

Aerospace Medical Association



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March 29, 1999

The Honorable Floyd Spence
2405 RHOB
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Spence:

I am writing to you as Executive Director of the Aerospace Medical Association, an organization of 3,400 physicians practising clinical aerospace medicine and scientists doing related research. We are deeply concerned about the proposed reduction in research conducted at Brooks AFB, Texas. Because USAF is moving toward an air-space force, expanding our role and mission should herald an increase, not a decrease, in aerospace medicine research. I will briefly summarize our rationale.

- a. G-loss of consciousness (GLOC) continues to occur in today's aircraft and will undoubtedly be of concern in future aircraft (such as the F-22) that will impose even higher accelerative forces (G forces) on pilots. Centrifuge studies are necessary to develop countermeasures.
- b. Future aircraft will probably impose Gy (sideways) forces. There has been no meaningful research to date on this type of acceleration.
- c. Night vision goggles have become critical components for crews flying combat/rescue missions after dark. More research is needed to improve visual acuity and depth perception through these lenses as well as making them more compatible with other life support equipment.
- d. Future aircraft will have higher cabin altitudes which will increase the risk of decompression sickness. This can be addressed only by altitude chamber and hyperbaric chamber research.

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- e. Chemical and biological warfare ensembles for aircrew need much improvement, particularly in comfort and compatibility with other life support equipment.
- f. Laser eye protection research must be ongoing.
- g. Space operations by military personnel will open up an entire area of research including medical flight standards. In addition, medical standards and human factors research will be critical for ground control personnel.

Brooks AFB has a long history of excellence in aerospace medicine research and will continue this tradition. The Aerospace Medical Association strongly urges you to utilize your office to the fullest in support of appropriate funding for research at Brooks AFB. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Russell B. Rayman, M.D.

Executive Director

RBR:jc