Dialogue exercise:

Begin by writing out a conversation you remember from your time in the military. The conversation may have taken place between two people, or among a group. This could be a conversation that you participated in, or it might just be a conversation you overheard. Try to stay faithful to the actual words you remember people saying. Focus on the dialogue first, and then work on developing a context for the dialogue--that is, the story that makes the dialogue make sense. Take the liberty of inserting descriptive or reflective writing between lines of dialogue.

Doing One’s Duty (or not):

This past week, you likely heard excerpts from a heated telephone conversation between Italian cruise line commander Captain Schettino and Italian coastguard commander Gregorio De Falco on the night of the sinking of the cruise ship Costa Concordia. The conversation indicates that “the skipper tried to argue that he could coordinate the evacuation of thousands of stranded passengers from the safety of his lifeboat.

At one point, the coastguard, clearly infuriated by Schettino’s feeble excuses, shouts: ‘You get back on board! That is an order!’

He also says: ‘Listen, Schettino, perhaps you have saved yourself from the sea but I will make you look very bad. I will make you pay for this. Damn it, go back on board!’

The coastguard commander has become a national idol. The cruise captain has become the object of scorn, censure, and house arrest.

While media reports paint this as a cut and dried situation where a captain failed to do his duty and harmed his passengers, think about a time in your military service where a conflict or dispute arose over doing one’s duty/obeying an order. What was the nature of the conflict and dispute? How did it play out? What was the resolve? What are the complexities of “doing one’s duty”? Duty to what and to whom?

See: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2087704/Costa-Concordia-Captain-Francesco-Schettino-I-left-I-FELL-lifeboat.html#ixzz1k20tdJRa

Relationships in the military:

Write a piece in which you consider how your military service brought you new relationships, friendships, and bonds and how your service challenged, strained, or strengthened already existing relationships. What kinds of relationships were possible and which weren’t for you when you served in the military? To write this piece, you may want to make a general list of ideas/stories that come to mind and choose one incident or scene to write that addresses a specific relationship at that time in your life.