

VCNO talks candidly about Navy's future

Story by MC1 Igo Wordu, Public Affairs Office

Guantanamo Bay Sailors had the opportunity to bring their concerns to the attention of senior Navy leadership during an 'All-Hands' call with Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO), Adm. Robert Willard, held in the Wind-jammer Ballroom, Nov. 27.

The VCNO's visit to GTMO is part of a familiarization tour of Navy installations around the world.

He was accompanied by his wife, Donna, who was interested in quality of life on this unique, remote overseas location. They spent two days touring station and Joint Task Force (JTF) facilities.

ADM Willard told the assembled company of more than 400 Sailors, that although he receives regular comprehensive feedback from senior leadership in GTMO, his visit affords him the opportunity to interact directly with junior Sailors in order to gain first-hand knowledge of their living and working conditions.

"This is a discovery mission on my part," he said. "GTMO is no longer a small cadre of individuals here intending to keep the lights on. Rather, servicemembers are here now, not just dealing with the detention center, but dealing with all the logistics and support of various military activities. It is important that senior leadership pay occasional visits to installations like GTMO just to put



Photo by MC1 Robert Lamb

Vice Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Robert Willard, talks to GTMO Sailors about the future goals of the Navy.

eyes on things."

He stressed the importance of the feedback from the troops who perform their du-

ties because it guides senior leadership in making the right decisions for the Navy.

"We need to make sure that

Navy is doing what we need to do to support you here," said ADM Willard.

The VCNO addressed questions from Sailors about quality of life issues, Added Incentive Pay (AIP), retention, recruitment, states' taxes, Individual Argumentation (IA), and other incentives geared towards improving Navy's capabilities.

He explained processes involved in developing and implementing plans and strategies that make the Navy more capable in accomplishing assigned missions. He added that the Navy is working on setting aside money and approving policies to adjust incentives, high-year tenure, and Selective Re-enlistment bonuses.

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Tree-lighting
— *The GTMO Christmas season has not begun until the lights of the Christmas display are on. Mrs. Ronnette Moore, wife of CDR Sylvester Moore, flipped the switch marking the annual holiday tradition, on Saturday, Nov. 25.*

Photo by Nichole Lamb

Surviving the holidays without debt

Story by Paul Walker, Fleet and Family Support Center Financial Educator

It's that time of year when stores display holiday decorations, increase inventory, and gear up for the onset of holiday shoppers. Online holiday shopping has become very popular as well, especially in remote areas such as GTMO.



Holiday parties and travel to distant places add to the financial burden. Ideally, you've planned and budgeted for the holidays all year long.

But for many of us, it's not until the decorations go up that we start thinking about how much we are going to spend and where the money will come from.

Credit card balances sky-

rocket. Some delay paying bills for the month. The result? Seasonal expenses that strain our personal finances and create stress during what is supposed to be a joyful time of year.

You can avoid this stress by following these tips on holiday money management from the Federal Consumer Information Center:

— Draw names. If your list

of family and friends is long, suggest this approach to gift giving.

— Set a price limit for purchased gifts. Stay within a budget.

— Give a gift from one family to another family, rather than individual gifts for all.

— Pass on a family heirloom. These often are cherished forever.

— Take advantage of seasonal bargains.

— Consider giving priority to gifts that can't be bought—such as time or self-made items.

— Use credit wisely. Keep track of the total amount of

credit used. It's best to stay within a budgeted amount that can be paid off before incurring finance charges.

It's not too early to begin thinking about next year. Consider joining an interest-paying holiday savings club at your bank or credit union.

Taking control of your holiday spending helps you avoid seasonal stress, allowing you to enjoy this time of year with family and friends.

Happy Holidays from the Fleet and Family Support Center.

For additional information or assistance call the FFSC at 4141.

Social Security warns public about email scam

Story by Mary E. Foley, Manager, Policy & Operations DoN Civilian Benefits Center

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has issued a warning regarding an email scam that has surfaced recently.

SSA has received several reports of an email message being circulated with the subject "Cost-of-Living for 2007 update" and purporting to be from the Social Security Administration. The message provides information about the 3.3 percent benefit increase for 2007 and contains the following.

"NOTE: We now need you

to update your personal information. If this is not completed by Nov. 11, 2006, we will be forced to suspend your account indefinitely."

The reader is then directed to a website designed to look like Social Security's Internet website.

Once directed to the phony website, the individual is asked to register for a password and to confirm their identity by providing personal information such as the individual's Social Security number, bank account

information and credit card information.

All personnel should take precautions when giving out personal information. Never provide your Social Security number or other personal information over the Internet or by telephone unless you are extremely confident of the source to whom you are providing the information.

To report receipt of this email message or other suspicious activity to Social

Security's Office of Inspector General, please call the OIG Hotline at 1-800-269-0271. (For those who are deaf or hard of hearing, call the OIG TTY number at 1-866-501-2101).

A Public Fraud Reporting form is also available online at OIG's website: www.socialsecurity.gov/oig/hotline/index.htm.

To view the complete SSA press release, go to www.ssa.gov/pressoffice/pr/colaPhishingScam-pr.htm.

GUANTANAMO BAY

Gazette

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Journalist.....	MCI Igo Wordu

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Snap shot — Congratulations to MacKenzie Thirumalai, 10, for winning the Boys & Girls Club 2006-2007 Digital Arts Festival Photo Illustration regional competition.

Galley staff puts out all the fixin's

Story and photo by MC1 Robert Lamb, NAVSTA Public Affairs

Before anyone starts complaining about how many mouths they've fed on Thanksgiving Day, consider what the Gold Hill, Leeward, and Seaside Galleys' food service staffs had on their plate.

While many residents of Guantanamo Bay were home preparing a Thanksgiving meal for a small group of family and friends, the staffs of all three galleys were up early preparing for an estimated 1,400 customers, quite a larger crowd than a normal home gathering.

"PENTAD provided excellent support for the Thanksgiving dinner preparation," said Mike Firme, facilities manager for Gold Hill Galley.

The Food Service Staff at all three galleys combined to slice more than 1,400 pounds of turkey, 1,000 pounds of roast beef, 190 pounds of ham, and prepare 350 pounds of shrimp.

It wasn't just servicemembers on duty who were served a traditional Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 23.

Everyone on station was welcome - those on duty, civilians, contractors, and anyone else who didn't want to slave over a hot stove for just

two or three people.

"I never think twice about enjoying holiday dinners at our Gold Hill galley," said NDC(DSW) Jose Castillo.

"The friendly staff always does a top-notch job with the food and presentation. My daughter, Phoenix, particularly enjoys the stuffing, and I like the boat-load of shrimp and freshly made cocktail sauce."

The culinary expertise of the GTMO food service staffs that is expected on a daily basis, really shines on holidays, like Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The food service staffs might not always get the glory and the recognition that they deserve, but on such a special holiday, they know that patrons are lining up for a great hot Thanksgiving meal with all the fixin's.

"Pentad's professional attitude and high degree of personal initiatives have been a key factor in the consistent food service currently enjoyed in the general mess," said Firme. "Gold Hill Galley continues to be a flagship facility, and general feeding continues to increase for both Gold Hill and Seaside Galleys due to strong customer satisfaction."



Charlie Ganal, Gold Hill Galley Chef, cuts through a turkey like a surgeon. The galleys combined to serve more than 1,400 pounds of turkey during the Thanksgiving Day meal.

VCNO talks candidly ...

Continued from page 1

RDML Harry Harris Jr., the JTF commander, noted that there are a number of incentives being considered for those stationed in GTMO, including Hazardous Duty Pay Location (HDPL).

"As most of you know, we just received approval for HDPL," said RDML Harris. The Naval Station got a \$50 increase, and JTF got a \$150 increase."

In his closing remarks, ADM Willard expressed his appreciation for the work be-

ing done by the senior leadership and every military and civilian person in GTMO.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to be here," he said. "We have a lot of Sailors here who are working in very difficult and challenging circumstances, and doing work that is a little outside the norm."

We (senior Navy leadership) are very, very proud of the work everyone is doing here for our Navy, and the War on Terror."

Women's Spa Day



Sunday Dec. 3



MWR and the NEX have collaborated for Women's Spa Day.

Stephenie's Manhattan is offering free pumpkin peel facials and massages, in the Windjammer Ballroom, on a first-come, first-served basis, 1-6 p.m.

The NEX Beauty Shop has a free gift bag for the first 100 women, as well as one-day only discounts on chemical services and nail sets, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

GTMO Shopper

For Sale

- (2) Sirius Sportster satellite radio w/ pre-paid subscription, \$265; Sopranos DVD collection, \$250; Seinfeld DVD collection, \$100; Left Behind book series, \$40; Bose Wave radio, \$260. FMI call 3404 or 77806.
- (2) 32-in. Toshiba flat screen TV, \$200; Lane Wingback recliner, burgandy, \$75; Waverly botanical upholstery chair, \$75; French country kitchen table w/4 chairs \$200; JVC camcorder, uses VHS tapes, needs new battery \$50. FMI call 4574 or 77599.
- (2) HP 5740 color printer, prints only. \$50. FMI call 77131.
- (2) NordicTrack E4400 treadmill w/ 3.0 CHP motor, excellent condition, \$1,000; 4 X-box controllers, spare X-box AV cable and DVD remote kit, \$50. FMI call 78063.
- (2) Various household items including lamps, bar stools, bed-room furniture, stepping stones, potted plants, and couch for sale. FMI call 75397.
- (2) Squire child-size Stratocaster style electric guitar, \$30; Fender Stratocaster electric guitar, \$300; Charvel acoustic electric guitar, \$300; Princeton guitar amplifier, \$50; crate guitar amplifier, \$230; Gibson acoustic guitar, \$750. FMI call 90230.
- (2) Motorola model 66 flip phone, \$120. FMI call 78264 or 2023.
- (2) Potted plants, \$5 - \$20; dining room set, washer and dryer, \$500; desk, lamps, dresser, silver fox jacket, \$75; Bowflex w/leg extension attachment, \$600; reclining leather couch, \$850. FMI call 77974.
- (2) Metal patio table w/glass top and 4 chairs, \$40 OBO; 18 ft. round trampoline \$30 OBO; Gas grill, \$30 OBO. FMI call 77166.
- (2) Ladies 27-in. bicycle w/helmet, \$30 OBO; GTMO cell phone, \$90 OBO. FMI call 79010.
- (1) Mongooose mountain bike w/ helmet, lock, and tire pump included, \$600. FMI call 75548.
- (1) White bedroom furniture including mirror, 1 drawer nightstand, 5 drawer chest, tall armoire w/3 big drawer, \$50; two radial tires, excellent shape M+5 P225/75R15, %15 ea. FMI call 75828.
- (1) Kenmore washer and dryer, excellent condition, \$200. FMI call 74975 DWH or 77332 AWH.
- (1) 17-in. Sharp monitor, like new, \$150 OBO. FMI call Chris 77868.
- (1) Multi-game table, new condition, \$150; two antique carved wood unfinished German chairs, \$200; twin-size bed w/wood shelf headboard and mattress \$100; performance series Double Baby jogger, 20-in. wheels, light weight, quick un-pin and fold feature, \$150 OBO. FMI call 75815.
- (1) Two men's mountain bikes, \$75 ea. FMI call 77944
- (1) Girl's Haverty's 5-piece twin bedroom set, \$400; sofa bed and love seat, \$300; washer and dryer, \$250; Microwave, \$40. FMI call 75512.
- (1) Burgundy sectional couch w/ two massage chairs and a pull-out bed, \$800; 46" big screen TV, \$700; computer desk, \$40, Blk entertainment stand, \$35; coffee table, \$90. FMI call 75688.

Vehicles/Boats

- (2) 2006 Harley Davidson Sportster 1200, custom, less than 600 miles, \$9,900. FMI call 78032.
- (2) 1986 Volvo 240, 4 door, tan, \$2,500 OBO. FMI call 4574 or 77599.
- (2) 1991 Dodge Dynasty, V6, 3.3L, auto, PS/PB/Tilt, excellent condition, \$2,300 OBO. FMI call 79582 or 4529.
- (2) 2001 Toyota 4-Runner, clean, power windows/locks, AC, w/Sirius Satellite radio, \$14,000 OBO. FMI call 78077.
- (2) 1998 Dodge Neon, 4dr, blue, runs great, AC, \$4,500 OBO. FMI call 4298 or 77939.
- (2) 2001 Town & Country LXi minivan, loaded, 77k miles, \$13,000 OBO. FMI call 77390 or 72196.
- (1) 2000 Ford Explorer, 118k miles, well maintained, \$8,500. FMI call 2033.
- (1) 1984 Chevy Celebrity, convertible, runs well, \$750 OBO. FMI call Tony 2351.
- (1) 1997 Saturn Coupe, 2 dr., A/C, great condition, available in Jan., \$5,000. FMI call 4513 or 77737.
- (1) 1987 Volkswagen Cabriolet, convertible, A/C, AM/FM/CD, low mileage, \$4000 OBO. FMI call Chris 77868.
- (1) 2000 Buick Century, pwr breaks, window locks, A/C, automatic, asking \$8,500. FMI call 4063.
- (1) 1992 Geo Tracker, available Dec. 5. FMI call Bruce 75749.
- (1) 1984 Honda Shadow, low mile,

good shape, runs good, \$1,500. FMI call 4380 or 77716.

Employment

- (2) Responsible, experienced, dependable spouse of GTMO Contractor seeks permanent, full-time position as Secretary or Admin Asst. Qualifications include: experience with MS Office, Internet, E-mail, various time-keeping software, and all relevant office machines. Hand-led human resources, housing issues, and various confidential matters. FMI call 2616.
- (2) SCSI is seeking a full time database/Internet technician, interested individuals can submit their resume to the SCSI office at bldg. N609. FMI call 77362 or 77479.
- (1) The GEO Group Inc., Migrant Operations Center has the following position available: Housing Escort Officer. Qualification required: High school diploma or GED equivalent. One year full-time experience in a public or private security or law enforcement-related field. Must be a U.S. citizen or a lawful resident. Bi-lingual is a plus: English-Spanish; English-Haitian Creole. FMI call 76149.

Announcements

- (1) The African American Cultural Organization (AACO) meets every Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. at the Acey Ducey. All interested in joining the organization are invited to attend. FMI call 9769.
- (1) Anyone interested in volunteering time or cookies for the

Chapel Cookie Drive should contact the Chapel at 2323. Cookies can be dropped off in the Fellowship Hall at the Chapel Complex. They will be packaged and delivered to individuals standing duty on Christmas Day.

- (1) The Fleet and Family Support Center is offering a class in Anger Management Class on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 9-10:30 a.m. FMI call 4141.
- (1) Guantanamo Bay Chapter of the Red Cross will be hosting a 'Silent Auction,' Dec. 7, at the Bayview. FMI call 77067 or 77070.
- (1) The Catholic Women of GTMO will meet on Thursday, Dec. 7, at 7 p.m., after Mass at Iguana Crossing. Women interested in getting together for discussions, dinner, fun, and to learn about topics of interest for Catholic women, please contact Heather Whirley at 2351 or 2300.

Lost or Found

- (1) Lost 4-in. female plastic gnome figurine at the hospital on Tuesday Nov. 28. This item is very important to it's owner. If found please contact Danielle at 72301 DWH or 75683 AWH.

Yard Sales

- Dec 2 — Center Bargo, #1151, 7 am - 1 p.m.
- Dec 2 — Caribbean Circle, #23D, 7 - 10 a.m.
- Dec 2 — Nob Hill, #16B, 7 - 11 a.m.
- Dec 2 — Radio Point, #731, 8 a.m. - noon.



Photo by PH1(SW) Terry Matlock

Reptile show — Dr. Peter Tolson of the Toledo Zoo will present a Reptile Show, Saturday, Dec. 2, 2 - 3:30 p.m., at Windmill Beach. FMI call 4493.

Worship Services

Catholic

Catholic Mass Mon. thru Fri. 6 p.m. (Main Chapel)
Confession, Mon. thru Fri. 5:15 p.m. (Main Chapel) Sat. 4:15 p.m., Sun. 8:15 a.m.
Vigil Mass, 5 p.m. (Main Chapel)
Sunday Mass, 9 a.m. (Main Chapel)
Eucharistic Adoration, daily 24 hrs.

Protestant

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Services, Main Chapel, 11 a.m.
Children's Sunday School, 11:30 a.m.
Gospel Worship Service, 1 p.m.
Monday
Prayer Group, 6 p.m. (Fellowship Hall)
Wednesday
Men's Fellowship, 6:30 p.m. (Fellowship Hall)
Gospel Bible Study, 7:30 p.m. (Sanctuary A)
Thursday
PWOC - 6:30 p.m. (Fellowship Hall)
Sunday, Protestant Liturgical Service, 10 a.m. (Sanctuary B)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

(Sanctuary A)
Monday, Family Home Evening, 7 p.m. (rm. 8)
Sunday Sacrament, 9 a.m.

Filipino Christian Fellowship

(Sanctuary A)
Sunday Worship, 7 p.m.

Iglesia Ni Cristo (Sanctuary B)

Bible Study, Thursday, 7 p.m.
Sunday Worship, 5:30 a.m.

Pentecostal Gospel Temple

(Sanctuary D)
Sunday Worship, 8 a.m. & 5 p.m.

Seventh Day Adventist (Sanctuary B)

Prayer Meeting, Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Vesper Meeting, Friday, 7 p.m.
Sabbath School, Saturday, 9:30 a.m.
Divine Service, Saturday, 11 a.m.
Bible Study, Saturday, 4:30 p.m.

Islamic Service (Sanctuary C)

Friday Worship, 1:15 p.m.

United Jamaican Fellowship

(Bldg. 1036, next to Phoenix Cable)
Sunday Service, 11 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service

Second Friday of the month, Rm. 11, 7:30p.m.

The National Security Personnel System (NSPS)

The National Security Personnel System (NSPS) is a new personnel management system that is being rolled out to enable the Department of Defense (DoD) to better meet the national security demands of the 21st century.

Key aspects of NSPS are designed to value talent, reward contribution, and promote excellence; ensures employee performance objectives are aligned to the mission of the activity, DON and the DoD; increases DON's ability to retain and recruit highly skilled employees; promotes a system in which pay progression is driven by performance and/or attainment of competencies and not longevity; and lastly allows flexibility for meeting mission changes.

The goal of NSPS is to enhance effectiveness through a simplified personnel management system that improves the way Department of Navy (Don) hires and assigns, as well as compensates and rewards employees.

Merit system safeguards, such as protection from discrimination, ensuring merit based selection, and Veterans preference remains under NSPS. Additionally, employee benefits such as leave accrual, insurance, and retirement will not change under the NSPS.

Questions such as "Why do we need the National Security Personnel System?," "What advantages does it offer to me?," "How can DoD implement NSPS when the Court permanently enjoined DoD from implementing certain parts of NSPS?," "Are wage grade employees covered?," "What happens to my retirement, health insurance, and other benefits when I convert to NSPS?," and "What kind of support will I receive to handle this?," are a sampling list of employee and supervisor/manager questions concerning the NSPS taken from The Department of Defense NSPS website located at www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps.



Photo by Roberta Stanley

Yard of the Quarter — *HMCM Ira and HMC Venecia Wenzel are congratulated by CAPT Mark Leary, NAVSTA Commanding Officer, after their home was selected as one of the winners for 'Yard of the Quarter.' The Wenzel family resides at Villamar #2232B.*



Ombudsman Corner

Cheryl Crouse

NAVSTA Ombudsman

Local Liaison

Phone - 75860

Pager - 4447-2000

ccrouse35@yahoo.com

Senora (Sunni) Malone

NAVSTA Ombudsman

Phone - 77957

Pager - 4084-2390

sunnim0427@yahoo.com

Tanya Ward

NAVSTA Ombudsman

State-side Liaison

tanyawrd@yahoo.com

Kathy Diaz

USNH Ombudsman

Phone - 7379

Pager - 72090, #018

kathiuska.m.diaz@gtmo.med.navy.mil

Jennifer Amaio

USNH Ombudsman

Phone - 7379

Pager - 72090, #493

jennifer.k.amaio@gtmo.med.navy.mil



W.T. Sampson Sports Banquet

**Tuesday, Dec. 5,
6 p.m., at the
Community Center.**

GTMO Happenings



Victorious — *Winners of the Men's Doubles Raquetball Tournament pose with their trophies after the contest, Nov. 25, at the base gym.*



Happy Thanksgiving — *The Food Service Staff set up an assembly line of meat to cut .*



Christmas mail — *Bulk holiday mail is being shipped out as fast as possible.*



Don't move — *LT Jonathan Higdon receives a flu shot from HM2 Darla Moore at Locke Auditorium. Flu shots are mandatory for military personnel.*



Turkey Trot — *John Miklas, Patrick Phelan and Gustavo Lombera finished 1st, 2nd and 3rd during the MWR-sponsored 'Turkey Trot,' Nov. 23.*



Big sales — *Lino Arsenas checks out jewelry, assisted by Dawn Mcbean during this year's 'Black Friday' at the NEX.*

Downtown Lyceum

Friday, Dec. 1

Open Season

7 p.m., PG, 87 min.

School of Scoundrels

9 p.m., PG-13, 100 min.

Saturday, Dec. 2

**No movie scheduled,
Holiday Light Parade
and Concert by
Carly Goodwin**

Sunday, Dec. 3

Casino Royale

7 p.m., PG-13, 137 min.

Monday, Dec. 4

The Guardian

7 p.m., R, 139 min.

Tuesday, Dec. 5

School of Scoundrels

7 p.m., PG-13, 100 min.

Wednesday, Dec. 6

Casino Royale

7 p.m., PG-13, 137 min.

Thursday, Dec. 7

All the Kings Men

7 p.m., PG-13, 120 min.



Casino Royale

Genre: Action/Adventure, Thriller, Adaptation and Sequel
Cast: Daniel Craig, Judi Dench, Mads Mikkelsen, Eva Green, Jeffrey Wright
Storyline: James Bond's first 007 mission takes him to Madagascar, where he is to spy on a terrorist Mollaka. Not everything goes as planned and Bond decides to investigate, independently of the MI6 agency, in order to track down the rest of the terrorist cell.



School of Scoundrels

Comedy and Remake
Cast: Billy Bob Thornton, Jon Heder, Jacinda Barrett, Michael Clarke Duncan, Horatio Sanz
Storyline: Roger is a beleaguered New York City meter maid who is plagued by anxiety and low self-esteem. In order to overcome his feelings of inadequacy, Roger enrolls in a top-secret confidence-building class taught by the suavely underhanded Dr. P. Aided by his assistant, Lesh, Dr. P uses unorthodox, often dangerous methods, but he guarantees results.

MWR

Happenings

Windjammer Dinner Theater

Monday, Dec. 4, at 5:30 p.m. Bring the family to the Windjammer Club to enjoy dinner and then watch family oriented G- or PG-rated movies. This Monday, "Bambi," begins at 5:30 p.m., and the second movie, "Uptown Girl," begins at 8 p.m.

GTMO Marathon

Dec. 2, 5:30 a.m., departs from D.J. Denich Gym. Runners (individual or teams of 5) and cyclists welcome. Register at the gym by Nov. 30. First 200 to register receive a t-shirt. FMI call 77262.

Electric Light Parade

Dec. 2. Parade begins at 6 p.m., concert follows immediately at the Downtown Lyceum. Live performance by Carly Goodwin Band. Enter a float by calling 75225.

Stephenie's Manhattan Beauty treatments

Dec. 3, Special Spa Day, women only, 1 - 6 p.m. Regular services Dec. 4 - 8. FMI call 75225.

Boat Parade of Lights

Dec. 9, begins at 6 p.m., from the Marina. Open to all command special interest groups, clubs and individuals. Register by calling 2345, or stop by the Marina. FMI call 2345.

Ham Shoot Bowling Challenge

Dec. 10, 6 p.m., entry fee \$7. To win, bowler must roll three strikes in a row, each bowler has three games to try. One ham per winner. For \$3, purchase a ticket for a second chance to win and trade first ham for a cooked ham from the Bayview. FMI 2118.

Gary Sinise and the LT Dan Band

Dec. 17, at the Downtown Lyceum. Showtime is 8 p.m.



Photo by MC1 Robert Lamb

More than 50 people signed up to participate in the first annual "Across the Bay" swim, but as the start began, only 48 people entered the water and completed the 1.75-mile distance between the Windward and Leeward sides of Guantanamo Bay on Nov. 25. "This was not a race, but a challenge," said Audrey Chapman.

Jellyfish accompany swimmers 'Across the Bay'

Story by MC1 Robert Lamb, Public Affairs Office

Swimmers with long-distance experience, thrill seekers, and maybe a few people who thought 'why not', took part in the "Across the Bay" swim from Phillips Dive Pier to Leeward Beach on Saturday, Nov. 25.

Sponsored by the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Dept. for the Naval Station, the event began about 6:30 a.m., with the breakdown of safety tips, and then the swimmers entered the water.

The bay was a little rougher than normal on this particular morning. At 6:55 a.m., the outside temperature was 74 degrees, with winds around 10 mph., mostly cloudy skies and very choppy surf.

Every effort was made to help the swimmers feel at ease during the 1.75-mile event. The swimmers were flanked by some of GTMO's finest lifeguards in kayaks and pontoon boats, while volunteer

scuba divers and even the Coast Guard patrolled nearby.

"I was very hopeful that the bay would be "glass" like it usually is at that time of day. But with recent rains, wind, etc, there was more wind chop than usual for 6:30 a.m.," said LCDR Cindy Kuehner, NC, USN, Family Nurse Practitioner at U.S. Naval Hospital, Guantanamo Bay. "I knew I could swim the distance. I knew the goal would be in sight and that I would finish," she added.

Following a straight course was difficult due to the current and sea swells.

"I couldn't see other swimmers, and had no idea how I was doing. I had a few moments where I thought the chase boats and lifeguards were going to come retrieve me and tell me that I looked like I was having a hard time. I felt like I was having a hard time. Other swimmers were prob-

ably much closer than I realized, but I just couldn't see them over the waves," she said.

Many of the swimmers had to adjust to more than just cooler temperatures and large waves, they needed to deal with sea creatures too. Marine invertebrates or 'jellyfish' blanketed the path the swimmers swam.

"I was prepared for some distractions, swallowing salt water, waves, tides, but had not considered jellyfish," said Kuehner. "The welts I have on the right side of my body and my face speak for themselves. I did not factor them in.

"I dive a lot in the bay and have never encountered as much burning and stinging. I could see many jellyfish, while swimming, but never saw the ones that got me. You couldn't get around them. I felt like I was on fire, literally for much of the swim. I don't think anyone escaped them."

Even with all of the obstacles, the swimmers pressed on and did their best to finish.

"Out of 48 participants only about 10 were picked up before reaching the finish," said Audrey Chapman, MWR fitness coordinator. "The first three finishers, although this wasn't a race, were Jonathan McComb, 1:04; Kim Murphy, 1:06; and David Schneider, 1:09."

MWR marked the event by presenting all participants with certificates of their accomplishment.

"It was a challenging swim, but I had a great time, and I would do it again," recalls Kuehner. "I might go with more skin protection next time, not a full wet suit, but maybe a skin of some sort. The certificates at the end, complete with our name in calligraphy and a beautiful picture of the island were a great reward to have to show for our efforts."