



Mission Sustainability- Related Articles

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Center of Excellence



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ARIZONA



El Mirage's Luke AFB backers headed to victory in council races

by Cecilia Chan - Aug. 26, 2010 12:20 PM
The Arizona Republic

Pro-Luke forces dominated the returns in the El Mirage City Council primary on Tuesday.

Former board members of the grassroots group People of El Mirage appeared headed to *claim all five council seats, including the mayor. Five of the nine candidates on the ballot* are former group members who advocated for Luke Air Force Base in Glendale.

Lana Mook trounced Mike Humes to become the city's next mayor with 73 percent of the votes counted to Humes' 27 percent, according to unofficial results. Mayor Michele Kern opted not to run.

"Here in El Mirage, a group of good, honorable men and women joined together to try and stop the questionable and, oftentimes, detrimental practices that have been going on at City Hall," Mook said in a statement. The "election results are a resounding vindication of that effort. This is the best reward we could have asked for."

City leaders had angered its West Valley neighbors with a trip to Washington, D.C. last year to ask for \$400 million in compensation for economic damages they said stemmed from development restrictions to protect the base against encroachment. The city also released a noise study that said bringing the F-35, the newest fighter jet, to Luke for pilot training would lower property values.

Lynn Selby easily won the two-year seat vacated by Councilman Bill Conner, who resigned in February, citing family obligations. Unofficial returns show Selby received 80 percent of the votes counted, compared with opponent Hubert Flisyn's 20 percent.

Five candidates vied for the three remaining seats, which carried four-year terms. The top three vote-getters were James McPhetres, John Palladino and Joe Ramirez, all Luke proponents. Voters were asked to vote for three candidates.

The only incumbent who sought to retain his seat, Roger Cleveland, received 15 percent of the votes. Challenger Jeff Zaharia came in last, capturing 11 percent of the votes.

According to El Mirage City Clerk Richard Saathof, candidates need to get 50 percent plus one of the votes cast to win the primary. Saathof did not know how many outstanding ballots still needed to be counted.

The new council members in January will join Vice Mayor David Shapera and Councilman Roy Delgado, both supporters of Luke Air Force Base.

With Mook and Selby as shoo-ins for the council, it will turn the tide at City Hall. El Mirage leaders have, for two years, taken a stance that support for the Glendale base should not come at the expense of El Mirage. The base pumps \$2 billion into the state's economy each year.

Luke is the Air Force's preferred training base for F-35 pilots. A final decision will be based on findings of an environmental impact study.



McCain: Blocking encroachment protected Ariz. base

Associated Press - August 27, 2010 6:04 AM ET

PHOENIX (AP) - Sen. John McCain says local governmental action to prevent urban encroachment on Luke Air Force Base was vital for the installation's recent selection as a preferred training site for a new Air Force jet.

McCain says the Air Force never would have given Luke that designation -- and a possible new lease on life once Luke's current role of training F-16 pilots is phased out -- without zoning restrictions to prevent encroachment.

The Arizona Republican says encroachment is the largest single reason for bases being closed under past rounds of base closings.

FLORIDA



Navy Releases Draft Environmental Assessment

August 24, 2010

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southeast and Naval Air Station Whiting Field (NASWF) completed the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) necessary for the runway extension in Baldwin County, Ala. The draft recommends the extension of runways at Barin and Summerdale Navy Outlying Fields (NOLF).

A public scoping meeting is scheduled for Aug. 31 at 6 p.m. in the Central Annex Auditorium, at 22251 Palmer Street, Robertsdale, Ala. to enable local residents to review the proposed extension plan and provide comments to Navy representatives.

Public review of the draft EA is available via the web at <http://www.navyolfextensions.com/index.html>, and at the following public libraries: Foley Public Library, 319 East Laurel St., Foley, Ala., 36535; Summerdale Public Library, 202 West Broadway St., Summerdale, Ala, 36580; and the Mobile Public Library, 700 Government St., Mobile, Ala., 36620-1403.

Interested persons may also receive a copy of the draft EA by sending a written request to Mr. Sean Heath, NAVFAC Southeast, Box 30, Bldg. 903, NAS Jacksonville, FL 32212 or via fax at (225) 761-8077.

Public and agency comments on the draft EA are solicited for a period of 30 days from publication of the official notice, which will be issued Aug. 19. Comments must be received by Heath, through the web site or via email at Sean.Heath@navy.mil by Sept. 20, 2010 in order to be addressed in the final EA. Please put NASWF-T6 in the subject line of any email comments sent.

The U.S. Navy is proposing to re-pave and extend runway surfaces at existing NOLFs located in Baldwin County, Ala. to accommodate T-6B "Texan" landing requirements. The proposed action would provide two 5,000-foot long runways with 1,000-foot long overruns for safety and 2,000-foot long clear zones for noise reduction at the end of each runway at Barin NOLF. Summerdale NOLF would have two runways extended to 4,000-feet with the same overruns and clear zones.

Naval Air Station Whiting Field and Training Air Wing FIVE, the base's major tenant command, provide primary flight training to nearly 60 percent of all Navy and Marine Corps aviators as well as to U. S. Coast Guard aviators, select Air Force pilots and flight students from allied foreign countries. The current training aircraft was implemented in 1977 and is aging. The T-34 Turbo Mentor has already begun transitioning to the T-6B Texan. The transition is expected to be complete by 2013.



August 29, 2010

Elite military chopper, pilots train locally

Residents can see Chinook helicopter flying low at night

BY ADAM LINHARDT Citizen Staff

Residents curious about the low-flying, black helicopters over parts of Key West recently should rest easy despite the noise -- the military pilots flying them are widely considered the best in the world.

A small contingent of the famed 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) are in town to train and help give the Special Forces Underwater Operations School commandos studying at Fleming Key a taste of combat aviation.

"Flying in this unit is the best job in the world for a helicopter pilot," said Chief Warrant Officer Matthew Murphy of Greenville, S.C. "We work with the best."

As other Special Operations Forces, the Fort Campbell-based unit typically avoids the spotlight and has been flying under the radar, figuratively and literally, since its birth in 1981.

Though it is still largely a classified unit, SOAR pilots drew media attention after military reporter Mark Bowden described their heroics in his 1999 book "Black Hawk Down," which sparked a 2001 movie of the same name. The subject was a fierce, 1993 firefight in Somalia following humanitarian attempts to remove a warlord from power.

The pilots are known for their pioneering use of night vision goggles -- hence their nickname the "Night Stalkers" -- and other sensory gear during flight, usually at high speeds and extremely low or high altitudes in dangerous conditions over enemy territory.

They typically fly three different helicopters, including the well-known Black Hawk, but the unit in Key West brought two of its biggest -- the dual-rotor MH-47 Chinook Special Operations Aircraft. They are the only helicopter pilots in the Army that refuel in the air, pilot Maj. Brian Supko said.

"Everybody mistakes our refueling probes for machine guns," he said with a grin.

Though Key West is a popular destination for military units, SOAR has not been in town recently, given the wars overseas, Supko said. They arrived last week and will continue flying throughout this week.

"Generally, we've been concentrating on mountainous, desert training," Supko said. "But we have to train over water as well -- and Key West is perfect because the water is so clear -- which can be dangerous. And we have the dive school here as well."

Whenever Green Berets, Navy SEALs or Delta Force commandos need a lift, they most often call the 160th SOAR. The unit was primarily formed based on the recommendation of the first Delta Force commander after the failed 1980 rescue of 52 Americans in Tehran, Iran, which was plagued by aircraft issues that led to the death of eight soldiers.

The arrival of the SOAR pilots to Key West is a treat for the Green Beret instructors and students at the Army dive school, school commander Maj. Trevor Hill said.

"We rarely get a chance to train with this unit because they've been so busy overseas," Hill said. "This aircraft that they have here is the only aircraft in the Department of Defense that can operate in some of the altitudes in Afghanistan, so it's hard to get a chance to train with them."

Special Forces have come to rely on SOAR pilots' guarantee that they will get their fellow commandos on target, on time, anywhere in the world, "plus or minus 30 seconds," Hill said.

"We have definitely seen that with them," Hill said of the mutual training.

alinhardt@keysnews.com

HAWAII



Windward Residents Sound Off Against Military Fleet

Noise Increase Tops Concerns

POSTED: 9:52 pm HST August 26, 2010, UPDATED: 12:33 am HST August 27, 2010

HONOLULU -- The military is proposing to move-in 24 Osprey aircrafts to the Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe, along with 18 Cobra attack choppers and nine Huey helicopters.

On Thursday night, windward residents spoke out against the plan at the King Intermediate School in Kaneohe

The military said the added fleet is necessary to prepare marines for combat.

The Osprey aircraft is designed to function as a helicopter but is capable of covering longer distances and perform at higher speeds.

The military aircraft is also equipped to takeoff and land vertically.

“It is allowing us to move our marines from combat zone to combat zone in the air safe away from IEDs that line the roads,” said Lt. Col. Jason Holden.

Residents said the community already bears the constant noise of aircrafts flying overhead throughout the day and night.

“I’m worried about quality of life,” said Kaneohe resident Guy Ballou. “These people have to live like this all day long its ridiculous.”

The military assured the crowd the environmental impact statement will address the noise concerns.

“I think you are going to find that the predominant noise that you are going to hear from us will be less than what you are seeing from legacy helicopters,” said Holden.

Along with the additional aircrafts, the military estimates a thousand uniformed personnel and 1100 family members will come too.

Residents fear the increase in population will add to the already competitive housing market.

“Our local people can’t afford to compete they can’t compete with the housing allowances that the military personnel get,” said Kaneohe resident Mahealani Cypher.

“I want the marines to have the best training in the world this isn’t the place for it they need to go some place else,” said Ballou.

The military doesn't expect to release the results of the EIS until next winter.



Training Same As Always, Navy Is Insisting

August 29, 2010

Chris Hamilton

KAHULUI – U.S. Navy training exercises in waters around Hawaii and across the Pacific would be the same kinds of activities that have been under way for decades, including sonar training and the use of explosives under water, Navy officials said last week.

The U.S. Navy brought its application to renew an environmental impact statement allowing its ships, submarines and planes to continue training in waters around Hawaii and Southern California to a lightly attended open house in Kahului on Friday.

Opponents have objected to the Navy's use of sonar in its exercises within the 1.2 million-square-mile Hawaii testing range, saying the powerful sounds cause injuries to marine mammals including humpback whales.

"We believe our effects (with sonar) are temporary," said Fleet Environmental Counsel Johnny Nilsen. "We do not believe that the sonar is going to kill any mammals."

The Navy must, by law, conduct training exercises to be prepared for the event of attack or war, and that involves using explosive devices in the water as well, Nilsen added. However, their main concern is trying to detect diesel-powered submarines, which are becoming increasingly popular among some Asian countries, such as North Korea, he said.

None of the training and tests under consideration is for land targets, Navy officials said.

"This is more of the same," said Mark Matsunaga, environmental public affairs officer for the U.S. Pacific Fleet command of the EIS process. "We have been doing these activities for decades."

At least a dozen residents stopped by for the four-hour-long open house at Maui Waena Intermediate School. Another dozen Navy officers, spokespeople, private consultants and scientists were on hand to answer the public's questions.

A number of those who visited the event were skeptical of the Navy's claims.

"Of course, you darn well know they are just telling you what you want to hear," said Mele Stokesberry of Maui Peace Action. "They've got to defend their positions."

Stokesberry said she was concerned that the Navy is using depleted uranium in its weapons training but was told that only the Army uses the controversial metal for its projectiles.

Mahealani Oliver said she came to find out firsthand where the Navy got the authority to conduct its operations in both the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. She also said she was concerned about its impact on the environment and aquatic life.

"I just don't think it's a good place for training, you know?" Oliver said.

The final EIS and overseas environmental impact statement (OEIS) is actually the second set of studies for the area, Matsunaga said. It won't take effect until the existing statements expire in January 2014, if the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Fisheries Services approves the study, he said.

The EIS/OEISs are for the Hawaii-Southern California Training and Testing Study Area. San Diego is about 2,400 miles from Hawaii, and vessels train along the way.

For more information, go online to www.HSTTEIS.com, where the Navy will also accept written comments. The drafts of the documents are scheduled to be ready by spring 2012, when the Navy will return to hold public hearings on the subject and gather more public input.

"We're getting out ahead of the game," Nilsen said.

This month, the Navy also hosted four other required "scoping period" open houses in Point Loma and Long Beach, Calif., Lihue, Honolulu and Hilo.

The studies are partially in response to a U.S. Supreme Court decision nearly two years ago. The Navy prevailed, but the courts imposed a number of restrictions on its use of sonar to protect marine animals, such as Hawaii's famous whales, monk seals and sea turtles.

The Supreme Court sided with the Navy in its November 2008 decision against the Natural Resources Defense Council, saying the ability to conduct realistic training exercises outweighs any concerns that sonar could damage marine life.

However, both sides claimed victory in that case. Environmentalists said that the decision puts a number of restrictions in place.

Nilsen said that the new guidelines call for the Navy to power down its sonar by 75 percent if a mammal is at least 1,000 yards from a craft and shut it off if a mammal gets within 200 yards.

"There's a lot of allegations that mammals are being hurt or killed, but there's no evidence," Matsunaga said.

The sonar the Navy uses on 56 ships included in the EIS/OEIS is midfrequency, said Conrad Erkelens, who represented the Navy's marine resources acoustics/modeling research. He said sonar causes what's called a "take" in ocean mammals, that can be as minor as an animal turning its head in response to hearing the sonar.

Pearl Harbor has 17 submarines; however, they don't use the sonar very often because it gives away their position, Nilsen said.

Some people are concerned that the Navy's sub-hunting sonar disrupts fishing, but he said it's been proved that it does not affect fish, which cannot hear the frequency, as mammals can.

Officials also noted that the humpback whale population is on the rise and continues to come from Alaska to Hawaii using the same migratory paths.

"We're not discounting there may be an effect, but we say it doesn't eliminate wildlife," Nilsen said.

In addition, it's the NOAA's civilian-run National Marine Fisheries Service that determines how many hours Navy planes and helicopters can be in the air and, what, where and how much ordnance and munitions they can use, Nilsen said.

"We are on the phone with them every week," Nilsen said. "It's a sea change for us, and it's a good thing."

Project documents, fact sheets and other information can also be found at the Wailuku Public Library.

IDAHO



New Navy Project May Come to Eastern Idaho

August 23, 2010

Johnny Archer

Two U.S. Navy nuclear projects in the works could possibly come to eastern Idaho. The total cost of both is estimated up to \$1 billion. But before any construction can begin, the public's input must be considered.

The project is called the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. It's in the beginning stages, but has been an idea for the past 2 to 3 years.

The collaboration between the U.S. Navy and the Department of Energy intends to recapitalize on facilities in the Arco Desert. Using them as a place to handle used nuclear fuel from the Navy's fleet.

Idaho is the only place in the U.S. where facilities already exist. Rehabilitating them would be most financially feasible. Two projects that Navy officials estimate will cost up to \$1 billion and will create a large number of local construction jobs.

Local input will be heard to factor in stakeholder's concerns of potential environmental hazards from the projects.

"We really anticipate that the environmental impacts will be little if any associated with the new facilities and the recapitalization," said Alan Gunn, a representative of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

Three public hearings will be held in eastern Idaho. One will be Tuesday, August 24, 2010 at the Shilo Inn in Idaho Falls. The next will be Wednesday, August 25th at the Red Lion Hotel in Pocatello and the third will be Thursday, August 26 at the Canyon Springs Red Lion in Twin Falls. Each meeting will run from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Channel 6 attempted to contact the Snake River Alliance, an Idaho nuclear watchdog, but was not able to reach a representative. Navy officials say the alliance has not shared any objection yet toward the projects.

MARYLAND

autoevolution

Navy Renegade Drone Wanders Off

27th of August 2010 | 06:51 GMT | **Daniel Patrascu**

A very scary incident, if looked at through the eyes of those claiming robots will take over the world, took place earlier this month over Washington DC airspace. A Northrop Grumman MQ-8B Navy Fire Scout belonging to the US Navy went out its computerized mind and flew right into DC airspace because of a “software issue.”



According to the Navy, the drone, which is built pretty much as a miniature helicopter, was uncontrollable for 30 minutes and traveled 23 miles (37 km) into restricted airspace, reaching a point no more than 40 miles (64 km) away from the US capital.

As a result of the incident, The New York Times reports that the Navy grounded all six such drones they are currently testing.

The Fire Scouts have a maximum altitude of 20,000 ft. (6 km) and a top speed of over 125 knots. The drones are based on the Schweizer Aircraft commercial airframe and operate using a turbine which runs on standard NATO heavy fuel.

It can provide its operators with Over The Horizon (OTH) targeting, battle damage assessment and is fully interoperable between land and sea-based systems.

The incident itself is not cause for worrying, as the Fire Scouts are being used by the Navy for surveillance missions over the US, and not search and destroy. Even among battle drones used in the Iraqi and Afghan theaters of war, the failure rate is quite common.

According to a report by The Los Angeles Times, about 80 drones have failed, causing at least an \$1 million budget hole per crash. That's about \$80 million

NEVADA



Conservation project benefits county, NAS Fallon

*By Stephanie Carroll – Saturday, August 14, 2010
Lahontan Valley News*

The Transfer of Developmental Rights and Conservation Easement program has been



established in Churchill County for four years and has already created about 6,000 acres of preserved land.

“It’s been a definite success, and it’s doing very well right now, and in the long term it’s going to preserve the personality and the character of this county,” said County Manager Brad Goetsch.

Goetsch explained the program was created to accomplish three goals: Preserve agricultural land, preserve water and preserve the buffer zone around Naval Air Station Fallon.

“We feel like we’re a partner with the county because there seems to be a big desire to preserve agriculture,” said John Dirickson, community planning and liaison officer with NAS Fallon.

Goetsch said the program allows the county and U.S. Navy to pay residents to strip development rights from acreage they own near the base and designate it as a conservation easement. The land owner retains the land and can use it for agriculture but can never develop on it or strip its water rights.

The amount paid to landowners is determined by an appraiser, and 25 percent comes from the county and 75 percent from the U.S. Navy.

Goetsch said the funding comes out of the county budget but is supported by selling the TDR rights.

The TDR rights become available for purchase to any developer that wishes to build in higher density in another area. Goetsch explained the county has ordinances that prevent more than a few houses per acre, but some developers want to build more and can purchase more rights to do so.

The recession has slowed development and TDR purchases, but Goetsch said the program is worth the cost because it benefits the local economy.

“It's really a big stimulus package for Churchill County, and it's a big win for everyone,” Goetsch said. “This program gives you money, and you get to keep your farm. It's had a huge impact and has been a huge help especially in this bad economy ... bringing in millions to the county.”

The benefit to the U.S. Navy comes from conserving the area around the base that provides a buffer zone for noise and guarantees the base can continue operational training. Dirickson said many bases in the nation are forced to close after a developing area grows to close.

“You start getting a lot of pressure from the residents and from the political system to not make noise at night,” Dirickson said. “Training has to be done in the day and the night.”

Dirickson said the Navy is dedicated to keeping the Fallon base open because of nearby bombing ranges built in the 1940s and 1950s, which can not be replicated elsewhere. During budgeting, Dirickson said the U.S. Navy categorized the TDR program as priority No. 1.

“Every carrier that leaves a port out of the U.S. comes to Fallon to train for four to five weeks,” Dirickson said. “This is it. The importance of Fallon can not be overstated. It's like gold. You just can't replace it.”

In addition to conservation, the TDR program has also strengthened relations between the base and community.

“NAS Fallon and Churchill County are often held up as the nation's premier base buffer and community supporter for a base,” Goetsch said.

Goetsch said the program's goal is to acquire 15,000 acres; however, Dirickson said new louder aircraft coming to the base may expand the area of the desired buffer zone and lead to increasing the program.

“I think we have more acres under easement than any other air station,” Dirickson said.

NEW MEXICO



Pearce implorres N.M. leadership to keep F-22s

Alamogordo Daily News

By Steve Pearce, For the Daily News

Posted: 08/22/2010 12:00:00 AM MDT

The U.S. Air Force recently announced that Holloman Air Force Base would lose the F-22 mission and will get two F-16 training squadrons.

The seven leading New Mexico Democrat politicians have tried to put a brave face on this loss for New Mexico. I do hope it means more jobs in and around Holloman, but I fear there is a disturbing trend here. I think the families around Holloman and Alamogordo need to get some harder facts because if the press releases aren't followed by jobs, times will get worse in Otero County.

Our delegation should be insisting on public briefings of these decisions. The city of Alamogordo has always been a good partner for the Air Force. The citizens of the town should be given the respect of a full and public disclosure of the criteria, which was used to place Holloman fifth out of the five bases being considered.

I do not believe Holloman deserves to finish last.

Everyone should be concerned about the apparent trading down from the F-22 to the F-16 mission. The deficits of our government are hurting our entire economy and spending cuts are inevitable. A training mission will be cut before the next generation aircraft mission is cut.

In other words, Holloman is receiving an F-16 mission that will be on the chopping block before the next generation F-22 is cut.

All decisions to locate units and missions are based on definable factors. For instance, when a town has encroached upon or grown around an air base, that base is less desirable. Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix has been completely surrounded. Local residents are protesting its presence. Pilots have to make difficult departures and approaches to avoid the population near Phoenix. Holloman has no encroachment and no public protests. Evaluations of the two bases should be made public.

Other issues such as capacity and cost of living are also easily definable factors. Data should be provided to show the number of hangars available at Holloman compared to the other bases considered and cost of living analysis among the several bases under consideration.

The federal government provides education money for communities where there are federal installations. The Air Force has complained in the past that New Mexico is taking the money for Alamogordo and redistributing it among all the schools in New Mexico. If this was the reason for the mission being lost, the citizens of Alamogordo and New Mexico need to know.

When Republicans were in the majority and held the presidency, Congressman Tom Udall's northern district lost its mission from Cannon Air Force Base.

The governor, both senators and all three of us in Congress cried foul. We demanded the Air Force records of the process be made public. The combined bipartisan effort led to a new mission and Cannon is still a viable player in our national security.

The same thing should be happening in Alamogordo.

During the past two years, the New Mexico congressional delegation has had its head handed to it on a platter. The first loss was the reassignment of 6,500 soldiers who were headed to White Sands Missile Range. Then there was the loss of the flying mission at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque. Las Cruces is losing its NASA mission. Now the F-22 is moving on.

It appears that none of the current leaders are willing to fight the White House to protect military jobs in our state. Sen. Jeff Bingaman is the senior member of the delegation with 27 years of seniority. He has the clout to keep this from happening. Now he needs to lead the charge to prevent the loss of any military missions - starting with the F-22.

Steve Pearce is a candidate for New Mexico's 2nd Congressional District. He previously served three terms in Congress and worked extensively on military basing issues. He is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and flew combat missions in Vietnam being honorably discharged as a captain.

Navy fliers to return to local skies

By Steve Ramirez sramirez@lcsun-news.com

Posted: 08/26/2010 12:09:21 AM MDT

LAS CRUCES - The Navy pilots are returning, testing once again the varying degrees of tolerance and patience among Las Cruces residents.

In years past, some Las Cruces have expressed exasperation about the training flights conducted by the U.S. Navy from Las Cruces International Airport, annoyed by the noise generated by the airplanes as pilots worked to become certified as Naval aviators.

Others, however, have argued that the noise is "the sound of freedom," and they are proud that our community can play a role in training Navy aviators who will be defending our country. They note that the critics wouldn't have the right to complain without that freedom.

"As far as I'm concerned, if

they're going to complain I hope it's long and healthy," said Las Crucesen David Granger, a Korean War

veteran. "I have no qualms whatsoever about the Navy coming here to train. I welcome them with open arms."

So does the City Council, which voted 6-0 Wednesday to approve plans for the Navy to resume training flights at Las Cruces International Airport. The training begins

on Sept. 7 and is expected to continue through Nov. 9.

"This is a good deal for the city," Mayor Ken Miyagishima said. "With about a hundred people coming in, that's going to mean about an extra \$1 million in gross receipts taxes for the city. They'll pay for their lodging, meals and just about anything else they'll need while they're here. Businesses will make more money, the city will make money, and some of our (police and fire) employees can earn some overtime."

Fire Chief Travis Brown said this will be the seventh time the Navy has returned to Las Cruces. It did not train at the airport last year because of repairs being done on one of its major runways.



Navy Lt. Erica Haynes inspects the propeller of a T-34 trainer airplane on July 9, 2007, after she and a student pilot landed at the Las Cruces International Airport. The Navy Training Wing 4, out of Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, will be flying over the Mesilla Valley skies for about two months for pilot training. (File Photo)

"Initially, they told us they were planning to come back the first of the year, but not in September," Brown said. "But I received an e-mail Monday afternoon informing me that they did, in fact, want to come. The elevation at the airport, and the winds, are similar to what they encounter in Corpus Christi."

The Navy's e-mail to Brown was to inquire about the city's ability to again provide police, fire and rescue services. Brown said police services, primarily for security at the airport, are expected to amount to \$27,821, with the tab for fire and rescue services anticipated to come to \$55,598 during the Navy's two-month stay.

"It is not out of the realm of possibility that the Navy could return early next year as well," Brown said.

As in the past, the Navy will reimburse the city for all costs associated with the training.

"They will pick up all costs, plus a slight overage for administrative fees to the city," Brown said.

Navy air training

- The U.S. Navy will again conduct air training in Las Cruces.
- About 100 Naval personnel, including as many as 60 pilots, are expected to begin arriving Sept. 3.
- Training will begin Sept. 7 at Las Cruces International Airport.
- It is anticipated that the Navy will bring about 20 airplanes from Naval Air Station Corpus Christi.
- The Navy will conduct its training from Sept. 7 until Nov. 9.
- The estimated cost to provide police, fire and rescue services is \$83,419, and the Navy will reimburse the city the total cost for those services.
- The Navy could possibly return for additional training in January.
- The Navy has trained at the airport on six previous occasions.

NORTH CAROLINA



Residents speak out on Navy training

August 28, 2010 8:27 AM

By Jannette Pippin

MOREHEAD CITY — In a study area that covers more than two million nautical miles of ocean, the Navy sees an opportunity for real-world training while citizen Susan Davis sees potential impacts to the marine animals that inhabit the same areas where explosives and active sonar are used.

“The use of sonar is what concerns me; that’s such a large area,” said Davis, a part-time Emerald Isle resident and member of North Carolinians for Responsible Use of Sonar.

Davis was one of a handful of people who attended an open house meeting held by the Navy Thursday in Morehead City. The meeting was the North Carolina stop in a series of public input meetings held as the Navy begins preparing an Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing Environmental Impact Statement to assess the potential environmental effects associated with at-sea training off the Atlantic coast and Gulf of Mexico.

Public input is being gathered to identify community concerns and issues to be considered in the assessment.

The use of active sonar has been an issue of both concern and support.

According to the Navy, more than 400 extremely quiet diesel-electric submarines are operated by more than 40 nations worldwide, making the use of active sonar crucial in the detection of the subs.

Jene Nissen, acoustic policy manager for U.S. Fleet Forces, said at-sea training is necessary to prepare sailors for use of active sonar in a real environment.

“Conditions in the ocean change all the time,” he said. “Sailors need to be able to train in all the different water environments.”

Nissen said the Navy has been conducting sonar training for decades, and the information shows there can be a temporary reaction by some species to exposure to intermittent use of sonar.

“Some species will leave an area and when (an exercise) is done, from what we’ve seen, the animals come back,” he said.

Jack Spruill attended the meeting with perspective as a former Navy destroyer officer and a director with the environmental advocacy group Pender Watch & Conservancy.

He understands the need for realistic at-sea training but is also critical of the EIS process. He said it lacks independence, noting that the Navy is applicant and administrator, hires the experts for the assessment and is the judge in the process.

Meanwhile, he said, there have been many unanswered questions raised about the impacts of sonar.

“The idea that just because we don’t know the impact we shouldn’t worry; I don’t buy that,” Spruill said.

Dave MacDuffee, a natural resources manager with U.S. Fleet Forces, said the Navy strives to protect the marine environment while meeting its training needs.

“It’s reaching a balance between effective training and the responsibility to avoid and minimize impacts,” he said.

The Navy already conducts training in the AFTT study area, but Project Manager John Van Name said training needs and the Navy mission are always evolving.

“The Navy mission continually changes as the threats out there change,” he said.

The latest EIS is one comprehensive evaluation to renew and combine current regulatory permits and authorizations. A previous round of EIS reviews included five different studies.

Written comment is being accepted through Sept. 14. Comments may be submitted online at AFTTEIS.com or by mail at: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Atlantic; Attention: AFFT EIS/ OEIS PM – Code EV-22LL; 6506 Hampton Boulevard; Norfolk, VA 23508-1278.

Navy To Hold Public Meeting On Training, Testing

August 25, 2010

Jannette Pippin

MOREHEAD CITY – The Navy will hold a public meeting Thursday in Morehead City on its plans to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of training and testing activities in an area of operation that covers 2.6 million nautical miles of ocean along the Atlantic coast and Gulf of Mexico.

The use of explosives and active sonar bring with it potential impacts such as noise from ships, subs and sonar; ship strikes with animals that swim near the surface, and debris left from training activities.

But that’s not the only reason Jack Spruill will be attending the meeting, one of a series of meetings the Navy is holding along the East Coast and in Florida, and submitting his comments to the Navy.

“I will be writing comments to let the Navy know I’m looking over their shoulder and I expect them to be fair and balanced (in their evaluation),” Spruill said.

Spruill has attended his share of meetings involving the Environmental Impact Statement process as a director with the Hampstead-based environmental advocacy group PenderWatch & Conservancy and for North Carolinians for Responsible Use of Sonar. He said the EIS process is flawed in that the Navy is the applicant, administrator, and “judge” in the process.

The public’s involvement, Spruill said, is important in representing the ocean habitat, marine animals, fishermen and others who operate in the ocean.

The Navy is preparing an Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with at-sea training in the Western North Atlantic Region, lower Chesapeake Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

The AFFT region is approximately 2.6 million square nautical miles and includes the proposed Undersea Warfare Training Range off Georgia and Florida.

Spruill, a former Navy destroyer officer, said he’s not opposed to military training but it should be fairly balanced against potential impacts.

“I support the need for appropriate training — I served as a Navy officer — there also needs to be checks and balances,” he said.

Public input is being gathered through a series of meetings. The Morehead City open house meeting will be held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Crystal Coast Civic Center.

Written comment is being accepted through Sept. 14. Comments may be submitted online at AFTTEIS.com or by mail at: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Atlantic; Attention: AFFT EIS/ OEIS PM – Code EV-22LL; 6506 Hampton Boulevard; Norfolk, VA 23508-1278.

August 30, 2010

Navy Seeks Public Feedback From Jacksonville Area On Training Plans

Steve Patterson

With plans for new ships and sonar equipment penciled into the Navy's vision for Florida and Georgia, Navy administrators are inviting public feedback today on how to measure the potential for environmental harm.

Jacksonville is the fourth stop on a five-city chain of meetings for the service to hear concerns about how its training and testing programs could affect communities from New England to the Gulf Coast for much of the next decade.

"We're at the beginning of this process, so we're looking to the public to gather information," said Julie Ann Ripley, a spokeswoman for the Navy's U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

The Navy's meetings so far have drawn from a dozen to 40 people each, Ripley said. Although their livelihoods depend on a healthy ocean, few fishermen have been involved, and shrimpers have been entirely absent, she said.

The North Florida and South Georgia coasts have areas where the federal government has set up protective zones to maintain healthy fish populations.

Developing an undersea training range with sonar equipment and a mine warfare training zone are part of the Navy's plans for the Jacksonville area, where the planned basing of new near-shore littoral combat ships will also change routines.

Comments from today's meeting are supposed to help Navy planners pick subjects to address in an environmental impact study covering a range of Navy activities planned between 2014 and 2019.

But many likely issues are already well-known to both sides of the environmental debate.

The Humane Society of the United States, for example, is asking the Navy to rethink how the undersea warfare range could affect endangered right whales.

But the group was already one of several suing to stop the range's construction, saying the Navy hasn't done enough research on how close whales will actually be to the training area.

"There's a common misperception on the part of the Navy that an absence of data on whales is the same thing as data on the absence of whales," said Sharon Young, marine issues field director for the Humane Society.

Navy advocates have said the training range is vital for preparing sailors and aviators to handle new generations of submarines being embraced by rival navies.

A draft version of the study won't be ready until late 2011 or early 2012 when people will have more chances to comment, Ripley said.

The final report will be released in 2013, she said.

Evening aircraft noise expected near Cherry Point

August 31, 2010 3:57 PM

Sun Journal Staff

CHERRY POINT — Jet aircraft noise can be expected in the vicinity of Cherry Point air station later than in the day than usual Wednesday and Thursday, and Sept. 6-9.

Marine AV-8B Harriers are scheduled to conduct night operations training as late as midnight daily during these periods, a Cherry Point Public Affairs spokesman said.

The later-than-usual flight hours are scheduled to provide pilots important night flight training, including night take-off and landing qualifications.

SOUTH CAROLINA



Lowcountry group opposes F-35B at MCAS Beaufort

By Holly Bounds

Published: August 25, 2010

You've probably seen that sign out front of Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort: "The noise you hear is the sound of freedom." One group of neighbors says they can't handle any more noise and that's what would come with the Joint Strike Fighter F-35 B that could potentially come to Beaufort's station. So they're trying to make some noise now to save it from coming later.

There's one thing Best 4 Beaufort and all those who vocally support the F35-B Joint Strike Fighter coming to Beaufort have in common.

"You get involved because it has an impact on you," Rob Pollard, with Best 4 Beaufort said.

But the 100-neighbor strong group believes they'd get the short end of the deal. The main reason is noise. They already hear it now and fear it could cost them if it gets any louder.

"Basically it benefits a few people on the short term but in the long term an awful lot of people are going to pay for it for very many years," Pollard said. "And they'll pay for it in terms of noise levels, safety issues and property values."

Garry Parks is the chairman of the Military Enhancement Committee and while he wouldn't comment specifically on an impact of property value, he said the neighbors shouldn't hear much more than they do now.

"What I can tell you is that people in that zone had to sign in advance that they knew they were in that zone prior to the purchase of that property," Parks said. "With the noise, most of the noise will be when the liftoff occurs--at the liftoff and set-down and that will occur at MCAS Beaufort."

Holly tried to get a comment from the air station in Beaufort but they declined. They said they're keeping quiet on this issue until December when a decision is expected of what goes to which bases. One of the main reasons so many are rallying behind the Joint Strike Fighter and training center coming to Beaufort is the creation of more civilian jobs.

TEXAS



Local officials steer NAS land-use committee

Group to oversee study paid in part by city

By Jessica Savage

Posted August 25, 2010 at 4:23 p.m., updated August 25, 2010 at 4:30 p.m

CORPUS CHRISTI — The city has formed a five-man committee to oversee a joint land-use study in and around the Naval Air Station Corpus Christi to develop a plan, one that city officials said will protect the military mission of the base.

The study, which is routine and done every several years at the request of the Navy, will be initiated after the Navy completes its own study of noise levels and other tests to determine how a new fleet of aircraft, expected in 2012, will affect that area. The Navy is upgrading its training aircraft.

Mayor Joe Adame and Navy Capt. Randy Pierson will co-chair the committee with County Judge Loyd Neal, City Councilman Mark Scott and City Planning Commission Chairman Rudy Garza serving as members.

The committee's first meeting is planned for September when it will develop an application to submit to the U.S. Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment requesting grant money to help pay for a consultant to conduct the study. The city will provide a 10 percent match.

Navy and city officials said the study would help both entities develop a strong and compatible relationship for the future.

The study was prompted after the Navy announced its Naval Air Station Corpus Christi would receive a fleet of T-6 Texan II, a single-engine, two-seat primary trainer designed to train students in basic flying skills. The aircraft will replace the T-34.

The T-6 require more runway space for landings. Naval Air Station Corpus Christi doesn't have the runway space for training or room to expand because of land encroachment issues. The Navy has been looking at airfields in nearby counties to purchase.

In April, it offered Goliad County \$2.4 million for an airfield in the Berclair area. County commissioners there rejected the offer after residents who live near the airfield raised concerns about noise.

Naval Air Station Corpus Christi spokesman Bob Torres said the Navy is continuing to look for other airfields.

UTAH



F-35 squadrons off to Hill

Sunday, August 15, 2010

By Mitch Shaw, Standard-Examiner, Ogden, Utah

HILL AIR FORCE BASE -- At least two and likely three operational F-35 squadrons appear to be headed to Hill Air Force Base, and state and local economic experts say that's very good news for the region's economy.

In late July, the Air Force announced that the base had been chosen as the Air Force's "preferred alternative" for the location of the first two operational squadrons of the advanced F-35 stealth fighter.

Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah, said the Air Force officials also indicated that Hill would likely obtain a third operational squadron in 2019, assuming the F-35 program remains funded and on course.

The announcement essentially means Hill has one hurdle to clear -- the completion of an environmental impact statement -- before standing up two active-duty F-35 squadrons by 2013.

When the announcement was made, members of Utah's congressional delegation and other leaders spoke of the great economic impact the decision will have on the state, particularly the communities near the base.

Economic experts and lawmakers both say precise numbers can't be determined right now, but the F-35's biggest impact to the economy will be sustaining Hill for years to come.

"Just like when Hill received the first wing of F-16s, this keeps the base moving forward," said Gary Harter, managing director of business creation for the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

"Hill has a \$3 billion impact every year on the state of Utah. The F-35 sustains that and potentially even grows it."

Kent Sulser, Davis County community and economic development director, echoed Harter's sentiments about what the F-35 means for the long-term future of Hill.

"The F-16 is being phased out, and if Hill didn't have a replacement, it would likely be phased out, too," Sulser said.

"In essence, it's (the F-35) retaining and upgrading the jobs we already have for long-term sustainability."

Hill is the largest component of Utah's Defense sector and the state's largest single-site employer, with nearly 30,000 total employees. Approximately 5,000 of those employees are active-duty members of the Air Force.

Sulser said losing those members would have a devastating effect on the local economy.

Of the approximately 5,000 active-duty military members at Hill, nearly 4,000 of them live in Davis County, Sulser said.

"The largest share of the impact would be in Davis County," he said. "You'd have an awful lot sucked out of the economy."

If the base were ever phased out, Sulser said, the state would lose approximately \$200 million in tax revenue and \$2 billion in employee earnings, the housing market would likely be deflated by 25 percent, and the total loss to the state's economy could reach \$5 billion per year.

"In robust times, it would take about three to five years to recover from something like that," Sulser said. "But in today's economy, it could take 10 (years)."

Dexter Henson, global sustainment communications officer at Lockheed Martin, said six supplier companies in Utah can provide support in the manufacture of the F-35, with an annual economic impact of approximately \$110 million and providing more than 1,500 direct and indirect jobs.

The companies include: Alliant Tech; Barnes Aerospace Ogden Division; EDO Corporation; Klune Industries Inc; Metalcraft Technologies; and Wyman Gordon Investment Castings Inc.

Recently, commercial real estate brokerage NAI Utah announced it had finalized a lease agreement with aerospace manufacturer Janicki Industries as the anchor tenant for JL Properties Inc.'s new business development in East Gate.

The company's new site will be a 100,000-square-foot composites manufacturing plant at 3835 N. Fairfield Road in Layton.

Supporting the F-35, the plant will employ about 50 full-time workers, the large majority of those positions to be open to the local work force, said Lisa Janicki, chief financial officer for the family-owned company.

"The bottom line is, the F-35 is great news for our economy," Harter said. "We look to be able to maintain the economic impact of the base and even increase it."

VIRGINIA



Beach says radar's blocking Oceanfront overhaul

By Deirdre Fernandes
The Virginian-Pilot
© August 22, 2010

VIRGINIA BEACH

Along the Oceanfront strip, 15th Street and 34th Street aren't that different.

But what developers may build at those locations are worlds apart because of a radar used to protect the country's coastline.

The Federal Aviation Administration earlier this month told a Richmond developer that he couldn't construct a building taller than 110 feet on 15th Street, at the fishing pier, without blocking the radar and causing, "an unacceptable risk to the overall air defense mission."

The developer, Steve Becker, had asked permission to build a 165-foot hotel – about 15 stories.

That notice came seven months after the FAA cleared Virginia Beach hotelier Gold Key/PHR Hotels and Resorts for a 200-foot building on 34th Street. The decisions are unfair, Becker said.

"We're going to fight at every step," he said.

Virginia Beach officials said they believe the difference between the two properties is that a tall building stands in front of the 34th Street site, already blocking the radar. There's no similar obstruction on 15th Street.

Still, the FAA denial came as a surprise to Beach officials, who have been waiting for the federal government to help resolve the clash between the national security radar and Oceanfront redevelopment. And some are concerned that the recent decision doesn't bode well for the city's suggestion that the federal government should relocate the radar.

The radar system, which looks like a giant golf ball, sits at Oceana Naval Air Station. Placing it at a different location, such as Fort Story or the Chesapeake Light Tower, as city officials have suggested, probably would cost millions of dollars.

"It's insult to injury," said Steve Herbert, a deputy city manager, about the recent FAA decision.

U.S. Department of Defense officials are still reviewing the Pentagon's own study of the radar and its effectiveness, said Cheryl Irwin, a spokeswoman for the department.

"They want to do it right," Irwin said.

The radar has crimped the city's plans to give the Oceanfront a face-lift with taller hotels and office buildings. Last year, the federal government told city officials that buildings taller than about 10 stories, or 110 feet, at several sites, including the location of a proposed convention center hotel, would threaten homeland security.

Virginia Beach paid a consultant, Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas Inc., \$29,755 to conduct its own radar study. According to that study, the radar was already blocked at certain locations because of existing structures. But for 66 percent of the Oceanfront, a new tall building could further degrade the radar's view. The Dome site and Rudee Loop, both city-owned properties that Beach officials have targeted for major development, are among the locations where a tall building could block the radar.

The city warned that it could lose \$26 million a year in tax revenues over the next 50 years if the Oceanfront can only be redeveloped with 110-foot buildings. The FAA's restrictions on the 15th Street project are what city officials have feared, Herbert said.

"Exactly what we thought was going to happen is happening," he said.

Deirdre Fernandes, (757) 222-5121, deirdre.fernandes@pilotonline.com



Navy To Share Info On Training Activities At Open House

August 23, 2010

Kate Wiltrout

The Navy will hold an open house on Wednesday to provide information and gather public input on its training activities across a huge swath of the Atlantic Ocean, including the lower Chesapeake Bay.

It's one of five East Coast meetings scheduled on the topic, and the only one in Virginia. John Van Name, the project manager for the Navy's Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing program, said the Navy is doing a comprehensive study of the potential environmental impacts from its training and testing activities on over 2.6 million square miles of the ocean, bay and Gulf of Mexico.

The study, called an environmental impact statement, will include analysis of technologies and weapon systems that might not yet be in widespread use, like unmanned underwater vehicles. UUVs, as they're known, are becoming increasingly prevalent in the search for underwater mines and will be included in the study.

Another example is an anti-submarine mission module that will be used aboard littoral combat ships, with a different series of sensors and equipment than is currently in use. "We're looking at things that will come or may become between now and 2019," Van Name said.

Then there is the so-called Joint Strike Fighter, which will eventually replace the F/A-18 Hornet jets now flying out of Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach. If the strike fighter would use new weaponry or a different kind of dummy bomb during its at-sea training, that would need to be studied.

"When we know something's coming, we use the best available information we have," Van Name said. "We try to take conservative approach with new technologies."

The study, which is required by federal law, will also examine piers and channels at existing Navy ports, shipyards and contractor shipyards where ship and sonar maintenance and testing occur.

Its results might allow the Navy to continue, without interruption, training activities that require permits from the National Marine Fisheries Service. One example is sonar training, which is regulated because of possible harm to dolphins and whales, who use a natural form of sonar to communicate and find food. The Navy's five-year permit for sonar use in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico expires in 2014. The analysis completed as part of the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing Program would be used to pave the way for the next permit.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY



Aug. 24, 2010

Green power turning Air Force blue

By KEITH ROGERS
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Nellis Air Force Base officials are waving a red flag at the rush to put green power on the grid in Southern Nevada, at least for projects that may impede the base's training and testing missions.



Col. Steven Garland and Deborah MacNeill talk Thursday about problems posed by wind and solar farms planned for rural areas around the Nevada Test and Training Range, formerly known as Nellis Air Force Range.
GARY THOMPSON/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

The 12,000 square miles of airspace above the 2.9 million acres of the Nevada Test and Training Range, formerly known as Nellis Air Force Range, is the only place in the United States where pilots can drop live bombs and conduct air combat training at a level that compares with the places they fly overseas.

The climate and weather conditions around the range also are ideal for wind and solar power facilities, but

placing them too close to the range could interfere with Air Force operations.

Air Force officials worry about the problems a solar tower's infrared glow could cause for a pilot who relies on infrared signatures for targeting.

The glare pilots could get from a misplaced solar mirror also concerns them, as does the damage that a sonic boom could inflict on an array of solar panels.

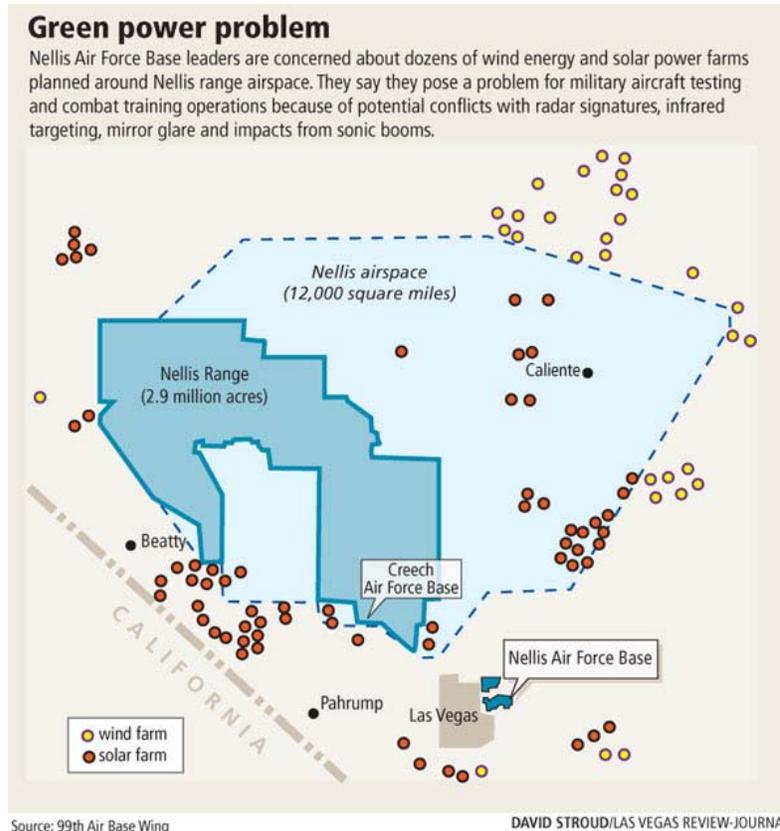
Wind turbines could interfere with radars used for air traffic control, navigation and airborne testing.

"We need to be able to use the range as an outdoor laboratory," said Col. Steven Garland, commander of the 99th Air Base Wing at Nellis. "We've got 68 years of investing in this pristine outdoor laboratory. You can't replace it anywhere else in the United States."

Today, Air Force leaders and Pentagon planners will launch a three-day forum in Las Vegas with invited officials from state and local governments, federal agencies and the green power industry.

Their message is for renewable energy developers and land use planners to slow down and work cooperatively with the Department of Defense so that green power projects can share the landscape without interfering with Air Force operations on the range.

"Both goals can be achieved. We just need to be smart about it," said Deborah MacNeill, director of public partnerships for the Nellis and Creech bases and the range.



Over the years, she said, as warplanes got faster and louder, the Air Force set up no-fly bubbles around Caliente, Pioche and other rural communities.

These bubbles are already problematic without adding wind turbines and solar mirrors to the equation.

Just one bubble "is a pothole in the middle of your basketball court," MacNeill said.

Col. John Montgomery, commander of the 98th Range Wing at Nellis, said the range, which is the size of Maryland and Connecticut combined, is

"incredibly quiet" and can be used to test aircraft without interference from electromagnetic signals.

But if a large windmill 60 miles from the training range can affect radar signals, how does the military cope with enemy combatants who might use windmills or the glare from solar mirrors to foil warplane missions?

"If the mirrors are a problem in war, I'll blow them up. If it's going to be a problem, I'll take it out before my pilots get there," Montgomery said.

"If the windmills are a problem for me, they're also a problem for the nation that has them. You can't make the windmill not a target," he said. "And if I were attacking a country, I would attack from the windmills because they can't see me."

The bottom line is, windmills cause a problem to radars.

Montgomery said building one windmill in the wrong location without the Air Force having the ability to switch it on and off is like walking "into the laboratory and you sneezed in it, or an operating room and you sneezed in it."

"What are you going to do?" Montgomery asked. "You go get another operating room. I don't have another operating room. This is the only one I've got. And if we sneeze in it, then we can't go anywhere."

James Holland, deputy for installation policy at the Pentagon, said that while the Air Force is concerned about the potential effects from renewable energy facilities near Nellis and other bases, the service wants to work with all parties to develop compatible projects.

Holland said Air Force installations across the country "have varying degrees of vulnerability to mission degradation" from renewable energy projects, but those installations don't have any direct authority to halt or change the projects.

Montgomery said, "In these training airspaces, we need to tread lightly before we take something that we can never get back."

Col. Steven Garland and Deborah MacNeill talk Thursday about problems posed by wind and solar farms planned for rural areas around the Nevada Test and Training Range, formerly known as Nellis Air Force Range.

GARY THOMPSON/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Reid says military can do more to develop renewable energy

August 26, 2010

By KEITH ROGERS

Sen. Harry Reid on Wednesday challenged Nellis Air Force Base officials to lead the way in promoting renewable energy and reducing the nation's dependence on foreign oil.

But Reid, D-Nev., gave little direction on how to address wind energy and solar power projects planned near a military training range without compromising operations. Without getting into specifics, the Senate majority leader said he's had "a number of conversations" with Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Pentagon officials about the Air Force's concerns involving the Nevada Test and Training Range, formerly known as Nellis Air Force Range.

Air Force officials say dozens of renewable energy projects could affect their ability to test advanced warplanes and train fighter pilots. They cite radar interference from wind turbines and dangers posed by solar towers and glare from thousands of solar mirrors.

"We have to develop renewable energy. We have to protect our military installations," Reid said after a luncheon speech to about 160 attendees of the Nevada Forum in Las Vegas.

"We can do both. There's no reason we can't," he said during a break in the Air Force forum that ends today and focuses on making wind and solar projects compatible with Nellis missions.

Reid noted the solar panel array at the Nellis base, the largest of its kind in North America. It provides 25 percent of the base's electricity. Plans call for building more solar panels to double the base's solar power production.

"The military is holding up their end of the bargain," Reid said. "They're following through on a commitment to use energy more efficiently and use cleaner alternatives."

He said the solar array, which he visited last year with President Barack Obama, "is a really good start but there is a whole lot more we could do and should do to address our critical energy challenges."

During the forum, speakers from the Pentagon and the Air Force said wind turbines too close to the range and solar mirrors could pose problems for pilots who are training in or testing advanced aircraft such as the F-22 Raptor and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

Even high-voltage transmission lines need to be studied, they said, because of the potential that electromagnetic interference could affect the range's pristine conditions for aircraft tests.

Terry Yonkers, assistant secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Logistics, called for "balancing the Air Force mission" in respect to renewable energy projects planned in Southern Nevada.

He called for the creation of a "clearinghouse" for renewable energy developers that would allow them to work with Air Force officials before proceeding with the projects.

More research is needed to understand whether certain wind and solar energy projects are compatible with Air Force operations, said David Belote, a senior civilian Pentagon employee whose work focuses on large-scale energy projects.

"Before we say yes to something that scares us, or say no, we want to get the facts," said Belote, former commander of the 99th Air base Wing at Nellis.

August 27, 2010

EDITORIAL: As the wind blows

Wind power really blows.

Consider two stories from this week.

First, Air Force and Pentagon officials held a three-day forum in Las Vegas to dial back the rush to develop renewable resources all over Southern Nevada -- and especially within and around the 12,000 square miles of airspace controlled by Nellis Air Force Base.

Windmills, in particular, are so disruptive to radar signals that they could render the country's biggest and best air defense training range useless.

"We need to be able to use the range as an outdoor laboratory," said Col. Steven Garland, commander of the 99th Air Base Wing at Nellis. "We've got 68 years of investing in this pristine outdoor laboratory. You can't replace it anywhere else in the United States."

Of course, the whole reason so many wind farms have been proposed all over the United States is the promise that they'll reduce carbon emissions and help states reach arbitrary, mandated renewable benchmarks to stave off a hoaxed global warming catastrophe.

But it turns out, the Defense Department is doing taxpayers and ratepayers a favor by vetoing a number of wind farms. As Robert Bryce wrote this week in *The Wall Street Journal*, "a slew of recent studies show that wind-generated electricity likely won't result in any reduction in carbon emissions -- or that they'll be so small as to be almost meaningless."

Wind power, heavily subsidized by taxpayers and far more expensive than electricity generated by fossil fuels, is intermittent. No wind, no electricity. So utilities have to either keep conventional plants running all the time as backup, or constantly shut them down and fire them up, depending on whether the wind is blowing, to keep everyone's lights on.

Mr. Bryce reports that this "cycling" of conventional power plants is so inefficient that it negates whatever emissions reductions are realized by turning wind turbines.

"Wind energy gives people a nice, warm, fuzzy feeling that we're taking action on climate change," Kevin Forbes, director of the Center for the Study of Energy and Environmental Stewardship, told Mr. Bryce. "The reality is that it's not doing much of anything."

This is Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's big pitch for reviving Nevada's economy, the reason voters should return him to Washington: the siren song of "green jobs."

No thanks.

August 26, 2010

Wind Turbine Projects Run Into Resistance

By LEORA BROYDO VESTEL

BARSTOW, Calif. — The United States military has found a new menace hiding here in the vast emptiness of the Mojave Desert in California: wind turbines.

Moving turbine blades can be indistinguishable from airplanes on many radar systems, and they can even cause blackout zones in which planes disappear from radar entirely. Clusters of wind turbines, which can reach as high as 400 feet, look very similar to storm activity on weather radar, making it harder for air traffic controllers to give accurate weather information to pilots.

Although the military says no serious incidents have yet occurred because of the interference, the wind turbines pose an unacceptable risk to training, testing and national security in certain regions, Dr. Dorothy Robyn, deputy under secretary of defense, recently told a House Armed Services subcommittee.

Because of its concerns, the Defense Department has emerged as a formidable opponent of wind projects in direct conflict with another branch of the federal government, the Energy Department, which is spending billions of dollars on wind projects as part of President Obama's broader effort to promote renewable energy.

"I call it the train wreck of the 2000s," said Gary Seifert, who has been studying the radar-wind energy clash at the Idaho National Laboratory, an Energy Department research facility. "The train wreck is the competing resources for two national needs: energy security and national security."

In 2009, about 9,000 megawatts of proposed wind projects were abandoned or delayed because of radar concerns raised by the military and the Federal Aviation Administration, according to a member survey by the American Wind Energy Association. That is nearly as much as the amount of wind capacity that was actually built in the same year, the trade group says.

Collisions between the industry and the military have occurred in the Columbia River Gorge on the Oregon-Washington border and in the Great Lakes region. But the conflicts now appear to be most frequent in the Mojave, where the Air Force, Navy and Army control 20,000 square miles of airspace and associated land in California and Nevada that they use for bomb tests; low-altitude, high-speed air maneuvers; and radar testing and development.

When the developer Scott Debenham told local Navy and Air Force officials in June that he was working on plans to install a wind turbine at three industrial locations near the area overseen by the military, they expressed opposition to all of the projects, saying that even one additional turbine would interfere with critical testing of radar systems.

The military says that the thousands of existing turbines in the gusty Tehachapi Mountains, to the west of the R-2508 military complex in the Mojave Desert, have already limited its abilities to test airborne radar used for target detection in F/A-18s and other aircraft.

“We cannot test in certain directions because of the presence of wind turbines in the Tehachapi area,” said Tony Parisi, the complex’s sustainability officer. “Our concern is construction in other areas will further limit where we can do this kind of testing.”

As a result of the military’s opposition, Horizon Wind Energy recently withdrew three project applications in the area. AES Wind Generation said it found out in May, after nine years of planning, that the military had objections to its proposal to build a 82.5-megawatt, 33-turbine wind farm.

Mr. Debenham, a former naval officer, said he understood the concerns but that the military was overstating them. A similar turbine just went up on a nearby Marine base. “It’s standing proof that these single turbines are not an unmitigatable threat to national security,” he said. (Mr. Parisi said the military was assessing whether the interference would force it to shut down the base’s turbine, which cost \$6 million to install.)

The impact of wind turbines on radar had been a back-burner concern for years, but it heated up in March, when the Defense Department put a last-minute halt to the \$2 billion, 338-turbine Shepherds Flat wind project in Oregon out of concern the turbines would impair the effectiveness of long-range surveillance radar.

The department eventually withdrew its opposition after an internal analysis indicated the effect on radar would not be as severe as initially thought and an outside study identified measures that could be taken to mitigate the interference. However, the Pentagon soon raised concerns about another wind project in the area, saying it could interfere with the very same radar.

Mark Tholke, regional director for the wind energy developer enXco, said that the objections could make wind energy less competitive. “It makes investors and banks jittery,” he said. “They will increasingly view these as risky projects and push up the financial terms.”

Mr. Tholke said three of four wind projects in enXco’s current portfolio have been delayed because of radar concerns. One of the projects has been reduced in size to 140 megawatts from 250 megawatts to appease a military contractor worried about radar impacts.

Eliminating turbine clutter on radar is complicated. Part of the challenge is that many radar systems in use in the United States date back to the 1950s and have outdated processing capabilities — in some cases, less than those of a modern laptop computer. While there are technology fixes to ease interference on these aging systems, it can be tricky to filter out just the turbines.

On radar, “a wind turbine can look like a 747 on final approach,” said Peter Drake, technical director at Raytheon, a major provider of radar systems. “We don’t want to have the software eliminate a real 747.”

The Energy Department says the problem should be solvable through new technologies. “We are confident that investments in mitigation measures, including new coatings or materials for wind turbines, alternative configurations for wind farms, gap-filler radar or software patches, and investments over time in upgrades to modernize radar systems, will enable the continued deployment of wind power across the country,” said Jen Stutsman, a spokeswoman for the agency.

But some observers say this piecemeal approach does not go far enough.

“I can’t imagine a better example of everyone wanting to do the right thing and nobody doing it,” said Howard Swancy, an aviation consultant and former F.A.A. official. “We need an infrastructure-size development plan.”

Mr. Debenham just wants his three individual turbines to win approval. The concerns of the local military have been directed to Washington for review. In the meantime, millions of dollars in financing and renewable energy incentives are, well, twisting in the wind.

“I’m in limbo. My customers are in limbo,” he said. “Can you tell anyone in Obama’s office?”

US military says wind turbines risking its security

August 27, 2010

The United States military has found a new menace to the defense establishments and military training -- the erupting wind turbines encouraged by White House to spur renewable energy production in the United States.

The New York Times reported Thursday that moving turbine blades can be indistinguishable from airplanes on the radar systems, and can even cause blackout zones in which planes disappear from radar entirely.

And, clusters of wind turbines look very similar to storm activity on weather radar, making it harder for air traffic controllers to give accurate weather information to flying-in pilots, the report said.

Although the military says no serious incidents have yet occurred because of the interference, the wind turbines pose an unacceptable risk to training, testing and national security in certain regions, the newspaper quoted Dorothy Robyn, deputy under secretary of defense, as saying.

As a result, Pentagon has emerged as a formidable opponent of wind turbines in direct conflict with another branch of the federal government, the Energy Department, which is spending billions of dollars on wind projects as part of President Barack Obama's broader effort to promote new energy.

In 2009, about 9,000 megawatts of proposed wind projects were abandoned or delayed because of radar concerns raised by the military and the Federal Aviation Administration. That is nearly as much as the amount of wind capacity that was actually built in the same year in the United States.

Collisions between the industry and the military have occurred in the Columbia River Gorge on the Oregon-Washington border and in the northern Great Lakes region. But the conflicts now appear to be most frequent in the Mojave Desert, California, where the Air Force, Navy and Army control 20,000 square miles of airspace and associated land in California and Nevada that the Pentagon uses for bomb tests; low-altitude, high-speed air maneuvers; and radar testing and development, the New York Times reported.

The military says that the thousands of existing turbines in the gusty Tehachapi Mountains, in the Mojave Desert, have already limited its abilities to test airborne radar used for target detection in F/A-18s and other aircraft, said the report.

By People's Daily Online

Pentagon emerges as foe of wind power

By Leora Broydo Vestel
New York Times / August 27, 2010

BARSTOW, Calif. — The military has found a new menace hiding in the vast emptiness of the Mojave Desert: wind turbines.

Moving turbine blades can be indistinguishable from airplanes on many radar systems, and they can even cause blackout zones in which planes disappear from radar. Clusters of wind turbines look very similar to storm activity on weather radar, making it harder for air traffic controllers to give accurate weather information to pilots.

Although the military says no serious incidents have occurred because of the interference, the wind turbines pose an unacceptable risk to training, testing, and national security in certain regions, Dorothy Robyn, deputy undersecretary of defense, told a House Armed Services subcommittee recently.

The Defense Department has emerged as a formidable opponent of wind projects, in direct conflict with another branch of the federal government, the Energy Department, which is spending billions on wind power as part of President Obama's broader effort to promote renewable energy.

In 2009, about 9,000 megawatts of proposed wind projects were abandoned or delayed because of radar concerns raised by the military and the Federal Aviation Administration, according to the American Wind Energy Association.

Collisions between the industry and the military have occurred in the Columbia River Gorge on the Oregon-Washington border and in the Great Lakes region. But the conflicts now appear to be most frequent in the Mojave, where the military controls 20,000 square miles of air space and associated land.

The military says the thousands of existing turbines in the gusty Tehachapi Mountains, to the west of the R-2508 military complex in the Mojave Desert, have already limited its abilities to test airborne radar used for target detection in aircraft.

The impact of wind turbines on radar had been a back-burner concern for years, but it heated up in March, when the Defense Department put a last-minute halt to the \$2 billion, 338-turbine Shepherds Flat wind project in Oregon out of concern the turbines would impair the effectiveness of surveillance radar.

The department eventually withdrew its opposition after an internal analysis indicated the effect on radar would not be as severe as initially thought. However, the Pentagon soon raised concerns about another wind project in the area, saying it could interfere with the very same radar.

September 3, 2010

Wind Turbine or Airplane? New Radar Could Cut Through the Signal Clutter

The push for wind as a renewable energy source has turbines sharing the same airspace as aircraft, with aging radar systems unable to tell the difference

By Larry Greenemeier



CLEARING CLUTTER: Raytheon's Digital Airport Surveillance Radar (DASR) in use at a U.S. military base.
COURTESY OF RAYTHEON COMPANY

Wind turbines function best in wide-open spaces where they can capture airflow unobstructed by buildings or mountains. Unfortunately, these same conditions are also optimal for aircraft takeoffs and landings, creating tension between wind energy utilities and airports in a number of locations worldwide. Utility-scale wind turbines, many of which stand more than 100 meters tall, can interfere with the radar used to safely guide aircraft.

Radar works by emitting radio waves in a particular direction and gathering data about waves reflected back to the radar's position that can be used to identify the range, altitude, direction and speed of nearby objects. Wind turbines can defeat radar either by blocking signals or by creating

unwanted reflections of the signals, resulting in clutter on radar maps.

Aging radar technology and the demand for renewable sources of energy have complicated the situation, slowing and in some cases stopping the construction of new wind farms. The British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) estimates that 6 gigawatts of planned new wind capacity are being held back by objections over radar. (Britain's overall installed wind-power capacity as of the end of 2009 was 4.1 gigawatts.)

In the U.S., new wind farms are threatening to interfere with surveillance radars used by the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the U.S. Northern Command and the Department of Homeland Security, said Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Dorothy Robyn in June at a House of Representatives Armed Services Committee hearing on the impact of wind turbines on military readiness ([pdf](#)). Long-

range radars managed by NORAD and Northern Command to maintain airspace surveillance and air defense are decades old, and many still use analog signal processors, which are inherently less effective at removing wind turbine clutter, according to Robyn.

Concerns over the impact of wind farms and aircraft radar must be resolved if the U.S. Department of Energy is to reach its goal of using wind energy to provide 20 percent or more of the nation's electricity, according to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), a trade association representing business in the wind-energy industry.

One approach to the problem is upgrading radar systems, which have been used to track ships and aircraft since before World War II, with advanced digital signal processors so they can manage larger amounts of data and thereby identify and filter out the signal scrambling caused by wind turbines.

Typically a radar system will send and receive a single beam of radio waves—either high or low radio frequency—that can be deciphered with a minimal amount of computer processing power. Concerned that wind farms would create disturbances that prevent conventional radar systems from distinguishing between signal clutter and aircraft in need of assistance, Britain's National Air Traffic Services (NATS) began working with Raytheon Company in 2006 to upgrade systems with advanced digital signal processors and data-processing software. The upgraded systems were designed to handle both high and low radio frequency beams concurrently, providing a wealth of data to better map signal clutter and distinguish between the Doppler signals (indicating movement) created by turbines and by aircraft.

In July and August, Raytheon and NATS worked with the Royal Netherlands Air Force to test an enhanced radar system at that country's Soesterberg Air Base and determine whether the system was effective at keeping the nearby wind turbines from cluttering air traffic control displays with false targets and obfuscating real aircraft. Once the results of these tests are analyzed, NATS plans to further test the new radar system at a civilian airport with nearby turbines in northern Scotland later this year.

Whereas Raytheon advocates the upgrade of radar systems, others propose ways to make the wind turbines themselves less visible to radar. Denmark's Vestas Wind Systems, which makes wind turbines with blades as long as the wings of a Boeing 747, is working with QinetiQ Group (formerly part of the U.K.'s Defense Evaluation and Research Agency) to develop radar-absorbing coatings and composite materials containing conductive particles like iron and carbon for Vestas's turbines and towers. Vestas began testing prototype "stealth" blades about a year ago and plans to begin selling them next year. Although the company acknowledges that it cannot make its turbines invisible to radar, these radar-absorbing efforts could have an impact on whether companies get a green light from the government to build wind turbine fields.

ECONOMIC IMPACT



Rising pay, benefits drive growth in military towns

By Dennis Cauchon, USA TODAY
August 16, 2010

Rapidly rising pay and benefits in the armed forces have lifted many military towns into the ranks of the nation's most affluent communities, a USA TODAY analysis finds.

The hometown of the Marines' Camp Lejeune — Jacksonville, N.C. — soared to the nation's 32nd-highest income per person in 2009 among the 366 U.S. metropolitan areas, according to Bureau of Economic Analysis data. In 2000, it had ranked 287th.

The Jacksonville metropolitan area, with a population of 173,064, had the top income per person of any North Carolina community in 2009. In 2000, it ranked 13th of 14 metro areas in the state.

The USA TODAY analysis finds that 16 of the 20 metro areas rising the fastest in the per-capita income rankings since 2000 had military bases or one nearby. Other examples:

•**Manhattan, Kan.**, home of the Army's Fort Riley, is the state's most affluent metro area. In 2000, it was the poorest of the state's six metros.

•**Killeen**, Texas, home of the Army's Fort Hood, is today more affluent than Austin, the state capital and university town 60 miles away.

What's driving the income growth: pay and benefits in the military have grown faster than those in any other part of the economy.

NATIONAL DEBT: A historical perspective

Soldiers, sailors and Marines received average compensation of \$122,263 per person in 2009, up from \$58,545 in 2000.

Military compensation — an average of \$70,168 in pay and \$52,095 in benefits — includes the value of housing, medical care, pensions, hazardous-duty incentives, enlistment bonuses and combat pay in war zones. More than 300 U.S. servicemembers have died this year in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"You have to have a good compensation package if you want to recruit and retain the best people," says Pentagon spokeswoman Eileen Lainez.

After adjusting for inflation, military compensation rose 84% from 2000 through 2009. By contrast, compensation grew 37% for federal civilian workers and 9% for private sector employees during that time, the BEA reports.

The military has met or exceeded its recruiting goals in 2009 and so far this year, helped by a weak economy and the improved compensation.

"It's booming here," says Mona Patrick, president of the Jacksonville-Onslow (N.C.) Chamber of Commerce. Construction is robust, she says. Extended-stay hotels are full of military contractors.

The Marines have added 10,000 active-duty personnel at Camp Lejeune since 2000 for a total of 48,000, plus 5,000 civilian employees.

Places without links to the military were the decade's biggest losers. Doing poorly:

- **High-tech centers.** San Jose, the heart of the Silicon Valley, recorded the nation's biggest decline in income per resident since 2000 — a 23% drop after adjusting for inflation.
- **College towns.** Despite a reputation for economic vibrancy, many well-known college towns — from Boulder, Colo., to Raleigh and Durham, N.C. — registered declining or flat per-capita incomes.
- **Industrial cities.** Falling hardest: Auto supplier Kokomo, Ind., started the decade ranked 128th in per-capita income and ended ranked 293rd.

Metros with top income gains

Metro areas that saw the biggest percentage gains in per-capita income 2000 to 2009

Metro Area	Per capita Income,2000	Per capita Income,2009	Percent change, adjusted for inflation	Military Connection
Cheyenne, Wyo.	28,601	44,273	30%	Warren Air Force Base
Hanford-Corcoran, Calif.	16,920	26,371	31%	Naval Air Station Lemoore
Las Cruces, N.M.	18,102	28,251	31%	Multiple bases
Houma-Bayou Cane-Thibodaux, La.	21,939	38,060	49%	Military shipbuilding
Hinesville-Fort Stewart, Ga.	16,790	26,681	34%	Fort Stewart (Army)
Lawton, Okla.	21,697	36,748	45%	Fort Sill (Army)
Manhattan, Kan.	23,348	40,345	48%	Fort Riley (Army)
Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, Texas	22,766	38,757	46%	Fort Hood (Army)
Clarksville, Tenn.	23,269	36,233	31%	Fort Campbell (Army)
Fayetteville, N.C.	23,894	40,917	47%	Fort Bragg (Army);Pope AFB
El Paso, Texas	18,833	28,638	27%	Fort Bliss (Army)
Columbus, Ga.	24,372	37,011	27%	Fort Benning (Army)
Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin, Fla.	27,500	41,624	27%	Eglin Air Force Base
Jacksonville, N.C.	23,455	44,664	66%	Camp Lejeune (Marines)
Farmington, N.M.	19,140	30,479	35%	-
Cumberland, Md.	20,844	31,420	26%	-
Morgantown, W.Va.	22,412	34,412	29%	-
Lafayette, La.	25,511	38,944	28%	-

*Bureau of Economic Analysis, USA TODAY research
Contributing: Tom Vanden Brook*

FREQUENCY SPECTRUM



Baby Monitors On Okinawa Irritate Japan Officials

(AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE 17 AUG 10)

TOKYO - The U.S. military is in trouble in Japan - but this time it's not low-flying fighter jets or misbehaving Marines who are ruffling feathers, but infant babble transmitted over illicit baby monitors.

Japan's Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry has warned the 47,000 U.S. forces based in the country that the devices used by service personnel with young children interfere with local radio frequencies.

Some U.S.-bought baby monitors transmit signals on wavelengths that are reserved for cell phone traffic and radio services in Japan, and are strong enough to cause interference, a ministry official said.

"Our ministry is asking the U.S. military for permission to visit the families who are illegally emitting these frequencies and personally ask them to avoid using the baby monitors," the official said.

The radio transmitters, which allow parents to check on an infant in a different room, have also interfered with the radio services of taxi and truck companies and threaten firefighters' communications, media reports said.

The U.S. armed forces have faced controversy in the past in Japan - including a recent fight over a noisy airbase on the southern island of Okinawa and because of past misdemeanors and crimes committed by troops.

But the U.S. military vowed the baby monitors must not get in the way of relations with its Asian security ally.

A spokeswoman said that the U.S. Forces in Japan had banned the sale of the devices on base and "taken proactive measures to educate the U.S. military community ... in Japan that U.S.-purchased baby monitors can affect Japanese frequencies and should not be used here in Japan."