



Naval Hospital and JMG Change of Command

By Spc. Timothy Book

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

A Change of Command ceremony was held Wednesday for the commander of the Naval Hospital and the Joint Medical Group.

Capt. John Edmondson transferred his command to Capt. Ronald Sollock at the ceremony, which was held at 9:00 a.m. Sollock will continue to hold both commands as Edmondson had.

Edmondson has served in the Navy for 25 years and has been in this command since July 2003. He has led the hospital and group through many challenges and has earned much praise.

Edmondson said one of the biggest accomplishments was passing the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO). Recently, JCAHO has been updated with stricter rules and the Naval Hospital was the first military organization to undergo the inspection after the new changes. Edmondson said they passed with no discrepancies, but others added much more praise for the accomplishment.

Rear Adm. Thomas Cullison, Navy Medicine commander, East, was present at the ceremony. He described the accreditation as "scoring an unprecedented 100 percent in both hospital and home health."

Cullison continued to compliment Edmondson. "He optimized the staff by consolidating his directorates and eliminating redundant processes to deliver medicine more effectively."

During the ceremony, Edmondson was awarded the Legion of Merit Gold Star, third award, for his accomplishments here. The award cites the successful accreditation as one of many of his accomplishments.

JTF-GTMO Commander Maj. Gen Jay Hood was also present. "Throughout his command, Steve Edmondson has proven

himself to be a strong, seasoned, caring and thoughtful leader," he said.

Hood also commented on how well Edmondson dealt with the changes he faced with this command. "Few in the medical community have faced the challenges in command that [he has]. Without much guidance, [he has] charted a way ahead that focused on medical professionals providing first-rate medical care to patients."

Edmondson also addressed the changes he and the base faced. "At the beginning of the Global War on Terror and the establishment of the JTF, another chapter in the history of the base began." He also expressed his gratitude for being part of it.

Edmondson spoke highly of his experiences here. He said this assignment has been, "some of the most interesting and challenging years in my memory. I can't begin to [say] how much of a privilege it has been to be here."

He offered much accolades to the leaders he worked with here and for the entire Guantanamo Bay community. But, he appeared the most passionate when he offered his final thanks. "And for some of the most important participants here today, the men and women of the Naval Hospital and the Joint Medical Group, you have continued to amaze me. Your hard work and dedication to each other, our patients and the community has been a constant source of inspiration to me."

Edmondson further praised them in addressing Sollock. "Your staff has been performing heroically in a difficult and hostile environment," he said. He also said this mission is an important part of the war and, "each of you has an important role in making it a success."

Sollock was also given a warm welcome from the JTF commander. "You'll find this



Photo by Sgt. Dave Lankford

assignment the single most challenging and rewarding of your military career," said Hood. "Gitmo is a great place to serve our country and I look forward to serving with you." ■

JTF supports commissions

Troopers from all branches and offices around the JTF served in various roles supporting commissions this week.

Their duties and positions included: security personnel for the exterior of the commissions building and the courtroom, bailiffs, media facilitation and assistance for the joint information bureaus erected on both the Windward and Leeward sides, escorts for media, non-government agencies, and logistics support including meal-delivery and transportation. *More on page 6.*

Decision making tools

By Navy Capt. Thomas Beall

Commander, Navy element

On the first day of training for each new company of Navy Provisional Guards, I tell them what the United States Navy expects of them in this mission. I frame the discussion in terms of the four pillars of my own personal command philosophy, one I used when I was Captain of a ship and one that serves me well today. The four pillars are:

1. *Accomplish the Mission.*
2. *Bring the Crew Home Safe.*
3. *Uphold the Sailor's Creed.*
4. *Try to Find a Way to Say Yes.*

“Accomplish the Mission” always comes first. This truth is embedded in the core values of all our services. Our business is to accomplish the mission given to the JTF Commander:

(JTF-GTMO conducts detention and interrogation operations to collect and exploit intelligence in support of the Global War on Terrorism, coordinates and implements detainee screening operations, and supports law enforcement and war crimes investigations.)

“Bring the Crew Home Safe” comes in a close second. Every one of us has a duty not only to ourselves but also to our fellow shipmates to help each other come home healthy in body and spirit. Leaders, in particular, have a 24 / 7 duty to ensure their Troopers are well trained and well equipped to cope with the challenges and stresses of their jobs so that we may all “come home safe.”

“Uphold the Sailor's Creed” means hold fast to our core values. In the Navy, the Sailor's Creed speaks to who we are (“I am a United States Sailor”), why we fight (“I will support and defend the Constitution . . .”), those who went before us (“I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy . . .”), our core values (“I proudly serve with . . . Honor, Courage, and Commitment”), and how we will do our duty here (“I am dedicated to excellence and the fair treatment of all”). When guard force



Photo by Sgt. Todd Lamonica

Sailors are going through training, they say the Sailor's Creed every day to remind them of our core values and how they will sustain us in this mission. Regardless of your service, the core values are essentially the same. Embrace them daily to help you better accomplish the mission and bring the crew home safe.

“Try to Find a Way to Say Yes” speaks to the leader's responsibility to see to the needs of his or her troopers. There is a practical reason for this. The Trooper whose personal needs are addressed is one who is better able to accomplish the mission, bring the crew home safe, and uphold our core values.

For me, these four phrases are not just words. They are tools I have used throughout my career to make decisions affecting the lives of my Sailors and the success of the mission. I use them to constantly assess how well I am living up to my obligations to my country, my command and my shipmates in the missions I have been asked to perform. I ask you to do the same. Ask yourself daily, “What am I doing to advance mission accomplishment? What am I doing to help my shipmates in this mission? Am I living up to my service's core values? Am I doing my best to take care of my Troopers so they can help me accomplish the mission?”■

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Troopers provide quality care for detainees

By Spc. Seth Myers

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

There is a hospital and staff here standing ready to medically help in any way they can. The hospital is located in Camp Delta and has a pharmacy, x-ray, a small lab and an operating room. Services include medical care for chronic and acute illnesses and injuries, physical therapy and uncomplicated surgery. The Camp Delta hospital's quality staff works hard to ensure the care they provide is as good as people would receive in the United States.

"The detention hospital is comprised of the medical administrative building, inpatient facilities and an outpatient clinic. The detention hospital is considered to be a small community hospital," said Cmdr. Lisa Lessley, senior nurse executive for the detainee hospital. "We provide a standard of care comparable to what you would see in the United States... the same outstanding quality care."

Their mission is to "give compassionate and quality medical care to the detainees at JTF-GTMO," said Capt. Stephen Hooker, officer in charge of the detention hospital. The Troopers

working at the detention hospital know their mission and make sure they do their best. "For many of us, this may be the most important mission of our military career," said Hooker.

Various medical services, to which detainees would not have access in their home countries, are available to the detainees, according to JTF-GTMO Commander Maj. Gen. Jay Hood.

Much of the routine care is provided on the blocks, but detainees also receive care at the detention clinic, which is located near the detention hospital.

In all circumstances, the Troopers who provide medical care at the detainee hospital have been outstanding, said Hooker. They have been able to adapt to difficult situations; they have shown great commitment and dedication to duty; and they have labored tirelessly to provide consistent, quality medical services.

"The corpsmen are the backbone of our healthcare delivery system," said the senior medical officer. "This is one of the finest groups of medical personnel we have ever worked with."

Making sure that medical care is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is not an easy task. There are



Photo from JTF archives

many challenges that arise in the world of detainee medicine because of the cultural differences and the different ways medicine is practiced in other countries, but the staff stays true to its mission, and does what is best for the detainee, said the senior medical officer.

Despite the issues and difficulties presented by treating detainees here, the staff has remained vigilant. They will continue to provide the top care that is expected of them, not only because they know that their job is very important, but because they are outstanding, dedicated Troopers who want to carry out that mission to the best of their ability ■

Secretary of the Army approves reimbursement program

By Maj. Paul Cucuzzella

U.S. Army Claims Service

On 21 November 2005, the Secretary of the Army issued final instructions implementing the Department of the Army's program to reimburse Soldiers who purchased body armor and certain other protective, health and safety equipment for use in Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers can also be paid for these items if the items were purchased for them by someone else, such as members of their family. Soldiers currently on active duty, including those in the Army Reserve or National Guard, former Soldiers, and survivors of deceased Soldiers may now file claims and receive reimbursement for privately-purchased protective equipment if the Soldier was not issued equivalent equipment by the Army

prior to deployment on one of these Operations.

More information on the body armor and protective equipment reimbursement program, including a list of reimbursable items together with the pre-established compensation rates, can be found by accessing www.jagcnet.army.mil, and selecting the U.S. Army Claims Service link under the "Client Services and Links" section. This link can be accessed by the public. Potential claimants can also obtain a printable DD Form 2902 through this link. Claimants or commanders can also contact MAJ Paul Cucuzzella, Project Officer, USARCS, at paul.cucuzzella@emh1.ftmeade.army.mil or at (301) 677-7009 ext. 431, with any questions concerning this program or for additional information. ■

Understanding the NCOER

By Spc. Jeshua Nace

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

As part of Army regulations every non-commissioned officer is to receive an NCO evaluation report. The report allows superiors to evaluate the performance and the leadership abilities of the NCO (like a grade report in high school). NCOERs are very important to the future of the NCO and proper completion of the form by superiors is a top priority.

A really good site for complete instructions on the NCOER form, DA 2166-8, can be found at www.erec.army.mil/ncoer/NCOER.htm.

The best way to fill out the NCOER is to follow the instruction step-by-step. However, there are several things NCOs should know before filling out the form.

When filling out the form, if the supervisor or the NCO being evaluated doesn't have a middle name, do not put in "NMN," instead just leave this blank.

When the form asks for rank, put in rank (ex. SSG), not pay grade. Also, the date should appear as "YYMMDD," do not write in the full year.

The home station address should be the complete address of the unit. For everyone here in parenthesis "(duty w/JTF GTMO)."

"One of the most common mistakes on the NCOER is the names of the rating official. The name may be in all caps or upper/lower case, but must be consistent. The rank portion of part two A, B and D should contain the appropriate three letter Army rank abbreviation. For rating officials who are not U.S. Army officers or NCOs, in addition to their rank, enter their pay grade and branch of service. For example, a U.S. Navy Captain would be entered as CAPT/06 USN; a USMC Gunnery Sergeant would be entered as GYSGT/E7 USMC; a civil service official would be entered as GS grade or GM (6-15)," said Staff Sgt. Cheryl Bolden.

The NCO's daily duties and other responsibilities must be a series of phrases, starting with action words and separated by semicolons.

"Rating officials may only use the first two lines in block 3D to list areas of special emphasis. Line three of this block is reserved for listing email addresses for all three of the rating officials. The first choice is the AKO email address. Only when there is no AKO email address available will a unit, office or personal Internet e-mail address be used. When an AKO e-mail address is used there is

no need to add the portion after the @ sign since it is standard on all," said Bolden.

In part four, which concerns Army values, attributes, skills and actions of the NCO, it's necessary to be short, concise and to the point. All comments will be bulleted.

"Bullets will be no longer than two lines; and no more than one bullet to a line. Start with action words (verbs) or possessive pronouns (his or her); do not use the NCO's name or the personal pronoun he or she, and words should be in past tense when addressing the NCO's performance and contributions. Double-space between bullets, which should be preceded by a small letter 'o' to designate the start of the comment. Each bulleted comment should start with a small letter, unless it's a proper noun, which is usually capitalized," said Bolden.

Army Physical Fitness Test data should be entered as pass or fail, followed by the date (ex. PASS 0106). If no APFT was taken because of a profile then enter the word "Profile" and then enter the date in which the profile was given.

The NCOER should be printed out on one page, front and back. ■

Editors Note: Next week we will cover Navy Regs

It's never too late for a Christmas card

By Sgt. Adrian Galvan

Unit Public Affairs Rep. 1/18th Cav.

Sgt. Christopher Garcia and Sgt. Wade Davenport from the S1 personnel section conducted mail operations last Friday as usual for the 1st/18th CAV. Garcia was the first person to discover a package from the California Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger and First Lady Maria Shriver.

"A package from my favorite childhood hero," Garcia said very anxiously to Davenport.

"I have a package from who?" This was the phrase exclaimed by 1st Lt. James Wagoner, HHT Commander, 1st/18th CAV, when delivered the rather large box. When the initial shock wore off, the box was opened with awe and curiosity by Wagoner and 1st Sgt. Malcolm Campbell. Inside the box was a total of 330 Christmas cards that displayed a picture of a watercolor painting created by California artist Governor Schwarzenegger, a man with many talents.

Who knew that the Governor could paint? The 330 cards were divided between Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Headquarters Troops. Inside each Christmas card was a gift: a 200-minute phone card. Since there are more Troopers in the Cavalry than cards, the officers declined them so that the enlisted Troopers could have one each.

The first to receive their cards from the Governor and First Lady was Charlie Troop, 1st Platoon. Charlie Troop XO, 1st

Lt. Joseph Christenson, Wagoner and Staff Sgt. Daniel Gutierrez, HHT's acting first sergeant, presented the cards.

The Troopers eyes lit up when they were told who had sent the cards and what the cards contained. Yells, hollers and happy smiles filled the air as each Trooper received their Christmas card from the Governor and his wife, Maria.

"It is nice to be remembered by the Governor and his wife. This was a nice thing for our

Troopers. It is nice to know that people still remember that we're here," said Staff Sgt. Mark Rock, squad leader.

The Troopers were still talking about the Christmas cards as they put away the cherished gifts, picked up their equipment and headed out to do the mission. ■



Photo by Sgt. Adrian Galvan

Governor Schwarzenegger painted this watercolor Christmas card and duplicated it for JTF Troopers.

Doctor Martin Luther King Jr, prominent civil rights leader

By Sgt. Jessica Wilson

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

Martin Luther King Jr was born in Atlanta, Georgia and is famous for being a leader in the civil rights movement. He graduated from Boston University with a Doctorate of Philosophy in Systematic Theology. Also, he was awarded honorary degrees from numerous colleges.

King entered the Christian ministry when he was 19 and was ordained in 1948. He became Assistant Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and later accepted the call to Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He eventually decided to co-pastor with his father at Ebenezer and was the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

King was elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association. They were successful in the Montgomery bus boycott from 1955 to 1956. Also, King was arrested thirty times for his participation in civil rights activities.

The movements and marches King led brought significant changes in American life. He is also famous for his lectures and remarks regarding civil rights. King had a philosophy of nonviolent direct actions and the Voting Rights act of 1965 went to Congress as a result of the Selma to Montgomery march.

In 1968, James Earl Ray shot him while King was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. King had been in Memphis to help lead sanitation workers in a protest against low wages and intolerable conditions.

During his lifetime, King was involved in many civil rights movements, wrote several books and received many awards to include the Nobel Peace Prize. The Martin Luther King, Jr Historic Site, a 23-acre area, was listed as a National Historic Landmark on May 5, 1977 and was made a National Historic Site on Oct. 10, 1980 by the U.S. Department of the Interior. We honor King on Jan. 16. ■



Photo from clemson.edu

Excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood. I have a dream

that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

Busy week for the JTF

Commissions' preliminary sessions in action



Photo by Spc. Timothy Book

A press conference was held to allow the media to hear from members of the defense counsel and prosecution.



The group was given the meals being served to detainees.



Media witnessed and filmed meals being served in honor of the Muslim holiday Eid al-Fitr.



Photo by Spc. Timothy Book

A reporter and cameraman prepare for a live feed after the first day of deliberations.



Navy Lt. Jonathan Sym, Joint Task Force spokesman, answered reporters' questions.



Photo by Spc. Timothy Book

**opportunity to eat the same
ainees.**



Photo by Spc. Timothy Book

**ing prepared for detainees in ob-
Adha.**



Photo by Spc. Timothy Book

**Force food service
ons regarding meals**



Photo by Spc. Timothy Book

Representatives from Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the ACLU gave a press conference Monday.



Photo by Spc. Timothy Book

Some of the media group toured the temporary facility used to house detainees for a limited time in 2001. Detainees are now housed in a more permanent facility in Camp Delta.

NFL playoffs offer lots to watch for

Commentary by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Patterson

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

With the wild card round out of the way, this week's divisional round games bring a large degree of intrigue to our television sets. Want to know why? Good, because I'm going to tell you anyway.

First up, we have the reborn New England Patriots visiting the frosty confines of Denver to clash with the ever-ready Broncos. What makes this such an interesting match-up is the fact that many left the defending champs for dead months ago, only to see them get healthy and dominate over the second half of the season. Denver has been steady all season under the guidance and veteran leadership of Jake "The Snake" Plummer, who had a rebirth of his own. Both teams possess tremendous defensive acumen, so whoever can find the most success in their offense and make the big play will take this one. I wouldn't be surprised if "Automatic" Adam Vinatieri added another big field goal to his resume in this one.

In the other AFC match-up, it's the Indianapolis Colts against the Pittsburgh Steelers. Peyton Manning and company have had two weeks to get some rest and prepare for this one, while the Steelers took down Carson Palmer and then staged a second half comeback to beat the Bengals. The main question here is, can the Steel Curtain defense contain Peyton Manning, Marvin Harrison, and Edgerin James? They couldn't in week 12, a 26-7 Colts victory in Indy. Jerome Bettis could also play a huge role in this game; if he is successful in running the ball and the Steelers can play physically, they have a real shot. But if Indy stops him and makes "Gentle" Ben Roethlisberger beat them, you can notch this one up to the Colts. I won't say the Steelers can't win, I just don't think they will.

In the NFC, we start off with the Da' Bears and the Carolina Panthers. Carolina absolutely dominated the Giants fourth-ranked offense last week, and look to do the same against a much weaker unit this time around. The Bears have lived off a nasty defense all season,

led by defensive player of the year Brian Urlacher. In order to have a chance, they must concentrate on stopping Steve Smith at all costs, and knocking Jake Delhomme around a little would certainly help. On offense, Chicago is relying heavily on youth at both cornerback and quarterback, with Cedric Benson and Rex Grossman, respectively. Unlike the other games, don't expect more than 15-20 points in this one, with Carolina narrowly escaping with the "W".

Finally, NFL MVP Shaun Alexander and his Seattle Seahawks look to end their run of playoff futility when they clash helmets with the NFC darkhorse Washington Redskins. The Seahawks have the definite advantage in this one with Alexander, while the Skins counter with the ever-flashy Clinton Portis. Assuming they both do business as usual, it comes down to play of the quarterbacks. Mark Brunell makes his return to the playoffs after a stellar season, proving he still has a little left in the tank. The Washington defense was stellar against a so-so Bucs team last week, and they'll be put through the wringer this week, with Alexander showing everyone why he is "The Man." ■



Photo from Seahawks.com

This was the play where Seattle's Shaun Alexander set the single season rushing touch-down record of 28.

NFL PICKS WEEK 17

LAST WEEK
SHAY (1-3) WEIR (4-0)
STALLINS (1-3)

SHAY SEASON RECORD
144-94

Picks submitted by Spc. Ian Shay, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Mark Stallins and Army Maj. Jeff Weir.

Week 17
 Washington at Seattle

New England at Denver

Pittsburgh at Indianapolis

Carolina at Chicago



Shay
Seahawks



Stallins
Seahawks



Weir
Redskins

Broncos

Broncos

Patriots

Colts

Colts

Colts

Panthers

Bears

Panthers

Military commission proceedings occurred this week

By Kathleen T. Rhem

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9, 2006 - Military commissions proceedings resumed this week as officials here held preliminary hearings in the cases of two enemy combatants held here since 2002.

Proceedings resumed in the case of Ali Hamza Ahmad Sulayman al Bahlul, a Yemeni man accused of crafting terrorist propaganda, and began for Canadian teen Omar Ahmed Khadr, who officials say killed a U.S. serviceman while fighting for al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Military commissions proceedings began against Bahlul in August 2004 but were halted by a federal district judge's ruling in November 2004. An appeals court decision in July 2005 overturned that ruling, clearing the way for this week's resumption.

Military documents summing up the charges against Bahlul allege that Osama bin Laden commissioned him to make a propaganda video glorifying the attack on the USS Cole in Yemen and to collect news feeds showing the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States. In his first appearance before the military commission, in August 2004, Bahlul admitted being a member of al Qaeda and asked to represent himself or to be represented by a Yemeni.

"People of the entire globe should know I testify that I am from al Qaeda," Bahlul said in court in 2004.

In July 2005, John D. Altenburg Jr., appointing authority for the Defense Department's Office of Military Commissions, ruled that Bahlul may not represent himself. Under military commissions rules, detailed military defense counsel must represent all defendants. Further, private defense attorneys are required to be U.S. citizens and possess a secret security clearance. Detainees are also allowed to have foreign legal consultants.

The hearing on Jan. 11 was intended to further examine the issue of Bahlul's defense team, to allow the presiding officer to set a trial schedule and possibly to afford defense and prosecution attorneys the opportunity to challenge the suitability of the presiding officer, Army Col. Peter E. Brownback III. Legal officials describe this process as similar to attorneys in a civilian court challenging the impartiality of members of the jury.

The second defendant, Khadr, was born in Canada in

1986 to a family of terrorists, according to U.S. military documents. His father, Ahmed Khadr, is said to have been a close associate of bin Laden and other senior al Qaeda members, who ran a charity supposedly for the support of Afghan orphans. In reality, U.S. officials said, the group, "Health and Education Project International Canada," was channeling funds to terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.

Khadr is said to have trained extensively in terrorist camps in Afghanistan and became an explosives expert specializing in remotely detonated improvised explosive devices, according to the charges against him. Attempted murder charges are based on the allegation that he emplaced improvised explosive devices on routes frequented by U.S. military convoys.

A murder charge stems from July 27, 2002, the date of his capture by U.S. forces in Afghanistan. According to U.S. military documents, U.S. forces surrounded a compound that housed Khadr and other al Qaeda members. A firefight ensued, killing Army Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Speer and two Afghan military members.

Several other U.S. military members were injured. Officials allege Khadr threw the grenade that killed Speer. Khadr was 15 at the time.

Air Force Maj. Jane Boomer, a spokeswoman for the Office of Military Commissions, said Khadr would be tried as an adult without consideration of his age at the time of his alleged crimes.

Boomer said both men could be sentenced to up to life in prison if they are found guilty of their crimes.

More than 30 media representatives arrived at this island base this week to cover the legal proceedings. Up to eight reporters are allowed to observe hearings in the courtroom. All others observe proceedings from a nearby media center via closed-circuit television.

Army Maj. Jeff Weir, deputy public affairs officer for Joint Task Force Guantanamo, said facilitating media coverage is an important part of the process. "If you're not as open as you can be it's going to look like you're trying to hide things," he said today.

To date, nine men have been charged with war crimes under the military commissions process. Issues in one of those cases, that of Salim Ahmed Hamdan, are pending U.S. Supreme Court review. A lower court also halted proceedings in the case of David Hicks, the so-called "Australian Taliban," until the Supreme Court rules in the Hamdan case. ■

Are all religions the same?

By Army Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Chris Molnar
JTF-GTMO Command Chaplain

Since I am a chaplain and pastor I am frequently on the receiving end of statements like: "Chaplain, all religions are really the same, aren't they?" or "We are all going to the same place, isn't that what religion is all about?" As a young pastor, just out of Seminary, my tendency was to hear such statements as a challenge to the unique claims of Christianity as opposed to other world religions. And I suppose there is some element of that in all such statements. However, with experience and, hopefully, a little maturity, I have begun to hear such statements as a way a saying, "Chaplain, religion is not something I need to take the time to think seriously or critically about, right?"

What amazes me is that some still ignore religion even after all that

history, both ancient and modern, has shown us. Clearly, there are religions and religious folks who do good, even wonderful things, and then there are others whose cruelty can only be explained in religious terms. To think critically about religion is to ask the basic questions of our existence. "Why am I here?" "What is the purpose of my life?" "Is there such a thing as good and bad, and how can I know?" Some of the greatest literature of all time has attempted to answer these questions as honestly as possible. I am thinking of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* or *Siddhartha* by Hesse. Other works are less overtly religious but serve as a way of exploring basic questions. Some of the great works of literature that serve this function are Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* or Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

The Bible is still a best seller after all these years and religion remains a popular topic in the arts.

All this is to say nothing of the literally billions of people around the world who attempt to order their lives, their societies, their cultures in light of a Holy book like the Bible or the Qur'an.

Yes, I suppose I must say it, there are many similarities between the world's religions. One would expect that to be the case if what those religions seek to describe is real, that is, not made up. Folks who fill up their time entertaining themselves when they are not trying to feed and clothe themselves, never giving any thought to the basic questions of life, are, in a word, foolish. There, I said it. So, make my day. Ask me, "Chaplain, aren't religions all the same and get us to the same place?" ■

Changeless truth in changing circumstances

By Army Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Robert Palmer

JTF-GTMO Chaplains office

Our world is constantly changing; people, events, circumstances, and even a new year - 2006! Change can be good, because it offers hope, fresh starts, and new discoveries. But change can also create stress. As we experience various changes in 2006 we can reduce our stress by reminding ourselves of two things that are changeless: Americans' love of freedom and God's love.

As Americans, we have always loved freedom. We want it for ourselves and we want it for everyone. We are unwilling to allow any tyrant or terrorist to take our freedom. This has not changed. Our JTF motto expresses our personal honor in defense of freedom- Honor Bound To Defend Freedom.

God's love is constant no matter how much things change. Psalm 106:1 declares, "Give thanks to the Lord, because He is good; His love is eternal." God's love is constant no matter how much we change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He always loves us.

God also loves freedom, because without freedom it is impossible to choose. Without freedom it is impossible to love. Love is a choice. We choose to love our country. We choose to love our family members. We choose to love our friends and our fellow troopers. We choose to love God. We choose to love freedom. We choose to defend what we love.

So, as we begin our journey through 2006, don't let change leave you frustrated and depressed. Have a change of heart about change, because a change of heart will transform your stress into rest. ■

CAMP AMERICA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday	9 a.m.	Protestant Service	Troopers' Chapel
	6:00 p.m.	Confessions	Troopers' Chapel
	6:30 p.m.	Catholic Mass	Troopers' Chapel
	7:30 p.m.	Evening Prayer	Troopers' Chapel
Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Soul Survivor	Camp America North Pavilion

NAVAL BASE CHAPEL

Sunday	8 a.m.	Pentecostal Gospel	Room 13
	9 a.m.	Catholic Mass	Main Chapel
	9 a.m.	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Sanctuary A
	9:30 a.m.	Protestant Sunday School	Main Chapel
	10 a.m.	Protestant Liturgical	Sanctuary B
Monday	11 a.m.	Protestant Service	Main Chapel
	1 p.m.	Gospel Service	Main Chapel
	5 p.m.	Pentecostal Gospel	Room 13
	7 p.m.	Prayer Group Fellowship	Fellowship Hall
	7 p.m.	Family Home Evening	Room 8
Tues. to Fri.	12 p.m.	Daily Mass	Cobre Chapel
Wednesday	7 p.m.	Men's Bible Study	Fellowship Hall
Friday	1 p.m.	Islamic Prayer	Room 12
Saturday	4:30 p.m.	Confessions	Main Chapel
	5:30 p.m.	Vigil Mass	Main Chapel

Jewish Shabbat Services held every second Friday at 7:30 p.m. in the Naval Base Chapel complex Room 11.

15 Minutes of Fame

with Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Amphayuanh Khounnoraj

By Sgt. Todd Lamonica

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

Years ago, one of the Navy's recruiting slogans was "Join the Navy and see the world." This was just the type of adventure that Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Amphayuanh Khounnoraj was looking for. After spending a few years in college, things weren't going the way he wanted them to, so he decided to join the Navy.

A native of Laos, Khounnoraj became a U.S. citizen after graduating from high school. His military career began as an interior communications electrician, which involves working and maintaining alarms and communications on ships. After spending nine years in this career field, Khounnoraj decided to get out of the military and try his hand at civilian life.

It only lasted six months. "I applied for a job and passed all the tests to get in but was told nothing was available at the time. I needed the benefits so I decided to rejoin," said Khounnoraj. He was right back in the fight. This time around he chose to become a Master-at-Arms. His first duty station was Naval Training Center (NTC), Great Lakes, Chicago, Illinois. While stationed at the NTC he became a command investigator. The mission involved investigating criminal cases on base, surveillance and inspections of new recruits entering boot camp.

Khounnoraj has been here for five months and is due to leave soon. He is glad he volunteered to participate in this mission due to the current direction that the Master-at-Arms rate is going. "Detention operations are becoming a common mission for MA's, with facilities here, Iraq and Afghanistan. I would not be surprised to be reassigned to Iraq when I return," said Khounnoraj. Working in detention facilities while stationed at the NTC helped him prepare for his mission here.

The training that the Troopers received at Ft. Lewis is invaluable. They are taken through many scenarios that prepare them for their job here. Khounnoraj is married with one child and his wife is very supportive of his job and understands what is expected of him.

While here he is working on his associate's degree in criminal justice



Photo by Sgt. Todd Lamonica

and when he returns he will start on his bachelor's. Becoming a Navy Chief is one of his longtime goals. After being board eligible twice he feels his chances will be better this time around.

Troopers like Khounnoraj set the standard for incoming personnel. ■

15 Minutes of Fame

Know a Trooper worthy of being highlighted in "15 Minutes of Fame?" Call Army Sgt. Jessica Wilson at 3594.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Patterson

Spc. Dean Barnhardt swears in during his reenlistment ceremony. Army Maj. Jeffrey Weir administered the oath.

AROUND THE JTF



Photo by Sgt. Dave Lankford

Army Sgt. 1st Class Steve Alvarez and Army Sgt. Glen Christy raise the flag in Camp America on a recent morning.



Photo by Sgt. Dave Lankford

Maj. Gen. Jay Hood gives his thanks to outgoing members of the JTF in an award ceremony at the Windjammer Thursday.



Photo by Spc. Seth Myers

Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter talks to JTF-GTMO Commander Maj. Gen. Jay Hood during his visit here Jan. 8.