

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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FOR INSTALLATIONS**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, good morning. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Air Force's experience with managing its historic properties through its cultural resources conservation program. As you know the Fiscal Year 2007 President's Budget proposal was released last month. Much of my testimony will be based on expectations from that proposal. I ask that you consider my comments in that light.

The Air Force owns over 4,500 properties (actual 4,548), which we consider to be historic in nature. Of those properties, almost 30% (1,283) are formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places and a little over 70% (3,265) are eligible for listing on the National Register. Whether a property is "listed" or "eligible" for listing is a matter of semantics since we treat all of these properties the same.

Over the next 2 years the Air Force will divest itself of over 2,000 historic homes, or over one-half our total historic property inventory, through housing privatization. When an installation is selected for housing privatization, all homes, historic and non-historic, will be privatized. The property owner is subject to provisions in an agreement that requires consultation on adverse impacts to historic properties. Air Force installations with historic privatized housing that have been awarded to date include Patrick, Offutt, Hill, Elmendorf and Scott Air Force Bases. Property owners at privatized bases work closely with base officials and State Historic Preservation Officers.

The Air Force takes seriously its responsibilities for the management of its historic properties under the National Historic Preservation Act. In addition, there are 15 various laws, executive orders, DoD and Air Force regulations associated with cultural resources management. President Bush signed Executive Order 13287, "Preserve America," in March of 2003. This Executive order directs Federal agencies to increase their knowledge of historic resources in their

care and to enhance the management of these assets. We are doing just that. Our historic properties contribute a deep sense of place and heritage to Air Force people as well as to the general public. The importance of our historic properties, their management, maintenance, and repair is carefully factored into the Air Force's larger goal of successful execution of mission requirements, productivity, quality of life and retention. With nearly 100,000 total buildings in the Air Force inventory, we ensure maintenance and repair funds are used wisely and most effectively.

Contrary to popular belief, when facilities reach 50 years of age, they are not automatically designated as historic. There are procedures in place to review and document structures that have eligibility potential. Requirements associated with the management of historic properties include the inventory of buildings and their evaluation for eligibility to the National Register, the preparation of installation integrated cultural resources management plans, and mitigation costs that may be associated with the disposal of a historic property. Once determined eligible for listing, the preparation of a nomination package is an additional requirement.

Like our fellow Services, we value our historic properties for the significance they represent. The significance varies ... from the proud, albeit relatively recent history of the Cape Canaveral Historic District, where America's manned space program began, to the inspiring architecture of the Cadet Chapel at the Air Force Academy, to Huffman Prairie Flying Field in Fairborn, OH, which served as a testing ground for the Wright Brothers over 100 years ago.

When General Robbins testified before the HAC-MILCON subcommittee in 2001, he stated that overall maintenance costs of our historic buildings are proportionate to that of other

buildings in our inventory. We continue to believe this is true with regards to the total inventory.

To manage the Air Force's historic properties, we develop and implement installation Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plans that serve as our primary management tool for cultural resources. These management plans include inventories of all historic properties and an overall strategy for how the properties will be maintained in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. Additionally, programmatic agreements or memorandums of agreements with State Historic Preservation Officers allow for pre-coordinated approaches to maintenance and facility modifications for historic properties to streamline the consultation requirement.

One of the most sweeping changes in our ability to manage our historic inventory is on the horizon. The Air Force initiated changes to how we track operations and maintenance costs against our real property inventory. These changes, which will be in place by the fall of this year, will enable us to categorize our historic facilities, both listed and eligible, into numerous historic classifications. This will allow us to better track, understand and manage the resources invested into these facilities.

The Air Force has not and does not plan to allocate Real Property Maintenance funds specifically for maintenance of historic facilities. The current Real Property Maintenance budget supports all facilities without regard for age or historical designation. We develop our budget for sustainment and life cycle repair using DOD's Facility Sustainment Model. Within this model, historic properties do not carry a special or distinct designation. In other words, a historic facility used to house administrative functions has the same code as a similar non-historic

facility. Under this model, historic facilities "earn" the same sustainment funding (on a square footage basis) as a non-historic facility.

As I alluded to earlier in my testimony, one area where we expect our management of historic facilities to change significantly over the next couple of years is historic housing. The Air Force currently owns over 2,000 "listed" or "eligible" homes. By the end of fiscal year 2007, the Air Force will privatize most of these, with only Mountain Home AFB still having housing "eligible" for listing on the Registry remaining within our control. Of note, this includes privatizing all 135 of our historic General Officer quarters. This divestiture of historic housing is both welcome and necessary, as private contractors are able to bring quality housing to our Airmen more quickly than we could in the government.

Divesting historic properties isn't a new concept. The disposal or transfer of historic properties has often been the best approach from both operational and fiscal perspectives. In our privatization contracts we ensure National Historic Preservation compliance is mandatory for the new property owners. Following the consultation requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we have already successfully disposed or transferred ownership of a number of historic properties over the years, including transfer of the Delta 01/Delta 09 Minuteman II Missile complex at Ellsworth AFB, SD, to the National Park Service to form the Minuteman Missile National Historic Site; the transfer of a Titan II Launch facility near Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, to a non-profit organization to maintain as a museum; the transfer of ownership of a historic hangar at McConnell AFB, KS, to the City of Wichita; and the transfer of ownership of a historic Red Cross building at F. E. Warren AFB for relocation off the base.

We will continue to enhance our historic preservation procedures and guidance with the assistance of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and also continue to strengthen our

already strong partnerships with the State Historic Preservation Offices. A recent example of how we are streamlining the consultation process is through the use of an Air Force wide programmatic agreement we've established regarding Capehart-Wherry, era housing. Under the agreement, we are considering them "eligible per Program Comment" until we perform detailed recordation on representative units. After this is complete, we will have fulfilled our obligations under the National Historic Preservation Act and subsequently may proceed with planned privatization efforts or other management actions. This is an example of how we both honor our historic roots and provide quality housing for our service members and their families. In summary, I'm proud to report the Air Force successes with regards to historic preservation and I'm optimistic that our efforts will improve future management of our historic facilities inventory. We do not believe the cost of maintenance of historic properties is disproportionate to that of comparable non-historic properties and are confident that our automated real property inventory system will assist in quantifying that original assessment. The Air Force's goal -- to maintain real-property inventory and cost tracking mechanism associated with historic properties -- will be realized with the addition of the coding required by the Federal Real Property Council and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Population of the core data elements will be completed in August 06 for end-of-year reports. In FY07, the AF will have all data and calculations in our automated system to allow for an analysis of the costs to maintain historic and non-historic properties based on square footage and other criteria. The AF will be fully compliant with requirements for the full range of historic data in its inventory by the end of FY06. Looking to the future, we are cooperating with the Defense Department and the other Services to ensure fiscally prudent and technically sound management of our historic properties. Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. Thank you.