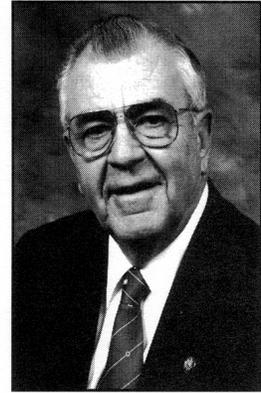


Congressman Herbert H. Bateman
AMERICA'S FIRST DISTRICT — VIRGINIA

NEWS



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OPENING STATEMENT
THE HONORABLE HERBERT BATEMAN
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY READINESS

I would like to welcome everyone here today to the Subcommittee on Military Readiness hearing on Real Property Maintenance. This is a critical quality of life area with a funding backlog that continues to grow with no indication that funding in the future will improve.

The committee understands that the Department of Defense does not have a comprehensive strategy for managing its maintenance and repair needs. Each military service sets its own standards for maintaining its property, using different methods to assess property conditions, prioritize repairs, and allocate funds. We are told that in some cases, bases and major commands within the services sometimes apply their own assessment criteria inconsistently. I must tell you that it baffles me as to how the military departments can determine their actual needs and make intelligent decisions about how much money needs to be budgeted without a consistent policy.

Due to systematic underfunding, it seems obvious to me that the backlog of repairs and maintenance can be expected to continue to grow in future years and, as has been the case in the past, the transfer of scarce funds from other readiness accounts will continue to be necessary. As an example, records indicate that from fiscal years 1994 through 1999, the services moved \$7.1 billion dollars from other accounts into real property maintenance and base operations over and above the amount requested and authorized by Congress. Although the amount varied between each service, Department of Defense records show that a portion of this money was moved from unit training funds such as flight hours, tank miles and steaming days. This has a direct impact on readiness and I want to learn from our witnesses what we can expect in this area in the future.

For the past five years, Congress has been adding money to the defense budget only to read in the press that it is for pork that the military didn't ask for or doesn't want. I submit to you that if we had not added over \$10 billion to the military readiness budget during the past several years, the state of readiness and the backlog of real property maintenance would be much worse.

We are very fortunate to have two panels of witnesses today who can help us understand the magnitude of the problems in real property maintenance management and some of the efforts going on to improve the situation.

(MORE)

The first panel is made up of General Accounting Office representatives who are doing research in some of the areas associated with real property maintenance. I look forward to their testimony to help us understand the past funding of real property maintenance, especially the transfers that have been necessary in this area.

Our second panel is made up of representatives from the Department of Defense and the four services who work these problems on a regular basis. The panel can give us insight into the challenges they face and some ideas about how we can all work toward improving the working and living conditions for our men and women of our military services. We look forward to their testimony.

Before we get into hearing from our panels, I would like to yield to my good friend from Texas and the Ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, the Honorable Solomon Ortiz, for any comments that he may wish to make.

Now we will begin with our first panel which consists of the following General Accounting Office witnesses:

Panel 1: Mr. Neal P. Curtin, Associate Director, and

Ms. Brenda S. Farrell, Assistant Director

National Security Preparedness Issues
National Security and International Affairs Division

Panel 2: Mr. Randall A. Yim
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Installations)

Major General Robert L. Van Antwerp, Jr.
Deputy Chief of Staff for Installations and Housing
U.S. Army

Rear Admiral Louis M. Smith
Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command
and Chief of Navy Civil Engineers
U.S. Navy

Major General Earnest O. Robbins II
The Civil Engineer
U.S. Air Force

Major General Harold Mashburn, Jr.
Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff
Installations and Logistics
U.S. Marine Corps

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