DCN: 6691

BASE VISIT REPORT

FT SMITH AIR NATIONAL GUARD STATION, AR

July 11, 2005

COMMISSIONER: Chairman Anthony Principi

COMMISSION STAFF: Brad McRee

LIST OF ATTENDEES: (see attached)

BASE'S PRESENT MISSION: F-16 General Purpose

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:

Realign Fort Smith Municipal Airport (MAP) Air Guard Station (AGS),Arkansas. Distribute the 188th Fighter Wing's (ANG) F-16s to the 144th Fighter Wing (ANG) Fresno Air Terminal AGS, California (seven aircraft) and retirement (eight aircraft). The 144th Fighter Wing's F-16s (15 aircraft) retire. Ft. Smith's expeditionary combat support (ECS) elements remain in place. Fire fighter positions realign to Tulsa, Oklahoma and the Home Station Training Site moves to Savannah, Georgia.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:

Military value played the predominant role coupled with homeland defense. The Air Force recommendation realigns 15 aircraft from Fort Smith (110) to Fresno (87), which supports the homeland defense Air Sovereignty Alert mission. Additionally, this recommendation helps align the eight different F-16 models across the Air Force. Finally, this recommendation makes experienced Airmen available to support the new ANG flying training unit created at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas.

MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED: Entire base.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED:

* Army Range (Ft Chaffee) and air ranges very close by allowing for joint training. ANG base has outstanding ability to schedule and operate these ranges.

* Effort underway with FAA to tie air ranges together.
* Concern that MCI was not appropriate for an efficiently sized ANG installation and good joint operations capabilities.
* Potential impacts to Homeland Security, Recruiting and Retention, Training.
* More jobs to be lost than in report. Very few personnel will relocate.
* Alternate airfield just five miles further than the 50 mile threshold specified in the MCI.
* Jets have 3,800 hours average time. Low because ranges are close by.
* Unit has 98% personnel strength.
* Unit is the #1 mission capable rate unit for the past five years.

INSTALLATION CONCERNS RAISED:

* Concern about moving Home Station Training Site to Savannah, GA.
* Moving out firefighters a concern to the municipal airport authority.
* 40 fighters can be parked there now. 58 can be parked with another ramp expansion. Data call did not capture ramp expansion.
* Encroachment and environmental factors apparently not a problem.
* Munitions storage currently at Ft Chaffee.
* Have pulled ASA alert there using soft shelters.
* Current lease expires in 2054.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS RAISED:

* Unit has a history of helping local communities with ice storms, etc.
* Good recruiting base in local community.
* Ft Smith area one of the (5) fastest growing areas in the US.
* Community leaders want base to remain.

REQUESTS FOR STAFF AS A RESULT OF VISIT:

* Perform careful evaluation.

Mr. McRee,

The attached file lists all of the members of the 188th Fighter Wing who assisted with the visit by the BRAC Commission on Monday, July 11. In addition, the following personnel were in attendance at the briefing:

Personnel present during the briefing:

Chairman Anthony Principi

Mr. Brad McRee

Mr. Brock Strom

Mr. Asa Hutchinson

U.S. Senator Mark Pryor

Mr. Randy Massanelli, assistant to Senator Pryor

Mr. John Brackin, representing Governor Mike Huckabee

MG Don C. Morrow, the Adjutant General of Arkansas

Brig Gen Shelby Bryant, Commander, Arkansas Air National Guard

Col Kevin Wear, 188th Fighter Wing Vice Commander

Lt Col Tom Anderson, Operations Support Flight Commander

Capt Kristine Munn, State Public Affairs Officer

MSgt Keith Brown, videographer

<<Commissioner Visit Assistance.xls>>

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Thank you,

V/R

Capt Kristy Munn

Kristine M. Munn, Capt, ANG

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