story in your or your recipient's life. Scrapbooks are growing popular and many consider it a favorite pastime.

Another creative gift idea is poetry.

Poetry is a meaningful way to express feelings that couldn't be shared otherwise. immortalize your love through writing or make someone laugh with your poetic humor. Consider placing your poem in a picture frame so your recipient can display it in their home.

In addition to poetry, personalized gift baskets make a great creative gift. Visit your local store and pick out a nice basket. Add items to it that mean something to your loved one. If they enjoy reading, include a few good books or, if they like tea, add some flavored tea bags and a mug. There are many ways to decorate a gift basket. If you or your recipient enjoys reading the newspaper, wrap the gift basket in newspaper and top it off with a nice bow. You may want to use the newspaper to cushion the items in your gift basket as well.

Besides gift baskets, grab bags are an inexpensive and fun gift to give and receive during the holidays. Write the participant's name on a piece of paper and mix it up in a hat. Each participant will pick a name from the hat and put



together a grab bag for him or her. For those Troopers spending the holidays away from home, request the name of your recipient to be sent to you here. The bag can range from a grocery bag to a sophisticated gift bag. Include various creative items that you have made or bought. Seal the bag with a bow or fold the top over and tape or staple it closed. Make sure you write the recipient's name on the outside or attach a nametag. Grab bags are definitely cost saving and are also popular among many families and friends.

Instead of going over your budget and stressing about what to give loved ones this year, take time to personalize your gifts. Consider a creative and cost cutting approach to gift giving. Whether your home or abroad, a heartfelt gift is something they're sure to cherish. ■

Too Much?

By Navy Chief Warrant Officer Lisa Skiöldhanlin

JTF-GTMO Safety

By now we all have been bombarded with various messages for the holidays. Watch out for your fellow Trooper. Don't overload the electric circuits with light strings. Bring the Troopers cookies if they have to work on Christmas.

Well, there is a reason for this. Historically, Thanksgiving through New Years Day we see an increase in accidents, fires and other incidents; usually alcohol is in the picture. So, take time out for your own safety and that of others. After making the call back home, share it with your friends here instead of dwelling on the fact you are not at home. Decorate your quarters with cards and put a sign on your door outside and maybe add some lights. Celebrate with other Troopers as most of us here are away from family and friends. Don't isolate yourself. Share a drink or two, but no more. Enjoy the



"Are they on yet love?"

cartoonstock.com

cookies and thoughts of others. But above all, make sure you and your fellow Troopers make it back home the way you came – safe and sound. ■

Trooper Christmas traditions

Photos and Story by Army Sgt. Todd Lamonica

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

Christmas traditions vary widely throughout the world often with diverse origins. Some JTF Troopers have shared some unique family traditions with *The Wire*.



Army Sgt. Ronald Pope, 1/18 Cavalry Regiment, is Wiccan, and of Irish, Scottish and German decent. His holiday starts on Dec. 21 and is called Yule, or winter solstice. This is the celebration of the longest night and shortest day of the year.

Many of the Christmas traditions observed by Christians are similar to Yule.

For instance, decorating trees, caroling and giving presents are incorporated. A Wiccan nativity set may be set up as well, but the people represented are referred to as Mother Nature, Father-Time, and Baby Sun-God.

These events are similar to celebrations that originated in Northern Europe long before Christianity. These celebrations were reinterpreted into Christianity by Pope Gregory I to allow the continuation of these traditions. They include decorations, such as the Christmas Tree, Yule log, holly, mistletoe as well as the Santa Claus legend.



Army Sgt. Gus Ortiz, 1/18 Cavalry Regiment, talks of a period of time that starts on Dec. 16 and runs to Christmas Eve. This time is referred to as "La Posadas" and commemorates the journey Mary and Joseph took going from Nazareth to Bethlehem looking for food and shelter. This is one Christmas tradition he remembers celebrating while growing up in California. Starting on Dec. 16

people from the neighborhood would gather at night and walk down the street with candles lit while singing the "Litany of the Virgin". Simulating Mary and Joseph's journey they ask neighbors for shelter and according to the story, only the third neighbor provides shelter. Once they are accepted into someone's home they enter the home, pray for an hour and give thanks. Then, they have a small celebration where they enjoy hot chocolate and "Pan Dulce," Mexican bread. Afterward, they hit a Piñata for fun, which brings unity to all who participate.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Jose Becerra, 1/18 Cavalry Regiment, talks of a special Mexican meal that is prepared on Christmas Eve and consists of tamales, calentitos and menudo along with fruits and nuts. His roots

are in Mexico. "We do not have Christmas trees, we have what is called 'Nacimiento' or the manger scene. Christmas does not end until Jan. 6 and this day is referred to as 'Los Reyes Magos' or Three Kings Day (the day when the three wise men arrived in Bethlehem with gifts for baby Jesus) On Three Kings Day we exchange gifts." A lot of these traditions are still practiced in many towns in California.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Bridget Barr, 525th Military Police Battalion, is German and still follows many of Germany's traditions. "We do not put the Christmas tree up until Christmas Eve and it stays up until the Three Wise Men Day on Jan. 6. A meal is served on the evening of Dec. 24 and then

the family goes to midnight mass and returns home to open gifts. It is a very festive time. On Christmas Day we have a

(Continued on page 7...)

Deployment cycle support helps Troopers transition

By Spc. Timothy Book

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

Deployment Cycle Support is a program given to Troopers in the last stage of their deployment.

"This is something we do for all military personnel who are leaving the island in two weeks," said Navy Chaplain (Lt.) Cynthia Kane. "It helps them transition back to their civilian lives or back to their base."

The briefing is mandatory, but can be helpful to everyone.

The first half of the meeting deals with emotional issues, such as domestic violence, anger management, post-traumatic

stress disorder, suicide awareness and communication skills.

"It's important to realize that you may not be having any problems, but maybe your buddy is. Becoming aware of these issues might help you help a friend when they need it," said Kane. "This is all about looking out for each other." The first 30 days of a deployment and the 30 days following a deployment are the times when Troopers are more at risk of experiencing emotional difficulties, she said.

The briefing lasts three hours, but covers a lot of information. "We cover a lot of issues in a small amount of time," said Army Sgt. Amber Bastian, chaplain's assistant. "Everything is important, but to

me, the suicide prevention is one of the most vital."

Kane gives the brief on suicide prevention. She challenges people to think before attempting suicide. "Imagine I'm speaking at your funeral. First, I give a service and then I have to sum up what I know about you in three sentences," she said. "What would you want to say about your life?"

The second half deals with out-processing requirements.

DCS is one of the last things Troopers do here. It contains valuable information and instruction for the final phase of the deployment as well as ways to successfully reintegrate back into society. ■

National Guard celebrates 369 years of service

Compiled by Spc. Ian Shay

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

The National Guard, the oldest component of the Armed Forces of the United States and one of the nation's longest-enduring institutions, celebrated its 369th birthday on Dec. 13, 2005. The National Guard traces its history back to the earliest English colonies in North America. Responsible for their own defense, the colonists drew on English military tradition and organized their able-bodied male citizens into militias.

The colonial militias protected their fellow citizens from Indian attack, foreign invaders, and later helped to win the Revolutionary War. Following independence, the authors of the Constitution empowered Congress to "provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia." However, recognizing the militia's state role, the Founding Fathers reserved the appointment of officers and training of the militia to the states. Today's National Guard still remains a dual state/Federal force.

Information on the National Guard can be found on ngb.army.mil. ■



Photo by Spc. Ian Shay

The Seaside Galley staff prepared a birthday cake for the National Guard birthday celebration. Gen. John Gong, JTF deputy commander, assisted 1st Sgt. Malcolm Campbell and Spc. Raul Mendoza, to cut the cake during the ceremony.



California Guard Troopers get early holiday visit

By Army Staff Sgt. Nfor Barthson

JTF-GTMO HHC UPAR

California National Guard Troopers of the 1/18 CAV and 40th DIVARTY, currently serving here, turned out in large numbers at Camp America's Troopers' Chapel, late Tuesday afternoon. They were there to meet with two distinguished visitors from their home state. Army Brig. Gen. James Combs, incoming Commanding General of the 40th Infantry Division (Mechanized), and Air Force Command Chief Master Sgt. Henry Hernandez, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Adjutant General of the California National Guard, were on the island for a two-day meet-and-greet visit with the "best soldiers of the Sunburst Division" – as Combs declared, in reference to the mother unit of both the 1/18 CAV and the 40th DIVARTY.

During the chapel session, California Troopers listened to words of encouragement from their new division commander, then took the opportunity to ask him questions on matters concerning jobs when they return home from deployment, military schools for those who need them and may have missed attending them while on deployment, well as the continuous reorganization of the California military structure. After fielding questions from the soldiers, the enlisted Troopers addressed their deeper concerns directly with Command Chief Master Sgt. Hernandez.

Besides the Troopers' Chapel meeting, the distinguished visitors also received a standard operational update briefing from JTF Deputy Commander, Brig. Gen. John Gong (also from California's 40th Inf. Div.), a tour of Camp Delta, Camp 5, Camp America and the 1/18 CAV area of operations. At every juncture of their sojourn, they openly discussed the concerns of the Troopers with them, wished them happy holidays and a safe return home, and promised to address any



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Nfor Barthson

Army Brig. Gen. James Combs, incoming Commanding General of the 40th Infantry Division (Mechanized) is greeted by JTF Deputy Commander Brig. Gen. John Gong.

reported problems with the right authorities as soon as possible.

The arrival of Combs and Hernandez to the island certainly gave California National Guard Troopers a reason to cheer up, as they prepare to celebrate the holidays on foreign soil before embarking on the last weeks towards the end of their mission here. ■

Holiday travel tips

By Army Sgt. Jessica Wilson

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

This holiday season many Troopers will travel home to be with family and friends. With reunions and celebrations to look forward to, no one wants to have logistical setbacks. In order to travel with ease during this time of year, here are a few travel tips to put on your packing list.

First, you must plan ahead. Book hotel rooms and coordinate with family and friends. If you have to rent a car, be sure to check prices and availability. Also, don't wait until the last minute to pack. It's easier to take along clothes that can be mixed and matched because this will cut down on the amount of clothing you have to carry. In addition to a light suitcase, *rolling* suitcases also add to the ease of transporting your luggage. Furthermore, don't carry holiday packages with you. Stop by a post office prior to your departure and mail the packages home. Another way to shop is online. When you shop online, you can have your gifts wrapped and delivered to your recipients.

Second, if it takes over a day to travel to

your final destination, make sure you are well rested and coherent. All Troopers should make their safety a priority. For those who take medication, plan to carry extra prescriptions on your person so you can replace any lost medication. Also, drink water. Carry a bottle of water and a snack with you to prevent hunger and dehydration. Having a lightweight carry-on will allow easy access to extra supplies that you feel are essential while traveling.

Finally, remember unexpected events might arise. Your plane may be delayed or a road may be closed off to car traffic. Be flexible. Don't let sudden unexpected events ruin your holiday. And remember, if you can't travel this holiday season; bring your family and friends to you. Make arrangements for video-conferencing or plan a special time during the day where you know you can contact loved ones back home on the telephone.

When Troopers return home for the holidays, a few preparations ahead of time will save time, headache and often, money. (*Holiday travel tips compiled from arthritis.org*) ■



Holiday Events

Dec. 16

MWR Community Christmas party at Bayview

Dec. 19

Troop "Life Support" for being in GTMO during the holidays at TK 57, 7-8p.m.

Dec. 20

Troop "Life Support" for being in GTMO during the holidays at Camp America Bldg. #3205, 7-8 p.m.

Dec. 20

Combat Stress Team's judging the Camp America C-Hut Holiday Lights Contest

Dec. 23

MWR Christmas Party

Dec. 23

Christmas Caroling

Dec. 25

Operation Cookie Drop

Dec. 31

New Year's Eve events at Windjammer and at Bayview

Jan. 2

The New Year's 5K Resolution Run

Holiday Trooper traditions

(Continued from page 5)

meal of ham, duck or goose.

Spc. Kay Izumihara, Combat Stress Control, says that due to her Japanese roots, there is more of a celebration of New Year's traditions than that of Christmas in her family. A whole set of special meals are prepared and sake, Japanese rice wine, is served warm and passed around on a small plate from which everyone drinks. Mochi, which is eaten at breakfast on New Year's Day, is a rice cake served in a stew called ozoni. "On New Year's Eve, my mom cooks buckwheat noodles and ozoni as well," said Izumihara. Her family is half Buddhist and half Catholic and it presents some challenges around the holidays. Buddhists do not celebrate Christmas, but because of the American ways of life, some have conformed to it and celebrate in the Christian way by putting up a tree or decorating their home.

Although these traditions vary in different ways, there is one common bond. It is the spirit of unity and giving at this special time of year. ■



JTF Trooper of the Quarter
Army Sgt. Paulette Ocampo

MLB off-season moves

Commentary by Army Staff Sgt. Jeremy Patterson

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

Teams are finally starting to realize that pitching really does win championships. They are also finding out that good pitching costs lots of money, and bad pitching isn't much cheaper. I can understand Billy Wagner getting \$43 million from the Mets, because he has an established history as a closer. B.J. Ryan, with one year of closing under his belt, getting \$47 million from the Cubs, gives me bitter beer face. Remember Arthur Rhodes and Octavio Dotel? They were great setup men, but eventually bombed as closers after signing big-money deals. After losing Wagner, the Phillies signed former Red Sox/Cubs closer and Yankee setup man Tom Gordon to a three-year, \$18 million contract. Gordon has had arm problems in the past, and has not closed a game in over three years. Safe to say Phillies fans are in for a less than thrilling ride after the seventh inning next year.

Some teams are ignoring the free agent market completely and filling their needs at the swap meet. The New York Mets have been very active, acquiring Xavier Nady from the Padres of San Diego, slugging first-baseman Carlos Delgado from the baseball team formerly known as the Florida Marlins, and are exploring ways in which to lure Manny Ramirez from Boston. Along with getting Wagner, the Mets have been very active, and don't figure to be done anytime soon.

Speaking of trades, the Marlins are having their annual fire sale, ridding themselves of Delgado, Josh Becket and Mike Lowell (to the Red Sox). Former all-star second sacker Luis Castillo is on his way to Minnesota, and A.J. Burnett is trading in his American dollars in favor of some serious Canadian bacon. More on that later.

The Phillies made a smart move in trading Jim Thome and his lard-filled contract to the White Sox and then proceeded to drop a big time deuce when they allowed Wagner to get away. I've had Tom Gordon on my fantasy team before, there's never a dull moment with this guy. This is a team that, for a couple of years, has been two starting pitchers away from being a contender. Hopefully, they'll take some of the Thome money and address that situation, pronto.

This off-season may also spell the end to the Brave's run of dominance

in the east. Famed pitching coach Leo Mazzone is gone, and shortstop Rafael Furcal may be close behind, (to either the Dodgers or Cubs). Pseudo-closer Kyle Farnsworth signed with the Yanks earlier this month, leaving yet another hole on the Braves roster. Can the Braves rebound from these losses? Can Bobby Cox perform yet another miracle? Tune in later to find out.

In the American League, the Boston Red Stockings welcomed Mike Lowell and Josh Becket to their squad for a bag of peanuts, and are exploring trade option with Manny "The Malcontent" Ramirez. Gone is 32 year-old G.M. Theo Epstein, the man that bought the Sox their championship rings. Johny Damon is on the market, but will likely stay in Boston, where Captain Caveman has quite the following. Elsewhere in the division, the Blue Jays signed B.J. Ryan to be their stopper, and signed starter A.J. Burnett. Things are starting to get interesting in the east, my friends.

The Bronx Bombers have been quiet, with nothing evident on the horizon. Tom Gordon's spot in the bullpen will require attention, as will center field, where Bernie Williams has been patrolling since 1950. I'd look for a trade or two to fill these holes, since the free agent market is drying up at both spots. Maybe "The Boss" can pony up \$20 million and sign 90 year-old Goose Gossage. Don't laugh, he's better than most other available options at this point.

The White Sox traded Aaron Rowand for \$22 million and Jim Thome, then turned around and re-signed Paul Konerko for a gazillion dollars. Frank Thomas, say hello to the unemployment line. This team doesn't have any glaring weaknesses, and there has been little action from the remainder of the division, so the White Sox should be content with what they have.

For the first time since the Bash Brothers era, the Oakland Athletics opened up their iron-clad wallet for a major free agent signing, inking starter Esteban Loaiza to a three-year deal. This signing gives them the deepest and potentially best staff in the league. Does this mean Billy Beane trades Barry Zito at last? Don't count on it, unless the A's general manager is blown away with a great offer. Milton Bradley is on the radar, possibly for one of Oaktown's spare starters, and don't be surprised if Frank Thomas is their DH come spring training.

All this being said, the meat of the off-season, the winter meetings, started this week and run through Thursday. Next week, we'll see what went down in Dallas (or what didn't go down, which is usually the case). You just never know. ■

NFL PICKS WEEK 15

MONDAY NIGHT: GREEN BAY AT BALTIMORE

SHAY:
PACKERS 24-16

WILSON:
RAVENS 27-10

WEIR:
RAVENS 30-24

LAST WEEK
SHAY (9-7) / WILSON (11-5)
WEIR (11-5)

SHAY SEASON RECORD
120-70

Picks submitted by Spc. Ian Shay, Army Sgt. Jessica Wilson and Army Maj. Jeff Weir.

Week 15

Tampa Bay at New England
Kansas City at NY Giants
Denver at Buffalo
Arizona at Houston
Seattle at Tennessee
San Diego at Indianapolis
Carolina at New Orleans
Pittsburgh at Minnesota
NY Jets at Miami
Philadelphia at St. Louis
San Francisco at Jacksonville
Cleveland at Oakland
Cincinnati at Detroit
Dallas at Washington
Atlanta at Chicago



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Chiefs
Broncos
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Seahawks
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Panthers
Steelers
Dolphins
Eagles
Jaguars
Raiders
Bengals
Cowboys
Bears



Wilson
Patriots
Chiefs
Bills
Cardinals
Seahawks
Colts
Saints
Steelers
Dolphins
Rams
49ers
Raiders
Bengals
Cowboys
Bears



Weir
Patriots
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Cardinals
Seahawks
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Panthers
Vikings
Dolphins
Rams
Jaguars
Raiders
Bengals
Redskins
Bears

SETH & JESH'S... GAMERS ARCADE Knights of the Old Republic II

SETH

Over the years we have seen many pathetic Star Wars games hit the market, like Star Wars: Obi-Wan, Star Wars: Bounty Hunter and Episode III: Revenge of the Sith. Years ago, Bioware released Knights of the Old Republic (KOTOR) and proved to us that this overused market still had some life left in it. In fact, KOTOR was one of the best role-playing games (RPGs) in the market. It made me fall in love with Star Wars again.

Although Bioware did not make the sequel, it more than holds the spirit of the original game. KOTOR 2: The Sith Lords, expands on the original story and adds many new features, making it an even more monumental game.

One of the greatest additions to the game is the influence system. Now, your actions will influence more than the galaxy, it will affect your party members. Depending on what you do and how you treat them, you can alter your henchmen's path, turn a Sith back to the light side, and train a force sensitive in the ways of a Jedi or the dark side. Some will even completely turn to the dark or lights ways. Others are unwavering. It

all depends on the person.

The game has a very movie-like feel to it, which draws you into the plot even more because it really feels like you are a Jedi from the films. As always, the plot is incredibly involving and will keep you glued to the screen.

The character creation system is roughly based on the third edition Dungeons and Dragons system. Thus, it is very open ended, involved and in depth. Whether you chose to be wise in the force, a master of the light saber, a savior or a Sith consumed by hatred and revenge, you can do it in this game.

Obsidian Entertainment did more than pump out a sequel to a popular game; they improved it and made an epic worthy of holding the KOTOR name. If you are a fan of RPGs or Star Wars and haven't played this game yet, pick it up. This and the original are a must play for any role playing and Star Wars fan.

JESH

Knights of the Old Republic (KOTOR) 1 was, by far, one of the best storylines I've ever seen in a video game. So, when the sequel KOTOR 2 came out, I bought it as soon as possible and spent the 40-plus

hours fighting as a holy and powerful Jedi rescuing the galaxy and saving myself from assassins, Siths and bounty hunters.

Overall, the storyline in KOTOR 2 is not as good as the first, but in my opinion, it is still better than the two Star Wars trilogies movies put together.

KOTOR 2 is also a little too easy, but this is because you start off as a Jedi. In the first game you have no force powers in the beginning. Also, in the original, once you get Jedi powers, you're constantly fighting Sith Jedi. Not to ruin anything, but in KOTOR 2 there aren't exactly a lot of Jedi's left, good or evil.

KOTOR 2 added in a lot of cool new feats and six prestige classes that fine-tune your Jedi to a more specific combat role. Feats are your characters special combat abilities. They also added in new force powers as well. The only thing that made me cry is that the force lightning power is not as powerful as in the original. The graphics are better, and the controls are the same, which is a good thing.

If you played the original, then you will be happy to know that the arrogant homicidal assassin robot HK-47 has mysteriously evolved himself into this new crew. He says the best lines, even after I have a full crew of Jedi by my side I still like to have a long conversation with HK. Things like, "Love is making a shot to the knees of a target 120 kilometers away using an Aratech sniper rifle with a tri-light scope."

If you haven't played the original, play it first. Trust me, you'll be glad you did. ■



Photo by Spc. Jeshua Nace

Through advances in technology and the ever-developing commercial world, there are a lot of new products for the warrior.

Many corporations have taken on the task of developing merchandise that caters to Soldiers. Anything that makes the job easier and safer in a world where bullets are flying can make a big difference. They range from Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) compasses to better body armor, all found in magazines featuring high-speed gear.

The military has been changing since Sept. 11th. More gear is authorized or allowed. Just recently, Troopers did not carry a lot of the equipment they use now.

The Troopers deployed to GTMO have to deal with the unrelenting sun and the arid environment. Items like the lightweight and comfortable boonie hat saves Troopers at GTMO from the sun's harsh rays. The camelback that holds precious water and keeps Troopers hydrated is starting to replace the uncomfortable canteen. Many Troopers will be glad to see the canteen days disappear, as they rode into the sides of their hips on road marches.

"This gear has helped mission performance by being more in tune with the local environment, especially the boonie hat which protects against sunburn of the face and neck," said 1st Sgt Lawrence Smith, Charlie Troop, 1/18th Cavalry. "Also, having the newest gear gives troops a psychological and morale boost besides the operational advantage." ■

GTMO all geared up

By Spc. Jeshua Nace

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

Respect builds success

By Army Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Chris Molnar

JTF-GTMO Command Chaplain

In a military organization the commander is the embodiment of the legal or constitutional authority that governs our country. We all swore to uphold and defend the Constitution, which at the time may have seemed an abstract kind of thing. Our commander is the authority of the Constitution come to life in our community. For those who revere the Bible as God's words, obedience to those in authority over us is specifically commanded by God. For example, in St. Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome, it says, "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established." (Rom. 13:1) The Bible also makes clear that we are commanded to pray for those in authority (I Tim 2:1-2).

I cannot, of course, speak for your experience, but in my experience, on balance, good people tend to rise to the top in the NCO and Officer Corps. I may not necessarily like them personally, nevertheless, their ability to lead is usually evident. My judgment of the faults and

failings of a particular commanding officer or senior NCO is always tempered by my knowledge of my own many faults and failings. This last point brings me to a perspective on respect that may not have occurred to you before.

One very important aspect of respect is self-respect. Often, those who have difficulty respecting others are those who do not value themselves very highly. A good healthy respect for yourself, your abilities and talents, coupled with an honest view of your weaknesses, faults, and failings, will help you appreciate the struggles of those around you, whether they are your peers or those in authority over you. The Bible speaks to this issue with the words, "...love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 19:19) Another way of expressing this aspect of respect is to say, "Don't criticize me until you have walked a mile in my shoes."

All the military institutions of our country are going through a period of challenge and change. Obviously, the mission of the Joint Task Force-GTMO is a challenging one for all of us. Need I remind you that we are all on the same team. A healthy respect for each other, our respective roles and responsibilities can go far to building a better more successful team. ■

A prayer for peace

By Army Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Chris Molnar

JTF-GTMO Command Chaplain

The following is a prayer offered by President Thomas Jefferson on the occasion of his second inaugural, March 4, 1805.*

Almighty God, who has given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech Thee that we may always prove ourselves people mindful of Thy favor and glad to do Thy will. Bless our land with honorable ministry, sound learning, and pure manners.

Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitude brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues.

Endow with Thy spirit of wisdom those to whom in Thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that through obedience to Thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth.

In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in Thee to fail; all of which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1902*, 12 Vols. [1:379-380]; as found in "Our Christian Heritage," *Letter from Plymouth Rock* (Marlborough, NH: The Plymouth Rock Foundation), p.5. ■

CAMP AMERICA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday	9 a.m.	Protestant Service	Troopers' Chapel
	6:00 p.m.	Confessions	Troopers' Chapel
	6:30 p.m.	Catholic Mass	Troopers' Chapel
	7:30 p.m.	Evening Prayer	Troopers' Chapel
Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Soul Survivor	Camp America North Pavilion

NAVAL BASE CHAPEL

Sunday	8 a.m.	Pentecostal Gospel	Room 13
	9 a.m.	Catholic Mass	Main Chapel
	9 a.m.	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Sanctuary A
	9:30 a.m.	Protestant Sunday School	Main Chapel
	10 a.m.	Protestant Liturgical	Sanctuary B
	11 a.m.	Protestant Service	Main Chapel
Monday	1 p.m.	Gospel Service	Main Chapel
	5 p.m.	Pentecostal Gospel	Room 13
	7 p.m.	Prayer Group Fellowship	Fellowship Hall
	7 p.m.	Family Home Evening	Room 8
Tues. to Fri.	12 p.m.	Daily Mass	Cobre Chapel
Wednesday	7 p.m.	Men's Bible Study	Fellowship Hall
Friday	1 p.m.	Islamic Prayer	Room 12
Saturday	4:30 p.m.	Confessions	Main Chapel
	5:30 p.m.	Vigil Mass	Main Chapel

Jewish Shabbat Services held every second Friday at 7:30 p.m. in the Naval Base Chapel complex Room 11.

15 Minutes of Fame

with Sgt. 1st Class Jose Becerra

By Spc. Jeshua Nace

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

Sgt. 1st Class Jose Becerra is a headquarters platoon sergeant for Bravo troop, 1/18th Cavalry Regiment. He has been in the Army and the California National Guard for the past thirty years.

What is your job?

My job involves making sure we have enough supplies for Bravo troop and ensure we have water at all times.

From your experiences in the military, what have you learned the most?

Over the years, you get many different experiences. You can accomplish a lot from gaining experience from the military and civilian world. If your job is a supervisor; a supervisor in the military is equal to a supervisor outside, you gain all that training and you can put it to work. To treat the troops better, you have to understand them. In order to work with them better, take care of them before you take care of something else.

What other jobs have you performed for the military?

I started as a ground Soldier and then I went to the big guns-the artillery. I learned the job from the number one cannonaire, all the way up to the chief of the howitzer. After that, I went away from the howitzer to be the gunnery sergeant. Then, I left the gunnery sergeant position to do this big job called the chief of smoke. Chief of smoke means chief of the firing battery. I was in charge of the whole gun battery. We have seven guns. Sometimes we have seventy to eighty people; I am in charge of all those people. I work together with the gunnery sergeant and XO.

Any interesting stories, any knowledge you want to share?

You have to understand, I have in over 30 years. You got a lot of experience and stories, period. The biggest experience for me is that I learn from others. Take the NCO corps, for example, there are many roads. To approach the NCO corps, you must believe in the NCO corps, so you can do your job. It's not enough

just to be an NCO, or promoted to be an NCO to get the money. You've got to learn how to perform; you have to learn to be a leader, not a follower. There is a difference between a leader and a follower. A follower will always be there to be the 'clown NCO' of the community. If you don't want to be that clown, you have to be the leader. You need to be a trainer. You need to follow the NCO corps regulations.

How many deployments have you been on?

Four. I spent over two years over at Moffett Field with the 1/29th Air Wing. We were there as a security force after Sept. 11. We trained with them, learned with them and we worked with them. For over two years, I was assigned to go overseas to go to Kosovo. However, they sent me to GTMO instead with the 1/18th Cavalry Regiment.

Beside that, what else have you been activated for?

I have been activated for floods, fires, riots in Los Angeles and earthquakes. The riots were a different experience. We took it as doing the right thing for the people. We take care of the people in the streets; we help them. At the same time, we protect them and protect ourselves. We didn't go into the streets to look for people to arrest. We were there to protect the community, and that's all we did. The community responded beautifully.

How did it feel to help your fellow Americans during hurricanes and earthquakes?

It felt good. We do the job; it's not always safe. I am the first one to get up and the last one to get down. It feels good to accomplish



Photo by Spc. Jeshua Nace

the mission. It feels good when everyone is accounted for.

What are the rest of your plans?

I have three years left in the service. This is probably going to be my last deployment. I don't think about the retirement pay. I think sometimes about changing my birth certificate to get myself another 10 years to continue just serving my country. There are a lot of young Troopers out there who need a lot of guidance. Without guidance, they are running around. My ego still is demanding and I say I'm fine. I'm always going to wear my uniform with pride. I'm the first one to get in and the last one to get out. Always. ■

15 Minutes of Fame

Know a Trooper worthy of being highlighted in "15 Minutes of Fame?" Call Army Sgt. Jessica Wilson at 3594.

AROUND THE JTF



Photo by Army Maj. James Cook, photo altered for OPSEC

▲ Maj. Gen. Jay Hood (Second from right), JTF-GTMO commander, Command Sgt. Major Angel Febles (Second from left), JTF-GTMO Command Sgt. Major and engineers from NAVSTA and JTF, inspect the fence line of Camp 6, the state-of-the-art facility currently under construction here.



Photo by Spc. Ian Shay

▲ The Seaside Galley staff got in the Christmas spirit by preparing a giant gingerbread house.



Photo by Spc. Jeshua Nace

▲ Petty Officer 2nd Class Jerry Carpenter takes the Oath of Reenlistment with Maj. Gen. Jay Hood.



Photo by Army Sgt. Todd Lamonica

◀ Navy Capt. Thomas Beall, Navy Element Commander, and Navy Cmdr. Catie Hanft, Navy Provisional Guard Battalion Commander, pose with some newly inducted Navy Petty Officers.