



the Wire

“HONOR BOUND TO DEFEND FREEDOM”

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Friday, February 27, 2004

Augmentees complete JTF GTMO picture

By SSG Patrick Cloward

Where do you go when you're in the Air Force, to be surrounded by Navy, and work with the Army every day?

As part of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, positions that can't be filled by active or reserve Army units because of their individual nature are slotted for augmentees.

Often, the specialization required can only be filled by personnel who happen to be in other branches of the military. Lucky for us, there are plenty of Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard troopers who are more than willing to do their duty to bring the fight to terrorism.

Though there are many different specializations, military members of all ranks and ages serve here in a variety of specializations.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Philip Miceli, originally based at the Naval Hospital at Twenty Nine Palms, Calif., works as the senior medical officer for the JTF. Like many augmentee personnel, he had never

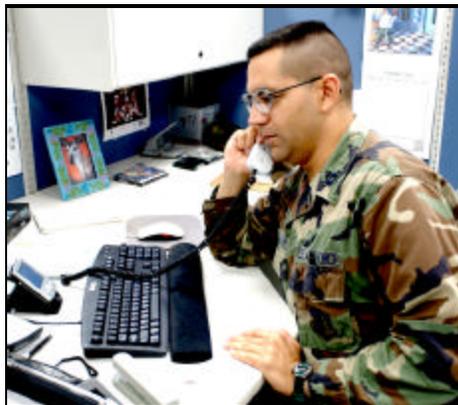


Photo by SSG Patrick Cloward

When it comes to working in the JTF, "There's definitely been some education between us," said CPT George Galloway of Langley AFB, Va., who serves as the officer in charge of future operations at J-6. "In mixing services, you have different expectations than what they might be used to. So we've learned a lot about each other."

worked outside of his Navy element.

"I've never actually been on deployment with other services," said Miceli who oversees medical care of the approximate 650 detainees at Camp Delta. "It's a lot better than what I expected. I like the coop-

eration I get from all sides. It's like a team here." Due to his satisfaction he volunteered for extra time here.

"I was assigned to be here six months; my command said I only needed to stay for three," said Miceli. "I called my command and told them that instead of staying just half of my official deployment, I would stay the whole six months."

Some troopers serve less noticeable positions, but are no less important to the JTF.

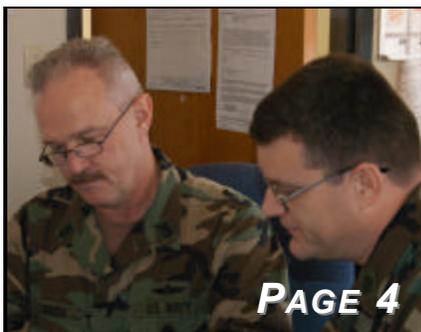
"I thought the job would be a lot more difficult," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Albertine Stewart from Robins AFB, Ga. "But you've got to love the tropical weather. Stewart, who works with the J-4 assisting with detainee meals, found the joint service environment something that took a little bit of adjustment. Of the Army personnel, she encounters she noticed only minor differences.

"Most are hard workers," Stewart said. "They do things a little harder than what I

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Trooper to Trooper

Key to victory: Ongoing training

The global war on terrorism has changed the way we live as a country and the way we fight as a military. It has challenged us to reinvent the way we do business. Every day, we at JTF-Guantanamo do our best to meet that challenge.

JTF troopers are making a difference in this war by gathering intelligence from enemy combatants, by providing security for Camp America and Camp Delta, and by ensuring the JTF has the necessary equipment, supplies, and personnel to keep operating. We must be at the top of our game every day. As JTF troopers, each of us has the responsibility to stay trained and ready.

Over the past month, several things have happened to make sure the JTF maintains its high level of readiness. We've graduated our first PLDC class, supplying current and future first-line leaders with additional tools to show their troopers what right looks like. We've sent several troopers through the 31E MOS conversion course, giving them additional knowledge needed to perform their jobs as corrections officers. We've participated in a live fire exercise that tested our capabilities, and ability to synchronize numerous operations. We are now applying the lessons we learned from that event as we prepare for our next exercise.

By conducting tough and realistic training, we continue to grow as a team. However, we can't stand still. We must continue to accept our responsibility to be "mission-ready." On an individual level, this means doing several things—conducting physical training, becoming proficient with assigned weapons, and improving job skills, whether that's working as a guard at Camp Delta, as an infantryman patrolling Radio Range, as a medic in the Detention Hospital, or as a mechanic in the motor pool. First-line lead-



MG Geoffrey D. Miller
Commander
JTF Guantanamo

ers must continue to emphasize training on those tasks that are essential to completion of the mission at the small-unit level. And we must continue to hone our collective skills at live-fire training and in our periodic JTF live-fire exercises. Our success as a JTF depends greatly on the success we have at the team, squad, and platoon levels. When we win our battles at this small unit level, the JTF wins – it's that simple.

Training is all about being ready. We must continue to look for opportunities to make us one step faster than our enemies. I challenge every leader at every level to push the envelope and find new ways to keep our troopers trained and ready. I could not be more proud of our accomplishments over the past few weeks and months. But keep in mind that nothing we have accomplished has been done by one person alone. It has been accomplished by extraordinary individual efforts within the framework of our team of teams. I am proud of the work you do, and proud to be a part of this great organization.

Stay focused on your mission; celebrate the small victories and the daily successes. Know that you are making a difference every day.

Honor bound!

JTF Guantanamo OPSEC message of the week

Be on the lookout for OPSEC indicators. Each small glimpse of changes in our routine, paints a picture of our intent for the adversary.



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Augmentees from page 1

think they need, but otherwise it's been a lot better here than I expected. If I was reassigned, I would come back here if I had to."

"I just wanted some adventure and it seemed like a pretty interesting thing to do," said Navy Seaman Matthew Wynn from Camp Pendleton, CA, who works as a pharmacy technician for the JTF. "So I volunteered for it." His first deployment, Wynn was surprised by what Guantanamo Bay was actually like, compared to what he imagined.

"It's not as bad as they say. I didn't know what services were going to be here, but I've enjoyed getting to talk to other people and services," Wynn said. "There's

some variety, rather than being around the same people all the time."

Like Wynn, Air Force Senior Airman Ronald McCall from Robins AFB, Ga., who works in J-4 with the detainee meals service, was surprised by the improved living conditions in a traditionally Army setting.

"I thought it was going to be eating MREs and sleeping in tents and stuff," said McCall. "It could be a whole lot worse than this." This being his first deployment in a joint military setting, McCall noticed something profound.

"When I first got here [members of the J-4] used to tease each other about which service was the toughest. Who's hardest; who's softest?"

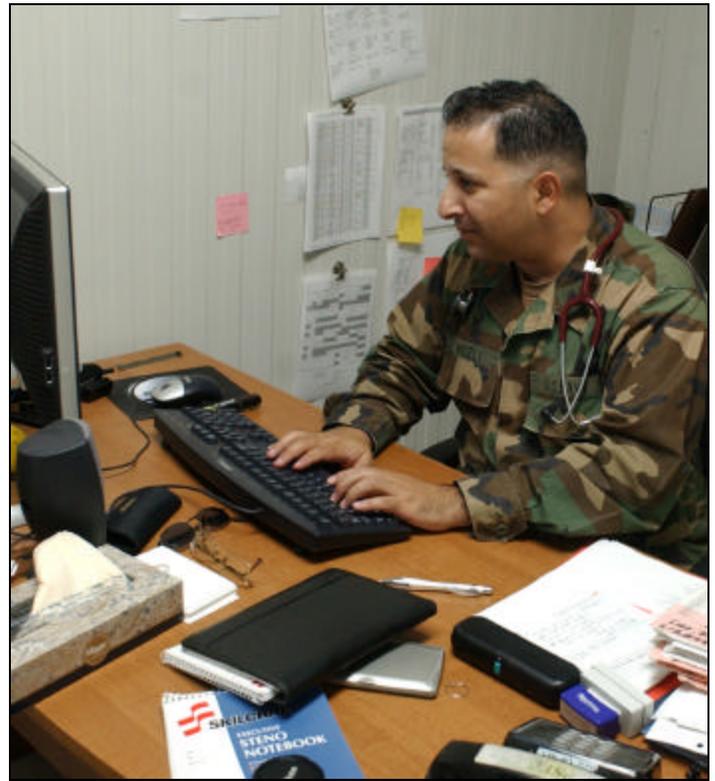


Photo by SSG Patrick Cloward

Lt. Cmdr Philip Miceli works as an augmentee to JTF Guantanamo serving as senior medical officer for the medical facility at Camp Delta.



Photo by SSG Patrick Cloward

CPT Sean Wilson from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina serves in the JTF Guantanamo interrogation control element.

said McCall. "Eventually, we got over the Army-Air Force thing. Now I realize we're all the same. We're all working for the same thing here. But of course," he said smiling. "Everybody knows the Air Force is still number one."

Coming from another branch that takes pride in its unique nature, one officer turned his eyes on Guantanamo Bay for something other than what he would normally be sent here for.

"I have a son that lives in New York, so 9/11 was a big impetus because I knew the mission related to me," said Marine Corps Capt. Sean Wilson from Camp Lejeune, N.C. and part of the interrogation control element of the JTF. "I wanted to be contributing to the war on terror as much as I could." So he volunteered for a position with the JTF, unlike his Marine counterparts who work perimeter security on the base fence line. Wilson found the job to

be much more than he expected.

"I knew I was going to contribute," he said. "But I didn't realize that I was participating where the rubber meets the road in the JTF." Wilson said that besides the great job satisfaction, he has learned a great deal from working with the other services, after overcoming some of the differences.

"Biggest thing was differences we have in customs, courtesies and just nature," said Wilson. "So being in the JTF has made me more accepting of the other services." Wilson added how he's learned intra-professional skills that have increased since he's been here. It's also increased his respect for those who didn't necessarily volunteer for this mission. "I have a newfound appreciation for the diversity the reservists bring to the fight," he said. "This by far is the best duty station I've ever been assigned to."

O'Brien retires after 30-year career

By SGT Jolene Staker

"You have this day experienced what comes to all of us who serve on active duty in our Navy," said Master Chief David Peck, Command Master Chief of the Naval Hospital. "I say 'our Navy' because your departure from the active duty in no way terminates your relationship, regard, or obligation to the United States Navy and your fellow Chief Petty Officers."

These words were spoken to Master Chief James O'Brien, NCOIC of Medical Plans of the JTF Joint Medical Group, at his retirement ceremony Friday.

"...We still have to stop all engines, lay about smartly and drop anchor to pay homage to one of our shipmates going ashore," said Chief Petty Officer Gina Siefert, head of education and training at the Naval Hospital. "To honor the years served, the guidance, the leadership, the friendship and the expertise that this shipmate has freely given over these 30 years."

O'Brien had a career worthy of honor. He joined the Navy as a compromise between his two desires. Since his father, uncles and grandfather all served in the Marine Corps, he had wanted to be a Marine, but he also wanted to serve in the medical field. The Navy allowed him to be in the medical field and still work with the Marine Corps.

O'Brien shared his favorite scripture passage in Psalms, "In all things, acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

What a path it has been for O'Brien. His biography contains far too many assignments and accomplishments to mention them all, but the highlights include deploying to the Per-

sian Gulf during operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm as the senior special operations technician.

O'Brien was also assigned to the Force Reconnaissance Group in Southwest Asia. He was the Command Master Chief for both the Naval Support Facility, Diego Garcia, Indian Ocean Territory and the Naval Hospital in Cherry Point, N.C.

O'Brien ended his career with a Joint Task Force fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

"I'm very proud and very honored to have had this opportunity to end my career in the service of my country by way of a joint command," said O'Brien. "I see joint commands like this, as the future of military operations."

O'Brien's most memorable assignment was another joint operation. In 1989, he served with the 3rd Infantry Regiment of the French Foreign Legion for six months in French Guyana, South America. He was attached to their jungle company to learn Brazilian jungle operations but ended up teaching them Marine Corps jungle operations instead.

"We built good camaraderie," said O'Brien. "We took good care of them, and they took good care of us."

O'Brien earned the following devices during his career: Air Warfare, Fleet Marine Force, Navy Scuba Diver, Navy/Marine Corps Parachute, Norwegian Parachutist and French Foreign Legion Jungle Commando. His personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, (5) Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medals, (3) Navy/Marine Corps Achievement medals and the Combat Action ribbon.

See O'Brien on next page



Photo by SGT Jolene Staker

Petty Officer 3rd Class Danny Doudy hands a flag to Master Chief O'Brien after the "flag folding ceremony" where the flag was folded 12 times and ends up looking like a cocked hat in memory of General George Washington and Captain John Paul Jones.



Photo by SGT Jolene Staker

MG Geoffrey Miller presents Master Chief O'Brien the Fleet Reserve Certificate



Photo by SGT Jolene Staker

Master Chief O'Brien reports to MG Geoffrey Miller and requests permission to go ashore for the last time.

O'Brien from previous page

O'Brien has applications in to corrections facilities. He is pursuing a master's degree in criminal justice administration. O'Brien said that the regimented environment of the correction facility would help him use what he has learned in the military.

"Master Chief O'Brien, you stand relieved," said Siefert. "We have the watch."

"As I leave the service of my country, my thoughts and prayers are on those men and women who are currently serving in harms way around the globe," said O'Brien. "They are the vanguard of our future."

O'Brien left those at his retirement with this advice: "We as a nation need to stop saying 'God Bless America' and start saying, 'Thank you God for blessing America and we ask you for your continued guidance and grace for this nation.' The success of this nation is truly a gift from God. It was forged on the backs of heroes who came before us and will continue on the backs of those heroes in the future, but success cannot be accomplished without His continued grace and blessings."

O'Brien spoke of former President Theodore Roosevelt, saying that Roosevelt was a Medal of Honor recipient and has served the nation in many different roles, a man who lived the core values we hold dear in the military and a father who experienced

the personal loss of a son killed in combat. Quoting Roosevelt, O'Brien said:

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."



Photo by SGT Jolene Staker

CSM George Nieves watched the Army-Navy game at Club Survivor with Master Chief O'Brien.



Photo by SGT Jolene Staker

Master Chief O'Brien (left) current NCOIC of Medical Plans trains Chief Douglas Cave in the position to prepare for his departure from Guantanamo.

Guantanamo community wishes O'Brien well

Thank you for your many years of dedicated service. It has been a pleasure to work with you. Fair winds and following seas.

CDR J. W. Timby

Thanks for 30 years of great service to our country and for all that you have done. It has been great working with you the last few months. I wish you the very best.

Amanda

Thanks for your 30 years of dedicated service to this great

Nation of ours. Your leadership and mentoring has touched us all.

COL (ret) Vaughn Caudill

I wish you godspeed on your retirement and new life. I wish you all the best God has to offer for you and your family and the rest of your journey. I thank you from the bottom of my heart as a father, son, peer, military member and United States citizen for your 30 years. Those of us who learned from you will never forget.

Be proud of yourself, you deserve it.

Capt. Keith Waid

From a grateful nation to an "old" salt, an "old" squid and a "new" friend from an "old" doggie. Enjoy your retirement!

CSM Steve Short

Best wishes for a long and enjoyable retirement. It's been a pleasure serving with you.

LTC Lawrence Martin

Congratulations and Thank You Master Chief O'Brien on

behalf of a Greatful Nation. The Price Of Freedom!

CPT Dave Cserep

Thank you for your 30 years of sacrifice, dedication and service to this country. I enjoy working with you here in GTMO, Cuba. I am also very fortunate to be a friend of yours. Happy Retirement! Good luck and best wishes!

CPT Kim Chow

Fair Winds and Following Seas, Chief!

2Lt Caruana

JTF gives green troops a chance to go gold

By SrA. Thomas J. Doscher

The JTF is looking for the next generation of junior officers, and they could be looking for you.

A direct commissions board for JTF applicants will meet March 22.

The intent of the direct commissioning program is to offer an alternate commissioning source to exceptionally qualified individuals and is not intended to replace officer candidate school or other commissioning programs. Individuals do not request direct appointments; they must be nominated and selected for consideration by their chain of



command.

As part of the JTF's continuing effort to ensure the success and potential for the training and advancement of each trooper while on deployment status, the JTF is opening this opportunity to a select group of outstanding enlisted soldiers.

Open to Reservist and National Guardsmen, candidates passing the direct appointments board will be commissioned as second lieutenants after they return to their home station.

A nominee is expected to have outstanding qualifications that clearly exceed a majority of the minimum requirements, which include:

- A Reservist candidate must not be older than 32 years old upon commissioning. The age requirement for a Guardsman is a minimum of 22 and a maximum of 30. In some instances, the requirement may be waived.
- Candidates must have a secret security clearance.
- Guard candidates must have a baccalaureate degree. Reserve candidates may have a degree or an SAT score greater than

850 or an ACT score greater than 18 within the last three years.

- Candidates must have an ASVAB GT score of 110 within the last two years.
- Candidates must pass a pre-commissioning physical.
- Candidates must pass an Army physical fitness test within six months of the board. Guardsmen must accumulate at least 70 points in each event.
- Candidates must remain within the Army's height-weight standards.
- Candidates must have letters of recommendation from their chain of command, through the battalion level.
- Candidates must go before a board.

There are also financial implications for troopers getting a commission. While troopers will still be eligible for the Montgomery G.I. Bill and the Army tuition assistance program, they lose their MOS bonus and the student loan repayment.

Once commissioned, a new officer will be required to complete the officer basic course within two years to qualify for promotion to first lieutenant.

Being thorough

SPC John DiRaimo (left) conducts a hands-on test of strip search procedures during last week's 31E Corrections military police class.



Photo by SPC Katherine L. Collins



Photo by SPC Katherine L. Collins

New promotions

SSG Jaydee Hendrickson of J-1 (left) stands at attention during his promotion this week. Hendrickson was one of a number of enlisted soldiers promoted during their time in JTF Guantanamo.

God's Witnesses

By CH (LTC) Stephen Feehan

When I was a police officer many years ago, I was often called upon to testify in court. I learned there are basically two types of witnesses in court- professional witnesses, who testify facts, and expert witnesses, who offer their expert opinion in their area of expertise. As a police officer, I was a professional witness not an expert witness; however, as a Christian and a chaplain, I now find myself serving as both types of witnesses.

As a fact witness in a court trial it is your responsibility to tell the truth of what you have seen, heard or otherwise experienced. One of the first things you must understand is that you cannot testify to something you have not personally experienced in some way. You need to witness the experience in order to testify of it in court.

Recently during Soul Survivor, JTF troopers shared testimonies of their personal relationship with Christ. It was inspiring to hear the ways in which these witnesses had experienced the working of God in their lives. Friday at Master Chief James O'Brien's retirement ceremony, I was also blessed to hear him give God the glory for what God has done in the O'Brien family over the years. Then Sunday, I gave my own testimony of God's work in my life. These troopers, O'Brien and I were all serving as witnesses to the facts of God's involvement in our lives.

Unlike a professional witness, an expert witness is qualified through training, education and experience to serve as an



Photo by SPC Katherine L. Collins
CH (LTC) Stephen Feehan, JTF chaplain, delivers his personal testimony Sunday at JTF's 9 a.m. Protestant worship service at Trooper's Chapel.

"What a fulfilling experience it is to serve as two types of witnesses for God."

– CH Stephen Feehan

expert in his or her field. As a JTF chaplain, it is often my great joy to talk to troopers about things happening in their lives, and maybe point out to them the hand of God in their circumstances. I sometimes feel I am serving in the role of an expert witness in the area of recognizing God at work. What a fulfilling experience it is to serve as both types of witnesses for God.

God is always working and moving in our lives. Some would say that stuff just happens, it's fate or luck (good or bad). I believe that God changes circumstances and

people. It is not blind fate or just dumb luck. God is working all things together for the good of each of His children, if we love Him and are called according to His purposes. The blessing lays in recognizing God's working in your own personal life and acknowledging Him and giving Him the thanks and glory for all He is doing.

Heavenly Bits & Pieces

By CH (MAJ) Daniel Odean

The surest ways to happiness are steps to Chapel

We work hard at having a good time, trying to be happy in life.

But a life without God is no real life at all.

It's time to consider God and your soul. Get to church and talk to God.

Get around people who will support you spiritually!

Psalm 122:1 - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'"

Calling all musicians

Anyone who would like to sing or play an instrument in JTF's praise band, "God's Anointing," contact SGT Heather Sittler at 3248/3646/3202 or SittlerHM@JTFGT-MO.southcom.mil.

1 Corinthians 13:1

Sports highlights

Mid-majors ready for 'Dance'

Compiled by SPC Rick Fahr

Avid college basketball fans know that this time of year is when teams from the so-called mid-major conferences make their bids to be among the teams in the "Big Dance," the NCAA tournament. This year, there are a number of teams that could grab at-large bids that have usually gone to the power conferences. Among them:

Gonzaga. At 22-2 this perennial NCAA tourney troublemaker will be heading back to March Madness and could have a high seed.

Southern Illinois. Having won 21 of 23 games, the Salukis will be hard to shut out.

Utah State. For the first time in the school's history, USU (21-2) broke into the national polls earlier in the season.

Some of the mid-majors, though, will be left on the outside looking in. **Kent State, Western Michigan** and **Troy**

State are among the teams with great records that might not make the final NCAA cut.

While some programs sweat out at-large bid choices, others are jockeying for top-seeded positions. When the NCAA brackets come out, two of the top four seeds will likely be **Stanford** and **St. Joseph's**, the only remaining undefeated teams.

Which teams will claim the remaining top seeds? **Duke**, which sat atop the national polls for half the season, would be a good bet, but after those three teams, the scenarios become less clear. The fourth No. 1 seed could go to **Kentucky** or **Mississippi State, Wisconsin** or **Gonzaga**.

The tournament begins March 18.

This baseball offseason has been one of the more memorable in recent years.

Alex Rodriguez goes to the **New York Yankees**, and two

Yankees' pitchers – Andy Pettitte and **Roger Clemens** – end up in **Houston**. **Greg Maddux** goes back to the **Chicago Cubs**, and **Curt Shilling** signs with the **Boston Red Sox**.

Exhibition games begin March 3.

After beating **New Orleans** on Sunday, the **New Jersey Nets** had posted 13 wins in a row, boosting their Atlantic Division lead to 9 ½ games over the **New York Knicks**.

In the Central Division, **Indiana** led **Detroit** by eight games. The Midwest Division was the closest in the league, with the **Minnesota Timberwolves** leading the **San Antonio Spurs** by three games, and the **Dallas Mavericks** close behind. The **Sacramento Kings** led the **Los Angeles Lakers** by five games in the Pacific Division.

Sports Highlights compiled from www.espn.com.

FAHR GAME

Tourney or Series or bowls?

By SPC Rick Fahr

Want to start an argument among sports fans?

Just ask them to name the best sporting event of the year.

This close to March, the NCAA basketball tournament will strike many as the be all-end all. That's OK. I can't think of many better sports days each year than the first Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the tournament. That's excitement.

Hacker that I am, though, I look to an early weekend in April for my sports zenith. The Masters at Augusta National. Tough to beat, except perhaps on Fathers' Day weekend when someone wins the U.S. Open.

Of course, we just finished the Super Bowl, and that's always a national event, drawing in even non-fans for the game and the commercials.

On the college gridiron, the postseason bowls create a lot of excitement, eclipsed, perhaps, only by the argument over who is the real national champion.

Then there's the World Series, although the national pastime seems to maybe be past its time. Still, the drama of a best-of-seven series for the crown ranks pretty high. Speaking of baseball, the Little League World Series is a highlight, too. Watching those kids swing for the fences reminds us old codgers why we started playing in the first place.

Regardless of which event is your favorite, reminders on the calendar say it's a great time to be a sports fan.

Muscle toning requires weights, cardio work

By SGT Talal Elkhatib
Master Fitness Trainer

Losing fat and toning muscle are what a lot of people want. Guantanamo Bay is the perfect place for that. You have to know that toning is a separate phase of exercise. Bodybuilders go through two different phases of exercise, which are building, then toning.

Doing both phases in one routine is not recommended. The reasons why Guantanamo is a good place to tone are an active lifestyle that burns calories and there aren't many things to do besides exercise.

The basics of toning are doing high numbers of repetitions with low weight and cardio vascular exercise. Exercise your entire body, but do different muscle groups on separate days to get the variety of exercise. Start with a good warm up and stretch, and then proceed with your muscular exercise. You should feel soreness with a toning workout. Try to put together a program where you exercise primary and secondary muscle groups that work together. For example,

when you bench press you work your triceps. When you do a back workout, the secondary muscles worked are your biceps. I recommend that you split your leg workout to quadriceps and hamstrings. That way you can do four or five sets of certain exercises like the leg extension and the leg curl. Abdominal, oblique and hip flexors can be exercised every day. It is recommended that you give them time to recover, especially when using weight.

Cardiovascular training is a must. Try to do your cardio on a different time than your muscular exercise. That way you give your muscles a chance to build and recover. Mix up your cardio by doing sprints, speed runs, long distance runs, interval training and swimming. When toning, your cardio should be from 45 minutes to an hour. If you can, do 30 minutes in the morning and 30 in the afternoon so you can take metabolism and heart rate up and down. Anything under 20 minutes is not cardio but just a warm up. You should do cardio five days a week plus your weight training and a good diet. The kickboxing and spinning classes provided by the MWR are excellent for toning.

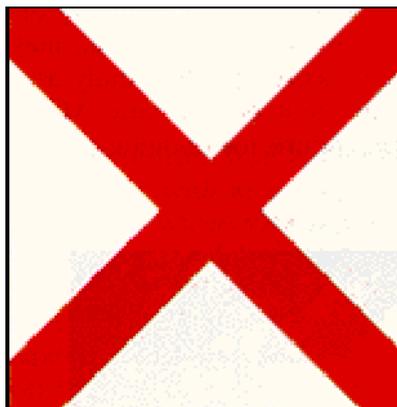
Alabama TAG pays visit to GTMO

*Deployments
subject of talk
with 217th MPs*

Photos by SPC Larry Lynch

At right is the Alabama state flag, the only state flag square in shape.

In 1985, the Alabama Legislature authorized the "crimson cross of St. Andrew on a field of white."



Alabama National Guard Adjutant General Mark Bowen (left) is presented with an honorary Joint Task Force Guantanamo officer's mug from 217th Military Police Co. Commander CPT Dave Love during his visit to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.



CSM Don Wood (center), Alabama National Guard command sergeant major, speaks with 1SG Ronald Claunch (left) and SGT Billy Whorf, 217th Military Police Company, during his visit to Guantanamo Bay.



MG Mark Bowen addresses members of the 217th Military Police Company during a troop call in the Seaside Galley Feb. 20. Bowen talked about deployment issues facing the National Guard.

B Co., 1-181st performs battle drills



By SGT Jolene Staker

B Co, of the 1-181st Infantry Regiment performed battle drills Thursday at Grenadillo Range and rucked 12 miles that night. Drills included setting up an ambush, reacting to contact and knocking out a bunker.

"This was a blank-fire exercise in preparation for a live-fire exercise," said 2LT Thomas Clark, 1st platoon leader of B Co., 1-181st. "It's crucial for the squad leaders to get out and practice with the team leaders."

"There are four squads in our infantry platoons and each must be able to function individually and as a group in order to accomplish whatever mission we may receive," said SFC Scott Sheridan, 1st platoon sergeant.

"It's a valuable opportunity for us to train together with our squads and to build confidence in our squad leaders and their abilities to lead their two fire teams



Photos by SGT Jolene Staker

SPC Matthew Tsihlis (above) of B Co., 1-181st lays in wait during the ambush battle drill. SPC Matt Varney (right) also of B Co., 1-181st passes along the signal to halt. SSG Fred Bonner (below) stands over SPC Jesse Chambers during the drill giving instructions. 1LT J.T. Kaminsky (left), 2nd platoon leader, participates in the 12-mile ruck march Thursday evening.



through four different infantry tasks," said SGT Jamie Bourgault of B Co., 1-181st.

Completing a 12-mile ruck march is one of the goals that the company commander has for B Co. and also one of four



prerequisites that must be met for soldiers to be able to test for the Expert Infantry Badge (EIB). The standard for the ruck march is 12 miles in three hours. Twenty-three soldiers met the standard Thursday night.

The prerequisites to test for the EIB are scoring expert on the range with the M-16, which takes a score of 38 or higher on paper targets, passing a day and night navigational course and scoring a 70 percent or higher in each PT event. Less than 10 percent of unit members usually earn this badge.

The 273rd contributes to Black History Appreciation

By SGT Jolene Staker

Black History Month is an opportunity to appreciate the heritage of African Americans and acknowledge the contribution they have made to each branch of the military throughout history.

The 273rd Military Police Company has played an important role in that history.

"Our ancestors were Buffalo Soldiers," said SFC William Wells, training and physical security NCO of the 273rd MP Co. "We take pride in being an African-American unit."

African American members comprise about 98 percent of the 273rd MP Co.

While being primarily African American may be the first thing people notice when the unit arrives in a new duty location, they soon stand out for other reasons.

Some people do look at us surprised, because we are a primarily black unit," said SSG Melvin Cammon, Jr. of the 273rd MP Co. "But we perform our job well and get the job done."

It hasn't been easy for the unit to deal with the attention and

negative misconceptions. "It's something we deal with everywhere we go," said Cammon. "It is something we're able to overcome because we're used to it."

Wells joined the Marine Corps in 1973. "It was hard in the 70s being an African American in the military," he said. "There was still some prejudice and harassment, but I was determined I was going to stick it out."

Wells did stick it out for four years and then he took a 10-year break in service before joining the Army National Guard.

"When I joined the National Guard I noticed the military had changed as far as opportunities for African Americans," said Wells. "There were higher ranking African Americans and more African American officers."

SSG Joseph Owens, 2nd squad leader of the 2nd platoon of the 273rd MP Co., joined the unit in 1971 – then it was known as B Company of the 163rd Military Police Battalion.

Owens had been active army during Vietnam.

"During the Vietnam crisis, I had guys who came from other states who were real prejudiced," said Owens. "I just turned the

other cheek and did my job."

The 273rd MP Co. has not always been predominantly African American.

"When my uncle was in the unit in the 60s it was predominantly white," said MSG Michael Davis of the 273rd MP Co.

By the time Owens joined it was about half white and half African American.

"It was in the late 70s that the unit became predominantly African American," said Owens.

While the unit members are proud of their heritage, they are equally proud of being able to get along with everyone.

"Regardless of who joins up with us, we treat them like part of the family," said Owens.

SPC Randy Radant, of C. Battery, 1-119th Field Artillery Battalion, is one of the troopers augmenting the 273rd MP Co.

"It is really easy to work with the 273rd MPs, because there is not a line between black and white," said Radant. "I've learned more how to receive and give respect as well as how to talk to each other and how to address issues."

SPC George Washington of the 273rd MP Co. said, "We as soldiers – National Guard,

Reserve and Active – need to realize that we are all soldiers. This white, black, blue and green screen needs to disappear."

"I can't control anyone else," said Washington. "But I can control myself, and I'm going to get along with everybody."

SGT Carolyn Bennett of the 273rd MP Co. focuses on the benefits of being in the military.

"I have really enjoyed the traveling we do," said Bennett. "We've been all over – Honduras, Saudi Arabia, Panama, Turkey, Alaska and many other places."

Everywhere the 273rd MP Co. traveled they have met the same challenges, but they have overcome it the same way – by hard work.

"The complexion and make-up of our unit are not normal," said MSG Roland Kinley, operations sergeant of the 273rd MP Co. "It just comes down to job performance in the end – then our complexion doesn't matter."

"Once they see how we perform our mission and how proficient we do things they perceive us differently," said SGT Michael McCullough. "We tend to shine a lot."



Photo by SGT Jolene Staker

Photo on left:

SSG Melvin Cammon, Jr. (left) of the 273rd MP Co. takes a break from work in the wire due to a broken shoulder and helps SGT Carolyn Bennett, Admin NCO of the 273rd MP Co. in the company headquarters.

Photo on right:

SGT Michael McCullough of the 273rd MP Co. puts tape over his name tag in preparation for his shift in the wire on his 42nd birthday.



Photo by SGT Jolene Staker

15 Minutes of Fame...

With SGT Robert Williams, 273rd MP Co.

By SPC Katherine L. Collins

SGT Robert Williams joined the District of Columbia's National Guard as a way to fulfill his calling and use his talents. He applies his experiences of recently losing close family and of working with at-risk male youth in D.C. to be a successful NCO. Williams views his JTF Guantanamo service as a fulfilling opportunity to further give of himself and to gain experience and knowledge to help him better serve in his community.

Q: What inspired you to join the military?

A: Growing up in Washington D.C., I recognized I was doing the same old things in the everyday run of the mill. I remember saying to a friend that I wanted to do something different. She told me I could join the military. So I went and took the test and joined the National Guard as a [military policeman]. I joined in 1980. Then I took a break in service in 1985. I rejoined in 1990 and have served ever since. I plan to make a reserve career of it.

Q: Why did you choose to serve as a military policeman?

A: I pretty much felt it was my calling. I had wanted to work in law enforcement or in dealing with substance abuse. I saw I could do this as an MP, and that the training would prepare me to serve in such a field as a civilian too.

Q: Where have you deployed?

A: In 1996 I deployed to Germany, where I served for 10 months. Then I served with my unit at the Pentagon. Now I'm here. I've been on active duty since 9/11.

Q: What do you recall as your best military experience?

A: My best military experience was in Germany. It was my first time of serving actively, so it was exciting to finally put to use all the skills I had been acquiring through my years of service. Although I served in a garrison environment, I felt I was serving in my full capacity.

Q: How has your military service impacted and molded you as a service



Photo by SPC Katherine L. Collins

SGT Robert Williams, of the 273rd Military Police Company, conducts hands-on testing during last week's 31E military police corrections course.

member and a person?

A: It made me recognize my calling. I use the word "calling" because a calling is something you do for the sake of doing it, not for the money or anything of that sort. Here I can be like a big brother as an NCO. It assures me I want to continue working with at-risk juvenile males back in the city.

Q: How have you followed your calling in your community?

A: I was working with at-risk males, and at one point I wanted to open up a house for them. Due to other circumstances in my life, it was not in God's plan for it to happen then. Perhaps I will open a home in the future.

Q: How has your family helped you succeed in your military service?

A: I don't have much family now. I just recently lost my father, grandmother and my only sister. I consider the military my family now, and I've gained a lot of strength from them. The experiences I've had in regards to my own family and the ways they've shaped me have helped me immensely in my career. Losing my family has taught me how important family and other relationships are. It's helped me be more of an encourager here,

caring about people. I know what it's like to suddenly have your support system taken from you. So I understand what it's like for deployed soldiers who are now away from their families. I let them know that I'm here if they need anything or just someone to talk to. It's also helped make me be a better NCO. We may think our soldiers are acclimating okay, but I know that how well we appear we are doing isn't always a true representation. [Losing family] has also made enduring tough situations easier for me. Losing close family within such a short time is a hard experience. Again, too, it's helped me see what's important in life. The struggles I experience on this deployment don't compare much to the experience of losing my family.

Q: In what ways have your friends supported you while here?

A: When I first got here, everyone thought I was the one getting all the mail. My friends do keep in contact a lot. I have two grown children too, and we often keep in touch. I have a great support system back home.

Q: What do you find most rewarding about this mission?

A: How it's forcing me to slow down to where I'm doing things here I'd never imagine doing at home. For example, since the city life is three times as fast as here, at home I'd never consider sitting to read a book. I find myself reading here though.

Q: How do you think this mission will impact you as you leave Guantanamo and strengthen you to better succeed as a soldier and person?

A: Just as I brought my experience of working with male adolescents in the city to my service in Guantanamo, I will bring back any knowledge I've gained from being an NCO and MP here to working with at-risk males back home.

Q: Looking back on your overall military experience, what makes you most proud to serve?

A: Just knowing that I'm protecting freedom. That's why I joined. I felt obligated, knowing someone had to do it.