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CLOSING FORT MONMOUTH

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The cost to move the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School (highlighted in photo above), housed at Fort Monmouth, began at \$29 million, but jumped to \$208 million before its latest estimate of \$197 million.

Price of closing fort prep school balloons

Pentagon cites construction costs for \$197M move to West Point

By KEITH BROWN
STAFF WRITER

In little more than two weeks, the price of moving the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School from Fort Monmouth to its new home in New York jumped 617 percent, according to a review of Army documents.

When the federal Base Realignment and Closure commission on Aug. 24, 2005, recommended that the bulk of the 90-year-old Army post's mission be transferred to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, the prep school was parceled off to West Point, N.Y., where new facilities would be built on the grounds of the U.S. Military Academy it serves.

The price tag of the move — estimated by the Pentagon, approved by the BRAC commission and, ultimately, Congress and President Bush — was roughly \$29 million.

Sixteen days after the BRAC commission vote, the prep school's commandant and dean, Col. Tyler Rugerstein, gave a slide-show presentation to about 60 prep school employees titled "BRAC: The Truth as of 9 Sept 2005." It put the cost of moving the school at \$29 million, or \$19 million more than the commission approved.

"It blew me out of my chair," said John Poitras, president of American Federation of Government Employees Local 1964, which represents nearly 3,000 civilian post workers.

Poitras, who attended the meeting, said he questioned Rugerstein about the inflated figure. According to Poitras, Rugerstein responded, "That's the number the Army is using at this time."

Rugerstein in an interview



confirmed the \$208 million price tag but declined to discuss the difference, referring questions to the West Point public affairs office.

"I'm not the guy to talk to," he said.

Joe Tambrello, spokesman for West Point, said he had no idea where Rugerstein would have gotten the \$208 million figure.

"I do know," Tambrello said, "that the current number is about \$197 million, and that has been in the works for about a year."

Tambrello declined to comment further and referred questions about the cost increase to the Department of Defense.

Dave Foster, a DOD spokesman, said that the \$29 million that the BRAC commission approved was among two plans for moving the prep school.

"One was a course of action if they did very little. It's what they would do if they would use

existing structures," Foster said. "The second was if they had to build new barracks and structures. It was simply two different courses of action."

The prep school employee meeting was held one day after the BRAC commission delivered its full recommendations including the closing of Fort Monmouth — to President Bush, who considered the panel's recommendations for a week before approving them on Sept. 15, 2005.

Although the latest cost estimate is somewhat lower than Rugerstein's \$208 million, the Army's 2006 budget request pegs the cost of moving the school at \$197 million, a 511 percent increase in two years. It's also just \$11 million less than the number Rugerstein gave out in his 2005 slide show.

The massive cost increase didn't surprise retired Vice Admiral Paul G. Gaffney II, president of Monmouth University and chairman of a former state

panel aimed at bolstering New Jersey's military installations.

Gaffney in July 2005 told BRAC commissioners at a public meeting held in Maryland that the DOD had woefully underestimated the cost of closing Fort Monmouth.

Armed with estimates done by the Patriots Alliance — a group of defense contractors and others that spearheaded the effort to keep the fort open — Gaffney told commissioners the price of moving the prep school would be around \$214 million, according to a review of public DOD documents. The estimate was never disputed by the Army, Gaffney said.

"The Army never came back and said 'those guys are crazy.' They just sort of let it lay there," he said. "I expected the other side to come back and say something was wrong. I don't remember seeing that."

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From left: Reps. Rush D. Holt, D-N.J., Christopher H. Smith, R-N.J., H. James Saxton, R-N.J., and Frank J. Pallone Jr., D-N.J., tried to block funding related to the Fort Monmouth closure.

4 fail to block closure funding

By KEITH BROWN
STAFF WRITER

Four New Jersey congressmen in March failed to block the House of Representatives from funding military construction related to closing Fort Monmouth.

U.S. Reps. Rush D. Holt and Frank J. Pallone Jr., both D-N.J., joined Christopher H. Smith and H. James Saxton, both R-N.J., in signing a March 20 letter addressed to members of two military construction oversight committees asking for a hold-up of money that would allow the Department of Defense to implement the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure decisions, the closure of Fort Monmouth among them.

Citing "serious concerns" about the integrity of the 2005 BRAC process, skyrocketing costs and the failure of the DOD to comply with a BRAC commission mandate related to Fort Monmouth, the congressmen asked members of the House Armed Services Committee and the Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations to withhold funding for all Army research facilities affected by the BRAC process until Congress could conduct a "comprehensive review" of the largest military consolidation in U.S. history.

"We're saying not everything was taken into account ... and the BRAC commission was being misled," Patrick Creamer, a spokesman for Smith, said.

The letter — which quotes liberally from recently released internal DOD documents that are highly critical of the 2005 BRAC round — had the attention of the Armed Services Committee, which spent weeks investigating the charges contained within those documents, according to a spokesman for the committee.

"But ultimately, the committee was not able to come to a resolution and took no action," Lara Battles, the spokesman, said.

Jeff Saxton, a spokesman for Saxton, declined to comment.

Holt also declined to comment specifically on the letter, but said he and Pallone have not walked away from the effort to save Fort Monmouth.

"What we're saying is we are not satisfied with how this has come down, and we're not walking away from

it," Holt said, but declined to elaborate.

The letter comes around the critiques of Don DeYoung, a Naval Research Laboratory employee who in 2006 was a BRAC alternate representative on a DOD task force charged with evaluating the Pentagon's BRAC recommendations for research laboratories.

The letter says DeYoung — who also had worked on the 1995 BRAC round — is "clearly an expert" in the field of military research and development facilities whose criticisms "raise serious questions about whether the department (of Defense) was forthcoming in its declarations to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission and the Congress on the need to close or consolidate military research facilities, such as Fort Monmouth."

For instance, DeYoung alleges the BRAC process was "driven by a predetermined outcome" rather than by facts, and that DOD officials knew that the 2005 consolidations would "make it impossible to support" the Pentagon's projected needs, the letter says.

DeYoung's papers and internal memo say that the relevant data supporting that allegation were omitted from a final report used by the Pentagon in justifying realignment and closure recommendations, "thus depriving the (BRAC) Commissioners and their staff the opportunity to judge for themselves whether DOD's claims and recommendations were valid and verifiable," according to the letter.

The letter says the ballooning cost of closing the fort further undermines the DOD's recommendation to shutter the Army post. It also skewers the DOD for not providing to Congress a report detailing how moving critical fort functions to the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland can be accomplished without jeopardizing the global war on terror, as the BRAC commission required.

"DOD's failure to comply with this report requirement has only reinforced our belief that it is not possible for this move to occur without significant degradation of support to the warfighter," it reads.

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Analyst's early warnings on BRAC ignored

Says 'military value' was not the primary focus in closure decisions

By KEITH BROWN
STAFF WRITER

The closure of Fort Monmouth is a glaring example of a 2005 Base Realignment and Closure round that was driven by pre-determined outcomes that were not based in fact, according to a former Department of Defense analyst.

Don J. DeYoung, a Naval Research Laboratory employee and a former member of a panel helping to create the Pentagon's 2005 list of military installations to be closed or consolidated, wrote several internal DOD documents critical of the BRAC process in which he held up the recommendation to close Fort Monmouth as emblematic of a process gone awry.

The fort is a "multidisciplinary and multifunctional center" that would have seemed like a "logical winner" for additional workload. Instead, the 90-year-old Army post was targeted for closure, with the bulk

of its research and development mission going to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

That result shows that "military value was not the primary consideration in the making of recommendations" as the BRAC law requires, DeYoung wrote.

DeYoung, a veteran of previous BRAC rounds, developed the analytical tool that was used to evaluate the Navy's research and development infrastructure in the 1985 round of closures. His work was commended by the Secretary of the Navy and won him the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

During the 2005 BRAC round, DeYoung was an alternate member of the Pentagon's Technical Joint Cross Service Group — one of seven analytical panels given the task of recommending to then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld which military installations should be closed or consolidated.

DeYoung's papers were recently released on the Pedraza of American Scientists Web site. Although he declined to comment further, DeYoung has said that he stands behind his writings.

Using the Technical Joint Cross Service Group's stated evaluation strategy, Fort Monmouth scored in the top 10 of Army laboratory sites in four critical areas. No other Army site scored in the top 10 for more than one area. DeYoung wrote in the Nov. 29, 2005, paper titled "The Conduct and Lessons of BRAC05."

The recommendation to move the bulk of the fort's mission to Aberdeen requires moving "the 5,000-plus work force and building a facility that does not currently exist at a site that did not rank in the top 10 for any of the four" categories, DeYoung wrote.

"The best that can be said for the proposal is that the desired transformation is possible which is an unacceptably low standard," DeYoung wrote.



Analyst Don J. DeYoung wrote reports related to concerns over the BRAC process.

The move to Aberdeen, DeYoung wrote, exemplified a process that was neither "data-driven" nor consistently "strategically driven."

"The (TRACG) process was compromised by a premature and excessive use of judgment," DeYoung wrote.

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OTHER BASE CLOSING INCREASES

The Fort Monmouth closing is not the only 2005 decision by the Base Realignment and Closure commission that has experienced a cost increase in the last two years.

A random sampling of the 2006 budget requests submitted by the various military branches for 13 other BRAC decisions shows a more than \$1.8 billion increase in the one-time cost estimates of closing or realigning installations.

Those increases range from \$16 million in the cost to realign March Air Reserve Base in California to a \$776 million hike in the cost of realigning Fort Knox, Ky., and Fort McCoy, Wis.

- \$16 million to realign March Air Reserve Base, Calif., from \$5.2 million to \$21.1 million.
- \$18 million to close Navy Supply Corps School in Athens, Ga., from \$23.8 million to \$41.9 million.
- \$21 million to realign Bradley International Airport Air Guard Station, Conn., Barnes Air Guard Station, Mass., Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., and Martin State Air Guard Base, Md., from \$14.5 million to \$35.4 million.
- \$24 million to realign Naval Station Newport, R.I., from \$11.8 million to \$35.5 million.
- \$31 million to close Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, Calif., from \$14 million to \$45 million.
- \$40.4 million to realign Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass., Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Air Guard Station, Mo., and Atlantic City Air Guard Station, N.J., from \$3.7 million to \$44.1 million.
- \$40.3 million to realign Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., from \$10.4 million to \$50.7 million.
- \$53 million to close Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine, from \$19.1 million to \$74.6 million.
- \$52.6 million to close Fort Gillem, Ga., from \$56.8 million to \$109.4 million.
- \$186 million to realign Fort Hood, Texas, from \$436 million to \$622.1 million.
- \$205.6 million to close Fort Monroe, Va., from \$74.2 million to \$281 million.
- \$267 million to close Brooks City Base, Texas, from \$25.3 million to \$292.3 million.
- \$726.9 million to realign Fort Knox, Ky., and Fort McCoy, Wis., from \$773.1 million to \$1.5 billion.

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