NAVSTA Sailor of the Week. Interior Communications Specialist Second Class Alvaro Deanda
On 10 January, the consolidated dispatch center received a notification about a passenger aboard an inbound C-130 aircraft that was in need of medical attention and was unconscious and unresponsive. As the senior on-duty watchstander, IC2 Deanda maintained outstanding control and command both inside the dispatch center and with Security, Fire and Medical coordination authorities to ensure a smooth transition of the sick passenger to the terminal to Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay on the Windward side of the installation. Bravo Zulu, IC2 Alvaro Deanda!

NAVSTA Sailor of the Week. Master-at-Arms Third Class Codey Luker
MA3 Luker is a motivated Sailor who plays an essential role in the everyday Security Operations for the installation. As Security Department’s leading petty officer, MA3 Luker is the only Third Class Petty Officer qualified as Patrol Supervisor. He supervises 23 Master-at-Arms on a daily basis in all facets of law enforcement. His efforts and unmatched motivation have been exemplary in the daily development of his section peers looking to emulate him. This has contributed to his section’s achievement of being the only Section Supervisor of Petty Officers. Additionally, MA3 Luker has devoted over 25 hours of his off-duty time helping his fellow patrons acquire their qualifications and handling two Incident Complaint Reports and thirteen calls for service with zero issues or safety discrepancies. Bravo Zulu, MA3 Luker!

Walker’s main goals and priorities as executive officer of NSGB include making sure everybody is operating safely and making sure we’re taking care of our families. “An island itself is a giant family, so a big part is just making sure we’re taking care of each other on the island,” said Walker. “Be procedurally compliant in everything that we do out there and provide each other forceful backup.”

Any Sailor who has already met Cnmdr. Walker may already be familiar with his three basic expectations for Sailors: “Right Place, Right Time, Right Uniform.” “Be where you’re supposed to be on time, be at your appointed place of duty, and have a squared away uniform,” said Walker. “When you look sharp, you feel sharp, and it gives you that edge to do well.”

Walker wants all Sailors to be their best selves and advises all Sailors to take care of one another, which means making sure they’re studying for exams and college and getting involved in off-duty activities and sports.

“A big part is that I want them to have fun here,” said Walker. “I want them to do their job, but I want them to have fun.”

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W. T. Sampson Makes History with Navy Band

By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Monique Meeks, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Affairs

W.T. Sampson Elementary School made history as the first school to participate in Music in the Schools via livestream with the Navy Brass Quintet, January 29. The U.S. Navy Band, in conjunction with Defense Media Activity (DMA), is expanding the band’s educational outreach program.

“As of today there are over 300,000 active duty Sailors serving in the Navy and each one has a specific job or rating as part of their identity,” said Chief Musician Brandon Almagro, a trumpet player in the brass quintet. “Of those 300,000 Sailors, only about 600 are musicians. And of those 600 musicians, 174 are based in Washington, D.C. and server alongside the five of us. Our job is to be ambassadors for the Navy through our musical performances and we represent the Navy as the premier musical organization of the entire Navy.”

“Using the facilities of DMA and the distribution of the Defense Video Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS), they can bring the outreach program to unlimited schools concurrently. The Navy Brass Quintet performed on January 29 was the first outreach program in the series. Department of Defense Education Authority (DODEA) W.T. Sampson Elementary School students in grades 3 through 5 were the first and only remote audience to participate in the webcast. Students from Centennial Elementary School in Ellicott City, Maryland, participated in the same event as a live audience in the studio.

During the event, students were treated to several music arrangements performed by the quintet. “One of us or all of us collectively will kind of give a little bit of an ictus in conducting on our bell, a little bit of a nod to give a clear beat and we can see it and we can all sync up with that one instrument or all together. We can also play what’s called flash breathing when we start a piece. Since we don’t have a conductor, we use our eyes and ears a lot more than we use our mouths in a large ensemble. We don’t have one specific person always conducting everything. Also, when we rehearse, one thing that we do is if we have a track of the music beforehand that we set that, we will actually write it in our part and we’ll be aware of that and we’ll listen for that and then try to sync up with that at the same time. It’s a process but you really learn how to communicate with everyone else in the ensemble.”

3. Did you join the military just to play instruments?

“If you do the math, if you’ve been playing for 28 years, I was about 11 or 12 when I started, so I was a little bit too young to join the military,” said Almagro. “I did start trumpet in 6th grade and here I am!”

4. Are you required to do your job or rating as part of your enlistment?

“Yes, the military is the most we’d ever do. As far as a chamber group like this, if it’s music we’ve played before we just get together and run through it and refresh our memory a little bit. But, as you become a professional musician, the time really gets to be less and less and everyone has so many performances that they’re a part of and rehearsal time becomes a real issue. I don’t know what time you start school, but our rehearsals are usually at 7:30 in the morning and that’s pretty early to be playing a brass instrument. I think we adopt the idea that if we can get through a difficult piece of music at 7:30 in the morning, we can get through it in a performance pretty well. One question from a Centennial Elementary School student may have lent itself to the best response of the session: How do you get through really hard sheet music? Chief Musician Colin Wise said that it is much like anything else you do, whether that be music or something completely different, likening his advice to the same ways you’d prepare for a marathon.

“The best way to get better at sight reading is to sight read, is to make yourself do it a whole lot,” said Wise.
118 Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (NSGB) residents participated in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Annual Marathon and Half Marathon, Jan. 27. The marathon and half marathon took runners from the MWR Fitness Center and Cooper Field along Sherman Ave. to the Northeast Gate, Nob Hill, and Skyline Drive before heading back to Cooper Field. Participants took many different avenues to prepare for the event to ensure they could compete at their highest level. 

Sally Anne Groomes, half marathon first place female finisher and mother of two, typically runs about 40 to 50 miles per week but has been progressively increasing that to 60 to 70 miles per week to better prepare for the race. “I have run one full marathon and five half marathons,” said Groomes. “Even in January, this race was quite a bit hotter than the others. This is also my first half marathon since I had my two kids!”

In contrast, some took the race a little more in stride. Pavlo Demczur did very little to prepare for the race. “Per a friend’s recommendation, I bought a running belt and some energy chews the evening before the marathon,” said Demczur. “I think I did quite well for a first marathon with no preparation. My goal was to finish the marathon and I accomplished that goal.”

Christopher Springer, event participant and half marathon first place male finisher, explained how he felt after finishing and why he was successful. “It honestly went better than expected and I wasn’t in too much pain until about mile 10 after climbing the massive hill on Skyline Drive,” said Springer. “If I hadn’t been pushing myself these past few months, the last five miles would have been much more challenging than they were.”

W.T. Sampson Students Prepare for New Testing Standards

By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Monique Meeks, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Affairs

W.T. Sampson School will conduct an infrastructure trial, Feb. 5-9, to prepare students for the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) summative assessments that will be administered at all Department of Defense Education Authority (DoDEA) schools during the fourth quarter of this school year.

Dr. Judith Minor, Associate Director for Performance and Accountability and DoDEA Americas Director for Student Excellence, recently visited W.T. Sampson School to meet with students, staff, parents, base leadership and personnel from different organizations. She visited the construction site of the new school and also held a parent forum, during which she answered many questions about the current state of student excellence and what parents could expect during the upcoming assessments.

Dr. Minor and Mr. Emilio Garza, W.T. Sampson School principal, briefed the parents on last year’s Terranova scores (the standardized assessment test taken in Spring 2017) and were very happy to report that at every single grade level, about 75% of W.T. Sampson students were above grade level in their performance. W.T. Sampson School students’ scores were as high as or higher than every other DoDEA Americas school. The school administrators, faculty, students and parents have all been working very hard to improve the curriculum of the school and the critical thinking abilities of the students.

The test results revealed that hard work does pay off. Minor assured parents that this first year of the new CCRS summative assessments may cause a slight decline in overall scores due to the students being unfamiliar with the new tests, but that it would be a benchmark for future years’ assessments and not a sign that the students were suddenly falling lower in their knowledge base and that the infrastructure trial students will be taking this upcoming week is a way to assist them in being more prepared for the spring assessments. The CCRS summative assessments are new tests the students will be taking instead of the Terranova assessment tests that have been used in recent years. The computer-based CCRS summative assessments in mathematics will be administered to students in grades 3-6 and those enrolled in Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II courses. CCRS summative assessments in English language arts/literacy will be administered for students in grades 6-8 and 10. Grades 7 and 8 students will not be assessed in mathematics unless they are enrolled in Algebra I, Geometry or Algebra II.

The purpose of the infrastructure trial is to perform a simulation exercise that will allow schools to assess the performance capabilities, level of readiness of the network infrastructure, and technology assets for a successful administration of the spring 2018 CCRS summative assessments.

Schools will participate in the infrastructure trial in order to provide students and staff the opportunity to become familiar with the online tools on the Person Access platform and prepare them for managing logistical actions that are needed for the actual CCRS summative assessments. During the infrastructure trial, schools will administer the English language arts/literacy assessment and/or the mathematics assessment. The infrastructure trial will take approximately one hour (90 minutes for secondary school) of each child’s time. “It is very important to note that the data generated from the infrastructure trial will not be used for reporting student performance; therefore, you will not receive a student score report based on this trial,” said Garza in a letter sent home to all parents and guardians.

“Participation will not affect your child’s academic grades or scores.” Practice tests are available for students and teachers to become familiar with the kinds of items and format used for the CCRS summative assessments. Accommodated versions of the practice tests are also available. The link to the practice test site is https://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests/. Tutorials that demonstrate the navigation and tools available for the assessments can be found at https://parcc.pearson.com/tutorial/.

The actual spring 2018 CCRS summative assessments will be administered during the period of April 10 to May 3, 2018. The school administrators would like to remind all parents that the students’ attendance will be very important during this test administration.

For additional information, please contact Mr. Emilio Garza at 3500 or emilio.garza@am.dodea.edu. If you would like more information about the CCRS summative assessments, please visit: http://dodea.edu.assessments.

Seabees Build W. T. Sampson Students a Garden Area

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Philip Wagner, Jr., Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Affairs

Seabees assigned to Public Works Self Help Office build a fence around the W. T. Sampson Elementary/High School garden area.
Three Day Craft Workshop Brings Beauty to Old and New

By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Monique Merkx, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Affairs

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay’s (NSGB) Morale, Welfare and Recreational Arts and Crafts center hosted a three day craft workshop, January 26-28. Participants were offered a variety of classes featuring chalk paint and milk paint projects, including a farmhouse clock, stencil pillow, and a family name rustic sign.

Annie Sloan Chalk Paint and Miss Mustardseed Milk Paint companies provided all materials for the classes and also donated extra supplies to the MWR Arts and Crafts center. During the classes, the instructors provided informative lessons on the use of various materials and paint mediums so that the participants could go on to complete future projects on their own. The Arts and Crafts Center is open Thursday through Sunday, 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to come in and select a pre-molded ceramic to paint or work on your personal ceramic, pottery, and wood projects during these hours.

The Ceramics Shop offers residents a chance to enjoy their artistic side. The shop has a wide selection of green ware and pottery clay for purchasing. The shop is equipped with over 20 commercial-grade woodworking machinery and various handheld tools for use. Residents must complete the Woodshop 101 Class in order to use the Wood Shop. Classes are offered through the Ceramics shop. The Woodshop also offers a variety of resale items ranging from hardwood to supplies for projects. MWR invites all NSGB residents to learn to do something new or practice an old favorite at the Arts and Crafts Center. All of their Woodshop, Ceramics and Canvas Painting Classes are posted online at navywrguantanamobay.com/ARTS&CREATS. This month’s classes include Woodshop 101 at 6 p.m. every Friday, a Ceramic Molding Class at 1 p.m. on Saturday, February 10, and a Parent/Child Ceramic Night from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 28. Space is limited in the classes, so those wishing to participate are encouraged to register early. Registration is taken at Arts and Crafts until space is filled. Call 4091 for more information about this month’s classes as well as future offerings.

NSGB: Don’t Get Bugged by the Flu

By Joycelyn Biggs, Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay, Public Affairs Officer

All U.S. states except Hawaii are reporting widespread flu activity, according to the Centers for Disease Control website. While this is not the case in Guantanamo Bay, hospital leaders are taking a proactive approach to sustain this trend. Kevin Robarge, emergency management, Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay, said a pandemic influenza tabletop meeting was held in conjunction with Naval Station Guantanamo Bay personnel and other directorates across the installation. The meeting included discussing tactics to effectively hinder the spread of influenza on base and educate the public.

“During the working group, we established communications and action plans,” Robarge said. “We determined the best options to educate residents on a variety of topics including effective cough hygiene, hand washing and other tips which will help eliminate the probability of the spread of flu-like viruses.” Based on those discussions, informational pamphlets have been distributed on social media sites and in the local newspaper. A public service announcement was created and is being played on the local radio station. Information concerning flu shots being provided at no cost has been published and 13 hand sanitizing stations were built and are being placed in various high traffic areas around the installation.

LCDR Robert Kimberling, director of public health, NHGB, provided several suggestions to proactively decrease the spread of the flu and similar illnesses. He said to stay home if you are sick unless you need to come to the hospital for medical care, cover your mouth when coughing, wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, and be sure to a receive flu shot.

“The number of flu cases here is not at a level to cause concern,” Kimberling said. “Although there is no need to panic, everyone should be proactive.”

Communicating a Message

By Dr. Deborah Byrd, NSGB CREDO Facilitator

So, what IS communication anyway? It’s a message between two or more people that can be accomplished a number of ways including written, verbal, code, pictures, and body language to name a few. Sounds simple, right? So, what’s the problem? ways that effective blocked. Sometimes a mixed message. For “say” one thing but expressions and/or something different. and receiver literally language or there differences (I am to misunderstanding. or presenting creates ineffective as most, if not all, gossip as a form very destructive. more effective what you need to know when you the message; 3) sentences with “I”,

There are several communication can be the sender sends a example, their words the tone of voice, facial body language “show” Sometimes the sender don’t speak the same are other cultural STILL learning military acronyms) which leads Withholding, distorting untruthful information communication. And of us have experienced of communication is To become a communicator: 1) say say; 2) let the person confused by be truthful; 4) start not “you” as in “I feel, I need, or I believe” instead of “you make me feel, you need to, or you don’t really believe that”; 5) don’t start, listen to, or spread gossip; 6) join me for a training on “Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution” on Thursday, February 15, from 1530-1700 in Room 7 at the Chapel Annex. For more information on this topic and others or to register for this workshop contact me at x 2248 or Deborah.l.byrd5.ctr@mail.mil.
Naval Station Guantanamo Bay residents start the New Year off by participating in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)-sponsored Softball Tournament, Jan. 20. During the event, participants played a double eliminations tournament where the teams of Blazing Saddles and Missouri Nightmares battled to be the top team at the tournament. On this particular day, Missouri Nightmares came out on top, beating Blazing Saddles in a close game. Congratulations to Missouri Nightmares and the rest of the teams that played.