

Gardner-Webb University

## Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

---

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

---

7-10-2013

### **Gardner-Webb Alumnus Shares Christ's Love with Soldiers at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba**

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

---

# Gardner-Webb Alumnus Shares Christ's Love with Soldiers at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

 [webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gardner-webb-alumnus-shares-christs-love-with-soldiers-at-guantanamo-bay-cuba/](http://webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gardner-webb-alumnus-shares-christs-love-with-soldiers-at-guantanamo-bay-cuba/)

Office of University Communications

July 10, 2013

## *Terry Eddinger ('88) Serves as Chaplain in U.S. Military*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – When God commissions people to serve in missions, they generally understand they may not be offered an opportunity to minister in a peaceful environment. GWU Alumnus Terry Eddinger ('88) finds himself in a challenging environment at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, while ministering in what has been described as a political and religiously charged location. As part of the War on Terror, that's where Eddinger is currently serving as chaplain to United States troops who work at the terrorist detainment camp.

"The situation remains tense here," said Eddinger. "At present time, there are over 100 detainees who remain on a hunger strike, with around 40 being force-fed. Our guards are holding up well. They are professionals, providing humane, respectful, and safe treatment to the detainees. In spite of the mental, verbal, and sometimes physical chaos, they endure." Guards generally work long days with not much time off. "I'm very proud of how they conduct themselves," he shared.

Eddinger serves as a supervisor for chaplains. An aspect of his job is to advise the command on religious matters including ways to provide ministry for the military community. Reaching out and serving the troops from all five branches of the military (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy) is a key priority. His office is located on the naval base, but not within the camp detainment.

"My staff and I visit the prison camps once a week to lend support to our guards," Eddinger said. "Usually, I make these visits in conjunction with my office's weekly visit to hand out religious supplies to detainees. Most are grateful for our gifts but some refuse them. Occasionally, I do get yelled at, but I ignore it, since I'm not allowed to interact with the detainees."

Eddinger is a native of Thomasville and now calls home Winston-Salem (both located in N.C.). He graduated from GWU with a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. After completing his time at GWU, Eddinger's degrees, includes a Master of Divinity from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo. and his Doctor of Philosophy, Old Testament, at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

“I want to provide our troopers with hope—hope that humanity is better than what today’s society suggests it is. Hope that we are making a positive difference for our nation by diligently doing our jobs. I wish I could provide them with hope that only comes through knowing the peace of Christ,” stated Eddinger.

A recent project for Eddinger included helping manage the restoration of volleyball and basketball courts for soldiers’ recreational purposes. He also fills in to deliver sermons during worship services and in his rare spare time, Eddinger likes to sail, snorkel, perform cardio kickboxing, and run.

He says God continues showing him things through this experience. “God is teaching me patience through the difficulties of representing him in this environment. Patience to consider carefully what I do, that every action has a reaction. God has shown me many good people, our troops from all parts of society, that I wouldn’t have met without this opportunity.”

Eddinger has received numerous medals, ribbons, and commendations for service to his country. He has also taught college courses and enjoys writing. Eddinger is the author of several Biblical-based books and has written articles that have appeared in various journals. He also sends out a monthly journal of his experiences at Guantanamo through email.

Eddinger extends an invitation for the general public to keep in touch with him and send items to the troops. “I can always use cookies and beanie babies as items to hand out to our soldiers if someone wants to help,” he shared. “Suggestions of other and more creative things for them are welcome.” Eddinger can be contacted by email at [terry.w.eddinger@jtfgtmo.southcom.mil](mailto:terry.w.eddinger@jtfgtmo.southcom.mil).

“Keep us in your prayers. My hope is that we can affect lives for the better here and strengthen people’s personal walk with our Lord.”

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University offers a comprehensive academic experience that introduces students to the diverse world of ideas and to the people who think them, preparing them for career success and for engaged, responsible citizenship in their professional, civic, and spiritual communities.*