

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

**MEMORANDUM OF MEETING**

**DATE:** 21 Jul 05

**TIME:** 1030

**MEETING WITH:** Delegation representing 108<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing (ARW), New Jersey Air National Guard (NJANG), McGuire AFB, NJ

**SUBJECT:** Recommendations impacting 108<sup>th</sup> ARW (NJANG), McGuire AFB, NJ

**PARTICIPANTS:**

***Name/Title/Phone Number:***

- Brig Gen Maria Falca-Dodson, Deputy NJ Adjutant General, (609) 530-6953
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***Commission Staff:***

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- \*Tim MacGregor, Senior Air Force Analyst, (703) 699-2950

**MEETING SUMMARY:**

BRAC Commission Air Force Team members met with a delegation representing the 108<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing (ARW) New Jersey Air National Guard (NJANG), McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, and additional HQ NJANG personnel. Discussion centered on DOD BRAC recommendation DoN-21, "Recommendation for Closure and Realignment of Naval Air Station (NAS) Joint Reserve Base (JRB) Willow Grove, PA, and Cambria Regional Airport, Johnstown, PA." DoN-21 refers to the programmatic retirement of the 108<sup>th</sup> ARW's 16 KC-135E Primary Assigned Aircraft (PAA) at McGuire, and receives forces and functions from NAS JRB Willow Grove, PA and New Castle County Airport Air Guard Station, DE.

The meeting began with a lengthy discussion of options, details and costs to repair, maintain and sustain the KC-135Es at McGuire, with an emphasis on engines, engine struts, other structures,

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and the 13 items listed as “serious risk issues” by the KC-135 System Program Office’s (SPO) Functional System Integrity Program (FSIP).

- Twenty-nine KC-135Es have been “removed from the flying schedule” by the Air Mobility Command Commander for flight safety reasons, including two KC-135Es at McGuire. Additional maintenance and repair topics discussed included: results and findings from the KC-135 SPO FSIP, the KC-135E Fleet Viability Board (FVB) Report Special Assessment, KC-135E depot maintenance history and requirements, costs and requirements in converting from KC-135E-models to R-models, and more. The BRAC staff cited recent Air Force estimated costs of \$1.9 Billion to repair and maintain the current KC-135E fleet over the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) excluding additional costs for Operations and Sustainment.

In reference to the 108<sup>th</sup> ARW KC-135Es:

- The aircraft engine struts have been inspected and repaired and are serviceable until 2007.
- Engine overheat occurs during takeoff that may require retarding a throttle .
- Aircraft will require GATM mod after ~2012 to conform to navigation requirements
- PDM costs are high; eventually aircraft will be grounded rather than incur PDM cost

When questioned, 108 ARW maintenance personnel indicated they felt they had maintenance crews that could make many of the required maintenance actions currently being performed at the KC-135 maintenance depot (Tinker, AFB, OK), possibly at less cost. 108 ARW personnel also indicated that they’re flying older KC-135Es (including 1956 and 1957 models) many of which have no reasonable ability to be converted to R-models.

NJANG personnel referenced, and spoke to results indicated in a paper prepared by the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, titled, “108<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard: Military Value and Missions.”

NJANG personnel highlighted several issues:

- The 108th has appx 1,344 authorized drill billets, currently manned at 95% for 16 PAA KC-135E aircraft
  - o They state that “manning is not an operator issue, it’s a maintenance issue”
    - They attribute some of the maintainer shortage to wage-parity issues (in part due to high demand for aircraft maintainers in the region)
    - NJANG is working on wage-parity solutions to boost their manning
  - o With less KC-135 PAA assigned, they could easily reach 100%
    - They note that “other bases” in the Northeast are below 100% and don’t have the recruiting pool that the 108 ARW has due to its proximity to major metropolitan areas such as Philadelphia and New York City
- The Air Force tanker program (pre-BRAC) was for the 108 ARW to convert to KC-135R models. They’d very much like to convert to R-models and maintain the tanker flying mission
  - o They’d like 12 PAA, but will take 8
- They state that there appears to have been no assessment done of 108<sup>th</sup> Military Value

- There are direct, secure fuel lines into the base, to include some of the best hydrant refueling in the Air Force, comprised of 18 refueling pits
- The base has great infrastructure—that it's a new base from the ground up
- NJANG personnel believe that the standard minimum size tanker base as noted in a recent AF Tanker white paper is not achievable and/or necessary for all units
  - o They note there are differing sized PAA units in the field. While the size is sometimes inconsistent, there are often reasons for it
    - Some believe that standardized PAA is a convenience, not an operational necessity
- The 108<sup>th</sup> has aircrew lines and jets currently supporting and/or standing alert against OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE missions, as well as “air bridge” operations across the Atlantic
- NJANG personnel feel the DOD BRAC Tanker Mission Compatibility Index (MCI) does not properly or accurately account for current Global War on Terror operations
  - o NJANG personnel indicated that the BRAC staff should note that ANG units comprise approximately 50% of Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) manning
- NJANG personnel also cite recent proposals to keep the KC-135s at McGuire as part of a tanker Weapons Instructor Course (WIC) move to McGuire in conjunction with the Air Mobility Warfare Center already located adjacent to the 108<sup>th</sup> at Fort Dix, NJ (less than one mile away).
  - o The KC-135 WIC is currently located at Fairchild AFB, WA

\* Denotes individual responsible for completing the memorandum