

# The WIRE

## 'Tis the season

GTMO gets into the holiday spirit with annual parade

## Rockin' country style

Scarletta entertains Troopers with unique style, dance party

## Trooper Focus:

Electronics Technician 2nd Class

Reuben Contreras



# COMMAND CORNER

CAPT. W. ANDREW DOCHERTY

CHIEF OF STAFF, JOINT TASK FORCE GUANTANAMO

It has truly been an honor serving as Joint Task Force Guantanamo's Chief of Staff for the past nine months, and I have definitely grown professionally from having served beside such a talented and diverse group of professionals.

The experience of working with our multi-service, multi-discipline, military and civilian force has taught me about much more than our mission areas of detention operations, intelligence collection, and military commissions. It has also taught me about the wide diversity of cultures within the different services and about the many similarities in the way we lead, the way we execute the mission, and the way we work together to take care of our personnel. Whether active duty, Reserve, or National Guard, our leaders all know "what right looks like," and I believe they are continually doing everything in their power to ensure that we're doing things right every day.

Doing the right thing isn't always easy, and the leadership team we've been blessed to work for has always recognized this. They've always been willing to do whatever it takes to overcome obstacles and navigate a path to a solution from which we can look back with pride, knowing that we did the right thing to get there. Whether it's been through extra effort, extra hours, extra checks and balances, or extra resources expended to accomplish the mission the right way, each of us should be confident that JTF-GTMO

has done our duty in a way that our nation, our communities, and our families should be extremely proud.

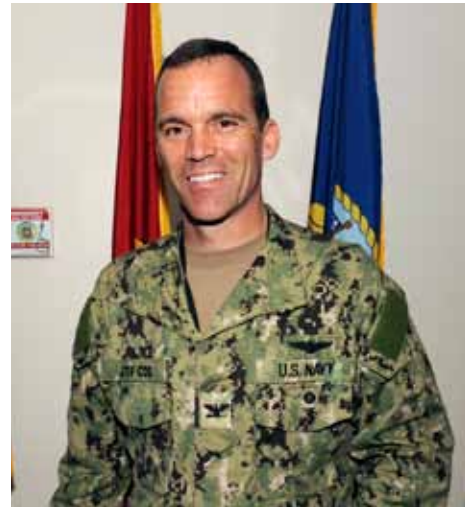
The mission we're doing here at JTF-GTMO is exceptionally difficult and exceedingly complex, but through the dedicated efforts of each member of the team, we continue to execute it admirably. We should all take great pride in knowing that we are doing an extremely important mission extremely well, and I hope that each of you will feel the same level of satisfaction that I feel when you rotate

*We should all take great pride in knowing that we are doing an extremely important mission extremely well, and I hope that each one of you will feel the same level of satisfaction that I feel when you rotate home after serving here at GTMO.*

home after serving here at GTMO. I am also hopeful that each of you will also help carry the message regarding our work here to your family and friends back in your home towns and throughout your communities.

You've all helped me to understand the importance of the mission and the direct value we bring to our national security and our nation's standing within the global community. I want to thank

each of you for your continued efforts to ensure the safe, humane, legal, and transparent care and custody of the detainees at GTMO and for the continued sacrifices you and your families make in the defense of our great nation. I have been extremely blessed to have served with such a great team under such inspiring leadership in our front office and I will look back on this tour with immense satisfaction. Godspeed and happy holidays.



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# JOINT TASK FORCE GUANTANAMO

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# 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.

## Brunch with Santa

How would you like to have brunch with Santa? One last chance to tell him what's on your Christmas list. The Bayview Club is hosting Brunch with Santa on Sunday, Dec. 9th. Brunch is from 10am to 2pm, and Santa will be there from 11am to 1pm. This event is open to all hands. Don't forget your camera!

## 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.

## Cooking class

The MWR Liberty program is offering a free Hanukkah cooking class at the CBQ kitchen. The class will be held Tuesday, Dec. 11th and starts at 4:30pm. This class is for unaccompanied service members.



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NOVEMBER 23, 2012

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## ONLY AT GTMO by Spc. Brian Godette



**Cover:** The Christmas tree on Christmas Tree Hill lights up during Naval Station Guantanamo Bay's annual holiday parade, originally scheduled for Saturday but pushed back to Sunday because of rain. The parade featured Santa Claus himself leading the way and a variety of floats from different organizations on base. Photo by Spc. Brian Godette

## Movie Review

PG-13  
101 min.

# ALEX CROSS



By Army Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr.

With a weekend filled with early Christmas preparations, a glow-in-the-dark parade and a live concert, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay was really rocking it out, which meant no movie time until Monday night.

It was all good though, I still enjoyed myself around Santa Claus. However, my joy really came when I got off work Monday, and my anticipation increased as the clock drew near 7 p.m. My eagerness was hung on the expected performance of a notable actor who was well known for his comedic impersonations as a loudmouth, hold-a-gun-in-her-purse character name Madea. He is also known for directing movies, such as "Diary of a Mad Black Woman" and "Madea's Witness Protection."

This actor/director/writer/producer, Tyler Perry, wiped off his lipstick and mascara, took off his Madea costume and put down his director's hat to play the role of an intelligent homicide detective who is pushed to his limit when chasing a serial killer who specializes in torture and pain in the movie "Alex Cross." Did Perry meet my expectations or did I leave the Downtown Lyceum disappointed? Well, you just have to read on to find out.

This action crime mystery starts off with a chase in a tunnel led by Alex Cross (Perry). His partners Tommy Kane (Edward Burns, "Man on a Ledge") and Monica Ashe (Rachel Nichols, "Star Trek") tag along to help him catch the culprit. The introductory action that is usually meant to engage the audience in almost every action movie was kept plain and typical in this one, but the visuals in the title sequence leading up to the action was one of a kind.

The film went on, going back and forth introducing the protagonist and the antagonist interchangeably in completely different moods, which I thought was a great way to keep the audience interested. However, I felt the way the detectives were introduced and characterized was weak and was done so as if we the audience was spoon-fed a simple dish. There was no – "I wonder if this dish was seasoned with olive oil or garlic and onion powder?" The characters fed me a plain burger and told me how they cooked it, leaving no element of surprise or curiosity.

I blame most of that on the director and the writer because there are many ways you can tell the audience something without flat out verbally telling us and exaggerating those key points. Movies are a visual medium filled with anticipation and surprises that ultimately excites the viewers and I just felt this movie lacked that in the beginning.

On the other hand, I thought Picasso (Matthew Fox, TV series "Lost"), the sick and demented serial killer, was portrayed lovely. You knew he had an agenda in the beginning of the film from a simple telephone conversation. I thought Fox's acting was superb, and I can tell he put a lot into his character to make Picasso come alive. You can tell when an actor puts his all into a role when playing a bad guy if you keep saying to yourself, "This dude is crazy!" all throughout the film. His body physique and demeanor told a story within itself. I read that Fox had gone through a strict diet and workout routine to gain muscle and lose an incredible amount of body fat.

Perry's character was cool as well, but I think the director made him too simple. I mean, I understand that he is a smart detective, but let me know HOW he is able to find things out so easily and quickly. I know Alex Cross is a fictional character, but make him believable! How does he know it was only one killer? Did he leave a clue to support that hypothesis? How do you know the victim got shot twice if you looked at him from a distance and never turned him over from lying on his stomach? Either give me a back story to why he is so intelligent, or add some special effects whenever he finds a clue or something. Some distinct acting skills would have

worked as well to emphasize his character. I don't know, maybe every time he thinks of a clue that helps him solve a crime he looks up to the sky for a couple of seconds and takes a long breath. Maybe that's his signature demeanor that clearly differentiates him from the rest of the characters. Normally when people are great at something, their dissimilarities stand out.

Fox's character and Perry's character hunt each other like a game of cat and mouse when a shoot out happens that interferes with Picasso's mission. Picasso is upset and makes his second agenda killing Cross and making him feel pain, whether it's emotional or physical. Picasso becomes successful in hurting Cross emotionally when he brings Cross' family into the feud. Cross then realizes that he is not as perfect as he thinks he is and how everybody perceives him.

The movie just makes a complete turnaround, and it actually starts getting really good. It was weird in a good way I guess. It was kind of like the main producer saw where the movie was going (downhill) and decided to switch directors. By the way, before I keep badgering Rob Cohen, the director, who is known for directing "Fast and the Furious," "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story," and "Stealth," which are all good movies except for "Stealth," he actually did well directing and blocking the scenes from the middle of the film all the way to the end. He really got my attention.

Although, I felt he made simple mistakes like choosing 'love' music scores in places where it wasn't necessary and picked confusing compositions. He actually filmed Tyler Perry with a video playing in the background. I didn't know whether to look at Perry or the video! Come on now!

Overall I thought the movie was good but not good enough. So much could have been done to enhance the character, Alex Cross, from the beginning of the film all the way to the end. I do recommend you see it just so you can see a different and, I believe, new side of Tyler Perry. Just give the movie some time to progress and you might actually enjoy it. I give this movie two and a half banana rats.

# Bringing People Together One Ornament at a Time

Story and photos by Army Sgt. Trisha Pinezes

The holidays are traditionally a time for family and cheer, and while many will not be spending Christmas with their family, many volunteered to decorate with a different type of family at the Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Chapel. "This is what is known as the hanging of the greens," said Navy Capt. John Van Dickens, the command chaplain for the base. "In anticipation of the first Sunday leading up to the Advent season, we begin the celebration of Jesus' birth by decorating the chapel." While the chapel is beautiful to begin with, by adding holiday decorations to the mix, a piece of home is brought to life. "It's very seasonally beautiful here," Dickens said. "People will take



Master-at-Arms 1st Class Carol Markham helps straighten the Christmas tree at the Naval Station Chapel Saturday.



Fiona Olson volunteered as well, helping with decorations by arranging the garland around the banister and making some of the ornaments for the tree.

their family more than ever. Little things can be the biggest reminders of home."

Helping with the decorations can in itself be a pleasure for those putting them up.

"For those today that are volunteering, it's a way of getting involved, which gets your heart involved too," Dickens said. "You remember Christmases of the past while you celebrate the Christmas of the present."

While seeing the decorations is wonderful, volunteering gives many a new sense of accomplishment and purpose.

"In our command, we are always trying to support the community," Markham said. "One of the reasons that I'm here is that not only are you getting to do something you usually do at home, but you're getting to do something that will matter for a lot of other people as well."

pictures and send them to family back home. It's a way for them to connect from far away."

The decorations themselves are a morale boost for many as they drive around.

"This is the season," said Master-at-Arms 1st Class Carol Markham, the volunteer coordinator for NEGB. "Everybody is away from their family and people tend to get depressed. Just seeing the festivities, lights and Christmas trees can help cheer someone up."

Many of those who are currently on the Island will not spend the holidays with their spouses, children, parents, extended family, and friends, which can bring individuals down.

"The more decorations that are around base probably lift the spirits of a lot of people," Markham said. "This is the time of year that people are going to be missing



Volunteers that participated in hanging holiday decorations work to unravel a 20 foot garland.

# Latino food tasting:

## putting the fun in fundraising



Attendees purchase meal tickets for Friday night's Latino Food Tasting fundraiser, while others relax and socialize in the family party-like atmosphere. The Latino Food Tasting was held at the Windward Loop housing area Friday Night to raise money for the National Guard birthday celebration.

Story and photos by Spc. Raechel Haynes

When asked to describe Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, people might answer sunny, fun, or unique. How many would think diverse? Naval Station Guantanamo Bay boasts a diverse population of Soldiers, Airmen, Marines, Sailors and Coast Guardsmen.

"Everywhere you look in the JTF [Joint Task Force] and the NAVSTA you see diversity in the services," said Army Brig. Gen James Lettko, the Joint Task Force Guantanamo deputy commander. "If you look closer, there is even more diversity in cultures among the service members."

Another part of the diverse life here in GTMO is the food selection. One can find quite a variety of foods to eat here. There's the Jerk House serving Jamaican food, the Bayview providing Mongolian night, O'Kelly's serving a variety of American and Irish food, and of course, there are always the galleys. But for many, no amount of restaurants can compare to a home-cooked meal.

GTMO residents got the chance to enjoy a good home-cooked meal Friday evening. The National Guard Birthday Committee hosted a Latino food tasting on Friday at the Windward Loop housing area. The committee is headed by Lettko, himself a member of the New York National Guard, and the other heads of the National Guard units. The food tasting itself was run by Army Capt. Josué Flores of the 191st Regional Support Group, a part of the Puerto Rico National Guard.

The image that comes to mind of a food tasting is somewhere in a fancy restaurant with small portions. But in true GTMO style, things are done here differently: food tasting

here turned into more of a small block party. A portion of Windward Loop was closed off with traffic cones and lined with tables and chairs. Alongside the house was a variety of boilers and grills, all being used for the meal served Friday night. The garage was open and lit up with black lights with Latino music pouring out.



Spc. Juan Serrano cooks pork and chicken at the Latino Food Tasting held Friday night.

Among the foods served Friday night were chicken, pork, several kinds of rice, a variety of desserts, pink beans, and sangria.

"The food is from all different cultures," Flores said.

For those who have never been to an actual Latino party, the food tasting was very much like a family party, complete with hosts making sure everyone had a full plate.

"In the Latino community, everything is around food and friends," Flores said. "That's what we are trying to do today. We just want

people to enjoy themselves."

Fundraising can sometimes be tedious and boring, but everyone at this fundraiser enjoyed themselves. This is the second Latino food tasting held here at GTMO. Food tastings are all fundraisers to help raise money for the National Guard birthday celebration. The National Guard birthday celebration is planned for Dec. 21 at Phillips Dive Park.

"I've been here going on 14 months," Lettko said. "I've been to every ball they hold and thought there ought to be a National Guard Ball."

Instead of a National Guard birthday ball, the committee has decided to just have a regular birthday celebration. While it may be a little bit more informal, it would be a more relaxed environment where people can have fun.

People tend to forget that the National Guard is the oldest component of the military. The National Guard may not be the forefront of the image of the armed services, but it's still one of the key elements. The National Guard is the foundation for the active Army and for all the other services.

"Everyone talks about how old their service is, but the National Guard is the oldest," Lettko said.

People of all ranks were present at the food tasting from officers to lower enlisted, families to unaccompanied, service members and civilians. Tickets cost \$10 for adults and five dollars for children. The Latino food tasting was an all hands event, and so will the National Guard birthday. The National Guard will be celebrating its 367<sup>th</sup> birthday.

"This food tasting is a great event to have," Petty Officer 2nd Class Delcon Ferguson said. "It gets people out having fun no matter what their rank."

# 5 on 5 HOLIDAY HOOPS

## CLASSIC

FREE,  
All Hands

16+

# BASKETBALL

## 2 DAY TOURNAMENT

Dec. 21-Dec. 22 | 7 pm

Denich Gym Indoor Court

## REGISTER YOUR TEAM

(5 players on the court & up to 5 subs)

## By 12/14 at Denich Gym

Coaches Meeting: Dec. 19, 5:30 pm, Denich Gym

## Liberty Half Court Shoot-Out Competition

(Available to unaccompanied, active duty)

## Food & Refreshments Provided

## Awards distributed at conclusion of tournament



FMI, call  
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# Scarletta gets GTMO dancing

Rising country band jumps and jams at Downtown Lyceum



Scarletta lead singer Aubrey Collins twirls a young fan around on the stage at the Downtown Lyceum Sunday night while other audience members join them in a dance party that broke out during the band's rendition of the classic 1980s rock song "Footloose." The up-and-coming country band closed out a night that included a Christmas parade and tree lighting and also delivered an acoustic performance on Saturday night at O'Kelly's Irish Pub during its weekend tour of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

Story and photos by Army Sgt. Jonathan Monfiletto

There was a dance party going on at the Downtown Lyceum Sunday night – except this time, instead of a new movie playing on the big screen, it was a real scene playing out on the stage.

First, it was a country two-step during a rendition of the Garth Brooks hit "Callin'

Baton Rouge" as a couple from the audience hopped up on the platform and showed off their moves.

Then, the dance party went full swing as more members of the audience jumped up on stage and got "Footloose" while the band banged out a version of the classic 1980s rock song.

Finally, the party turned into a showcase of line dancing as the band played one of

their own songs, "Just Dance," while the crowd on the platform formed two lines and strutted their stuff.

That was just one scene, but the jamming and dancing continued on throughout much of the hour-and-a-half-long set as Scarletta, an up-and-coming country band out of Nashville, performed for the Troopers of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

The band, headed by lead singer Aubrey



Benji Harris on guitar and Nathan Stoops on fiddle jam together during Scarletta's concert Sunday night.

Collins, guitarist Benji Harris and fiddler Nathan Stoops, came to GTMO to provide some entertainment and appreciation for the Troopers as they prepare to close out what has been a breakthrough year for them.

Scarletta released its self-titled first album and saw the first single, "Right Here, Right Now" rise from number 152 to number 26 on the country charts, the highest ranking for an unsigned country act this year. The band appears set for more success as it gets ready to release its second single, "Island Fever," early next year.

Then the band members traveled to GTMO to help Troopers get into the holiday spirit, headlining a show that also featured GTMO's annual holiday parade and acts by the W.T. Sampson High School band and various performance groups.

"Everyone's been super nice. It's been pretty cool," Harris said Friday of the band's experience at GTMO. "You hear so much about Guantanamo Bay, but most of it is rumors and stuff that's not exactly true. A lot of those rumors were dispelled today ... It's like a little self-contained town. I didn't know what to expect."

The whole show was supposed to take place Saturday night, but Mother Nature thought otherwise as steady rains throughout Saturday afternoon and evening forced organizers to push all of the events back a day.

While the parade and performances were put off, Collins, Harris and Stoops brought their show to O'Kelly's Irish Pub and gave Troopers there a preview of what to expect on Sunday with a 45-minute acoustic set.

As they played their own songs from the band's album, the trio also mixed in some covers of legendary artists such as Garth Brooks, Brooks & Dunn, Michael Jackson and Linda Ronstadt.

That pattern continued on the stage at the

lyceum with the addition of drummer Heath Ledbetter and bassist Nathan Gehri. Besides introducing more songs from their album, the band members added a few more covers to the playlist and ended the set with Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama" as their encore performance.

All the while, the band continuously showed their appreciation for the military and thanked the Troopers for their service, especially around the holidays. While Stoops toured Iraq as a member of country star Aaron Tippin's band, the other members of Scarletta found themselves performing on a military installation for the first time.

"It's been an honor for us to do it," Harris said. "You guys work so hard, and you sacrifice so much for us to be able to do what we do. For us to be able to give back just a little bit, it's the least we could do."

For Collins, the visit to GTMO was an eye-opening experience as the band members saw firsthand how the Troopers here work hard and serve Americans.

"It's awesome. I'm very appreciative, very, very appreciative," she said. "I want to give back as much as I can to you guys like you give back to us."

While the band members are appreciative of the opportunity to perform at GTMO, they are also appreciative of where they came from. Harris from Texas and Stoops from Ohio met in Nashville during a recording session and decided to form a band, eventually bringing in Collins from Colorado.

"We all just came to Nashville just to chase the dream, to do it professionally," Harris said, noting the three hit it off instantly and became friends right away. "We wrote a song the next week, and the harmonies just locked in real good and everyone got along really well. There was chemistry already ... It felt like it was the right thing to do."

When Stoops first approached Collins about joining him and Harris, she thought he was trying to ask her out on a date. When she realized he wasn't, she quickly accepted the invitation to turn the duo into a trio.

"Next thing I know, we're still together. That was three years ago – my longest relationship ever," she said. "They're great guys and they're my brothers. They look out for me ... We have family harmonies, even though I'm no relation to these boys at all. We're like a family."

While all three have influences in the country and classic rock genres, Stoops also has a background in classical music as a violinist and mixes his experience with modern sounds to create his contribution to the band's style.

Combined with Collins' powerful vocals and his own rock 'n' roll guitar licks, Harris said the band produces something different than their contemporaries, and it is that distinction that he believes will set them apart and bring them success.

"It's definitely a unique sound that I hadn't heard before. That's why I like being in this band," he said. "It's tough to label us ... It's still country, but it's just right on the edge and kind of covers three or four different genres and molds it together into this new sound. That's why I think it's going to work."

Before Scarletta made its way to GTMO, the band was touring around the country and concentrating on the Midwest and southern United States.

While they performed at the International Country Music Festival in Zurich, Switzerland, and played with Uncle Kracker, Sister Hazel, Thompson Square and Colt Ford, the band has mostly shined on its own in local honky-tonks and dance halls.

The trend of small-time venues will continue into next year for the band that seems to be on the verge of big-time success. Scarletta is booked for shows through March as the band performs on its own and keeps striving for the top.

While the members dream of platinum albums and sold-out concerts, Harris said working hard and earning it this way – as opposed to appearing on American Idol and similar shows – will make them appreciate success more when it finally comes.

"I feel like that's the legit way to do it, even though it takes a little longer," he said. "Work and earn it. Even though it takes longer and it's harder work, we're paying our dues."

The arrival of success may not take that much longer, according to the members of Scarletta, who feel the place at the top of country music is just around the corner.

"We really feel like the ball is rolling," Harris said. "We're just hanging on for dear life on the ride. The boulder's rolling down the hill."



With Nathan Stoops strumming the fiddle and Benji Harris strumming the guitar, Scarletta lead singer Aubrey Collins belts out a song from the country band's self-titled debut album. The band performed an acoustic set at O'Kelly's Irish Pub on Saturday night and a full show at the Downtown Lyceum on Sunday night.

# GTMO parade starts the Christmas season off right



GTMO residents and parade participants glide down Sherman Avenue Sunday evening on one of many floats in the MWR sponsored Christmas Parade.

Story and photos by Spc. Brian Godette

The floats are coming! The floats are coming, accompanied by Santa Claus, his helpers, and a myriad of residents and service members of all ages here at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Sunday evening.

The holiday spirit was in full effect Sunday evening with the kick off of the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation annual Christmas Parade and tree lighting.

The already highly anticipated event created more eagerness with an unscheduled rain delay, which pushed the start date back by one day. No biggie for GTMO residents, who patiently waited and lined both sides of the street of Sherman Avenue from the parade's start point to its ultimate destination - the Downtown Lyceum.

Parade float line-ups began at 3 p.m. Sunday afternoon, coordinated by volunteers and MWR personnel. Sleighs, trucks, humvees - oh my! Each vehicle was prepped out for the holiday season, covered with Christmas lights, decorations, wreaths, and greetings of season tides. Two hours before the scheduled start time of the parade, excitement was abuzz.

"This is great for the kids, for us too, but definitely to get that excited holiday feel for the kids is the most important thing," said Barbara Stein, mother of two and GTMO resident.

Delighted, young faces were definitely

abundant Sunday evening, with many of the parade participants made up of students from the W.T. Sampson Elementary School and High School, as well as the GTMO Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

Before the scheduled start time of 5 p.m., prime real estate in front of the big



Santa makes an appearance on the United States Navy float in Sunday's Christmas Parade.

Christmas tree on Sherman Avenue, was staked out. Onlookers brought their folding chairs and cameras ready to take in the Christmas spectacular here at GTMO.

As the sun started to set behind the crowd, the tune of 'Jingle Bells' could be heard coming from around the corner. The music preceded the lights that were emitted

from the oncoming entourage of floats.

Right before the floats hit the corner, the GTMO Christmas tree on the hill and decorations were suddenly lit. The magnificence in its beauty was complemented by the landscape of looking at the tree from atop the hill. Someone say photo op?

Vehicle after vehicle of Christmas-lit glory slowly rolled down the street, full of residents donned in appropriate Christmas attire (Santa hats, mainly) and screaming "Merry Christmas!" to all along the route. Holiday cheers were not the only thing being shared with the crowd, as parade participants showered the street lines with candy. Yes, delicious, delicious candy, a double treat for the kids watching.

From onlooker to parade participant, the look of joy could not be hidden.

"The rain couldn't hold this back. We all were so looking forward to this, and you can see why," said Teresa Bryar, parade onlooker.

Some of the most popular floats were those that carried the big man himself, Santa Claus, the lit golf car with Frosty the Snowman strapped to the top and the GTMO fire truck with mascot Sparky.

The parade and Christmas tree lighting was just the start to the event-filled evening. With the final destination set at the Downtown Lyceum, GTMO residents were set for more holiday fun and entertainment.

The parade floats transformed the Lyceum parking lot into a bright center of



GTMO fire truck enters the scene as it passes by the Christmas tree on Sherman Avenue en route to the Downtown Lyceum during the Christmas Parade.

attraction with pictures being taken next to them and music belting from its speakers.

A long line caught the attention of most children - the line leading to the lap of Santa Claus, who was situated in a big red chair under a tent surrounded by gifts and lovely helpers. Parents waited in line to have their kids get to sit on Santa's lap and tell him what they wanted for Christmas.

Other residents filled the seats of the Lyceum ready to be entertained by a concert put on by the students of W.T. Sampson school and eventually put into a groove by the musical stylings of the band Scarletta.

The GTMO community came out Sunday evening and was not let down with a fun, warming and enjoyable holiday night for all.



GTMO Fire Rescue team mascot Sparky waves to parade goers and spectators as the holiday float passes by on Sunday.



# Electronics Technician 2nd Class Reuben Contreras

# Trooper Focus



Story and photos by Spc. Raechel Haynes

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said, “Ability is of little account without opportunity.”

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Reuben Contreras had the ability and talent, and he found the opportunity to use them in the Coast Guard. Contreras is a member of the Coast Guard Reserve deployed here at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. He has been a member of the Coast Guard for nearly 10 years, four years on active duty and nearly six in the Reserves. Contreras has been taking opportunities from a young age.

“My father worked in a Honda factory, so I grew up working on Hondas,” Contreras said. “I’ve always had a high mechanical inclination. I used to take my toys apart and put them all back together again.”

Once he had learned about Hondas and their engines, he began to branch out into different kinds of engines. He said the concept is basically the same once you know what the parts look like. During his job at an airport, he worked on helicopters, and now with the Coast Guard he lends a hand with the boat engines.

“Learning an engine takes time,” Contreras said. “If you take it all at once, it is like drinking from a fire hose. It is better to take one piece at a time.”

Contreras is listed as an electronics technician, but he is really a jack-of-all-trades, doing whatever is asked and even some work that isn’t asked of him.

“We don’t have an electrician’s mate in the unit so I am the de facto electrician’s mate,” Contreras said. “I also help out with engine repairs and maintenance. I help out with some of the construction too. I’m like a human Swiss army knife.”

Contreras is known for his can-do attitude and always seeks opportunities to help out. Instead of focusing on just repair,

Contreras embraces the “proactive is better than reactive” frame of mind. Given that he works in the Port Security Unit, keeping the boats in good condition is a key part of the job. Contreras focuses on preventative maintenance as well as his regular duties.

“By having this keen eye, he is able to limit the malfunctions to our boats,” Senior Chief Petty Officer Jeffrey Christensen said. “He is always on the lookout for corrosion, which is the number one cause of break downs on electronic devices”

This same attitude and work ethic carries over into his civilian job on an offshore oil rig.

“I am a maintenance specialist O3, but I’m relieving as an instrumentation electrical



Electronics technician 2nd Class Reuben Contreras conducts regular maintenance and preventative maintenance on the Coast Guard boats in Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

technician,” Contreras said. “So I fix all the stuff, generators, calibration, safety systems, everything.”

However, Contreras didn’t always want to be “Mr. Fix-It.” Contreras grew up watching films like *Top Gun* and *Iron Eagle*, which led to his wanting to become a fighter pilot. Unfortunately, when he was told he would always need glasses, his dreams of being a pilot took a nosedive. Rather than let that stop him, he pursued other opportunities.

“I’ve done a variety of different jobs,”

Contreras said. “I’ve worked at an airport, golf course, Sports Chalet, Aerie, and Snow Summit Ski Resort. I joined the Coast Guard because I thought I needed a ‘big boy’ job and it seemed like a great fit for me. Being in the military and specifically the Coast Guard has opened so many doors for me.”

He credits getting his civilian job to the Coast Guard. During the application and interview process his experience in the military was viewed favorably for his future with the company.

While Contreras is planning for the future, he has reflected on the changes that have happened in the last year.

“My grandmother inspired me, and she just recently passed away,” Contreras shared. “Just found out I’m going to be a dad, so that’s another big change.”

Contreras is using his time here in GTMO to plan for his life when he returns home. He still finds time, however, to enjoy GTMO life with his teammates.

“The variety of recreational activities is awesome,” Contreras said. “I’ve taken the scuba class, we go snorkeling, fishing, and have cookouts. But I miss the snow. This is going to be my longest summer ever.”

There is certainly plenty to keep a person busy in GTMO, and Contreras plans to take advantage of the opportunities offered here.

Contreras stressed the importance of taking opportunities and advancing your skills. You never know when any one of those skills might be needed. Rather than not using his mechanical skills, Contreras volunteers them where there is a need. Through his proactive outlook he has earned the respect of those around him.

“He’s a great team player and well liked by his coworkers,” Christensen said. “He’s an excellent ET and loves to keep the boats in tip top shape.”

# DECEMBER 2012



**The Liberty Program** is open to unaccompanied active duty personnel only. *Schedule subject to change.*

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

Monday, Dec 3..... **POOL TOURNY**  
CAMP A • 1930



Tuesday, Dec 4 & Thursday, Dec 6 ..... **BOAT FLOAT DECORATING**  
MARINE HILL • 1730

Wednesday, Dec 5 ..... **BOWLING**  
MARBLEHEAD LANES FREE • 1800-2100

Friday, Dec 7 ... **ARMY NAVY GAME**  
COOPER FIELD BY SPORTS

Saturday, Dec 8 ..... **BOAT PARADE**

Sunday, Dec 9 ... **BEACH BRIGADE**  
CABLE BEACH • 0900

Tuesday, Dec 11..... **HANUKKAH COOKING CLASS**  
CBQ KITCHEN • 1630



Wednesday, Dec 12..... **BOWLING**  
MARBLEHEAD LANES FREE • 1800-2100

Thursday, Dec 13 ..... **PRANCER'S PUTT-PUTT COMPETITION**  
PUTT-PUTT COURSE • 1900

Friday, Dec 14..... **XMAS MOVIE MARATHON**  
OUTDOOR AT TK • 1900

Saturday, Dec 15..... **PAINTBALL WITH O-REC**

Sunday, Dec 16..... **VOLUNTEER! HOLIDAY READING**  
SIGN UP FOR 30 MIN OR MORE!  
LIBRARY NOON-9

Monday, Dec 17 ..... **PING PONG TOURNAY**  
MARINE HILL • 1900

Tuesday, Dec 18... **MASSIVE CALL OF DUTY TOURNAY**  
MARINE HILL • 1900

Wednesday, Dec 19.... **CHRISTMAS BOWLING**  
MARBLEHEAD LANES FREE • 1800-2100



Thursday, Dec 20 ..... **HOLIDAY COOKING CLASS**  
CBQ KITCHEN • 1630

Friday, Dec 21..... **HOLIDAY BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT**  
DENICH GYM • 1800

Saturday, Dec 22..... **COMET'S KAYAK TO THE CAVES**  
FERRY LANDING BEACH • 0900

**HOLIDAY BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT**  
DENICH GYM • 1800



Sunday, Dec 23... **JINGLE BELL RUN WITH NAVY FITNESS**  
DENICH GYM • 0630

Monday, Dec 24..... **CHRISTMAS EVE SUNSET CRUISE**  
MARINA • 1700

Tuesday, Dec 25..... **PANCAKE BREAKFAST**  
0900



Wednesday, Dec 26..... **BOWLING**  
MARBLEHEAD LANES FREE • 1800-2100

Thursday, Dec 28 ..... **NIGHT FISHING**  
MARINA • 1800

Sunday, Dec 30..... **9 HOLE GOLF TOURNAY**  
SIGN UP AT MARINA

Monday, Dec 31..... **CELEBRATE NEW YEARS EVE WITH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES!**  
TIKI BAR • 2200



## 525 COMMAND LEADS OC CONFIDENCE COURSE

Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Baker, command sergeant major for the 525th Military Police Battalion walks past his Soldiers at the start of his OC Confidence Course in Camp Delta Nov. 27.

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

As one Trooper goes up in the ranks, his leadership tactics may change according to his duties whether that Trooper is enlisted or an officer. It is safe to say that one may not see a sergeant major or a lieutenant colonel in the trenches, so to speak, but giving commands from a battle intellectual standpoint.

However, on Nov. 27., right here at Joint Task Force Guantanamo, leaders like Lt. Col. Darcy L. Overbey, battalion commander for the 525th Military Police Battalion, and Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Baker, sergeant major for the 525th, led their Soldiers from the front and did so with oleoresin capsicum (OC) in their face during an OC confidence course.

"I've listened to a few pros that have gone through it before and they say it's the worst pain ever," Overbey said minutes before the confidence course. "I'm not sure what to expect. Next month makes 19 years as an MP officer and I have not gone through it."

With others Soldiers possibly thinking the same thing, Overbey, Baker and their 525th Troopers all waited inside for their safety brief with mixed emotional expressions on their faces.

Holding to a standard implemented by the 525th, every Trooper in the battalion, regardless of what their military occupational specialty is, has to go through the OC training.

"We've put out that everybody has to go through pre-service, everybody ... I'm in the unit, I have to go through it. Same standards for everybody, and I hope they see that," Overbey said when asked how she thinks her Soldiers feel about seeing her go through the course.

Overbey and Baker sure did set an example as they practiced their unarmed self-defense while the instructors demonstrated

the takedown moves that make up the course.

The OC training finally began, and Overbey was the first up to lead her Troopers. The instructors sprayed her in the face, and she went through the course slowly but rock steady, taking down her obstacles as her Troopers encouraged her.



Lt. Col. Darcy L. Overbey, battalion commander for the 525th Military Police Battalion twist her target's arm to subdue him during her OC Confidence Course at Camp Delta Nov. 27.



Sgt. Major Michael L. Baker, sergeant major for the 525th Military Police Battalion subdues his target during his OC Confidence Course at Camp Delta Nov. 27.

"She motivated me," Spc. Shanna Chastain said while standing by her husband Sgt. Jason Chastain. "Me and my husband, she motivated us."

The Chastains are both with the 189th Military Police Company and were both waiting for their turn to go through the course.

"I'm highly motivated. She went through it like a champ," Sgt. Chastain said.

"She handled it really well," Spc. Chastain said, piggy backing off her husband.

Just as Overbey finished her course, Baker was right behind her, pumped and ready to go through it.

Unlike Overbey, this was no initiation for Baker.

"This is my fourth time going through this," Baker said. "Once you do level 1, you usually don't have to do it again ... "However, I'm doing this today to support the commander and to lead from the front for the Soldiers."

Baker's selfless service brought forth nothing but enthusiasm from his Soldiers waiting their turn.

"Seeing my battalion commander go through and our sergeant major, who I know is at level 1, I'm motivated, I'm motivated, because I wouldn't go through level 1 again," Spc. Chastain said, laughing.

Realizing how rarely senior non-commissioned officers go through training such as the OC confidence course, Baker said he hopes he lives to be an example to all sergeant majors.

And like a great sergeant major, Baker encouraged Overbey, his battalion commander, and the rest of the Soldiers who were detoxing after they went through the course.

Overbey said it was a great course and highly recommends the training.

"I have a greater appreciation of what Soldiers do," Overbey said.

Her Soldiers appreciate her as well.

"That shows some serious leadership. She cares about her Soldiers ... She knows what we're going through, and she's not going to talk the talk, she's going to walk the walk," Spc. Chastain said.



# NEX kicks off holiday season with tree annual lighting



Onlookers check out the smaller trees decorated by various groups on Naval Station Guantanamo Bay after the big tree was lit during the base's annual command-sponsored Christmas tree lighting ceremony. The ceremony also included performances by the W.T. Sampson High school band and chorus and routines by a number of children's groups.

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Jonathan Monfiletto

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, especially now that the big tree in the atrium of the Navy Exchange, and all of the smaller trees and decorations around it, have been lit.

The lights were officially turned on on Nov. 24 at the conclusion of GTMO's annual command-sponsored Christmas tree lighting ceremony. The ceremony featured performances by the W.T. Sampson High School band and chorus and songs and routines by a number of children's groups.

Elizabeth Flinn, operations service manager for the GTMO Navy Exchange, said the tree lighting has been held for more than 12 years, and this is the fifth year she has been involved with it.

The ceremony always takes place

the Saturday after Navy Blue Friday, the Exchange's version of Black Friday. Flinn said the Exchange works with the GTMO Spouses' Club, MWR youth programs, the school music department, and the naval station chapel to organize the tree lighting.

"I love it," she said. "We look forward to it every year. It's exciting to see different groups perform. We enjoy being able to sponsor this event and be a part of bringing the Christmas spirit to the island."

On a day that would have passed for late summer or early fall back in the states, the Christmas spirit was alive and well in front of the Exchange on that Saturday. The band and chorus combined to open the ceremony with the national anthem and then performed some Christmas carols as Santa Claus himself rolled up in a golf cart.

With Santa Claus looking on and greeting

children, the band and chorus played some songs together and also performed separately. The W.T. Sampson Elementary School second-grade and fourth-grade classes also sang a song each.

Daniel Freeman, the music teacher for both the high school and the elementary school, said the ceremony gives students the chance to play for other people and also to celebrate Christmas despite being far away from the states.

"This is a great opportunity for our kids to perform and display their work for people who wouldn't otherwise hear it," said Freeman, who took part in the tree lighting ceremony for his second time. "It helps them still be involved in the Christmas spirit even though we're on an island in the middle of the Caribbean."

Being such a small school, W.T. Sampson has to put all of its students, regardless of ability, into one class, and Freeman said that presents some challenges, but not enough to stop the group from putting on a crowd-pleasing show for those who attended the tree lighting.

"We have to put the beginners in with the advanced kids," Freeman said. "That leads to varied degrees of skill, and we have to choose songs that work for all students ... We're pleased to have been able to do this for the service members."

With Navy Lt. Larry Jones, naval station chaplain, emceeding, the audience also saw performances from the All-American Candy Cane Girls and GTMO Shimmers cheering squads, GTMO Caribbean Energy and Caribbean Rhythm dance teams, the children's chapel chorus, and the Child and Youth Programs chorus.

After the performances, Navy Capt. J.R. Nettleton, naval station commander, announced the winners of the military family art and essay contests, as well as the winners of the tree decorating contest.

In tree decorating, the GTMO Latino Association won for the most traditional tree, the GTMO Spouses' Club won for the most GTMO tree, and Pentad Corporation won for the most creative tree.

"I'm pretty happy about the three groups who won," Nettleton told the audience. "They all do great things for this base."

After the awards were announced, the audience was invited into the atrium, and it became aglow with the light of the trees and the decorations. Children were also invited to meet Santa, get their picture taken with him, and tell him what they want for Christmas.

And, just like that, the Christmas season is now under way at GTMO.

# AROUND THE WORLD AND BACK AGAIN



Story by Army Sgt. Jeremy Bratt

With the holidays upon us and dreams of sugar plum fairies dancing through most Americans' head, the thoughts of most here in Guantanamo Bay turn to one thing: home. Unfortunately, for those lucky enough to travel this season, there is a lot of misinformation out there in the rumor-verse.

The J4 Travel office handles official travel only for Troopers. This includes TDY, redeployment, permanent change of station, leave, emergency leave, and medical TDY. Space Available travel is handled by the terminal. One of the biggest mistakes Troopers make is going to the Personnel Support



Detachment office on the Naval Station side. All Joint Task Force personnel must go through the J4 Travel office. Going to the wrong place can slow down the process and even lead to not departing on time.

"How GTMO works, it's not like every

other terminal. It's first come, first serve," said Staff Sgt. Ahmad Williams.

"In the states, at other terminals, it's more like: you have orders, it's a mission, you have priority, so we'll bump everybody off. Out here it's not like that."

That is why Williams

tells everyone that the most important thing you can do if you need to travel is plan ahead. All standard operating procedures for official travel can be located on the J4 SharePoint site and Williams recommends reviewing them as soon as you know you need to travel.

The most

important part of

planning is funding.

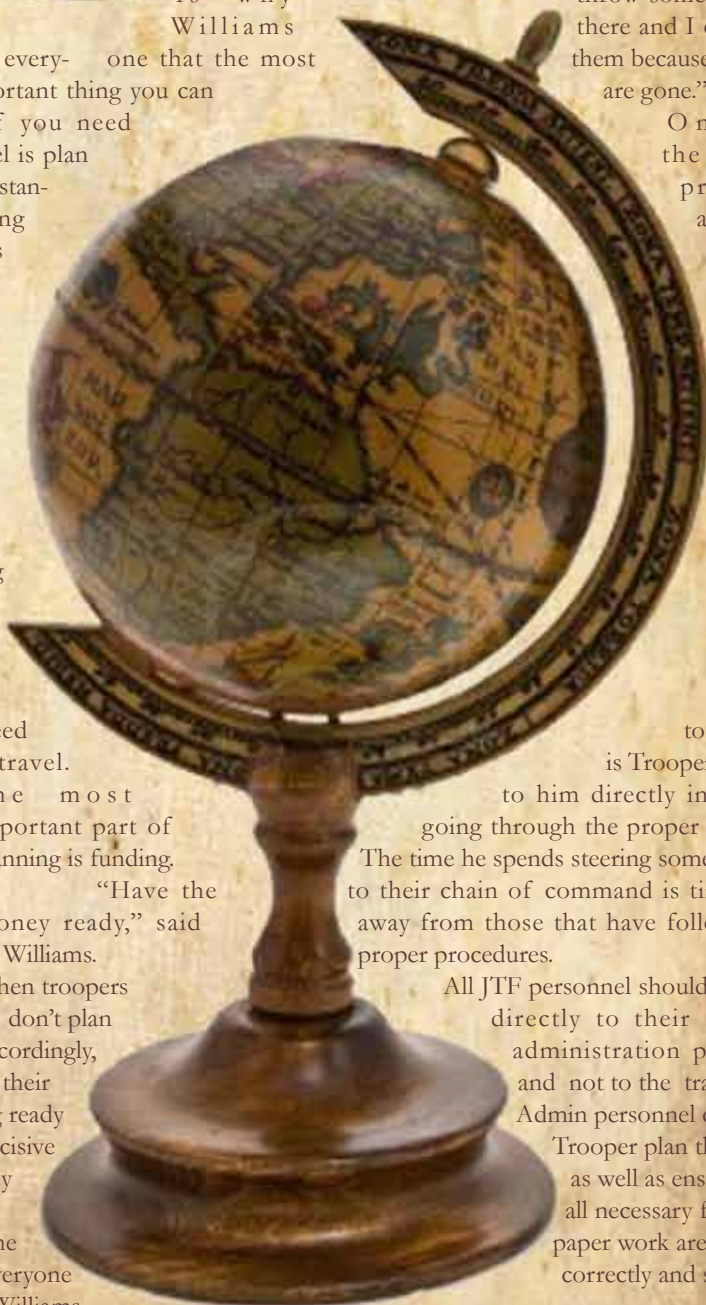
"Have the money ready," said Williams.

When troopers don't plan accordingly, have their funding ready or are indecisive as to what they want to do, it slows down the process for everyone according to Williams.

"I spend a lot of time on phone calls with people who are like, 'hey, what do you think is best?' and when I spend that time doing that, and when folks haven't planned accordingly what they want to do with their travel, then that holds up everybody else who do have the money."

"Some folks come in last minute for these holidays, 'Well, I was thinking I was gonna [sic] do this, I was thinking I was gonna [sic] do that' and now they throw something out there and I can't help them because the seats are gone."

One of the biggest problems, according



to Williams,

is Troopers coming to him directly instead of going through the proper channels.

The time he spends steering someone back to their chain of command is time taken away from those that have followed the proper procedures.

All JTF personnel should be going directly to their section's administration personnel and not to the travel office Admin personnel can help a Trooper plan their travel as well as ensuring that all necessary forms and paper work are filled out correctly and submitted properly.

# Trooper to Trooper

## If you see something, say something

CHIEF BOATSWAIN'S MATE PAUL KEOUGH  
PORT SECURITY UNIT 311

Several years ago, my ship docked out-board of another ship, forcing me to cross that ship's deck to get to the pier. Since we were docked, I placed my wedding ring back on its respective finger and went to depart the ship. Due to the difference in deck heights and the lack of a brow between our ships, I opted to lean out, grab the overhang of the other ship's main deck, and swing over onto its main deck. As I released my grip, a burr of metal caught under my wedding ring and my body weight caused an avulsion of my finger at the joint (that's medical speak for severing the finger completely off!).

While at the hospital the following day, one of the corpsmen quizzed me on my assigned unit and then informed me that I had been transferred off the ship 12 days prior to the accident. Now don't get me wrong, I was responsible for the injury, but as I look back on that day, I can't help but think to myself "What if?"

What if I had been notified of my transfer prior to the accident? I bet I would still have my finger. What if someone told me that my method of crossing from one ship to another was risky and suggested a different option? I probably wouldn't be sporting the cool prosthetic finger issued to me by Uncle Sam.

As I ponder those and many other questions, I think of the Department of Homeland Security's anti-terrorism slogan, "If you see something, say something," and wonder why we do not use it in everyday applications. How many times have you seen something that seemed unsafe or out of the ordinary but failed to speak up? How many

times has someone started to stray off course, engaging in dangerous behavior, and their friend didn't say something or intervene?

Even some of the most mundane or seemingly minor problems can yield significant damage if not corrected. Take, for example, seeing debris in the roadway – if not reported and cleared, it poses a risk to other traffic that might swerve to avoid it and then strike another vehicle. Another situation we all face is when a co-worker or acquaintance exceeds their limit but continues to drink only to end up being arrested. The list of circumstances goes on and on, limited only by your imagination.

We have probably all heard someone at some point or another, when reflecting on an accident, injury, or a misconduct incident, say, "I wish I had said something." We should never miss the opportunity to step up and voice our concerns. It should be in our nature, as military



men and women, to take action and prevent any undue harm to a person's health, career, or their reputation. It is just as simple as that slogan, "If you see something, say something!"

### PROTECT YOUR INFO!

## ALERT What is PII?

**PII** is an acronym that means "personally identifiable information." PII consists of information that is unique to us. Things like your name, social security number, phone number, local address, home of record, birthday, place of birth and mother's maiden name are all considered PII. Putting this type of information on Facebook, MySpace or other internet websites can put you at a much greater risk of financial fraud, stolen credit and identity theft. Any information that is tied directly to you or could be used to identify you should be protected. Many people don't think about the need to protect this information until it's too late. Don't let this happen to you or your family. Use OPSEC to protect your PII.

	7 FRI	8 SAT	9 SUN	10 MON	11 TUE	12 WED	13 THU
Downtown Lyceum	Fun Size (NEW) (PG-13) 7 p.m. Silent Hill Revelation (NEW) (R) 9 p.m.	Here Comes the Boom (PG) 7 p.m. Cloud Atlas (NEW) (R) 9 p.m.	Sinister (R) 7 p.m.	Twilight: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (PG-13) 7 p.m.	Taken 2 (Last showing) (R) 7 p.m.	Hotel Transylvania (Last showing) (PG) 7 p.m.	Dredd (Last showing) (R) 7 p.m.
Camp Bulkeley	<b>No movies. Check Facebook for Lyceum updates.</b>						

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

# SAFE RIDE – 84781

2012 Marina  
*Boat Parade*



December 8, 2012

**MWR Marina**

Parade starts at 6:15 pm

Parade Route: Captain's house  
to Admirals house and back  
(2 or 3 loops around)

**WANT TO PARTICIPATE?**

Decorate your boat or rent  
one from the Marina.

Decorating starts at noon  
on Dec. 8.

**FREE TO ENTER**

Open to all ages  
with a valid  
boaters license



Cocoa and cookies  
after the parade



FMI, call 2345

Call Marina to rent generators/inverters  
MWR will not provide lights/decorations