

## Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

# EARLY



# BIRD

July 28, 2005

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[Base-closing official questions data justifying Nevada cuts \(Carson City, NV\)](#)

### National News Articles

#### **Door shuts on delaying list of bases**

Portland Press Herald (Portland, ME)

Bart Jansen

July 27, 2005

[Defense Department firms up troop movements for Fort Riley \(Fort Riley, KS\)](#)

Opponents of the latest round of military base closures won a Senate battle Tuesday but might have lost the legislative war to stop any closures. Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, both R-Maine, are among lawmakers seeking to block base closures through legislation they are trying to attach to a defense policy bill being debated this week.

[Navy makes it clear it does not want to see BNAS closed \(Portland, ME\)](#)

Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., proposed limiting debate on the defense bill, which under

[Beyond the economic hit, a base closure in New Mexico would tear apart families, friendships \(Clovis, NM\)](#)

[State's challenge to base closures heats up \(Harrisburg, PA\)](#)

Senate rules would have prevented Tuesday's vote on base closures.

But Frist needed 60 out of 100 votes to win. He lost on a 50-48 vote in which the Mainers were among seven Republicans who opposed leadership because of their interest in amendments on base closure and the treatment of military detainees.

"I think we should have an opportunity to vote on base closings," Snowe said. "It's important to our national security and this base-closing round in particular."

Frist then temporarily ended debate on the defense bill, which means the Senate likely won't return to the defense bill until after the August recess in September.

Meanwhile, the Base Realignment and Closure commission, which is reviewing recommendations from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, will submit its final list of closures to President Bush by Sept. 8. Bush and Congress could either accept or reject the list but cannot change it.

Sen. John Thune, R-S.D. and lead sponsor of the base-closure amendment, acknowledged not knowing whether Congress could still stop the base closures after the list is released. But he said other lawmakers may join the cause once they know their bases definitely face closure.

"They are going to be very passionate about stopping it after that list comes out," said Thune, who is fighting the closure of Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Collins expressed hope that the Senate would resume the defense policy debate this week. But Frist's spokesman and other lawmakers were pessimistic.

Delaying the vote on base closures dims chances for ending the process. Also, Bush has threatened to veto the defense bill if it has a provision to put off the base reductions.

"I think it will be very difficult to stop BRAC, period, at this point," Collins said. "But I continue to believe that this is the wrong time, when our nation is at war, for us to be pursuing base closings."

Maine stands to lose more than 7,000 jobs with the potential closure of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Brunswick Naval Air Station and a Defense Finance Accounting Service office in Limestone.

### Local News Articles

#### **Dole, Burr Promote Pope**

Fayetteville Observer (Fayetteville, NC)  
Henry Cuningham  
July 28, 2005

Sens. Elizabeth Dole and Richard Burr and three U.S. House members on Wednesday asked the base-closing commission to let Pope Air Force Base stay open and keep its active-duty C-130 wing.

The North Carolina congressional officials urged rejection of Pentagon proposals on Pope Air Force Base in a letter to Anthony Principi, chairman of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

The Pentagon on May 13 recommended turning Pope over to Fort Bragg and replacing the 43rd Airlift Wing with a mixed squadron of active and reserve personnel. The 43rd flies the Vietnam War-era E model version of the airplane.

The proposal calls for newer H model airplanes to come to Pope from National Guard and Air Force Reserve units.

BRAC analysts at a hearing July 19 in Washington, D.C., suggested that the commission consider removing all permanently stationed C-130s from Pope and let units and aircraft from elsewhere take care of missions to fly Fort Bragg troops and cargo.

"This would be a serious mistake that would have significant negative impact on our

military's capability to quickly react in crisis situations," Dole wrote.

Reps. Robin Hayes, Mike McIntyre and Bob Etheridge also signed the letter.

September deadline

The nine-member BRAC commission is the only body that can make changes to the Pentagon's recommendations. Its report is due to the president Sept. 8.

The president and Congress can only accept or reject the entire package.

"Closing Pope Air Force Base also violates BRAC guidance and principles, and it is a mistake we cannot afford to make," Dole's letter said.

"The secretary of defense has directed that any BRAC actions not reduce our warfighting capability."

Fort Bragg airborne and special operations forces board Air Force airplanes at Pope's Green Ramp for local airborne training as well as overseas deployments.

Gov. Mike Easley and other North Carolina elected officials urged a panel of BRAC members in a hearing June 28 in Charlotte to support recommendations that add people to the state and reject proposals to take large groups of people away.

The nine-member commission voted July 19 to set aside Pope for further consideration.

Two of the nine BRAC commissioners will visit Pope on Tuesday to gather information.

Five commissioners will hold a public hearing Aug. 10 in Washington.

The hearing will consider proposals at military bases in North Carolina, Indiana, Ohio, Maine, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Final decisions are due the week of Aug. 22.

States' arguments

The Pentagon proposals are coming under fire from state governors and National Guard officials who do not want to give up airplanes.

State officials are questioning the legality of the Pentagon taking away their airplanes that have roles in responding to state emergencies and Homeland Security missions.

Some BRAC commissioners have questioned how much coordination has been done between the Defense Department and the Department of Homeland Security and to what extent the requirements have been formalized.

The Government Accountability Office has questioned the Pentagon's estimates of savings.

"The projected cost analysis and cost savings are seriously flawed and inaccurate," Dole's letter said.

"In reality, while those savings will save the Air Force money, the Army and DoD will pay dearly for those savings."

Retired Brig. Gen. Paul Dordal, a former Pope wing commander who is working with the Cumberland County Business Council, said the Army lacks personnel to do jobs such as fighting airplane fires and loading munitions onto Air Force airplanes.

"If Pope AFB kept facilities to the same standards that exist today, the cost of maintaining and operating these facilities will increase as the Army replicates functions and assigns personnel to duties that were run by and have been unique to the Air Force," Dole's letter said.

In a supplement to the letter, Dole addressed the argument that other Army posts - such as Fort Bliss and Fort Hood, Texas, and Fort Campbell, Ky. - are able to operate runways that can accommodate large aircraft.

"Fort Bliss is the home to the Army Air Defense Command, which does not have a rapid response mission," she wrote.

Fort Hood is home to armor forces and Fort Campbell has helicopters, which normally move by rail, she wrote.

"None of the Army's airfields operate at the same level, alert status and tempo of Fort Bragg/Pope AFB," she wrote.

### **Experts say states need to focus on both defense and high tech**

The Associated Press State and Local Wire  
(Uncasville, NC)  
Susan Haigh  
July 28, 2005

Whether or not the submarine base in Groton closes, Connecticut and other New England states still need to build on their high-tech industries and attempt to meet the needs of the evolving defense industry.

That was some of the advice state lawmakers and other officials received Wednesday at the Council of State Governments Eastern Regional Conference, being held this week at Mohegan Sun.

Connecticut and Massachusetts, in particular, are already home to many high-tech companies. They also boast some of the most productive and highly educated workers in the country, said Stan McMillen, an economist at the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis.

"Whether or not the base closes, those are our future," McMillen said. "We need to figure out how to leverage these industries to the defense industries."

Alan Macdonald, executive director of the Massachusetts Defense Technology Initiative, which began lobbying to save its state's bases before the Pentagon released the list of recommended base closings, said he agrees the region needs to "lay a foundation in the defense

community" and begin cultivating a work force that can meet the industry's needs.

"We need to plan, for the past, present and future," said Connecticut state Rep. Andrea Stillman, D-Waterford. "We need to seize upon the changing dynamics of the defense industry."

Although there is not much data on the subject, McMillen said he found one study that estimated the undersea warfare industry nationally is a \$6.2 billion business. An estimated 61 percent of that flows through southern New England, but McMillen said he believes the impact is more than that.

This comes as the Navy wants to shrink its submarine fleet as part of a budgetary shift, much to the chagrin of towns such as Groton and Kittery, Maine, where the Pentagon has recommended closing a shipyard that repairs, overhauls, modernizes and refuels submarines.

The Base Closure and Realignment Commission has until Sept. 8 to report its recommendations for base closings and realignments to President Bush.

On Wednesday, one of the commissioners took a private tour of the submarine base. Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Ellen Turner is one of four BRAC commissioners who did not tour the facility with state officials last month.

"New London is such an important element in the mix, she felt it was a very important part of her job to visit," commission spokesman James Schaefer said.

A small group of residents gathered near the base entrance to show support for the facility. Turner declined to address the public or take questions from the media following her tour. She had asked that members of the state's congressional delegation not participate in the tour.

Connecticut House Speaker James Amann, D-Milford, said he supports efforts to try and save the base. However, he said he wants the state to

be prepared for "the worst case of scenario" of it closing.

"We should be preparing for the 'what if,'" Amann said. "We should be pro-active on both sides."

Macdonald suggested the state of Connecticut designate a powerful, local redevelopment authority to oversee the sub base property. If BRAC does recommend closure and the president and Congress agree, then the authority will be able to oversee the environmental cleanup and make sure the site can be used for a new industry.

### **Delegation says mistake could cause job loss at arsenal**

The Associated Press State and Local Wire (Rock Island, IA)  
July 27, 2005

Members of the congressional delegation from the Quad Cities area urged the Army to correct a mistake that could cause Rock Island Arsenal to lose up to 180 jobs to Army depots in Alabama and Pennsylvania.

Rock Island Arsenal builds armor door kits for soldiers in Iraq, but the congressional delegation said that work was incorrectly categorized by the Pentagon as "depot maintenance."

The delegation sent a letter to Army Secretary Francis Harvey urging that the mistake be corrected and forwarded it to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, which is reviewing Pentagon proposals.

The letter was signed by all members of both states' delegations.

Thom Hart, president of the Arsenal and Quad-City Development Group, said the commission staff appeared receptive, but that time was short. The commission will vote on the Pentagon's recommendations in late August.

The Defense Department has made several recommendations affecting the Arsenal. They

could result in a net loss of about 1,600 jobs if implemented.

### **Base closing commissioners tour Maine military facilities**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (Kittery, ME)  
Jerry Harkavy  
July 28, 2005

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Turner requested a low-key reception for her visit to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. She didn't get it.

Though smaller than last month's rally for base closing commissioners, several hundred workers and supporters wearing yellow T-shirts and led by bagpipes greeted Tuesday's arrival of Turner and former Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner.

Afterward, Skinner joked that that "low-key is an oxymoron here." However, he suggested that the community's efforts to show support were not for naught.

"These things do make a difference. It shows the kind of support that a community has for its Navy," he said. "That's not true in all of the places we go."

Tuesday's visit, which also included a visit by Skinner and Turner to Brunswick Naval Air Station, means two-thirds of the nine-member panel deciding the fate of the Navy bases in Maine will have toured the two facilities.

If the Kittery shipyard closes, it would result in more than 4,500 job losses and a ripple effect through the Maine and New Hampshire economies.

Shipyard supporters contend there's enough submarine repair and overhaul work to keep all four existing public shipyards open. Of the four, Portsmouth is the most efficient, so it definitely makes no sense to close the yard, they say.

"Why would you close down a place like that?" said Tyler Foss, a 25-year shipyard worker from

Dover, N.H. He noted that Portsmouth, unlike the others, always delivers submarines back to the Navy ahead of schedule and under budget.

Maine Gov. John Baldacci and New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch joined the commissioners at a news conference after their tour.

Turner was asked whether there is excess capacity in the public shipyards as the Navy contends. Portsmouth supporters contend there is no excess capacity, and eliminating the shipyard will cause delays and backlogs.

"I don't know yet," she said. "That's one of the things we're looking at. That's a real key point. But I couldn't tell you today."

The Brunswick station visit followed an 8-1 vote by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to add it to the list of those under consideration for closure. The Pentagon originally proposed removing its aircraft and half of its personnel.

Adding the base to the closure list doesn't necessarily mean it will close, but it gives commissioners more options and flexibility in the decision-making process, Skinner said. In Brunswick's case, they could leave it open, close it or scale it back.

Supporters have argued that keeping the last active military airfield in New England open is vital to the national defense, and that it makes little sense to maintain an active duty airfield without airplanes as the Pentagon originally proposed.

If the base were scaled back, its planes would be sent to Jacksonville, Fla., and more than 2,300 jobs would be cut, representing roughly half the base's work force.

Rick Tetrev, chairman of the Brunswick Naval Air Station Task Force and a former second-in-command at the base, said he remains optimistic that the message is getting through to commissioners. Every base visit by commissioners gives supporters one more chance to make their case.

"We're not lawyers and we're not lobbyists," Tetrev said. "We can speak from our heart and with conviction."

In Brunswick, the commissioners said they asked pointed questions and that they'll use the information to help make a decision on the fate of the base.

"It's not fair to reach any preconclusions other than it's a great facility and there's a lot of support in the community," Skinner said.

Turner said it was helpful to get a firsthand look at the base.

"It was important to get up here and see it for myself, so I'm really glad we had the opportunity to do that," she said.

The commission will forward its final recommendations on hundreds of military installations nationwide to the president by Sept. 8. The president has until Sept. 23 to accept or reject the recommendations in their entirety.

If accepted, Congress has 45 legislative days to reject the recommendations in their entirety or they become binding.

### **Base-closing official questions data justifying Nevada cuts**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire  
(Carson City, NV)

Brendan Riley

July 27, 2005

The chairman of a federal commission reviewing military bases facing possible closure says he's concerned about the data provided by the Pentagon to justify closures or cutbacks at two Nevada bases.

"There have been some issues about the quality of information," Anthony Principi said following tours Tuesday of the Nevada Air National Guard Base in Reno and a big Army ammunition depot in the small desert town of Hawthorne.

"I'm not sure I would use the word 'shocking' but obviously I'm concerned by what I've learned compared to what the military told us and we need to take that into consideration without question," the head of the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission added.

Principi said there are more bombs and other ammunition stored at Hawthorne than the commission had realized - some 300,000 tons. He also mentioned accuracy of cost savings and the cost of relocating all the ammunition elsewhere.

While the Department of Defense had figured relocation costs at about \$383 million, Day & Zimmerman Hawthorne Corp., which operates the depot under contract from the Army, has put closure costs at \$1.46 billion.

Principi also said economic impact is an important consideration, and clearly the ammunition depot closure "would be devastating to the town of Hawthorne."

Local officials say base closure would result in the loss of about 1,200 jobs at the depot and elsewhere in the community about 130 miles south of Reno. That's two-thirds of all jobs in Mineral County, which encompasses Hawthorne.

Principi also repeated earlier comments supporting Air Guard activity around the nation, saying, "It's important that we have Air Guards and that they be in our communities, that the military and our communities are interrelated."

The commission also is still waiting for a Justice Department analysis of whether cutbacks or closures of Air Guard facilities without the consent of governors in affected states is legal, Principi said.

Mike Hillerby, chief of staff for Gov. Kenny Guinn, said Nevada hasn't joined in lawsuits launched by some other states over the legality issue, but has brought up that issue in dealings with the BRAC. Signing onto that litigation is "one of the potentials," he added.

Guard Brig. Gen. Cindy Kirkland said that in her discussions Tuesday with Principi she got the impression that commissioners "really are trying to put the commonsense check on this process - and they're looking at the (Pentagon) recommendations and scratching their heads just like we are."

U.S. Rep. Jim Gibbons, R-Nev., who made the tour with Principi, said it's significant that the chairman of the nine-member BRAC came to Nevada. Principi's visit followed an early tour by commission member Philip Coyle.

Shelley Hartmann, director of Mineral County's economic development authority, said she's encouraged by Principi's mention of information discrepancies regarding the Army ammunition depot.

"But I'm not going to be encouraged completely until Aug. 22 when the commission votes" on its recommendations, she added.

The DOD has proposed removing C-130 transport plans in Reno. Guard commanders said that would leave them with only one set of C-130s west of the Rockies, based in the Los Angeles area.

The DOD's plan for Hawthorne would close a facility that has been operating for 75 years. Ammunition stored in 2,500 bunkers at the depot, which sprawls over 230 square miles, would be moved to the Tooele Army Depot near Salt Lake City, Utah.

### **Defense Department firms up troop movements for Fort Riley**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (Fort Riley, KS)

John Milburn  
July 27, 2005

A decade ago, Fort Riley said goodbye to the Big Red One, watching the U.S. Army division pack up and go to Germany.

On Wednesday, the Pentagon confirmed that the historic 1st Infantry Division, known as the Big

Red One for its emblem depicting a green shield with a red No. 1 in it, was returning to Fort Riley. The headquarters, an aviation brigade and support units will be arriving between Oct. 1 and Sept. 30, 2006. The division headquarters currently is in Germany, where it has been since it left Fort Riley in 1995.

Col. Jay Simpson, garrison commander, said the confirmation was big news for the 152-year-old post.

"This has been a question over my three years as commander," Simpson said. "My answer was, 'Maybe, if that's what the Army transitions to.' The local communities are very excited."

Once completed, the move will bring Fort Riley's population to 18,000 soldiers, not counting families. The Army estimates 55 percent of soldiers are married.

The additional soldiers were first announced in May when the Pentagon made its recommendations to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission. Repositioning of the 1st Infantry Division is part of the Pentagon's decision to return soldiers from Europe and Korea to the continental United States.

Members of the state's congressional delegation welcome the Big Red One home.

Sen. Pat Roberts said he placed an Army flag outside his Washington office until the division flag comes to Fort Riley.

"In May, when the BRAC recommendations were announced and Kansas discovered we would get a division headquarters, we thought this was the most likely outcome," the Kansas Republican said. "Today, it is a reality."

Added Congressman Jim Ryun, R-Kan., "It has been a long awaited return for everyone involved in this process, but today our perseverance has been rewarded."

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said one key to the division's return was local and state officials'

efforts to persuade the military that, "Kansas is a military friendly state."

The news includes the movement of the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Armored Division - currently deployed to Iraq - from Fort Riley to Fort Bliss, Texas. The brigade will join two brigades in Germany that will return to the United States.

There are about 3,600 3rd Brigade soldiers in Iraq for the second time since the start of the war. Simpson said those soldiers will remain at Fort Riley and join the 1st Infantry.

Other units will be formed at the post or transfer from other Army installations, such as an aviation battalion coming from Fort Campbell, Ky.

Fort Riley is already in the process of forming the new 6th Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division. Soldiers are beginning to form the initial cadre of officers, with the bulk of the soldiers arriving January through March 2006. Those soldiers also will change their unit designation, Simpson said, making the move to 1st Infantry Division.

Simpson said Fort Riley and local officials have been planning for the arrival of the additional soldiers for 10 months. The communities will be responsible for building new housing, roads and schools for the soldiers and their families.

"More is better," Simpson said. "These are going to be some of the fastest growing counties in the state over the next decade."

Other facilities will be built at Marshall Field, the post airfield, to house additional attack and transport helicopters. In all, more than \$600 million in construction is expected associated with the new aviation and ground units.

### **Navy makes it clear it does not want to see BNAS closed**

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

David Sharp  
July 27, 2005

The Navy made it clear in a letter to U.S. Sen. Susan Collins that it does not want to see the Brunswick Naval Air Station closed and envisions a continued role in NATO exercises, refueling aircraft and hosting a Navy survival school.

The Brunswick base has "enormous strategic value as the last remaining active duty airfield in the Northeast," wrote Ann Rathmell Davis, an assistant to the Navy secretary on base realignment and closure issues, in a letter Tuesday.

In fact, the Navy continues to view Brunswick as "the optimal site in New England for P-3 detachment missions," she wrote.

Collins, R-Maine, said the letter will be used as Brunswick supporters press their case for keeping the base at full strength during a public hearing of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission on Aug. 10 in Washington, D.C.

"It is the strongest statement that I have seen from the Navy about the value of the Brunswick Naval Air Station," she said Wednesday. "It's ironic because it makes the case for having Brunswick as a fully operational base."

The Pentagon originally proposed moving P-3 Orion patrol aircraft to Jacksonville, Fla., and reassigning 2,300 military personnel. But the base closing commission voted 8-1 to add Brunswick to the list of those being considered for closure.

Base supporters have contended that the base's strategic value makes it too important to close. And they say it doesn't make sense to scale it back, either, because doing so would eliminate any possibility that it could be redeveloped.

In her letter, Davis acknowledged that scaling back Brunswick would lengthen the response time to maritime threats in the Northeast.

The Navy supports keeping Brunswick Naval Air Station open in a limited role because it would support future requirements for homeland

defense, as well as providing "surge capacity" for the Navy, she wrote.

The base has a fully functional weapons facility, an ability to service all aircraft in the Defense Department arsenal and a geographic location that allows maritime patrol aircraft to avoid passing over inhabited areas, she wrote.

In addition, the Pentagon envisions Navy and Marine Reserve units to continue to operate in Brunswick and for the Brunswick to continue to serve as home to the Navy's Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape School in western Maine.

### **Beyond the economic hit, a base closure in New Mexico would tear apart families, friendships**

The Associated Press State & Local Wire  
(Clovis, NM)  
Anne Aguayo  
July 27, 2005

The thought of losing Cannon Air Force Base tugs at the heart of Betty Tiedemann.

It would mean a separation from her 20-year-old daughter and the two young grandchildren. Her son-in-law is stationed at the base.

"My daughter's really my best friend," said Tiedemann, 46, her eyes tearing up.

"She's never been away from home. We talk on the phone about two or three times a day ... My grandkids, one is my sunshine boy and the other is my pumpkin girl. My son-in-law, he taught me how to ride an ATV."

Tiedemann, a bookkeeper, typifies what often gets lost in debates over threatened military base closures: losing a base could leave a community reeling emotionally as well as financially.

Residents of southeastern New Mexico contend that, beyond thrusting the region into economic gloom, closing Cannon would tear asunder families and friendships. Also shuttered would be three public schools where the kids of cattle

ranchers and dairy farmers learn alongside children who've traveled the world with their uniformed parents.

The void would be felt in social services - from Habitat for Humanity to youth scouting troops - that thrive because of the military's volunteerism.

"This community is faced with a very unpleasant, undesired divorce situation," Clovis Mayor David Lansford said recently. "And that's not a pleasant thing to contemplate."

Lansford expects to lose two co-workers if the base closes.

"You can't measure the emotional impact this would have on us," he said. "But it's negative. All over town, in churches and schools, people would be losing close family and friends."

When Ivonne Haney's husband was stationed at Cannon Air Force Base in 1985, she assumed they'd move after his tour. Having just moved from England, her first impression of southern New Mexico's high plains were not great.

The desert landscape was too flat and lacked vegetation, she thought. Two decades later, with her husband retired from the service, she lives in Clovis by choice.

"People ask me what I'm still doing here," she said. "I tell them, 'Clovis grows on you.' In Clovis, you're only a stranger for about 10 minutes. People are accepting and welcoming of the military."

Haney, a mother of three, felt embraced at Ranchvale Elementary, a rural campus where at least 75 percent of the students have parents based at Cannon. As a teacher, she now tries to recreate the same nurturing she felt at Ranchvale for transient military families.

She keeps a rocking chair in her classroom where she reads to kindergartners and they read to her. She decorates the classroom in bright colors and personalizes it with students' names.

"You invest so much energy, not just to make a classroom appealing, but to make it a comfortable place, a safe place," she said. "My kids see their names in at least eight different places in the classroom."

The cultural diversity and travel experiences of Ranchvale's students makes for some neat learning activities, Haney said.

"I can do a Japan unit because I have kids who've lived in Japan," she said. "I usually have a Japanese mom who can write the children's names in Japanese."

The children take a field trip to a dairy and learn about ranching, too.

"I can do a cowboy unit, because I usually have a child who can bring his horse to school. We've had a child demonstrate how to rope a wooden steer."

Haney said Ranchvale teachers feel ownership in the school and are trying to carry on as if the base will not close. When school opens in August, she said, "The children won't know that their teachers are watching for a date in September."

A commission will make a final recommendation on Cannon's fate to President Bush on Sept. 8. Supporters of the base have bombarded the Base Realignment and Closure commission with thousands of letters - - asking them to remove Cannon from their hit list.

Residents of Clovis, Portales and places as far away as Amarillo and Lubbock, Texas, emphasize the many ways they prosper because of the base. They say, for example, that the community benefits when Cannon's volunteer coordinator matches base personnel with tasks ranging from food distribution at a pantry to mentoring kids.

"The military bring with them a strong willingness and desire to improve what's around them, wherever they are based," said Catherine Johnson, coordinator of Court Appointed

Special Advocates in Curry and Roosevelt counties.

With CASA, volunteers ensure that abused children are represented in court when a judge considers their custody.

"When it comes to children - the innocent and the vulnerable - their effort is phenomenal," Johnson said.

Twelve of CASA's 20 volunteers would leave if Cannon closed. That, would be a "major loss," Johnson said.

The Clovis and Portales Habitat for Humanity would miss its volunteers, too, said project director Joyce Davis. Ninety percent of the group's volunteers are military families. They've shared carpentry and plumbing skills and have given some 8,000 hours to construct four homes.

"The men and women of the base make a significant difference in how fast we can accomplish things," Davis said.

Developer Craig Chapman also is in limbo. He bought 84 home lots before the base's fate was put in jeopardy.

"It's been very stressful," he said. "I'll probably have to lay off people. There will be a ripple effect. The lumber yard is going to slow down. The plumber, dry wall contractors, painters and floor covering people won't have work."

Chapman said that lately his nights have been sleepless.

"I won't be eating out as much," Chapman said before digging in to a spicy dish at a popular Mexican restaurant. "I feel despair. It makes me take a little bit more time for prayer in my office every day."

Even the normally jovial bunch at Clovis' Mainline Bowling Alley wear pained expressions when asked to envision life without their military friends, among them the leader of their bowling association.

"There's some darn good bowlers at the base," said Barbara Roberts, an artist and competitive bowler.

Lansford said residents are striving to keep a positive attitude. Leaders have started talking about how they might redevelop the base property.

"This community is not made of a bunch of whiners," he said. "We're not saying to government" 'Help us. Help us. Help us.'

"Our agrarian roots have shown us that we're responsible for our own livelihood. No matter what, we'll survive."

### **State's challenge to base closures heats up**

Centre Daily Times (Harrisburg, PA)

Marc Levy

July 27, 2005

HARRISBURG -- The Air Force "misused" this year's round of base closures by attempting to disband or move National Guard units without state input, drawing sustained criticism and two lawsuits, a senior adviser to Gov. Ed Rendell said Tuesday.

Adrian R. King Jr., who is spearheading Rendell's response to the base closure proposals, said Pennsylvania's lawsuit against the Pentagon over the proposed deactivation of a Pennsylvania National Guard unit, if successful, could ify many of the Air Force's proposed changes nationwide.

He also said the state is exploring the idea of taking over operation of Willow Grove Naval Air Station, where the Guard unit is based.

King, a lawyer, spoke with The Associated Press in a 90-minute interview at the offices of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, which he has headed since January, following two years on Rendell's staff.

The state's lawsuit against the Pentagon protests the proposed deactivation of the 111th Fighter Wing without Rendell's consent in the cost-

cutting process known as base realignment and closures, or BRAC.

"Most observers, educated observers, would say that the Air Force is essentially trying to do ... force transformation and they're trying to do it that way because they're trying to insulate it from congressional oversight," King said. "But that's just wrong."

Since Pennsylvania filed its lawsuit July 11, Illinois also has filed suit and Missouri has threatened to do the same, while members of the BRAC commission have expressed reservations about parts of the Pentagon's proposals to change dozens of Air National Guard units.

King noted that the Army also proposed changes to Army National Guard units, but it has avoided similar controversy or criticism because it consulted state officials beforehand -- unlike the Air Force.

Willow Grove, 10 miles north of Philadelphia, is home to the 111th Fighter Wing, plus Air Force and Navy reserve units.

If Pennsylvania's lawsuit is successful, it could undo much of the Air Force's BRAC strategy across the country, he said.

"I think that it can have a very dramatic effect because, as I understand it, about 80 percent of the Air Force BRAC recommendations have to do with the Air National Guard," King said. "So in one way, you could end up with all those recommendations essentially being declared illegal and and void."

An independent commission is reviewing the base closings proposed by the Pentagon, and its final report is due by Sept. 8 to Congress and President Bush for approval. The commission also awaits an opinion from the Justice Department regarding the Pennsylvania lawsuit.

Glenn Flood, a Defense Department spokesman, said the Pentagon stands by the recommendations it made in May to the BRAC commission. It compiled its recommendations believing that BRAC law superseded all other

federal law, including the one that gives governors approval over the fate of National Guard units, Flood said.

Pennsylvania is proposing to the base-closure commission that the Pentagon transfer Willow Grove into state hands, much like what happened with Fort Indiantown Gap in 1998. The base lost about 600 jobs at the time, but it remains an active training site for National Guard units in the region while being run by the state for significantly less than what it cost the federal government to operate.

Plus, such an arrangement would allow the state to keep the 111th Fighter Wing active, even if other units leave the base.

"The state could run that facility," King said. "We've done it at Fort Indiantown Gap. ... There's no doubt that we could run Willow Grove, as well."

### **Norco Base Has Closure Issues; While the Navy facility's end isn't definite, workers weigh their options: relocating, long commutes or finding new jobs**

Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles, CA)  
Stephanie Ramos  
July 27, 2005

If the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Norco is closed by the Pentagon in November, Patty Pfouts will have a long haul ahead of her.

The military has proposed moving the weapons research facility to the Naval Air Weapons Station at Point Mugu in Ventura County, and the 42-year-old Norco native said she can't afford to move her family. So she'll have to commute 230 miles a day.

"I just can't afford not to," she says.

Pfouts is one of the 1,800 workers whose paychecks depend on Naval Surface Warfare Center Corona Division, locally known as "Norco," for the small equestrian town in which it resides.

Norco is one of 62 communities nationwide -- including 25 in California -- that are starting to grapple with the changes a closure can bring, even as they lobby to keep their bases open. When it appeared in May on the list of sites recommended for relocation in the current round of military downsizing, it wasn't the first time. Ten years ago, during the last major round of post-Cold War closures, the base was on the list.

Although the closure is not definite, the employees, scientists and engineers who test the value and efficiency of weapons before the Navy purchases them in bulk, have been through this before.

Pfouts, an engineering technician, is one. She is a 19-year employee of Computer Services Corp., a contracted electronics services company involved in nearly every division of the base. The company has about 300 employees at Norco.

Pfouts said her husband already makes a 45-minute commute to the City of Industry, where he is a warehouse manager, and her two college-age children live at home and attend area schools. She wouldn't want to make any of them move to Ventura County, even if she could afford the higher housing prices.

"My other daughter lives in Riverside with my grandchild and another one on the way; I'm not going to move away from them," she said.

Karen Curp, 50, has spent 16 years at the company, living one block from the base. She said the housing market in Ventura County is out of reach for her family. The current median price of a home in Riverside County is \$393,000, and the Ventura County median is \$584,000.

"I can't afford to move. It's just too expensive. My husband has a job here, and he obviously makes more than me. I have a kid in college and another in school, and I can't move them either," she said.

Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Corona) has been working behind the scenes in Washington to keep the base active.

"Especially now in a time of war, it is not the right thing to do," Calvert said. "Plus, in my mind, it's a recommendation that's trying to fix a problem that does not exist. It's the least cost-saving of all the [recommended closures] in the country."

According to the Navy's estimates, closing the base would save about \$400,000 over 20 years. The facilities at Norco were upgraded 10 years ago, and Calvert and Norco base proponents say that the Point Mugu site has nothing comparable, requiring the building of a weapons analysis site at a minimum cost of \$40 million.

"So, it's actually going to cost them money to move the base," Calvert said. "If it doesn't save money and it doesn't help the national defense of the country, why do it?"

Roberta Spieler, spokeswoman for the Norco base, said the base's position is steadfast: "We're dedicated to follow through the [realignment and closure] process .... That's what we're about right now."

Many employees, however, are reluctant. Most have spent their careers at the Norco base, which the Navy purchased the day before Pearl Harbor was attacked in 1941.

Even newcomers, such as Mary Koster, 43, of Norco, a computer programmer who has been at the base for 1 1/2 years, are feeling the pressure.

"It's an awesome team of people," Koster said, "almost like a family. It'd be great to keep it here. I've worked [other jobs] for 20 years, and I don't think I've ever had such a good job with nice people."

Koster, too, can't move her family to Ventura County and said she would need to find another job in the Inland Empire.

Like Curp and Pfouts, Koster was one of 60 base employees who took their lunch hour to protest

during a visit by two realignment and closure commissioners July 12. They lined the street entering the base waving American flags and large red, white and blue "Save Our Base" signs, receiving honks and waves of support from passersby.

Each of the commission's nine members journeyed to at least one of the California proposed downsized sites. Their tour ended at a July 14 public hearing in Westchester, which focused on the six most controversial closures and realignments.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, along with representatives from the state and federal government and each base, argued for the economic and military worthiness of the 33 major California military facilities, of which 25 would face losses or changes under the proposals.

"For the good of our national security, the bases that are here should stay here," the governor said. Noting that though "no jobs should be lost," he said he was pleased that, if approved, state cuts would only total 2,000 military positions, far less than the 100,000 jobs lost in the 1994-95 base closures.

Some Norco employees would willingly move to the larger naval base at Point Mugu.

Chester Franklin, 71, an 11-year Norco systems engineer with Computer Services Corp., said he would relocate, family and all. "I have changed jobs a lot, and I have moved a lot," he said. "Sometimes you just have to do it."

Franklin said the job itself was important: "I like what I do. The function of it is important, and the job is needed."

Moving his wife and family wouldn't be easy, he said. His four school-aged children "probably won't be too happy." And Franklin would also have five horses in tow. "I can't leave them behind," he said.

Despite his enthusiasm, the Moreno Valley resident used his lunch hour to protest with his

co-workers. "I wanted to show support not only for the people I work with, but also to the commissioners," Franklin said. "There are a lot of people who are not happy about this. We're a small base, but we're a strong one."

Should President Bush and Congress approve the Pentagon's recommendations in November, the 935 military and naval employees would be offered a variety of alternatives, including buyouts and early retirement.

Jill Botaw, a Navy Southwest realignment and closure coordinator, said the vast majority would probably take those offers. Employees willing to relocate could transfer to another base or government agency. Others may be placed on the government's priority hiring list.

Those buyout and bonus offers would not be extended to employees of Computer Services Corp. or other private companies that contract with the base. Those workers would have to see what their own employers offer.

"It's always been easy -- living here, working here," Pfouts said. "But I guess that might change."

### **Visiting panelists praise strategic value of BNAS;**

**The air station impresses the commissioners, who caution that their remarks are not indicators of its fate.**

Portland Press Herland (Portland, ME)

Dennis Hoey

July 27, 2005

Two Base Realignment and Closure commissioners offered an encouraging assessment of the Brunswick Naval Air Station's strategic value Tuesday. But they cautioned that the public should not read anything into their remarks. Retired Brig. Gen. Sue E. Turner and former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Samuel K. Skinner, who also served as chief of staff to former President George H.W. Bush, toured the air base Tuesday morning.

They then met privately with members of the Brunswick Naval Air Station Task Force. Their visit means that six of the nine members of the BRAC commission have visited Brunswick.

The stakes for Brunswick are much higher now than they were during the commissioners' June 2 visit. At that time, the Pentagon had recommended that BNAS be realigned, which means the base would stay open but its fleet of P-3 Orion planes would be moved to Jacksonville and more than 2,300 personnel would be laid off or reassigned.

Base supporters thought realignment was the worst option because it would prevent the town or state from redeveloping the property, which would remain in federal hands.

But earlier this month, the commission voted 8-1 to put BNAS on its closure list, a move that local supporters speculate was designed to force the Pentagon's hand by making it decide between closure or keeping it open.

"It's a great facility. Really up to date and they have an important mission," Skinner said during a brief press conference. "They certainly present a compelling argument. Its strategic location and the fact that it's up and ready to go into action are important facts for us to consider."

Skinner cautioned against trying to read between the lines of his comments. He stressed that the commission has not made up its mind about Brunswick.

Skinner said commissioners must weigh all factors - from the base's military value to the economic impact its closure would have on the community - before deciding Brunswick's fate.

For now, BNAS remains on both the realignment and closure lists.

"I am really, really happy that we had the opportunity to come up here and visit Brunswick," Turner said. "For me, it had become apparent that it was really important to get up here and see the base for myself."

On Aug. 10, commissioners will hold a hearing in Washington to receive testimony on their decision to add BNAS to the closure list. The panel will decide what to do with BNAS on Aug. 23.

Commissioners' recommendations must be given to the president no later than Sept. 8.

Unlike the commissioners' earlier visit to Brunswick, where dozens of base supporters holding signs lined the street to the base entrance, Tuesday's tour was purposely kept low-key at the commissioners' request, said Rick Tetrev, chairman of the Brunswick Naval Air Station Task Force.

"Brunswick is totally different than Kittery," said task force member Joseph Byrnes. "All they have to do is snap their fingers and 8,000 shipyard workers wearing yellow T-shirts show up for a rally. That doesn't mean we don't have the community's support here, because we do."

Gov. John Baldacci and task force members spent about an hour in private with Turner and Skinner. Retired Navy Capt. Ralph Dean, a task force member, made a presentation that focused on military value rather than economic impact.

Dean said BNAS could play a vital role in the war on terrorism by intercepting ships that could be carrying weapons of mass destruction. He also noted the base's proximity to sea lanes and to Europe.

The commissioners asked a lot of "penetrating" questions during the session, members said.

"I think the commissioners are leaning toward closing it or keeping it open. I am inclined to believe that they are not looking favorably on realignment," said Ed Anderson, a former P-3 pilot who serves as the task force's financial analyst. "It doesn't make good strategic sense to close it or good fiscal sense to realign it. And in my mind that only leaves one option."

### **Shipyard backers welcome BRAC officials;**

**The two commissioners say they will take to heart the outpouring of support for the Kittery facility.**

Portland Press Herland (Portland, ME)  
Elbert Aull  
July 27, 2005

The conspicuous yellow shirts flooded the intersection of Walker and Wentworth again Tuesday afternoon. A crowd of around 1,000 in "Save Our Shipyard" shirts gathered there to greet two Base Realignment and Closure commissioners - one a former Air Force nurse, another a former White House chief of staff - who will help decide the fate of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue E. Turner and Samuel K. Skinner, former chief of staff to President George H. W. Bush, both called the facility "first-rate" after their visit, but said the nine-member commission has made no decisions about the future of the base.

The tour brought to six the number of BRAC commissioners who have visited the Kittery shipyard since it was recommended for closure by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Both commissioners spoke with reporters after their visit, but neither said whether the tour answered lingering questions about excess shipyard capacity - questions the two acknowledged will likely determine the Kittery yard's fate.

Shipyard advocates say the Navy does not have enough excess capacity at its facilities in Hawaii, Maine, Virginia, and Washington to close one of the facilities.

Naval officials say their shipyards would have around 4.5 percent more repair space than they need at the remaining yards if Kittery closes. Critics said the Navy routinely underestimates repair needs.

Turner, who said she came to Kittery primarily because she was impressed by a letter sent to her by a local family, said it would be "reasonable to

assume" some bases currently recommended for closure will be taken off the list in mid-August.

The visit followed a whirlwind week for shipyard supporters as commissioners decided they wanted to study whether there is enough repair work to keep the Kittery yard open, but did not want to look into whether Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in Hawaii should close.

While some analysts saw the Pearl Harbor decision as bad news for the Kittery yard, workers at the rally took a different view.

"If Pearl was put on the list, and they had to make a choice between the two, then we would close," said Paul Cardinal, 50, of Portsmouth, N.H., a welder with 27 years at the shipyard.

Cardinal, who came to the rally on one of his vacation days, said most yard workers don't want the BRAC process turned into a competition between shipyards.

Retired Capt. William McDonough, the shipyard's former commander, has argued from the beginning of the process that the Navy has no excess repair capacity. He said work on submarines sometimes gets bumped to second-priority at yards that make repairs to larger ships, such as aircraft carriers. Keeping all the yards open gives the Navy more options, he said.

Shipyard activists Paul O'Connor and John Joyal of New Hampshire led hundreds of workers out of Gate 1 and down both sides of Walker Street about 20 minutes before the van carrying the commissioners arrived. The workers stretched several blocks down Walker Street, but Tuesday's crowd was less than half the size of the one that welcomed four other commissioners to the facility in early June.

Both commissioners said after their visit they will take to heart the outpouring of support for the Kittery facility.

"That's not true in all the places we go," said Skinner, flanked by Gov. John Baldacci and

New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch at a press conference after the tour.

**Opinions/ Editorials**

**Additional Notes**