

Thank you, Chairman Principi, and members of the Commission for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Tim Davlin, and I'm the Mayor of Springfield, Illinois. I represent the individuals, families, and the communities of Illinois that will be affected by your decision regarding the 183<sup>rd</sup> Air National Guard unit based at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport.

As you know, the Department of Defense has recommended moving our seventeen assigned F-16 fighter aircraft from Springfield, IL, to Ft. Wayne, Indiana – a decision we believe substantially deviates from the Base Closure and Realignment Committee criteria.

Here's why:

1. Moving the aircraft to Ft. Wayne does not demonstrably improve our overall national defense or homeland security missions;
2. This shift of assets to Ft. Wayne will not result in net savings for our military—not one single penny—and , in fact, it will cost money;
3. The facility at Ft. Wayne is simply not as well-equipped to meet the future force requirements of our military as the base in Springfield; and
4. The economic impact to Springfield, Illinois, and the surrounding area has been drastically miscalculated by the Air Force.

I will speak briefly to each of these points, but I encourage each of you to closely review our white paper that provides an in-depth analysis of these arguments.

First, you as Commissioners have been given a monumental and no doubt, at times, a disagreeable task. I do not dispute that our military needs some changes. Certainly the military must constantly improve its efficiencies, but the purpose of these closings and realignments should be to make our military stronger.

Changes to National Guard units must not undermine our homeland defense efforts.

Yet, that is exactly what would happen if our F-16 fighter aircraft are moved from Springfield, Illinois.

The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW has a proud heritage of answering our nation's call to duty. The military value of the wing is undeniable. Most recently, personnel from the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW played an integral role in both "Operation Southern Watch" and "Operation Enduring Freedom".

Specifically:

- From a national perspective, the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW is centrally located in the U.S. and can easily support any mission in the region whether it is federal, state or homeland security.
- From a regional perspective, Illinois has 28 locks and dams along the Mississippi, the Illinois and the Ohio Rivers. Having the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW located at its current base is an important Homeland Security issue for the state.
- 15% of all commodities in the country are shipped on the inlet waterways at 3% of the cost. The bulk of these shipments are on the Mississippi, Illinois and Ohio Rivers, which all border Illinois.
- Additionally, Illinois has 11 nuclear facilities while other surrounding states have between 1 and 4 facilities. Again, this has critical Homeland Security ramifications for the region.
- While on the surface it may not appear to be much of a difference between locating the Fighter Wing in northern Indiana versus central Illinois, we believe an in-depth study by Commission will raise serious doubts about whether such a move will improve our nation's homeland security defenses.
- From a performance perspective, the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW, with a military value of 115, is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 10 F-16 ANG units. Seven other units have lower military value, yet the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW is 1 of 5 units recommended for realignment. Yet DoD proposes moving the aircraft from the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW to a guard base which ranks below Springfield.

Next, and this point is related to improving the future capabilities of our military and the National Guard: if your task as Commissioners is to find the appropriate mesh of bases that meet the Defense Department's future force requirements, this recommendation simply has it all wrong.

Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport in Springfield has many environmental and infrastructure advantages that position the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW to carry out current and expanded future missions.

Specifically:

- Unlike Ft. Wayne, Springfield is not hampered by any air quality restrictions. The county of Allen (Ft Wayne), however, is classified as a non-attainment area for 8-hour ozone standards.
- In fact, the 183<sup>rd</sup> has just completed a Base master Plan. The state and local community are working together with the airport authorities to acquire financial aid and assistance to provide additional acreage to the base in order to accommodate force protection, munitions storage and homeland security alert facility.

Finally, we know that many communities around the country will suffer an economic impact when their military bases are closed and realigned. Perhaps that is a painful but necessary step when we are trying to right-size our military. However, let's at least be honest about the impact those closings will have on our communities before making those painful decisions.

The devil is in the details and in the case of Springfield, the Air Force simply has it wrong. The claim that only 163 positions will be lost is also wrong—for it fails to include those who work part-time at the military base. Include those part-time workers and the numbers skyrocket to almost 600 individuals.

The loss of the firefighting unit at the military base, which also serves Capital Airport, will cost the airport between \$500,000 and \$600,000 every year. Additionally, the unit is relied upon to provide runway maintenance and snow and ice removal.

Such a loss would be devastating for the 9-county central Illinois area economy.

We cannot afford losses of this magnitude.

I have lived my entire life in Springfield, Illinois. When I talk to my neighbors, my friends and the citizens of Central Illinois, there is no mistaking the tremendous, button-popping pride they have in our Air National Guard base.

Personnel from the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW responded to the call of duty, after the events of September 11, 2001. The unit deployed for a three month period starting in March 2002 and as I mentioned, took part in both "Operation Southern Watch" and "Operation Enduring Freedom." During the unit's first 30 days in theater, personnel from the 183d flew more than 1,000 hours.

Because of the long hours, and to get all its pilots combat flying experience, the squadron rotated all of its 33 assigned pilots, six of whom stayed the entire rotation. These men and women are not full-time military – they are part and parcel of our community. Yet, they answered the call of duty without hesitation.

The 183<sup>rd</sup> Air National Guard base has been a close partner with the community of Springfield, Illinois for over 50 years.

They served our country with distinction and honor.

Commissioners, they deserve better than this. The people of Central Illinois understand the military; they understand what is required of our fighting men and women to protect us at home and abroad. And I'll take a solid base in the Heartland any day.

In closing, the decision regarding the Springfield-based 183<sup>rd</sup> is not consistent with BRAC's own criteria. A decision that will cost the taxpayers money, not save money. And Commissioners, you have the power to change this recommendation for the benefit of our military and our future force requirements.

I hope that you seriously consider whether realigning Springfield's aircraft is in the best interest of our country's national security and homeland defense.

We in Springfield have many reasons to believe it is not.

## **Executive Summary** **Supporting the 183<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing ANGB** **Springfield, Illinois**

### **Overview**

In its submission to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), the U.S. Air Force has recommended "realigning" the flying mission of the 183<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing located at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport in Springfield, Illinois to Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

The State of Illinois and the Springfield community strongly dispute the rationale behind that decision as it is: (1) inconsistent with lawful BRAC criteria that demands military value be the primary consideration; (2) not financially sound; (3) based on erroneous factual assumptions; and (4) not in the best interest of this country's future force structure or homeland security. Accordingly, this recommendation should not be adopted by the Commission.

### **Community Relationship**

The 183<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing of the Illinois Air National Guard has been a close partner with the community of Springfield, Illinois for over 50 years. The unit enjoys an exceptional relationship with the Springfield Airport Authority which allows the 183<sup>rd</sup> to conduct its operations in an extremely cost effective manner that benefits both the Department of Defense and the local community. The close relationship with the Airport Authority leaves the 183<sup>rd</sup> well-positioned for expansion and future mission growth. This relationship has recently resulted in the 183<sup>rd</sup> receiving 15 acres of additional property for force protection requirements and an offer by the State of Illinois and the local community to build a munitions storage facility and alert facility at the base for air sovereignty operations.

### **History**

The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW conducts air-to-air and air-to-ground operations using upgraded Block 30 Big Inlet F-16C/D fighter aircraft. Elements of the 183<sup>rd</sup> have flown air sovereignty alert as part of Operation Noble Eagle, while also flying in direct support of ground troops as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Southwest Asia. The unit deployed to the Central Command Area of Responsibility for a three-month period starting in March 2002 to take part in both "Operation Southern Watch" and "Operation Enduring Freedom." During the unit's first 30 days in theater, personnel from the 183<sup>rd</sup> flew more than 1,000 hours. The 183<sup>rd</sup> has deployed to Southwest Asia a total of three times in the past several years.

This recent deployment history follows a long legacy of the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW answering the call when the nation needs to deploy forces overseas. The 183<sup>rd</sup> deployed to Southwest Asia five times since the 1990s in support of Operation Southern Watch, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Eagle's Talon Partners in Peace. The unit also deployed to Panama in support of Operation Coronet Nighthawk in 1998 and again to Curacao in 2001 to support the same operation. Currently, the unit is deployed to Poland in support of Operation Sentry White Falcon 05.

## Military Value

The most important criteria the BRAC Commission should consider when evaluating base realignment or closure is military value. The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW has demonstrated itself to be an extremely capable and adaptable unit that contributes significantly to the operational readiness of the total force of the Department of Defense.

- The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW's high military value rank does not justify its inclusion on the BRAC list. Based on the overall Fighter MCI rankings, Springfield ranked **third** out of the 12 non A-10 Air National Guard fighter units in the upper Midwest. The only non A-10 units ranked higher are Sioux Falls, South Dakota (by less than a point) and Selfridge, Michigan, which is also slated to lose its F-16s. Further, and most importantly, the 183<sup>rd</sup> ranked first in this group of units in the "current and future mission" category, six points above Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Toledo, Ohio, and Madison, Wisconsin, eight points above Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and ten points above Des Moines, Iowa. Capital Airport has two active runways with barrier arrest to facilitate fighter operations (most bases only have one). In addition, the base has excess ramp capacity to accommodate growth, future missions and/or mobilization requirements. Accordingly, the 183<sup>rd</sup> should be adding fighters -- not losing them, especially to a base with significantly lower present and future military value.
- The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW's central location allows it access to exceptional training opportunities within a short distance from the base. The 183<sup>rd</sup> is located within a short distance of 11 Military Operating Areas, seven air-to-ground ranges, and 20 low-level training routes that it routinely uses. This capability allows for low and high-level training, air interdiction, air-to-ground exercises, combat search and rescue, and counter air operations. These training areas are located north, south, east, and west of Springfield, greatly reducing the number of training sorties missed because of weather – this cannot be said of most other fighter bases who can only utilize one, or at most two, locations. Further, the 183<sup>rd</sup> is located within an area of ample tanker support and dissimilar fighter units which increases training effectiveness.
- The strength of recruiting at the Springfield ANG Base is exceptional. The State of Illinois provides benefits to its Guard members that exceed any state in the union, including educational opportunities, employment preference, and increased benefits for military families. This has allowed the 183<sup>rd</sup> to consistently maintain staffing levels above 100% of authorized positions. The 183<sup>rd</sup> also maintains a highly educated force with over 40% of its members holding college degrees. For critical coded positions, the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW is over 100% manned, with 776 positions assigned out of 774 authorized. Until May 2004, the 183<sup>rd</sup> was manned overall at 100%. Only in the last year has recruiting dropped a negligible amount to 98.5% (due to the temporary loss of a recruiter on medical leave), certainly not enough to be included as the **only** reason why the Air Force has recommended moving the fighter mission to the lower military value Indiana base. It is noteworthy that the National Guard Bureau rated both Springfield and Ft. Wayne "green" (the best category) for recruiting.

- The realignment of the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW will negatively impact recruiting and hurt force structure. The loss of the fighter mission at the 183<sup>rd</sup> will negatively impact recruiting and hurt the overall force structure of the unit. This impact will not be unique to Springfield but will take place at all Guard units that are losing their aircraft. The meager to nonexistent cost savings generated by the Air Force do not warrant the damage that will be done to the reserve component if its recommendations are followed.
- The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW outperformed all other units in Mission Capable Rates. For the reporting period of Oct 1, 2001 to March 31, 2005, the 183<sup>rd</sup> outperformed all five of the Block 30 Big Inlet F-16 units (115 FW Madison, Wisconsin; 120 FW Great Falls, Montana; 140 FW Buckley, Colorado; 149 FW Kelly, Texas; 187 FW Montgomery, Alabama). The 183<sup>rd</sup> was above the Big Inlet average Mission Capable rate 83% of the time.
- The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW is in a key partnership with the Polish Air Force. The 183<sup>rd</sup> is currently on its second deployment (Sentry White Falcon 05) to Poland and will return by mid-June 2005. As part of this mission, Illinois is working in concert with, and using tankers from, the 126<sup>th</sup> ARW (Scott AFB, Illinois) and C-130s from the 182<sup>nd</sup> AW (Peoria ANGB, Illinois). The Polish government specifically requested that the members of the 183<sup>rd</sup> train them how to use and deploy their newly purchased F-16s based upon their excellent past working relationship. This unique partnership with a key European ally is of great importance to not only Poland, but our NATO allies as a whole and the U.S. State Department. This relationship was not considered by the Pentagon in making its BRAC decisions but is one of several "intangibles" that set the 183<sup>rd</sup> apart from other units.
- The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW is one aircraft away from being "right-sized" under the new Air Force standards. The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW current has 17 aircraft currently assigned to it. Under current Air Force stands, as stated to the BRAC Commission, an 18 aircraft PAI is considered "right-sized" for the Air National Guard. Accordingly, only one more aircraft needs to be assigned to the 183<sup>rd</sup> to make it "right-sized." Why would DoD close a fighter squadron with modern capable aircraft at a high military value base when it only needs one additional aircraft to become optimally sized (the average F-16 in the 183<sup>rd</sup> has only used up half of its anticipated 8,000 hour life)? This question becomes harder to answer when one considers that no cost savings are achieved from this move (this subject is fully explored in a later section of this summary).
- The central location of the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW is ideal to support any mission in the area. The 183<sup>rd</sup> position in central Illinois can easily support any operation in the greater Midwest, whether federal, state or homeland security. Civilian air traffic at Capital Airport is very light and the airfield can easily be shut down and traffic diverted to accommodate mission requirements. This situation does not exist in Northeast Indiana. Further, it is not needed in Northeast Indiana as that unit is located less than 80 nautical miles from another F-16 unit based in Toledo, Ohio.

- The units at issue should be consolidated at Springfield ANGB. Terre Haute, Indiana is closer to Springfield, Illinois than it is to Ft. Wayne. Additionally, the Terre Haute and Springfield units both fly similar aircraft, the Block 30 F-16. Ft. Wayne employs the dissimilar Block 25 F-16. Accordingly, it would make much more sense to combine Terre Haute with Springfield and realign Ft. Wayne, than it does to make the Air Force's proposed move. By doing so, retraining costs would be minimized and personnel retention maximized. Further, the only cost savings according to the Air Force's figures come from moving the fighters out of Terre Haute, which carries a return on investment in five years as opposed to never at Springfield.

## **Homeland Security**

Closely related to military value is the ability of a base to support America's homeland security mission. Secretary Rumsfeld, in his Quadrennial Defense Review of our military's capabilities, has stressed the importance of relying on adaptable military units – able to respond quickly to threats overseas or at home. The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW adopts these principles and is uniquely suited to perform homeland security functions as outlined below.

- Springfield ANGB is uniquely positioned for future growth for homeland security missions given its proximity to major metropolitan areas. Fighter cover emanating from Springfield, Illinois will be within easy reach of several major metropolitan areas including: Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee and could even quickly reach Des Moines, Kansas City, or Louisville.
- Illinois is home to key national assets that need nearby fighter protection. Illinois has 28 locks and dams along the Mississippi, Illinois and Ohio Rivers within its border. There are also 11 nuclear facilities in the state of Illinois and between one and four nuclear facilities in the immediate surrounding states. Nuclear energy supplies 50.1% of the electricity generated in Illinois. Following September 11<sup>th</sup>, nuclear power plants were one of the most protected facilities in our country – and rightly so. Fighter cover needs to be located near these facilities for continued homeland security protection. Without the 183<sup>rd</sup> at Springfield, this cannot be effectively accomplished.
- Illinois will expend the funds necessary to keep this fighter protection in Springfield and expand its homeland security capability. The State of Illinois and the local community believe so strongly that Illinois and the Midwest will be at a greater homeland security risk without the 183<sup>rd</sup>, that they have developed a plan to fund and construct a munitions storage facility and alert pad to facilitate air sovereignty missions from Capital Airport. These facilities are lacking in Ft. Wayne which was deemed not suitable for this mission by the Air Force. Once these facilities are constructed, the military value of the Springfield base will further increase over the other Guard fighter bases in the Midwest.

The goals of this BRAC round are unlike any previous rounds. Because of what happened on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Commission can no longer look only beyond our nation's borders for potential threats. We must consider what can happen here at home – and be prepared. Keeping the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW in Springfield prepares Illinois and the surrounding area for those domestic threats.

## **Financial Savings**

The Air Force recommendation has miscalculated the financial savings to the nation of moving the flying mission of the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW to Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

- The Air Force's own figures show a cost of \$13.3 million during the implementation period to complete the realignment at issue. In its BRAC recommendation, the Air Force states it will cost \$19.9 million to transfer aircraft from Springfield and Terre Haute to Ft. Wayne and to establish the Consolidated Intermediate Repair Facility (CIRF) in Springfield. The net of all costs and savings during the implementation period will be a cost of \$13.3 million. The Air Force has stated that the annual recurring savings will be only \$2.0 million per year and payback from this realignment is not expected for over 13 years. This stated savings is extremely small considering the impact and further the expected 13 year period of repayment is well beyond the six year payback period that moves under BRAC are expected to achieve.
- The Air Force's own figures show NO savings associated with the realignment of the 183<sup>rd</sup>'s fighter mission. The Air Force's financial assessments in the BRAC report are misleading to the detriment of the Springfield ANGB. According to the minutes of the Infrastructure Executive Council meeting on February 23, 2005, the cost to realign the 183<sup>rd</sup> is \$9.92 million with a cost of \$9.90 million in 2011. The payback is listed as "never." Accordingly, there are no cost savings whatsoever associated with the realignment of the fighter mission out of Springfield.
- The Air Force has inappropriately lumped three realignments into one recommendation to concoct presumptive savings. In its BRAC recommendations the Air Force has inappropriately grouped three realignments into one recommendation to realize the stated savings of \$2.0 million in 13 years. As previously mentioned, there is no payback – ever – associated with realigning the fighter mission out of Springfield. Accordingly, without grouping Terre Haute and Ft. Wayne into the Capital Airport realignment there would be no savings at all and the Air Force would have no justification for its recommendation.

## **Economic and Environmental Impact**

The Air Force has drastically underestimated the economic impact of moving the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW from Springfield and has overlooked potentially damaging environmental restrictions posed by moving the mission to Ft. Wayne.

- Employment figures in the Air Force BRAC submittal indicate 163 total positions will be lost at Springfield as a result of the realignment. This figure is extremely low and does not include the 450 plus part time positions that will leave with the aircraft. Accordingly, an accurate job lose figure is closer to 600 full and part time positions. This does not consider hundreds of tangential job losses associated with the realignment of the unit such as the loss of business opportunities, local marketing power, and tourism income. The Air Force has clearly provided the absolute rock bottom level of job loss in an effort to minimize the perceived impact of the realignment.

- The loss of the firefighting unit will cost Capital Airport between \$500,000 and \$600,000 per year. This cost is significant given that the Airport's operating budget is only approximately \$3.5 million per year. This impact is even more significant considering that the savings from moving the fighters out of Springfield and associated units is **zero**. Accordingly, both Springfield and the federal government's coffers are negatively impacted from this move. Further, the Air Force has not answered the question of how it will bring aircraft in to deploy the units left in enclave at Springfield ANGB when there are no fire fighting services at the airport.
- Springfield, Illinois is not burdened by any air quality issues. The Indiana county of Allen, where Ft. Wayne is located, however, is classified as a non-attainment area for eight-hour ozone standards. These air quality restrictions will come into play should the Air National Guard choose to grow and expand at Ft. Wayne.
- Ft. Wayne is also encumbered, according to Air Force briefings, by excessive aircraft noise issues that are not present at Springfield. Some 1,667 off base acres included within Ft. Wayne's Air Installation Compatible Use Zone are within the noise contours zoned by the local community. Over 170 of these acres are residentially zoned. The community has not purchased easements for the area surrounding the installation. This will lead to future issues associated with the growth of the fighter mission at Ft. Wayne.

If the BRAC Commission is to accept the recommendations from the Air Force, it must be prepared to justify these economic oversights and environmental concerns. To avoid these facts does not do justice to the men and women who have served the 183<sup>rd</sup> admirably in Springfield, Illinois.

### **TITLE X vs. BRAC**

During their analysis, the Air Force compared all units – Active, Reserve, and Guard – as if they were all on the same level playing field. The 1995 BRAC deemed that "...these bases (Reserve and Guard) do not readily compete against each other, and as Air Reserve Component units enjoy a special relationship with their respective states and local communities. Under federal law, relocating Guard units across state boundaries is not a practical alternative. In addition, careful consideration must be given to the recruiting needs of these units."

Title X of the U.S. Code Section. 18238 contains the following provision:

Army National Guard of United States; Air National Guard of United States:  
limitation on relocation of units. STATUTE - A unit of the Army National Guard of the United States or the Air National Guard of the United States may not be relocated or withdrawn under this chapter without the consent of the governor of the State or, in the case of the District of Columbia, the commanding general of the National Guard of the District of Columbia."

Based upon this statute, the BRAC Commission must at least clarify whether the Governor of Illinois was consulted prior to the Air Force's recommendation to move the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW across state lines to Indiana. If there was no consultation, the move must be voided as contrary to federal law. In this case, neither the Governor of Illinois nor the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois was ever consulted – in any manner – about the realignment at issue. Accordingly, the realignment cannot be allowed.

### **Conclusion**

The apparent goal of the Air Force was to increase one F-16 squadron in size (at a location of its choice, regardless of military value ranking and cost savings) from 15 to 24 aircraft by combining the Springfield and Terre Haute aircraft in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. By doing so, the Air Force's plan: (1) deviates substantially from lawful BRAC criteria; (2) is not consistent with improving military or homeland security value; (3) it does not result in any taxpayer savings and actually costs money in the long run; (4) will hurt military readiness by negatively impacting recruiting; (5) overlooks substantial economic impact; (6) and contains serious questions about future environmental impact at the gaining location.

The State of Illinois and the local community does agree with one portion of the Air Force's recommendation: Springfield is a central location and should become the engine repair hub for the region. This consolidation will likely lead to real cost savings. Excluding the engine repair facility, the BRAC Commission should reject the Air Force recommendation and remove the 183<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's list.

**Testimony of Colonel (ret.) Gene W. Blade  
On Behalf of the City of Springfield, Illinois  
Before the Base Closure and Realignment Commission  
June 20, 2005**

Thank you Chairman Principi and members of the Commission for allowing me to testify before you today regarding the 183<sup>rd</sup> Air National Guard unit based at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport in Springfield, Illinois.

My name is Gene W. Blade; I am a retired Army colonel and a member of the Peoria/Springfield BRAC committee.

I certainly agree with Mayor Davlin that the Air Force's decision to relocate the 183<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing is not consistent with the published BRAC criteria and should strongly be reconsidered by this Commission.

Keeping the 183<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing in Springfield is advantageous for many important reasons. I'm going to discuss two of those.

1. Military Readiness
2. Recruiting and retention

The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW mission is two fold:

- The Federal mission
- The State mission

This unit has a long and proud tradition in the fighter mission including the first unit with the F-84F in the 1950s and the F-4C in 1970s.

Since converting to the F-16 aircraft, this wing has proven itself continually with its Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) rotations and other demanding missions. I recently read in the AEFC news that the Air National Guard performs 34% of these missions for the Air Force.

One combat support unit, the 217<sup>th</sup> Engineering Installation Squadron, is also based with the wing. The Springfield based wing and combat support unit are authorized at 1,088 officers and airmen.

First, let me address the importance of the 183<sup>rd</sup> on military readiness.

From a training perspective, the current location of the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW is extremely advantageous. Regardless of weather, the F-16s of the 183<sup>rd</sup> get exceptional training because there are numerous training areas in every direction.

As a result, the wing almost never has to cancel a training run.

The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW has access to a number of Military Operating Areas (MOAs) within 150 miles. This allows them to perform low and high level training, air interdiction, air to ground, Combat Search and Rescue and Counter air.

There are even several additional MOAs that are up to an additional 100 miles out which the unit can reach with just a few additional minutes of flight time.

The base has two active runways (8,000 ft and 7,000 ft) which adequately accommodate both commercial and fighter operations. The runways cross each other allowing for operations during most weather conditions.

Both runways are equipped with barrier arrests and instrument landing systems. In addition, the base has excess ramp capacity to accommodate future missions and/or mobilization requirements.

It is not surprising then, on the subject of Mission Capable Rates, to learn that the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW out-performed all other units for the reporting period of October 2001 to March 2005.

When I mention all other units, I am talking about in comparison to the other 5 sister Big Inlet Engine bases (115 FW Madison, WI; 120 FW Great Falls, MT; 140 FW Buckley, CO; 149 FW Kelly, TX; 187 FW Montgomery, AL).

The 183<sup>rd</sup> FW was above the Big Inlet average MC rate 83% of the time.

When we look at the Total Not Mission Capable Maintenance Rate, this condition occurs when aircraft cannot do assigned missions because of maintenance. We find that the 183<sup>rd</sup> again outperformed sister units 64% of the time. This consistently proves that reliable maintenance by an experienced workforce is a key factor to meeting Air Force homeland security mission requirements and force protection efforts abroad. The 183<sup>rd</sup> maintenance efforts and maintenance personnel have unquestionably proven to be of high military value to the U.S. Air Force.

The only way you achieve these results is to have a very dedicated workforce with many years of experience servicing the aircraft.

I am concerned that, if relocated, the 183<sup>rd</sup> will have difficulty maintaining this impressive record because of diminished training cycles and infrastructure assets.

[One final note. Boeing Phantom Works is working with the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW to test out a new decal that can be easily installed and removed. The benefit of this is that the decals are light weight (compared to paint) and can easily be removed during wartime. With the Boeing Corporate headquarters located in Illinois, it makes sense for the 183<sup>rd</sup> to remain in its current location so as to facilitate this existing relationship.]

Finally, the strength of recruiting at the 183<sup>rd</sup> is exceptional.

The State of Illinois provides benefits to its Guard members, that beats any state in the union, including educational opportunities, employment preference, and increased benefits for military families. This has allowed the 183<sup>rd</sup> to consistently maintain staffing levels above 100% of authorized positions. The 183<sup>rd</sup> also maintains a highly educated force with over 40% of its members holding college degrees.

- Of critical AFSCs, the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW has 774 authorized with 776 assigned. So, the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW is over 100% critically manned. Overall, the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW was manned over 100% until May of 2004.
- In the last year, Springfield's recruiting has dropped, yet their average recruiting levels are at 98.5%, (due to the temporary loss of a recruiter on medical leave) but still they are in the green.
- Additionally, many Air Guard pilots are commercial air line pilots. Being centrally located between Chicago and St. Louis certainly helps to recruit them.
- Here in Springfield we have two major hospitals and Southern Illinois University for Medicine from which to attract doctors into the Guard.
- I've been around this unit for over 30 years and they've always been at 100% or over of authorized positions unless they had a recent mission change in authorized strength levels. Recruiting just has never been a real problem for 183<sup>rd</sup> unit.

Additionally, the airport recently made available an additional 13 acres for the 183<sup>rd</sup> to meet security clearance distances for anti-terrorism/force protection. A new \$10,000,000 three-story composite command center building is nearly complete. It meets all the anti-terrorism/force protection DoD standards.

We have identified specific reasons why this decision should be reversed – not only because we value our Air National Guard base, but because the recommendation is not consistent with lawful BRAC criteria, nor does it improve military readiness or homeland security. This unit is being penalized for doing a superb job in flying missions, maintenance performance and recruiting performance. **Where is the reward for being one of the best??**

The loss of experienced air crews, maintenance, and flying support personnel on the total Air Force would be hard to replace in a timely manner. I don't believe the loss of flying experience and training dollar investment has been adequately considered in the military value model. Not only will the effectiveness of our present force be diminished, but it will take decades to return the force to anywhere approaching an equivalent level of performance that we have been accustomed to.

As General Heckman stated previously, "[T]here also seems to be a homeland security benefit to having smaller (18 aircraft) Guard units more spread out than concentrating 24 aircraft units into a smaller local. This would enable more airspace to be effectively covered in a time of emergency."

For this strategic reason, I fully agree with General Heckman. I believe this logic, combined with the unique attributes of the Capital Airport, dictates that the 183<sup>rd</sup> FW should continue to be based at its present location.

**THE 183<sup>rd</sup>FW      ALWAYS READY—ALWAYS THERE**

**SLEEP WELL TONIGHT YOUR NATIONAL GUARD IS AWAKE**