

## Naval Station Ingleside

Background: after the poor performance of US mine forces in Operations Earnest Will (tanker escorts) and Desert Storm, CNO Admiral Kelso placed renewed emphasis on mine warfare, including the establishment of a Mine Warfare Center of Excellence at Ingleside. Since that time there has been strong Congressional and OSD support for mine warfare. The success of US mine countermeasure ships, helicopters, and EOD personnel in Operation Iraqi Freedom is a reflection on the progress the Navy has made, due in large part to the Mine Warfare Center of Excellence and the integrated (helicopter, ship and EOD) training that takes place in the Corpus Christi operating area. Mines continue to be a major threat to Joint warfighting operations in the littorals.

The Navy proposes to close Naval Station Ingleside and relocate the MCM ships to San Diego, move Mine Warfare Command to Point Loma and co-locate with Fleet ASW command to establish an Undersea Warfare Center of Excellence, and relocate HM-15 helicopters to Norfolk.

The Navy plan impacts the operational effectiveness of the Navy mine countermeasure force and therefore violates BRAC Criterion 1:

- The recommendation neuters the Mine Warfare Center of Excellence.
- The recommendation eliminates the possibility of integrated surface and airborne MCM training, thus reducing the operational effectiveness of MCM forces
- The recommendation violates the military standard of “we train as we fight.”

The selection criteria for determining military value were applied unfairly and inaccurately to Naval Station Ingleside and substantially deviate from BRAC Criterion 1:

- No credit for having a unique and specialized mission (Evaluation criteria SEA 14 and 15 would have given unique credit for the mine warfare mission, but were deleted)
- Navy military value criteria were biased against small, special purpose bases. All Navy bases were rated in their ability to support nuclear carriers, nuclear weapons, nuclear repair work, proximity to submarine operation areas, submarine training facilities, etc., none of which apply to NSI. NSI is exceptionally good at what it has been funded to do!
- SEA 28 gave NSI no special credit for having 6 dedicated off-shore mine warfare training ranges. 9 other bases received the same credit for ability to conduct mine warfare training even though they don't have dedicated mine warfare training ranges.

The recommendation to close NSI, break up the Mine Warfare Center of Excellence, and shift mine warfare assets to fleet concentration areas represents too heavy a reliance on unproven future mine warfare systems and thus poses a significant risk to the operational readiness of the total force, substantially deviating from Criterion 1:

- The BRAC action assumes Congress will approve the inactivation of all 12 MHC class ships.
- The Navy proposal assumes future mine warfare capability will be provided by the new Littoral Combat Ship program and mine warfare systems that have not yet demonstrated operational capability. The Navy shipbuilding plan is recognized as unaffordable and there is technical and schedule risk in the new mine warfare systems.

The BRAC recommendation results in the loss of dedicated mine warfare training areas and the movement of mine warfare assets to areas where replacement ranges will not be available within the BRAC implementation period, thus deviating substantially from BRAC Criterion 2.

- The State of Texas has provided the Navy with 6 dedicated mine warfare training ranges in state-owned land in the Gulf of Mexico. Last year the Navy signed a new 10-year lease for these ranges (at no charge to the Navy!)
- There are no similar ranges in San Diego or Norfolk. The East Coast Shallow Water Test Range has been under environmental review for over 8 years and is still not approved. There has been no prior coordination to speed the approval process for mine warfare training areas for post-BRAC use.
- Naval Surface Warfare Development Center, Panama City is the Navy's dedicated Mine Warfare Laboratory with uniquely instrumented ranges. There is close synergy between the MCM ships, AMCM helicopters and the work at Panama City that will no longer be practical if the ships move to San Diego.

The loss of a permanent Navy presence in the Gulf of Mexico creates a strategic Homeland Defense vulnerability and thus deviates substantially from Criterion 2.

- The Gulf of Mexico produces over 25 % of US domestic oil and gas. Over 50% of imported oil and gas flow through the Gulf.
- Gulf Coast refineries account for over 50% of US domestic capacity.
- 8 of the 10 busiest US ports (in tonnage handled) are in the Gulf. Gulf shipping choke points need protection now and in the future (Straits of Florida, Yucatan Channel, Panama Canal).
- The recently signed US Homeland Defense Strategy calls for a "layered defense" protecting the air, land and maritime approaches to US borders.
- There are no ships stationed in Key West or Pensacola, and Pascagoula is also on the BRAC list. Post-BRAC there will be NO Navy ships stationed in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Ingleside is the ONLY Navy port in the Gulf that can berth any Navy ship, including aircraft carriers and submarines.

Inadequate scoring of Naval Station Ingleside for its ability to accommodate contingency, mobilization, surge and future total force requirements deviates substantially from Criterion 3.

- Corpus Christi and Beaumont are Tier 1 strategic deployment ports. Closing NSI will remove a deterrent naval presence in their immediate vicinity.
- The Coast Guard had plans to expand its presence in the Corpus Christi area by berthing ships at Naval Station Ingleside. These plans are now on hold.
- The Army Reserve notified the Navy in Dec 2004 that NSI was their choice for over 1 million square feet of controlled humidity storage facilities. This was not considered during BRAC.
- Naval Station Ingleside was not considered to receive assets from other bases, including ships from Pascagoula or Military Sealift Command ships that occupy leased civilian berths.
- Although there are BRAC criteria for encroachment, there is no credit for expansion potential. Unlike most large Navy ports, there are over 1800 acres immediately adjacent to Naval Station Ingleside available for immediate expansion.

Errors in COBRA data have overestimated the recurring savings from closing Naval Station Ingleside.

- Pre-BRAC savings for inactivation of the 12 MHC ships only accounted for their crews, not for their portion of the maintenance and support burden on Naval Station Ingleside.
- Initial Navy response was that despite a 50% reduction in ships, there was no reduction in maintenance and support personnel.
- 22 June Navy response was that there would be a 3.5% reduction in manpower (48 billets). When challenged, Navy reps agreed that their data was inconsistent, required more research and analysis, and a rerun of COBRA model.

Naval Station Ingleside is ideally positioned to support 21<sup>st</sup> century naval requirements:

- Homeland Defense of the Gulf Coast
- Mine Warfare Center of Excellence
- Littoral Combat Ship mine warfare training, module storage and refurbishment, and possible LCS basing as part of our maritime homeland defense posture.
- Expanded Coast Guard presence
- Military Sealift Command ship berthing
- Army Reserve warehousing
- Expeditionary warfare training