

117th Air Refueling Wing plan doesn't fly

By ROBERT F. REINHARDT JR.

The Department of Defense did Birmingham and the military no favors recently when it made recommendations for the realignment of military installations in the United States to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The Defense Department proposal removes all aircraft from 28 of 88 Air National Guard flying units, almost one-third of Air Guard flying wings, and Birmingham's

117th Air Refueling Wing is among those 28 units to be eliminated.

The Defense Department plans to move Birmingham's aircraft, sending two to Phoenix Sky Harbor, Ariz., four to McGee Tyson in Knoxville and the last two to Bangor, Maine. This effectively ends all flying operations at the 117th Air Refueling Wing. The 117th's firefighters will move to Dannelly Field in Montgomery. The remaining support personnel will stay in Birmingham to become a manpower pool for the Air Force.



NEWS FILE

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KC-135R Stratotankers assigned to the 117 Aerial Refuelling Wing of the Alabama Air National Guard are on standby at the unit's base at the Birmingham International Airport.

Col. Robert F. Reinhardt Jr. retired as vice commander of the 117th Air Refueling Wing on May 29.

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