

PENTAGRAM



JOINT BASE MYER — HENDERSON HALL

ISSUE 11 • MARCH 2024



In this issue:

• Drool comes with the job • Better together • Carrying the fallen • Meet the SLOs ...and more



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EDITOR'S NOTE



Denise Caskey
Public Affairs Specialist

Greetings from Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall – “America’s Post!” – and welcome to the March 2024 edition of the award-winning Pentagonagram.

You read that right! We are excited to announce that the Pentagonagram was named the 2023 David Harris Print Publication of the Year at the IMCOM level and got second place at the AMC level! In addition, yours truly is the 2023 Moss-Holland Civilian Writer of the Year at the IMCOM level and also second place at the AMC level.

It’s fitting that this issue is about teamwork because it takes an amazing team to create an award-winning publication. In addition, without the people who allow us to tell their stories, there wouldn’t be a Pentagonagram, so we want to thank all of you who trust us with your stories.

In this issue, you’ll read about one of the great MWD teams from the 947th Military Working Dog Detachment on the joint base and we’ll introduce you to a pair of husband-and-wife teams from the Directorate of Emergency Services and the new JBM-HH school liaison officers.

You’ll also learn how our Community Relations Chief works to build better bonds with the surrounding communities and how The Old Guard casket teams honor our fallen heroes.

The next issue comes out June 2024 and as always, we invite you to share with us any ideas you might have for future issues.

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On the cover:

Cpl. Camron Allen and his K9 partner, MWD Sasu, pose for a photo following a run through a training obstacle course. Allen and Sasu, whose specialty is explosives detection, are one of 23 military work dog teams with the 947th MWD Detachment, 289th Military Police Company, 4th Battalion, 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard). (Photo by Jason Goselin, JBM-HH Public Affairs)

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Commander's Corner



Col. Tasha N. Lowery

As the commander of Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, I witness daily the transformative power of teamwork. When I look around JBM-HH, I see a team of teams.

Of course, there is the overall team, but I also see smaller teams within directorates and units, all formed to carry out our daily mission.

Each person on the garrison is a crucial piece of the puzzle, contributing their expertise and dedication to a common goal. Every unit, department and division play a vital role in upholding our operational readiness.

I also see how those teams work together, supporting each other and the goals of JBM-HH, senior commands and the Army.

By the Oxford Dictionary definition, teamwork is the combined action of a group of people, especially when effective and efficient.

But, it's much deeper than that.

When you are part of a team, not only are you sharing knowledge and resources, but you also grow and learn. You gain communication and problem-solving skills. Working with others also gives you a unique perspective and insight.

Being a part of a team is where people learn to lead.

As the commander, I am viewed as the leader of JBM-HH, and I am humbled by that, but I truly take pride in the workforce and service members who build these teams that get the hard work done every day.

As you read this edition of the Pentagongram, you will learn about husband-and-wife teams who save lives, military working dog teams that protect our citizens, and members of teams that keep moving the mission forward.

What we do every day at JBM-HH is vast and nobody, me included, gets the job done on their own.

The resilience of our community lies in our ability to stand as one.

As they say, 'teamwork makes the dream work'.

Tasha N. Lowery
Colonel, AG
Commanding



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SCAN ME



Cpl. Camron Allen prepares his military working dog partner, MWD Sasu, to run an obstacle course Feb. 21 at the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall kennels. (Photo by Denise Caskey, JBM-HH Public Affairs)

Drool comes with the job

By Denise Caskey
JBM-HH Public Affairs

Imagine going to work every day and your partner is so excited to see you, he's literally jumping for joy... And maybe slobbering a little.

That's the life of Cpl. Camron Allen and 22 other military working dog handlers with the 947th MWD Detachment, 289th Military Police Company, 4th Battalion, 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard).

When Allen joined the military in April 2019, he said he was supposed to be a computer technician.

"Something happened during the MEPs process. My recruiter called me and said, 'Hey, do you like dogs?'" Allen said. "That's how I became a (military working dog handler)."

To work as an MWD handler, Allen took the Mil-

itary Working Dog Handler Course at Joint Base San Antonio/Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

He met his partner, a 3-year-old Belgian Malinois, MWD Sasu, when he joined the 947th in Sept. 2023.

WORKING WITH SASU

Having a dog for a partner can be challenging because dogs have minds and feelings of their own, Allen said. Working with a dog takes patience, hard work, dedication and sacrifice.

"You have to be willing to sacrifice your weekends because building a rapport with your dog is the most important thing," he said. "If you don't have a rapport with your dog, you're not going to be an effective team. Some days he doesn't want to work, and I have to find ways to encourage him to do his job and keep him interested."

Allen and Sasu are a patrol explosives detection



Cpl. Camron Allen runs his military working dog partner, MWD Sasu, through an obstacle course Feb. 21 at the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall kennels. (Photo by Jason Goselin, JBM-HH Public Affairs)

team. A typical training day for them consists of basic obedience, patrol and detection work.

“Sasu is still a baby. There’s a lot of things he doesn’t know,” Allen said. “As the experienced handler, I have to show him what to do.”

Explosives detection work requires Allen and Sasu to be tuned into each other. Allen communicates with Sasu using hand gestures and voice and tone inflection. He watches Sasu’s behavior for changes that may indicate interest in a particular area.

“If I take a wrong step in an area my partner hasn’t searched, I could potentially be placing myself and others in life-threatening danger,” Allen said. “I can’t turn on the lights in a training or real-world problem. I can’t move items because it is possible that there could potentially be an explosive device in the area.”

Allen, who grew up with pets – two pit bulls, Sassy and Choc, and a cat named Cookie – in Gainesville, Florida, said working with Sasu is the best part of his job.

“I get to work with a dog,” Allen said. “I get to build a bond with the dog. Sometimes you don’t want

to talk to the person to the left or right of you. I can talk to that dog, and I don’t have to worry about the dog saying anything.”

Allen said as he’s learning and growing in his position, he looks to Specialist Isaac Reimer for inspiration.

“There is a bond and level of trust between him and his MWD,” Allen said. “I want to learn to build and strengthen the bond I have with Sasu to that extent or surpass it. The training techniques that he has learned throughout his time as a handler are good tools that I can utilize.”

THE MILITARY WORKING DOG

The working dogs of the U.S. Army are primarily Belgian Malinois and German and Dutch Shepherds. These are strong, intelligent and energetic breeds that can complete tasks with little assistance from their handlers.

A good working dog is obedient, able to avoid distractions and focus on required tasks, said Staff Sgt. Kara Yost, Kennel Master for the 947th. They have a



Cpl. Camron Allen and his military working dog partner, MWD Sasu, pose after running an obstacle course Feb. 21 at the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall kennels. Allen and Sasu are one of 23 dog and handler teams at JBM-HH. They specialize in explosives detection. (Photo by Jason Goselin, JBM-HH Public Affairs)

strong prey/reward drive, meaning they'll be enthusiastic about completing a task so they can receive the reward at the end.

MWDs are loyal and will protect their handler from harm, but they must also be able to tell the difference between a threat and a casual encounter.

"We prefer that MWDs don't frequently bite without cause or command," Yost said. "The reality is that while our MWDs are trained to attack if needed they have multiple other abilities. Patrol trained MWDs can search open areas, woods, or buildings for a missing person, and some are trained to track a specific scent and work through other human odors."

PCSING AND THE MWD

Until recently working as a MWD handler meant leaving the dog behind and trying to build a bond

with a new dog every time the handler changed duty stations. However, the U.S. Army is working on a pilot program in which the working dog can PCS with its handler.

Use of the program is done at the unit commander's discretion, Yost said, and TOG leadership fully supports the program.

"Dogs for Life is an initiative from the U.S. Army to build stronger, more resilient, and more reliable MWD teams," Yost said. "It also assists in retention rates for Soldiers who want to take their MWDs to their next duty location."

Allen said when the time comes for him to change duty stations, he hopes he will be able to take Sasu with him.

Coordination between kennel masters helps ensure



Military working dog Sasu exits an obstacle course tunnel Feb. 21 at the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall kennels. (Photo by Jason Goselin, JBM-HH Public Affairs)

that the new duty station can utilize the incoming team and the program masters work together to ensure a smooth transition, Yost said.

They look at the age of the dog and the quality of the teams, Yost said. Teams with younger dogs are more likely to PCS together than teams with older dogs because they still have several years of service remaining before they're ready to retire.

Allen said he was planning on leaving the Army after his time at JBM-HH, but he has since had a change of heart.

"We have new Soldiers here and they are ready to learn," Allen said. "It makes me feel good and it makes me want to put in my work, my effort, to mold this program to become something better. You can't gauge your Army experience off your first duty station. Every day is not a good day, but as long as you come in with a mindset that is open and eager to learn and put a little time in, everything will work out."



Military working dog Sasu, a 3-year-old Belgian Malinois, chews on a Kong toy after running through an obstacle course Feb. 21 at the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall kennels. (Photo by Jason Goselin, JBM-HH Public Affairs)

Carrying the fallen

A look at The Old Guard's Casket Team

By Jason Goselin

JBM-HH Public Affairs

Military funerals are among the most revered of military honors. The men and women who perform these ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery are members of the Army's 1st Battalion, 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard). This ceremonial unit is steeped in tradition and highlights the Army's history and commitment to honoring the fallen.

"We're the oldest active-duty regiment in the United States Army. We perform ceremonial duties at Arlington National Cemetery and around the Military District of Washington," said Cpl. Nathaniel Moore, of Delta Company's Casket Platoon.

One of the primary responsibilities of TOG during a military funeral is the dignified transfer of remains; a task belonging to the casket team, of which Moore is team leader.

"I acquired this position through many years of training, slowly moving up the ranks by practicing each role and finally becoming the senior member of the platoon," Moore said.

One of the biggest pieces of the ceremony is the flawlessness in which it's conducted, so the team members need be physically fit, ensuring everyone can handle their portion of the weight.

"The standard is always to meet the Army requirements. When it comes to being a casket bearer, we look for guys who want to do it and are passionate about it, but we also look for bigger guys who are stronger and like to lift," Moore said.

The imagery of a casket draped with an American flag has become synonymous with the ultimate sacrifice many service members have paid to defend American freedoms and way of life. It's up to the members of TOG to maintain this time-honored tradition, and they do so through rigorous and consistent training, ensuring



Cpl. Nathaniel Moore

they are always prepared to flawlessly execute this duty.

"We build team cohesion by practicing. We're always practicing together and making sure we know what we're doing and the responsibilities of each member of the team. Every member of the casket team is important and has a part to play,"

Moore said.

A full-honors casket team has eight members, and while they're all responsible for carrying the remains, each is assigned a specific role during the ceremony.

The drag man pulls the remains from the hearse so the team can begin their carry. The center throws and center catches are responsible for the flag fold as it passes them. The fold man is the primary one folding the flag, and the present man ensures the folded flag is perfect before handing it off to the officer in charge.

"The casket team will carry the remains to their final resting place and military honors will be given. They'll receive a 21-gun salute from the firing party, Taps will be played, and a flag fold will be conducted over the remains and presented to the next of kin," Moore said.

Casket teams can perform multiple ceremonies per day, as ANC hosts upwards of 25 funerals daily between the military branches. They must always be ready to perform to the standard and provide the highest honor to the fallen and be the best representation of their service to the families.

"At the end of the day, it's for the family," Moore said. "We have to make sure we're doing right by them because it's the last time they're going to see their loved one before they go into the ground. It's not about us, it's about them."



The casket team puts the finishing touches on a folded American flag before handing it off to the officer in charge. (US Army Photo by Sgt. Josue Patricio)



The “fold man” of the casket team begins shaping the flag. Only after the flag is perfect can it be presented to the family of the service member. (US Army Photo by Sgt. Josue Patricio)



The officer in charge salutes as the casket team carries the remains into Old Post Chapel. The chapel is the first portion of the service before traveling to the gravesite. (US Army Photo by Sgt. Josue Patricio)



Allison Montalvo, left, and Anita Williams, school liaison officers for Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, collect donations for a staff breakfast Feb. 20 at the Cody Child Development Center at JBM-HH. (Courtesy photo)

JBM-HH school liaisons team up for military kids

Pamela Kulokas
JBM-HH Public Affairs

By the time a military child reaches the age of 18, on average, they will have moved every two to three years and changed schools between six and nine times, according to the Department of Defense. Interruptions in their learning and complications with the transfer process can ultimately cause stress for the entire military family, as they adjust to their new duty station.

As of November 2023, there were 78,000 school age military connected students attending public schools in the state of Virginia.

Although some school systems track the number of military-connected children and participate in supportive programs, many still do not, said Allison Montalvo, school liaison officer with the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Child and Youth Services program, and Anita Williams, school liaison officer with Marine Corps Community Service at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

"That's why we are really working to ensure that schools are aware that these concerns are very real for kids," Williams said, noting that moving is stressful enough on an adult level but is even more so for young people.

Montalvo, a military spouse and parent, has seen firsthand how hard it was for her daughter to say goodbye to a cherished friend in Germany when the family moved to a new duty station.

“It’s a double-edged sword. You meet so many amazing people because of the movement, but also you say goodbye to amazing people as well,” she said.

Raising awareness of the unique challenges military connected students face that may impact their success in school is the mission Williams and Montalvo share as a team of two. With multiple degrees and more than 40 years in the education field between them, the duo that is relatively new to their jobs – both started in 2023 – have hit the ground running for JBM-HH’s military kids and their families.

The unseen mental load a military child brings into the classroom can impact the way they interact in their educational space, Williams said. School personnel often do not perceive why they need help to adjust.

“They’re oblivious,” she said. “All they see is a new student coming in. (They think) ‘This is one more student; you go to this class.’ But these students are coming with that additional layer of stress from having to transition. Their parents may not even be with them.”

Williams and Montalvo’s goal is to raise awareness of the invisible but deeply felt stressors, such as a deployed family member or course credits not transferring properly, that military kids carry with them to class. Once the staff members see the issue, then they work with them to coordinate layers of support such as buddy systems and counseling services.

Williams has 34 years of experience as an educator, principal, instructional superintendent and chief of schools, having previously worked with school systems in Birmingham, Alabama as well as Detroit and Atlanta.

Although she has dedicated her entire career to the education of young minds, Williams said prior to starting her position at JBM-HH – her first with the Department of Defense – she herself did not have the mindfulness she and Montalvo now seek to impart.

“Oh, I did not,” she said. “Which is why I value this experience even more, because I did not have the awareness at the time. We weren’t even tracking the number of military students who came into our schools in Detroit. A lot of districts aren’t, honestly ... and you don’t know what you don’t know.”



Allison Montalvo decorates cookies with her daughter, Elena, Feb. 20 in the PreK classroom at the Cody Child Development Center. (Courtesy photo)

Montalvo affirmed it is common, even in the National Capital Region, for districts to be unaware of the large population of military children enrolled in their schools.

Since they both onboarded in 2023, Williams and Montalvo have made a point to work closely together, they said, putting the joint Army and Marine Corps’ School Liaison programs in lock step, fighting to get in in key areas on behalf of those they serve.

They attend events in the community weekly and most recently presented to about 80 people Feb. 7 at a principal’s meeting the superintendent of Arlington Public Schools invited them to attend.

Williams said she appreciates Montalvo’s depth of knowledge about the military, transitions and all those acronyms, and Montalvo said she admires the ease with which Williams interacts with the upper echelons of school administration.

“I think we’re a good combination, honestly,” Montalvo said.



Major Swafford and her son, left, and Anita Williams, school liaison officer for Henderson Hall, take a break from cookie decorating Feb. 20 in the PreK classroom at the Cody Child Development Center. (Courtesy photo)

Although SLOs may be more visible with their parent-focused support and information tables, that is just one component of their complex mission to open hearts and minds to what military children need from their schools.

“We are responsible for bridging the gap between the installations and the community and the school community,” Williams said. “That is what is difficult; bringing people together is the part that we’ve been working a lot on – trying to get people together – so we’re out in schools, we’re trying to make connections, we’re trying to open up volunteer opportunities for our service members to go in. We’re creating all different types of avenues for us to push in in other ways, and that’s going to help build the relationships as well.”

Williams and Montalvo’s shared goal, they said, is to gain the trust of parents, schools and the

community and to be the primary conduit for these relationships.

They also intend to increase the number of partnerships with the program, to include mentorship and scholarship opportunities, and will continue to offer training for the Purple Star Schools program – a designation awarded to military-friendly schools that have demonstrated their support to military-connected students and their families.

The buddy system the Purple Star program encourages is intended to help ease the transition by pairing an incoming student with an established military-connected student. In this way, Montalvo said, the lived experience of a military child becomes an advantage, rather than a burden.

“That’s also where our military children are an asset, because they know what other kids are going through when they move,” she said. “So, for other

kids, they are very welcoming. They're very good at being like, 'Oh, you're new? Here, you come sit with me for a little while.'"

The SLO duo also promotes the smaller-scale Youth Sponsorship Program for middle and high schoolers, offered by the JBM-HH School Age Center under CYS. Military kids who are incoming fill out a form and can be matched by an adult with a sponsor – a buddy – to help them adjust.

Kindness, Williams said, recalling a favorite video from last year's Purple Up Day, is a great place to start.

"Just be kind," she said. "You can start there. It doesn't take a lot. Kids want to feel like they fit in. Like they are a part of it. They don't want to be treated differently; they just want to be treated like 'I'm a part of this family.'"

For more information about JBM-HH's school liaisons, visit: <https://hendersonhall.usmc-mccs.org/marine-family-support/child-and-youth/k-12-school-liaison-program> and: <https://jbmhh.armymwr.com/programs/school-liaison-services-2>

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Better together

JBM-HH couples share commitment, passion for work and life

By Sherry Kuiper

JBM-HH Public Affairs

Sitting around a table in the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Directorate of Emergency Services building, two married couples shared what it is like working together at the joint base.

Mike and Patty Jackson have been married 18 years and have two children. While they only lived two hours away from each other, it wasn't until they were both working as civilian contract firefighters in Baghdad, Iraq that they met.



Mike and Patty Jackson both started out as volunteer firefighters, Mike at 16 and Patty at 18. (Courtesy photo)



Mike and Patty Jackson in Baghdad, Iraq in 2005 where they met while working as civilian contracted fire fighters. (Courtesy Photo)

"I couldn't shake her," Mike said with a smile.

Mike is still a firefighter and Patty is now a dispatcher for JBM-HH fire and police.

Brandy Corrales and Christopher Metcalf, who are newlyweds, met on Fort Belvoir, where Brandy was working as a barista and Christopher, who was ordering his usual Pumpkin Spice Latte (with almond milk), worked for the Fort Belvoir Police Department.

Now Brandy, a Coast Guard veteran, is an administration officer and Christopher is the training officer for the joint base.

For these couples, working together makes them better in every aspect of life, especially on the job.

"Mike and I have always worked together in some form or fashion," said Patty. "It's how our marriage has always been. He's my biggest cheerleader and we always want to make sure the other one succeeds and does well. I don't see it any other way for us. It just feels weird when we are not working together."

DANGEROUS JOBS

Emergency services work brings unique challenges, and having a spouse that understands your job, who is by your side, makes you stronger according to the couples.

"We are always there for each other, the shoulder to cry on, just to express anything you can't talk to other people about because of the things we see as officers,"



Mike and Patty Jackson have been married for 18 years and are pictured with their two daughters and family dog. (Courtesy Photo)

Brandy said. “We are just better together.”

That togetherness is what sometimes gets these couples through difficult days at work.

“There is a danger in the job we do. It’s the security of knowing that he’s OK,” Patty said. “I get to know, on the radio, as soon as they clear a call and that they are all OK.”

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Both couples have different perspectives on maintaining their work-life balance.

For Mike and Patty, work and personal time are very interconnected.

“Work absolutely consumes all our time,” Mike said, who sometimes works three days straight.

Mike and Patty are often like ships passing in the night, but say they take advantage of as much time together as they can.

“There is no set rule, but we don’t try to bombard each other and talk about nothing but work,” Patty said. “We have two kids and they consume a lot of the conversation. We have one graduating this year, so they are taking up a lot of our time right now. It just balances itself out based on what we have going on and what is the priority.”

For Brandy and Christopher, they aim to keep work and their personal life separate.

“At home we might make a few work jokes but our

time at home is our time at home,” Christopher said.

Finding other outlets to meet and talk to people is important too.

“At our church, we belong to a life group so we are busy and out with other people, and you can’t really talk about work because they are not police officers and don’t understand,” Brandy said. “It’s really good to get involved with other conversations and other people.”

Both couples really love working with their spouse and appreciate having them close by.

“It’s knowing that they are there, knowing they



Brandy Corrales is an admin officer and Christopher Metcalf is a training officer, both work for the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Police Department. (Courtesy photo)



Brandy Corrales and Christopher Metcalf hike with their family in January somewhere along the Appalachian Trail. (Courtesy photo)

are OK,” Brandy said, with nods of agreement from everyone else.

And for the simple things too.

“My favorite thing is that I can pop over anytime I want to when she is here and bring her breakfast on the weekends,” Mike said, which was noted by Brandy that he brings Patty so much food, it gets shared with co-workers and is quite delicious.

FINDING PUBLIC SERVICE

Becoming a police officer or firefighter is something that children aspire to become when they grow up and for these four, it’s no different.

For Mike, it was chasing fire trucks with his dad when he was little and watching firefighters hard at work at the scene of a fire.

Mike joked that his dad probably felt bad for him because he couldn’t peddle as fast as the trucks.

But it was those experiences as a child that led to him becoming a firefighter.

“I started as a volunteer firefighter when I was 16,” Mike said. “This is my 30th year in the fire service.”

For Patty, inspiration came from a wedding.

Her sister married a firefighter and recalls the stories they shared at the reception and wanted stories of her own.

“The next day I went and became a volunteer and the next thing you know, it’s 22 years later,” Patty said, who joined at 18 years old.

For Brandy, law enforcement and public service runs deep in her family.

“I am prior military, U.S. Coast Guard, and my father was a police officer for 27 years,” Brandy said. “My mother was also a police officer.”

Being a police officer is something Christopher has done for 13 years now.

“I did want to be a police officer when I was a kid,” Christopher said. “It’s something I have always wanted to do and love doing.”

WE’RE THE LUCKY ONES

There is a lot of gratitude for the job and for each other with these couples.

While saving lives and helping people on their worst days topped the list of rewarding experiences, there was also heartfelt love in watching their spouse succeed.



Brandy (Center) and Christopher (right) are pictured with a co-worker at Fort Belvoir, where they first met before coming to the joint base. (Courtesy photo)

“Watching her get promoted is a huge accomplishment,” Christopher said, as he looked at Brandy. “Seeing where she started and where she is now is just an awesome thing. I watch her take so much pride in what she does and that’s super rewarding, probably almost as much as anything I have ever done.”

Brandy agreed that watching Christopher succeed and get recognized for his hard work was also rewarding but for her, it’s also about being a good example to her daughters.

“I continue to strive to get better, do better and know more. I want to show my daughters that I can do it,” Brandy said. “There are not a lot of women in law enforcement, and I want to show them they can do anything.”

There is also the love for what they do every day.

Seeing the look on people’s faces when they show up to a scene is what keeps them going – that look of thankfulness that someone is here to help.

“Once I got that look the first time, that is why I never left it,” Patty said.

Mike agreed.

“We do this because we like serving the communities. We like being there to support them and pick them back up,” he said.

Mike, Patty, Brandy and Christopher each work in jobs that are inherently dangerous and selflessly serve their communities because they care about people.

They all agreed that the work is incredibly rewarding.

“We are the lucky ones,” Patty said as the others agreed.

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Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Community Relations Chief Susan LeRoy, then Sgt. Susan Noga (kneeling), deployed with American Forces Network in Livorno, Italy, shoots video September 13, 2012 of the MQ-9 Reaper drone as it taxis the runway for take-off for a story on how MQ-9 Reaper drones support U.S. ground troops in Afghanistan. (Courtesy Photo)

Building trust

ComRel supports open communication with partners outside the fence

Military installations don't exist in a bubble. That's why the job of Community Relations Chief Susan LeRoy is so important to the day-to-day operations on Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

As the community relations, or ComRel, chief, LeRoy represents JBM-HH in the greater community outside the borders of the installation.

"Making that connection between community members and our base is huge if we're going to be able to work together," said LeRoy.

LeRoy came to the joint base around the same time as the new joint base commander, Col. Tasha Lowery, and got straight to work setting up meetings to introduce her to surrounding community leaders and elected officials and accompanying her to a variety of community events, such as the 2023 Holiday Boat Parade, as well as attending regular meetings with groups such as Military and Veterans of Arlington County and Northern Virginia Regional Commission to discuss subjects of mutual benefit or concern for the joint base and the community.

LeRoy said her job was made easier by the paths laid by former JBM-HH ComRel Chief, Leah Rubalcaba.

"She was the one that really got all those connections," LeRoy said. "My job is basically to go out and say, 'Hey, we haven't seen you in a while.'"

LeRoy, a retired Army sergeant, said she learned



Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Community Relations Chief Susan LeRoy, shoots photos of the changing of the guard Feb. 2 at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery during a special Black History Month wreath laying ceremony. (Photo by Sherry Kuiper, JBM-HH Public Affairs)

the importance of relationship building in 2012 while she was stationed with American Forces Network and worked with civil affairs in Afghanistan and saw how they worked to gain the trust of Afghani civilians.

“I learned how important it is to build relationships and trust with the community and folks around us,” LeRoy said. “Without trust, without building those relationships, we’re not going to have the support we need for our people on the joint base.”

HOW THE RELATIONSHIPS WORK

Lynne Porfiri, chief of staff for the Arlington County Manager’s office said, a relationship with the communities surrounding JBM-HH can be mutually beneficial.

One benefit is the sharing of emergency services.

“We are part of the Northern Virginia Emergency Services Mutual Response Agreement,” JBM-HH Fire Chief Russell Miller said. “We provide automatic aid support to Arlington County on a daily basis, sometimes several times a day, and we provide mutual aid support to Washington, D.C. on an as requested basis.”

The joint base does not have advanced life support capabilities or an ambulance, he said, so they must rely on aid from the surrounding communities when those services are needed.

“Without that kind of trust between our base and the community outside our base, coordinated efforts



Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Community Relations Chief Susan LeRoy, then Sgt. Susan Noga, a broadcast journalist assigned to U.S. Army Europe, records Sgt. Maj. of the Georgian Armed Forces Aluda Kopaliani, left, taking part in an interview with local media during the second day of the Conference of European Armies for Noncommissioned Officers May 20, 2014, in Tbilisi, Georgia. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel Cole)



Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Community Relations Chief Susan LeRoy, then Sgt. Susan Noga, a broadcaster at Livorno, Italy, American Forces Network, won second place in 2012 in the Army's annual Keith L. Ware Public Affairs competition in the deployed television news report individual award category for her story titled "Kiowa Warrior Maintainers." (Courtesy Photo)

probably wouldn't be as good," LeRoy said. "They work well together on a day-to-day basis because of those relationships."

The partnership between the military installations – particularly JBM-HH, Fort Belvoir and Marine Corps Base Quantico – and the communities of Arlington and Fairfax counties has a huge economic impact, said Peggy Tedaj, director of military and community partnerships for the NVRC.

"Looking at all three bases, the regional economic impact is \$54.5 billion," Tedaj said. "The military is 24% of the economy for the Northern Virginia region."

The benefits of working with surrounding communities and other military installations in the National Capital Region can be felt in the cost of doing business. For example, the joint base, Fort Belvoir and MCB Quantico have an Intergovernmental Support Agreement in which they partner with NVRC to purchase road maintenance supplies, such as salt, in bulk from the Virginia Department of Transportation, saving them an estimated \$29,700 over 10 years.

Having a great relationship with the community impacts the quality of life for joint base service

members and families, supporting everything from positive experiences with local businesses to fun and safe ways to spend free time to good schools for children.

There aren't any schools on the joint base, so most of the children who reside there must attend school in Arlington County where there are nine Purple Star Program schools. Because of the transient nature of military service, these military friendly schools help children who experience frequent moves acclimate to their new surroundings and get the services they need.

"We have quarterly meetings with the superintendent of Arlington County Public Schools," LeRoy said. "That way we can keep the line of communication open in case there are issues."

Tedaj and Profiri both enjoy working with LeRoy, and said working with her has been beneficial in keeping the lines of communication open. Working together can only improve the communities for all who reside in the area, they said.

"We share the same community, and we share the same values," Profiri said. "It's the close personal relationships that we build with our counterparts over at the base that lead to a better community."

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The gravesite of Ernest “Jud” Wilson, who was a Soldier in World War I and a Negro League baseball player who played for the Homestead Greys in Washington, D. C., is adorned with a small flag and a wreath. Wilson was honored during a special Black History Month event Feb. 2 at Arlington National Cemetery. (Courtesy photo)

Nationals honor Negro League player buried at Arlington National Cemetery

By **Becky Wardwell**

Media Chief, Arlington National Cemetery

Washington Nationals 2019 World Series Champion pitcher and Pitching Strategist Sean Doolittle led a team of Nationals personnel and military officials to Arlington National Cemetery on Feb. 2 to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and honor Negro League baseball player Ernest “Jud” Wilson, who is laid to rest in Section 43.

Joining Doolittle for the wreath laying was Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Commander U.S. Army Col. Tasha Lowery, Commander of the 316th Wing and Installation Commander for Joint Base

Andrews-Naval Air Facility Air Force Col. Todd Randolph and Washington Nationals’ Mailroom Coordinator and Air Force veteran Marc Barnes. The group was greeted and hosted by Army National Military Cemeteries Chief of Staff Col. Michael Binetti and Senior Enlisted Advisor Sgt. Maj. Donnie Davis.

Laying the wreath meant a great deal to Doolittle. “I was more nervous than at the World Series,” he said. “The World Series was just baseball; once the lights came on, it was the same, but I felt privileged and proud here.”

After the wreath laying, the group traveled to Section 43 to honor Jud Wilson, who played for,



From left, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Commander, Col. Tasha Lowery, Air Force veteran Marc Barnes and Commander of the 316th Wing and Installation Commander for Joint Base Andrews-Naval Air Facility Air Force Col. Todd Randolph stand at attention beside 2019 Washington Nationals World Series Champion pitcher and current pitching strategist Sean Doolittle while sentinels prepare to place a wreath Feb. 2 at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery during a special Black History Month ceremony. (Courtesy photo)

among other teams, the Homestead Grays, who played many of their home games in Washington, D.C. Wilson was buried at ANC for his service in the U.S. Army during World War I.

Nationals Ballpark Tour Guide and U.S. Air Force veteran Dennis Burgart said at the gravesite that Wilson earned the nickname “Boojum” for the echo made by his bat hitting the ball.

“He was considered one of the hardest-hitting players in the Negro Leagues,” he said. “Some people called him the Black Babe Ruth, but in other circles, they called Babe Ruth the white Jud Wilson.”

Burgart explained that in 2010, the Nationals inducted Wilson and five other Homestead Grays

players into their stadium’s Ring of Honor.

“So, when you’re in Nationals stadium, look at the concourse behind home plate,” he said. “When you see the capital G next to Wilson’s name, you’ll know that’s for the Homestead Grays.”

Burgart was followed by ANC Historian Kevin Hymel, who spoke about Wilson’s military service.

“Twenty-four-year-old Jud Wilson joined the U.S. Army on June 29, 1918, in the last year of World War I,” said Hymel. “He joined the segregated Black 417th Reserve Labor Battalion, stationed at Camp Meade, Maryland, but the unit never deployed overseas.”

Hymel spoke about the harsh conditions for Black soldiers at the camp but said of Wilson that “on



Air Force veteran Marc Barnes lays a wreath at the gravesite of Ernest “Jud” Wilson Feb. 2 during a special Black History Month event at Arlington National Cemetery. Wilson was a Negro League baseball player who played for the Homestead Greys in Washington, D. C. and a Soldier during World War I. (Courtesy photo)

Nov. 1, 1918, four months into his service, he was promoted to corporal.”

Also speaking at Wilson’s grave were colonels Randolph and Lowery.

“We stand on the shoulders of those giants who served before us,” said Randolph, the first Black colonel to command Joint Base Andrews-Naval Air Facility.

“It’s through their service, commitment, sacrifice, that we’re able to hold positions to help defend our nation the way we do today,” Lowery said and thanked the team for remembering Wilson’s legacy. “What the Washington Nationals are doing, and what we are all doing is making sure that we are doing the right thing for those who came before us, so that we can continue to do great things for our country.”

With the speeches complete, Barnes concluded the ceremony by laying a wreath at Wilson’s grave.

Barnes, who had come to ANC for ceremonies as a staff sergeant in the Air National Guard, identified with Wilson.

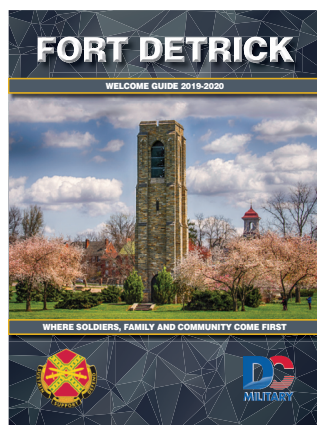
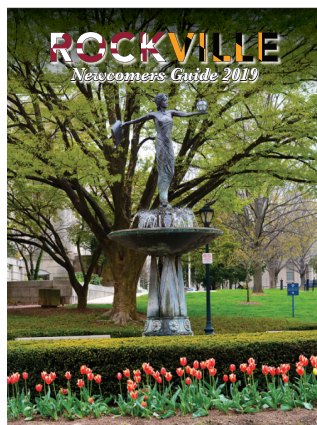
“There’s a parallel there,” he said. “He was in a labor unit, and as the mailroom coordinator, I do manual labor daily.”

Once the ceremony ended, Doolittle reflected on Jud Wilson.

“Unfortunately, because of the era that he played, with its racism and discrimination, he never got to be called a major leaguer,” Doolittle said. “He deserved a chance to play.”

Coming together to honor and remember Wilson’s legacy and hear the powerful stories of our local military leaders proved to be a memorable and impactful start to Black History Month at Arlington National Cemetery.

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Kearstin Cabiya, a U.S. Air Force Veteran, now serves as the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall executive officer as a member of the civilian workforce since Feb. 20, 2023. (Photo by Susan LeRoy, JBM-HH Public Affairs)

The XO behind the JBM-HH leadership team

By Sherry Kuiper
JBM-HH Public Affairs

The commander, the deputy commander, the command sergeant major and the chief of staff are all key leaders at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall. But they will tell you that leadership comes in all forms, at all levels, and the garrison executive officer is no different.

From managing schedules, coordinating VIP visits, creating high level briefings, to printing out agendas, Kearstin Cabiya, the JBM-HH executive officer, does it all.

“You have to be a doer, someone that is just willing to get things done,” Cabiya said.

Cabiya is a U.S. Air Force Veteran, who was a Senior Airman and served as a military police officer during her five years of active-duty time and then as a pharmacy technician for three years of reserve time.

Following her time in uniform, the stability of a civilian military career was appealing to Cabiya.

“It is still closely connected to the military. I still get that comradery and get work around military members,” she said.

The executive officer role is unlike any other position Cabiya held. In fact, it’s a hard job, even for her, to explain.

“You do a little bit of everything,” she said.

The job is about filtering through the mass amounts of information that comes across her desk every day.

That information can come in the form of more than one hundred emails and meeting requests a day from commanding generals and higher headquarters, like Installation Management Command and Installation Directorate Sustainment, as well as requests to participate in community engagements.

“What do you do with it?” Cabiya said. “It’s about getting the right information to the right people.”



Cabiya served in the U.S. Air Force for eight years, as a military police officer and then as a pharmacy technician, making the rank of senior airman. (Courtesy photo)

It's also about keeping the commander on track and ensuring that she gets the information she needs.

"I work hard to protect the commander's time. Not everyone understands what she does every day," Cabiya said. "Plus, there are things coming down from the Military District of Washington commander and the ID- Sustainment director, not to mention the people who stop by for office calls."

Even with all her experience, which included time working at European Command before coming to the joint base, there was one thing that really surprised Cabiya about the job.

"I didn't realize how busy the garrison is," she said. "You are not only getting things from higher headquarters, but you are also actually executing a real-time mission."

Cabiya said that another unique aspect of the job that she never experienced anywhere else is the high visibility people that live on the joint base like the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Joint Chief of Staff.

The high operational tempo of the base does have its challenges, such as competing engagements and priorities meaning the workforce is busy.

It's something that an executive officer can help with.

"I try to meet people where they are at," Cabiya said. "When I can, I help people out with the little things and keep it moving. I like to see things get done."

Sitting in on meetings with the commander and working closely with the staff gives the executive officer a unique perspective that can benefit the whole team.

"It gives you the knowledge, and knowing the commander's intent, that you can use to help others get their jobs done," Cabiya said.

Fast paced days, managing information, protecting time and supporting the entire team are the norm for any executive officer.

"No day is the same," Cabiya said. "It's never boring."

As for her favorite part of the job, it's the people she encounters every day.

"I work with people of all different backgrounds, ages, everything. It's my favorite thing."

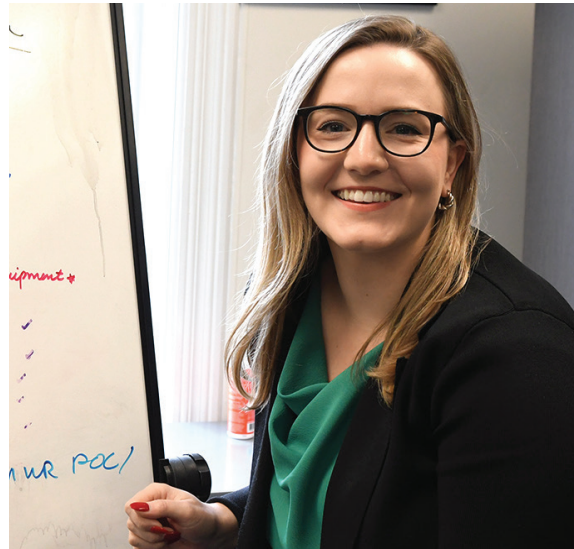


Cabiya with her husband, Jose, also a U.S. Air Force Veteran, and their son in October 2023. (Courtesy photo)

#PeopleFirst

Clair Kelley

Strategic Program
Manager
Plans, Analysis &
Integration Office



How does the Army help you #BeAllYouCanBe?

The Army is my first and only career. I started as a DA Civilian at Fort Campbell in 2020 as a Department of the Army Fellow in Installation Management. Looking back on the past four years working for the Army, I am amazed at all that I have experienced. From flying over the Washington Monument in a Blackhawk, to fixing the targets Soldiers use to qualify on the ranges at Fort Campbell, to preparing Army Senior Leaders to testify before Congress. These experiences have not only made me a smarter, more experienced government employee, but have enriched and benefited my life.

What is your favorite thing about working at JBM-HH?

My favorite things about working at JBM-HH are the people and the location. At the heart of the National Capital Region, there are so many unique opportunities both in and outside the garrison. In the fall of 2022, was selected for a 120-day detail assignment at the Pentagon HQDA Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison.

Inside of JBM-HH I am encouraged to work on projects ranging from pursuing alternative funding sources for the Myer Flyer, creating advanced modeling products to capture the performance of our base operation services, and even filling in as interim Executive Officer for the Command Team. I love the variety of projects I get to work on and how no two days are the same here.

The team at JBM-HH empowers me to grow as an employee and a person. I am grateful to be a part of the JBM-HH team.

From Matt Steger, Plans, Analysis & Integration Director

Claire Kelley significantly and positively contributes to the joint base mission. Her willingness to provide excellent program management and customer service to Soldiers and civilian customers living and working on the joint base is a great credit to her and her professionalism. Claire's willingness to take on challenging assignments and high visibility projects is an acknowledgement to her confidence and expertise as well as her desire to enhance the organization in which she works. She sets the bar high for other employees wanting to execute at the highest level of accomplishment as a U.S Army Civilian.

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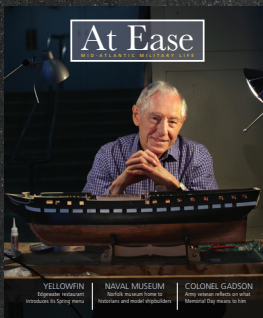
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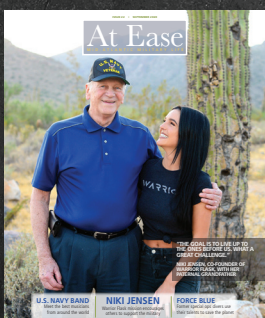
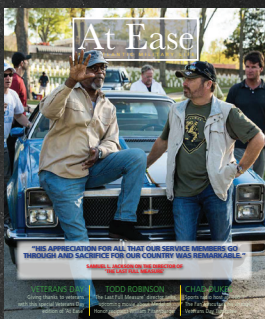
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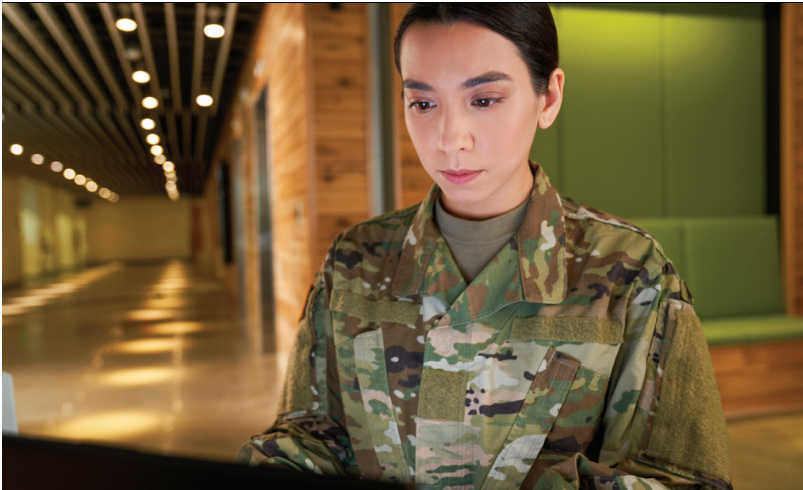
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