

24 May 2005

Mrs. Darlene Meister
3608 Player Place
Clovis, New Mexico 88101-3146

Mr. Anthony J. Principi
Chairman, 2005 BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark St., Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Principi,

I am writing in reference to the proposed closing of Cannon Air Force Base, Clovis, New Mexico.

I have for the past 41 plus years been associated with the United States Air Force as a military spouse. The first 20 years I supported my husband as a member of the Air Force while serving our country wherever he was called to go whenever he was called. We had three children and there were many times that I played the role of both mother and father to our children while my spouse was serving our country.

We arrived at Cannon Air Force Base in 1977. We put our three sons through elementary and high school in Clovis, where there were excellent schools and a great environment for raising children. We are very proud of our sons as the impact their schooling had on them made them responsible, productive members of our society.

When my husband retired in 1984 from the Air Force, we chose to stay in Clovis and make it our home. We have both been fortunate in finding good employment and enjoy the Clovis area. There have been so many positive changes in our community in the 28 years that we have lived here and many changes are due largely to Cannon Air Force Base. There are many military retirees who feel as I do and have chosen to make Clovis their home too.

I have also been employed at Cannon Air Force Base for the last 24 years as a civil service employee. So I stay connected to the military in that way as well. Even though we are "retirees" I still feel a part of the military family and the bond that always existed when my husband was active duty is still there.

The improvements at the base have been in the millions of dollars. Hardly a building stands anymore that isn't new. I find it hard to believe that the savings noted in the closure has included all the money spent in the last several years to improve the "number 1" base in the Air Force, which is what we were named last year.

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I know the BRAC Commission has a commitment to our country to keep its best interests, safety, and well being in mind and I pray that God will guide you to that end. I would offer to you that closing Cannon Air Force Base would be devastating to the communities of Clovis and Portales, New Mexico and would ask your reconsideration in doing so.

Darlene Meister

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