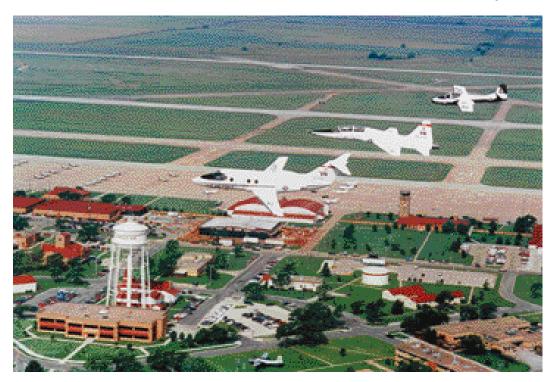


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When an Installation Grows: The Impact of Expanding Missions on Communities

By: Yvonne Dawson



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WHAT IS NAID?

NAID, An Association of Defense Communities (NAID/ADC) is the nation's leading organization supporting communities with active, closed and closing defense installations. NAID/ADC unites the diverse interests of communities, the private sector and the military on issues of mission enhancement/realignment, community-base partnerships, privatization, and closure/redevelopment.

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For close to 30 years, NAID/ADC has been the voice of communities dealing with the challenges and opportunities of active and closed military installations. It's an organization built on support found through one-on-one interaction at conferences, timely updates in our weekly newsletter, and the unique online resources.

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For defense communities, understanding the complex and important issues they must face is not an easy task. At NAID/ADC we know the importance of learning and the opportunity that creates. Our comprehensive approach to increasing the knowledge of our members includes two major conferences – both packed full of hundreds of sessions – a highly regarded library of original publications, and a just-a- call away clearinghouse of information ready for your access.

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Our membership and leadership are not just the top experts in their profession, in many instances they set the standard for the field. From community leaders to retired military officers, attorneys, environmental experts, and engineers, NAID/ADC is the place where the best minds on defense community issues come together.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process will serve as an opportunity for the U.S. military to reduce infrastructure, enhance joint operations and cut costs. According to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfield, "BRAC 2005 should be the means by which we reconfigure our current infrastructure into one in which operational capacity maximizes both warfighting capability and efficiency."

Unlike previous rounds of base closures, though, this round is not driven by a need to reduce overall force structure. This BRAC round is instead anticipated to bring about a series of **realignments** in which operations are moved to receiving installations.² For communities with receiving installations, this growth will not only bring an influx of additional troops and/or missions, but also families and, potentially, federal civilian employees and contractors.

A significant factor influencing this year's BRAC process is the Bush administration's decision to move up to 70,000 overseas troops back to the United States, primarily from Germany and South Korea. These troops will consume some of the military's excess domestic capacity. According to Raymond Dubois, former deputy under secretary of Defense for installations and environment, "...the new global posture strategy and BRAC 2005 are tightly linked. The overseas moves will inform the domestic BRAC decisions." An additional factor in this round is the consolidation that is anticipated as part of the Army's transition from divisions to more readily deployable brigades. Many communities have already received word of troop increases due to the Army's transformation efforts.

As a result of these factors, this round of BRAC presents a situation in which a significant number of **defense communities** will experience growth. While BRAC 2005 announcements are still months away, communities already may be considering how to prepare for the additional troops, families, civilian employees and/or contractors anticipated to arrive. This InfoBrief issue serves as a resource to defense communities facing installation growth - exploring the major impacts on communities and describing practical steps communities can take to address this issue.

The next section defines installation growth and outlines potential impacts on defense communities. For each of the impacts, a set of questions is presented that a community can begin to consider. It is important to begin a process to evaluate your community's preparedness for installation growth and start developing plans in partnership with the installation, school district and other community stakeholders to address potential impacts.

Section three provides direction on how to start addressing these impacts, including identifying a lead organization and developing a planning process that engages local stakeholders to develop an action plan. Also included are details on resources available to help communities fund planning efforts. The final section examines two defense communities and details their experience dealing with the impacts of installation growth.

REALIGNMENT:

"Any action that both reduces and relocates functions and civilian personnel positions, but does not include a reduction in force resulting from workload adjustments, reduced personnel or funding levels, or skill imbalances." (Department of Defense).

DEFENSE COMMUNITIES:

municipalities, including towns, cities and counties, adjacent to or near an active or closed defense installation.

II. INSTALLATION GROWTH AND ITS IMPACTS

INSTALLATION GROWTH:

a net gain of personnel and population to a defense community due to mission expansion.

"OUTSIDE THE GATE" IMPACTS:

the impacts of installation changes, such as mission growth, that occur in the larger defense community.

What is Installation Growth?

Installation growth can be defined as a net gain of personnel and population to a defense community due to mission expansion. The total population increase in a given defense community can be much larger than the announced troop increase. Troops will bring their families, and since roughly two-thirds of all military families live off-post, the impact will be felt immediately in the community. Civilian workers and their families may be given the option to relocate, and contractors may choose to move their operations near the expanded base. This population increase will have impacts, both on the base and in the community as a whole.

What is the Impact of Installation Growth on Defense Communities?

Installation growth is not simply a "within the gates" issue. The impacts are felt throughout the community, and these impacts can present both opportunities and challenges. Take, for example, the economic impact. Soldiers and civilians spend much of their pay in local communities and the installations spend considerable sums with local vendors for maintenance, utilities, food and supplies.⁴ At Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, a post that currently has about 12,000 troops, the Army said it would add 3,800 by 2006. This increase is estimated to bring \$586 million to the local economy each year, in addition to 1,000 additional private sector jobs, according to a study by the University of Texas-El Paso.⁵ The additional economic benefits are expected to come from soldiers and their families buying homes, paying taxes and purchasing goods locally.⁶

While generally regarded as an economic boon, installation growth also presents its own challenges to defense communities. Where will the new troops and their families be housed? If outside the gate, does new housing need to be constructed to meet the demand? Is there enough capacity in the local school system to serve the families that will be moving to the community? Are there enough jobs for arriving spouses? Can the current transportation system support increased traffic? Who will plan for these "outside the gate" impacts? The questions are numerous and the answers sometimes complicated.

To prepare for these changes, defense communities are beginning to face these issues now. Killeen, Texas, home to Fort Hood, is an example of a community that has already begun planning for installation growth. In July of 2004 the Army announced plans to move 5,000 additional troops to the post as part of the transition to an organizational structure driven by brigades. Anticipating the need for increased infrastructure, the community approached the state of Texas for funding to improve existing roads and other infrastructure needed to support expanded operations at Fort Hood.⁷ The state responded by committing \$20.5 million to these efforts. By working to identify anticipated impacts of installation growth, defense communities can establish partnerships with the state and other jurisdictions, the military installation and the private sector to address these challenges.

Housing

One of the most pressing issues for defense communities is where to house this new influx of residents. Some of the personnel will live in on-base housing, but the majority

will not. A big question for communities is whether there is sufficient housing available outside the gates to meet the increased demand.

Communities can begin by working with the installation to perform a housing assessment that identifies both demand and available supply. First it is important to identify who is expected to live off base. Is it officers or enlisted service members? Families? Civilians? Each of these groups may have different housing needs based on age, income, anticipated length of assignment and other factors. For example, young households may have a preference for rental housing; or, depending on grade and income, the focus may be on affordability.

With information on who is coming and what their housing needs may be, the community can begin to examine whether there are enough housing units to meet the projected increase in demand. If the number of new families is relatively small, the private housing market may have existing capacity to absorb the demand with little fanfare. Or capacity may exist in one segment of the housing market, say rental housing for low- to moderate-income families, but not in another. Is new housing required? And if so, is there land available for development?

A need for new housing should prompt the community to work in partnership with the housing and construction industry to build new housing units. At Fort Benning in Ga., the community is anticipating the arrival of over 5,000 new soldiers in the next year. To ensure there is enough housing for the soldiers and their families, the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce is working in a coordinated effort with local jurisdictions, homebuilders, public service providers and school boards to identify areas with political and community support for new housing. As a result, over 3,000 developable lots have been identified in six Georgia and two Alabama counties. For more information, see the Fort Benning case study on page 12.

Infrastructure

Defense communities often must make infrastructure improvements to support the new development that results from installation growth. Off-base impacts such as new housing and commercial development - and potentially on-base impacts as well -create a need for increased sewer/water capacity along with new roads, utilities and other infrastructure in the community at-large to support expansion.

How does a defense community plan for these off-base improvements? Communities should first identify those jurisdictions or private utility providers that manage the infrastructure in the area, taking note of current capacity, mapping areas that are well served and identifying those that would require additional investment to support growth. This information will help defense communities readily quantify the costs of growth and allow them to identify funding sources for these improvements.

When faced with an influx of new development, defense communities have found ways to concentrate housing and other projects in certain areas in order to make efficient infrastructure investments. In anticipation of new housing development near Fort Leonard Wood in south central Missouri, the Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA) mapped the county based on the adequacy and availability of utilities, water and sewer to

encourage development in areas serviced by public infrastructure. The RCGA also partnered with the Missouri State Department of Development to obtain infrastructure financing for developers working in these areas. For more information, see the Fort Leonard Wood case study on page 13. Also see information on Fort Hood on page 6.

In response to on-base growth, defense communities may be called upon to improve infrastructure near the base, including roadway entrances and exits. In New Mexico, the state has begun work to improve the roadways near Holloman and Cannon Air Force bases in anticipation of the BRAC 2005 process.⁸

Schools

Another consideration for defense communities is preparing for increased enrollment at local public schools. While the Department of Defense enrolls about 30,000 children annually in its U.S. schools, over 500,000 children of military families are enrolled in local school districts near installations.

According to the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA), a first priority for communities is to ensure that there is an open line of communication between the installation commander and the local school district. This will help both the schools and the installation plan for the children's successful transition to new schools. Local community leaders can assist in making sure this relationship is a strong one.

School funding is also an important issue for communities. School districts with high concentrations of military children may apply for federal Impact Aid from the Department of Education, which covers a portion of the educational costs of these students. The remainder of these costs is covered by local and state education funds. Schools districts apply for Impact Aid by submitting a count of military students to the department each year by Jan. 31st. Children who begin after this date are left out of the count, leaving school districts with no funding for these students in the following school year. It will be important for local school districts to revise their count if necessary and prepare for any adjustments in funding.

If military children will be starting school before the Jan. 31st deadline, school districts have an opportunity to work collaboratively with their congressional representatives to identify interim funding. At Fort Campbell in Kentucky, which is located near the Tennessee border, the community found out in 2004 that an additional 850 soldiers would be assigned to the post. Many of the military children attend nearby Tennessee schools, and the school system there estimated an additional 1,000 children would attend the schools beginning in the fall of 2004. To prepare for this jump, the school district and local officials request help from their congressional delegation to obtain funding. As a result, a \$4 million earmark was secured in the fiscal year 2005 defense appropriations bill to help the Clarksville-Montgomery School System pay for new students entering the school system.¹⁰ Currently, MISA is working with Congress to adjust the process for counting military children and providing funding for their education.

Employment

In addition to increasing on-base military and civilian employment, installation growth often brings about significant private sector job growth as well. Defense communities can

begin developing estimates of how installation growth could impact the local labor market. At Fort Bliss, for example, the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) estimated that with the addition of 3,800 troops, 1,000 private sector jobs would be created. A labor market analysis can also identify those industries most affected. A 2002 study by UTEP indicated that the El Paso construction industry would be impacted aided substantially by troop increases, with construction from base expansion and housing and commercial building starts providing significant opportunities for the region. With information on the forecasted impacts, communities can then evaluate whether the local labor force can meet this new demand.

Defense communities may be affected by the employment needs of military families, and in particular, spouses. It is important to examine the education and background of these new spouses in comparison with available jobs. Is there a need for workforce training? In Columbus, Ga., local leaders estimate that almost 2,000 spouses will enter the local workforce as new troops arrive at Fort Benning over the next year. In response, the community is strengthening educational programs at local technical colleges to prepare spouses for jobs in healthy regional industries. In many cases, highly educated spouses will not be able to find work in their field and instead take lower-wage positions. Communities will need to strive to identify alternative employment opportunities for these higher skilled spouses.

Depending on labor force availability and skills, it may be important to recruit workers from elsewhere. When the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command was moved from St. Louis, Mo. to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala. in 1997, the community worked diligently to encourage civilian employees to move to Huntsville. Through outreach efforts that included information sessions in St. Louis, Huntsville leaders promoted their region's attributes to the civilian employees. To help workers obtain information on city services, community officials established a one-stop center at a local mall. As a result of the community's efforts, about 60 percent of the command's 2,600 civilian employees decided to relocate to Huntsville.

Other Issues

For defense communities facing installation growth, the potential impacts discussed in the previous sections are those that are often most pressing, requiring attention well in advance of troop arrival. This is certainly not an exhaustive list of potential impacts, as others issues may present themselves after troops and their families arrive. Some additional issues to consider include:

- *Health Care* Will the local health care system be able to meet the increased demand for health care services for families and civilians?
- *Child Care* For families with young children, will they be able to identify early childhood care providers?
- *Community Services* What are some of the community and social needs of the arriving troops and their families? Will the base meet those needs? Are there any services that the local community will need to provide, such as recreational opportunities?

■ *Air Quality Issues* — Will additional operations on-base and other development have any adverse impacts on air quality? How will this inform the community's growth strategy and/or potentially impact a State's mandated air quality improvement plan?

III. WHERE TO BEGIN

Organizing

How does a community start addressing the effects of installation growth? The first step is to develop a planning process that engages local stakeholders to consider the potential community impacts, determine priorities and ultimately, develop an action plan.

Who should be involved? Potential stakeholders should include representatives from the base, local jurisdictions, school districts, business and civic leaders, builders, higher education institutions, workforce board members and other important local institutions.

While many organizations in the community will ultimately be involved, it is important to identify one organization to lead this process. Defense communities may already have an organization that serve as advocate on behalf of the installation, possibly even working to "save" the base during the BRAC process. This organization may be able to serve as - or facilitate transition to - a **partnering organization**, bringing the community together with the base to plan for the impacts of growth. As impacts are often spread across many jurisdictions, communities often look to regional organizations such as chambers of commerce or other economic development organizations to aid the process.

What is the role of the partnering organization? Among other activities, the organization typically is responsible for:

- Leading the planning process, involving all necessary stakeholders, initiating the development of an action plan and monitoring implementation of the plan;
- Undertaking research to estimate community impacts;
- Maintaining a close relationship with the installation commander to ensure base changes are well understood by the community and are included in the planning process; and
- Developing an outreach program to ease the transition for new families. This can include a Web site, informational meetings, linking families with sponsors, etc.

Funding

To fund planning efforts in response to installation growth, defense communities may be able to tap **growth management planning assistance** through the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA). Local governments, states and/or regional organizations (such as a council of governments or metropolitan planning organization) are eligible to apply. To qualify, the proposed or actual expansion of a local military installation must involve:

■ The assignment of more than 2,000 military, civilian, and DoD contractor personnel to a new or expanded installation OR

PARTNERING ORGANIZATION:

a community
organization that works
collaboratively with
the local installation
to enbance mission
effectiveness.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING ASSISTANCE:

funding from the Office of Economic Adjustment available to state and local governments impacted by the sudden growth from new or expanding bases.

■ The assignment of military, civilian, and contractor DoD personnel that is equal to 10 percent of employment in counties or independent municipalities within 15 miles of the installation.

An important consideration for OEA is the degree of impact on the local community. To receive aid, the expansion must be expected to result in a direct and significantly adverse consequence on the affected community. For example, at Fort Leonard Wood (see case study on page 13), the addition of 2,000 military and civilian employees raised serious questions about where these personnel would live in this highly rural area with relatively few housing options aside from manufactured housing. OEA's growth management planning assistance allowed the Fort Leonard Wood Regional Commerce and Growth Association to study this issue and develop a plan that resulted in new single family housing for the added personnel. OEA also considers whether other community impact or special impact assistance is available.

The average growth management planning assistance grant is \$150,000 and a 10 percent match of non-federal sources is required. The grant pays for community planning activities, including - but not limited to - staffing, operating and administrative costs and general or specialized economic adjustment studies. The grant period is typically one year. OEA is expected to solicit applications for these grants following the announcement in May 2005 of DoD's BRAC recommendations.

More information is available on OEA's website at: http://www.oea.gov

Defense communities also may be able to access other federal funds such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), particularly for the preparation of housing assessments. These funds, available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, are distributed to entitlement communities (typically in larger metropolitan areas) and through states for non-entitlement communities. A primary focus of this program is the provision of decent housing, principally for low- to moderate-income families. More information on the CDBG program is available on HUD's website: http://www.hud.gov

DEALING WITH MISSION GROWTH: A COMMUNITY'S FIRST STEPS

Defense communities can take the following steps to begin addressing the potential impacts of installation growth:

- Determine the number of new military personnel and work with the installation to estimate the total number of new community residents
- Perform a housing assessment to identify available demand and supply
- Evaluate infrastructure capacity, including roads, water/sewer and utilities
- Begin communication with local school districts to plan for new children entering the local schools
- Perform a labor market analysis, incorporating military personnel increases
- Initiate a planning process that engages local stakeholders to consider impacts, determine priorities and develop an action plan
- Identify or develop a partnering organization to bring the community together with the base to plan for the impacts of growth

CASE STUDIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Biff Hadden Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce (706) 327-1566

Case Study: Fort Benning, Georgia

Fort Benning - outside Columbus, Ga. near the Alabama border - serves as a major Army training center and is currently home to the 4,000-member 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division. Due to the Army's transformation effort to create smaller, more deployable units, it soon will be home to a new brigade of 3,800 light-infantry soldiers. An additional 1,690 soldiers will be coming to Fort Benning as part of the post's expanded training responsibilities. When the community received word of this expansion in February 2004, it quickly started planning for the arrival of these new soldiers and their families.

According to Biff Hadden, Senior Vice President of the Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce, the first order of business was to determine the total projected population increase. Working with the installation commander and utilizing Army statistics on marriage and birth rates for soldiers, the total increase was estimated to be approximately 15,000 new community residents, including 3,600 families and 4,500 school-age children. For a community of 300,000 people, this represents a sizeable population increase, occurring within a two-three year period. And with the growth of civilian contractor jobs to support the base's expansion, this increase may go even higher.

Almost from the very beginning, the chamber has engaged the community in a planning process intended to build political awareness of the base's growth and make plans for the future. The planning group, called the Fort Benning Futures Task Force, is made up of over 60 community stakeholders from local jurisdictions and school districts in Georgia and Alabama, citizens, and the private sector - including builders and realtors. The most pressing issues facing the task force are the need to build off base housing for arriving families and incorporating new military school children into school systems with little excess capacity. The task force also is examining impacts on transportation, infrastructure, workforce training, medical services, childcare, and many other areas.

For any community, new housing development can be met with opposition because of the potentially adverse impacts on schools, transportation and quality of life. To diffuse this, jurisdictions, homebuilders, public service providers and school boards in the Columbus region worked in a coordinated effort to identify areas with political and community support for housing development. As a result, over 3,000 developable were identified in six Georgia and two Alabama counties. Recognizing the affordability needs of military families as well as the short-term nature of some assignments, the builders are planning to develop multi-family units as well.

To ensure the schools are prepared for the influx of new students, builders are in close communication with school districts about planned new developments. While some children can be absorbed into existing schools, the local school districts anticipate a need for temporary buildings to house these students, and ultimately new schools. While the Department of Education provides Impact Aid to help military impacted schools pay for the education costs of military children, it does not provide dollars for new school construction. As a result, the community is now rallying its congressional representatives to provide a special appropriation to cover these costs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Ron Selfors Ft. Leonard Wood RCGA (573) 329-8505 While an increase of 15,000 new residents can seem daunting, the Columbus/Ft. Benning community has worked proactively to address the impacts of this growth. According to Hadden, "Ultimately the key to this whole process is forging a partnership between the base and the community on a common goal and vision. We want this to be as professional and seamless to the base as possible."

Case Study: Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri

As a result of BRAC 1995 decisions, the Army moved its Chemical School and Military Police School in 1999 from Fort McClellan, Ala. to Fort Leonard Wood. The move brought an influx of over 2,000 military and civilian personnel to the installation in south central Missouri. The post, adjacent to the Mark Twain National Forest, is near the communities of Waynesville and St. Robert, Mo.

To develop a plan for this growth, the Ft. Leonard Wood Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA) was formed in 1996 with members from the county and five area municipalities. With support from the state of Missouri and OEA, the organization hired staff to initiate the planning process and develop plans for managing growth in the area. For more information on OEA planning programs, see page 10.

One of the first issues facing the community was how to house these new soldiers and their families. It was estimated that up to 1,800 families would need off-base housing. Fort Leonard Wood is located in Pulaski county, a rural community without planning or zoning and the existing housing stock - made up of mostly manufactured housing with septic systems - was considered inadequate to meet this demand. In fact, most families living off-base commuted over 30 miles due to the lack of adequate housing near the base. In response, RCGA focused on how to stimulate a private housing market in the local communities.

With the goal of encouraging developers to build housing closer to the installation, the Pulaski County Board of Commissioners put a referendum before the voters to institute planning and zoning regulations. The referendum was defeated by a large margin. Despite this setback, the RCGA devised a growth management plan that instead encouraged adequate public facilities.

RCGA's plan geographically subdivided the county based on the adequacy and availability of utilities, water and sewer, encouraging developers to build to nationally recognized codes in areas serviced by public infrastructure. While the RCGA has no enforcement authority, the association extended "quality endorsements" to acceptable development projects. Working in partnership with the State Department of Economic Development, RGCA was able to ensure that only those projects receiving quality endorsements were eligible for state infrastructure loans. Through 2000, RCGA endorsed nine subdivisions of single-family homes and three apartment complexes, resulting in the construction of over 1,200 housing units.

Along with this new housing development has come an increase in commercial development, including a new super Wal-Mart, two strip malls and 12 hotels. The RCGA has grown, too. In 2002, it facilitated the development of a technology park on the post in

partnership with the University of Missouri System and the Missouri Technology Corporation. For more information on the technology park, see the January 2005 NAIDInfoSeries publication, *Profiles in Privatization and Facility Cost Reduction*.



FOOTNOTES

- ¹ From memo prepared by Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense entitled, "Transformation Through Base Realignment and Closure," (November 15, 2002).
- The military defines BRAC realignment as including "any action that both reduces and relocates functions and civilian personnel positions, but does not include a reduction in force resulting from workload adjustments, reduced personnel or funding levels, or skill imbalances."
- Remarks by Raymond F. DuBois, Former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment to the Association of the United States Army 2004 Annual Meeting and Exposition entitled "BRAC 2005: For More Relevant and Joint Installations," (October 25, 2004).
- ⁴ Coomes, Paul. "Economically Important Military Activity Offers Future Opportunity," Foresight 6 (1999).
- ⁵ Roberts, Chris. "El Paso Welcomes this Kind of Military Invasion," *Houston Chronicle* (September 25, 2004).
- ⁶ Ibid.
- Office of the Governor of Texas. "Governor Perry Asks TxDot to Place Fort Hood Infrastructure Funding on August Agenda," (July 23, 2004).
- ⁸ Rubel, Walter. "New Mexico Develops Plans to Protect its Installations," El Paso Times (Nov 23, 2003).
- The Military Impacted Schools Association provides a number of resources for military families on its website, http://www.esu3.org/districts/bellevue/misa/misahome.html, to help ease children's transitions to new schools.
- Office of Senator Lamar Alexander. "Alexander, Frist Secure \$4 Million for Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools," (July 14, 2004).
- From the Economic Impact of Fort Bliss on the El Paso Region: 2002, David A. Schauer, Dennis L. Soden, Brent McCune and Janet S. Conary, Institute for Policy and Economic Development, University of Texas at El Paso, Technical Report #2002-08.
- ¹² Associated Press. "Ga. Army Base Set for Big Troop Expansion," (Nov. 29, 2004). Accessed from http://www.abcnews.go.com/US/print?id-288562.
- 13 Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Rhem, Kathleen. "Missouri Base Tackles Housing Quality Issue," American Forces Information Service (August 8, 2000). Accessed from www.defense.gov/news.
- 15 Ibid.



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