



Board of
MINERAL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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GOVERNING BOARD FOR THE TOWNS OF
HAWTHORNE, WALKER LAKE, LUNING
AND MINA
LIQUOR BOARD AND GAMING BOARD

RICHARD BRYANT, CHAIRMAN
NANCY BLACK, Vice-Chairman
EDWARD FOWLER, Member

June 20, 2005

06262005



RECEIVED

BRAC Commission
2521 S. Clark St
Suite 600
Arlington, Va. 22202

Re: BRAC closure listing for Hawthorne Army Depot

Sir:

It was with dismay that the Mineral County Board of Commissioners reviewed the published Department of Defense recommendation that the Hawthorne Army Depot in Hawthorne, Nevada be closed. Hawthorne is the County seat in Mineral County, and at approximately 4,000 in population, is by far the largest community in Mineral County. Hawthorne is located in a very remote and sparsely populated area of Nevada, about 135 miles south of Reno/Sparks, and 310 miles north of Las Vegas.

After reading your recommendation, and the data provided with it to support your recommendation, this Board was left bewildered with the inaccuracy of the data used to reach and support your recommendation. As such, this Board is compelled to not only question your decision and data, but to protest it as well.

A recent evaluation by the Military Capabilities Report of military installation assets as to their military value rated Hawthorne Army Depot currently as second only to McAlester as a whole, and first in several categories. For future, long term military value, Hawthorne Army Depot was rated as first. What has changed that would explain or justify the loss of all military value, current and/or future?

The BRAC Commission was charged with using an established set of principles in conjunction with military judgment to evaluate each installations' military value, and to use that military value as the primary consideration in making closure and realignment recommendations. From our perspective, it appears that a decision was made to close HWAD, and then to attempt to compile flawed data to support that recommendation. Our community, State, and County leaders have worked long and hard in researching data and developing a response to your recommendation that soundly and accurately address each and every aspect in determining HWAD's military value. All this data was compiled by the Mineral County Economic Development Authority and the Mineral County Chamber of Commerce into a large binder referred to as the "Hawthorne Fact Book". Your Commission will be receiving this document at the Clovis, N.M. hearings.

It is this Board's decision that we, for the most part, will let the facts and data as outlined and presented in the Hawthorne Fact Book speak for themselves. There are, however, a few areas that we wish to address.

Two key areas in determining an installation's military value were the installation's ability to expand both it's mission and it's borders, and also the all-important encroachment condition, both present and future. Hawthorne Army Depot is the Nation's largest Depot, and has ample room to expand to

There have been numerous studies conducted on developing more economical methods of conducting business within the Dept. of Defense. Virtually all of these studies/reports have recommended increasing the privatization or "out-sourcing" of installations by going from a GO-GO (Government Owned-Government Operated) to a GO-CO (Government Owned - Contractor Operated) operation. Out-sourcing or contracting out facilities has proven to be a very effective cost-cutting tool for managing facilities. Hawthorne Army Depot was one of the first to become a GO-CO twenty-five (25) years ago, and has performed in an outstanding manner and has been an asset to the community and County for this entire time period.

The BRAC closure recommendations, however, appear to be not only conspicuous, but suspicious in relation to the recommendation of expanding GO-CO's. Day & Zimmerman Corp. has had the contract to operate HWAD for twenty-five years. They also have the contract to operate four other facilities, Newport Chemical Plant, Miss. Ammunition Plant, Lone Star Ammunition Plant, and Kansas Ammunition Plant. All five of these GO-CO's were recommended for closure by the BRAC. Are we to believe this was just a coincidence? We believe that it appears that the BRAC Commission is sending out the message that (1) the BRAC Commission is rejecting the directive to out-source, (2) That out-sourcing is the next step to facility closure, and (3) DOD has little regard for the well-being of private sector/contract employees versus that of public sector employees.

It is also troubling that HWAD was apparently the ONLY facility to have alternative scenarios performed, and this with flawed data. HWAD's stocks are destined for Tooele Army Depot. Has the BRAC Commission ever been to Tooele? Our Board Chairman spends a great amount of time in the Salt Lake City area that includes Tooele. Unlike Hawthorne, Tooele is within twenty straight-line miles of over 2 million people, and is already suffering from encroachment. The people in the Salt Lake Valley and surrounding area recognize the value of the land and facilities that comprise the Tooele Army Depot. It would be a very sound bet that by the time the movement of stocks from HWAD to Tooele is completed, DOD will be searching for a location to move Tooele Army Depot and it's missions to, due to the encroachment created by the incredible growth the area is experiencing, and the resultant overwhelming resistance to Tooele's mission, especially Demil. We challenge the BRAC Commission to run an alternative scenario on the facility slated to receive HWAD's stocks.

We, as a Board, are requesting a site visit. We have become very frustrated in our efforts to inquire as to why a site visit was not scheduled for HWAD. One inquiry established criteria of 200 jobs lost before a site visit would be made, and we were at 199. That criteria later changed to 500 jobs lost when told the 199 was not accurate. Factual data shows that the job loss exceeds the 500 level also, but still no site visit. Conservative estimates show that the direct and indirect job loss in the community at about 900, or about 50% of the jobs within the community, and accompanied by the devastating economic impact in all facets of life, services, and government created by this large job loss. This community has dedicated itself to the service and support of the Department of Defense and its components for over seventy-five (75) years without question or complaint. No other community or County affected by the BRAC Commission recommendations is faced with the level of economic impact Hawthorne will sustain. We will incur a tremendous economic and service impact which will include default on a school bond, closure of private businesses, closure of County Hospital, reduction in Public Safety services, decreased assessed valuation for tax purposes resulting in reduction in County operating funds, severe impact on school district and a large increase in utility services. Haven't we earned a site visit or at least a straight answer?

HWAD's and the County's infrastructure and ability to meet mobilization requirements has been brought into question. Close scrutiny by the BRAC will lay these concerns to rest. Our railroad and highways are sound and well-maintained, and our airport runway was recently expanded to accommodate military airlift and cargo aircraft. HWAD and the community have 75 years of outstanding performance in meeting mobilization requirements to include manpower and equipment. The BRAC report contradicts itself in regards to movement of stocks/materials. HWAD seems to get a failing grade for ability to respond for mobilization, but can meet a very ambitious shipping and demil schedule in order to meet the time line for closure.

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In closing, we again request that the Hawthorne Fact Book be read and evaluated, and that the BRAC Commission listen to the presentation made at the Clovis hearing with an open mind. We are confident that a review of all data and materials will persuade the Commission of the importance of a site visit, and hopefully eventual removal from the closure listing.

Thank you for your time and attention, and if you have any comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Mineral County Board of Commissioners at any time.

Respectfully,

BOARD OF MINERAL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

BY *Richard Bryant*
RICHARD BRYANT, CHAIRMAN

BY *Nancy Black*
NANCY BLACK, VICE-CHAIRMAN

BY *Ed Fowler*
ED FOWLER, MEMBER

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