

DCN: 733

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RECEIVED  
5/23/05  
KTJ

May 19, 2005

BRAC Commission  
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, Va., 22202

Re: Cannon AFB, New Mexico

Dear Commissioners:

I was at a loss for words when I received a call from my mother the morning of May 13, 2005 telling me of the message the community had received from Sen. Domenici. In anticipation of the BRAC list being released, I wasn't worried, I had no doubts that Cannon **would not** be on the list.

Cannon Air Force Base should not be on the list for the following reasons:

- Cannon does not fit the criteria provided for base closure.
- The base has an abundance of air space and no encroachment issues. This provides for safer and more realistic training scenarios for pilots.
- Once the New Mexico Training Range Initiative is implemented, we will be able to offer pilots the ability to fly supersonic during training missions. This is a very important point, as it allows the Air Force to better train for real-life situations.
- The weather in Eastern New Mexico provides year round training ability.
- The Melrose bombing range is seconds from the end of the runway at Cannon. This allows pilots to get airborne, and immediately begin training operations over the bombing range, rather than spending all of their fuel just to get to the range, having one pass over, then returning to the base.
- Cannon has the space and facilities to accommodate joint war-fighting, training, and readiness as was evidenced by the recent joint training effort between Cannon and the US Navy.
- Cannon has ample space/ramp space to accommodate surge force requirements in training and emergency situations.
- The availability of air space and ideal flying weather makes Cannon the perfect candidate to support future training missions for the F-22, Joint Strike Fighter, and other military aircraft.
- Cannon has won countless awards, both on ACC level, Air Force and NAF levels, and national and STAT levels. [Click here](#) for a list of the awards Cannon has received.

- The relationship between Cannon Air Force Base and the surrounding towns; Clovis, Portales, West Texas, and others, is unlike any other installation in the country.
- Clovis, Portales, Eastern New Mexico, West Texas (including Amarillo and Lubbock) are home to a large military retiree population. These people rely on Cannon Air Force base for healthcare, grocery shopping, and more. There is not another installation close by to serve our retired military.

Although I have not been around for the last half-century, Clovis has a strong, 50-year relationship with Cannon AFB.

- In the early 90s, Curry County, in conjunction with the state of New Mexico, purchased air easements around Cannon Air Force base and GAVE them to the Air Force. This one done to protect that air space from encroachment and was an important issue for the Air Force.
- The local community purchased the land north of Cannon Air Force Base and GAVE it back to the Air Force for additional housing, now known as Chavez Manor.
- Within the last few years, our community purchased land west of Cannon and GAVE it back to the Air Force for the installation of instrument lighting on the alternate runway at the base.
- Leaders within our community spear-headed the effort to expand and convert the air space to supersonic capability through the New Mexico Training Range Initiative.

In summary, the community has reached out and supported the base like no other community over the last 50 years. We've done so financially, morally, spiritually and above all, consistently. I was born and raised in Clovis, New Mexico and was proud of the Air Force being in our community. I loved participating every year in the Community Appreciation Day and seeing everyone from the surrounding communities come out to watch the air show and to get educated on what their mission was. The first war that I can vividly remember is the first Gulf War. I was at Clovis Community College when it was engaged and at the college again when the end was announced. I remember the yellow ribbons everywhere, the cheers when the soldiers and planes came "home." Although I was only in my late teens, I wore a bracelet every day of the war with a soldier's name and unit on it – I was one of the fortunate ones, I was able to present it to him at a luncheon when he came home safely. To my knowledge, he still has it and was honored that the community cared enough to think of the deployed soldiers daily.

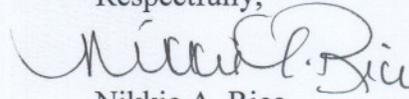
I loved living in Clovis and enjoy going back at every opportunity as my family and in-laws still reside there. I was only taken away from the community because my husband (also a Clovis native) decided to serve his country by joining the Army, which he has done with pride for the last ten years. I hate to think that upon his retirement, we will have no home to return to. Clovis will slowly blow away without Cannon AFB.

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Please take Cannon Air Force Base off of the list that you will present to their  
Commander-in-Chief in a few short months.

Respectfully,



Nikkie A. Rice

Army Spouse & Clovis Native

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