

PENTAGRAM

JOINT BASE MYER — HENDERSON HALL

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Welcome message from JBM-HH Public Affairs



Rachel Everett
Public Affairs Specialist

Greetings again from Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall – “America’s Post.” I am delighted to introduce to you our latest edition of the Pentagongram Magazine.

In this issue, we bid farewell to deputy joint base commander Lt. Col. Mark Paolicelli, highlight education and career opportunities for service members, spouses and veterans, and give you tips for staying safe during hurricane season. On behalf of the entire Public Affairs team, I welcome you to connect with us to discuss future content you would like to see in the Pentagongram Magazine. Our next issue will feature holiday events and safety tips.

Lastly, please join us in welcoming our new Pentagongram editor, Denise Caskey, who previously worked at Stars and Stripes.

Clockwise on the cover: Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall commander David Bowling and deputy commander Lt. Col. Mark Paolicelli attend the USO gala reception June 9. Capt. Mark Paolicelli sits with his staff from Battery K, 3d Battalion, 12th Marine regiment on Red Beach 1 at Iwo Jima in February 2006. Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall deputy commander Lt. Col. Paolicelli greets President Biden at Marine One on Fort McNair and escorts him to his motorcade August 23, 2021. Lt. Col. Mark Paolicelli stands beside a British Soldier during a combat operation in Afghanistan in 2011.

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Former Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall commander Col. Kimberly Peeples and joint base commander Lt. Col. Mark Paolicelli present a Purple Heart to John H'LeBar during the Twilight Tattoo performance in July 2018.

Deputy Commander reflects on experience, career

Alice Swan

Contributing Writer

When Lt. Col. Mark Paolicelli turns over his duties at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall to Lt. Col. John Dexter this month, he will do so as the longest-serving deputy commander for the base, having been on the leadership team for more than four years.

As just the sixth deputy since

the joint base was established, Paolicelli has helped guide the installation through several crises that made his time at JBM-HH not only challenging but rewarding.

From addressing infrastructure and housing issues, supporting state funerals and ceremonies, addressing child care staffing challenges, increasing the base's security posture, coordinating installation construction projects,

to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, the JBM-HH staff has tackled some very difficult and complex problems and have consistently accomplished the mission, Paolicelli said.

"Regardless of what challenges this team faces, everybody comes together, rolls up their sleeves, gets to work and figures out how to solve them. Being a part of that has been an honor," he said.

Reflecting on his 29-year Marine Corps career, which will officially end Dec. 1, Paolicelli shared stories on how he became a Marine, the people who influenced his leadership style and his thoughts on his time at JBM-HH.

As you look back on the past four years, what were your expectations originally, and what are your feelings now?

When I came into the job in 2018, I didn't know much about the position, but it has been beyond my wildest dreams and expectations. We are the only Army-Marine joint base in the Department of Defense, and to be the deputy commander here is a privilege. I am not only representing JBM-HH but also the Marine Corps. And I'm okay being the only Marine surrounded by a bunch of Soldiers. Some of the best leaders I've served with have been in this command – Brig. Gen. Kimberly Peeples and now Col. David Bowling, who are both incredible leaders and two of the best bosses I've ever worked for. The leadership and guidance they provided has kept a steady state for this base through some challenging times.

JBM-HH has become a special place for me and my family. My daughter has been at the Cody Child Development Center since she was infant, and the phenomenal staff there have helped raise her. My wife is a dietitian in the Army Reserve and supported The

Andrew Rader U.S. Army Health Clinic on her reserve duty. My family is very invested in this place; it's not just a bunch of buildings behind a fence line. This is a home for us.

What were some of the biggest challenges you faced in your time at JBM-HH?

Obviously COVID-19 was a challenge for everybody. We couldn't shut the base down; we had to stay open and provide services in a pandemic and virtual environment. We were able to come together and figure out how to do that in safe manner. I am very proud that we kept our CDC open through the pandemic to assist mission-critical personnel, keeping the staff and kids safe.

I am also proud of how our team handled an Arlington Public Schools rezoning proposal that was going to move many of our military children to a different elementary school. After gathering data, our team successfully advocated for our families in front of the school board and superintendent, and got our kids grandfathered into Long Branch Elementary School, where they were already zoned. Ultimately, we aligned with the new school, Fleet Elementary, once it was open, but our priority was to make sure our families were taken care of, and that they didn't have any additional stressors. Military kids go through enough turmoil and change, and

this one was avoidable. Since then, we have developed a strong relationship with APS, meeting with the superintendent once a quarter.

Was a military career always in your plans while growing up?

If it wasn't for the Army, I wouldn't be here. My father enlisted in the Army at age 18 in 1969, because he wanted to go to Vietnam. But the Army sent him to Korea where he met my mom and they got married. At a young age, I saw my father's Class A uniform hanging in a closet and thought it was the coolest thing. Growing up, I knew I wanted to be in the military and an officer. But the road to reaching this goal wasn't easy.

I am the product of perseverance. At the end of my freshman year at Norwich University, my grades weren't great. I went with my father to the local recruiting offices, where a U.S. Marine Corps recruiter told me about a program that would keep me in school and allow me to train in the summers. If my grades went up and I proved myself in training, then I could apply for Officer Candidate School. So I did just that, taking a semester off from college and going to Marine boot camp in 1993. When I went back to school, my grades improved, and I was drilling every month in the reserves. And in the end, I got accepted to OCS when I graduated.



Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall deputy commander Lt. Col. Mark Paolicelli poses with his wife Courtney and daughter Molly after the Twilight Tattoo performance June 1.

What have been some highlights of your Marine Corps career?

Because I started as an infantryman and eventually became artillery officer, I've been presented with a lot of unique opportunities both on and off the battlefield. I had seven deployments, including four combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. The combat tours are what we train for, and nothing can compare to leading a group of Marines into harm's way, doing your job and bringing them all home.

I also had three noncombat tours, one of which included a humanitarian mission to the

Philippines in 2006. For that mission, my unit was called in to help with a massive mudslide that destroyed an entire village. We worked closely with the Philippine Army, doing everything we could to rescue survivors. Working around the clock to help a community in need was something I'll never forget.

Last but not least, as deputy commander for JBM-HH, I can honestly say that this position has put the exclamation point on the end of my career. Not only have I had the opportunity to meet two U.S. Presidents and liaise with senior military leaders, but moreover, I've been surrounded and supported by

some of the most dedicated and committed public servants I've ever had the pleasure of working with.

Besides Col. Bowling and Brig. Gen. Peeples, are there other leaders who had an impact on you?

Two of my Marine Corps bosses definitely stand out: Lt. Col. Mike Frazier and Lt. Col. Mike Grice.

Lt. Col. Frazier was my battalion commander with 2nd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, and I served as one of his artillery battery commanders as a captain. I always appreciated how he issued clear guidance and set very high standards but also put a lot of trust in his Marines and was receptive to our questions.

He also prioritized the physical and emotional well-being of his Marines, to the point that our former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Dunford, once commented to me how impressed he was that Lt. Col. Frazier clearly had a connection with his Marines, because we all have kept in touch for so many years after we served together. While we were in Iraq, he wrote a personal letter to the parents of all his Marines to explain the mission, thank them and say it is an honor serving with their son. After my father received this letter, he had it framed and kept it in

his office until he passed away. Knowing how much this letter meant to my dad, I decided to do the same thing when I became a major and deployed to Afghanistan. Lt. Col. Frazier taught me the importance of taking those extra steps and letting the people you work with know you care about them and their families.

The other leader who had a positive impact on me is Lt. Col. Mike Grice. Lt. Col. Grice was my commander when I was with 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company and is honestly one of the most intelligent and caring officers I have ever served with. It should come as no surprise that he is another Frazier-trained officer. He balances book smarts with empathy and emotional intelligence. Even in his retirement, he still cares very much about his troops, and although it's been over a decade since I served with him, I still get text messages from him checking in to see how I am doing and how my family is doing.

Both of these gentlemen took the extra steps to look after their folks. If you have a boss who cares about you, you are going to make the extra effort because you want to - not because you have to. This has inspired me to be a caring leader, lead by example, provide good guidance and lead with empathy.

As you make the transition to civilian life, what have you learned about that journey?

First and foremost, I want to underscore that transitioning out of the military is a journey, and not destination. All service members need to know that there are some great programs and support services available to help them along this journey, and I urge people to leverage these programs as they exit the military. No one should do this alone. Furthermore, I encourage our military leaders to support their people and allow them to take advantage of programs like SkillBridge. It's on us to set our service members up for success in the next phase of their life, and fortunately, we have the resources available to do that.

Speaking of great resources and programs, I was fortunate to participate in one of the SkillBridge programs led by the International City/County Management Association. Through my ICMA fellowship, I had the opportunity to work for the City of Alexandria, alongside the city manager, Mr. Jim Parajon. I found that there are a lot of similarities between running a city and running a base, and this fellowship gave me an opportunity to experience local government firsthand. I am grateful that Col. Bowling was

willing to give up his deputy for two months so I could have this experience. His support speaks volumes about his leadership and commitment to ensuring transitioning service members have every opportunity to be successful after they exit the military.

What's next for you and your family?

While nothing is set in stone at the moment, I do know I will continue to serve in some capacity, whether at the federal or local government level.

Do you have any final words for your JBM-HH team?

I can't stress enough how grateful and humbled I am to have served with such a dedicated and amazing team. Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall is a small base, but we are mighty with who we support. We are a joint base, and I hope we continue to strengthen our relationship between the Army, the Marine Corps and all of our tenants and mission partners. It doesn't matter what uniform you wear or if you are a civilian; we all serve. We are one team, one family with a common purpose. If you are a part of this joint base, you are part of something special. It has been the absolute honor of my life and the highlight of my military career to serve with this team.



The 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) ceremonial drill team performs for 50 campers and counselors Sept. 30 2015 during the 12th International Association of Firefighters International Burn Camp at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

International Burn Camp to return to JBM-HH

Denise Lew
Contributing Writer

After a nearly two-year hiatus, the International Association of Fire Fighters' International Burn Camp will return to Joint Base My-

er-Henderson Hall's Fire Station Sept. 28.

The annual International Burn Camp is a transformative opportunity for burn survivors, ages 13 to 15, and the firefighters/camp counselors who work to make

a difference in their lives. Sponsored by the IAFF Burn Fund, the all-expenses paid, weeklong camp shows young survivors there is a large support system for them, and they are not alone in their struggles.

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Welcome remarks will be made by the command group, the director and fire chief from the Directorate of Emergency Services as well as the IAFF local F-253's master of ceremonies. Performances from the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) Fife and Drum Corps, U.S. Army Drill Team and the U.S. Army Band Downrange will take place, time permitting.

"After the performances, the campers and counselors will get to meet the Fife and Drum Corps and U.S. Army Drill Team members, who are looking forward to performing for and meeting with the campers

and counselors," said Russell Miller, JBM-HH fire chief.

Miller said the fire station visit provides young burn survivors a unique experience to learn about JBM-HH's special mission.

"The burn camp is an opportunity to showcase what JBM-HH does, put a smile on everyone's face and leave a lasting impression," he said.

In past years, these visits have had an impact on burn survivors, Miller said. Inspired by touring JBM-HH and the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, two burn camp alumni eventually attended the U.S. Naval Academy.

"They learned by speaking with an Army Soldier and U.S. Naval Academy cadets that their physical scars would not disqualify them from joining the U.S. military," said James Dansereau, JBM-HH fire inspector.

Miller said he and his team look forward to the visit.

"It is very important to me and our entire team at JBM-HH, from the firefighters and command team to the Fife and Drum Corps and U.S. Army Drill Team," he said. "This is an event the entire team looks forward to."



A collage of 12 images illustrating various aspects of modern military operations and personnel. The images include: a close-up of a soldier's helmet with a night vision device; a soldier looking through binoculars; a soldier's face in profile; a soldier operating a computer in a vehicle; a soldier using a handheld device; a soldier in a tank; a soldier in a gas mask; a soldier in a suit; a soldier in a gas mask; a soldier in a gas mask; a soldier in a gas mask; and a soldier in a gas mask.

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A portrait of a lady I know

Mike Howard

Contributing Writer

Let me tell a story you may not know about a lady so you can paint a portrait of her. You will have to imagine it from the words I say – okay?

Little things are missed about a person like Leah. Now is the perfect time to point out those things, because she just retired from federal service after 22 years, and I was her boss for three of them.

To pronounce Leah's last name, Rubalcaba, correctly, you must roll the "R." That's the first dab of bright color; let's make it orange on the canvas since she was raised

in El Paso, Texas, and is extremely proud of her Hispanic heritage.

We must prepare the canvas with an undercoating of subdued colors to shape a very vague outline for context to contrast the bright colors we'll put down later.

Isn't this fun?

If you are from around here, you've probably heard of our subject because she impacted the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall community mightily for many years. Leah's reach into the broader military community throughout the National Capital Region is also pretty well known. She was involved in many high-level matters.

Here is a quick wash of the first layer of color: Leah began working for Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Marketing at Fort Bliss, Texas, in 2000. Her start in Army Public Affairs was in 2003 at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, before coming to then-Fort Myer in 2005.

Fort Myer then combined with Fort McNair and eventually joined with Henderson Hall to become Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in 2009, with Leah as the community relations officer for the various garrison commands during her 18-year tenure here.

Now for one big historical detail to help add symbolic darker colors to help add shape in the undercoating: In 2008, Leah led the effort of Myer-Henderson Hall in helping plan the Centennial of Military Aviation in celebration of the Wright Brothers' 1908 flight trials at then-Fort Myer.

Another biggie, this time in a lighter tone, came in 2014. This is when Leah began hosting quarterly public open houses in the Grant Hall Court Room on Fort McNair. It was May of that year, to be exact. This followed the three-year renovation of the building and restoration of the historic courtroom where the 1865 military tribunal took place for those thought responsible for plotting to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln.



Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall community relations chief Leah Rubalcaba shakes hands with Command Sgt. Maj. Matthew Majeski at her retirement ceremony June 24.

Over the years, Leah also worked with community partners in Arlington County and Washington for community covenant signings, annual Thanksgiving luncheon cruises for single Soldiers and veterans, annual patriot picnics, annual parades, the Cherry Blossom Fireworks Festival and Holiday Boat Parade along the waterfront in Washington.

There were many, many more accomplishments that just cannot be memorialized in this painting undercoat, but I think you get the essence of undertone. You should have a sense of historical importance, service to the nation and helping our community grow.

We can spread mid-tones across the canvas to represent all these.

For any great portrait, most of the work is in this first phase. Now, let's outline the background and the portrait, which is simple.

Leah doesn't seek the limelight. She is a behind-the-scenes gal. That is the overall message of the picture. She's a very hard worker. I think you get that feeling from the colors we just laid.

Now on top of all these subdued colors and shapes, we are going to paint a large red brick building with white wood framed windows and a porch the length of the building. The American flag is posted by the door. The sign in the lawn states, "Joint Base Headquarters Building 59"

Leah, posing on the steps with her hands at her sides, wears her retirement ceremony attire: a black



Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall community relations chief Leah Rubalcaba retires after 18 years on June 24 in a ceremony at the joint base headquarters.

sweater, light patterned blouse, dark skirt, dark pumps with shoulder length dark hair and bangs and a smile.

The sky has bright blue marks in it, the grass has bright green marks, bricks bright red, and wood bright white. The colors on the sign are as equally vibrant as Leah.

Now we have our portrait, but we are not done. You see, for those 18 years Leah worked here, she worked inside this building – usually coming in at 6:30 a.m. She was the first one in the building every morning.

Now we need magic to finish this piece off.

The colors and marks must stand out to show this lady's vibrant personality, because whenever Leah walked, she walked with purpose. When she talked,

she did so with purpose. We are talking about energy that is like a volcano erupting. You simply cannot contain it. She is passionate – she believes in and is dedicated to the cause. She accepts no refusal.

Our canvas is full.

But we are not done. Leah is a walking encyclopedia of facts and figures about the military history in the region, dating back to the Civil War. It ties to her passion for the Grant Hall Courtroom trials. In fact, she can tell you how this building in our portrait used to be a hospital and about men being operated on in the garrison commander's office long ago. She even told me a secret once that she heard the ghosts of some of the men who died in the building when it was a hospital.



Former community relations chief Leah Rubalcaba stands at the entrance of Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall headquarters in a sketch created by former JBM-HH Director of Public Affairs Mike Howard. Rubalcaba served on the public affairs team for 18 years before retiring at the end of June.

I think we can make some swirly marks in white coming out of the windows like ghosts in our portrait.

Our markings must be fast with a rich pigment of thick oil paint applied to canvas with energy equal to her walking, talking and passion. These strokes must be full of energy, vigor, brightness, boldness, determination and randomness.

There must be variety and equal carefulness to let the un-

derpainting show through. These strokes must be placed from corner to corner, because they tell the story we are trying to communicate visually – and, if we have done this right, it is the story of a patriot.

One more thing. We should definitely add a big splash of bright hues to that first dab of orange —equally vibrant reds, yellows, blues, purples and greens for a surprise flower bed next to her, like a pinata, to em-

phasize her Hispanic heritage as a final touch.

As a final touch, we can put a waist-high information plaque outside the flower bed and next to the sidewalk leading to the steps where Leah stands. It gives the history of the building for visitors to read. Leah designed it and worked behind the scenes with engineers to install it in 2018.

See what we did? We created an image of a lady I know — a portrait on America's Post.



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A soldier meets with a representative from the University of Maryland Global Campus on Aug. 16 during the Military Career and Education Expo at Spates Community Club on Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

Growth in the fall

Education, Career Opportunities at the Joint Base

Katie Begley
Contributing Writer

Ready to take your education or career to the next level? The offerings at the Education Center and Transition Assistance Program at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall can help service members reach their goals and make the most of the benefits available for current or transitioning service members, veterans and their spouses.

Back to School

Whether a service member is a first-time student or wants to

add a professional credential to their resume, the resources and experts at the Education Center are available to help them. Each installation has an Education Center with trained academic counselors who focus on military benefits as well as university advisors who can help with matriculation and degree requirements.

“We enable Soldiers to sharpen their intellectual abilities. The deadliest weapon on the battlefield is a Soldier’s mind,” said Timothy Battle, chief of Education Services. “(When) they can think critically and act on those assessments, this enables them to work on that muscle and become a more functional warfighter. These things go hand-in-hand with the development of

a Soldier as a whole person, for personal endeavors and as they transition out.”

The Education Services program connects Soldiers with opportunities for skill development, professional credentials using tuition assistance and universities that provide everything from associate degrees to bachelor’s and master’s degrees and doctorates.

TaMekii Clark-Warrington is the new deputy Education Services officer and lead Education Services specialist.

“I’m excited to be able to assist across the hub, bringing all of our services together as one,” she said. “We stress the importance of being in the National Capital Region and bringing all of our services to the forefront to highlight what is offered in the area.”

Professional Development

Job seekers and those transitioning from military service have the opportunity to leverage their skills for a new career. All service members transitioning out of military service are required to attend a course called the Transition Assistance Program, or TAP.

Transition services manager Carlos Rodriguez recommends that those getting ready to separate from the military reach out 18 months before separation, and those retiring should connect with his office as early as 24 months before their retirement date. This allows them time to attend the required TAP class, work one-on-one with a counselor and take advantage of training and services that are available.

Rodriguez said TAP is extremely helpful and very comprehensive.

“We try to cover all the areas where someone transitioning out of the military will make a decision to move,” he said. “Whether they want to find employment, go back to college or go the entrepreneurship route, we have something to not only to inform them but to prepare them to move forward with whatever path and decision they make. We’re interested in making sure they have a successful transition.”

Information and programs to assist service members with the transition from military life to a civilian career include: resume writ-

ing, interview skills and job placement. Six-month skill building and apprenticeship programs as well as veteran-focused job opportunities and partnerships with top companies are available.

Workshops are available that focus on specific interests and careers and include topics such as how to open a franchise, opening a business, marketing yourself for a second career, finding and applying for federal careers and more.

TAP can also help military spouses and veterans make the most of their professional expertise

and develop new skills needed to take the next step in their career.

Service members can stop by the Education Center and TAP to meet with a counselor and find out what opportunities match their goals. They can also connect with these offices through social media by visiting: <https://www.facebook.com/fort.myer.education.center>.

The Education Services Office at JBM-HH which also serves those at the Pentagon, Fort Belvoir, and Fort Meade is located in Building 417 at 239 Sheridan Avenue. The TAP Center is located at 209 McNair Road.

EDUCATION SERVICES

Basic Skills Education Program

Service members can reclass in their military occupational specialty, or MOS, by studying to get a higher general technical, or GT, score.

Credentialing Assistance Program

Service members can use their tuition assistance funding through the Army credentialing opportunities online at: <https://intellectualpoint.com/veterans/army-cool/>.

Degree opportunities: Service members can work directly with a counselor to access military benefits and an academic advisor for degree programs, with options available for virtual, hybrid and in-person classes from a variety of universities.

Annual Joint Service Graduation Recognition Ceremony

From 10 a.m. to noon Oct. 6, all service members, family members, Department of Defense civilians, veterans, and retirees graduating from postsecondary education between August 2021 and August 2022 are invited to celebrate with the military community. For more information contact Tamekii Clark-Warrington, Education Service Specialist at 703-696-1579.

Antiterrorism awareness on America's post

See Something, Say Something

Rachel Everett

JBM-HH Public Affairs

Effective antiterrorism and community vigilance are crucial to countering terrorist and extremist threats, especially in the National Capital Region. Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall antiterrorism officer James Hickman networks with other antiterrorism officers in the NCR to analyze threats and assess risks to people, systems and facilities.

During the second week of August, the Directorates of Operations and Emergency Services teamed up with a wide array of agencies across the NCR with static displays outside of the JBM-HH Main Exchange. Hickman said the engagement with the public reminded them there is a huge network of teammates in the area who work night and day to provide critical services and make (JBM-HH) a safe place to live and work.

"Together, we partner with outside agencies to foster a safe environment to live and work," he

said. "Our collaboration and teamwork have resulted in a safer environment."

Residents, employees and service members on JBM-HH can do their part to help mitigate threats on the installation by doing proper reporting. Hickman said although the old adage "see something, say something" can get old, it is true.

"The worst thing we can do is assume the right people already know," he said. "Call 911 if you witness an emergency. If you witness something strange that does not appear to be an emergency, you can report it to the military or civilian police at one of the gates."

When reporting suspicious activity or behavior, it's important to remember the acronym SALUTE, which stands for size, activity, location, unit, time and equipment. By remembering details about people, places, conversations and vehicles, patrons can help authorities mitigate the threat.

Additionally, Department of Defense employees can use annual Threat Awareness and Reporting



Hickman

training and Operational Security training to counter terrorism.

"Too often we view annual training requirements with a check-the-block mentality; however, we must remain vigilant as we continue to live in a world where terrorists are willing and able to travel great distances to conduct reconnaissance and train in order to harm and undermine our way of life," Hickman said.

Although OPSEC level II training is primarily for program managers, Hickman said it is a solid course of instruction to assist leaders at multiple levels.

"OPSEC and antiterrorism go hand in hand," he said. "A simple way to keep one another safe is to consider who needs to know. If it is close-hold information, don't share it. If it is information printed in your office that appears important, it's probably wise to destroy it either with a burn bag or shredder." OPSEC does not end when employees punch out at the end of the day, however; everyone can practice OPSEC on social media.

Hickman said there's nothing wrong with showing pride in one's work, but not everything needs to be shared on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.



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“Sometimes, the greatest way to share your pride is by reaching out to your Public Affairs Office to request support,” he said. “After content has gone through a short but thorough review by the PAO, we can share a link or file on our social media that probably tells our story better than we would have if we had done it alone – and no one gets hurt.”

While adversaries look for the latest tactics, techniques and procedures to exploit weaknesses and routines, Hickman said the biggest threat to the JBM-HH mission is showing up with

an attitude of complacency or disrespect.

“It really comes down to respecting yourself and your teammates and remembering we are all part of one really big team,” he said. “When we work

hard and encourage one another, that can actually reduce the number of insider threats and disarm frustrated citizens who might be considering acts of violence against government institutions.”



Hurricane preparedness

More than an afterthought

Brian Shane

Contributing Writer

You and a loved one are injured in the aftermath of the most serious East Coast hurricane since Katrina, and you rush your partner to the hospital. An orderly shoves a clipboard in your hand, demanding to know: what's their Social Security number? Do you have an address for their parents? Quick – what's their blood type? Hurry!

Could you answer those questions? A lot of us would fall short.

It turns out that hurricane preparedness means a lot more than stocking flashlight batteries and a supply of bottled water. Would you have Wi-Fi access? What about the safety of your pets? Or access to cash and bank accounts?

The most diligent among us have not just a detailed plan for survival but an emergency kit at the ready, according to Malanya Westmoreland, emergency management specialist at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

First and foremost, she said, consider a preventive maintenance check of your emergency management kit if you have one. Some

might call it a go-bag. Think of it as your own personal continuity of operations plan, or COOP for short.

“Disaster happens, but the world is still moving,” Westmoreland said. “Things are still happening. The government is not going to stop moving, so we must have those measures in place. Your kit and your plan go hand-in-hand. If I have to pick up and go, I can pick up this kit and set up shop somewhere else.”

Some items in your emergency kit have an expiration date. Have you checked them lately? Your supply of food and water needs to be updated.

If you had to pick up and leave, do you have Wi-Fi capability? Does your phone have a hotspot? Will you have power? Generators might be hard to find on store shelves when a hurricane is in the forecast.

Think long-term: At first, you'll be in mid-disaster mode, but when the smoke clears, then we could move into a terrifying post-disaster mode. Consider the very serious aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Westmoreland said, when the city had no potable water, power was out and survivors were shipped out to new locations – not to mention the countless remains of

the deceased that authorities in New Orleans, Louisiana, had to sort out.

How many of us don't remember our immediate family's telephone numbers because they're saved into speed dial? At some point in your emergency action plan, you might need to write down – don't memorize – important phone numbers and addresses. Keep them in a safe and accessible spot.

Think about your job and duty assignment. For many Department of Defense cardholders, remote work may still be necessary. Where can you go to work securely?

Westmoreland said although she's based at JBM-HH, she can still go to nearby installations like Fort Meade or Aberdeen Proving Ground if she needs to plug in.

“Every DOD agency has a requirement to have a continuity of operations plan,” she said. “If you're working from home, if you couldn't connect to work, what would be your plan? Have you looked at alternate work sites you can plug into?”

When disaster strikes, there may not be enough time to grab your purse or wallet. What about emergency money? ATMs and cash machines



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might be offline. What is your extended financial plan to access your own personal funds? Consider having an emergency credit card ready.

Even scarier, there might not be time to gas up your vehicle in an emergency. What if the power is out and gas stations aren't operational? The prepared always keep at least a half-tank of gas in their car, Westmoreland said. Never let the needle run down to "E," if you can help it.

"You keep spare fuel for your lawnmower, why not keep extra gas for your car, stored properly?" she said.

It's important to note that not all emergency kits are created equal. They need to be customized to your needs and expectations.

Clothes and batteries are the basics but think about what you'll need over at least a three-day period. What things make you comfortable? For instance, small kids may need a playpen or a stuffed animal handy. Does your pet have a favorite chew toy and nonperishable food?

In a weather-related emergency, some desperate people might see what you have and want to take it away from you. Your own

personal safety needs to be part of the plan.

Do you have a will drafted or a special power of attorney? Westmoreland recommends being mindful and prepared for that possibility.

Most crucial of all, she said, make sure your loved ones know about your plan as well.

"In the D.C. area, everybody was focused on going into the office, now what you have to pay attention to is, how strong is your foundation in having the communication you need to have?" Westmoreland said.

For more preparedness tips, visit FEMA's website: <https://www.fema.gov/>.

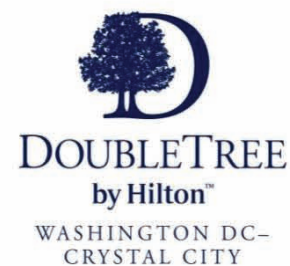


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