



# KATRINA Daily News

Tuesday, September 6, 2005



**Ringed by a group of Keesler's Hurricane Katrina survivors Sunday in the Levitow Training Support Center, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld gives words of encouragement to those severely impacted by the storm.**  
*(U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Mike Buytas)*

## SECDEF, top recovery generals: 'Keesler is blessed'

**By Tech. Sgt. Dan Neely**  
**81st Training Wing Public Affairs deployed**

The military's highest-ranking officials leading post-Hurricane Katrina relief efforts toured Keesler Air Force Base Sunday and personally delivered reassuring words to the storm-battered base's troops and family members.

The visiting delegation, led by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, included Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Navy Admiral Timothy Keating, U.S. Northern Command commander, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré, commander of the USNORTHCOM's recently established Joint Task Force Katrina and Maj. Gen. Harold Cross, Mississippi National Guard adjutant general.

After receiving a comprehensive post-hurricane overview by General Cross, and Keesler's Maj. Gen. "Chip" Utterback, 2nd Air Force commander, and Brig. Gen. William Lord, 81st Training Wing commander, the leaders visited the base's devastated housing and industrial areas.

The tour was highlighted by a visit with a host of Keesler members – Airmen, Marines and Sailors and their families, many of whom lost most or all of their worldly possessions, as did thousands of other victims along the northern Gulf Coast.

Inside the base's packed Levitow Training Support Center, Secretary Rumsfeld expressed condolences to those who are attempting to cope with stress and frustration in the wake of their staggering personal losses, Secretary Rumsfeld said he was especially thankful that Keesler didn't suffer any lost lives or serious injuries. He asked them to be mindful of the fact that "it could have been worse."

While acknowledging the crowd's grief and dismay in the wake of their staggering personal losses, Secretary Rumsfeld said he was especially thankful that Keesler didn't suffer any lost lives or serious injuries. He asked them to be mindful of the fact that "it could have been worse."

Telling them he had just come from an extensive aerial survey of Katrina's worst-hit places in the greater New Orleans area as well as completely destroyed beachfront homes and businesses in Keesler's neighboring communities of Gulfport and Biloxi, the secretary emphasized, "This base is blessed. As bad as it is [here], when you fly in a helicopter and see this area, it's just amazing to see the damage that's been done."

The delegation expressed special thanks to many in the audience whose above-and-beyond efforts had earlier gained attention of Keesler's leadership. They also lauded some of the more than 400 non-prior service technical training students who volunteered to remain in place and help recovery operations rather than evacuate, as did several thousand of their fellow classmates and other Keesler people.

"We appreciate the way you're working as a team," General Myers told the audience. "Our job is to make sure you get the resources to get the job done, get this place stood up and get everybody back on their feet."

Despite Keesler's relentless 24/7 efforts to get the now austere base functioning again, its people have embraced opportunities to show appreciation for their community neighbors. Just days after emerging from hurricane shelters, the now daily opportunities to deliver tractor-trailer convoys of humanitarian aid to towns such as Biloxi, Gulfport and Ocean Springs are gaining wide participation.

General Cross's comments reaffirmed the mutual base-community goodwill.

"This is one of the best-supported military bases by a community in the United States," he said. "They love Keesler Air Force Base, and I know Keesler loves Biloxi. You know their devastation.

"My heart and prayers go out to you that lost all your possessions, but you still have your lives, your health, your resolve and your resilience," he said. Drawing on the words of poet Robert Frost, he added, "We have promises to keep and miles to go before we sleep.' This is going to be a long, long marathon, not a sprint. Let's all hang in there and help each other, because that's our greatest strength; not our technology, but our love for one another."

## KEESLER BASICS:

### General Information

**Evacuation info** – All remaining dependents are required to report to the Levitow Bldg. (Fish Bowl/Family Assistance Center) to identify your method of evacuation. Please sign up at the Fish Bowl as soon as possible. If you are leaving via **military airlift**, the deadline to evacuate is Sept. 8. If you are leaving by **commercial airline**, military buses will provide transportation to Mobile airport daily from the Levitow Bldg. at 7 a.m. today through Friday. Contact vehicle operations at DSN 597-2430 or 2432 to sign up. Please provide your departure date. If you are leaving via POV, please provide your departure date.

**Food** – Hot meals are available at both dining facilities.

**Breakfast:** 5:30 to 8 a.m. at the Azalea Dining Facility.

**Lunch:** Soup, Sandwich and Salad at the Azalea dining facility 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**Dinner:** 5 to 9 p.m. at the Magnolia Dining Facility.

**AAFES** – The mini mall BX hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The BX accepts cash, credit and debit cards and personal checks.

**Gasoline** – Gasoline is available at the AAFES Service Station from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### **Fish Bowl Movie Schedule – Tuesday:**

“Million Dollar Baby, 7 p.m.;

**Wednesday:** Benji, 10:30 a.m.; Beauty

Shop, 7 p.m.; **Thursday:** Babe, 10:30

a.m.; Hitch, 7 p.m.; **Friday:** 10:30 a.m.,

Little Giants; Independence Day, 7 p.m.;

**Saturday:** Charlotte’s Web, 10:30 a.m.;

Indiana Jones’ Last Crusade, 7 p.m.;

**Sunday:** The Emperor’s New Groove, 10:30 a.m.; Patch Adams, 7 p.m.

**Fitness Center** – The Blake Fitness Center is open from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.

### Claims Information

**Claims Briefings** – Legal representatives provide claims briefings for all personnel at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. daily. Call DSN 597-5404 for more information.

**USAA** – Representatives are located at the Levitow Bldg. Their hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Personnel should contact a representative calling toll-free (800) 531-8222 before visiting.

**GEICO** – A representative from GEICO is available to answer questions at the Levitow Bldg. until further notice. Please call claims into the GEICO regional office at (800) 841-3000.

### Finance Information

**Finance** – Limited financial services are available at the Levitow Bldg. from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Customer service hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. To reach a representative for customer service/travel pay related issues call DSN 597-7479. For budget issues, call DSN 597-2770. Contact a finance representative at DSN 597-7256 for additional information.

**Cash Advances** – Up to \$200 is available from the finance office located in the Levitow Bldg. Additionally, Travel pay and pay advances are available to military members and their spouses from other military installations’ finance centers.

**Air Force Aid Society** – A limited number of monetary grants for evacuation purposes are available to families in need through the Air Force Aid Society. Single active duty military members from all services may be eligible to receive up to \$250, and military members with families may be eligible to receive up to \$500. Contact your unit first sergeant for application instructions.

### Health Care Information

**Emergency Room/Urgent care clinic** – Medical care is available at the EMEDS tent hospital located directly across from Tyer House and beside the Sablich Center. Routine or non-urgent sick call hours are 8-11 a.m. and 3-6 p.m. daily. 24-hour emergency care is available at the Clinical Research Laboratory located behind Tyer House. Those not in the local area can contact the nearest military medical facility or call (800) 444-5445.

**Health Care for Military Families** – Wherever Keesler’s family members are located, their health care needs will be met. Military treatment facilities across the U.S. have extended hours, established

refugee clinics and begun many other creative programs to take care of displaced active duty family members and retirees. Further, TRICARE has waived referral requirements for Keesler’s TRICARE Prime enrollees. Necessary care can be obtained from any network provider with no preauthorization required. Family members should call 800-444-5445 for help in finding care.

**Medical Transportation** – A medical shuttle will transport personnel for routine medical issues from 8 to 11 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. Shuttles will stop at the Welch Theater, Thompson Hall, Wolfe Hall, Building 5022, Shaw House, Muse Manor and the Clinical Research Laboratory.

**Dental Clinic** – The Dental Clinic is open for acute needs from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and for routine needs by appointment. Call DSN 597-3003.

### In Quotes

**“The recent hurricane was evil, but as I look at all of you, I see so much good, and we are truly blessed for what you’re doing.”** *Shelter/Distribution Center representative speaking to Keesler volunteers who delivered humanitarian supplies Sept. 5.*



**Tech. Sgt. Andrew Reid, a deployed member of Hurlburt Field, Florida’s, 823rd RED HORSE Squadron, clears downed tree limbs from area near the 81st Training Wing’s headquarters building Monday. RED HORSE members are heavily involved in base recovery operations. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Dan Oberly).**