

DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION
2521 CLARK STREET, SUITE 600
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22202
(703) 699-2950

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING

DATE: July 20, 2005

TIME: 10 AM

MEETING WITH: Atlanta, GA Representatives and the Georgia Congressional Delegation Staff

SUBJECT: Community Comments

PARTICIPANTS:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title/Code</i>	<i>Phone</i>
* Bill Fetzer	BRAC Staff - Navy/Marine Corps Senior Analyst	703-699-2915
Maj Gen Larry Taylor	USMC Reserves (retired)	404-892-1165
Jim Irwin	SR LEGIS ASST Congressman Gingrey 11 th District, GA	202-225-2931
Clyde Taylor	MLA SEN Chambliss - Georgia	202-224-3521
Don Beaver	Cobb County Chamber of Commerce COO	770-980-2000

* Denotes individual responsible for completing the memorandum

MEETING SUMMARY:

A discussion was held regarding the top three reasons why NAS Atlanta should not be closed. The community provided several documents regarding comparative reserve demographics in the Atlanta area, New Orleans, LA, Fort Worth, TX and Macon, GA; a map of NAS Atlanta; the written statement of Major General Larry Taylor who also provided similar testimony at the Atlanta Regional Hearing and an email from Maj Gen Taylor that included a congratulatory personal note from LtGen Gregson (Commander, U.S. Marine Forces Pacific) to the CO of HMLA-773.

The three key points that were made were:

1. The Navy and Marine Corps Reserve demographics are better in the Atlanta area at than any of the DoD BRAC Recommended proposed realignment sites.

Library Routing Slip 2006 BRAC Commission Materials

Title of Item: Memorandum of meeting
 Installation or Community: NAS Atlanta
 Source: Provided 20 July 05 during Community Meeting
 Certified Material? yes no hosted by William Fetzer
 Analyst / Provider: Bill Fetzer Date Received: 23 July 05

2. The stated savings for DoD will not be realized by the proposed BRAC realignment, because the U.S. Air Force will likely re-acquire the abandoned Navy facilities (ramps, hangars and admin/personnel buildings).
3. Moving combat ready reserve units to new locations will result in a significant reduction combat readiness for an unspecified period of time.

Copies of all documents provided have been forwarded to the BRAC Commission library for inclusion in the public record.

NAS BRAC DATA

Comparison of Available Prior Service * From USMC Recruit District

Marietta 1149 Marines

Macon 28 Marines
(Warner Robins)

New Orleans 403 Marines

Historical Navy Manning

From CAG 2e

NAS Atlanta 100%

NAS New Orleans 40-50%

NAS Ft. Worth 80%

NAS Oceana 80%

IAP (Awaiting Assignment)(Excess) By Region

- IAP: = Excess Personnel for available billets.
- NAR Atlanta: 320 personnel
- NAR New Orleans: 124 personnel
- NAR Ft Worth: 157 personnel

MANNING DATA COMPARISON

*From HQ Atlanta
NARS
T*

NAR ATLANTA NAR NEW ORLEANS NAR Ft. Worth

	Total Billets/Billets Filled	Total Billets/Billets Filled	Total Billets/Billets Filled
Hardware Units	217 / 199 = 91.7%	483 / 318 = 65.8%	496 / 370 = 74.5%
Non-Hardware Units	476 / 426 = 89.0%	667 / 526 = 78.8%	2942 / 2598 = 88.3%
Average	693 / 625 = 90.2%	1150 / 844 = 73.0%	3438 / 2968 = 86.0%

**Naval Air Station Atlanta
Statement of Major General Larry Taylor, ret. before the BRAC Commission**

30 June 2005

Thank you, Congressman Gingrey, and thank you for this opportunity to address the Commission. I appreciate having the opportunity to make the case for Naval Air Station Atlanta and detail why the Department of Defense was shortsighted in making the recommendation for closure, an act that we believe would negatively affect the readiness of our reserve forces.

I am here today to discuss three key points:

- Reserve combat readiness is about demographics
- The DoD numbers are flawed
- There are better alternatives

First, let's address the key issue of demographics: What makes our reserve forces strong? Being able to recruit and retain the best and brightest our country has to offer, allowing them access to key job opportunities, occupational advancement, great schools, affordable housing and a great quality of life for their family – all while serving their country.

The Atlanta area achieves all of this and more. Atlanta has the second largest population of aviation-related occupation fields in the United States. That is supported by the world's busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company and hundreds of high tech companies.

I have two examples from personal experience as Commanding General of the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing that demonstrates the benefit of superior access to trained, prior service reservists.

One of 4th MAW's helicopter squadrons, HMM-764 (in Iraq as we speak), then based at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, had given themselves the call sign "Moonlight." They were very proud of the fact that in the few years preceding they had accumulated a higher percentage of flight hours on night vision goggles than any other non-deployed squadron in the Marine Corps. They were able to do this by regularly scheduling multi-aircraft tactical training flights on weeknights. Keep in mind that some people still think the reserves are "weekend warriors." Not true. These Marines, most of whom lived near the base, were able to take care of their work and family obligations and train regularly throughout the month with their squadron. As you know, many of our combat missions these days take place during the hours of darkness. HMM-764 was combat-ready.

✓ Then BRAC closed El Toro and realigned HMM-764 to Miramar. No problem, we thought. Miramar, near San Diego, also has a reserve-friendly demographic profile. However, once the move of this squadron actually began, we discovered there wasn't enough room for them all at Miramar. So they were redirected to Edwards AFB – a 3 1/2 hour drive into the Mojave Desert. The Air Force has been an excellent landlord to the Marines at Edwards, but that weeknight training that "Moonlight" had done so much of when the squadron was near their homes and workplaces was dramatically reduced and frequently involved administratively pre-positioning aircraft closer to where the crews

lived and worked, costly in time and dollars. Similarly, should DoD's recommendations be approved, the highly trained and combat-ready helicopter squadron at NAS Atlanta will inevitably suffer the same fate.

There was another redirect that took place at about the same time. The NAS Atlanta-based fighter squadron, the one presently in Iraq, used to be based at NAS Cecil Field, FL. BRAC closed Cecil and directed this squadron to Beaufort, SC. After many lengthy discussions, the message that we had been trying to send finally sunk in. It was difficult to recruit and retain reservists to the South Carolina low country. The redirect of the squadron was ordered to NAS Atlanta and the rationale was "superior demographics." This is a direct quote from the 1995 BRAC report to the President "...recognition of the superior demographics for the Navy and Marine Corps reserves by relocation of reserve assets to Atlanta." **We must ask, "What has changed?"**

And, all this I add, at a time when we are relying far more than ever before on the reserve components of our armed forces. About 40 percent of our warfighters deployed into harm's way in the Global War on Terror are from the reserve or National Guard.

The Total Force works. It works because in the past we have placed our reserve component capabilities in locations where recruiters and the personnel required to man these capabilities have relatively easy access. When I talk to civic groups I often use the old cliché about the three most important things about a piece of property being location, location, location. Similarly, the three most important things about a reserve site are demographics, demographics, demographics. This demographics issue is inherently tied to BRAC Criteria Number 1 – operational readiness. Navy and Marine readiness will suffer if the Navy divests itself from Atlanta – which this recommendation does.

The savings claimed from the proposed closing of NAS Atlanta are substantially incorrect. Specifically, it would appear that the savings projection of \$60 million in labor costs are incorrect and will be substantially lower. For example, one of the tenant squadrons, VFA-203 with 129 personnel, left more than a year ago, but is included in the calculations.

Also in error was the manning of the to-be-closed medical clinic. The data said closing the clinic would save 111 personnel; the actual number is 40.

The bottom line is 307 fewer personnel would be eliminated due to closure than the original COBRA model estimated.

Moreover, if the recommendations are implemented, the tenant commands do not cease to exist; rather they become tenants at other bases like New Orleans, **which presently has the lowest reservist manning percentage of all NAS reserve bases**, Robins AFB, 120 miles from NAS Atlanta and Dobbins, or Fort Worth.

The actual savings, that is the savings associated with the elimination of the administrative and other overhead of the NAS itself, is \$35 million versus the \$60 million contained in DoD's original COBRA model (\$25 million less than claimed). **The number of those positions slated to leave here only to operate elsewhere is 598.**

I also must point out that the model fails to take into account the NAS Atlanta Facilities Condition Index of .7 percent, which is much better than the criteria of 5 percent to be

considered excellent by the Navy, which addresses BRAC Criteria Number 2 (Condition of Facilities).

The key point here is that, notwithstanding hard-to-quantify claims of cost savings, there can be little doubt that NAS Atlanta has been not only efficient but extraordinarily effective in doing what any reserve base is supposed to do, which addresses BRAC Criteria Number 4 (Cost of Operations, Manpower Implications). A base is supposed to facilitate the recruiting, organizing, equipping and training of operational units to mobilize, deploy and be employed in combat. The proof is in combat as we speak.

The analysis also ignores the joint use of the Dobbins runway, which is no additional cost to the Navy because it is fully owned and operated by the Air Force. It seems ironic that BRAC, intended to promote jointness, has essentially ignored the decades-long inherent jointness of NAS Atlanta/Dobbins.

Late in 2004, not long after VMFA-142, our F-18 fighter squadron, was mobilized and deployed to Iraq, and before HMLA-773 our helicopter attack squadron, had returned from Afghanistan, a very prominent local political figure visited NAS Atlanta. He commented how "sleepy" the place seemed. I mention this because it seems to me that it dramatically illustrates how efficient and effective NAS Atlanta has been and continues to be.

That sleepy impression in that politician's mind was not because the base was Beetle Bailey's Camp Swampy with General Halftrack waiting in vain for a call from the Pentagon. On the contrary; he saw little activity precisely because the Pentagon has called and continues to call – early and often.

I've already mentioned the helicopter squadron, just back from 18 months in Afghanistan, and the fighter squadron in Iraq as we meet here today. There is also the Navy's transport squadron, VR-46, which sends detachments overseas for 28 weeks a year. There also is the airborne early warning squadron, VAW-77, heavily involved with our counter-narcotics efforts and with NASA.

Now these young men and women are being told thank you very much for the sacrifices you and your families and employers have made. We plan to move your squadron to Fort Worth, New Orleans, a recruiting and retention black hole, or Warner Robins. If you wish to continue to participate after being mobilized for so long, you're going to have to explain to your families and employers that even more days and hours will need to be spent just getting to and from your squadron, even when not mobilized.

Is there any doubt what this will do to the retention of their critical and combat-tested skills? Is there any doubt how much more difficult it will be to recruit such skills to new sites which lack the aviation-skills intensive demographic makeup of Atlanta?

My final point is that there are workable alternatives that will provide cost savings while not having a negative effect on the readiness of our forces.

We have long advocated further increasing the joint relationship of NAS Atlanta and Dobbins by relocation or conveyance, but regardless, **NAS Atlanta should be the model, not the target.**

Increased jointness also would spare DoD some of the challenges, not to mention money and countless man-hours of previous BRAC rounds, and their subsequent redirects when mistakes were discovered. Some of these discoveries, in my personal experience, were actually simple admissions that previous BRAC recommendations had ignored the expert testimony and warnings of the on-scene commanders. I have already talked about the Moonlight experience on the West Coast and the superior demographics quote referring to a 1995 redirect to NAS Atlanta.

To some degree, NAS Atlanta is a victim of its own success. It's a remarkably efficient base with very low overhead, due in part to the joint relationship with Dobbins. Notwithstanding this efficiency, however, it is relatively easy to close in the lense of the COBRA model. No matter how many times you run the model, however, COBRA will fail as long as it does not factor in the intangible strength of NAS Atlanta's demographics, demographics, demographics.

We understand that you are wrestling with incredibly difficult issues, not only pertaining to saving taxpayer dollars, but lives affected. You are trying to determine, as Admiral Gehman put it, "Is the pain worth the gain?" I'm here to testify that the pain to the taxpayers of losing the military value of NAS Atlanta is not worth the gain of \$35 million.

The good news is that we have shown you a way to save DoD dollars while retaining the military value resident in NAS Atlanta. Jointness is the key, and, in that regard, NAS Atlanta should be your model, not your target.

At a time when we rely more heavily than ever on the reserve components of our armed forces and at a time when we lament the large and growing cultural and knowledge gap between our military and the society it serves, we are involved in a process that, if we're not careful, will continue the trend of the military to withdraw even further into the insulated and isolated "Fort Apaches" of a few large bases. Cut the fat. But when you do, please remember that much of our military "muscle" is the assurance that when America must go to war places like Broken Arrow, OK, Yakima, WA, Garden City, NJ and Atlanta, GA must go as well, both in person and in spirit – the personnel of the reserve units based here with the spiritual support of their friends, families, employers, co-workers and fellow citizens.

Gentlemen, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today. We look forward to meeting with you and your staff in Washington to discuss these ideas and numbers in more detail. Thank you.

Beaver, Don

From: Larry Taylor [kim-chi@mindspring.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2005 3:15 PM
To: Jim.Irwin@mail.house.gov; John.Okeefe@mail.house.gov
Cc: Beaver, Don; "kirk.chartier-commerquest.com"; Cole, Holly
Subject: Fwd: BZ FOR LTCOL ALLEN AND THE MARINES AND SAILORS OF HMLA-773(-) REIN

AlCon

some background on an NAS Atlanta squadron's 18 months in Afghanistan. Effusive praise from the Commander, Marine Forces Pacific, force provider for all Marines assigned to Operations Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom(Afghanistan).

This is the squadron DoD wants to move to Robins. Might be useful to include this in any handout we use in conjunction w/ the 30Jun presentation.

LST

>Date: Mon, 04 Apr 2005 16:23:14 -0400
 >To: kat,dagger2F,mss
 >From: Larry Taylor <kim-chi@mindspring.com>
 >Subject: Fwd: BZ FOR LTCOL ALLEN AND THE MARINES AND SAILORS OF
 >HMLA-773(-) REIN

>...my old squadron, just back from Afghanistan...

>>Date: Mon, 04 Apr 2005 16:00:38 -0400
 >>To: shorts,birch,kadafi,rozeen,pearl,LPH,sponge6
 >>To: boris,bud,snic,huge,dragon,snake,peach,elmo
 >>>From: Larry Taylor <kim-chi@mindspring.com>
 >>>Subject: BZ FOR LTCOL ALLEN AND THE MARINES AND SAILORS OF
 >>>HMLA-773(-) REIN

>>>>Date: Mon, 04 Apr 2005 15:51:25 -0400
 >>>>To: "McCarthy LtGen Dennis M"
 >>>>From: Larry Taylor <kim-chi@mindspring.com>
 >>>>Subject: Re: Fw: BZ FOR LTCOL ALLEN AND THE MARINES AND
 SAILORS OF
 >>>>HMLA-773(-) REIN

>>>>thx, Boss, I'll fwd this to my "773net" of former COs

>>>>At 12:34 PM 4/4/2005, you wrote:

>>>>

>>>>>Larry - I know you will appreciate this. These great organizations
>>>>>don't just happen. Their history and culture contribute.
Best regards.

>>>>>VR, Dennis

>>>>>-----

>>>>>Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld SIR

>>>>>

>>>>>P4 from LtGen Gregson to HMLA 773 -- glad to see he info'ed
CMC AVN

>>>>>on it..... V/BOB

>>>>>

>>>>>021554Z APR 05 R UNCLAS ou:CDR COMUSMARCENT (MC)

>>>>>

>>>>>TO HMLA 773 (UC)

>>>>>CC MAG 42 (UC)

>>>>>CG 4TH MAW (UC)

>>>>>COMMARFORRES (UC)

>>>>>USCENTCOM CCJ3 (MC)

>>>>>CJTF-76 C2X BAGRAM AF (UC-MFI)

>>>>>CFC-A INTEL KABUL AF (UC-MFI)

>>>>>CMC WASHINGTON DC AVN (UC)

>>>>>CMC WASHINGTON DC PPO (UC)

>>>>>

>>>>>NARR// THIS IS A PERSONAL MESSAGE FOR LTCOL ALLEN AND THE
MARINES

>>>>>AND SAILORS OF HMLA-773 (-) REIN.

>>>>>1. YOUR DEPARTURE FROM THE JOINT OPERATING AREA IS A
NOTABLE OCCASION.

>>>>>YOUR REMARKABLE PERFORMANCE AS A FIGHTING FORCE CONTRIBUTED
>>>>>SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM AND HAS
ADVANCED THE

>>>>>TWIN CAUSES OF LIBERTY AND STABILITY THROUGHOUT
AFGHANISTAN. YOUR

>>>>>ACTIONS HAVE SERVED NOTICE TO THOSE WHO WOULD RULE OTHERS
THROUGH

>>>>>TERROR AND HAVE GIVEN HOPE TO THOSE LIVING IN FEAR AND
OPPRESSION.

>>>>>2. THE STRENGTH, COURAGE, AND PROFESSIONALISM THAT THE MEN
AND

>>>>>WOMEN OF

>>>>>HMLA-773 (-) REIN BROUGHT TO BEAR WHILE CONDUCTING COMBAT
OPERATIONS

>>>>>IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM WAS EXTRAORDINARY.
OVER

>>>>THE COURSE OF A 17 MONTH DEPLOYMENT, THE RED DOGS OF
HMLA-773 (-)
>>>>REIN FLEW OVER 4,400 COMBAT OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SORTIES AND
>>>>ACCUMULATED OVER 6,700 COMBAT OPERATIONAL SUPPORT HOURS,
PROVIDING
>>>>CRUCIAL SUPPORT TO COMBAT TROOPS ON THE GROUND IN
AFGHANISTAN.
>>>>THROUGHOUT THIS TIME, YOU MAINTAINED AN IMPRESSIVE 81%
MISSION
>>>>CAPABLE RATE AND AN INCREDIBLE 100% MISSION COMPLETION
RATE, NEVER
>>>>MISSING A MISSION REQUIREMENT. THESE STATISTICS SPEAK
VOLUMES TO
>>>>THE TREMENDOUS EXPERTISE AND DEVOTION TO DUTY OF EVERY
MEMBER OF
>>>>THE SQUADRON, ESPECIALLY THE MARINES WHO KEPT THE AIRCRAFT
FLYING
>>>>THE MECHANICS, TECHNICIANS, AIRCRAFT SUPPORT MARINES AND
>>>>SUPERVISORS.
>>>>3. WORKING IN AN EXTREMELY CHALLENGING OPERATIONAL
ENVIRONMENT,
>>>>HMLA-773 (-) REIN DELIVERED OVER 225,000 POUNDS OF ORDNANCE
IN
>>>>SUPPORT OF COMBAT OPERATIONS. MOST IMPORTANTLY, YOU HAVE
SAFELY AND
>>>>PROFESSIONALLY ACHIEVED THESE RESULTS IN A COMBAT ZONE
WITHOUT
>>>>LOSING ANY OF OUR PRECIOUS MARINES OR SAILORS. YOU HAVE
TRULY
>>>>UPHELD THE HIGHEST REPUTATION OF OUR CORPS AND MADE A
WORTHY
>>>>CONTRIBUTION TO ITS LEGENDARY COMBAT PROWESS. THE
COMMANDER, CJTF-76, HAS DESCRIBED THE PILOTS AND AIRCREWS AS
ABSOLUTELY
>>>>FEARLESS. YOUR RECORD SPEAKS TO THAT FEARLESSNESS, AS
WELL AS YOUR
>>>>SUPERIOR CAPABILITIES AND DEDICATION.
>>>>4. AS YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR LONG AWAITED HOMECOMING, TAKE
PRIDE IN
>>>>THE FACT THAT YOUR SUPERB EFFORTS HAVE BROUGHT CONTINUED
SECURITY
>>>>AT HOME WHILE ASSISTING THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN IN
DETERMINING
>>>>THEIR OWN FUTURE.
>>>>5. I TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN THANKING YOU FOR YOUR HARD
WORK AND
>>>>SACRIFICES AND I CONGRATULATE YOU ON A JOB EXTREMELY WELL

DONE.

>>>>6. ON BEHALF OF THE MARINES AND SAILORS OF MARCENT, I WISH YOU

>>>>MANY FUTURE SUCCESSES, GOD SPEED AND A SAFE RETURN HOME.

SEMPER:

>>>>FIDELIS.

>>>>7. LIEUTENANT GENERAL GREGSON SENDS. //

>>>>

>>>>

>>>>DeClassBy:

>>>>DeClassReason:

>>>>DeClassDate: X-4

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>>>>No virus found in this incoming message.

>>>>Checked by AVG Anti-Virus.

>>>>Version: 7.0.308 / Virus Database: 266.9.1 - Release Date: 4/1/2005

No virus found in this outgoing message.

Checked by AVG Anti-Virus.

Version: 7.0.323 / Virus Database: 267.7.3/15 - Release Date: 6/14/2005

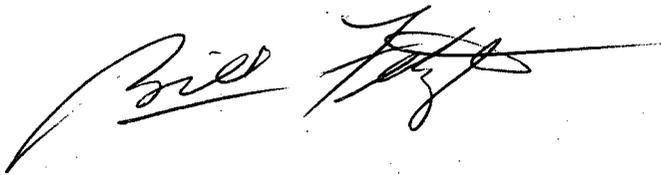
Community Correspondence to Documents/E-Library

From NAS Atlanta Community/CODEL reps

Provided 20 July 2005 during Community Meeting hosted by William Fetzer

Please add attached documents to the BRAC Library.

Memorandum of Meeting
attached also.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill Fetzer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



NAS Atlanta Location

