

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-20-401](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Army and Marine Corps operate large industrial depots to maintain, overhaul, and upgrade numerous weapon systems and equipment. The depots play a key role in sustaining readiness by completing maintenance on time and returning refurbished equipment to warfighting customers.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, in a report accompanying a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, included a provision for GAO to review Army and Marine Corps depots. GAO evaluated the extent to which (1) the Army met its planned maintenance goals and addressed any challenges in measuring depot performance; (2) the Army identified and addressed any key challenges in completing planned maintenance; and (3) the Marine Corps completed its planned maintenance and addressed associated challenges. GAO reviewed depot planning processes; analyzed maintenance goals and data for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 for the Army and fiscal years 2015 through 2019 for the Marine Corps; and met with Army and Marine Corps headquarters, command, and depot officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making five recommendations, including that the Army develop procedures to ensure depot input on metrics, develop guidance for depot customers, and analyze the causes of maintenance changes; and that the Marine Corps develop a complete baseline. DOD concurred with all five recommendations.

View [GAO-20-401](#). For more information, contact Diana Maurer, (202) 512-9627, MaurerD@gao.gov, or Asif Khan, (202) 512-9869, KhanA@gao.gov

July 2020

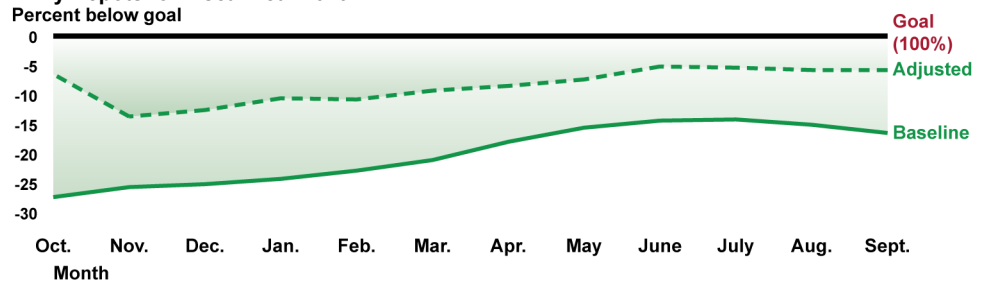
MILITARY DEPOTS

Army and Marine Corps Need to Improve Efforts to Address Challenges in Measuring Performance and Planning Maintenance Work

What GAO Found

The Army reported that it met its goals for about 91 percent of the systems on which it planned to complete maintenance for its customers in fiscal years 2018 and 2019, but its key performance metric has some limitations. Recognizing these limitations, Army Materiel Command (AMC), which oversees the Army depots, has begun assessing performance against monthly (adjusted) and annual (baseline) goals (see figure). AMC also began an effort to improve its performance metrics, but depot officials involved in the effort whom GAO interviewed are uncertain how AMC will incorporate their input. Without AMC procedures to ensure that it will incorporate depot input, as called for by Army guidance on effective teamwork, AMC cannot be assured that it is developing metrics that are beneficial at all levels for assessing depot performance.

Percent Variance from Goal for Average Adjusted and Baseline Depot Performance across Army Depots for Fiscal Year 2019



Source: GAO analysis of Army data. | GAO-20-401

The Army identified a key challenge to meeting the depots' maintenance goals in fiscal years 2018 and 2019, but it has not fully addressed this challenge. During this time the Army experienced schedule changes to more than half of its planned maintenance work. GAO found that most of this variability was caused by changing customer needs and identified two key shortcomings in the Army's approach to minimizing such changes. First, the Army does not have guidance establishing time frames for depot customers to submit their needs during depot planning, resulting in millions of dollars in unplanned work. Without such guidance, depots will continue to experience workload variability. Second, AMC has not systematically analyzed why depot customers have changes, resulting in incomplete information about causes and potential solutions. Without such analysis, the Army will be poorly positioned to address longstanding maintenance challenges.

For fiscal years 2015 through 2019, the Marine Corps reported generally meeting its yearly depot maintenance goals, but GAO found that the Marine Corps has not yet included all its planned work in its baseline schedule for a key performance metric. The Marine Corps also experienced monthly variability in fiscal year 2019 for a variety of reasons, including parts shortages, lack of asset availability, and changing customer needs, and it is undertaking several initiatives to minimize such changes. However, developing a complete baseline will allow the Marine Corps to better assess its performance against its planned maintenance work and better identify and mitigate the causes and effects of any unfavorable performance.