

LEMON CREEK JOURNAL

The background of the cover is a photograph of a majestic, snow-covered mountain peak, likely Mount Wrangell, under a soft, cloudy sky. In the foreground, a small, white, multi-story building with a dark roof sits on a dark, rocky island in a body of water. The overall color palette is dominated by the blues and greys of the sky and water, contrasted with the white of the snow and the building.

INSIGHTS & IMAGES OF LIFE ON THE LAST FRONTIER

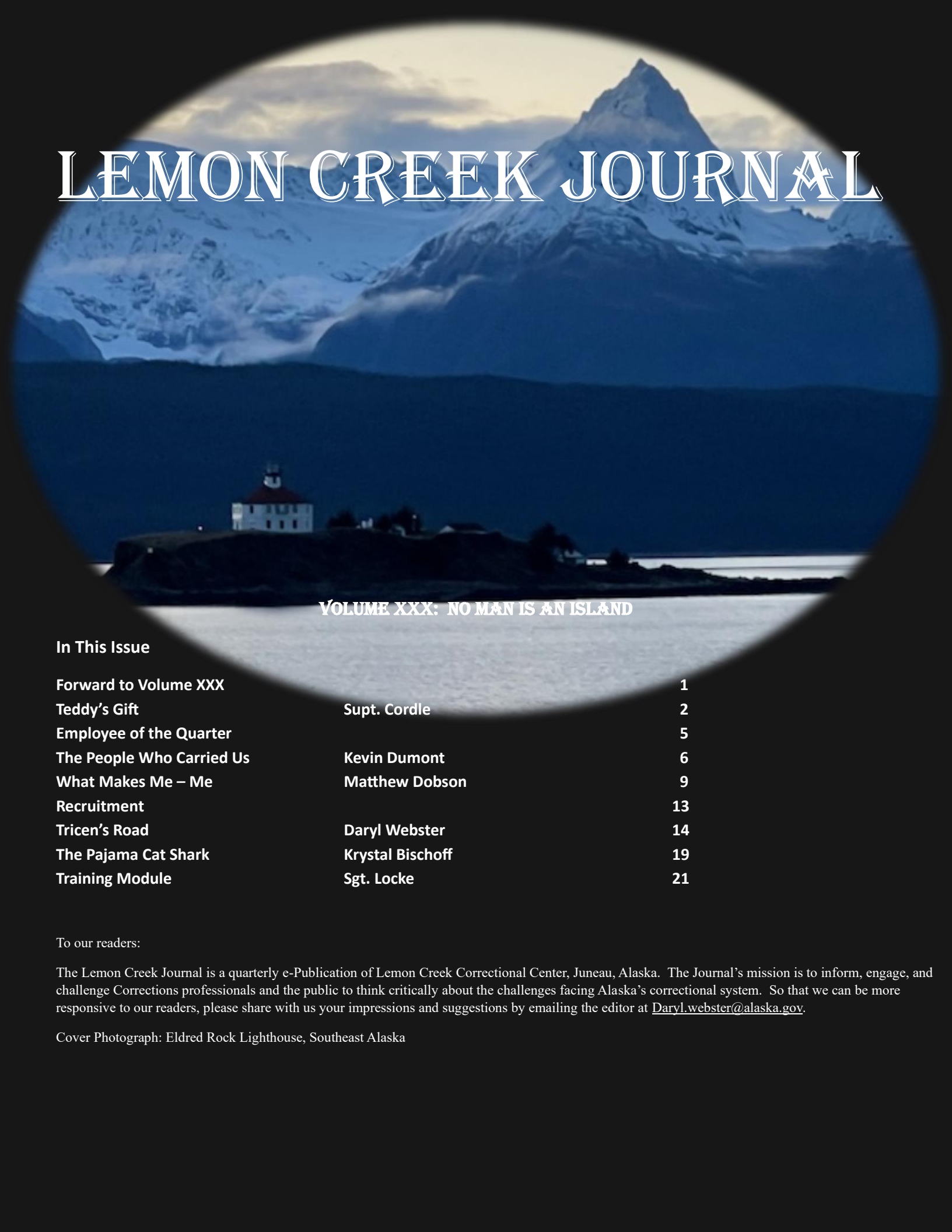
LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER

JUNEAU, ALASKA

NO ONE IS AN ISLAND

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Volume XXX



LEMON CREEK JOURNAL

VOLUME XXX: NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

In This Issue

Forward to Volume XXX		1
Teddy's Gift	Supt. Cordle	2
Employee of the Quarter		5
The People Who Carried Us	Kevin Dumont	6
What Makes Me – Me	Matthew Dobson	9
Recruitment		13
Tricen's Road	Daryl Webster	14
The Pajama Cat Shark	Krystal Bischoff	19
Training Module	Sgt. Locke	21

To our readers:

The Lemon Creek Journal is a quarterly e-Publication of Lemon Creek Correctional Center, Juneau, Alaska. The Journal's mission is to inform, engage, and challenge Corrections professionals and the public to think critically about the challenges facing Alaska's correctional system. So that we can be more responsive to our readers, please share with us your impressions and suggestions by emailing the editor at Daryl.webster@alaska.gov.

Cover Photograph: Eldred Rock Lighthouse, Southeast Alaska

Forward to Volume XXX

No man is an island,
Entire of itself.
Each is a piece of a continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thine own
Or of thine friend's were.
Each man's death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee.

John Donne,

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Repeated often enough, the most profound words become cliché. That was on our minds when we selected *No man is an island*, from John Donne's classic poem, as the theme of this issue. As we recruited writers, our aim was to dig beneath the cliché and expose truths among its roots. Once again, we got way more than we bargained for.

In this issue,

Two young men on a mission encounter a terrified child, stranded in a storm.

One of our own DOC families experiences an outpouring of love and support as they wrestle with the illness and death of a son.

A veteran of the Marine Corps and Alaska State Troopers learns that it takes many influences to build the ultimate Individualist.

Lemon Creek teammates and friends carve a road through the wilderness in pursuit of a family legacy.

A talented singer turns to music, her bandmates, and appreciative listeners to achieve her musical dream.

Enjoy. And don't forget to share your feedback at Daryl.webster@alaska.gov



Teddy's Gift

by

Superintendent Bob Cordle

In the winter of 1988, I lived in Waycross Georgia while serving a two-year mission for my church. I had only been in the mission field for about six months, and coming from Montana had assumed the South, especially the Deep South would be hot all year round. I was wrong. Winters in Waycross were generally mild, but on rare occasions temperatures could drop to near or below freezing.

One very cold and rainy February morning my companion and I drove to a remote area on the edge of town, to assist with an ongoing community service project. As we stepped from our car, near the entrance of a trailer court, the wind carried the faint sobbing of a little girl. Instead of crossing the street, as we had intended, we turned and walked toward a group of seven or eight trailers set close to the road. Stepping over and around muddy puddles, we followed the sound of the crying child. The rain fell in a continuous, overlapping rumble on the roofs of the mobile homes as we passed.

Reaching the fifth mobile home in the group, we rounded the end of the single-wide and entered the driveway. On an old, small rickety deck stood a tiny-framed, barefoot little girl, wearing a soaked t-shirt and shorts. Her head hung as low as it possibly could, as she slowly knocked on the front door. I stood in disbelief, and in my mind immediately began judging her parents. *How on earth could this be happening? Were they not at home? How could they not know she was outside? Were they responsible for her being locked out in these awful conditions?* While I stood there doing nothing but criticizing and casting judgement, my companion stepped forward toward the stairs and asked, "Are you locked out?" The little girl looked over at us and began crying louder. Fear replaced her saddened expression as she began knocking harder on the door. To add to her troubles, two strangers had appeared out of nowhere and one of them was asking her questions.

To my surprise, as I continued my morally superior condemnation of the adults who

were responsible for failing this child, my companion knelt down on one knee, directly into a mud puddle and kindly asked, "What is your name?" She gave no reply but stopped knocking and turned toward us with her head still hung low. Her drenched, bare arms and legs were covered with goosebumps. My companion then said, "My name is Teddy." Unmoved, she continued to sob and shiver as she studied her feet.

Teddy was a big guy whose name was oddly fitting. He had wrestled in college and was planning on returning to the sport once he finished serving his mission. His six-foot three frame and two-hundred and twenty plus pound physique was impressive. But though his appearance could be quite intimidating, he was extremely kind and giving.

He again asked her, "Are you locked out?" She slowly nodded. "What is your name?" Through chattering teeth, the little girl whispered something without making eye contact. My companion then softly exclaimed, "Wow! That is a great name!" He stayed kneeling in the muck, water seeping up his pantleg, but he paid it no mind. He then took off his coat and said, "It sure is cold out. Can I give you my coat to wear to help you warm up?" The crying grew quieter as she slowly made her way down the stairs until she stood directly in front of him. She was so small that as he draped his coat around her shoulders the lower half of it began floating in the puddle he was kneeling in. Seeing this he said, "I am going to put you on my knee so that you are not standing in the water anymore."

Gently picking her up, he placed her on his knee and adjusted the coat so that it covered all of her tiny frame. Still kneeling, he reached into one of the coat pockets and took out a pack of gum. As he did so she

stopped crying. He removed two pieces, unwrapped one, and began chewing it. He then unwrapped the second piece and held it out to her. One of her hands emerged from the coat and she took the gum from him and placed it into her mouth.

After a moment had passed, he continued, "What happened? How did you get locked out?" She responded, "Mommy went to a friend's house and after she was gone my brother pushed me outside and locked the door." This statement caused her to start crying again. Reaching into another coat pocket, he pulled out a clean, folded white handkerchief and tenderly wiped away her tears. In doing so it was apparent from the collection of small, brown smudges that she had not been bathed in days. He then said, "I have brothers too, and sometimes they can do mean things, but it's going to be okay. We aren't going to leave you. We are going stay right here with you until your mom comes home."

Reaching once again into one of his coat pockets, he retrieved a small black comb. As he began to gently comb out the tangles in her hair he said, "You are beautiful, do know that?" To this day I still vividly remember her sitting on his knee as she looked up to make eye contact with him for the first time. A sweet grin appeared as he continued to work out the tangles in her hair, and then a smile. For the next fifteen to twenty minutes my companion continued to kneel in the puddle as I stood there smiling in amazement at one of the most selfless acts I have ever witnessed. The two of them chewed gum and giggled while they talked about their favorite colors, animals, treats, and dumb brothers.

Her mom eventually drove up. Seeming surprised, she inquired as to what was going on. We explained how we had found her

daughter locked out of the house. She went up the stairs and using a key to open the door, motioned for her daughter to follow her. Not much else was said, but the little girl, still smiling, waved to us as they both went inside and closed the door. We made our way to the car in complete silence, climbed in soaking wet, and drove back to the apartment to put on dry clothing.

My parents strived to raise me to be genuine, to be kind, to be service-oriented, and up until that moment, I thought I was all of those things. When I was sixteen years old my dad had taught me an invaluable lesson about jumping in to help without having to be asked to do so. During that teaching moment I thought, “Check! I got it! I will always do that!”

Roughly four years later, on that miserable February morning, I failed to act promptly for someone who was in great need, both physically and emotionally. My first thoughts were accusatory in nature, as I stood there in disbelief and anger that someone would allow their precious child to be out in those conditions. In contrast, my companion’s first thoughts were to rescue that little girl. He first established trust with her and then acted appropriately to shield her from the elements. That experience was a life-changing moment for me and thirty-eight plus years later I still reflect upon it from time to time.

An act of kindness, whether we are giving or receiving it, is one of the things that help us connect to humanity. We thrive because of

our interconnectedness, and to sustain that, the positive influence we have on one another must be in continual motion. We have all heard sayings or quotes about kindness. “Kindness is free, kindness is a gift, kindness is a virtue, kindness is a choice.” One thing for sure is that if kindness is not acted upon in the moment it is needed, the opportunity to give it freely may pass and be gone forever.

I have always been impressed by the selfless acts and kind gestures I have witnessed among staff here at the facility. To have so many different personalities coexist and work so well together is truly encouraging. Everyone laboring together to make certain that public safety is our highest priority is impressive to say the least. Assisting one another builds unity, creates a strong team, and cements a common bond that ensures our success and strengthens our interconnectedness as unit.

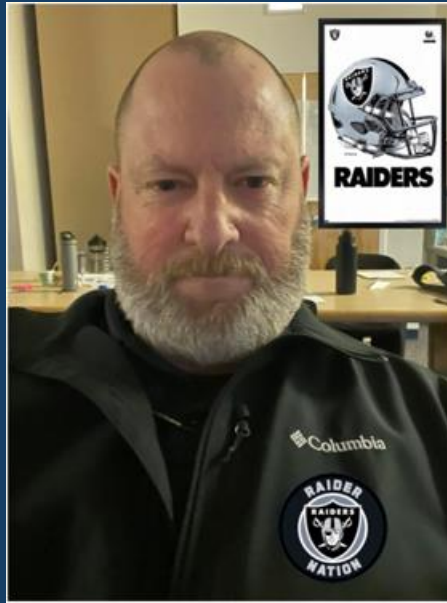
The older I get, the more I realize that if we truly want to measure the significance of how we live our own lives, we can do so by having valued the lives of others. It is generally the small things that we do for others that matter the most. Kindness sometimes requires self-sacrifice and the giving of one’s time. Kindness is intentional, and when you share it with others, it directly reflects who you are. Thank you for the example you set, for the work you put in, and the care you provide while doing it.

All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.

Gandalf - *The Fellowship of the Ring*

LEMON CREEK CORRECTIONAL CENTER

Employee of the Quarter – Officer Chris Walkenford



Officer Christopher Walkenford is our favorite recidivist. He began his first journey at Lemon Creek Correctional Center in December 2001, before leaving for the United States Marshalls Service in May 2013. We were very fortunate when he returned to serve with us in December 2023. Since his return he has become a mainstay in our property department and has brought a wealth of experience to share with new officers. His stellar work ethic, his energetic persona and booming voice are contagious, raising the spirits of those around him.

Officer Walkenford is so good-natured and exuberant, one could be excused for underestimating his greatest attribute... whatever he does, he stays on mission. Utilizing his experience and security awareness, he recently made a major contraband seizure from a visitor in the contact visiting room. What others might miss, he never does.

Lemon Creek Correctional Center is proud to honor Officer Walkenford as Employee of the Quarter.



The People Who Carried Us

By

Kevin Dumont

When Superintendent Webster asked me to write a story about people showing up during the hardest moments of life, I found myself asking a difficult question: How vulnerable do I want to be? What I realized is that some of the greatest displays of goodness happen in our darkest moments. During trying times, people reach out, and a text, a phone call, or a knock at the door can truly change a life. When I think about the people who were there for me, my mind immediately goes to two moments involving my son.

I came into a ready-made family when I married my wife, Dusty. She had two preteen children, Rikki and Gray. Being a stepfather is no easy feat, even more challenging when you join a family with almost-teenagers. Both kids were incredibly sweet, with huge hearts. They also had challenges. Gray was hearing-impaired and had Type I Diabetes, and Rikki wore hearing aids and had learning disabilities. It was a lot for us to navigate as a new, blended family.

Things were very good for us for several years...until middle school. And honestly, who doesn't struggle in middle school? Gray had a vivid imagination and often exaggerated physical ailments. We became so accustomed to sorting out what was real from what wasn't, that when he truly was sick, we almost missed it.

The summer before his sophomore year, Gray began complaining that his stomach hurt. He really laid it on thick. He even had my mother-in-law advocating for him, convinced he was seriously ill. But to us, he looked okay, outside of the complaining. Then one night he looked at my wife and said, "Will you pray for me?" That was the moment everything changed. Off to the emergency room we went, where we discovered Gray's appendix had ruptured. He went into emergency surgery here in Juneau. After surgery they stitched him up like Frankenstein's monster with 33 staples. Success. Or so we thought. A few days after the stitches were removed, we noticed swelling and signs that something wasn't right. We went back to see the doctor and were told that Gray had an infection and to just leave it be. We left with instructions on what to watch for, including a fever.

The moment Gray spiked a fever, we bypassed that doctor and went straight to the emergency room, where we learned they hadn't gotten all of the infection out of his abdomen. Suddenly we were being medevacked, Gray's second medevac in his life, to Seattle Children's Hospital. Gray was

seriously ill. When the surgeon evaluated him there, the incision had already started coming apart. The doctor gently pressed on the incision...and it opened like a zipper.

When I think back on that time, I remember fear. Helplessness. Exhaustion. Trying to stay strong for my son and my wife. Trying to manage leaving a teenager at home while supporting a son who was fighting for his life. We spent the next several weeks in the hospital, in and out of procedures, appointments, and dressing changes. The three of us lived in one room together. It was kind of like camping (and not the cushy kind in a cabin or an RV). It was uncomfortable, with minimal sleep. Dusty and I shared a chair that turned into a bed, grabbing an hour or two of sleep between nurse checks and beeping monitors.



Gray Staying Occupied

Eventually Gray had a large open wound that had to close naturally, but with a wound vacuum attached. Naturally, we named it *Suckasaurus Rex*. It weighed about ten pounds and had no attractive features.

JULY 1, 2026

Every other day the dressing had to be changed. At first, the pain and anxiety were so significant, and his tolerance for being a pin cushion at that point so depleted, that it had to happen in the operating room under sedation. But eventually Gray decided he would endure it in his room. That may have had less to do with bravery and more to do with the fact that every procedure meant not eating. And what teenage boy wants to go a day without food? He had already lost about 20 pounds he didn't have to spare.



The Six-Foot Storm Trooper

At the time, it felt like one of the hardest things we would ever face. But we did not face it alone. God took care of us through people. One of my sisters brought home-cooked meals and treats. Our church family sent cafeteria gift cards. My uncle brought us one of his vehicles to use. Family drove across the state to visit, giving Dusty and me a chance to step away and breathe. One friend even extended her duty assignment on a Coast Guard ship so we could use her apartment. The kindness was overwhelming. We received so many flowers that we started giving them away to

other patients. People sent Gray crossword puzzles, games, magazines, notes, and reminders that he was loved and being prayed for. One of my sisters sent a six-foot Storm Trooper balloon, which is wonderful in theory until you try to fit three people, flowers, and a giant inflatable soldier into one hospital room. After the balloon started to deflate, we inhaled the helium and sang songs to Gray. He rolled his eyes the way only a teenage boy can when his parents are embarrassing him. He tried to say we weren't funny. But we were.

The prayers. The meals. The visits. The texts. The phone calls. The care packages. The practical help. People simply being there. Even now it brings tears to my eyes. I learned something during that season: People don't need to fix our pain to help us carry it. Community matters. Faith becomes tangible through people. God often shows up through ordinary acts of kindness.

When we were finally released from jail, I mean the hospital, we thought surviving that season meant we had already walked through our hardest chapter. We had no idea life would ask more of us. Over the next several years Gray continued to struggle. If I'm completely honest, those years stretched us in ways I didn't know were possible. We held tightly to our faith, believing he would find his way back and that we would fully live as a family again. But sadly, that isn't what happened.

I will never forget the moment Dusty called and told me Gray had died. I was at work. I

couldn't get through the gates fast enough. Into my car fast enough. Downtown to her office fast enough. And then a different question arose: How to be strong for a mother who just lost her child while carrying your own grief? Shock. Numbness. Confusion, Grief, oh, the grief. There are pains in life that divide your story into before and after.

And yet again...our church family showed up. They embraced us. Helped us plan Gray's memorial. Sat in silence with us. Cried with us. Checked in months later. Refused to let us grieve alone. Many people know how to show up immediately, the rare ones keep showing up later. Sometimes people were there physically. Sometimes spiritually. Sometimes practically. Sometimes quietly. But we always knew we were being looked after.

What I've learned is that being there for someone is rarely about having the right words. Presence matters more than perfection. Love often looks simple, a meal, a prayer, a text, a hand on your shoulder, just coming alongside you without judgment. In our darkest moments, our church family became the hands and feet of Jesus to us.

Life is hard, and it was never meant to be carried alone. Reach out. Encourage one another. Carry each other's burdens. Celebrate each other's victories. Because sometimes the greatest gift we can give to someone isn't fixing their pain, it's simply showing up.

Kevin Dumont is a husband, father and person of faith, who believes that some of life's greatest lessons are learned through both joy and hardship. He hopes that this story honors those who showed up and encourages readers to do the same for someone else.

WHAT MAKES ME – ME

By

Matthew Dobson

As America gets ready to celebrate its 250th birthday, I am reminded of the unofficial motto of our nation, “*E Pluribus Unum*,” which translates to mean “*Out of many, one*.” We Alaskans are known for our individualism, for being “The One.” What we often forget is the many who molded us into who we really are. This surely applies to me.

I graduated from the Alaska State Trooper Academy in 1996 and left with a vast arsenal of new skills; weapons proficiency, techniques to apply physical methods of arrest, verbal judo skills and a knowledge of state laws, just to name a few. But foremost, I left with the understanding that I, “The Trooper”, would be the law in the farthest reaches of our vast state. Instructors told us, “Don’t expect back-up, you’re a Trooper. One riot... one Trooper.” You get the picture. For the most part, that is true. Whether you are a “blue-shirt” Trooper working traffic in the middle of nowhere or a “brown-shirt” Wildlife Trooper walking into a hunting camp, the chances are good that you are alone. Over the course of 25 years as both a blue shirt and a brown shirt, I worked in over 100 communities and villages in Alaska, usually by myself. In this type of working environment, you learn very



Matt Dobson - Piloting

quickly to become self-reliant, to become that “One.”

In 2013 I was fortunate enough to attend the Administrative Officer’s Course put on by the Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville. This 12-week course is considered one of the most prestigious law enforcement courses in the United States and focuses on the professional development of first line supervisors. At that time, I had been a State Trooper for about 17 years, nine of those as a sergeant. What made the course especially appealing to me was that each class was

made up of sergeants and lieutenants from across the United States. With a total class size of 50, I was excited to interact with officers bringing a wide range of experiences to the class.

Before attending the course, I spoke with a supervisor who had graduated from the class a few years earlier and asked him what I should expect. He said that it wasn't that hard to pass the class and do well, but if I wanted to really excel academically, I would have to study hard. As a final comment he said that we would be given a voluntary assignment called "What makes me – me." He strongly encouraged me to participate but warned me to be prepared.

As the fall semester began, it was interesting to see how small groups, or cliques, started to develop. Military veterans found each other, small department officers united as did big city cops from Chicago and Minneapolis. I quickly fell into a group with two other State Troopers (one from Kentucky and one from New Mexico) and a Kansas City Police Officer. All of us had served in the military so it was easy for us to find common ground.

As we neared the end of the semester, the instructors informed us about the "What makes me – me" assignment. The guidelines were that we could make a presentation about anything, it just needed to be about something that defined us as police officers. It could be personal or professional. It could be a defining moment in life or the pursuit of a long-term goal. The options were unlimited.

The assignment was voluntary, but everyone chose to participate. As I think back now, I realize that had we been given this assignment at the beginning of the course, not everyone would have joined in. But we had spent over two months together and despite our "cliques" we had really bonded as a group. We had already shared many stories and presentations, so we felt secure enough to share in this assignment. From our collective "many" we were becoming "one."

The first day of presentations, I watched as officers stood up and presented stories that were powerful and unbelievably emotional. You have to remember that this was a class made up of 50 veteran police officers, many with prior military/combat experiences. We came from across the country, and as a group had experienced almost every law enforcement event you can imagine. Topics included officer-involved shootings, line of duty deaths and becoming demonized by the press and public for simply doing their job. By the end of the first day, the entire class was emotionally wrecked. As we walked back to our dorm rooms, several of us commented that we didn't think we could do four more days of that. Thankfully, as the week progressed, the presentations started to take on a lighter tone. They were still powerful and emotional and above all else, personal.

I was slated to present on the last day and spent quite a bit of time fine-tuning what I wanted to say. I had come up with several "defining" and "exciting" events that had occurred in my life, but in the end, I decided that I wanted to convey the message that no

single moment in my military or law enforcement career defined me as a man, a Marine or a State Trooper. Instead, I wanted to show that what really made me – me, also enhanced everything, like how I acted as a husband, father, Marine or a State Trooper.

So, what made me – me? I grew up in rural Eastern Washington State in the 70's and 80's and what sticks out to me was that my family had a commitment to family involvement. Almost every weekend, we would gather with aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and close friends. We went camping, hunting, fishing, attended sporting events and celebrated holidays. That family commitment is just as strong today, and definitely shaped how I live my life.

When I was 17 years old, I met Captain Dwight Cook of the Washington State Patrol. He had just retired and he and his family moved into the small town that I grew up in. He had served in the Army in the late 50's before joining the State Patrol. Dwight would often say that one of the best parts of the job was the variety. "When you put that car in drive in the morning, you never know where you are going to end up." Dwight would also talk about how it was a privilege to not only serve his nation as a soldier, but to also serve his state and community as a Patrolman. When I enlisted in the Marine Corps and later, when I got hired by the Alaska State Troopers, he was one of the first people I called.

Over the course of five years in the Marine Corps, I served in a lot of places, but Camp LeJeune, North Carolina was my primary base of operations. While serving there with the 2nd Light Armored Infantry Battalion, I

was lucky enough to be commanded by outstanding officers and staff-NCO's, in particular, Staff Sergeant Jack Paulin. He refused to let his men be idle or complacent and would constantly ask "So what's next?" and "How can you improve?" Jack had enlisted as a private and worked his way to the rank of staff sergeant. As an expert in the communications field, he was eventually promoted to warrant officer and after completing his college degree, commissioned as a regular Marine Officer. He would retire as a lieutenant colonel after 30 years. Jack Paulin was a great leader of Marines and led by example. It has been well over 30 years since I last saw him, yet I still catch myself thinking "So what's next, how can I improve?"



Once a Marine...Always a Marine

Finally, it was my turn to present to the class. As I worked through my presentation, I shared events from my career that had been subtly guided by my mentors. I talked about things that are not typically taught at the academy. Things like showing true compassion to a grieving family member who had lost a loved one, encouraging a young person about career options or mentoring a young officer about his

professional path. I pointed out that quality of life almost always outweighs a larger paycheck and it's OK to take off the uniform and volunteer in your community and church. I ended my presentation by telling the class that I hoped to someday be considered part of the "Many" who helped shape a "One."

My presentation was not the kind to bring a tear to anyone's eye. But in the end, I felt good about what I had shared. In working through the project, I realized that the success I had enjoyed in my career was not just me as "One" but was a direct result of the "Many" who had shaped me. The work ethic, faith and commitment to family modeled from my own family. The advice, support and love of service displayed by Dwight Cook and the outstanding leadership exhibited by Jack Paulin.

..... *E Pluribus Unum.*



Matt Dobson retired as a Lieutenant with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers after 25 years of service with duty stations in Sitka, Anchorage, Bethel and Juneau. During those 25 years he served as a state pilot, a member of the Tactical Dive Unit and was a medium class vessel operator. He is a graduate of the Southern Police Institute and the FBI National Academy. Prior to working as a Trooper, he served five years in the US Marine Corps. In retirement he serves as the Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 6 in Juneau and is active with American Legion Post 25 in Auke Bay and as an Elder at Chapel by the Lake church. Matt and his wife Beth have been married for 27 years and have three grown children; Samuel, Eric and Jenna.

Lemon Creek Correctional Center Wants YOU!



Lemon Creek Correctional Center in Juneau, Alaska employs Correctional Officers, Food Service & Maintenance Specialists, Nurses, and Administrative & Clerical Staff. Check out [Governmentjobs.com/careers/Alaska/](https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/Alaska/) for job opportunities DOC's Juneau facility.

Benefits:

- Correctional Officer hourly pay starts at \$30.77
- Annual scheduled pay increases
- Employee health insurance
- Work schedules maximize time off
- A supportive & team-oriented work environment

For information, contact Sergeant Green at (907)465-6202. We look forward to working with you.





Tricen's Road

By

Daryl Webster

I have a beloved friend named Tricen Headings. Some of you know him from his career at Lemon Creek Correctional Center and as an occasional contributor to the Lemon Creek Journal. When I first came to Lemon Creek, I hadn't been in Alaska long. Everything was new and strange. I was embarked on a second career at an age when most people eye retirement, so the pressure was on to get it right. My family was counting on me. Tricen being Tricen, the ultimate people-person, it didn't take long for him to draw me into his vast and frantic orbit. Before I knew it, I was playing cards with the gang in his garage and fishing from his boat. Our families got along well and we vacationed together. He became my first and oldest Alaskan friend.

Our friendship took some getting used to, because my friend's Formula One personality comes with only one pedal. He is the only person I've ever known who does everything full throttle. All the time.

If I needed help with a home project, he was there before I could hang up the phone, throwing things around, swinging a hammer like Thor, lifting impossibly heavy objects, and doing it all with gusto. Watching him work was wonderful and alarming all at once, expecting that at any moment he would collapse from a massive coronary or herniate something precious while lifting and carrying loads I wouldn't touch without a forklift.

So, when Tricen called me one day and asked if I could lend a hand with a small construction project, I was all over it. He had recently purchased a remote, landlocked parcel where he planned to build a family retreat that he referred to as his "Family Legacy." There was just one catch. No road access. There wasn't a road for miles. He spent days ferrying tools and building supplies by small boat to a suitable anchorage and from there to a shoreline cache, until the day came for me to do my part. After ushering me and another friend, Jeremy Finlayson, to

shore, he proudly introduced us to the starting point of the road we would begin to build, half a mile cross-country to the cabin site. Not a driveway, mind you, but an honest to goodness road, capable of handling four-wheelers with trailers.

Surveying the unbroken forest before us, I wore my confused face. “Where?”

“That way,” he said, pointing to a tangled gash winding up a ridge, through a sea of spruce, hemlock and devil’s club . “We’ll use the ditch as a roadbed for a ways, then turn overland to the site.”



“The Ditch” - Before

“Not. Freaking. Happening,” I thought, but kept it to myself, so as not to offend. And off we went.

Folks take it for granted nowadays, but old-time Alaskans carved their way into the wilderness to explore, homestead or mine and did it mostly by hand. You’d think we’d be past that by now, but here in the North, time and technology move only slightly faster than the glaciers that decorate our mountains. You want a cabin off the grid? So do plenty of Alaskans, and they do it the old-fashioned way. And though chain sawing a swath through heavy timber and slash is way better than swinging an ax, after an hour or so, even a modern Stihl gains a ton of weight.

Our creek bed starting point, (I came to think of it as *The Ditch*), was more ankle-deep mud than creek, choked with basketball-sized rocks and a jackstraw tangle of fallen timber. All of it had to be cleared out and “paved” with flat rocks and stout logs that wouldn’t disappear into the muck. Once we conquered The Ditch, the plan was to build a corduroy road, made of smaller logs, tightly set crossways across the roadbed, that would support traffic. But that was still in the unimaginable future.

The work wasn’t entirely grim. We did our share of slipping, falling, and finger-mashing with much profanity. Bottled water retailers saw a big upswing in sales at our expense. But most of our cursing was playful and I smiled to hear my boys, Max and Declan, whooping through the woods with Tricen’s son, hunting bears and rhinoceroses with sharpened sticks.



Jeremy, Tricen & The Ditch – Not Quite After

The entire project took a while, though probably less time than it takes road crews to fill potholes around our town. A number of friends from Tricen's tribe cycled in and out every weekend, so a lot of hands touched the project, but for the three of us, slaving through that opening stretch had to be the worst of it all. Just a hundred yards or so of The Ditch seemed to take forever, until we reached a point only Tricen could see, where we executed a 90 degree turn and continued building up a steep slope. But first, we had to hack our way through the 8 foot gully wall, then literally shave the hillside to make the grade passable.



Rhino Hunters Checking Our Progress Up The Hill

After that, it was weeks of digging out and log-paving a roadbed, hundreds of yards to the cabin site. I'd be lying if I claimed to have been there from start to finish. Most of my contribution was limited to the initial breakout, through The Ditch and up to level ground. Plenty of people worked longer and harder than I, but the ever-cheerful Tricen was always gracious and grateful for any help we could offer.

What value does one assign to helping a friend realize a dream? Quite high, as it turns out. True friends don't grow on trees. They're worth the investment, even at the cost of sweat and pain, of which there was plenty. Nature has a way of letting you know that your 50 something



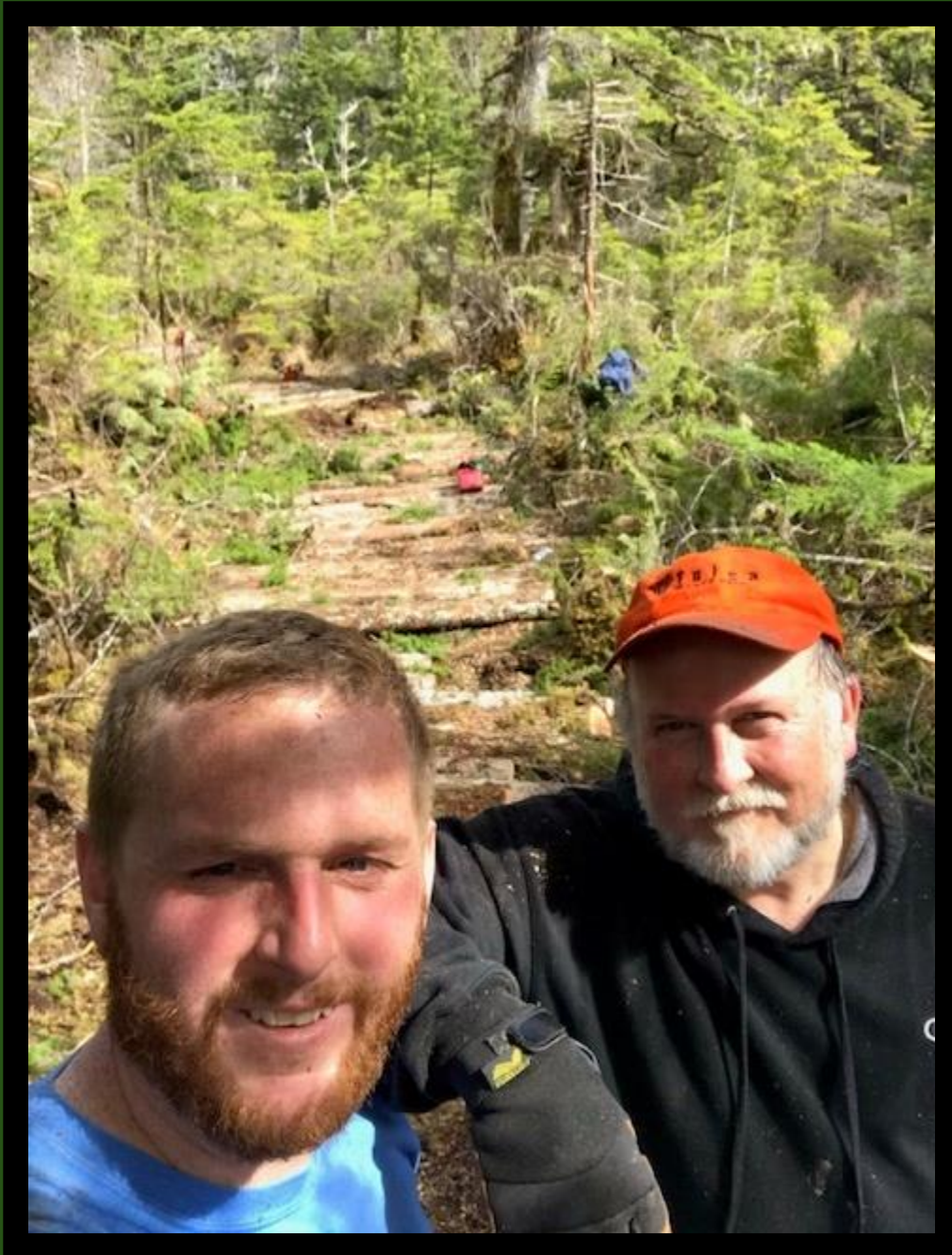
Three Men & An Impossible Job - The Author Center

body hasn't aged well enough to bend for hours, wrestling a chainsaw, bucking logs and lugging them aside, gouging out a roadbed that never ran straight for more than spitting distance. Along the way, there were stumps and rocks to uproot by pick and shovel, and scores of tree trunks bucked to form crosspieces for the corduroy road. Yet foot by tortuous foot, the primitive highway took shape, winding through the forest and swampy muskeg. And you know, it was a thing of beauty. I pray Tricen gets a lifetime of joy from his cabin, without minding that one day, Alaska will reclaim it and the road we built.

Determined men scratch paths and build monuments in the wilderness. Alaska patiently consumes them all. Saplings will invade the corduroy road, grow large, and choke it out. The elements will reduce the cabin to its sturdy foundation. One day, some future Alaskan will stumble across a faint trace in the woods, leading to a weathered wreck, and wonder what manner of men dared build it.

Bittersweet years have come and gone since those days in The Ditch. Tricen's oldest boy and mine are nearly grown. My younger son passed away last year. Jeremy Finlayson and I still work at Lemon Creek and Tricen is medically retired. My Stihl saw seems heavier than ever. Guess I'm not getting any younger. But the road is still there and doing its job.

Decades from now, one of our descendants will post a photo on social media, reading, "There's my great grandfather, pioneering in Alaska. Anyone know who the other two men were?" By that time, we will have joined the figures in grainy, old Alaskan photographs that seem ghostly to us now. They were once people just like us, who laughed and labored and helped each other plot courses through the woods. The names and details won't matter to us phantoms, only what we meant to one other, and the days we worked together on Tricen's Road.



Tricen, The Author, & The Corduroy Road

The Pajama Cat Sharks

By

Krystal Bischoff

I joined the Lemon Creek Correctional Center team on October 3, 2022 as the Administrative Assistant II and switched positions in November of 2023. Though most of you know me as the bubbly blonde who walks around with coffee, residing in every office other than my own, my official title is the Criminal Justice Technician II for the Sentenced Electronic Monitoring program. Which, in my opinion, is just a fancy way of saying, “PO Behrends’s Assistant.”

I don’t face the many tough challenges or experiences that our Correctional Officers or Institutional Parole Officers do, but I help monitor a caseload of sentenced inmates, and my position requires reading and witnessing things that can take a mental toll. My unique way of coping with that stress is by singing. Not quite in the way you may imagine.

Anyone can have fun being the rock star of their own car, shower, (or if you’re Officers Jona Valdeconza or Mike Schramm, anywhere you happen to be during your shift). Singing is for everyone. But for me, it’s more than that. I remember the first time I sang “publicly.” I was 5 years old when I walked into the backyard of our condominium and belted out, “I Will Always Love You” by Whitney Houston, to anyone who would listen. That was my first memory of feeling completely euphoric as I sang to the neighborhood at the top of my lungs.

When I moved to Juneau in 2012, I subtly immersed myself in the music community by doing solo projects. Things like hosting karaoke at local bars, singing the national anthem for community and sporting events and participating in “Juneau’s Got Talent.” These performances provided me with an outlet for my craft, but I knew something was missing. Everything changed when I met my significant other in 2021 and he convinced me to start a band with him. I had never sung in a band before. I had always done things on my own, in my own way. In the beginning, I struggled a lot. In my mind, I was the diva. I was the star. I wanted to sing what I wanted to sing. I wanted my group to practice as much as I did. I wanted to be the boss. Eventually I quit our first band and took a break from band life but immediately regretted it. I missed my people. Several discussions with my significant other lead me to try again, this time with an open mind. In 2022, The “Pajama Cat Sharks” (don’t ask) was created and there was no turning back.

Sharing my love for music in a group of like-minded musical artists opened a new and better way for me to expand my talent and ultimately, my happiness. My drummer is the heart of the band, the bassist provides the muscle, the guitarist the soul, and I am the voice. Just as in life, we can walk our own paths, and in music, we can perform as solo artists. But I've found that we're

stronger together. My band is more than a group of musicians. They're my team, my family, and my friends. Together, we create something greater than any of us could do alone.



Krystal's Got Talent

In-Service Training

Response to Resistance

SSgt. Gary Locke

LCCC Training Sergeant

The echo of boots on concrete was the only sound in the corridor—until a sudden shout shattered the stillness. In that moment, a correctional officer had to decide: escalate or de-escalate? In correctional facilities, responses to resistance are rarely black-and-white. Each decision can mean the difference between restoring order and igniting chaos, between protecting lives and violating rights

When I think about Response to Resistance (Policy 1207.01) in a correctional facility, I recognize it as one of the most important and challenging responsibilities of a correctional officer. Officers are expected to maintain order, enforce rules, and ensure the safety of staff, inmates, and visitors. While most situations can be resolved through communication and professionalism, there is always the possibility that resistance may escalate into a dangerous situation.

Response to resistance involves more than simply gaining compliance. It requires officers to make sound decisions under pressure while remaining calm, professional, and objective. In a correctional setting, resistance can range from refusing a direct order to physically assaulting staff or other inmates. Each situation requires officers to assess the level of resistance and respond appropriately.

Communication is often the most effective tool available to a correctional officer. Many incidents can be resolved by speaking respectfully, providing clear instructions, and allowing individuals the opportunity to comply voluntarily. Maintaining self-control and treating others with dignity can prevent minor incidents from escalating into major confrontations. Professionalism is one of the strongest forms of authority an officer can demonstrate.

However, communication is not always sufficient. There are situations in which an inmate's actions create an immediate threat to safety and require a higher level of response. In those circumstances, officers must rely on their training and follow established policies regarding the use of force. The objective is never punishment; rather, it is to regain control of the situation and protect everyone involved. Any force used should be reasonable, necessary, and proportional to the level of resistance encountered.

One aspect of response to resistance that carries significant responsibility is the potential use of lethal force. Although no correctional officer wants to use lethal force, there may be rare

circumstances involving an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to staff, inmates, or others. In such situations, lethal force may be legally and ethically justified as a last resort. The possibility of facing such a decision highlights the importance of training, sound judgment, and the ability to remain composed under extreme stress.

The most effective response to resistance is one that resolves the situation using only the amount and type of force reasonable and necessary to maintain safety and security. The ability to de-escalate conflict, communicate effectively, and make responsible decisions reflects the professionalism expected of correctional officers. At the same time, officers must be prepared to act decisively when lives are at risk. Equally important is the requirement to properly document and report incidents to ensure accountability and adherence to policy.

One aspect of Policy 1207.01 that demonstrates accountability is the review process that follows a response-to-resistance incident. Once each month, Superintendents Cordle and Webster, Lieutenant Pierce, SSgt. Cook, and I meet to review response-to-resistance reports. During these meetings, we examine the incident reports, Response to Resistance forms, and available video footage. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the force used was appropriate for the level of resistance displayed by the inmate. We also identify any deficiencies in the reports and determine whether additional training may be necessary for staff.

Documentation is a critical part of the process. Whenever staff must use physical force in response to resistance, a Response to Resistance Form (Form 1207.01a) must be completed. This form documents important details, including the officers involved, the inmate involved, witnesses, and any injuries sustained during the incident, and photos. Accurate documentation helps ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with departmental policy.

In conclusion, response to resistance is a critical component of correctional work. It requires a balance of communication, authority, restraint, and accountability. While the ultimate goal is voluntary compliance and peaceful resolution, officers must be prepared to respond appropriately to any level of resistance, including the rare circumstances in which lethal force is necessary to protect human life. Understanding this responsibility reinforces the seriousness of the profession and the trust placed in those who serve within the correctional system.

Thank you and stay safe!

Mandatory Training:

The following Training Module is MANDATORY for all CO and PO personnel and should be completed and submitted no later than July 31. Thank you and stay safe, SSgt. Locke

Read Policy 1207.01, then access a computer, enter G-Drive, select the “Everyone” folder, then select “Training Folder,” where you will find the Response to Resistance Test. Print the test and answer all test questions. Place your name and completion date on the test and put it in the Training box in Booking. Upon completion, you will earn one hour of mandated annual training.