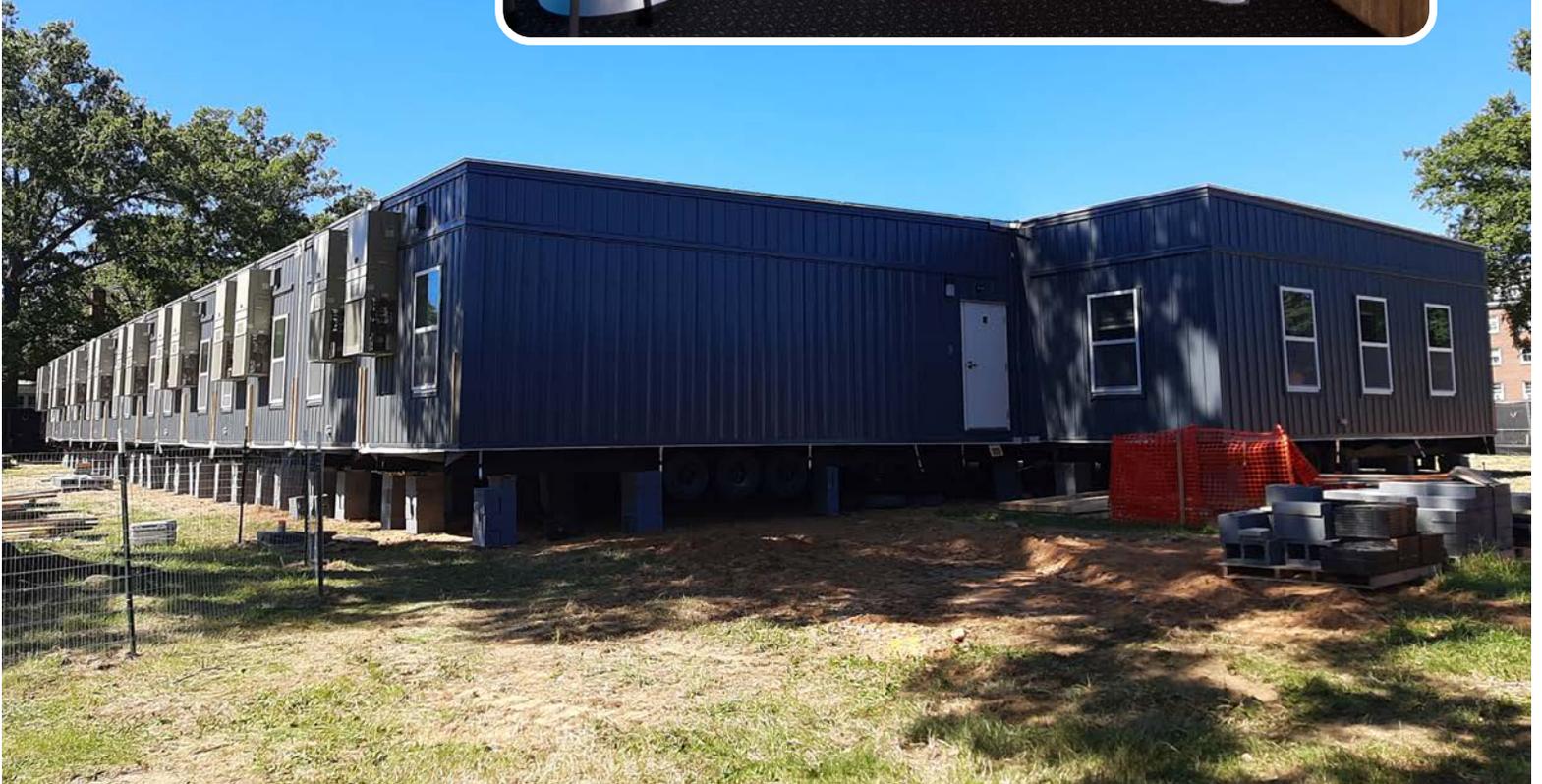


# PENTAGRAM



JOINT BASE MYER — HENDERSON HALL

ISSUE 6 • NOVEMBER 2022



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# WELCOME



**Denise Caskey**  
Public Affairs Specialist

Greetings from Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall – “America’s Post!” and the latest edition of the Pentagram.

This issue features the Joint Base barracks renovation projects. We welcome Lt. Col. John Dexter as the new Joint Base Deputy Commander, highlight the work of the Family Advocacy Program in preventing and treating domestic abuse, tell you about all the exciting things Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers is doing and we update you on the International Burn Camp, which JBM-HH hosted again this year. Check out photos from the Battle of the Bases softball game, in which JBM-HH Generals played against the Joint Base Andrews Hot Suff. In addition, our social media manager, Rachel Everett, honors her Indigenous heritage.

Our next issue, which comes out March 2023, will focus on the community connections within JBM-HH and outside the fence. As always, we invite you to share with us any ideas you have for future content.

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**YOUNG**  
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**THIS ONE DAY HAS DONE MORE TO HELP ME THAN MONTHS IN THE HOSPITAL.**

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**"I'M SO HAPPY WE WERE ABLE TO STOP IN AND HELP HER CURBING THIS SIGNIFICANT TIME OF NEED."**

**ADAM BIRD**  
"I'm a member of the Army National Guard and I'm currently serving in the 101st Airborne Division."

**MILITARY BARRACKS**  
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**KYLOWOOD**  
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**"THE COMPLETION AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF THESE ABILITIES."**

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**BRIG BURGETT**  
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# Army improves barracks for Marines, Soldiers at JBM-HH

**Sherry Kuiper**

JBM-HH Public Affairs

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The U.S. Army is putting its money where its mouth is.

Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth recently pledged to boost the Army's annual barracks budget, which will positively affect several ongoing barracks projects and future sustainability projects at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

In collaboration with Army Materiel Command and Installation Management Command, Army leaders are allocating \$150 million as a part of the Facility Investment Plan, which includes money for quality-of-life services like housing and barracks.

"Renovating and upgrading the barracks that our Marines and Soldiers live in is something we have been working on for years," said Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Commander Col. David Bowling. "It's also a top priority for the Army and the joint base has received several hundred million dollars in funding specifically for barracks."

JBM-HH is using a portion of the money to construct and renovate Building 416 and Barracks 248 on the installation, improving the quality of life for nearly 1,000 Marines and Soldiers living on the joint base.

## The Swing Space Barracks

Construction on the new barracks is set to begin in January 2025, but now that site is home to the Swing Space Barracks project, which IMCOM and AMC funded through the FIP.

The temporary living space will provide 120 Marines with two-bedroom suites and common areas such as dayrooms, laundry rooms and kitchens.

The living quarters ensure Marines find safety, companionship with other service members while away from home, and a no-cost living situation while renovations at Building 416, known as the Marine Barracks, are underway.

The temporary, relocatable barracks are going up at 406 McNair Road.

Col. Bowling, Marine Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander Col. A. R. Winthrop, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other joint base leaders broke ground Sept. 15 on the Swing Space Barracks.

"Quality of life issues are one of the most significant variables that determine whether a Marine elects to stay beyond their initial contract," said Col. Winthrop. "The upcoming renovation of Building 416 will pay tremendous long-term dividends and demonstrate that the Joint Base team is committed to the future success of our Marines assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps."

Meanwhile, the Marine Barracks will get a much-needed renovation to include repairing and upgrading the HVAC, roof, electrical, pumping, interior fixtures, and regrading the center courtyard.

The building will have 120 bedspaces at the expected completion date of May 2025.

Barracks 248, which houses Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Regiment, will see repairs and upgrades to the HVAC, electrical, pumping and reconfigure the building with a 140 square foot bedroom with 32 square foot closet per service member, a shared bathroom, and a common area with kitchenette.





Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Commander, Col. David Bowling, and Marine Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander, Col. Andrew Winthrop, broke ground on the Swing Space Barracks Project on Sept. 15, which will allow for renovations and improvements to the Marine barracks on the installation. (Photo by Sherry Kuiper, JBM-HH Public Affairs Office)

The project is expected to be completed in October 2024. It will maintain the historic look of the outside of the building while upgrading the interior to a more modern standard, updating HVAC and adding two more bedspaces.

Service members living in barracks on the joint base also have the Army Maintenance Activity app and website, also known as ArMa, to quickly submit any issues they are having in the barracks along with pictures.

“This is a great tool to ensure we are providing our service members with

the quality housing they deserve,” said Eric Cope, director of Public Works at the joint base. “This allows us to communicate with Soldiers and Marines living on the joint base, track their maintenance requests and address them in a timely manner.”

### **Sustaining for the future**

Housing is a focus for Secretary Wormuth, who has been touring barracks facilities and speaking out about the challenges.



(Courtesy photos from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

“I think we have underinvested a little bit in housing, and so that is something that I am really, really focused on,” said Wormuth during the recent Maneuver Warfighting Conference at Fort Benning. “I want to make sure that our soldiers — that you all and that your families have quality housing to live in. And that’s an area [where] I think we’ve got work to do.”

Secretary Wormuth went on to say that for decades there was not as much focus on the infrastructure of military bases.

“With everything that we were doing in the last 20 years, where the focus was so much downrange, you know, we probably were not paying as close attention to our own infrastructure as we are right now,” said Wormuth.

Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston echoed those concerns in an October Army Times interview, saying that having timely, adequate, predictable and sustained funding are key in dealing with the challenges surrounding barracks.



Renderings of the new barracks that is expected to begin construction in January 2025, which will be two new buildings with space for 200 Service Members. (Courtesy photos from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

“We are working very hard on this,” said Grinston during the interview. “We’ll average over a billion a year through 2030 to build, renovate and sustain our barracks.”

A preventive maintenance program has been developed at the joint base to keep buildings at the current level of quality once repairs and construction are complete.

“We have new contracts in place for HVAC preventative maintenance, as well as for flooring, roofing, and painting,” said Cope. “We believe

effective preventative maintenance reduces unscheduled issues and improves quality of life for our Soldiers and Marines.”

Army leaders recognize that by renovating the barracks into sufficient living spaces, they keep their promise to improve the quality of life for service members. The investments into the barracks are part of IMCOM and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall’s commitment to the Army’s ‘People First’ initiative, which will benefit service members for years to come on America’s Post.



(Courtesy photos from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)



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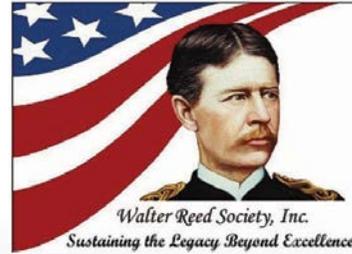
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# Joint base welcomes new deputy commander

**Sherry Kuiper**

JBM-HH Public Affairs

A Marine heavy helicopter pilot has landed as the new deputy commander at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

Lt. Col. John Dexter took the helm as deputy joint base commander in early September.

## Supporting the joint base

Dexter holds the distinction of being the only Marine deputy joint base commander.

With 12 joint bases in the Department of Defense, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall is the only one with the Marine Corps.



Lt. Col. Dexter supported airborne wildfire fighting operations in Southern California in July 2014. Dexter says short of supporting troops in combat, this is one of the most fulfilling things he has done as a Marine aviator.

(Photo courtesy from Lt. Col. John Dexter)

Dexter says his primary duty will be to support the commanding officer and looks forward to applying his energy and talents where needed.

“I will focus on the installation itself,” said Dexter. “Facilities, barracks, the Child Development Center and ensuring the tenants have what they need to succeed.”

This new role is a stark contrast to his time as a Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron executive officer.

## Choosing a life of service

Growing up in Norfolk, Virginia, home of the largest U.S. naval station, and with a father who retired from the Navy, military life surrounded Dexter.

“I always thought military service was a good way to give back to the country I live in,” said Dexter.

September 11th also influenced that decision when he graduated high school in 2002, the first graduating class following the terrorist attacks.

“Coming from a highly military town and a military family created the perfect storm for me to join,” Dexter reflected.

It wasn’t the Navy that a young John Dexter wanted to join; it was the United States Marine Corps.

“The Marines have always been the branch of service that is always in the thick of things,” said Dexter. “Their mission was aligned with what I want to contribute back to this nation.”

Dexter said when he joined the military, he wanted to be a Marine first and would be happy with any job he was good at, which happened to be aviation.



Lt. Col. John Dexter and his crew approach an M777 howitzer for external lift training in June 2014 aboard Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Center, 29 Palms, California. (Photo courtesy from Lt. Col. John Dexter)

When he joined, it just so happened there was a need for pilots in the Marine Corps: A fitting job for someone who grew up hearing the sounds of jet planes and helicopters at Naval Station Norfolk, which conducts an average of 275 air operations each day.

Ultimately Dexter became a CH-53E Super Stallion pilot, flying the largest helicopter in the military's inventory and completing 3,000 flight hours throughout his aviation career.

While Dexter did serve in combat in Afghanistan, providing assault support and transporting troops, his most impactful mission as a Marine happened here at home.

In 2013-2014 Dexter flew helicopters supporting fire crews battling wildfires in southern California.

"It was one of the more fulfilling things I have done as an aviator," he said.

### **Importance of community**

While nothing has surprised him yet at JBM-HH, Dexter is looking at installation operations with a new lens and realizing just how important something like a CDC is to any installation.



Lt. Col. Dexter and fellow pilots with HMH-466; all whom had previously been Dexter's students while serving as a flight school instructor. L to R: Capt. Kristi Scinto, Capt. Richard Trammell, Lt. Col. Dexter, Capt. Ethan Woolsey, Capt. Andreas Kanya, Capt. Patrick Finley. (Photo courtesy from Lt. Col. John Dexter)

“The CDC is a huge asset to the base and isn’t necessarily the thing people think of as critical infrastructure to the installation,” said Dexter. “Getting a peek behind the curtain and seeing how vital it is to keep the joint base up and running; If the CDC shuts down, many people will not be able to get to work.”

The deputy commander spends a lot of time building relations with the local community and Arlington County, both of which have a long history with the joint base.

That includes building the relationship between the Army and the Marine Corps.

Dexter will take up finalizing a Memorandum of Agreement between the two branches to refine the relationship as a joint base and to maximize resources to support the mission and the service members who live and work here.

His answer was easy when asked what he looks forward to most as deputy joint base commander.

“I am excited to be a part of the team.”

To read Lt. Col. Dexter’s full bio, go to the joint base website at [home.army.mil/jbmmh](http://home.army.mil/jbmmh) and click on the leadership tab in the menu.



When commissioned as an officer in the Marine Corps, Dexter was sworn in by his father, U.S. Navy Capt. Stephen Dexter, in Fairfax, VA on Jan. 20, 2007.

(Photo courtesy from Lt. Col. John Dexter)

Right page: Victory photo after flying this aircraft from Okinawa, Japan to Busan, Korea for depot level maintenance.

L to R: Capt. Karah Jaeb, Cpl. Wade Kirkpatrick, Lt. Col. Dexter, Gunnery Sgt. Jack Heimbach.

(Photo courtesy from Lt. Col. John Dexter)





Three young women attending the Fairfax Police Department K9 Krawl 5K Oct. 15 in Fairfax, Virginia put the swag bag from The Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Family Advocacy Program to good use. FAP participates in several outreach events throughout the year in an effort to inform local communities about the program. (Photo courtesy of Kaitlin Mitchell)

# Family Advocacy Program – Building better military families

**Denise Caskey**  
JBM-HH Public Affairs

One thing a Soldier can count on is change and the stress that comes with it.

Between deployments and changing of duty stations, a Soldier will typically move every two or three years. Being in a new place and not knowing what resources are available or where to go to find help, all bring a certain amount of stress.

For a Soldier with a family who is also going through these changes, the stress can get overwhelming, and sometimes it can boil over into a domestic violence situation.

The Family Advocacy Program at JBM-HH wants to help before it reaches that point, and if there is an incident, with the recovery.

## What is the Family Advocacy Program?

“The Family Advocacy Program is a domestic violence and child abuse prevention, intervention and treatment program,” said Lisa Barber, director of FAP. “We address domestic violence, child abuse and neglect and problematic sexual behavior in children. In the Army it’s divided into two different facilities. We [prevention and intervention] are part of Army Community Services, and then the treatment is part of the [U.S. Army Andrew] Rader [Health] Clinic.”



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FAP victim advocate Kaitlin Mitchell said FAP is sometimes called the “career ender” in military circles but emphasized that could not be further from the truth.

“We’re all about healthy, happy relationships,” she said. “Our ultimate goal is to make military families feel healthy, safe, secure, confident, comfortable and as resilient as possible given everything they go through. We want them to understand what healthy relationships are, and if they don’t feel healthy and they don’t feel safe, here is what we can do to help.”

If an incident does occur, it is referred to clinicians at the Rader Clinic who will conduct a comprehensive assessment through interviews with both the victim and alleged abuser and information from others with knowledge of the incident. Following the assessment, intervention and treatment plans are created and recommendations for support services are provided to the family.

“The goal is to engage families in treatment to eliminate risk and address safety concerns,” said Lt. Cmdr. with the U.S. Public Health Services Commissioned Corps Vickie Ellis, clinician and chief of FAP at the Rader Clinic. “Appropriate referrals are made for additional services such as behavioral health, new parent support, and educational classes. Treatment plans may include individual counseling, couples counseling and domestic violence groups.

“Studies show that families engaging in treatment are less likely to repeat domestic violent incidents due to developing healthy coping and communication skills,” she added.

JBM-HH FAP faces a unique set of challenges because of where it’s located and who the base serves.

“In our purview, we’re responsible for Fort Myer, Fort McNair, the Pentagon, the White House and the National Guard,” said Barber.

“There’s a lot of connection,” said Prevention Education Advocate Donna Frye. “When you’re talking about JBM-HH, FAP overall is a unique program, but here it’s unique because we have so many outreaches and so many connections. If you go to Fort Bragg, Camp Pendleton, or any of those other places, it’s all contained. They know where their Soldiers are. They live on base and that’s pretty much what it is. Here, they’re everywhere. There’s really no definition. You can’t define and you can’t contain where JBM-HH is, so that makes it unique.”

### Skills to deal with stress

With practice in skills like anger management and active listening, most incidents of domestic violence can be avoided. As the prevention education advocate, Frye offers a variety of classes, usually two or three a month, that are open to anyone carrying a government ID card.

“On the prevention side, what we’re trying to do is teach people skills, tools and methods, so if situations come up, it doesn’t turn into something that has to go to the Victim Advocacy Program,” said Frye.

The classes are offered through Microsoft Teams, and Frye said they have been successful. So successful, in fact, that she has had to specify the time zone in which the classes are being held.

However, Frye added, she does wish she could get more engagement from Soldiers on the Fort Myer and Fort McNair campuses.

The classes are also open to Marines from the Henderson Hall campus.

“We collaborate [with Henderson Hall] on activities, outreach and community engagement,” said Mitchell, but she pointed out that if there was a case of domestic violence reported, the victim advocate at Henderson Hall would need to get involved.

“We can also offer troop trainings about healthy relationships,” Barber added. “We seldom get any takers for that, but we do offer it to the units. We’d like to do more of that.”

### New Parent Support Program

Through FAP, parents of children ages zero to three can connect with licensed professionals who will support them every step of the way.

Army families expecting a new baby can request a home visit and through the visit, Jennifer Johnson, a NPSP home visitor and registered nurse, can assess the strengths and needs of the growing family.

“Home visits are guided by the parents and what they are interested in learning about or needing help with,” said Johnson. “For example, many times we provide information on growth and development pertaining to their child’s current age, how to begin potty training, and safety in the home. We work with parents to set achievable goals in order to help them with feelings of isolation and to promote self-care and positive parenting.”

Johnson has organized a playgroup for parents of infants and young children which meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month at the JBM-HH library and is open to families with children up to age five. The playgroup offers enriching activities for the children, and it also provides parents with an opportunity to meet and connect with other military parents, helping them build connections and grow their support system, as well as ease feelings of isolation.

“A lot of these young soldiers don’t have a parent nearby to guide them along the way, and the new parent support program kind of does that,” said Frye. “It kind of guides them for three years. How awesome is that? [Jennifer] is an unbelievable source for someone who is brand new at this.”

### Victim Advocacy Program

Through FAP’s 24-hour hotline, victims of domestic abuse can connect with Mitchell or Jennifer Marsh who can help with reporting or creating a safety plan.

“I would say safety planning is 70 percent of what we do,” said Mitchell. “If someone’s calling, it’s a safety plan. It’s talking about the what ifs. If they’re safe, that’s great, but let’s talk about if the situation



Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Family Advocacy Program set a table at Fairfax Police Department K9 Krawl 5K Oct. 15 in Fairfax, VA.

becomes unsafe. ‘How can we plan for that? What can you set aside? Who do you have in your circle that you can connect with?’ Things like that.”

If a violent incident occurs, using VAP is optional. Mitchell said if someone goes through a traumatic event, they should not feel like they need a victim advocate, but she and Marsh are always happy to help and be there for support.

“We want them to feel like they have military support,” she said. “We’ll get them connected to civilian victim advocates too because you can never have enough people who care about how you’re doing. We want to encourage people and we want them to know that they can talk to us.

“Ideally, they never have to talk to Jenny and me,” said Mitchell, but she stressed that she and Marsh are always there if someone needs help.

### **Transition Compensation Program for Abuse Dependents**

If someone finds themselves the victim of domestic abuse at the hands of a military spouse, they may be able to get financial assistance through the Transition Compensation Program for Abuse Dependents.

Compensation is an option when the offender is being released from the Army because of the domestic violence. Their separation orders must specify domestic violence as the reason for their separation.

The benefit offers financial compensation and covers the healthcare of the family for up to three years. It also includes access to the exchange and commissary.

If the offender simply changes their duty station, victims will not qualify for compensation.

The application is lengthy and can take several months to complete. There are also no guarantees that compensation will be approved.

“If it’s something that someone qualifies for, it can be tremendously life changing in terms of helping them get on their feet and feeling secure, comfortable and safe,” said Mitchell.

Change is the common thread that binds all military life together. The uncertainty of change will impact people in a variety of ways, and FAP is available to offer support and help navigate the rough waters of change so that, in the end, it doesn’t turn into a domestic violence situation.

If you are in a situation and you feel you need help, contact the 24-hour hotline at (703) 919-1611.



The Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Generals line up for the presentation of the colors by the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) and the singing of the National Anthem before the Battle of the Bases championship softball game Oct. 24 at Nationals Park in Washington D.C. From left to right: Head coach Richard Pulignani, Assistant coach 1st Lt. Carrie Reilly, Assistant coach Spc. Joshua Latimer, Sgt. Marshall Brooks, Sgt. Reece Urban, Pfc. Anthony Rollison, Cpt. Peter Olson, Pfc. Baylor Rowlett, Spc. Brock Emery, Sgt. 1st Class Brian Gougler, Spc. Samuel Fletcher, Spc. Logan Kendrick, Staff Sgt. Kyle Middleton, Spc. Kaylee Johnson, Sgt. Miguel Garza, Pfc. Christian Oswalt, Sgt. Jacob Sanlin, 1st Lt. Adam Reed, Spc. Eric Dizewieki and Sgt. 1st Class John Parks. (Photos by Denise Caskey)

# The Battle of the Bases

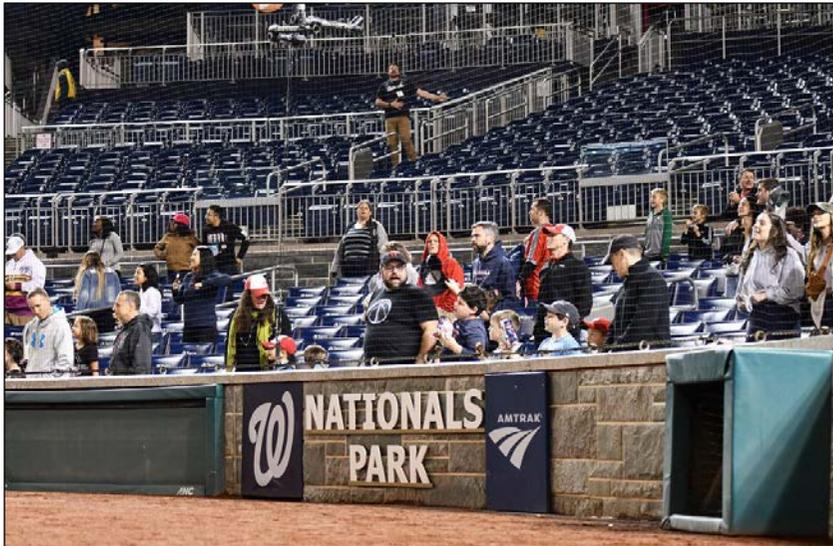
**Denise Caskey**  
JBM-HH Public Affairs

Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall sent two teams to the Battle of the Bases softball tournament. The 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) did not survive past the elimination rounds, but the Generals played hard and earned a spot in the championship softball game played Oct. 24 at Nationals Park.

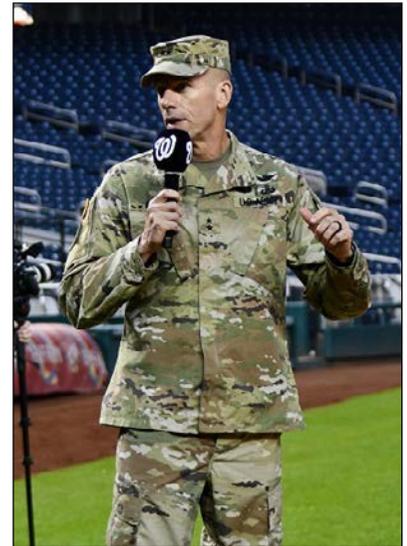
To kick off the event, the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment Continental Color Guard presented the colors while Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Pattison sang the National Anthem. Then, local legend and

retired Washington Nationals player, Ryan Zimmerman, threw the ceremonial first pitch to Col. Ryan A. Zietler from Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling.

The Generals came out swinging, scoring six runs in the first inning, but their rival, the Joint Base Andrews Hot Stuff, proved too hot to handle. With the first Battle of the Bases over-the-fence homerun, JBA Tech. Sgt. Garrett Rayfield would seal the Generals' fate. The Hot Stuff would claim the 11-9 victory. In addition to throwing out the first pitch, Zimmerman spent time chatting with the teams during the game and presented Joint Base Andrews with the championship trophy following their win.



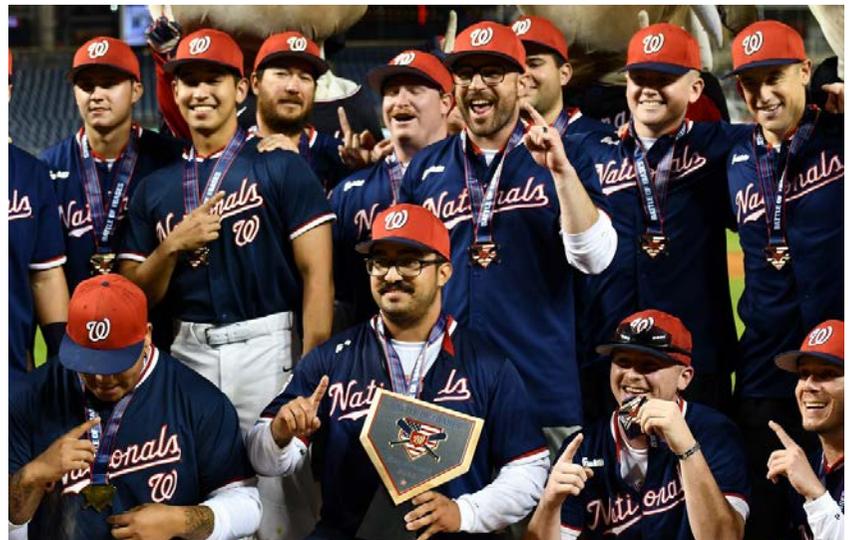
A crowd of friends, family and coworkers gathered to watch the game.



Maj. Gen. Allan Pepin makes an address.



Pfc. Anthony Rollison waits at first base.



Joint Base Andrews Hot Stuff shows off the championship trophy, medals after the game.



Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Pattison sings the National Anthem.



Ryan Zimmerman, stands with Col. Ryan A. Zietler from Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling.



Spc. Brock Emery smacks the ball out to right field.



My extended family and I pose for a photo at the biannual Steadham reunion at Steadham Chapel in Atmore, Alabama Sunday, Oct. 2. (Photo courtesy Rachel Everett)

## Commentary: Army civilian reflects on Poarch Creek ancestry

**Rachel Everett**  
JBM-HH Public Affairs

I can still feel the hard church pew on a pleasantly warm day with the aroma of southern cooking filling the air. It is a moment etched in my memory as twice a year, my extended family and I attend a reunion at Steadham Chapel on the Poarch Creek Indian Reservation in Atmore, Alabama.

We come from all walks of life – some have served in the military, others have passed down the stories from previous generations about how they walked tumultuous Trail of Tears from Alabama to Oklahoma, but regardless, we all have one commonality: We all share Poarch Creek native ancestry.

Although I don't resemble my mother's side of the family with the olive skin tone and dark hair, I still have native Poarch Creek Indian blood

running through my veins. The blood lines of the Band of Poarch Creek people have expanded over the centuries.

According to a Department of the Interior federal report on the anthropological genealogy of the Poarch Creek people, several core families derived from a community of ‘half-bloods,’ or descendants of marriages between the Creeks and white residents within the nation, who settled in the Northwest corner of Escambia County, Alabama in the early 18th century.

They remained in Alabama both during and after the vast majority of Creeks were removed to Indian Territory in the 1830’s. One of the core families of the highly intermarried Poarch Creek Community that remained was that of Lynn McGhee of whom I am a direct descendant. Many of his descendants are buried in the Steadham Chapel cemetery.

As I walk through the church cemetery while attending the biannual reunion, I read the names of those who are a part of the family, and often reflect on what they have experienced throughout their lifetimes: The Fort Mims Massacre, the harsh removal from their lands, formal educational challenges as well as the fight for equal rights.

Despite all of this, on August 11, 1948, the United States formally acknowledged the Poarch Creek people as an “Indian Tribe.” It is one of 573 federally recognized Indian Nations and its flag hangs proudly in the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. The nation’s flag is described in detail by tribal member Larry Jackson’s poem “Tribal Symbol” which reads,

*“Red stands for the red sticks a fighting man  
He would fight to the death for his land  
The white in the feather meant a friendly clan  
They lived near the water and played in the sand  
The circle of gold stands for the place we live  
With a lovely sunset  
And the land has so much to give*

*Green is for the color of the corn and the trees  
Corn for life and trees for seed  
Direction of travel is shown by the logs  
No matter which you take  
It must come from the heart  
The line of blood is in the vein.  
Throughout all the nations, all is not the same  
The feathers are the nations, nations of two  
Lifestyles are different, but the words are true”*

Over the years I have embraced my Poarch Creek heritage and am honored to be a part of the only federally recognized tribe in the state of Alabama. I believe it is important for all indigenous people to learn more about their heritage as they will be the ones to ensure the rich cultures and traditions live on.

For more information about the Poarch Creek tribe visit <https://pci-nsn.gov/>.



My great grandmother Dorothy Purvis and I pose for a photo in December 2004. (Photo courtesy Rachel Everett)



Burn survivors mingle with members of the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment's Drill Team following their performance at Burn Camp. (Photo courtesy of Rachel Everett)

# IAFF Burn Camp returns to Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall

**Rachel Everett**  
JBM-HH Public Affairs

Nearly 100 burn survivors visited Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall's Fort Myer fire station Sept. 28 as part of the International Association of Firefighters sponsored Burn Camp held annually in Washington D.C. The all expenses paid, week-long camp helps burn survivors understand that they are not alone and that there is a larger support system for them. It serves as a life changing opportunity for burn

survivors, camp counselors and firefighters to make a difference in the lives of young people.

The visit marked the 17th year that the JBM-HH firefighters hosted Burn Camp on the installation, and provided the opportunity for burn survivors to learn about the unique mission at the joint base. Deputy Joint Base Commander Lt. Col. John Dexter expanded on the mission of the joint base in his opening remarks to the campers prior to the day's activities.



IAFF Burn Camp burn survivors and camp counselors pose for a group photo at the Arlington Memorial Amphitheater following their wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. (Photo courtesy of Rachel Everett)

“As a joint command, our mission is to work as one, with all services coming together,” said Dexter. “All of you here today are a great example of that. You have come together in a show of strength and support for each other and all the other campers, firefighters, and camp counselors across the U.S. and Canada. I know Chief Miller and this great group of firefighters have some exciting things lined up for you.”

The activities for the campers consisted of performances by the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment’s Fife and Drum Corps, Drill Team and The U.S. Army Band. One camper, 17-year-old Daunte from Richmond, Virginia said that although he had visited the nation’s capital many times, he had never seen ceremonial performances. “I thought it was really cool and unique,” he said. Daunte and many of the other campers

mingled with the service members after their performances, inquiring about the drill team bayonets and Fife and Drum corps instruments.

After enjoying a homestyle barbecue lunch prepared by the firefighters, the campers and counselors departed the joint base for the second half of the day’s activities, which included a visit to Arlington National Cemetery. This was one of the activities Kendall, a 17-year-old camper from Fresno, California, was especially excited about as this was her first-time visiting Washington D.C. “I’m looking forward to touring Arlington National Cemetery and the wreath laying,” she said. “I think it’s a huge honor that we are able to do the things we are able to do.”

To see photos from this year’s event visit [www.flickr.com/photos/jbm-hh/albums/72177720302492018](http://www.flickr.com/photos/jbm-hh/albums/72177720302492018).

# Boost in morale

BOSS program aims to improve quality of life for single Soldiers

**Denise Caskey**

JBM-HH Public Affairs

Established 1989, BOSS, or Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, tries to answer the question, “How do you raise the morale of a unit?”

One key component of the BOSS program is organizing engaging leisure and recreational activities.

“The biggest thing we do is plan trips for single Soldiers, and it gets them out of their barracks room and gets them doing things they wouldn’t be doing normally,” said Sgt. Jacob Lopez, president of the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall BOSS program. “It breaks up the mundane day-to-day life for the soldiers.”

Recent activities have included a trip to Marine Base Quantico for an afternoon of paint ball, skydiving at the DC Skydiving Center in Midland, Virginia and a kayaking tour around the shipwrecks in Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary.

Some of the activities are paid for by the Soldiers, but BOSS is careful to make sure that there is some sort of military discount in place at the venues they choose. Otherwise funding for BOSS activities comes from a variety of sources. The skydiving and paint ball trips, for example, were paid for using funds donated by the Post Thrift store.

“Sometimes we don’t get the full amount, but we appreciate whatever is donated or given to us in grant money and sponsorship money to offset the cost to service members,” said BOSS advisor Tonya Clark.

## Single Marines Program puts Marine wellbeing first

Young Marines at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall have someone in their corner in the form of the Single Marines Program.

“It really has to do with Marine wellbeing, said Anna Leonovich, the SMP Coordinator, “so the idea of taking care of our own people.”

Taking care of a Marine means making sure they have an outlet for problems they may be facing, such as making sure gym hours are accommodating or issues with their barracks are being addressed and resolved.

“I don’t necessarily have any authority over making sure their stuff is taken care of at the barracks,” said Leonovich. “I can pass it along to the right people and add some extra momentum behind it, and make sure they know how to report things correctly and that they’re following up. I’m just an extra person in their corner really.”

Their wellbeing is also addressed through access to recreation and volunteer activities. Whether it’s a movie night or an activity that takes young Marines off base for a bit of fun, “we want to make sure all of our young Marines have something to do and that they’re not just sitting in their barracks room,” Leonovich said.

Among the volunteer opportunities for young Marines, and in keeping with their competitive spirit, SMP hosts a weeklong Days of Service event, usually in April, in which the Marines from JBM-HH compete with Marines from other bases to see which base can log the most volunteer hours.

SMP meets at 3 p.m. every other Wednesday at the Marine barracks and anyone is welcome to attend.



Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers took 22 soldiers on Aug. 26 to the DC Skydiving Center in Midland, Virginia, where they were strapped to an instructor for tandem dives. During a freefall from 10,500 feet, soldiers reached speeds of 120 miles per hour before their instructor opened the parachute. (Photo courtesy of BOSS)

Also, because JBM-HH is an Army and Marine joint base, BOSS frequently partners with the Single Marines Program to coordinate joint activities, and although opportunities for joint activities has been suspended because of COVID-19, Lopez said he is looking forward to seeing them start up again.

Participating in community and volunteer activities is also part of the foundation of BOSS.

“A lot of people don’t realize that when they do give to their community and when they do help out, it raises their morale. I’ve noticed this specifically in the past when I have done community service; I have definitely felt better at the end of the day, like ‘Hey! I actually did something to help people around me who may not have it as good as I do,’” said Lopez.

Helping people is one of the reasons Lopez got involved in BOSS. He said when he was first pulled into the program he thought it would be a good learning experience, but the more he thought about it, the more he could see that through BOSS he could have a positive impact on his fellow Soldiers.

“I know people have been dealing with a lot of hard times, especially with COVID. I know it brought a lot of people down and if there’s something I can do to help fix that, I’m always willing to try,” he said.

“My biggest goal is to improve Soldiers’ quality of life,” he added. “I’ve been on the front lines of dealing with Soldiers’ issues and their personal day-to-day life for the past three years as their leader in some way, and I’ve been very acquainted with a lot of the issues they go through. I think it’s kind of a vicious cycle where they come home and they’re depressed or down and they do destructive things that make them fall even deeper into a hole, and then they go to work and they get torn down even more and they just repeat that cycle over and over. If I can do something to interrupt that a little and kind of put some positivity into their lives and bring them up, I think that will go a long way.”

BOSS meetings are usually held the third Wednesday of every month in the Community Activities Center ballroom, Building 405, and are open to all service members.

“If you even consider going on a trip, I would highly recommend you do so,” said Lopez. “Just trying new things... I know a lot people kind of get stuck in those routines where they eat the same food, they do the same thing after work. They’re kind of in this schedule where it’s not going to be broken. If you just kind of change it a little bit you can find things you really enjoy that you might not have ever thought about.”



BOSS participated in a bicycle tour Aug. 20 hosted by Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation around the National Mall in Washington D.C. where they visited places like the Washington Monument. (Photo courtesy of BOSS)

# Serving the Military Community...



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