



CAPTAIN JAMES SEAN KING
United States Naval Reserve

Captain James Sean King graduated from Boston College in May 1978 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and Communications. After being commissioned in August 1979 at Aviation Officer Candidate School he entered flight training and was designated a Naval Flight Officer in May 1980 at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida.

Upon completion of replacement Electronic Countermeasures Officer training in the Grumman EA-6B "Prowler" at Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 129 at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, he reported to VAQ-132 in October 1981. He made two Mediterranean deployments aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69), which included supporting operations for USMC and multi-national peacekeeping operations in Beirut, Lebanon.

Captain King returned in August 1984 to VAQ-129 at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, as a Fleet Replacement Squadron Flight Instructor and was selected for the Training and Administration of the Reserve (TAR) program in September 1984. Upon completion of duty at VAQ-129 Captain King reported to Naval Air Reserve Norfolk, Virginia, in March 1987 and served as an augment unit program manager. In July 1988 he reported to VAQ-209 at NAS Norfolk, Virginia, flying the EA-6A "Electric Intruder".

Captain King served in all squadron departments during this assignment and in May 1990 was selected to coordinate the squadron's transition to the EA-6B and the concurrent squadron relocation to NAF Washington, D.C.

In August 1992, Captain King was assigned as the Officer in Charge of the VAQ-309 "Axemen" at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington. Captain King was assigned to NAS Dallas, Texas, in August 1994 as the Reserve Programs Director and in May 1997, he assumed duties as Site Commander, NAS Dallas, until the command's disestablishment in September 1998.

Captain King reported to the Pentagon and the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations in September 1998. He served as the EA-6B/E-2C Aircraft Inventory Manager and as the Head, POM Development Management, Director Air Warfare, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Following his Pentagon tour in July 2000 Captain King reported to the U. S. Air Force Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, Alabama where he earned a Masters of Science degree in Strategic Studies. Upon graduation in June of 2001 Captain King reported to the staff of the Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he served as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Policy (N3/5). He assumed command of Naval Air Station Atlanta in June 2003. On October 1, 2003 Captain King concurrently became Commanding Officer of Naval Air Reserve (NAR) Atlanta.

His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (four awards), The Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (three awards) and various campaign and unit commendations.

Commander Victor Bruni, USNR
Executive Officer, Naval Air Station Atlanta

Commander Victor R. Bruni graduated from Saint Mary's College in May 1983 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business. After being commissioned in April 1987 at Aviation Officer Candidate School he entered flight training and was designated a Naval Flight Officer in May 1988 at Naval Air Training Unit, Mather Air Force Base (AFB) Sacramento, California.

Upon completion of replacement Navigation/Communication Officer training in the Lockheed P3C "Orion" at Patrol Squadron (VP) 31 at Naval Air Station (NAS) Moffett Field, California, he reported to VP-50 in October 1988. He made three Western Pacific deployments to Misawa AFB, Japan, NAS Cubi Point, Philippines, and NAS Adak, Alaska.

Commander Bruni returned in October 1991 to VP-31 at NAS Moffett Field, California, as a Fleet Replacement Squadron Flight Instructor and was selected for the Full Time Support (FTS) program in September 1993. Upon completion of duty at VP-31 Commander Bruni reported to Commander Reserve Patrol Wing Pacific, NAS Moffett Field, California in November 1993 and served as Weapons and Flight Simulations Training Detachment Officer in Charge. In August 1996 he reported to VP-69 at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, flying the P3C "Orion".

Commander Bruni served as squadron Training and Administrative Department Heads during this assignment and coordinated the squadron's transition to the P3C-U111 aircraft. In January 1999, Commander Bruni was assigned to Commander Reserve Patrol Wing at NAS Norfolk, Virginia. He served as Wing Operations and Safety Officer.

In July 2000, Commander Bruni was assigned as the Officer in Charge of the VP-65 "Tridents" at NAS Point Mugu, California. Commander Bruni lead the Tridents' transition to the P3C-U111 aircraft and successful fleet detachments to Belize, Central America and Misawa AFB, Japan.

Commander Bruni reported in April 2002 to the staff of the Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he served as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Commanding Officer Staff Enlisted (N1). He assumed his present position as Executive Officer of Naval Air Station Atlanta in September 2004.

His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (one award), The Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (four awards), The Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (three awards) and various campaign and unit commendations. Commander Bruni is married to the former Ms. Lynda Lee Vincent; they have three children and live in the local community.



Jeremiah D. Canty
Colonel, United States Marine Corps



Colonel Jeremiah D. Canty was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in April, 1982 he completed The Basic School and reported for training in the Naval flight program in June, 1983 and was designated a Naval Aviator on 17 August, 1984.

In March of 1985 Col Canty was assigned to HMM 364, serving variously, as the Assistant Administration Officer, Ground Safety Officer, ASO and DOSS. While with the "Purple Foxes" he completed two UDPs before receiving orders to transition to the UH-1N at Camp Pendleton in late 1988.

Upon completion of transition training, in January, 1989 he was assigned to HMLA 367 "Scarface" where he served first as the Airframes Officer and then as the Assistant Aircraft Maintenance Officer completing a UDP tour to Okinawa. Soon after returning to the United States the squadron was ordered to Saudi Arabia to serve as part of the coalition force in Operations Desert Shield/Storm. In March of 1992 Col

Canty miraculously graduated as a Weapons and Tactics Instructor from the 2-91 and 1-92 classes.

During November, 1992, Col Canty was transferred to HMM 161 "Grayhawks", where he served as the Quality Assurance officer while the squadron deployed to Westpac as part of the 11th MEU(SOC).

Ordered to MAWTS-1 in June of 1993, he served as the UH-1N Division Head until mid 1996 after which he was assigned to Marine Command and Staff College, Quantico earning a Masters degree in Military Studies. After graduation Col Canty was selected to attend the School of Advanced Warfighting.

From July 1998 to July 1999 he served in the II MEF G5 as the CENTCOM/PACOM Plans Officer. Col Canty served as the Commanding Officer of HML/A 167 from July 1999 to May 2001 after which he served as the Commanding Officer of H&HS 26 while awaiting orders to the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island. After graduating from the Naval War College, Col Canty was ordered to the Joint Staff in July 2002 where he served for 2 years as an action officer in J 3 Information Operations.

Personal decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Air Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal, 2 awards.

Captain Michael E. Cross
United States Navy

Captain Michael E. Cross was born in South Ruislip, England. He graduated from the University of California, San Diego in June 1981. He entered the United States Marine Corps in February 1982 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in May 1982. Upon graduation from The Basic School, he reported for flight training and was designated a Naval Aviator in September 1984. In December 1984, Captain Cross reported to VMAT 102 in Yuma, Arizona for training in the A-4M Skyhawk. Shortly after reporting he was offered an inter-service transfer to the United States Navy and was commissioned a Lieutenant Junior Grade in April 1985. In May 1985, he was assigned to VA 122 for training in the A-7E Corsair at NAS Lemoore, California.

Following Replacement Pilot training, he joined the "Warhawks" of VA 97 and completed two Western Pacific and Indian Ocean deployments aboard USS CARL VINSON (CVN 70). Captain Cross reported in December 1988 to VFA 125 for transition training in the F/A-18 Hornet and Instructor Pilot duties. During his tour he served as Landing Signal Officer and the Carrier Qualification Phase head. In February 1991, he was assigned to Carrier Air Wing ELEVEN as an Air Wing Landing Signal Officer aboard USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72) and completed her maiden deployment to the North Arabian Gulf.

Following his CAG LSO tour, Captain Cross reported to the "Fighting Redcocks" of VFA 22 as a Department Head. While there he served as the Administrative, Safety, Operations and Tactics Officer and completed a deployment to the North Arabian Gulf aboard USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72). In March 1995, he was selected to attend the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island and earned a Master of Arts Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies. In March 1996, he was assigned joint duty on the staff of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), located in Casteau, Belgium. During his tour at SHAPE, Captain Cross was selected for Aviation Command and returned to NAS Lemoore for refresher training in the F/A-18 in March 1998. He joined the "Eagles" of VFA 115 as Executive Officer in September 1998 and assumed command in October 1999, completing two deployments to the North Arabian Gulf aboard USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72). He reported aboard CINCPACFLT in April 2001 where he served as the Pacific Fleet Readiness Officer and Flight Hour Program Manager.

Captain Cross has accumulated over 3500 flight hours and 800 arrested landings. His personal awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (four awards), and various unit and service awards.

Captain Cross is married to the former Lisa Breen of Hanford, California. They have two daughters, Paige and Emily.

Commander David J. Opatz
United States Navy (RC/FTS)

Commander David J. Opatz is a native of South St. Paul, Minnesota. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, and was commissioned an Ensign in May 1986.

During a three-year tour aboard USS Raleigh (LPD-1) deployed to the North Atlantic, Mediterranean Sea and Arabian Gulf, Commander Opatz served as Boat Division Officer, 2nd Division Officer and Navigator/Personnel Officer. Commander Opatz earned his Surface Warfare Officer pin in the first 11 months of this assignment.

In November 1989, Commander Opatz reported to Pensacola, FL for Naval Flight Officer (NFO) Training. He graduated from Training Squadron (VT-10) on the Commodore's List. In January 1991, Commander Opatz reported to the E-2C Hawkeye Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS), VAW-120, for training, and received his NFO "Wings of Gold", graduating at the top of his class, earning the "Golden Nugget" award.

In November 1991, Commander Opatz reported to Squadron VAW-125 (the Tigertails) assigned to USS Saratoga (CV-60). As a Tigertail, Commander Opatz achieved the CICO designation in 11 months, stood Anti-Surface (ASUW) and Air Resource Coordinator (AREC) watches, deployed twice to Mediterranean Sea; and in 1994, earned the coveted COMAEWWINGLANT "Hawkeye of the Year- at Sea" award.

In January 1995, Commander Opatz reported to Squadron VAW-120 as an Instructor. While assigned to the FRS, he earned a Master's Degree from Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, in Education, Training and Management.

In September 1997, Commander Opatz reported to Squadron VAW-77 (the Nightwolves) for counter drug operations in the Caribbean region. As a Nightwolf, he headed the departments of Training, Operations and Maintenance. In October 2000, Commander Opatz reported to Carrier Air Wing Reserve 20 (CVWR-20/CAG-20) in the capacity of Safety Officer and Assistant Operations Officer.

In August 2002, Commander Opatz became the Officer-In-Charge of Squadron VAW-78 (the Thunder Slugs) until September 2003 when he reported to Naval Air Reserve (NAR) Norfolk for temporary duty as the Training Officer. Commander Opatz returned to the Nightwolves as Executive Officer in August 2004.

Commander Opatz has accumulated over 2800 flight hours in the Hawkeye, and has been crew for over 450 carrier landings. His personal decorations include the Air Medal-Strike Flight (#1), five Navy Commendation medals, five Navy Achievement medals, and various unit and service awards. Commander Opatz is a "Blue Nose" and a "Shell Back". Commander Opatz contributes much of his success to growing up with two older brothers who taught him humility and kept his ego in check.

Commander Opatz and his wife, Lisa, have two daughters, Sarah and Erica, and reside in Marietta, GA.

**Commander Shawn P. Cassidy
United States Naval Reserve
Commanding Officer, VR-46**

Commander Cassidy was born in 1963 at Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Connecticut. Like all career navy families, he saw much of the world growing up as a navy "junior", from Rota, Spain to Alameda, California, eventually graduating from high school in Rockville, Maryland in 1981. He attended the U.S. Naval Academy where he received a Bachelor of Science degree and was commissioned an Ensign in 1985. He reported to NAS Pensacola for flight training in September 1985.

Upon completion of primary flight training, he reported to Beeville, Texas for jet training and was designated a Naval Aviator in July 1987. In August 1987 he reported to Attack Squadron 42 at NAS Oceana, VA for A-6E Intruder Fleet Replacement Training. After successful FRS training he was assigned to VA-36 in Carrier Air Wing Eight. He made two deployments aboard the USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT, including the 1991 deployment to the Persian Gulf and eastern Mediterranean in support of Operations Desert Storm and Provide Comfort. He flew 56 combat sorties, and accumulated over 1000 A-6 hours and 300 carrier landings.

In August 1991, Commander Cassidy was assigned to VF-43 at NAS Oceana as an Out of Control Flight Instructor flying the T-2C, as well as an adversary pilot flying the A-4F and F-5E. He then separated from active duty in July 1994 and matriculated at Duke University's The Fuqua School of Business as a full time-time student. After receiving his MBA in May of 1996, he worked for IBM as a financial analyst.

In November 1996 Commander Cassidy began his calling back to aviation and affiliated with VR-52 at NASJRB Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. In March 1997 he began his commercial airline career with Trans World Airlines, and in March 1998 he started with Delta Air Lines where he is currently an MD-88 pilot based in Atlanta.

After serving 6 years in VR-52, Commander Cassidy was selected for prospective command of VR-46 in NAS Atlanta where he assumed the duties of executive officer in January 2003. In June 2004 Commander Cassidy assumed command of VR-46.

Commander Cassidy's personal decorations include the Air Medal (three awards), Navy Commendation Medal (5 awards), Navy and Marine Corp Achievement Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal and numerous other unit and service awards.

Commander Cassidy is married to the former Elizabeth Kirkland of Brookneal, Virginia. They have two children, Katie and Christopher and reside in Fayetteville, Georgia.

Bio for LCDR Scott Edwards, USNR, OIC VR-46

LCDR Edwards graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1991 with a B.S. in Oceanography. Following graduation he was assigned duty as an instructor in the Professional Development Department. LCDR Edwards then reported for flight training at NAS Pensacola, FL in 1992 and ultimately received his "Wings of Gold" at VT-7, NAS Meridian, MS in 1994. Upon completion of fleet replacement pilot training at VS-41, NAS North Island, CA, LCDR Edwards was assigned to VQ-5, NAS North Island, CA flying the ES-3A "Shadow" aircraft. LCDR Edwards served as Assistant Operations Officer, Quality Assurance Officer and Ground Safety Officer, deployed to the Western Pacific with CVW-14 onboard USS Carl Vinson in 1996 and also served in support of CVW-5 onboard USS Independence, and CVW-9 onboard USS Nimitz. In 1998 LCDR Edwards was assigned instructor duty at VS-41. He served as ES-3A Pilot Training Officer, Aircraft Division Officer and Assistant Operations Officer. He was recognized as Sea Control Instructor Pilot of the Year in 1999. LCDR Edwards transferred to the Training and Administration of Reserves (TAR) program in 1999 and was assigned to VR-46 flying the C-9B "Skytrain II" in 2000. While at VR-46 he served as the Operations Officer, Maintenance Officer, Reserve Services Officer, and Quality Assurance Officer. In 2004 LCDR Edwards transferred to the Naval War College, Newport, RI and was awarded an M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies. LCDR Edwards reported as Officer in Charge, VR-46 in April 2005.

Commander David E. Ruppel, USNR

CDR David E. Ruppel is originally from Colorado, and graduated from the University of Colorado, NROTC, with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. He reported to Navy Flight Training at Pensacola, FL in August of 1983 and was designated as a Naval Aviator in May of 1985.

In February of 1986, CDR Ruppel reported to the Tridents of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron THREE in Jacksonville, Florida, deploying to the Mediterranean and around South America. In March of 1989, CDR Ruppel was assigned to Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHTEEN in Whiting Field, FL as a primary helicopter flight instructor. During his tour at HT-18, he was selected for the Training and Administration of the Reserves (TAR) Program and reported to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron EIGHT-FIVE in Alameda, California. While there he served as the Department Head for the Maintenance, Administrative, and Safety Departments and he moved with the Squadron to San Diego, California. In June of 1994, CDR Ruppel reported to the Naval War College at Newport, RI where he received his Masters Degree in National Security Decision Making and Strategic Studies.

CDR Ruppel reported to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron SEVEN-FIVE (HS-75) in August of 1995 where he served as the Department Head for the Maintenance, Operations, Administrative, and Safety Departments. During his tour at HS-75 the squadron received two consecutive Battle Efficiency "E" Awards and two consecutive Maintenance Excellence Awards. CDR Ruppel was selected as an Officer in Charge in November 1998 and assumed these duties for HS-75 in May of 1999. During this tour he coordinated the aircraft transition of the Squadron from the SH-3H Sea King to the SH-60F Sea Hawk. In July of 2000 CDR Ruppel was assigned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Washington, DC, as the TAR Aviation Enlisted Community Manager and also served as a representative to the CNO Anti-Terrorism Force Protection Task Force. CDR Ruppel left the Bureau in June of 2002 to report as the Executive Officer of Naval Air Station Atlanta.

In September of 2004 CDR Ruppel became Executive Officer of Naval Air Reserve (NAR) Atlanta aboard NAS Atlanta.

CDR Ruppel's decorations include a Meritorious Service Medal, two Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Awards, three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, two Meritorious Unit Commendations, and five Battle Efficiency "E" Awards.

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Visits To Endangered Bases Scheduled

By Ron Martz

Two of the four military bases in Georgia put on the Pentagon's chopping block will be visited Wednesday by at least one member of the federal commission charged with deciding the fate of dozens of installations nationwide.

The Naval Air Station Atlanta in Marietta and the Naval Supply Corps School in Athens will play host to a member of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

The other two Georgia bases that the Pentagon wants to close are Fort McPherson in Atlanta and Fort Gillem in Forest Park. No dates have been scheduled for visits to those bases.

Commissioners plan to visit all the bases considered to be major closures or realignments before regional hearings begin June 7.

The Atlanta regional hearing is June 30.

The commission has until Sept. 8 to make its recommendations to President Bush.

SAFE AND SECURE

① **Fort Benning** (Columbus)
The Army's only basic training center for infantry and home to three key deployable units (3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division and 3rd Battalion, as well as the 75th Ranger Regiment and 36th Engineer Group). A combat brigade from the 25th Infantry Division also is scheduled to be stationed there starting in fall 2006. Officials have told the Pentagon the base could handle some of the troops being sent home from Europe.

Military population: 28,659
Civilian work force: 6,712
Annual payroll: \$1.1 billion

② **Fort Stewart** (Hinesville) and

③ **Hunter Army Airfield** (Savannah)
Home of the headquarters and three combat brigades of the 3rd Infantry Division and a battalion of the 75th Ranger Regiment. Also the largest Army base east of the Mississippi River that serves as a regional mobilization center for deploying National Guard and Army Reserve forces. Could expand and add troops and missions as bases close in Europe.

Military population: 19,536
Civilian work force: 3,482
Annual payroll: \$698 million

④ **Kings Bay Naval Base** (St. Marys)

The state's newest base, opened in 1978, is home to eight Trident ballistic missile submarines, the entire East Coast fleet. Although the subs must make a long run around Cumberland Island to reach open ocean, permanently moving them elsewhere would be cost-prohibitive.

Military population: 5,027
Civilian work force: 1,831
Annual payroll: \$356 million

⑤ **Robins Air Force Base** (Warner Robins)

The only air logistics center east of the Mississippi River. Provides maintenance and repairs for F-15 jets and C-130 and C-5 aircraft in addition to all Air Force helicopters and special operations planes. Home to the Air Force Reserve Command headquarters and the 116th Air Control Wing (J-STARS), which combines active, Reserve and National Guard members.

Military population: 6,856
Civilian work force: 13,421
Annual payroll: \$1.35 billion

LIKELY TO SURVIVE

⑥ **Fort Gordon** (Augusta)
Already a joint-use facility, this Army post provides training for all services in signal intelligence in addition to being the Army's primary signal communications training site. The Eisenhower Army Medical Center is one of the major military hospitals in the Southeast and has been handling some of the casualties from Iraq and Afghanistan. Has room to grow and could add some of the troops now based in Europe.

Military population: 8,860
Civilian work force: 2,310
Annual payroll: \$685 million

⑦ **Moody Air Force Base** (Valdosta)

Improved its chances for survival in recent years by adding missions and is home to the 347th Rescue Wing, which conducts combat search-and-rescue operations around the world. Also home to the 820th Security Forces Group, which provides security in hostile environments for "first-in" American forces. Also provides pilot training. Air space encroachment is not an issue in sparsely populated South Georgia.

Military population: 3,715
Civilian work force: 336
Annual payroll: \$186 million

ON THE BUBBLE

⑧ **Dobbins Air Reserve Base** and ⑨ **Naval Air Station Atlanta** (Marietta)

Although it is a classic joint-use facility (Army and Air National Guard, Army and Air Force Reserve and Navy and Marine Corps Reserve units operate there), it is located in the midst of densely populated south Cobb County and encroachment from surrounding neighborhoods is an issue. The fact that

Lockheed Martin is also on site, building C-130 and F/A-22 Raptor aircraft, could help keep the base open if the Bush administration decides to continue funding those programs. On the other hand, proposed cutbacks to those programs could spell the facility's end.

Military population: 3,484
Civilian work force: 395 (not including Lockheed Martin)
Annual payroll: \$115 million

10 Fort Gillem (Forest Park)

The primary tenant is First Army headquarters, which is responsible for the mobilization and training of all Army Reserve and National Guard units east of the Mississippi. It also houses the Army's only criminal investigation laboratory, the regional distribution center for Army and Air Force exchanges and the Military Entrance Processing Station. All those functions could be moved to other facilities and the real estate returned to the community for development. Or, the base could retain most of its functions and be turned over to the Georgia National Guard, which then could move out of its cramped headquarters on Confederate Avenue in Atlanta.

Military population (includes Fort McPherson): 6,133
Civilian work force (includes Fort McPherson): 4,952
Annual payroll (includes Fort McPherson): \$512 million

11 Fort McPherson (Atlanta)

A prime piece of real estate in southwest Atlanta, with MARTA stops at either end and a golf course in the middle. It houses three major headquarters, but they could easily be moved elsewhere. The Third Army headquarters, which answers to U.S. Central Command, could quickly be folded into that headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. Forces Command, which answers to Northern Command, could become part of its operations at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado. It could also go to a larger Army installation east of the Mississippi or Joint Forces Command headquarters in Norfolk, Va. The activities of Army Reserve Command headquarters could be moved to the Pentagon or another base in the Washington, D.C., area. Atlanta was a prime spot for those headquarters because of easy access to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, but that likely will not be a factor in any decision to close the base or retain it.

CLOSURE CANDIDATES**12 Navy Supply Corps School (Athens)**

A small installation where 4,000 students train every year in loading ships. But those students have to travel long distances to see the ships they will be working with when they graduate. The school, which also trains foreign supply officers and is the headquarters for the Navy's service support, could easily be moved to another larger Navy facility. Because it occupies prime Athens real estate, finding a new use for the site would pose few problems.

Military population: 130
Civilian work force: 193
Annual payroll: \$8.7 million

13 Marine Corps Logistics Base (Albany)

One of two Marine logistics bases in the United States — the other is in Barstow, Calif. — and the only one east of the Mississippi River. It does maintenance work for all services, both active and National Guard, and is headquarters for Marine Corps Logistics Command. But its location in southwest Georgia, far from the ocean and any Marine combat units, works against it. The base also controls the Blount Island maintenance facility in Jacksonville and some of its functions could be moved there. The big Marine base at Camp Lejeune, N.C., could absorb the rest, saving time and money for the service.

Military population: 673
Civilian work force: 2,313
Annual payroll: \$149 million

TROY OXFORD / Staff

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'Save Our Base' Lobbying Cranks Up

Defense tactics: Areas use emotion, consultants in bids to save facilities from Pentagon closure.

By Bob Dart

Washington -- Former Mississippi congressman Sonny Montgomery is remembered as the ringmaster of the lobbying circus connected with military base closures.

When members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission -- known as BRAC, for short -- would visit a Mississippi community with a threatened military installation, the Democratic representative would organize parades and "stick the commissioners on the back of convertibles," recalled Jeremiah Gertler, an analyst with the 1995 commission. "There would be cheerleaders with pompoms and marching bands, and people would be lining the streets cheering the procession to the base.

"He may have been on to something. His bases did very well," mused Gertler, now a defense specialist with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Montgomery is retired now. But with the Pentagon's proposed list for the first round of base closures in a decade set to be announced in mid-May, "Save Our Base" lobbying is revved up from Kittery, Maine, where the historic Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is endangered, to Yuba City, Calif., where 500 townsfolk recently lined up on a high school football field and spelled out "Save Beale" in a campaign to keep open nearby Beale Air Force Base.

Four earlier rounds of closures in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 shut down 97 major military installations and ended or reduced operations in scores of smaller ones. The bipartisan BRAC committee, using -- but not limited to -- the Pentagon list, will make its decisions by Sept. 8. Congress and President Bush will then ratify or reject the recommendations.

Before rendering its decisions, the commission conducts hearings and sends members and staff to every base slated for closure.

Major reductions

Seeking significant consolidations, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has warned that a fifth of the remaining 425 domestic bases could be closed. States and communities have engaged an army of lobbyists, consultants, former lawmakers and retired military honchos to try to keep their bases off the dreaded list.

Gov. Sonny Perdue has gone to the Pentagon to make the case for the state's bases. And Georgia's voluntary Military Affairs Coordinating Committee is headed by the state's former senators: Sam Nunn, who was a Democratic chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and Mack Mattingly, a former Republican chairman of the Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittee. It also includes five

retired generals or admirals.

"For any military community waiting to this stage to hire a lobbyist, it's too late," said Bob Hurt, Nunn's former top Senate aide and a partner in Hurt, Norton and Associates, a consulting firm to several military communities in the South and Midwest.

Unless a community has already prepared its defense, it makes it harder to challenge the Pentagon's list when the BRAC commissioners begin regional hearings on the Pentagon recommendations, he said.

The campaigns pit community against community, state against state.

"It's very competitive," said Barry Rhoads, a member of the 1991 base closing commission and founder of The Rhoads Group, another lobbying group in the BRAC process. Indeed, he would not reveal his clients or tactics because "I don't want to let others know what we are doing."

Preparing for the 2005 closings, "the efforts go back a couple of years," said Tara Butler, the BRAC specialist with the National Governors Association. "But there is no such thing as BRAC-proofing a base. No one knows what will work or what will not."

The basic approach is to anticipate any problems and remove them before the assessments are made, she said. A problem at many bases is encroachment. "Residential or commercial development bumps up against military establishment."

Arizona, Georgia, Florida and North Carolina are among the states that have passed legislation to help bases ward off encroachment, she said.

Selling points

Many communities have upgraded infrastructure around bases -- widening and paving roads, upgrading sewer lines and building more affordable housing, Butler said. Others use zoning to facilitate night training.

States also go to great lengths to emphasize why their bases should remain open while others close.

"It is crucial that we make the case for those unique defense assets that California brings to the table," Leon Panetta, a former California congressman and Clinton's chief of staff, told the commission he heads to keep bases in his home state. "California's weather and terrain provide the best place imaginable for training, testing and mobilizing forces. Not even the Defense Department can move the mountains, desert, oceans, and sunshine that result in California providing 90 percent of all military training days nationwide."

Communities also go all out to convince decision-makers that they appreciate military families -- and their dollars.

The emotional tactics range from hundreds of residents sending e-mails and letters to campaigns in which elementary school children draw pictures after visits to their local bases and send them to the BRAC, said Tim Ford, a spokesman for An Association of Defense Communities, an advocacy group.

"Last time, one community had a 'living flag' made up of 300 elementary school kids in red, white or blue hats," Ford said. "Several members of the BRAC commission were flown in helicopters over the

hillside where the kids were."

"Commissioners are human," said Hurt. "When they go to an installation and see people have turned out, it helps."

No community wants to be remembered as the place where people didn't come out to support their base.

"Community support is one of those intangible factors," said Ken Beeks, vice president of Business Executives for National Security, a group that views base closures as a necessary to cut Pentagon spending. "Everybody knows what is a good Navy town, a good Army town, and what is not."

However, Beeks believes that hiring lobbyists in the BRAC process is a waste of money.

"It's probably not a winnable battle [for communities earmarked for closures], but most feel that they have to be seen as having tried," he said.

Ga. Base Closure Hearing Set

Backers can campaign for 4 state sites

By Ron Martz

Georgia officials hoping to save the four military bases in the state proposed for closure by the Pentagon will get a chance to make their case June 30.

Members of the independent Base Realignment and Closure Commission will be in Atlanta that day to hold one of a series of regional hearings that will cover 16 cities over 5 1/2 weeks.

The site for the Atlanta hearing has not been finalized, but the Fox Theatre was used during the last two rounds of base closings in 1993 and 1995 and is under consideration again, said Fred Bryant, deputy executive director of the Georgia Military Affairs Coordinating Committee.

Bryant said the coordinating committee and community leaders will prepare strong defenses for the four bases: Fort McPherson in Atlanta, Fort Gillem in Forest Park, Naval Air Station Atlanta in Marietta and the Naval Supply Corps School in Athens.

"We'll look at the data the [Department of Defense] has put together, analyze that, try to find mistakes they've made, or errors or omissions, and present to the commission the best possible story we can for the four bases in Georgia," Bryant said.

If past BRAC hearings are any indication, not all nine commissioners will attend the Atlanta hearing. Bryant said it is likely that only those commissioners appointed to be experts on issues related to headquarters and administrative groups, supply and storage areas, and education will come to Atlanta, along with their staff members.

Fort McPherson has three major headquarters commands: Forces Command, Third Army and the U.S. Army Reserve Command. Fort Gillem is home to First Army headquarters and the Southeast regional distribution center for the Army and Air Force post exchange system. The Athens facility teaches supply and logistics to Navy enlisted personnel and officers. Only Naval Air Station Atlanta has units that train specifically for combat.

The announcement of the regional hearings, which will begin June 7 in Salt Lake City and St. Louis, came on the last of four days of hearings in Washington, in which members of Congress grilled defense officials over their recommendations on closing more than 150 facilities and making major realignments to many more.

If the Pentagon's list holds, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld estimates it will save \$50 billion over the next two decades.

The BRAC panel has until Sept. 8 to make its recommendations to President Bush. The president then has two weeks to approve or disapprove those recommendations.

to one of his black players. Several months before this incident, some African-American students protested the use of the n-word on a display in an exhibit honoring Charlayne Hunter-Gault, one of the first black students admitted to the University of Georgia.

Even in an age of political correctness and political incorrectness, scholars continue to use the n-word — most often in quotes — in their writings wherever it appears in the context of the times. But there is both hypocrisy and mendacity, particularly among the hip-hop generation of African-Americans, in the pervasive use of the n-word as a term of endearment. Where is the endearment in referring to one's ethnic peers by a word whose origins and history denote racist stereotypes — filthiness, shiftlessness and imbecility? Have Jews or any other religious or ethnic group adopted the religious and racist slurs used against them as terms of endearment?

Those African-Americans who continue to denigrate themselves by the pervasive use of the n-word still wear the most perverse aspects of the badge of slavery.

ALTON HORNSBY JR.

Hornsby is a professor of history at Morehouse College.

Ellen Rafshoon's well-intended celebration of the contribution made by hardworking Mexican lawn-service workers, produce harvesters, chicken cleaners and condominium builders is a humiliating slap in the face to a population that also includes many highly educated profes-

sionals. Can't we celebrate the contributions made at all socioeconomic levels without perpetuating the stereotype of Mexicans as only manual laborers?

I'm afraid the implicit message in Rafshoon's essay negates any intended good.

JOE KREBS
Atlanta

Salute the military for base-closing decisions

Our military is often maligned for failing to address matters in an efficient, objective, businesslike manner. Let's give it credit for making tough base-closing decisions that are intended to cut taxpayer costs by about \$50 billion.

SPENCER ROANE
Atlanta



Soon on Oprah: DeKalb's top cop?

I think I have figured out the motive of the DeKalb County chief of police in reopening the Wayne Williams can of worms: A book deal and a guest spot on Oprah.

STEPHEN PEACE
Stone Mountain

DeKalb County Chief of Police **Louis Graham** announces that a cold case squad will reinvestigate the Atlanta child murders of the 1980s.

Reader Opinions: Letters should be no longer than 150 words and may be edited for length and clarity. They may be published in print, electronic or other formats. E-mail submissions are preferred.

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LETTERS TO EDITOR
MON. MAY 16

THE
May 16

if they are caught lying, they'll lose their insurance for a year.

State officials claim the surcharge will be an incentive to quit, but they are approaching it backward. According to researchers at the

officials should seek other options, beginning with coverage of smoking cessation plans.

► **EQUAL TIME:** For another perspective on this issue, see the next page, A11

Base closings no cause for despair

Local business leaders, civic activists and politicians responded to Friday's announcement of planned military base closings as expected: with declarations to fight shutdowns in their communities tooth-and-nail. Metro Atlanta was no exception.

But that response ignores both the need for the U.S. military to cut costs where it can and the possibility of economic redevelopment on what is often prime real estate. In truth, Georgia will come out ahead if, first, the base closing commission and, then, the president and Congress accept the Pentagon's recommendation to shut down about 180 military facilities to save \$48.8 billion over the next 20 years. Overall, the state would gain about 7,400 military and civilian jobs because of expansion at some facilities.

That does not lessen the local impact of closing facilities such as Fort McPherson in Atlanta, Fort Gillem in Forest Park and the Naval Air Station in Marietta. Those facilities account for about 6,500 jobs, in and out of the military, and an annual payroll of \$560 million.

Fortunately, those bases, plus the Naval Supply Corps School in Athens and smaller facilities in Columbus, Rome and Atlanta, exist in metropolitan areas with economies large enough to dilute the impact of closings. There are more opportunities in the metro areas for

civilians who will lose their jobs than for civilians who work at rural bases.

In fact, the total payroll represented by Fort McPherson, Fort Gillem in Forest Park and the Naval Air Station is dwarfed by that of all of metro Atlanta. Rajeev Dhawan, director of the Georgia State University Economic Forecasting Center, estimates that wages and salaries of metro Atlanta workers hit \$100 billion last year.

The civilian job loss also is small, compared to area employment. As of March, an estimated 2.4 million people were employed in metro Atlanta. Dhawan expects the metro area to add 50,000 jobs this year and the same number in 2006, when the base closings would begin.

Of course, there's no immediate consolation for supporters

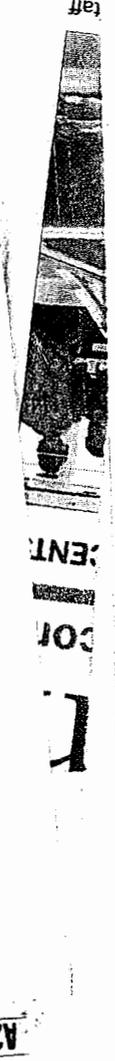
of bases targeted for closure and workers who will have to find jobs. But they can take some comfort from a government study that found that most communities affected by earlier closings "are continuing to recover from the impact." The Government Accountability Office said early this month that employment and income growth in such communities "are faring well compared with the average U.S. rate."

The lesson is that energy spent fighting the loss of military bases is better harnessed in economic redevelopment.

One government study found that most communities affected by earlier base closings "are continuing to recover from the impact."

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NAS fails to make cut

Saturday, May 14, 2005 3:08 AM EDT
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By David Burch

Marietta Daily Journal Staff Writer

MARIETTA - Cobb officials, both locally and in Washington, have vowed to fight to save Marietta's Naval Air Station Atlanta - one of four Georgia military bases targeted Friday by the Pentagon for closure.



"We're not about to give up Naval Air Station Atlanta without a fight," said U.S. Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-Marietta), a member of the House Armed Services Committee and a leading cheerleader in Congress for both NAS Atlanta and neighboring Dobbins Air Reserve Base.

Dobbins was spared from closure as part of the list compiled by the Base Realignment and Closure committee. The committee even recommended a small expansion in the number of military and civilian personnel assigned to the base.

That's a far cry from 1995, when Dobbins was included on the last list of base closures compiled by the BRAC committee but was eventually spared.

Closing NAS Atlanta would affect 1,498 workers at the base, including 1,274 full-time military personnel and 224 civilians. The base also serves about 3,000 Navy and Marine Corps reservists in 31 different units.

"We're prepared to make the case for Naval Air Station Atlanta to the national defense of our country," Gov. Sonny Perdue said Friday afternoon while standing in front of the base's main gate with a cross section of local and state officials. "While it was good news for Dobbins, we didn't want to lose a single soul, a single job here."

Reservists at NAS Atlanta fly the DC-9 Sky Train to support the Chief of Naval Operations and the C-12 for personnel and cargo movement in the U.S. and the Caribbean. They also fly the E-2C aircraft for anti-drug

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The upcoming fight in Washington to save NAS Atlanta and other Georgia bases will focus on convincing the Pentagon and members of Congress that each base targeted for closure plays a crucial role in the war on terror and other ongoing military actions.

Gingrey said the roll reservist groups at NAS Atlanta, such as the Marine Aircraft Group 42, have played in the war in Iraq will be part of the argument Georgia's Congressional delegation will make in an attempt to save the base.

U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) pointed to F-18 fighters based at NAS Atlanta currently fighting in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

"That in and of itself tells you how significant the base is to the defense of our country," Chambliss said.

U.S. Rep. Tom Price (R-Roswell) said NAS Atlanta and Dobbins combined represent a "poster child for the type of joint use facility that the military said it desires."

If closure becomes final, aircraft currently based at NAS Atlanta have been slated for transfer to either Robbins Air Force Base south of Macon or to bases in Fort Worth and New Orleans.

One the other hand, Dobbins stands to gain an additional 118 military and civilian personnel as part of the latest round of base realignments. That would include the transfer of eight C130J cargo planes and their crews to be based at Dobbins.

Even though the list base closures is not final, a group of local business and civic leader assembled by the Cobb Chamber of Commerce and Cobb County government has begun looking for possible future uses for NAS Atlanta's land and facilities.

Cobb Chamber Chief Operating Officer Don Beaver said recommendations from the "Local Redevelopment Planning Authority" would focus on uses that would "provide jobs and strengthen the community" while also taking advantage of the existing base facilities and its proximity to Dobbins, Lockheed Martin and the existing runways.

"In a perfect world, you would find a mix that would use the infrastructure that's already in place," Beaver said.

Both U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) and Gingrey agreed that NAS Atlanta already has a wealth of valuable infrastructure and that redevelopment should focus on supporting the national defense purpose of Dobbins and Lockheed next door.

"This property is not going anywhere," Gingrey said. "It's not going to be mothballed - We're not about to start a subdivision here."

NAS Atlanta would remain in operation for a while even if it remains on the list for closure.

The nine-member BRAC commission has until Sept. 8 to make their final recommendation for base closures. President Bush then has until Sept. 23 to either accept or reject the commission's recommendations.

If Bush rejects the list, the BRAC commission has until Oct. 20 to compile a



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revises list, which would return to the president for approval or rejection by Nov. 7.

After a final list is complete, the Pentagon has six years to shut down or downsize affected military bases.

Cpt. Sean King, commanding officer at NAS Atlanta, said for the time being business will continue as usual at the base.

"I understand the disappointment of the local community regarding the recommendation to close NAS Atlanta," King said. "As you can see, there is much time before the list is official. The military and civilian men and women of NAS Atlanta will continue the day-to-day work that is expected to fulfill our mission of 'Supporting the Warfighter.'"

Cobb Commission Chairman Sam Olens said he was disappointed NAS Atlanta was targeted for closure, but said losing the base would not prove devastating to the county economically.

"I think if it closes, it will have a minimal short term impact," he said. "The development potential for the property is greater than the number of jobs that are there now, so I think from an economic development perspective, we will get past this"

"There's been numerous proposals, many people interested in various options both government and private, and we will analyze those options if they should not reverse the decision," Olens said. "But I'm not in a big rush until the base is closed - I'm focused on saving the base"

Marietta Mayor Bill Dunaway said he thinks it would be inevitable that closing NAS Atlanta would have some effect on the city and the surrounding community.

"When you're talking about 1,200 or 1,300 active duty personnel, several hundred civilian employees and reservists, it'll certainly have an impact," he said.

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Saturday Talk

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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Base closings

Responses to "Hit list targets Atlanta bases," Page One, May 14

Politicians and media react predictably, a COO doesn't

The Pentagon's release of the military base closure list was a politician's dream event. Virtually minutes later, here come Gov. Sonny Perdue and Sens. Johnny Isakson and Saxby Chambliss parading before the cameras, vowing to oppose the closing of any Georgia installations. Did both of our esteemed senators just happen to be in Atlanta at the time? I'm sure the same scene took place all over the country, wherever there was a base on the "hit list."

What a deal for the politicians — a photo-op with a no-lose promise. All those adversely affected by the closings cheer them on, but if the bases close, they can say, "We really tried folks, so don't hold it against us at election time."

Certainly, the loss of a major business in any community can have an adverse economic impact, at least in the short run. It didn't take reporters long to find businesses whose owners unwisely put all their eggs in one basket and are now contemplating their futures in a negative light. Not the Cobb Chamber of Commerce's chief operating officer, Don Beaver, though: His committee has been planning for more than a year for the day when 200 acres of prime real estate (Naval Air Station Atlanta) would become available for development. And under the proposed scenario, Georgia stands to gain 7,400 jobs.

STEVE BERNTHAL
Blairsville



W.A. BRIDGES JR. / Staff

U.S. Sens. (from left) Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson (both R-Ga.), Gov. Sonny Perdue and U.S. Rep. David Scott (D-Ga., far right) speak at Fort McPherson on May 13, when they vowed to fight to keep the base open.

It's not about troops; it's about politicians

It's amazing how much pandering and posturing politicians can do to get re-elected. They all tell us they "support our troops," but when the Pentagon wants to close some redundant bases to save money that then can be spent on the troops, the wailing from politicians can be heard for miles.

Politicians support the troops only when there are no bases to be closed in their district.

PHIL COUCH
Douglasville

Closings, two wars suspiciously timed

The Department of Defense is engaged in a sweeping base closure and troop redeployment program that has been under consideration for more than two years.

I don't think it's a coincidence that that period of time includes the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

How much of the money "saved" by the base closings, and how many of the redeployed troops, will wind up in the aforementioned quagmires?

SCOTT WILBUR

Grouping of resources might increase risk

What I find most disturbing is the consolidation of resources. Submarines seem to be destined for one main home port while senior Army headquarters will be stationed at the same posts as Air Force high-tech bombers. Grouping resources in one place makes them a more attractive target.

Let's not forget the lesson learned at Pearl Harbor, when ships and planes were lined up closely together, making them easier to hit during the surprise attack by Japan.

ART ROBINSON

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Cobb officials brainstorm ideas for NAS Atlanta's potential closing

Monday, May 23, 2005 3:00 AM EDT
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By Kimberly Starks

Marietta Daily Journal Staff
Writer

MARIETTA - Following last Friday's announcement that Marietta's Naval Air Station Atlanta is up for closure, Cobb officials have formed a redevelopment authority that will consider alternative uses for the military base.

The Local Redevelopment Authority will look at the base's land, its demographics and the types of companies that are interested in moving onto the site. In addition, authority officials will focus on state requirements, zoning laws and other real estate and civil engineering matters.



Members of the authority include city and county officials and private-sector business leaders.

"While our number one goal is to (preserve) NAS, we have received a number of calls with uses compatible with the base should NAS remain on the list," said Cobb Commission Chairman Sam Olens. "There will be immediate assets moved to the property to help the economy."

Possible uses for the site, for example, include the National Guard which is interested in the property, Olens said. Private companies, however, cannot immediately inquire about the land until the federal and state officials have

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examined the site for government use.

Don Beaver, executive director of the Cobb Development Authority and a leading member of the authority, said that discussions about a future use for the base are premature.

"Right now we're going through the initial analysis and planning to look at reuse of the property," said Beaver, who also serves as the Cobb Chamber of Commerce's chief operating officer and senior vice president of economic development. "We will be running on a parallel track with Citizens for Cobb in reversing the decisions to close those units."

Even before the May 13 announcement, Cobb County officials have been proactive. Local leaders and congressmen representing the county have appealed to Washington about the need to keep the base open. If overturned, county officials would not want to be left at "the starting gate," Beaver said.

"We've got a long laundry list of questions that we've got to get answered before we move forward," he said.

NAS Atlanta, which is host to several naval commands, is one of four military bases in Georgia targeted for closure by the Pentagon. Another 32 major military bases in 22 states are slated to close.

The economic impact of NAS Atlanta and Dobbins neighboring Air Reserve Base is estimated at more than \$310 million each year, which includes the salaries and the goods and services purchased by the reservists stationed there, according to Cobb's Office of Economic Development.

NAS Atlanta supports some 3,000 Navy and Marine Corps Reservists in 31 different units. They fly the DC-9 Sky Train to support the Chief Naval Operations and the C-12 for personnel or cargo movement throughout the continental U.S. and Caribbean regions.

Reservists also fly the E-2C for operating and anti-drug operations. The Marines from Marine Aircraft Group 42 fly the AH-1W gun ships, the UH-1 Huey helicopters and the F-18 Hornet unit, according to NAS Atlanta. Capt. Sean King is commander of the station.

Other military bases in the state targeted for closure are Fort Gilliam in Clayton County, Fort McPherson in Atlanta and the Navy Supply Corps School campus in Athens.

NAS Atlanta spokesman Thomas Cooney said the base is not involved with Cobb's Local Redevelopment Authority.

"Friday's announcement was the first step in the process, so we're rolling along and doing the same job of continuing to support the over 4,500 reserve sailors and Marines stationed at NAS Atlanta that are fighting the global war on terrorism." Cooney said.

A Base Realignment and Closure commissioner will tour the base, host town meetings and will meet with the development authority. While officials are unsure of the date, the commissioner will visit before Sept. 23 when President Bush makes the final decision to close or realign the targeted military bases.

The BRAC Commission plans to host a public hearing for the Atlanta region June 30, during which the four Georgia bases targeted for closure, including NAS Atlanta, will be discussed.



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Cooney and other Cobb officials are remaining optimistic.

"Nothing is final until the president signs the bill in September, but until then we're continuing our everyday duties," he said.

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