

**BASE VISIT REPORT**

**Laughlin Air Force Base, TX**

**Friday June 17, 2005**

**LEAD COMMISSIONER:** None

**ACCOMPANYING COMMISSIONER:** None

**COMMISSION STAFF:**

Ms. Tanya Cruz

**LIST OF ATTENDEES:**

Col Theresa Daniel

Mr. Bob Wood, 47 FTW/MX

Lt Col Martin Gearhart, 47 OG/CD

Lt Col Marc Pincince, 47 MSG/CD

Lt Col Susan Baker, 47 MDSS/CC

Lt Col Scott McCreedy

Maj Ralph Korthauer

**BASE'S PRESENT MISSION:**

- Mission: The primary mission is to conduct undergraduate pilot training for the USAF as directed by HQ AETC, to conduct T-37/T-38 pilot training for designated foreign nations as directed by HQ AETC and to provide normal base support for satisfactory maintenance and operation of assigned and attached units, organizations, and detachment.
- Major Command: Air Education and Training Command (AETC)
- Primary Weapon Systems: T-37, T-38, T1A, T-6
- In calendar year 2004, Laughlin's airmen flew 62,920 sorties and 93,818 hours.
- Laughlin AFB graduates 400+ student pilots per year.

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:**

- Realign Moody Air Force Base, GA, as follows: relocate the Primary Phase of Fixed-wing Pilot Training to Columbus Air Force Base, MS, Laughlin Air Force Base, TX, and Vance Air Force Base, OK; relocate Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals Training for Pilots to

Columbus Air Force Base, MS, Laughlin Air Force Base, TX, Randolph Air Force Base, TX, Sheppard Air Force Base, TX, and Vance Air Force Base, OK; relocate Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals Training for Weapons Systems Officers to Columbus Air Force Base, MS, Laughlin Air Force Base, TX, Sheppard Air Force Base, TX, and Vance Air Force Base, OK; and relocate Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals Training for Instructor Pilots to Randolph Air Force Base, TX.

Realign Randolph Air Force Base, TX, by relocating Undergraduate Navigator Training to Naval Air Station, Pensacola, FL.

### **SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:**

- This recommendation will realign and consolidate USAF's primary phase of undergraduate flight training functions to reduce excess/unused basing capacity to eliminate redundancy, enhance jointness for UNT/Naval Flight Officer (NFO) training, reduce excess capacity, and improve military value.

The basing arrangement that flows from this recommendation will allow the Inter-service Training Review Organization (ITRO) process to establish a DoD baseline program in UNT/NFO with curricula that permit services latitude to preserve service-unique culture and a faculty and staff that brings a "Train as we fight; jointly" national perspective to the learning process.

### **MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED:**

During my visit and a driving tour, in addition to the current Wing Headquarters (a new one is in the process of being built), I saw the following facilities:

- (New) Wing Headquarters
  - A new and larger facility is in the construction phase and is designed with a focus on emergency operations as a result of a presidential Homeland Security directive.
- Air Expeditionary Force Center
  - This building houses supply and logistics, both of which are contracted out. The AEFC is also where Laughlin has consolidated its mobilization processing.
- Runways
  - Laughlin has three recently refurbished runways with dimensions of 6236 ft. x 150 ft., 8852 ft. x 150 ft., and 8316 ft. x 150 ft.
- Ramp
  - The ramp size is approximately 2.5 million square feet and holds several sun shades to protect the aircraft from the weather.
- Hangars
  - There are a total of six hangars at Laughlin AFB.
- Fire Station
  - This facility was recently expanded to include more rooms for the fighters.
- Operations Training Center
  - This facility, built three years ago, houses the Operations Support Squadron as well as the other three flying squadrons, mission planning rooms, and new student training.

- Base Operations
  - This facility, also built three years ago, houses the tower; and air traffic control, flight safety, weather, and air field management functions.
- Aircraft Weather Shelter
  - When the forecast expects hail, this facility will provide protection for the T-6s (the installations most expensive aircraft). The Shelter can fit 55 of these planes.
- Education Building
  - They are currently in the process of building a new facility. The project is planned for completion in November 2005. This facility (not intended for flying training) will be used to support the Education Services flight mission. In the interim such functions are housed in a temporary facility.
- Readiness Flight
  - This facility houses those functions used to prepare individuals for deployment, disaster preparation, and threat response.
- Combat Arms building
  - This facility opened in November 2004 and is used for training of security forces and anyone being deployed.
- Housing
  - In 2006 the housing development is to be conveyed to a private contractor to be renovated or rebuilt. Base officials said that the majority at Laughlin live off base. According to officials, the Air Force conducted a housing assessment about a year and a half ago. The housing at Laughlin AFB was assessed to be adequate. As a result, excess housing was converted to be used as temporary housing.
- Golf course
  - Through an Energy Savings Performance Contract, Laughlin AFB's golf course is irrigated by mixing the final product of the sewage ponds with other water. This method results in water as well as dollar savings.

### **KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED**

All facilities at Laughlin AFB appeared to be very well maintained. Many of the base's buildings were built within the last 2-4 years and there are plans underway to build others.

According to the design and construction records maintained by the 47<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron at Laughlin AFB, the following is the status and cost of MILCON projects<sup>1</sup>:

- MILCON Approved and Appropriated, but Not Yet Constructed
  - Student Officer Quarters (99-3002P1). This contract is awarded. – \$7.32 million
  - T-1 Squadron Operations Facility (06-3005). This contract is expected to be awarded approximately 9 August, 2005. – \$6.90 million
- MILCON Under Construction
  - Consolidated Wing Support Facility (98-3001A) – \$7.83 million
  - Construct JP-8 Fuel Stand (00-3000) – \$4.40 million
  - Aircraft Weather Shelter (03-3000) – \$5.44 million
  - Replace Education Center (03-3002) – \$1.17 million

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Marc L. Pincince, Lt Col, USAF, Deputy Commander, 47 MSG. Received via email June 29, 2005.

- MILCON Recently Completed
  - VAQ/VOQ Facility (Visitors' Quarters) (99-3000) – \$10.14 million
  - Fitness Center (98-3004) – \$12.61 million
  - Law Enforcement Facility (98-3003) – \$3.97 million

At present, there are approximately 7,000 individuals on base including contractors, military, civilians, and 508 student pilots (Laughlin is the largest employer in the region). Two hundred and seventeen aircraft are assigned at Laughlin AFB (91 T-6s, 24 T-38As, 50 T-38Cs, and 52 T-1s). The DoD recommendation would result in a net gain of 182 personnel and 27 aircraft (14 T-6s and 13 T-38s).

The current size of Laughlin Air Force Base is 5,343 acres. As the base has room for expansion, the increase in personnel and aircraft should not be a problem. There is virtually nothing but Laughlin-owned land on the other side of the runway and those older facilities replaced but still in good condition are used for other purposes. The Old Temporary Lodging Facilities (TLF), for example, will become efficiency apartments. One TLF will be turned into a mosque. Also, while the construction is out for bid for a new T-1 Squadron Operations building, the plan is to keep the old building, built in the 1950s, to support other requirements. According to officials, they currently do not have detailed capacity information. However, AETC/XP (Air Education and Training Command/Plans and Programs) is scheduled to conduct a capacity analysis at Laughlin AFB in early August.

There did not appear to be any encroachment issues and officials said that there are few, if any, noise sensitive issues.

According to officials, Airspace is Laughlin's greatest asset. Laughlin AFB owns 7,000 square miles of military airspace with 11 major low-level routes.

#### **INSTALLATION CONCERNS RAISED**

No installation concerns were raised. According to base officials, the recommendation would entail Laughlin AFB taking on additional but compatible missions that would result in cost savings. Moving Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals (IFF) training to Laughlin AFB decreases TDY costs. In addition, officials cited the reduced lag time from SUPT (Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training to IFF as a potential benefit (currently there is a 2-5 month wait for this transition).

#### **COMMUNITY CONCERNS RAISED:**

None

#### **REQUESTS FOR STAFF AS A RESULT OF VISIT:**

None

# DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

## BASE SUMMARY SHEET

### Laughlin AFB, TX

#### INSTALLATION MISSION

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**COST CONSIDERATIONS DEVELOPED BY DoD**

- One-Time Costs: \$71.7 million
- Net Savings (Cost) during Implementation: \$(1.6) million
- Annual Recurring Savings: \$18.3 million
- Return on Investment Year: 2012 (4 Years)
- Net Present Value over 20 Years: \$174.2 million

**MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS OF THIS RECOMMENDATION (EXCLUDES CONTRACTORS)**

	<u>Military</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Students</u>
<b>Baseline</b>	1,024	899	
Reductions			
Realignments	98	80	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,122</b>	<b>979</b>	

**MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS OF ALL RECOMMENDATIONS AFFECTING THIS INSTALLATION (INCLUDES ON-BASE CONTRACTORS AND STUDENTS)**

	<b>Out</b>		<b>In</b>		<b>Net Gain (Loss)</b>	
	<u>Military</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Military</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Military</u>	<u>Civilian</u>
This Recommendation	0	0	98	80	98	80
Other Recommendation(s)	0	0	4	0	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>80</b>

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- This recommendation may require significant air permit revisions for Columbus, Laughlin, Vance, and Sheppard Air Force Bases. This recommendation may impact cultural, archeological, or historical resources at Columbus, Sheppard, and Laughlin Air Force Bases. DoD will need to re-evaluate noise contours for Columbus, Laughlin, Vance, Sheppard, and Pensacola. May need to modify the hazardous waste program for Columbus, Laughlin, Vance, and Sheppard Air Force Bases. Additional operations at Columbus, Laughlin, Vance, and Sheppard Air Force Bases may impact wetlands, which may restrict operations. This recommendation has no impact on dredging; land use constraints or sensitive resource areas; marine mammals, resources, or sanctuaries; or water resources. This recommendation will require spending approximately \$2.3M for waste management and environmental compliance activities. This cost was included in the payback calculation. There are no known environmental impediments to implementation of this recommendation.

## **REPRESENTATION**

Governor: Rick Perry (R)  
Senators: John Cornyn (R)  
Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R)

Representative: Henry Bonilla (R)

## **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

- Potential Employment Gain: 319 jobs (182 direct and 137 indirect)
- MSA Job Base: 21,096 jobs
- Cumulative Economic Impact (2006-2011): 1.5 percent increase

## **MILITARY ISSUES**

- TBD

## **COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES**

- TBD

## **ITEMS OF SPECIAL EMPHASIS**

- TBD

Tanya Cruz/Air Force/June 8, 2005