

AN INTERESTING DAY AT GITMO

While I actually think these two items are coincidental, note two things that happened on the Gitmo front yesterday.

First, contrary to the claims of Gitmo prosecutors made last month, no inmate ever got a copy of Inspire. Thus, the entire excuse for intervening in the attorney-client communications of Gitmo detainees turned out to be ungrounded.

"We caught it before it went into the camps," Rear Adm. David B. Woods said, adding that Guantánamo prison camp staff intercepted a copy of the now defunct glossy English-language publication in a routine incoming mail scan.

The circumstances are bizarre because on Jan. 18, a war court prosecutor used the discovery of the magazine to justify Woods' new policy of having contractors scan the privileged legal mail of Military Commission attorneys. "There was material getting in, like Inspire magazine," said Cmdr. Andrea Lockhart.

[snip]

Curiously, Woods said he did not know precisely when the episode happened.

But he said he was certain it did not occur during his nearly six-month tenure as prison camps commander.

Moreover, he said, the sender's identity was on the package and that person was "counseled" against sending "that kind of information." The sender was still having contact with the camps after what the admiral called an "attitude adjustment of what is informational contraband."

Also yesterday, the guy who will replace the Woods, who put the new communications process into place (a judge has since revised them) was formally announced.

Rear Adm. (lower half) John W. Smith Jr. will be assigned as commander, Joint Task Force Guantanamo, U.S. Southern Command, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Smith is currently serving as deputy commander, Joint Interagency Task Force, U.S. Southern Command, Key West, Fla.

Here's a biography for Smith.

Again, I think it's just a coincidence both these stories came out yesterday. But it's an interesting coincidence nevertheless.

One more Gitmo related story I hope to return to is this piece from Jeff Kaye, which provides details from the autopsy reports of two detainees alleged to commit suicide. One of the two, for example, was found in solitary confinement with his hands bound, yet the government claims he hanged himself.

Al Amri's autopsy states that the "male civilian detainee" was "found hanging by his neck in his cell with a ligature made of braided strips of bed sheet. By report, similar fabric bound his hands loosely behind him."

Note, these two deaths are separate from the three suspicious "suicide" deaths on June 9, 2006.

Like I said, I hope to return to Jeff's piece, but in the meantime, do read it yourself.