

THE WIRE

A JTF Journal



JTF Commander says farewell

New leadership at 525th MP

Softball tourney is a hit

Father follows son into Navy

Live as we fight

**Army Master Sgt.
Oscar E. Fraire**

Camp America Commandant

Traditionally, the military has been known for its good standards of appearance. The military has been setting the standards for hundreds of years, from military uniforms to the standard of living conditions. Everywhere I have been stationed and every military installation I have been to, whether it has been for training or a PCS move, I have observed a high standard of appearance – from family housing to troopers quarters all the way down to landscaping which represents good discipline and order.

That sends a message – we live how we fight. Unfortunately, somehow that has gone away from us slowly, especially in our living quarters.

Through out my mayoral rounds and monthly inspections of Camp America, Camp Buckley and Camp America West, I am finding areas where attention to detail is lacking – in some cases more than others. Something as small as cigarette butts – which, unfortunately, can cause a fire – are improperly disposed of. I am finding

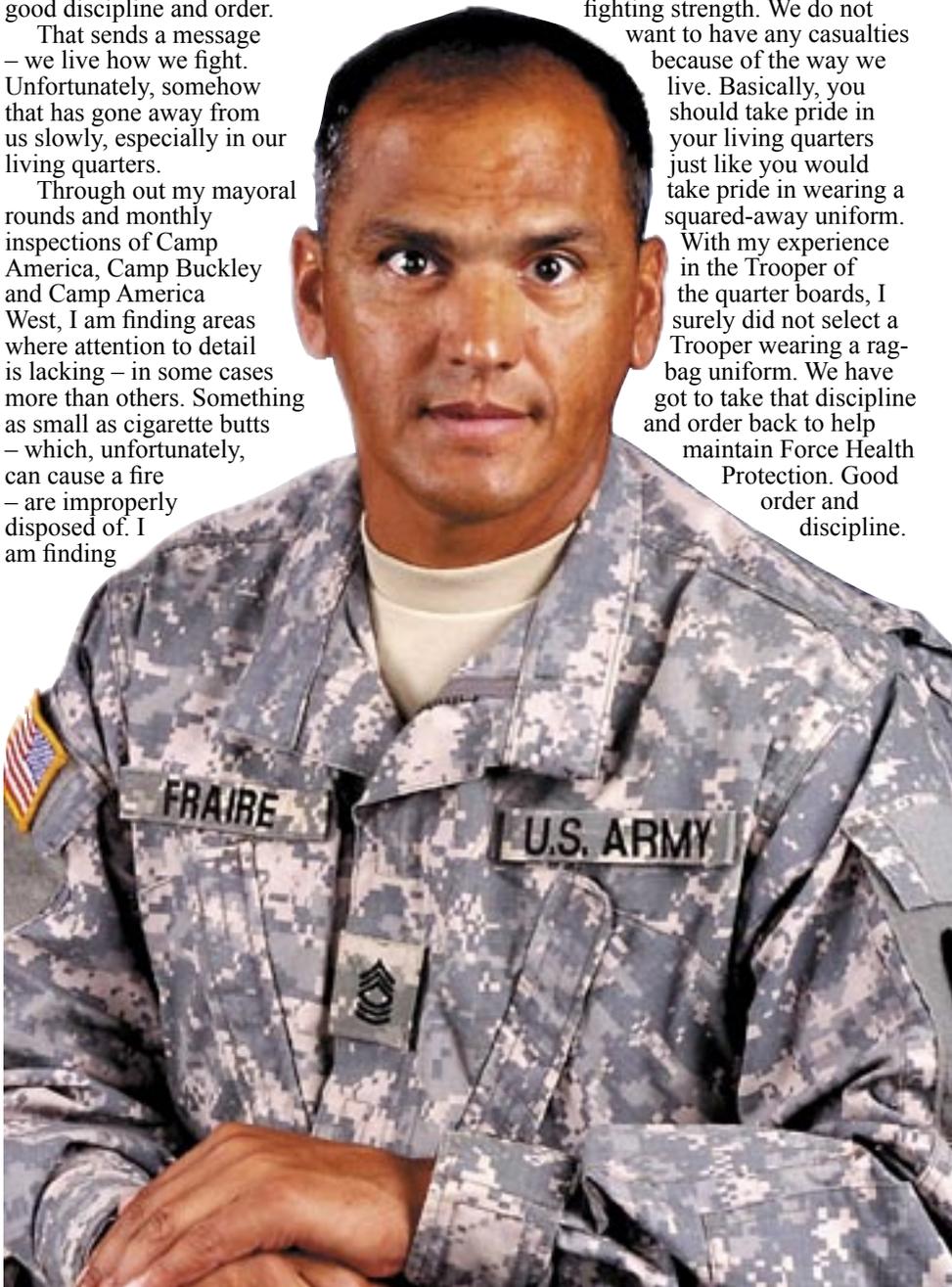
hundreds of cigarette butts on the ground and a number of objects improperly stored. This can cause food poisoning, disease, attract rodents and ultimately affects our fighting force.

We are not maintaining our areas where we cook. During one of my monthly inspections one of the Troopers in Camp America stated it was the Camp Commandant's responsibility to clean the camp. No, it is not the responsibility of the Camp Commandant's office, nor my staff, to clean and maintain the Troopers' quarters – after all, we do not live there.

We need to maintain Force Health Protection in order to maintain our fighting strength. We do not want to have any casualties

because of the way we live. Basically, you should take pride in your living quarters just like you would take pride in wearing a squared-away uniform.

With my experience in the Trooper of the quarter boards, I surely did not select a Trooper wearing a rag-bag uniform. We have got to take that discipline and order back to help maintain Force Health Protection. Good order and discipline.



JTF GUANTANAMO

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COVER:

Air Force Master Sgt Raymond Delp, electrical superintendent of the 474th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, performs a voltage load test on a secondary distribution center transformer at Camp Justice, Guantanamo Bay May 20. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Megan Burnham



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.



Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, left, reviews plans for a new migrant operations facility with Navy Adm. James Stavridis last July. Buzby's tenure as Joint Task Force commander comes to a close next week. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Joseph Scozzari

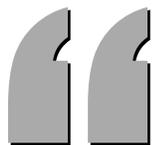
The final salvo

**Navy Rear Adm.
Mark H. Buzby**

JTF Guantanamo Commander

Early next week, Rear Admiral Dave Thomas will relieve me as commander of the Joint Task Force. I have known Admiral Thomas for many years, and you are lucky indeed to have such an accomplished and proven Naval officer coming aboard to lead you through the challenges and unknowns which lay ahead. You will be in very good hands; he will keep you headed fair.

As I will never have the opportunity to address you – my shipmates and battle buddies – in print again, I did want to take a moment to share a thought or two with you. On four occasions, I have been given the great privilege of command – to lead those who serve – but I have never experienced a greater satisfaction nor been more proud of the service rendered by those serving with me than here in Guantanamo. During the course of this



The success of this command was due to no other reason than the heavy weight each one of you shouldered every day. – Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby

past year, many of you saw me walking the blocks, showing up in towers, climbing into boats, or popping into offices. I had two main reasons for doing that.

First, I wanted you to hear from me how much I appreciated the difficult and unheralded job you were doing so magnificently every single day. Believe me, I was never under any illusion that the success of this command was due to no other reason than the heavy weight each one of you shouldered every day without much thanks, and in some cases, mischaracterization in the press. Try as I might, I know I didn't say thanks often enough.

The second reason is a lot more selfish: I honestly drew strength and encouragement just from being around

you. Strange as it may seem, admirals and generals need reassuring from time to time. It swelled my heart to walk among you, to see you doing your mission so professionally and maturely, to hear you say with a smile, "No worries Admiral, we're on it." You'll never know how many times one of you said something to me that provided a sense of reassurance in a tight situation that I could only get from the Trooper who was personally facing the situation. So thanks to you, all of you – uniformed and civilian – for helping me keep the JTF on a steady course.

The day I took command, I pledged to you that I would lead you the very

See **BUZBY/12**

A simulated specimen collection bottle, sealed and initialed is ready to be packaged and shipped to the Forensic Toxicology Drug Testing Laboratory where specimens are tested for drugs.



Master Sgt. Urbano Sosa demonstrates the job of an observer for a UPL collection exercise. As observer, maintaining a direct line of sight with a specimen bottle at all time helps to ensure a proper chain of custody and prevents tampering or altering of a specimen.

Army Substance Abuse Program steps up training at Gitmo

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

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Substance abuse can affect the Army as a whole in overall readiness, safety and ultimately, the individual servicemembers.

In an effort to improve specimen collection procedures at Guantanamo Bay, 18 Soldiers attended a five-day course, provided by the Army Substance Abuse Program, to receive training and obtain their certification as biochemical testers, more commonly known in the Army as Unit Prevention Leaders.

Biochemical testing is an important part in preventing military members from abusing drugs and alcohol. It is defined in the Unit Prevention Leader handbook as “the chemical analysis of urine for specific drugs or the analysis of breath or blood for alcohol.”

Collection is not as simple as receiving a specimen from a Soldier. It is maintaining a secure chain of custody from the time the specimen is provided, until the moment the specimen is ready to be shipped to the test facility.

“For the safety of the Soldier, it is critical that a proper chain of custody is maintained so there is no question about the validity of the sample,” said Irma B. Vasquez, Substance Abuse Specialist for US Army South.

Vasquez, who has been with the ASAP for approximately 18 years, understands the importance of proper collection and handling procedures.

“I look at [urinalysis testing] as individual careers and individual people. That’s why the proficiency of collecting these samples and securing the chain of custody is crucial,” Vasquez said. “When we have a test we know we do everything possible to ensure its validity.”

With the rate of inaccurate biochemical testing on the rise, the ASAP identified weaknesses in the collection process and stepped up their efforts to ensure deployed UPLs are sufficiently trained in the process.

“The level of discrepancies we have found have made us aware of the tremendous need for well trained UPLs at Gitmo,” said Vasquez.

In 2007 Guantanamo Bay saw a rise in fatal and non-fatal discrepancies. However, Gitmo saw discrepancy rates as high as 33 percent fatal, and 94 percent non-fatal.

Discrepancies fall into two categories; fatal and non-fatal. A fatal discrepancy means a specimen is completely void and the lab will not test it. For example, a specimen is considered fatal if the social security number on the bottle doesn’t match the supporting paperwork. This means the donor’s bottle may be switched with another donor, whether intentional or not.

A non-fatal discrepancy is tested; however the validity of the test can be questioned because of the credibility of paperwork. If the wrong test code is listed on the supporting paperwork, it doesn’t discredit the quality of the specimen, but it does damage the credibility of the paperwork.

“If there is any question whether a specimen has been tampered with or the chain of custody has not been maintained properly, the consequence is the loss of validity during a potential courts martial hearing.”

The ASAP is designed with the Soldier in mind to support Army Values, promote readiness and maintain safety.

“The program is not just urinalysis, Vasquez emphasized. “It’s prevention, education of risk, substance abuse and consequence.”

525th: Responsibility changes while excellence continues

**Army Sgt.
Gretel Sharpee**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Battalion colors flew, distinguished guests were recognized and Soldiers stood at attention to witness the change of responsibility in the 525th Military Police Battalion.

On May 12, at Guantanamo Bay, Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Fowler became the new senior non-commissioned officer in charge of the Soldiers who provide the security within the detainee camps. Fowler took command from Sgt. Maj. Donald Troxler who was with the 525th for the past year.

“My initial assessment was that Soldier morale is very high and I was very impressed by that,” Fowler said. “All of the Soldiers appear very professional and eager to do their job.”

Detainee security is not the only thing the Soldiers of the 525th are responsible for. Other Soldiers within the battalion provide vital mission assistance in support roles such as personnel, legal and financial services.

“My goal for this battalion is to carry out safe and humane treatment for the detainees as well as provide security,” stated Fowler when asked what he wanted most for the 525th.

Historically the 525th has served in World War II, the Korean War and the Global War on Terror when it was reactivated in 2005 at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as the Active Army’s first Military Police Interment and Resettlement Battalion.

The duty of the command sergeant major, as outlined in the Army NCO guide, is to carry out policies and standards on performance, training, appearance and conduct of enlisted personnel. Also, the command sergeant major is the training professional within the unit, overseeing and driving the entire training program.

“Immediately upon hitting the ground he has impacted the [battalion] in a positive way,” said Lt. Col. William Wozniak, commander of the 525th, speaking about the new command sergeant major. “I look forward to serving with him, as well as continuing to build on the foundation for success.”



Lt. Col. William Wozniak, commander of the 525th, transfers the sword between the incoming and outgoing command sergeant majors symbolizing the continuity between commands. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Josh Treadwell

**Incoming
Command Sgt.
Maj. Gary J.
Fowler assumes
responsibility of
525th Military
Police Battalion
during a change
of responsibility
ceremony at
Joint Task Force
Guantanamo,
May 12, 2008.** –
JTF Guantanamo
photo by Navy
Petty Officer
1st Class Josh
Treadwell





Armed Forces softball tournament a hit!

Nick Skinner makes contact during U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay's spring softball tournament, May 18, 2008.

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Nat Moger

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

After playing an 11 p.m. game the previous night, seven previous games over the past two days and scoring 143 runs, team Detox took the field one more time to slug it out against the number one seed, Bad Karma.

Unfortunately for Detox, their winning streak had to end.

The Spring 2008 Armed Forces Coed Softball Tournament ended Monday, May 19, at 12:45 a.m. with Bad Karma prevailing over a previously steamrolling Detox, breaking their winning streak at six games, 22-4. The Rookies took third place.

The tournament proceeded in a double elimination bracket, allowing teams two losses before being disqualified. This meant a lot of softball action for players and fans alike.

"[The tournament] turned out to be a great success," said Karissa Sandstrom, U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay's Morale, Welfare and Recreation office's fitness coordinator. "Ten teams entered the tournament and they were all in it to win it."

The opening day saw the preliminary action, with each team coming up at least once to set up the winner's bracket for Sunday. Bad Karma easily took their

opening games, ensuring a quick route to the finals. Detox took the road less traveled.

"The tournament was fun, but long," said Heath Coulter, Detox team captain. "After losing our first game, we had to move through the loser's bracket."

Following their 17-19 loss to the Dukes early on, Detox won their next five games to meet up with Bad Karma late Sunday night for the championship. Even though it was 10:00 p.m. and everyone had work the next day, the competition raged, with Detox coming out ahead 22-21. However, that was still Bad Karma's only loss, so the tournament proceeded to a winner-takes-all game.

The championship game was close, with Bad Karma nursing a 3-1 lead through the first three innings. In the bottom of the fourth, though, Bad Karma bats came alive, scoring five runs. The hitting continued, and with strong pitching support, Bad Karma was able to close it out 22-4.

Over the course of their five games, Bad Karma scored a total of 100 runs and Detox scored 147 runs in their eight games.

"The tournament was fun and long," said Coulter. "Even though my team finished 2nd overall, I believe we were the best

team out there. I was very proud of Detox and how they played."

Coulter also looks forward to future tournaments where Detox can display their stamina and endurance again.

"Not many teams can play for almost six hours straight," said Coulter. "We are very much looking forward to the next time we can play Bad Karma."

Berta Morales takes a swing during U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay's spring softball tournament.





FULL

METAL JACKET



Iron Man
Rated
PG-13
2 hours
6 minutes

Rating:
★★★★★

**Army Pfc.
Eric Liesse**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

As Marvel superheroes go, Iron Man is one of the biggest. With more than 40 years of production, both solo and crossover, Tony Stark and his shining gold-red suit have been rocketing, pounding, and flying over enemies with boot-jets into the minds of rabid fans. Now, after Marvel's box office uber-successes Spider-Man and X-Men, the rich inventor in a metal suit is taking it to the screen.

For Marvel Studio's first self-funded and produced picture, Jon Favreau takes the helm directing and sculpts Iron Man into something few super-hero movies are lately: a quality, witty film driven by story, character and dialogue rather than bombastic action and campy catchphrases.

Robert Downey Jr. shines as Tony Stark, the man inside the gleaming weapon-suit – Iron Man. A womanizing, high-rolling, incredibly wealthy inventor-savant, Stark is the wise-cracking, heavy-drinking figurehead of Stark Industries, a U.S. military arms developer. Downey makes the character a sort of likeable jerk who redeems himself after major events change his perspective on life.

As the film opens, Stark displays a new, massively destructive weapon system to military leaders in Afghanistan when his Air Force convoy is hit by a roadside bomb and he is taken prisoner by terrorists. Forced to create an equally powerful weapon for his captors, Stark secretly creates a weapon-suit to escape. As he proceeds to right the wrongs he believes his weapons helped create, he uncovers deeper dealings with terrorists' associates, adding to the already

engaging story.

Downey brings his razor-sharp wit and sardonic delivery to a role that could have been much flatter. Playing a hero in a full weapon-suit that can almost fight crime on its own, Downey does not let the character or audience get away from him – even when flying with jet-boots at supersonic speed and trying to stop two Air Force F-22 Raptor jets from shooting him down.

Alongside Downey are Gwyneth Paltrow as Stark's secretary and personal assistant, Pepper Potts, and Terrence Howard as Air Force Lt. Col. James "Rhodey" Rhodes, Stark Industries' military liaison and Stark's closest friend. Paltrow's Potts keeps a devoted, ever-vigilant watch over Stark. Howard plays Rhodes as the by-the-book yet passionate confidant, even when Stark seems in the wrong.

Jeff Bridges, in rare bald and bearded form, embodies Stark's corporate right-hand-man, Obadiah Stane. With Stark held captive, Stane is the company's figurehead at the film's start. Upon Stark's return, Bridges takes Stane to a high level of cunning, attempting to keep Stark on his former weapons-developing track.

Intense, well-orchestrated action and visual effects are ever-present. The battle scenes leave the audience wanting more.

Iron Man may prove to be the knight in shining armor for the super-hero genre, and perhaps the summer movie season as well.

★ Farewell



REAR ADM. MARK H. BUZBY

AFTER 12 MONTHS IN COMMAND OF JOINT TASK FORCE GUANTANAMO, REAR ADM. BUZBY BIDS FAREWELL, MAY 27, 2008.

New location for JTF badging office

Tony Camera
JTF Guantanamo
Command Security Manager

This is a reminder that the Joint Task Force Guantanamo J-2 Badging Office has relocated to Building N329, or the JIIF, across the street from the Community Center. We are currently working to add signs to Sherman Avenue to help direct folks to our office. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; we are closed on federal holidays. We have a satellite office on the Leeward side that services all Air Mobility Command rotator flights.

Our office can accommodate all of your badging needs – including badge extensions, visitor badge requests, information updates and new badge requests. A badge request is required from your command prior to receiving a new badge. We have established a specific contact within each command to ensure that security measures are being followed. For new employees, badge extensions, information updates, and professional military visitors (TAD), your command representative will fill out a badge request form completely. This form was designed to gather information to expedite the processing of badges, so please provide as much detailed information as possible.

All Badge Request forms must be routed through the JTF-GTMO J-2 Badging Office via e-mail at JTFGTMO-J2-badging@jftgtmo.southcom.mil. The badge request form will be processed once it is received. This includes checking security clearances and verifying Joint Detention Group access levels. The badge will be available in approximately two business days.

Visitor badges are issued to personal visitors who present an approved Naval Station entry clearance and a photo ID. JTF family members living in Gitmo are authorized a JTF badge

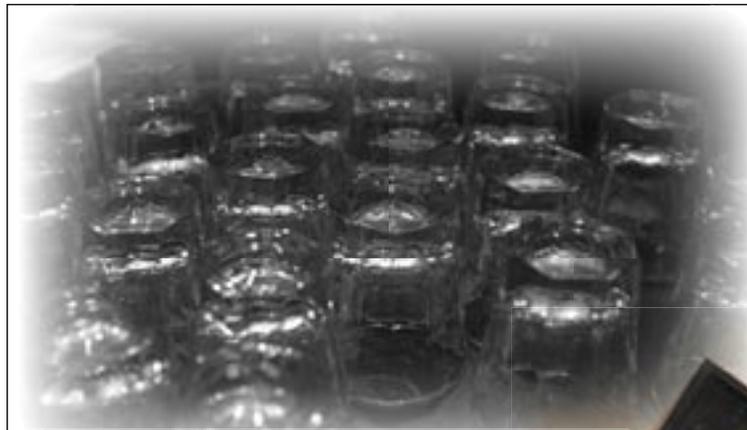


Army Pfc. David Seda verifies appropriate identification for Joint Task Force Guantanamo personnel at one of the access control points. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Cheryl Dilgard

when they present their NAVSTA Entry Clearance to the J2 Badging Office.

Please keep in mind that Escort Required badges are no longer being issued. All personnel are required to have the proper badges or they won't be able to enter any JTF areas.

Should you have any questions regarding your contact, or any other badge related issues, please call our office at extensions 3009, 3010 or 3014.



Drink Responsibly!

With the ban on alcohol consumption raised, cheers of joy resonate throughout Gitmo. The weekend will be a welcome release for many JTF personnel – however, knowing your limit will help foster an atmosphere of responsibility and, ultimately, contribute to a safer, healthier task force.

Did You Know...

Binge drinking is a common practice of excessive alcohol use that brings a person's blood alcohol content to .08% or above in about two hours.

The rate of binge drinking among men is two times the rate of women.

70% of binge drinking involves adults over 25.

Approximately 92% of US adults who drink excessively report binge drinking in the past 30 days.



Source: http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/quickstats/binge_drinking.htm



Kickin' Asphalt with their championship trophies after their win over the Roadrunners in the final game of Spring 2008's Guano Cup indoor-rules soccer league tournament Tuesday, May 20, at Denich Gym's outdoor soccer rink.

Kickin' Asphalt takes Guano Cup

**Army Pfc.
Eric Liesse**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Kickin' Asphalt trounced the Roadrunners, 5-2, winning the Spring 2008 Guano Cup indoor-rules soccer league tournament Tuesday, May 20, at Denich Gym's outdoor soccer rink.

Despite the final score, the Roadrunners gave little slack. Two of Asphalt's goals by Waady Ajour came as quick, out-of-nowhere surprises to Roadrunners goalie Dave Giesler. The Roadrunners had plenty of possession time and many viable plays. However, Asphalt's defense and quick goals got them the high-speed win.

The tournament was a six-team, three-round bracket, with each team seeded based on their final regular season record. Third-seeded Kickin' Asphalt and first-seeded Roadrunner had records of 5-3-2 and 8-1-1, respectively.

Starting Monday, May 12, the tournament's first round ended with fourth-seeded Prime Beef narrowly beating out fifth-seeded Mustache Mustangs, while Kickin' Asphalt started their winning streak by taking out sixth-seeded Bamfs.

In the semi-final round, the Roadrunners

GUANO CUP SOCCER	
Guano Cup Records by seeding	
1 st Roadrunners	8-1-1
2 nd Weapons of Pass Destruction	7-1-2
3 rd Kickin' Asphalt	5-3-2
4 th Prime Beef	4-6-0
5 th Mustache Mustangs	2-8-0
6 th Bamfs	1-8-1

secured their finals spot after stopping Prime Beef in their tracks. Also, Kickin' Asphalt played as opportunists in their win over second-seeded Weapons of Pass Destruction.

The tournament — led by league commissioner Jerry Ramm — held its final game Tuesday after rescheduling due to hard rain last Wednesday night.

In a correction to last week's Spring 2008 indoor soccer league article, the Superliga is not the third country national league. It is the advance, open league, while the Guano Cup is the intramural league.



**Jon Higdon
of the
Roadrunners
dribbles the
ball during the
second half of
the final game.**



Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, right, greets National Guard Director Lt. Gen. Steven Blum during a visit to Guantanamo Bay last August. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Joseph Scozzari

Departing JTF commander says farewell

BUZBY from 3

best way I knew how, and asked that you remain focused on executing our mission as brilliantly as you have always done. I'd say you not only kept your end of the bargain, but took the performance of this command to even greater heights, and took on new missions in support of commissions and migrant operations to boot. As for me, I'd like to believe that

I did more good than bad, impacted your quality of life and quality of service in a positive way, and made you as proud to be a part of this outfit as I was proud to lead it. It has been a real honor, ladies and gentlemen. God Bless you and your families, and God Bless America. Gina joins me in wishing you all the very best. Sail safe.

Honor Bound!

New online program at Columbia College

Columbia College is making it easier for certified teachers to achieve professional growth with a new online Master of Arts in Teaching program. Registration opened April 28, and classes begin June 2.

The MAT is of great value to education professionals who intend to remain in the classroom rather than seeking administrative positions. Earning the degree not only will improve teaching skills, but could also serve as the basis for an increase in an individual's salary and retirement options.

The MAT is the third graduate degree to be offered online at Columbia College. The online Master of Business Administration was launched in January 2007, and the Master of Science in Criminal Justice began January 2008.

"At Columbia College, we pride ourselves in balancing convenience and affordability with academic excellence," said Dr. Gerald Brouder, president of Columbia College. "Teachers who want to master the art of teaching will appreciate an online education from a respected and successful institution, especially because our start-and-stop flexibility allows them to earn a degree at their own pace."

The online program will consist of 12 courses in the areas of curriculum and instruction, psychological and philosophical foundations, and measurement and assessment. The five eight-week sessions

per year begin in June, August, October, January and March. By taking just one course per session, a student can graduate in approximately two years.

As with all online and on-campus degree programs at Columbia College, the online MAT is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission. Columbia College launched the Online Campus in 2000 with 10 classes. Today, the Online Campus offers more than 500 classes and 19 complete degrees each session.

Columbia College is nationally ranked for academic excellence and financial value by U.S. News & World Report, Geteducated.com and the Princeton Review.

Founded in 1851 as Christian Female College, the college was the first private women's college west of the Mississippi River to be chartered by a state legislature. The college changed its name in 1970 when it opened its doors to men and women, with a special emphasis on serving adults, including learners from all branches of the military. With the Online Campus and more than 30 campuses across the country, including the home campus in Columbia, Mo., Columbia College today serves nearly 25,000 students worldwide.

To apply for or learn more about the online MAT program at Columbia College, visit www.ccis.edu/onlineMAT or call the Online Campus: (800) 231-2391, ext. 7246.



JCOG efforts at Gitmo lauded

(Editor's Note: The following is from a letter dated May 3, 2008)

Dear Rear Adm. Buzby,
Please accept my deepest appreciation for your leadership in hosting the 75th Joint Civilian Orientation Conference (JCOG). We greatly value the long hours and dedication devoted to putting together a dynamic, hands-on visit that highlighted the unique capabilities of our Armed Forces operating within SOUTHCOM.

Along with the immediate thanks and feedback of the group that I hope was communicated to you during the course of our visit, note after note has poured into our office reiterating the impact of the experiences you provided. From the Hollywood publisher whose life was changed after seeing the compassion shown to the poorest neighborhoods of our partner nations to the philanthropist who was moved by the transformative effect of military service in young people, all participants were able to take away from the conference a new paradigm. And each of them will go forth in different ways to translate their experience into positive communication on behalf of the Armed Forces within each of their unique spheres of influence.

We continue to reach out to participants to provide additional opportunities to interact and support our military, and hope that you will continue to monitor the JCOG activities and view photos and stories from the visits at <http://jcoc.dod.mil>

Thank you for your willingness to take the time to produce a phenomenal experience for all of us. We wish you all the best and hope you have a wonderful summer!

Gratefully,

Anne D. MacDonald, director
Joint Civilian Orientation
Conference



Radiothon

Seaman Jesse Sharpe and Seaman Ace Rheaume, Navy mass communication specialists, hosted the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society's 2008 Radiothon on Radio GTMO stations 102.1 and 103.1 last week. Troopers were able to call into the station and donate money to hear their favorite songs – C.W. McCall's "Convoy" received heavy rotation – and even "bumped" other songs off the airwaves. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Pvt. Carlynn Knaack

Boots on the Ground

by Army Spc. Megan Burnham

What new activity/event would you like to see on Guantanamo Bay and why?

Air Force Master Sgt. Chris Fulks



"A country western dance night – they have all types of music at the Windjammer, but [not] much country."

Coast Guard Seaman Apprentice Daniel Hall



"A skeet shooting range. I'm from Oregon where a favorite pastime is shooting at clay pigeons."

Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Dan Morrissey



"Jet Ski rentals. They allow you to go out on your own and just are more fun than a speed boat."

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Edith Alvarado



"I would like to see a big fireworks display for the 4th of July – it's patriotic."

Meditations on Memorial Day

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

525th MP Battalion Chaplain

Each year, at the last weekend of May, we pause to give thanks as a grateful nation to the many people who have fallen for love of their home and country. We remember those who have given of themselves to make life as pleasurable and as wonderful as it is.

This precious memory stretches back through many years. And each day, we hear how those of our fellow countrymen, both men and women, continue to give their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On this very solemn weekend of the year, I'm thinking on the topic of death.

We all, as human beings, have deep questions of faith. These questions raise the spirit of the human quest for meaning of the brevity and uncertainty of human life. Most of us do not like to talk about this subject too seriously or for too long. Nevertheless, it is certainly an inevitable and unavoidable question of human reality. Thus, it is not a matter whether we are living in a society that discourages thinking. God wants us to think – God wants us to wrestle with these deep questions of life and death. It is good to ask some of these fundamental questions. It is not so far from what a Psalmist once cried: “Show me, O LORD, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.” (Ps. 39:4)

This statement is not just unique to this Psalmist. Life is fleeting. Compared to the immensity of the Universe, I would say human history is less than one tick of a clock.

Everything about humanity is fleeting – there is no permanence. We live in a world of phantoms in this passing scene. This should challenge all of us to have a new measurement, perspective and viewpoint on how to look at life and how to look at death.

It's sad news for those who build their treasures upon the earth. If one sets one's heart to achieve fame or fortune, one will inevitably be disappointed. Even if one is able to accomplish one's goal, it's with a sense of ultimate futility. Only one thing is sure: nothing is sure but that we will die! As to our desires, if we pursue money only, we have no idea who will enjoy that money. Who will enjoy that wealth we've heaped up and for which we may have worked all our lives, and worked so hard?

Now, is this just a depressing fact? One cannot fully understand the good news unless one understands the bad news. You've got the bad news, now you can fully appreciate what is coming. It is only when we rise to the mountaintop that we gain a true perspective. Life is short, extremely short – but what matters above everything else is our relationship with God and eternity.

This mess that we call life is so brief that it is over before you hardly know it's begun. If meaning is to be found, it will be in the purpose of the One who gave life.

The quest for the meaning of life, to understand the uncertainty of it and the brevity of it, leads to the important question: what do I look for in life?

Nothing in life is important or reliable unless one's hope is anchored. If there is no hope, there's no meaning.

Now while we may not have complete understanding of all the questions in our lives, nevertheless, we know that in the midst of life's uncertainties that there is a personal God who is in charge over our lives. Through the process of this quest, we need to learn that we are itinerants, that this world is not our home.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that we are all “aliens and strangers in the world” (1 Peter 2:11). If this world is all you have, then you above all people are most to be pitied. But if you understand you were made for eternity, that there is a whole other world for which we live, ultimately then you have a whole new perspective of how to live out your lives.

I believe that the true value and appreciation of life lies within the knowledge that life is transitory at best.

This Memorial Day, as we commemorate once more our brave men and women who laid down their lives for this country, we also acknowledge that our lives can be very brief.

Truly, measured against eternity, our time on this world is just a blink of an eye – but the corollary of it will last forever.

Like Son, like Father

**Army Sgt.
Gretel Sharpee**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

“I asked him to serve his country, something I had not done - but it felt like something I needed to do.”

Lt. Cmdr. William Smith, a self-proclaimed small town, country physician, changed his life, and his retirement, to join the Navy as Medical Doctor at age 54 after his son, Navy Lt. Thaddeus Smith, recovered from serious injuries when his helicopter went down in Sigonella, Italy.

“It felt like it was something I needed to do, and the Navy doctors, they took such good care of his wounds that he was able to fly again for deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan,” said Smith, Senior Medical Officer for the Joint Task Force, Joint Medical Group.

Smith checked out the Army and the Air Force before deciding to join the Navy.

“I talked with the Army; they said I was too old,” joked Smith. “The Air Force said I was dead and cold, but the Navy was willing to give me a few waivers and that was it.”

Smith was stationed at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Fla., before being deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to be the Senior Medical Officer for the Joint Medical Group.

His day-to-day activities include coordinating the medical care for the detainee population as well interacting with the Nurse and Medical Corps and reviewing

Navy Lt. Thaddeus Smith points out the difference in ribbons between his newly commissioned father, Navy Lt. Cmdr. William Smith, and himself.



Lt. Cmdr. Smith gives a tour of the detainee hospital to distinguished guests and visitors who come to Guantanamo Bay to see first hand the treatment and care each detainee receives.

medical charts for the Staff Judge Advocate Office.

“I’ve really enjoyed working with all of the different components of the JTF,” said Smith. “My story pales in comparison to the servicemen at Gitmo who have spent

their whole lives serving. It is more my privilege to be serving with them.”

“The best thing about JTF-GTMO has been the way everyone accepted me as an equal even though I am quite a novice in the military,” he continued. “Everyone from flag officers to E-1s have shown me kindness and respect.”

Culture shock was how Smith described joining the military late in life, but he attributes the support from his son with helping him adjust.

“At first [Lt. Smith] was very concerned that I wouldn’t like [the Navy],” Smith said. “But he was very supportive, and I am not sure I would have made it without him.”

Smith said two things have impressed him most with working in the detention hospital here on Gitmo

“First, the professionalism of the Guard forces and the Corpsmen,” he said. “These young people are doing a tremendous job in an intense environment under tremendous psychological stress and I am in awe of them.”

“Secondly, the leadership from the top down through all the components of the JTF has been outstanding. I am really honored if I have been able to contribute any small part to this mission.”



Delta block residents at Cuzco barracks engage in two separate multi-player video game sessions projected against barracks walls late Saturday evening. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Vaughn R. Larson



Petty Officer 2nd Class Nancy Aguilera and Senior Chief Jai Dykes play spades at the Iguana Xing, May 14. The Iguana Xing provides Troopers a place to hang out. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell



Melina Leon, a Puerto Rican merengue singer and actress held a performance here May 14, at the Downtown Lyceum. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. Gretel Sharpee ▶

Anita K. Blair, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy in Manpower and Reserve Affairs addresses Sailors' questions at the Windjammer May 19.

- JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell ▶



AROUND THE JTF