

Defense *advocate*

January 2012

Chairman's Message

As we enter 2012, another round of base realignment and closure is being openly discussed and we see evidence of rallied efforts among states to compete for shrinking defense budget dollars. The Virginia National Defense Industrial Authority was created precisely to serve in such an environment. Through its establishment in the Code of Virginia as a permanent political subdivision of the Commonwealth, Virginia legislators intended never to be caught merely reacting when faced with defense cutbacks and major realignments.

Since the beginning of the 2005 BRAC implementation process, VNDIA has worked hard to build alliances between Virginia's defense communities, installation commanders, educational institutions and economic development professionals. In this issue of Defense Advocate we will examine the current competitive environment of state programs directed towards the protection of defense investment. We will also highlight the successful growth of the grassroots Fredericksburg Military Affairs Council. The lessons learned from this now well-established program to support and advance the regional defense industry are those that others can replicate across the Commonwealth.

VNDIA's 18-member Board of Directors and staff are pleased to serve as Virginia's principal advocate for defense investment in coordination with the Virginia General Assembly and Office of the Governor. Representing a \$59 billion industry and nearly 14% of the gross state product, defense investment is a key fiscal driver and continuing economic development opportunity for the Commonwealth. We welcome your comments, support, and suggestions.



Robert R. Fountain
Robert R. Fountain
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Chairman

Competition Intensifies Among States for Defense Dollars

Base Realignment and Closure has historically brought home to public officials the importance of promoting and protecting defense spending as an economic driver at the state and local level. Authorization of a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission in 1995 led to organized efforts to manage the process in 11 states. Fifteen additional states, including Virginia, created formal ongoing programs after the 2005 BRAC Commission completed its work. Today, a majority of states have some form of military affairs office or coordinator. Virginia's dedicated effort resides in the Virginia National Defense Industrial Authority through the dedicated effort of eighteen working board members including retired Army and Navy flag officers, a former Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, a national expert on Homeland Security and leaders in the industries of defense contracting and finance. VNDIA has on its board a former staff member of the Senate Arms Services Committee, who continues to provide expert analysis of the federal defense budget. Staff and board expertise is augmented through commissioned analysis of Virginia's strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by a nationally recognized consulting firm.

With critical defense budget cuts looming, and the growing certainty of another BRAC, states with a robust military presence are once again committing resources to protecting defense investment. Florida, for example, recently established the Florida Defense Support Task Force and appropriated \$5 million to fund research and advocacy for Florida's military missions and installations. As Florida's effort shows, other states have not remained complacent. Maryland's Lieutenant Governor takes an active role in BRAC-related issues, and its Office of Military and Federal Affairs has a staff of ten and a \$1.6 million budget for 2012. The Texas Military Preparedness Commission manages installation support grant and loan programs that have invested more than \$86 million in infrastructure improvements and economic adjustment assistance. And after the 2005 BRAC Commission considered closing the submarine base at New London, Connecticut, that state created the Connecticut Office of Military Affairs and appropriated \$50 million for investments in military infrastructure to protect the value of the installation. This money has paid for support and training facilities on the base that the state donated to the Department of Defense. Other states have and will continue to convince defense officials to realign military activities out of Virginia. California has targeted Navy missions at Wallops Island and NSA Dahlgren. Florida worked hard to have the Master Jet Base realigned from NAS Oceana during the 2005 BRAC round. Without support of the VNDIA administered Military Strategic Response Fund support, the 2005 BRAC Commission would have moved this activity to Cecil Field and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to Maryland.

As another round of BRAC is deliberated and budget cuts are enacted, states with military installations and defense industrial base infrastructure will work even harder to protect the investment this brings to their communities. Virginia must be vigilant and maintain a consistent effort to safeguard its interests. It is clear that Virginia can no longer afford to assume that our natural advantages – proximity to the Pentagon and world-class port facilities – will keep a robust defense presence in the Commonwealth. Other states are investing aggressively and preparing to state their cases vigorously. Virginia must as well.

Fredericksburg Military Affairs Council: Grassroots Effort Creates a Successful Model



Sept 2011: (left to right) Hart Rutherford, 2011 FMAC Chairman, VA Congressman Rob Wittman, Mary Garber, MAC Executive Director, Mrs. Brenda Linnington and Major General Michael Linnington.

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"Over the course of the past couple years I have gained a deeper appreciation for what the Fredericksburg Military Affairs Council/Regional Chamber of Commerce and the other surrounding Chambers of Commerce and Business Alliances do in support of Marine Corps Base Quantico, and that includes all of its military and civilian personnel and their family members. At first I was leery of the intent to meet, collaborate, and exchange information because I felt the interest was primarily business related. Clearly, the interest is to first show their appreciation and to support the installation's mission, one that is vital to the defense of this great Nation. From this realization, enduring partnerships have been formed with the focus on developing a regional vision through continuous collaborative planning efforts, one that protects the base's mission while allowing the communities to grow, prosper and improve quality of life for all."

Col Daniel J. Choike, USMC
Commander, Marine Corps Base Quantico

The story of the Fredericksburg Military Affairs Council (FMAC) starts in 2004 when the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce took on the task of being the regional focal point for BRAC defense efforts relating to the three regional bases—MCB Quantico in Stafford County, Fort A.P. Hill in Caroline County and the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Dahlgren in King George County. A coordinated effort was developed which involved support from the Commonwealth, active involvement of members of the General Assembly, and a working relationship with our congressional delegation in Washington. One of the keys in the execution phase of our BRAC defense was the active involvement of a group of community volunteers who were intimately knowledgeable on the details of the functions and missions of the numerous commands. This group consisted largely of retired senior government officials, ex-military officers and long time defense contractors, who together were able to tell the story of the military value of the many commands and functions. After assessing the strengths, weaknesses and vulnerability of the numerous commands, and reviewing the results of previous BRAC's, the assessment was made that the base at Dahlgren which hosts the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division (NSWC DD), the joint Warfare Analysis Center (JWAC) and the Aegis Training and Readiness Center (ATRC) was the most vulnerable to being either closed or having its major functions transferred to bases in other states. In retrospect, this turned out to be a correct assessment.

The BRAC defense process included development of briefings that outlined the military capability, worth and importance of our local military establishments, explanations of how the many parts of the Dahlgren community fit together and explanations of why the decisions were made over several decades to have specific functions and commands where they are. It was this type of information that the Chamber's BRAC defense group conveyed to various senior military officers and DoD civilians during office calls in Washington in the months leading up to BRAC. At the same time, the Chamber was able to stress the desire of the Fredericksburg region to support positive relations with their military neighbors at the bases—one of the key BRAC decision issues, community support. In the BRAC end game the Chamber briefings to the BRAC commission articulating why the DoD recommendations to transfer about 10% of the work force at Dahlgren to New Jersey and Maryland resulted in the commission overturning DoD's recommendation in favor of the positions articulated so well by the Chamber's committee—a clear success of the Chamber's BRAC mission. As a result, the decision was made to transform the Chamber's BRAC committee into an organized Military Affairs Council that could continue the efforts of communicating regularly with the bases and commands, provide a forum for regular events that would help educate the public and provide a platform to allow the MAC to work with our local, commonwealth and Washington political delegations to the mutual benefit of all.

The Fredericksburg Regional Military Affairs Council was chartered in 2006 with a Board of Directors representing the broad spectrum of community interests including bankers, insurance agents, defense contractors, educators plus representatives from the elected governing bodies of the five municipalities in the Fredericksburg region. The mission statement for the FMAC at its core is one of advocating for and promoting the military and national defense bases, commands and installations in the region.

The first major project undertaken by the FMAC was to take a leadership role on a project to establish a graduate school in Dahlgren to provide Masters and Ph. D. level graduate education and research opportunities for the 3000 navy scientists and engineers at Dahlgren and the large number of defense contractors who work outside the gate at Dahlgren. Accepting that challenge, the FMAC established a small committee that then spent 18 months meeting with and briefing a large number of Navy officials in attempts to get the school placed on Navy property. In the end, the FMAC's concept merged with the vision of the University of Mary Washington for a Dahlgren presence and with the support of then Governor Kaine and the General Assembly. Over a two year period, the finances were put in place to buy the land and build the \$22M facility that opened for business this month as the UMW Dahlgren Campus Center for Education and Research. Other notable efforts of the FMAC over the last five years include the successful work with Senator Allen and Senator John Warner to convince the navy to relocate the Aegis Ballistic Program Office with its 350 employees to Dahlgren, which transpired in 2007 and then, the Navy's decision in 2009 to co-locate the new Navy Air and Missile Defense Command (NAMDC) with its 50 employees with the other air and ballistic missile defense related engineering and training activities in Dahlgren.

The FMAC's success clearly demonstrates that working hand-in-hand with state officials and through regular interaction with our Washington Congressional delegation, a motivated local community can not only retain its military bases but help them grow, even in challenging economic environments. The fact that other states are organizing aggressive programs speaks volumes for ongoing coordinated efforts and provides a warning signal that we can't let our guard down. The Fredericksburg Regional Military Affairs Council remains active and is growing. We intend to continue our efforts in preparation for the next round of BRAC—whether it is in 2013 or 2020!

Contributing Writer: Ted Hontz, Chairman, Fredericksburg Military Affairs Council