

THE WIRE

A JTF Journal



Senior NCOs retire

Two praised at ceremony

CMC LeVault moves on

New mission awaits

Reflections on the past year

**Army 1st Sgt.
Alfred Gomez**

JTF Higher Headquarters Co.

A calendar year is such a very long time to be away from family and friends, but it seems like a very short time now. It is almost time for our group to go home to New Mexico. We have made a lot of friends and made our mark here at Joint Task Force Guantanamo since relieving the 92nd Separate Infantry Brigade of Puerto Rico.

Looking back, it seemed as if we never had enough time to accomplish our tasks. We went from one assignment to the next while preparing for the next two, which is why time just flew by so very quickly.

When you are here for a year you get to see a lot of rotations, a lot of new faces come and go – excellent individuals contributing knowledge and providing a much-needed resource to accomplish our mission here at Guantanamo.

This has been, and continues to be, a great mission for everyone. There is no single group that can say that they came, they saw and they conquered. It takes a lot of teamwork to accomplish the mission.

I want to thank all the personnel that make up the Joint Task Force, and of course all the personnel here at the Naval Station for making our stay here such a pleasant and unforgettable experience.

Last but not least, for all of you “party animals” out there that are younger than I, please don’t live like there is no tomorrow, because you may be right! ☆



JTF GUANTANAMO

Commander:

Navy Rear Adm. David M. Thomas, Jr.

Joint Task Force CMC:

Navy Command Master Chief
Brad LeVault

Office of Public Affairs:

Director:

Navy Cmdr. Pauline Storum: 9928

Deputy Director:

Army Capt. Kim Kleiman: 9927

Supervisor:

Army 1st Sgt. James Venske: 3649

The Wire

Executive Editor:

Army 1st Lt. Adam Bradley: 3596

Editor:

Army Sgt. 1st Class Vaughn R. Larson: 3651

Assistant Editors:

Army Staff Sgt. Emily Russell: 3592

Army Staff Sgt. Gretel Sharpee: 3594

Staff Writers:

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class

Jayne Pastoric: 3499

Army Spc. Megan Burnham: 2171

Army Pfc. Eric Liesse: 3589

Graphics:

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Dollar: 3589

Contact us

Editor's Desk: 3651 or 3596

From the continental United States:

Commercial: 011-53-99-3651

DSN: 660-3651

Email: thewire@jftgmo.southcom.mil

Online: www.jftgmo.southcom.mil

COVER:

The Flame of Hope is raised high across U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay during the New Jersey Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. See page 8 for more photos. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Megan Burnham



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.

Offering appreciation and cookies

Air Force Lt. Gen. Glenn Spears talks with Air Force Troopers during his visit to Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay as part of a holiday tour to bases in the U.S. Southern Command areas of focus.

Army Spc. Megan Burnham

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

As Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay Troopers entered the Seaside Galley for breakfast Friday morning, they were offered more than a choice of eggs, meat and fruit. Senior Leadership from the 12th Air Force and U.S. Southern Command offered Christmas cookies and thanks to Guantanamo Bay Troopers as part of their holiday tour and Cookie Caper mission.

“This is an opportunity for the U.S. Southern Command to come out and wish the very best of the holidays to all the Troopers here at Joint Task Force Guantanamo and at the Naval Station here at Guantanamo,” said Air Force Lt. Gen. Glenn Spears, military deputy commander at SOUTHCOM.

Guantanamo Bay was the last stop that Spears, Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Joe Hollen of the 12th Air Force, and Army Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Balch of SOUTHCOM visited on their holiday tour.

The SOUTHCOM area of focus is comprised of more than 30 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The week-long tour visited bases in countries to include El Salvador, Honduras, Guyana, Suriname and Cuba.

“We wanted to visit those locations where we have Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen,” said Spears, “to say thanks to the men and women in uniform who are serving our nation away from their families over the holiday season.”

This holiday tour and Cookie Caper visit



Air Force Master Sgt. James Butts grabs a bag of cookies at the Seaside Galley offered by the 12th Air Force and U.S. Southern Command during their holiday tour to Guantanamo Bay.

is an annual event that begins at the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tuscon, Ariz. with the baking or donation of the cookies distributed to the Troops. This year, about 300 dozen cookies were made by the 12th Air Force spouses.

“It brings goodwill to the Troops who are away from their families at this time of year,” said Balch.

When the group arrived at Seaside Galley, they quickly ate their breakfast and then continued to visit with Troopers of all branches. A box filled with a variety of cookies in plastic bags was available to anyone who still had room for dessert.

“I think [the Cookie Caper event] is awesome. Last year, I did a Cookie Caper for my base [Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii] and we sent cookies to the deployed troops,” said Air Force 1st Lt. Carly Omizo. “It’s such a good program and I think it’s great that [senior leadership] came down to visit us.”

“I want to thank them for their service,” said Hollen. “For us to come down and give them cookies and thank them for their service is really an honor to me.”

Balch added, “I want to particularly thank the families, for [those of] us that are in uniform, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Coast Guard and Marines, we understand what we do for our nation and we go out and do it to the best of our ability. We really appreciate the fact that the families put through a lot of sacrifice in order for us to serve our nation.”

The senior leadership of 12th Air Force and SOUTHCOM continued on with their holiday tour visiting Camp America and Gold Hill Galley to hand out cookies and offer appreciation.

“This is our opportunity to say thanks to all these great men and women that are serving away from their family and serving our nation,” said Spears. “We appreciate what they do every single day.” ★



Command Master Chief Bradley LeVault leaves JTF and assumes duties as Fleet Master Chief of Naval Forces Europe and Africa. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Erica Isaacson

Mission complete, new course charted

**Navy Petty Officer 1st Class
Jayme Pastorik**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Completing a successful deployment is a challenge that Troopers can be proud of. Completing a deployment as Command Master Chief of Joint Task Force Guantanamo is something Command Master Chief Petty Officer Bradley LeVault is very proud of.

“This has been my most rewarding tour,” LeVault said. “Nothing I have done prior has compared to the importance of the JTF mission.”

In September 2006, LeVault assumed the duties of Command Master Chief of JTF and immediately hit the ground running by quickly making improvements for the Troopers living conditions.

When he arrived, LeVault had a written goal of having one Trooper per room.

“When I got here, they measured the number of living accommodations by beds. I immediately said ‘No more; it will be addressed by rooms,’” LeVault said.

Improvements have taken place with all the Troopers’ living spaces, everything from renovated Tierra Kay houses, more single room Cuzco Barracks and newly



completed senior enlisted housing at Bay Hill.

LeVault will be relieved by Master Chief Petty Officer Scott Drenning while LeVault will assume duties as Fleet Master Chief for Naval Forces Europe and Africa headquartered in Naples.

“The only difference in my new

command is that it’s mostly Navy Sailors I will be involved with,” LeVault said. “We do a lot of work with a joint coalition force, and I feel that my training and experience here at JTF really prepared me.”

Having spent a lot of time working with the Army, LeVault credits his success to following the Army values of good order and discipline.

“I never went to a senior enlisted academy or had any formal leadership school,” said LeVault. “My training came from Army senior leadership, and I’m grateful for them.”

Reflecting on his time in Guantanamo, LeVault has a lot of fond memories living in the Caribbean with his family.

“Only in Gitmo will iguanas stop traffic,” LeVault said, “or live in a gated community guarded by Marines!”

LeVault said this deployment was very rewarding, allowing him to leave with a wealth of knowledge and the honor to have worked alongside the JTF Trooper.

“The job the Troopers have done, they did so well,” LeVault said. “All of the Troopers held themselves to a level of professionalism that left no room for criticism. They have been very patient and are truly Honor Bound.” ☆



Air Force Maj. Gen. James Graves, assistant to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff for Reserve Matters, gives a presentation to Joint Task Force Guantanamo Guard and Reserve Troopers at the Windjammer Ballroom Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2008. Graves spoke on the importance of joint-service experience work within the military, as well as joint-service rank advancement aspects specific to reserve component Troops. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Pfc. Eric Liesse

Graves details joint service matters during visit

**Army Staff Sgt.
Emily J. Russell**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Maj. Gen James W. Graves, Assistant to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff for Reserve Matters, visited Guantanamo Bay to address Reserve and National Guard Troopers and discuss the opportunity to gain credit for joint-environment deployments and the importance of taking advantage of joint learning opportunities.

Graves addressed the changes – both past and present – that support the opportunity for joint credit, citing the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the future plans for implementation.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 called for a major defense reorganization. It centralized operational authority in a joint environment and simplified the chain of command from the president, to the

secretary of defense down to the unified commanders. Today, the efforts of the act are on-going with continued goals for the joint environment creating the most effective, flexible and responsive force in order to ensure future operational success.

One result of this act allows officers eligibility to receive joint credit.

Recognition for joint work has been difficult, stated an audience member during a question and answer session. Graves acknowledged the comment and explained that Reserve officers have until the year 2010 to reconstruct their records and apply for credit. They have the ability to claim credit back to October of 1986.

For the enlisted Troopers, the benefits are not as clear. However, joint professional military education opportunities exist, and are open to all regardless of component or status.

Looking toward the future, the Office

for Reserve and National Guard Matters will continue to improve accessibility and timeliness of enlisted joint professional military education, while promoting joint assignments earlier in a Trooper's career and better career management.

Currently, resident and non-resident courses are available for senior enlisted leaders and officers.

A final question asked of Graves pertained to the current inability for military members serving with the Joint Task Force to receive joint service awards. This question has been on the minds of many JTF Troopers with no satisfying answer.

Graves reaction to the question was one of puzzlement, as he seemed unaware of this. "We'll take this on board," he promised.

Graves' presentation is available to Troopers on the Joint Task Force public drive: P:\PAO\Maj. Gen. Graves presentation. ☆

For the ladies

■ *Belly dancing offers women a new way to move*

**Army Staff Sgt.
Emily J. Russell**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

When the thought of a workout on a treadmill is less than enticing, or the repetition of an aerobics class has you running for the door, consider an alternative way to get fit – belly dancing.

Belly dancing is an ancient form of dance with roots deep in Middle Eastern culture. Its origin, however, is debated with varying theories that it has descended from religious dances to traditional birthing practices. Regardless of how or where it began, the popularity of it today is booming as it provides a cardiovascular and muscular workout for women of all shapes and sizes.

“From the movements of the hips, the positioning of the feet and the constant shifting of body weight, all of these factors are what make up a great lower body workout,” said Spc. Mercedes Diaz. “You really feel the burn after 10 minutes of hip drops!”

Diaz, who works with the Joint Task Force Joint Detention Group, has been belly dancing for four years.

“I feel the burn in my arms,” continued Diaz. “We are constantly instructed to keep our upper body and torso aligned and upright for good posture. Staying in this position while moving other parts of your body gives you a full body workout and tones you up while having fun.”

The movements in belly dancing range from hip rotations and accents, to shimmies and undulations with flowing arms, all

while maintaining good posture. It is also considered low impact which takes the stress of exercise off of knees and ankles.

“Belly dancing will definitely give you a great cardio workout depending on how long you are dancing, but more than anything, it will strengthen your muscles,” said Diaz. “Dalia’s two-hour class definitely helps for both cardio and muscle strength.”

“I attended the class because I thought it sounded like an exotic and unique opportunity,” said Samantha Prince, a Joint Task Force contractor. “I knew some other ladies who were attending the class, and I thought it would be a fun Sunday afternoon adventure.”

The reputation of belly dancing has been marred over the years, painting it as a less-than-wholesome form of dance or entertainment due to the undulation of the hips and flowing, sensual nature of the dance. Traditionally, however, the dance is family-friendly and suitable for community festivals.

Belly dancing, while excellent for strengthening the

body, also strengthens the mind and spirit.

“At one point in the class,” said Prince, “the instructor – Dalia – said that we should ‘Dance like we are the most beautiful women – because we are.’ How often do we as women really believe that we are beautiful?”

See **DANCE/13**



Samantha Prince attended the belly dancing class Sunday and learned the basic hip rotations and arm movements to combine for a variety of songs from traditional Arabic music to today’s hip-hop and rap.

Max Boredom



**Army Pfc.
Eric Liesse**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Yet again, Hollywood has let down videogame fans. The latest in the long string that will probably never end is “Max Payne,” a story of a New York City police homicide detective working to find the killer of his wife and baby. Done in a new-age noir style, the movie falls very flat on its emotionless face.

Like in the videogame and classic noir works, Max is on a relentless pursuit of justice and stops at nothing to finally get the unknown assailant that killed his family three years before. The murders – which Max walked in on just moments too late – are often replayed in his head, each with varying degrees of hallucination-like changes.

Mark Wahlberg plays the title character, but he should stop doing these cold characters. He was excellent in “The Departed,” so, playing the hard-faced, nothing-left-to-lose Max Payne could make people forget he can actually act. He pulls his weight here, though it doesn’t take much, given what little development and

depth the story offers.

The story kicks off with Max being framed for the slaying of a woman he met while pursuing his family’s murderer. Mona Sax (Mila Kunis), the sister of the slain woman, seeks out Max for revenge. The detective on the case, Max’s former partner Alex Balder (Donal Logue), then turns up dead, with Max again as the prime suspect.

Though constantly pursued by internal affairs officer Jim Bravura (Ludacris, giving the film’s best performance), Max never lets up in his own search. He soon starts looking into his wife’s former employer, the Aesir Corporation (one of many references to Norse mythology). This continues until the climatic shootout, but it never feels remotely entertaining or worth staying awake for.

Going in, I didn’t expect an amazing story since the games were as much focused on the stylization of the setting and characters as it was with the plot. The 2001 PC videogame, created by developers Remedy Entertainment and publishers 3D Realms, set amazing neo-noir ambiance, with gritty voiceovers, a constant light snowfall outside, and starred a hard-boiled detective character. Also, the gameplay has since become legendary for its use of



“bullet time,” which gave the player special advantage by slowing the scene to see bullets flying, but still allowed the player to act in real time.

The film does transfer these elements, but they all fall short and appear there just to make fans happy. The noir storytelling style is ever-present, making use of ambient shadows and characters with hardened hearts that always seem to be hiding something. However, the excessive use of computer graphics takes away from the story that is mostly grounded in reality – though with more pretty hallucinations.

The videogame’s famous bullet time is nodded to, but only once. The other action is done well, but pretty sparse for a videogame movie. The few gun-blazing scenes are appropriately outlandish, but when Max takes a point-blank shotgun blast and walks away, it’s pretty ridiculous.

Of all the videogames to put to film, “Max Payne” wasn’t a bad choice – especially compared to “Super Mario Bros.” However, with a lack of action or anything compelling happening until the gun-filled end, this one isn’t even worth the time. ☆

PG-13
1 hour, 40 minutes

Rating: ★★☆☆☆



LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN

FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS TEAM U.S.A.

The New Jersey fundraising team for the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics came to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Dec. 13. Guantanamo Bay residents were able to sign up for the team relay or as individuals to run or bike. The 10-mile fun run included six relay teams: the Federal Bureau of Investigation office, the Criminal Investigation Task Force office, the Staff Judge Advocate office, the Office for the Administrative Review of the Detention of Enemy Combatants, the Naval Station Security office and the 525th Military Police Battalion. The run began at the Northeast Gate and ended at Phillips Dive Park with each team holding the Flame of Hope for approximately 1.6 miles.

All proceeds generated from this event went to sponsor the 17,000 athletes of the Special Olympics Team U.S.A. and their families. The proceeds were also in honor and remembrance of Army Maj. Dwayne Kelley of New Jersey.



From left: Frazier Thompson, Chris McCormac, Navy Rear Adm. Dave Thomas and Robert Belfiore hold the torch at the Northeast Gate along with all participants.



From left: Robert Belfiore and Thompson hold the torch together at the finish line. Both contributed to the planning and coordination of this successful event.



The NAVSTA Security team finishes strong before handing the Flame of Hope to the 525th.

Members of the OARDEC team pass the Flame of Hope to one another in their 1.6 mile segment.



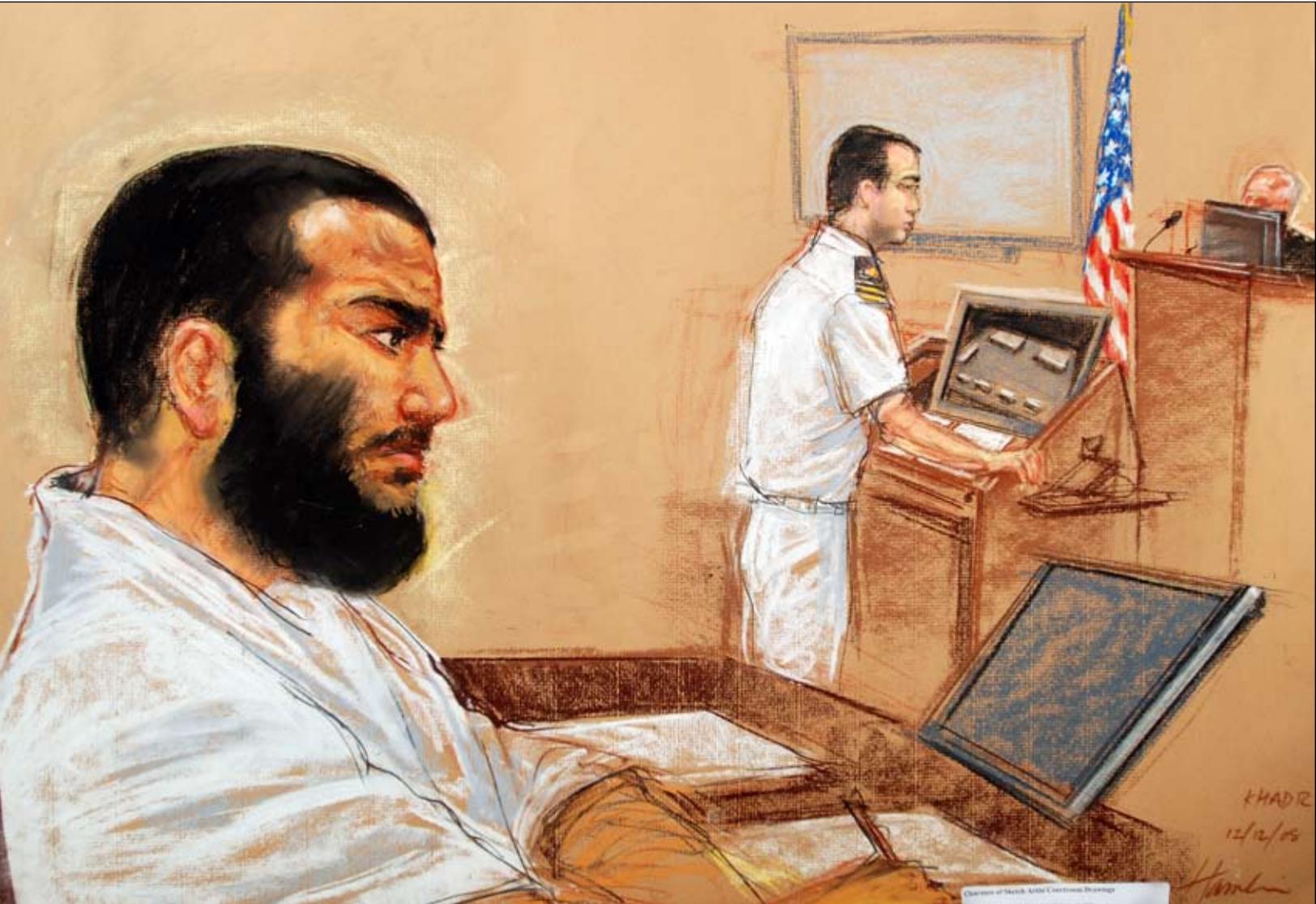
Ralph Smith, a member of the CITF team, carries the torch before passing it to another team member and co-worker.

JTF Guantanamo photos by
Army Pfc. Eric Liesse and Army Spc. Megan Burnham



Army Lt. Col. Alexander Conyers and Chris McCormac lead the 525th MP Battalion formation in the last segment of the Torch Run.





Omar Khadr looks on as detailed military counsel Navy Lt. Cmdr. William Kuebler argues in support of a defense motion during a court session Dec. 12 in the Expeditionary Legal Complex. Khadr is charged with five war crimes, including murder and attempted murder. – Courtroom sketch by Janet Hamlin

Unanswered questions

**Army Sgt. 1st Class
Vaughn R. Larson**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The major questions before the military commission Friday, Dec. 12, were what constitutes a war crime, and what makes an unlawful combatant?

But after the motions hearing had ended, the question became: will Omar Khadr, charged with murder and attempted murder in violation of the law of war for a grenade attack in July 2002 in Baghram, Afghanistan that claimed the life of Army Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Speer, actually be tried for war crimes?

In addition to murder, Khadr is charged with conspiracy, providing material support for terrorism and spying.

Army Capt. Keith Petty, assistant prosecutor, cited military judge Army Col. Peter Brownback's ruling on a defense motion to dismiss murder charges to bolster the government's argument that

the killing of a lawful combatant by an unlawful combatant constitutes a war crime. The defense countered that this is not the case, as demonstrated by military commission rulings for Ahmed Hamdan and Mohamed Jawad, and that combatant acts by non-combatants do not violate the law of war. The defense further argued that, by definition, Khadr was not an unlawful combatant but an unprivileged belligerent who does not qualify as a prisoner of war.

"If [Army Col. Patrick Parrish] follows the other judges, he'll say it's not a war crime," Navy Lt. Cmdr. William Kuebler said during a post-court press conference. "The question is when he'll say that."

Petty, speaking after court, said the unresolved issue before the judge is what instruction he will give the jury.

"We urged the judge to decide this issue prior to trial," Petty said. He indicated that Navy Capt. Keith Allred, who presided over the Hamdan case, regretted the instructions given to that jury.

The defense continued to contend that Khadr did not throw the grenade in question. Kuebler attempted in court to display photos taken of the compound at the time of the attack by Soldiers at the scene to bolster the defense claim that Khadr was buried face-down under the debris of a collapsed roof and was unable to commit the crime for which he is charged. Parrish did not allow the photos to be shown Friday.

"The most significant thing is what didn't happen," Kuebler told reporters later, referring to the photos. "It's indicative of the nature of this process to conceal information."

John Murphy, assistant prosecutor, said the government was not concerned about the photos in question.

"We provided them," he said. Petty added that the defense has had the photos for more than a year.

"We are confident about our case,"

See **KHADR/13**

True public servants

**Army Pfc.
Eric Liesse**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Almost 50 years of military service gracefully left the U.S. Army with the help of Joint Task Force Guantanamo personnel Friday, Dec. 12. Master Sgt. Jeffrey M. Sweeney and Master Sgt. Leonard J. Pimentel, both with JTF's 525th Military Police Battalion, were honored with a dual retirement ceremony at Troopers' Chapel.

The event was presided over by 525th commander Lt. Col Alexander Conyers who honored the two retirees and their families, saying deployed Soldiers miss an innumerable amount of important events at home. However, the oath and the institution and the ways of Army life keep Soldiers in.

"You stay in as long as you have because you love Soldiering," Conyers said.

525th Headquarters, Headquarters Company 1st Sgt. Rodney Sanchez spoke on behalf of Sweeney, echoing Conyers' words on the importance of the military family.

"These two could write a book on how to raise a family," Sanchez said. He continued by mentioning his time working with Sweeney before the JTF and repeating how much love he saw in Sweeney's family.

During Sweeney's own speech, he reminisced on both his military career and how his family supported him.

"This has been the most exciting 23 years of my life," Sweeney said, "and it's more excitement than anyone should be allowed to have."

Starting as a private in March 1986 at the age of 22, Sweeney rose in the ranks steadily and deployed several times. His assignment here as the JTF's Joint Detention Group senior intelligence advisor and operations sergeant is his final mission.

"It's sort of like buying a car – buyer's remorse," Sweeney said of his decision to retire. "I just hope I find a job that's just as rewarding as this one."

Sweeney closed by again praising his family, especially the support he received from his wife of 24 years.

"She has put her life on hold to help me with mine," said Sweeney. "Thank you, my love; my friend."

After Sweeney received two awards and his ceremonial end-of-service flag, Sgt. 1st Class Virgilio Angeles, JDG's senior human resources NCO, took the pulpit to talk about his friend "Lenny."

"I asked [Pimentel]," Angeles began, "Are you going to stop working?" He said "No, I can't stop working – especially now."

Throughout his speech, Angeles repeated Pimentel's commitment to work and serve as a "fine example" for the junior Soldiers. "Lenny always steps ahead and sets standards," Angeles said, "and steps up Troopers to meet those standards."

"I've been waiting and looking forward to this day for a long time," Pimentel began.

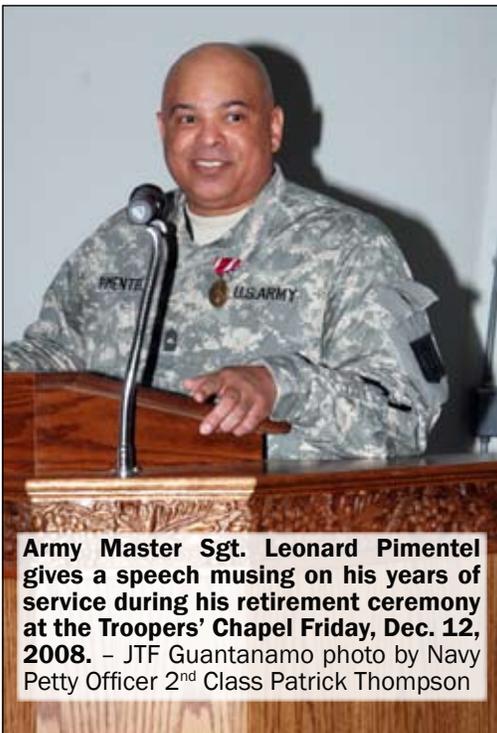
Pimentel said that throughout his career and his life, he always tried to take away "one good point" from everyone he meets, saying everyone has at least one thing about them worth remembering and emulating. This philosophy has guided his life and how he handles himself with others.

"Just remember: you got to take all the good and leave the bad," Pimentel said.

Pimentel began his military service in September 1973, enlisting as a Marine Corps infantryman. After reaching the rank of gunnery sergeant in the Marines, he retired from the service. He re-enlisted as an Army Soldier after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Pimentel is currently finishing his final assignment as the senior NCO of the JDG's J-1 office, as well as the drug and alcohol coordinator, detainee standardization team, and equal opportunity advisor. He will end his current assignment January 2009.



Army Master Sgt. Jeffrey Sweeney receives his Meritorious Service medal from Army Lt. Col. Alexander Conyers, the 525th Military Police Battalion commander, during his retirement ceremony. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Thompson



Army Master Sgt. Leonard Pimentel gives a speech musing on his years of service during his retirement ceremony at the Troopers' Chapel Friday, Dec. 12, 2008. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Thompson

Pimentel said he is often asked why his personal achievement coin is styled after a poker chip, but he has his reasons.

"I feel life is a gamble. But as long as you make the right choice, you'll never lose."

JTF's deputy commander, Army Brig. Gen. Gregory Zanetti, gave a speech after Pimentel received his two awards and end-of-service flag. Zanetti talked about the role of a master sergeant within a command, saying "when we're young; we're immature," and the master sergeants and first sergeants are looked up to as the quintessential Soldier, commanding respect and wielding authority. However, once a Soldier becomes a master sergeant, they learn it is not that simple.

"All those people aren't working for you. You're working for all those people," Zanetti said. "You become a true public servant; not just for the Army, but for the nation." ★

Sept. 11 next of kin weigh in on motions

**Navy Petty Officer 1st Class
Linda Andreoli**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Family members of some of the victims of the Sept. 11 terror attacks were in court at Guantanamo Bay Monday, Dec. 8. They watched military commission proceedings involving the men accused of plotting the events that took the lives of their family members and nearly 3,000 people.

Hamilton Peterson's parents were aboard United Airlines flight 93, which crashed into the Pennsylvania countryside after crew members and passengers fought hijackers for control of the aircraft. He said he was struck by what he called the tremendous efforts the United States is going to for a fair and objective trial. He responded to a reporter's question about the commissions being tainted by allegations of torture.

"Those of you in the courtroom today could see the conduct, demeanor, behavior and attitude of the defendants," he said. "These were people who were at times laughing, passing notes, sneering – these were not people who had been subject to such physical torture that they were in some way impaired. They seemed to view these proceedings as a joke.



I can say without hesitation that my son would be very, very proud that I was part of this witness.

– Maureen Santora

"They were clearly intellectually grasping all the painstaking efforts of due process that our country's giving them," Peterson continued, "and as you may have heard made the comment 'I don't want to waste our time going through all these things. These things that give us additional rights or issues, I just want to plead guilty because I did it.'"

Peterson said it was clear to him that the defendants were willing to plead guilty to crimes they knowingly committed, and that the U.S. has done what is needed to ensure a fair trial.

Maureen Santora's son was a 23-year-old New York City firefighter who died while responding to the attacks.

"I can say without hesitation that my son would be very, very proud that I was part of this witness," Santora said, "and I was part of the United States' effort in making sure that these detainees, who have admitted their guilt and have killed almost 3,000 people, are getting a fair shake."

She said she is sure justice will be served and her son's death will not be in vain.

Jim Samuel lost his son on Sept. 11.

"My son was on the 92nd floor of the north tower," he said. "It's just a shame, but it shows how good this country is. And I'm very proud of the military, and I can't speak enough to all the people here – how they care about us and all of that. I'm really proud to be an American."

Alice Hoagland lost her son on United flight 93.

"We Americans have exercised remarkable restraint and have, in the form of our United States military, men and women [who] have sought this day to preserve the rights and privileges of those men who have convicted themselves out of their own mouths," she said. "Nonetheless, the U.S. government is doing its utmost to make sure that their rights and privileges are preserved as they proceed with this trial, and I'm very grateful. We have reason to be proud."



Still waiting for **Santa**? while you wait...

Use Only Nonflammable Decorations. All decoration should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents and sources.

If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory. Do not leave holiday lights on unattended.

Do not overload electrical outlets or link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch.

Place lit menorahs and other candles away from decorations and drapes. Place candles out of children's reach and where pets can't knock them over. Blow out all candles before going to bed or leaving the house.

Candles are not permitted in JTF housing.

Lawyers prepare for Jan. 26 Khadr trial date

KHADR from 10

Murphy continued. “We will have evidence that we are willing to present that [Khadr] is guilty.”

Murphy suggested that the defense was seeking to try the case in the media. He declined to discuss specifics about the photos or evidence to avoid prejudicing the accused as well as potential jury members.

The defense team appeared willing to entertain the notion that Khadr’s wounds – he was shot twice in the back – may have occurred after he was discovered and cleared of the debris, but would not venture so far as to officially make that claim. Kuebler said he would not speculate how Khadr was shot in the back.

Petty said prosecution witnesses have been notified of the Jan. 26 trial, but conceded that those witnesses most likely keep up with the news.

“The bottom line is, since Nuremberg we have never prosecuted a child for war crimes,” Kuebler said, adding that Khadr would be safe if returned to Canada. Khadr was born in Toronto in 1986 but had lived with his family in Peshawar, Pakistan mostly since birth.

Marine Maj. Jeffrey Groharing, lead prosecutor in the Khadr case, was not present at Friday’s hearing. ❖



The belly dancing class, held Sundays at 3 p.m. at the Marine Hill aerobics room, offers women a chance to learn the techniques of belly dancing in a supportive environment. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

New class offers all the right moves

DANCE from 6

“I plan to attend the class again,” continued Prince. “I found it very enjoyable to be around a group of supportive women who are gathered in one place to learn and have fun.”

Belly dancing isn’t a replacement for the average Trooper who needs to focus on

running, push-ups and sit-ups in order to pass their physical fitness test. However, it can add variety and a little culture to your regular fitness routine.

Belly dancing is offered every Sunday at the Marine Hill fitness center aerobics room. Class begins at 3 p.m. Bring a hip scarf and a positive attitude and prepare to have fun. ❖

Boots on the Ground

by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Little

What is your favorite Christmas movie and why?

Navy Seaman James Amidon



“Ernest Saves Christmas, because Pee Wee Herman didn’t have a Christmas movie.”

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class John Frazier



“The Christmas Story. The part where Ralphie’s little brother can’t put his arms down because of his jacket and he had to go to the bathroom.”

Navy Seaman Alex Arutyunov



“The Nightmare Before Christmas, because Danny Elfman did a great job on the music.”

Army Spc. Waddell Tollison



“How The Grinch Stole Christmas, because he had a change of heart.”

The spirit of Christmas



**Army Capt.
Scott C. Brill**

JTF-GTMO Deputy Command Chaplain

It seems that there is more concern this holiday season about having nothing in the Christmas stocking than a lump of coal. I don't know about you, but I never got a lump of coal, even when I cried and pouted, which according to the "Santa is coming to town" song meant Christmas present doom. I did, however, end up with a few presents that seemed worse than coal – or they did at the time. A time when I did not understand much about the true meaning of Christmas and what a gift, regardless of its retail value, really cost the giver.

Christmas is a time to celebrate the gifts He gave and gives us by His matchless love and sacrifice. It is a time for giving. He gave the perfect example of the best gifts: love, service, friendship, kindness, forgiveness, et cetera. None of these things require cash or credit, and all of them are a gift we can and should give year-round.

My best Christmas ever was my sophomore year in high school. At the time we were living in a campground, year number four. I remember plugging a string of lights into a power box, and

wrapping it around a pine tree next to our Coleman tent. That Christmas morning, when it came time to open my present, singular, I made sure to smile and thank my mom for the set of Pentel marking pencils. She knew I liked to draw. As you can imagine, it was somewhat difficult to go to school after the break and be asked, "What did you get for Christmas". Especially living in Santa Barbara, where cars were common gifts. Why was this Christmas the best ever? Because, I knew the widows' mite was spent to buy those simple pencils.

A perfect example of living the spirit of Christmas is Mother Theresa, who spent her life serving the poorest of the poor and doing good to all she met, and felt no need to promote herself. When praised for her work she said, "I am just a little pencil in God's hand." She believed that there should be less talk and more action. "Take a broom and clean someone's house," she taught. "That says enough."

Those who leave a legacy of good deeds generally shun the limelight. They would rather modestly push a broom or quietly bind up a wound or lend a shoulder to cry on than bask in public praise. The kindest actions and the best people are often unnoticed by the thoughtless crown

of the world. Instead, they receive the highest honor by those whose opinion really matters, from the people they serve and from God "who rewards in secret."

What a blessing it is to be part of a community that emulates the spirit of Christmas and the principles of service taught by Mother Theresa. Think of all the times in just this week alone. My mind is drawn to sweet memories of the selfless service rendered by the dive club members and others during the visit of the Wounded Warriors, and the Wounded Warriors themselves. What a forever difference you made in their lives.

Another lasting memory is of the kindness of those troops called upon to escort the Sept. 11 victim family members. Surely you were touched by their lives, and no doubt were instrumental in lifting their burdens by your calming presence. These and many others are all examples of life-changing gifts that cannot be bought in any store, but only experienced by giving of ourselves.

We are all in the words of Mother Theresa, "a little pencil in God's hand" doing our part, standing shoulder to shoulder, lifting where we stand. This is our Christmas gift to the world.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays. ☆

CHAPEL HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Naval Station Chapel

Dec. 23: Operation Christmas Stocking – 10 a.m. Cookie drop-off; noon, stocking stuffing
Dec. 24: 5 p.m. Children's Mass; 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass (PPI Chapel); 7 p.m. candlelight service; 11:30 p.m. Midnight Mass
Dec. 25: 9 a.m. Mass; 11 a.m. Protestant Service

Troopers' Chapel

Dec. 24: 7 p.m. Bible Study
Dec. 25: 7:30 a.m. Mass
Dec. 28: 7:30 a.m. Mass; 9 a.m. Protestant Service; 11 a.m. Spanish Protestant Service; 6 p.m. Bible Study

The bug man cometh



Army Pfc. Carlynn M. Knaak

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

While driving around the base at night, seeing the glowing eyes of nocturnal rodents called Hutias, or banana rats, is not uncommon. However, thanks to Air Force Staff Sgt. James Keel, these timid creatures are about the only rodents you'll come across in Camp Justice, inside as well as out.

Keel, an entomologist from the 474th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron, works in the Pest Management shop in Camp Justice to ensure that Troopers, media, attorneys and civilian contractors are protected from rodents and annoying insects.

"I make sure the Troops are safe from disease-ridden rodents," said Keel. "I spray dust for ants, dispose of bee hives, and even fix the bat problem in the hanger. I help make sure your places are safe to live."

Keel's hard work and dedication was evident when he treated 183 living and work areas for ants and some commonly known insects.

Armed with his personal protection gear, explained Tech. Sgt. Chad Leblanc, the superintendent of the Pest Management shop for the 474th ECES, Keel hit the ground running and placed insecticide underneath thousands of sand bags that line 183 living and work quarters.

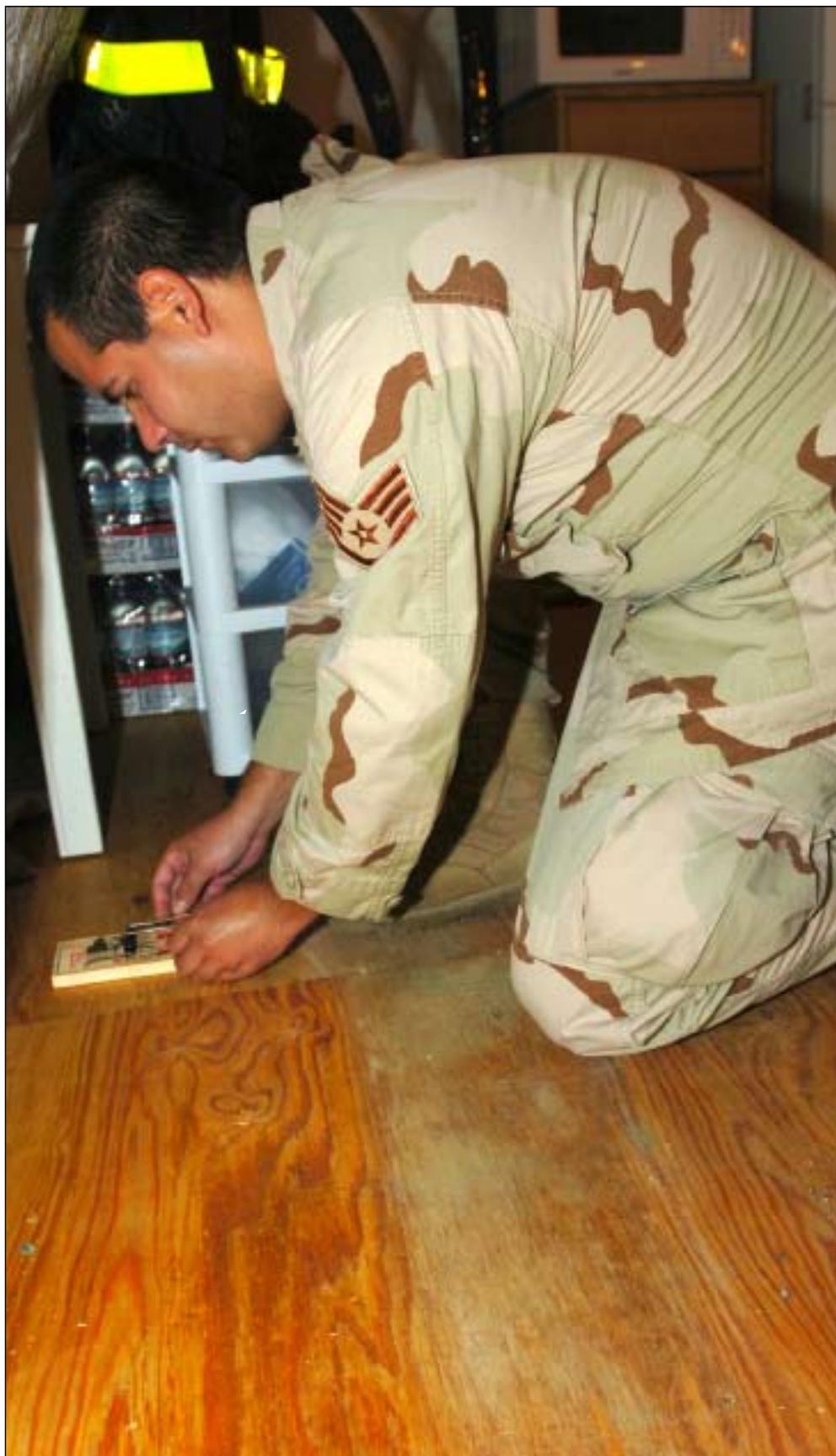
Not all the work that Keel does utilizes chemicals to exterminate troublesome rodents and insects. Initially non-chemical methods are used to dispose of the creatures, such as brooms to knock down bee hives or biological control for plants – a method of controlling pests that relies on predation.

Through these techniques Keel protects the health and welfare of Troops by maintaining a clean, hygienic area to live and work.

"With his atypical attitude toward his mission requirements as well as volunteering for additional duties, [Keel] has allowed the 474th ECES mission to be accomplished in a smooth flowing manner from day one of his arrival," said LeBlanc.

"I don't ask for any accolades for what I do, but my job is sort of taken for granted," said Keel. "I take care of the things that people don't want to."

Keel leaves no sandbag unturned, no dark corner or dumpster unlooked. Although many might not realize the job he's doing around Camp Justice, it just means that the bug catcher is doing his job well.



Air Force Staff Sgt. James Keel, an entomologist for the 474th ECES, lays down a rat trap inside one of the tents within Camp Justice.

Samantha Prince
with some of the
more than 3,000
cards of support sent
to guards in the Joint
Detention Group.

Encouraging words

**Army Sgt. 1st Class
Vaughn R. Larson**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

An unassuming request led to an unexpected result. Samantha Prince, a Joint Task Force contractor, had posted a request for letters of support for guards in the Joint Detention Group Dec. 3 on the website "anysoldier.com" and anticipated between 20 to 30 responses.

Monday, Dec. 15, she received more than 3,000.

The vast majority were messages from patrons of Golden Corral restaurants, as part of an effort called "Operation Thank You" organized by Brian Bohlman, executive director as well as a chaplain in the South Carolina Army National Guard. Among the brief messages:

"We wish you were all home for the holidays, but you are out there taking care of our country. Thank you for all you do."

"We really appreciate all that you do for us. God protect and send you home safe."

"Never doubt for a moment that you [are] prayed for or thought about, as well as your families."

According to Prince, the cards will be distributed to guards through their senior enlisted members.

"I've met some of the guards," Prince said. "If anybody needs daily encouragement, they do."

She encouraged anyone in the Joint Task Force to sign up as a sponsor on "anysoldier.com."

"Look at the response I got in a week or two," she said.



**Coast Guard Port Security
Unit 305 members Pam
Smith, Sheldon Harley, Dana
Coleman, Carl Taylor, D.J.
Wassler and Charles Conley
participated in the lighted
boat parade Saturday, Dec.
13. The PSU, which provides
maritime security for the
Joint Task Force, had two
boats in the parade. - JTF
Guantanamo photo by Army
Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell ▶**

