NSGB'S Sailors of the Week for Mar. 6 and Mar 13

NAVSTA Sailor of the Week. Culinary Specialist Third Class Joseph DiRocco. Culinary Specialist Third Class Joseph DiRocco is the newest culinary specialist to the Galley, CS3 has shown initiative in every facet of his job. CS3 Joseph DiRocco is a motivated Sailor who plays an essential role in ordering equipment for the Food Service Department on board Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. During the emergency wildfire, CS3 heard that the NAVSTA duty section needed more personnel until EOC team would arrive and volunteered on his off-duty time to help the duty section. CS3 spearheaded assisting any section prepare two hundred meals for the Naval Station firefighters and emergency crews with just two hours short notice of knowing they would miss the dinner meal. The actions CS3 took to assist the installation during the time of need was a great reflection upon himself and has shown great dedication to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. Bravo Zulu, CS3 DiRocco!

NAVSTA Sailor of the Week. Aviation Maintenance Administrationman Second Class Baric Belanio. Aviation Maintenance Administrationman Second Class Baric Belanio. Petty Officer Belanio is an invaluable Sailor who plays an essential role in GMTO’s every day air operations. As the Air Operations Admin Clerk, he tackled the transition of scheduling authorities from NAPO to CTF 43 and has processed flight requests for 21 different customers to include a recent school trip for the high school kids at W.T. Sampson. Working hand-in-hand with CTF 43, he has streamlined the flight schedule submission process while identifying and correcting numerous discrepancies with Logistical Flight Plans enabling more accurate mission planning and execution. Additionally, his attention to detail has been instrumental in the revision of multiple instructions to include Aircraft Strike Hazard, C-12 SOP, Preliminary/Salvage plan and Flight Order Audit Board. Petty Officer Belanio upholds the “MAKING AIR OPS GREAT AGAIN” motto each and every day. Bravo Zulu, AZ2 Belanio!

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay's Sailors of the Week for Mar. 6 and Mar 13.

BY DR. DEBBIE BYRD, NAVAL STATION GUANTANAMO BAY CREDO FACILITATOR

Deborah.L.byrd5.ctr@mail.mil, or message her through the GTMO CREDO Facebook page.

For more information about this and other topics, contact Dr. Debbie Byrd, base CREDO Facilitator, at x 2248, Deborah.l.byrd5.ctr@mail.mil, or message her through the GTMO CREDO Facebook page.

Keeping NSGB the Pearl of the Antilles

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

NSGB community members from all commands and tenant commands conducted a monthly base cleanup, Friday, Mar. 2. The monthly base cleanup is a way to ensure we are keeping the base at its best not only for the residents who live here, but also to make a great first impression on visitors to the base.

Cmpd. David Walker, NSGB executive officer, said first impressions are important and it’s the right thing to do. “Team GTMO helps show guests that we are the ‘Pearl of the Antilles,’” said Walker. “Keeping our base clean can only be done as a team effort. We have a great community here who is always there to lend a hand and, with nearly 6,000 residents on island, it’s a pride issue. Base cleanups are a good way for the community to come together for a common goal and have many benefits. Walker said some of those benefits include team building, getting folks out of the office to help improve our environment and living conditions on the island, and providing a little bit of exercise.”

Walker added that members of the community can help keep the base clean in between base cleanups by calling out litter bugs and pick up after themselves. “I would just ask our GTMO team to use the proper trash receptacles instead of the side of the road or trails,” said Walker. “I have noticed in recent weeks that there have been quite a few folks leaving garbage on the beaches despite receptacles being available.”

Base officials are currently working on an adopt-a-roadway program to allow NSGB and its tenant commands the choice to take responsibility for specific areas of the base. More information will be posted at a later date.

Walker added that there are specific areas of the base that need special attention, including:

1. Sherman Avenue between Deer Point and Central Magazine Road
2. All trails (Please carry your trash with you and pick up along the way)
3. Kitty Beach Road between Tierra Kay and Roosevelt Gate
4. Areas immediately surrounding buildings
5. Housing Areas (Law mowing as required)
6. Beaches

Base cleanups are held the first Friday of each month. The next cleanup will be held Friday, Apr. 6.

CREDO: Healthy Relationships 101

By Dr. Debbie Byrd, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay CREDO Facilitator

According to Amy Bushatz, the divorce rate among male officers and male enlisted troops continues to decline. Rates also declined among females in all branches except the Marines, with the largest decrease occurring among enlisted female sailors. Some possible reasons for this decline may include military families experiencing less stress today than in the past, an increase in attendance at both pre-marital and healthy relationship seminars (i.e. the Navy’s CREDO iRelate Program) and/or CREDO’s Marriage Enrichment Workshops and Retreats. Following are examples of healthy relationship qualities. As you read them, see if you recognize these in couples that you admire or in your own current relationship.

- Open and honest communication.
- Constructive disagreement.
- Encourage and support of each other’s successes, interests, activities and aspirations.
- Mutual goals for the relationship.
- Trust in, and respect for, each other.
- EXPRESSIONS to each other of love, admiration, and affection.
- Feel physically and emotionally safe with each other.
- Have fun together.

Healthy relationships will not show all of these qualities all of the time. For a healthy, intimate relationship is to continue to strive to develop, maintain, demonstrate, and strengthen these qualities.

For more information about this and other topics, contact Dr. Debbie Byrd, base CREDO Facilitator, at x 2248, Deborah.l.byrd5.ctr@mail.mil, or message her through the GTMO CREDO Facebook page.
What's Happening at Navy College

By Jessica Mujica-Rivera, Director Navy College NSGB

Though this is the Navy College office, I assist all branches the best I can, including dependents and civilians. Anything you need to make an appointment can go to My Navy Portal to see the available counseling and testing options and book your appointment. Those commands interested in requesting a brief and assisting their command in becoming eligible for Tuition Assistance (TA) can call and schedule a brief. In some cases, depending on the size of the group, I can help with the counseling at the command.

Counseling services:
I have found that people tend to hesitate to come to the Navy College Office because they are not sure which path to pursue. The reason receiving counseling is part of the requirement to receiving TA is because I am able to sit and speak to you and see what interests you. I can look at which schools will offer college credit by your rate. Sometimes people want to pursue something completely different from their rate; I can assist with that as well. The first and most important step is to come in to speak to a counselor.

Records:
I am able to assist those seeking assistance with their records and fulfilling the requirements to become eligible for TA. I can also update, change or cancel records and fulfilling the requirements to become eligible for TA. I am able to sit and speak to you and see what interests you. I can also schedule military members for testing to complete the course requirements to take the exams. Some officer programs require scores from SAT or ACT exams. Check My Navy Portal for available dates.

Testing:
I am also able to proctor exams from other schools. Due to our location, it’s sometimes difficult to fly back for the exams. If a person needs a proctor, they just need to contact my office and I can walk them through the process. I can also schedule military personnel for their Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) exams.

Separation or Retirement:
One of the most difficult parts of my job is that people seem to want to come to me when they are separating or retiring. It is true that you can receive college credits in the different military schools, the truth is there are college courses that cannot be covered by experience alone. I want to assist everyone in making their transition to civilian life as successful as possible. The sooner a person comes in, the better your chances of that member separating or retiring with a degree or on the right path.

Graduation:
My motto on the recognition/graduation ceremony is “Let me help celebrate YOUR accomplishments.” I have the pleasure of having a ceremony for anyone and everyone on base that wants to participate. Because of our busy and active lives, most of us are not able to fly out to our colleges or universities to attend the graduation ceremony. Therefore, I want to celebrate this time for as many as possible. I do my best to make sure it is perfect for everyone and hard work it took for you to complete your degree or certificate. As the day comes closer, I welcome all to assist me in celebrating our fellow GOM employees and their accomplishments. The ceremony will be held at Bulkley Hall on April 6th at 1000.

The College Level Exam Program (CLEP) is offered on base. What is CLEP? CLEP is an exam you can take to place out of courses in the curriculum. I often recommend CLEP to students. I explain that CLEP is free to active duty and, if they pass, that’s one less class they have to take. If they fail honestly they have already started studying for a course they would have to take anyway. This really is a win-win situation. Civilians can also CLEP. The fee for each CLEP exam is $50. The fee to purchase the cost of a course which usually costs 750 dollars or more, the 85 dollars may seem like a good investment.

SAT/ACT:
We currently offer the SAT and ACT exams. The exams are free to active duty. All service members on active duty or reservists on active status are eligible to take the exams. We do not offer the exam testing of the class. Some officer programs require scores from SAT or ACT exams. Check My Navy Portal for available dates.

Contact the Columbia College representative for seasonal weather patterns and moon phase. Blue land crabs take approximately four years to reach sexual maturity. Females carry their eggs externally and then must release them in salt water for the larvae to survive. Spawning culminates with a migration from the land to the water which is associated with a full moon. The time frame for successful spawning requires adult crabs to remain within 3-5 miles of the coastline but they spend most of their adult lives on dry land. Once the eggs hatch, larvae are at the mercy of the currents to keep them in tropical/subtropical waters. Larvae must complete 5 larval stages and 1 post-larval stage in waters above 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit). Below this temperature, the metamorphosis into adulthood is slowed. This is the basic reason these crabs are found in tropical and subtropical regions. Blue land crabs live most of their lives in burrows and vegetables planted for human consumption. Also, in the days of bias piling these tires were responsible for numerous flat tires contributing to their repuation as pests. Large numbers of migrating crabs were run over as they crossed roads and flat tires were a fact of life. After many years, these crabs are commercially exploited for their food value and, in some countries, blue land crab populations are diminishing.

Whether the blue land crab is considered a pest, a delicacy, or neither, the species deserves conservation. Currently there are no limits for taking these crabs but there is a noticeable decline in the population conservation may be required. Fortunately, at NSGB most of us have radial tires these crabs are not a pest nor an over-exploited commodity. This is a good thing because, once again, we have shown conservation begins with us.

True Community Effort

By Lt. j. g. Jacob Tolar, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Deputy Command Chaplain

One of the things that I truly enjoy about being part of Guantanamo Bay is the community spirit. Just a few weeks ago, this was put to the test. It was a blustery Thursday afternoon. Clouds were rolling quickly across the blue sky. As I looked beyond Denich Fitness Center, I noticed smoke billowing over the horizon and down the valley. Cars were rushing to various locations with people pilled in to retrieve various belongings as roads began to close due to the quick and capable efforts of our security team. Marines and firefighters were throughout the installation providing security or fighting the fire. Displaced families were being well cared for by friends, family, and coworkers and peers. Dogs and cats were retrieved by vets and officers to ensure their safety. Housing was provided at Denich Fitness Center, the chapel, Fleet and Family Support Center and various other locations. I know that much of us were grateful for the quick and efficient work of command leadership to assist in getting locations were cleared and families and individuals were able to go back to their homes and barracks. This was not a time of pandemonium, but rather of focus and teamwork. How proud I am to be part of such an incredible network of support for our women who have one goal and one mission.

The chaplains at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay are here to serve you. If you need to talk or just want to learn more about the many resources that we provide, feel free to swing by the Chapel Annex.
Fifteen single and unaccompanied service members participated in a Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Liberty Campout at Chapman Beach, Mar. 9.

The Liberty program is for unaccompanied active duty only, including all ranks and branches. The Liberty program offers three facilities for the target population to use that include computer and printer access, video games, massage chairs, DIRECTV, an indoor movie theater and a fully equipped band room. They also offer around 20 events per month which include activities such as ping pong tournaments, bowling nights, kayaking trips, barbeques, and more. Liberty has three locations at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (NSGB): Marine Hill, Tierra Kay (TK) and Camp America.

Anna Cole, MWR Liberty coordinator, explains the importance of the Liberty Program.

“The Liberty program is vital to maintaining the morale for unaccompanied active duty,” said Cole. “We are here to support our single/unaccompanied Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coastguardsmen by providing them activities and events that occupy their time outside of work. We have a diverse population of military here and we want to give them things to do to get them out of their rooms, meeting new people, and enjoying their time here in GTMO.”

For the first time in more than nine years, a Liberty event was held that gave single and unaccompanied service members the opportunity to spend the night under the stars.

“It to the best of my knowledge, Liberty has only done one other camping trip like this,” said Cole. “This was several years back, well before I was at GTMO. It was done at Windmill Beach.” Cole added that choosing Chapman Beach does have its logistical problems, but it’s one of her favorite beaches and it allows service members to explore other parts of NSGB.

“Many people spend their whole time here and never venture to Leeward or Chapman Beach for their personal time,” said Cole. “Holding this camping trip at Chapman Beach will allow people to explore a new place at GTMO that they may have not been without having to worry about the logistics themselves. We are taking care of transportation, equipment, food, etc., so that all our participants can simply enjoy a fun night away at Leeward and appreciate the serenity and beauty of Chapman Beach and this place in general.”

During the evening at Chapman Beach, the service members were able to relax around a camp fire, cook s’mores and enjoy the night life of the ocean.

Annea Jenson, event participant, recommended that single or unaccompanied service members make the most of their time here at NSGB.

“Don’t hide in your rooms,” said Jenson. “Get out and experience the Caribbean life.”

The campout left a good impression on those who participated, including Jenson.

“It was a great experience,” said Jenson. “Not often do you get the stay out on the beach, have the stars overhead, camp fire going and be with good company.”

Benjamin Paredes, event participant, added that he loved the event too.

“It felt like I had the opportunity to relax a little bit and hangout with some friends, said Paredes. “This is an event that I would like to have the opportunity to do more often. The best part of the event for me was watching the sunrise. I do not get a chance to wake up early after sleeping under the stars and see the sunrise over the beach with friends.”

MWR Liberty is planning another camp out in the near future. Make sure you check out MWR’s GTMO Life calendar for more Liberty events.
NSGB Security Participates in RASS
Photos and Story By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Philip Wagner, Jr., Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Affairs Office
Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (NSGB) Security Forces participated in a Regional Assessment (RASS), Mar. 5-9, with a team from Commander Naval Region Southeast (CNRSE) reviewing all aspects of the installation’s security force and emergency response operations. RASS is part of Commander Naval Installation Command’s (CNIC) Navy security force shore assessment and certification cycle.
According to Chief Master-at-Arms John Day, NSGB’s security training chief, the assessment is a way to ensure all training standards are met.
“This assessment is important to ensure standardized training is upheld and resources are aligned for all shore base security force requirements in support of their ability to fight and thwart threats as an effective force,” said Day.
During the week-long assessment, the CNRSE team took a hard look at all aspects of security training and reviewed any corrections recommended by CNIC during the Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART) inspection a year ago.
“Upon completion of RASS, the inspection team will recommend to CNIC that NSGB is ready for the Final Evaluation Problem (FEP) and certification,” said Day. The week-long assessment was a very busy time for the security training teams, members of NSGB’s security department, and other emergency first responders.
“During the assessment, the security antiterrorism training team conducted a harbor patrol unit exercise involving the protection of a high-value asset in port,” said Day. “The naval station’s installation training team (ITT) conducted an active shooter/improvised explosive device (IED) drill that evaluated response, containment and recovery operations with a unified incident command post that included security, fire, and medical personnel.”
Day added that security is constantly looking at its processes and procedures to ensure compliance to all aspects of training.
“The best way to prepare is constant self-assessment and ensuring we are following all instructions, policies and guidance at all times,” said Day.
After all the drills were complete, security had improved its score.
“Security is constantly self-evaluating and making corrections as we go,” said Day. “There is always room for improvement.”

NSGB Residents Celebrate Storyteller’s Birthday
By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Monique K. Meeks, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Affairs Office
Naval Station Guantanamo Bay children and parents celebrated famed writer and storyteller Dr. Seuss’ birthday, Mar. 2, with an event at the W. T. Sampson Elementary/High School and then traveled to the North East Gate with members of the Marine Corps Security Forces Company Guantanamo Bay for a fun run along the Windward Fence Line between the base and Cuba.
NSGB’s Sprint Triathlon creates Local Stars

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (NSGB) community members participated in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Sprint Triathlon, Mar. 3. The Sprint Triathlon consisted of a half mile swim, a 12.4 mile bike ride and a 3.1 mile run. One participant 15-year old, A’Janil Stokes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Stokes, participates in many of the MWR running events because it’s the only way for him to participate in track and field type events to be able to judge how well he is doing.

According to Mr. Stokes, younger Stokes participates in these events because he likes running and wants to compete at the college level and hopefully make the US Olympic team. “These events allow him to compete with older adults,” said Stokes. “When we get a chance to go off island to compete in Amateur Athletic Union Track and Field AAU events he is running against older kids so it helps him prepare.”

A’Janil added that running in the MWR events helps me a lot to train. The courses are very accurate and it’s set up just like how I would run in back in the states.”

“It makes me feel really confident in myself to know that I am beating most of the adults make some feel good,” said Stokes. “The next step is to go ahead and beat some of the kids that are in the states.”

Mr. and Mrs. Stokes are extremely proud of his accomplishments during his running events at NSGB. “We can see the progress he has made in these last couple of months,” said Stokes. “We just hope that he sticks with it because doors will open.”

A’Janil Stokes, 15-year-old, A’Janil Stokes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Stokes, event participant. “I enjoy running, I loved it as soon as I stepped on the track or field,” said A’Janil Stokes event participant. “I love running because you need to push yourself every single time not just against other runners but run against yourself and the time clock, it relaxes me.”

History of the American Red Cross Station on NSGB

The American Red Cross has played an important role in providing assistance across the area now known as Naval Station Guantanamo Bay since 1898. Historian Herbert Collins said that the Red Cross first provided their own ambulances in the Spanish-American War, when in 1897 Cubans revolted against Spanish domination. Clara Barton, Red Cross President at the time, asked President McKinley to help her raise money for Red Cross relief in Cuba. She also set off to Cuba in February 1898 to help the injured during the Cuban insurrection.

The government eventually joined the effort, but only after the conflict turned into the Spanish-American war in 1898. When the United States declared war on Spain, Clara Barton – who was 76 years old at the time – traveled to hospitals recruiting nurses to work for the Army at medical camps in Florida and Cuba. On June 20, 1898, Clara Barton and the Red Cross nurses then sailed to Havana, Cuba to provide nursing care, medical supplies, food and other necessities to American service members and victims of the Spanish-American War. The Red Cross also provided a non-medical service for the armed forces by handling inquiries from families.

Barton’s most significant act during her closing years as head of the American Red Cross was to take supplies to Cuba on a specially chartered ship during the Spanish-American War. Aid was given to the American forces, to prisoners of war, and to Cuban refugees. This effort was the first step toward the broad programs of service to the armed forces and to civilians during wartime that have become traditional in the American Red Cross.

By Sharon Coganworth, Director, Red Cross Naval Station Guantanamo Bay

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During the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the American Red Cross played a major role on the base again while assisting the families of military personnel who were evacuated from the base. Notified of the evacuation on 22 October, evacuees were told to pack one suitcase per family member, to bring evacuation and immunization cards, to tie pets in the yard, to leave the keys to the house on the dining table, and to wait in front of the house for buses. Dependents traveled to the airfield for flights to the United States or to ports for passage aboard evacuation ships. On December 5, 1962 Red Cross begins collecting medicines and food for Cuba in exchange for release of the Bay of Pigs Prisoners of War. After the crisis was resolved, family members were allowed to return to the base in December 1962.

In January of 2010, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay’s American Red Cross office stood at the ready once again to help with providing supplies by air and ship to the people of Haiti following a major earthquake that devastated the already impoverished nation.

Finally, when three major hurricanes threatened Naval Station Guantanamo Bay in the span of a little over a year, the American Red Cross staff and their volunteers swept in to assist with ensuring all residents were kept safe, whether that be mission essential personnel who remained in shelters on base or dependents who had been evacuated to Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida.
The Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Women’s Fellowship Group came together at the Windward Lighthouse on Mar. 11 for an evening of fellowship and praise during the second Illuminate event.