

Inquiry Response

Re: BI-0105 (CT-0432) Synergy of Training Between Cannon AFB F-16s and Ft Sill

Requester: Commission Request (Ken Small)

Question: Question to both the Army and to the Air Force: There is currently a synergy between the Cannon AFB F-16 Wing and Fort Sill related to simultaneous air to ground and artillery training, conceivably simulating fighter loiter time to artillery targeting. If Fort Bliss grew as projected this same synergy could heighten between Cannon and Fort Bliss and the proposed "Net Fires Center" to be established at Ft Sill.

Army: Is this synergy important to the Army? Will valuable training opportunities be lost if Cannon AFB Closes? If Cannon AFB closes, will similar Army training opportunities be available with other sources?

Air Force: Is this synergy important to the Air Force? Will valuable training opportunities be lost if Cannon AFB Closes? If Cannon AFB closes, will similar Air Force training opportunities be available with other sources?

Answer:

1) Yes, in general. Coordinated-fire and close air support synergy with the Army is very important to the Air Force. That is why Cannon's aircraft are moved to places where they can do close air support and joint training with the Army and USMC more easily and frequently. The Mission Compatibility Index (MCI) for fighters limited its evaluation of ranges to 150 nautical miles so that all installations could be compared on a fair and equitable basis. From an Air Force perspective, while Cannon AFB may currently support joint training at Ft Sill's ranges, at 240 nautical miles it was not considered in Cannon's Fighter MCI score.

The recommended Air Force realignments offer better joint training alternatives for both the Air Force, the Army, and the Marine Corps as well. Hill AFB provides close air support missions almost daily on the on the Utah Test and Training Range (UTTR) and the adjacent Army Dugway Proving Ground. Shaw AFB is in close proximity to a large number of Army and USMC ranges, as is Nellis AFB, providing more "joint" training rather than two-service opportunities currently available at Cannon AFB.

2) From an Army perspective, there are several ways the Air Force will continue provide air support for Army joint fires training requirements. The F-16s at Tulsa IAP AGS, Oklahoma, and Carswell Joint Reserve Base, Texas, are roughly half the distance to Ft Sill's range as Cannon AFB and are therefore better situated to support the Army's new Net Fires Center slated for Ft Sill. The Air National Guard F-16 wing at Kirtland AFB is closer to the Ft Bliss McGregor Range than Cannon AFB and can provide needed close air support for joint training with the artillery (Fires) brigade recommended for movement from Ft Sill to Ft Bliss. Additionally, the

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airfield at Ft Bliss has sufficient capacity to receive F-16 deployments to support joint fires missions at McGregor Range as required.

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. L. Johansen', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

DAVID L. JOHANSEN, Lt Col, USAF
Chief, Base Realignment and Closure Division



BRAC 2005 - Query Response Manager



Response to 0413

Question:

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Army:

Is this synergy important to the Army? Will valuable training opportunities be lost if Cannon AFB Closes?

If Cannon AFB closes, will similar Army training opportunities be available with other sources?

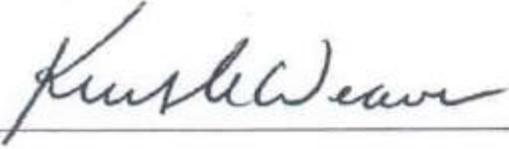
Answer:

Close Air Support, in conjunction with fighter aircraft, trains Army and Air Force personnel to work together and fight together before they are forced to execute live missions on the battlefield. It would be ideal to have a fighter base right next to every Army base, because of the increase of convenient opportunities to train together, but that isn't always the case. The loss of Cannon AFB would most likely mean a decrease in the number of sorties that would be conveniently available for Close Air Support training with the maneuver units at Fort Bliss. Close Air Support missions at Fort Sill are supported by a number of fighter and bomber units in the Midwest and the closure of Cannon AFB would have a fairly small impact on its training.

If F-16s are no longer stationed at Cannon AFB, similar training would have to be conducted with aircraft that fly to Fort Bliss from greater distances, and therefore would most likely have less time-on-station to support the training. Fort Bliss maneuver units would still receive Close Air Support training during deployments to NTC and/or JRTC. There would be a decrease in training available, which is hard to quantify at this point, but there would be alternatives for Close Air Support training missions and exercises.

References:

DCN 4453

Approved By: 

Date: 05-Jul-05