

Base Commanders' Meeting, February 15, 2005

Governor Jeb Bush Discusses Issues with Florida's Military Leaders

Executive Summary

Governor Jeb Bush and the Commanding Officers of military bases, installations, and major commands throughout Florida met on February 15, 2005 to discuss how Florida could continue to contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the military within the state. Attendees at this meeting included representatives from every military service, every installation, the joint combatant commands, and the Florida National Guard.

Introduction

Dr. Pamella Dana opened the first 2005 Florida Base Commanders' Meeting at 10:00 a.m., February 15, 2005. She then introduced Governor Jeb Bush as host. Governor Bush welcomed the attendees and expressed his and the State's great appreciation for the dedication and commitment men and women of the United States Military Services. He then updated the attendees on the progress of issues raised at the last meeting held on February 2, 2004, as well as highlighted several new issues the state is working on.

Issues and Updates

- The Governor thanked the Commanders for the military's efforts in Florida's hurricane recovery and asked that each Commander give an update of their installation's recovery efforts. The last Base Commanders' Meeting had been scheduled for August 16, 2004, but was cancelled due to Hurricane Charley.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Solicit for "after action" Hurricane recovery reports from Base Commanders.
- The Governor gave an update on the content, passage, and implementation of Senate Bill 1604. SB1604 made significant progressive changes in education and employment for military families and also initiated development for a more conducive environment in managing encroachment at military installations. Governor Bush asked that each Commander comment on the implementation and impact of SB1604 on their troops and overall mission.
- The Governor introduced Dr. John Agwunobi, Secretary, Florida Department of Health; Mr. Rocky McPherson, Executive Director, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs; Mr. Ron Harrison, Consultant, Agency for Workforce Innovation; and Mr. Darrel Kelley, President and CEO, Enterprise Florida, Inc. Each Agency Head/Representative expressed their capability and willingness to help Florida's military in any state related problems.

Installation Updates *(Installations are listed in alphabetical order)*

Air Armament Center; (Major General Robert Chedister, Commander) **(Brigadier General David Edgington, Vice Commander)**

- Major General Chedister stressed the need for Commanders at the meeting to voice their issues and problems, as the Governor is very serious about supporting their resolution.
- Major General Chedister gave a concise brief on the State's efforts relative to the Northwest Florida Greenway project. He also introduced Ms. Deborah Keller of the Nature Conservancy and Ms. Mollie Palmer of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, both of whom represent their organizations working on the project.

Avon Park Bombing Range; (Lieutenant Colonel Franklin Walden, Commander)

- The Governor's Office support during ADM Fallon's Community Outreach visit to Avon was much appreciated.

Central Command (Colonel Mike Davino, ??)

- Central Command Headquarters is currently at about twice peace time capacity.

[CNET] Naval Education and Training Command; (Captain Gary Dye, Chief of Staff)

- Thanked Florida for its support during their Revolution in Training.
- Thanks for support in recovering from Hurricane Ivan.

Coast Guard Air Station Clear Water; (Captain Everett Rollins, Commanding Officer)

- SB1604's implementation has helped tremendously in establishing communication with the County and State for road developments around the Base.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Request update from Department of Transportation regarding access issues for the Coast Guard and reserves at Clearwater Airport.

Coast Guard Air Station Miami; (Captain Keith Taylor, Commanding Officer)

- Renewed partnership with Miami-Dade College has benefited the installation tremendously.

Coast Guard District 7; (Read Admiral Brian Peterman, Commander)

- RADM Peterman thanked the Governor for Florida's pre-paid scholarships to dependents of soldiers killed in action and for the "Salutes to the Military" held this past summer.
- Had \$4.6 million in damages from the hurricanes.
- Following the hurricanes, the Coast Guard worked to have ports opened in order to bring in needed supplies and thus avoided a gas shortage in Tampa.
- The implementation of SB1604 is going well in the Tampa area, with a few exceptions in Pinellas County.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Contact Pinellas County and help to resolve student transfer issues.
- The implementation of the Maritime Securities Act this past summer went very well.
- The Coast Guard, while not officially a part of BRAC, still has a vested interest in many of Florida's bases; specifically, Homestead ARB and NS Mayport.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* How does the Coast Guard's dependency on DoD bases affect the BRAC process? The Coast Guard would be happy to work with the State in BRAC 2005.
- RADM Peterman has been designated to be the director of the Southeast Homeland Security Task Force.

Coast Guard Group Mobile; (Captain James Bjostad, Commander)

- Group Mobile sustained very little hurricane damage on whole. However, Coast Guard Station Pensacola located on Naval Air Station Pensacola did receive substantial damages from Hurricane Ivan. The station is being completely rebuilt, a \$4 million effort.
- Interaction with the State was absolutely crucial in reopening 300 miles of coastline following Hurricane Ivan.

DJC2 JPO; (Colonel Andrew Dwyer, Program Manager)

- The Joint Program Office for the Deployable Joint Command and Control System DJC2 JPO), a new command and control plus collaborative capability for combatant commanders, is now on board NSA Panama City.

Eglin Air Force Base; (Colonel Edmond Keith, Commander)

- SB1604 implementation is working very well.
- Eglin has a great relationship with Okaloosa County schools. The school district is assisting incoming families as their children transfer into and out of local schools.
- The Federal Bureau of Prisons has announced that they will close the minimum security federal prison located at Eglin AFB. Currently, the prisoners provide a multitude of services for the base. Closing the prison will increase operating costs to Eglin AFB.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Request update from Washington D.C. office on Eglin prison closing.
- Sustained \$77 million worth of hurricane damage. Recovery is going very well.
- Starting to get Spectrum interference from commercial businesses.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Research possible solutions to the radio frequency interference problem.

First Air Force Headquarters; (Major General Scott Mayes, Commander)

- Great relationship and synergy with the State and Bay County Military Affairs Committee.
- Recently broke ground on the new combined air operations center that will serve as NORTHCOM's air operations center.
- A new First Air Force Headquarters Building will soon be under construction.
- First Air Force served as medical support, coordinated 67 sorties, and flew 343 passengers and 1248 short tons of cargo in the hurricane relief effort.

Florida National Guard; (Colonel Jerry Vaughn, Chief of Staff)

- The 53rd Infantry Brigade (1400 soldiers) is preparing to mobilize to Afghanistan.
- Just opened the new C.W. "Bill" Young Armed Forces Reserve Center in Pinellas County.

Homestead Air Reserve Base; (Colonel Randall Falcon, Commander)

- Room for expansion on the Base and a lot of interested parties.
- As Homestead grows and the surrounding Homestead community grows, encroachment into accident potential zones may become an issue.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Request update from Department of Community Affairs.
- The coastal wetlands restoration of Biscayne Bay could cause a bird hazard.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Contact DEP about the issue.

Hurlburt Field: (Colonel Tim Hale, Vice Commander)

- Sustained \$50 million in damage from Hurricane Ivan. Repairs are underway.
- Traffic jams entering the front gate from Highway 98 are limiting access to the base.
 - ❖ *Action Item: Request update from Department of Transportation regarding Hurlburt Field's traffic problems on US 98.*

MacDill AFB: (Colonel Margaret Woodward, Commander)

- A big concern is Installation survivability during future hurricanes.
- \$200 million in construction currently underway.
- Implementation of SB1604 is going very well and is very much appreciated.
- Currently expanding Tinker Elementary school and will look for help in funding for a gym and recreation center.

Marine Corps Systems Command: (Colonel Walter Augustin, Program Manager)

- Thank you for Partnership II.
- \$19 million economic impact on Orlando during the 5-day ITSEC.
- Coast Guard is entertaining a relocation of their Modeling and Simulation activity to the Orlando area.
- The Toys for Tot's program collected 1.1 million toys and over \$500,000 and then distributed it to over 403 needy Florida children.
- Orange County has dedicated a section of I-4 running through Orlando as the "Corporal Smedley Medal of Honor Memorial Highway".

Naval Aviation Depot Jacksonville: (Captain David Beck, Commanding Officer)

- No significant hurricane damage was sustained; but lost \$1 million in revenue as a result of the storms.
- NADEP Jacksonville's workforce is largely non-transferable and thus the Command is managing related morale issues. The Governor's visit was extremely helpful to morale as are Congressman Andrew Crenshaw's many visits.

Navy Region Southeast: (Captain Larry Cotton, Chief of Staff)

- Served as Navy coordinator for FEMA during the hurricanes.
- 600 Masters-at-Arms are mobilizing to take over the guard mission at Guantanamo Bay relieving the Army.

Naval Air Station Jacksonville: (Captain Chip Dobson, Commanding Officer)

- The City of Jacksonville is trying to buy land surrounding Whitehouse Field in order to protect against future encroachment.
- Great feedback on SB1604 implementation.
- St. John's county has very strict residency requirements that are restricting military dependents from transferring into their schools.
 - ❖ *Action Item: Work with St. John's County School Board to develop a memorandum of agreement with the Navy to assist in school transfers of military dependents.*
- Sustained \$5 million in hurricane damage.
- NAS Jacksonville was the staging area for FEMA operations during the hurricane relief effort.
- Great effort in working with the State for support of the '04 Super Bowl.

Naval Air Station Key West; (Captain James Scholl)

- Working with Emergency Management Service in Monroe County to update the evacuation process for future Hurricane seasons. The evacuation for Hurricane Ivan went well.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Request update from Emergency Management Service on evacuation issues in Key West.
- Main challenge is affordable housing. The lack of affordable housing deters the working class from living in Key West. As a result, it is hard to retain firefighters, teachers, etc. Civilian recruitment for Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South is becoming very difficult, as employees are unable to find affordable housing.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Request update from Department of Community Affairs on affordable housing issues in Key West.
- Updated the Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ) and have some friction with proposed developments in noise/accident potential zones and again with affordable housing. NAS Key West has an ex-officio member on the Monroe County planning board.

Naval Air Station Pensacola; (Captain John Pruitt, Commanding Officer)

- Hurricane recovery is number one priority for the moment. NAS Pensacola sustained an estimated \$800 million to \$1 billion in damage.
- Already expended \$132 million in repairs. Must obligate the rest of the funds this fiscal year.
- Working with Fred Gaske on to resolve issues pertaining to repair/demolition of historic buildings on the installation.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Request Department of State update on historic building issues at NAS Pensacola.
- Working with Department of Environmental Protection to get permitting for restoring marinas.

Naval Air Station Whiting Field; (Captain Joan Platz, Commanding Officer)

- Hurricane repairs are underway; the Installation is back to full strength.
- Thanked the Florida National Guard for their assistance in hurricane relief efforts.
- Number one concern remains getting family housing repaired.

NAVAIR Orlando TSD; (Captain Larry McCracken, Commanding Officer)

- Facilities were in the path of 3 hurricanes with little effect to operations. Never lost electrical power.
- Working with University of Central Florida to establish the university as the National Center of Excellence for Human Performance.
- Over 16,000 people attended the Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation & Education Conference, with 400+ companies exhibiting.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Florida needs to dominate the simulation and modeling congressional caucus.

Naval Ordnance Test Unit; (Captain Jeff Gernand, Commanding Officer)

- Lockheed Martin is establishing its U.S. Navy Fleet Ballistic Missile, Post Production Center of Excellence to Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, a move that will potentially affect up to 400 employees at the Cape. The Governor's office and the local Economic Development Commission were of great assistance in encouraging the move.

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay; (Captain Les McCoy, Commanding Officer)

- The population at Guantanamo Bay is up to 10,000.
- Currently establishing the Migrant Operations Center with the Department of Homeland Security.

Naval Station Mayport; (Captain Charles King; Commanding Officer)

- NS Mayport has a few minimal issues with encroachment; but the installation has an excellent rapport with the community.

Naval Support Activity Panama City; (Commander Hal Harbeson, Officer in Charge)

- Development along Panama City Beach could turn into an encroachment problem.

Naval Surface Warfare Center; (Captain Vito Jimenez, Commanding Officer)

- No problems with Panama City Beach development.
- Thanked the Governor for attending the USS Momsen commissioning.
- No significant hurricane damage.
- The Secretary of the Navy, Gordon England visited the installation to tour the mine warfare systems program facilities.

Patrick Air Force Base; (Colonel Mark Owen, Commander)

- Sustained \$48 million in damage during hurricanes. Most damage was to infrastructure but not to mission critical infrastructure at Cape Canaveral.
- Appreciated visit by the Governor's office (Mr. Wayne Nelms and Tim Moore).
- Working closely with the Florida Space Authority.
- Costs for over-sized load permitting are hampering industry facilitation.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Contact Department of Transportation and brief them on the issue.
- The National Security Personnel System is being implemented at Patrick.
- The Wing is aggressively pursuing housing-privatization and Brevard County is providing support.

PEO-STRI; (Colonel Matt Fair, Deputy)

- Held a Congressional demonstration last week in Washington, D.C. with over 800 visitors participating.
- Concurrently, Representative Randy Forbes of Virginia has started up a Modeling, Simulation, and Training Caucus with some Representatives from Florida engaged.
- Move into Partnership II is complete; very much looking forward to working on Partnership III and IV.
- Invited the Governor to Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation & Education Conference, November 28 - December 3, 2005.

Tyndall AFB; (Colonel Armand Grassi, Inspector General)

- Gulf Coast Community College is very supportive of the military. Transferring in is easy and the school allows for military and their dependents to pay in-state tuition with a copy of orders.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Encourage other community colleges to replicate the GCCC program with Tyndall.
- There may be a future problem with noise sensitive development and unrestricted building heights as the FA-22 is introduced to Tyndall. The Bay County Defense Alliance is very supportive but it is still an uphill battle.
 - ❖ *Action Item:* Contact Bay County and explore issue.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville; (Major Erik Stor, Deputy Commander)

- No new issues.

USMC Blount Island Command; (Colonel Carl Matter, Commanding Officer)

- The U.S. Marine Corps purchased Blount Island (finalized August 12, 2004) and the Command is now undergoing a transition from leasing the land to ownership.
- Deployed 3 teams to Iraq, another will deploy in March.

U.S. Southern Command; (Major General Richard Mentemeyer, Deputy Commander)

- Thanked the Governor for all of Florida's support, particularly SB1604.

U.S. Special Operations Command; (Colonel Mark Meyers, Chief of Staff)

- As a follow up from the last meeting, Col Meyers noted that SOCOM's partnership program with USF is underway.

Next Meeting

Scheduled for August 8, 2005 at Naval Air Systems Command, Orlando.