

May 19, 2005

Mr. James V. Hansen
BRAC 2005 Commissioner

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6/23/2005

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My name is Dennis Chalker and I am a 22 year veteran with the USAF. Cannon was my last assignment. I enjoyed this community so much I decided to stay here and make this my home. My wife, (Marge) has been a realtor for 10 years and this is the only home my 13 year old daughter (Kate) has known. My 26 year old son (Nick) has also remained here. This isn't like the old military days when we could expect to move every few years and Marge had to give up her career. We are settled in Clovis therefore, moving really isn't an option for us. My daughter is in the National Honor Society and her junior high band just finished in first place within the state. Moving her would create a war that I don't want to enter.

There is a great deal of pride living in a small town military community. You should have been here when Clovis welcomed the troop's home last summer and you probably heard about the human flag that the hundreds of us participated during the beginning of the War. All you need to do is ask Mrs. Bush about Clovis, she came here during the last election and witnessed first hand how great our community is and how much military pride we have.

I asked a retired bomb loader to explain the advantages of Cannon, vs. a base such as Luke. He said that our planes can take off with live bombs attached and fly to areas such as Melrose range, Nellis AFB, etc. Luke doesn't have this same option. Their planes must take off with a pin on the bomb, land at another base such as Cannon, remove the pin, then take off again to continue their training. It appears that Cannon has the advantage in this area.

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these "older F-16 aircraft", played a key role at the beginning of the Iraq war and are still playing a vital role today. Also, our personnel continue having rotations to the Iraq.

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Your own figures show that there will be a 20.5% drop in employment in our area. That will be devastating until the community is able to recover. Not only will myself and hundreds of other people be in this 20.5% unemployed group but, my wife's loss of income has already been felt by people canceling contracts on homes and the general slowdown on home purchases. If necessary, we can always let our home foreclose and file bankruptcy. I never considered that as an option before. What about the many other private citizens which have no military ties. These folks will also lose money on the dropping home values and economy, yet the Homeowner Assistant Program (HAP) will not be there to help these people. You are going to hurt a great many people who depend on Cannon from as far away as Roswell, Lubbock and Amarillo also.

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Thank you for your support in voting to keep Cannon AFB open and allowing many of us to stay off the unemployment line.


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