



Operational Range Assessment Altus Air Force Base

Air Force Operational Range Assessment Program

May 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 DAF Operational Range Assessment Program (ORAP), established to comply with DoD policy, sets forth procedures for consistently conducting ORAs throughout the Air Force. The DAF ORAP assessment methodology uses an installation-wide approach to verify the ORAP inventory and accomplish range-specific assessments. An Air Force ORA is comprised of two primary phases: Qualitative Assessment, Phase 1 and Quantitative Assessment, Phase 2 (if required).

- 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.

Installation Overview

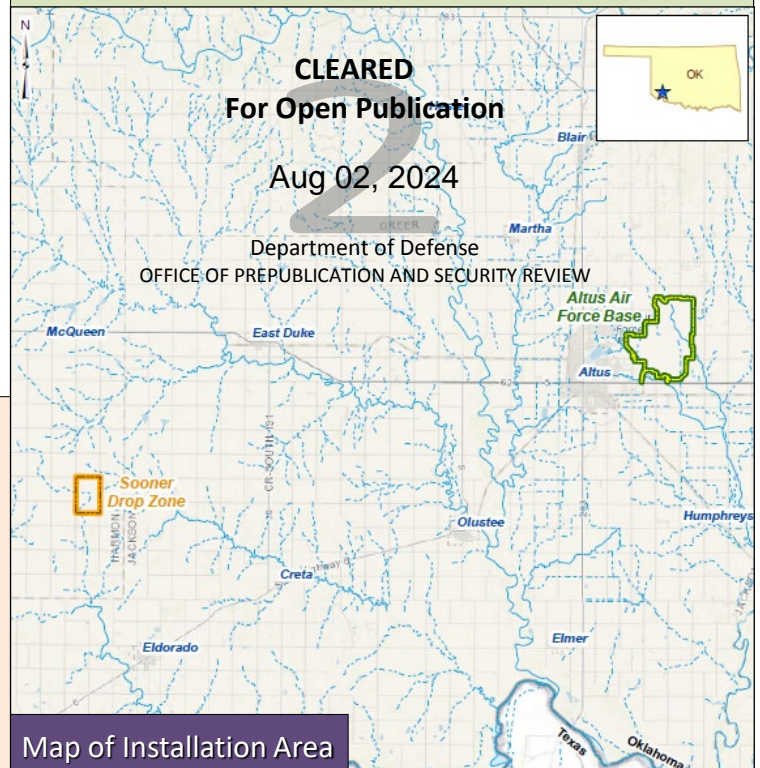
Altus AFB encompasses approximately 7,057 acres of land in eastern Jackson County, approximately 4 miles east-northeast of Altus, Oklahoma. The installation falls within the city limits of Altus and is 140 miles southwest of Oklahoma City and 14 miles north of the Oklahoma-Texas border. Altus AFB is accessible from the north and south by U.S. Highway 283 and from the east and west by U.S. Highway 62.

ORAP Findings: September 2023 ORA Report

- The only Munitions Constituents (MC) transport mechanism deemed viable is runoff via surface water/sediment media at one area at Altus AFB.
- No actual or substantial threat of an off-range MC release exists for areas assessed at Altus.
- No unacceptable risks to human health or the environment were identified for areas assessed.

Next Steps

Altus 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.



Installation Overview Continued

Altus AFB also manages one Geographically Separated Unit (GSU), the Sooner Drop Zone, which is located 23 miles southwest of the main base in Harmon County. The Sooner Drop Zone is approximately 959 acres of DAF owned land and is used by aircrews to practice aerial drops of simulated cargo loads. No munitions are expended on this GSU.

Altus AFB has five operational areas eligible for assessment under the ORAP: the Combat Arms Training Maintenance (CATM) Facility, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Range, the Practice Grenade Range, the Military Field Training Area (MFTA), and the Military Working Dog Facility.

The Military Working Dog Facility meets criteria under the ORAP, but MC source is limited, and as such, is not identified for a full assessment under the ORAP. The MFTA meets ORAP eligibility criteria and is identified to receive an initial assessment in the next iteration of the ORA at Altus AFB.

The following summarizes assessment findings at the CATM Facility; Practice Grenade Range; and EOD Range. This is the third ORA for the CATM Facility and the EOD Range; and the second ORA for the Practice Grenade Range.

CATM Facility Assessment Overview

The CATM Facility encompasses 2.35 acres and includes a fully contained 25-meter outdoor range located in the southwestern portion of Altus AFB. The CATM Facility has been used for small arms weapons training since the 1950s.

The prior ORAs (2012, 2017) determined a potential source of MC present at the range floor and historical berm. Suspected MC were identified as metals (copper, lead, and zinc) and nitroglycerin. All MC migration routes were deemed unlikely.

During this periodic Phase 1, the transport of MC in the surface water pathway was identified as viable. However, no release or potential risks to receptors were identified. The CATM Facility is recommended for an initial Phase 2.

EOD Range Assessment Overview

The EOD Range is in the southeast portion of Altus AFB and is approximately 66.3 acres in size. The range was used as an open burn/open detonation (OB/OD) area from 1953 to 1968 for disposal of a variety of munitions related items. Since 1968, the EOD Range has remained a designated area for emergency response disposition but is used very infrequently.

A Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Investigation (RFI) was conducted in 2000 and 2001 which revealed no buried munition items, no detections of explosives, and no detections of metals above background levels and/or screening levels.

The prior ORAs (2012, 2017) determined a limited potential for MC based on prior geophysical and soil sampling investigations. Known/suspected MC were identified as metals (chromium and lead), explosives, and perchlorate. All MC migration routes were deemed unlikely.

During this periodic Phase 1 a limited (if any) MC source was determined to be present due to infrequent use of the EOD Range. No viable MC migration mechanisms were identified. As such, there is no threat of an off-range release nor risks receptors (human and ecological).

Practice Grenade Range Assessment Overview

The Practice Grenade Range is in the northwestern portion of Altus AFB, encompassing approximately 12.36 acres, and has been used for training with 40-millimeter (mm) practice grenades since 2012. The Practice Grenade Range has been infrequently used for crowd control training with non-lethal 40-mm rounds.

The prior ORA (2017) for Practice Grenade Range determined MC deposition limited. Suspected MC were identified as metals (zinc and aluminum). All MC transport mechanisms were deemed unlikely.

During this periodic Phase 1 at the Practice Grenade Range, a limited MC source and no viable migration mechanisms were identified. As such, there is no threat of an off-range release nor risks to receptors (human and ecological).

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/>