

May 23, 2005

To the BRAC Commission,

After 28 years and 8 months in the United States Air Force, and having served at bases in large cities, Nellis, Las Vegas NV, Randolph, San Antonio, TX, when given the option, I always ask to come back to Cannon. In 1992, I had orders to Ft. Walton Beach FL. Who would not want that?. I didn't. I called the Military Personnel Center and ask my assignment manager if I could go back to Cannon. A very pregnant pause ensued and finally his reply..."Man, are you for real?" Yes I was and I did come back. There is something very special about Cannon and this community that you will not find anywhere else.

Since 1983, I have watched Cannon and more so Clovis, evolve from a transit community to the most tightly knit support mechanism that exists in the Air Force. The symbiosis we enjoy with Clovis comes from years of watching Cannon be the pilot and maintainer supply line for the combat F-111 units in Europe. When you were just getting to know that young pilot, it was his time to go. Clovis shared his loss to other bases the same as his Squadron did. The same was felt for the Maintainers, the Admin, the Services, the Chaplains and all. The newly assigned were embraced by Cannon and Clovis alike because we were all we had out here on the high plains. With the demise of the bomb toting "Vaarks", we transitioned to those cute little "Lawn Darts", kept the EF-111A, and acquired a real combat mission.

With the new mission we also got a new moniker, we were known as "America's Go To Wing" and we did. We did go to Turkey, we did go to Saudi Arabia, we did go to Italy. And when we were not going to those combat zones, we were going to Egypt, for Bright Star '93, we were going to Spain for "Combat Hammer". As the "Go To Wing" we were doing Americas business. And doing Americas business is what Cannon is all about. And all the time we were doing America's business, Cannon and Clovis has sought to expand our capabilities and contribution. In every case, from not becoming the dual wing of F-111's in the nineties, to not acquiring other diverse missions Cannon has actively pursued, is in no fault for lack of trying.

There are no finer facilities, or capability than Cannon. I know consolidation of missions is important in today's strategic thinking but, if you have six C-17 loads that need to go from one base and can only fit two at time on the ramp, you won't get there any faster and not gaining anything. Keeping Cannon open gives our war fighting CINC's a rapidly deployable specific strike force in a small package. That is the future of America's defense. Additionally, I would propose you expand Cannon as the premier base for small package combat units. We have the capacity to train, hone, and execute the skills needed in today's guerrilla/terrorism environment. In today's 'be there tomorrow' atmosphere, only Clovis has not only the capacity but more importantly the compassion to see to it those left behind are not deployment orphans.

The Air Force has long maintained that "people are our most important asset". By default the community of every military base becomes the unfunded surrogate and unseen force multiplier. Isn't then the community supporting the wives, husbands, and children of our deployed forces as important as the war fighting skills? Give us more. More capability, more missions, more of the DOD's need for us. KEEP CANNON!

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