

FORT MCPHERSON, GEORGIA (ARMY RECOMMENDATION)

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

Close Fort McPherson, GA. Relocate the Headquarters US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), and the Headquarters US Army Reserve Command (USARC) to Pope Air Force Base, NC. Relocate the Headquarters 3rd US Army to Shaw Air Force Base, SC. Relocate the Installation Management Agency Southeastern Region Headquarters and the US Army Network Enterprise Technology Command (NETCOM) Southeastern Region Headquarters to Fort Eustis, VA. Relocate the Army Contracting Agency Southern Region Headquarters to Fort Sam Houston, TX.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION

This recommendation closes Fort McPherson, an administrative installation, and moves the tenant headquarters organizations to Fort Sam Houston, Fort Eustis, Pope AFB and Shaw AFB. It enhances the Army's military value, is consistent with the Army's Force Structure Plan, and maintains adequate surge capabilities to address unforeseen future requirements. This closure allows the Army to employ excess capacities at installations that can accomplish more than administrative missions. The organization relocations in this recommendation also create multifunctional, multicomponent and multi-Service installations that provide a better level of service at a reduced cost.

The recommended relocations also retain or enhance vital linkages between the relocating organizations and other headquarters activities. FORSCOM HQs is relocated to Pope AFB where it will be co-located with a large concentration of operational forces. The USARC HQs has a mission relationship with FORSCOM that is enhanced by leaving the two co-located. 3rd Army is relocated to Shaw AFB where it will be collocated with the Air Force component command of CENTCOM. The IMA and NETCOM HQs are moved to Fort Eustis because of recommendations to consolidate the Northeastern and Southeastern regions of these two commands into one Eastern Region at Fort Eustis. The ACA Southern Region HQs is moved to Fort Sam Houston where it is recommended to consolidate with the ACA Southern Hemisphere Region HQs, and where it will co-locate with other Army service providing organizations.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The community argued that cost was the overriding factor in DoD's decision to close this historic installation, and significant relocation costs were understated. The community maintained that the current co-location of three major Army headquarters (Forces Command, Reserve Command and Third Army) next to an international airport with unparallel access and point-to-point travel is an important synergy for training readiness and operational planning. Loss of a major military presence in the Atlanta metropolitan area would adversely affect the City of Atlanta, a terrorist target; hinder military recruitment of African Americans; reduce military support to the Department of homeland security; disadvantage a significant number of handicapped employees at Fort McPherson; and adversely affect surrounding communities already suffering high unemployment rates and low per-capita income. It was the community's judgment that Fort McPherson, Atlanta's seventh largest employer, is ideally located to take advantage of Atlanta's major transportation and information technology hubs which they believed will be necessary to meet future military and homeland security command and control challenges. The community maintained DoD substantially deviated from criteria 3 and 4 by dispersal of headquarters which limits command and control at additional cost; criterion 1 by dispersing critical synergy; and criterion 5 by understating costs.

COMMISSION FINDINGS

The Commission found that the cost to relocate the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) regional communications hub at Fort McPherson was not accounted for in DoD's analysis. Subsequent DoD certified data revealed relocation of the hub would cost \$17.09M. Moreover, relocating Third Army Headquarters to Shaw Air Force Base could require more construction funding than anticipated. The Commission confirmed that Fort McPherson has a large number of historic facilities requiring maintenance and consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office. Fort McPherson Garrison supports an 85-acre recreational area at Lake Allatoona, GA, consisting of cabins, boating and outdoor activities, and the Commission found no plan for the disposition of this Morale, Welfare and Recreational Area. The Commission notes that Fort McPherson borders East Point, GA, a Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone. The closure of Fort McPherson will have a negative economic impact on this already economically depressed, predominantly minority community, and because the Garrison provides employment opportunities to a large number of individuals with severe disabilities, the Commission strongly urges the Department to proactively work with the community to minimize these impacts. However, the Commission did not find these issues individually or collectively rose to the level of a substantial deviation.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission found the Secretary's recommendation consistent with the final selection criteria and force structure plan. Therefore, the Commission approved the recommendation of the Secretary