
Staff Sgt. Jim Charles (left) examines a screw he fastened into a rafter while Senior Airman Matthew Frost supports the rafter as part of the construction of an awning, attached to the guard shack at the entrance of the Expeditionary Legal Complex near Camp Justice, Tuesday. — photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jordan J. Miller

Cheerleaders from the Miami Dolphins entertained and signed autographs for Troopers of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, Sunday. — photo by Navy Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Elisha Dawkins

Miami Dolphins Cheerleaders
The Commercials
The Pig Bowl
The Game
February 15 is the anniversary of the 1898 sinking of the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbor, which led to the Spanish-American War. This is significant for Troopers for two reasons.

First, the war resulted in a U.S. naval presence at Guantanamo Bay. Second, it provided a stellar example of the type of missions that could prove vital to the effort in Cuba. His reputation as someone who got things done likely had a lot to do with that.

Can you carry a message? Few of us are a seasoned traveler. Rowan was. That doesn’t mean we have any less opportunity to be a “go-to” person. Everyone is responsible for coordinating with Cuban insurgents already on the ground. Those efforts are a part that’s entrusted to you, regardless how large or small it may seem.

Andrew Summers Rowan (center, holding his hat) and General Calixico y Iniguez Garcia (right). Photo taken in Cuba, 1898. Work in the U.S. military between the Civil War and World War I. His reputation as someone who got things done likely had a lot to do with that.

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What was the most creative thing you’ve ever done for Valentine’s Day?

I put flowers with her initials.”

“Keep it simple, stupid. Stick with a card and candy.”

“Send valentines and candy home to your husband, daughter and mother.”

“Instead of sending roses, I put together flowers with her initials.”

“Call the wife and send an e-card.”

“Send valentines and candy to your husband, daughter and mother.”

“A lone protestor aligns himself against the Egyptian Security forces as protests in the country continue.

Egypt Military: Mubarak to ‘Meet Protesters’ Demands

Doctors in white lab coats and lawyers in black robes flooded Cairo’s Tahrir Square Thursday, linking striking workers with anti-government protesters.

In addition to the prolonged protests by thousands in the capital, the opposition has turned to labor actions across Egypt affecting tourism, textiles, railways and the government.

Meanwhile, Egypt’s state prosecutor has launched a corruption investigation against three former government ministers and a member of parliament from Egypt’s ruling National Democratic party.

Media reports Thursday say the investigation is targeting former Commerce Minister Rachid Mohammed Rachid, former Tourism Minister Zuhair Garana, former Housing Minister Ahmed Maghrabi and parliament member Ahmed Ezz.

New Military Strategy Calls for Redefined Leadership

The first revision in seven years of the National Military Strategy calls for redefining leadership in a changing world.

The document released Tuesday is the first revision since 2004 of the ways and means that the military will advance U.S. national interests.

It builds on the 2010 National Security Strategy and the objectives in the latest Quadrennial Defense Review.

“Our military power is most effective when we are able to ‘safeguard’ the nation and its people.”

The National Military Objectives are designed to counter violent extremism, deter and defeat aggression, strengthen international and regional security and shape the future force.

Violent extremism directly threatens Americans, their way of life, and America’s vital interests, the strategy says.

Navy cuts some re-enlistment bonuses

The Navy is cutting or eliminating re-enlistment bonuses for 31 different skill and experience combinations, a Navy Personnel Command memo released Wednesday.

Some cryptologists, intelligence specialists and electronics technicians are among those slated to receive either a smaller bonus or nothing at all for re-enlisting in their current job category, according to the memo. Bonus sizes within job categories vary both by specialty and zone, which is determined by time served in the Navy.

The move covers 19 reductions and 12 eliminations of bonuses, while 105 skill and zone combinations remain unchanged, the memo said.

The reduced bonuses are a result of tougher competition to remain in the Navy, according to a Navy news release.

Selective re-enlistment bonuses are used to retain sailors with critical skills and tend to vary, depending on which jobs are undermanned.

To view the complete list, go to www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Messages/.
Troopers be aware of CAC card email scam

It looks official, it sounds legitimate and it has an air of authority and consequences should you fail to heed the message – all the elements of a successful scam and that’s exactly what it is. Making the rounds of the network and finding its way into Troopers’ inboxes is a new email scam informing Troopers to click to change the length of their identification access card PIN. The message reads:

Subject: IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED: CAC PIN length increases

In order to handle the high volume of CAC PIN resets, an automated CAC Reset site has been established that calls for PIN length to be at least 10 digits and no more than 14 digits.

Therefore a new requirement has been established that calls for PIN length to be at least 10 digits and no more than 14 digits.

Security systems DoD wide will begin imposing the new restriction on 10- FEB-2011. In order to handle the high volume of CAC PIN resets, an automated CAC Reset site has been established. Please log in to http://www.activident.com to immediately establish your new PIN with the increased length requirement.

NOTE: If you fail to establish your new PIN before the new restrictions are imposed, you will need to visit a CAC issuance location before you will be able to access the network.

Joint Task Force Guantanamo Command Master Chief Petty Officer Salmon, the Government Accountability Office and the Department of Defense are aware of the scam.

Marlins and Mermaids swimming ashore

Florida Marlins pitcher Chris Volstad and hitter Gaby Sanchez are scheduled to visit Guantanamo Bay Monday at the Camp America Liberty Center.

Joining the ballplayers will be three Marlins cheerleaders, affectionately coined the Mermaids by Marlins fans.

The event, brought here by Armed Forces Environment, will feature a meet and greet from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. with the group, as well as a pitching demonstration from Volstad.

A free lunch will be provided. For more information, call x4882.

Spc. Meredith Vincent

JIG Troopers learn unity through paintball

Building unity and morale within their unit, the Joint Intelligence Group battled each other on the paintball range Feb. 4.

“On a deployment like this, the environment itself is stressful just by itself,” said Seaman Marcus Salmon with the JIG.

Joint Task Force Troopers often work 55 hours a week at the JIG in response to 60 hours a week at the JIG.

Hill Galley begin soon

The renovation will have two phases and last approximately 16 weeks. During the first half, “the right side of the dining facility will be completely closed for patron usage,” said Manor.

During the renovations, the galley will offer to-go meals, due to limited seating.

For more information, contact Manor at x2234 or x2236.

Spc. Meredith Vincent

Renovations on Gold Hill Galley begin soon

The Gold Hill Galley will be undergoing repairs beginning Feb. 5, said j.g. Vivian Manor, food services officer.

The renovation will have two phases and last approximately 16 weeks. During the first half, “the right side of the dining facility will be completely closed for patron usage,” said Manor.

During the renovations, the galley will offer to-go meals, due to limited seating.

For more information, contact Manor at x2234 or x2236.

Spc. Meredith Vincent

While taking an undergraduate course in psychology at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA, I distinctly remember studying Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Although the professor focused on the entire pyramid of human needs, the category that stood out most to me was love and belongingness. At this point I cannot recall why love stood out more than the other needs, principally because I graduated, let’s say, a long time ago. However, I do remember the impact of the professor’s lectures and the passion with which he wanted the class to understand the value of loving and being loved.

Interestingly, love is not a sentiment my family used to talk about. In fact, I cannot remember my father ever mentioning love or anything pertaining to love. Of course my grandparents and other relatives constantly talked about love, family networks, and the importance of loving others. In retrospect, maybe this is why the course at ODU struck a chord within me.

Although I realized the importance of love and loving others, I am not quite sure when Valentine’s Day came into focus for me. But I do remember all of a sudden I wanted to celebrate Valentine’s Day. It was like I woke up out of a dream. I became aware of a day where couples expressed their love for each other. So I became intrigued about the meaning of Valentine’s Day and its origin.

Tracing back through history, Valentine’s Day, like most holidays in the United States, emerged from a significant event. According to legend, the day is named after a Christian martyr — who was named Valentine, thus the original name St. Valentine’s Day. Another legend contends that Valentine’s Day dates back to a Roman festival period bringing in the spring season. Whatever the case, Valentine’s Day is one of the most popular days on the calendar. Ironically, given the popularity of Valentine’s Day in the United States and throughout the world, it is not a federal holiday. That fact does not take away the significance or the desire for people to express love in a variety of ways.

Economic indicators illustrate Valentine’s Day is second only to Mother’s Day in terms of acquiring floral arrangements second to Christmas in terms of purchasing cards; and a close third behind Christmas and Mother’s Day for buying gifts. This demonstrates a need for people to find expression of love and being loved. In many respects, I think the phenomena of social networking are tools for connecting and a direct response to a sense of companionship. Bottom line, people want to love as much as they want to feel loved. Valentine’s Day gives way to expressing the desire to love.

As a chaplain, one of my roles is helping military personnel and civilians navigate through the complexities of relationships. Although I believe love is a critical dimension of all relationships, studies have shown that separation can create the fabric of love. That is why deployments coupled with other factors are particularly stressful for military families.

While servicemembers may not be able to change deployment cycles, we can be intentional about managing our relationships. While doing so, we must keep in mind the sense of loving and the need to be loved. In this regard, we can learn some lessons from the celebration of Valentine’s Day.

Valentine’s Day reminds us that love is essential for all relationships, whether single or married. Keys to building strong, lasting relationships are honesty, commitment, transparency and giving, to name a few. On this Valentine’s Day, find the means to express your love in a way that is meaningful and heartfelt.

And let every day be like Valentine’s Day — an opportunity to tell someone how much you really appreciate them. This will enhance their sense of love and belonging. The level of love and the ability to express that love will determine the quality of the relationship.

Happy Valentine’s Day!
Coffeehouse Series introduces singer/songwriter Kari Nichole

Story and photo by Spc. Meredith Vincent

The three performances were a tremendous success,” she said. “I received a lot of positive feedback from the attendees and even some suggestion as we continue the Coffeehouse Series on a quarterly basis.”

Songstress Kari Nichole serenades the crowd at O’Kelly’s on Saturday night. Nichole’s set included classic radio hits coupled with her own original music.

Call MWR at ext. 2010 for more information. Movie Hotline - call 4880.
Navy search-and-rescue team a constant presence on GTMO beaches

The Navy dive team here at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay plays a critical role in every Joint Task Force Trooper’s dive by providing first-aid and conducting Search and Rescue Capabilities (SAR) for lost swimmers and divers.

While the Coast Guard assists during searches, only the Navy currently has search-and-rescue qualified divers on the island.

Hajduk, the acting command dive officer for the naval base, said not every phone call is a diving emergency.

“Any kind of water incident that happens, we are going to get called,” said Hajduk. “We will assess the situation from there.”

Hajduk said any call from port control spurs his six-man team into action.

A scuba set prepared for two divers and an alternate is always kept pre-staged and ready to be loaded onto the boat as a moments notice, said Hajduk.

“Even the boat stays in the water to save us time so we can respond to situations more efficiently,” said Hajduk. “If we have to do is load the gear, load the guys and we are gone.”

Initially, during a missing persons search, the team will scour the most obvious choices: the individual’s last known location.

“A lot of times people try to swim from Cable Beach to Girl Scout Beach and depending on the current, it can get pretty rough,” said Hajduk.

Swimmers often become stranded and can end up cutting their feet badly on the sharp rocks and edges of the bay, said Hajduk. If the injuries only require first-aid care, the patient is taken to the hospital.

“If it is just a physical injury, then we will provide first responder care and have a small role,” said Hajduk. “But if it is a diving-related, we are the main players.”

When sending divers into the water, the buddy system is always implemented.

“I like to send in two divers if I can, especially if I have someone lost up trapped on the bottom,” said Hajduk. “It’s a Navy requirement to have a standby diver just in case something goes wrong.”

If disaster does strike, the reserve diver is deployed to assist the primary divers.

“The dive team strives for a response time between five and twelve minutes, said Hajduk, depending on the distance to the diver’s location.”

“When you are talking about decompression sickness, the quicker you can get the patient under pressure and treated, the more likely they will make a 100 percent recovery,” said Hajduk.

Navy Diver First Class David Lutz explained decompression sickness, also known as the bends, is a condition caused by gasses going from a liquid state to a gas state and forming air bubbles inside a person’s blood stream.

“The effects vary from minor joint pain to paralysis and death,” said Lutz. “The only treatment is to recompress the gasses into a liquid by taking the person to the pressures experienced while diving.”

The longer time goes on before treatment, the more damage can be done to a person neurologically, warned Hajduk.

Hajduk said a diving injury such as the bends takes precedence over physical injuries and must be treated before the others.

“Decompression sickness is life threatening, so we always have to treat that first then we will take care of the other wounds as needed,” said Hajduk.

The Dive Locker has the limited capacity to treat four dive injuries at one time, said Hajduk and once the decompression chamber is started all recreational divers must suspend their activities.

He explained the dive team’s importance goes beyond serving recreational divers. There are no lifeguards on duty at any of the beaches, which means his team also conducts missions related to the safety of Troopers in other capacities.

“When there are triathlons or sporting events that use the water, we will check the area for sharp or dangerous objects that could cut or injure the participants,” said Hajduk.

One particular recurring problem is not due to the Troopers at all, revealed Hajduk.

“Several times a year, we have medical waste that washes up on Windmill beach,” said Hajduk. “I don’t know where it comes from, maybe a ship that dumps it or something, but there are used needles and we have to close the beach. We don’t want anyone walking in knee-deep water and stepping on a bag full of used needles.”

Hajduk painted a disturbing scene of life without the Navy dive team. Without their services, more than 400 certified recreational scuba divers throughout Guantanamo Bay would be immediately impacted.

“Without us here, there would be no scuba diving,” said Hajduk.

Lutz said the loss of the Navy dive team would affect more than just recreational opportunities.

“Our presence is incredibly important,” said Lutz. “If something goes wrong and they get hurt or get the bends and we are not here, then they are going to die.”

Despite the dangers, the diving opportunities here are world class, said Hajduk.

“This is some of the best diving that can be done compared to Florida and the rest of the Caribbean,” said Hajduk. “The water is so clear and there is enough marine life that you can see just about as much snorkeling as you can diving.”

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Joint Task Force Guantanamo’s 525th Military Police Battalion kicked off their inaugural Guantanamo Bay Pig Bowl Saturday at Cooper Field Sports Complex.

Each of the 525th’s four companies formed individual teams for the six-hour-long intramural football tournament. The 193rd MP Co. came away with the coveted Pig Bowl Trophy after a 14-7 championship game win over the 189th MP Co.

“The 193rd kept on their winning ways and took it all the way through the championship,” said 525th Command Sergeant Major Daniel Borrero. “The 193rd” kept on their winning ways and took it all the way through the championship,” said 525th Command Sergeant Major Daniel Borrero. “The 193rd MP Co. lost their first game, then went on to have a good time. It was really nice just to get out here and meet and come back together. And now we’re doing it here,” he added.

For many players, the Pig Bowl serves as more than just a chance to come together with battle buddies.

“Like Army military police duty here, it’s a lot easier [here] because in high school there’s bigger dudes and you can actually hit. Out here it’s a lot of old men,” joked Nastavrgel.

“Your sport, but in reality I’m probably never going to play again. So if this all I’ve got going to play again. So if this all I’ve got is football during the inaugural Pig Bowl Football Tournament held Saturday at Cooper Field. “It’s really nice just to get out here and you help someone have a better day. Your sense I helped someone have a better day. So the Pig Bowl was a way for all of us to have fellowship - meet and come back together. And now we’re doing it here,” he added. For many players, the Pig Bowl serves as more than just a chance to come together with battle buddies.

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Along Sherman Avenue, nestled next to the Lateral Hazard Golf Course, an inconspicuous fenced-in area bursts with a variety of foliage. The only identifying marker is a sign that says simply: PWD Plant Nursery. This hidden treasure may be easy to overlook, but it offers what most new residents expect when arriving on island.

Frances NeSmith, work leader at the Guantanamo plant nursery, is used to newcomers’ disenchanted realities. “When they look around GTMO, many of them are disappointed in the lack of the tropical atmosphere they had expected,” said NeSmith. “Guarantee you, they will not be disappointed when they come into the plant nursery.”

The nursery’s simplistic look is the perfect fit for what it has to offer: relaxation. Sharon Coganow, Guantanamo’s Red Cross station manager charged with tracking the hours of the nursery’s volunteers, takes advantage of the peace that comes with the scenery. “They actually have benches sitting around, or if you want to bring your own chair you can sit in there and just enjoy the atmosphere,” said Coganow.

Dense, green foliage greets customers as they walk through the gate and down a path into the main part of the nursery. Mature trees scattered throughout filter the sun with their canopies, creating a pleasant, shaded brightness.

Placed throughout the inside are rows of different plants in all shapes and colors. These freshly propagated plants are destined for a place in someone’s home.

On the first and third Saturday of each month, the nursery opens to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. First-time visitors are entitled to one free plant per person, while returning customers may receive one plant per household.

The nursery is open to each and every person on Guantanamo Bay. NeSmith said she has customers from the Cuzcos and Tierra Kays as well as non-military personnel and third-country nationals.