

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

October 11, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Military may seek to profit from Monroe (Hampton Roads, VA)

Changeover of F-15s expected to be smooth (Boston, MA)

Hampton urged to monitor review (Richmond, VA)

Base realignment recommendations could harm South County economy (Oakville, MD)

Opinions/ Editorials

Topic of the Day: Patterson Army Clinic (Asbury Park, NJ)

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

N/A

Local News Articles

Military may seek to profit from Monroe Hampton residents encourage city leaders to feature Fort Monroe's history as part of the base's future.

Daily Press (Hampton Roads, VA)

Terry Scanlon

October 11 2005

HAMPTON -- A former Army attorney warned city officials Monday that the military is more interested in selling closed bases for profit than it has been before.

That means that the Defense Department could try to get Hampton or Virginia taxpayers to pay for a portion of Fort Monroe if the base is formally slated for closure later this year.

In the past, the Pentagon has been willing to give the land from closed bases to neighboring communities so the economic development would help offset the financial loss of the military's departure.

But preliminary guidelines issued by the Defense Department suggest that officials are less willing to do that with this round of base closings, said Michael C. Bobrick, an attorney who once worked for the Army in its Base

Realignment and Closure office located at Fort Monroe.

"The Defense Department hopes to make some money off this BRAC round," he said. "They don't just want to give it away."

Bobrick cited a former Marine base in California as an example. The Navy sold that base to a developer for nearly \$650 million through an online auction last year. The base had remained largely unused for six years.

It's not clear how the sale of former bases might affect the transfer of Fort Monroe. But city officials are hopeful that it won't apply much or at all.

Much of the land that the fort has been built on would revert to state ownership once the military stops using it as a base. The portion that the Army could try to sell is the narrow strip on the north end of the base near Buckroe.

Bobrick's comments were part of a report given Monday to the group that Hampton officials hope will lead the base's redevelopment - the Federal Areas Redevelopment Authority.

Later Monday at a meeting at Kecoughtan High School, many city residents encouraged Mayor Ross A. Kearney II to showcase the fort's history as part of future development at the base. Some of the 130 people there said they're excited about the possibilities for the future of the historic base.

"We have an opportunity to make Fort Monroe our Williamsburg - a destination people want to come to," said resident George G. Smith.

Kearney told the group that their ideas would be incorporated, where possible, into the plans the city is drafting for the future of Fort Monroe. And he promised that the public would be able to remain involved throughout the process.

"No decisions are going to be made in some smoke-filled room," Kearney said.

Preliminary plans need to be drafted by January, Kearney said. But the Army isn't expected to transfer its troops to other bases for several years. The commission and president have already approved closing Fort Monroe. The final step in the process is Congress, which should decide within a month to accept or reject the commission's report. Kearney said it's important for the city to act quickly and to work with the state and Pentagon on planning in order to ensure that new development begins as soon as possible.

The mayor said his greatest fear is that the Army leaves the base but refuses to pay for removing the unknown amount of unexploded bombs. That could prevent new construction and leave the base vacant.

"The city of Hampton," he said, "would be in dire economic trouble."

Changeover of F-15s expected to be smooth

Westfield air base phasing out A-10s

Boston Globe (Boston, MA)

October 11, 2005

WESTFIELD -- The changeover of the Air National Guard's 104th Fighter Wing from A-10s to F-15s is not expected to disrupt the unit or its personnel, its commander said.

"We have flown a lot of fighters in our 58-year history," Colonel Marcel E. Kerdavid, commander of the Barnes Air National Guard Base, said last week. "The people here working now for the most part are the people who will be working on the F-15s."

In a somewhat surprising move, a federal base closure commission decided in August to move the F-15s at Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod to Barnes. The decision by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission also moves the 104th's and the Connecticut Air National Guard 103rd Fighter Wing's A-10s out of the region.

"In no way is the 104th being dismantled, disrupted, or given away," Kerdavid told The Republican of Springfield. "The only thing that is going to change is the aircraft."

The commission's decision will mean an increase in Barnes personnel, including some who may transfer from Otis, said Brigadier General Michael D. Akey, commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard. He did not know the exact number of additional personnel.

Some of the 104th's pilots may elect to remain with the A-10 mission and transfer elsewhere, Kerdavid said. Some may elect to stay. "I would imagine a lot are going to stay local, stay here, and convert," he said, adding that he intends to stay on.

The exact timetable for the changes is not known either, Akey said.

Hampton urged to monitor review Expert: City officials could then direct Fort Monroe's future uses

Richmond Times Dispatch (Richmond, VA)
Sue Lindsey
October 11, 2005

HAMPTON - The city can benefit from lengthy processes that the Army must follow to review the impact on the environment and the historic property before it closes Fort Monroe, Hampton officials were told yesterday.

A consultant who specializes in historic preservation urged officials to get involved with the Army so they can direct future use of the site.

During its August deliberations, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission approved a Defense Department recommendation to close the historic base. President Bush has endorsed BRAC's recommendations, which will become final in early November unless Congress acts to reject them.

Fort Monroe's designation as a National Historic Landmark requires that the Army go through a

process to consider the effect of closing the base, consultant Dave Dutton told the city's Federal Area Development Authority.

In addition, a lawyer hired to help Hampton officials through the process said the National Environmental Policy Act calls for reviews determining how to clean up unexploded ordnance at the base, which was used for artillery training.

In the historic-preservation review, the secretary of the Interior will be invited to participate, as well as federal and state preservation officials, Dutton said.

He said city and state officials should be involved to ensure that "those qualities and characteristics that make Fort Monroe special" are incorporated in development that is of the greatest public benefit.

"A 'one size fits all' approach is not going to be in anyone's interest," he said.

The fort, on a peninsula stretching into the Chesapeake Bay and surrounded by a moat, was built in the 1820s. The site was first a military fort in 1609, and during the War of 1812, the British used a lighthouse on the grounds as a watch tower.

It remained in Union hands during the Civil War, and Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned there after the war.

Hampton Mayor Ross A. Kearney II has endorsed a mix of uses for the site, including areas open to the public, commercial and residential development and preservation of historic buildings.

Kearney has said disposing of the fort will be expensive. Maintaining the base's older buildings costs \$14 million a year, and city estimates to clean up ordnance on the site have ranged from \$200 million to \$1 billion.

Lawyer Michael Bobrick said the NEPA process that the Army must follow will determine how to deal with any ordnance found on the grounds.

In addition, he said, the city should make sure that the buildings don't fall into disrepair between the time Army personnel move out and the base is transferred to the state.

If the heating and air-conditioning systems were shut down in the historic buildings, Bobrick said, "you could have a real problem."

Base realignment recommendations could harm South County economy

Oakville-Mehlville Journal (Oakville, MO)
Crystal Franke
October 05, 2005

The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendation could deal a blow to South County's economy.

Col. David Newman of the Missouri Air National Guard, one of the branches located at Jefferson Barracks, explained that should the BRAC recommendation be accepted by Congress, several units would replace the 131st Fighter Wing at Lambert Airport.

Those units include the 157th Air Operations Group and the 218th Electronic Installment Squad.

"Our jobs aren't going away. Worse case scenario; they're just being transferred," Newman said.

Jefferson Barracks, which houses Air National Guard, Army and Reserve units, is a historic base. An estimated \$1.5 to \$2 million is spent annually to update the facilities. The improvements would not be continued in the event of a move.

In addition to the renovations, the base is planning to break ground in 2008 on a joint reserve army center that would cost \$8.5 million. The project would also be terminated should the units be relocated.

During drill weekends when Guard and Reserve soldiers complete training, the base brings in \$12,000 to \$15,000 to South County. This money would move along with those units transferred to Lambert.

According to Newman, the BRAC movements would not take place until 2010 or 2011 for Jefferson Barracks. However, Newman believes that future military tasks could override the realignment.

"I can't say for certain what will happen," Newman said.

The Department of Defense took two and one half years to study and compile recommendations for the BRAC commission.

"Department of Defense's BRAC recommendation will reduce military infrastructure between 5 to 11 percent and save \$48.8 billion over 20 years," said Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Congress will decide whether to accept or reject the BRAC report in its entirety later this month.

Opinions/ Editorials

Topic of the Day: Patterson Army Clinic

Retired veterans to lose clinic
Asbury Park Press (Asbury Park, NJ)
I.G. Nordin
October 11, 2005

For the thousands of folks who drive by Route 35 and may be aware that Fort Monmouth is due to be closed, and for the thousands of taxpayers who know the fort is there but have only a vague idea of what's behind that security fence, let me introduce you to Patterson Army Clinic.

It is a special place of special people, a place of compassion and understanding far beyond just healing, a place where you get a smile . . . maybe even a hug.

For decades, a dedicated staff has been the center of health care for a retired military

community of more than 23,000 from Monmouth and Ocean counties, giving top-flight medical care to retirees and their dependents.

When the Base Realignment and Closure commission ignored the arguments of our congressmen, senators and mayors to keep the fort open, they also, by not specifically exempting it, began the process of closing Patterson.

I have not see a word about where and how the 23,000 military retirees will continue to receive the medical care now provided by Patterson. This is not "free" medical care; this is earned health care. The price of the medical care was earned by years of service, and sometimes by the wounds of battle.

Have we become a nation of promise breakers? Doesn't that ribbon sticker on so many vehicles — Support Our Troops — include the troops who honorably served but are now retired and depend on the medical care provided by Patterson?

The VA Clinic on the third floor of Patterson, a Department of Defense medical facility, may remain open for veterans and disabled veterans eligible for medical care through the New Jersey Veterans Health Care System. But this does not fill the void for the 23,000 retirees. Perhaps they, too, are expected to move to Aberdeen in Maryland.

Additional Notes