

DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION
Activity Visit Report

Prime Power School
Ft Belvoir, Virginia
28 July, 2005

Lead Commissioner: No Commissioners were on this visit.

Commission Staff: Mr. Dean Rhody, Senior Army Analyst

List of Attendees: LTC Andrew Backus, *Commandant, Prime Power School/Commanding Officer, 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power)*
Mr. Dennis Calamita, *Deputy Commandant, Prime Power School*
Major Anthony Reed, *Executive Officer, 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power)*.

Activity Mission: The Prime Power School trains Prime Power Production Specialists (MOS 21P) through a year-long program including courses in math, physics, engineering, and power plant operations and maintenance. The training program is open to Active and Reserve soldiers, and Navy Seabees. Upon graduation, Army personnel are awarded MOS 21P20 and Navy personnel are awarded NEC 5633. Students attain the knowledge and skills associated with installing, operating, and maintaining large medium voltage electrical power plants. Additional courses conducted at the school include MOS 21P30 BNCOC and MOS 210A, WOAC.

DoD Recommendations

Realign Fort Belvoir, VA, by relocating Army Prime Power School training to Fort Leonard Wood, MO.

Main Facilities Reviewed

No facility tours were conducted.

Key Issues Identified

1. School leadership has already begun planning for the transfer including a site visit at Ft Leonard Wood, MO. Leadership is supportive of the recommendation and raised issues primarily associated with implementation.

2. There is a strong operational relationship between the 249th Engineer Bn (PP) and the school. The battalion is the only prime power battalion in the Army and home for over 50% of all 21P personnel in the Army. Graduates of the Prime Power School are reassigned directly into one of the three companies of the battalion (HHC, A, and B). Lesson learned in theater are quickly incorporated into school training. The battalion commander is also the school commandant. Separation of the school and platoon will reduce the effectiveness of this unique school-end user relationship.
3. The battalion will stand up C Company in September, 2008, increasing the school training load by 50% just as the school is positioning to execute the BRAC recommendation.
4. The school estimates that 4 of 13 instructors will transfer to Ft Leonard Wood. Selection and training of new instructors will become important since training time is usually six to eight months. The school believes a sufficient pool of expertise to meet instructor need will be found by issuing job announcements nation-wide, although this will incur added PCS costs.
5. The school sees no issues with training assets, mission execution, or environmental requirements at Ft Leonard Wood. Concern was expressed that one to two class starts would be missed during implementation due to the need to train up a qualified instructor force. The effect may be a drop in graduates of 40 just as the Army requirement increases significantly. Two to three years will be required to make up the shortfall.
6. The 249th Engineer Bn leadership has expressed concern with the loss of proximity between the unit and the school. They suggested that the movement of the school essentially eliminated any rationale for retaining the unit as Ft Belvoir and that the battalion headquarters should be moved to a Power Projection Platform location to facilitate its extensive civil and military deployment. Transfer of the Battalion headquarters (68 personnel) is below BRAC thresholds and may be accomplished outside of the BRAC process.
7. MCA costs at Ft Leonard Wood may not include necessary exterior facilities (hardstand and cabling). Tentative site plan also requires infrastructure support (paved roads and utilities).
8. Savings may not accrue as projected and the action may be a net cost increase.

Installation Concerns Raised

None

Community Concerns Raised

No community concerns were raised.

Requests for Staff as a Result of the Visit

None