

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# **EARLY** **BIRD**

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BRAC Commission Early Bird

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**Warner: Defense Closures 'Rigged'  
D.C. Area Jobs Long Targeted, Senator Asserts**

Washington Post  
August 24, 2005

Virginia Sen. John W. Warner (R) said that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and a senior aide improperly manipulated the national base realignment plan announced earlier this year to compel the movement of more than 20,000 defense jobs away from the Washington area.

Two years before the Pentagon revealed its base closing plan May 13, in a stream of memos and internal records, top department officials were saying that "thinning of headquarters in the National Capital Region remains a[n] objective," according to Warner.

A Military on the Move

Warner: Defense Closures 'Rigged'

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Raymond F. DuBois, Rumsfeld's principal aide for personnel and organizational planning, guided planners in an April 1, 2004, meeting: "The Secretary of Defense wants to reduce footprint and headcount in the [region] . . . -- Moving activities from the [region] is good but moving activities beyond the 100-mile radius of the Pentagon is better," according to minutes of his remarks cited by Warner.

Warner, chairman of the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee, said the Defense Department acted improperly by singling out one area of the country for cutbacks. He added that he did not know the reasoning behind the 100-mile limit.

He said Rumsfeld's team used the base realignment process to achieve other goals, specifically, unrelated real estate management goals. Congress intended the base-closing procedures to focus on one issue: efficiency -- or, in Pentagon jargon, "military value."

"In simple terms, the military value model was rigged," Warner said, citing a final report in which Pentagon planners adopted criteria that prejudged all leased space as less desirable than owned buildings and the concentration of activities near Washington "as a negative."

DuBois said the Pentagon followed proper procedure in determining the Washington area closures. DuBois, now acting undersecretary of the Army, said Warner's arguments are "well-crafted" but leave out key points. "Decisions were made with respect to leased space in Northern Virginia consistent with military value as well as cost savings -- the two most important criteria," he said.

Warner has submitted summaries of scores of pages of Defense documents to the U.S. Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which begins meeting today to vote on the Pentagon recommendations. A final version is to be delivered by Sept. 8 to President Bush, who can accept the entire package or send it back once for revisions before forwarding it to Congress, which must reject or accept the plan in full.

In all, the Pentagon plan would shut or trim 837 bases and save \$49 billion over 20 years. The District, Arlington and Alexandria stand to lose about 30,000 jobs by 2011 under the plan -- some of the biggest cuts in the country -- including 23,000 workers in leased buildings in Northern Virginia. Maryland and Virginia would gain more than 20,000 jobs on military bases in outlying suburbs, including Fort Belvoir in southeast Fairfax County, Fort Meade in Anne Arundel County and Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County, Md.

In an interview, Warner acknowledged that his argument could help a legal challenge from Virginia Gov. Mark R. Warner (D) or local groups if the commission approves the Northern Virginia closures.

Rumsfeld has not detailed publicly why the Pentagon wants to disperse defense jobs away from Washington. But internal department reports prepared for the process refer to security in moving workers out of leased office buildings and out of the region.

When the senator's committee asked the Pentagon to disclose its legal review of the closures, it invoked attorney-client privilege, the senator said.

"I'd have to consult with the governor . . . other members in the delegation and the local community because it would be a lot of cost, but I think Virginia has a very strong resolve that whatever is done by the BRAC Commission in this state is done with strict accordance to the law," the senator said. "It's simple. BRAC is designed to eliminate excess facilities, not designed to go back to redo business decisions with leasing structure, which you can do 365 days a year."

DuBois said efficiency led to the department's focus on Washington. "Is it necessary to have them here now? Should they be closer to their suppliers . . . their contractors . . . to testing and evaluation ranges?" DuBois asked. "Those are components of military value. . . . Those are the selection criteria and the prism they should use to make these judgments."

Department leaders have long targeted the area for cuts. In 2002, Rumsfeld expressed concern over the concentration of Defense facilities. That December, briefing reporters about the coming base closing process, DuBois said the area was a target-rich environment: "We have now huge -- excuse me -- very large military installations here in the Washington area. We also have an enormous amount of leased space in the Washington metropolitan area. And the question is, can we better utilize the military installations . . . and reduce the expense of leased space?"

According to the senator, base closing planners in March 2003 reported as an "assumption" that "moving from leased spaces to military installations will contribute to security of these functions."

The Pentagon has adopted anti-terrorism standards that will require leased sites to be set back at least 82 feet from surrounding traffic, citing the threat of truck bombs. The rule will take effect this fall, and virtually no leased sites in the region satisfy it.

The message was reinforced by DuBois in April 2004 and again Oct. 5. DuBois was reported in minutes as saying that "leadership expectations" included "(1) significant reduction of leased space in the [National Capital Region]; (2) reduce DOD presence in terms of activities and employees."

"The public record is clear," Warner said. "All installations' functions and activities were not considered equally."

At a Pentagon briefing yesterday, Rumsfeld defended the massive effort and cautioned commissioners against changing any of the Defense Department's recommendations.

"This was our chance in maybe a quarter of a century to reset our force, to look at military value . . . and have it all come together in a way that's in the interests of the taxpayers of America" and the armed forces, Rumsfeld said. "They didn't come out of midair. And there wasn't an ounce of politics in any aspect of it."

DuBois said that dispersing military facilities would "probably not" make the Washington area or the Pentagon less of a terrorism target but could make them more efficient and valuable.

"If there were no defense agencies, no leased space in Northern Virginia, would the Pentagon have been attacked on Sept. 11, 2001? Yes," DuBois said. "To say, 'Aha, now we have lessened some ephemeral sense of being in the cross hairs' is not really accurate. . . . But efficiency and effectiveness -- those are essentially the two sides of the [base closing] coin."

### **Pentagon Briefing**

CNN News

August 23, 2005

QUESTION: On base closure, Mr. Secretary, the commission meets this week starting tomorrow. When the Pentagon's recommendations initially came out, you had said that you hadn't made the changes to those recommendations, if I recall correctly.

RUMSFELD: I did not. QUESTION: And the message that many of us drew from that was that you wanted the commission not to make major changes to that list.

Traditionally, they've made about 15 percent changes on the closures, and they have questioned a number of things, including cost savings and significant cuts in base structure in the Northeast.

Would you like to ask them now not to make any changes? Do you expect them to make significant changes?

RUMSFELD: Well, let me say two or three things about this process. It's a very open process. It's transparent. It's on television. People can see and hear what individuals have to say.

The thing to keep in mind are the following several points. One, the Department of Defense has spent something like two or two and a half

years working on this. The recommendations came up from the services. Then they were looked at across services. And then they were fashioned into a package, costed. The data was arranged and the data was certified. And the data was then presented to the commission with the recommendations. What we've seen since is not certified data. We are seeing marketing data from various states and cities and communities that have a deep concern about -- understandably -- about the circumstances of their states and their cities.

But one has to give different weight to certified data that was shaped over two and a half years and information that's being gathered for the sake of making a point.

RUMSFELD: Second, on costs: I do not know precisely what the commission has said nor do I know precisely what the GAO has said. I only know what I've read in the paper, where the papers are saying some things with respect to cost.

And it strikes me it's important to take a moment and explain this. You all know that there are people in Congress who are recommending that we increase the size of the armed forces.

In addition, General Schoomaker came to me many, many, many months ago and asked that I and the president agree with him that we could increase the army by 30,000 on a temporary basis while the resetting of the force and the modularization takes place.

So let's take the number of 30,000, or some number like that, where we need to increase the size of the force. There's two ways to do that. We need 35,000 more people available to do the things that the Army needs to do.

You can get them from several places. You could get them by bringing them in and taking a year or two or three to train them. Or you can get them by moving them out of civilian jobs and putting them into military jobs. Or you can find efficiencies.

For example, if you've got two bases that do roughly the same thing and you decide that you're paying double force protection and double logistics, and you can save 1,000 or 5,000 people by bringing them together and having single force protection or single logistics -- just for a simplified example -- then the question is -- let's say you've got 5,000 people that you've just saved. You don't need them at that other base. Someone says that that's a saving only if you cashier them out of the military. That's kind of a green eye shade auditor approach to it.

On the other hand, if you say you're going to add 5,000 because of the modularization and because of the stress on the force and the things you're trying to do, and you use those 5,000, then you don't have to add 5,000. You've had cost avoidance. They're exactly the same thing financially.

And any suggestion to the contrary that any of the cost savings that have been projected are not, in fact, really cost savings, it seems to me, would be a misunderstanding of the dynamics that are take place in the armed services.

RUMSFELD: The only other thing I'll say about the BRAC is that we have to be appreciative of the chairman and the commissioners and the work they've done. You're quite right: Previous BRACs have made some changes.

I looked at this two and a half year work product and all the data and the past history where people were concerned that politics had entered into it and made a decision that this was our chance in maybe a quarter of a century to reset our force, to look at military value, and to connect it with the important things that are coming back from Europe and around the world -- 70,000 military probably, maybe 100,000 dependents, contractors -- and have it all come together in a way that's in the interest of the taxpayers of America, that's in the interest of the United States armed forces.

These are all recommendations that they've produced. They didn't come out of midair. And

there wasn't an ounce of politics in any aspect of it.

And I did exactly what you said. I looked at it and said that it would be risky for me to try to second-guess all of that and pull a thread out and have some non-intuitive effects that one couldn't anticipate because I hadn't spent the two and a half years doing it.

I feel that we made very solid recommendations. I suspect the commission, when all is said and done, will endorse the overwhelming majority of those recommendations.

Whether they make some changes is up to them. The next step then would be for us to make our recommendations to the president as to any changes that are made, or might be made, and advise him as to his next step, which is either to send it to Congress if he's comfortable with any changes they might make or not make or send it back to them to review any changes they thought they might like to make. And time will tell.

### **Base Closings Will Be OK'd, Rumsfeld Says**

USA Today  
August 24, 2005

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld predicted Tuesday that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will endorse "the overwhelming majority" of his proposals to close, shrink or expand hundreds of military bases across the country. Previous commissions — in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 — altered about 15% of what the Pentagon proposed.

The nine-member panel has set aside four days, beginning today, to vote on the Pentagon's plan, announced in May, to close 33 bases and downsize 29 others, saving an estimated \$49 billion over 20 years.

The commission's report is due to President Bush on Sept. 8. He will give a final list to Congress, which can accept or reject the list but can't change it.

### **Commission begins final voting on military base realignment**

Associated Press  
Liz Sidoti  
August 24, 2005

The fate of hundreds of military bases across the country, including in Illinois, lies in the hands of nine members of a federal commission.

Concluding four months of work, the panel reviewing the Pentagon's plan to restructure the stateside network of facilities was starting to make final decisions Wednesday about which Army, Navy and Air Force bases to spare and which ones to close, shrink or expand.

Commissioners, who have vowed not to rubber-stamp Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's plan, say changes are likely before they send their final report to President Bush next month. But just what may be changed is unclear.

A day before the commission was to begin voting, Rumsfeld was optimistic his plan would remain largely intact. "I feel that we made very solid recommendations," he said Tuesday. "I suspect the commission, when all is said and done, will endorse the overwhelming majority of those recommendations."

No Illinois bases are recommended for closure, but hundreds of jobs and military positions would be lost at the Rock Island Arsenal, Springfield's Air National Guard base and The Great Lakes Naval Recruit Training Command in North Chicago. Illinois would gain 800 positions, however, at Scott Air Force Base, east of St. Louis.

Previous commissions - in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 - altered about 15 percent of what the Pentagon proposed as it sought to get rid of bases considered no longer needed. But analysts say the current environment - the emphasis on homeland security and threats in the post-Sept. 11, 2001, era - make it difficult to predict just what the commission will change.

"It's not about just trying to get rid of excess capacity. It's actually about trying to reorganize

the forces for future challenges," said Loren Thompson, a military analyst with the Lexington Institute, a think tank in Arlington, Va. "That makes the outcome harder to call."

The Pentagon proposed closing or consolidating a record 62 major military bases and 775 smaller installations to save \$48.8 billion over 20 years, streamline the services and reposition the armed forces to face current threats. It's the first such effort in a decade to reconfigure domestic military bases and the most ambitious by far.

Announced in May, the proposal set off intense lobbying by communities fearful that the closures and downsizings would hurt their economies and by politicians worried they would be blamed by voters for job losses.

In the months since, commissioners reviewing the plan have voiced serious concerns about several parts of it.

The most contentious issues have been the Air Force's proposal to strip aircraft from about two dozen Air National Guard facilities and the Navy's efforts to scale back its forces in New England. They include closing the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine and Submarine Base New London in Connecticut, as well as sharply reducing forces at Naval Air Station Brunswick in Maine.

Commissioners fear those proposals could hamper homeland security, a contention the Pentagon rejects.

The Air Force's attempt to close Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, home to freshman Republican Sen. John Thune, has stirred the most political consternation. Thune argued during the 2004 campaign that he - not Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle - would be in a better position to save the facility.

Over the past week, commission members have publicly expressed reservations about closing Ellsworth, as well as two other large bases: Fort Monmouth in New Jersey, which would lose more than 5,000 jobs, and Cannon Air Force

Base in Clovis, N.M., where nearly 3,000 jobs are at stake.

Commissioners also have grappled over one of their own proposals: whether to move the Navy's jet training base at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia to Cecil Field in Jacksonville, Fla., which was closed in 1999. The Pentagon opposes the plan, which would require the commission to reopen the Florida base, but the commission decided to consider the move because of urban encroachment in Virginia.

The commission is scheduled to work 14 hours each day, although members are hoping to complete their work before the weekend. Army, Navy and joint-service recommendations will be considered first, followed by the Air Force.

The panel, chaired by former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi, must send its final proposal to Bush by Sept. 8. The president can accept the report or order the commission to make changes, a scenario considered unlikely given that his predecessor, President Clinton, was criticized for such intervention in 1995.

If Bush accepts the proposal, it will become law in about nine weeks unless Congress passes a joint resolution rejecting it. Lawmakers haven't taken that step in any of the previous base-closing rounds.

**Hope, Fear for Some Military Bases**  
**The panel that votes this week on the fate of 837 facilities around the U.S. is showing signs that it won't rubber-stamp the Pentagon's list.**

Los Angeles Times

John Hendren

August 24, 2005

Since the Pentagon began methodically trimming its network of military installations after the Cold War, one part of the process has remained grimly consistent: Nearly any base on the proposed closure list has been doomed, and subsequent review has rarely changed the outcome.

But a surprising amount of suspense surrounds the latest Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission as it prepares to vote this week on the fate of 837 facilities around the country, including 33 major bases the Pentagon wants to close.

To an unusual degree, members of the panel have sharply questioned the rationale behind some of the military planners' life-or-death recommendations for bases, fueling predictions that they may be poised to make significant changes.

"They are certainly showing signs of being more willing to buck the department's recommendations than previous commissions," said Jeremiah Gertler, a staff member on the last base-closing commission.

The speculation is infusing the panel's Washington meetings with a mixture of hope and fear — hope among backers of bases targeted by the Pentagon that they might somehow be spared; fear among supporters of once-safe bases that could be whacked instead.

California, which got off comparatively easy in the Pentagon's spring recommendations, is struggling to preserve the Defense Language Institute and the Naval Postgraduate School, both facilities in Monterey that were added to the list by the panel last month to the dismay of state and local officials.

Underscoring the possibility of significant differences, members of the base-closing commission in recent hearings have challenged the Bush administration's projected cost savings and strategic justifications for removing most of the active-duty military from the Northeast.

When the Pentagon offered its list in May, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said he did not make a single change, out of fear that it would unravel a plan to cut costs while transforming military capabilities.

Commenting on Rumsfeld's statement May 16, commission Chairman Anthony J. Principi said,

"I don't see it as stopping us in any way" from reaching different conclusions.

After a hearing Saturday, retired Gen. James Hill, a commission member, said most of the Pentagon recommendations were "for the most part really well made." But he added, "We're not going to bless it all, I suspect."

Rumsfeld repeated his warning Tuesday on leaving the recommendations intact, describing criticism of the Pentagon plan crafted over 2 1/2 years as "marketing data from various states."

"I looked at it and said that it would be risky for me to try to second-guess all of that ... because I hadn't spent the 2 1/2 years doing it," Rumsfeld told reporters at the Pentagon.

Nevertheless, some insiders believe that the commission could revise one-fifth of the Pentagon's closure recommendations and substantially change an additional one-fourth — altering nearly half of Rumsfeld's proposals. Customarily, substantial changes have amounted to no more than 15%.

"If the administration wanted a rubber stamp, they really picked the wrong commissioners," said military analyst Loren Thompson.

In a July 19 hearing, the base-closing panel took the unusual step of adding the Navy's premier East Coast aircraft carrier training center, the Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia, to its list of potential cuts, citing encroachment by the surrounding community. The panel is considering reopening Cecil Field Air Station in Florida, closed in the 1993 base-closure round, to replace it.

"To bring a base onto the list and to set up a competition between an existing base and one that was already closed ... is unprecedented," Gertler said. "It's the commissioners taking a very broad view of the commission's job."

One potential target for change in the Pentagon's plan is the proposal to close or dramatically cut four major bases in New England. The Pentagon blueprint would cut 16,000 jobs at Portsmouth

Naval Shipyard and Brunswick Naval Air Station in Maine, Otis Air Guard Base in Massachusetts and New London Submarine Base in Connecticut.

Commissioners have expressed sympathy for the arguments of New England officials who say the "demilitarized" region would be more vulnerable to terrorist and missile attacks and that residents would have little stake in supporting or sending their children to join a military that had fewer connections to their lives.

"I remain very concerned with the recommendations to close just about all remaining military facilities in the Northeast and New England particularly ... virtually abandoning that section of the country from our operating base," Principi said at the July 19 hearing.

Another theme sounded by commissioners in recent hearings is that some of the Pentagon's cuts, designed to save \$48.8 billion over 20 years, are not worth the trouble. A July 1 critique of the plan by the Government Accountability Office concluded that much of the savings came from counting positions that would be transferred to other bases.

"It doesn't appear to us the savings are real," commission member Philip Coyle, a Californian, said at the hearing Saturday.

The panel, including Principi, appeared to have tipped its hands on that point, said Steve Grundman, who served as deputy undersecretary of Defense for installations during the Clinton administration.

"That makes me think there is a consensus developing to turn back some of the secretary's recommendations — that whatever cost savings are to be gained are not worth it," Grundman said. "I would guess that some of those cost savings will be turned back on that basis."

In cuts from 1988 to 1995, 29 California bases were closed, costing 93,000 jobs. Proposed cuts this year are light by comparison. If the proposed transfers and closures are completed,

California, which has nearly 200,000 military and civilian defense jobs, would lose 2,018.

The tally does not include the Defense Language Institute and the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey. Neither was on the original Pentagon closure list; they were added later by members of the review panel as an option. The panel is reportedly considering merging the Navy school and an Air Force school in Dayton, Ohio.

The panel could begin making decisions on the California bases in votes today. But California officials expect the Monterey schools to survive.

"That's because the hard work was done before the original list came out and California did quite well at that time," said Vince Sollitto, a spokesman for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. "The commission is reviewing that work, but appears to agree."

The base-closing commission must deliver its final report to President Bush by Sept. 8. Bush may either forward it to Congress or send it back to the commission with his own recommendations. In that case, the panel would have to resubmit its report by Oct. 20, and Bush would have to send it to Congress by Nov. 7. Congress would have 45 days after it received the report to approve or reject it, but it could not change it.

One wild card in the process is a group of lawsuits by several states challenging Air Force plans for a major restructuring of the Air National Guard. In Philadelphia on Tuesday, U.S. District Judge John Padova heard arguments in a lawsuit filed by Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell challenging cuts at an Air National Guard base in his state. Padova issued no decision, however, allowing the work of the base-closing commission to continue.

**When the Pentagon Wants to Cut**  
New York Times  
Terry Pristin  
August 24, 2005

The just-completed One Liberty Center, in the Ballston section of this Washington suburb, was

BRAC Commission Early Bird

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built specifically for the Office of Naval Research. The design included antiterrorism features that added about 25 percent to the cost of the 13-story building, according to the developer.

The huge columns in the garage, for example, are housed in steel plates. The concrete walls are unusually thick, and the laminated windows are not only shatterproof but are anchored to the building by steel rods.

Yet its \$10 million of bells and whistles -- paid for by the Department of Defense -- have not protected One Liberty Center from winding up on the Pentagon's base-closing list.

Just nine days before the Office of Naval Research moved in to its new offices, the Department of Defense recommended moving the research agency, as well as a second tenant, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, to the National Naval Medical Center, a government-owned complex in Bethesda, Md.

The department also proposed transferring the remaining tenant, the Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals, to Fort Meade, Md.

One Liberty Center is among 102 office buildings nationwide that could lose Defense Department tenants. In its May 13 announcement proposing that 180 military bases be closed or reduced in size, the Pentagon also said it wanted to consolidate its research agencies and "reduce the department's reliance on leased space, which has historically higher overall costs than government-owned space and generally does not meet Anti-Force Protection standards."

New Defense Department standards, which differ from those for other buildings with government tenants, call for an 82-foot setback. One Liberty Center, which was built according to the security standards in place in 2002, is only 20 feet from the curb, like most city buildings.

"You hate to play the game and find out that they changed the rules," said John G. Shooshan, the chairman of the Shooshan Company, a

private company in Arlington that developed the building and is a minority owner.

If the proposals are adopted, Northern Virginia would bear a heavy economic burden. As much as 7.7 million square feet of leased space could empty out and 23,000 jobs could be affected, according to Cassidy & Pinkard, a real estate services company in the Washington area.

The realignment would occur over several years, however, and the General Services Administration would still be responsible for the long-term leases. The base realignment commission has until Sept. 8 to forward its recommendations to President Bush.

Uncertainty over the realignment plan caused Equity Office Properties, the large office landlord, to take two buildings off the market in the Crystal City section of Arlington. But the company with the most at stake is Vornado Realty Trust, a large real estate investment trust based in New York that is renting an estimated 2.3 million square feet of space in Arlington to the Defense Department, according to Jim Sullivan, a senior analyst for Green Street Advisors of Newport Beach, Calif.

Real estate specialists say the streamlining plan is also likely to ripple through the office market as military contractors search for new offices near their clients.

"That's the wild card in this whole issue," said Margarita Foster, the director of research for Cassidy & Pinkard. Agencies are generally believed to use one outside contract worker for every employee, but the outsourcing ratio in some cases may be as high as 3 to 1, she said.

Mr. Sullivan said the loss of so many contracted jobs would be "an anchor that will weigh on that market for years to come." For Northern Virginia, the threatened vacancies come just as the office market has managed to recover from the technology bust of a few years ago, thanks in large measure to heavy spending by the Defense and Homeland Security Departments.

More than half the vulnerable space -- about 4.6 million square feet -- is in Arlington County, representing about one-seventh of the privately owned office market, and local officials are fighting back hard.

They are being aided by influential politicians like Senator John W. Warner of Virginia, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who has said that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld violated the realignment process by basing his proposals on a policy to vacate leased space. (In response, Glenn Flood, a Pentagon spokesman, said the recommendations were consistent with improving "military value.")

The county has also hired a lobbying group led by William S. Cohen, a former secretary of defense, and has proposed that other sites that could provide wider setbacks from the street be considered for the research agencies. The base-closing proposals are yet another blow to Crystal City, a warren of concrete buildings that has been struggling to rebound from the loss of the Patent and Trademark Office, which recently gave up 2.3 million square feet spread over a number of buildings and moved to a new complex of 2.4 million square feet in neighboring Alexandria.

Another important tenant, US Airways, is also expected to move out of 2345 Crystal Drive, the building that houses the headquarters of the Charles E. Smith Company, which developed most of Crystal City.

Steven Roth, the chairman of Vornado, which owns Charles E. Smith, would not allow company officials to be interviewed about Crystal City. But in a letter to shareholders in the company's 2004 annual report -- issued before the base-closing announcement -- Mr. Roth acknowledged that efforts to find new tenants were "going a bit slower than the self-imposed schedule we established in this letter last year." The company has, however, filled some of the empty space with tenants like the Public Broadcasting Service.

Designed in the so-called brutalist style of the 1960's and 1970's, Crystal City's buildings are linked by the kind of old-fashioned underground retail shopping center that is anathema to today's planners.

Faced with a need to replace the Patent and Trademark Office, Vornado has spent \$43 million to make Crystal City more appealing to nongovernment tenants by putting street-level restaurants along Crystal Drive. Materials like limestone and granite, brightly colored awnings, banners and umbrellas, and landscaping and benches have softened that street's appearance.

"We're moving away from the days when benches meant vagrants," said Olivia Demetriou of Adamstein & Demetriou, the firm that designed the sleek new building that houses Jaleo Spanish Tapas & Bar and Oyamel Cocina Mexicana.

The rejuvenation of Crystal City is consistent with Arlington's attempts over the years to create a series of pedestrian-friendly urban villages around its Metro stations. In the Ballston section, for example, scientists at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency regularly walk to the nearby National Science Foundation.

County officials have warned that employees of the research agencies would be likely to find jobs in the private sector rather than allow themselves to be uprooted.

Jay Fisette, the chairman of the Arlington County Board, challenged the Defense Department's policy of requiring wide setbacks when other government agencies do not.

"Some day we're going to judge this secretary as having truly overreacted," Mr. Fisette, a Democrat, said of Mr. Rumsfeld. "Speaking as a person who tries to build communities and create a sense of place, this turns that on its head and sends a very strong message of anxiety and fear."

### **Delaware ready to sue if BRAC votes to move National Guard planes**

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Randall Chase  
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Delaware is ready to file a federal lawsuit if the Base Realignment and Closure Commission goes along with Pentagon recommendations to gut the state's Air National Guard, officials said Tuesday.

Under the Department of Defense recommendations, the Delaware Air National Guard would lose all eight of its C-130 cargo aircraft based at the New Castle County Airport. Four of the planes from the 166th Air Wing would go to Charlotte, N.C.; the other four would move to Savannah, Ga.

The Pentagon also is recommending that the 166th Aerial Port Squadron and 166th Fire and Rescue Squadron be moved from New Castle to Dover Air Force Base, and that the 142nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron be moved to McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey.

The BRAC Commission is scheduled to vote later this week to accept or reject the Pentagon's recommendations.

"We are prepared and will be filing a lawsuit if it is appropriate when the BRAC commission releases its vote," chief deputy attorney general Carl Danberg said Tuesday.

The governors of Pennsylvania, Illinois and Tennessee have filed lawsuits arguing that the federal government cannot move National Guard units without their consent. The Justice Department has sided with the Pentagon, arguing that the Base Realignment and Closure Act supersedes a federal statute requiring gubernatorial consent.

Danberg said the "tactical and legal" decisions to plan for Delaware's lawsuit were made in concert with Gov. Ruth Ann Minner, the state's congressional delegation, and Maj. Gen. Frank Vavala, adjutant general of the Delaware National Guard.

"We should be prepared to pull the trigger should the BRAC commission rule against the retention of our aircraft in New Castle County," Vavala said.

Minner spokeswoman Kate Bailey said the governor would not comment on the lawsuit until the BRAC Commission makes its decision.

Delaware officials still are hoping that a lawsuit won't be necessary.

"I think if the BRAC Commission follows its charter, they can't help but overturn (the recommendations) in our particular case, because what the Air Force has done is subverted the process," Vavala said.

Delaware officials have challenged the DOD's findings in a series of venues, including a site visit by BRAC officials to the New Castle base and formal testimony at hearings in Baltimore and Atlanta.

"We believe that the BRAC Commission has been apprised of significant errors and omissions in the Department of Defense process," Danberg said.

Among other things, Delaware officials contend that Air Force data on pavement quality at the New Castle base was collected before the completion of \$17 million in renovations. They also argue that the methodology for determining the base's mission capability index was faulty, and that the Pentagon failed to address the economic impact on the local community and the likelihood that many of the Guard members that maintain and fly the planes would not be willing to relocate.

Vavala said the recommended moves would result in the loss of about half of the 1,000 members of the DANG. Under the Pentagon plan, the New Castle base would become one of about Air National Guard "enclave" bases around the country.

Critics say the "enclave" concept is simply a gradual way to eliminate military bases while circumventing the BRAC process.

#### BRAC Commission Early Bird

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"Essentially, it's a delaying tactic," Vavala said. "... How am I going to recruit for an Air National Guard without 'Air'?"

### **CCAGW URGES BRAC COMMISSION, CONGRESS TO SUPPORT MILITARY TRANSFORMATION**

PR Newswire  
August 23, 2005

The Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW) today urged the Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) and Congress to endorse a comprehensive plan for military transformation. The nine-member BRAC panel will begin voting tomorrow on the Department of Defense's (DoD) recommendations to close or restructure 67 major U.S. bases, saving an estimated \$ 48.8 billion over 20 years. President Bush is expected to approve the BRAC Commission's final report, which will then be forwarded to Congress for an up-or-down vote.

Past commissions have endorsed about 85 percent of the Pentagon's recommendations. In the past four months, commissioners have flown from coast to coast for private meetings, public hearings, and in-depth studies of military installations. They have considered adding at least 11 installations to the Pentagon's list.

Objections to the Pentagon's recommendations include concerns that restructuring the Air National Guard could hurt recruitment and retention. But National Guard Bureau chief Lt. Gen. Steven Blum called it a modernizing step toward shedding excess infrastructure, vowing to accommodate service people and pointing out that "frankly, some of the jobs they are doing now are not what we need the Air Force to be doing in the future." The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found the DoD's process to be "generally logical, reasoned, and well documented," and if approved, would "produce savings." The BRAC commission has questioned the Pentagon's savings estimates, but not its overall effort.

"People may quibble with this or that element of the Pentagon's plan, but the fact remains that BRAC has a proven track record of achieving significant savings for taxpayers," CCAGW President Tom Schatz said.

BRAC has narrowly survived multiple legislative attempts at sabotage. The Senate must still consider S. 1075, an amendment to the defense authorization bill proposed by Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), that would postpone base closures until most troops return from Iraq. His state stands to lose Ellsworth Air Force Base. Service leaders have repeatedly stressed that BRAC not only makes economic sense but military and operations sense as well, calling the timing "perfect" as it gives planners the opportunity to determine the best locations to reset units coming back from overseas.

"Lawmakers who would undercut the entire process just to salvage a few votes are putting parochial interests ahead of national security," Schatz continued. "The prime purpose of these efforts is to preserve jobs for constituents."

Despite the dire prognostications by opponents, a May 2005 GAO report showed that towns affected by base closings continue to recover and fare well compared to average rates for unemployment and income growth. BRAC success stories can serve as models for towns facing a difficult period of adjustment. Austin converted the Bergstrom Air Force Base into the Bergstrom-Austin International Airport, contributing \$ 1.8 billion annually to the city's economy. Officials in Georgia have floated the idea of relocating Zoo Atlanta to Fort McPherson if it gets slated for closure.

"The BRAC Commission has all the information necessary to submit a plan in the best interest of the country. Members of Congress must ensure that DoD has the flexibility to restructure in a changing security environment," Schatz added.

The Council for Citizens Against Government Waste is the lobbying arm of Citizens Against Government Waste, the nation's largest nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating waste, fraud, abuse, and

mismanagement in government. Council for  
Citizens Against Government Waste

**Some military bases may survive  
Pentagon targeting**

Scripps Howard News Service  
Lisa Hoffman  
August 23, 2005

A lucky few communities around the country will find their wishes coming true this week when a commission votes beginning Wednesday on the dreaded Pentagon military base hit list.

If past base-closing rounds are a predictor, several of the more than 800 major and minor facilities targeted this year to close or shrink will be saved by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which this week is holding marathon public voting sessions that could stretch to Saturday at a hotel in Arlington, Va.

In 1995, the last time the wrenching base-closing process occurred, commissioners voted to keep open at least seven facilities the Pentagon had requested to close. In each case, the members disagreed with the analysis provided by the military on the future worth of the installation.

Among the lucky installations then: the Army's Fort Hamilton in New York, the Naval Air Station in Meridian, Miss.; the Red River Distribution Depot in Texas; and the Naval Air Warfare Center in Lakehurst, N.J.

The Naval Air Station and the Red River facility are back on the current Pentagon hit list.

In 1993, the commission rescued Fort McClellan in Alabama, the Naval Supply Center in Oakland, Calif., and the Defense Distribution Depot in Letterkenny, Pa., among other bases.

"(The panel members this year) by and large feel pretty comfortable with a majority of the (Pentagon's) recommendations," said Chris Hellman, a base-closing expert at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation think tank in Washington.

Statistically, about 10 percent to 15 percent of facilities targeted by the Pentagon have been saved by commissions past. Base-closing analysts predict the same result this year, although the outcome of a firestorm over the Defense Department's desire to gut about two-dozen Air National Guard posts could change that proportion.

Commission members have pressed the Air Force and states to come up with a compromise plan that would save some of the facilities but also cut costs.

"If you leave aside the National Guard (outfits), I predict the result will be pretty consistent with previous rounds in terms of changes," said Robert Gillcash, a senior adviser at McKenna, Long & Aldridge law firm in Washington, who as an aide to Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., led the ultimately successful effort to remove the Naval Submarine Base in New London, Conn., from the 1993 closing list. (The facility is back on this year's list.)

In comments made during weeks of public hearings, and in an interview Monday with the publications Congressional Quarterly and Military Times, panel chairman Anthony Principi hinted at those facilities in the bull's-eye that might have a shot at survival.

Among those were Maine's Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the New London submarine base and Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota.

But while proponents of those facilities might be breathing a bit easier as the voting begins, other communities that thought they had dodged the Pentagon's base-closing bullet are bracing for bad news.

As commissions have done in the past, the current panel is considering killing, shrinking or moving a host of installations that the Pentagon did not target this year.

They include the Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia, Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine,

and Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina, according to the commission.

### **Panel to decide cuts that could split military, Northeast**

Associated Press

Jeff Donn

August 23, 2005

The military may save money with deep cuts at Northeastern bases, critics say, but that would probably come at a cost - an erosion of public support in the region where Americans first took up arms for their new country 230 years ago.

A national commission starts final review Wednesday on a plan that could erase 12 percent of jobs at bases across the region, according to a tally by The Associated Press.

If adopted as proposed, the cuts would more deeply stamp America's army as an institution of the South and Midwest - and not of the Northeast, say some analysts and community leaders. They predict weaker backing in wartime, fewer recruits, and strained contractor relations across the region.

"We're quickly moving to the point where we will have no military bases in the Northeast, and this undermines support for the military," said U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Conn., who was an Army reservist for 33 years. "We are a nation of citizen soldiers."

In Arlington, Va., the nine-member Base Realignment and Closure Commission will consider closing or trimming 62 of the largest bases and hundreds of smaller sites in proposals initially laid out by the Pentagon. President Bush and Congress each exercise veto power over the final plan.

In previous rounds of trimming since 1988, about a fifth of the major cuts struck the Northeast once they filtered through civilian review, according to a 2002 report by the U.S. General Accounting Office. That showed a kind of demographic equity, since about a fifth of the nation lives in the Northeast.

This time, the Pentagon would shift that balance radically. It proposed slicing 21,151 Northeastern jobs - 12 percent of the region's remaining defense and civilian personnel at military bases, Defense Department studies indicate.

That would be three-quarters of the regional cuts. The Midwest would shed the rest, while 21,598 jobs would go to the South and West.

"It is national security that we're talking about here, and you need national support," said Glen Browder, a former Alabama congressman who teaches civilian-military relations at the Naval Postgraduate School. The school in Monterey, Calif., is itself on the list of possible closings.

The Pentagon and many other employers have followed the tug of more plentiful land, cheaper prices and sunnier skies in the South and West for decades. The Pentagon defends its latest plan on the basis of military value and savings; it estimates its plan would save almost \$50 billion over 20 years.

However, several politicians and members of the review commission have hinted that the Pentagon's cuts need more geographical balance. Commission Chairman Anthony Principi has said the military would be "virtually abandoning" the Northeast.

Analysts generally reject any theory that the Republican administration is taking revenge on the heavily Democratic Northeast for voting for John Kerry in the last presidential election. "I don't see any malicious political intent here - just myopia and shortsightedness," said Richard Kohn, a military historian at the University of North Carolina.

However, some worry that the base shift would magnify a tendency toward more public and political backing for the military in the South and West and less in the Northeast.

"The sources of support for the military are becoming concentrated in a handful of regions," said Loren Thompson, a security expert at the Lexington Institute think tank in Arlington, Va.

"That suggests in the future less broad-based political support for the armed forces."

The institute is named for the site of the first Revolutionary War battle, where a small band of civilian militiamen, warned by Paul Revere, challenged a larger force of British regulars. They came to be called Minutemen, because they could rally so quickly to the nation's defense.

These days, military recruiters fear that an out-of-sight army will be out of mind for many Northeasterners. Maj. General John Libby, who heads the National Guard in Maine, said the bunching of bases in the South "just removes from our culture and society of the Northeast the military presence - and therefore the inclination to military service."

Fewer Northeasterners will forge personal connections with the military through relatives or personal experience, the specialists say. John Pike, director of Globalsecurity.org., recalled clambering over Army tanks as a child at a museum not far from his home at Fort Knox, Ky.

"If the only soldier you've ever seen has been on TV, I think you'd think of the military as something alien," he said.

Defense specialists also warn of estrangement between the military and its Northeast contractors, who are often based at prominent nearby universities or businesses with long experience. More than 2,000 local companies do business with Submarine Base New London, in Groton, Conn., which is targeted to close with its 8,460 jobs in the state hardest hit by the Pentagon's plan.

"So we have a culture - and one could say it's an advanced form of maritime culture - that we've had here in New England for a couple hundred years," said Tony Sheridan, president of the area's Chamber of Commerce.

Nuclear submarine maker Electric Boat, also in Groton, sends about 500 workers to the base as part of a broader company team that helps

design, build, and fix the undersea fleet. The Pentagon wants to run the fleet instead from two Southern bases.

"It would take many years to reconstitute it, even if they could ever bring it to the level that exists today," said Electric Boat spokesman Neil Ruenzel.

Electric Boat sold its first submarine to the Navy, after all, way back in 1900.

### **NGAUS Files Amicus Brief Supporting Pennsylvania Lawsuit Against the Pentagon**

U.S. Newswire  
August 23, 2005

Stymied and frustrated by Air Force officials, 45,000 current and former National Guard officers are taking their Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) case to court.

The National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) yesterday filed an amicus (friend of the court) brief in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania supporting Pennsylvania's lawsuit against the Defense Department over BRAC.

The association agrees with the commonwealth that the Pentagon violated federal law in recommending the deactivation of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard's 111th Fighter Wing without the consent of Gov. Edward G. Rendell.

NGAUS believes the states and the federal government share the National Guard with Congress establishing a careful balance on matters relating to command, control and oversight of the force. The brief outlines, from a Guard perspective, why preserving this equilibrium is vital.

"One important element in maintaining this balance is respect for the congressionally mandated role of our governors, who are commanders in chief of the National Guard when not in federal service," the association

wrote in the filing. "Federal law gives the governors the authority to make certain decisions about their state National Guard units."

The association believes Air Force officials ignored these laws not only in the case of Pennsylvania, but in 26 other states and territories facing the loss of numerous Air Guard aircraft and hundreds of personnel under recommendations included in the Pentagon's BRAC proposal.

"NGAUS agrees with the plaintiffs that this case is not about closing or realigning installations or about the Base Closure Act," the association wrote. "Rather it is about the proper and prudent role of the states, set forth by Congress, with regard to National Guard units."

### **Hanscom rivals make last appeal to panel Foes say state lacks space, skilled labor**

Boston Globe  
Bryan Bender  
August 24, 2005

Communities set to lose work to Hanscom Air Force Base are making a last-ditch effort to defeat the Pentagon's proposal to consolidate hightech research programs at the Bedford facility and add more than 1,000 jobs there.

Officials from Ohio, Texas, and Alabama have told the baseclosing commission this month they believe Hanscom lacks the space and the skilled workforce in the surrounding area to take on the new projects. The opponents also contend that the Pentagon's decision to expand Hanscom was improperly influenced by a public-private plan in Massachusetts to pay for the new infrastructure.

"Sufficient land for military construction is not available at Hanscom AFB," Representative David L. Hobson, an Ohio Republican who represents employees of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, told the Base Realignment and Closure Commission in recent correspondence. He also questioned whether Hanscom can find "qualified civilians in the Boston area that are needed."

Massachusetts leaders who successfully lobbied for the expansion struck back yesterday. They provided commissioners with a point-by-point rebuttal of the critics' contentions and urged the commission to uphold the Hanscom expansion plan when it completes deliberations this week.

"We believe that Hanscom's unique position at the heart of the nation's leading defense technology cluster, combined with its sizable excess capacity, make it well-suited to accommodate the mission outlined in the [Defense Department's] recommendation," five members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation told the commission's chairman, Anthony J. Principi, in a letter delivered to him yesterday.

The letter was signed by Governor Mitt Romney, Senators Edward M. Kennedy and John F. Kerry, and Representatives Edward J. Markey, Martin T. Meehan, and John F. Tierney. When the Pentagon made its recommendations in May, lawmakers and industry leaders celebrated the proposal to shift work to the Bedford facility from Wright-Patterson in Ohio, Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, and Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. The renewed debate over the merits of Hanscom's expansion is occurring as the commission convenes today for a four-day marathon of hearings and votes on a final list of closures and reconfigurations to send to President Bush and Congress.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld expressed confidence yesterday that the nine-member panel will support most of the Pentagon's recommendations, which call for closing 33 major bases.

The plan is intended to save an estimated \$50 billion over the next two decades and better tailor the armed forces to new threats, although the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, says the projected savings are exaggerated.

"I suspect that the commission, when all is said and done, will endorse the overwhelming

majority of those recommendations," Rumsfeld told reporters.

The proposals receiving final review by the independent commission this week include closing Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, and Submarine Base New London in Groton, Conn., and relocating the 102d Fighter Wing of the Massachusetts Air National Guard from Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod to bases in Florida and New Jersey.

Rumsfeld maintained that the Pentagon's recommendations are based on well-documented data compiled over more than two years, and warned that many of the counterarguments now being lobbed at the commissioners by local community leaders are colored by politics.

"We are seeing marketing data from various states and cities and communities that have a deep concern -- understandably -- about the circumstances of their states and their cities," he said. "But one has to give different weight to certified data that was shaped over 2 1/2 years, and information that's being gathered for the sake of making a point."

Among the latest targets of such efforts is the plan to expand Hanscom. Responding to the assertion that the Bedford base does not have enough room for additional research, Massachusetts officials wrote that "Hanscom has 600,000 square feet of excess capacity within existing infrastructure -- more than enough space to accommodate the 1,383 new personnel that will be transferred to Hanscom under the recommendation."

At the same time they also maintained that Massachusetts has more than enough skilled workers.

"Massachusetts certainly has plenty of qualified civilians that the Air Force could hire to fill any vacancies," Romney and the lawmakers wrote. "Hanscom Air Force Base lies at the center of the Route 128 technology corridor of Eastern Massachusetts, one of the world's greatest concentrations of information technology workers."

### **Frist won't join Tenn. lawsuit against base closings by Pentagon**

Associated Press  
Jonathan M. Katz  
August 23, 2005

Tennessee Congressional Democrats are backing Gov. Phil Bredesen in his lawsuit to stop the Defense Department from moving a Nashville-based airlift wing's planes to bases elsewhere in the country.

But Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist of Tennessee won't join them, saying a Bredesen victory would undermine the Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closure process.

At issue is the Pentagon's recommendation to strip the 118th Airlift Wing of equipment and personnel, including its C-130 transport planes, which would be relocated to Kentucky, Illinois and Texas.

The nine-member BRAC panel is scheduled to vote on its final nationwide base closure recommendations this week and send its final report to President Bush by Sept. 8.

Bredesen's suit argues it is against federal law for an Air National Guard unit to be relocated or withdrawn from a state without consent or approval from the governor.

Democratic representatives Jim Cooper, Lincoln Davis, Bart Gordon and Harold Ford Jr. filed a friend-of-the-court brief Tuesday in support of the governor.

The state's fifth Democratic member, John Tanner, was not listed on the brief.

"There must be no doubt, no nuance, no shades of gray when it comes to chains of military command, whether they run from George W. Bush, Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces, or Philip N. Bredesen, Commander in Chief of the Tennessee National Guard," the brief says.

The congressmen stressed the importance of preserving the unit in Nashville.

"The recommendations from the BRAC Commission don't make sense," Gordon said in a statement. "Cutting personnel and removing aircraft at the 118th Airlift Wing do nothing to strengthen our military."

But Frist opposes Bredesen's move, arguing the unit should be protected, but only through the BRAC process.

"He sympathizes with the governor's lawsuit but is concerned that if successful it will greatly undermine BRAC, keeping our military from becoming as effective and efficient as possible," said Frist spokesman Nick Smith.

The governors of Pennsylvania and Illinois have filed similar lawsuits, with a Pennsylvania federal court hearing held today. There is no word yet on when a ruling may come.

But the Tennessee case, which was filed on Thursday, is progressing slowly. A response is not expected before the BRAC recommendations reach the president's desk.

"This is not moving fast in our case," Tennessee Attorney General spokeswoman Sharon Curtis-Flair said. The state has not yet filed for an expedited hearing, she said.

"The loss would severely compromise the state's ability to deal with emergencies and natural disasters, as well as impair our homeland security capabilities," Bredesen said.

### **Local News Articles**

#### **Vote On Bases Likely Today**

Baltimore Sun  
Phillip McGowan  
August 24, 2005

Maryland will learn over the next four days whether four years of lobbying to bring thousands of high-paying defense jobs to the state have paid off.

And the most crucial day is likely to be today, when the federal commission that controls the fate of a national military realignment is scheduled to vote on proposals that would affect Fort Meade and Aberdeen Proving Ground.

After months of hearings across the country on recommendations to close or consolidate more than 60 U.S. bases, the nine members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will meet this morning at a hotel in Crystal City, Va., to begin deciding what will be cut.

At stake for Maryland is whether the commission will adopt proposals the Pentagon made in May that would bring to Maryland at least 6,600 defense jobs - more than any state except Georgia.

Yesterday, top Maryland officials remained quietly confident that the recommendations would be approved - but they weren't taking anything for granted, making last-minute calls to Pentagon leaders and the commissioners to ensure that there would be no surprises.

"I think we will come out a winner," said Aris Melissaratos, secretary of Maryland's Department of Business and Economic Development. Over the last four years, his department has spearheaded the lobbying campaign to bring military jobs to the state. He added that "the Army has followed [the commission's] requirements precisely. They are right on."

Maryland will find out how that optimism holds up today as the panel is expected to vote on adding more than 5,300 jobs to Fort Meade in Anne Arundel County and more than 2,200 to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County. Many of the positions are scientific, and state officials hope they will bolster Maryland's reputation as a high-tech magnet.

Another source of likely job gains will be the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. The Pentagon wants to relocate the flagship military hospital, along with nearly 2,000 jobs, to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda. It was unclear yesterday

#### **BRAC Commission Early Bird**

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when this week's vote on Walter Reed and some other affected state installations would take place.

Maryland leaders reiterated that the Pentagon's proposals would serve national defense priorities. They said that Maryland's proximity to Washington would meet the military's interests to consolidate and protect operations, and the state's deep pool of highly educated workers would also help high-tech operations to flourish.

#### Criticism of plan

But some uncertainty still exists over the expansion at APG, as elected officials from New Jersey have fought a proposal to close Fort Monmouth and move the installation's more than 5,000 scientists and engineers to Aberdeen.

New Jersey's congressional delegation has pointed to cost overruns as one reason to keep the installation put. Its argument, and those of other states, appeared to have been bolstered by a recent report from the Government Accountability Office that put the estimated savings of the realignment at about half of the \$49 billion the Pentagon anticipates over the next 20 years.

The report stated that thousands of jobs expected to be cut would be reassigned. Those findings led commissioners to sharply question Pentagon officials last weekend in Washington over the projected savings.

The Pentagon put the cost of closing Fort Monmouth and moving those jobs south at \$822 million, but New Jersey's congressional delegation has argued that the real cost is closer to \$2 billion.

New Jersey leaders also pointed to a poll that predicted that 82 percent of the base's workers would not move to Maryland with their jobs, leading to a "brain drain" that would endanger troops in Iraq. Some commissioners said they were giving those arguments consideration.

Maryland leaders, however, said that consolidating weapons-development and testing efforts at APG would save the Army hundreds of millions of dollars a year. They also referred to GAO testimony that Fort Monmouth's closure was among the Pentagon's top recommendations for cost cutting.

The commission, led by former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi, must send its recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president must then approve or disapprove the list as a whole by Sept. 23. If he approves the list, it becomes law in 45 days unless Congress rejects it.

#### Potential losses

Maryland would suffer some losses if the Pentagon's recommendations are adopted. And state leaders have fought to keep those jobs.

They are hoping to keep the Bethesda-based National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency from moving to Fort Belvoir, Va. Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski, a Democrat, has asked the commission to consider moving NGA's nearly 3,000 workers to Fort Meade, home to the National Security Agency. And state officials want the commission to reconsider a Pentagon directive to relocate eight C-130J cargo aircraft and 123 Air National Guard jobs from Baltimore County to California and Rhode Island.

Previous BRAC commissions have signed off on about 85 percent of Pentagon recommendations. It would take the vote of five commissioners to save Fort Monmouth - a facility that has escaped closure in previous BRAC cycles.

But Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, a Democrat who represents Fort Meade and APG, said he was taking no chances. In recent days he has contacted eight of the nine commissioners and has spoken with Francis J. Harvey, secretary of the Army, to contest New Jersey's arguments.

"We think our arguments are good, but we are still monitoring this to make sure there are no surprises," Ruppersberger said. "You can't let up until the end."

The most contentious Pentagon plans have been the Air Force's proposal to strip aircraft from about two dozen Air National Guard facilities and the Navy's efforts to scale back its forces in New England. They include closing the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine and Submarine Base New London in Connecticut, and sharply reducing forces at Naval Air Station Brunswick in Maine.

Commissioners fear those proposals could hamper homeland security, a contention the Pentagon rejects.

"I feel that we made very solid recommendations," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said yesterday. "I suspect the commission, when all is said and done, will endorse the overwhelming majority of those recommendations."

**'All we can do is wait' for votes on bases; The BRAC Commission's deliberations will begin Wednesday and be shown live on C-SPAN II. (Maine)**

Portland Press Herald (Maine)  
Dennis Hoey  
August 23, 2005

From Rapid City, S.D., and Willow Grove, Pa., to Brunswick and Kittery, the advocates who have fought to keep their hometown military bases from being closed will gather in various venues Wednesday to watch an independent commission determine their fate on national television. Base supporters in those communities say they have done everything they can to convince the Base Realignment and Closure Commission of their installations' value. Now, all they can do is wait as the future of the Brunswick Naval Air Station and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is decided.

In Brunswick, town officials have invited residents to come to the former Brunswick High School on McKeen Street to view the proceedings on C-SPAN II. The high school will open at 8 a.m. and remain open throughout the

day for anyone who wants to watch the proceedings on a big screen.

"This is an important national event, and not everyone subscribes to expanded cable services," said Brunswick's assistant town manager, Patricia Harrington. "We wanted to offer a place where people could watch together and talk about it. It's a form of reaching out to the community."

Members of the commission are scheduled to begin deliberations at 8 a.m. Commission spokesman Robert McCreary said commissioners will discuss Army bases that are targeted for closure before reviewing the list of Navy installations.

Brunswick and Portsmouth supporters say the base-closing commission will deal first with the question of closing Brunswick Naval Air Station. It will take votes from seven of the nine commissioners to keep the base on the closure list. Any number less than that will remove Brunswick from the closure list.

"It takes seven votes to close," said retired Navy Adm. Harry Rich of Harpswell, a member of the citizen task force that has lobbied to keep the Brunswick base open. Rich plans to attend Wednesday's hearing in Arlington, Va.

"I want to be physically present to look the commissioners in the eye and to see who raises their hand," he said.

If Brunswick survives, the commission will address the issue of realignment. Votes are needed from at least five commissioners to realign BNAS - the option favored by the Department of Defense. Under the downsizing scenario, Brunswick would remain open but all of its P-3 Orion planes would be moved to Jacksonville, Fla.

Commissioners are expected to take up the question of closing the shipyard in Kittery after they have dealt with Brunswick, which means that Maine could know the fate of its installations by Wednesday night. The

commission must give President Bush its list of bases to be closed or realigned by Sept. 8.

Shipyard supporters will hold a news conference at Traip Academy in Kittery two hours after the commission's decision. No special gatherings are planned for Wednesday, but supporters will be glued to their television sets.

"All we can do is wait now," said Dick Ingram, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce. "Absolutely everything that could be done has been done. I think it all came together for us in pretty impressive fashion."

In Rapid City, S.D., supporters of Ellsworth Air Force Base have fought hard to save their base, which is home to two B-1 bomber squadrons. Supporters showed up en masse for commission hearings in Washington, D.C., earlier this summer.

Jim McKeon is president of the Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce. He also serves on the Ellsworth Task Force, which was formed to keep the base open. McKeon said it would be impossible to hold a public gathering like Brunswick has planned because it is not clear when the commission will address the list of Air Force bases to be closed. But, he said, supporters will follow the proceedings closely on C-SPAN.

"We have been fighting passionately to keep the base open, and we will continue to do that until the end of the process," he said.

Dan McCaffrey is a spokesman for the Regional Military Affairs Committee, a citizens group that has been fighting to keep the Willow Grove, Pa., Naval Air Station open.

Though the station is owned by the Navy, it serves as a reserve center for the Marine Corps, the Air Force and the Army. It is also home to two P-3 Orion squadrons, the same maritime surveillance planes that fly out of Brunswick.

Base supporters plan to gather at the Willow Grove Chamber of Commerce offices to watch the proceedings on C-SPAN.

"We are going to be sitting there with our fingers crossed," McCaffrey said.

### **Cannon's fate at stake; Richardson says 'outside' chance it'll be spared (New Mexico)**

Associated Press  
Jennifer Talhem  
August 24, 2005

Defenders of Cannon Air Force Base will learn this week whether three anxious months of lobbying can reverse the Pentagon's decision to close the eastern New Mexico installation.

Beginning Wednesday, the nine-member Base Closure and Realignment Commission will take a series of votes to settle the fate of Cannon and 32 other major military bases as part of the Pentagon's massive cost-saving effort.

"I feel that we have an outside chance, but less than 50-50," New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson said Tuesday in a phone interview with The Associated Press.

The commissioners charged with reviewing the Defense Department's plan for streamlining the military complex will gather in Arlington, Va., Wednesday to begin considering each of the Pentagon's recommendations.

The votes are expected to go fast, starting with the Army and Navy on Wednesday, the Air Force possibly as early as Thursday morning and wrapping up by Saturday.

State officials plan to lobby up to the last minute. Richardson said he spent Tuesday afternoon talking to commissioners. No commitments had been made, he said, but he thought state officials' efforts had helped improve the chances for the base near Clovis, N.M.

"Only 15 percent of the decisions are overturned," he said. "We've markedly improved our situation."

Officials estimate that closing Cannon would cost 2,385 military and 384 civilian jobs and as many as 2,000 more related jobs. Cannon, which is home to four F-16 fighter squadrons, represents a third of the local economy in the community of 36,000 people at the eastern edge of New Mexico.

When the news came in May that the Pentagon intended to close Cannon, Richardson held a town hall meeting where officials urged an overflow crowd of Clovis-area residents to call, send e-mails and rally around Cannon. A similar effort saved Kirtland Air Force Base from closure in 1995, and officials vowed to do it again for Cannon.

No one can say what will happen this week, but Cannon boosters are optimistic that BRAC commissioners have recently questioned the Pentagon's estimate for how much it would save by closing or downsizing bases.

New Mexico officials say one of their strongest arguments is that closing the base would not save the \$2.7 billion over 20 years as the Pentagon predicts.

Officials say many of the jobs would move to other bases. Meanwhile, Cannon's economic impact has been estimated at \$200 million a year. Closing the base would devastate the local economy and the effects would be felt by all of eastern New Mexico, they say.

"You're really not getting a cost savings," said Rep. Tom Udall, D-N.M. "This is a very independent commission. I just feel that in my bones. I think they're somewhat skeptical of the Defense Department's justifications."

State officials also have worked hard to paint Cannon as a base with a lot of potential.

They say the Air Force has worked to expand the training range around the base, both in space and supersonic capabilities.

Earlier this month, Richardson announced that property owners near the base have agreed to sell land to enable it to nearly double in size.

And New Mexico's congressional leaders contended the joint strike fighter mission, the F-35, would be a good fit for the base.

Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., said he hadn't given up on anything yet. "I'm not inclined to say anything is a dead issue," he said. "I think we've made some very good arguments for keeping Cannon open."

Still, officials are waiting on pins and needles.

"I'm nervous because I don't know how it will come out," Bingaman said.

### **Niagara Falls' defenders take aim at Air Force math (New York)**

Associated Press

Devlin Barrett

August 23, 2005

Western New Yorkers desperate to save their air base charge the Air Force has failed to live up to its old "Aim High" motto, and has instead radically lowballed the costs of shipping jobs elsewhere.

A base closure commission on Wednesday begins three days of scheduled votes to decide the victor in the latest bureaucratic air battle between the U.S. Air Force and the Empire State.

The commission will either approve or deny the Pentagon's plan to close Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station as part of the process called BRAC, for Base Realignment and Closure.

In the 1990s, BRAC removed the last active duty Air Force bases in the state when they closed bases in Plattsburgh and Rome.

Merrell Lane, a funeral home operator leading community efforts to keep the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station open, said the state lost those bases because top Pentagon decision-makers sought new air-defense strategies.

"I don't think there's a conspiracy against New York in any way, but one of the issues here is we do have five flying New York Air National

Guard units, which is probably more than some other states. But we also do not have any active duty bases, so I'm hoping the Air Force will try to balance those things," said Lane.

The Niagara Falls site, home to 914th Airlift Wing Reservists and National Guard members from the 107th Air Refueling Wing, may learn its fate on Friday when the commission is expected to vote on Air Force closure recommendations.

The base and adjoining Army and fuel delivery facilities employ some 2,936 full- and part-time workers.

Rep. Thomas Reynolds, R-Clarence, has been part of a group of lawmakers that includes Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., and Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-Fairport, to argue the Pentagon's savings estimates don't add up.

The group also has cited internal military assessments that indicate the cost of consolidating C-130 aircraft from Niagara and other bases around the country into one super base in Little Rock, Ark., would actually be \$292 million, not the \$100 million claimed by the Pentagon.

"Niagara was a poster boy for many of the inquiries the commission had for military value," said Reynolds, who argued that it will end up costing the Pentagon more money to close Niagara Falls than keep it open.

Reynolds was incensed over top Air Force General John Jumper's response Saturday when he declined to immediately explain to the commission why Little Rock was chosen as a large base for C-130's from Niagara Falls and elsewhere.

"I was just absolutely flabbergasted that at this point in time, General Jumper would have to make a comment like that to get out of the room and go figure out an answer," said Reynolds.

Niagara Falls is not the only upstate community anxiously awaiting word from the commission.

Clinton, who has used her position on the Senate Armed Services Committee to try to pry more BRAC-related data out of the Pentagon, said Tuesday that her recent trip to Alaska offered more proof of the need to keep four planes at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia.

Stratton operates a special polar flying unit and would lose four planes under the Pentagon's plan.

"The Stratton base is such an important base for our Antarctic and Arctic missions and now that I've returned from my trip to the Arctic ... I consider climate change a security issue," Clinton said.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Services site in Rome, N.Y., stands to lose nearly 400 accounting jobs and another 137 high-tech sensor jobs under the Pentagon's plan. Commission staff said late Tuesday they would change the order of votes to decide joint services bases like Rome on Thursday and Air Force bases on Friday.

Commission votes Wednesday on the Army recommendations will likely decide whether the U.S. Military Academy at West Point receives more than 200 new jobs with the expansion of a preparatory school, which would be enlarged if a similar school at Fort Monmouth in New Jersey is closed.

"We approach the final deliberations with butterflies in our stomach and some real hope," said Eric Schultz, a spokesman for Sen. Charles Schumer.

### **Kingston: Carter's letter on submarine base could hurt Kings Bay**

Associated Press  
August 23, 2005

A Georgia congressman on Tuesday accused former President Jimmy Carter of going against his home state at a critical time for a Georgia naval base trying to land several submarines from Connecticut.

Rep. Jack Kingston, a Republican who represents southeast Georgia, complained that the letter Carter sent last week to the chairman of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission could be devastating to Kings Bay because of his clout.

In the letter, Carter warns of an "adverse economic impact" should the Groton, Conn., base be closed, as the Pentagon is recommending. On Wednesday, the independent Base Closure and Realignment Commission is expected to essentially vote on whether Kings Bay or Groton gets the vessels - a contest Kingston says could go either way.

"The numerical ping-pong has already been played," Kingston said. "Now it's in the emotional stage. You just hate to have an ex-president, a Navy guy and a Georgian going against the home team in the 11th hour."

Although it's hard to predict whether the BRAC panel will support or oppose Groton, Carter's letter does seem to be resonating. During an interview that aired Tuesday on C-SPAN, BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi said Carter was the highest ranking of anyone who had weighed in for any base.

"Georgia can certainly use the economic development that this would bring, and they're certainly capable of handling it, but he feels its in the best interest of our nation to keep the (Groton) submarine base open," Principi said.

Carter, the only president to serve in the submarine force, was instrumental in getting the Kings Bay base established. His letter praises the base and acknowledges it could handle the expansion but questions losing the Connecticut base.

"I am concerned about the adverse economic impact on the New London area, the abandonment of a huge installation of facilities, and, less quantitatively, a loss of some of the proud submariners heritage of our historic association with service and training in New London," he wrote.

Walt Yourstone, president of a community booster group for Kings Bay, said Carter's letter won't help.

"I was certainly surprised, although if you look at President Carter's background as a former submariner, he has emotional ties to Groton," Yourstone said. "I don't know that he was looking beyond that in his position."

Groton also has other powerful allies, including House Speaker Dennis Hastert of Illinois, who wrote to Principi with similar sentiments.

The key vote for Kings Bay Wednesday is whether the panel elects to keep Groton on the closure list. If that happens, Kings Bay would almost certainly expand as planned - making the area possibly the largest per capita gainer in the nation.

### **Vote pending on the future of century-old New Orleans naval base; dsfnrs/fls**

Associated Press  
August 23, 2005

The future of a century-old Navy base on the banks of the Mississippi River hinges on a vote this week from the panel that will recommend to President Bush which domestic military facilities should be shut down.

The Pentagon in May listed bases it wants to close, including the New Orleans base, known as the Naval Support Activity. The list also proposed an expansion of workers at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, in Plaquemines Parish, by about 1,700 military and civilian workers.

However, such closings and personnel shifts must get approval from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which can accept, reject and alter the Pentagon's plans. The president and Congress each have veto power over the commission's final plan.

The commission is scheduled to begin voting Wednesday on the Pentagon's 88-page list of proposed changes at bases around the country.

### **BRAC Commission Early Bird**

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In previous years, the commission has approved the vast majority of the Pentagon's wishes.

However, Gov. Kathleen Blanco said Tuesday she remained hopeful the commissioners would vote to override the Pentagon's decision to close the New Orleans base, which supplies 4,600 jobs to the city.

"I'm just going to stay optimistic until I hear otherwise," Blanco said.

The state and the city of New Orleans have pitched a plan to keep the Naval base open and turn it into a center for military and homeland security operations - a so-called "federal city." State and city officials have argued to the base closure commissioners that the federal city would combine military offices spread throughout the metropolitan area and provide a regional headquarters for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Blanco and Mayor Ray Nagin pledged at least \$166 million in state and city bonds to pay to streamline the base.

Naval Support Activity has facilities on both sides of the Mississippi River, partly on land once owned by New Orleans founder Jean Baptiste Le Moyne and bought by the federal government in 1849. A Navy station was established at the site in 1901. It served as an Army depot during World War I and reverted to the Navy in 1996, according to the base web site.

To try to protect Louisiana's bases from closure or reductions, the state paid The Spectrum Group, a Washington, D.C.-based lobbying firm, \$350,000 to research and promote the state's bases to military brass.

The Pentagon proposed only minor changes at Louisiana's two largest military bases, the Army's Fort Polk and Barksdale Air Force Base.

Blanco said she phoned BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi on Tuesday and was awaiting a return call so she could offer another pitch for

the federal city proposal - and keep the New Orleans base from getting shut down.

"I'm just going to put one more plug in for Louisiana," she said.

### **Panel to vote on base closings and realignments; hm/stf/rh**

Associated Press  
Holbrook Mohr  
August 23, 2005

The commission charged with streamlining the U.S. military is expected to vote this week on changes to several military installations in Mississippi, changes that could cost hundreds of jobs.

The nine Mississippi facilities are part of the Pentagon's proposal to close or realign hundreds of military facilities around the country.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld in May announced the first round of base closings and realignments in a decade, saying about 180 military installations nationwide, including 33 major bases, should be closed.

Statewide, Mississippi would lose 1,678 military, civilian and contractor jobs at the military installations under the Pentagon's recommendations. However, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, also known as the BRAC Commission, could reject the recommendations when it begins voting on facilities Wednesday.

Lamar McDonald, appointed by Gov. Haley Barbour to head the Mississippi Military Communities Council, said he has worked with the state's military communities in hopes of convincing the BRAC panel to spare Mississippi's bases.

"We have made a very, very good case and presentation and that's about as much as you can possibly do," he said. "We just hope we get a good hearing out of five commissioners. That's what we need - a simple majority."

The Pentagon's plans include closing or reducing the capacity of seven facilities in Mississippi with the biggest reduction of jobs at Naval Station Pascagoula, which the Pentagon says should be shut down.

While Columbus Air Force Base and a Jackson Air Guard Station could gain jobs under the plan, Pascagoula would lose 963 jobs if the Naval base closes. Officials have said a lack of multiple missions and the fact that two of the base's largest ships have been decommissioned make the facility a prime target.

McDonald said the suggestion to close Naval Station Pascagoula and Naval Station Ingleside, on the Texas Gulf Coast, would leave the Gulf of Mexico open to threats.

"Pascagoula is more centrally located and can protect south toward South America," he said.

U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., has said the Coast Guard would likely increase its presence if the Navy were to abandon the deep-water port.

McDonald said the Pentagon's plan to close the U.S. Army Reserve Center at Vicksburg and the Mississippi Army Ammunition plant and a Naval Human Resources Center, both in Hancock County, were not opposed.

But he said communities fought Rumsfeld's recommendation to close or reduce personnel at Naval Station Pascagoula, Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Naval Air Station Meridian and Key Field Air Guard Station, also in Meridian.

Unique to this round of BRAC is that the Pentagon set its sights on National Guard facilities - including the Guard's 186th Refueling Wing in Meridian, which would lose all its KC-135 tankers.

Some officials have suggested the federal government has overstepped its bounds. And some states have even filed lawsuits claiming the commission cannot touch Guard bases without the consent of state governors.

McDonald said he has heard conflicting opinions regarding the legality of the Pentagon closing Guard bases.

"At this point we have not taken the step of bringing a lawsuit," he said. "We were trying to let the process work through before we did that."

When asked if Mississippi would pursue legal action to protect Guard bases, Pete Smith, a spokesman for Barbour, said: "We will wait to see what the BRAC Commission does and then we'll decide."

Other recommendations, including the proposal to cut 402 jobs in the 81st Medical Group at Keesler Air Force Base, have also met sharp criticism.

U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor, D-Miss., whose district includes Keesler, has said changing the military inpatient service missions to outpatient clinics and ambulatory surgery centers could leave soldiers scrambling for adequate health care. And, he said, it would force military retirees to pay out-of-pocket for enrollment fees and co-payments at civilian hospitals.

McDonald said the Air Force would lose a valuable training hospital for military doctors.

During a regional BRAC hearing in New Orleans last month, Taylor said Pentagon analysts made errors in calculating the worth of Keesler Medical Center.

The facility was placed on the list "all because someone at the Pentagon punched the wrong key," Taylor argued at the meeting.

Mississippi's nine military communities and 12 bases employ more than 40,000 civilian and military workers with an annual payroll of nearly \$1.5 billion. The bases have survived past BRAC rounds.

BRAC commissioners must give their recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president must accept or reject the recommendations in their entirety. If he accepts them, Congress would have 45 legislative days

or until the end of its 2005 session to reject the recommendations in their entirety or they become final.

If they are disapproved, the commission has until Oct. 20, 2005, to submit a revised report to the president. The president has until Nov. 7, 2005, to approve a revised report and send it to Congress.

The Pentagon then has six years to close, relocate or downsize bases on the final list.

### **State, Pentagon argue merits of lawsuit over National Guard cuts**

Associated Press  
Maryclaire Dale  
August 23, 2005

In a case that could affect National Guard units nationwide, a lawyer for Pennsylvania's governor told a judge Tuesday that the Pentagon wrongly proposed trimming the state's Air National Guard without the governor's consent.

Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen has joined Illinois and Pennsylvania in filing suit against the Department of Defense, alleging that the base closing decisions infringe upon states' control of their Guard units.

A Justice Department lawyer insisted that the Base Realignment and Closure Act supersedes a federal statute requiring gubernatorial consent. The lawyer, Matthew Lepore, said Congress passed the act to prevent exactly what Gov. Ed Rendell is doing - suing over the closing of an individual military base.

"It's not our position that we need permission from 50 governors in order to do things under BRAC," Lepore argued.

Rendell is fighting to save the 111th Fighter Wing of the Pennsylvania National Guard at the Willow Grove Naval Air Station. The unit employs more than 1,000 people and represents one-fourth of the state's Air National Guard.

The nine-member Base Closure and Realignment Commission is voting this week on

each site on the Pentagon closure list. The commission is expected to vote Thursday on the recommendation to close Willow Grove, which is also home to Air Force and Navy reserves and other military units.

"They have the right to clear out Willow Grove, except for the 111th," Rendell said after the 90-minute hearing before U.S. District Judge John R. Padova.

The governor commands the unit's activities 90 percent of the time, as it responds to floods, errant planes and other emergencies, Rendell said. Federal officials command the Guard only when it is activated for missions such as Operation Iraqi Freedom, he said.

Rendell's lawsuit would likely become moot if the commission votes to keep Willow Grove open and the president accepts the recommendations, though Rendell believes he has raised an important states' rights question.

"I do think this issue should be decided, but we're not looking to make law here. We're looking to preserve 1,023 jobs" and ensure the state can adequately respond to emergencies, Rendell said.

Padova did not indicate when he would rule, but has agreed to expedite the case given the commission's Sept. 8 deadline to send its report to President Bush.

The Pentagon recommended closing or downsizing 30 of 95 National Guard sites around the country while boosting the ranks of two dozen others.

### **One Facet Of Base Case Goes To Court**

Philadelphia Inquirer  
Marc Schogol  
August 24, 2005

Pa. calls unconstitutional the Pentagon's bid to close the Air Guard unit at Willow Grove without a state OK.

With a vote scheduled this week on plans to close the Willow Grove air base, Pennsylvania

BRAC Commission Early Bird

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and the Pentagon waged legal combat in U.S. District Court yesterday over the legality of deactivating the base's Air National Guard unit without state permission.

The outcome of the case could affect the Pentagon's nationwide reorganization plan, which involves more than 50 bases that have Air Guard units, including Willow Grove and McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey.

U.S. District Court Judge John R. Padova has agreed to issue a speedy ruling on the Pennsylvania suit, which contends that the governor must agree before a National Guard unit can be deactivated.

At a news conference outside the federal courthouse in Philadelphia after the hearing, Gov. Rendell said: "I was very satisfied with the arguments... We're optimistic."

Judge Padova did not indicate yesterday when he will issue a decision.

Under the Defense Department plan to economize and modernize the armed forces, the Naval Air Station and Joint Reserve Base at Willow Grove would be closed and the 111th Fighter Wing of the Pennsylvania National Guard would be deactivated.

A vote on the Pentagon's plan by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission is expected this week. If it votes to close the base, Rendell hopes that a favorable court ruling will overturn the BRAC decision.

Though it is only one of several units at Willow Grove, the 111th became the focal point of the state's fight to save the base - and about 1,200 jobs there - after Rendell and the state's two U.S. senators filed suit against Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld last month.

The suit cites the states' constitutional right to raise militias and federal law that says "a unit of the Army National Guard of the United States or the Air National Guard of the United States may not be relocated or withdrawn under this chapter

without the consent of the governor of the State."

"I was never consulted and never consented," Rendell has said of the Pentagon decision to deactivate the 111th, which flies A-10 attack planes and has about 1,000 personnel.

The Pentagon's legal authority to unilaterally disband a guard unit has also been questioned by the base closure commission's lawyers.

But the Justice Department has contended Pennsylvania was asking for "a system in which local politics, rather than national planning, determined which facilities were closed and which were spared."

At yesterday's hearing, the Defense Department's lawyer argued that the legislation creating BRAC superseded requirements for state consent.

The state lawsuit could become moot later this week if BRAC members vote to keep Willow Grove open.

The plan to close Willow Grove results from the Pentagon's decision to deactivate or relocate most units at the base. The state says such a proposal flies in the face of Defense Department claims that it wants "joint" bases where units from different services can train together. That's already the case at Willow Grove, one of only three such facilities nationwide, the state says.

Proponents of keeping the base open also say it is ideally located for vital military, civilian and homeland-security missions.

Even if BRAC approved the Pentagon decision, Army Reserve units would still use a portion of the 1,200-acre facility. The future of the rest is unclear.

Unlike the other military units at Willow Grove, the 111th is part of the National Guard, which is primarily state-controlled and typically deployed to assist after floods and other natural disasters.

## Connecticut waits anxiously for sub base decision

Associated Press  
Stephen Singer  
August 24, 2005

Worries about the future of the Groton submarine base could end or flare up anew when the Base Closure and Realignment Commission votes Wednesday to recommend whether to close the historic facility.

A lot rides on the decision. Because the Groton base provides more than 8,000 jobs and contributes billions of dollars to the state's economy, removing it from the list of recommended closings would bring enormous relief to residents of southeastern Connecticut, defense contractors and state officials.

If the commission votes to recommend to President Bush that the base be closed, new - and more intense - economic and political worries will surface.

Established by the U.S. Navy in 1868 as the nation's first submarine base, the Groton base has been the subject of fierce lobbying since the proposed list of closings was released on May 13. Connecticut lawmakers have inundated the BRAC commissioners with data, reports and letters of support.

The list also recommended closing the Sgt. Libby U.S. Army Reserve Center in New Haven, Turner U.S. Army Reserve Center in Fairfield and U.S. Army Reserve Center Maintenance Support Facility in Middletown. The Bradley International Airport Air Guard Station would be realigned.

The Pentagon plan is the first such effort in a decade to reconfigure stateside military bases. The Groton base made the proposed closure list in 1993, but was saved after an effort by legislators, business owners and residents.

This year's Pentagon proposal is the most ambitious by far. It would close or consolidate a record 62 major military bases and 775 smaller installations to save \$48.8 billion over 20 years.

The plan also would streamline the services and reposition the armed forces to face current threats.

Connecticut lawmakers met with commissioners on numerous occasions, and Sens. Christopher Dodd and Joe Lieberman, both D-Conn., and Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Conn., have recently focused on personal appeals.

The base has drawn support from U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., and former President Jimmy Carter, who served at Groton in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

At least four members of the base closing commission, including the chairman, Anthony Principi, have publicly expressed doubts about the wisdom of closing the Groton base. They have questioned the Navy extensively about its projected cost savings.

Connecticut officials have used a multi-pronged attack to overturn the Pentagon's arguments for closing the base. They cited national security concerns, submarine force requirements, environmental cleanup costs, personnel needs and detailed reports challenging the Navy's projected cost savings.

The Navy initially said shuttering the base would save about \$1.6 billion. The Government Accountability Office concluded the Navy overestimated the savings by nearly half a billion dollars.

In addition, lawmakers took issue with the Navy's assertion that an environmental cleanup would cost about \$23 million and Pentagon officials last month acknowledged it may be too early to tell what the actual cost would be.

Five votes on the nine-member commission are required to remove a base from the list. One of the members, retired Navy Adm. Harold Gehman, has recused himself and will not vote on the Connecticut base.

**Key dates in 2005 related to the recommended closing of the Groton submarine base**

Associated Press  
August 24, 2005

March 22: State lawmakers propose tax breaks and \$40 million in state energy assistance as part of legislation to help Connecticut's defense industry and keep the Naval Submarine Base in Groton off the Pentagon's closure list. Gov. M. Jodi Rell in early June signed legislation that would provide \$10 million for improvements at the base.

April 1: The White House announces that President Bush appointed the nine-member Base Closure and Realignment Commission while the Senate was in recess.

May 4: A study by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development found that the Navy submarine base and Electric Boat, both in Groton, are responsible for 31,500 jobs producing \$2 billion in personal income a year in southeastern Connecticut.

May 13: The Pentagon releases its list of proposed base closures that includes four Connecticut military bases: the submarine base in Groton, Sgt. Libby U.S. Army Reserve Center in New Haven, Turner U.S. Army Reserve Center in Fairfield and the U.S. Army Reserve Center Maintenance Support Facility in Middletown. The Bradley International Airport Air Guard Station would be realigned.

May 18: Gov. M. Jodi Rell's top commissioners, hoping to find faults and errors, begin a close examination of the federal report recommending the closing of the base.

May 31: Four BRAC members tour the submarine base, beginning a two-day visit. Commission members reviewed each of the bases the Pentagon has recommended closing.

June 7: A U.S. Senate committee issues subpoenas to the Pentagon asking for more information on the decisions to shut down

military installations, including the Navy's submarine base in Groton.

June 13: The Navy's top submarine commander warns against reducing the size of the nation's submarine fleet. Vice Adm. Charles L. Munns testifies before a House Armed Services subcommittee that there are already more missions than submarines to complete them.

June 16 : Members of the Connecticut congressional delegation announce that Gov. M. Jodi Rell will hire a Washington lobbying group to help direct the campaign to keep the submarine base off the list of recommended military base closings.

July 6: Testifying before BRAC, Connecticut officials accuse the Pentagon of predetermining which military bases it wanted to close and crafting a process that ensured the submarine base in Groton would make the list.

July 28: Eight former high-ranking naval officers write to the head of BRAC that the submarine base is a valuable asset that the military cannot afford to lose.

Aug. 2: In their last meeting with BRAC members, Connecticut officials head to Washington to argue that the Pentagon underestimated the cost of closing the Groton submarine base and overestimated the amount its elimination would save.

Aug. 17: John P. Casey, president of submarine builder Electric Boat, says he will consider moving more than 1,500 repair jobs out of Connecticut if the submarine base in Groton is closed.

Aug. 18: U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert writes to the chairman of BRAC that he believes closing the submarine base would weaken national security and save no money. Former President Jimmy Carter later also wrote to the head of BRAC, opposing the shutdown of the Groton base.

Aug. 20: In their final appearance before BRAC, Pentagon officials defend their decisions to shut

or realign military bases. They said the changes do not overestimate savings and would strengthen national security.

### **Commission votes this week on base closings (Texas)**

Associated Press  
Suzanne Gamboa  
August 23, 2005

Texas officials have spent the past four months trying to make their state's military installations stand out as indispensable. Beginning Wednesday, they'll learn whether their work has paid off.

The Base Closure and Realignment Commission votes on the closing or scaling down of 62 major military bases and hundreds of smaller bases in hearings this week that will be aired live on C-SPAN2.

The hearings are scheduled to continue through Saturday, and the commission's recommendations must go to President Bush by Sept. 8.

Four Texas installations - Red River and Lone Star Ammunition Plant in Texarkana, Naval Station Ingleside on the Gulf Coast and Brooks City Base in San Antonio - are on the Pentagon's proposed closing list.

Fort Hood also could lose thousands of troops to Fort Carson, Colo., Ellington Field in Houston could lose its National Guard unit and Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls may send a medical mission to San Antonio and mechanical crews for the still-in-development Joint Strike Fighter jet to Florida.

A number of gains also are proposed for Texas, including thousands of troops from overseas planned for transfer to Fort Bliss in El Paso.

"I really feel we've done all we can," said Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, who has led the effort to spare and expand Texas bases.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in May said the reorganization was needed to modernize to

fight terrorism and save \$48.8 billion over 20 years.

At the start of the process, BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi said his panel would "look at the seamless whole and not just an individual military installation."

But that hasn't stopped state and local officials from pitching their bases as one of a kind.

Over the past four months, state and local officials have been engaged in an all-out sprint to save their hometown military presence and, if possible, lure the personnel and equipment from another state's base to their backyard.

Last week, Texas Gov. Rick Perry pledged a \$365 million incentive package to persuade the commission to move the Navy Master Jet Base to Ingleside and Kingsville from Oceana, Va. But the commission didn't seem interested, holding a hearing over the weekend that included officials from Florida, also trying to lure the base, and not from Texas.

And on Tuesday, Rep. Solomon Ortiz, D-Corpus Christi, hoped to persuade the commission to change voting rules so fewer votes would be needed to save Ingleside.

Commission rules require five of the nine commissioners to remove a base from the Pentagon's closing and realignment list. But two commissioners are recusing themselves on the Ingleside vote, so five of seven must agree.

There has been some camaraderie in trying to save bases, such as when governors from around the country stood together to oppose the Pentagon's proposal to close about 30 Air Guard units. The Justice Department issued an opinion saying governors' consent was not needed for the Guard changes.

But on other issues, it was every state for itself, with some states trying to exploit the closings or realignments proposed for another.

Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum spoke with a BRAC commissioner last week on reasons

Texas' Red River Army Depot should be closed and its missions sent to depots in Pennsylvania, a release from Santorum's office said.

Meanwhile, Texas officials have tried to show commissioners, who made two visits to Red River, that the Army depot in Anniston, Ala., doesn't have the infrastructure to take on work done at Red River, as the Pentagon has proposed.

A Government Accountability Office report bolstered their arguments. Also, Texas and Arkansas officials have questioned savings the Pentagon has said could come from the depot's closure.

Texas is supposed to see a net gain of some 6,100 personnel when the BRAC process is complete. Principi cast doubts that B1-B airplanes now at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota would end up at Dyess AFB in Abilene as the Pentagon proposed. He said in an interview aired Tuesday on C-SPAN the transfer didn't seem to yield the savings the Pentagon suggested.

Hutchison acknowledged little more can be done on behalf of its bases once the voting starts. President Bush has said he will accept the commission recommendations. He has until Nov. 7 to submit the list to Congress, which then has 45 days to pass a motion disapproving.

#### **Base-closing commission to decide 440th's fate this week (Wisconsin)**

Associated Press  
Frederic J. Frommer  
August 23, 2005

A federal base-closing commission will decide this week whether to accept the Pentagon's plan to shelve the 440th Airlift Wing at Milwaukee's airport, along with proposed modifications to several other bases in Wisconsin, including Fort McCoy.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission is holding a series of meetings this week, in which it will take up each base the Pentagon has proposed closing or modifying.

Nationally, the Pentagon has proposed shutting down or reducing forces at 62 of the largest bases and hundreds of smaller military facilities. After its votes this week, the commission must send the proposal to President Bush in September and then to Congress later this fall.

The 440th Airlift Wing, which has eight C-130 Hercules aircraft, would suffer a net loss of 266 military and civilian jobs if it were moved to Pope Air Force Base, near Fayetteville, N.C. as proposed, according to the Pentagon.

The base airlifts people, supplies and equipment to the edge of battle zones.

Wisconsin state and federal officials have lobbied heavily to get the 440th off the list. During a visit in June, BRAC Commissioner Samuel Skinner called the wing "a first-rate organization with a great history," but said he could not guarantee it would survive the base-closing process.

Lobbying for the base continued up to the last minute. The state's two senators, Democrats Russ Feingold and Herb Kohl, spoke with BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi on Monday and urged him to scrap the plan to move the 440th out of Milwaukee.

"At a time when our military is not meeting recruitment goals," Feingold said in a statement, "it makes no sense to close down a facility that routinely exceeds Air Force reserve retention rates and has a recruiting base of 12 million people in the Milwaukee and Chicago area."

Kohl noted in a telephone interview that historically, BRAC changes only about one of seven Pentagon recommendations.

"It's always an uphill battle, because it's not every other one. It's one out of seven," he said. "Having said that, it's not one out of 100."

Wisconsin's Washington lobbyist on the base-closing process, Stephen Moffitt, had a similar take.

#### **BRAC Commission Early Bird**

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"We put together the best case we could, and got a lot of support from the congressional delegation and the governor," he said. "The odds are still against us. We just have to wait and see."

Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, said, "History shows that it's difficult to keep a military base open after it has been recommended for closing by the secretary of defense." But she argued that the delegation and Gov. Jim Doyle made a solid case for the 440th.

The Pentagon also proposes moving Fort McCoy's 84th Army Reserve Regional Training Center to Fort Knox, but also creating a new Northwest Regional Readiness Command Headquarters at Fort McCoy, located in western Wisconsin. The base would lose 282 military jobs and gain 51 civilian jobs, for a net loss of 231 jobs, according to the Pentagon.

Overall, Wisconsin would lose more than 500 military and civilian jobs under the Pentagon plan, which also calls for relocating reserve units in Madison and La Crosse.

### **Indiana awaits outcome of military realignment votes**

Associated Press  
Charles Wilson  
August 23, 2005

Indiana officials have made their case for retaining - or even expanding - military facilities in the state. Now, all they can do is wait and see whether the panel considering the Pentagon's base-closing plan bought their arguments.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission was set to begin several days of voting Wednesday on the changes proposed for some 900 military installations. The Pentagon's plans include cutting about 600 jobs at the Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center in southern Indiana and adding 3,500 jobs to a finance center in Indianapolis.

Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman said Tuesday that she felt "positive" about the state's chances.

"We are in a holding pattern now, monitoring the progress on a daily basis," she said.

The plan announced in May would more than double employment at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service center at the former Fort Benjamin Harrison by shifting thousands of jobs from other centers across the country.

The Crane center would lose about 15 percent of its 4,000 jobs under the Pentagon's plan.

But officials from the Bloomington area, where Crane is the second-largest employer, tried to persuade the commission that plans to shift jobs in electronic warfare and support for special missions elsewhere didn't make economic or strategic sense.

Indiana officials suggested alternatives that would keep some of the targeted jobs at Crane and even bring other work to the base.

"We have a good sense that those may be brought up as recommendations" for a commission vote, said Mike Gentile, director of the Southern Indiana Business Alliance.

State and Indianapolis officials also worked to convince the panel that the Army finance center had space for 3,500 workers in addition to the 3,000 it already employs. The shift is part of a proposal to consolidate 26 such centers to three in Indianapolis, Colorado and Ohio.

Gov. Mitch Daniels told commission members this month that about one-third of the 1.6 million-square-foot center, the largest U.S. military office building after the Pentagon, is now vacant.

The Pentagon's list also includes about 140 job cuts at the Air National Guard station at the Terre Haute International Airport and the addition of some 300 jobs to the Air Guard unit at Fort Wayne's airport. The changes are part of a larger proposal to close or reduce about 30 Air Guard units.

That part of the plan has emerged as a contentious issue, with Pennsylvania and Illinois

filing lawsuits to block the move, saying governors share control of National Guard units with the federal government.

The Illinois suit was filed to block the move of 15 fighter jets from a Springfield, Ill.-based unit to Fort Wayne.

Indiana officials likely will know what will happen with the Army finance center and the Air Guard units before they can unravel the fallout from Crane, said John Clark, the governor's senior adviser on economic growth.

That is because many of the recommendations state officials offered to transfer work to Crane would come up during votes on other military facilities, he said.

Clark said he, too, was upbeat about this week's votes but acknowledged, "I think it's going to be a difficult couple of days for all concerned."

Overall, Indiana would gain nearly 2,200 mostly civilian jobs under the changes, which would occur over six years starting in 2006 if approved. The commission's recommendations are subject to approval by Congress and President Bush.

### **Ft. Monmouth Future To Be Decided Today**

Newark Star Ledger

Wayne Woolley

August 24, 2005

After more than four months of lobbying, hundreds of thousands of dollars in consultants' fees and hours of impassioned arguments, the fate of Fort Monmouth comes down to this today: five votes.

Without the dissent of at least five of the nine members on the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission, a Pentagon recommendation to close the 80-year-old Army research installation will stand. And 5,000 high-paying civilian jobs will be transferred to the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland by 2009.

New Jersey officials said last night they're cautiously optimistic they have persuaded a

majority of the members of what's known as the BRAC Commission that moving Fort Monmouth's operations would hurt national security -- and cost more than double the \$822 million the Pentagon projected.

"I'm hopeful we'll have something to celebrate after the vote," said S. Thomas Gagliano, a co-founder of the Patriot's Alliance, a consortium of business owners and defense contractors who raised nearly \$170,000 to advocate for saving Fort Monmouth.

But even though the commissioners -- former members of Congress, generals and Defense Department civilians -- have said they do not agree with all of the Pentagon's recommendations, defense analysts believe it's unlikely a majority will vote to keep Fort Monmouth open at today's public hearing in Crystal City, Va.

"I don't believe they'll reverse Fort Monmouth," said Loren Thompson, a defense analyst with the Lexington Institute. "I just don't think the place is seen as a critical nerve center anymore."

By the end of the week, the commission also will vote on the proposed closure of 32 other major installations, including Eglin Air Force Base in South Dakota and the Naval Submarine Base in New London, Conn.

In the case of Fort Monmouth, Thompson believes the BRAC commissioners will be swayed by Pentagon insistence that the nation's defense is best served by consolidating at Aberdeen the communications and electronic warfare research now done at Fort Monmouth as well as installations in Kentucky, Alabama and Virginia.

Rep. Frank Pallone (D-6th Dist.), whose district includes Fort Monmouth, said overcoming what he perceives to be a Pentagon bias against research and development installations in general and Fort Monmouth in particular will be a major hurdle to clear.

He said the Pentagon ignored a letter 11 retired two- and three-star generals sent the BRAC

Commission on Aug. 16. The retired signal and intelligence officers wrote that disrupting Fort Monmouth research would jeopardize troops in Afghanistan and Iraq who rely on devices that disable roadside bombs.

The Pentagon recommendation "will have a direct, immediate and catastrophic impact upon the mission being performed by (Fort Monmouth) in support of Army transformation and more importantly, the warfighter," the letter said.

Michael Wynne, the principal Pentagon deputy undersecretary for acquisition, downplayed the letter and told members of the BRAC Commission at a hearing Saturday that Army research efforts would benefit by being "shaken up."

That assertion troubles Pallone.

"He's talking about 'shaking things up,'" Pallone said. "I'm not looking to shake things up in the middle of a war. ... They're just determined to keep pushing back on any arguments we make."

New Jersey officials say they have at least one solid vote in Philip Coyle, the Pentagon's top weapons scientist for much of the 1990s. Coyle introduced the letters from the generals at Saturday's hearing. He also warned Wynne that the Pentagon faces the loss of "precious intellectual capital" if Fort Monmouth closes and its most experienced people do not move.

Another commissioner Pallone and others believe will vote in favor of Fort Monmouth is James Bilbray, a former Nevada congressman who has often spoken of the dangers of losing "intellectual capital."

The remaining commissioners New Jersey officials have lobbied the hardest and consider potential "yes" votes are: Anthony Principi, the former secretary of Veterans Affairs; Lloyd Newton, a retired Air Force general; James V. Hansen, a former Utah congressman; Sue E. Turner, a retired Air Force general, and James T. Hill, a retired Army general.

New Jersey officials say they base their beliefs on the public comments the commissioners have made as well as private conversations with commissioners and commission staff over the past four months.

Garden State officials concede Fort Monmouth will be hurt if the commissioners shy away from overturning Pentagon recommendations that affect more than one installation. In the case of Fort Monmouth, overturning the recommendation to close it would also overturn changes at Aberdeen Proving Ground as well as planned consolidations at Fort Belvoir, Va., Fort Knox, Ky., Redstone Arsenal in Alabama and an Army laboratory in Alexandria, Va.

But Chris Hellman, a base-closure specialist at the Center for Arms Control and Non Proliferation in Washington, D.C., said Hill told Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at a hearing in May that the commission would not hesitate to make wholesale changes that would affect more than one installation.

"They've shown a real willingness to be independent minded," Hellman said.

John R. Poitras, president of the union local that represents more than 3,000 Fort Monmouth employees, is counting on it.

In recent weeks, Poitras has met with BRAC staffers to argue that the Pentagon recommendation to close Fort Monmouth is illegal because it did not consider costs to close non-Defense Department facilities at the base, including a veterans health clinic, an FBI field office, a post office and a Federal Emergency Management Agency office. The Pentagon never challenged his assertion, according to Defense Department documents filed with the BRAC Commission.

"How can the Pentagon make a decision on the life of Fort Monmouth when they didn't have all the information the law required?" Poitras asked. "Anyone who is making a decision that affects the life and blood of our soldiers needs all the facts."

### **Fort Monmouth braces for word of its fate (New Jersey)**

Associated Press  
Donna de La Cruz  
August 23, 2005

The waiting game will be over Wednesday for Fort Monmouth when a federal panel is expected to decide whether the Army research and development facility closes, stays open or is possibly revamped.

The Pentagon recommended in May that Fort Monmouth, along with dozens of other major U.S. military installations, be closed. It would take five of the nine members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to keep Fort Monmouth open, and at least two of the commissioners have publicly expressed concern about closing the post and sending more than 2,000 jobs to a base in Maryland.

During an interview aired Monday on C-SPAN, BRAC chairman Anthony Principi said the commission is concerned with a so-called "brain drain," referring to the high number of Fort Monmouth's engineers and scientists who would not move to the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. At least 80 percent of the post's current employees have said they would not relocate if the post is closed.

Principi said "all of that expertise and brain trust" does not exist right now at Aberdeen.

"Fort Monmouth day in and day out is assisting troops in Iraq," Principi said, referring to the electronic equipment being used by U.S. soldiers in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

"Can a transition take place in an orderly way that will not disrupt the technology going on?" Principi asked. "We're weighing the impact of that on military value and whether we should accept the recommendation or not."

But minutes later, Principi said that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld "would not have made these recommendations if he had not

believed they were important to our national security."

"There were good arguments made for closing Fort Monmouth and building a center of excellence at Aberdeen," Principi said.

Commissioner Philip Coyle recently told Pentagon officials at a hearing that closing the post would severely hamper the Army's research and development efforts.

"You're jeopardizing fragile intellectual capital," Coyle said at last Saturday's hearing here.

At that hearing, Coyle mentioned a letter sent to the commission from 11 retired Army generals saying that if Fort Monmouth is closed, research currently underway to upgrade devices used to protect U.S. troops in Iraq from roadside bombs would be severely disrupted.

"They're arguing that the people at Fort Monmouth are intimately involved in saving lives in Iraq and Afghanistan," Coyle said of the letter. "How can we ignore people of that stature?"

New Jersey officials have offered the commissioners another solution: If keeping Fort Monmouth open is out of the question, they suggest linking the post with three other New Jersey bases - Fort Dix, McGuire Air Force Base and Lakehurst Naval Air Station. The Pentagon has recommended those three bases become a "mega-base" since they are contiguous and often work together on projects. At a July hearing, four of the commissioners were receptive to that idea.

Starting Wednesday, the commission is to publicly discuss and vote on all the Pentagon recommendations. Commissioners have until Sept. 8 to submit their list to President Bush, who can send the list back for revisions. Bush must either approve or disapprove the list by Sept. 23.

Bush must submit a BRAC commission list to Congress by Nov. 7, which must either accept or reject the list in its entirety.

If Congress fails to pass a motion of disapproval of the list within 45 days, the list becomes law.

### **Thousands of jobs on the line as commission begins its voting (Maine)**

Associated Press  
Clarke Canfield  
August 23, 2005

More jobs are at stake at military facilities in Maine than in any other state as the Base Realignment and Closure Commission begins voting Wednesday on which installations nationwide will close and which will survive.

In a worst-case scenario, more than 9,500 jobs could be lost if the commission votes to shut down the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, the Brunswick Naval Air Station and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service center in Limestone.

Connecticut also faces a potential big hit if the commission closes the Navy submarine base at Groton, which has nearly 8,500 jobs.

Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, said it's inconceivable from both military and economic perspectives that the commission will shut down all of the Maine facilities.

"In my view, and in the view of many experts, they are indispensable and irreplaceable," Snowe said. "So it's really hard to contemplate the worst-case scenario."

Commissioners were scheduled to begin voting at 8 a.m. Wednesday and the votes were to take place over two to three days. The commission will forward its recommendations by Sept. 8 to President George Bush, who has until Sept. 23 to accept or reject the list in its entirety.

The fate of the shipyard and the air station were expected to be decided on Wednesday. A vote on the Limestone center was expected later.

Because the Defense Department recommended that Brunswick be realigned, but not closed, it will take seven votes of the nine-member

commission to shut down the facility. If that vote fails, the commission will vote on whether to scale back the base, which would take five votes.

If the base shuts down completely, it would result in the loss of more than 4,800 military, civilian and reservist jobs, according to base officials. If the base is scaled back, it would lose 2,400 jobs and its P-3 Orion planes would move to a base in Jacksonville, Fla.

If Portsmouth closes, it would result in 4,510 job losses, according to the Department of Defense. If the DFAS-Limestone closes, 353 jobs would be lost.

The shipyard, which is located on the Maine side of the Piscataqua River that serves as the Maine-New Hampshire boundary, has a civilian payroll of \$318.3 million, according to the Seacoast Shipyard Association. About 60 percent of the shipyard's employees come from Maine, and 40 percent come from New Hampshire.

Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., said supporters have done all they can to persuade the commission that the shipyard should remain open.

"We've made what I believe is a very strong, substantive case and as a result I do remain cautiously optimistic," he said. "But we're all sitting, waiting with great anticipation for the big event."

Maine officials have estimated losses of 12,000 direct and indirect jobs and \$465 million a year in payroll in Maine alone if Portsmouth closed and Brunswick were downsized. The numbers would be even greater if Brunswick were closed.

Snowe said that Wednesday will be a day of "anxiety and prayer." She can't remember any time when so many jobs were hanging in the balance.

"It would take my breath away" if the commission shut down all the facilities, she said. "That would be of seismic proportions, no question, for Maine and America."

### **Money set aside to save Eielson is half-spent (Alaska)**

Associated Press  
August 23, 2005

The Save Eielson Task Force has spent a little more than half of the \$1.5 million allotted to help remove Eielson Air Force Base from the Pentagon's proposed plan to eliminate or reduce the size of the base.

The task force so far has spent \$817,500 of the funds provided by the state and Fairbanks North Star Borough to lobby the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, said Bob Shefchik, chief of staff for borough Mayor Jim Whitaker.

Shefchik, who oversees the task force's accounting, said \$759,000 was paid to consultants in Washington, D.C., and Fairbanks and about \$34,600 was spent on advertising.

Shefchik said the task force is using the state's \$1 million primarily to fund the fight to save Eielson and is saving the borough contribution to help soften the a likely economic downturn if Eielson remains on the list.

Many resources the task force needed to mount its defense were donated by the community, which helped keep costs down, Jim Dodson, chair of the Save Eielson Task Force said. He estimated the value of the donations at close to \$200,000.

Task force members said the money has been well spent protecting the base and its nearly \$400 million economic impact on the Fairbanks area last year.

"I think we've done everything we could do," said Jim Dodson, chair of the Save Eielson Task Force. "We've turned over every leaf and we're continuing to work the commission."

"The effort could not have been done better," Whitaker said.

The Air Force, in its May 13 recommendations, said it expected to save \$229 million a year from reduced activity at Eielson, but at least three in

the nine-member commission have voiced doubts over the savings projections.

The Air Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing at Eielson has 580 employees, about half of whom work part-time, and eight KC-135R tankers used to refuel Air Force fighters.

The commission plans to hold its final round of votes starting Wednesday on which bases should remain on the list.

### **Oklahoma leaders hopeful about military base hearings**

Associated Press  
Kelly Kurt  
August 23, 2005

Oklahoma leaders anxiously awaited the start of final deliberations by a federal base closure commission Wednesday - not fearing military jobs could be lost but hoping for confirmation that thousands will be gained.

The Base Closure and Realignment Commission will spend the next three days, and Saturday if necessary, voting on a list of 900 military installations targeted by the Defense Department for closure, downsizing or growth.

Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., said he felt "100 percent" certain none of Oklahoma's five major military installations would be added to the closure list.

But he was less sure about whether the state would gain all the jobs recommended in the Pentagon's realignment proposal.

"The real question is whether we can make a move for personnel out of Fort Bliss (Texas) into Fort Sill" in Lawton, Cole said Tuesday, adding that the Texas delegation had lobbied hard to keep the more than 4,000 jobs.

Cole, who serves on the House Armed Services Committee and whose district includes Tinker Air Force Base and Fort Sill, said the move of the Air Defense Artillery School from Fort Bliss to Fort Sill could bring an estimated 2,100 more

private sector jobs and millions of dollars in construction activity to the Lawton area.

In previous base closure rounds, the commission retained 80 to 85 percent of the military's recommendations, he said.

"I think we're in good shape, but I would never say the process is complete until it is indeed complete," Cole said. But "I don't think we need to be concerned about any bases being closed down. Nobody has raised that issue in any discussion."

The commission plans to submit its final recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president will either forward the report to Congress or return it to the commission for further evaluation.

The independent panel can reject installations on the list by a simple majority. Adding bases for closure or realignment requires a vote by seven of nine commission members.

"It's very tough to add and a little easier to relinquish a base from the BRAC list. Oklahoma has positioned itself in the best possible position," said state Rep. Mike Jackson, R-Enid, a member of a state task force that lobbied to keep Oklahoma's bases intact.

Gov. Brad Henry will be watching the commission's deliberations closely, said his spokesman, Paul Sund.

With changes in the list possible, "we're not going to let our guard down," Sund said.

"We obviously feel good about Oklahoma's position given the initial BRAC report that essentially protected all of our major installations," he said. "But until the process is over and the last hearing has been held and received final approval, Gov. Henry's not going to leave anything to chance."

#### **DFAS director recommends closing Cleveland accounting office**

Associated Press  
August 23, 2005

A military payroll office in Cleveland would be closed as the nation's 26 Defense Finance and Accounting Services offices consolidate into three locations, under a plan recommended by DFAS' director.

Director Zack Gaddy detailed the plan in a letter sent last week to the Base Realignment and Closing Commission, the group that will decide this week which of the nation's military bases and operations are moved or closed.

The Cleveland accounting office employs about 1,200 people and has been targeted for closure.

Deborah Setliff, a spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Steve LaTourette, a Republican fighting the Cleveland office closure, said the letter merely restated the "company line" of the Pentagon, for which Gaddy works.

"The BRAC Commission is independent," Setliff said. "They can decide whatever they want. I don't think this one letter means anything."

The commission is expected to vote on its recommendation for DFAS on Thursday or Friday. Congress or the president can either accept or reject the recommendation but may not amend it.

**Ready, Set, BRAC**  
Bangor Daily News (Maine)  
August 23, 2005

Starting Wednesday, the Base Realignment and Closure commission will vote on whether to accept hundreds of recommendations by the Pentagon to close or realign military facilities in all 50 states. Maine's congressional delegation and its governor, along with a ton of support from staff, local groups and volunteers, has made a consistent, well-informed and vigorous defense of the facilities here vulnerable to closure.

Now these leaders must be prepared for whatever news emerges from the BRAC commission, because although the list still must

be approved by President Bush and Congress by November, this week's decisions are likely to remain final. Being prepared includes having a process for economic recovery and knowing how to tap federal funding, but mostly it means leadership, guiding Maine through an upheaval that could redefine the state.

The current BRAC round, involving 60 large bases and 775 smaller facilities for an estimated saving of nearly \$50 billion over 20 years, is as large as all four previous rounds combined. It is Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's pitch to remake the military according to his own vision, and while the Government Accountability Office says the Pentagon's estimated savings are much larger than what would likely occur, it is the reconfiguration of the military that matters most.

Any member of Maine's delegation - nearly any member of any state's delegation, for that matter - could describe in detail why the Pentagon's analysis of bases to be closed is wrong. Numbers don't add up, assumptions about capacity are questionable, those projected savings are squishy. Indeed, in an important New York Times story Aug. 13, eight of the nine BRAC commissioners doubted data supplied to them by the Pentagon. Just as they certainly doubted some of the data provided by the states.

Unless the commission rejects the entire process, it is going to look for savings that can come only through major base closure. Those major bases include Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery. It should have an easier time with the broad consolidation plan for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service that would close most of the centers, such as the one in Limestone.

Rather than a question of military readiness, DFAS, appropriately enough, is about money, and the commission seems doubtful about the purported savings. On Brunswick Naval Air Station, there is a growing sense that the P-3s it hosts will remain vital to the North Atlantic.

It's too late to argue for these bases now, but it's not too early to prepare for life after their closure. Gov. Baldacci, whose work on this issue has been crucial since the base-closure list

was released in May, will be needed even more after this week should bad news arrive here. The next couple of weeks, in the face of economic uncertainty, will demand strong leadership and lots of cooperation as Maine prepares for the worst and hopes for the best.

**Fight for 440th is an uphill battle;  
Optimism fades as base commission meets  
this week (Wisconsin)**

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel  
Katherine M. Skiba  
August 23, 2005

Keeping the 440th Airlift Wing in Milwaukee seems to face long odds as a decisive vote nears on the Pentagon's proposal to evict the Air Force Reserve unit from Mitchell International Airport.

Beginning Wednesday, three or four days of meetings (expected to run at least 14 to 16 hours a day) kick off in Arlington as the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission votes on plans to dramatically reshape the nation's military infrastructure.

The commission will pass judgment on the Pentagon's proposal in May to close 33 and realign 30 major bases, as well as to close or alter the roles of 774 other installations.

The Pentagon proposed then to shut down the Air Reserve Station at Mitchell, where the 440th flies eight C-130H transport planes on missions that have taken it around the world. When the station was put up for closure, it was known that the historic odds of reversing the recommendation were low - only about 15%, based on past commission rounds.

Officials from Wisconsin have been lobbying hard to save the unit, but there was little optimism being voiced last week as the voting looms.

Gov. Jim Doyle: "I know we have an uphill climb."

Rep. Paul Ryan of Janesville: "I have been told, by consultants the governor hired and BRAC analysts, to expect the worst and hope for the best."

Sen. Herb Kohl: "It's not as though it's hopeless. It's not hopeless."

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker: "Obviously, we'd be ecstatic if it came off the list, but . . . it's still very much an uphill battle."

The meetings, at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City near the Pentagon, begin at 8 a.m. and may spill into the next morning, said Robert McCreary, a commission spokesman. The sessions are to wrap up Friday or Saturday.

The panel's decisions go directly to the president, who has said he will endorse them. Congress can vote to reject the commission's choices, but only on an all-or-none basis.

One of the nine commissioners, Samuel K. Skinner, who visited the 440th in June, said last week that it was a "great unit" with "great people" and much community support.

He said the 440th's future is tied to that of Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina - also up for review - and the question of how to distribute aircraft between the Air Force's active-duty, Reserve and Guard components. "It's a complicated set of decisions," he said. "And it's too early to tell how they're going to come out."

Skinner, a White House chief of staff and transportation secretary under President George H.W. Bush, lives near Chicago.

#### Little optimism

The 440th employs 379 civilians and 1,409 military personnel, most of them part-time reservists. There's great suspense but little optimism now, said Dennis J. Mehring, the wing's public affairs director.

Air Force Reserve Command leaders are not fighting to keep any unit where it is, Mehring said.

Plans call for the 440th to go to Pope, near the Army's Fort Bragg. Its eight planes would be split between Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas and Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Georgia.

Maj. Gen. Gary Heckman, who co-chaired the team that drew up the Air Force recommendations, said one aim was to create active-duty C-130 squadrons with 16 planes and Air Reserve Component squadrons - Guard and Reserves - with 12.

One effect: The 35 domestic bases with C-130s would drop to 16. But as more C-130s move into the active force, the Reserve component would get more C-5s and C-17s, he said.

Heckman said installations such as Mitchell were assessed for military value, suitability for missions and room to grow. "It's not because they're not great bases, not because they're not highly experienced and not because they're not great communities," he said. "We have great bases, we just have too many of them. It's the same reason you and I don't have eight cars in our driveways at home."

#### Spared the last round

In the last commission round in 1995, the 440th was spared and instead an Air Reserve unit of C-130s was closed at O'Hare International Airport, where officials wanted room for commercial development.

Walker, recalling that, sees no such magic bullet now. "It appears as though the Air Force was really the most interested not just in consolidating, but in 'getting the metal' - getting the C-130s into the active Air Force. That is a real challenge for us."

Officials from Wisconsin charge that the Pentagon incorrectly rated the wing's infrastructure. They caution that the Air Force Reserve would be walking away from a vast talent pool. And they deride sending more C-130s to the active fleet as an "airplane grab" that defies congressional intent.

No one will hazard a guess as to whether those arguments will stick. "I have been in front of enough juries as a lawyer to know you can't read this," Doyle said.

At the Washington, D.C.-based Business Executives for National Security, Paul Taibl, a Milwaukee native and retired Air Force flier, predicts that most of the Pentagon's recommendations will hold.

In late July, new uncertainties arose for the 440th. The Air Force Reserve Command headquarters at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia held a teleconference with the 440th, announcing that if the wing moves, only select, senior personnel would "follow the flag" to Pope, the wing's Mehring said.

Some positions would go to Dobbins, but it was unclear if that meant people - or the authorization for personnel, he said. Meantime it's assumed - but not official - that some jobs would follow aircraft to Little Rock, he said.

Other jobs not going to Pope would fall into a Defense Department job bank, meaning positions in the 440th could be shifted to other military branches, Mehring said. "My public affairs position could be given to the Army at Fort Knox, Kentucky," he said, "and that doesn't necessarily mean I get to go with it."

While top Air Force officials talk about emerging missions - from outer space to cyberspace to surveillance - Mehring said that if Mitchell's Reserve station shuts down, personnel would need to relocate for such jobs. "They're assuming a guy from Manitowoc or Sheboygan is going to be as excited about a drone mission in Florida as they are," he said.

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### **Fort Knox hospital could be lost in base realignments (Kentucky)**

Associated Press

Jonathan M. Katz  
August 23, 2005

Fort Knox is expected to be a big winner in the upcoming round of base closures and realignments, but that success could come at the expense of its community hospital.

The 48-year-old Ireland Army Community Hospital is slated to lose its in-patient care facilities, including its maternity ward, if a federal commission this week goes along with Pentagon recommendations. That would send soldiers, their families and nearby veterans 30 minutes away to hospitals in Hardin County, or an hour north to Louisville.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission will vote on the hospital's future along with all its recommendations this week.

"However the BRAC recommendations come out, it's our intent to ensure our beneficiaries get the best care possible," said Col. Steven Braverman, the hospital's commander.

The decision comes just as Fort Knox gears up for big changes: losing its long-held tank school in exchange for new active units, a boost that could leave Fort Knox with an additional 3,500 infantry soldiers and 3,000 new civilian employees under the consolidation of personnel services in Louisville, St. Louis and Indianapolis.

"There's going to be a significant increase in the number of soldiers," at Fort Knox, said Bill Barron, a retired Army Reserves major general who is active in issues around the post. Barron said he was optimistic the BRAC commission could change its mind on the hospital. "If we're really serious about the care of soldiers, it's very important," he said.

The hospital, named for late surgeon general Maj. Gen. Merritte Weber Ireland, has 29 inpatient beds and had more than 22,500 outpatient visits in June, said Gini Sinclair, a Fort Knox spokeswoman. It serves an estimated population of 260,000, she said.

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Rep. Ron Lewis, R-Ky., who represents the district including Fort Knox has argued for the hospital to remain at full strength.

"It's essential for Fort Knox to maintain a strong medical capability on post," Lewis told the Base Realignment and Closure Commission in June. "I believe that the arrival of these new troops mandates a review of this recommendation."

### **N.C. waiting word from base closing commission**

Associated Press  
Estes Thompson  
August 23, 2005

Most North Carolina officials who lobbied hard to maintain the state's military assets tended to other issues Tuesday, the day before a federal commission planned to start voting on the fate of bases around the nation.

The governor, lieutenant governor, members of the state's congressional delegation and citizens have talked personally to members of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, attended hearings and submitted reams of written evidence.

Now, they wait on BRAC, which starts four days of voting Wednesday morning at a hotel in northern Virginia.

Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, who heads the state effort to deal with BRAC, presided over the state Senate. Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., attended non-BRAC functions in the state, as did other elected state and federal officials who have devoted hours to saving North Carolina's military installations.

"I think, if anything, if your base doesn't say 'closed' then you're alive and well and that means you can grow and expand," U.S. Rep. Walter B. Jones, R-N.C. "I feel real, real good about the future of bases in North Carolina.

"I just don't see any surprises coming."

The largest issue for North Carolina is the proposal to change the structure of Pope Air Force Base.

Originally, the Defense Department recommended that the commission turn the base over to the Army and make it part of adjacent Fort Bragg. That plan would send 4,125 personnel elsewhere and use reserve or National Guard transport planes to haul paratroopers. But BRAC members voted to reconsider Pope's fate.

Another important item for the state is the proposal to move the U.S. Army Forces Command and U.S. Army Reserve Command to Fort Bragg from Fort McPherson, Ga. The plan would bring in 4,325 new troops to Fort Bragg, which already has a population of more than 45,000.

Also of interest is the proposal to cut more than 600 jobs at the Naval Aviation Depot, a repair shop for airplanes and helicopters at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. Jones said those losses probably will be handled by allowing the civilian employees to work until retirement, but some 4,000 jobs will remain and he expects growth.

It's hard to tell when the votes affecting North Carolina will occur, said officials who are following the process. Most likely, the votes will be scattered throughout the days.

Retired Brig. Gen. Paul Dordal, a former wing commander at Pope and consultant to the Cumberland County Business Council, has been one of the local proponents for the base. He has attended previous BRAC sessions and helped gather and present information. He said he will stay at home and watch events unfold on television.

"I've done everything I can and now it's a matter of just listening to the vote," Dordal said.

During a visit to Pope earlier this month, two commissioners said the air base and Army post share a unique military capability involving airborne troops and that shouldn't be damaged. The commissioners met with Air Force, Army

and Special Operations commanders during that visit and talked to Perdue, Gov. Mike Easley, U.S. Rep. Robin Hayes, R-N.C., and other officials.

Dordal said the proposal to have the Army operate the airfield wasn't economical or feasible because the Army doesn't operate major airplane bases, like Pope, and would have to pay for operational personnel. The Army does run helicopter bases, which are totally different, he said.

"I think the commissioners were convinced the Air Force should continue to operate the airfield and they need some kind of command and control unit in place that unifies all the operations," he said.

### **Arkansans wait for word of BRAC closures, gains**

Associated Press  
Caryn Rousseau  
August 23, 2005

When word came that federal military cuts could hit Arkansas, protesters lined the streets, wrote letters and took busloads of supporters to San Antonio for hearings, doing all they could to keep their soldiers and airmen close to home.

Starting Wednesday, the protests end and the Base Closure and Realignment Commission begins voting on whether to close, downsize or increase Arkansas military installations in Fort Smith, Pine Bluff, El Dorado, Jacksonville and Texarkana, Texas.

"We've done almost everything we can," Maj. John Weisenfels of the 188th Fighter Wing said Tuesday. "It's up to the BRAC commission to come up with their own decision. I'm pretty sure most of us are going to be gathered around C-SPAN tomorrow to see how that all goes."

In Arkansas, the Little Rock Air Force Base in Jacksonville is expected to gain equipment and personnel. Realignment and cuts are suggested for the 188th Fighter Wing at Fort Smith, the El Dorado Armed Forces Center, the Stone Army Reserve Center at Pine Bluff and Camp Pike.

Fort Smith looks to be the hardest hit as it stands to lose 670 of its 980 employees and have seven of its 15 F-16s moved seven to Fresno, Calif., and eight retired.

"Fort Smith has a dynamic economy and we don't want to lose jobs anywhere, especially the high-tech jobs that go along with the military in Fort Smith," said Mitch Chandler, spokesman for the Arkansas Department of Economic Development.

If BRAC decides to rubber stamp Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's recommendations, which came down in April, El Dorado would lose 24 workers, Pine Bluff would be down 34 and Camp Pike down 177.

But the Little Rock Air Force Base in Jacksonville comes out on the plus side, an additional 3,898 jobs.

"We know that Little Rock Air Force Base is able to sustain growth and we're excited about that," Chandler said. "It's a definite economic impact, especially for Jacksonville."

But as much as Jacksonville needs the new jobs, the state doesn't want to lose them in Fort Smith either. Or in Texarkana, where about 4,500 employees, mostly civilians work at the Red River Army Depot and Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant. Recommendations would close the depot and some supporting companies and the ammunition plant, moving the work to bases in five other states.

Work started soon after the cuts were proposed. Both Arkansas and Texas' congressional delegations met with BRAC commissioners, lobbying to save jobs. The city of Fort Smith hired a public relations firm to help it ready a 30-minute presentation made before commissioners in San Antonio, trying to convince commissioners to spare the 188th.

Gov. Mike Huckabee sent emergency funds to help and when commissioners visited Texarkana and Fort Smith, Arkansans lined the streets showing support. While the thought of nearly

4,000 extra jobs in Jacksonville is tempting, the state doesn't want them to come at the cost of jobs elsewhere.

"When you say job, you're talking about somebody's family," Chandler said. "We can't lose sight of that fact. It's kids and families who have to find some other way. A community can come back from 24 job losses but can a family?"

### Opinions/ Editorials

#### **Deep-sixing deep-sea dominance**

Boston Globe

Robert Ballard

August 24, 2005

OVER THE last few months, numerous arguments have been presented by a long list of well-educated and informed individuals why closing Submarine Base New London -- as recommended by the Department of Defense -- is a grave miscalculation by our country.

Their arguments over military value and cost issues seem convincing. But overlooked in the debate has been another important element -- the close relationship that exists between our nation's submarine forces and its center of oceanographic research. It is a connection that, through the long history of our country, has come together to overcome every undersea threat we've ever faced.

Virtually every expedition that I have led or participated in has benefited from our relationship with the Navy at New London, Conn. Using Navy resources such as the NR 1, its deep-sea nuclear research submarine, we were able to explore places and find ships and new life that had never been seen before. These expeditions include the exploration of the Mid-Ocean Ridge, the discovery of warm water springs and their unusual animal communities in the Galapagos Rift, the discoveries of the RMS Titanic, the German battleship Bismarck, and 11 warships from the lost fleet of Guadalcanal, and the exploration of the luxury liner Lusitania.

In 1998 we teamed with the Navy and National Geographic to locate lost ships of the Battle of

Midway. These included the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown, which lay at a depth of 16,650 feet. Without the Navy's deep-sea exploration capability, this would not have been possible.

But many people may not fully comprehend or appreciate the indebtedness the nation's submarine force has to the New England oceanographic research community. During World War II, it was the oceanographers of New England who used the physical characteristics of the thermocline -- the ocean layer in which the most dramatic temperature changes occur -- to teach our Navy how to hide its submarines from attack as well as how to sink German submarines that threatened our maritime lifelines to our allies.

In the Cold War, it was the oceanographers of New England who discovered the deep sound channel, ultimately resulting in development of the Sound Surveillance System. This is a system that provides deep-water, long-range detection capability, which proved critical during the Cold War in tracking Soviet submarines by their faint acoustic signals. Although even to this day the public doesn't know much about it, the system was an invaluable component in winning that war of nerves.

The oceanographic centers of the Northeast located at the University of New Hampshire, MIT, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the University of Rhode Island, the University of Connecticut, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, as well as others, are not moving. They represent arguably the world's foremost collection of oceanographic expertise.

Let's not forget the Naval Undersea Warfare Center at Newport, some 40 miles from the submarine base. With its work in research, development, and prototyping, it takes the results of exploration and moves them to conceptualization and eventually implementation -- all in the interest of maintaining our undersea superiority.

It is no coincidence that Submarine Base New London, the academic institutions mentioned above, and the Naval Undersea Warfare Center

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exist in relatively close proximity. They are all part of the seafaring culture of New England, going back to the settlement of this country.

Our submarine forces are an integral part of that culture. If the base were to close, I fear that our armed forces would lose a vital regional cultural dimension. The proposal put forth by the Defense Department would relocate Submarine Base New London to bases in the South. But while submarines can be moved and piers and buildings can be built elsewhere, a culture developed over hundreds of years can never be successfully replaced. This is an important reason why closing the base would be an incalculable loss for the region and the nation.

Having served as a naval officer and oceanographer in New England for more than 35 years, I speak from a position of knowing that when these two worlds are torn apart, the magic that has ensured America's undersea dominance will be lost forever.

If the Base Closure and Realignment Commission approves the recommendation to close the Submarine Base New London, we will be severing the spine that connects our nation's submarine might with its intellectual center, a united body that has well served this country since its birth.

**Additional Notes**