



Mar 17, 2005

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

Dear Brig. Gen. Sue Ellen Turner, Samuel Knox Skinner, James H. Bilbray, Phillip Coyle, Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr., James V. Hansen, Gen. James T. Hill, and Gen. Lloyd Newton:

After hearing the upsetting news that Cannon Air Force base is on the Base Realignment and Closure list, I feel compelled to write and voice my opinion.

Clovis is a community that has embraced Cannon every since I can remember. I was born and raised in Clovis and Cannon has been very much a part of my life and a vital segment of the Clovis community.

Closing Cannon Air Force base does not make sense to me. We have a wide open area for flying, we have a bombing range a very short distance from the base and the community support is unheard of in the air force base community. We are in close proximity to several high security locations, Los Alamos National Labs in Los Alamos, NM, Pantex in Amarillo, TX, WIPP in Carlsbad, NM, and Sandia Labs in Albuquerque, NM. What is the plan to protect these locations if a threat ensues? Where would the protection come from.....halfway across the country? I have always felt safe in knowing that Cannon was here protecting our country and my family. My brother works at Pantex, my sister works at Sandia Labs, and my neice and her family live in Los Alamos. Suddenly that safe feeling is questionable to say the least. If Homeland Security is our quest, you are really not making a good decision to close Cannon Air Force base.

Not only looking at this from the Homeland Security aspect, but this area allows the pilots to train in wide open spaces, day and night. They can practice several bombing missions in succession without having to stop for refueling. I see jets flying both day and night training for the time they may be needed. This is the only bombing range within a thousand mile radius that does both bombing and electronic combat. That bombing range serves the 27th Fighter Wing at Cannon, B1's out of Dyess AFB in Abilene, TX, 150th ANG out of Kirkland AFB in Albuquerque, NM, 550th SOS, Special Ops out of Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque, NM, B52's from Barksdale AFB in Louisiana, B2's out of Missouri, F117's from Holloman AFB in Alamogordo, NM along with occasional E3's, EC-13's, and who ever else flies within range. It is also used by the Army for air drop exercises, and both USAF and Army Forward Air Controller training. To say it is a valuable asset would be a huge understatement. With it's proximity to Cannon AFB makes it unique and makes Cannon a necessary part of the equation. Not only for training missions, but for availability for emergencies and refueling. The 27th

Fighter Wing works and trains as a team. You can see them flying the skies every day, executing their combat ready skills with expertise. The numerous awards they have received for their proficiency and ability have proven they work very well as a team. You cannot break these units up and expect them to perform in wartime at this same degree when they are not able to train at the level they train at here at Cannon.

According to the selection criteria that was listed, the availability of land, facilities, and associated airspace were to be considered. Cannon has all of this and then some. The facilities are very state-of-the-art, with up to date runways that can accommodate many types of jets. The airspace goes on for miles and miles. Land is available everywhere. We have a bombing range just 30 minutes west of the base. There have been numerous military exercises held here jointly with other segments of our military organizations due to the unique environment we have.

The closing of Cannon Air Force base would impact Clovis in a very negative way. The last numbers I have heard, there are close to 4,000 people, military & civilian employed at Cannon Air Force base. You can pretty well double or triple that number when you include spouses and children. We will lose neighbors, friends, family members, church members, students, co-workers, volunteers, & business if Cannon should close.

I have been involved with Special Olympics for many years. The majority of our volunteers come from active military at Cannon. I have said many times before that if it were not for the folks at Cannon and the support we get from Cannon, we would not have a Special Olympics program in Clovis.

All I ask is that you take a really hard look at the Final Selection Criteria and re-evaluate your decisions for Cannon Air Force base being on the BRAC list and remove Cannon from that list.

Your consideration in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Roxie S. Burgess
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