

THE

WIRE

A News Magazine

***Gitmo
lights up
for the
holidays***

SANTA
LAND
HERE ↘

***Crawford proud of service
Puerto Rico TAG visits Gitmo
Caribbean travel options***

Our legacy – making history at Guantanamo Bay



By Coast Guard Command Master Chief Robert J. Fowler

308th Port Security Unit

You could say I was destined from birth to spend a tour of duty in Guantanamo Bay. Jimmy Buffett has nothing on me. I am from a family of sailors. My father, father-in-law and three of my uncles served as petty officers in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War and Cold War eras.

Even though I take a lot of ribbing from my family about defecting to the Coast Guard, they are very proud of my military service and glad that I was willing to join an armed service that at least has some boats. I am also the first in the family to become a Master Chief Petty Officer. My father was a Radar Man Third Class on the heavy cruiser USS Salem on which he made several trips to Guantanamo Bay during his four year hitch in the Navy.

As many of you may do as well, I consider myself a legacy member of the Guantanamo fraternity. We are all sons, daughters, nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen that have served on this hunk of rock, dirt and coral for over 100 years to protect our freedoms and belief systems from those that would like to see them dismantled. We have chosen to carry the standard until it is

the next generation's turn to bear it.

As far back as I can remember, Cuba, and specifically Guantanamo Bay, were frequently the topics of conversation in my family anytime there was a discussion concerning the military, global politics or matters of war. In fact, some of my earliest memories are from the days of the Cuban

Missile Crises. Yes, I am that old.

In fact, since the U.S. Fleet defeated Spanish Admiral Pascual Cervera's armada in 1898, Guantanamo Bay has served through the years as a microcosmic barometer for the U.S. and its relationship to the global political environment. In other words, you can take a look at what is going on in Guantanamo Bay at any time in contemporary U.S. history and it will give you a good idea about the level of political tension between the U.S. and the other major political forces in the World.

Our current global political situation is no exception. Since we are at war, Joint Task Force Guantanamo is currently experiencing a period of high operational tempo and all of us are in the mix. Due to the nature of some of the duties we are performing here in Guantanamo Bay, some of our experiences may be unpleasant. Nevertheless, I think it is still an exciting time to live and work here because we are part of a complex system that is working to make the global society a better and safer place in which to live.

As Port Security Unit 308 prepares to turn over the watch, I want to leave you with this final epiphanic thought that sums up my feelings about my tour here. Some people study history and some people write about history, but here at Guantanamo Bay, we make history.

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ON THE COVER:

Holiday decorations abound as Guantanamo residents celebrate in the spirit of Christmas. (Photo by Army Sgt. Jody Metzger)



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JTF deputy commander proud of his service as ‘Citizen Soldier’

Story and photo by
Army Sgt. Scott Griffin

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Cameron Crawford, deputy commander of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, is a native of Oregon and a graduate of West Point, class of '78. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering and a regular Army commission as a second lieutenant in the Military Police Corps.

Crawford joined the Oregon Army National Guard after leaving active duty in 1993 and is employed full time by Weyerhaeuser Company. He was promoted to brigadier general in January of 2007 and soon after assumed his responsibilities at Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

Crawford took time out recently to answer some questions about himself and his role in the Joint Task Force.

What has been particularly challenging for you here?

The busy social schedule takes up a lot of my time and energy. It wasn't something I'd really planned on.

What is the difference between commanding an Army unit and a joint force?

Not much, really. Soldiers are Soldiers and Sailors are Sailors. Troopers are Troopers and at the end of the day they will do what they are led to do. Command is always about leadership. The new vocabulary can be difficult, but that's all part of the job, too.

What previous experiences have helped prepare you for this command?

Everything I've ever done has prepared me for this. I served as a military police officer in Desert Storm repatriating enemy prisoners of war; I've got a master's degree in corrections; I speak passable Spanish. Every leadership position I've ever held – as a commander, as a deputy commander, as an executive officer – that all brought me here.

Where do you feel this mission is going?

Sooner or later, this mission will end. That works for me as long as we do it properly. The commissions process has been and will continue to be successful. We'll then move

onto the war crimes process and ultimately progress to prison operations, maybe as soon as next year. We'll likely retain the intelligence platform for strategic and tactical purposes in the forward fight.

What have you found rewarding about your tour here?

A lot of things. It's a mission that's about people. I enjoy seeing Troopers perform to their potential and do their part in the Global War on Terror.

What would you say are your (or the JTFs) major accomplishments during your tenure?

The drawing down of the detainee population. We've sent about 150 detainees out the door, and that reflects the President's wishes not to detain people longer than necessary. We've achieved a more efficient battle rhythm. We've improved the facilities where we work and live, making them better and safer and improving the quality of life. The Joint Intelligence Group continues to provide valuable [intelligence] for the Global War on Terror.

What is your overall impression of the force here?

Two things stand out: consistency and flexibility. The Troopers consistently perform above the standard every day while remaining agile enough to adapt and change as the mission evolves.

How'd you spend Thanksgiving?

I had a great Thanksgiving. The Puerto Rico Adjutant General came down with several media outlets to interview Troopers. It was a very special event that gave the families a chance to see the Troopers on TV.

What do you miss most about serving at home with the National Guard?

I miss the state mission. The National Guard is unique and the state mission



is very important. In Oregon, we have our youth programs and we assist with forest fires. I miss being part of the local community. I miss the citizen part of 'Citizen Soldier.' In the Guard, we develop long-term relationships with our peers, and I find myself missing the closeness of that community.

Can you speak a bit about the aging detainee population?

That's a major concern for the entire JTF, but those answers are higher than us. We are currently working with our higher headquarters to [address] that issue and figure out what we do from here.

Do you miss being part of the active duty Army?

I really don't. I prefer being a Citizen Soldier. There are ample opportunities for active duty time nowadays, whether it's schools or deployments or annual trainings.

Any final thoughts on the JTF?

I think it was particularly wise to have the Puerto Rico National Guard involved in the JTF operations for the foreseeable future. They've got the dual language benefits and efficiency in location – it just makes sense. When Puerto Rico returns for JTF 10.0, they'll have a cadre of veterans with historical knowledge of operations here. They can ultimately offset the frequent rotations here and make the most of Troop relief.

Puerto Rico National Guard visits Guantanamo Bay

By Army Staff Sgt. Paul Meeker

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The adjutant general of the Puerto Rico National Guard joined service members of the Puerto Rico National Guard on Thanksgiving Day for a special “town hall” meeting at Joint Task Force Guantanamo headquarters and a holiday reception and lunch with the Puerto Rican Troopers at the Seaside Galley.

Col. David Carrion Baralt, accompanied by his staff and members of the Puerto Rican press, flew to Guantanamo Bay Nov. 22 to pay special recognition to the approximately 300 Puerto Rico National Guard service members serving a year-long deployment with the Joint Task Force.

According to Carrion’s chief of staff, Col. Isabelo Rivera, one of Carrion’s main reasons for spending time with the Troopers is to emphasize to the Troopers the critical value of their work in the JTF as it relates to the Global War on Terror. Rivera also noted that Carrion wants the Puerto Rican press to give the Troopers here the home-town media exposure that their important work warrants.

After a few opening remarks at the town hall meeting, a clearly relaxed Carrion solicited questions from the assembled Troopers. The Troopers sat respectfully silent at first, prompting Carrion to call on several by their first names. Immediately smiles appeared and hands were raised by Troopers eager to air their questions and concerns.

Carrion fielded questions regarding

quality of life issues such as base housing, medical and insurance services and space available travel between Guantanamo Bay and Puerto Rico. He made a point of acknowledging issues raised by directing his chief of staff, and his senior enlisted leader, Command Sergeant Major Gilbert Arocho, to pay particular attention to key concerns.

The adjutant general also listened



Army Col. David Carrion Baralt, Adjutant General of Puerto Rico, shares Thanksgiving greetings with Sgt. Luis Jimenez who is working traffic duty. Carrion spent Thanksgiving Day with members of the Puerto Rico National Guard visiting them at their duty stations, fielding their questions at a “town hall” meeting and dining with them over lunch. (Photo by Army Sgt. Joseph Scozzari)

intently as several officers and senior enlisted Soldiers detailed the significant accomplishments of the Troopers serving in their respective commands. He expressed admiration and appreciation as they noted excellence in weapons qualification, safety practices, force protection and detainee operations.

Carrion made a special effort to share with the Troopers information regarding the significant transformations occurring in the overall U.S. National Guard mission and what that might look like for the Puerto Rico National Guard.

“The Puerto Rico Guard, both Army and Air, is undergoing extensive transformation. We’re going from being a strategic reserve to an operational force, at the same time that we’re transforming from mostly combat to combat support and combat service support. What we’re going to find is that we’re not going to have the same kind of training that we used to have in old days fighting the cold war. What we’re going to find is more training fixed on the threats we’re dealing with currently,” said Carrion.

One question from the JTF deputy commander, Brig. Gen. Cameron Crawford, drew a large smile from Carrion. The question, delivered in Spanish, “When will you have a star pinned to your uniform?” – drew a quick response.

“Next month, on Dec. 6, if all goes well,” he answered.

Carrion was named the Adjutant General of

Puerto Rico on Jan. 1, 2007. He commands a force of over 10,000 Citizen Soldiers and airmen under authority vested in him by Governor Anibal Acevedo Vila of Puerto Rico. Previously, he served in the Puerto Rico National Guard as Staff Judge Advocate and U.S. Property and Fiscal Officer for Puerto Rico.

Joint task forces influence Gitmo missions since 1994

By Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class

William Weinert

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Ever since Marines first landed at Guantanamo Bay in 1898, during the Spanish-American War, the American presence here has been vital to our nation's interests. The Naval Base served many purposes over a long and proud history. The base functioned as a coaling station, a Naval Air Station, a thorn in Fidel Castro's side, and periodically since 1994 the site of various joint task force operations.

In 1994 and 1995, a mass migration of refugees flocked to Guantanamo. Coming from the politically and economically troubled nations of Haiti and Cuba, the refugees took to the seas in old fishing boats and makeshift rafts. They came seeking freedom and hope. They came seeking new beginnings. Many did not know anything about navigation or how to handle the seas and ended up adrift and lost at sea for extended periods of time. The lucky ones made it to shore or were picked up by the Coast Guard and brought to Guantanamo Bay.

The migrants came to Guantanamo to escape socio-political unrest in their own nations. Haitians fled their country soon after the democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was deposed and replaced by the military dictator Raoul Cedras. Late in 1994 Cedras was overthrown and Aristide was put back into power. Aristide allowed many of his people to exit the base and return home.

At the same time, the Cuban economy was facing harsh challenges. Castro opened his doors for residents to leave in an attempt to relax economic pressure. With the massive number of people coming in, the Naval Station received assistance from the Department of Defense. Soon, Guantanamo's first joint task force was formed to facilitate Operations Safe Passage and Save Haven.

The Operation Sea Signal JTF arrived in Guantanamo in May of 1994, at a time when 10,000 Haitian migrants were



This boat, currently on display at the Lighthouse Museum, is one of many that brought Haitian and Cuban refugees to Guantanamo Bay in 1994 and 1995. (Photo by Army Sgt. Jody Metzger)

already encamped at the base. Between July and August of that year, roughly 50,000 Cubans fled Castro's regime for Guantanamo compounding the issue of how to house everyone. At first, the new arrivals were housed in tents at the abandoned air strip on McCalla Airfield. Later, as demand for space grew, more camps were built on the Yatera Seca Golf Course.

Marines were the first to support the task force mission, since they were already an established presence guarding the Cuban/American fence line. They set up the first camps at McCalla Airfield, and within no time members of the other services flooded the quiet Caribbean outpost to help out in the migrant operation.

The influx of Sea Signal JTF personnel created a severe housing shortage that plagued the base. The solution to this problem was to set up different areas for each of the different services to reside. Marines and Air Force personnel lived in tents, Navy Troopers lived in the Gold Hill Barracks, while many Army personnel were given quarters aboard the cruise ship *Brittanis*, which was contracted out by the government and moored in Guantanamo Bay.

While here, JTF personnel carried out duties similar to those of today's JTF

Troopers: guarding camps and performing related tasks. One of these tasks was the construction of Camp X-Ray which was built to house troublesome guests.

When the time came for the migrants to depart, most Haitians were sent back to Haiti since the political environment had calmed down. For Cubans, a lottery system was developed. This system allowed approximately 50 percent of the refugees to enter the U.S., as well as Mexico and other Latin American countries. The remaining refugees were sent back to Cuba. By July 1996, all of the migrants and JTF personnel had departed the base.

Following the departure of the JTF, the base underwent several years of readjustment.

"We went through a period of downsizing," said long time resident and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Program Director Craig Basel. "It was a quiet little community, everyone knew your name. It was the Navy's version of Mayberry."

During this period, many base facilities were closed, buildings were demolished and the base's importance level was reduced to a 'minimum pillar' status. That was until the arrival of a new joint task force in January 2002 – Joint Task

Continued on page 11

Sellen predicts Mountaineers vs. Buckeyes for BCS and Navy over Army

By Army 1st Sgt. Patrick Sellen

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

After talking myself down off the roof of Bulkeley Hall after LSU (my favorite team) lost their second triple overtime game of the season this time to the Arkansas Razorbacks, I sat down and tried to figure out the wacky world of College Football in 2007. This is what I have come up with.

If Missouri (11-1) can beat Oklahoma and West Virginia (10-1) can upend Pittsburgh, they will play for the national championship. If one or both of these falter, there are several teams waiting in the wings to scoop a up a national championship bid.

Ohio State (11-1), whose season is done, sits in the third spot and with only one loss would be the logical choice for a shot. Georgia (10-2), in the fourth spot, has two losses and won't even play for its conference title, yet still has a shot. However, I don't see how a two-loss Georgia team would be better than a two-loss LSU team if the Tigers can win the SEC championship.

Kansas (11-1) sits in the fifth spot and is in a similar situation as Georgia. Although



Ohio State linebacker James Laurinaitis celebrates with fans after beating Michigan, 14-3, in a college football game in Ann Arbor, Nov. 17.

www.espn.com

the Jayhawks only have one loss, they too will be sitting at home watching their conference championship on TV. So again how can you play for the National Championship if you can't even win your own league?

Virginia Tech (10-2) sits in the sixth spot and will try to avenge an earlier season loss to Boston College in the ACC championship game. Tech still has an outside shot, but got their butts handed to them in an early season 48-7 loss to LSU.

LSU has the seventh spot and in my biased opinion still has a shot if the top two teams lose and LSU beats Tennessee convincingly in the SEC championship game. I believe LSU should play Ohio St. in the National championship game.

With all this said, it will likely be the West Virginia Mountaineers and the Ohio St. Buckeyes in the BCS Championship game. One thing is sure – next week at this time we will know for sure the fate all the above-mentioned teams and college bowl schedule.

Now lets move on to the most important game on Saturday and

the college football season for that matter – the 108th meeting between Army and Navy. Navy holds the series lead (51-49-7) over Army and has won five in a row. Navy will also enter this game a huge favorite on the strength of their nation leading rushing attack.

Navy's 357 yards per game rushing average should spell disaster for the Army Black Knights rushing defense that yields 228 yards per game; however, in this rivalry you can throw the stat right out the window, because anything is possible

Army is 3-8 and losers of their last five games. They are led by wide receiver Jeremy Trimble and young quarterback Carson Williams. They hope to end their season on a high note at the expense of the Midshipmen, especially since none of their seniors have ever beaten Navy.

Navy (7-4) and headed to the Poinsettia Bowl still has plenty to play for. Led by quarterback Kaipo-Noa Kaheadku-Enhada, the Midshipmen are closing on their fifth straight winning season (a first) and its seniors could tie the class of 1909 for the most wins ever – 36. All indicators point to a Midshipmen victory here, so I will do my Army brethren a favor and pick Navy to walk away winners.



West Virginia's Steve Slaton carries the ball for a touchdown against Connecticut during the second half, Nov. 24. West Virginia won 66-21.

www.espn.com

Captain's Cup Soccer returns, offers "hooligans" chance to discover roots

Story and photos by Army Sgt. Sarah Stannard

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

There's only a little over a month left in regular season National Football League play this year. I know all you pigskin fans have hunkered down – making deals with your preferred supernatural entity to get your team at least as far as the playoffs. But, lets face it boys, do you really think your team stands any shot against the unconquerable Patriots, who remain unbeaten, even after a determined Eagles team attempts to de-throne the quarterback king, Tom Brady?

I'm not telling you to throw in your proverbial 'terrible towel' all together – just yet anyway. I will tell you, however, that maybe it's time to put a few of your eggs into another basket. But you first have to ask yourself, "Are you ready?"

Are you, as my copy of, "Football and it's Rules" says, "Ready to cheer the players to victory, marvel at their fitness, speed, and skills, urging them to win every tackle for the ball, ready to explode at a powerful shot? Ready for the excitement of flying wingers, overlapping backs, curling corners, slick one-two passing and goals scored with panache? Ready for another moment in a fantasy world?"

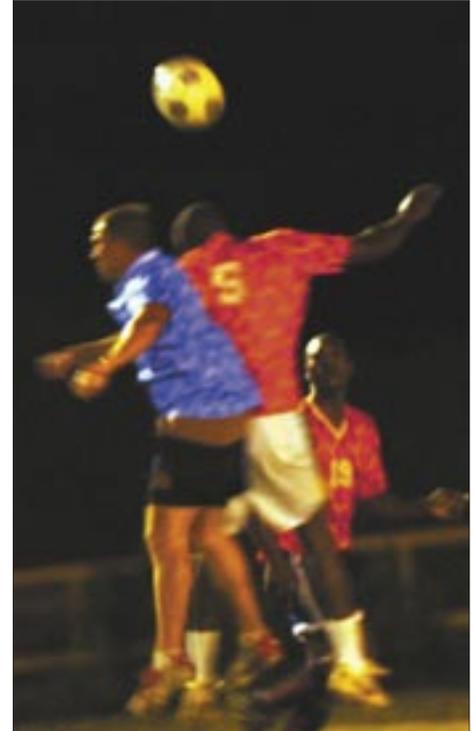
What you really must ask yourself is: "Are you ready for Guantanamo Bay's truly electrifying contest of speed and agility?" I will warn you right out – this is no game suitable for delicate boys. So if you prefer your sport to come with remote control, easy chair and delivery pizza this is not your game. No way. Captain's Cup Men's Soccer comes only with hard metal bleachers, heaps of mosquitoes, concession stand popcorn, and a ton of street cred. Because, let's face it – soccer players are tough – and so are their fans.

Hooliganism (you know, stemming from Hooligan, those most excitable fans) can be traced back to the Middle Ages in

England when, in 1314, Edward II banned soccer, (which then involved a pig's bladder and rival villages) because he believed it may lead to social unrest. I will not debate his clairvoyance here, but despite his best, and not so far-gotten, efforts, the global soccer trend has now not only begun to sweep the United States, but has completely taken over Guantanamo Bay.

Giving you a chance to be part of the time honored soccer-supporting tradition, the league's eight teams will contend each night for glory and laurels, battling through 50 arduous minutes of swift soccer steps. The game, modified a bit for safety (i.e. no slide tackles) promises not to disappoint.

An excited fan from the front of the stands commented, "If these guys are as good as they say they are, they shouldn't need to slide tackle." And don't worry, they are. With an impressive display of talent, this centuries old struggle of man versus man versus the unpredictability of an inanimate object guarantees viewer satisfaction – and a remedy for your football-fan blues.



The undefeated Fire Department (red) takes on 2-4 Sissy Lincoln (blue) Monday, Nov. 27. Lincoln held on for a tough game in which, ultimately, F.D. was victorious 4-1.



Bremcor (purple) shuts out the Pirates (blue) 8-0, in Captain's Cup play Monday night. The Pirates (0-5) were unable to fend off Bremcor (5-2) and ultimately fell with only six shot attempts in the match.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS!

Right down Santa Claus Lane, Guantanamo Bay is illuminated with thousands of tiny lights to guide Ol' St. Nick and his reindeer to where they're expected. Hundreds assembled at two locations, Nov. 25, to celebrate the holidays in grand fashion and escort the old man in. From the front stoop of the Navy Exchange voices rose in Christmas Carol as Santa in tractor-drawn sleigh rolled down Sherman Avenue and from Harbor Lights Hill a bell choir filled the air with a festive melody, while eager children munched on popcorn and cookies. All joined in a countdown, and as "one" was reached Gina Buzby and Kris Kringle flipped the switch that lit up the 50 ft. tall tree and surrounding decorations. Area homes then began to follow suit. All across the base displays of holiday cheer can be enjoyed – from small strands of lights to magnificent illuminated scenes.

Photos by Army Sgt. Jody Metzger, Army Sgt. Sarah Stannard and Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs



Beaches beckon Troopers to fun and sun

www.lonelyplanet.com

By Army Sgt. Sarah Stannard
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

What were you expecting when you got to Guantanamo Bay? There are plenty of land-locked Guantanamo transplants who thought, for sure, they were going to get miles of palm backed, sugar-soft sand rising out of gin clear shadows in the striking blue sea. Not to knock Guantanamo Bay – it certainly has its share of charm – but if you were expecting that ‘authentic’ Caribbean beach experience you may have to take some of your rest and relaxation leave time, and one of many flights off this island, to get it.

Some of the most popular destinations for American travelers, and easy ones to get to from Guantanamo, are the all-inclusive island resorts of Jamaica. Boasting hundreds of hideaways that offer everything from scuba and spa services to golf and fitness clubs, and private beaches, Jamaica provides all the sun and sand one would expect from the British West Indies. The largest English-speaking island in the Caribbean, Jamaica can be as easy as a \$45 or \$90 jump from Gitmo.

Department of Defense (DoD) personnel can fly via ‘space available’ travel into Kingston, Jamaica for \$45 each way and \$90 each way for non-DoD personnel. Space on the flight, which rotates on Wednesdays, can be secured through the Personal Service Detachment’s customer service desk, located in building 760 (give ‘em a call at 4147). If a long weekend is more your speed, you

can easily get Tropical Aviation flights on Fridays and Sundays, which are about triple the price but offer much more flexibility..

Once in Jamaica you will be bombarded with choice resorts, hotels and bed and breakfasts. Andre Gordon, the information, tickets and tours manager here, specializes in helping people navigate the web of tourist traps (he can be reached at 75586, which is also the Taxi number...so don’t worry, you’ve got the right place). He recommends those interested in all-inclusive style resorts look no further than Super Clubs resorts (which can be scoped out at superclubs.com), as they offer great discounts to people employed by the DoD.

One thing you must not forget if you plan on traveling to Jamaica: You MUST have a passport. Luckily, getting one in Guantanamo Bay is pretty darn easy, and a heckuva lot faster than the average eight months it will take you in the states. Fill out the DS-11, easily downloaded online, and take it, along with your birth certificate (or an old passport) and your passport pictures (which you can get at Personalized Services inside the NEX) to the Personnel Support Detachment and in as few as eight weeks you can have your shiny new passport.

If you’re not interested in waiting around for a passport, don’t worry. The U.S. has lots of opportunities for DoD personnel to get their beach-fix. The U.S. Virgin Islands, or ‘America’s Paradise’ as they are sometimes called (sounds like a nice vacation spot), are famous for great salt-water fishing. Because these islands have been ruled

by as many as seven other nations, they will give you a unique cultural experience. You can occasionally get a space available flight from Gitmo to St. Croix, but Mark Veditz, Air Operations Manager here, says these are unreliable. Your best bet may be to hop that steal of a \$45 dollar flight to Jamaica. From there you can get to the Virgin Islands for under \$300.

Florida, too, offers much of the same white sand and mild temperatures of the Caribbean, but might be more interesting if, say, you want your kids to meet you somewhere. Shades of Green is a full service Armed Forces Recreation Center (AFRC) located on the Walt Disney World Resort. This facility is reserved specifically for those employed by the DoD and offers a 20 percent discount to those taking their R&R or block leave from Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Twelve months of deployed time, your DA form 31 and your mobilization orders are all you’ll need for you and your family to enjoy first rate fun in the sun. There are a host of other AFRCs (who all give great deals to deployed Troops) all across the globe, and you can check them all out at armymwr.com/portal/travel/recreationcenter.

Most commanders of deployed units will tell Troopers one thing, “Take your leave.” Take it at home, take it abroad, but just take it. Some people wait a lifetime to get a Caribbean vacation. Why not take the leave you’ve earned and re-charge your batteries in some of the best climates on the globe – for cheap.

One Sailor, 280 Soldiers re-enlist together in Iraq

By Renanah Miles

American Forces Press Service

Two hundred eighty soldiers and one sailor re-enlisted earlier this month in the Al Faw palace, one of Saddam Hussein's former homes.

The palace was seized by 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., in 2003. On the division's 90th birthday Nov. 21, soldiers under its command renewed their commitment to the Army and the war on terror.

When Sgt. Patricia Daniels, of Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Support Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, re-enlisted during Operation Iraqi Freedom III, she didn't know the significance of the date at first. "Last time I was in Iraq, I re-enlisted on the 21st of November, not realizing it was the 3rd ID birthday," she said.

This year, Daniels' choice to recommit to the Army on the division's 90th birthday was intentional. Daniels is deployed to Baghdad again, under the command of the Multi-National Division Center. Still, Daniels, a native of Miami, said the decision is bittersweet. While she loves her job, said, the separation from her husband and four children is hard.

"I like the camaraderie, I like the teamwork," she said of the Army. "I don't like to deploy every other year."

This year, as the ceremony fell the day before Thanksgiving, Daniels had home on her mind. She said Thanksgiving trumps Christmas in her family, and she begged her husband and children to carry on the elaborate food preparation and holiday traditions in her stead.

Despite the sacrificed holiday, her conviction to serve remains unshaken. "I'm re-enlisting for the needs of the Army," she said.

Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of Multinational Division Iraq, officiated over the ceremony.

"Re-enlisting soldiers is one of my favorite duties, one of the greatest honors I think any of us can perform," the general said.



www.savannahnow.com

281 servicemen and women line up in the marble halls of Al Faw palace in Camp Victory, Iraq, as Gen. David H. Petraeus administers the oath of enlistment on Wednesday. The re-enlistment ceremony was part of the 3rd Infantry Division's 90th birthday celebration.

"And it is a true honor to be with you to re-enlist 281 of you at last count, and that does include a 'Sailor of One,'" Petraeus said in a play on the Army motto.

Spc. Heidi McNeely, also with Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, re-enlisted in July. Her husband, food service specialist John McNeely, re-enlisted in a private ceremony last week.

On Nov. 21, John also joined other Multinational Division Center soldiers and affirmed his commitment. Husband and wife, both from New Orleans, joined the Army for similar reasons. "The biggest motivation was stability," McNeely said. "That's what keeps me and him going."

But being deployed simultaneously is a mixed blessing for the couple. "It's nice, ... comforting," McNeely said. "But kind of scary because we have two kids."

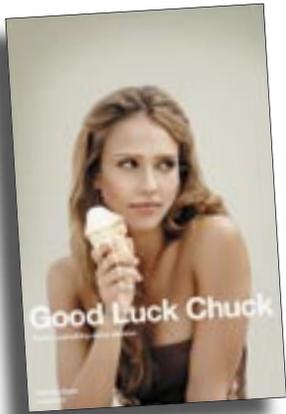
John's parents are taking care of the children while mom and dad are deployed. Their oldest daughter, 8 years old, is aware enough to wonder where her parents are and why they went away.

McNeely said she gave her children a simple explanation. "I told them [it's] because there were people who needed help from us," McNeely explained. "I didn't go any further than that. She didn't question it. The only thing she questioned was if something was going to happen to me."

"I told her that God gave her to me," McNeely continued. "I'm not done taking care of her yet."

Both Daniels and McNeely say options for school are a factor in their decision. Falling a day before Thanksgiving and on the day of the 3rd Infantry Division's birthday, the ceremony came as a poignant reminder of the tradition and duty that lie at the heart of soldiers' choice to serve their country.

"I don't know where this division, this great division, will be when it celebrates one century of service in 2017," Petraeus said. "But I can guarantee you that wherever it is, future 'Dog Face Soldiers' will celebrate the courageous contributions that each of you is making in Iraq today. They will proudly look at each of you the same way you look back at some of your predecessors."



'Good Luck Chuck' left me feeling betrayed

By Army Sgt. Scott Griffin

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Rated: R

Running Time: 96 loooooong minutes

"Good Luck Chuck," directed by Mark Helfrich, is 96 minutes long. I want those 96 minutes of my life back.

The film is not funny. I don't mean not funny as in "Last night's episode of 'The Simpsons' was lame," or "Everybody Loves Raymond" isn't

my cup of tea." I mean not funny like a Jane Fonda comedy. I left the film feeling utterly betrayed.

The premise is that Charlie (Dane Cook – one of my favorite comedians) screwed up a game of spin the bottle with a freaky-deaky goth girl when he was 10 years old (and who knew there were 10-year-old freaky-deaky goth girls back in 1985). So she curses him to be the guy that women dump to find their one true love.

Now a grown man with a successful (if not boring) dental practice and a raunchy best friend (Stu Fogler) working as a successful (if not sexist) plastic surgeon, Charlie begins to learn that he's the target of marriage-crazed women looking for a one-night stand with him. Charlie being a wise and educated man actually believes the curse and takes a chauvinistic glee in exploiting it.

Given the current state of "Wedding Crashers" wannabes, the following scenes of Charlie's debauchery are not just obvious, they're derivative. It's like someone remade a 'Porky's'-era teen comedy and then dumbed it down even further.

This being a boy-meets-girl storyline, Charlie eventually falls for Cam (Jessica Alba), a penguin trainer at a zoo ... or something. I had trouble paying attention because so many scenes were so boring. Again, that nagging feeling of betrayal that rivals only my hatred of the Fonda. Charlie falls for her, realizes the curse prevents him from being with her, then tries to not be with her and then ...

I just got a headache from writing that.

I had high hopes for Jessica Alba, and yet she continues to spurn me with film entries like "Into The Blue" and "Honey." I hear rumblings of a 'Sin City' sequel on the horizon and it can't get here soon enough. Ms. Alba, I beseech thee, please stop breaking my film-loving heart. I can take no more. Also, never try to do slapstick comedy again. All that clumsiness and beat-down just ends up looking mysogynistic.

Cook makes his second film mistake following "Employee Of The Month." He's funniest when doing stand-up comedy that makes the audience feel like they're watching a nervous breakdown of joyous insanity. Trying to smooth over his jagged edges doesn't make him palatable to a wider audience; it just makes him dull and unfunny.

And there you have it. 'Good Luck Chuck' is raunchy and sexist, more than a little mean-spirited and worst of all, *not funny*. Stay for the end credits and you might catch a chuckle or two. Or don't see it at all and avoid all of those feelings of betrayal.

Rating: ★★★★★

WEEKLY WEATHER FORECAST

Weather forecast provided by www.weather.com

Saturday, Dec. 1

Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the low-70's.



Partly Cloudy

Sunrise: 6:19 a.m.

Sunset: 5:21 p.m.

Chance of rain: 20%

Sunday, Dec. 2

Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the low-70's.



Scattered Showers

Sunrise: 6:20 a.m.

Sunset: 5:21 p.m.

Chance of rain: 20%

Monday, Dec. 3

Highs in the high - 80's, and lows in the low-70's.



Partly Cloudy

Sunrise: 6:20 a.m.

Sunset: 5:21 p.m.

Chance of rain: 20%

Tuesday, Dec. 4

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



Sunrise: 6:21 a.m.

Sunset: 5:21 p.m.

Chance of Rain: 10%

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Dec. 5

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



Sunrise: 6:21 a.m.

Sunset: 5:21 p.m.

Chance of Rain: 60%

Scattered Showers

Thursday, Dec. 6

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



Sunrise: 6:22 a.m.

Sunset: 5:21 p.m.

Chance of Rain: 40%

Scattered Showers

Friday, Dec. 7

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



Sunrise: 6:23 a.m.

Sunset: 5:22 p.m.

Chance of Rain: 20%

Partly Cloudy

JTF from page 5

Force Guantanamo.

Following the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, the Global War on Terror ensued. At the onset of the war, the main battleground was Afghanistan. As fighting escalated and many enemy combatants were captured a new challenge arose: what to do with them?

According to Navy Capt. Patrick McCarthy, JTF staff judge advocate, Guantanamo Bay met the government's criteria for establishing a secure defense facility.

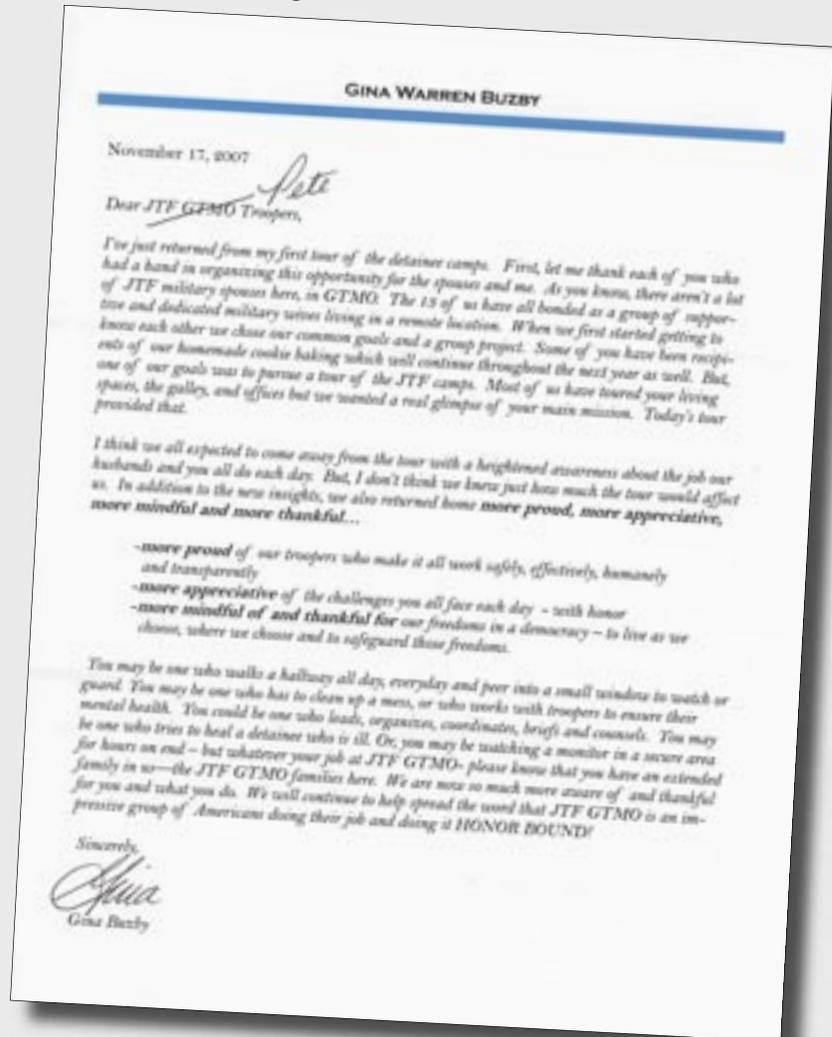
"Guantanamo [Bay] was chosen from among several sites considered because of its proximity to the U.S., the security features it offers, the fact that we exercise exclusive control over the location, and because it was outside of the U.S. or its territories," said McCarthy.

Joint Task Force Guantanamo brought multiple challenges to the quiet Caribbean community but also significant economic benefits.

"We [the Naval Station] were given a healthy chunk of money to support the JTF," said Basel. "It's been fast, always moving and always changing."

The JTF overall has breathed new life and purpose into an otherwise quiet place.

Leaders' wives give thanks to JTF Troopers



Boots on the Ground

What is your favorite holiday movie?

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

Army Spc. Luis
Araujo



"Charlie Brown's
Christmas"

Navy Petty Officer
1st Class Jacob
Richardson



"Reindeer Games"

Marine Cpl. Matt Erbele



"A Christmas Story"

Navy Petty Officer
1st Class Teresa
Weier



"The Grinch," the
cartoon version

Christmas symbols invite us to consider God's gift of love



www.homepages.edu

By Navy Chaplain (Lt. Cmdr.) Daniel McKay

JTF Guantanamo Deputy Chaplain

I don't know if it's just me or not, but it seems Christmas comes around more quickly with the passing of each year. As a young child, I can remember ebbing somewhere between anxious anticipation and exasperated frustration as Christmas ever so slowly, painstakingly, inched its way, day-by-day, upward on the calendar. It felt as if time had a mind of its own, deliberately putting off my enjoyment of what seemed to me the most wondrous and joyous time of the whole year.

After all, with the exception of Easter, is there a more glorious season? Think of it: in the dead of winter there appears this beautiful celebration of God's love, literally, throughout the entire world. There's the singing of choirs and carolers – giving voice to what is surely, without question, some of the most beautiful music ever created. There are the varied light displays – running the rainbow's entire spectrum, demonstrating human ingenuity and creativity like little else can or does. There's the amazement in children's eyes – responding, along with their grown up mentors, in faith to the story of God's love all over again or, perhaps, for the very first time. It seems as if everything and everyone is under a marvelous spell: a spell that, unfortunately, comes but once a year and lasts all too briefly.

Yet, for those of faith, deeply personal and genuine faith, the symbols of the season are enjoyed all year and all life long – they just take on a special sparkle, significance, and meaning during the Christmas season. Consider the meaning of the season's symbols: **stars**: as on the first Christmas, they still guide the

wise to their Creator; **candles**: repelling the darkness, they call us to receive God's Light; **evergreen trees**: through their color and upward motion, they point us to the Source and Sustainer of life; and **wrapped gifts**: remind us that God's gift of love is freely given, but, as with all other gifts, it cannot have its full and desired effect until received, unwrapped, and enjoyed by us – personally and collectively.

Are you ready for Christmas, then? You are, if you'll take to heart the meaning of the season's symbols and the words of Henry Van Dyke's poem entitled "Are You Willing?"

Are you willing —

to stoop down and consider the needs and desires of
little children;

to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who
are growing old;

to stop asking how much your friends love you, and to
ask yourself whether you love them enough;

to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear
on their hearts;

to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less
smoke, and to carry it in front so that your
shadow will fall behind you;

to make a grave for your ugly thoughts and a garden
for your kindly feelings, with the gate open?

Are you willing to do these things for a day? Then you are ready to keep Christmas!

Senior Trooper of the Quarter listens and leads

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Jody Metzger

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

It is a special honor to be regarded by one's colleagues as a leader. It is with this particular consideration that Joint Task Force Guantanamo set aside special recognition for a Trooper who excels in guiding and supporting his troops.

Coast Guard Port Securityman 1st Class Joseph Harwell, 308th Port Security Unit, was named JTF Senior Trooper of the Quarter Nov. 13. Harwell is recognized as an exemplary Trooper serving with honor and distinction.

Harwell grew up in Gulfport, Miss. with his parents and one brother. He, like many other young men, loved the outdoors, whether fishing, hunting or just escaping into woods. It was there that he developed his profound sense of pride in America's freedoms.

This deep commitment to his country motivated Harwell to join the 308th PSU, after the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001.

"I wanted to do my part to serve my country to prevent attacks on American soil," said Harwell.

Within five years of joining the Coast Guard, he attained the rank of Petty Officer 1st Class, proving to himself and to others that hard work pays off. It didn't take long before other members recognized Harwell for his skills as a leader. He quickly became someone his shipmates could trust.

"Being a leader," says Harwell, "is all about listening to your Troops, being there for them and having the answers they need."

Although the support Harwell has shown the 308th has been nothing short of stellar, he is grateful for the opportunities he has received as a Coast Guard member.

"The Coast Guard has changed my life by giving me confidence to learn and the experience of new things. It has given me discipline that otherwise I would not have had the opportunity to learn," he said.

Since joining the Coast Guard, Harwell has participated in numerous training missions and also deployed to Kuwait for an Operation Iraqi Freedom rotation.

"People do not realize how good we have it here. In Kuwait it was a lot of long hours.

"I was drawn to the PSU due to the opportunity



to travel to various locations for training as well as deployments. With the Coast Guard you will more than likely be deployed along a coast somewhere, which is always better than a desert," said Harwell.

Harwell felt both honored and relieved when he first learned he had been recognized as JTF Senior Trooper of the Quarter.

"It took a lot," said Harwell. "I stood in front of a panel of six judges. It's probably the most nervous I have been in a long time. When I learned that I had won, I could not help feeling relieved that the studying and preparation for the board was over and I was excited that all my efforts had paid off."

Harwell looks forward to a continuing future in the Coast Guard. He is nearing completion of an Associate's degree and hopes one day to be selected as a reserve officer candidate.

AROUND THE JTF

Photos by Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Billings

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

◀ **Army Sgt. Julio A. Pagan-Laboy of C Company, 1st Battalion, 65th Infantry Brigade receives the Joint Service Achievement Medal and the Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal Nov. 27 at the Intelligence Operation Facility.**

▼ **Army and Navy personnel gathered Nov. 28 at Camp Delta to promote unity in advance of Saturday's Army-Navy game. The Army-Navy game is an annual tradition, pitting the football teams of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. against United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md.**



▲ **Petty officers frocked Nov. 28 assemble at the Camp Buckley Lyceum. Frocking is a Navy tradition in which officers or non-commissioned officers wear the rank insignia of the grade they are being promoted to for a period of time before they are actually promoted.**