

WESTFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION, INC
P.O. Box 373
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457
<http://wraMiddletown.org>



August 13, 2008

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress, 2nd District, CT
101 Water Street, Suite 301
Norwich, CT 06360

Dear Congressman Courtney:

I am writing on behalf of the Westfield Residents Association to thank you for your letter of August 8th, in which you indicated you would monitor the issue of the Military Training facility that the Army Corps of Engineers intends to site on Boardman Lane in Middletown. Your role as a member of the House Armed Services Committee puts you in a position to ensure that each and every Military Facilities is built on land suitable for its construction.

In our original letter of July 2nd, we noted that the Boardman Lane location would be a significant financial burden for Middletown, as it would require significant infrastructure improvements, generate no economic benefits to Middletown as a host community, and provide no interaction between soldiers and civilians. We also raised important environmental, safety, and legislative issues that make this site unsuitable. Since our letter to you, we have learned much more about each of these issues. Here is some of the most significant new information:

1. The State's Natural Diversity Database identifies three species of special concern within the property's wetlands systems.
2. The FEMA prepared 2008 Flood Insurance Rate Maps indicate that Boardman Lane would be flooded at three locations during a 100 year flood event. The site would be inaccessible in such a disaster!
3. The necessary site work would destroy two acres of wetlands.
4. The Noah Bacon farmstead on the property is registered with the State Historical Commission.
5. The Army's assertion that the training Facility must be built in Middletown has been called into question by recently released documents from the Army indicating that any site within 20 driving miles of the City's limits would be acceptable.

As a result of these and many other factors, the City of Middletown has reached consensus that the Boardman Lane site is unsuitable for the construction of a military training facility. This manifested itself last week in the unanimous passage of Resolution 134-08 (Concerning the Army Training Facility proposed for Boardman Lane), in which the city (among other things) expressed the opinion that a facility on Boardman Lane would violate the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and would absolutely require a full and complete Environmental Impact Statement.

On August 4th, Governor Rell decided to keep the 250th Engineer Co. in its present location, reducing the space needed for the new facility. She suggested that the Corps of Engineers "consider a wider range of possible locations." Attorney General Blumenthal has written the Army Corps of Engineers, stating, "The site selection process

should go back to square one.” Secretary of State Bysiewicz has indicated that the plain language of the bill authorizing this training facility does not require it to be built in Middletown.

There is conflicting information about whether this base actually has to be built in Middletown. An Army letter of November 16, 2006 (attached) indicates that they required land for this base that was simply within 20 miles of the city limits. More recently, on their informational web site, the Corps state that the Office of the Secretary of Defense provided a legal opinion in the case of a base that BRAC 2005 proposed for Ayer, MA. This opinion was that the BRAC 2005 report legally required the base specifically to be built in Ayer. However, we would point out that the language used in BRAC 2005 regarding the Ayer base is substantially different from the language used in BRAC 2005 regarding the Middletown Base. I attach a side by side comparison of these two paragraphs.

Middletown has expressed its unanimous official opinion that the Boardman Lane site is unsuitable for the construction of this Military training facility, this opinion directly reflects residents’ opinion as well. Our top three State elected officials concur that Boardman Lane is inappropriate. However, despite this consensus at the citizen, City, and State levels, the Army continues to proceed with plans for a military facility at Boardman Lane. We would be grateful for your continued engagement in this dispute. Specifically, we would respectfully like to request the following:

- We ask that you use your considerable influence to request that Army Secretary Geren reconsider the site of this Training Facility.
- We ask that you contact Diane McCartin, project manager for this site at the Army Corps of Engineers, asking her to fulfill all of the requests of both Governor Rell and Attorney General Blumenthal.
- We ask that you request a legal opinion from the Office of the Secretary of Defense regarding the language in BRAC 2005 that pertains to the Middletown training facility.

Most of Middletown is closely monitoring this military training facility. We look forward to your continued involvement in this issue of such great importance to both Middletown and our Armed Forces.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen H. Devoto
Acting Secretary, Westfield Residents
WestfieldResidents@gmail.com

Attachments: BRAC language regarding Middletown and Ayer; Army letter of 11/16/06



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
696 VIRGINIA ROAD
CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01742-2751

RECEIVED
06 NOV 20 AM 9:20
CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
MAYOR'S OFFICE

November 16, 2006

Real Estate Division
Conveyancing Branch

Mayor Sebastian N. Giuliano
City of Middletown
245 deKoven Drive
Middletown, CT 06457

Re: New Armed Forces Reserve Center--
Available vacant land in the Middletown,
CT Vicinity


Dear Mayor Giuliano:

We are inquiring as to the availability of approximately 16-25 acres of land in the town of Middletown or within 20 driving miles of the town limits that could be used for an Armed Forces Reserve Center. We would appreciate information on any property owned by the city that might be available for a 99-year nominal-cost lease or for other terms. We also would welcome information on property owned by counties, other municipalities, or other parties that might be suitable for our requirements.

We placed an ad in the Sunday, November 12th edition of the Hartford Courant and will be writing to the State of Connecticut to ask if they would like to identify property for us to consider.

If you know of any property you would like us to consider, please contact Pam at the above address or by phone at (978) 318-8025 no later than November 22, 2006.

Sincerely,

for 
Joseph M. Redlinger
Chief, Real Estate Division

The USACE insists that 2005 BRAC language mandates a training facility be built in Middletown. They are basing this conclusion on a legal opinion, by the office of the Secretary of Defense, regarding a base proposed for Ayer, MA (<http://www.lrl.usace.army.mil/poi/article.asp?id=463&MyCategory=309>). However, the language of BRAC 2005 is very different for Ayer and for Middletown. Below is the complete paragraph for Ayer and the complete paragraph for Newton and Middletown, CT, from the 2005 DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION REPORT.

From Page 38

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

Close the Army Reserve Equipment Concentration Site 65 Annex, Ayer, MA, and relocate units to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center in Ayer, MA; realign the Devens Reserve Forces Training Area, MA, by relocating the 323d Maintenance Facility, and the Regional Training Site Maintenance to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center complex in Ayer, MA; realign Ayer Area 3713 by relocating storage functions to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center complex in Ayer, MA. Realign the Marine Corps Reserve Center Ayer, MA, by relocating the 1/25th Marines Maintenance Facility, Marine Corps Reserve Electronic Maintenance Section, and Maintenance Company/4th Marine Battalion to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center complex in Ayer, MA. The new Armed Forces Reserve Center complex shall have the capability to accommodate all Reserve units affected by this recommendation, including Army National Guard units from the Ayer Armory and Consolidated Support Maintenance Shop, Ayer, MA, if the state decides to relocate the National Guard units.

From Page 26

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

Close Turner US Army Reserve Center, Fairfield, CT; close Sutcovey US Army Reserve Center, Waterbury, CT; close Danbury US Army Reserve Center Danbury, CT, and relocate units to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center and Maintenance Facility in Newtown, CT if the Army is able to acquire land suitable for the construction of the facilities adjacent to the existing Connecticut Army National Guard Armory in Newtown, CT. The new AFRC and OMS shall have the capability to accommodate units from the following facilities: Connecticut Army National Guard Armories in Naugatuck, Norwalk and New Haven, CT, if the state decides to relocate those National Guard units. Close the US Army Reserve Center, Middletown, CT, the Organizational Maintenance Shop, Middletown, CT; the SGT Libby US Army Reserve Center, New Haven, CT; the Organizational Maintenance Shop, New Haven, CT; the Army Reserve Area Maintenance Support Activity #69, Milford, CT, and relocate units to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center, Organizational Maintenance Shop and Army Maintenance Support Activity in Middletown, CT, if the Army is able to acquire land suitable for the construction of the facilities. The new AFRC, OMS and AMSA shall have the capability to accommodate units from the following facilities: Connecticut Army National Guard Armories in Putnam, Manchester, New Britain and the CTARNG facility in Newington, CT, if the state decides to relocate those National Guard units.