

RECEIVED

June 7, 2005

BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street – Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

06102005

Chairman Principi and Members of the BRAC Commission:

Yes, this is another letter from Clovis, New Mexico. However, I hope you will allot our community the time to convey our thoughts to you throughout your decision-making process. In making your determination with such tremendous results, I hope that you welcome and validate the input. Your burden is heavy, and it is imperative that qualified and intelligent decisions are made after carefully evaluating all the facts.

I beg that you don't limit your options based on the knowledge provided to you from paper and numbers. Please don't overlook the economical, emotional, physical, and future results that hinge on your choices.

Various drafts of my letter began with my feeble attempt to disqualify your criteria. I won't attempt to discredit the paper analysis and decision process, but I will ask that you take a step back and take in all aspects of the decisions you are contemplating. Separate from the politics and separate from the hype, please take a look at our military's relationship within our community.

During World War II, my father was stationed in Clovis with the 713th railroad battalion. Before being shipped overseas, he was embraced by a community that supported the troops and extended tremendous warmth and love to their country's soldiers. That didn't change over time, and that same community has adopted the many men and women stationed at Cannon Air Force Base. Without question or hesitation, Clovis and Portales have nurtured a home for the troops throughout the years. Many retirees have returned to Clovis, as my father eventually did, to find Clovis still welcoming and supporting their military personnel.

Yes, our weather is perfect for training missions. To train and work in a physical environment conducive to the flight needs is vital. In the desert southwest, our sun shines 92% of the year. Additionally, the proximity of the Melrose bombing range is extremely favorable in controlling fuel costs making the training efficient and effective.

Yes, Clovis is wide-open and surrounded by vast farm and ranch land. As an outsider, expansion for Cannon seems extremely viable. The base is surrounded by a community that loves and supports it. Cannon's aircrews, past and present, have an exemplary history that has performed at levels that exceeded that of other wings/units. Without question, the credit is properly given to the leaders and troops that earned these accreditations. Yet, it is important to note that behind their successes stands a community that uplifted and supported their efforts. I've heard horror stories about communities that didn't support their bases and troops, and the moral of these men and women was poor. Our country is in a trying time, and it is so important our troops feel that support and love from the country they defend.

Yes, our cost-of-living is substantially lower than other parts of this country. Housing is extremely attractive to families. Many troops and dependents are amazed at the availability of owning their own homes in lieu of renting or base housing. Many retirees return here. Homeownership is not limited to an officer's paycheck.

Finally, cost of operation is always the ultimate agenda. Why not? Repeatedly I read that the recommendations to BRAC will save money. Will it if the overall impact is taken into consideration?

- Cannon has continually been reported as one of the cheapest cost of operation with fewer airmen being needed. How does that happen without the environment and community?
- Located in the southwest, we balance warm summers without humidity and with mild winters. Heating and cooling are minimal by comparison to the northern states.
- Again, military training is not hindered by harsh winters and horrific rain storms. Planes aren't confined to hangers waiting for appropriate training weather.
- When you bring the troops home from closing foreign bases, where will they go? Is now the best time to shut down a cost-efficient operation to expense and expand another? What about re-location expenses? What about school systems not ready to handle the influx of new students?

Our world is changing, and I can appreciate the military adjusting and preparing for this. Such forethought has made our military top notch in the past, and it will continue to maintain our country's frontrunner position in the world in years to come. Please take a broad look at the whole picture. Our community is so much more than paper and numbers. We have so much more to offer than the paper analysis can even begin to address.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise Gendreau", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Denise Gendreau
Phone: 505-763-6207
Email: gendreau5@cox.net