

Tropical Times



May 31, 2012

GRAND SANTACRUZAN 2012



Atiatihan Dancers lead a parade of elaborately dressed personnel during the annual Santacruzan Festival, a popular festival highlighting the month-long Flores de Mayo celebration.



Submitted By
Lt. Cmdr. Robert Spencer
Command Chaplain,
NAVSUPFAC Diego Garcia

This past Mother's Day was the seventh that I have experienced without my mom. She is now where I have written about in previous articles. She's enjoying her heavenly reward. I still miss her as do my siblings. Of course my dad misses her the most. They were married for 58 years. Their marriage was a promise that was kept because on their wedding day they promised each other and God that they would stay together until death. It was upon the death of my mom that both of my parents had fulfilled their vows.

The love that a mother has for her children can only be surpassed by God's love. It's probably even more than a father's love. Why is that? Probably because our moms love us before we are

even born. Not that our dads do not but it's the moms who carry us around in their womb for nine months before our births. During that time a special bond develops between mother and child. After birthing, the mom then nurtures the child because they came from her and within her. It's only natural that they would have this special love that surpasses other relationships.

My mom had a long and fulfilled life. She did not feel cheated and her family did not feel short-changed upon her death at the age of 83. She was the glue of the family as most moms are. She had made her mark and she did it with her family. Her kids are all successful and happy and more importantly, we all still get along and enjoy each other's company.

C h a p l a i n ' s C o r n e r

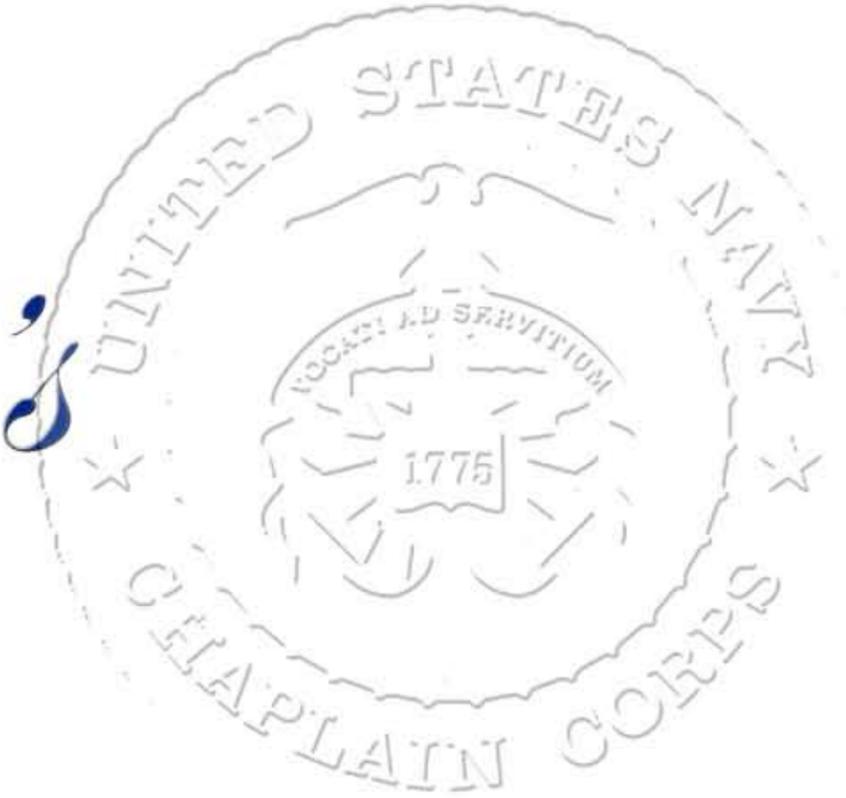
“Mother's Day Without Mom”

Saying goodbye to her was not easy. I was fortunate to do this a couple of weeks before her death. This was followed up with a funeral visitation, a funeral Mass, and a graveside ceremony. These are the ways that people of faith give thanks and say goodbye. They were sad events but they reassured us that my mom was now resting in eternity with our loving Savior and His loving mother, Mary the Mother of God. Not being a parent myself, I will never experience the same love that a parent has for their kids. But I have certainly felt that love that my parents have for me.

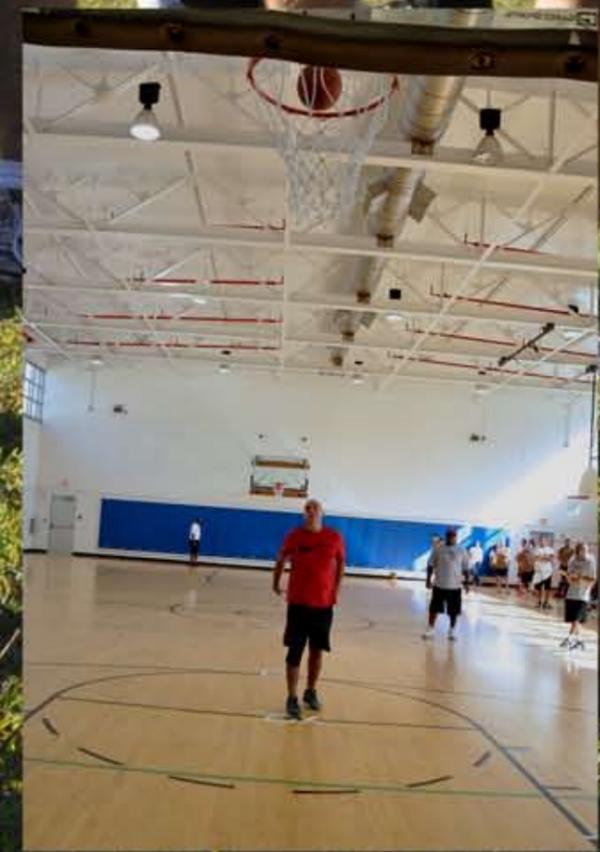
There will always be a void in my life when Mother's Day is celebrated in the future. That's normal and to be expected. So how can I continue to honor and thank my mom even after she has passed away to

better things? If we want to honor those we love to include those who have died, then we should practice those virtues that they taught us. We should also do our best to pass on those same attributes to our loved ones. That way their goodness will continue to live on in others.

“... and his mother kept all these things in her heart.”
(Luke 2:51)



Captain's Cup



Diego Garcia NEWS

Diego Garcia Celebrates Santacruzan

By NAVSUPPFAC Diego Garcia Public Affairs Office

DIEGO GARCIA, British Indian Ocean Territory – Decorated arches and elaborately dressed characters filled the main road of Diego Garcia in celebration of Santacruzan; a popular religious festival held in many towns and cities throughout the Philippines. Service members and civilians participated in the tradition, introduced by the Spanish, which marks the conclusion of the month-long celebration of Flores de Mayo.

Diego Garcia is host to more than 1700 Filipinos that work for the Base Operating Support Contractor and U.S. government.

“The ladies in the parade represent what the Virgin Mary represents—hope, faith, justice and much more,” said Personnel Specialist 1st Class (SW) Nicolas Caranto.

“The highlight is St. Helena—the one who searched and found Christ’s course.”

According to Caranto, the festival brought many civilians and service members closer to their roots.

“Diego Garcia has a rich Filipino culture, this gives us a taste of home,” said Caranto. “For many proud Filipinos, being able to share one of our many traditions is self-gratifying. We also have a few Filipino-Americans here who have never seen or experienced such a parade.”

Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory (May 27, 2012) - An Atiatihan dancer prepares to march down DG-1 during the Santacruzan, a popular religious festival held in many towns and cities throughout the Philippines. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan B. Tabios)

During the festival, participants walked over a mile to the village chapel Sacred Heart of Jesus. For Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Christine Camama being asked to participate in the event fulfilled an item on her bucket list.

“I have always wanted to be in a Filipino parade as my cousins and relatives have and this is the first time I have participated in this type of event,” Camama. “Participating has a deep meaning to me. I am one hundred percent Filipino born and raised in American, this is allowed me to get in touch with my heritage.

“I take immense pride in being a Filipina,” Camama.



“During and after the parade I felt a deeper connection and understanding of my culture.”

Diego Garcia NEWS

Merchant Mariners Recognized on Diego Garcia

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class April Adams

DIEGO GARCIA, British Indian Ocean Territory - Military Sealift Command (MSC) aboard U.S. Navy Support Facility Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory, celebrated National Maritime Day Friday May 25 at the Seaman's Center.

National Maritime Day is a United States holiday created to recognize the maritime industry. Observed on May 22-the day in which the American Steamship Savannah set sail on the first ever transoceanic voyage under steam power.

"National Maritime Day is an annual event where we recognize and celebrate the merchant seaman working on ships today and also recognize the merchant seaman who have come and gone," said Gary Johnson, Seaman's Center Director.

"We join Americans everywhere celebrating our nation's rich and diverse maritime history and take this opportunity to show our appreciation to the men and women of the American merchant marines," said Lt. Benjamin Thornton, Diego Garcia MSC Executive Officer.

According to Johnson, MSC ships play a vital role in Diego Garcia, as it serves as a supply hub for various ships and commands forward deployed in the region.

"They [merchant marines] play a vital role in the war on terrorism-delivering supplies and ammunition to forces around the world," said Johnson. "We have ten prepositioned ships on the island that also deliver food and other supplies to help sustain and effective force."

Chief Mate Kevin Stith, the celebration's guest speaker, spoke on the importance of merchant marines.



DIEGO GARCIA, British Indian Ocean Territory (May 25, 2012) – Lt. Benjamin Thornton Executive Officer of MSC, Diego Garcia speaks on the importance of the Merchant Marines during the National Maritime Day Ceremony at the Seaman's Center May 25. National Maritime Day is a United States holiday created to recognize the maritime industry. (Photo provided by DG 21)

"The U.S. Merchant Marine has played a vital role in every war that has been fought," said Stith, stationed aboard the Motor Vessel LTC John U. D. Page. "We must be grateful to the patriots that stood in harm's way." The ceremony included a reading of the Presidential Proclamation for the Merchant Marines, a cake cutting ceremony and food for all guests.

"The celebration went really well this year," said Johnson. "We had a good turnout of personnel from merchant mariners, Navy Sailors and civilians-probably about 275 people attended the ceremony."

MSC operates approximately 110 noncombatant, civilian-crewed ships that are strategically prepositioned around the world to replenish U.S. Navy ships, conduct specialized missions, and move military cargo and supplies used by deployed U.S. forces and coalition partners.

Diego Garcia NEWS

Diego Garcia Focuses on Safety

By NAVSUPPFAC Diego Garcia Public Affairs Office

DIEGO GARCIA, British Indian Ocean Territory – As we enter the 101 Critical Days of Summer, U.S. Navy Support Facility Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory, held a Focus Group emphasizing the importance of safety throughout the island.

Led by Kordeen Kor, Occupational Safety and Health Director, Navy Region Japan, the sessions gave service members and civilians the opportunity to voice their concerns about safety issues on the island.

"I not only came here [Diego Garcia] to assess the safety program onboard, but also get a general consensus of whether or not personnel were satisfied with it," said Kor. "Furthermore, I wanted to see if individuals understand their roles when it comes to safety."

By dividing the groups by rank and demographics, Kor was able to get an overall assessment and perspective of the island's safety program.

"Separating service members and civilians allowed them to speak freely and not be afraid to speak," said Kor. "I was able to see that opinions differed among the groups. For example service members in supervisory roles agreed that safety was everyone's responsibility, on the other hand junior personnel expressed that the upper chain of command was responsible."

According to Kor, civilians showed more ownership of the island than their military counterparts.

"The majority of the military folks are not here for longer than a year, on the other hand the civilians have been here for quite a long time and have called this island



their home away from home," said Kor. "Safety is their primary concern-they have more invested. They were the more vocal group."

During the sessions, the importance of Operational Risk Management and integrating it into daily activities was emphasized.

"It is a simple concept," said Religious Program Specialist (FMF) Akil Blackmon. "By remembering to be responsible, we can prevent mishaps from occurring and safeguard the Navy's most valuable asset-it's Sailors."

Blackmon added, "We [Sailors] often tend to let the idea of having a good time affect our judgment, which can lead to unplanned situations that can get us in deep water." Just as any focus group, changes and concerns were brought up in the hopes that they will be fixed over time.

"Across the board, Diego Garcia has a successful program, but there are things that can be improved," said Kor. "While most personnel were concerned about the quality and quantity of the vehicles on the island, others were concerned about trip and fall hazards-for example coconuts on bike trails."

For Marilou Monton, the concept of near misses is what she will remember the most from the session. Near miss is the term used to describe narrowly avoided mishaps-events that usually go unreported.

"Minor mishaps can lead to major injuries," said Monton. "It is important that they get reported because although one may barely avoid an injury, the next person might not be so lucky. By reporting these incidents, something can be done now and not after the fact."

What's happening in Diego Garcia

HEAT

SAILORS AND THEIR FAMILIES CAN NOW APPLY FOR HOUSING ONLINE FROM ANY COMPUTER.

THE HOUSING EARLY APPLICATION TOOL (HEAT) MAKES THE HOUSE HUNTING PROCESS SMOOTHER AND LESS STRESSFUL. SAILORS AND THEIR FAMILIES CAN REVIEW HOUSING AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION ON A HOME BEFORE RECEIVING PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION ORDERS. FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.CNIC.NAVY.MIL/HEAT.

Chapel

THE FRONT ENTRANCE TO THE CHAPEL (BUILDING 141) WILL BE CLOSED EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. WORKERS ARE PREPARING TO INSTALL A STEEPLE. PLEASE USE THE SIDE ENTRANCES OR THE BACK ENTRANCE FOR ACCESS TO THE BUILDING.

Classes

THE NEXT ROUND OF PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT CLASSES WILL BE CONDUCTED IN JUNE. SIGN UP IN ADVANCE SO THAT THE CHAPEL CAN PLAN ACCORDINGLY OR CALL 370-4601. THE CLASSES WILL BE HELD JUNE 14, 21, AND 28.

Ship's Store

THE SHIP'S STORE WILL BE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY JUNE 9.

Congratulations to the newly advanced Sailors:

ET1 KIMBERLY BELLAVIA, GM1 LEO TORRES, MA1 THOMAS TAYLOR, MC1 ERIK SIEGEL, HM2 TAYLOR SMITH, IT2 KENNETH UNGERMAN, MA2 MELVIN GOLMOND, MA2 EDGAR HALL, MA2 JADANIEL WASHINGTON, MA2 CHRISTOPHER SOMMA, GM3 TERRANCE MULLEE, HM3 STEPHANNIE LONG, HM3 STEVEN ROBBINS, HM3 CHAD SHATTUCK, IC3 LAURA KIRKLANDPITT, IT3 CALEB HOCH, MC3 RAMON GO III, MC3 ANDREW LAVIN, MC3 ZACHARY SHEA, MA3 DOUGLAS COGSWELL, MA3 GEORGE DANIELS, MA3 JEFFREY DEASON, MA3 JOSHUA HEIKES, MA3 ALAN LOVOS, MA3 MICHEL MERCADO, MA3 NIGEL MORRISON, MA3 WILBER ORDONEZ, MA3 COLTON OTTO AND MA3 ALEC WILSON

Blood Donations

THE BLOOD BANK IS CURRENTLY IN NEED OF ALL BLOOD TYPES. ALL HANDS ARE ENCOURAGED TO GET SCREENED FOR ELIGIBILITY. TO DONATE PLEASE CONTACT THE BRANCH HEALTH CLINIC AT 370-4211.

R&R Site

THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREA LOCATED ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF DIEGO GARCIA IS NOW OPEN TO ALL HANDS FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES.

Ombudsman Search

DIEGO GARCIA WILL NEED A NEW OMBUDSMAN AS OF JUNE 2012. IF YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER OR SPOUSE IS INTERESTED IN BECOMING THE NEW OMBUDSMAN PLEASE CONTACT THE CMC.

Friday
1

Saturday
2

Sunday
3

Monday
4

Tuesday
5

Wednesday
6

Thursday
7

Basic Sailing Class
Marina
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Team Triathlon
Marina
8:30 a.m.

MWR Sailing
Regatta
Marina
2 p.m.

Queen's Diamond
Jubilee 5K Fun Run
Jake's Place
8 p.m.

Dominoes
Tournament
Island Room
6:30 p.m.

2 X 75M Freestyle/
Breast Stroke
Swim Competition
Base Pool
6:30 p.m.

Powerboat Class
Basic Boating
Marina
4:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Warhorse
Drama
PG
8 p.m.

Contraband
Action
R
8 p.m.

Woman in Black
Drama
PG 13
8 p.m.

The Grey
Action
R
8 p.m.

**Mission Impossible:
Ghost Protocol**
Action
R
8 p.m.

**Ghost Rider: Spirit
of Vengeance**
Action
PG 13
8 p.m.
Island Room

**Extremely Loud &
Incredible**
Adventure
PG 13
8 p.m.

**My Week With
Marilyn**
Drama
PG 13
10 p.m.

Red Tails
Action
PG 13
10 p.m.

Tropical Times

United States Navy Support Facility
Diego Garcia British Indian Ocean
Territory

Commanding Officer
Capt. David L. Tidwell

Executive Officer
Cmdr. Stephen E. Petras

Command Master Chief
CMDM(SW/AW) Robert L. Johnson

Public Affairs Officer
MC1(SW/AW) Ryan B. Tabios

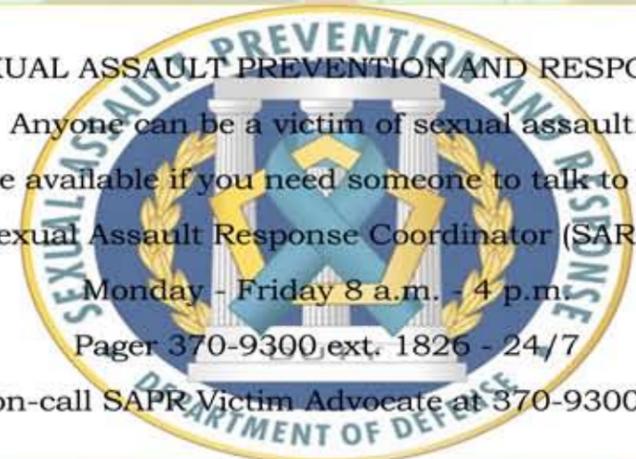
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This funded newspaper is an
authorized publication for
members of the U.S. military
services.

Contents of the Tropical Times
are not necessarily the official
views of, or are endorsed by, the
U.S. Government, Department of
Defense, or Department of the
Navy.

All editorial content is prepared
by U.S. Navy Support Facility,
Public Affairs, Diego Garcia.
**Submissions to the Tropical Times are
due to the editor no later than close of
business Tuesday**



SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Anyone can be a victim of sexual assault.

Resources are available if you need someone to talk to confidentially.
Contact the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) at 370-4421

Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Pager 370-9300, ext. 1826 - 24/7

Page the on-call SAPR Victim Advocate at 370-9300 ext. 1825.