



May 2013

# DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE

Communities Need  
Additional Guidance  
and Information to  
Improve Their Ability  
to Adjust to DOD  
Installation Closure or  
Growth

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-13-436](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

Through BRAC and other growth initiatives, DOD has made significant changes to its force structure, affecting communities around DOD installations. To help transition toward a smaller, more agile force, DOD has requested new BRAC authority. House Report 112-479, accompanying the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, directed GAO to study the practices and strategies that communities have used to cope with installation closure or growth. This report (1) describes the practices and strategies communities have used in dealing with base closures and growth since 2005 and economic and population data in those communities and (2) presents information on communities' needs in adjusting to installation closure and growth. GAO interviewed DOD, service, and installation officials; interviewed and surveyed community representatives; reviewed relevant guidance; and visited select installations.

## What GAO Recommends

DOD concurred with GAO's recommendation that the Army issue guidance on maintenance levels to be provided during the base closure process. DOD partially concurred that it should establish procedures for sharing additional information with growth communities and designate a civilian point of contact at growth installations. GAO believes action by DOD prior to future installation growth will help forestall future challenges.

View [GAO-13-436](#). For more information, contact James R. McTigue, Jr. at (202) 512-7968 or [mctiguej@gao.gov](mailto:mctiguej@gao.gov).

May 2013

## DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE:

### Communities Need Additional Guidance and Information to Improve Their Ability to Adjust to DOD Installation Closure or Growth

## What GAO Found

The 21 communities surrounding the 23 Department of Defense (DOD) installations closed in the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round have used strategies such as forming a local redevelopment authority and seeking federal grants to deal with the closures. Some economic data for these communities are comparable to national averages, with some variation. For instance, GAO found that 52 percent (11 of 21) of communities had unemployment rates lower than the national average of 8.9 percent, although the rates ranged from a low of 6.1 percent to a high of 16.8 percent. Sixty-two percent (13 of 21) of the closure communities had real per capita income growth rates higher than the national average of 0.14 percent for the period from 2006 through 2011. Since 2005, 23 other installations have experienced population increases that have resulted in net growth of about 191,000 military and civilian personnel (a 36 percent increase), and their corresponding communities have used several strategies to accommodate this growth, including forming a regional working group composed of representatives from affected jurisdictions.

Community representatives stated that DOD's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) provides good support to communities facing base closure, but some representatives from communities surrounding closed Army installations stated that facilities were not maintained at a high enough level for reuse. An Army official told GAO that the Army makes an effort to maintain closed facilities in accordance with their planned usage and that local redevelopment authorities have unrealistic expectations of maintenance levels. DOD guidance states that the services have developed specific maintenance levels for facilities during the transition process. The Air Force and the Navy have published this specific guidance, but the Army has not and instead relies upon DOD's guidance, which does not describe specific levels of maintenance. Without clear guidance on the expected levels of maintenance for closed facilities, the communities may not have a clear understanding of what maintenance the Army will provide.

Community representatives indicated that OEA provides good support to communities facing base growth, but that additional data and a civilian point of contact at the installation could improve their ability to respond to future growth. DOD has issued guidance that states communities should be provided maximum advance information to plan, and service guidance states that services will give communities information including military and personnel changes. However, community representatives told GAO that they would like additional aggregate information on where servicemembers live while stationed at the installation to facilitate planning for the impact of installation growth. Installations currently do not provide communities with this information because they do not have a system to track it, but officials noted that existing systems could potentially be modified to provide it. Installation officials and community representatives also stated that establishing a long-term civilian point of contact at the installation would help the community effectively plan for growth. Accurate and timely information on personnel residence areas and a civilian point of contact at the installation could better facilitate communities' efforts to accommodate installation growth.

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### **Abbreviations**

BEA Bureau of Economic Analysis  
BLS Bureau of Labor Statistics  
BRAC Base Realignment and Closure  
DOD Department of Defense  
OEA Office of Economic Adjustment

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May 14, 2013

### Congressional Committees

Over the past several years, the Department of Defense (DOD) has made significant changes to its force structure, through the movement of forces needed to implement the recommendations from the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round, the redeployment of U.S. forces in overseas locations back to the United States under the Global Defense Posture Realignment, changes in the composition of forces and realignment of those forces to accomplish a major Army reorganization known as force modularity,<sup>1</sup> and overall force structure increases due to Army and Marine Corps Grow the Force initiatives. These types of activities have had a significant impact on the local communities surrounding major U.S. DOD installations experiencing either closure or growth.<sup>2</sup> We have previously reported that these DOD actions have led to challenges for the local communities affected. For example, communities surrounding closed installations have faced long-term challenges in the economic recovery process arising out of base closures<sup>3</sup> while communities surrounding a growth installation face other challenges, including a greater need for transportation, schools, and housing. We have previously recommended that DOD provide communities surrounding growth installations with better information early in the process to allow them to more adequately plan for these changes, and in response the services issued guidance for the timely, complete, and

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<sup>1</sup> The Army's modular force restructuring—sometimes referred to as Army Modularity—is a multiyear undertaking that involves the total redesign of the operational Army. Under Army Modularity, the Brigade Combat Team, rather than a division, will be the centerpiece of the Army's combat forces and the lowest unit of organization capable of self-sustained operations. The Army's modular restructuring initiative includes its entire operational force of active, National Guard, and reserve units.

<sup>2</sup> DOD defines major closure installations as those having a plant replacement value exceeding \$100 million, and DOD's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) identifies installations and surrounding communities as having significant growth if the communities are deemed to be substantially and seriously impacted by the installation growth.

<sup>3</sup> GAO, *Military Base Closures: Updated Status of Prior Realignments and Closures*, [GAO-05-138](#) (Washington, D.C., Jan. 13, 2005).

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consistent dissemination of planning information on changes in military and civilian personnel and school-age children.<sup>4</sup>

The Secretary of Defense stated in August 2012 that, after a decade of war, DOD will again be drawing down its forces over the next five years, moving toward a smaller, leaner, and more agile force. As part of its fiscal year 2013 budget request, DOD asked Congress to authorize two more rounds of BRAC in 2013 and 2015. Congress did not authorize additional BRAC rounds in the National Defense Authorization Act for 2013, but if Congress should decide to authorize a future round of BRAC, some communities may face either significant increases or decreases in base populations and the potential impacts of these changes.

House Report 112-479, accompanying a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (H.R. 4310) directed GAO to study the practices and strategies that communities used to cope with base closure or growth in previous BRAC rounds.<sup>5</sup> This report: (1) describes the practices and strategies used by communities in dealing with the installation closures from the 2005 BRAC round and how current economic indicators for those communities compare to national averages; (2) identifies the installations that have experienced significant population increases since 2005 and describes the practices and strategies, if any, that the surrounding communities have employed to accommodate this growth; (3) presents information on communities' needs in adjusting to installation closure; and (4) presents information on communities' needs in adjusting to installation growth.

To describe the practices and strategies that communities used to deal with installation closures and compare their current economic indicators to national averages, we identified communities that had major DOD installation closures in the BRAC 2005 round using DOD's information provided for our previously issued report on BRAC.<sup>6</sup> We also collected 2006 through 2011 economic indicator data—the most recent available—

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<sup>4</sup> GAO, Defense Infrastructure: High-Level Leadership Needed to Help Communities Address Challenges Caused by DOD-Related Growth, [GAO-08-665](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 17, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> H.R. Rep. No. 112-479, at 313-314 (2012).

<sup>6</sup> GAO, Military Bases: Opportunities Exist to Improve Future Base Realignment and Closure Rounds, [GAO-13-149](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 7, 2013).

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on these communities from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of Economic Analysis in order to compare them with national averages. We found these data to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes. In addition, we held discussion groups with and interviewed selected community representatives, and surveyed representatives of closure communities. We received responses to 16 out of 22 questionnaires we sent,<sup>7</sup> for a response rate of 73 percent. To identify the installations that have experienced significant population increases since 2005 and describe the practices and strategies, if any, that the surrounding communities have employed to accommodate this growth, we started with the list of 20 installations that DOD's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) had identified and we discussed in our 2008 report.<sup>8</sup> We reviewed this list with OEA and the military services, and, based on information provided by OEA, added 3 additional installations that OEA had identified since 2008 as being significantly affected by growth. To identify the strategies and practices that communities used to deal with installation growth, we held discussion groups with and interviewed selected community representatives. We also interviewed installation officials and selected four installations to visit. These results cannot be generalized to all closure or growth communities, but common responses across groups and similar findings through the survey provide converging validation. Our site selection included one installation per service, a joint base, and installations in geographically diverse locations.<sup>9</sup> Further, we surveyed community representatives from all 23 growth installations and received 21 responses, for a response rate of 91 percent.

To determine the extent to which DOD has provided support to communities to deal with base closure, we held discussion groups with and interviewed community representatives from locations that had installations close as a result of BRAC 2005 and we interviewed DOD and service officials. We surveyed closure community representatives on their experiences and any areas where they felt they needed additional

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<sup>7</sup> Although we identified 23 major installation closures, we did not send our survey to the Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant because the property was transferred from the U.S. Army to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and did not have a local redevelopment authority.

<sup>8</sup> [GAO-08-665](#).

<sup>9</sup> We visited Fort Belvoir, VA; Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA; Camp Lejeune, NC; and Eglin Air Force Base, FL.



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support or areas they considered adequate to support their needs. To determine the extent to which DOD has provided support to communities to deal with base growth, we held discussion groups with and interviewed community representatives from growth communities. We also interviewed DOD and service officials as well as installation officials at the four visited installations. Further, we surveyed growth community representatives on any areas where they felt that they needed additional support and areas that they considered support to be adequate.

We conducted this performance audit from June 2012 to May 2013 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. A more detailed description of our scope and methodology is included in appendix I.

Since 2005, we have issued over 30 reports and testimonies on BRAC 2005 planning, implementation, costs, and savings that provide information to assist Congress as it considers BRAC authorizing legislation and that DOD can use to improve the BRAC development and implementation process. (For a list of related reports and testimonies, see the Related GAO Products page at the end of this report.)

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## Background

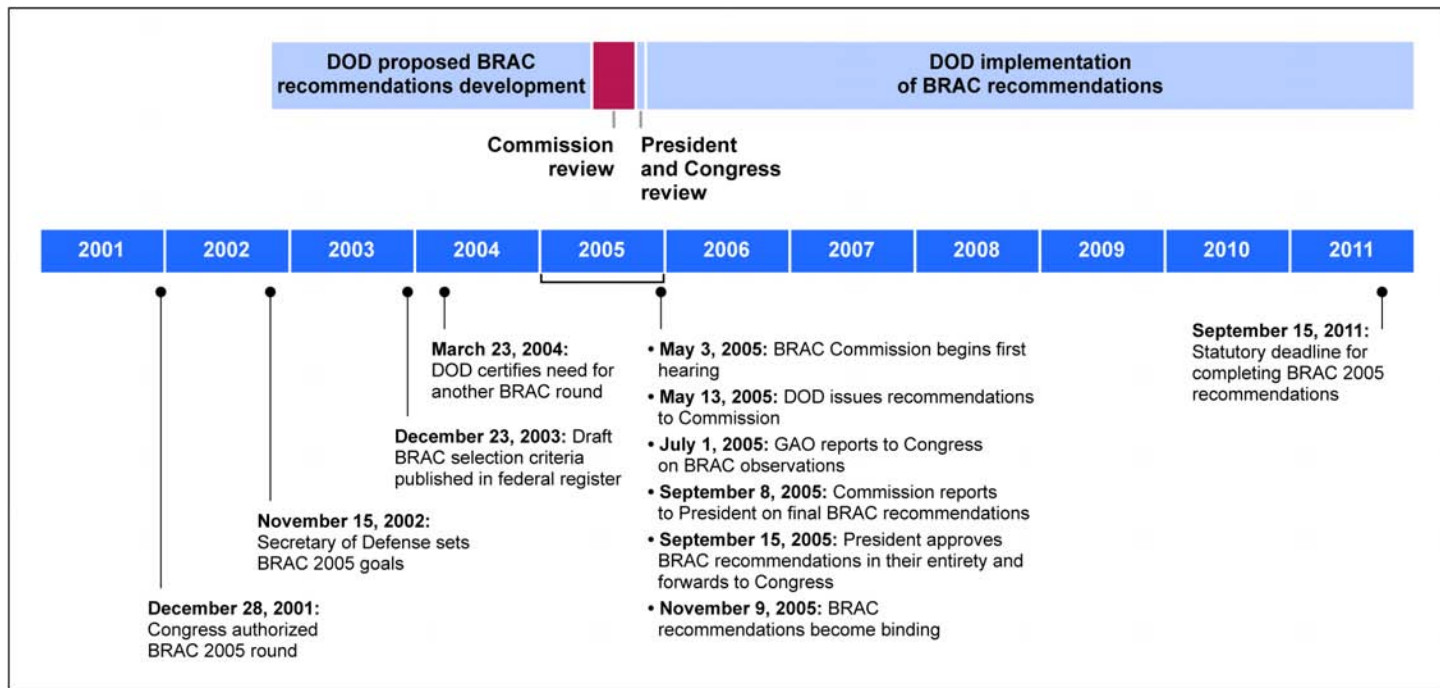
Since 1988, DOD has relied on the BRAC process as an important means of reducing excess infrastructure and realigning bases to meet changing force structure needs. The 2005 BRAC round was the fifth round of base closures and realignments undertaken by DOD since 1988, and it was the biggest, most complex, and costliest BRAC round ever.<sup>10</sup> The 2005 BRAC process generally followed the legislative framework of previous BRAC rounds, providing for an independent Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission to review the Secretary of Defense's closure and realignment recommendations, which were produced through the BRAC processes coordinated by the Deputy Under

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<sup>10</sup> DOD conducted BRAC rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, and 2005.

Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment.<sup>11</sup> The Commission assessed the Secretary's recommendations, under its authority to approve, modify, reject, or add closure or realignment recommendations, before reporting its own recommendations to the President. The President then approved the Commission's recommendations and forwarded them to Congress, and the recommendations became final in November 2005. Implementation of the recommendations was required to be complete by September 15, 2011. Figure 1 below is a timeline of the 2005 BRAC round.

**Figure 1: Timeline of BRAC 2005 Round**

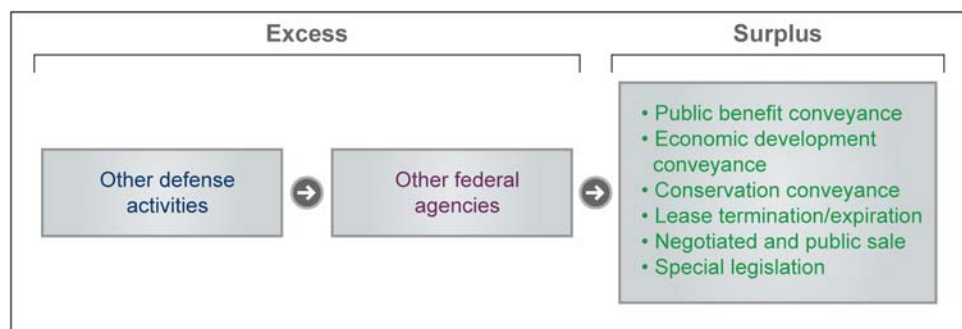


Source: GAO.

<sup>11</sup> Congress authorized BRAC 2005 with the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-107, Title XXX (2001). The law reauthorized the BRAC process by amending the authority under which the 1991, 1993, and 1995 rounds had been carried out, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-510, Title XXIX ((10 U.S.C. 2687 note). Throughout this report, we will refer to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (as amended) as “the BRAC statute.”

As specified in the BRAC statute, DOD has 6 years to complete all installation closures and realignments, although certain actions, such as the cleanup of environmentally contaminated property and the subsequent transfer of unneeded property to other users, may extend beyond the 6-year implementation period for each round. Once DOD officially closes an installation, the property is typically considered excess and offered to other federal agencies. As shown in figure 2, any property that is not taken by other federal agencies is then considered surplus and is disposed of through a variety of means to state and local governments, local redevelopment authorities, or private parties.

**Figure 2: DOD's Usual Procedures for Transferring Property**



Source: GAO.

The various methods used to convey unneeded property to nonfederal parties noted in figure 2 are targeted, in many cases, to a particular end use of the property. For example, under a public benefit conveyance, state and local governments and local redevelopment authorities acquire surplus DOD property for little or no cost for purposes such as schools, parks, and airports. Under an economic development conveyance, property is transferred for uses that promote economic recovery and job creation. Conservation conveyances provide for the transfer of property to a state, a political subdivision of a state, or a qualified not-for-profit group for natural resource and conservation purposes. Property can also be conveyed to nonfederal parties through other methods shown in figure 2 without regard, in many cases, to a particular end use. For example, property can be sold or special congressional legislation can dictate transfer to a particular entity.

In recent years, the growth of installations has occurred as a result of both the 2005 BRAC round and other DOD initiatives. Under the 2005

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BRAC round, DOD implemented 182 recommendations, many of which resulted in significant personnel movement across installations and the subsequent growth of some of those installations. In addition, DOD has undertaken other actions outside of BRAC that have resulted in the growth of installations. For example, the Army has undergone a major force restructuring through its force modularity effort, which has been referred to as the largest Army reorganization in 50 years. This effort created Stryker brigades, primarily located at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. Finally, DOD's Grow the Force initiative increased the end strength of the Army and the Marine Corps, affecting bases across the country. Although DOD has recently announced plans to downsize the Army and the Marine Corps, installations that experienced significant growth under these initiatives, and their surrounding communities, are still dealing with the impact of additional personnel and their dependents.

Within DOD, the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA)—a field activity under the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisitions, Technology, and Logistics—assists communities by providing technical and financial assistance in planning and carrying out adjustment strategies in response to defense actions. OEA is the primary DOD office responsible for providing assistance to communities, regions, and states affected by significant defense actions including base closures and realignments. Much of that assistance in the past was directed toward communities that lost military and civilian personnel because of the closure or major realignment of a base. However, because the 2005 BRAC round and other initiatives described above have created significant growth at many bases, OEA has also assisted affected communities with growth planning.

We have reported on the impact of BRAC actions numerous times over the last several years. In particular in our 2005 report on BRAC, we reported that DOD had closed 97 major installations since the first BRAC round in 1988.<sup>12</sup> Specifically DOD closed 16 bases in BRAC 1988, 26 bases in BRAC 1991, 28 bases in BRAC 1993, and 27 bases in BRAC 1995. (See appendix II for a list of the 97 bases and the year of closure for each.) In that report, we studied 62 affected communities and found that most of the surrounding communities were able to replace the jobs

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<sup>12</sup> GAO, Military Base Closures: Updated Status of Prior Base Realignments and Closures, [GAO-05-138](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 13, 2005).

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lost due to the installation closure with new jobs created by the reuse of the installation and that these communities generally had economic indicators that compared favorably with the U.S. national averages. Specifically, as of July 31, 2004, almost 70 percent of the 62 affected communities studied in that report (43 out of 62) had unemployment rates at or below the national average. Our analyses in that report of annual real per capita growth rates for the BRAC-affected communities showed mixed results.<sup>13</sup> The latest available data at that time (1999-2001) showed that only 48 percent of the BRAC-affected communities (30 of the 62) had an estimated average real per capita income growth rate that was higher than the national average. This was a decline from when we reported these figures in our 2002 report, where we reported that 33 out of 62 communities (53 percent) matched or exceeded the national average for real per capita income growth rate for 1996 to 1999.<sup>14</sup>

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## Communities Have Used a Variety of Strategies to Deal with BRAC 2005 Closures and Select Local Economic Data Are Comparable to National Averages

Communities surrounding the 23 major DOD installations<sup>15</sup> closed in BRAC 2005 have used a variety of strategies to deal with the closures, and economic data on unemployment and real per capita income growth show the rates for these communities are comparable to national averages.

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<sup>13</sup> By real per capita growth rates, we mean growth rates that have been adjusted for inflation.

<sup>14</sup> GAO, *Military Base Closures: Progress in Completing Actions from Prior Realignment and Closures*, [GAO-02-433](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 5, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> DOD defines major closure installations as those with a plant replacement value exceeding \$100 million. DOD's 2005 BRAC closure list includes 24 major installations, one being the Navy's Broadway Complex in California. Subsequently, the Navy entered into a long-term lease with a private firm in November 2006 and as a result the Complex did not close. Therefore, this report only refers to 23 major installation closures.

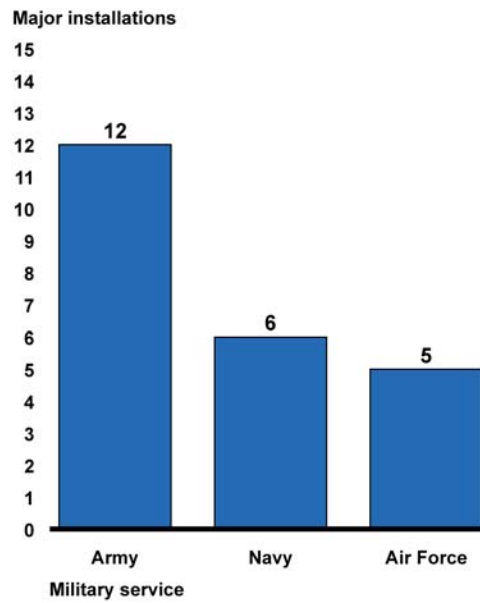
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Communities Surrounding  
DOD Installations Closed  
in BRAC 2005 Have Used a  
Variety of Strategies to  
Adjust to the Closures

During the BRAC 2005 round, DOD closed 23 major installations in the United States, the majority of which were Army installations. Figures 3 and 4 show the number of major installations that were closed by military service and the locations of these installations.

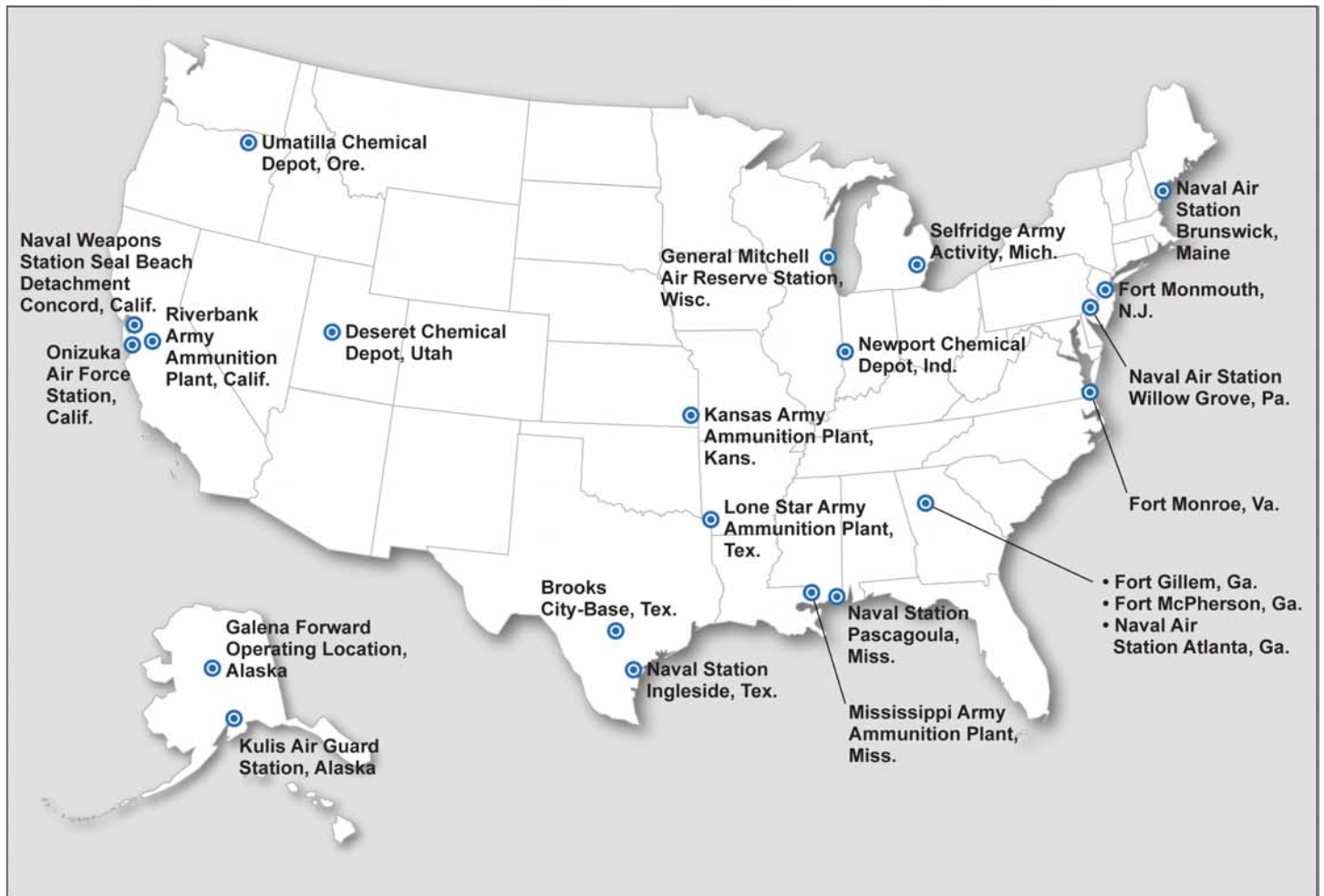
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**Figure 3: Major DOD Installations Closed in BRAC 2005 by Service**



Source: GAO analysis of DOD information.

Figure 4: Locations of Major DOD Installations Closed in BRAC 2005



Source: DOD; Map Resources (map).

Communities affected by these installation closures faced a number of different challenges and developed strategies to deal with them. In particular, community representatives we spoke with or surveyed said that some of their greatest challenges in dealing with the installation closures were developing a plan for the reuse of the property, dealing with facilities that were in poor shape or not suitable for reuse, and obtaining funding for infrastructure improvements. Other challenges identified by community representatives included navigating the legal intricacies of property transfer, dealing with environmental cleanup, and

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replacing lost jobs. Based on our analysis, we found that community representatives have used a variety of strategies to deal with these challenges. For example, several representatives that responded to our survey cited forming a local redevelopment authority<sup>16</sup> as an effective strategy for dealing with installation closure. One community representative said his local redevelopment authority was comprised of local and regional stakeholders to help build alliances and partnerships across the entire community spectrum. Another said his local redevelopment authority operates in a public forum where all meetings are open to the public and community input is solicited at every meeting. This was also reiterated by another community representative who said it was important to use an open process involving public meetings and outreach to accept input and gain community support in developing a plan for the reuse of the property.

Community representatives also cited working closely with DOD as an effective strategy for dealing with installation closure. For example, one community representative said the local redevelopment authority worked with the Army to ensure there was an effective and acceptable plan for dealing with environmental remediation prior to and after installation closure. Another local representative worked with DOD to have many of the facilities that were in poor condition demolished prior to finding new tenants, thus saving the community maintenance and operation dollars. A third representative said it would have been impossible without assistance from DOD for the local redevelopment authority to make its way through the maze of federal regulations and available information to create redevelopment plans. In addition, another community representative said that the Army was extremely helpful in transferring knowledge from numerous years of operating the installation. He said this historical knowledge allowed the local redevelopment authority to utilize previously completed studies in lieu of committing taxpayer dollars to repeat those investigations and reports. Further, he noted that data the Army maintained on utility and infrastructure would be used to manage repair and maintenance of the property in the future. Finally, another local redevelopment authority worked with local and headquarters Air Force

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<sup>16</sup> A local redevelopment authority is any entity (including an entity established by a state or local government) recognized by the Secretary of Defense as the entity responsible for developing the redevelopment plan with respect to an installation or for directing implementation of the plan.



staff to find follow-on jobs for DOD civilians that did not relocate or retire when the installation closed.

Some community representatives cited leveraging funds from state and federal agencies as a successful strategy. For example, one community representative said the local redevelopment authority was able to secure state-issued bonds to make the facilities more business-ready. Another local redevelopment authority secured federal funds to modify existing structures, and a third local redevelopment authority took advantage of a state tax benefit that allowed it to use state money to pay down improvement bonds. In addition, community representatives cited receiving grants from OEA as being helpful to their local redevelopment authority's organizational, planning, and implementation efforts. For example, one representative said the funding OEA provided was used to hire personnel, maintain offices, and conduct planning. Another said OEA provided funding through a grant that permitted the local redevelopment authority to hire dedicated professional staff and contract with a consultant to prepare the redevelopment plan and assist with the property transfer application. Many other representatives told us that OEA provided resources to develop reuse plans or supporting studies or to hire specific consulting or legal services. Table 1 below displays the OEA grants provided to closure communities during calendar years 2005 through 2012.

**Table 1: OEA Grants Provided to Communities Surrounding Major DOD Installations Closed in BRAC 2005 (Calendar Years 2005 through 2012)**

Closure Communities	Cumulative OEA Grants (calendar years 2005 - 2012)
<b>Army</b>	
Fort Gillem, GA	\$3,115,158
Fort McPherson, GA	6,916,841
Fort Monmouth, NJ	10,309,387
Fort Monroe, VA	9,686,581
Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, KS	4,673,962
Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant, Realignment of Red River Army Depot, TX	5,841,923
Newport Chemical Depot, IN	3,698,199
Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant, CA	3,492,545
Selfridge Army Activity, MI	726,602
Umatilla Chemical Depot, OR	1,224,033
<b>Total Army</b>	<b>\$49,685,231</b>

<b>Closure Communities</b>	<b>Cumulative OEA Grants (calendar years 2005 - 2012)</b>
<b>Navy</b>	
Naval Air Station Brunswick, ME	9,019,525
Naval Air Station Willow Grove, PA	4,305,365
Naval Station Ingleside, TX	2,658,768
Naval Station Pascagoula, MS	697,701
Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach Detachment Concord, CA	5,806,694
<b>Total Navy</b>	<b>\$22,488,053</b>
<b>Air Force</b>	
Brooks City Base, TX	1,328,258
Galena Forward Operating Location, AK	371,841
General Mitchell Air Reserve Station, WI	514,118
Onizuka Air Force Station, CA	1,844,727
<b>Total Air Force</b>	<b>\$4,058,944</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$76,232,228</b>

Source: GAO analysis of Office of Economic Adjustment data.

Note: Deseret Chemical Depot, UT; Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant, MS; Naval Air Station Atlanta, GA; and Kulis Air Guard Station, AK did not receive any grants from OEA.

In addition, community representatives who responded to our survey or that spoke with us said taking early possession of the property and leasing some of its assets was an effective strategy for dealing with installation closure. For example, one respondent said that since funding is limited for BRAC reuse projects, the local redevelopment authority entered into a protection and maintenance contract with the Army and was therefore able to lease out some of the assets on the installation, allowing the local redevelopment authority to increase revenue. Another community representative said the local redevelopment authority was able to move from complete financial dependence on federal funding to utilizing alternative revenue sources such as leases, tax revenue, and fees for service. He noted that the local redevelopment authority was awarded the Army caretaker contract for the former installation, and by providing services for fees, it was able to generate revenue. Furthermore, another local redevelopment authority representative told us that it is taking over the closure property in a piecemeal fashion. For example, it has already taken over all the historic homes at the installation and has leased out many of them. According to the community representative, this has provided the local redevelopment authority with some revenue to operate and maintain the facilities. The local redevelopment authority is

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also preparing to take over the rest of the property when the primary caretaker leaves.

Community representatives also said hiring experts was an effective strategy for dealing with installation closure. For example, one community representative said the local redevelopment authority had to hire individuals who had experience with BRAC to get things done in a timely and professional way. In particular, she said the local redevelopment authority hired an attorney to draft documents associated with specific lease amendments. Likewise, a community representative said the local redevelopment authority hired an experienced BRAC attorney to advise them on the process for land transfer.

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## Some Economic Data for Communities Surrounding DOD Installations Closed in BRAC 2005 Are Comparable to National Averages

Selected economic indicators for the 21 communities surrounding the 23 DOD installations closed in BRAC 2005 are comparable to national averages.<sup>17</sup> In our analysis, we used annual unemployment and real per capita income growth rates compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) as broad indicators of the economic health of those communities where installation closures occurred.<sup>18</sup> Our analyses of BLS annual unemployment data for 2011, the most recent data available, showed that 11 (52 percent) of the 21 closure communities had unemployment rates at or below the national average of 8.9 percent for the period from January through December 2011. The other 10 communities had unemployment rates that were higher than the national average (see figure 5). Of the 21 closure communities, Portland, Maine (Naval Air Station Brunswick) had the lowest unemployment rate at 6.1 percent and Modesto, California (Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant) had the highest rate at 16.8 percent.<sup>19</sup>

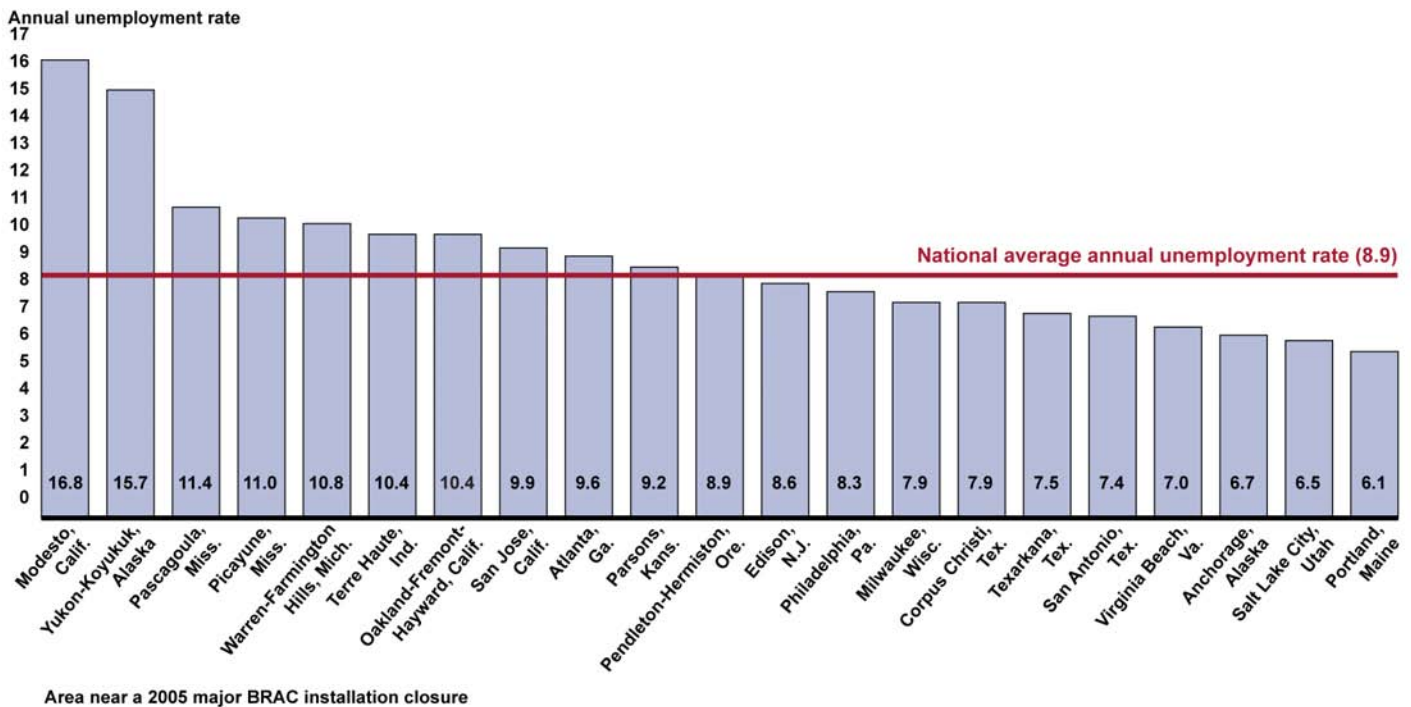
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<sup>17</sup> In this section, the term community refers to the statistical area, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), that the community surrounding an installation is located in. (Some locations fall within metropolitan statistical areas that are further subdivided into areas called metropolitan divisions. In those cases, the metropolitan division is treated as the relevant statistical area for our purposes.) Therefore, the 23 DOD installations closed in BRAC 2005 are represented by only 21 communities because Fort Gillem, Fort McPherson, and Naval Air Station Atlanta are located in the same statistical area. Also, population and economic data in this report are for the statistical area within which an installation is or was located. With few exceptions, the names of installation localities used in the text and figures are an abbreviated version of the installation's statistical area and are for the reader's convenience. For example, economic data reported for Ft. Monroe (Virginia Beach locality) are based on the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC Metropolitan Statistical Area even though the installation is in Hampton, VA. Therefore, the cities listed here (e.g., Portland, Maine) are provided as a short-hand reference to the statistical area and do not refer to economic data about the city itself. See appendix III for a list of the major DOD installations closed in BRAC 2005 and their corresponding economic areas.

<sup>18</sup> Ideally, to assess how the local communities were affected after the BRAC 2005 round, we would need economic information on how those communities would have fared without the BRAC round compared with how they fared since the BRAC program began. Because we did not have these baseline data, we compared the national averages for unemployment and real per capita income to assess the communities. This comparison does not isolate the economic effects of a base closure from other factors impacting the economy of a particular region.

<sup>19</sup> The cities named in this section represent the economic region surrounding the closed installation that we used to analyze these data. See appendix III for a list of the census areas and the corresponding closed installations and cities. For convenience in the report, we refer to the name of the closest city to the installation, rather than the economic region.

**Figure 5: Comparison of 2011 Unemployment Rates of Major 2005 BRAC Installation Closure Locations to the U.S. Rate**

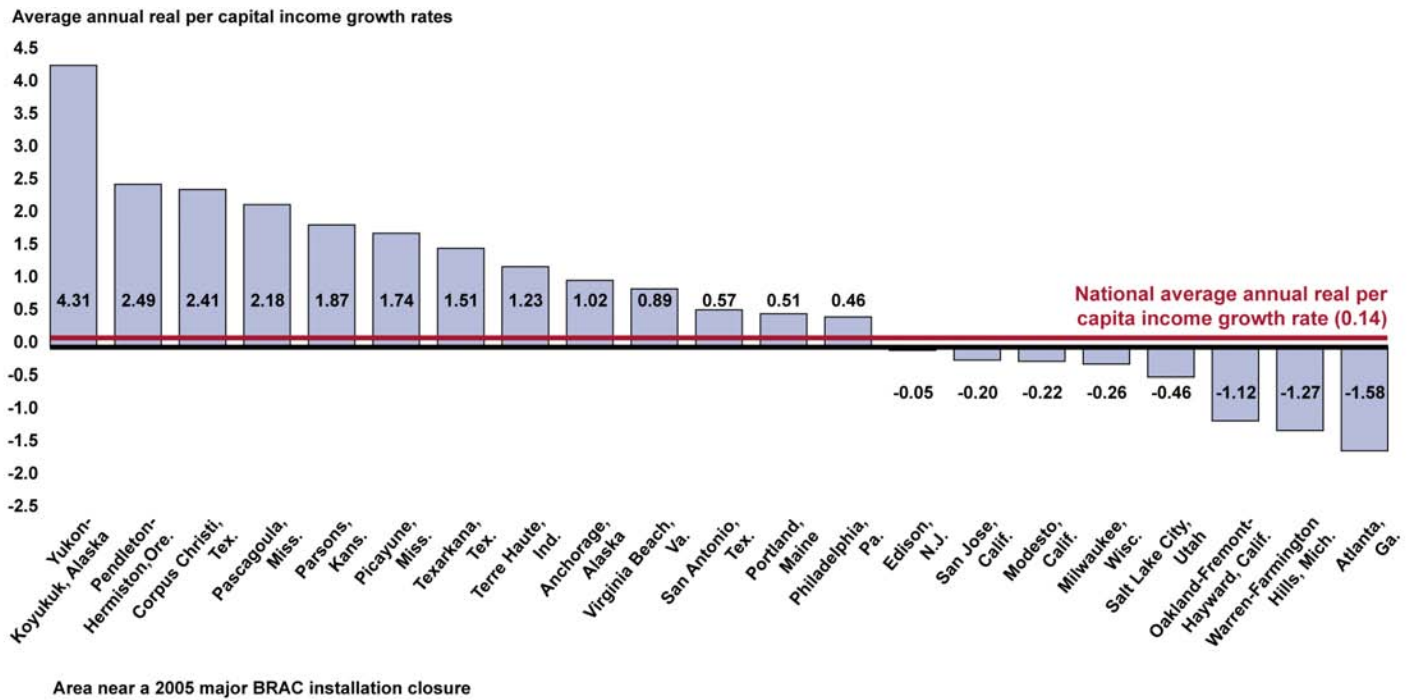


Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Note: Installation localities listed in this figure are abbreviated versions of the Census Bureau Statistical Area within which an installation is/was located and do not represent the town/city by the same name. The data reported are for the entire Census Bureau Statistical Area, not only for the town/city used as the locality name.

We also analyzed BEA real per capita income growth rates between 2006 and 2011 and found that 13 (62 percent) of the 21 closure communities had real per capita income growth rates that were higher than the national average of 0.14 (see figure 6). The other 8 communities had rates that were below the national average. Of the 21 communities affected, Yukon-Koyukuk, Alaska (Galena Forward Operating Location) had the highest growth rate at 4.31 percent and Atlanta, Georgia (Fort Gillem, Fort McPherson, and Naval Air Station Atlanta) had the lowest rate at -1.58 percent.

**Figure 6: Comparison of 2006-2011 Average Annual Real Per Capita Income Growth Rates of Major 2005 BRAC Installation Closure Locations to the U.S. Rate**



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis data.

Note: Installation localities listed in this figure are abbreviated versions of the Census Bureau Statistical Area within which an installation is/was located and do not represent the town/city by the same name. The data reported are for the entire Census Bureau Statistical Area, not only for the town/city used as the locality name.

## Growth Has Occurred at 23 Major Installations and Communities Have Used a Variety of Strategies to Accommodate this Growth

Since 2005, DOD has implemented several major initiatives, including BRAC realignment actions and Army Modularity, that have resulted in growth in military and civilian personnel at 23 installations, and the communities surrounding these installations, which also experienced growth, have used a variety of practices and strategies to accommodate this growth. As shown in table 2, these 23 installations had a combined net growth of about 191,000 military and civilian personnel from fiscal years 2006 through 2012, with their total population growing from about 526,000 to over 717,000, a 36.3 percent increase.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 2: Growth in DOD Personnel (Military and Civilian, Not Including Dependents and Nonmission-Related Contractors) at 23 Growth Installations from Fiscal Years 2006 through 2012**

Service and Installation	Fiscal Year 2006 Population	Fiscal Year 2012 Population	Net Gain (Loss) in population	Percentage Gain or (Loss) in population
<b>Army</b>				
Fort Belvoir, VA	21,065	45,796	24,731	117.40%
Fort Bliss, TX	23,541	43,258	19,717	83.76%
Fort Carson, CO	18,465	30,900	12,435	67.34%
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA <sup>a</sup>	32,231	52,837	20,606	63.93%
Fort Lee, VA	13,885	20,920	7,035	50.67%
Fort Meade, MD	33,548	49,385	15,837	47.21%
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD	16,207	22,446	6,239	38.50%
Redstone Arsenal, AL	26,311	36,372	10,061	38.24%
Fort Bragg, NC	57,684	73,435	15,751	27.31%
Fort Riley, KS	20,275	25,423	5,148	25.39%
Fort Benning, GA	38,471	48,107	9,636	25.05%
Fort Drum, NY	20,354	23,455	3,101	15.24%
Fort Polk, LA	16,837	18,952	2,115	12.56%
Fort Stewart, GA	21,763	24,345	2,582	11.86%
Fort Sill, OK <sup>b</sup>	26,916	26,613	(303)	(1.13%)

<sup>20</sup> These figures do not include family members and nonmission-related contractors who have also relocated to the surrounding communities.

Service and Installation	Fiscal Year 2006 Population	Fiscal Year 2012 Population	Net Gain (Loss) in population	Percentage Gain or (Loss) in population
Fort Knox, KY <sup>b</sup>	23,004	18,938	(4,066)	(17.68%)
<b>Navy/Marine Corps</b>				
Marine Corps Base, Quantico, VA	8,431	13,171	4,740	56.22%
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, MD	8,000	11,686	3,686	46.08%
Eastern North Carolina (Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station New River and Cherry Point, NC) <sup>c</sup>	53,364	62,253	8,889	16.66%
<b>Air Force</b>				
Joint Base San Antonio, TX <sup>a</sup>	22,067	38,047	15,980	72.42%
Cannon Air Force Base, NM	3,652	5,255	1,603	43.89%
Eglin Air Force Base, FL	11,934	15,407	3,473	29.10%
Andrews Air Force Base, MD	8,328	10,487	2,159	25.92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>526,333</b>	<b>717,473</b>	<b>191,140</b>	<b>36.32%</b>

Source: GAO analysis of Army, Navy, and Air Force data.

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Joint Base Lewis-McChord is a joint Army and Air Force installation, though the Army has the lead for delivering installation support. Therefore, it is listed with Army installations. Joint Base San Antonio is also a joint Army and Air Force installation, though the Air Force has the lead for delivering installation support. Therefore, it is listed with the Air Force installations.

<sup>b</sup> While Fort Knox actually incurred losses in personnel between fiscal years 2006 and 2012; OEA has identified growth challenges for the surrounding communities due to the changes in personnel demographics and therefore treats Fort Knox as a growth installation. While originally projected to grow, Fort Sill also incurred personnel losses during this time period due to a change in stationing plans.

<sup>c</sup> There are three Marine Corps installations in eastern North Carolina – Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station New River, and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. Due to the close proximity of these locations, the surrounding community and OEA treat these installations as one growth location.

While Fort Sill, Oklahoma actually incurred a net loss during this time period, OEA treated it as a growth location because it was originally projected to increase by more than 2,000 personnel which was anticipated to impact the surrounding community in the areas of housing, schools, and transportation. In addition, Fort Knox, Kentucky also experienced a net loss in population, but changes to the mission and the resulting changes to the demographics, including the increase of full-time military personnel versus the temporary students that were previously stationed at the installation, caused significant challenges to the surrounding community. The growth of each of the 21 installations that did grow during this time period ranged from about 12 percent to 117 percent. Of the 23 growth installations, 16 were Army, 3 were Navy and 4



were Air Force. The seven installations that grew the most all had growth rates of more than 50 percent over fiscal years 2006 through 2012. These were five Army installations (Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Carson, Colorado; Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington; and Fort Lee, Virginia); one Navy installation (Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia); and one Air Force installation (Joint Base San Antonio, Texas).

Between 2006 and 2011 all of the surrounding communities also experienced growth.<sup>21</sup> Table 3 shows the change in population of the communities surrounding the major growth installations from calendar years 2006 through 2011. The growth rates for the individual communities associated with the installations ranged from about 1 to 14 percent over this period. As with the installations, the majority of the communities experiencing the most growth surround Army installations. Specifically, communities surrounding Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Stewart, Georgia; Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; and Fort Sill, Oklahoma experienced growth rates of more than 12 percent from 2006 through 2011. Also, one Air Force installation, Joint Base San Antonio, Texas experienced growth of more than 13 percent. The community with the sixth largest population gain was around the Marine Corps' Camp Lejeune and New River Air Station, North Carolina with a growth rate of about 12 percent.

**Table 3: Population Change in Communities Surrounding Growth Installations from Calendar Years 2006 through 2011**

Service and Installation	Community Population in 2006	Community Population in 2011	Net Gain in Community Population	Percentage Gain
<b>Army</b>				
Fort Bliss, TX	720,756	820,790	100,034	13.88%
Fort Stewart, GA	71,537	80,587	9,050	12.65%
Redstone Arsenal, AL	379,304	425,480	46,176	12.17%
Fort Sill, OK	112,293	125,815	13,522	12.04%
Fort Riley, KS	117,083	130,240	13,157	11.24%
Fort Knox, KY	110,653	121,771	11,118	10.05%
Fort Carson, CO	601,150	660,319	59,169	9.84%

<sup>21</sup> For the purpose of this report, we used specific economic areas defined by the U.S. Census Bureau to determine the population surrounding the growth installations. For convenience, we refer to the city closest to the installation, rather than the economic area, in the report. See appendix IV for a list of growth locations and the corresponding economic areas. The latest year available for population data was 2011.

Service and Installation	Community Population in 2006	Community Population in 2011	Net Gain in Community Population	Percentage Gain
Fort Belvoir, VA <sup>a</sup>	4,107,820	4,477,409	369,589	9.00%
Fort Polk, LA	48,467	52,107	3,640	7.51%
Fort Bragg, NC	348,072	374,157	26,085	7.49%
Fort Lee, VA	1,195,634	1,269,380	73,746	6.17%
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WAb	764,241	807,904	43,663	5.71%
Fort Benning, GA	290,057	301,439	11,382	3.92%
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD <sup>a</sup>	2,662,048	2,729,110	67,062	2.52%
Fort Meade, MD <sup>a</sup>	2,662,048	2,729,110	67,062	2.52%
Fort Drum, NY	117,162	117,910	748	0.64%
<b>Navy</b>				
Marine Corps Camp Lejeune, NC <sup>a</sup>	161,054	179,719	18,665	11.59%
Marine Corps Air Station New River, NC <sup>a</sup>	161,054	179,719	18,665	11.59%
Marine Corps Base, Quantico, VA <sup>a</sup>	4,107,820	4,477,409	369,589	9.00%
Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC	118,815	128,003	9,188	7.73%
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, MD	1,157,192	1,226,539	69,347	5.99%
<b>Air Force</b>				
Joint Base San Antonio, TX <sup>b</sup>	1,932,720	2,194,927	262,207	13.57%
Andrews Air Force Base, MD <sup>a</sup>	4,107,820	4,477,409	369,589	9.00%
Cannon Air Force Base, NM	45,660	49,649	3,989	8.74%
Eglin Air Force Base, FL	182,462	183,482	1,020	.56%
<b>Totals<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>15,292,647</b>	<b>16,508,844</b>	<b>1,216,197</b>	<b>8.0%</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

Notes: The data reported are for the entire Census Bureau Statistical Area surrounding the installations listed in this table. See appendix IV for a list of growth locations and the corresponding economic areas.

<sup>a</sup> Fort Meade, MD and Aberdeen Proving Ground include the same community. Similarly, Fort Belvoir, VA, Marine Corps Base, Quantico, VA, and Andrews Air Force Base include the same community. This is also true for Marine Corps Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River. Although Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point is located in the same geographic region as Marine Corps Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River, it falls within a different Census Bureau Statistical Area.

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<sup>b</sup> Joint Base Lewis-McChord is a joint Army and Air Force installation, though the Army has the lead for delivering installation support. Therefore, it is listed with Army installations. Joint Base San Antonio is also a joint Army and Air Force installation, though the Air Force has the lead for delivering installation support. Therefore, it is listed with the Air Force installations.

<sup>c</sup> Totals for the same communities are only counted once in the overall total.

Further, we found that population growth in the communities surrounding the growth installations could differ based on factors other than installation growth. While some of the community growth can be attributed to additional servicemembers and their families living in the communities, growth could also happen for other reasons. For example, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, the two counties surrounding the installation experienced growth at the same time that the number of servicemembers at the installation increased. Installation officials told us that while the population of the installation increased primarily due to the creation of the Army's Stryker Brigades, the surrounding communities also experienced an increase due to the growth in local industry, including the aerospace industry. We also found that in some cases, an installation experienced a large growth in personnel, but the surrounding community did not experience the same level of growth. For example, Fort Belvoir had the largest percentage of installation growth but ranked tenth in percentage of community growth. This occurred for a number of reasons. According to DOD officials most personnel that transferred to this installation already lived in the region and thus were commuting from other local areas to Fort Belvoir rather than moving to the region. Therefore, while Fort Belvoir incurred significant growth, population growth in the local communities was not impacted as directly as it might have been if transferred personnel were coming from other communities. Furthermore, the actual community growth for this area was almost 370,000 people—the largest overall increase of any community in our review—but because the metropolitan area was so large to start with the increase did not change the percentage of growth as significantly as did smaller changes to smaller communities.

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## Installation Growth Raises Challenges for Communities, Which Have Used a Variety of Strategies to Accommodate This Growth

Growth of an installation can cause a variety of challenges for a community, and we found that communities have used a variety of strategies to cope with these challenges, which include increased demand for transportation, education, and other public services. For example, based on our site visits, interviews with DOD officials, data we collected from surveys, and discussion groups, transportation was a key challenge facing communities around growth installations. During all our site visits, DOD officials cited transportation as a major challenge, as did several other installations we contacted. For instance, several installation

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officials expressed concerns about the impact of traffic in the community and on the installation when vehicles are entering or leaving the base. In September 2009, OEA conducted a project needs assessment for defense growth communities.<sup>22</sup> This assessment was initiated to assess projects identified by communities as needed to support DOD growth actions. As a result of this assessment, communities identified transportation improvements to mitigate growth impacts as the greatest need. In addition, based on data we collected from our surveys and interviews of growth community representatives, transportation was the most frequently cited challenge. Another challenge for communities discussed during our site visits as well as in interviews with DOD officials and discussion groups and cited by survey respondents involved overcrowding in local schools. DOD officials at installations we contacted expressed concerns about the capacity of local area schools to handle the growth. In addition, the 2009 OEA project needs assessment identified education as the second greatest funding need for defense communities. Other challenges noted by DOD officials and community representatives included the need for additional medical care and housing, lack of federal funding to deal with the growth, and inadequate utility systems.

Communities have used a variety of strategies and practices to deal with these concerns. The most common successful strategy, cited by DOD officials, community representatives we interviewed, survey respondents, and discussion group participants, was to form a regional working group composed of representatives from all of the jurisdictions affected by the growth at the installation. Examples of some of the regional working groups are cited below:

- In response to growth at the North Carolina Eastern Region, which includes Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point and New River, the North Carolina's Eastern Region Military Growth Task Force was established. The task force included representatives from surrounding counties, and its mission was to analyze community impacts from the sudden and unanticipated growth of these installations and develop potential recommendations to address those impacts.

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<sup>22</sup> Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment, *Project Needs Assessment, September 2009 Snapshot: Assessing a Continuing Funding Gap for Local Economic Adjustment Projects*.

- In response to mission growth at Fort Bragg, the Fort Bragg Regional Alliance was formed to evaluate economic, employment, infrastructure, and social impacts associated with this expansion and to identify actions required to address future growth needs in the area.
- The community around Walter Reed National Military Center established a stakeholders' advisory board that brought together local business and community leaders and representatives from all levels of government and the Navy, who worked together to identify growth impacts and to propose solutions.

In addition, DOD officials, community representatives, survey respondents, and discussion group participants cited seeking grants as a successful strategy to cope with the challenges posed by installation growth. In some cases, communities were successful in obtaining funding to address the associated growth in their area. OEA provided growth communities with grants to cover administrative expenses, including hiring consultants to conduct growth management studies. As seen in table 4 below, from 2005 through 2012, OEA provided over \$73 million in grants to growth communities. In addition to OEA funding, state and local governments also provided funding to address various issues. For example, at Redstone Arsenal, state and local governments provided funding to address the overcrowding of the local schools.

**Table 4: OEA Grants to Growth-Impacted Communities and Selected States (2005 through 2012)**

Growth Communities and States	OEA Grant Awards from 2005 - 2012
<b>Army</b>	
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD	\$7,970,310
Fort Belvoir, VA	7,704,174
Fort Benning, GA	4,892,414
Fort Bliss, TX	2,653,808
Fort Bragg, NC	4,687,136
Fort Carson, CO	3,306,801
Fort Drum, NY	1,555,329
Fort Knox, TN	2,397,775
Fort Lee, VA	733,181
Fort Meade, MD	3,896,349
Fort Polk, LA	168,173
Fort Riley, KS	2,219,194
Fort Sill, OK	897,157
Fort Stewart, GA	1,246,364

<b>Growth Communities and States</b>	OEA Grant Awards from 2005 - 2012
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA	2,321,934
Redstone Arsenal, AL	1,544,938
<b>Navy</b>	
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, MD	1,525,273
Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station New River and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC	4,425,735
Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA	1,687,698
<b>Air Force</b>	
Andrews Joint Base, MD	495,000
Cannon Air Force Base, NM	625,598
Eglin Air Force Base, FL	1,433,435
Joint Base San Antonio, TX	4,422,550
<b>States<sup>b</sup></b>	
Commonwealth of Kentucky	1,327,209
Commonwealth of Virginia	1,250,909
State of Kansas	1,047,963
State of Maryland	7,144,221
<b>Totals<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>\$73,580,628</b>

Source: GAO analysis of Office of Economic Adjustment data.

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Grant totals represent OEA planning and organization grant funds awarded to communities affected by BRAC, Grow the Army/Grow the Force, Army Modular Forces, and Global Defense Posture Realignment in calendar years 2005 through 2012.

<sup>b</sup> These states had multiple installations impacted by DOD actions, requiring state intervention to mitigate the resulting issues. Therefore, OEA provided these states with some grant money which they are using for such things as transportation planning.

Conducting studies to determine installation and community needs was also cited as a key practice in working effectively through the challenges that base growth creates. Studies provide the necessary data to guide the individual bases and community representatives to take action to find solutions to address challenges. Examples of studies are cited below:

- At Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the South Sound Military and Communities Partnership, a group comprised of communities surrounding the installation, conducted a survey of servicemembers and found that where servicemembers live in the community is influenced by how much they can afford with their Basic Allowance for Housing. Further, installation officials identified a lack of affordable housing as an issue and worked with community representatives to develop a rental property program where landlords from the

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community voluntarily sign up to give discounts to servicemembers in exchange for receiving their rent as an allotment directly from the Army. This helped the community by decreasing vacancy rates, and helped the base by finding servicemembers affordable housing.

- At Fort Bragg, a study conducted for the Fort Bragg Regional Alliance, a group formed to deal with the growth at Fort Bragg, revealed that many people working in the Fort Bragg area were not prepared to compete for high-wage and high-skill jobs both on base and in the community. As a result the base and community worked together to develop a career exploration platform and installed enhanced technology classrooms into 33 schools and 8 community colleges throughout the region, which provided training and resources to better prepare the community for the workforce.
- At Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base, a study conducted for the North Carolina's Eastern Region Military Growth Task Force identified traffic issues between the base and the surrounding neighborhoods. The study group proposed the implementation of an Intelligent Traffic System in the surrounding City of Jacksonville to offer instant relief by monitoring and controlling key choke points on area roadways that connect the base to the neighborhoods where employees live. Intelligent traffic lights were later installed and helped with the flow of traffic on base and the surrounding communities.

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**DOD Provides Assistance to Communities Surrounding Closure Installations, but Additional Army Guidance Is Needed to Improve Maintenance of Facilities**

Community representatives we surveyed and spoke with indicated that DOD provides good support to communities facing base closure through its OEA, but representatives from communities surrounding closed Army installations that took ownership of the facilities stated that in many instances the Army facilities were not maintained at a sufficient level to retain their value or facilitate reuse. The Navy and the Air Force have guidance that aligns with DOD guidance specifying levels of maintenance to be provided during the BRAC process but the Army has not issued its own guidance. If Army officials and community representatives do not have a clear understanding as to the level of maintenance that should be carried out, local redevelopment authorities and the Army will continue to have differing expectations of the maintenance that should be provided to closed facilities, hindering the transfer and reuse process.

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**DOD's Office of Economic Adjustment Provides Assistance to Communities Surrounding Closure Installations**

DOD, primarily through OEA, provides assistance to communities surrounding closure installations. OEA assigns a project manager to each community who can provide assistance in a variety of ways. For example, project managers can provide funds for hiring consultants to assist in developing a reuse plan, information on federal grant money or other available resources, and information on best practices used by other closure communities. Installation and community representatives that we spoke with and surveyed stated that they were pleased with the level of assistance that OEA provided. For example, one representative stated that the OEA project manager was a valuable resource in dealing with the base closure. Another representative stated that OEA's assistance was helpful to address crucial issues with closing the installation. A third representative described OEA's support as invaluable and stated that his community could not have planned for base reuse without OEA's assistance. Further, OEA provides grant money to closure communities as described above.

All of the respondents to our survey that requested best practice information from DOD, OEA or the services stated that they received some or all of the information they requested. In addition, OEA project managers regularly connect communities so that they can share best practices and OEA's website provides reports containing lessons learned from other communities and information on other available resources. OEA is currently developing a community forum function on its website where community members can exchange ideas and learn from each other's experiences.

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**Two of the Three Military Departments Have Guidance on Maintenance Levels for Closed Facilities**

The Navy and the Air Force have issued guidance on the appropriate maintenance levels to be performed on closed facilities, but the Army has not. In both interviews and discussion groups, representatives from communities surrounding some closed Army installations stated that the Army did not provide adequate facility maintenance to buildings it planned to transfer ownership of during the BRAC process. An official from the Army BRAC office stated, however, that the Army makes every effort to provide maintenance in accordance with the planned usage of the facilities and that communities have unrealistic expectations of the condition of the buildings. DOD guidance states that surplus facilities and equipment at installations that have been closed can be important to the eventual reuse of the installation and that each military department is



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responsible for protecting and maintaining such assets in order to preserve the value of the property.<sup>23</sup> The guidance further states that the services should consult with the local redevelopment authority to determine the maintenance levels for the facilities. Finally, while the DOD guidance states that the services have developed specific maintenance levels, only the Navy and the Air Force have published service-specific guidance to clearly describe their maintenance levels consistent with factors outlined in DOD's guidance.

The Navy has developed the most comprehensive guidance on the maintenance of closure facilities. The Department of the Navy's Base Realignment and Closure Implementation Guidance describes a process for establishing initial maintenance levels in consultation with the local redevelopment authority.<sup>24</sup> Building maintenance levels are based on the intended reuse of the individual building. For example, a building that is designated for immediate reuse, meaning that the local redevelopment authority has already identified a tenant, will be given the highest level of maintenance. A building that does not have a reuse identified is given the lowest level of maintenance, where only conditions adversely affecting public health, the environment and safety are to be corrected. This guidance further states that the Navy's BRAC Program Management Office is responsible for overseeing this process and for serving as the Navy's liaison to the community. Navy officials stated that the local redevelopment authorities often want all of the buildings maintained at a high level or that they change their minds on the immediacy of reuse of the buildings after the Navy has begun maintenance at a different maintenance level, resulting in property that is not maintained to the level that the community would like because degradation of the property may have already occurred. Officials further stated that they are willing to work with communities to determine the appropriate maintenance levels and even to change the maintenance levels if possible, but the best way to ensure maintenance levels are in place to meet the needs of the community is for the local redevelopment authority to work closely with the Navy early on in the closure process to determine the proper level of maintenance for individual facilities.

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<sup>23</sup> DOD Manual 4165.66-M, *Base Redevelopment and Realignment Manual*, (March 1, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Department of the Navy, *Base Realignment and Closure Implementation Guidance*, Mar. 23, 2007.

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Air Force guidance from 1991 states that as facilities are vacated, they shall be placed into one of six maintenance levels that are dependent on the planned reuse of the facilities.<sup>25</sup> This guidance has not been updated to reflect the current command structure of the Air Force, including the Air Force Real Property Agency, which was formed in 2002 and would have responsibility for overseeing the implementation of these actions in a future BRAC round. However, officials stated that the current policy is still in effect and being followed, even though the Air Force has reorganized the components overseeing this process. The Army has not issued any guidance in this area. An Army official stated that the Army had draft guidance, but it was never finalized and that the Army therefore relies solely on the DOD guidance. However, the DOD guidance does not describe specific levels of maintenance.

Community representatives surrounding some closed Army installations who we spoke with in interviews and discussion groups stated that the Army did not always maintain the facilities to their expectations, resulting in facility deterioration. For example, at the former Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, community representatives stated that a storm damaged the roof of one building that was never repaired by the Army, resulting in mold growing inside the building and requiring the building to be demolished at the expense of the local redevelopment authority (see figure 7).

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<sup>25</sup> Memorandum from the Civil Engineer, Department of the Air Force, *Policy Guidance for Facility Protection and Maintenance at Closure Bases*, Nov. 26, 1991.

**Figure 7: Damaged Roof at Kansas Army Ammunition Plant**



Source: Great Plains Development Authority.

In interviews, discussion groups and survey responses, other representatives from communities surrounding closed Army installations provided examples of poorly maintained property. One representative stated that the service did not provide any maintenance to a housing facility, resulting in significant mold growth inside the facility and rendering it unusable. The community had to demolish this facility at its own expense. Another representative told us that the service did not properly maintain the grass on the property, causing it to become overgrown and attract wildlife. Because of this increase in wildlife in the area, the service had to spend approximately three times the originally budgeted amount for environmental restoration of the property. Another community representative stated that her local redevelopment authority took over the maintenance of an Army installation prior to transfer through a maintenance contract with the Army. She stated that her organization did this to fix issues of deferred maintenance and to ensure that buildings were properly maintained so that they could be reused.

An official with the Army BRAC office told us that the Army makes an effort to maintain closed facilities in accordance with their planned usage. For example, he stated that in fiscal year 2013 the Army provided \$49 million in caretaker funds for installations closed during BRAC 2005. He further stated that local redevelopment authorities would like the buildings

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to be in new condition, but that is not a realistic expectation. As a result, an expectations gap exists between the Army and communities regarding the levels of maintenance to be provided to facilities during the transition period. Without clear guidance on the expected levels of maintenance for closed facilities, the communities will not have a clear understanding of what maintenance the Army will provide, hindering the transfer and reuse process.

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## DOD Provides Support to Communities Facing Installation Growth, but More Data and Long-Term Coordination Is Needed

Community representatives we surveyed or spoke with indicated that DOD provides good support to communities facing base growth through its OEA, but more data and long-term coordination could improve the communities' and DOD's ability to respond to future force structure changes. Without accurate and timely information, and a means to ensure continued effective communication throughout the growth process, communities will be hindered in their efforts to effectively plan for growth.

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## DOD's Office of Economic Adjustment Provides Support to Communities Facing Installation Growth

Similar to the types of support that DOD provides to communities facing installation closures, DOD, primarily through OEA, also provides support to communities facing base growth. OEA provides a project manager to growth communities to help with technical and financial information assistance and growth management planning assistance. The project manager assists the communities in identifying available resources, including potential OEA grants as described above. In addition, as in the case of communities facing installation closures, the OEA project manager can link growth communities with other growth communities to facilitate collaboration and the sharing of best practices.

Growth community representatives that we spoke with or that responded to our survey were pleased with the level of support that they received from OEA. For example, one growth community representative commented that his community's OEA project manager was a great source of information and had a lot of experience. Another community representative commented that having OEA support was tremendously beneficial to the community. She further stated that with OEA's support, her community was able to better plan for community needs. Several community representatives that we spoke with stated that their project

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manager visited their community regularly and participated in planning meetings.

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### Communities Facing Installation Growth Expressed the Need for More Data and Long-Term Coordination

Community and installation representatives that we spoke with and responded to our survey identified some areas where improvements could be made to enable both DOD and the communities to be in a position to better respond to potential installation growth, particularly with regard to additional data for planning purposes and long-term coordination between the community and the installation.

First, community representatives indicated that they need additional information to adequately plan for the growth in their community. DOD guidance states that maximum advance information and support should be provided to state and local governments to plan for military growth actions.<sup>26</sup> The services implemented DOD's guidance by issuing service-specific guidance specifying certain information that shall be provided to communities including military and civilian personnel changes; school-age children increases or decreases; and construction activity.<sup>27</sup> However, some community representatives noted that they would like more specific information. For example, they told us that installations are unable to provide communities with aggregate data on where servicemembers and their families live while stationed at the local installation, because they do not have a system that tracks this type of information. Service officials confirmed that current personnel data systems contain the servicemembers' home station of record rather than their current residence and payroll systems may only include direct deposit information and not a home address, and that therefore this information is not currently available. In addition, although the housing office at the installation may have information on the number of servicemembers living off the installation, there is no requirement to maintain information on

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<sup>26</sup> DOD Directive 5410.12, *Economic Adjustment Assistance to Defense-Impacted Communities* (July 5, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations and Environment), *Economic Adjustment Assistance to Defense-Impacted Communities*, Jan. 26, 2011; Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations, Energy, and Environment), *Economic Adjustment Assistance to Defense-Impacted Communities*, Jan. 20, 2011; Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Installations, Environment and Logistics), *Economic Adjustment Assistance to Defense-Impacted Communities*, Mar. 15, 2011.

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where those servicemembers live. Installation and service officials did note, however, that existing data systems could potentially be modified to provide this information. Installation officials noted that communities continually asked for this information so that they can plan for the impact of installation growth on transportation routes, local school districts, and the need for various social services. Installation and service officials expressed some concerns about privacy and force protection issues stemming from the release of this information, but acknowledged that it would be beneficial for communities to have some type of aggregate information on where servicemembers reside in the communities to help with community planning and traffic management, including where traffic will feed into the access control points on base. One community representative noted that as installation growth often happens incrementally over time, having updated information that captures where the additional servicemembers move to during the ongoing growth period would enhance the communities' ability to respond to this growth.

In addition to the need for more data on where personnel live, community representatives and installation officials we interviewed stated that establishing a long-term civilian point of contact at the base installation level is necessary to effectively plan for the long-term effects of growth on the base and local community. Both the Navy and the Marine Corps have a provision for a Community Planning and Liaison Officer at installations whose role is to be the central information point with the community. Navy guidance states that to ensure continuity, the inclusion of a civilian planner in the community planning liaison team is strongly encouraged. The guidance further states that not every installation can support a full-time Community Planning and Liaison Officer position, and that this position can be a collateral duty. In the Marine Corps, the Community Planning and Liaison Officer is usually a senior civilian who has the responsibility to develop and maintain a network with state and local officials. Air Force officials told us that the Air Force has a draft instruction with information on this type of position, but it has not yet been approved and an Army official confirmed that the Army does not currently have this type of position. We have previously reported that career civilians possess institutional memory, which is particularly important in DOD because of the frequent rotation of military personnel.<sup>28</sup> An official from

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<sup>28</sup> [GAO-03-98](#), *Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Defense* (Washington, D.C.: January 2003).

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the Army BRAC office agreed that a long-term point of contact at an installation is important to maintaining community relationships. In the past, the Army specifically stationed an additional officer to large growth installations to be the primary contact point for the installation during the growth period. This official further stated that he believes that the liaison function can be performed by an active duty person; however, many Army installations have a civilian deputy garrison commander acting in this capacity.

According to leaders we spoke with, base commanders do an excellent job with community outreach; however, because they are typically only in their positions for 2 to 3 years and then transferred, community outreach has to start all over again once a new commander is appointed. In the Navy and the Marine Corps, the Community Planning and Liaison Officer does not replace the installation commander in community outreach; rather, the position provides an additional person to act as a day to day point of contact to work directly with local governments, community representatives, and non-governmental organizations. Officials at installations that we visited felt that maintaining such a position at the installation level would be beneficial in establishing long-term working relationships with the community. Accurate and timely information on such things as personnel residence areas and expected changes in demand for public services could better facilitate communities' efforts to accommodate installation growth. Further, effective communication throughout the growth process enables community and installation leaders to collaborate on solutions to the problems raised by installation growth.

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## Conclusions

DOD plays a significant role in communities across the country, and actions taken by the department and the military services to change force structure, composition, size, or distribution can have direct impacts on the communities where such actions are implemented. A decision to change the size or population of a base installation or to close it entirely affects the economy of the surrounding community. DOD has taken effective steps to aid both growth and closure communities during the BRAC process, however further efforts could prove useful.

Base closure presents many challenges for a surrounding community. The condition of the buildings that DOD no longer needs and plans to either sell or transfer to the communities has a direct effect on the development of a successful reuse plan or arrangement between the parties; if properties deteriorate during the closure transition time, they will

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have less value for the communities that acquire them. In the case of the Army, both installation officials and communities would benefit if there were clear Army guidance to govern the maintenance of facilities prior to their transfer to the community.

Installation growth can affect surrounding communities, creating new demands for transportation, education, and other social services. To meet these needs, community representatives stated that additional information could be helpful to facilitate planning efforts.

Finally, community leaders pointed out that having an established long-term point of contact with the military community on base to help see growth projects through to completion would also be helpful. Community representatives generally expressed satisfaction with the quality of DOD's support and regular interaction with community planners. However, the support and regular interaction that is so important to maintaining productive and efficient working relationships between communities and installations can be enhanced by taking steps to lessen the impact of changes in personnel such as those that occur with changes of station for military personnel. With DOD hoping to pursue more BRAC rounds in the future, actions that would further ease the transitions that communities face would be worthwhile.

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## Recommendations for Executive Action

To improve the ability of the Army and local communities to manage future base closures, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to issue, consistent with DOD guidance, guidance on specific levels of maintenance to be followed in the event of a base closure based on the probable reuse of the facilities.

To improve the ability of DOD and the local communities to respond to future growth actions, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force to consider developing a procedure for collecting service members' physical addresses while stationed at an installation, annually updating this information, and sharing aggregate information with community representatives relevant for local planning decisions, such as additional population per zip code, consistent with privacy and force protection concerns.

Furthermore, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force to consider creating or designating a civilian position at the installation level to be the focal point



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and provide continuity for community interaction for future growth installations and to consider expanding this position to all installations. This position may be a collateral duty.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In written comments on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with one recommendation and partially concurred with two recommendations. DOD concurred with our first recommendation to direct the Secretary of the Army to issue guidance on specific levels of maintenance to be followed in the event of a base closure, based on the probable reuse of the facilities. DOD stated that the Army agrees to publish property maintenance guidance prior to closing installations in the event of future base closures.

DOD partially concurred with our second recommendation to develop a procedure for collecting service members' physical addresses while stationed at an installation, annually updating this information, and sharing aggregate information with community representatives. DOD stated that it agrees that information pertaining to the physical location of installation personnel helps affected communities plan for housing, schools, transportation and other off-post requirements and that existing policy requires the military departments to share planning information, including base personnel, with states and communities. DOD also stated that in the event of future basing decisions affecting local communities, it will work with the military departments to assess and determine the best means to obtain, aggregate, and distribute this information to help ensure that adequate planning information is made available. We are pleased that DOD recognizes the importance of this information to community planners and plans to address this in the future. However, we believe that proactively determining the best means to provide such information, rather than assessing the problem should it arise due to future basing decisions, would reduce the challenges the department and affected communities face.

DOD partially concurred with our third recommendation to direct the Army and the Air Force to create or designate a civilian position at the installation level to be the focal point for community interaction for future growth installations, and consider expanding this position to all installations. DOD stated that it agrees with the need for a designated position at the installation level and will ensure that each military department is meeting this need through current practices. DOD also stated that many growth installation officials often already serve as "ex-officio members" of the community's growth management organizations,

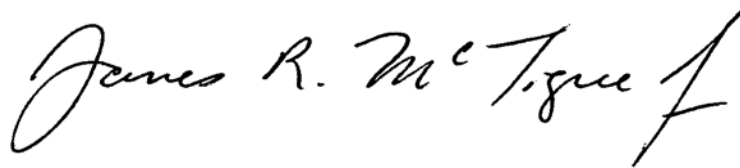
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and as we noted in our report, community officials agree that this has been quite valuable for both the department and affected growth communities. However, it is not clear from DOD's comments whether the department specifically agrees that installations should maintain a civilian rather than military position to fulfill the role of community liaison, and thus we reiterate our belief that creating or designating a civilian position would provide greater continuity over time than would assigning liaison responsibilities to a military servicemember. DOD's comments are printed in their entirety in appendix V.

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We are sending copies of this report to appropriate congressional committees, the Secretaries of Defense, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force; and the Director of the Office of Economic Adjustment. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-7968 or [mctiguej@gao.gov](mailto:mctiguej@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix VI.



James R. McTigue, Jr.  
Director  
Defense Capabilities and Management

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*List of Committees*

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman  
The Honorable James Inhofe  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate

The Honorable Tim Johnson  
Chairman  
The Honorable Mark Kirk  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

The Honorable Howard P. McKeon  
Chairman  
The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives

The Honorable John Culberson  
Chairman  
The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
House of Representatives

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# Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

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To identify communities experiencing installation closures and to compare their current economic indicators to national averages, we focused our review on the 23 major DOD installations closed in the BRAC 2005 round and their surrounding communities. For BRAC 2005, DOD defined major installation closures as those that had a plant replacement value exceeding \$100 million. We identified the major closure installations using DOD's information provided for our previously issued report on BRAC.<sup>1</sup> We defined the "community" surrounding each installation as the economic area identified in DOD's Base Closure and Realignment Report<sup>2</sup> which linked a metropolitan statistical area, a metropolitan division, or a micropolitan statistical area to each installation.<sup>3</sup> Because DOD's BRAC report did not identify the census area for the Galena Forward Operating Location in Alaska or the Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach Detachment in Concord, California, we identified the town of Galena as within the "Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area" and the city of Concord in the Oakland-Fremont-Hayward, CA Metropolitan Division and our analyses used the population and economic data for these areas. To compare the economic indicator data of the communities surrounding the 23 major DOD installations closed in the BRAC 2005 round to U.S. national averages, we collected and analyzed calendar year 2011 unemployment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and calendar year 2006 through 2011 per capita income growth data, along with data on inflation, from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), which we used to calculate real per capita income growth. The most current calendar year for which local area data was available from these databases was 2011. We assessed the reliability of these data by reviewing BLS and BEA documentation regarding the methods used by

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<sup>1</sup> [GAO-13-149](#).

<sup>2</sup> Department of Defense, *Base Closure and Realignment Report, Volume I, Part 1 of 2: Results and Process*, (May 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas (metro and micro areas) are geographic entities delineated by the Office of Management and Budget for use by Federal statistical agencies in collecting, tabulating, and publishing federal statistics. A metro area contains a core urban area of 50,000 or more population, and a micro area contains an urban core of at least 10,000 (but less than 50,000) population. Each metro or micro area consists of one or more counties and includes the counties containing the core urban area, as well as any adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration (as measured by commuting to work) with the urban core. A Metropolitan Division is used to refer to a county or group of counties within a Metropolitan Statistical Area that has a population core of at least 2.5 million. There are 11 Metropolitan Statistical Areas deemed large enough to be subdivided into metropolitan divisions.

each agency in producing their data and found the data to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes. We used unemployment and real per capita income as key performance indicators because (1) DOD used these measures in its community economic impact analysis during the BRAC location selection process and (2) economists commonly use these measures in assessing the economic health of an area over time. While our assessment provides an overall picture of how these communities compare with the national averages, it does not necessarily isolate the condition, or the changes in that condition, that may be attributed to a specific BRAC action.

To identify the installations that have experienced significant population increases since 2005 (“growth installations”) and their surrounding communities, we collected and analyzed available military service data regarding the personnel growth at 23 growth installations within the United States. We identified the major growth installations by using DOD’s information provided for our previously issued report on BRAC and OEA grant data.<sup>4</sup> We defined the “community” surrounding each installation as the community identified in DOD’s Base Closure and Realignment Report which linked a Metropolitan Statistical Area to each installation, supplemented with U.S. Bureau Census data as needed. To describe the populations of the 23 DOD growth installations and their surrounding communities, we collected and analyzed population data from the military services and the U.S. Census Bureau, respectively. In order to present information regarding expected growth at each military installation, we analyzed Army and Air Force headquarters-level data, and Navy and Marine Corps installation-level population data. We obtained and analyzed the installation population data for fiscal years 2006 and 2012, the most recent data available, for military and civilian personnel excluding dependents and nonmission-related contractors. We contacted cognizant Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force officials to gather and explain these data. We found this data to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes. We analyzed community population data for calendar years 2006 through 2011, the most recent data available. For the 2006 populations, we used the latest estimates available, which were from 2009. We assessed the reliability of the Census Bureau data by reviewing documentation regarding the methods used to produce the data. We assessed the reliability of the military service data by asking

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<sup>4</sup> [GAO-08-665](#).

service officials to answer a set of standard questions about the accuracy and completeness of the data including relevant data collection, storage, maintenance, and error-checking procedures. In addition, we conducted logic and computational checks on the data that the Army provided. We found all these data sources to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes. While our assessment provides an overall picture of how these installations and communities grew during this timeframe, it does not necessarily isolate the condition, or the changes in that condition, that may be attributed to a specific BRAC action.

To gain initial insight into the practices and strategies communities used to address installation closures and growth, we held two discussion group meetings with closure community representatives and two discussion group meetings with growth community representatives at the Association of Defense Communities Conference in August 2012 in Monterey, California. Officials from six closure communities and six growth communities participated in these groups. A discussion group protocol was developed to help the moderator gather information from these officials about the experiences of these communities. The protocol contained questions about challenges the communities had experienced, strategies that the communities have found successful in preparing for or dealing with installation closure or growth, and the type and quality of assistance they had received from multiple sources. Notes were taken by at least one, but usually multiple, GAO note-takers. Sessions were audio-recorded but recordings were used as a backup to written notes only. The results of these discussion groups cannot be generalized to all closure or growth communities, but common responses across groups and similar findings through the survey provide converging validation. We also conducted a survey of closure and growth communities, which is described in detail below. We also called and talked to several respondents by phone to clarify their answers to the survey and ask additional follow-up questions. Further, we collected data from OEA about the grants that they provided to closure and growth communities. We assessed the reliability of the OEA data by asking OEA officials to answer a set of standard questions about the accuracy and completeness of the data including relevant data collection, storage, maintenance, and error-checking procedures. We found these data to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes.

To gain additional insight into the practices and strategies communities used to address installation growth, we visited four locations representing each of the military departments: Camp Lejeune Marine Corp Base, North Carolina; Eglin Air Force Base, Florida; Fort Belvoir, Virginia; and Joint

Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. At each location we interviewed installation and local community officials regarding the communities' growth challenges and strategies.

To determine the extent to which DOD has provided support to communities to address base closure or growth, we discussed this issue with closure and growth community representatives individually and in the discussion groups described earlier and we interviewed DOD and service officials. We also surveyed closure and growth community representatives on their experiences and any areas where they felt they needed additional support or areas they considered adequate to support their needs. The survey is described in detail below. We also reviewed DOD and service guidance on DOD and the services' roles and responsibilities in the event of a base closure or growth.

To inform multiple objectives, we sent a survey to representatives of all 23 growth communities and 22 of the 23 closure communities to gather detailed information on the greatest challenges each community had experienced, successful strategies they had used to deal with change, and assistance and information they had received from federal sources. We did not send a survey to the Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant because the property was transferred from the U.S. Army to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, which did not require disposal through a local redevelopment authority.

The survey was implemented as a self-administered Microsoft Word form emailed to respondents. We sent e-mail notifications to community representatives beginning on November 5, 2012. We then sent the questionnaire and a cover e-mail to representatives on November 7, 2012 and asked them to fill in the questionnaire form and email it back to us within two weeks. To encourage respondents to complete the questionnaire, we sent e-mail message reminders and a replacement questionnaire to each non-respondent approximately one week and three weeks after the initial questionnaire was sent. We also made follow-up phone calls to non-respondents from December 11, 2012 to February 4, 2013. We closed the survey on February 19, 2013. Overall, we received 37 completed questionnaires for an overall response rate of 82.2 percent. Of those, 21 were from growth communities and 16 were from closure communities, for response rates of 91.3 percent and 72.7 percent, respectively.

To minimize errors that might occur from respondents interpreting our questions differently than we intended, we pretested our questionnaire

with four community officials (two from growth communities, two from closure communities) who were in positions similar to the respondents who would complete our actual survey. During these pretests, we asked the officials to complete the questionnaire as we observed the process and noted potential problems (two sessions were conducted in-person, two were conducted by phone). We then discussed the questions and instructions with the officials to check whether (1) the questions and instructions were clear and unambiguous, (2) the terms used were accurate, (3) the questionnaire was unbiased, (4) the questionnaire did not place an undue burden on the officials completing it, and (5) to identify potential solutions to any problems identified. We also submitted the questionnaire for review by an independent GAO survey specialist and two external reviewers who were experts on the topic of the survey (selected based on their experience with military installation closure and/or growth issues). We modified the questionnaire based on feedback from the pretests and reviews, as appropriate.

Because we attempted to collect data from every community rather than a sample of communities, there was no sampling error. However, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey may introduce errors, commonly referred to as non-sampling errors. For example, differences in how a particular question is interpreted, the sources of information available to respondents, how the responses were processed and analyzed, or the types of people who do not respond can influence the accuracy of the survey results. We took steps in the development of the survey, the data collection, and the data analysis to minimize these non-sampling errors and help ensure the accuracy of the answers that were obtained. For example, a social science survey specialist designed the questionnaire, in collaboration with GAO staff with subject matter expertise. Then, as noted earlier, the draft questionnaire was pretested to ensure that questions were relevant, clearly stated, and easy to comprehend. The questionnaire was also reviewed by external experts and an additional GAO survey specialist. Data were electronically extracted from the Word questionnaires into a comma-delimited file which was then imported into a statistical program for analyses. No manual data entry was performed, thereby removing an additional potential source of error. We examined the survey results and performed computer analyses to identify inconsistencies and other indications of error, and addressed such issues as necessary. Quantitative data analyses and the compilation of open-ended responses were conducted by the first GAO survey specialist using statistical software and working directly with GAO staff with subject matter expertise. An independent GAO data analyst checked the statistical computer programs for accuracy.



The verbatim wording of key survey questions whose results are discussed in this report is below:

**What have been your community's three greatest challenges in dealing with base closure or growth in your community?** Please list one challenge per box below. You can list up to three challenges in any order. (Response options provided: Three text boxes.)

**What successful strategies, if any, has your community used in dealing with the first challenge?** The box will expand as you type. (Response option provided: One text box.)

**Has your community received any financial, technical, or other assistance (e.g., networking assistance) from the Office of Economic Adjustment, the military services, or any other office within the Department of Defense (DOD) to deal with the first challenge you listed above? Please do not include any assistance you received from the Association of Defense Communities or any other agency or organization other than DOD.** (Response options provided: Checkboxes labeled "Yes", "No", and "Don't know.")

**If Yes, what assistance has your community received from the Office of Economic Adjustment, the military services, or any other office within DOD to deal with the first challenge you listed above?** (Response option provided: One text box.)

**In your opinion, did the Office of Economic Adjustment provide adequate assistance to address the first challenge you listed above?** (Response options provided: Checkboxes labeled "Yes", "No", and "Don't know.")

Responses to closed-ended (e.g., Yes/No) questions were summarized as standard descriptive statistics. Responses to open-ended questions were analyzed through content analysis. In conducting the content analysis, one GAO analyst reviewed each open-ended response from each community representative to identify recurring themes. Using the identified themes, the analyst then developed categories for coding the responses. A second GAO analyst reviewed each response from each community representative and reviewed the first analyst's themes and categories to reach concurrence on the themes and categories. Each of the two GAO analysts then independently reviewed the answers to each open-ended question and placed them into one or more of the categories. The analysts then compared their coding to identify any disagreements and reached agreement on all items through discussion.

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We conducted this performance audit from June 2012 to May 2013 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

# Appendix II: Major Installations Closed During 1988, 1991, 1993 BRAC Rounds

<b>Major DOD Installation</b>	<b>BRAC Round</b>
Army Material Tech Lab, MA	1988
Cameron Station, VA	1988
Chanute Air Force Base, IL	1988
Fort Douglas, UT	1988
Fort Sheridan, IL	1988
George Air Force Base, CA	1988
Jefferson Proving Ground, IN	1988
Lexington Army Depot, KY	1988
Mather Air Force Base, CA	1988
Naval Station Brooklyn, NY	1988
Naval Station Galveston, TX	1988
Naval Station Lake Charles, LA	1988
Norton Air Force Base, CA	1988
Pease Air Force Base, NH	1988
Philadelphia Naval Hospital, PA	1988
Presidio of San Francisco, CA	1988
Bergstrom Air Force Base, TX	1991
Carswell Air Force Base, TX	1991
Castle Air Force Base, CA	1991
Chase Field Naval Air Station, TX	1991
Eaker Air Force Base, AR	1991
England Air Force Base, LA	1991
Fort Benjamin Harrison, IN	1991
Fort Devens, MA	1991
Fort Ord, CA	1991
Grissom Air Force Base, IN	1991
Hunters Point Annex, CA	1991
Loring Air Force Base, ME	1991
Lowry Air Force Base, CO	1991
Moffett Naval Air Station, CA	1991
Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, SC	1991
Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Center San Diego, CA	1991
Naval Station Long Beach, CA	1991
Naval Station Philadelphia, PA	1991
Naval Station Puget Sound, WA	1991
Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, PA	1991
Richards-Gebaur Air Reserve Station, MO	1991

**Appendix II: Major Installations Closed During  
1988, 1991, 1993 BRAC Rounds**

<b>Major DOD Installation</b>	<b>BRAC Round</b>
Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, OH	1991
Sacramento Army Depot, CA	1991
Tustin Marine Corps Air Station, CA	1991
Williams Air Force Base, AZ	1991
Wurtsmith Air Force Base, MI	1991
Charleston Naval Shipyard, SC	1993
Defense Personnel Support Center, PA	1993
Gentile Air Force Station, OH	1993
Homestead Air Force Base, FL	1993
K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, MI	1993
Mare Island Naval Shipyard, CA	1993
Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, CA	1993
Naval Air Station Agana, Guam	1993
Naval Air Station Alameda, CA	1993
Naval Air Station Barbers Point, HI	1993
Naval Air Station Cecil Field, FL	1993
Naval Air Station Dallas, TX	1993
Naval Air Station Glenview, IL	1993
Naval Aviation Depot Alameda, CA	1993
Naval Aviation Depot Norfolk, VA	1993
Naval Aviation Depot Pensacola, FL	1993
Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Center St. Inigoes, MD	1993
Naval Hospital Oakland, CA	1993
Naval Station Charleston, SC	1993
Naval Station Mobile, AL	1993
Naval Station Staten Island, NY	1993
Naval Station Treasure Island, CA	1993
Naval Training Center Orlando, FL	1993
Naval Training Center San Diego, CA	1993
Newark Air Force Base, OH	1993
O'Hare International Airport Air Reserve Station, IL	1993
Plattsburgh Air Force Base, NY	1993
Vint Hill Farms, VA	1993
Bayonne Military Ocean Terminal, NJ	1995
Bergstrom Air Reserve Base, TX	1995
Defense Distribution Depot Memphis, TN	1995
Defense Distribution Depot Ogden, UT	1995

**Appendix II: Major Installations Closed During  
1988, 1991, 1993 BRAC Rounds**

<b>Major DOD Installation</b>	<b>BRAC Round</b>
Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, CO	1995
Fleet Industrial Supply Center Oakland, CA	1995
Fort Chaffee, AR	1995
Fort Holabird, MD	1995
Fort Indiantown Gap, PA	1995
Fort McClellan, AL	1995
Fort Pickett, VA	1995
Fort Ritchie, MD	1995
McClellan Air Force Base, CA	1995
Naval Air Facility Adak, AK	1995
Naval Air Station South Weymouth, MA	1995
Naval Air Warfare Center, Aircraft Division, Indianapolis, IN	1995
Naval Air Warfare Center, Aircraft Division, Warminster, PA	1995
Naval Shipyard Long Beach, CA	1995
Naval Surface Warfare Center, Crane Division Detachment, Louisville, KY	1995
Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division Detachment, White Oak, MD	1995
Oakland Army Base, CA	1995
Ontario International Airport Air Guard Station, CA	1995
Reese Air Force Base, TX	1995
Roslyn Air Guard Station, NY	1995
Savanna Army Depot Activity, IL	1995
Seneca Army Depot, NY	1995
Ship Repair Facility, Guam	1995

Source: DOD.

# Appendix III: Locations of Major Installations Closed in BRAC 2005 and Their Corresponding Economic Areas

Closure Installation	Locality	Economic Area[a]
<b>Army</b>		
Deseret Chemical Depot, UT	Tooele, UT	Salt Lake City, UT Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Gillem, GA	Forest Park, GA	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort McPherson, GA	Atlanta, GA	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Monmouth, NJ	Eatontown, NJ	Edison, NJ Metropolitan Division
Fort Monroe, VA	Hampton, VA	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC Metropolitan Statistical Area
Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, KS	Parsons, KS	Parsons, KS Micropolitan Statistical Area
Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant, TX	Texarkana, TX	Texarkana, TX-Texarkana, AR Metropolitan Statistical Area
Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant, MS	Hancock County, MS	Picayune, MS Micropolitan Statistical Area
Newport Chemical Depot, IN	Newport, IN	Terre Haute, IN Metropolitan Statistical Area
Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant, CA	Riverbank, CA	Modesto, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area
Selfridge Army Activity, MI	Chesterfield Township, MI	Warren-Farmington Hills-Troy, MI Metropolitan Division
Umatilla Chemical Depot, OR	Hermiston, OR	Pendleton-Hermiston, OR Micropolitan Statistical Area
<b>Navy</b>		
Naval Air Station Atlanta, GA	Marietta, GA	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA Metropolitan Statistical Area
Naval Air Station Brunswick, ME	Brunswick, ME	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME Metropolitan Statistical Area
Naval Air Station Willow Grove, PA	Horsham, PA	Philadelphia, PA Metropolitan Division
Naval Station Ingleside, TX	Ingleside, TX	Corpus Christi, TX Metropolitan Statistical Area
Naval Station Pascagoula, MS	Pascagoula, MS	Pascagoula, MS Metropolitan Statistical Area
Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach Concord Detachment, CA	Concord, CA	Oakland-Fremont-Hayward, CA Metropolitan Division

**Appendix III: Locations of Major Installations  
Closed in BRAC 2005 and Their Corresponding  
Economic Areas**

<b>Closure Installation</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>Economic Area[a]</b>
<b>Air Force</b>		
Brooks City-Base, TX	San Antonio, TX	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX Metropolitan Statistical Area
Galena Forward Operating Location, AK	Galena, AK	Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area
General Mitchell Air Reserve Station, WI	Milwaukee, WI	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI Metropolitan Statistical Area
Kulis Air Guard Station, AK	Anchorage, AK	Anchorage, AK Metropolitan Statistical Area
Onizuka Air Force Station, CA	Sunnyvale, CA	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area

Source: DOD and community data.

Note: a We identified the economic area using DOD's Base Closure and Realignment Report which linked a Metropolitan Statistical Area, a Metropolitan Division, or a Micropolitan Statistical Area to each installation. Because DOD's BRAC report did not identify the census area for the Galena Forward Operating Location in Alaska, we identified the town of Galena as within the "Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area" and the city of Concord in the Oakland-Fremont-Hayward, CA Metropolitan Division and our analyses used the population and economic data for these areas.

# Appendix IV: Locations of Major DOD Growth Installations in BRAC 2005 and Their Corresponding Economic Areas

Growth Installation	Locality	Economic Area
<b>Army</b>		
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD	Aberdeen, MD	Baltimore-Towson, MD Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Belvoir, VA	Fairfax County, VA	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Division
Fort Benning, GA	Cusseta, GA	Columbus, GA-AL Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Bliss, TX	El Paso, TX	El Paso, TX Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Bragg, NC	Fayetteville, NC	Fayetteville, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Carson, CO	Colorado Springs, CO	Colorado Springs, CO Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Drum, NY	Watertown, NY	Watertown-Fort Drum, NY Micropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Knox, KY	Radcliff, KY	Elizabethtown, KY Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Lee, VA	Hopewell, Petersburg and Colonial Heights, VA	Richmond, VA Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Meade, MD	Odenton, Laurel, Columbia and Jessup Counties, MD	Baltimore-Towson, MD Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Polk, LA	Leesville, LA	Fort Polk South, LA Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Riley, KS	Junction City, Ogden, and Manhattan, KS	Manhattan, KS, Micropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Sill, OK	Lawton, OK	Lawton, OK Metropolitan Statistical Area
Fort Stewart, GA	Hinesville, GA	Hinesville- Fort Stewart, GA Metropolitan Statistical Area
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA	Lakewood, WA	Tacoma, WA Metropolitan Division
Redstone Arsenal, AL	Huntsville AL	Huntsville AL Metropolitan Statistical Area
<b>Navy</b>		
Marine Corps Camp Lejeune, NC	Jacksonville and Havelock, NC	Jacksonville, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area
Marine Corps Air Station New River, NC	Jacksonville and Havelock, NC	Jacksonville, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area



**Appendix IV: Locations of Major DOD Growth Installations in BRAC 2005 and Their Corresponding Economic Areas**

<b>Growth Installation</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>Economic Area</b>
Marine Corps Base, Quantico, VA	Triangle, VA	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Division
Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC	Jacksonville and Havelock, NC	New Bern, NC Micropolitan Statistical Area
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, MD	Bethesda, MD	Bethesda-Rockville-Frederick, MD Metropolitan Division
<b>Air Force</b>		
Joint Base San Antonio, TX	San Antonio, TX	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX Metropolitan Statistical Area
Andrews Air Force Base, MD	Prince George's County, MD	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Division
Cannon Air Force Base, NM	Clovis, NM	Clovis, NM Micropolitan Statistical Area
Eglin Air Force Base, FL	Shalimar, Niceville, Valparaiso and Fort Walton Beach, FL	Crestview -Fort Walton Beach- -Destin, FL Metropolitan Statistical Area

Source: DOD and community data.

Note: We identified the economic area using DOD's Base Closure and Realignment Report which linked a Metropolitan Statistical Area, a Metropolitan Division, or a Micropolitan Statistical Area to each installation

# Appendix V: Comments from the Department of Defense



ACQUISITION,  
TECHNOLOGY  
AND LOGISTICS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
3000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3000

APR 26 2013

Mr. James R. McTigue, Jr.  
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. McTigue:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO draft report, GAO-13-436, "DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE: Communities Need Additional Guidance and Information to Improve Their Ability to Adjust to DoD Installation Closure or Growth," dated March 26, 2013 (GAO Code 351734). Detailed comments on the report recommendations are enclosed.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft report. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Joan Sigler at 703-697-2139 or joan.sigler@wso.whs.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Conger".

John Conger  
Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense  
(Installations and Environment)

Enclosure:  
As stated

GAO Draft Report Dated March 26, 2013  
GAO-13-436 (GAO CODE 351734)

**“DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE: COMMUNITIES NEED ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE  
AND INFORMATION TO IMPROVE THEIR ABILITY TO ADJUST TO DOD  
INSTALLATION CLOSURE OR GROWTH”**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS  
TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATION**

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to issue, consistent with DoD guidance, guidance on specific levels of maintenance to be followed in the event of a base closure based on the probable reuse of the facilities.

**DoD RESPONSE:** Concur. The Army agrees to publish property maintenance guidance prior to closing installations in the event of future base closures.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force consider developing a procedure for collecting service members' physical addresses while stationed at an installation, annually updating this information, and sharing aggregate information with community representatives relevant for local planning decisions, such as additional population per zip code, consistent with privacy and force protection concerns.

**DoD RESPONSE:** Partially concur. The Department agrees that information pertaining to the physical location of installation personnel helps affected communities plan for housing, schools, transportation and other off-post requirements in support of our installations. Existing policy requires the Military Departments to provide planning information, including base personnel, to states and communities to support the establishment or expansion of a military base. In the event of future basing decisions affecting local communities, the Department will work with the Military Departments to assess and determine the best means to obtain, aggregate, and distribute this information to help ensure adequate planning information is made available.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force to consider creating or designating a civilian position at the installation level to be the focal point and provide continuity for community interaction for future growth installations and to consider expanding this position to all installations. This position may be a collateral duty.

**DoD RESPONSE:** Partially concur. The Department agrees with the need for a designated position at the installation level to work with the community and will ensure this requirement is being met through current practices and in accordance with each Military Department's personnel system. In many of the growth impacted communities, installation officials serve as ex-officio members of the community's growth management organization and relevant installation staff, including those engaged with public works, housing, education, and land use planning, and coordinate as needed with their civilian community counterparts.

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# Appendix VI: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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## GAO Contact

James R. McTigue, Jr., (202) 512-7968 or [mctiguej@gao.gov](mailto:mctiguej@gao.gov).

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## Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Laura Durland, Assistant Director; Bonita Anderson; Leslie Bharadwaja; Timothy Carr; Mary Jo LaCasse; Gregory Marchand; Michael Silver; and Erik Wilkins-McKee made key contributions to this report.

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# Related GAO Products

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*Defense Infrastructure: Improved Guidance Needed for Estimating Alternatively Financed Project Liabilities.* [GAO-13-337](#). Washington, D.C.: April 18, 2013.

*Military Bases: Opportunities Exist to Improve Future Base Realignment and Closure Rounds.* [GAO-13-149](#). Washington, D.C.: March 7, 2013.

*DOD Joint Bases: Management Improvements Needed to Achieve Greater Efficiencies.* [GAO-13-134](#). Washington, D.C.: November 15, 2012.

*Military Base Realignments and Closures: The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's Technology Center Construction Project.* [GAO-12-770R](#). Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2012.

*Military Base Realignments and Closures: Updated Costs and Savings Estimates from BRAC 2005.* [GAO-12-709R](#). Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2012.

*Military Base Realignments and Closures: Key Factors Contributing to BRAC 2005 Results.* [GAO-12-513T](#). Washington, D.C.: March 8, 2012.

*Excess Facilities: DOD Needs More Complete Information and a Strategy to Guide Its Future Disposal Efforts.* [GAO-11-814](#). Washington, D.C.: September 19, 2011.

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*GAO's 2011 High-Risk Series: An Update.* [GAO-11-394T](#). Washington, D.C.: February 17, 2011.

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*Military Base Realignments and Closures: DOD Is Taking Steps to Mitigate Challenges but Is Not Fully Reporting Some Additional Costs.* [GAO-10-725R](#). Washington, D.C.: July 21, 2010.

*Defense Infrastructure: Army Needs to Improve Its Facility Planning Systems to Better Support Installations Experiencing Significant Growth.* [GAO-10-602](#). Washington, D.C.: June 24, 2010.

*Military Base Realignment and Closures: Estimated Costs Have Increased While Savings Estimates Have Decreased Since Fiscal Year 2009.* [GAO-10-98R](#). Washington, D.C.: November 13, 2009.

*Military Base Realignment and Closures: Transportation Impact of Personnel Increases Will Be Significant, but Long-Term Costs Are Uncertain and Direct Federal Support Is Limited.* [GAO-09-750](#). Washington, D.C.: September 9, 2009.

*Military Base Realignment and Closures: DOD Needs to Update Savings Estimates and Continue to Address Challenges in Consolidating Supply-Related Functions at Depot Maintenance Locations.* [GAO-09-703](#). Washington, D.C.: July 9, 2009.

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*Military Base Realignment and Closures: Army Is Developing Plans to Transfer Functions from Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, but Challenges Remain.* [GAO-08-1010R](#). Washington, D.C.: August 13, 2008.

*Defense Infrastructure: High-Level Leadership Needed to Help Communities Address Challenges Caused by DOD-Related Growth.* [GAO-08-665](#). Washington, D.C.: June 17, 2008.

*Defense Infrastructure: DOD Funding for Infrastructure and Road Improvements Surrounding Growth Installations.* [GAO-08-602R](#). Washington, D.C.: April 1, 2008.

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*Defense Infrastructure: Realignment of Air Force Special Operations Command Units to Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico.* [GAO-08-244R](#). Washington, D.C.: January 18, 2008.

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*Military Base Realignment and Closures: Impact of Terminating, Relocating, or Outsourcing the Services of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.* [GAO-08-20](#). Washington, D.C.: November 9, 2007.

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