

July 31, 2005

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

AUG 03 2005

Received

Dear Commissioners:

The purpose of this letter is to protest the BRAC proposal of selecting Fort Benning as the site for merging the Armor Center and Armor School (to include the Armor Training Brigade) with the Infantry Center and Infantry School. Instead, it is proposed that this merger be accomplished at Fort Knox.

This objection is based mainly on the exorbitant costs associated with such a relocation, as compared to combining these elements at Fort Knox. Tank facilities for training and maintenance are far more expensive than those required by the infantry. Fort Knox not only has all of the areas and structures related to tank activities, it also has the firing ranges used in training both mounted and dismounted infantrymen, plus the maintenance buildings and areas associated with armored infantry carriers. It would be a huge waste of resources to largely abandon these tank facilities and various other post assets, upon relocating the armor agencies (Incl 1 and para 2, Incl 4).

The Fort Benning option is estimated to cost \$1.7 billion in new construction over an eight-year period (Incl 2 and 5). In comparison, the Fort Knox option is estimated to cost about \$500 million (Incl 3). This is less than one-third the BRAC proposal or an astounding \$1.2 billion savings (see also the Note at Incl 1).

This recommendation is directly related to the BRAC goal of taking actions to reduce expenditures. These costs and other data included in the inclosures may not be entirely accurate in all respects, but this does not alter the fact that the Fort Knox option is clearly far less expensive than what is planned in the BRAC.

Either of these options will result in a large increase of personnel at one of these posts. This aspect of relocation could be better accommodated at Fort Knox. That is because of the greater amount of building space in their garrison area (para 1, Incl 4) and the fact the civilian built-up areas and residential areas in the vicinity of the post, far exceed those for Fort Benning (Incl 6).

Other considerations related to this merger are included in the Discussion (Incl 4).

This counterproposal is being submitted at this late date because the stupendous price tag for the relocation to Georgia was not made known to those in the Fort Knox area by either military or congressional sources. It was discovered in a news story (Incl 5) and sparked a desire for a cost comparison. Attempting to have the appropriate agencies assume responsibility for this examination caused further delay. Finally, the time element made it necessary to take it upon myself to scrutinize these relocation options on behalf of all concerned citizens.

Please advise me I we can provide you with further information.

Sincerely,



Col. Thomas G. Quinn
US Army – Retired
125 Johns Road
Radcliff, KY 40160
Tp: (270) 351-8311

Inclosures:

- 1 – Fort Knox Armor Agency Facilities
- 2 – Construction Projects Associated with a Relocation to Fort Benning
- 3 – Construction Projects Associated with a Relocation to Fort Knox
- 4 – Discussion
- 5 – Georgia News Story on Relocation
- 6 – Comparison of Civilian Built-up Areas in the Vicinity of Fort Knox and Fort Benning

CF:

Selected organizations and individuals

Inclosure 1

Fort Knox Armor Agency Facilities

Armor Center

Headquarters Building	Tank Driving Areas
Other Administrative buildings	Tank Instructional Areas
Maintenance Shops and Areas	Tank Firing Ranges
Supply Areas	Tank Roads and Trails (with special attention to bridge capacities)
Ammunition and Fuel Storage Areas	BOQ's
Motor Pools and Wash Racks	

Armor School

Headquarters Building	School Troops:
Command and Staff Department	Headquarters
Automotive Department:	Troop Billets
Building 1	Student Billets
Building 2	Supply Areas
Building 3	Mess Halls
Weapons Department	Simulation Buildings
Communications Department	Maintenance Areas

Armor Training Brigade

Headquarters	Medical Clinic
Troop Billets – 20 large buildings	Dental Clinic
Mess Halls – 6 large buildings	Library Annex
Classroom or Instructional Buildings - 6 Complexes	Theater
Covered Instructional Areas - 4	Recreational Buildings

Note: This list is not exact, but does provide a good indication of what facilities are presently utilized or controlled by these organizations and would be required elsewhere if they are relocated. As indicated in the Discussion (para 2, Incl 4), the departure of the armor organizations would result in a great amount of wasted resources.

The various firing ranges, driving areas, maintenance shops, instructional complexes, and other facilities built for tank units, would get little or no use in this event. The same applies to most of the Armor School buildings and many of those belonging to the Armor Center.

This abandonment of facilities is really another cost factor that should be calculated and added to the cost differential between the Fort Benning and the Fort Knox options. It undoubtedly involves many tens of millions of dollars.

Inclosure 2

Construction Projects Associated with a Relocation to Fort Benning

The announced total cost of the projects associated with relocating the armor agencies to Fort Benning, as indicated in Incl 5, is \$1.7 billion. These projects would include the structures and areas required to accommodate the activities of the Armor Center, Armor School, and Armor Training Brigade, as generally shown in Inclosure 1.

An attempt was made to get a detailed listing of these projects (including costs) by having the local news media secure this information through PIO channels. It was not successful by the time this letter was dispatched. This data should be more readily available to the BRAC commission.

Inclosure 3

Construction Projects Associated with a Relocation to Fort Knox

Infantry Center:

Headquarters -----\$10m
Other Administration Buildings and Areas ---\$20m

Infantry School:

Building for staff and faculty and
academic departments and classrooms --- \$60m
*Infantry Museum ----- \$10m

Support Troops:

Headquarters -----\$5m
Troop Billets----- \$100m
Supply Areas -----\$10 m
Mess Areas ----- \$10m
Maintenance Areas (Refurbish)----- \$10m
BOQ's ----- \$65m

Additional Dependent Housing -----\$200m

Total – \$500m

Note: These cost figures are general estimates, which are hopefully on the generous side; however, even if they are off by several hundred million dollars, the Fort Benning relocation option would still be over twice as costly as the Fort Knox option.

No parachute facilities were included on the assumption this training would remain at Fort Benning; however, they could be relocated to Fort Knox at relatively little cost.

*The Patton Museum building at Fort Knox was funded by money collected from private donors. This collection of funds covered a 40-year period and required the construction to be accomplished in phases. Consequently, it would be appropriate to use some of this government funding to refurbish the Patton Museum to bring it up to the same standard as the new Infantry Museum.

Discussion

1. Fort Knox's Capacity for Handling the Merger. Fort Knox is a major installation in both size and facilities. It has a garrison area of about 10,000 acres and a total area of over 109,000 acres. It also has all the facilities to serve and support a large number of residents.

During WW II, Fort Knox had a population of over 90,000 and it has twice been home to armored divisions. For another long period, the post units included not only the Armor Center and Armor School, but also five training brigades and the largest combat brigade in the U.S. Army, plus a variety of other units and agencies. That is equivalent to nearly two divisions.

Now the post is less than a quarter of what it was in its glory days. Most of the WW II buildings have been razed and there are many large empty spaces throughout the post. The point being that Fort Knox could again handle a large number of personnel and units, to include a merged Armor and Infantry Center and their subordinate organizations.

Additionally, the post and surrounding areas could accommodate a very large dependent population. There are several housing areas that have been demolished on post and are ready for new housing. Along with these sites, there is a 200 plus acre golf course that was recently destroyed to use for housing construction. Over 90 percent of it is still available for that purpose. See also Incl 6 for the off-post housing situation.

2. Wasted Resources. Before the latest BRAC proposals were offered to further consolidate bases and reduce expenses, it seemed inevitable that Fort Knox would be expanded. Instead, the realignment that has been recommended fails to take advantage of the installation's land areas and training facilities. It also does not realize the benefits from economies of scale, which is at the heart of BRAC.

The Accessions Command and the Human Resources Command, which are scheduled to relocate to Fort Knox, would occupy relatively small parcels of land. Each of these commands would most likely be housed mainly in some humongous building of its own, specially constructed to meet its needs. Neither would have any use for most of the Armor Center and Armor School buildings. That would result in many vacant structures and eventually even more empty spaces. Furthermore, these commands would have little use for the large training areas, as they are not in the training or the equipment testing business.

The Infantry Brigade that is slated to be formed at Fort Knox would probably fit into the Armor Training Brigade area; however, they would have little use for the numerous tank instructional complexes and the various tank firing and driving ranges and other tank facilities on post.

All in all, the location of these type organizations at Fort Knox without the armor agencies, would result in a huge waste of resources (see Incl 1, to include the Note).

3. Misleading Justification. Comments in support of the Fort Knox BRAC proposals sometimes allude to these relocations as being necessary in order to better combat terrorism. Actually, they have no relation to this activity. In fact, there is no compelling reason, military or otherwise, to choose Fort Benning over Fort Knox. On the other hand, the cost savings realized from the Fort Knox option is overwhelming.

4. Failure of the Local Leadership and Media to Act. The local leaders in the Fort Knox

area have a vital interest in the BRAC proposals for this installation; however, they are largely uncertain about the real ramifications of these actions.

This stems from the pronouncements of certain congressmen and local officials. In order to garner support for these actions (for whatever reason), they put them in the best possible light and rave about what a good deal they are for the local area. They invariably fail to indicate how relatively small the benefits are compared to having an armor/infantry merger at Fort Knox. The negatives concerning costs and wasted resources are also never mentioned, even though they are significant. This situation has been compounded by a lack of specifics concerning the costs and consequences of these BRAC proposals. The reluctance of the local news media to do investigative reporting has further served to keep everyone in the dark in this regard.

Between party loyalty, misleading information, and paucity of facts, it is little wonder that the local leaders have not presented a united front against the Fort Benning option. In spite of the half-truths and the information voids, though, it is easy to see that the Fort Knox option is the best way of accomplishing this merger.

5. Emotional Reaction. Those who try to justify the idea of relocating armor agencies, often attempt to dismiss the widespread dissent against this action as an emotional response from the armor community. Such an accusation only betrays a weak case.

In reality, there seems to be little feeling for making armor and Fort Knox synonymous; however, there is great feeling for doing what is sensible, to include not wasting resources and making needless expenditures.

Ga. post-area chamber official: ‘Fort Benning is going to receive the city of Fort Knox’

Business leader anticipating 25,000 new residents and Patton Museum

SMITHS STATION, Ala. (AP) — The proposed move of the U.S. Army's Armor School to Fort Benning would bring more than 25,000 people to the area and mean nearly \$2 billion in new construction in coming years, a local civic leader said.

Approximately 7,000 students attend the Armor school each year. Fort Knox is expected to lose approximately 10,000 jobs.

Moving the school and armor center from Fort Knox to Fort Benning on the Alabama line near Phenix

City is one of the military's Base Realignment and Closure recommendations.

"In simplest terms, Fort Benning is going to receive the city of Fort Knox," said Biff Hadden of the Columbus (Ga.) Chamber of Commerce. He spoke as part of the Fort Benning Futures Partnership's presentation at City Hall Tuesday.

Hadden said the move would bring an estimated 26,980 people — including soldiers and their families, civilian contractors and defense contractors — over

the next four years. It would also mean some \$1.7 billion in new construction over an eight-year period, he said.

The number of soldiers trained annually at the post would increase by some 5,000 to about 29,000 by 2009 as Fort Benning takes over armor training for the Army and the Marines.

The move also would mean the addition of simulators used to train soldiers and Marines and technicians to maintain the machines.

"We will become, overnight, the Department of

Defense's premier simulation center," Hadden said.

Currently, Fort Benning is the second largest simulation center in the Army after Fort Knox, he said.

The Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor, currently at Fort Knox, also would bring about 300,000 visitors annually, according to Hadden.

Officials at Fort Knox earlier told *The News-Enterprise* they were unaware of any plans to move the Patton Museum. ■

The News-Enterprise
Elizabethtown, KY
July 7, 2005

The estimate of \$1.7 billion was undoubtedly provided to this booster by his congressional and military contacts and must have some validity.

TGQ

Inclosure 6

Comparison of Civilian Built-up Areas in the Vicinity of Fort Knox and Fort Benning

Fort Knox:	<u>Town</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Distance</u>
	Radcliff	25,000	5-10 miles
	Elizabethtown	25,000	10-20 miles
	Vine Grove	5,000	5-10 miles
	Brandenburg	3,000	15-20 miles
	Greater Louisville	620,000	20-40 miles
	Shepherdsville	<u>10,000</u>	20-25 miles
		688,000	

Additionally, there are numerous other small towns and residential areas within 25 miles of Fort Knox in Hardin and Meade Counties with a total population of over 40,000. Most of them have a large amount of expansion room.

Fort Benning:	<u>Town</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Distance</u>
	Greater Columbus	190,000	5-20
	Phenix City, AL	<u>30,000</u>	12-30
		220,000	

The location of the Fort Benning reservation along, near, and across the Chattahoochee River, limits access to and availability of, civilian residential areas.