April is Sexual Health Month: Let’s talk about it
Story By Jocelyn Biggs, Public Affairs Officer Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay

According to the Centers for Disease Control, nearly 20 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year. Open communication with a healthcare provider is a key element to maintaining sexual health. It may not be the most comfortable conversation to have, but it is important to provide doctor’s with a thorough sexual history. Based on individual history, a physician can best determine which sexually transmitted infection tests are reasonable even if there aren’t any symptoms.

Many people with STI’s will not have symptoms, which makes testing critical. If left untreated, infections can lead to serious and sometimes permanent health issues.

According to the CDC website, women with untreated chlamydia or gonorrhea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease which can lead to ectopic pregnancy or infertility. In men, these infections can each cause a painful condition in the tubes attached to the testicles. In rare cases, this may prevent him from being able to have children. Untreated chlamydia or gonorrhea may also increase the chances of getting or giving HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Conversely, if treated, these infections can be cured with no long term adverse effects. Visit mil.relayhealth.com or call 72944 to make an appointment and have a conversation about your sexual health with a provider.

NSGB’S Sailors of the Week for Apr. 17 and Apr. 24

NAVSTA Sailor of the Week, Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Michael T. Ginley. MA3 Ginley is being recognized as NAVSTA Sailor of the Week for his selfless hard work and dedication. As a Military Working Dog handler, he conducted over 15 hours of Patrol and detection training with his MWD, enhancing the mission readiness of NSGB. In addition MA3 Ginley certified with his MWD in less than 10 days onboard and is currently working on his demolition material qualifications and training his assign MWD. His exceptional Navy Core Values has set him apart from his peers. MA3 is a shining example of an effective and well-rounded Sailor. BRAVO ZULU MA3 Ginley!!

NAVSTA Sailor of the Week, Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Charles Campbell. MA2 Campbell is a steadfast sailor who has achieved an enormous amount in a short time aboard NSGB. MA2 has provided tremendous support during Security Department’s Regional Assessment inspection assisting in the maintenance of Naval Security Force training records, drill preparation and Security Range qualifications that support everyday Security Operations for the installation. MA2 has also qualified as a Range Safety Officer, Emergency Vehicle Operators Course (EVOC) Instructor, Small Arms Marksman Instructor (SAM), Crew Serve Weapons Instructor (CSWI) and Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Instructor. As a primary FEMA instructor, MA2 Campbell has assisted in establishing a required program previously unavailable on the Naval Station, ensuring procedural compliance with CNIC standards. While facilitating as a SAM and CSWI, he selflessly stayed late after an already long range day to ensure all weapons scores and training were entered and tracked in the Data Housing and Reporting Tool (DHART) and gun cards printed and routed for approval. This streamlined the process of providing all qualified Patroline with all necessary documents in a timely manner to ensure the watch is manned. MA2 Campbell is also Security Department’s ACLF and assists in facilitating Command PFFAs and PT. MA2 Campbell’s hard work and dedication ensure the highest standards of training are delivered and increase the overall security posture of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. Bravo Zulu, MA2 Campbell!!

From a Simple Ceremony, a New JTF Commander
Story By Sergeant First Class Jerry Sauser, JTF Public Affairs Affairs Office Photo By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Philip Wagner, Jr., Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Public Affairs Office

“Ceremonies like this are always bittersweet,” said Adm. Kurt W. Tidd, commander, U.S. Southern Command, as he addressed the service members and civilians who filled Naval Station Guantanamo Bay’s chapel, Tuesday afternoon.

They had gathered for one of the most common of military ceremonies: a change of command ceremony. “They’re bitter because we have to fondly, but sadly, bid farewell to a great leader,” said Tidd. “Now let me start with the most difficult part, the farewells.”

For over a year, Rear Adm. Edward B. Cashman led approximately 1,700 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and civilians who comprise Joint Task Force Guantanamo. “It’s been a great assignment, incredibly rewarding. The people really make the assignment … the people who volunteer to serve and come here are phenomenal,” said Cashman. “I just try to figure out what I can [do] to support and assist them in doing the work that they do.”

What the men and women of the JTF do is conduct safe and humane detention operations for the 41 Law of Armed Conflict detainees currently in custody. They also provide support to the Department of Defense’s Office of Military Commissions, who is responsible for the legal proceedings involving Law of Armed Conflict detainees. “Detainee operations are an absolutely essential tool in our counterterrorism efforts,” Tidd said. “We all know that this mission is not easy; every single part of what you do in demanding. The mission is, too often, endless. And everything that you do is always conducted under the most intense scrutiny. Our country could not ask for better men and women to execute this incredibly important mission.”

The man chosen to relieve Cashman and take the lead of the men and women of the JTF last commanded one of the U.S. Navy’s largest vessels, an aircraft carrier. “Commanding a joint task force is a unique leadership opportunity that I wholeheartedly look forward to,” said Rear Adm. Ring during the ceremony. “I plan on applying the leadership skills I have developed over a 30 year career in taking care of our troops and ensuring safe, humane care and custody of the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) detainees at Guantanamo. I have an amazing team to back me up, we are going to do things by the book. Every trooper will leave here with their honor intact.”

Ring will be Joint Task Force Guantanamo’s 15th commander since the task force was formed in November of 2002.

“I am absolutely looking forward to this job,” said Ring. “Just the exposure to the different services’ culture is worth doing the tour. I’m proud to become part of this amazing team.”

Before Ring could officially take command, a few simple, yet significant, actions had to occur. First Cashman took the stage, stood behind the podium and read aloud to those assembled the order detaching him from command. When he was done, he walked to the right of the stage and faced the audience; Adm. Tidd was standing in the center of the stage, also facing the crowd. Then Ring stepped upon the stage, stood behind the podium and read aloud the order stating that he was to report for duty as Commander, Joint Task Force Guantanamo, U.S. Southern Command. When Ring finished, he walked over and stood to Cashman’s left. Both men turned and shook hands. Then they turned and faced Tidd and rendered salutes.

With that, JTF’s Guantanamo new commander was officially installed.
Naval Station Guantanamo Bay residents participated in the Navy Exchange (NEX)/Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Customer Appreciation Weekend, Apr. 14-15. During CAW, there were many events for the community that included a Young Joe Concert, 5K Color Run, autograph signings by guest chefs, Medal of Honor Recipient CSM Gary Littrell, Imagination Movers Concert for the children, and the Vans bicycle team.
Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (NSGB) held its annual summer kickoff party, Day at the Bay, sponsored by Morale, Welfare and Recreations (MWR) Child and Youth Programs, Apr. 21. The annual event is a way for NSGB residents to come together and have a fun-filled afternoon with family activities that included a cardboard boat regatta, craft fair, surfboard judging, and fun on the water. This year’s winners of the cardboard boat regatta were: Adult Division- Most GTMO: David Bachelor and David Bailey “The Pirate and The Pelican”, Most Titanic: Sara Nowothy and Javier Graham “Duct Almighty” and Fastest Time: Heather Baugh and Hadley Bardoni “Aqua Bums” (this was our only adult/Youth combo entry); Youth Division - Most GTMO: Arya Snedeker and Julianna Holmes “GTMO Egg”, Most Titanic: Zachary Thompson and Declan Langston “Bolt” and Fastest Time: Shiloh Toliver and Eli Toliver “Smooth Sailing”. The surf board competition winners for this year were Most GTMO- Perla Chavez, Most Island inspired- W.T. Sampson Art class—I have reached out to the art teacher for the specific student’s name and Most Radical-Fleet and Family Support Center. Congratulations to all those that participated in the cardboard boat regatta and the surfboard decorating competitions.
Military Sealift Command petroleum tanker USNS Lawrence H. Gianella (T-AOT 1125) made a fuel delivery to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (NSGB), Apr. 6. During the visit, Gianella transferred 1.5 million gallons of MOGAS to the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) Fleet Logistics Center Jacksonville (FLCJ) Guantanamo Bay (GTMO).

Since its inception, NSGB has been a coaling and fuel station for United States Coast Guard ships, United States naval vessels and partnering naval ships in the Caribbean and is the last fuel station for U.S. ships prior to transiting to the Pacific Ocean via either the Cape of Good Hope or the Panama Canal.

Edgar (Tony) Ramirez, NAVSUP FLCJ’s Fuels Director/Contracting Officer said the base supplies three types of fuel to its customers, including F-76 (Naval Distillate Fuel NATO F-76) for shipboard use, JP-5 (aviation fuel) and the most common fuel on base MOGAS (motor vehicle gas or just regular gasoline.

The fuels division provides fuel to an average of 40 U. S. naval vessels and Coast Guard ships per year.

"Right after Hurricane Irma, we saw the biggest influx of ships that I can ever remember," said Ramirez. "In a three-day period, we saw more than 20 coast guard ships and provided more than 400,000 gallons of fuel so that the ships could go and assist in hurricane relief efforts."

The newly commissioned Pier Charlie complex will expedite the offload of fuel ships and barges by about three and a half hours. Ramirez noted that it takes a dedicated experience team to accomplish this.

"Our mission at the fuels section is wide and varied. There are a lot of moving parts so that we can provide safe and consistent fuel services to our NSGB customers and visiting ships," said Ramirez.

While our location does have its own inherent challenges, including being the only U.S. base using a gravity-fed system, Ramirez still finds it rewarding to help ensure that the base is mission ready.

“Our ability to support our Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen is both rewarding and exciting,” said Ramirez. “It is an honor to support our community and the NSGB mission on a daily basis.

Petroleum products move the world, including our armed forces, and provide everyone with the ability to energize their home, cars, generators and lawn mowers. To know that we have dedicated our life to the fuels and petroleum field while providing those services to our military gives us a sense of pride and mission accomplishment.”
NSGB’S Cuban Boaconstictors
Story By Michael McCord, Public Works Environmental

If you are not a fan of rodents, then you should really appreciate the Cuban boa (Epicrates angulifer). One of four species of snakes found on NSGB, the Cuban boa is the largest snake in the Greater Antilles. A shy and nocturnal snake, the Cuban boa is non-venomous and poses little threat to people. It is observed infrequently because it rests in trees and caves during the day and is more active at night to hunt for food. This snake plays an important role in our local ecology by consuming a variety of prey, including hutia (banana rats) and rats that we consider pests. By consuming these rodents, Cuban boas help control local pest populations through a completely natural process. This species also has special protection status under Chapter 13 of the Final Governing Standards (FGS) for Cuba.

The boa family contains about eight genera and thirty-nine species, all of which are constrictors. In general, they are the most primitive of living snakes. As constrictors, boas kill their prey by squeezing it to death and then they swallow it whole. In undertaking this feeding process, they actually use their bodies to coil around and suffocate their prey. The boa has the ability to dislocate its lower jaw to eat; allowing it to consume prey that can be several times the diameter of its body. While boas may seem similar to pythons, they differ in several ways. These include various skeletal differences as well as the manner of giving birth. Boas bear live young while pythons lay eggs.

The Cuban boa’s cryptic color patterns help it blend into the surrounding environment. They tend to be brownish and intricately patterned with contrasting chevrons, rings, and spots. These markings can be tan, yellow, brown, or black. The boa’s scales exhibit a green and blue iridescence, giving this snake a truly exceptional appearance. While adult Cuban boas average six to ten feet long, individuals may reach lengths of twelve feet or more. While it may seem menacing due to its size, it is not deserving of its dubious reputation.

Due to its shy and reclusive behavior, NSGB residents rarely encounter the Cuban boa. However, if you encounter one of these harmless snakes, please leave it alone. If you are driving a vehicle and see one crossing the road, please let it cross. It is important to remember the boa’s critical role as a rodent predator and its importance in maintaining a balanced ecosystem at NSGB. Due to its importance as an apex predator in the Guantánamo ecosystem, we are actively working to preserve and sustain our local boa population. Please do not harass or otherwise harm these snakes. Should you encounter one near your residence and want it removed, please call the Public Works Department Environmental Division at extension 5626. We also remind you to keep pets on leashes or under control and do not feed feral animals. Unattended pets and feral animals can easily kill young boas. Remember that everyone can be a part of conserving this valuable species and the natural resources on the installation while working to complete our mission.

W.T. Sampson Senior Class Hosts First-Ever Poetry Night
Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Philip Wagner, Jr., Naval Station Guantánamo Bay Public Affairs Office

Naval Station Guantánamo Bay residents joined the 2018 Senior Class for a poetry night at the W.T. Sampson School gym, Apr. 13.

NSGB Blesses Pets
Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Philip Wagner, Jr., Naval Station Guantánamo Bay Public Affairs Office

Naval Station Guantánamo Bay residents took their furry family members to the command chapel, Apr. 9, for the annual “Blessing of the Pets” by Navy Chaplain Cmdr. Keith Shuley, NSGB’s Command Chaplain and priest.
Fifth grade students attending Naval Station Guantanamo Bay’s (NSGB) W. T. Sampson Elementary/High School recently completed an engineering and design project that allowed the students to work in teams to build cardboard boats for a regatta held at Day at the Bay, Apr. 21.

During the month-long project, the 15 students worked in groups of two or three students to create seven boats. Mr. Damian Bardoni, the students’ teacher, chose this project to show the students how classroom learning transfers into the real world.

“I wanted to give them the opportunity to participate in a fun project,” said Bardoni. “With schools across the nation transitioning to a 21st century model of learning and teaching, this project allowed students to focus on creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem solving and flexibility, all of which are necessary for these children to thrive in today’s world.”

Khayla Amarles, fifth grade student, thought the best part of the project was being able to come up with what their boats would look like. “Having someone come into the class that knew a lot about boats and how they worked helped give us a bunch of tips about keeping our boats stable,” said Amarles. Bardoni had invited the installation’s Public Works Officer, Cmdr. Jeff Richer, to come into the classroom and talk to the students about water displacement, drag, buoyancy and the different types of boats and design. “The students researched what positive and negative buoyancy was and then drew out a design of their boats and used cardboard to assemble prototypes,” said Bardoni. “Then they calculated how much weight their prototype could hold and tested for accuracy, drew blueprints of their boats and then, finally, constructed their boats.”

Bardoni added that no matter the outcome, he was proud of his students. “Before the regatta even took place Saturday morning and no matter the outcome of their boats, I was already pleased with all they had accomplished,” said Bardoni. “However, after the students successfully finished the regatta, my heart was filled with pride not only because they were successful, but also because each of the students were proud of themselves.”

As the students, with the help of their parents, moved their boats down the ramp to start racing, many of these young boaters were a bit worried. “I was a little uneasy putting my partner, Jose Alejo, and my boat in the water and paddling,” said Ben Richer, fifth grader. “I wasn’t sure if we were going to float or not and I didn’t know how fast we were going to go.”

“It was fun participating in the boat regatta, I got to learn and experience new things,” added Alexandra Quintanilla, fifth grader.

Mr. Bardoni plans to continue his hands-on educational technique. The next project is to construct miniature golf courses using their knowledge of geometric shapes. In addition, before the end of the school year, the students will construct small rockets made out of paper towel rolls and launch them using an air-compressed launcher made from PVC pipes.