

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-242](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

## Why GAO Did This Study

The military services' 21 depots maintain the readiness of critical weapon systems such as ships, aircraft, and tanks needed for military operations. The condition of depot facilities and equipment directly affects the timeliness of maintenance and the readiness of the weapon systems they repair. The services have invested over \$13 billion in the depots from fiscal year 2007 to fiscal year 2017.

Senate Report 115-125 included a provision for GAO to examine the services' investment in and performance of their depots. GAO evaluated (1) the condition of depot facilities and equipment, their relationship to depot performance, and the services' tracking of the relationship to depot performance and (2) the extent to which DOD and the services have developed an approach for guiding depot investments to address key challenges. GAO also provides an overview summary for each depot. GAO reviewed data from fiscal years 2007 through 2017 on depot investment, performance, and the age and condition of facilities and equipment; reviewed agency guidance; and interviewed DOD, service, and depot officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making 13 recommendations to improve data collection on the effect of facilities and equipment condition on depot performance, and develop plans that incorporate key elements to guide depot investments. DOD concurred with 12 recommendations, but did not agree to monitor and report on depot investments. We continue to believe monitoring and reporting will enhance DOD's efforts to improve its depots.

View [GAO-19-242](#). For more information, contact Diana Maurer at (202) 512-9627 or [maurerd@gao.gov](mailto:maurerd@gao.gov).

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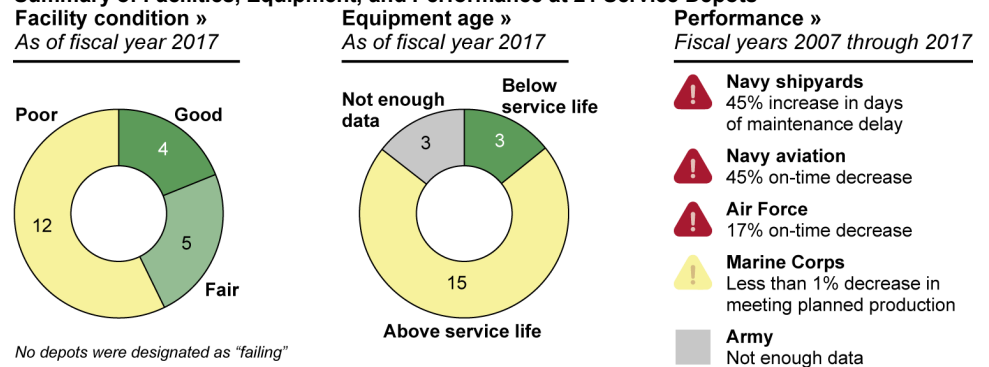
## MILITARY DEPOTS

### Actions Needed to Improve Poor Conditions of Facilities and Equipment That Affect Maintenance Timeliness and Efficiency

## What GAO Found

The condition of facilities at a majority of the Department of Defense's (DOD) depots is poor and the age of equipment is generally past its useful life, but the services do not consistently track the effect that these conditions have on depot performance. Twelve of the 21 depots GAO reviewed—more than half—had "poor" average facility condition ratings (see figure). Some facilities also serve functions for which they were not designed, reducing their efficiency. In addition, the average age of depot equipment exceeded its expected useful life at 15 of the 21 depots. These factors contributed, in part, to a decline in performance over the same period. From 2007 to 2017, performance at the depots generally declined, reducing the availability of the weapon systems repaired for training and operations. Optimizing facilities and equipment at the depots can improve their maintenance efficiency. For example, the Navy estimates that its shipyard optimization effort will save over 325,000 labor days per year, which would allow an additional submarine overhaul annually. However, the services lack data on the effect that facilities and equipment conditions have on maintenance delays, hindering DOD's ability to effectively target investments to the highest priorities.

#### Summary of Facilities, Equipment, and Performance at 21 Service Depots



Source: GAO analysis of service depot data. | GAO-19-242

DOD and the services' approach for managing investments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its depots lacks elements important to addressing key challenges. The services have efforts underway to complete their plans by February 2019 to address their depots' facility and equipment needs. However, GAO found that these plans are preliminary and will not include key elements, such as analytically-based goals; results-oriented metrics; a full accounting of the resources, risks, and stakeholders; and a process for reporting on progress. Addressing the poor conditions at DOD's 21 depots will cost billions and require sustained management attention over many years. However, the DOD office responsible for depot policy does not monitor or regularly report on depot improvement efforts to DOD decision makers and Congress. Until DOD and the services incorporate these key elements into the management approach for their depot investments, they risk continued deterioration of the depots, hindering their ability to meet the Secretary of Defense's goals for improving readiness and reducing operating and support costs.