

FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

(ARMY RECOMMENDATION - MANEUVER TRAINING)

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

Realign Fort Knox, KY, by relocating the Armor Center and School to Fort Benning, GA, to accommodate the activation of an Infantry Brigade Combat Team (BCT) at Fort Knox, KY, and the relocation of engineer, military police, and combat service support units from Europe and Korea. Realign Fort McCoy, WI, by relocating the 84th Army Reserve Regional Training Center to Fort Knox, KY.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION

This recommendation enhances military value, improves training and deployment capabilities, better utilizes training resources, and creates significant efficiencies and cost savings while maintaining sufficient surge capability to address unforeseen requirements. It properly locates Operational Army units in support of the Army's Force Structure Plans and modular force transformation.

This recommendation supports the consolidation of the Armor and Infantry Centers and Schools at Fort Benning and creates a Maneuver Center of Excellence for ground forces training and doctrine development. It consolidates both Infantry and Armor One Station Unit Training (OSUT), which allows the Army to reduce the total number of Basic Combat Training locations from five to four.

This recommendation also relocates the 84th ARRTC to Fort Knox and supports another recommendation that relocates Army Reserve Command and Control units to Fort McCoy. These relocations enhance command and control within the Army Reserve and promote interaction between the Active and Reserve Components.

This recommendation directly supports the Army's operational unit stationing and training requirements by using available facilities, ranges, training land at Fort Knox, KY, (vacated by the Armor Center and School) to effectively and efficiently relocate various Combat Support and Combat Service Support units returning from overseas, and as the installation platform for the activation of a new Infantry BCT. These units are a combination of the relocation of Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS)-related units returning from overseas and the activation of units as part of the Army's modular force transformation.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The Fort Knox, KY, community reluctantly supported the loss of Ft. Knox's Armor Center and School and the related armor tradition because of offsetting gains at Fort Knox from other DoD BRAC recommendations. However, it questioned whether the same quality of Armor training could be reconstituted at Fort Benning due to its concern that insufficient training land and facilities are available at Fort Benning. Both Fort Knox and Fort Benning communities requested clarification of which Armor Center and School-related activities will relocate to Fort Benning. Fort Knox wanted to retain a museum to preserve its Armor legacy.

The Columbus, GA, and Fort Benning community welcomed the relocation of the Armor Center and School, and indicated full support for this portion of DoD's recommendation. However, the Fort Benning community was concerned that an additional brigade combat team (BCT), previously planned for Fort Benning, is instead now identified in this recommendation for stationing at Fort Knox. The Fort Benning community felt the Army ought to station additional units at Fort Benning to more fully use its available capacity.

COMMISSION FINDINGS

Although the Fort Benning community was concerned that the Army BRAC proposal revised a pre-BRAC plan to activate a brigade at Fort Benning but did not identify substitute units to be based at Fort Benning, the Commission found that the Army does not currently plan to add major units to Fort Benning as part of BRAC but may do so outside of BRAC. Both the Fort Benning and Fort Knox communities requested clarification from the Army about which specific units would relocate under BRAC from Fort Knox to Fort Benning, and the Commission obtained the needed Army clarification. Last, the Fort Knox community expressed concern that the Armor Center and School functions might not be readily accommodated at Fort Benning, but the Commission found the Army would implement the transfer only as the moves are fully supportable and that Armor student training will not be degraded by BRAC moves. The Commission found that Army BRAC plans relocate the museum portion on the Armor school manning document, and remaining museum issue resolutions can be addressed during implementation.

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.

FORT BENNING, GEORGIA (ARMY RECOMMENDATION)

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

Close Fort Gillem, GA. Relocate the Headquarters, 1st US Army to Rock Island Arsenal, IL. Relocate the 2nd Recruiting Brigade to Redstone Arsenal, AL. Relocate the 52nd Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Group to Fort Campbell, KY. Relocate the 81st RRC Equipment Concentration Site to Fort Benning, GA. Relocate the 3rd US Army Headquarters support office to Shaw Air Force Base, SC. Relocate the Headquarters US Forces Command (FORSCOM) VIP Explosive Ordnance Support to Pope Air Force Base, NC. Close the Army-Air Force Exchange System (AAFES) Atlanta Distribution Center and establish an enclave for the Georgia Army National Guard, the remainder of the 81st RRC units and the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Forensics Laboratory.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION

This recommendation closes Fort Gillem, an Army administrative installation and an AAFES distribution center. The recommendation moves the major tenant organizations to Rock Island Arsenal, Redstone Arsenal, Fort Benning, and Fort Campbell. It also moves small components of the Headquarters 3rd US Army and US Army Forces Command to 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 closure of Fort Gillem also enables the stationing of its tenant units at locations that will increase their ability to associate with like units and promote coordination of efforts. Both the 52nd EOD Group and the 2nd Recruiting Brigade have regional missions in the Southeastern United States. The 52nd EOD Group was co-located with operational forces at Fort Campbell to provide training opportunities. The 2nd Recruiting Brigade is recommended to relocate to Redstone Arsenal because of its central location in the Southeast and its access to a transportation center in Huntsville, AL. The Army is converting the 1st US Army Headquarters into the single Headquarters for oversight of Reserve and National Guard mobilization and demobilization. To support this conversion the Army decided to relocate 1st Army to Rock Island

Arsenal, a central location in the United States. The 81st RRC Equipment Concentration Site is relocated to Fort Benning, where there are improved training opportunities with operational forces.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The community emphasized that Fort Gillem and Fort McPherson are linked. They asserted that DoD understated costs, producing projected savings which appear to be the primary basis for the closure decision. They indicated relocation of three major headquarters (1st Army, 2nd Recruiting Brigade and 52nd EOD Group) would adversely affect Reserve Component training readiness, homeland defense, and efficient command and control. They also held that relocation of 1st Army Headquarters would separate it from the many related capabilities offered by homeland security organizations and Reserve Components located at Fort Gillem. They argued that cost, command and control obstacles, loss of Reserve Component synergies, homeland defense coordination issues, and security challenges for enclaved organizations should persuade the Commission to vote against closure. The community indicated the economic impact will be great on Clayton County and the surrounding community which suffers from high unemployment rates and low per-capita income. The community states that the proposed enclave at Fort Gillem would create security challenges and fragment potential reuse, in addition to challenges of long-term contamination cleanup.

COMMISSION FINDINGS

The Commission's findings supported DoD's overall recommendation, although the Commission found that DoD failed to adequately define its planned enclave at Fort Gillem, contrary to its agreement with the findings of a 2003 study by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) of prior BRAC enclaves. GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense provide the 2005 BRAC Commission with data clearly specifying the infrastructure needed for any proposed enclaves and the estimated costs to operate and maintain such enclaves. The Commission found merit in community concerns about the adverse effect of multiple enclaves on reuse of the remainder of Fort Gillem, and therefore modified the DoD recommendation to require a contiguous enclave.

The Commission also found that units other than those explicitly stated in the approved recommendation, such as the Military Entrance Processing Station, may need to remain in the enclave, although the Commission strongly believes that the size of the enclave needs to be minimized to give the community maximum opportunities for reuse. The Commission found that the recommendation failed to address the Ammunition Supply Point, the only Army ASP in north Georgia supporting the Federal Transportation Security Administration, Army Reserves, and National Guard. The Commission was advised by the Department that the ASP was not part of the enclave recommendation and that disposition of the ASP will be determined during implementation. The Commission found that DoD designated Fort Gillem as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mobilization site for the Southeast United States and that further determinations by FEMA and DoD are required during implementation. The Commission found DoD's economic impact analysis failed to consider significant loss of jobs associated with closing the Army and Air Force Exchange Service Atlanta Distribution Center. The Commission notes that Fort Gillem borders Forest Park, GA, an Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone and that the Garrison provides employment opportunities to a number of individuals with severe disabilities. The Commission strongly urges the Department to proactively work with the community to minimize these economic impacts.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission found that the Secretary of Defense deviated substantially from final selection criteria 7 and the force structure plan. Therefore, the Commission recommends the following:

Close Fort Gillem, GA. Relocate the Headquarters, 1st US Army to Rock Island Arsenal, IL. Relocate the 2d Recruiting Brigade to Redstone Arsenal, AL. Relocate the 52d Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Group to Fort Campbell, KY. Relocate the 81st RRC Equipment Concentration Site to Fort Benning, GA.

Relocate the 3d US Army Headquarters support office to Shaw Air Force Base, SC. Relocate the Headquarters US Forces Command (FORSCOM) VIP Explosive Ordnance Support to Pope Air Force Base, NC.

Close the Army-Air Force Exchange System (AAFES) Atlanta Distribution Center and establish a contiguous enclave for the Georgia Army National Guard, the remainder of the 81st RRC units and the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Forensics Laboratory.

The Commission found this change and the recommendation as amended are consistent with the final selection criteria and the Force Structure Plan. The full text of this and all other recommendations can be found in Appendix Q.