

oppaga Progress Report



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Department of Military Affairs Revising Its Long-Term Planning for Armories

at a glance

The Department of Military Affairs' process for long-term planning of armories has evolved to include consideration of current factors and opportunities, such as consolidation of units, security issues at armories, and location of armories.

Recent changes in legislation provide for more active involvement of Governor's designee on the Armory Board, which should improve planning and budgeting process.

Purpose

In accordance with state law, this progress report informs the Legislature of the actions taken in response to the findings and recommendations included in our 2001 justification review of the Department of Military Affairs.¹

Background

The Department of Military Affairs is a state agency whose primary mission is to prepare for state and federal activation of the Florida National Guard. The department's head is the

adjutant general. The department is staffed with both state and federal employees, many of whom serve in the Florida National Guard as a condition of their employment.

The Department of Military Affairs is located in St. Augustine, Florida. Camp Blanding, the department-managed 73,000-acre training site, is located approximately 45 miles west of St. Augustine in Clay County. Florida National Guard units are located throughout the state.

The Department of Military Affairs is responsible for

- the readiness of the Florida National Guard and its oversight upon activation,
- drug interdiction operations, and
- local community support initiatives.

The Department of Military Affairs provides executive direction, planning, and administrative support to the Florida National Guard as it prepares for activation. As of July 2003, the Florida National Guard is an organization composed of 90 U.S. Army and Air Guard units with approximately 12,350 members. The Florida National Guard serves as a reserve component of the Department of Defense, and training, staffing, and equipping of the guard is fully funded by the federal government. The state and federal governments jointly fund guard armories.

¹ *Department of Military Affairs Should Develop Plan to Consolidate Facilities to Save Costs*, OPPAGA [Report No. 01-59](#), November, 2001.

Either the President or the Governor can activate guard units and personnel to support national security objectives, protect the public safety of citizens and their property, or defend the State of Florida. Although the organization's ultimate purpose, activations are not part of the state's budget process. Activation costs, when ordered by the federal government, are directly paid by the federal government. When activation is ordered by the Governor, most occasions have been for relief from natural disasters. Normally, the department is able to seek and eventually obtain full reimbursement by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for such activations. Rare non-reimbursed activations are either absorbed within the department's annual budget or by state budget amendment.

The Florida National Guard has been activated for federal duty on frequent occasions in recent years. During Fiscal Year 2002-03, over 5,100 Florida National Guard members were called to active duty at peak activation.

State appropriations for the program total about \$50 million for Fiscal Year 2003-04. Of the \$50 million state appropriation, approximately \$34 million comes from federal sources, \$14 million from state general revenue, and a \$2 million from revenue generated from operations at Camp Blanding.

Prior Findings

Performance measurement system needed improvement

Our prior report identified needed improvements to the department's performance measurement system. We recommended several changes to the performance measures the department reported to the Legislature.²

²The department's outcome measures *percentage of funded positions available for state deployment or number and percentage of armories rated adequate*, did not sufficiently assess the department's overall readiness level. We recommended that the measures be replaced with a more comprehensive measure of the *percentage of units that meet essential readiness standards to accomplish routine state activation missions*.

We also recommended that the department's measure *percentage of supported agencies reporting satisfaction with the*

In addition, the department's inspector general had not completed an examination of the department's performance measures as required by statute. Without this evaluation, the department, the Legislature, and the citizens of the state could not rely on the accuracy of the accountability system of the program.

Consolidating some armories would realize long-term cost avoidance

Our prior report noted that the department's inventory of 59 armories that housed National Guard units were aging, and many no longer met federal adequacy recommendations. Many of the facilities were built in the 1950s and 1960s, and the department's most recent evaluation of armory conditions rated two-thirds of the armories as needing replacement, renovation, or significant repair.

Under federal rules, the costs of constructing new armories and, in some cases, major renovation of Army National Guard armories are shared between the state and federal governments. At the time of our original report, the department's five-year capital improvement plans called for state funding of about \$46 million for projects linked to armory improvements, in addition to \$58 million of shared federal construction funds. The department identified \$30 million of additionally needed repairs for armories beyond the five-year plan.

We believe that the department could realize a cost avoidance by developing a plan to consolidate some of the armories. Consolidation would allow the department to co-locate some units, which would leverage federal funds for construction and renovation and allow the department to realize economies of scale to operations. We noted six sets of armories that were located relatively close to

department's support for specific missions be modified to weight the overall rating for an activation by the total person-days for that activation. For internal purposes, the department should also track activations by type to allow an evaluation of its ability to respond.

Finally, we recommended that a measure be added for the *percentage of targeted- age-group students receiving drug awareness training* be adopted to broaden the scope of evaluation in this service area.

each other, did not meet current federal armory adequacy specifications, and were in department plans for renovation or repair. We recommended that the department develop a long-term facility plan that sought to co-locate units in new facilities over time.³

Active involvement of Governor’s designee on Armory Board would improve planning and budgeting process

The Armory Board, which consists of the Governor and major commanders of the Florida National Guard, is charged with developing long-term facilities plans. However, at the time of our prior review, the Governor seldom attended these meetings. To strengthen the department’s armory planning and budgeting process, we recommended that the Office of the Governor be authorized to designate a staff member of the Office of Policy and Budgeting to work with the Armory Board in this process.

Current Status

Program performance measures still need improvement to better report agency accomplishments

As part of its required Long Range Program Plan, the department made changes to its outcome performance measures that approximately match OPPAGA’s recommendations and is in the process of having the official measures adjusted. However, the agency’s inspector general still has not completed an examination of the department’s performance measures. We continue to believe this step is necessary to provide the Legislature with reasonable assurance that accountability data is accurate.

³ Since our original report, a joint state and federal unit armory has been approved for the St. Petersburg area.

Armory planning is evolving

The department has recently issued a report that summarizes its current armory planning position and command guidance.⁴ This report lists modified long-term project plans, some of which reflect the criteria for assessing the potential for consolidating armories recommended in our report. For example, the report considers potential consolidation involving five armories. We continue to believe that the department should seek to consolidate these facilities over time when it is feasible to do so.

The governor’s office is now represented at Armory Board meetings

The 2003 Legislature amended s. 250.40, *Florida Statutes*, to allow the Governor to be represented by a member of his office at Armory Board planning meetings. This should facilitate the development and passage of legislative requests and budgets.

⁴ [Department Update on OPPAGA Report Number 01-59](#), Florida Department of Military Affairs, July 11, 2003.

The Florida Legislature

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability



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