



Highlights of [GAO-08-427](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Unscheduled ship maintenance, known as voyage repairs, is a high priority for the U.S. Navy. Such repairs are sometimes beyond the capability of the ship's crew to perform; cannot be deferred; and must be made at a remote location. After the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended closing the former Naval Ship Repair Facility, Guam, the Navy leased the property at that facility to the Guam Economic Development and Commerce Authority, which sub-leased the property to a private shipyard. DOD has since begun planning for a military buildup on Guam. In January 2007 the Navy recommended allowing the private shipyard's lease on Navy land to expire in 2012. Consequently, the House Armed Services Committee asked GAO to determine the extent to which the Navy has (1) identified future ship repair requirements at Guam, and (2) identified and assessed options to address those requirements. GAO reviewed documents related to ship maintenance and interviewed officials affiliated with private contractors, the Guam government, the Marine Corps, Military Sealift Command, and the Navy in conducting this review.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD estimate future voyage repair requirements for vessels at Guam; assess the options for providing repairs; and select the best option or combination of options. DOD concurred with comments to these recommendations.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-427](#). For more information, contact Brian J Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov.

DEFENSE LOGISTICS

Navy Needs to Develop and Implement a Plan to Ensure That Voyage Repairs Are Available to Ships Operating near Guam when Needed

What GAO Found

The Navy has not identified voyage surface ship repair requirements for 2012 and beyond for vessels operating near Guam, although some information is available on which to base estimated requirements for planning. Navy officials stated that they cannot estimate such requirements because the Navy expects to change its force structure, the Marine Corps has not finalized its plans for any additional vessels associated with the buildup, and Military Sealift Command expects changes to its force structure at Guam. Although the Navy, Marine Corps, and Military Sealift Command have not made final force structure decisions or operational plans for vessels operating at or near Guam, information is available to support an estimation of ship repair requirements as part of the multiyear planning and budgeting process. Specifically, the Navy (1) knows the history of voyage repairs conducted on Guam; (2) can identify vessels likely to operate near Guam based on planned force structure realignments in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review; and (3) can identify ship repair capabilities available at other strategic locations in the Pacific area, including Yokosuka, Japan. Developing requirements is a prerequisite for planning, and without developing estimated repair requirements the Navy cannot adequately evaluate options for meeting them.

Navy officials identified potential options for providing repairs in Guam, but have not fully assessed their viability or identified time-critical planning tasks. According to Navy officials, once the Navy identifies voyage ship repair requirements for the Guam area, they will choose from four options or a combination of options for providing voyage repairs. First, the Navy could try to expand existing organic repair capabilities to conduct voyage repairs. However, the existing ship maintenance capabilities and facilities have little excess capacity without augmentation, limiting their ability to perform additional work. Second, the Navy could rely on repair teams flown in from naval shipyards in the United States. Third, the Navy could build a new Navy ship repair facility, though that could require years of planning and new funding. Fourth, the Navy could contract out work to either or both of the private ship repair providers now operating in Guam, or to any other private ship repair facility that might choose to locate in Guam. Three of these options might require building new facilities or expanding existing facilities. Officials said they would not begin planning until preparations begin for submissions to the President's budget for fiscal year 2012. However, lead time is required to perform planning tasks necessary to provide repair capabilities from the Navy's suggested options. Without assessing the viability of each option for voyage repairs in a timely manner, the Navy increases the risk that voyage repair capabilities for ships operating in the Pacific may not be available when needed, potentially undermining ships' ability to accomplish their missions.