

**BASE VISIT REPORT**

**Beale Air Force Base, CA**

**17 June, 2005**

**COMMISSION STAFF:**

Mr. Nathaniel Sillin, Associate Analyst

**LIST OF ATTENDEES:**

**9<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Wing Unit Mission Brief:**

Mr. Mike Walker, Field Rep., Senator Feinstein  
Col Lawrence Wells, 9RW/CC  
Col Domenick Eanniello, 9RW/CV  
Col James Kerr, 940ARW/CC  
Lt Col Jon Ellis, 13RS/CC  
Lt Col Marc Duncan, 9RW/XP  
Lt Col George LaVezzi, 9MXG/BRAC POC  
Mr. Harl Sanderson, 9MSG BRAC POC  
Mr. John Larson, 9OG BRAC POC  
Capt Eleyce Winn, 9MDG BRAC POC

**940<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing Unit Mission Brief:**

Mr. Mike Walker, Field Rep., Senator Feinstein  
Col James Kerr, 940ARW/CC  
Lt Col Ron Gray, 940 ARW/ BRAC POC  
Lt Col Jon Ellis, 13RS/CC  
Lt Col Ron Soejoto, 940 AMXS/CC  
Lt Col Marc Duncan, 9RW/XP  
Lt Col George LaVezzi, 9MXG/BRAC POC  
Mr. Harl Sanderson, 9MSG BRAC POC  
Mr. John Larson, 9OG BRAC POC  
Capt Eleyce Winn, 9MDG BRAC POC

**940<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing Meeting:**

Mr. Mike Walker, Field Rep., Senator Feinstein  
Col James Kerr, 940 ARW/CC  
Col Dave Mitchell, 940 OG/CC  
Col Mike Higginson, 940 MSG/CC  
Lt Col Jon Ellis, 13RS/CC  
Lt Col Ron Soejoto, 940 AMXS/CC  
Lt Col Bob Landgraf 940 AMDF/CC  
Lt Col Randy Lavender, 940 ARW/CCE  
Lt Col Ron Gray, 940 ARW/ BRAC POC  
Maj Bob Couse-Baker, 940 ARW/PA

CMSgt Don Pope, 940 CES/CEO  
CMSgt Less Palmer, 940 LRS/LGRR

12<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron Unit Mission Brief:

Mr. Mike Walker, Field Rep., Senator Feinstein  
Lt Col Mark Corley, 12 RS/CC  
Lt Col Chris Jella, 12RS/DO  
Lt Col Craig Morris, 9 OG/GHPOD  
Lt Col Jon Ellis, 13RS/CC

**BASE'S PRESENT MISSION:**

- 9th Reconnaissance Wing: The 9th Reconnaissance Wing is responsible for providing national and theater command authorities with timely, reliable, high-quality, high-altitude reconnaissance products. To accomplish this mission, the wing is equipped with the nation's fleet of U-2 reconnaissance aircraft and associated support equipment. The wing also maintains a high state of readiness in its combat support and combat service support forces for potential deployment in response to theater contingencies. The 9th Reconnaissance Wing is composed of more than 3,000 personnel in four groups at Beale and multiple overseas operating locations.
- 940<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing (AFR): Operates 8 KC-135R Stratotankers. 40th Air Refueling Wing is gained by Air Mobility Command for wartime and contingency operations. In peacetime, the unit reports to Headquarters 4th Air Force (AFRC), March Air Reserve Base, Calif.; in wartime, to the 15th Expeditionary Mobility Task Force (AMC), Travis Air Force Base, Calif. The 940th also supports unified commands, including the United States Strategic Command and the North American Aerospace Defense Command.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron: Integrated Associate unit which provides the Total Force solution – in conjunction with 9<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Wing and California Air National Guard personnel – to sustain the RQ-4 Global Hawk mission. 13 RS maintenance and operations personnel provide wartime surge capability, weekend maintenance, experience and continuity. In addition, 13 RS operations personnel augment and support the Formal Training Unit with instructor pilots and imagery analysts.

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:**

- Realign Beale AFB, CA
  - Distribute the 940th Air Refueling Wing's (ARW) KC-135R aircraft to:
    - Air National Guard, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan (4 aircraft)
    - 134th ARW (AFR) McGhee – Tyson Airport Air Guard Station, Tennessee (4 aircraft)
  - 940<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Combat Support (ECS) elements will remain in place.
- Realign Selfridge Air Reserve Base, MI (ANG) Base:
  - Distribute the 927<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing's KC-135R aircraft to:
    - 127<sup>th</sup> Wing (ANG) at Selfridge.
    - The 127<sup>th</sup> Wing will retire its 15 F-16 aircraft and 8 C-130E aircraft and will convert to A-10 and KC-135R aircraft.

## **SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:**

- **Beale AFB, CA:**
  - This recommendation capitalized on Beale's (7-C2ISR & 33-UAV) high military value and emerging Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) mission.
  - Realigning KC-135 force structure enables Beale to have one primary operational flying mission.
  - Receiver locations for Beale's KC-135's each have "above-average" military value for reserve component bases in the tanker mission.
  - Beale's more modern KC-135R will replace older, higher maintenance KC-135E models at McGhee-Tyson and help increase the new ANG tanker mission at Selfridge to an effective-size of 12 aircraft.
- **Selfridge Air National Guard Base, MI:**
  - As a reserve component base, Selfridge ANGB has above avg. mil. Value as both tanker installation (57) and fighter installation (70).
  - This recommendation streamlines operations at Selfridge ANGB by realigning the Reserve air refueling mission, currently operating as a tenant unit, and divesting the ANG wing of its retiring force structure.
  - Reorganizing the flying operations under one component (ANG) will maximize organizational effectiveness and allow the installation to accommodate two effectively sized squadrons.

## **MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED:**

Flightline  
Dock 5  
Bldg 1086 Ops  
Dock  
KC-135T Model conversions  
Dock 6, RQ-4 Global Hawk  
Bldg 1200, & MCE Tour  
Flightline SCIF

## **KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED**

- 940<sup>th</sup> ARW embraces shifting to C2ISR operations and becoming a Global Hawk Unit, but has concerns about retention and recruiting based on lack of specificity as to how the transformation will be made.

## **INSTALLATION CONCERNS RAISED**

- 940<sup>th</sup> ARW CC concerned with timeline for defining what the 940th Global Hawk Mission i.e. manpower, etc. will be. Without definition and timeline he is concerned about losing reservists.

- 940<sup>th</sup> ARW CC concerned with competition between Global Hawk pilots and their peers in weapon systems as the F-22, B-2, etc. Global Hawk hand eye coordination is entirely different (computer key board and a mouse vs an actual aircraft flight station and the physiological affects). Currently there is no pilot program to maintain the traditional skills required to fly as the U-2 weapon system augments their piloting skill with the T-38 trainer. Also, if the Air Force keeps the requirement for a pilot to operate Global Hawk, I fear that it will be a difficult weapon system to recruit and maintain for. There may be no incentive for the young pilot who wishes to fly an aircraft with stick and rudder, experiencing the aesthetics.
- 940<sup>th</sup> ARW CC concerned that the tanker mission is here to stay until the year 2009. A concern exists that members seeking their livelihood (pilots flying traditional planes) and or their job security (KC-135 Boom operators) will leave the wing for other job opportunities leaving a tanker mission to fly the next 3 plus years. It could be a challenge recruiting the backfill.