

MARYLAND MILITARY INSTALLATION COUNCIL

Monday, March 11, 2024; 0830-1145

Meeting Minutes

The first MMIC meeting of 2024 was conducted in-person at the state government building at 100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD. The session included introductory remarks, briefings on the Purple Star Schools program and Military Family Services, a brief overview of state legislative initiatives relative to military families, plus updates from the Maryland installation and base commanders, from the military alliance presidents, and from state agency members of the MMIC. Total attendance was 62.

Opening Comments

Lisa Swoboda, Executive Director of the MMIC, and Senior Director of the Maryland Commerce Office of Military & Federal Affairs welcomed attendees to the meeting, provided opening remarks with a review of the agenda, and recognized the MMIC cabinet members in attendance.

Purple Star Schools: Maryland Overview

Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent, Student Support Academic Enrichment & Educational Policy, Maryland Department of Education, and Commissioner, Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission

- Purple Star schools consider the unique situations and needs of the children of military families, to enable and ease the smooth transition of those students.
- Ms. Gable described the criteria to become a Purple Star School and listed the eight schools in the state with the Purple Star designation:
 - Bellows Springs Elementary (Howard County), Captain Walter Francis Duke Elementary (St. Mary's County), Kent Island High (Queen Anne's County), MacArthur Middle (Anne Arundel County), Meade High (Anne Arundel), Mt. Harmony Elementary (Calvert), Queen Anne's County High (Queen Anne's County), and West Meade Early Education Center (Anne Arundel County).
 - Breakdown by county: 3 from Anne Arundel, 1 Howard, 1 St. Mary's, 2 Queen Anne's and 1 from Calvert.
- Each school must apply, but there is no limit or cap on the number of Purple Star schools in the state.
- The next round of applications will be received late summer or early fall.
- For questions or further discussion: mary.gable@maryland.gov

An overview of the Q&A following the presentation can be found below:

Question: (COL Wilson, CO South Potomac) How does this work for DoDea schools?

Answer: Assistance would not vary.

Question: If a parent deploys, the child can take off and not be counted tardy – does that count for federal schools?

Answer: Yes, but MD Dept of Education does not have oversight over those schools. Parents/students can take time off after a deployment but there needs to be a conversation about the reasonableness of that time off and any tests that may be missed.

Question: (COL Marsh, CO Fort Detrick) Fort Detrick has a great relationship with FCPS; what are the talking points with the county executive/superintendent to pursue Purple Star status?

Answer: Mary will send information to Lisa about the program to distribute to commanders. Reach out to the schools, however there is an application and it requires the superintendent's approval.

BWI Airline Service for the Military

Jordan Kayloe, Director of Air Service Development

- Mr. Kayloe was unavailable and will be rescheduled for the 10 June MMIC meeting.

Understanding the Military Family: Panel Discussion

Sonja Flannigan, 1st Vice President, APG Community Spouses Club

Miranda Wright, APG Community Spouses Club

Gari-Ann Kia, NAS Patuxent River Officers' Spouses Club

- The panelists were introduced and profiled. Each described similar experiences:
 - Challenge of frequent moves, specifically experiencing moving to Maryland
 - Difficulties transitioning in and out of communities and the role of spouses clubs and social media to reach military spouses and provide services and support
 - Issues with school transitions, particularly transferring credits
 - Spouse employment roadblocks

The panel received lots of questions from the audience and was well received. Some of the questions from the audience and the outcomes from that discussion are summarized below.

- What used to be "Officers Wives Clubs" should now be "Military Spouses Club" or "Community Spouses Club" due to the changing demographics of the military family and to be inclusive of all genders and family dynamics, including unmarried partners.
- Some support programs for transitioning service members and military families that were highlighted at Maryland installations and defense communities include:
 - JBA Sponsorship Program offered as a model for other services/bases for transitioning service members and families. Incoming airmen are paired with a sponsor within their unit of a similar grade/rank and with similar family dynamics (e.g. single, married, with kids, etc.) to help guide them with the transition.
 - JBA also created an app called JBA Connect that has all of the information for the base on that app so any new service members or interested parties can download the app and has info on who to connect to depending on the question/issue.
 - A non-federal non profit org, Community Salutes, hosts a "D-1 Signing Day" of HS enlistees in Howard County.
- Importance of service opportunities for K-12 education:
 - (Mary Gable) Maryland is one of the only states that requires 75 hours of service for graduation. Some of it is embedded in curriculum like civics classes and some are outside of the classroom. Could still do a better job.
 - (Secretary of Labor Portia Wu) Maryland under the Blueprint for Schools is focused on getting students college and career ready and has funded career counselors for the first time through local workforce boards that are advising kids on their options, including military and government service. These positions have recently been hired within the last three months.
 - (Secretary of Labor Portia Wu) Maryland Governor Wes Moore has created a Maryland Corps and Service Option program which provides HS grads with the opportunity to take a "service year" creating new pathways to meet community needs, enhance workforce development, and promote preparedness for both higher and vocational education. The

program within the newly created Department of Service and Civic Innovation will look to make military families aware of and engaged in this initiative.

- School rankings/scoring and homeschooling as an option for military families:
 - Scores online are not necessarily indicative of a school's performance and do not tell the whole story. Need to research school's programs and parenting plays an important role.
 - (Lisa Terry, Manager of the Howard County Office for Veterans and Military Families) A great rating does not define a school. Encourages military families to get into the schools, volunteer and get to know their programs. Howard County is working on recognizing students who have gotten into a service academy at graduation or will serve in the military after the graduation; not sure if MSDE can support. Encourages participation in Veterans Day or Memorial Day celebration as well to get exposure for kids on what military service can mean; not just combat.
 - (COL Sapp, Fort Meade CO) Homeschooling is an option to military families that provides stability but has heard from homeschooled families at Fort Meade that every state and county has different requirements for homeschooled students.
 - (Mary Gable) Homeschooling families have to register the child through a homeschool program. Whether they can participate in sports or extracurriculars depend on the county/state jurisdiction as regulations can vary. Not sure about current regulations, but previously not allowed.
- Spousal employment remains a concern for military families
 - Areas that have schools of higher desirability have higher cost of living and hidden expenses that often require dual income. Also challenging to find affordable childcare; inaccessible to many military families.
 - One panelist indicated that she was unable to find employment on base due to her green card status and by the time she found employment off-base and settled into position, it was time to change station again. Can lead to employers discriminating against military spouses.
 - (Lisa) Proposed legislation in the 2024 legislative session to address discrimination against military families and service members.
- Difficulties with childcare and the impact on military families
 - Spousal clubs have connections in the community for childcare. Churches provide childcare but only for limited hours that are not sustainable for employment. Before and after school programs have a cost involved.
 - Childcare Aware Program takes 6 months to apply and get approval and reimbursement/ subsidy is not guaranteed; if you live outside of a radius or the base CCD(s) is full, the program subsidizes childcare costs at private centers. The six-month wait discourages families to apply. Making that process easier would help.
 - Most community child care centers open at 6:30 am. Most military families need them open at 5:00 am in order to arrive for their PT on time.
- Two major issues impacting change of station and retirement decisions:
 - School choice: difficult to do in Maryland but can be coordinated at local level between counties and Maryland continues to look at other state's best practices.
 - State taxation of military retirement pay: Last year in the legislative session, Governor Moore supported a gradual total exemption of military retirement pay. There is a need to educate legislators on the value of the exemption from a workforce attraction perspective and less on the fiscal note impact. Two different bills currently for military retirement pay exemption are being considered by the state legislature during this year's session.
- To the commanders: "Military families will love you forever if you reach out and help them transition."

Networking Break 10:00-10:15

Maryland Legislative Updates

State Delegate Carl W. Jackson, District 8

- Delegate Jackson had conflicting legislative duties and regrets he was unable to attend.
- Ms. Swoboda highlighted several military and family related initiatives in the current legislative session. Specifically, she highlighted:
 - Bill that supports the state giving hiring preferences for active duty members and spouses.
 - Bill to create a commission for veterans and military families
 - Healthcare Occupations Temporary Licensure bill
 - Cosmetology Licensure Compact bill
 - Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact bill
 - Anti-discrimination bill for military status
 - Several bills on income tax deduction for military families
 - Modification to MMIC membership to add state departments of Labor, Education, and a military spouse as statutory members.
 - Administration bills including the Time to Serve Act and the Families Serve Act
- A full list of military-related bills will be provided to attendees as a follow-up.

Blue Star Families: Annual Military Families Survey

Yolanda Rayford, Director, Baltimore/Chesapeake Chapter, Blue Star Families

- Ms. Rayford had to cancel due to illness. She will brief on the newly released 2024 survey at the 10 June MMIC.
- The Blue Star Military Family Survey results are scheduled for release tomorrow, 12 March.

Maryland Military Installation Commander Updates

Naval Support Activity (NSA) Annapolis – CAPT Christopher Schwarz, Commanding Officer

- Busy season upcoming with graduation; expects over 1M visitors to the area over next two months, bolstering local economy
- The Navy Community College program at Quantico is moving to the Naval Academy. College will be 100% virtual, however 100 employees are relocating to NSA Annapolis, so there will be some local economic growth to the region as a result.
- The Bancroft Hall (midshipman dorm) renovations continue with some construction this year and a study on renovations planned for next year.
- NSA Annapolis has two CCDs and has 30 military families on the waitlist who have priority, plus civilians who are ranked lower priority. Looking into a third on-base CCD or at subsidizing childcare for military families to use off-base CCDs.
- There are discussions about potential use of “The Naval Academy Dairy Farm” site for solar energy production. An RFI is out to the renewable industry to see what is possible with solar/other renewable energy projects on that site.

Naval Support Activity Bethesda – CAPT Alan Christian, Commanding Officer

- Continuing with construction through 2028 at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and encourages people to check their website to see what gates are open for visitors.
- Two on-base CCDs with waitlists and working on prioritizing that list. No on-base housing so it's challenging for commuters to drop off children off base with traffic issues in the area.

- Parking is a perennial problem, with no apparent quick fixes. They average over 10,000 individuals each day commuting to the 243 acre campus. Parking garages are all full; one is still down for construction and will be up and running in August.

Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock – CAPT Matt Tardy, Commanding Officer

- NSWC Carderock has 2800 Navy civilians engaged in research and development.
- Activities to build future workforce include STEM programs with high school students, scholarships and internships. NSWC Carderock is bringing on about 120 students this summer and encourages the community to support.

Naval Support Facility Indian Head – CAPT David Wilson, Commanding Officer NSA South Potomac

- NSF Indian Head has begun a 10 year \$2.7B Energetics Comprehensive Modernization Plan (ECMP) which will also result in 600 additional employees.
- The Marine Corps Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF) will become a Joint organization, which will increase the total uniformed population of on-base.
- As an action to reduce the “gate running” at the main gate - NSF Indian Head has more occurrences than any other navy base - a three-phased response is in place. Phase 1 completed with additional signage in town that the base entrance is upcoming. Phase 2 has started with the installation diverting after hour and weekend traffic to a secondary entrance away from the main entrance. Third phase will require a study and plan for traffic calming solutions (not yet begun) to include improvements to Route 210, a state managed highway.

Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River– CAPT Douglas Burfield, Commanding Officer

- NAS Pax hosted a visit with Governor Moore last month; highlighted that the CCDs at Pax River are 100% staffed and highlighted Fleet and Families support center, also fully staffed.
- The installation is supporting several initiatives to support military children and families. School liaison officer Dawn Simpson has been especially effective. Sees Purple Star Schools Program as a growth program for the state.
- The base continues to have difficulty in hiring, particularly with security guards.

Joint Base Andrews – Col. Todd Randolph, Installation and 316th Wing Commander

- JBA hosted a Change of Responsibility for the 19th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the top enlisted member in the service.
- The annual “State of the Base” briefing is scheduled for 10 April with local and community leaders.
- JBA hosted its 6th annual STEAM Summit for middle/high school students for aviation technology which included presentations from various teams/commands on the base. Participating students competed in competitions. Event is organized by Krist Zimmerman and the base welcomes other installations to participate in next year's events.
- This year, JBA is hosting several aircraft as a result of the national election and as a result of the national NATO summit in DC. For the NATO Summit, all NATO countries are flying in and will host a flight crew starting on July 4th during holiday.
- Col. Randolph will rotate this summer to a fellowship in New York City for the Council on Foreign Relations.

Aberdeen Proving Ground – COL Phil Mundweil, Garrison Commander

- The Senior Mission Commander, MG Robert Edmondson will retire this summer. The incoming SMC is BG James Turnetti.

- APG Immersion Day on 21 March; base will host educators from Harford and Cecil county to familiarize themselves with technology from APG. COL Mundweil will reach out to Mary Gable about this for coordination.
- Great support from local communities:
 - The Harford county emergency operations center backs up APG emergency ops. A full scale exercise is planned across the installation on 24 April and the base is receiving assistance from Harford County on this exercise. Base is also engaged in a county-hosted full-scale exercise on 16 April at Peach Blossom Nuclear Power Plant
 - There is notable support from the Harford County Veterans Commission.
 - Cecil County recognizes contributions from the base, including that they are the largest employer for the county and have also started a Veterans Commission to support the veterans/retiree community within the county.

Fort Detrick – COL Ned Marsh, Garrison Commander

- Both COL Marsh and Senior Mission Commander BG Edward Bailey will be rotating this summer.
- The installation is averaging 280 days to fill a position through USA Jobs. Unacceptable!
- MDE obligation \$32M to decommission the old steam plant is fully approved; win for the community.
- Transportation issues are the number one concern for Fort Detrick, particularly US-15.
 - Lyn Farrow (MDOT, Director of External Affairs): planning is ongoing despite state budget cuts; commission working to develop new funding streams for transportation projects.
- COL Marsh recognized the role of OMFA in supporting the installations and the symbiotic relationship between the base and the community. Recognized Jen Staiger and Fort Detrick Alliance's work to support the base.

Fort Meade – COL Michael Sapp, Garrison Commander

- COL Sapp will rotate this summer, with a change of command date set for 6 August. CSM Welch has a change of responsibility date set for 26 April.
- Base is proud that Anne Arundel County has three Purple Star Schools of the eight total schools and that all three are within the Meade cluster.
- The new dual-hatted NSA/CYBERCOM commander is GEN Timothy Hough, who is very supportive of the Meade schools cluster. GEN Hough wants the Meade Cluster to be a model for the community and has a goal that service members will choose to retire to the area rather than move again. Transition is a disruption to families and there is a need to explore supporting stability for families.
- Meade High School is under renovation, supported with a \$100M DoD grant from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC). There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony planned with community stakeholders when completed. This Fall will be the first year the renovated school can host students.
- The Garrison is coordinating with Anne Arundel County to pursue a grant from OLDCC to support a Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) for the base, identifying and addressing threats within the community that could negatively impact the base's resilience. Looking at transportation issues like the MD-198 bridge that keeps getting washed out in addition to other concerns.
- Discussed the importance of IGSA to save money for the federal government and invest in the community.
- Pre-Covid Color Guard event "Massing of the Colors" is returning this year, scheduled 19 May.

Coast Guard Yard – CAPT David Obermier, Commanding Officer

- The Coast Guard Yard (CGY) continues to provide worldwide support.

- CGY is finally almost caught up on filling vacant civilian workforce positions, however, there is now a notable experience gap which requires targeted training.
- CGY is looking at ships to be decommissioned and accelerating that plan for refurbishing for foreign military sales.
- Maryland hosted the Antarctic and Arctic Symposium and the keynote spoke to threats in those areas and how the Coast Guard plays a role in maintaining ice breakers.
- NSA Annapolis and Fort Meade CCDs support their members.

Maryland National Guard – Antonio Campbell, representing The Adjutant General, Maryland Military Department

- The Adjutant General is dual-hatted as a Department Secretary and as the Commander of the Maryland National Guard.
- The Maryland Military Department has been working to retain the MDNG air mission at Martin State Airport in Middle River. However, the Air Force just announced decommissioning of the A10 airframe, and the transition to a cyber related mission. This will impact the local workforce and potentially the regional economy.
- Aviation Day at Fort McHenry is scheduled for 23 March.

Army Corps of Engineers – Not represented

Military Alliance President Remarks

Military Alliance Council (MAC) – Steve Mitchell, President

- NSF Indian Head hosted the CNO Admiral Franchetti and Senator Cardin in February and is scheduled to host a visit from Congressman Hoyer on 19 March.
- The Indian Head “State of the Station” address was presented on 29 February.

Southern Maryland Naval Alliance (SMNA) – Tom Garrison, President

- The installation hosted a very successful visit with Governor Moore last week.
- Mr. Garrison mentioned the upcoming ADC conference and encouraged other installation communities to attend.

Fort Meade Alliance (FMA) – Tim O’Ferrall, Executive Director

- Fort Meade and the surrounding area was recognized by the Association of Defense Communities (ADC) as one of five 2023 Great American Defense Communities.
- Mr. O’Ferrall will host the Army Town Hall opening session of the ADC Policy Forum conference on 8 April.
- “Friends of Meade” is a new advocacy group in support of the Ft. Meade school cluster, led by Chad Jones, the garrison Public Affairs Officer.
- The FMA annual acquisition outlook breakfast conference with NSA, CYBERCOM and DISA acquisition leaders is scheduled for 3 April.
- The FMA-sponsored Project Scope has reached 700 students this year to emphasize the importance of personal conduct in obtaining a security clearance as they enter their work years.
- The Kuhn Hall Education and Resiliency Center has been open and providing services for just over a year, and is exceeding expectations.
- An FMA-sponsored Career Transition Pilot Program for service members and spouses is scheduled for 25 April at Maryland Live in Arundel Mills. Counseling and resume prep from at least 20 employers will be available.

Army Alliance (AA) – Mike Ray, President

- The Alliance annual luncheon meeting was held last week; the annual dinner meeting is scheduled 3 June.
- Mary Jane Jernigan, Civilian Aide to Secretary of the Army and a Harford County resident will be recognized as one of several Association of Defense Community Champions.

Fort Detrick Alliance (FDA) – Jennifer Staiger, President

- Fort Detrick continues to be the largest employer in Frederick County.
- Most of the tenant organizations are engaged in research and development and related missions, which require a very technical workforce.
- The Alliance has been working with Fort Detrick and workforce services to support the MRDC and other tenants to identify resources for attracting and hiring workers, to include apprenticeship programs.

Maritime Technology Alliance (MTA) – Not represented**Andrews Business & Community Alliance (ABC) – Not represented****State Agency Closing Remarks****Veterans Affairs – Ross Cohen, Deputy Secretary**

- Commented on three pending legislative initiatives:
 - The “Families Serve Act” that will provide military spouses 10 points in the Maryland state hiring process.
 - The “Time to Serve Act” would provide additional leave to Reserve and National Guard service members preparing for and returning from deployments.
 - The Department of Veterans Affairs to be renamed as the Department of Veterans Affairs and Military Families, with the addition of a Deputy Secretary for Military Families.

Department of Labor – Ms. Portia Wu, Secretary of Labor

- Very glad to have the Department of Labor become an official member of the MMIC.
- We currently have active workforce programs that support career counseling for veterans and military spouses.

Department of Transportation – Ms. Lyn Farrow, Director of External Affairs

- Governor Moore created a Maryland Transportation Revenue and Infrastructure Needs Commission that is charged with exploring alternative funding sources to meet the state’s growing transportation needs including options for public-private partnerships.

Department of Environment – Scott Bowman, Chief of Staff

- The EPA is about to release standards for PFAS, which could require assessment and possibly remediation on military installations.

Announcement: Kristin Byerly, MMIC member and Director of Veterans Initiatives for the University of Maryland Global Campus, noted the MilVet Net event scheduled at the College Park Marriott and

Conference Center on April 23 from 4-7pm. This no-charge networking event is open to everyone across the state of MD with a military connection looking to network with veteran service organizations, employers, and entrepreneurial resources.

Conclusion

Ms. Swoboda thanked those in attendance for participation and adjourned the session at 11:45 am.

Enclosures:

MMIC Agenda 3.11.24

MMIC Slides 3.11.24

MMIC Attendee List 3.11.24