

# Mountain Home Air Force Range No. 5

## Location

- The former Mountain Home PBR No. 5 is located in Cassia County, approximately 25 miles east of Burley, Idaho. The site, consisting of 2561.8 acres, is further identified as being located in Sections 2, 3, 10, and 11, Township 10 South, Range 27 East of the Boise Meridian.

## History

- The former Mountain Home Precision Bombing Range (PBR) #5 is located about 25 miles east of Burley, in portions of sections 2, 3, 10 & 11: Township 10 South; Range 27 East, in Cassia County, Idaho. The site is further situated at Latitude 42°34'N and Longitude 113°15'W (Headquarters, Pocatello AAF 1947). Other names for this range have included Pocatello Low Altitude Gunnery Range, Pocatello Low Altitude PBR Bombing Range #1 and the Raft River Bombing Range.
- The Navy apparently also used the site. Their name for the range is referred to in a 1944 location map that labels PBR #5 as the Raft River Bombing Range (Pocatello AAB 1944). While documentation didn't indicate any usage by the Navy on PBR #5, it did show that Pocatello Naval Ordnance Plant conducted tests on PBR#2 (Air Installations Division 1945).
- On 13 March 1943, under Public Land Order (PLO) No. 94, the War Department acquired the lands necessary for the former Mountain Home PBR #5 (Federal Register 1943). The Military acquired the land by two means. The first included 639.67 acres of land by a Declaration of Taking on 25 August 1943 (War Department 1943). The second included 1922.13 acres acquired by use permit from the Department of the Interior (War Department 1948).
- On 30 March 1944, Headquarters 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Force, by General Order No. 40, transferred Pocatello Bombing Range No. 1 to Mountain Home Army Airfield and redesignated it Mountain Home PBR No. 5 (Ogden Air Technical Service Command 1946). The transfer allowed Mountain Home to comply with the requirement of five Precision Bombing Ranges for Combat Crew Training Stations (Hdqts Second Air Force 1945).
- By November 1945, the range was no longer in use (War Department 1945). Headquarters, Strategic Air Command declared the 2561.80 acre range excess to the needs of its command on 22 May 1947 (Hdqts SAC 1947). On 14 September 1948 the United States Air Force (USAF) declared the range surplus and made it available for disposal (USAF 1948).
- The portion acquired through the declaration of taking was relinquished to private interests in June 1949. On 19 January 1952, PLO No. 793 revoked the Military's

reservation and returned the land to the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for public use. Calvin Webb, who acquired the property in 1975, currently owns the land. Much of the private land within Township 10 South; Range 27 East is being cultivated for the production of alfalfa and the portion administered by the BLM is used mostly for cattle grazing.

### **Certificate of Clearance**

- Bomb disposal personnel inspected the range from 6-10 October 1947. Subsequent operations were started in November. Work accomplished consisted of removing all visible bomb casings and burying them approximately four feet below the ground surface. A mound of dirt used for a target was also knocked down, leveled, and searched for bomb casings. The contaminated or impact area consisted of the southeast one fourth and southwest one fourth of the southeast one fourth, Section No. 2. The only ordnance mentioned in the mission is the M38A2 practice bomb. By January 1948 it was estimated that “ninety-five percent of the total scrap metal left on the range had been removed. Adverse weather conditions had caused operations to cease early (Corps of Engineers 1947).
- On 24 December 1948, in a letter to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the corps of Engineers state “The lands have been examined and have been found to be clear of all explosives or explosive objects reasonable possible to detect by visual inspection (Corps of Engineers 1948, Appendix, E-6).

### **Project History**

- **Inventory Project Report (USACE, 1997)**

A Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) FUDS Inventory Project Report (INPR) for the Mountain Home AFR No. 5 was completed in June 1997. The findings determined that the site had been formerly used by the DoD and was therefore eligible under the DERP program. A Risk Assessment Code (RAC) of 4 was assigned to the bombing range.
- **Archive Search Report (USACE, 2001)**

USACE completed an Archive Assessment Report (AAR) in June 2001 to assess the presence or absence of contamination from facility activities. The AAR included a visit to the site on August 25, 1999. The primary purpose of the site visit was to assess the presence of MEC through non-intrusive means. Interviews, historical research, and site reconnaissance determined:

  - The U.S. Army Air Corps used conventional ordnance at Mountain Home AFR No. 5.
  - Known munitions utilized on the former Mountain Home AFR No.3 consist of 100-lb Practice bombs (M38A2).

- Ordnance and Explosives (OE) debris in the form of M38, 100 pound practice remnants, was found piled in two locations. The INPR indicated the existed of a third pile of practice bomb casings but team did not observe this pile during site visit. Single remnant casings were observed at various locations on BLM owned portion of the former site.