DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

Observations on Changes to the Reporting Structure for DOD's Corrosion Office and Its Implementation of GAO Recommendations

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) relocated the Office of Corrosion Policy and Oversight (Corrosion Office) within the restructured acquisition and sustainment organization in fiscal year 2018. Prior to the restructure, the Corrosion Office reported directly to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. As part of the restructure, DOD relocated the Corrosion Office within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, where it reports to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Materiel Readiness. It continues to perform its statutory roles and responsibilities under the new oversight organization. For instance, it is continuing to

• develop and recommend corrosion policy guidance;
• develop and implement a long-term strategy to reduce corrosion;
• review corrosion programs and funding levels proposed by the military departments, and submit related recommendations to the Secretary of Defense; and
• monitor and ensure that corrosion prevention and mitigation are incorporated into acquisition and maintenance processes.

DOD is also making or planning changes to the operation of the Corrosion Office, specifically planning to increase corrosion advocacy throughout DOD, oversight of the Corrosion Office, corrosion accountability of the military departments, and corrosion transparency and its alignment with materiel readiness.

DOD’s Corrosion Office has taken or planned actions to implement most recommendations GAO made in calendar years 2003 through 2018 related to corrosion management. Specifically, GAO made 35 recommendations to the Corrosion Office in 11 corrosion-related products on topics such as strategic planning, performance management, and mandatory oversight reports. In comments on these products, DOD concurred with 16 of those recommendations, partially concurred with eight, and non-concurred with 11. As of March 2019, DOD had taken action or planned to take action on most of GAO’s prior recommendations (see figure).

Prior GAO Report Recommendations to Corrosion Office and Department of Defense (DOD) Actions, as of March 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Taken action on 18</th>
<th>Plan to take action on 12</th>
<th>Do not plan to take action on 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
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Source: GAO. | GAO-19-513

Specifically, DOD’s Corrosion Office had taken action on 18 recommendations. Corrosion Office officials also described to GAO their plans to take action to implement 12 additional recommendations. These planned actions include, among other actions, updating existing guidance and developing new policy or processes. DOD stated that the Corrosion Office does not plan to take action on the remaining five recommendations. GAO continues to believe that its recommendations are valid.