

MILITARY PROCUREMENT OF AIRBORNE ROCKET LAUNCHERS

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 1968

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
MILITARY OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met in executive session at 10:35 a.m., in room 2203, Rayburn Building, Hon. Chet Holifield presiding.

Present: Representatives Holifield, Moorhead, Randall, and Erlenborn.

Also present: Herbert Roback, staff administrator; Joseph C. Luman, defense analyst; Douglas Dahlin, counsel; Paul Ridgely, investigator; and J. Philip Carlson, minority counsel, Committee on Government Operations.

Mr. HOLIFIELD. The subcommittee will be in order.

Today and tomorrow we will review the military procurement of the 2.75-inch rocket launcher. This is an important ordnance item used by all military services. This launcher fires the 2.75-inch Folding Fin Aircraft Rocket (FFAR). Navy and Air Force aircraft and Army helicopters in Vietnam use these ordnance items in great quantities.

The launcher comes in two basic types: 7-round and 19-round, and each type may be made of metal or fiber, depending on whether the launcher is expendable or reusable. Reusable launchers are used in training and also preferred by the Army for helicopter use.

On May 7, 1968, the Washington Post carried a news story that the Justice Department brought a legal action before a Federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., involving a company named Alisco, Inc. This company recently acquired a company known as Chromcraft, a maker of chrome furniture in St. Louis, Mo. Chromcraft was awarded an Air Force contract to make a 19-round rocket launcher known as the LAU-3/A in 1957, about 11 years ago. When the contractor experienced production difficulties with the rocket launcher, the Air Force partially terminated the contract and indicated that it was no longer interested in 2.75-inch rocket launcher procurement.

A few years later, with the new emphasis on limited war preparation and the Vietnam conflict, the military services became very much interested in the 2.75-inch rocket launcher. All of them, it seems, turned to Chromcraft as a production source. In a few instances 7-round rocket launchers were purchased from another company, Radiant Co., of Chicago, Ill., but Chromcraft was the exclusive source for the 19-round and the primary source for the 7-round.