

FORT RUCKER, ALABAMA (JOINT CROSS SERVICE GROUP – TECHNICAL; ESTABLISH CENTERS FOR ROTARY WING AIR PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT & ACQUISITION, TEST & EVALUATION)

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

Realign Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH, by relocating Air Force Materiel Command V-22 activities in rotary wing air platform development and acquisition to Patuxent River, MD. Realign the Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, NJ, by relocating activities in rotary wing air platform development, acquisition, test and evaluation to Patuxent River, MD. Realign Ft. Rucker, AL, by relocating the Aviation Technical Test Center to Redstone Arsenal, AL, and consolidating it with the Technical Test Center at Redstone Arsenal, AL. Realign Robins Air Force Base, GA, by relocating activities in rotary wing air platform development and acquisition to Redstone Arsenal, AL.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION

This Air Land Sea & Space (ALSS) recommendation realigns and consolidates those activities that are primarily focused on Rotary Wing Air Platform activities in Development, Acquisition, Test and Evaluation (DAT&E). This action creates the Joint Center for Rotary Wing Air Platform DAT&E at the Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, AL, and enhances the Joint Center at the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD), Patuxent River, MD. The end state of this recommendation builds upon existing rotary wing air platform technical expertise and facilities in place at the two principal sites and provides focused support for future aviation technological advances in rotorcraft development.

The planned component moves enhance synergy by consolidating rotary wing work to major sites, preserving healthy competition, and leveraging climatic/geographic conditions and existing infrastructure, minimize environmental impact. These consolidations co-locate aircraft and aircraft support systems with development and acquisition personnel to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of rotary wing air platform design and development activities.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The Robins community stated the 50 personnel potentially impacted by this recommendation provide support for the rotary wing development and acquisition process as well as sustaining operational aircraft. They believed the sustainment mission and applicable personnel authorizations should be retained at Robins and that only development and acquisition personnel should be relocated to Redstone Arsenal. The Fort Rucker and Redstone communities expressed support for the recommendation.

There were no formal expressions from the Wright-Patterson, Lakehurst and Patuxent River communities regarding the recommendation to establish a rotary wing aircraft research, development and acquisition, test and evaluation center at Naval Air Station Patuxent River.

COMMISSION FINDINGS

The Commission found that the number of positions to be transferred from the realigning organizations to create or enhance joint centers of excellence for development, acquisition and test and evaluation (DAT&E) of rotary wing aircraft at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, MD, and Redstone Arsenal, AL, are not necessarily tied to the number of positions identified in the Department's COBRA analysis. In some cases, the Commission determined that the COBRA numbers were not based on full-time equivalent

position counts, but instead on a tally of personnel whose duties at one time or another address DAT&E functions. The Commission believes DoD should use its discretion in determining what specific skill sets and personnel authorizations are needed to properly staff the new joint centers. The Commission notes that the 26-year payback is driven in large part due to requirements for new aircraft test and evaluation facilities at Redstone. These issues were found by the Commission to be implementation matters that can be resolved successfully during the six-year implementation period, and did not rise to the level of a substantial deviation.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission found the Secretary's recommendation consistent with the final selection criteria and the Force Structure Plan. Therefore, the Commission approves the recommendation of the Secretary.