

BASE VISIT REPORT**CANNON AIR FORCE BASE, CLOVIS, NEW MEXICO****23 June 2005****LEAD COMMISSIONER:**

The Honorable James V. Hansen

ACCOMPANYING COMMISSIONERS:

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi (Chairman)

General James T. Hill (USA,Ret)

Brigadier General Sue E. Turner (USAF,Ret)

COMMISSION STAFF:

Brigadier General David Hague (USMC Ret, General Counsel)

Frank Cirillo (Director R&A Team)

David Combs (AF/R&A Team Analyst)

Justin Breitzschopt (AF/R&A Team Analyst)

Jim Aarnio (R&A/FAA Analyst)

LIST OF ATTENDEES:**Cannon Air Force Base Officials;**

Colonel John Posner, FW/CC

Colonel Jeff Harrell, FW/CV

Colonel Joe Dickson, MXG/CC

Colonel Peggy Poore, MSG/CC

Colonel Delores Forrest, MDG/CC

Lt Col Patterson, 27th OG/CDLT Col McClelland, 27th OSS/CCLt Col Lewis, 27th MSG/CDLt Col Karibian, 27th CES/CCSam Pyeatt, 27th CES/CDMaj Witmyer, 27th FW/JAFrank Struzinski, 27th OSS/Airspace ManagerJohn Rogers, 27th OSS/Melrose Range OperationsCapt Kok, 27th FW/PA

Community Officials;

Randy Harris, Clovis Committee of 50

Brig Gen (Ret) Hansen Scott, NM Governor's liaison for BRAC

Chad Lydick, Clovis Committee of 50

Pat Tucker, Piper Rudnick

BASE'S PRESENT MISSION:

The 27th Fighter Wing maintains an F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter wing capable of day and night combat operations for war fighting commanders worldwide, at any time.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:

Close Cannon Air Force Base, NM. Distribute the 27th Fighter Wings F-16s to the 115th Fighter Wing, Dane County Regional Airport, Truax Field Air Guard Station, WI (three aircraft); 114th Fighter Wing, Joe Foss Field Air Guard Station, SD (three aircraft); 150th Fighter Wing, Kirtland Air Force Base, NM (three aircraft); 113th Wing Andrews Air Force Base, MD (nine aircraft); 57th Fighter Wing, Nellis Air Force Base, NV (seven aircraft), the 388th Wing at Hill Air Force Base, UT (six aircraft), and backup inventory (29 aircraft).

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:

Cannon has a unique F-16 force structure mix. The base has one F-16 Block 50 squadron, one F-16 Block 40 squadron, and one F-16 Block 30 squadron. All active duty Block 50 bases have higher military value than Cannon. Cannon's Block 50s move to backup inventory using standard Air Force programming percentages for fighters. Cannon's F-16 Block 40s move to Nellis Air Force Base (seven aircraft) and Hill Air Force Base (six aircraft to right size the wing at 72 aircraft) and to backup inventory (11 aircraft). Nellis (12) and Hill (14) have a higher military value than Cannon (50). The remaining squadron of F-16 Block 30s (18 aircraft) is distributed to Air National Guard units at Kirtland Air Force Base, NM (16), Andrews Air Force Base, MD (21), Joe Foss Air Guard Station, SD (112), and Dane-Truax Air Guard Station, WI (122). These moves sustain the active/Air National Guard/Air Force Reserve force mix by replacing aircraft that retire in the 2025 Force Structure Plan.

MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED:

Commissioners toured Cannon Air Base by bus including:

- Wing Headquarters
- Hangars
- Flight line
- Control Tower

- Maintenances facility
- Outpatient Medical facility
- Fire/Crash Rescue Station
- Security Forces Operations Complex

Stops were made at the new Air Traffic Control Tower and at the new Fire/Crash Rescue Station. From the nine story control tower, Commissioners were provided a full view of the entire airfield, including the 10,000 feet and 8,200 feet runways, and airspace.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED:

- Buildable acreage for industrial and air operation growth was rezoned in January 2005 at the direction of Air Combat Command. At the time of the data call in December 2004 the correct number was 10.5 acres. In January 2005, through a USAF Planning Assistance Team driven rezoning action, buildable acreage was increased to 368.
- The New Mexico Training Range Initiative (NMTRI) when approved will increase the range training capabilities. However, the mitigation measures that must be enacted to have the NMTRI proposal approved by the FAA will lessen the operational capabilities originally requested by the Air Force.
- The NMTRI implementation is projected to be approved in June 2006.
- The NMTRI proposal will go forward even if the SECDEF recommendation to close Cannon Air Force Base becomes a reality.
- 27th Wing Commander believes that New Mexico ranges would be used daily by Dyess, Barksdale, and Kirkland Air Force Bases if Cannon's F-16s were not occupying the ranges.

INSTALLATION CONCERNS RAISED:

None

COMMUNITY CONCERNS RAISED:

- DOD's recommendation to close Cannon deviated from BRAC selection criteria and force structure plan.
- The Air Force failed to meet its own organization and BRAC principles by not appropriately considering encroachment, the NMTRI proposal, force structure retention, and quality of life.
- The Air Force military value weighted analytical process failed to properly evaluate highest military value for the next 20 years for current/future missions, conditions of infrastructure, contingency, mobilization, future forces, and cost of operation and manpower.
- Data provided was inaccurate, incomplete, out dated, and misleading
- Economic Impact of closing Cannon was underestimated.

REQUESTS FOR STAFF AS A RESULT OF VISIT:

Commissioner Hill asked the Staff to request information on the loss of synergy between the Cannon F-16's and Ft Bliss if Cannon Air Force Base were closed. The question was forwarded to the OSD Clearinghouse on 6/27/05.