

September 14, 2005

To: Chairman Principi and General Newton
From: Congressman Dave Hobson
Re: Involvement of the Ohio ANG in response to Hurricane Katrina

I thought you might find the attached information interesting regarding how the Ohio Air National Guard (ANG) is currently supporting the nation's hurricane response efforts. I fear that the capability to respond in such an expeditious manner will be lost if the DOD/BRAC Commission's recommendations concerning the ANG are implemented.


M.C. 1st OH

On September 11 you reported the following:

Adm. Craig Vanderwagen, director of the U.S. Public Health Service, said C-130 planes from the Ohio Air National Guard will spray the chemical Naled to control mosquitoes and flies in the New Orleans area.

Adm. Vanderwagen was incorrect; the C-130s for this mission are from the Air Force Reserve unit (the 910th) in Youngstown, not the Ohio National Guard C-130 unit (the 179th) in Mansfield, Oh.

The C-130s of the Ohio National Guard have been extremely active in support of hurricane response efforts, however. The Ohio National Guard has nearly 1700 soldiers and Airmen serving in Mississippi and Louisiana. We received the first call to duty on the morning of August 31, and by 10:00 p.m. on September 1, 315 soldiers of the 1-148th Infantry Battalion were on the ground in Louisiana, and an advance party of about 60 soldiers and Airmen were at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, preparing for the arrival of the remaining 1200 members of Joint Task Force Buckeye. The Louisiana contingent began security operations at the Superdome on the morning of September 2.

The 179th Airlift Wing (Mansfield, OH) carried most of the 1-148 Soldiers into Louisiana on Day 2, and has been responsible for sustaining the Ohio National Guard soldiers and Airmen in the theater (10 days into the operation we are still providing all of the food, fuel, equipment and other supplies that are being used by the Ohio National Guard forces). The 179th has flown over 50 missions, carried nearly 600 personnel, and over 200 tons of cargo into the region. It has been noted by our Joint Force Headquarters commander that without the C-130s, there is no way we could have responded as quickly as we did, nor would we have been able to sustain this force.

Ironically, all of this activity occurs just two weeks after the Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted to accept the DoD recommendation to strip Mansfield of its C-130s.