

## **Milcon/Va Member Day Remarks**

Thank you Chairman Dent for allowing me to speak here today on some of the priorities that are most important to my district and my state.

As a Member of Congress whose district includes Fort Hood, I know that “The Great Place” is the gold standard for the Army, the Department of Defense and our nation’s overall national security posture.

From its state of the art training facilities to its world renowned reputation, Fort Hood represents America’s 21<sup>st</sup> century military.

As you begin work on the fiscal year 2018 Military Construction, Veteran Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I request language be added to ensure Fort Hood remains the gold standard.

First, I request that action be taken concerning Fort Hood’s Tactical Equipment Maintenance Facilities or TEMFs.

Fort Hood has 26 battalion-sized TEMFs that were built in the 1950s and 1960s and are now failing.

None of these legacy facilities have any overhead lift capabilities and all have significant shortages as compared to current Army standards and are thus rated F3 (red) in the Installation Status Report (ISR).

These facilities also lack the electrical and communication infrastructure to support maintenance of the M1/M2, Paladin and Stryker vehicle programs. In order to replace these facilities we need federal funding.

Secondly, I am very concerned about the condition of the Unaccompanied Enlisted Personnel Housing (UEPH) Barracks on Fort Hood.

Funding is needed to replace the failing Q3/Q4 barracks, which are required to provide adequate barracks to support the 250 Soldiers of the 69<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Brigade.

I think it is important to note that the average age of Fort Hood's 99 barracks buildings is 44 years, with a third built in the 1950s, and more than half rated Q3/Q4.

Without this funding for the replacement project, Soldiers will continue to live in inadequate facilities resulting in a negative impact on operational readiness.

Furthermore, impacts on morale, welfare and health will continue to result in disruptions to command, control and operations.

I also support full funding for a future SCIF on Fort Hood.

Currently, our soldiers are using a facility that was built in 1963 and originally used as a daycare.

We need to build a SCIF that meets current standards and gives our military the necessary tools to protect our nation.

In addition to these requests, it is my hope that the Veterans Administration is given every resource necessary to support our men and women who have so bravely fought for our freedom.

There are many worthwhile veteran programs that should have our full attention.

Additionally, although I am encouraged that President Trump has exempted VA medical staff from the hiring freeze, I think the need to hire qualified doctors to take care of our veterans is now more important than ever.

Hiring more doctors would give us the ability to further reduce our VA claims backlog and provide timely care to our veterans.

I urge you and this Subcommittee to do all you can within your allocation to fund these projects and it is my hope that any future president's budget that we receive will address these matters.

I would like to express my gratitude to Fort Hood, the Department of the Army, our soldiers and their families and fellow Texans.

And I would like to thank you for your time. God bless our troops, God bless the Great Place and God bless the United States of America.