

BRAC Commission

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Received

20 Arrowhead Drive
Buzzards Bay, MA 02532-4527
9 August 2005

BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

RE: Resolution in Support of Otis Air National Guard Base

Dear BRAC Commission:

I have been reading a numerous amount of correspondence from many of the various Town Selectmen, Governor, and both Massachusetts State and Federal Congressmen and Senators. The funny part about it is that prior to "9-11", some of them wanted Otis (MMR - Massachusetts Military Reservation) closed to protect the environment and have a game preserve. That went down the toilet when it was discovered that the Base was a contributor to the contamination of the well water and soon became a "Super Fund Base". The tide turned and gave the public a new topic to shout about. **Then there was "9-11"**. The tune change and was replaced with gratitude, feelings of safety and security, and a calmness returned knowing that the 102nd was meeting the mission. How proud I was to be a member of the Air Force's "finest" fighting machine.

F-15s from the 102nd Fighter Wing were the first military aircraft to reach the World Trade Center during the September 11, 2001 attacks. Have you ever been woken from your sleep to hear aircraft flying overhead. When all of the airlines, private and commercial were grounded, I found myself waking in the middle of the night to the silence and stayed awake until I heard that F-15 coming back from the CAP (Combat Air Patrol) mission. One, lonely, but comforting sound allowed me to feel safe and secure so as I might lull off to sleep again. How proud I was to be a member of the Air Force's "finest" fighting machine.

Operations performed by the 102nd Fighter Wing at Otis Air National Guard Base are an integral and valued part of many of the surrounding communities and the entire Cape Cod region. Most importantly, the military missions it fulfills are of utmost importance to the safety and protection of the United States, in general, and the Northeast, in particular. As important and justifiably that this statement is, it doesn't address the part that members of the 102nd have been asked to go into the classroom and share their feelings and experiences as a member of the Armed Forces of these United States, providing a better understanding of the mission and the "Citizen Soldier" and neighbor carrying out that task.

They regularly provide a myriad of military and homeland security functions, as well as vital support to the U.S. Coast Guard at Air Station Cape Cod, one of the busiest installations in the country. This all began in 1972 as the Unit was moved from TAC (Tactical Air Command) to a higher level in ADC (Air Defense Command) under one of the finest enlisted man's General: Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr. With this new assignment we stopped shooting holes in the sky becoming the first ANG to intercept the Russian Bear in the F-106 and this was repeated on numerous occasions as the Russians played cat and mouse. This action continued when the Unit received the F-15 Eagle. How proud I was to be a member of the Air Force's "finest" fighting machine.

Otis ANG Base is the host installation for all of the military and homeland security operations at the MMR, including U.S. Army Guard training at Camp Edwards and numerous Coast Guard

operations. As well as being the host, Otis operates the runways, provides base security and fire services to air operations, housing, and mutual aid to off base towns. Supports the Coast Guard at Air Station Cape Cod's fisheries training center and marine safety office.

Look at the map of the northeastern United States. In fact look at a map of the United States coastline. Being station on Cape Cod provides for a strategic airfield defending the northeast with twin engine fighting machines. It juts out in the Atlantic providing almost immediate and unencumbered access for our fighters. Why would the DoD desire to close Otis and move the fleet inland? Isn't that in fact what they would be doing by transferring the F-15 from Otis to our sister Unit, the 177FW in Atlantic City, NJ?

Let's talk money; for isn't money and politics that is driving this machine:

I have read that there was a study stating that it would cost the Coast Guard about 17M and 100 new personnel with the costs to other tenants being unknown. What about the real costs: people. Never mind about the corporate knowledge the ANG and Air Force would lose. What about the cost to put people out to the cornfields early before their time and this concerns both the civilian and military retirements? I can't put a price on the knowledge lost, but how much money is the DoD willing to spend from the savings of closing the base to pay for a buy-out for early retirements of civilians near retirement and those nearing retirement on the military side? What about the community and their losses? Oh sure, the Cape is a resort, but only 5-6 months of the year. What about the cost to relocate members and their families? The servicemen and women of Otis ANG Base are neighbors, family, friends and part of our business community and their depart will hurt.

I realize that there will be a 2-year period upon which to draw plans for transfer of equipment responsibilities, but those remaining need to know who will operate the MMR Base Services that is required by all tenants to perform their mission, to provide water and sewer services to approximately 600-military families, base security, airport operations, FAA support and the VA. Otis provides approximately 98% of the funding to support fire services for all MMR users, PAVE PAWS ("PAVE" is a program name for electronic systems, while PAWS stands for Phased-Array Warning System), suppress future fires in the northern 15K acres of the base, leaving the surrounding towns exposed to a significant and potential safety hazard.

What happens to the funds approved for construction plans? We all know that it will be costly to cancel a contract due to penalties and alike that would be added on and that is why the government continues to complete their contracts.

What about the medical for local retirees on the Cape? They have already paid their dues and continue to support the DoD. There is a Medical Clinic on base that serves the immediate needs of the active/reserve military and the retirees with medical care and pharmaceutical and is about only 10 miles away in any direction from the some 100,000 retirees instead of driving to Newport, RI some 40 miles away or to Hanscom AFB which is some 70 miles away. This issue affects the registration of their motor vehicle for access to military installations. Otis handles approximately 2000 registrations per year for Air Force Personnel. The Coast Guard and Army accomplish additional processes for their agencies.

Well I've stated the reasons that I see to keep Otis alive. And yes there is some emotion involved here. You see I just retired after spending over 40-years with the 102FW, part of that time at Logan Int'l Airport, from '65 to '68 when we moved here. Seen many changes in missions, aircraft, people, and how we do business. As one of the Air Force's finest, I would have thought that we would have been integrated with our active duty brothers a while back. Otis is very important to me. It is most of my life.

Thank you for your time.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald P. King". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "D".

DONALD P. KING, MSGT (Retired)