

May 17, 2005

DCN:4589

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Mike Hankins and I am writing in response to the BRAC recommendation to close Cannon Air Force Base outside of Clovis, New Mexico. I am a high school math teacher and coach at Clovis High School. I have been in this area since 1968 when my father was transferred to Cannon. I was a military brat and now for the last eighteen years I have taught more kids just like me than I can keep up with.

It came as a great disappointment to see Cannon Air Force Base on this list. It comes as a great shock to hear that it does not have a great military value. During the time I have lived in Clovis, Cannon has been a home to many different aircraft and currently houses F-16s. It definitely is not limited to the F-16. It could house any airplane that comes along. Through the years Cannon has sent airmen and pilots to every battle we have been in. They served in Vietnam, Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. When President Reagan sent planes to bomb Libya, they were the F-111's from Cannon. When the first President Bush began Desert Storm, Cannon pilots were leading the way jamming Iraqi radar. This base has unlimited air space and is being cleared for supersonic flight. There is a bombing range with no easement issues. There are no issues with flying over the city. We have never had a jet from Cannon fire any ammunition rounds into any of our local schools as has happened in other parts of the country. There is no competition with civilian airspace as there is in large metropolitan areas. To hear that there is no military value is a devastating blow to the young people I serve at Clovis High School who have lived without their family members who are currently serving in the middle east or have been called away in past times.

The community that surrounds Cannon has always been closely tied to this base. Fifteen percent of our school population is directly related to the base. There is no major industry in this area, so the community has always rallied this base and its' personnel. Because of this support, it is amazing how many people who have served at Cannon have retired and made this area their home. They will all tell you it is because of the support and care that this community has given to the base and the men and women who are stationed here. With the closure of this base, our community would lose, according to the BRAC's own numbers, 20.5% of its current work force. This is a knock-out blow to our area. This is easily the worst impact of any facility on the list. I pray that people have really thought about this.

I write this letter with a heavy heart. Cannon Air Force Base has always had a very important military value. It is in a community that has always supported it every way possible. It is also in a community that will be dealt a tremendous blow if the base is taken away. A community that would do anything it could to accommodate the needs of the base. I ask you to take these things into consideration and join our community in its' fight to keep Cannon Air Force Base.

Sincerely,

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5/26/05

Mike Hankins  
505-762-6398