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Sunday, June 05, 2005

To the members of BRAC Commission,

My name is Tom Watson. I do not speak for the US Navy.

I'm a Union Official with the oldest Federal Employee's Union in the United States, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, IFPTE, Local 1. This is one of the first government unions to be formed in 1918 out of Norfolk Naval Shipyard, VA. We feel that membership in our union does not obliterate, nor conflict with loyalty to our employer, the US Navy, it only makes it more meaningful and permanent. I represent the hard working employees doing facility maintenance, providing safety, security and ship repair in the Coastal Bend area for all US Navy ships stationed at Naval Station Ingleside, Texas. We have joined with the other unions, representing federal employees, the American Federation of Government Employees, AFGE, Local 1005 and 4047 and the International Association of Fire Fighters, IAFF, Local F266 and have formed a, Save Our Station, or S.O.S. Task Force, to speak to Gen James Hill on July 8, 2005 when he visits Ingleside and at the BRAC Commissioners hearing in San Antonio, TX on July 11, 2005.

We have followed our country's direction and have taken great pride in our mission, of WE FIX SHIPS, and now we are faced with closure of our facility, reduction in manpower and loss of our jobs. Most of the employees have come from military installations that have been closed by prior base closures. We have come here from various former installations, US Naval Ship Repair Facility Guam, Long Beach Naval Shipyard, CA, SUPSHIP Sturgeon Bay, WI, Mare Island Naval Shipyard, CA, Charleston Naval Shipyard, SC, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, VA and Naval Air Station Beville, TX.

Our employee's have fears and concerns that are not captured after the economic business concerns of the community are addressed.

I'm here asking for your help. While it is important to you to review the mission and capacity utilization of all of our military bases, to help determine which ones to close in 2005, what is more important to us is our jobs and the future of Ingleside. This facility has the potential to be a multi use base serving all branches of the military service and is ideally located to the open sea without any urban encroachment and is accessible to major state, federal highways and an upgraded Union Pacific Railroad system.

I'm writing to request that you review the data that the Navy has provided to the Dept. of Defense that puts MCM Class ships, that were designed to work well in the shallow waters of the Gulf of Mexico or the shallow Continental Shelf off the East Coast and moves them to the deep waters of the Pacific Coast. I'm asking you to request that the Navy bring it's submarines, San Antonio class ships or a Carrier Battle Group here and consider realigning Ingleside instead of closing it.

If the Navy doesn't see the value added benefits of keeping Ingleside open, then lets support the ideas of the South Texas Military Task Force and get on the fast track to bring the Military Sealift Command here with the US Army, where we can provide better security to the Army's military equipment. Let's open the doors and invite the Dept. of Homeland Security to come in and provide security to the Port of Corpus Christi and the

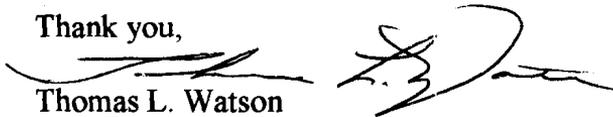
Gulf Coast region. Pensacola and Key West, Florida cannot provide adequate support to us in this area when we are only 150 miles from the Texas and Mexico border with a war on terrorism.

If no other federal agency can see the value and location of Ingleside, then open the doors wider and turn the facility into a new college campus, a fire fighting training facility for refineries or a cargo loading port for La Quinta's container cargo or Toyota's new car plant in San Antonio per the recommendations of the San Patricio Economic Development Commission.

The future is in your hands, in our community's business leaders, our consultants and our elected leaders, and regardless of what happens we ask that you give all these federal employees the first right to be hired at Ingleside before they are slowly disbanded and forgotten due to BRAC 2005.

We have followed the US Navy's mission to perform at our full potential and we will continue take pride in what we do for our country as federal employees.

Thank you,



Thomas L. Watson

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"In Unity There is Strength"