

THE WIRE

A JTF Journal



Neither rain, nor snow
Post Office gets ready for the holiday season

There's a new deputy in town
Brig. Gen Lake takes his position with JTF



Inches make a difference

**Navy Command Master Chief
Scott Fleming**
JTF Guantanamo CMC

Treating fellow service members as we would want to be treated is a well-regarded concept. Regardless of service, the essential core values are the same. Despite being reminded constantly to do the right thing, there are some who still fail to do so.

A wise man once said detention operations in Guantanamo is a game of inches. He should know – he’s been here for more than two years and patiently watched processes and procedures evolve incrementally in response to lessons learned through good and bad experiences. The measured approach makes practical sense in a place where small victories provide precious stability and seemingly insignificant setbacks can wreak strategic mayhem. This tactic is most profound behind the wire but is suitably applicable for every member of the JTF team.

How do we succeed in battle space where a gain of inches, invisible to all but the most intuitive participants, constitutes success? Communication is crucial – constantly conveying the concept that we prepare and execute very deliberately to maximize control and minimize imprudent risk. Human nature declares bigger is universally better, and as members of the armed forces, many of us champion the gross-tonnage theory in our implementation. However, here, where every movement generates a potentially volatile response, moderation rules the day. Sometimes we perceive temperance as appeasement or a loss of ground when, in fact, it is really a calculated step intended to disrupt a larger problem.

We remain supremely conscientious of the audiences, both internal and external, and function as though every move we make is methodically dissected by them for vulnerability. No, not paranoia or tunnel vision; just cognitive recognition of the right way versus the wrong way. When inches matter, even small deviations from accepted practice can allow the front lines to shift drastically if those digressions are not considered in the proper context. This is where complacency, carelessness and inexperience cloud the equation by creating maneuver room that can be exploited – or instead, where vigilance, prudence and intelligence solidify the computation by eliminating error margins.

We immediately identify changes from the norm before they become tangibly embedded as the status quo and are ultimately rendered irreversible without a confrontation. An inch lost through indifference becomes a mile before you know it, and then you’re talking about a fierce tug-of-war to take it back again. Once in awhile, inches are sacrificed in battles to earn yardsticks in the war but that is purposefully done as means to an end. Inches robbed in blind daylight are a different story because they can be construed as chinks in the proverbial armor and invitations for further manipulation. Fluidity, a discerning and integral element for maintaining balance, is not a plausible explanation for casually drifting off course toward shoal water and endangering the ship. Mind the helm – know when the seas are shifting!

We capitalize on corporate knowledge. Although it is a rare commodity when essentially the entire force is reconstituted on an annual basis, the troops who possess it provide incredible return on investment. They understand slippery slopes and hazards to navigation and GTMO’s finer points for staying one step ahead in an endless chess match. They are familiar with the game of inches and have probably watched it go both ways. I’m sure they can explain it better than me. Bother them, tap into their reservoirs of experience, and learn from them. There’s no reason we should have only a few wise troops on duty who can influentially discuss why inches make a difference at GTMO. ☆



JTF GUANTANAMO

Commander:

Navy Rear Adm. Tom Copeman

Command Master Chief:

Navy Master Chief Petty Officer
Scott A. Fleming

Office of Public Affairs

Director:

Navy Cmdr. Brook DeWalt: 9928

Deputy Director:

Army Maj. Diana Haynie: 9927

Supervisor:

Army 1st Sgt. Shellie Lewis: 3649

The Wire

Executive Editor:

Army Lt. Christopher Cudney: 2171

Command Information NCOIC:

Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael Gholston: 3651

Editor:

Army Sgt. Michael Baltz

Staff Writers:

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class
Edward Flynn

Army Spc. David McLean
Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class
Justin Smelley

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class
Joshua Nistas

Army Spc. Tiffany Addair
Army Pfc. Christopher Vann

Contact us

Editor’s Desk: 3594 or 2171

From the continental United States:

Commercial: 011-53-99-3594

DSN: 660-3594

E-mail: thewire@jftgmo.southcom.mil

Online: www.jftgmo.southcom.mil

COVER:

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class A.J. Knight jumps a rail with his skateboard during off-duty hours, Nov. 30. Knight is a member of Maritime Safety and Security Team 91103 from Los Angeles. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Russell

BACK COVER:

Members of JTF Guantanamo participate in the “Across the Bay Swim,” Nov. 28. Troopers and civilians swam about two miles. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Justin Smelley



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



O'Ferrall bids GTMO farewell

Army Brig. Gen. Rafael O'Ferrall, former deputy commander of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, addresses Soldiers from the Puerto Rico National Guard at the Trooper's Chapel earlier in his tour. O'Ferrall's focus included the improvement of the quality of life for Troopers and detainees during his one-year tenure. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black

■ Deputy commander leaves JTF Guantanamo after yearlong deployment

**Army Staff Sgt.
Blair Heusdens**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Army Brig. Gen. Rafael O'Ferrall developed a unique perspective on operations at Joint Task Force Guantanamo after serving as deputy commander for the past year.

"This has been a unique, important and relevant mission," O'Ferrall said. "Unique because of its jointness, important because it is the center of gravity for the world and relevant because we are all doing a great job and mission for our nation."

During his tour, O'Ferrall was instrumental in many key improvements in the quality of life for Troopers and detainees.

"I think our most important accomplishment is the way we continue to enhance and evolve, not only with the transitions and rotations of service members, but also in improving the Morale, Welfare and Recreation opportunities and resources

available for our Troopers," O'Ferrall said. "We've also continued improvements to the detention facilities, inside and out."

O'Ferrall took the time to get to know the Troopers at the JTF during his tour and feels the Troopers contribute greatly to the success of the mission at Guantanamo Bay.

"Even though the Troopers here are young, we have a good and diverse mix of Troopers – from all services – who understand the task and take it in a professional manner and make it easier to accomplish the mission," O'Ferrall said.

This diversity is due in part to the joint environment which is truly unique to GTMO. According to O'Ferrall, while many "joint" task forces may have one or two people from each service, Joint Task Force Guantanamo provides an opportunity to work with members of all services and get a feel for what each service is all about.

"There is a true mix of services here – complete units from all the services – that work together to accomplish the mission," O'Ferrall said.

O'Ferrall was tasked with sharing the Joint Task Force mission with groups from around the world, including distinguished visitors, government officials, human rights organizations and various groups of

community leaders. One such opportunity was the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, in which O'Ferrall escorted a group of 50 distinguished visitors from across the nation around the U.S. Southern Command area of operations. These visits are an opportunity for others to see firsthand the JTF Guantanamo mission. O'Ferrall feels it is important for the message to get out about what really happens at Guantanamo Bay.

"Whatever is done here with the detainees is what the world should see," O'Ferrall said. "We are the center of gravity on detainee procedure."

O'Ferrall realizes that not everyone can visit GTMO to get a firsthand experience of what conditions are really like.

"Even if people can't get here to visit GTMO, they should praise the Troops for keeping us safe and keeping these people out of combat," O'Ferrall said.

During his tour, O'Ferrall has learned a few things that he will take with him in his career. He will go back to Puerto Rico and continue to serve as the assistant adjutant general for the Puerto Rico National Guard.

"I've learned how to let things go and let leaders do their jobs. We really have professionals here, from the O-6s down to the E-5s," O'Ferrall said. ★



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ricardo Berenguer and Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Thomas Joyce, logistic specialists with the Navy Expeditionary Guard Battalion, sort out mail as part of routine mail processing in the Camp America Posta Office, Nov. 23. On average, the Camp America Post Office cycles through approximately 2,500 pounds of mail weekly during peak seasons such as the holidays. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Marcos Hernandez

Post office prepares for the holidays



Berenguer sorts packages as part of routine mail processing in the Camp America Posta Office, Nov. 23. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Marcos Hernandez

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Marcos Hernandez

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

With the holidays fast approaching, service members from across Joint Task Force Guantanamo are rushing to the Camp America Post Office to send gifts, letters and souvenirs to friends and family back home. During this time, post office personnel must make additional preparations to be able to support the needs of their customers.

“We prepare by making sure we have enough supplies such as boxes, labels, tape, stamps and money orders to enable us to support the mission,” said Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Tyrone Henderson, a postal clerk.

On average, the Camp America Post Office cycles through 2,500 pounds of mail weekly during peak seasons such as this one. To advise their customers of an approximate delivery date, mailing dates are posted on the shop’s bulletin board containing the recommended deadlines to ensure delivery of mail by the holiday date.

“I recommend people take the time to read the holiday season mailing list deadlines posted in the shop,” said Henderson. The main concern for

customers is likely to be the mailing of parcel post packages which is known to take a much longer time to reach recipients than letters. When mailing from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay to the U.S., customers sending first class letters, cards, and priority mail should have these sent out by Dec. 4.

In addition to mailing items on time, there are a few things service members can do to send their mail more efficiently. A plain box is the best for shipping items. If the box has other markings, be sure to darken them out and make sure the addresses for both sender and recipient are legible.

“My advice is to know what you want. For example, if the customer is interested in insuring their mail, then it’s a good idea to stop by and pick up all the forms needed. That way, with everything pre-filled upon arrival, half the battle is won,” said Navy Seaman Jordan Grainger, a logistic specialist with the Navy Expeditionary Guard Battalion.

As a valuable reminder to all customers visiting the Camp America Post Office, the office only accepts cash as a form of currency. Also, a customs form is mandatory for all items being mailed, as Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, is a foreign country. ☆

Lake takes over as JTF deputy

**Army Staff Sgt.
Blair Heusdens**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Among the many new faces at Joint Task Force Guantanamo to arrive recently, Army Brig. Gen. Timothy Lake may be one you'll see around as he gets settled into his new job as the JTF deputy commander.

Lake, a native of the Virgin Islands, recently relieved Army Brig. Gen. Rafael O'Ferrall, who returned to Puerto Rico with Soldiers from the Joint Task Force Guantanamo Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Lake is excited about his new assignment and feels the JTF mission is an important one.

"Guantanamo is important to our military's national security strategy," Lake said. "I think it is within the top five mission-critical assignments out there right now."

Lake was commissioned in 1985 as a distinguished military graduate through the North Carolina A&T State University Reserve Officer Training Corps and earned a master of science degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College in 2004. He was promoted to brigadier general in September of 2009.

During his career, Lake has served on active duty and in the Virgin Islands National Guard, on the Joint and Army staff and at the White House Military Office in support of two presidents. Lake also served as the first joint task force commander in Baton Rouge, La., responsible for maintaining discipline and order after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005.

Upon notification of his upcoming assignment at JTF Guantanamo, Lake set out to find out everything he could about operations at the JTF. He visited JTF Guantanamo in September for a pre-deployment site survey and had an opportunity to see firsthand the mission and job he would have to fill.

"[From my experience in Washington], I already had a pretty good idea of what the JTF was all about, but it was all peripheral," Lake said. "After the site survey, I did more in-depth research into the mission and expectations of the JTF."

Lake also had the opportunity to spend a week and a half with O'Ferrall to familiarize himself with daily operations, missions and the Troopers at GTMO.

"I'm thankful for [Brig. Gen. O'Ferrall's] experience and he has been very forthcoming in sharing his knowledge while letting me also get a feel for where we could make changes," Lake said.

Lake looks forward to his tour as an opportunity to grow as an individual and make positive changes at the JTF, while



Army Brig. Gen. Timothy Lake tours the detention facilities at Joint Task Force Guantanamo during a site survey visit, Sept. 28, 2009. Lake, a Virgin Islands native, recently took over as the JTF deputy commander. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Sgt. Emily Greene

ensuring the mission is accomplished.

"We are always growing in the military. You always intend on leaving your mission better than you found it," Lake said. "I am truly here to support the JTF commander and ensure the nation's objectives are being executed professionally in a joint environment."

After visiting with the Troopers at GTMO, Lake was given an impression of the quality of the force tasked with ensuring every aspect of the safe, humane, legal and

transparent care of the detainees here.

"The Troopers here are very professional and understand the criticality of the mission and the national security implications of what we do here; not only for the United States, but internationally," Lake said.

As the new deputy commander, Lake has certain expectations of the Troopers here as they continue to carry out their mission.

"I expect the Troopers to stay focused,

See **LAKE/12**



Crush win turkey tourney

The GTMO Crush placed first in the 2009 Turkey Gobbler All Nighter softball tournament. More than 100 civilians and service members participated in the 10-hour-long softball tournament. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Flynn

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Flynn

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Although many celebrated the day after Thanksgiving with several hours of non-stop shopping or rest and relaxation, others dusted off their old high school cleats for the Turkey Gobbler All Nighter softball tournament at Cooper Sports Complex, Nov. 27–28. It was a tough battle and fierce competition in the thrilling, 10-hour marathon softball tournament, but only one team could win: The GTMO Crush.

Following the GTMO Crush victory over The Antagonizers in the softball championship game, GTMO Crush coach/outfielder Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Matt Harris complimented his teammates in their victory. “We were successful in this tournament because we worked together as a team,” Harris said. “We played many good teams in the tournament and they deserve credit for their determination and hard work. The competition was tough.”

Personnel from Joint Task Force Guantanamo and Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, both civilians and military members, participated in this fast-moving, double-elimination tournament. Organized by Morale, Welfare and Recreation, the 10 teams left all of their toughness, grit and sportsmanship on the field. “Like all MWR-sponsored sporting events, we stress sportsmanship,” said Robert Neuman, the MWR sports coordinator.

“Uncompromising integrity and fair play is what we strive for.”

Prior to the start of the tournament, a representative of each team submitted their player rosters and met with the MWR staff and were briefed on the rules and regulations of the softball tournament. From basketball to bowling, golf to jogging, MWR ensures personnel have the opportunity to participate in many sporting events held throughout the week in celebration of Thanksgiving.

For the newly arrived Rhode Island National Guard and the U.S. Virgin Islands National Guard, it was their first introduction to an MWR-sponsored sporting event on the island. “We literally finished unpacking our bags and here we are in this all-nighter softball tournament,” said Army Spc. Ross Manzotti, a member of the Rhode Island National Guard. “The tournament was action-packed and competitive. We are disappointed in the results, but it was a great opportunity to play and compete.”

Although the competition was tough throughout each game, the teams demonstrated their respect for each other and the umpires. “It seemed like everyone had a great time,” said Army Sgt. 1st Class Olson Christian, a member of the Virgin Islands National Guard. “This tournament was a great introduction to the island. It was also a good opportunity to talk to the other teams and learn from each other.”

Other sporting events and tournaments are now being planned by the MWR staff.

MWR is now accepting team rosters for a winter softball league and a 5-on-5 deck hockey tournament. For additional information on these events and other upcoming athletic activities, please contact the MWR sports office at ext. 77262. ☆



In the competitive and spirited softball tournament, players from the 10 teams demonstrated fair play and sportsmanship: the cornerstone of a MWR-sponsored sporting event. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Flynn

SANDRA BULLOCK
THE BLIND SIDE
BASED ON THE EXTRAORDINARY TRUE STORY



**‘Blind Side,’
Something for everyone**

**Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class
Joshua Nistas**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

“The Blind Side” a story about a homeless, suffering teenager who is taken off the streets by a family who shows him his true potential – in the classroom, on the football field, and in life.

I’ve never really been into the inspirational sports movies, like “Remember the Titans,” “Invincible,” and “Miracle.” I’m not saying they weren’t successful, I’m just saying that for all things considered, this movie surpassed them. It kept my attention throughout, and made me care for the characters portrayed in the film.

Sandra Bullock (“The Proposal,” “Miss Congeniality”) plays Leigh Anne Tuohy, a well-off-Caucasian woman who decides to take in an African American teen, Michael Oher (Quinton Aaron, “Mr. Brooklyn,” “Be Kind Rewind”), who’s living on the street while attending a private Christian school and failing. At the beginning of the movie, Michael Oher, who lacked prior education and school records, was only admitted into the private school because the school’s coach thought it would be the Christian thing to do – to help the less fortunate.

I thought that this movie would have a lot of football in it, considering that it’s based on the early life of a football player, but surprisingly it didn’t. It focused more

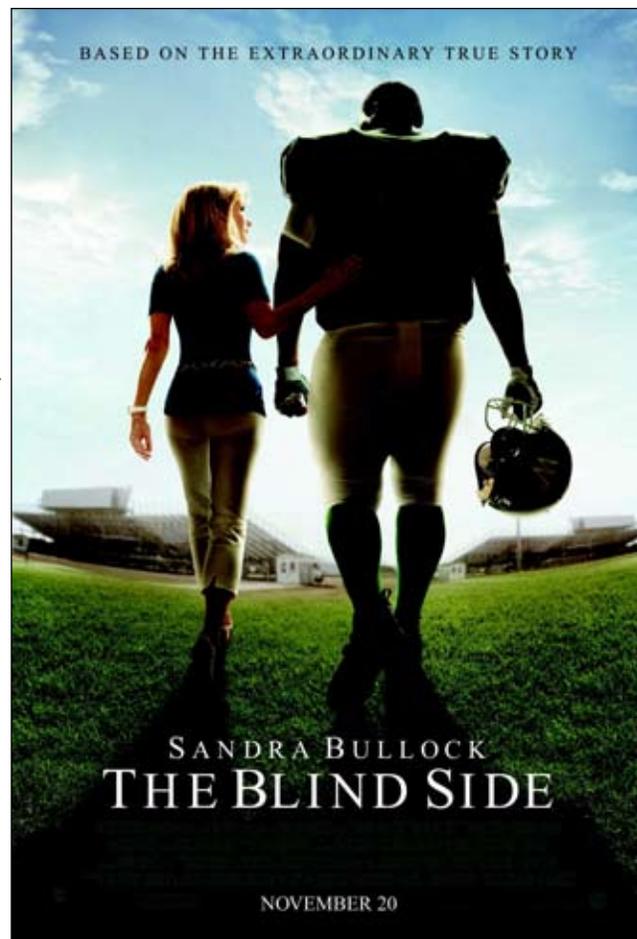
on Oher learning to deal with real life issues facing teens in less than savory neighborhoods. It shows how less fortunate teens with potential may take a different route than what society might expect.

There were many laughs from this movie, with a great supporting cast. Tim McGraw, a country singer who also stars in “Flicka” and “Friday Night Lights,” plays Sean Tuohy, Leigh’s husband and father of S.J. and Collins, who have to deal with the new addition to their household. The scenes with S.J. and Oher were hilarious, yet realistic, as if they were truly a family and not merely actors working for a living.

I would suggest this movie for the whole family—there’s something in it for everyone, not just the football fans. ☆

PG-13
128 minutes

Rating: ★★★★★☆



Lighting the Pearl of The Antillies



U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay kicked off the season with a Christmas tree lighting ceremony that took place Nov. 28. One tree, located atop of Harbor Lights Hill, has over 20,000 lights and is 40-feet tall. The purpose of the tree is to increase the morale of Troopers by establishing that the holiday season has arrived. The tree will stay lit until the New Year.

**JTF Guantanamo photos by
Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Justin Smelley**



Keeping Troopers in touch with home



A Trooper uses the liberty center computer to communicate with family. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Justin Smelley

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Justin Smelley

JTF Guantmo Public Affairs

Being deployed during the holiday season is tough for most Troopers, but with the advances in technology, it is much easier to keep in touch. For the most part, e-mailing has replaced the old fashion letter through the mail or even the classic note tied to the leg of a carrier pigeon. Troopers also have the option of using Skype and Microsoft Network messenger, which are software applications that allow users to make voice calls over the Internet, to communicate with their family and friends.

The military and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation try their best with helping Troopers stay in regular communication with their families by supplying wireless Internet, phones and computers equipped with webcams.

“I basically keep in touch with my family by phone calls,” said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan Bell. “I like calling on the phone, because I think it’s more personal and I get to hear how they sound and hear their emotions. Where as if I chat with them on the computer, all you see is the text or maybe a picture they may send.”

What was once a thing of the future, webcams allow you to see your family and friends on the screen and talk to them as if you were talking on the phone.

“I like MSN messenger, because it’s like a video call where I can hear my family at

the same time as I talk to them. It allows me to see my son and play games with him over the Internet,” said Army Spc. Ivan Tejada.

Webcams and other Internet devices not only help Troopers deal with the difficulty of deployment, but can also be comforting to the children who miss seeing their parent’s face.

“My daughter had a hard time with me leaving for deployment, but since we’ve been doing the webcam chats about once or twice a week, she seems to be much more at ease with the situation,” said Army Sgt. Kevin Foley.

Troopers who have been deployed for the holidays in the past have grown to use these valuable assets to cope with the difficulty of not being with their families.

“It’s rough, but it’s not my first rodeo or my wife’s first, so we know what to do in these certain situations. I just make sure I call and keep in contact with her and wish her a Merry Christmas and tell her I love her,” Bell said.

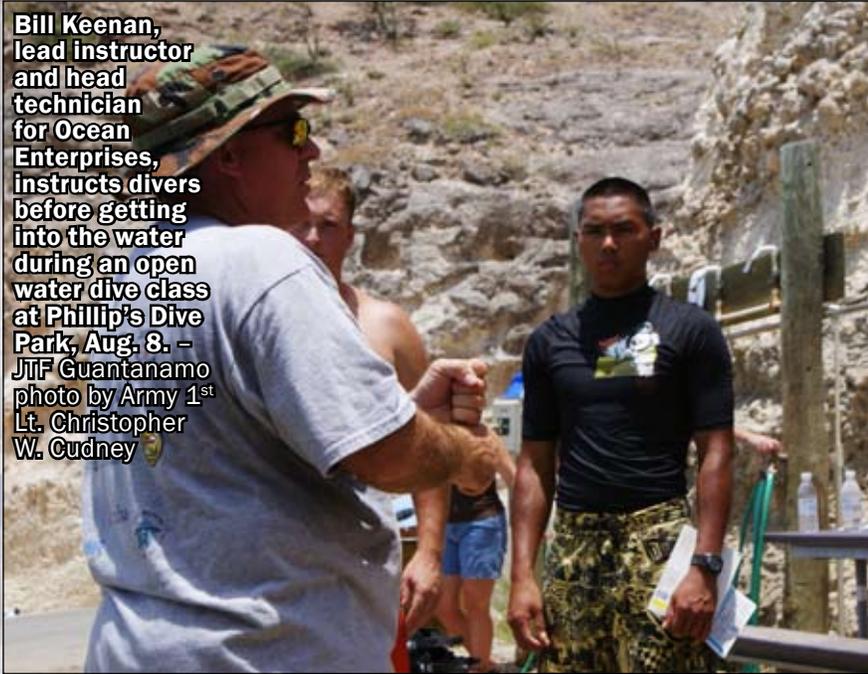
Keeping in touch with family is especially important during deployments. It helps Troopers deal with the stress and keep a clear head so they can continue the mission of providing safe, humane, legal and transparent care of detainees. ★



Webcams provide an important means for Troopers at Joint Task Force Guantanamo to keep in touch. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Justin Smelley

Delving deep into diving

Bill Keenan, lead instructor and head technician for Ocean Enterprises, instructs divers before getting into the water during an open water dive class at Phillip's Dive Park, Aug. 8. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army 1st Lt. Christopher W. Cudney



information on,” said Bill Keenan, lead instructor and head technician. “I get to pass on my passion.”

Ocean Enterprises is your one-stop resource for diving in Guantanamo Bay. They offer scuba diving classes, dive equipment for rent or purchase, air fills and full maintenance on a wide variety of dive gear. The dive shop also offers discounts and sales on a regular basis.

Depending on your work schedule here, instructors remain flexible to keep diving open to as many people on base as possible.

“We try to work around schedules as much as possible,” Jessie said. “We understand and our instructors have full-time jobs as well to work around. For the most part, classes are offered on the weekends, but we want to make classes available for everyone.”

“Diving is extremely important,” Jessie said. “It is a let loose thing. You can relax and get away from cell phones, pagers or e-mail and forget about everything going on.”

Alongside courses offered, the dive shop offers many events for current divers to get involved in. Divers are encouraged to participate in organized events. It is a great way to meet new people and stay involved in the local dive community on base.

Divers will be decorating a Christmas tree underwater Dec. 6 at Phillips Dive Park. The dive will start following a monthly Reef Raiders meeting beginning at 6 p.m.

Ocean Enterprises is open Monday – Friday, 12 – 6 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.; and Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. For more information, call the dive shop at ext. 75336. ★

Army Spc. Tiffany Addair

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

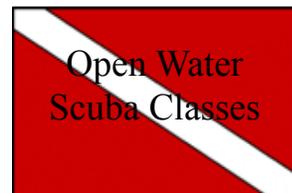
It can be relaxing, adrenaline-filled and breathtaking. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay offers a once in a lifetime opportunity for individuals to dive in such pristine waters. Troopers deployed to Joint Task Force Guantanamo or stationed at the naval base, Department of Defense civilians, contractors, dependants and foreign nationals all have the opportunity to participate in numerous dive classes and recreational dives offered here on base.

Diving gives individuals the opportunity to relieve stress while meeting new people. Ocean Enterprises, the local dive shop on base, offers dive classes to get individuals started and on their way to an exhilarating experience. With classes offered year round and flexible schedules, becoming dive certified is an easy task to accomplish, even if deployed here for a short period of time.

“We offer between one and two beginning open water classes ever month,” said Jessie Keenan, dive store manager. “Advanced, rescue and specialty courses are offered once a month. People looking for upper-level courses, such as dive master or instructor, should contact the dive shop for further information.”

To become a scuba diver, minimal time is needed to receive certification. The open water course takes about two weeks to complete. Advanced open water can be completed in one weekend. The rescue diver course also takes two weeks to complete. If you want to become a master diver the course can be completed in a minimum of two months, but the dive shop highly recommends a six month course to become certified. The dive shop has many qualified instructors eager to teach new divers their passion.

“I like to instruct because it is satisfying passing good



► COST: \$280

- paid in two payments; credit cards, checks, bank drafts and cash

- payments are made at the dive shop:

*\$55 to NEX for books and certification card

*\$225 to MWR at G. J. Denich Gym

► Cost covers: all books, certification and use of instructor's gear

► You must provide: mask, fins, snorkel and booties (either purchase at dive shop, rent or use a buddy's!)

Brig. Gen Lake, new JTF deputy

LAKE from 5

pay attention and understand why they are here and that their primary mission is the safe, humane, legal and transparent care and custody of detainees,” Lake said.

As discussion continues in Washington, D.C., about the future of the detention facilities, Lake likens the coming months to a part of an ongoing relay race. As units and Troopers continue to transition in and out of the JTF, Lake’s advice is to focus on the mission and not on a particular closing date.

“This is the third leg of a relay race,” Lake said. “There are many rumors in regard to the JTF life expectancy, but the guidance from the commander is that we don’t know when the race will end, so we’re going to run the race all the way through. If we have to pass the baton on, whether it be to military or civilian personnel – whenever it may be – we need to make sure we’ve run the race through professionally, not with a focus on the end date, because we have no influence on that date.” ☆



Army Brig. Gen. Timothy Lake, the incoming deputy commander of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, shakes hands with a Trooper at Seaside Galley on Thanksgiving, Nov. 26. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Blair Heusdens

Holiday Safety

- ❏ Beware of holiday candles: Be sure candles are kept away from decorations or other combustible materials. Never display lighted candles in windows or near exits.
- ❏ Use decorations appropriately: For outside decorations, use only those lights labeled for outside use. Don’t overload electrical outlets and always unplug all lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- ❏ Keep Christmas trees fresh: Place the tree away from heat sources and exits, and water it daily. If you purchase an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.
- ❏ Designate a driver: When attending a party, always designate a non-drinking driver. If you are the host of a holiday gathering, be sure there are non-alcoholic beverages available for guests who are driving.
- ❏ Cook with care: When cooking, do not wear loose fitting clothing. Always turn pot handles in. Keep kitchen appliances clean and in good condition, and turn them off after use.
- ❏ Be sure to check base housing regulations for prohibited decorations or safety hazards. For additional information, contact the base safety office at ext. 4526.



Making room for dinner

Members of Joint Task Force Guantanamo and Naval Station Guantanamo Bay kicked off their Thanksgiving celebration with a five-kilometer Turkey Trot run, Nov. 26. Morale, Welfare and Recreation handed out t-shirts, turkeys and gift certificates to participants in the holiday race. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Maria Blanchard

Boots on the Ground

by Army Pfc. Christopher Vann

Who do you think will win the college football championship?

**Navy Petty Officer 1st Class
Michael Kelly**



“Cincinnati, because it’s time for a small college to get a chance to win.”

**Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd
Class Jonathan D’Arcy**



“Texas; you can’t go wrong with Texas.”

**Air Force Tech. Sgt. Lana
Sehorn**

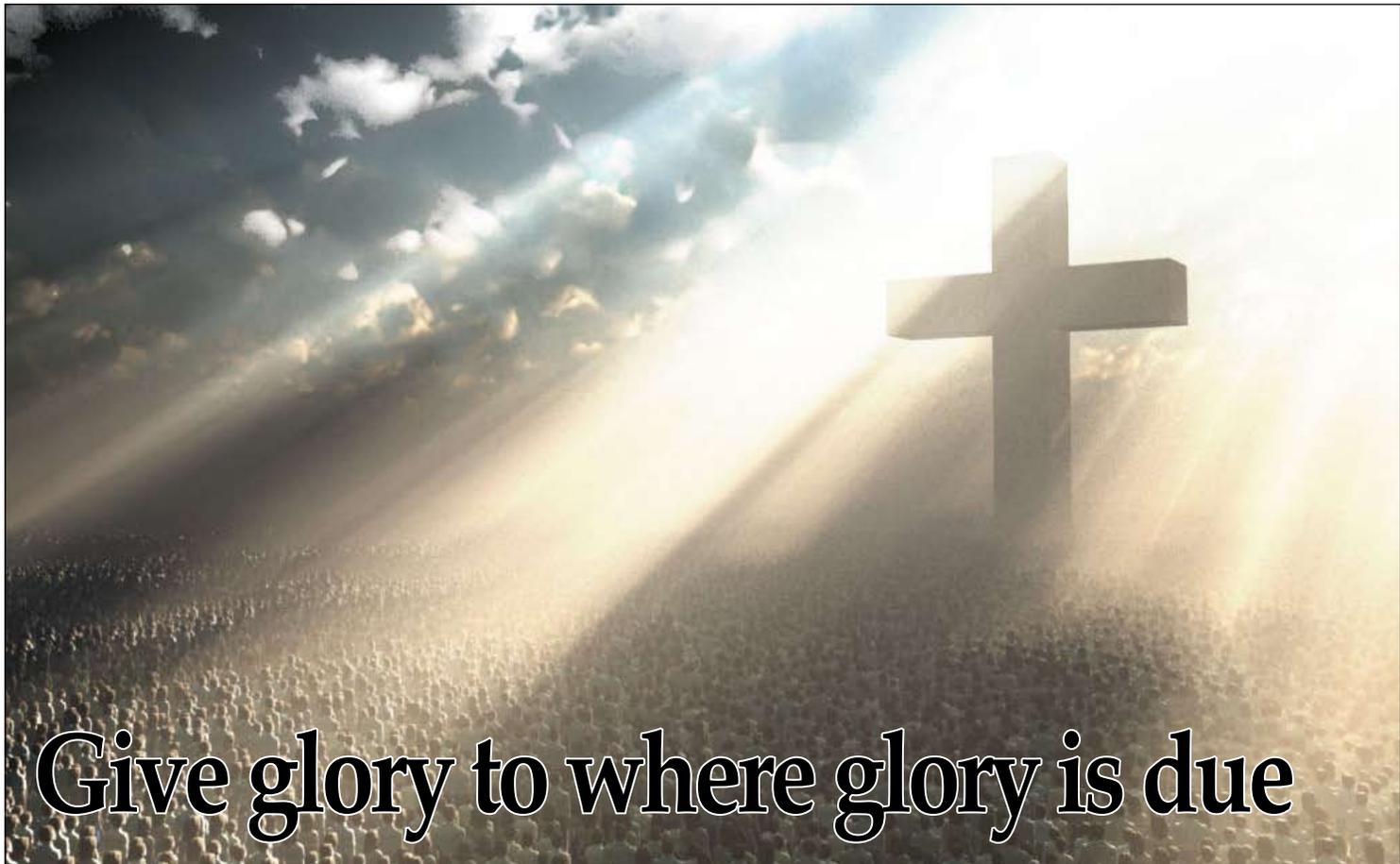


“Florida; I like Tebow.”

**Air Force Staff Sgt. William
Roberts**



“Alabama; I’m tired of seeing Florida win.”



Give glory to where glory is due

**Army Capt.
Eric Bey**
525th MP chaplain

As we enter this holiday season, there is no doubt many people will miss family and friends and the traditions that they may have had their whole lives.

For some, the tradition they will miss may be a special dinner or dessert; for others, it is decorating the Christmas tree; and perhaps for others it will be the family reunions. Virtually everyone however, will partake in the exchanging of gifts, dinners, parties, decorations and parades.

I wonder how many will remember the true meaning of these holidays. We just celebrated Thanksgiving, a traditionally American holiday and how many remembered why they were celebrating or to whom they were giving thanks. Do you remember that it started out in the days of the pilgrims? They were thankful to God for the journey and purpose for which they came. This Thanksgiving I am sure that

many people performed the ritual of going around the table and took turns saying what they were thankful for, but how many were thankful to God?

I think it would actually set people back on their heels if they were to read the original intent of the first Pilgrims who settled this land those many years ago. In the Mayflower Compact, they declared that they were undertaking the endeavor of starting the first colony for the Glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith. I think it would offend a great many people if someone today were to feel the same way the Pilgrims did.

Then there is Christmas. The very reason for the season is the birth of Christ and yet how many people get offended at the mentioning of Him. It seems now that political correctness has led it to be called a "winter festival." For decades or longer people have been complaining about how commercial Christmas has become. I see a move away from our beginnings; a forfeiting of heritage; a forgetting of traditions. We

have traditions true enough, but they have nothing to do with the true meaning of the beginning. We have substituted superficial traditions for the tradition where families gathered and the stories of God, His great exploits and His love were shared.

I would like everyone everywhere to stop and meditate. Think about the meanings of these holidays. Think about something bigger than you and get lost, enraptured and inspired again. Reclaim the holidays and reintroduce and reinstitute meaning and purpose. Retell the stories, not of flying reindeer, elves and Santa, but of a God who gave His only begotten Son; of a people who gave up everything for a heartfelt belief that God had called them to leave everything familiar to spread the Good News of our redemption through Christ.

Let's be an active part in reviving the spirit of the holidays and not make apologies for having done so. Share the stories and meaning of the holidays with all those who will listen and let's give glory where glory is due. ✪

JTF CHAPEL SCHEDULED PROGRAMS

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

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

Protestant Worship
Sunday: 9 a.m.

Spanish Protestant
Worship
Sunday: 11 a.m.

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

Scout popcorn creates smiles

■ Boy scouts begin to distribute more than 4,000 pounds of popcorn to Joint

**Army Spc.
David McLean**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

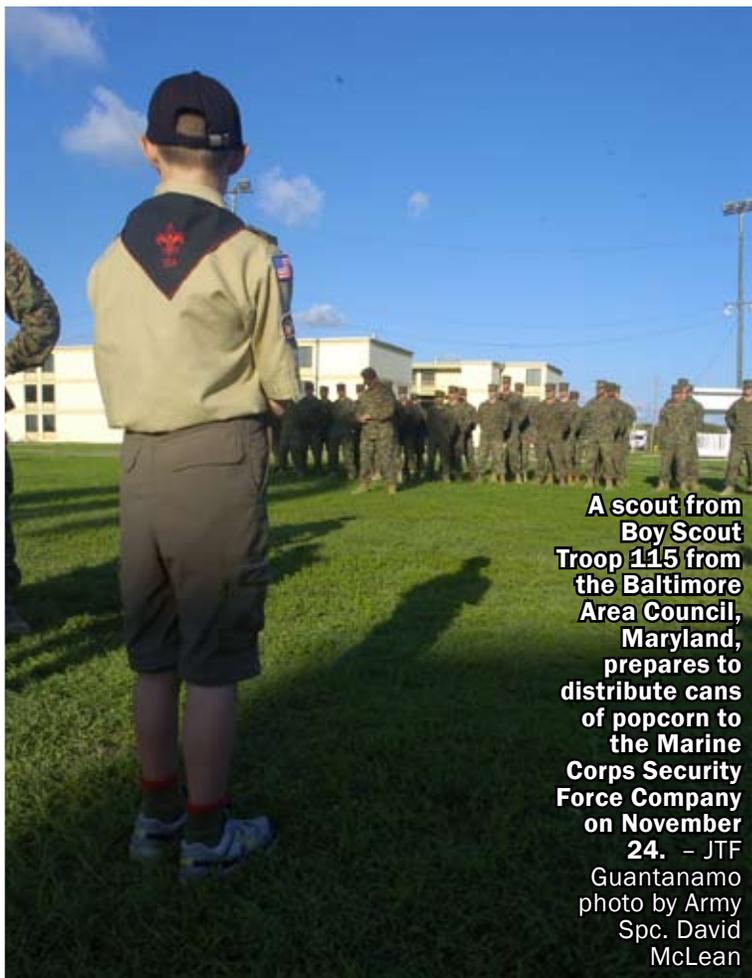
Tight economic times could not stop the Boy Scouts of America from bringing gifts of popcorn to Troopers. Members from Boy Scout Troop 115, part of the Baltimore Area Council, teamed up with the Guantanamo Bay's BST 435 to deliver tins of popcorn to Marines with Marine Corps Security Force Company Guantanamo. This distribution of the confectionary corn snack is the first of many that is intended to reach every Trooper here at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

Air Force Lt. Col. Denise Boyer, commander of the 474th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron, coordinated much of the effort to get the popcorn down to Guantanamo Bay. Her two sons are scouts in Maryland, and upon seeing the large number of Girl Scout cookies delivered here earlier this year, she wanted to get Boy Scout popcorn here.

"Every year my boys sell Boy Scout popcorn, and one of the options is to make a donation to the Troopers," said Boyer. "Our Boy Scouts distribute at Baltimore Washington International Airport when Troopers are coming back from the field. Most Troopers say they would rather have it in the field than when they come home."

In order to have the popcorn reach Troopers in the field, Boyer arranged transportation for the popcorn with the Office of Military Commissions flights from Andrews Air Force Base.

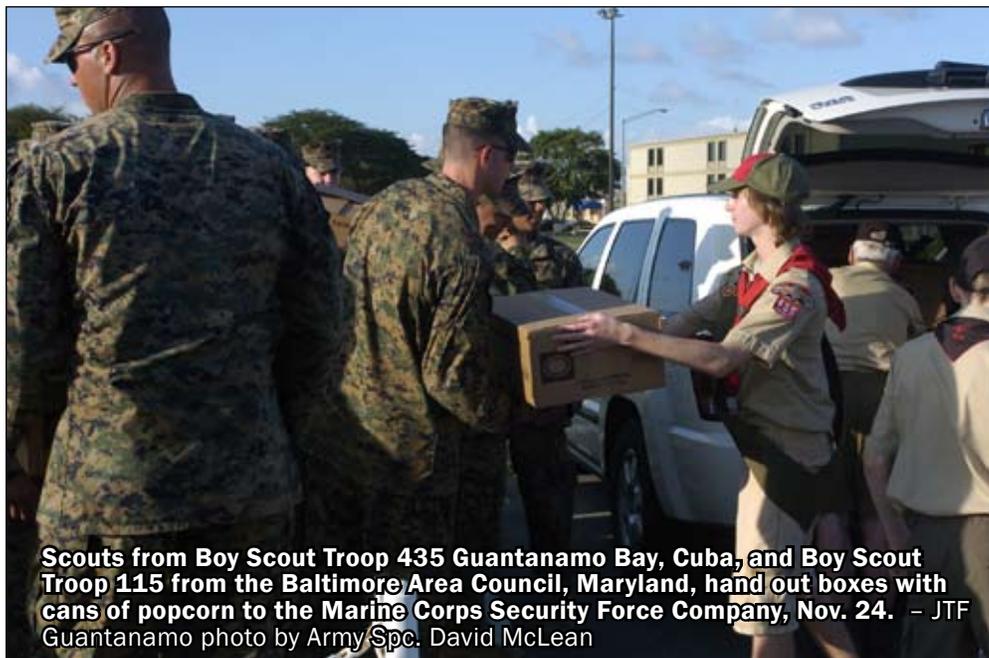
"I approached the subject of getting stuff down here, and



A scout from Boy Scout Troop 115 from the Baltimore Area Council, Maryland, prepares to distribute cans of popcorn to the Marine Corps Security Force Company on November 24. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. David McLean

talked with the local Troops and to the one back in Baltimore to figure out some way to get some donated popcorn here," said Boyer. "The Baltimore Area Council approved to send 4,000 to 6,000 pounds of popcorn to Troopers stationed at GTMO. It is overwhelming to see how much popcorn they were willing to send here."

Shipments are arriving, and Boyer's two sons and husband made the trip to distribute the first tins alongside the local troops. The plan for distribution was first to the MCSFCO who work outer security for the naval station.



Scouts from Boy Scout Troop 435 Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Boy Scout Troop 115 from the Baltimore Area Council, Maryland, hand out boxes with cans of popcorn to the Marine Corps Security Force Company, Nov. 24. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. David McLean

"The first people we wanted to give to were the Marines at GTMO who work the fence line," said Boyer. "For many of them, this is their first deployment. Sometimes it will be their very first time away from home for Christmas. We wanted to do something special for them."

Marine Lance. Cpl. Aaron Purkiss, a MCSFCO member and Eagle Scout, said he enjoyed the visit from the scouts and the work they are doing.

"Boy Scouts always have that spirit of helping out, doing some service for others and doing what is right," said Purkiss. "Thank you, Boy Scouts of America. Thank you for coming here and treating us."

Continued distribution of the popcorn is expected in the coming weeks to reach all Joint Task Force and Naval Station Guantanamo Troopers.

For more information about Boy Scout popcorn, contact Lt. Col. Boyer at ext. 5025. ★

Troopers with Joint Task Force Guantanamo, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and civilians participate in the Turkey Gobbler All Nighter softball tournament at Cooper Sports Complex, Nov. 27-28. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Flynn



Around the



JTF



Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class James Latess, deployed to Joint Task Force Guantanamo with Maritime Safety and Security Team 91103, secures a patrol boat after navigating Guantanamo waters, Nov. 30. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black

Members of the Puerto Rico National Guard display their flag proudly as they depart GTMO to return home, Nov. 28. The PRNG was stationed here on a year long deployment attached to Joint Task Force Guantanamo's Headquarters and Headquarters Company. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black

