

**OFFICE OF MILITARY AFFAIRS**  
*The Digest of Administrative Reports to the Governor*  
**Fiscal Year 2019-2020**

***At a Glance***

**ROBERT T. ROSS, Executive Director**  
**OFFICE OF MILITARY AFFAIRS (OMA)**

***Established***—July 2007

***Statutory Authority*** - Connecticut General Statute 32-58b

***Central Office***—450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 5, Hartford, CT 06420

***Recurring Operating Expenses*** - \$200,000.00

**Organizational Structure** – As an independent agency, OMA is staffed with a full-time Executive Director, designated as a department head in the executive branch, reporting directly to the Office of the Governor. The Executive Director is supported by Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) staff members who provide administrative services for OMA in various functions, including but not limited to, office administration, financial management, legal counsel, information technology, economic research, government, public and legislative affairs.

**Mission**

The Office of Military Affairs promotes and coordinates state-wide activities that enhance the quality of life of all branches of military personnel and their families and to expand the military and homeland security presence in this state.

**Statutory Responsibility**

Under the provisions of Connecticut General Statute 32-58b, OMA coordinates policies and programs to enhance the quality of life of service members and their families from all branches stationed in or deploying from Connecticut. OMA develops and implements strategic initiatives to prevent the closure or downsizing of Naval Submarine Base New London. OMA advocates for Connecticut's defense industries with efforts to retain established defense industries and encourage the relocation of new defense manufacturing to the state. And OMA serves as liaison to the Connecticut congressional delegation on defense and military issues.

The legislation setting forth duties and responsibilities of the OMA Executive Director was revised by the Connecticut General Assembly to more accurately reflect the ongoing activities of the office. The revised legislation was signed into law by the Governor on June 19, 2015.

## Connecticut's Enduring Role in National Security

The year 2019 was relatively stable on the national security front, with most media attention focused on four areas: On again-off again discussions with North Korea on nuclear weapons, U.S.-China negotiations on resolving an ongoing trade war, U.S. efforts to draw down the American presence in Afghanistan, and intense debate over the funding and construction of the U.S. southern border wall.

For Connecticut, the state's defense industrial base saw a landmark year, with defense contracts to Connecticut companies or companies doing business in the state at their highest level in recent decades. The main reason was the award in December 2019 to General Dynamics Electric Boat (EB) of the largest single shipbuilding contract ever awarded by the Navy, a staggering \$22.2 billion, for nine *Virginia*-class nuclear submarines.

The year closed with approval by Congress of a defense appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 containing tens of billions of dollars for weapons programs based in Connecticut: EB's submarines, F-35 Lightning aircraft powered by Pratt & Whitney engines, and Sikorsky helicopter programs.

December 2019 was a very good month for the state of Connecticut. In addition to the record-breaking Navy shipbuilding contract referenced above, both the FY 21 defense authorization and appropriations bills received final passage by Congress and were signed into law that month. Due in large part to support from the state's congressional delegation, both bills resulted in significant funding for CT-based defense programs.

Following is a summary of the key items:

- \$8.5B for two *Virginia*-class submarines in 2020.
- \$3B in advance procurement for additional submarines in 2021 and 2022.
- \$1.8B for advance procurement for the new *Columbia*-class ballistic missile submarines.
- An additional \$427 million for continued research and development of *Columbia*-class submarines.
- \$9.3B for 98 Pratt & Whitney-powered F-35 aircraft, 20 more than the DOD budget request.
- \$3B for continued development of the Air Force B-21 long-range bomber; Pratt & Whitney is a partner in the program.
- \$2.1B for 12 KC-46 tanker aircraft, also powered by Pratt & Whitney engines.
- \$1.4B for 74 Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, 16 more than the number funded in the previous year.
- \$847M for six Sikorsky Marine Corps heavy-lift CH-53K helicopters; \$517M for continued research and development.

## Connecticut Defense Spending Ranking

The most recent comprehensive analysis of state-by-state defense spending is Defense Spending by State, Fiscal Year 2018, released in early 2020 by the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) in the Department of Defense. The report is based on research done between June and December of 2019 and is drawn from numerous sources, mainly DOD's Defense Manpower Data Center and USAspending.gov, operated by the Department of the Treasury.

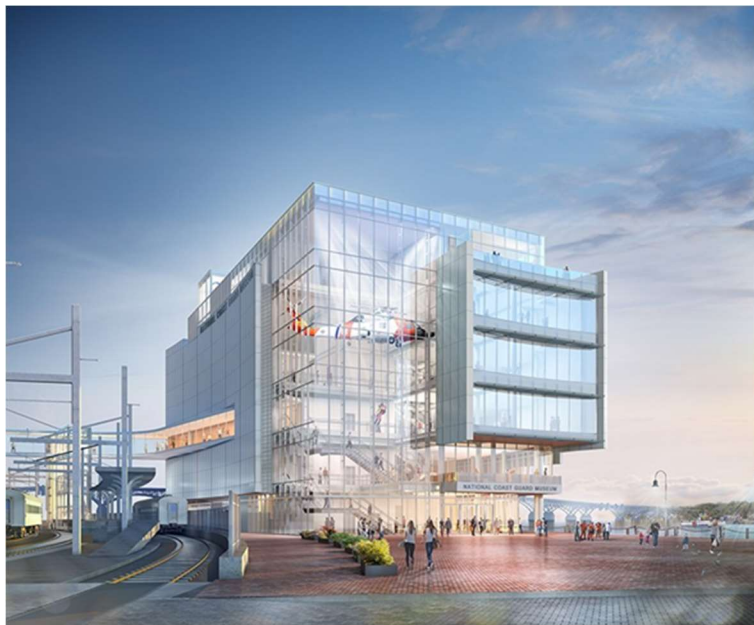
Connecticut did very well in the rankings, especially with its small population (3,565,287) compared to other major defense spending states. Connecticut is ranked 8th overall in total defense spending, 7th in defense spending as a percentage of state gross domestic product (GDP), and 6th in defense contract spending.

### **The National Coast Guard Museum**

The United States Coast Guard is the only military service that does not have a national museum. On April 5, 2013, after a decade of false starts and failed attempts, the Commandant of the Coast Guard announced the decision to build a National Coast Guard Museum (NCGM) in downtown New London. The National Coast Guard Museum Association (NCGMA) proposed a world class museum at the head of New London City Pier. Then Governor Malloy participated in the announcement and committed up to \$20 million in state funding to build a pedestrian bridge to connect the museum with all elements of the New London multi-modal transportation hub.

On April 17, 2013, the Governor directed all state agencies to collaborate in this undertaking and to help the U.S. Coast Guard and City of New London advance the project. He also directed the OMA to coordinate the efforts of state agencies on his behalf.

Negotiations with stakeholders advanced swiftly. On July 26, 2013, the State Bond Commission approved \$500,000 for advance engineering and design of the pedestrian bridge and authorized the DECD to enter into an assistance agreement with the NCGMA. The State of Connecticut, City of New London, USCG and NCGMA negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement to clearly define roles and responsibilities in this partnership to build the museum. The State Bond Commission approved the remaining balance of \$20 million for the pedestrian bridge on April 13, 2018.



Rendering by Payette®

Much of the financing for the \$100 million museum is being raised in a national fundraising campaign coordinated by the NCGMA. Contingent upon this fundraising effort and a series of prerequisite agreements with area stakeholders, construction could begin as early as 2020.

### **Creating Military Value in Submarine Base New London**

Chief among the reasons to create OMA was the very real probability that the Submarine Base (SUBASE) in Groton would be closed. Twice it was targeted by the DOD for closure in the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. Twice, *Team Connecticut*, a group of public and private sector individuals, got organized and worked tirelessly to reverse the almost certain closure of the base. Today, the primary task of OMA is to do proactively what *Team Connecticut* had to do reactively in 1993 and 2005. We don't want to wage this battle again.

The predictable economic catastrophe associated with the potential closure of the SUBASE is obvious to anyone familiar with southeastern Connecticut. The loss of the positive effects we realize from the base -- its \$5 billion annual economic impact and over 15,000 jobs -- would be devastating. The ripple effect throughout the state would simply be the reverse of what we experience today. Hundreds of small businesses deriving their business and clientele from the base would go under. Without this economic anchor, the regional economy would be severely impacted.

It is likely that another BRAC round will eventually be approved by Congress. Although DOD did not request a BRAC in its Fiscal Year (FY) 19 and 20 budgets, BRAC requests were made for six straight years prior to FY 19 and DOD is expected to renew such a request in the FY 21 budget. OMA efforts will continue to focus on developing and executing strategic initiatives to enhance the *military value* of the base in preparation for the next BRAC round when it comes.

Today the SUBASE is undergoing a remarkable transformation as old infrastructure is demolished and replaced with modern capacity. People familiar with the SUBASE recognize its ongoing dramatic transformation into a modern campus of new buildings, specifically designed for unique operations, specialized training and high-tech support functions associated with producing and maintaining our nation's submarine force.

Working in a close partnership with Navy officials in Connecticut and at the Pentagon, OMA has established a legal framework through which the state can transfer funds to the Navy for carefully selected projects.

Previous state-funded projects have included construction of new buildings to support operations and maintenance, construction of training equipment, installation of a new high efficiency boiler for base-wide steam utilities, and purchases of land for encroachment mitigation on both the northern and southern perimeters of the base. Collectively, these projects represent a wholly unique partnership with the Navy in diverse and creative areas of base improvements.

As important as these ongoing state-funded investments are, they represent only a small fraction of the military construction projects underway on the base. Since 2005, there have been over \$400 million worth of planning, demolition and construction projects on the base, with about \$27 million of them funded by the state. So, the state is an important but modest partner in a much larger effort to modernize the base.

OMA will continue to work closely with our congressional delegation, state and local officials, regional stakeholders and Navy leadership to identify future projects as part of our ongoing strategy to enhance the *military value* of the base and protect it from closure in a future BRAC round.



200121-N-II118-121 GROTON, Conn. (Jan. 21, 2020) – Cmdr. Bradley Boyd, officer in charge, Historic Ship Nautilus (SSN 571) and director, Submarine Force Museum shows Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont the name of his uncle who is listed in the book of personnel lost at sea aboard USS Snook (SS-279). Lamont visited SUBASE New London for his first extended visit to familiarize himself with submarine operations in the state. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Latrice Jackson/Released)

### **Quality of Life and Military Service in Connecticut**

Advocating for service members and their families has become one of the most important roles of OMA. Military families stationed here for duty assignments or training enjoy supportive local communities, excellent public schools and the unique experience of living in New England. As families in transition, they occasionally need reasonable accommodations and OMA actively engages state agencies and local organizations on their behalf. Many examples of this advocacy can be read on the OMA website.

The OMA is a member of the national Association of Defense Communities (ADC), a Washington-based organization that represents states and communities nationwide that host military installations. The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments was recently designated an ADC Great American Defense Community for their outstanding collective efforts to support military bases, service members and their families.



Photo by Mark C. Jones

## Conclusion

Connecticut's Office of Military Affairs demonstrates an efficient model for achieving tangible strategic outcomes. Since it was established, the office has produced a partnership with the Navy that was unprecedented in the United States. The SUBASE is now in a much better position to withstand another round of BRAC. The Connecticut National Guard and U.S. Coast Guard Academy are realizing and planning for expansions with new facilities to support their missions. The State and City of New London are looking forward to being the home of the National Coast Guard Museum. The OMA helped coordinate consistent and sustained support for increases in defense and military economic impacts within the state. Most importantly, OMA has advanced the *quality of life* and *quality of service* for service members and their families stationed here and deploying to destinations around the world.

Connecticut's diversified defense industries continue to thrive due to the high quality and strategic relevance of the products designed and manufactured throughout the state. Our defense industries enjoy superb reputations for their highly skilled workforces, outstanding management and efficient business practices.

Residents should be proud of Connecticut's long history as what George Washington called the *Provisions State*. It is an important part of our character, embedded in the economic fabric of our state and a legacy that should be carefully protected. The Office of Military Affairs will continue to seek opportunities to enhance the military and defense industry presence in Connecticut and advocate for the many organizations and people in our state - particularly military members and their families - who serve and support our nation's defense.

## Information Reported as Required by State Statute

The OMA is required by statute to prepare and submit a report of activities, findings and recommendations annually to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce and public safety, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The most recent annual report is publicly available on the OMA website. [www.ct.gov/oma](http://www.ct.gov/oma)