

1 Introduced by Council Members Howland, Lahnen, Salem, Amaro,  
2 Carlucci, Miller, Gay, and Pittman and Co-Sponsored by Council Members  
3 Carrico and Freeman:  
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6 **RESOLUTION 2025-566-A**

7 A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE CHANGE OF COMMAND  
8 AT MARINE CORPS BLOUNT ISLAND COMMAND, HONORING  
9 COLONEL LUKE WATSON FOR HIS LEADERSHIP, AND  
10 WELCOMING COLONEL DAVID MERLES TO HIS NEW ROLE;  
11 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.  
12

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

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

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

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

1 Island, relieving Colonel Watson during a ceremony aboard the USNS  
2 Sgt. William W. Seay; and

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

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

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

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

20  
21 Form Approved:

22  
23 /s/Mary E. Staffopoulos

24 Office of General Counsel

25 Legislation Prepared By: Nayeli Jimenez, City Council Research

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