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BRAC Commission

To: Base Realignment Commission  
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Received

Subj: Pope AFB

Commissioner Adm Harold Gehmann Ret.

I have been watching the BRAC hearings on c-span that you have been holding and the internet. A recent internet article posted on the Air Force.com web site mention that the comminsion has put Pope AFB on the list for possible closer. (See Attachment)

It stated a comment you made objecting to adding Pope and made a reference about the Air National Guard mess. I want to inform you that proposed move of 16 aircraft from Wisconsin and Pennsylvania are not air national guard units but are Air Force Reserve units and are not under and control of either state. This being fact the Air Force does not need any State approval.

I concur with you this move make sense for several reasons:

1. Establishment of a reserve unit there will allow these aircraft to be maintained with a limited amount of full time personnel.
2. With the establishment of a reserve unit they can bring in reservists in time of surges.
3. A reserve unit can deploy anywhere but if you only have non military civilians (non air reserve technicians) maintaining these aircraft they cannot be mobilized when needed.

Note: A air reserve technician is a civilian employee who has to maintain a membership in the reserve unit very similar to the navy TAR program.

Also the following information you may not be aware of is the Pennsylvania Air National Guard has several flying units other than the 111 TFW located at Willow Grove Naval Air Station which is schedule follow closer under BRAC.

1. 193 SOW A ANG C-130E SOF unit located at Middletown Pa (airlift capability)
2. 171 ARW A ANG KC135 unit (with some airlift capability) located at Pittsburgh Air National Guard Station. Which happens to be on the same airport grounds just across the ramp as the Air Force Reserve C-130 unit recommended to be transferred to Pope AFB by BRAC.
3. Recently I sent another letter to the Chairman Principi about Willow Grove and the 111th TFW and recommended that to transfer the 111th TFW ANG to Pittsburgh area when and if the Air Force moves C-130 to Pope. This would allow Willow Grove NAS to close. The C-130 unit located at Willow Grove is an Air Force Reserve unit and does not

come under the control of the state. These aircraft are scheduled to be retired. This would allow the navy and marines to move their aircraft to McGuire AFB NJ which is located within driving distance of each other (approx 30 miles). Willow Grove NAS is a highly populated area and does not operate 24/7 so they do not disturb the locals.

As you might not know the Navy and Marines use to fly fighter aircraft there but no longer do. Since 1960's there have been at least 6 fighter aircraft crashes off base. Five of these were Navy and marine corp accidents and one ANG A-10 fighter aircraft. Fortunately no civilians have been killed yet but a number of Navy and Marine pilots stayed with their aircraft and been killed so they would not kill any civilians. If an fighter aircraft crashes and kills civilians who will held responsible Department of Defense or Governor Rendell the Commander in Chief of the 111th TFW.

As you are aware of Governor Rendell has stated that he was not taken into loop about the deactivation of the 111 TFW and as Commander in Chief he did not give his consent and will not. He has filed a federal law suit. He stated that these aircraft are needed for homeland security. When did he ever activated this unit (air cover) for homeland security and paid for it.

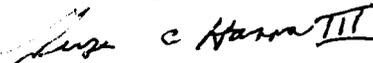
He already has two other units that have not been hit by BRAC a KC 135 and C130 unit. How big of an Air Force does this Governor need at his disposal when some states are being recommended not to have any Air Guard flying assets. Pa is being ask to suffer some pain as other states are being ask to. Giving up one unit and still have two units some states would jump to.

Presently the Alantic City ANG have the mission for air protection over NY and PA. They are on alert status and are 24/7 operation. They had that mission during the cold war but was assigned another mission after the cold war. If they still had the alert mission on 9/11 what might have happen over NY we will never know. I doubt that shot down order without a clean shot will be carried out over a large populated area expect Washington DC.

The 111th TFW is not a 24/7 unit and there aircraft A-10 is designed for close ground support and not air defense.

" Willow Grove is a nice to have base which has limited future use. It needs to be closed down before another plane crashes and kills civilians".

Thank you

  
George C Hanna 3rd

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July 19, 2005

### Pope AFP, AFIT added to list of potential base closures

**By Gordon Trowbridge**

*Times staff writer*

The independent base closings panel on Tuesday added Pope Air Force Base and the Air Force Institute of Technology to a list of potential closings, but left several other Air Force proposals unchanged.

The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission only briefly addressed the most controversial aspect of the Air Force's base-closings plan: the proposed shift of hundreds of Air National Guard aircraft from bases around the country.

Tuesday's votes do not mean definite closure for any of the dozens of installations considered. They merely add bases to the hundreds of closing and restructuring recommendations proposed by the Department of Defense. Seven votes from the nine-member panel were required to add an installation Tuesday, and another seven are needed to include those additions in a final list due in September.

The vote on Pope allows the commission to consider rejecting a Pentagon plan to turn the base's real estate over to neighboring Fort Bragg, but to base 16 Air Force C-130 cargo planes there as a tenant unit.

The Pentagon plan would move Pope's current fleet of C-130s and A-10 attack planes to other locations, and move 16 C-130s from reserve-component bases in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania to what would become an Army-operated air field. The movement of Air National Guard planes embroils Pope in the ongoing Guard controversy, in which several state governments have objected to removal of planes from their Guard units.

One commissioner, retired Adm. Harold Gehman, objected to adding Pope. "We're taking one little piece of this Air National Guard mess we have," which makes little sense, Gehman said.

Other commissioners suggested that by adding Pope to the list, the panel would allow its staff to perform research that would shed light on the Guard controversy. That led to a long and sometimes confused conversation on the proposal. Chairman Anthony Principi called for a vote, "there being no confusion whatsoever," a joke that brought laughter from the hearing room.

The panel also voted to examine consolidation of three military postgraduate schools: AFIT at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio;



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and the Naval Postgraduate School and Defense Language Institute, both in Monterey, Calif. The commissioners discussed placing all three at a site in California, but some, including retired Air Force Adm. Lloyd Newton, said they wanted to consider other locations.

Commissioners also voted to consider closing Galena Forward Operation Location, Alaska, an alert base for air-defense aircraft. The commission seems likely to shift that operation to Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, which under Pentagon plans will remain open mostly as host for Cope Thunder exercises.

The panel rejected proposals to add Moody Air Force Base, Ga., and Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., for further review.

Commission staff had suggested Moody as a possible location for Navy aircraft from Oceana Naval Air Station, which the panel added to the closings list on Tuesday. That would have required movement of several Air Force units from the base. But, ultimately, the panel decided Moody was a poor fit for the Navy's carrier aircraft. Grand Forks would lose its current fleet of KC-135 tankers under the Pentagon's plan, but remain open for Predator and Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles, which Air Force officials say they want to add at the base. Commissioners had worried that the UAV plans were not solid enough to leave the base open, but ultimately decided the promises of Vice Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley during testimony on Monday were sufficient.

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