

DCN 4889  
Executive Correspondence

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

BRAC Commission

JUL 19 2005

Received

July 18, 2005

Anthony J. Principi, Chairman  
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission  
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA, 22202

Re: Youngstown Air Reserve Station

Dear Chairman Principi:

We are writing to express our strong support for the U.S. Department of Defense's recommendation to preserve and expand the Youngstown Air Reserve Station (YARS), and we urge you and your colleagues on the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) to concur with the Pentagon's findings.

As Members of the Congressional delegation representing this region, we are monitoring the BRAC process closely because YARS is important to our nation's military strength and we want to ensure that the base remains an active part of the region's economy and infrastructure.

This Air Reserve base is vitally important to the Mahoning and Shenango Valleys, and its value to Northeast Ohio and Western Pennsylvania is evidenced in numerous ways over the last few years – including community investment of more than \$36 million in airport improvements and \$7.8 million in public infrastructure improvements (road, water and sewer) around the facility. This investment is above the \$84 million invested by the US Department of Defense in the Air Reserve Station itself over the same period.

As stated above, our support for DOD's recommendation for the YARS could not be stronger; however, we know that the BRAC Commission is still reviewing the Pentagon's recommendations and may well add or delete bases to the final list submitted to the President. With this in mind, we want to correct and clarify several facts related to YARS that will further emphasize the value and contribution of this installation to our national military capability.

## Military Compatibility Index Airlift: Corrections/Additions

**Ramp Space** – An error was made in reporting that YARS only has 129,286 square yards of aircraft parking ramp. In fact, per the property inventory, the actual figure is almost

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139,000 square yards. An official amendment is being submitted to the US Department of Defense (DoD) through the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC). When the corrected data is applied YARS earns 1.49 points for criteria #8 (from 0 pts as currently assigned) and 8.98 points for criteria #1235 (from 5.98 points currently assigned) – a difference of 4.49 additional points.

**Proximity to Drop Zones/Landing Zones** – The Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport currently has both an official Drop Zone and an official Landing Zone that were not recognized in this process. This data is also used to calculate the scores for two criteria: #1248 Proximity to DZ/LZ; and #1249 Airspace Attributes of DZ/LZ. When the corrected data is applied YARS, earns 8.58 points for criteria #1248 (from 7.13 pts as currently assigned) and 3.48 points for criteria #1249 (from 2.88 points currently assigned) – a difference of 2.05 additional points. Again, an official amendment is being submitted through the AFRC.

**Level of Mission Encroachment** – Although the YARS received nearly full MCI value for criteria #1207 Level of Mission Encroachment, it did not receive credit for a Local Joint Use Coordinating Board that is now in place. On October 15, 2004, the Board of Trumbull County Commissioners created an Airport Zoning Board and an associated Airport Zoning Commission, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Sections 4561 and 4563, to prevent future encroachment at the facility. When the corrected data is applied YARS earns 1.66 points for criteria #1207 (from 1.64 pts as currently assigned) – a difference of 0.02 additional points.

**As a result of these corrections and additions, the MCI Airlift score for the Youngstown Air Reserve Station should increase by 6.56 points, making the final score 46.65 (from 40.09 as currently assigned).**

### Military Compatibility Index Airlift: Additional Issues

**Low Level Training Routes** - Criteria #1246 Proximity to Low Level Routes Supporting Missions is one where the YARS scored poorly – earning just 1.68 of a possible 13.98 points. Yet an objective analysis shows that the YARS has a very significant infrastructure for low-level training that is widely used, if unrecognized by the MCI Airlift process. While the MCI Airlift looked only at IR/VR routes within 150 nautical miles, the YARS has an 88,000 square mile Low Altitude Tactical Navigation Area (LATN) that includes the YAK West, Star Camp, YAK East and Swordfish LATN areas. Within that area, the 910<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing has 12 low level routes they fly on a recurring basis – plus others they use on a more limited basis. That equals the number of official IR/VR routes whose entry and/or exit points are within 150 nautical miles that was measured by the MCI Airlift criteria.

**Training Resources** – Exceptional training opportunities are afforded at the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport by minimum levels of aviation congestion (MCI Criteria #1242 ATC Restrictions to Operations), accessibility to thousands of square

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miles of unrestricted air space, two runways (9002 feet and 5003 feet) and an assault runway. These amenities make it an ideal site for Touch and Go Landings, and Practice Instrument Approaches (ILS, COR, NDB, Airport Surveillance Radar, and Airborne Radar Approaches). Additionally, the Airport is also installing permanent Night Vision Goggle (NVG) Compatible Lighting on both the main and assault runways. This project is scheduled for completion in 2005 and will enable the FAA tower to quickly configure the airport for NVG operations when required.

To demonstrate its value as a training site, units from across the region travel to YNG for practice. This includes Air Force Reserve units from Pittsburgh, Willow Grove (PA), General Mitchell (Milwaukee), and Niagara Falls, as well as Air National Guard units from Pittsburgh, Akron, Mansfield (OH), Yeager (Charleston, WVA) and Martinsburg (WVA).

**Manning** – As the DoD's only full-time, fixed-wing, aerial spray capability, the 910<sup>th</sup> completed over 2,319 flying hours, airlifting more than 2,959 tons of cargo and 6,425 passengers on missions throughout the world in 2004. In addition to its current missions of flying troops, supplies and equipment into and out of Iraq and Afghanistan, the 910<sup>th</sup> has been a major participant in various military and humanitarian efforts, including demonstrating their aerial spray capability for insect control in the wake of natural disasters. The 910<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing also participates in joint service exercises supporting active duty forces in airborne training, operates facilities supporting Naval and Marine Corps reservists and other federal agencies, and assists military and other federal government air traffic to the region.

Consistent with the region's overall commitment to the nation's war on terror and our military, YARS consistently sees exceptional personnel levels. As of July 1, 2005, the manning of the 910<sup>th</sup> is at 99.8 percent, the retention rate is 97.5 percent and recruiting levels are at 94 percent of their goal for FY05.

**Weather** – Because YARS experiences fewer than 250 days annually when the prevailing weather is better than 3000'3 Nautical Miles, it received 0 points for criteria #1271. However, in reality, flight operations have not been negatively affected by weather conditions. According to the FAA Control Tower, the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport has not been closed for weather-related conditions in the last decade. Other comparable facilities received between 0.5 and 0.75 for this criteria. A more salient question would have been on how many days the weather affected aviation activity at the airport.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you our support and commitment to the Youngstown Air Reserve Station, and to clarify and correct data related to the base, its infrastructure and operations.

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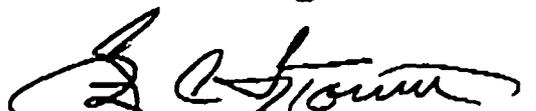
We understand the magnitude of the task the Commission must perform and very much appreciate your outstanding service to our nation's military. If you have additional questions about the Youngstown Air Reserve Station and its capacity for expansion, please contact Mary Anne Walsh, Chief of Staff for Congressman Tim Ryan at 202-225-5261.

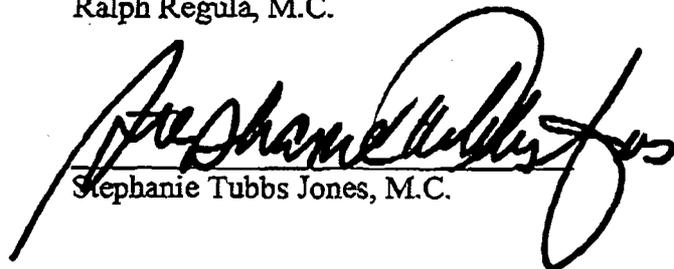
Sincerely,

  
Michael DeWine, U.S.S.

  
Tim Ryan, M.C.

  
Ralph Regula, M.C.

  
Steve LaTourette, M.C.

  
Stephanie Tubbs Jones, M.C.

  
Ted Strickland, M.C.