



May 20, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a citizen of Clovis, NM and I am proud to live in a community that supports Cannon Air Force Base. I have lived in Clovis for 18 years, and in the Texas Panhandle for 19 prior to that, so Cannon has always been a part of my life. I've read the justification given by the Pentagon for closing our air base and ask that you please reconsider the DOD's recommendation.

MILITARY NEEDS

Cannon has been home to various types of aircraft and currently houses F16's. Cannon jets have flown in multiple wars and the F111's from Cannon were instrumental in Desert Storm; not to mention they were the planes sent by President Reagan to bomb Libya. Cannon has always had a strong presence everywhere they go. Plus, there is ample base space and air space available, as well as great weather conditions that allow almost zero days lost of flight time per year. Cannon and Clovis is willing and able to accommodate growth.

Cannon is also home to the Melrose bombing range, and to unlimited air space (up to 50,000 feet in some areas) free from obstacles or hindrances found in larger metropolitan areas. There is limited risk here; if a jet crashes – normally it hits dirt, not housing units or schools.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Clovis will be the hardest community hit economically if you go through with this closure. We will take a -20.5% hit in job losses alone; the next closest impact is Martin County Indiana at -11.6%. Our loss represents **4 times more (400%)** of the current national average of the employment rate. In a town the size of Clovis, this is tragic. Clovis has built itself around the base, and much of the livelihood in Clovis relies on base personnel and/or resources.

The report says that approximately 4,780 jobs would be affected if the base were to close. While these numbers may be somewhat lower than other areas – based on the overall population of Clovis, the results will be devastating nonetheless. A large city can more easily survive a base closure (even with higher numbers than those reflected above) because of population, but with only 34,000 residents in Clovis – it would kill us. It will take years and years to rebound from a loss this great, if ever.

Clovis is rural; there are no big businesses knocking on our door begging to come in. We cannot support a larger airport, and there are no people to build or buy big high-rise condominiums. How can we possibly rebound after such an enormous blow? Please reconsider the ramifications that this closure would deal us if it were to close.

SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURES

Cannon provides support/resources for the Melrose bombing range. The range serves the 27th FW, B1's out of Dyess (Abilene), 150th ANG (Kirtland), 550th SOS (Special Ops, Kirtland), B52's (Barksdale AFB, Louisiana), B2's (Missouri), F-117's (Alamogordo), along with occasional E3's, EC-135's, and whoever else flies within range. It is also used by the Army for air drop exercises, and both USAF and Army Forward Air Controller training. To say it is a valuable asset, would be a minor understatement. The facility consists of 66,000 acres,

with 59,000 acres owned by the Air Force, and has been in use continuously since 1952 and accounts for 4800 sorties annually. They also provide an electronic counter measure facility for advanced training, as well as night-vision goggle training.

The September 2001 Defensive Training Initiative permitted the use of chaff and flares in existing airspace contiguous to the Melrose bombing range so that combat-condition training could occur in response to available simulated ground-based and aircraft threats. Currently, pilots use defensive countermeasures to avoid these threats only in the restricted airspace over the bombing range. The 27 FW, as the proponent for this action, conducts defensive training using chaff and flares in surrounding areas. As far as I can tell by my research, Cannon Air Force Base is the only base in the United States authorized to utilize this training, thus making the bombing range in Melrose even more of a critical infrastructure that should remain in place along with the base itself.

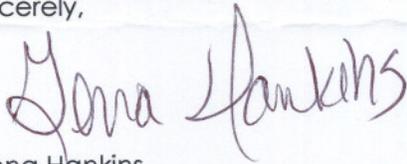
Cannon is the closest base to PANTEX in Amarillo, Texas, which is a Nuclear weapons facility. I would consider Cannon to be a huge defensive support infrastructure to this facility, and the closest fighter jets in reach.

Cannon is a base that is supported by the community. Clovis and the surrounding communities are proud to have the air base in our presence; we welcome the people it brings to the area, the diversity it offers us, and the security of knowing we are protected and safe.

In closing, I would like to note that Cannon believes in giving back to the community and does so through volunteer and other charitable work. I have a handicapped daughter that participates in Special Olympics, and our team benefits greatly from their help. We have anywhere from 2-50 volunteers at any given time, which shows how much they love our community and the families that make it up. With this said, I'd like to ask that you please rethink the numbers, the loss, and the impact that this closure would have on our community and the people who live here. And then reconsider the opportunities available at Cannon if kept open.

Clovis is a community that has always supported the base, its personnel, and FREEDOM. Our community will do anything necessary to accommodate the needs of the base and its personnel. Please consider removing Cannon Air Force Base off the list of base closures. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Gena Hankins
505-389-4377 or 505-762-6398

We are PROUD of our air base!
We love it and want it to remain a part of our community.