

THE WIRED

A News Magazine



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Jan. 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968

Puerto Rico Guard stands tall, prepares to stand down

By Army Sgt. Maj. Jaime Perez

JTF Guantanamo J3 Operations Office

It has been nearly a year since we arrived at Guantanamo not knowing much about the operations and how things were. During those first weeks the Puerto Rico National Guard had the challenge of adapting from an Army working style to being part of a Joint Task Force where Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and civilians would work together as one force to defend freedom.

At that time I was convinced that the Troopers from Puerto Rico would not only accept the challenges given to them, but that they would accomplish the mission with great professionalism and with honor.

After eleven months I can say with great pride that the Puerto Rico National Guard has done an outstanding job, beyond the expectations of many of our leaders in the Joint Task Force. Their willingness to be part of JTF Guantanamo in support of Operation Enduring Freedom has been shown, not only by their professionalism and how seriously they have taken their jobs, but also by their behavior when they have not been on duty.

I thank the JTF leadership for guiding us throughout this year and for having confidence in our Troopers. I also congratulate the Puerto Rico National Guard officers for their great performance during their tour.

But we all have to congratulate our Troopers enlisted, junior and senior noncommissioned officers for making things happen and for a job well done. Without their effort and dedication, this mission would have been much more difficult to accomplish.

As Rear Adm. Buzby says, we have been almost a year 'on watch,' making sure the freedom that our country enjoys is not jeopardized by anyone. Now we will be standing



down knowing that we have done our part with pride and honor, and leaving another group 'on watch' while we go back to our family and friends and continue enjoying our freedom certain that we have dedicated Troopers willing to sacrifice one year away from their love ones so that we can enjoy this freedom with our loved ones.

Now we have to prepare our replacements to "run this show." We need to make sure they learn how to deal with their daily tasks (all the other things they will learn on a day today basis). It will be our responsibility to make sure they have all the tools available and guide them for success, not for failure.

I am convinced that we go back to Puerto Rico better Soldiers, taking with us a lot of great memories and with a huge list of new friends. We have learned among other things that all of our forces can work together as a team with camaraderie and that together we can accomplish any mission with no problem. It has been an honor for me and for the Puerto Rico National Guard to be part of history, but most of all – We are honored and proud to be from Puerto Rico. "A lo que vinimos."

JTF GUANTANAMO

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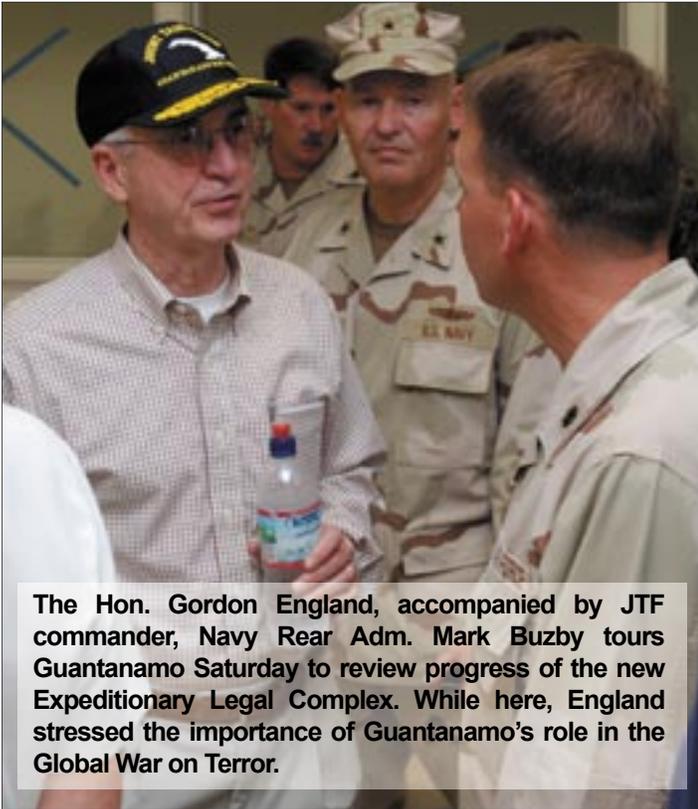
ON THE COVER:

Joint Task Force Guantanamo reflects on the life of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a celebration at the Windjammer Ballroom Monday night at 6 p.m. (Photo from integrator.hanscom.af.mil)



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.

Deputy Secretary tours Expeditionary Legal Complex



The Hon. Gordon England, accompanied by JTF commander, Navy Rear Adm. Mark Buzby tours Guantanamo Saturday to review progress of the new Expeditionary Legal Complex. While here, England stressed the importance of Guantanamo's role in the Global War on Terror.

from literally a concept – looking out over an open field – to what is now a complete structure.”

Once opened, the ELC will be the site of upcoming military commissions proceedings. The complex is equipped with the latest in courtroom technology and includes special holding facilities for detainees on trial.

England, while impressed with the progress of the facility, stressed the fact that just because the facility is nearly ready, it does not mean the detainee trials will be rushed.

When asked about the timing of military commission trials, England said “We will not rush the legal process,” adding that the legal requirements must be followed and, “We will have their trials at the appropriate times.”

With the completion of this facility, Guantanamo moves another step toward properly assessing the guilt or innocence of detainees subject to military commissions proceedings because of alleged criminal conduct.

“What has been accomplished here in the past year has been extraordinarily important as we go forward with these commission trials, and the world sees that we do have a legal process,” said England.

England stressed the importance of Guantanamo's role in the war on terrorism by asserting the legality of the Joint Task Force mission here.

“People have criticized Guantanamo, but the fact of the matter is, we have been holding detainees under the Law of War, and we will prosecute them according to the Law of War,” England said.

England, who has served the past two years as Deputy Secretary of Defense, has traveled to Guantanamo Bay numerous times throughout a long career of public service. Prior to his present appointment, England served our nation twice in key senior posts as Secretary of the Navy and as Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

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

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

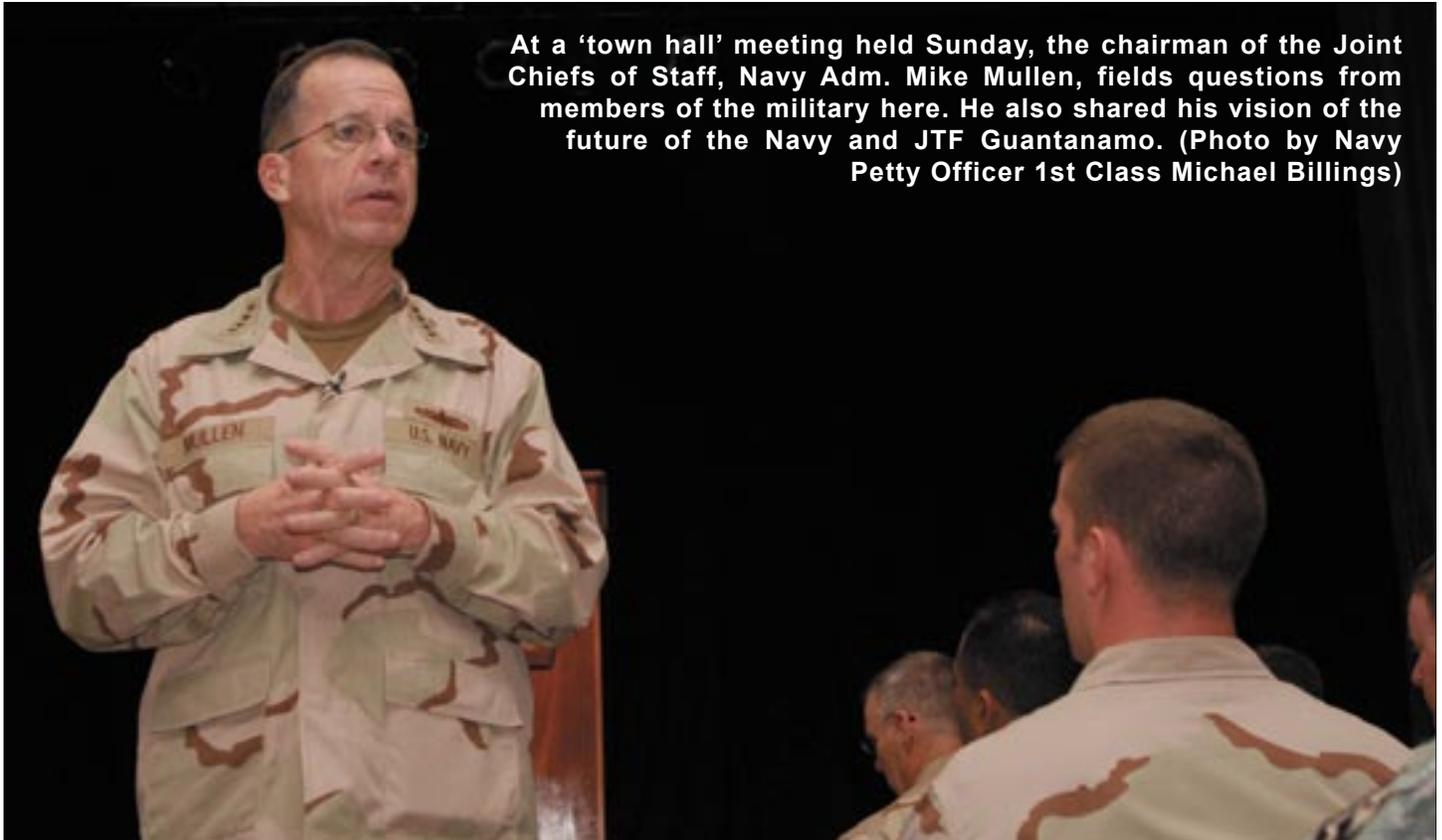
The Deputy Secretary of Defense paid a visit here Saturday to review progress of the new Expeditionary Legal Complex which will be the site of military commissions proceedings once construction is fully completed.

The Hon. Gordon England's most recent visit to Guantanamo Bay was in March 2007, when the ELC was still in its conceptual phase. In describing the ELC, now dubbed Camp Justice, England remarked, “It went



The Hon. Gordon England (immediately left of the sign), Deputy Secretary of Defense, is joined by his traveling staff and leaders of JTF Guantanamo, Saturday, at Camp Justice. Camp Justice is the site of the new Expeditionary Legal Complex, which when completed, will be the site of military commissions proceedings.

Mullen says Guantanamo mission mitigates global risk



At a 'town hall' meeting held Sunday, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, fields questions from members of the military here. He also shared his vision of the future of the Navy and JTF Guantanamo. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Billings)

By Army Spc. Shanita Simmons

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff visited the Naval Station Sunday to share his vision for the joint services and express his gratitude to those serving here.

Navy Adm. Mike Mullen toured the new Expeditionary Legal Complex and the Joint Task Force detention facilities where he thanked service members guarding detainees for their service. He also met with service members in a 'town hall' meeting where he discussed future goals for the military and Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

"JTF Guantanamo has performed extraordinarily well and has really delivered during a difficult mission," Mullen said. "The naval station has also done great work to support the mission here. I am equally proud of what the naval station has done."

During his visit, Mullen spoke favorably of the need to continue

fostering the integrated capabilities that have allowed service members to perform the JTF mission in a safe and professional manner.

"The world is focused on Guantanamo Bay. We've got to get it right every single hour. The consequences of getting it wrong could be global," said Mullen.

Although Mullen admitted to going on record in support of closing the Guantanamo Bay detention facilities, he said no decision has been made to do so.

"There is no decision to close Guantanamo Bay. Clearly, we have worked our way in the last several years through processes, which have allowed us to understand where we are and what we are doing in a very comprehensive way," said Mullen.

"Guantanamo Bay is known to the world and there are many who editorialize on the fact that Guantanamo Bay should be closed down. The decision to close it down

would be made completely out of our purview, and I am not aware of anyone who is considering doing that."

Since the Joint Task Force mission here plays an essential part in fighting the War on Terror, Mullen mentioned that the operations here are necessary to help protect Americans against possible terrorist attacks.

"The joint detention operation is a part of mitigating risk. We need to keep the detention facilities operating as best as they can be to protect Americans against individuals who have pretty bad backgrounds in terms of the War on Terror," Mullen. "This facility helps mitigate that global risk."

Mullen was sworn in as the 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Oct. 1, 2007. He serves as the principal military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council.

Acting DHS Deputy Secretary visits JTF



Air Force Lt. Col James Starnes briefs the Department of Homeland Security's acting Deputy Secretary, Paul A. Schneider, on construction progress of the Expeditionary Legal Complex. Schneider said his visit on Sunday to JTF Guantanamo helped him gain an "understanding of the activities people perform on the front line."

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Scott Griffin

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The acting Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security visited Guantanamo Bay Sunday to gain an understanding of the functions of the various Joint Task Force law enforcement elements and their operations here.

Paul A. Schneider said that his tour of JTF facilities helped him gain an understanding "of the activities people perform on the front line."

"I've heard a lot about the work that's been going on out here and the cooperation that exists between elements of the Department of Defense and the Coast Guard and other organizations, so I took advantage of an opportunity to see all of the great work that's going on down here," Schneider said. "It helps me understand how all of the various organizations are working together."

Schneider was highly impressed with what he saw of the JTF. "It's kind of amazing," Schneider said. "I'm really impressed by the fact that – regardless of the uniform worn, whether it's active duty, reserves or Guard – the fact is that everybody works together in a true spirit of cooperation and commitment that is absolutely tremendous."

"Speaking personally, as an American, everyone here can take great pride in what they've been doing for our country," Schneider said. "It's a tremendous contribution."

"This environment is a tough environment," Schneider said. "People are away from their homes and their families and that makes it all the more important to have that commitment and dedication. It makes me pretty proud. It makes me feel great."

Schneider said he looks forward to returning to the States to tell people about his experience and

bring recognition to the service members of the JTF.

"It's kind of unfortunate that the average American can't have the opportunity to see what I've seen today," Schneider said. "They'd walk away with a tremendous feeling of accomplishment in the work that [the JTF] is doing here."

Schneider's permanent responsibilities as Under Secretary of Management with the Department of Homeland Security began on Jan. 3, 2007, after serving in high level positions with various other government and military agencies. He is responsible for all the department's budget, appropriations, expenditure of funds, accounting and finance; procurement; human resources and personnel; information technology systems; facilities, property, equipment and other material resources; and identification and tracking of performance measurements.

Packers and Patriots should triumph this weekend



Green Bay Packer's Brandon Jackson runs from Seattle Seahawks defender Deon Grant during the second half of an NFL divisional football playoff game Jan. 12, in Green Bay, Wis. Green Bay won 42-20. (AP photo)

By Army 1st Sgt. Patrick Sellen

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

After the second weekend of the NFL playoffs, we are left with two teams that we thought would be in the conference championships and two teams who are quite a surprise. One thing is for certain, this weekend will draw plenty of viewers to their television sets. I will break down the games and give you my insight on what to look for. After going six for six in my first playoff picks, I cooled off on Sunday missing both. I intend to rebound with my new predictions.

Let us start in the NFC where the Green Bay Packers host the New York Giants. Last Saturday night the Packers and Ryan Grant got off to an inauspicious start when Grant fumbled on the Packers first two possessions leading to a 14-0 Seattle Seahawk advantage. What transpired after that was a thorough butt-kicking by the Packers and Grant. Grant ran for 201 yards and three touchdowns. Yes, Brett Favre is the leader of this team, but the ground game of the Packers has made them a complete team.

In the other NFC game, the Giants were huge upset winners, 21-17, over the Dallas Cowboys in Dallas. The Giants ran their road record to 9-1 with this victory and seem to be more comfortable playing away from their home stadium. The Giants rode a mistake free game from Eli Manning and the outstanding control game of their offensive and defensive lines. The Giants close loss to the New England Patriots earlier this season taught them

that they could play with any team in the NFL. This is a tough game for me to pick. The Packers are on fire so I have to take them at home, 24-20, in what will be a closer game than many people will predict.

On to the AFC where it's no surprise to see the Patriots in this game, but a big surprise that the San Diego Chargers are also there. The Patriots looked like the same old Patriots Saturday night as they picked apart an over-matched Jacksonville Jaguar team. The Jags traded punches with the Pats in the first half, but in the third quarter the Patriots, behind a nearly perfect performance from Tom Brady and the running of Lawrence Maroney, proved to be too much. The Pats continue to play perfect football and, quite frankly,

just seem to be unbeatable.

The Chargers will try to disprove my opinion of them as they will try to pull off another upset this weekend. The Chargers upset the Indianapolis Colts with a reserve running back and a fourth quarter comeback led by quarterback Billy Volek. That's right Volek, not starter Philip Rivers. True, the Colts helped the Chargers considerably by turning the ball over in the red zone a couple of times and dropping several passes. The Patriots will not make those mistakes. As good as the Chargers looked, I don't believe they can go toe-to-toe with the Patriots for four quarters. The Pats stay unbeaten 38-24.

Enjoy conference championship weekend! I will be back next week to recap the games and give you my initial Super Bowl report.



New York Giants cornerback R.W. McQuarters intercepts a pass intended for Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Terry Glenn in the end zone during the final seconds of the fourth quarter of an NFC divisional playoff football game, Jan. 13 in Irving, Texas. The interception ended the Cowboys' final drive and sealed the Giants' 21-17 win. (AP photo)

Main Attraction takes overnight softball tourney

By Army Staff Sgt. Jerry Rushing

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Softball is the last sporting event you'd expect to see in the middle of January, but the buzz from Saturday night into early Sunday morning was that the lights at Zaiser Field stayed on all night for the first softball showdown in 2008. That's right ... Softball. Even serious sports enthusiasts left NFL playoff coverage to participate in America's 'old-timers' favorite past-time.

Seven teams pulled out their cleats, gloves and bats for the first ever New Year's Overnight Softball Tournament. Main Attraction was the main attraction as they went undefeated at 3-0 and won the double elimination tournament with a 32-16 victory over Detox in the championship game that ended at sunrise. Main Attraction finished the tournament outscoring their opponents 66-28 in three games.

"What else could a person ask for? The games were all good, the weather was great, and we had a good turn out by players and fans for the first-ever tournament,"

said Morale, Welfare & Fitness Director Karissa Sandstrom. "It was awesome seeing the final game end and having the trophy presentation right as the sun began to rise," she added.

With the score tied at 6-6, Main Attraction erupted for 15 runs in the bottom of the second inning to take a commanding 21-6 lead. Over the final three innings, Main Attraction outscored Detox 11-10 for a final count of 32-16. The game was called after five innings due to the 15-run mercy rule.

Detox took second place in the tournament going 4-2 overall, while the 525th Military Police Battalion took third with a 2-2 record. The GTMO Latino's, THC and the Red Bulls all tied with 1-2 records, while NEGB finished last with a 0-2 record.

"Next year we hope to have more teams sign-up so that we can make it a 24 hour tournament next year," Sandstrom said.



The victorious team, Main Attraction crushed their competitors by going 3-0. Seven teams went to bat Saturday in an all night softball tournament sponsored by MWR. (Photo by Karissa Sandstrom)



A Red Bulls player crushes the pitch. The Red Bulls won the match-up against the NEGB 21-4 in the first round of the New Year's Overnight Softball Tournament. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Jerry Rushing)

Friday Night Entertainment



Photos by Army Sgt. Scott Griffin, Army Sgt. Jody Metzger, Army Staff Sgt. Jerry Rushing and Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation Comedy Tour, stirred up laughs Friday, Jan. 11, at Club Survivor while Kia Graham shared her vocal talents at the Windjammer Ballroom. The Comedy Tour, which featured the humorous routines of Shawn Pelofsky, Ruben Paul, Butch Bradley and Patrick DeGuire, played three shows in Guantanamo and wowed crowds with their energy and wit. While the comedy tour was delivering laughs, Graham showcased her broad vocal range, performing everything from Country to Rhythm and Blues.



MLK pioneered a path to justice



www.indamixworldwide.com

By Army Spc. Lavelle Jones
525th Military Police Battalion

On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous “I have a dream” speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. For me, the part of the speech I’ve excerpted below encapsulates everything that has come to describe the African-American experience here in America – an experience of struggle, pain, discontent, poverty, and mental anguish – of feeling and being strangers, somehow ‘insufficient,’ in our own land. Yet with all of these grim realities in our history, we still have the wherewithal and commitment to see a better and brighter day for ourselves here in America.

In a sense we’ve come to our nation’s capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall

heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the “unalienable Rights” of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked “insufficient funds.”

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we’ve come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

From my own vantage point I am totally indebted to our leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. I didn’t have to personally face attacks from dogs or have water hoses used against me

when I felt the need to stand up for equality and justice. I have not had to ride or walk by schools that exhibited signs that read “Whites Only.” Nor have I had to ride in what was once deemed my place ‘in the back of the bus.’ I have never had to deal with being on a team with players who despised me because of my race, nor have I had to participate on a team where I was not able to stay at the same hotel with my white teammates. Of course I can not forget that just a few decades ago, I would not have been served food by many establishments because of who I am – a black man.

These are just a few of the injustices that I haven’t had to personally experience because Martin Luther King Jr. was willing to put his life on the line to bring about positive changes for our people. Many changes have come about because of his pioneering

spirit. While some disagree with his methods, it is obvious that the justice achieved from bus and store boycotts, workers’ strikes, and restaurant sit-ins would not have been achieved without his willingness to fight for what was right.

King represents the American Dream of “Life, Liberty, & the Pursuit of Happiness.” He believed all of us, black and white, could one day walk hand in hand, move beyond the differences of race and be bonded by the content of our character. While many things have changed for the better, there is still a ways to go to fulfill the dream that Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned. And as of now, that obligation falls on us.

Join me and the Guantanamo African American Association as we host a celebration and solidarity march in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Monday evening at the Windjammer at 6 p.m.

Cell phones and driving = unacceptable risk

By Air Force Capt.
Lee Jeffords

JTF Guantanamo Safety Officer

Cellular phones offer a level of communication and connectivity that was unheard of 15 years ago. We can roam, send text messages, dial direct across states and countries and stay connected more effectively than ever before. With that increased capability and the ease of owning a cell phone, we have incorporated phone usage into every facet of life. This improves our ability to communicate.

Unfortunately, there is an increase in phone use where it doesn't belong – while operating a motor vehicle.

It's common knowledge that using a cellular phone while on a Department of Defense installation is not allowed without a hands-free device, including here at Guantanamo Bay. Have you ever wondered why?

Thanks for asking! Dozens of studies have been conducted to assess the relation between cell phone use and motor vehicle accidents. Some reports state that use of cell phones while driving makes the driver just as impaired as if they were driving drunk! Your attention span, reaction speed and focus are drastically limited and split between driving and “multitasking” in the vehicle. A lead researcher from the University of Utah offers this comment: “Just like you put yourself and other people at risk when you drive drunk, you put yourself and others at risk when you



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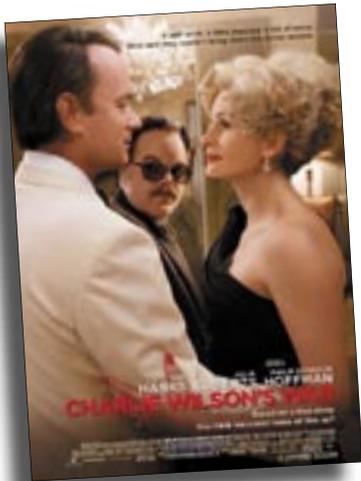
use a cell phone and drive. The level of impairment is very similar.”

While these results are from just one study, the preponderance of data from other research comes to the same conclusion: Drivers significantly increase their potential for accident or incident if they operate a cell phone and drive simultaneously. The report from the University of Utah concluded that cell phone using drivers were five times more likely to get in an accident than undistracted drivers.

Cell phone use is not the only distraction for the driver (eating, drinking, smoking, applying makeup, adjusting stereo, etc.), but “over the last decade many new electronic devices have been developed, and they are making their way into the vehicle. Drivers can now surf the

Internet, send and receive e-mail or faxes, communicate via a cellular device and even watch television. There is good reason to believe that some of these new multitasking activities may be substantially more distracting than the old standards because they are more cognitively engaging and because they are performed over longer periods of time.”

So, stop the vehicle to make or receive a call. Remember, you will be ticketed by Naval Station Police if you don't. Invest in a hands-free set for your phone. The act of using a cell phone while driving places us all at a greater level of risk and in turn, if an accident should occur, adversely impact our abilities to accomplish the mission of the Joint Task Force.



Tom Hanks is an alien here to steal the Oscars

By Army Sgt. Scott Griffin

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Rated: R

Running Time: 97 minutes

“Charlie Wilson’s War” is proof once more that Tom Hanks is here to steal the Oscar again. I now have a theory that he is indeed not human, but rather part of an alien race known as ‘Skrulls’ who assimilate a person’s form and take over their existence.

is strong as Herring, practically glowing on-screen – and I do not say this lightly, because I’m not a fan of hers. I will say this, though: that is the worst hair she’s ever had in a film. Sure, you can blame it on the ‘80s, but whoever shot that poodle of a haircut and slapped it on her head should be hauled before Congress too.

The film itself is an odd turn of somber – Wilson’s War contributed to the roots of modern day Islamic terrorism – and good fun. ‘Good Time Charlie’ is secretly helping finance a war that is horrifying and terrible, but he’s sure having a great time doing it. It’s hard not to like him as he drinks and carouses his way through an international political battlefield. Don’t mistake this for parody, though. It’s the beauty of movie magic – and director Mike Nichols and screenwriter Aaron Sorkin – that we can watch an aging, alcoholic politico finagle the system into working and have such a grand time doing so. Some of the events are so over-the-top that I wouldn’t have believed it at all if I hadn’t read the book (which I highly recommend).

On the other end of political flicks playing here, there’s the one starring that other alien in “Lions For Lambs.” I think it’s about L. Ron Hubbard fighting off Xenu and his evil Thetans. Could be good science fiction.

Rating: ★★★★★

No, wait. I read that in a Marvel comic book. Still, it’s not a bad theory.

Hanks stars as ‘Good Time Charlie’ Wilson, a Texas Democrat in the House of Representatives who, along with cantankerous rogue CIA agent Gust Avrakotos (Philip Seymour Hoffman) and Houston socialite Joanne Herring (Julia Roberts), conspired to assist the Afghani Mujahideen to repel the Soviets in Afghanistan in the ‘80s. Hanks portrays Wilson as the womanizing politician he was, but subverts the character’s faults with a wink-wink-nudge-nudge performance that shows us he’s just looking to have a good time.

Hoffman is excellent as Avrakotos. He’s the perfect mix of blue collar bitterness and aging CIA cynicism. Roberts

WEEKLY WEATHER FORECAST <small>Weather forecast provided by www.weather.com</small>			
<p>Saturday, Jan. 19</p> <p>Highs in the low - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Sunrise: 6:38 a.m. Sunset: 5:45 p.m. Chance of rain: 20%</p>	<p>Sunday, Jan. 20</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Sunrise: 6:38 a.m. Sunset: 5:45 p.m. Chance of rain: 20%</p>	<p>Monday, Jan. 21</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Sunrise: 6:38 a.m. Sunset: 5:46 p.m. Chance of rain: 20%</p>	
<p>Tuesday, Jan. 22</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Sunrise: 6:38 a.m. Sunset: 5:47 p.m. Chance of Rain: 10%</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p>	<p>Wednesday, Jan. 23</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Sunrise: 6:38 a.m. Sunset: 5:47 p.m. Chance of Rain: 20%</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p>	<p>Thursday, Jan. 24</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Sunrise: 6:38 a.m. Sunset: 5:48 p.m. Chance of Rain: 10%</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p>	<p>Friday, Jan. 25</p> <p>Highs in the mid - 80's, and lows in the high - 60's.</p>  <p>Sunrise: 6:38 a.m. Sunset: 5:48 p.m. Chance of Rain: 10%</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p>

Construction begins on Joint Trauma Research Facility

By Elaine Wilson

American Forces Press Service

Construction of a \$92 million center for all Defense Department combat casualty care and trauma research missions began with a groundbreaking ceremony at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Jan. 11.

The 150,000-square-foot Joint Center of Excellence for Battlefield Health and Trauma Research marks the first construction project at Fort Sam Houston directed by 2005 base realignment and closure legislation.

Military leaders from the Army, Navy and Air Force joined community leaders at the ceremony. The new facility, slated for completion in September 2009, signifies a "new era in military medical research," commander of U.S. Army Research and Material command Maj. Gen. George Weightman said.

The research center will enable research and development experts, scattered throughout the nation, to centralize efforts, which will improve efficiency, reduce duplication and enhance the collusion between them, the general said.

By doing so, DoD will ensure "we

continue to provide the best research in an environment that will enable (medical experts) to extend the boundaries of research," Weightman said.

The center will be collocated with the Institute of Surgical Research, which falls under Weightman's command, and next to Brooke Army Medical Center. The ISR also will benefit from BRAC with a 5,000-square-foot renovation.

In addition, the research center adds 230 people to the 440 already working at the institute, which totals "670 people dedicated to improving the quality of life of our wounded warriors," the general said.

"Locating this facility here (with the Institute of Surgical Research) at Fort Sam Houston is the absolute logical choice," he said.

Weightman attributed the high survivability rate of today's war in part to the institute, which steadily has produced life-saving products and technologies.

Innovations include new field dressings and tourniquets, hemoglobin-based oxygen carriers with a two- or three-year shelf life rather than 30

days, new methods for wound closure after a burn injury, and five interrelated computerized devices that allow medics to provide quality care to wounded service members at the point of injury.

The focus of the Institute of Surgical Research and the future focus of the new joint center will be on the delivery of immediate care for warriors who suffer life-threatening injuries on the battlefield.

"This is not just pie-in-the-sky research. ... (The institute) has been saving lives and improving function every day since it has been open," Weightman said. "It's just incredible, the comprehensiveness and far-reaching aspects."

The combined research efforts of the Institute of Surgical Research and the Joint Center of Excellence for Battlefield Health and Trauma Research will benefit not only military members, but civilians as well.

"While the causes of trauma are different, the responses are similar," Weightman said. "And the interventions to save lives are remarkably similar. The fruits of this labor will help every civilian in this nation."

Boots on the Ground

Now that the Christmas season is over, what would you like to see more of at the NEX?

By Army Sgt. Jody Metzger and
Army Staff Sgt. Jerry Rushing

Navy Petty Officer
2nd Class
David Conklin



"More outdoor sporting
equipment"

Navy Seaman
Benjamin Crocker



"More baseball and
softball gloves"

Coast Guard Petty
Officer 3rd Class
John Shriver



"Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer"

Coast Guard Petty
Officer 2nd Class
Kenneth Lann



"More electronics and
software"



“Are We There Yet?”

assistance from the other they would give it, no questions asked and no money involved. So, with no more than a phone call, when my step-dad’s hay baler broke down on a hot July morning, Ol’ Pete arrived and assisted with the repairs. It was during the lunch break that I discovered an all-important truth.

When mom called us to lunch, Ol’ Pete stood outside our trailer door and said, “Now, ma’am, you know I can’t sit at your table. It just wouldn’t be proper, me being

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By Navy Chaplain (Lt. Cmdr.) Daniel McKay

JTF Guantanamo Command Chaplain

Take a long drive with young children and what’s the one question you are sure to hear a dozen times before reaching your destination? The inevitable, “Are we there yet?” Without a doubt, at one time or another, we’ve all heard the answer or even provided it, “No, but we’re closer now than when you last asked the question.”

As we reflect on Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life and legacy, this is the question I hear him asking of us as a nation, “Are we there yet?” That is to say, “Has my dream become reality? Have you arrived to the point where character matters more than skin color? Has the proposition of our nation’s Founding Fathers, ‘that all men are created equal,’ become more than mere words or an empty promise?” And as a nation we have to say, in all honesty, “No, Reverend King, we’re not quite there yet, but we’re closer now than when you last asked the question.”

True, long-overdue changes occurred after that fateful day when Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama on December 1, 1955. Then even greater advances were experienced after Rev. King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to deliver his “I Have a Dream” speech to over 250,000 like-minded supporters on August 28, 1963. Yet, for all the gains made since, his dream remains a beautiful but elusive dream. What will it take, then, for us to fully realize Rev. King’s dream?

I believe the answer is found in a truth I learned one summer day during my youth. Down the road from our Missouri farm lived a man known to all his neighbors as “Ol’ Pete.” He was the sort of person who would do anything for you if you needed it. In fact, he and my step-dad had a working agreement: If one ever needed

a black man and you folks being white.” Believe it or not, Ol’ Pete’s remarks made me realize, for the very first time, that color was an issue between us. Thus, we partook of our noon meal, inside around the table, while Ol’ Pete partook of his, sitting alone, on the front step of our trailer’s porch. The longer I sat there the more the situation frustrated and angered me. I looked up at mom and asked, “Why doesn’t Pete sit with us?” Her answer only made me more upset: “Son, it’s just the way he was raised.”

Next thing I knew I was sitting beside Ol’ Pete on the front steps, enjoying my meal with him. Wearing a surprised look on his face, Ol’ Pete asked, “Boy, what are doing out here? You should be at the table with your folks.” “Nope, Pete,” I quipped, “you said you couldn’t sit at the table with us. You said nothing, though, about us enjoying our meal out here with you.” “Hmm,” he replied, smiling as he did so, “I guess that’s true enough. I didn’t.” No more words were exchanged. We simply sat there, in the cool shade, enjoying our meal together – two fellow human beings, both equally created in our Maker’s image, appreciating each other’s company.

What’s the truth I learned from that experience? I found that changing foolish attitudes and behaviors starts within one’s own heart and mind. After all, if you wait for the other person to change, you might be waiting for a long time. It’s as the Apostle Paul encourages, “As much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18).

So, it’s up to each of us to take the first step and reach out to the other person, for by doing so we advance the relationships and society that Rosa Parks and Reverend King envisioned. And the next time we’re asked the question, “Are we there yet?” we can reply, in unison, “No, but we’re a lot closer now than when you last asked.”

Puerto Rico Guardsmen share with needy children back home



Photo provided by Army Sgt. Luis Jimenez



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Paul Meeker

Family members, facility staff, Santa Claus and Army Staff Sgt. Wilson Nunez of the Puerto Rico National Guard assemble in front of “el Hogar del Nino Jesus” (“The Home of the Baby Jesus”) in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Members of the Puerto Rico National Guard deployed here raised funds over Christmas ‘07 to purchase gifts and needed supplies to help the abused and neglected children that ‘el Hogar’ raises. Army Sgt. Luis Jimenez helped coordinate the event.

By Army Staff Sgt. Paul Meeker

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The plight of children – homeless, abused and abandoned – weighed heavily on the hearts of Soldiers stationed here from the Puerto Rico National Guard this past holiday season. These Soldiers decided to do something tangible with their concern by raising money for a special place that cares for these children – el Hogar del Nino Jesus, (“The Home of the Baby Jesus”) in Barrio Carnita, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The burning issue for these Soldiers was summed up by Army Sgt. Luis Jimenez who said that he and his fellow Troopers were compelled by a desire to meet a real need at home as well as raise awareness in Puerto Rican communities about the plight of at-risk children.

“We wanted to let the island know that we care for the kids and that we stand against the physical neglect and abuse of children,” said Jimenez.

Jimenez and other Guard Soldiers asked family members and a fellow

Guardsman, Staff Sgt. Wilson Nunez, back home to work with the facility staff to identify particular needs and plan a Christmas party at the home for the children. The purchase list included individual, special toys for each of the 22 children, clothing and diapers, as well as two DVD/VCR players and ceiling fans that the facility desperately needed.

During the Christmas party on Dec. 26, 2007, Jimenez and fellow members of the Puerto Rico contingent here gathered around a telephone and spoke with some of the children. That personal connection, and the knowledge that they brought smiles to the children, is what motivated these Troopers from the outset of their mission.

“We wanted to give the same smiles that we give to our own children to these children who don’t always have loving families,” said Jimenez.

The goal, to raise awareness of the childrens’ needs, was accomplished as the event received local media coverage by El Vocero de Puerto Rico, an island-

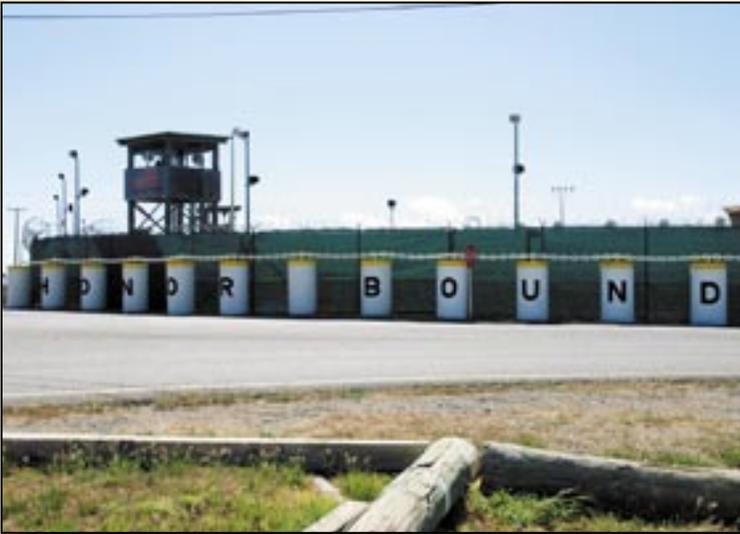
wide media news service. El Vocero reporter Mara D. Resto Velez wrote a full page article about the event on Dec. 27, 2007. She captured the enthusiasm generated by the event through her interview with the home’s director, Eileen De Jesus.

“We were very grateful for the enthusiasm of the group [the Soldiers’ representatives] that came to visit us. Truly, it was a beautiful thing that these Soldiers did. Their interest in the welfare of the children was very evident by how they shared with the children.” De Jesus said.

The deployed Troopers of the Puerto Rico National Guard accomplished their purpose for this event; they delivered smiles to children desperate for love and attention. Their work isn’t over, however.

“Some of us are talking about doing more things once we get home next month, like sponsoring a family in need or helping senior citizens. Our concern is not just as military Troopers, but as human beings,” said Jimenez.

AROUND THE JTF



▲Contractors at Guantanamo Bay recently painted 'Honor Bound.' The full motto "Honor Bound to Defend Freedom" was established during the command of Army Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller who served here from late 2002 to early 2004) (Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Sanchez)



▲Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby awards Navy Master Chief Petty Officer Rick Beaber with the Defense Meritorious Service Medal for his outstanding service to the JTF, Jan. 16. (Photo by Army Spc. Shanita Simmons)



◀Sgt. Tiffany Chagdes defends herself against Spc. James Villa's onslaught of punches during combative training, Jan. 11. Combative training helps Troopers hone their combat skills. (Photo by Army Spc. Shanita Simmons)