Operational Range Assessment
Dyess Air Force Base

Air Force Operational Range Assessment Program June 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 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

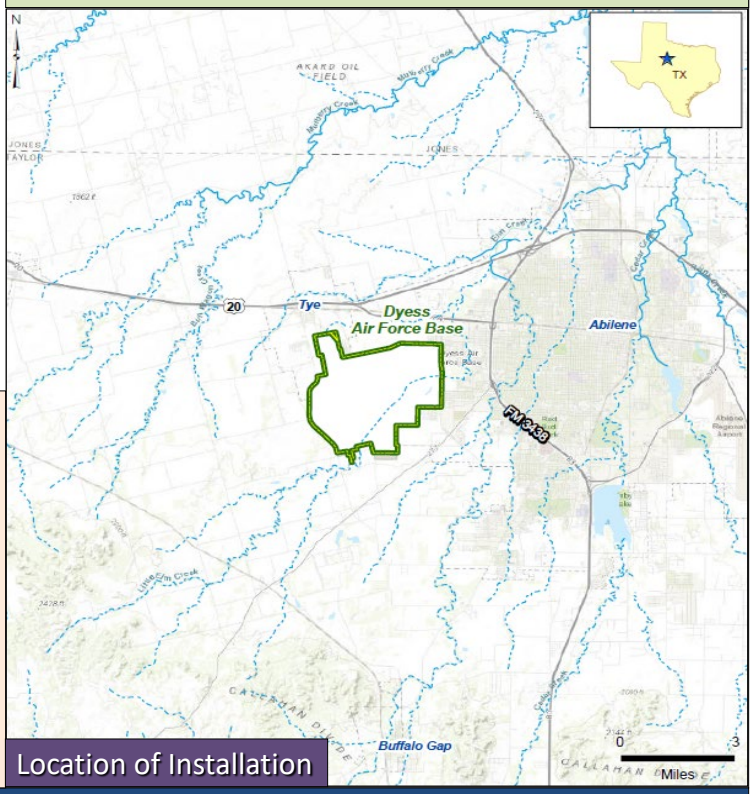
Dyess AFB encompasses approximately 5,348 acres of land in Taylor County, Texas. The installation is in the city limits of Abilene and approximately 7 miles west-southwest of the downtown area. Dyess AFB also manages the following Geographically Separated Units (GSUs): Moran Nexrad Weather Site, Instrument Landing System (ILS) Middle Marker, ILS Outer Marker, Dyess Communications Annex, Tennyson Drop Zone,

ORAP Findings: June 2024 ORA Report

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

Next Steps

Dyess 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

and Snyder Electronic Scoring Site (which includes five emitter sites). No munitions are expended on these GSUs, as such, they will not be further evaluated under the ORAP.

During implementations of the ORAP at Dyess AFB six operational areas were determined to be eligible for assessment under the Program: the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Proficiency Training Range, 40-millimeter (mm) Grenade Training Range, Small Arms Range (SAR) (8120), EOD Tool Area, Canine Training Area, and Ray Rangel Air Base. An operational indoor SAR, was also identified but determined to be programmatically excluded.

The EOD Tool Area, Canine Training Area, and Ray Rangel Air Base meet criteria under the ORAP, but MC source is deemed limited. The use of these areas shall be reevaluated and further evaluated as necessary during the next schedule implementation of the ORAP at Dyess AFB.

The following summarizes assessment findings at the EOD Proficiency Training Range, 40-mm Grenade Training Range, and SAR 8120.

EOD Proficiency Training Assessment Overview

The EOD Proficiency Training Range encompasses a total of 113.66 acres which includes the associated quantity distance arc. The area has been used since 2003 for explosives proficiency and familiarization training and as needed for emergency dispositions.

Previous ORA Phase 1 (2011 and 2017) efforts indicate MC (metals and explosives) may be deposited but no viable MC transport mechanisms exist, and area recommended for periodic assessment.

During the 2024 periodic ORA Phase 1, no significant MC loading and no viable MC migration mechanisms were verified due to flat terrain, berms surrounding the detonation area, and soil characteristics. As such, there is no threat of release nor risks to receptors, and area recommended for periodic Phase 1.

40 mm Grenade Training Range Assessment Overview

The 40-mm Grenade Training Range encompasses a total of 16.02 acres including the associated surface danger zone (SDZ). The area has been used since the 1980s for practice 40-mm grenade training. In addition, since 2010, the range has also been used for Shoot, Move, Communicate training with small caliber dye marker rounds.

Previous ORA Phase 1 (2011 and 2017) efforts indicate MC (metals and explosives) may be present. However, all migration routes were deemed unlikely.

During the 2024 periodic Phase 1, no viable MC migration mechanisms were verified due to flat terrain, vegetation, soil characteristics, and low precipitation rates. As such, there is no threat of release nor risks to receptors.

SAR (8120) Assessment Overview

SAR (8120) encompasses 4.13 acres including the associated SDZ. SAR (8120) became active in the 1950s for small arms weapons systems qualification and familiarization. The range has been inactive since July 2014 and is anticipated to remain in standby status for the foreseeable future. Small arms weapons training is currently conducted at the nearby indoor SAR (8118).

Previous ORA Phase 1 (2015 and 2017) efforts indicate a potential source of MC (metals) present, but all MC migration routes deemed unlikely.

During the 2024 periodic Phase 1, no viable MC migration mechanisms were confirmed due to range layout, low precipitation rates, and soil characteristics. As such, there is no threat of release nor risks to receptors. Due to range inactivity, the status of the area is recommended to be confirmed and range evaluated, as appropriate, during the next scheduled implementation of the ORAP at Dyess AFB.

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/