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May 31, 2005

Chairman Principi
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This information is provided in accordance with the PRESS RELEASE of 26 May 2005, specifically, as part of the "community impact from affected stakeholders."

This letter is prompted by four major considerations and/or events. There is a myriad of other reasons and all stem from the current BRAC exercise that is now underway. The major reasons are:

1. Conference with Secretary of the Navy Hidalgo (SecNav).
2. The Naval Aviation Maintenance Plan (NAMMP).
3. Organic Depot Workload Interservicing.
4. Military Training.

I personally feel that I am qualified to address each of these subjects because I have had over 30 years of progressive experience in direct aviation logistics support at the depot level. Prior to my retirement, my last three years I served as the Chief Engineer of the NAVAIR Engineering Support Office (NESO). During that same period, I served simultaneously as the Aeronautical Engineering Department Head (GS-15). Prior to that latter assignment, I served as the Production Engineering Department Head (GS-14) for seven years. Before that, I was the Plant Engineering Division Director (GS-13) for 13 years. Other supervisory positions at lower ratings preceded those.

I listed the above for a single reason. Despite my long experience in the field of Aviation Logistic Support (ALS), I am not a complete authority or expert in that field. Due to that field's unbelievable complexity, I don't believe that anyone up to and including the maximum governmental and commercial levels exists. Some of us have been fortunate enough to manage individuals who are true experts in different segments of ALS and together constitute an expert cadre. Long years of collective experience, study and application only create such a cadre. That is an extremely important and militarily essential part of Naval as well as Air Force and Army ALS at the Depot Level.

Reason 1 - During my final seven years of federal service, I was President of the Cherry Point Employees Association (CPEA), which was one of six (then) chapters of the National Council of Industrial Naval Air Stations. I was also Vice President of the East coast chapters.

The North Island President and I were granted a 15 minute audience with the then Secretary of the Navy (SecNav) Hidalgo. We explained to him in minute detail the operations of the then six depots. We went through the total phases of airframe, engine, accessories and repairable components rework from receipt to preservation (if applicable). Beyond that, we explained (to the depth he desired) how rework capability is established in a Designated Overhaul Point (DOP). We went through the judgmental process used to determine which of the then 13 aviation service depots was already equipped physically, with sufficient artisan skills, technical and engineering experience, sufficient capacity (without Military Construction) to accommodate the workload. Formost in the selection process was both new-start and military construction avoidance.

We explained the involvement of the depot in developing capability to rework a given article including technical instructions, specialized support equipment, general equipment specifications and procurement, installation of equipment, support shops re-arrangement, supply provisions, inspection requirements, performance testing and packaging and preservation. Each of the elements is a study within itself, and, if desired, can be described completely.

In the final analysis, the North Island President and I saw our 15 minute time grant extend to over three hours by the Secretary himself. He was obviously both amazed and intrigued at the depot and complexity of depot operations. He thanked us and said the depots had never been explained to him in such detail.

My personal belief is that the Secretary's prior understanding is still shared by many, both in and out of government. Simple assignment of some number of man-hours to a facility, within itself will never create the capability of that facility to produce depot level work.

Reason 2 - The NAMP, among other things, specifies the three levels of Naval Aviation Maintenance in support of aviation readiness. Those levels are Operational, Intermediate, and Depot. A common belief is that the three are separable, conversely they are not. Operational is practiced and applied by the squadrons that fly the planes; the intermediate level must also practice operational; and, the depot cannot avoid also practicing and applying both the intermediate and operational levels.

I will apologize for the very crude analogy that I have applied to the NAMP at many presentations throughout my federal career.

Operational – In my own backyard, I change oil, replace filters, replace belts, replace fuses, lubricate and a host of other tasks to keep my vehicle operational.

Intermediate – I don't have the skill, equipment, tooling, or space to replace or repair transmissions, differentials, clutches, starters, generators, etc. However, a local service station has established that capability. A specific operation that he performs for me must and does include the operation at the next lower (Operational) level.

Depot – This level includes such things as overhauling the engine, reworking the transmission, structural renovation, grinding crankshafts, overhauling air conditioning systems and other similar complex systems. The depot level must also be equipped and staffed to perform at the intermediate and operational levels. The Depot must be equipped with the physical facility, specialized equipment, technical experience and instructions to perform that and the other two levels.

As a hypothetical example, assume that my local vehicle dealer will overhaul my truck engine if I will pay him for 50 man-hours. If that dealer for some reason closes his business, I could then agree to pay my local service station owner 50 man-hours to overhaul the engine.

He could perform the overhaul if and only if he expanded his facility, obtained the special tools and equipment, hire and train mechanics, purchase and stock replacement parts and provide the managerial skills to inspect and progress the work.

Reason 3 – The Joint Logistics Commanders (JLC) consisting of a Navy Admiral, two Air Force Generals, and an Army General published a Joint Agreement on Aviation Depot Maintenance Interservicing. The general objective was to investigate, promote and expand interservicing among the three services.

In order to accomplish the objective, the task was subdivided into several applicable work groups. The JLC appointed me to be the Chairman of the Work Group (WG-8) to investigate and recommend the interservice depot to rework specific field-generated repairable components. Each depot appointed two persons (Engineers/Technicians) to be members of WG-8. At that time, there were six Navy, five Air Force and two Army Depots that assigned members to WG-8.

We met at least monthly for probably three years at the member Depots. Our main purpose was to introduce and recommend the Depot to rework a given repairable component. The selection was intended to reduce new-starts by recommending the Depot that was the nearest to already being capable of doing the work. That recommendation was based on requisite trained skills, supply support, organic capability, equipment availability, and technical/engineering support.

The Honorable H. T. Johnson
Assistant Secretary of the Navy (I&E)
Department of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This is in further reference to my letter addressed to you dated March 12, 2002 and is enclosed for your information as Encl. (1).

I am not a Northeast, but prefer being identified as a *Southeast* North Carolinian because I have been, am now, and will continue to be an avid and vigorous supporter of our total military establishment. I have had extensive involvement with that establishment for many years, as was briefly discussed in Encl. (1). A complete resume is available, if desired.

I believe that the Washington County site for the OLF site was selected by the Navy after extensive study of environmental, wildlife and alternate locations considerations would be the best, most feasible and probably the most economical location for a dual application OLF.

It is regrettable that forces obviously not of the same bent have elected the path they have now taken.

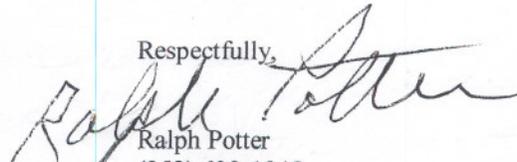
Encl. (2) is my original proposal that I submitted before I was aware that the OLF was to be used for aircraft stationed at both Oceana and Cherry Point. That proposal was location D on Encl. (3) and is shown for reference only.

Encl. (3) indicates two alternatives that may be considered in case the Navy is forced into considering some other location than that preferred (A on Encl. (3)). The B location could be approximately halfway between Rodanthe and Sandy Point. The same rationale as stated in Encl. (2) would also apply to Location B. Location C may be attractive because an active carrier could be deployed to that general area. That alternative would yield certain advantages by not only training young pilots in more actual conditions but also increasing the proficiency of flight support crew members in catapulting, landing restraint and general flight support operations. A carrier crew having intermediate capability could affect that level of repairs if necessary.

I would be pleased to discuss this subject more fully if you desire.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Ralph Potter
(252) 638-1845

Enclosures:

- Encl. (1) 12 Mar 02 ltr to Secretary Johnson
- Encl. (2) Aircraft Landing Platform Proposal
- Encl. (3) Possible Alternative OLF Locations

March 12, 2002

The Honorable H. T. Johnson
Assistant Secretary of the Navy (I&E)
Department of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D. C. 20350-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I live in the incorporated town of Cove City, N.C., which is located approximately halfway between New Bern and Kinston, N.C. The most satisfying element of my living here is that the town is roughly equi-distant from the following defense establishments: MCAS Cherry Point; MCAS New River; MCB LeJeune; AFB Seymour-Johnson; and MALF Bogue Field. Ft. Bragg at Fayetteville is less than 100 miles away, and we are within 50 miles of the Atlantic Ocean.

We are protected amply and feel a strong sense of security and are thankful for the defensive and offensive air, land, sea and undersea military capability that surrounds us.

I am personally disturbed and offended by any action that would contribute toward diminishing the military efficiency, effectiveness and readiness capability in our military establishment.

I have read and heard the local and other newspaper, television and public discussions regarding the pros and cons of locating an OLF somewhere in near proximity to some of the Naval facilities now in existence for pilot training.

I feel qualified to offer the alternative in the enclosure because I have had extensive aviation logistic support experience with Naval, Marine Corps, Air Force and Army Aviation Forces. Most of my engineering experience has been at the Naval Aviation Depot (NADEP) at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C. (30 plus years). At that location, I served progressively as the Plant Engineering Division Director, then the Production Engineering Department Head, and finally the Chief Engineer of the Naval Engineering Support Office (then 300 (NESO) Department Head).

I also have had involvements in Foreign Military Sales, Navy ADMIT Chairman, NADEP GIDEP Co-ordinator and Chairman of Interservice Work Group 8. An expanded resume is available if desired.

My only purpose in listing my career involvements is to demonstrate that I have had extensive aviation logistic support experience at the three prescribed maintenance levels and consider myself qualified to offer the OLF proposal in Encl. (1).

I am no longer privy to the projects manual (11010.20) (I believe) or the 4790 series so I recognize that the proposal may be completely out of the proper Naval format.

Any consideration you can give this proposal will be appreciated. I knew of no other vehicle to transmit the proposal since I am retired.

Respectfully,

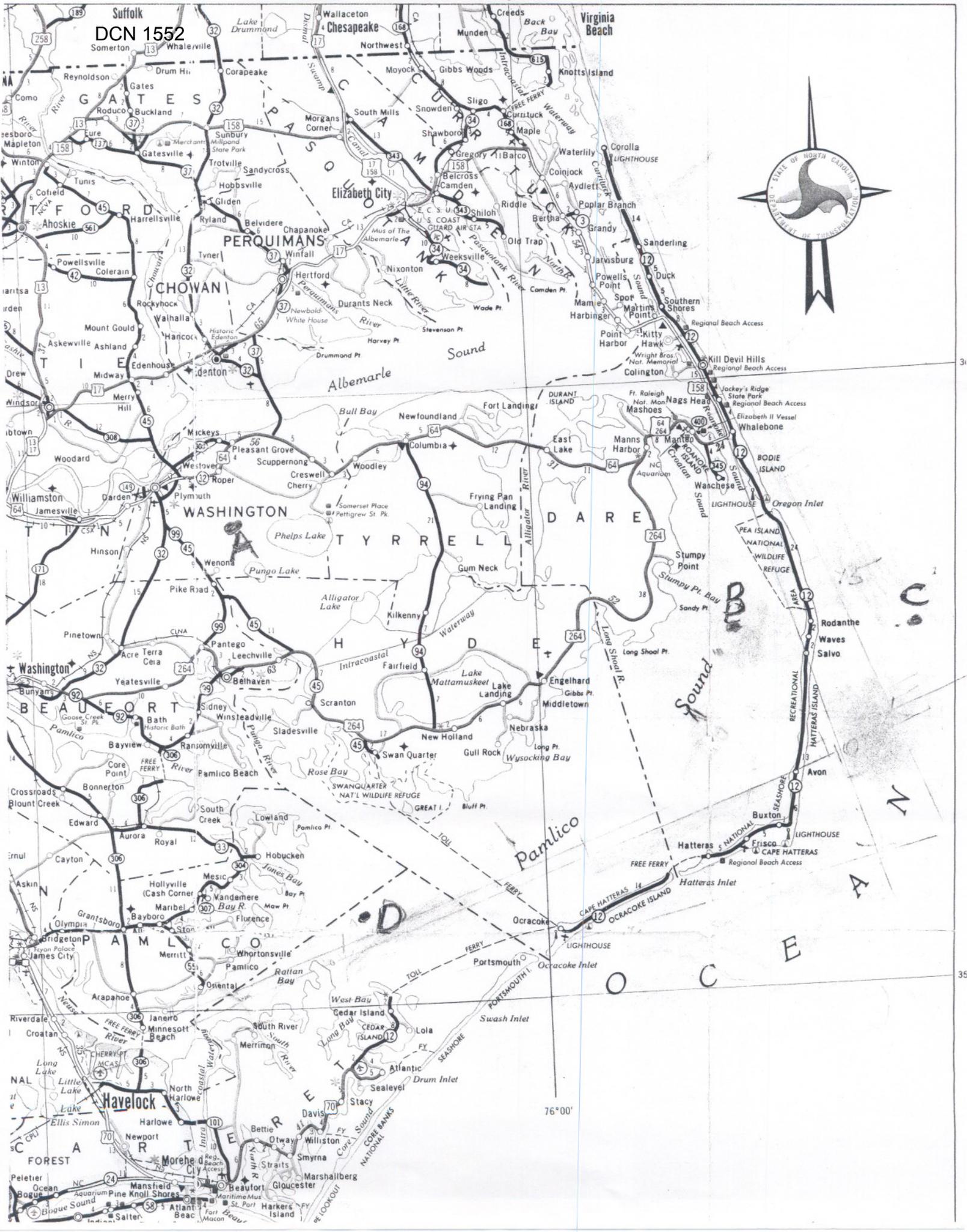
Ralph Potter

Aircraft Landing Platform Proposal

- 1. Proposal:** It is proposed that the Navy design, construct and position a Landing Platform-Shallow Draft (LPSD) in the Pamlico Sound in Eastern North Carolina.
- 2. Purpose:** The purpose of the LPSD is primarily to train pilots in take-offs and landings after they have performed those maneuvers successfully some prescribed number of times at land based airstrips.
- 3. Location:** There are two major military prohibited areas in the South West end of the Pamlico Sound. The center of one (a Target Platform) is located near 35 degrees 02 minutes N. and 76 degrees 28 minutes E. The center of the other is near 35 degrees 13 minutes N. and 76 degrees 26 minutes E. Just east of the center of the latter area the water appears to be around 20-22 feet deep. The LPSD should be located out-of-sight of land to more nearly simulate actual sea-side conditions. There are many locations in Pamlico Sound where that condition can be met.
- 4. Configuration:** The LPSD should resemble our largest carrier in size, beam, freeboard, runway surface, etc. Weight adding features such as armor plate, massive power plants, armament and extensive fuel storage facilities would be eliminated. The LPSD could even be brought to the chosen location by tugboats. The LPSD should be equipped with safety, fire protection, heating, arresting, communication, messing (optimal) health and accident, rescue equipment and any other facility considered essential.
- 5. Carrier Mass Simulation:** In order to provide aircraft landing shock and thrust absorption, a ballast and mass system could be devised and applied to give the LPSD more stability and shock absorption capability.
- 6. Advantages:**
 - a. Positioning an LPSD generally as described would more nearly simulate at-sea conditions.
 - b. Training of pilots would be expanded to include more extensive on-site training for flight and other logistic support personnel.
 - c. Pilot mishaps at "sea" would more likely result in less serious injuries or even deaths than on land.
 - d. Public Domain use would not be expanded and could therefore remain in the private sector.
 - e. Take-off and landing noises would be further remote from populated land areas and therefore would be less hazardous or annoying.
 - f. The existing target area would be in closer proximity to the take off/landing site and would result in fuel economies for bombing practice.
 - g. Travel distance to a crash site for aircraft for which the NADEP is the cognizant field activity would be lessened and engineering response would be quicker. TAD costs would be reduced proportionally.
- 7. Environmental Impact:**

Migratory and native wild fowl and marine life abound in and around the existing target area in Pamlico Sound. No complaints have been seen or heard from the target operating area specifically in the fields of air and water pollution.

Landings and take-offs from an LPSD located as prescribed earlier, out of sight of land would be even less hazardous or polluting than the existing target area.



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