

# THE BEACON

U.S. Naval Support Activity Souda Bay, Greece

November 2021



# THE BEACON

Warfighting First, Operate Forward, Be Ready



**COMMANDING OFFICER** CAPT Rafael C. Facundo

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER** CDR Michael Mosi

**COMMAND MASTER CHIEF** CMDCM Igor F. Vargas

## THE BEACON NEWSLETTER

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER** Carolyn Jackson

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS SPECIALIST** Kostas Fantaousakis

## HOW TO CONTACT US

**EMAIL** [SoudaBayPAO@eu.navy.mil](mailto:SoudaBayPAO@eu.navy.mil)

**ONLINE** [www.cnic.navy.mil/SoudaBay](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/SoudaBay)

**PHONE** +30 28210-21348

**WRITE** PSC814 BOX 1, FPO, AE, 09266

**FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK** [facebook.com/NSASoudaBay](https://www.facebook.com/NSASoudaBay)

**FOLLOW US ON TWITTER** @NSA\_SoudaBay

**FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM** [instagram.com/NSASoudaBay](https://www.instagram.com/NSASoudaBay)

The Beacon is the professional online newsletter of NSA Souda Bay Public Affairs. Information contained in The Beacon does not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Navy. Editorial content is prepared by the Public Affairs Office of NSA Souda Bay.

Articles for publication in The Beacon should be submitted to [SoudaBayPAO@eu.navy.mil](mailto:SoudaBayPAO@eu.navy.mil). Story submissions must be routed through tenant command or departmental senior leadership. Security and policy review must be completed before submissions can be considered for publication.

# Contents

October 2021



16

2021 Navy Ball

4

**Triad Corner**  
by  
CDR Michael Mosi  
Executive Officer

6

**Around NSA Souda Bay**  
Awards, Reenlistments,  
Events, Operations

12

**Souda Spotlight:**  
AC3 Henry Waterman  
Eva Koumandraki

20

**Driving in Crete:**  
Winter Road Conditions

22

**Chaplain's Corner:**  
Enjoying Your Time  
to the Fullest

**Front Cover:** Capt. Rafael Facundo, Naval Support Activity Souda Bay commanding officer, and Boatswain's Mate Seaman Sa'Niyah Taylor cut the birthday cake during the installation's Navy Ball held at the Avra Imperial Resort in Kolymbari, Crete, Oct. 8. Cutting the birthday cake is a Navy tradition performed by the youngest and oldest Sailors present, signifying the passing of knowledge and experience from one generation to the next. Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jacob Vernier, AFN Souda Bay.

**The Parting Shot:** Sunset at Kalathas Beach, captured in a long exposure image on Oct. 2. Photo courtesy of Chief Mass Communication Specialist Ben Farone, AFN Souda Bay.

# Triad Corner



Team Souda,

The holiday season is approaching; plan now to make sure you can enjoy celebrating in a way that is meaningful to you! I don't want any of you to wake up in 2022 and feel like the Grinch has stolen your joy because the holidays didn't live up to your expectations.

Let's talk about planning for a minute. The command has set aside three holiday leave periods. Pick one and get your leave chit in as soon as possible:

- Thanksgiving  
(4:30 p.m. Nov. 22 – 7:30 a.m. Dec. 7)
- Christmas  
(4:30 p.m. Dec. 13 – 7:30 a.m. Dec. 28)
- New Year's  
(4:30 p.m. Dec. 28 – 7:30 a.m. Jan. 12)

The Triad has done the coordination upfront with your chain of command. Your leaders know we expect leave chits to be turned around in a timely manner.

The fact that you are on assignment in

Greece might mean that you aren't going to fly home this year to spend the holidays with family and friends. However, I hope you are open to celebrating this holiday season in new ways and with new people. You might decide to have a stay-cation with friends and enjoy the feasts that I know the Minoan Taverna Galley team will prepare. Or, you might take time off and travel – using this as an opportunity to learn about holiday traditions in Greece and other European countries.

When you are making your plans, also consider your financial responsibilities. Decide who and what you'll be spending money on. The saying, 'It's the thought that counts' is a true one – no one should go into debt buying gifts for the holiday season. Will you be purchasing airline tickets or paying for hotels and rental cars? Are you mailing gifts home? Will you be cooking special meals or going out for special meals? All these expenses add up – so make sure you are budgeting in a way that supports your holiday plans.

I know not everyone gets excited about holidays – they can certainly add stress

because we think we're supposed to be having an amazing time – and sometimes, that isn't the case. Kirsten Diller, our Fleet and Family Support Center director, has a great article on Page 32 that reminds us that we are in charge of our emotions. In it, she offers tips on how to improve our mood and mindset.

I submit to you that taking charge is the most important thing you can do for yourself this holiday season – get out in front, make a plan and then enjoy your time off!

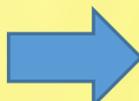
~XO

## HOLIDAY MAIL-BY DATES

Send cards and packages by these dates to ensure the timely delivery of your holiday wishes by December 25, 2021:

SERVICE	MAIL-BY-DATE
USPS Retail Ground	Nov. 30
Priority Mail	Dec. 3
First-Class Mail Letter and Cards	Dec. 3

**REMINDER:**  
*Electronic customs forms are now required!*

Visit one of these sites to print yours: 

USPS Click-n-Ship:  
<https://cns.usps.com>

USPS Customs Form Online:  
<https://cfo.usps.com>

Contact NSA Souda Bay's Post Office at DSN: 314-266-1561 if you have any questions.

Video tips for packaging and a list of prohibited items:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61URFM2JVGo>

---

# AROUND NSA SOUDA BAY

---

Awards      Reenlistments      Events      Operations

---

## AWARDS AT QUARTERS FOR October 2021

### Aviation Warfare Qualification

Machinist's Mate Third Class Erian Francisco, Port Operations

### Letter of Commendation

Air Traffic Controller Airman John M. Komarek, Operations Department

### Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal

Master-At-Arms Third Class Reed J. Vandermeiren, Security Department  
Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Second Class Stephen Jones, Air Operations  
Master-At-Arms Second Class Gerard A. Rutledge, Security Department  
Master-At-Arms First Class Alejandro Colon, Security Department  
Yeoman First Class Brande J. Mclane, Admin Department  
Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) First Class Kevin A. Mitchell, Air Operations  
Yeoman First Class Robert G. Watson, Admin Department

### Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal

Master-At-Arms First Class Curtis Jackson, Security Department

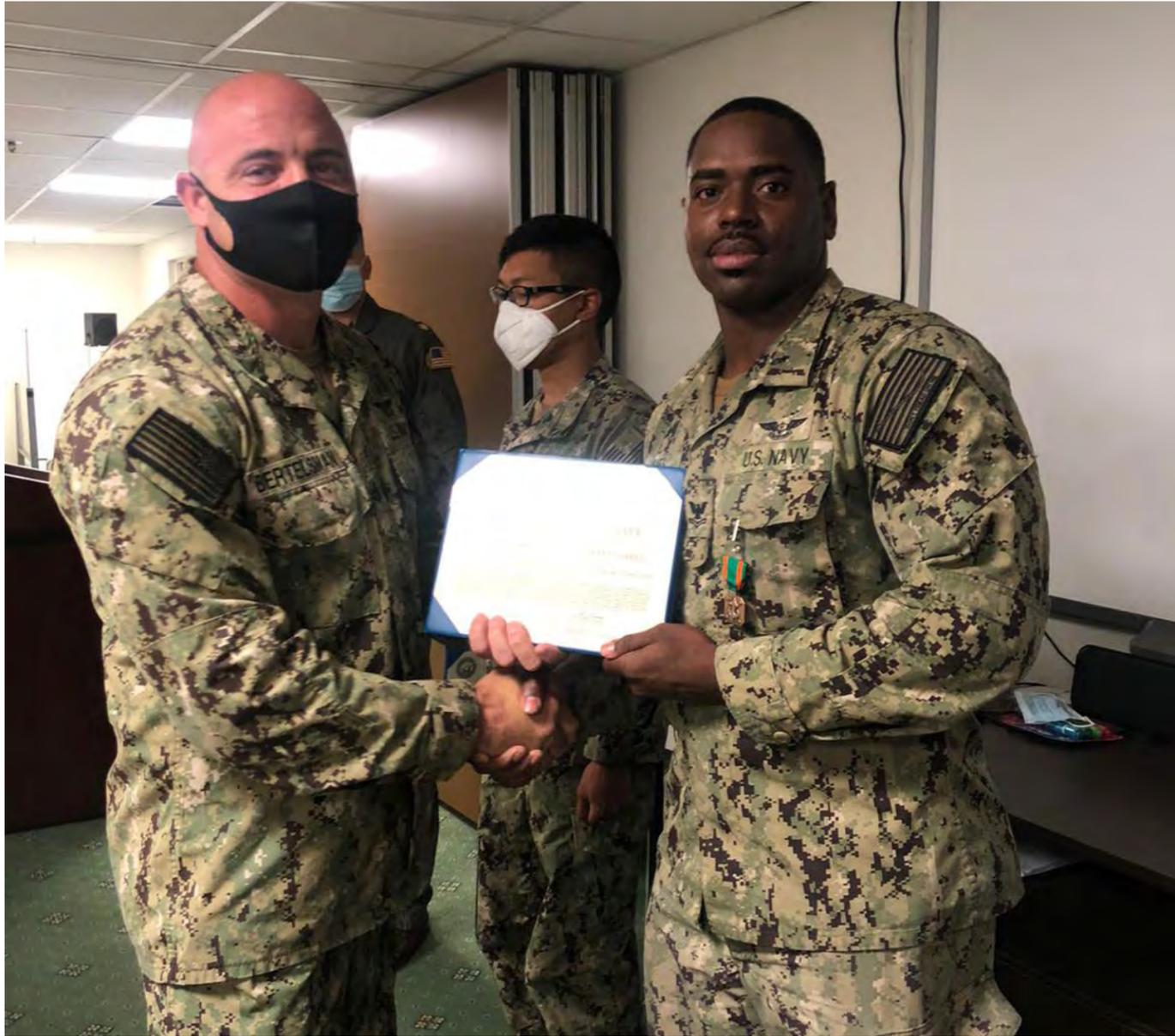
**Team Souda**  
**Join us for**  
**November's Awards at Quarters**  
**at 9 a.m.**  
**Wednesday, Nov 17**

## Aviation Warfare Qualification Machinist's Mate Third Class Erian Francisco Port Operations



**M**achinist's Mate Third Class Erian Francisco received his Aviation Warfare Qualification certificate from Lt. Cmdr. Ryan Salcido, NSA Souda Bay's operations officer, on Oct. 14.

**Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal  
Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Second Class  
Stephen Jones, Air Operations**



**A**viation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Second Class Stephen Jones received his Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal award from Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Jason Bertelsman on Oct. 14.

**Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal  
Yeoman First Class Robert G. Watson, Admin Department**



**Y**eoman First Class Robert G. Watson, Admin Department, received his Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal award from Chief Warrant Officer Two Timothy R. Thurman, administrative officer, on Oct. 21.

## Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Brandon J. Blackwell Reenlistment Ceremony



**M**aster-at-Arms 2nd Class Brandon J. Blackwell received his Plaque of Reenlistment from Lt. Michael Spoke, command chaplain, during his Oct. 15 reenlistment at NSA Souda Bay's Chapel.

## Builder Third Class Terill Johnson Reenlistment Ceremony



**B**uilder Third Class Terill Johnson, Public Works Department, received his Plaque of Reenlistment from Chief Warrant Officer Two Timothy R. Thurman, administrative officer, during his Oct. 25 reenlistment at Marathi Pier.

# Souda Spotlight: Air Traffic Controller Third Class Henry Waterman Air Operations

By Kostas Fantaousakis, Public Affairs



**A**ir Traffic Controller Third Class Henry Waterman is a native of Gastonia, N. C., and has been in the Navy for two years. NSA Souda Bay is his first duty station. Waterman comes from a military family as his father was in the Army. He works in Air Operations and is the branch chief for the other Air Traffic Controllers, meaning he is the direct supervisor of all enlisted junior Sailors. His job is to keep an administrative record of all their qualifications, daily operation logs and ensure that all training is being done properly.

**What does your typical day look like in Air Ops?**

Every morning when I come into base ops I will usually check our daily operations packet from the night before and ensure that everything was done properly, and I will also go over any critiques that have been written during on the job training for our junior Sailors. I am also charged with qualifying our Sailors and routing the required paperwork once it is ready.

**What role does Air Operations play for NSA Souda Bay?**

A very important one. NSA Souda Bay is here to serve as the last stop for any aircraft on their way down range to their respective areas of operation. We are the last stop for gas as well as the last place for rest before they get out there and proceed with their missions. Therefore, Air Operations plays a big role in the primary mission for NSA Souda Bay.

**What is your favorite thing about your job?**

Flight planning branch chief is a position typically held by a First Class Petty Officer, so as Third Class Petty Officer I am on the same level as my Sailors while also acting as a direct leader. This gives me the opportunity to lead them from their own perspective and serve as both a leader and a member of the team.

**When you are not at work, what do you enjoy doing?**

I enjoy playing guitar and being outdoors. I play a wide variety of video games but my personal preference is first person shooters such as Call of Duty and Battlefield. Back home I enjoyed fishing and deer hunting.

**What do you want Team Souda to know about Air Ops?**

This comes down to the mission here in Souda Bay. Air Operations is one of the sole purposes of this base being here so I feel we take pride in having that much responsibility and really being the backbone of the mission here. We also take pride in staying vigilant and paying close attention to detail in solving any potential issues before aircraft arrive. Once they get here, everything happens very smoothly as we try to coordinate what they need prior to arrival, and we give it to them so that they can get out of here and continue with their mission in a timely manner. This is a team achievement more than anything, as it's not just Operations that handles everything. To name just a few of the moving parts, Air Operations includes passenger services, cargo, as well as T-line personnel that park the planes on their spots. Our job specifically is to coordinate all of these operations and handle the administrative side of things prior to arrival so everyone is on the same page and everything happens smoothly.

# Souda Spotlight: Recreation Aide Eva Koumandraki Liberty Center

By Kostas Fantaousakis, Public Affairs



**E**va Koumandraki, a native of Kalyves, which is located in the Apokoronas Municipality, has been a Team Souda member for 19 years. She was hired by the Morale, Welfare, Recreation team in 2002 to be a food service worker at the All-hands club on base. When the Liberty Program started at NSA Souda Bay in 2007, she was hired as a Recreation Aide at the Liberty Center, where she helps plan a number of events including trips and other outdoor activities to support Sailors on base.

## **What is a typical day like at the Liberty Center?**

We have an amazing facility for single Sailors. Every day we start with our calendar, as we have to make sure that everything is set up for the events of the following days. We have to combine preparations for the events of the day and future events and this requires careful planning as some events take place off base.

## **What is your role in the events MWR offers?**

Events can be small like a ping-pong tournament or larger like last week's beach party where we had to go to Marathi and set up everything on location. There are also seasonal events like for example the upcoming Halloween Trick or Treat event that need special planning at various locations. I also go on trips, daily ones or overnight. I love the overnight trips but these are a bit more challenging as we need to arrange everything in order to ensure that Sailors have a fun and safe trip and everybody is happy at the end.

## **What role does Liberty Center play at NSA Souda Bay?**

Souda Bay is a small, unaccompanied base. This means that sailors do not have their families here so the Liberty Center is the home away from home for all active duty Sailors E6 and below. We provide opportunities for recreation and indoor and outdoor events. The facility offers the opportunity for many

recreational activities including a pool table, PlayStation and Xbox consoles, ping-pong, a foosball table, a variety of more than 600 movies, massage chairs, arts and crafts and board games, as well as free coffee. We focus on exploring the island of Crete in a variety of ways that includes outdoor events and trips.

## **What is your favorite thing about your job?**

When we finish an event and we see the smiles on Sailors' faces. This shows us that we did our job and everyone had a great time.

## **When you are not at work what do you enjoy doing?**

When I get off work, I take my dog out for a walk. I also enjoy going out for a coffee with my friends. My main hobby is gardening as I have a small garden at home. During summertime, I spend a lot of time at the beach.

## **What do you want Team Souda to know about the Liberty Center?**

The Liberty Center is here for single Sailors; they are welcome to come anytime they want and they should know that we are here for them. Whenever they feel alone and need some company or whenever they have questions or need directions, they can stop by to ask and we will be more than happy to help them.

# 2021 Navy Ball

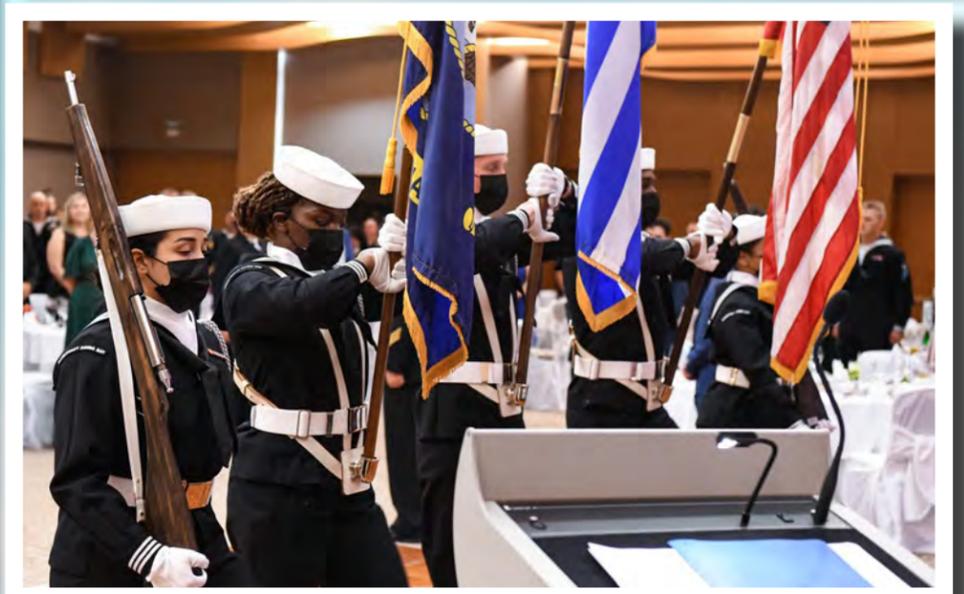
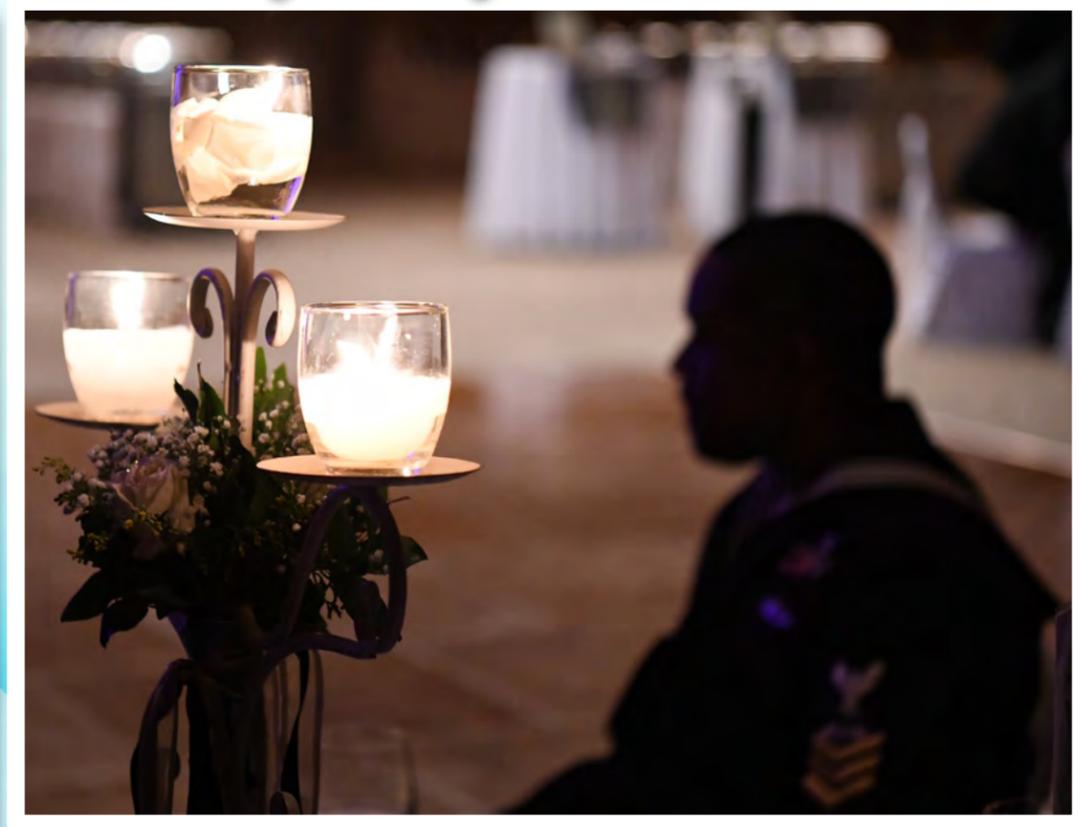
Photos by MC3 Jacob Vernier, AFN Souda Bay



Naval Support Activity Souda Bay held its Navy Ball at the Avra Imperial Resort in Kolymbari, Crete, on Oct. 8, in celebration of the U.S. Navy's 246th birthday. This year's theme was 'Resilient and Ready,' which speaks to the Navy's history of being able to shake off disaster, such as the loss of a ship or a global pandemic, and still maintain force lethality and preparedness. NSA Souda Bay's Honor Guard presented the colors; Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Shane Labeach delivered the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action remembrance speech and all attendees observed a moment of silence; Chief Master-at-Arms Sandy Cosmetorres rang the ceremonial bell; Souda Bay's Command Master Chief Francisco Vargas was the guest speaker; and the youngest and oldest Sailors in attendance cut the ceremonial cake, a Navy tradition signifying the passing of knowledge and experience from one generation to the next. This year, that honor went to Capt. Rafael Facundo, Naval Support Activity Souda Bay commanding officer, and Boatswain's Mate Seaman Sa'Niyah Taylor.



# Navy Ball 2021 Highlights



# Driving in Crete: Don't Be a Distracted Driver

Story by Garvin Purtteman, Safety Director

**T**he island of Crete is a wonderful place to be. It is a place full of wonderful people to meet and amazing things to do. However, driving to your destination can become dangerous if your attention is not directly focused on the road.

## What is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. A distraction is anything that endangers a driver, passenger or bystander's safety.

## Attention Is Key!

Even though the speed limits on the island are relatively low, the roads are full of potholes, hills, forks, switchbacks and dead ends. Roads become increasingly dangerous too as we roll into the winter months: potholes become ponds in the road; dirt and gravel fall from the hills above causing a skid hazard; and cars speeding past your vehicle can put you into a tight spot. The key is to always be focused on the road.

## Types of Distractions in Crete:

There are many distractions that can take your focus off the road for a short time that can cause a mishap. Whether it is a beautiful piece of scenery, an animal in the road, a ringing phone, eating a gyro, grooming your face, using a navigation device, picking up something that dropped, or just turning up the stereo.

## Keep Your Focus on the Road or Pull Over!

It is important for you to be mindful of all distractions and acknowledge them when they happen. If you want to do anything other than drive, look for a safe spot to pull over before you do. If you are in a safe location and pulled over to the side of the road, you don't have any risk of getting into an accident due to being distracted.

Don't fall prey to distractions and keep your focus on the road. Have a safe and enjoyable experience in Crete this winter. Stay alert and drive to arrive!



Photo by Josh Astor, Fire & Emergency Services

## How to be Prepared for the Road Conditions in Crete this Winter:

- **Use your brakes and accelerator as you would on snow; soft and easy.** When roads get wet they are very slippery, especially during the first rains when oil residue, dust and foliage on the road surface cause it to become slick.
- **Reduce speed during and immediately after heavy rain.** Poor or non-existent drainage systems on the roads cause them to flood with 10 to 15 inches of water, causing vehicles to stall or hydroplane. Heavy rainfall causes the road surface to break up, creating potholes that are not visible under the puddles.
- **Beware of rock and mud slides, especially on the national highway.** As the rains loosen the ground you will frequently find the road blocked by rock and plant debris.
- **Look out for sudden patches of fog.** In some areas, fog may appear and reduce your visibility suddenly, especially early in the morning. Do not use high beams as this results in even further reduced visibility.

- **Reduce speeds and keep your eyes open.** Be sure to stick to the posted speed limits, especially when driving through villages, such as Mouzouras. Cars may be illegally stopped, pedestrians may be walking on the road, and heavy vehicles, such as trash trucks and buses, travel the road constantly.
- **Be alert to the actions of fellow drivers.** Buses make unscheduled stops, cars stop on the side of the road and motorcycles pass you in areas where they should not. On agricultural back roads, farmers park beside the road to load their crops and equipment.
- **Be sure to inspect your vehicle.** Check your tire condition, windshield wipers and fluid level, and defrosters.
- **Remember to always buckle up and keep alert!**

# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By Lt. Michael Spoke, Command Chaplain



**T**eam Souda, as my time here comes to a close, I wanted to use this last corner here in the Beacon to share a couple of things I have observed over my tour. My hope is that what I have seen and learned during my two years will help some of you enjoy your time to the fullest! This really is a unique and incredible duty station. It is worth enjoying!

Let's get to it:

## **Observation 1: Our community has an overwhelming desire to volunteer!**

My time at Souda Bay has been marked by people eagerly wanting to serve. Through organizing almost 100 Community Relations events, I have witnessed the donating of time, energy and financial resources. For every event, we have never had a lack of people. Often times, we have too many!

This level of engagement is uncommon!

When we could be spending time doing everything else that focuses on the self – the overall spirit of the base is asking how to give back and make improvements. That is a different mindset.

The truth is in the pudding on this one: life is found in giving it away. Whether we are picking up trash, pulling weeds, painting walls, petting dogs or planting trees, in all the projects – the joy, laughter, connection and satisfaction are the things we all take away when the job is done. Community Relations events do just that – they build community. The connection amongst our sailors, and between sailors and our host nation, is self-evident. That's not just a talking point. These are the memories and life moments people will have long after their time in the Navy is done.

So to those who have engaged and invested in our COMRELS, thank you! And for those still wanting to engage – Keep asking! Keep showing up! Keep wanting more. You don't have to wait for someone else to organize a project; be the one to make it happen and get the ball rolling. We are all better for it!

## **OBSERVATION #2: You get out what you put in.**

It's essentially the law of reciprocity. The amount of effort, energy, attention to detail, determination, etc. that you exert, generally determines what you are going to experience and receive back. Those who put in the effort generally have a return on investment – whether it be social, professional or personal enrichment. But if you are not willing to invest, to risk your time and energy, you are not going to see a positive yield.

Which is why those who flourish here tend to be those who are willing to invest, and to put in the work toward opportunities to engage. There are Sailors who have been promoted multiple times during their tour. Sailors who not only excel at their job, but are involved throughout the command. They see a gap, and they use their time and talents to fill it. They go out of their way to find the people they can encourage and walk alongside. I really believe this is about more than collaterals or holding a title. The people who love their time at Souda enjoyed it because they were proactive in the work and people around them. What they received in return is simply a byproduct of what they were willing to invest.

I invite you to take a look around. Do you like what your time, relationships, career projections look like? If you do – Great! Keep on keeping on. If not, then you have to change things up! This is more than simply trying harder – it is about trying different and being diligent. Look for ways to invest, and do it over and over again until you are able to look around and enjoy what you see in return!

## **Observation #3: You can always find a negative; don't let it rob you of the positives!**

Listen, if you are looking for a negative in your situation, you will surely find it. This is a fact of life: the negatives will always be there, and they are usually easy to find. That said, the same is true for the positives. They will always be there too. The question is, are you willing to look for them? Are you willing to create them if you have to?

Many people have said that they get their first impression of Souda from other people's complaints, and then they let it set the tone

for their whole tour. I am not denying or minimizing what the negatives may be in your situation ... but if you let them rob you of missing out on the positives, that is the real tragedy.

You don't need to have rose colored glasses – I am definitely not calling for false optimism – but you do need to stop and smell the roses.

Find ways to appreciate what you do have here. I can't tell you the number of people who look back on their time here, and wish they hadn't wished it away or been so eager to leave. They were so focused on what they didn't enjoy that they never fully appreciated what they did! And it wasn't until after they left that they realized what they had – or could have had!

Often I think we take the path of least resistance and choose to live in the negatives, instead of working for the positives, and that is a breeding ground for regret.

So be different. Seek the positive, even in the midst of negativity.

Agency and ownership always starts with you. YOU get to decide the way you will respond to your experiences right here, right now, and what your enjoyment level will be. Need a starting point? Start with gratitude. What are you thankful for right now? If that is a hard question, then start with what you could be thankful for. Chase the change. After all, it is your tour on the line!

It's been my joy to be your chaplain. I am so grateful for all of you. I am looking forward to seeing you again in the Fleet!

# 'Goodbye Summer' Beach Party

Photos by Nick Fragos, MWR, and the Liberty Center Staff.

The Liberty Center Souda Bay team organized a 'Goodbye Summer' Beach Party on Friday, Oct. 15 at Marathi Beach. Sailors had lots of fun at the free event which included stand up paddleboard, beach volleyball, beanbag toss, a barbecue lunch and a DJ playing summer tunes.

Goodbye Summer, Welcome Autumn!







# Catch the XO Radio Show Fridays at 7 a.m.

107.3 on the FM dial  
or  
AFN Europe App



## Living in Greece: Basic Words and Phrases

by Kostas Fantaousakis, Public Affairs

**Where is the bathroom?** Πού είναι η τουαλέτα (Poo EEney ee tuaLEHtah)?

**Where is...?** Πού είναι... (Poh EEney). You can use this incomplete phrase in order to ask for help with locating something by saying this while pointing to a specific location in your guidebook or on a map.

**Do you speak English?** Μιλάτε αγγλικά; (MeeLAHteh agleeKAH?)

**How much is it?** Πόσο κάνει αυτό; (POHsoh KAHnee afTOH?)  
You can get by with asking POHsoh KAHnee (How much?). Adding the 'afTOH' just means How much is it?

**I don't understand:** Δεν καταλαβαίνω (Then KahtahlahVEHnoh)

**I love Greece:** Αγαπώ την Ελλάδα (AhgahPOH teen EhLAHtha)

**Oops!/Whoa!:** Ωπα (OHpa)  
Originally meaning 'oops' or 'whoops,' it's also used frequently as an expression of enthusiasm or joy in celebrations or to show appreciation for music and dancing.

### Birthdays

**May you live long!** Να ζήσεις! (na zeesees)

**May you live up to a hundred!**  
Να τα εκατοστήσεις! (na ta ekatoSTEEsees)

### Name Days

**May you rejoice your name:** Να χαίρεσαι το όνομά σου! (na HErese to Onoma soo)

### Weddings

**Before the ceremony:**

**May the time of marriage be good and lucky:**  
Η ώρα η καλή! (ee ora ee kaLEE)

**After the ceremony:**

**May you both live long:** Να ζήσετε! (na ZEEsete)  
**Congratulations:** Συγχαρητήρια! (seehareeTEEria)

### Birth

**May your child live a long and healthy life:**  
Να σου ζήσει! (na soo ZEEsee)



The Virgin Mary Cathedral located Chania's old town. It was originally built between 1850 and 1860. (Source: Wikipedia).  
Photo by Kostas Fantaousakis, Public Affairs.

# Community Outreach: Yardwork Projects

Photos by Lt. Michael Spoke, Command Chaplain



Service members assigned to NSA Souda Bay participated in two yardwork projects for the Daily Care Center for Children and Young Adults in Chania on Oct. 17 and 24.

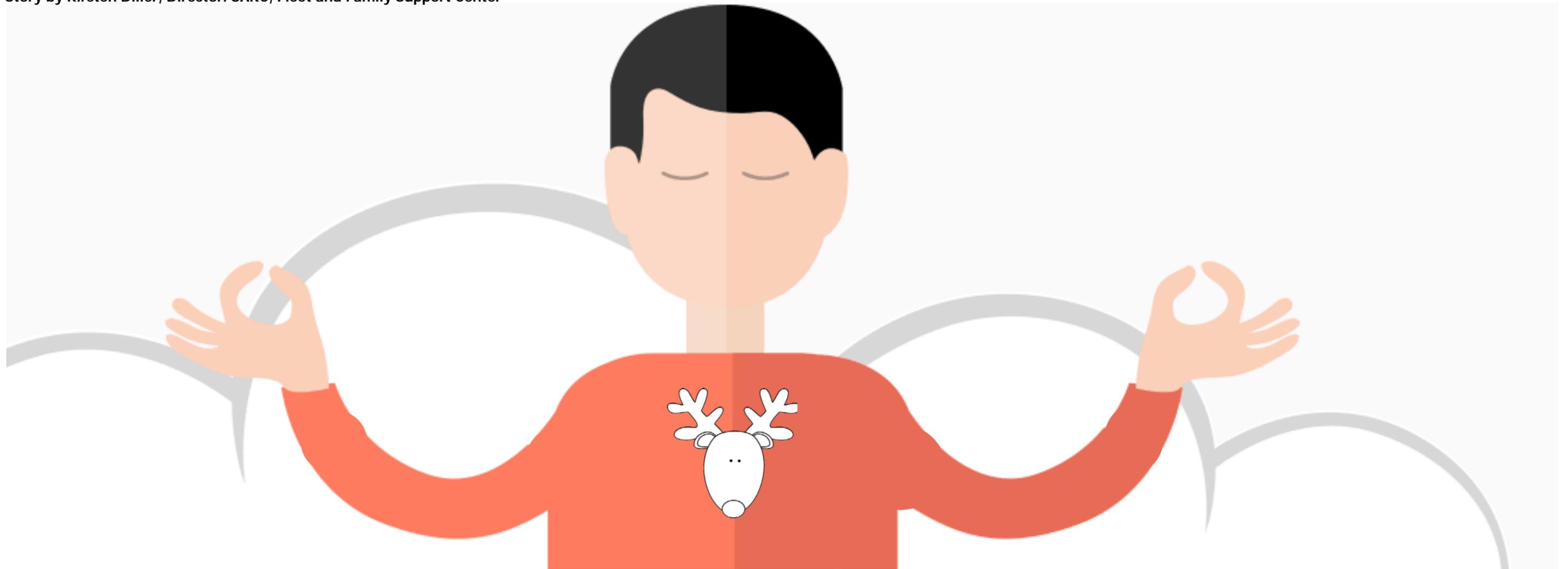
The projects to beautify the Center's grounds consisted of landscaping, trimming and hedging. Over the course of a month, 40 volunteers participated in the Community Outreach events. Sailors were more than happy to contribute to the Center's mission and for the opportunity to give back to the local community.

**Bravo Zulu and a job well done!**



# Staying Healthy this Holiday Season

Story by Kirsten Diller, Director/SARC, Fleet and Family Support Center



The holidays are festive, fun and filled with excitement... except when they're not. Being away from loved ones and missing the comforts of home can be challenging enough on a regular day, so the holidays can really amp up those feelings. However, there is HOPE and you can still find CONTENTMENT despite some of these barriers. Here are three easy tips you can employ to improve your mood and mindset this holiday season:

## Tip #1: Deep Breathing

This is extremely simple (and free!), yet a commonly neglected mental health strategy. When we get stressed, angry, upset, or (insert any other strong emotion here), our rational brain becomes clouded with negativity. An easy way to de-fog our brain quickly is to step outside and engage in deep,

intentional breaths for at least a minute or two. During this time, you're feeding your brain oxygen, giving yourself the space to think things through, and bringing executive power back to your rational brain. And guess what? When our rational brain is in charge, we typically make better decisions and have improved control of our responses. You're also more likely to problem solve and figure out a creative solution to your holiday blues!

## Tip #2: Gratitude

This is my favorite tip: just wake up every day and write down five things for which you are grateful. That's it! Starting the day off with a positive focus, such as a heart of gratitude, can alter a person's attitude and focus for the rest of the day. Although, keep in mind you need to write down five

DIFFERENT things each day. To do this, it helps to be super specific, i.e. do not simply be thankful for "this island of Crete," but be thankful for the majesty of the Omalos mountains, the colors of the sunrise in the morning, the amazing aroma and taste of souvlaki, etc. That way, you force yourself to recognize all of the little things in your life and avoid simply lumping life into large categories that get lost in your brain space.

## Tip #3: Find Connection

Humans are made for connection, it's in our DNA. So, if you are lacking in this area, especially during the holidays, it makes sense that your mental health may suffer. Thus, my challenge to you is to FIND CONNECTION. Find and join a group or organization that shares your beliefs, initiate more social events with your friends and co-workers,

engage in a new hobby, be adventurous and explore this incredible island, save up for a trip to mainland Europe, be INTENTIONAL in creating NEW holiday traditions, etc. etc. If this strategy brings you particular difficulty, feel free to talk to a counselor at Fleet and Family or our Chaplain. We LOVE to help people make connections because we understand how very important they are.

Hopefully, these tips are useful and easy to apply in your life. Trust me: investing just a few minutes a day in deep breathing, writing down five things for which you are grateful, and being more intentional in making connections could boost your mood, increase your productivity, and help you navigate through this holiday season with peace, joy and love. And who doesn't want those things?

# How to Stay Safe

## When an **EARTHQUAKE** Threatens

Information provided by ReadyNavy.mil and the Federal Emergency Management Agency

**E**arthquakes are the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of underground rock. Earthquakes can collapse buildings and cause heavy items to fall, resulting in injuries and property damage. The Greek word for earthquake is seismos, and Crete is located in the area of the Mediterranean basin with the most seismic activity, so it is very important to know what to do in case we have an earthquake here.



Secure items such as televisions and objects that hang on walls. Store heavy and breakable objects on low shelves.

Identify a safe place in every room of your home where nothing can fall on you, such as under a table, against an inside wall, or in a doorway.

Practice Drop, Cover, and Hold On with family and coworkers. Drop to your hands and knees. Cover your head and neck with your arms. Crawl only as far as needed to reach cover from falling materials. Hold on to any sturdy furniture until the shaking stops.

Build an emergency supply kit that includes enough food and water for at least three days, a flashlight, a fire extinguisher, and a whistle. Consider each person's specific needs, including medication. Do not forget the needs of pets. Have extra batteries and charging devices for phones and other critical equipment.

Make an evacuation plan and create a family emergency communication plan in case family members are separated during an earthquake. Plan where to meet if you get separated.



### If you are indoors:

Do not run outside. There may be falling debris.

If possible, DROP to the ground; take COVER under a table or sturdy piece of furniture; and HOLD ON until the shaking stops.

If you are not near any sturdy furniture, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building or in a load-bearing doorway where there is less of a chance of things falling on you.

Stay away from windows, light fixtures, unstable furniture, or anything that could fall.

If in bed, stay there and cover your head and neck with a pillow.

Stay inside until the shaking stops and you are absolutely sure it is safe to go outside.

If you are in a high-rise building, expect fire alarms and sprinklers to go off. Do not use elevators.

### If you are outdoors:

Move away from buildings, street lights, and utility wires or anything that could fall.

If near slopes, cliffs, or mountains, be alert for falling rocks and landslides.

Once in an open area, stay there until the shaking stops.

Statistics show that the most injuries in earthquakes are caused by falling debris. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits, and alongside exterior walls.

### If you are in a moving vehicle:

Stay in the vehicle.

Stop as soon as you can in a clear area, away from buildings, overpasses, utility wires, or anything that could fall.

Proceed very slowly once shaking stops.

Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake, and anticipate traffic light outages.



Expect aftershocks, which can come minutes, hours, or days after an earthquake.

If an aftershock happens, "Drop, Cover, and Hold On."

Check yourself and others for injuries.

If in a damaged building, go outside and quickly move away from the building.

Do not enter damaged buildings.

Open cabinets cautiously. Beware of objects that can fall off shelves.

Be very careful of falling debris in homes or outdoors. This is how most injuries occur.

### If you are trapped beneath debris:

Do not light a match for light. There may be gas leaks in the area.

Do not move around or kick up dust.

Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or piece of clothing to reduce dust inhalation.

Tap on a pipe or use a whistle if you have one to help rescuers find you.

Shout only as a last resort as it will increase dust inhalation.

Look for and extinguish small fires. Fire is the most common hazard after an earthquake.

Use the telephone only for emergency calls.

If you live near the ocean, be aware of possible tsunamis, which are caused by earthquakes off the coast.

Once you are in a safe place, muster with your command.

# The Parting Shot...

