

Fort Hunter Liggett, California

Category: Major Training Areas

Mission: Home of the Test and Experimentation

Command Experimentation Center and the major maneuver training area for the California Army National Guard and western United States Army Reserve forces

One-time Cost: \$6.7 million

Savings: 1996-2001: \$12.5 million

Annual: \$5.7 million

Return on Investment: 1999 (1 year)

FINAL ACTION: Realign

Secretary of Defense Recommendation

Realign Fort Hunter Liggett by relocating the U.S. Army Test and Experimentation Center (TEC) missions and functions to Fort Bliss, Texas. Eliminate the Active Component mission. Retain minimum essential facilities and training area as an enclave to support the Reserve Components (RC).

Secretary of Defense Justification

Fort Hunter Liggett is low in military value compared to other major training area installations and has few Active Component tenants. Relocation of the Test and Experimentation Center optimizes the unique test capabilities afforded by Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range.

Fort Hunter Liggett's maneuver space is key to Reserve Component training requirements. Since it is a primary maneuver area for mechanized units in the western United States, retention of its unique training lands is essential.

Community Concerns

Local and state officials are concerned with the cumulative economic impact of previous base closure and realignment actions, coupled with recent major fires and floods in this sparsely populated area. Residents do not want the Test and Experimentation Command's Experimentation Center to move to Fort Bliss, Texas. They maintain that Fort Hunter Liggett, with its varied terrain, a natural bowl surrounded by hills, which permits non-eye-safe laser testing, low artificial light, and no radio frequency interference, is the premier location for operational testing. They believe that possible frequency interference, arid desert conditions, and proximity to the large city of El Paso, make Fort Bliss undesirable as a test site. Some believe Fort Hunter Liggett should have been evaluated as a proving ground or an operational test facility, instead

of as a major training area. The California Army National Guard is keenly interested in training at the installation and retaining access to ranges and training areas.

Commission Findings

The Commission found the Army properly evaluated Fort Hunter Liggett as a major training area and found no basis to change the installation's category. The realignment of this installation ends the Active Component presence while preserving the U. S. Army Reserve Command garrison. The Army will license the training facilities and training area to the California National Guard as part of the realignment.

The Commission examined the community's claim that Fort Hunter Liggett is ideal for TEC's location and found them to be accurate. The community believed relocation of TEC to Fort Bliss would be unwise, unworkable, and too expensive. The Commission examined each issue raised by advocates of keeping TEC in California and found non-eye-safe laser testing within a 360-degree area is not required for most tests, the frequency conflict between White Sands Missile Range and TEC telemetry can be resolved by coordination of future tests, and the Army has plans to digitize required areas of Fort Bliss. The Commission found although Fort Hunter Liggett is suited to its current mission, the mission can be relocated to Fort Bliss without disruption, and the Army will achieve substantial savings as a result.

Commission Recommendation

The Commission finds the Secretary of Defense did not deviate substantially from the force-structure plan and final criteria. Therefore, the Commission recommends the following: realign Fort Hunter Liggett by relocating the U.S. Army Test and Experimentation Center (TEC) missions and functions to Fort Bliss, Texas. Eliminate the Active Component mission. Retain minimum essential facilities and training area as an enclave to support the Reserve Components (RC).

Oakland Army Base, California

Category: Ports

Mission: Manage movement of DoD cargo throughout the western US and Pacific; manage port operations on the West Coast and at Pacific locations

One-time Cost: \$36.5 million