Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia

October 2019

Background

The Department of Defense (DoD) uses and manages operational ranges to support national security objectives and maintain the high state of operational readiness essential to its mission requirements. The Department conducts non-regulatory, proactive, and comprehensive operational range assessments (ORAs) to support the long-term sustainability of these ranges while protecting human health and the environment. The purpose of an ORA is to determine if there is a release or substantial threat of a release of munitions constituents (MC) from an operational range to an off-range area that exceeds an applicable regulatory standard or creates a potential unacceptable risk to human health or the environment.

The Army ORA effort was developed to address DoD requirements detailed in DoD Directive 4715.11 (10 May 2004) and DoD Instruction 4715.14 (15 November 2018). The overall objective of the ORA is to assess operational ranges/range complexes to determine if an off-range MC release or substantial threat of an off-range MC release exists; if an off-range MC release exists, does it exceed an applicable regulatory reporting standard; and if an MC release or substantial threat of a release exists, determine whether it creates a potentially unacceptable risk to off-range human health or the environment.

Operational Range Assessment Findings (10/2019)

Based on data evaluated for the updated CSM, the conclusions from the 2016 Periodic Review remain valid. The Basic Assessment determined that no potential MC associated with Hunter Army Airfield's operational ranges are migrating off-range and there are no risks to human and ecological receptors.

Next Steps

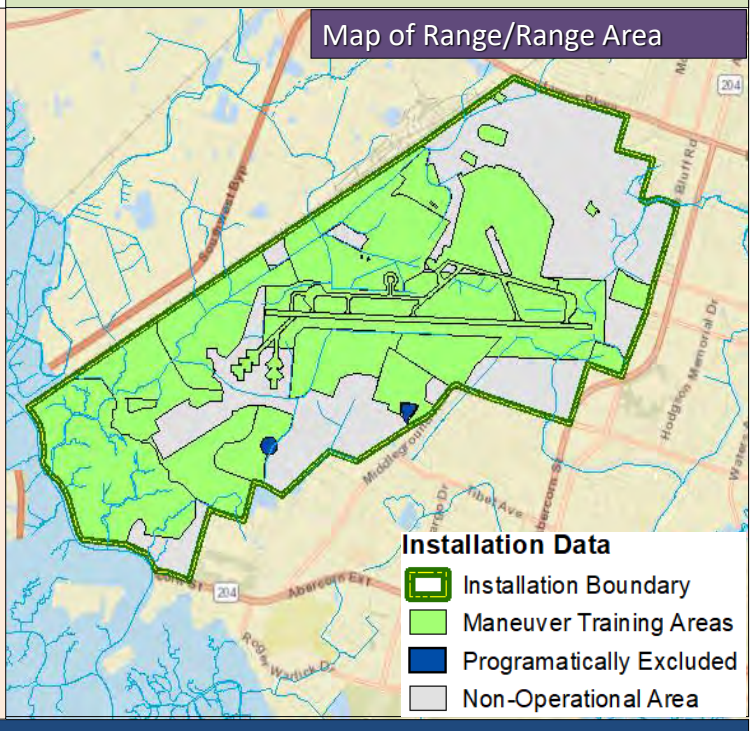
The installation's operational ranges should be included in the FY23-27 cycle of ORAs to satisfy re-assessment requirements.

Installation Overview

Hunter Army Airfield (AAF) is located in Chatham County, Georgia, south of the city of Savannah. Hunter AAF includes the Army's longest runway east of the Mississippi River, is home to the Truscott Air Deployment Terminal, and serves as sub-installation of Fort Stewart, which is located approximately 25 miles southwest of Hunter AAF. Hunter AAF includes a cantonment area, an airfield, and undeveloped lands. Hunter AAF is bordered to the north, east, and south by mixed use commercial/residential lands and to the west by railroad tracks and residential properties.

Hunter AAF currently consists of 28 operational ranges totaling approximately 3,120 acres. The operational ranges include a small arms range, breach facility, shoothouse, maneuver training areas, landing areas, and other miscellaneous training areas.

Map of Range/Range Area



Previous ORA Investigations

The Phase I for Hunter AAF was completed in 2008. The initial qualitative assessment consisted of collecting, evaluating and presenting available data to establish if there is an interaction between the on-range sources of MCOC and off-range receptors (source/receptor interaction).

During the Phase I, Hunter AAF consisted of 24 operational ranges totaling 2,620 acres. These ranges included: 11 maneuver training areas, three apron surfaces for fixed wing and/or rotary wing parking, one fixed-wing runway (also used as a drop zone), one field training area, one obstacle course, one parade/drill field, one drop zone, two parachute landing fall platforms, one rappelling training area, one shoothouse, and one small arms range. The small arms range was identified to be collocated with a historical bore sight range and the impact berm associated with the boresight range was still present within the boundary of the small arms range.

The Phase I identified a limited or no source on the 22 miscellaneous ranges. The shoothouse was identified to have a potential source of MCOC; however, no pathways were identified. The small arms range was identified to have both current and historical source components from small caliber munitions within the actively used impact berm and the boresight range berm. A potentially complete groundwater pathway was identified at the small arms range; however, no receptors were identified. As such, the 24 operational ranges at Hunter AAF were deemed unlikely and placed into a periodic review cycle.

During the 2016 Periodic Review, Hunter AAF's operational range layout was revised to 28 operational ranges totaling approximately 3,120 acres. Changes to the operational layout included the addition a maneuver training area, obstacle course, and repel tower; and the dividing of the shoothouse into a shoothouse and a breach facility.

Previous ORA Investigations (continued)

The 2016 Periodic Review confirmed the conclusions of the 2008 Phase I as no MC were determined to be migrating off-range at concentrations that pose a threat to human health or the environment.

ORA Basic Assessment (2019)

Based on an evaluation of updated data gathered as part of the 2019 Basic Assessment, it was determined that the potentially complete groundwater pathway identified during the 2016 Periodic Review was incomplete. No other significant changes to Hunter AAF's CSM components have occurred since the 2016 Periodic Review.

The Basic Assessment determined that Hunter AAF's current operational footprint is the same as the 2016 Periodic Review (28 ranges totaling 3,120 acres). One operational range (the airfield) was increased in size; however, this expansion consisted of expanding an operational area in an existing operational area resulting in no change to the overall operational acreage. No changes to human or ecological receptors were identified as compared to the 2016 Periodic Review. Although a source was determined to be present at several ranges, no viable off-range migration pathways were identified. As such, the Basic Assessment determined that no potential MC associated with Hunter AAF are migrating off-range nor pose a risk to human and/or ecological receptors.

For more information on Hunter AAF, contact usarmy.stewart.3-id.mbx.mbx-public-affairs1@mail.mil
For more information on the DoD Operational Range Assessment Program visit https://www.denix.osd.mil/orap/home/