

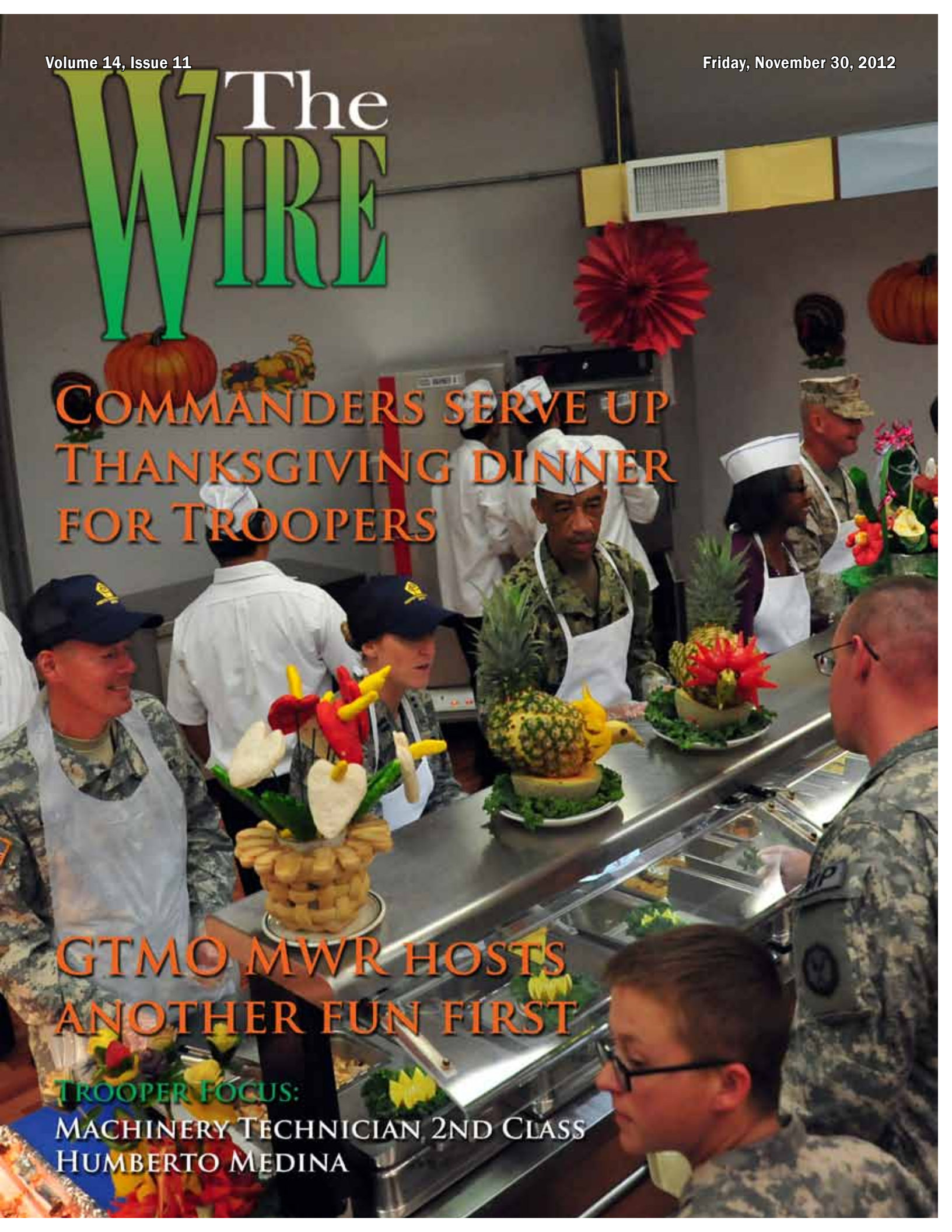
The WIRE

COMMANDERS SERVE UP THANKSGIVING DINNER FOR TROOPERS

GTMO MWR HOSTS ANOTHER FUN FIRST

TROOPER FOCUS:

MACHINERY TECHNICIAN 2ND CLASS
HUMBERTO MEDINA



COMMAND CORNER

CAPT. DANIEL GARD

JOINT TASK FORCE GUANTANAMO CHAPLAIN

It occurred to me this week that we are soon to leave the fall season for the winter season. That surprised me a bit since there seems to be no real difference between the two seasons here at Guantanamo Bay. At least, not like there is in my long time home in northern Indiana. The trees here do not change color. The temperature and humidity remain at levels that do not noticeably change. All in all, summer and fall are pretty much the same here. Though I have yet to see what winter is like here on the island, I am not expecting a white Christmas. If there are differences in seasons, so far they are too small and gradual for me to notice.

But the seasons are merely the result of earth's annual trip around the sun. Winter will come, as will spring and summer and fall. Each season brings its own unique beauty, enriching our lives by its opportunities and challenges. What that season may mean to an individual depends not only on where he or she happens to live but how the individual seizes their moment in time.

Almost 3,000 years ago, a wise man named Solomon wrote, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." These words suggest that the seasons of the year serve as a window into an issue far more important than the geographical place where we live our lives. Our very lives themselves go through changes like the seasons, though not with the same dependable routine of summer, fall, winter and spring annually following one another. But the seasons of life are

most certainly there.

Certainly there is the broad picture of a full human life from the birth of spring (childhood) to the winter (old age). We are all somewhere in those common human cycles that define life on a large scale. Some here are barely out of spring and into the summer of their lives. Others are quickly moving towards the winter. But all of us are in some season and each season is precious in its own right.

No matter where we are in our journey through the years, today is a day unlike any other. So where are you in your life? Your life is not defined by any one thing like where you are stationed, whether you are married or single, what your sex or cultural heritage might be. Your life is all these things and more. A human being is a complex creation with many different aspects, with hopes and dreams,

No matter where we are in our journey through the years, today is a day unlike any other. So where you in your life? Your life is not defined by any one thing.

with joys and sorrows, with certainties and uncertainties. You cannot be simply pigeon-holed into a neat pre-determined category. And even more, your present is different from your past and different also from your future.

That is why Solomon's words mark him as one of humanity's wisest thinkers. You are unique as a person and living in a unique point in your life. This season of your life has its own purposes and own possibilities. There is a Latin phrase, "carpe diem" and it means "seize the day". As you do, you will find that for which this season has come and the fullness of your life. As you enjoy this holiday season, remember to also enjoy the seasons of your life, whatever they may be.



JTF Guantanamo

Commander
Rear Adm. John W. Smith Jr.
Deputy Commander
Army Brig. Gen. James Lettko
Sergeant Major
Marine Sgt. Maj. Scott Smith
Office of Public Affairs Director
Navy Capt. Robert Durand: 9928
Deputy Director
Army Capt. Alvin Phillips: 9927
Senior Enlisted Leader
Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone: 3383
Command Information NCOIC
Army Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr.: 3499



The Wire

Senior Editor Army Sgt. Jonathan Monfiletto
Layout Editor Spc. Raechel Haynes
Copy Editor Spc. Brian Godette
Assistant Editor Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brian Jeffries

Webmaster
Army Sgt. Trisha Pinetzes

Contact us

Editor's Desk: 3651
Commercial: 011-5399-3651
DSN: 660-3651
E-mail: thewire@jftgmo.southcom.mil
Online: www.jftgmo.southcom.mil/wire/wire.html

Cover: Members of the Joint Task Force Guantanamo command element serve Thanksgiving dinner to Troopers at Seaside Galley on Nov. 22. From left are Deputy Commander Army Brig. Gen. James Lettko, Housing Officer Air Force Capt. Lindsey Phillabaum, Commander Rear Adm. John W. Smith Jr., Smith's wife Maple, and Sergeant Major Marine Sgt. Major. Scott Smith. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr.

JOINT TASK FORCE GUANTANAMO

SAFE • HUMANE • LEGAL • TRANSPARENT

NEWS FROM THE BAY

Reading bingo

When was the last time you got a prize for reading a book? Elementary school? The MWR Community Library is hosting the Reading Bingo event to promote reading. The contest is open to adults and teens and begins Dec. 1st. For more information call 4700 or pick up your reading Bingo card at the library today. Start reading and winning prizes.

Christmas concert

Need a jump start on your holiday spirit? Love Christmas music? Command Religious Ministries is hosting the "Songs of the Season" Christmas concert at the Naval Station Main Chapel. The concert will be held Thursday, Dec. 6. The music begins at 6 p.m., so be sure to get there early and get a good seat. For more information call the chaplain

Motorcycle course

Ever want to learn how to ride a motorcycle? Maybe it seems dangerous or too difficult. The Naval Station Safety Office makes learning to ride easy. They offer the Motorcycle Basic Rider Safety Course. The next scheduled course begins Dec. 12th through the 13th. The class is open to military or DOD personnel only. For more information on the course, contact the Safety Office at 4526 or 4655.

A new way to dance

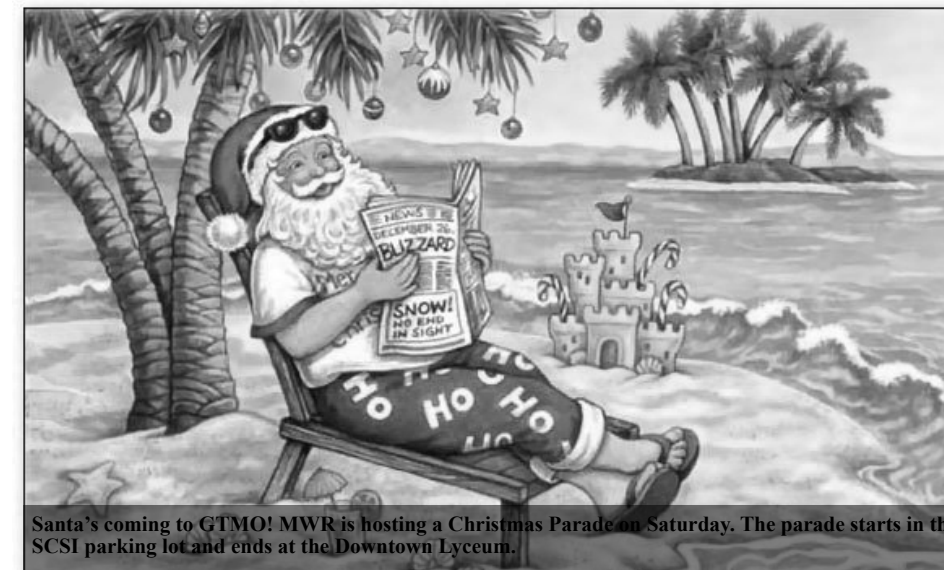
Want to learn salsa? Lessons are held every Saturday at the W.T. Sampson Elementary School gymnasium. There is a beginner class from 7 to 8 p.m. and an intermediate class from 8 to 9 p.m. For more information, contact gtmosalsa@yahoo.com or 84093.

A new way to bowl

Want to liven up your bowling experience? Come out and enjoy all-new Cosmic Bowling, now playing at Marblehead Lanes Bowling Center every Friday and Saturday night from 9 to 11:30 p.m. The scene features new cosmic lights and sound system, and attendees can request music on four new big screens. The \$13 cost includes two and a half hours of bowling and a shoe rental.

Power outage

There will be a scheduled power outage Saturday Dec. 1st from 6am to 5pm. A number of areas will be affected. Check the base roller channel for a list of affected areas.



Santa's coming to GTMO! MWR is hosting a Christmas Parade on Saturday. The parade starts in the SCSi parking lot and ends at the Downtown Lyceum.

INDEX THE WIRE NOVEMBER 23, 2012

Movie review: Rise of the Guardians	4
All Night Softball	5
Redneck Games	8
Thanksgiving	10
Trooper Focus	12
North East Gate Tour	16

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. 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 Defense Logistics Agency Document Services with a circulation of 1,200.

ONLY AT GTMO by Spc. Brian Godette



RISE OF THE GUARDIANS



By Army Sgt. Trisha Pinczes

Growing up, every child had a few nightmares and heard sayings such as “watch out for the boogeyman.” In DreamWorks Animation’s new movie Rise of the Guardians, children’s nightmares are brought to life.

Throwing together a somewhat strange combination of make-believe legends or guardians as they are known in this movie, brings an interesting new angle to classic childhood stories.

Directed by Peter Ramsey and based on William Joyce’s series The Guardians of Childhood and Joyce and Reel FX’s short film The Man in the Moon, DreamWorks brought a twist of comedy and sentiment to a film relatable to those young and old.

With a star packed cast doing the voice of both the Guardians and Pitch, or the boogeyman, the actors were able to enhance the funny but somewhat flat storyline into something interesting.

The showstopper for me was Hugh Jackman’s character the Easter Bunny. Playing with his native Australian accent throughout the movie, Jackman is able to transform a traditional fluffy Easter Bunny into a rough and sarcastic character with a soft spot only for children.

Santa Clause, or better known in the movie as North, was the voice of Alec Baldwin. The

head of the Guardians and Russian accented leader of his elves and yetis that work for him. North calls all of the Guardians together when he senses a threat from Pitch, or the

Boogeyman, and learns from the Man in The Moon that a new Guardian has been chosen - Jack Frost.

The voice of Chris Pine depicts Jack Frost to a “T” as a young boy trying to have fun and spread fun to others that often comes off as trouble making.

The Tooth Fairy is played by Isla Fisher and has a comical sense of (no pun intended) flighty energy.

The Sandman is a silent character that makes images above his head in order to communicate and rises as an unexpected character of importance despite his silent role.

Jude Law plays the voice of Pitch as he tries to shroud the world in nightmares and darkness so people will know who he is. As Jack Frost deals with similar issues of being invisible to humans, the struggle erupts between right and wrong despite your circumstances. Jack Frost must make the decision to follow Pitch or do the right thing.

While the story connects the five guardians as they protect the children, the dry and ironic humor is brought out by a fantastic job of highlighting a little piece of each actor into their character to create a hodge-podge group that support each other’s roles as much as their own.

While it was no Despicable Me in my book, Rise of the Guardians brings a funny piece of everyone’s childhood to life.



Story and Photos by Spc. Brian Godette

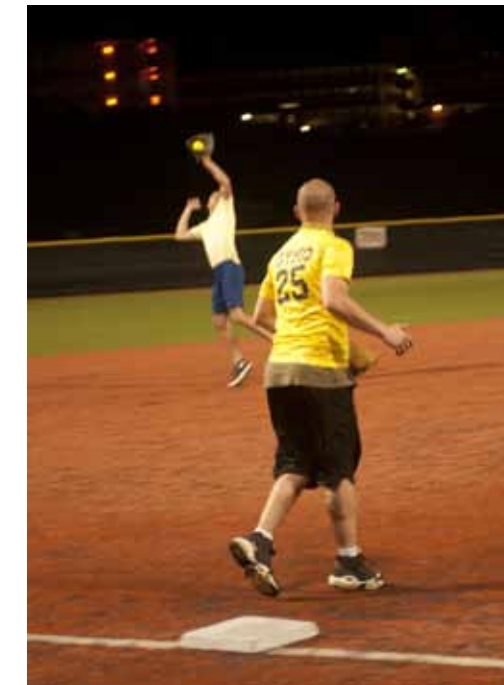
An all-night softball battle royal describes the scene at Cooper Field Saturday night here at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. Residents formed up on their respective teams and participated in the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation annual Turkey Gobbler All-Night Softball Tournament.

The festivities kicked off at 7 p.m. Saturday night with a huge turnout. The MWR staff and volunteers were ready to handle the traffic and cater to the softball players and fans, playing lively music over the loud speakers, extending the concession stand hours until 12 a.m., and even doing raffle giveaways. Many onlookers and players brought their own food and drinks with them, prepared to endure a long night of activities and softball.

“We’re taking this straight to tomorrow morning. All night softball tournament until we get a champion,” Sports Coordinator Oshane Winter said. Nine teams took to the field, having registered a week in advance for the opportunity to play for the championship in the Turkey Gobbler Tournament. “The Turkey Tournament won’t happen again until next year Thanksgiving, so you have a whole year to say I’m the Turkey Gobbler Champion,” Winter said.

The coveted bragging rights had players suited up for the double elimination

tournament, with a 1st place trophy set as the goal. “Everybody wants to get a prize, something to show you’re the champion, so we give prizes to first place and second place with the championship trophy going to the championship team,” Winter said. The energy on and off field was not only fed by the excitement of the game but through the entire outdoor fun-spirited atmosphere created by the MWR staff and volunteers. The music, food, raffles and



sense of community bonding added to the ambiance of the evening. “We try to make it as fun as possible,” said Winter.

Fun and energy was definitely needed to aid participants in the all-night tournament, which lived up to its name, going all the way to 4:30 a.m. before a champion was crowned.

The championship game was played by the 193rd Military Police Company Guardians against the GTMO Mercenaries. To be declared champion, either team would have to win twice to take claim to the throne, and in the end, the GTMO Mercenaries did just that.

Over nine hours of bats cracking, fly balls, and rounding bases, all in the name of good fun. The Turkey Gobbler all-night Softball tournament was another successful event by MWR with more to go before the year is up. “We’re trying to bring a lot of activities to the GTMO community,” said Winter. With next month’s line up scheduled with a basketball tournament and cookout, half court shoot out contest, a pre-Christmas 5k fun run and the highly anticipated Army vs. Navy flag football game, GTMO residents have a lot to look forward to.



Stuffing stockings with deals for the holiday

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brian Jeffries

The Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) announced Sept. 20 that NEXs worldwide will be taking a new approach to the holiday shopping season this year.

NEXs will offer sales and specials throughout the holiday season beginning in early November instead of starting off the holiday shopping season with a big sale the day after Thanksgiving.

Also new this year, deployed Sailors will be able to take advantage of holiday specials by shopping on-line.

“For the 2012 holiday shopping season, we

have revised and refreshed our approach to the traditional ‘Black Friday’ sales events. We are calling it ‘Navy Blue Friday’ and will emphasize Navy core values, Navy family and preserving Thanksgiving cultural values,” said Robert J. Bianchi, chief executive officer for NEXCOM. We will also provide broader access to NEX sale items for afloat and deployed Sailors.”

NEX customers will still find a wide variety of holiday gifts on sale as they have in the past. The prices on the items for sale will last for the duration of the sale, not to be limited to a certain day or time period. NEX events will begin, worldwide, at 6:00 a.m. on Friday morning, featuring all-day Friday specials and additional sale items will be available across the entire three-day weekend.

“We took this approach so customers wouldn’t feel obligated to get up early and leave their families to go shopping for the holidays,” said Tess Paquette, NEXCOM senior vice president and chief merchandising officer. “Beginning our sales earlier in the season will allow our customers to better budget their holiday spending by purchasing gifts over a longer period of time.”

Sailors, Airman, Marines, Soldiers, and Coastguardsmen alike, as well as government employees and civilians had the opportunity over the holiday weekend to enjoy all the sales.

“It’s nice to have everything so covalently priced at your fingertips,” said senior airman Terri Groves, member of Joint Task Force Guantanamo. “It’s great what the Naval Exchange is doing for everyone,” she added.

NEXCOM is continuing its look into how it could better serve its deployed customers. Based on feedback gained through focus groups, NEXCOM will run a special sale event for afloat Sailors at mynavyexchange.com three days prior to Thanksgiving, with exclusive sales tailored specifically to their needs. Deployed customers will start receiving electronic or paper copies of the sales flyer onboard their ship in mid-November through their supply officer or sales officer.

“We have developed an assortment of ‘Sailor requested’ items such as electronics, games and sports nutrition products which will be featured in the three-day sale,” said Paquette. “If Sailors are unable to participate in the sale due to operational or mission requirements, they will be able to contact NEXCOM’s call center after the sale dates and NEXCOM will accommodate them.”

Sales at the Naval Exchange are not just limited to “Blue” Friday and the weekend following. If you missed out don’t hesitate to stop past up through the holiday season for ongoing discounts and offers.



National Guard Birthday Celebration Fundraiser Latino Food Tasting

When: November 30th

From: 1800 to 2200hrs

Location: Windward Loop 29D

POC’s:

CSM Torres @ 84794

CPT Flores @ 55302

Menu

Arroz con longaniza (Rice with sausage), Arroz con jueyes (Land crab rice), Habichuelas rosadas (Pink beans), Bacalaitos (Cod fish fritters), Carne Frita (Deep fried pork), Chicharrones pollo (Deep fried chicken), Asopao pollo (Chicken soup “late night”)

Desserts/drinks

Arroz con dulce, Cheesecake, Bizcocho borracho, Soft drinks and water, Grilled pineapple

Prices:

\$10.00 adults

\$5.00 for 10-16 yrs.

less than 10 FREE!



You might be a redneck if...



...you play redneck games at GTMO

A disoriented participant in the dizzy bat portion of MWR's Redneck Games gets help from two of his friends as he tries to stand up and take a swing at a dodgeball being pitched to him by MWR intern Michelle Maynard. The first-time games also included plunger darts, keg tossing, and seed spitting.

Story and photos by Army Sgt. Jonathan Monfiletto

It was a Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Liberty event that would have made Jeff Foxworthy proud.

In a scene that seemed fit for a punchline of the blue collar comedian's well known "You might be a redneck if..." brand of jokes, a group of about 20 Troopers gathered in the space behind the Windjammer and O'Kellys Friday evening to participate in MWR's first-time Redneck Games event.

While Naval Station Guantanamo Bay might not exactly exude the air of a redneck haven, MWR representatives transformed a piece of the base into one, at least for a little while, as the Troopers took part in plunger darts, keg toss, dizzy bat and seed spitting. There was also a redneck costume contest that had just one participant.

Liberty Program Manager Katie Stanley said she decided to bring the Redneck Games to GTMO after the MWR group at Naval Station Pensacola successfully held a similar event, especially because the event could bring a piece of America to Troopers in a foreign country.

"I said, 'We can make this happen here,'" Stanley said. "We put it around a theme that's very America. We try to keep with the American theme."

The turnout for the first-time event was almost non-existent at first, and MWR representatives took turns tossing plungers at a target on a dumpster while waiting to see

if anybody would come to join them. Tech. Sgt. Craig Delorme, the lone costume contest entrant and winner, showed up in short overalls and a boonie cap as the first non-MWR attendee of the Redneck Games.

About 15 minutes past the scheduled 5:30 p.m. start time, Michelle Maynard and Katie Stanley made their way around the outside and inside areas to drum up participation for their event. They did not have to look far, as they soon happened upon some crew members of the USS Carr, which is currently docked at the naval station.

The group – almost all of them straight off the Carr and headed back from deployment – first played a round of plunger darts. The goal was to see who could hit the target the most times, but after no one was able to reach it even one time, the goal became to just hit the target once and win the contest.

Next, the group took turns tossing an empty keg to see who could throw it the farthest and win that portion of the games. Participants had a variety of styles – some heaved it like a discus thrower, while others swung it back and forth and then let it go. But it was Petty Officer 1st Class Gary Freas who had the winning move, as he stood backwards and chucked it over the back his head and farther than his competitors.

"I'm having fun," Freas said, after accepting a fishing pole as his prize for winning the keg toss. "This is awesome. We just pulled in... This place is awesome. The MWR here is just fantastic."

This is the second time Freas and his

shipmates have docked at GTMO with the Carr, and he said last time MWR helped the crew set up a time for a softball game among themselves that did not interfere with regular leagues.

"We hit the ball around, and we talked with people," he said. "This place is just awesome. It brings us back to being connected to the U.S."

Freas and his friend, Petty Officer 2nd Class Corey Mink, were excited about the next event – dizzy bat – because the two are the only ones on the crew who have played on organized baseball teams.

"I'll win that too. This is what we do," Freas said after Mink told him about the next event while he was still celebrating his keg toss win.

In the dizzy bat portion of the games, the participants had to spin themselves around a bat seven times and then attempt to hit a dodge ball pitched to them by Maynard. Some players had enough trouble trying to stay standing up after spinning around, let alone being able to hit the ball. The prize went to one who could hit the ball the farthest.

The crew really appreciated the opportunity to participate in a fun event such as the Redneck Games during the down time, Mink said, and he pointed to the group's camaraderie for making their recent deployment an enjoyable one.

"This is the best fun we've had the entire time," he said. "We had a good time ... The crew is what makes it."

While the group was celebrating the end

of their deployment on Friday, Mink said they were also marking one of the final times they will all be together. He said almost all of the crew members recently achieved Enlisted Surface Warfare qualification and, as a result, will be assigned to different commands.

"You know just about everything about everybody," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Travis Gardner, echoing Mink's words on the group's closeness. "It makes things awesome."

The Redneck Games closed out on Friday with a seed-spitting contest. Participants were given 10 seeds and lined up behind a column of four buckets, the closest being worth one point and the farthest being worth four points. They spit the seeds and aimed for the buckets to see who could earn the most points.

As with the Geocache Tournament the week before, the Redneck Games was a new event for MWR and Stanley said MWR is always trying to come up with ideas for

things to do. Despite the slow start, she said the Redneck Games went very well.

"It's really exciting when you have something special here for the first time," she said. "It's easy to get people to try it. When you're stuck on a ship for a long time, it's easy to be entertained and get up and be active."

Stanley said the trend in MWR is niche programming – finding events that meet different, specific interests among participants – and her goal as Liberty program manger is to keep trying different things.

"You get different people who want to try different things," she said. "I'm hoping to tap different interests. I hope people continue to come to us with ideas for events. If someone has an idea that's crazy and off the wall, let us know. We've been able to make most stuff happen."

The Redneck Games may have been one of those crazy and off-the-wall ideas, but it was an event that seemed to go over very well with the crew of the Carr – who came

out on Friday just looking to have a good time and ended up having much more fun than they originally anticipated. The fun was what was most important in the end.

Though the winners of each of the four portions of the event received prizes, as also did Delorme for winning the costume contest, what mattered most to the crew of the Carr – as they once again took their places behind O'Kellys at the conclusion of the Redneck Games – was the opportunity to relax and unwind after spending months out at sea and away from home.

"That was a lot of fun," Petty Officer 3rd Class Joseph Kruse said. "A lot of guys have had back-to-back deployments. The last one was pretty rough for them. Coming to the end, we appreciate it."

"It was pretty fun," Petty Officer 1st Class Andrew Moye said. "I didn't expect to come out here and have a chance to do this. We all got to have fun. It was a really good time."



Tech. Sgt. Craig Delorme, who won the Redneck Games costume contest, takes aim during the plunger darts portion of the games.



Electronics Technician 2nd Class Corey Mink tries to score points during the seed spitting contest.



Engineman 3rd Class Joseph Kruse winds up to see how far he can throw an empty keg during the keg throw portion of the Redneck Games.



The participants of MWR's first-ever Redneck Games event celebrate at the end of a fun evening.

Liberty Center celebrates Thanksgiving with Troopers



Recreation Assistant Nadine Williams poses behind the Thanksgiving food she and her fellow Liberty Center staff prepared for the Troopers on Thanksgiving Day.

Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr.

Love, respect and good food was spread throughout Naval Station Guantanamo Bay this Thanksgiving holiday. Whether you were greeted by a 'Happy Thanksgiving,' or served by command groups in the Seaside Galley, this joint community expressed how thankful they were.

And what better way to show how thankful you are than to celebrate. The Liberty Center hosted a Thanksgiving Celebration Thursday evening for Troopers here on the island. Troopers were able to watch football, eat some more food and contact their families back home.

"This is for the Troops," recreation assistant Nadine Williams said. "We try to make them feel comfortable. They're away from their family so this is a part of the appreciation that we do."

Just before Williams and the rest of the Liberty Center staff showed their appreciation, the Joint Task Force command element and other leaders from the 525th Military Company, including Army South Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis C. Zavodsky, expressed their gratitude by serving Thanksgiving dinner to the Troopers at Seaside Galley.

Serving food with smiles goes a long way to making Troopers feel happy on a

Thanksgiving holiday, but Williams said she usually makes the Troopers feel comfortable by playing ping pong and pool with them or by just assisting them with anything they need help in.

"I make them feel like they're at home," Williams said. "It's part of our job"

With Troopers watching their favorite football team on a flat screen television and watching their wives, daughters, sons and other family members on a computer screen, the atmosphere sure did feel like home.

Whether the Troopers communicated through Skype, phone or just plain email, they seemed very happy and at ease.

"I talked to my wife, I talked to my parents and, in a little bit, I'm going to talk to my sister," Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Toci, said when asked if he got a chance to speak to his family.

During the Thanksgiving celebration, Toci said he was able to watch a football game, a soccer game and another football game.

"It's almost like home because you got people walking around randomly," Toci said when asked what's the difference in watching football in the Liberty Center or in his room.

After watching the Texans and Lions game, Toci said he was about to leave until he saw the turkey, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, green beans, potato salad and vegetable cake that was spread

out on the table.

As the pleasant smell of food spread throughout the Liberty Center, a few Troopers couldn't resist fixing themselves a plate.

"This place really made you feel like home, especially this meal right here," Toci said. "I found out that she made most of it at home."

Toci added he could also taste the 'love' that was put in the food.

Williams made a few dishes, but she wasn't the only one who prepared the food. Liberty Program Manager Katie Stanley and the rest of Liberty Center staff took part in making sure the Troopers' bellies were full.

In addition to the food and the whole Thanksgiving celebration, the Liberty Center had a Bike Opening that offered Troops free bike rentals.

"Everyone who is here can just sit, relax, talk, grab a bite and say hi to their family... and when they're finished they can take a ride out," Williams said.

Williams said over 25 Troopers spent their Thanksgiving holiday at the Liberty Center.

"This all came from the MWR [Morale, Welfare and Recreations] facility, showing our appreciation to the military that they're always a part of the family here," Williams said. "No matter how far they are away from their family, we always show appreciation to them."



Sgt. 1st Class Pedro Santiago talks to his wife on the phone while surfing the internet on Thanksgiving Day at the Liberty Center.



Spec. Christopher Porter, human resource specialist with the 602nd Military Police Company relaxes on Thanksgiving Day at the Liberty Center while talking to his family and watching v.

MK2 HUMBERTO MEDINA



TROOPER FOCUS

Story and photos by Army Sgt. Trisha Pinczes

Born in Jalisco, Mexico, U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Humberto Medina came to America in 1989 in order to find a better, and more importantly, a safer life with his family.

"It was not by choice, but during the mid '80s, Mexico saw a spike of the drug cartels and it began to affect my father's business," Medina said. "For security reasons for him and our family, we had to leave."

Staying until the safety of their own family was at risk, they moved to the United States.

"My father was contacted a couple of times by these people and it didn't go very well so we were forced to move," he said. "The reason for our migration was simply it was no longer worth it to live there knowing what could happen."

Having grown up in Mexico, the Medina family held a large sense of loyalty to their home and country only to be let down by those who had once been respected.

"It was really hard for my father," Medina said. "He was very disappointed in the government, in Mexico, the infrastructure, the corruption, the lack of leadership."

Staying with your family is usually assumed while growing up. However, when it means leaving everything you've known, the decision can be harder than one might think.

"I wanted to stay in Mexico but when I saw the level of corruption that was going on and is still going on, it kind of disappointed me as well," he said. "With America, I had seen that if you work really hard and you do the right thing, you could have a chance to make something of yourself."

Deciding to come to America and leaving your childhood behind can be quite an adjustment, but Medina had a leg up on adjusting to a new culture.

"Luckily I lived close to an area where there are a lot of Americans," Medina said. "At a young age I was exposed to the language, culture, how people think, and even the food, so it wasn't that hard."

As a teenager, Medina was able to learn some of the language before arriving in America.

"I lived on the ocean and surfers would come in their VW buses and surf for a month or two and then move on," he said. "During that time I would continue to learn more and more English so when I got to the states, I had a basic understanding of how to speak it."

Years after coming to America, Medina decided to further make this his home by

servicing his country when he joined the U.S. Coast Guard.

"I've been in since 2004. I can honestly say at the end of the day when I go home that I feel like I did a good job," he said.

How he came to serve his country is a testament to his commitment to serving as well.

"I remember waking up on the morning of 9/11 and I wasn't sure if it was a movie or what it was," he said. "I was watching and the whole day I went to work, but I wasn't really working, my mind was somewhere else."

A day everybody will always remember convinced him to enlist.

"It hit me, I came to this country and I've been here for a decade. I've gone to school, had a job and I was in the process of becoming a naturalized citizen at the time," he said. "I said to myself the hardest part is going to be leaving but I realized that just watching CNN and voicing my opinion wasn't going to do anything."

Deciding to join the military, Medina looked at all of the services before deciding. "The Coast Guard just fit me," he said.

Being in the country and being a part of the country are two different things he explained.

"I can honestly say that it's different when you hear the national anthem and you wear the uniform, you feel proud," Medina said.

"I was given an opportunity when I came to this country when I didn't have anything and now I would like to think that in a small way I'm now a part of it."

Being away from family is something Medina has done before since being in the Coast Guard.

"This is my third deployment and obviously the separation is the hardest thing," he said. "They understand it though and they're proud of what I do."

Being in Kuwait for his two previous deployments, this tour of nine months here is somewhat different than the first two.

"Coming here to Cuba is kind of like coming home for me," Medina said. "It's humid, it's hot, the water is great, there are lots of iguanas, and it's a similar environment to where I grew up so I reminisce back to when I was a kid, especially with the mosquitoes."

While he may not enjoy being away from his family, Medina is proud of his work and of what he is serving for and he has taught his children the same.

"Growing up at a young age, we left our country, we left our culture, our environment, the people we like to be with," he said. "You understand that at one point in your life you are going to be separated from those that you love so you have to make the most of it when you are with them."



Machinery Technician 2nd Class Humberto Medina does equipment repairs while here at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay with the U.S. Coast Guard on a nine-month tour.

NAVY
ENTERTAINMENT

Presents

Scarletta



GTMO Holiday Parade & Concert

Sat Dec 1st

Parade begins at 6PM and travels down Sherman Ave
MWR Tree to light as Parade passes by
Children's performances to begin at 7:30PM
Concert begins at 9PM



Event Sponsored by USAA - Endorsement is not implied

GTMO GETS CRAFTY



Crafters share information and stories about their crafts with shoppers. Crafters from all over GTMO set up booths at Saturday's craft fair. The MWR Arts and Crafts program hosted the craft fair at the Windjammer Ballroom.

Story and photos by Spc. Raechel Haynes

Hobbies are a great way to pass the time. Whether you are deployed or assigned to a duty station, hobbies are a productive way to utilize your free time. Arts and crafts are one of many creative hobbies and can cover a wide variety of activities. Arts and crafts can include everything from woodworking to ceramics to photography. One of the ways people showcase their hobbies is by showing their products at craft fairs.

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay's Morale, Welfare and Recreation held a craft fair Saturday at the Windjammer Ballroom. The Windjammer was decked out for the holidays with wreaths, Christmas trees, and filled with the sound of Christmas carols. MWR tries to hold craft fairs every quarter, and they try to always have one before Christmas.

"People have requested having a craft fair after Thanksgiving," MWR Arts and Crafts Program Manager Andre Gordon said. "That way they can buy unique gifts to send home for the holidays."

Saturday's craft fair featured over 32 booths. Crafts ranged from photos to jewelry to candles. Each craft is unique and handmade by crafters here in GTMO.

"It's a good way to have the crafters stay engaged and keep their skills honed,"

Gordon said. "It is nice to have this avenue of creativity and relaxation."

The crafts themselves covered a wide variety of skills. There were beautifully crafted pieces of sea glass and shell jewelry, as well as framed photos of scenery and animals native to GTMO. One booth featured a resident's collection of pottery that she'd done at the ceramics shop during her time here.



A popular craft featured at the craft fair was sea glass ornaments. The craft fair was hosted Saturday at the Windjammer Ballroom.

Another booth sold handmade oil lamps and glass bottles filled with Christmas lights. One couple sold a variety of sea glass ornaments. Almost every booth featured a craft with a piece of GTMO in it.

"The craft fair provides GTMO residents with gifts and art that are unique to GTMO, something they can't get anywhere else," Gordon said.

The crafters weren't just service members. There were spouses, staff, and even a couple of students had booths set up. One of the youngest crafters was a young girl named Taylor Nordman, and her specialty is bottle cap jewelry. The craft fair was an all hands event. Crafters paid a fifteen dollar booth fee, but kept all the money they made on the sale of their crafts.

"This is an avenue for GTMO residents to make some money off work they do in their spare time," Gordon said.

MWR hosted an art and poetry contest for the children as well. The children could sit and draw while their parents explored the craft fair's offerings.

GTMO craft fairs started small with only a few crafters setting up booths and were sometimes combined with another event. Since then, the craft fair has grown to a popular event among GTMO residents and crafters.

So if it feels like time here in GTMO is dragging along, take up a craft. If you don't know where to start, the craft fair can give you ideas. If you are just looking for a unique GTMO-oriented gift, the craft fair provides one-of-a-kind gifts. Check the MWR's Facebook page for craft ideas and information on the next craft fair.



Sightseeing in Fidel's backyard

GTMO residents get tour of North East Gate, learn base history

Attendees of the North East Gate Tour held Nov. 16 check out the gate and fence line that separate Naval Station Guantanamo Bay from Cuba. The monthly Marine-guided tour gives base residents a rare chance to see the gate and fence line up close and learn about the history of the base.

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Jonathan Monfiletto

If you start driving down Sherman Avenue, with the Cuzco barracks on your right and the Navy Exchange on your left, you'll pass quite a few landmarks of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay along the way before you reach the end.

You'll pass Marine Hill, then the U.S. Naval Hospital, then W.T. Sampson elementary and high schools, then Windward Loop, just to name a few. Eventually, you will also reach Camp X-Ray, the original GTMO detention facility.

If you keep driving, you'll reach a restricted area and assuming you have an escort or the proper clearance, you'll come to the end of the road and see a small Marine barracks and, down the hill from that, the North East Gate.

On Nov. 16, a group of about 80 Troopers and civilians, along with a few Marine escorts, got the chance to take this drive, starting out from the Marine Corps Security Force Company headquarters on Marine Hill and ending at the gate that separates GTMO from Cuba.

It was the North East Gate Tour – a monthly tour that allows anyone on the naval station the opportunity to learn about the history of GTMO and view the now-closed gate between GTMO and Cuba. The tour is held on the third Friday of every month and open to the first 100 people who sign up.

Upon reaching the barracks that overlooks the North East Gate, tour attendees heard a summary of GTMO's history from Marine Staff Sgt. Johnny Hang of the MCSF Company and a tour guide for the North East Gate Tour.

Hang told attendees that the United States acquired the land that now contains the naval station as a result of winning the Spanish American War in 1898, and in particular, the first battle that took place on Guantanamo Bay.

In that battle, he said, the U.S. Navy achieved its mission of outgunning Spanish ships, cutting off communications and securing the area for a naval base.

"This area here was lost with no communication to the Spanish," Hang said.

In a subsequent battle, Marines saw action and captured freshwater resources, while two Marines earned the Medal of Honor for signaling the Navy where to shift fire toward enemy forces.

The war ended in August 1898, and Cuba officially leased land to the United States to establish the naval base for use as a refueling station. He explained that the lease is a perpetual agreement that can only be broken if the two sides come to a mutual agreement to do so, or the United States abandons the land.

"We're not going to abandon this area, and we don't really talk to them, so we're going to be here awhile," Hang said.

The North East Gate, which previously allowed for free travel between Cuba and GTMO, was closed off during the Cuban Revolution and has remained that way since Fidel Castro took power in 1959.

Hang told the attendees that among the only people who cross the gate are two Cuban workers who hold jobs on the base and get shuttled in and out of the gate every day. Also, base officials sometimes cross the gate to talk to Cuban officials during monthly

meetings, which alternate between the base and Cuba.

The fence line was installed and the barracks were established near the North East Gate after it closed to increase the security of the border between the gate and Cuba, Hang said. At one time, the Marine force numbered a thousand infantry and artillery because of the threat, but it was cut back in the 1990s when the threat was reduced.

One highlight of that threat, Hang said, was the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, during which all nonessential personnel were evacuated from the base.

The MCSF Company was founded at GTMO in the year 2000 and provides security for the base, along with a Marine Corps Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team that keeps an eye on the border around the North East Gate.

"We're reinforced by FAST Marines," Hang said. "They are the ones who protect us and watch this fence line daily."

At the end of the tour, Hang said he has been leading the monthly North East Gate Tour for two months and enjoys being able to explain the history of the base and to show people a site they do not see on a regular basis.

"It's a good opportunity for people to learn a little about the history of how the Marines and Navy came here and this base came to be here," he said.

Since the tour is limited to the first 100 people who sign up at the MCSF Company headquarters, Hang said people should do so at least a week ahead to reserve their spot and so tour guides can know how many people to expect.

From me to you

A thought on giving thanks from your friendly neighborhood Army sergeant

Commentary by Army Sgt. Jonathan Monfiletto

Thanksgiving – the meaning is right in the name. It's the one day a year where we reflect on our lives and give thanks for what we have and who we have, by sitting down to a bountiful harvest of a meal with our family and friends.

Minus the feast that leaves us feeling stuffed that night plus the next three days at least, it's something we should do all 365 days of the year, not just the fourth Thursday of November – counting our blessings and feeling grateful and fortunate for everything we have.

Army Capt. Al Phillips, the deputy commander for the Joint Task Force Guantanamo Public Affairs Office, hit the nail on the head last week. We as a society really have lost sight of what Thanksgiving really means, and we need to bring the focus of the holiday back on to what the name says – giving thanks.

I'll be the first to admit that giving thanks was a little harder than normal for me to do this year. I'm on my first deployment, and for the first time in my 24 years, I'm spending the holidays away from my family and I won't see them for another six months or so. I enjoyed a fantastic dinner with the people from my unit and another unit we worked with, but it just wasn't the same as being at home.

But, deep down, underneath all of the homesickness, I realize that I really do have a

whole lot of things to be thankful for – first and foremost, my wonderful family and my amazing girlfriend. Sure, I miss them terribly, but I know that's just a by-product of having them in my life to begin with. I'm thankful for all of their love and support, especially at this time since it is what keeps me going.

I'm also thankful for my fellow service members serving here at GTMO and elsewhere around the world. As I said, this is my first deployment, but I often wonder if I can really call this a deployment. I'm living on a military base where the biggest threats for me are sunburns and bug bites, while my fellow service members – including some of my battle buddies from Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training – are serving in much more dangerous situations in Afghanistan. My hat is completely off to them, and each and every one of them has my total respect.

On Thanksgiving and every day, I give thanks for their service and their sacrifice, as well as that of my fellow service members here at GTMO. While I was enjoying a nice Thanksgiving and a relaxing four-day weekend, I know plenty of my fellow Troopers did not have that luxury and were spending Thanksgiving hard at work in the detention facilities and elsewhere around JTF Guantanamo.

Last but certainly not least, I also have to give thanks for my health, my financial

well-being, my freedom as an American – everything that I usually take for granted on any normal day but that I always remember to be thankful for on Thanksgiving. I am very blessed and fortunate, and I honestly have so much to be thankful for that I could not possibly list it all here in this column. I have done my best, though.

I guess my point to my fellow Troopers is to always be thankful for what you have in your life, no matter how big or how small, and who you get to enjoy it with, no matter how near or how far away they are. I know we all have so much to be thankful for this year and every year, this day and every day, whether or not we realize it.

All of us have battle buddies and shipmates beside us here, and all of us have family members behind us back home. All of them are always there to support us and encourage us every step of the way, whether up close or from a distance. I know having that kind of support system has made a huge difference in my life, especially at this time.

All of us are part of the greatest, strongest military in the world, and all of us are in some way a part of the mission here at JTF Guantanamo – and I think those are two opportunities that we can all be thankful for. All of us are alive and well and enjoying the American way of life and, again, that is something we can all give thanks for.

In closing, I wish all of my fellow



Trooper to Trooper

Deckplate leadership

SENIOR CHIEF JEFF CHRISTENSEN

PORT SECURITY UNIT 311 CHIEF

Our world is a complex place, and amongst that world, we have our workplace. The workplace is made up of workers, middle management, and executives. In the military, we have a similar system. We have our junior enlisted, senior enlisted, and officers. Like our civilian counterparts, the executives generate the policies that middle managers will use to guide their workforce.

In the military, our policies are not always as clear and concise as we might like. This opaqueness is out of design, and it is here where our senior enlisted leaders have the opportunity to shine. These vaguely written policies allow our senior enlisted leaders to be flexible and creative, thus gaining maximum effective use out of our junior enlisted, all while being a highly efficient workforce. Keeping an open mind to change and creativity will allow them the ability to move with the times. Do not make change because you can, make change because it's the right thing to do. Changes for the right reasons will be seen by your subordinates as sensible, thus ensuring their support. With them onboard, your new processes will have lasting effect. Every problem requires a solution and every solution is an opportunity. As a deckplate leader, bring your commanding officer solutions not problems.

Senior enlisted leaders must be ever cognizant of their role as mentors, not only to the junior enlisted, but also to the junior officers. These up and coming leaders need to know that they can come to them and receive the wealth of knowledge they have to offer. It's very likely that this junior officer will one day go on to become a commanding officer. The interaction



that senior enlisted leaders give to them as junior officers will remind them later of the importance that the senior enlisted leaders have in the success of their command. If you do not forge this relationship with the junior officers the success of your unit is in jeopardy.

As a mentor to the junior officers, senior enlisted leaders are also a role model to

the junior enlisted. Senior enlisted leaders embrace this role and take it very seriously. They know the enlisted workforce is watching. Senior enlisted leaders must maintain a very high level of professionalism on and off the job. They are accountable for their actions. The dedication our senior enlisted leaders put in today will build the "second to none" service of tomorrow.

	30 FRI	1 SAT	2 SUN	3 MON	4 TUE	5 WED	6 THU
Downtown Lyceum	No Movies for stage setup for the holiday parade and concert.	No movies for holiday parade and concert. Concert begins at 9 p.m. at the lyceum.	Sinister (NEW) (R) 7 p.m.	Alex Cross (NEW) (PG-13) 7 p.m.	Paranormal Activity 4 (NEW) (R) 7 p.m.	Lawless (Last showing) (R) 7 p.m.	Taken 2 (PG-13) 7 p.m.
Camp Bulkeley	No movies due to a power source issue and repairs.						

Call the movie hotline at 4880 or visit the MWR Facebook page for more information.

GTMO RELIGIOUS SERVICES

For more information, contact the NAVSTA Chaplain's Office at 2323 or the JTF Chaplain's Office at 2309

NAVSTA MAIN CHAPEL

Daily Catholic Mass

Tues.-Fri. 5:30 p.m.

Vigil Mass

Saturday 5 p.m.

Mass

Sunday 9 a.m.

Spanish-language Mass

Sunday 4:35 p.m.

General Protestant

Sunday 11 a.m.

Gospel Service

Sunday 1 p.m.

Christian Fellowship

Sunday 6 p.m.

CHAPEL ANNEXES

Protestant Communion

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Room B

Pentecostal Gospel

Sunday 8 a.m. & 5 p.m. Room D

LDS Service

Sunday 10 a.m. Room A

Islamic Service

Friday 1 p.m. Room 2

JTF TROOPER CHAPEL

Protestant Worship

Sunday 9 a.m.

Bible Study

Wednesday 6 p.m.

GUANTANAMO BAY BUS SCHEDULE

All buses run on the hour, 7 days/week, from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m.

Camp America :00 :20 :40

Gazebo :02 :22 :42

NEX Trailer :03 :23 :43

Camp Delta 2 :06 :26 :46

KB 373 :10 :30 :50

TK 4 :12 :32 :52

JAS :13 :33 :53

TK 3 :14 :34 :54

TK 2 :15 :35 :55

TK 1 :16 :36 :56

West Iguana :18 :38 :58

Windjammer/Gym :21 :41 :01

Gold Hill Galley :24 :44 :04

NEX :26 :46 :16

96 Man Camp :31 :51 :11

NEX :33 :53 :13

Gold Hill Galley :37 :57 :17

Windjammer/Gym :36 :56 :16

West Iguana :39 :59 :19

TK 1 :40 :00 :20

TK 2 :43 :03 :23

TK 3 :45 :05 :25

TK 4 :47 :07 :27

KB 373 :50 :10 :30

Camp Delta 1 :52 :12 :32

IOF :54 :14 :34

NEX Trailer :57 :17 :37

Gazebo :58 :18 :38

Camp America :00 :20 :40

PROTECT YOUR INFO!



ALERT OPSEC while traveling

If you're taking leave or traveling off island during the holidays, use OPSEC to protect your travel plans. You might want to tell your family and friends about your travel, but it's very risky to post your flight itinerary, driving routes, hotel reservations, or information about traveling companions online. It is also risky to use apps that track your location or provide online location updates. Don't make yourself an easy target. Be safe while traveling. USE OPSEC!

SAFE RIDE – 84781



ARMY

VS



NAVY

2012 Flag Football Games


Thursday, December 6

1800-2200

Pre-ceremony events begin at 1800!!

Kick Off 1900 for Women's game *Kick Off*
2020 for Men's game

COOPER FIELD



Half Time Entertainment by CYP Dance & Cheer Squads
Drawings for VIP seating (Recliners on the 50 yard line),
and tons of giveaways and prizes!

Concessions serving burgers, hotdogs and beverages

FMI, call 2113