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BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Honorable BRAC Commission Members,

I was very saddened by the release of Department of Defense's BRAC list on May 13, which identified my Air National Guard Unit, the 179th Airlift Wing on the list. The 179th Airlift Wing is recommended to be closed and our C-130 aircraft sent to Maxwell AFB, Alabama and Little Rock AFB, Arkansas.

For the past twenty seven (27) years, it has been my distinct honor and privilege to have served my country proudly in the Air National Guard at the 179th Airlift Wing. I can attest to the fact that yesterdays National Guard is not the same as it is today, and uncertainties run high for the National Guard in the future.

I have been blessed to have been associated with the men and women, of what I believe is one of the most "OUTSTANDING" units the Air National Guard has to offer; the 179th Airlift Wing located at Mansfield Lahm Airport, Ohio.

How do you begin to put twenty seven (27) years worth of experience and feelings pertaining to this world class organization in a letter less than ten (10) pages? The best that I can do is to try and highlight what I feel are the best attributes of this particular unit!

If you were to spend just one day with this organization, you would certainly understand the reason why it is, and has always remained the unit of choice for the one thousand, plus members! With recruitment and retention rates at / or consistently exceeding 104% it supports the reputation of the 179th Airlift Wing rated 3rd in recruitment in the entire Air National Guard / nationwide.

The condition of the unit's modern facilities, equipment and aircraft reflects the pride, professionalism and integrity of the members and senior leadership. You would also find the members of the 179th Airlift Wing to be the most professional world class military members in the Air National Guard.

- ✚ The assigned 1990 Model C-130 / H2.5 aircraft are consistently kept near "new" condition. The quality of pride and workmanship put into the assigned aircraft sets a high standard, second to none. A review of Mission Capable (MC) ratings will support this topic
- ✚ With "well over" One Hundred Thirty-five Thousand (135k) Accident Free Flying Hours, it says a lot about the 179th Airlift Wings commitment to the safety, professionalism, and maintenance effectiveness initiatives and the overall culture of the unit
- ✚ Because of those efforts, the 179th Airlift Wing was awarded the Rusty Metcalf Award, identifying the unit as the "Most Outstanding Unit" in the United States Air Force
- ✚ The 179th Airlift Wing Maintenance Group's efforts to provide outstanding quality workmanship and reliability / maintainability set another high standard for the unit as it was awarded the Air National Guard Outstanding Maintenance Effectiveness Award twice in the past several years

- ✿ The unit was also awarded the “Outstanding Unit Award” by Higher Headquarters (twice)
- ✿ The 179th Airlift Wing is fully capable of supporting the state and nation in support of Homeland Defense / Weapons of Mass Destruction Team response and delivery capabilities.

The 179th Airlift Wing has led the way in the C-130 community in both combat hours and sorties, and has supported numerous combat and humanitarian operations and exercises around the world to include:

Volant Oak (Panama) 1979-1999

Volant Partner (Germany) 1987-1992

Reforger (Alaska) 1983

Desert Shield / Desert Storm 1990-1991

Operation Restore Hope (Somalia) 1992-1993

Operation Provide Promise (Bosnia) 1993- 1994

Operation Joint Endeavor (Bosnia) 1996-1998

Operation Joint Guard (Bosnia) 1998-1999

Operation Joint Forge (Bosnia) 1999-2002

Operation Southern Watch (Mid-East) 1996-1999

Operation Uphold Democracy (Haiti) 1994 and Operation Shining Hope (Kosovo) 1999

From July to October 2003, the 179th realized that several sister units had been mobilized “in theatre” (Kuwait) since “mid year” 2002. The unit volunteered to support a four (4) month rotation to allow “sister unit” members a chance to rotate back home for a much deserved break with their families. Later in December 2003, the unit was called to duty upon Mobilization Order, and has been serving proudly since then.

Our air crews have been decorated with over 116 Air Medals and 16 Aerial Achievement Medals since Operations Joint Guard (1996-1998, Sarajevo), and Joint Forge (1998-1999, Sarajevo); these medals recognize meritorious service and/or valor in aerial flight.

Since the inception of the Global War on Terror on 9/11, the 179th Airlift Wing has served proudly: In 2001, a total of 13,842 days were served to support the effort, 56,912 days in 2002, 35,971 days in 2003 and 64,052 days in 2004.

Community impact:

The 179th Airlift Wing provides over \$70 million dollars into the local community annually.

1). Local Supplemental Fire Protection: The 179th provides specialized equipment and trained personnel to deal with fires involving aircraft and jet fuel. This capability supplements the city's ability to protect the airport and the adjacent community (instant response within a 5 mile radius of the base). The unit has the only foam capability in the area and has been dispatched as far away as Sycamore, Ohio (45 miles away) to extinguish the Kirby tire fire. The FAA requirement to have the fire fighting capability would require the city to build facilities, procure new equipment, hire fire fighters and then extensively train them.

2). Color guards and parades: The 179th has a very active color/honor guard, which provides color guards, honor guards and military equipment for military funerals and

patriotic events in the community. Members of the 179th participate in more than 70 military funerals and patriotic events each year.

3). *The 179th performs flyovers* with its C-130H Hercules for military and patriotic observances.

4). *Open houses and base tours:* By opening its doors to the community or by taking its equipment and message out into the community, the 179th has developed stronger bonds in our communities. The 179th hosts more than 60 schools and 3,000 visitors each year.

5). *The 179th Airlift Wing Chorus:* Formed in 2001, the chorus consists of military and family members who provide patriotic music. The chorus has participated in events such as the Freedom Festival, the Korean War anniversary and other patriotic events.

6). *Earth Day events:* The unit started celebrating Earth Day in 1998 and each year more than 200 unit members support over 30 environmental projects in Mansfield, Shelby, Galion and surrounding areas.

7). *Special Olympics:* For more than 30 years, the unit has supported the Special Olympics by providing medical support to participants.

8). *Adopt-a-School:* The National Guard was the first government organization to embrace the "Adopt-a-School" concept, initiating its program in 1989. The 179th has adopted several elementary schools in the local areas. I have personally been associated with the Adopt-a-School Program for the past fourteen (14) years. I have had the distinct opportunity to watch these children develop into some of the finest young Americans.

Recently, due to the volunteer efforts of the 179th Airlift Wing members and the Russell Elementary School (located in Shelby, Ohio), staff and students constructed a Pavilion that will serve the entire community needs and will be also be utilized as an outside classroom to help enhance the students environmental research efforts at a locally adopted Wet Lands area, one of just several state identified Wet Land sites still left in existence in Ohio. Also, volunteer members have served numerous hours as tutors, mentors and positive role models and participate in other activities with students.

9). *Community Projects:* The 179th supports many community projects. Civil engineering provided carpenters, plumbers and general construction workers to reconstruct the Harmony House in Mansfield. With the support of numerous unit members, the Rae Melton Therapeutic Organization for the physically handicapped was able to improve facilities to accommodate special therapy needs for paralyzed patients. The unit supports the United Way Day of Caring and plays a substantial leadership and financial role in supporting the Combined Federal Campaign, a non-profit charity which supports numerous local groups.

As you can see, the 179th Airlift Wing and its members have worked hard to keep the unit's proud and long standing heritage well preserved.

Through effective recruiting initiatives and member commitment to the unit, we have created a wonderful window of opportunity with the retention of some of the finest young troops that this unit and the Air National Guard have to offer.

I've had the opportunity to talk with numerous aircraft maintenance members, and the issue of recruitment and retention will be *significant*, not only in this unit, but with other sister units as well, these effects will drain the life out of what's left of the National Guard! Numerous members will be faced with the reality that they will have to make some major decisions in the near future. Most members have expressed that they would

seek to leave the Air Guard due to the fact that most do not want to have to travel to the nearest Air National Guard (**C-130**) unit in Louisville, Kentucky (123 AW) to pull drill.

I have yet to make sense of how all of the guard members, (1000 / plus in Mansfield alone) will ever have the opportunity to even be placed or offered the opportunity to join other units if the gain / loss numbers don't balance out!

With the current OPS TEMPO, we have asked for more and more from our guard members and technicians, and they have done nothing short of meeting those requests with phenomenal attitudes and pride. Members are concerned about future civilian employer issues, the love and commitment for their hometown unit and community and the local colleges that they are attending. Members do not want to cross-train into another weapon system. With "hundreds of thousands" of dollars invested in our members to get them to competent (5 and 7) skill levels, those members who are fortunate enough to get assignments to other Guard units with different weapon systems, will be expected to retrain at "significant" costs to the American tax-payer.

The truth is, members join the guard because of the love and involvement with their community and they are extremely proud of their "unit of choice." They are within acceptable commuting distances and they are close to their families and employers and local colleges that they attend.

As for myself, after twenty seven (27) years of serving proudly, I will also be faced with some major decisions. With significant family health issues, proximity of medical specialists and care facilities and the need for me to assist their special needs, I would find it impractical to look at relocating and would hope that I would qualify for some sort of acceptable retirement benefit. At my current pay grade and rank, most units would not consider me for placement within their organization.

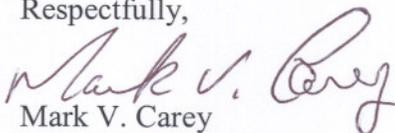
I will find it very hard to take the uniform "off" after so many years of serving my country!

In closing: I realize that the Commission has an extremely important and painstaking task to validate and report the "big picture" that each and every unit represents and deserves. All that I can do is ask that the Commission please thoroughly review the "contributions" that the 179th Airlift Wing has done over the past fifty seven (57) years, the wonderful members and facilities, and validate the organization fairly, ensuring that it is done in a prudent manner that will best protect the interests of our great nation. I'm thoroughly convinced that the 179th Airlift Wing has a lot to offer in support of this great nation and the State of Ohio.

May God grant each of the Commission Members the ability and wisdom to accomplish the responsibilities of the BRAC through-out the upcoming months!

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and God Bless you all!

Respectfully,



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