



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

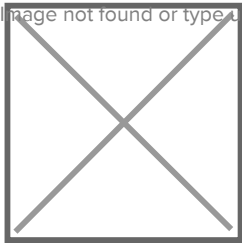
Martin J. Golden

Rep. Grimm & Brooklyn Leaders Fight to Keep the Corps at Fort Hamilton

MARTIN J. GOLDEN March 30, 2011

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Rep. Grimm & Brooklyn Leaders Fight to Keep the Corps at Fort Hamilton

Oppose the Army Corps of Engineers' plans to leave Brooklyn for Manhattan

BROOKLYN, NY – Today, Representative Michael G. Grimm (R,C-Brooklyn/SI) is joined by Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz (D-Brooklyn), elected Brooklyn officials, community leaders, and the Fort Hamilton Citizens Action Committee (FHCAC) in opposition to the Army Corps of Engineers' proposal to move the headquarters of its North Atlantic Division (NAD) from Fort Hamilton Army Base to Manhattan. The NAD headquarters have been at Brooklyn's Fort Hamilton since 1998. Moving them now will add unnecessary costs to taxpayers and could make the base more susceptible to closure under the next round of Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) decisions.

“With a skyrocketing debt and a nationwide need to cut back on spending, it makes absolutely no sense for the Army Corps of Engineers to move from Fort Hamilton, where it has been housed – rent free - since 1998, to Manhattan where it will pay \$1 million a year in rent. Fort Hamilton is an important part of the Brooklyn community, which is why we must fight to keep it here and to prevent a costly taxpayer-funded move that could put the Army base's future at risk. I will do whatever it takes to keep the Corp's flag at Fort Hamilton and will not consider any conversation to the contrary,” said Congressman Michael Grimm.

“At a time when creating and retaining jobs in Brooklyn is critical, the North Atlantic Division moving out of the borough would take away more than a hundred jobs and leave the Fort Hamilton Army Base more vulnerable to future closing. The North Atlantic Division has been a presence in the Fort Hamilton/Bay Ridge community for more than a decade, and a proposed relocation to Soho in Manhattan simply doesn’t make logistical or economic sense. I join Congressman Grimm and the Fort Hamilton Citizens Action Committee in opposing this ill-conceived idea, and to the Army Corps of Engineers’ plan to leave Fort Hamilton, I say—‘fort-geddaboudit!’” said Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz.

"The Army Corps of Engineers should remain as part of the operations at Brooklyn's Fort Hamilton Army Base. It is that simple. To incur new expenses, to move the North Atlantic Division to Manhattan, when they have been welcomed here in Brooklyn makes no sense. I join Congressman Grimm in opposing this proposal and stand as a staunch supporter of the base operations at Fort Hamilton," said Senator Marty Golden.

“Moving Army resources from Fort Hamilton would greatly impact our community. The base provides not only jobs but creates significant economic activity for Bay Ridge which we cannot afford to lose during these trying times. Furthermore, such a loss could lead to the base becoming a target for closure in the future, which would be devastating for Brooklyn and New York City,” said Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis.

“The Fort Hamilton Citizen Action Committee’s mission is to foster a strong relationship between the Fort and the surrounding community and to protect this valuable military installation from misguided attempts to close it. I believe this potential move by the Army Corps of Engineers would put the Fort at risk and deal a major blow to our efforts to defend it in the next BRAC. Not to mention, now is hardly the time for a federal agency to be spending more taxpayer funds on an ill-advised, unnecessary move. Therefore, I oppose this potential move on behalf of all the committee’s board members,” said Bill Guarinello, Chairman, FHCAC.

“At a time when spending is out of control, the taxpayers would be cheated if the Army Corps of Engineers left Fort Hamilton,” Mike Long, Vice President, FHCAC.

“As a former Chairman of Community Board Ten, an officer in the Fort Hamilton Civic Action Committee, and a resident of Bay Ridge for over 20 years, I have witnessed firsthand the tremendous relationship and synergy that the residents of Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights and the entire Borough have with the Fort Hamilton Army Base, and anything that could potentially weaken this relationship, including the NAD's current proposal to leave the Base, could potentially be detrimental to those residents and the entire City of New York," said Craig Eaton, Treasurer, FHCAC.

“The Corps of Engineers must not move its North Atlantic Division from Ft. Hamilton. Fort Hamilton is an important part of our community. I am proud to stand with Congressman Grimm in opposing this move,” Fran Vella-Marrone,

President of the Dyker Heights Civic Association.

The Army Corps of Engineers has been exploring the possibility of moving its NAD headquarters to 201 Varick Street in Manhattan as early as late 2012 or early 2013, where it will pay roughly \$1 million in rent a year. It currently pays no rent at Fort Hamilton; however, it does pay operating expenses which are estimated around \$130,000 a year. In addition to the cost, the move could make Fort Hamilton more likely to be selected for closure in the next round of Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) decisions.

On March 17, 2011 Rep. Michael Grimm sent a letter to General Robert L. Van Antwerp, the Chief of Engineers, urging the Army Corps of Engineers to keep its NAD headquarters at Fort Hamilton, citing unnecessary cost to taxpayers as the strongest reason for opposition.