



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

MAY 20 2008

The Honorable Ron Kind
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kind:

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates asked me to respond to your April 28, 2008 letter concerning conditions in a barracks building at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I found your constituent's video deeply troubling, for it showed that we had let our Soldiers down. The conditions captured in the video are unacceptable and have no place in our Army. We are taking steps to identify and address any problems that exist anywhere in our barracks.

We have fixed all life, health, and safety issues in the Fort Bragg barracks. Critical repairs, such as the stopped up drain were repaired the same day. All other repairs, with the exception of some minor spot painting, were accomplished within two weeks. The Womack Hospital Preventative Medicine and Environmental Health staff inspected the building and cleared it for occupancy. We have, moreover, reprogrammed a total of \$5,255,500 to Fort Bragg for this fiscal year to improve the conditions of 22 similar barracks.

Army-wide, the Installation Management Command ordered an immediate inspection of over 3,300 barracks and 146,500 rooms to ascertain the extent of the problem. Barracks deficiencies were corrected or put on work order, and any Soldier found living in a substandard room was relocated.

The Army has taken steps to address maintenance shortcomings and how we manage our barracks at every installation. We reprogrammed \$248 million to address our most urgent barracks' priorities. We have established a senior noncommissioned officer oversight body that will continuously monitor barracks conditions and maintenance teams. We also have transferred barracks "ownership" from deploying units to the permanent headquarters "garrisons" to provide continuity in their upkeep, and we are centrally managing and tracking barracks quality on a recurring basis.

We are taking steps to improve the nearly 80 percent of our barracks which were built in 1979 or earlier. These older facilities will require a continual investment and leadership focus to extend their life until replacements are constructed. The Army began a barracks modernization program in 1994 to provide all permanent party Soldiers housing units with two private bedrooms and a shared bathroom and kitchenette, or an equivalent standard. All permanent party replacement barracks will be funded by fiscal

year 2013, with construction completed by the end of fiscal year 2015. The Army has a similar program to eliminate substandard training barracks, with full funding by the end of fiscal year 2015 and full occupancy expected by the end of fiscal year 2017. The Army has invested \$13 billion since 1994 and will invest an additional \$10 billion to upgrade all barracks for Soldiers by 2017.

Thank you for your support of our Soldiers.

Sincerely,



Pete Geren