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980G Hopkins Rd
Williamsville NY. 14221



BRAC Commission
Washington, D.C.

To Whom it may Concern;

I am writing in a rebuttal of an article that appeared in the Buffalo News dated June 3,2005 titled "Frequent Call Ups."

The 136th Flying squadron of the 107th was called up in 1951 for the Korean conflict, in 1961 for the Berlin crisis, in 1968 for the Vietnam War, and most recently for the Afgan, and the Iraq conflicts. I can't believe it took the DOD and Air Force 53 years to realize how much they depend on the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves as a combat ready back up force. ANG and Reserve units know why they are maintained and are ready and willing to defend the National Policy of the United States if called upon!

The cost to maintain these valuable forces is an approximately one-third the cost to maintain an active duty unit. Even if the cost were one half, here at Niagara you have a BUY ONE GET ONE FREE bargain.

In the article a Gen. Heckman States "By consolidating the cargo plans we save money by reducing maintenance staffs and allowing more pilots to fly each aircraft." This is fine in theory, but what happens when you have to send a number of aircraft to different forward operating bases in support of regional conflicts, you guessed it, not enough maintenance staff to support both forward operating bases and home station maintenance. You would also have extra pilots sitting at home station with little or nothing to fly.

The sustained fuel capability at Niagara Falls is equal to that of Bangor, Maine. This statistic, I think does not warrant discussion as in the event of another conflict the KC-135 tankers will be moved to forward operating bases to support fighter and transport aircraft and will be using fuel from storage facilities at the forward operating location.

I still believe by decreasing Air Guard and Reserve units our military capability will suffer greatly. There will not be enough money to reinstitute these units once they are phased out.

Once again we are leaving an enormous void in the Defense Posture of the United States. Thank you for your consideration.

Brig. Gen. James C. Cook
NYANG (Ret.)

1. Attachment

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Chairman Anthony J. Principi
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202



Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

I am an Air Reserve Technician (ART) and a member of the 914th Airlift Wing. I have deployed with the 914th in both Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Along with the 107th Air Refueling Wing at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station we have been recommended for closure by the Pentagon. I believe this would be a grave mistake and I ask you to reject this recommendation for the following reasons.

- The ART program is one of the most cost effective programs in the Air Force. The high experience levels of the full time Technicians provide quality, cost effective maintenance and operation of modern aircraft systems. We have people with 10, 20 and even 30 years of experience. I myself have 33 years in maintaining C-130 aircraft. Very few of my active duty counterparts can match that.
- The Base Closure list is a major blow to the Air Guard and Air Force Reserve Programs. Plans for creating large Reserve centers at some far off location are unsettling. The Guard and Reserve Programs rely on support from their local communities and draw their members from their region. These traditional Reservists with years of experience are rooted to their local communities and probably will not follow the Reserves off to some far-away location. Large "Reserve Superbases" would be unable to recruit experienced personnel from the local population to make up for these losses. In a time when the Active duty military is experiencing recruiting problems both Niagara Units have maintained in excess of 100% manning rates.
- Why disturb such a successful program as the Air Force Guard and Reserve during wartime. We provide about half of the Air Force presence presently stationed in the Middle East. Is it wise to "switch horses in midstream"?
- Since the fall of the Soviet Union, we have cut the U.S. Military in half. We were promised that we could still fight two Regional wars simultaneously, but it is obvious that we are strained with the conflict in the Middle East. What if North Korea or Iran were to flare up, who would be left to fight that. The shortfall might force us to upgrade to much more drastic measures than if we had sufficient conventional forces. I feel the erosion of Air Guard and Reserve along with the other services should come to an end.
- The active duty Air Force is using Guard and Reserve aircraft as a stopgap measure to remedy a major loss of C-130 aircraft due to wing cracks. This does not provide any additional aircraft for the nation, it only redistributes them. This would put newer aircraft in the hands of Active Duty units unfamiliar with the newer high tech systems while we are in the middle of a war.

I also see no reason to include Niagara on the BRAC list, considering our impressive record.

- During Operation Desert Storm the 914th was one of only two A.F. Reserve C-130 units deployed to the Middle East, forming the 1650th Tactical Airlift Wing. Flying at more than four times the normal mission rate for a six month period, we provided an impressive 96% mission capability rate, at one point accomplishing 112 consecutive on-time take-offs. An all Niagara crew was the first to land in Kuwait City after a temporary cease fire was announced, delivering the first personnel and humanitarian supplies. We received the Outstanding Unit Award with Valor.
- During Operation Iraqi Freedom we were the only Air Force Reserve unit deployed along with 6 Air National Guard units to form the 485th Air Expeditionary Wing, a hastily set up contingency base to attack Iraq from the West. Under the most inhospitable conditions we once again compiled an outstanding flying record, far surpassing the Active Duty. We achieved a Mission effectiveness rate of 98%. With the end of the Air War, we re-deployed to Seeb Air Base, Oman operating as the 320th AEW, replacing an active duty unit that had been providing a Mission Effectiveness rate in the 60's.
- In October 2003, after six weeks in Kuwait as part of the 332nd AEW, we left for Tallil Air Base and were the first C-130 Airlift Group to move forward and permanently operate from a former Iraq air base. We provided a 99% Mission Effectiveness rate. For our efforts in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom we received the Meritorious Unit Award.
- We have also supported numerous other real-world missions including Panama in the 1980s, Operations Coronet Oak and Palmetto Ghost in Puerto Rico, and Volant Forge in Germany.
- The 914th has not had an aircraft crash in over 40 years.

Positive attributes of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

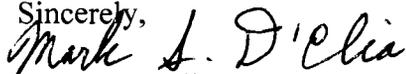
- The Niagara Air Reserve Station has the advantage of sharing costs between the 914th and the 107th, and it is still expandable. The existing infrastructure can accommodate 8 additional aircraft without any new military construction.
- Unlike some other bases, Niagara Falls faces no physical encroachment, nor air traffic control constraints and has additional acreage on the base and adjacent to the installation for expansion.
- Besides the Flying Squadron, the 914th also has an Aerial Port Squadron, an Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, and a Civil Engineering Squadron.
- Since 1995 Niagara has been modernized with \$35M in new facilities and lengthened runways which have improved the operational effectiveness of both the 914th and 107th.
- We have also reduced our Base Operations Support costs by not less than 33% (to include a 25% reduction in utilities) to make the base one of the most cost-efficient facilities in the Air Force Reserve Command.
- We are the closest facility to five major cities including the two largest cities in Canada.

Effect on the local area. Western New York is already an economically depressed region.

- As Niagara County's second largest employer with nearly 3,000 full and part-time workers, this would deliver another devastating blow to our region's economy. Base closure would also eliminate fire protection and snow removal and runway maintenance presently provided by the Air Force. This cost would have to be fully absorbed by the financially troubled Niagara Frontier Transit Authority which operates the civilian portion of the Airport. The newly opened Calspan flight test facility would also be affected.
- Closure of Niagara would reduce the Air Force presence in NY by 40%, and eliminate the last Federal Air Force flying mission in the State.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this very important matter.

Sincerely,



Mark S. D'Elia

5157 Bronson Drive
Lewiston, NY 14092
716-297-9565

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Chairman Anthony J. Principi
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

I was upset by the Defense Department's recommendation to close the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve and Guard base. This recommendation is not in the nation's best interest and the BRAC Commission should reverse this decision and remove this facility from the closure list.

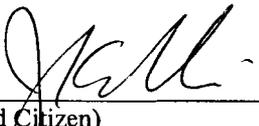
It is hard to understand why the Air Force has decided to take planes, missions and jobs away from so many Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve bases and put them on the more costly active duty bases.

Also, even the newspapers say that we are facing significant challenges in recruiting during wartime. As the only remaining major military installation in Western New York, Niagara Falls has been key to military recruitment.

The impact of this decision will be devastating to the New York Air National Guard and will make the Pentagon's efforts to recruit and retain military personnel even more difficult than it is now.

All New Yorkers stand with the Niagara Falls/Western New York community and are united in their support for this base and its retention. Overturn the Pentagon's recommendation and keep the base open.

Sincerely,



(A concerned Citizen)

(address)

82 Independence Lane
Grand Island, NY 14072