

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

October 18, 2005

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

Change is in your hands, reserve chief tells Soldiers

Local News Articles

Take broad view of fort's needs (Asbury Park, NJ)

Westsiders vote neigh on Cecil (Jacksonville, FL)

Opinions/ Editorials

Self-inflicted wound (Virginia Beach, VA)

Pork, pelicans and Louisiana (Washington DC)

Additional Notes

N/A

Department of Defense Releases

N/A

National News Articles

Change is in your hands, reserve chief tells Soldiers

Army News Service
Col. Randy Pullen
October 17, 2005

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, October 17, 2005)—Army Reserve Chief, Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly discussed the great changes that had taken place, were taking place and that were going to take place as he addressed Army Reserve Soldiers attending the Association of the United States Army's Annual Meeting Oct. 5.

"If it's going to change, I can't do it," Helmly said to the large group of Army Reserve Soldiers before him. "You've got to change it. The Army Reserve that you and I joined is not the Army Reserve needed for this century. We have to change to meet the conditions of the world," he said.

Helmly used the example of a training simulator to explain the sort of quick-thinking, adaptive men and women needed to transform the Army Reserve. In the newest simulators, he said, the terrain changes and new situations suddenly come up before you, calling for you to make immediate decisions – don't fire at that woman holding the baby, do fire at that guy in the ski mask holding a detonator. That's a far cry from the old, 25-meter target range where you know just where the targets are going to pop up and that you shoot at them no matter what.

“The Army Reserve has been on a 25-meter range for too long,” Helmly said. “We’ve got to be on a simulator now.”

Reserve Soldiers must be always thinking and adapting

“An integral component of the world’s best Army, complementing the joint force with skill-rich capabilities.”

Another key element in understanding the direction for the Army Reserve was embodied in his Commander’s Intent:

“Use the energy and urgency of Army transformation and the operational demands of the Global War on Terrorism to change from a technically-focused force-in-reserve to a learning organization that provides trained, ready, inactive-duty Soldiers poised and available for active service as if they knew the hour and day they would be called.”

The Army Reserve chief used statistics to point out the enormous changes that had taken place in the last four years. Since 9-11, 140,910 Army Reserve Soldiers have been mobilized, with 40,252 mobilized today. More than 16,000 have served or are currently serving a second mobilization tour since Sept. 11, 2001. One of those who has volunteered for a second tour is Spc. Jeremy Church, the first Army Reserve Soldier to receive the Silver Star in the War in Iraq.

There are other, more sobering statistics. Ninety Army Reserve Soldiers have been killed in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, 686 have been wounded, and one, Sgt. Matt Maupin, remains a captive.

Helmly pointed out how things had changed by saying that four years ago, most of the Army Reserve Soldiers wearing combat patches were old-timers like him.

“Look around you here and see all the Army Reserve Soldiers wearing combat patches now,” he said.

Helmly was adamant about changing something that he said demeans the public image of the Army Reserve. That something is a couple of terms, “weekend warrior” and “reservist.” More than changing them, he wants them eliminated from usage.

Weekend warrior and reservist give the implication that you’re playing at being Soldiers, he said. Army Reserve men and women today, in combat or preparing for combat, aren’t playing at anything. They’re fighting for their country and some of them are dying and being wounded for it.

Army Reserve Soldiers owed a term of honor

“Weekend warrior is an insult to Matt Maupin,” Helmly said. “We have Army Reserve Soldiers now. We owe you a term of honor.”

Turning from words to facilities, Helmly said that the proposed Base Realignment and Closure recommendations would be an engine of change for the Army Reserve.

“The Army Reserve will close or change a higher percentage of facilities than any other service,” he said, eliminating excess reserve centers and allowing for the streamlining of Army Reserve command and control.

10 U.S. Regional Readiness Commands reduced to 4

Command and control will be transformed significantly in a number of ways. The 10 Regional Readiness Commands in the continental United States will be reduced to four Regional Readiness Sustainment Commands. These organizations will have garrison-type missions.

Operational forces will not be commanded by them but would be commanded by go-to-war headquarters, such as a theater sustainment command, two theater engineer commands, two theater network commands, an aviation command, two medical deployment support commands, and a military police command.

There are also plans to create eight sustainment brigades and four deployable command posts.

Changes underway

Helmly said that the changes he was describing were already underway and would continue to occur in the very near future. BRAC implementation would start in 2006, following the approval of the BRAC recommendations.

“Five to six years from now, we’ll look, act and be entirely different than we are now,” he said, with new equipment, a different command structure and fewer but more modern reserve centers.

“We’ll still be American Soldiers,” he added, emphasizing that no matter what changes, “our values won’t change.”

He quoted Army chief of staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker: “Our values are sacrosanct, everything else is on the table.”

No alternative but to transform

Helmly acknowledged that all the changes would be hard but there was no alternative but to transform. He castigated those who would prefer an easier path than the one the Army Reserve is embarked on now.

“Some folks may want to go back to the way it used to be after I leave,” he said, noting that he was scheduled to stop down as Reserve chief in May 2006. “Shame on you if you do so.”

As he did when he began his remarks, Helmly again thanked the men and women before him, and through them, the thousands more serving around the country and around the world.

“We serve the American people,” Helmly said. “We guarantee the rights of the people. When we’re called, the American people want to see action from us, boots on the ground.”

Reiterating what the Army chief of staff said the day before about not letting the terrorists win, Helmly left no doubt that this same pledge

would be upheld by him and by every Army Reserve Soldier. Like the Army values, this commitment is unchangeable.

Local News Articles

Take broad view of fort's needs

Asbury Park Press (Asbury Park, NJ)

October 18, 2005

The Fort Monmouth Reuse Committee's primary task is to form a regional development authority to determine how to use the 1,100 acres of Fort Monmouth if the Army post is closed as recommended by the Base Realignment and Closure commission. It must stick to that task. It should not venture beyond it by proposing or endorsing specific redevelopment plans for any portion of the site.

The mothballing of the military base, which could become official with congressional approval of the BRAC recommendations as early as this week, will be painful for the fort's employees and the region's economy. But it also presents opportunities.

It's important that the opportunities are not missed by proceeding piecemeal without a well-thought out, comprehensive master plan for the entire site. That plan should be developed by people with special expertise in land-use and re-use planning. That means seeking out expertise from well beyond the three towns that host the fort — Eatontown, Oceanport and Tinton Falls.

Last week, Eatontown Mayor Gerald J. Tarantolo, who also is chairman of the reuse committee, sought and received Borough Council approval to "pursue all avenues available" in enlisting the support of area congressional representatives to sway the Army to support the borough's plan to redevelop the vacant 40-acre Howard Commons housing site at the fort.

That plan may or may not be the best use for the site. But it should not be acted on until it is viewed in the context of an overall master plan by the regional development authority.

Westiders vote neigh on Cecil Equestrian business grows in Navy's absence

The Business Journal of Jacksonville
(Jacksonville, FL)

Tony Quesada

October 16, 2005

WESTSIDE -- Six months after moving into their new home, Stephanie and Russell Stalvey have yet to hang any family photos. The one adornment on their kitchen wall is a map of the Westside overlaid by a curious shape one might mistake for a psychiatrist's Rorschach test.

Actually, it's the 65-decibel average noise zone surrounding the Navy's East Coast master jet base at Naval Air Station Oceana (Va.), but in a sense it is a measure of perception.

The many people who covet the 12,000 Navy and civilian jobs that could move from Oceana as a result of Base Realignment and Closure look at it and see economic growth. The Stalveys, and others who value an equestrian lifestyle and associated agrarian industry, see economic death.

Since the former Naval Air Station Cecil Field closed in 1999 and became Cecil Commerce Center, new horse-based businesses have sprouted and existing ones have flourished. They hope to further tap what is a \$15 billion industry nationwide.

In Florida, the horse industry generates \$2.2 billion a year and has a total economic impact of \$6.5 billion, according to FloridaHorse.com. Floridians spend more than \$1.2 billion a year caring for horses, including \$185 million on feed and hay.

"It's coming to Jacksonville, if they'd let us finish," said Michael Griffin, owner of Diamond D Trailers on Normandy Boulevard and president of The Better Westside Project, a group opposing the return of Navy jets to Cecil.

The Stalveys -- Stephanie, a pharmaceutical sales agent and Russell, a computer project manager -- have invested their savings to turn 19 acres off Manning Cemetery Road into a

boarding and training complex for competitive horses. The facility is about 2.3 miles west of Cecil's east-west runway.

"I was hoping to retire from my job in a couple of years," Stephanie Stalvey said. The plan is to lease 10 stalls to Northerners who bring their horses south for the winter, with an equal number available to locals. "That would be a healthy income."

But that business, she fears, "would be a non-starter" if Navy jets return. "They're going to choke off the [Westside's] growth for a short-term fix," she said.

The Stalveys studied the world of championship equestrians and found a profitable niche to serve as the fledgling Jacksonville Equestrian Center that opened last year grows in stature among affluent, and often demanding, horse owners.

It's common for out-of-town horse owners to bring them to the site of an upcoming competition well in advance to become acquainted with the surroundings and climate, said Lesa Williams, director of the Jacksonville Equestrian Center. Such was the case for some of the 340 horses who competed at the center Oct. 7-9 during the Great American United States Dressage Federation Region 3 Championships.

The USDF event -- the biggest of its kind held in Jacksonville to date -- was for a region covering Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and South Carolina, but some people associated with the competition came from as far away as Pennsylvania.

The Stalveys haven't skimped to bring Santee Farms to the standards of discerning equestrians. Beside the stables is a full-scale Olympic-standard dressage ring filled with clay from Ocala. On the exercise and grazing area they grew world feeder Bermuda grass, which must be planted in individual sprigs to exacting standards.

In the stable, they engineered and built a sophisticated drainage system for horses' urine,

keeping stalls cleaner and minimizing odor. To maximize comfort, they installed a radiant heat barrier and put a high-velocity fan in each stall to circulate fresh air. They also put in a tankless water heater and shower -- for people.

In all, they have sunk a few hundred thousand dollars in the project and expect to spend at least several tens of thousands more to finish, Stephanie Stalvey said.

But the couple has halted construction on the stable. Besides being uncertain of the complex's viability should the 117-decibel F/A-18 Super Hornets come to Cecil, they have been consumed with fighting to preserve the quiet equestrian lifestyle they sought when they bought their land.

Jewel and Dewey Griffin's family has been involved in horses in the area since the couple opened a riding stable in 1957. But while their Diamond D Stables has long been a Westside institution, the Navy's departure from the former base shifted their business to a higher gear.

Before, Jewel Griffin said, their 90 stalls averaged about 20 percent vacancy. Today, they have a waiting list.

Between the Griffins and their children, they make a living from horses and roughly 500 contiguous acres. One daughter is a horse trainer, while another is a horse veterinarian practicing on the Westside. And these days, their son, Michael Griffin, operates the riding stables as well as corporate parties and group field trips on a 10-acre private park.

"We're right in the flight zone," Griffin said. "We know it's not going to be something people will enjoy as much as they do now."

What's really flourished for Michael Griffin since the Navy left is his horse trailer dealership. The three-and-a-half-year-old Diamond D Trailers has grown steadily, averaging more than \$5 million in annual sales since it opened.

The equestrian center has been an excellent marketing vehicle for the dealership, which displays trailers during events.

"I did feasibility studies of businesses that do real well near equestrian centers, and trailer dealers were one of them," he said. "We sell hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of trailers every time they have a major event."

But Griffin and others worry the presence of Navy jets will hurt the center in the long run as competitors grow weary of the noise, or worse, if riders and horses become injured when the roar of an engine causes horses to rear up. He said that being creatures of habit, horses living near Cecil would get used to the noise but at least some four-legged visitors would get spooked for the short time they're in town.

Williams, the center's director, is concerned about the possibility of Navy jets flying over, but she's not dwelling on it because the Navy is not likely to arrive before 2009. And while she said there are important issues to address prior to that happening, "We have been assured by the mayor's office that we will be a big part of the conversation so we can keep the building going."

Meanwhile, business is good. Since the center opened in March 2004, its use has increased as planned, perhaps even a little ahead of schedule. There are more than 35 events booked for 2006, many of which will last for more than a day.

"We're attracting the types of regional shows we really wanted to," Williams said.

The North Florida Dressage Association, the local sponsor for the recent competition, is tracking the Cecil issue closely, said President Mary O'Brien.

"If they do fly over [during shows], I don't see it [the center] as a viable showplace," she said. "I hope they can work it out."

At a recent press conference Mayor John Peyton said he wants the Navy to share any plans it has to mitigate any of the impacts it will create.

"This relationship needs to be a two-way street," Peyton said, "and I see absolutely nothing wrong with requiring a new naval aviation installation to meet the same kinds of rigorous tests we require of other businesses who want our assistance in locating here."

Opinions/ Editorials

Self-inflicted wound

BRAC process may be too flawed to continue

Daily Press (Virginia Beach, VA)

October 18, 2005

The worst-case scenario for the Base Closure and Realignment Commission that finished its work in September may not lie in the communities that will suffer as the bases they host are closed or downsized. It may not lie in the lost opportunities to save money.

No, the worst-case scenario may be that this BRAC panel so botched its job that an entirely new method of handling base closings will have to be developed. That would be bad news for the military and taxpayers if it interferes with the military's best use of limited resources.

A little review: The military must have a way to close bases it doesn't need, or to reconfigure them so that they are used more efficiently. Excess base capacity chews up money - the Pentagon says \$10 billion a year - and manpower that the branches need for other duties more central to their missions.

But in the past, the politicians would get involved, because they didn't want to face constituents upset about job losses if a base was closed or restructured. The result: It became nearly impossible to close bases.

So BRAC was born of an effort to lift the base-closure process out of politics.

But this BRAC panel took that process in new directions - directions that may make Congress leery of going down this route for a long time to come. The BRAC decision regarding Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach provides a perfect example of some of the missteps.

First, the commission overruled the Navy's wishes to retain Oceana. Then it took its authority into new territory in several ways: by basically inviting bids from competitors that sought to replace Oceana and by ordering a city and state - Virginia Beach and Virginia - to enact legislation and appropriate millions of dollars to condemn thousands of homes to have even a chance of keeping the base. Otherwise, Oceana's jets would be moved to one of those competitors - Cecil Field in Florida, which had been closed by a previous BRAC. Since that decision, the information provided to make the case for Cecil has proved bogus, demonstrating the commission's lack of due diligence.

Other critics are incensed by the panel's refusal to honor Pentagon requests to close several installations - a submarine base, a shipyard and Air Force bases - the military argued are excess and expensive. In the beginning, the Pentagon sent BRAC a list of recommendations for closing 33 major bases and consolidating 29 others. By the time the panel had done its work, one-third were dropped, and with them much of the anticipated savings.

And therein is another problem. The savings are much less than advertised: about \$700 million a year over 20 years, according to the Center for Defense Information. That's about one-third of the original estimates.

In short, too much rancor and too little savings.

And too much politics. As Rep. Randy Forbes (whose district actually fared well) has written: "The BRAC process ... has been too political and the assessment standards applied unequally to some regions and installations but not to others." Sen. John Warner even questioned BRAC's legal authority to take some of its actions.

This does not build confidence. It does not demonstrate fairness or competence.

Maybe the best-case scenario for this commission is that it will have provided the

impetus for finding a better way to handle base closures.

Pork, pelicans and Louisiana

Washington Post (Washington DC)
Newt Gingrich and Veronique de Rugy
October 18, 2005

A month after Hurricane Katrina destroyed much of the Gulf Coast, Louisiana's congressional delegation has presented Washington with a request for \$250 billion in federal reconstruction funds for Louisiana alone. That's more than \$50,000 per person in the state. And since the entire country will foot the bill, it will cost \$1,900 per American household. This money would come on top of the \$62 billion that Congress has already appropriated for emergency relief and in addition to payouts from businesses, national charities and insurers. The long-term cost will be even greater because this is adding to the deficit, and our children and grandchildren will pay interest on the debt for years.

While we all feel for Louisiana's residents, there are limits to what American taxpayers can — and should — be asked to contribute on top of their already large tax bill. More worrisome, too much federal largesse can have negative consequences on behavior. What are the odds, for instance, of more responsible behavior by state and local officials when the federal government picks up all costs? And will private individuals and businesses make sound decisions — purchasing insurance to cover risks, for example — when Uncle Sam bails out poor choices?

Moreover, there are macroeconomic issues. A \$250 billion spending package necessarily means \$250 billion of money no longer available for private-sector activity. Research from the academic community has confirmed the adverse impact of government spending on economic performance. Even traditionally left-wing international bureaucracies, such as the European Commission, have published research confirming that larger levels of government are associated with weaker economic growth.

In addition, one's compassion and generosity is tested when one realizes that the Louisiana lawmakers have stuffed the 440-page bill with numerous items that have nothing to do with hurricane relief. This pork barrel spending includes: \$120 million for a laboratory facilities and equipment at the Southern Regional Research Center, \$35 million for the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board, \$8 million for direct financial assistance to alligator farmers, \$25.5 million to complete the Sugarcane Research Laboratory, \$12 million for the restoration of wildlife management areas and \$28 million for the restoration and rehabilitation of forestlands. The Louisiana legislators appear committed to grabbing as much as they can even if they cannot spend it effectively. For instance, they request \$7 billion for rebuilding evacuation and energy supply routes on top of \$5 billion for expansion of road and transit capacity. They also demand \$20 million for the establishment of development plans for development districts in the State of Louisiana.

They ask for \$150 million for small business loans fund and tax breaks on top of \$50 billion in block grants. But they also ask for lost sales revenues for many commercial entities. For instance, they request \$27 million for lost timber-sales revenues from the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area and \$250,000 for dairy-cattle losses of dairy producers along with \$11 million for livestock losses.

The Louisianans also request \$715 million for diverse military construction projects, including \$160 million to implement the 2005 recommendations of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission related to the Federal city development in Algiers, La. Even with imagination it is hard to see what this has to do with Hurricane Katrina.

The delegation requests a gigantic budget for the Army Corps of Engineers. The request for \$40 billion is 10 times the Army Corps' annual budget for the entire nation. It is also 16 times the amount necessary to protect New Orleans from a category five hurricane.

The Corps section of the bill was based on recommendations by a "working group" dominated by lobbyists for ports, shipping firms, energy companies and other corporate interests. Hence, the bill asks for hundreds of millions of dollars for water projects unrelated to Hurricane Katrina. Worse the request features projects that have flunked the Corps' cost-benefit analysis.

The bill would create a "Pelican Commission" to oversee the Army Corps's work. But if history is our guide, we know that the opportunity for fraud and waste will be unprecedented. New Orleans is currently the third most-indicted city government in the entire country. (And even before Hurricane Katrina, FEMA was trying to track as much as \$60 million in unaccounted funds that it distributed to the emergency office of Louisiana state government dating back to 1998.)

Finally, the bill's author, Sen. Mary Landrieu, Louisiana Democrat, said, "Louisiana will be rebuilt by Louisianans. New Orleans will be rebuilt by New Orleans." However Mrs. Landrieu certainly does not expect Louisiana to pay the bulk of the cost. She wants all the power and none of the burden. The bill waves the normal cost-sharing requirements and shift the entire cost to the federal government. In other words, Mrs. Landrieu is expecting federal taxpayers to foot 100 percent of the bill.

For the sake of those harmed by the tragedy and the taxpayers who share the financial burden, rebuilding New Orleans should be done in an efficient manner, free of politics and pork-barrel spending. This proposal does not represent that kind of solution.

Additional Notes