

# **Base Realignment and Closure Commission Early Bird**

*May 13, 2005*

*Department of Defense Releases*

**BRAC 2005: Service Leaders Support DoD  
Recommendations (AFPS)**

**Comprehensive and impartial.... (AFPN)**

*National News Articles*

**Pentagon Plans Fewer Base Closings Than  
Once Expected**

*Local News Articles*

**Military Base, Awaiting Future, Tries Hard  
to Assure It Has One (NY City)**

**Hometown Area Braces For BRAC  
Announcement (Ft Smith Ark.)**

**BRAC military closings (Kansas)**

**Beaufort Braces for BRAC**

*Additional Notes*

**Upcoming Commission Schedule**

## **BRAC 2005: Service Leaders Support DoD Recommendations**

**By Donna Miles  
American Forces Press Service**

WASHINGTON, May 12, 2005 – Senior service leaders expressed confidence today in the base realignment and closure process and acknowledged that it's a critical part of the Defense Department's transformation to make the military more effective to meet 21st-century threats.

Speaking today at a news conference with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and Joint Chiefs Chairman Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, the service representatives said BRAC represents a difficult, but important step as the department postures itself for the future.

The process led to BRAC recommendations the services "were all able to sign up to with no problem at all," Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, told Pentagon reporters.

Gen. Richard A. Cody, Army vice chief of staff, said the Army believes the recommendations to be announced May 13 "will holistically transform our current infrastructure and support the Army modular force while supporting the needs of the combatant commander."

"These BRAC proposals will posture the Army in the best possible manner to meet the strategic and operational requirements of this century," Cody said. They also will "provide stability and an improved standard of living for our hard-working soldiers and their families," he said.

Adm. Vern Clark, chief of naval operations, said the BRAC process "has been of great value to

the United States Navy" and presents a far greater trend toward jointness than proposed during previous BRAC rounds.

"Our focus has been throughout on getting the best military value, and that ties to ... running our Navy in the most effective and efficient way possible," he said. "But at the end of the day, it was always about the best military value for the United States Navy and the joint force."

Gen. Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, said he believes the BRAC recommendations "will improve organizational alignments and ensure our readiness and expeditionary capability to deploy quickly."

The recommendations reflect a close review of the Defense Department's infrastructure capability and the military value of current installations to meet not only current needs, but also those of the future force structure, he said. Throughout the process, Hagee said, those involved in the review focused on joint solutions to develop recommendations "for the more efficient and effective use of our bases and stations."

Jumper said the BRAC recommendations represent a continuation of the service's ongoing transformation "to make our structures and our organizations more agile and better able to cope with the world that we find ourselves in today."

The recommendations will help accelerate the move toward joint processes, training and research, and maximize limited training space so it available to more than one service, he said.

In addition to the Defense Department and its members, the service leaders said the BRAC recommendations also will be a boost to taxpayers, who will benefit from a more effective military while being relieved of the cost of excess infrastructure and redundant operations.

Jumper reiterated commitments made by both Rumsfeld and Myers at the news conference to help make the process as painless as possible for

the affected communities. "As the secretary said, we pledge ... to stand by our community partners as we make these transitions that flow from the full process of BRAC," he said.

## **LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (AFPN) -- Comprehensive and impartial is the assessment of Air Force officials on the process used in determining the secretary of defense's recommendations of installations sent to the independent Defense Base Realignment and Closure commission.**

i-Newsire, 2005-05-12 - The recommendations, which are scheduled to be released May 13, are focused on making the most efficient and effective use of all the Defense Department's resources, Pentagon officials said. Additionally, they will improve operational efficiencies, save taxpayer dollars and continue DOD's transformation.

"BRAC will transform the Air Force by maximizing its warfighting capability," said Gerald F. "Fred" Pease Jr., deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for basing and infrastructure analysis. "Closing and realigning certain installations allows the Air Force to base its reduced 2025 force structure at installations of high military value and to create fewer, larger, more combat-effective squadrons."

In addition, Mr. Pease said, BRAC allows the Air Force to realign its infrastructure to meet future defense strategy, eliminate excess physical capacity and capitalize on opportunities for joint activity.

The process to determine Air Force BRAC recommendations used "comprehensive and impartial analysis" across the board, Mr. Pease

said. "All installations were evaluated equally.

"The Air Force used military value as the predominate consideration in making its closure and realignment recommendations," he said. "All recommendations were based on legally mandated BRAC selection criteria and a 20-year force-structure plan."

The release of the secretary of defense's recommendations is just the beginning step in the BRAC process, Mr. Pease said. The nine-person commission, which can add to, expand or remove installations from the list, will review the recommendations. It takes the approval of seven commissioners to add or expand a recommendation, and only a simple majority to remove one.

"The commission will solicit community inputs once it receives the recommendations," he said. "People will be able to provide inputs by calling or writing to the commission. The commission also plans to set up a Web page."

The commission has until Sept. 8 to send its recommendations to the president. Historically, about 85 percent of past DOD recommendations have been accepted by the commission.

Mr. Pease said there is still a long way to go with the process, and no immediate actions will result from the release of the secretary's recommendations.

"The Air Force understands the impact BRAC can have on the military and civilian communities," he said. "But the end result will be a more effective Air Force that continues to be the best trained and equipped in the world."

by Maj. Dave Honchul  
Air Combat Command Public Affairs

## **Pentagon Plans Fewer Base Closings Than Once Expected**

By **ERIC SCHMITT**

Published: May 13, 2005

WASHINGTON, May 12 - Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said Thursday that the Pentagon would recommend closing fewer domestic bases than originally expected because the military had less surplus space and capacity than was initially estimated.

While Mr. Rumsfeld refused to discuss details of the recommendations before their planned submission on Friday to Congress, three military officials who have seen the final list or been briefed on it said the Pentagon would recommend closing at least 30 bases and realigning a few hundred more installations or other smaller military facilities. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because Congress had not yet been formally notified. The military earlier estimated it had 20 percent to 25 percent more capacity than it needed.

But Mr. Rumsfeld said military officials had found only 5 percent to 10 percent excess capacity once they took into consideration the need to accommodate 70,000 troops returning from Europe, as well as Pentagon agencies moving from leased commercial space to less vulnerable offices on military bases. He also cited the need to preserve the ability to step up operations at ammunition plants and maintenance depots in times of crisis.

The comments by Mr. Rumsfeld, who was flanked at a news conference by the chiefs of the armed services, suggest that fewer communities across the country will see their local bases completely shut. But the changes will still significantly alter the operations of many of the nation's 425 bases, and the local economies that depend on them.

Many National Guard and Reserve bases will close and their functions will be consolidated at active-duty installations or other reserve bases.

Maintenance depots, research laboratories and hospitals now operated by each of the armed services will be merged. For example, Walter Reed Medical Center, an Army hospital, and the Bethesda Naval Hospital are expected to share some operations.

Military chaplains and cooks will be trained at one place, rather than having each armed service train its own. The Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps will share training ranges and war-fighting centers as part of the Pentagon's goal to train and fight jointly, senior military officials said.

Mr. Rumsfeld said the closings and realignments would save about \$5.5 billion a year after initial closing costs were paid, and \$48.8 billion over 20 years. The previous four rounds of base closings - in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 - saved \$29 billion through 2003, but independent military specialists said the Pentagon estimates were plausible given the extensive realignment it aimed to achieve.

"The savings projected by this round seem to be generated more by reorganization than outright closures," said Loren Thompson, a military analyst with the Lexington Institute, a consulting firm. "At present, the military is very inefficiently located and organized. Many facilities are sited in places that made sense a century ago but not now."

After more than two years of exhaustive study, this round of base closings is an integral part of Mr. Rumsfeld's strategy to revamp the military into a leaner, more agile force.

"The degree with which the services coordinate, integrate and operate together will be increased, and it will include how we manage some of our bases and posts," Gen. Richard B. Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said.

Mr. Rumsfeld sought to ease fears in many communities that closings could leave thousands of local employees out of work. He cited examples of closed bases that had been converted into commercial airports and

economic centers. And he pledged that the Defense Department would provide retraining for workers and economic aid to help offset the immediate economic impact in communities where bases close.

The Pentagon's recommendations will go to an independent nine-member commission that will hold public hearings and visit bases through the summer. The panel can add or subtract bases from the list, but it needs seven panel members to approve any changes. The panel, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, will present its recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8.

## **Military Base, Awaiting Future, Tries Hard to Assure It Has One**

By [KIRK SEMPLE](#)

On military bases across the country and in the communities that depend on them, all the dread and anxiety comes into high focus today, when the Pentagon plans to release a new list of recommended base closings and consolidations.

The upstate New York city of Rome, like many other military communities, has seen this moment coming for years and has tirelessly prepared for it. Stung by past cuts at Griffiss Air Force Base and even a proposed closing 10 years ago, the community spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in public and private money to sell the complex as an essential cog in a shrinking military.

The base has reconfigured its mission, cut costs, streamlined operations and secured millions of dollars in new investments. A community action group that sprung up in support of the base has deployed a small battalion of lobbyists, publicists, public policy experts and financial analysts to build a case in Washington for keeping it right where it is.

"Tomorrow, this will kind of validate 10 years of work or put a major hiccup in our efforts," Steve J. DiMeo, president of the community development group, Mohawk Valley Economic

and Development Growth Enterprises, said yesterday as he anxiously awaited final word. "But I'm trying to remain optimistic."

The city's campaign mirrors efforts elsewhere to head off or blunt the cuts to be recommended by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, who has described this round of base closings and realignments, the first in a decade, as a cornerstone of his plan to streamline the military. He is seeking to cut five to ten percent of base capacity, closing fewer bases than was first expected. [Page A16.]

Mr. Rumsfeld's proposals go to the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission, or BRAC, which must prepare a final list by Sept. 8. President Bush and Congress must accept or reject the list by Nov. 7.

Every major military installation in the country, including those in the New York region - 12 in New York, 7 in New Jersey and 1 in Connecticut - has come under review.

States have tried called on high-powered lobbyists. Florida hired William S. Cohen, the former defense secretary, and Dick Armey, the former House majority leader.

Officials have tried flexing political muscle. Speaker J. Dennis Hastert and two other senior Illinois lawmakers warned Mr. Rumsfeld that closing any National Guard base would require the governor's approval. (The Pentagon disagreed.)

In the New York region, state legislative and Congressional delegations, in conjunction with their governors and public-private community action groups like the one in Rome, have mounted vigorous campaigns to safeguard their bases.

Public officials, military analysts and community leaders say that elements of the Griffiss complex - especially a high-technology research center there - remain particularly vulnerable in the current round of cuts, as do Niagara Air Reserve Station in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and the Naval Air Engineering Station

Lakehurst, Picatinny Arsenal and Fort Monmouth in New Jersey.

The administration of Gov. George E. Pataki has spent \$3 million in the past three years to promote New York military installations: About half the money has helped to finance the community action groups and the other half has paid for Washington lobbyists, including the firm of Hyjek & Fix.

New Jersey has paid more than \$1 million to a Washington lobbyist, Barry D. Rhoads, during the last four years to promote the state's bases, and Connecticut has budgeted more than \$1.2 million to save its most important military complex, the naval submarine base in Groton.

In these campaigns, advocates have frequently emphasized the economic significance of their base to the surrounding communities: the jobs generated, and the amount of personal income and gross state product produced. But the savviest recognize that the best way to win is to establish their base's relevance to the military.

In the calculations of base closings, the most important criteria include the military value of a base - particularly its impact on fighting wars, training and combat readiness - as well as potential cost savings.

"It's apple pie and motherhood in every community," said Hank Beck, a leading community advocate for the New York State Air National Guard 106th Rescue Wing, based at Francis S. Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach, N.Y. "But the decisions that the BRAC commission makes are based on military value."

Rome knows only too well what it feels like to be on the Pentagon's list - and what to do to avoid it. The community lost most of Griffiss Air Force Base in the 1993 round of closings, including an entire bomber wing, costing about 4,500 jobs and spurring the exodus of more than a quarter of the city's population, now about 34,000.

In the next round of cuts two years later, the Pentagon recommended the closure of the

research center on the base, an economic stanchion of the community. A furious lobbying campaign managed to persuade Washington to drop the center from its final hit list that year.

Informed by these near-death experiences, Mohawk Valley Economic and Development Growth Enterprises has spent more than half a million dollars since January 2004 in an effort to keep the Rome military complex off the new list.

(In addition to the laboratories, the base, now called Griffiss Business and Technology Park, includes a defense finance and accounting services center, and an air defense surveillance unit.)

But even the head of the development group admits that all this work might not be enough. Should the Pentagon select any element of the Rome base, the group is poised to spend another \$1 million to rescue it by redoubling its lobbying, focusing on the base closing commission.

"I've prepared myself for the past several weeks that after Friday, we're going to go forward with a full-fledged fight," the group's president, Mr. DiMeo, said in a telephone interview this week. He sighed deeply. BRAC, he said, "is not a good four-letter word."

There's a lot at stake for Rome. Some 4,000 people work on the base: about 800 military personnel and 600 contractors work in the laboratory, 400 people in the air defense surveillance unit, about 400 in the finance accounting service center and the rest in other companies, many of which do business with the lab.

"It's been on everybody's mind because we know what it tastes like to lose that social and economic fabric in our community, we know what it means," said William K. Guglielmo, the president of the Rome Area Chamber of Commerce, in a telephone interview this week.

The current effort to protect the Rome military complex began immediately after the last round of base closures with the formation of the

development group in 1997. Since then, the group has helped the base shift its focus and consolidate its resources around the research center, called the Air Force Research Laboratory. Private firms have moved onto the base and work with the military laboratory.

The development group has also helped to promote about \$182 million in infrastructure improvements using public and private money, Mr. DiMeo said. Another \$70 million is earmarked for this year, he said.

Some functions of the base have been privatized, including electrical and heating systems, and the city has assumed the costs for other services, including road maintenance and fire and police calls, Mr. DiMeo said. "The Air Force only has to worry about its own facility," he said. The efforts have produced what Mr. DiMeo called the premier lab of its kind, specializing in command and control communications, surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence-gathering technology.

"I'm optimistic," Mr. Guglielmo of the Rome Area Chamber of Commerce said. "But having lived through it, gee ..."

His voice trailed off. At this late hour, it seemed, there was nothing more to do but wait and fret.

*Jonathan Miller contributed reporting for this article.*

## **Hometown Area Braces For BRAC Announcement**

### ***Base, Chamber Officials Prepare For Possible Inclusion On Closure List***

POSTED: 5:33 pm CDT May 12, 2005

**FORT SMITH, Ark.** -- Military bases across the country were gearing up Thursday for the possibility that their names could end up on the Base Closure and Realignment list -- and the story was no different in the River Valley.

On Friday at approximately 9:30 a.m., 188th Fighter Wing officials will learn of their unit's fate. Business leaders at the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce were also working on contingency plans Thursday in the event that the 188th Fighter Wing leaves Fort Smith --and takes about \$51 million in revenue with it.

For several months, there has been speculation that the 188th could be at risk. The base's name was first listed on the Air National Guard's Vanguard report earlier this year, and some now fear it might appear on the BRAC list as well. Even if the 188th appears on the BRAC list, base and city officials said that doesn't necessarily mean the end for the unit in Fort Smith.

Base officials said President George W. Bush has to approve or revise the list, which then goes back to the BRAC commission. The list then goes back to the president before receiving an approval or disapproval in Congress.

Chamber President Tom Manskey said officials will use the present time to rally against the possible removal of the air base.

"We are going to kind of see how things play out," Manskey said. "Hopefully, we won't have anything on the list, and we won't have to worry about it any -- as a region or a community -- to get them off that list."

Manskey said that if the base is closed, the chamber's first priority will be to find jobs for the people who won't be relocating to another base.

## **BRAC military closings**

**Kim Wilhelm**

**KWCH 12 Eyewitness News**

**Thursday, May 12, 2005**

Friday morning we'll know which U.S. military facilities may close to save the government money. It's called the BRAC list for Base

Realignment and Closure. But Thursday night, military communities across the United States, including four here in Kansas wait to see if they'll be cut.

The Kansas congressional delegation is confident McConnell AFB won't be on the BRAC list. It's been a political war behind the scenes - a fight to keep jobs. And it's happening all across the nation.

It's a different state, a different military branch, but the same concern. Workers at Rock Island Arsenal, an Illinois Army post make parts for armored vehicles in Iraq. They worry they'll be shut down.

"Anybody who thinks politics won't come into play with this hasn't been to Washington lately," said Sen. Trent Lott, R-Mississippi.

Who is and is not on the BRAC list is hot political debate in Washington. Everyone knows the decision to close a military facility changes thousands of lives.

The changes that will occur will affect a number of communities," said U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. "These are communities that have warmly embraced nearby military installations for a good many years, indeed in some cases, decades. The department will take great care to work with these communities with the respect that they have earned and the government stands ready with economic assistance."

Recently, Rumsfeld scaled down the number of cuts but some are still critical of closures.

"I think the timing is completely wrong," said Lott. "Here we are fighting two wars, one in Afghanistan and Iraq and a war on terrorism."

Eyewitness News will have access to the BRAC list Friday morning at 8:15 a.m. It is not a final list. Among the steps of approving it, both the President and Congress must sign off on it.

Rumsfeld says the BRAC plan could save \$49 billion dollars over 20 years. Ninety-seven bases have been closed since 1988 at a savings of \$18 billion dollars. The one time cost of cleaning them up and closing them down is \$22 billion.

## Beaufort Braces for BRAC

Paul Floeckher

WSAV News 3

Thursday, May 12, 2005

Retired Marine drill instructor Ron White runs Sgt. White's Diner in Beaufort. He says the military accounts for about 50 percent of his customers and 75 percent of his catering business.

"If the bases did close, we'd all be in trouble," White said Thursday.

But White is extremely confident that won't happen. He says he won't be holding his breath Friday when the Pentagon releases its list of bases recommended for realignment or closure.

"I just have to operate on faith and I have to believe that it's a done deal that they won't close any (in Beaufort). So I'm not even worried about it," White said.

Others in the community are more guarded in their optimism.

"We are cautious. We don't have a crystal ball or a magic list. Nobody does. We'll have to wait like everybody else does," said retired Marine Col. Bob Semmler.

Semmler is vice chairman of Beaufort's Military Enhancement Committee. For about a year-and-a-half, the committee has been working to show how important the Beaufort Marine Corps Air Station, Parris Island Marine Recruit Depot and Beaufort Naval Hospital are to the community.

The committee has made six trips to Washington, D.C., to talk to military leaders,

Semmler said. The MEC raised \$600,000 for lobbying and marketing, including funds from Beaufort County and the towns of Hilton Head, Bluffton, Beaufort and Port Royal.

"It's been a community-wide effort from the beginning," Semmler said.

"I really believe that going up there (to D.C.) and talking, and just showing interest, and buying property around the [air station] to keep people from developing around it, really helps a lot," White said.

Along with hurting local businesses, a base closing would also impact the University of South Carolina-Beaufort.

About 500 active-duty military are enrolled full- and part-time each year, according to the university's public relations office. Along with its campuses in Beaufort and Bluffton, USC-Beaufort has campuses on Parris Island and the Marine Corps Air Station.

"Many of the students are either related to, married to or are themselves Marines, so [a closing] would definitely affect the student body," said Johnathan Lucky, USC-Beaufort Student Government president.

Lucky acknowledged that a base closing would "change the way our town works." But, he added, "I think, even if a base does close down, the city will survive no matter what."

But Semmler points to two economic impact studies of the worst-case scenario -- Beaufort losing all three of its bases. A Georgia Southern University study estimated Beaufort's economy would lose \$454 million a year; a University of South Carolina study put the annual loss even higher, at \$700 million.

"It would take 17 years to recover if all three bases closed," Semmler said.

Semmler predicts that all major military installations in the U.S. will be affected in some way by the Base Realignment and Closure. He's

optimistic that Beaufort's bases will not only survive, but actually grow -- by absorbing resources from bases that are closed.

"We want to be on the realignment growth list. That would be fantastic," Semmler said.

"I think people need to be preparing themselves for a lot more military people coming to this town and this town just exploding," White said.

Keep in mind the Pentagon's list isn't the final say. The BRAC Commission will have to hold public hearings and then issue its recommendations to President Bush. If the President accepts the list, it then has to go to Congress.

"(After) the list comes out Friday, we don't pack our bags and close the door," Semmler said. "We have to keep working and we have to keep lobbying to stay off any kind of closure list."

## **Upcoming Commission Schedule**

### **Monday, May 16**

Hearings at the U.S. Senate Hart Building, Room 216

Time: 1:30PM Open Session  
Witnesses: Panel #1  
Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace  
Panel #2  
Department of Defense Officials on Methodology  
Subject: Presentation of Recommendations and Methodology

### **Tuesday, May 17**

Hearings at the U.S. Senate Dirksen Building, Room G50

Time: 9:30AM Open Session  
Witnesses: Secretary of the Air Force  
Chief of Staff  
Designated Department of the Air Force Officials  
Subject: Presentation of Recommendations and Methodology

Time: 1:30PM Open Session **U.S. Hart Building, Room 216**  
Witnesses: Secretary of the Navy  
Chief of Naval Operations  
Commandant of the Marine Corps.  
Designated Department of Navy and Marine Corps. Officials  
Subject: Presentation of Recommendations and Methodology

### **Wednesday, May 18**

Hearings at the U.S. Senate Dirksen Building, Room 106

Time: 9:30AM Open Session

DCN: 9799

Witnesses: Secretary of the Army  
Chief of Staff  
Designated Department of the Army Officials  
Subject: Presentation of Recommendations and Methodology

Time: 1:30PM Open Session  
Witnesses: Designated Department of Defense Officials  
Subject: Presentation of Recommendations and Methodology\_Department of Defense\_s  
Joint Cross Service Groups

**Thursday, May 19**

Hearings at the U.S. Hart Senate Building Room, Room 216

Time: 9:30AM  
Witnesses: Designated Department of Defense Officials  
Subject: Presentation of Recommendations and Methodology\_Department of Defense\_s  
Joint Cross Service Groups