

El Morro

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Sentinel of the Caribbean

December 2016



Happy Holidays -
Feliz Navidad
Story on page 4





Hola Team 77,

During this special holiday season, we celebrate faith, family and friends.

This is a season filled with joy, celebrations, and gatherings. As we get into the spirit of the holidays, let's take a few moments from our busy schedule to reflect on how blessed we are and focus on what's truly important.

For the majority of our Fort Buchanan community, the holidays bring joy, memories and a time to get together but some of our families will experience a different holiday due to being apart as there are Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen deployed around the world ensuring our freedom. As we celebrate the season, let's keep them in our hearts and prayers.

Please remember our Gold Star families who are missing a loved one who paid the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our nation. These are difficult times for these families so please let them know the Fort Buchanan community will never leave them behind and will always be available for support/assistance.

As we all get together on 09 December at 1600 for the Holiday Celebration and Christmas tree lighting, let it be a symbol of a brighter future for our families, especially our children, for this is their season. As Laura and I celebrate our second Feliz Navidad in Puerto Rico we count our blessings for meeting so many great people who make up the Fort Buchanan community. I understand the Puerto Rican tradition is to start the holiday season on Thanksgiving, celebrate Christmas, Three Kings Day up to the "Octavitas" until the end of January. Please celebrate with mucho gusto but please be safe as we need the entire Fort Buchanan refreshed and excited to begin a New Year filled with many

opportunities to continue to grow Fort Buchanan!

Please join us again for the 2nd annual Operation Feliz Navidad which combines the efforts of Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, interagency and intergovernmental partners and civilian service organizations in a truly unique event. Operation Feliz Navidad is a humanitarian project where Fort Buchanan's military and community partners donate new or unused unwrapped toys to be distributed to local children's hospitals and social service agencies. These toys will be delivered into the arms of deserving children throughout the island.

Operation Feliz Navidad also includes a Run/Walk on 17 December 2015 at 1700. An unwrapped toy is all that is suggested to registrar for the run/walk. Be part of something bigger than yourself this holiday season. Thank you and Feliz Navidad!

There are many other activities happening at Fort Buchanan as well. Find more details on these events in this edition of the El Morro and the DFMWR's monthly magazine and join us as "Juntos podemos lograr mucho."

I also want to thank our service members, service member families, our civilian workforce, our contractors, our educators, our interagency partners, our friends who together make Fort Buchanan great! In the last year, we started a transition of getting rid of the old and bringing in the new with the beautiful Antilles Elementary School; a new Navy Operational Support Center Drill Hall, a new joint, interagency active threat training facility; renovations to our award winning Exchange; renovated building 390 for a consolidated Directorate of Emergency Services; started a water line replacement project, replaced roofs, repaired roads, installed new air conditioning systems, and started one of largest unit/organization moves in the history of the installation to name just a few.

In the new year, please have patience as the installation will have

many new and on-going projects to increase the readiness of our service members and increase our security posture. For example, the installation's Borinqueneer Gate will undergo a complete renovation (probably starting in June) that will address the rapidly changing security environment and provide more protection to our workforce and partners/visitors.

We are planning a Land Navigation Orientation Course and Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) sites to assist units in performing individual and collective tasks. We will start Phase I of a new Training Support Center/Mission Training Complex to provide more training opportunities for our service members and units and are diligently pursuing the construction of a 25M Baffled Range to provide units more opportunities to increase weapons proficiency IAW the new HQDA Objective T guidance to increase readiness.

We will complete Operation Resolute Move which is one of the largest movements of units and organizations in the history of the installation. While some moves occurred in FY16, the majority of units will vacate buildings in the 1300 block area and move into the old Antilles Elementary School. The movement of units will allow the installation to demolition the old barracks buildings and prepare the area for three new Army Reserve Centers being constructed in FY23, FY26, and FY29.

We will also be constructing an Apparatus Building to store our Fire Trucks and equipment. We will be moving medical services such as EDIS and TRICARE to a new medical campus being created near Rodriguez Army Health Clinic in order to provide all medical services in one location on the installation. We will be upgrading our IT network to improve speeds and security of our networks. We will continue to replace our failing water infrastructure lines and continue our efforts in water security and water harvesting initiatives. We also have

(continue on following page)

From the Garrison Command Sergeant Major

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Every effort will be made to publish submissions in a timely manner. However, time, layout, style and editorial considerations, as well as determinations for publication, are determined by the Commander or the Public Affairs Officer.



Whether you are following the rhythm of Jingle Bells or “Alegre Vengo”, December is a meaningful month we congregate with coworkers, friends and family to celebrate the holidays. It is a month where we close the chapter of a year and establish the expectation for a new year to come. December is the point in time where we dust off and reflect on all those resolutions we launched at the beginning of the year, and re-focus based on the achievements we accomplished during this year.

As we get into the celebrations we can already smell the roasted pork, ham or turkeys. We have the craving for the rice, the potato salad, the sweet potato casserole, the cranberry sauce, the eggnog or “coquito”, the pies and all other delicacies we enjoy during all the gatherings. We can smell the aroma of pine trees and apple cinnamon candles, and the music that builds up the Christmas’ spirit. As we get ready to have a good time let’s remember to keep safety as one of our top priorities, and consider others while we attempt to operate our vehicles under the influence of alcohol.

As we gather we our loved ones let’s not forget the true meaning of Christmas and keep Christ in your hearts. Let’s not forget our deployed Service Members that are currently serving in harm’s way and keep them in your prayers. Let’s not forget about our veterans, and the homeless people that might not have a hot meal for the holidays. Christmas time is the time to give and share our wealth we those less fortunate.

On behalf of Fort Buchanan Family we would like to wish you all, “Feliz Navidad y Prospero Año Nuevo”. May the Peace of Lord be with each of you and your loved ones during this Holiday Season.

From the Garrison Commander (cont.)

started renovations/additions to our Chapel and will continue to renovate this great facility. We will add a deck to the Bowling Alley where patrons can take a break from bowling and watch a Softball game in a relaxing environment.

There are a lot of great projects happening at Fort Buchanan because the Nation relies on us to provide unique capabilities for the Nation’s defense. Please join us as there are no shortage of projects to enhance the installation, only shortages of personnel to complete the work. Also, bring your ideas to the staff so we can continue to renovate this great little installation in the best manner possible as we are always looking for new partnerships.

Always remember, We are the Foundation of America’s Defense and we provide a strategic platform

to display resolve to assure allies and deter enemies.

On behalf of the Harvey family, we wish you a very Merry Christmas! ¡Feliz Navidad.

May this special season be filled with blessings to enjoy throughout the New Year. ¡Muchas felicidades!



Fort Buchanan's Holiday Celebration "What does Christmas mean to you?"

With this theme, Fort Buchanan initiated the holiday season, December 9, 2016. Garrison directorates, tenants and partners showed their creativity decorating their floats according to this year's theme. The traditional Holiday Parade was fun and festive, with special guests, Santa Claus and the Three Wise Men, followed by the Tree Lighting Ceremony held at the Community Center facilities.



Fort Buchanan's Holiday Celebration "What does Christmas mean to you?"



Photos by Rosie Frizarry, PA Specialist

Rodriguez Army Health Clinic supports Veterans Appreciation Week

Story and photos by Rosie Irizarry

Public Affairs Specialist

US Army Garrison Fort Buchanan in collaboration with strategic partners held events from 14 to 19 November 2016 in appreciation of Veterans of all wars.

November 14 and 16, 2016 the Rodriguez Army Health Clinic (RAHC) hosted Wellness Fairs held at the PX lobby area. RAHC had booths providing information and services to Veterans, Service Members and their families.

The information booths were sponsored by: Tricare, Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS), ZIKA & mosquito Disease Orientation, Patient Safety-Dwight David Eisenhower Army Medical Center Performance Triad, Health screening (BP/sugar, cholesterol blood levels & vision screening) - Triple S, Nutrition, CROLITE, Dental disease screening, Behavioral health - San Juan Capistrano. US Army Garrison had booths from the Religious Support Office, Veterinary Clinic, Directorate of Human Resources (DHR) - Employee Assistance (EAP) and Army Substance Abuse Programs (ASAP).

during the Wellness Days of Veterans Appreciation Week, RAHC welcomed the Commanding General and the Command Sergeant Major of the Regional Health Command-Atlantic (RHC-Atlantic), Brigadier General Ronald J. Place and Command Sergeant Major Mathew Brady. Both participated in the Wellness Day event November 16, 2016.

Brig. Gen. Place met with the RAHC and garrison staff that were manning the booths at the PX main entrance area. As part of the interactive booths, Brig. Gen. Place and Command Sgt. Maj. Brady were able to see, through

the microscope, samples of the ZIKA virus and the disease bearing mosquitos that have been captured by the RAHC to document its dispersion and contamination at the installation.



Rodney Vega, Chief Admin Support Service, DHR explains services available and gives out printed information.



Service Members and retirees asked questions to members of the Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS), RAHC.



Fort Buchanan's Veterinary Clinic staff showed samples of the devastating effects of heart worm in a dog.



(L to R) Ismael Rivera, Lieutenant Colonel Eliasib Lozano, Commander from RAHC; Captain Cambell, and Command Sgt. Major Brady from the RHC-Atlantic, stand by as Brig. Gen. Place, RHC-Atlantic observes samples of the ZIKA virus and mosquitos captured during the studies being conducted at the RAHC.

Specialist Frances M. Vega's gate Re-dedication ceremony

Story by Grissel Rosa
Public Affairs Officer

In a significant ceremony held during Veterans Appreciation Week on November 15, 2016, Fort Buchanan rededicated the Specialist Frances Marie Vega gate with a new monument.

The ceremony honored one of our own as Spc. Vega graduated from Antilles High School, Fort Buchanan in 2000. She joined the Army after the events of September 11, 2001 and at the age of 20 years old she was the first Puerto Rican Soldier to die in combat during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Her father, Orlando Benitez, is a retired U.S. Army Master Sergeant and her mother, Wanda Benitez is an employee of the Defense Commissary Agency.

The original memorialization ceremony, conducted on July 4, 2008 was the first time in the history of Fort Buchanan and the United States Army in Puerto Rico, that one of the gates was named after a Puerto Rican Soldier. Colonel Michael T. Harvey, Garrison Commander, reiterated to Spc. Vega's



Spc. Frances M. Vega's commemorative plaque located at the gate.

family that "Mi casa es su casa," that Fort Buchanan will always be their home, that Spc. Vega's sacrifice will never be forgotten, and the monument will serve as a reminder for all who enter the installation that the price of freedom is very high.



Mr. Orlando Benitez, Spc. Vega's father thanked Fort Buchanan's leadership for the re-dedication ceremony to honor their daughter.



(L to R) Mr.Orlando Benitez, Mrs. Wanda Benitez, and Ms. Jeanette Benitez, Spc. Vega's father, mother and sister, respectively, unveiled the monument accompanied by Col. Harvey, garrison commander.



Employees from the Directorate of Public Works who built the memorial posed proudly at SPC Vega's monument.



Col. Michael T. Harvey, Commander, USAG Fort Buchanan addressed the audience on the importance of recognizing the sacrifices made by our veterans.



(L to R) Col. Harvey, Mrs. Harvey, Ms. Wanda Benitez, Mr. Orlando Benitez, Ms. Jeanette Benitez, Mr. William S. Leyh, Command Sergeant Major Luis A. Rosario Vélez and Chaplain (Major) Wanda I. Acevedo salute during the playing of La Borinqueña and the United States anthem.

Photos by Rosie Irizarry, PA Specialist

Re-dedication ceremony of Fort Buchanan's historical cannon

Story by Grissel Rosa
Public Affairs Officer

On November 15, 2016, Fort Buchanan conducted a rededication ceremony of the installation's historical Spanish Ship cannon donated by Mr. Harry Hauck, a Navy veteran and great citizen who epitomizes the best of every Service Member in the United States Armed Forces.

Garrison leadership, military and civilian personnel and other community members witnessed the unveiling ceremony of a Spanish anti-personnel cannon circa 1775 found off the waters of Dorado, Puerto Rico that Harry, as we lovingly call him, so generously donated to the garrison in 1988.

A U.S. Navy Frogman, professional scuba diver and distance swimmer, Harry's achievements are numerous. In 1982, he became the first person to swim non-stop from St. Thomas to Puerto Rico in 30 hours to promote physical fitness for senior citizens. In 1986, he and his family completed a



The audience was amazed as Harry narrated the experiences during the recovery of Fort Buchanan's historical cannon located in front of the garrison's headquarters building.

relay swim across the English Channel to promote family values. In 1988, he swam around the island of Puerto Rico to promote drug awareness.

These achievements serve as a testimony of his lifelong commitment to the military and the Puerto Rican community, placing others first, always ready to serve.



Colonel Harvey, Jason and Mr. Hauck unveil the Spanish cannon donated to the garrison.



Colonel Michael T. Harvey, Commander, USAG Fort Buchanan presented Mr. Hauck the garrison's coin.



(L to R) Mrs. Carol Hauck, Harry's wife, Mr. Harry Hauck and son Jason pose for a family photo



(L to R) Colonel Harvey, Mr. Hauck and Command Sgt. Major Luis A. Rosario pose in front of the historical cannon.

Photos by Rosie Irizarry, PA Specialist

Fort Buchanan Inaugurates Remembrance Garden

Story by Grissel Rosa
Public Affairs Officer

During the inaugural Fort Buchanan Veteran's Appreciation Week, the garrison conducted a Veteran's Appreciation Service, a Survivor Outreach Services presentation and Chapel renovations dedication ceremony at the post chapel on November 15, 2016.

Fort Buchanan recognized our veterans for their service to the nation and dedicated a Remembrance Garden and Gazebo. The guest speaker for the Veteran's Appreciation Service was Chaplain (Colonel, Ret.) Ernesto Rivera, member of the 65th Infantry Regiment, "The Borinqueneers". Chaplain Rivera emphasized "the importance of not forgetting our veterans", and added "those who died in action, the ones missing, the ones wounded and others that returned with some kind of ailments, are veterans that Puerto Rico should never forget, and not only Puerto Rico, but the whole world should remember their veterans."

The gazebo was dedicated as a place for family and friends to spend time in quiet thought to remember and honor the memory of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The Remembrance Garden was completed in partnership with the Fort Buchanan Starbucks who provided the plants and personnel to create the garden.



Fort Buchanan community members have a place to meditate and pray thanks to the hard work of the employees from the Directorate of Public Works, Command Group, Chaplain's Office and Starbucks.



(L to R) Col. Harvey, Mrs. Wanda Benitez, family members from the Gold Star Families, Chaplain Acevedo and Religious Affairs Specialist Sgt. Edwin Ruiz celebrate after cutting the ribbon of the new gazebo at the Fort Buchanan Chapel.



Ms. Angie Matos, Fort Buchanan Starbucks manager assists in a beautification project at the chapel.



Garrison Commander Col. Michael T. Harvey and Garrison Chaplain (Maj) Wanda I. Acevedo, present a Certificate of Appreciation to the guest speaker Chaplain (COL, Ret.) Ernesto Rivera.



Mrs. Wanda Benitez, mother of Spc. Frances M. Vega, who died in combat during Operation Iraqi Freedom, receives a quilt from the "Home of the Brave Quilt Program". Presenting the quilt and certificate to Mrs. Benitez are Col. Harvey, Chaplain (Maj.) Acevedo, Mr. Edwin Jordán and Angel Castro from Survivor Outreach Services.

Photos by Rosie Irizarry, PA Specialist

Upcoming events

December

National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

December 12-16, 6:00 p.m.
Cabaña Softball Field
Sign up: (787) 707-3278

Pearl Harbor Day
December 7

Battle of the Bulge
Dec. 15 - Jan. 25

Holiday Celebration
December 9, 4:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Community Club

380th Army National Guard Birthday
December 13

Human Rights Day
December 10

Operation "Feliz Navidad" 5K Fun Run
December 17, 5:00 p.m.
Community Club

Holiday Celebration (Open Post)
December 10, 5:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Community Club

Christmas Day
December 25

Army Navy Game
December 10

Operation "Feliz Navidad" Softball Tournament



January

National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

New Year's Day
January 1

Three Kings Day
January 6

Martin Luther King's Birthday
January 16

Newcomers Briefing
January 19, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Community Club

Presidential Inauguration Day
January 20



The community is invited to participate in these events as we partner together to provide opportunities, expand relationships, and show our appreciation to all who served and support the United States Armed Forces.

Fort Buchanan supports ICE Veterans

Story by Grissel Rosa
Public Affairs Officer

The Fort Buchanan Police Chief, Jorge Quiñones, served as the guest speaker for the Department of Homeland Security – Immigration and Customs Enforcement recognition of veterans ceremony.

The ceremony was conducted on November 10, 2016 at the ICE main office in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Chief Quiñones, who recently retired from the Army Reserve, shared stories on how he worked up “the ladder of success”. Chief Quiñones was commissioned in 1986 as a 1st Lieutenant, deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Desert Storm and came back to Puerto Rico to work as a high school English teacher. In 1996 he transitioned to the Fort Buchanan Police Department as a police officer “while keeping

my favorite part time job – the Army Reserve.” He never said no to the many challenging assignments he was offered as stated he was just of many who devote their lives to service for their country.

Chief Quiñones thanked ICE veterans for their service as well as their families “for they, too, have served and sacrificed and deserve our thanks and admiration.”



USAG Fort Buchanan, DES, Chief of Police, Jorge Quiñones shared his life experiences as a veteran and law enforcement officer.



Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Ricardo Mayoral addresses the agents and veterans during the event.



SAC Mayoral accompanied by a fellow veteran conduct the wreath laying ceremony to honor all fallen service members at the “Monumento de la Recordación-Memorial Monument” in San Juan.

Photos by Rosie Irizarry, PA Specialist



DECA Hosts Vietnam Veterans Commemoration Ceremony

Story by Grissel Rosa
Public Affairs Officer

The Defense Commissary Agency (DECA) honored Vietnam Veterans with a ceremony conducted during Fort Buchanan's Veterans Appreciation Week, November 14 - 19, 2016.

The event, hosted by Mr. William Roger, General Manager, DECA, was conducted on November 16, 2016 in front of the Commissary's main entrance.



Mr. William Roger addresses the audience during the Vietnam Veterans commemoration ceremony.

The guest speaker was Colonel (Ret.) Jesús M. Galvez, Chief, Operations and Maintenance Division, Directorate of Public Works, and Vietnam Veteran. Col. (Ret) Galvez served with the 1st Infantry Division in An Khe, 1/5th Infantry Division in Quang Tri, and with the 116th Air Assault Helicopter Company in Chu Lai from 1969 to 1971.

“So what do you say to a Vietnam



Col. (Ret.) Jesús Galvez, shares his Vietnam War story, the prejudices and other issues confronted by the troops when they returned home.

veteran?”, asked Galvez while sharing with the audience an emotional story of his tours in Vietnam, the prejudices, criticisms and stigma when the troops returned home. “I am a veteran of Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan and the grandson of a WWII veteran, so I know what heroes look like. Today we are here to receive this recognition for our brothers and sisters of the Vietnam era.

We have earned our respect and our gratitude. So ladies and gentlemen, what do you say to a Vietnam veteran? You say “Thank you for your service and welcome home!”

The ceremony concluded with a cake cutting in appreciation for the service and sacrifice of all who served during the Vietnam War.



(Top) Veterans in Vietnam War era uniforms greet guests.

(Bottom) Mr. William Roger, General Manager, DECA present “Thank you for your service” medals to all veterans, including a DECA employee who served in Vietnam.



(Top) (L to R) José López, Assistant Manager and Mr. Roger General Manager, DECA, cut the 50th Anniversary cake with Col. (Ret.) Galvez at the conclusion of the event.

(Bottom) The Fort Buchanan community shows their support to veterans during the ceremony conducted in front of the Commissary's main entrance.



Photos by Rosie Irizarry, PA Specialist

Fort Buchanan partners with La Casa del Veterano

Story and photos by Rosie Irizarry
Public Affairs Specialist

Fort Buchanan's Religious Support Office in support of our veterans and in partnership with the Rodriguez Army Health Clinic (RAHC) and the Medical Entrance and San Juan Processing Station (MEPS) delivered assorted donations to La Casa del Veterano in Juana Diaz, P.R. November 17, 2016.

Upon arrival to La Casa del Veterano Garrison Chaplain, (Major) Wanda I. Acevedo; Garrison Chaplain Assistant, Sergeant First Class Edwin Ruiz; RAHC Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Eliasib Lozano; MEPS Cmdr. Major Maria Elizabeth Sánchez and MEPS Senior enlisted Advisor, 1st Sergeant Estela Delgado, all veterans themselves, were warmly greeted by residents at the main entrance of La Casa del Veterano.

Sergeant (Retired) Trinidad Rivera Chévere, a former medical specialist with 21 years of service in the US Army and 19 years of civil service in the US Post Office, was happy to welcome visitors and their donations. Sgt. (Ret.) "Trini" Rivera was especially



Sgt. (Ret.) Trini Rivera former medical specialist greeted all the Soldiers from Fort Buchanan, here with Lt. Lozano from the RAHC.



(L to R) MEPS 1st Sgt. Delgado and Maj. Sánchez, RAHC Cmdr. Lt. Lozano arrived to La Casa del Veterano along with members of the to present donations to the veterans.

enthusiastic to talk to RAHC Cmdr. Lozano since he served at the former Rodriguez Army Health Hospital from 1942 to 1944 and then again from 1948 to 1952.

La Casa del Veterano has long term care living facilities for more than 20 veterans over 92 years of age. Student Nurses from Dewey University visit the veteran's home to complete their internship in mental health while



Garrison CH (Maj. Acevedo poses with retired Sgt. William "Willie" Rodriguez after spending some time talking about his "adventures" as a Soldier in the 65th Infantry during the Korean War.

providing arts and crafts; group and musical therapy; play bingo and checkers; do puzzles; painting and listdn to the veteran's war stories.

The highlight of the visit was sharing with the veterans and listening to their war, family, and love stories.

Photos by Rosie Irizarry, PA Specialist

99 year old, Corporal Rufino "Rufo" Santiago, retired Military police machine gun specialist who served during World War II and with the 65th Infantry during the Korean War, recalled the struggles with language and the great camaraderie he experienced.

Retired Sergeant First Class Luis Medina Vazquez was happy to share with Sgt. 1st Class Ruiz, NCO to NCO. A former parachutist, Medina showed his photographs and medals from his military career during WW II, Korea and Vietnam Wars. Other veterans also showed books and other memorabilia from their military careers.

The visit concluded with a heartfelt "Thank You for your service".



Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Medina proudly shares photographs and stories with Lt. Lozano.



Sergeant (Ret.) Rafael Rodríguez Torres, a "Borinqueneer" shows a book highlighting the 65th Inf. during the Korean War.



Corp. (Ret.) "Rufo" Santiago talks with Sgt. 1st Class Ruiz about his experience and struggles during WW II and the Korean War.

402nd Civil Affairs Battalion NCO's certified as CNOs/CAOs

Story and photos by Maria Morales
Director of Human Resources

Fort Buchanan's Directorate of Human Resources certified six Non-Commissioned Officers from the 402nd Civil Affairs Battalion in Casualty Notification and Assistance Officer training from 18-20 October 2016. (L to R, front row) Sergeant First Class Juan A. Colon, Staff Sergeant Miguel A. Colón Aponte, Mr. Ignacio González (Instructor), Sgt. 1st Class Verónica R. Monroig, and Staff Sgt. Julio Lorenzo. (L to R second row) Sgt. 1st Class Roman J. Wesley and Sgt. 1st Class Torrance D. Wiseman. The Casualty Assistance program provides compassionate support for families of service members who are missing, ill, injured or deceased.



Logistics Readiness Center poses for historical record



Photo by Rosie Irizarry, PA Specialist

November 18, 2016, Mr. Edward Trevino, Director of the Logistics Management Center gathered his staff for a group picture, sent to higher headquarters, to document a successful year in support of garrison and other military services.



Holiday Fire Safety...

Facts about home holiday fires

- One of every three home Christmas tree fires is caused by electrical problems.
- Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious. On average, one of every 31 reported home Christmas tree fires results in a death compared to an average of one death per 144 total reported home fires.
- A heat source too close to the tree causes one in every four of Christmas tree fires.
- December is the peak time of year for home candle fires.
- One-third of all candle fires start in the bedroom.

Preparedness Tips

- ☞ Place Christmas trees, candles, and other holiday decorations at least three feet away from heat sources like fireplaces, stoves and candles.
- ☞ Purchase flame retardant metallic or artificial trees. If you purchase a real tree, make sure that it has fresh, green needles that aren't easily broken. Keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water.
- ☞ Make sure that light strings and other holiday decorations are in good condition. Do not use anything with frayed electrical cords and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- ☞ Always unplug tree and holiday lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- ☞ Never use lit candles to decorate a tree. Always extinguish candles before leaving the room or going to bed.
- ☞ Use only sturdy tree stands designed not to tip over. Keep curious pets and children away from Christmas trees.
- ☞ Keep anything that can catch on fire—pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, and towels or curtains—away from your stove top.
- ☞ Designate one person to walk around your home to make sure that all candles and smoking materials are properly extinguished after guests leave.
- ☞ Smoke alarms save lives. Install a smoke alarm near your kitchen, on each level of your home, near sleeping areas, and inside and outside bedrooms if you sleep with doors closed. Use the test button to check it each month. Replace all batteries at least once a year.
- ☞ Visit www.redcross.org/homefires and <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/holiday.html> for more information on how to keep your home fire safe during the holidays.

DES Blotter

For the month of October 2016
Police Department reports the following:

Most relevant offenses that occurred during this month:

- ◆ 4 Traffic accidents reported due to negligent driving.
- ◆ 2 Accidental damage to property.
- ◆ 1 Theft to private property.
- ◆ 1 Loss of government property.
- ◆ 2 Customers paid at the PX with Counterfeit money.
- ◆ 1 Littering.

Traffic Violations for the month:

- ◆ 21 Central Violations Bureau (CVB Traffic Tickets)
 - The most common violations were, Failure to Obey Traffic Control Device (i.e. stop sign, expired tags, speeding radars)
- ◆ 9 Warning Tickets (DD1408) – They are issued to military personnel and federal civilian employees who work on the installation. A DD1408 is not a “to pay” fine but is administrative in nature
 - The warnings were failure to stop at the posted stop sign (run or pass the stop sign), speed, expired registration and defective equipment.

Entries in the DES Blotter are not necessarily adjudicative or prosecutorial in nature and do not always involve criminal charging by a prosecutor or in a criminal court.

Legal Corner

Ethical Decision Making:

Everyone will face ethical dilemmas in their personal and professional lives. As federal employees and service-members, the impact of ethics is often magnified because so much of what we do is subject to public scrutiny. By thinking about your ethical code and values, and using a proven model, you will be in a stronger position to make ethical decisions that support your organization's ethical standards.

In a profession of arms that relies so heavily on institutional and individual credibility and trustworthiness, we must have a solid ethical foundation in order to be effective. Lapses of ethical judgment often become hot media topics for any organization, garnering negative publicity and significantly damaging organizational reputations. This is even more profound for the U.S. armed forces, an organization with a historically stellar professional reputation among the American public for doing the right thing.

The law usually dictates what not to do. However, the question that we often contemplate is, "what governs what we should do?" This is the world of ethics – the discipline of deciphering right from wrong rather than legal from illegal. The challenge is that ethics are seldom black and white. We often operate in a gray area between true and false, accurate and "technically" accurate, and tactical and strategic perspectives.

To be of value to our organization, we must have an understanding of ethical standards and their application in our fields of expertise. In the upcoming legal articles in "El Morro", we will explore the ethical principles that should guide us through effectively solving ethical problems or dilemmas. Please follow us in our next issue.

The Character That Takes Command!

"The character that takes command in moments of crucial choices has already been determined. It has been determined by a thousand other choices made earlier in seemingly unimportant moments. It has been determined by all the little choices of years past — by all those times when the voice of conscience was at war with the voice of temptation — whispering the lie that it really doesn't matter. It has been determined by all the day-to-day decisions made when life seemed easy and crises seemed far away — the decisions that, piece by piece, bit by bit, developed habits of discipline — or of laziness, habits of self-sacrifice — or of self-indulgence, habits of duty and honor and integrity — or dishonor and shame."

— Ronald Reagan, The Citadel, May 15, 1993

Ltc. Daniel C. Estaville
Staff Judge Advocate



Chaplain's Corner

Season of ending and beginnings; faith and hope

As we end one year and begin another, we arrived to a very special and significant season of the year. During this time our hearts and minds enter into a journey of memories. A walk thru the experiences we lived. Some of them we just want to erase or live like they never happened. Others we wish could stayed with us forever. The truth is no matter what at the end we need to learn how to embrace every day of our journey as part of our story. Because we cannot erase what we have lived or keep forever what we have lost. This process of embracing our experiences honors our past and looks into the future with expectation. During this year you may have lost a loved one or got into a new relationship, lost a job or began in a new position; you may had been betrayed by a friend and or felt loved. In this cycle every ending finishes with a new beginning. This cycle is not easy on us but is also the best that can happen to us.

That's why it is so important to go through this process and ask ourselves how did I live this year? How I embraced my life? Am I staying prisoner of my past or is it serving me to move forward? How open I am to what is next? What moves me, is it fear of loss or anticipation of what is coming?

In my tradition as a Christian this season reminds us that the answers to these questions are found through faith and hope. As Dr. Allender wrote "... hope is a focus on the future, faith is a reflection on the past."

Embracing the many endings and beginnings we lived is the entrance door for faith and hope. Because it produces in us the necessary humility to recognize we don't control life and we need something bigger than us.

It is faith that allows us to believe that our past and future have meaning. Faith is the confidence that there is something bigger than my losses or gaining. That when everything is put together it can work for a purpose. Hope direct us to that purpose. Hope shows us that there is more into the future, that there is a new blank page to be written every morning. Living life like we are abandoned in this world at our mercy does not give us any sense of pupose. Having faith and hope will always direct us to a higher place where we find the presence of God in our existence.

Therefore we all need faith and hope to embrace all our life and to make sense out of it.

Let's celebrate and honor our what we lived this past year and celebrate with anticipation of what will come in the next one. Let's also open our hearts to faith and hope. As this is the path for closing the year and entering a new one.

PRO DEO ET PATRIA
FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

CH (Maj.) Wanda I. Acevedo



Fort Buchanan supports Dorado Cub Scouts

Story and photos by Grissel Rosa
Public Affairs Officer

The Directorate of Emergency Services, K-9 Units conducted a demonstration November 4, 2016, to Pack 95, Dorado, Puerto Rico, as part of Fort Buchanan's community outreach program.

The "Paws for Action" event was developed to expose the Boy Scouts (children from Kindergarten to 5th grade) to law enforcement personnel. Officers Angel Rivera with Edo and Efraín Laureano accompanied by Sarga provided a demonstration on the K-9 unit's mission to keep Fort Buchanan safe from drugs and explosives and to reinforce the message of "Say No to Drugs" and "If you see something, say something".



Members of Pack 95 from Dorado were grateful for the demonstration provided by USAG Fort Buchanan's DES Police officers, K-9 Unit on drug prevention.



Officer Efraín Laureano and partner Sarga provided a demonstration on how to detect explosives.



Officer Efraín Laureano, DES-Police listens to a Cub Scout's questions on how does he train his dog, what kind of dog it is and what it does with the police.



Officer Rivera's partner Edo helped to capture a "criminal" during an arrest.



Bears, Webelos, and Boy Scouts from Pack 95 listen attentively to the messages presented by Police Officers Laureano and Rivera on staying away from drugs and to let their parents or an adult know if they see something that is wrong. The event contributed to completing the requirements to receive the Bravery badge.



Officer Angel Rivera and partner EDO provided a demonstration on how to detect drugs.

NEC Safety Stand Down prevents Holidays Accidents

Story by **Arnaldo L. Espada**
IT Specialist

Christmas is synonymous of joy and celebration. A time to enjoy with family and friends. Many times joy transforms into sadness when unexpectedly accidents happen at home and especially on our roads due to high alcohol consumption. In an effort to prevent these accidents to happen, the 93rd Network Enterprise Center (NEC) and its Collateral Safety Duty Officer (CDSO) Arnaldo Espada conducted December 1, 2016 at NEC Facilities, a Holiday Safety Stand Down in collaboration with Carlos Montañez of the Directorate of Human Resources and CPT Alfredo Aponte, Traffic Accident Investigator Supervisor from the Directorate of Emergency Services.



Arnaldo L. Espada, Collateral Duty Safety Officer for the Network Enterprise Center (NEC) briefed NEC employees on holiday safety during the NEC Holiday Stand Down.

During the event the NEC CDSO presented different accident prevention topics at home and driving tips such as: how to assemble holiday decorations, most common injuries that happen during the holidays, Christmas tree safety, how to handle fireworks to prevent unexpected fires and holiday safety for children. Carlos Montañez, DHR - Army Substance Abuse Program, demonstrated the consequences of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol; CPT Aponte used the “Convincer” to remind us to always use the seat belt and for the infant seat for children. Drivers must also avoid distractions such as the

use of cell phones, television screens and loud music. For motorcyclists, he indicated that it is the law to use helmets and adequate protection.



Arnaldo L. Espada, NEC CDSO and IT Specialist, with Maria D. Miranda, IT Specialist, ready to launch the “Convincer”.

After NEC employees received the briefing by NEC CDSO Espada, they participated in a live demonstration on traffic safety using the “Convincer” that recreates the possible consequences when drivers and passengers do not use the safety belt. While Montañez used special goggles that distorted the vision recreating the effects of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Most of the fatalities during the holiday



Barbara Devos, NEC employee, gave instructions to the driver during the drunk or drugged driving exercise.

season are due to drunk drivers. With these actions, the objective of the NEC Safety Stand Down was achieved contributing to strengthen a culture of prevention and the adoption of safe behaviors to avoid accidents and injuries.

Enjoy these family holidays without accidents.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE
93RD NETWORK ENTERPRISE
CENTER FAMILY**



Carlos Montañez, Directorate of Human Resources, Army Substance Abuse Program, explained the effects of alcohol in the human body during the event held December 1, 2016.



Ramón Santiago, IT Specialist, tried to pick an object with the goggles that distorted the vision recreating being under the influence of alcohol.



Mr. Montañez gave the instructions to NEC personnel before starting the driving test using the special goggles to simulate driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

FB hosts VA Benefits and Claims Clinic for Veterans and Military

Story and photos by Rosie Irizarry
Public Affairs Specialist

As part of Veterans Appreciation Week events, the US Army Garrison Fort Buchanan hosted a Veterans Affairs Benefits and Claim Clinic on November 18, 2016. The clinic was conducted at the installation Community Club in partnership with Veterans Affairs. It provided veterans and Service Members with updated information on benefits and the opportunity to check the status of their claims through the VA Public Contact Team.

The event included personal assistance in claims processing and inquiries. In addition, representatives from the Puerto Rico National Cemetery provided Burial and Memorial Benefits; VBA Compensation, Pension and Appeals; Veterans Healthcare Administration provided OIF/OEF/OND orientation; Life Insurance information; Veterans Service Organizations; Eligibility/Enrollment details; General Health Benefits Orientation and Women Health Program Orientation; Education Benefits; Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment; VetCenter Counselors and the Mobile Van on site.



San Juan Regional Office of Veterans Affairs Assistant Director, Abner Concepción welcomed veterans, Service Members and their families to the event.



VA claims clinic personnel supported veterans with their claims providing instant responses on the status of their existing and newly filed claims.



Mr. Juan Nieves, Director of the Puerto Rico National Cemetery, provided information, eligibility requirements and benefits for all members of the armed forces and their families that may be eligible for burial at their facilities.



Sergeant (Retired) Javier A. Morales, President of the Retired 65th Infantry Association the "Borinqueneers" addresses the audience.



A veteran receives information from The American Legion Department of Puerto Rico Public Affairs Officer Julio C. Martinez, and Legion Commandant Pedro J. Colón.



Mr. Concepción answered questions from the audience about benefits and debunked myths they may have about their rights as veterans, Service Members, as well as their families.

ENJOYING CHRISTMAS AND COPING WITH THE HOLIDAY STRESS

Story by Wilda Diaz

Director, Army Community Service

The stress of the holidays could trigger sadness and depression for some people. This time of the year is especially difficult because there may be an expectation of feeling cheerful and generous. Some people may compare their emotions to what they assume others are experiencing or what they are supposed to feel. There are a few things that could increase the stress during the holidays (e.g., grief, loneliness, finances, divorce, away from relatives/friends).

There are ways to prevent the holiday stress and sadness specially, if you are away from home or love ones. Seek out for community social or religious events; volunteer time to help others; if you are going through a grief process find someone to talk about your feelings and realize that it is normal to feel sad; set financial boundaries by creating a budget; involve family members while planning the budget and events; this will help them to understand how much money the family can afford to spend. The stress of financial hardship during economic recessions tend to make individuals feel ashamed and sad. It is important to say no if you cannot participate of an event that you cannot afford. Christmas is not about buying happiness with tons of gifts, but to share the holiday spirit in peace, harmony, and enjoyment.

It is also important to maintain your health habits. Avoiding excess eating is essential as this will add to stress and guilt after the holidays. Include healthy snacks and physical activities. Enjoy the traditional Puerto Rican Christmas food such as “pasteles”, “lechón asado”, “arroz con dulce”, “tembleque”, and other traditional holiday foods that give Puerto Ricans a distinct identity from the rest of the world. But, remember that moderation is the key to maintain a healthy life style.

If for any reason you are feeling sad, just remember that we are indeed blessed to be able to celebrate Christmas in this island for so many reasons to include, great weather, traditional “parrandas” (group of people gathered together to surprise another friend, usually after 10:00 p.m.). This is a version of Christmas caroling. The “parranderos” sing and play different instruments such as “guiros”, “maracas”, “palitos”, guitars or/and any object they can make musical sound with. Once the owner of the house opens the door for the “parranderos” they are invited in for refreshments, “asopaó”, music and dance. Then, everyone leave (including the owners of that house), to “parrandar” and surprise another friend. This is another opportunity to celebrate the Christmas spirit among family and friends.

In other places it seems as Christmas goes by too fast. The holiday lights, decorations, parties and all the fun comes and go before you know. But, we do not have that problem in Puerto Rico. We have one of the longest Christmas

seasons in the world. We begin our holidays on Thanksgiving Day and end it almost in February. There are also many free and fun events that we can join. Therefore, enjoy the holiday season by experiencing the “Navidad” in Puerto Rico. And do not forget the Three Kings Day’s tradition during the evening of 5th January. On that night children go to their yards with empty shoe boxes to cut grass for the camels to eat. The boxes are then placed under the beds. During the night “Los Reyes” come and while the camels eat the grass “Los Reyes” leave gifts or/and sweets for the children. These are indeed unforgettable memories for our children.

To conclude, avoid the holiday stress by making a budget and planning in advance. Seek for events and social groups if you feel lonely. Enjoy the traditional Christmas foods in moderation. Enjoy the weather, the friendly people from Puerto Rico, and most of all have a wonderful, safe, and blessed Holiday Season!



Operación Feliz Navidad



5K run walk

Free of cost.
You may bring a
NEW UNWRAPPED TOY
to donate to a child
in need this Holiday
if you wish. Everyone
is invited to join!

Saturday, December 17, 5:00 pm
Starting at the Community Club, Bldg. 660
Fort Buchanan
787-707-3767



OPEN POST EVENT- for access to the event everyone 16 years and older
must present a valid photo ID (drivers license or passport) at the gate by PR 28.

