

July 1999

DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE

Observations on Aviation Training Consolidation and Expansion Plans



GAO

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United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

**National Security and
International Affairs Division**

B-281048

July 12, 1999

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
The Honorable Jeff Sessions
The Honorable Bob Graham
The Honorable Connie Mack
United States Senate

The Honorable Terry Everett
The Honorable Joe Scarborough
House of Representatives

This report responds to your requests concerning Department of Defense (DOD) efforts to reduce the infrastructure that supports initial pilot training. We previously briefed your staffs on our preliminary observations, which were based on interviews with cognizant DOD and service officials. This report summarizes the information we obtained regarding (1) DOD's prior efforts to reduce aircraft training infrastructure, (2) some current plans for expanding pilot training capacity, and (3) the likelihood of further consolidations.

Results in Brief

Little consolidation activity followed a 1993 directive by the Secretary of Defense that required the services to consolidate initial fixed-wing aircraft training and examine the potential for consolidating initial helicopter training at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Consolidation efforts were limited to phasing in a common primary training aircraft, combining follow-on flight training into four common tracks, and exchanging instructors and students. No further consolidation of fixed-wing undergraduate pilot training or rotary-wing undergraduate helicopter pilot training was implemented.

Currently, the Air Force is expanding its capabilities for undergraduate pilot training because it projects shortages through at least fiscal year 2007 and, therefore, it has increased its estimates of the number of new pilots it must train. The Air Force is increasing its training capabilities by activating additional squadrons at three of its existing pilot training bases and establishing an additional undergraduate pilot training squadron at an operational base. Increased navigator requirements have also led the Air Force to expand its capabilities to provide navigator training.

Cross-service consolidations, where feasible, can reduce excess capacity and increase operating efficiencies. Prior base realignment and closure (BRAC) rounds have served to reduce the number of bases used to provide aviation training; however, efforts to achieve such cross-service consolidations as part of the BRAC process have not been successful. Further consolidation of aviation training between the services may be difficult to accomplish without authority from the Congress for additional BRAC round(s).¹ Should such authority be granted, DOD would likely examine the potential for cross-service consolidations in a number of areas, including aviation training, as it did in prior BRAC rounds. Such an examination in the aviation training area would need to address a number of barriers to consolidation that exist, including (1) the services' differing approaches to their training and (2) the interrelationships among training approaches, personnel management, and career development strategies.

Should the Congress authorize additional BRAC rounds and should DOD find existing barriers to additional consolidations too difficult to overcome, we are making a recommendation to the Secretary of Defense for optimizing efficiencies at bases retained for aviation training.

Background

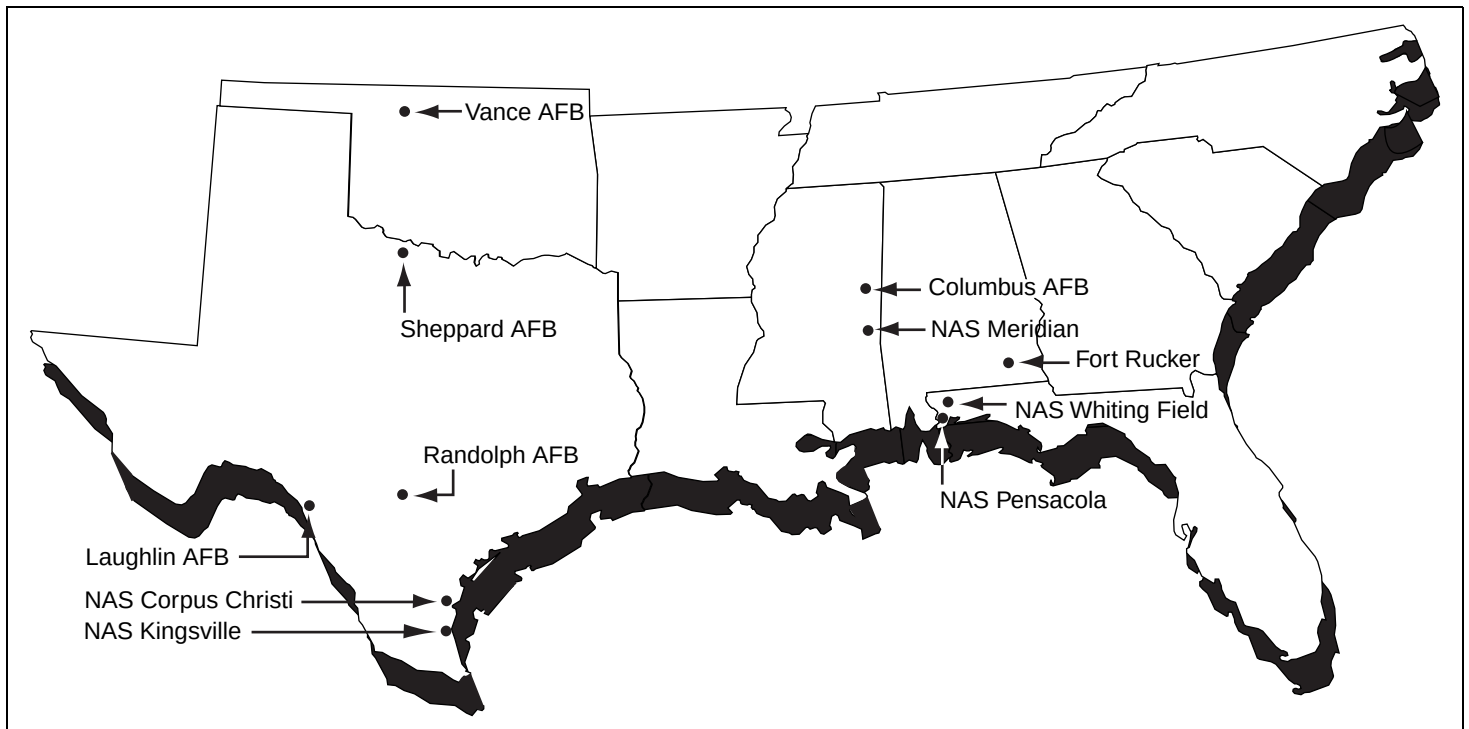
Military pilots who fly either fixed- or rotary-wing aircraft typically receive about 1 year of undergraduate pilot training. Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard helicopter pilots receive initial training in a fixed-wing aircraft, but Army helicopter pilots do not. After completing their undergraduate pilot training and receiving their wings, graduates from all services receive advanced training and are then assigned to an operational unit.

Since the mid-1960s, a number of studies have examined the potential for consolidating initial fixed- and rotary-wing pilot training. Many of the studies cited the potential for savings as a product of such consolidations. Independently of these studies, the military services have gradually reduced the infrastructure for their undergraduate aviation training as a result of downsizing and the base closure process. Whereas the services had 19 undergraduate training bases in 1970, today there are 10 fixed-wing undergraduate pilot training (UPT) bases and 2 undergraduate helicopter

¹The Secretary of Defense's authority to realign and close bases in 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995 terminated in 1995. Currently, it is unclear if and when the Congress might approve similar legislation for additional BRAC rounds.

pilot training (UHPT) bases. Figure 1 shows the bases that constitute the Department's UPT and UHPT infrastructure.

Figure 1: Military Services' UPT and UHPT Infrastructure



Source: DOD.

As shown in figure 1, the Air Force's five undergraduate flying training bases are Columbus Air Force Base (AFB), Mississippi; Laughlin AFB, Texas; Randolph AFB, Texas; Sheppard AFB, Texas; and Vance AFB, Oklahoma.² The Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard collectively have five UPT bases: Naval Air Station (NAS) Corpus Christi, Texas; NAS Kingsville, Texas; NAS Meridian, Mississippi; NAS Pensacola, Florida; and NAS Whiting Field, Florida. NAS Whiting Field also serves as the Navy/Marine Corps/Coast Guard UHPT training base. Air Force

²The Air Force currently uses two additional facilities for screening new pilot candidates: Hondo Municipal Airport in Hondo, Texas, and the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Flight screening provides the Air Force with a selection process to identify students possessing the potential to complete undergraduate pilot training.

undergraduate helicopter pilot training is collocated with Army helicopter training at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

In 1993, the Secretary of Defense directed the Air Force and the Navy to consolidate initial fixed-wing aircraft training and directed the Army and the Navy to examine the potential for consolidating initial helicopter training at Fort Rucker, Alabama. The directive also required the services to phase in a common primary training aircraft, combine follow-on flight training into four common training pipelines or tracks, and exchange instructors and students.

During the BRAC 1993 and BRAC 1995 rounds, the Office of the Secretary of Defense also required the services to explore opportunities for cross-service use of common support assets in several areas, including the area of undergraduate pilot training. To facilitate this process in BRAC 1995, DOD established separate working groups in each of the cross-service areas. The groups proposed alternatives for the services to consider. The cross-service process examined an option for housing Army and Navy undergraduate helicopter pilot training at Fort Rucker, Alabama, but the option was not adopted because it was not considered cost-effective.³ Separately, in the fixed-wing training area, one UPT base—Reese AFB, Texas—was closed as a result of BRAC 1995 actions. By 1997, the 64th Flying Training Wing at Reese AFB had been inactivated and its assigned aircraft redistributed to other Air Force UPT bases or retired.

DOD Efforts to Reduce Undergraduate Aviation Training Infrastructure Have Been Limited

Although the Secretary of Defense directed the services to consolidate initial fixed-wing aircraft training and examine the potential for consolidating initial helicopter training, only limited steps were taken.⁴ These steps included phasing in a common primary training aircraft, creating four common pipelines or training tracks for follow-on training, and exchanging instructor pilots and students. Consolidation efforts involving helicopter training have also been limited and are expected to remain so for the foreseeable future.

³The option under consideration was best depicted as involving a collocation rather than a full consolidation.

⁴These represented steps that could be taken outside of a BRAC process.

Services Plan to Phase in a
Common Primary
Fixed-Wing Training Aircraft

The Air Force and the Navy will replace the T-37B and T-34C training aircraft with a Joint Primary Aircraft Training System (JPATS)⁵ (see fig. 2). JPATS includes a new common training aircraft, the T-6A “Texan II” aircraft, which will be phased in for all initial fixed-wing training beginning in fiscal year 2001. Although the Air Force and the Navy developed a common JPATS syllabus, the services plan to implement the training differently. For example, Air Force and Navy takeoff and landing procedures and aerial maneuver tactics are different.

⁵JPATS includes the training syllabus, computer-management system, training simulators, training aircraft, and ground-based training equipment.

Figure 2: T-6A “Texan II” JPATS, Air Force T-37B “Tweet,” and Navy T-34C “Turbo-Mentor” Training Aircraft (pictured from top to bottom)



Source: NAS Whiting Field, Florida.

Cost savings associated with JPATS are expected to result from joint development and production, joint procurement, and lower flying hour cost. Savings from JPATS are also expected from reducing the training “footprint” (procurement and associated flying hour cost) of the Navy’s T-45 advanced trainer aircraft, limiting support facility requirements to one

depot and one source for parts and support, and consolidating operations and logistics services management responsibilities. The specific savings associated with JPATS have not been quantified.

Services Created Four Common Training Tracks for Undergraduate Pilot Training

As directed by the Secretary of Defense in 1993, the services created four common training tracks in fiscal year 1994 for advanced undergraduate pilot training. Each track is divided into three building-block levels of training: primary, intermediate, and advanced. After a screening process to select student pilots, a preflight (non-flying) training period, and a primary fixed-wing training period, Air Force students are assigned to one of four advanced Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training tracks. The four tracks are: (1) airlift, tanker, or bomber; (2) fighter; (3) multi-engine turboprop; and (4) helicopter. Having successfully completed advanced training, student pilots receive their wings and are selected for their next assignment. Similarly, after a period of aviation preflight indoctrination and primary fixed-wing training, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard students are assigned to one of four intermediate UPT tracks: (1) jet aircraft, (2) carrier prop aircraft, (3) helicopter, and (4) maritime/surveillance. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard students then move into advanced UPT training in these same four tracks. Again, after completing advanced undergraduate pilot training, student pilots receive their wings and specialized aircraft training in their follow-on assignment.

Service Exchange of Instructor Pilots and Students for Fixed-Wing Training

The Air Force and the Navy agreed to exchange instructor pilots beginning in fiscal year 1993 and agreed to exchange up to 200 students beginning in fiscal year 1994. Currently, up to 100 Air Force students are trained by the Navy and up to 100 Navy students are trained by the Air Force during the primary flying phase of Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training. Air Force and Navy officials said even though joint training (an exchange of students) among the services costs somewhat more than the services training separately, it provides intangible benefits in terms of commonality.⁶ Air Force and Navy officials said they plan to reevaluate whether to expand the number of students trained jointly once JPATS has been fielded.

⁶The limited exchange of Air Force and Navy students actually costs DOD an additional \$1.3 million annually, primarily in permanent-change-of-station costs.

Undergraduate Helicopter Pilot Training Consolidation

Most helicopter pilot training takes place in the Army and the Navy. DOD has had only two undergraduate helicopter pilot training sites since the Army closed Fort Wolters, Texas, in 1973: NAS Whiting Field, Florida, and Fort Rucker, Alabama. In fiscal year 1999, the Army plans to train 700 active helicopter pilots at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and the Navy plans to train 530 active helicopter pilots at Whiting Field, Florida. The Air Force plans to train only 53 active helicopter pilots in fiscal year 1999; this training is collocated with the Army at Fort Rucker.

The services' total rotary-wing pilot production dropped considerably (about 50 percent) between fiscal years 1991 and 1997, from 2,081 helicopter pilots to 1,046. DOD plans a nearly 17-percent increase in helicopter pilot production, from 1,318 in fiscal year 1998 to a projected 1,545 helicopter pilots trained in fiscal year 2000.

Navy officials are opposed to consolidating helicopter pilot training with the Army for a number of reasons. Chief among these is the importance that the Navy places on initial fixed-wing training, flying over water, and landing on ships. The Army does not include fixed-wing aircraft training in its helicopter pilot training syllabus, but the Navy wants all of its pilots to learn the fundamental rules of flight in fixed-wing aircraft before moving on to helicopter training in intermediate and advanced undergraduate flight training. This initial fixed-wing training provides general aviation orientation and allows Navy trainers to evaluate student aptitudes and capabilities for placement into one of four advanced undergraduate training tracks.

Typically, the Army does not train over water; its focus is training over land, where it expects most of its pilots will operate once assigned to operational units. In addition, the Army trains its helicopter pilots to fly using night vision equipment routinely and to carry out combat operations. Navy and Marine Corps helicopter crews operate, however, in a maritime environment, and Navy officials believe it is essential that its undergraduate pilots train to navigate over water and to land on ships. Moreover, the Navy's focus is on training its pilots to become uniquely qualified naval officers to assume leadership roles.

Increasing the Number of Students to Meet Fixed-Wing Undergraduate Pilot and Navigator Training Requirements

Currently, increasing the number of students to meet pilot requirements in the Air Force has caused that service to expand rather than reduce its own capabilities for fixed-wing training. Likewise, increasing the inventory of navigators is causing the Air Force to expand its capabilities for providing navigator training.

Fixed-Wing Training Expansion

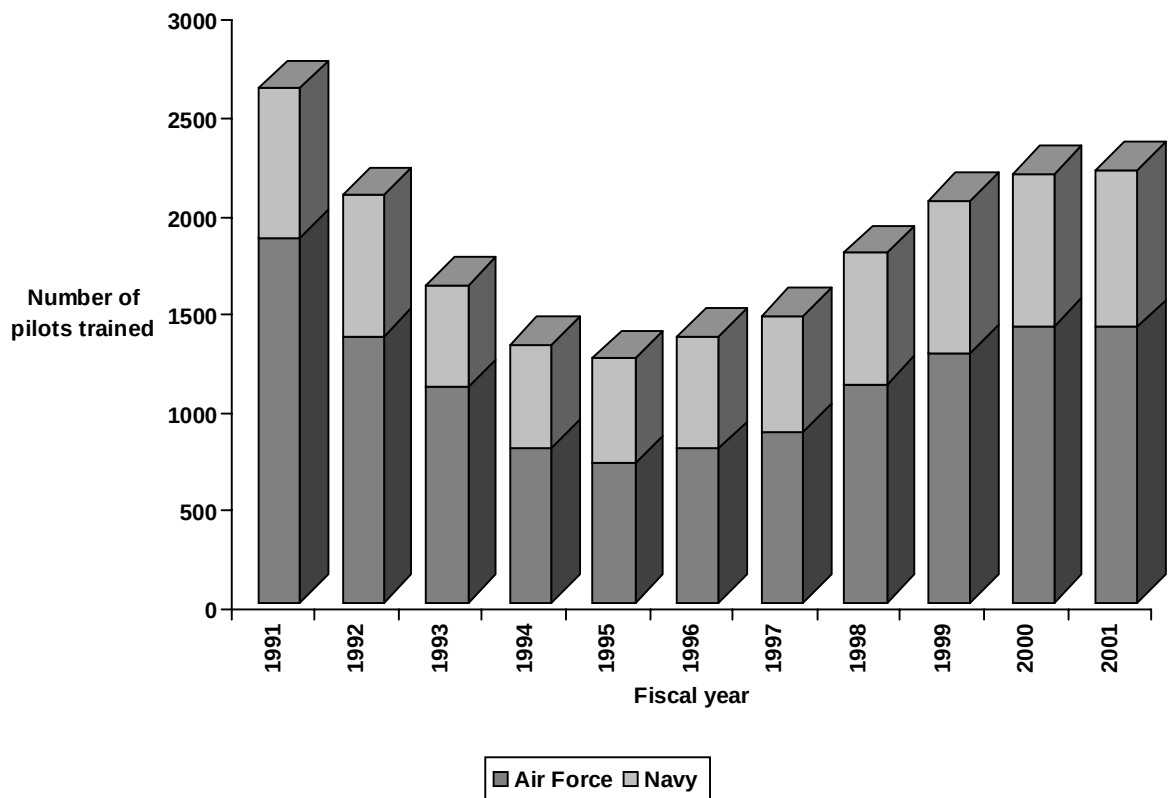
Since 1988, the Air Force has reduced its UPT infrastructure by three bases as a result of past base closure actions, but Air Force officials now believe that production rate requirements for future pilots will require an expansion of UPT capabilities at existing bases. This development may limit the potential for further fixed-wing consolidation.

Two key factors have contributed to the reported pilot shortfalls. First, during the drawdown in the 1990s, the services reduced their pilot accessions. This action has unintentionally resulted in insufficient numbers of pilots to support the current force, and it is driving the need to retain more pilots. Second, pilots are unhappy with a number of quality-of-life factors. For example, pilots reported several reasons for wanting to leave the military, including (1) frequency and length of deployments, (2) improved family life, and (3) better financial opportunities outside of the military. Further, a good job market is making a career within private industry more attractive.⁷

As shown in figure 3, the services' fixed-wing pilot production dropped significantly (about 53 percent) between fiscal years 1991 and 1995, from 2,616 pilots to 1,241. The biggest changes occurred in the Air Force, where the fixed-wing pilot production rate dropped sharply in fiscal year 1992 and continued to drop through fiscal year 1995. Since BRAC 1995, the Air Force has increased its pilot production rate four times. The Navy also experienced major reductions in fixed-wing pilot production between fiscal years 1991 and 1993, but similarly reversed the trend. DOD plans nearly a 50-percent increase in pilot production, from 1,458 in fiscal year 1997 to a projected 2,180 pilots trained in fiscal year 2000.

⁷See Military Pilots: Observations on Current Issues (GAO/T-NSIAD-99-102, Mar. 4, 1999).

Figure 3: Services' Fixed-Wing Pilot Production Rates



Note: Figures for fiscal years 1991 to 1998 are actual; figures for fiscal years 1999 to 2001 are projected. Air Force totals include active Air Force, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve Component, Air Force-trained Navy students, Euro-North Atlantic Treaty Organization Joint Jet Pilot Training program participants, and foreign student pilots who received their wings. Navy totals include active Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, Navy-trained Air Force students, and foreign student pilots who graduated from fixed-wing training.

Source: Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas, and Chief of Naval Air Training, NAS Corpus Christi, Texas.

We recently testified that the Air Force projects that its greatest pilot shortfall, particularly within its fighter community, will occur in fiscal year 2007.⁸ Navy data show that its greatest pilot shortfall was in fiscal year

⁸Military Pilots (GAO/T-NSIAD-99-102, Mar. 4, 1999).

1998 and was primarily among those pilots who fly helicopters, followed by those who fly propeller aircraft and jets.

According to Air Education and Training Command officials, increases since fiscal year 1996 in Air Force total production rate requirements for fixed-wing pilots have resulted in a capacity shortfall within their existing UPT base infrastructure. The Air Force believes that it currently has a pilot production requirement for four new UPT squadrons. In March 1999, it announced that three additional T-37 UPT squadrons will be activated in fiscal year 1999 (at Columbus AFB, Mississippi; Laughlin AFB, Texas; and at Vance AFB, Oklahoma) and that a fourth UPT squadron of 39 T-6A JPATS aircraft will be established in fiscal year 2000 (at Moody AFB, Georgia, an operational base). Based on increasing requirements, the Air Force, then, is not inclined to further consolidate its UPT infrastructure, but rather to increase its UPT training capabilities.

Joint Undergraduate Navigator Training Program Is Being Modified

As a result of the 1993 Secretary of Defense directive, the Navy and the Air Force proposed joint navigator training initiatives. Accordingly, the Air Force and the Navy have conducted joint primary navigator training since fiscal year 1995. However, a recent increase in total Air Force navigator-training requirements from 300 navigators in fiscal year 1997 to 360 navigators by fiscal year 2001 is causing a modification to an undergraduate program for navigator training sponsored jointly by the Air Force and the Navy.

In fiscal year 1999, the Navy provided 317 Air Force students with strike/strike-fighter/electronic warfare officer navigator training at NAS Pensacola, Florida, and the Air Force provided 160 Navy and Marine Corps students with airlift/tanker/maritime navigator training at Randolph AFB, Texas. However, in fiscal year 2001, the Air Force plans to reduce navigator training conducted by the Navy at NAS Pensacola by more than two-thirds, to about 105 students, and to train the balance of its navigators at Randolph AFB. This functional alignment is necessary due both to Navy-unique training that increases Air Force navigator time-to-train and to potential capacity issues. In addition, the training platform (the T-43A—the military version of the Boeing 737) for “heavy” aircraft (such as airlift, tankers, and surveillance aircraft) already is located at Randolph AFB.

Outlook for Further Consolidations

Additional consolidations of aviation training among the services would likely entail shifting significant functions from one base to another, a step that may be difficult to achieve absent new authority from the Congress for additional BRAC actions. Should such authority be granted, which is uncertain, DOD would likely want to examine the potential for cross-service consolidations in a number of areas, including aviation training, as it did in prior BRAC rounds. Such an examination in the aviation training area would need to address a number of barriers to consolidation that exist, including (1) the services' approaches to their training and (2) the interrelationships among training approaches, personnel management, and career development strategies. Given these factors, the services might need to consider other options for maximizing operating efficiencies at bases being used for aviation training.

BRAC Authority Required to Facilitate Significant Realignments and Closures

Typically, infrastructure reduction savings are the greatest when bases can be closed. Economies also are achieved by consolidating functions and activities on other bases where excess capacity exists and where support services and other base operating support costs can be shared among a broader universe of personnel. However, under existing legislation (contained in 10 U.S.C. 2687), realignment and closure actions are difficult to accomplish. Under this legislation, the closure of any military installation in the United States with at least 300 authorized civilian positions or the realignment of any installation involving a reduction by more than 1,000 civilian employees or by more than 50 percent of the installation's authorized civilian workforce cannot take place until the Secretary of Defense has evaluated the "fiscal, local economic, budgetary, environmental, strategic, and operational consequences of such closure or realignment." Legislation in effect through 1995 provided special authorities and processes to facilitate base realignments and closures above those thresholds. Absent the special BRAC legislation enacted in 1988 and 1990, DOD largely has been precluded from significant closures and realignments of military bases for many years—the 1990 legislation authorized BRAC rounds in 1991, 1993, and 1995, but not thereafter. While DOD subsequently has sought authorization from the Congress for additional BRAC rounds, the Congress has thus far not supported such legislation because of concerns regarding costs and savings from prior BRAC rounds and other concerns about how some decisions in the 1995 round were implemented.

Examining the Potential for Further Consolidation of Current Training Would Need to Address Existing Barriers

Should authority for additional BRAC rounds be granted, it is uncertain how much they would facilitate additional consolidation of initial aviation training. According to Navy officials, differences regarding the services' unique roles, missions, tactics, operational requirements, and training philosophies represent substantial obstacles to further consolidation of such training. Air Force officials believe these differences are necessary during undergraduate pilot training to meet the needs of the customer—their individual operational units.

For example, while Air Force helicopter training was consolidated in 1970 with the Army at Fort Rucker, Alabama, this relationship has been modified over the years to better address the different needs of the two services' customers. Today, each service has tailored its training syllabus differently. The Air Force's training syllabus has been tailored to meet the needs of its customer—the 58th Special Operations Wing at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. Economies are still achieved, however, because the Air Force uses Army helicopter assets (the Bell UH-1 "Huey") and shares training facilities and maintenance contracts.

Air Force and Navy officials believe that initial fixed-wing training is essential for assessing new aviators, including helicopter pilots. Navy officials stated that the primary flight skills that future helicopter pilots learn during the first stages of undergraduate flight training give them valuable experience, which enables them to be more fully integrated into combined fixed- and rotary-wing naval operations plus joint operations. However, Navy officials stressed that they are training more than just a fixed- or rotary-wing pilot—they also are producing an officer for their individual service's career paths. The Navy is, for example, training pilots to navigate over water, land on ships, and become naval officers.

According to Air Force and Navy officials, differences in their respective roles and missions translate into the need for specialized training that is best incorporated early. Navy officials told us that if more training can be achieved in a relatively low-cost training aircraft, then more time and money can be saved during later training in more expensive operational aircraft. To ensure that their pilots receive this specialized training early on, the Air Force provides students returning to the Air Force with several weeks of additional training to compensate for the service-specific training they did not receive while attending flight training provided by the Navy.

While some Army aviation officials have expressed the view that economies of scale could be achieved through consolidating initial entry

rotary-wing training, officials in other services have expressed views indicating such a consolidation could be difficult. Some services view consolidation as going against their long-standing organizational structure, established personnel management systems, unique officer development approaches, time-honored training philosophies, and traditional practices. The Navy and the Marine Corps strongly believe that further consolidation would result in the loss of needed orientation to their missions and a failure to establish early identification with the Navy way of life. The Navy believes any change from the status quo would adversely affect the Navy's ability to achieve helicopter-recruiting levels, result in an increased attrition rate in the helicopter-training track, and ultimately cause a shortfall in the number of instructor pilots. Further, Navy officials contend that consolidation of undergraduate helicopter pilot training at just one base could jeopardize contingency, mobilization expansion, and future total force requirements in time of a national emergency.

Other Options

It is uncertain to what extent further aviation training consolidations will be achieved given existing barriers. However, these factors should not preclude a periodic reevaluation of consolidation, particularly if additional BRAC rounds are authorized. If further consolidation of aviation training proves unlikely, then DOD might consider other options to achieve efficiencies at aviation training facilities. For example, DOD could maximize operating efficiencies by collocating similar functions and activities at aviation training facilities having excess capacity. At the same time, we recognize that without new BRAC authority, options available to DOD to realign other functions to these bases are limited, given the personnel thresholds contained in 10 U.S.C. 2687.

Recommendation

Should the Congress authorize additional BRAC rounds, current barriers to further aviation training consolidation should be examined; should they be found too difficult to overcome, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense require the services to consider other opportunities for optimizing efficiencies at bases retained for aviation training.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We requested comments on a draft of this report from the Department of Defense. DOD concurred with the report's recommendation without further comment. DOD's response is reprinted in appendix I. DOD also

provided technical corrections and clarifications, which have been incorporated throughout this report, as appropriate.

Scope and Methodology

We reviewed past DOD efforts to consolidate undergraduate pilot training and undergraduate helicopter pilot training, and we analyzed opportunities for further consolidation. As agreed with the congressional requesters, we did not analyze cost and quality-of-training issues further because of the limited availability of data.

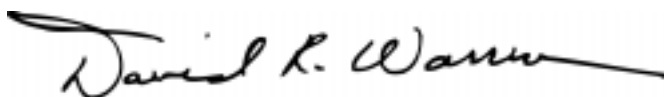
To obtain background information, we reviewed prior studies on consolidating undergraduate helicopter pilot training and on the need to conduct initial fixed-wing training for helicopter pilots. To determine DOD efforts to reduce aircraft training infrastructure and to identify impediments to further consolidation, we conducted interviews with cognizant DOD and service officials and reviewed relevant documents. Information regarding DOD's reported pilot shortage was obtained from the Air Education and Training Command, Chief of Naval Air Training, and from our other recent work.

At DOD, our work was conducted at the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Industrial Affairs and Installations), DOD Inspector General, and at the appropriate military training commands. Within the Air Force, we conducted review work at the Air Education and Training Command and 12th Flying Training Wing at Randolph AFB, Texas; the 80th Flying Training Wing at Sheppard AFB, Texas; and at the Air Force Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training–Helicopter 23rd Flying Training Flight at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Within the Navy and the Marine Corps, we conducted review work at the Chief of Naval Education and Training and Training Wing 6 at NAS Pensacola, Florida; Chief of Naval Air Training and Training Wing 4 at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas; Training Wing 2 at NAS Kingsville, Texas; and Training Wing 5 at NAS Whiting Field, Florida. We also conducted review work at the U.S. Coast Guard Liaison Office at NAS Pensacola, Florida. Within the Army, we conducted review work at the U.S. Army Aviation Center at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

We conducted our review between November 1998 and April 1999 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

We are sending copies of this report to Senator John Warner, Chairman, and Senator Carl Levin, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Armed Services, and Representative Floyd Spence, Chairman, and Representative Ike Skelton, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Armed Services. We are also sending copies of this report to: the Honorable William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense; the Honorable Louis Caldera, Secretary of the Army; the Honorable Richard J. Danzig, Secretary of the Navy; the Honorable F. Whitten Peters, Secretary of the Air Force; General James L. Jones, Commandant of the Marine Corps; Admiral James M. Loy, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard; the Honorable Donald Mancuso, Acting DOD Inspector General; and the Honorable Jacob J. Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget. Copies will also be made available to others upon request.

GAO points of contact concerning this report and other key contributors are listed in appendix II.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David R. Warren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David R. Warren
Director, Defense Management Issues

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Abbreviations

AFB	Air Force base
BRAC	base realignment and closure
DOD	Department of Defense
JPATS	Joint Primary Aircraft Training System
NAS	Naval Air Station
UHPT	undergraduate helicopter pilot training
UPT	undergraduate pilot training

Comments From the Department of Defense



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

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18 JUN 1999

Mr. David R. Warren
Director, Defense Management Issues
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Warren:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report, "DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE: Observations on Aviation Training Consolidation and Expansion Plans" dated May 20, 1999, (GAO Code 709370/OSD Case 1829).

The DoD has reviewed the draft report and concurs without comment on the single recommendation:

"Should the Congress authorize additional BRAC rounds, current barriers to further aviation training consolidation should be examined; should they be found to be too difficult to overcome, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense require the Services to consider other opportunities for optimizing efficiencies at bases retained for aviation training." (p. 13, GAO Draft Report)

The Department appreciates the opportunity to review the report in draft form. Technical corrections and clarifications have been provided to your reviewers by separate correspondence.

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Longstreth
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Readiness)



GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgements

GAO Contacts

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Acknowledgements

In addition to those named above, Mark A. Pross and David F. Combs made key contributions to this report.

Related GAO Products

Military Pilots: Observations on Current Issues (GAO/T-NSIAD-99-102, Mar. 4, 1999).

Defense Acquisition: Acquisition Plans for Training Aircraft Should Be Reevaluated (GAO/NSIAD-97-172, Sept. 18, 1997).

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Undergraduate Helicopter Pilot Training: Consolidation Could Yield Significant Savings (GAO/FPCD-80-37, Jan. 31, 1980).

Proposed Consolidation of Undergraduate Helicopter Pilot Training at Fort Rucker, Alabama (GAO/FPCD-79-94, Sept. 26, 1979).

Undergraduate Helicopter Pilot Training: Consolidation Could Yield Significant Savings (GAO/FPCD-79-88, Sept. 20, 1979).

Undergraduate Helicopter Pilot Training (02447, June 7, 1977).

Consolidation of Helicopter Pilot Training (GAO/FPCD-77-52, May 5, 1977).

Need to Assess Potential for Consolidating Undergraduate Helicopter Pilot Training (B-157905, May 3, 1974).

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