

January 29, 2009 - New DoD IG Report Requested by Rep. Slaughter Calls for Reform

New DoD Inspector
General Report Requested by U.S. Rep. Slaughter Questions Army Body Armor
Testing Practices, Calls for Reform

16,413 Pieces of Armor Recalled, Real Changes in Testing
Procedure Brought About by Rep. Slaughter's Persistence

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28),
Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, today released a new report she
requested from the Department of Defense's Inspector General (DoD IG) which
finds that first article testing for an Army body armor contact was improperly conducted
and three of eight armor designs that originally passed this testing, actually
failed. As a result, the IG recommends that the Army immediately recall 16,413
body armor plates.

The report also finds that there are significant differences, for no clear reasons, between the Army and U.S. Special Operations' ballistic testing requirements and recommends that testing procedures be standardized to the higher requirements DoD-wide.

"We found out that body armor was improperly tested and that armor designs that originally passed testing, actually failed," said Congresswoman Slaughter. "How many Army soldiers died because they didn't have the best armor? The answer to that question could be devastating."

Key recommendations made by the IG to improve testing requirements and keep troops in the field safe have already been accepted by the Army. In fact, Secretary of the Army, Pete Geren, has already issued the orders to recall the 16,413 body armor plates in question.

However, officials from the Army and the Pentagon's independent armor testing experts disagreed with the IG findings that the armor pieces actually failed first article testing. The dispute will be adjudicated by the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Secretary Geren agreed to order the recall, pending the results of that adjudication.

"I am anxiously awaiting the results of this dispute," Slaughter continued. "This needs to bring about

the necessary reforms to ensure that our soldiers always receive the best available equipment."

Congresswoman Slaughter began looking into DoD body armor testing requirements in January 2006 when the New York Times reported that 80 percent of Marines who died in Iraq from upper body wounds would have lived with the proper body armor. Congresswoman Slaughter took action and requested that the IG investigate body armor contracting procedures and testing requirements.

"Three years ago we found out that 80 percent of the Marines who died of upper body wounds in Iraq could have been saved with the proper body armor," Slaughter added. "That is outrageous and the reason I requested this report."

Congresswoman Slaughter's quest for answers took three years. In March 2008 she received a report from the IG regarding Army body armor contracting procedures which found deficiencies in numerous contracts. This report, however, was entirely inadequate and left Congresswoman Slaughter with more questions than answers, prompting her to request the IG to confirm that all body armor has been properly tested and passed testing.

"I have been trying to get answers for nearly three years," Slaughter concluded. "I won't rest until we are absolutely certain that the brave men and women who serve this country have the very best armor to keep them safe."

The real changes in Army procedures triggered by this IG report would not have been brought about had Congresswoman Slaughter not persisted.

BACKGROUND

For a complete timeline of Congresswoman Slaughter's efforts to get answers and effect change, please [click here](#).

What the DoD IG Did At Congresswoman Slaughter's Request:

The DoD IG reviewed whether first article testing, stringent testing to ensure that a body armor design is up to contract specifications, was conducted properly. They also reviewed the basis for first article testing criteria used by the U.S. Army and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

What the DoD IG Found:

Finding 1: First article testing for an army body armor contract was not consistently conducted or scored in accordance with contract

terms, conditions, and specifications.
Consequently, the IG believes that three of eight armor designs that passed first article testing actually failed.

Finding 2: The Army and USSOCOM officials developed separate ballistic testing criteria for body armor. The criteria differed significantly, even when testing against the same threats.

DoD IG Recommendations:

The IG recommended that the Army immediately identify and facilitate the return 16,413 pieces of body armor. The IG also recommended that the Army implement controls to ensure that changes to body armor contracts are approved by the contracting officer in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation. Lastly, the IG recommended that a standardized test operations procedure for the body armor pieces in question be developed and implemented DoD-wide.

Army and Director, Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) Response

Officials from the Army and DOT&E, the Pentagon's independent body armor testers, disagreed with the IG findings that the armor pieces actually failed first article testing and should be returned. The dispute will be adjudicated by the Deputy Secretary of Defense. The Secretary of the Army, Pete Geren, agreed to order the recall, pending the results of that adjudication.

For a copy of the report,
please call 202.225.2888.

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