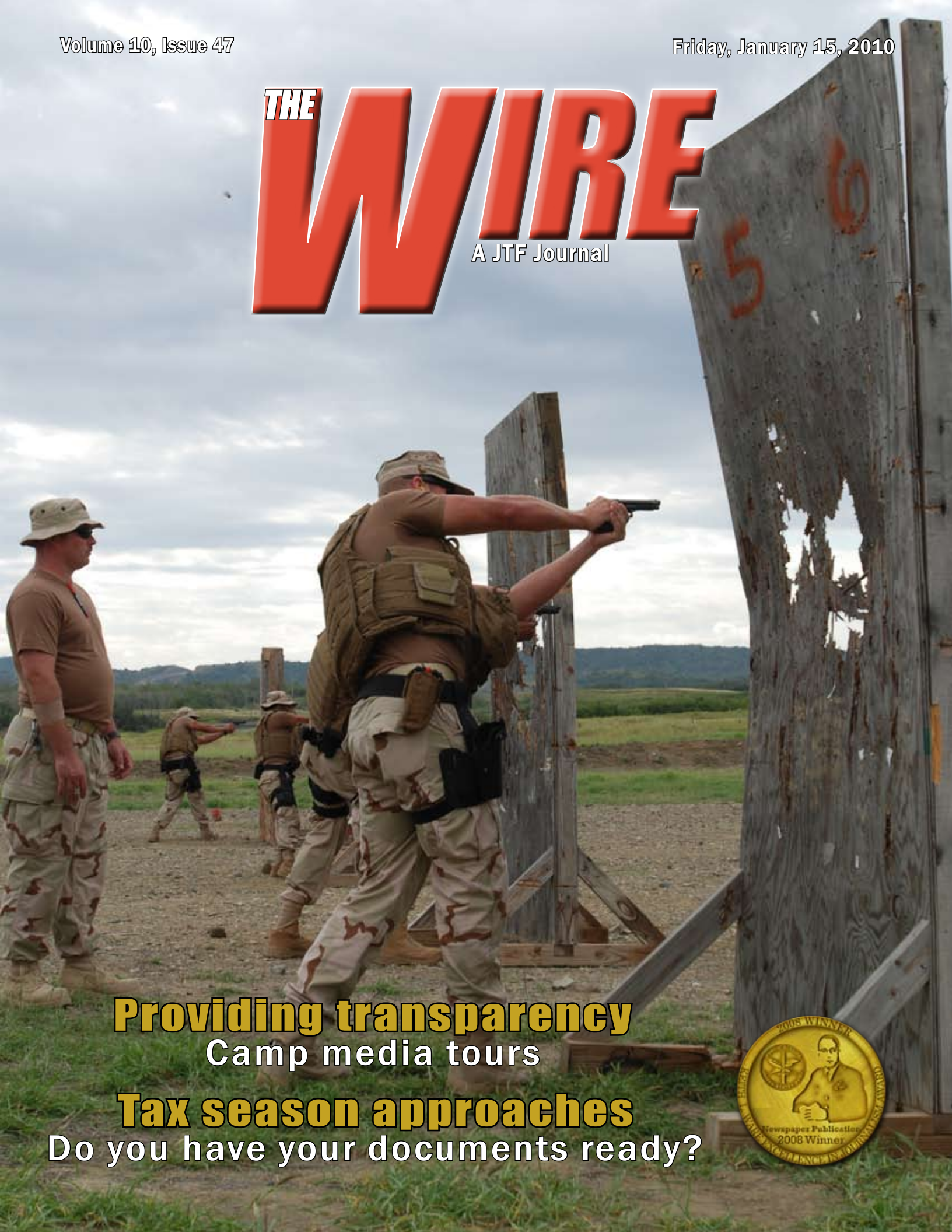


THE WIRE

A JTF Journal



Providing transparency
Camp media tours

Tax season approaches
Do you have your documents ready?



You are in charge

Coast Guard Senior Chief Petty Officer Christopher Thomas

MSST 91103 Command Chief/Engineering
Petty Officer

In the armed forces, the advancement to the pay grade of E-7 is monumental. This is the point where you become very influential and can have a positive or negative impact at a unit.

It's not just one more rank to wear on your collar and more money in the bank. You will be looked at differently and your advice will be sought from both junior and senior officers. You will sometimes find yourself in difficult positions by having to "push back" and provide the ground truth. Your command will depend on you to manage the work and, although you may have a different opinion from them, it is important to be on the same page at the end of the day. You need to show support for your leadership and enforce their directives as if they were your own.

It is important that you not show frustration or disagreement with your seniors in front of your Troopers. This could lead to poor morale and a dysfunctional unit. Keep the pulse of the Troops and relay this up the chain of command to keep your unit meeting the requirements to make mission.

You are expected to be a mentor to junior enlisted and junior officers. Be there for them and assist them to make informed and calculated decisions.

Leadership doesn't start at the E-7 level. It starts the very first day you enter the service. Sometimes we learn from other people's mistakes and must incorporate those lessons to help others in their career. Always remember the road and the people that got you where you are today. Use those experiences to make good choices for your Troops.

Leaders must take care of their people. Sometimes the junior person may not agree. An example could be an unfavorable recommendation for the next pay grade if they truly are not ready or deserving. Another example may be counseling members about a less than desirable assignment and have them seek a unit that would benefit their career in the long term but may be unpleasant in the short term. Set them and the service up for success.

Leadership is important and it's never too early to start learning to become a better leader. How many times have you said to yourself, "I would do that differently if I were in charge?" With that said, you are in charge. Remember, attitude reflects leadership! ☆



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COVER:

Coast Guardsmen with Joint Task Force Guantanamo's Maritime Safety and Security Team 91103 fire pistols at Grenadillo Range, Jan. 8. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Emily Greene

BACK COVER:

A foosball table is available to detainees for recreation. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black



The WIRE is the official news magazine of Joint Task Force Guantanamo. It is produced by the JTF Public Affairs Office to inform and educate the Troopers of JTF Guantanamo through news, features, command guidance, sports and entertainment. The WIRE seeks to provide maximum disclosure with minimum delay with regards to security, accuracy, propriety and policy. This DoD news magazine is an authorized publication for the members of the Department of Defense. Contents of The WIRE are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or Joint Task Force Guantanamo. It is printed by the Document Automation & Production Service with a circulation of 1,000.

Showing our mission to the world

**Army Sgt.
Andrew Hillegass**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Since opening in 2002, Joint Task Force Guantanamo has been at the forefront of an intense debate about foreign policy. If you turn on any major news network, it is not uncommon to hear something being mentioned about the detention facility.

So how does all this information that ends up in the news, make it there in the first place? The job of providing clear, accurate and timely information to the media concerning Guantanamo falls on JTF public affairs media relations.

The media relations team makes sure that news outlets from around the world have the opportunity to see for themselves the JTF's mission in action. They ensure outlets are vetted and coordinate all logistics for media prior to their arrival on island, along with escorting media while they are on island.

"The media relations team is responsible for escorting the media through the camps, JTF facilities, and in and out of interviews with the Joint Task Force, Joint Detention Group and Joint Medical Group's senior leadership," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Veshannah Lovelace, media relations non-commissioned officer-in-charge.

In 2009, the group facilitated more than 80 different media tours ranging from newspaper organizations such as Associated Press, to broadcast outlets including British Broadcasting Corporation, whose news stories are viewed by millions around the world.

"Our mission directly supports the JTF's transparency mission. We bring the media down here to see firsthand the conditions of detention here at Guantanamo," added Lovelace.

It is that transparency that takes some members of the media by surprise.

"There have been instances where the media realize what they see reported on televisions around the world does not reflect the environment and operations that really take place here," said Army



Members of Spain's Telecinco and Public Radio International interview the Camp 4 assistant officer-in-charge during a recent media tour at Joint Task Force Guantanamo. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Emily Greene

1st Lt. Cody Starken, media relations officer-in-charge.

A typical tour takes media through the detainee library, detainee hospital, and Camps 4, 5 and 6. It also includes interview opportunities with camp guards and senior JTF leadership.

"These interviews allow the media to get their information firsthand. It comes from the mouths of the Troopers who are working in the camps and have daily interaction with detainees. Media are able to get their information directly from the source," said Starken.

Since the media relations team is with the media at all times while they are visiting, the team finds that they have to constantly maintain their awareness.

"My team members are consummate professionals. They have a tough job; they're always on the front lines of everyone's opinions both negative and positive. They have to always be 'on' and constantly have to maintain their conversation and demeanor, keeping things on a professional level," said Lovelace.

Of course keeping the media satisfied while they visit takes more than just casual conversation. It also involves trying to fulfill the numerous requests that the public affairs office handles on any given tour.

"One of the challenges that we face are the last minute schedule changes that are beyond our control. We also strive to make each visit meaningful," said Lovelace. ☆



Katy Clark of Public Radio International speaks with the Camp 4 assistant officer-in-charge during a recent media tour at Joint Task Force Guantanamo. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Emily Greene



Members of Joint Task Force Guantanamo's Headquarters and Headquarters Company conduct a planning meeting at their office, Jan. 13; – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Marcos Hernandez

JTF HHC adjusts to transition

**Navy Petty Officer 1st Class
Marcos Hernandez**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Upon arriving at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, as it happens with most people, Troopers naturally find themselves adjusting their new environment. At GTMO, Troopers have to do more than to adjust to these new reptile saturated surroundings. Troopers assigned to the Joint Task Force also have to adjust to working in a joint environment. As with all units on island, this too is the case with the Virgin Islands National Guard's 786th Combat Service and Support Battalion which makes up the Joint Task Force Guantanamo's Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Comprised of approximately 70 Troopers, their mission consists of many peripheral support activities. Their duties encompass responsibilities such as Morale, Welfare and Recreation, courtesy patrol and safe ride, camp commandant for Camp America, JTF armory, administration, supply, watch duty rosters and Kittery Beach police patrol.

"We have adjusted very well. Just last Saturday night, we had our first big party" said Army Sgt 1st Class Kelvin Bailey, with the HHC.

Bailey serves as the unit's first sergeant for this deployment and notes, "This is a great learning environment because all service branches are meshed together here. I think it is important to understand each other's service culture and to be able to not only

recognize what is internal to yours, but also to be able to work as a team."

The HHC handles many different taskings, including property accountability, system improvements and communications, which means junior personnel have had to step up by filling billets of more seasoned and higher ranking NCOs. "I've spoken to various Troopers who are E-5s filling in for E-7 billets and they informed me they are learning new skills and receiving a lot of support from the Joint Task Force," states Bailey.

Despite adjusting to transitions and the stress brought forth by deployments, there are plenty of constructive activities at GTMO to balance out these factors. Many troopers of HHC opt to enjoy the weather and participate in sporting activities such as volleyball, basketball, going to the gym, and fishing.

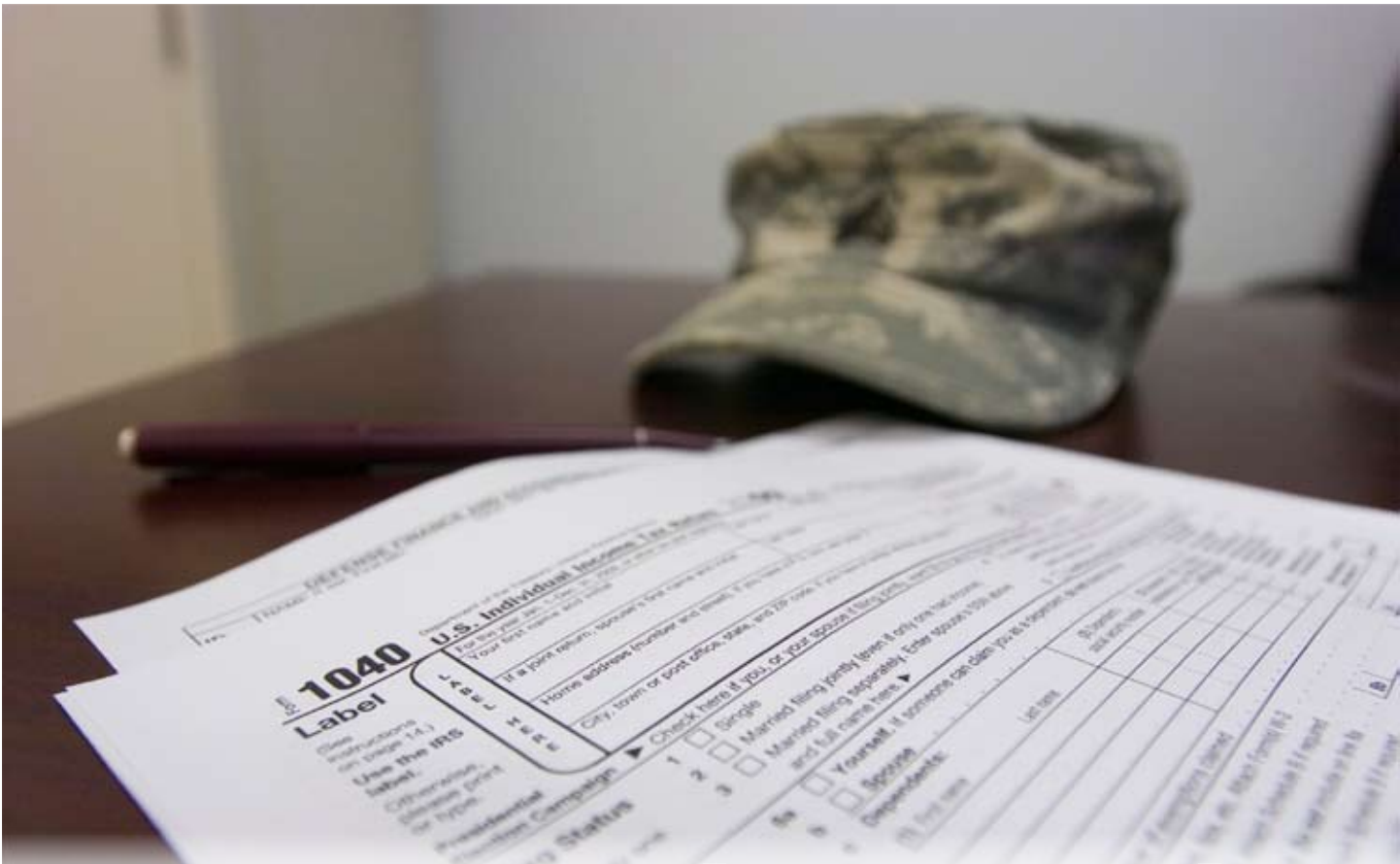
"The transition went very smoothly and the weather here is very similar to the weather in the Virgin Islands," said Army Capt. Josephine Hector-Murphy, JTF HHC commander.

In the fast-paced environment that is trademark of JTF daily operations, Troopers from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces work together to keep the machine going.

"I see a lot of cohesiveness in the JTF. I know my Troops are enjoying working as a team with the different branches. Everyone has different styles and input, but what matters is that it culminates finally in successful mission accomplishment. It all works out in the end," states Hector-Murphy. ★

“ My troops are enjoying working as a team with the different branches.

– Capt. Josephine Hector-Murphy



Get ready; tax time's a-coming

**Army Sgt.
David McLean**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Tax season is right around the corner, and now is the time to begin preparing to file taxes. While stationed at Joint Task Force Guantanamo, Troopers have a few options to file taxes with the Internal Revenue Service with help from the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

VITA is a program that is recognized by the IRS and the Armed Forces Tax Council to help military personnel and their family members with tax filing. VITA sites provide free tax advice, tax preparation and assistance as they are trained and equipped to address military specific tax issues.

VITA staff consists of volunteers and legal office employees, both civilian and military, who tackle the toughest tax problems in an effort to get a Trooper's return correct. They are educated using the latest tax software and IRS training to prepare the 1040s for submission, and returns are double checked by legal professionals to make sure any potential errors are eliminated.

Navy Petty Officer Sarah Kelly-Alston, a legalman with Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Naval Legal Service Office, helps to coordinate the efforts of VITA staff for both

JTF Guantanamo and NAVSTA. Her teams prepared roughly 800 returns last year, and are looking forward to helping residents of the base this tax season.

"Our volunteers go through an extensive training program," Alston said. "They are ready to handle many difficult questions and can find the appropriate forms and publications to handle most situations. They are ready to help."

The staff ranges from E-5s to O-4s, and are enthusiastic about the opportunity to serve Troopers this year.

"I enjoy doing taxes," said a lieutenant commander with JTF Guantanamo who volunteered this year. "It is a nice service, especially for deployed people. It makes it easier for them to get their taxes done so they can focus on the mission here."

The tax office on the NAVSTA side will be opening Jan. 20 and on the JTF side on Jan. 30. Normal hours will be from 0800 to 1900, but appointments are strongly encouraged to make sure staff will be available to help.

"Remember to bring all important tax and identification documents to make the appointment as smooth as possible," Alston said.

For more information call ext. 4692 on the NAVSTA side, and ext. 8115 on the JTF side. 🇺🇸

When you go, make sure you have:

- Proof of identification
- Social Security Cards for you, your spouse and dependents and/or a Social Security Number verification letter issued by the Social Security Administration
- Birth dates for you, your spouse and dependents on the tax return
- Current year's tax package if you received one
- Wage and earning statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns if available
- Bank routing numbers and account numbers for Direct Deposit
- Total paid for daycare provider and the daycare provider's tax identifying number (the provider's Social Security Number or the provider's business Employer Identification Number)
- To file taxes electronically on a married-filing-joint tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms (or a power of attorney must be presented.)

GTMO basketball fever is back



Participants in the 2010 Captain's Cup Basketball League play in the first game of the season, Jan. 11. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Flynn

Army Brig. Gen Timothy Lake, JTF Guantanamo deputy commander, prepares to take a free throw shot. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Flynn



Participants in the 2010 Captain's Cup Basketball League prepare for a rebound during a basketball game, Jan. 11. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Flynn

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Flynn
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

As Troopers and residents of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay celebrate the start of a new year and exciting opportunities on the island, Morale, Welfare and Recreation kicked off their first sporting event of the year with the annual 2010 Captain's Cup Basketball League at G. J. Denich Gym, Jan. 11. From softball to bowling, golf to flag football, MWR administers a varied program of recreation, social and community support activities that contribute to the retention, readiness and physical and emotional well-being of military members.

"Like all MWR-sponsored events, the Captain's Cup Basketball League allows the community an opportunity for fitness, camaraderie and staying active," said Robert Neuman, the MWR sports coordinator. "We stress sportsmanship, uncompromising integrity and fair play."

Personnel from Joint Task Force Guantanamo and Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, both civilian and military members, are participating in the thirteen-team league. Although a women's league was originally

announced, it was canceled due to a lack of participation. However, there will be a women's team playing in the men's league for the first time.

For some Troopers with the recently arrived Rhode Island National Guard and the U.S. Virgin Islands National Guard, it was their first introduction to an MWR-sponsored sporting event on the island.

Playing in the basketball league is a tremendous opportunity to build esprit de corps while maintaining physical fitness. "This is a competitive league and it takes my mind off work while getting some good exercise," said Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Rayshaun Cole. "This is a team sport and working together is important."

Even though this was the opening game of the league, the hard work, fierce competition and determination was clearly evident by the players. Like all MWR athletic events, the cornerstone of the game is treating your opponent with respect, which was evident from the opening jump ball to the final buzzer. "This is a great way to build camaraderie among Troopers," said Navy Lt. Nick Rizzuto.

Prior to the start of the league, a representative from each team submitted player rosters, met with MWR staff and was briefed on the rules and regulations of the basketball league.

The league will run through March 2010. All basketball games will be played at the gymnasium, Monday through Friday, beginning at 7:00 p.m. For additional information on upcoming athletic activities, please contact the MWR sports office at ext. 2113. ★

'Avatar' graphics capture audience



PG-13

162 minutes

Rating: ★★★★★

**Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class
Joshua Nistas**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

In the future, man has traveled across the expanses of space and found a world ripe with resources, adventure and an alien race so protective of their way of life that they will die in the hopes of saving it.

Pandora, home to the Na'vi, holds a mineral called Unobtanium, which brings the forces of Earth to the small moon to mine the material, no matter the cost to the inhabitants.

Jake Sully's (Sam Worthington) arrival to Pandora is with mixed feelings from the human base. Sully is taking the place of his brother who was killed in battle to become a member of the Avatar Program, which allows humans to link with hybrid bodies of the Na'vi people, and try to infiltrate their race to find their weaknesses.

The reason that Jake is able to fill his brother's shoes with no experience is simple: they are genetic matches. Sully's "avatar" resembles his brother, and by extension, himself. Even though Sully, a former Marine, was left a paraplegic from the war, he is able to walk again through the interactions with his avatar.

This idea made me think about all of those people playing World of Warcraft. The world of Pandora seems like something straight out of a video game, with people entering into the bodies of Avatars; the most extreme version of playing a video game.

While watching this movie, I thought of some other movies that held similarities. The first and most obvious was "Dancing with Wolves." Jake Sully is the outsider who arrives into the unknown and gets adopted into the tribe after having to learn all their different ways. He falls for the tribe girl, and with her help, gets a grasp of the new language, traditions, and way of life. Of course, this can also go for the story of Pocahontas.

One of the other movies from the early '90's is "FernGully: The Last Rainforest." Even though this movie is an animated film from my childhood, the idea holds true for connecting with "Avatar." Both main characters are transformed and deal with persecution from the natives, but in the end, they try to stop the destruction of the world around them.

One of the main things that made me see this movie twice, is the world in which the characters live. I bet the movie would be great in 3D, but even seeing it here, the way the forests stand out is awe inspiring. You would think that it couldn't get much better to see the forests during the daylight, but once Pandora goes dark, with the planet Polyphemus and its other moons looming in the night sky, things becoming more breathtaking. It's like everything in the forest is lit with black lights, glowing with bright neon colors.

The creatures that make Pandora their home are like something from Dr. Seuss's nightmares. From horse-like animals with six legs, to the bat-like creatures the Na'vi

use to fly. The creatures and the Na'vi people have something in common – a way to connect with each other as well as to the planet for a deeper understanding than anything previously thought possible.

Everything about the movie was impressive to me, from the way the computer graphics seemed so lifelike, to the storyline and the characters, this movie has me wanting to come back again and again. I'd advise seeing the movie and bringing others with you to enjoy it. 🌟





Members of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay's Chief Petty Officers Association volunteer to clean up trash and debris at Girl Scout Beach, Jan. 9.

The CPOA is open to all servicemembers in the pay grade of E-7 through E-9. The association participates in various community service projects monthly ranging from reading to elementary school children to clean-up projects around the base.

The CPOA meets every first and third Wednesday to discuss upcoming events. For more information, contact Rich Vargas at ext. 2156 or Jillian Easley at ext. 3145.

JTF Guantanamo Bay photos by
Army Spc. Christopher Vann

Starting the year with a clean slate

Be cautious of GTMO's critters

The hutia, or banana rat, is a common creature found on Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Russell



**Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class
Joshua Nistas**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Many different types of wildlife slither, crawl, flap and swim here at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, giving the island an aspect of variety not easily found on other naval bases.

With the different species of amphibians, reptiles, mammals, fish and plants, Troopers are reminded to take care in what they do, both at work and during their recreational time, to ensure the safety of these species for years to come.

The most well-known native animal species at Guantanamo Bay, the Cuban Rock Iguana, is thriving on the island. They are the largest group of iguanas in the Caribbean, consisting of 20 percent of the population in Cuba. Cuban Rock Iguanas are protected under the Endangered Species Act, and Troopers and residents could be subject to fine or imprisonment for harming the iguanas on base.

One of the biggest threats to the iguanas is people hitting them while driving.

"The problem is failure to notice, which proves to be a problem for pedestrians," said Michael McCord, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay's environmental director.

McCord said that people should not feed the iguanas, because the iguanas will get used to humans, and then become aggressive. Signs are posted throughout the base, warning residents not to feed iguanas or any wildlife at GTMO.

Another one of the native animal species at Guantanamo is the Cuban hutia, also known as the banana rat. Though the name implies rodent, banana rats have more in

common with a porcupine than a rat. The reason for the nickname is due to the fact that the hutia's feces looks like bananas. The naval station provides a safe habitat for these species, which are often consumed as food on mainland Cuba. The hutia can sometimes prove to be a pest on the island, according to McCord. They can damage lawns and even chew through wires under cars.

"We have a permit with Cuba to maintain the hutia population," said José B. Montalvo, GTMO natural resources manager. It is one of the few permits that the naval station has with the Cuban government.

Stray, or feral cats are some of the more dangerous animals found on the island. Although they may look like friendly pets, especially to Troopers who are away from their own pets back home, feral cats can be carriers of disease and may lash out unexpectedly. One of the things to remember, McCord said, is that cats are vectors for rabies. Any person who is bitten by a cat on base will be started on the rabies vaccination series immediately.

Army Capt. Todd French, the officer-in-charge of GTMO veterinary services, said that there is always a health risk with unvaccinated animals, which are not allowed in people's rooms.

"If people bring in strays, and they're healthy and friendly, we'll try to adopt them out to a certain extent," said Army

Sgt. Jamie Murphy, the animal care non-commissioned officer for the GTMO veterinarian clinic. "If they're untamable, we'll have to euthanize them for humane reasons."

McCord said it is important that people not feed any stray cats.

"I recommend for health reasons and population control, to spay and neuter your pets in general," French said. For further information on veterinary services, call the veterinarian clinic at ext. 2212.

One animal species to be on the lookout

**... if you're out there
enjoying the wildlife,
know the regulations.**

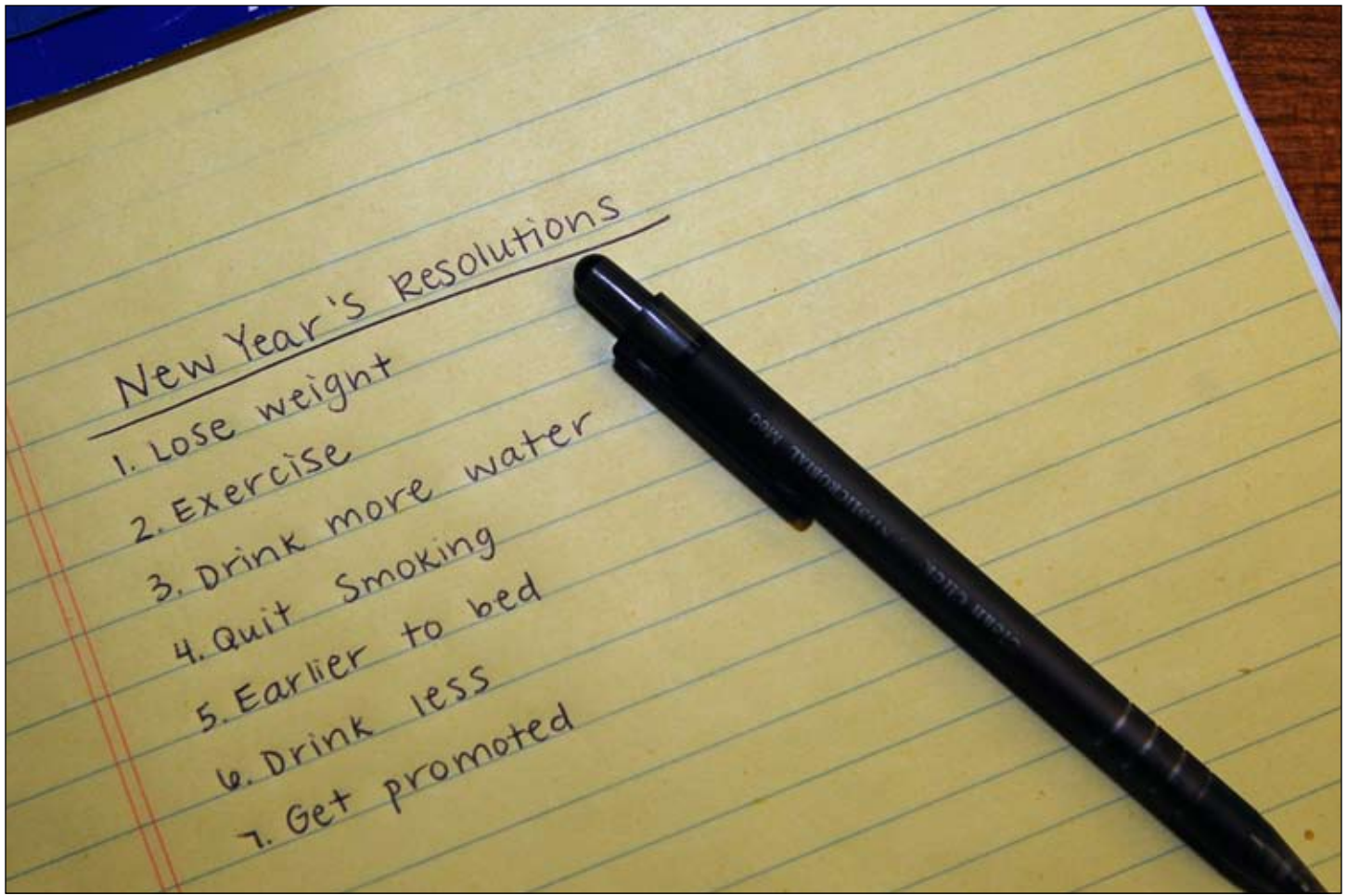
- Mike McCord

for is the mongoose that was brought to GTMO from India back in the 18th century, McCord said. The Cuban government reported two cases of mongooses with rabies approximately a year ago, and the Marines at the Cuban border were given pictures of mongooses to watch out for them.

McCord said not to try to catch a mongoose, but to call the natural resources office. People usually mistake stray cats for mongooses.

With all wildlife at GTMO, be respectful. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay continues to provide an environment where endangered and threatened species can develop and prosper.

"The biggest thing is that if you're out there enjoying the wildlife, know the regulations," McCord said. "There's no excuse for taking something because you don't know what it is." ☆



Sticking to your resolutions

**Army Sgt.
Michael Baltz**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Every year, people all over the world make a list of their New Years resolutions, and it is no different for Troopers assigned to Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

“In order to stick with a New Years resolution, it has to be a significant goal,” said Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Woodrow Scott, a psychiatric technician with the Joint Medical Group. “You have to ask yourself; am I making a goal just to have one? Is it something I really want to accomplish? Is it realistic? If you are able to answer yes to your questions, then you should be able to stick with your goal.”

Regardless of your goal, Scott says, be prepared to make mistakes.

“Everyone is going to make mistakes,” Scott said. “There are going to be days where you don’t want to go for that run, want to pick up that cigarette or forget to read your Bible, but you can’t let those days get you down. You have to know that life is like practice; the more you do it, the better you get.”

“As long as you can realize you made a mistake, you can keep on going,” Scott continued.

Scott suggests, if possible, find a friend who has the same goal as you, to make it easier for when you are looking for support.

Along with the countless resolution ideas, whether it is learning Chinese, getting out of debt or getting promoted, there are two resolutions that stand out above the rest. According to www.usa.gov and www.about.com, the two most common resolutions are to “get fit” and “lose weight.”

Morale, Welfare and Recreation fitness instructor, Everton Hylton, knows how people can accomplish these fitness goals.

“Some people have the mindset that everyone can achieve physical fitness in the same manner, and that is not the case,” Hylton explained. “For most people, there will be a lot of trials and errors.”

“Discipline is key,” he added. “You have to adapt to do it, if you want to see the results.”

Along with discipline, knowledge of what you should eat will help Troopers meet their goals successfully.

“All food can be bad and good,” Hylton explained. “Being at GTMO, there aren’t a lot of choices for [Troopers] to eat. They have the fast food places and the galley, but

many of them don’t have the ability to cook on their own. Nutrition plays a vital role in accomplishing your goals.

The key is eating based on your blood group and staying away from processed foods, because they are loaded with preservatives, which harm the body.”

Along with eating healthy, getting fit will help you toward the goal of losing weight as well.

“For you to achieve physical fitness, you must make sure you are training your heart in the target heart rate zone, which is 60 to 80 percent of your max heart rate,” Hylton explained. “Training should be from 20 to 30 minutes, and not longer than 45 minutes.”

According to Hylton, it is also very important to be flexible. “If you aren’t flexible, you’re not fit,” he said.

At any rate, Scott and Hylton advise you to keep at it and not to quit. 🎯

Discipline is key.

– Everton Hylton

MWR fitness instructor

Obama makes Haiti response top U.S. priority

Jim Garamore

Armed Force Press Service

President Barack Obama said today said he's made helping Haiti in the wake of a crippling earthquake the top priority of every U.S. government agency.

Speaking from the White House, Obama called the quake an unimaginable tragedy, and said the United States has launched "a swift, coordinated and aggressive effort" to help.

Flanked by his national security team, the president said the U.S. response will require help from every government agency and the compassion of Americans.

"I've made it clear [to Cabinet officers and government agency heads] that Haiti must be a top priority for their departments and agencies right now," Obama said. "This is one of those moments that call out for American leadership."

American service members are deploying to the area, the president said. "Several Coast Guard cutters are already there, providing everything from basic services like water to vital technical support for this massive logistical operation," he said. "Elements of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division will arrive today."

The United States also is deploying a Marine expeditionary unit, the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson and the hospital ship USNS Comfort.

The first waves of the U.S. rescue and relief effort are on the ground and at work, the president said.

"An airlift has been set up to deliver high-priority items like water and medicine," Obama said. The United States is working closely with the Haitian government, the United Nations and relief organizations to deliver supplies, but it will take some time for supplies, personnel and equipment to arrive in Haiti, he added.



Navy hospital staff members rush an American U.S. Embassy worker into the U.S. Naval Hospital at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay from a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter, Jan. 13. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Chief Petty Officer Bill Mesta

"Right now in Haiti, roads are impassible, the main port is damaged and communications are just beginning to come online, and aftershocks continue," he said. "None of this will seem quick enough, ... but it's important that everyone in Haiti understand that one of the largest relief efforts in our recent history is moving toward Haiti."

The earthquake struck the evening of Jan. 12 near the capital of Port-au-Prince. The magnitude 7.0 quake flattened many areas of the city. Port-au-Prince is one of the largest cities in the Caribbean, and Haitian officials fear that at least 100,000 people may be dead.

American assets are pouring into the country. U.S. search and rescue teams have

arrived, and medical personnel and relief supplies are arriving.

In the best of times, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The country suffers from extreme poverty, deforestation, a lack of infrastructure and political instability.

Obama pledged not to forsake the people of Haiti in their hour of need.

"American stands with you. The world stands with you," he said. "We know you are a strong and resilient people. You have endured a history of slavery and struggle and natural disaster and recovery. Through it all, your spirit has been unbroken and your faith unwavering. Today, you must know that help is arriving and much more help is on the way." ☆

Be smart about online threats

Social media can be a great way to stay in touch with family and friends. It's also a great way to get the story out about the great things the U.S. military is doing throughout the world. Service members are encouraged, however, to remain mindful of potential online security threats and posting information that could potentially jeopardize the security of our forces.

**For more information on the safe use of social media, visit
<http://socialmedia.defense.gov>.**

Trooper's promotion a family affair

**Army Staff Sgt.
Blair Heusdens**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Promotions are an important part of any military career and an important event to share with friends and family. For Navy Capt. Robert Elrod, stationed at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay in support of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, his promotion to the rank of captain was one more milestone in his Navy career in which his family played an important role.

Elrod's parents, Alvon Sr. and Ruby Elrod, his wife, Shannon, his eldest brother, Alvon Jr. and his wife Maureen, all traveled to GTMO for the ceremony, which was held Jan. 4. Like several of his previous promotions in the Navy, Elrod chose to have his father, an Air Force veteran, participate. This promotion, however, was special because Alvon Sr., who retired after 30 years as a Colonel, was able to promote his son to the equivalent rank in the Navy.

As one of six children growing up, Robert Elrod followed the example of his parents – his mother a teacher and his father a professor at Clemson University – and pursued a degree in mechanical engineering before being commissioned into the Navy as a submarine officer. He is not the only of his siblings to follow in his father's military footsteps; his younger brother, Harold, is an officer in the Air Force.

"My experience with the military growing up made me realize that it was something I wanted to be a part of one day,"



Navy Capt. Robert Elrod, right, takes the oath of re-enlistment from his father, Alvon Elrod, during a promotion ceremony, Jan. 4. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Emily Greene

Robert said.

When Robert found out he would be promoted at GTMO, he began making plans to have his family fly to the base through a program allowing family and friends of service members stationed at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay to visit the island. Robert said the opportunity to have family visit is one of the things that makes a deployment at JTF Guantanamo more family-friendly than a regular combat deployment.

"We're overjoyed to be here and very appreciative of the invitation," Alvon Sr. said.

During the ceremony, Robert's father read the oath of reenlistment, and his wife and mother pinned his new rank on his collar. Both parents expressed the pride they felt for their son's accomplishments.

"I'm still trying to hold the buttons on my clothes," said Ruby. "I'm very proud of him."

For Robert, the presence of family, friends, his superiors and co-workers made the event more memorable.

"The fact that my friends, family and co-workers could all be part of the ceremony made it extremely special," said Robert. ★

Boots on the Ground

by Army Spc. Cody Black

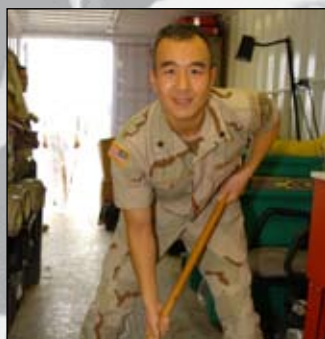
What is your favorite winter Olympic event? Why?

**Army Spc.
Joseph Delmonico**



"The ski jump, because they get some high-speed hang time."

**Coast Guard Petty Officer
3rd Class John Oh**



"Ice hockey, because I follow Team U.S.A."

**Air Force Staff Sgt.
Sean Poling**

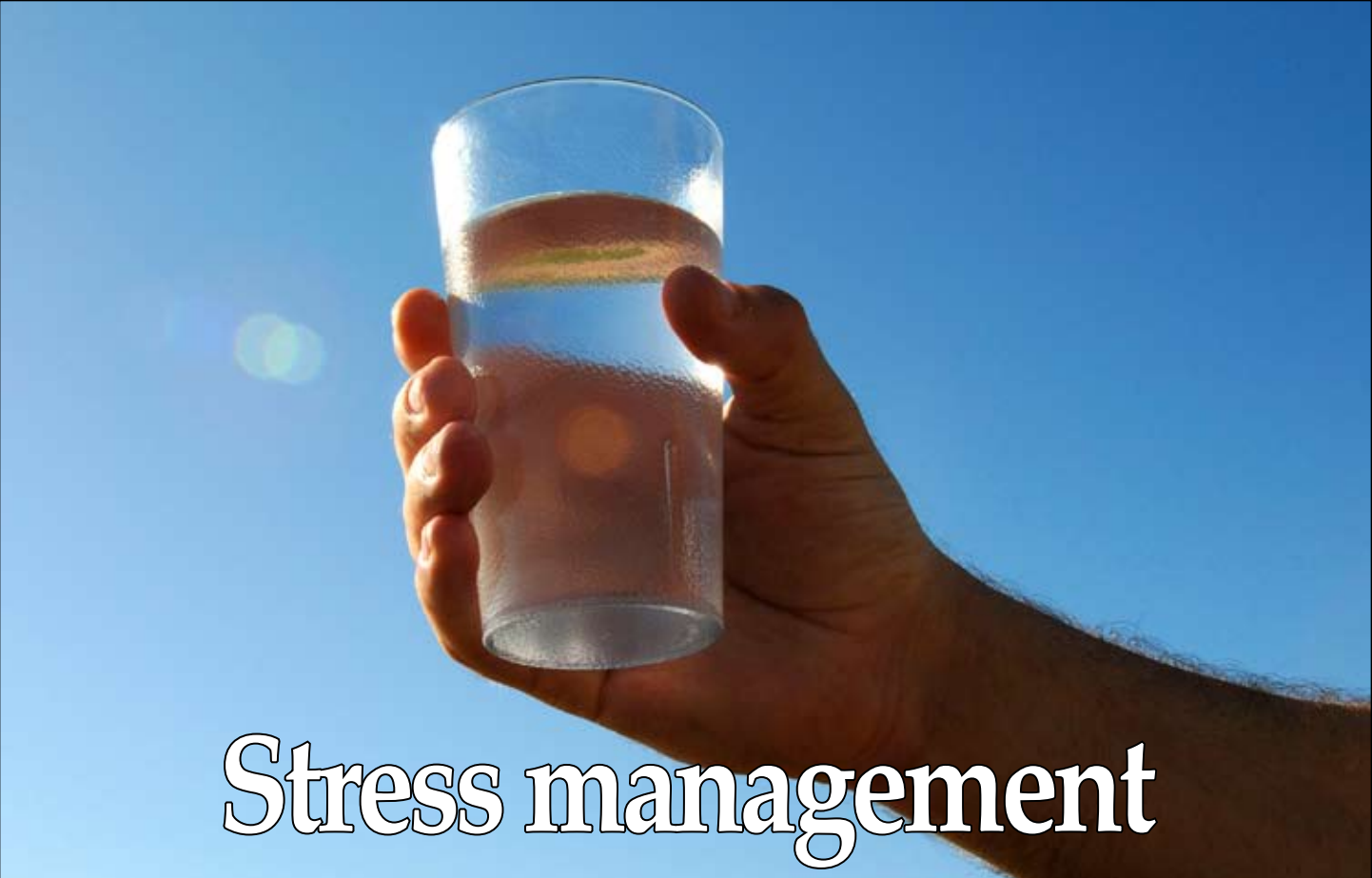


"The downhill skiing slalom, because my roommate was on the Army ski team."

**Army Pfc.
Stephen Pollett**



"Curling, because it is fun for young or old."



Stress management

**Navy Lt. Cmdr.
Lee Hellwig**
NEGB Chaplain

A chaplain lecturing to an audience of chaplains attending a Navy professional development training course years ago used a visual aide to describe stress management by holding up a glass of water and asking, "How heavy is this glass of water?" Answers called out from the audience ranged from five ounces to 20 ounces.

The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I try to hold it for a quarter hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I try to hold it for a longer period, I will probably need medical attention due to lack of circulation. In

each case, the glass of water weighs the same and in a normal situation is not a burden at all, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it seems." He continued, "That's the way it is with stress, and why we need to manage it."

You see, if we try to carry our burdens continuously, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on and achieve what is expected of us. As with the glass of water, we have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it up again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with any burden or demand placed upon us.

So, when you get off duty today, put down the burden of the work day. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. It will still be there.

Whatever burdens you're carrying now, let them down for a moment. Don't pick them up again until after you've rested a while. Then, find an appropriate way to lessen the weight of that burden pressing down upon you.

Often, looking at things from a different perspective can help. It may be beneficial to talk with someone who can offer a different point of view and help you to think differently about a particular situation. Often, recreational activity will help ease our burdens when they become increasingly heavier. We re-create ourselves, refresh our spirit and relax our minds through recreation. If you need someone to talk with about things, remember that your chaplains are always available. If you come to talk with me, I will show you how long I can hold up a glass of water. ☆

GTMO Religious Services

Daily Catholic Mass
Mon. - Fri. 5:30 p.m.
Main Chapel
Vigil Mass
Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Main Chapel
Mass
Sunday 9:00 a.m.
Main Chapel
Gospel Service
Sunday 1:00 p.m.
Main Chapel

Protestant Worship
Sunday 9:00 a.m.
Troopers' Chapel
Islamic Service
Friday 1:15 p.m.
Room C
Jewish Service
FMI call 2628
LORIMI Gospel
Sunday 8:00 a.m.
Room D

Seventh Day Adventist
Saturday 11:00 a.m.
Room B
Iglesia Ni Christo
Sunday 5:30 a.m.
Room A
Pentecostal Gospel
Sunday 8:00 a.m.
Room D
LDS Service
Sunday 9:00 a.m.
Room A

Liturgical Service
Sunday 10:00 a.m.
Room B
General Protestant
Sunday 11:00 a.m.
Main Chapel
United Jamaican Fellowship
Sunday 11:00 a.m.
Building 1036

GTMO Bay Christian Fellowship
Sunday 6:00 p.m.
Main Chapel
Bible Study
Wednesday 7:00 p.m.
Troopers' Chapel
The Truth Project Bible study
Sunday 6:00 p.m.
Troopers' Chapel

New role, new challenges

**Army Staff Sgt.
Blair Heusdens**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

After approximately seven months as commander of the 189th Military Police Company of the 525th Military Police Battalion at Joint Task Force Guantanamo, Army Capt. Suzanne Redente is gaining valuable leadership experience and taking on an additional role as the officer in-charge of Camp 5.

"I'm here to make sure the detainees, as well as the Soldiers, are getting support and the standard operating procedures in the camps are being followed," said Redente.

The officer in-charge position is usually rotated among the junior company commanders of the 525th to provide them with an experience in detainee operations at GTMO, a unique opportunity for young officers in the military police field.

Redente received training in the camps upon arrival at the JTF and that training proved to be a valuable asset when she recently assumed the position.

"The systems are the same; I've just had to get to know the different personnel who are here," said Redente.

Redente is adjusting to her new responsibilities and appreciates spending more time interacting with her Soldiers and watching them perform their duties.

"Being a commander is a full-time job and keeping the camp running is also a full-time job," said Redente.

Her leadership style has been noticed by not only her superiors, but also the Soldiers she works with day to day.

"Capt. Redente has raised the morale of the



Army Capt. Suzanne Redente tours military visitors through Joint Task Force Guantanamo's Camp 5, Dec. 22. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black



Army Capt. Suzanne Redente shows visitors the items issued to detainees at Joint Task Force Guantanamo's Camp 5, Dec. 22. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Cody Black

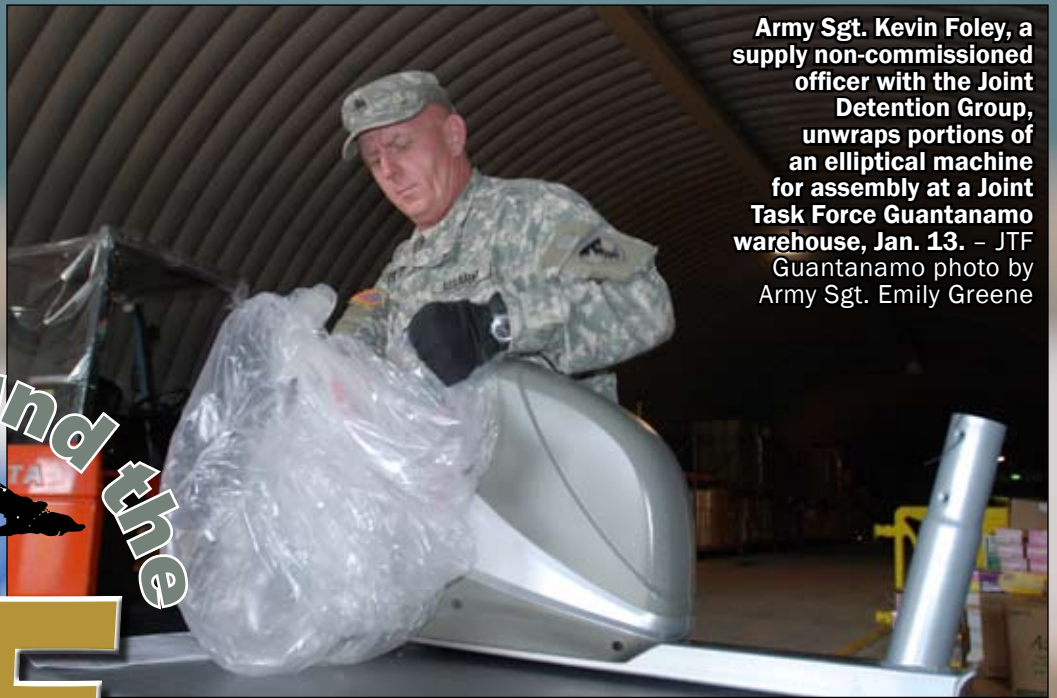
Soldiers to its highest level in the last 22 months that I have been the first sergeant," said Army 1st Sgt. Mark Tillman, the 189th first sergeant. "She talks with the Soldiers every chance she gets, asking them how they are doing and if they have talked with their family lately."

Her time as a commander has already taught her some valuable lessons, especially in patience. Redente says she has matured as a leader and improved her interpersonal communication skills.

"I've learned that when things happen, to take a minute, rationalize, and then make a solution," Redente said. "I understand that nobody's perfect. We try to look at why the problem happened and what we learned."

This sentiment was echoed by her first sergeant, "She is not afraid to make the quick decision, yet she also realizes to research all courses of action when necessary. She has a full understanding that a leader never wants to 'rush to failure'." ☆

Army Sgt. Kevin Foley, a supply non-commissioned officer with the Joint Detention Group, unwraps portions of an elliptical machine for assembly at a Joint Task Force Guantanamo warehouse, Jan. 13. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Emily Greene



Around the



JTF



Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrea Penn with the Commissions Support Group washes a government vehicle at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Jan. 11. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Emily Greene



A JTF Guantanamo Trooper jabs a punching bag to stay fit during his off time, Jan. 12. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Christopher Vann