



the Wire

“ HONOR BOUND TO DEFEND FREEDOM ”

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Army Chief sees “a big difference” in JTF

Story Sgt. Benari Poulten

A tropical sun beat down on Guantanamo Bay, Cuba when General Eric Shinseki, Army Chief of Staff, visited the service members of Joint Task Force Guantanamo last Christmas Eve 2002. The weather hadn't changed much when Shinseki returned to the island on April 21st, but many other things in the Joint Task Force had.

Improvements in living conditions and detention facilities, as well as advances in technology, have helped the members of Joint Task Force Guantanamo to better carry out their important mission. During his previous visit, Shinseki remarked that the troopers of JTF Guantanamo have the critical job of detaining and deterring terrorists, "making sure they never have another chance to do it again." The ongoing changes to the JTF - such as



Spc. Delaney T. Jackson
Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, talks with some soldiers on a ferry ride, during his most recent visit to Guantanamo Bay. (From left to right: Gen. Shinseki, Spc. Joaquin Barela - 984th Military Police Company, Spc. William Thornhill - 470th Military Intelligence Battalion, Sgt. Charles Farthing - 438th Military Police Company, and Sgt. Albert Lamont - 785th Military Police Battalion).

the addition of Camp 4, the medium security detention facility - play an integral role in helping the troopers of JTF continue to defend freedom and protect our nation's security. Shinseki seemed pleased with the

numerous advances that have been made by the Joint Task Force in recent months. "This is a big difference since I was here in December," noted Shinseki.

Camp 4 was nothing more than a construction site last Christmas Eve, but now it stands as a fully operational medium security detention facility, demonstrating the JTF's ability to quickly achieve its goals. Shinseki lauded the improvements and marveled at the short amount of time in which these sweeping changes have occurred. As he observed the JTF members working hard, he commended them for their dedicated service. "This is important work you're doing," Shinseki said. "You're doing a great job."

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From the Top



BG James E. Payne
Deputy Commander of
Operations
JTF Guantanamo

Every day, the JTF improves the way we work and the way we live. At the midpoint of the mobilization, and this rotation, it's good to reflect on the progress that has been made, and set goals for where the JTF will be at the end of this rotation.

"Making improvements everyday", that's what professionals do. With the very start of this rotation, the troopers and leadership of the JTF set the target to be more effective and efficient in our mission; and focus on improving the quality of life for every trooper in the JTF. And every day, we can see the improvements that have been reached

through everyone's efforts.

Every area of the JTF has been affected with the attitude of making things better, and doing things right. Detention operations have improved and we have taken on new missions. We will continue to reduce the administrative workload by placing laptop computers in each of the blocks. The concept, the structure, and the actual software were designed and developed by the troopers working in the Camp. The JIG and JDOG work almost seamlessly to create an atmosphere in the Camp that enhances our ability to collect intelligence at the soldier/trooper level and works up. It's true teamwork.

Our training has also improved. A year ago, the JTF didn't train. Now, it's an integral aspect of what we do - Training To Improve, both

mission capability and individual skill. The recent exercise is a perfect example. Six months ago we did one event at a time, and one unit fired their weapons at a time. Now we combine events (Mass Casualty, Air Defense, Sea Borne threat), have units engage simultaneously, and conduct live-fire exercises at night. That is a great accomplishment. It's only possible because everyday, each member of the JTF strives to be better than we were before.

Whether it's our housing, the gyms, the dining facilities, or our daily mission; everywhere you look, the JTF continues to improve. That's not by accident. It only comes through hard work of our troopers and their leaders.

It's good at this midpoint to reflect on how far the JTF has come and how much each of us has grown personally. But reflection only tells us what has been achieved up to now. The exciting story is what is yet to come. Success is a journey, not a destination. There are more improvements yet to come, many we may not have thought of yet. As an organization, we must continue to seek new goals for increasing our mission capability, our ability to detain our enemies, exploit intelligence, and enhance the quality of life and professional opportunities for our troopers.

This is a team effort. Be proud of your team and the part you play in our improvements. As a professional team, we will ensure that the JTF continues to improve, so that the next rotation starts at a higher level and achieves greater goals. Making things better everyday; that's what professionals do, that's what our troopers in the JTF do.

Honor Bound!

From the Field

Why can't my family members come down to visit me here at GTMO?

The main issue is space availability. Right now, Guantanamo Bay has limited facilities and most servicemembers are in multiple occupancy houses with upwards of three to four persons per room. And most of these houses have only one bathroom. For family members to visit, they would have to live in the house with their sponsor. Not only would this be inconvenient for everyone in the house (lack of privacy being a major issue), it would also negatively impact operational readiness and capabilities.

Moreover, all the transit facilities - including the BOQs and the BEQs

are full. The only possible alternative would be the Navy Lodge, which has limited availability as well and is usually booked up. Due to a lack of space, it's just not possible at this time. *(Answer provided by NAVBAS Housing office)*

"From the Field" is a weekly feature addressing questions from service members on policy, procedures and other topics of interest to Joint Task Force Guantanamo. If you have a question for "From the Field," submit it to pao@jftgmo.southcom.mil or call The Wire at 5239.

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Worst case scenario training keeps JTF troops ready



Photo by Chief Journalist (SS) John F. Williams
A soldier is loaded onto an ambulance to be transported to the Naval Hospital during a Mass Casualty Exercise inside Camp Delta April 12, 2003.

Story by Sgt. Bob Mitchell

Just after midnight, a disturbance breaks out at the Detainee Operations Center. There are mass casualties among soldiers and detainees. Meanwhile, a ship approaches from 19 miles out at sea. However, as the vessel gets closer to the coastline, Mobile Inshore Underwater Warfare Unit 212 notices that instead of one track there are multiple tracks on its radar screen. Not one, but three 25-foot boats are speeding toward Guantanamo Bay intending to inflict as much harm as possible. Is it a coincidence or a well-orchestrated assault? Fortunately it is just an exercise. However, in the event that those horrific events come to pass, Joint Task Force Guantanamo plans to be ready to adapt, improvise and overcome by training for such possibilities.

On April 12, this scenario was part of a three-part exercise designed to enhance readiness and coordination between the various services involved. According to Major Cliff Buttram, J3 Operations Officer, the exercise took about eight hours but there was a lot of action. "The first part was an exercise in recalling personnel using the alert roster. Individuals, by section, alerted their personnel, came into the office into their respective sections and initiated accountability procedures. The second part of the exercise involved a mass casualty inside the facility...to see how the JDOG (Joint Detention Operations Group)

MIUWU 212 radar suddenly became triplets. According to Major Buttram, inter-service teamwork kicked into high gear at this point in the form of tenacious defense. "The infantry were firing at two of the three targets, firing mortar rounds, .50 caliber rounds and small arms rounds. The MSST (Maritime Safety and Security Team 91102, U.S. Coast Guard), were firing .50 caliber rounds at another target that was on the direct southern end of the Joint Operational Area."

After the exercise concluded, the Navy retrieved a pair of bullet-riddled boats. The third boat was resting at the bottom of the ocean, a testament to JTF marksmanship.

The efforts of everyone involved in the training exercise drew words of praise from MG Geoffrey D. Miller, Joint Task Force Guantanamo Commander. "I think the exercise went exceptionally well. This is our fifth live-fire exercise. It really demonstrates what the JTF is all about, the integration of all the different services. But it revolves around troopers: soldiers,

sailors, airmen and marines doing what they're supposed to do, and leaders allowing that success to be done. You know, these events - these exercises - are all about doing what's right when no one's looking, and that's the real value of this. We're enormously proud of our troopers because they demonstrate every day what makes America great. It's the individual commitment of people to the ideas of what freedom really is."

On May 19, Miller handed out coins to 24 individuals, from eight units, whose outstanding efforts during the exercise earned them nominations as heroes. To a person, each "hero" was humbled at their nomination. Specialist Skip Evans, 438th MP Co., displayed particular humility. "I am not worthy. I think my name got drawn out of a hat," he said. "I don't know what I did that stood out. I think the other people - the medics and the MPs on the block - I think they deserve this more than I do."

Sergeant Derrick Aleshire, C Co., 2/116 Infantry Regiment, felt the exercise was beneficial for his entire unit. "It always helps because we can always constantly

improve, whether it be little or major things. So training is always a good way to help improve everything for us."

The small victories that come from training for worst case scenarios prepare troops for the terrible possibilities that might occur. This is one of the many ways that help those small victories add up to a big triumph over global terrorism.

MG Geoffrey D. Miller, Joint Task Force Commander, congratulates troops who stood out by being outstanding during a recent training exercise. Twenty four troops from eight units were nominated as 'heroes' and received the Commanding General's coin for excellence



Spc. Delaney T. Jackson
MG Geoffrey D. Miller, Joint Task Force Commander, congratulates troops who stood out by being outstanding during a recent training exercise. Twenty four troops from eight units were nominated as 'heroes' and received the Commanding General's coin for excellence

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The JTF Mission: A midpoint review

Story by Maj. Paul Caruso & Sgt. Erin Viola

Designing, building and operating a finely tuned machine takes a lot of work and a lot of patience. The bottom line is that you want that machine to operate as efficiently as possible. You want that machine to be the best at performing whatever task it is intended to be used for, and you want it to improve over time; making it the best machine it can possibly be. Camp Delta is such a machine, built and operated by highly skilled, highly trained Joint Task Force servicemembers.

Over the past several months, Joint Task Force Guantanamo has been making Camp Delta a better machine by implementing a variety of improvements. These physical, technological and administrative improvements have a direct and positive impact on the working conditions for the guard force that work inside Camp Delta 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Command Sgt. Major John Vannatta, Camp Delta Superintendent said one of the first improvements to the physical structure of the camp was the construction of cuff and ankle ports in the detention units. This made it easier and safer for guards to affix handcuffs and leg irons on the detainees.

Additionally, Vannatta said that other physical improvements have been made to the camp, making it easier and safer for the guards to view the detainees. "There are issues of detainees committing self-harm acts which become the responsibility of the guard force to prevent. By increasing the visibility within the cells themselves, it alleviated stress on the guards and has allowed the guards to do a better job," said Vannatta.

Some simple but very beneficial physical

improvements also included putting rubber mats on the floor to make it easier on the guard force that walk up and down the detention blocks throughout the day. Vannatta also said that lights were installed in units where guards produce their daily reports. Before this, the guards were using their flashlights.

By the end of the month, Vannatta says there will be offices at the end of each block. These will have a glass enclosure and be air-conditioned. This modification will not only protect the guard's paperwork, but allow for the installation of computer systems connected to the LAN; thereby improving the quality of their work environment.

Another major improvement in the operation of Camp Delta has been the evolution of the Mental Health Facility and a Medium Security Facility - Camp 4.

The Mental Health Facility was developed for detainees who are suffering from a variety of mental illness issues. They can be detained there and receive appropriate treatment from trained professionals such as behavioral scientists, psychologists, and psychiatrists who provide mental health assessments and treatment. "A person that is suffering from mental illness is a lot more difficult to supervise," Vannatta said. He also added that the facility makes it easier for the guards to closely monitor the detainees.

Camp 4 is a medium security, communal-living type facility within Camp Delta for detainees who have been cooperative in the interrogation process and are considered less of a security risk than others. According to Vannatta, Camp 4 provides additional comfort items and activities to detainees that are behaving, while at the same time producing a more cooperative and well-behaved detainee population.

The interrogation process is a vital link to winning the Global War on Terrorism. "The efforts we put forth inside the wire have a direct impact on fighting the GWOT. The cooperation that has been received from these detainees with respect to the intelligence we have gathered, has been very instrumental in saving lives of not only Americans but really throughout the world ... there is no question that hundreds and thousands of lives have been saved because of the information we have obtained," said Vannatta. Intelligence gathering is a very careful process and the servicemembers involved with this task are being very thorough.

Through the sharing of intelligence with Federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies, enemy combatants have been removed from the battlefield, permitting U.S. Forces to operate more freely. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated that "as we interrogate more detainees, we are being told of terrorists who they believe were killed in earlier bombing raids...our operations are working -- we've captured or killed a number of senior Taliban and al Qaeda leaders." In one example, a Moroccan detainee led law enforcement officials to three Saudi Arabians planning terrorist attacks in Morocco, all of whom were subsequently arrested, including one top al Qaeda operative.

The detention and interrogation mission here at JTF Guantanamo is definitely working. Since the arrival of the 300th MP Brigade, operations inside Camp Delta have become more streamlined and guards are improving every day. Information that has been obtained from the detainees during interrogations has been of tremendous value in reducing future terrorist attacks and protecting our national security. The GWOT is not over yet, but we are on track to being victorious.

DIFFERENCE, from page 1.

In addition to Camp Delta and the Camp 4 facility, Shinseki toured the newly renovated Commissions building, and received briefings on all the latest activity, as well as a detailed analysis of what is being planned for the coming months. He listened intently, asking in-depth questions and offering his own recommendations. He also managed to meet with soldiers in the field, including the third and fourth squads of Alpha Company, 2-116th

Infantry Regiment. He applauded their efforts and stressed their importance in the ongoing War on Terrorism. "They all do such a terrific job," Shinseki said of the troopers, prior to his departure.

While the numerous improvements greatly impressed him, Shinseki pointed out that technology alone does not win wars; it takes well-trained, committed servicemembers to ensure success. Surrounded by a small group of soldiers, Shinseki related his meeting with one of his foreign counterparts - a former tank

commander. They began discussing who had the better weaponry and Shinseki was surprised by his counterpart's admission. "He held up his hand and said, 'We have the better tanks...you have the better soldiers. You have the better army.' And he was right...you can have the best technology in the world, but you need the best soldiers in the world to utilize that technology in order to succeed." Grinning, Shinseki continued, "Of course, I like to add that he was half right. We also have the better tanks."

JIG soldier spends downtime taking college courses, getting into shape

Story by Sgt. Erin P. Viola

This is not necessarily the best place to be, but it could be worse, right? We could be dodging bullets in Iraq. We could be sleeping in foxholes or traveling in a convoy in the dessert - strategically evading Iraqi mine fields. Maybe our gig here isn't so bad after all. It all depends on your perspective. And believe it or not, your perspective is your choice. So, perhaps this really is the 'least worst place to be', depending on how you look at it.

One Joint Task Force Guantanamo service member has made the choice to make the best of his time here. During his working hours he welcomes the challenges given to him by his superiors, and gives 110 percent daily. He spends his downtime getting into shape and taking college courses.

Due to the unique nature of this service-member's job here, his identity must be protected, so he will be referred to as Max. Max is a member of the Joint Interrogation Group for JTF Guantanamo.

Seven years ago Max started out as an infantryman in a reserve unit. After three

years of serious ground pounding, Max's commander notified him of some active duty opportunities in a variety of medical specialties that were offering excellent incentives. So Max decided to go active duty and become a Mental Health Specialist.

After 50 weeks of intensive training at the Academy of Health Sciences at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, he became a Mental Health Specialist. "Basically I'm a counselor. It was excellent training and I also got certified as a substance abuse counselor and counseling in general psychiatry," said Max. "We were also trained in crisis intervention, depression counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, and suicide prevention."

Since finishing the program for his military occupational specialty and putting his skills to use in the active duty Army, Max has also completed a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Currently he is working on a Master's in Business Administration and hopes to go the officer's route in the near future. "I hope to get an active duty commission after my contract is up," said Max.

Right now Max is taking two classes here at the Naval Station - financial management and advanced computing/programming, both of which will count towards his Master's Degree. If all goes according to his plan, Max will get a commission in a logistics position where he can put his degrees to use.

Not only is Max academically inclined, but he can also strum a few tunes. After a long, stress filled day at work, Max finds playing his acoustic guitar very relaxing. He started playing when he was stationed in Korea for a year. "One of the KATUSA's (Korean Augmentee to United States Army) over there started showing me how to play and I actually got this guitar as a present when I got permanent change of station orders. It just so happens that my roommate here is pretty good at playing the guitar and he's teaching me a little bit more," said Max.

Max feels that it is important to focus on other things besides the job at hand, and by doing so, one can actually have better focus at work. It is a balance that one must

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Man on the Street

Compiled by Army Spc. Delaney Jackson

This week's question:

What are you doing better now compared to when you first arrived here?



Sgt. William Henderson,
HHC 2-116th Inf. Regt.

"Since coming here, I have actually been serving in my duty MOS, chaplains assistant. It was difficult at home since we had no chaplain, but here I've become better at performing my duty MOS."



Army Sgt. Aimee Lansky,
TK JAS

"I've learned how the Navy operates differently from the Army on the medical side of the house. It helps us to get people appointments more quickly."



Sgt. 1st Class Jimmie
Tubbs, 438th MP Co.

"I have a better understanding of the different cultures among the detainees and the different languages. Since we arrived there's been a lot of improvement in MP safety, it continues to be an everyday improvement."



Spc. Jeremy Boeck,
300th MP Bde

"I'm more proficient at my job, specifically diagnostics. I'm able to more quickly identify a problem with a vehicle, the quicker the problem is identified, the faster the vehicle is fixed and back out on the road."



Petty Officer 2nd Class
Shawnette Middlebrooks, J3

"I have a better understanding of how the Army operates by familiarizing myself with their publications, SOPs and manuals. This enables me to do my job as the J-3 Administrative Clerk more efficiently."

Quality of life is "all about options"

By Spc. George Allen

They keep saying, 'It's getting better every day,' here at Joint Task Force Guantanamo, but to prove it, Joint Task Force Command Sgt. Maj. George Nieves, has outlined some of the not-so-long-term quality of life improvements that troops will see over the next few months.

Shopping at Camp America ...

Camp America is getting two troop stores, a bigger, better Navy Exchange Mini-mart, and an Outfitter Shop honed to the fitness needs of JTF troops. "We want to expand so there's more merchandise for troops who live and work at Camp America," said Nieves.

A 2,700 square-foot pre-fabricated building is on order to replace the current shoppette. The NEX trailer at Camp America will remain open until the new NEX mini-mart is ready.

The Outfitter Shop at Camp America will be a separate store containing athletic clothing, shoes and sports nutritional goods. The store will carry four or five different styles and name brands of running shoes, and will have staff trained to determine soldiers' foot-types (flat or pronated, high-arched or supinated, or 'normal'), so that they can get the proper shoe for their running needs and reduce physical training injuries.

"The key is that they get the right running shoe to prevent lower leg injuries, like shin splints," said Nieves. "We want to equip JTF troops with the right equipment to do physical training, namely running, because we do a lot of that in our training program here."

Both stores should be complete within the next three months.

Speaking of physical fitness...

By the beginning of May, renovations of the second gym building at Camp Bulkeley will be finished. The existing gym will contain free weights, and the new one will have an aerobics area, tread mills, stair-steppers, and other aerobic type machines. The aerobics instructor and trainer that works at the Denich Gym will also come out to the Camp Bulkeley gym to provide training to our troops.

Calling home made easier ...

The new 'Moral Minder' software is now in place for Morale Calls, providing two 15 minute calls per soldier, per week via a computerized PIN number system. For troops that want to talk to their loved ones more than that, the Joint Task Force is working on more options to reduce cost and keep troops in touch with their families.

"If people want to call home more often, they can. They just have to pay for the service. We're trying to give them options to reduce the cost," said Nieves.

One current proposal is the purchase of pre-paid phone cards for all the JTF troops. Many phone cards charge over a dollar a minute when calling from Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, because the card's 'credits' may not translate into the same number of minutes offered by the phone company's pricing for this area. The cards that the JTF is looking into have one-for-one credits to minutes.

According to Nieves, the purchase of calling cards is still in the works and they are evaluating the risk and value of these cards.

JTF Guantanamo is also improving Internet access for troops. "We're laying the wire neces-

sary to add more computers to the MWR huts at Camp America and Tierra Kay, and we had a meeting with the folks from Phoenix Cable, with the idea of stringing cable to Tierra Kay and Camp America so that soldiers can subscribe to internet service for their quarters."

Troops can use email to stay in touch, and there are also Internet sites that allow one to call home for only a couple cents a minute using a computer. Some troops already take advantage of this, and have bought the headsets required to make these calls. "If troops want Internet (cable modem) in their quarters, they'll have to pay for it, but we're trying to make that option available also," said Nieves.

Billeting improvements ...

Troops will continue to move into Tierra Kay and Tierra Kay East (across from Tierra Kay), emptying Windward Loop and Camp Bulkeley. This will turn Camp America North into the 'home of the infantry'.

Across the street from Tierra Kay, ten buildings are being renovated in the old Kittery Beach Housing section, which will become Tierra Kay East and provide space for 200 troops. The 984th Military Police Company and troops from Windward Loop will occupy this area.

"We want the JTF footprint to start from West Iguana, and go out to Camp America. Camp Bulkeley will be cleared out," said Nieves.

According to Nieves, the intent is to make everything that a troop may need available in Camp America or Tierra Kay. "It's all about giving the troops options," said Nieves.

JTF Health Source

Heat injuries 101

By Army 2LT Wesley R. Grieve
JTF-Guantanamo, JAS

(Part one of a two part series)

The possibility of heat injury is always a danger but as the temperature soars, we need to increase our awareness to prevent heat emergencies. All Joint Task Force Guantanamo service members must understand how to prevent heat injuries and how to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat illness.

Hydration

As always, the best medicine is preventive medicine. Service members must aggressively and consistently monitor their fluid intake and output. During moderate environmental heat stress, one to three liters of water per hour can be lost through sweating. Limitations on physical exertion and the amount of water intake must be actively adjusted accord-

ing to heat conditions. It is also important to replenish electrolytes by incorporating salt-containing beverages, such as Gatorade, into the hydration plan.

Heat Injuries

Heat injuries increase in severity from heat cramps to heat exhaustion and ultimately to heat stroke if left untreated. Heat cramps are brief yet often severe muscular cramps that occur in muscles fatigued by heavy exertion or exercise. These patients usually are alert with hot sweaty skin, rapid pulse, and a normal core body temperature. Heat cramp management includes removal from the hot environment and replacement of sodium and water. Be alert for the signs and symptoms of heat emergencies in your buddies and those service members falling under your leadership. Train and work hard yet smartly. Hydrate for life! **Stay alert; Stay alive!**

(Part two next week will feature information on Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke).

Girl Scout cookies, Easter cards distributed to JTF troops



Spc. Alan L. Knesek

Lt Col. Herb Heavner, JTF chaplain, hands Spc. Denise Hanes Girls Scout cookies donated by the Miami-Dade Troop and easter cards donated by The Seagull School, Whiddon-Rogers Education Center, Coral Ridge Homeschoolers, the Evans family, the Turner family, the Battalion 1233, Christian service brigade, the Hughes family, the Russell family and the Johnson Family. All of these organizations and families are from Florida and expressed their appreciation for the sacrifices the troops of Joint Task Force Guantanamo have made. Spc. Hanes had this to say about the cards.: "I felt like I got a small part of home. When I got the card, I didn't even realize it was Easter. It really cheered me up."

Are those pounds creeping up? Now is the time to manage that waist line!

Sign up now for the Naval Hospital's new four part weight management program: "GTMO FIT"

Classes will begin

May 8, at 5 p.m. at the USNH training room

May 10, at 5 p.m. at the Camp America training room

For more information or to sign up call 7-2110

MG Miller kicks-off JTF Forum Talk Show

Do you have a question that you would like to ask MG Miller?

Then call in to the "Open Line" talk show on FM 103.1, "The Blitz," Wednesday, April 30, between the hours of 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. The "Open Line" talk show phone numbers are 2351 and 2300.

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maintain. "This is one of the better deployments that anyone could hope to go on. If you are able to keep focus on things other than work, have goals besides what you do everyday, then time goes by faster and you can maximize your time here by doing things like going to school. I go to the education center here constantly," said Max.

Always open to learning new things,

Max says one of the best parts about his experience here is interacting and working with the other services. "It has provided me with a greater understanding of how the U.S. Military works together," said Max.

Often, new experiences bring with them new mentors and good advice. Max says the best advice he's received here is to look at this deployment as an opportunity to better your self professionally and person-

ally. Although Max has been doing this all along throughout his military career, it is good to know there are like-minded people in his company.

His relationship with the Army has been a two way street. "I have gained lots of experience, both personally and professionally. I think I have provided the Army, hopefully, with a little awareness on how a soldier's mind is a very important thing," said Max.

Chaplain's Corner

**By CH (LTC) Herbert Heavner
Joint Task Force Guantanamo
Command Chaplain**

No way! It can't be done! It is simply not possible! Have you ever shouted out those words in desperation when faced with a task that seemed totally outside the realm of reality? When I was much younger and a student in graduate school there was a course that was required for graduation.

The course was a year long study in the Greek language. I didn't want to take that course. I knew if I did take it I would be totally embarrassed. I was convinced that not only would I be embarrassed, but that I would fail miserably. I wanted nothing to do with learning Greek. I avoided it like the plague. Ultimately I was forced to face reality. I had to take Greek or I would not graduate. If I did not graduate after working so hard to get where I was, I would be even more embarrassed. Not only would I be embarrassed, I would really feel like a failure.

In my mind, I would be a failure. So, in my second year of seminary I enrolled in Greek. I decided that if I was going to be forced into doing this, I would give it all I had. I took it one step at a time. My terrific wife helped me everyday with my vocabulary. She made out flash cards and drilled me until I could recognize every word. When it came test time, I passed every test with an "A". When I had to prove that I not only knew the words, but could also use that knowledge to interpret-I did it! How did I do it? I am convinced that it was my

reliance on God in my life that enabled me to succeed. The impossible became doable. The challenge became an opportunity for success.

To many of you, the idea of spending six months in Cuba loomed out there as a very difficult task. Then when the extension was announced, the difficult took on the appearance of the impossible. You may even have thought, "I don't want to do that!" Or the words may have come into your mind, "This task is not for me, I can't do it!" And you may not be completely off base. It might be something that you don't want to do. It may seem as though spending all the additional time with JTF Guantanamo is an impossible task; however, it is something that you can do. It is a task that you can survive. What can and will make the difference? Confidence in yourself is a beginning point, but confidence in God will carry you past the midpoint right through to completion.

Many of us actually are at least at that midpoint, or even a little past it. We have been successful so far, and with God's help and strength we will continue in that success. Sure it's tough. Sure it's a huge challenge, for us and for our families. Sure it may seem at times that it is outright impossible; however, with God's help we can do it. Don't get discouraged. Don't let your negative emotions ground you to an existence of discouragement and defeat. Allow your heart and mind to soar like an eagle. There the presence of God will be with you. He will enable you to successfully finish your time here on the island!



Photo by JOC Ric Evans

Joint Task Force Army Chaplain Maj. John Terrell conducts the Easter Sunday sunrise service on top of John Paul Jones Hill.

Worship Services

Catholic

Main Chapel

Daily	6:30 a.m.	Mass Cobre Chapel
Wed.	5 p.m.	R.C.I.A. Cobre Chapel
Fri.	5 p.m.	Rosary
Sat.	4:30 p.m.	Confession
	5:30 p.m.	Mass
Sun.	9 a.m.	Mass
	11 a.m.	Mass (Sanctuary B)

Camp America

Sun.	10:45 a.m.	Mass Wooden Chapel
	5 p.m.	Mass Wooden Chapel

Protestant

Main Chapel

Mon.	7 p.m.	Prayer Group Fellowship*
Wed.	7 p.m.	Men's Bible Study*
	7 p.m.	Spanish Group 390-Even's Pt
Thurs.	6:30 p.m.	Home Group Nob Hill 5B
	7:15 p.m.	Youth 7-12 Fellowship*
Sun.	6:30 a.m.	Praise and Worship Service
	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School
	11 a.m.	Service/Sunday School
	5 p.m.	Bible Study*

* Fellowship Hall located in Chapel Complex

Camp America

Wed.	7 p.m.	Service
Sun.	9 a.m.	Service White Tent
	7 p.m.	Service Wooden Chapel

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Sun.	9 a.m.	Sanctuary A
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Islamic

Fri.	1 p.m.	Classroom 12 ChapelComplex
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Jewish

Fri.	8 p.m.	Fellowship Hall
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Camp America Church Bus schedule:

Sun.	8 a.m.	Windward Loop
	8:15 a.m.	Tierra Kay

The bus will return immediately following worship.

Troops tour Old San Juan during 'Special Pass'

By Spc. George Allen

The leaders of Joint Task Force Guantanamo are showing their appreciation to 'high speed' troops by sending them to sunny Puerto Rico for a Four-Day Special Pass.

The J-6 Help Desk sent three servicemembers a few weeks ago -- Army Spc. Michelle Pross, Navy Information System Tech 3rd Class Adam Stogner, and Air Force Staff Sgt. Bill Dixon.

Although you have to pay for the flight (\$40 round trip), and for lodging (\$60 / night at the Roosevelt Roads Navy Lodge ... much more elsewhere), and for everything else on the trip, "it's well worth all the money you spend, to get away," said Dixon.

The Navy Lodge at Roosevelt Roads Naval Base is right next to the Navy Exchange, Commissary, and near the base club. There are nice beaches within 20 minutes of base also.



Photo courtesy of Air Force Staff Sgt. Bill Dixon
Spc. Michelle Pross, J6 Help Desk, relaxes in front of the Old San Juan tourist center, Puerto Rico.

"You have to rent a car to be able to get around," said Dixon. "You can expect to spend 50 dollars a day on that."

"Remember to make reservations for the Navy Lodge before you leave, and to sign up for a return flight to Guantanamo Bay as soon as you get to Roosevelt Roads, to guarantee yourself a seat," said Dixon. Show-up times are

10:30 a.m. going to P.R. and 5 a.m. returning.

Less than an hour away from base are beaches, malls, rain forests, Old San Juan, restaurants and nightlife, all of which Dixon's trio visited during their four days away from Guantanamo.

"The best beach is about 20 minutes from the base," said Dixon, and there are others behind hotels in San Juan that are very popular, but you have to pay for parking.

There are several malls in the area. "When we were in Puerto Rico, we did a lot of shopping and just walking around seeing things, but there's lots of other things to do, beaches, clubs, etc..." said Dixon.

The rain forest, which happens to be the only rainforest administered by the U.S. Forest Service, is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and is about a half-day excursion, including hiking, waterfalls and places to swim.



Movie Schedule

Camp Bulkeley	Downtown Lyceum
<p><u>Fri., Apr. 25</u> 8 p.m. <i>Biker Boyz</i> PG13 - 111 min.</p> <p>10 p.m. <i>Anger Management</i> PG13 - 101min</p> <p><u>Sat., Apr. 26</u> 8 p.m. <i>The Jungle Book 2</i> G - 72 min 10 p.m. <i>Old School</i> R - 91 min</p> <p><u>Sun., Apr. 27</u> 8 p.m. <i>Life of David Gale</i> R - 130 min</p> <p><u>Mon., Apr. 28</u> 8 p.m. <i>Anger Management</i> PG13 - 101 min</p> <p><u>Tues., Apr. 29</u> 8 p.m. <i>Old School</i> R - 91 min</p> <p><u>Wed., Apr. 30</u> 8 p.m. <i>Life of David Gale</i> R - 130 min</p> <p><u>Thurs., May 1</u> 8 p.m. <i>Dark Blue</i> PG13 - 118 min</p>	<p><u>Fri., Apr. 25</u> 8 p.m. <i>Sugar and Spice</i> PG13 - 82 min</p> <p>10 p.m. <i>Exit Wounds</i> R - 101 min</p> <p><u>Sat., Apr. 26</u> 8 p.m. <i>The Base</i> R - 97 min 10 p.m. <i>Payback</i> R - 102 min</p> <p><u>Sun., Apr. 27</u> 8 p.m. <i>We Were Soldiers</i> R - 138 min</p> <p><u>Mon., Apr. 28</u> 8 p.m. <i>Last of the Mohicans</i> R - 120 min</p> <p><u>Tues., Apr. 29</u> 8 p.m. <i>Independence Day</i> PG13 - 145 min</p> <p><u>Wed., Apr. 30</u> 8 p.m. <i>Spy Game</i> R - 127 min</p> <p><u>Thurs., May 1</u> 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. <i>The Messenger</i> R - 141 min</p>

(Left) The Windjammer's dance floor heated up Saturday night when The Johnny Header Show came to town. Performances were by "Jezt Bryan's" Red Eyes, Juana Lynn Gonzalez and Rodriguez and Oquendo Rappee Latino. The dance floor was filled with Joint Task Force servicemembers and Naval Station servicemembers performing the Salsa, the Meringue and the Cha-Cha dance. The Johnny Header's Show was another success for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and for JTF-Guantanamo MWR. (Photo by Spc. Alan L. Knesek)

NATIONAL SPORTS

In the headlines.....

"I'm deeply sorry," Eric Dybas said. "I regret doing everything that I did." Dybas said he wanted to distinguish himself from the three men who had stormed the field before he leaped from the stands during Tuesday night's **Chicago White Sox-Kansas City Royals** game. "I wanted to get a rise out of the crowd, plain and simple," Dybas told the Chicago Sun-Times during an interview at Cook County Jail. "I wanted to do something that would stick out a little more, but I never intended for it to be like I was trying to inflict any danger on anybody." 24 year old Dybas faces one count of felony aggravated battery and one count of misdemeanor criminal trespassing. He faces up to 5 years in prison.

Bill Self was introduced Monday as the new basketball coach at Kansas, which lost Roy Williams to North Carolina shortly after losing the **NCAA Championship Game**. Self's first college coaching job was as Larry Brown's assistant at Kansas in 1985, and he called his new post "the most prestigious act in all of college basketball." Bill Self leaves an Illinois program which he led to two Big Ten regular season titles and one conference tournament title. Self leaves with a 78-24 record with the Illini, and he led the team to the NCAA Tournament each year, reaching the elite eight in 2001.

Dennis Weathersby, a standout cornerback at **Oregon State** and a top prospect in the upcoming **NFL** draft, was shot in the back Sunday in an apparent gang-related shooting. Weathersby, 22, was shot at about 5:24 p.m. Pacific Time, in a residential neighborhood, said Sgt. Donnie Johnson, a spokesman for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. He was taken to a hospital, but his condition was not immediately known. The drive-by shooting occurred in an area with a fairly high concentration of gang activity where numerous shootings have occurred recently. Weathersby was a semifinalist last season for the Jim Thorpe Award given to the nation's best defensive back. He was rated as one of the top 10 cornerbacks in this year's draft class.

In one of the greatest offensive performances in **National Basketball Association Playoff** history, Allen Iverson scored 55 points on 21-32 shooting from the floor, to lead the **Philadelphia 76'ers** over the **New Orleans Hornets** 98-90 in game one of their 7 game series. Paul Pierce led the **Boston Celtics** to 4th quarter comeback over the **Indiana Pacers** in game one of their playoff series. Pierce scored 40 points (21 in the fourth) and also set an NBA Record for most free throws made without a miss. Also in the East the **Orlando Magic** beat the **Detroit pistons** 99-94 behind MVP candidate Tracy McGrady's 43 points to take the first game. The **New Jersey Nets** and the **Milwaukee Bucks** are knotted up, 1-1, in the first round of the Eastern Conference playoffs. The Bucks capitalized on the Nets' inept free throw shooting to win, 88-85 Tuesday night. New Jersey made only 9 of 20 from the charity stripe. Gary Payton led Milwaukee with 22 points while Sam Cassell added 21.

The **Phoenix Suns** upset the **San Antonio Spurs** in game one of their series behind two desperation 3-pointers. With 8.4 seconds left in regulation Amare Staudemire banked a 3-pointer to send the game in overtime. In overtime Stephon Marbury banked

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STANDINGS

(As of April 24)

American League

	<i>W</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>PCT</i>	<i>GB</i>
East				
NY Yankees	18	3	.857	----
Boston	14	7	.667	4
Baltimore	10	10	.500	7.5
Tampa Bay	8	13	.381	10
Toronto	7	15	.318	1.5
Central				
Kansas City	15	3	.833	----
Chicago	12	9	.571	4.5
Minnesota	9	11	.450	7
Cleveland	7	14	.333	9.5
Detroit	2	17	.105	13.5
West				
Seattle	13	8	.619	----
Oakland	11	10	.524	2
Texas	9	12	.429	4
Anaheim	9	12	.429	4

National League

East				
Atlanta	12	9	.571	----
Philadelphia	12	9	.571	----
Montreal	12	9	.571	----
Florida	11	11	.500	1.5
NY Mets	9	12	.429	3
Central				
Chicago	13	8	.619	----
Pittsburgh	10	10	.500	2.5
Houston	10	10	.500	2.5
St. Louis	9	10	.474	3
Milwaukee	8	13	.381	5
Cincinnati	7	14	.333	6
West				
San Francisco	16	4	.800	----
Colorado	12	9	.571	1.5
Los Angeles	9	12	.429	7.5
Arizona	8	13	.381	8.5
San Diego	8	13	.381	8.5

in another 3-pointer with no time remaining after Spurs center Tim Duncan missed two free throws, which could have sealed the game. Kobe and Shaq combined for 71 points to lead the 5th seeded **Los Angeles Lakers** over the **Minnesota Timberwolves** 117-98, taking away home court advantage for the Timberwolves. However, Minnesota evened things up in the Western Conference first round by pounding the Lakers, 119-91. The T-Wolves' dynamic duo of Kevin Garnett and Troy Hudson combined for 72 points. Garnett pulled down 20 rebounds. Dirk Nowitzki score a game hi 46 points to lead the Dallas Mavericks over the **Portland Trail Blazers** 96-86. The Mavs hold a 1-0 advantage in the Western Conference first round series. The **Sacramento Kings** beat the **Utah Jazz** 96-90 in game one of the Western Conference first round, then took a commanding 2-0 lead in the series with a 108-95 verdict in game two.

Sports highlights compiled from ESPN.com

JTF SPORTS & FITNESS



Spc. Alan L. Knesek

1st Lt. Shaw Locke, 303rd MP Co. team, hits a home run during Wednesday nights game against the Cleveland Steamers (PAO). The 303rd MP Co. went on to win the game with a final score of 9 - 8.

Guantanamo Softball Standings

Teams	Wins	Losses
JTF HQ	5	0
Security	5	0
PWD	4	1
303rd MP Co.	4	1
NAVSTA	4	1
Hospital	4	1
W.T. Sampson	4	1
USN MIUWU 212	3	2
NEX	2	3
G-Unit (PAO)	2	3
JTF GIG Ice Breakers	2	3
Migrant Ops	2	3
344th MP Co.	2	3
36 LIMA (MCSF Co.)	1	4
ACS Defense	1	4
J4 Trans	1	4
MCSF Co.	0	5
NMCB21	0	5

Marine Corps Martial Arts Class 4-18-03



Spc. Delaney T. Jackson

38 members of JTF Guantanamo graduated from the Marine Corps Martial Arts Class Friday, April 18th. The three-week long training course was the first of several training sessions in the Marine Corps Martial Arts program, allowing its graduates to hold the rank of Tan Belt. The martial arts program, taught by the Marine Corps, is required of all Marines, but this particular class was open to volunteers as well. And 30 non-Marines (all members of the JTF) stepped up to the challenge. According to Gunnery Sergeant Robert A. Gariepy, the head instructor of this course, the program is designed to create the 'complete warrior'. It teaches you to push yourself even when you don't think you can go any further. It also helps you to develop the mind, body and spirit, as well as work together as one cohesive team.

15 Minutes of Fame...

with Sgt. Heidi McMeekin
300th Military Police Brigade

Making a difference inside the wire

**Interview & photo by
Spc. Alan L. Knesek**

Army Sgt. Heidi McMeekin, of the 300th Military Police Brigade works in Camp Delta as part of the Joint Detention Operation Group. She joined the Army Reserve in 1991, and after eight years, she took a break from the military life. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, she joined the Army again, feeling that her efforts and contribution to the Army could make a difference.

Q: What do you like about working in Camp Delta?

A: I feel that working in the wire, we have a direct impact on the Global War on Terrorism and we contribute to those efforts on a daily basis.

Q: How did the extension here affect you?

A: I anticipated a year deployment from the time that we got here. A six-month extension didn't really take me by surprise and I'm not actually disappointed about it. I enjoy my work here.

Q: How long have you been in the Army and why did you join?

A: I was in from 1991 to 1999 and I had a break in service. Then I got back in after September 11, in 2001. I joined because I wanted a challenge. When I first joined, I was just out of high school. I got very bored with the idea of having a civilian job, working in an office. So I wanted the challenge, something different?

Q: What drew you back in after your break from service?

A: After things happened on September 11, I felt like they could definitely use the help. As an NCO, I really wanted to further my skills as a leader.

Q: How did your family feel when you told them you wanted to join the Army?

A: That's a funny story actually. I didn't really tell anyone I was joining the Army. I just did it and then told them after the fact. My family had confidence that it was something I wanted to do. So they supported me in it, but they were kind of surprised though.



Sgt. Heidi McMeekin of the 300th Military Police Brigade says the mission here is making a difference in the Global War Against Terrorism.

Q: What have you found to be the most challenging aspect of being in the Army?

A: As a reservist, I think you have to be more disciplined to stay up on your soldier skills and do physical training on your own time.

Q: What has been the biggest challenge being deployed here?

A: I think it's hard not to let things get routine, since GTMO is a very small area with a limited number of things to do. I think though, if you seek out the MWR opportunities it can break up the monotony.

Q: Is this your first deployment?

A: I've had a previous deployment so I've had a lot of active duty experience. My last deployment was to Germany in support of Operation Joint Endeavor in 1997. I would say that I have a lot of active duty experience as a reservist, but nowadays it seems like more and more it is the norm.

Q: What do you do in your free time here?

A: I plan on doing the ceramics course and also I've signed up for the pottery classes. I've also looked into volunteering with the sexual assaults advocacy program.

Q: So, where do you go to school back home and what is your major?

A: Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. I have been going there for a couple of years. I was actually a transfer student from a community college in the area. I only need to take four more classes to finish off my bachelor's degree. I plan on getting into social work; eventually I want to get a M.S.W (Masters in Social Work). I enjoy working with teens in social work. My first job in social work, I worked with teenage male sex offenders. It was actually quite interesting.

Q: What sets you apart from other soldiers here?

A: I'd have to say a lot of previous experience as a reservist and the fact that I was out for a while and came back into the Army. It kind of gives me perspective on why people may leave the military and what draws them back in.

Q: How does your family feel about you being here?

A: My family is a very supportive of everything I do. My sister has been really supportive in emailing me and sending me packages. I talk to them on the phone quite a bit and I think that is the key.

Q: How do you think this deployment has affected you so far?

A: It has affected me in a lot of ways, mostly positive. Since I'm in social work, I'm making a lot more money here. I also feel that being back on active duty is helping me to get back and re-train on a lot of the skills. After having that break in service, I could definitely have used the refresher.

Q: What do you miss the most about home?

A: I miss going out with my friends to J.D.'s Key club, it's a piano bar in Pontiac. I also miss Taco Bell, KFC and Chili's and just seeing my friends and family.

Q: What is the best advice you have received?

A: The best advice I have received here is not to let the small things get you down and to try and actually get out and do things. People who stay at home all the time are miserable, so I try to make the best of social activities in my off time.