

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-17-769](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD relies on its training ranges within the United States and overseas to help prepare its forces for combat and complex missions around the globe.

Section 366 of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 required DOD to submit a comprehensive plan on its efforts to address training constraints caused by limitations on the use of military lands, airspace, and marine areas in the United States and overseas for training. The act, as amended, further required DOD to provide annual progress reports on its efforts through 2018. The act also included a provision for GAO to submit annual evaluations of DOD's reports. This report assesses the extent to which DOD's 2017 Sustainable Ranges Report met statutory reporting requirements.

To conduct this work, GAO reviewed DOD's 2017 report and compared it with the statutory reporting requirements. GAO also interviewed cognizant DOD and military service officials regarding preparations made to complete the 2017 report.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making recommendations in this report. DOD agreed with GAO's findings without further comment.

View [GAO-17-769](#). For more information, contact Brian J. Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov.

September 2017

MILITARY TRAINING

DOD Met Annual Reporting Requirements in Its 2017 Sustainable Ranges Report

What GAO Found

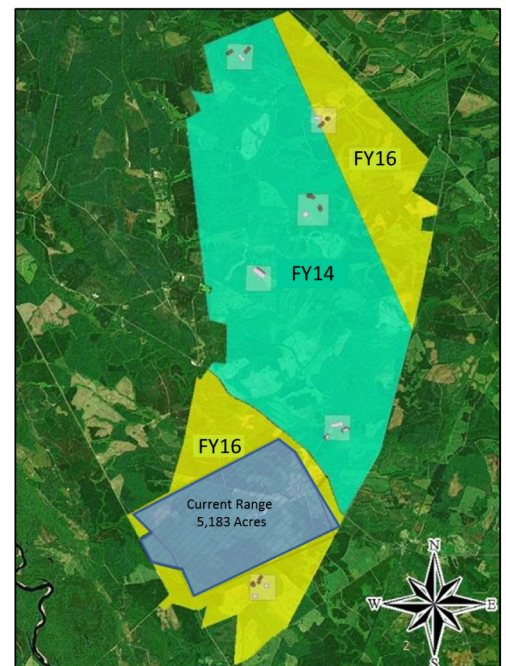
The Department of Defense's (DOD) 2017 sustainable ranges report met the annual statutory reporting requirements to describe DOD's progress in implementing its plan to sustain training ranges and any additional actions taken or planned for addressing training constraints caused by limitations on the use of military lands, marine areas, and airspace. DOD's 2017 report provides updates to the plan required by the act, specifically (1) proposals to enhance training range capabilities and address any shortfalls; (2) goals and milestones to describe DOD's progress in implementing its comprehensive training range sustainment plan; and (3) projected funding requirements for each of the military services to implement their planned actions. In the report, DOD used goals and milestones to address the statutory requirement to describe its progress in implementing its comprehensive training range sustainment plan. Using these goals as a common framework, each military service developed its own milestones and needed actions for reaching those milestones. The report also identifies evolving activities and emerging issues related to training range sustainability, and it includes actions taken to mitigate them.

Expansion of the Townsend Bombing Range

In updates pertaining to military services' issues related to range capability, the report noted that the Marine Corps has identified the need for an aviation training range on the East Coast of the United States capable of supporting precision guided munitions training. The report states, the Marine Corps selected the expansion of Townsend Bombing Range in Georgia as the best alternative for securing this East Coast capability after a thorough assessment of area capabilities. The report notes that a record of decision to expand Townsend was signed in January 2014 and that a formal airspace proposal supporting the land expansion has been submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration. The report further stated that full operational capability is now planned for December 2019.

FY14: Funded through fiscal year 2014 military construction appropriations

FY16: Funded through fiscal year 2016 military construction account



Source: United States Marine Corps. | GAO-17-769