

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

June 15, 2005

### Department of Defense Releases

N/A

### National News Articles

[Subpoena Spurs Pentagon To Release Base-Closing Documents](#)

[Sens. to Rumsfeld: Don't jump gun on base closings](#)

### Local News Articles

[State Resists Move Of Jets \(Hartford, CT\)](#)  
[Alaska residents mobilize to show support for Eielson Air Force Base \(Fairbanks, AK\)](#)

[Cannon unit going inactive \(Cannon AFB, NM\)](#)

[Kempthorne to argue against cargo-plane transfer \(Boise, ID\)](#)

[Before 'play ball,' the rallying cry is 'save our base' \(Norwich, CT\)](#)

[AG says 1994 agreement requires feds to pay for base cleanup \(Hartford, CT\)](#)

[Analysts promise fairness Commission to decide if 130th Airlift Wing will remain here \(Charleston, WV\)](#)

[City developing BRAC strategy \(Victorville, CA\)](#)

[BRAC officials will tour Coast \(Biloxi, MS\)](#)

[Snowe, colleague battle Defense Department \(Portsmouth, NH\)](#)

### Opinions/Editorials

[Nation is failing to see Eielson's value \(Anchorage, AK\)](#)

[Proposals to remove Fort Monmouth from BRAC \(Ashbury Park, NJ\)](#)

### Additional Notes

N/A

### Department of Defense Releases

N/A

### National News Articles

#### **Subpoena Spurs Pentagon To Release Base-Closing Documents**

GovExec.com

David McGlinchey

June 14, 2005

The chairwoman and ranking member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee said Tuesday that they have been successful in gaining more base realignment and closure documents from the Pentagon.

Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., issued a subpoena last week after the Pentagon delayed the public release of some BRAC papers. The Defense Department has proposed closing 33 major

facilities nationwide, realigning 29 others, and closing or realigning hundreds of smaller military locations.

On Monday, Lieberman issued a statement saying the Pentagon has been "at least partially responsive" to questions about BRAC.

The recommendations have been sent to the nine-member BRAC commission and that group is scheduled to pass on its proposals to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president and Congress are required to accept or reject the base closures and realignments in their entirety.

Lawmakers protested, however, saying some communities were at a disadvantage during local public hearings held by the BRAC commission because the Pentagon had not made available all its base-closing material. The Pentagon has recently released more information, according to congressional staffers.

"We are gratified that, as a result of Senators Lieberman's and Collins' subpoena, the Pentagon has increased the stream of data it is making available," said Leslie Phillips, a spokeswoman for Lieberman. "We expect some of this information will be helpful in answering our questions, although additional analysis is needed to confirm that."

Collins and Lieberman represent states that would be among the hardest hit by the base realignment and closure process. Under the plan, Connecticut would lose 8,586 civilian and military jobs and Maine would lose 6,938.

Earlier this week, Collins and Lieberman praised the Pentagon for its renewed cooperation in sharing information. They extended the subpoena's deadline because of what they called a "good faith effort" on the part of the Pentagon to release BRAC documents, according to Lieberman's office.

The new deadline is set for Friday.

"We expect the information flow to continue through the week," Phillips said.

### **Sens. to Rumsfeld: Don't jump gun on base closings**

The Associated Press  
June 15, 2005

Senators from Maine and New Hampshire have asked Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld for assurances the Pentagon won't jump the gun on any of its base closing recommendations.

In a letter released Tuesday, Sens. Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine and John Sununu and Judd Gregg of New Hampshire said they don't want any units or activities transferred from bases targeted for closure until Congress has acted on the final list.

"The Department of Defense should under no circumstances begin to take action on closing and realigning bases across the country before the Base Realignment and Closing Commission process has come to an end," the four Republicans said in a joint statement.

The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Brunswick Naval Air Station and an accounting center in Limestone, all in Maine, are on the closure and realignment list the Pentagon issued May 13. The commission is holding hearings and has until Sept. 8 to submit a final list to President Bush, who must approve it or reject it as is.

The senators also asked Rumsfeld for assurances that members of the Armed Forces and civilian defense workers will be able to testify freely before the commission without fearing reprisals.

"We seek your assurance that no member of the armed forces may be discharged, demoted, suspended, threatened, harassed, or in any other manner discriminated against" for testimony supporting any targeted base, the senators wrote. They asked for the same protections for civilian workers at bases.

Congressional delegations from both states condemned the inclusion of Portsmouth on the list. The Maine delegation also opposes stripping Brunswick of its planes and most of its

personnel, and the proposed closing of the accounting center.

Congressional delegations from affected states are building cases for removing bases from the list, but say they have been hampered by not having background documents. Collins and Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., subpoenaed the documents last week. The two said Monday the documents were beginning to flow and they would extend the deadline from Monday to Friday.

### Local News Articles

#### **State Resists Move Of Jets Rell Could Stop Bradley Guard's Shift, Officials Say**

Hartford Courant (Hartford, CT)

Jesse Leavenworth

June 15, 2005

State leaders say the federal government has no right to remove the Connecticut Air National Guard's warplanes without the governor's consent - and the governor is not consenting.

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal wrote to Gov. M. Jodi Rell on Monday that "any closure, reorganization or relocation of the Bradley Air Guard Unit would likely be unlawful, because you have neither approved nor consented to such action."

Pentagon analysts have recommended that the A-10 Thunderbolt squadron at Bradley be sent to the nearby Massachusetts Air National Guard base in Westfield, Mass., which also hosts an A-10 squadron. Combining the units "creates an optimum-sized and more effective squadron," according to U.S. Air Force recommendations to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

But Blumenthal cited federal law that says National Guard units "may not be relocated or withdrawn" without a governor's approval. In a letter dated Tuesday, Rell told Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld that she formally objected to the proposed transfer of the Bradley squadron.

"I do not consent to this recommended realignment," Rell wrote. "The Department of Defense did not coordinate this recommendation with the State of Connecticut. No federal official contacted my office or my Adjutant General to discuss any federal proposals concerning Air National Guard units or assets located in Connecticut.

"This lack of consultation compromises the integrity of the process used to develop the BRAC recommendations," she wrote, "disregarding the role of the Governor in relation to Connecticut's Air National Guard units."

The governor's letter, Blumenthal said Tuesday, "puts DOD on notice that we will insist on our legal rights."

"The responsibility for the National Guard units are shared by federal and state authorities," Blumenthal said. "Both provide critical support and both have to approve fundamental changes in structure and command as well as location."

Leaders in other states have vowed to wage similar battles over proposed removals of their National Guard units. The Illinois governor and attorney general have been at the point of the fight, promising even before the Pentagon's recommendations were made public that they would sue the federal government over the possible loss of Guard units.

"This we cannot accept," Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich said after the Air Force recommended transferring an Illinois Air National Guard fighter wing to Indiana. "As the commander in chief of the Illinois National Guard, I will not consent to this."

"It is an issue that needs to be resolved one way or the other," BRAC commission Chairman Anthony Principi has been quoted as saying. The commission, Principi has said, would ask the Pentagon's general counsel to issue a finding on the matter.

Department of Defense officials could not be reached Tuesday for comment, but at a BRAC hearing last month, an analyst with the Congressional Research Service said the federal law that Illinois officials had cited - the same one Blumenthal cited - did not apply to the BRAC process, according to a transcript of the hearing.

Also, Michael W. Wynne, the acting Pentagon undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, has written: "For BRAC to be a truly comprehensive process and to achieve our objective in support of the war-fighter, the process must involve all of our installations, including those used by the reserve component."

Asked whether the issue will be prominent at the regional BRAC hearing slated for next month, Blumenthal said he did not know "because we're still strategizing and deciding on how to present our case most effectively."

In any case, the Bradley Air National Guard Base is not due to close.

If the BRAC commission adopts all the Air Force recommendations, the base would have a bigger role in the maintenance and repair of A-10 engines and would gain an air sovereignty alert system now housed at an air base in Otis, Mass., that is marked for closure.

But Connecticut officials are fighting the proposed removal of the "Warthog" squadron, which they say is based on flawed calculations and would cut jobs and harm the Connecticut Guard's recruiting efforts.

In other action related to the Pentagon's BRAC recommendations, Blumenthal has pushed for release of documents related to radiological contamination at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton.

State officials already have said that the Pentagon has most likely grossly underestimated clean-up costs at the Groton base. Now Blumenthal says the Department of Defense "erroneously and intentionally" tallied long-term savings that would come from closing the sub

base by excluding costs related to radioactive waste clean-up.

He wrote on Friday to U.S. Sen. Susan M. Collins, chairwoman of the Senate committee on homeland security and governmental affairs, and U.S. Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, a committee member, asking them to subpoena the Pentagon for an update to a 1994 assessment of radioactive contamination at the base.

Blumenthal cited Navy officials' admission that the 1994 assessment was only cursory and that further testing would be necessary before the base was converted to any other use.

A thorough review of the updated assessment and other documents "is critical so that BRAC can make its determination based on complete and accurate information," Blumenthal wrote.

He said Tuesday that Lieberman's staff has added the assessment update to a list of documents being sought as part of the BRAC process.

The BRAC commission is slated to hold a regional hearing in Boston on July 6.

### **Alaska residents mobilize to show support for Eielson Air Force Base**

The Associated Press (Fairbanks, AK)  
Dan Joling  
June 15, 2005

Faced with losing several thousand jobs in a proposed realignment of Eielson Air Force Base, state leaders have urged residents to show up en masse at a hearing to show their support for keeping the base intact.

More than 40 businesses have committed to closing or operating with skeleton crews so employees can attend, and supporters planned to line streets Wednesday as members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission arrive for the first regional base closure hearing.

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner even printed a two-page red and white poster proclaiming, "America Needs Eielson Air Force Base."

"We're fighting city hall on this issue," said Jim Dodson, a contractor who heads the Save Eielson state and local task forces.

The Pentagon has proposed shutting 33 large bases and scores of smaller ones across the country to save \$48 billion over 20 years. The plan recommends moving Eielson's Air Force personnel and fighter aircraft to other locations by 2011.

The Base Realignment and Closure analysis concludes that the net loss of 2,940 military and civilian jobs at Eielson will result in the loss of 1,770 more jobs in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Together, that's a loss of 8.6 percent of all borough jobs, according to the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The borough quickly appropriated \$500,000 to protect Eielson and the Legislature matched it with \$1 million more.

The Pentagon says it could save \$2.7 billion over 20 years by shifting Eielson to a "warm" status - staying open but removing most permanent personnel. The Air Force covets Eielson's vast flying space and would use it to rotate in units from across the country for training sessions.

But the proposed realignment is an especially bitter pill in North Pole, where residents have loyally supported Air Force requests such as permanent flying space.

Eielson is located 30 miles southeast of Fairbanks and even closer to North Pole.

On Wednesday, Alaskans planned to highlight Eielson's location, which allows its aircraft to reach hotspots by flying polar routes. Eielson is only nine hours out from 95 percent of the developed world, said University of Alaska President Mark Hamilton, a former Army major general.

The base is virtually in the middle of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline and it's a stone's throw from Fort Wainwright, allowing for joint training operations.

Dodson is incensed that the Air Force refuses to release more information on how it made its decision on Eielson. The lack of information has left Alaskans shooting in the dark when trying to rebut military reasoning, he said.

He's also aware that in past reviews the BRAC Commission has backed 85 percent or more of DOD recommendations.

Underlying the Alaskans' urgency is the economic effects, a matter the BRAC Commission can consider in the second tier of criteria. The Department of Defense plugged in Eielson's numbers to an economic model that simply does not apply to Alaska, Dodson said.

"They failed to realize that Alaska is in fact a frontier economy," Dodson said, isolated from other regional economies that could help absorb change. People displaced by Eielson's changes cannot simply drive to another job - unless they're willing to drive at least 300 miles.

### **Cannon unit going inactive**

The Associated Press (Cannon AFB, NM)  
June 15, 2005

A Singaporean Air Force fighter squadron stationed at Cannon Air Force Base will be gone next month.

Cannon announced Tuesday it will hold a July 6 ceremony for the inactivation of the 428th Fighter Squadron, made up of 140 Republic of Singapore Air Force and 25 U.S. Air Force airmen who flew Singaporean F-16 Block 52 aircraft.

Nine of the wing's 12 aircraft have already left for Singapore. The others will go to Luke Air Force Base near Phoenix sometime next month to join the 425th Fighter Squadron, Singapore's other U.S.-based squadron.

Rep. Tom Udall, D-N.M., whose district includes the base, and Sens. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., and Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., expressed disappointment at the Republic of Singapore's decision to stop training fighter pilots at Cannon.

The decision was based on budget issues in Singapore and not on Cannon as a military installation, the congressional members said.

The Singapore Air Force unit has been at Cannon since November 1998 when the U.S. and Singaporean governments reached an agreement to bring a second Singaporean F-16 unit to the United States. The squadron combined airmen from both countries to provide training for Singaporean pilots in airspace surrounding the southeastern New Mexico base.

Inactivating the 428th will bring the total number of aircraft assigned to Cannon to 60.

The congressional delegation said officials assured them the decision had nothing to do with the Pentagon's recommendation that Cannon be closed under the 2005 base realignment and closure process.

Bingaman and Domenici were among a bipartisan group of senators who wrote Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Friday, warning the Pentagon not to transfer any personnel or military activities permanently until the independent Base Realignment and Closure Commission completes its work. Commissioners should have time to analyze the targeted installations before permanent changes are made, the senators wrote.

Udall said the relocation of the Singapore pilots should have no bearing on the realignment process.

He, Bingaman and Domenici all pledged to continue efforts to save Cannon.

Members of the commission are to hold a hearing in Clovis on June 24. The congressional delegation is expected to attend.

Meanwhile, Gov. Bill Richardson and Hanson Scott, director of the state Office for Military Base Planning and Support, planned to meet with BRAC members this week in Washington, D.C., and Florida.

The governor has already met with three other commissioners and spoken to a fourth by phone.

"Face to face meetings with each commissioner are critical to our overall efforts to overturn the Pentagon's decision to close Cannon Air Force Base," Richardson said in a news release.

Five of the nine members of the commission would have to vote to take Cannon off the closure list.

### **Kempthorne to argue against cargo-plane transfer**

The Associated Press (Boise, ID)  
Christopher Smith  
June 15, 2005

Idaho needs its wing of Air National Guard cargo planes to stay in Boise for emergency airlifting and future firefighting chores, Gov. Dirk Kempthorne will tell a panel reviewing the Pentagon's decision to send the planes to Wyoming.

But the Idaho Republican doesn't plan to air his argument that any reconfiguration of Guard assets must be approved in advance by involved governors when he appears before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission at a Friday hearing in Portland.

"Certainly, the governor agrees with the premise he has to consent to changes with respect to the National Guard bases, but his testimony will be focused on the positive reasons to retain the C-130s and their tactical mission in the Pacific Northwest under a governor's authority," David Lehman, Kempthorne's policy director, said Tuesday.

Nationally, 28 of the Air National Guard's 88 flying units will be grounded under the Pentagon's plan - a move some governors and

members of Congress say is out of proportion to plans for active-duty stations and tramples state executives' authority over reserve units.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has brushed aside arguments made by lawmakers - including House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., - that governors must be consulted on any closure or transfer of a guard unit.

Kempthorne, one of the National Governors Association's designated policy leaders on National Guard issues, has said he had no discussions with the Defense Department before the May 13 announcement that the Idaho planes were to be moved to Wyoming.

At a May hearing in Washington, D.C., BRAC Commissioner Samuel Skinner of Illinois asked the Pentagon for a legal opinion on the question of governors' authority over reserve units.

"That would be nice to know, because otherwise, we might be taking action that at least some people have already asserted we have no authority to do," Skinner said.

The closure or realignment of Air Guard installations is expected to take up much of Friday's hearing since three of the four states invited to testify are slated to lose reserve-unit planes under the Pentagon proposal.

Washington is the only state in the Northwest that gains under the plan, picking up 760 new jobs.

Oregon will lose 1,083 jobs to base closures and realignment - 564 of them from shuttering the Air Guard station at Portland. Planned closure of Montana's Air Guard station in Great Falls will mean a loss of 107 jobs out of a total of 124 statewide.

And realigning the Boise Air Guard Station with Wyoming's 153rd Airlift Wing will send all four of the state's C-130 cargo planes to Cheyenne, accounting for 83 of the 659 jobs Idaho is expected to lose under the Pentagon plan. Most of Idaho's job losses come from realigning

Mountain Home Air Force Base to reduce the variety of jet fighters on the flight line.

The Defense Department estimates relocating Idaho's C-130s to Wyoming will save \$300,000 annually, but moving the planes will cost \$2.5 million, meaning it will take more than eight years to break even.

Member's of Idaho's congressional delegation have questioned the logic of the Pentagon's plan.

"It's fair to say Idaho, from a standpoint of comparison to what other states are losing, has fared well," said Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, who will join Kempthorne and Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, at the Portland hearing. "But I will be speaking out forcefully against the plan because of the impact on the community and the future of the mission."

Craig said he believes the Pentagon has overlooked the need for the Idaho Air Guard C-130s to be positioned near the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, in case they are needed for fire suppression or for airlifting supplies or firefighters around the West.

Lehman said the Idaho C-130s slated for redeployment to Wyoming currently do not have the proper equipment to drop fire retardant, "but those are hopeful future missions" for the planes.

### **Before 'play ball,' the rallying cry is 'save our base'**

The Associated Press (Norwich, CT)  
June 15, 2005

Baseball took on new meaning Tuesday as the Norwich Navigators opened their gates for a free game and a rally for residents of eastern Connecticut in support of the threatened submarine base at Groton.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell led a crowd of about 1,500 in a chant of "save our base" just before the Norwich Navigators faced off against the Altoona Curve at the Sen. Thomas J. Dodd Memorial Stadium in Norwich.

"I don't think the Defense Department knew who they were dealing with when they took on southeast Connecticut," Rell told the cheering crowd.

The Pentagon has recommended closing the submarine base, which is the Navy's oldest. If approved, the closing would lead to the loss of nearly 8,600 jobs - more than in any other state. Economists estimate it would cost the state economy billions of dollars.

Lou DiBella, the owner of the Navigators, gave the governor a field base signed by the team as a show of support for the effort to keep the sub base open.

State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal also rallied the crowd, asking, "Are we going to win this fight?" The crowd roared back its approval.

"There's no issue more critical to the economic future of our state and our nation's defense and this kind of very powerful statement by the people here today," he said.

Rell and Blumenthal said the Defense Department greatly underestimated costs to clean up the base, and they said they look forward to presenting budget numbers to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission at a hearing scheduled for July 6 in Boston.

Edward Hadley, 68, a retired Navy submariner and Electric Boat technician who owns a bed and breakfast in Bozrah, attended the rally.

"I think it's a horrible thing," he said of the proposed closing.

The base and Electric Boat, which contributes to the manufacture of the Virginia class of submarines, provide a more solid local economy than the two casinos in southeast Connecticut, Hadley said.

### **AG says 1994 agreement requires feds to pay for base cleanup**

The Associated Press (Hartford, CT)  
Susan Haigh

June 15, 2005

Nine years ago, Connecticut hammered out an agreement with the federal government requiring the Department of Defense to clean up all the contamination on the U.S. Navy Submarine Base in Groton, Connecticut's attorney general said Tuesday.

That "federal facilities agreement," which is unique to the sub base, means DOD "can't leave it, or sell it or contain it; they have to clean it," Attorney General Richard Blumenthal told The Associated Press.

Blumenthal is questioning whether the Pentagon accounted for the agreement last month when it recommended closing the base.

"The Navy has plainly and blatantly based its closing projections on bogus assumptions," Blumenthal said. "There's no basis in fact or reality for its current cost projections for its cleanup, which it is obligated to do."

The Navy has pledged \$23.9 million toward making the base clean enough for industrial uses once it is closed.

But Blumenthal said the 1994 agreement reached between the state, the Navy and Environmental Protection Agency requires the cleanup meet strict radiation standards that apply equally to industrial and residential areas. Many sites will be required to meet the residential standard for all contamination.

And Blumenthal believes Connecticut has the ability to go to court and enforce that agreement.

The U.S. Navy said it was reviewing the 1994 agreement and could not comment on Blumenthal's assertions.

Since it was opened in in 1868, the 575-acre submarine base in Groton has been a dumping ground for all sorts of chemicals, such as torpedo fuel, sulfuric acid, waste oil and incinerator ash. The Navy has already spent \$57.6 million cleaning the base, which is also a

Superfund site. But few sites on the complex have been sanitized enough for residential use.

Blumenthal said the Navy also failed to take into account the cost of cleaning up any radioactive waste that might have been produced at the base, which houses nuclear submarines.

State officials hope they can persuade the independent Base Closure and Realignment Commission that it makes more sense to keep the military base open than to foot the bill for the true cleanup costs, which they say could easily climb by tens of millions of dollars.

Environmental restoration is one eight selection criteria used by the Pentagon when it chose which bases to close. John Markowicz, the head of a regional coalition to save base, said the BRAC commissioners must determine whether the Pentagon "substantially deviated" from that criteria when it recommended closing the Groton base.

If the federal government has ignored the 1994 federal facilities agreement with Connecticut, Markowicz said he believes that could constitute a "substantial deviation" from the criteria. An under-calculation of clean up costs could bode well for Groton's fate, he said.

"Let's put a real number out there," Markowitz said of the estimated cleanup costs.

Blumenthal has written to U.S. Sens. Joseph I. Lieberman, D-Conn., and Susan M. Collins, R-Me., asking them to subpoena certain documents that prove the U.S. Navy knew it underestimated the cost of closing the Groton base.

### **Analysts promise fairness Commission to decide if 130th Airlift Wing will remain here**

Charleston Daily Mail (Charleston, WV)  
Allison Barker  
June 14, 2005

Analysts with the Base Realignment and Closure Commission who are reviewing whether the

West Virginia National Guard's 130th Airlift Wing should lose its aircraft have promised the state's congressional delegation, the governor and others to conduct a fair evaluation

"Our job is to make sure we take a good impartial look at every one of the recommendations," Capt. Dave Van Saun, the commission's chief analyst, said. "That's why we're traveling across the country right now.

"There are eight separate criteria that have been established. The main criteria is military value."

The Department of Defense has recommended stripping the 130th of its eight C-130 Hercules turboprops and transferring them to Pope Air Force Base near Fayetteville, N.C.

The recommendation is part of a national plan to close 33 major bases and downsize 29 others. It aims to save \$ 48.8 billion over 20 years by eliminating redundant and inefficient facilities and promoting cooperation among the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

The recommendation said the Charleston unit based at Yeager Airport did not have enough space to accommodate an operational force of 16 planes.

"The numbers in the report said you have room for eight aircraft. You clearly have room for 12, actually, 13," Van Saun said after the analysts attended a briefing with West Virginia officials.

"The numbers that we actually looked at, we now have improved numbers, based on the presentation."

Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., said she did not want to give false optimism that the base would be spared because it is competing with units across the nation that also are fighting closure.

However, "If you can dispel facts on which major decisions were based, that's got to go in your favor. And that's what I think we spent a lot of time on, to the point of repeat, repeat, repeat," Capito said.

Sen. Robert C. Byrd, U.S. Reps. Nick Rahall and Alan Mollohan, all D-W.Va., and Gov. Joe Manchin also attended Monday's events. Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., who was in Washington on Senate business, sent a representative.

"We've got the case on our side," Byrd said. "We're here to fight and we've just begun to fight. It's going to be uphill. No one man can do this but we're unified in this delegation. We mean business."

The unit has a reputation for being one of the best-run units in the country. It has the highest personnel strength of any Air Guard C-130 base, 103.6 percent, and is second in readiness and fifth in retention. It also was named the Air Force's outstanding unit four times since the 1970s and was recognized by the National Guard Association four times for best overall operation.

"We should have more planes here," said Mollohan. "The complement should be 15, 16, 17."

Harold W. Gehman Jr., a retired Navy admiral and former NATO supreme allied commander, was scheduled to participate in Monday's briefings with base officials but canceled. Instead, Anthony J. Principi, chairman of the nine-member commission, will visit Charleston on June 24.

The DOD has estimated removing the 130th's planes would wipe out 156 full-time military and civilian jobs and about 700 part-time positions. The unit employs 320 full-time military and civilian staffers. Another 700 National Guard members are assigned to the unit.

On Sunday, Manchin announced he would give \$ 100,000 from his contingency fund to a group trying to keep the 130th Airlift Wing at Yeager Airport.

The governor also volunteered to be chairman of the group, called Keep 'Em Flying. Former Govs. Bob Wise and Cecil Underwood have

agreed to serve as co-chairmen of the organization. Former prisoner of war Jessica Lynch also has agreed to be a spokeswoman for the group.

The group includes military retirees, National Guard families, local and state public officials.

The commission will hold a public hearing on the recommendations for West Virginia and other states in Charlotte, N.C., on June 28. Capito said the West Virginia delegation should get 30 minutes.

The commission can change the list before it is submitted to the White House and Congress this fall.

### **City developing BRAC strategy**

Daily Press (Victorville, CA)

Kelly Donovan

June 14, 2005

BARSTOW -- The city's latest step in developing a strategy to fight the proposed job cuts for the Marine Corps Logistics Base came Friday, when they met with a consultant.

City representatives attended a meeting Friday in Corona to learn more about the Base Realignment and Closure process and how to best defend the base.

"We learned a lot," said City Councilman Joe Gomez, who went to the meeting with Patricia Morris, the city staff official handling BRAC matters.

One piece of advice Gomez said he picked up was that it's helpful for the BRAC Commission - - which will decide the fate of the Marine Base - - to hear comments from elected officials.

He said he'll do his best to attend the BRAC hearing scheduled for Los Angeles next month so he can testify before the commissioners.

Morris said the state Office of Military and Aerospace Support organized the meeting for the cities of Barstow and Corona so they could

meet with a consultant who has been inside the BRAC process and is now working as a consultant for the military and aerospace office.

Corona also has an installation being targeted in the BRAC round.

Other supporters of Barstow at the meeting included First District Supervisor Bill Postmus' chief of staff, and Rick Bremen, who retired two years ago as the head of the Production Management Department at MCLB's Maintenance Center Barstow.

Bremen said Monday that he's trying to do whatever he can to help the city with BRAC, and he's been helping the officials better understand the work that takes place at the Marine Base.

Gomez said it's important for the city officials to further discuss what strategies to use so they don't say anything that would actually hurt their efforts.

"We have to be very careful on how we approach these issues," he said. "It could do us more harm than good." Also, he said it's important for the city not to become complacent because of being recommended for realignment instead of closure.

"They could actually still close the base," he said.

Morris said the city has identified three main ways to approach BRAC:

--Addressing the question of whether the Department of Defense's realignment recommendations for MCLB would adversely affect the combat readiness of the Marine Corps.

Before this question can be answered, clarification on the meaning of the Department of Defense's recommendations is needed, Morris said.

--Looking through the Department of Defense's analysis to see whether any mistakes were made, and pointing them out.

Morris said she's already started the process of going through documents, looking for errors.

--Defending the Marine Base against any attacks from other bases.

Sometimes, when a base is recommended for closure, it will advocate the closure of another base instead.

Morris said the rumor is that a city with an Army depot in Texas will be promoting the closure of MCLB instead of its depot.

The BRAC list, released last month, contained recommendations that could result in the loss of 419 jobs at the Marine Base if approved by the government.

The loss would represent about 24 percent of the Marine Base's 1,720 jobs.

### **BRAC officials will tour Coast**

Biloxi Sun Herald (Biloxi, MS)

Michael Newsom

June 15, 2005

Community leaders and military personnel will be given a chance this week to petition government officials not to scale back Keesler Medical Center or close Naval Station Pascagoula.

A member of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will tour both installations on Thursday before the regional hearing July 12 in New Orleans. The regional hearing will give interested persons a chance to petition the BRAC commission to remove installations from the list for closure.

Both tours are closed to the press and general public, but there will be closed meetings today with an analyst for the BRAC commission in Harrison and Jackson counties, where community leaders will get a chance to ask questions.

The meetings are formatted as information sessions for those interested in presenting arguments at the July 12 hearing. At the information sessions, attendees will get a chance to talk to the analyst about parts of the model used to determine which facilities should be closed, among other things, so they can prepare their cases.

The analyst works for four-star retired Adm. Harold W. Gehman, a member of the commission, who will tour the two installations on Thursday with top brass from both.

Staffers from the offices of U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor and U.S. Sen. Trent Lott's office also will be monitoring the tours.

Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Clark Griffith, president of the Biloxi Bay Chamber of Commerce, will attend a closed meeting today with the analyst to help him prepare for the July 12 meeting, where he will ask the commission to remove Keesler from BRAC.

"Obviously, we believe their (Department of Defense) recommendations are incorrect, but we have to prove this..." he said. "The key driver is facility age, you are making the recommendations on building's age, not on the impact."

He said he will be asking the analyst specific questions about the model used to assign points to certain installations slated for closing.

Naval officials gave Naval Station Pascagoula the lowest worthiness score of all of its facilities in an evaluation done by the Navy, according to a report from Gannett News Services.

Keesler Medical Center commander Brig. Gen. David Young told the Sun Herald in an interview two weeks ago he believes Keesler lost points with BRAC because of its age, and its equipment is also expensive to maintain.

Griffith said he intends to argue Keesler should be saved because it is the best medical center in the Air Force and the reason he and many other military retirees live here. A meeting with the

press will follow the Thursday tours of Keesler Medical Center and Naval Station Pascagoula at Keesler Medical Center.

The Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant, in Hancock County, will not be toured by the commissioner, even though it is on the list. Partners of Stennis and other parties with interest in the ammunition plant will be visiting with Pentagon officials in Washington this week.

### **Snowe, colleague battle Defense Department**

Portsmouth Herald News (Portsmouth ,NH)  
June 14, 2005

The Defense Department should not attempt to get a "head start" on implementing its military closure recommendations while the process is still underway, 11 U.S. senators argued in a letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld Monday.

Sens. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, and John Thune, R-S.D., asked Rumsfeld to assure them the Defense Department does not "preemptively identify or carry out any permanent transfer of activities or personnel, from any installation identified by the Department for possible closure or realignment, prior to Congressional consideration of the final list," according to a press release.

Snowe, an advocate for the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, said, "It is absolutely imperative that the Department of Defense not attempt to get a head start on closing and realigning bases across the country before this process has come to an end."

The shipyard was slated for closure in May along with 32 other major military installations. The base realignment and closure commission has the summer to review the recommendations to determine whether the decisions are justified.

Until that process has ended, the Defense Department should not begin shutting down any installations, the senators argued.

"In the interest of maintaining an open process and making sure the BRAC Commissioners receive all the information they need, it is also of paramount importance that all members of the Armed Services or civilian employees be able to freely provide information requested by the Commission without fear of reprisal," Snowe said, in a press release.

Currently, members of the Armed services are not allowed to talk in favor of or in opposition to military closures in their official capacity.

The senators argued Monday that workers should be allowed to "freely testify before the Commission as to the military value of any military installation" without being punished.

### *Opinions/ Editorials*

#### **Nation is failing to see Eielson's value**

Anchorage Daily News (Anchorage, AK)

Rep. Don Young

June 15, 2005

Members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will be in Alaska this week to be told of the importance of Eielson Air Force Base. If there is one message I want to get to them, it is that the Department of Defense has a history of undervaluing Alaska and a history of seeing the error of its ways.

From Alaska's first discovery until today, U.S. armed forces have come in waves to Alaska. After each investment, the military tried to save money by leaving but always had to return: Alaska is too vital, too centrally located, too significant to be anything but fully garrisoned and utilized.

With the purchase of Alaska in 1867, the War Department dispatched ships and men to the new territory, mostly to Southeast. The expense of maintaining these posts quickly became too much for the government, and they soon closed. The Army had to return, however, with the Gold Rush, but again withdrew, this time until World War II. The Japanese attack on the Aleutians surprised all but the most insightful strategic

thinkers. There was a massive, hurried -- and therefore overly expensive -- buildup.

After the war, the military scaled back its presence in Alaska, only to be forced to recommit when the realities of the Cold War became clear. Today's Eielson Air Force Base started as a bad-weather alternate base for Russian lend-lease flights. In 1945, it was placed into caretaker status, similar to what is proposed today. But the Soviet threat necessitated well-placed bomber bases, and Alaska was chosen. This led to re-activation, an expansion of its runway (to 14,000 feet) and a renaming as Eielson Air Base.

Again, during the earlier BRAC rounds, the Pentagon misjudged the value of Alaska bases. Fort Greely was closed in the 1995 round. But its superior global position meant it was reactivated and now houses interceptors as the core of a national ballistic missile defense system.

The central location of Alaska, at the top of the world, means the geometry of interception is best here. But the geography of Alaska is supportive for more than just missiles.

The future holds a shift in the world's strategic map. The Fulda Gap and NATO/Warsaw Pact fault line was dethroned 15 years ago. Since then, the Middle East and the Pacific Rim have competed for prominence.

Although we are now involved in the Middle East, and will remain so for a while, the Pacific Rim is where the future lies. The world's six largest militaries are in it, as well as half the world's surface and more than half the world's economy. Most everyone agrees that the premier rival to American military dominance will come, very soon, from China. North Korea remains a desperate, heavily armed, power. Focusing our military assets in this area is the wisest choice. And Alaska is the best place to do that.

Alaska's strategic importance was first recognized by Secretary of State William H. Seward in the purchase of Alaska from Russia, and was underscored by Medal of Honor winner

and father of the U.S. Air Force, Gen. Billy Mitchell. His famous quote, no matter how often used, bears repeating: "I believe that, in the future, whoever holds Alaska will hold the world."

Fairbanks is 700 miles closer to Seoul than is Honolulu. It is 1,000 miles closer to Beijing. Eielson's massive runway can support up to 20 loaded C-17s and C-5s. Deploying from Eielson, these aircraft would be offloading their cargo in Korea in less than eight hours, and in Southwest Asia in under 11 1/2 hours. Fighter aircraft from there can deploy in even less time. Perhaps the biggest constraint today is the availability of air refueling assets, and planes at Eielson can deploy using fewer air refuelings than Lower 48 fighters.

In the future, the United States will not have time to leisurely build up forces or construct new bases like in the past. The speed of modern war means we will not have the time to fix old mistakes. We need to act now to keep Eielson open, equipped and active.

### **Proposals to remove Fort Monmouth from BRAC**

Ashbury Park Press (Ashbury Park, NJ)  
June 15, 2005

Why Maryland, not New Jersey?

The June 9 letter "Keep Army's work local," suggesting that Fort Monmouth's functions be moved to the joint base being established in New Jersey, is right on. I'll even take it one step further.

Our local politicians should be able to make a good enough case where the Department of Defense would have to prove why Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland is better than Ocean and Burlington counties. If our politicians are worth their salt, they ought to be able to put the Pentagon on the defensive. The only reason why the Defense Department would prefer Aberdeen over Dix-McGuire-Lakehurst would be a political reason: for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to change his plan would upset his Maryland friends. On the other hand,

as we all know, politics is not supposed to be a part of this process.

New Jersey politicians need to put on their lawyer hats for the next few months and make an argument that makes perfect sense for everyone involved. If Fort Monmouth must close, there's no reason for it to move 200 miles away when it can be moved a mere 25 miles to a place where some Communications and Electronic Command (CECOM) work already occurs. Lakehurst is already home to CECOM-testing activity. It would save many jobs, all but eliminate the "brain drain," save millions of dollars in moving costs and still accomplish the goal of reducing Army infrastructure.

Greg Fisher  
Ocean Township

Don't accuse; argue merits

To our elected leaders who have sounded off regarding the proposed closure of Fort Monmouth:

Stop accusing the individuals who served on the Base Realignment and Closure commission with insensitivity about the safety of soldiers in the field. Most of them have been in the military, and most of you haven't.

Stop saying that the Pentagon doesn't appreciate the need for technology regarding soldiers in the field. They do. Better than you. Some of them were involved in developing that very technology.

Stop saying that the work done at Fort Monmouth can't be duplicated elsewhere. It can. There are few places today that can't duplicate the work done anywhere. Most of you don't even know what work is done at Fort Monmouth/

Stop saying this was politically motivated. Maybe it was. Who cares? It won't stop the Defense Department from closing the fort because you are running your mouth.

Instead, our leaders should:

Start reviewing the logic used in the study that came up with the idea in the first place.

Start understanding how the savings were generated and how the numbers were arrived at. Involve people who understand the numbers and logic and come up with ways to show that perhaps the savings won't be realized given the cost of closure. Most estimates in these matters are just that, estimates, and can sometimes not fully consider the cost of duplicating services elsewhere.

Start to understand what goes on in Fort Monmouth so that you can discuss what is done there and what makes it unique. Present the results to the appropriate parties who will make the decision.

You never know. Approaching a problem intelligently sometimes works. Approaching a problem the way most of the officials have never does.

Lee Hoffman  
Manasquan

Fort closure pro-developer

Fort Monmouth, a pillar of New Jersey's until-now robust economy, is threatened with closure by the Bush administration's Base Realignment and Closure henchmen. This will have an enormous adverse impact on local businesses and several thousand soon-to-be-unemployed civilian federal workers.

The rationale for this traumatic proposal is cost savings for the taxpayer and cost effectiveness for the military, partially in the form of position transfers to other locations. Really? Developers already salivate at this potential bonanza. More high-priced high-rises, homes and shopping areas would fit ever so nicely in this relatively affluent county, a nice byproduct to fatter wallets for rich Republican contributors ensconced in the building trades.

Principled New Jersey residents need to acquaint themselves with these curious juxtapositions, where prime property apparently trumps national

defense in an area tragically traumatized by 9/11 yet bludgeoned again by BRAC's grim reaper bellowing the blue-state blues.

Lawrence Uniglicht  
Galloway

Base closing cost is real

President Bush announced during his address at the Naval Academy that the government would save \$48 billion over the next 10 years by closing military bases. Former Rep. Helen Gahagan Douglas, D-Calif., once remarked about government spending: "A billion here, a billion there, pretty soon we'll be talking real money."

No, \$48 billion over 10 years is not real money. Real money is the cost in unemployment compensation, real estate devaluation and general economic decline caused by the base closings. Real money is tax cuts for the wealthy. Real money is what we spend in Iraq every single day.

Flora T. Higgins  
Colts Neck

Employees must rally support

I attended the town hall meeting May 21 regarding the future of Fort Monmouth. As a former employee, I was distressed that very few people attended this meeting. In addition, I'm surprised that current employees of the fort did not attend. From what I saw, there were only a handful of current employees.

Many of these employees don't wish to move out of the area. Therefore, they should support the work of the officials. This fort needs to be taken off the closure list. To have any chance of that happening, current employees should work together in this effort.

Our congressmen and all other elected officials are looking for information from those people who work at the fort.

Irene Manna

Eatontown

Link fort to lifesaving

I suggest the following slogan for the efforts to save Fort Monmouth:

Base realignment saves money. Fort Monmouth saves lives. How much money is a human life worth?

Irving Kullback  
West Long Branch

*Additional Notes*