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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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Dear Mr. Rooney:

As requested in your letter of September 7, 1971, we reviewed the Army's purchase of PERSHING Missile Launch System test sets from Mohawk Industries, Inc., Easton, Pennsylvania, to determine whether defective test sets were being purchased.

You furnished us with copies of Mohawk's letters dated August 20, 1971, advising the Army that its proposed engineering change from stainless-steel screws to carbon-steel bolts would not correct the problem of metal dust and shavings in the test-set case caused by captive locknuts. Mohawk advised the Army also that it was not possible to deliver additional test sets until the defect was corrected. Mohawk previously had expressed its concern that metal particles would come in contact with terminal points of electric circuits and cause malfunction of the test sets. As a solution Mohawk recommended the use of military standard floating nylon insert locknuts.

An official of the PERSHING Project Office advised us that the use of nylon locknuts, as recommended by Mohawk, was impractical because the existing steel locknuts were riveted into the aluminum test-set case.

Subsequent to August 20, 1971, the U.S. Army Missile Command, Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, made tests to compare the extent of metal dust and shavings using both stainless-steel screws and carbon-steel bolts. The test report showed that carbon-steel bolts with a light coating of oil were far superior to the original stainless-steel screws either with or without lubrication. Photographs of metal dust and shavings resulting from the use of stainless-steel screws and carbon-steel bolts showed that shavings were substantially less when carbon-steel bolts were used. The use of carbon-steel bolts in lieu of stainless-steel screws was recommended by Martin-Marietta Corporation, the design contractor, when it was advised of the problem.

On September 7, 1971, an Army team visited Mohawk to resolve problems concerning contract hardware and deliveries

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and to discuss the screw-shavings problem. After viewing photographs of the comparison tests, the president of Mohawk agreed that accumulation of filings and residue was reduced to an acceptable level through the use of carbon-steel bolts with a light coating of oil.

On September 16, 1971, Mohawk accepted a contract modification which incorporated an engineering change involving the use of carbon-steel bolts, beginning with the fourth production unit. The modification also revised the delivery schedule in accordance with agreements reached on September 7, 1971, and increased the contract price by \$103.

After completing our fieldwork at the U.S. Army Missile Command, we discussed the matter with the president of Mohawk Industries, Inc., and he confirmed his satisfaction with the Army's corrective measures.

Please advise us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely yours,



Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States

The Honorable Fred B. Rooney
House of Representatives