

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

OBSCURANT MUNITIONS TRAINING AT FORT BLISS, TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO

1.0 Introduction: To ensure Soldiers' preparedness, Army doctrine calls for the utilization of smokes and obscurants in military training areas. Due to recent Army stationing and growth decisions, Fort Bliss needs to provide capabilities in obscurant munitions (OM) training within the Fort Bliss Training Complex (FBTC). An Environmental Assessment (EA) was generated to assess the impacts of OM training on the human and natural environment.

2.0 Proposed Action and Alternative Actions: The EA evaluated a proposed action and three alternatives. The **Proposed Action** is the training with OM within previously duded impact areas of the Doña Ana Range, the Digital Air/Ground Integration Range (DAGIR, Range 88), and after firebreaks are constructed on the east side, within the Digital Multi Purpose Range Complex (DMPRC, Range 83). **Alternative A** would include obscurant training only on Doña Ana Range. **Alternative B** would exclude obscurant training at the DMPRC because of the firebreak requirement. Under the **No Action Alternative**, OM training would not be conducted within the FBTC and Soldiers at Fort Bliss would not complete training to Army doctrine.

3.0 Environmental Consequences: The EA provides an analysis of potential environmental impacts of the proposed action within the region of influence. Potential major effects identified were the initiation of wild land fires by obscurant munitions that could then affect cultural and natural resources. Human health risks could occur if obscurant compounds exceed short-term exposure guidelines to persons (troops or commuters on War Highway) outside of the impact areas. These impacts would be managed and reduced via operations planning and monitoring to less than significant. Existing impact areas with minimum vegetation cover would be designated for OM use and lessen the chance of wild land fires. Impact areas are also remote and thus exposure to Soldiers and the public would be minimized. Standard Army obscurant safety and health restrictions and/or requirements used at other installations would be enacted and officially incorporated into the Fort Bliss Regulation 350-1, Training Safety. Requirements would include no firing of obscurants under high danger fire conditions, safety equipment issue and use, and construction/maintenance of necessary fire fighting lanes/breaks. The wild lands fire management plan, under coordination with the Bureau of Land Management, would be amended to address the increased risk of fire due to OM use.

4.0 Conclusion: I have reviewed the EA and have determined the Proposed Action, with the indicated safety, health and environmental protection measures, would not have a significant impact on the natural or human environment and no further environmental review is required. It is my decision to implement the proposed action with those indicated mitigation measures.

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Commanding

Date