

FROM: Samuel M. Upton

23 May 2005

SUBJECT: Save Operation Cannon

TO: BRAC Commission

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Upon hearing the unexpected news on Friday, May 13, 2005, that Cannon Air Force Base (AFB) in New Mexico had made the Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list, I was in a state of shock. What criteria had the Pentagon utilized in making this decision? Had important items somehow been overlooked?

I believe important items were definitely overlooked. Let me just state a few of the advantages Cannon enjoys. For one reason, Cannon faces no encroachment issues of any kind and there is plenty of space for expansion for any future mission here for a period of at least twenty years or longer.

Another outstanding area Cannon excels in is the positive relationship with the local communities of Clovis and Portales. This relationship is second to none. Local businesses appreciate the military here and seek to address and resolve their needs in any way possible.

Also, let me mention the New Mexico Training Range Initiative. Once approved in October of this year, Cannon airspace will expand from 2,600 to 3,300 square miles. This expansion will enable our pilots to fly our airplanes at supersonic speeds.

Additionally, Cannon has two long runways that were recently renovated. With this renovation, Cannon has the space to accommodate surges for training and any real-life emergencies that may arise.

Another important factor to consider is when our pilots fly at Cannon, there is less danger to the pilots or residents on the ground if something does go wrong in the air due to our very lack of encroachment.

Other advantages to consider are Cannon's location is within miles of a vast, world-class training range that does not face encroachment. Our pilots can, within seconds, take off and almost immediately began training operations instead of flying to some far-off location wasting precious fuel and time and then having very limited useful time for training. To me, the capability to train better, safer and faster can and does save our most precious resource, human life.

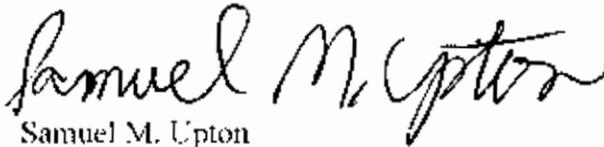
Along with these advantages, in the vast Eastern New Mexico locale, with its mild weather, our pilots can fly an absolute unbelievable 320 days yearly. I would find it hard to believe many bases offer this year-round opportunity to train and fly.

Let me reiterate again that the local communities have supported and embraced Cannon and their personnel for over 60 years. The outstanding relationship between the base and the surrounding communities is quite unique, and in my opinion, better than any other in this country. It is so special that, upon retiring from Cannon in 2001, I decided to make this my home, as many military have done before me.

Let me clarify one note. A large military retiree population lives in the surrounding areas of Clovis, Portales, Eastern New Mexico, West Texas (including Amarillo and Lubbock). Myself and other honored veterans depend upon Cannon for shopping, medical, and, most importantly, maintaining our close ties with the military services.

Finally, on a more personal note, I implore the BRAC Commission to seriously consider these points I have stated. Cannon is our home. Please expand and realign Cannon and, give Cannon new and challenging missions. Remember, Cannon safeguards our future as well as yours

V/R

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel M. Upton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Samuel" is written in a larger, more prominent script, followed by "M." and "Upton".

Samuel M. Upton