

STATEMENT OF  
REPRESENTATIVE WARREN DAVIDSON  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
ON  
MARCH 9, 2017

Good morning Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Visclosky, and Members of the Defense Subcommittee. Thank you for providing me and other Members of the House with the opportunity to testify to the Subcommittee on issues that are important to our national security.

I strongly urge the Members of this Subcommittee to provide a generic program increase of \$5.0 million in Air Force Base Support Equipment for competitively procured Civil Engineers Construction, Surveying, and Mapping equipment when you develop the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2018. This will upgrade the surveying equipment at RED HORSE and other Air Force civil engineering units throughout the country.

Existing US Air Force civil engineer equipment is over fifteen years old, much of which was discontinued over seven years ago. Thus maintenance is cost prohibitive and some equipment in the Air Force inventory is no longer being maintained or repaired. The age of mission critical hardware components also makes them incompatible with existing US Air Force Civil Engineer equipment. The US Air Force Civil Engineer School currently trains on modern equipment and software not yet fielded.

The Air Force's Equipment Modernization and Technology Refresh program replaces aging and significantly outdated land surveying equipment, mapping/ GIS systems and grade control equipment across the Air Force's Base Civil Engineer Units, USAF Prime Beef Teams and RED HORSE Squadrons. These engineers are currently unable to efficiently perform urgent and often critical construction, surveying and mapping in-garrison or in deployed theaters of operation due to outdated equipment. This has adversely affected the Air Force's civil engineers' readiness and ability to effectively conduct critical missions, and their ability to respond to homeland natural disasters.

An additional \$5.0 million is urgently needed in fiscal year 2018 to competitively provide commercial off-the-shelf equipment and technologies commonly used in U.S. commercial construction and other industries. The benefits to Air Force Civil Engineers include:

- Productivity increases of new survey and mapping equipment:
- Productivity increases of new grade/position on heavy equipment
- Improved workflows for US Air Force civil engineer missions
- Enhanced capabilities between US Air Force Base Civil Engineers, Base master planners and RED HORSE Commanders
- Rapid data collection, analysis and mission decision making

- Comprehensive, integrated and unified Base master plans

The Air Force estimated needing \$6.9 million during fiscal year 2018 for Based Procured Equipment, in its fiscal year 2017 President's budget request to Congress. This budget line is for organizations throughout the Air Force to acquire authorized equipment from the General Services Administration, the Defense Logistics Agency, and commercial sources when these items are unavailable through Air Force central procurement or exceed the unit cost of what may be purchased using O&M funds.

Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer (RED HORSE) squadrons are the United States Air Force's heavy-construction units. Their capabilities are similar to those of the U.S. Navy Seabees and U.S. Army heavy-construction organizations. RED HORSE units are self-sufficient, 404-person mobile squadrons, capable of rapid response and independent operations in remote, high-threat environments worldwide. Air Force RED HORSE Units possess special capabilities, such as water-well drilling, explosive demolition, aircraft arresting system installation, quarry operations, concrete mobile operations, material testing, expedient facility erection, and concrete and asphalt paving. RED HORSE squadrons provide the Air Force with a highly mobile civil engineering response force to support contingency and special operations worldwide.

RED HORSE's major wartime responsibility is to provide a highly mobile, rapidly deployable, civil engineering and construction response force that is self-sufficient to perform heavy damage repair required for recovery of critical Air Force facilities and utility systems, and aircraft launch and recovery. In addition, it accomplishes engineer support for beddown of weapon systems required to initiate and sustain operations in an austere bare-base environment, including remote hostile locations, or locations in a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosives-prone environment.

Other Air Force Civil Engineering Units also provide heavy-repair capability and construction support when requirements exceed normal base civil engineer capabilities and where U.S. Army engineer support is not readily available.

The primary US Air Force Civil Engineering tasking in peacetime is to train for contingency and wartime operations. It participates regularly in Joint Chiefs of Staff and major command exercises, military operations other than war, and civic action programs. These units perform training projects that assist base construction efforts while, at the same time, greatly improving readiness while honing wartime skills.

The increase to this account will go a long way to rebuilding our military's readiness and getting back on track to ensure the Air Force has the advanced technology these units need. Thank you again for the opportunity for me to bring this important issue to the Subcommittee's attention today.