Around the JTF

A detainee reads a book in the outdoor recreation area of Camp Six at Joint Task Force Guantanamo, Feb. 24. *— photo by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Jordan Miller.*

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bear (WMEC-901) pulls into Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to take on fuel and stores, March 2. *— photo by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Elisha Dawkins.*

Professional pool player Jeanette Lee, aka The Black Widow, performs a trick shot for fans at the Windjammer Saturday night. Lee spent three days on Guantanamo Bay playing against, performing, coaching and getting to know Troopers. *— photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jason Tross.*

Volume 12, Issue 11

Friday, March 4, 2011

The WIRE

An award-winning JTF journal

Guantanamo Generations

Runners get muddy for the ball

The Black Widow spins her web

Trooper to Trooper

featuring

Senior Chief Petty Officer Wendell Burnette

Senior enlisted leader, MSST Miami

When we are asked about our core values, most of us respond with our service's respective key words and phrases. All the services refer to honor and/or integrity and set standards for conduct. However, regardless of which service you are a member, it all boils down to duty. Our duty is our contractual obligation to fulfill our commitments, do our jobs, discharge our responsibilities and perform our assigned tasks and functions. It is within this devotion to duty that we are compelled to live up to all those other core values.

It is not enough to show up to work each day and collect a paycheck. We must be willing to seek out new responsibilities, put forth effort to achieve our organization's goals and be willing to accept accountability for our actions. Everyone needs to strive to learn and improve. We must endeavor to improve the operational readiness of our equipment and our fellow servicemembers.

Every service member has an obligation to improve every duty station he or she serves at. The worst thing anyone can ever say to me is "well that's the way we've always done it." Just because it has always been done wrong, does not miraculously make it right. It is our duty to improve, streamline and make safer every work area to which we are assigned. The only time you truly cannot do anything, is when you do not try.

JTF Guantanamo

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The WIRE is the official news magazine of Joint Task Force Guantanamo. It is produced by the JTF Public Affairs Office to inform and educate the Troopers of JTF Guantanamo through news, features, command guidance, sports and entertainment. The WIRE seeks to provide maximum disclosure with minimum delay with regard to security, accuracy, propriety and policy. This DoD news magazine is an authorized publication for the members of the Department of Defense. Contents of The WIRE are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or Joint Task Force Guantanamo. It is printed by the Defense Logistics Agency Document Services with a circulation of 1,000.

COVER: Army Staff Sgt. Tim Brooks places a flower on the grave of his great-grandmother Antonia Negron Valle, Feb. 15, at the Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Cemetery. – photo by Army Staff Sgt. Benjamin M. Cossel

BACK COVER: Troopers participate in a volleyball game at the newly restored Tierra Kay Housing volleyball court, Feb. 26. Troopers broke in the volleyball court after a recent restoration that was completed by volunteer servicemembers. – photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jordan Miller

Sam Phelps-Roper and other protesters representing Westboro Baptist gather outside the entrance of Stanford University to protest the schools production of "The Laramie Project," a play about the 1998 murder of gay student Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, Jan. 29. — *photo by AP*

Ex-Army Officer Convicted in Iraq Contract Fraud

Voice of America News Service

A federal jury in Alabama has convicted a former U.S. Army officer and his wife of bribery, fraud and other charges for a scheme that netted them millions of dollars in illegal payments related to contracts in Iraq.

Eddie Pressley and his wife, Eurica, were found guilty on 22 charges of bribery, fraud, conspiracy and money laundering. The Justice Department says they accepted $2.8 million in bribes from civilian firms working in Iraq on U.S. Department of Defense contracts between 2004 and 2006.

Husband and wife each face up to 75 years in prison and potential fines of more than $5 million ($250,000 for each of the 22 criminal charges). They are to be sentenced in June.

Supreme Court: Anti-gay funeral picketers allowed

Voice of America News Service

The Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that a grieving father's pain over mocking protests at his Marine son's funeral must yield to First Amendment protections for free speech. All but one justice sided with a fundamentalist church that has stirred outrage with raucous demonstrations contending God is punishing the military for the nation's tolerance of homosexuality.

The 8-1 decision in favor of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., was the latest in a line of court rulings that, as Chief Justice John Roberts said in his opinion for the court, protects "even hurtful speech on public issues to ensure that we do not stifle public debate."

The decision ended a lawsuit by Albert Snyder, who sued church members for the emotional pain they caused by showing up at his son Matthew's funeral. As they have at hundreds of other funerals, the Westboro members held signs with provocative messages, including "Thank God for dead soldiers," and "You're Going to Hell."

Justice Samuel Alito, the lone dissenter, said Snyder wanted only to "bury his son in peace." Instead, Alito said, the protesters "brutally attacked" Matthew Snyder to attract public attention. "Our profound national commitment to free and open debate is not a license for the vicious verbal assault that occurred in this case," he said.

The ruling, though, was in line with many earlier court decisions that said the First Amendment exists to protect robust debate on public issues and free expression, no matter how distasteful. A year ago, the justices struck down a federal ban on videos that show graphic violence against animals.

What might have made this case different was that the Snyders are not celebrities or public officials but private citizens. Both Roberts and Alito agreed that the Snyders were the innocent victims of the long-running campaign by the church's pastor, the Rev. Fred Phelps, and his family members who make up most of the Westboro Baptist Church. Roberts said there was no doubt the protesters added to Albert Snyder's "already incalculable grief."

But Roberts said the frequency of the protests - and the church's practice of demonstrating against Catholics, Jews and many other groups - is an indication that Phelps and his flock were not mounting a personal attack against Snyder but expressing deeply held views on public topics.

Indeed, Matthew Snyder was not gay. But "Westboro believes that God is killing American soldiers as punishment for the nation's sinful policies," Roberts said.

"Speech is powerful. It can stir people to action, move them to tears of both joy and sorrow, and - as it did here - inflict great pain. On the facts before us, we cannot react to that pain by punishing the speaker," Roberts said.

Snyder's reaction, at a news conference in York, Pa.: "My first thought was, eight justices don't have the common sense God gave a goat." He added, "We found out today we can no longer bury our dead in this country with dignity."

He said it was possible he would have to pay the Phelpses around $100,000, which they are seeking in legal fees, since he lost the lawsuit. The money would, in effect, finance more of the same activity he fought against, Snyder said.

Margie Phelps, a daughter of the minister and a lawyer who argued the case at the Supreme Court, said she expected the outcome. "The only surprise is that Justice Alito did not feel compelled to follow his oath," Phelps said. "We read the law. We follow the law. The only way for a different ruling is to shred the First Amendment."

She also offered her church's view of the decision. "I think it's pretty self-explanatory, but here's the core point: the wrath of God is pouring onto this land. Rather than trying to shut us up, use your platforms to tell this nation to mourn for your sins."

The picketers obeyed police instructions and stood about 1,000 feet from the Catholic church in Westminster, Md., where the funeral took place in March of 2006.

The protesters drew counter-demonstrators, as well as media coverage and a heavy police presence to maintain order. The result was a spectacle that led to altering the route of the funeral procession.

Several weeks later, Albert Snyder was surfing the Internet for tributes to his son from other soldiers and strangers when he came upon a poem on the church's website that assailed Matthew's parents for the way they brought up their son.

Soon after, Snyder filed a lawsuit accusing the Phelpses of intentionally inflicting emotional distress. He won $11 million at trial, later reduced by a judge to $5 million.

The federal appeals court in Richmond, Va., threw out the verdict and said the Constitution shielded the church members from liability. The Supreme Court agreed.

Forty-eight states, 42 U.S. senators and veterans groups had sided with Snyder, asking the court to shield funerals from the Phelps family's "psychological terrorism."

Roberts described the court's holding as narrow, and in a separate opinion Justice Stephen Breyer suggested that in other circumstances governments would not be "powerless to provide private individuals with necessary protection."

But in this case, Breyer said, it would be wrong to "punish Westboro for seeking to communicate its views on matters of public concern."

News from the Bay

JTF GTMO not included in tax exclusion

CORRECTION: *In the Feb. 19 edition of The Wire, we incorrectly stated the requirements for tax exclusion. The conditions for tax exclusion are both requirements, not either one as we incorrectly stated.*

As the excitement of the New Year fades away, those who pay taxes start to count down the days until April 15. Luckily, the Tax Center on Guantanamo Bay is here to help Troopers with all their tax needs.

This year, there has been confusion concerning whether serving at Joint Task Force, Guantanamo Bay qualifies as a tax exclusion zone. Unfortunately, JTF GTMO does not qualify and the income Troopers' earn here will be taxed.

In order to qualify as a tax exclusion zone, two basic criteria must be met: a country or area must either be designated as a "combat zone" by an executive order or as being in direct support of a combat zone by the Department of Defense AND servicemembers must qualify for hostile fire or imminent danger pay in that area or country. Although Troopers serving in JTF-GTMO qualify for imminent danger pay, the DoD has not designated JTF-GTMO as being in direct support of a combat zone. Therefor, JTF GTMO does not qualify as a tax exclusion zone.

W2s distributed by Defence Finance and Accounting Services are correct as they are. Servicemembers should not file taxes based on the amount they feel is correct. Returns filed with income different from what is shown on the servicemember's W-2 will be audited by the Internal Revenue Service.

For further questions, contact the Tax Center at x8117.

Spc. Meredith Vincent

Kayak to the Caves a can't-miss opportunity

Morale Welfare and Recreation will bring back their Kayak to the Caves event Sunday at 9 a.m.

"The kayak to the caves is by far our most popular guided trip," said Cory Geiger, MWR outdoor recreation director. "It is a longer paddle than the other tours but is well worth the effort once you reach the caves and are able to paddle in ... and enjoy the cool breeze and shade."

Participants will depart from Ferry Landing, go past Phillips Dive Park and on to the caves. Geiger said Guantanamo residents should not pass up this unique opportunity.

"This trip should be on everyone's GTMO bucket list," he said. "Whether it is done on a tour or by themselves."

The event is free to the community and all guided trips do not require a license.

For more information on the Kayak to the Caves, call x2345.

Spc. Meredith Vincent

Accounting fellowship application now open

The application period for the FINRA Foundation Military Spouse Accredited Financial Counselor fellowship is now open.

The program provides up to 200 military spouses with the education necessary to enter the financial counseling career field. The fellowship covers costs associated with completing Accredited Financial Counselor training and test.

Current or surviving spouses of any servicemember are eligible. Spouses who are current employees of the United States government or are employed by government contractors, are in the military, or who currently hold active securities licenses are not.

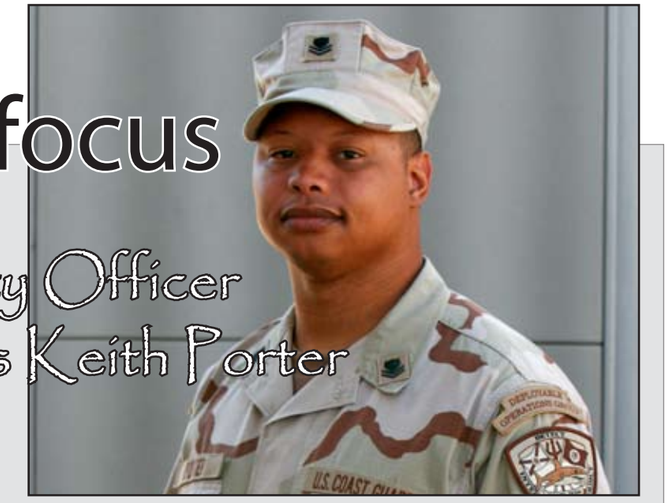
Applications are accepted only online at www.militaryfamily.org/fellowship and must be received by midnight EST April 15.

Spc. Meredith Vincent

What is your favorite recreational activity?

trooper ✪ focus

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Keith Porter



Army Sgt. Mathieu Perry

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Keith Porter was looking for future federal job opportunities the fateful day he signed on the line at the recruiter's office.

Porter, an electrician's mate, said he left Oklahoma State University a year early to work for the Federal Aviation Administration.

While there, he was inspired by the large number of prior coasties and other servicemembers to join the armed forces.

"My coworkers said their military experience helped them to get their jobs and they mentioned it would be beneficial to me for advancement to serve in the military," Porter said.

Now, he views his future with the Coast Guard more permanently.

"My plan is to do 20 years and re-evaluate," said Porter. "Chances are that I will do 10 more after that."

Porter's dedication to his job, the Coast Guard, and our country is noticed by his coworkers.

"Porter is an exceptional electrician's mate," said Coast Guard Senior Chief Machinery Technician Wendell Burnette, machinery technician senior chief. "He also maintains an outstanding military bearing in all situations."

Burnette said Porter is the cooler mind to follow during times of change and his disposition to take things in stride helps to improve the overall performance of those around him.

When it comes to leadership, Porter is humble about walking the walk.

see FOCUS, page 19

Bullet Bio

Time in service: 9 1/2 years

Hobbies: "twidgetting" with electronics and playing soccer

Pet peeves: messy people

Next goal: promotion to Petty Officer 1st Class

Advice to junior Troopers: do your best in all aspects of life

Seabees take down sea huts, make room for new Club Survivor

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jordan Miller

No, your eyes are not playing tricks on you. You are not seeing things. The Southwest Asia huts near the Liberty Center in Camp America have been demolished and now an empty space is conspicuous where they once stood.

At the end of January, Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion-28 began to tear down the small buildings.

Several reasons contributed to the removal of the huts, said Army Maj. Kevin Kenworthy, Joint Task Force Guantanamo Deputy Director of Engineering.

"The SWA huts weren't insulated," Kenworthy said. "They weren't good for protecting equipment like computers, radios or telephones."

They were also termite-infested, failed engineering inspections and did not meet destructive weather protection standards, said Kenworthy.

"They were never put on any foundation," Kenworthy said. "If there was to be any hurricanes to come through, they would be blown away."

About 22 percent of the huts have been demolished, said Steelworker 1st Class Terrence Ryan, NMCB-28 leading petty officer.

In the past, the huts were used for unit headquarters, joint detention group functions, training and a post office, Kenworthy said.

Equipment Operator 2nd Class James Owen uses a wheeled excavator to break down wood from a demolished hut at Camp America, Feb. 14.

A new Club Survivor will be built in place of the huts, explained Ryan. Construction on the new building is expected to begin in early April.

"We have the building. We just have a few odds and ends to work out on the interior design," Ryan said.

see HUTS, page 19

Black & Silver Ball celebrates African-American heritage, history

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Elisha Dawkins

(from left to right) Capt. Kirk Hibbert, Dr. Ron Archer, Capt. Monte Bible and Maj. Winston Tierney cut the Black History Month cake, Feb. 26, at the Silver and Black Ball hosted by the Black Heritage Organization.

The Black Heritage Organization hosted a Silver and Black Ball at the Windjammer Ball Room Feb. 26, to commemorate the significant contributions of African-Americans throughout the history of the United States.

Dr. Ron Archer of Palm Beach, Fla. was the highlighted guest speaker for the evening. Among his many accomplishments, Archer served as a leadership consultant to General B. Bell, supreme commander, U.S. Army Europe and for the National Football League Players Union.

Archer's speech touched on a number of topics relating to leadership in the 21st century, including the impact of the civil rights movement and the current state of the educational system in the United States.

"Civil rights were essential to Dr. King's message of hope and reconciliation," said Archer. "The moral crisis for the 21st century is the epidemic of educational failure in the urban community."

Black History Month reminds Americans of the struggles for freedom and liberty in the country and the contributions of black citizens in the shaping of American society.

"I want this occasion to teach and encourage African-Americans to turn their pains into power, their wounds into wisdom and take everything they understand and learn in life as a down payment on their destiny," Archer said prior to the speech. "You received grace and mercy; not to keep it for yourself but to give it to someone else in order to leave a legacy of greatness behind."

During the speech, Archer revealed he was raised by a single mother in a low-income community and abused during his childhood. Still in grade school, Archer found himself on the brink of suicide.

"At age 10 I had enough," he said. "But there was a teacher in my fourth grade class who brought in people to work with kids like me and teach me about self esteem and self worth. This transformed my family entirely."

The Black Heritage Organization is doing its part to serve the community and be a part of the society, today and in the future. The group focuses on the idea that black heritage is not just a black issue, said President Darell LaBorn, but a human being issue as well.

"This month we had a food festival for everyone in our community and a Dr. Martin Luther King essay contest for students grades 8 through 12," said LaBorn. "And currently we are working on a spelling bee contest for the children in our community in March."

The evening concluded with gospel singer Army 1st Lt. Alisha Osborne bringing the audience to its feet as she sung numerous uplifting songs. Osborne demonstrated her range and skill by singing jazz and gospel.

"Her rendition of Andre' Crouch's 'My Tribute' captured the moment of the entire event," said Joint Task Force Guantanamo Command Chaplain Lt. Col. Marvin Williams.

Black History Month encourages everyone to think about ways they can improve American life, Williams said. Regardless of race and religion, citizens must assist those struggling by becoming involved in the community.

"Black History month is about celebrating culture and understanding the history of our ancestors in shaping the very fabric of America society," said Williams.

February is not only an opportunity to educate the public on ways black people have contributed to society; it also serves as a constant reminder for African-Americans of how far they've come and where they are headed.

Parents and children are encouraged to be a part of the Black Heritage Organization meetings, held every Monday at 6 p.m. located at the Cuban Community Center.

Pro pool player Jeanette Lee tries to break an audience member's concentration during her visit at the Windjammer, Feb. 26.

The Black Widow weaves her web at the Windjammer

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

International billiards icon Jeanette Lee, aka 'The Black Widow,' visited Naval Station Guantanamo Bay last weekend to play challengers, give tips and spend time getting to know Troopers.

Lee holds more than 30 professional billiards titles and formerly ranked #1 overall in the world. She appeared as the final opponent for Morale Welfare and Recreation's billiards shoot-off. The top three contenders won their divisions over three nights playing at The Windjammer. However, each fell to The Black Widow Saturday night.

Even though she gives her victims a chance, The Black Widow remains undefeated after challenges at more than 25 military bases around the world.

"I always give them the first break," said Lee. "If they make the nine ball on the break, they win."

Lee enjoys playing all challengers, but definitely has her favorites.

"Half the people want to play me just to say, 'I played The Black Widow from ESPN - it was fun and she kicked my butt,'" Lee said with a smirk. "Then there's others who are like, 'nah, nah – I can beat her.' And those are the most satisfying."

Lee's husband George Breedlove, also a world-champion pool player, joined her performance Saturday night and again Sunday morning. Both players pulled fans from the audience to participate in trick shots – including Radio GTMO's Dr. J and Joint Task Force Guantanamo Deputy Commander Brig. Gen. Samuel T. Nichols, who let The Black Widow shoot an eight ball being held in their mouths.

Lee and Breedlove came to do more than play pool. They came to connect with people. Lee touched Troopers by sharing some personal experiences away from the pro tour at each show – like her battles with a debilitating birth condition and fertility.

"Anyone who has fought scoliosis and conception the way she did is a trooper," said JTF Chaplain's Assistant Air Force Staff Sgt. Archie Gerald. "It's easy just to give up but she never did. She honestly fought tooth-and-nail for everything she wanted and at the end of her tenure, she became # 1 in the game of pool. It's inspiring and very relevant here."

While Lee's experiences resonated with audiences, she found similar themes with folks around the JTF.

"Just talking to people you can hear it," said Lee "I hear people going through some [difficult] things here."

Lee and Breedlove made their way to the Seaside Galley Sunday morning to reach a more personal level with JTF servicemembers than they could at the performances. They listened to some of the challenges Troopers and their families are facing here.

"I think you start getting into trouble when you say, 'I know what you're going through,'" said Lee. "No you don't. It's hard for me to imagine what people are going through out here. The only thing I can do, the only place I think I have, is through my experience and through my hardship."

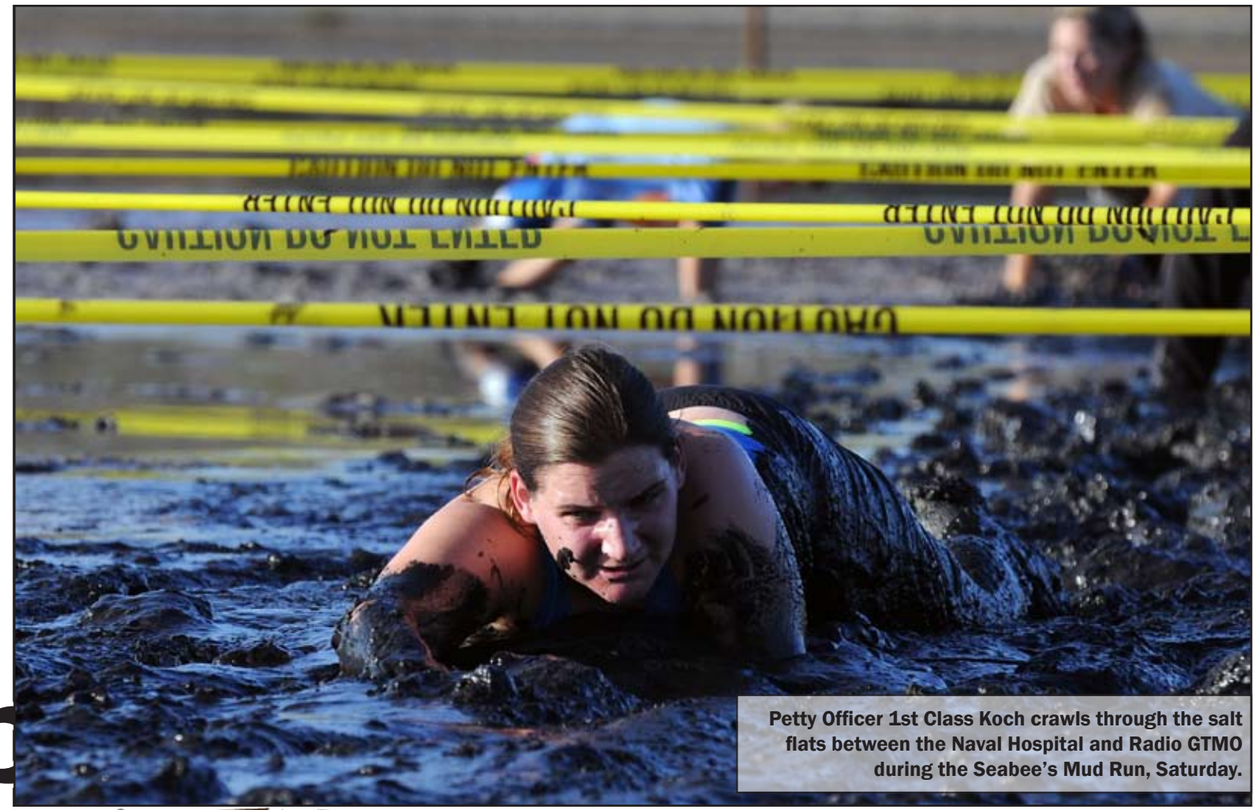
Lee's approach to billiards and life is one in the same – something she found in many of the Troopers and families she met here.

"My attitude over all these experiences is to embrace what comes. When I say embrace I don't mean be happy about it. When you accept it you can grow from it and move forward. If you are just fighting it – you can't get through it," explained Lee.

Having won nearly every title and tournament in her sport, The Black Widow said she isn't necessarily moving on from pool, but looking for new ways to find personal reward in her professional life. She described visits like this as one of the last truly fulfilling aspects of her billiards career.

"It is an absolute honor to be here," said Lee "It's a great feeling to know I have something to contribute here."

Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Charles Grimes gives his visiting girlfriend, Charis Domadon, a smooch following the Seabee's Mud Run, Saturday.



Petty Officer 1st Class Koch crawls through the salt flats between the Naval Hospital and Radio GTMO during the Seabee's Mud Run, Saturday.

Seabee MUD RUN

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jason Tross

Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class David Coleman

Nearly 75 participants and volunteers came together

Saturday for the dirtiest fundraiser of the year – the Seabee Mud Run.

The 2.3-mile loop course led Troopers, families and Department of Defense civilians from the old baseball field through the flooded salt flats between Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Hospital and Radio GTMO and back.

"Everyone had a lot of fun," said second place winner Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Bryant Curry, of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion-28. "I've done 5Ks and things like that, but I've never been in a race where you got covered in mud. This race was really just about having fun, not winning."

More than 50 people from around Guantanamo Bay registered for the race – helping Seabees raise more than $700. Public Works Project Manager Navy Lt. j.g. Henry Pollock, one of the mud run organizers, feels this Seabee Ball fund raiser was a success on many fronts.

"It helps the community and … morale to do something different because when you're at a place where you can't leave you're doing the same thing over and over again every weekend," said Pollock. "This is something new and something to look forward to."

The mud run also served as an opportunity for Guantanamo Bay's Seabee community to come together before next week's annual Seabee Ball. Eleven NMCB-28 volunteers spent an afternoon before the race preparing the course and an hour cleaning up afterward. Some volunteers were surprised to find other Seabees there as well.

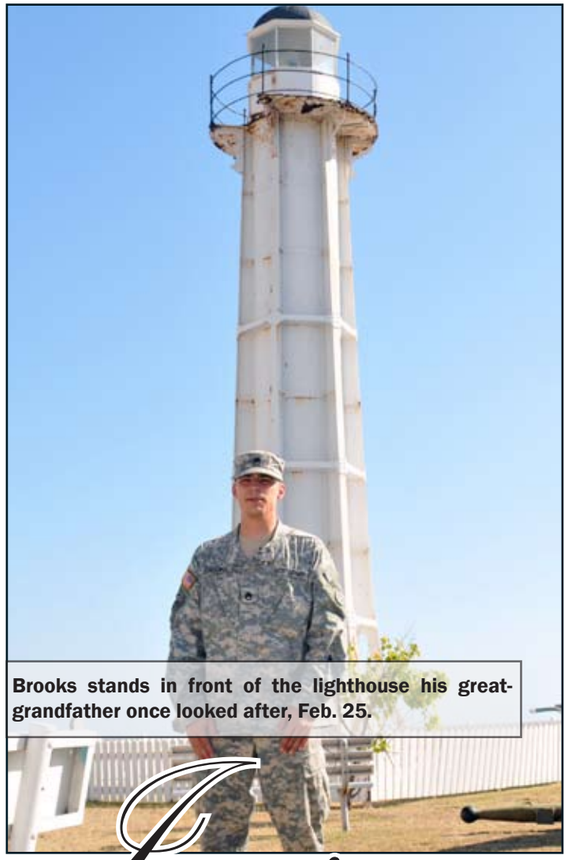
"There are 85 Seabees here at Guantanamo Bay," said Equipment Operator 1st Class Lori Roberts. "We're at NMCB-28, Public Works, JTF Seabees and various individual augmentee positions around the JTF. Until events like this, we didn't even know there were other Seabees here."

Roberts, a reservist, finds putting on events like the mud run and last month's fishing derby afford other reservists a rare opportunity to participate in the Seabee Ball and its preparation since many don't live near a Seabee base.

"Being here and doing these fund raisers is a great opportunity for us," she said. "Because we're reservists, this is really the first opportunity for a lot of us to go to the Seabee Ball. I've never actually been to one so I'm very excited."

This weekend's Seabee Ball marks the beginning of another fundraising season for the Seabee community here. With all the expected and unexpected success of the weekend's mud run, many hope this will happen again.

"I'd love to do another one," said Curry. "Everyone had such a great time. I didn't get to build the course this time, but I'd definitely do it next time."



Brooks stands in front of the lighthouse his great-grandfather once looked after, Feb. 25.

Cayetano Valle and Antonia Negron Valle pose with one of their children. The place or year for this photo are unknown. -photo provided by Staff Sgt. Tim Brooks

Journey through generations

A Soldier discovers family on Guantanamo Bay

Story by Spc. Meredith Vincent
Photos by Army Staff Sgt. Benjamin Cossel

It's as beautiful a day as I've seen here on Guantanamo Bay but there is a stillness setting today apart. Maybe it's the presence of death – maybe just the idea.

He retrieves the flowers from the back seat, carefully unwraps them and we head up the road. Two master-at-arms wait for us, eyes covered by dark glasses, their faces stoic. As we step into the small cemetery, the first thing to greet us is a large tree with blooming purple flowers. He comments on the tree and I say something encouraging.

We begin our search.

It takes us a few minutes to find the right one. There are several hundred small, unadorned white headstones lined up in neat rows, in no apparent order. She was buried in 1926, he thinks. The MAs lead him over to the left. I hang back and start checking the stones on the right. And then suddenly, there it is: Antonia Negron Valle … and child. I call them over. As he approaches I think about all the events set into motion to make this one moment happen.

I first meet Staff Sgt. Tim Brooks, noncommissioned officer in charge for rotations at J3, Jan. 3 over a beer at O'Kelly's Irish Pub in the Windjammer. Word of his story reached my office and I was eager to tell it. As we sit down with two of his friends, I realize how young he is. Lanky and dark, with a boyish glint and a friendly smile, I am immediately taken with his approachable and amiable attitude. He starts to tell me his story, about his great-grandmother, his great-grandfather and a serendipitous series of deployments that brought two generations to Cuba, decades apart.

"I don't know my great-grandfather's name," Brooks starts out. "But my great-grandmother was Antonia Negron Valle…"

His great-grandfather's name, we eventually learn, was Cayetano Valle. A Sailor, Cayetano met Antonia in Portugal, where she was born and raised. They were married and began a family. Brooks' grandmother, Sylvia Barry, was their third child. Shortly after Sylvia's birth, Cayetano was assigned to Guantanamo Bay as the lighthouse keeper.

"We have one picture of my great-grandmother and the kids at the beach here on Guantanamo," says Brooks. "And the only way we know is that both my grand-uncle and my grandma remember taking that picture there."

Before his deployment, Brooks learned from his family his great-grandmother was buried here. After that single piece of information, everything else became blurry. Where was she buried? How did she die? When did the family arrive here, and for how long?

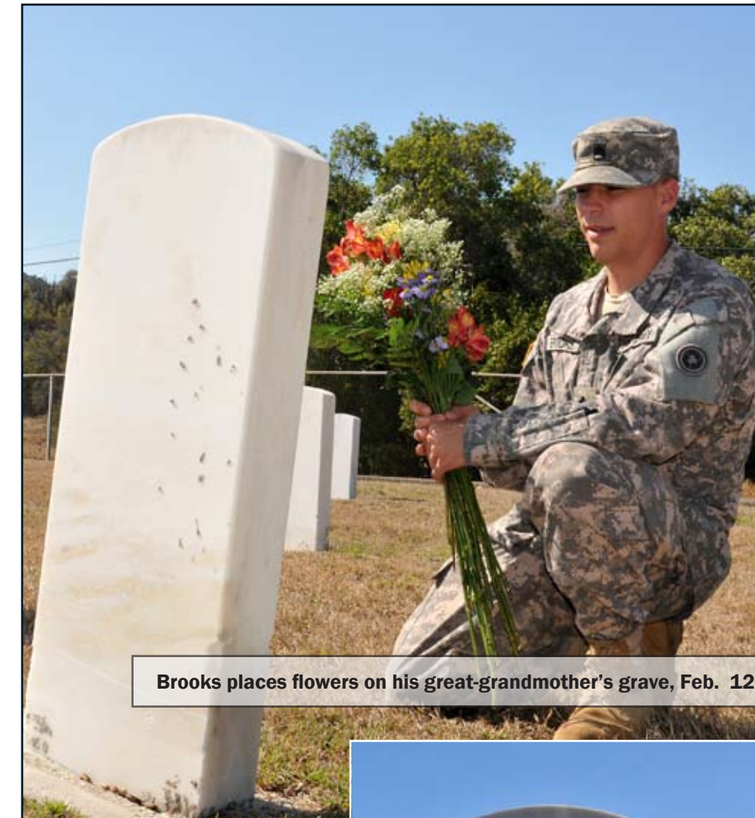
"I always ask questions about my family," Brooks laughs. "But with a (grandma) who's 87, she kind of leads the conversation in a direction that she either A) wants or B) remembers."

Brooks' affection for his grandmother shows when he talks about her.

"She's like three-foot-eleven – she's a Portuguese spitfire!" he jokes. "She grabs the comb and the broom when she comes after you. I mean, she may be 87 but you fear that little woman!"

Determined to find more answers, Brooks' search led him to an unusual source – Miami Herald journalist and JTF Guantanamo staple Carol Rosenberg.

"I was trying to find a list of people buried in Guantanamo Bay," he explains. "(Rosenberg) had written a story in 2006 … and (it) listed (my great-grandmother's) name."



Brooks places flowers on his great-grandmother's grave, Feb. 12.

Brooks was perplexed at the simplicity of the situation.

"I didn't really know to Google my great-grandmother's name," he says, exasperated. "But sure enough, when you type in her name, that's the first thing that pops up."

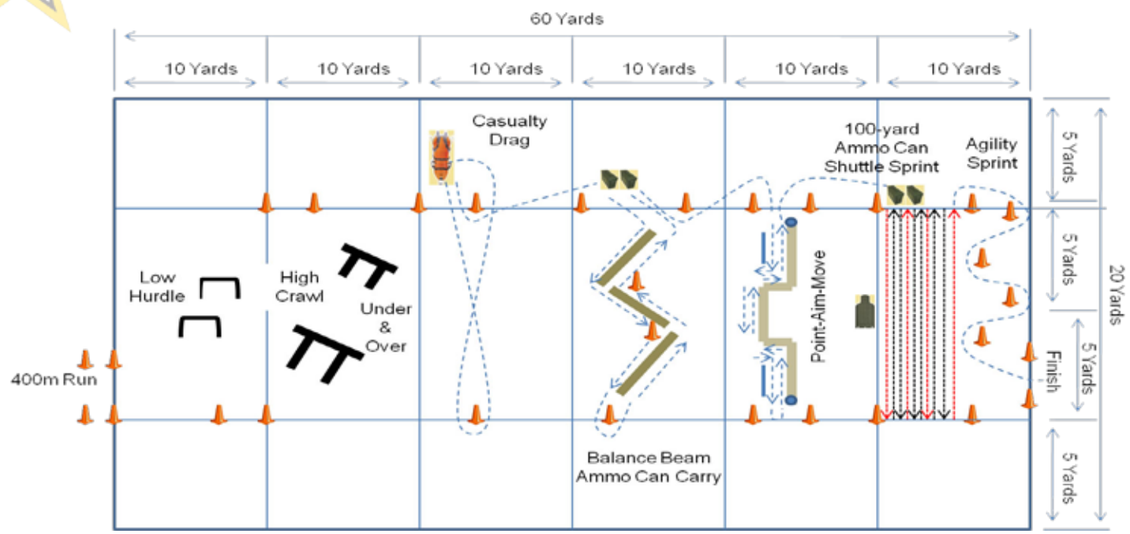
I take a look at Rosenberg's story that night. He's right, it shows up immediately. I read through it and realize the names Rosenberg picked to use in her article are seemingly random. Out of the hundreds of names she could've used, she chose the one that happened to be related to a Soldier who would be deployed here in only a few years. Just another piece to the rapidly unfolding reunion.

After discovering Rosenberg's article, Brooks went in search of more confirmation. He didn't have to look far. After many false starts, he learned there was, in fact, an Antonia Negron Valle buried, with child, inside the cemetery. Not only that, she was also buried alongside two of her other children.

Back at the cemetery, we stand in front of the three graves. Antonia on the far left, her two sons to the right. She died during childbirth in 1928. The baby who passed away with her was never named.

Five-year-old Ferdinand Serapio Valle died from influenza Dec. 4, 1926. Next to Ferdinand's stone is another that simply reads "Baby Boy Valle." He passed four days after Ferdinand. Looking around at the years engraved in many of the nearby headstones, it is clear families were lucky if their infants survived

see BROOKS, page 19



This diagram maps out how leaders can set up the Army Combat Readiness Test in their units.

TRADOC revises Army Physical Fitness Test

Kelly Schloesser
TRADOC

FORT MONROE, Va., – Soldiers will be better prepared if they train how they would fight. This innovative physical readiness training philosophy, implemented by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, has driven the U.S. Army Physical Fitness School to revise not only how the Army conducts physical training, but also how it will evaluate a Soldier's physical capability.

WHY CHANGE?

Since 1980, the U.S. Army has assessed physical aptitude through the Army Physical Fitness Test, or APFT. Commonly known as the "PT Test," Soldiers are required to complete three events: two-minutes of push-ups, two-minutes of sit-ups, and a two-mile run.

"Today's PT test does not adequately measure components of strength, endurance, or mobility. The events have a low correlation to the performance of warrior tasks and battle drills and are not strong predictors of successful physical performance on the battlefield or in full spectrum operations," said Lt. Gen. Mark P. Hertling, TRADOC's deputy commanding general for Initial Military Training, who holds a master's degree in exercise physiology.

As TRADOC's lead for the test review, Hertling collaborated with a 16-member team headed by Frank Palkoska, director of the U.S. Army Physical Fitness School, resulting in a recommendation to the Army for not just one, but two revised PT tests.

"The goal is to align the training and the tests with tasks that Soldiers have to perform on the battlefield so that the commander has a better tool to measure preparedness and can guide training for the unit," said Palkoska.

WHAT WILL THEY LOOK LIKE?

The proposed tests, the Army Physical Readiness Test, or APRT, and the Army Combat Readiness Test, known as the ACRT, align with Army Physical Readiness Training outlined in Training Circular 3-22.20, which was implemented Army-wide last August providing exercises, drills and activities appropriate for various levels of physical fitness.

The APRT, designed to replace the current APFT, expands from three to five events, eliminates sit-ups, increases the pace of push-ups, and replaces the long-distance run with shorter-faster runs. The five events include: 60-yard shuttle run, one-minute rower (exercise outlined in TC 3.22-20), standing long-jump, one-minute push-up, 1.5 mile run.

These events will more accurately test a Soldiers anaerobic and aerobic endurance while reducing the risk of injuries. The current test also only provides a "snapshot" assessment of upper and lower-body muscular endurance and fails to identify anaerobic capacity, said Hertling.

In order to better assess anaerobic capacity that drive high-intensity bursts of energy, the run will be changed to 1.5 miles.

"Soldiers will tend to run faster, testing the anaerobic energy system in their body," said Hertling of the 1.5 miles. The shorter-faster run, requiring a significant burst of energy, will better prepare Soldiers for the intensity of today's battlefield, he said.

To better assess muscular endurance, the one-minute rower and push-up events will not allow Soldiers to pause and rest. This will require non-stop muscle movement that will demonstrate immediate muscle fatigue and failure.

TRADOC is also recommending Soldiers take the ACRT, which incorporates warrior tasks and provides a more accurate assessment of the physical readiness training program and the Soldier's individual capability. The ACRT will be executed in the Army Combat Uniform, Advanced Combat Helmet, and weapon, and includes a 400-meter run, hurdles, a high crawl, casualty drag, sprints, and several other movement drills.

The ACRT is designed to not only correlate with readiness training, but also to provide a more accurate picture of a Soldier's ability to perform Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills. The test incorporates several exercises and drills from the physical readiness training circular and provides a testing environment similar to that on the battlefield.

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN?

The Army will begin pilot testing at approximately eight locations with multiple units in order to set standards. The pilot currently plans to align age categories for the test scores with the American College of Sports Medicine and Cooper Institute, broadening age categories to under 30, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and above, for both genders.

Following the establishment of standards and a thorough review, likely lasting through the summer, the tests can then be approved for Army-wide execution. Implementing the new tests is the final step in the Soldier Athlete initiative to better prepare Soldiers for strenuous training and the challenges of full-spectrum operations.

Construction begins on Navy's newest aircraft carrier

One of the first pieces of steel is cut for the second ship in the Gerald R. Ford class, CVN 79, during a ceremony at Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding. — photo courtesy of Northup Grumman Shipbuilding

Program Executive Office Aircraft Carriers Public Affairs

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (NNS) – Advance construction started on the nation's newest aircraft carrier Feb. 25 with a "first cut of steel" ceremony at Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Newport News, Va.

The steel plate cut will be used in the construction of the carrier, which has yet to be named, but will be designated CVN 79.

The carrier represents the second in a new class of ships designed to replace Enterprise and Nimitz-class carriers and save more than $5 billion in total ownership costs during its planned 50-year service life when compared to Nimitz-class carriers.

"Today we mark the beginning of the advance construction of CVN 79, second of the Gerald R. Ford-class of aircraft carriers," said Rear Adm. Michael McMahon, Program Executive Officer for Aircraft Carriers. "It's an important step in continuing carrier construction using advanced technologies and efficiencies to reduce both ownership and procurement cost in this new class of carriers."

Ford-class aircraft carriers, while retaining the same hull form as the Nimitz class, contain several advanced technology systems including Electromagnetic Aircraft Launching Systems, advanced arresting gear, dual band radar, a redesigned smaller island and a new propulsion plant. The first ship in the class, Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), is also under construction at Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Newport News and is scheduled to be delivered to the fleet in September 2015.

The PEO for Aircraft Carriers, an affiliated PEO of Naval Sea Systems Command, focuses on the design, construction, system integration, delivery and life-cycle support of all aircraft carriers.

For more news from Naval Sea Systems Command, visit www.navy.mil/local/navsea/.

Navy Region Hawaii combats synthetic drugs

Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Mark Logico
Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

PEARL HARBOR (NNS) – Commander Navy Region Hawaii Criminal Investigation Division is currently investigating allegations of possession of illegal synthetic drugs by Sailors of one Hawaii-based ship and two shore-based commands, March 1.

According to Commander, Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific Rear Adm. Dixon R. Smith, "The Navy recognizes this as a problem society-wide, and now it's hitting home here in Hawaii."

Lt. Matthew Clark is the CNRH security officer in charge of CID, whose mission is to assist Hawaii-based commands with criminal investigations.

"If a command believes that one or more of their Sailors may be using Spice, they will call us for assistance," said Clark. "We will interview the initial suspect and develop and follow up on all other leads."

So far, CID has handled five synthetic drug-related investigations involving at least 38 suspected users in Hawaii in the past year alone.

"It's not difficult to get caught when using Spice," said Clark. "Basically, once someone is suspected of using Spice, they'll be interviewed, and more times than not, that will lead to other suspects in the case, and they'll end up getting caught, too."

"Usually, once the suspect starts talking, the numbers in the case increase dramatically," said Clark.

Smith wants Sailors to think about the known consequences before they choose to possess or use synthetic drugs or other illegal substances.

"When Sailors get caught using drugs, they don't just throw away their careers, they let down their shipmates, the young Sailors they mentor, their leaders and their families," he said. "Sailors who take illegal drugs, including synthetic drugs, will be caught. Those who are found guilty will face the consequences of their actions."

According to a recent message from Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West, more than 150 Sailors are currently being processed out of the Navy for Spice use, possession or distribution.

"Overall, the Navy has separated 1,374 Sailors in FY09; 1,308 Sailors in FY10; and 302 Sailors during the first quarter of FY11, for drug abuse," said West. "These unexpected losses negatively affect our commands' manning levels, which in turn affects the commands' operational and warfighter readiness. The Navy's policy on drug abuse is simple and clear – zero tolerance, and there are no second chances."

Midgett returns from patrol, interdicts semi-submersible with cocaine

WASHINGTON (AFNS) – Air Force and
the award of an engineering and manufactur
than $3.5 billion for the KC-46A aerial refuel
The program expects to deliver the first 18
Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley
evaluated during the tanker selection process.
"This selection process determined whe
the ability of an offerer to deliver all 372 m
mandatory capabilities would be addressed,"
both offerers met the mandatory requiremen
effectiveness in wartime, and life cycle costs
construction costs."
Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lyn
except the taxpayer and the warfighter."
The Air Force-led selection effort included
including staff from the Office of the Secre
teams during each step of the process.
The thorough and transparent selection p
with offerers to ensure the Air Force had a c
the companies clearly understood the servic
Donley.
Secretary Donley also highlighted that th
requirements for the tanker, and that meeting
go to war on day one.
"General Schwartz and I are confident in
operators and maintainers receive this aircraf
successful at what we ask them to do," the se
Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Sch
"I'm pleased with how this has produced an outcome after an exhaustive effort by hundreds of the department's very best people, that we will get about delivering the capability that's long overdue," General Schwartz said.
While the focus of the briefing was on the award of the contract, Secretary Donley addressed basing considerations for the aircraft, stating that those decisions involve other organizations and will take place over the next couple of years.

and wounded in yesterday's attack," said Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe. "We are working closely with German authorities to fully investigate this incident."

Pope AFB becomes Army-operated airfield assigned to Fort Bragg

FORT BRAGG-POPE FIELD, N.C. (AFNS) – Pope Air Force Base became Pope Field March 1 as it transitioned to be an Army operated facility supporting Air Force operations.

Several Air Force units were redesignated or inactivated, marking a significant moment in Air Force history.

The signing of a proclamation by Col. Stephen Sicinski, the Fort Bragg Garrison commander, and Col. Paul Kucharek, the 43rd Operations Group commander, marked the handover of responsibility for Pope Field. Colonel Kucharek presided over the inactivation of Pope AFB's mission support group, maintenance group, and the contracting, security forces, communication and civil engineer squadrons, whose missions will be assumed by the Army garrison

"The transfer of Pope Field to Army control is certainly an emotional event for our Air Force brethren, but it would be hard to find a closer relationship between sister services than Fort Bragg has had with Pope Air Force Base," Colonel Sicinski said.

The War Department officially established "Pope Field" in 1919 and it ranks as one of the oldest installations in the Air Force.

When the Air Force became its own branch of the military in September 1947, Pope Field officially became Pope Air Force Base.

Today, Pope Field continues to put the "air" in airborne for Fort Bragg missions by providing airlift and close air support to American armed forces and to humanitarian missions flown all over the world.

Pope's transition to Army management was directed by public law in keeping with the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment Commission's recommendations to improve military efficiency and reduce redundancy.

Pope Field will be Fort Bragg's third airfield, joining Simmons Mackall Army Airfields in supporting combat training and rapid contingency deployments of the post's airborne and special operations communities.

"The big message for those in the Fort Bragg community is that the Air Force mission at Pope Field continues post March 1," said Col. John Stokes, 440th Airlift Wing vice commander.

A Marine with Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, sets a stake while putting up a net over a mortar system Feb. 27. – photo by Lance Cpl. Garry J. Welch

Marines, Sailors break down barriers to train with Cambodian service members

Lance Cpl. Garry J. Welch
31st MEU

PEACE KEEPING OPERATION TRAINING BASE, Kingdom of Cambodia – More than 150 Marines and Sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit trained with Cambodian soldiers and sailors in a variety of different military skills, Feb. 27.

The training included classes on hand to hand fighting, crew served weapons, small arms, mine and improvised explosive device detection, combat lifesaving skills, and mortar systems.

"The training is geared towards familiarizing each other with our different techniques," said Lance Cpl. Marshall C. Kerby, a mortar man with Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, 31st MEU. "The language barrier is the biggest challenge we had to overcome. Because most of them do not speak English, we have to communicate mostly through hand gestures everyone understands."

Kerby went on to say while it was challenging, it was fun to get to interact with the Cambodian forces and share ideas and experiences.

While the Cambodians were learning about the U.S. Marine Corps weapons and tactics, the Marines and Sailors were learning new things too.

"For pretty much all the Marines, this is their first time here," said Staff Sgt. Daniel B. Linden, a mortar section leader with BLT 2/5. "We are just getting to know each other's cultures, and this allows us to have a better understanding of what we can each bring to the table in terms of training."

The training also built upon the Marines confidence in their abilities to teach other forces.

"The more the Marines get a chance to pass their skills onto other service members, Cambodian or U.S., the better and more comfortable they feel about their ability to do it," said Linden. "They are not just learning the ability to work with foreign militaries, they are learning the basic teaching skills that will allow them to pass their knowledge on to their Marines as well."

As the day and training came to a close, the Marines of Company G, BLT 2/5, felt they had accomplished their mission and everyone had learned some valuable skills. "Even with the language barrier I think we did really well," said Kerby. "Everyone seemed to gain something from the experience."

The 31st MEU visited and conducted bilateral training as part of the U.S. Pacific Command's Theater Security Cooperation program with the Kingdom of Cambodia.

One voice connects two nations

Cpl. Salvador R. Moreno
11th MEU

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – When training between militaries of two of the world's major industrial nations commenced in February, so too came the need for interpreters, as one lance corporal found out.

Language barriers are common during training between two countries, and in the case of Iron Fist, the annual exercise to enhance amphibious capabilities and increase interoperability between the U.S. and Japan, Lance Cpl. Westley Contrata was the solution.

Contrata was born to Honami and Walter in the suburbs of Illinois. At a year old, he and his family moved to Kyoto, Japan, where he grew up for 13 years knowing a small amount of English.

"I learned Japanese first, so when I moved to the states knowing almost no English, it was tough," said Contrata.

In 2008, he graduated from Westlake High School in Westlake Village, Calif. Shortly after, he decided to become a Marine.

"I joined because I wanted to travel the world," said Contrata.

He was assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif., to serve as a motor transport operator. Interpreting as a Marine never crossed his mind, he said.

"The MEF looked up my service record from my defense language proficiency and pulled me for the exercise," he said.

He was able to help 180 Japanese soldiers connect with the Marines of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

"I think it's a great opportunity," said Contrata. "I'm enjoying it. I don't really get a chance to use my Japanese outside of what I'm doing right now."

Some of the military terminology can be difficult to translate for the Japanese, but with Contrata being fluent in both languages, the process is easy, said 2nd Lt. Saito Shiotomai, a Japanese interpreter serving with the Western Army Infantry Regiment, Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force.

"I envy him because I am an interpreter too, but my English skills are raw," Shiotomai said.

Midgett returns from patrol, interdicts semi-submersible with cocaine

Coast Guard News Service

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard Cutter Midgett returned from a multi-mission patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Tuesday, where they interdicted a 35-foot self propelled semi-submersible (SPSS) vessel carrying approximately 6,000 kilograms of cocaine, more than 335 miles off the coast of Costa Rica, Jan. 20.

Self propelled semi-submersibles are a class of vessel used for smuggling large loads of narcotics across the ocean from South America to Central America. The vessels ride very low in the water, and are generally made of fiberglass making them very difficult to detect either visually or by radar.

When law enforcement assets arrived on scene, no movement was visible on the SPSS. Cutter Midgett dispatched a boarding team in its small boat, attempted to hail the vessel in English and Spanish, and knocked on the hull with no response. After three hours alongside the vessel, night had fallen and for the safety of the boarding team it was decided that the vessel board would be delayed until the next day. Suddenly, the hatch atop the central conning tower swung open and hands were visible as one of the crewmembers slowly came out of the SPSS

Cutter Midgett's law enforcement team closed with the vessel, and ordered all personnel out of the SPSS onto the hull. SPSS crews are known to scuttle their vessels upon evacuation, therefore Cutter Midgett prepared for people to be thrown or to jump into the water. Cutter Midgett immediately put its second small boat in the water, and the two law enforcement teams quickly brought all four SPSS crewmembers safely onboard the cutter.

The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Midgett intridicted 6,000 kilograms of cocaine, Jan. 20, during multi-mission operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. — photo courtesy of Department of Homeland Defense

Once onboard, the SPSS crew stated that the vessel was from Colombia and the purpose of the voyage was to transport cocaine.

The next morning, upon entry into the vessel, an estimated 300 bales of contraband was discovered. The boarding team removed one of the 20 kilogram bales from the SPSS and a sample tested positive for cocaine.

The cutter Midgett is home ported in Seattle, Wash. and conducts missions in homeland security, search and rescue, maritime and law enforcement, perations from the Bering Sea to Central American waters.

Coast Guard responds to boat collision in Key West

Coast Guard News Service

KEY WEST, Fla. – Coast Guard and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission personnel responded to a boat collision south of Stock Island, Fla., Tuesday.

Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Key West were notified at approximately 7:15 p.m. Tuesday of a collision between the commercial fishing vessel Pirate's Pride, an 85-foot stern trawler, and an anchored 17-foot recreational vessel. As a result of the collision, the recreational vessel sank and the four people aboard went into the water. Two boat crews from Coast Guard Station Key West were immediately launched.

The crew of the Pirate's Pride immediately recovered three of the four people from the water. The fourth person was recovered by the Coast Guard smallboat crew. No injuries were reported.

Coast Guard and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission are conducting an investigation into the collision.

Key Biscayne crew repatriates 5 Cuban migrants to Bahia de Cabañas, Cuba

Coast Guard News Service

MIAMI – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Key Biscayne repatriated five Cuban migrants Sunday to Bahia de Cabañas, Cuba.

An HU-25 Falcon jet crew from Coast Guard Air Station Miami spotted the four adult males and one adult female aboard a rustic vessel about 65 miles south of Key West, Fla., Wednesday at 8:42 a.m.

The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Okracoke arrived on scene and safely embarked the five Cuban migrants. The Cuban migrants were later transferred to the cutter Key Biscayne for repatriation.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, migrants are provided food, water, shelter and basic medical care.

For information on how to legally immigrate to the United States, call U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at 1-800-375-5283 or visit the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov.

The Key Biscayne is a 110-foot patrol boat homeported in Key West.

Attack the anxiety... before it attacks you

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Minerva Williams

Do you think of yourself as a worrier? Do you feel keyed up and unable to relax? Does this feeling come and go, or is it constant?

Anxiety disorders are characterized as excessive, exaggerated anxiety and worry about everyday life events, frequently without an obvious reason to worry. People with symptoms of anxiety tend to often expect disaster and cannot stop worrying about health, money, family, work or school.

For some people, the feeling of anxiety is very common when faced with stressful events such as a business presentation or a first date. For others this is part of their daily lives and can grow progressively worse if not treated. Living with an anxiety disorder can be a long-term challenge and in severe cases it can make it hard to enjoy life or succeed in your military career.

For military personnel who are constantly deployed and still have to deal with life at home, anxiety can be detrimental and it can make it difficult to adequately function. Therefor, it is often advised military members take care of themselves before and after a difficult deployment. Don't think because you are deployed to Cuba life gets easier. Just because your spouse, kids or dogs aren't around does not mean you need to overload yourself. Take it easy and make sure you know the description of your job before you decide to enroll in school, join a committee or a sports team.

Stress is a normal part of life, but can be managed and monitored appropriately. The most effective solution is to address the source of your stress or anxiety. The first step is to take an inventory of what you think might be making you anxious:

— What do you worry about the most?

— Is something constantly on your mind?

— Does anything in particular make you sad or depressed?

— Most importantly, keep a jounal of the experiences and thoughts related to your anxiety. Are your thoughts adding to your anxiety in this situation?

Also find someone you trust (friend, family member, neighbor, spouse) who will listen to you. Often, just talking to a friend or loved one is all that is needed to relieve anxiety. Most communities also have supports groups and hotlines that can help. Social workers, psychologist, and other mental health professionals may be needed for therapy and other treatment. You can contact JSMART at x3566 if you feel you need professional help.

GTMO Religious Services

Daily Catholic Mass
Mon. - Fri. 5:30 p.m.
Main Chapel
Vigil Mass
Saturday 5 p.m.
Main Chapel
Mass
Sunday 9 a.m.
Main Chapel
Catholic Mass
Saturday 7:30 p.m.
Troopers' Chapel
Sunday 7:30 a.m.
Troopers' Chapel

Protestant Worship
Sunday 9 a.m.
Troopers' Chapel
Islamic Service
Friday 1:15 p.m.
Room C
Jewish Service
Friday 7 p.m.
Chapel Annex
LORIMI Gospel
Sunday 8 a.m.
Room D
LDS Service
Sunday 10 a.m.
Room A

Church of Christ
Sunday 10 a.m.
Chapel Annex
Room 17
Seventh Day Adventist
Saturday 11 a.m.
Room B
Iglesia Ni Christo
Sunday 5:30 a.m.
Room A
Pentecostal Gospel
Sunday 8 a.m.
Room D

Liturgical Service
Sunday 10 a.m.
Room B
General Protestant
Sunday 11 a.m.
Main Chapel
United Jamaican Fellowship
Sunday 11 a.m.
Building 1036
Gospel Service
Sunday 1 p.m.
Main Chapel

GTMO Bay Christian Fellowship
Sunday 6 p.m.
Main Chapel
Bible Study
Wednesday 7 p.m.
Troopers' Chapel
The Truth Project
Bible study
Sunday 6 p.m.
Troopers' Chapel

PG-13
113 min.

UNKNOWN

Spc. Meredith Vincent

After 2008's blockbuster hit "Taken," it seemed as if Liam Neeson's career was spiraling into a whole different territory. Over the last few decades, the veteran actor has put together a solid resume mixing classic characters from "Schindler's List" and "Les Miserables" with flashier roles in franchises like "Star Wars" and the re-booted "Batman." But after the success of "Taken," he emerged as an exciting, new action hero – a leaner, more thoughtful Bruce Willis – and inexplicitly found a new niche we never knew we needed.

Maybe it's because of his rapport with today's audiences that we hang in there throughout the slow, creeping first half of "Unknown." We trust Neeson, he hasn't steered us wrong yet.

Neeson's Dr. Martin Harris is traveling to Berlin with his wife (*Mad Men*'s January Jones) for a [insert boring science specialty here] conference. He leaves his briefcase at the airport, goes back to get it and on the way is in an awful car crash. There, I just told you in two sentences what it took the movie almost 30 minutes to tell me. You're welcome.

Waking up from a four-day coma, Harris races to find his wife, who, it turns out, is not very patient, having already replaced him with Aiden Quinn. Wha???

"Unknown" shifts gears from creepy thriller to testosterone-fueled action flick (complete with destructive car chase) to not-so-subtle spy flick so quickly, it doesn't give movie-goers enough time to digest their surroundings, let alone start to care about the characters. To the core, the film is a mystery – we're finding out what happened to Harris as he is. But I remember Matt Damon doing almost the very same thing a few years ago in the Jason Bourne movies, and it was much more entertaining.

Neeson's co-stars do very little to help the plot along, save one. January Jones does a heck of a job playing the porcelain doll with vacant eyes and shiny hair. Too bad she's so empty and expressionless we forget why she's in the movie half the time. Diane Kruger is cute, if not a little angsty, as a Bosnian hipster who saves Harris' life in the first place, only to have him invite assassins to her door.

No, the character to watch is Bruno Ganz's Ernst Jürgen, an old-school spy enlisted by Harris. Ganz brings the only touch of humor and class to this restless movie. He is the breath of fresh air that calms every scene down. If only the movie could have been about Ernst Jürgen – that might have been a story worth watching.

In the end, "Unknown" does its job as a post-Oscar season popcorn audience pleaser. There's really nothing *that bad* with it — but there's really nothing very good about it either. A middling two and a half out of five banana rats.

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Downtown Lyceum	**Despicable Me** (PG) 7 p.m. **The Dilemma** (PG-13) 9 p.m	**Megamind** (PG) 7 p.m. **Hall Pass** (PG-13) 9 p.m.	**The Fighter** (R) 7 p.m.	**Just Go With It** (PG13) 7 p.m.	**The Social Network** (PG-13) 7 p.m.	**True Grit** (PG-13) 7 p.m.	**Unknown** (PG-13) 7 p.m.
Camp Bulkeley	**Green Hornet** (PG-13) 8 p.m. **Hall Pass** (R) 10 p.m.	**Just Go With It** (PG) 8 p.m. **The Dilemma** (PG-13) 10 p.m.	***NO SHOWING* Theater of War**	**True Grit** (PG-13) 8 p.m.	**Unknown** (PG-13) 8 p.m.	**The Fighter** (R) 8 p.m.	**Season of the Witch** (PG-13) 8 p.m.

Call MWR at ext. 2010 for more information. *Movie Hotline - call 4880.*

BROOKS cont.

a year. Every fifth or sixth one says "Infant" "Baby Boy," "Baby Girl" or just simply lists the few months they were alive. Even as the sun beats down on us, I feel a shiver of sadness. There really isn't anything that compares to the death of a child.

Brooks goes first to Ferdinand's stone. He carefully chooses a flower from his bouquet, a blue cluster of petals, and places it softly against the headstone. He then goes to the baby's and does the same. Finally, he stands before his great-grandmother's.

"I tried to ask my grandma if my great-grandpa ever came here one last time," he says. "She said she couldn't remember."

He's quiet for several moments, as if he's wrestling with a thought.

"If I had a wife and three children who I lost here, I don't know whether it would be too hard to come here and say one last goodbye or just…" He trails off, thinking about the man he never knew. "Maybe it was too much to bear, I don't know. It's almost too much for one guy to take."

Brooks is the youngest of six and the only living son. He knows the importance of his presence here today.

"It might quite possibly be that I'm the last person to ever set foot in the gravesite, as far as family," he remarks solemnly. "It's a personal connection I have here. None of my siblings can ever say they came here and did that."

He kneels in front of the grave and mutters something softly; I can make out a small prayer.

Later I ask him if his family is religious. He answers yes.

"My grandma goes to regular services when she can," he says simply. "I was just making a thankful prayer that the family has been so blessed despite all that loss."

Regardless of one's faith, it's hard not to feel moved in the quiet cemetery. Outside the thick trees and hills that seclude the area, the naval station keeps humming along. Inside, surrounded by the memories and names of people who once called Guantanamo home, it's difficult to remember that world.

On the way back, Brooks tells me he wants to bring his grandma here.

"She didn't get to know her mom, she died when she was three," he says. "I would feel a sense of satisfaction if she got to say one last goodbye."

It's been an emotional afternoon. We sit in silence for a while, as I wait for him to process everything. After the excitement he displayed during our first meeting, I wonder aloud if the visit was what he had in mind.

"It was different than what I expected," he finally says. "But very nice. It's a good choice [the cemetery's location] up here."

The long journey bridging these two generations came to a meeting point this fateful February afternoon as Brooks stood looking down at his great-grandmother's grave. It's natural for one to think about larger-than-life ideas like fate and destiny. Brooks has a simpler take on it.

"I like to think of it as serendipity," he says. "Just a wonderful accident."

"It's definitely odd to find out you have family from 80 years ago buried here," he chuckles. "But everything we have here is kind of a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

I remember again our conversation at O'Kelly's. He remarked on everything that happened in history between his great-grandmother and great-grandfather embarking on a life here, to when their great-grandson would venture here with the United States Army.

"It's been over 75 years, two world wars, two gulf wars and a man on the moon later and one of my family finally comes back here," he laughed.

That night there was laughter and jokes, as he related to us the crazy series of events that transpired since he arrived on Guantanamo Bay in October. Today is much more somber, as the reality of a family who lost so much here sinks in.

"It's sad because I definitely want to share this experience with my grandma and my mom," he says regretfully. "It's kind of bittersweet that I have to spend it alone."

But he's not alone. Off the beaten-path and tucked away securely, Brooks found them in a small cemetery, past a large tree with blooming purple flowers. He found the three headstones that share the name "Valle" – a mother and her three young sons. Through nearly eight decades, he found his family on Guantanamo Bay.

SEABEES cont.

Club Survivor, an enlisted club, existed before but the structure was torn down in November of last year. JTF Guantanamo leadership made a goal to replace the old structure with a better building, said Tara Culbertson, Morale Welfare and Recreation director

"We're doing the work for the Troopers so they can have a place to relax in a nice environment," said Kenworthy.

To guard against potential damage caused by weather, termite infestation or conditions circumstantial to Guantanamo Bay, a pre-engineered building will be built for the new Club Survivor.

PEB is a generic term used for any building assembled elsewhere, then disassembled and shipped to the location, said Kenworthy.

"PEB's are engineered to withstand hurricane forces, earthquakes, snow loads, and they are termite proof because they are all-metal," Kenworthy said.

The PEB's compatibility with Guantanamo Bay conditions is not its only advantage.

"It's real easy and fast to build. It's like putting LEGO's together," Ryan said. "As long as you have all the pieces, which we do, you can construct it."

The project is meant to bring recreation to Troopers, but it also provides gratification to the personnel accomplishing it.

"It's a great challenge to put together a structure Troopers will have to relax and take a break from work for a little while," Kenworthy said. "It's very personally and professionally rewarding."

The expected completion date for Club Survivor is June 1. Due to the Seabees on-call status to South America, that date could be deferred but Club Survivor is their next focus, said Ryan.

FOCUS cont.

"Everybody here is a take-charge type of person," said Porter. "They all show initiative and I just try to do the job to the best of my abilities."

Burnette said Porter's strength lies in his willingness to work in new skill sets.

"He works well with others and has the ability to cross train effectively outside of his rate," said Burnette.

Burnette explained Porter has accomplished the skills of a machinery technician by taking apart and rebuilding engines for the small boats, automobile brakes, and even electronics.

Porter has big plans for his future, both immediate and distant.

"My immediate goal is to make petty officer 1st class and eventually finish my college degree in electronic technologies," said Porter.

Burnette summarized by saying Porter fulfills the core values of the Coast Guard.

"This is a gentleman who is forth right, honest and respectful," said Burnette. "He goes out of his way to help others and he does whatever is required to get the job done without any complaints whatsoever. So he epitomizes the Coast Guard values."