

THE WIRE

A JTF Journal



**525th change of command
Navy Divers keep JTF mission ready
USS Farragut passes through
Coast Guard: 218 years of service**

Personal values matter

**Air Force Senior Master Sgt.
Edward Berrios**

474th ECES Operations Superintendent

In my 26 years of military experience I have come in contact with many people, and one thing that stands out from these encounters is individual differences that bring this great military together. One of the most interesting differences is how each individual interprets values – by that, I mean personal values.

A value is a belief, a mission, or a philosophy that is meaningful. Whether we are consciously aware of them or not, every individual has a core set of personal values. Most of us learned our values – or morals, if you prefer – at home, at church, even at school.

Values can range from the commonplace – such as the belief in hard work, honesty and concern for others. Tolerance, openness, respect for the individual and teamwork are several great human values, while oneness, love, beauty and truth are some of the higher spiritual values. At certain times, human and spiritual values blend into one another and are expressed as selflessness, self-giving and gratitude.

We all have values that determine our decisions and guide our lives. Those that value individuality take responsibility, are self-reliant and act with self-respect. Those who value truthfulness cannot bring themselves to tell a lie. Those who value family or friendship sacrifice their personal interests for the good of others. Those who value goodness cannot bring themselves to do something they know is wrong. We express values in our relations with other people when we are loyal, reliable, honest, generous, trusting, trustworthy, feel a sense of responsibility for family, friends, co-workers, our organization, community or country.

Here are several of the more interesting thoughts on values:

1. Simplicity – taking the time to simplify anything that is overly complex is a very helpful skill. It not only streamlines, but makes it more productive. Remember the K.I.S.S. concept.

2. Harmony – the coming together of different people for a common purpose. The value of teamwork is a variation of the value of harmony.

3. Concern for others – I believe this to be the most important value. We are so concerned about ourselves and our own personal motives and ambitions that we overlook our fellow Troopers or human beings. The happiest people are those that literally lose themselves in the feelings, thoughts and life aspirations of others.

4. Integrity and Honesty – honesty, integrity, truthfulness, fairness and justice are values. One must be honest both in telling and feeling to have true honesty.

These are just a few values that I have encountered in my tenure in this great Air Force – some I have learned and implemented while struggling with others. It is my sincere desire, whichever values you embrace, that you may apply them in your life both physically and spiritually. Thank you. ★



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COVER:

The 525th Military Police Battalion participate in a change of command ceremony at Windmill Beach, Aug. 5. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Kleynia McNight



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.

A fond farewell



Army Lt. Col. William Wozniak bids farewell to the Soldiers of the 525th Military Police Battalion Aug. 5.

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Nat Moger

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Rolling waves and a sandy beach served as the backdrop when Army Lt. Col. William Wozniak handed command of the 525th Military Police Battalion to Army Lt. Col. Alex Conyers at Windmill Beach Aug. 5.

The 525th, originally constituted during World War II, was reactivated in October 2004 to conduct detention operations as part of the Joint Detention Group for Joint Task Force Guantanamo. The 525th, along with the Navy Expeditionary Guard Battalion, have the responsibility of walking the blocks and ensuring the safe and humane care and custody of detained enemy combatants.

Army Maj. Gen. Keith Huber, the commander of U.S. Army South, presided over the ceremony, and praised Wozniak for his two-year tour of duty.

"People's perspectives become their reality. Here you exist in the most visible location in the world," said Huber. "Woz, if you're wondering if you made an impact, stop. You don't need to. Job well done."

Next, Navy Rear Adm. David M. Thomas, Jr., the commander of the JTF, addressed both the incoming and outgoing battalion commanders, and the Soldiers standing in ranks, company by company, in the sand.

"Lt. Col. Wozniak, farewell shipmate. It's been a true honor and privilege to serve

with you," said Thomas. "Lt. Col. Conyers, welcome aboard. You'll find it a rewarding experience."

He then remarked on the Soldiers of the 525th, saying "these young men and women have done it right."

Wozniak began his remarks by thanking his Soldiers.

"To the Soldiers of the battalion, you guys look great," said Wozniak, before recapping his time as commander, listing the four principles of his leadership style: preservation of readiness, discipline, responsibility and accountability, living the Army values and enforcing set standards. He closed with his radio call sign.

"Warrior Six, Vigilant Six. Out."

Conyers kept his remarks short, saying he looked forward to taking over and reflecting on his last tour of duty here, back in 1991.

"It's been said that it's tough to get on and off this island," said Conyers. "It's been 17 years, and it's great to be back."

Wozniak will be assuming a staff position in the Office of the Provost Marshal in Washington, D.C. ☆



Army Lt. Col. William Wozniak passes the 525th Military Police Battalion colors to Army Maj. Gen. Keith Huber, signifying his relief of command Aug. 5.

We dive Gitmo over!

**Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class
Jayme Pastoric**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

From the ever present patrols of the Puerto Rican National Guard to the U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay base security and the Coast Guard Port Security Unit 307, Joint Task Force Guantanamo is well taken care of at all hours of the day.

But who looks out for our interests under the crystal clear waters of the Caribbean Sea? The world's finest navy divers of Navy Dive Locker Guantanamo Bay are on call to protect Gitmo's piers, keep Coast Guard ships free from hazards below and to watch over JTF Troopers who enjoy recreational diving.

The dive locker's mission statement is to run and operate a ready recompression chamber in case of an emergency, and to help JTF and port services if needed.

"There are a lot of JTF members who dive," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Clessie Simmons. "Just in case diving accidents were to happen, we have the equipment and training to treat them."

Helping JTF Troopers who dive is only one way Navy divers help keep all personnel mission ready.

Simmons has routinely helped the Coast Guard maintain their mission readiness by assisting them in the removal of debris.

"My last dive job was with the Coast Guard," said Simmons. "I had to remove rope from one of their ships that had wrapped around one of the shafts."

Today, Simmons dives along the pier to look for any suspicious objects that might delay or prevent Coast Guard or Navy ships from docking in Guantanamo. Security sweeps such as this are a force protection measure that the divers are happy to assist in.

"The best part about being a diver is diving. I hate sitting at a desk, and I always see or do something new each time I dive," said Simmons. "You never know what you will run into down there, a shark, gold, or a bowling ball. There is no routine and I like that." 🌟



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Clint Guernsey and Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Clessie Simmons conduct checks of Simmons' SCUBA gear, while Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Dean Paraskeva briefs them on the upcoming dive.

Farragut and McLay



Navy Capt. Deidre McLay stands next to USS Farragut (DDG-99) pierside Aug. 1. McLay was Farragut's first commanding officer.

**Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class
Nat Moger
and
Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class
Kleynia McKnight**
JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

As the guided-missile destroyer *USS Farragut (DDG-99)* rounded Windward Point into the waters of U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Aug. 1, 2008, Navy Cmdr. Deidre McLay calmly took off her desert camouflage uniform blouse and put another one on. The only difference between the two: eagles instead of oak leaves.

Capt. McLay, didn't choose that point and that time arbitrarily. Currently the executive assistant to Navy Rear Adm. David M. Thomas, Jr., the commander of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, McLay's previous duty station was at sea aboard the very same destroyer passing behind her.

"I was the commissioning commanding officer of the *Farragut*," said McLay. "The crew and myself were responsible for post-delivery testing and its first training cycle."

The maiden voyage for a new ship, no matter its size, is always a challenge. For the two years between its commissioning

in July of 2005 and McLay's departure in June of 2007, the *Farragut* and its crew shook down all the systems to ensure that it was seaworthy.

"We went out tested everything, from the missile systems to the sonar systems," said McLay. "It was, without a doubt, the best experience of my Navy career. It all had to do with the quality of the crew and the excitement of bringing a brand new command into the fleet."

While faces change and personnel rotate, there are still at least 100 plankowners, Sailors that helped commission the vessel, aboard.

"Seeing the ship again was great, and the fact that so much of the plankowner crew was there made it special," said McLay. "A lot of them have really developed, too. A



Farragut prepares to dock in Guantanamo Bay Aug. 1.

See **MCLAY/13**



Team Schevanalesberg members (left to right) Brandon Schumann, Daniel Evans, Eric Regensberg and Berta Morales strategize which task to tackle next during a scavenger hunt Saturday, Aug. 2 sponsored by the Deer Point Liberty Center. The event was open to Naval Station and Joint Task Force personnel.

The game is afoot

Army Sgt. 1st Class Vaughn R. Larson

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The Iron Man Competition, it was not.

The “I Run Many Places” Competition is more like it.

Fourteen teams of up to four members each scoured the base Aug. 2 in the GTMO Scavenger Hunt, hoping to find more items than their competitors in roughly three hours or less.

The hunt was challenging, with 14 mandatory categories worth up to 10 points each. Teams could also earn up to 155 bonus points from 10 additional categories. Teams were penalized 10 points for each mandatory task not completed.

Teams were limited to using only what was provided by the Deer Point Liberty Center staff –

a Polaroid camera, a GPS device and a checklist. Personal vehicles were prohibited, as were vehicles belonging to friends. And each task required a witness and a signature.

Some of the tasks were easier than others, such as getting a golf ball at the Yatera Seca Golf Course or a nutritional value chart from McDonald’s. Others were not so easy, such as photographing a person in uniform doing a handstand.

According to April Sarani of the team named “Docs,” the most difficult task was to photograph someone holding a bowling ball, taco – mind you, the scavenger hunt began at 9 a.m. – and a \$100 bill.

“But we did it,” Sarani said. “We got creative.”

They were not alone in interpreting the rules somewhat

See HUNT/13



Rabid Badgers team member Josh Treadwell, right, and Jim Wagner found themselves running in circles at the go-kart track by Coopers Field to complete a scavenger hunt task.



As exciting as the name suggests



**Army Pfc.
Eric Liesse**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

In recent years, M. Night Shyamalan has made audiences shudder with spot-on horror timing. However, Shyamalan's latest film "The Happening" shows his plot development skills are all but gone.

The premise is simple: people in New York City start killing themselves en masse for no apparent reason. Quickly, the phenomenon spreads to other New England cities and towns, causing residents to flee in panic.

The movie stars an awkward Mark Wahlberg as a Philadelphia high school teacher in a bumpy marriage with Zooey Deschanel – who has creepy-huge blue eyes. Along with Wahlberg's best friend – a fellow teacher played by John Leguizamo – and his daughter, who seems almost mute, all major players flee Philly for smaller towns in hopes of avoiding whatever is causing the pandemic.

In true Shyamalan fashion, the ominous, ever-present question is, "Why is this happening?" Terrorism is the first assumption. But when smaller towns are also affected, theories begin to include widespread nuclear contamination or Mother Nature releasing unnoticeable toxins.

Wahlberg and the others seem to overact

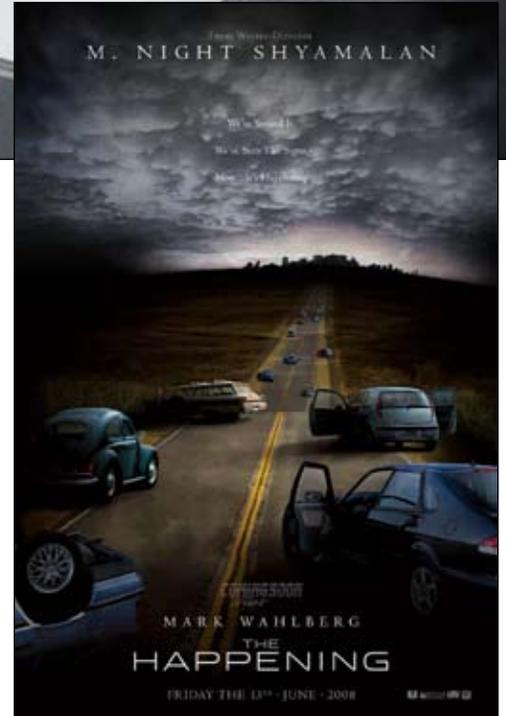


throughout, giving that raw horror/science fiction feel many niche fans cherish.

Although you will laugh and you will cringe, it won't be why Shyamalan wants you to. "The Happening" has the feel of a classic B-horror movie, with a random catastrophic event and an hour of running from it. The many creative death scenes cause most viewers to erupt in "Oh!"s and "Whoa!"s with chuckles tacked on, regardless if that was Shyamalan's intent. There is repeated use of facial close-ups, as well as grotesque action framed just slightly off screen – both trademarks of the genre. The outbursts are amplified because the pace switches from quick to yawn-inducing slow – until the next extreme scene. In other words: No suspense, all scares.

Despite proficient – and prolific – use of this technique, the movie's ambiguity begins to kill off audience interest as characters are dispatched to their gruesome fates.

Wahlberg and the cast try their best – in fact, they may try too hard. Ironically, the biggest problem with "The Happening" is that barely anything really happens. ☆



R
1 hour, 31 minutes

Rating: ★★☆☆☆



525TH COMMAND RUN



The 525th Military Police Battalion participated in an 'Esprit de Corps' run Aug. 4, to support unit cohesion and commemorate the battalion's change of command. Outgoing commander, Lt. Col William S. Wozniak led the run, which began in front of the 525th Bn. headquarters. After the run, and some cool-down stretches, the units that comprise the 525th were awarded battle streamers indicating success in areas such as: physical fitness, weapon qualification, training and community service.



Photos by Navy Petty Officer
1st Class Joshua Treadwell



“SEMPER PARATUS”

**Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class
Jayme Pastoric**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Next time you see a Coast Guardsman make sure you wish them a happy birthday. They just turned 218-years-old.

Like every 218-year-old, the members of Coast Guard Port Security Unit 307 decided to run a five kilometer foot race, or just host one instead.

“The Coast Guard plays a huge role in patrolling Gitmo’s waters,” said co-winner of the women’s division Jennifer Seese. “Not only does it provide protection to Gitmo’s shores and the Caribbean, but also it provides assistance at any time.”

Overall winner, Navy Seaman Nathan Brassmassery finished with a time of 12 minutes, 18 seconds, and is happy to see the turnout of supporters for the race.

“It’s nice to see everyone come out to support the Coast Guard for this race,” said Brassmassery.

Established by Alexander Hamilton under the Department of the Treasury, Aug. 4, 1790, the U.S. Coast Guard’s original mission was to collect taxes from a brand new nation of patriot smugglers. When the Coast Guard was at sea, they were told to crack down on piracy and while they were at it, rescue anyone in distress.



Coast Guard Cmdr. Bob Grassino stands by to sound the air horn starting the Coast Guard 5K. The Coast Guard run is in celebration of the 218th anniversary of the USCG, established Aug. 4, 1790.

“Semper Paratus,” the Coast Guard’s motto, is Latin and means “Always Ready.”

Currently, the Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Security and patrols and maintains the last line of defense on our nation’s costal waters. Unlike other Department of Defense services the Coast Guard is deployed every day, upholding maritime law and specializing in search and rescue.

While Troopers are deployed around the world, they will have one less thing to worry about knowing the Coast Guard has 218-years of experience defending our coastline and protecting our families. 🇺🇸

Give hutia a chance



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

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

To many, the hutia, commonly referred to as a Banana Rat, is just that – a rat. There is little public knowledge about it. In a recent ‘Boots on the Ground’ question, Troopers were asked if they would rather have a banana rat or an iguana as a house pet. Everyone said iguana. So, where’s the love for the hutia?

Hutia are a fixture of Guantanamo Bay. In fact, you can find T-shirts at the gift shop that feature their likeness. But they carry a negative image as being dirty and a nuisance on base.

“When I first saw one [dead in the road] I thought they were disgusting because it just looked like a giant rat,” said Lt. Col. Doris Acevedo.

“I started reading about them, and I realized they are rodents, not rats,” she continued. “Eventually I saw live ones and started to like them. I think they’re cute, and would enjoy one as a pet.”

Don’t be fooled by how common hutias are around base – they are considered endangered. Fifteen of 27 species known to science have become extinct, with the remaining 12 seriously endangered. In Cuba, all species of hutia are protected. However, protection is rarely enforced.



The hutia that inhabit Guantanamo Bay thrive here. As nocturnal creatures, they spend most of their day lounging in trees or cactus, cohabitating in their family groups. At night, they come out to feed, mostly on vegetation such as leaves, fruit and tree bark – but they won’t turn down an occasional lizard.

Hutia are territorial creatures and tend to stay within their home area. They mark their territory with urine as well as small piles of banana-shaped feces, which earned them the name ‘banana rat.’

During dry seasons, it is not uncommon for hutia to roam into residential areas looking for lush vegetation. Plants serve as their primary water source, so when their grazing territory is affected by drought, they won’t discriminate against eating ornamental plants, as opposed to native vegetation. Hutia have been known to gnaw on radiator hoses, wires and even fiber optic cables, which contributes to their

negative image and may cause conflict with the human population at Gitmo.

Guantanamo Bay Naval Station has been working with Ohio’s Toledo Zoo through a partnership that initially began as an opportunity to study the Cuban Boa. As the study progressed, scientists expanded their research to include the hutia, which serves as prey for the boa.

During a visit earlier this year, members from the zoo worked with personnel from the Naval Station and Joint Task Force to trap, radio-collar and track the hutia, all in an effort to understand their habitat and habits. The study is still underway.

Not much is known about any species of the hutia, though the opportunity to collect data and further study the local ecosystem here will provide some insight to better understand and appreciate native inhabitants like the hutia. 🐾

Information from “Currents” summer 2008 edition.



Save a life!

Soldiers of the Puerto Rican Army National Guard practice cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on dummies during a CPR certification course in Camp America Aug. 1. The course, conducted by Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Ellis, non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the Joint Troop Clinic, taught the Soldiers how to properly assist victims of cardiac arrest or respiratory arrest. (From left to right) Spc. Flor Perez, Spc. Erica Irizarry, Spc. Porfirio Acevedo, Staff Sgt. John Kinney, Sgt. Milton Perez. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Pfc. Eric Liesse

OUTDOOR FIRE SAFETY

With temperatures on the rise at Guantanamo Bay, fire safety needs to be at the front of our minds in anything we do. When gathering for a bonfire, here are a few things you need to do before striking that match.

- Contact the fire station to request a fire permit at least 48 hours in advance.
- Call the fire station or base security before you light the fire. (ext. 4105)
- Make sure anything combustible is at least 25 feet away from the flames.
- Don't throw garbage like aluminum cans or glass into the fire, especially anything that may be combustible.
- Designated burning areas include: Windmill and Cable Beach, Hospital Cay and Chapman Beach (leeward).
- Before you leave, douse the flames and embers with water and ensure the fire is out.

For more information, call the fire prevention office at 4178 or 4179 or refer to NAVSTA base regulation 11320.

Information courtesy of Carl Davis, Assistant Fire Chief, Guantanamo Bay



Megan's Team took first place, and a 2-hour Gitmo Queen gift certificate, in Saturday's Scavenger Hunt sponsored by the Deer Point Liberty Center. Members include (left to right): Ethan Saxton, Megan Haney, Forrest Rodman and Michael Cornista – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Vaughn R. Larson

14 teams compete in Scavenger Hunt

HUNT from 6

loosely. One team wrote "You owe me \$100" on a napkin in lieu of a bank note – it's a *bill*, get it? Another team took a group photo with a stuffed plush iguana, rather than locate the real thing.

Technology proved to be an additional, unplanned challenge for the event. The Polaroid cameras did not yield the best images, and the GPS devices were also somewhat unreliable – one team did not have a waypoint loaded to locate a specific landmark, which counted against them in the final tally.

Megan's Team took first place by being

the only team to complete each task, and also correctly identify the landmark – not the lighthouse, but the anchor by the lighthouse. They received a coupon good for two hours on the Gitmo Queen.

Natasha's Team earned a second-place finish, followed closely by Team Dean.

Sarah Stannard of the Rabid Badgers said her team had fun, even without a waypoint needed to complete the landmark location task.

"Doc's" team member John Joseph agreed.

"I'm just glad it's over," he said with a smile. "That was a workout." ☆

Full speed ahead

MCLAY from 5

lot of the seamen and firemen are now 2nd class petty officers, and five 1st class petty officers were selected for chief last week."

"Being promoted to captain is more a reflection of the crew of the Farragut than it is on me," continued McLay. "When you're a surface warfare officer, your tour as CO determines whether or not you make captain. I wouldn't have been promoted if the crew hadn't done such a good job. If you don't have quality people, you cannot achieve your mission."

McLay's preparations have paid off. Under the command of Navy Cmdr. Scott Dugan, Farragut is halfway through its six-month maiden cruise. The stop here in Gitmo was a working port visit to take on fuel and stores. It was also an opportunity for crew members to qualify on small arms.

"Our crew will experience different tasking during our second half of deployment," said Dugan. "We will be able to hone our operational prowess during PANAMAX, help fight the war on drugs in the Caribbean and have the rare opportunity to work side by side with foreign navies through our theater security cooperation tasking."

PANAMAX is a multinational exercise dedicated to the defense of the Panama Canal, and following its completion, Farragut will get to put that small arms training to use during visit, board, search and seizure operations in support of maritime interdiction operations and counter-narcotics operations.

After the cruise, Farragut will return to the homeport of Mayport, Fla. However, until that day, crewmembers were happy just to have a little break.

"We're still pretty busy. The ship's got a high op tempo, so even in port, it's still strenuous," said Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Josh Sheprow, who was on a 24-hour duty status the day Farragut pulled in. "All things considered, just getting a couple hours ashore is good." ☆

Boots on the Ground

What is your favorite song on your MP3 player?

by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

Air Force Capt. Fernando DeFillo



"Dude (Looks Like A Lady), by Aerosmith."

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Felicia Lemmob



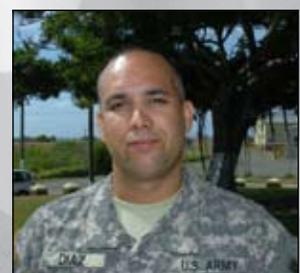
"Chariot, by Gavin DeGraw."

Army Sgt. Jared Fretze



"Blame It On The Rain, by Milli Vanilli."

Army Cpl. Jaime Diaz



"Playero 37."



Lessons: One Generation to the Next

**Army Capt.
Eric Bey**

525th MP Battalion Chaplain

There once was a man who, when coming across some road-kill, took his son and made him look intently at it. It was horrifically traumatizing. The father, after several moments, began to explain to the boy how the creature would be missed by its family and how emotional, grief, loss and turmoil would ensue. He ended by telling him that it could have all been avoided, and it was all caused by the creature's carelessness at crossing a road without having looked both ways. The boy was forever changed!

The point of my telling this story is to underline the importance of teaching our children actual lessons. I'm not suggesting for a second that we traumatize our children but that we lovingly invest time in

teaching them life lessons. The principle is scripturally sound. After giving Israel the two greatest commands, the Bible says in Deuteronomy 6:7 that we should teach them to our children. It also says in Proverbs that if you train up a child in the way he should go, that when he is old he will not depart from it. Yet probably the saddest thing in scripture is the phrase, "There arose a generation that knew not the Lord." That happened and I'm sorry to say still happens because we fail to pass on the teachings, stories and knowledge of God.

I distinctly remember the fondest of memories when my father taught me how to catch fish, shrimp and crab. I remember when he taught me how to shave in ninth grade. I remember him taking me out to learn to drive a manual transmission, and I remember us having the talk about faith in God.

There is no way of telling the effect

those lessons and times of intimacy have had on me and who I have become, and they are the fondest memories I own.

I have five children of my own, and I'm not entirely convinced that we're through having more but the time I take to teach them life lessons comes back to me in spades. I am constantly reminded as I see them putting the principles I teach them into practice, that whom they will become has everything to do with my wife and me. After all, not everyone has planted apple seeds and harvested tomatoes. You will get what you put in. So let us take note of what we are teaching our children because we know that they are always watching, listening and even recording our every thought, word and deed. Garbage in, garbage out; blessing, faith, hope, peace and life lessons in, productive, God fearing member of society out! Be blessed, and happy parenting! ☆

JTF CHAPEL SCHEDULED PROGRAMS

Catholic Mass

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

Wednesday: 11 a.m. Mass

Protestant Worship

Sunday: 9 a.m.

Spanish Protestant Worship

Sunday: Noon



Army Staff Sgt. Cecilio Munoz assists with security in the Joint Task Force. More than a quarter century ago, a younger Lance Cpl. Munoz served in the U.S. Marine Corps Ground Defense Force here (at right).

Here and back again

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

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

In a military career that is just shy of three decades, Army Staff Sgt. Cecilio Munoz may have seen it all.

When it comes to Guantanamo Bay, he's seen it twice.

Munoz first served here from 1981-83, when he was a Marine lance corporal with the Ground Defense Force. Quite a bit has changed since then, he said.

"You had a Cuban community here," Munoz recalled. "There were about 300 Cubans coming in to work – we used a school bus to take them in and back.

"There were many Spanish-speaking dependents," he continued. "The community was better – [it was] closer to military personnel than now. Lots of activities going on."

Some of those activities included more rest and recreation opportunities to Jamaica, Tahiti and Puerto Rico, Munoz said. An express bus used to ferry people

directly to the Navy Exchange, to sick call and to the beach. He conceded, however, that back then the base was without a Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, or even McDonald's.

"We had the Windjammer," he said.

Marine field artillery pieces used to fire shells into the ocean where the Joint Task Force now operates, Munoz said.

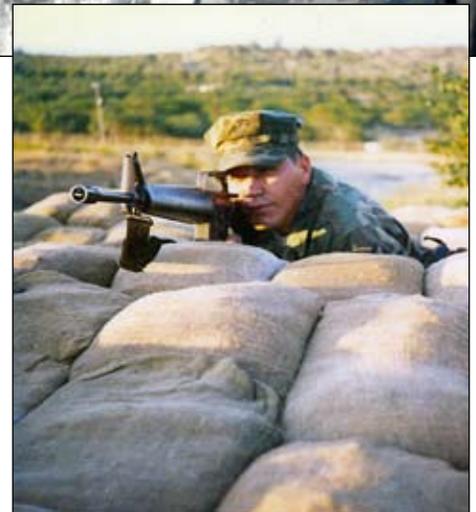
The Marines also trained with tanks at Guantanamo Bay as part of the Ground Defense Force. Munoz recalled patrolling the fence line and maintaining bunkers.

"It was kind of hard work," he said.

Munoz left the Marine Corps in 1997, and after a brief retirement joined the Puerto Rico Army National Guard later that year. He said military service helps pay the bills, noting that he has a son studying in Mexico to become a doctor.

The 52-year old called this deployment a challenge, but said he shares his experience with younger troops – and listens to their knowledge as well.

"They still call me 'old man' anyways," he said, adding that he may stay in the military until he is 60 years old.



Munoz deployed once before with the Puerto Rico Army National Guard for a 12-month tour providing ground defense at U.S. Army Garrison in Vicenza, Italy.

Despite some major differences between Guantanamo Bay then and now, Munoz acknowledged there are similarities as well. His current mission with the JTF also involves maintenance along towers and fences – just not the same towers and fences. His daughter was born while he was stationed here in 1983. On her 25th birthday, he found himself back here. And while the uniforms are different, Munoz said both missions are important.

"I feel proud," he said. "I like Gitmo." ♡

Emily Gebo, a contractor for the Joint Task Force roasts a marshmallow over a bonfire at Hospital Cay Aug. 2. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell



The guided-missile destroyer USS Farragut (DDG-99) is moored to a pier. Farragut is halfway through its six-month maiden cruise. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Jayme Pastoric

Petty Officer 2nd Class Bobby Toal displays Gino, a military working dog (MWD) with base security, during a National Night Out event at the Navy Exchange Aug. 5. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Vaughn R. Larson

AROUND THE JTF