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February 25, 2005
BRAC Commission

Admiral Vern Clark
Chief of Naval Operations
Department of the Navy
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-2000

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Dear Admiral Clark:

I write today on behalf of the men and women of our Navy who support our national security objectives and help defend the freedoms we cherish. The men and women of our Navy and Marine Corps based at installations such as Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NASJRB) Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, are key components of our national security strategy.

By way of background, drilling reservists travel to NASJRB Willow Grove from states such as New York and South Carolina because of the unique capabilities present at this installation. NASJRB Willow Grove is geographically positioned to support the rapid deployment of aircraft, ships and personnel on the eastern seaboard. The installation is a 20-minute flight from Andrews Air Force Base, MD, a 40-minute flight from Naval Air Station Oceana, VA, and a 25-minute flight from New York, New York.

NASJRB Willow Grove is an installation utilized by not only the Navy and Marine Corps, but also the Army Reserve, Air Force Reserve and Pennsylvania Air National Guard, making Willow Grove a true joint installation with respect to military operations. Among the tenants of this installation are the 913rd Airlift Wing, Marine Aircraft Group 49 (MAG-49), Patrol Squadron 64 (VP-64), Patrol Squadron 66 (VP-66), Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 52 (VR-52), and the 111th Fighter Wing of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. With regard to the Navy's presence at this installation, there are 373 officer assigned drilling reservists and 1,094 enlisted assigned reservists to VP-64 and VP-66 at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove. Additionally, there are 234 civilians assigned to this installation.

VP-64 and VP-66 utilize P-3C aircraft in the conduct of their mission for the Navy. As you know, the Navy has begun studying the implications on the service associated with the declining airframe service life of the P-3C fleet. Recent correspondence from Secretary Gordon England notes that individual P-3C aircraft will begin to be transferred between Active and Reserve components, including VP-64 and VP-66 aircraft. That being said, I am informed that one Marine Corps and three Navy squadrons could be relocated to NASJRB Willow Grove in the event VP-64's or VP-66's P-3C aircraft are retired. VR-52 based at Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine, VR-53 based at Naval Air Facility Washington, Andrews Air Force Base, MD, and VR-48 based at Naval Air Facility Washington, Andrews Air Force Base, MD, are all ideal candidates to be located at NASJRB Willow Grove. Additionally, I am informed that the Marine Corps has considered moving their C-9 squadron, currently based at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina, to another location.

In addition to its prime location and its highly trained cadre of military personnel, NASJRB Willow Grove has a new Navy Lodge, an enlarged Navy Exchange, and a new high-security gate and guard dog kennel. I would encourage you and others in the Navy's senior leadership to consider moving either a C-130 squadron, a C-20G squadron or a C-9 squadron to NASJRB Willow Grove in the very near future. This installation has been a valued asset to our nation for over 60 years and has played a key role in meeting our national security requirements. I urge the Navy to continue its much valued commitment to this installation

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and this community.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of additional assistance to you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Rick Santorum
United States Senate