

DCMA Witnesses Testify

Greening and Tremper appeared at the June 12, 2007, Capitol Hill hearing, which focused on the merits and deficiencies of the DP-2 developmental program and on the prudence — or folly — of continued Congressional funding for it.



At a Capitol Hill hearing, Marie Greening, DCMA Aeronautical Systems Division director, outlines DCMA's oversight role to members of a House science and technology subcommittee assessing the development of a vertical short takeoff and landing aircraft. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology)

Appearing before a subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives, two Defense Contract Management Agency witnesses provided testimony on the experimental manned DP-2 aircraft, a vertical short takeoff and landing — V/STOL — aircraft with hover capability being developed with public funds by duPont Aerospace Company, El Cajon, Calif.

Testifying before the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight, Committee on Science and Technology, Marie Greening, executive director of DCMA Aeronautical Systems Division, and Air Force Lt. Col. Michael J. Tremper, the DCMA government flight representative (GFR) for the DP-2 Program, shared their insights and expertise with the 10-member panel, chaired by Rep. Brad Miller, D-N.C.

At the request of the chairman, Greening and Tremper appeared at the June 12, Capitol Hill hearing, which focused on the merits and deficiencies of the DP-2 developmental program and on the prudence — or folly — of continued Congressional funding for it. duPont Aerospace received its original funding for the program in 1988 with a legislative earmark of \$3 million. Since then, Congress has earmarked an additional \$60

million, yet the program's progress and documented results thus far are viewed by many as disappointing and short of the intended mark. Such perceptions were reinforced by the majority of the hearing's other witnesses, including John Kinzer of the Office of Naval Research, G. Warren Hall of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and former Harrier test pilot, Dr. William Scheuren.

However, not all the witnesses painted such a dire picture. Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, defended the program, pointing out the military's continued need for short-takeoff and landing and hover capability, particularly on the battlefield and on irregular terrain. He also reminded the panel about the historically protracted nature of cutting-edge aircraft-development programs. "Anybody can be critical of a V/STOL program, because V/STOL is very hard to achieve," offered the 14-term congressman who represents the El Cajon area.

In the third and final segment of the hearing, DCMA's Greening and Tremper took their places at the witness table to address the subcommittee, which included Democrats Bart Gordon, Tenn., and Brian Baird, Wash., and Republicans

Before Congressional Panel

By Tom Gelli, Chief, DCMA Congressional Affairs

James Sensenbrenner, Wis., Dana Rohrabacher, Calif., and Ralph Hall, Texas. Greening outlined DCMA's contract-management role and the GFR responsibilities carried out by Tremper, whom she introduced to the panel. Said Greening, a private pilot herself, "DCMA serves as the in-plant representative for military, federal and allied government buying agencies. The assurance of safe ground and flight operations at these defense plants is an important facet of the agency's GFR role."

Tremper, whose civilian job is flying Boeing 767s for Delta Airlines, opened his remarks with a prepared statement chronicling his oversight work on the DP-2 program. This work included a series of test analyses, safety reviews and compliance evaluations. Tremper offered no definitive judgment of the program, but did cite several procedural shortfalls and four mishaps that occurred during various liftoff and hover tests. "The program was found to be contractually non-compliant in many aspects of the operation, resulting in temporary withdrawal of approval for aircraft testing," stated Tremper. "However, subsequent inspections identified a considerable upward trend in program compliance with contractual requirements."

The hearing did little to endear the subcommittee's majority members



Appearing before the Investigations and Oversight panel of the House Committee on Science and Technology, Air Force Lt. Col. Michael Tremper, DCMA government flight representative, presents testimony on the DP-2 V/STOL aircraft development program. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology)

to the program or to instill optimism that the 19-year-old project would be turning the corner anytime soon. In August, the House of Representatives opted to deny fiscal year 2008 funds

for the program, which Chairman Miller remarked had come to resemble a "hobby, not a serious research project." **C**



The experimental and controversial manned DP-2 aircraft being developed by duPont Aerospace Company, El Cajon, Calif. (Photo courtesy of Air Force Lt. Col. Michael Tremper, DCMA)