

## Government

### Southold Trustee redies for deployment to Cuba

by Michael White | 01/31/2015 10:00 AM

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Charles Sanders (second from right) during his first tour in Afghanistan in 2010, when he was a 1st Lieutenant. (Credit: Courtesy photo)

One of the town's Trustees is getting ready for a deployment to Cuba next month, a mission that comes at a time when President Obama has renewed his push to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay.

Southold Town's five-member Board of Trustees, which is charged with administering activities along the town's coastline and underwater lands near the coast, will serve with one less member during the nine-plus months Trustee Charles Sanders of Greenport is expected to be away.

Mr. Sanders, 46, a captain in the Army National Guard, will be stationed at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base as part of a team that will be running detainee operations, he said.

No matter what the future holds for the prison there, Mr. Sanders said he's "incredibly excited to be a part of that history," and proud that New Yorkers have been entrusted with such a task.

"Especially with the 42nd Infantry Division, that's a New York National Guard unit," he said. "As these new changes occur, we're the ones who execute all those orders that come down from the President."

He's currently in Fort Bliss, Tex.

"I'll then be going to Guantanamo Bay for about four or five days before my deployment," he said by phone, adding that he will be back in town prior to leaving again for Cuba.

As for the Board of Trustees being short-handed, board president John Bredemeyer said he expects the group will be fine in performing its regular duties — at least, with a little luck.

"God willing and no major coastal storms, we'll probably be able to handle [the workload]," he said. "Irene and Sandy were big time deals for the Trustees, but with any degree of luck I don't foresee a problem. We honor and support our service people; they've got a difficult task no matter what."

Among other things, he said Mr. Sanders had been spearheading efforts related to the Trustees' mooring policies and handling the mooring waiting list, so the others on the board would have to pick up some of those duties. It's also possible permit applications might be rejected if there's a 2-2 split vote on the board, he said.

But, he added, the Trustees try to work with applicants to get all environmental concerns mitigated and, ultimately, get permit applications approved.

"But it's not uncommon to have 3-2 vote," he said. "A 2-2 vote is, of course, a lost resolution."

Mr. Sanders was elected to the Trustee seat left open after two-term incumbent Dave Bergen did not receive the Republican nomination in 2013. He edged Democrat Geoffrey Wells, 60, by just 578 votes. It was the slimmest margin of defeat for a losing candidate in a Trustee race since 2001.

He will be paid while he is away, said Supervisor Scott Russell.

Trustees make just over \$18,000 a year.

"He will continue to hold his seat and continue to be paid," Mr. Russell said. "State law provides assurances to servicemen and women that their jobs would be secure and waiting for them when they return from service to their country. Elected officials are treated the same as employees."

Mr. Sanders will be returning to town in January 2016, though he's not allowed to say exactly when. He said that unlike with many of his fellow soldiers, he's not leaving a wife and any kids behind.

His private job, as a realtor at Town & Country, will be held for him until he gets back from Cuba.

"They've been really gracious," he said of the company.

mwhite@timesreview.com