

1 Introduced by Council Members Howland, Lahnen, Salem, Amaro,
2 Carlucci, Miller, Gay, and Pittman:

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5 **RESOLUTION 2025-566**

6 A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE CHANGE OF COMMAND
7 AT MARINE CORPS BLOUNT ISLAND COMMAND, HONORING
8 COLONEL LUKE WATSON FOR HIS LEADERSHIP, AND
9 WELCOMING COLONEL DAVID MERLES TO HIS NEW ROLE;
10 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

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12 **WHEREAS,** a change of command is a time-honored military
13 tradition signifying the orderly transfer of authority and
14 responsibility from one Commanding Officer to another, ensuring
15 continuity of leadership and mission execution; and

16 **WHEREAS,** the base commander of Blount Island Command, located
17 at the Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island, serves as the
18 senior officer responsible for directing operations, overseeing
19 logistics, coordinating with civilian and military partners, and
20 maintaining readiness in support of global Marine Corps missions; and

21 **WHEREAS,** Colonel Luke Watson relinquished command of Blount
22 Island Command on July 2, 2025, following a tenure that included
23 managing strategic pre-positioned equipment, maintaining
24 exceptionally high readiness rates and audit compliance, supporting
25 exercises across multiple countries, and completing infrastructure
26 resilience initiatives; and

27 **WHEREAS,** on July 2, 2025, Colonel David A. Merles, originally
28 from Cleveland, Ohio, a 1996 Marine Corps enlistee who was
29 commissioned in 2002 after graduating from The Citadel, took command
30 of Blount Island Command and Marine Corps Support Facility Blount
31 Island, relieving Colonel Watson during a ceremony aboard the USNS

Sgt. William W. Seay; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Merles assumes leadership of over 1,200 service members, government civilians, and defense contractors, guiding the hub of the Marine Corps maritime pre-positioning programs that support expeditionary forces worldwide during exercises and contingency operations; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Jacksonville:

Section 1. The City of Jacksonville hereby honors Colonel Luke Watson for his dedicated service as Commander of Blount Island Command and thanks him for his leadership in managing strategic readiness, infrastructure resilience, and global pre-positioning efforts, and congratulates Colonel David Merles on assuming command, and welcomes him in his new capacity, expressing confidence in his leadership and his commitment to sustaining Blount Island's critical mission in support of the Marine Corps.

Section 2. Effective Date. This Resolution shall become effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective without the Mayor's signature.

Form Approved:

/s/ S MacGilllis

Office of General Counsel

Legislation Prepared By: Nayeli Jimenez, City Council Research

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