

THE WIRED

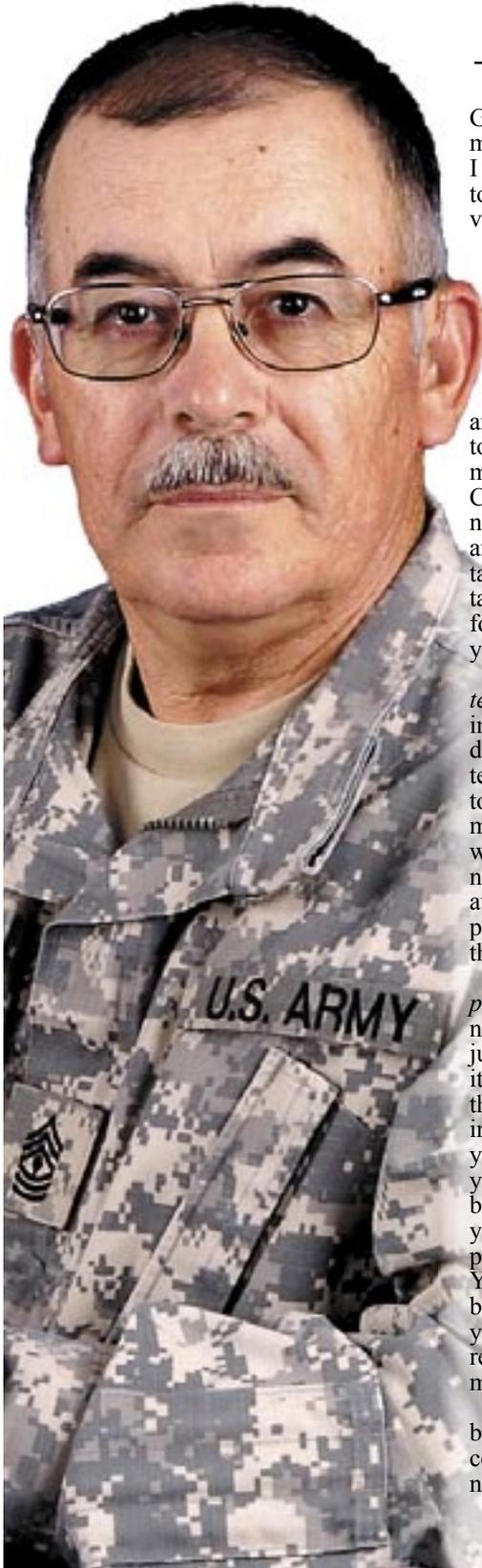
A JTF Journal



Fallen heroes honored
J-4 keeps JTF moving
Cinco de Mayo
Trooper leads by example

Building blocks for success

**Army 1st Sgt.
Alfred A. Gomez**
JTF Guantanamo HHC



Let me say that I am proud to be here at GTMO among all the men and women that make up and support our current mission. I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about three things that I feel are very important to your future.

First is *education*. As you know, technology is changing our world faster than ever before. The only way to keep up with technology is through continued education. There are many resources here at GTMO that will help you with your education needs – target your weak areas and get started. Make a commitment to be a student for life and you will see many doors open for you in the future. Continue to build on your education; it is never too late. Don't be a procrastinator and don't get discouraged by all the red tape. Remember, enrolling in anything takes time – and of course there are always forms to fill out – but stick with it, and your future will be a lot brighter.

Secondly I want to talk about *teamwork*. Nothing gets done here by an individual; it takes a lot of us to get things done. You are a very important part of our team. It takes everyone's positive attitude to get the job done. A lot of times there is more energy spent in complaining about what has to be done than the actual energy needed to get the job done. We are here at GTMO for a very short time – set a positive example for all by going beyond the standard.

Last, but not least, let me talk about *physical conditioning*. The easiest thing not to do is exercise. After a long day you just want to relax, and before you know it your day is gone. It is very important that you find what can motivate you into exercising. You have to make up your mind that you are going to commit yourself to a regular routine that can be accomplished. Set realistic goals for yourself and maintain them. Any exercise program will not yield results overnight. You'll see that before you know it you will be stronger and faster and you can adjust your goals again. Stay active and you will reap the rewards of a much healthier and more productive life in your later years.

With all that said and done, let's be prepared and willing to help the commissions process with whatever they need. Their success is our success.

Thank you. Be safe and act responsibly.

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COVER:

Dana Swope, a PADI certified dive instructor, prepares his class for a confined water dive exercise during an open water dive certification class at the Marine Hill pool complex. For more information, see pages 8-9.



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 1000.



Army Sgt. Michael Owens, of the 241st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, escorts members of the media during a tour of the defunct Camp X-Ray at Joint Task Force Guantanamo last August. Owens and the remainder of the unit, below, have recently completed their deployment. – Photo courtesy 241st MPAD

Unit leaves its mark on PA mission

**Army Sgt. 1st Class
Vaughn R. Larson**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

When Navy Cdr. Richard Haupt boarded the ferry at the end of his tour of duty a few weeks ago, members of the 241st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment – in keeping with local tradition – jumped into the bay.

That may have been the most fitting way to mark the end of their yearlong deployment as well, considering that their tour began much like a plunge into the unknown.

“We came here without one job-qualified person,” conceded Army 1st Sgt. Patrick Sellen, “and we did what we said we’d do.”

Specifically, that meant standing up a new public affairs unit made of Soldiers from different Army National Guard and Army Reserve units across Louisiana, creating a new web page for the Joint Task Force at Guantanamo, and improving *The Wire*.

“And all this was done without the media relations team missing a beat,” Sellen continued.

See **MPAD/12**



Members of the 241st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment as seen last September. Navy photojournalists augment the unit in support of the Joint Task Force public affairs mission. – Photo courtesy 241st MPAD



J-4 keeps things moving

**Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class
Cheryl Dilgard**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The motor pool doesn't have down time.

J-4 motor pool assigns all vehicles to Joint Task Force personnel. If you are part of JTF and have a ride to work, chances are you have someone in J-4 motor pool to thank.

The motor pool is made up of three JTF soldiers from the New Mexico Army National Guard and one civilian. The officer in charge 1st Lt. Shane Lauritzen, non-commissioned officer in charge Tommy Benavidez, and Spc. Griselda Rivera along with Judy Balch make up the motor pool team. All vehicles are logged into Unit Level Logistics System-Ground, a tracking system that monitors all JTF vehicles during their operational life here.

"The ULLS-G helps us track vehicles through dispatch. We use it to create work orders, and then tracks the vehicles while they are at Bremcor for repairs," said Spc. Griselda Rivera.

Rivera's job with the motor pool is almost endless. Besides tracking vehicles through ULLS-G, she maintains and schedules regular maintenance, prints monthly reports and issues licenses.

See J-4/13



Army Sgt. 1st Class Tommy Benavidez and Spc. Griselda Rivera have shifted the J-4 motor pool into a higher gear since arriving earlier this year. - JTF Guantanamo photos by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Cheryl Dilgard (above) and Army 1st Lt. Adam Bradley (left).

Work continues on legal complex

**Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class
Nat Moger**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The Expeditionary Legal Complex on U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay is sure to be the site of history making and groundbreaking events. The ongoing military commissions of detained enemy combatants is a lightning rod of controversy, polarizing people into camps of ardent supporters and fierce opponents.

The sensitive process of conducting a trial requires far more than a room, a couple of benches and a place to bang a gavel. It also requires more than attorneys, a defendant and a judge.

For every one of these major players there are dozens of others in support roles, from the guards guaranteeing the safety of detainees and those around them to the external security specialists providing logistical support.

But before any of them can begin to do their jobs, they need to have a state of the art facility and those don't just build themselves. Air National Guard engineering units have been upgrading the existing facilities at McCalla airfield to accommodate the commissions, and members of 474th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron from the Texas Army National Guard are continuing that mission.

"You could say we took the baton from our predecessors," said Air Force Lt. Col. Frederick Olson, 474th commander. "Our primary mission going in was the sustainment, operations support and maintenance of the facilities. Once we got here we realized, due to the increased security requirements, we had a bit of construction left to do."

The ELC needs to not only accommodate the physical security concerns of the commissions process, but also the information security concerns. Due to the classified nature of much of the evidence in the cases, the ELC – out of necessity – became a sensitive compartmented information facility, or SCIF.

"Originally it was a normal courtroom, but now we've transformed it," said Olson. "They'll be dealing with a lot of classified information so it's important to make sure that information is not leaked out."

Due to the fact that some of the documents being handled will be heavily classified, the 474th needed to take extra measures in the information security domain.

"There were issues in the way the facilities were constructed," said Air Force Maj. Kevin McKinney, 474th deputy commander and project engineer. "We made changes to the electrical systems so they're much different than the way they



Air Force 1st Sgt. Scott Clarkson, Lt. Col. Frederick Olson and Maj. Kevin McKinney from the 474th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron examine blueprints in Camp Justice April 28. The 474th ECES is currently providing maintenance support for the Expeditionary Legal Complex where military commissions are being held.

were originally constructed. Now you're not getting any of the RF-type radiation going outside."

Transforming the ELC into a facility capable of handling top secret/SCI documents wasn't the only thing the 474th did. The commissions process requires a lot of manpower, and all those bodies need a room and a bed. The 474th was more than willing to take on this task by installing double-wide trailer style living units, similar to the Cuzco barracks, for the attorneys and their staff.

"The prosecution and defense teams

have cuzcos now, and they can stay there when court is in session," said McKinney. "The purpose of those, instead of an open-bay tent, is to provide them some extra privacy, so they can get some work done at night."

All of this extra construction on a previously fallow airfield meant the installation and maintenance of the unseen support structures needed to sustain modern human life that most take for granted: electricity, sewage, phone lines and the like.

See **ELC/13**

A 3-on-3 basketball tournament to entertain and inform

■ *Sexual Assault Awareness Month
provides education with competitive edge*

**Army Spc.
Megan Burnham**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Teams of four congregated at Denich Gym to participate in a 3-on-3 basketball tournament sponsored by the Sexual Assault Victim Intervention Program, April 26. Intended to increase awareness on sexual assault, the event provided entertainment and friendly competition for players and spectators alike.

Eight teams signed up for the tournament. Teams played for 15 minutes or until one team reached 15 points.

First place team, The Docs, comprised of Christopher Simmons, Jamal Whitehead, Billy Latham and Nigel Lampkin, went on to dominate the tournament by taking out their competition with extreme prejudice. Raining down jump shots just inside the arc like a howitzer, The Docs ended second place finishers team Goon 15 to 10 in the championship game. Mixing a potent cocktail of dazzling offensive skills with a defense clingier than fly paper, team Back 4 More served a victory brew stiffer than anything offered at O'Kelly's, taking third place.

The first, second and third place teams were awarded with athletic bags, water bottles, t-shirts, and NEX coupons. The first place team was also awarded a certificate for a free dinner at Navy



Ryan Dixon (left) makes a jumpshot to put his team further in the lead at the 3-on-3 basketball tournament on April 26 at Denich Gym; the team places third overall.

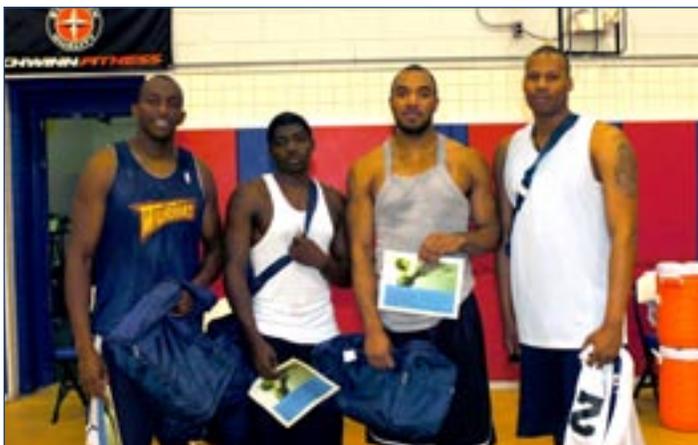
Capt. Mark Leary's house.

This tournament was organized in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month held in April. While most people don't associate basketball with sexual assault awareness, James Mandley, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, felt this was an effective means to communicate to participants and attendees the importance of educating oneself and learning the risk factors related to sexual assault.

"Sexual assault does happen and it is a crime," stated Mandley. "When you see inappropriate behavior, take action...intervene. The worst thing a person can do is nothing." This message was a key issue that he wanted attendees to obtain from this experience.

The end result was a victorious basketball tournament and increased awareness about sexual assault awareness. Gitmo residents can look forward to Mandley hosting something new, exciting and informational next April for SAAM.

"Bottom line, it was a success," said Mandley.



The first place team, The DOCS, of the 3-on-3 basketball tournament at Denich Gym, April 26. From left to right: Jamal Whitehead, Christopher Simmons and Nigel Lampkin, Billy Latham.



Kate Hudson, left, and Matthew McConaughey compete with the tropical landscape to provide breath-taking scenery in an otherwise cheap bauble of a movie. – Photo courtesy Warner Bros. Studios

Glittery, but not gold

**Army Pfc.
Eric Liesse**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

“Fool’s Gold,” the newest Matthew McConaughey and Kate Hudson flick, has decent enough moves to fool people into buying a ticket – unless you see it at the Lyceum.

Directed by Andy Tennant, whose previous flicks include “Hitch” and “Sweet Home Alabama,” the movie (because I refuse to give it the respect of calling it a film) had a chance. The stars play their roles quirky and full of passable one-liners. The supporting cast overacts their pigeonholed characters like no one has seen these stereotypes before, and the bad guys are only slightly bad. The formula was predictable and added in gorgeous setting and lots of scuba footage, which does go over well.

Still, the formula just didn’t work itself out like one would have hoped. Granted, I seriously doubt expectations were all that high, but still, this one shoots pretty low.

To sum it up: Crap in, crap out.

The plot rides the weird line of almost being convoluted. It probably only feels that way because so much of it is packed into such a small amount of time.

McConaughey – who, like his real

life persona, is mostly shirtless – plays a treasure diver who loses his boat and can no longer hunt for treasure. At the same time, Hudson, who plays his wife and almost always wears a shirt, is divorcing him. She seems both psychotic and level-headed at the same time throughout. I’m still not sure whether that’s a compliment.

Hudson ends up taking a job on a large yacht owned by a wealthy man named (and I’m not making this up) Nigel Honeycutt, played by Donald Sutherland. His appearance doesn’t make the movie as good as “M.A.S.H.”

I know. I was stunned, too.

McConaughey ends up saving the hat of Sutherland’s Paris Hilton-esque daughter, played by Alexis Dziena, earning himself an evening on the boat. While serving dinner, Hudson sees him and freaks out. McConaughey then uses his shirtless charm to persuade Hudson to get back into treasure hunting for one last big pull. Together, they persuade the yacht owner to do the same, and then everyone starts looking for this ultimate treasure. There aren’t any ubiquitous group high-fives at this decision, but it would have been fitting.

These 20 minutes are roughly 80 percent of the plot.

There are some antagonists, but they are only there because there have to be

some antagonists – at least the writers remembered that. One is a complete joke of a rich local gangster played by Kevin Hart and the other is a slovenly, bloated rival treasure hunter played by Ray Winstone. Neither is that menacing but they do provide McConaughey something to play off.

As previously mentioned, there are plenty of stunning visuals. The beaches and corals of the underwater shots are pristine and almost worth the money, till you realize that you can get these shots in good movies. Or just go snorkeling at Phillips Dive Point.

There are some cool stunts, most notably with a natural geyser, and plenty of little slap-stick moments. Nothing that would make the Three Stooges or anyone proud, but the moments are there.

“Fool’s Gold” is one those movies that makes the audience wonder who landed these actors for such a pointless picture. McConaughey has made some high quality movies like “Dazed and Confused” and Kate Hudson got an Oscar nomination for her roll in “Almost Famous.” Heck, the producers even landed Donald Sutherland, but the writers still buried any chance of anyone being worth their weight in pyrite.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

SELF-CONTAINED UNDERWATER AWESOMENESS!

Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class
Nat Moger

Dana Swope conducts an open water certification confined water class at the Marine Hill pool complex. Resident dive instructors offer a number of Professional Association of Dive Instructor, or PADI, certified classes, from open water to dive master. PADI is the world's largest recreational dive membership and is recognized in more than 180 countries.

To get started, contact the dive shop at 75336 and take your first steps towards exploring the blue waters surrounding the Naval Station!





Remembering the fallen

Army Sgt. Gretel Sharpee

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Despite the large crowd, a respectful silence quieted the audience at the Salute to our Fallen Heroes tribute concert as an opening statement was read by Staff Sgt. Brian Jopek.

“Ryan was my oldest son and was the third combat death his battalion had suffered during the deployment,” said Jopek, a member of the 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. “The last time I talked to him was on 23 July 2006. He called me at a stop on the way to Mosul to let me know he was on his way up there. I’m just glad I was able to tell him I love him. And he told me he loved me.”

Clapping and cheers followed Jopek’s reading, and continued as different performers took the stage and carried the tribute into the night.

The event started with an idea from Pfc. Mercedes Diaz, a Soldier from the 525th Military Police Battalion, who came across the death toll for Operation Iraqi and Enduring Freedom while studying for a military board.

“I just couldn’t believe the number,” Diaz said slowly. “Having never been to combat myself, I can’t imagine what these



Anjuli Stars, an artist from the United States, performed at the Salute to Our Fallen Heroes tribute concert. The tribute also featured live local music from The Fancy Smooth Band, above, as well as spoken words from Troopers stationed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Soldiers go through but I can empathize.”

Diaz decided to do what she could here on Guantanamo to raise awareness and money for the family and friends affected by the deaths overseas. She selected

the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, an independent not-for-profit organization, to donate the money raised at the tribute.

“I really wanted to help the families of the Soldiers lost or wounded and the Intrepid organization really came close to what I had in mind,” said Diaz.

Another thing Diaz considered was how to entertain the audience that came for the tribute. Before she became a Soldier, Diaz was a student at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Mass., and decided to use her talents and those of a former classmate in the tribute.

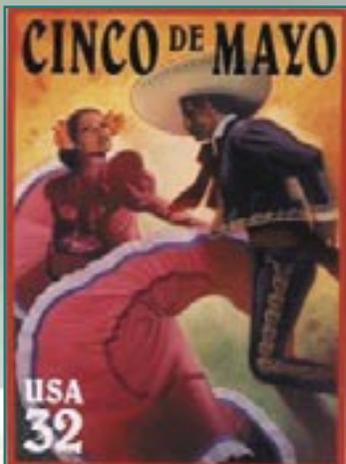
After Jopek’s reading, the audience was asked to take a moment to remember Soldiers and loved ones who had fallen by calling out their names as a small portion of water was poured into a plant. Every time a name was called, water was poured in the belief that the fallen are not forgotten if their names are still being spoken.

After the silence was recognized, the concert began. The first music performance was by The Fancy Smooth Band, a local band with Soldiers from the Joint Task Force here on Guantanamo .

Their performance ranged from well known hits to original melodies and lyrics

See **TRIBUTE/12**

iViva la Mexico!



**Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class
Cheryl Dilgard**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Margaritas, tacos, fajitas, Dos XX, Corona; these things come to mind at the mention of Cinco de Mayo. Most Americans think that Cinco de Mayo is Mexico's Independence Day, it's not. Mexico's Independence Day is Sept. 15. Cinco de Mayo commemorates the battle of Puebla on the morning of May 5, 1862.

The French, English and Spanish came to Mexico under the guise of collecting debt. The English and Spanish settled with Mexico and left. The French remained.

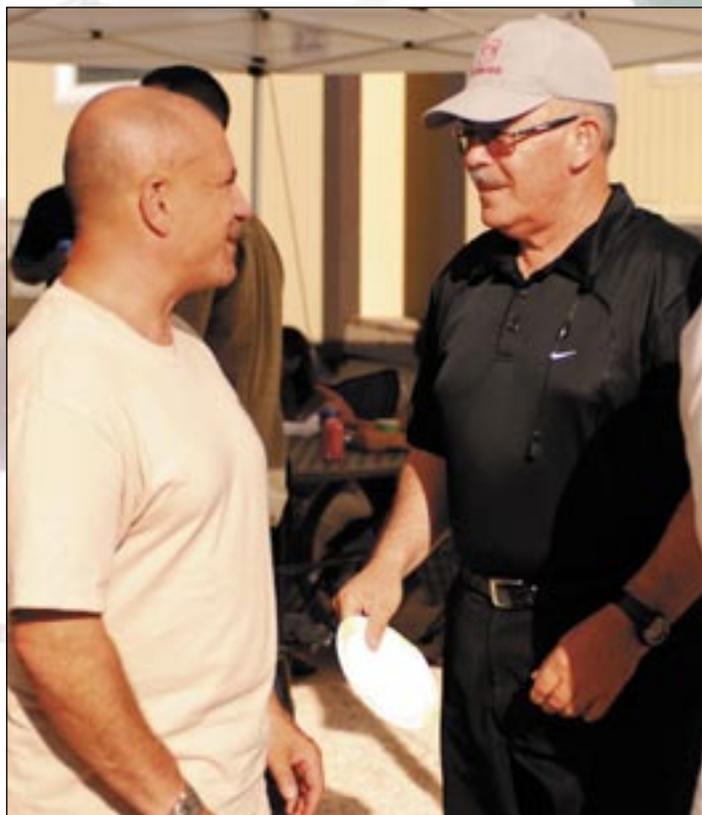
The French Army, headed by Napoleon III, was undefeated for 50 years. With the most modern equipment available they proceeded toward Mexico City to attack, and decided to chase Colonel Porfirio Diaz. Diaz's 4,000 soldier cavalry, with the assistance of stampeding cattle and Indians armed only with machetes, slaughtered the 8,000-strong French Army. This victory delayed the French attack on Mexico City by one year, and is the reason for the annual Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Today Cinco de Mayo is not only celebrated in Mexico but also in the United States as well as here in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The Bayview is hosting a Cinco de Mayo celebration complete with festive music and Mexican food.

For 1st Sgt. Alfred Gomez of the New Mexico Army National Guard, celebrating Cinco de Mayo was a family affair growing up in the border town of Douglas, Ariz. His family came to the United States in 1946 from Aqua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico to open a photography studio. His family would go back across the border to Aqua Prieta every May to celebrate.

"When I was growing up with my parents we celebrated Cinco de Mayo by going to Mexico and celebrating with friends and family. It was always a big celebration in the center of a big plaza," said Gomez.

Gomez has no plans for traveling to Mexico this year, but does plan on enjoying some good food with friends here in Guantanamo.



1st Sgt. Alfred Gomez, left, and Sgt. 1st Class Tommy Benavidas enjoy delicious food with good friends and members of the New Mexico Army National Guard during a barbeque at Cuzco barracks this past spring.

Cinco de Mayo observations at Guantanamo

Enjoy a celebration of Mexican unity and patriotism at the Bayview. Come for the authentic food, stay for the fun! Bayview Restaurant, Saturday, May 3, 6 p.m. until midnight.

Take a Liberty cruise on the GTMO Queen. May 5, 7 p.m.
For more information call 2010.

Public affairs unit answered the challenge

MPAD from 3

The media relations team had the important – and sometimes difficult – task of escorting a skeptical civilian media covering the military commissions and detainee operations here.

Army Spc. Daniel Welch finished his deployment as a member of the media relations team – also known as med-rel – but also worked for *The Wire* for a time. He said he gained a good sense of the unit's overall mission.

“When you work on *The Wire*, you don't see the interaction with the media,” Welch explained. “When you do med-rel you see that. It was nice to get both perspectives.”

He added that it wasn't until he accompanied a media tour into Camp Delta that he truly began to grasp the mission of the Joint Task Force.

Army Lt. Col. Edward Bush echoed that sentiment.

“I was most surprised by the largeness of Gitmo,” he said. “The international appeal is much bigger than I thought.”

Bush said he gained an understanding of how far reaching the Joint Task Force mission is, and how many people are affected by that mission.

“It's not as simple as people think,” he observed.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Sanchez agreed. Part of his job in the unit's Public Information section involved taking raw information and putting it into a format that people would understand. His section also marketed stories produced by the unit, updated the JTF Guantanamo website, sent out hometown news releases, and took photos of visitors or ceremonies.

“You always learn something new,” he said, noting that his biggest learning experience was understanding how a true joint task force functions with all armed services.

Army Staff Sgt. Paul Meeker was expecting to attend the Defense Information School after joining the unit. The deployment prevented that, so he combined his ability to write with his non-commissioned officer experience to head up *The Wire* staff.



Army Spc. Shanita Simmons of the 241st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment interviews Madame Anne-Marie Lizin, president of the Belgian Senate, during a visit to Joint Task Force Guantanamo last June. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Joseph Scozzari

“I think I was aware that there was an awful lot I didn't know and couldn't anticipate,” Meeker said. “As I began to understand the operations and what a satisfactory product looked like – and developing expectations for that – the squad moved from needing to be told what to do to anticipating what the needs were, anticipating the direction of the story and the type of supporting photos needed, and moving from there.”

His section – Command Information – generated articles and photos for *The Wire*, designed the pages and distributed the finished product.

“The coolest thing about this mission was the opportunity to work with a very interesting, bright and energetic group of people,” Meeker continued. “I can't think of one person I would have wanted to trade away or who I thought was a liability to the mission. It was a blessing.”

According to Sanchez, everyone in the unit was able to do something new or expand on existing skills.

“We were free to do our jobs,” he said. “In other jobs you are restricted, but here it was an open door.”

Points of pride varied from member to member. Sanchez pointed out the Joint Detention Group staff for the difficult job they do. Bush said he was proud of the website his unit made that provides “a video tour of Gitmo.”

Army Sgt. Michael Owens, who worked on the media relations team, was proud of the job the unit did over the past year. He noted that the unit received accolades during a farewell dinner with Navy Capt. Peter Husta.

“While you're here you don't get that much praise,” he said. “When you leave, that's when people tell you what a great job you did. It's great to know what kind of impact we had.”

Sellen's moments of pride were more nuts-and-bolts variety – unit members improving physical fitness test events, watching the civilian media depart after the last commissions hearings knowing that his Troopers did their job, and how the unit came together over the past year.

“To take all the people from all the walks of life and make a unit – Navy guys included – that's pretty special,” Sellen said.

Performances honored fallen, wounded warriors

TRIBUTE from 10

composed during these Soldiers' down-time.

There were also spoken word performances from Vibe Sessions. One Soldier, who went by the name Lethal, recited a poem about 9/11 called “The

Chambers of My Mind.” He spoke about how that one day changed our country and what it was going to take to bring our nation together.

Anjuli Stars, the main performer, closed the night with her fast-paced lyrics and unique style which includes R&B, hip

hop and jazz. Stars, a friend and former classmate of Diaz, came to Guantanamo especially for the Fallen Heroes Tribute.

“I had a chance to talk some of the Soldiers and officers here, and I think this is great cause to support. I am very happy to be here this weekend,” said Stars.

Engineers continue work on legal complex

ELC from 5

“We’ve got the cuzcos and a gigantic tent city,” explained McKinney while pointing at the sprawling mass of tents. “There are six miles of wires and a couple miles of sewer lines. Who knows how many air conditioning units we’ve got. So, we’re putting in the work to maintain all of that.”

Given the wide variety of responsibilities given to the 474th, the squadron draws much of their technical expertise not only from their military training but from the fundamental nature of being a reserve unit.

“You’d be surprised with the level of expertise that our people have gotten from their civilian jobs,” said Olison. “It’s a force multiplier. For instance one of our guys who works on our environmental control units works for Johnson Controls for his

civilian job. He could probably build you one from the ground up.”

While being activated and pulled from their civilian lives can be a demoralizing factor, these Texas Air National Guardsmen have jumped into this job with the best of attitudes.

“I challenge any other unit to show higher morale. Happy people work harder,” said 474th 1st Sgt. Scott Clarkson, who also noted that many of his people could be off doing other things. “There are a lot of people here with degrees and high paying jobs back home that come out here and enjoy what they do. They just like to swing a hammer.”

A view of the judge’s bench from one of six detainee tables. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Erica Isaacson



J-4 section makes great strides in short time

J-4 from 4

“My biggest challenge in this position is to keep everything running,” she said. “It is a trial just staying on top of things and making sure ULLS-G is running at its highest standard.”

Sgt. 1st Class Tommy Benavidez, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the motor pool, has extensive responsibilities. Along with assisting Rivera in tasks such as scheduling routine maintenance, he is also accountable for managing all accidents involving JTF vehicles and ensuring equipment is turned in and taken care of in a timely manner. When JTF needs a bus for distinguished visitors or newcomer’s

briefs, it is Benavidez that arranges the availability and schedules that.

“Our goal is to make the best use of what we have and not fall short, by keeping track of what we have properly and making sure people are properly licensed,” Benavidez said. “We try to work around everyone’s schedule; we have to schedule maintenance, but everyone needs their vehicles during the day.”

The NMANG has only been here since late January, but has managed to make huge steps toward improving the motor pool processes. Among those improvements: deleting drivers that are no longer on island, ensuring all vehicles are properly entered into the ULLS-G, properly monitoring

work orders, conducting end-of-month reports, and updating and maintaining equipment in a timely manner.

“One of our biggest accomplishments is that we have brought the ULLS-G up to a higher level, using it more efficiently,” said Rivera.

The motor pool team maintains all vehicles and has significantly improved the flow of business and efficiency of the J-4 motor pool. Benavidez and Rivera work hard, but they work well together.

“I couldn’t do this without [Rivera] – she does a great job,” Benavidez said. “We keep very busy, but it makes the time go by quickly. We are already two and a half months into our deployment.”

Boots on the Ground

by Army Spc. Megan Burnham

Which performing artist would you like to see come to the island?

Navy Seaman Frank Jones



“Mariah Carey, because she has an amazing voice and is very beautiful.”

Army Sgt. Sean Reeves



“Jeremy Camp. He is one of the most up-and-coming Christian artists in the country.”

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ericka Maximin



“Erykah Badu. It’s like poetry, jazz, rhythm and blues all in one.”

Army Staff Sgt. Duriel Randolph



“Kanye West. I simply like his songs because they are upbeat with a message to it.”

Do you fear loneliness

**Army Capt.
Y. J. Kim**

525th Military Police Chaplain

“Loneliness is the most terrible poverty” - Mother Teresa

Many people struggle with loneliness. This resonates especially for those in the military. We are suddenly separated from family and friends and put into a new and unfamiliar environment. Those who lose a loved one through death, divorce, or romantic breakup also face loneliness. There are also those who experience loneliness in the midst of friends and family. Sometimes, we experience feelings of loneliness because we feel as if we are social outcasts. We may have a physical or mental handicap that makes us different and causes us to feel desolate and deserted. We feel rejected, isolated, and alone.

As a response, we will in some way try to fill the void. One response may be to become angry and bitter about the void and to seek out others who share the same feelings. A lonely person may withdraw from people and fill his mind with fantasies. Many young adults marry out of feelings of loneliness. Some strive to fill the void with achievements. Still others seek thrills to fill the void. The problem is that these things are only temporary fixes. They don't last!

We should understand that we are

lonely not just because we lose friends and family, but because God created us to have a relationship and fellowship with Him. In one sense, we feel a spiritual void in our lives. It is inevitably human nature that was originally shaped by our Creator.

We all have at some moment in our lives experienced loneliness to a certain grade. Either because we have been without other people's company or even when we are surrounded by a lot of people, we experience that somber sensation of being isolated, separate, disjointed. The truth is that to experience loneliness, you don't have to live alone. There are people that live alone and don't complain about the isolation, while we also know people that live surrounded by a lot of people, yet live yearning for a significant relationship because they feel alone.

No matter who you are, some day we will face loneliness. We have to believe what God says about our situation and

trust and obey what comes our way. It is imperative to believe and obey the truth of God.

This is key for those that experience loneliness. A lot of times we focus on ourselves. Our heart desires relationships so we usually say, “I want somebody to fill the void. I want someone who can take care of me, someone who worries about me.”

What we should do instead is to focus our attention toward sharing the love that we have received from God. People that suffer loneliness tend to center around themselves. What God says is that you should stop focusing on the self and begin to love and to give to others.

In your loneliness, look for somebody to whom you can provide a service, to help, to collaborate, to support.

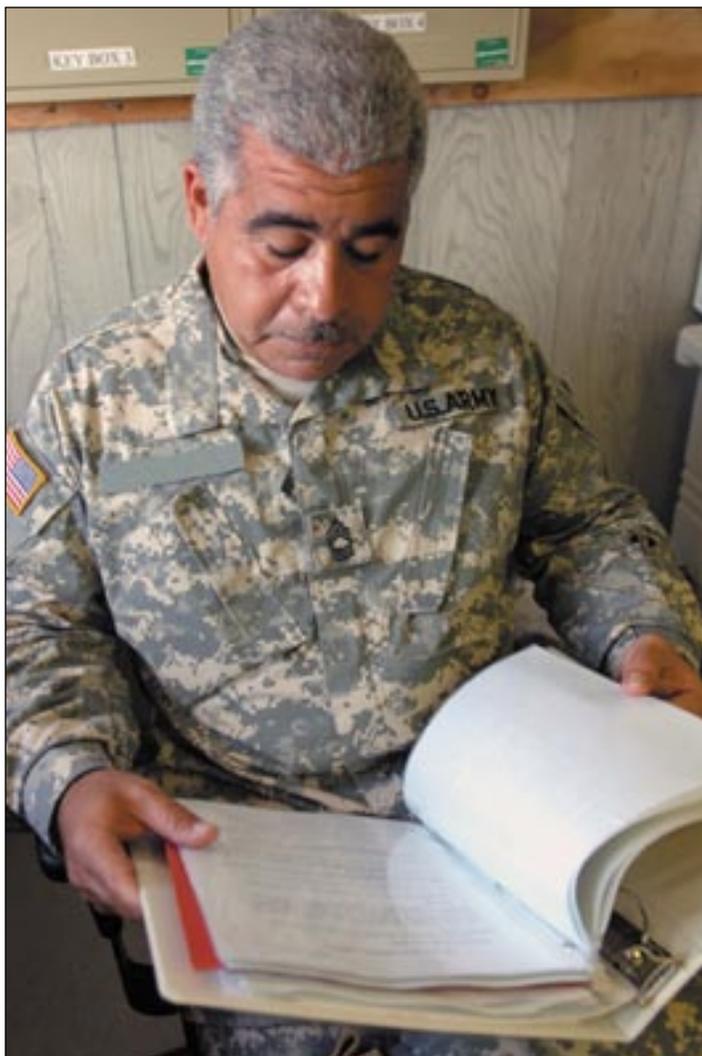
An important step in the battle against the loneliness is to be focused on loving others. When you turn your heart toward others, you begin to see the presence of God in your life in a more evident way.

Remember, you are never alone – and by virtue of this reality, find strength and comfort in this and focus on loving others. Believe in the truth of the promise of God and obey the commandment of loving your neighbor. It is a powerful antidote against loneliness. God helps us to open our eyes and to embrace the truth so that you can embrace others in need for His glory.



Photo illustration by Navy Petty Officer
2nd Class Nat Moger

Exemplary Artillery Battery has exemplary First Sergeant



Army Master Sgt. Jorge Diaz looks over a binder in his office here in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

■ Actions as first sergeant lead JTF NCO to a Meritorious Service Medal

**Army Sgt.
Gretel Sharpee**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

After being the first sergeant for an artillery battery that won the prestigious Alexander Hamilton Award for the Army's Best Army National Guard (ARNG) Battery in 2006, Master Sgt. Jorge Diaz was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

"It [MSM] is not my award, it is the unit's," said Diaz. "The Army gave me the opportunity, but the award belongs to the guys."

The guys he refers to are the Soldiers of Bravo Battery, 162nd Field Artillery Battalion, in the Puerto Rico Army National Guard. Diaz was their first sergeant for the year they earned the Hamilton award.

"When I am with that unit, I am always with my guys," commented Diaz. "I sleep where they do, I eat with them and when my guys are out in the field for training, I am there too."

Bravo Battery earned the award by being number one in Quality Force Indicator (QFI) percentages for 2005, which is a measure of unit readiness in the National Guard. This percentage includes reenlistments, promotions, as well as being exemplary in unit mission essential task list (METL) missions.

"Our families help in the unit retention," Diaz acknowledged. "We are all friends outside (the National Guard). On drill weekends, we put on the costume, get the weapons and go to the field."

Diaz has been in the Puerto Rico National Guard for 28 years. Initially he was put into the role of first sergeant while he was still an E-7.

"Our unit was short on officers, so the tasks an executive officer or platoon leader might do were left to me and our commander," said Diaz.

Despite the challenges his battery faced in the years leading up to the Hamilton award, Bravo Battery received the best unit award in the years 2004, 2005 and 2006. It is these accomplishments that put Diaz in line to earn the MSM.

The MSM, a bronze medal depicting an eagle and five-pointed star, is awarded to senior officers and NCO's who have distinguished themselves through non-combat meritorious achievement or service to the United States.

Diaz is currently assigned to the Joint Task Force at Guantanamo Bay, but some of his unit from the Puerto Rico Army National Guard operate here as facility guards for Camp Delta.

"I know that being first sergeant keeps you busy, so even though I am no longer their first sergeant I check up on the guys I know here," Diaz said. "Gitmo is a hard place to work everyday, so I try and make sure they are keeping themselves busy with good things."

The first few lines of the first sergeants' creed state:

"My job is people – Every one is my business. I dedicate my time and energy to their needs; their health, morale, discipline and welfare."

Each of those words describes Diaz's actions towards the Soldiers in Bravo Battery, and with those actions he earned the right to wear the Meritorious Service Medal.

“It [MSM] is not my award, it is the unit's. The Army gave me the opportunity, but the award belongs to the guys.” – Master Sgt. George Diaz

AROUND THE

JTF



◀ From left; Navy Seaman Daniel Garrido, Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Chad Kissinger, and Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class James Proctor of the 74th Naval Mobil Construction Battalion pose in front of their collected refuse for the Earth Day base-wide cleanup here April 25. After collecting the truck-full of trash from Coranaso Cove, the Sailors brought their haul to Ferry Landing to unload the refuse and enjoy the post-cleanup cookout. A picnic followed the cleanup. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Pfc. Eric Liesse

Neville Richardson, a cook at the Bayview Restaurant, prepares meals for hungry patrons attending the Mongolian Grill barbeque held every Thursday, rain or shine. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell ▼



▲ Following tradition, co-workers and friends of the members of the 241st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment said farewell by jumping off the dock at the ferry landing as the Louisiana Army National Guard Soldiers made their way to the leeward side for their final flight to the United States. The 241st spent one year here providing public affairs support to the Joint Task Force. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Gretel Sharpee