

The WIRE

An award-winning
JTF journal

Season Served

GTMO's most popular sport returns

525th brings home
New Mexico glory

JTF implements DADT
repeal training



Trooper to Trooper

featuring

Sgt. Maj. Harold Bodenschatz

Operations Sergeant Major, J3

Today I would like to talk about Troopers' commitment in the day-to-day operations here at Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay. Many will say it is no big deal to do our jobs day in and day out; but I beg to differ. Doing your job every day, all day takes a special kind of commitment. It takes dedicated commitment of all Troopers to face the same grind each day. Some of our jobs here have excitement in them from time to time and some are the same old thing. But one thing always remains the same – the job must get done. Troopers are not always granted the choice of what they want to do; nevertheless they must do what they are told to do. I must say that I am very proud of the Troopers here at GTMO because they have that dedication I am talking about. I see everyday the commitment in their eyes and in their smiles. I see an important mission with a no-fail demand can have success. That success comes from our Troopers through their dedication everyday. From the lowest-ranking Trooper to the most senior-ranking Trooper, everybody works to do their best to make the mission happen.

What headlines we get here are focused on policy, rather than the efforts of those who serve. That is beyond our power to change. Still, everyone wants to be recognized for their effort. Many leaders have different views on recognizing Troopers. I believe everybody is entitled to recognition when they work hard to make the mission happen. It should not

matter what rank they hold or who they know – it should be based on their merit. This type of commitment is called "commitment to doing what is right."

All leaders need to remember a little recognition will go a long way to getting the job done. All leaders must remember if it were not for their Troopers who support them everyday, they would not have a job themselves. Way too often I hear someone say, "Well, they just did their job. Why should they get recognized?" Why shouldn't they get recognized for doing that job?

I also hear, "Well, they are just a lower-enlisted, their time will come later." Why should they have to wait just because you did? We as leaders must remember it is our job and our duty to be committed to making things better and not make the same mistakes that were made at our expense. Commitment of leaders to their Troopers' well-being should always be the uppermost important objective in our word and deeds.

Leaders need to always understand and keep in front of them a commitment to



selfless service. To serve everybody you are charge of before you serve yourself. Every time you do something that benefits yourself, ask the question "Is this truly selfless service or is it self-serving to me only?" Are you taking care of Troopers, the needs of the Mission and the Country; or is it really only benefiting you? These are hard questions we must ask ourselves if we are truly leaders. This is the kind of Commitment that defines us as leaders and as a great nation of people. I am not saying it is easy. It is, in fact, very easy to stray from the path of commitment. We must stay the course and always remember to be committed to our Troopers and the mission.

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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 regard 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 Defense Logistics Agency Document Services with a circulation of 1,000.

COVER: Anthony Tydingo spikes the ball as Salim Rahmanzai goes for the block during a volleyball scrimmage Tuesday night at Denich Gym. - photo by Army Sgt. Benjamin Cossel

Final Haiti run-off election results delayed until Monday

Voice of America News Service

Haitian officials say the final results of the country's recent runoff elections will be announced next Monday, instead of this coming Saturday as originally planned.

A government source close to the matter tells the French news agency conditions have not been fulfilled to present the results on Saturday as scheduled. Word of the delay comes as President-elect Michel Martelly prepares to take office May 14, succeeding President Rene Preval.

Mr. Martelly was initially excluded from the disputed first round in November, until international observers reviewed those results and recommended he advance to the second round instead of the ruling party candidate, Jude Celestin. The observers cited fraud and irregularities in the first round of balloting. The second round took place March 20.

Meanwhile, the president-elect says his new government will be all-inclusive and that he plans to make his selections based on qualifications, not political affiliation. In an interview with VOA, Mr. Martelly also said he is deciding whom to pick as prime minister to help implement his vision for Haiti. The president-elect says his goals include free tuition for all children nationwide, housing for people living in tent camps following last year's earthquake, and strengthening the agricultural sector so Haiti can become more self-sufficient.

The president-elect was not clear on whether he planned to renew the mandate of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission after its expiration this coming October. Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive and former U.S.

President Bill Clinton co-chair the commission, which is overseeing assistance to the Caribbean nation following the January 2010 earthquake. The quake left more than 200,000 people dead.

The number of people still living in tent camps as a result of the quake has fallen by more than half to 680,000. A deadly cholera

epidemic that started in Haiti last October appears to have stabilized. Millions of people, however, continue to rely on non-governmental organizations to meet their basic needs. Haiti's justice system is dysfunctional, and the prison system is dangerously overcrowded.

Haiti is the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.



Obama Wants Defense Review, \$400 Billion in Cuts

Voice of America News Service

The Pentagon says President Barack Obama's desire to find \$400 billion over the next 12 years in additional defense spending cuts will result in reductions in U.S. military capabilities. U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates is launching a comprehensive review to develop options for the president to consider.

In his budget speech Wednesday, President Obama praised Secretary Gates for finding \$400 billion in cuts based mainly on improved efficiency. Then he said he wants the same amount of cuts again.

"We need to not only eliminate waste and improve efficiency and effectiveness, but conduct a fundamental review of America's missions, capabilities, and our role in a changing world. I intend to work with Secretary Gates and the Joint Chiefs on this review, and I will make specific decisions about spending after it's complete," Obama said.

In a fact sheet, the White House specified that the president wants to hold defense

spending increases below the inflation level, and save \$400 billion between now and 2023. Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell says the cuts would affect the defense department's base budget, currently \$553 billion per year. At the current spending rate that would be a cut of about 6 1/2 per cent per year. The cuts would not affect funding for the current wars.

Still, Morrell says reductions of that magnitude will have a real impact on U.S. defense capabilities, and will be considered carefully during the review the president ordered.

"The secretary has been clear that further significant defense cuts can not be accomplished without reducing force structure and military capability. The comprehensive review of missions, capabilities and America's role in the world will identify alternatives for the president's consideration. The secretary believes this process must be about managing risk associated with future threats and national security challenges, and identifying missions that the country is willing to have the military forego," Morrell said.

Morrell says Secretary Gates was not aware the president wanted the review until Tuesday, and is still putting together a plan with other senior officials. The secretary did not speak in public Wednesday, but at a news conference in February he urged members of congress not to make defense cuts based on fixed amounts, but rather only based on the strategic and operational realities of today's world.

"Suggestions to cut defense by this or that large number have largely become exercises in simple math, divorced from serious considerations of capabilities, risk, and the level of resources needed to protect this country's security and vital interests around the world," Gates said.

The press secretary, Geoff Morrell, says the Pentagon's review of threats and capabilities will not be finished in time to impact the coming debate over the budget for next year. Rather, he says, any strategy-based reductions will be part of the president's budget proposal for 2013.

News from the Bay

Stories and reporting by Spc. Meredith Vincent and Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jason Tross

Servicemembers to be paid in full tomorrow

The impending government shutdown confused many over the weekend. Now that the threat is over, many servicemembers are asking themselves, "How am I getting paid?"

"DFAS will pay the military in full at the next regular payday – Friday, April 15," said Lt. Cmdr. Will Parks, officer in charge, personal services detachment. "However, there will be two bank deposits for each member. Both deposits will go into member accounts on April 15."

Parks explained that, facing the shutdown, DFAS ran the payday for the period of April 1 through 8. Interim leave and earning statements were generated for that time period. Over the weekend, the decision was made to run a second, semi-manual pay for the period of April 9 through the 15, as opposed to going back and re-booting the entire thing.

"The current military system is reliable but ... somewhat inflexible," said Parks. "DFAS programmers thought it very risky to start over."

The semi-manual run will not automatically update the LES. Therefore, the mid-month LES will only show pay for April 1 - 8. The month-end LES, however, will be complete for the entire month.

The bottom line servicemembers should bear in mind is this: You are getting paid. Look

for two LES's.

For more information, contact x4415

Engineers hold first base-wide Fun Day

Engineers from around Joint Task Force Guantanamo and Naval Station Guantanamo Bay traded their tools for sports and barbecue April 2 during the inaugural base-wide Engineer Day.

More than 50 Troopers from the Air Force Prime Base Engineering Emergency Force, Navy Seabees and Army engineers took an entire Friday to play volleyball, basketball, golf, go diving and finally regroup at the Marblehead Lanes Bowling Center.

"It's great to get everyone together – especially from the different branches," said Tech Sgt. Chris Dallas, work order assignment manager for the BEEF. "We all work very hard and now we get to play hard together. This sort of thing breeds camaraderie and unity which helps us work together."

Army Maj. Thomas Knott, of JTF Guantanamo engineering, spent the day behind the grill cooking steaks, bratwurst, burgers, hot dogs and baked beans – all seasoned with his personal marinade recipe.

"Good things happen around a dinner table," said Navy Capt. Thomas Karnowski, of JTF Guantanamo engineering. "I believe you sit at the table, break some bread and

talk about things and pass on the word. It's a great way to get things done."

Throughout the day, some people took to the bay for diving while others scattered around Naval Station Guantanamo to play their respective sports.

"I played the heck out of some volleyball and bowled my first 188 – four strikes in a row," exclaimed Army Staff Sgt. Tasha Cooper, a carpenter and mason with the 525th Military Police Battalion and Engineer Day sports coordinator.

"We've been planning for about 60 days now for this first... Engineer Day," she said. "Everything went great. Hopefully they'll do it again this time next year."

Marines host night run along northeast gate

Marine Corps Security Forces Company is sponsoring a Moonlight Run along the northeast gate April 22.

Check-in begins at 6 p.m. – departure from Marine Hill is scheduled at 6:30 p.m.

Sign up at the Marine Hill Whitehouse, Monday – Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost of participation is \$25. The first 15 to sign up will receive a free T-shirt.

For more information, contact Staff Sgt. Owen at x2344.

What motivates you?



"My country, my Corps, my family."

Gunnery Sgt.
Chet Smith



"The new opportunities God gives me each day."

Spc. Migdalia Torres



"A nice, relaxing evening hanging out at Hardhoagmer's Place."

Religious Programs
Specialist 3rd Class
Jeffery Lauber



"My family."

Hospital Corpsman
Jay Patty

Boots on the Ground

trooper focus

Army Sgt. Eric Ocampo

Spc. Kelly Gary

After serving 13 years in the military spread across active duty, inactive and active reserve, Sgt. Eric B. Ocampo, J3 administrative noncommissioned officer, said he has learned a lot since swearing in more than a decade ago.

“When I was in high school I couldn’t see myself working in fast food,” said Ocampo. “I had more skills than that, so I joined the military.”

Since joining, Ocampo has attained two military occupational specialties. He is primarily shower/laundry, clothing repair specialist. For Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay however, he employs his secondary skillsert- human resource specialist. He performs an array of administrative duties for J3, supporting operations and training.

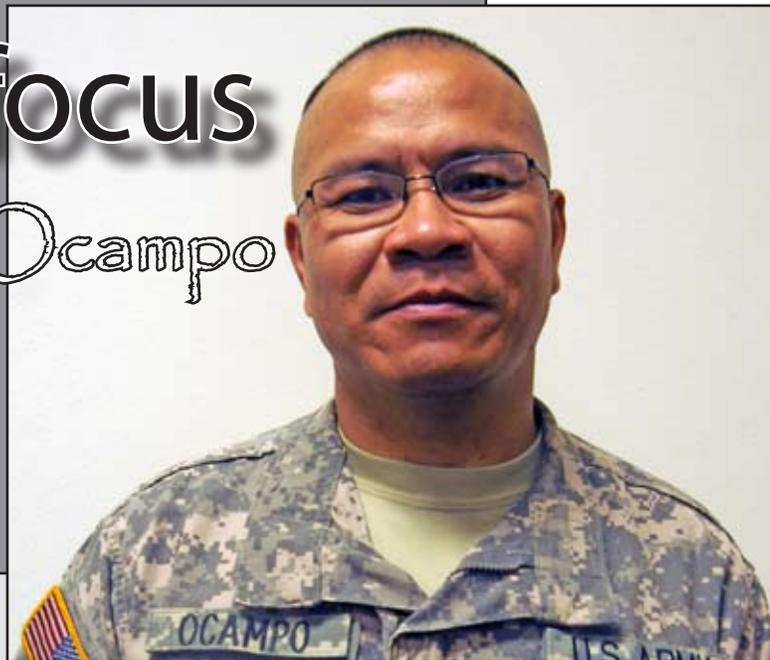
“Sgt. Ocampo is a very mature young man,” said Sgt. Maj. Harold J. Bodenschatz, operational sergeant major for J3. “He does an outstanding job in supporting the J3 in taking on every task that he does.”

Administrative specialists are unsung heroes. They often do a great deal of behind the scenes missions that keep sections in order.

“I wish people could really see how hard we work,” said Ocampo.

Ocampo’s leadership has noticed the effort he has put forth.

“He takes on every task with zeal,” said Bodenschatz. “He completes it in a timely manner or even ahead of schedule.”



Bodenschatz said he believes Ocampo exemplifies all of the Army Values but that personal courage is one of his strongest traits.

“He has the personal courage to always do the right thing,” Bodenschatz said. “I can always count on him to take care of business and it will be done the right way.”

When he is not taking care of business, Ocampo said he likes to watch movies and basketball.

“Hopefully I can get some tickets with my friends and go to the playoffs,” he said.

Yet, there doesn’t appear to be much extra time for Ocampo to watch basketball games.

“He works very long hours but always has a smile on his face,” Bodenschatz said. “He is always there to assist anybody that needs help.”

see FOCUS, page 19

Bullet Bio

Time in service: 13 years

Hobbies: watching basketball and movies

Pet peeves: annoying people

Next goal: to make staff sergeant

Advice to junior Troopers: “Do the best you can do with any task you are given.”

Backup power responsibilities exchanged with bittersweet goodbye

Story and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jason Tross

The Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force power production engineers with Joint Task Force Guantanamo packed up and sent off their last MEP-012A generator April 8.

This effectively hands over backup electrical power for Camp Justice to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Works Department and civilian contractors, Burns and Roe.

BEEF power production and electrical engineers see this as a bittersweet moment. The MEP-

012A units have been handed down from unit-to-unit at Camp Justice since its inception in 2005 to provide emergency power during military commissions at the facility.

“Today we are reluctantly sending off our last MEP-12 electrical generator,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Frank Valls de Los Reyes, assistant noncommissioned officer in charge of power production. “Anytime you have something around for this long you take ownership and have a lot of work invested in it. It’s something to

be proud of.”

Camp Justice was built with eight of these large-capacity generators as its initial backup power plan. The trailer-based unit weighs 12.5 tons and uses a V12 Cummins Diesel motor to pump out 750 kw of electricity. That is plenty of power, but too much weight for most standard vehicles.

Air Force Master Sgt. Lyn Jamison said the greatest challenge handing this unit over was simply getting it from Camp Justice to the Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Port.

“We had to plan an easy slope route and travel at a low speed with a police escort to make sure this thing didn’t get away from us,” said Jamison. “It’s not really a problem getting the generator rolling. It’s getting it to stop that’s such a risk.”

BEEF engineers borrowed a five-ton truck from U.S. Navy Seabees and used the old Naval Air Station Guantanamo Bay flight line to approach a more gradual slope down toward the docks where the unit will be

see BEEF, page 19

Reading program links children with deployed family members

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist
2nd Class Maddelin Angebrand

Being away from loved ones is something every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine and Coast Guardsmen understands when he or she takes the oath of enlistment. Only on deployment do servicemembers truly come to grips with the mental strength it takes to endure time away from family.

These emotions are familiar to Army Sgt. Nazario Castro, attached to the 124th Military Police Company, Puerto Rico National Guard. Castro has been away from his wife and two sons for nearly six months.

Aside from using Skype to talk to his family each night, Castro was elated to learn about Joint Task Force Guantanamo's United Through Reading program.

United Through Reading records a deployed parent, aunt, uncle or sibling reading a storybook to a child back home. The disc and the book are then sent to the child so he or she can read along with their family member. This allows the child to make powerful connections and helps deployed personnel parent from afar. It also reassures the child mom or dad is safe and thinking of home while deployed.

"I had no idea that this was available. I heard some friends talking about it, and I thought what better way to surprise my boys," Castro expressed.

A native of Puerto Rico, Castro said he's a family man and wanted to find a book written in Spanish. Instead, he resorted to translating a Disney's Peter Pan book from English to Spanish.

"My sons are learning both English and Spanish," said Castro. "So this will be good for them to hear an English-written story translated for them. I can't describe what their faces will look like seeing me, but I know they will be excited."

Castro attended a Yellow Ribbon pre-deployment brief with his wife prior to deployment and said the program really helped prepare his family.

"My wife took charge and shared this Sesame Street pre-deployment book with our sons, which showed them that Elmo's dad is also deployed and what to expect," he said.

Not realizing his older son would take the book so literally, Castro was surprised at his son's most recent request.

"He said, 'Daddy, I want to meet Elmo's father,'" laughed Castro. "So I had to tell him that Elmo's father is on leave, because he thinks that Elmo's father is my boss."



Army Sgt. Nazario Castro, reads a Peter Pan book to his two sons while being recorded as part of the United Through Reading program, at the Trooper Chapel on Guantanamo Bay, April 4.

Although Castro's son will not be meeting Elmo's father, he will see his dad on video making voices and sound effects to the tune of a Disney classic- "Peter Pan."

"We adults always try to explain life, but children just live everything with great imagination and passion," said Castro. "Trying to describe or explain how my sons will feel with this storytelling is impossible."

Religious Programs Specialist 3rd Class Jeffery Lauber, attached to JTF Guantanamo, said he finds joy in being a facilitator for the program by setting up and recording the readings.

Since Lauber arrived in October, 50 videos have been recorded and delivered to families across the country. Lauber explained the recorded tape is made into a DVD and formatted to play in a computer or DVD player. Then the member mails the book and DVD to family members.

"It gives the family back home a chance to see their Trooper as often as they want," Lauber shared. "I have heard from people who use this program, how their kids or grandkids watch the video on a nightly basis."

If you are interested in uniting with your family through reading contact Lauber at ext. 2305 to set up an appointment.

Poker Ride offers unique fitness, family opportunities

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jason Tross

Residents from around Naval Station Guantanamo Bay turned out to participate in Morale Welfare and Recreation's Poker Ride bicycle event Saturday.

More than 60 people grabbed bikes and rode to five different stops around the base during a two-hour span, taking a card at each stop. Riders then compiled their hand and met at the MWR Marina for the last two cards to flip and see who got luckiest.

In the end Navy Personnel Specialist 1st Class Christina Reaves, Naval Station Guantanamo's command career counselor, won with four sevens. She got to choose her prize from one of four beach cruiser bicycles and more than \$1,000 in prizes from Camelback and the Navy Exchange. She came away with a new Camelback.

"I definitely didn't expect



Senior Chief Petty Officer Robin Guy and 1st Sgt. Brian Stuckey receive their playing cards and information at the beginning of the Poker Run, Saturday morning.

to win this," said Reaves, who rode alongside her eight-year-old daughter. "We rode our bikes around base this morning just to do something healthy together. She was with me through most of the ride before I had to drop her off at ballet. I think she would have made the whole thing with me [otherwise]."

MWR Marina Director Cory

Geiger explained this poker ride was less about winning and more about having a good time.

"It literally doesn't matter who finishes first," said Geiger. "It's a true game of chance all day. The nice part is that this is not a race. We just want to make

see POKER, page 19

Longtime Rick's Lounge DJ says goodbye

Story and photo by Spc. Kelly Gary

Bon Jovi's "Blaze of Glory" and Boyz II Men's "End of the Road" were robustly belted out by a few of the regulars at Rick's Lounge in honor of disc jockey Jeffrey Omar Campbell's last karaoke night Wednesday.

After more than a year of moonlighting at Rick's, Campbell, hazardous material inspector for Naval Station Guantanamo, said he needed to find more substantial employment to better help his family in Jamaica.

Many customers expressed sincere regret Campbell will no longer be there to create customized playlists or promote and facilitate karaoke on Wednesday and Saturday nights.

"[These nights] are a time when all the officers get to come in and let their hair down," said Marine 1st Lt. Robert M. Collinsworth, Joint Task Force Guantanamo anti-terrorism officer.

JTF and Naval Station officers as well as civilians come to Rick's to have a good time and



Jeffrey Campbell joins in on the Cupid Shuffle Wednesday at Rick's Lounge. He spent his last night as Rick's disc jockey singing, dancing and entertaining the customers.

Campbell is there to keep the tunes rolling.

"Jeffrey is the glue that holds everything together," Collinsworth said. "He knows

exactly when to put on the right song."

Throughout his time as the

see DJ, page 19

DADT repeal training begins

Story by Army Staff Sgt. Benjamin Cossel

In December, Congress voted to repeal a 17-year policy of banning openly homosexual individuals from serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, commonly known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

For the moment, the policy remains in effect. Since December, the Department of Defense has been charged with reviewing whether or how implementation of the repeal could impact military readiness, and with preparing the force for the change.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates said before the law is officially off-the-books, a military-wide education campaign will take place. Once the chiefs of the individual services have certified the training is complete, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of Defense and the President must certify repeal of the law will not negatively impact combat readiness. Following such certification, there will be a 60-day waiting period after which gay and lesbian servicemembers will be allowed to serve openly.

In a Pentagon briefing room interview following President Obama signing the repeal legislation into law, Gates said the entire process could take up to a year but the Pentagon would not drag its feet on the implementation process. To that end, training has already begun at Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

"The key takeaway from this training is that all personnel are needed to accomplish the mission and that we must treat everyone with dignity and respect," said Rear Admiral Jeffrey Harbeson, Joint Task Force Guantanamo commander. "We each come from different backgrounds,

see DADT, page 16



MWR serves up league volleyball

Story by Mass Communication Specialist
2nd Class Joe Ebaló

For almost two weeks straight, the Denich Gym on Naval Station Guantanamo has been filled with hundreds of servicemembers, families and sports fans alike cheering on their favorite teams. But sports lovers haven't been coming out three evenings a week to watch the volleyball championship series or even the playoffs, as the season just started.

"Volleyball is by far the most popular sports league here in Guantanamo," said Alana Morrison, Morale Welfare and Recreation sports director. "If you come out on a Monday or Wednesday night to watch the games you'll see why. The energy from the players on the court is great and the fans love it."

MWR kicked off their Spring 2011 Co-ed Indoor Volleyball League with four games scheduled back-to-back, April 4. More than 100 servicemembers from Joint Task Force and Naval Station Guantanamo joined up with families and players from the military community to form the 14 teams playing in the league. Dozens of Sailors, Soldiers, Marines,

Airmen and Coastguardsmen play for their command teams as a way to build team work and camaraderie in their units outside of the workplace as well as to participate in friendly competition with other departments.

"The games are intense, but not as physical as football or other sports," said Morrison. "I think that's another reason why volleyball has such a big following -- it's a co-ed league so at all times there needs to be at least two females on the court. Believe me, the ball still gets hit very hard and fast."

Fe Reyes, a member of one of the volleyball teams in the league, agrees.

"We always have fun and that counts more than the outcome of the match," said Reyes. "But we all try our best out there on the court so it's always nice to get the win."

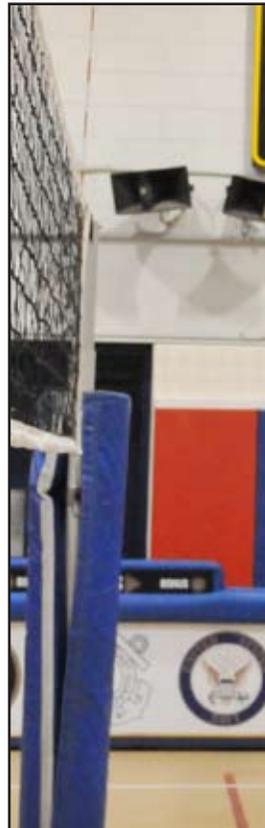
During the two-month regular season and month-long playoff tournament for the championship, teams are schedule to play each other at least once and offered a chance to forfeit a game or reschedule due to mission requirements.

"We understand many of the teams

have players that might not be able to play for work reasons, so we try to adjust the game scheduled as needed for the teams as long as we have prior notification," Morrison said. "We know the mission comes first and we fully support our teams."

Morrison said her main goals for the league are good sportsmanship, safety and continuing to attract more fans.

"We want to foster a competitive, but healthy and fair environment for all our sports leagues and events," she explained. "Come out and support your local volleyball players, and if you think you got game, sign up for the next league and serve it up."





Opposite page: Gilbert Saenz and Tony Gul battle over the net during a volleyball scrimmage Tuesday evening.

Top left: Katie Graske, captain and coach of the Legal team, sets up the ball.

Bottom right: Zahi Abi Chaker tips the ball over the net as Brie Kreutzfeldt looks on.

Top right: Salim Rahmanzai goes up for the block as Burch tips the ball over the net.

Photos by Spc. Meredith Vincent



Back in January, the Wire brought you the story of Guantanamo Bay's Bataan Memorial Death March. More than 50 Soldiers with the 525th Military Police Battalion competed in a 15-mile ruck march for the opportunity to travel to White Sands, N.M., where those with the top five quickest times would then compete in the national Bataan March.

Those lucky five recently returned to Guantanamo Bay, after placing fourth out of 23 in their category, with memories and an experience none of them will soon forget.

Brian Stuckey, first sergeant for the 193rd MP Company, explained his motivations for putting his team together.

"One reason was to be physically fit," he said. "And two, because there was a goal at the end of it, not just a PT test with push-ups and sit-ups."

There was, of course, a deeper meaning to the event, and Stuckey made sure his Soldiers never forgot it. For those who don't know the story, it goes like this:

During World War II, on April 9, 1942, thousands of American and Filipino servicemembers were surrendered to Japanese forces. Through the miserably hot Philippine jungles, the prisoners marched for several days under deadly supervision. Those who fell, stopped, talked or tried to help another prisoner were executed. The incident is now one of legend in the United States Army. In 1989, the New Mexico State University began sponsoring the memorial march – the New Mexico National Guard's 200th Coast Artillery was among the prisoners at Bataan.

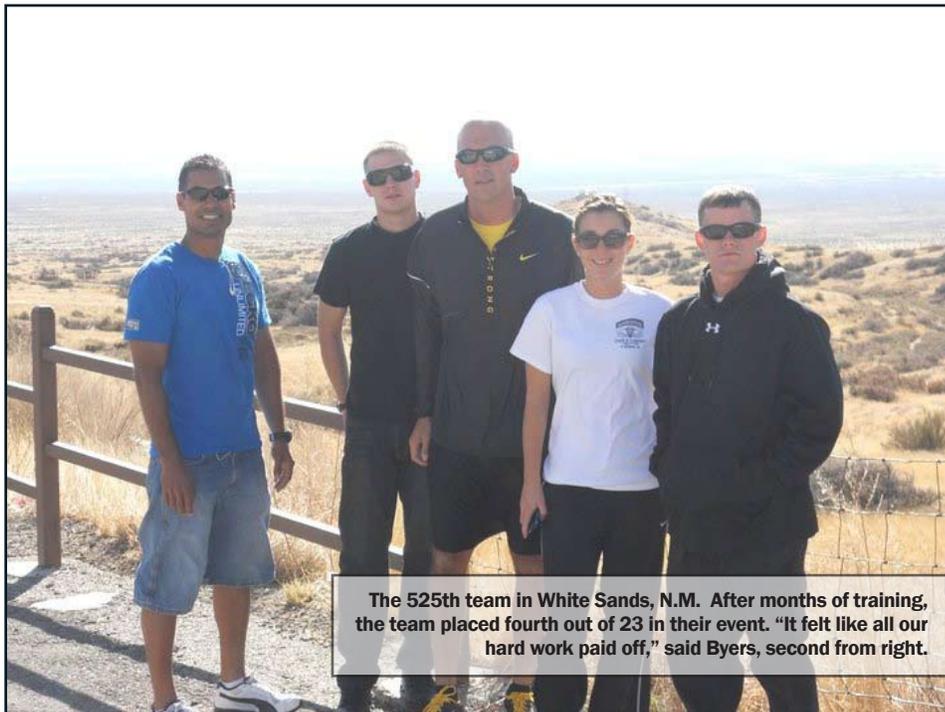
Now in its twentieth year, the march inspires more than 6,000 people from all parts of the country to join. And, in an emotional whollop, it has become tradition for survivors of the original Bataan march to greet participants at the beginning and end of the race.

"The reason we were there was the best experience," said Stuckey. "Walking out ... and being able to shake the hands of the individuals who were actually in the Bataan March by gunpoint, forcibly, for hundreds of miles. That was the epitome of it – that made the whole march worthwhile."

The history of the event hit the mark for his young Soldiers as well.

"The day we went to register, we passed one of the vets and I immediately got emotional," said Pfc. Tiffany Byers, who works in the S2 shop with the 525th Headquarters and Headquarters Company. "I was so amazed at the will to live they had and the turmoil they survived. I was just thankful to be there and represent the vets who didn't make it."

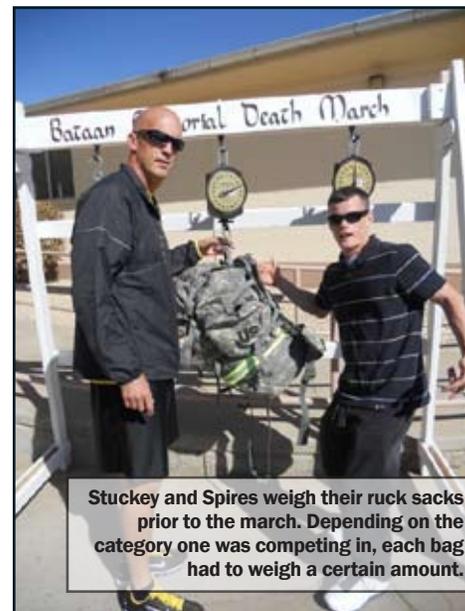
The road to White Sands was not an easy one. After the qualifying march, Stuckey set about training his newly acquired team. For



The 525th team in White Sands, N.M. After months of training, the team placed fourth out of 23 in their event. "It felt like all our hard work paid off," said Byers, second from right.



Stuckey leads his Soldiers down the road on their 26.2 mile journey.



Stuckey and Spires weigh their ruck sacks prior to the march. Depending on the category one was competing in, each bag had to weigh a certain amount.

two and a half months, they trained three hours a day, Monday through Friday and every other Saturday.

"We knew what we were getting into," explained Stuckey. "We talked to people who had been there before, but just to physically get out and march with that weight on your back was the best training we could do ... and we probably should've done more of it."

"1st Sgt. Stuckey did a really good job of training ... and preparing us," said Pfc. Robert Carroll, a corrections specialist with the 193rd MP Company.

"We knew we had to train hard to be competitive," Byers said. "We were more than prepared, but once you get past mile 15 or so, it was all about what we had inside that

pushed us to the end."

Aside from the physical training, Stuckey had to bring the group together as a team. Only two of the Soldiers knew each other before the qualifying march – now they were spending up to 20 hours a week together, and Stuckey knew to place in New Mexico, they would have to trust and rely on each other.

"We would try once a week to have team building time and get breakfast together," said Stuckey. "[No one] really knew each other, but by the time we left, it was like, this is our family."

"Our group had such a good dynamic," explained Byers. "During training we were figuring each other out, but during the march, we were all on one page. It was all about the team."

“I thought God should be there, waiting for us.”

Soldiers from the 525th journey to New Mexico

Story by Spc. Meredith Vincent
Photos provided by the 525th “Vigilant Warriors” Bataan Memorial Death March Team



from left to right: Pfc. Robert Carroll, Pfc. Tiffany Byers, Spc. Anthony Spires and Sgt. Axel Cardona traveled to White Sands, N.M., March 27, with 1st Sgt. Brian Stuckey to compete in the Bataan Memorial Death March.

Byers had a singular obstacle to overcome – of the five who left for New Mexico, she was the lone female.

“Being the only female in the group was a lot of pressure,” she admitted. “I never wanted to be the weak female. I stayed strong and did what I had to do.”

Stuckey watched Byers perform and said she literally – and figuratively – pulled her own weight.

“[She] never faltered,” he said. “There was a goal, she set it in her mind and she did it.”

As part of his motivational strategy, Stuckey told his Troops to find that one thing that would take them to the finish line.

“Find something in your heart,” he told them from the beginning. “There’s got to be

something that’s going to carry you over that edge, that’s going to keep you moving.”

For a few of his Soldiers, that inspiration came from the veterans who brought them to White Sands in the first place.

“That’s all you can think about while you’re doing the ruck, is how those guys actually did it,” said Sgt. Axel Cardona, with the 296th MP company. “They didn’t have people giving them water or anything like that, and they did it for over 100 miles.”

“I kept trying to motivate myself with thoughts of the survivors,” agreed Carroll. “I just had to keep reminding myself of them.”

The group landed in New Mexico March 22 and continued to train. The march itself was held on the March 27, with teams

stepping out at 7 a.m. With an assortment of military, civilians, families and children, the group described the scene as chaotic. It was time to put all their training to the test.

“The altitude was ungodly compared to what we trained with here,” remembered Stuckey. “It averaged 4300 to 5300 above sea level. That was pretty overwhelming.”

The altitude combined with the wind to make the experience even more unpleasant.

“We had on average 33 mile an hour winds,” continued Stuckey. “They said that was the worst they’ve ever had it.”

“The wind .. was pushing against us,” recalled Spc. Anthony Spires, a human

Sgt. Maj. of Army says retention-control points to shape force

C. Todd Lopez
Armed Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- As part of a "right-shaping" of the force, the Army will adjust retention-control points for Soldiers this fall.

During his first appearance on Capitol Hill, March 30, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III discussed the Army's temporary end-strength initiative and ensuing force reductions before the House Appropriations Committee, defense subcommittee.

In July 2009, the Secretary of Defense authorized a temporary increase of up to 22,000 Soldiers for the active Army. This temporary end-strength increase reduced stress and strain on the force by ensuring all deploying units were filled appropriately.

"One of the things we've taken in to account is, that in order to draw the Army down and reduce that temporary end-strength initiative, we're going to have to do some right-shaping, or shaping of the force," Chandler said.

The Army's senior enlisted adviser told lawmakers the service had accelerated promotions to create the noncommissioned officer corps needed to serve as the backbone of a force that has expanded over the last 10 years while prosecuting war on two fronts.

"We accelerated promotions and we were way ahead of our normal promotion rates," Chandler said. "We're now starting to see those slow down. Which is actually a good thing for us, because it helps us to better develop that leader

at their current grade instead of being put in a position where we have to accept some risk and move them ahead to be able to properly man the force."

In the fall, Chandler told lawmakers, the Army would implement the force-shaping tools needed to help reduce the size of the Army by 22,000 by the fall of 2013.

"We will actually introduce some retention-control-point reductions for our NCOs to actually reduce the amount of time they can serve in the force," Chandler said.

Retention control points specify how long a Soldier may stay in the Army at a particular rank before having to either leave the Army or get selected for promotion.

Chandler also said the Army would take initiatives similar to the Navy, to look at selective early-release boards.

"Some of our marginal achievers will be looked at and considered for separation from the service," he explained.

Those efforts will help the Army "get the right Soldier at the right time promoted to be in the right job," Chandler said. "We're very interested in ensuring we do this in a deliberate and efficient and effective manner to take care of the Army's requirements, but just as importantly (those) Soldier and family requirements."

Lawmakers also asked Chandler about the Army's use of mental-health providers, and of availability of mental-health care. Chandler told them he had used those programs himself.

"I sit before you as a beneficiary of the Army's behavioral-health program," Chandler said. "I myself have had the last two years of behavioral health treatment and it has made a difference in my life and my wife, Jeanne, who is with me today."

Chandler said the Army has benefited from an increase in mental-health providers.

"I believe without the increases we've had over the last several years, that we would be in much worse shape than we are now," he said. Though the service faces a shortfall in providers, he said the Army is continuing to recruit.

"It has made a difference in my life and I know in Soldiers' lives," Chandler said.

Lawmakers also asked Chandler and other service senior-enlisted advisers at the hearing about how the services would be equipped to handle conflict on another front -- in Libya.

"We exist to fight and win our nation's wars," Chandler said. "We all know that where ever the nation calls us to go is where we are going to go and do the best we possibly can."

Chandler said the Army's force generation model, or ARFORGEN, is designed to handle the current demand, and that changes in demand for forces "is going to obviously cause the Army to have to reassess what it is doing and where we are sending Soldiers and the commitment of the Guard and Reserve as an operational fore."

Nevertheless, he said, "I guarantee you that he Army will do everything the nation needs it to do."

New physical training test to get at least 6-month trial phase

Rob McIlvaine
Armed Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Pilot testing for the new Army Physical Readiness Test has only been conducted at Fort Jackson, S.C., where the Army Physical Fitness School is located.

This week, however, the new Army Physical Readiness Test, or APRT, will be given to a pilot unit at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Scheduled to take it with them was Maj. Gen. Richard Longo, deputy commanding general for initial military training at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

"I'm setting the standards for 52-year-olds," Longo said with a smile after his sergeants performed a demonstration at the Pentagon, April 7.

"A lot of people ask, 'hey, what's the standard, how many push-ups do I have to do?' We have no idea at this stage," Longo explained. "We're going to be giving this test in pilot form to 10,000 Soldiers between now and September -- all age groups, male and female, Active Component and Reserve Component, and Soldier-just-entered-the-Army and Soldier-been-in-the-Army."

"We really need this data so we know what excellence looks like, what average looks like, and what not meeting the standard looks like," Longo said.

The new test will still be given twice a year, according to current plans, and the new Army Combat Readiness Test -- run in battle gear with weapon -- may be used as a pre-deployment measurement tool for commanders.

Short duration does not necessarily equate to easy. Especially when performing push-ups for the Army's new APRT.

"There's a reason why we teach precision of movement," said Frank Palkoska, director of U.S. Army Physical Fitness School at Fort Jackson, S.C.

"In the past, we didn't enforce much precision and exercise prescription as we do today. There's an important aspect of that we teach the correct motor pattern in a controlled environment so when Soldiers have to execute that same motor pattern in an uncontrolled environment that we call combat, they have a proper motor pattern to revert back to. This also helps us avoid injury, which has been a big problem for our Army in

the past," Palkoska said.

To illustrate the difference, Sgt. 1st Class Amanda Kokkonen, Advanced Individual Training Platoon Sergeant of the Year, told how she used to perform the PT test.

"During the two minutes of push-ups of the APFT we currently do, I do between 60 to 70. Today, (at the Pentagon demo) I did about 29 push-ups in one minute. It sounds like a big difference but for me, the biggest difference is the fact that I can't move my hands and use different muscle groups. Also, not being able to take a break, or sag or bow my back definitely makes a big difference," Kokkonen said.

Under the new test, the Soldier must place their hands in an anatomically correct position. This exhibits the maximum force by virtue of the hand placement, Palkoska said.

"We're testing their ability for one-minute's worth of muscular endurance and this becomes a true muscular endurance assessment. In the old APFT, the two minutes of push-ups wasn't a true muscular endurance assessment because we allowed you to rest," Palkoska said.



MCPON Testifies before Senate on Sailors' Quality of Life

Chief Mass Communication Specialist
Sonya Ansarov

Office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the
Navy Public Affairs

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The master chief petty officer of the Navy (MCPON) testified for the first time before the Personnel Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee April 13.

MCPON (SS/SW) Rick D. West, along with the other top enlisted leaders from the Marines, Army and Air Force, appeared before the committee to discuss the health of their forces, quality of life programs, family readiness, continuum of care, Reserve force, and family housing.

“Current operational demands and high operating tempo have placed added stress on the force,” said West. “Our many personnel and family readiness programs remain one of our Navy’s highest priorities.”

Navy’s Homeport Ashore program, bachelor and Navy family housing, childcare, and Continuum of Care were important issues that were brought up to the congressional subcommittee.

“One area that has had recent significant impact on quality of life for our families that I feel the need to highlight is the Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2011,” said West.

West detailed for the committee how the spending restrictions under the CR resulted in considerable delays in permanent-change-of-station (PCS) orders and more than 20,000 sets of orders were deferred. He said under the CR, the Navy has not had sufficient manpower funding to allow for normal lead times for Sailors to receive PCS orders, and the result is the average lead times have been reduced from four to six months to two months or less.

“While relief is on the way, lingering effects of the CR will continue to place emotional and economic strain on our Sailors and their families as they attempt to sell homes, seek follow on employment for family members, enroll children in schools, and complete necessary screening and training requirements prior to transfer,” said West.

West continued to explain that though our leadership continues to be resourceful in mitigating the impact, the CR has affected funding for new construction and facility sustainment in barracks and base operating support.

West gave the committee a global snapshot of the Navy’s current operations with approximately 60 percent of the Navy’s ships underway, 40 percent being on deployment worldwide, and more than 28,000 Sailors are on the ground and at sea

in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Naval forces are providing direct support of ongoing operations in the Mediterranean Sea, executing counter-piracy missions off the coast of Africa, and continuing to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the people of Japan.

Greater demand on Navy forces has led to longer deployments and shorter dwell, or turnaround times, which increases strain on Sailors, Navy civilians and their families, West explained. West said he firmly believes that how the Sailors sent to war, the families they leave behind and those wounded and retired shipmates are supported, truly defines us as a Navy and a nation.

“Despite these challenges, our leadership remains focused on providing support to our Sailors and their families to foster resiliency as well as family readiness,” said West.

In closing, West thanked the subcommittee for their steadfast support of our men and women in uniform.

The MCPON periodically testifies before Congress along with the senior enlisted leaders of the other services. This was his first appearance before the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

Sources: Predator Drone may have killed Navy, Marine medics

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The military is investigating what appears to be the first case of American troops killed by a missile fired from a U.S. drone.

The investigation is looking into the deaths of a Marine and a Navy medic killed by a Hellfire missile fired from a Predator after they apparently were mistaken for insurgents in southern Afghanistan last week, two senior U.S. defense officials said Tuesday. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing.

Unmanned aircraft have proven to be powerful weapons in Afghanistan and Iraq and their use have expanded to new areas and operations each year of those conflicts. Some drones are used for surveillance and some, such as the drone in this case, are armed and have been used to hunt and kill militants.

Officials said this is the first case they know of in which a drone may have been involved in a friendly fire incident in which U.S. troops were killed, and they are trying to determine how it happened.

Marine Staff Sgt. Jeremy Smith of Arlington, Tex., and Seaman Benjamin D. Rast of Niles, Mich., were hit while moving

toward other Marines who were under fire in Helmand province.

Military officials in Afghanistan declined to provide any details, saying only that it was a friendly fire incident. “A formal investigation will determine the circumstances that led to the incident,” the International Security Assistance Force said in a statement last week.

But reports from the field indicate that the Marines who were under attack mistook Smith and Rast for militants heading their way and called in a strike from a U.S. Air Force Predator, one official said.

Smith, 26, and Rast, 23, were with the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, a reserve unit in Houston.

Smith’s father, Jerry, said he didn’t want to place blame for what happened.

“Whoever that young man or woman was, they didn’t send that drone over there to kill my son or Doc Rast,” Jerry Smith told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. “If it was a royal screw up, it was a royal screw up. Make corrections because I don’t want another family to have to go through this.”

He said “trying to put a bigger burden on that person who fired the missile is not

something I would do.”

“I guarantee you if he was standing in front of me, he’d be asking for forgiveness, and I would give it to him,” Jerry Smith said.

The Marines have been in a fierce fight in the south, battling insurgents in key Taliban sanctuaries such as Sangin, a militant stronghold.

Currently, Air Force Predators and Reapers, the high-flying hunter-killer drones, are logging 48 of the 24-hour air patrols a day, moving toward a goal of 65 in 2013. The aircraft are prized for their intelligence gathering proficiency and ability to pinpoint targets, reducing the risk to U.S. pilots and other personnel.

Under pressure from Defense Secretary Robert Gates, the Air Force has dramatically increased the number of armed and unarmed drones in the war zones over the past three years.

Other military services have their own drones, ranging from the Army’s smaller shoulder-launched Ravens to the sophisticated, high-altitude Global Hawks, which are used for surveillance missions and do not carry weapons.



First Marines, Soldiers graduate from new integrated ops training program

Lance Cpl. William J. Jackson

Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — Senior enlisted and commissioned Marines, along with a handful of Army officers, filled a Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group classroom for the very first integrated Ground Operations Chief Course and Tactical Marine Air

Ground Task Force Integration Course graduation April 8.

In January, Gen. James F. Amos, the commandant of the Marine Corps, signed into effect the Operations & Tactics Training Program Marine Corps Order 3502.7 that requires operations chiefs and officers to become certified as operations and tactics instructors before assuming an operations leadership billet.

The newly-integrated course prepared the Class 2-11 ground combat element operations chiefs for operational planning, fire support planning and coordination and warfighting functions at the battalion and regimental level, said Master Gunnery Sgt. Dennis Steiber, chief instructor for the Ground Operations Chief Course, out of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Each class now incorporates non-infantry subject matter experts to craft a well-rounded operations chief, capable of taking charge of a ground combat element with a more sharpened skill set.

“[The Marines] will be comfortable with taking the lead. They should be able to emplace and displace the [Combat Operations Center], and they should be able to take the lead on training the COC battle staff,” said Steiber, before the graduation ceremony began.

Steiber said the training staff dismantled the old operations chief course and essentially built the new integrated course from scratch. “There’s more practical application than there is classroom time. They spend the majority of the seven weeks actually doing what they’re supposed to be doing,” added the Marathon, Wis., native.

The first course, Class 2-11, integrated training officers and enlisted Marines, allowing them to work under similar conditions they will face while serving as part of a unit. Each gained the knowledge it will take to work together as ops chiefs and officers in their respective job.

“It was all valuable and pertinent training,” said Capt. Quinci D. Martin, about the two courses. “I’d recommend it for anyone.” Martin, a self-proclaimed “Navy brat” from the Naval Station Subic Bay, Philippine Islands, will take charge as the supply officer for the 8th Communications Battalion at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.

“I have been paying attention to this particular course,” said Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy, III, the Combat Center’s commanding general. “It’s important to me personally, as a Marine, as the commanding general here, a former director of Expeditionary Warfare School, but more importantly it’s important to the Commandant of the Marine Corps and therefore imperative that this [course] goes well.”

“We as Marines are war fighters. The wars we are fighting now have gotten more complicated, more complex,” said Clardy. “We need skilled operators who understand the complexities of the battlefield, who understand how training should be conducted in a sophisticated manner, and just as importantly, how to plan and execute operations.”

Commandant announces next Sergeant Major of Marines

Sgt. Michael S. Cifuentes

Headquarters Marine Corps

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos announced the next Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps April 11.

Sgt. Maj. Micheal Barrett, 1st Marine Division’s sergeant major, is set to take charge as the senior enlisted Marine in the Marine Corps. He’s scheduled to succeed Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, the current Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, during an appointment and relief ceremony, and Kent’s retirement ceremony held at Marine Barracks Washington June 9.

Barrett recently returned from a deployment to Helmand province, Afghanistan, where he served as Regional Command Southwest’s sergeant major.

Amos said Barrett is “the best of the best,” and will continue to serve the Corps as Amos’ senior enlisted advisor.

“Sgt. Maj. Barrett, through his long and distinguished service to our nation, has demonstrated that he is particularly well-suited to serve as my senior enlisted advisor

through the challenges ahead,” said Amos.

Barrett enlisted as an infantryman in March 1981. In addition to Afghanistan, his combat deployments include serving in the Persian Gulf War as a sniper with 3rd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, and two tours in Iraq as battalion sergeant major of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

Kent has served as the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps since April 25, 2007. He graduated recruit training March 1976 at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. In his 35 years of service, Kent has led Marines in various billets to include senior drill instructor and battalion drill master at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, chief drill instructor and first sergeant at Naval Aviation Officers Candidate School in Pensacola, Fla., and sergeant major of I Marine Expeditionary Force at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

“My time on active duty is coming to an end, and I’m honored to pass the sword of office to Sgt. Maj. Barrett,” said Kent. “He is a true warrior and will continue the great legacy our Corps.”



Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos announced Sgt. Maj. Micheal Barrett as his selection for the next Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. The relief and appointment ceremony and retirement of Kent is scheduled for June 9 at Marine Barracks Washington. — photo by Sgt. Ben J. Flores



Changes to AF leave policy take effect

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- The Air Force announced April 8 several changes to Air Force Instruction 36-3003 on Military Leave. These include revised rules for determining the first and last day of chargeable leave, emergency leave requests, permissive temporary duty and educational leave of absence.

The rule for determining the first and last day of chargeable leave was changed to align Air Force procedures with Department of Defense guidance, according to Lt. Col. Jodi Riley, Air Force Military Pay, Entitlements and Allowances Policy chief.

The colonel explained that if a member is starting leave or signing up for space-available travel on a non-duty day, then the member is on leave and that day will be chargeable. If a member returns from leave on a non-duty day, that day will not be charged as leave.

For example, if an Airman who works a typical Monday through Friday work week starts leave on Saturday, Saturday counts as the first day of leave, the colonel said. However, if the Airman starts leave during the work week and returns from leave on a Saturday, the last day of chargeable leave is Friday. In addition, if the Airman starts leave during the work week and returns from leave on a Sunday, the last day of chargeable leave is Saturday. If the Airman returns from leave on a Sunday or holiday, that day is not charged as leave.

The change means the rules for determining the first and last day of chargeable leave have been reversed, Colonel Riley said.

"There was nothing wrong with the way the Air Force implemented its leave policy," the colonel noted. "The change was made so the Air Force is consistent with the DoD leave policy. There is no need to

correct anyone's records."

Because LeaveWeb is not configured to automatically differentiate between the last day of leave and the last chargeable day of leave, Airmen and supervisors will be responsible to input the correct chargeable days into the program based on an Airman's duty schedule.

Air Force officials said Airmen and supervisors should carefully read Air Force Guidance Memorandum 2 to AFI 36-3003, Military Leave Program, paragraphs (i) through (m), before finalizing leave requests under the revised guidelines.

Other leave policy changes include:

- Expanding the conditions under which a member may request emergency leave, to include when the member or someone in the member's or spouse's immediate family is admitted into an intensive care unit in critical condition due to a major illness or accident

- Clarification of ordinary leave start and end dates when leave is taken in conjunction with permissive temporary duty as well as clarification of circumstances under which commanders may authorize permissive TDY in conjunction with an adoption

- Members granted an educational leave of absence will now be charged leave for scheduled school breaks and extended holiday periods unless they return to duty with their units of assignment during the break.

Airmen and supervisors with questions about changes in the leave policy may contact their servicing military personnel section or the total force service center at 800-525-0102 or DSN 665-5000.

Airmen hone relief skills in Trinidad and Tobago

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (AFNS) -- More than 150 U.S. military personnel plus counterparts and civilian officials from Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, Canada, Guyana, and Suriname gathered here April 8 to participate in Fuerzas Alidas Humanitarias. The annual event is also called Allied Forces Humanitarian Exercise.

FA HUM 2011 is conducted to enhance a nation's response capabilities and interoperability with international military forces and humanitarian assistance agencies. This year's two-week exercise simulates a catastrophic earthquake in Trinidad and Tobago, requiring outside aid. Officials said the exercise illustrates U.S. commitment to work with regional partners in ways that "strengthen friendships, bolster partner nation capacity, expands cooperation between nations and enhances regional

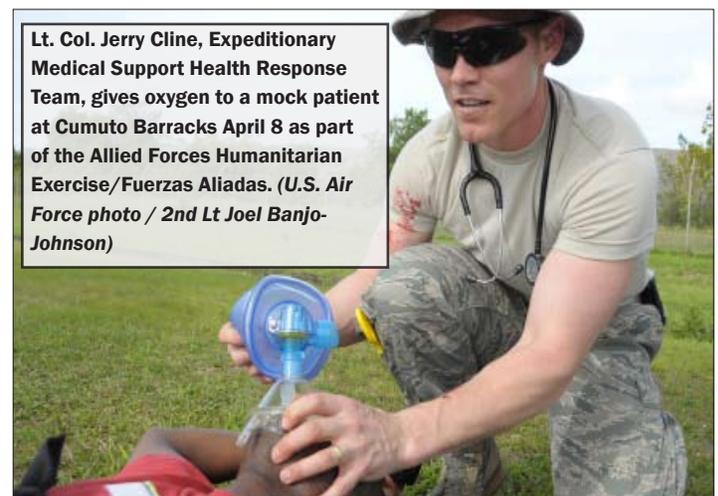
stability."

"We've received great support from the host nation," said Col. John Mansfield, the 60th Medical Group deputy commander at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. "The Trinidad military has been superb in meeting our needs. Our focus is to support the host nation."

Fifteen volunteers from the 1st Engineer Battalion from the Trinidad military acted as patients for the first day of the exercise, with the emergency room team treating them within the first 20 minutes.

"Once receiving life-saving medical care, patients are transferred to civilian hospitals," Colonel Mansfield said. "The facility cannot hold many patients because it does not have the in-patient beds to do so. This is why partnerships with the host nations are so important."

The purpose of a Health Response Team is to stabilize



Lt. Col. Jerry Cline, Expeditionary Medical Support Health Response Team, gives oxygen to a mock patient at Cumuto Barracks April 8 as part of the Allied Forces Humanitarian Exercise/Fuerzas Alidas. (U.S. Air Force photo / 2nd Lt Joel Banjo-Johnson)

patients, stop bleeding, stabilize limbs and work with the host nation to transfer patients to more long-term facilities.

"We are working with the Ministry of Health in Trinidad, the Trinidad military, the U.S. Embassy assigned here and several other agencies," said Lt. Col. Michael Bruhn, the deputy chief of the Expeditionary

Medical Operations Division at Headquarters, Air Combat Command. "We started planning about a year ago and have coordinated with the Trinidad army and air guard to ensure rapid transport of equipment."

The government of Trinidad is exercising to evaluate their ability to respond to a disaster, in order to increase their readiness.



Ten migrants repatriated

Coast Guard News Service

MIAMI — The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Sawfish repatriated 10 Cuban migrants to Bahia de Cabañas, Cuba, Wednesday.

The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Valiant located a rustic vessel with six Cuban migrants aboard in the Straits of Florida Sunday. The crew of the cutter Kodiak Island was diverted and, once on scene, safely embarked the Cuban migrants.

Coast Guard Sector Key West, Fla., watchstanders received notification from a good Samaritan that they were on scene with a rustic vessel south of Florida Friday. The five Cuban migrants aboard the rustic vessel were brought aboard a Coast Guard Station Marathon smallboat and later transferred to the cutter Kodiak Island.

One Cuban migrant is awaiting further disposition.

Cutter locates missing sailors

Coast Guard News Service

SAN PEDRO, Calif. — The Coast Guard located two adult males this morning at approximately 4 a.m., who were reported overdue from a sailing trip, Tuesday.

The boaters and sailboat were located south of Catalina Island, Calif., in good condition and in no distress.

Coast Guard Cutter Sea Otter, an 87-foot patrol boat homeported in San Diego, escorted the boaters to Avalon Harbor on Catalina Island.

A Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter, an 87-foot patrol boat, and C-130 aircraft were involved in the nearly 11 hour search. Two Baywatch units and Dana Point Harbor Patrol also conducted multiple search patterns.

BATAAN cont.

resources specialist with the 193rd. “It got so strong sometimes, I couldn’t even walk.”

Spires in particular was battling that day. In an unfortunate turn of events, he fell ill in the days before and was still recovering as they began the march. Stuckey said the young Soldier’s determination was a motivator for all.

“Spires didn’t eat for three days prior because he got sick,” Stuckey explained. “[He] was probably the reason we finished where we did. Because he kept on and didn’t let it affect him. That’s my motivation, seeing my guys push through stuff like that. Blood and guts – they spilled it all.”

In the middle of the 26.2 mile march was an uphill climb of about seven miles. It was at that point the team had to dig down deep and

DADT cont.

experiences, and perspectives but we have one common bond - we have all volunteered to defend our nation.

“This professional training began with our JTF leadership and first-line supervisors because we are the ones who set the example for implementation,” the Admiral continued. “It is also important to standardize the instruction among the leadership to ensure our training is consistent and understood by each of those individuals who will serve as the future trainers in the task force.”

While each service is responsible for carrying out their specific training program, they all follow a similar model. Broken down into three tiers, level 1 trains experts (e.g. chaplains, law enforcement, public affairs and others) likely to deal with issues related to the policy’s repeal. Tier 2 training provides senior leadership on both the officer and enlisted side awareness of specific impacts of the policy change and the expectations of command conduct. Finally, Tier 3 is geared for all military personnel, with a focus on emphasizing professional conduct and personal respect for all.

Training at all levels is mandatory and is being arranged through individual service channels.

Navy personnel will be trained through a series of All-Hands meetings. Lt.j.g Lauryn Dempsey, the service representative, said the training sessions will be scheduled beginning in May, after the arrival of the new Joint Task Force Command Master Chief.

Air Force Lt. Col. Marvin Williams, JTF Guantanamo command chaplain, is coordinating that service’s training. Air Force personnel must complete an online training module via the Air Force’s Advanced Distributed Learning Service.

Access to ADLS is available through the Air Force Portal. All Airmen are required to complete the training by Apr. 30. Section officers in charge will pass their team’s training certificates to Chaplain Williams. The chaplain said he hopes Airmen will take away from the training that leadership, professionalism, discipline and respect remain the top focus and a person’s sexual orientation remains a personal and private matter.

Army personnel will have several opportunities to receive training, said Army Master Sgt. Alfonso Smith. Two sessions take place Apr. 22. The first, from 8-10 a.m., is for Army field grade officers and senior warrant officers. The second, from 1:30-3:30 p.m., is for company grade officers and junior warrant officers.

Three additional sessions take place Apr. 28. All E-1 to E-4s receive training from 8-10 a.m. All E-5 to E-7s are scheduled for 10 a.m. to noon. From 1:30-3:30 p.m. all E-8 and E-9s will receive the training.

“The bottom line here is respect,” Smith said. “Respect the Soldier’s privacy and keep in mind what they are here for – to accomplish the mission.”

One branch is already ‘mission complete’ regarding the initial training.

“There’s only five of us in the task force,” said Marine 1st Lt. Rob Collinsworth, who served as that branch’s point person.

Collinsworth said one of the key training messages was the Marine Corps would not change how they promote individuals.

“The Marine Corps has always been a meritocracy -- we only promote the best Marines,” Collinsworth said. “That won’t change regardless of a person’s sexual orientation.”

decide, individually, what they were capable of.

“I didn’t think it was going to end,” Spires remembered.

Cardona summed it up succinctly. “Walking up that hill, I thought God should be up there, waiting for us.”

Doubting their reasons for volunteering during the march, as the team neared the end and realized they were almost home, everyone agreed it was worth it.

“Crossing the finish line made me see the bigger picture,” Byers said. “The march wasn’t about us – it was about the survivors, those who didn’t make it and the history [of the event.]”

Stuckey especially was proud of his group. “I was happy we finished. That was truly

the goal,” he said. “Underlying that, we wanted to do good. We wanted to represent the battalion. They had faith in us.”

Represent they did, with a fourth place finish.

“We went into it with high expectations,” Stuckey acknowledged. “The training really spoke for itself by [placing fourth.]”

Now back on Guantanamo Bay and recovered from their adventures, everyone agrees they would not hesitate to do it all again. Spires said he would run it as a civilian, while Cardona wants to take his son. And of course, the first sergeant is ready.

“I would do it again in a heartbeat,” Stuckey exclaimed. “The gratification of finishing is cool, but to know why you did it, made it even better. What an experience!”

Psych or Psyched Out?



Hospital Corpsman Justin Atha,
JSMART Psychiatric Technician

Have you ever heard or said, “Only crazy people go to see psych?” This sentiment is not uncommon among servicemembers throughout the armed forces. I have heard this spoken many times, on many fronts, in many ways. This is what is called a stigma.

Stigma was originally a word used to describe the brand or mark of a Greek slave. This conceptual symbol of negativity and separation is one that is constantly connected with psychology – the Stigma of Psych. People don’t want to be crazy and, what’s more, they don’t want other people to think they are crazy. They believe by talking to a psychiatric technician, psychologist or psychiatrist they will embody this label of crazy. Others even think they actually need to BE crazy to use these outlets. Crazy means different things to different people but is a negative term that should never be used in the mental health field.

For Joint Task Force Guantanamo personnel, psych is the Joint Stress Mitigation and Restoration Team, a group

currently comprised of one psychologist, five psychiatric technicians and one general duty Navy corpsman. Contrary to popular belief, psych is not a looney group of diagnosers and shrinks. We are, in fact, professionals who take our job and our commitment to the well-being of Troopers very seriously.

On so many occasions we downplay or altogether avoid and ignore anything suspected of being a psych problem.

Pride, fear of ridicule and misunderstandings play into peoples’ uncertainty about JSMART. We often fear what we do not understand, but JSMART is a place you can go to talk about what is on your mind, away from your work space.

Simply being in the military can be stressful, let alone being deployed. We work in a field where mission readiness is top priority and our conviction lies in the arms of “suck it up,” for the betterment of ourselves, our unit and our country. This approach, despite its attempts at nobility, can mask, contort or amplify many internal problems. Everyone feels the collateral pressure of these

Chaplain’s program offers series of retreats, workshops

The Chaplain’s Religious Empowerment Development Operation provides a series of events to help military and Department of Defense employees and their families develop personal and spiritual resources in order to be more successful at meeting the unique challenges of military life. Several types of activities will be offered in May:

Personal Growth Retreat:

Free meals and lodging on the Leeward side of the base are included. The event is geared to increase participant’s knowledge of themselves and others. A PGR is a great way to “defrag” from the stresses of daily life and reflect on the things that are really important.

May 9-11 Single/Unaccompanied Personal Growth Retreat: held on Leeward side. (Permissible TDY) (16 Slots) Monday 1 p.m. to Wednesday 1 p.m.

Workshops:

Workshop activity is designed to help commands, work spaces, divisions or departments in developing an interdependent and cooperative spirit. Participants come away with a better understanding of themselves, appreciation

of the differences between people, and more respect for personal dignity and diversity. The team building workshop is designed to enhance readiness and team cohesiveness.

May 12 and 13 Workshops: Two workshops each day – 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. - held at the NAVSTA Main Chapel. Two types of workshops offered: Team Building and Myers Briggs.

Marriage Retreat/Seminar:

The setting for this two-day retreat will be the Bayview. Activities are designed to increase a couple’s ability to understand one another better and communicate on a more intimate level. During the retreat breakfast, lunch, and dinner are all provided free of charge.

May 4-5 Couples Marriage Retreat/Seminar: (Permissible TDY) (18 Couples Slots) Wednesday 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Thursday 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

May 6-7 Couples Marriage Retreat/Seminar: (Permissible TDY) (18 Couple slots) Friday 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Saturday 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

To register contact call Chaplain Holmes at ext. 2843 or RP1 Credo at ext. 2359, no later than Apr. 28.

factors; no one is immune to stress.

JSMART can help to identify, manage and relieve those problems, stressors or unknowns in a safe and confidential environment.

If you know anyone who

exhibits signs of depression or anxiety, talk to them about making a JSMART visit. If you begin to have feelings of anxiety or become overwhelmed don’t hesitate to call x3566 for more information. Thank you and have a JSMART day!

I AM NUMBER FOUR

PG-13
109 min.



Sp. Meredith Vincent

Recently, a few people commented that I rarely give a good review.

This is not that review.

Eventually, when I've finally watched something worthy of three, four or even five (!) banana rats, I will be happy to do so. However, there is no doubt "I Am Number Four" is probably the worst yet, so if you don't enjoy reading a good-old fashioned beat down, I suggest you move on to the next page.

"I Am Number Four" is pointless, teeny-bopper drivel. Honestly, sometimes I can hang with teenager angst, if it's done with wit and class. No need to worry about either in this humorless, painfully derivative offering directed by D.J. Caruso. The only redeeming quality about this entire flick is by the time you throw away your popcorn, you won't remember anything about it – it's that unremarkable.

Actually, the entire plot is simply a microwaved, rehashed version of yesterday's leftovers. Hunky dude – in this case Alex Pettyfer – lands in random small town – in this case Paradise, Ohio – and begins making googly-eyes at sweet, artsy chick – in this case "Glee's" Dianna Agron. Eventually we discover he has special powers and is an alien. This story was awesome when it was Superman and Lois Lane. It was barely tolerable when it was Edward and Bella. It



has finally reached its expiration date. Too bad nobody told the cast.

Pettyfer, a former model, should've stuck to what he was good at – standing around and being really, really, ridiculously good-looking. Watching him try to emote is so painful, I'm sure I actually winced a couple of times. Unfortunately, the same can be said of his leading lady. Agron proves she is a one-trick pony. There is not one shred of difference between the movie's Sarah and her alter ego as "Glee's" Quinn. (That's not entirely true – Quinn would never be caught in that awful beret.)

Doing my best not to be a hater, I'm going to give it one banana rat. At one point there was a puppy. I'm a sucker for a cute puppy.

About the MWR Movie Program

MWR offers the GTMO community recently released movies at the Downtown Lyceum and Camp Bulkeley Lyceum. The 35mm movie program is administered by Navy Motion Picture Service (NMPS) which has been in existence since circa 1919. NMPS manages the selection and shipping of films each installation receives and the dates authorized to play each movie based on license agreements held with the movie studio. The program is operated under BUPERSINST 1710.15A.

	15 FRI.	16 SAT.	17 SUN.	18 MON.	19 TUES.	20 WED.	21 THURS.
Downtown Lyceum	Hop (PG) 8 p.m.	Gnomeo and Juliet (G) 8 p.m.	I Am Number Four (PG-13) 8 p.m.	The Roommate (PG-13) 8 p.m. <i>*last showing*</i>	Justin Bieber: Never Say Never (G) 8 p.m.	Unknown (PG-13) 8 p.m.	Diary of a Wimpy Kid (PG) 8 p.m.
	Big Momma's: Like Father, Like Son (PG-13) 10 p.m.	Hall Pass (R) 10 p.m.					
Camp Bulkeley	Diary of a Wimpy Kid (PG) 8 p.m.	Big Momma's: Like Father, Like Son (PG-13) 8 p.m.	Hop (PG) 10 p.m.	The Eagle (PG-13) 8 p.m.	Sanctum (R) 8 p.m. <i>*last showing*</i>	Just Go With It (PG-13) 8 p.m.	Gnomeo and Juliet (G) 8 p.m.
	Hall Pass (R) 10 p.m.	I Am Number Four (PG-13) 10 p.m.					

Call MWR at ext. 2010 for more information.

Movie Hotline - call 4880.

DJ cont.

DJ, Campbell has played and experienced all kinds of new music.

“As a foreign national coming here I knew nothing about country or rock or pop,” said Campbell. “Back home in Jamaica I thought everyone in America listened to country music.” “Getting here I now know most people hate country music.”

As well as learning more about music, Campbell made the effort to learn the customers and what music they listen to.

“I study each and every one of my customers who come into Rick’s,” said Jeffrey. “I can tell you what each customer likes.”

Campbell goes out of his way to make each newcomer comfortable and play what they want to hear.

“If you walk into Rick’s and it’s your first time I will know right away,” said Campbell. “I will go to you and I will ask how you are doing and what kinds of music do you like.”

Once he learns what a person’s taste is he will not forget.

“If you come back in two months or three years, I will still remember,” he claimed.

Two men walked up to the table and Campbell instantly recognizes them. “This is Blue, he is an Elvis fan,” then turned to the other and added, “This guy here is an old school hip hop and old school rock kind of guy, like Ottis Redding’s “Dock on the Bay.”

Campbell described the music each person in the vicinity preferred to listen and sing to.

“Jeffrey always has a great attitude,” said Army Col. George M. Bryan, Joint Visitors Bureau Director. “He is always willing to help, always trying to get people involved.” “He is like the JSMART (Joint Stress Mitigation and Restoration Team) of Rick’s.”

Many people are nervous to sing but Campbell manages to ease them into it.

“He will get up and sing when no one else will,” Bryan said. “That encourages people to want to come up.”

The departure was deeply felt by Campbell as well as by the patrons.

“I’m going to miss my customers like crazy,” Campbell said. “If I wanted to stay, not even management could get me out of here because these guys wouldn’t allow it.”

Campbell said while it is hard to move on it is also necessary.

“It hurts to leave,” he said. “These guys really make me feel at home,”

Various customers were sure it just wouldn’t be the same without Campbell keeping the beat and hope he will return in the future.

“After a night at Rick’s with Jeffrey your moral is up and you are ready for another day on JTF,” said Bryan.

“Jeffrey has always carried the party,” said Collinsworth. “I am really going to miss him.”

BEEF cont.

The Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force power production engineers with Joint Task Force Guantanamo packed up and sent off their last MEP-012A generator April 8.

This effectively hands over backup electrical power for Camp Justice to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Works Department and civilian contractors, Burns and Roe.

BEEF power production and electrical engineers see this as a bittersweet moment. The MEP-012A units have been handed down from unit-to-unit at Camp Justice since its inception in 2005 to provide emergency power during military commissions at the facility.

“Today we are reluctantly sending off our last MEP-12 electrical generator,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Frank Valls de Los Reyes, assistant noncommissioned officer in charge of power production. “Anytime you have something around for this long you take ownership and have a lot of work invested in it. It’s something to be proud of.”

Camp Justice was built with eight of these large-capacity generators as its initial backup power plan. The trailer-based unit weighs 12.5 tons and uses a V12 Cummins Diesel motor to pump out 750 kw of electricity. That is plenty of power, but too much weight for most standard vehicles.

Air Force Master Sgt. Lyn Jamison said the greatest challenge handing this unit over was simply getting it from Camp Justice to the Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Port.

“We had to plan an easy slope route and travel at a low speed with a police escort to

POKER cont.

sure we’re having fun and being extra safe.”

Nearly 30 volunteers helped keep things both fun and safe by helping set up at the MWR Marina, manning card stops, providing water and acting as dealers for the riders.

“We had a ton of volunteers this time,” said Geiger. “JTF was great. I think 95 percent of the volunteers came from that side of the house.”

For many participants, the MWR Poker Ride served as an opportunity to catch up with fellow Troopers and do something fun on a weekend.

“This was a great way to get some good PT on a Saturday morning,” said Army Sgt. Joey Diaz of JTF Guantanamo’s Bravo Company 1st 296. “We try to get out whenever we can to MWR events like this. Our work makes it tough so we take advantage whenever we can.”

Other participants, like Reaves, felt the

event was more about spending family time to show her daughter how to live a healthy lifestyle.

“If I’m making her stay healthy, I need to make sure I’m doing it too,” said Reaves. “I don’t want to be one of those parents who’s pushing their kids to be active while they sit at home watching TV. This was a great way to do that.”

Based on attendance and the smiles and laughter among riders and volunteers alike, Geiger felt the MWR Poker Ride was a popular success.

“To get a turnout like we did – we’re definitely going to do something like this again,” said Gieger. “It takes about two months to plan and get everything in for safety and security. So we’ll probably start working on the next one Monday with five new locations and possibly a little bit longer. Maybe we’ll make it a two-and-a-half-hour ride and push it to maybe 15 miles with longer stops between.”

FOCUS cont.

While Ocampo assists the J3, he also displays good leadership with fellow servicemembers, said Bodenschatz.

“He is a good NCO,” he said. “He helps mentor Soldiers he sees on a day-to-day basis.”

Ocampo said there are many different definitions for a leader but the ability to offer guidance is key.

“Being a leader does not necessarily mean knowing everything,” said Ocampo. “Yet, [a leader] should know enough so they can guide their subordinates along the right path.”

Ocampo said he is not sure what the future holds but his own path looks promising.

“I see him making staff sergeant here very shortly,” said Bodenschatz.

Ocampo said he hopes to make E-6 and then go from there.

“If I do retire in the military, hopefully I will be an E-7,” said Ocampo.

Bodenschatz predicts Ocampo might just exceed his own expectations.

“He could become a sergeant major easily if he wants to stay in the military,” said Bodenschatz. “The sky is the limit for him.”

The JTF

At Shutter Speed

MOON OVER GUANTANAMO

A recent full moon waxes over Guantanamo Bay's historic lighthouse - photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Brian Margavich



WATCHING FROM THE REAR VIEW

Machinist Mate 1st Class Christopher Coleman drives a 44-passenger bus while Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Manoah Zurn supervises from the rear view mirror during a driving class on Naval Station Guantanamo, April 12. Both Sailors are assigned to the Joint Detention Group - photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Maddelin Angebrand.



STAY OUT OF THE GUTTER

Engineers from around the base participated in Engineer Fun Day, April 8. - photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jason Tross



A FOND FAREWELL

A crowd gathers at ferry landing Saturday to see off the latest group of island escapees. - photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Maddelin Angebrand.

