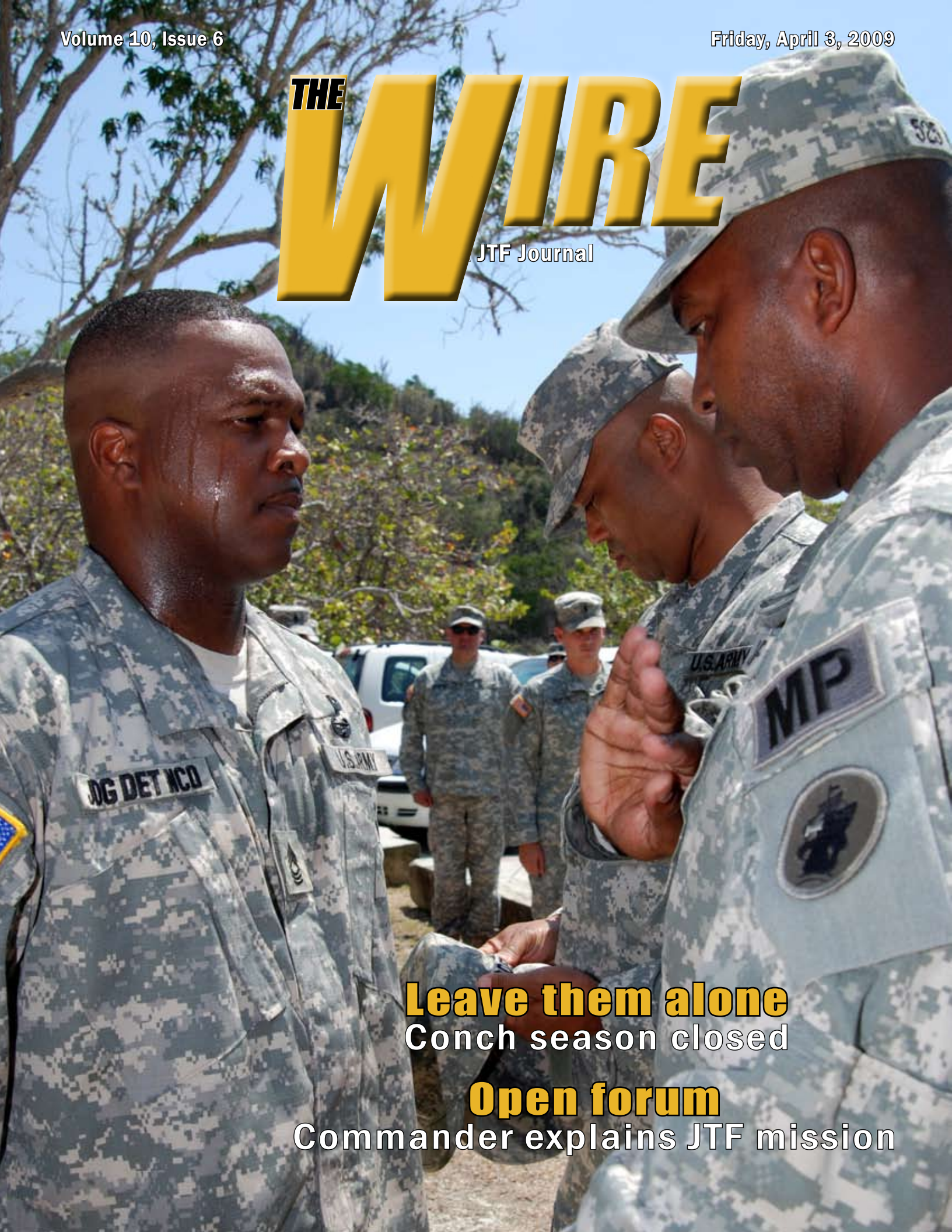


THE **WI**RE

JTF Journal



Leave them alone
Conch season closed

Open forum
Commander explains JTF mission

Beyond regulation

**Army Command Sgt. Maj.
Donald W. Troxler, Jr.**
525th MP Battalion Sgt. Major

Our regulations spell out what a leader must be, know, and do with step-by-step instructions of our duties, responsibilities, tactics, techniques, standards of conduct and behavior, and even how to perform battle drills.

What the regulations cannot explain to you comes from within. It comes as a result of sacrifice; with no immediate and external reward. I gladly share this story of what lies within us that shaped the success of my career as a leader and my life in past, present and hopeful future.

In 1986, I returned to New London, Conn., and visited my dad, who was most commonly referred to as "First Sergeant." He was U.S. Army retired with more than 20 years of service, an Army boxer and a Vietnam and Korean veteran. It wasn't until I set an azimuth on a career in the U.S. Army that First Sergeant revealed such a profound lesson.

We talked about this great man's life as a Soldier. We traveled through his career from his days as a boxer to his retirement as a first sergeant. Little did I know that I would learn my greatest lesson in becoming a Soldier, and then lose this man of wisdom all in the same night. You see, First Sergeant taught me about caring.

Throughout his career in the military, he secured the hearts and minds of his Soldiers through his untiring ability to "care" about every aspect of their lives. He told me that there is not a manual anywhere that can teach this four letter word with genuine sincerity – the ability comes from within. Only your caring deeds will stimulate the growth process in you and your Soldiers.

I remember First Sergeant saying "Son, if you want to see one of your Soldiers carry you up that mountain and move the next one despite opposition, don't give him a weapon." First Sergeant continued, "The key is to care without ceasing before you get into the fight."

He remembered distinctively – while in Korea – one of his Soldiers leaving his fighting position after observing him fall due to injuries from the advancing adversary. He said it was without hesitation that one of his Soldiers came to his aid and neither First Sergeant nor his Soldier could explain why. When asked, the Soldier simply said, "I had to." A few days later, his Soldier approached him and said that he had been thinking about the First Sergeant's question of why he came to his aid, despite the imminent danger. The Soldier replied with his most feasible explanation, "When I saw you fall, First Sergeant, all I could do was reflect back on all that you had done for me and my family both as a Soldier, man, husband and father; on and off duty. You were always there and so too I had to be there. Leaving you out there would have been shameful, and my wife would never forgive me for leaving behind a man of greatness."

We ended our conversation with dad telling me that this was the most important lesson he learned throughout his career. We exchanged hand shakes, and almost like a scene from a movie, he passed away that very same night, leaving me with such a profound lesson that has shaped my life and military career: care for Troopers, their families and community without ceasing and without expectation of reward.

The core of who we are reveals itself in our ability to care conditionally or unconditionally. In business, customer service drives the train in the success of major and minor corporations. In our profession, it's caring. Caring lasts a lifetime and affects the support of our profession for generations.

This is simply leadership beyond the regulation, with the viewpoint of unconditional caring through eyes of a man who still lives within the hearts and minds of many he served; I am proof of that. Unconditional caring, is it in you? The reward is Priceless. ❖



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Army Sgt. 1st Class Daryl Savage is promoted to Master Sgt. during a ceremony held at Windmill

Beach April 1. – JTF Guantanamo

photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st

Class Richard M. Wolff



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.

**Joint Task Force
Guantanamo
Commander Navy Rear
Adm. Dave Thomas Jr.
recently held a series
of town hall meetings
March 26 and 28
at Naval Station
Guantanamo Bay to
explain the mission
of the JTF to service
members and civilians
who work at the base.**
- JTF Guantanamo
photo by Army Staff
Sgt. Blair Heusdens



Navy Rear Adm. Dave Thomas Jr. took the opportunity to thank Naval Station Troopers for their continued support of the JTF during recent town hall meetings held at the naval station. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Blair Heusdens



Explaining the mission

■ *Recent town hall meetings give Naval Station residents a look at Joint Task Force mission*

**Army Staff Sgt.
Blair Heusdens**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

At first glance, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay seems like any other U.S. naval base, and in many ways it is. With its long history, the base has supported naval operations in the Caribbean for close to 100 years. For the last seven of those years, however, the island has absorbed a separate mission, which, because of its nature, residents don't always understand.

In an effort to educate the community of Guantanamo Bay, Joint Task Force Guantanamo commander Navy Rear Adm. David M. Thomas Jr. hosted a series of town hall meetings to discuss the mission and operations of the JTF.

"There's nothing that we do that I would be ashamed to show my mom or my kids,"

Thomas said.

The briefing consisted of a detailed explanation of the mission of Joint Task Force Guantanamo and what the Troopers involved do on a daily basis to support the mission of safe, humane, legal and transparent care and custody of the detainees. The briefing is the same briefing Thomas gives to distinguished visitors and media who visit the task force.

"Transparency is our most effective means of giving people an appreciation of our various missions and for dispelling misperceptions about how we perform those missions," he said.

The recent signing of an executive order to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay also presented an opportunity for Thomas to discuss the important and continued mission of the naval station. Many people misinterpret

the imminent closing of the detention facility to mean the naval base will close as well, which is not the case. Thomas sent a message to the civilians and military personnel on base that Naval Station Guantanamo Bay will continue to exist long after the detention operations have moved from the base.

"This base has been of strategic value for more than a century and it will continue to be in the future," Thomas explained to those in attendance.

Thomas also took the opportunity to thank those present for the support the naval station continues to give in providing housing and base support facilities to the members of the JTF.

"[In my years in the Navy], I thought I'd seen it done right before, but I've never seen anything like I have here at GTMO," Thomas said. ★



474th HVAC: War on temperature

Air Force Staff Sgt Brian Wright prepares a boiler for installation at Camp Justice. The boiler will allow Troopers to take warm showers. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Michael Baltz



Air Force Senior Airman Ryan McClung works on a boiler.
– JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Michael Baltz

Army Sgt. Michael Baltz

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The 474th Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning unit is responsible for maintaining the Expeditionary Legal Complex and Camp Justice in support of Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

The unit, which is comprised of National Guardsmen from West Virginia, Michigan and Hawaii, is responsible for maintaining environmental control units (ECUs) throughout the ELC and Camp Justice.

“We maintain more than 100 ECUs,” Master Sgt. Steve Contreras, the supervisor for 474th HVAC, said. “We perform maintenance on those, which consists of changing filters, motors and condensation removal.”

The 474th HVAC is also responsible for maintaining seven M-80 boilers. These boilers provide people with hot showers and warm water. The unit repairs water leaks and maintains the burning systems.

“The bulk of the work we do is preventive maintenance,” Contreras said. “That is mixed in with emergency calls.”

In case of an emergency, an HVAC technician is posted inside the ELC during the proceedings.

Contreras’ staff is also tasked to maintain five advanced-design refrigeration units, which are walk-in refrigerators. The Cuzco trailer billeting is also maintained by the 474th HVAC for the ELC staff, which can include lawyers and reporters for the commissions.

The majority of the members of the unit perform the same kind of tasks in their civilian careers.

“We have a very diverse group,” said Contreras. “We have a guy that works on commercial equipment for the University of Michigan, we have a guy that works on specialty equipment and I own a business.”

The unit also has a few members who are still in training.

“Our shop is comprised of Guardsmen from various parts of the nation and for them to work together so well has contributed to our success.” ☆

Veterinary services maintain high standard

Army Staff Sgt.
Emily J. Russell

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Measuring health standards and ensuring the safety of foods we eat isn't the first thing that comes to mind when you think about Army Veterinary Services. However, with a critical eye and strict standards, veterinary services is Guantanamo Bay's first line of defense against sub-standard food products.

"We inspect the quality and the condition of the fruits and vegetables that come to Guantanamo Bay – from beginning to end," said Army Spc. Ria Coutts, a food inspector with Army Veterinary Services. "Even though [the food] comes from the U.S., we have to verify the products are arriving in the same condition as they were shipped. We ensure quality food for the Troopers, residents and detainees here."

Whether you eat at the galleys and restaurants, or purchase your food at the Navy Exchange, each product is carefully inspected by a food inspection team.

"The job is important for the financial interest of the government," said Army Staff Sgt. Angela Dominguez, also a food inspector. "We want to make sure they get what they pay for. If we find a bad item at receipt, we issue the paperwork so the government can get their credit, or get the item replaced."

Coutts explained the food is already paid for by the government when it reaches the island.



Army Spc. Ria Coutts inspects a box of lemons that recently arrived at Guantanamo Bay. Coutts, a food inspector with Army Veterinary Services, regularly inspects shipments of food before distribution to various vendors on base.

– JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

"If we find something bad, our documentation is important for next year's contract," added Coutts. "That's why this is so vital."

Dominguez and Coutts hold food contractors to a standard of quality which helps to ensure the contractor is fair, and that the food we get is what we are expecting – not defective or rotten.

"Most items are supposed to have at least 50 percent remaining shelf life at receipt," Dominguez said. "We write off a lot of items for that reason. If a contract says that an item is supposed to be packaged a certain way, or kept at a

certain temperature, we have to hold them to that standard. If an item is frozen, it must arrive frozen. Shelf life is a big issue here, we can't just send items back."

Dominguez explained that in the U.S., if food does not meet the standard, that it would simply be sent back to the vendor.

"We can't do that here," she said. "Either we take it and work with what we get and receive some credit for it, or wait for the next shipment."

As a result, food with a short shelf life is often discounted at the NEX.

"It doesn't mean that the food is bad," Dominguez added, "but it doesn't necessarily have the shelf life it would normally have at receipt."

"Before food is shipped here, anything that doesn't meet the standard of quality it is supposed to be sent back," Coutts explained. "But that still doesn't mean that the [inspection team] caught everything before it was shipped here. That's why



Army Staff Sgt. Angela Dominguez holds government contractors accountable for the food they provide by inspecting items that arrive here. Should food arrive in poor condition, a report is filed to indicate the condition in which it was received. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Russell



Will Work for Sets wins final set

(From left to right) Brian Boyer, Billy Course, CJ Foster and Aaran San Luis pose for a photo with their trophies. Their team, Will Work for Sets, won the beach volleyball tournament in a championship game over the Assassins on March 29. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Michael Baltz

**Army Sgt.
Michael Baltz**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Every Saturday and Sunday, 20 to 30 people of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay gather at Windmill Beach to play and watch beach volleyball. March 28-29 was a little different; there was a 12-team double-elimination beach volleyball tournament.

Will Work for Sets defeated the Assassins in the championship match 23 to 22 with the help of a different set-up in the final round of the two-day tourney.

“We switched up our setters, so one of our setters would have more blocking opportunities and that helped out a lot,” said Lt. j.g. Brian Boyer, the team captain for Will Work for Sets. “It was that, and having few hitting errors, that allowed us to win.”

Strategy played a key role in their success. Salim Rahmanzai also noted that defense is an important aspect of the game.

“You have to play hard defense to win games,” Rahmanzai, the team captain for the Assassins, said.

The tournament not only allowed people to show off their skills and compete, it also allowed people to socialize and have fun.

“It is good to get people together” said



“You have to play hard defense.”

– Salim Rahmanzai, the Assassins captain

Rashed Barkho, a linguist for Joint Task Force Guantanamo. “While I am away from my family, I am able to have a second family here, whether they are a service member or a civilian.”

There are several people like Barkho who have been playing volleyball for more than 30 years and were very pleased to have this tournament.

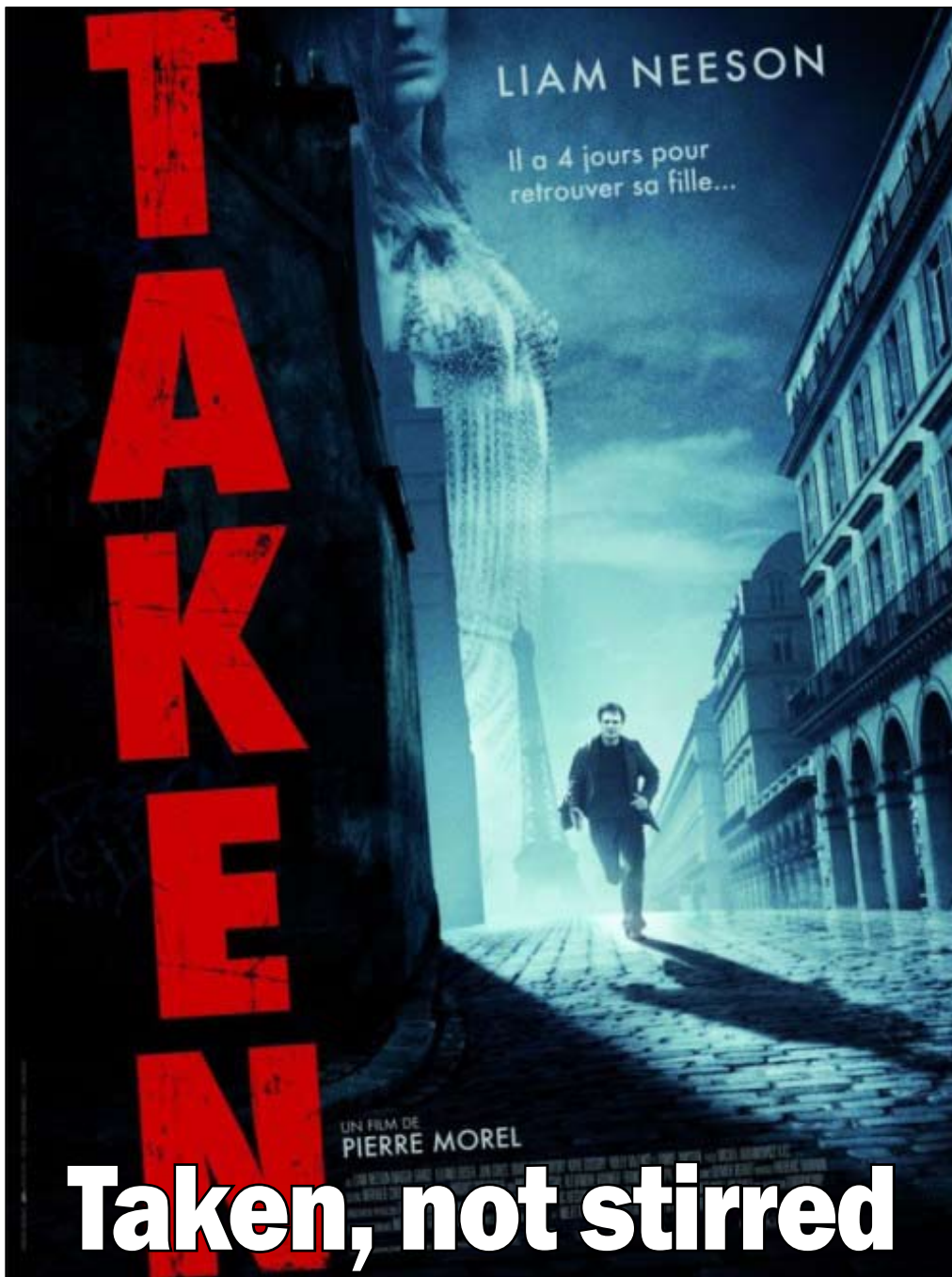
The tournament led into the Spring Indoor Coed Volleyball League which began March 30.

“This tournament helps kick off the spring league,” said Robert Newman, the sports coordinator for Morale, Recreation and Welfare. “It allows people to find other teammates and prepare for the upcoming season.”

If you wish to find out more information regarding volleyball tournaments or other sporting events, contact the base sports office at ext. 2113. ☆



Billy Course spikes the ball against his opponent. We Play for Sets met the Assassins early in the tournament on Sunday and met again in the championship game. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Michael Baltz



**Army Sgt.
Carmen Gibson**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

This action flick came highly recommended, and while the laws of physics are slightly suspended in places, the draw is so intense that the fulfillment of natural laws bears little importance.

As an absent father making up for lost time, Bryan Mills (Liam Neeson) kicks off this brutal thriller by purchasing a karaoke machine for his daughter Kimmy's 17th birthday. Liam is immediately upstaged by Kimmy's stepfather's grander, yet less useful gift of a show horse. His gift shows Neeson in an emasculating light before he turns into the most resourceful, well-connected bad-ass this side of James Bond, and moonlights as a body guard for a pop

songbird.

This section of the high-paced punchfest merely serves to quickly transition the audience into believing that a scrawny disheartened dad with the body and charisma of Neeson could perform on the same level as Chuck Norris or even the Punisher.

In Kimmy's wet blanket of a mother, Dr. Jane Grey (Famke Janssen), instigates a crisis when she persuades Neeson to let Kimmy take off to Paris with her popular best friend. The trip entails two un-chaperoned girls traveling all of Europe following a U-2 concert series. Mr. Neeson's resistance to Kimmy's travel plans leads to a predictable scene which he explains "awareness" of overseas dangers, because of his job working for the government. Kimmy and her father share a tender moment when she

implies that he was often mysterious to her as a child; often making believe that he was masquerading as a ninja or a Jedi. He, rather unconvincingly, tells her he's just a civil servant.

Upon arrival in Europe, Kimmy's overly-eager best friend falls into a trap, executed perfectly by a "hot" guy with a "hot" accent, who follows them to their apartment and informs his supervisors about the arrival of two lonely American girls. The kidnappers arrive during a phone conversation between Kimmy and her father, after which, he disturbingly remains calm and urges her to describe them with great detail while she is dragged out of the room screaming. Any parent would find such a horrific portrayal of family protection most difficult to endure.

When Neeson traces his way to the apartment where they were abducted, he busts out high-rise exploits, edging his way along a ledge, one apartment to another; no doubt because French locks are notoriously hard to pick.

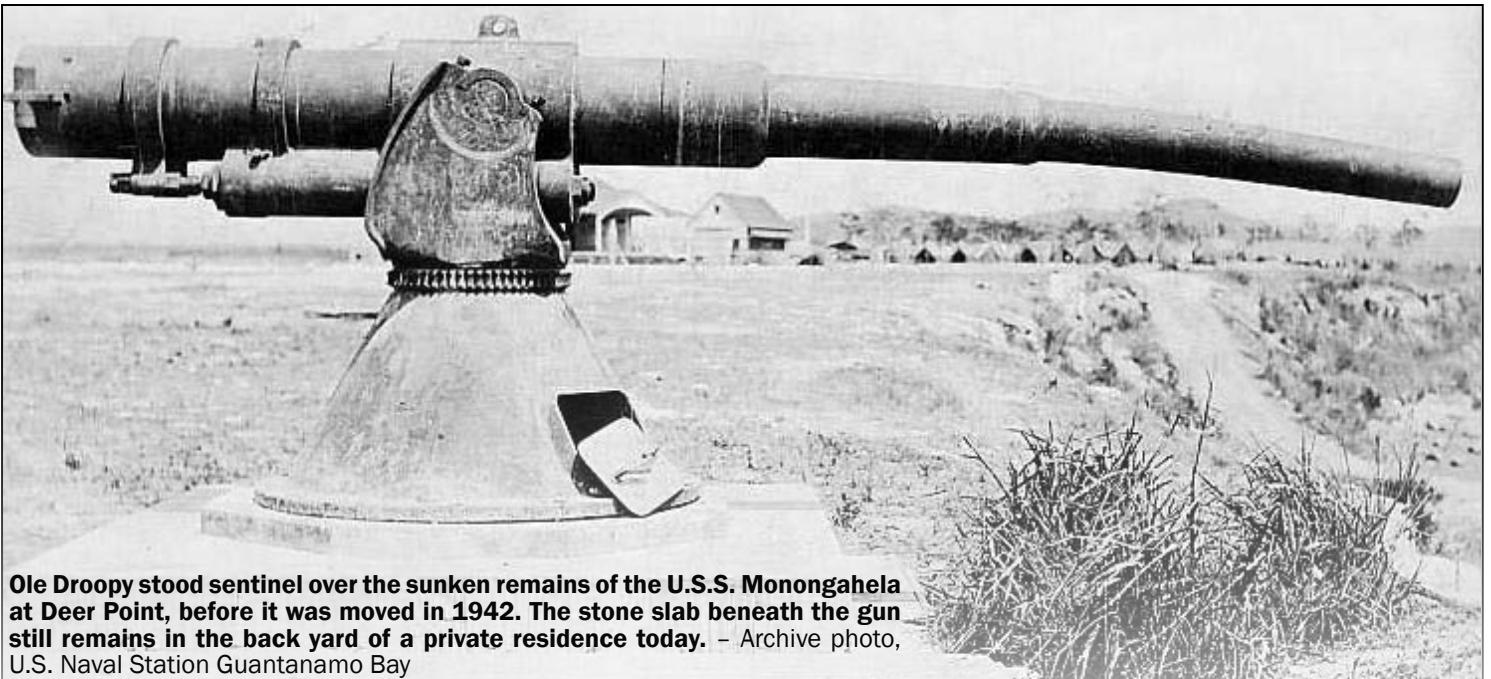
Anyone who enjoys disliking the French will get their opportunity. With ex-CIA operative training, Neeson races around Paris disrupting quiet snooty life and crashing into a few buildings and parked cars, searching for his daughter. He eventually uncovers a human trafficking ring led by a mafia-like posse of Albanian businessmen. The group is behind his daughter's kidnapping, as well as countless others, and is backed by corrupt French policemen and politicians filling their deep pockets behind the safety of their powerful desks.

Throughout the murder, cover-ups and all around butt-kicking, Neeson remains fixated on tracking down his daughter, and his momentum never lets up. The action and quick pace is addictive, to the point of nail biting, air-punching euphoria. And patriots, be proud of the fact that despite the

total domination of Audi vehicles in this film, it was the Jeep Cherokee with which Neeson wreaked the most automotive-related havoc. Despite any objections based on implausibility, this movie rocked, especially by action movie standards. It was a refreshing break from the confusing story lines and dumb-witted jock straps that plague the "blow 'em up, shoot 'em up" genre of today. *Taken* has certainly stirred up a lot of old feelings for classic action advocates and Bond buffs. ★

Rated PG 13
91 minutes





Ole Droopy stood sentinel over the sunken remains of the U.S.S. Monongahela at Deer Point, before it was moved in 1942. The stone slab beneath the gun still remains in the back yard of a private residence today. – Archive photo, U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay

Ole Droopy legacy lives on

**Army Staff Sgt.
Emily J. Russell**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Guantanamo Bay is steeped in history from the battle of Cuzco Wells during the Spanish-American War, to history in the making, with the Joint Task Force. The time between these events is speckled with curiosities, mysteries and history that isn't necessarily world-wide headline material, but is still significant to the naval station's legacy.

The tale of "Ole Droopy" is a great Guantanamo Bay controversy with allegations of power-mad officers and late-night skullduggery – according to local lore and legend.

Ole Droopy was a deck gun aboard the U.S.S. Monongahela, a "barkentine rigged screw sloop" which – in non-naval terms – means it was a war ship with both sails and an engine and "screw," or, propeller.

In the spring of 1908, the U.S.S. Monongahela caught fire while anchored between South Toro Cay and Grenadillo Point. While the ship was afire, it was towed to the harbor area on the south side of Deer Point, near Officer's Landing.

"The ship was towed to the harbor because it was easier to try and fight the fire," explained Navy Cmdr. Jeff Johnston, public works officer for the naval station. "The effort was unsuccessful and the ship sank in only about 20 feet of water."

After the ship sank, one of the deck guns was retrieved from the charred wreckage.

"During the fire, one of the deck guns became so hot that its barrel partially melted, acquiring a pronounced droop," Johnston explained. "The gun became known as Ole Droopy."

The gun was placed on Deer Point,

directly over the remains of the sunken ship, as a way to honor the memory of the Monongahela. It remained there until 1942 when houses were built on the point preventing base residents from visiting Ole Droopy.

"In the late 1950s, the Guantanamo Bay chapter of the Navy League, with permission of the base commander, moved Ole Droopy from Deer Point to a 'downtown' location – currently the site of the Prisoner of War, Missing in Action memorial," Johnston said.

At the time, Ole Droopy rested across the street from the commissary and Navy Exchange, right in the center of everything. The old site is currently the Downtown Lyceum parking lot.

This is where "GTMO lore" begins, and the line between fact and exaggeration become a bit blurred.

"The fact is," Johnston began, "in the spring of 1988, the base commander, Navy Capt. John Condon and his public works officer, Navy Capt. John Gallen, decided to build a POW-MIA memorial at the site of Ole Droopy. During this construction, Ole Droopy was removed and taken to the base landfill with the rest of the construction debris. That we know to be true."

A popular, though unconfirmed, rumor about Ole Droopy is that the base commander and public works officer were not pleased with the undignified look of the warped, downward pointing deck gun. To some young Sailors and Marines, it became the appendage of off-color jokes and references. The new memorial was built in its place as a means of eliminating the relic.

"The volunteer curator of the lighthouse museum, Ms. Cookie Johnson, recalled that no one knew about the plans to remove

the gun until it happened," Johnston said. "According to her, when word spread that it was gone, the historical society secreted out to the landfill to locate Ole Droopy, which was almost entirely buried.

"They quickly drew up plans to retrieve it from the landfill," he continued. "The high school principal even agreed to place it in the school courtyard – if it could be recovered."

However, Ms. Johnson claimed that those plans were derailed when an unannounced visit from a "senior officer" came to her door, late one night.

"As she tells the story," Johnston recounted, "she was standing there in her bathrobe as the officer admonished her to stop trying to retrieve Ole Droopy – lest something happen to her husband's job. Ms. Johnson also related that others who attempted to rescue the gun had similar experiences."

Currently, the only information available about Ole Droopy's location is a hand drawn "treasure map" from one of the members of the 1988 effort to rescue the deck gun from the landfill.

"The map shows the approximate position of the disposal site," Johnston explained. "But, that doesn't mean it can be easily located. Since it's buried in a landfill, metal detectors and ground penetrating radar will not be able to distinguish Ole Droopy from all the other metal in the ground. So, finding this piece of GTMO's past isn't like looking for a needle in a haystack, it's like looking for a needle in a stack of needles."

Ole Droopy may never be seen again, but it's infamous past will live on. Perhaps someday its significance will be realized and it will be resurrected from its grave, but until then, we'll have to settle with legend and lore. ★

Queen conch shells are easily found in the waters of Guantanamo Bay. Residents and Troopers are allowed to take one Queen Conch per day, except during March, April and May, when the season is closed. - JTF Guantanamo Photo by Army Sgt. Michael Baltz

A beautiful, but limited, resource

**Army Staff Sgt.
Emily J. Russell**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Conch shells serve as a nice souvenir from Guantanamo Bay and also provide a meal for anyone willing to make the effort. In order to sustain this resource, it is important to abide by base regulations during the closed season.

Conch is a species of saltwater snail which can vary in size from very small, to very large. It's not uncommon to find them while scuba diving or snorkeling, as they often make their home in grass beds.

Each year, according to naval station base regulation, during the months of March, April and May, taking conchs from the ocean for any purpose is prohibited.

"This season is known as the reproductive season," said Mike McCord, environmental manager for the naval station. "Guantanamo is special for its biodiversity, both marine and terrestrial. It's our duty and mission to be good stewards of the environment."

Reports of Troopers and residents taking conchs out of season have been coming in more frequently than in years past.

"A number of conch shells were seen at Cuzco barracks and it was brought to the attention of the environmental office," said Christopher Creighton, environmental compliance program manager for the base.

"It's important if you want to keep your recreational privileges," Creighton continued. "If you are caught, your outdoor recreational privileges may be revoked."

In the past, individuals who took conchs

out of season have claimed the conch was already dead when they found it, with the shell abandoned.

"It's easy to tell the difference between a shell that was taken live and a shell that was empty," McCord said. "Within days, a shell will lose its luster when the animal dies. [The snail] is what keeps it shiny, so we know the difference."

Members of the naval station receive an indoctrination briefing which includes a briefing from the environmental office covering the regulations about fishing and shelling. However, members of the Joint Task Force may not receive the same brief, McCord explained.

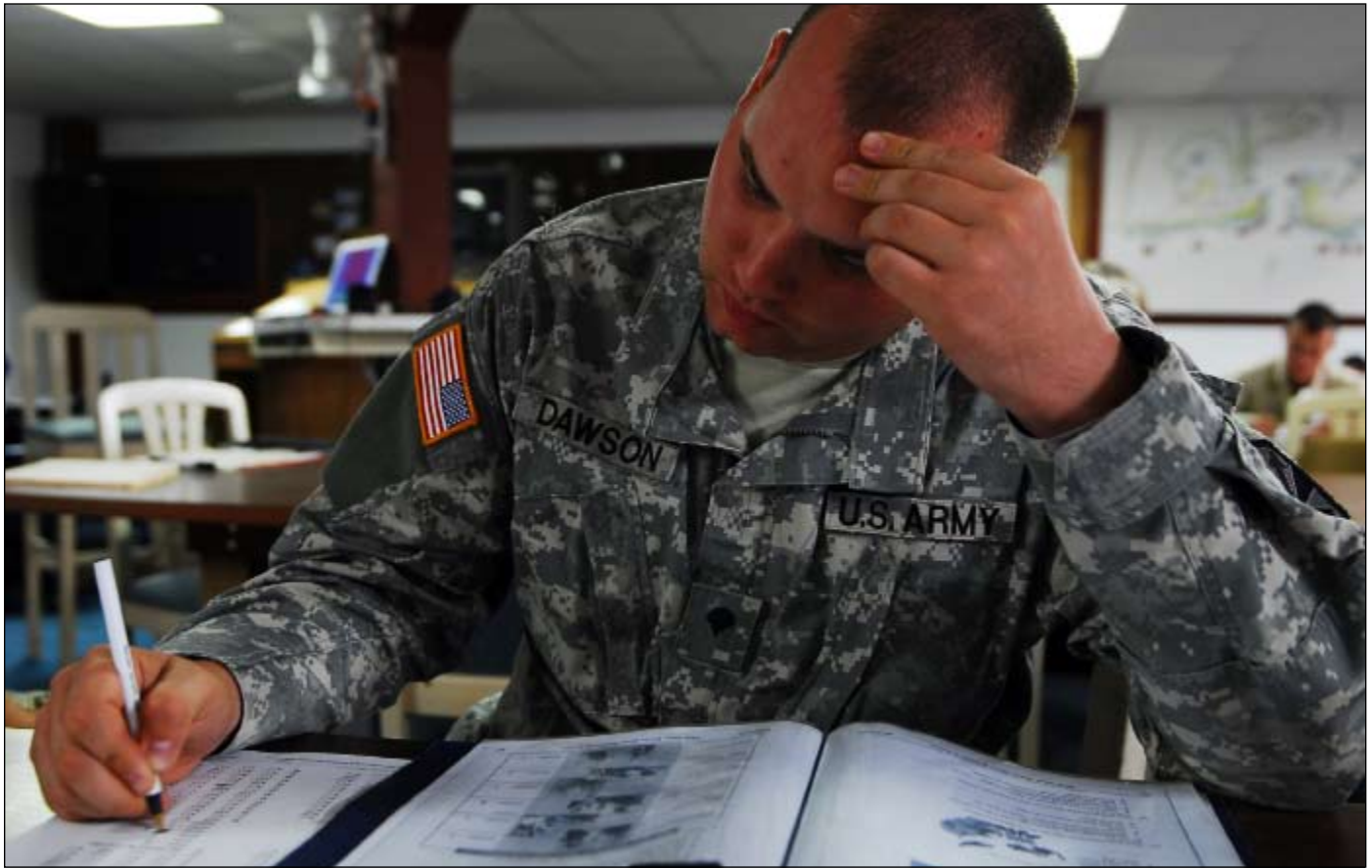
According to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay instruction 11015.1, shelling is permitted at all public beaches. During the open season, you may take a total of two live shells per person, per day. A live shell is defined as one that is occupied by the original animal. Shells occupied by hermit crabs or empty shells that wash up on the beach are not considered live. However, you may only take one live Queen Conch per person, per day. Queen conchs must be at least nine inches long from tip to tip or have at least a one-eighth inch lip.

Taking live starfish, coral, fans or sponges is strictly prohibited at any time. Coral, fans or sponges washed up on the beach, however, are acceptable to take.

Additional information can be found in the outdoor recreation instruction 1710.10, or in the fishing and natural resources related recreation instruction, 11015.1. ★



Queen conch shells must measure at least nine inches from tip to tip, or must measure at least one-eighth of an inch at the lip. - JTF Guantanamo Photo by Army Sgt. Michael Baltz



Preparing for the big dive

Army Spc. Tim Dawson, a paralegal with Joint Task Force Guantanamo, takes his final exam for his open-water dive class March 31. After successful completion of the test, Dawson will be able to participate in open water dive training. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Michael Baltz

2009 Mother's Day Greetings

Send a Mother's Day greeting back home to friends and family. Show up at either Club Survivor or Kittery Café to record your greeting.

Club Survivor

April 20 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

April 21 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Kittery Café

April 22 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

April 23 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

For more information contact Joint Task Force Public Affairs at ext. 8757.

Produce, big or small is inspected for quality, like these strawberries pictured here. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Russell

Quality assurance: keeping Troopers healthy

FOOD from 5

we're the backup before the food gets to the customer."

In addition to food inspections, veterinary services also inspects facilities on base that prepare and serve food.

"We do facility inspections and sometimes work in conjunction with preventive medicine to inspect the galleys, McDonalds, Caribbean Coffee and Cream and the Windjammer," Dominguez said.

When the team inspects eating establishments, they observe sanitary practices, confirm food is properly stored and ensure that food is stocked properly.

"I love my job," Coutts said. "It is important for the fighting strength of the Troopers and civilians working here. It's also important for the families. If we're not supporting our families, we're not supporting Trooper morale." ☆

Boots on the Ground

Who do you want to win the Final Four?

by Army Staff Sgt. Blair Heusdens

**Army 2nd Lt.
Stephanie Wormwood**



"I'm from North Carolina, so I'd like them to win."

**Navy Lt. Cmdr.
Christopher Blair**



"My team is out, so I hope North Carolina wins."

**Navy Petty Officer 2nd
Class Matt Thomas**



"I'm rooting for UNC."

**Army Spc.
Richard Vega**



"I'd like to see Yukon win."

Prayer and stress relief

**Navy Lt. Cmdr.
Clint Pickett**

JTF Command Chaplain

For the 17th consecutive year, April has been designated Stress Awareness Month. Stress Awareness Month, sponsored by the Health Resource Network, is intended to increase public awareness about both the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic. – I wonder if it is just a coincidence that they chose April, with tax time looming over us!

All of us at Guantanamo Bay know what stress is about. Did you know that prayer can help reduce stress? It is true. Many studies have suggested that prayer can reduce physical stress, regardless of the god or gods a person prays to, and this may be true for many worldly reasons.

I was paging through a stress management guide, compliments of our local JSMART, and several ideas on reducing stress are related to prayer. Simply setting aside 15 minutes each day to pray helps bring us out of our stress-

filled routine and can give us a mental, spiritual, and physical break. The passage from Psalms comes to mind: “Be still and know that I am God.” Simply taking a break to remember that it is not all about us can help a lot!

One of my prayer techniques is to memorize favorite passages of scripture and repeat them, especially in times of stress. I, and many others, really appreciate Psalm 23. Using guided imagery – a stress reduction technique – reminds me of the passage, “He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me besides still waters . . .”

Instead of letting my thoughts go around in my head when I find myself stressed out, reciting Psalm 23 reminds me of the rational thinking technique. When I say, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,” I can change the upsetting thoughts and beliefs that give rise to negative feelings like anxiety, anger, depression, fear and guilt.

Prayer is not just a stress reduction technique, but stress reduction is certainly a side-effect of prayer. There are many ways to pray, and there is no one “right” way to

pray. One prayer I find helpful in my life is the so-called “Serenity Prayer,” familiar to many of us.

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

This prayer, by Reinhold Niebuhr, continues below:

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;

Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things
right if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this
life and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next. Amen

Regardless of how you pray, I encourage you to pray! May Paul’s words to the Philippians be an inspiration and a comfort in your lives. “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” ★

JTF CHAPEL SCHEDULED PROGRAMS

Catholic Mass

Sunday: 7 a.m. Confession
7:30 a.m. Mass

Wednesday: 11 a.m.
Spanish Mass

Protestant Worship

Sunday: 9 a.m.

Spanish Protestant Worship

Sunday: 11 a.m.

Bible Study

Sunday: 6 p.m.

Wednesday: 7 p.m.



Army Spc. Jonathan Santiago, Army Staff Sgt. Jose Santiago and Army Sgt. Joseph Santiago are deployed to Joint Task Force Guantanamo with the Puerto Rico National Guard. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. April D. de Armas

Deployment brings family together

■ *Father and two sons share experience of a lifetime*

**Army Spc.
April D. de Armas**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

For most Troopers, deployment means leaving family, friends and loved ones at home to engage in a mission with their command. Troopers may be gone for a very long time without seeing their family at home, and sometimes miss big events such as birthdays and anniversaries.

For one family, however, this deployment is different. Army Staff Sgt. Jose Santiago, with Joint Task Force Guantanamo, is experiencing something many Troopers may never have the opportunity to experience. Santiago has the pleasure of serving alongside his two sons during his deployment with the Puerto Rico National Guard.

Jose has been in the Army for 20 years and has deployed eight times.

Jose said when he found out his unit was deploying, they were going to need more than just the Troopers who were in

his unit.

“When the call went out to other units my boys volunteered to join me and my unit on the mission,” he said.

Army Sgt. Joseph Santiago, with JTF External Security, is Jose’s oldest son. He joined the Army eight years ago.

“I wanted to be with my dad,” said Joseph.

Jose said he encouraged his son Joseph to join and authorized him to enlist since he was only 17 at the time.

“I liked the Army and I wanted to go to college,” Joseph said.

Joseph, a father of two young boys, said it is hard to leave them behind but would not change his decision to deploy with his father.

Army Spc. Jonathan Santiago, a driver with the JTF Joint Visitors Bureau, is the youngest of Santiago’s sons. Jonathan joined the Army three and a half years ago.

Jonathan said he also jumped at the opportunity to be with his father.

Jose said he and his wife did not want Jonathan to go into the Army. They wanted him to go straight to college, but Jonathan wanted to do his own thing.

“I wanted to follow in my father’s footsteps,” said Jonathan. “I wanted to be a military policeman, like my dad.”

Jose also has a daughter who teaches math in Texas. She is the eldest of his children.

Jose said he raised his children in a military manner and they never gave him problems. He said his boys were always good and he stayed involved with them growing up.

He said he coached their ball team and kept close contact with their teachers.

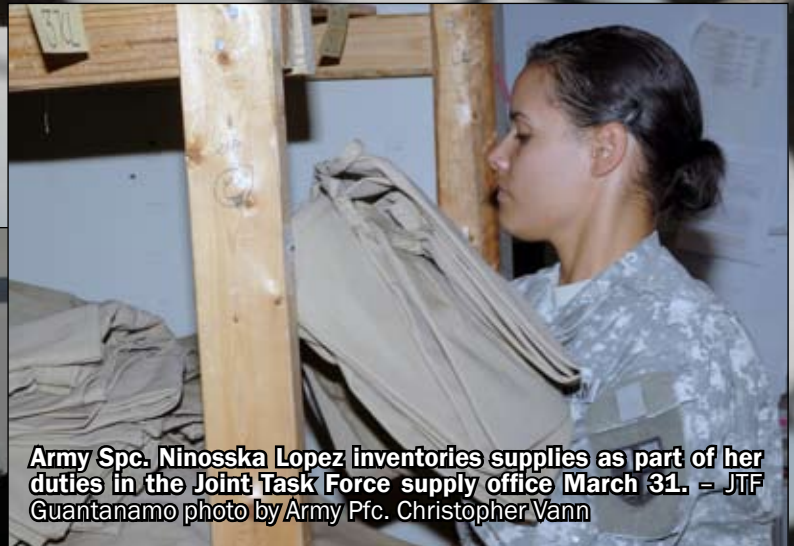
“He was strict growing up,” said Jonathan. “It was ok. We needed it and he is a good man.”

Both Jonathan and Joseph said they are equally proud of their father and love him very much. They both said they are happy to have the opportunity to serve alongside him and wouldn’t have it any other way. ☆



Navy Constructionman Jarred L. Metro and Petty Officer 3rd Class Jesse W. Haisch make enhancements to a detainee recreation yard. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Tiffany Addair

Around the JTF



Army Spc. Ninosska Lopez inventories supplies as part of her duties in the Joint Task Force supply office March 31. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Pfc. Christopher Vann



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Nacole Williams reads a poem from a book of poetry she's writing called "Set the Mood" during Poetry Night March 28 at the naval station community center. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Michael Baltz