

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

June 27, 2005

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### Department of Defense Releases

### National News Articles

**Simmons Says Base Congested With Subs  
A Likely Terrorist Target**

Hartford Courant (Hartford, CT)  
June 26, 2005

STONINGTON, Conn. -- Calling it another potential Pearl Harbor, U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons said moving submarines from Groton to the Norfolk, Va.. submarine base would invite a terrorist attack.

"Do we want to create a bigger target for terrorists? Do we want another Pearl Harbor," said Simmons, who just returned from a fact-finding trip to the Norfolk base.

The Pentagon has recommended closing the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton and moving the 18 fast-attack submarines to either Norfolk or Kings Bay, Ga.

Simmons said Saturday that a shift of manpower and boats to an already congested Norfolk base could create "a massive Pearl Harbor" and make Virginia a target for terrorists.

The Republican congressman, whose district includes the Groton base, toured the Virginia base Friday with retired Navy submariner Denny Hicks, a former Norfolk commander. As a member of the Subbase Realignment Coalition, Hicks is among those reviewing Pentagon data on Norfolk.

Simmons called Norfolk a "fabulous naval station" but very congested. Additionally, Norfolk would have to build more piers, barracks and other facilities to accommodate the new arrivals.

"This is something that would cost millions and millions," he said. "Where would the savings be?"

The Norfolk base's focus is on building and maintaining the Navy's surface fleet and not on submarines, Simmons said.

"The submarine is lost" among aircraft carriers and destroyers, he said.

State and local officials fighting to save the Groton base will present their arguments before the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission July 6 in Boston. Commissioners have until Sept. 8 to issue their final recommendations to President Bush.

State officials also have visited the Georgia base.

The recommended closure of the Groton base, which would take place between 2006 and 2011, and would shift much of the facilities, vessels and people from Connecticut to Kings Bay and Naval Station Norfolk on the Virginia coast.

Connecticut lawmakers have argued that the costs of shutting down the base and moving the submarine school have been largely underestimated, and that the military value of the Groton base has also been miscalculated.

"The strategy is the same in that we are looking to present the best case of military value. We've accumulated additional data on the past two trips that will only build and benefit our case," Simmons said.

The Pentagon said the estimated cost of the entire move - which also will include shifts to several other smaller facilities - is \$679 million.

Connecticut was hit the hardest by the Pentagon's base closing recommendations, absorbing about 8,600 proposed job losses - nearly 30 percent of the net national job cuts that would result from the closure plan announced May 13.

### Local News Articles

#### **Message To BRAC To Focus On Success**

Fayetteville Observer (Fayetteville, NC)

Don Worthington

June 27, 2005

Fayetteville's message to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission is simple: Don't break up a winning team.

Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base are America's crisis-response team because of their proximity, retired Air Force Gen. Paul Dordal said.

The closeness builds relationships, which is the "reason why the team is called on all the time," Dordal said.

Dordal and retired Army. Gen. Buck Kernan will present Fayetteville's case to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission on Tuesday in Charlotte.

The commission - known as BRAC - has recommended moving Pope's 43rd Airlift Wing and bringing Army Forces Command and Army

Reserve Command to Pope Air Force Base from Fort McPherson in Atlanta.

Dordal and Kernan are among a contingent of representatives from North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia who will speak before the commission from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Harris Conference Center on the west campus of Central Piedmont Community College.

Kernan is a former commander of Fort Bragg and the 18th Airborne Corp. Dordal is a former commander of the 23rd wing at Pope Air Force Base.

Gov. Mike Easley is expected to lead the North Carolina delegation. Fayetteville and Havelock, home of the Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station, are expected to make 30-minute presentations. Representatives from Raleigh, Goldsboro and Jacksonville also are scheduled to speak.

About 150 community leaders from Cumberland County are expected to be on hand.

The public can attend, but only designated community representatives can speak.

The BRAC meeting is one of 16 to be held throughout the country.

"We want it all," said Bill Martin, president of the Cumberland County Business Council, the area's economic development group. Martin said he plans to attend the meeting.

Report by Sept. 8

The nine-member commission must make its report to Congress by Sept. 8. It is the only body that can make changes to the BRAC proposal released May 13.

The president and Congress can approve or reject the plan but cannot make changes.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission acts as an appeals court.

"They are looking for errors in the process," Dordal said.

He said the Air Force appears to have used the BRAC selection criteria differently from other military services.

The Air Force showed a strong desire to consolidate various types of aircraft when it made its recommendations, Dordal said.

BRAC is considering moving the 43rd Airlift Wing's C130-E airplanes to Little Rock, Ark.

The 911th Airlift Wing, now based in Pittsburgh, would move to Pope, providing C130-H cargo planes to train 82nd Airborne troops.

The Air Force rated Pope Air Force Base 49th of 176 installations in being able to meet future military needs.

"We don't understand why Pope was rated so low," Dordal said.

Pope is rated No. 1 in its ability to meet the needs of special forces and also rates high in meeting airlift needs, he said.

Other BRAC recommendations affecting Fayetteville are moving A-10 aircraft stationed at Pope to Moody Air Force Base and moving the 7th Special Forces Group to Florida.

Dordal said Fayetteville will not oppose those moves.

In past BRAC rounds, about 15 percent of the recommendations were either changed or not implemented, said U.S. Rep. Robin Hayes, whose district includes Fort Bragg.

Hayes said he hopes that figure drops to 5 percent this round.

### **Base civilians' jobs also hinge on BRAC call**

Clovis News Journal (Clovis, NM)  
Marlena Hartz

June 27, 2005

His posture told a story. Leo Dudley sat in a front pew at the 16th and Pile Church of Christ, leaning forward, his hands perched on his chin for nearly 90 minutes Friday morning as two local base supporters and a New Mexico delegation argued to have Cannon Air Force Base removed from the Base Realignment and Closure list.

Dudley has a personal stake in the process.

“I work at Cannon,” Dudley said, briefly shifting his eyes from the large screen that broadcast the hearing from the overflow church venue, where about 30 members of the community listened to pro-Cannon testimony.

He is one of more than 600 civilians employed at the base, according to the Cannon office of public affairs. For many military personnel stationed at the base, Cannon is just one stop in a long line of assignments, carried out at bases across the United States. Not so for employees like Dudley. If the base closes as recommended by the Department of Defense, Dudley would lose his job.

“There are a lot of programs to help people relocate if they need to — depending on what you do,” said Capt. Andre Kok of Cannon’s Public Affairs office. Qualification for certain government assistance programs, Kok said, is based on the type of job the employee performs — of the 600-plus civilian base employees, “some are contracted workers, some are government and civil service folks,” and the type of aid a worker receives is dependent upon their position, Kok said.

Charla Krumheuer’s husband is an electronic technician at Melrose Bombing Range — at Friday’s rally for Cannon, an event planned after Friday’s regional Base Realignment and Closure, her face carried the same look of intensity worn on Dudley’s.

“We might have to move,” Krumheuer said, seated under the shade, the option of relocation Kok spoke of most viable for the couple. “But I

basically told him (my husband) not to worry so soon.”

But the odds for Eric and Charla Krumheuer don’t look good. Historically, 85 percent of the bases recommended for closure do indeed shutter. And state leaders are lumping Cannon and Melrose in the same lot. New Mexico Land Commissioner Patrick Lyons said he would seek the return of about 80,000 acres of state trust land that surrounds the base and the Melrose Bombing Range if Cannon closes. A similar statement was made by Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M.

“While the Air Force,” said Wilson at Friday’s hearing, “assumes that these ranges will continue to be available even if Cannon closes, I don’t think that is a reasonable assumption for the long term. People accept training ranges when they are associated with bases in their communities. Without the base, support for the ranges will erode.”

Statements like Wilson’s have Eric Krumheuer on edge.

“If Cannon does close and the Air Combat Command wanted to keep the range open, it would be very selfish of the city of Clovis to fight that in an all or nothing type deal,” said retired Senior Master Sgt. Krumheuer, who makes about \$60,000 a year operating and maintaining ground radar systems, and says that Melrose Bombing Range generates income that can’t be replaced for the 30 other civilians with whom he works.

“If the range closes, we are leaving. If I stayed here, I would have to take a 60 percent cut in pay,” said Krumheuer, who like many area military retirees once stationed at Cannon, grew to like the Clovis area, and never left. “With the experience I have there is nothing else out there for me to do.”

For now, the Krumheuers are just standing fast, and waiting.

"We both understand that if it (Cannon and Melrose) happens, it happens and it is time to move on with life," Eric said.

But moving on, for the Krumheuers means leaving a community they have lived in for more than 14 years — a community three of their five children have settled into permanently.

"The saddest thing would be leaving the kids that are here," Eric Krumheuer said.

### **Officials hope new data can save 183rd**

The State Journal Register (Springfield, IL)

Chris Wetterich

June 27, 2005

Most military installations saved from the Pentagon's ax in the last round of base closings in 1995 had one of two attributes: The Defense Department either had overestimated the savings to be realized by closing a base or had underestimated an installation's military value.

Those two characteristics could be good news for the 183rd Fighter Wing when the Base Realignment and Closure Committee votes on whether to realign the unit and send its 15 active F-16s to Fort Wayne, Ind. - if the commissioners buy the case state and local officials are trying to sell them.

In the last three rounds of base closings in 1991, 1993 and 1995, the commission approved 83 percent, 84 percent and 84 percent, respectively, of the closings recommended by the Pentagon.

In 1995, the Pentagon recommended 146 base closures or realignments. The commission removed 23 of those bases from the list (counting four facilities the Pentagon voluntarily removed from the list for various reasons).

"Typically, it's been the case that data comes to light that was not used in the Pentagon's decision," said Paul Taibl, policy director for the non-partisan Business Executives for National Security in Washington, D.C., about why commissioners strike bases from the list. "It's

pretty hard to come up with new details, new data."

State and local officials arguing for the 183rd have said the Pentagon's proposal to transfer the 183rd's planes to Fort Wayne International Airport Air Guard Station would actually cost the Pentagon money.

Springfield claims the Pentagon fudged the small savings it would realize by combining the costs and savings of transferring the 183rd's planes along with the realignment of the Hulman Air Guard station in Terre Haute, Ind., to Fort Wayne.

The Pentagon said the realignments will save \$2 million annually starting in 13 years. But to implement the changes, the Pentagon will have to spend \$13.3 million.

"There is no payback - ever - associated with realigning the fighter mission out of Springfield," a written summary of Springfield's arguments against the realignment said.

"Without grouping Terre Haute and Fort Wayne into the Capital Airport realignment, there would be no savings at all, and the Air Force would have no justification in its recommendation.

During this year's BRAC process, it has not been unusual for the Air Force to combine cost savings from recommendations involving multiple bases to come up with a total cost savings figure as it did with the Springfield, Fort Wayne and Hulman bases. The Pentagon did this with at least 14 of its Air Force recommendations.

State and local officials have argued that Springfield has been listed by the Pentagon as ranking higher in military value than Fort Wayne and has a similar, if not better, recruiting record. The commissioners have asked for detailed data on the recruiting record of the 183rd, which the city said it will provide.

In the 19 bases saved by the commission in 1995, not once did commissioners cite community support or economic impact as the primary reason for saving the base.

In four cases, the commission said that the Pentagon had made faulty judgments on an installation's military value. In nine cases, the commission found a problem in the Pentagon's computations of cost savings. In most of those nine, commissioners also felt that military value was underestimated as well.

In six cases, the commission said the Pentagon improperly assessed the bases' ability to receive new missions from the shuttered bases. This was because the commission decided to close the two bases set to receive missions from the six bases the Pentagon wanted to shutter.

"The best testimony includes analytical data," 2005 commissioner James Hansen, a former Utah congressman, told reporters in St. Louis last week. "You can expect everyone to get emotional, to talk about how terrible it is. But the fact of the matter is the military has had an awful long time to work on this."

Most of the states and cities testifying at the commission's hearing on Monday alleged problems with the Pentagon's methodology, whether it related to military value or the estimated cost savings.

"I was pleasantly surprised with the ability of communities to give details on how the BRAC process did them wrong," said commissioner Sue Ellen Turner, a retired Air Force general. "That gives us something to work with."

But whether the commissioners buy the case of Springfield - or any other city - will hinge on analysis that must be done by the commission's staff over the next several months.

"Anybody who's brought a challenge, we will adjudicate what's right and what's wrong," said commissioner Harold Gehman, a retired admiral. "Our staff will do a detailed analysis."

Hansen added that even in cases where a community does present detailed data, "we haven't had the other folks (from the Pentagon) on the stand. Usually they have a pretty good

answer" as to why they made a certain recommendation.

Mayor Tim Davlin said he will travel to Washington at least once more before the BRAC process is completed to present additional data to the commissioners.

Commissioners will take a vote on each one of the Pentagon's recommendations at a public hearing. It takes five votes on the nine-member commission to remove a base from the list.

Commissioners have until Sept. 8 to review the Pentagon's suggested moves and render a final report to President Bush, who has until Sept. 23 to accept or reject it. Congress then has 45 days to accept or reject the final report.

Different this year as compared to 1995 is the relatively large number of Air National Guard bases slated for closure or realignment by the Pentagon. In 1995, four Air Guard stations were recommended for closure. In 2005, 26 Air National Guard bases with aircraft are set to be realigned or shuttered.

The 1995 commission saved three of them, the Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport Air Guard Station in Ohio, the Moffett Federal Airfield Air Guard Station in California, the North Highlands Air Guard Station in California, while the other, Roslyn Air Guard Station in New York, was closed. The Springfield, Ohio, base is recommended for realignment this year.

In the case of the Springfield, Ohio, base, the Pentagon overestimated the savings in closing the base. The other two Air Guard bases were struck from the list because the commission decided to close two larger Air Force bases to which the smaller Guard installations were set to be transferred.

The three commissioners who were at a hearing Monday in St. Louis said they hope to hold a hearing on whether the Pentagon's methodology for determining military value was biased against smaller bases and units, such as the 183rd. Gehman said they have heard frequent

complaints that Air Guard units were not consulted closely about the process.

**BRAC closure can have positives;  
Colorado's Lowry example of success**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Atlanta, GA)  
Christopher Quinn  
June 27, 2005

Denver --- A massive hangar that could easily hold two B-1 bombers wingtip to wingtip at the former Lowry Air Force Base in Denver and nearby Aurora now houses two ice skating rinks.

The old parade ground has given way to a smart-growth town center filled with shops, restaurants and services such as dry cleaners and a grocery.

The former liquor store is now a community church.

If that isn't enough to make local leaders say "Praise the Lord," check out the 3,200 new houses, the \$39 million in new local taxes and 800 acres of parks and green space the converted military base brought to the cities.

A few miles away at the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Aurora, about 8,000 workers have replaced the 4,000 lost when the Base Realignment and Closure Commission shuttered it in 1998.

The city worked to lure the University of Colorado's medical and health research complex, formerly landlocked on 47 acres in Denver, to more than 200 acres of base land. The expanding facility is attracting emerging bioscience companies.

Paul Tauer, mayor of Aurora during the closures, said his initial response to the bad news was "Oh, my God!"

People still say "Oh, my God!" when they see the base, but mean it in a positive way.

There is life for a base after closure, says Tom Markham, the executive director of the Lowry Redevelopment Authority, but it's really hard.

And it took a long time to resuscitate the corpses the military left behind.

The good news is that after about 15 years of base closings, everyone --- the government, private firms and local communities --- is getting better and faster at doing it.

Lowry was targeted for closure in 1991. The Air Force turned it over to the cities in 1994.

Two years into the project, the redevelopment authority, a consortium organized by local governments and given the job of coming up with a plan for rebuilding the base, had no money, Markham said. Things looked bleak.

Base closings were a pretty new concept at that time, and locals were learning as they went.

The authority kept plugging away and changing its plans until it came up with one the local market needed and liked, a new smart-growth community with large park spaces.

The Lowry authority was able to get backing from the myriad governmental and private agencies it was working with, along with that of developers and builders, and hit a tipping point about two years after being broke.

The first houses on the 1,800-acre former base went up in late 1997; the first buyers arrived in 1998.

Today, the master-planned community is more than 70 percent built out --- two square miles of new and refurbished buildings and parkland.

Fortuitous time

Others have not been as successful. The political fight over what to do with El Toro, a Marine base in Southern California also targeted for closure in 1991, took more than a decade to resolve.

One group wanted to build an airport. Another wanted thousands of acres of parkland and neighborhoods, much like Lowry.

They are only now getting the parkland/neighborhood plan under way.

Fitzsimons in Aurora closed in 1996 and was handed over in 1998, a fortuitous time, Tauer said. The University of Colorado was looking for more land for the medical complex.

Tauer and others used the earlier lessons learned and got things moving quickly.

He said they expect to add 2,000 workers to the old site in a year and envision a future when employment at the old base will top out at more than 30,000 lucrative jobs in the health and high-tech science fields.

The two bases often are cited as some of the most successful base transitions in the country.

Like Forts Gillem and McPherson and the Naval Air Station in metro Atlanta, the bases were surrounded by a large, vibrant metropolitan area, something development experts say improves chances of successful redevelopment.

The lure of living in a well-planned community attracted Gary Schwartz, his wife and two daughters from their previous home in Denver.

There were some trade-offs. Many of Lowry's new neighborhoods are dense.

"Most of back yards are not very large, which is one thing that people understand going in there," he said.

But, because Lowry's planners had so much property to work with, they included a system of well-connected community parks.

"Parks are close enough that you don't need a big back yard," Schwartz continued. The one near his house has an extensive playground, which has attracted young families like his to move nearby.

'Minutes from anything'

Lowry includes apartments, condos and houses from the low \$100,000s to more than \$1 million.

The plan included 89 homes for local families who were making a transition from homelessness.

Huge brick military barracks were converted into housing for seniors. The officers club and its swimming pool were converted to a community swimming club.

Two community colleges built satellite campuses in the development.

Homes at Lowry have been appreciating at a rate of 10.5 percent a year, compared with Denver's 8.5 percent, said Hilarie Portell, a spokeswoman for the Lowry Redevelopment Authority.

Six public transit routes stop in Lowry, helping commuters get to jobs in Denver six miles away or in nearby Aurora.

Gale and Ron Kahn moved from Boulder, nearly 30 miles away, to Lowry a year ago because she was tired of her commute.

"Now, I drive into work four miles instead of the torturous trip I was making. I can go home for lunch. I can have a normal life," she said.

"I love that I can come home from work and walk over to dinner. If we want to walk a little longer, we can walk to the post office. And everything else is pretty close. We are about 10 minutes from anything," she said.

### **State fights to keep its bases open**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Atlanta, GA)  
Christopher Quinn  
June 27, 2005

The idea of "Hurry up and wait" is as common in the Army as drab olive paint.

Soldiers hurry to the mess hall, then wait in line; double-time to the parade ground, then wait for marching orders.

Civilians in Georgia are getting a dose of that philosophy as they wade through the process of potentially losing Forts Gillem and McPherson

and the Naval Air Station in metro Atlanta and the Naval Supply Corps School in Athens.

Georgia has applied for millions of dollars in federal grants to boost re-employment efforts if the bases close, and cities and counties already have put committees in place to lead development.

Everyone involved is anxious to get concrete answers about job losses or the potential redevelopment of the bases, but the cure for their anxieties will be dribbled out in coming months or years.

At least they can vent on Thursday to a committee from of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. State and local government representatives and the public will debate the commission's decision to close the bases at 8:30 a.m. in the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center at 800 Spring St.

Retired Brig. Gen. Phil Browning, who is leading Georgia's efforts as head of the state Military Affairs Coordinating Committee, said, "We are working seven days a week to get ready. We will then continue to look for facts to support our case and will make trips up to Washington to confer with commission staff and make sure they have complete updates on the facts we have found."

The committee will listen and take the information back to the full commission for consideration.

President Bush should receive the list in September and will turn it over to Congress, which has up to 45 days to mull it over. It can approve or disapprove the list, but can't make any changes.

#### Federal help

Even though the final closure list won't be known for some time, Georgia is eligible for \$1 million or more in emergency grants used to prepare communities for potential job losses the closings would bring.

The federal Department of Labor is to announce grant recipients Thursday.

The three metro bases employ about 4,000 civilians and about 5,350 full-time and active military reservists and pay out \$565 million in salaries.

Military personnel will be subject to reassignment and early retirement.

Many civilian workers can take advantage of federal programs that give them priority in hiring for new federal jobs, but many contractors and local suppliers to the bases will simply see their jobs end.

The federal grants will beef up programs in local unemployment offices, including skill-training and job-finding help.

Forest Park Mayor Chuck Hall is helping organize efforts around Fort Gillem and its employees.

"I have talked to number of them. They are concerned about what's going to happen to them if the base closes and where do they go. A number of them are in their final years of employment."

#### Applying for grants

Local communities also are preparing to apply for grants from the Pentagon's Office of Economic Adjustment to help pay for planning and studies for base redevelopment.

Felker Ward, a former military man, attorney and now an investment banker, is heading up Atlanta's committee. It will deal with the potential redevelopment of Fort McPherson.

He said members are querying local agencies like the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and the Atlanta Regional Commission for redevelopment ideas and to figure out where the expertise and money for such a project would come from.

Mary Norwood, an Atlanta City Council member, also noticed that Fort McPherson is near the Beltline, a 22-mile loop of largely unused railroad tracks circling the city.

She talked to Ward about the possibility of including Fort McPherson, which has a MARTA rail stop, in a plan to redevelop the Beltline into a mix of transit, green space and development.

Neither knew if the complex rules regulating turnover of federal property would allow that.

"But to have a transportation plan with 500 new acres [the fort] that connects not only to MARTA, but to the entire Beltline grid, what an incredible opportunity," she said.

**City rebounds from base closing;  
As more shutdowns near, Anniston, Ala.,  
holds lessons for Georgia**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Atlanta, GA)  
Charles Seabrook  
June 27, 2005

Anniston, Ala. --- Where the sharp bangs of exploding shells once resounded across the landscape, the rousing strains of a Tchaikovsky overture fill the air. The rugged mountain forest where soldiers once trained to protect themselves against chemical weapons is now the country's newest national wildlife refuge.

Fort McClellan, once a thriving Army base and the bedrock of Anniston's economy, is now simply McClellan. Local civic, business and political leaders hope the name becomes synonymous with a good place to live and work, a nice place to visit and a center for the arts.

"We now talk about McClellan becoming the Tanglewood of the South," says local civic leader Pete Conroy.

Ten years ago, the talk was of gloom and despair. In May 1995, the federal government announced that Fort McClellan, on the outskirts of Anniston, about an hour's drive from downtown Atlanta, would be shut down under the Base Realignment and Closure process.

"The community was in a state of shock and denial," recalls Anniston Mayor Hoyt "Chip" Howell. "We had been told that McClellan would not be on a closure list."

When the base did close in 1999, thousands of civilian and military jobs --- representing about 17 percent of the region's employment --- disappeared, and Anniston's economy took a turn for the worse.

"McClellan was about half of everything we had," says Conroy.

Now, as the nation girds for another round of base closures --- including four installations targeted in Georgia --- McClellan's life after BRAC is getting a lot of attention from other communities facing similar losses.

Arts center envisioned

The National Association of Installation Developers, a Washington-based group dedicated to assisting communities with base closures, calls McClellan a "national model" for putting a BRAC-shuttered base to new uses.

Since the military gave it up, McClellan has become one of Anniston's most exclusive residential areas. Most of its 316 houses, once assigned to military personnel, have been snapped up by families as permanent residences. Its golf courses, swimming pools and ball fields, once the domain of the military, are now public facilities.

Several new businesses and government complexes have moved to McClellan. They include the Center for Domestic Preparedness, which trains police officers, firefighters and others to respond to terrorist attacks. Hunjan Moulded Products Ltd., a Canadian auto parts maker, has renovated an old building, at a cost of \$2 million, to supply parts for Honda minivans.

"We now have 2,370 employees coming to McClellan every workday," says Miki

Schneider, planning director for the authority that oversees the base's redevelopment.

"They are a diversity of employees, from government workers to waiters," Schneider says. "To have a successful redevelopment, you need that kind of diversity."

Much of McClellan's future, however, is planned around music and the arts, Conroy says.

One of his hopes is that McClellan will draw carloads of Atlantans, who will make the hourlong drive on I-20 to hear the concerts and visit the art galleries and craft shops planned for the former base. To ease access to McClellan, the Alabama Department of Transportation has begun work on an \$80 million, eight-mile-long bypass that will connect it to the interstate.

Conroy and other supporters vow that McClellan will be worth the trip.

The Alabama Symphony Orchestra, for example, has made McClellan its permanent summer home, recently performing Tchaikovsky's thundering 1812 Overture in McClellan's Longleaf Park, a grassy expanse where Army officers once played polo.

Nearby, an 11-acre complex of weathered brick buildings, including McClellan's former stables, blacksmith shop and motor pool, will be converted into an arts and crafts district, with working areas for artists and a retail gallery to sell their creations. A microbrewery, winery and bakery also are planned, Conroy says.

Also close by, the former officers' club has been restored and turned into a restaurant. A gourmet Italian eatery has opened in the former noncommissioned officers' club, renamed the Buckner Center. It also houses a restored theater and a 6,300-square-foot ballroom.

Named after George B. McClellan, who headed the Union Army early in the Civil War, Camp McClellan was opened in 1917 by the U.S. War Department. It became Fort McClellan in 1929. During World War II, nearly 500,000 soldiers

trained at the base, which also was home to a 3,000-bed prisoner-of-war camp.

When President Dwight Eisenhower visited the post, he called it "the jewel among Army installations," because of its mountain scenery, stately trees and Spanish architecture.

When the closure was announced in 1995, Fort McClellan was home to the Army Chemical School, the Army Military Police School and several other units. Covering 46,000 acres, it was the largest Army base to close so far.

The federal government agreed to transfer 22,000 acres of the base to the Anniston-Calhoun County Fort McClellan Development Joint Powers Authority, created in 1997 by the Alabama Legislature. Most of the rest of the base's acreage was taken over by the Alabama National Guard.

The Joint Powers Authority gained about 316 houses, 6.5 million square feet of floor space, 1,000 miles of roads and other assets, says Conroy, an authority member and director of the Environmental Policy and Information Center at Jacksonville (Ala.) State University.

Forty-four of McClellan's houses, built in the Spanish colonial style and once reserved for senior officers, overlook a grassy quadrangle complete with huge shady oaks and a white gazebo. The stately homes have become some of Anniston's most sought-after housing, selling for more than \$250,000 apiece.

No easy answers

In another milestone in McClellan's revival, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service two years ago dedicated the 9,000-acre Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge, carved out of the eastern half of the former base. The military gave 7,800 acres of the refuge directly to the service, and the Joint Powers Authority donated the rest.

For decades, the Army protected and inadvertently aided the mountain longleaf pines by lobbing artillery shells into hillsides, causing

frequent fires. The fire-resistant longleafs thrived, and the forest became one of the last major strongholds of the pine.

For the most part, however, nothing about McClellan's redevelopment has been easy, and there have been no clear answers, Conroy says.

The Joint Powers Authority still owns 12,000 acres of the former base but cannot market most of it until it is rendered free of pollution and unexploded ordnance. The cleanup will take years. So far, the Army has committed about \$48 million to the effort.

"We knew one thing from the beginning: that we needed a lot of money to clean up significant environmental problems that the Army had left behind," Conroy says.

But the initial fears of an economic disaster for Anniston have largely dissipated. The region has shown a strong rebound since the base closed. Before then, the city of Anniston brought in about \$15 million per year in sales tax revenue. After the closing, that fell by about \$1 million a year. Now, it has recovered to about \$16 million annually.

Howell, Anniston's mayor, says the revenue turnaround can be attributed to McClellan's redevelopment and to new industries that have moved into the area.

"It's like surgery," he says. "It may be painful for a while, but in the long run, you're better."

### **Supporters rally to preserve Niagara Falls base**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire  
(Buffalo, NY)

Carolyn Thompson  
June 26, 2005

Supporters of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station staged a show of support Sunday for the benefit of officials in town to consider whether the base should be closed.

Monday, the day of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's regional public hearing, has been called "D-Day" by some who fear the loss of Niagara County's second-largest employer in a nationwide shakeup of military installations.

"Our community needs this base. Our country needs this base," said "Black Hawk Down" and "The Longest Yard" actor William Fichtner, a western New York native whose sister, Col. Patricia Jarmuz, is stationed at the base.

Sunday's rally following a Buffalo Bisons minor league baseball game was part of a frantic campaign involving nearly 1,000 volunteers that began after the Pentagon announced May 13 that the base was among those it intended to close.

In New York, the Pentagon also said it would cut 427 jobs from Rome labs and a nearby defense accounting facility.

BRAC commissioners were scheduled to consider the proposed closings and realignments in New York and Ohio during a four-hour hearing Monday. Gov. George Pataki and Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Charles Schumer were among those scheduled to testify.

"We will fight this fight through the BRAC process to the very end for our own local heroes," John Cooper, vice chairman of the Niagara Military Affairs Council, said to cheers from sign-waving supporters at the ball park.

NIMAC, a coalition of business and elected officials formed after the base narrowly averted a shutdown during the last BRAC process 10 years ago, urged the public to line the streets near the base Monday morning during a tour by commissioners and to pack the afternoon hearing.

"The community support is crucial ... They have to see that the community wants the base here," said Col. Pat Ginavan of the 107th Air Refueling Wing, a National Guard unit on site.

Base officials, meanwhile, vowed to do their part by stressing the repeated deployments of the

reserve units stationed there and their high retention rates at a time the military is concerned about preserving its numbers.

Members of the 914th Airlift Wing of the Air Force Reserves are expected to be deployed for a second time to Iraq within the next few months, officials said.

"I think we have an outstanding chance of proving our point," Ginavan said.

The base, with nearly 3,000 full- and part-time employees and a \$50 million payroll, generates an estimated \$150 million in economic activity in the struggling region, according to NIMAC.

The BRAC commission must present its list to President Bush by Sept. 8. Congress ultimately must approve the final list, expected to save the Pentagon nearly \$50 billion. Nationwide, the Pentagon has proposed closing about 180 military facilities.

New York lost two major bases in the last BRAC cuts 10 years ago, when Griffiss Air Force Base and Plattsburgh Air Force Base were closed. The closing of Griffiss cost the Rome area 4,500 military and civilian jobs.

### **State, city officials set for BRAC plea**

The Montgomery Advertiser (Montgomery, AL)  
William F. West  
June 27, 2005

Local and state leaders want to convince the Base Realignment and Closure Commission there's no reason to move an Air Force technology service from Montgomery to Massachusetts.

They will get their chance on Thursday when BRAC commissioners hold a regional hearing in Atlanta about why military posts shouldn't be shut down or reconfigured.

At stake for Alabama's Capital City is the future of Headquarters Operations and Sustainment System Group (OSSG), located at Gunter Annex of Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base.

The Defense Department, in May 13 BRAC recommendations, called for moving OSSG from Gunter to Hanscom Air Force Base near Boston.

Relocating could leave Montgomery minus as many as 3,200 jobs and a more than \$750 million economic impact.

During Thursday's BRAC commission hearing, officials from Georgia will have two hours speaking time, followed by Alabama officials with one hour.

"Montgomery is going to have ample opportunity to get up and talk about why we think that, of all the good decisions, this one probably needs to be rethought," Gov. Bob Riley said.

Riley and the state's two U.S. senators, Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions, will testify for the state.

Paul Hankins, a retired Air Force brigadier general and Montgomery's consultant on BRAC issues, will testify for Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base.

"We're going to try to make the points very strongly, very succinctly, that we think we can try to hang our hat on," Hankins said.

OSSG provides computer support for Air Force operations worldwide.

A shift of OSSG from Montgomery to Massachusetts, along with a proposed realignment of smaller functions from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, would give Hanscom a yet-to-be created organization.

Hanscom is located in a research-and-development region, and Hankins said he would tell BRAC commissioners Thursday that a realignment would not fit with OSSG's job of responding to those in the field.

And moving OSSG would be tainted with the loss of irreplaceable "intellectual capital" in Montgomery, he added.

"You're going to harm the war fighters' efforts to do their job," he said.

Hankins also said there are no assurances military contractors in Montgomery, with increasing technology at their fingertips, would head for Massachusetts.

"You live in a virtual world," Riley said, "and there is nothing site-specific that says that you can't do the same functions here that you could anywhere else."

Massachusetts is willing to spend more than \$240 million to upgrade Hanscom to accommodate a realignment.

Hankins said while BRAC commissioners would not be looking at economics as a top issue, he would tell them Thursday he believes moving OSSG to Massachusetts would not produce a long-term cost savings.

The BRAC commission, which is an independent panel, wants feedback before handing President Bush a report on Sept. 8. It will be up to Bush and Congress to make the final decision later this fall.

Locally, last week small groups, including additional consultants, were helping Hankins craft what he will say in Atlanta.

Leaders of the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee either declined comment or didn't return phone calls last week.

The testimony has to be published and in the hands of BRAC commissioners 48 hours before the hearing.

However, preparations hardly have been all about text.

Hankins and others from Alabama went to a BRAC Midwestern regional hearing in St. Louis

last week so they could know what to expect in Atlanta.

"We have been hustling quite a bit here lately," said Jim Walker, Riley's chief of homeland security and his liaison on BRAC issues.

**On the offensive to save air base**  
Philadelphia Inquirer (Philadelphia, PA)  
Marc Schogol  
June 27, 2005

Willow Grove, which has taken part in America's wars for 60 years, begins the fight of its life this week.

Starting with a "Save Our Base" rally today, Gov. Rendell and other officials are preparing a final push to remove the Willow Grove Naval Air Station and Joint Reserve Base from a Pentagon list of suggested base closings.

There isn't much time left. In the next 10 days, a member of an independent commission reviewing the list will tour the Horsham base. Several days later, state and local officials will appear before the full commission to make their case.

Though only 15 percent of facilities recommended for closure get reprieves, Gov. Rendell said last week that "we're going to dig our heels in and fight!"

Rendell said there will be a mock hearing this week in Harrisburg to prepare the state's July 7 presentation to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission in Washington.

The practice session, likely at the governor's residence, will be timed, because state, local and area leaders will have exactly two hours to address the commission.

"We are going to prepare this to the 'nth' degree," Rendell said. Rendell and Republican U.S. Sens. Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum are scheduled to attend, but an exact list of speakers has not been finalized.

At today's 10 a.m. rally at Hatboro-Horsham High School, Rendell is scheduled to speak. He will urge people to sign petitions and join a bus caravan to Washington.

One former commission staffer said it may be an uphill fight, because Willow Grove was on a similar closing list in 1994.

Though Pennsylvania officials were able to save it then - in what was a more politicized process than now - the fact that the Pentagon still thinks Willow Grove should be closed "is a fairly serious omen," said Christine Kelley Cimko, head of realignment commission communications in 1993 and now a top defense expert for an international communications firm.

"The best way to fight it is challenge how valid is the recommendation, how does it reflect the criteria and the priorities?" she said.

That's what Rendell and other officials are trying to do - to save not only Willow Grove, but 12 other Pennsylvania military bases and installations on the Pentagon list.

Closing the 13 bases would eliminate 1,600 jobs - more than 1,200 at Willow Grove alone - and would seriously effect the economies of the local communities.

The Defense Department says it recommended closing more than 30 bases nationwide, including Fort Monmouth, N.J., to save \$50 billion and transform the military.

But Pennsylvania officials say there are homeland and overseas security reasons for keeping the bases open. The state has one of the largest National Guard units in the country, and the members use the bases as headquarters or for training.

And, they say the state has taken disproportionately hard hits in previous base closings, including the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard and the Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster.

To prepare the defense against the latest proposed closings, Rendell and the state's congressional delegation met last week in Washington. "We think we have a very strong case," Specter said afterward.

Rendell, Specter, Santorum and others at last week's meeting said the most potent ammunition is the facility's strategic importance and its mission, which they say the commission doesn't know.

Because Willow Grove was categorized primarily as a Navy Reserve base with a reduced mission, the commission wasn't fully aware of the overseas deployment and national security significance of an Air National Guard A-10 attack plane unit based there, they said.

The commission, they said, also doesn't realize the base now houses Reserve and National Guard units from all the services - one of only three such installations in the country.

After the Washington meeting, U.S. Rep. Curt Weldon (R., Delaware), cochair of the House Armed Services Committee, said he thought there was a strong case to make. "I am convinced we can get a win."

**Charleston site on chopping block**  
**State officials to argue for Navy facility**  
 Myrtle Beach Sun News (Myrtle Beach, SC)  
 Chuck Crumbo  
 June 27, 2005

COLUMBIA - S.C. officials will make their case to spare a Navy engineering facility in Charleston from the Pentagon's ax at a Tuesday hearing of the base-closing commission.

"We're just going to argue that it doesn't make sense to move it," said Mary Graham, vice president of the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. "There are no cost savings."

Four of the nine members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, commonly referred to as BRAC, will conduct the hearing in Charlotte.

Charleston was the state's only military community to take a hit when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld issued his recommendations for base closings May 13.

Rumsfeld announced plans to shutter the South Naval Facilities Engineering Facility and Defense Finance and Accounting Service, costing the Lowcountry up to 1,100 jobs.

The state would net 700 jobs overall under Rumsfeld's proposal, which includes adding 1,800 jobs and additional missions to three Midlands bases: Fort Jackson, McEntire Joint National Guard Base and Shaw Air Force Base.

The Pentagon wants to move jobs from the Charleston engineering command to Jacksonville, Fla.; Great Lakes, Ill.; and Norfolk, Va. The finance center is one of 13 the military wants to consolidate in three cities.

Charleston officials say they think they have a better chance of saving the engineering facility than the finance operation. The Pentagon deviated from its criteria in picking engineering facilities to close and used flawed data, said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Tom Mikolajcik, co-chairman of Charleston's base-saving efforts.

"We have lots of facts and figures to bring before the commission to refute [Department of Defense] recommendations," he said.

But it appears the Pentagon followed the regulations in deciding to move the finance facility, Mikolajcik said.

"We're only going to fight something that we know we can win," said Mikolajcik, a former commander at Charleston Air Force Base.

Some advocates of the state's military bases thought Charleston would be spared during this year's round of base closings because of the hit it suffered in 1993, when the Pentagon closed Charleston's Navy base, eliminating 20,000 to 30,000 jobs.

The panel is sensitive to Charleston's earlier loss, said retired Army Gen. James Hill, a BRAC commissioner who visited Charleston about three weeks ago.

"We recognize there is a human side to this," Hill told reporters.

"Everyone should understand that. We understand that and we take that role very seriously."

Charleston, though, will not be asking for the commission's sympathy, Graham said. "We won't be saying, 'Poor us.'"

But, she said, Charleston's efforts to retain Navy jobs are hampered because the Navy, the area's largest employer, does not have a base in the Holy City.

"The Navy likes to be where its boats are," she said.

The state will have two hours of the panel's time during a public session Tuesday afternoon at the Harris Conference Center on the west campus of Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte.

Lindsey Graham, R-Seneca, the state's senior U.S. senator, will head the S.C. delegation that also will include U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, R-Greenville; U.S. Reps. Henry Brown, R-Hanahan, Jim Clyburn, R-Columbia, John Spratt, D-York, and Joe Wilson, R-Springdale, and Gov. Mark Sanford.

The base-closing commission has until Sept. 8 to make recommendations to President Bush. It can accept all of Rumsfeld's recommendations or it can pick and choose which bases it wants left off the closure list.

The odds against Charleston's efforts to save the engineer facility are steep. In five previous base-closing rounds, about 85 percent of all Pentagon recommendations were approved.

## Recusal ruling a blow for Eielson

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (Fairbanks, AK)  
Sam Bishop  
June 26, 2005

WASHINGTON--The military base review commission has rejected a request from Sen. Ted Stevens to lower the number of votes necessary to exempt bases from the Pentagon's cutback plan when commissioners recuse themselves from decisions.

Stevens' request would have made it easier to remove Eielson Air Force Base from the Pentagon's plan. One commissioner has recused himself from that specific question, leaving a pool of eight to decide Eielson's future.

An agency spokesman said the law does not allow the change Stevens requested.

"We're standing by the original statute," commission spokesman Jim Schaefer said.

Stevens and Virginia Sen. John Warner, both Republicans, wrote Anthony Principi, chairman of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, on June 17.

They said commission rules require that most actions be approved by a majority of commissioners "serving at the time." With a nine-member commission, it thus takes five commissioners to pass a motion removing an installation from the Pentagon's plan.

If, however, commissioners recuse themselves because of conflicts of interest, a question arises about whether they are actually "serving," the senators wrote.

Without a change, the commission could find itself in an absurd position, the senators wrote. Even if a majority of eligible commissioners supported an action, the lack of five votes could doom it.

The commission must "preserve the principle of majority decision-making" in the face of multiple recusals, the senators said.

Schaefer said the law passed by Congress, not the commission, has set the rules. The law requires five votes to take action, regardless of recusals.

Stevens, talking with Alaska reporters Thursday, said he disagreed.

"There's a confusion as to the current law that Congress passed, which says a majority of commissioners must agree to amend or deny a recommendation of the Department of Defense," Stevens said. "We're confident that that means a majority of those who are permitted to vote."

Whether the dispute has much meaning for Eielson might depend on whether any other commissioners recuse themselves from a decision affecting its personnel and aircraft. With just one recusal, that of former Nevada Rep. James Bilbray, eight members remain eligible to vote on Eielson.

Bilbray recused himself because part of the Pentagon's plan for Eielson involves relocating all 18 of the base's F-16 jets to Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada.

Stevens also said he thinks the commission's recusal requirements are too strict because they automatically knock commissioners out of decisions.

"I, for one, do not believe that automatic recusal makes any sense," Stevens said, adding the commission may need to adopt a rule for itself "because there is no federal law that deals with recusals."

Bilbray, in comments prior to the June 15 Fairbanks hearing, expressed a similar view. He said he couldn't see how a vote to remove Eielson from the Pentagon's plan could be motivated by whatever parochial interest he might have in Nevada.

### **Opinions/ Editorials**

**BRAC cuts don't add up**  
Birmingham News (Birmingham, AL)  
June 26, 2005

This week in Atlanta, Alabama officials will get an hour before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to make their case why the Pentagon's plan for bases in the state should be left intact or changed.

Part of that time ought to be used to point out that transferring the airplanes (and hundreds of jobs along with them) from the Air National Guard refueling wing in Birmingham hurts Alabama and the nation, and will actually cost the military more money than it saves.

Under the base closure and realignment plan announced last month, the Pentagon recommended relocating the eight KC-135 air refueling tankers from their base at the Birmingham International Airport to three other Air Guard stations outside the state. In addition, the 117th's firefighters would be transferred to Montgomery, leaving behind support personnel with no planes to support.

The net job loss, counting full-time and part-time jobs, will be close to 500, according to Col. Robert F. Reinhardt, who recently retired as vice commander of the 117th wing. Reinhardt makes a compelling case that the move makes no military or economic sense.

He notes that Birmingham scored better in the Air Force's evaluation of the Air Guard units' ability to support air-refueling missions than two of the bases to which Birmingham's planes are to be transferred. He also argues that Birmingham's personnel are more combat ready since some of the units to which the planes are being transferred have older planes that are being phased out and will have to retrain with Birmingham's newer planes.

Plus, Birmingham has a longer runway, which means planes taking off from here can carry more fuel and thus fly greater distances. In fact, the military has invested \$73 million over the past 11 years in building new facilities and upgrading others at the airport.

On the subject of expenses, the Defense Department says it will cost \$11 million to make

the changes it wants while savings will total only \$500,000 over the next 20 years. Reinhardt says, conversely, closing one of the units with older planes would save the military \$35 million.

That's critical; saving money while maintaining military readiness is BRAC's goal.

The Defense Department plan simply doesn't add up. Gov. Bob Riley and Alabama's congressional leaders must make the case for keeping the 117th wing's planes in Birmingham. Fortunately, the BRAC commission, which will hear Alabama's concerns Thursday, doesn't have to follow that plan. In the past, the commission has departed from the Pentagon recommendations about 15 percent of the time. This should be one of those cases.

Monday, U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus, R-Vestavia Hills, requested a House Armed Services Committee hearing on the plan to basically de-wing the 117th, noting that six other air-tanker units that have less military value than Birmingham's are remaining, some even gaining planes.

Overall, the Pentagon plan treats Alabama well, with the state gaining more jobs than it loses. But that's no justification for giving Birmingham the shaft, especially when the move is militarily and economically flawed.

### **Kings Bay intends to absorb Groton**

Norwich Bulletin (Norwich, CT)

Ray Hackett

June 26, 2005

While much of the focus locally is on the preparations for the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission regional hearing in Boston on July 6, an interesting little development is playing out at another hearing in Atlanta this week.

Walt Yourstone, executive director of the Camden (Ga.) Partnership, is reportedly being given 10 minutes to make a presentation to the

four BRAC commissioners who will conduct the regional hearing there Thursday. Yourstone is to southeastern Georgia what John Markowicz is to southeastern Connecticut -- the front man in the BRAC wars.

This is interesting because the Kings Bay Submarine Base, which Yourstone is promoting, isn't on the base closings list.

According to the official public notice of the BRAC hearings recorded in the Federal Register, the purpose of the regional hearings is "to allow communities experiencing a base closure or major realignment (defined as a loss of 300 civilian jobs or 400 military and civilian jobs) an opportunity to voice their concerns, counter-arguments, and opinions in a live public forum."

Kings Bay isn't slated for closure. Kings Bay isn't slated to lose any positions, civilian or military. So it's interesting that Georgia state officials are giving up some of their time to Yourstone for a brief presentation on Kings Bay.

There is no question the folks in Camden County, Ga., have been aggressive players in the BRAC process to date. They've traveled to Washington several times to meet with Pentagon officials prior to the release of the base-closing list, and again earlier this month to meet with BRAC commission staff. When a commission staff analyst toured the Kings Bay base last week, Yourstone was invited to meet with him.

There appears to be little doubt that the folks in Kings Bay are actively pursuing Groton's subs, commands and the sub school. Some have referred to it as "poaching."

But it is really a simple matter of economics.

Kings Bay was built in the late 1970s to accommodate 10 Trident submarines. There are only seven there today -- and two of them are slated to be transferred to the West Coast by the end of the year. That means Kings Bay is currently operating at only 70 percent capacity -- and about to drop to 50 percent by year's end.

Groton maxed out

Groton, on the other hand, is pretty much maxed out. It's less than 20 times smaller in area than Kings Bay, and home to 18 fast-attack submarines. There's not a lot of "excess capacity" there.

If the purpose of the base-closing process is to eliminate excess space and facilities to save costs, it would seem clear where that "excess capacity" is.

But Kings Bay was never really in play. Truth is, the Navy is not about to shut down Kings Bay and transfer the remaining Tridents to either Norfolk or Groton. The Tridents are the "boomers." They're the subs that carry the missiles with the nuclear warheads. When a Trident takes to sea, it becomes the third most powerful nation in the world.

Neither Groton nor Norfolk has the space to park a half- dozen Tridents, so Kings Bay isn't going anywhere.

Kings Bay losing ships

But Kings Bay is losing ships -- and crews, and their families -- to redeployment, and the folks at Kings Bay are trying to make up for that loss by absorbing Groton.

And the Navy seems to be applying "fuzzy" math in support that effort.

The Navy has identified 50-percent excess capacity on the East Coast, and has opted to rid itself of the underutilized and unneeded space by transferring the Groton operation to Norfolk and Kings Bay -- thus making Groton the "excess capacity" that isn't needed.

With no subs, no commands, no sub school and lots of unused pier space, it becomes a little easier to understand how Groton scored so low on the "military value" scores when compared to Kings Bay and Norfolk.

### *Additional Notes*

