



Future leaders show promise

West Point Cadets Michael Niemiec, John Oswald, William Yankauskas, Carson Williams and Chad Plenge spent two weeks job-shadowing platoon leaders with the 193rd Military Police Company at JTF Guantanamo. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

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For five West Point Cadets, a trip to Joint Task Force Guantanamo has been an educational and eye-opening experience as they jump into the role of platoon leader, working with the Troopers who serve at the most talked-about detention center in the world.

“The cadets are assigned to individual lieutenants and get to [job]-shadow them during their time here,” said Army 2nd Lt. Stephanie Wormwood, Camp 5 assistant officer-in-charge. “They get to see the Army in action and they [experience] the cohesion that comes with being on a real-world mission.”

The program is intended to expose cadets to the job of platoon leader, and show them what the position is like in an active duty unit.

“It’s a great program,” said Army Capt. Pedro Vazquez, company commander of the 193rd Military Police Company. “[The Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Alexander Conyers, and I] give the cadets an officer evaluation report when they leave here. Basically, it’s an assessment of their leadership potential. The evaluation helps them with their [duty] assignment because it can help them get the branch they desire.”

While the cadets are here, they are considered to be in platoon leader positions,

dealing with all facets of leadership like Soldier counseling, evaluation writing, mentoring junior Soldiers, performing inventories as well as other key tasks performed by a platoon leader.

“The cadets work the entire shift with the platoon leader,” Vazquez said. “It’s good for the cadet, and for the platoon leader because it shows them how far they’ve come from when they were cadets.”

Cadet Chad Plenge, the cadet-in-charge, began planning and coordinating the visit for the team long before their arrival. He worked with West Point leadership and 193rd MP Co. leadership to plan the tour, addressing transportation, lodging, meals and many other details that are important to a seamless mission.

“They really tried to show us the bigger picture down here,” said Cadet Michael Niemiec. “They’ve taken us to the different camps to show us how each service contributes. I’ve never seen so many military branches and civilian agencies working together on a project before so it’s been really interesting.”

The cadets have been busy since they first arrived.

“At West Point, we learn that the main point for an officer is leading Soldiers and providing everything they need,” said Cadet John Oswald. “Down here, with such close interaction between the officers and the [enlisted] Soldiers, it’s a really neat experience to see day-to-day [operations]

in the camps. You’re working shoulder-to-shoulder with other Soldiers and really get a feel for what they need on a daily basis.”

“I had the opportunity at the beginning of this training to help prepare the meals for some of the detainees,” said Cadet William Yankauskas. “Initially coming here, I didn’t know what to expect. Guantanamo Bay is portrayed in a really shady manner by the [civilian] media but I discovered that the guards go to great lengths to serve the detainees. I want to become an [Military Policeman] more than before. I believe that you don’t ever want to become what you fight. You have to lead by example. It’s important to treat people in a humane way as the guards at Guantanamo Bay have done.”

In an effort to give the cadets a well-rounded experience, the 193rd has arranged for additional tours that educate them about the other branches of service and how all the branches of service come together at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

“We’ve toured Coast Guard [vessels], visited the Northeast gate and learned how the Marines [patrol] the perimeter,” said Niemiec. “[We also see] how the Navy, Army and [Air Force] all contribute within the camps.”

The opportunity to spend time within the detention facilities, observing and following the example of the Troopers

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Cadets learn the ropes at GTMO

who work here, has left an impression on each of the cadets.

“I was unbelievably impressed at how patient the Soldiers are,” said Cadet Carson Williams. “They get jerked around by detainees who play mind games with them over and over, day after day. These Soldiers work [long shifts], are expected to remain in peak physical condition and still perform their jobs consistently and professionally. That takes a very strong person to do that.”

The job-shadowing program isn’t just beneficial for the cadet, but for the military members they work with as well. As they come to the end of their mission, the feedback about their performance has been positive.

“We understand that [being here may be] an inconvenience,” Williams said. “There’s times when we’re more in the way than we are helping. But, it has been an awesome experience.”

“The Soldiers here see the cadets coming out of West Point are high-caliber Soldiers,” Wormwood said. “They’re going to be good leaders. These Cadets are personable and have really impressed the Soldiers.”



Members of the 193rd Military Police Company and four West Point cadets toured the Northeast Gate, June 5. – JTF Guantanamo photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily J. Russell

Sun Protection

Being outside on a warm, sunny day is one of life’s greatest pleasures, but getting too much sun can be dangerous.

- Wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UV radiation
- Wear a hat. A hat with a wide brim offers good sun protection to your eyes, ears, face, and the back of the neck - areas particularly prone to overexposure.
- Protect other areas with clothing during prolonged periods in the sun.
- Always use sunscreen when outside on a sunny day.
- Avoid the midday sun as much as possible. The sun’s UV rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Avoid sunlamps and tanning parlors. Tanning beds damage the skin and unprotected eyes and are best avoided entirely.

Prevention works!

For more information, please email safety@jftgmo.southcom.mil