

June 17, 2005

**BRAC Commission
Received**

6/23/2005

Dear Commissioner Turner:

I am writing you to request that you vote to remove Cannon AFB, New Mexico from the 2005 BRAC closure list. I realize that voting to overrule the Department of Defense and remove Cannon AFB from the closure list requires a comprehensive re-assessment of DoD's evaluation of Cannon against certain criteria by you. I honestly believe that Cannon meets and exceeds the stated criteria used by DoD and that Cannon's assets did not receive sufficient consideration when the base was evaluated and designated for closure. If you have not already decided to examine Cannon AFB and hear from the citizen's representatives in Clovis on June 24, I also request you attend our town's hearing and see for yourself how wrong it would be to close this installation.

I arrived for duty at Cannon AFB on February 26, 1996, and then retired in the local area on April 1, 2001. I was a CMSgt in the base's maintenance complex during the last years the F-111 and EF-111 aircraft were in the inventory, and saw the base through the transition to the F-16. The base and 27th Fighter Wing have been non-stop contributors to the Expeditionary Air Force concept since its inception.

When evaluating Cannon AFB against current and future mission capability and contribution to the mission, as well as the cost of operations, you should please consider:

1. The Air Force underutilized Cannon for many years. In 1997, the base had 69 F-16s and 33 EF-111 aircraft—a total of 102 medium- and small-body aircraft—conducting combat support and training missions by supporting 33 deployments and 14,292 sorties in a single year.
2. Cannon has two (2) runways available—not one—and a huge parking ramp that make Cannon an exceptional location to stage for Pacific or Atlantic deployments or homeland protection. There has been significant, mission-oriented improvement of base facilities and infrastructure, and more was programmed into DoD's out-year budgets for Cannon. Cannon has a new fire station, a new control tower, improved and expanded runways, new force protection and security measures, new Mission Support Group facility, a new Security Force complex, construction has begun on a new ground equipment maintenance complex. Cannon also has a programmed Operations-Maintenance command complex, designated space for a programmed facility specifically designed to support large force deployments, a programmed state-of-the-art communications facility, and a programmed new wing headquarters.
3. There is enough hangar space on Cannon to house every aircraft presently assigned. The departure of the RSAF F-16 unit opens up even more ramp space for additional USAF aircraft.
4. Cannon's south-central location in the continental United States ensures opportunities for more training time per flying hour than most USAF installations—less than 4 weeks out of every year are lost to inclement weather. The warm, dry climate reduces wear and tear on aircraft and facilities while ensuring lower annual facility maintenance costs than bases further north. The dryer climate inhibits rusting and corrosion on aircraft, vehicles,

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and support equipment, unlike the problems I have personally seen at bases located near a coast or in the northern tier.

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5. The proximity of nearby railroad and major highway networks, as well as large tracts of open and unoccupied land, mean Cannon can easily accommodate contingency, mobilization and/or surges in mixed single-service or joint service forces for overseas deployment staging or homeland defense.
6. Cannon has a proven history in aircraft and mission transitions—retiring the F-111 and EF-111 were exceptional performances, benefited our allies in the Royal Australian Air Force, and can be done again.

When examining Cannon for the condition of the land, facilities, and associated airspace, Cannon shines. Add in how well Cannon can accommodate contingency, mobility or surge operations, and the following factors were obviously given short shrift:

1. Cannon already enjoys unencroached airspace suitable for training at supersonic speed, many new and existing facilities suitable for joint training exercises, and a low-cost environment that promotes cost-efficient training. With the New Mexico Training Range Initiative, that airspace expands and becomes available for lower altitude training at supersonic speeds—all within less than 20 miles from the base.
2. Cannon's runways do not go over populated areas in any direction, unlike what you find at many other Air Force installations. I was in Tucson, AZ when an A-7 narrowly missed crashing into an elementary school downtown in the late 1970s. Increasing flying operations near large civilian populations increases the likelihood of another incident like that, with potentially disastrous. Encroachment should be more highly considered than it appears to have been.
3. Cannon's distance from a large population center makes it less of a "target of opportunity" for terrorists hoping to make political statements by damaging military assets with large, adjacent civilian population centers. Consolidating our assets near large civilian populations reminds me of how the US clustered the Pacific Fleet's battleships into Pearl Harbor.
4. The open land surrounding Cannon allows easier protection of military assets through more effective perimeter surveillance. The smaller population density provides better opportunity for human intelligence regarding suspicious activities and creates greater obstacles for potential threats to military assets.
5. Being a rural area also means significantly less civilian air traffic near the military operations areas than what you find at installations nearby larger cities.
6. Cannon and Clovis both have room to expand in size without competing for land, worrying about flyovers of civilian residential areas, or adversely affecting traffic flow or the housing market.
7. In the early 90's, Curry County and the state of New Mexico purchased air easements around Cannon AFB and gave them to the Air Force. The local community also purchased the land north of Cannon AFB and gave it to the Air Force for additional housing, now known as Chavez Manor. Our community also purchased land west of

Cannon AFB and again gave it to the Air Force for the installation of instrumentation on the alternate runway.

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The economic impact would be devastating. Clovis has been growing in a way that avoids encroachment of civilian businesses and residential areas or interferes with military operations.

1. The DoD suggests there would be a maximum potential reduction of 4,780 jobs, both direct and indirect. A recent Economic Impact Study indicated that almost 7,000 jobs, both direct and indirect, result from Cannon AFB operations.
2. DoD estimates closure of Cannon means Clovis and the surrounding area will initially lose at least 20 percent of its workforce and a sizable portion of the local economy. This is unrealistically low, as the loss of a large consumer base with good salaries will precipitate a "rightsizing" or shutdown of many local businesses. This is the largest economic "hit" a community will suffer in this BRAC round.
3. Cannon's and Clovis's infrastructures and recent histories demonstrate the base's and communities' abilities to absorb more and/or newer aircraft returning from overseas, from other bases, or from production of next-generation aircraft displacing aircraft in the existing force-mix or as home to the next-generation aircraft
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Cannon shouldn't be considered for closure—Cannon should be considered for expansion! Clovis is a town that has done a lot to make the military feel welcome and wanted. Our military people contribute to local charities and service organizations through volunteering time, effort, skills, and money. They contribute the perspective of world travelers to an otherwise isolated community. They go to our colleges, worship in our churches, marry our sons and daughters, patronize our businesses, become our friends and neighbors, and their children attend our schools. They are an important and vital part of our communities that we want to keep and can ill-afford to lose. I hope to see all 9 commissioners on the 24th of June to see for yourselves just how big a mistake it would be to close Cannon AFB, New Mexico.

Respectfully,



Raymond Walker, CMSgt (Ret)

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Respectfully,



Raymond Walker, CMSgt (Ret)

June 17, 2005

**BRAC Commission
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I am writing you to request that you vote to remove Cannon AFB, New Mexico from the 2005 BRAC closure list. I realize that voting to overrule the Department of Defense and remove Cannon AFB from the closure list requires a comprehensive re-assessment of DoD's evaluation of Cannon against certain criteria by you. I honestly believe that Cannon meets and exceeds the stated criteria used by DoD and that Cannon's assets did not receive sufficient consideration when the base was evaluated and designated for closure. If you have not already decided to examine Cannon AFB and hear from the citizen's representatives in Clovis on June 24, I also request you attend our town's hearing and see for yourself how wrong it would be to close this installation.

I arrived for duty at Cannon AFB on February 26, 1996, and then retired in the local area on April 1, 2001. I was a CMSgt in the base's maintenance complex during the last years the F-111 and EF-111 aircraft were in the inventory, and saw the base through the transition to the F-16. The base and 27th Fighter Wing have been non-stop contributors to the Expeditionary Air Force concept since its inception.

When evaluating Cannon AFB against current and future mission capability and contribution to the mission, as well as the cost of operations, you should please consider:

1. The Air Force underutilized Cannon for many years. In 1997, the base had 69 F-16s and 33 EF-111 aircraft—a total of 102 medium- and small-body aircraft—conducting combat support and training missions by supporting 33 deployments and 14,292 sorties in a single year.
2. Cannon has two (2) runways available—not one—and a huge parking ramp that make Cannon an exceptional location to stage for Pacific or Atlantic deployments or homeland protection. There has been significant, mission-oriented improvement of base facilities and infrastructure, and more was programmed into DoD's out-year budgets for Cannon. Cannon has a new fire station, a new control tower, improved and expanded runways, new force protection and security measures, new Mission Support Group facility, a new Security Force complex, construction has begun on a new ground equipment maintenance complex. Cannon also has a programmed Operations-Maintenance command complex, designated space for a programmed facility specifically designed to support large force deployments, a programmed state-of-the-art communications facility, and a programmed new wing headquarters.
3. There is enough hangar space on Cannon to house every aircraft presently assigned. The departure of the RSAF F-16 unit opens up even more ramp space for additional USAF aircraft.
4. Cannon's south-central location in the continental United States ensures opportunities for more training time per flying hour than most USAF installations—less than 4 weeks out of every year are lost to inclement weather. The warm, dry climate reduces wear and tear on aircraft and facilities while ensuring lower annual facility maintenance costs than bases further north. The dryer climate inhibits rusting and corrosion on aircraft, vehicles,

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