

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

July 17, 2005

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**Rumsfeld defends choice to shut, shrink military pay offices**

Cleveland Plain

Becky Gaylord

July 16, 2005

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld stands behind his decision to all but shutter a military pay office in Cleveland that employs 1,200.

He says the move is part of the most cost-effective strategy to shrink or close facilities nationwide.

Rumsfeld responded Friday to questions from Base Realignment and Closure Committee Chairman Anthony Principi. He asked Rumsfeld whether the Pentagon considered other options besides expanding just three of the Defense Finance and Accounting Services offices while closing or paring the 23 others, including Cleveland's.

The base-closing panel is scrutinizing the Pentagon plan.

To try to save DFAS Cleveland, which handles payroll and accounting for the Navy and other branches of the military, supporters picked out flaws in the Pentagon process. They said that the Defense Department rankings shortchanged the Cleveland office and that the realignment would waste taxpayer money.

Rumsfeld didn't specifically address those criticisms in his letter.

"The process considered options," he said, and concluded that expanding military pay centers only in Indianapolis, Columbus and Denver "represented the best value solution for DFAS by maximizing military value."

Political and civic supporters of Cleveland DFAS said the shorter-than-one-page response isn't surprising but is disappointing.

"It still makes one wonder why three is the magic number," said Carol Caruso, a vice president at the Greater Cleveland Partnership, a business group.

Rep. Steve LaTourette said that instead of re-evaluating its conclusions, the Pentagon said: "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead." The Republican from Concord Township has been a leading critic of the Pentagon's case to dismantle Cleveland DFAS.

Supporters of the local office said they remain optimistic because the base-closing panel - and

not the Pentagon - has the final say about what's on the hit list. In previous base-closing rounds, only about 10 percent of the targeted facilities were taken off.

Nonetheless, supporters of Cleveland DFAS have raised "a formidable challenge," said Rep. Dennis Kucinich, a Cleveland Democrat. "We have such a strong case."

Members of the base-closing commission's staff have indicated as much, according to Fred Nance, chairman of the Cleveland Defense Industry Alliance, an advocacy group for local defense jobs.

On Monday, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will hold public hearings and hear testimony from Defense Department officials.

### **Air Guard Memo Downplayed BRAC Spokesman Calls It One Opinion, But Blumenthal Sees Support For State**

Hartford Courant  
Jesse Leavenworth  
July 16, 2005

A memorandum calling into question the federal government's ability to shut down or move Air National Guard units is only one lawyer's opinion - not the final word on the issue, a spokesman for the Base Realignment and Closure Commission said Friday.

But state Attorney General Richard Blumenthal called the document "powerful ammunition" in the state's battle to retain its jet fighter squadron.

At stake is the A-10 "Warhog" squadron based at Bradley International Airport. The Pentagon has recommended that some of the planes be moved to an air base in Massachusetts, and the rest retired.

State leaders have strenuously objected, saying federal law prohibits such action without the governor's consent.

"There can no longer be any reasonable dispute," Blumenthal said, "that the DOD's

recommendations with regard to the Bradley Air Guard Unit are unlawful - a fact that we have consistently maintained and the BRAC Commission itself has now acknowledged."

The memo, written by BRAC deputy counsel Dan Cowhig, said that "where the practical result of an Air Force recommendation would be to withdraw, disband or change the organization of an Air National Guard unit, the [BRAC] commission may not approve such a recommendation without the consent of the governor concerned."

Gov. M. Jodi Rell said Friday that the BRAC counsel's memo "will bolster our case substantially. Federal law is quite clear: Air National Guard units cannot be moved without the express permission of their commander in chief, the governor. I certainly have not given my permission to move our A-10s from Bradley to Massachusetts, nor do I plan to do so."

Rell said a June 14 letter she wrote to U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld citing the states' rights issue and similar letters from other governors "seem to have created a stir at BRAC.

"Good," she continued. "They should have. We are not going to stand idly by while the Defense Department acts illegally to move important national defense and homeland security assets, not to mention people's lives and livelihoods."

A BRAC spokesman on Friday, however, downplayed the memo. The opinion, commission spokesman Jim Schaefer said, is "a working document," meant only to solicit feedback on the issue from the federal departments of justice and defense.

Military officials are urging the BRAC Commission to wait for a justice department finding on the issue before making any changes to the recommendations, a defense department spokesman said.

In the meantime, the Pentagon is standing by recommendations to shut down or shift planes and other resources at 30 Air National Guard units around the country.

If the BRAC Commission adopts all the Air Force recommendations, the Air National Guard base at Bradley 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.

### Local News Articles

#### **Murkowski mulls suit over base closures**

Fairbanks News Miner (Fairbanks, AK)

Chris Talbott

July 16, 2005

Gov. Frank Murkowski told two key figures in the military's base closure and realignment process Friday that the state is considering a lawsuit to stop proposed changes to Eielson Air Force Base and Kulis Air Guard Station.

The governor sent letters to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Base Realignment and Closure Commission Chairman Anthony Principi outlining the flaws he sees in the process, including the Pentagon's failure to follow federal law and seek the governor's consent for its National Guard plans.

He planted a warning in each letter and notes the state of Pennsylvania's recent filing of a lawsuit to stop the process.

"I want to ensure that other federal laws are followed to the letter so that costly and protracted litigation between the Department of Defense and the State of Alaska might be avoided," he wrote.

"I will be closely monitoring these proceedings and will take similar action if necessary."

Murkowski and other governors believe federal law gives them the right to approve changes to National Guard units.

Kulis would be closed if the current plan is approved by the commission, the president and Congress. Its 179th Wing and most other equipment and personnel would move to Elmendorf Air Force Base, also in Anchorage.

Eielson would retain its Air National Guard tanker unit, but would lose almost all remaining military personnel in a move projected to save about \$2.7 billion over 20 years. The base would remain on "warm" status and continue to host military training exercises.

In his letters, the governor cites federal statute and the U.S. Constitution's "militia clause" to back up his claim that the military needs his permission to move forward.

The issue is not new and has been debated since before the 2005 plan was released. A memo prepared by the legal counsel for the commission said relocating, disbanding or moving Air Guard units from one state to another could be beyond the commission's authority.

Defense Department spokesman Glenn Flood said Friday that the Justice Department is expected to issue its own legal ruling on the matter. The Pentagon is urging the commission to wait for that before deciding whether to make any changes to the military's recommendations.

While state and city of Anchorage officials have generally supported plans for Kulis because Anchorage would eventually gain military personnel, there has been a \$1.5 million effort under way to persuade the commission Eielson must be spared.

The governor's letters are just the latest effort and fall hard on the heels of a Thursday request by his daughter, U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, to look closely at what she considers the forced recusal of a commissioner who might offer a favorable vote for Eielson. Gov.

Murkowski addressed the issue in his letter to Principi, as well.

Officials have also said the Pentagon failed to follow its own rules when choosing Eielson for realignment and that stripping Eielson of its teeth comes at a time when the Pacific region is increasing in importance.

The commission will forward its recommendations to the president in September. If he signs off on the plan, then Congress must concur for it to become final. Neither has the power to tinker with the plan. Commissioners held a June 15 regional meeting in Fairbanks and will wrap up the series of meetings Monday and Tuesday in Washington, D.C.

### **Report On Bases Buys Pa. Leaders**

Philadelphia Inquirer (Philadelphia, PA)

Marc Schogol

July 16, 2005

Pennsylvania officials who have filed suit to save an Air National Guard unit at Willow Grove were encouraged yesterday that the base-closing review commission has raised similar legal questions.

Defense Department decisions to close and move nearly 30 Air Guard units nationwide - including the 111th Fighter Wing of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard at Willow Grove - may be illegal, according to the legal counsel for the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

A 37-page report prepared by the counsel for BRAC said relocating, disbanding or moving Air National Guard units from one state to another could be beyond the commission's authority and might be unconstitutional, CongressDaily, a Capitol Hill publication, reported yesterday.

Gov. Rendell and the state's two senators filed a federal lawsuit last week saying the Constitution and federal law forbid the Pentagon from closing the 111th or any National Guard unit without state consent. That suit is independent of state

efforts to prevent the closing of the entire Naval Air Station and Joint Reserve Base at Willow Grove.

Adrian R. King Jr., head of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, said yesterday that Rendell is "gratified that the legal counsel to the commission appears to have come to the same conclusion we did."

And Sen. Arlen Specter (R., Pa.) said: "I am becoming more optimistic we are going to win this battle."

Denying it has done anything illegal, the Pentagon said the Justice Department would be issuing its own ruling shortly and "we respectfully ask the commission to refrain from revising or eliminating any of the department's recommendations until it has received the [Justice Department] opinion."

The Pentagon in May recommended closing Willow Grove and reassigning nine of the 15 planes attached to the 111th. The remaining six would be taken out of service.

But federal law based on states' constitutional right to raise militias says "a unit of the Army National Guard of the United States or the Air National Guard of the United States may not be relocated or withdrawn under this chapter without the consent of the governor of the State."

### **Pentagon Says Long-Term Goal Is To Replace Oceana**

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA)  
Dale Eisman  
July 16, 2005

WASHINGTON — Navy and Defense Department officials ultimately want to replace Oceana Naval Air Station with "a new, 21st century Master Jet Base" elsewhere on the East Coast, the Pentagon disclosed Friday.

In a letter to a congressionally chartered commission studying military bases nationwide, the Defense Department indicated it has no

specific plan to replace Oceana – likely a multi-billion dollar project that could take a decade or more to complete – but asserted that a new "from the ground up" facility would best serve the Navy's long-term needs.

A new base "is by far the preferred choice" over moving Oceana's F-14 Tomcat and F/A-18 Hornet and Super Hornet fighters to Moody Air Force Base in Georgia or some other existing facility, the Pentagon letter said.

Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera E. Oberndorf and U.S. Rep. Thelma Drake, R-2nd District, said the letter strengthens their immediate efforts to preserve Oceana but acknowledged that it raises new questions about the base's future.

Oberndorf said she was "delighted" at the letter's conclusion that Oceana is the best currently available location for the Navy's East Coast fighters.

But the Pentagon's interest in a new base means "we need to do long-range planning from the perspective of what's in the city's best interest, while the Navy looks at what they can afford and what's in their best interest," she added.

"I'm not giving up," on efforts to keep the base over the long run, Oberndorf stressed.

Christopher Hellman, who tracks base closure issues at the Washington-based Center for Arms Control, said, "it's very clear the Pentagon considers Oceana to be a problem and one they are planning on resolving."

Virginia Beach's largest employer and a major economic engine for Hampton Roads, Oceana is the Navy's principal East Coast hub for fighter aircraft.

The sprawling base was carved out of farmland in the 1940s but today is ringed by subdivisions and shopping centers that have constrained its operations and led some community activists to urge it be downsized. There are chronic citizen complaints about jet noise.

Eliminating such “environmental encroachment” is a major focus of the 2005 round of base closures, the fifth such attempt since 1988 to trim the military’s infrastructure and redirect money used to maintain it to other defense needs.

Oceana currently is home to about 140 F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets and about 50 F-14 Tomcats. The latter planes are to be phased out of service by late 2006.

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission asked the Pentagon on July 1 for more information on possibly relocating Oceana’s fighters to Moody, now a hub for Air Force rescue helicopters.

The transfer “is a feasible alternative” to keeping Oceana open, the Pentagon responded Friday, but would cost almost \$500 million and still leave the Navy with an outdated facility.

The commission has scheduled two days of hearings next week on potential additions to a list of 33 major bases being considered for closure. Putting Oceana on the list would require the votes of seven of the nine commissioners.

Oberndorf said she was in Arlington on Thursday for meetings with commission staffers in which she stressed the city’s determination to “continue to be good neighbors” to Oceana and to “do much more proactively to protect the base.”

But Dan Else, who tracks base commission issues at the Congressional Research Service, argued that Oceana already “is about as encroached as you can get.”

Navy officials declined to comment Friday on whether a specific plan to build a new base is in the works.

The service has been trying to acquire 30,000 acres in northeastern North Carolina for an outlying landing field that would be used to practice take-offs and landings now done at Oceana and an auxiliary airstrip, Fentress Field, in Chesapeake.

The parcel is far larger than needed for the outlying field; Navy officials have indicated they want the extra land to provide a buffer against the kind of development that has sprouted up around Oceana.

Else suggested that the disclosure of Navy interest in a new, full-scale base may further energize Carolina residents who are battling in court to block the OLF.

Some of those residents already see the OLF plan as “the nose under the tent,” he said.

Else and Hellman agreed that a new base would be hugely expensive – the Pentagon in 2002 estimated Oceana’s “plant replacement value” at \$1.2 billion – and is probably beyond the authority of the base commission .

The commission has the power to add or remove facilities from a closure list submitted by the Pentagon in May, or to make adjustments to the Pentagon’s proposals to expand some bases while contracting others, Hellman said.

The law creating the commission also requires that any closures or base restructuring ordered by the panel be complete within six years, another apparent factor in the Pentagon decision to recommend retaining Oceana for now.

The letter sent Friday said any action to create a new base “would occur outside the BRAC window,” an apparent acknowledgement that acquiring land and building a new facility would take longer than six years.

The commission is to issue its list of recommended closures and realignments by Sept. 8. The law requires Congress and President Bush to accept or reject the list as a package, a feature intended to ensure that larger states or those with more influential representatives do not dominate the process.

## **US Defends Portsmouth Shipyard Closure**

### **Base at Pearl Harbor seen as more suitable**

Boston Globe (Boston, MA)  
 Bryan Bender  
 July 16, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The Pentagon is strongly defending its recommendation to close the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine instead of a ship repair facility in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, because Portsmouth cannot accommodate nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and is too far from Asia, the center of most of the Navy's operations, according to its official response to inquiries from the commission.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission had questioned why the Defense Department opted to shutter Portsmouth, depriving New England of at least 4,400 jobs, even though the Navy base at Pearl Harbor performed the same tasks at greater cost.

In a Thursday letter to commission chairman Anthony Principi obtained by the Globe, Gordon England, the acting deputy secretary of defense, acknowledged that Pearl Harbor costs more and is less efficient. But he wrote that Pearl Harbor's "critical geographic location, adjacent to a significant portion of the fleet and forward-positioned in the central Pacific, combined with its capability to dock a nuclear aircraft carrier, provided a higher overall military value" than Portsmouth.

The commission on base closings has been working to review the Defense Department's recommendations in time for a report to Congress and President Bush in September. Yesterday, the commission formally asked the Justice Department to determine whether the Pentagon has the authority to eliminate or relocate Air National Guard units -- including the 102d Fighter Wing at Otis Air Force Base on Cape Cod -- which are normally under the control of state governors.

A commission lawyer on Thursday raised questions in an internal memo about whether closing or relocating Air National Guard bases is within the scope of the base-closing legislation.

The Justice Department's legal opinion will help form the basis of the commission's final recommendations, officials said. "The commission needs that input in their ultimate decision," Jim Schaefer, the panel's communications director, said yesterday.

In reviewing the Pentagon plan, the commission earlier this month took issue with a series of recommendations, including the proposal to close the Portsmouth yard instead of the Naval Shipyard Pearl Harbor, even though the Navy's own assessment found that Portsmouth has a faster and less costly record of overhauling warships and submarines. The panel's concerns raised hopes in Portsmouth that it might reverse the Pentagon proposal to shut down the yard.

The Pentagon, however, seems to have a strong case for choosing Pearl Harbor over Portsmouth, according to one leading specialist.

"The submarine fleet will be at most half the size of the Cold War fleet," said Loren Thompson, chief executive officer of the Lexington Institute, a think tank in Arlington, Va. "Unlike other shipyards, Portsmouth is only equipped to support submarines. What's more, it is located on the opposite side of the world from where the Navy primarily operates these days, in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean." In the past, he said, Portsmouth's location was critical to the Navy's defense against the Soviet Union in the North Atlantic seas.

But some local officials lobbying to save Portsmouth maintain that there should be enough repair work for all four of the nation's shipyards.

"They are avoiding the real issue," said retired Navy Captain William D. McDonough, former commander of the Portsmouth yard and head of the Seacoast Shipyard Association. "They are wrong to believe there is excess work in the shipyard family."

New Hampshire's congressional delegation agreed. "The nation needs four naval shipyards, and the Department substantially deviated from the selection criteria in making its closure

recommendation for Portsmouth," they said in a joint statement issued yesterday.

But Thompson said plans to draw down the submarine fleet to less than 50 since the end of the Cold War leaves too many shipyards. "There is no question they have more submarine support capacity than it requires," he said.

Portsmouth was pitted against three other shipyards in the Pentagon deliberations: Puget Sound in Bremerton, Wash; Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia; and Pearl Harbor. It decided to keep open Puget Sound and Norfolk because it was determined that Portsmouth and Pearl Harbor could not take on their work.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon also took issue with assertions by state officials that they were not consulted on the Pentagon's deliberations to relocate Air National Guard forces, including moving the 102d Fighter Wing's 12 F-15 fighter jets from Cape Cod to Florida and New Jersey.

England said that as early as December 2003, and again in April 2004, Pentagon officials met with the Guard's adjutants general -- the heads of each state's National Guard forces --to inform them of the criteria for drafting the plan. He said they also briefed the chief of the National Guard Bureau a month before the final proposal was forwarded to the commission in May. But an aide to Governor Mitt Romney said a few meetings, but none with the governor himself, was not adequate.

England also rebutted assertions by Massachusetts and other state officials -- raised by the commission this month -- that the Air Guard closures would hurt homeland security. England said the US Northern Command, which is responsible for defending US territory, found that the recommendations "do not create an unacceptable risk to the accomplishment of our homeland defense or defense support of civil authorities."

Otis supporters were not backing down yesterday.

"That argument is just so fallacious," said Representative William Delahunt, the Quincy Democrat whose district includes Otis.

Delahunt said the argument for closing Otis and transferring the 102d Fighter Wing ignores the impact it would have on the Coast Guard units that share the base.

Senator John F. Kerry agreed. "The Defense Department can't argue with a straight face that it's 'adequately addressing' homeland security by shutting Otis," Kerry said in a statement.

The commission will hear further testimony from the Pentagon in a public hearing scheduled for Monday in Washington.

### **Shipyards Fear Job-Loss Ripple Effect**

Honolulu Star-Bulletin (Honolulu, HI)

Gregg K. Kakesako

July 15, 2005

More than 2,500 blue-collar workers employed by Hawaii's private shipyards worry that their jobs might be on the chopping block if the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard goes out of business.

"There will definitely be a ripple effect," said Robert Lillis, who represents Local 1998 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

Lillis, whose union represents 500 machinists at Pearl Harbor and 150 in private yards, said the Ship Repair Association of Hawaii estimates that 768 people work at private ship-repair facilities, and an additional 1,833 are employed by suppliers and private vendors.

"The workers in the private yards are very concerned," Lillis said. "They know if Pearl Harbor goes, they will go."

That is because a lot of private shipyard repair work is done at Pearl Harbor's dry dock 4 -- one of four maintained by the shipyard -- and Bravo pier.

The Chamber Commerce of Hawaii was told earlier this week that shuttering the 97-year-old Pearl Harbor shipyard would result in an annual economic loss of \$1.3 billion and eliminate 2.2 percent of Oahu's total work force.

The Base Realignment and Closure commission asked the Pentagon on July 1 to justify its decision to keep Pearl Harbor open while closing Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Nearly 5,000 people work in the shipyard. However, the chamber's reports said there would be an additional 4,565 who are indirectly linked to Pearl Harbor whose jobs also would be in jeopardy.

On Monday the nine-member BRAC commission will take Pentagon testimony on its May 13 recommendation to close Portsmouth.

Hawaii's congressional delegation, led by Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee ranking member Daniel Inouye, says there is more than enough work at the military's four shipyards to keep the Navy's aging fleet afloat.

Inouye said yesterday that the chamber's study "underscores in a very real way the economic value of the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

"But more importantly, what is incalculable is the strategic value of the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard to our nation's defense in the Asia-Pacific region, which is an area of increasing concern for us."

U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie said that when Hawaii's congressional delegation talks to BRAC commissioners about Pearl Harbor, "we will focus on its strategic value."

However, he added, "these numbers add another dimension. They underline its importance to Hawaii's economy and the working families who earn their livings from the shipyard."

Abercrombie was referring to a meeting to take place Monday between BRAC commissioners and Inouye, Gov. Linda Lingle and Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

## **Guam Officials Lay Out Case For More Military**

Pacific Daily News (Guam)

Steve Limtiaco

July 16, 2005

Guam is the only American soil where U.S. military forces can be at their home base and forward-deployed at the same time, Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo told members of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission during a regional hearing in Los Angeles yesterday morning.

Bordallo, Gov. Felix Camacho and Guam Chamber of Commerce Armed Forces Committee Chairman and publisher of the Pacific Daily News Lee Webber traveled to Los Angeles to reinforce the message that Guam supports increased military activity here. Speaker Mark Forbes, R-Sinajana, was unable to attend but submitted written testimony.

Some residents disagree with the idea of more military here, however, and have submitted written testimony to the BRAC commission, as well.

Guam fared well when the latest round of base closures and realignments was announced in May -- about 31 civilian jobs would be affected when management work is consolidated -- but Bordallo asked for 30 minutes of face time with the commission to reinforce Guam's benefit to the military and to state support for the BRAC recommendations. The island decided to present a united front, with political and business representatives presenting the same message of support for the military.

The group talked about existing military infrastructure, Guam's strategic location, the support of residents, the availability of training areas and efforts to improve roads and utilities for everyone, including the military.

Guam's testimony yesterday at the Westchester High School auditorium came at the tail end of testimony by California representatives.

"It went extremely well," Gov. Felix Camacho said shortly after the hearing ended. "It gave Guam a real good opportunity to present a very positive case for realignment of assets and for growth. That's the advantage we had over others, who were basically making a case not to close the bases here in California. ... I think Guam is in great shape and I anticipate in the very short future tremendous growth in the military arena."

Bordallo said all of the testimony by the Guam delegation was consistent, and the commission members appeared to be interested.

"I guess it was rather unusual to hear people come and testify in favor of the position of the BRAC. Most of them here are very upset about base closures, and we, in turn, said we were very happy with their recommendations," she said.

Webber said the commission members also received a report that summarizes Guam's case for increased military activity.

"I think it went across well. We have to wait and see, but they now know more about Guam than they did before," he said.

Guam's economy currently is 65 percent dependent on tourism, 30 percent dependent on the military and about 5 percent dependent on other industries, according to Pacific Daily News files, and the Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey which it said shows 80 percent of residents support increased military activity here.

Opposed

But Umatac resident Debbie Quinata isn't convinced by that survey and said she disagrees with the idea of increased military activity.

"My concern is, I think we are going over there and sending mixed messages. It's obvious that not everyone on Guam supports increased military presence, but that is not the message that's being relayed to the BRAC commission," Quinata said.

"I also believe that the more military and the more ordnance we have on Guam makes us a more likely target for terrorists. I do have a problem with that -- all of my family and my children, my grandchildren, live here."

Quinata submitted written testimony stating her views.

"My general statement was that there are quite a bit of lands being held by the U.S. federal government for military use that is truly not being used," she said. "If they were not using the lands, I thought it was only good manners and probably a real good idea to return the lands to the original landowners so they can use it for subsistence living and survivability."

### **Keep MCRD Open, S.D. Group Tells Base Panel**

But Navy's Broadway Complex should be sold, delegation says

San Diego Union-Tribune (San Diego, CA)

Gordon Smith

July 15, 2005

LOS ANGELES – A delegation of San Diego business and military leaders told a regional meeting of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission here yesterday that the venerable Marine Corps Recruit Depot is a key facility that not only helps the Marine Corps meet its recruitment goals, but would be costly and problematic to consolidate with the Corps' other recruit depot at Parris Island, S.C.

Led by Julie Meier Wright, who heads the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp., the delegation took a starkly different tack on the Navy's Broadway Complex, however.

Closing that facility would not only provide the city with an opportunity for harbor-front development, but would also enable the Navy to sell the complex and generate millions of dollars needed to move its functions to a more secure location, possibly the 32nd Street Naval Station, Wright said.

"The closure of the Navy Broadway Complex under BRAC 2005 could be a real win-win for San Diego, as well as for the Navy, provided the money from the public sale reverts to the Navy so it can build a new headquarters on a local military base," she said.

With the Broadway property valued at between \$100 million and \$500 million, the Navy would gain substantial funds for relocation, while "San Diego would get an opportunity to move forward with a long-anticipated redevelopment of a key part of downtown San Diego," Wright said.

After the meeting, commission Chairman Anthony Principi endorsed the notion of closing and selling the Navy Broadway Complex, adding, "I feel strongly that that facility should stay (somewhere) in San Diego."

Principi, a Rancho Santa Fe resident, was less enthusiastic about keeping MCRD open, saying questions remain "as to the need for two recruit depots as opposed to one."

Neither MCRD nor the Navy's Broadway Complex is on the Defense Department's closure list. But in a recent letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Principi questioned why they weren't included.

The nine-member commission will vote next week on whether to add the two installations to the list, with a "yes" vote by seven of the commissioners needed to approve the action.

The panel is scheduled to forward its final recommendations to President Bush in September.

Yesterday's hearing was the only one the commission will hold in California as it determines which bases to shutter in the latest round of military cost savings authorized by Congress.

San Diego's delegation was among a half dozen from around the state to make formal presentations to the commission in an effort to influence its final decisions.

Retired Marine Corps Gen. Joe Hoar of Del Mar detailed why relocating MCRD's functions to Parris Island wouldn't make sense.

Expanding training activities at Parris Island would be problematic at best because of the depot's limited size and proximity to residential areas, Hoar said. Its flat terrain poses a challenge for live-fire exercises, and the base is vulnerable to seasonal hurricanes, he said.

Pointing out that 52 percent of the Marine Corps' recruits are trained at MCRD, or about 16,000 a year, Hoar emphasized that the San Diego base's location makes it easier to sign up recruits from California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas because parents can visit and attend graduation ceremonies relatively easily.

"The military value of maintaining a recruit depot on the West Coast is undeniable, and far exceeds any speculative financial gains that would be gained by consolidating these depots," Hoar said.

Principi asked pointedly why it's critical for the Marine Corps to have two recruit depots when the Navy and Air Force have downsized to single facilities.

"You just can't do it all at Parris Island. That's the first issue," Hoar responded. "The second issue is ... the Marines are not like anybody else."

Marine Corps recruits need longer, more intensive training than those in other branches of the armed forces, he explained.

### **Pope Air Force Base's Fate Hangs On Vote**

Fayetteville Observer (Fayetteville, NC)  
Don Worthington  
July 16, 2005

Cumberland County officials want the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission to take its first vote Tuesday on Pope Air Force Base's future.

Action by the commission - commonly called BRAC - would open a new series of meetings, giving Cumberland County officials another chance to lobby for keeping the 43rd Airlift Wing at Pope.

Other BRAC recommendations for Fort Bragg and Pope include putting the airfield under Army control and bringing U.S. Army Forces Command and Reserve Command to Pope; relocating the 23rd Fighter Group to Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Ga.; and moving the 7th Special Forces Group from Bragg to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

On Monday, Department of Defense officials will defend their plans for Pope and nine other recommendations before the BRAC commission.

On Tuesday, BRAC commissioners will consider making changes to the Department of Defense recommendations. It takes seven out of nine votes to add a recommendation and five votes to delete a recommendation.

In a letter to BRAC on Thursday, defense officials said placing Pope under Fort Bragg control meets several objectives:

- \*It allows the U.S. Army Forces Command, located at Fort McPherson, outside Atlanta, to relocate to Pope.

- \*It maintains airfield capability for the Army and the Air Force.

- \*It consolidates installation management.

Moving the 43rd Airlift Wing and 23rd Fighter Group from Pope would not change the relationship between the base and the 18th Airborne Corps because the 3rd Aerial Port Squadron and several other units would remain at Pope.

Cumberland County officials say replacing the 43rd Airlift Wing with 16 C-130s staffed mainly by reservists could affect the ability of the 82nd Airborne Division to respond in a crisis.

"When you have a homeland defense mission you don't want to wait for airlift to show up," said retired Brig. Gen. Paul Dordal.

Dordal said it is unclear what the squadron's mission would be in crises.

Dordal is a former wing commander at Pope Air Force Base. He is a consultant to the Cumberland County Business Council, the area's economic developers, on BRAC issues.

Cumberland County officials also say that turning over the base to Army control would be costly because the Army would have to add specialized airfield jobs.

For instance, the Army does not have the personnel to load munitions on cargo planes or crews to maintain runways.

Those are part of air wing responsibilities, Dordal said.

Most importantly, the Pentagon will have forgotten the lessons of Desert One, the failed attempt to rescue 66 hostages at the American embassy in Tehran in 1980, Dordal said.

"You can't fight together if you don't plan and work together," Dordal said. "You can't throw units together and expect them to work."

Retired Army Gen. Buck Kernan has also been hired by the Cumberland County Business Council to consult on the BRAC recommendations.

Dordal and Kernan met with two BRAC analysts Thursday in Washington, D.C. The meeting was to answer questions BRAC members posed at a June 28 meeting in Charlotte.

They stressed three points with the analysts:

- The military value of having an airlift wing adjacent to the 82nd Airborne Division.

- The Army is not equipped to operate a large airfield.

The system used to analyze Air Force bases was flawed.

They also sought to separate the recommendations that link the move of U.S. Army Forces Command and U.S. Reserve Command to Fort Bragg with air operations at Pope.

Dordal said if the commands move they would be located on Fort Bragg, not Pope.

### **Reports Help Show Why Ft. Huachuca, D-M Won't Expand**

Arizona Daily Star (Tucson, AZ)

Carol Ann Alaimo

July 17, 2005

Southern Arizona's military bases did not emerge as the superstars many had predicted they would when the Pentagon recently rated the value of the nation's defense facilities, federal reports show.

Tucson's Davis-Monthan Air Force Base received lackluster grades for future growth potential and Fort Huachuca, in Sierra Vista, was tagged for its water supply problem in reports compiled as part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process, known as BRAC.

The ratings may help explain why the bases were bypassed for expansion - contrary to what supporters expected - in the Defense Department effort to restructure the military.

"When I looked at those scores, I thought D-M kind of came out mediocre," said Gene Santarelli, a retired Air Force three-star general and former D-M commander who now advises Tucson City Hall on military matters.

Growth at the Tucson base now seems unlikely in the foreseeable future, he said - and if it does one day occur, it may be in a much different form from what he and others have pictured.

Sierra Vista City Manager Chuck Potucek, who touted Fort Huachuca's growth potential before the BRAC announcement in May, now says expansion probably won't happen unless the municipality can supplement its water supply - an expensive proposition that could take years.

"It's difficult to envision any large-scale mission growth until more of the water issues are resolved here," Potucek said.

Despite major conservation efforts, critics say the fort and the city of Sierra Vista are consuming water at a rate that threatens the nearby San Pedro River, a habitat for endangered species and millions of migrating songbirds that roost along its banks each year.

The Defense Department is Southern Arizona's largest employer, providing nearly 21,000 military and civilian jobs at D-M and Fort Huachuca, with an estimated yearly economic impact of about \$2.6 billion.

Civic officials, base boosters and some independent experts had predicted a boom in local military presence on the heels of BRAC. They envisioned thousands more troops and dozens more aircraft being moved here as bases elsewhere were closed or downsized.

In formal pitches to the Pentagon, D-M supporters proposed that the military create "centers of excellence" in Tucson for combat search-and-rescue operations and close air support. Fort Huachuca supporters asked for more unmanned aerial vehicle and military intelligence training and that the Pentagon move its foreign language school there, from Monterey, Calif.

The Defense Department didn't bite on any of those ideas. Instead, D-M stayed as is and Fort Huachuca lost 167 civilian jobs, leaving the region's military landscape virtually unchanged.

The Pentagon's BRAC recommendations, which proposed closing 33 major bases and realigning dozens of others in a multibillion-dollar cost-cutting move, are being reviewed by an independent commission with a final decision

due by fall. Military personnel aren't allowed to comment on the changes.

Military value rankings for local bases were prepared by the Army and the Air Force to lay the groundwork for the BRAC recommendations.

D-M was one of 157 Air Force installations - including active duty, reserve and peripheral sites such as the U.S. Air Force Academy - that were ranked for compatibility with eight missions, from space operations to combat search and rescue.

D-M's overall rankings ranged from a high of 11th place for tanker operations to a low of 35th place for airlift operations. The rankings generally were helped by high marks for the physical condition of facilities.

But in the future growth category, D-M scored 60 percent or lower in every mission area reviewed. The growth potential ratings looked at factors such as the amount of aircraft parking space and availability of nearby land for future base expansion.

David Sorenson, a professor of national security studies at the Air Force's Air War College in Alabama who wrote a book about previous BRAC rounds in the 1990s, said urban encroachment likely worked against D-M when the service surveyed the growth potential of its bases.

Like many military cities, Tucson's city limits once ended miles from D-M, but the city virtually surrounds the base now.

State and city officials recently moved to protect D-M's busiest flight corridor by banning home building and some other land uses. There are ongoing efforts to ease tensions with neighbors, too. But D-M still logged the most noise complaints of the state's five major bases last year - 286 people made 485 complaints.

Sorenson said that sort of friction, while not severe enough to shutter the base, likely gave the

Pentagon pause when it looked at candidates for growth.

"Urban encroachment at places like D-M and Luke (Air Force Base near Phoenix) would be one of the big factors in why there are limitations on expansion," Sorenson said.

Luke is to lose nearly 280 jobs under BRAC proposals, the bulk of the 550 military jobs to be cut in Arizona. Luke's future growth scores were lower than D-M's, ranging from a low of 26.4 to a high of 46.9.

Santarelli said the Pentagon seemed to give higher marks to air bases located near water - where the military does supersonic jet training - than to bases near ground ranges such as D-M and Luke, which train pilots at the Barry M. Goldwater Range, west of Tucson.

Fort Huachuca's value ratings are harder to decipher.

The Army ranked the fort 21st overall of 97 installations nationwide. But the reasons weren't immediately clear in the service's BRAC report, which contained more than 80 acronyms and weighting formulas so complex that, according to one defense analyst, some communities targeted for closings have hired calculus experts to help fight the shutdowns.

One thing is clear: The Pentagon is concerned about the water supply issues that have prompted a string of environmental lawsuits against the fort and related agencies.

"Increased missions may result in additional water restrictions or mitigation requirements at Fort Huachuca," one BRAC report noted.

Lilly Goren, a political-science professor at Lake Forest College near Chicago, who also wrote a book on earlier rounds of base closings, said Fort Huachuca's water issues would have been a deal killer for the Defense Department when it decided which bases could take on more military personnel.

"They have to be sure, if they're pulling people out of Massachusetts or northern Virginia and moving them to Arizona, that the move is going to be supportable," she said.

The fact that Arizona is a fast-growing state with rising urban land prices probably worked against military expansion as well, experts said.

Santarelli, the city of Tucson's military adviser, said there's still a chance D-M could pick up new missions in future years, but perhaps not in its current warplane operations.

Based on the recent BRAC rankings, D-M might be seen as better suited for missions such as unmanned-aerial-vehicle operations or intelligence and surveillance work, he said.

Potucek, Sierra Vista's city manager, said even if no military growth occurs, Southern Arizona is still fortunate that existing bases survived.

"When you go through such a high-stakes process and you escape relatively unscathed, you've got to be happy about that."

### **Governors To Discuss Shipyard With Panel**

Boston Globe (Boston, MA)  
July 17, 2005

Governor John Lynch of New Hampshire, Governor John Baldacci of Maine, and members of the states' congressional delegations will meet tomorrow with three members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to discuss the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. They will meet with Admiral Harold Gehman, James Hansen, and General James Hill in Washington, D.C. The three commissioners are the only members of the BRAC Commission who either did not attend the regional public hearing in Boston or tour the shipyard. Lynch said he will leave the National Governors Association meeting in Iowa early to meet with the three BRAC commissioners to press the case for keeping the shipyard open.

### **103rd Appeal Strong On Three Fronts State officials confident in bid to save Air Guard wing from base closing**

New London Day (New London, CT)  
Robert A. Hamilton  
July 16, 2005

Groton — The state has mounted a three-pronged response to the Pentagon's recommendation to close the Air National Guard's 103rd Fighter Wing in East Granby, and all three approaches appear to have a good chance of prevailing, the acting state adjutant general said Friday.

Brig. Gen. Thaddeus J. Martin said the state is arguing that the Pentagon undervalued the wing's military value and that the Air Force did not consult the Guard before recommending the changes. In addition, the state contends the Pentagon can't close the base without the approval of Gov. M. Jodi Rell.

If the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission agrees with any of those lines of reasoning, it could overturn the recommendation.

"We'll take a win in any one of these categories," Martin said during an interview at the 1109th Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot in Groton. "And I feel more confident as each day goes by that we're going to win this case."

The Defense Department has recommended the 103rd, which operates 17 A-10 "Warthog" attack planes out of Bradley International Airport, be folded into the Barnes Air National Guard base in Westfield, Mass., which would eliminate 23 military and 88 civilian jobs.

Rell announced Friday that she has filed a request under the federal Freedom of Information Act for an internal base closure commission report that suggests she has sole authority to decide whether the 103rd can be moved.

"I think it will bolster our case substantially," Rell said. "Federal law is quite clear: Air

National Guard units cannot be moved without the express permission of their commander in chief, the governor. I certainly have not given my permission to move our A-10s ... nor to I plan to do so.”

Rell's staff said some of the documents were released Friday.

State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal concurred that a memorandum prepared by the commission's legal staff gives the state a much stronger case for keeping the 103rd.

“This memo provides powerful legal ammunition in our battle,” Blumenthal said. “It is an extraordinarily strong source of support, and we should use it as vigorously as possible in considering immediate legal action.”

Since the May 13 release of the Pentagon's base closure list, the proposed closure of the 103rd has been overshadowed by the recommendation to close the Naval Submarine Base in Groton at a cost of 8,460 jobs.

For instance, Martin got just five minutes of a two-hour presentation before the commission in Boston earlier this month to make the case for keeping the 103rd in Connecticut.

At the hearing, Martin demonstrated that the information the Pentagon used in assessing the military value of the Bradley unit was flawed. While other units got credit for aircraft ramp space that they owned as well as space that was accessible, the 103rd only got credit for what it owned.

Adjusting for the space that the 103rd can use at Bradley not only gives the units more points for ramp space, but also for the number of aircraft it can house, which would raise it from 98th in the ranking of airfields to 66th, and makes it the second-highest rated A-10 base in the country — well ahead of Barnes.

But Martin said he's not arguing that Barnes should be closed. He contends that the Air National Guard needs five A-10 bases, not the

four recommended by the base closure commission.

The A-10 Weapons Systems Council has endorsed having five units with 18 aircraft, and keeping the 103rd open would be the only way to accomplish that, Martin said. In addition, the Pentagon has said it wants to be able to maintain 10 rotating units of aircraft for combat deployment, which would be easier with five bases — two units from each base — than with four.

But Martin said the base closure panel also seems sympathetic to the argument that the Air Guard was not consulted sufficiently on the reorganization, which was engineered by the active Air Force, and which the Guard contends leaves the nation weaker from a homeland security perspective.

### **BRAC plan for Keesler puts care in doubt** Biloxi Sun Herald (Biloxi, MS)

Michael Newsom  
July 17, 2005

Keesler Medical Center is slated to be scaled back by the Department of Defense, which could leave some 56,000 beneficiaries looking for treatment in civilian hospitals.

Some believe the decision could cause a sharp increase in patient loads in South Mississippi.

The Base Realignment and Closure commission recommends taking away Keesler's in-patient mission and turning it into a "super clinic" with ambulatory services, a move some hospital officials are unsure about. The move would leave retired and active-duty military and their dependents to go to civilian hospitals, some of which do not accept their government-issued insurance plans.

Elected officials from the state and South Mississippi have been in attack mode against the BRAC recommendations.

U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor feels one of the weak points in the case to gut Keesler is the fact the

BRAC commission members didn't talk to local hospitals about whether they might take up Keesler's residency program.

"They haven't contacted a single local hospital and asked if their doctors there are presuming all this," Taylor said. "They are presuming that the continuing education would go on. It is really amateurish of them."

"You don't even know if you are going to be able to treat them," Taylor said. "They are assuming those people will get treatment somewhere."

Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Clark Griffith, president of the Biloxi Bay Chamber of Commerce, is part of a panel that has been extensively researching the Keesler data from the BRAC reports; he said four out of 11 area hospitals aren't enrolled as Tricare providers.

"There are certainly not enough staff beds out of the 11 hospitals that are within the 40-mile radius. Less than half take Tricare," Griffith said. "You are utilizing a set of numbers, when in fact they are not even signed into the Tricare system."

Keesler Medical Center will refer only those who have Tricare to Tricare providers, Griffith said.

Griffith, who has become an expert on the medical situation in South Mississippi since taking up the fight alongside members of Rep. Taylor's office and Sen. Trent Lott's office, local businessmen and outside consultants, also said the medical system cannot support the patient load.

"You are forcing the active-duty military, their families, veterans and retirees into a local medical situation where they don't have the capacity to accept them," Griffith said.

Griffith said he thinks two of the potential problems would be the Tricare participants being sent into a civilian medical system that does not have the amount and variety of specialists that are available at Keesler, and

many doctors not accepting the Tricare insurance because the fees paid to doctors are much lower in comparison to those paid by other insurance companies.

### *Opinions/ Editorials*

#### **Fight over guard misses the point**

Boston Herald (Boston, MA)

July 16, 2005

The fight over the future of Air National Guard bases - Otis Air Guard Base on Cape Cod among them - ought not to be about real estate or jobs. The real estate can always be put to better use.

And the jobs, well no one likes to lose jobs, but the skill sets of those holding civilian jobs on these bases already puts them ahead of the curve.

The only case that can and should be made to save Otis and other air guard bases is whether they currently serve a homeland security function.

Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England addressed the issue in a letter to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) yesterday. Gordon wrote that defense officials "focused on comprehensive air sovereignty requirements" and not on the missions of particular units.

The Pentagon proposal shifts the 102nd Fighter Wing now at Otis to stations in Jacksonville, Fla., and Atlantic City. Nine of the 17 A-10 Thunderbolts currently based at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Conn., would go to Barnes Municipal Airport in Westfield.

Gov. Mitt Romney made his most persuasive case in testifying before the commission when he noted that closing Otis would leave only two fighter jets on alert in a 175-mile radius of Boston. Now perhaps that's adequate; perhaps it isn't.

This isn't simply about protecting Boston and the region, but about how best to protect the nation.

To grasp at the straw being handed out by BRAC lawyers, that air guard moves might be beyond the scope of the commission's authority is to miss the broader point - that we are indeed all in this together and need to respond accordingly.

### **Legal opinion may help the Moon air base**

Pittsburgh Tribune Review (Pittsburgh, PA)  
Brian Bowling  
July 16, 2005

A legal interpretation supporting Pennsylvania's contention that the Pentagon can't unilaterally disband one of the state's National Guard units could help a Moon air base.

The memo alone doesn't improve the chances for saving the Air Force Reserve's 911th Airlift Wing, but the base could end up with new tenants, said Keith Dorman, spokesman for the Pit-BRAC task force.

"It potentially presents an opportunity for Pittsburgh International Airport being a home for state guard units that need a base," he said Friday.

A national security analyst went further, saying the memo could help the 911th stay open.

The memo leaked to The Associated Press says the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's authority extends only to bases, not to guard units housed there. Written by the commission's lawyer, the document implies the commission could approve the Pentagon's recommendation to close Willow Grove Naval Air Station near Philadelphia without endorsing the dissolution of the Air National Guard's 111th Fighter Wing, which is stationed on the base.

"I think the BRAC commission is saying they're not in the business of deactivating Air National Guard units," Dorman said.

Pennsylvania filed a federal lawsuit Tuesday claiming that the Pentagon exceeded its authority when it included the disbanding of the 111th in its base realignment plan.

The Defense Department wants to move the unit's A-10 Thunderbolt II's and other assets to National Guard units in Idaho, Maryland and Michigan. Another part of the proposal would close the Moon air base and send the 911th's C-130H Hercules cargo planes and other assets to bases in Nebraska, North Carolina and Ohio.

Neither the memo nor the lawsuit suggests that closing the 911th would exceed the Pentagon's authority, but Pit-BRAC and the state's congressional delegation have argued that the Air Force bungled the analysis that concluded the base should be shut down. One commissioner has agreed the analysis understated the facility's military value. If four others come to the same conclusion, the panel could vote in mid-August to remove the Moon air base from the closing list.

The memo and the lawsuit could lead to Pennsylvania being able to keep the 111th, but having to find it a new home.

The proposed closing of the 911th and Willow Grove are part of a national plan to close or reduce operations at 837 bases so the Pentagon can trim its operating costs by an estimated \$5.5 billion annually. The proposal would take planes away from 23 Air Guard units nationally.

John Pike, a national defense analyst who operates GlobalSecurity.org, said that blocking the Air Guard moves could save many reserve bases such as the 911th.

The Air Force plan includes many linked moves of planes and positions -- for example, the 911th and a Charleston, W.Va., squadron would be moved to Pope Air Force Base near Fayetteville, N.C., while all of Pope's planes would be decommissioned or moved to other bases.

"The question is, can you undo some of (the moves) without undoing most of them?" Pike said.

*Additional Notes*