“What could possibly go wrong?” That’s a question we should all be asking ourselves every day as we perform our mission, engage in recreational activities, and go about our daily routines. Without taking the time to think through the possible things that could go wrong, there’s no way to thoughtfully consider the second- and third-order effects of those things. There’s no way to take specific actions to avoid those things. There’s also no way to make an accurate evaluation whether the things that could go wrong are really so bad after all, and whether the benefits from the action you’re planning are worth the chance that something will still go awry.

For most of us, this thought process was installed in us when we were children. We learned to evaluate the “pros and cons” of various activities and courses of action as we learned to ask ourselves questions like “Will I get hurt?” or “Will I get in trouble?” or “Will I make my family look bad?” As adults, we have a more refined decision-making tool to help identify risks and benefits and determine the best course of action. This is called Operational Risk Management, or ORM.

Everyone should be familiar with the five steps of ORM: identify the hazards, assess the hazards, make risk decisions, implement controls, and supervise. While all of these steps are equal in importance, it is Step 1: “What could possibly go wrong?” that we need to revisit most frequently. Remember that hazards aren’t just physical dangers like “I might sprain my ankle if I slide into second base” or “I could damage my vehicle and injure/kill myself or others by driving while distracted.” They include the risks to mission accomplishment, unit morale, and the reputation of the United States and Department of Defense. If you don’t take the time to think through everything that could possibly go wrong, then there is no way you can properly evaluate the potential negative consequences (hazards) associated with an activity or action.

In addition to the five steps of ORM, it is important to also understand the tool’s four basic principles, as these will help you take appropriate action to manage risks once all possible hazards have been thought through: accept risk when benefits outweigh the cost, accept no unnecessary risk, anticipate and manage risk by planning, and make risk decisions at the right level. Many of the risk decisions to increase safety and ensure mission accomplishment have been codified in Standard Operating Procedures, policies, instructions, and regulations; however, each of us is still faced with a huge number of potential hazards every day. These potential hazards need to be identified first before action can be taken to prevent them from causing injury or damage to ourselves, our fellow Troopers, our unit, or our family.

Be smart out there, continue to ask “what could possibly go wrong?” and use the tools of ORM to help keep us all safe while executing our mission every day.

Navy advancement exams

JTF Sailors: exams are coming up. If you are an individual augmente to Guantanamo, contact NCCS Stanford at 9541 or email PS1 O’Hara at christina.ohara@usnhbgm.navy.mil as soon as possible to get your name on the exam list. It’s your career!

Paperclips closed

If you need office supplies next week, get them Wednesday or you’ll get bent out of shape! Paperclips etc. will be closed July 19 and 20 for annual inventory. The store will resume normal hours June 23.

For more information, call 74603.

Learn to lifeguard

You guard lives every day while you’re in the military, but how’d you like to learn to be a lifeguard? Starting July 21, the Red Cross offers a class that will teach you just that! For $80, you get all the instruction you need to be a Red Cross-certified lifeguard. Sign up at the Dentich Gym as soon as possible, as space is limited.

For more information, call Tony at 84969.

Cloudy skies for Air Sunshine

Until further notice, recreational flights will only be available through IBC Travel. Only service members returning from R&R leave are authorized a reserved seat on the personnel. Personnel on pass will not have seats reserved. For further information, call Air Sunshine’s customer service desk at 1-800-327-8000. For more information on your pass, ask your chain of command or call the Joint Personnel Center at 9763.

Use travel insurance!

If you have friends or family visiting over the summer, U.S. Naval Hospital Guantanamo recommends you get travel insurance if your visitor is not active duty or an active duty dependent. The average price of an urgent medevac is $30,000. The rotator and C-12 flights are not an option for those who have to be medically evacuated off-station.

NAVSTA Security car wash

They may see you rollin’, but they’re not hatin’. This Saturday, let the MAs catch you on the head! For more information, call the NAVSTA Recycling Department at 2323.

North East Gate Tour

Want to learn about the history and lineage of the North East Gate and the United States Marines at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay? Meet at the-minute Hill Parade Deck at 11 a.m. on the third Friday of every month for the North East Gate Tour. For more information, call 2344.

Jewish religious support available

Jewish chaplain support will be available July 18-24. For more information, call the NAUSTA Religious Ministry Department at 2323.
What Independence Means To Me

I ask you to take time out of your day and reflect on the sacrifices that we have all made to ensure that we remain a free country. These rights, which have been defended since 1776 and which are still defended today, are what July 4th truly stands for.

Thinking back on our July Fourth barbecues, fireworks, and events, let us remember what we really celebrate: our independence! We have fought on many different battlefields over the years, but the one remaining constant has been our loyalty to our country and the freedom that we protect. My family has fought to almost every war that the United States has been in, and I hope that we continue this tradition in our family. I think about my grandfather and his time in the Navy during World War II and my great uncle during the Vietnam Conflict and how much pride they took in wearing the uniform and what they were fighting for. So I ask you to take time out of your day and think of those who came before you. Think of those who will come after you and the sacrifices that we have all made to ensure that we remain a free country. These rights, which have been defended since 1776 and which are still defended today, are what July 4th truly stands for.

Remember, it’s your right to vote

To vote absentee, call ET1 Robles at 4721 or register online at http://www.fvaps.gov/index.html
B

Being deployed at Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay is no easy job. The hours are often long, leaving Troopers little time to themselves. It is quite a feat then that Sgt. Dora L. Brock, detentionary library non commissioned officer, found time to complete her bachelor’s degree in the year she was deployed to Guantanamo.

“While here, because of my grades, I made the honor roll,” Brock said about her studies. “I took advantage of all the activities that went on here at [GTMO] but my main focus was my studies.”

Brock earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice, an area of study she is familiar with. Although the online path allowed her greater flexibility when it came to her schedule, she still faced some challenges.

“The downside is, for a person my age, it was a little bit harder to get used to the computer work and meeting deadlines and the essays,” said Brock. “But once I got into it and I learned the school had a lot of resources to help me I just [did it].”

Brock is set to leave the island this week-end as her tour comes to an end. She has no plans to stop though as it is her goal now to complete a master’s degree in education.

“The master’s is like my gift to me,” said Brock. “It’s going to be my ultimate accomplishment.”

Bullet Bio

Advice to junior Troopers: “Never give up on your goals and achievements, because as long as you put your mind to it anything is possible.”

Hometown: “I’m a Georgian.”

Time in Service: About 13 years

Favorite College Course: Forensics

“Jesus. He’ll give as definite answers to so many questions.”

Pfc. Hector Gutierrez

“Martin Luther King Jr. He did so much for civil rights without compromising his principles of nonviolence.”

Spc. Brendan Daniels

“Manny Pacquiao. He could teach me how to fight.”

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Mykel Noceda

“Marilyn Monroe. She came from nothing and worked her way up to the top.”

Tsgt. Sgt. Kimberly Trumpeter

If you could hang out with anyone in history, who would it be?

If not many Joint Task Force Troopers have their motorcycle here at Guantanamo. That mode of transportation is sitting, waiting for them back home.

Before you throw your leg over the seat, you need to think about the riding skills you learned in the Motorcycle Safety Foundation’s (MSF) Basic Rider Course (BRC) or a similar program. These are required courses in order to ride while serving in uniform.

Recently, the American Motorcyclist Association published a list of safe riding tips. These timeless pieces of advice are from a motorcycle crash study completed three decades ago, showing that not much has changed to stay safe on two wheels.

Don’t drink and drive, and don’t speed. These seem like no-brainers, but both remain leading causes in crashes.

Speaking of brains, a helmet tops the list of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This is not where you want to go cheap; at a minimum the helmet needs a DOT approved sticker. Experienced riders go with the added “Snell approved” designation for maximum protection.

While many states are helmet optional, wearing a brain bucket in a crash reduces brain injuries by 67 percent and you are one third less likely to die as compared to riders without a helmet.

On the clothing front, jackets and pants save the skin, while gloves and long-sleeved garment complete the minimum PPE for the upper body. A riding jacket is optional but offers the best abrasion protection. Some jackets have inserts to save your back, shoulders or elbows in the event you fall.

When it comes to your lower half, how many times have you seen someone riding with shorts and sandals, thinking to yourself that they are just looking for a skin graft? Thirty percent of all motorcycle injuries involve the leg-and-foot, and these are not all from crashes, but include injuries from hot exhaust pipes and bikes just falling over.

Military riders need to wear long pants and over the ankle footwear. For the best protection, riding pants and boots are the way to go according to the experts.

To see the importance of the right riding apparel, the MSF “Food’s Gear, Cool Gear” video at www.msf-usa.org gives you a guided tour from head to toe, comparing and contrasting the benefits of wearing a full complement of safety gear to the risks of riding with inadequate protection, showing you can be safe in style.

The allure of open rural roads with the scenery and turns are some of the best backstops to travel on. But those roads present unique hazards like slow moving farm equipment and animals. Many a rider tells of hitting a deer or other large animal. The same goes for military installations, whether in cantonment or out near the ranges. Just ask me about the large groundhog on Fort Dix, N.J. that put me in a cast for two months; I’m fairly sure I stepped in his world on my way to the top.

There is always a mental judgment to be made when you see a problem ahead brake or swerve? If a car is tailgating, then braking is probably not a good option. If it is a two-lane road and there is oncoming traffic, then swerve could be a bad decision. The rule of thumb at speeds less than 30 miles per hour: it’s better to swerve.

One last fact from the study was that riders who have rider education are less involved in accidents. Besides refreshing your BRC every three years, military owners of sport bikes need to attend the MSF’s Military Sport Bike Rider Course (MSRC). Servicemembers coming off deployment greater than 180 days are required to attend Motorcycle Refresher Training (MRT), and all motorcyclists are encouraged to take the Experienced Rider Course (ERC).

Information on the classes is available at safety offices or online. The Army Motorcycle Mentorship Program website is https://safety.army.mil/nnmp/default.aspx. Or, check out your nearest militarycyclerider.com or the MSF website.

To ride safe back home, remember all your training and you will enjoy the freedom of motorcycling, without becoming what some medical folks like to call riders: organ donors.

Safe riding: a way of life that preserves life

By Sgt. 1st Class Ken Westhaven

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

If you could hang out with anyone in history, who would it be?

Jasen Kevon Baker

Maj. Handy

SSG Alexander

SGT Baker

SPC Potter

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Trooper Focus

By Spc. Vanessa Davila

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On a blustery early evening, the Soldiers stood in formation awaiting the inevitable. The sun was slowly sinking over the horizon; it not only marked the end of a day but an end of an era for them. The tides of change were upon them and they stood ready to answer the call.

On July 5, the 525th Military Police Battalion bid a fond farewell to Lt. Col. Christopher Wynder and embraced their new commander, Lt. Col. Darcy Overbey, with open arms.

During his tenure as the commander of the 525th, Wynder has seen more than 2,000 Soldiers pass through his battalion. They included four external security companies and three iterations of battalion staff, all comprised of active duty, Reserve, and National Guard troops.

Wynder stood in front of his troops one last time and delivered a heartfelt speech. “We could not conduct our detention operations mission efforts without the collective efforts of each and every one of you,” he expressed to his troops. He stated that regardless of their military occupational skill, their work inside and out of the camps was important, and he appreciated all their hard work and effort.

Since taking command, the 525th has produced two United States Army South Noncommissioned Officers of the Year as well as this year’s Joint Task Force senior and junior Trooper of the year. After a proverbial laundry list of accomplishments, Wynder summed up how he saw the Soldiers of his beloved command. “There are many more accomplishments, but the 525th Soldiers do not seek out fame or glory,” said Wynder. “You just do your job every single day with pride and professionalism. I saw it in your eyes daily that you cared about the mission.”

Upon finishing his speech, Wynder asked the Soldiers to do two things: “take pride in your work and strive for excellence every day.”

Overbey kept her speech short and to the point. She promised the Soldiers that she would be completely dedicated to the mission and to them. She thanked Wynder for all the valuable information he bestowed upon her. “Chris, there is no doubt that you have made a lasting impression on this unit and all of the Soldiers that have been part of this battalion over the past two years,” she said.

Easing the minds of her Troopers she finished her remarks: “All policies and procedures remain in effect.”

Several Joint Task Force Guantanamo elements bid farewell to Cuba Thursday, taking with them up to a year’s worth of shared knowledge, experience, and good times.

“I met a lot of special people,” said outgoing Joint Visitor Bureau deputy director Army Capt. Eddie RosaRamos. “I’m going to miss you all.”

Members of the Army Reserve’s 641st Regional Support Group, the Georgia Army National Guard’s 170th Military Police Company, and the Missouri Air National Guard’s Base Emergency Engineer Force (Prime BEEF) boarded the ferry, and several remaining Troopers participated in the traditional jump off the Ferry Landing pier to say goodbye to their friends. While the rotational force guarantees frequent personnel changes, the friendships forged here will certainly last a long time.

Meanwhile, elements of the Puerto Rico Army National Guard have assumed their new roles.

“The mission doesn’t change,” said Brig. Gen. James Lettko, JTF Guantanamo Deputy Commander. “We rely on the new folks to compare the Standard Operating Procedures and make corrections. The new team asks the questions and improves the SOPs. It’s a positive thing.”

Pick up a future edition of The Wire for full coverage of the Puerto Rico Army National Guard!
GTMO’s Bowling League:
No Gray Hairs Required

Troopers at the Marine Hill Gym’s jiu-jitsu class practice the proper technique for choking an opponent. The class meets three times a week to practice the “Gentle Art.”

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kyle Steckler

I can honestly say I’m not a great bowler. In fact, it’s not even a question: I’m average at best. Did the ball roll down the lane and knock over some white things? Then mission accomplished.

Personally, I’ve always thought of bowling as a social sport. It’s a way to meet new people, get to know people better, and have a couple of drinks, all while praying I’m not the worst one playing that night.

According to Cliff Exley, Public Works Facilities Manager for Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) and the GTMO bowling league president, that is exactly what it’s all about.

“One of the best things about the league is the fun you have playing,” said Exley. “The people participating, the competitive- ness and the fun are all the best things about it.”

This particular incarnation of the league started a little more than a month ago and is running for 12 weeks.

“Due to the constant transfer of personnel at GTMO, we try to have more short leagues as opposed to long ones,” said Exley. “This allows for maximum participation for anyone who wants to join.”

As a member of the league, and because this is my first experience with a bowling league, the learning curve has been steep. Figuring out the handicaps and averages, points for games won and most pins scored; it’s all a new world to me, but so far it’s been a fun experience. Spc. Davon Gaines, a Joint Task Force Guantanamo Trooper bowling for the team “Keepin’ It Real,” said the same thing.

“I’ve only been bowling for about six months, but the league has challenged me to get better every week,” said Gaines. “I’m glad my friends asked me to join.”

Typically, the league meets on Mondays at GTMO’s own bowling alley, Marblehead Lanes, at 6:30 p.m. Two teams will then play three games against each other, using averages, handicaps and total downed pins to calculate the score.

“We have several key people that make this league happen, as well as a lot of help from MWR,” said Exley. “But ultimately, it’s the people that make this fun. The more people that show up, the more fun I have.”

Exley also added that GTMO’s leagues are not sanctioned by any professional or non-professional bowling organizations. Typically, bowlers register with a particular organization and can then go anywhere in the country and retain their average; not so at GTMO. The average one establishes here won’t be able to be carried anywhere else, and vice versa.

So far, I’m enjoying the bowling league. You don’t need a ball or, to be honest, any skill whatsoever. I’m still not the best bowler, and I’m still happy when, by some miracle, I hear the sound the ball makes when it crashes into the pins. I’m always given a quick high five by my teammates regardless of how I do, because it’s not about the bowling; it’s about the fun.

By Army Sgt. Brett Perkins

It’s a typical Friday evening on Guantanamo Bay. The sun has just set and a wind gently whispers across the top of Marine Hill. I step to the door of the Marine Hill Fitness Center and try to pull open the double doors. It’s stuck. Another quick tug and it opens to a dimly lit cardio area. Am I in the right place? I head towards another set of doors through which I can see a lighted room beyond. I enter the next room; it’s a large open gym with mats set on the floor. A small Filipino man stands at the front of a mixed formation of eleven service members. The man wears a set of robes that end just above the floor. To one side another man stands in a gi with a yellow sash belted around his waist. The man is a mixed formation of eleven service members. The man wears a set of robes that end just above the floor. To one side another man stands in a gi with a yellow sash belted around his waist. The man is a member of the group to attention and they bow.

This class is about the basics of jiu-jitsu, almost anyone could join this class and participate. Motivations bringing people into this class vary. The instructor is a lifelong martial artist who got started at age five by learning boxing. A Marine tells me that he would like to improve at his job. A Soldier is here because he is already familiar with the art and is looking to keep his skills current. No matter the reason, this looks to be good physical training. Meeting three times a week at 8:00 pm, it still makes me wonder, who was the man that named this discipline? To me it looks as though jiu-jitsu is anything but “soft and gentle.”

Troopers at the Marine Hill Gym’s jiu-jitsu class practice the proper technique for choking an opponent. The class meets three times a week to practice the "Gentle Art." - photo by Vet Brett Perkins

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The Battle of Raspberry Creek

Fifty Marines against a brigade

By Cpl. Jonathan Wright
31st Marine Expeditionary Unit

The Australians had been holding the buildings across the road, the rest of the mounted forces began to move towards the town. Among those were more APCs and LAVs unloaded their 12-troop passengers - into the waiting mare of a M240G machine gun fire team.

"Far we’ve killed more than a platoon’s worth of troops with a lost of eight Marines," said Staff Sgt. Bryan Robins, platoon sergeant for 3rd Plt., Co. G. "They haven’t made it into more than one room yet, for us to pin them down as they approach the town. If we want to have to assist to the Australians," he said as fire came through the open windows. "It’s the Raspberry Creek Alamo now!"

1424 - Impatience coursed through the enemy ranks. After more than six hours of fighting and two hours of stalemate, the remaining Marines endured for more action.

"They think fighting 50 Marines during the day was bad," said Robins. "Wait until they have to fight 18 during the night."

Over the next few hours, intermittent firefights and minor Australian advances were made at the Marines’ numbers, but the Australians continued to suffer a much higher casualty rate. At the 11-hour mark, 12 Marines remained, prepared to fight 18 during the night.

1700 - With an average of one kill every five minutes, Moyer, Robbins and other Marines were fighting fire with fire that suppressed the Australians on the roofs and second stories of the surrounding buildings. Two additional fire teams remained in the town; one moving around to draw fire away from Moyer’s team, while the other set-up defenses in a building adjacent to Moyer’s.

With the sun now set, darkness was descending upon the town. The Australian soldiers donned night vision and made their advances, using the retreating light as concealment. However, the Marine fire team closed by darkness proved much deadlier than expected.

1737 - A team of soldiers broke through the first-floor barricades of the reinforced building. Standing between those soldiers and the building’s capture was Moyer, the three-star veteran Robbins, three Marines, and two machine guns stationed on the staircase. With exceptional suppression and assistance of simulated grenades, the Marines held their position for an additional 20 minutes, eventually being overrun and killed. Two of the Marines were killed in action and taken as prisoners of war.

"We fought to the last and held them off as long as possible," said Cpl. Fritz Waechtler, the Marines maintained their position for an additional hour.

1837 - With nightfall, the Australians forced the tank to cease fire and give up.

Continued to the indoors, Moyer was unable to call in further artillery strikes but continued to coordinate egress routes and where to focus fire.

Volunteering gives satisfaction, builds esprit de corps, and creates friendships. For example, in October of last year the rainy period caused damage to trails, brought heavy growth of brush, and overtook any thing that resembled a trail. A group took on the gargantuan task of locating the trails and cutting back the brush. Those who volunteered were disciplined and kept a steady sense of humor throughout the task. They opened up miles and miles of trails which weaved through this base and offered splendid vistas and places of tranquility. Their trails got used.

That team, consisting primarily of the 170th National Guard unit, left a footprint, opened trails, built beautiful benches for all to enjoy and enhanced the deployment experience of everyone who ventures on them. Get out and see their work for yourself.

Spiritual resiliency training, or SRT, may sound like military speak but translates to worship, fellowship or study groups. Air Force engineers of the Base Emergency Engineer Force (Prime BEEF), practiced SRT training on a weekly basis. A large and consistent number of them attended Trooper Chapel, and midweek they went to Bible study in the Chaplain’s office led by members of the group. Together they shared spiritual growth, engaging conversation, and a lot of fun. Members of that group also participated in the major Morale Welfare and Recreation events and leagues. They’ll leave with dressers full of t-shirts and carry home stories of their fulfilling time on the island. They grew deeper together and gained friendship while contributing to the JTIF mission. What the BEEF modeled is carried out every day of the week by those who get involved in SRT.

In those groups and experiences, Troopers gain inspiration, friendships and personal strength.

Talk with a helping professional. A month ago a Trooper was checking out and simply started unloading stories and challenges he faced during his work here. Then he said, “Chaplain, that felt really good. I should’ve done this months ago.” Another shared a painful experience regarding his situation but it was hours before he left. In both situations they simply entered the office and unloaded accumulated stress carried through much of their deployment. Certainly GTMO can be a stressful place, and some positions carry more or less challenges than others. Caring conversations may prevent stress overload and inappropriate behavior. Simply conversing with your Chaplain, SRT, or representatives from Fleet and Family Support Center can reduce anxiety and anger, address grief and sorrow, or prevent engaging in risky behavior.

Finally, get involved! As you’ve been told many times, GTMO has a ton of activities for deployed Troopers and Naval Station family members. Their activities run the gamut from athletic events to arts and crafts. You can engage in ambitious, adrenaline driven events to placid kayaking on the bay. If you don’t care to participate, then volunteer as mentioned above. MWR is always looking for people to help with their events, and simply get involved. One or five volunteers at seemingly every MWR event offered. She was a terrific motivator for all who participated. She made things happen.

Make your time fly here. Volunteer, practice SRT, chat with a helping professional, and get involved. There is so much to be engaged in and so many friendships to make. Don’t just survive here but THRIVE and come alive! You’ll leave GTMO a very satisfied person and a much better service-member.

Vivendo la vida dulce en Guantanamo!
**Movie Review**

**PG**

**100 min.**

I'm very fond of Pixar. I still remember seeing their first feature-length production, “Toy Story,” way back in 1995. At the time, my only exposure to computer animation had been from watching the TV show “ReBoot.” “ReBoot” was the first completely computer-animated TV series, and it was a great show, but its early episodes suffered from very primitive animation.

“Toy Story,” on the other hand, looked leagues better. I was completely blown away by the visuals I was seeing, but even my 10-year-old self instinctively knew that CG was nothing more than a tool for telling a story, and that “Toy Story” had a good one. For that reason, it still holds up well today.

Pixar has remained true to their original formula since then, putting out a string of visually-stunning movies, but the visuals don’t mean anything unless they accompany a good plot. A few years back, I became absolutely breathtaking. Our story begins with the tomboyish Princess Merida (voiced by Kelly Macdonald, TV’s “Boardwalk Empire”) of her royal hand. Merida hatches a plot, announcing that since she’s the firstborn of her clan, she’ll win her own hand! She easily bests each suitor in archery, humiliating the clans and earning the ire of her mother.

Merida and her mother have a vicious argument that ends with Merida running away into the forest, where she stumbles upon a quaint little hut, occupied by a witch (voiced by Julie Walters, “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows”). Merida implores her to cast a spell to change her mother’s attitude. Unfortunately, things go horribly wrong and she has to scramble to undo the damage she has wrought before she ruins her mother’s life.

This is what anyone could tell about the movie. From there, it’s watching the trailer, and it’s all from the first third of the movie. I have to give kudos to Pixar for being able to draw viewers in with a trailer that only shows scenes from the beginning of the movie, instead of giving away plot points. I can’t help but compare it to one of the most blatant examples of marketing done wrong, “Terminator 2: Judgment Day.” In T2, we were supposed to be surprised when Arnold Schwarzenegger turned out to be the good guy this time, but the marketing for the film actively ruined the surprise by making it a selling point of the movie. The marketing for “Brave,” on the other hand, kept us guessing, and I applaud it for that.

It’s par for the course for Pixar to make visually-stunning movies, but the visuals in this movie still stunned me with their beauty and atmosphere. It all takes place in a fantasy version of Scotland, and it looks absolutely breathtaking.

The voice performances in this movie were very good. Scottish characters were played predominantly by Scottish actors, and the authenticity shines through. In fact, the Scottish accents were so good that I actually had a wee bit o’ trouble understanding them at times. When I buy the movie, I’ll definitely be watching it with subtitles turned on.

The fantastic settings and funny accents are just window-dressing, however, for the underlying plot of a daughter and mother in a strained relationship who “mend the bond, broken by pride.” It’s a simple plot, but a compelling one.

On that note, I recently read a guide to writing movies by a Pixar writer. In it, she revealed Pixar’s secret to writing effective plots. The key, she said, was to show your characters in a happy, contented state, and then to bring them out of their comfort zone. The rest of the movie is the actions of the characters trying to return to the status quo, usually learning a lesson about themselves along the way.

This movie definitely follows that formula. With that knowledge, I now see the movie as a companion to “Finding Nemo.” In “Finding Nemo,” a father is questing to save his son. In “Brave,” a daughter is questing to save her mother. The locales and details may be different, but the underlying plot is almost the same.

“Brave” could be called a movie that plays it safe. It doesn’t try to do anything earth-shatteringly original. It is, however, content to tell a simple story very well. I don’t think there’s anything wrong with that.

There have been Pixar movies I didn’t see, but there has never been a Pixar movie that I saw and didn’t enjoy, and this movie didn’t break that streak for me. It’s well worth a watch.

You stay classy, Guanoanato.