

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT UPCOMING BASE CLOSURES

Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force (in this order)

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The upcoming 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission will trim excess domestic base infrastructure, which is estimated at 25% too large and costs billions of dollars a year. In addition, heighten base security is now a tremendous financial drain, and older buildings constructed during the Cold war have decayed and need replacement. The four previous base closure rounds now save our military \$6.6 billion dollars each year. Nevertheless, there is a movement to derail the next round of base closures by convincing people it is cheaper to keep all bases open and lease land to earn money; thus expanding what is known as Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) facilities. This robs local communities of business property taxes and rarely produces net profits as cozy relationships result in contracts in which the government still pays for property maintenance.

The 2005 round will begin in March 2005 when the President, in consultation with congressional leaders, will appoint the nine-member base closing commission. Two months later, the Secretary of Defense will submit his list of facilities to be closed. It will take seven members to add a facility to that list, but just a simple majority to remove a facility. The President may approve that list and send it to Congress, or reject it and send it back to the commission. Neither Congress nor the President can make changes to the list. If he accepts the list, it becomes law unless Congress votes against it within 45 days. This has never happened since Congressmen from districts spared closures think the list is fair.

Small military bases are inefficient to operate since each base usually has a housing office, equal opportunity office, public affairs, chapel, library, auto shop, medical clinic, dental clinic, commissary, exchange, base headquarters, base security, decal office, fitness center, reception center, swimming pool, child care center, enlisted club, officer club, teen club, family support center, temporary lodging, education center, dining hall, maintenance office, golf course, theater, post office, and various recreational facilities. Therefore, shifting "tenant" units to larger bases with room for growth saves a great deal of money and manpower in the long run, although moving units requires money for relocation and some new construction. Reserve, National Guard, and federal civilian activities at closed bases can continue as they do elsewhere without a military landlord.

There is ambitious talk about "joint" bases. This will prove too complex because of budget conflicts. Base absorption is easier. For example, Pope AFB within Fort Bragg can be annexed by the Army, becoming Pope Field. Bragg can take over base operations at Pope, although the Air Force will still fund construction and renovation for facilities used exclusively by its units there. In exchange, McGuire AFB could annex small Fort Dix. Base closures also allow the elimination of outdated organizations which have been preserved as jobs programs by members of Congress. The Armed Services must realize they can eliminate these organizations by pulling the rug out from them by closing their base. They should identify these bases now so they can limit closing costs by quietly implementing a hiring and construction/renovation freeze at targeted bases a

couple years early. Ironically, most communities benefit from base closures as property tax free and sales tax free military units are replaced by productive tax-paying private sector companies.

G2mil assembled a list to help the commission make the best choices and appreciates input. The Defense Logistics Agency is likely to close some facilities, but that will depend on reorganization plans so we made no attempt to guess closures. This is not an official list, just informed speculation gathered from hundreds of sources over the past year.

U.S. Navy Base Closure List

The US Navy has done the best job in closing excess base capacity. It has shut down two major base complexes: San Francisco Bay and Charleston. However, the fleet has shrunk since the 1995 base closing round, so a few medium size bases and several small bases can be closed to save a couple billion dollars a year in overhead. Current Navy plans are to shrink further, from 313 ships in FY2002 down to 291 ships in FY2004.

Ingleside Naval Station, Texas

This is an underdeveloped base where the Navy banished its unwanted mine warfare ships. However, the Navy now acknowledges that it is very difficult for combat ships on each coast to train with mine warfare ships based in South Texas. Realizing these small, slow ships cannot rapidly deploy, the Navy has moved several overseas. In addition, the only large ship at Ingleside, the helicopter carrier USS Inchon, was recently decommissioned and nothing will take her place. The Navy should move the remaining ships to a major base on each coast to join the rest of the fleet.

Naval Postgraduate School, California

This is a major hotel complex in scenic Monterey which the Navy acquired during World War II and never left. It is far from Navy bases and exists solely to operate a military post-graduate school. This can be done at any major base with none of the overhead costs of operating an entire base. However, an article appeared Naval Proceedings in 2000 which questioned why the Navy runs its own post-graduate school when it's much cheaper to send students to the finest graduate schools in the United States, which offer the same courses and would provide officers healthy contact with outside institutions.

Naval Air Station Meridian, Mississippi

Over the past few years, the Navy and Marine Corps have reduced the size of squadrons and will soon eliminate several because skyrocketing aircraft prices do not allow all older aircraft to be replaced. As a result, they will need to train fewer new aviators each year. NAS Meridian is a small aviator training base that was on the 1995 closure list because its bad weather limits safe flying days. Unfortunately, Admiral Borda succumbed to political pressure from Mississippi congressmen and told the commission it was mistakenly put on the list. These training squadrons can move to the other three naval aviator training bases, or perhaps the joint/reserve NAS Fort Worth in arid Texas.

Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, New Jersey

This is an old base left over from the era when the Navy developed most of its aircraft "in house". The Navy wanted to close this base in 1995, but a close commission vote kept it open. Its difficult to determine anything of value of done there today. Any important activity can move to the larger naval aviation development base at Patuxent River, Maryland or the testing center in China Lake, California. Lakehurst is adjacent to Fort Dix and McGuire AFB so the problem of local retiree support and civilian job transfers are nonexistent. I

Naval Recreation Station Solomons Island, Maryland

This is an old unused base which evolved into a hidden navy resort. There are thousands of choices for private sector recreation in the Washington DC area, the Navy shouldn't spend millions of dollars each year to run an exclusive resort at taxpayer expense. Money is better spent improving recreational facilities at fleet bases where regular sailors can use them daily.

Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane, Indiana

This is left over from World War II when the Navy and Marines once developed their own weapons. This is now done in the private sector or at operating bases. Whatever relevant work can be found is best done near naval forces and not in a remote spot a thousand miles from any ship.

Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division, Virginia

NAVSEA is an amazing large organization with 37 R&D facilities in the USA. It employs an army of engineers and scientists, yet awards huge contracts to private corporations to design future ships and aircraft. In addition, the Naval Research Laboratory has several facilities spread around the country. Since the Navy now prefers to outsource its R&D, there is no need to retain this massive in-house capability. Dahlgren is tucked away in the middle of Virginia and far from any ship. Its traditional mission of munitions testing is very limited due to the rapid growth of nearby communities, so most all weapons testing is done at China Lake. Important activities and tenants can be merged into bases elsewhere, or just eliminated. The Navy has over a dozen "research" facilities in the Washington DC area and around Virginia which should be consolidated. In the September 2002 Naval Proceedings, Rear Admiral Rowland G. Freeman III (ret) noted: "focus got lost as the laboratories strove to become more like academic campuses [where] ferocious competition for dollars between the laboratories downgraded the technical closures in this region, Dahlgren should be axed to force change and save money.

Navy Supply Corps School, Georgia

A small base in Athens, which is in an odd location for the Navy. It can be moved to a major base to save money, manpower, and the air travel costs for student trips for ship familiarization.

New Orleans Naval Support Activity, Louisiana

During the 1960s, the Navy and Marines banished their reserve commands to decaying buildings at an old Army base in downtown New Orleans. These commands will be more effective and less costly at major bases where they can support reservists directly and interact with active forces.

Pascagoula Naval Station, Mississippi

This tiny base has just three old cruisers, two old frigates, and few base facilities. It is isolated from the fleet and its ships must steam for several days to participate in exercises off the Atlantic coast. The Navy can easily accommodate these ships at larger east coast bases, but they will be decommissioned within a few years anyway.

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, New Hampshire

The Navy has far more shipyard capacity than it needs. Portsmouth was to be included in the 1995 base closure list, but President Clinton was said to have exerted inappropriate pressure on the commission to spare it since the important New Hampshire presidential primary race was underway. Portsmouth only works on attack submarines, work which can be done by several underutilized public and private sector shipyards.

Saratoga Springs Naval Support Unit, New York (includes Ballston Spa, Scotia)

This small, inland base was overlooked in previous base closure rounds. Nuclear power training can be consolidated in Charleston since the number of nuclear powered subs has been cut, while the regional recruiting office can move to any Navy base along the New England coast. A Los Angeles class submarine scheduled for early decommissioning may be added to Charleston to provide a third reactor for training.

U.S. Marine Corps Base Closure List

Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, Georgia

This Korean war era base is far from any major air or seaport, and far from any Marine units. As a result, the Corps built a seaport logistics facility at Blount Island near Jacksonville, Florida in the 1980s. Albany should close with its activities moved to Blount Island, Camp Lejeune, and Quantico to save money and provide superior support. The manpower and money saved should allow the Corps to open a spare parts facility at a US Navy base in Italy and another in Bahrain to greatly improve support in those regions, and replace its two ageing aviation maintenance support ships in Baltimore.

Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California (realign)

This World War II base is far from any major air or seaport, and far from any Marine units. It is actually three bases, the Yermo maintenance and storage area, the main base eight miles away at Nebo, and a rifle/pistol range complex. Logistics activities can provide superior support at Camp Pendleton or 29 Palms, or if forward-based in Guam.

However, the desert air is ideal for storage of excess equipment. Therefore, the base may "realign" becoming the Yermo Annex of Marine Corps Base 29 Palms with a dozen Marines supported by a hundred civilians. This annex will be for storage, although some maintenance work may still be done. The Nebo complex and rifle range area can transfer to the US Army. Fort Irwin is nearby and needs the family housing and some buildings. It is also an ideal location for a heavy Army Reserve or National Guard armor unit. The rest of Nebo can become an urban warfare training center which Fort Irwin needs as a modern National Training Center, which it can share with the Marines.

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California

Budget problems caused by high-priced aircraft will force the Corps to eliminate over a dozen flying squadrons during the next decade. While Miramar is a beautiful base, it is surrounded by a booming urban area whose vocal residents complain about noise, which is why the Navy happily left in 1999. It has the highest off-base housing costs of any air station, and training is limited by congested civilian air traffic and quiet time for the locals. Moreover, San Diego desperately needs a new airport and Miramar is the only practical location. Dispersing Miramar aircraft to other Marine Corps and Navy Air Stations will save the Corps millions of dollars each year. If such a move is considered too costly, the Corps can "sell" Miramar to the city to fund new facilities elsewhere. Since ten Marine F/A-18 squadrons are now permanently assigned to Navy carrier wings, the Navy has plenty of room at NAS Leemore in central California to host Marine F/A-18 squadrons. F/A-18 squadrons can also return to MCAS Kanehoe Bay, and two must move to MCAS Iwakuni in Japan if the Corps wishes to maintain three squadrons there since the new carrier commitments make squadron rotations impractical. The two helicopter training squadrons can move to MCAS New River, while others will be disbanded as helicopter shortages caused by the V-22 program require several deactivations. Remaining squadrons can be squeezed into MCAS Camp Pendleton, MCAS Kanehoe Bay, MCAS Yuma, or NAS El Centro. Other options are Edwards AFB where two Marine reserve helicopter squadrons are based, or build hangars and landing pads at 29 Palms and move a few squadrons there.

Marine Corps Mountain Warfare School, California

This tiny base in the midst of a huge national forest was founded during the Korean war to prepare Marines for mountain warfare. It was mothballed during the Vietnam war as the Corps determined it was no longer needed. For unknown reasons, the base was later reoccupied even though the Corps hasn't been involved in mountain warfare since Korea. This school absorbs funds and manpower needed for new urban warfare facilities elsewhere. Marines can attend US Army or foreign mountain/winter warfare schools on occasion, but such training should be a low priority. Marines are a rapid reaction force, which always involves urban areas. The rare mission of chasing guerrillas or terrorists in mountains should be left to specialized Army units. The base should be mothballed and returned to the US Forest Service again, or possibly transferred to the California National Guard for urban warfare and mountain training for all armed services.

Marine Reserve Support Unit, Kansas City

This is a tiny base with 200 Marines which somehow ended up in Kansas City. It should move to any Marine base, probably co-located with Marine Forces Reserves, which will also move from New Orleans. (see Navy list)

Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, California (realign or close)

This tiny, concrete base is the worst place to train new recruits. The roar from the adjacent airport is constant while tourists roam about gawking at recruits and taking photos. Training facilities are so limited that recruits must move 40 miles north to Camp Pendleton for their final three weeks. There are three options: 1) move MCRD up to Camp Pendleton; 2) move MCRD to Nebo at Barstow (see Barstow above); 3) expand MCRD Parris Island, which already has the capacity to double its load, although facilities would need to be modernized. The US Air Force trains more airmen recruits each year at one base in Texas, and the Navy trains twice as many at a single location. A major war would quickly empty most of Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune, providing ample facilities for another MCRD to support a major war. The city of San Diego wants this base to expand its airport. However, if the Marine Corps closes MCAS Miramar instead, it may keep "Marine Base San Diego" because of its ideal location near the Navy. It could accommodate the Reserve Support Unit from Kansas City, reserve headquarters from New Orleans, a small Marine Corps Logistics Facility (from Barstow), or any Navy or Marine unit which needs space in the San Diego region. Another option would be a small Marine Corps Air Facility which uses the runway at adjacent civilian Lindbergh field. This could accommodate the VIP aircraft from Miramar and maybe a reserve F/A-18 squadron.

U.S. Army Base Closure List

The Army has done the worst job at closing excess bases, only closing one of its 30 largest bases in the four previous rounds-- Fort Ord. It just trimmed its World War II system of depots and arsenals which have massive excess capacity. The Army's excuse was that it must maintain room in case units are brought back from overseas. However, the Army has plenty of room in the USA for its seven brigades based overseas; and has no intention of withdrawing them anyway. Meanwhile, the Army wastes billions of dollars a year to maintain excess bases and civilian employees.

Ideally, the Army will return to its traditional role of defending the United States and re-deploy combat units to the Mexican border, a mission it abandoned after World War II. An infantry division can guard remote areas and detain anyone seen crossing the border illegally. By shifting a few units during the 2005 round, the Army can easily accommodate a brigade at Fort Bliss, one at Fort Huachuca, and a third at Yuma Proving Grounds in Arizona.

This list may seem long, but it includes no major bases, no training areas, and will affect none of the Army's combat brigades. It closes a third of the arsenals/depots and a few small "ivory tower" posts. This will eliminate enough military and civilian positions to man two more combat divisions, and save enough money to train and equip them.

Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania –

A small base with just the Army War College. It will be far less costly if the War College moves to Fort Leavenworth and shares facilities and staff with the Army's Command and Staff College, similar to the arrangement of other service war colleges. It could also move to the DC area and share resources with one of the DoD colleges. The Carlisle campus can immediately become a community or state college.

Detroit Arsenal, Michigan

This tank factory was shut down in 1999, yet the base remains with a huge staff of 128 military and 3479 civilian personnel in Detroit just to support the headquarters of the Army's Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command. This command can join its proponents at Fort Knox or move to Anniston Army Depot were much of it's work is actually done, or slide over to Selfridge Air National Guard (SANG) base 22 miles away where many of their soldiers already live.

Fort Belvoir, Virginia –

Critics often note there are over 100,000 servicemen in the Washington DC area, and not a single combat unit. Housing costs are high and traffic gridlock common. This is not place for an army base, which is why Belvoir has been downsized, with one-third of the base now a nature preserve. The three small commands here may relocate to any Army base. Federal activities will continue in place, except the land will revert to Fairfax County as the Army sheds the burden of running a base and shuts down support activities. Some Army activities may remain as part of Fort Myer.

Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico

This small base with over 2000 civilian employees has little military function whatsoever and can be turned over to the National Guard. The naval base and airfield at nearby Roosevelt Roads can support any military activity on the island.

Fort McPherson, Gillem, Georgia

McPherson is an old, tiny base in Atlanta which is mostly a golf course with three headquarter units. The Forces Command can co-locate with the new Northern Command in Colorado, the Joint Forces command in Norfolk, or Army headquarters in Washington DC. The 3rd Army Headquarters is unneeded; it can downsize to fewer than a dozen soldiers and merge into the Central Command headquarters in Florida. (During the 1991 Persian Gulf, General Schwartzkopf determined it was much easier for CentCom to control Corps directly.) The Reserve Forces command can move anywhere. The sub-post called Fort Gillem can be turned over to the National Guard while it's reserve units, MEPS, and the AAFES distribution center remain.

Fort Monmouth, New Jersey

This base has 552 active duty troops and 5198 civilians just to host the Army's Communications and Electronics command. This headquarters can relocate with just a few hundred people to Fort Gordon, or Tobyhanna Depot where related equipment is

repaired. Fortunately, private sector businesses are eager to develop the prime real estate at Monmouth.

Fort Monroe, Virginia

This is a small, historic base which is costly to maintain, but could become a luxury resort or a National or State Park. TRADOC can move to any other fort in Virginia, or Fort Leavenworth where it can rejoin the Forces Command. The ROTC command can move anywhere while the Joint Warfare Center can be deactivated with no loss.

Fort Polk, Louisiana (to realign)

The Army desperately needs a major urban warfare training center, and the north half of this base is ideally suited. North Fort Polk should be shut down and become a huge urban training area for the Joint Readiness Training Center. This will allow brigade size units to arrive by sea or at Polk's large airfield to conduct lengthy urban warfare exercises in a real city ten times larger than the quaint artificial villages used today. This may require some tenant units to move to other Army bases. Perhaps the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment can move elsewhere and a permanent urban ORFOR unit established.

Fort Richardson, Alaska

The Army does not need three bases in Alaska for a single brigade, especially since housing and operational costs are high. This small base does little except support the Alaskan National Guard, so turn it over to the state of Alaska and move the NCO academy and airborne battalion up to Fort Wainwright or elsewhere. Adjacent Elmendorf AFB may annex some buildings and family housing.

Fort Sam Houston, Texas

This is a old base in an old run down part of San Antonio with no training areas. The new Brooke Army Medical Center may be transferred to the Air Force or VA. There are no major army units near San Antonio so there is little need for a major hospital. Basic medical training can be performed at any Army base while the Medical Command can move anywhere; probably Fort Detrick. Reserve units can move to Camp Bullis 15 miles away where they already train.

Fort Shafter, Hawaii

The "US Army Pacific" doesn't need its own base with 1400 soldiers and 2000 civilians in expensive Hawaii. It should be eliminated or cut down to a dozen soldiers and based within the Pacific Command headquarters at Camp Smith. I Corps in Washington state can "command" the few army units in the Pacific.

Lima Army Tank Plant, Ohio

This is run by General Dynamics which does similar work at its Sterling Heights Complex in Michigan. Tank work is declining and there is no reason for the Army to own a plant

used by private industry. Sell the plant to General Dynamics if they want it, or close it if they prefer to do work elsewhere. The Anniston Army Depot can also do future tank upgrades.

Natick Soldier Center, Massachusetts

This small facility is located in an expensive Boston suburb which is tasked with developing personal equipment for soldiers. Better work can be done at a major base where soldiers can help test gear and provide direct input; Fort Benning is ideal.

Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey

Very little is done there nowadays. Anniston, Aberdeen, Watervliet, and Red River have plenty of excess capacity to fill whatever need might arise. One Colonel who worked there stated they could turn out the lights and send everyone home tomorrow and the Army wouldn't notice. This will allow the base to retain its appropriate mission as a Moth Sanctuary.

Redstone Arsenal, Alabama

This is no longer an "arsenal", just a lot of office space. The Army turned over the large missile business to NASA in the 1960s, which runs the Marshall Space Center here. However, the Army edged into the National Missile Defense business in recent years and Redstone has boomed. However, a roles and missions review is likely to give all that mission to the Air Force. While some in the Army will oppose this, over 90% of soldiers prefer to dump costly space related missions and focus on ground combat. The Army can demilitarize Redstone by cutting base support overhead and sending soldiers elsewhere, leaving behind NASA, a few DoD test facilities, and Federal agencies. The Army's Aviation and Missile command can move to Fort Bliss or White Sands where most development and testing actually occurs, or perhaps to Fort Rucker. Other activities can move to Letterkenny Depot.

Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois

Very little is done here nowadays. Anniston, Watervliet, Aberdeen, and Red River have plenty of excess capacity to fill whatever need might arise. Most non-Army activities aboard this Arsenal can remain.

Sierra Army Depot, California

This was mostly shut down since the 1995 BRAC declared it excess and environmental clean up began. However, the Army retained it to help burn off surplus munitions from the Cold War. Since this produces toxic fumes, nearby citizens are furious and want it closed for good. The depot's burn mission should be complete by 2005 and Tooele Depot in Utah can burn whatever is left.

Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona

Aberdeen does the most "proving" for the Army, while Dugway has newer facilities and special equipment to test chemical and bio weapons. The little work done at Yuma can be easily done at Dugway, Fort Irwin, White Sands, or elsewhere, as was demonstrated with the recent Stryker program. The test ranges may be preserved as part of nearby MCAS Yuma or transferred to the Arizona National Guard, but an active Army base is not needed unless the Army puts troops here to help defend the border.

U.S. Air Force Base Closure List

The Air Force conducted a 1998 study which concluded it could cut its overhead costs in half by consolidating into 20 megabases. The average Air Force base is less than half the size of a typical Army, Navy or Marine Corps base (based on active duty population). As a result, these small bases become dysfunctional whenever their operational wing deploys overseas because it takes many airmen which the base itself needs, like security personnel. In addition, the Air Force must eliminate half its fighter and attack squadrons in the coming years to afford ultra-expensive F/A-22s and F-35s; it has already eliminated eight squadrons since 1997. The number of B-1B bombers was recently cut by one-third, and the number of aerial tankers will be cut as some old KC-135s are replaced by larger tankers based on the Boeing 767. Here is detailed data on the Air Force inventory. Finally, fewer aircraft require fewer pilots, so fewer pilot training bases are needed. As a result, the Air Force will have twice as much base capacity than it needs. Some of this problem is easily solved by closing outdated bases overseas, but dozens of smaller domestic bases must also be closed.

Consolidating Air National Guard units into nearby bases of any service can yield tremendous savings and improve security. For example, there are eight KC-135s at Sky Harbor airport while Luke AFB is 24 miles away; a few C-130s operate from leased space at Oklahoma City's airport when the large Tinker AFB is just a few miles away; and an F-16 training wing at Tucson's Airport is just five miles from Davis-Monthan AFB. Maxwell AFB hosts just nine reserve C-130 aircraft while an Alabama fighter wing uses a civilian airport nearby. For some reason, Massachusetts and New York state have numerous air guard bases not too far apart.

The Clinton administration attempted to minimize base closures in 1995, due to that President's view that our military is a jobs program. Fortunately, the 1995 commission closed two of the Air Force's five huge air logistics centers despite objections from the Clinton administration and powerful Senators. Most all of the bases on this list are recommended for closure simply because they are the smallest Air Force bases in the country. It's no secret the Air Force will soon move bombers and maybe tankers to empty Anderson AFB in Guam. Wright-Patterson, Vandenberg, Patrick, and Arnold are large airbases, but host no active-duty flying wings. Another option is for Lackland to absorb the adjacent Kelly "reserve" airfield and add a wing there. Malmstrom has vacant hangars and a closed airfield that hosted a tanker wing until a few years ago.

This looks like a big list, but includes no major air force installations and doesn't cut even half of what is needed for the 20 mega-base concept. In fact, the number of airmen at all bases on this list is fewer than the number of soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas. Keep in mind

that moving Air Force wings may be unnecessary as the Air Force will deactivate several wings in the coming years.

Altus AFB, Oklahoma

A small base whose transport training wing can move to a larger base, possibly Tinker where a transport training wing was based until 1969. The C-5 training mission can easily move to Lackland-Kelly.

Beale AFB, California

A small base whose U-2 reconnaissance squadron can move to a larger base, probably Robins where the U-2 is serviced, and reserve squadron can move to March AFB where 12 million local citizens provide a huge manpower pool. The old missile warning radar site may be mothballed, manned by civilians, or replaced by newer radars elsewhere under construction for National Missile Defense.

Brooks AFB, Texas

A tiny non-flying research base in an old area of San Antonio which is virtually shut down. The Air Force wanted to close it in 1995, but it was spared because the commission chose to close the large Kelly Air Logistics Center nearby.

Cannon AFB, New Mexico

A small base whose fighter wing can move to a larger base, but will probably be deactivated.

Columbus AFB, Mississippi

A tiny base whose training wing can move to a larger base with better flying weather. It may just be deactivated since fewer pilots will be needed as the future Air Force will have fewer aircraft.

Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota

A small base whose bomber wing can move to another base. Since the Air Force has just cut one-third of its B-1Bs, it may be best to deactivate that wing.

Goodfellow AFB, Texas

A tiny and remote non-flying base used for skills training which can move to a larger base.

Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota

A small base whose refueling wing can move to Malmstrom or Seymour Johnson. Tankers from this base require two or more hours of flight time to support operations along the coast or overseas deployments.

Hanscom AFB, Massachusetts

A small research base with no aircraft. The Air Force may continue to fund research with MIT, but there is no need to keep 2000 airmen running a "base". Any pure Air Force work can be moved to other underutilized Air Force Research labs.

Kirtland AFB, New Mexico

Special Operations activities will move to Hurlburt Field, Florida or perhaps Moody AFB. Sandia National Lab will remain while other Air Force activities move elsewhere.

Los Angeles AFB, California

A small base whose only tenant is the Space and Missile Systems Center. However, there are no space facilities or missiles nearby because it's located in a crowded and expensive section of Los Angeles county, which is why it has been considered for closing in past rounds. This command should move to a real "space" base like Vandenberg or over to March, leaving behind the contracting squadron and closing the Fort MacArthur base support complex 18 miles to the south.

McConnell AFB, Kansas

A small base whose refueling wing can move to a larger base, probably to one of the bomber bases in nearby states or to Tinker.

Nellis AFB, Nevada - (to realign)

This is a key medium-size base whose tenant units are better off elsewhere. The rapid growth of Las Vegas has enveloped the airfield causing community conflicts due to noise and demands for connecting roads through Nellis. Security is poor since the airfield is close to a major road with dozens of aircraft parked outdoors during exercises, while thousands of tourists visit the "Thunderbirds". In addition, the federal government has restricted growth in Las Vegas because air pollution becomes trapped in that valley, while Air Force jets at Nellis spew out tons of pollutants. Nellis is also an ideal location for a much needed civilian airport. More details are in this article: [Moving Base Has Advantages](#). These problems will only worsen, so the main base (Area I) should close. Separate Area II (munitions storage) and Area III (hospital, family housing and support) can remain open. The Development Wing and Weapons school can move to Edwards AFB, California. The Thunderbirds and 66th Rescue squadron can move anywhere. The Air Warfare Center "Red Flag" can move 40 miles northwest to small Indian Springs Field, which can expand and renamed Nellis AFB (Area I). Another option is build a new airstrip with hangars and a Red Flag building in a secure, isolated area 10 miles to the north with a direct 8 mile road to Area II. Parts of Area I can remain open (like the commissary, golf course, and clubs) while the city runs an airport for small aircraft to relieve congestion at McCarran.

Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina - (to realign)

The F-15 fighter wing can move, while an active KC-135 tanker wing is added. This base is much better located for tanker ops than those in the Mid-West.

Shaw AFB, South Carolina

This is a medium-size base, but the Air Force will cut its fighter squadrons in half and something must be shut down. This base may be preserved if a fighter wing based overseas returns.

Vance AFB, Oklahoma

A tiny base whose training wing can move to another base.

Ideal Base Size

Many readers have asked about the ideal base size. The best measurement is the total number active duty and civilian employees, which range from 1000 up to 50,000 at megabases. Modern military bases are expected to provide so many base services that small bases are extremely inefficient. On the other hand, megabases present nice nuclear targets and tend to dominate local economies. The federal government pays no local property taxes, exempts servicemen, their family members, and retirees from paying on-base sales tax, and usually expects local schools to pay for the education of military children (even those living on-base) and only reimburses part of cost. This is why so many communities have prospered after their bases shut down. See this editorial for more information. Keep in mind that shutting down a base doesn't mean shutting down everything. Government agencies, reserve units, and even military hospitals may remain.

As a result, megabases impose intolerable burdens on local communities which result in lousy schools and a run down infrastructure. Megabases are also impersonal for young military families who need a second car just to get around the base. Therefore, the best base size is from 10,000-20,000 personnel, and the 2005 BRAC should shift some activities from megabases to smaller bases with room to grow. Local housing costs must also be considered. For example, a married soldier in Alaska must be paid ~\$15,000 more a year than one in Kansas to live off-base. Once again, this is not an official list, just bases likely to be closed.