

THE WIRE

A News Magazine



Hail New Mexico, Farewell Puerto Rico
Guantanamo Art Exhibit
Cuban-American Friendship Day

There is no free ride



By Army Sgt. Maj. John Jenson
JTF Camp Commandant

Have you ever gotten behind one of those big tractor trailer trucks on the highway? You crawl up behind it and “draft” just behind the “Yosemite Sam” mud flaps and you let the tractor trailer plow ahead so you can save gallons of gas? Well, if you have you’re fooling yourself! There is no such thing as a free-ride and to draft behind one of these big trucks is almost suicidal, because you can never ever see what’s in front of it or where it’s going, and if he slams on his brakes you’ll be eating those mud flaps!

Aerodynamic laws clearly show that this “drafting” creates a vacuum of air molecules that creates low pressure in the rear of the truck that encircles your car. In order to benefit from this you must have your front bumper touching or at least two-four inches from the trucks’ rear bumper, much like a single train. Race cars line up nose-to-tail to benefit from this; however each car pushes the one in front, except the leader who enjoys a freshly plowed path through the air.

Well, what about fuel savings? Aeronautic researchers estimate that if your car gets 25 miles per gallon, you might save three ounces of gas in a 50-mile drafting session. In reality, many people end up behind trucks because they’re free-loaders or they’re afraid to pass!

My advice is to pass the truck! Use your own energy and plow ahead. Get

out in front of that big old truck and see what’s in front of you, you’ll be surprised what’s out there. As I get ready to depart, I want to acknowledge and congratulate those Troopers who were not afraid to make the decision to “pass.” These are the Troopers whose contributions will leave an everlasting impression on this mission as well as future units. These Troopers were not satisfied with just coasting behind somebody, they actually wanted to get out in front and see what was in front of them, and as they passed they carved out their own destiny. It was refreshing to see such genuine and sincere concern that some Troopers applied as they tackled their jobs. These Troopers applied themselves diligently to their jobs and many improved the systems that were handed off to them. As they got to their final destination they could feel the self satisfaction that comes from when you do something that requires you to use your own will power, your own desire and more importantly your own inner drive and momentum.

The “drifters” left no impression, because they never passed. They were just content to “coast” along for the free ride. They used somebody else’s momentum and fuel to get them to their destination. They were blinded throughout the journey and never saw the clear path that was in front of them. The sad part is that they actually never saved any “fuel” by using somebody else’s momentum because they were always in the back overshadowed by the one that was out in front of them leading the way.

The point is that in order to be successful there must be continuous improvement. To be complacent is to be satisfied with reality. Silence is acknowledgement. To never, ever say anything or never do anything means that you are satisfied. To stay behind that big ole truck and use the truck’s momentum to catch a free ride is complacency, but to pass it and see what is in front of it is called initiative! And as for the free-loaders I say “there is no free ride”!

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COVER:

The Puerto Rico National Guard 92nd Separate Infantry Battalion’s 1st Sgt. Jose DeJesus, Sgt. Major John Jenson, Maj. Rolando Vargas stand beside their monument located in the Camp America graveyard erected in their final days in Guantanamo. (Photo by 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.

Historic New Mexico National Guard joins JTF

By Army Sgt. Scott Griffin

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The New Mexico National Guard has a unique history. Existing under several names and three different flags, the NMARNG dates back to the formation of the Spanish Colonial Militia on April 30, 1598. Juan de Onate's colonization expedition crossed the Rio Grande in the vicinity of present-day Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. With no Spanish soldiers attached to the expedition, the colonists themselves assumed dual roles of soldier and colonist.

By the early 1700s, the settlement had grown into the need for local commanders of the citizen-soldiers who could be mustered by the Governor and provide his own arms and mount for defense.

This system remained in place until 1846, when the Kearney Code was enacted to provide a system of law. The territorial Legislature created the office of Adjutant General in 1852, placing the militia under its jurisdiction.

By 1898, the New Mexico Guardsmen were serving with Teddy Roosevelt's "Rough Riders" and the legendary charge of San Juan Hill. After the war with Spain, NMARNG units pursued Pancho Villa on the Mexican border.

World War I found the NMARNG activated into Federal Service with the 40th Infantry Division in France. A Field Artillery Battery was assigned to the 41st Division, taking part in the actions at Champagne-Marne, Alsne-Marne and Meuse-Argonne.

World War II was a time of great distinction for the New Mexico National Guard. Coastal Artillery Soldiers served throughout the Philippine Campaign, to include surviving the horrific Bataan Death March. The 120th Engineers served with the 45th Infantry Division throughout Italy and into the Rhineland. The 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion served with the 34th "Red Bull" Division in Italy,



Army 1st Sgt. Jose DeJesus of the Puerto Rico National Guard passes the guide-on to his counterpart Army 1st Sgt. Alfred A. Gomez of the New Mexico National Guard Wednesday. The year long journey is drawing to a close for one group, while it just begins for the other. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert)

racking up more than sixty bronze stars and many other commendations.

The Korean Conflict caused the activation of multiple New Mexico individuals, but no entire unit saw action. However, New Mexico units provided individual members as replacements to actively engaged units.

The Vietnam Conflict saw a repeat of the Korean pattern. While no units were activated, many New Mexico Guardmembers volunteered for duty.

The decades passed and the New Mexico National Guard continued to modernize and train to their established high standards. During these years, many state activations occurred for various events. In November of 1990, four New Mexico units federalized in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm, serving stateside with distinction.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the New Mexico National Guard has deployed over 4,000 personnel in support of the Global War on Terror. NMNG units

have mobilized stateside in support of Operation Noble Eagle and in Afghanistan and Iraq in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The 111th Combat Support Brigade is the latest to join these efforts and assuming their duties as the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

At the Yellow Ribbon Ceremony for the 111th, Brig. Gen. Zanetti, ground forces commander of the New Mexico National Guard, prepared the Soldiers for their deployment to Guantanamo. "You are prepared for this politically charged, strategically important mission," Zanetti said. "I know that you will exercise exceptional judgment and discernment and I know you will perform to the highest degrees of integrity and honor."

Maj. Kenneth Nava, public affairs officer for the New Mexico National Guard, provided information for this article.

Puerto Rico 92nd bid farewell to Guantanamo



flickr.com image

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

From the time that I first arrived here nearly six months ago, I've been honored to both know and befriend a group of people that has done much to shape my Guantanamo experience. This group has identified themselves as hard-working individuals who know how to get the job done, who serve as great co-workers and off-duty friends. These diligent individuals that have been such a presence here are the fine Troopers from the 92nd Separate Infantry Brigade of the Puerto Rico National Guard.

Management theorist Peter Drucker once said, "Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work." Since the unit's arrival, over a year ago, they have brought their good intentions to fruition through the hard work they have generated.

The 92nd has brought their work ethic to all aspects of their deployment which for that past year has been fulfilling all duties and responsibilities of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company. In undertaking HHC tasks, Troopers from the 92nd have served as administration specialists, chaplain's assistants, information technology specialists, duty drivers and any other job the Joint Task Force has required of them.

The unit's story all started over a year ago as a multitude of

soldiers from the Puerto Rico National Guard came together at Ft. Lewis, Wash., to prepare for a mission that was not entirely clear to them. Some of the members had known each other for years while many others were just meeting for the first time. At Ft. Lewis, they formed a cohesive unit and learned the skills necessary for the coming mission with Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

Throughout their time here the 92nd has shown their excellence, achieving great heights that had never before been seen in Guantanamo.

"One of our greatest accomplishments has been the Inspector General's inspection with excellent marks for the first time in Guantanamo's history," said HHC commander Maj. Rolando Vargas.

The unit's leadership is currently working with all their dedication to bring their replacements, from the New Mexico National Guard, up to speed on the mission and how to accomplish it as well as they did.

"Right now our goal is to leave them set up for success. Our predecessors did it for us and we're doing it for them," said Sgt. Maj. John Jensen.

The 92nd has left an indelible mark on all that have come their way. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to befriend

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474th engineers construct Expeditionary Legal Complex



Airmen from the 474th Civil Engineering Squadron relax at the Red Bull Lounge, a facility they built themselves in Camp Justice that features pool and foosball tables, a piano and a quiet sitting area.

Story and photo by Army Spc. Shanita Simmons

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

When most Troopers arrive in Guantanamo Bay, they are typically assigned to living quarters designed to accommodate their needs during the deployment. However, Airmen attached to the 474th Civil Engineering Squadron saw a different reality as they were led to an abandoned airfield that would soon become their home.

With luggage in tow and mission clearly defined, Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Bellrose, a civil engineer with the 474th, arrived here in July 2007 with a six-member forwarding party who began setting up a BEAR base soon after their feet hit Cuban soil. Although many would have become dismayed if given such a task, Airmen assigned to the 474th saw this challenge as an opportunity to use the many skills and talents they have acquired as civil engineers.

“Our squadron is tasked with setting up Basic Expeditionary Airfield Resources program camps, which consist of taking an area where we would want to put a base, clearing it off and making it able to sustain aircraft. Then, we will fill in the infrastructures such as water and sewage,” said Bellrose. “Our unit consists of carpenters, electricians, plumbers, heating and electric technicians, etcetera – all trained to set up these base expeditionary airfield resources.”

Bellrose mentioned that their mission was to first set up the BEAR camp called Camp Justice and then to construct the Expeditionary Legal Complex. When Airmen assigned to the 474th first arrived, most of the amenities they needed were boxed up in containers that had to be opened and unloaded. Everything from the tents, which would become their shelter, to the washers and dryers that are a necessity in a hot and humid environment, had to be put together and installed. As Airmen from six different states continued to arrive to augment the squadron, they slowly developed a “tent city” that they now call their “home away from home”.

“We lived in tents called Alaskans that are sized to billet twelve people. Currently there are six per tent based on the size of the group,” said Bellrose. “We are self contained. We have our own generating plants, billets, latrines, laundry mats, and shower and shave units. We have pretty much all that we need out here.”

When an observer strolls through Camp Justice, they notice a sea of tan colored tents that all bear the painted logo of a bull on each door. The majority of the tents are used to house those assigned to the 474th, however some tents are designated as latrines and laundry facilities. Since the tents are aligned side

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Superbowl has nation's attention



AP photo



AP photo

By Army 1st Sgt. Patrick Sellen

JTF-Guantanamo Public Affairs

It's time for the biggest Sunday afternoon of the NFL season, all eyes will be on the University of Phoenix stadium in Arizona for Superbowl XLII. The game will feature the New England Patriots who could be the best team of all time against the surprise team from the NFC, the New York Giants. The game is a rematch of a week 17 match up that the Patriots had to comeback from 12 down in the third quarter to pull out the win 38-35. I will give you all a little bit of insight on the game and my Superbowl pick.

The New England Patriots come into this game with an astounding 18-0 record and winners of three of the last six Superbowls, the last coming in 2005. The Patriots are beaming with confidence and have a ton of veteran leadership, but the thing that amazes me about this team is that no matter who is on the field for them they always seem to

step up. Take Kevin Faulk for example. He is not the starting running back but always seems to come through on that crucial third down play. This team is all about team accomplishments and each other. They will do whatever it takes to win. The Patriots have arguably the best quarterback in the league in Tom Brady, that always seems to rise to the occasion and will try to earn his fourth championship ring. The Patriots defense has given up a playoff low 16 points per game.

The New York Giants come into this game as hot as Guantanamo asphalt in the dead of summer. After their week 17 match-up with the Patriots, the Giants have been revitalized as a new football team and have a tremendous amount of life and belief that they can beat anyone. The Giants quest to be the Superbowl champs started with convincing wins over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Dallas Cowboys. Two weeks ago, they pulled off a giant upset over the

Green Bay Packers at the frozen tundra of Lambeau Field. The Giants have been led by the mistake-free play of their quarterback Eli Manning, who has thrown five touchdowns and no interceptions in the three playoff games. The defense has given opposing quarterbacks fits and has held teams to an average of 17 points per game.

It has been said that defenses win championships and these two teams have the lowest points against totals in the playoffs. Both teams bring a lot of pressure and have good play in their defensive back field. So I see the defense as a wash, leaving Brady and the Pats offense against Eli Manning and the Giants offense. I believe both teams have a decent running game, so this game will be won in the air. I just don't believe that Manning will be able to rise to the occasion; furthermore, Brady lives for moments like this and has plenty of weapons surrounding him. Patriots roll to their 4th Superbowl victory 28-17.



VS.

By Army Staff Sgt. Jerry Rushing
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

“Take me out to the ball game... Take me out to the crowd... Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jacks...”

With its catchy melody, this song is universally known as a reminder of sitting at a ballpark on a sunny day cheering with friends and family for your favorite ball team or just the memories of playing in a little league game for the championship.

It is now 2008 and if you look, there is more softball being played than baseball in towns and cities all over the states, including at Guantanamo. This year, men’s baseball here only had three teams going for the Captain’s Cup. The number has remained the same with three teams for the last two seasons. Softball, on the other hand, started this week and the numbers are up. Twelve men’s teams are vying for the Captains’ Cup, two more than last year. There are four women’s teams playing slow pitch this year with a possibility of three more for a fast pitch league.

Let’s look at some of the pros and cons of baseball vs. softball. One con of baseball is that it is always considered to

be a defensive game, while softball has always been a hitter’s game. A baseball is harder to hit because of the fact that the ball is coming in at 80 or 90 mph compared to hitting a high arcing softball that is going no more than five mph. Just take into account the size of the balls used; a softball is twice the size of a baseball.

After a hard day at work there is nothing like going to get in an extra work out before bedtime. In softball that can happen because each game is only 55 minutes compared to a baseball game that can go on for over two hours. Think about it: the less time a person stands outside, the less chance of getting bit by the famous Guantanamo mosquitos and no-see’ums.

Some of the pros for baseball are that base runners are allowed to take a lead off of base and can even steal a base. In softball, the runner is stuck on the bag until the crack of the bat – there is no stealing.

The larger ball and the rule of requiring underhand pitching might give the impression that the batter in softball enjoys more advantages than in baseball. Precisely the opposite is true. The bat is narrower; and unless the larger ball is hit almost

dead center, an under hit “pop-up” or an overtopped weak “dribbler” is usually the result. So, in actuality it’s easier to get a solid hit in baseball.

Fast pitch softball has the same rules as slow pitch, except for a few differences. There is bunting in fast pitch, runners can steal bases after the ball has crossed home plate, and there are only nine players on the field instead of 10.

The residents of Guantanamo have spoken and it looks like softball takes it over baseball in a landslide. Since more and more people are playing softball, the game has even developed into fast pitch. The first step was taken Saturday when Morale, Welfare, and Recreation hosted a clinic to see if there’s interest for a women’s fast pitch softball league.

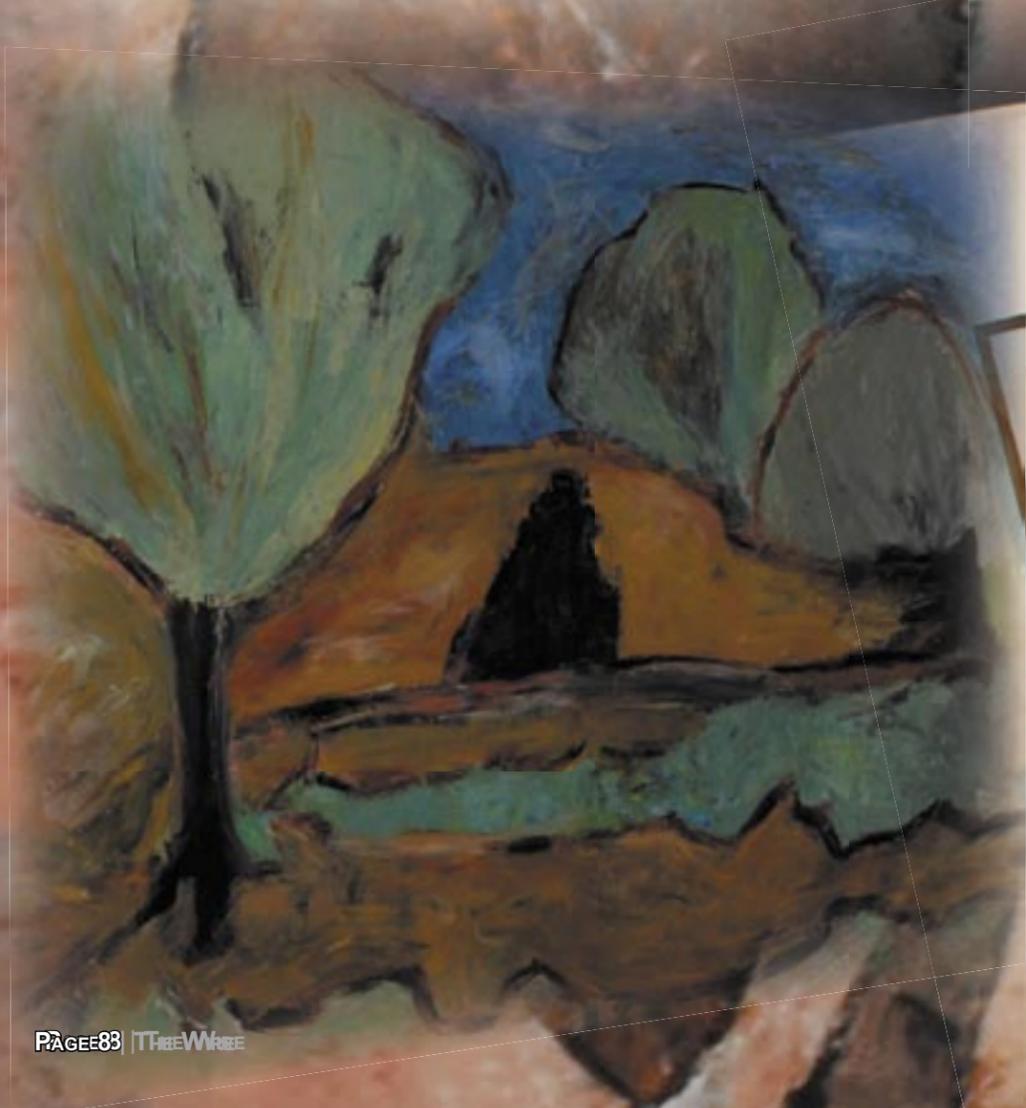
“We’re hoping to get at least enough players together to form a league with two or three fast pitch softball teams,” said MWR Fitness Director Karissa Sandstrom.

If the softball trend continues on this course, you will probably see leagues forming for both men and women in fast pitch as well as keeping the slow pitch leagues.

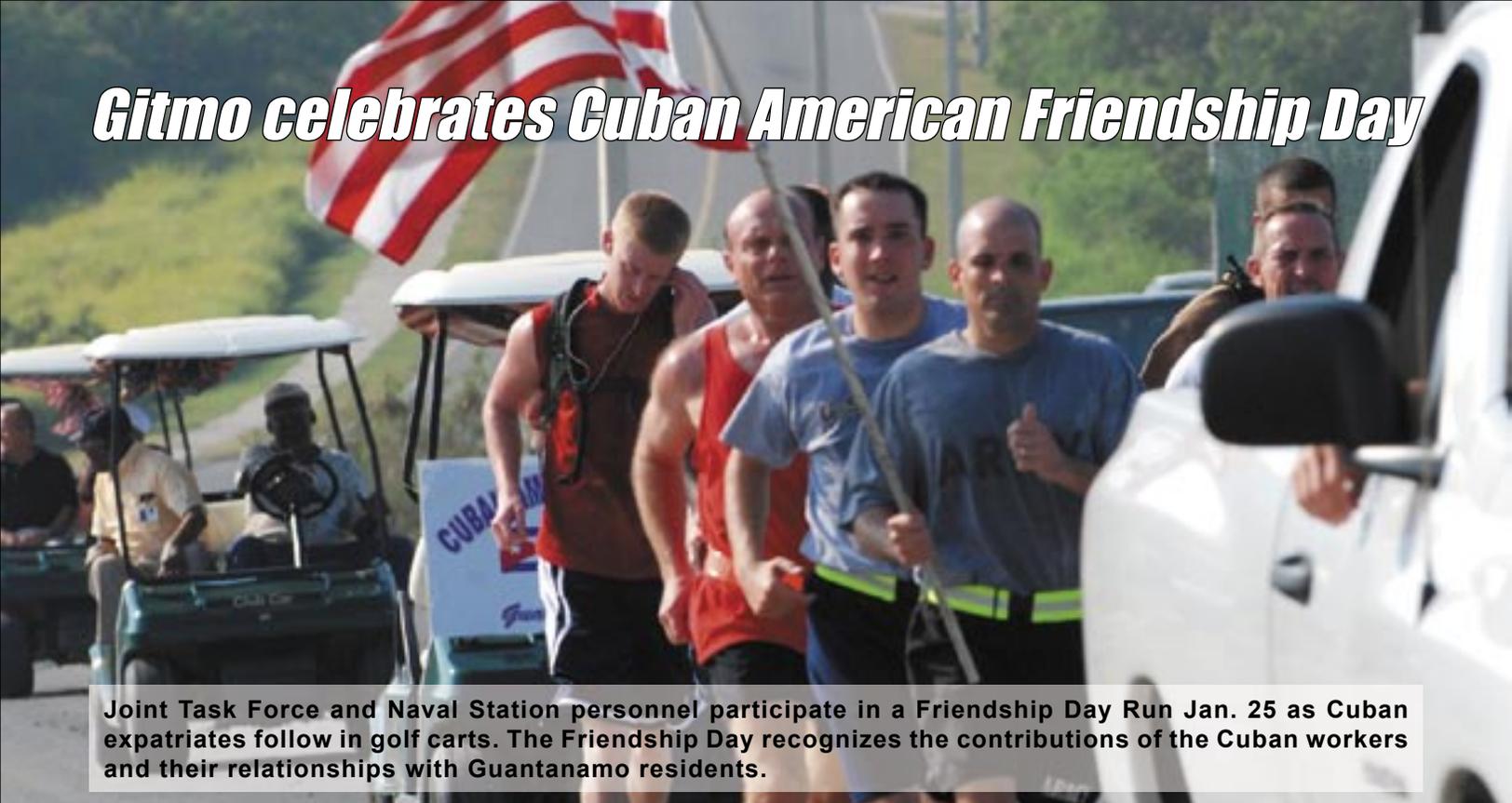
"A little bit of everything"



Guantanamo Bay held an art exhibit at the Navy Exchange Atrium over the weekend. An official ceremony, hosted by Joint Task Force Guantanamo's commander, Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, was held for dozens of Guantanamo residents. Live music was played as five artists were spotlighted for the showcase, displaying an array of works from fantasy pieces to Guantanamo landscapes to some truly beautiful abstract interpretations of Sardinian art and architecture. (Photos by Army Sgt. Scott Griffin)



Gitmo celebrates Cuban American Friendship Day



Joint Task Force and Naval Station personnel participate in a Friendship Day Run Jan. 25 as Cuban expatriates follow in golf carts. The Friendship Day recognizes the contributions of the Cuban workers and their relationships with Guantanamo residents.

Story and photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Cheryl Dilgard

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Friends and colleagues got together on Friday, Jan. 25 to celebrate the 39th annual Cuban American Friendship day. Established in by Navy Admiral J.B.Hildreth, the Cuban American Friendship Day recognizes the contributions of the Cuban workers and their mutual friendship.

The importance of the Cuban contribution and friendship is just as important today as it was in 1969. The tradition of the Cuban American Friendship Day continued with a day of festivities.

The day started off with a formation run beginning at the Northeast Gate where forty participants began a six-mile run. The course beginning at the Northeast gate, continuing down Sherman Avenue past the NEX, and then wandering past the library and behind Cuzco for a finish at the Windjammer. The Cubans joined the runners near the NEX and followed behind them as they crossed the finish line. Although the heat slowed down a few runners, victory and a sense of accomplishment sustained the faithful few who completed the long charge.

According to Army Sgt. Jody Metzger “The run was a real challenge with the heat but I am glad I did it, I felt like I have really accomplished something”

Following the run, a luncheon honoring the Cubans was held at the Windjammer. Authentic Cuban food was served to attendees giving them a ‘taste of Cuba’. Capt. Mark Leary, the commanding officer of U.S. Naval Base

Guantanamo Bay introduced the guest speaker. The guest speaker, Capt. Robert Buehn, former commanding officer of U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay from May 2000 until March of 2003, spoke of the importance of the base and its mission as well as the significance of the friendship between Cuba and the United States.

Buehn’s remarks will followed by an awards ceremony recognizing Cubans and their supporters for hard work and dedication. Among the awards given out was the passing down of the walking stick. Mr. Harry Henry, the eldest commuter was the recipient of the stick. This tradition is specific to the Cubans here at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station. The tradition began years ago when some of the commuters decided to play a joke on an elder commuter and gave him a walking stick. When that commuter retired, he passed the walking stick on to the next senior commuter, creating the tradition of passing down the walking stick.

The events concluded with entertainment provided by the students from the W.T. Sampson schools. Students performed original Cuban Dances to Cuban music. Dancing was followed by Giliana Pagan singing, which prompted the attendees of the event to begin dancing.

“The event gave a taste of the Cuban culture and got the kids involved” according to Army Spc. Karen Simmons a member of the JTF and a volunteer with the Cuban American Friendship Day events. Simmons continued “Being a closed base we don’t get much of a chance to experience the Cuban culture, and this event gave participants a chance to be involved in the Cuban cultural experience.

Mardi Gras comes to Gitmo



By Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class
Cheryl Dilgard

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Mardi Gras (French for Fat-Tuesday) actually has its roots in the Catholic Church. Surprised? Don't be. The idea behind Mardi Gras is to indulge in all the bad things or 'sin' before Lent, which begins the following day.

When Ancient Rome embraced Christianity, the Church decided to incorporate the Roman tradition of Lupercalia, a carnival-like atmosphere celebrated by the masses. Carnival was a time of uninhibited entertainment and merriment, usually accompanied by drink, dance and lascivious behavior. Participants of the carnival events often wore masks to disguise their appearance and add to their lack of inhibitions.

The French brought Mardi Gras to America in 1699 with the explorer Iberville. When the gulf-coast came under Spanish rule, the conservative Spanish banned the celebration. The Louisiana Purchase brought the American flag, but it wasn't until 1823 that the Creole people convinced the governor to legalize the masked festival.

The first Mardi Gras parade in the United States was in 1837. The parade became so violent in the 1840's and 50's that the press was calling for an end to the parade and the event. In 1857 six men, known as the Comus, who had good a reputation for organizing parades in Mobile, Ala., added beauty and a sense of security and organization to the parade and the ball that followed.

During the first World War and the pandemic flu outbreak of 1918-1919 the festival was cancelled, and – although reinstated – it struggled through the lean times of the depression. Just as Mardi Gras began to prosper again, WWII broke out and festivities were once again put on hold. However, by 1949 Louis Armstrong was king of the parade and on the cover of "Time" magazine.

The festival and series of parades grew over the next few decades. The 1970's saw a ban of parading in the French Quarter, ending a 117 year tradition. By the end of the 1980's Jefferson Parish saw crowds of over 600,000 for their Mardi Gras parades.

The traditional Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans has grown in notoriety and

popularity in the past two decades, known as much now for lascivious behavior as the Roman festivals of old. The festival is generally known as an opportunity to let one's hair down and be completely uninhibited in a generally public setting. The time of festivities has grown so much that even hurricane Katrina couldn't stop the parade. In the wake of the 2005 hurricane, the February 2006 Mardi Gras parade did go on, although not as populated as in the past it still proceeded down streets throughout the Gulf Coast.

This year – with the Louisiana Army National Guard here – Gitmo will have their first Mardi Gras parade February 9, at 8 p.m. The parade will run from the Bayview to O'Kelly's Irish Pub then back to the Bayview. The Bayview will also be hosting a Mardi Gras celebration prior to the parade, serving traditional New Orleans cuisine. So pull out your best and brightest in Mardi Gras garb, wear your mask, your beads, and a crown. Just remember it's a small island and you will have to see these people the next day, so don't get too crazy out there: this ain't Rome ... or New Orleans.

Continued from page 4

some of their Troopers have gotten a wonderful perspective into the culture and tradition of Puerto Rico, which we otherwise may never have known.

"I'm honored and glad that we came down," said 1st Sgt. Jose DeJesus as he looked back on his time here. "People tend to forget how important this mission is, but we've shown that some good things have been done here."

Jensen adds "We've taken what was given to us and we've made it better. When we do the hand off, they're going to be able to improve it more."

Now, after more than a year away from their families, most are looking forward to a calmer life, a more normal life, a life

back home with their families that they've missed so much. But for all of us who had the pleasure to know some of the 92nd's finest, now consider them family and they will be missed. Through their hard work, dedication and constant striving for excellence the 92nd SIB has left their mark on Guantanamo as a great group of individuals.

"I just want to tell them to keep going with the project we have, keep going with the tasks and to do better than we did. That's the challenge," Vargas said. "It has been nice to be here but it's going to be great to get back home."

The unit's slogan, "a lo que vinimos (to accomplish the mission we are called on to do)," sums up the their time in Guantanamo. They gave their greatest effort in what they came to do.



The Mist is just kinda average, nothing special

By Army Sgt. Scott Griffin

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Rated: R

Running Time: 125 minutes

Disclaimer: "The Mist" is not really about mist. Sure, the setting is smoky and stuff, and yeah, there are horrible creatures floating around in it, but the movie is not about mist. I feel more than a little cheated. Here I was, expecting a movie about fog and smoke and well ... mist ... and I end up watching this

"The Punisher" Jane starring, this should have been an easy win. Instead, someone hit the 'fail' button and dropped in some pretty clichéd elements. First off, the film is shot in the now-overused pseudo-documentary style that's been used to death in so many other flicks. As much as I enjoyed the handheld camera style in the Bourne series, I find myself longing for the classic compositions of cinematographers like Jordan Cronenweth, a cameraman who could really paint with light.

Also, with few exceptions, there is no music. I kind of dug that. The Coen Bros. used this to great effect recently in "No Country For Old Men," and it's effectively gripping here. But when there is music, it's too over-the-top. That gets the 'epic fail' button.

I did get a few laughs out of Marcia Gay-Harden's character, but that's just my warped perspective. Keep in mind that I still dress up as Batman for Halloween and I'm over 30.

I'm probably bashing this film more than I should, but I am a big fan of Darabont and I expected, well ... more. I expected better. It's not that the film isn't entertaining or interesting, it's just that I was disappointed in it falling short of the high standard that Darabont usually hits.

I'll play nice and give this one three stars. That's out of five, though, so it's basically a C-rating and that's ... average.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Frank Darabont number about the monsters inside all of us.

The long and short is this: David and his son Billy are among a group of people (a.k.a. victims) trapped in a supermarket that becomes surrounded by a bizarro mist. Otherworldly monsters begin preying on the folks trapped inside. Survival means working together, so of course, most folks don't. We get to see cowardice, reason, bravery, logic and ultimately ... man's inhumanity to his fellow man.

I just kept thinking to myself, "Didn't "Sunshine" tackle these same themes better?"

Darabont, director of "The Shawshank Redemption," is an excellent filmmaker and more than capable of creating a gripping thriller. With Thomas 'I was the only good part of

WEEKLY WEATHER FORECAST <small>Weather forecast provided by www.weather.com</small>			
<p>Saturday, Feb. 2</p> <p>Highs in the low - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Sunrise: 6:36 a.m. Sunset: 5:53 p.m. Chance of rain: 20%</p>	<p>Sunday, Feb. 3</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Sunrise: 6:35 a.m. Sunset: 5:54 p.m. Chance of rain: 20%</p>	<p>Monday, Feb. 4</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Sunrise: 6:35 a.m. Sunset: 5:54 p.m. Chance of rain: 20%</p>	
<p>Tuesday, Feb. 5</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Sunrise: 6:35 a.m. Sunset: 5:55 p.m. Chance of Rain: 20%</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p>	<p>Wednesday, Feb. 6</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Sunrise: 6:34 a.m. Sunset: 5:56 p.m. Chance of Rain: 10%</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p>	<p>Thursday, Feb. 7</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Sunrise: 6:34 a.m. Sunset: 5:56 p.m. Chance of Rain: 30%</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p>	<p>Friday, Feb. 8</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Sunrise: 6:34 a.m. Sunset: 5:57 p.m. Chance of Rain: 30%</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p>

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by side on an airfield tarmac, the environment lacks the trees and colorful vegetation needed to add a little flare. What the exterior of the tents lack in appearance is made up for in the character you see once you take a peep inside.

Once the work day ends in Camp Justice, many assigned to the 474th travel to the galley for dinner while others retreat to their respective tents for a quiet night. Those seeking entertainment need not travel to a liberty center or the Tiki bar thanks to a group of innovative Airmen.

474th Troopers can walk a few yards to their own Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) tent and enjoy the comforts of home as they watch football games and movies on a 60-inch big screen television.

What has become one of the most well-known fixtures in Camp Justice is the Red Bull Lounge, which is described as a place where Airmen can let their hair down, get a drink or just hang out with friends.

Senior Airman Kevin Green, a structural engineer technician with the 474th, said members of his unit built the Red Bull Lounge from the ground up to help boost morale. However, the lounge has slowly become a hang out that is patronized by individuals from other units.

"The Red Bull lounge is a place we go to relax. One day the guys said we needed somewhere to relax, and they got together to build it on their own time," said Green.

Anyone who has had the privilege of being invited

to the Red Bull lounge will quickly appreciate the skill and craftsmanship of the Airmen who designed it. The tent includes a bar with stools where Airmen can have a drink or just talk with friend. There is also a pool and foosball table for those competitive individuals and a piano for those who can carry a tune. The lounge even has a cozy sitting area for anyone looking for a quite place to read a book.

Air Force Tech Sgt. Daniel May, a structural engineer with the 474th, added that "tent city" life allowed squadron members to maintain the close interactions with each other that permitted them to grow both personally and professionally.

"An engineering squadron includes individuals with a variety of skill sets and this deployment has been a great opportunity to see various types of jobs all being done at once," said May. "If I could not remember how to do something or wanted to pick up a new skill, there was always someone nearby to help me with my work."

In addition to hanging out in Camp Justice, Bellrose said that many of the Airmen attend various MWR events and activities held on the naval station. However, despite the sometimes daunting conditions unit members find themselves in at Camp Justice, Bellrose said all can agree that the Guantanamo Bay deployment has been one of their most rewarding and fulfilling missions.

"The camaraderie here is fantastic. This unit consists of individuals from six different states, and the team just kind of gelled together in a really early phase," said Bellrose. "They just complement each other, and they are just a great bunch of folks."

Boots on the Ground

Who is going to win the Superbowl?

By Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Cheryl Dilgard

Army Sgt.
Joey Diaz



"The Patriots are going to win... they have the best defense in the NFL."

Navy Petty Officer
2nd Class
Ericka Maximin



"I'm not a fan of either team but between the two of them I'm going for New York. New England... I'm just not feelin' it."

Army 1st Lt.
Berta Morales



"Patriots, because they are undefeated and doing great."

Army Spc.
Brittney Valerio



"Patriots, they have been kicking butt all year."

God's love revealed through feathery friends



www.awesomephotos.com

By Navy Lt. Cmdr. Daniel McKay

JTF Command Chaplain/ NEGB Chaplain

One of the things I've greatly enjoyed since arriving here at Guantanamo Bay is the wonderful variety of wildlife. It's nothing short of amazing how many different species we are able to behold, whether on land or in the water, within such a small area of God's creation. Recently, though, I've had the rare honor of viewing one of the more beautiful and tiny inhabitants of our Caribbean oasis up close and personal.

A few weeks ago, as I was hurrying out the front door to go to a morning meeting, a small, gray object – attached ever so precariously to one of the outer – lower limbs of the bush located next to the front porch, caught my eye. I have never seen such a tiny, delicate looking, or more beautifully constructed bird's nest in all my life. (It was about two inches in diameter and nearly two inches in height.) "How," I wondered, "had I missed seeing it in the days before?" I walked over, pulled down the tiny branch supporting it, ever so gingerly, and peered inside. There, on the nest's floor, rested two "Jelly Belly" sized light-blue bird's eggs. "A pair of Cuban Emerald Hummingbirds," I thought to myself, "is in the family way!"

Over the course of the following days I observed the mother sitting on the nest, keeping the eggs warm. Then, the miracle of life happened, late on a Saturday afternoon: two extremely small hatchlings appeared (each about the size of a number two pencil eraser). Once they were born, mom gradually spent less time at the nest, only returning time-to-time to feed them or sit near with her watchful eye. The growth rate observed in the two siblings, a brother and sister, was absolutely extraordinary. In only a few days they changed from helpless babes to small reflections of their parents.

Little brother was the first to leave the safety of the nest.

He sat outside the nest all day this past Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. Then, when I came home Monday evening, he was hard to spot. At first, I couldn't see him at all, though I could hear his familiar chirping sound. The sound drew my eyes upward, nearly to the top of the bush. I located him just in time to see him jump free of his perch and circle the top portion of the bush a couple times and come back to rest on the top-most-branch. I immediately dubbed him "Mr. Independence." My eyes went back to the nest, and there I found his sister, for the very first time, sitting outside of it. "Can she, 'Miss Liberty,'" I thought, "be too far from joining her brother in flight?"

It's been a genuine privilege and joy to keep track of the birth and growth of these two. In all my wildest dreams, I never thought I'd be able to observe a favorite bird species in this way. Though the nest is now empty, the tree is fuller with the sounds of chirping and humming wings, and the feeder outside the kitchen window has two new visitors.

The loving, devoted attention of their mother, in particular, has served as a beautiful reminder of God's daily and faithful provision, watch, and care over us—His creation. After all, in similar fashion, God has given to us the gift of life, provided for our daily needs, and given to us the gift of flight. How high, far, and well we fly is up to us, but, as with all of God's creation, we remain at our best so long as we live unto His glory and for the purpose of giving His joy to others.

It's as the psalmist observes: "How many are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures. . . . These all look to You to give them their food at the proper time. When You give it to them, they gather it up; when You open Your hand, they are satisfied with good things. . . . I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live" (Psalm 104:24, 27-28, 33).

Musician motivated by military and ministry



**Story and photos by
Army Staff Sgt. Jerry Rushing**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

It is no accident why Army Capt. Carlos Hernandez ended up at Guantanamo and it is no accident that he has found purpose in life. For the last 21 years, his life has been dedicated to the military as a member of the Puerto Rico National Guard and—beginning five years ago—to Christian ministry.

After failing the military entrance exam three times because his English language skills were deficient, Hernandez decided to visit his brother in Maryland for the summer. When he ran out of money, his brother told him to go find a job and that was when he decided to give the military another try. This time he passed the exam.

After three years as an enlisted soldier he decided to go the officer route. In 1991, he finished the Army ROTC program at Metropolitan University in Puerto Rico and received his bachelor's degree in accounting.

"I was enlisted for three years and then Capt. Molina (now Lt. Col. from J3 here) helped me. He told me that I had good leadership skills and would be a good officer," said Hernandez. "I told him I didn't think that I would make it. He wouldn't take no for an answer and told me that I needed to go forward and just do it."

In 2002, his life took a major turn; he

wound up in the hospital with some serious complications. He decided to give his life to Jesus while he was in the bed.

"I found Jesus while I was in a hospital bed five years ago," Hernandez said. "I suffered what they called a mild heart attack, so in those few minutes that I suffered this stress I decided to give my life to God. I told him if he took me out of this bed, I'd do it. It was difficult. I would have done anything he told me to do at that point," he said. "He demanded nothing only to believe, so I gave my life to him. I felt the presence that day that I can not describe."

Hernandez was raised Catholic but had not been attending church on a regular basis. The doctor on duty at the hospital that night happened to be a practicing Protestant and offered him a choice.

"The doctor just happened to be Protestant and he told me that he had two choices for me, I got a medicine that can relieve your pain and I got a medicine that can heal your pain, which one do you want?" Hernandez said. "Of course, I wanted the one that would heal my pain. So he gave me a card from a church and told me I needed to start going."

Soon after he started going to church on a regular basis he started writing, singing, playing guitar and performing his songs at different churches. He performed Christian songs with a social message. His music

emphasizes how God meets the needs of people and heals their souls.

In 2006, the military called on him to deploy to Guantanamo. He actually had a choice between Gitmo and Egypt, it was easy for him chose Gitmo. Once here he became the personnel officer for the Joint Detention Group where he is in charge of personnel issues, awards, evaluations, transportation, and finance.

If you have gone to any of the Spanish services at Camp America in the last year, then you have heard Hernandez play. He has played at almost every Spanish service since he arrived here.

When the Puerto Rico unit leaves later this month, Hernandez will depart Gitmo with a couple of plans to finish. His first priority is to finish his master's degree and the second is to finish his music CD. He is currently two songs away from his debut album, "Dios del Universo," which translates to "God of the Universe."

"The purpose for my CD is to take the word of the gospel and convert it into an easy listening sound that people can understand," he said. "They can refer to it when they have sadness, problems, and sickness so they can know that there is someone waiting for us on the other side—Jesus Christ.

"I'm not a chaplain, but I can talk about Jesus Christ all day any day with anyone that will let me," he concluded.

AROUND THE

JTF



▲ Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Auerbach of the Joint Stress Mitigation and Restoration Team, instructs newly arrived Troopers on his office's services during the newcomers brief Thursday. The newcomer's brief gives Troopers a glimpse at everything Guantanamo has to offer. (JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert)



▲ Army Sgt. Deborah Cruz of the Puerto Rico National Guard explains information in her continuity book to her incoming counterpart, Army Spc. Tina Wipfli from the New Mexico National Guard, Wednesday. The outgoing Puerto Rico Troopers will spend the next few weeks providing a left seat-right seat passdown for their New Mexico replacements. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert)



◀ Everyone will be seeing a lot more of this patch around the Joint Task Force as it is the unit patch of the New Mexico National Guard. The patch is adapted from the New Mexico state flag which proudly sports a red sun symbol, called the Zia, over a yellow field. The colors honor queen Isabella of Castile and the conquistadors who explored the area.