



August 11, 2005

Honorable Anthony Principi
Chair
2005 Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

By resolution of the Board of Directors of Battle Creek Unlimited, I respectfully request that the 110th Fighter Wing at the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base at W.K. Kellogg Airport, be removed from the 2005 round of base closures and realignments.

As you are no doubt aware, the greater Battle Creek community, the State of Michigan and our legislative delegation in Washington, D.C., have rallied behind the men and women of the 110th Fighter Wing. Our team has met, on various occasions, with you and all your colleagues on the 2005 BRAC Commission. We urge you to consider, and share with your colleagues, the reasons Battle Creek Unlimited poses for removing this capable Air National Guard unit from closure, and allowing it to continue as an active unit in Battle Creek for the long-term benefit of the nation.

1. It is in the best interest of the Air Force, the Air National Guard, and the United States of America to retain the incredible combat capability of the 110th Fighter Wing, and the infrastructure and community support of W.K. Kellogg Airport. There is no cost savings or high level of military value in moving the 17 A-10 jets 110 miles from the West to the East side of the State of Michigan. Sending the A-10s to Selfridge Air National Guard Base, as recommended, will immediately result in a colossal loss of military capability, close air support, and search and rescue operations for the warfighter. At a minimum, this loss will extend another three to five years.
2. The A-10 weapons system is important to Michigan and the nation. Airfield infrastructure other than W.K. Kellogg Airport, in particular Selfridge Air National Guard Base, is within or in close proximity to large metropolitan areas. Consequently, those airfields suffer from encroachment on the ground, and in the airspace from commercial airports serving the areas. Further, the training airspace

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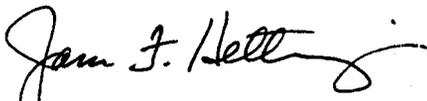
used by units in large metropolitan areas typically suffers the same encroachment. Battle Creek is in largely agricultural and rural Southwest Michigan and will not in the foreseeable future be impacted by ground or airspace encroachment.

3. If an installation is to be closed and aircraft reapportioned to another location, the units themselves must be the focal point of the evaluation.
 - a. In terms of combat deployments, non-combat deployments, and HHQ inspections, Battle Creek's 110th FW is the only Air National Guard unit to receive an Outstanding from a HHQ Operational Readiness Inspection in the last eight years; Battle Creek's 110th FW is only the second A-10 unit out of the four already inspected to pass in the recent round of inspections.
 - b. The Department of Defense cannot expect to support a growing mission at a base that cannot fully "man" its current mission. Battle Creek has the smallest recruiting base, yet the best "manning" rate of all Air National Guard A-10 units for the past five years.
 - c. In hours flown, maintenance-ready aircraft, and recruiting and retention, the 110th Fighter Wing is unsurpassed.
4. If cost savings are the reason for closing the W.K. Kellogg base in Battle Creek, careful research now establishes there will instead be a cost.
5. If military value is the criterion, we find even the suggestion of an argument impossible, that the 110th Fighter Wing, and resulting loss of the men and women who will not follow the A-10s to Selfridge Air National Guard Base, have little or no military value.

Our recommended solution is removal of the 110th Fighter Wing from the 2005 BRAC list. This will not affect the overall Air Force plan. There will be no "ripple" effect. Keep the 110th Fighter Wing in Battle Creek, and you will maintain the best A-10 unit, and facility, in the Air National Guard.

We encourage you and the other independent commissioners to keep these considerations at the forefront, as you develop your final list of recommendations for 2005. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



James F. Hettinger
President and CEO

Cc: Honorable Samuel Skinner