

BASE VISIT REPORT

BRADLEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AGS, CT

June 6, 2005

COMMISSION STAFF: Brad McRee (staff only visit)

LIST OF ATTENDEES: (see attached)

BASE'S PRESENT MISSION: To fly and support the A-10 aircraft for the Close Air Support mission.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:

- * Realign Bradley International Airport Air Guard Station, Connecticut. The A-10s assigned to the 103d Fighter Wing will be distributed to the 104th Fighter Wing, Barnes Municipal Airport Air Guard Station, Massachusetts (nine aircraft) and retirement (six aircraft). The wing's expeditionary combat support (ECS) elements will remain in place at Bradley and Bradley will retain capability to support a homeland defense mission.
- * Establish a Centralized Intermediate Repair Facility (CIRF) at Bradley for TF-34 engine maintenance.
- * Construct an Air Sovereignty Alert (ASA) facility at Bradley. The Bradley ECS elements remain in place to support the ASA mission.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:

Barnes and Bradley are 12 miles apart. A "full" A-10 squadron will be at Barnes because it ranked higher in military value. Closing Otis ANGB creates a need to place an Air Sovereignty Alert (ASA) site in the region. The Air Force priced an alert facility at both Barnes and Bradley, and chose Bradley on the basis of lower cost. The Bradley ECS elements remain in place to support the ASA mission. Establishing a CIRF at Bradley for TF-34 engine maintenance compliments the realignment of the A-10 fleet. The CIRF at Bradley will consolidate TF-34 engine maintenance for the ANG A-10 aircraft from Barnes, Selfridge, Martin State and active duty aircraft at Spangdahlem, Germany. Establishing this CIRF at Bradley rather than at Barnes avoids relocation of a hush house facility at an estimated cost of \$3.5 million, and avoids construction of additional 18,000 square feet of maintenance facilities already existing at Bradley and that will be available.

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MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED: Entire base. (windshield tour)

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED:

- * (6) aircraft are slated for retirement. Base officials questioned if they were really retiring. The Air Force Force Structure Plan supposedly says that there are to be no changes in the number of A-10 aircraft available for the next twenty years. There is a plan to extend the useful service life of the fleet.
- * 504 military positions are included. This is apparently not in the COBRA analysis.
- * The questions and MCI analysis masked the true capability of a smaller scale Guard base.
- * The main range used is located at Fort Drum. The next closest is Warren Grove. They believe there will be a huge impact on recruiting and retention. If Otis closes also, Barnes will give them priority for jobs because they are in the same state. Even though Bradley and Barnes are 12 miles apart, there is a state line between them. MA has two unions to satisfy.
- * They predict huge retraining costs and loss of combat capability.
- * If this proposal is enacted, the result will be a huge impact to the Air Force AEF plan.
- * An ASA unit has supposedly never been placed at a base that did not have an active flying unit without maintenance support.
- * It is unknown if the CIRF workers will be mobility qualified.
- * They believe they could handle the CIRF, ASA, and 24 A-10 aircraft.

INSTALLATION CONCERNS RAISED:

- * The base has 144 acres now with an option for 44 additional acres for expansion. This additional land is owned by the state. The current lease expires in 2050.
- * The base can currently park (36) A-10s on the ramp. They are not sure what the DoD data says. They know that they shorted themselves on the data call. Other units supposedly counted space that was not on their lease. If that space is eligible, there is Army ramp and airport ramp area that could be used.
- * To construct the ASA, there should be a cost of \$2M for arresting barriers that should be installed. The ASA facility itself is expected to cost \$15.5M.
- * Modifications to the Base Operations building would be necessary because of the need for 24-hour operations. In addition, there would be increased personnel costs.
- * To create the are for the CIRF would require \$5 ½ M to modify an existing building.
- * Snow removal is done by the airport authority.
- * The base has an A-10 simulator that other units use.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS RAISED: Did not meet with community.

REQUESTS FOR STAFF AS A RESULT OF VISIT:

- * It was reported that the economic locality area changed in 2005 nationwide. Which standard does the COBRA use? 2004 or 2005?

- * Staff from the National Guard Bureau (NGB) were to come to the base in late June to get the real costs of doing this proposal. Did they estimate the costs correctly the first time?
- * Need to check the Force Tabs for the numbers of A-10 aircraft in the fleet over the upcoming years.
- * Bradley would like to do "City Basing." Ask NGB what is the latest on this proposal.