

# Trabuco Bombing Range History



## 1944-1949

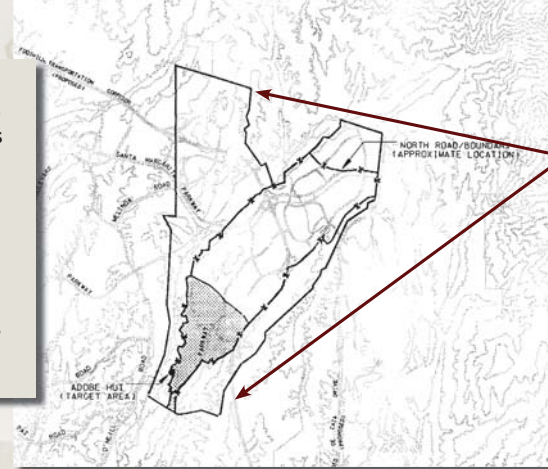
- 1,800 acres for use by pilots in dropping practice bombs and firing practice rockets

## 1950-1956

- boundary is reduced to 503 acres in south end

## After 1956

- land is returned to previous use as grazing and farming



Rancho Santa Margarita Boundary

The Trabuco Bombing Range in southern Orange County, California, initially comprised an area of approximately 1,800 acres. From 1944 through 1956, all or part of the area which is now identified as the Trabuco Bombing Range Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) project area was used by the US Navy and Marine Corps as a practice bombing/target range in conjunction with Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) El Toro.

The range originally was acquired by the Secretary of the Navy on 21 February 1944 by condemnation for military purposes. Lease agreements were later negotiated with the landowner (the O'Neill family). The lease apparently was modified in 1949 to reduce the leased area to 503 acres. This agreement continued until 1956, when the rest of the range was released to the owners and the land was returned to its former use as farmland and grazing.

The Trabuco Bombing Range was operated as a practice range, meaning that the bombs and rockets dropped/launched at the Range were either inert or contained "spotting charges" that allowed flight crews to see where their ordnance had landed. Available records indicate that high-explosive munitions were not deployed at the Trabuco Canyon range. However, a large amount of debris from the activities at the Trabuco Bombing Range remained on the range following its closure. This debris included some unexploded ordnance (UXO), in the form of practice bombs containing spotting charges (an explosive charge designed to create a puff of smoke upon impact) which had not detonated.

