

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

Savings: 1996-2001: \$22.9 million

Annual: \$15.9 million

Return on Investment: 2000 (2 years)

FINAL ACTION: *Close*

Secretary of Defense Recommendation

None. The Commission added this military installation to the list of bases to be considered by the Commission for closure or realignment as a proposed change to the list of recommendations submitted by the Secretary of Defense.

Community Concerns

The community argues Oakland Army Base provides a critical capability during any major regional contingency. Without Oakland, significant combat forces deploying from Continental United States (CONUS) will not arrive in time to meet the theater commander's required delivery dates. Further, Oakland can efficiently ship overweight, oversized, and non-container military cargo that commercial ports have difficulty handling. The community contends Oakland's availability on short notice and its secure operating environment offer vital flexibility to military planners. Commercial facilities are becoming increasingly unwilling to guarantee staging and berthing space, within 48 hours, to military cargo. Because commercial facilities are operating near capacity, they are hesitant to disrupt normal traffic, fearing damage to customer relationships and their long term profitability.

Commission Findings

The Commission found the normal workload of Oakland Army Base does not justify its continued operation as a military terminal. Oakland's role in a west region contingency is based on transportation feasibility analysis that models an obsolete force structure and stationing plan. To date, DoD has not conducted analysis of Oakland's requirements from a ten division Army viewpoint. The Commission observed DoD transportation engineers list six commercial ports on the West Coast capable of deploying a mechanized infantry division. Further, the Commission acknowledged at least two other military ports on the West Coast handled military cargo in support of Desert Storm. The Commission addressed the growing resistance by commercial operators to disrupt commercial traffic to give priority to military needs. They noted the Maritime Administration (MARAD), Port Authorities, and DoD were undertaking two initiatives to address the issue. The Commission

recognized legal means exist under the National Shipping Authority Service Priority Orders to obtain priority for military cargo in contingency situations. Based on deliberations, the Commission found the Secretary of Defense had deviated substantially from operational blueprint criteria by not recommending closure of Oakland Army Base.

Commission Recommendation

The Commission finds the Secretary of Defense deviated substantially from final criterion 1. Therefore, the Commission recommends the following: close Oakland Army Base, California. Relocate Military Traffic Management Command—Western Area and 1302nd Major Port Command to locations to be determined. Enclave Army Reserve elements. The Commission finds this recommendation is consistent with the force-structure plan and final criteria.

Rio Vista Army Reserve Center, California

Category: Minor Installation

Mission: Formerly supported an Army Reserve watercraft unit

One-time Cost: None

Savings: 1996-2001: \$0.6 million

Annual: \$0.1 million

Return on Investment: 1996 (Immediate)

FINAL ACTION: *Close*

Secretary of Defense Recommendation

Close Rio Vista Army Reserve Center.

Secretary of Defense Justification

Rio Vista Army Reserve Center consists of approximately 28 acres. It formerly supported an Army Reserve watercraft unit. Since Reserve Components no longer use Rio Vista Reserve Center, it is excess to the Army's requirements. Closing Rio Vista will save base operations and maintenance funds and provide reuse opportunities for approximately 28 acres.

Community Concerns

There were no formal expressions from the community.

Commission Findings

The Commission found no reason to disagree with the recommendation of the Secretary of Defense.