



July 2013

MILITARY TRAINING

DOD Met Annual Reporting Requirements and Continued to Improve Its Sustainable Ranges Report

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GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-13-648](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

As U.S. forces draw down from Afghanistan and home training is expanded, the competition for training ranges may also increase. Section 366 of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (as amended) required DOD to submit a comprehensive plan to address training constraints caused by limitations on the use of military lands, marine areas, and airspace available in the United States and overseas for training, and provide annual progress reports on these efforts through 2018. The act also requires GAO to submit annual evaluations of DOD's reports to Congress within 90 days of receiving them from DOD. In this report, GAO examined (1) whether DOD's 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report met the legislative requirements; and (2) whether DOD acted on GAO previous recommendations to improve its submissions.

GAO is not making any recommendations in this report. In commenting on this report, DOD stated that it agrees in general with the report.

View [GAO-13-648](#). For more information, contact Brian Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov.

July 2013

MILITARY TRAINING

DOD Met Annual Reporting Requirements and Continued to Improve Its Sustainable Ranges Report

What GAO Found

The 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report of the Department of Defense (DOD) met the annual statutory reporting requirements for the department to describe its progress in implementing its sustainable ranges plan and any additional actions taken or planned for addressing training constraints caused by limitations on the use of military lands, marine areas, or airspace. DOD's 2013 report provides updates to several elements of the plan that the act required it to include in its annual progress reports, including (1) proposals to enhance training range capabilities and address any shortfalls; (2) goals and milestones for tracking progress in the implementation of its sustainment plan; and (3) projected funding requirements for each of the military services to implement their planned actions. DOD reported that there were no significant changes in range capability or encroachment since 2012. It identified emerging challenges to training range sustainability, and reported on actions being taken to mitigate them. It used goals and milestones in its progress updates, and reported its projected funding requirements for implementing planned actions. Together these elements describe DOD's progress in implementing its comprehensive plan and addressing training constraints at its ranges, thus meeting the annual reporting requirements of the act.

DOD has now implemented all prior GAO recommendations focused on meeting the requirements of the act and improving report submissions. GAO reported in 2012 that DOD had implemented all but 2 of 13 prior recommendations. DOD has subsequently addressed these 2 recommendations by developing and launching the range assessment module within the Defense Readiness Reporting System. Additionally, DOD created a range visibility tool within its range scheduler system to enable a user to query and identify the availability of training ranges across the Army, Marine Corps, and Navy to optimize utilization of training resources. Future improvements include plans to provide a link to the Air Force range scheduling system. Through the changes DOD has implemented in its annual reporting over the past several years, the department has continually improved reporting on the sustainability of its ranges.

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July 9, 2013

Congressional Committees

As U.S. forces draw down from Afghanistan and home-station training potentially increases, the competition for ranges, airspace, and maneuver training land is expected to increase. The Department of Defense (DOD) relies on access to military land, airspace, sea space, and frequency spectrum to provide its forces a realistic training environment that will prepare them to face combat or complex missions around the globe. Competition for access to live training resources may worsen because of domain shortfalls and growing encroachment challenges.¹ To respond to these challenges and increase the long-term sustainability of its military range resources, DOD has launched a number of efforts aimed both at preserving its training ranges and addressing the effects of its training activities on the environment and on local communities through the issuance of policy, establishment of programs, and proactive partnering at the federal, state, and local levels.

Section 366 of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (as amended) required DOD to submit a comprehensive plan for using existing authorities available to the department to address training constraints caused by limitations on the use of military lands, marine areas, and airspace in the United States and overseas to Congress at the same time as the President submitted his budget for fiscal year 2004.² Further, section 366 required the Secretary of Defense to submit an annual progress report to Congress along with the President's budget through fiscal year 2018. Since 2004, DOD has

¹DOD defines range encroachment as external influences that threaten or constrain range and operating area activities required for force training and testing. Encroachment includes, but is not limited to, endangered species and critical habitat, unexploded ordnance and munitions, electronic frequency spectrum, maritime sustainability, airspace restrictions, air quality, airborne noise, and urban growth.

²Pub. L. No. 107-314 (2002). Section 366 originally required reports for fiscal years 2005 through 2008. However, this requirement was extended through 2013 by section 348 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, Pub. L. No. 109-364 (2006), and extended through 2018 by section 311 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, Pub. L. No. 112-239. Additionally, section 1063(c)(2) of Pub. L. No. 110-181 (2008) and section 1075(g)(2) of Pub. L. No. 111-383 (2011) made clerical amendments to section 348 of Pub. L. No. 109-364.

submitted an annual sustainable ranges report to address these requirements. Additionally, the act directed GAO to submit annual evaluations of DOD's reports to Congress within 90 days of receiving these reports from DOD.³ In response to this act, our review of DOD's 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report is our 10th annual report. In this review, we determined (1) whether DOD's 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report met the legislative requirements; and (2) whether DOD acted on GAO recommendations to improve its report submissions, and what opportunities, if any, exist for DOD to improve future reporting.

To determine whether DOD's 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report met the reporting requirements specified in section 366(a) of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (as amended), we reviewed the current report and compared it with those requirements in the act. We also compared the 2013 and 2012 reports to determine what changes, if any, DOD had made to its Sustainable Ranges Report. In addition, we met with Office of the Secretary of Defense and service officials to determine whether the 2013 report met the mandated requirements and whether there were changes to the services' submission for 2013 as compared with the 2012 submission. The intent of our review was to determine whether DOD's report met mandated requirements and whether DOD's reporting could be improved. To determine whether DOD acted on GAO recommendations to improve its report submissions and what opportunities, if any, exist for DOD to improve future reporting, we identified prior GAO recommendations and reviewed the status of DOD's actions to implement those recommendations in its reporting submissions on sustainable ranges.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2013 through July 2013 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for this assessment based on our audit objectives.

³Section 366 originally required GAO to submit its report to Congress within 60 days of receiving the original report from DOD, but this was extended to 90 days by section 348 of Pub. L. No. 109-364 (2006).

Background

DOD has been reporting to Congress since fiscal year 2004 on several items related to its training ranges in response to section 366(a) of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003. The act as subsequently amended required annual progress reports to be submitted at the same time as the President submitted the administration's annual budget for fiscal years 2005 through 2018. The requirement that GAO evaluate the plans submitted pursuant to subsections 366(a) and (b) within 90 days of receiving the report from DOD has also been extended through fiscal year 2018.

In our prior reviews of DOD's Sustainable Ranges Reports, we noted that DOD had not addressed certain required elements when it initially submitted its comprehensive plan in 2004.⁴ Further, we noted that it took DOD some time to develop a plan consistent with the basic requirements of section 366. Over time, we found that as DOD reported annually on its progress in implementing its comprehensive plan, it continued to improve its Sustainable Ranges Reports, and it has reported on the actions it has taken in response to prior GAO recommendations. For instance, DOD has included special interests sections for each service providing additional information on areas affecting training capabilities: the goals, actions, and milestones section; the funding requirements section; and the individual range assessments. A specific example is that, over time, the department progressed from using four common goals and milestones to using seven shared goals for which the services have developed their own actions and milestones that are tailored to their missions. We have reported that these new goals and milestones are more quantifiable and are now associated with identified time frames.

As part of the preparation of its annual plan, the Secretary of Defense was to conduct an assessment of current and future training range requirements and an evaluation of the adequacy of DOD's current range resources to meet those requirements. We found that the 2012 Sustainable Ranges Report met the annual statutory reporting requirements for DOD to describe its progress in implementing its sustainable ranges plan and any actions taken or to be taken in addressing training constraints caused by limitations on the use of military lands, marine areas, or airspace. In its 2012 report, DOD provided updates to several elements of the plan required by the act to be included

⁴See Related GAO Products page at the end of this report.

in DOD's original submission in 2004. These elements included (1) proposals to enhance training range capabilities and address any shortfalls in resources, (2) goals and milestones for tracking planned actions and measuring progress, and (3) projected funding requirements for implementing planned actions, among others.

In our review of DOD's 2012 Sustainable Ranges Report, we found that DOD had implemented 11 of our 13 recommendations since 2004 for expanding and improving its reporting on sustainable ranges. At that time, DOD officials stated that they were still in the process of implementing 2 recommendations. These recommendations were to: (1) develop an integrated training range database that identifies available training resources, specific capacities and capabilities, and training constraints caused by limitations on the use of training ranges, which could be continuously updated and shared among the services at all command levels, regardless of service ownership; and (2) develop a readiness reporting system to reflect the impact on readiness caused by training constraints due to limitations on the use of training ranges. For a complete presentation of prior GAO recommendations and their implementation status, see appendix II.

DOD Met the Annual Reporting Requirements in Its 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report

The 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report met the annual statutory reporting requirements for DOD to describe its progress in implementing its sustainable ranges plan and any actions taken or to be taken in addressing training constraints caused by limitations on the use of military lands, marine areas, or airspace. In its 2013 report, DOD provided updates to several elements of the plan required by the act. These elements include (1) proposals to enhance training range capabilities and address any shortfalls, (2) goals and milestones for tracking progress implementing DOD's sustainment plan, and (3) projected funding requirements for implementing planned actions, among others.

DOD Reported Proposals to Enhance Range Capabilities and Address Shortfalls

In our review of DOD's 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report, we found that DOD again reported on its proposals to enhance training range capabilities and address any shortfalls in resources. DOD developed these proposals by evaluating current and future training range requirements and the ability of current DOD resources to meet these requirements. In its 2013 report, DOD validated as current the 2012 range assessments and provided an update to the special interest sections developed by each service. For example, as the Marine Corps stated that the special interest section from the 2012 Sustainable Ranges Report

was still valid for the 2013 report, the Marine Corps revalidated the issues it identified in the 2012 report and provided updates as needed. The Marine Corps identified several training shortfalls that it is working to remedy, such as the capability to fully exercise a large Marine Air-Ground Task Force in a realistically, doctrinally appropriate training scenario. The area currently used to provide this training is not large enough to accommodate a full-scale, live-fire Marine Expeditionary Brigade exercise. In order to address this shortfall, DOD would like to add 150,000 acres of land to this training area, and it is currently, in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management, pursuing legislation from Congress in support of this objective. In its 2013 report, DOD also reported on four emerging challenges to training and its training ranges. These four challenges are: renewable energy, the demand for frequency spectrum, threatened and endangered species, and the indirect impacts of increased home-station training. For example, the report stated that as U.S. forces draw down from Afghanistan, the competition for airspace and training ranges is expected to increase to levels that have not been experienced for more than 10 years. During the surge of deployments over that period, demand for airspace and training ranges in the United States was commensurately lower since large numbers of forces were deployed to overseas contingency operations. DOD cited policies, programs, and proactive partnering at the federal, state, and local levels as a means to address this challenge.

DOD's 2013 report also revalidated as current its 2012 annual assessment of the adequacy of existing range resources to meet training requirements. Beginning with its 2013 report, DOD began conducting full range capability and encroachment assessments every 3 years rather than annually, and to validate those assessments in the years between evaluations. DOD's analysis of range capability and encroachment data over the preceding 10 years had found that there were not significant changes in the data from year to year, and the military services had confirmed this finding. For the 2013 report, DOD asked the military services to validate the range capability and encroachment data from 2012, and to report on any significant changes. All of the military services reported that their range assessment data had not significantly changed from the 2012 report. Officials from all of the military services told us that they did not believe this change negatively affected the Sustainable Ranges Report, and that they believed this change accurately captured range capability and encroachment data. The next planned full range capability and encroachment assessment is to be included in DOD's 2015 Sustainable Ranges Report.

DOD Used Goals and Milestones to Update Its Progress in Implementing Its Comprehensive Training Range Sustainment Plan

In its 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report, DOD continued to use goals, actions, and milestones to help address the statutory requirement to describe its progress in implementing its comprehensive training range sustainment plan. DOD has developed seven goals in support of this plan. These goals are as follows: to mitigate encroachment pressures on training activities from competing operating space; to mitigate frequency spectrum competition; to meet military airspace challenges; to manage increasing military demand for range space; to address impacts from new energy infrastructure and renewable energy impacts; to anticipate climate change impacts; and to sustain excellence in environmental stewardship. Each military service has developed its own milestones and needed actions for reaching those milestones, using these goals as a common framework. In the 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report, each service provided updates to its milestones and actions. For example, the Army is in the process of implementing the Army Compatible Use Buffer Zone Program at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, to protect the military mission and offset training restrictions, and it reported that approximately 22,000 acres have been conserved and more than \$14 million in funding has been spent in support of this milestone. DOD also reported on new milestones that have been identified in support of department goals. For example, the Army is planning to relocate an instrumentation system to Fort Shafter, Hawaii, to enable enhanced home-station training in the Pacific by the end of fiscal year 2013. DOD stated that these goals and milestones will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure that DOD continues to address future training requirements and constraints.

DOD Reported Its Projected Funding Requirements for Implementing Planned Actions

In the 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report, DOD met the statutory requirement to track its progress in implementing the comprehensive plan by identifying the funding requirements needed to accomplish its goals. DOD has delineated four funding categories to be used by the services to project their range sustainment efforts: modernization and investment, operations and maintenance, environmental, and encroachment. This section of the report also includes definitions and specific examples for each category, as well as requested funding levels for fiscal years 2013 through 2017. For example, the environmental category is described as funding dedicated to environmental management of ranges, including range assessments, response actions, and natural and cultural resource management planning and implementation. Examples of environmental funding include conducting range assessments and environmental mitigation costs associated with range modernization and range construction. In this section, DOD also provides an explanation of any fluctuations occurring over the 5-year funding period covered in the

report. For example, the Army's modernization and investment funding decreases from \$247.0 million in fiscal year 2013 to a projected \$49.3 million in fiscal year 2017 as a result of a significant reduction in military construction funding during this period due to DOD's reduction in the force structure.

The elements of DOD's 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report describe the department's progress in implementing its comprehensive plan and addressing training constraints at its ranges, thus meeting the annual reporting requirements of the act.

DOD Has Implemented All Prior GAO Recommendations

DOD has implemented all of the 13 recommendations made by GAO since 2004 for expanding and improving its reporting on sustainable ranges. In our 2012 review, we reported that DOD had implemented 11 recommendations, but had not fully addressed 2 recommendations regarding readiness reporting. DOD subsequently addressed these 2 recommendations by developing and launching a range assessment module within the Defense Readiness Reporting System. Additionally, DOD created a range visibility tool within its range scheduler system to enable a user to query and identify the availability of training ranges across the Army, Marine Corps, and Navy. Future improvements include plans to provide a link to the Air Force range scheduling system to optimize utilization of training resources.

One of the remaining GAO recommendations that was in the process of being implemented in 2012 called for the Office of the Secretary of Defense to develop an integrated training range database that would serve as the baseline for the mandated comprehensive training range plan. We reported in 2012 that this database should identify available training resources, specific capacities and capabilities, and training constraints caused by encroachment and other factors, and that such database could be continuously updated and shared among the services at all command levels, regardless of service ownership. Although DOD did not concur with our recommendation to develop a stand-alone training range database, it developed the Defense Readiness Reporting System—Range Assessment Module. The module provides an integrated database

that identifies available training ranges, capabilities, and constraints, and this meets the intent of our recommendation.⁵

The second remaining recommendation to be implemented called for DOD to develop a readiness reporting system to reflect the impact on readiness caused by training constraints due to limitations on the use of training ranges. Section 366(b) required DOD to report to Congress its plans to improve its readiness reporting system—the Global Status of Resources and Training System—to reflect the extent to which limitations on the use of training ranges affected readiness. DOD did not concur with our recommendation and stated that it was inappropriate to modify this system to address encroachment. However, DOD stated that the department planned to incorporate the impact of range encroachment on readiness into the Defense Readiness Reporting System. DOD developed another phase of its Range Assessment Module, which resides within the Defense Readiness Reporting System—Strategic, that reflects the effect of range-related training constraints on readiness, and this meets the intent of our recommendation.⁶

The Defense Readiness Reporting System—Range Assessment Module provides the means to manage and report on the readiness and capability of military ranges. Phases I and II developed an unclassified system that captured the range readiness assessment portion of the Sustainable Ranges Report to Congress in a web-based format compatible with and capable of being integrated within the Defense Readiness Reporting System as a stand-alone module. However, DOD appeared to lack the tools needed to properly define two challenges associated with managing its ranges. The two main issues were as follows: (1) service modernization efforts increased the demand for physical space for individual, unit, and integrated unit training; and (2) encroachment by external development and endangered species seeking refuge in suitable habitats within the department's ranges, coupled with the growing need for more energy resources, artificially constricted DOD's ability to train properly. Therefore, DOD had a need to integrate the assessment portion

⁵In 2002, DOD Directive 7730.65, *Department of Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS)* (June 3, 2002), established the Defense Readiness Reporting System to measure and report on the readiness of military forces and the supporting infrastructure to meet missions and goals assigned by the Secretary of Defense.

⁶GAO, *Military Training: DOD Report on Training Ranges Does Not Fully Address Congressional Reporting Requirements*, [GAO-04-608](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 4, 2004).

of the Sustainable Ranges Report process into a single comprehensive readiness reporting system, as directed by 10 U.S.C. § 117. DOD consequently developed phase III of the module in order to obtain this assessment. This phase allows DOD to establish a link between range assessments categorized by the services, individual installations, and range complexes. For example, the module can display range capability and encroachment data using service-specific mission areas for training ranges.

In addition to providing the assessment of training ranges, DOD also developed a mechanism to provide greater visibility of training resources across the services. DOD created the range visibility tool within its range scheduler system to enable a user to query and identify the availability of training ranges across the services to optimize utilization of training resources.⁷ The need for this type of query function arose with the likely increased competition for home-station training resources created by decreased deployments and increasing budget constraints. These factors necessitate more-efficient use of existing training capabilities. The tool allows users to enter an address, zip code, desired proximity, and range capability into the system. It will then display a list of ranges within a specified area, their availability, a map and driving directions, and scheduling information. This type of feature allows units to maximize available military training resources before having to outsource capabilities, resulting in savings.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to DOD for comment. In its written comments, reproduced in appendix III, DOD stated that it agrees in general with the report. DOD also provided technical comments, which were incorporated into the report as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Defense; the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force and Commandant of the Marine Corps; and the Director, Office of Management and Budget. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

⁷The Range Facility Management Support System (RFMSS) provides training support to servicemembers as an automated range scheduler system.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report are listed in appendix IV.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian Lepore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "Lepore" clearly distinguishable.

Brian J. Lepore
Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

List of Committees

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Dick Durbin
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The Honorable Thad Cochran
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Chairman
The Honorable Adam Smith
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Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

The Honorable C.W. "Bill" Young
Chairman
The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

To determine whether the Department of Defense's (DOD) 2013 Sustainable Ranges Report met the reporting requirements specified in section 366(a) of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003, as amended, we reviewed the report and compared it with those requirements. We also compared the 2013 and 2012 reports to determine what changes, if any, DOD had made to its Sustainable Ranges Report. In our comparison, we identified changes in the types of information contained in the two reports, such as DOD's decision to conduct range capability and encroachment assessment every 3 years. We also compared the 2013 and 2012 Sustainable Ranges Reports to track changes in the data that DOD reported, such as changes in training range capability or DOD's progress in implementing its sustainable ranges initiative from 2012 to 2013. We also reviewed the memorandums that the Office of the Secretary of Defense sent to the military services to request data for the Sustainable Ranges Report to determine what differences, if any, there were in the types of information that were requested for the report. In addition, we met with Office of the Secretary of Defense and service officials to determine whether the 2013 report met the mandated requirements, and whether there were changes to the services' submission for 2013. The intent of our review was to determine whether the Sustainable Ranges Report met mandated requirements and whether DOD's reporting could be improved.

To determine whether DOD acted on GAO recommendations to improve its report submissions and what opportunities, if any, exist for DOD to improve future reporting, we reviewed the status of prior GAO recommendations. We identified the actions DOD has taken to meet these recommendations in its reporting submissions on sustainable ranges.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2013 through July 2013 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: GAO Recommendations from 2004-2011 Reviews and the Status of the DOD's Implementation of Those Recommendations

GAO recommendation	Status of recommendation
GAO-12-13R: Military Training: DOD's Report on the Sustainability of Training Ranges Meets Annual Reporting Requirements but Could Be Improved (Oct. 19, 2011)	
In the goals, actions, and milestones section, include a brief narrative that describes the progress made since the prior year's report for each action and milestone.	●
In the funding requirements section, provide an explanation for excluding the funds required to execute buffer projects under the Compatible Use Buffer program from the Army funding projections for the encroachment category.	●
In the funding requirements section, for each funding category, provide an explanation for significant fluctuations in funding projections.	●
GAO-09-128R: Improvement Continues in DOD's Reporting on Sustainable Ranges, but Opportunities Exist to Improve Its Range Assessments and Comprehensive Plan (Dec. 15, 2008)	
Include each service's rationale for excluding the specific training ranges not included in its assessment of the adequacy of current resources to meet requirements in future sustainable ranges reports.	●
Include the Marine Corps' individual combat training elements as the mission areas in the range capability and encroachment assessment in future sustainable ranges reports.	●
Include an update on the actions taken by the Air Force to address DOD's modernization and investment goals for range sustainment in future sustainable ranges reports.	●
Include a detailed description of all funding data included in each funding category, for each of the military services in future sustainable ranges reports.	●
GAO-08-10R: Improvement Continues in DOD's Reporting on Sustainable Ranges, but Opportunities Exist to Improve Its Range Assessments and Comprehensive Plan (Oct. 11, 2007)	
Develop clear criteria and standard methods for assessing current and future training range requirements and capabilities.	●
Include funding information on the services' range sustainment efforts in future reports.	●
GAO-04-608: Military Training: DOD Report on Training Ranges Does Not Fully Address Congressional Reporting Requirements (June 4, 2004)	
Develop an integrated training range database that identifies available training resources, specific capacities and capabilities, and training constraints caused by limitations on the use of training ranges, which could be continuously updated and shared among the services at all command levels, regardless of service ownership.	●
Develop a comprehensive plan, which includes quantifiable goals and milestones for tracking planned actions and measuring progress, and projected funding requirements to more fully address identified training constraints.	●
Assess current and future training range requirements and evaluate the adequacy of current resources to meet these requirements.	●
Develop a readiness reporting system to reflect the impact on readiness caused by training constraints due to limitations on the use of training ranges.	●

● Addressed

Source: GAO and DOD.

Appendix III: Comments from the Department of Defense



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

JUN 25 2013

Mr. Brian J. Lepore
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Lepore:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the Government Accountability Office Draft Report GAO-13-648, "Military Training: DoD Met Annual Reporting Requirements and Continued to Improve Its Sustainable Ranges Report," dated June 5, 2013 (GAO Code 351804). Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft. The DoD appreciates the opportunity to work with the GAO to continually improve reporting on the ability of our training ranges to meet the needs of the warfighter. The Department agrees in general with the report, however, we have a few minor technical comments for accuracy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura J. Junor", is positioned above the typed name.

Laura J. Junor
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Readiness)

Enclosure:
As stated

Appendix IV: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Brian J. Lepore, (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Harold Reich (Assistant Director), James Ashley, Susan Langley, Sabrina Streagle, Lindsay Taylor, Cheryl Weissman, and Natasha Wilder made key contributions to this report.

Related GAO Products

Military Training: DOD Met Annual Reporting Requirements and Improved Its Sustainable Ranges Report. [GAO-12-879R](#). Washington, D.C.: September 12, 2012.

Military Training: DOD's Report on the Sustainability of Training Ranges Meets Annual Reporting Requirements but Could Be Improved. [GAO-12-13R](#). Washington, D.C.: October 19, 2011.

Military Training: DOD Continues to Improve Its Report on the Sustainability of Training Ranges. [GAO-10-977R](#). Washington, D.C.: September 14, 2010.

Military Training: DOD's Report on the Sustainability of Training Ranges Addresses Most of the Congressional Reporting Requirements and Continues to Improve with Each Annual Update. [GAO-10-103R](#). Washington, D.C.: October 27, 2009.

Improvement Continues in DOD's Reporting on Sustainable Ranges, but Opportunities Exist to Improve Its Range Assessments and Comprehensive Plan. [GAO-09-128R](#). Washington, D.C.: December 15, 2008.

Military Training: Compliance with Environmental Laws Affects Some Training Activities, but DOD Has Not Made a Sound Business Case for Additional Environmental Exemptions. [GAO-08-407](#). Washington, D.C.: March 7, 2008.

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