



Atlantic Fleet

Active Sonar Training (AFAST)

Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS)

Navy Training – The Big Picture

IMPORTANCE OF NAVY TRAINING – TRAIN AS WE FIGHT

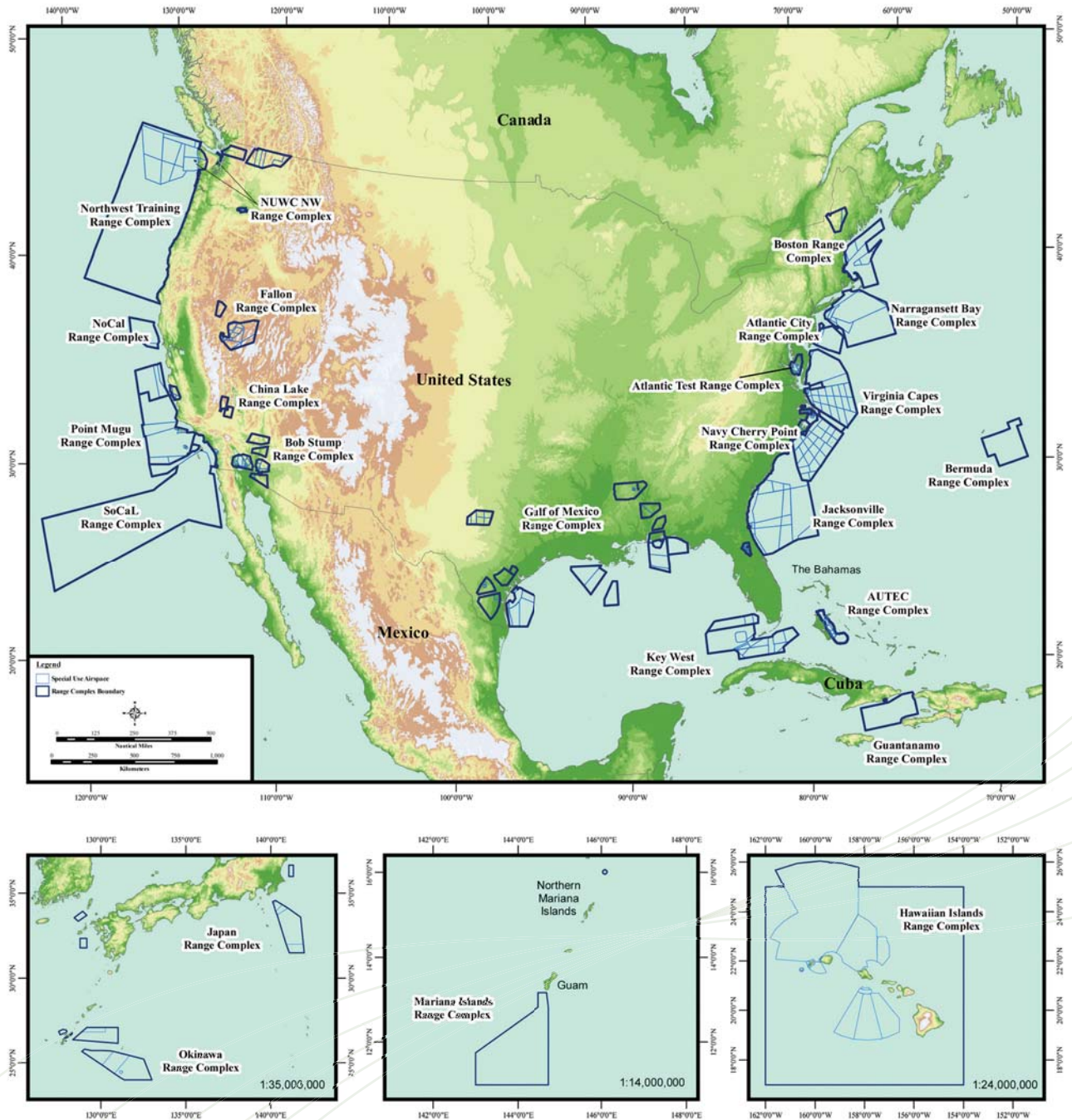
Realistic training is the single greatest asset the military has in preparing and protecting Navy personnel. "Train As We Fight" is not just a phrase. It is a statement of the absolute

necessity to train the men and women in uniform for the precise conditions in which they may find themselves while protecting the nation.

Realism requires access to areas and environments that closely match the locations where our Sailors may face

combat situations. Changes in naval strategy, force structure, base closures, and population growth are increasing the challenges the Navy faces in training its personnel to be prepared to defend the nation.

Figure 1: U.S. Navy Range Complexes



To respond to the challenges and increase the sustainability of Navy ranges, the Navy has launched a number of efforts aimed at preserving training ranges while also minimizing environmental effects of training activities.

HOW DOES SONAR TRAINING FIT INTO OVERALL NAVY TRAINING?

The Navy prepared the AFAST EIS/OEIS to assess active sonar use related to Fleet training activities along the East Coast of the U.S. and the Gulf of Mexico. Active sonar training is conducted in a variety of ways as part of Anti-Submarine Warfare and Mine Warfare training.

While essential, active sonar represents only a portion of the training requirements of the Navy. To fully prepare Navy personnel, a host of exercises are conducted to meet training requirements, including those related to active sonar, including:

- Gunnery
- Bombing
- Missile firing
- Torpedo firing
- Underwater mine hunting and detonation
- Amphibious operations
- Vessel search and seizure
- Aircraft flight operations and maneuvers

Navy training ranges provide the capability to perform these critical exercises in environments that are safe for our Sailors and for the public. Protection of the environment is an integral component of this training, with numerous measures taken to minimize effects on natural and cultural resources.

PRESERVING NAVY TRAINING RANGES

“Ranges” are locations where Navy personnel train to accomplish their mission of national defense. Ranges are grouped into complexes (see Figure 1). A “range complex” is an organized and designated geographic area used by the Navy to conduct necessary training activities. Having a designated range complex allows our military to train and perform required activities against a simulated enemy in an environment that is safe and controlled for our Sailors and for other users of the area.

Ensuring sustained use of Navy ranges, operational areas, and airspace is a growing challenge as encroachment from various

sources limit and sometimes restrict their use. Yet Navy personnel require even more access to continued, consistent, and realistic training opportunities using ever-advancing technologies to defend our country.

The Navy has developed a comprehensive approach to sustain or preserve ranges for continued training access. Known as the Tactical Training Theater Assessment and Planning (TAP) program, the multi-faceted approach focuses on:

- Mission readiness;
- Strategic vision;
- Operational and training requirements;
- Environmental and encroachment issues;
- Stakeholder and public involvement;
- Organizational efficiency; and
- Enhanced range complex capabilities.

The objectives of the TAP program are to ensure the readiness of Navy personnel and promote sustainability of Navy ranges. Preserving ranges means actively managing resources to promote sustainability, including protecting natural and cultural resources.

ONGOING ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Environmental planning documents, such as EISs and Environmental Assessments (EAs), are being prepared for each Navy range complex. These documents will ensure compliance with U.S. environmental laws and provide continuing opportunity for public comment and involvement. On the East Coast, EISs/OEISs are being prepared for the VACAPES, Cherry Point, Jacksonville, and Gulf of Mexico Complexes.

ACTIVITY-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Alongside TAP efforts, the Navy has been preparing a series of environmental planning documents focused on individual Navy training activities. These activity-based documents analyze training activities across multiple range complexes and assist the Navy with environmental planning for the range complex. Examples of the activity-based documents include those that focus on activities such as:

- Atlantic Fleet active sonar training, maintenance, and research, development, test, and evaluation activities
- Vessel sinking exercises
- Undersea Warfare Training Range (USWTR)

The Navy manages its land, air, and sea ranges, facilities, and natural resources as integrated training range complexes to be able to meet its current and future requirements, while protecting natural and cultural resources.

Public involvement is a fundamental part of the AFAST EIS/OEIS development and the Navy wants and appreciates your comments. The Navy has established several venues and informational resource areas for the public to learn more and provide input.

Comments on the Draft AFAST EIS/OEIS will be accepted via mail, fax, or the project Web site. All comments should be submitted no later than **March 31, 2008**, for consideration in the Final AFAST EIS/OEIS.

**THE NAVY
WANTS
YOUR
INPUT!**

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