

BASE VISIT REPORT

LAMBERT FIELD, ST LOUIS, MO

June 21, 2005

COMMISSION STAFF: Brad McRee, Tyler Oborn

LIST OF ATTENDEES: Col. Michael Brandt 131st FW Commander and key staff

BASE'S PRESENT MISSION: Air Defense of the Midwest and Air Superiority for Air Expeditionary Forces

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:

Realign Lambert-St Louis International Airport Air Guard Station, St Louis, Missouri. The 131st Fighter Wing's F-15s (15 aircraft) will distribute to the 57th Fighter Wing, Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada (nine aircraft) and 177th Fighter Wing, Atlantic City International Airport Air Guard Station, NJ. The 177th Fighter Wing's F-16s will be distributed to the 158th Fighter Wing, Burlington International Airport Air Guard Station, Vermont (three aircraft) and retire (12 aircraft). The wing's expeditionary combat support (ECS) elements will remain in place. Firefighter positions move to Scott Air Force Base, IL. The 157 Air Operations Group (AOG) and the 218th Engineering Installation Group (EIG) will relocate from Jefferson Barracks geographically separated unit (GSU) into space at Lambert International. Jefferson Barracks real property accountability will transfer to the Army.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:

The Air Force distributed reserve component F-15C force structure to bases with higher military value than Otis (88) and Lambert-St Louis (127). The F-15C aircraft are realigned to Nellis (13), Jacksonville Air Guard Station (24), and Atlantic City Air Guard Station (61). The Nellis bound aircraft will help form an enhanced aggressor squadron for Operation RED FLAG and the Atlantic City bound aircraft will provide expanded capability for the Homeland Defense mission.

MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED: Entire base.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED:

- * MCI values do not adequately address ANG mission and capabilities.
- * Disagreement with AF on optimum PAA requirement.
- * Homeland defense not properly assessed in military value calculations.
- * Concern if NORTHCOM adequately consulted.
- * Did all units answer data call questions consistently?
- * Current AF plan mixes "A"s and "C"s, and also different engines.
- * Is risk of drawing down F-15 numbers now worth it?
- * Personnel strength over 97%
- * Average pilot has over 15 years in fighter aircraft
- * Good performance in recent inspections and deployments.
- * Converted to F-15A in 1991. Converted to F-15C in 2004.
- * F-15 more capable air to air than F-16.
- * ANG units operate more efficiently than comparable active duty units due to more experienced personnel. Minimum sortie rates outlined in Air Force Instruction (AFI) confirms this.

INSTALLATION CONCERNS RAISED:

- * Not sure where GSU will situate on Lambert site as proposed in AF Report.
- * Unit has pulled alert at Lambert and Lambert meets all requirements. There was a problem at one time with Quantity Distance calculations for munitions.
- * Current lease expires in 2023 but is proposed to extend to 2037 on 47 acres.
- * It would cost \$8 ½ M to construct permanent ASA site.
- * Open to doing City Basing there.
- * Base is joint already with 1,000 Marines and Navy personnel there.
- * Hanger space appears adequate.
- * Lambert has received no new MILCON in the past 15 years.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS RAISED:

- * Unit has strong presence in community.
- * Significant effort for state mission in "Great Flood" of 1993 in St Louis.

REQUESTS FOR STAFF AS A RESULT OF VISIT:

- * Evaluate data they submitted.
- * Break out costs of Lambert from Otis recommendation.