

# Alliance asks to have Detroit declared a military outpost

By Teri Banas  
staff writer

An alliance of business, political and labor leaders has launched a campaign to win Detroit the designation of a military outpost. If they're successful, it could bring military service and manufacturing dollars to southeastern Michigan.

But a military spokesman said Friday that the U.S. Air Force, for one, has no plans to add military outposts at this time.

Wayne County Commission Chairman John Hertel, D-Harper Woods, announced last week that a task force has been formed to win approval for the plan.

It would call for retooling military personnel and cargo through the Port of Detroit and Detroit's major airports. Business gains, he said, would be in transportation, manufacturing and the hotel-restaurant trade.

CAPT. TOM LAROCK, chief media spokesperson at Military Airlift Command Headquarters in Illinois' Scott Air Force Base, said the Air Force had forwarded its response in a letter to officials here.

"We told them that there were no plans (for expanding) at the moment, but we would certainly consider Detroit as a place to look at in the future," said Larock. "There were no promises given."

Larock said the Air Force currently operates "gateways" or embarkation points at five national locations. These are Charleston International Airport, Philadelphia International Airport, St. Louis' Lambert

Field and at Oakland-San Francisco and Los Angeles in California.

He said the Air Force's last designated site was in Charleston. Qualifications considered there included concentrated numbers of military personnel found, the facility's accessibility and traffic conditions.

Hertel told reporters the task force will travel to Washington, D.C. later this month and make a pitch before military and congressional leaders.

Members include himself; U.S. Sen. Donald Riegle, D-Mich.; James Pitz, director of the Michigan Department of Transportation; Tom Turner, head of the state AFL-CIO; and prominent Detroit businessman Frank Stella, also known for his involvement in Republican party matters.

Hertel said he has been in close touch with U.S. Rep. Dennis Hertel, D-Detroit, his brother. The congressman's membership on two committees (Armed Services and Merchant Marine and Fisheries) could be beneficial in winning support.

Rep. Hertel also has been actively involved in other Great Lakes issues, recently helping to reinstate a U.S. Coast Guard Station in Detroit. His 14th District includes part of Troy.

There currently is no military outpost in the Great Lakes, John Hertel said. He added that cities which recently have expressed interest are Cleveland, Toledo and Milwaukee.

"Our goal is to convince the federal government that Detroit and Wayne County has excellent marine and air facilities as

well as the necessary support services to warrant the designation as a military outpost," Hertel said.

JIM KELLOW, director of the Detroit-Wayne County Port Authority, said the benefits of the military designation in Detroit's airports would involve "more people flying" and, therefore, the potential for more flights scheduled, benefiting non-military flyers.

In addition, additional hotel and restaurant accommodations would result, he said. Not only would military personnel fly out of Detroit's airports, but increased business would include their household belongings and private vehicles for shipment, Kellow said.

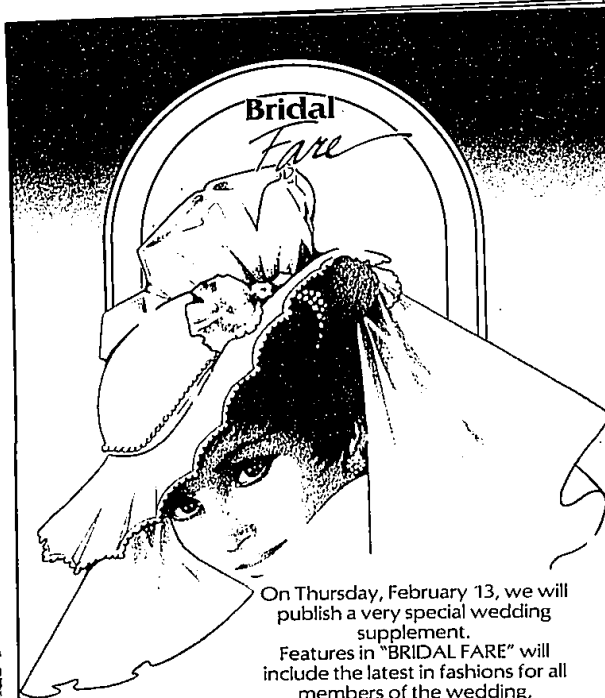
He said that in 1984, some 14 percent of all military personnel leaving the U.S. are based in the Great Lakes region.

AS FOR WATERWAYS, Kellow said manufacturers in southeastern Michigan could bid more competitively for military contracts if they had the ability to ship military goods closer to home.

For example, he said, Federal Lakes Service recently was able to flag one vessel for military roll-in cargo.

"The more people coming through the area of the country, the more money there's going to be spent. And the more cargo through the ports, I know there'll be more jobs, and the same goes for the airport," he said.

"If we receive this designation, it'll make Detroit a major port authority in the nation," Hertel said.



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