

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

July 22, 2005

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The Associated Press State & Local Wire  
July 21, 2005

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New Mexico's two senators want to halt the base realignment and closure process at least until the Pentagon completes a defense review and most of the major combat units return from deployment in Iraq.

Sens. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., and Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., announced Thursday they are sponsoring an amendment to the fiscal 2006 Defense Authorization bill that would halt the closure process and protect Cannon Air Force Base in eastern New Mexico.

The amendment is identical to a stand-alone bill they introduced in May. It would delay the BRAC process until the Pentagon finishes this year's quadrennial defense review, a review of the nation's overseas military facilities is completed and substantially all major combat units return from Iraq.

"How can we make informed decisions about what bases to close if we don't have all the necessary analyses about our future military needs? It defies common sense," Bingaman said.

Domenici said closing American bases should be a last resort.

"This amendment will delay BRAC until our overseas military situation is clear, ensuring that bases that may be needed in the future are not closed now," he said.

Cannon, near Clovis, is one of 33 major bases around the country targeted for closure. The Pentagon has estimated it would save \$2.7 billion over 20 years by closing Cannon, costing the base's 2,385 military employees and 384 civilian jobs and about 2,000 more indirect jobs.

The economic impact of the base has been estimated at \$200 million a year - about a third of the Clovis economy in a community of about 36,000.

New Mexico's congressional delegation and state leaders have complained that the Defense Department erred in assessing Cannon's assets.

The delegation also pointed out Thursday that 80 percent of the projected savings gained by closing Cannon would come through personnel expenses. They said the vast majority of personnel at the base would be moved - not terminated - so the estimated savings is wrong.

"The Pentagon was wildly off base in estimating cost savings associated with closing Cannon," Bingaman said. "Knowing this, we have good reason to continue questioning the accuracy and legitimacy of the other reasons the Defense Department offered for closing the base."

Meanwhile, Gov. Bill Richardson took Cannon's case to BRAC Commissioners Anthony Principi and retired U.S. Air Force Gen. Lloyd W. Newton. He urged them to take the base off the closure list during meetings Thursday in Washington.

"Today's meetings were cordial and productive, and while I am encouraged by the response from the commission, we still face an uphill battle to keep Cannon," the governor said. "I have been proud of how New Mexicans have come together to help save Cannon and I'm hopeful we can get it done."

Richardson has now met with each of the nine commissioners.

It would take five commissioners to remove a base from the list. The commission's recommendations are due by Sept. 8 to President Bush, who may accept or reject the entire list.

### Local News Articles

#### **Sub Officers Objected To Closing Base In Groton**

Boston Globe (Boston, MA)

Bryan Bender

July 22, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The Navy's top submarine officers disagreed with the study used to justify closing the base in Groton, Conn., raising questions about the Pentagon's military rationale for shuttering Naval Submarine Base New London, according to previously undisclosed documents.

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vernon Clark, who is set to step down from his post today, said in a July 18 response to

congressional inquiries that the submarine division at Navy headquarters did not sign off on the findings of the Navy's 2004 Force Structure Assessment. That evaluation of future needs was used as a key foundation for the Pentagon plan to close or realign dozens of bases across the country, including Groton -- the largest base in New England that is set to close.

The Navy study concluded that the service will need from 37 to 41 attack submarines over the next two decades -- versus the current 51 -- despite the concerns expressed by the submarine community that those numbers would not be enough to meet the growing demands for submarines both in peacetime and during conflicts, according to Clark's letter and interviews with others knowledgeable about the internal Navy deliberations.

"In the course of this study, [the submarine division] expressed concerns regarding operational availability assumptions and factors used in modeling the analysis, and made recommendations concerning these assumptions and factors," Clark told Representative Rob Simmons, a Connecticut Republican who represents Groton. Clark added that while some of those concerns were resolved, "others were not."

Connecticut officials yesterday seized on Clark's letter as further evidence that the Pentagon relied on faulty analysis in recommending which bases to close. They said it strengthens their argument to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission that the decision to shutter Groton and slash 8,600 jobs would not only cause significant economic hardship for the region but also does not make military sense.

"It is increasingly clear that the Defense Department miscalculated the submarine force the Navy needs to safeguard our nation," Governor M. Jodi Rell said in a statement issued by her office. "There is disagreement at the highest levels about the number of subs we need to perform critical missions around the world."

A top Navy officer confirmed that the submarine division did not agree with the 2004 analysis,

but he emphasized that "the submariners' view of the world" did not fully appreciate that other forces could fulfill similar missions. Speaking on condition that he not be named, the officer said "the top leadership was pretty comfortable" with the study's findings.

Under the Pentagon plan, the submarines stationed at the Groton base would be transferred to ports in Virginia and Georgia as part of an overall consolidation of Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps units around the country.

The recommendation, if adopted, would be an especially hard blow to New England, which is slated to lose a large share of its remaining military facilities, including bases in Massachusetts and Maine. The Groton base not only accounts for thousands of jobs, but pumps billions of dollars into the region's economy, which is still heavily dependent on shipbuilding and the overhaul of submarines and warships. Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, is on the chopping block for many of the same reasons as Groton.

The loss of the Groton base could also have a domino effect on the nearby Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics and its more than 8,000 employees, a major manufacturing center, local officials say.

Groton was recommended for closure based primarily on the findings of the 2004 Navy study; specifically, that the submarine fleet is shrinking and the base is therefore no longer needed, according to Pentagon officials and BRAC staff members.

But according to officials knowledgeable about the Navy's internal deliberations, submarine officers disagreed with several assumptions upon which the analysis was based.

Among them was the assumption that the Navy will be able to station nine attack submarines on the US territory of Guam in the Western Pacific, even though the island is now capable of accommodating only three. The submarine division at Navy headquarters concluded that

upgrading the Guam base would require massive investments and would also be risky because tropical storms frequently strike the island.

A larger concern, however, was that a submarine force level of between 37 and 41 attack submarines would require the Navy to rely too heavily on the remaining subs and their crews to meet all required missions.

Vice Admiral Charles L. Munns, commander of Naval Submarine Forces, recently testified to Congress that 54 attack submarines were needed well into the future to meet the heavy demands placed on the fleet, including conducting intelligence missions, protecting critical sea lanes around the world, and being at the ready in the event of hostilities.

Fleet commanders have also objected to closing Groton. In fact, getting rid of the base was the only closure recommendation opposed by the Navy's Fleet Forces Command, which is responsible for coordinating and training the Atlantic and Pacific fleets.

The commands' two most recent leaders, Admiral William J. Fallon and Admiral John B. Nathman, argued for keeping Groton, according to Navy and BRAC officials and congressional aides.

Meanwhile, the command's deputy, Vice Admiral Kevin Cosgriff, told Simmons in a conversation last month that closure of the base would undermine the overall readiness of the fleet, negatively impact day-to-day maintenance of the nation's submarines, and require substantial investments in the base at Kings Bay, Ga., to replace the Naval Submarine School now located at the Groton facility.

Connecticut's congressional delegation and the governor's office yesterday provided a copy of Clark's letter to BRAC chairman Anthony Principi, noting that the military's plans for its force structure over the next 20 years was one of the most important criteria for base closing decisions.

"The Department of Defense's failure to correctly assess our nation's required [attack submarine] force levels is a substantial deviation from the BRAC criteria that undermine the recommendation to close Naval Submarine Base New London," they told Principi.

The independent panel, which has visited Groton as part of its review, will make its recommendations to President Bush and Congress in September. "As the information comes in we are reviewing it and finding the supporting documents," said Robert McCreary, a commission spokesman.

Clark's July 18 letter was the latest example of the rift between the civilian leadership of the Pentagon and at least some members of the uniformed military over the base closure plan. For example, the state adjutants general from the Air National Guard are scheduled to meet with the BRAC commission today over their opposition to the Pentagon's recommendations to ground more than two dozen Air Guard units around the country, including the 102d Fighter Wing at Otis Air Guard Base on Cape Cod.

### **Senators want to halt BRAC, Gov meets with commissioners**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire Santa Fe, NM)  
July 22, 2005

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the nation's overseas military facilities is completed and substantially all major combat units return from Iraq.

"How can we make informed decisions about what bases to close if we don't have all the necessary analyses about our future military needs? It defies common sense," Bingaman said Thursday.

Domenici said closing American bases should be a last resort.

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Newton. He urged them to take the base off the closure list during meetings Thursday in Washington.

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Richardson has now met with each of the nine commissioners.

It would take five commissioners to remove a base from the list. The commission's recommendations are due by Sept. 8 to President Bush, who may accept or reject the entire list.

### **Louisiana fights to keep military base open**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (New Orleans, LA)  
Cain Burdeau  
July 22, 2005

The commission looking at streamlining U.S. military bases faces the tough task Friday of looking at cutting back the military's presence in the three deeply patriotic Southern states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida.

The Base Closure and Realignment Commission's scheduled regional hearing in New Orleans is the last of several it has held around the nation.

Public officials, including Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco, were expected to descend on this city to argue against base closings that would bring about the loss of thousands of military and civilian jobs.

Mississippi and Louisiana face an overall loss in jobs while Florida is poised to gain jobs overall despite big losses at Pensacola.

According to Pentagon figures, Mississippi stands to lose 1,678 military, civilian and

contractor jobs and Louisiana faces the loss of 1,267 jobs. Florida would gain 2,757 jobs.

The members of the commission, also known as BRAC, scheduled an opening reception at the National D-Day Museum. Officials from each state will get two hours Friday to give a presentation.

The biggest losses would be in New Orleans and Pensacola.

In New Orleans, the Naval Support Activity base could be closed. The Pentagon projects that the administrative base could lose 2,711 jobs - 1,997 of them military and the rest civilian and contractor positions.

Scaling back training facilities and other operations at the Pensacola Naval Air Station would lead to the loss of 1,579 jobs - 857 of them military.

Louisiana officials have argued that the Pentagon has miscalculated the savings it would get by closing the 100-year-old Navy base in New Orleans, which straddles the Mississippi River.

Dell Dempsey, a retired Marine who is director of military affairs for Louisiana's economic development agency, said the Pentagon's estimates are off by about \$100 million. She said the military did not include the cost of buying out 50-year contracts on 220 private housing units on the base.

"We are all very optimistic about our story," Dempsey said. "We've had real close associations with the BRAC staff in Washington and they have been very supportive and they have really helped us with our analysis."

Louisiana officials have come up with a proposal to keep the base open by turning it into a center for military and homeland security operations. Blanco and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin have pledged at least \$166 million in state and city bonds to streamline the base.

Florida officials will be arguing against cuts at the Pensacola base, a center for aviation training.

Under the Pentagon's plan, the base's Navy Officer Training Command would be moved to Newport, R.I., and other training programs would be consolidated with the Navy's personnel bureau at Millington, Tenn.

Florida officials say moving training to Rhode Island makes little sense because many officers would still return to Pensacola for more training. Instead, Florida officials say Pensacola should become an even larger training center.

Mississippi faces the biggest loss of jobs, but they are scattered throughout the state. The biggest loss would be the closing of the Naval Station at Pascagoula, Miss., and Lakeside Naval Support Unit. The Pentagon says closing the base would cost 844 military jobs and 199 other jobs.

The base, located on a man-made island, is home to crews for ships being built at Northrop Grumman Ship Systems.

Mississippi officials argue that the Pentagon would not save as much as it thinks it would. Also, they say closing the base would leave a nearby refinery and defense contracting plant vulnerable to attacks.

Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour will not attend the hearing because of a scheduling conflict, his office said.

The commission must give its recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president must accept or reject the recommendations in their entirety. If he accepts them, Congress would have 45 legislative days or until the end of its 2005 session to reject the recommendations in their entirety or they become final.

If they are disapproved, the commission has until Oct. 20, 2005, to submit a revised report to the president. The president has until Nov. 7, 2005, to approve a revised report and send it to Congress.

The Pentagon then has six years to close, relocate or downsize bases on the final list.

**Governor wants to earmark \$25M for areas hit by base closings**

The Virginian-Pilot (Hampton Roads, VA)  
Christina Nuckols  
July 21, 2005

RICHMOND - Gov. Mark R. Warner announced today that he will push to spend \$25 million from the state's budget surplus this year to aid cities and counties that have military bases closed or downsized.

The money could be used for roads and other infrastructure, environmental cleanup, and training for displaced workers, Warner aides said. Top budget leaders in the General Assembly signaled their support for the governor's proposal.

Some of the money also would be available to localities that host military bases facing expansions as part of the realignment.

In order to obtain the state funds, local governments would be required to come up with matching funds.

The announcement comes two days after the federal Base Realignment and Closure commission voted to consider closing Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach. Also on the list for closure is Fort Monroe in Hampton.

In a written statement, Warner said, "Virginia is committed to supporting America's military, and demonstrating to the Department of Defense that the Commonwealth is an exceptionally attractive and secure place to base its facilities. At the same time, we recognize that changing defense requirements will likely lead to the shifting of personnel and facilities from some areas to the others."

**Minnesota National Guard chief to fight for Duluth-based unit**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire  
(Duluth, MN)  
July 22, 2005

The leader of the Minnesota National Guard says his top priority is preserving a flying mission for the Duluth-based 148th Fighter Wing.

"That's what I'm fighting for. It'll be a knife fight as we negotiate all of this out," Maj. Gen. Larry W. Shellito said. "It appears a national compromise is in the works. It appears the Air Force is willing to work out a compromise."

Shellito is scheduled to meet Friday with other adjutant generals to craft an alternative to the Base Realignment and Closure plan currently being debated across the country.

He said in Duluth on Wednesday that he has three or four ideas or strategies to counter BRAC's "unsatisfactory set of recommendations" but declined to discuss them.

"Don't even ask," he said.

After meeting Wednesday with the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee, Shellito and other Minnesota military brass huddled at the Duluth Air Base to plot strategy.

They hadn't anticipated this battle.

Before he was deployed to Iraq this spring, Col. Mark Johnson, commander of the 148th, was assured the wing's future was solid. In fact, he and others said, there were indications the 148th would get three additional F-16 jets. The wing now has 15.

When the BRAC recommendations were released in May, the Duluth Air Base wasn't listed for closure. But deep in the recommendations, Shellito and others noticed, Duluth's jets were due to be retired by 2007. That would leave Duluth with the puzzling combination of an air base but no aircraft. The future mission of the 148th was left unclear.

"It's a mess," said Col. Dennis Shields, spokesman for the Minnesota National Guard. "Yeah, we feel misled. We feel like the Air Force and the Pentagon took advantage of the BRAC process."

BRAC was supposed to make recommendations about bases and installations, not about things like where jets should be assigned, the state's military leaders said. Leaders from other states feel the same. Pennsylvania, Illinois and Connecticut are preparing lawsuits to block the BRAC recommendations. Minnesota is considering its own lawsuit.

Besides losing its jets, the 148th faces the prospect of losing more than half of its 1,100 members. On the same day the BRAC report was publicly issued, the Air Force privately released recommendations for slashing 583 jobs in Duluth within four years of the jets' retirements.

The base is the Twin Ports area's ninth-largest employer. Last month, Gov. Tim Pawlenty and others received assurances from the leaders of the National Guard and Air National Guard that the 148th's new mission, whatever it is, would include a similar number of jobs.

The fight for the 148th faces a tight deadline. The nine-member BRAC Commission, appointed by the president, is holding hearings and is scheduled to forward its own recommendations to the president by Sept. 8. The president can then reject the recommendations or pass them to Congress, which can reject or adopt them as law.

Shellito referred to Sept. 8 as "drop-dead day" because the recommendations can't be altered after that.

"September Eighth is coming up very, very fast," he said.

### **Commissioners to visit Kittery shipyard and Brunswick air station**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (Kittery, ME)

July 22, 2005

Two more members of the government commission studying military base closings are planning visits to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and Brunswick Naval Air Station next week.

Ret. Brig. Gen. Sue Turner and former federal Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner will tour the yard and the air station on Tuesday. The commissioners did not visit the bases with other members of the group in June.

Dick Ingram, president of the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce, said the visit was a good sign.

After Tuesday, shipyard supporters will have made their case and shown off the facility to six of the commission's nine members.

"We've had significant face time with a majority of the panel," he said. Previous commissioners that visited "reacted very positively" to the information presented, he said.

"They are doing their job and working hard at it and we're heartened by that," he said.

The visit to Brunswick and plans for a new hearing were triggered Tuesday when the commission voted 8-1 to remove Brunswick from the realignment list and recommend it for closure instead.

The commission has until Sept. 8 to forward recommendations to President Bush. It would take a simple majority vote of 5-4 to remove either Portsmouth or Brunswick from the closure or realignment lists.

"This decision to add Brunswick to the closure list is for study only," Rick Tetreu, chairman of a volunteer task force in Maine, said during a press conference Wednesday. "It is not a final decision, and we believe it is to our advantage."

Tetreu said the task force is gearing up for Tuesday's visit, though much of the preparation

is already done. "Our message will not change," he said.

The commissioners are expected to visit Portsmouth during the morning, then travel to Brunswick for the afternoon.

### **Illinois officials sue over transfer of Springfield fighter squadron**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire  
(Springfield, IL)  
Christopher Wills  
July 22, 2005

Illinois officials sued Thursday to block the Defense Department's proposal to move a squadron of Air National Guard fighter jets to another state.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan filed the lawsuit in federal court in Springfield, where the 183rd Fighter Wing is stationed.

The state argues that Gov. Rod Blagojevich oversees Illinois National Guard forces, so federal officials can't make changes if he objects.

"Federal law could not be more clear: no National Guard base closures without the consent of the governor," Madigan said in a statement. "Gov. Blagojevich certainly has not given his consent."

Other states are making the same legal argument as federal officials consider closing military bases and moving units around the country. Pennsylvania has already filed a similar lawsuit.

In Illinois, the Pentagon has proposed cutting jobs at the Rock Island Arsenal and the Great Lakes Naval Recruit Training Command near Chicago. But they are under direct federal control.

The 183rd, which would be moved to Indiana, is part of the Illinois Air National Guard, under the authority of the governor. Blagojevich argues it should be kept in Illinois to help protect the

state's many nuclear plants and locks and dams, as well as potential terrorist targets in Chicago.

"It makes a lot more sense to keep those planes in Springfield rather than move them further east," he said Thursday.

The Defense Department released its base-closure recommendations in May. Now the independent Base Closure and Realignment Commission is deciding whether to make changes to the list. Once it comes up with the final recommendations, the president and Congress must accept or reject the entire list of changes.

The commission members, along with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, are named as defendants in the state's lawsuit.

A Defense Department spokeswoman declined to comment. Commission spokesman Robert McCreary acknowledged the legal issue is a concern.

A memo by the commission's legal department supports the argument that Air National Guard units cannot be transferred without the approval of governors.

U.S. Rep. Ray LaHood, a Peoria Republican whose district includes the Springfield airport, said he has spoken to at least one commissioner. "I think there's a great deal of confusion about what to do," LaHood said.

LaHood says recommendations affecting National Guard units should be put aside until the courts decide whether federal or state officials ultimately have control.

Transferring the 15 jets based in Springfield would cost the city at least 160 jobs. Blagojevich said it would also cost taxpayers \$10 million in relocation costs.

### **Illinois sues DOD to save 183rd Fighter Wing**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire  
(Springfield, IL)

Chris Wetterich  
July 21, 2005

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan and Gov. Rod Blagojevich Thursday sued the Department of Defense to prevent the transfer of F-16 jets from Springfield's 183rd Fighter Wing to Fort Wayne, Ind., through the Base Realignment and Closure process.

Blagojevich and Madigan, both Democrats, said the Pentagon violated federal law by recommending the transfer. They contend the governor must consent to any changes in Illinois' Air National Guard bases. The Pentagon says the federal law to which Blagojevich and Madigan refer does not apply to the BRAC process.

"We are taking our case to federal court because the Department of Defense did not coordinate this recommendation with either my office or the Illinois adjutant general," Blagojevich said. "The law leaves no question about how the process should work - Defense Secretary (Donald) Rumsfeld must have my consent to move the 183rd Fighter Wing. I will not give my consent."

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Springfield.

Madigan said federal law is clear on who has authority over the location of National Guard bases.

"Governor Blagojevich certainly has not given his consent and, along with myself, the congressional delegation and the mayor, has fought this realignment," she said. "We now will continue this fight in court."

Last week, a memo by the BRAC Commission's legal counsel said there could be significant legal problems with closing or realigning Air National Guard bases, and among them is the federal law Blagojevich and Madigan cited in their lawsuit.

Members of the commission, who are reviewing the Pentagon plan, this week have questioned the proposed realignment for Air Guard units,

and some have suggested they might change the recommendations if the Department of Defense does not.

The Pentagon has urged the commission to wait until U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' office issues an opinion on the matter.

BRAC commissioners have until Sept. 8 to deliver their final report to President Bush, who has until Sept. 23 to accept or reject it. Congress then has 45 days to do the same.

Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell already has sued to counter a similar Air Guard change in his state.

U.S. Rep. Ray LaHood, R-Peoria, lauded Madigan's actions. LaHood said he hopes the court settles the matter before the BRAC Commission begins taking votes on which bases to close. The 183rd is in LaHood's congressional district.

"I talked with (BRAC commissioner Sam) Skinner at length about this when he was in Springfield. I got the impression from him that they're very concerned about this," LaHood said. "It's a very good move."

Skinner, an Illinoisan, is a former White House chief of staff and U.S. transportation secretary.

Meanwhile, Springfield Mayor Tim Davlin, retired National Guard officer Gene Blade, Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport director Eric Frankl and a state Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity official are scheduled to meet with staff members of the BRAC Commission Friday.

The group will present the staff with a "white paper" outlining why the 183rd should not be realigned. The paper, building on the case Davlin and others presented to the BRAC commissioners in St. Louis last month, will emphasize the unit's homeland defense role, solid recruiting record and military value.

If the 183rd is realigned, its 15 active F-16s will be sent to Fort Wayne International Airport to

become a part of another Air Guard unit. One hundred sixty-three full-time personnel will also leave the Springfield base.

**Can This Base Be Saved?;  
Local Officials Are Convinced It Can Be, And  
This Week They Make Their Case Before  
The Federal Panel That Will Make The Call.**  
Times-Picayune (New Orleans, LA)  
Paul Purpura  
July 21, 2005

It's an offer that Louisiana and New Orleans officials hope is too good to be refused: \$100 million in potential savings and a contemporary makeover for the Naval Support Activity's Algiers campus at no cost to the federal government.

Friday will be the last formal chance for local leaders to make the case for keeping the New Orleans Navy base open when members of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission hold a regional hearing in the Crescent City. The panel will hear similar pleas from Florida and Mississippi.

Louisiana will argue that data used by the Defense Department in making its recommendation to shutter the Naval Support Activity was flawed and that it will cost millions to close the base, which spans the Mississippi River in Bywater and Algiers, and move its tenants.

"We think we've got a pretty credible, pretty dramatic case," said retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. David Mize, who is leading the effort to save the base.

Slidell Mayor Ben Morris also will address the commissioners in an attempt not only to save the Defense Information Systems Agency center and the 151 jobs it brings to that city, but to expand it by moving 43 high-tech jobs in Virginia to eastern St. Tammany Parish.

New Orleans stands to lose 1,197 military, civilian and contractor jobs, as well as the national Naval and Marine Corps reserve

headquarters commands, if the Naval Support Activity closes. Several units will move out of state, while most, including the Marine Corps Reserve headquarters, would move to the Naval Air Station-Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse.

The Defense Department estimates it would spend more than \$112.5 million to move the major commands, of which \$89.8 million would be spent at Belle Chasse.

Over 20 years, the department predicted a projected savings of \$276.4 million.

But city and state officials said after reviewing the data that the Defense Department is overstating its savings by "multiple millions," said retired Marine Corps Col. Dell Dempsey, director of military and defense affairs for the Louisiana Department of Economic Development.

The data also does not accurately reflect the impact that closing the base would have on the New Orleans area economy, local officials said, adding that the Defense Department dramatically undercounted the number of civilians who work at the base.

"We found plenty of errors in the data that give us a really good argument for the commission," Dempsey said. "So we are cautiously optimistic."

And, according to Mize, "our arguments are only getting better and better with increased analysis. We're going to have dramatic numbers."

Plan of action

The BRAC Commission, which can alter the Defense Department's plans, must report to President Bush in September. The president and Congress can approve or reject the commission's recommendations but cannot change them.

In addition to attacking the data, New Orleans officials hope to sell their idea of a \$200 million "federal city" complex for the Algiers site.

Deeply rooted in New Orleans' culture, the Algiers site "is the cradle of support that exists today for all our military throughout the city," said New Orleans City Councilwoman Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson, whose district includes the base.

Gov. Kathleen Blanco and Mayor Ray Nagin have pledged state and local funds to pay for the complex, which could cost as much as \$200 million. The Defense Department would get new facilities at no cost and would receive leases at below-market rates, officials said.

Possible tenants could include the Navy and Marine Corps reserve commands, the 8th Coast Guard District headquarters, the Army Reserve's 377th Theater Support Command and a regional office for the Department of Homeland Security, if New Orleans is selected for a site.

Mize said the Defense Department would save "well over \$100 million" if the project is approved.

Just in case

Yet city officials still are preparing for a worst-case scenario.

On July 1, Blanco signed into law a measure by state Rep. Jim Tucker, R-Algiers, that makes the Algiers Development District responsible for overseeing the 200-acre Algiers site.

"It gives the Algiers Development District new and vastly broader powers to deal with whatever the military throws at us," said Tucker, who is chairman of the seven-member board. "So we're prepared. We're ready."

Discussions also are ongoing that would create a separate panel to oversee reuse of the 30-acre Bywater property, Clarkson said.

Clarkson said the agencies would be used as a last resort. Meanwhile, work continues on plans for a federal city and a cruise ship terminal in the Bywater area, she said.

What's at stake

Govs. Jeb Bush of Florida and Haley Barbour of Mississippi also are expected to attend the regional hearing to stave off closure of bases in their home states.

Though Florida could gain 2,575 jobs and retain its bases, Bush is expected to talk about a loss of 1,579 jobs, most of them held by civilians at the Naval Air Station at Pensacola.

In Mississippi, 1,678 military, contractor and civilian jobs are at stake, along with the Naval Station and Naval Support Facility in Pascagoula and the downsizing of Keesler Air Force Base's hospital at Biloxi, frequently used by throngs of Louisiana military retirees.

Meanwhile, Mayor Morris of Slidell said he will argue that his city's proposal will save the Defense Department money.

Moving the Defense Information Systems Agency to Fort Meade, Md., to consolidate it with similar centers would be more expensive to the Defense Department than retaining the Slidell center and expanding it, Morris has said.

Slidell owns the 14-acre site and leases it to the government for \$1 per year, but the agency wants to move into facilities it owns, according to BRAC data.

Louisiana will present its case at 11 a.m. The public hearing will be held at the Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts, 801 North Rampart St.

### **Closure of N.C. base may help 911th survival**

Beaver County Times (Allegheny, NC)  
Patrick O'Shea  
July 22, 2005

The nine-member Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which is reviewing a Pentagon list of military facilities throughout the country recommended for closing or changes, announced this week it voted 7-2 to add Pope

Air Force Base, N.C., to the list for recommended closure.

The congressional committee had until Tuesday to add installations to its list. The group chose to add Pope and nine other military facilities, including installations in Columbus and near Akron, Ohio, to the list for closure or realignment.

No reason was given for why Pope was chosen, but the North Carolina base has ranked poorly in military studies on the condition of its equipment and facilities. BRAC Commission members will visit the base on Aug. 2 to give officials there a chance to argue for the decision to be reversed.

Pope initially was recommended by the Defense Department to be one of the main beneficiaries of the proposed closure of the 911th, with the Moon base's eight C-130 cargo aircraft being sent to North Carolina. The Pentagon said the 911th should be closed because there was not enough space to expand the fleet of cargo aircraft there to the favored number of 16 airplanes.

However, 911th supporters have argued since the list came out that the base offers plenty of space.

Keith Dorman, spokesman for the Pittsburgh BRAC Task Force, said Thursday there is room for 10 planes on the outside tarmac and three more in hangars on the main footprint for the base. Also, he said, there is capacity for another seven planes on about 20 acres the 911th has been given permission to use for more than 10 years by the Allegheny County Airport Authority, which operates Pittsburgh International Airport adjacent to the installation.

That does not include another 30 acres the county has offered to the base for use.

"We have more than enough room," Dorman said.

The additional space, the access to four runways at Pittsburgh International as opposed to one

runway at similar bases, and the assistance of the 24-hour airport on issues such as snow cleanup and fire protection could make the 911th a suitable replacement for Pope, military observers said.

Dorman said a group of task force members will be in Washington, D.C., today to present the commission with an alternate plan for deployment of C-130s that would keep the 911th's planes in Moon. The group also will deliver more than 6,000 letters of support from local residents for local bases, he said.

The Pentagon also has recommended closing the Army's Charles E. Kelly Support Center, which has facilities in Collier and Neville townships, and moving many of the duties of the 99th Army Reserve Regional Readiness Command in Moon to Fort Dix, N.J.

The task force has complained that the Defense Department has been negligent in releasing information on how recommendations were reached on the 99th and the support center. Task force co-chairmen county Chief Executive Dan Onorato and Michael Langley, chief executive of the Allegheny Conference, sent a letter this week to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld asking he order the immediate release of data.

The BRAC Commission has until Sept. 8 to go over the Pentagon's list and come up with its own list of recommendations to forward to President Bush for acceptance or rejection.

If Bush accepts the list, it will be sent to Congress for an all-or-nothing vote.

## **2nd BRAC visit to base buoys hope**

Norwich Bulletin (Norwich, CT)

Greg Smith

July 22, 2005

Groton sub base supporters are sensing a possible shift in momentum.

Thursday they learned at least one more member of the independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission will visit the base.

Commission member Sue E. Turner, who did not attend the June 1 tour with other BRAC members, will tour the facility Wednesday.

According to the BRAC Web site, commission member Samuel K. Skinner is also scheduled for Wednesday's tour. His visit was not confirmed Thursday, however. Skinner also did not tour the base June 1.

Both were present in Boston when the Connecticut delegation made its case to remove the base from a Pentagon closure list. It takes votes by five of the nine commissioners to remove a base from the list.

John Markowicz, Subbase Realignment Coalition Chairman, called the visit "unprecedented."

"The fact that two of the commissioners who were in Boston and listened to our testimony are taking the time out their very busy schedules is a very major development," Markowicz said.

"Perhaps there is some skepticism regarding the Navy's proposal," he said.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell, who along with others in the delegation extended an invitation to the commissioners, was hopeful.

The governor's spokesman, Rich Harris, said Rell is confident the commissioners who visit "will be every bit as impressed as other commissioners."

Rell said she expects the tour to expose flaws in the Department of Defense recommendation to close the base and low military value score Groton received.

"I've always felt that seeing the subbase is believing in the subbase, so I'm pleased that Commissioner Turner will be visiting Subbase New London next week," said U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, in a written statement.

"I hope Commissioner Turner will also tour Electric Boat during her visit so that she can see first-hand the unique synergy that makes Groton

the center of submarine excellence in the world," Simmons said.

Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., in a written statement also welcomed the visit.

"Seeing Sub Base New London first hand is, frankly, the most persuasive argument we can make as to its military value," Dodd said.

### **Opinions/ Editorials**

#### **Lawsuit over base closing is justified**

Philadelphia Inquirer (Philadelphia, PA)

Maj. Gen. Jessica L. Wright  
July 22, 2005

The July 13 editorial "Cherry-picking is off base" criticizes the lawsuit filed by Gov. Rendell and Sens. Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum over the proposed deactivation of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard's 111th Fighter Wing, calling it a "misguided suit" to block the closure of Willow Grove Naval Air Station. The suit is not about the closure of the base but about the rights of the governor as commander-in-chief of the commonwealth's National Guard.

The editorial misstates the nature and purpose of the lawsuit and betrays a stunning misunderstanding of the history, role, and status of the Guard in our federal system of government.

The Constitution recognizes that the National Guard is a partnership between the federal and state governments. Congress recognized that command, control and oversight of our guard involve a process of collaboration, coordination and mutual consent. Federal law provides that changes to the branch, organization or allotment of guard units require the approval of the governor.

These laws and this cooperative process were totally ignored by the Department of Defense when it proposed deactivating the 111th Fighter Wing. The lawsuit is not a sign of weakness but a recognition that important legal principles need to be addressed.

The editorial incorrectly portrays the lawsuit as a challenge to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission. When the governor announced the lawsuit, he specifically stated that Pennsylvania was not challenging the BRAC process and that he believed the commonwealth had presented more than enough factual evidence to reverse the Defense Department's recommended closure of Willow Grove.

### **State's 130th Guard unit proves BRAC report is flawed**

Herald Dispatch  
Frederick C. Languille  
July 22, 2005

The protest to the BRAC proposal realigning the West Virginia Air National Guard's 130th Air Wing and the commission's reaction appears to be coming to a successful conclusion for the state and the country. This realignment, along with the others that are on the docket, will have an economically negative impact on the areas in which these guardsmen and reservists serve.

This indicates, however, a more insidious problem facing BRAC, one that potentially affects all of the units targeted. Specifically, how many of the other units on the list are there due to misread, false or, outdated information?

The broad impact of this realignment, if based on bad data, would seriously impact the United States' ability to fight a war, as well as negatively affect the morale and economic situations of the unit members, their careers and their areas'.

While I am not cognizant of the BRAC guidelines, it is apparent that their criteria are bean-counter-oriented rather than war-fighting ability. The 130th's reconsideration (and potential reclassification) is a prime example of this and a welcome answer to the possibility of permanent flag-furling.

The question that now remains is how many other units were affected by faulty information as well? What about the momentary slack in

training these actions will cause? Is it better to train all pilots, for example, at one base when the missions, aircraft and doctrine are totally different for the Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy and Coast Guard?

A thought-provoking example is the effect that the attack on Pearl Harbor had on the dispersal of USAAF fighters at Hickam Airfield. Prior to the attack, P-40's were bunched together ostensibly for protection and easy guarding against sabotage.

What happened, instead of fifth column saboteurs, was that the Japanese attack caught 99 percent of these fighters on the ground, destroyed them and left the anchored naval forces without air cover. The planes that did get into the air did well. But how many lives were lost because of this tactic?

It could happen again. We have already seen it happen to New York's financial district and, almost, to Washington, D.C., as well as in Vietnam, where attacks on camps were made almost daily. However, a historically bad battle tactic should not segue down the years to allow occurrence again in the form of a logistical and personnel blunder affecting all American forces, home and deployed.

In this regard, the 130th cannot be the anomaly. There will be other units misjudged.

The 130th's case statement with BRAC will put the entire listing in doubt. While the President can't do a line-item veto, he can throw the entire BRAC report out, forcing a rethinking of the recommendations.

So, the 130th could be the nail holding this report together. Hammer it back into the horse and look at the rest of the horseshoes. For want of a nail, a kingdom was lost. We can't afford to lose

### **Additional Notes**