

Naval Aviation Excess Capacity and East Coast Maritime Patrol Aircraft: A Flawed Analysis

Issue: East Coast Naval Aviation excess capacity in the Maritime Patrol Aircraft Community is not as large as currently calculated.

Discussion: In a Secretary of Defense memorandum for the Secretaries of the Military Departments dated November 15, 2002, the Secretary stated, "At a minimum, BRAC 2005 must eliminate excess physical capacity."¹ The memorandum further states, "BRAC 2005 should be the means by which we reconfigure our current infrastructure into one in which operational capacity maximizes *both* warfighting capability and efficiency."²

From this guidance, the Department of the Navy analyzed Aviation Operations using a capacity data call that was created to measure an installation's ability to house aviation squadrons and units while properly maintaining aircraft, providing ample airfield operating resources and training infrastructure, and ensuring sufficient support facilities.³ What these capacity data calls failed to measure, however, were the conditions of many hangars that are currently considered either substandard or inadequate. **When the Navy's existing Aviation Operations capacity is closely examined, it is clear that many hangars today are actually planned for demolition in the near future, which will reduce overall "excess capacity."**

The principal capacity metric for Aviation Operations used by the Navy was the "Hangar Module." A Hangar Module was defined as the hangar space, line space, administrative space, operational space, and maintenance shop space required to house one aircraft squadron. Additionally, since actual hangar space is dependent on the type of aircraft to be housed in a

¹ Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments dated November 15, 2002; Subject: Transformation Through Base Realignment and Closure; page 1.

² Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments dated November 15, 2002; Subject: Transformation Through Base Realignment and Closure; page 1.

³ DOD Base Closure and realignment Report to the Commission; Department of the Navy, Analyses and Recommendations (Vol. IV), page C-2.

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particular hangar, data was collected for two different types of hangars – Type I hangars, built to house carrier-based aircraft, and Type II hangars built to house larger aircraft, such as the P-3.⁴ It should be noted that during the Department of the Navy's Analysis Group (DAG) meeting on 31 August 2004, concerns that the new Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft (MMA) and the C-40 (both Boeing 737 aircraft) did not fit into one of the two hangar module types was highlighted. A review of all DAG meeting minutes did not reveal any additional discussions concerning this discrepancy in hangar types for the MMA or C-40. **It can only be assumed that the Navy erroneously considered that the C-40 and MMA aircraft can be housed in Type II hangars.**

Volume IV (Department of the Navy, Analyses and Recommendations) of the DoD Base Closure and Realignment Report to the Commission states that the Navy's two recommendations for closure (NAS Atlanta and NAS Willow Grove) decreases excess capacity for Aviation Operations from 19% to 16%.⁵ Not considered in this review of excess capacity are the future reductions of capacity due to the demolition of old, unusable hangars. **For the East Coast Maritime Patrol community, the capacity reported through the data call process actually counted hangars that were graded either substandard or inadequate and never considered the fact that many of these hangars are scheduled for demolition.**

Navy analysis determined that NAS Brunswick currently has 20 Type II Hangar Modules. At the time of the Navy's capacity data call, two hangars with Service Facility Condition Codes of "Inadequate" were included in the total number of hangar modules. Since this data call, Hangar 3, which equated to 4 hangar modules, has been demolished and Hangar 1, which is another 4 hangar modules, is due to be demolished in FY06 due to failing rafters.⁶ **Reducing the available hangar modules at NAS Brunswick due to the demolition of Hangars 1 and 3 will leave this base with a capacity of only 12.**

⁴ DOD Base Closure and realignment Report to the Commission; Department of the Navy, Analyses and Recommendations (Vol. IV), pages C-2 and C-3.

⁵ DOD Base Closure and realignment Report to the Commission; Department of the Navy, Analyses and Recommendations (Vol. IV), page C-8

⁶ BRAC Capacity Data Call, 7 January; Certified by: Anne Davis; Originating Activity: NAS Brunswick, ME; Date: 3/28/2005; page 72

Additionally, Navy analysis determined that NAS Jacksonville has a capacity of 20.5 Type II hangar modules. These hangar modules equate to nine different hangar structures with seven structures given a Service Facility Condition Code of "Substandard." Four hangars, Hangars 113, 114, 115, and 116, are to be demolished following the completion of the S-3 aircraft sundown plan in FY08. These four hangars must be demolished to provide ramp space prior to the arrival of the Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft and are old and not suitable for the MMA. Hangars 113, 114, 115, and 116 represent eight hangar modules. There are also three other hangars at NAS Jacksonville with Service Facility Conditions Codes of "Substandard" that host the Navy's helicopter community. Several of these hangars are also to be demolished to make ready for the construction of new helicopter hangar facilities at Jacksonville.⁷

Finally, **of the 20.5 hangar modules at NAS Jacksonville, only 7.5 modules are used by the P-3 and C-40 communities** (Hangar 1000 – 5 modules; VP-30 hangar with 2.5 modules). None of these modules are capable of hosting the MMA or C-40 aircraft which are derivatives of Boeing's 737 aircraft. As a result, a new MMA hangar is planned to be built at NAS Jacksonville and major renovations will be needed to hangar 1000.

In summary, it can be seen from the above analysis that **the excess capacity believed to exist at the two East Coast Maritime Patrol air bases will soon be greatly reduced due to the demolition of substandard and inadequate hangars.** Capacity at NAS Brunswick has already been reduced 4 hangar modules with the demolition of Hangar 3 in December 2004. When Hangar 1 is demolished in FY06, the base capacity will be further reduced four additional hangar modules. The net result is a hangar capacity at NAS Brunswick of 12 hangar modules. At NAS Jacksonville, hangar capacity will be reduced as the S-3 aircraft community completes decommissioning in FY08. When hangars 113, 114, 115 and 116 are demolished to create ramp space for the introduction of the MMA aircraft, **excess capacity will be reduced by eight hangar modules.** Capacity at Jacksonville will be further reduced as substandard hangars are demolished for the recapitalization of hangars for the helicopter community.

⁷ BRAC Capacity Data Call, 7 January; Certified by Anne Davis; Originating Activity, NAS Jacksonville, FL; 3/28/2005, page 87

Although new hangars will be built at Jacksonville for the MMA and for Navy helicopters, the demolition of old, substandard hangars will yield a net reduction in overall hangar capacity at the base. **Thus, from this analysis it can be seen that the overall excess capacity within Naval Aviation is much less than currently calculated and the recommendations to consolidate all Navy MPA squadron at one air base should be carefully reconsidered.**