

BASE VISIT REPORT

FORT HOOD, TEXAS

8-9, 21-22 JUNE 2005

LEAD COMMISSIONER:

GEN James T. Hill (USA, Ret)

ACCOMPANYING COMMISSIONER:

BG Sue E. Turner (USAF, Ret)

COMMISSION STAFF:

LTC Kevin Felix (Army Senior Analyst for Fort Hood, TX)
Mr. Gary Miller (Interagency Analyst detailed from EPA)

LIST OF ATTENDEES:

FORT HOOD

• LTG Thomas Metz, CG, III Corps and Fort Hood	• Mr. Bill Kinnison, Chief, Education Services	• Mr. Eric Harmon, Installation Range Officer
• MG James E. Simmons, DCG, III Corps and Fort Hood	• Ms. Georgie McAteer, Chief, Battle Command Training Branch	• Mr. Charles Green, Installation AG
• COL Victoria Bruzese, Garrison Commander	• Mr. Bob Bishop, DOL	• COL Kevin Smith, III Corps G3
• COL John Murray, Chief of Staff	• Mrs. Gladys Yoshinaka, Chief, Deployment Operations	

COMMUNITY LEADERS MEETING, 22 JUNE 05

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congressman John Carter, 31st District, Texas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Bill Shine: former Civilian Aide to the SecArmy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COL(Ret) Bill Parry: Executive Director, Heart of Texas Defense Alliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTG (Ret) Pete Taylor: Chairman, Heart of Texas Defense Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Maureen Jouett: Mayor, Killeen, TX 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jim Hawkins: Superintendent, Killeen Independent School District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Terry Tuggle: President/CEO of Fort Hood National Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Kevin Cooper: Region Director for Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Sandy Edwards: Region Director for Senator John Cornyn

BASE'S PRESENT MISSION:

FORT HOOD

Fort Hood, Texas is located approximately 60 miles north of Austin and 50 miles south of Waco. It is 63 years old and was established as a WW II training camp for the Army as a tank destroyer and tactics firing center. Today it is a world class joint training and deployment center.

Fort Hood is a power projection platform that supports the full spectrum of operations. It provides responsible stewardship of resources and enables training of joint/combined expeditionary forces. It mobilizes/demobilizes RC forces, provides for the well-being of families, and sustains and supports Army transformation.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:

There are two DOD recommendations involving Fort Hood:

1. **Operational IGPBS.** Realign Fort Bliss, TX by relocating air defense artillery units to Fort Sill and relocating 1st Armored Division and various echelon above division units from Germany and Korea to Fort Bliss, TX. Realign Fort Sill by relocating an artillery (Fires) brigade to Fort Bliss. **Realign Fort Hood, TX by relocating maneuver battalions, a support battalion, and aviation units to Fort Bliss, TX.** Realign Fort Riley, KS by inactivating various units, activating a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and relocating 1st Infantry Division units and various echelons above division units from Germany and Korea to Fort Riley, KS. Realign Fort Campbell, KY, by relocating an attack aviation battalion to Fort Riley, KS.
2. **Realign Fort Hood, TX, by relocating a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and Unit of Employment (UEX) Headquarters to Fort Carson, CO.**

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:

1. **Operational IGPBS.** This proposal ensures the Army has sufficient infrastructure, training land and ranges to meet the requirements to transform the Operational Army as identified in the Twenty Year Force Structure Plan. It also ensures the Army maintains adequate surge capacity. As part of the modular force transformation, the Army is activating 10 new combat arms brigades for a total of 43 active component brigade combat teams (BCTs). Including the results of the Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS), the number of BCTs stationed in the United States will rise from twenty-six to forty. Relocating the units listed in this recommendation to Fort Bliss, Fort Riley, and Fort Sill takes advantage of available infrastructure and training land. Fort Bliss and Fort Riley are installations capable of training modular formations, both mounted and dismounted, at home station with sufficient land and facilities to test, simulate, or fire all organic weapon systems. This recommendation enhances home station training and readiness of the units at all installations.

2. **Realign Fort Hood, TX, by relocating a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and Unit of Employment (UEX) Headquarters to Fort Carson, CO.** This recommendation relocates to Fort Carson, CO, a Heavy BCT that will be temporarily stationed at Fort Hood in FY06, and a Unit of Employment Headquarters. The Army is temporarily stationing this BCT to Fort Hood in FY06 due to operational necessity and to support current operational deployments in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). However, based on the BRAC analysis, Fort Hood does not have sufficient facilities and available maneuver training acreage and ranges to support six permanent heavy BCTs and numerous other operational units stationed there. Fort Carson has sufficient capacity to support these units. The Army previously obtained approval from the Secretary of Defense to temporarily station a third BCT at Fort Carson in FY05. Due to Fort Carson's capacity, the BRAC analysis indicates that the Army should permanently station this third BCT at Fort Carson. This relocation never pays back because it involves the relocation of a newly activated unit. No permanent facilities exist to support the unit.

MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED:

GEN Hill indicated he had been to the Fort Hood many times and, consequently, he was very familiar with the operations and layout of the installations. After a briefing by garrison staff, GEN Hill, BG Turner and accompanying BRAC analysts participated in an overflight of the training area and installation. There are numerous key facilities on Fort Hood that contribute to its status as one of the premier Army installations, with advanced range complexes that are integrated to support live, virtual, and constructive training. Upon completion of the base visit, Commissioners Hill and Turner met with local community leaders at the airport to discuss the concerns of the local community.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The size of the base increased with the addition of a remote deployment area currently known as North Fort Hood and West Fort Hood, which includes Robert Gray Army Airfield. The base includes 214,968 acres of land. Of this there is 136,094 acres of maneuver area and a live fire impact area of 63,000 acres. There are 447 miles of tank trails, 4916 active buildings and 458 miles of paved roads. There are 2 airfields. One of the airfields (Robert Gray Army Airfield) is a joint use airport with the City of Killeen. The base is bounded on the east by Lake Belton and the south by Killeen, Harker Heights and Copperas Cove.

The base has worked with the local community to better define potential encroachment areas. The base feels that a buffer zone is established along the southern boundary of the base with the cantonment area, highway 190 and the cities along the main route into the base. Along the western boundary the base has worked with major landowners and established an easement to restrict the type of construction along the base boundary. The base continues to allow cattle grazing. This continues a practice started when the base was established in 1943 and landowners were forced to give up family ranches and farms.

The base has worked with local landowners and Fish and Wildlife to enhance habitat in surrounding ranches. This combined with on-base habitat management (prescribed burning, fire breaks and brush control) have allowed an increasing populations for the two endangered birds in the area. This has allowed the base to gain 37,000 acres of unrestricted training land. This has opened up the maneuver and impact areas and allowed training to continue without restrictions. This is based upon a new Biological Opinion released in 2005. Although there would still be restricted areas during nesting season, the areas would only exist along the eastern boundary of the base near Lake Belton.

The base is not listed on the Superfund National Priorities List. Based upon a review of available information the base has completed investigations and cleanup required by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act permit. Therefore there is no impact to the reuse of areas on the base from past waste disposal practices.

Based on the Recommendation Supporting Information Fort Hood does not have noise contours that extend off the installation's property.

Although there are UXO issues, the base has a restricted impact area and as ranges are renovated UXO is dealt with during the construction. There is no impact on the training ranges or the construction of new ranges. Although, the discovery of UXO during recent work on a range delayed construction and increased cost of the project.

Fort Hood does not have any water resource issues. The base has an excess of capacity in their potable water supply and small excess capacity in wastewater disposal. The base is working with the State to develop a solution to wastewater disposal at the North Fort Hood which may involve converting some land to wetlands. This would enhance the habitat in the area and form a buffer zone.

There does not appear to be any environmental restrictions or limitations that would impact use of the training areas.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Fort Hood is, today, a model for all bases of the future. Its infrastructure and facilities are some of the best in the Army. It has great outload facilities, both for air and rail, and its SRP, digital ranges, and maintenance facilities are superb. However, it cannot escape from the fact that it has limited capacity in terms of overall maneuver space compared with other facilities like Fort Carson and Fort Hood.

INSTALLATION CONCERNS/ISSUES

“An acre is not an acre, is not an acre”. This is the quote often used to describe the Quality v. Quantity of training areas and ranges at Fort Hood vis-à-vis other installations with larger overall maneuver capacity. Fort Hood leaders believe they can train and sustain 50K soldiers.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES

There is a perception of a loss of personnel resulting from the realignment of approximately 4100 soldiers to Fort Carson and almost 5K personnel to Fort Bliss. The local community has embraced the 4th BCT, 1st Cavalry Division and did not consider the fact that this unit was temporarily stationed at Fort Hood. From a BRAC perspective, using the '03 baseline, there is no major loss of personnel at Fort Hood – it began in '03 with 41K and will return to about the same population of soldiers. In reality, soldiers bought homes and have integrated into the community. This movement, in conjunction with the realignment of 5K to Fort Bliss, leaves the community with actual movements of approximately 9100 soldiers and their families. The community is concerned that housing prices will drop and that soldiers who might need to sell homes will realize significant financial losses. Also, the community responded to the temporary increase in soldiers with increased housing, police, fire and municipal services.

REQUESTS FOR STAFF AS A RESULT OF VISIT:

1. GEN Hill recommended the staff conduct an analysis for selected bases similar to the analysis that Fort Hood conducted in evaluating its range capacity and frequency of usage.
2. The staff will continue to refine the assessments of maneuverable acres, with respect to airspace, environmental restrictions and types of terrain for all installations.