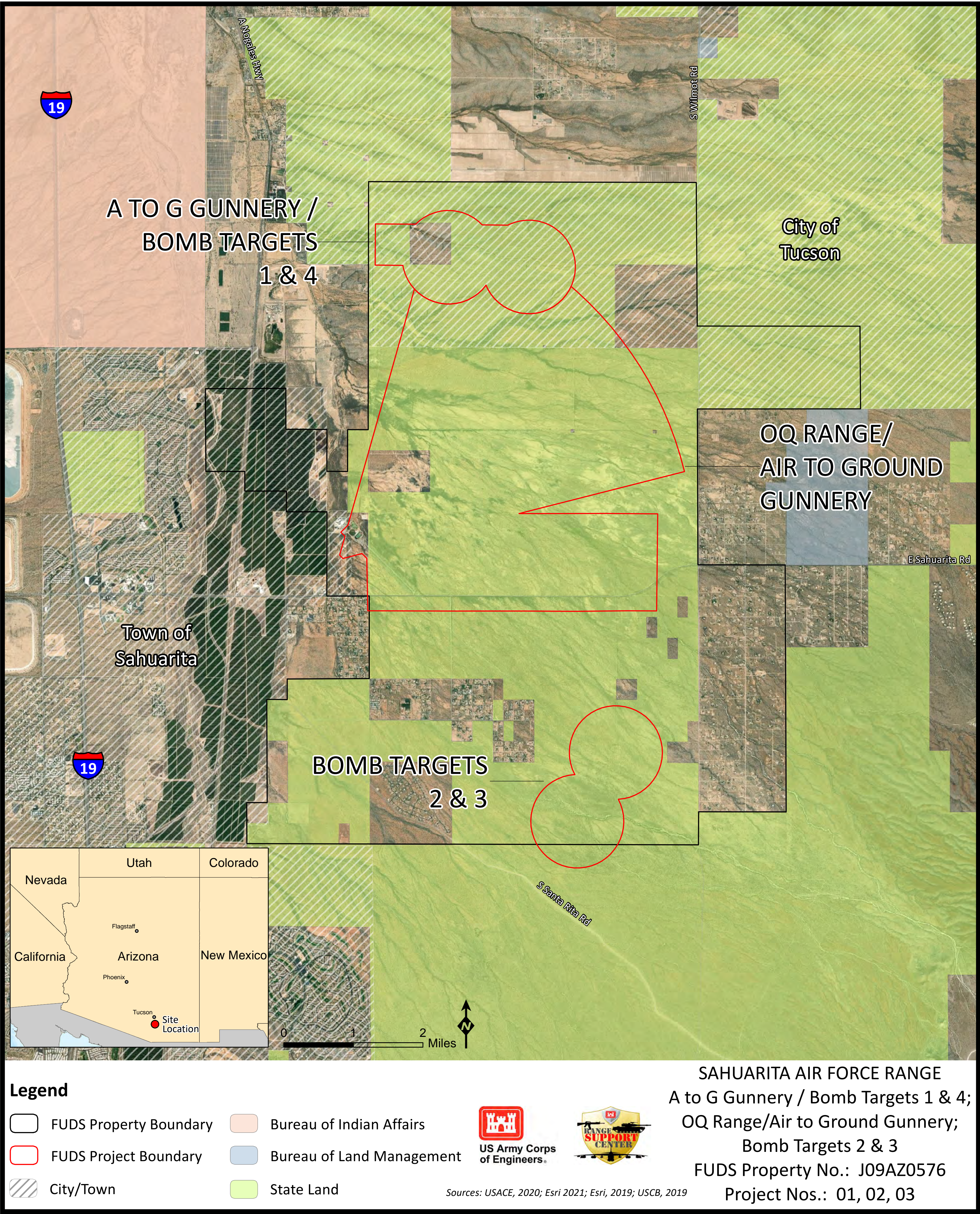


# Sahuarita Air Force Range

The Sahuarita Air Force Range Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) is located in Pima County, Arizona, and intersects the eastern edge of the town of Sahuarita. The range was used from 1942 through 1958 for military training by Davis-Monthan and other Army Air Fields or Air Force Bases. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is the organization responsible for the environmental remediation of FUDS properties such as former Sahuarita Air Force Range that were owned by, leased to or otherwise possessed by the Department of Defense and transferred from DoD control prior to October 17, 1986.

The FUDS is divided into three project areas known as Munitions Response Sites or MRSs: (1) Air to Ground Gunnery Range / Bomb Targets 1 & 4 (northern MRS), (2) Unpiloted Radio-controlled Flying Target (OQ Range) and Air to Ground Gunnery Range (central MRS), and (3) Bomb Targets 2 & 3 (southern MRS).





# History

In April 1942, the Army Air Corps at Davis-Monthan Field acquired approximately 27,000 acres of land south of Tucson for use as a training range. A runway, bombing targets, an unpiloted radio-controlled flying target (OQ range), air-to-ground gunnery targets, buildings, and observation towers were some of the improvements the Army Air Corps made to the land.

The Bombing Targets were used for high-altitude and night bombing training by Airmen stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Field/Air Force Base, as well as, March Field, California, and Carswell Air Force Base, Texas. Some targets consisted of wooden pyramids that were 24-feet wide and concentric circles.

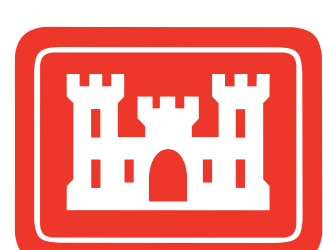
The air-to-ground gunnery targets were used by pilots for strafing and other firing with small arms guns. The runway, located within the gunnery range, was primarily used for emergency landings.

The unpiloted radio-controlled flying target was used for ground-to-air gunnery practice. Remote-controlled drone aircraft were ejected from a large rotary launcher located southwest of the runway. Airmen on the ground would fire machine guns at the drones.

Historical documents indicate that the range was used through 1958 and that the majority of the leases for the property were terminated between 1971 and 1978.



*B-29 and B-20 turret line on the unpiloted radio-controlled flying target gunnery range at Sahuarita Air Force Range, Arizona, 9 September 1952*  
Source: NARA College Park, RG 342-FH, box 2230, photo 4A-24136

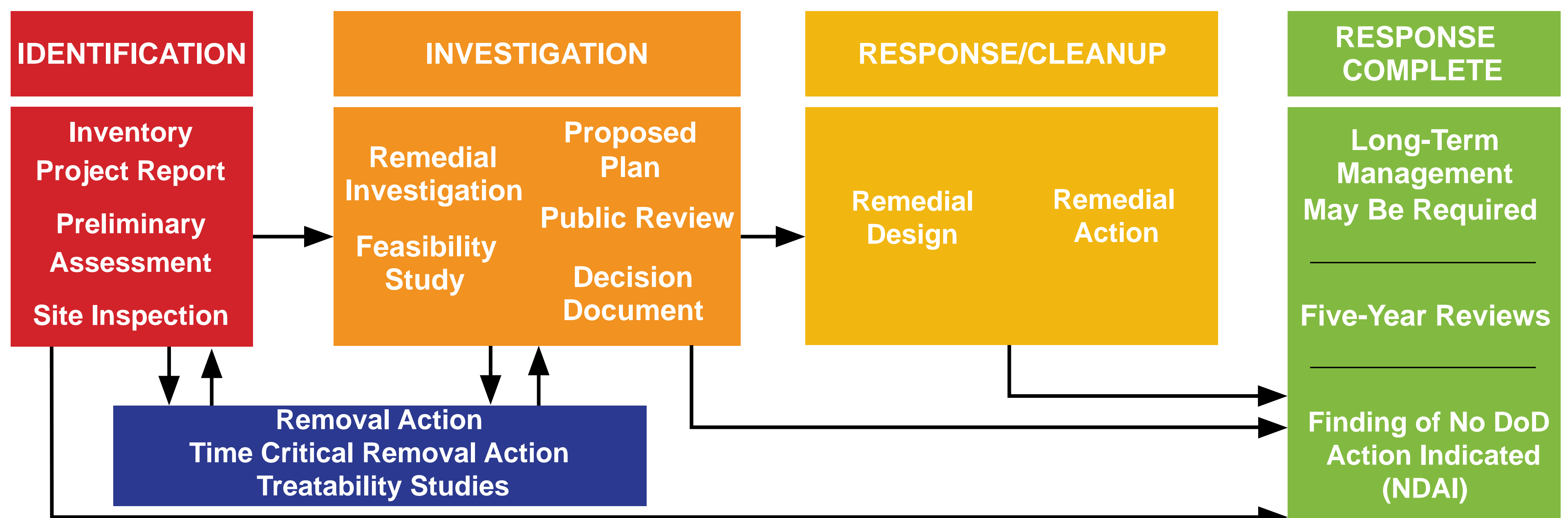


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# Military Munitions Response Program Process



*(U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Regulation 200-3-1, FUDS Program Policy, May 2004)*

## Formerly Used Defense Sites Military Munitions Response Program Process

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, also known as CERCLA, provides the framework for the response process at Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) and involves four phases that are described below. If at any time in the response process the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) identifies an imminent threat to the human health or the environment, a removal action may be conducted. Alternatively, if no threat has been identified, the FUDS will be moved to the Response Complete phase.

### Identification

In the Identification phase, USACE conducts historical research to determine if a property is eligible for the FUDS Program. Once a property is determined eligible, readily available information on the property is collected and a visit is made to identify areas of the property that may have impacts from past military activities and that require further investigation. Areas that require further investigation are referred to as "projects." The findings of the historical research and descriptions of projects are documented in a Preliminary Assessment Report. After this report is completed, a Site Inspection is conducted to identify the current uses of the property and determine whether the project areas pose a threat to human health or the environment.

### Investigation

The Investigation phase includes conducting a Remedial Investigation to characterize the nature and extent of the environmental contamination or military munitions at a project area. A Feasibility Study is prepared that identifies and evaluates alternative approaches to remediate the project area. A Proposed Plan is developed that summarizes the remedial alternatives and is made available for public review during a 30-day comment period. Based on input from the public, USACE selects a remedy and records it in a Decision Document.

### Response/Cleanup

The Response/Cleanup phase consists of developing the design documents and implementing the remedy identified in the Decision Document.

### Response Complete

Once a remedy has been completed, the project moves to the Response Complete phase. For some projects, additional Long-Term Management activities and Five-Year Reviews may be conducted to ensure the remedy continues to protect human health and the environment.



# Site Investigations

**1994**

An Inventory Project Report was completed in 1994, which documented the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) Program eligibility for Sahuarita Air Force Range's. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) also identified an initial property boundary.

**1996**

In 1996, the findings of an historical records and photos review and site visit were compiled in an Archives Search Report. Munitions and munitions debris from general purpose and practice bombs of various sizes, projectiles, and small arms ammunition were identified as potential concerns.

**2004**

In 2004, USACE evaluated the available information and identified seven ranges within the FUDS. These ranges were grouped into the three Munitions Response Sites depicted on the map.



*Munition identified at Sahuarita Air Force Range in 2021*  
Source: Pima County Sheriff

**2007**

In 2007, USACE finalized the Site Inspection Report. The inspection included taking soil samples and walking 44-miles within the FUDS to identify evidence of former military use, such as munitions/ munitions debris. USACE determined that a Remedial Investigation was required for the site.

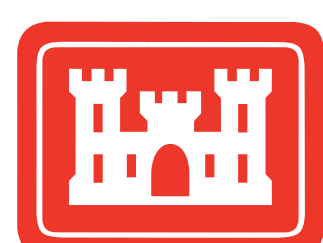


*Soil sampling during the site inspection, 2007*  
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**Future Investigations**

A Remedial Investigation to determine the nature and extent of munitions hazards at the range is underway. Once the investigation is complete the results will be analyzed as part of a Feasibility Study. Afterwards, a Proposed Plan of remediation will be made available for public review and comment.

While USACE continues its investigation, it is possible to encounter munitions (either whole or in parts) in or near the FUDS. If you see an item that may be a munition, remember to follow the 3Rs of Explosives Safety on the right.



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# Follow the 3Rs of Explosives Safety

Debris from military use, such as unexploded munitions, may be present at the former Sahuarita Air Force Range Formerly Used Defense Site project area. The Army Corps of Engineers recommends that all landowners and visitors, learn and follow the 3Rs of Explosives Safety – Recognize, Retreat, and Report.

## **R**ecognize

**when you may have encountered a munition,  
and that munitions are dangerous.**

## **R**etreat

**do not approach, touch, move or disturb it,  
but carefully leave the area.**

## **R**eport

**call 911 and advise the police of what you  
saw and where you saw it.**



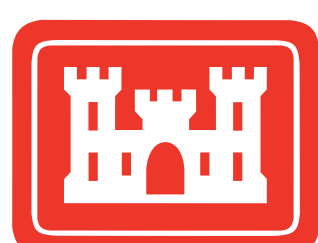
*Munitions debris identified at Sahuarita  
Air Force Range, 2007  
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*



*Munitions debris at Sahuarita Air Force  
Range, 2007  
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*



*Practice bomb debris at Sahuarita Air  
Force Range, 2007  
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

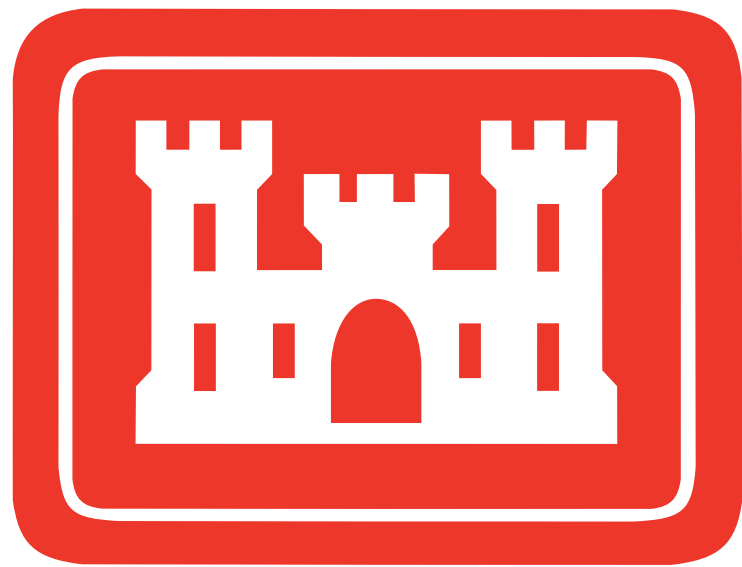


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# Contact Information



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**Fran Firouzi**  
Project Manager  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District  
915 Wilshire Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
Phone: 213-452-3165  
Email: [forough.firouzi@usace.army.mil](mailto:forough.firouzi@usace.army.mil)

**Dave Palmer**  
Public Affairs Specialist  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District  
3636 N. Central Ave, Suite 900  
Phoenix, AZ 85012  
Phone: 602-230-6990  
Email: [publicaffairs.spl@usace.army.mil](mailto:publicaffairs.spl@usace.army.mil)