



**Airspace Establishment Project  
Frequently Asked Questions  
September  
2018**



**OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL USE AIRSPACE USED TO SUPPORT TRAINING  
AT MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER**

**1. What is Special Use Airspace (SUA)?**

- Special Use Airspace (SUA) is airspace of defined dimensions wherein activities must be confined because of their nature, or wherein limitations may be imposed upon aircraft operations that are not part of those activities. Due to the nature of the activities taking place within SUA, varying levels of restrictions are imposed on non-military aircraft in each area. These limitations allow the Department of Defense to conduct necessary training activities while preserving public safety. Different categories of SUA are used to support military training activities at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) and is released back to the FAA for use by civil and commercial aviation when not needed for military operations.

**2. Why has the Marine Corps proposed the establishment or modification of SUA at MCAGCC?**

- With expanding capabilities of Marine aircraft and artillery over the last several decades, the Marine Corps identified modernized requirements for scalable Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) training. These requirements necessitated the acquisition of additional land and airspace in which to train with advancing technology. While the training land to accommodate these requirements was acquired through Congress via the National Defense Authorization Act of FY2014, the Marine Corps is still in the process of establishing the associated SUA. The establishment of SUA over and adjacent to the newly acquired lands is essential to safely undertaking realistic scalable MAGTF level training. Establishing the airspace is necessary to ensuring that the land is able to be used to fulfill requirements and that Marines receive the best combined-arms training.
- Marines must train as they fight to deploy successfully as a force in readiness anywhere in the world. Based upon battlefield experiences, the increased ranges of new weapons and battlefield transportation systems, and evolving war-fighting doctrine, the Marine Corps identified critical training requirements to prepare Marines for what they will encounter in combat operations. Realistic training means Marines will have the best chance to successfully meet their mission in combat and return safely to the United States.
- To ensure that scalable MAGTF training requirements can be fulfilled, both sufficient training lands and sufficient training Special Use Airspace (SUA) are required to support sustained, combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver and to contain these operations in support of public safety.
- A Marine Air Ground Task Force is a combined-arms force that is the principal organization for all missions across the range of military operations. The Marines deploy to combat as a

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combined-arms unit, which includes air and ground combat elements (along with command and logistics elements). SUA is required to accommodate live fire training both of ground units and of aviation units.

- Advanced weapons systems provide military forces with greater capabilities for detecting and countering enemy threats at greater distances. This has required that range and airspace areas be expanded, where necessary and feasible, to enable these forces to train in an environment that is more representative of realistic combat conditions. For that reason, the Marine Corps requires corresponding training airspace to support MEB training.
- SUA is needed to meet MEB sustained (48 -72 hours), combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver training requirements for, and to protect the public from, the use of:
  - **Artillery, mortars, tanks and other ground-based systems**
  - **Missiles, bombs and other airborne weapons systems**
  - **Maneuver space for aircraft involved in the exercise**

### 3. What are the different types of SUA used by MCAGCC?

- At MCAGCC, three different categories of SUA are used to support military training activities, including Restricted Area (RA), Military Operations Area (MOA), and Controlled Firing Area (CFA).
- **Restricted Airspace (RA)** Airspace above MCAGCC is classified as a Restricted Area (RA), in which the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that air traffic must be segregated due to safety or security concerns during military training activities. On aeronautical charts, RA is depicted in blue with the letter “R” followed by a serial number. R-2501 represents MCAGCC’s RA.

Before flying through RA, a civilian pilot must confirm that the RA has been returned to the NAS for general use and management by ATC, or the pilot must secure permission from Range Control when MCAGCC retains use of the RA for military training.

Entering an RA without authorization and during military training will put your aircraft in danger from munitions fired by ground and airborne weapon systems. Additionally, unauthorized civilian overflights will halt live-fire training, causing the loss of critical military training opportunities. All pilots entering R-2501 without permission will be reported to the local Flight Standards District Office (FSDO)

- **Military Operations Area (MOA)** Military Operations Area (MOA) is designated outside of Class A airspace, up to 17,999’ Mean Sea Level (MSL). A MOA separates or segregates certain non-hazardous military activities from Instrument Flight Rule (IFR) traffic, and identifies where these activities are conducted for Visual Flight Rule (VFR) traffic.

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- **Controlled Firing Area (CFA)** Controlled Firing Area is airspace designated to contain activities that if not conducted in a controlled environment would be hazardous to nonparticipating aircraft. CFAs provide a means to accommodate, without impact to aviation, certain hazardous activities that can be immediately suspended if a nonparticipating aircraft approaches the area. CFAs are an auxiliary tool used by the Marine Corps to meet its training requirements. They provide a means to accommodate limited training activities without impact to general aviation. CFAs are not depicted on aeronautical charts because the user terminates the hazardous activities when non-participating aircraft approach the area. For this reason, they are also not required to be published to Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs).

#### 4. Who Controls MCAGCC SUA?

- MCAGCC Range Control manages MCAGCC's SUA and returns airspace to the National Airspace System (NAS) for use by all aircraft when not required to support MCAGCC's military training mission.
- When it is not active, authorization to fly into R-2501 must come from the Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC). For current SUA status, contact Range Control Office (BEARMAT) 127.125 and check NOTAMs for airspace status in the vicinity of the Combat Center by visiting the FAA website and searching "NXP" and "ZLA".

## CONTROLLED FIRING AREA

#### 1. What is a CFA?

- A Controlled Firing Area (CFA) is airspace designated to contain activities that could be hazardous to non-participating aircraft while providing no impact to aviation. It is set up so that hazardous activities may be conducted without limiting the movement of aircraft as with a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) or permanent Restricted Area.

#### 2. How does a CFA differ from SUA?

- A CFA is a type of SUA. The primary difference between a CFA and other types of SUA is the lack of impact to nonparticipating aircraft. CFA activities are suspended immediately when a non-participating aircraft approaches the airspace. The responsibility lies with the CFA user to terminate hazardous activities. CFAs are not depicted on aeronautical charts and are not required to be posted to NOTAMs. MCAGCC is responsible for terminating activities when required to prevent endangering non-participating aircraft.

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3. **What activities are conducted within CFA at MCAGCC?**
  - Only activities such as small arms, mortars and artillery that can be suspended on notice when non-participating aircraft approach the area are conducted within the CFA. Training supported by the CFA include small arms to include pistols, rifles and machine guns (up to .50 cal), flares, smoke, hand grenades, demolitions, mortars (60mm, 81mm, 84mm, 120mm), 155mm Howitzers, all classes of lasers, mines, mine clearing line charges, tanks, UAS, and fixed and rotary wing flight operations.
  
4. **Will CFAs be depicted on aeronautical charts and will the public be provided notice of CFA activation by Notice to Airmen (NOTAM)?**
  - No. CFAs are not depicted on aeronautical charts and are not typically posted to NOTAMs because the training unit terminates activities that would impact approaching aviation. MCAGCC is responsible for terminating activities when required to prevent endangering non-participating aircraft.
  
5. **Does the CFA establishment result in any new restrictions being placed on commercial airline or civil aviation over flights?**
  - No. Unlike other types of SUA which do place restrictions on commercial and civil aviation, CFAs are designed to have no impact on aircraft not participating in the training.
  - During training using the CFA, the Marine Corps monitors civil aviation in the area utilizing radar as well as exercise observers that would serve as lookouts for approaching aircraft. Prior to nonparticipating aircraft entering the area, an immediate cease-fire is ordered. Training does not resume until the nonparticipating aircraft are safely out of the area.
  
6. **Has the Marine Corps used CFAs before?**
  - Yes. CFAs are a common tool used by the Marine Corps to meet training requirements. Regionally, CFAs have been used in the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range in Southeastern California.
  
7. **What are the details of the CFA established at the Combat Center to support training?**
  - The CFA will be activated only during the times needed to support specific training, only to the altitude necessary to contain each day's activities, and will be deactivated immediately upon completion of training each day. CFA establishment is approved from August 24, 2018 through August 23, 2020; altitude surface to 16,000' MSL. Training supported by the CFA will include small arms to include pistols, rifles and machine guns (up to .50 cal), flares, smoke, hand grenades, demolitions, mortars (60mm, 81mm, 84mm, 120mm), 155mm

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Howitzers, all classes of lasers, mines, mine clearing line charges, tanks, UAS, and fixed and rotary wing flight operations.

### 8. Who will be monitoring the CFAs?

- Currently the Marine Corps uses trained personnel (air sentries) to help monitor the existing ranges within the R-2501 complex. These air sentries are used as a primary means to monitor operations within the CFA. Range Control (BEARMAT) augments the air sentries using existing radar to maintain situational awareness.

## TEMPORARY SPECIAL USE AIRSPACE

### 1. Why does MCAGCC need Temporary SUA?

- The process of gaining Permanent SUA can take several years to complete. In the interim, the Marine Corps submitted a Temporary SUA proposal to the FAA in 2018 to allow for limited large-scale training in the new training lands provided by Congress as a temporary measure.

### 2. Is the proposed Temporary SUA a suitable replacement for the Marine Corps Permanent SUA proposal?

- No, the Temporary SUA, while useful for conducting a more limited large-scale, combined-arms exercise in the newly expanded ranges at MCAGCC, is insufficient to meet more robust training requirements for a MEB, a type of MAGTF consisting of approximately 15,000 Marines, that includes a:
  - **Command Element;**
  - **Ground Combat Element built around a Regimental Combat Team (three battalions);**
  - **Aviation Combat Element built around a Marine Aviation Group;**
  - **Logistics Combat Element built around a Combat Logistics Regiment**

### 3. What are the specifications of the Temporary SUA?

- The proposed *Temporary* SUA is a subset of the required SUA to fully support LSE/MEB training in MCAGCC's new range lands.
  - **R-2509 E/W/N** - The proposed Temporary R-2509 E/W/N accommodates MEB LSE building block live fire combined arms training. And will be activated either by

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itself or in conjunction with existing and/or planned restricted area and MOAs/ATCAAs for LSE-19 and LSE-20.

- a). **R-2509E** – Surface to FL400
- b). **R-2509W** – Surface to 8,000 feet MSL excluding that airspace within a 3.4 nm radius of three private airports in Johnson Valley.
- c). **R-2509N** – Surface to 16,000 MSL

- **JV MOA** – Adjoins the lower southwest corner of the R-2501. From 3,000 feet AGL to but not including FL180.
- **Sundance High MOA** – From 10,001 feet MSL to but not including FL180.
- **Sundance West MOA** – adjoins established Sundance MOA to the west. From 500 feet AGL to but not including FL180.
- **Bristol Low MOA** – From 2,000 feet AGL up to but not including 5,000 feet MSL
- **CAX Low MOA** – From 2,000 feet AGL up to but not including 8,000 feet MSL.
- **Turtle Low MOA** – From 2,000 feet AGL up to but not including 11,000 feet MSL.

### 3. How will we know when Temporary SUA is established and activated?

- The Temporary SUA is described and activated via Notice to Airmen (NOTAM).

### 4. Will the Temporary SUA be charted and/or posted to NOTAMs?

- The FAA does not chart *Temporary* SUA however, it is described and activated via Notice to Airmen (NOTAM).

### 5. How is Temporary SUA different than a TFR?

- Both Temporary SUA and Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) are *Temporary* and not depicted on any navigational charts. TFR is a regulatory action that temporarily restricts certain aircraft from operating within a defined area in order to protect persons or property in the air or on the ground. Temporary SUA is also regulatory action that temporarily places varying levels of restrictions on non-military aircraft in each specifically designated *temporary* SUA. These limitations allow the Department of Defense to conduct necessary training activities while preserving public safety. Usually, TFRs are more short-lived than a Temporary SUA which may be in effect for a period of a week or more. Both TFRs and Temporary SUA are issued in NOTAMs and neither are charted.

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### PERMANENT SPECIAL USE AIRSPACE

#### 1. Why does the Combat Center need more airspace?

- The establishment of SUA over and adjacent to the newly acquired lands is essential to safely undertaking realistic MAGTF training that incorporates live fire training both of ground and aviation units. As weapon systems continue to advance and provide military forces with greater capabilities for detecting and countering enemy threats at greater distances, the land and airspace required to train Marines for battle is also greater. Additionally, Marines cannot sufficiently train without the required airspace to support airborne, surface-to-air and surface-to-surface weapons.

#### 2. When will Permanent SUA be established?

- The Marine Corps submitted a proposal to the FAA in summer of 2018 for Permanent SUA. However, the process of establishing permanent airspace will likely take up to three years.

#### 3. What are the specification of the Permanent SUA proposal?

- The proposed **Permanent** SUA will support scalable MAGTF combined arms exercises planned for existing and newly acquired training lands at MCAGCC.
  - **R-2509 E/W/N** - The proposed Permanent R-2509 E/W/N will accommodate MEB LSE building block live fire combined arms training and will be activated either by itself or in conjunction with existing and/or planned restricted area and MOAs/ATCAAs.
    - a). **R-2509E** Surface to FL400
    - b). **R-2509W** Surface to 10,000 feet MSL
    - c). **R-2509N** Surface to 16,000 feet MSL excluding that airspace within a 2 nm radius and 1,500 feet AGL of three private airports in Johnson Valley.
  - **JV MOA** – Adjoins the lower southwest corner of the R-2501. From 1,500 feet AGL to but not including FL180.
  - **Sundance MOA** – From 500 feet AGL to but not including FL180; excluding a 1nm radius of the Dale Sky ranch airport surface to 1,500 feet AGL.
  - **Bristol MOA** – From 1,500 feet AGL up to but not including FL180.

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