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Updated December 9, 2020

Defense Primer: Department of Defense Maintenance Depots

Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.) §2464 states that it is "essential for the national defense that the Department of Defense maintain a core logistics capability that is government-owned and government-operated [GOGO] ... to ensure a ready and controlled source of technical competence and resources necessary to ensure effective and timely response to a mobilization, national defense contingency situations, and other emergency requirements." Accordingly, each military service owns and operates industrial facilities that manufacture, maintain, repair, and overhaul military weapons and equipment. These GOGO facilities, together with certain government-owned, contractor-operated (GOCO) facilities are collectively referred to as the *organic industrial base*, or OIB.

Included in the OIB are several large-scale maintenance facilities (otherwise *named* depots, shipyards, production plants, logistics complexes, or readiness centers) owned by each service that are dedicated to performing *depot-level maintenance and repair* (collectively the "maintenance depots"). In addition, the Air Force and Navy utilize several "centers" that perform weapon systems support in the forms of research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E), acquisition, and sustainment activities including depot-level maintenance and repair. This InFocus pertains to those selected large-scale maintenance facilities that maintain, repair, or overhaul end items (See GAO-17-82R).

What is Depot-Level Maintenance?

Title 10 U.S.C. §2460 defines *depot-level maintenance and repair* (commonly "depot maintenance" or "D-Level" maintenance) as "material maintenance or repair requiring the overhaul, upgrading, or rebuilding of parts, assemblies, or subassemblies, and the testing and reclamation of equipment as necessary, **regardless of the source of funds for the maintenance or repair or the location at which the maintenance or repair is performed** [emphasis added by CRS]." The definition includes "(1) all aspects of software maintenance classified by the Department of Defense as of July 1, 1995, as depot-level maintenance and repair, and (2) interim contractor support or contractor logistics support (or any similar contractor support), to the extent that such support is for the performance of services described in the preceding sentence."

Section 2460 specifically excludes certain activities such as "the procurement of major modifications or upgrades of weapon systems that are designed to improve program performance," and the nuclear refueling or defueling of aircraft carriers. Additionally, the procurement of parts for safety modifications is not considered depot maintenance, however the installation of those parts is.

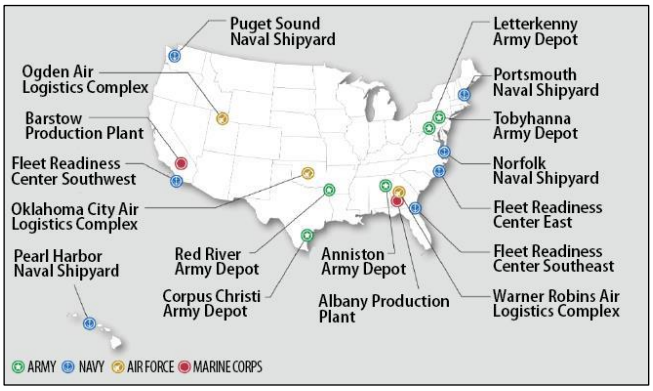
How do the Maintenance Depots support readiness?

DOD's maintenance depots are GOGO facilities that are capable of performing complete overhauls of military weapon systems, as well as repairs to many individual components within each weapon system. Many of the maintenance depots also have the ability to send mobile repair teams to operating locations to perform on-site technical assistance or in-depth repairs. As the Government Accountability Office (GAO) states in its 2019 report (GAO-19-242), these depots "are crucial to maintaining military readiness by ensuring that the services can regularly repair critical weapon systems and return them to the warfighter for their use in training and operations." The maintenance depots also serve as a repository for technical data, testing equipment, and unique tooling and design capabilities for many weapon systems.

Organization and Management

Each military service includes command structures with responsibility for providing logistics and maintenance support to the majority of its weapon systems and equipment. Within each service, there are dedicated maintenance depots whose *primary* responsibility is to conduct depot-level maintenance (**Figure 1**). However, depot-level maintenance can be performed at any location, thus some facilities may not be identified as a maintenance depot by DOD or other government agencies due to the scale or majority of work performed at that location.

Figure 1. Selected DOD Maintenance Depot Sites



Source: GAO-17-82R.

Note: The identification of maintenance depot sites has changed over time (e.g., see the *2008 DOD Maintenance Fact Book*). No sites were identified in Alaska, Hawaii, or the U.S. territories.

Army

Army Materiel Command (AMC), headquartered at Redstone Arsenal, AL, develops and delivers materiel support to maintain combat equipment. AMC operates five maintenance depots, each of which is generally responsible for specific systems.

- **Anniston Army Depot, AL:** Combat vehicles, small caliber weapons, artillery, and rail operations.
- **Corpus Christi Army Depot, TX:** Rotary wing aircraft.
- **Letterkenny Army Depot, PA:** Air defense and tactical missile systems.
- **Red River Army Depot, TX:** Combat and tactical wheeled vehicles.
- **Tobyhanna Army Depot, PA:** Electronic systems.

Air Force

Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC), headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH, conducts RDT&E while also providing acquisition management and logistics support. Under AFMC, the Air Force Sustainment Center, located at Tinker Air Force Base, OK, directs the operations of the three Air Logistics Complexes (ALCs), each of which generally performs work on specific weapon systems.

- **Ogden ALC, UT:** Aircraft such as the F-35, F-22, and C-130 as well as Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles.
- **Oklahoma City ALC, OK:** Aircraft such as the B-1B and B-52 as well as military aircraft engines.
- **Warner Robins ALC, GA:** Aircraft such as the F-15, C-5, and Special Operations Forces aircraft.

Navy

Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), headquartered at the Washington Navy Yard in the District of Columbia, operates the shipyards and has technical authority for ship maintenance operations. The four shipyards within NAVSEA perform depot-level repairs on ships and submarines as assigned.

- **Norfolk Naval Shipyard, VA.**
- **Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, HI.**
- **Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, ME.**
- **Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, WA.**

For naval aviation, Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR), headquartered in Patuxent River, MD, provides full life-cycle support of naval aviation aircraft, weapons, and systems. It is responsible for the operation of three aviation Fleet Readiness Centers (FRCs) providing support to both Navy and Marine Corps assets.

- **FRC East, NC:** Fixed and rotary wing aircraft such as the V-22, F/A-18, F-35, UH-1N, and H-53 variants.
- **FRC Southeast, FL:** Aircraft such as the P-3 and EA-6B, as well as multiple aircraft engines.
- **FRC Southwest, CA:** Fixed and rotary wing aircraft such as the AV-8B, E-2, H-60, AH-1, and UH-1 variants.

Marine Corps

Marine Corps Logistics Command (MARCORLOGCOM), headquartered in Albany, GA, directs the Marine Depot Maintenance Command (MDMC) in repairing, rebuilding, and modifying all ground combat equipment, and combat support and combat service support equipment. MDMC operates two production plants that perform depot-level maintenance.

- **Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, GA:** Ground-combat and combat-support equipment (East Coast).
- **Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, CA:** Ground-combat and combat-support equipment (West Coast).

Relevant Legislation: Maintaining a Core Logistics Capability

Title 10 U.S.C. §2464 requires the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to identify the core logistics capabilities necessary to maintain and repair the weapons systems and other military equipment "as necessary to enable the armed forces to fulfill the strategic and contingency plans prepared by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under [10 U.S.C. §153(a)]." Section 2464 also requires the Secretary to assign the maintenance depots "sufficient workload to ensure cost efficiency and technical competence in peacetime while preserving ... surge capacity and reconstitution capabilities."

The 50/50 Statute

Title 10 U.S.C. §2466, often referred to as the *50/50 statute*, states that not more than 50% of the funds made available in a fiscal year to a military department or defense agency for depot-level maintenance and repair workload, may be used to contract nonfederal government personnel for the given workload. This prevents the outsourcing of a majority of DOD's maintenance depot workload, thus helping to ensure facilities, equipment, and personnel receive a sufficient peacetime workload to remain qualified and available in times of emergency.

The Six Percent Rule

Title 10 U.S.C. §2476 stipulates investment in the "capital budgets of the covered depots of that military department a total amount equal to not less than six percent of the average ... workload at all the depots of that military department for the preceding three fiscal years." This statute is often referred to as the *6 percent rule*, and it applies to only those named sites in the statute. For those sites, the law ensures that departments invest in the modernization "of depot facilities, equipment, work environment, or processes in direct support of depot operations." Investment in the capital budget of a covered depot "does not include funds spent for sustainment of existing facilities, infrastructure, or equipment."

Considerations for Congress

- **Shipyard Modernization.** The Navy has attributed maintenance delays at its four public shipyards to insufficient capacity, inefficient facility configurations, and aging infrastructure and equipment. However, GAO recently identified "unplanned work and workforce factors" as additional causes of delays (GAO-20-588). Congress may wish to delve more deeply into the Navy's shipyard modernization efforts, such as the 20-year Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP), to ascertain a clearer understanding of the Navy's maintenance situations.

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