

Larry S. Rosenthal
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Hamilton, New Jersey, 08610-3902

AUG 01 2005

Received

29 July 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

I am writing to urge you to reject the Air Force plans to ground a third of the Air National Guard (ANG) under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. The recommendations made by the Air Force affecting ANG bases are outside the scope of the BRAC process. As hearings held by the Commission and by the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) have proved, these recommendations substantially deviate from published BRAC selection criteria.

From a military point of view to shut down operations like the 108th at McGuire, AFB is strategically inconceivable. They are one of the best on the east coast. I served with those men and women for two years. I have been in the National Guard for over 21 years. Currently Food Service NCO for the 250th Forward Support BN in Bordentown, New Jersey and Corresponding Secretary of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard in New Jersey.

Also being a member of Benjamin Kaufman Post # 100 and hearing some of the Veterans complain of the distances that they have to travel now to get service needs to be considered, as to how this will affect them and their families.

I am also concerned about the effects of proposed base closures, both active and reserve component, on my access to health care, commissary, and MWR benefits. DoD did not consider retiree and reserve component populations surrounding military bases in their evaluation and selection of sites for closure. These closures will have a significant impact on my ability to use those benefits that I and others like me have earned.

The men and women of our National Guard are playing an increasingly integral role in military operations both domestically and around the world. There is a crisis in recruiting and the potential for one in retention. Closing these facilities would not only force National Guard members to drive farther to drill, it will also, in many cases, take away the missions they have been trained to do and enjoy doing. This will cause yet another

drop in morale that the services cannot tolerate at this time. Recruiting and Retention are having tough enough time keeping and filling positions; let's not make it more difficult.

Please consider these issues carefully as you finalize your recommendations for base closure. I ask that you remove the Air National Guard facilities from the list and make changes to reduce the impact of potential loss of installation-based benefits for National Guard members and retirees. If you have any questions, please contact me at 609-888-0646 or my representative at the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, 1-800-234-3264.

BRAC Commission

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry S. Rosenthal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "R".

Larry S. Rosenthal, SSG

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