



## This Week in Indiana History

June 16th, 1906:

### Fort Benjamin Harrison is Named After Hoosier President

On June 16th, 1906, the newly created military base in Lawrence, Indiana is named after Benjamin Harrison, the twenty third president of the United States. It was used for a variety of purposes, including everything from housing prisoners of war during World War Two, to hosting training for military police. Although closed in 1991, much of the area is now part of the Fort Harrison State Park, where people can enjoy hiking trails, biking, fishing, and picnicking.

Headline from the Indianapolis Star, April 11th, 1991, chronicling the eventual decommission of the Fort.

# THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 1991

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty" II Cor. 3:17

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## Defense cuts may close Fort Ben

By JO ELLEN MEYERS SHARP  
STAR STAFF WRITER

Fort Benjamin Harrison is on a proposed list of military bases to be closed in the next round of cost-cutting measures by the Department of Defense, according to independent reports.

The *Los Angeles Times* quoted an unidentified official in the Bush administration as saying that the 2,500-acre Fort Harrison in northeastern Marion County is on a list of more than 30 military bases targeted for closing. The *New York Times*, in its editions this morning, quoted "officials" as saying the same.

"I'd heard that," U.S. Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., said Wednesday night of Fort Harrison's inclusion on the list.

About 2,000 soldiers are stationed permanently at Fort Harrison and about 2,400 soldiers can be trained there at one time. Fort Harrison opened in 1903. About 4,000 civilians are employed at the Army Finance and Accounting Center at the fort.

Burton also said he had heard that while the fort would close, the finance center operations would remain open.

"If that rumor is true, it could end up creating a much better situation with more employment," Burton said.

Burton represents the 6th Congressional District, which includes a portion of Fort Harrison.

Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said late Wednesday that an official announcement of the list of new proposed

closings is scheduled for 1 p.m. EST Friday.

U.S. Sen. Richard G. Lugar, R-Ind., said Wednesday. "There's been no official word to me or anyone else."

Portions of Fort Harrison also are in the 10th Congressional District. U.S. Rep. Andrew Jacobs Jr., D-Ind., who represents the 10th District, could not be reached Wednesday.

No other military installations in Indiana, including Grissom Air Force Base, were mentioned in the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* dispatches.

Lugar and Indianapolis Mayor William H. Hudnut went to Washington a month ago to meet with the Army's

assistant secretary for installations, logistics and environment to speak on behalf of the fort.

"We had an excellent meeting," Lugar said. "They had very good data on Fort Harrison, its functions and plans. They knew of renovations of some buildings and had visited the fort."

Hudnut said Wednesday he considered word that the fort would close to be "tentative."

"Obviously, I'm disappointed. We did everything we could to save those jobs at Fort Harrison," he said.

When in Washington last month, the mayor and Lugar presented top Defense Department officials with a carefully worked-out proposal that they consolidate operations from Alexandria,

Virginia, at a savings of some \$8 million.

The largest bases proposed to be closed are Fort Ord, Calif., where 30,000 military personnel and their families are stationed, and Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, Wash., home to 21,000 sailors and their families.

The Defense Department list is subject to review and approval by an eight-member citizens review panel appointed by the president. The panel has 75 days to accept or alter the list.

The plan must go to Congress and the president by Sept. 1.

Lugar said he expected hearings on the proposed closing would be held throughout the country.

Want to learn more? Visit the library to view these texts!

A History of Fort Benjamin Harrison / ISLI 355 B786H

Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana: A Brief History / ISLO 355 No. 16

Map of Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis / ISLZ 912.772 IMAF55M (1955)