


GAO
 Accountability-Integrity-Reliability
Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-723](#), a report to the Secretary of Defense

Why GAO Did This Study

While four previous base closure rounds have afforded the Department of Defense (DOD) the opportunity to divest itself of unneeded property, it has, at the same time, retained more than 350,000 acres and nearly 20 million square feet of facilities on enclaves at closed or realigned bases for use by the reserve components. In view of the upcoming 2005 base closure round, GAO undertook this review to ascertain if opportunities exist to improve the decision-making processes used to establish reserve enclaves. Specifically, GAO determined to what extent (1) specific infrastructure needs for reserve enclaves were identified as part of base realignment and closure decision making and (2) estimated costs to operate and maintain enclaves were considered in deriving net estimated savings for realigning or closing bases.

What GAO Recommends

As part of the new base realignment and closure round scheduled for 2005, GAO is recommending that the Secretary of Defense provide the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission with data that clearly specify the (1) infrastructure needed for any proposed reserve enclaves and (2) estimated costs to operate and maintain such enclaves.

In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD agreed with the recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-723.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Barry Holman at (202) 512-8412 or holmanb@gao.gov.

MILITARY BASE CLOSURES

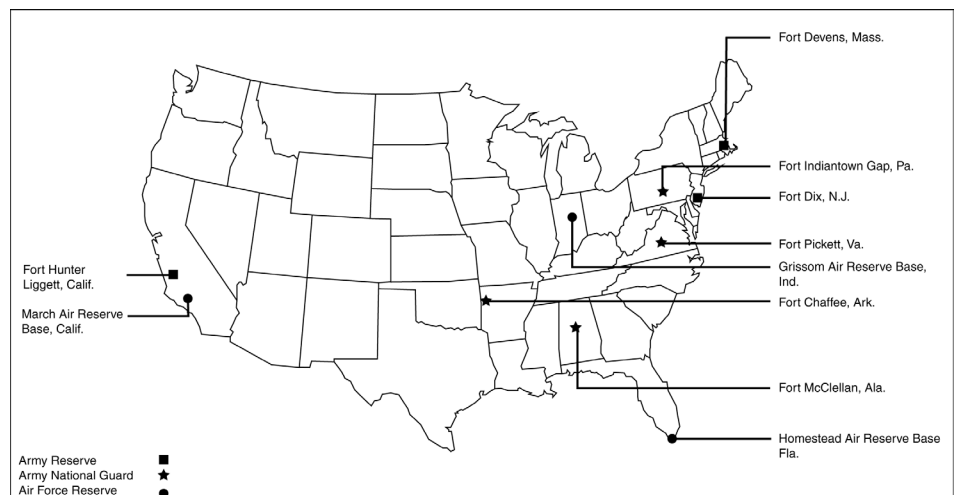
Better Planning Needed for Future Reserve Enclaves

What GAO Found

The specific infrastructure needed for many DOD reserve enclaves created under the previous base realignment and closure process was generally not identified until after a defense base closure commission had rendered its recommendations. While the Army generally decided it wanted much of the available training land for its enclaves before the time of the commission's decision making during the 1995 closure round, time constraints precluded the Army from fully identifying specific training acreages and facilities until later. Subsequently, in some instances the Army created enclaves that were nearly as large as the bases that were being closed. In contrast, the infrastructure needed for Air Force reserve enclaves was more defined during the decision-making process. Moreover, DOD's enclave-planning processes generally did not include a cross-service analysis of military activities that may have benefited by their inclusion in a nearby enclave.

The Army did not include estimated costs to operate and maintain its reserve enclaves in deriving net estimated base realignment or closure savings during the decision-making process, but the Air Force apparently did so in forming its enclaves. GAO's analysis showed that the Army overestimated savings and underestimated the time required to recoup initial investment costs to either realign or close those bases with proposed enclaves. However, these original cost omissions have not materially affected DOD's recent estimate of \$6.6 billion in annual recurring savings from the previous closure rounds because the Army subsequently updated its estimates in its budget submissions to reflect expected enclave costs.

Major Reserve Component Enclaves Created under Previous BRAC Rounds



Source: DOD.