

THE WIRE

A JTF Journal

Ramadan

JTF prepares for
Islam's holy month

SeaBees

Building a stronger
Joint Task Force



Motivation, will, balance: Keys to success

**Army Master Sgt.
George Diaz**
JDG Operations NCO

We, as service members of the Armed Forces, are now living an historical moment. We are fighting a sophisticated, mostly invisible enemy; a different kind of threat, from different cultures and backgrounds around all corners of the world. In order to win this struggle we have to be disciplined, physically and mentally tough, skill proficient, highly motivated and possess the will to succeed and balance ourselves. It is exactly these last three attributes that I wish to discuss with you.

Motivation comes from the heart – this allows us to do things that may seem difficult or impossible. The will provides us the necessary force to move forward and accomplish any task, no matter the difficulty. The will may be a personal goal, a belief, or the desire to prove yourself. No matter the reason, we have to search inside ourselves and find this will. If we find it, we will have the motivation necessary to accomplish any mission. Will and motivation creates the desire to be or do something – a reason to get up in the morning and work hard for it.

Sometimes circumstances and the day-to-day routine make it easy to lose your will and motivation. It's here where leaders provide the spark to regain the excitement our goals need to be accomplished. They are responsible to provide the inspiration, set a positive climate, and build teamwork and cohesion within us. For me, this has to be the first priority of any leader.

Many people seem to think that success in one area can compensate for the failure in others, but I sincerely don't think so. True effectiveness requires a balance. Leaders have to balance the mission and the welfare of their subordinates, maintain discipline, and remember to be fair by enforcing the standards, understanding the limitations of each individual, as well as identifying individual strengths and weaknesses. By doing this, they may turn weaknesses into strengths, thus developing motivation.

Display character and authority, but demonstrate confidence and knowledge, and listen with an open mind. If a leader achieves this balance, then that leader can motivate their Troopers and maintain their will to succeed.

We as individuals have to balance our interests with team goals, our needs with the mission, and our limitations with the standards. We have to work hard on our weaknesses, find positive things to do in our free time, expand our knowledge, strive for good comradery and always seek to be the best. Enthusiasm is nothing more than will and motivation. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

Always be positive – pessimism leads to depression, withers achievement and undermines physical health. Leaders have the responsibility to set a positive working condition; we have the responsibility to give our maximum effort to accomplish the mission. Leaders are responsible to drive that energy, maintain positives and be the first to demonstrate will and motivation – the combination will result in success. I'll conclude with the words of Adm. Collinwood: "Now, gentlemen, let us do something today which the world may talk of hereafter."

Good luck, and always maintain your self motivation, will and balance. ★



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COVER:

A giant star fish inches across the bottom of the ocean floor near Phillips Dive Park here at Guantanamo Bay. - JTF Guantanamo Bay photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jayme Pastoric



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Construimus, Batuimus: We build, we fight

■ *Gitmo Seabees help JTF, Naval Station with construction needs*

**Army Pfc.
Eric Liesse**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Since 1942, the U.S. Naval Construction Force, better known as the Seabees, have built bridges, homes, offices and anything else needed to complete the missions at hand. Trained as Sailors as well as construction specialists of all fields, Seabees create and upkeep the infrastructure of the Navy.

The Seabees of Guantanamo Bay, the 25-man Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 4, are no different.

From building storage buildings for BREMCOR Joint Venture, to maintaining the Marine's 22-mile perimeter road, to literally moving sections of bridges, Gitmo's Seabees crew does it all.

"We're here to provide [construction] services for the Joint Task Force when needed and the Naval Station," said Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Brown, the operations department leader.

Brown explained that although the Seabees are not here because of the JTF, whenever the JTF Engineer's Office need personnel or equipment for a mission, NMCB 4 supply what they can.

One major project these Sailors are currently involved in is constructing



Petty Officer 3rd Class Chance Keifer, a construction mechanic, greases the tracks of a land excavator at the Seabee's equipment yard.

the bridge over the Guantanamo River connecting the two sides of the base. Two spans were built for the bridge – one from each side. However, when defects were discovered on the Leeward-side span, it was decided to move that segment back to the Seabees' shop area for repair. Brown expects the bridge to be finished and in use by the end of 2009.

The current crew of NMCB 4 has been on-island since the beginning of August, and they are here for a six-month deployment. Brown said Seabees usually deploy as a unit, and his office is the same.

The story of the Seabees name is not a typical military tale. During World War II, Navy Rear Adm. Ben Moreell felt the Navy needed trained Troopers to build advanced bases in war zones rather than civilian contractors. On Jan. 5, 1942, he was granted the authority to recruit civilian construction tradesmen specifically for the three new Naval Construction Battalions, getting the new designation of CB from this name.

The name of "Seabees" came from a Walt Disney Studios employee tasked to design a logo. After scrapping a badger, despite their natural construction prowess, the artist used a play on CBs, making "Seabees" and created the logo of the fighting and building Sailor bumble bee.

"Pretty much every island station I've been at, we've been hit by a hurricane," Brown said. Durring hurricane season,

the Seabees receive even more specialized demands.

Before storms, like all other commands, their equipment is stowed away for safety. After the storms passes is they kick into full gear.

Seabees get in their trucks and bulldozers to remove debris from the roadways and public areas – whether that be downed trees or scattered loose equipment.

"I guess we're like the road crew of Gitmo," Brown joked.

NMCB 4 does whatever construction needs Gitmo has in store for them, be it JTF, NAVSTA or BREMCOR. Both construction tradesmen and Sailors, they build and they fight. ★





This ethnic meal of fresh pita bread, sweets, fruit, juice and rice with shrimp and vegetables will be served to detainees as part of their Ramadan observance, beginning Sept. 1. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Megan Burnham

Preparing for Ramadan

Army Sgt. 1st Class
Vaughn R. Larson

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

The holiest month in Islam is set to begin next week.

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is expected to begin the first day of September this year, according to the Islamic Society of North America. The Islamic lunar calendar is 11 or 12 days shorter than the standard Gregorian calendar, which means that Ramadan observations begin earlier each succeeding year. Last year, for example, Ramadan began Sept. 13. There is some variance on the correct method to determine when Ramadan begins – some favor the sighting of a new moon, but according to the Quran, any method is allowed.

Zak, the Joint Task Force cultural advisor, said the beginning of Ramadan will be definitively known one day in advance.

Ramadan is marked by fasting – one of the five pillars of Islam – and devotion to Allah. Fasting, or *sawm*, is practiced from dawn until sunset, and includes abstaining not only from food, but drink, smoking and sex. Behavior such as anger, envy, greed, lust, gossip and character attacks are also to be avoided during Ramadan. Observers partake of a pre-fast meal called a *suhour*, as well as an evening meal called *iftar*. The month of fasting ends with a celebration called *Eid-al-Fitr*.

The Joint Task Force invests significant time and effort to provide detainees who observe Ramadan with special meals and schedules, according to Zak. Not all detainees observe Ramadan, and receive three daily meals on the same schedule as before. But detainees who fast receive the *suhour* before dawn and the *iftar* after sundown. Zak emphasized that the *iftar* meal is a double portion, so detainees receive the same amount of food during



The sighting of a new moon is a common method of determining the start of Ramadan, the holiest month in Islam.

Ramadan despite going from three meals to two. Honey and dates are preferred to break the fast, followed by soup as the first course of the evening meal.

The JTF guard force modifies its schedule to allow for the different meal and prayer times and shifts recreation times to the evening during Ramadan. They are busiest around the evening meal, delivering the dates and honey, being sensitive of the fourth prayer, delivering the evening meal and being sensitive of the *taraweeh* – all within a few hours. Guards also watch their own actions –

See **RAMADAN/13**

USCG GUNEX: Keeps Sailors weapon-ready

Army Spc.
Erica Isaacson

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

It was an all to common hot and humid morning as members of Port Security Unit 307 boarded their Viper patrol boats and ventured out of the Guantanamo Bay and into the Caribbean for weapons training.

Employed in the training were M-2 .50 Caliber Machine Guns, M-240B Machine Gun and an assortment of signaling devices.

By mornings end, the Vipers' assorted arsenals of weapons were given a full work out in order to give members of Port Security Unit 307 a little seaborne target practice.

To the members of Port Security Unit 307, the live-fire exercise held here Aug. 21 was a chance for them to hone their marksmanship skills and rehearse basic survival skills.

"Everyone in the unit is already qualified on their weapons," said Chief Boatswain's Mate Joseph Tew, who helped with exercise organization. "The exercise was a maintenance qualification range to keep up the skills of unit members."

After leaving the bay, PSU 307 Troopers started off the exercise by deploying smoke



Port Security Unit 307 Troopers practice deploying various signaling devices during a live fire exercise, Thursday, Aug. 21.

and flare signaling devices. One at a time, Viper boats traveled a safe distance from the others and each crew member took a turn practicing how they would signal for help in case of an emergency.

"The practice with the signals was familiarization," said Tew. "With practice their use becomes second nature."

The exercise then shifted into high gear as the crews prepared to fire live rounds down range.

After having already spent hours out on the water with the unrelenting sun beating down on them, the PSU 307 Troopers once again donned their Kevlar helmets and other protective gear as they prepared to fire while underway.

A floating target was

placed on the open water by the command boat as crew members on the remaining Vipers anchored themselves to their weapons by attaching straps to harnesses they were wearing.

Then, one by one, the coxswain of each Viper approached the target at high speeds.

The target was first engaged by the gunner operating the M2 .50 Caliber Machine Gun at the front of the boat. The coxswain would then turn the Viper to allow the M16A2 Rifle gunner on the side of the boat to engage the target simultaneously.

"Turning the Viper to the side while engaging the target creates interlocking fields of fire," explained Tew. "It is a much more effective way to engage a target."

Aboard each Viper were mixes of both veteran and relatively fresh Troopers. More experienced Troopers showed others how to "walk in the rounds" as they engaged targets. By coming together and performing training exercises, seasoned Troopers are able to share their experience with the rest of the unit. It is just one way PSU 307 maintains the highest level of mission readiness.

When PSU 307 finally completed the live-fire exercise and pulled their Vipers in to dock, the Troopers were sweat soaked and exhausted. But, their day had only just begun.

Not only were their weapons dirty from firing, but saltwater had penetrated every crevice of the Vipers and weapons and all needed to be cleaned to prevent rust from forming.

After a short break for lunch, a long afternoon of cleaning and maintenance work awaited the members of PSU 307. ☆



U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st class Michael Ward, a gunners mate with Port Security Unit 307, gives a familiarization brief before a live fire exercise Thursday, Aug. 21.

Fun in the sun and the sand



GTMO Assassins serve the volleyball across the court to the awaiting team Sweet Tea 1 and 1/2 during one game of the Beach Volleyball Tournament.

Army Spc. Megan Burnham

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

There's no better way to spend a weekend than playing beach volleyball. The scorching hot sand, scraped knees from the concrete slab under the sand and the promise of painful sunburn are all things not to be missed.

These potential negatives at the sand volleyball court at Windmill Beach didn't stop 13 teams from participating in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation co-ed 4-on-4 Beach Volleyball Tournament, Aug. 23-24.

The tournament started at 11 a.m. both days with some teams playing until after 7 p.m. on Saturday and the championship match finishing around 2 p.m. on Sunday. The team roster could consist of up to six players with at least one female per team; however, only four players were allowed to play on the court at any one time.

Each match consisted of up to three games where one team had to win two of them. The first two games were played to 25 points and if both teams won a game, the third was played to 15 points.



Jaime Mirabueno, Carolann Foster, Walt Zapf and Travis Blackman made up The Scrubs team who placed first in the tournament with an undefeated record.

In beach volleyball, a scoring method called rally point scoring was used as opposed to normal indoor volleyball scoring. Rally scoring is where a point is awarded each rally even if the team receiving the point didn't serve the ball; in simple terms, when one team makes an error the opposite team receives a point.

The tournament was very intense with the double-elimination rule where a team had to lose two matches before they were eliminated from the tournament. With this rule, team GTMO Assassins was able to play in the championship match against the undefeated team The Scrubs even though they lost one match on Saturday. GTMO Assassins had to play four matches in a row (6 games overall) to accomplish this feat;

however, they fell short of winning against The Scrubs. The Scrubs had a more relaxed schedule with a two-hour break in between each match.

The award ceremony was held after the championship match. Trophies and \$25 gift cards to the Navy Exchange were given to the first place team The Scrubs while GTMO Assassins also received trophies and \$15 gift cards to the NEX for placing second. ✪

Tournament Results

1st Place: The Scrubs
2nd Place: GTMO Assassins

I've got a bad feeling about this...



**Army Pfc.
Eric Liesse**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

I invite you to recall your first viewing of George Lucas' "Star Wars." Remember the opening epic sound of John William's score queuing with the full-screen logo drifting into the star-lit space. With the theme blasting, you read the scrolling prologue to set the scene and tone.

This preceded all "Star Wars" full-length features, becoming synonymous with the franchise and iconic in the greater-modern-American culture.

Just as I realized the new "Star Wars: The Clone Wars" did not open with this same sequence, I knew there was something wrong with this movie.

"The Clone Wars" is the new fully animated installment in Lucas' saga and is set between the end of "Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones" and "Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith." The film pits the gallant Galactic Republic and its clone armies against the droid armies of the insidious Separatists. Also, to win Jabba the Hutt's help, the Jedi send operatives to retrieve his kidnapped son from the deceptive Sith lords.

The Republic's Jedi generals – namely Master Obi-Wan Kenobi and Master Anakin Skywalker – lead the fight and are the film's main focus. Other familiar characters, such as Jedi Council heads Master Yoda and Master Mace Windu, make appearances but are rarely seen.

Aside from the weird opening, "The Clone Wars" sounds like a great popcorn version of "Star Wars." However, there is a third major Jedi player: a young female Padawan named Ahsoka Tano, who Anakin reluctantly teaches.

Ahsoka, a spunky, back-talking scrap, is the reason this movie is the hands-down worst "Star Wars" film yet. One example: She refers to R2-D2 as "Artooey" and Anakin as "Sky-Guy." That right there should have sent up a red flag for the producers. And the young Ahsoka Tano almost makes you forget about how annoying Jar Jar Binks was ... almost.

Overall, the story and dialogue are just as lax. They don't allow plot points or events to be left to the audience to discover what's happening. Instead, every detail is blatantly told to them, cheapening it like a Saturday morning cartoon with lightsabers.

Anakin is halfway between his over-emotional, lame-Jedi persona of "Episode



Don't be fooled: Yoda never uses his light saber.

PG

1 hour, 38 minutes

Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

II" and his awesome, youngling-slicing Jedi persona of "Episode III." He's given more than enough annoying whining and overconfidence for the entire film that "Snips" – as Anakin calls her – doesn't need to be present.

The animation style is a letdown as well. It seems they wanted the animation style of the "Clone Wars" television shorts that played for "Episode II," only with computer graphics. However, the movements are wooden and rarely flow naturally and the characters have little expression and look like glossy marionettes rather than CG players.

Few actors returned to voice their animated counterparts. Samuel L. Jackson is back as Windu and Christopher Lee returns as droid leader and Sith Lord Count Dooku, but only Anakin's voice is noticeably different.

Sadly this "Star Wars" chapter hails from a wrong time ago, and a galaxy far, far away from the genius of the original. ☆



Underwater Neighbors



Photos by 1LT Sarah Cleveland and MC2 Jayme Pastoric



Squirrel fish



Blue Tang



Loggerhead Seaturtle



Giant Tube Sponge



Leafy Stinging Coral



Elkhorn Coral



Stoplight Parrotfish



Searod

The sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever. —Jacques Yves Cousteau



BE SMART DO YOUR PART VOTE!

**Army Staff Sgt.
Jim Wagner**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Casting an absentee ballot for this year's presidential election has never been easier for Joint Task Force-Guantanamo Troopers, thanks in large part to official support for the program and technology improvements.

The biggest concern, however, is ensuring every Trooper gets the word and the time to fill out an application for an absentee ballot. With only 67 days until Election Day Nov. 4, the time remaining to apply for and receive an absentee ballot is dwindling.

Department of Defense-wide, officials are making a concerted push to ensure all military members overseas have a chance to vote by designating Aug. 31 - Sept. 7, 2008, as Armed Forces Voters Week.

1st Lt. Berta Morales, 525th Headquarters and Headquarters Company voting assistance officer, said the feedback she's received from Troopers who have heard about and are interested in applying for an absentee ballot has been very positive.

"Surprisingly, they get very excited

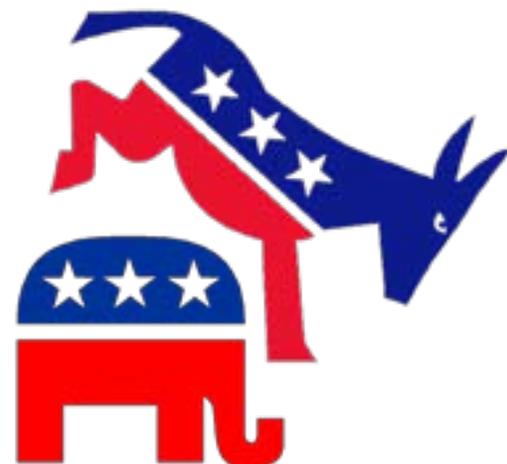
about the process," she said. "They're pretty pleased with how easy it is getting on the Web site and signed up."

Casting a vote for the next president of the United States is the right of every service member and the importance of casting a ballot can't be overstated. According to statistics provided by the organization FairVote.org, approximately 30 percent (nearly one-third) of all U.S. votes for president in 2004 came from absentee ballots.

The argument of "my one vote doesn't matter" was dispelled with the 2000 elections when President George W. Bush narrowly won the popular vote by 543 votes in Florida over Al Gore, giving Bush the Electoral College edge and, ultimately, the presidency.

The U.S. government is making it even easier to vote overseas this year than in years prior. Its Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site www.fvap.gov was significantly overhauled earlier this month to make it more user-friendly than in the past, allowing Troopers to access state-specific absentee ballot application requirements with a few simple mouse-clicks.

Troopers who have not applied for an absentee ballot and would like to contact their unit's voting assistance officer, visit the FVAP Web site or visit the Absentee Voting Web site on the JTF-Gitmo intranet. ☆





National Geographic

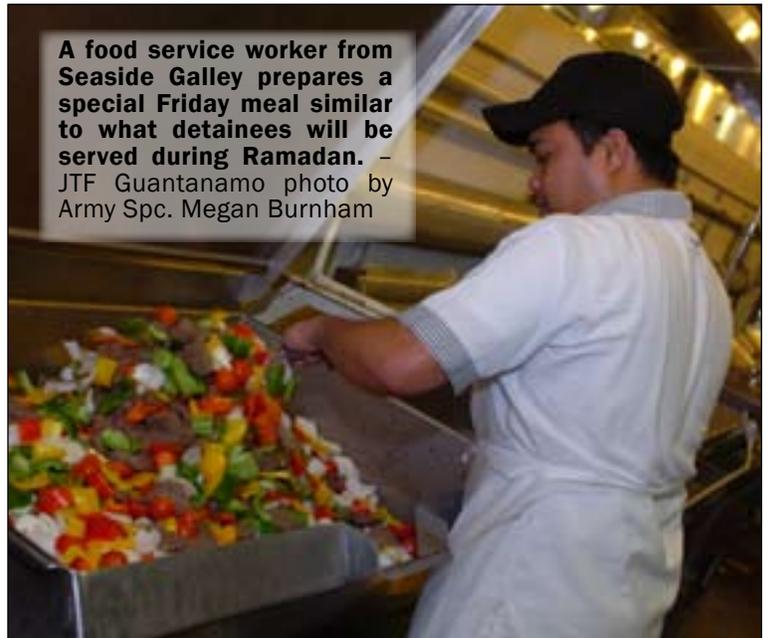
Jon Else, an independent documentary filmmaker working with the National Geographic Television film crew, collects stock film footage of Cuzco Wells Cemetery Aug. 25, 2008. The National Geographic crew was here for two weeks documenting and researching the workings of Joint Task Force Guantanamo for a film to be aired sometime next year. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Pfc. Eric Liesse

10 Things to remember about OPSEC

Operations Security is everyone's responsibility. Each member of the Joint Task Force needs to do their part in protecting information here at Guantanamo. Here are ten quick reminders of how you can do your part:

1. Do not display your Joint Task Force identification badge out in public.
2. Properly log off your computer and take your ID card whenever you are not at your desk.
3. Monitor the content of your conversations out in public. You never know who is listening.
4. Shred all government documents, both unclassified and classified.
5. Do not take personal photos of Gitmo coastlines.
6. When answering the phone, remind users the line you are speaking on is unsecure.
7. Do not share details of your mission over the phone when calling at work or calling home.
8. Keep all government documents covered when out in public.
9. Keep unclassified materials on unclassified computers and classified materials on classified computers.
10. Remember Operations Security is everyone's mission!

Joint Task Force prepares for Islamic holiday



A food service worker from Seaside Galley prepares a special Friday meal similar to what detainees will be served during Ramadan. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Spc. Megan Burnham

RAMADAN from 4

eating, drinking, chewing gum or using smokeless tobacco can be seen as provocative acts during Ramadan. Detainees may be more easily offended and may be irritable, tired or restless during the month. Guards watch detainees for signs of heat sickness during the day.

“We put the guards through a lot,” Zak said with pride. “We go out of our way not offend the detainees, to let them freely practice their religion. We plan for Ramadan three to four months out.”

Army Col. Bruce Vargo said he didn’t think Ramadan had a significant effect on the guard force.

“We work 24 hours a day anyway,” he said. “If anything, it’s a positive thing because as we rotate the guard forces, they learn something new. We teach them about Ramadan, about Islamic practices.”

The *iftar* follows the fourth prayer of the day for Muslims. A special prayer called *Taraweeh* usually follows the fifth prayer during Ramadan. The intent is to recite the entire Quran over the course of the nightly *Taraweeh*.

Zak said the JTF provides detainees with Ramadan cards to send home to family members, noting that the detainees take the cards. He added that detainees are aware of the extra efforts by JTF staff, but may not acknowledge it.

“All we care about is doing the right thing,” Zak said. “We will continue to do the right thing – we’re not going to wait for a thank-you.”

Vargo said the importance of the holiday to detainees makes it important to JTF.

“It would be unacceptable not to do everything we can, within security arrangements, to help them celebrate Ramadan,” he explained.

Zak noted that fasting is also practiced in Judaism and Christianity, adding that it is considered beneficial physically and spiritually. In Islam, fasting teaches patience and sympathy as well as thankfulness. Zak also said that Ramadan prepares Muslims for the coming year.

The observation celebrates the angel Gabriel’s revelation of the first verses of the Quran to the prophet Mohammed. That particular event, known as *Laylat al-Qadr* – the Night of Power or the Night of Destiny – will be observed Sept. 27 this year and generally marks the final 10 days of Ramadan. Many Muslims believe that Allah grants any request made during this time. According to Zak, detainee behavior may change slightly during the final 10 days.

“When holidays approach, that tends to change your behavior,” he explained. ☆

“All we care about is doing the right thing. We will continue to do the right thing.”

– Zak, cultural advisor

by Army Spc. Megan Burnham

Boots on the Ground

If you could rename Hurricane Gustav with another “G” name, what would it be?

Army Staff Sgt.
Crystal Slay



“Genius, it’s far enough away not to cause too much damage but close enough to cause an uproar on base.”

Navy Chief Petty Officer
Trent Ingram



“Gilligan, just Gilligan.”

Navy Petty Officer 2nd
Class John Armendariz



“Grouch, it’s like you made someone mad and now they want revenge.”

Navy Petty Officer 2nd
Class Samuel Nah



“Greedy, because with all the hard work we’ve done, it’ll cause much damage to the base and then we’ll have to rebuild.”

The choice to forgive

**Army Capt.
Eric Bey**

525th MP Battalion Chaplain

There once was a minister in a Romanian prison who was in very poor shape. His hair had fallen out in huge patches. Most of his teeth were gone – some from poor nutrition, but most from beatings. He was malnourished, and hobbled from broken bones that were never set. Open sores plagued his body but particularly the soft skin of his face.

His captors brought him in one morning after his usual beating and sat him at a table. Badly bruised and bleeding, he sat there as they asked him about being made in the image and likeness of his God. When he affirmed he was made in God's likeness, they gave him a mirror and watched his face as they proclaimed how ugly his God must be, for his face was absolutely disgusting. He hadn't seen himself for many years. As he sat there mesmerized at the site of his face, his captors began their assault.

"We have taken your health, your wealth, your family, your pride, your dignity, your reputation and everything you hold dear," they told the minister. "Your ugly God has forsaken and abandoned you, and we can kill you any time we choose. You are nothing. You have nothing. We have taken everything, so what do you have to say now?"

It didn't take him long at all to begin.

"In the Hebrew language, there is actually no word for the singular tense of

“

You have not
taken away
my ability
and choice to
forgive you,
and I do.

the noun 'face,'" he explained. "We only have the word 'faces.' So as I sit here and look at the ugliness that is my face, I am reminded that God has many faces. Here might be the ugly image of God, but when I think of Easter I see God's beauty. When I think of David and his mighty men or Samson, I see God's strength. When I look at Hosea I see God's jealousy, faithfulness and longsuffering."

He went on for quite some time.

"And you may proclaim that you have taken all that I hold dear and precious away," he continued, "but the fact is there is one thing that I have reserved that has given me strength all these many years."

His captors were furious and commanded that his cell be searched and demanded to know, with blows to his frail body, what they have failed to take from him. He looked at them through bloody eyes as he softly said to them, "You have not taken away my ability and choice to forgive you, and I do – I choose to forgive you!"

Seeing that they would never be able to break his spirit, they killed him shortly thereafter – but I tell you that for the rest of their days, they would be haunted by the inexplicable, unconditional love and forgiveness that they had received.

I just want to admonish, encourage and exhort those who are harboring unforgiveness. Chances are you haven't suffered like this man, but like him you still possess the ability and choice to set someone free. In the end, you will discover that the true captive was you. ☆

JTF CHAPEL SCHEDULED PROGRAMS

Catholic Mass

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

Wednesday: 11 a.m. Spanish Mass

Protestant Worship

Sunday: 9 a.m.

Spanish Protestant Worship

Sunday: Noon

Public Affairs Soldier achieves standing

■ *The new junior Trooper of the Quarter attributes his win to military bearing and confidence*



**Army Sgt.
Gretel Sharpee**

JTF Guantanamo Public Affairs

Every three months, Troopers can be found studying pages and pages of military facts from important military historical events to current news topics and countless rules and regulations. For this quarter it wasn't any different, except for who won the junior Trooper of the Quarter title- for the first time in two years it was not a Coast Guard Trooper, or a Military Police Trooper but a Public Affairs Trooper.

"Basically, six weeks ago, my first sergeant and my squad leader told me they wanted me to study and compete for Trooper of the Quarter," said Pfc. Eric Liesse, photojournalist for the 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. "They said they tried to think of someone who was always willing to volunteer and help out in our unit and from that they picked me."

Each quarter, Troopers from around the Joint Task Force compete for junior and senior Trooper of the Quarter by answering questions in front of a board. The board consists of six senior enlisted leaders from the JTF and across all branches of service.

"I was told that while it is important to answer the questions correctly, it is more important to have good military bearing and be confident in your answers," said Liesse, who has been in the Wisconsin National Guard 16 months.

Before entering the Army, Liesse completed one semester of college at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, studying film.

"I have always been a big movie geek-

film and music have been some of the only things I have really been passionate about," said Liesse.

But when asked why this film student wanted to join the Army, a different passion subtly surfaced.

"I thought about joining the military ever since I was a teenager, but when I started hearing on the news about Soldiers younger than me being injured in Iraq, it

really hit me that I was in a rut and needed to make a change," said Liesse.

When Liesse isn't studying for the next board, he can be found writing the movie reviews and other various articles for the JTF publication, *The Wire*.

"This board has given me more confidence in everything I do and I think that will help me in everything I do in my military career." ☆



Pfc. Eric Liesse selected this photo as one of his best from his deployment here to Guantanamo Bay. Five months into a 12-month deployment, Liesse writes for the weekly Joint Task Force publication, *The Wire*. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Pfc. Eric Liesse

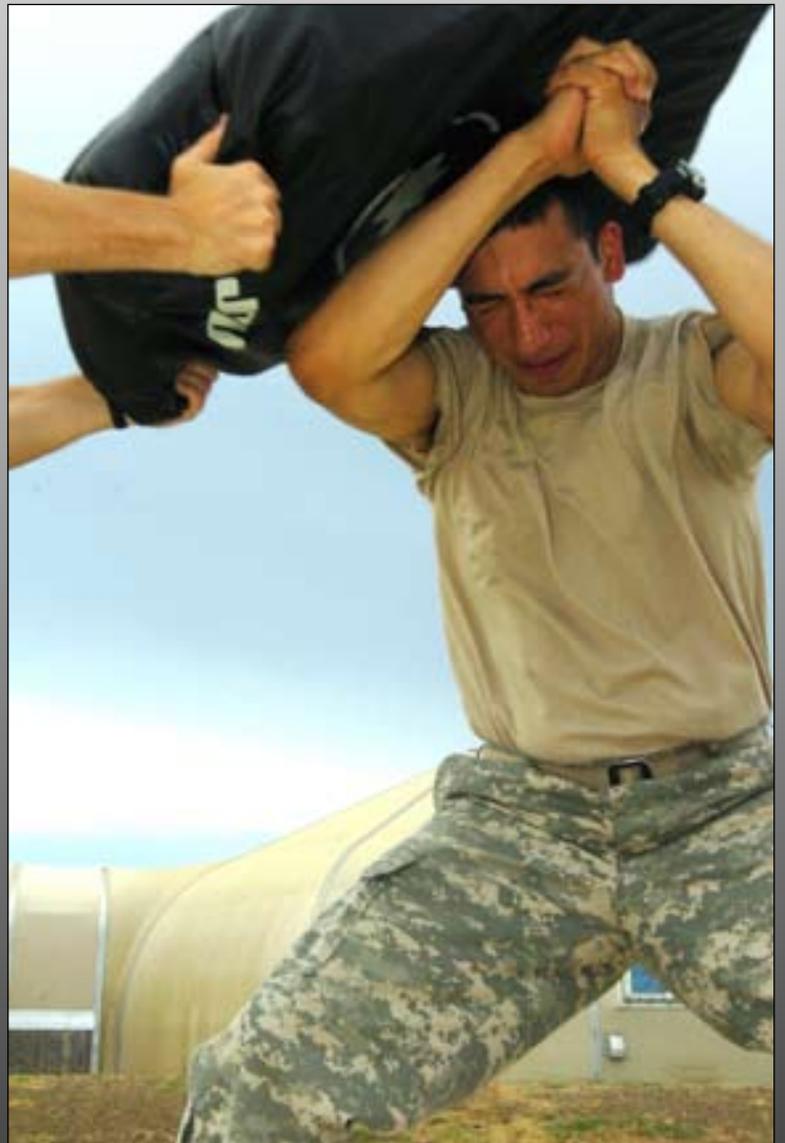
Around the JTF



Divers take a giant stride off the diver platform at Phillips Dive Park.
- JTF Guantanamo photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jayme Pastoric



The historical light house at night is lit by the night sky. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell



Army Spc. Carlos Garcia, holds his arms above his head for protection during his Oleoresin Capsicum Pepper spray training.
-JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Pfc. Carlynn M. Knaak



Red Legs faced off with the Dukes in the final game of the baseball season. - JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell