



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D C 20548

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LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS  
DIVISION

JUN 30 1976

General John R. Deane, Jr.  
Commanding General  
U.S. Army Materiel Development and  
Readiness Command  
5001 Eisenhower Avenue  
Alexandria, Virginia 22304

Dear General Deane:

We have completed a survey of data processing activities at the Aberdeen Proving Ground. Our objective was to assess the overall management effectiveness in using the computer to support the Aberdeen mission. We also contacted the Acting Director of Management Information Systems of the Army Materiel Development and Readiness Command (DARCOM) to determine if the Command is planning to obtain replacement or additional computer equipment.

The Aberdeen Proving Ground operates an IBM model 360/65 computer which was installed in 1970 and purchased by the Army for about \$2 6 million. It is used for both business and scientific and engineering applications and serves as a central computer hosting a number of remote activities through telecommunications. A sizable portion of the computer workload is used in processing the Test, Evaluation, Analysis, and Management Uniformity Plan (TEAM-UP), the standard automated management system of the Test and Evaluation Command.

In addition, data processing support is provided through remote job entry terminals to:

1. Jefferson Proving Ground, Madison, Indiana
2. Materiel Test Directorate of the Aberdeen Proving Ground
3. U.S. Army Ordnance Center and School located at Aberdeen
4. Aviation Test Board, Ft. Rucker, Alabama

Prior to July 1975, Aberdeen also supported three additional test boards, but this work has since been transferred to another Army computer installation

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We believe the management of the data processing facility at Aberdeen has been effective in satisfying user needs and meeting reporting requirements. However, the central processing unit was used less than 30 percent of the available hours during fiscal year 1975. From tests we made for the month of September 1975, the central processing unit was used at only 27 percent of practical capacity. Some authorities in the data processing field believe that central processor utilization for this model computer can be maintained as high as 80 percent of its practical capacity without significant degradation of service to the user.

The Army Audit Agency reported, in 1973, that the system was not being fully utilized and that Aberdeen should seek additional scientific and engineering work. The workload has not increased appreciably since then and, in fact, has decreased somewhat since the loss of the three test boards in mid-1975.

There are some Department of Army and DARCOM standard systems planned for implementation at Aberdeen. The Installation Equipment Management System and the Integrated Facilities System were scheduled to become operational this year, and the Standard Army Civilian Pay System was scheduled to replace the civilian pay application. It is difficult to estimate the machine time these systems will require when operating in a multiprogramming environment, but we do not believe they will significantly increase the current workload.

Just prior to the completion of our survey, DARCOM designated Aberdeen as one of eight wholesale computing facilities in the DARCOM scientific and engineering network. As such, DARCOM activities will be required to seek computer support from these facilities before contracting for support with non-DARCOM agencies.

While this action may increase the computer workload at Aberdeen, we believe excess capacity will still remain. Therefore, we suggest the actual impact be determined. If sharable capacity still remains, we believe that the automated data processing management within DARCOM should identify other potential business and scientific users of this type and scale of computer power either in DARCOM, the Department of Defense, or other Governmental agencies and not limit their increased sharing effort to scientific and engineering work within DARCOM. We also believe that DARCOM

should reexamine its business oriented computer needs and before leasing or purchasing its planned acquisition of replacement or additional automated data processing equipment, make greater and more efficient use of the Aberdeen data processing facility by sharing the facility with others in DARCOM in need of this type and scale of computer power for business applications

A copy of this letter is being sent to the Commanding General, Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Should you desire, we will be pleased to discuss our survey with you or members of your staff.

Sincerely yours,

  
Donald L. Eirich  
Associate Director