

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

June 5, 2005

### Department of Defense Releases

N/A

[Eielson moves to top of BRAC hearing list \(Alaska\)](#)

### National News Articles

[Searching For Care \(Miss.\)](#)

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[Region benefits from its volunteers \(N.D.\)](#)

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### Additional Notes

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[State Is Facing Other Job Losses From Military's Decisions \(Groton, Conn.\)](#)

### Department of Defense Releases

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[If the Navy Leaves \(Groton, Conn.\)](#)

### National News Articles

[Md. works to retain secretive U.S. agency Geospatial-Intelligence would make good fit at Fort Meade, officials say \(Md., Va.\)](#)

### **Japan, U.S. see base deal by year-end**

Daily Yomiuri (Tokyo)  
Satoshi Ogawa Yomiuri Shimbun  
June 5, 2005

[Federal panel members hear pleas not to close N.J. Army base  
Plan calls for 5,200 jobs to leave Fort Monmouth for APG in Harford County \(N.J.\)](#)

Defense Agency Director General Yoshinori Ono reached a basic agreement with U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld Saturday to achieve a deal on the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan by the end of this year.

[C-130s flying to Yeager Airport for training exercise \(W.V.\)](#)

In a meeting held in a hotel in Singapore, Ono and Rumsfeld also agreed to release as soon as possible an interim report on the sharing of security roles by the Self-Defense Forces and U.S. troops.

[Vendors nervously watch base realignment unfold \(Conn.\)](#)

Ono told reporters after the meeting that the report could be issued in one or two months.

[Fort Smith leaders fighting base closing \(Ark.\)](#)

During the meeting, the defense chief said that as it would take time to gain the understanding and support of communities hosting U.S. bases for the realignment plans, it would be difficult for Japan to incorporate specific plans in the report for the redeployment of U.S. military bases.

He also asked the U.S. to work toward reducing the burden on local governments, particularly in Okinawa Prefecture, saying it was very important to do so.

A high-ranking defense official said Ono reiterated his call for the burden to be lightened on Okinawa because failure to do so when U.S. forces were realigned would spark anti-U.S. sentiment, making it difficult to ensure a prolonged stay for U.S. troops.

Rumsfeld cautioned against reducing U.S. troops in Okinawa, saying maintaining a military deterrent was essential.

However, Rumsfeld also cited the importance of understanding, cooperation and support from local governments, saying the redeployment of U.S. forces had to lighten the burden on the communities affected while meeting the demands of the security environment in the 21st century.

He said the U.S. government spent about 3.2 percent of its gross domestic product on defense--about three times Japan's level of spending. Regarding the role-sharing of SDF and U.S. troops on the basis of common strategic objectives agreed in a two-plus-two security meeting in February, Ono praised Japan-U.S. cooperation in helping victims of the Dec. 26 Asian tsunami.

"We have to keep in touch with each other regarding contingencies. Now the contingency law has been passed, Japan can speed up talks on cooperation," he said.

Rumsfeld said the U.S. government greatly appreciated Japan's cooperation in rebuilding

Iraq and the fight on terrorism, saying Japan's contribution was important.

### **Throwing a fit will not slow the BRAC process**

Macon Telegraph

June 5, 2005

Back in 2002, John Thune was a good loser. Falling just 528 votes short of winning a U.S. Senate seat from South Dakota Democrat Tim Johnson, he refused to challenge the results. But today, a freshman senator after his upset win in 2004, he's feeling betrayed by his leaders. There's a lot of kicking and screaming going on.

The Pentagon recommendation to close Ellsworth Air Force Base, his state's second largest employer, was not only embarrassing but humiliating. But Thune's so far futile efforts to hold up and obstruct the BRAC process by throwing handfuls of sand into the machinery of national defense and government are not becoming.

Thune asked for it, in a way, when he upset Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle last November. When Democrat Daschle claimed to have kept Ellsworth (a \$278 million economic engine for the lightly populated state) off the BRAC list under President Bill Clinton, Republican Thune countered that his close ties to the Bush White House would enable him to protect the base now.

His record in three House terms had identified him as a party loyalist and a good soldier. He'd been urged to run for the Senate by the White House. Heavy personal and financial backing in both 2002 and 2004 brought Bush to the state to campaign for him personally. And he campaigned hard for Bush. Thune had been given a seat on the Armed Services Committee. And he'd worked hard with the Ellsworth Task Force, lobbying Vice President Cheney even before Thune was sworn in back in January.

But on May 13, when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld presented his list of bases slated for closure, there was Ellsworth - home to half the

Air Force's 58 B-1 bombers (some assigned there from Robins a few years ago).

Thune went into orbit. Joined by other wounded politicians, such as Maine's two senators, he sponsored bills to delay the BRAC process until studies are completed. To hold it up until major combat units come back from Iraq. Another nuisance bill demanded that uniformed service members testify to the BRAC commission. The bills failed, but Thune's pugnacious posture continues.

Now he has announced he will withhold his support for Bush's controversial nominee for the post of U.N. Ambassador, John Bolton - apparently for no reason other than to send a message to the White House that it can't mess over John Thune with impunity.

The Base Realignment and Closure process was set up specifically to insulate the commission from that kind of political pressure. It has already begun hearings and base visits.

We trust Thune's efforts will fail as the nonproductive posturing they are. And we applaud Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's political independence in making his closure decisions seemingly without fear or partisan favor.

### Local News Articles

#### **State Is Facing Other Job Losses From Military's Decisions (Groton, Connecticut)**

New York Times  
Avi Salzman  
June 5, 2005

The proposed closure of the submarine base in Groton would represent the most dramatic change to Connecticut's military forces by far, but it isn't the only closure or realignment that could cause job losses in the state. Reserve centers and armories in central and western Connecticut also made the Pentagon's list of proposed cuts, and military airplanes stationed in Windsor Locks could be sent to Massachusetts.

The smaller closings have not received much attention for obvious reasons. The Groton base would lose at least 50 times the numbers of personnel than all of the other military installations combined, which are expected to lose 126 jobs. Nonetheless, the Pentagon's plans to remake the state's military infrastructure come as a welcome relief to some people in the state, and as a blow to others.

The most controversial proposal from the Base Closure and Realignment Commission, known as BRAC, would move the A-10 Warhogs based at the Bradley International Airport Air Guard Station in Windsor Locks. Nine of the planes would be sent to Barnes Air Guard Station in Westfield, Mass., about 20 miles from Bradley and considered by the Pentagon to have a slightly higher military value. Six of the planes would be retired.

"We won't have any aircraft assigned to the Air National Guard anymore in Connecticut, something we've had since 1924," said Maj. George Worrall, a spokesman for the station. "Connecticut would be one of only six states that would no longer have a flying base."

Instead, under the Pentagon recommendations, the Bradley base would become a hub for engine repair, which would bring planes, and possibly some jobs, from other states to the area.

Bradley could gain other new responsibilities. The Pentagon has proposed that the airport become the site for an air sovereignty alert system that is now at the Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod. In the event of a hijacking, the base could become particularly important. On Sept. 11, 2001, F-15's from Otis were scrambled when military officials learned about the first hijackings, according to the 9/11 Commission Report.

It is unclear whether new planes would be based at Bradley to support the new mission, Major Worrall said.

Over all, the base would lose 70 jobs, according to one Pentagon estimate. Over 20 years, the

Pentagon would expect to save more than \$25 million by realigning the bases.

Representative John B. Larson, a Democrat from East Hartford, said he opposes removal of the A-10's and plans to fight it.

"I think to expand its maintenance mission makes sense," he said. "To remove its core mission makes little sense given its capacity to handle everything in the region."

Numerous smaller closings would also reshape the state's military presence. Connecticut cities and towns are filled with armories and small reserve centers where members of the National Guard and Army Reserves report one weekend every month and two weeks every year. Six of those Reserve centers could be closed under the Department of Defense plan, and as many as seven Connecticut National Guard units could end up relocating, with Reserve and Guard members traveling to consolidated training centers.

Connecticut's armories are 57 years old on average, said Lt. Col. John Whitford, a spokesman for the Connecticut National Guard. National Guard officials have been pushing for an upgrade for a few years. "BRAC has kind of nudged it a little further," Colonel Whitford said.

No longer will local communities each have their own armory. Under the proposed plan, members of the Guard and Army Reserves would train at joint readiness centers with more room and new technology.

Local and national politicians said they were generally unconcerned about the few job losses that could result from the changes to the Reserve centers. Closings in New Haven, Middletown and Fairfield would cost an estimated 56 jobs, according to the Pentagon.

"We don't feel there's a real case to be made for some of the smaller ones they're seeking to consolidate," said Representative Christopher Shays, a Republican who represents Fairfield County. A Reserve center in Fairfield is

scheduled for closure under the Pentagon plan, with estimated losses of 17 jobs.

"We're really making our case in Groton," Mr. Shays said.

### **If the Navy Leaves (Groton, Conn.)**

New York Times  
Robert A. Hamilton  
June 5, 2005

While the state is worried about the estimated \$3-billion-a-year loss to its economy if the Naval Submarine Base in Groton is closed as the Pentagon recommended last month, the Blood Services division of the Connecticut Red Cross wonders what will happen to its blood supply.

In the last 12 months, sailors and civilians at the base have donated 984 units of blood, said Lynn Townshend, a Red Cross spokeswoman. And that's not counting the effects of an economic downturn, which tends to affect all blood drives in the area.

"It could run into the thousands of units a year that we won't be collecting in southeastern Connecticut if the base closes," Ms. Townshend said. "It would be a lot to make up."

There has been a lot of worry in Groton since the Pentagon's announcement. The president of the Little League is worried about having enough players to field teams, the school superintendent is concerned that some schools may close and the staff at the Senior Center wonder who will run the programs after its naval volunteers leave.

While the rest of the state looks at the billions of dollars and thousands of jobs that will be lost, Groton has the concerns of a community that is about to lose at least 4,000 residents, about 10 percent of its population.

"Who knows how long it will take to replace them with people moving into the area," Mark R. Oefinger, the Groton town manager, said. "It's a lot of people leaving in a very short period of time, even if it stretches out longer than the

five years the Navy said it will take. I'm not sure we can begin to gauge the impact right now. And the human impact is going to be even more significant, because sailors and their families are so active in Groton."

Indeed, sailors coach Little League teams, they volunteer at charities. Their spouses teach in the schools and hold important jobs such as lawyers and nurses. Their children fill the schools. About 25 percent of Groton's students are Navy children and 10 percent more are children of base workers. At the Charles Barnum Elementary School, which is adjacent to the Navy's largest housing complex, 90 percent of the 330 students are Navy children. Valerie G. Nelson, the school's principal, said it's not unusual to have a turnover of more than 200 students during the school year because of Navy transfers.

"The children are so resilient, though, you can't tell who's new and who's been here for a while," Mrs. Nelson said. "The only bad part is you're always saying goodbye to someone."

Beth Anne Trask, whose husband is a senior chief petty officer, works as a paraprofessional in the special-education department at the school. She said a half-dozen of the aides who work in the school are Navy spouses.

"Being here for so long, and knowing everybody, the idea of moving is a little scary," she said. "Here, you know everybody on the waterfront, and everybody knows you. There's a comfort level that is hard to find in the Navy. At least half of my husband's military career has been spent here, so even if they do close it, we'll take it with us, and if they keep it open, we'll return."

The Groton schools superintendent, James E. Mitchell, said he expected to lose the federal impact aid that Groton receives because of the submarine base. The aid makes up about 10 percent of \$65 million annual school budget.

"Hopefully, if the Navy does pull out, it won't be quickly, because it would make it very difficult to plan for," Dr. Mitchell said. "If they pull out

over a longer period, it would mean a lot fewer teachers and probably fewer schools."

He said the schools would suffer in another regard as well: Members of the military and their spouses are a large portion of the school's volunteers. In a recent ceremony honoring volunteers, Dr. Mitchell acknowledged 17 members of the military, from the commanding officer of the base for helping to identify maintenance needs at Ledyard High School, to a Navy wife who raised thousands of dollars to pay for painting classrooms and setting up a computer network.

Other organizations that rely on volunteers said that while the base closure may not be a fatal blow, they don't look forward to its effect.

"Our volunteer base is pretty diverse, but I can't say we wouldn't lose some very key people who have helped us in our work over the years," said Bradford Bates, executive director for the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity. "The Navy has some very wonderful people who have put a lot of work into making Habitat successful. They're great workers, hard workers, always very dependable. They've always been a great asset."

Every Christmas, sailors from the base collect more than \$60,000 worth of toys and cash for children of needy families. These donations are distributed by the eastern Connecticut office of the state's Department of Children and Families.

"That kind of work with needy kids in their community is a real display of the value that these men and women have," said Gary M. Kleeblatt, a spokesman for the department. "It shows you they are an important part of the fabric of the community. And it's efforts like that, from the community, that are really the most effective."

Hundreds of sailors also volunteer annually for programs at the Senior Center, teaching computer classes, participating in the fall cleanup, delivering meals to shut-ins, and driving the elderly to medical appointments.

"If the base closes, it's going to be felt all over town, in ways we probably can't even guess right now," said John P. Silsby, the Groton town parks and recreation director.

Frank Norosky, president of the Groton Little League, wonders what's going to happen to the youth baseball schedule if all the military dependents leave. Many of the coaches are sailors and many players are Navy children.

"It would leave us down several teams, and take away our ability to fill the schedule," Mr. Norosky said. The remaining teams would probably end up having to play each other several times each season. "It would be a tremendous blow to our program."

The Department of Defense estimates the closure of the base could eliminate more than 16,000 jobs. The state had previously estimated spinoff effects could raise that number to more than 25,000, and the annual impact on the state economy could exceed \$3 billion in lost wages and federal spending.

The recommendation now goes to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission, which is to hold a hearing on July 6 in Boston. The commission has until September to review the list and decide on any changes. Four of the nine members of the commission toured the base on Tuesday. The commission will forward its final list to President Bush, who must accept or reject it as a whole. If the president accepts it, it goes to Congress, which must vote to reject it within 30 days, or it becomes law.

The time line means the state probably won't know until December, at the earliest, whether any save-the-base initiative has been successful, which means months of anxiety for people who worry about the impact on day-to-day life in the region.

Thomas A. Sheridan, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, said the economic disruption would involve more than just jobs on the base. If the Navy pulls out, a lot of people in non-Navy jobs would go with it.

"There are a huge number of Navy spouses who work in local businesses," said Mr. Sheridan, who employs one of them in his office. Some of the spouses work as nurses or lawyers or in other professional capacities, but many of them are young and move every couple of years with their husband or wife in the service, and so fill service jobs in retail, tourism or entertainment.

"I'd say we're talking 2,000, 3,000, and maybe as many as 5,000," he said. "The impact from the loss of those people is going to put a lot of pressure on the casinos and other businesses that rely heavily on this type of labor."

Jennifer L. Millspaw runs a cosmetics business out of the house where she lives with her husband, Petty Officer First Class Keith Millspaw, an electronics technician who works at the Naval Submarine Support Facility, a shore-based repair station in Groton.

"It's an easy business to pack up and move, but it wouldn't be so easy rebuilding my customer base," said Mrs. Millspaw, who estimates that 70 percent of her clientele come from outside the Navy. "And I have friends who have just bought a house or started a family because they thought they were going to be here for a while, so it's going to be difficult for them."

Janet D. Pearce, executive director of the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, said her greatest fear is that the base closure would put thousands of people out of work and cause an economic downturn that forces local governments to curtail spending on social services.

"It would be a double whammy - just as the service needs increase, the funds for paying for those services would decline," Mrs. Pearce said.

And it would likely cut into United Way collections even before the base is actually shut down, she said. "Fear is the biggest killer in a United Way campaign, and the possibility of losing your job is one of the greatest fears," she said.

Mr. Oefinger, the town manager, said there is a lot of retail development along Route 12, just south of the base, including car dealers and grocery and department stores, that serve the Navy population.

"The people who are in the Navy go out to the movies, to a restaurant, they buy a pair of shoes for their kid or a new family car - if we lose those things, it's going to hurt," Mr. Oefinger said.

"The base closure commission isn't going to be swayed by arguments about the local economic impact, because closing a base anywhere is going to generate local economic impact," he said. "We have to make a case for the military value of the base so we can keep it here."

### **Md. works to retain secretive U.S. agency Geospatial-Intelligence would make good fit at Fort Meade, officials say (Md., Va.)**

Baltimore Sun

Larry Carson and Laura Cadiz

June 4, 2005

State leaders are working behind the scenes to halt the proposed shift of the secretive National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency from Bethesda to Virginia, arguing that if it must move, the operation should go to Fort Meade, which is set to undergo a major expansion over the next seven years.

The 3,000-worker agency, which does mapping and analysis of satellite photographs and images for the military, is the only major military facility slated to leave Maryland under the Pentagon's proposed shakeup of military bases.

Even with the loss of the satellite agency, the state would gain more jobs than all but one other state -- Georgia -- under the Pentagon proposals. Local officials already are planning for the effect of those jobs on everything from highways to housing stock.

A range of Marylanders, from Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan to U.S.

Sen. Paul S. Sarbanes, are working to keep the Geospatial agency as well -- though they are worried about arousing communities in other states vying for the same federal jobs, said Jesse Jacobs, a spokesman for Sarbanes.

Aris Melissaratos, secretary of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, confirmed that such an effort is under way. But he said, "The reality is it's a very sensitive topic, and we really shouldn't be discussing it."

The Fort Meade expansion -- estimated by state and local officials to exceed 10,000 jobs -- could bolster arguments for moving the Geospatial agency to Anne Arundel County instead of to Fort Belvoir, Va., as proposed by the Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The White House is to receive final recommendations in September.

Maryland Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski met this week with Geospatial's director and spoke with Anthony J. Principi, the base commissions chairman, a spokeswoman said. The senator also sent Principi a letter outlining her arguments for keeping the agency in Maryland.

"In sum, I believe that Fort Meade's secure, superior facilities make it better suited than Fort Belvoir to accommodate the special needs of a high-tech intelligence facility," Mikulski said in a letter released yesterday and dated May 26.

Rep. Christopher Van Hollen Jr., whose district covers Montgomery County, said, "The first thing we want to look at is whether we can accommodate security concerns at the existing site." If not, a move to Fort Meade would be less disruptive for employees, he said.

### **'Logical alternative'**

Duncan said he would prefer to keep the Geospatial operation in Bethesda, but said that "for a fallback, Fort Meade is the next logical alternative."

Fort Meade was mentioned as a possible home for the agency earlier this year by Col. John W. Ives, retiring commander of the Army base.

In a March interview with The Sun, he pointed to reports that the agency would like to grow, and went on to highlight Fort Meade's advantages as a potential site. He noted that the post is being modernized, with new fiber-optic communications lines and 3,170 new base homes under construction.

"We are easily capable of growing by more than 20,000 people," he said.

Planning officials in Anne Arundel and Howard counties are preparing for a huge influx of jobs under the Pentagon's realignment plan, regardless of what happens with the Geospatial agency.

State officials have advised local planners to prepare for at least 10,000 jobs -- and that could prove to be a conservative estimate.

"The numbers we're preparing for are much higher than this" as Fort Meade and the National Security Agency expand, said Anne Arundel County planning director Joseph W. Rutter, Jr. "There will be more announcements over time. This is part of an overall package."

### **'A major challenge'**

Economists caution that the base realignment decision is not final. And if and when the jobs come to the area, they likely will be spread out over a couple of years.

"This will create a major challenge for the local governments. They may have to rethink how much density is appropriate in Howard County or Anne Arundel County," said Stephen Fuller, an economist and director of George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis.

The immediate effect will be increased traffic as new jobs lead to thousands more cars on the roads, Fuller said.

Richard P. Clinch, director of economic research at the University of Baltimore's Jacob France Institute, said the added jobs will increase pressure to widen Route 32, which already is clogged with workers heading to NSA, Fort Meade and Northrop Grumman.

Despite that, Howard County planning director Marsha L. McLaughlin said the U.S. 1 corridor recently was rezoned for intense redevelopment for new homes and businesses -- and isn't far from the NSA-Fort Meade area.

"We're working as fast as we can so the infrastructure will be there," she said.

Walt Townshend, president and CEO of the Baltimore Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce, said the organization is the only chamber in the nation to operate a bus system, which could be useful in ferrying employees from commuter trains on the MARC line to jobs at NSA and Fort Meade.

Rutter said transportation improvements to Route 175 next to the base are under way. Improving the highway is Anne Arundel's top transportation priority, he said.

Approximately 60,000 county residents commute out of the county for work, Rutter said. If some of them commuted instead to the Fort Meade area, "that would help reduce traffic from a regional perspective." The state also has plans to create additional parking at the MARC train station in Odenton, Rutter said.

Rutter also said the county has plenty of office space being built that could accommodate private contractors doing government work.

Construction has begun on about 2 million square feet of space in Annapolis Junction, and a 1.8 million-square-foot business park is to be built in the Arundel Mills area.

"We in Anne Arundel County have been preparing for significant increases in activity both on and off base," he said.

**Federal panel members hear pleas not to close N.J. Army base**  
**Plan calls for 5,200 jobs to leave Fort Monmouth for APG in Harford County (N.J.)**  
Associated Press (Baltimore Sun)  
June 4, 2005

EATONTOWN, N.J. -- Two members of a federal commission recommending that Fort Monmouth be closed and much of its work shifted to Aberdeen toured the Army base yesterday but would not say whether the visit would help save the installation.

Anthony J. Principi, chairman of the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission, would not say whether his visit provided information that would lead him to support removing Fort Monmouth from a list of military facilities that would be closed under the Pentagon's cost-cutting plan.

Under the plan, most of the base's more than 5,200 jobs would be transferred to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County.

"We came here to listen, to learn and to see firsthand the situation at Fort Monmouth," Principi said. "That's precisely what we will do."

Retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd Newton also emphasized that Monmouth's fate has not been sealed.

"No decisions have been made," he said. "We tried very hard not to come to any conclusion while we're sitting here."

In response to the visit, about 200 local residents, elected officials and merchants rallied yesterday morning across the street from the base to demand that one of the region's largest employers be kept open.

Supporters of the base emphasized its value not only to the local economy but also to the war effort in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Frank Muzzi, an executive with a local defense contractor that does work with Fort Monmouth, said a save-the-fort coalition estimates that no

more than 15 percent to 18 percent of the highly trained scientists and technicians who work at Fort Monmouth would move to Maryland. That would result in a terrible loss of intellectual capital for the Army, he said.

Principi said that is one factor that will be given serious consideration in the panel's deliberations.

U.S. Sen. Jon Corzine, a New Jersey Democrat, said, "I'd like to make the argument that it's a bad idea economically for Monmouth County, but they're relatively indifferent to that issue. But they shouldn't be indifferent to the idea that it's a bad idea for national security."

Corzine, the likely Democratic nominee for governor, said work done at Fort Monmouth has led to the development of electronic equipment that helps troops in Iraq find and disable or detonate roadside bombs, one of the chief threats to American troops serving there.

The fort's advocates want to persuade a majority of the nine-member base closure commission to take it off the closure list to be sent to President Bush in September.

Bush can only accept or deny the entire package submitted by the commission. If he accepts the recommendations, the list becomes final within 45 legislative days, unless Congress passes a joint resolution to block the entire package.

If the president rejects the recommendations, the commission has until Oct. 20 to submit a revised list. In November, Bush would have to approve or disapprove the revised recommendations.

**Developers eye Fort Monmouth as officials scramble to preserve it**

Associated Press  
Jeffrey Gold  
June 4, 2005

It's a question those focused on saving the Fort Monmouth Army base would rather not even consider: If they close it, what will come?

Fort Monmouth's 1,100 acres in the heart of affluent Jersey Shore community could eventually generate more economic activity than the base ever did, some developers say.

"When they put this thing out to bid, they are going to get whopping bids from developers," said David Lichtenstein, founder of The Lightstone Group in Lakewood, which owns residential and commercial property in 28 states. "There's no way they can't replicate the revenue base."

Local officials fear a devastating economic hit if Fort Monmouth is closed. At stake are more than 5,200 mostly civilian jobs that would be transferred to Maryland, and an estimated 4,000 others in nearby support companies.

While it might take years before the Army's land would be sold, developers generally agree that housing, with some shopping, is the most likely use of the land if the fort is closed. A final decision on closure will come this fall.

Retail or residential development at Fort Monmouth would produce property taxes for three towns - Eatontown, Oceanport and Tinton Falls - that the fort lies in, as well as the county. None got such revenue in the past, since the fort was federal property.

"It would be a fantastic boon to the local economy," Lichtenstein said. "Acreage in that area that is zoned commercial would sell for \$500,000 and \$1 million an acre."

Sheldon Gross, president of Sheldon Gross Realty, a West Orange-based real estate company that manages an office building near the fort, expects homes and shopping would replace the fort, but it might not be a windfall.

"It's a fantastic location, but there are other fantastic locations around that are going to be developed. There is not a need for anything that large to be dumped on the market," Gross said.

New housing could be lucrative in Monmouth County, where the median home price is now \$359,000, well above the state median of

\$306,000, according to Fiserv CSW Inc., a home price researcher.

Residential development is more likely than an industrial use because the fort is not near the New Jersey Turnpike, according to Steven D. Fleissig, a Newark lawyer who represents developers.

Tax revenue from new housing would not be a substitute for federal money that now flows into the region in the form of salaries and contracts, said James W. Hughes, dean of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University.

"If you replace it with housing, all you're doing is recycling existing dollars," Hughes said.

New Jersey already ranks last among the states in return on federal tax dollars, and a closure of Fort Monmouth would cement that standing, he said.

"Since this is really a research complex, with a lot of secondary vendors clustered around the fort, and all are fed by federal dollars, that's an economic engine you don't want to lose," Hughes said.

Saving Fort Monmouth is the aim of the mayors whose towns include the base. Even the prospect of fresh tax revenue pales when compared to the turmoil and uncertainty of a closing.

"Our focus is getting this reversed," Eatontown Mayor Gerry Tarantolo said, who counts 660 of his residents as fort employees.

"The interval of time from when the fort begins to close, and when it closes, and when something is done with the real estate, we have a void in our economy," he said. "The aspect of having a void of seven years, or even longer, could be devastating."

The time to start thinking about future uses for the fort is now, said Tim Ford, executive director of the National Association of Installation Developers, which advises towns on redeveloping military bases.

"We understand completely that you have to fight this, but at the same time it's important to start planning in case you are on that final list," Ford said.

The closing of the Military Ocean Terminal in Bayonne underscores Tarantolo's concern about a delay before economic recovery can begin.

The Bayonne terminal, a 430-acre manmade peninsula that reaches into New York Bay, employed 2,500 workers in 1995, when it was placed on the base closing list. Those jobs were phased out and it closed in 1999.

The Bayonne Local Redevelopment Authority, formed in 1998 to acquire and develop the land, began subleasing some of the land in 2000. Its tenants included NJ Transit, which used space for parking lots, and a ship builder, which used a dry dock.

The redevelopment authority did not get ownership until 2001, when 70 percent of the land was transferred to its control. It renamed the site, "The Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor."

It was not until last year - nine years after being slated for closure - that the first "tangible step in transforming" the area to a modern commercial port took place, the authority acknowledged. That was when Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. began operating a terminal for some of its ships.

Fort Monmouth was the only New Jersey post among 33 major bases named May 13 for closure by the Defense Department. A majority of the nine-member Base Realignment and Closure Commission would have to agree to take it off the list they will send to President Bush in September.

Bush can only accept or deny the entire package submitted by the commission. If Bush accepts the recommendations, the list becomes final within 45 legislative days, unless Congress passes a joint resolution to block the entire package. If Bush rejects the recommendations, the commission has until Oct. 20 to submit a revised list. In November, Bush would have to

approve or disapprove of the revised recommendations.

### **C-130s flying to Yeager Airport for training exercise (W.V.)**

Associated Press

June 4, 2005

C-130 aircraft from the 167th Airlift Wing in Martinsburg were expected to be flown in to Yeager Airport on Sunday as part of a training exercise at the Air National Guard base in Charleston.

Adjutant General Alan Tackett and others will be at Yeager to talk about the capabilities of the newer model aircraft, according to West Virginia Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Mike Cadle.

The newer model C-130s from Martinsburg and the older models in Charleston will take part in the joint training exercise, which will include 8 to 10 aircraft, Guard officials said.

"This is a great opportunity not only for our flyers but for our ground crews as well." said Col. Timothy L. Frye, commander, West Virginia National Guard's 130th Airlift Wing. "The logistics in handling a large formation is quite intense and we have to concentrate on everything from launching the aircraft, to flying the formation, to recovering the aircraft, and doing it all efficiently, effectively but most importantly, safely."

The C-130s will depart the base at noon and travel to Gallipolis, Ohio, moving into a formation that will be staggered in four different elements about two miles apart.

The aircraft will then leave Ohio and fly over Huntington, Milton, Hurricane, Winfield and the St. Albans bridge, returning to Yeager at about 1 p.m. and joining four other aircraft already on the landing ramp, the Guard said.

Also Sunday, about 45 members of the 130th Airlift Wing who have been deployed overseas as part of Operation Enduring Freedom will come home on a C-130 Hercules aircraft after

providing operations, maintenance and support to Karshi-Khanabad Air Base since early April, the Guard said.

Meanwhile, Maj. David Lester, a spokesman at the 130th, said the training exercise is not a direct response to news that the Department of Defense plans to transfer the 130th Airlift Wing's eight cargo planes to Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina. The transfer is part of a national plan to close 33 major bases and downsize 29 others.

Lester said the training event will show the base's capabilities in handling numerous aircraft.

Meanwhile, Jessica Lynch has agreed to be spokeswoman for the group Keep Em' Flying, which hopes to convince the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to take the unit off the DOD's list. Soldiers flown in on the 130th's C-130s were involved in the former POW's rescue at a Nasiriyah hospital on April 1, 2003.

Sen. Robert C. Byrd's office announced Friday that BRAC Chairman Anthony Principi had assured the state's senior senator he would visit the Charleston base before the BRAC Commission makes a decision about realignment. No date for the visit was announced.

On Thursday, Byrd, D-W.Va., had announced that BRAC analysts will inspect the 130th on June 14.

### **Vendors nervously watch base realignment unfold (Conn.)**

Associated Press  
Stephen Singer  
June 4, 2005

Michael Williston's art and framing business is among hundreds of Connecticut vendors threatened by the Pentagon's recommendation to close the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton.

"It's a pretty scary prospect in the short term," said Williston, who with his wife has owned Framers of the Lost Art shops in Mystic and

Groton for 20 years. "In the long term, the area could bounce back, but the short-term prospects are daunting."

Williston, who sells frames, photos and other art supplies, is one of 568 state vendors who supply the Virginia class of submarines built by Electric Boat, which maintains several repair facilities near the Groton base. The suppliers have generated nearly \$347.5 million since the mid-to late-1990s, according to the Submarine Industrial Base Council in Washington, D.C.

In addition, 730 contractors have access to the submarine base, with some overlap with the list of suppliers for Electric Boat, said John C. Markowicz, chairman of the state's submarine base realignment coalition.

Nationally, more than 4,000 suppliers generating \$6 billion in business support the Virginia class of submarines, according to the Submarine Industrial Base Council.

The economic impact is one of the arguments being used to win a reversal of the recommendation to shut the sub base and consolidate the Atlantic fleet in Norfolk, Va., and Kings Bay, Ga.

"Could it be a tiebreaker?" Markowicz asked. "Yeah, it could."

The vendors are as varied as Williston's art business and Hamilton Sundstrand, which manufactures equipment that generates oxygen used for the submarines.

Electric Boat has orders to build 10 Virginia-class submarines in what is expected to be a 30-boat program for the Navy. The company has said it will readjust its work force but said it has no plans to move based on the Pentagon's recommended list.

Elected officials and others applaud EB's commitment, but question its practicality.

"If the base leaves, the nature of their business will be required to adjust," said state Sen. Cathy Cook, R-Mystic. "If there aren't any submarines

going by them on the Thames River, we expect it will be more difficult for them to do work on the subs."

Fred V. Carstensen, director of the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis at the University of Connecticut, is skeptical of Electric Boat's promise to remain in Connecticut.

"Now after you stop laughing, let's talk about that," he said. "It's not going to have to leave immediately, but it will move."

"It's extraordinarily important for them to be close to their one and only client," Carstensen said. "It won't move immediately because it has hundreds of millions in fixed assets in Connecticut."

Construction of a dry-dock or other capital improvements will eventually be in Georgia or Virginia, he said.

"There will be a decision point at which a big chunk of EB will relocate," Carstensen said. "Eventually, EB will relocate. I'll give it 15 years."

### **Fort Smith leaders fighting base closing (Ark.)**

Associated Press  
June 4, 2005

City leaders have agreed to spend \$40,000 to hire a retired Air National Guard colonel and local advertising firm to help fight a Department of Defense recommendation that 670 jobs be cut from the 188th Fighter Wing.

The city of Fort Smith, the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Fort Smith Regional Airport Commission will split the costs. The agency, Advertising Plus of Fort Smith, and retired Col. Brock Strom are to lobby against recommendations that the base's F-16C Falcon fighters be retired or reassigned and that it lose 670 of its 1,000 jobs.

The agency will be paid \$5,000 a month for four months and Strom will receive \$10,000 a month

for two months, officials said. The agency will put together briefing books, write testimony and act as a congressional liaison.

Strom, who just retired Wednesday as chief of operations at the Air National Guard headquarters in Washington, will help Fort Smith shape its message and to respond to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission and Department of Defense.

The city is preparing for a hearing before the commission on July 11 in San Antonio. Fort Smith City Administrator Bill Harding, Chamber of Commerce president Tom Mansky and airport manager Kent Penney will represent Fort Smith at the hearing.

### **Eielson moves to top of BRAC hearing list (Alaska)**

Associated Press  
June 4, 2005

Alaska will be the first state where the Pentagon will hold a regional hearing on plans for the nation's military bases.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission on Friday canceled a hearing in Salt Lake City and put off a hearing in St. Louis because of delays in obtaining information from the Department of Defense. The first hearing now will be June 15 in Fairbanks.

Alaska and Fairbanks officials also have complained about the delay in obtaining information on the military's proposal. They say their ability to rebut the Air Force's justification of the realignment is hampered by their inability to see the underlying data.

A commission spokesman could not be reached Friday to say whether the commission had also considered delaying the hearing in Fairbanks.

Jim Dodson of Fairbanks, who heads the task forces working to defend Eielson's current functions, said his organizations haven't asked for a delay of the Fairbanks hearing "yet."

Dodson and University of Alaska President Mark Hamilton joined Sen. Lisa Murkowski and her staff Thursday evening in a video conference with Air Force generals in Washington.

The generals told the Fairbanks contingent some of the information is still not available publicly.

The Department of Defense, in a report to the commission released May 13, recommended eliminating most of the approximately 3,000 Air Force positions at Eielson Air Force Base, located about 25 miles southeast of Fairbanks.

### **Opinions/ Editorials**

#### **Region benefits from its volunteers (N.D.)**

Grand Forks Herald

Mike Jacobs

June 5, 2005

If one measure of a community is the quality of its volunteers, our region proved itself again last week.

Two outstanding volunteer efforts came to my attention. One supports Grand Forks Air Force Base. The other seeks a cure for cancer.

Both of these reached into the Herald office.

Many members of our staff were involved in the Relay for Life, the American Cancer Society's major fundraiser. It took place Saturday.

The major portion of the fund-raising effort involves selling "luminaries," which are paper sacks. Buyers write names of people they want remembered on the sacks. Candles are placed inside. The candles are lit, and the effect is overwhelming, both because it underscores how widespread cancer is among us and because it shows how generous people are when they are asked to give.

Herald staff members found other ways to raise money for the Cancer Society. There were bake sales, silent auctions and raffles.

Cancer isn't the only cause Herald people work for. We have staff who are active in a number of organizations. The business institution's role is to allow fund-raising activity and to support and encourage the volunteers. The Herald's role is to provide coverage as appropriate.

Support for the Air Force Base is a little different. Developments about the base have been the major story of the past month. Hardly a day has passed without some front-page notice of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommendations and potential new missions for the base.

News coverage of this kind is a given. The base is big news.

The Herald has another role, as well. Supporters of the base came to the office Thursday to discuss how the Herald can help galvanize community support for the base. We came up with a pretty good plan. We'll distribute posters supporting the base with every copy of the Herald just before the commission's hearing in Grand Forks. That means every reader will have a poster.

We'll use the front page to call attention to the posters.

We hope base supporters will display these posters by hanging them in windows or, better yet, bringing them to the hearing. Base supporters hope the hearing becomes a rally for the base, and we're happy to do what we can to help that happen.

It strikes me that our posters are only a tool for a community that has already rallied around the base. When the base retention committee met Tuesday, I was impressed with how many people were poised to help and how well advanced their plans already were.

Of course, we have done this before. Grand Forks Air Force Base was on the closure list in 1995, and a public rally helped keep it open. In fact, the Grand Forks rally has become a kind of prototype for communities facing the potential closing of military bases.

The region has a lot of experience with issues that need attention.

Cancer may not be more frequent here than it is elsewhere, but it is more obvious because we know one another so well. Probably everyone knows someone affected by cancer. As the Relay neared, we at the Herald were struck again and again at the number of names we had collected to include on the luminaries.

It's also true that that our region has a lot of experience with community effort.

The fight against the Flood of 1997 comes to mind. Tens of thousands of hours were spent filling and piling sandbags. When that effort failed, tens of thousands of hours more were spent cleaning up and helping out.

All of these efforts take an amount of organization.

More than that, though, they take a big amount of heart. That is what the region demonstrated last week, in two wonderful huge volunteer efforts.

### **SEARCHING FOR CARE (Miss.)**

Biloxi Sun Herald  
Michael Newsome  
June 5, 2005

Keesler Medical Center survived Hurricane Camille without a scratch, but downsizing in the Department of Defense could gut the hospital, leaving 56,000 beneficiaries looking for treatment of serious illness in civilian hospitals.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission will decide by the end of the year if the full-scale military hospital should be transformed into an outpatient-only medical center with clinics and ambulatory services.

That would be a major shift from the hospital's existing mission. Keesler would lose its residency program, which trains about 100 doctors and nurses each year. And active-duty

personnel and military retirees would lose access to certain free medical care provided at the hospital.

Keesler made the short list of threatened installations about three weeks ago. The move to close Keesler Medical Center could save the federal government about \$23 million per year, officials said. The 1-million-square-foot hospital has an operating budget of about \$102 million per year.

Government Accountability Office officials believe the Air Force can defray the cost by sending the people that now use Keesler to civilian hospitals. The reasoning is it would be cheaper to farm out treatment than operate a hospital and pay for health coverage for military personnel.

The biggest expenditure for the hospital is drugs, which carry a price tag of \$35 million per year.

U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor said the hospital should be spared because the decision to put it on the list was a hasty one.

"I don't think the military has thought things through. There are a lot of consequences, and all of them are bad," Taylor said.

He said he will be lobbying members of the commission to reconsider and will modify the Defense Authorization Bill with language that would try to improve the situation.

He said the loss of Keesler for active-duty personnel and retirees will be a substantial one.

"A young enlisted man, he leaves Keesler with his wife, a baby and no bill," Taylor said. "When they walk out of a civilian hospital, they will walk out with a wife, a baby and a bill."

Taylor said the head of the BRAC commission, Anthony Principi, was the secretary for Veterans Affairs, a cabinet post, under President George W. Bush. He said Principi wanted to close the Gulfport VA Hospital a few years ago and then shift the load to Keesler Medical Center, which

he now wants to close, which Taylor finds ironic.

One side effect of the potential closure could be the loss of the residency program. The program trains about 100 doctors and nurses each year and Keesler Medical Center's man-in-charge, Brig. Gen. David Young, said he is concerned about this. "We've been training doctors for over 50 years here. They are nationally ranked," Young said.

Young said he feels Keesler's hospital lost points with BRAC because the building is nearly 50 years old and its equipment is expensive to maintain.

He said he theorizes 60 percent of the doctors along the Gulf Coast are here because they were trained at Keesler.

That statement is backed up by an anecdote from U.S. Sen. Trent Lott.

"The doctor that delivered both my children was in the Air Force and was stationed at the base. He married an Ocean Springs girl and moved to Pascagoula," Lott said. "He has delivered about about a third of all the babies born in Pascagoula."

Lott said he has never supported BRAC.

"I have voted against it since 1979," he said.

He said he, Taylor and other state leaders will push to keep Keesler, and other installations intact and fully operational.

"We're going to do our best," Lott said. "We have been through three rounds, and not had a single base closed in Mississippi."

### **Additional Notes**

N/A