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June 15, 2005

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

Dear Commission Members,

When I heard that Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) again made it on the current BRAC list I was baffled and angry.

The two units that are stationed at NFARS are among the top performers in the entire Air Mobility Command and United States Air Force.

The 107th Air Refueling Wing, New York Air National Guard has not only met but has exceeded Air Force standards in all categories of performance. Manning and retention are also among the highest in the Air Reserve Forces. Personnel from the 107th were some of the first on the scene to provide security at the ruins of the World Trade Center following 9/11. They have also provided emergency relief to residents of the State of New York including (but not limited to) the snow and ice storms that have plagued the State for the last decade. The 107th has also responded to every national conflict since it organized as part of the New York State Military Forces, beginning with the United Nations Police Action in Korea through our current War on Terrorism in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Iraq.

The 914th Airlift Wing, United States Air Force Reserve Command, also falls into the same categories of excellence. It is among the best-qualified night vision mission unit in the United States Air Force. Their performance for cargo and medivac transport is also one of the best in the United States Air Force.

Regarding moving the 914th to Arkansas. I also don't believe it is a good idea to consolidate too many resources at a single base. Remember the consequences of basing the entire Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor and having it all there at the same time!

One of the advantages of Guard and Reserve units is that the members work with each other for their entire military career. Active duty units, where there is constant turn-over as personnel not only join or separate from military service or PCS from one duty station to another, rarely perform with the speed or quality of Guard and Reserve units. During deployments to SW Asia, Active Duty commanders marveled at how the 107th Civil Engineer Squadron completed in weeks, projects they estimated would take months to complete.

If NFARS were to be closed many of the Guard, Reserve and civilian support personnel would not be able to follow the units to a new "home". The continuity of services provided by the men and women of the units would suffer dramatically. The units would not be available for missions they now find routine. Until new personnel are recruited, schooled and trained to a proficient level of performance, the units would be able to adequately support mission requirements.

This area of New York State is one of the most economically depressed in the country. The NFARS infuses millions of dollars into the local economy. Closing the NFARS and moving its missions elsewhere would send several thousand military members and the civilian support personnel to unemployment lines. Even if some industry would take over base facilities, there is no way they could reemploy all of the displace workers.

Please reconsider your choice and remove Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station from your closing list.

Sincerely yours,



David L. Dexheimer
SMSgt, USAF, Retired