

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 23, 2011

Admiral Jonathan Greenert
Chief of Naval Operations
The Pentagon
Washington, DC

Dear Admiral Greenert:

We are writing to urge you to keep Navy Reserve Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 209 in the Washington, DC area and oppose any attempts to move the squadron to another location.

As you know, VAQ-209 remains the Navy's premier reserve electronic attack squadron. Based at Naval Air Facility Washington, VAQ-209 draws upon the rich civilian talent pool in the Capitol Beltway region to bring critical skills, experiences and expertise into the Navy Reserve. Named "Reserve Squadron of the Year" in 2008 and awarded the Battle Efficiency Ribbon in five of the last seven years, VAQ-209 has deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan five times since 2006.

Currently, VAQ-209 reservists work at the top of the electronic warfare field and remain trusted government technical advisors. From the development, testing and evaluation of the EA-18G Growler to the development of the Next Generation Jammer, VAQ-209 personnel are major stakeholders in the future of the Naval Airborne Electronic Attack (AEA) community and are well-positioned to oversee their squadron's transition from Prowlers to Growlers.

Additionally, VAQ-209's aggressive forward-deployment schedule enables these unique reserve aviators to operationalize theories developed in their civilian lives – a significant boost to our warfighting capabilities in theatre. For example, during their 2010 deployment to Afghanistan, VAQ-209 reservists were able to conduct operational flight tests in order to evaluate the effectiveness and interoperability of several newly developed communications jamming techniques now used in the EA-6B and EA-18G. These engineer-aviators were also responsible for fixing a known problem in the AEA community regarding enemy communications targeting.

Like you, we do not want to see our Navy lose access to this unparalleled AEA

talent pool. Keeping VAQ-209 in its current home is the only sustainable model that allows the Reserves to continue to support vital Defense Department AEA requirements. Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to the Navy Reserve. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski
U.S. Senator



Mark Kirk
U.S. Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator