

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

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Air Force BRAC planners nixed Minot realignment

Air Force Times
Nicole Gaudiano
September 05, 2005

Air Force base realignment and closure planners proposed retiring 150 Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles and realigning Minot Air Force Base, N.D., before deciding in April that the idea wouldn't work.

The scenario was one of dozens that Air Force BRAC planners developed in the months before the Pentagon's official recommendations were released in May. The Air Force's top BRAC committee, Base Closure Executive Group, rejected the idea April 7, little more than a month before the final list was released, according to minutes of a group meeting.

Details on the Minuteman proposal are included in an April 7 draft deliberative document among hundreds of thousands of pages of such information released by the Pentagon. Using “force structure reduction” as a justification, the “scenario team” charged with examining BRAC issues cited a recurring savings of \$9 million a year if the plan was adopted.

But the executive group, rejecting the proposal, stated in its minutes, “The proposed Minot Realignment was removed from analysis as inconsistent with planned future force structure.”

An Air Force spokeswoman said she had no comment on the issue since the concept was never discussed beyond the committee and the specifics of such a recommendation were never developed.

The rejected proposal came as news to Air Force Space Command’s director of requirements, Brig. Gen. Mark Shackelford.

“To my knowledge, they didn’t talk with us here at Air Force Space Command headquarters,” he said.

The Air Force has 500 Minuteman missiles divided among Minot; F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo.; and Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., a number validated by the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review that isn’t expected to change.

“Our planning is all toward the 500 number,” Shackelford said.

While the Air Force has been modernizing the Minuteman missiles, they are expected to age out by 2018. Shackelford said an analysis of options for next-generation missiles is on track to be completed in September, with a report following several weeks later.

“The likely solution is going to be based on the current Minuteman III concept,” he said. “We expect to reuse things like the silos, so it will be a silo-based system rather than a mobile system.”

John Pike, a space policy expert and director of GlobalSecurity.org in Alexandria, Va., said that although the intention of BRAC should not be force-structure changes, that has been the result in some cases. He cited as an example the proposal to decommission Minehunter Coastal ships at Naval Station Ingleside, Texas, “to get a base closing,” adding, “Nobody had talked about ships being retired before BRAC.”

“Since they’ve done so many other force-structure changes in BRAC, the notion that they would have done nuclear force-structure changes is not surprising,” he said. “The notion that it would get slapped down immediately is not surprising either, because adult supervision would say, ‘Let’s let the nuclear posture review handle this.’”

Along with new nukes, Air Force Space Command is proceeding with plans for its first conventional warhead for prompt global strike. Another analysis of alternatives will begin in October for the capability, examining how to marry a conventional warhead with an ICBM platform.

U.S. Strategic Command requested the capability, concerned that there could be a challenge getting a bomber into an area where the U.S. is denied access, Shackelford said. Bombers responded to time-critical targets in Afghanistan and Iraq, but they were already in the theater.

The new warheads would be land-based. Their placement will be determined by the analysis of alternatives, which could take as little as one year, he said.

Col. Richard Patenaude, Air Force Space Command’s deterrence and strike division chief, said commanders want the ability to strike anywhere in a time frame reduced from days and weeks to hours and minutes.

“When I say hours and minutes ... we’re talking about six or four or two hours to respond, regardless of the anti-access threat, with little or no forward presence, and being able to respond in multiple theaters simultaneously,” he said.

BRAC Round All But Final Bush Expected To Back Recommendations

Hartford Courant

David Lightman

September 6 2005

WASHINGTON -- President Bush is expected to endorse most, if not all, of the base closing commission's recommendations this month, and Congress is likely to offer little resistance - but lawmakers are making it clear they want no more such panels anytime soon.

"Washington will be reluctant to put themselves through this process again," said Christopher Hellman, military analyst at Washington's Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation.

Bush has been signaling for weeks that he is unlikely to overturn the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's recommendations, which must be presented to him Thursday .

He will have until Sept. 23 to accept or reject them, or send the report back to the commission for revision. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld is considering whether to ask for changes.

The panel rejected some of the key Pentagon recommendations, notably closing the Naval Submarine Base in Groton, Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine.

Last week, Rumsfeld said he did not know what he would recommend to the president.

"They seem to have put a much heavier weight on economic impact" than on military value, he told reporters in California, according to The Associated Press. "We've got our people analyzing what they have proposed. Some of it is difficult to understand."

At the same time, Rumsfeld noted that 80 percent or so of the Pentagon's recommendations were accepted, about the same as in previous BRAC rounds. But many of the changes

involved moving, closing or realigning National Guard units, decisions that have angered many governors and are likely to be decided in courts.

The last time a president offered his own suggestions on base closings came in 1995, when President Clinton recommended changing the decision to close two maintenance depots, one in California and another in Texas.

The recommendations were partially accepted, and Republicans howled that Clinton, facing re-election the following year, was trying to gain support in two of the nation's biggest states.

Bush has consistently said he is trying to avoid any semblance of politics. In an interview with The Courant and seven other newspapers last month, he recalled how hard he had fought as governor of Texas to keep bases open.

Although he appreciates the politics of the matter - he was governor when Clinton tried to get the BRAC ruling changed and was facing his own re-election in 1998 - he vowed in the interview that although "I will take a good look, what I'm not going to do is politicize the process."

"For this to be a fair process, people need to be assured politics will not be part of the decision making," Bush added.

Rep. Thomas M. Reynolds, R-N.Y., chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, said Bush had all but assured him privately that the BRAC decisions would be accepted.

Once Bush acts, the next step is up to Congress. Unless both houses reject the BRAC recommendation within 45 days, it goes into effect.

Few expect legislative rejection. "It's pretty much over with," Sen. Christopher J. Dodd, D-Conn., said of any serious congressional opposition.

Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., had been leading a charge to delay BRAC's implementation. But

Thune got what he wanted, a reversal of the Pentagon's recommendation to close Ellsworth AFB.

After BRAC's Aug. 26 vote on the South Dakota facility, Thune said he would consult with his legislative co-sponsors, but did not sound inclined to move ahead.

"In some respects, the BRAC commission, I think, reflected the spirit of my legislation," he said. "They took a longer look and a harder look at what we were doing and the timing of all that, being at war."

What's more likely in Congress is a lot of anger over the BRAC process. While most members believe the commission was scrupulously independent, few expect to see another version anytime soon.

This BRAC was the fifth since 1988, and its mission was generally to eliminate excesses in military facilities designed to fight the Cold War.

The 2005 round was authorized in late 2001, and the administration wanted it in 2003. The House, concerned that closings would prove a political liability, got it delayed until this year.

The 2005 panel, though, has been subject to congressional skepticism since it started.

"We're at war," said Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, D-Conn., a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, "and this is a process that began at the end of the Cold War."

"I was half expecting the president or someone to postpone the BRAC process," Dodd said.

As the process proceeded, Lieberman found the congressional attitude toward BRAC "ranges from increasingly skeptical to downright angry," he said.

Not only did members want BRAC combined with a more thorough look at the future of the military, but they were concerned about how the Pentagon reached its conclusions.

When defense officials offered their recommendations in May, they said the 62 major base closings and realignments, as well as hundreds of other changes, would save \$50 billion over 20 years.

Those numbers were questioned throughout the hearings, with BRAC Chairman Anthony J. Principi saying that after the commission's changes, the savings would more likely be around \$37 billion. But he cited other estimates that brought the savings down to about \$14 billion.

The lack of precision bothered members of Congress.

"The whole notion of savings was misleading," said Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., top Democrat on the Senate Budget Committee. "The process for calculating savings is badly flawed."

"Nobody really knows the answer as to how much is being saved," Hellman said.

The prospect of a new base closing commission anytime soon is remote.

As Conrad put it, "the mood in Congress is very sour toward BRAC right now."

Local News Articles

Leaner, Meaner Through A Merger The Defense Department sees the mega-base in the Pinelands as the model for a more- efficient combat force.

Philadelphia Inquirer (Philadelphia, PA)
Edward Colimore
September 6, 2005

The transformation of Fort Dix, McGuire Air Force Base and Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station into a single, giant entity has been years in the making.

And it could be years before the mega-base's identity is established, but one thing is certain: The evolution of the American military into a leaner, meaner fighting machine will depend in

part on what happens in the Pinelands of South Jersey.

Long before the proposed melding, the Army, Air Force and Navy were crossing traditional service boundaries, sharing real estate, and working together on multimillion-dollar projects at the facilities.

The cooperation between the bases over the last 12 years became a major selling point as the Base Closure and Realignment Commission considered future defense needs.

The merger, which is awaiting the approval of President Bush and Congress, would make the combined facilities - designated as Joint Base McGuire/Dix/Lakehurst and under a single commander - less vulnerable to future closing, defense experts said.

The 60-square-mile mega-base also will draw military assets from other bases - including Marine and Navy units from Willow Grove Naval Air Station in Montgomery County.

BRAC commissioner Philip Coyle, a former assistant secretary of defense, said the joint cooperation at the bases is part of a wider "streamlining" process.

"It is a model," he said, adding that he would like to see more joint cooperation.

U.S. Rep. Jim Saxton (R., N.J.), whose district includes Fort Dix and McGuire, said Friday the bases would serve as the "test bed for crossing military cultures."

The services see the change as natural. Col. Carla Coulson, who serves in the Army's Joint Cross Services Group at the Pentagon, said that "modern warfare is joint warfare... . Simply, it is an important next step toward a better, more efficient, less costly military."

After surviving previous BRAC cuts by finding new missions, the three South Jersey bases took on joint projects often with help from elected officials such as Saxton, a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

In one project, Dix permitted McGuire in 1994 to build an Air Mobility Warfare Center on the fort's ground.

Also in 1994, Dix and McGuire split the \$40 million cost for a water treatment plant.

More recently, Lakehurst agreed to allow McGuire to use a landing strip and McGuire and Dix have been cooperating on a major housing project at the bases, involving 2,400 new, renovated or converted units.

The Army and Air Force also cooperated on the construction of a new \$5 million gate to X-ray trucks at Dix to serve both bases.

But details of the future tri-service working relationship must be worked out.

McGuire will manage the joint facility and must work with the Army and Navy to determine what services can be combined, such as grass-cutting, road repairs and snow removal.

Combining three bases "is largely unprecedented in the military," Jeff Sagnip, a spokesman for Saxton, said. "There is no blueprint to follow, but Dix, McGuire and Lakehurst are ahead of the curve."

Sagnip said the representatives of the services are meeting to facilitate the changes. "It will take a couple years of planning and a couple years to phase everything in," Sagnip said. "It might be five or six years before we see the joint base of the future."

The evolution of the three bases into one has been part of a larger process.

Stuart Rochester, deputy historian for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, said the armed services have been working more closely over the last two decades on intelligence, logistics and command arrangements.

Part of the impetus for cooperation came from the failed attempt to rescue American hostages from the U.S. Embassy in Iran in 1980,

Rochester said. The services found they were using different maps and radios with different wavelengths.

The consolidation at the South Jersey bases will mean more military assets and jobs. The BRAC recommendations call for all Navy and Marine Corps aircraft and their support personnel to be sent from the Willow Grove Naval Air Station, along with the Marine Light Helicopter Attack Squadron from Cambria Regional Airport in Johnstown, Pa.

The mega-base, which currently employs 15,700 people at the three facilities, would realize a net gain of more than 500 jobs.

The move also would bring about 29 aircraft, including four C-9s, four C-130s, 11 light helicopters and 10 large Sea Stallion helicopters.

The Air Force base also is expected to receive a squadron of KC-135R tankers to replace its aging KC-135Es, which are being retired.

But military officials like to say that nothing is "BRAC proof."

"Threats to national security are ever-changing," Coulson said. "... There is no future intention, should there be a future need for another Base Realignment and Closure round, not to evaluate the military value of each installation, whether joint or not."

About the Bases

Fort Dix

Fort Dix specializes in Reserve training and the processing of Army reservists and national guardsmen called to active duty. It is home to the Air Mobility Warfare Center.

Earnings in fiscal 2003: \$135 million.

Employees: 2,200 military and civilian.

Historical note: It was named for Maj. Gen. John Adams Dix, governor of New York in 1873 and 1874.

McGuire Air Force Base

The base is home to the 305th Air Mobility Wing, which provides air support, transportation and refueling for all military branches, and home to the 108th Air Refueling Wing.

Earnings in fiscal 2003: \$338.4 million.

Employees: 11,800 military and civilian.

Historical note: It was named for Maj. Thomas B. McGuire Jr. McGuire, a Medal of Honor recipient from Ridgewood, N.J., was the second-leading air ace in World War II when killed in action in January 1945.

Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station

In addition to the air station, the site is home to the Naval Air Warfare Center, which focuses on developing, testing and staffing the arresting gear and catapults for aircraft carriers.

Earnings in fiscal 2003: \$114 million.

Employees: 1,700 military and civilian.

Historical note: Lakehurst was where the Hindenburg exploded on May 6, 1937.

SOURCE: Department of Defense; Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University.

Navy Consolidates Intellect In Newport The naval station is in line to gain 500 jobs under a plan to relocate the Officer Candidate School and other resources to Aquidneck Island.

Providence Journal-Bulletin (Providence, NJ)
John E. Mulligan
September 6, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The return of the Navy's Officer Candidate School to Newport may be inconspicuous among the hundreds of changes coming to the installations that make up the nation's military structure. But it suggests how some centers of the armed forces are flourishing

during the first nationwide base-closing exercise in a decade, which has been widely feared for the shock it can inflict on military communities.

Newport appears to be consolidating its status as an intellectual bastion of the Navy, under the Base Realignment and Closure project (known as BRAC) that passed a major milestone last month with a federal base-closing commission's approval of a long list of actions.

"I don't think there's any place in the country where you have as much intellectual capital concentrated as you do in New England" in the military as in the commercial sector, said Loren Thompson, a military analyst at the Lexington Institute, a Washington-area think tank.

"So it makes sense that many of the things the Pentagon does in New England are what the commercial market does," said Thompson. He referred to the Pentagon's successful bid for a modest expansion of the Navy's education and research complex in Rhode Island -- as well as the BRAC panel's rejection of controversial plans to close the historic submarine base in Connecticut and the Portsmouth Navy Shipyard in Maine.

"The continuing problem," Thompson said, "is that there doesn't seem to be as much room for more defense manufacturing jobs -- like you have at Portsmouth or Electric Boat or Bath Iron Works -- as there is for more research and education." (Electric Boat is the submarine shipyard based in Groton, Conn.; Bath Iron Works, another General Dynamics division, builds Navy surface ships in Maine.)

Taken as a whole, the Navy's likely shifts on Aquidneck Island do not involve the numbers of jobs that make headlines or disrupt regional economies. BRAC is tentatively slated to add about 530 Navy jobs to its complement of about 7,500 in and around Newport. By comparison, more than 8,000 Navy jobs were at stake in the proposed shutdown of Submarine Base New London that the BRAC commission refused to approve last month.

But the changes at Newport do seem to follow a clear pattern established since the closure of the Quonset Point Naval Air Station and the radical reductions of the cruiser-destroyer squadron in Newport that sent tens of thousands of sailors away from Narragansett Bay in the 1970s.

In the aftermath, Rhode Island's political establishment worked to shore up what was left, the classrooms-and-laboratory complex centered around the Naval War College. The trend continued during the defense boom of the 1980s, with private companies -- led by the Raytheon operation in Portsmouth -- working with the Navy to develop electronic tools for submarines and antisubmarine warfare.

Between the base-closing rounds of the 1990s, the Navy expanded an existing research-and-development shop into the Naval Underwater Warfare Center, which added new specialties -- and a lot of sought-after high-tech jobs -- at the expense of other Navy facilities around the country.

"Consolidation has been the recurring theme for the warfare center here in Newport," said David Kerwood, public information officer at the center.

Two weeks ago that trend continued with two significant decisions by the BRAC panel, which deliberated for several days in a hotel ballroom near the Pentagon. First, the commission approved a Pentagon plan to relocate to Newport a pair of organizations that work on subsurface "sensors," from the research phase to testing and engineering for eventual production.

Moving to Newport will be a total of about 150 mostly civilian jobs at the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River, Md., and at the Navy's space warfare base in San Diego, Calif.

Kerwood said an example of the new work to be assigned to the underwater warfare center is research and development of the sonar buoys -- once created at Patuxent -- that antisubmarine ships or aircraft, drop or tow in the ocean to detect enemy submarines. Equally significant, according to John Riendeau of the Rhode Island

Economic Development Corporation, was a Pentagon plan for the underwater warfare center that the BRAC commission rejected.

That was the proposal to transfer to San Diego a unit of the center that creates "maritime information systems" and employs about 110 people. According to Kerwood, that piece of Navy jargon can refer to an extremely complex tool unique to submarines. That is the "mast" protruding from the submarine's sail that integrates an array of high-tech features -- optical equipment for periscopes (and their computerized modern replacement); radio antennae; satellite communications links; sonars and other sensors of undersea data.

The electronic communications revolution of recent years -- which essentially resides in the mast of a submarine -- has changed the submariner's world, for the first time breaching the veil of silence that has historically isolated subs from the rest of the fleet.

Kerwood said the plan to recreate the maritime information organization on the West Coast would have separated that work from its foundation in Newport. "It would be like trying to design a new car radio without having a car near you," he said.

The underwater warfare center is the largest of the "tenant" organizations at Naval Station Newport, employing about 2,800, almost all civilian. But the schools are more deeply ingrained in Newport's maritime traditions -- with the Naval War College, perhaps, the flagship.

The shift of the Officer Candidate School from Pensacola, Fla., to Newport is a partial return to tradition. Until about 10 years ago, Newport was the principal home of OCS until the school was transferred to Pensacola, best known as a training base for Navy aviators.

"If you think of the naval base as a university, the War College is the graduate school," for mid-career officers at several stages of their service, Navy spokesman David Sanders said. OCS will be, in effect, the undergraduate wing.

Of the freshly commissioned ensigns in the Navy today, almost 40 percent were educated at civilian colleges under the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps, about 35 percent went to Annapolis and about 25 percent were trained at OCS.

The Navy Supply Corps School will also move to Newport, from its current location at Athens, Ga.

All the gains through the underwater warfare center, OCS and the supply corps will mean a net gain of more than 500 jobs -- uniformed personnel, civilians and students -- according to Sanders.

But included in the net calculation are some losses. About 110 positions in the Navy's Warfare Development Command will move to Norfolk, Va. The organization develops Navy fighting doctrine and sea-trial plans for ships and other weapons.

Also shipping out is the Navy Chaplain School, to a joint religious training center for all the services at Fort Jackson, S.C. Finally, the Navy's New England Reserve Readiness Command, an administrative unit, is to be absorbed into its Mid-Atlantic chapter in Norfolk.

All the shifts -- like the preservation of Sub Base New London and some changes in the nation's Air National Guard units -- are still tentative, part of an overall plan to be presented next week to President Bush and later to Congress.

Unlike the BRAC panel, however, Congress and the president must either accept or reject the sweeping base overhaul as is, with no modification.

Old Torpedo Factory Hit By Military Site Closings

Chicago Tribune (Chicago, IL)
Aamer Madhani
September 5, 2005

When Cmdr. Barbara Franklin arrived in Forest Park last year to take charge of the U.S. Naval

Reserve Center, she found few signs of the Navy's storied history at the sterile-looking military installation now marked for closing.

In the midst of World War II, it was the site of a torpedo factory that helped arm Navy submarines, destroyers and planes. As many as 6,500 workers churned out hundreds of torpedoes per month, a long-forgotten but crucial part of the war effort.

Little of the original installation on Roosevelt Road remains. Built on ground that was once a nine-hole golf course, the torpedo factory building was converted into a shopping center years ago, and a Wal-Mart now sits where there was once Navy housing.

"There isn't much left around that represents the Navy's past in Forest Park," Franklin said. "A lot of my sailors didn't even know what the Navy did here during World War II until I told them."

The last vestige of the Navy in the western suburb could soon be gone as well.

Late last month, the reserve center was among dozens of military installations throughout the country that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended for closing.

Congress and President Bush still have to give their consent. But so far, the pending demise of the Forest Park installation has generated little complaint from Illinois politicians consumed by the potential loss of thousands of jobs at the Downstate Rock Island Arsenal and Great Lakes Naval Training Center in North Chicago.

If the closing is approved, about 20 sailors at Forest Park would be reassigned to other bases, and about 500 reservists who use the reserve center would have to drill elsewhere.

"It's a pretty sad thing," said Rich Vitton, the village's resident historian. "We tried to explain the base's historical importance to the [commission], but it's not something they're too interested in. At least it's something that Forest Park contributed an important part in the war

effort. Those torpedoes probably saved lives. Well, at least American lives."

More than 19,000 torpedoes were built at the factory, and the factory workers--who came mostly from Forest Park, the West Side of Chicago and other nearby suburbs--were credited by Navy commanders for crafting precision weapons considered essential in defeating the Japanese in the Pacific.

Torpedoes "made by the men and women of [Navy Ordnance Plant] Forest Park took heavy toll o[n] the enemy when they were dropped by U.S. Navy airmen in a strike on Manila Bay," Rear Admiral G.F. Hussey Jr. wrote in one telegram to the factory in November 1944. "Pilots were enthusiastic in their praise of the performance of Forest Park torpedoes."

By the end of the war, however, production slowed drastically, and the plant was used primarily as a research and testing facility. In 1971 the plant was shut and the main factory building converted into a 360,000-square-foot mall.

Still, through the years, the Navy kept a presence in Forest Park with the reserve center. The only remaining military structure left on the once expansive installation, the center is a fairly generic office building on a 6.6-acre lot.

Its only distinguishing feature is the "danger control" training center, a corner of a room on the ground floor of the building built to emulate a battle-scarred hull of a Navy battleship. With water pumped into the steel walls of the faux hull, reservists learn how to patch a ship under stress. Navy officials, however, ordered the simulator closed next month, Franklin said.

The U.S. Army, which moved into the space in 1964, will continue to operate a reserve center there.

For years, the mall kept a mural commemorating the factory and a displayed a torpedo made in the Navy ordnance plant. Those and many other mementos were lost or given to military

museums over the years, according to Navy and village officials.

"For a lot of the younger generation in the village, there isn't much to remind us of the military history in Forest Park," said Mayor Anthony Calderone.

In the past, Navy reservists dedicated a weekend per month to drilling, plus one, two-week block.

Under restructuring, Franklin said the Navy hopes to encourage many of its reserve units to fill their commitments over less frequent but longer blocks of time, a shift she said is more attractive to students and professionals in the reserve corps. With the shift in drilling schedules, Franklin said the Navy believes it can make do with fewer facilities.

Some, however, have criticized the strategy, because they believe it will discourage reservists from sticking with the Navy because they would have to drive farther to get to their drill sites.

"Everybody I've spoken to is against it," said retired Chief Petty Officer Conrad Forks, who was a recruiter for the Navy at the center for 11 years. "When they close these centers down, they are just making it tougher for the reservists."

Franklin, who came to Forest Park last year after being stationed in New Orleans, said she is disappointed that she soon might have to leave the installation.

When she arrived in Forest Park last summer, Franklin knew the installation's history and was struck by how little of the Navy's past was reflected in the halls of the reserve center.

She began looking for World War II memorabilia and gathering photographs of the torpedo plant from the Navy installation with the hopes of commissioning a mural. Franklin said she contacted a local cement factory owner who she heard had the shell of an old torpedo that was built at the plant with the hopes of getting him to donate it for a memorial.

But with the closing of the pipeline, Franklin said she has given up on the idea.

"Once the talk started that we were going to be on the [closure] list, the motivation was lost," she said.

Fort Knox Loses Tanks, But Still Wins Post's Identity To Change With More Soldiers, Civilians

Lexington Herald-Leader (Lexington, KY)

Ryan Lenz

September 4, 2005

FORT KNOX - Fort Knox has been heralded as the Army's home of heavy armor since tanks first rolled into battle. Its name is legendary and its grounds equated with some of the military's most famed tank commanders.

The military's plans to move its training grounds for tanks from such a storied home and make Fort Knox a post for an infantry brigade returning from Europe and a central hub for Army personnel services represents a sea change for the post.

Maj. Gen. Terry L. Tucker, who commands Fort Knox and the Armor Center and School, told The Associated Press the changes mean a different identity -- and a break from the post's traditional mission.

"Ten years from now, Fort Knox is going to be bigger, better and stronger than it is today," Tucker said in an interview.

Fort Knox will be home to an additional 3,500 infantry soldiers and 3,000 new civilian employees once the Armor Center and School moves to Fort Benning, Ga., and other personnel command units arrive, Tucker said.

Those numbers differ from previous estimates that the post would lose about 8,500 jobs in surrounding communities with the changes, which Tucker said were influenced by the 15,000 soldiers who are posted to Fort Knox for training but leave afterward.

But bringing the Army's scattered personnel services and a combat brigade to the sprawling 109,000-acre historic post about 40 miles south of Louisville means Fort Knox will be a homefront instead of an itinerant home for soldiers in training.

"When the dust settles, that means families, housing, shopping in the local communities," Tucker said.

The change is drastic for Fort Knox, whose grounds for decades have been filled with the rumble of tanks as soldiers training at the Army's Armor School learned how to command one of military's deadliest machines.

Under the changes, the grunts of soldiers from the Army's 1st Infantry Division will replace that rumble.

"This will be a home to combat ready soldiers who could be sent around the globe on short notice and return to Fort Knox -- because this is where home is," said Connie Shaffery, a Fort Knox spokeswoman.

The addition of so many soldiers and their families will mean an increase in sales for dozens of stores and restaurants just outside the Fort Knox gates, said Helga DeRosa, owner of the German Cottage Cafe, about five miles down the road.

"I've been here forever, since 1969 when the post was full. We had a lot of soldiers a long time ago and I'm sure it's going to be an improvement for the town," DeRosa said.

Other units slated to come to Fort Knox in the wake of the base closing changes include engineer, military police and combat service support teams from Europe and Korea. The post also will receive the U.S. Army Accessions Command and U.S. Army Cadet Command from Fort Monroe, Va., the 84th Army Reserve Regional Training Center from Fort McCoy, Wis. The Army Human Resources Command will move to Fort Knox from Missouri, Indiana and the northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C.

The Armor Center and School won't leave for three years because Fort Benning has yet to build the necessary training fields and buildings to support the school. Fort Benning already has the Army's infantry counterpart to the Armor School. Training those branches of the Army in the same location should help to better prepare soldiers for future battles, Tucker said.

But the changes to Fort Knox were accompanied by raw emotion because of the state's history of base losses, said retired Brig. Gen. James E. Shane Jr., head of the state's Commission on Military Affairs, which lobbied to save Kentucky's military facilities.

Previous base-closing rounds closed the Lexington Army Depot and the Naval Ordnance Station in Louisville. Those closings and other scalebacks cost Kentucky more than 13,000 employees and \$240 million in payrolls in the 1990s, Shane said.

But recent months have brought a clearer picture of what good the changes will bring for Fort Knox.

Those benefits include a \$250 million increase in payroll, which feeds in some way the business climate in the communities that surround Fort Knox, and as much as \$200 million in on-post construction, Shane said.

The federal panel that voted on a list of military installations the Pentagon wanted to close or change also opted to retain Knox's Ireland Army Community Hospital's inpatient care facilities, which provides health care for soldiers and their families who would have to travel to hospitals in Hardin County or Louisville without it.

In their vote, the panel noted the presence of fighting soldiers as a reason to keep the hospital's services.

"There is a new future for Fort Knox, and the future is very bright," Shane said. "It's just going to have a different profile."

Ohio Gains Nearly 2,000 Jobs During Base-Closing Process

Columbus Dispatch (Columbus, OH)

Jonathan Riskind

September 4, 2005

The federal base closing process wound up treating Ohio well overall, according to the state Department of Development.

Ohio will gain nearly 2,000 jobs under the decisions reached recently by the independent Base Realignment and Closure Commission, whose job was to scrutinize the Pentagon's May 13 closure list and send final recommendations to the White House and Congress.

One of the major victories enjoyed by the state was persuading the commission not only to keep open but to expand by about 400 jobs a defense accounting center in Cleveland, which the Pentagon had slated for closure. Central Ohio's Defense Finance and Accounting Center in Whitehall was guaranteed at least not to lose jobs from its 2,000-employee center, but state officials expect new jobs to pour into that facility as well.

Several installations within Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton that the Pentagon wanted to move are being retained. Jobs are being lost with the planned pullout of planes from Air Guard bases in Springfield and Mansfield, but the bases themselves are being kept open, and local and state officials hope to persuade the military to find new missions for those facilities.

"The last six months have been a series of ups and downs, with Ohio going from status quo to a worst-case scenario loss of 3,300 jobs, to a net gain of more than 1,800 jobs," said Lt. Gov. Bruce E. Johnson, also the development director.

The Development Department gave local communities more than \$2.5 million to wage campaigns for their installations, according to a release.

The base closing commission's final report goes to President Bush by Thursday. The president

can send back the report once for revisions but ultimately must accept or reject the recommendations in their entirety -- and Bush has indicated he is inclined to accept the findings and forward them to Congress. Congress' only option is to vote the report down in its entirety or it becomes law.

Jobs Program Set For Base Workers

The Daily News of Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA)

Eric Leach

September 4, 2005

VENTURA - Ventura County officials have launched a new program they hope will help some of the 5,000 workers who might lose jobs that depend on the Naval Base Ventura County, which is transferring some 2,200 positions to the High Desert.

The Workforce Investment Board of Ventura County, which receives about \$7 million a year in federal money to help create employment opportunities, is developing a plan to help the displaced workers transition into new jobs in high growth areas, including health care, biotechnology and construction.

"The WIB will begin working in partnership with the BRAC Ventura County Task Force to save jobs at Naval Base Ventura County and to prepare for job loss as the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) Commission realigns employment at the base," WIB Executive Director Elaine Crandall said. "A plan is already taking shape to develop career pathway programs that will ease personnel into new jobs."

On Aug. 25, the federal BRAC voted to shift more than 2,000 Naval Base Ventura County jobs to the China Lake area of Kern County. As a result, Ventura County officials say they stand to lose about 5,000 military and related civilian jobs, many of them well-paying positions for highly skilled workers.

The BRAC panel is sending its recommendations to President George W. Bush,

who has until Sept. 23 to accept the package or send it back one time for revisions before forwarding it to Congress. The House and Senate must then either approve or reject the entire plan without amendments.

Members of the BRAC 2005 Ventura County Task Force have said it appears the Naval Base Ventura County jobs will be lost over a period of four years or more, but they remain hopeful that the number will be reduced over time.

But because so many of the jobs are for highly trained people, they have called the potential loss a "brain drain."

After the federal commission made its decision Bill Simmons, manager of the Local BRAC task force called it "a huge disappointment," but expressed optimism things could get better over time.

"A lot can happen in four to six years," he said. "I think we'll see a lot of people moving around."

Mark Schniepp, director of the California Economic Forecast, has said that those workers who don't want to move to the China Lake area could probably find alternative work in the Ventura County area.

The Workforce Investment Board has already distributed a request for proposals seeking qualified organizations to not only conduct an Economic Impact Study of Naval Base Ventura County, but to implement the WIB's proposed action plan to minimize potential negative effects.

"We want to develop a long-range plan and partnerships so the business organizations and community organizations are ready as the effects of the BRAC decision take place," Crandall said. "We want to keep as many of the talented people as possible in Ventura County."

The proposed plan includes a health care academy that provides military personnel with paid and unpaid internships at local medical centers, the BioTech Career Pathways Project

that trains military and civilian personnel for entry-level occupations in the biotechnology sector, and a pre-apprenticeship construction program to provide training necessary to qualify for pre-apprenticeship skilled construction jobs.

Planning includes a Troop-to-Teach academy that transitions military personnel into the education work force and an augmentation of Rapid Response services, which identifies resources and services for businesses and their employees affected by downsizing due to company restructuring, closure or relocation.

The WIB oversees work force development in the county by integrating employment, training, education and business services for job seekers, workers and employers.

Its annual budget of more than \$7 million helps create and fund programs that help youth and adults train for available jobs and help employers create new jobs and upward mobility for workers.

Even before the BRAC commission's decision, the Workforce Investment Board had been focusing on the potential of new jobs in Ventura County's growing biotechnology industry, which includes companies like Amgen and Baxter International.

The WIB recently launched a two-year, \$363,000 BioTech Career Pathways Project to address skill shortages created by the industry's fast-paced growth.

"With companies like Amgen and Baxter taking root in Ventura County, the skill shortage in the biotechnology sector must be addressed if we as a county are going to raise our employment rates," said Lynn Jacobs, chair of the Workforce Investment Board of Ventura County.

"This program will prepare dislocated workers for entry-level biotechnology careers, filling a shortage in personnel and lowering unemployment rates."

The flexible and industry-led program will be developed with a combination of accelerated

contract education courses and for-credit courses specifically developed and tailored for entry-level biotechnology careers, such as preparation technicians, cleaning technicians, biotechnology lab assistants and manufacturing associates.

Internship opportunities will be developed in connection with Ventura College, and job search assistance will be offered through a collaborative effort between Business and Employment Services and the Ventura County Community College District.

Previous program graduates have obtained positions with such companies as Amgen, Baxter, Bio-Source and DAKO.

Ellsworth to remain open

Indian Country Today (Rapid City, SD)
David Melmer
September 4, 2005

Rapid City, S.D. -- Anxiety turned into jubilation in South Dakota Aug. 26 when the Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted 8 -- 1 to keep Ellsworth Air Force Base, the state's No. 2 employer, open.

For months, when the military base reorganization procedure was announced, national, state and local officials went into action to save what was at first billed as an economic issue with up to 8,000 military and civilian jobs on the line. Estimates put the economic impact of the base at \$ 65 million per year for the immediate region.

The Ellsworth Task Force, which was founded 10 years ago when other military closings took place, geared up for the fight. The state's congressional delegation was at the center of the battle with the Pentagon and the BRAC Commission.

The message to the commission turned from economics to defense. Ellsworth, headquarters for the 28th B-1B Bomber Wing, would have moved to Dyess Air Force Base in Texas had it closed. The arguments to keep Ellsworth open turned to national security, claiming that it

would be more beneficial to national security if there were two B-1 bomber bases.

"I'm pleased the BRAC commissioners recognized the invaluable contribution Ellsworth Air Force Base makes to our national security and has recommended against placing it on the final base closure list.

"Ellsworth is critical not only to our national defense, but to the economic livelihood of the Rapid City area," said Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D.

The economic impact to the American Indian population in the state and the reservations is nearly impossible to determine. Air Force officials said they do not collect racial data on employees. The Pentagon and high level officials of the Air Force could not determine whether or not minority contracts, such as 8(a) contracts with American Indian companies and tribes, would have been affected by Ellsworth's closure.

Information on contracts affecting Indian country with other closures and realignments of military bases could not be determined.

When realignment was announced, two South Dakota tribes went on record to claim the land, buildings and other facilities of the 5,000-acre base. Ellsworth was built in 1942 on land that is located within treaty land.

Ira Taken Alive, a member of Rep. Stephanie Herse's staff, may have summed up the situation best: "Ellsworth keeps watch over our traditional homeland."

Tribal chairmen at a recent gathering said they supported the effort to keep Ellsworth open even though two tribes laid claim to the land in the event of its closure.

The Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association was contacted just prior to the announcement and asked to partner with Black Hills Vision, a group working on "Plan B" if the base closed. Plan B was formed to develop plans for economic development in case of the base closing.

Black Hills Vision came to the tribal chairmen to open communications and involve the tribes in a partnership.

"The Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association is the best place to come to get tribal involvement. We want to seek your partnership," said Mark Merchand, chairman of Black Hills Vision.

Recurring issues with Ellsworth began creeping to the surface. When the base was constructed, a portion of the Pine Ridge Reservation, mostly located in the South Dakota Badlands, was used as a bombing range. Today there is still ordinance residue in the area, with some ammunition and bombs still active. Cleanup efforts are under way.

Had the base closed, Cecilia Fire Thunder, president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, said money for the bombing range clean up would be welcome.

What the base closing and partnership with Black Hills Vision represented would have been an opening to meet face to face with state, local and city leaders.

"As leaders we need to dialogue with local leaders; we support Rapid City retailers," Fire Thunder said.

Chairman Harold Frazer, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, agreed that Rapid City and other cities need to do more for Indian people. The closing of Ellsworth would have brought the tribes and local leadership closer together. Closer work with the state would have also resulted from a decision to close.

Gov. Mike Rounds encouraged Black Hills Vision to partner with the tribes.

What the decision to keep the airbase open means to this potential partnership is not certain. Black Hills Vision will continue with efforts to develop economic expansion for the region.

It is not certain whether tribal leaders may have lost an opportunity to be directly involved with the future economic development of the region. The elevated presence could have been used to educate the non-Indian community, provide leverage for gaming compact negotiations, develop individual businesses, develop business training and loan opportunities and involve all communities in other American Indian issues.

Prior to the announcement, political careers were a topic of discussion on national television and in coffee shops. Sen. John Thune's future was at stake. He campaigned partly on the Ellsworth issue, claiming that as a Republican he would have more leverage with the president to keep the base open.

Thune defeated Sen. Tom Daschle, then Senate Minority Leader, in an election that followed a contentious campaign. Voters in Indian country overwhelmingly supported Daschle.

The entire congressional delegation, the governor and hundreds of people across the state can be credited with efforts to save Ellsworth, state officials said.

"Ensuring that the commission voted to remove Ellsworth from the base closing list was truly a group effort," Johnson said.

"I was proud to work with Senator Thune, Representative Herseth, Governor Rounds and the Ellsworth Task Force to make today's vote a reality," he said in a prepared statement.

Herseth also commented on the bi-partisan effort. Mentioning the task force, the governor and senators Thune and Johnson, Herseth said, "We have not only worked hard but we have worked together, and we should be proud of this victory for South Dakota's future."

Thune also praised the BRAC decision. "I am proud to have been a part of this victory to keep Ellsworth open, especially as America continues to fight the war on terror. Ellsworth Air Force Base is integral to America's current and future security needs."

Closings to cut jobs; Military facilities

The Kansas City Star (Kansas City, MO)

September 4, 2005

Kansas City would lose more than 980 defense-related jobs if the president and Congress approve recommendations of a base-closing panel.

Every effort should be made to alleviate the distress of those affected, even though the goal - a less-wasteful defense budget -- is a worthy objective.

The local installations slated for closing are a Defense Finance and Accounting Services office, a Marine Corps Support Center and a Navy recruiting headquarters.

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver says that along with indirect job losses, Kansas City's overall payroll cut could come to more than 1,160 jobs. Kansas City, however, has fared better than St. Louis, where the number of recommended job cuts would be more than twice as high.

The St. Louis total included 250 jobs that would be lost by closing the Air National Guard's 131st Fighter Wing at St. Louis-Lambert International Airport.

Missouri will lose jobs, but Kansas will gain. Major installations such as Fort Riley will absorb additional troops, although the Army Ammunition Plant in Parsons, with 167 jobs, was slated to close.

The Pentagon plans to close many installations around the nation and consolidate jobs in fewer locations, moves expected to generate \$48 billion in savings over the next two decades.

Once the Base Realignment and Closure Commission settles on a final list, Congress will have the last word on whether the list should be approved -- as written. Lawmakers are barred from making changes.

This is the fifth round of base-closing recommendations since 1980, and the process

has helped squeeze a great deal of excess spending. Still, the government should do what it can to ease the disruption of those who now confront the prospect of lost jobs.

BRAC bucked the Pentagon

Portland Press Herald (Portland, ME)

Bart Jansen

September 6, 2005

WASHINGTON — The first signal that there might be hope for the future of a military accounting office in Limestone came on June 28, when a member of the federal base-closing commission, retired Air Force Gen. Lloyd Newton, toured the facility on the site of the former Loring Air Force Base.

"(Newton) pulled me aside and said, 'You know, we can grow Limestone,' " recalled U.S. Rep. Mike Michaud, D-Maine, who was on the tour at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service building. "He was actually talking about moving a wall at a certain place up there. I was very confident."

On Aug. 25, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission did just that. The commission rejected a Defense Department recommendation to close the Limestone accounting office and instead voted to nearly double its work force to at least 600, a victory for economically hard-hit northern Maine.

The decision came one day after the panel voted to spare the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, saving 4,233 jobs, and close the Brunswick Naval Air Station, at a loss of 3,275 jobs.

The moves were surprising because in all three cases, the base-closing commission went against the Pentagon's recommendations. Analysts said the Maine decisions - and other similar votes nationwide - show that commissioners gave as much weight to arguments of a base's economic impact as they did to its military value in making their final decisions on what to close or keep open.

"I've got to tell you, I was surprised" about Portsmouth and Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, said David Sorenson, a national security professor at the Air War College in Alabama. "The one thing I think may have happened was that the commission is paying a lot more attention to economic issues than military value."

But analysts unanimously said that each base appeared to have been judged on its own merits.

"I think it caused them to spend a lot more time to look at those facilities," said Christopher Hellman of the advocacy group Center for Arms Control and Non-proliferation. "On something like Portsmouth, great minds might differ, but at least there was a line of logic you could follow."

The additional study allowed Maine's congressional delegation - Republican Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, and Democratic Reps. Tom Allen and Michaud - and Gov. John Baldacci to fight the Defense Department recommendations. Portsmouth was one of the highest-profile reversals in the country, along with Ellsworth and the Navy's submarine base in Groton, Conn.

Maine's quality work force was cited repeatedly by the commission. The chairman, Anthony Principi, called the Portsmouth work force "the gold standard" for ship repair and noted that environmental costs of closing the base were probably underestimated.

Even at Brunswick, the goal was to find other work for the employees. Keeping Limestone open kept faith with that center's "superb" workers, Principi said.

Here's a closer look at the factors that went into each decision about Maine's bases:

PORTSMOUTH

Because the Navy has an estimated 27 percent too much maintenance capacity at four shipyards, it proposed closing the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Closure would save an estimated \$1.26 billion over 20 years.

Maine and New Hampshire defenders, however, argued that there was plenty of work to go around, because the Navy historically underestimates its repair needs. This was the subject of testimony from retired Rear Adm. William Klemm, who was scheduled to testify July 6 at the commission's Boston hearing on Portsmouth.

The Pentagon barred his appearance. But commission staffers later interviewed Klemm and got his written testimony for deliberations.

In a copy of testimony obtained by the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram, Klemm cited the USS Greenville colliding with a fishing vessel, the USS Hartford running aground, the USS Dolphin flooding and catching fire, and the USS San Francisco colliding with an undersea mountain.

"Without shipyard capacity to get work done, projects are not executed," said Klemm, who oversaw shipyards during the final four years of his 41-year career.

The only Navy member of the commission, retired Adm. Harold Gehman, suggested the service needs excess capacity to respond to emergencies, but that "excess-excess" capacity should be eliminated.

The Navy figured to have 8 percent too much shipyard capacity after Portsmouth closed. But by then other commissioners seized on and amplified Gehman's argument.

Commissioner Philip Coyle, a former assistant defense secretary, said nobody complains about excess capacity on a highway that isn't filled with bumper-to-bumper traffic. He said he wouldn't tear down his garage because his car wasn't parked there all day every day.

"This is an example where we do not have excess-excess capacity," Coyle said of Portsmouth.

Part of the dispute focused on how many submarines, which Portsmouth specializes in

repairing, the Navy needs. The fleet is dwindling from about 100 during the Cold War to 55 today and could drop to 41 over the next 20 years.

But Snowe, a member of the Intelligence Committee, insisted that the commission hear a classified briefing about China's emerging naval threat that could spur a revival in submarines. Four commissioners and two top staffers got briefed Aug. 12.

The permanence of closure weighed heavily. The presumption is that no replacement yard could ever be built because of opposition to handling nuclear reactors.

"It would be tragic for the nation to lose it," Principi said of Portsmouth. "If we lose this one as well, we would not get it back."

BRUNSWICK

Several phrases from the Portsmouth debate failed to translate to Brunswick, where closure will cost more local jobs than the 2,420 at stake in the Pentagon's proposal to move the aircraft to Jacksonville Naval Air Station in Florida.

The only operational airfield in the Northeast wasn't saved because of its strategic location, which had protected Pearl Harbor.

The shrinking fleet of surveillance aircraft counted more harshly against the base than the declining number of submarines for Portsmouth.

And the commission shrugged off the additional cost of flying missions instead from Jacksonville - \$50,000 and an extra three hours in flight.

But in contrast to Portsmouth, this closure decision wasn't viewed as irrevocable. The runways are expected to remain. Because the next aircraft is a modified Boeing 737, it could land at civilian airfields in an emergency or at National Guard bases to deal with weaponry.

"There are airfields in New England - lots of airfields in New England - which will be able to handle ordnance," said Gehman, the retired admiral.

Closing rather than reducing the size of the base saves more money faster: \$798 million over 20 years rather than \$239 million. The decision boiled down to consolidating resources as the number of aircraft declines.

"This is very, very hard for anybody who has visited there and knows the wonderful support that the state of Maine and the people of Brunswick have given this naval air station for many, many years. It is an excellent facility," said Commissioner Samuel Skinner, a former White House chief of staff. "Having said that, it's not needed anymore."

LIMESTONE

In Limestone, the 360 jobs paying an average \$35,000 are valued in the rural county with high unemployment. The office fills openings in 9.2 days and has lower turnover than rival offices.

In addition, it's already on a former base, so beefing up security is no problem. The 50-year lease is rent free, a tough offer to ignore.

"I think this was one of the best actions done by this BRAC team," said retired Army Gen. James Hill, one of the commissioners most supportive of cost-cutting. "It seemed to be a classic no-brainer, but that's not true. In the closures, you couldn't flippantly discuss people."

Opinions/ Editorials

N.Y.'s Bases Protect The U.S.

New York Post (New York, NY)
Hillary Rodham Clinton
September 6, 2005

Last month, the nation learned what we in New York already knew: Our state is second to none in contributing to the country's national security and homeland defense. The Base Closing and Realignment Commission (BRAC) reminded the Pentagon yet again of the indispensable value of New York's military installations, by rejecting the Defense Department's proposals to close Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station and the

Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Rome, among other favorable decisions.

With that, New York went from a possible loss of over 1,000 jobs to a likely gain of hundreds. Yet those BRAC decisions don't just mean jobs for upstate communities — they're vital to protecting New Yorkers everywhere from the Canadian border to New York City.

When Congress was considering the base-closing law in 2001, I fought along with Rep. John McHugh (R-Watertown) for homeland defense to be one of the criteria that would be considered as part of a base's "military value." We knew that if defending our homeland was a determining factor in keeping our bases open, we had an even stronger case to make.

Indeed, the BRAC explicitly acknowledged that Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station's strategic location along the U.S.-Canada border makes it an ideal location for supporting our homeland defense.

As for other facilities, the facts speak for themselves.

In the hours and days after the 9/11 attacks, Brooklyn's Fort Hamilton kicked into high gear, becoming the home to National Guard troops assigned to protect airports and train stations in the metro area. Newburgh's Stewart Air National Guard Base served as a staging area for relief efforts.

And F-16s from Hancock Field were put into action to fly combat air patrols, while Air National Guard personnel from the Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) facility in Rome helped coordinate the response to the attacks and subsequent protection of New York City from the air.

The last remaining survivor at Ground Zero was found by an Air National Guardsman from Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton.

And only months later, the brave men and women of the 10th Mountain Division based at

Fort Drum were among the first to see combat in Afghanistan.

In preparing for this base-closing round, New York's congressional delegation also made the case that our state plays a significant role in fulfilling the needs of our armed forces, from the manufacturing ability of Watervliet Arsenal to the innovative defense industry ranging from Long Island to upstate.

Our next commander-in-chief will actually fly aboard a new Marine One helicopter built in Owego, designed to meet the security challenges of the 21st century. The Air Force Research Laboratory in Rome is developing critical new technologies with applications for homeland defense and security.

The base-closing process is a long one: Communities across New York state have been dealing with the latest round for four years — and the commission's votes only cap New York's unprecedented successes in the 2005 base-closing round.

Back in May, the Defense Department recommended that most New York installations remain open, including the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate in Rome plus Army installations at Fort Drum, Fort Hamilton, West Point and Watervliet Arsenal — along with the Air National Guard bases in Syracuse, Scotia, Newburgh and Westhampton, plus the Northeast Air Defense Sector in Rome. And in recent days, personnel and aircraft from several of our installations have deployed to help the disaster-relief effort in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Only three states contribute more of their residents to our nation's armed forces than New York. As our state's first senator to sit on the Armed Services Committee, I am proud to represent and support New York's military bases and the brave men and women who serve.

Rest assured that I will continue to fight to ensure that there is no attempt to damage New York's installations. After this BRAC round is done, I intend to use my position on the Armed

Services Committee to support our bases and to seek new missions that will allow New Yorkers to contribute their expertise and ingenuity to our national defense.

It's been an uphill struggle to save our bases, but we have proven victorious. We went from a threatened nearly 1,000 job loss to a likely job gain. It's a tribute to the spirit of New York: When faced with a challenge, we join together and fight. Our whole state should be proud.

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton is a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Going The Extra Mile?;

You Can Take Brac Out Of Politics, But . . .
Richmond Times Dispatch (Richmond, VA)
James Crawley
September 4, 2005

August is normally a month known here for its oppressive heat and humidity.

The only saving grace is that it's a month devoid of politicians.

The President goes to Crawford, Texas. Senators and House members are either home, vacationing in Tahiti, or junketing to the four corners on the taxpayer dime.

But, this August was a little different.

The nine-member independent Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) was busy holding hearings and voting on the future of hundreds of military installations and offices.

By the time it finished, the commission had decided the fate of cities, towns, and, yes, politicians from nearly every state.

Isn't BRAC supposed to be immune from political influence?

Yes, the powers-that-be did take the politics out of BRAC by setting up a panel to make the final

call on which bases to shutter, removing it from congressional horse-trading.

But, no law could take BRAC out of politics.

Having a base close in one's state, congressional district, or city limits is very bad karma for anyone who runs for re-election. No amount of mea culpas or "it's not my faults" would likely silence a political opponent after a base closure. Workers are voters and unemployed workers are mad voters. With thousands of jobs at stake, BRAC can be a political nightmare.

Politicians with local bases on the Pentagon list went into political survival mode.

Many spoke at local rallies as the "save our base" campaigns took on the air of a political campaign.

They attended hearings, visited bases, and lobbied commissioners. At press conferences, they vowed to fight the good fight for their bases, jobs, and the American Way. They wrote hundreds of letters, held congressional hearings. Some congressmen tried to block funding for BRAC projects. Three governors sued to halt the BRAC process.

Some politicians went the extra mile for their bases.

Despite having no chance to argue their cases, several dozen politicians sat through the commission's three monotonous days of deliberations. They just sat and listened.

It was a most unusual sight -- politicians as silent spectators.

"They're supporting their people," said Lilly Goren, a political science professor at Carroll College, in Waukesha, Wisconsin, who wrote a book on base-closing politics. "Of course, they're not the one's making the decisions."

New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, who was trying to keep Cannon Air Force Base open, was one of them. So was Florida Governor Jeb Bush, who sat on the front row with a delegation

from his state. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas warmed a chair for two days. New England officeholders filled other seats.

WHEN SENATE legend Robert Byrd of West Virginia strode into the hearing room, reporters quickly found the base he was interested in: a Charleston, West Virginia, airport with Air National Guard cargo planes.

The most persistent politician was easily the one politico standing to lose the most if a home-state base closed -- South Dakota Senator John Thune.

Last year, he defeated Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle in a bitter campaign marked by pronouncements that Thune would protect Ellsworth Air Force Base better than Daschle would.

When the Pentagon recommended Ellsworth's closure in May, the freshman's political career light flashed yellow for caution.

For three days, he alternately sat in the hearing room, paced the foyer, or conducted interviews with reporters as the panel decided the fate of dozens of Army, Navy, and Marine Corps bases. Air Force bases were last on the agenda.

When the commission voted to save Ellsworth, Thune was all smiles.

Base and career rescued.

Conspicuously absent were the Virginians -- the governor, the two senators, and most of the congressional delegation were "no shows." Most claimed they had said all they could say at previous hearings. Some were out of the country on congressional trips.

When commissioners voted on Virginia's Oceana Naval Air Station, the only elected official present was Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf.

VIRGINIA DID not do well. It lost thousands of jobs to Maryland and other states. Oceana was given a reprieve but could be moved to Florida

unless state and local officials meet BRAC demands.

On the other hand, Thune, Bush, Ms. Hutchison, Richardson, and Byrd all left with bases saved from the chopping block.

In all likelihood, one politician's presence or absence had little or no impact on which bases survived BRAC, but if voters perceive that an officeholder did not go the extra mile for local military bases, then dire consequences could happen at the polls.

BRAC 101: A primer on people power
Fort Worth Star Telegram (Fort Worth, TX)
Star-Telegram
September 6, 2005

The Base Realignment and Closure process provided an opportunity for PBS' NewsHour with Jim Lehrer to develop a social studies exercise that was posted on the show's "Extra Lesson" online feature.

By the end of the lesson, high school students were expected to understand the role and purpose of the BRAC Commission as well as the process and time line, and be able to identify ways for stakeholders to impact BRAC, described as "an example of defense policy making."

The most intriguing statement in the entire outline was buried deep in the introductory paragraph: "... because base closures can cause economic and social disruption to communities and require environmental cleanup, the process is somewhat political and emotionally charged."

Somewhat political and emotionally charged? That, dear students, is what is known as an understatement.

For two stakeholder groups -- politicians and community leaders -- the criteria used for deciding which military facilities should remain open and which should be eliminated as excess capacity often boiled down to one issue: jobs.

And these stakeholders engaged in a time-honored practice to make their points: lobbying.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and the Pentagon -- more stakeholders -- were primarily concerned with issues of military value, operational readiness, mission capabilities, potential costs and savings.

Community support and environmental implications, while necessary to consider, were not -- nor should they have been -- at the top of military minds. Rumsfeld said he did not discuss base closures with any governor or lobbyist, although defense officials said several tried.

The tactic, however, did work with BRAC commissioners, the powerful group of former military and government officials -- many with corporate experience -- who made significant revisions to Rumsfeld's list.

Now, class, for an example of how stakeholders were able to impact the process, direct your attention to Cannon Air Force Base in New Mexico.

Economic factors and not military strategy convinced the BRAC Commission to keep open an airbase that, if the commissioners' recommendations are approved by President Bush and Congress, will have no aircraft.

Rumsfeld inked Cannon into the "closed" category despite the 20 percent dent that it might put in the local economy. About 5,000 jobs on the base and in the community are directly tied to Cannon, which is home to three F-16 fighter squadrons.

Or, more accurately, was home to those squadrons. The planes are being moved even though the commission voted to keep the base open as an enclave. (It doesn't help to look that one up, students. Webster's definition of a "tract or territory enclosed with foreign territory" doesn't begin to describe the friendly environs surrounding Cannon.)

Of course, class, BRAC is supposed to be about more than jobs and money, but saving money is

important to all the stakeholders, including a group not mentioned yet: U.S. taxpayers.

When the Pentagon released its recommendations for realignment and closure in May, it was estimating savings of more than \$49 billion over 20 years. Here's where the lesson shifts from social studies to math.

A July report from the Government Accountability Office indicated that the assertions made to support the Defense Department recommendations, in particular those about estimated savings, were not as solid as the Pentagon indicated.

According to GAO Comptroller General David Walker, nearly half of the Pentagon's projected \$50 billion in savings came under the heading of cuts in military personnel, when in actuality most of those troops probably would be reassigned.

Class, this is what is known as creative accounting.

At the final BRAC hearing Aug. 27, Chairman Anthony Principi said preliminary estimates from the commission's recommendation list would generate \$37 billion in savings over 20 years. He added that those revised savings would be reduced to \$14 billion if manpower changes are not included.

The panel's recommendations will be on the president's desk by Thursday. Bush will have 15 days to accept or reject them. He can send the list back to the commission just once for revisions, but he does not have line-item veto power when it comes to BRAC.

Once Bush signs off on the list, Congress has 45 days to accept or reject it. Changes cannot be made.

So, students, what basic lessons were learned from 2005 BRAC?

Lobbying works, and even the Defense Department views itself as a jobs program.

Class dismissed.

Additional Notes

