

May 31, 2005

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2103 W. Asper St
Portales, NM 88130

DCN: 1733

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06062005

To Admiral Harold W. Gehman Jr.,

As we sit and reflect upon this Memorial Day weekend, we ponder upon the many lives that were sacrificed in the making of this great nation. My husband, Mark A. Kemp served in the USAF for twenty-one years and retired at Cannon Air Force Base as a MSgt. Before he retired, we had lived in Portales, New Mexico for eight years. We found the community to be supportive and helpful to our family and to the military way of life.

When we received the news that Cannon Air Force Base (CAFIB) was targeted as a base to be closed, we became distraught and disturbed. We use the facilities at CAFB on a regular basis. The facilities provide great savings & convenience to our family. Since we are retired, the availability of a hospital and pharmacy is greatly needed as we progress toward our golden years in life. Why do you and your Committee desire to take away the privileges afforded retirees?

The base also provides jobs for many people who live in Clovis,

Portales, and West Texas. It has been estimated that the closing of Cannon will cost these areas the loss of more jobs and have a great negative impact on the economy than any other area in the country. My question to you & to your committee is why do you desire to place numerous Americans, mostly men & women who have served our country out of jobs? Clovis, Portales, and West Texas are growing communities that currently have a relationship with Cannon, unlike any other installation in the country. Why would you and your committee wish to dissolve this relationship?

As a public school teacher, the base provided positive mentors to young people attending schools. They encourage young people—our future to expect exciting opportunities after high school, since many have had the opportunity to travel outside the United States, they provide a broader perspective of the world in which we live. Students learn to appreciate people of many cultures. The men and women who serve our country at Cannon deserve to live in communities that accept diversity.

and embrace a multitude of cultures that the military provides. America is all about teaching their children about building communities of many backgrounds and interests. Why would you & your Committee desire to stifle the academic achievement of our young peoples' vision, development, and growth?

Cannon is also an area that provides positive elements to the military agenda:

- 1) Once the New Mexico Training Range initiative is implemented, Cannon will be able to offer pilots the ability to fly supersonic during training missions.
- 2) The weather in eastern New Mexico provides year-around training.
- 3) The Melrose bombing range is supported by local residents and the New Mexico Commission of Public Lands and without Cannon, that bombing range is not feasible.
- 4) Cannon has ample space/ramp space to accommodate surge force requirements in training and

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- 4) Cannon has ample space/ramp space to accommodate surge force requirements in training and emergency situations.
- 5) The availability of air space and ideal flying weather makes Cannon

the perfect candidate to support future training missions for the F-22 Joint Strike Fighter, and other military aircraft.

Why close Cannon Air Force Base when America's mission is greatly enhanced by the existence of the base?

We are requesting that you and your committee reconsider your decision to close Cannon Air Force Base. We love the military and the men and women who elected to serve our country. Our communities' growth, development, and economic successes weigh heavily upon the existence of Cannon Air Force Base.

Please keep this part of the United States flourishing in the American Way of Life!

Sincerely,

Mark and Dianne Kemp
(Ret. MSGT USAF)
(505) 359-2101
mark.kemp@enmu.edu

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