

June 11, 2005



Paschal J. Benvenuti
261 Comfort Drive
Henderson, Nevada 89074

BRAC Commission
Washington DC.
c/o NIMAC
P.O. Box 231
Niagara Falls, NY 14304-0231

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

I am writing in reference to the Defense Department's recommendation to close the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve Base. This recommendation is obviously a horrendous mistake that has been decided based upon little insight into the units capabilities and accomplishments. I am strongly urging the BRAC Commission to reverse this decision and remove the Niagara Falls Base from the list immediately.

Why has the BRAC Commission decided to take their mission and aircraft and put them on more costly active duty bases, when the guard and reserves have proven their capabilities to stand and fight proudly with our active duty counterparts, while operating at a fraction of the cost? Additionally, why are they moving these aircraft to more volatile locations where hurricanes and tomadoes are more prevalent?

Did the commission consider our involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom? Our unit sustained some of the worst conditions while constantly being pulverized by sand storms and temperatures in the 130 degree range; yet we maintained a 98% on-time flight ratio while flying missions 24 / 7. While operating in Operation Iraqi Freedom, we participated in the largest gathering of C130's ever in one location and did you know that the 914th unit is the lead night vision C-130 unit in the entire Reserves? I have not even scratched the surface on the countless missions and excursions our unit has participated in, as well as the well trained personnel that our unit possesses.

Additionally, the Commission should consider our allegiance to the mission and some of the greatest folks from any single unit. The Guard and Reserve has a sense of ownership to their assets that will never be found in any active duty unit; I know I am a proud retired member of the 914th, and spent 4 years on active duty along with an additional 30 years as a Air Reserve technician.

I urge the Commission in the strongest possible terms to remove Niagara Falls ARS from the Pentagon's recommended list of base closures and to stop the degradation of our military and its mission abilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paschal J. Benvenuti". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Paschal J. Benvenuti

USAFR Retired