



## HONORARY COMMANDER PROGRAM

The Honorary Commander Program enables members of the community to understand the importance of Keesler Air Force Base, the United States Air Force, the Department of Defense, and their military missions. It also enables military commanders and their units to learn more about the communities in which they live. Keesler commanders and personnel benefit through increased association with the community and leaders.

The program allows for frequent opportunities to visit Keesler Air Force Base and learn about the 81st Training Wing mission and participate in base functions and to express views on issues of mutual concern.

The Honorary Commander Program is intentionally designed to build our support cadre among the community. Each time you step on Keesler Air Force Base as an Honorary Commander (HCC) you represent Biloxi and Harrison County. We appreciate your understanding in refraining from soliciting your business during any of the events.

### **BENEFITS**

These programs increase the bond between local civic leaders and the Department of the Air Force. The goal of a civic leader program is to engage, educate and empower local, regional, and national level community leaders to be advocates and unofficial spokespersons for the Department of the Air Force, Airmen and Space professionals and their families.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Promote a mutual understanding between Honorary Commanders and Kessler Air Force Base leadership and personnel. Help the Honorary Commander gain knowledge of the mission of Kessler Air Force Base, the United States Air Force as well as the Department of Defense.

Encourage the Honorary Commander to invest time and resources into projects that will enhance the quality of life for Kessler Air Force Base personnel and their families.

The Honorary Commander Program is a voluntary program designed to build and maintain solid, mutually beneficial partnerships between local communities and the 81st Training Wing.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

The program is a 1-year term.

To be the best well-rounded ambassador possible, you are expected to attend all immersions. To receive the maximum benefit of this unique opportunity and how you can best communicate what and who Keesler is, attending the immersions will give you the best understanding of the base.

You will also be invited to attend socials, changes of command as well as seasonal/routine base-wide events.

Honorary Commanders can resign or be dropped from the program at any time if the program is not a good fit.

To graduate at the end of the term, the Honorary Commander may not miss more than one Tier 1 immersion without a valid precoordinated excuse.

## **IMMERSION EVENTS (Dates Subject to Change)**

Tier 1:

- Graduation and Induction Ceremony – 5 September 2024
- 81st Training Wing Immersion – October 2024
- 81st Training Group Immersion – January 2025
- 81st Mission Support Group Immersion – March 2025
- 81st Medical Group Immersion – May 2025
- 2nd Air Force and Wing Staff Agency Immersion – July 2025
- Graduation and Induction Ceremony – September 2025

Possible additions: Wing Staff Agency and 403rd Wing

Tier 2: Other military event examples

- Changes of Command
- Air Force Ball (14 September 2024)
- Socials
- Award Ceremonies
- 81st Training Group Quarterly Drill Downs

Tier 3: Additional base-wide events and possible volunteer opportunity examples

- Cruisin' Keesler
- Ghouls in the Park
- Christmas in the Park
- Chiefs vs. Eagles Baseball game
- Keesler CON
- Freedom Fest

- Health Fairs
- Observance month events
- Crawfish Festival

## **FEEDBACK**

Beginning at the application stage, regular feedback will be asked of each of the Honorary Commanders to gauge their knowledge and progress with the program.

In addition to tracking attendance for immersions, we will also track each of their attendance at extra events and volunteer activity as well as the return on our investment in each of the Honorary Commanders.

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### **Relevant excerpts from AFMAN 35-101**

5.4. Choosing Civic Leaders. The intent of a civic leader program is to educate and increase the knowledge and understanding of key civic leaders about the Air Force and Space Force. Civilian participants are selected from among non-federally elected or appointed officials, mayors, chamber of commerce-type group members, principals of local schools, Military Affairs Committee members and others who, because of their position or influence in the community, can positively impact public support for the base. Public Affairs offices should nominate civic leaders from a diverse cross-section of the entire community and nominees should be approved through local legal offices prior to sending to leadership.

5.4.2. Civic Leaders will not:

- 5.4.2.1. Be an employee of the federal government. (T-0).
- 5.4.2.2. Be a federally elected or appointed official. (T-0). Locally elected or appointed officials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.4.2.3. Be an active member of the National Guard or a member of the Ready Reserve (Selected), Individual Ready Reserve, or Standby Reserve. (T-1).
- 5.4.2.4. Be a retired military member of any service. (T-0). Exceptions will be rare and approved at the MAJCOM/PA or Field Command PA level when there is significant justification for inclusion.
- 5.4.2.5. Be a paid employee of any political party or candidate. (T-0).
- 5.4.2.6. Hold financial interests that conflict with their role as a civic leader, or those who have current, or are bidding on, contracts with the DoD. (T-0).

5.4.4. Nominees can work in a media-related field, but should not be a newspaper, TV, professional blogger/vlogger, or radio reporter, due to the inherent conflicts of interest that could arise if allowed unescorted access to the installation and/or access to base leadership in situations not intended to be public or to be publicized. Consult with MAJCOM/PA or Field Command PA on establishing guidelines to mitigate potential conflict.