Denich’s Giant
Weight-lifting Trooper stands out at the gym

SCUBA comes to a halt
The what, where and why of next week’s safety stand down

JMG takes flight
Medical acquires its first Airmen in JTF history
“Leadership is leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent its ends and the motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations – of both leaders and followers. And the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their followers’ ends and motivations.” – McGregor Burns

“This cardinal mistake is that he isolates himself, & allows nobody to see him; and by which he does not know what is going on in the very matter he is dealing with.” – Abraham Lincoln

We (leaders) can learn a lot from former president, Abraham Lincoln. During his presidency, Abraham Lincoln spent the majority of his time among his troops. He realized these were the ‘doers’, these were the people who were going to get the job done. He met with key leaders of his cabinet and senior military members in their homes, offices, and in the field, principally to provide direction and leadership. He toured various strategic interests in Washington D.C., to obtain accurate knowledge of the workings and abilities of the armed forces. This contact gave him first-hand knowledge needed to make informed and accurate decisions. He didn’t have to rely solely on the word of others. He visited members of Congress, key confidants and toured other venues that housed the sick and wounded, which demonstrated his compassionate and caring nature.

Leadership is being in touch with your people and the internal and external stakeholders of the organization. It facilitates innovation and makes possible the teaching of values to every member of your organization. Listening, facilitating, teaching and reinforcing values is invaluable. What is this except leadership? Thus, MBWA (Managing by Walking Around) is a management technique of leadership. Leading is primarily paying attention to your environment and its surroundings. As leaders, we can not assume anything. You can not lead effectively by sitting behind the desk everyday, checking, and answering email. You must be out and about ‘walking around’ your area of responsibility, talking to people and reinforcing the command message and your Commander’s vision and intent. You are your Commander’s Ambassador – you and your fellow Troopers are an extension of your leadership’s command voice. The leader must get everyone working together toward fulfilling your goals.

When you are home, what will you say you did during your time with the Joint Task Force? Will you have bettered yourself or will you not want to say due to the choices you made? I believe in working hard and playing hard but watch out for situations that can get you into trouble. i.e. overconsumption of alcohol. Enjoy your time here and make the best of it.

What do you want to achieve while stationed on Guantanamo Bay, personally and professionally? I have been here since October 2010 and will be for possibly another six months as the non-commissioned officer-in-charge of J8. I have seen lots of new faces during my current stay, causing me to think of the following questions for new Troopers coming here. I will share my answers and thoughts on these questions.

What are your personal and professional goals while here?

My personal goals were to work on me as a person and learn about myself. I wanted to learn and try new things, rather than staying in my room. My other goal was to save money during my time here.

My professional goals were to tackle each challenge given to me while discovering other issues needing to be addressed. I have learned so much in my current job. Every day I learn much more than I thought possible from all branches of the armed forces and J-codes.

What do you want to achieve at GTMO personally and professionally?

Personally, I wanted to focus on my physical health. I have lost weight by focusing on my physical fitness, participating in new activities like kayaking, hiking, disc golf, ceramics, pottery and diving. MWR offers so much to do, you just have to go and do it. I would like to personally thank the Guantanamo Bay Liberty program, Jill Lynch and MWR for making my deployment so enjoyable.

Professionally, I believe these idioms: “Leave it better that you found it.” “Treat others as you would like to be treated” and “Look at yourself in the mirror and ask yourself if you did the right thing and would you do that again?” I strive to do that every day.

When was the last time you stopped and reflected on what you have done and where you are going next? I am looking forward to the time I have left on the island. My next personal goal is to learn the pottery wheel and complete the Marines’ half-marathon on October 1. My professional goal is to master a new computer system. Then soon it will be time to go back to my civilian job as a middle school special education teacher.
Bluzapalooza craft fair plus free BBQ food

Armed Forces Entertainment and Guantanamo Bay’s Morale, Welfare and Recreation are hosting a craft fair with entertainment, Sept. 3, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Ferry Landing Beach.

“The event will offer youth art, relay games, a craft fair and a barbeque dinner to kick off the event. There will be fun for everyone,” said Henigman.

The Bluzapalooza concert will also include blues history. Bluzapalooza veteran Billy Gibson, the “Prince of Beale Street,” will take the stage at 7 p.m.

Bluzapalooza is dedicated to showing the military appreciation for the selfless service they give to their country.

Henigman at x2113 or the Denich gym at x4882.

For more information, call x74795 or x84435.

Sailors host auction at Bayview to raise funds

Join the Navy Ball Committee at the Bayview’s Mongolian Night Sept. 8 for a friendly auction to raise money for the upcoming Navy Ball.

An assortment of more than 35 items, ranging from celebrity signed T-shirts to dinner for four certificates and an FBI polo shirt with coins will be offered up for auction.

The event will start at 6:30 p.m. with Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Justin Afles aka Radio GTMO’s “Dr. J.” as the auctioneer and emcee.

Anyone can participate - military members, civilians and dependants. Committee member Boatwain’s Mate 2nd Class Chris Pullan said IOUs will be accepted, to be paid by Sept. 16.

“The more money we raise, the more we can spend on the ball,” said Pullan. “Plus, people get a chance to support the Navy and get a good deal on items.”

Pullan said Radio GTMO plans to buy their donated celebrity T-shirt back so bidding will be competitive.

Most starting bids are between $10 and $20, with a few starting at $30 and $40.

“It’s a good event because it promotes camaraderie among shipmates and helps us celebrate the Navy Birthday and other Navy traditions,” said Pullan. “Here on GTMO, it gives everybody a chance to get out and have a good time too.”

For more information, contact Pullan at x84125.

9/11 prayer breakfast at Seaside Galley

Remember, reflect and renew at the Seaside Galley prayer breakfast, Sept. 9 at 7 a.m.

For more information, contact the JTF Chaplain's office at x2305 or x3203.
SCUBA SAFETY

STAND DOWN

Story by Army Sgt. Mathieu Perry

All recreational scuba diving on Naval Station Guantanamo Bay will be secured from 1 a.m. Sept. 6, until 11:59 p.m. Sept. 11.

Daily briefings will be held to address the recent increase in recreational scuba-related incidents, ensure compliance with base regulations and enhance diver safety. Class attendance is required before diving can recommence for each person.

“There have been several instances of individuals who have signed the local diving instruction saying they have read it and then not followed [it], whether willfully or otherwise,” said Navy Lt. Shawn Ware, Naval Station Guantanamo port services officer.

Boatswain’s Mate Senior Chief Carl Jakubec, assistant port operations officer, said the lack of compliance with base regulations can be seen in the change of attitude toward diving.

“In my opinion, the actions of recreational scuba divers on island has taken on the mindset that diving is a right and not a privilege,” said Jakubec.

He hopes this move will help the diving community to better police themselves.

“Diver’s can no longer use the, ‘I didn’t know’ excuse,” said Jakubec. “An additional form has been made that draws out the main points and each one has to be initialed.”

The majority of all diver-related issues dealt with by port services are divers forgetting to call port operations to secure their dive plan, explained Ware.

“Divers need to call up here and give us a dive plan with a start and stop time,” said Ware. “When they hit their stop-time, port control has 15 minutes to find them. At that point, if they haven’t found them, we contact security.”

Jakubec wants to help divers better understand the role of port services in addition to creating greater diver awareness of base regulations, new stricter penalties for violations and safety aspects of diving.

“We are also trying to educate divers that port control is there for the professionalism and safety of the bay,” said Jakubec. “Alongside their intended job responsibilities are added the safety and responsibility of each diver, buddy team and boater that goes out there and we are going to try to accommodate them as much as we can.”

Eleven briefings will be held during the week of the safety stand down. The classes will be in the Bulkeley Hall auditorium at 8 a.m., 12 p.m., and 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and at 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Friday. For more information, contact port control at x4899.

Troopers make history as first Airmen of Joint Medical Group

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joe Deane

Joint Task Force Guantanamo servicemen are accustomed to seeing Navy Hospital Corpsmen and Army Medics when they go to sick call, but now they’ll be seeing new faces and uniforms as Air Force medics recently arrived on Guantanamo Bay joining JTF’s Joint Medical Group.

Master Chief Hospital Corpsman Brian Domino, Joint Medical Group senior enlisted leader, said they are the only Airmen ever assigned to the unit.

“We welcome the diversity and experience they bring to the Navy and Army Troopers we have here,” Domino, who recently departed, said before he left. “We are very happy to have them as part of the team.”

Master Sgt. Ted Kraska, non-commissioned officer-in-charge of Joint Stress Mitigation and Restoration Team, Joint Trooper Clinic Health Administration, Staff Sgt. Albert Coronado, Staff Sgt. Andrew Waggoner, Senior Airman Paul Borrell and Senior Airman Charles Skinner, had no idea they would be the only Airmen at their deployed location. All agree it is an honor to represent the Air Force.

“We want to set the standard for future personnel stationed here and do the best job we can do,” said Kraska, who is home-stationed at McDill Air Force Base in Florida.

His junior NCOs are on the same page.

“It’s important for us to contribute to the team and help out in any way we can,” said Coronado, who deployed from Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

“The medics did not waste any time getting to business.”

“In the short time we have been here so far, we have been able to show our Navy and Army counterparts a little of how we do things back at our home stations,” added Waggoner, who came from Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

“It feels good to bring something different to the table.”

As the junior members of the group, Borrell and Skinner, from Travis Air Force Base in California and Langley Air Force Base in Virginia respectively, said they were most interested in gaining knowledge from their new Navy and Army teammates as well as from their senior Airmen.

“I’m motivated and excited about the opportunity I have to learn from everybody I’ve met here,” said Skinner. “The Sailors and Soldiers have already taught me a lot about taking care of patients and my Air Force leadership here has shown me firsthand how to carry myself in a joint environment. I’m just going to keep asking questions and do what I need to do to get the job done.”

Despite the difference in rank and experience, each of the Airmen joined the Air Force to do the same job – to help save lives.

“We have to set a good example for how Air Force medics operate and do their jobs,” said Waggoner. “We also need to be good wingmen and teach our counterparts how we help and look after each other, the Air Force way.”

The senior member of the group understands the responsibility of being the first wave, but he also recognizes there will be more Airmen coming in as well.

“We have to set a good example for how Air Force medics operate and do their jobs,” said Waggoner. “We also need to be good wingmen and teach our counterparts how we help and look after each other, the Air Force way.”

The senior member of the group understands the responsibility of being the first wave, but he also recognizes there will be more Airmen coming in as well.

“We do what we do now will set the tone for all future Airmen coming in to take over these positions,” Kraska said. “We’re aming high and we will hit the mark.”
The Woman behind the Rank
Colonel, boat captain, volleyball player, fisherman – is there anything Col. Linda Ross can’t do?

Photographing a Morale, Welfare and Recreation volunteer appreciation dinner for Troopers who serve as boat captains for the MWR fishing trips, I met Linda Ross.

We exchanged a stiff handshake, made direct eye contact and Ross said, “You must work with your hands.” I looked down at my palms – she must have noticed they were a bit rough. Intrigued by her keen observation, she struck me as a positive, confident and friendly woman.
Not having my rank makes others reticent from the start. Being able to chat with junior Troopers, see things from their perspective, share ideas or bring people together who can mentor one another is very fulfilling.

Sitting into a chair, I glanced around at my surroundings. There was a pile of folders directly in front of me. Looking down I realized, “Colonel – she’s a Colonel!” A flush of nervousness was a pile of folders directly in front of me. Looking down I pondered. “Did I call her Ma’am?” Was I acting differently? She was a Colonel! I wondered. “Did I call her Ma’am?”

It wasn’t until coming across Ross’ biography in a Women’s Equality event flyer, for which she was the guest speaker, that I decided to write a story about her. She had five years of All-Army Volleyball, was a prior enlisted mechanic and earned a doctorate degree in clinical psychology. As I read this, my interest in Ross peaked. Within a few days, I secured an interview and set out to understand the woman behind the rank.

This is her story.

Ross joined the Army in 1975 to pay for college. She never desired a commission - in fact, she loved being a non-commissioned officer and mentoring junior Soldiers. She became an officer after being told her leadership experience as an active duty and National Guard non-commissioned officer was needed in her college’s newly implemented ROTC program. They wanted her to be the battalion commander.

Thirty years later, Ross is still proudly serving. Currently, she is the Director of the Behavioral Science Consultant Team. She and her non-commissioned officer in charge teach a class to new Troopers before they begin working inside the detention facilities. Their class focuses on the mental preparation guards and medical providers need when working with detainees.

Ross says the best way to get her message across is through interactive, realistic and fun training.

“I want to communicate that we are approachable,” Ross shares, describing her team’s approach to teaching. “I sometimes joke that BSCT stands for the “no BS” zone. We are no BS consultants, because we talk about the difficult obstacles they will have to deal with. The class involves role playing of recent difficult guard-detainee interactions and an explanation for the changes in the detention facility over the years.”

During the training, Ross goes in-depth through each aspect of the safe, humane, legal and transparent mission of care and custody of the detainees.

“This is a critical job,” Ross explains. “Our guards and medical providers are at the tip of the spear, entrusted to interact with dangerous detainees we have in custody. It is critical that they understand every aspect of their mission.”

Combining her experience in sports and psychology, Ross incorporates the use of a sports psychology model of attention and performance to show Troopers how to maintain their focus when dealing with detainees.

“I try to think, ‘What is the essence that they need to know and how can we best present it in order to increase their learning curve right out of the gate so they are prepared for any type of manipulation by the detainees?’” Ross explains while drawing a four-square attentional model for me – the same one she uses in the BSCT class. “They are told to ‘Be professional and follow the SOP at all times.’ This is true, but I try to give them the tools they can use in every situation, as well as indicators so they can be aware of when they might be drifting one way or the other.”

Ross has observed that being a colonel often gets in the way.

“They see colonel,” Ross says pulling at the insignia centered on her uniform. “And they think, ‘Oh, I can’t talk with her, she’s a colonel!’ What I want them to get is that I am a Soldier with some experience and training that I got for the specific purpose of helping everyone in this command to be as successful as they can be.”

She actively finds ways to minimize the typical reaction she gets from junior Troopers toward her rank. First, she ensures the BSCT training provides valuable information in a dynamic manner.

“PowerPoint training is not effective for our purposes,” says Ross. “We want to get to know them, ensure that they really understand why they are here and give them specifics on how they can always be mentally prepared for their tasks.”

Doing this helps her and her NOCIC reach the Troopers more effectively and help them feel more comfortable approaching the team for advice.

Second, she volunteers as a boat captain with MWR. “When volunteering, I show up in civilian clothes and I don’t know who will be on my boat. When I meet them, I say ‘I’m Linda,’” she explains. “I never give them my rank, so to them maybe I’m an NCO, a civilian – who knows? They just relax and we go out on the boat.”

Once out on the water, Ross notices a dynamic among the group and enjoys just being “Linda.” She recalls a particular fishing trip with a group of junior Sailors and a few senior enlisted.

“We’re out on the boat and these very junior Sailors are talking about the Navy and what they might want to do,” Ross narrates. “At that point, the more senior Navy Sailors started giving them really great advice and mentoring.”

Most important to Ross is the opportunity to bond with Troopers over a common interest while at the same time being available to provide guidance.

“Not having my rank makes others reticent from the start,” Ross says. “Being able to chat with junior Troopers, see things from their perspective, share ideas or bring people together who can mentor one another is very fulfilling.”

Having been on Guantanamo Bay for over a year now, Ross’ time to rotate is drawing near. She will take with her a mental picture of her time spent with Troopers out on the bay and a great appreciation toward Jill Lynsd, MWR Liberty Program Manager for making the boat trips successful.

“Being out on the bay at night with the moon and the stars shining brightly, due to the lack of city lights here, is one of the quietest and peaceful places you can be. I love it!” Ross concludes.
For Voge, lifting isn’t about how much weight he can put up — it’s about pride in himself and well, looking good.

Voge, currently the Navy Expeditionary Guard Battalion N7 training leading petty officer, said he started lifting weights while serving on the USS John S. McCain in Japan and has been building muscle ever since.

“I had a bunch of friends I worked with in engineering,” Voge remembers. “I used to be a Damage Controlman. The guys did a lot of lifting, so my good buddy Tito and I went to the gym. I just got into it — it became my stress reliever.”

When he first arrived on Guantanamo Bay, Voge worked inside the camps and found his way up to the assistant watch commander position — a stressful one.

“If I have a long day at work, it’s always that place [the gym] I can go — my little sanctuary,” Voge shares. “I go and get lost in my thoughts and my music and just pound away.”

Soon after he became an assistant watch commander, Voge was selected to attend training at the National Rifle Association where he earned his small arms instructor qualification. Upon returning to the joint task force, Voge was moved to the NEGB training department.

“I love it,” Voge exclaims. “It’s the most rewarding job I’ve had yet within my naval career. I can give back, not only to the Sailors who work under me, but to the entire battalion — all 500 plus of them.”

Voge helps set up and coordinate the training pipeline for new NEGB Sailors.

“Seeing the Sailors from the time they get here until they leave — it’s rewarding,” Voge explains. “You get to see a lot of different people transition and become better people and better leaders.”

Although his new job title isn’t as stressful as the old, he still hits the gym on a regular basis and says he prefers to go alone, not for selfish reasons but for the safety of his friends.

“I don’t do well with partners,” Voge explains. “I try to take friends under my wing, and, unfortunately, I break em’ every time because they try to keep up with me. [Plus], getting that pause between switching weights, I end up losing my momentum, speed and I get cold.”

Although he prefers going solo, Voge always lends a helping hand at the gym, whether it’s spotting a buddy or giving advice to someone new.

“Find a friend,” Voge advises, “Go together and you’ll feel better about yourself.”

Voge says the most important part of lifting weights and working out is the balance of eating right and making time for the gym.

“You have to make time,” Voge admits. “It’s never easy getting back into it if you take a break, … but you have to push past that.”

Reading magazines and watching others is how Voge gains most of his knowledge.

“It’s all about form — look around,” Voge instructs as he does a scan of Denich Gym’s weight room, full of sweaty and determined Troopers. “Watch what other people do and learn from it. Then try your own twist on it but don’t forget your form.”

Listening to music is another ingredient in Voge’s motivation. His iPod holds a seemingly endless list of eclectic titles and artists.

“I listen to techno, anything upbeat and anything new,” he shares. “It depends on my mood; I need something energizing. Last time I updated my iPod, I had 14,000 songs.”

He works out for about an hour and a half at a time and says he prefers to go alone, not for selfish reasons but for the safety of his friends. 

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“They have a saying here,” Voge says, “You can either be that hunk, that chunk or a drunk — you choose!”

The Body Builder

Weighing in at 266 pounds and standing 6-foot-4 inches tall, there is no doubt Master-at-Arms 1st Class Christopher Voge is a formidable presence.

He’s not just a big guy though — he’s an iron pumping machine.

With 115 pound dumbbells in each hand, Voge takes a deep breath as he leans back on a bench a Denich Gym - he exhales and up it goes - 230 pounds.

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Army extends family accounting for hurricane relief

Army Corps crews work to clear debris from Irene

New efforts enhance Irene response with 24/7 National Guard

Inside the Jar

More active-reserve billets open to Marines during FY11

Navy extends family accounting for hurricane relief

Army Corps crews work to clear debris from Irene

More active-reserve billets open to Marines during FY11

The Wire | Page 14

The Wire | Page 15
High winds and treacherous flood waters have halted the transportation and arrival of Guantanamo Bay's newest cinematic experience. And, really, what's more important here than the new movie schedule? Short answer: nothing.

At a loss, I glanced at the movies showing this week and realized I either a) already reviewed them, or b) totally didn't want to review them. So instead, we're flying without a net this week.

That doesn't mean I'm not going to deliver. Like it or hate it, this is my page and I've got other talents as well. They mostly all hinge on sarcasm.

So, without further ado, I present "Seven Days in GTMO: An Anti-Boredom Guide."

The following words, sentences and paragraphs will introduce Guantanamo Bay veterans and members alike of some of the island's most treasured pastimes and meals. Think of it as Seven Wonders of the World, but take out the word "wonders" and replace it with "Random Stuff" and then take out the word "world" and replace it with "GTMO." Let's begin with Monday. It's the start of another work week, people are sluggish and groggy. And what is on everyone's minds? Coffee! Get ready quicker than usual and find time to make your way up to the Triple C coffee shop, located between the Bayview Club and the BOQ. My personal favorite is vanilla chai tea. If you're not in a hurry, have a few sips while looking out over the water. Close your eyes, breath in the fresh morning air and vow not to strangle the people you work with. A well-made cup of coffee can almost always cure a bad case of Mondays. (Cue "Office Space" joke here.)

Skip ahead eight hours. The first day of work is over – you've survived. If your job is anything like mine, you're ready to hit something. Luckily, Monke, Welfare and Recreation had the foresight to offer free disc golf on Monday evenings, enabling servicemembers to throw discs at baskets with force and abandon. Show up at the Lateral Hazard golf course office at 5 p.m. and put your disc-throwing skills to the test. Then, after a brutal day of work and golf with frisbees, hit the galley for dinner, doing something productive like laundry or studying and go to sleep – Mondays are typically lame anywaze.

Tuesdays aren't as ominous as Mondays, but still have their challenges. Believe some of that residual Monday tension after work by hitting the batting cages, located right next to Denali Gym. A couple of hooks will get you a decent amount of balls. Make sure you're wearing the proper safety attire (mostly because it makes anyone who wears it look like a golfer and the rest of us need a laugh) and make like Barry Bonds.

A highly sport needs to be followed with a manly meal and I guarantee you, the Jerk House's BBQ sauce will kick you in your…

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The United States' extensive outsourcing of military functions in war zones has been controversial since the beginning of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

A report by the bipartisan Commission on Wartime Contracting has heightened concerns with details of allegations of billions of dollars lost due to waste and corruption.

To lessen wartime strains on America's all-volunteer military force, the Pentagon hires private businesses to provide a vast array of support services.

Reliance on contractors expanded drastically during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, feeding what is now a large for-profit military industry funded by U.S. taxpayers.

The commission's co-chairman, Michael Thibault said that not all of the money has been well-spent.

"Total spending on contract and grants in Iraq and Afghanistan amounts to $206 billion. We estimate that $31-$60 billion of that total has been lost or is being wasted to loss and fraud," said Thibault.

At a news conference Wednesday, Thibault stressed that the commission's aim is not to attack the reputations of individual contractors, but rather to identify problems in the government's contracting process. He says many problems have been identified.

"The cost of contract support has been unnecessarily high," the U.S. government has not effectively managed contracts to promote competition, reward good performance, and improve accountability for poor performance and misconduct by both government and contractor personnel," Thibault said.

An example of counter-productive efforts, the commission alleges that some U.S. funds for construction projects in Afghanistan wound up in the hands of insurgents funding American troops.

Contractors do everything from serving meals to troops to building power plants and guarding diplomats.

The commission urges an overhaul of government contracting procedures in war zones, and even phasing out the use of contractors for certain functions.

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Report: Up to $60 billion wasted in Iraq, Afghanistan

By Stephanie Hof - Voice of America News Service

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The other commission co-chairman is former Congressman Christopher Shays.

"The way forward demands reform. With tens of billions of dollars already wasted, with the prospect of more to follow, and with the risk of re-creating these problems the next time America faces a contingency, denial and delay are not good options," said Shays.

Questions surrounding private military contractors are not new. In 2007, Congress held hearings on allegations that contractors targeted Iraqi civilians with excessive and reckless force. Eric Prince, founder of Blackwater, a well-known military contracting firm, denied any wrongdoing by his firm.

"I disagree with the assertion that they acted like cowboys," Prince said.

Democratic Senator Jim Webb of Virginia said the commission's report is a call to action for Congress. "These recommendations will be listened to and, when appropriate, acted on by the United States Congress," Webb said.

In May, the Congressional Research Service reported that the United States had 155,000 private contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, compared with 145,000 uniformed personnel.
Under the circumstances: Making the best of your deployment

A preachers was visiting an elderly widow in his congregation and asked her how she was.

“Well, preacher,” she replied. “I’m doing all right, under the circumstances.”

“What are you doing under there in the first place?” asked the preacher.

As I look back on my time here at Guantanamo Bay, I am realizing more and more how much your attitude has to do with what your experience here is. If you maintain a good attitude, it can be a good experience. On the other hand, if you throw a “poor me” pity party every day, you’ll end up under the circumstances every time.

My advice is to use the time you have here to make better yourself. Take time to improve yourself in all of the major areas of life while you are on this island. I’m going to concentrate on three: the physical, mental, and spiritual.

For the physical, there are a lot of opportunities available to improve your health. Learn a new sport (beer pong doesn’t count). Take up SCUBA or sailing. Get out of the barracks and enjoy yourself.

In terms of the mental, there are a lot of routes to take as well. Take a class at the college. Read a good non-fiction book on a topic you are interested in. Attend a lecture. Take correspondence courses for your occupational specialty. Download Rosanna Stone and learn a new language. You can even take up a new hobby and learn woodworking or pottery.

To improve your spiritual well-being, put time into studying your religion – or someone else’s religion, for that matter. Read a book on a spiritual topic you are interested in. Spend more time talking to God and listening to Him. The possibilities are endless.

The choice of how you leave Guantanamo Bay is up to you. Are you going to be better, worse or the same as when you got here?

In the end, you are the one responsible for the choices you make. You can’t change or be accountable for what others do, but you can change what you do. And that’s what makes the difference.

As I look back on my time here at Guantanamo Bay, I have many other activities offered, including sailing lessons, mountain biking, paddleboarding, kayaking, and much more. Don’t become a GTMO hermit – it’s not good for your complexion. If I’ve learned anything from my time here, it’s that you can’t take anything for granted.

Before you help yourself at the Bayview, however, what about whacking some golf balls at the driving range? I’ve been burned before, but with just a little bit of coordination enough to take on the whole course, but the driving range requires barely any skill. Perfect for golf-averse types who, like me, just enjoy whacking things.

TGBF – you thought Friday would never arrive. And yet, once the start to the weekend by picking up this fine, respectable publication and devoting it to cover over. I know many of you are fans of the movie review but if you take the time to peruse the rest of it, you’ll find fun, quirky stories written by my colleagues and friends. They work hard for their money, why not throw ’em some love? (FYI: Naval Station Guantanamo’s Gazette comes out this day, too; helmed by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Justin Ailes, also known as the Voice of the Talking Ignition – for realz!)

After you’ve been shocked and awed by the talented crew of The Wire, double check that movie schedule and make your plans accordingly. The MWR consistently schedules newer movies on weekend nights, so make sure to clear your schedule and catch at least one show; if not a double feature. And don’t worry about dinner because the snack window has hotdogs, enchocos and poppers from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to anyone who wants to get down and dirty.

After you clean up from your strenuous paintball mission, grab your broski’s and head to the Windjammer for dinner. (The Jerk House is a Guantanamo Bay must, of course, but the driving range requires barely any skill. Perfect for golf-averse types who, like me, just enjoy whacking things.)

When you leave, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

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Mind, Body & Soul | The Last Word

Under the circumstances: Making the best of your deployment

A preachers was visiting an elderly widow in his congregation and asked her how she was.

“Well, preacher,” she replied. “I’m doing all right, under the circumstances.”

“What are you doing under there in the first place?” asked the preacher.

As I look back on my time here at Guantanamo Bay, I am realizing more and more how much your attitude has to do with what your experience here is. If you maintain a good attitude, it can be a good experience. On the other hand, if you throw a “poor me” pity party every day, you’ll end up under the circumstances every time.

My advice is to use the time you have here to make better yourself. Take time to improve yourself in all of the major areas of life while you are on this island. I’m going to concentrate on three: the physical, mental, and spiritual.

For the physical, there are a lot of opportunities available to improve your health. Learn a new sport (beer pong doesn’t count). Take up SCUBA or sailing. Get out of the barracks and enjoy yourself.

In terms of the mental, there are a lot of routes to take as well. Take a class at the college. Read a good non-fiction book on a topic you are interested in. Attend a lecture. Take correspondence courses for your occupational specialty. Download Rosanna Stone and learn a new language. You can even take up a new hobby and learn woodworking or pottery.

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HONOR BOUND
Troopers from the J4 department pose for a group photo in front of the Honor Bound pillars, Wednesday. - photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Sally Hendricks

ROCK AND ROLL
Sailors attached to Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 23 load a piece of cement into the bucket of a backhoe at Windmill Beach, Wednesday. - photo by Army Sgt. Mathieu Perry

PATRIOTIC
The U.S. flag flies high over Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Monday. - photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kilho Park

IRENE TAKES HER TOLL
Hurricane Irene pounds Phillips Dive Park, Saturday as gusts of wind and water rush the beach. - photo by Chief Cryptologic Technician Christopher Hileman