

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

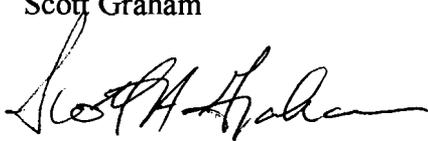
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Don't be fooled by the BRAC report justifying the re-alignment of the 117 ARW, Birmingham, AL. "Military Value" was thrown out the window in the decision to move aircraft from Birmingham to Knoxville and Bangor, even though it stated military value is the primary factor. Recruitment was another factor given in moving aircraft to Phoenix. Birmingham remains at 110% manned at all times. Recruiting in Alabama is not a problem, in fact it is the most diverse ANG unit in the nation. Plus, the unit gets the best instructors leaving the active duty.

Birmingham gives AMC a longer range of the KC-135R than Knoxville. Birmingham can deploy to the AOR without stopping for fuel. Knoxville is unable. Birmingham will be able to fly non-stop to Baghdad when the runway extension is finished and the runway extension comes at no cost to the DoD. How much does that save the DoD versus the meager \$500,000 saved in the proposal? Also if 12 aircraft is the new norm for AMC squadrons, why do Lincoln and Salt Lake remain open with only 8 aircraft, and Phoenix only pluses up to 10 aircraft? These are all facts that go against the BRAC's criteria and justification.

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld said the goal of the re-alignment was to "make the Air Force a more leaner and more capable force". If this is so, why is he recommending the closure of a more capable unit and location in Birmingham, Alabama? I hope and pray that you do your part and ask yourself the same questions, before making your decision.

Thank you,
Scott Graham





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June 15, 2005

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Dear Sir or Madam,

Let me introduce myself. My name is David Brown and I would like to address the apparent oversight by the Department of Defense when they compiled their latest list of suggested base closures. I am an Alabama native and I have a daughter who currently is serving with the 117th ARW in Birmingham, Alabama. I also have six years aircraft experience in the military and twenty-six years experience as a FAA licensed A&P mechanic as a civilian. I would like to express my concerns regarding the Defense Department's reasoning for wanting to realign Birmingham's KC-135s with three other units. It is also my intention to bring to light several other very important factors that have been overlooked up to this point.

First, I would like to talk about tanker operations in the southeastern United States. Birmingham is one of three Air National Guard tanker units in the Southeast; Key Field in Mississippi and McGhee Tyson in Tennessee being the other two. The Department of Defense has developed a formula to determine a unit's "military value." As you know the lower the number, the better the unit's military value. From highest to lowest, the values of the tanker units in the Southeast are as follows: Birmingham (63); McGhee Tyson (74); Key Field (92). Here is where questions start to arise. According to the BRAC statute "*Military Value must be the primary consideration when making realignment and closure recommendations,...*"¹ McGhee Tyson is due to receive aircraft from both Birmingham and Key Field, leaving it to be the sole ANG tanker force in the Southeast. The justifications given for these actions seem to stray from the guidelines and legal protocol used during this initial recommendation phase. The reason given for realigning Key Field with McGhee Tyson is "*McGhee Tyson (74) ranked higher in military value rating for the tanker mission than Key Field (92).*" It seems that military value was the primary consideration in this case. Now, the reason given for realigning Birmingham with McGhee Tyson (and Bangor, Maine) is stated as follows: "*Although McGhee Tyson (74) and Bangor (123) ranked lower, military judgment argues in favor of retaining and adding force structure to these installations to increase their overall effectiveness.*" The term "military judgment" is being used to justify the obvious deviation from the Congressional law set up to determine the criteria used in making closure and realignment recommendations. In the case of Birmingham (63) and also many other units, *military judgment*, not military value was listed the primary consideration.

In fact, Birmingham ranks higher than six other Air National Guard tanker units nation wide that will either remain unaffected or will increase in size: Sioux Gateway (67); McGhee Tyson (74); Pittsburgh (80); Gen Mitchell (86); Pease (105); and Bangor (123). Of these six units, three of them are currently flying a model of the KC-135 that is due to be retired after the fulfillment of tanker realignment, (McGhee Tyson, Bangor, and Sioux Gateway all fly the older E model.) Both the time spent and training required in bringing an E model unit up to the same efficiency as a currently qualified R model unit would be quite extensive (as well as costly.) It is unclear as to whether or not this necessary retraining was given any consideration while compiling the BRAC list. It is certainly *implied* by the Department of Defense (in their justification pertaining to Birmingham) that they consider the KC-135R to be nothing more than a "*re-engined*" KC-135E. This is a **dangerous** (and inaccurate) assumption. Every single system of the KC-135 has undergone several major changes and modifications by the time it reaches the R model designation. Knowing this, it flies in the face logic to eliminate *any* fully trained tanker unit that has several years of R model experience and in it's place, re-train a second unit (often of lesser efficiency) which is unfamiliar with this type of aircraft. Suggestions such as these are being made for numerous tanker units across the country such as Niagara Falls, McConnell, and Grand Forks. It can

¹ Unless stated otherwise, all quotes were taken from www.brac.gov or links provided there in.

be argued that military value is the primary consideration in some of these cases, and in others it may be the financial payback after twenty years. However, none of these factors can be used to explain Birmingham's recommended realignment. Again, referring back to the justification pertaining to Birmingham, it's stated that the Department of Defense took into consideration McGhee Tyson's experience as an Air National Guard unit when recommendations were made to add tankers to their unit, even though this experience is not even with the same type of aircraft that they are to receive. In the same paragraph though, it's acknowledged that both McGhee Tyson and Bangor are lacking in overall effectiveness and inferior to Birmingham in their military value. The solution: Take modern aircraft from a fully functional unit and distribute it among other units that are already scoring lower in military value, units that will immediately be under trained and will thus become even less effective upon receipt of these new, unfamiliar aircraft. Not only is Birmingham's military value higher than several other surviving tanker units, but also the projected payback after twenty years is only \$0.46 million. This equates to an average of \$23,000 annually. Also, how will this \$23,000 annual saving be affected by the *Civilian Employee Transition Assistance* offered by the federal government? From the facts I've listed so far, neither military value nor financial savings seem to justify realigning Birmingham's KC-135s. In truth, the true military value of Birmingham should be addressed next.

One very important factor that does seem to have been overlooked in determining the actual military value of Birmingham is the construction of a 12,000' runway due to be completed by the end of 2006. This longer runway means that a Birmingham based KC-135R will have the ability to reach higher speeds during takeoff, thereby increasing its cargo/fuel carrying capability. Simply put, this new runway will allow a Birmingham jet to out fly (distance wise) most tanker units nation wide and *any* tanker unit in the Southeast due to their shorter runways. I've included three charts that show the flying range of the three tanker units in the Southeast. One chart shows the flying range of a KC-135R on ALERT status offloading 85,000 lbs of fuel and staying on station for four hours before returning home. With the two other charts, all aircraft are either offloading 50,000 lbs of fuel or carrying 50,000 lbs of cargo. In this instance they are all laden with 50,000 lbs. of excess weight that is not useable fuel. Secondly, thanks to a \$73 million overhaul of the base in 1993, Birmingham currently has in place the infrastructure necessary to handle a fleet of thirteen KC-135s at no additional cost to the Air Force. Four more aircraft can land today and the only adjustments necessary would be an increase in manpower. Advantages such as these should surely increase the military value of Birmingham Air Guard Station.

I hope that I have shown the importance in maintaining flying operations in Birmingham. At this base you have a unit that is already highly experienced in flying the R model 135s, can fly them *farther* than any other unit in the Southeast, can do it *better* than any unit in the Southeast (according to the military value scores), and a unit that would be allowed to do all of the above if military value were truly the primary consideration when it came time to consider the fate of the 117th. As one Airman has put it ***"We've spent \$73 million to build a super tanker base only to turn around and abandon it and degrade mission capability in order to save \$23 thousand a year; and we have to break the law to do it?"*** I hope that I have pointed out the facts that show the questionable direction the Department of Defense suggests we should head in with this latest BRAC recommendation list. The retention of skills being offered by many Airmen in Birmingham hang on the logic used to determine the future of their unit. To not take into account the facts listed above would send the message that talent and efficiency are expendable. I thank you for your attention to this matter.

David M. Brown
2599 Alford Bend Rd.
Hokes Bluff, Alabama
35903

**KC-135R Departing For Al-Udeid
With Max Fuel For a 50,000lb Fuel Offload
Or 50,000lbs Pax/Cargo Load**

**A KC-135R Departing From
McGhee Tyson Arrives This Point
With 20,000 lbs Fuel Remaining
Total Distance 4545 Nautical miles**

**A KC-135R Departing From
Mendian Arrives This Point
With 20,000 lbs Fuel Remaining
Total Distance 5300 Nautical miles**

**GLOBAL REACH
Persian Gulf Region**



**KC-135R Departing For Wake Island
With Max Fuel For a 50,000lb Fuel Offload
Or 50,000lbs Pax/Cargo Load**

**A KC-135R Departing From
McGhee Tyson Arrives This Point
With 20,000 lbs Fuel Remaining
Total Distance 4412 Nautical miles**

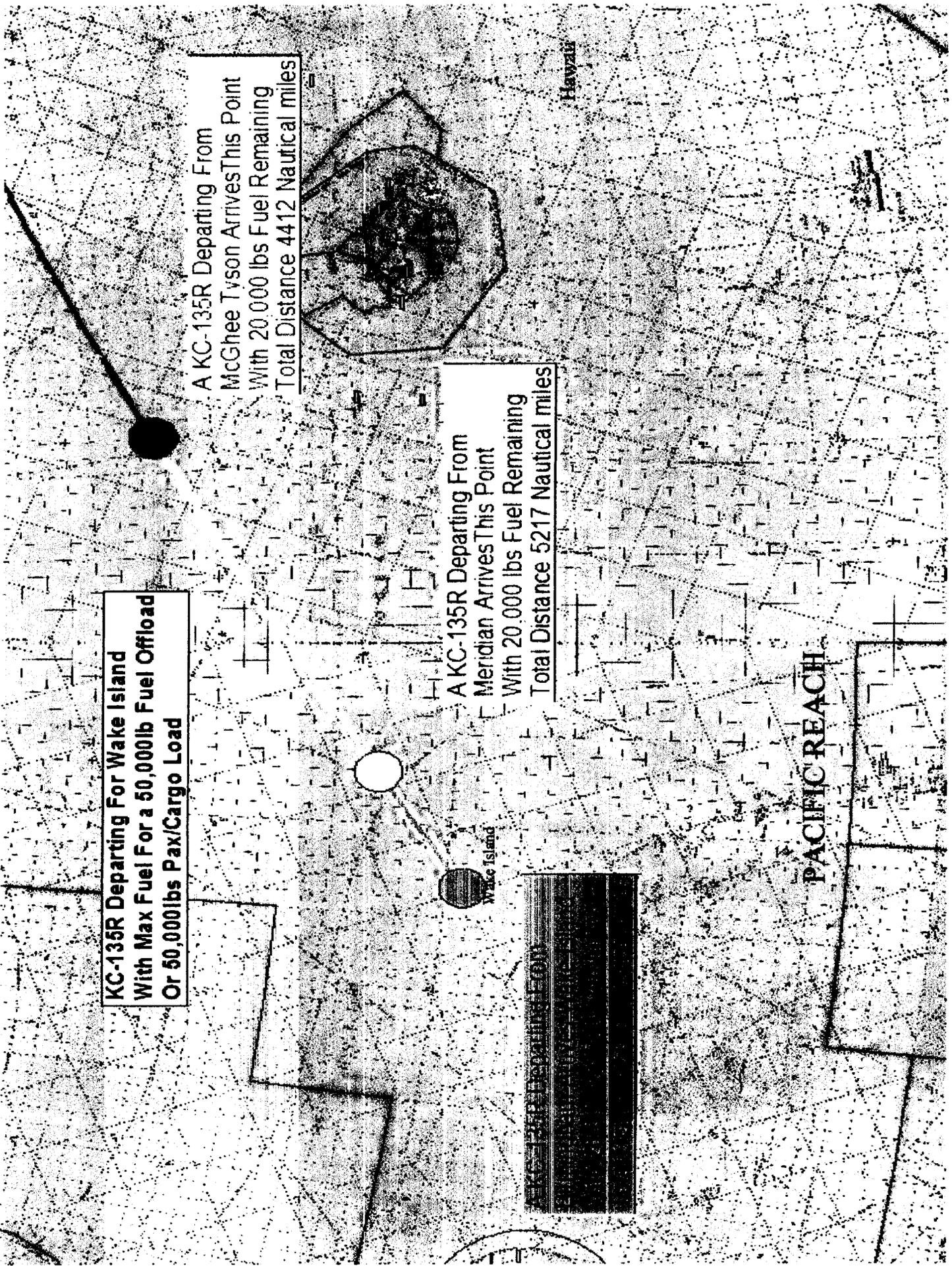
**A KC-135R Departing From
Meridian Arrives This Point
With 20,000 lbs Fuel Remaining
Total Distance 5217 Nautical miles**

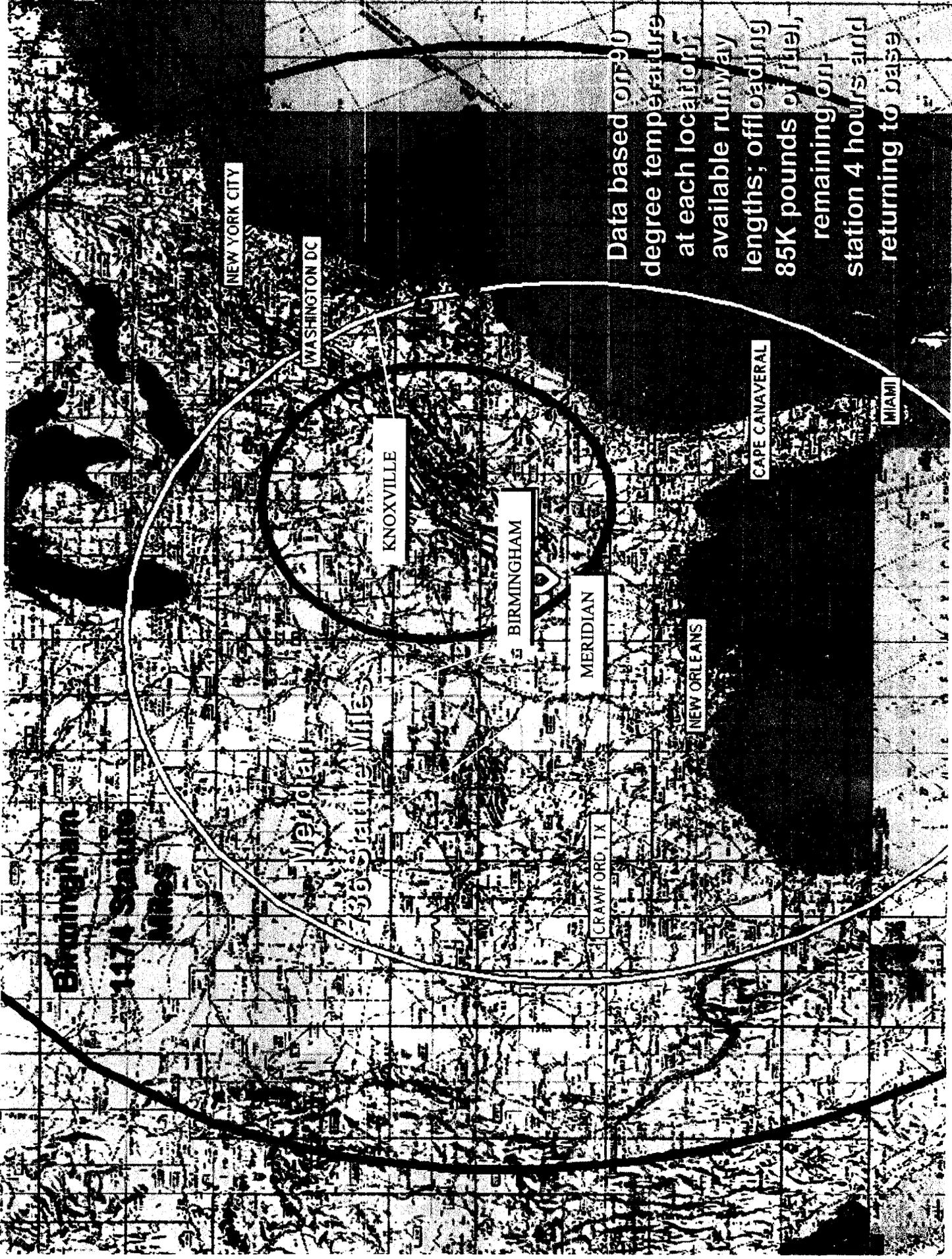
Wake Island

KC-135R DEPARTING FROM

PACIFIC REACH

Hayzia





Birmingham
1174 Statute Miles

Meridian
39 Statute Miles

NEW YORK CITY

WASHINGTON DC

KNOXVILLE

BIRMINGHAM

MERIDIAN

CRAWFORD, TX

NEW ORLEANS

CAPE CANAVERAL

MIAMI

Data based on 90 degree temperature at each location; available runway lengths; offloading 85K pounds of fuel, remaining on station 4 hours and returning to base



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20 June, 2005

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2532 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Sirs,

I am writing as a concerned citizen and wife of a 117th Air Refueling Wing Guardsman to encourage your leadership in the fight against the proposed recommendation to “realign” the 117th Air Refueling Wing (Air National Guard) in Birmingham, Alabama. My research into the facts surrounding the Department of Defense’s recommendation have revealed some very important information that needs to be considered.

First, The Secretary of Defense deviated substantially from and failed to comply with The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, as amended through the Fiscal Year (FY) 05 Authorization Act in recommending moving KC-135R aircraft from the Birmingham International Airport Air Guard Station (117th ARW) to McGhee-Tyson APT AGS (134th ARW, Knoxville), Bangor IAP AGS (101st ARW), and Phoenix Sky Harbor IAP AGS (161st ARW). Congress clearly stated its requirement in Section 2913(d) that, “The Secretary shall give **priority consideration to the military value criteria specified in subsection (b)** in the making of recommendations for the closure or realignment of military installations.” [Emphasis added.] Results: Two bases (Knoxville and Bangor) scoring lower than Birmingham are slated to receive Alabama’s aircraft.

It is also important to note here that Knoxville and Bangor both currently fly the ageing KC-135E model. Both units not only scored lower in “military value”; there is an associated **one time cost to the taxpayer of realigning Birmingham of \$11,000,000!** **The estimated savings to the taxpayer by the year 2025 is a mere \$500,000.** Birmingham could receive up to four additional KC-135R models today and begin executing operational missions immediately - **AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO THE TAXPAYER!**

Additionally, by December of 2006 the Birmingham International Airport will have a 12,000 ft Main Runway. This is **the longest of all Southeastern Air National Guard Tanker Bases** to include McGhee Tyson/Knoxville, TN (9,000 ft); and Key Field/Meridian, MS (10,000 ft). With this runway, the 117th ARW will be capable of near maximum fuel loads 24/7, 365 days a year, and have an operational range for tankers that can sustain protection for the majority of the Continental United States (852 Statute miles greater range than Knoxville; 438 Statute miles greater range than Meridian).

Thank you very much for your time and concern in this very important matter, and I look forward to hearing from you soon on this issue.

Sincerely,

Samela Largent
1550 Cedar Creek Rd.
Odenville, Al. 35120

25 May 2005

TO: 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

FROM: Allison Meadows
109 Warwick Drive
Prattville, AL 36066

SUBJECT: 117th BIRMINGHAM AIR NATIONAL GUARD UNIT

It makes no sense to disintegrate the 117th Birmingham Air National Guard Base in Birmingham, Alabama. If you will allow me a few minutes to justify why... This unit is full of nothing but amazing, professional personnel who have done nothing but go above and beyond the call of duty. They are rated one of the best KC135R units in the country. I have heard testimony from the Staff at Guard Bureau that they love to work with them and deal with them because of the units level of professionalism. They are the best of the best. They have what appears to be a totally remodeled base, surely costing millions already. It makes no sense to throw that away. They have amazingly well trained individuals that love what they do and thrive on it. I have worked with this unit on occasion and look forward to their professionalism and courteous attitudes when I know I am going to deal with them - I feel totally confident each and every time I deal with them or get in one of the units' aircraft.

They are a major point of contact when I (and many others) need technical advice or direction when it comes to Technical questions within the career field.

I ask you to please sincerely reconsider the options and the politics of it all.

At the very least, provide a new mission so you can have all the right people still there to do it for America's Defense.

I suggest an individual from the BRAC Commission make an in person visit with the bases' Commanders and Leaders alike to give them the opportunity to make their case and to let you know what they are all about and show you how good they are and what they have to offer the Air Force in the future of America.

I may be wrong, but do you realize that should you shut down this unit that it will only leave ONE Flying unit in the State of Alabama Air National Guard as a whole? Makes no sense. PLEASE RECONSIDER!!!!



Allie Meadows
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