

Proposal for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment in Support of Large-Scale MAGTF Live Fire and Maneuver Training

Public Information Brief February 14, 2013

Marine Air Ground Task Force
Training Command/
Marine Corps Air Ground
Combat Center
(MAGTFTC/MCAGCC)
Twentynine Palms, CA



The Secretary of the Navy has selected Alternative 6 in the Record of Decision (ROD) as the alternative that can best support Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) Training

- ◆The ROD selects Alternative 6 and recommends it to Congress along with other recommendations to Congress that include:
  - Identifying mitigation for recreation developed in response to nearly 1,000 public comments on the Final EIS and in consultation with BLM.
  - Providing for continued public access to 43,049 acres of the Johnson Valley OHV area for up to 10 months of each year.
  - Establishing a written agreement between the Marine Corps and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to manage the 43,049 Shared Use Area.
- Alternative 6, while not the best from either an operational or an environmental impact perspective, is the optimal alternative given both the operational and environmental impact factors.
- •By not selecting Alternative 1, the best alternative from a military training perspective, 42,803 acres in the Johnson Valley OHV would remain available to the public year round.
- •Elements of the ROD and Alternative 6 will be included in the legislative proposal to Congress and Congress will have to approve any withdrawal of public lands.



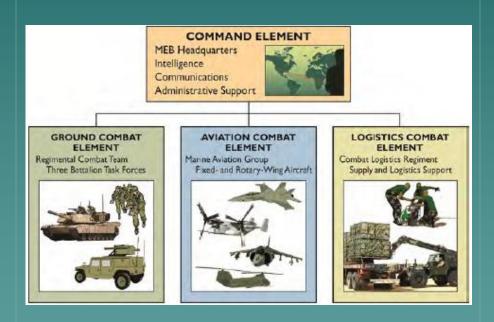
# Marine Corps Published a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) For Training Land and Airspace Project

- •The Project FEIS released July 27, 2012 completed almost four years of study, including public review and comment, on the environmental effects associated with acquiring sufficient land and airspace to meet the Marine Expeditionary Brigade training requirement, for which no current US military installation or range has sufficient capacity.
  - •The Project Team evaluated over 40,000 public comments received during the EIS Scoping period and in response to the Draft EIS (DEIS).
  - •Alternative 6, the preferred alternative, was developed directly in response to public comments and is slightly modified in the FEIS.
  - •Many new studies were undertaken and mitigation measures were identified in response to comments received on the DEIS.
- •Environmental impacts evaluated in the EIS including comments on the Final EIS costs, and mission training requirements was evaluated by the Secretary of the Navy in reaching a Record of Decision for the Project, which was signed February 11, 2013.



Marines Must Train As We Fight

Organization of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade



#### Operational Requirement

- Marines deploy as a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF).
- Marines must train as a Marine Expeditionary Brigade MAGTF (MEB) to deploy around the globe.
- A MEB, about 15,000 Marines, includes:
  - 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.
- MEB training requires a sustained (48-72 hours), combined-arms, live-fire and maneuver training exercise.
- No military range in the DoD inventory including MCAGCC – is currently sufficient to support MEB training.



#### We Must Train As We Fight





- Areas in the US Southeast, Southwest and Gulf Coast were initially assessed for suitability to meet the MEB training requirement. Only the US Southwest could meet the requirement and then only if MCAGCC was expanded.
- Lands to the north, south, east and west of the base were initially evaluated for potential land acquisition to meet Marine Corps training requirements. Study areas included land for safety buffers. Lands to the north were unsuitable for MEB training.



#### Project Inception

- Marine Corps Training and Education Command (TECOM) formulated MEB training requirement from lessons learned from combat.
- Marine Corps Reference Publication 3-OC and a Land Use Requirements Study showed need for more training range area.
- Center for Naval Analyses nationwide study of training options recommended MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, CA.
- Marine Requirements Oversight Council (MROC) validated the training requirement and approved study for land acquisition and airspace establishment or modification at MCAGCC.
- The Undersecretary of Defense approved moving forward to study alternatives at MCAGCC to meet MEB training.
- Notice of Intent to prepare Environmental Impact Statement published in Federal Register in October 2008.



Lands to the west, south and east of 29Palms have been studied in the NEPA process. The **BLM "withdrawal" application requested that** public lands be segregated from competing future claims during the study period.

 Public access and recreation were not affected during the study process.



#### **BLM Withdrawal Application**

- The Department of the Navy, on behalf of the Marine Corps, submitted a "withdrawal of public lands" application in August 2008.
  - BLM published a Segregation Notice in September 2008 and public lands within the study areas were segregated from competing future claims for two years.
  - In June 2009, the Department of the Navy relinquished its interest in approximately 60,000 total acres of land from study (approximately 33,000 of it federal land)—about 15% of the total, reducing the study area to about 379,000 acres.
  - In September 2010, BLM published a Proposed Notice of Withdrawal in Aid of Legislation to continue to segregate the public lands from competing claims to allow the EIS study to be completed.
  - In September 2012, the Department of the Interior authorized the "in Aid of Legislation" five year BLM withdrawal.
  - Any withdrawal of public lands would require congressional approval and any non-federal lands would be purchased at fair market value.



# The Marine Corps Training and Education Command Assessed Potential EIS Alternatives Against These Factors

#### Critical Training Requirements

- ◆Three Battalion Task Forces abreast converging onto a MEB objective
- 48-72 hours of continuous offensive operations toward the MEB objective
- Integrated air and ground live fires with optimized freedom of action (within reasonable constraints)

# Other Evaluation Criteria Land and Airspace that allow for:

- Employment of current and future weapons systems and munitions
- Employment of tactical communications and logistics over extended distances
- ◆Contiguity with current MCAGCC land
- Avoiding parks, critical habitat, wildlife refuges and wilderness areas
- ◆1000 meter buffer between live-fire areas and base boundary



# Airspace Alternatives for Each Land Acquisition Alternative Were Studied in the EIS

(Land Acquisition Alternatives 1, 4, 5 and 6 had the same airspace alternative)

- •Proposed land acquisition alternatives would require establishment or modification of Special Use Airspace to meet requirements for Marine Air Ground Task Force Training.
  - •Ground combat elements using rockets, tanks, mortars, and small arms, air combat elements using bombs, rockets and guns and maneuvering aircraft require Special Use Airspace during training.
- Each action alternative being studied in the EIS has varying degrees of training land acquisition and Special Use Airspace establishment or modification.
- •Any Special Use Airspace established or modified would be managed, as it is now, to release it for use by all aircraft in the National Airspace System when not needed for military training.



#### Types of Airspace Used in Military Training at MCAGCC

- Restricted Area (RA): Non-military aircraft are prohibited from entering during military training activities that involve live fire; MCAGCC releases RA for use by all aircraft in the National Airspace System when not needed for military training.
- Military Operations Area (MOA): A military operations area is airspace designated outside of Class A airspace (18,000 60,000 feet) to separate or segregate certain nonhazardous military activities from Instrument Flight Rule (IFR) traffic and to identify for Visual Flight Rule (VFR) traffic where these activities are conducted.
- Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (ATCAA): Similar to a MOA (and usually overlaying a MOA) within Class A airspace, non-military aircraft may fly in ATCAA during military training so long as air traffic controllers can maintain IFR separation from military aircraft; only non-hazardous military activities may be undertaken in ATCAA.



#### A Range of Reasonable Alternatives Were Evaluated in EIS

- •Five land acquisition alternatives for meeting MEB training requirements were presented to the public during scoping.
- ◆Based on public comments and further examination of training requirements, terrain, property ownership and other factors, the five were modified – resulting in removing 15% of lands from the study area.
- •A sixth land acquisition alternative was developed to accommodate public access while better meeting MEB training requirements.
- •All Alternatives received the same degree of analysis regarding their environmental impacts.

#### Supporting Airspace Alternatives

- •Alternatives to establish and modify Special Use Airspace were developed to support the training in any newly acquired lands.
  - One airspace alternative would support land acquisition Alternatives 1, 4, 5 and 6.
  - Separate airspace alternatives were developed for each of land acquisition Alternatives 2 and 3.



# Throughout the Project the Marine Corps Has Kept Interested Stakeholders Apprised of Project Developments

#### Non-Governmental

- Private and Commercial Airline
   Pilots and Commercial Airlines
- Chambers of Commerce
- Conservation and Environmental Groups
- Recreational Groups Hikers, Off-Road Vehicle Enthusiasts
- Manufacturers, Energy Companies, Railroads, Mines and Other Businesses
- Historic Preservation Groups
- Developers and Construction Companies
- Military Support Groups

#### Governmental

- State and Federal Regulatory Agencies
- State and Federal Resource Agencies
- City and County Governments
- Regional Governing Bodies
- State, Regional and Local Economic Development Agencies
- State and Federal Transportation Agencies
- State and Federal Land Management Agencies
- State and Federal Aviation Authorities
- Native American Tribes
- Other DoD Military Services



#### Highlight of Changes from Draft EIS to Final EIS

- An additional mitigation measure for recreation added.
- Four additional special conservation measures for biological resources added that include new Special Use Areas and discussion of a tortoise translocation plan.
- Air quality impacts analysis to sensitive receptors added.
- Displaced Off Highway Vehicle Recreation Study added.
- Additional analyses of single-event noise and noise-generated vibrations results added.
- Impacts from ordnance on water wells analysis added.
- Airspace sections revised and updated per coordination with the FAA.
- Agency correspondence with the California SHPO, California Native American Heritage Commission, USFWS, and Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District added.
- Public comments and the USMC responses to comments added.



#### Issues of Significance

All alternatives had significant impacts to land use, biological resources and airspace management. All alternatives except for Alternative 3 had significant impacts to recreation resources. Alternative 3, unlike the others, had significant impacts to transportation and air quality resources.

- The Marine Corps is proposing mitigation measures for five resource areas, as appropriate to the Alternative including:
  - Mitigation measures for loss of **recreation** use in the West Study Area (except in Alternative 3 where impacts are less than significant to this resource).
  - Mitigation measures, including four additional special conservation measures (developed in consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service) for impacts to biological resources, especially the desert tortoise.
  - Continued consultation with the FAA on airspace configurations and use that would sufficiently support MEB and MEB-building block training while allowing for effective overall management of the **national air space**.
  - Mitigation measures for transportation resources in Alternative 3.
  - The Installation Cultural Resources Management Plan would be modified to include acquired lands and updated in 2014 to account for mitigation measures for cultural resources to be identified in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and Native American tribes.
- No mitigation measures were available to address the impacts to land use.



#### Desert Tortoise

- The Marine Corps is proposing mitigation measures for five resource areas, as appropriate to the Alternative, including special conservation measures developed in consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for impacts to biological resources, especially the desert tortoise.
- US FWS completed its Biological Opinion of the proposed action on July 17, 2012, concluding:
  - \* "After reviewing its status, the environmental baseline for the action area, the effects of the proposed action, and the cumulative effects, it is our biological opinion that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the desert tortoise."
    - "The injury and mortality of desert tortoises ... would not result in an appreciable change in what these areas currently experience...".
    - "The Marine Corps' proposed Special Use Areas and the proposed changes in the Bureau's [BLM] land use classification for the areas adjacent to the Ord-Rodman DWMA will functionally increase the size of the protected areas associated with this DWMA and improve the long-term potential for maintaining population viability there. These changes in land use will improve our ability to recover the desert tortoise."
  - "...it is our biological opinion that the proposed action is not likely to destroy or adversely modify critical habitat of the desert tortoise."



#### **Summary of Direct and Indirect Environmental Impacts**

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5	Alternative 6 (Preferred)	
Change In Conditions							
Land Acquired (acres)	201,657	134,863	198,580	201,657	180,353	167,971	
Shared Use Area	No	No	No	Yes - on 180,353 acres	Yes - All	Yes – on 43,049 acres	
MEB Building Block Training	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes – on 103,618 acres	
Change in Personnel	70	65	59	77	77	77	
Resource Area Impacts							
Land Use	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	
Recreation	SI	SI	LSI	SI	SI	SI	
Socioeconomics	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Public Health and Safety	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Visual Resources	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Transportation	LSI	LSI	SI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Airspace Management	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	
Air Quality	LSI	LSI	SI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Noise*							
<b>Biological Resources</b>	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	
Cultural Resources	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
<b>Geological Resources</b>	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Water Resources	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	

Notes: SI = Significant Impact; LSI = Less than Significant Impact

<sup>\*</sup>The noise sections of this EIS describe only the potential changes in noise levels under each alternative. The significance of any noise-related impacts is assessed as a function of the environmental resources that may be affected by noise (e.g., biological resources, land use, etc). Therefore, noise-related impacts are assessed as appropriate in the relevant impact sections for those other resources.



#### **Summary of Cumulative Environmental Impacts**

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	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5	Alternative 6 (Preferred)	
Change In Conditions							
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Shared Use Area	No	No	No	Yes – on 180,353 acres	Yes - All	Yes on 43,049 acres	
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Change in Personnel	70	65	59	77	77	77	
Resource Area Impacts							
Land Use	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	
Recreation	SI	SI	NI	SI	SI	SI	
Socioeconomics	LSI	LSI	SI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Public Health and Safety	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Visual Resources	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	LSI	
Transportation	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Airspace Management	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Air Quality	LSI	LSI	SI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Noise*							
<b>Biological Resources</b>	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	SI	
Geological Resources	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	LSI	
Water Resources	LSI	LSI	SI	LSI	LSI	LSI	

Notes: SI = Significant Impact; LSI = Less than Significant Impact; NI equals No Impact

<sup>\*</sup>The noise sections of this EIS describe only the potential changes in noise levels under each alternative. The significance of any noise-related impacts is assessed as a function of the environmental resources that may be affected by noise (e.g., biological resources, land use, etc). Therefore, noise-related impacts are assessed as appropriate in the relevant impact sections for those other resources.



#### Alternative 6 - Partial West/South

◆167,971 acres: 146,667 acres west/21,304 acres south

- Maneuver would start from the east on the current MCAGCC base and the south study area, and the MEB battalions would converge on an objective in the west study area.
- No dud-producing ordnance used in 43,049 acres of the south-most portion of the west study area; this
   43,049 acres would be open for public use when MEB training not required.



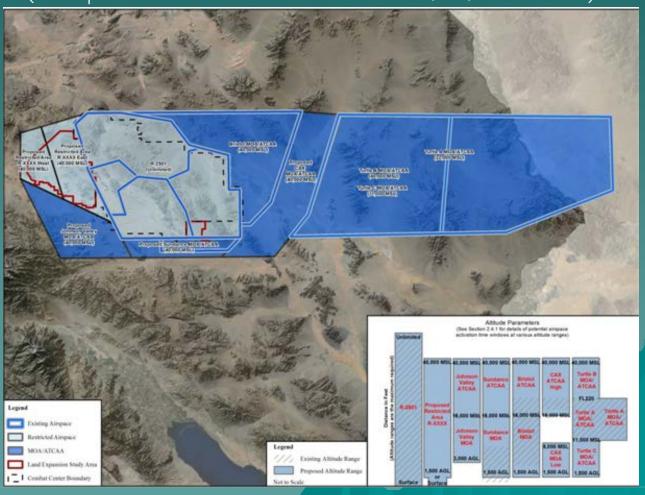


# Airspace Establishment and Modification Highlights Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 6

- Would add Proposed Combined Arms Exercise MOA/ATCAA between currently authorized Bristol MOA/ATCAA and Turtle MOA/ATCAA.
- ◆Would expand *Sundance MOA/ATCAA* to the south, east and west.
- Would modify the vertical limits of the Bristol, Sundance, and Turtle MOAs/ATCAAs.
- Would add Proposed Western and Eastern Restricted Area and Johnson Valley MOA/ATCAA to the west of the current R2501 Restricted Area.
  - •In the newly proposed *Restricted Area* the surface of the airspace would only go down to 1,500 feet above ground level anywhere it is not above the installation; for the areas above the installation the surface would go to the ground.

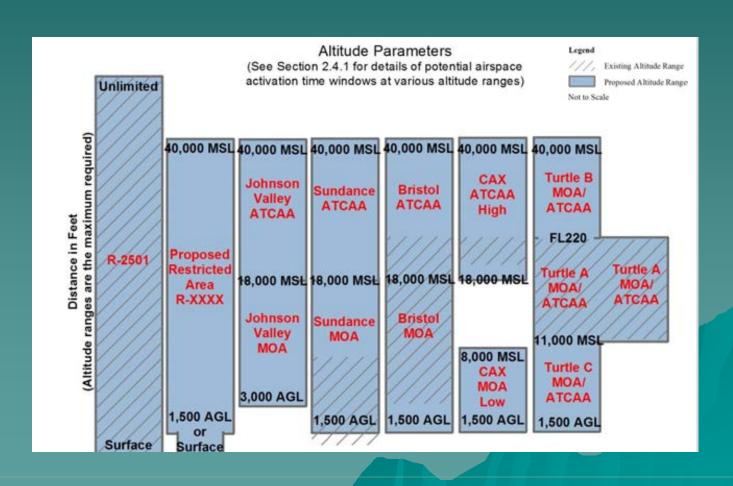


Airspace Establishment and Modification Proposed Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 6 (Airspace under Alternatives 1, 4, 5 and 6)





#### Airspace Establishment and Modification Proposed Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 6 Surface and Ceiling of Airspace Blocks in Alternative





#### Airspace Establishment and Modification Proposed Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 6 Days and Hours of Proposed Usage of SUA

R-XXXX parameters:	Johnson Valley MOA/ATCAA parameters:	Sundance MOA/ATCAA parameters:	Bristol MOA/ATCAA parameters:	CAX Corridor MOA/ATCAA parameters:	Turtle MOA/ATCAA parameters: Turtle A MOA/ATCAA
Alt Hours Days FL180 8 160	Alt Hours Days FL180 8 160 12 28 FL270 24 6 FL400 12 6*	Alt Hours Days FL180 12 28** FL270 24 6 FL400 12 6*	Alt Hours Days FL180 12 28+ FL270 24 6++ FL400 12 6++*	Alt Hours Days FL180 - FL270 24 6++ FL180 - FL400 12 6++*  1,500 - 8,000 feet MSL24FL270 24 6++  1,500 - 8,000 feet MSL24FL270 12 6++*	from 11,000 feet MSL to FL220 from 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mon-Fri; other times by NOTAM Turtle B and C sectors from 1,500 feet AGL to FL270 for up to 24 hours per day for 6 days.++ Turtle B and C sectors from 1,500 feet AGL to FL400 for up to 12 hours per day for six days.*

Days are per year.

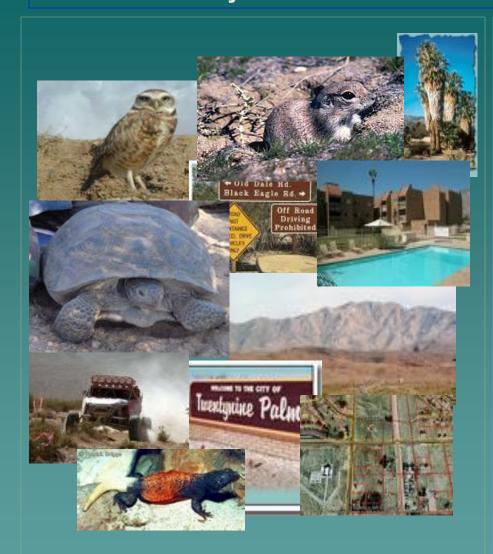
<sup>\*</sup>not to exceed 40 hours per year

<sup>\*\*1,500</sup> feet AGL to 10,000 feet MSL intermittently by Notice to Airmen (NOTAM)

<sup>+5,000</sup> feet AGL to FL220 from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, others times by NOTAM;

<sup>++</sup> by NOTAM



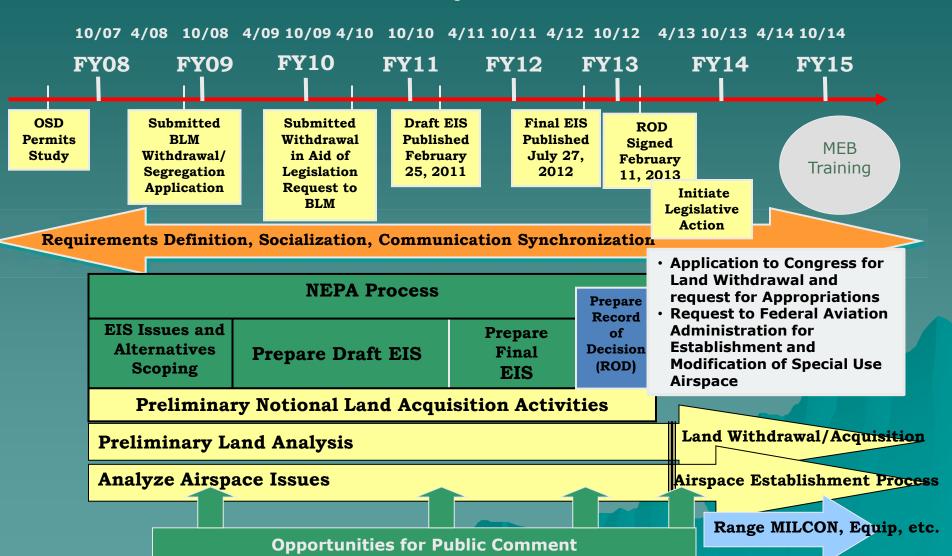


#### Path Forward

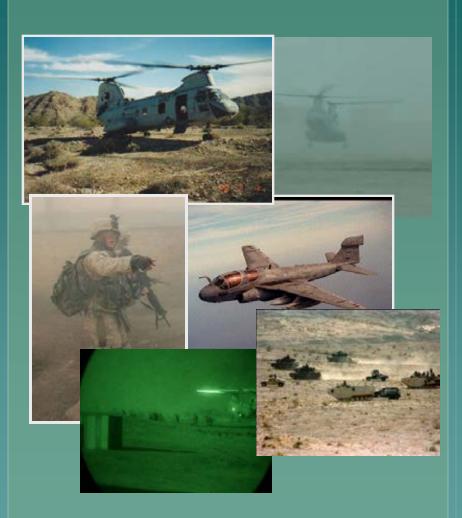
- ✓ Land withdrawal legislative process initiated, 2012
- √Record of Decision (ROD), signed February 11, 2013
- Request FAA to commence processes to consider establish or modify MCAGCC Special Use Airspace, 2013
- Enact Federal Land Withdrawal, 2013
- Prepare Resource Management Plan, or amend existing plan, 2013-2014
- Appropriations to purchase State/Private
   Lands at fair-market value, 2013-2014
- Complete FAA airspace review and rule making processes, 2013-2014
- Complete Necessary Training Range Improvements, 2014
- Implement and Sustain Required Mitigation, 2014 and beyond
- Commence Training, 2014; MEB training, 2015



#### Overall Project Schedule







#### Conclusion

- •To meet our required service-level training, the Marine Corps studied reasonable land acquisition and special use airspace alternatives in the area near the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.
- •The Marine Corps both seeks only those lands and airspace needed for the requirement and to continue our tradition of outstanding environmental stewardship. The Marine Corps is proud of this tradition, as well as of our good neighbor practices in the High Desert.
- •Throughout the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, stakeholders had opportunities to review alternatives, the completed studies that support NEPA compliance, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the Final EIS. After evaluating the EIS, public comments, costs and training requirements, the Secretary of the Navy signed a Record of Decision on February 11, 2013, selecting Alternative 6 and making recommendations to Congress on how to provide new lands and airspace to meet MEB training requirements.
- \*We look forward to working with you in the years ahead as the Combat Center continues its important mission for the nation.



#### QUESTIONS?

#### For Further Information Please Contact:

Proposed 29Palms Training Land/Airspace Acquisition Project

(web)

http://www.29palms.marines.mil/Staff/G4InstallationsandLogistics/LandAcquisition.aspx

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Project Manager
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Bldg. 1554, Box 788104
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104



Back Up Information Slides
Other Land Use and Airspace Alternatives Evaluated in the DEIS



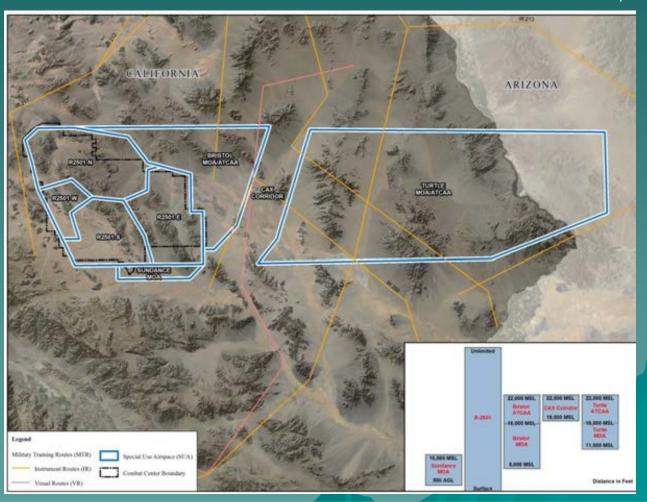
#### No Action Alternative - Current Base

- \*Adds no land; adds no changes to airspace
- Would not meet MEB training requirements.



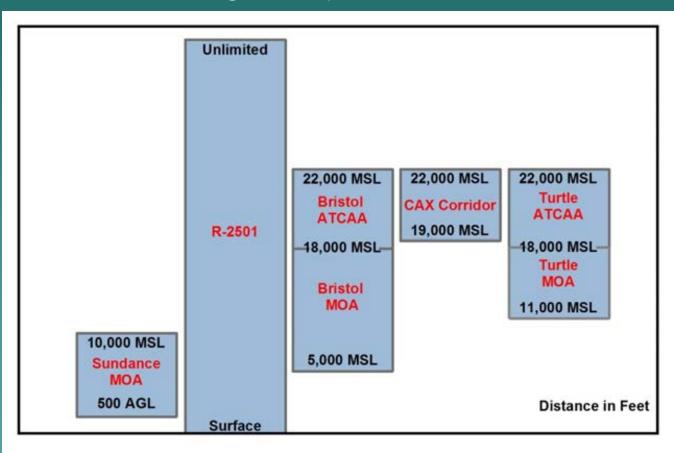


Special Use and Other Airspace in vicinity of MCAGCC No Action Alternative - No Added or Modified Airspace



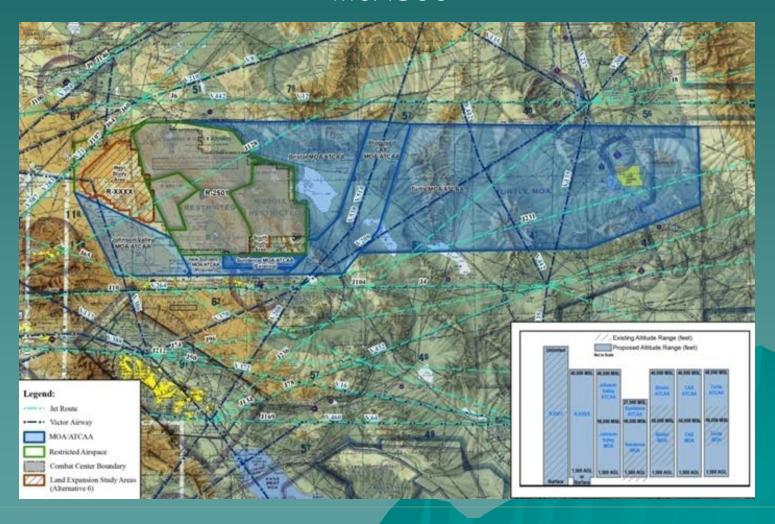


Special Use and Other Airspace in vicinity of MCAGCC No Action Alternative – No Added or Modified Airspace Surface and Ceiling of Airspace Blocks in Alternative





# Airways in Relation to Current and Proposed SUA in Vicinity of MCAGCC





#### Alternative 1 - West/South

\*201,657 acres: 180,353 acres west/21,304 acres south

Maneuver would start from the east on the current MCAGCC base and the south study area,
 and the MEB battalions would converge on an objective in the west study area.





#### Alternative 4 - West/South

- •201,657 acres:180,353 acres west/21,304 acres south
- •No dud-producing ordnance use in the west study area
- Maneuver would start in the west study area, the MEB battalions would converge on two objectives, one in the south study area and the other in the east of the current MCAGCC base.





#### Alternative 5 - West

•180,353 acres: west only

No dud-producing ordnance use in the west study area

Maneuver would start in the west study area and the MEB battalions would converge on two
objectives within the current MCAGCC base: one in the Military Operations in Urban Terrain
(MOUT) area and the other in the east.



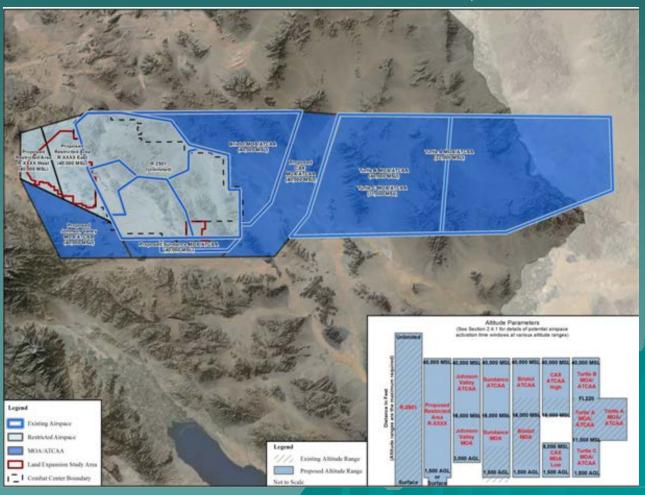


# Airspace Establishment and Modification Highlights Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternatives 1, 4, 5 and 6

- Would add Proposed Combined Arms Exercise MOA/ATCAA between currently authorized Bristol MOA/ATCAA and Turtle MOA/ATCAA.
- Would expand Sundance MOA/ATCAA to the south, east and west.
- Would modify the vertical limits of the Bristol, Sundance, and Turtle MOAs/ATCAAs.
- Would add Proposed Western and Eastern Restricted Area and Johnson Valley MOA/ATCAA to the west of the current R2501 Restricted Area.
  - •In the newly proposed *Restricted Area* the surface of the airspace would only go down to 1,500 feet above ground level anywhere it is not above the installation; for the areas above the installation the surface would go to the ground.

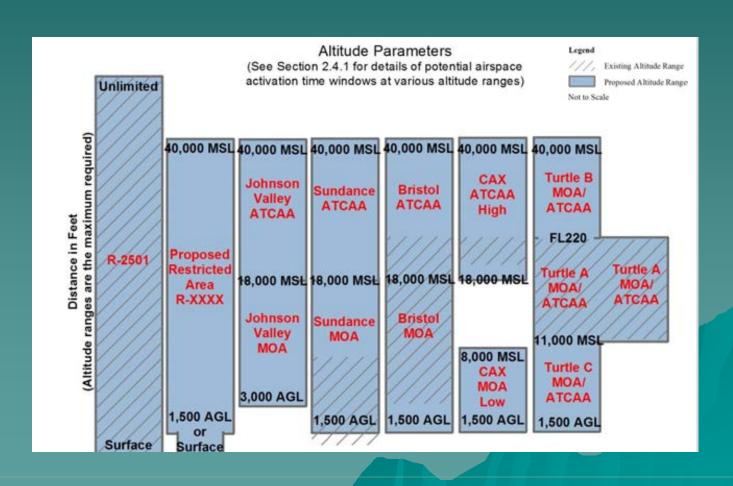


Airspace Establishment and Modification Proposed Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 6 is the same under Alternatives 1, 4 and 5





#### Airspace Establishment and Modification Proposed Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 6 Surface and Ceiling of Airspace Blocks in Alternative





#### Alternative 2 - Partial West/South

•134,863 acres: 113,558 acres west/21,304acres south

 Maneuver would start from the east on the current MCAGCC base and the south study area, and the MEB battalions would converge on an objective in the west study area.





# Airspace Establishment and Modification Highlights Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 2

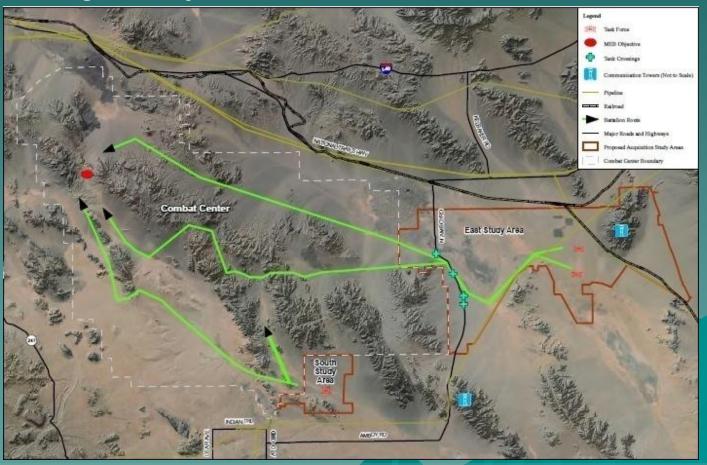
- •Would add *Proposed Combined Arms Exercise MOA/ATCAA* between currently authorized *Bristol MOA/ATCAA* and *Turtle MOA/ATCAA*.
- ◆Would expand *Sundance MOA/ATCAA* to the south, east and west.
- •Would modify the vertical limits of the Bristol, Sundance, and Turtle MOAs/ATCAAs.
- Would add proposed Western Restricted Area and Western MOA/ATCAA
  to the west of the current R2501 Restricted Area.
  - Westward expansion of both the Western Restricted Area and the MOA/ATCAA would be less in Alternative 2 than in Alternatives 1,4, 5 and 6.



#### Alternative 3 - South/East

•198,580 acres: 21,304 acres south/177,276 acres east

 Maneuver would start from the south and east study areas and the MEB battalions would converge on an objective within the current MCAGCC base in the northwest.



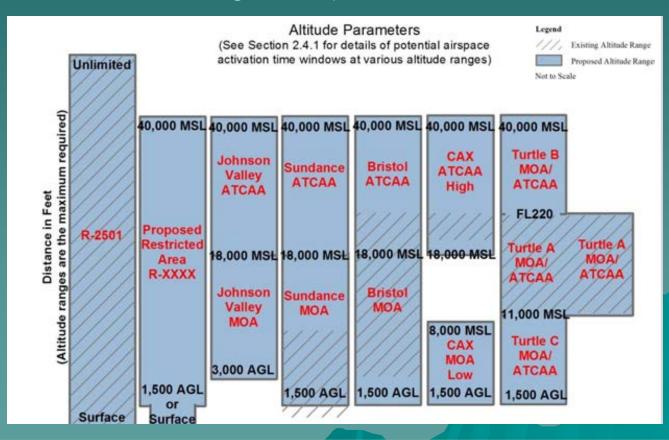


#### Airspace Establishment and Modification Proposed Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 2





# Airspace Establishment and Modification Proposed Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 2 Surface and Ceiling of Airspace Blocks in Alternative





# Airspace Establishment and Modification Highlights Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 3

- Would convert Bristol MOA/ATCAA into Bristol Restricted Area.
- Would add Proposed Combined Arms Exercise Restricted Area between currently authorized Bristol MOA/ATCAA and Turtle MOA/ATCCA.
- •Would expand Sundance MOA/ATCAA to the south, east and west.
- Would modify the vertical limits of the Sundance, and Turtle MOAs/ATCAAs.



#### Airspace Establishment and Modification Proposed Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 3





# Airspace Establishment and Modification Proposed Under EIS Land Acquisition Alternative 3 Surface and Ceiling of Airspace Blocks in Alternative

