

# SOUTHEAST ADVISORY

**To: BENS Southeast Members**  
**Subject: The CO of Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) Sets the Record Straight**

Sixty BENS members, government partners and other guests heard the GTMO story on January 13<sup>th</sup> from the officer in charge, **Rear Admiral David M. Thomas, Jr., U.S. Navy, Commander, Joint Task Force (JTF), Guantanamo Bay, Cuba**. The Admiral gave us an insider's overview of GTMO including the care and treatment of the approximately 245 remaining detainees. Over the last seven years, five hundred detainees from 30 different countries have been released and no one has been brought in during the last year.

Our appreciation goes to our luncheon sponsor **Ryan Parent**, Managing Director, Veridicus Ventures, LLC, for helping to make this compelling and informative program possible. Thank you, too, to former Navy officer **Alex Gregory**, President and CEO, YKK Corporation of America, for a great job as event host.

Some key points from the Admiral's remarks:

- *GTMO is a safe and humane operation that I would be proud to show my mom and my kids, Admiral Thomas said. While some dispute the 'policy,' what's indisputable is the safe and humane treatment. Everything is transparent.*
- Everyone detained is an enemy combatant and many have expressed the goal to do great harm to the United States; detainees try everything possible to "provoke" the GTMO staff into hurting them for propaganda purposes.
- The U.S. military personnel (primarily sailors and soldiers) at JTF GTMO are professionals in every sense of the word.
- Intelligence collection is important, but interrogations are completely "voluntary" and detainees are not isolated.
- Because it's the "right thing" to do, the command provides physical and intellectual stimulation to keep detainees occupied. This includes recreational and sports activities, a library, language and literacy classes, and opportunities for full religious observances. There's a 2:1 ratio of caregivers to detainees.
- While not required by law, the command adheres to all Geneva Convention guidelines.

BENS members expressed great support for the admiral and his command. Several members said that they were pleased to finally hear the real GTMO story as opposed to what is generally reported in the news media around the globe.

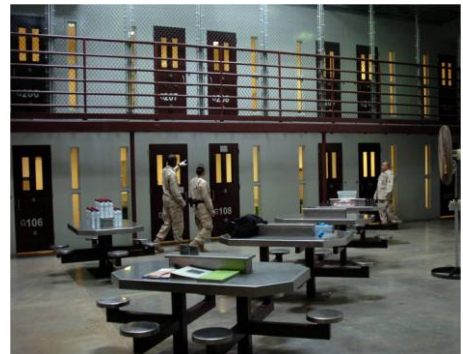
BENS Southeast Challenge Coins were presented to our guest speaker and three new BENS members: (1) Tony Holcombe of Tampa, Florida, President and CEO, Syniverse Technologies, (2) Jonathan Lucenay, President and CEO, Summit Resources, and (3) Jack McGovern, Former Chief Financial Officer, Georgia Pacific.



ADM Thomas stands with event sponsor Ryan Parent (left) and event host Alex Gregory (right).



Map of U.S. Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay



Guards making rounds to visualize detainees every 3 minutes