# Operational Range Assessment
# Sheppard Air Force Base

**Air Force Operational Range Assessment Program** April 2024

## Background

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 Department of the Air Force (DAF) Operational Range Assessment Program (ORAP), established to comply with DoD policy, sets forth procedures for consistently conducting ORAs throughout the DAF. The DAF ORAP assessment methodology uses an installation-wide approach to verify the ORAP inventory and accomplish range-specific assessments. The DAF ORA is comprised of two primary phases:

- A Qualitative Assessment, Phase 1, encompasses records review, interviews, and a visual survey.
- A Quantitative Assessment, Phase 2, encompasses records review, interviews, visual survey, and environmental media sampling, as required

## Installation Overview

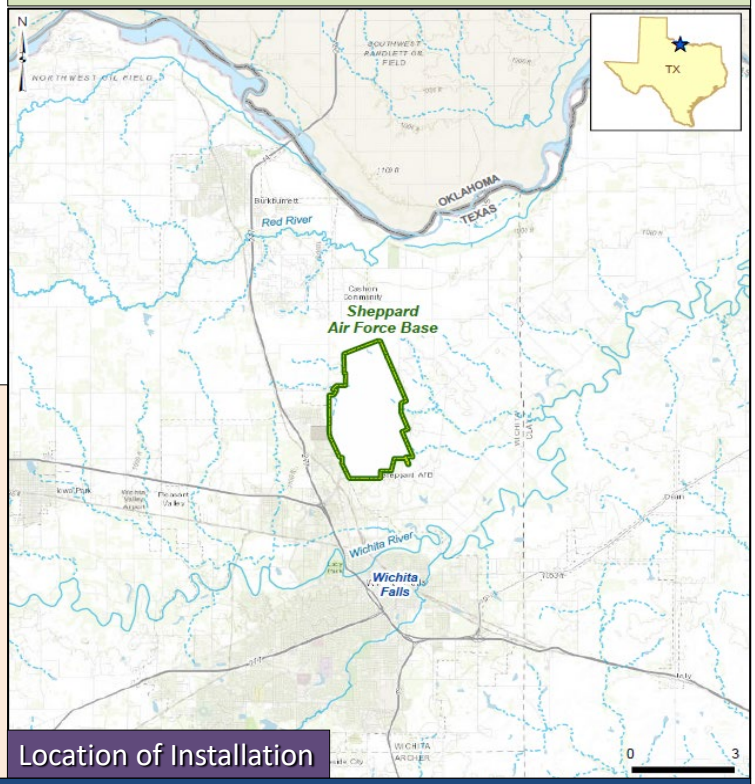
Sheppard AFB encompasses approximately 5,338 acres of land in Wichita County, Texas. The installation falls within the city limits of Wichita Falls and is approximately 6 miles south of the Oklahoma state line, south of the Red River and north of the Wichita River. Sheppard AFB also manages two Geographically Separated Unit (GSU) Frederick Auxiliary Airfield and the Sheppard Recreation Annex.

## ORAP Findings: April 2024 ORA Report

- No viable Munitions Constituents (MC) transport mechanisms identified for areas assessed at Sheppard AFB.
- No actual or substantial threat of an off-range MC release exists for areas assessed at Sheppard AFB.
- No unacceptable risks to human health or the environment were identified for areas assessed.

## Next Steps

Sheppard AFB is scheduled to be assessed in accordance with USAF and DoD policy specifying periodic assessment at least every five years or sooner if significant changes occur that may impact assessment decisions.



Location of Installation

Installation Overview Continued

No munitions are expended on these GSUs, as such, they will not be further evaluated under the ORAP.

During implementation of the ORAP at Sheppard AFB four operational areas were determined to be eligible for assessment under the Program: the Combat Arms Complex, Explosives Training Area, Field Readiness Training Area, and Canine Training Area.

The Canine Training Area meets criteria under the ORAP, but MC source is limited, and as such, is not recommended for an assessment under the ORAP.

The following summarizes assessment findings at the Combat Arms Complex, Explosives Training Area, and Field Readiness Training Area. This is the third ORA for the Combat Arms Complex and second ORA for both the Explosives Training Area and Field Readiness Training Area.

Combat Arms Complex Assessment Overview

The Combat Arms Complex encompasses 15.21 acres in the western portion of base and includes a partially contained Small Arms Range (SAR) and a Practice Grenade Range. These range assets were previously assessed separately; however, due to their adjacent nature and overlapping footprints, they were evaluated as a virtual complex under the ORAP. The Combat Arms Complex has been active since 1979.

The prior ORAs (2011, 2017) determined a potential source of MC present at the SAR's range floor and historical earthen berms and the Practice Grenade Range's firing points, range floor, and target areas. Suspected MC were identified as metals (aluminum, copper, lead, zinc) and nitroglycerin. All MC migration routes were deemed unlikely.

During this periodic Phase 1, no viable MC migration mechanisms were identified. As such, there is no threat of release nor risks receptors.

Explosives Training Area Assessment Overview

The Explosives Training Area encompasses 59.66 acres in the northwestern corner of the base. The area has been used since 2005 for detonating limited quantities of explosives for demonstration purposes and no emergency dispositions or proficiency training occurs.

The prior ORA (2017) determined a potential source of MC present within the sand floors of the bunkers utilized for training. Suspected MC were identified as RDX. All MC migration routes were deemed unlikely.

During this periodic Phase 1, no viable MC migration mechanisms were identified. As such, there is no threat of release nor risks receptors.

Field Readiness Training Area Assessment Overview

The Field Readiness Training Area encompasses 47 acres in the southeastern corner of the base. The area has been used since 1995 and has two areas that are used for munitions-related training as part of Explosive Ordnance Disposal preliminary technical training. The munitions use areas are used for buildup and expenditure of 0.50-caliber impulse cartridges that are approved munitions for off-range usage. All associated munitions debris is policed following training.

The prior ORA (2017) determined there was no potential source present. During this effort, suspected MC were identified as metals (copper and zinc) and nitroglycerin and a potential source area within the sand floors and sandbags in the bunkers were identified. Overall, a limited source of MC is suspected at the Field Readiness Training Area as all casings are policed following training exercises and primer/propellant MC is expected to be consumed during expenditure.

As such, during this periodic Phase 1, no viable MC migration mechanisms were identified. As such, there is no threat of release nor risks receptors.

**For more information on this assessment or the Air Force Operational Range Assessment Program contact the Ranges Subject Matter Expert, Technical Branch, Environmental Quality Directorate, Air Force Civil Engineer Center**
**For more information on the DoD Operational Range Assessment Program visit https://denix.osd.mil/orap/home/**