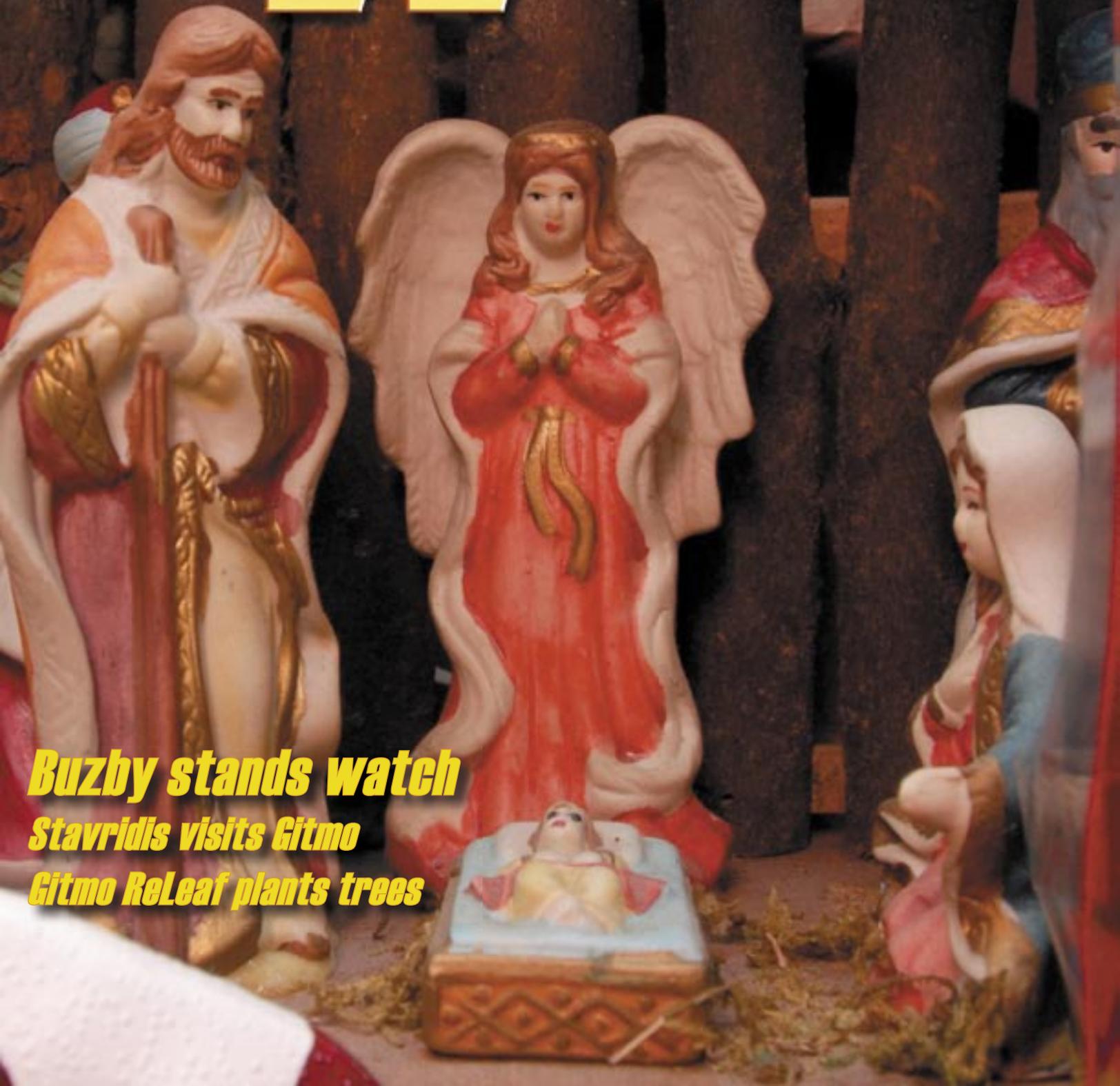


THE WIRE

A News Magazine



***Buzby stands watch
Stavridis visits Gitmo
Gitmo ReLeaf plants trees***

Senior enlisted leaders embody professional ethics



By Army Sgt. Maj. Cheryl Williamson
JTF Guantanamo Inspector General's Office

Professional ethics are the established framework for all personal and professional conduct within the military. Their main theme is a set of core values that invigorates the heart of leadership and emphasizes crucial characteristics that all senior enlisted leaders (SELs) of all service branches should embody.

Following Orders: SELs show a capacity to follow orders from their superiors.

Cohesiveness: SELs are team builders and therefore ensure that all Troopers are trained and prepared to execute the mission along side fellow team members.

Uniformity: SELs promote and enforce military standards.

Self Discipline: SELs are experts at subordinating their personal actions and desires to the needs of the military and specific missions.

Senior enlisted leaders have the responsibility for large organizations and systems. They exercise leadership indirectly through staffs and subordinate leaders, and they look deeper into the future than do their junior team members. Therefore senior enlisted leaders ensure they are continually developing to improve their leadership skills. This is achieved through:

Reinforcement Training: SELs continually update and re-learn skills previously acquired.

Setting the Example: SELs choose the

hard right over the easy wrong every time.

Presentation: SELs present the appearance of leaders and are able to speak the language of leaders.

Knowledge: SELs demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of military systems and their effects on subordinates.

Trust: SELs trust their subordinates to carry out their duties without micro management.

Motivate and Inspire: SELs provide the focus, support and tools to allow subordinates to carry out the mission.

Leadership at the lower levels is direct, face to face, and short-range in scope. As leaders ascend the organizational ladder, leadership tasks become more complex and long-range in scope. Therefore it is imperative that senior enlisted leaders know how to develop junior enlisted Troopers as leaders. This is achieved through:

Teaching Troopers: SELs show Troopers how instruct peers in a professional manner.

Team Building: SELs provide the tools and understanding of the importance of building close-knit, mission focused and professional elements that junior enlisted Troopers will one day lead.

Enforce Standards: SELs build an uncompromising spirit in junior enlisted leaders by demanding that they meet the military's standards of excellence.

Professional Development: SELs reinforce the importance of junior Troopers attending professional development schools to better prepare for future leadership challenges at higher levels.

Personal Conduct: SELs understand and reflect in their behavior that they are judged as leaders by how professionally they conduct themselves in every activity.

Ethics & Morals: SELs encourage junior enlisted leaders to understand that doing what is right is the only way a leader can act.

"I admire men of character, and I judge character not by how men deal with their superiors, but mostly how they deal with their subordinates, and that, to me, is where you find out what the character of a man is."

— Gen. H. Norman Schwartzkopf

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ON THE COVER:

A nativity scene depicts the Christmas story at Guantanamo Bay's Goldhill Galley. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert.)



The WIRE is the official news magazine of Joint Task Force Guantanamo. It is produced by the JTF Public Affairs Office to inform and educate the Troopers of JTF Guantanamo through news, features, command guidance, sports and entertainment. The WIRE seeks to provide maximum disclosure with minimum delay with regards to security, accuracy, propriety and policy. This DoD news magazine is an authorized publication for the members of the Department of Defense. Contents of The WIRE are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or Joint Task Force Guantanamo. It is printed by the Document Automation & Production Service with a circulation of 1000.

This Year We Have the Watch

By Navy Rear Admiral Mark H. Buzby

Commander, JTF Guantanamo

As we approach the holiday season, many of you are spending your first Christmas and New Year deployed away from your families, friends and loved ones. For many of us, we've done this many times before, and we know there will likely be more deployments spent away from our families in the coming years as we wage war against world-wide terrorism. That's just the nature of service these days. It's one aspect of what we do—the selfless service that characterizes military professionals.

The support that we have while away from our regular families is our military family. We have our shipmates, our battle-buddies and our wingmen who become our defacto families, especially over the holidays. I think it's really important that we embrace these ties and celebrate our time spent together. I can recall some of my most memorable Christmases were ones that I spent at sea with my crew in some far away place.

The Christmas I spent in the Persian Gulf in 1997 with my USS Carney shipmates was one of the best: I turned the ship over to an entirely enlisted watchteam to run the ship that day (they did GREAT!!), then steamed the ship backwards for 5 hours so that our satellite communications antenna could be unblocked, permitting Christmas phone calls back home. (I still get emails about that one....).

We have to remember it's a special time and we're all going through it together. In one way, I believe it makes us really focus on what Christmas is all about – emulating the kindness and compassion and hope that were bestowed upon mankind through the birth of a Savior. Devoid of many of the commercial trappings of the season down here in our little corner of the world, our focus rightfully turns toward that which is most important during this time – the ones we care about.

I am blessed to have my wife Gina with me this Christmas, and we look forward to spending Christmas with you, our Troopers. You are our family this year, and we want to be with our family on this day of celebration. You'll see us around the JTF, and we look forward to greeting many of you at Seaside Galley as



you enjoy a special meal.

Fellow Warriors, this is our year to stand the watch so that millions of other peace-loving folks can enjoy the season with their own families. There have been plenty of years when we stood around the dinner table together with our families and gave thanks for those who were standing watch for us. This year, it's our turn to return the favor. We should be proud that we're here to do it, providing others the time to enjoy their families. God willing, next year we'll all be standing around our families' tables giving thanks for those shipmates, battle buddies and wingmen that are again standing the watch for us.

Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanza, and may the coming New Year be the best one ever for you and your loved ones. I continue to be proud to serve alongside you.

Stavridis thanks Troopers for their service



Navy Adm. James G. Stavridis, commander of U.S. Southern Command, thanks Joint Task Force Troopers and civilian personnel at a briefing for their service during his visit to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba on Dec. 20, 2007.

Story and photo by Army Spc. Shanita Simmons

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The commander of the United States Southern Command thanked Joint Task Force Troopers and civilian personnel for their service during his visit to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on Dec. 20.

Navy Admiral James Stavridis handed out command coins and shook hands as he expressed his appreciation for those working for the Joint Task Force.

“I came to Guantanamo Bay strictly for one reason - to see as many people as I can during this holiday season and thank them for what they are doing,” said Stavridis.

During his visit, Stavridis toured the detention facilities here where he personally thanked Troopers for performing a mission that is “being executed perfectly by very proud and honor bound people.” As JTF personnel work throughout the holiday season to ensure the safe and humane care and custody of detainees here, Stavridis urged them to take time to connect with their family members and celebrate the holiday with their fellow Troopers.

Demonstrating awareness that those serving in Guantanamo Bay are miles away from their families, he reminded them that they are in the hearts and minds of many people who recognize and appreciate the sacrifices they make for their nation in the War on Terror.

“As you go into this holiday season, please know that your family is proud of you, your country is proud of you, and your service - be it Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard or DoD civilian - is proud of you,” said Stavridis. “I am 100 percent confident that we are executing the mission of providing safe, transparent, and legal care for the detainees here. As the commander of the U.S. Southern Command, I am proud of you.”

Stavridis assumed command of U.S. Southern Command on October 19, 2006. Its area of focus encompasses more than 30 countries, including the Caribbean Sea’s 12 island nations, and covers about 15.6 million square miles. The United States Southern Command’s mission is to conduct military operations and promote security cooperation to achieve U.S. strategic objectives.

Legal assistance helps Troopers maintain mission focus

By Army Master Sgt. Maria Rivera-Fontanez

JTF Guantanamo Legal Assistance Office

The Joint Task Force Guantanamo legal assistance office, a function of the Staff Judge Advocate, has a primary mission of ensuring that Troopers don't have legal issues that unduly interfere with their military and personal lives. They help Troopers find no cost solutions to legal problems. These services offered are especially vital since Troopers are away from home on deployment and have may have difficulty accessing civilian legal services.

The most common service requested by the legal assistance office is preparing powers of attorney. A power of attorney allows one person, an agent, to act on behalf of another, the principal, when conducting various transactions including signing the principal's name to documents. Troopers can seek assistance with drafting either a 'general' or a 'special' power of attorney.

A general power of attorney authorizes an agent to act on a Trooper's behalf in a variety of different situations. It is very broad and provides extensive powers to the person or organization appointed as agent. The power of attorney allows an agent to conduct various types of activities on a Trooper's behalf including making bank transactions, entering safety deposit boxes, handling transactions involving U.S. securities, purchasing life insurance policies, settling claims, entering contracts, exercising stock rights, filing tax returns, handling matters related to government benefits, and buying, managing or selling real estate.

A specific power of attorney authorizes an agent to act on a Trooper's behalf, but only in specific situations and only when the Trooper is unavailable or unable to conduct his or her own business. For example, Troopers may allow family members or friends to access their accounts or personal information for specific periods of time while they are traveling outside the state or country, or when they are unable to handle specific situations due to required commitments or health reasons.

Troopers can also visit legal assistance to



Army Master Sgt. Maria Rivera-Fontanez, a legal assistance representative, helps a Trooper with completing a Bill of Sale. Paralegals and attorneys are available at the legal assistance office to assist Troopers with many types legal issues. (Photo by Army Spec. Shanita Simmons)

seek guidance with notarizations and drafting wills. Notarization involves witnessing the signing of documents according to the specifications of state laws by a notary public and requires the notary public to ensure the signer's identity and willingness to sign the documents.

Wills are legally enforceable declarations of how a person wishes his or her property to be distributed after death. In a will a person can recommend a guardian for his or her children, as well as outline his or her wishes on family law issues such as adoption, divorce, property division, child support and custody.

Attorneys and paralegals will assist with bills of sale, income tax filing and naturalization issues. A bill of sale is a legal document made by a seller to a purchaser. The document authenticates that a specific item of personal or real property that the seller had in his lawful possession was sold on a specific date, at a specific locality and for a particular sum of money or other 'value received.'

Legal assistance staff members are also available to prepare and efile a Trooper's federal income tax without charge, as well as assist Troopers with guidance on naturalization issues such as beginning the process of obtaining legal residence.

Reserve or Guard Troopers with questions or concerns about returning to civilian employment can also rely upon legal assistance advice on the Uniformed Ser-

vices Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. This is a federal law that gives members and former members of the U.S. armed forces (active and reserves) the right to return to the civilian jobs they held before military service. Troopers are entitled to reinstatement with the seniority, status and rate of pay they would have obtained had they remained continuously employed by their civilian employer. The law also protects individuals from discrimination in hiring, promotion and retention on the basis of present and future membership in the armed services.

Legal assistance will also help Troopers with the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act of 2003 formerly known as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940. This is a federal law that gives all military members several important rights when they enter active duty. The law covers issues such as rental agreements, security deposits, prepaid rent, eviction, installment contracts, credit card interest rates, mortgage interest rates, mortgage foreclosure, civil judicial proceedings and income tax payments. For more information call 8116.

Troopers can contact legal assistance at Camp America Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the One Stop building (#1451). The office will also assist Troopers by special appointment after regularly scheduled hours and on Saturdays and Sundays.

“Phenom” college freshmen pay dues before the NBA

By Army Spc. Lavelle Jones

525th Military Police Battalion

The college hoops scene appears to be alive and well, especially since the rule was instituted making young players ineligible for the professional draft unless they complete at least one year of college or are at least a year beyond high school graduation. This new landscape has paved the way for student athletes like Greg Oden and Kevin Durant to show they can dominate at the college level and still draft early to NBA prominence.

Past players of their magnitude like Kobe Bryant, Kevin Garnett and LeBron James chose to skip March Madness for a quick chance at personal riches, better living arrangements for themselves and their families, along with the allure of superstardom. The truth is that outside of these few stars, most young players that entered the NBA before the ineligibility rule were simply unable to develop and mature on the NBA's dime.

The ineligibility rule has put aside most of the arguments over player exploitation, unstable college rosters, recruiting strain, and the right of young men to enter the NBA draft just as they can volunteer for military service. Regardless of where you stand on the issue, the fact remains that the college game is once again on the rise.

This college hoops season promises to be one of the most memorable yet. Dick Vitale claims this may be one of the best freshman classes he has seen in twenty or thirty years. As blue chip players have come back to the college scene in a major way, the residual effect is that there is more talent to spread to emerging powers such as Kansas State, Davidson, Butler, Southern Illinois, and Miami. This strengthens the pool of competition and provides opportunities for more Cinderella stories like Virginia

Commonwealth University knocking off Duke last year and George Mason's inconceivable run all the way to the Final Four the year before.

With one third of the season over, let's take a look at some of the “freaky freshmen phenoms” that are attracting lots of attention and whose four year stays at the college level are questionable.

At the top of the list, and apparently the NBA's as well, is a Kansas State player that is an imposing figure at 6ft. 10in. and 235 pounds. Michael Beasley (aka Michael ‘Beastly’) is averaging 25 points with a jaw-dropping 14 rebounds a game, all while shooting 58 percent from the floor. He has a sweet left-handed stroke with the midrange game reminiscent of top guards like Sam Cassell or Richard Hamilton.

Next up is the one my home state of Illinois let get away. He originally gave verbal commitment to Illinois, but then recanted when the Indiana Hoosiers decided to part ways with head coach Mike Davis. I'm talking about none other than the 6ft. 4in., 215 pound Eric Gordon. Anyone who watches ESPN's Sportscenter has seen him regularly whether he's dropping NBA range three pointers or making thunderous dunks that keep the crowd buzzing. He is averaging 24 points a game, 82 percent from the free throw line, 54 percent from the field, and an incredible 51 percent from three point range – WOW!

Anyone who follows basketball even slightly will recognize this next name



Michael ‘Beastly’ Beasley dribbles the ball in a McDonald's All America game prior to beginning his freshman year at Kansas State. (AP Photo)

as he has been in newspapers and magazines since he was in the seventh grade. I'm talking about USC's pride and joy, the 6ft. 5in. 215 pound O.J. Mayo. He has an effortless game with command of the dribble, a post-up game, one-on-one moves, enormous hops, and deep range. He is averaging 19.6 points, 80 percent from the stripe, 40 percent from three point range, and yes, he plays defense averaging 1.9 steals per game.

Some other notables from the freshman class are Kevin Love, UCLA; Bill Walker (redshirt freshman) and Jacob Pullen, Kansas State; Kyle Singler and Taylor King, Duke; Blake Griffin, Oklahoma; Davon Jefferson, USC; Deondre Jordan, Texas A&M; Jordan Crawford, Indiana and Corey Fisher, Villanova. March Madness will be here before you know it ... so be sure to stay tuned!

MWR Sports of 2007

These “best of” local sports photos from previously published issues of The Wire showcase the range of MWR activities at Guantanamo Bay.



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Clowney



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Donald Randall



Photo by Army Spc. Dan Welch



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert

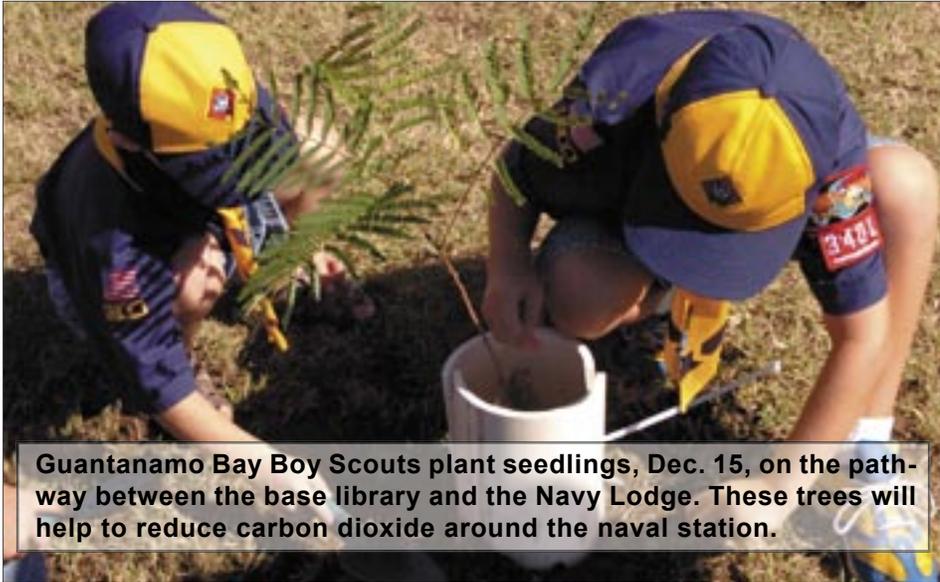
STATE OF MAN PERFORMS FOR GUANTANAMO

The explosive vocals, thumping bass, screaming guitar and shattering drums of the band, State of Man, thrilled their Guantanamo audience with a fast paced energetic live show, Monday, at the Downtown Lyceum. The band performed live to raise Troopers' morale during the holiday season.

By Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs



Boy Scouts plant trees, reduce carbon footprint



Guantanamo Bay Boy Scouts plant seedlings, Dec. 15, on the pathway between the base library and the Navy Lodge. These trees will help to reduce carbon dioxide around the naval station.

Story and photos by
Army Sgt. Sarah Stannard

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Anyone who saw “An Inconvenient Truth,” (Al Gore’s Academy Award winning documentary) and probably most Americans who haven’t, are familiar with the concept of the ‘carbon footprint.’ The carbon footprint is a measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide. It is now all the buzz in environmental circles.

The car you drive, the clothes you wear, and even the food you eat are all pieces of your lifestyle that can be calculated to reveal your carbon footprint, which is somewhere between 7.5 and 9.7 tons of carbon per year for the average human being. In fact, consumption (or in this case, emission) is such cause for concern that policy makers in both the U.S. and the U.N. are calling for people to “say no to carbon dioxide.” You’ll have to try to say no without breathing though – since carbon dioxide is the stuff you exhale.

It would be pretty easy to find yourself swimming in a sea of ‘go green,’ and all of the tips to reduce

your primary or secondary footprints could simply have you tripping over feet. But, the Boy Scouts of Guantanamo Bay won’t let that get them down, as they embark on a quest to earn conservation badges.

They, along with U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay’ Public Works and Fire Departments and Joint Task Force Guantanamo’s engineer team, have found a way through the new Gitmo ReLeaf Project to reduce Guantanamo’s carbon footprint and beautify the base while they’re at it.

The ReLeaf Project involves planting trees that provide shade, improve wildlife habitat and reduce carbon dioxide, and is a project well-suited for Guantanamo’s Boy Scout troops.

“Our intention is not to reforest the whole base,” said Meghan Byrne, natural resources intern here and Gitmo ReLeaf project manager. “This is an arid climate and we know that it was never a rain forest. We’re making extra sure to plant native species that will require little maintenance once they take root.”

The seedlings and soil for the project along the pathway between the base library and the Navy Lodge were donated to ReLeaf by the

base’s plant nursery. The base fire department volunteered to water the trees for the first few months, until they take root.

Assisted by Navy Capt. Mark Leary, commanding officer, U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, and their scout masters, the boys broke ground on the ReLeaf’s initial phase of the project Dec. 15. It offered them an opportunity to “think globally, but act locally” while earning a badge, said Byrne.

The Yellow Poincianas, which are similar in shape to the Red Flamboyant trees already flourishing around base, will, through the process of photosynthesis, absorb and store the carbon we emit, Byrne said. Properly cared for reforestation projects can also help to regulate local weather and climate as well as contribute to ‘green’ heating and cooling effects for communities.

These trees grow quickly to heights of 50 feet and their foliage can spread to 25 feet. Generally planted as shade trees in coastal cities, Poincianas flower from May to September and will not lose their leaves in the fall.



A Yellow Poinciana seedling planted near the Navy Lodge is one of many planted Saturday in support of Gitmo ReLeaf Project.

Chairman issues holiday message



***A message from Adm. Michael G. Mullen,
Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff***
Armed Forces Press Service

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued his holiday message Dec. 18, thanking servicemembers and families for their service and asking that others remember their sacrifices.

“I thank each of you for your dedicated service as you defend our national interests around the world. Whether on the ground, in the air, on the sea, or under it, you are making life better and safer for millions of people. Please know you have your nation’s deepest gratitude,” the statement from Navy Adm. Michael G. Mullen reads.

“As we count our many blessings, let us never forget our brothers and sisters in harm’s way and the families with empty seats at their holiday tables. Theirs is the sacrifice, the great and noble service, that allows our comfort and our freedom this season. Reach out to them if you can. Let them know they are remembered,” Mullen wrote.

The chairman is this week traveling with the 2007 USO holiday tour on the 15-stop, seven-country tour thanking the forward deployed troops for their sacrifice and service.

With Christmas a week away, Mullen passed along his holiday greetings in person during a stop to visit troops in Kuwait yesterday.

“I’d like to express my appreciation for what you do, not just for the nation, but for the world,” he said. “You are making a big difference in a very challenging part of the world.”

Mullen said he knows the holidays are a hard time to be away from family.

“We know that, and we keep them in our thoughts and prayers, and we hope we can bring a little cheer during this holiday season for you as you serve on this deployment,” he said. “You could not be as successful on this deployment without the support of those families, and we’re extremely grateful for all the things that they do to make your service possible.”



Wait a minute ... *Ben Affleck* directed this?

By Army Sgt. Scott Griffin

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

I can't believe that half of Ben-nifer was involved with this film, let alone the director of it. Don't get me wrong, I like Ben Affleck as an actor. Was "Daredevil" perfect? No, but it was still a lot of effort. "Hollywood-land" was half decent. "Dogma" was pure fun. But after the two black eyes of "Gigli" and "Jersey Girl," I figured that was it for Affleck. I'm happy to say I couldn't have been more wrong.

"Gone Baby Gone" has already easily made its way onto my top ten movies of 2007. The directing is subtle and surprisingly strong. This doesn't seem like the work of a first-time director and that credit goes to Affleck. He surrounds himself with a staff of veterans in film production and acting.

Casey "My big brother Ben can beat you up" Affleck ("Ocean's 13") is Patrick Kenzie, a local private investigator who works with his girlfriend, Angie Gennaro (Michelle Monaghan). They reluctantly agree to help in the search for missing girl whose mother is so boozed out and drug-addled she can barely keep her facts straight. Angie doesn't want to take the case, but Patrick has already agreed to help. Who wouldn't help look for a missing kid, right?

Casey Affleck's performance is so subtly done that he

Rated: R

Running Time: 114 minutes

seems to disappear into Boston itself. Kenzie knows the neighborhood and people are willing to talk to him. This wee pip of a kid looks like chum to the street sharks, but when he goes tough guy he holds his own. I don't know when Casey got so good at acting, but I'll make sure to catch his next few efforts.

The other star is the city itself. The Afflecks are Boston natives and the city of Dorchester is captured in all its grime and grit. Ben Affleck shows us the city as a character unto itself: edgy and abrasive ... and proud of it. When I left the theatre I looked over my shoulder to make sure the city wasn't following me. Then I hit my shin on a chair and stepped in a stray mud puddle. Score another one for Beantown.

Throw in Ed Harris, Amy Madigan (who I normally don't like but did here), and The 'Man Almighty,' Morgan Freeman, and you've got an ensemble cast prepped to make a film so affecting that I found my thoughts drifting back to it days later. The hook for me went beyond the superb performances and amazing direction and right into the heart of all crime fiction – the moral quandary. Good film noir gives us shadowy streets and interesting characters and a riddle to solve. Great film noir punches us with gray-area questions of right and wrong and then refuses to give easy answers. This does both.

Rating: ★★★★★

WEEKLY WEATHER FORECAST

Weather forecast provided by www.weather.com

Saturday, Dec. 22

Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high-60's.



Partly Cloudy

Sunrise: 6:31 a.m.

Sunset: 5:27 p.m.

Chance of rain: 20%

Sunday, Dec. 23

Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high-60's.



Partly Cloudy

Sunrise: 6:32 a.m.

Sunset: 5:28 p.m.

Chance of rain: 20%

Monday, Dec. 24

Highs in the high - 80's, and lows in the high-60's.



Partly Cloudy

Sunrise: 6:32 a.m.

Sunset: 5:29 p.m.

Chance of rain: 20%

Tuesday, Dec. 25

Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.



Sunrise: 6:33 a.m.

Sunset: 5:29 p.m.

Chance of Rain: 20%

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Dec. 26

Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.



Sunrise: 6:33 a.m.

Sunset: 5:30 p.m.

Chance of Rain: 30%

Scattered Showers

Thursday, Dec. 27

Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.



Sunrise: 6:34 a.m.

Sunset: 5:30 p.m.

Chance of Rain: 0%

Partly Cloudy

Friday, Dec. 28

Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.



Sunrise: 6:34 a.m.

Sunset: 5:31 p.m.

Chance of Rain: 0%

Partly Cloudy

DoD announces detainee release

U.S. Department of Defense News Releases

The Department of Defense announced Dec. 12 and 20 the transfer of eighteen detainees from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Thirteen detainees were transferred to Afghanistan, three to the U.K., and two to Sudan. These detainees were determined to be eligible for transfer following a comprehensive series of review processes.

The transfer is a demonstration of the United States' desire not to hold detainees any longer than necessary. It also underscores the processes put in place to assess each individual and make a determination about their detention while hostilities are ongoing – an unprecedented step in the history of warfare.

The Department of Defense has determined – through its comprehensive review processes – that more than 70 detainees at Guantanamo are eligible for transfer or release. Departure of these detainees is subject to ongoing discussions between the United States and other nations.

Since 2002, approximately 485 detainees have departed Guantanamo for other countries including Albania, Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, France, Great Britain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom and Yemen.

There are approximately 285 detainees currently at Guantanamo.

DoD Releases 2008 BAH Rates

The Department of Defense released the 2008 basic allowance for housing (BAH) rates Dec. 12. In total, the planned increase in housing allowance funds for 2008 is about \$600 million above the 2007 amount.

Military members will receive an average housing allowance increase of 7.3 percent when the new rates take effect Jan. 1, 2008.

Three components are included in the BAH computation:

- Median current market rent
- Average utilities (including electricity, heat, and water/sewer)
- Average renter's insurance

Total housing costs are calculated for six housing profiles (based on dwelling type and number of bedrooms) in each military housing areas. BAH rates are then calculated for each pay grade, both with and without dependents. An estimated \$17.5 billion will be paid to over 1,200,000 service members in 2008.

For members with dependents, average increases in the BAH are approximately \$83 per month. A typical E-4 with dependents, for example, will find his/her BAH about \$63 per month higher than last year, while an E-8 with dependents will receive about \$79 more than last year.

An integral part of the BAH program is the provision of individual rate protection to all members. No matter what happens to measured housing costs, an individual member in a given location will never see his/her BAH rate decrease. This assures that members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if the area's housing costs decrease.

Boots on the Ground

How do you plan to spend your Christmas in Gitmo?

By Army Sgt. Jody Metzger and Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert

Navy Petty Officer
2nd Class
Erik Barker



"Video conference with my family from home."

Army Cpt.
Marylane Garcia



"Going home to Puerto Rico."

Army Sgt. 1st Class
Raul Gonzalez



"Good party with friends and cooking 'carne frita y Arroz con gandules.'"

Army Sgt.
Ziomarie Cosme



"I am going to rent a boat and go tubing with friends."

Christ is the X in X-mas for all believers



chrislee.org

By Army Chaplain (Capt.) Yun J. Kim
525th Military Police Battalion Chaplain

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

Since 336 A.D., Dec. 25 has been the official date for the celebration of the birth of Christ. However, the birth of Christ was being celebrated in the church as early as 95 A.D. Since that time, many Christmas traditions have been adopted, such as the Christmas tree, Santa Claus and candy canes. All of these traditions have become synonymous with Christmas. Sometimes in the upkeep of these traditions, which are not always related to biblical teachings, we lose our sense of what Christmas really means and why we celebrate it.

I once heard a joke that went something like this. **Question:** What is the most uncertain and misunderstood day out of the year? **Answer:** X-mas.

In algebra, x represents any unknown number or value. In X-mas, the 'X' comes from the Greek 'Xpistō' meaning Christ. Thus, X-mas is Christ's day no matter how we read it. As bad as the joke may be, there is some truth behind it. It is during the season of Christmas that often times we tend to lose focus on its real meaning. We become stressed and agonize over what gift to give whom, and we debate endlessly over whether a particular indulgence will set us back on our credit card payments and waistlines. Christmas should not solely be a day of gifts, jingle bells, fruitcake and eggnog, but of something more, something

greater.

Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of our Lord and King, Jesus Christ, who embodies God's love for us. St. John wrote: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son" (John 3:16). God showed his love among us in this particular way, by sending His son so that we might live through Him (1 John 4:9).

God gave of Himself and love was the motivation behind it. Before Christ's birth, the angel said to Joseph, the husband of Mary, "She [Mary] will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth to save sinners.

This love that God has shown us requires sacrifice. Apostle Paul explains it in Phillipians 3:7-8: "But [he] made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself..." Love requires humility. All problems come from arrogance and pride. In the business of the holiday season, in the rush of shopping, in the midst of despair and loneliness, in the middle of turmoil we all face from time to time, God wants us all to be aware of the gift He has given the world. A gift He gave by becoming one of us. He became a human. He took on our sickness, our diseases and our sins. And He ultimately and eternally answered the question that plagues all of humanity. A gift we can accept or refuse. The gift of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel: God with us—this is the meaning of Christmas.

Randolph rises to challenges in sports and in the service

Story and photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

All over Guantanamo Bay there are stories of sporting glory in Troopers' pasts, but few match the accomplishments of Army Sgt. Duriel Randolph.

Randolph has trekked nearly as high as his dreams have taken him. Throughout his life, he has experienced all the ups and downs both the civilian and sporting worlds could throw at him before facing the challenge of serving his country.

Before joining the Army, Randolph had professional football aspirations. His football career started in high school, where he only played one year. Though he may have been inexperienced, he had potential. His talent pushed him to play football for a series of teams including the Langston University Lions in Langston, Okla., the arena football Tulsa Talons and the semi-professional Iowa Barnstormers.

"One day, I got the call from the Dallas Cowboys," said Randolph. "That actually came about by accident."

A friend of Randolph's, Noel Scarlett, had been traded by the Minnesota Vikings to the Dallas Cowboys and showed his new coaches and teammates some old films from when he and Randolph played together. "I guess I sparked their interest and they wanted to see what I really had so they gave me a call," Randolph said.

Randolph was asked to come to the Cowboy's training camp with another five players. He and one other player excelled enough to move on to a series of drills called 'the gauntlet.'

"It was fun and it gave me the chance to meet a lot of big name people like Emmett Smith, Larry Allen, Dave Campo and Michael Irvin," said Randolph.

"According to the numbers, between the other defensive tackle and I, I had him beat hands down. He ended up with a half a million dollar contract and they offered me practice squad," Randolph explained. Insulted by the offer, he turned it down.

After his experience in Dallas, Randolph worked various odd jobs trying to make ends meet, including a brief stint as a bouncer. Acting on the urging of his active duty Army mother, he looked into the Army as a career option.

"I joined in 2002, right after the birth of my son," said Randolph. "He was the reason things happened the way they did. After my experience in Dallas, I never wanted to play football again and needed to find something steady."

Since joining the Army Randolph has shifted his success from the football field to the battlefield. Trained as a mental health specialist, Randolph is currently serving as part of the Joint Task Force's Behavioral Science Conservation Team.

This is Randolph's second deployment. Previously, he served in Iraq from 2005 to 2006. While working as a mental health specialist in Iraq he assisted Soldiers in the field, offering them assistance in suicide prevention, stress relief and relaxation, one-on-one counseling, drug and alcohol counseling and anything else he could do to help them deal with the stresses of combat.

"It was similar to JSMART [Joint Stress Mitigation and Restoration



Team], but in a combat zone. Instead of people coming to us, we went to them," said Randolph.

Currently Randolph is half way through a six month deployment and is looking forward to spending next summer in Washington with his five year old son. Long range, Randolph has aspirations of coaching college football.

"College football gives you the opportunity to go out to get the talent and see different players. Also in college, you're the middle man; you can help them develop as players," Randolph said.

In his spare time, Randolph enjoys reading, playing video games and working out. While competing in a recent MWR sponsored weight lifting competition, he astonished the crowd with a winning bench press of 505 pounds. In January he will start college classes to finish his bachelor's degree in psychology.

AROUND THE JTF



▲ Petty Officer 1st Class Nikki Maxwell coaches her youth cheer squad before their final performance Monday. Cheerleading is offered as part of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Child and Youth Services Program here. (Photo by Army Sgt. Sarah Stannard)



▲ Air Force Capt. Jaquenette Belka, Air Force Maj. Mark Esslinger and Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kirk McManus present a Cuban family with Christmas gifts to brighten their holiday season, Dec. 20, 2007. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert)



◀ Army Sgt. Deborah Cruz and Navy Master Chief Mary Holland place cards on gifts given during the annual Cuban Christmas party held on Monday. The Officers Spouse's Club sponsored an Angel Tree program where Troopers could purchase Christmas gifts for local Cubans. (Photo by Army Spec. Shanita Simmons)