



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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Report: Camp Shelby ‘Uniquely Situated’ to be Premier Base After National Drawdown

Port of Gulfport, Camp Shelby partnership “a winning idea,” national group says

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. (July 17, 2014) - Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center (CSJFTC), with its location, weather, and logistical facilities, is “uniquely situated” to become and remain the premier, and most cost effective, facility of its kind, and local leaders could benefit from recommendations made in a report released Thursday by a national business group.

Business Executives for National Security (BENS) released a report with strategic business recommendations for Col. Brad Smith, commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, along with accolades for taking a proactive approach to reinventing the 100-year-old National Guard facility located just south of Hattiesburg. In March, the mobilization mission that began in 2004 concluded, and with it, a \$1 billion injection into the local economy over the last decade. More than 220,000 soldiers deployed to war zones through Camp Shelby during that span.

“BENS members applaud the CSJFTC leadership's initiative and forward thinking to develop INNOVATE Camp Shelby and lay out suggestions for the way ahead to sustain a viable and value-added (Open Technology Center) given the changing national security landscape and evolving requirements,” the report said. “In the private sector, business leaders are continually assessing the changing marketplace and planning to stay ahead of its competitors.”

Led by retired Air Force Gen. Norton Schwartz, the former Air Force Chief of Staff and chief executive officer of BENS, this influential group of corporate-level executives regularly tour military bases worldwide and provide insight and recommendations to Pentagon leaders. As part of a two-day visit in late June, the group of nine BENS members and staff visited Camp Shelby and the Southeastern Defense Corridor and also met with local leaders. They received a comprehensive briefing on the intermodal logistics plan involving military use of the Port of Gulfport, followed by briefings on major technology innovations underway at Camp Shelby. The trip concluded with a tour of the Port of Gulfport and the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport.

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Business Report

"Our members believe your INNOVATE Camp Shelby initiative is a realistic approach to forming the private and public sector economic development partnerships," Schwartz told Smith, who invited the group which is well-known in strategic defense circles. Prior to his appointment as the Air Force Chief of Staff, Schwartz was commander of the U.S. Transportation Command from 2005-2008, where he managed the Pentagon's global air, land and sea transportation logistics and elements of the supply chain.

An executive-level briefing about the military strategic intermodal logistical hub already located in South Mississippi was a welcomed topic of discussion. The five bases located south of Camp Shelby are one of the few remaining clusters of military installations nationwide that offer substantial logistics cost savings to the Defense Department. The delegation heard from Jonathan Daniels, executive director of the Port of Gulfport, who updated the group on the ongoing \$570 million restoration and expansion project.

"The partnership between the Port of Gulfport and Camp Shelby is a winning idea from a logistics and transportation standpoint, especially with the major renovations to the Port underway," the report said. "Political support is also particularly critical in this partnership as a link to both DoD and commercial opportunities."

The BENS report said Camp Shelby offered many attributes that would be favorable for continued Unmanned Aircraft Systems development for military use, including mild temperatures, low cross winds, numerous runways, and housing and dining facilities in proximity to the airfield. The report said Camp Shelby offered desirable alternatives to other military installations.

Labeled in 2010 by Newsweek "an obscure but highly influential organization," the membership includes Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon; David Koch of Koch Industries; former NFL quarterback Roger Staubach, chairman of Jones Long Lasalle; and Ross Perot, billionaire businessman and one-time presidential candidate.

Smith said having BENS view the military assets located in South Mississippi and how they fit in the context of major global issues was a critical step in ensuring Camp Shelby's viability in the wake of further defense cuts.

"I know exactly what will happen if we do nothing," said Smith, who launched the innovation and reinvention campaign in October 2012. "As leaders, we have a responsibility to do everything possible to boldly set the course for the next 100 years."

For more information or media inquiries you may contact the following representatives: On behalf of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Lt. Col. Richard Weaver, O: 601-558-2858, C: 769-798-3461, and via e-mail: richard.l.weaver18.mil@mail.mil. On behalf of the Business Executives for National Security, Mr. Jonathan Steed, O: 202-390-3107 and via e-mail jsteed@bens.org

CUTLINE: On June 23-24, Business Executives for National Security members traveled to Mississippi to visit the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, where they exchanged ideas on issues like strengthening public-private partnerships and provided business strategies and recommendations to the Camp Shelby leadership and local business and economic development leaders. BENS released its recommendations on July 17, 2014. (Source: Business Executives for National Security)