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MEETING MINUTES FOR THE
LOUISIANA MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
HELD AT
THE ESTUARY AT THE WATER CAMPUS
1110 S. RIVER ROAD
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA
ON THE 27TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2019
COMMENCING AT 10:37 A.M.

REPORTED BY: ELICIA H. WOODWORTH, CCR

1 **Appearances:**

2 Charles Bebe, Mayor of Hornbeck
3 Honorable Raymond J. Crews
4 Major General Glenn H. Curtis
5 Robert H. Gatti, Junior
6 Brian P. Jakes, Senior, Southeast Louisiana AHEC
7 Larry Jones, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
8 Secretary Donald Pierson, Junior, LED
9 Deborah Randolph, Central LA Chamber of Commerce
10 Michael D. Reese, President of Fort Polk Progress
11 Major General Ronald G. Richard, Major General (USMC)
12 Gary B. Silbert, GNO, Inc.
13 Ronnie L. Slone
14 Sec. Lt. Col. Joey Strickland, Secretary, Department of
15 Veterans Affairs
16 Murray Viser, Barksdale Forward

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1 SECRETARY PIERSON:

2 We'll officially call the meeting to
3 order at 10:37 today. Thank you being here. At 10
4 a.m., as you can see, we had an important announcement
5 to make, so we wanted to invite you to participate, and
6 at this point, we will begin our program. And let the
7 record reflect we call the meeting to order.

8 MS. HAYNIE:

9 Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.
10 Thank you all for being here, and we're going to follow
11 along with the agenda, so please join me in reciting the
12 Pledge of Allegiance.

13 (Whereupon the Pledge of Allegiance was
14 conducted.)

15 MS. HAYNIE:

16 Before we kick off with the rest of the
17 agenda, I'm going to do a quick rollcall for the record.
18 Please excuse me if I butcher your name. Feel free to
19 correct me. My maiden name is Gaudry, my married name
20 is Haynie, so I get "Hiney" and things like that. So
21 feel free to speak up.

22 Mr. Banks.

23 (No response.)

24 MS. HAYNIE:

25 Mr. Bebe.



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1 MR. BEBE:
2 Here.
3 MS. HAYNIE:
4 Mr. Crews.
5 MR. CREWS:
6 Here.
7 MS. HAYNIE:
8 Mr. Curtis.
9 MR. CURTIS:
10 Here.
11 MS. HAYNIE:
12 Mr. Elder.
13 (No response.)
14 MS. HAYNIE:
15 Mr. Gatti.
16 MR. GATTI:
17 Here.
18 MS. HAYNIE:
19 Mr. Jakes.
20 MR. JAKES:
21 Here.
22 MS. HAYNIE:
23 Mr. Jones.
24 MR. JONES:
25 Here.



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1 MS. HAYNIE:
2 I am present, Ms. Haynie.
3 Mr. Pierson.

4 SECRETARY PIERSON:
5 Present.

6 MS. HAYNIE:
7 Ms. Randolph.

8 MS. RANDOLPH:
9 Present.

10 MS. HAYNIE:
11 Mr. Reese.

12 MR. REESE:
13 Here.

14 MS. HAYNIE:
15 Mr. Richard.

16 MR. RICHARD:
17 Present.

18 MS. HAYNIE:
19 Mr. Silbert.

20 MR. SILBERT:
21 Here.

22 MS. HAYNIE:
23 Mr. Slone.

24 MR. SLONE:
25 Here.



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MS. HAYNIE:

Mr. Smith.

(No response.)

MS. HAYNIE:

Mr. Strickland.

MR. STRICKLAND:

Present.

MS. HAYNIE:

Mr. Tete.

(No response.)

MS. HAYNIE:

Mr. Viser.

MR. VISER:

Here.

MS. HAYNIE:

And Mr. Whitehead.

(No response.)

SECRETARY PIERSON:

I reflect 16, which we do have a quorum
if needed.

MS. HAYNIE:

Thank you, sir.

Does anyone have any questions, comments
or notes from the previous meeting's minutes last
November?



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1 (No response.)

2 MS. HAYNIE:

3 If not, then I will entertain a motion
4 to adopt those minutes.

5 MR. JAKES:

6 So moved.

7 MS. HAYNIE:

8 Can you state your name for the record?

9 MR. JAKES:

10 Brian Jakes.

11 MS. HAYNIE:

12 Mr. Jakes. Thank you.

13 Any second?

14 MR. SLONE:

15 I'll second. Ronnie Slone.

16 MS. HAYNIE:

17 Mr. Slone.

18 Seconded. All in favor of adoption,
19 please say "aye."

20 (Several members respond "aye.")

21 MS. HAYNIE:

22 Thank you.

23 And now I will turn the meeting over to
24 the Chairman for his comments.

25 SECRETARY PIERSON:



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1 Thank you so much. Jeannette Haynie is
2 our new Executive Director, so I know you've noticed
3 that change. We bid farewell to Sherri McConnell. She
4 voluntarily wanted to move on to some other pursuits,
5 and asked for her extension to you today. She'll have a
6 lot of LED thoughts for many, many years to come. She
7 did a great job for us, but we're very pleased now to
8 welcome Ms. Jeannette Haynie on board, as she would say,
9 Major Colonel Haynie, or I could say Dr. Haynie. She's
10 got quite a distinguished background. Very pleased to
11 welcome her aboard and look forward to her having an
12 opportunity to interface with you-all in your various
13 locations around the State.

14 It's really a challenge for me to have
15 to tell you in that she's a U.S. Naval Academy graduate,
16 and we were looking for the best and you pull up a Naval
17 Academy graduate. Yeah, I get -- it tugs at me a little
18 bit, but we're going to have a great partnership and
19 we're going to give them all a great 364 days a year.

20 MR. RICHARD:

21 Beat Army.

22 MS. HAYNIE:

23 Thank you, sir. Thank you.

24 SECRETARY PIERSON:

25 So we welcome Jeannette and look forward



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1 to working with her.

2 Some overview remarks, and I know we
3 have a number of other presenters and reports coming to
4 you later today. Just sort of in globo, you heard the
5 Governor talk about the important I220 entrance into
6 Barksdale Air Force base, something we've worked on for
7 a long, long time, and while it is great to have a
8 secure entrance and a new route that won't be impacted
9 by rail, all of the other entrances to Barksdale Air
10 Force Base can be blocked if a train happens to be going
11 by. And, you know, with Todd Murphy who would schedule
12 these trains, I'm sure, now we will have unimpeded
13 access to Barksdale Air Force Base for the first time.

14 But it's also very important because the
15 long range security of that installation is about
16 weapons generation storage facility that's not there
17 today that should be there, but over time, the previous
18 weapons storage facility did not get enough maintenance
19 dollars allocated to it, became unable to pass the
20 usable inspection standards, and therefore it's vacant
21 today. And it's a very expensive project, one that
22 we're shepherding through the appropriate channels, but
23 in order to secure the long-term future of Barksdale, we
24 have to secure a weapons generation facility. In order
25 to secure that, we've got to be able to get on and off



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1 the Air Force base unimpeded. So a real important
2 activity that's being executed now, and really pleased
3 the Governor was able to make that announcement earlier
4 this year.

5 We had today a fantastic announcement
6 about the establishment of the Cyber Coordination
7 Center. You got kind of a full rundown of that
8 previously in a meeting. I would like to also point out
9 that we just established a very important initiative in
10 support of our veterans, and today Assistant Secretary
11 Mandi Mitchell is with me to help talk about what we
12 established with that program. And obviously a very
13 powerful partnership with Secretary Strickland and
14 Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs. The
15 Governor's leadership requires that the various
16 departments of government work and play well together,
17 leverage each other and make good things happen. So I
18 get the opportunity to do that with the Department of
19 Environmental Quality, with the Department of
20 Transportation and other departments, always worked well
21 with Secretary Strickland, but it was very rewarding to
22 have the opportunity to put this program and execute
23 this program together.

24 And, Mandi, just by way of allowing
25 everybody to kind of know the mechanics about it a



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1 little bit, what we tried and what we had to kind of
2 navigate, just a brief overview of that program.

3 And, Secretary Strickland, I want you to
4 jump in anywhere you want to add or expand what Mandi's
5 remarks are, please feel free to do so.

6 MR. STRICKLAND:

7 Yes, sir.

8 MS. MITCHELL:

9 Good morning, everyone. Glad to be here
10 with you today, and we're very pleased to have been
11 asked by the Governor in partnership with Secretary
12 Colonel Strickland, my dear friend, and Veterans Affairs
13 to lead the effort to deliver the State's Veteran First
14 Business Initiative Program. The governor announced
15 that program on August 13th. What the program does is
16 it allows for veterans, active or reserve military
17 members or Gold Star spouses who own a business in
18 Louisiana, who are Louisiana residents and who's
19 businesses is domiciled in this state to achieve to
20 receive recognition through an online portal that we
21 launched. And in just two weeks, roughly two weeks, we
22 have over 300 businesses certified and we have 100
23 waiting in the queue, and that number grows every day.
24 But the businesses are entered into the portal into the
25 online searchable database, and it's searchable by a



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1 number of categories, by business type or industry
2 sector, region or parish of the state and products or
3 services offered.

4 And these businesses, in addition to
5 being recognized in this online database, receive
6 specialized marketing materials from LED that they may
7 display at their business so that the public, members of
8 the public that happen not to be searching online, but
9 may be in the physical area of the business, can
10 recognize that the business is veteran-owned or Gold
11 Star spouse-owned business.

12 We've also provided digital marketing
13 materials that the companies may use on their websites
14 or on their social media marketing for their businesses.
15 And so we are told that ours is the most robust program
16 of its kind in the country so far, and we expect other
17 states to try and emulate, but we're going to stay ahead
18 of the curve.

19 So, again, I mentioned the numbers of
20 businesses that have certified thus far. And just to
21 give you a flavor of the industry sectors represented,
22 we have folks in the construction trade, we have owners
23 of funeral homes and services, HVAC companies, the
24 healthcare sector is represented well, physical therapy
25 companies, addiction and recovery service companies,



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1 insurance companies, auto services, restaurant, Barbers.
2 The list goes on literally.

3 We have created a seamless process for
4 veterans to get certified. They first submit some
5 information, basic information about their business
6 online to LED, and we have a seamless handoff to
7 Veteran's Affairs to validate that the individual is
8 indeed a veteran or active or reserve member or gold
9 star spouse and that they were honorably discharged as a
10 veteran. And we also insure that their business is in
11 good standing with the Secretary of State's office.

12 So once those steps are done, the
13 business is certified, and it's a very simple, seamless
14 process. And we did our best to make sure that veterans
15 didn't have to, if they didn't want to, or if it wasn't
16 convenient, because veteran small business owners
17 physically go into a service center. However, that
18 option does exist. We partnered with Veterans Affairs
19 and every leader at every veterans affairs service
20 center around the state is knowledgeable and educated on
21 the program and has been providing assistance when
22 needed when veterans choose to physically go in to bring
23 their documentation to get verified.

24 So, Secretary Strickland, I don't know
25 if you wanted to add anything to that.



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1 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

2 Yeah. I think we're off to a good
3 start. The program is, Mandi, as you mentioned,
4 seamless. Our Undersecretary for Benefits is a key
5 player in this particular program, Ms. Vanessa Melancon.
6 She's a Air Force veteran, understands the culture, and
7 she's working very closely with Mandi to make sure that
8 the veteran business owners who apply for the program
9 are certified, that their DD214s are good, like Mandi
10 says, if they're registered with the Secretary of State.
11 And we're working hand in glove with Mandi's office to
12 create the database. So I think we're off to good
13 start. I'm really excited about it.

14 MS. MITCHELL:

15 Thank you. And you said something that
16 I wanted to -- that marked another mention that I should
17 share with this group. Lamar Advertising is helping us
18 to get the word out with free digital billboard space
19 advertising the website where veterans may go. So if
20 you-all know Sean Reilly, his team, please thank them
21 because they're treating this for us as a public service
22 announcement, and we're working to do that through
23 several other media outlets.

24 SECRETARY PIERSON:

25 Mandi, any feel for how many veteran



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1 businesses that we've been able to certify so far?

2 MS. MITCHELL:

3 Yeah. So we're over 300 now. It's
4 actually 312 as of late last night. We have about 100
5 in the queue, meaning either they've just submitted
6 their info to LED or it's moved along to Veterans
7 Affairs. So I expect within a week or two to be up to
8 400 or more.

9 SECRETARY PIERSON:

10 And just so everyone knows, this is not
11 a set and forget. We're going to work with our chambers
12 of commerce with countless issues around the state to
13 continue to educate and drive the information that this
14 is an available opportunity for our veterans, and so
15 we'll continue to maintain the database, but more
16 importantly, if we just let this drift away, it will
17 stay stagnant, you know. We want to keep pushing. We
18 want to see that number of businesses rise, and we want
19 to be able to come to any parish and perhaps see the
20 placard or the decal on the front door of the business
21 letting the public know that this is a veteran-owned
22 business.

23 A really big objective that we have is
24 just to help identify those businesses in a public way,
25 and it starts with getting them registered. So we're



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1 making good headway against that.

2 MS. MITCHELL:

3 Yes. And we're marketing this program
4 alongside with all of LED's business programs, so we're
5 aggressively getting the word out.

6 Yes, sir.

7 MR. SILBERT:

8 Mandi, just a quick question, is there
9 any requirement that a business has to have been in
10 existence for any prescribed period of time?

11 MS. MITCHELL:

12 No.

13 MR. SILBERT:

14 So a new business --

15 MS. MITCHELL:

16 That's right, a startup. And we wanted
17 to make this as accessible to all veterans to show our
18 appreciation for their sacrifices. So veterans may
19 return home from service and want to be an entrepreneur
20 and, so alongside all of our other existing business
21 services programs, which we have an existing Veterans
22 Initiative Program, it's a program not well known, but
23 we have a good number of veterans certified for that
24 program. It allows veterans to earn a required
25 additional 12 points any time they bid on procurement



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1 opportunities with the state. That's done through LED.
2 So we have an existing Veterans Initiative Program.

3 We also have another partnership with
4 Veterans Affairs that coaches veterans on
5 entrepreneurship, and so we did not want to put any
6 other additional constraints to limit participation. So
7 your help in getting the word out would be great.

8 MR. RICHARD:

9 Thank you, Mandi, Mr. Secretary and
10 Secretary Strickland. On behalf of many veterans who
11 I've spoken to, for some reason they believe that I have
12 a lot of information about veterans affairs, but I
13 don't. I work closely with Secretary Strickland. But
14 following what the Governor said and the initiative that
15 you, Mr. Secretary, has also sponsored along with
16 Secretary Strickland, he indicated that Louisiana should
17 be a veteran-friendly state. Now that we have a base
18 initiative sponsored by LED, it seems to me that you
19 mentioned that you didn't want this to become stagnant
20 and it involves veteran-owned businesses and whatnot,
21 and that's very important and I applaud y'all for that.
22 But the information that many of us are getting is that
23 we would like Louisiana to become that veteran-friendly
24 state, like Florida, like Texas, and it involves a lot
25 of involvement with state government to include taxes



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1 and things of that nature.

2 But since we have a platform here,
3 there's a huge lead for the young veteran. So the young
4 veteran has been left behind by the federal government
5 and by most of the initiatives by state governments and
6 other initiatives throughout the country. So I would
7 think that this committee should expand its scope,
8 Mr. Secretary, since y'all are sponsoring this, to
9 assist Veterans Affairs, and we could, in fact, be a
10 good sounding board to the Governor. He indicated that
11 we may hear things that are veteran questions before
12 government does to include Secretary Strickland's office
13 and certainly LED.

14 I would submit to the members here that
15 we should expand the scope of this council. I know it's
16 oriented toward the base and whatnot and the reason why
17 it was originally established, but it seems to me we
18 have a good opportunity here to make Louisiana what the
19 Governor indicated his vision was.

20 And certainly young veterans to include
21 jobs, ability to finance homes, discounts is huge, and
22 that dovetails with businesses who need to hire
23 veterans. So I believe we need to not wait until we get
24 3 or 4 or 5,000, 300,000, whatever the number is,
25 veterans-owned businesses. I think we should, soon as



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1 y'all feel confident, expand that to include the young
2 veteran and address the whole veterans population.
3 There's a real need for that. And from what I hear from
4 other veterans and from talking to other people in other
5 states, they applaud Louisiana for doing this, but they
6 also say now that Louisiana has a political and a
7 governmental platform to address veterans, let's not
8 limit it to veterans-owned businesses a sticker and
9 plaque. Let's actually assist the veterans. You can
10 assist them in the business side by allowing them to
11 hire qualified people they're looking to hire, but more
12 importantly, the young veteran needs to be able to have
13 a place to go and want to go, want to retire into a
14 state that assists them in about four major areas.

15 So I simply will -- excuse the length of
16 my rhetoric here, but I just think it's really, really
17 good that we have a platform here, and I agree, it
18 should not become stagnant.

19 SECRETARY PIERSON:

20 General, we greatly appreciate your
21 comments and input, and if there's a white paper of
22 sorts or anything that we could push some ideas together
23 on for consideration, we'll be very open to doing that.
24 And we do want to help the veterans, but I don't know
25 that we even need to segment it to that point, where we



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1 want to help all of our military personnel, past,
2 present and future.

3 One of the things we're working on a
4 little bit I think is the idea of supporting the
5 trailing spouses with the reciprocity opportunities.
6 Maybe, Mandi, you can fill in. That was going to be
7 part of my report, but I know you're managing that for
8 me, and I'll add that into the record, please.

9 MS. MITCHELL:

10 Yes, sir. I think the gentleman over
11 here had a --

12 MR. JAKES:

13 Yes. Not a trick question, but are
14 non-profits included in veteran-owned? Non-profits are
15 not owned.

16 MS. MITCHELL:

17 Right now it's focused for -- it's
18 focused on for-profit businesses.

19 MR. JAKES:

20 For-profit. Okay. It expands it
21 greatly if you open it up to maybe veteran-managed
22 non-profits, not just -- Baton Rouge Foundation is a
23 non-profit, for instance.

24 MS. RANDOLPH:

25 Secretary, one of the things, to what



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1 General Richard was speaking of, and I think Mike Reese
2 would agree with me, a bright spot in outreach to those
3 leaving the military and going back into whether it is
4 to stay in the community in Louisiana or if they're
5 going back home, but we certainly would like to see
6 those departing the military take positions in
7 Louisiana. But our community and technical colleges are
8 doing a great job, in my opinion, working with those
9 leaving the military to transition them into available
10 jobs in our region, and in our region, CLTC working in
11 Vernon Parish is doing some very good work with that.
12 So that's another asset for us I think.

13 And on this program, the veteran-owned
14 businesses, I think chambers are perfect to help get
15 that word out and help identify where to sign up for
16 that. In our area, we also do a military discount
17 program that we manage and we give any business, we
18 don't tell them how much, but as long as they provide a
19 military discount, they get a decal for the window. It
20 works really, really well. We hear accolades for it,
21 appreciation for it all of the time, and even a lot of
22 the venues in Alexandria, even our zoo provides a
23 discount, for example, for military families to have a
24 membership or just for the entry fee. So just having
25 that identity in the window can be a powerful tool.



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1 MR. RICHARD:

2 You're saying that any business that
3 gives a military discount, you give a...

4 MS. RANDOLPH:

5 In my area. This is something my
6 chamber does.

7 MR. RICHARD:

8 I've never seen any of those.

9 MS. RANDOLPH:

10 If you come to Alexandria, you'll see
11 them even in the McDonald's windows, et cetera. Our car
12 dealerships give some good discounts, for example.

13 MR. RICHARD:

14 Well, that's good because that's part of
15 telling the young veteran we care about them. The
16 problem is is communication, the ability to communicate
17 to that veteran and across the spectrum of veterans, and
18 I know Mr. Secretary, you know, what I hears you say is
19 that you didn't want to get too specific or too broad.
20 I don't know how you cannot get too specific or too
21 broad when you're dealing with veterans because you're
22 talking about an 18-year old that's still a veteran when
23 he's 80 years old.

24 SECRETARY PIERSON:

25 Well, the reason is, sir, is just that



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1 there's federal-level programs, there's state-level
2 programs, there's community-based programs and there's
3 conversions of all of those that we would want to manage
4 and not duplicate programs that are already in place.
5 Look for gaps, look where we can take our resources and
6 make the most difference. So that's why I would call on
7 white paper with specific ideas on how we can engage
8 better service to our veterans, which I'm confident that
9 we both agree on.

10 Mike Reese.

11 MR. RICHARD:

12 Excuse me. I certainly understand now
13 what you mean, and I'll be more than happy to
14 participate in that.

15 But in conclusion, what you said about
16 the different agencies, one of the things to --
17 synergism of all of those is communication. You have to
18 be able to have some method to communicate this out.

19 Mandi, how many hits did you get on the
20 website? I mean, do you get a lot of hits?

21 MS. MITCHELL:

22 I don't have that information on the
23 hits today, but I can share that with you.

24 MR. RICHARD:

25 That's really a good way to measure



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1 that.

2 MS. MITCHELL:

3 I can share that with you this
4 afternoon.

5 SECRETARY PIERSON:

6 How many veteran service centers do we
7 have in the state?

8 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

9 We have 64 veteran service centers.
10 Every parish has a veterans service center, and there's
11 64. All are staffed, including Leesville, and I think
12 the last one that we just staffed is in DeRidder.

13 SECRETARY PIERSON:

14 So part of our push needs to make sure
15 that veterans know that these assets and resources are
16 available to them.

17 MR. RICHARD:

18 Sure. Thank you very much. Excuse my
19 longevity.

20 MS. RANDOLPH:

21 And our discount program covers veterans
22 as well. Our discount covers veterans as well as
23 their --

24 SECRETARY PIERSON:

25 Mike, anything you have to add?



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1 MR. REESE:

2 All I was going to add to that
3 conversation that really ties into this, I'm working on
4 some draft legislation now. It wasn't really ready for
5 prime time, and so I didn't bring it today, but it ties
6 to this conversation where we need legislation in our
7 state too where we can recognize, you know, we talk
8 about it, hear a lot, the spouse professional licensure,
9 you know, that our military spouses receive from other
10 states so they can quickly go to work in our state. But
11 tied into that as well as we talk to our veterans is
12 that we recognize in our state the MOS skills those
13 soldiers may receive, all branch soldiers may receive
14 while they are in uniform, that our state has a
15 mechanism to quickly give them that certification within
16 our state. If they were a big truck driver in the Army,
17 they ought to be a CDL holder in Louisiana when they
18 exit the military so they can quickly take those skills
19 and put them to work in the private sector in their own
20 business. And I know there's been a lot of work done in
21 the area, but it kind of ties into that as well,
22 General.

23 SECRETARY PIERSON:

24 We'd love to get that kind of capture.

25 Mandi, did you have anything to add?



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1 MS. MITCHELL:

2 Yes. So you had also asked me to touch
3 upon the issue with occupational licensure for military
4 and for military spouses. And so I believe this council
5 brought this issue up a little over a year ago, and Ms.
6 McConnell reached out to me to do some research on what
7 exists currently in the law, so I'll share with you that
8 Revised Statute 37:3651 exists in the law today. It was
9 passed in 2013, and it requires that professional or
10 occupational licensing boards shall issue licenses,
11 certifications or registration to military-trained
12 applicants or military spouses to allow those
13 individuals to lawfully practice their occupation in
14 Louisiana.

15 Additionally, this law requires that
16 occupational licensing boards issue temporary licenses
17 to allow these individuals to enhance their economic
18 opportunities while they're going through whatever
19 processes are required for licensure in this state that
20 may be above a beyond the state where they came from to
21 Louisiana while they're satisfying those licensure
22 requirements.

23 Some of the requirements that the
24 applicant has to satisfy is that they have completed a
25 military program of training, been awarded a military



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1 occupational specialty and performed a specialty at a
2 level that is substantially equivalent or exceeds
3 Louisiana's requirements, that the individual has
4 engaged in active practice of the occupation, that the
5 individual has not been disciplined by any jurisdiction
6 in that -- related to their occupation, and that the
7 applicant holds a current license or certification or
8 registration.

9 So this exists in the law today. In
10 January of 2018 Governor Edwards issues a letter to 50
11 professional occupational licensing boards asking them
12 to fully utilize the legal provisions of this Louisiana
13 law to ease the process for individuals coming into our
14 state in military service to be able to practice their
15 occupation. On the heels of that, LED worked with
16 Representative Gaines and Senator Jonathan Perry to
17 issue a resolution memorializing this law, and also
18 urging all of the boards in this state to ensure that
19 they're adhering to this law.

20 So what I believe is that Ms. Sherri
21 McConnell had began some research on this issue to
22 determine what we need to do to enhance this law or to
23 ensure that all of the occupational professional
24 licensing boards are actually following the letter of
25 this law. The research that she began was looking into



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1 how pervasive the issue is, which licensing boards are
2 the most challenging are non-compliant and why, and how
3 we can help overcome those challenges through policy or
4 legislation.

5 So I believe that Ms. Jeannette Haynie
6 will take up the mantle, and I will work with her to
7 determine -- to take recommendations from this council,
8 but also to take a look at the laws that exist and to
9 determine what boards are the most non-compliant and
10 what we can do to ensure that they follow through on the
11 existing law today.

12 So I just wanted to provide that update.

13 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

14 We've been -- I just want to add one
15 thing. We've been working very closely with Don and
16 Mandi and the folks in Economic Development. One of the
17 biggest questions and concerns that we get are from
18 veterans who, including my own immediate family, my
19 son-in-law is a combat medic with service in Iraq and he
20 had the desire to be a nurse one day, and so we're
21 working very closely with LSU Medical and Ochsner and
22 different organizations to come up with a program to
23 certify these combat medics so that they don't have to
24 spend days and hours in college learning what they
25 already know, that they can be certified as LPNs,



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1 because these people are the equivalent of LPNs, and
2 they can go right to work, say at Ochsner or LSU
3 Medical, under the supervision of an RN or a doctor.
4 We've been working on that for some time with mixed
5 results, but we are going to continue to work with that.

6 MR. JAKES:

7 I thought Senator Peacock had
8 promulgated some legislation?

9 MS. MITCHELL:

10 His was specific to nursing, but that
11 was done this past session.

12 MR. JAKES:

13 Okay.

14 MS. MITCHELL:

15 Yes, but we can follow up on that as
16 well.

17 MR. JAKES:

18 Okay. Louisiana Revised Statute 36?

19 MS. MITCHELL:

20 37:3651. We'll e-mail it to you. I'll
21 ask Ms. Jeannette to e-mail a copy to you, a PDF copy.

22 MR. JAKES:

23 It surfaced at Barksdale when they had a
24 problem with that, a Commander and --

25 MR. VISER:



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1 Yeah. She's a cardiology nurse, and she
2 was able to -- I think it took her three or four months
3 to get her certification. Her certification did follow
4 when Senator Peacock had a couple of bills, three I
5 believe, that dealt with interstate compacts to allow
6 folks to come in and practice their trade within the
7 state. If they're certified in North Dakota, they're
8 able to come into Louisiana and practice their trade.

9 MR. JAKES:

10 And General Mize made a presentation to
11 this group about teachers was another issue.

12 MS. MITCHELL:

13 Yes.

14 MR. JONES:

15 The Coast Guard District Commander's
16 wife was a veterinarian and she couldn't get a license.

17 MS. MITCHELL:

18 These are the things we would like for
19 y'all to bring to our attention, and just know, at the
20 highest level, this is an issue that's priority for the
21 Governor, so we will go direct to those boards if we
22 have to. And sometimes it can be just a conversation,
23 but it may take additional action, like legislation, but
24 we'll share that information with you.

25 SECRETARY PIERSON:



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1 And really helpful when you have an
2 example, a specific example like this, because it can
3 really shine a light on a problem for a lot of people,
4 but it just doesn't get noticed or doesn't get addressed
5 sometimes. But we would encourage, if you have those
6 type of examples, make sure you message Jeannette or
7 talk to me at the end and see how we can use it as a
8 pathway to help a lot of people.

9 MS. HAYNIE:

10 And I've run into it on a national
11 level because I'm also a dual-military family, so
12 military spouse. I am plugged into the National Target
13 Family Spouse Network and some of those efforts at the
14 federal level to make that transition easier, so I'll
15 bring that into what I do here.

16 MS. MITCHELL:

17 Yes. And I'm glad you mentioned that
18 too. About two weeks ago I participated on a call with
19 the White House Office of Innovation, and this is one of
20 the issues, occupational licensing impacting military
21 families. This is an issue at the federal level as
22 well, so we are trying to keep close tabs on that to
23 learn best practices from them.

24 SECRETARY PIERSON:

25 All right. Well, those are the primary



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1 issues that I wanted to bring before you, and that will
2 conclude my remarks. I'll now turn to Colonel Haynie to
3 call on our reporting divisions.

4 MS. HAYNIE:

5 Per the agenda, Secretary Strickland,
6 would you like to make some comments?

7 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

8 Thank you, Secretary Pierson, Members of
9 the Committee, it's an honor for me to be here and to
10 serve on this committee.

11 For those of you that maybe don't really
12 know me, I've had the honor of serving as Secretary for
13 Veterans Affairs ever since Mike Foster was Governor. I
14 served Mike Foster for eight years, Governor Blanco for
15 four years, and it was under her that we created the
16 Department of Veterans Affairs as a cabinet-level
17 department. She was a strong veteran supporter. A lot
18 of people don't know that. And then I worked for Bobby
19 Jindal for about a year, then I went out to Arizona and
20 served as Secretary for about five years out there. So
21 all in all I've served our veterans for 22 years as
22 Secretary of Veterans Affairs after almost 30 years in
23 the Army.

24 The other day my wife was asking me, she
25 said, "If you had a choice, what would be your dream



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1 job?" I said I think it would be my dream retirement
2 because I think this is my dream job, but we are working
3 very hard in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

4 General Richard brought up some very
5 good points this morning because really the biggest
6 concern that we face in the department is generational.
7 We're dealing with different generations of veterans.
8 We're dealing -- and when we talk about older veterans,
9 we have pretty much a captive audience. We know where
10 these veterans are. The World War II, the Korean, my
11 generation, the Vietnam Veterans, we know where they're
12 at, and we work very, very closely with them.

13 Where we don't know where veterans are
14 at are the younger veterans, the veterans that are
15 coming through the transition pipelines out at Barksdale
16 and Fort Polk. Those veterans are not looking for
17 benefits necessarily. They're not -- maybe education or
18 something like that, but they're looking for jobs,
19 they're looking for transportation, they're looking for
20 housing information and things like that. And those are
21 the things that as Secretary I really get concerned
22 about.

23 But first I want to talk a little bit
24 about benefits. This past year we filed a total of
25 146,782 claims for Louisiana veterans. That number of



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1 claims brought into the state in terms of dollars, this
2 is money that goes into veterans' pockets, \$1.3-billion.
3 Money that comes into the state in terms of compensation
4 and pension benefits, it goes around about three times
5 before it goes out of the state, and we do this year
6 after year after year. This places Louisiana 11th in
7 the nation among all states that support our veterans.

8 This year, also, to make the process
9 even benefits a little bit smoother and to get away from
10 a paper trail and become more attuned to electronic
11 files, we instituted a new national program called
12 VetraSpec. It's a computer-based program that allows us
13 to file benefits quickly, efficiently and to make sure
14 that they are 100 percent accurate before they go into
15 the federal pipeline in New Orleans. And it also allows
16 us to track the status of those benefits once they're in
17 the federal pipeline, because a lot of times we'll get
18 follow-on questions about six or seven months later,
19 "What is the status of my claim?" All we have to do is
20 pull the status up and we can tell the veteran "This is
21 where your claim is at." "This is what's pending."
22 "This probably what's going to happen," and that was a
23 tremendous comfort to our veterans.

24 We have 64 parishes, as I mentioned
25 earlier. All of them are staffed with trained



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1 counselors. All of our counselors are veterans. Many
2 of them are retired military. And the last two offices
3 that were not filled within Leesville, we had it filled,
4 but we had to do a relief because of a misconduct
5 situation, and we just recently filled that office again
6 with an outstanding counselor. And then the neighbor
7 town of DeRidder, we filled that office too. So now all
8 parishes are serviced and staffed, so we're very, very
9 happy about that.

10 I'd like to talk to you about our
11 veterans homes. Back in 1998 or 1997, when I first came
12 to work for Mike Foster, we only had one veterans home,
13 the Old Jackson home, which we still have. Well, since
14 then we have built four others. We now have five state
15 veterans homes, which is what we're authorized, and they
16 are all filled to capacity. Every one of our homes has
17 a 90 to 95 percent fill. We call it census, a rating.
18 They have all undergone CMS and federal VA survey
19 inspections and they've all passed and they're doing
20 very well.

21 We have spent this past four years over
22 \$10-million in renovating all of our veterans homes, and
23 that will be a continuing effort as we go forward. We
24 put, just in the Jackson Home, we put a new roofs on the
25 homes, we put a new air conditioning, totally remodeled



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1 kitchens, chillers on all of the homes, and they're
2 beautiful. If you've never been to a veterans home, you
3 should stop by because you'll be amazed. Every one of
4 our homes has fishing ponds that are fully stocked by
5 Wildlife and Fisheries. We provide an atmosphere for
6 our veterans that no private nursing home can match, and
7 it's not -- and I want to make this clear, it's not just
8 for elderly veterans. We also have a lot of
9 combat-wounded veterans who are in their 40s, some of
10 them are in their 30s that live in our home. And some
11 of the younger veterans, every one of our homes has
12 physical therapy programs, and a lot of your younger
13 veterans that live in the community come for physical
14 therapy and then they go back home. So we're honored to
15 provide that service to them as well.

16 We also have in our state four working
17 cemeteries. We are actually building a fifth cemetery
18 in Jennings right off the freeway behind your veterans
19 home, and we have will have that cemetery -- it's a
20 \$10-million project. We'll have that cemetery completed
21 and ready to go by the end of December of this year, and
22 we hope to dedicate it and put it into operation at the
23 beginning of the new year.

24 We're also having to expand our state
25 veterans cemetery in Slidell. It's only three years



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1 old, but because it's, of course, New Orleans in the
2 North Shore, we've had more burials in that cemetery
3 than any other cemetery in the state. Over 3,000
4 veterans and their loved ones have been interred there.

5 There's a new phenomenon around the
6 country. It seems like people are getting away from
7 casketed burials and going to what we cremain burials.
8 These are cremation. And so in Slidell and in
9 Keithville near Barksdale, we're rapidly running out
10 columbarium space. These are the niches in the wall
11 where you put the ashes. So we're having to build more
12 columbarium space to bury our veterans and their loved
13 ones in those other two facilities, and we're going to
14 be taking a look at Fort Polk as well.

15 So all of our cemeteries are beautiful
16 places. I have the honor of serving on our National
17 Cemetery Committee in Washington and recommending policy
18 for how these cemeteries -- and state cemeteries have to
19 be run the same way that our national cemeteries are
20 run, no different. We have to meet the same standards,
21 and I have the honor of recommending policy to Secretary
22 Wilkie in that regard.

23 We have other programs that I'm very,
24 very proud of. Last year the Governor and all 30
25 college presidents, technical college and university



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1 presidents, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to
2 establish veteran centers on every Louisiana college
3 campus. I'm proud and honored to tell you that as of
4 today, we've established 26 veteran centers. We've got
5 four more to go. What we do, we went out, we wrote a
6 grant to the AmeriCorps Foundation, and we received
7 \$300,000 to establish this program in conjunction with
8 the colleges and university from LSU all of the way to
9 the smallest technical college. Every one of those
10 veteran centers have an administrator. And then what we
11 did, we hired what we call Student Veteran Navigators.
12 These are students that have a desire to work with that
13 vet center administrator, and we didn't just say "Will
14 you do this?" We made it an incentive. We're paying
15 these student veterans \$10,000 per year to work with
16 that vet center administrator to help their fellow
17 veteran students. These are places where veterans can
18 congregate on campus, share common experiences and be
19 together. And most of these young folks, and there's
20 8,000 of them out there, are combat veterans, and the
21 reason we did this is because we wanted make sure that
22 we enhanced their abilities to graduate and stay in our
23 state. So we're very honored to do that. We're the
24 second state in the nation that's established veteran
25 centers on all college campuses. Washington State being



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1 the first.

2 We continue to award honor medals.

3 We're at 10,000 honor medals that's distributed
4 throughout the state. All of our veterans, we award
5 honor medals every day. We mail them out. If they want
6 a ceremony, we do that. We leave it to the veterans.
7 We also award honor medals to the incarcerated. We run
8 a very vigorous incarcerated program in our department.
9 We reach out to Louisiana's incarcerated veterans
10 population. There's over 1,000 veterans in prison in
11 our state, and we support their banquets. We provide
12 honor medals. And then last year we created through
13 legislation a state law requiring the Department of
14 Corrections to notify us within eight months of when a
15 veteran prisoner is being released, that way we can open
16 their file, we can see if they need a claim open or if
17 they already have an existing claim, we put that back
18 into operation between -- let's say that you're 80
19 percent service connected and you go to prison, well,
20 you lose all but 10 percent of that 80 percent. You
21 only get 10 percent. And so we can reopen that claim
22 for that veteran coming out of prison and restore that
23 80 percent. So -- and that is state law now. So we
24 know where all of our veterans who are incarcerated are.
25 For example, at Angola, there's over 400 there. And



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1 I've got to tell you something, most of our incarcerated
2 veterans are your trusties. They are the people that
3 are the easiest to work with. I think the director, the
4 secretary, Jimmy is a Vietnam veteran himself, and he'll
5 tell you, if I need something done, I go to my
6 incarcerated veterans and they make it happen. So we're
7 honored to work with DOC in that regard.

8 We have in the State of Louisiana 4,000
9 Gold Star survivors. The problem is I don't always know
10 where those folks are at, and so what I did, I went out
11 and I hired a Gold Star representative. Her name is
12 Jennifer Hahn. Jennifer's husband was a National Guard
13 Sergeant First Class that was killed in combat in Iraq.
14 Great, great lady.

15 And the reason why we didn't know where
16 all of our Gold Star survivors were located is because
17 generally the Guard, the Reserves, the military bases,
18 they use contract folks to handle those programs. But
19 we want to do more than that. The contractors will
20 reach out to the Gold Star wives and the survivors and
21 they will take care of them initially, but then after
22 all of that is over with, then they really don't reach
23 out to them anymore. We wanted to be continuous
24 presence in their lives and we wanted to be able to
25 honor them in September, on September the 29th, which is



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1 Gold Star Month, bring them into our Louisiana Veterans
2 Memorial Park, have a beautiful ceremony and honor the
3 service of their loved ones. And so we brought Ms.
4 Hahn. She's doing a great job, and we are going to have
5 our first ceremony on the 29th of September in our park.

6 The other program that we're working
7 with really hard on is veterans courts. There's five
8 veteran courts in the State of Louisiana. We're trying
9 to create a sixth one here in Baton Rouge, and we've got
10 Judge Darrell White, who is a Guard retiree. I believe
11 he's Guard; right, General? But, anyway, Judge White
12 has agreed to take the lead in establishing the veterans
13 court here in Baton Rouge. And veterans courts are
14 important because if a young veteran is struggling with
15 post-traumatic stress and he's self medicated and they
16 get in trouble, they get a DUI or maybe spousal abuse or
17 something to that effect, if they go through the regular
18 courts, then they have a record and then it's a federal
19 record and then that follows them throughout their life.
20 If we can get them into veterans court and we can get
21 them into a year-long program that's regulated by the
22 court with a counselor, then if they follow what the
23 court tells them to do, their record will be wiped clean
24 and they get a brand new start. And that's extremely,
25 extremely important. And the reason I know that's



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1 important is because thousands of veterans -- or
2 hundreds, not thousands, but hundreds of veterans that
3 are in prison in Angola probably wouldn't be there if
4 somebody had addressed their post-traumatic stress back
5 when they were younger. And so veteran support for our
6 states is very important. We're going to continue to
7 push that in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

8 I think that pretty much covers it.
9 Last thing I want to mention is in September we're going
10 to host our second Veterans Suicide Summit. We hosted
11 our first one last year. We had over 200 people in
12 attendance, many were wives, many were husbands, many
13 were parents of veterans that committed suicide. So
14 we're going to host our second one. We're expecting
15 over 300 people to be here in Baton Rouge at Post 38,
16 the American Legion post there, so we're honored to do
17 that.

18 So this concludes my briefing subject to
19 any questions that you might have. The Louisiana
20 Department of Veterans Affairs is one of the oldest
21 departments in the state government, established in
22 1919. It it's not the old Department of Veterans
23 Affairs your father our your grandfather knew. It's a
24 dynamic department. It's a \$71-million department. We
25 only get about \$6-million in state general funds. The



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1 rest of our fund comes through federal VA. So thank you
2 for giving me the opportunity to brief you, and subject
3 to any questions you might have.

4 SECRETARY PIERSON:

5 Thank you, Secretary Strickland.

6 MR. STRICKLAND:

7 General Richard is my good buddy.

8 Anyway, thank you.

9 SECRETARY PIERSON:

10 General Curtis, do you have any
11 comments?

12 GENERAL CURTIS:

13 Yeah. I guess I'll get up here. Just a
14 few highlights on the Louisiana Guard. We're one of
15 Five Guards across the nation -- there's 54 National
16 Guards. We're one of five that actually are meeting our
17 current strength. Today we sit at 107 percent strength
18 across the Army and Air Guard here in Louisiana, and a
19 lot of that is because of what the citizens give us in
20 the way of respect and show our soldiers and airmen.
21 Our attention rate, the last probably five or six years,
22 has run 75 percent, give or take. That means three out
23 of four are choosing to stay with us.

24 Our recruiting numbers are through the
25 roof. We're number two in the nation in the percentage



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1 of recruits, and what our mission was, where we're at,
2 we're at about 130 percent of what we were missioned to
3 recruit for our forces, which puts us in a really good
4 position because I'm asking them now for more force
5 structure units, if you will. I'd love to get more
6 cyber capabilities, I'd love to get some units, I'd love
7 to get more military police in the state. So hopefully
8 that will be given to us.

9 This summer, of course, was our busy
10 season with our annual training. Our infantry brigade
11 went through Fort Polk at the Joint Readiness Training
12 Center. I will tell you if you have not been to that or
13 looked at it, it is the toughest training that a unit
14 will go through, an infantry unit, short of combat.

15 The Army has shifted from this coin
16 operation to kind of servicing out to a full spectrum
17 decisive operations, and for the young kind of Majors
18 and down, some First Class and down, all they've done is
19 a coin fight. So this is a new dynamic for them, and
20 they're a little bit uncomfortable with it, but if we go
21 to war in China, North Korea or Russia, this is how we
22 will fight, and so it was a really good training for
23 them.

24 On the all hazard front, I will tell you
25 we're continuously doing exercises to try to break



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1 ourselves, if you will, and figure out where our gaps
2 are for emergency response. I mean, it's everything
3 from a hurricane coming to a water well system going out
4 to a cyber pact that we talked about a while ago. We
5 work closely with all state agencies and GOHSEP in that.

6 On the international scene, we have two
7 countries that we've had relationships with for a number
8 of years, Belize for about 25 years and Haiti since
9 2011, right after the earthquakes. We train with them
10 all of the time, bring them to Louisiana or we have
11 people down there, but it's an ongoing relationship.
12 But we have the Guard across the world has about 78 of
13 those relationships. And I will tell you, a lot of
14 times when disasters happen or if someone feels
15 threatened, the first person that the Chief of Defense
16 for that country calls is the Adjutant General that's in
17 partner with them, and that happens all of the time. So
18 we want to continue to foster that.

19 We have a civil support team. Their job
20 is -- it's about 25 people that work full-time for us.
21 Their job is to go out to help policing authorities from
22 local all of way up to federal to sniff out stuff, you
23 know, whether they find a bag on the side of road or
24 they suspect some type of drugs on a ship coming into
25 port. Those guys go out and have very high-end labs



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1 that they take with them, portable labs, to assist law
2 enforcement with fighting the drug war.

3 Where have a huge infinary tendent here
4 in Louisiana, but one of the things I keep them plugging
5 into, we call them Community Assistance Projects, but
6 this summer, we're currently working on this summer, at
7 Avondale Boy Scout Camp, we're reworking a lot of their
8 facility for them from roads to obstacle courses. We're
9 working defense workup in Chenault, Aviation Park up
10 there in Ouachita and on the Caldwell Parish Sheriff
11 Range. Those are just example of what we currently --
12 we run these projects all of the time, and it's good for
13 us. We're the face of the military in most cases, and
14 so it's good for us to be out in the community doing
15 those type things.

16 On the war fight, I will tell you that
17 today, as we stand, we have 696 that are deployed. The
18 majority of those are either in Iraq. They set their
19 flags in Kuwait, and then they move forward into
20 Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, you name it.
21 They're all over Southwest Asia. But also we have
22 contingent of our effort and things that are in the
23 Pacific right now. I basically say they're playing
24 chicken with China. You know, that's what they're
25 doing. A couple years ago they did it with Russia over



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1 in Bulgaria.

2 Throughout the remainder of this year,
3 for about the next 12 months, we have currently a little
4 over 800 more that will be deploying into those same
5 theaters still engaged in this Global War on Terror.

6 We run an education program you may or
7 may not be aware of called Youth Challenge Program. We
8 take kids that are from 16 to 18, high school dropouts,
9 we put them through a five and a half month program
10 where they can earn a HiSET, used to call them GED.
11 They learn life coping skills, but we've also get them
12 in where if they score high enough, they're in college,
13 they work out of Bossier Parish Community College and
14 River Community College down around Gonzales, where they
15 can actually earn 15 or 18 college credits in this five
16 and a half months. There's a lot of kids that come to
17 us that are able to do that, but in addition, se started
18 job training where we teach them welding, nursing
19 assistance, HVAC, electrical, so that when they come
20 out, they have a HiSET and they have some job skills,
21 they're employable hopefully in the future. We graduate
22 about 1,400 kids from that program, or over 1,400 kids,
23 every year in that program.

24 Because of what we've done with this in
25 the last 25 years, the Department of Labor came to us



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1 earlier this year and asked us to run a job corps
2 program for them, and we'll run it down around St.
3 Gabriel. Starting out there will be 200 kids that
4 graduate our youth challenge that will come and stay
5 with us for another five and a half months and really
6 learn job training skills, some of the things I
7 mentioned before, electrical, millwright, welding. And
8 we're working with the private sector, mostly the
9 industrial sector, that are teaming with us, with the
10 community college so that we'll provide them assets and
11 they will provide the trainers and actually hire these
12 kids as they start coming out. We will start that
13 program, our first program, later this summer.

14 We run a program called STARBASE where
15 we bring 5th graders in for a week and they do two
16 things, we build a rocket that they actually get to fly
17 and we do flight simulators, but inside that, we're
18 teaching them all of the STEM programs.

19 My boys went through it. They well tell
20 you it was the best week of school they ever spent. We
21 put about five or 6,000 kids through that STARBASE
22 program every year.

23 And last thing I would mention, you saw
24 part of it here earlier, is the cyber realm that we're
25 operating in. You know, I tell people all of the time



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1 now I don't worry too much about an enemy that I can see
2 anymore because I can kill them. I worry about the
3 cyber thing because you can't see it. Most of time it's
4 on top of you before you even know it's on top of you,
5 and it can take you down in ways that you can't even
6 think about. So we committed to this thing probably six
7 years ago. It's going. We're somewhere between crawl
8 and a walk, in my opinion. We have got to continue to
9 take advantage of it. It pays us huge dividends in the
10 war fight. But I will tell you, in our state, you know,
11 from local municipalities to the school systems that
12 were attacked earlier, all of way up to state
13 government, the National Guard is postured right to be
14 the cyber warriors, if you will, within our militaries
15 as far as I'm concerned because we train -- it takes two
16 years to train essentially. When they come out, they
17 are extremely employable in the private sector. I'm
18 talking about \$100,000-plus a year in most cases. But
19 when I see with the private sector people is they like
20 for them to stay in the Guard because whenever they come
21 in for their duty, they truly can look at our
22 adversaries in very secure places and see what they're
23 doing, and they can take that capability back to the job
24 that they just left.

25 That's kind of one over the world. I'll



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1 be glad to try to answer any questions that you may have
2 if I could.

3 Yes, sir.

4 MR. JAKES:

5 General Curtis, the F15 upgrade, the
6 F22, are we in that queue for that?

7 GENERAL CURTIS:

8 So I haven't seen the final NDA yet, so
9 bear me there, but I know within circumference was F15Xs
10 to be built this year, but the program can build like
11 eight a year for the next, I think it's six or eight
12 years. What the Air Force is trying to get, though, is
13 to build 72 fighters a year. That's what they need to
14 get. That's an F22 or an F15X. The F35 is a great
15 aircraft, but it does not do air superiority missions.
16 It's just not built for that yet. So the first ones
17 will come out where the builds will start. I think once
18 it starts, it will continue. I think it's the right
19 decision for the nation because it now gives us two
20 production lines. So we've got our fingers crossed that
21 we will start transitioning to the F15Xs soon because
22 the ones we flight fly right now are built in the '80s,
23 maybe early '90s, and so they are long past out service
24 life, but we are working on a replacement for them.

25 Yes, sir.



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1 MR. GATTI:

2 General Curtis, will you say something
3 about tuition exemption and how that's being utilized?

4 GENERAL CURTIS:

5 So, yeah, for a Louisiana Guardsman --
6 and it's been -- I took advantage of it, that's how long
7 it's been in place. If you go to a public university
8 here in the state, you get tuition exemption, so your
9 tuition is paid for. So now you have to worry about
10 your books, add-on fees and everything, but that's a
11 great benefit for us for recruiting college students and
12 retaining them.

13 But on top of that, they can get their
14 GI Bill, depending on where they fit. If they've never
15 deployed before, there's a GI Bill that they can get
16 that's worth, you know, anywhere from 350 to
17 \$700-something a month based on their line scores and
18 their ASVAB. If you're a combat veteran, the new GI
19 bill kicks in, which is a tremendous benefit, but it is
20 great program. And I'll tell you, a lot of kids, a lot
21 of Louisiana Guardsmen take advantage of that.

22 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

23 The new GI Bill is called the GI Bill
24 for life, and you can give it to your spouse or your
25 children.



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1 GENERAL CURTIS:

2 Yeah. I put my daughter through grad
3 school on mine. Through my Iraq deployment I put my
4 third through grad school and my boys through their
5 first year in college, so.

6 Anything else? If you see me get up and
7 leave in a little bit, I've got a hard time to get out
8 of here by 12 o'clock, so pardon me whenever I exit, but
9 thank you.

10 MS. HAYNIE:

11 I'm glad you mentioned that as well,
12 sir, because there's an event at 1 o'clock at the
13 Capitol, so we don't have a lot of wiggle room after
14 noon as well to head out of here, so please keep that in
15 mind, it's 11:42 already, as we continue.

16 Mr. Viser. And I'll click for you
17 because the clicker's not working, if that's okay.

18 MR. VISER:

19 I'm really glad you're here to click for
20 me. Like I told a group last night, I'm a technological
21 dinosaur. I have a really hard time even answering my
22 cell phone.

23 So the Governor spoke a little bit ago
24 about the I220 extension at Barksdale. When I was
25 driving down here, I was trying to remember when we



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1 started working on I220 into Barksdale, and all I can
2 tell you is John Breaux was Senator when we started
3 doing that, so it's been a long time in the works.

4 There's 700 families that live on the
5 east side of Barksdale. Barksdale's basically divided
6 between the west side and the east side by the runway,
7 and there's 700 families that live out there. And as
8 the Governor said and has already been mentioned,
9 Barksdale is surrounded by railroad tracks, and when
10 trains are there, it's -- everything shuts down, so it's
11 a bad deal.

12 So, anyway, the 220 is going to come
13 directly into the base over the railroad track and
14 connect with a new gate. That's the good news.

15 The bad news, the new gate started
16 design work back in, what, Chris, 2011, something like
17 that? And so, of course, that hasn't changed up until
18 the Air Force has to come up or the military has to come
19 up and say "Okay. We're actually going to put this and
20 we're going to actually build a gate." Twelve and a
21 half million dollars back in 2011 or whatever the date
22 was, 24.6 to build the new gate. So needless to say,
23 nobody wants to have a road to no where, nobody wants to
24 have gates to no where, so there's mass scramble right
25 now to make sure that we have this gate built in time



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1 for 220 into the base to be finished. It looks like 220
2 is going to be there before the gate's there because
3 it's a two-year project, and we're hoping, along with
4 the Air Force, that it's going to be in the National
5 Defense Authorization Act in '21, which will give us a
6 complete date in '22.

7 There is going to be a road that's
8 planned by the Air Force to meet up with the 220 coming
9 into the base. No gate, so I'm curious to see how
10 they're going to work a secure entrance into the base
11 with no gate. So it's going to be interesting.

12 So you might ask yourself why is there
13 this big push? Well, as the next-to-last bullet says,
14 it's an election year. We want to have it done. We
15 want to show that we are actually doing the things that
16 need to be done.

17 The next two slides give you a timeline
18 of -- I'm going on to the next page -- give you a
19 timeline of how everything hopefully will marry up.
20 These came from the Air Force. They're thinking in the
21 right direction.

22 Weapons generation facility at Barksdale
23 was mentioned. Secretary Pierson gave you a good
24 understanding of what happened with the old weapons
25 storage facility that we had. It was not just a weapons



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1 storage facility, but it was an air lodge cruise missile
2 maintenance facility as well. This too has been a long
3 time coming. At one point the cost for the facility was
4 estimated to be over \$600-million. Well, if you know
5 anything about the military construction, that's not
6 going to happen because that's going to suck up every
7 dollar, so the current Air Force Global Strike Commander
8 General Ray came in and said "You know, this makes no
9 sense. We've got to go back, we've got to have a
10 redesign. We've got to relook at this program and have
11 something that makes sense." So we feel reasonably
12 confident that the facility is going to be in '21.
13 We'll see.

14 The slide says, and it's pretty
15 accurate, 300 to 400 new personnel at Barksdale, plus
16 two additional MILCON projects, a new security forces
17 dormitory, which will, my understanding is will be sited
18 close to the facility, which makes sense, and then a 35
19 lane indoor firing range. And you might think like I
20 did when I first heard that they're going to have an
21 indoor firing range was "Why do you need an indoor
22 firing range?" So they can fire everything up to
23 50-caliber machine gun. So it's going to be a serious
24 facility, firing range, and protection of that weapons
25 storage facility is going to be pretty serious too.



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1 General Ray feels very confident that
2 the final two steps he has to go through to get the
3 go-ahead to have this project certified are going to
4 work, and I have to believe him because I've known him a
5 long time.

6 Finally, the next slide is a request to
7 a response or a response for a request from the
8 Congressional Delegation from then Secretary of Air
9 Force then Heather Wilson to give an update, which he
10 gives in that letter.

11 And finally, just General Curtis
12 mentioned the age of the F15s down at Belle Chasse.
13 Sir, I think we've got you beat. The last B52 was built
14 in 1961; Air Force took delivery in '62. There are
15 eight engines on that airplane. It's scheduled to fly
16 until 2050, and I'm not going to try to do math in
17 public, but that's a long time. And it desperately
18 needs to have new engines for a couple reasons. One,
19 the existing engines are old, but more importantly,
20 there are no more parts being made for the engines on
21 these aircraft. When an engine breaks, either the parts
22 have to be fabricated somehow. They used to go out to
23 Davis-Monthan and take pieces and parts off of engines
24 off of B52 aircraft that were out at the aircraft
25 storage facility out at their spot in Arizona. There



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1 aren't anymore, so we have to have new engines for this
2 airplane.

3 Air Force has requested 175-million in
4 FY 20 for the new engines, and then that will go up to
5 300-million in FY 21 and stay about at that level until
6 '24 and then go down to 270 after that according to the
7 budget projection. So it's not going to be a cheap
8 project, but, again, there's 76 airplanes with eight
9 engines plus some spares. So that's a lot of engines.
10 Again, I'm not going to try to do math.

11 We're expecting three contractors, Pratt
12 & Whitey, GE, Rolls Royce. And the funding mechanism
13 the Air Force is asking to use is called 804 funding
14 mechanism. It's an expedited process that allows, well,
15 a speed up in the program, actually. We'll probably
16 knock at least a year, maybe two years off of getting
17 the engines on the airplane. So it's critical. We have
18 that done. The delegation is well aware of our request
19 that they get on top of it and make sure that the House
20 Armed Services Committee and others understand the
21 necessity to have these engines sooner rather than
22 later.

23 So I'll try to answer questions if
24 anybody has any.

25 MR. CREWS:



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1 I don't know if everybody is aware, but
2 Barksdale now has a lot of civilians living on it
3 because of the way they do housing. Is this going to
4 impact that once they a Generation facility with the
5 weapons? Are they going to still be allowed to live
6 there or are they going to move civilians off and --

7 MR. VISER:

8 My understanding is they will still be
9 allowed to live there unless, under the agreement
10 between Hunt Military Communities and the Air Force that
11 they're guarantying some big number, 90 to 92 percent
12 occupancy rate to come from active duty folks. Once
13 they can't reach that occupancy rate, then it's a tiered
14 process to go through, retired military, reservists on
15 down the list until you have civilian. The civilians
16 have to be in vetted in some manner. I'm not familiar
17 with exactly what that is. My guess would be that until
18 they can solve the problem of having all active duty
19 military in those houses, and it's not liking it used to
20 be, you know General Curtis can't say "Okay. Mr. Crews,
21 you're going to live -- Captain Crews, you're coming on
22 Barksdale, you're going to live in House 'X'." They can
23 choose to live on base or not. So it is going to be an
24 interesting process to see how they come up with solving
25 that problem.



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1 Yes, sir.

2 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

3 Murray, when the new gate is built, the
4 main gate that exists where the railroad track at,
5 that's going to be closed down?

6 MR. VISER:

7 No, sir. That gate will stay. The
8 existing North gate will also stay. The gate that will
9 go away is right next to the Industrial Drive commercial
10 gate. That gate will go away because it's got all kind
11 of issues with what goes on at Barksdale, and it's an
12 at-grade crossing again.

13 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

14 Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. VISER:

16 Anything else?

17 (No response.)

18 MR. VISER:

19 Thank y'all for your time.

20 MS. HAYNIE:

21 Mr. Reese.

22 MR. REESE:

23 Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm
24 pleased to share with you what we've been working on so
25 far this year, and I'll give you a quick, condensed



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1 update on that.

2 So, you know, significant advocacy
3 during the first part of this year. This is about an
4 every-other-year process for us as the key
5 decisionmakers of the military change, and we've got to
6 get back in front of them, you know, to make sure that
7 we're keeping good communication open in terms of Fort
8 Polk. And a lot of reassurance about the 3/10 Brigade
9 Combat Team. That continues to be something we have to
10 monitor very closely as it is the only orphaned brigade
11 combat team left in the country, and as some of our
12 military priorities change around the world, whether
13 we're standing up a unit in Poland or doing something
14 like that, we know that the Army may continue to look at
15 how they fill those gaps by identifying units around the
16 country now, but they can move quickly into those
17 missions. And we continue to be concerned that 3/10
18 will be looked upon in that way, so constantly
19 advocating for that.

20 I'll talk a little bit about these two
21 acronyms in the next one, DCIP and IGSA, and I'll tell
22 you about our next steps.

23 Some of our direct advocacy down to Fort
24 Sam Houston. The General on the top was relieved of
25 duty in the news here just a few weeks ago. He had a



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1 very difficult portfolio. One of them is military
2 housing, and, you know, a lot of the issues you may have
3 seen in the news and the quality of the military housing
4 and issues related to that. And to the gentleman that's
5 going to move up is right below him. That's General
6 Maguire. He's a former Commander at Fort Polk, now a
7 Two-Star Major General and a great friend to Fort Polk
8 and a great friend to Louisiana. I was pleased to have
9 him in that position, even if it's temporary.

10 So we've been advocating for some water
11 filtration systems that are needed on South Fort Polk,
12 some opportunities for gas and energy privatization on
13 Fort Polk. I'm sure our Mayor from Hornbeck will
14 probably end up taking advantage of as well.

15 The significant cost cutting that's
16 occurring across our force as the Army struggles to
17 maintain its investment in modernizations. They're
18 having to take some of that money from their
19 Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization of the
20 facilities, and so we have things like swimming pools,
21 we have things like community centers and chapels that
22 are falling victim to the money that the military's got
23 to capture to go elsewhere. So we're working on a
24 solution there.

25 You know, some state-wide road repair



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1 opportunities, I'll explain in a minute, and further
2 Intergovernmental Support Agreement.

3 Also working inside of the Pentagon,
4 again, working with these key decisionmakers to make
5 sure that we're up to speed on what their priorities are
6 and they understand what our investments are. There
7 have been major outreach going in the area of cyber,
8 just constantly looking for new mission opportunity at
9 Fort Polk, and I think we may be able to hopefully
10 uncover something further there. They continue to go
11 interested purchasing more land. You know, we've grown
12 Fort Polk by about 47,000 acres, and they've identified
13 a couple of areas where they need to purchase just a
14 little bit more property to make all of that area
15 usable. And then the Defense Access Road program, which
16 I'll address on the next slide.

17 So we've identified some of the problem
18 roads in and around Fort Polk. When we grew Fort Polk,
19 the additional 47,000 acres increased the use of these
20 training areas that are connected by state highways,
21 we've increased the use of military equipment over those
22 roads. Those were substandard roads to begin with that
23 have no shoulders, they're very narrow roads, have
24 narrow bridges. It's very problematic, and we've got to
25 do something about them. So we're being very creative



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1 in that process. So one of the areas is Defense
2 Communities Infrastructure Program, and very quickly, we
3 worked with our other defense community organizations
4 around the country to establish this as a federal law
5 about three years ago that would create a bucket of
6 funds so that a community like ours can apply in grants
7 for to address things just like that. It's outside the
8 military's own property, but it's absolutely vital to
9 the missions of these military bases.

10 So we've identified the projects you see
11 here. This year they're attempting to appropriate
12 nearly \$100-million to Defense Communities
13 Infrastructure Program, and we have been very closely
14 tied to that. Senator Kennedy has been working with us
15 to try to retain that money in that appropriation, and
16 we believe that's something we'll be able to apply for.

17 And I'm very pleased Secretary Pierson
18 has been working with us to potentially provide some
19 state match that would certainly increase our ranking in
20 that processes and hopefully let us be successful in
21 securing some of these grants to create a greater
22 partnership to address the infrastructure needs that our
23 state presently can't afford to do. So very proud of
24 the work that's going on there.

25 Intergovernmental Support Agreements, if



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1 you key take away here, we have three primary
2 Intergovernmental Support Agreements where we have
3 surrounding towns and parish governments around Fort
4 Polk going onto the installation, signing contracts with
5 the military to provide city-level, parish-level and
6 state-level services out there. We're saving the
7 federal taxpayer \$112-million in the first five years of
8 these agreements and earning revenue for our local
9 communities that's then being reinvested into road
10 overlay programs in the City of Leesville, the Town of
11 Rosepine's doing sewer treatment center repairs that
12 they've never had the resources to do before, and the
13 Vernon Parish Police Jury is able to buy more road
14 maintenance equipment to maintain some of our rural
15 roads as well. So this is a great win-win for our
16 communities in Louisiana and for the cost of operation
17 on Fort Polk.

18 One of the things that we have got to
19 do, though, is that as we visit with our military
20 leaders and they talk about how they've got to strip
21 money out of some of their maintenance reserves on the
22 installations, we've kind of -- we went back to them and
23 said "Well, if we're saving you \$112-million in five
24 years, why are we struggling so hard to get an \$800,000
25 repair to the swimming pool at Fort Polk? Why are we



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1 struggling so hard to get a chapel, a new chapel built
2 on Fort Polk? Why are we struggling so hard on these
3 quality of life initiatives?" And they said "Well, we
4 hear what you're saying. Thank you very much for
5 playing. We really need those cost saving, and we need
6 to put them in modernization." And they kind of take
7 their chips and walk away. We found that very
8 frustrating, so we've been working with our members of
9 congress to change that legislatively. So there's the
10 precedent for that already in federal law where enhanced
11 views leads us. So if you're in the Navy and you rent a
12 piece of property to private industry, there's already a
13 law that says 25 percent of the revenue generated in
14 that process has to remain on the installation, and so
15 we're pursuing regulation to do something similar here
16 that says if you enter into an Intergovernmental Support
17 Agreement and it states \$1-million, 25 percent of that
18 has to remain on that installation to be spent under the
19 purview of the commanding general and whatever their
20 priorities may be.

21 So we're working hard on this. We had a
22 little bit of pushback from the Department of Defense,
23 as you would expect. We think we'll get report language
24 this year, and we hope that we actually get something
25 accomplished next year. And this would be a great



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1 incentive to our military commanders to take advantage
2 of these cost savings opportunities as well when they
3 think they can get some money back and reinvest in their
4 own priorities.

5 Again, Defense Community Infrastructure
6 Program and IGSA, Senator Kennedy and some of the
7 language he helped us secure in the Senate, we'll
8 continue to follow that.

9 Joint Operations Command Center is our
10 big MILCON project at Fort Polk. This is absolutely
11 vital to the training mission that's going on now. It's
12 been in the pipeline for quite some time, and we have
13 worked every year to try to pull it ahead and find
14 additional resources for that, but we do believe that
15 it's going to start at FY 21. This will be a secured
16 facility, and it will help us grow at Fort Polk that
17 training mission that's there now and as it becomes more
18 complex, there's more cyber involvement. They're
19 presently operating out of the building that was built I
20 think around 1976. It doesn't -- it lacks the actual
21 secure facilities necessary for some of the training
22 going on at Fort Polk.

23 And in short term next steps, you know,
24 just working, again, as we outreached to the new
25 commanders in some of these areas where they have



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1 decisionmaking authority over Fort Polk. Our Defense
2 Access Road Program grant submissions, in the event that
3 we're able to keep that program funded, making sure that
4 our MILCON project and the Joint Operations Command
5 Center doesn't slip.

6 Talking about Ground Base Sense and
7 avoid radar to allow the greater use of unmanned aerial
8 vehicles from England Airpark in Alexandria over to the
9 training areas around Fort Polk is something that we're
10 working on. And then, of course, maintaining some of
11 that saving from our IGSA so that our communities work
12 hard and they can do something creative and we can shake
13 loose those cost savings for the military, we can get it
14 reinvested there, increase the military value of Fort
15 Polk.

16 So that's a very quick update on what's
17 going on at Fort Polk. Happy to answer any questions.

18 Again, Mr. Secretary, thank you for that
19 support in that grant application process. Hopefully
20 we're successful.

21 SECRETARY PIERSON:

22 You didn't even mention me being out
23 there on a drop-in.

24 MR. REESE:

25 Oh, that's right, yeah, in the middle of



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1 the night for the drop that never happened; right.

2 SECRETARY PIERSON:

3 We did get to see a heavy equipment
4 drop.

5 MR. REESE:

6 Oh, okay. Just not a personnel.

7 SECRETARY PIERSON:

8 It was great to be with the commander
9 out there and a lot of quality time with the commander
10 as well. We talked about all of the issues that you've
11 highlighted, made the introduction of Jeannette, so a
12 very successful engagement for us.

13 MR. REESE:

14 Excellent. Thank you. Appreciate it.

15 MS. HAYNIE:

16 Mr. Silbert, I've got yours queued up
17 here, and we are at 12:02. How long will you have?

18 SECRETARY PIERSON:

19 I think the heart stops around 12:30.
20 We should be able to make it.

21 MR. SILBERT:

22 Good afternoon. I'll be brief.

23 I want to start by quickly just
24 mentioning, since we talked about Veteran affairs this
25 morning, that there's an event coming up on October 4th



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1 in New Orleans. It is a Veterans Empowerment and
2 Transition Summit. In case anyone's interested, I'd be
3 happy to share more information about that. That is in
4 partnership with our friends NextOp.

5 I'm going focus my comments primarily on
6 Belle Chasse this morning. Just to share a bit of an
7 update, the base, as you may not know, is approximately
8 5,300 acres. We have 4,186 service members, 4,363
9 dependents, about 1,829 civilians with 33 tenant
10 commands. So it's a very busy base.

11 Our largest of the 33 tenants is the
12 Louisiana International Guard with 1,500 coming to work
13 each day, 18 F15C Eagles housed there on the base.

14 I'll start primarily with the challenges
15 we're facing. When the new commander came in about a
16 year ago, one of his first observations was how quiet it
17 is, and that is essentially a 19-percent utilization
18 rate at the base, so that's not good in terms of how the
19 Navy considers things and how we compare to others, so
20 that's something we need to shore up.

21 Also, the perception, not only of this
22 facility, but of MARFORRES, the other Navy mission in
23 our metro area, is that it's shore duty, so that's not
24 necessarily going to attract the brightest and the best,
25 so that's something that we just have to deal with.



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1 Along those same lines is the regional
2 perceptions of Southeast Louisiana does not make it
3 attractive for folks around the country to come and work
4 at our various missions, and I'm very happy to say this
5 is something of interest to Dr. Haynie and something we
6 want to work more closely on to get ahead of to change
7 those perceptions. So hope to have more to report about
8 our strategies down the road to get ahead of those
9 perceptions.

10 In terms of addressing the challenges,
11 some of the opportunities we see, specifically
12 short-term, the base commander has beefed up winter
13 exercises with the UK and Canada, also his operations
14 staff is looking to attract other detachments for joint
15 exercises. They've been in touch with counterparts in
16 Texas and Florida, and we're looking, again, to address
17 that 19 percent utilization.

18 From a long-term perspective, I'm proud
19 to mention that the Kuwaitis have 11 pilots, an 18 to
20 24-month program. They're using five F18 Hornets. They
21 are investing, the country Kuwait, in Hangar 415
22 \$7-million, and we'll also have five Boeing instructors
23 coming in. And this is something that we'll use in the
24 future. They're already working on a relationship with
25 Norway tie do the same thing, and so we hope to continue



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1 to cycle through and grow this international training
2 effort.

3 Additionally, you've heard me report
4 about the Joint Use Runway at Belle Chasse. The
5 Secretary of the Navy has approved the plan.
6 Plaquemines Parish is currently working hard to finalize
7 their input into the plan and to pursue cargo tenants,
8 which we hope to assist with.

9 And then another exciting opportunity is
10 the MQ-25 Stingray unmanned refueling aircraft. It's
11 about the size of an FA18. They're considering basing
12 one of the West Coast and one on the East Coast. Very
13 excited to report that Belle Chasse is one of five under
14 consideration for that basing. The decision is still
15 two to three years out. They intend to build about 20
16 to 30 of these unmanned refuelling aircraft. It will
17 create 600 new jobs.

18 In support of this, we did send a letter
19 to our delegation in support of this, and will continue
20 to work with Chris Goode and our deligation to try to
21 exert pressure on the decisionmakers to have this come.

22 Under funding at Belle Chasse, proud to
23 report that we've got over \$70-million consisting of,
24 for two years in a row, we got MILCON money. I think
25 the only facility in the state. Most recently a new



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1 \$25.2-million to support the gate entry and security at
2 Belle Chasse.

3 Also a resilience and conservation
4 investment of 5.4-million, and then the apron for the
5 National Guard's 159th, \$39-million dollars.

6 And, lastly, in the interest of time,
7 Chris, you can either cover this now or during your
8 presentation, just about next steps with the F35.

9 Any comments or question?

10 MR. CREWS:

11 I've got a question. Just out of
12 curiosity, I was at Barksdale and we used to work with
13 Belle Chasse F15s all of the time. When you said it was
14 quiet there, I just texted my -- the Commander
15 (inaudible) up there and asked him "How much work do we
16 get for the F15s from Belle Chasse anymore?" And he
17 said "Zero." So I'm just wondering if we can form a
18 relationship again. They love working against -- I
19 mean, because we're doing a lot of stuff that's going to
20 happen in combat, so I'm wondering if you can put me in
21 contact with someone where they can reenergize that
22 relationship.

23 MR. SILBERT:

24 I'd be happy to. Thank you.

25 MS. HAYNIE:



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1 Mr. Goode, I'll pull yours up. I also
2 have a couple of slides from Commissioner Elder. He
3 could not be with us today. They're in the packet, sir.
4 Do you want us to try to cover those or you want to just
5 leave them for people to read elsewhere?

6 SECRETARY PIERSON:

7 We'll see how much time we've got after
8 Mr. Goode is complete.

9 MS. HAYNIE:

10 Okay.

11 MR. GOODE:

12 Thank you. Chris Goode with the
13 Roosevelt Group. You know, I've been working with Mike
14 and Gary and Murray for some time now. They talked a
15 little bit, you know, to the efforts at the individual
16 base level. I just wanted to talk little bit on some
17 higher-level updates, the Congressional defense bill
18 process, talk a little bit about sequestration. You
19 hear about the bipartisan budget deals and the impacts
20 with sequestration. We've seen a lot of changes in
21 leadership in the Pentagon and how we track those, and
22 just looking ahead.

23 We really -- we focused on three major
24 defense bills among the defense communities, that
25 authorization bills, the big policy bills, and the



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1 appropriations bills that actually provide money to the
2 services and to the installations, that being the
3 appropriations defense bill and MILCON bills.

4 You know, why does that matter?
5 Because, you know, we talked about the ground-based
6 sensitive void project that's on the appropriations
7 side. If you look at ECIP funding, that's an
8 authorization and appropriations issue. When you look
9 at Gary's funding and recapitalization at Belle Chasse,
10 those are real appropriations issues.

11 And from this chart, you see it's kind
12 of a small print there, but these bills all are moving
13 along. The only thing that really hasn't happened yet
14 are finalizing the appropriations bills. So you're
15 probably going to go into another continuing resolution
16 1 October.

17 If you go to the next slide, the good
18 news is there has been a signed bipartisan budget
19 agreement once a year, a two-year deal covering FY 20
20 and FY 21. So if you're in the defense business, that's
21 a good thing for you. You know, you may not like big
22 deficits and, you know, running the country into
23 bankruptcy, but, you know, unfortunately, you know,
24 tying defense and non-defense has been sort of the way
25 to get these bills and these appropriations bills done.



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1 You know, on the other hand, you know,
2 we've been moaning about sequestration over the last 11
3 years. Well, sequestration ended in FY 21, so it's
4 done; right? That's 11 years of sequestration. You
5 know, this minor detail is that in those 11 years,
6 there's been four two-year deals. So for all of the
7 wiping about getting killed in sequestration, there's
8 been a lot of money pumped into the defense budget.

9 So you can see FY 20, 660-billion, and
10 then you add the OCA, the overseas contingency accounts,
11 so the defense budget this year will be about
12 745-billion, and next year 748-billion. So you will
13 have predictability, you will have some stabilization in
14 defense spending for at least two more years.

15 MR. REESE:

16 Chris, that carries it out through the
17 period of time the sequestration was planned; right?

18 MR. GOODE:

19 Correct. Right. So it's over, and I
20 think there's no -- you know, the bottom line, over the
21 last six or seven years, you know, you're basically
22 coupling defense and non-defense, so it's a big labor
23 HHS budgets combined with defense so you get enough
24 votes to get over the finish line. You know, Trump has
25 signed the bill over the last few years.



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1 So if you look at the next slide, you
2 can see how these, you know, defense and non-defense is
3 essentially coupled with each other with defense just a
4 little bit higher than the non-defense accounts.

5 So when you get back to the policy bill,
6 the big National Defense Authorization Act, you know,
7 essentially the House, which is run by Democrats, they
8 authorized 755, the Senate 750. That will get worked
9 out, you know, as part of that budget deal, to about
10 745-billion. Everybody gets a pay raise. If you have
11 kids in the military, they do look to get authorized
12 about a 3.1 percent pay raise.

13 And the end strength, General Curtis
14 talked about the end strength, the end strength, nothing
15 has changed from the President's request. Both the
16 House and Senate supported what the Pentagon wanted.

17 You know, again, the National Defense
18 Authorization Act, that's the big policy, there's some
19 specific issues that could tie it up. You know, it
20 still has not been conferenced. It's being conferenced
21 as we speak and will be signed probably in October,
22 November, December timeframe. But, you know,
23 essentially the left shows some issues with trans
24 military members and issues with the Saudi-led coalition
25 in Yemen and, of course, the border wall in Guantanamo



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1 Bay. Every year there seems to be an issue with
2 Guantanamo Bay. Those will get wrapped up and
3 reconciled and the bill will be passed.

4 So a lot of churn in terms of
5 leadership. The new Secretary of Defense, the Former
6 Secretary of the Army, the Chairman of the Joint Chief,
7 Mark Milley, new Chief of Staff of the Army and a new
8 CNO just recently, Admiral Mike Gilday. And I think
9 you'll be seeing the active Secretary of the Air Force
10 actually be replaced by a nominated Secretary of the Air
11 Force as well as the Chief of National Guard will be
12 changing out here soon as well.

13 Other new leaders, Lucian Niemyer,
14 Lucian used to work for us. He's now back in the
15 Pentagon working as the Acting Assistant Secretary of
16 the Navy for Energy and Installations. He's a good
17 contact to have inside the Pentagon.

18 So last slide, going forward, yes,
19 absolutely a significant focus on the Weapons Generation
20 Facility. This is a huge issue. It's gone on way too
21 long. We have hit this as hard as we can. The
22 deligation has been involved very closely with the Air
23 Force. Air Force Global Strike Command has all but said
24 it is going to be in the '21 budget. Tim Ray cannot
25 announce that, it is against the law. It's



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1 predecisional.

2 I spoke just this week with Mike
3 Johnson's aide, and we are going to meet with General
4 Clark in September with the delegations at a joint
5 delegation meeting with Clark to hammer home that we
6 need this thing in the budget. This is it. This is the
7 last chance probably in September to ensure that there
8 is a MILCON request for a significant amount of money.
9 It's not all going to get executed at once, but February
10 we should see something positive.

11 The gate, the entrance road, you know,
12 listen, we fought really hard to get this gate funded as
13 an unfunded priority. We got that done in '19. The DOD
14 estimated the gate that they were off by 50 percent. I
15 mean, it's a joke. So now you guys spend all of this
16 money on this entrance road, you're not only not going
17 to have a gate when that road is done, you may not have
18 a road unless they get this right this year. Delegation
19 knows about it, we're going to get it down, you're going
20 to have a road. You should have a gate, but, you know,
21 anyway.

22 So in terms of 159th Fighter Squadron,
23 this is the first year that Belle Chasse really has a
24 shot at recapitalizing F15s. Okay? The F35, there's a
25 new round of competition that's going to kick off in the



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1 Fall for F35s. Belle Chasse and 159th are going to be a
2 part of that competition whether they want to be or not.
3 You can fight for an old 15X, and it's still old, but if
4 you get an F35, that mission will be there for the next
5 100 years. The F15X that General Curtis talked about we
6 think will probably go west to Oregon where their
7 mission capability rates are horrible. The F15Cs in New
8 Orleans are actually in pretty good shape, better shape.

9 So bottom line, if you get the F15X,
10 fine. It's a good aircraft, but the real next
11 generation step is F35. So we're going to be watching
12 that very carefully that Belle Chasse ought to be
13 competing for the F35. If you get the F15, that's fine,
14 take it. The problem will be if an F15X falls into the
15 sea and they ground them all and for two or three or
16 five years, you're not flying anything, that's the
17 problem we need to mitigate. So that's something that
18 we will be paying close attention to.

19 Mike is right, that IGSA language where
20 you capture 25 percent, we were this close to actually
21 getting it into Title 10, but because the Pentagon
22 turns, you know, at the same speed as an aircraft
23 carrier, it was just too big of a leap to do that all in
24 one year. The Pentagon basically came back and said
25 "Oh, we can't figure out the math, and how do we do



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1 this?" So we said "Fine. We'll take the report, and
2 next year we want to put it into law."

3 And then obviously there's a lot going
4 on in cyber. You saw that this morning. There's a lot
5 going on elsewhere in Shreveport, certainly Fort Polk,
6 with a lot of investment in cyber, and it's great that
7 we are on the cutting edge.

8 I think that's it. Last slide, you
9 know, for all of the talk about lot of money and getting
10 our readiness correct, this is a picture of the USS Fort
11 McHenry coming into the BALTOPS exercise in Germany.
12 The shiny, white thing in the back is a brand new
13 people's liberation, Army, Navy, Chinese cruiser. That
14 is your Navy, unfortunately. I served on this ship,
15 actually, so it was kind of sad to see, but we are still
16 way behind on readiness and sustainability and new
17 procurement in spite all of the money going into DOD.
18 There's a long way to go.

19 So thank you.

20 MS. HAYNIE:

21 Thank you.

22 MR. RICHARD:

23 Who's the Captain of that ship no?

24 MR. GOODE:

25 He's an 05 probably. Probably a Senior



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1 05.

2 MS. HAYNIE:

3 Secretary Pierson, at the time should I
4 press with mine?

5 SECRETARY PIERSON:

6 Yes. I think the information General
7 Elder provided is in the packet, and that should
8 suffice. And we can proceed with your report.

9 MS. HAYNIE:

10 Yes, it is.

11 Thank you, all. I will make my remarks
12 very brief.

13 Obviously I'm meeting all of you for the
14 first time largely, and this is my first LMAC, so I'm
15 really excited to learn about the functions of LMAC and
16 the issues that affect our veteran service members,
17 families and installations all across the state.

18 I am a Lieutenant Colonel Marine Corps
19 Officer and a Cobra pilot by trade. Twenty-two years of
20 service as of this Fall, so I'll be retiring in the next
21 few months. I do have a Ph.D. in International
22 Relations. My work is on the intersections of gender
23 and war fighting and strategic war planning at the top
24 level.

25 My husband is also a Marine Infantry



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1 Office, ans so we're also -- we're a dual military
2 family for 20 years now, so I'm intimately familiar with
3 a lot of those issues that our families face.

4 I have to say that, yes, I'm a Naval
5 Academy graduate. I've got my ring on today mostly to
6 kind of waive it around like this, but my oldest
7 daughter, for the first 11 years of her life, had a
8 T-shirt that she was able to wear that said "I wasn't
9 born the last name Army beat Navy in football." So she
10 can't wear that right now.

11 SECRETARY PIERSON:

12 It's been retired.

13 MS. HAYNIE:

14 Three times. Three times is not really
15 a record. We'll see. This will certainly get
16 interesting. I have some decorations coming.

17 I also teach as an adjunct at Tulane.
18 I'm still involved in some of the Marine Corps'
19 warfighting effectiveness activities going on. And I
20 run two leadership programs, one for children in the
21 local New Orleans area based on Marine Corps training
22 principles, and one for female veterans to elevate their
23 stories.

24 I started at LED in 1, July. We've been
25 making some trips around the state. I've met with the



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1 entity formerly known as SPAWAR with Mr. Silbert. We
2 met with the JRB Commander last week as well.

3 I made a trip with the Secretary to see,
4 as you spoke about earlier, the 82nd Airborne drop-in at
5 about 11 p.m. one night at Fort Polk, and that was
6 fascinating. We didn't get to see the full lift. We
7 got to see the have drop, so that was good.

8 I will be making a trip with the
9 Secretary up to Barksdale hopefully in the near future.
10 We're trying to get some schedules aligned to make that
11 happen. And two of the remaining installations in the
12 Southeast Military Alliance.

13 But please consider my e-mail and my
14 phone an open door, so reach out to me with any concerns
15 you have. I look forward to getting to know each of
16 you, your mission, the installations and the needs in
17 your area and doing my job moving forward.

18 So thank you for your time and your
19 energy and your desire to make this state a better
20 place.

21 We have about seven minutes left, so was
22 there any new business? I know we presented some
23 already on the Veterans First Program and the
24 certifications.

25 MR. CREWS:



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1 Just as I was thinking about, when I was
2 talking about the integration of the B52 and the F15 is
3 maybe we should serve as some kind of facilitator so
4 that communities around the state -- I mean, they work
5 with each other in combat, but a lot of times within the
6 state they're -- some of them will retire and move on
7 and now that relationship's lost. So maybe we could
8 serve as some type of clearinghouse to be able to, you
9 know, keep a relationship with one another and utilize
10 each other to say that "Hey, we love Louisiana too," so
11 all of the military is here and we can work -- I don't
12 know what shape it would take, but I'm just thinking.

13 SECRETARY PIERSON:

14 That sounds a little bit like maybe like
15 a unit directory or something with a POC that's
16 designated so that they can talk to each other. I'm
17 happy to talk offline, maybe flush that idea out or open
18 it up to others.

19 MR. REESE:

20 I don't know if we ever flushed it out
21 completely. You know, when we changed the structure of
22 the LMAC, at one point we had all of our military base
23 commanders as part of the LMAC and then decided they
24 couldn't attend because it really wasn't legal for them
25 to participate in that process in that construct. But



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1 perhaps the next time we have an LMAC we make a serious
2 outreach for our advisory committee, if you would, of
3 our military base commanders that they're all invited,
4 and perhaps before we start conducting official
5 business, perhaps we can get a presentation from each of
6 those base commanders, for them, for the benefit of
7 themselves, but also to benefit of us in terms of
8 identifying challenges that they have.

9 MR. RICHARD:

10 You know, Green Flag exercises that used
11 to have at Barksdale that would support Fort Polk,
12 they're gone. So for the last however many years it has
13 been a handshake agreement to use B52s. The Belle
14 Chasse F15s could be supporting that exercise. We've
15 had that conversation. So I think you're right. I
16 mean, if there's some form where we can get the COOs
17 together at some meeting where you could have those
18 types of conversations. You know, doesn't have to be
19 every single LMAC meeting or maybe LMAC is not the
20 venue, but --

21 MR. VISER:

22 I don't see why that whoever the -- not
23 necessarily the Senior Officer, but a good point of
24 contact or a decisionmaker as a point of contact for
25 whatever the unit is, they could come and listen. They



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1 don't have to ask anything. That was the real problem
2 was when they would come, they would present their
3 little wish list, and that's where we got into a
4 problem. You know, you can't do that.

5 MR. RICHARD:

6 Colonel, somebody mentioned something in
7 now Orleans about a veterans convocation.

8 MR. SILBERT:

9 Yes. October 4th.

10 MR. RICHARD:

11 You did?

12 MR. SILBERT:

13 Yes, sir. I'll talk to you after the
14 meeting.

15 MR. RICHARD:

16 Lastly, please contact me as far as the
17 white paper that the Secretary mentioned. I'll be happy
18 to volunteer my time to assist in any way I could on
19 that.

20 MS. HAYNIE:

21 Thank you, sir. I definitely will.

22 Is there any other new business before
23 we move on?

24 (No response.)

25 MS. HAYNIE:



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1 Are there any public comments -- oh, I'm
2 sorry.

3 MR. JAKES:

4 Just, if I could, I want to introduce
5 Mr. John Manion. He's my Vice Chair with ESGR for the
6 State of Louisiana, and he's also our Director of
7 Ombudsman Services, so all of these employment cases
8 that go on, John's the one that honchos that.

9 MR. MANION:

10 Nice to be here. Thank you.

11 MS. HAYNIE:

12 Thank you, and welcome.

13 Are there any other public comments?

14 (No response.)

15 MS. HAYNIE:

16 Okay then. Are there any motions to
17 adjourn?

18 MR. SILBERT:

19 So moved.

20 MR. RICHARD:

21 Second.

22 SECRETARY PIERSON:

23 Moved by Gary Silbert; seconded by
24 Donald Richard.

25 MS. HAYNIE:



1 All in favor, please say "aye."

2 (Several members respond "aye.")

3 MS. HAYNIE:

4 Thank you for your time.

5 (Meeting concludes at 12:27 p.m.)

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