

FINAL

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE
UPDATE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
TOTAL FORCE TRAINING MISSION FOR VISITING UNITS
(OPERATION SNOWBIRD, MULTI-SERVICE, AND
FOREIGN MILITARY SALES)
DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, ARIZONA**



April 2015

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

1.0 NAME OF PROPOSED ACTION

Update and Implementation of the Total Force Training Mission for Visiting Units (Operation Snowbird, Multi-Service, Foreign Military Sales), Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The U.S. Air Force (Air Force) proposes to update and implement the Total Force Training Mission, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (DMAFB), Arizona. The implementation of that program would support a year-round training mission designed to build and maintain the readiness of military units comprising the Total Force of the Department of Defense (DoD), so that they are capable of supporting extended combat and other national security operations, including joint coalition air operations and multi-service activities, all of which increasingly require greater interoperability. In addition to the Air National Guard (ANG) operating under its ongoing program known as Operation Snowbird (OSB), DoD Active and Reserve Units would also participate and coordinate much of the training. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) units from U.S. allied nations would also participate in the training mission. The Proposed Action would increase the annual number of sorties flown by visiting units from the number of sorties (1,408) flown in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009.

Three alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, were analyzed in detail in the environmental assessment (EA). The No Action Alternative, which is considered the baseline, would allow the Total Force Training activities to continue at the levels and intensity completed in FY 2009. Under this alternative, up to 1,408 sorties would be flown annually. U.S. and foreign-ally aircraft would continue to participate in the training events at levels experienced in 2009.

The Preferred Alternative is for the Air Force to update and implement the Total Force Training Mission for all visiting units at DMAFB. The 2,326 sorties proposed under this alternative include the sorties required to deploy and redeploy the units, as well as cargo support. Although this alternative would increase the annual sorties by 65 percent (compared to the No Action Alternative), this number of sorties represents approximately 6 percent of the total DMAFB annual operations. A typical deployment would consist of approximately 150 personnel, four loads of cargo, and 8 to 10 fighter/attack aircraft. A typical deployment would include 5 to 7 days of receiving and in-processing, a 2-week flying window, and 3 to 5 days for shipping and out-processing. The primary aircraft expected to participate would be A-10 and F-16; however, additional U.S. aircraft that would be expected to participate include, but are not limited to, AV-8, C-130, F-15, F-22, F/A-18 E/F, MC-12, and MV-22. International aircraft expected to participate would include EF-2000 Typhoon, F-21 Kfir, GR-4 Tornado, Mirage 2000, and Rafale. Additional helicopters anticipated to be used under this alternative would include AH-1W, CH-53E, EC-725, HH-60G, UH-1Y, and UH-60.

Alternative 2 would also allow Total Force Training Missions to continue at DMAFB, but at a slightly reduced level compared to the Preferred Alternative. Under Alternative 2, FMS

aircraft would be limited and the total number of annual sorties would be 2,134. Alternative 2 would result in 9 percent fewer total annual sorties, as compared to the Preferred Alternative discussed above, but a 52 percent increase compared to the FY 2009 baseline. The same airspace would be used under each action alternative; types of munitions used would be similar. These training activities would fit within the capacity of existing airspace and ranges. No military construction or expansion of military training airspace is proposed.

3.0 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The EA provides an analysis of potential environmental impacts of the three alternatives within the region of influence, which includes DMAFB and Pima County. Five resource areas were evaluated during the preparation of the EA. No impacts were identified regarding land use, climate, geology, soils, water quality and supply, wetlands, fish and wildlife populations, transportation, and public services. Insignificant impacts would be incurred on noise, air quality, socioeconomics (including property values), public health and safety, and cultural resources, as identified below. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office has concurred with the Air Force's determination of no adverse effects on historic properties, under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Potentially affected Native American Tribes have also concurred with the determination. Section 106 consultation regarding cultural resources has been completed. The No Action Alternative would result in no change to existing conditions.

Noise: On average, a less than 100-foot expansion to the 65-decibel (dB) and 70 dB Day/Night Level (DNL) noise contours would occur for each of the two action alternatives compared to the No Action Alternative. The increase would occur in areas southeast and northwest of DMAFB; no residences or other noise-sensitive receptors would be affected in the areas southeast of DMAFB. However, in areas northwest of DMAFB, 128 additional residences would be located within the 65-69 dB DNL contour; no additional residences would be located within the 70-74 dB DNL contour. These expansions in the noise contours would likely be imperceptible to the residents.

Air Quality: There would be no significant impacts on the region's air quality under any alternative. Under the Preferred Alternative, annual air emissions from visiting aircraft would be estimated to be up to 58.49 tons of carbon monoxide and up to 0.20 ton of particulate matter less than 10 microns, which are the two pollutants of concern in Pima County. All emissions would be well below *de minimis* thresholds of 100 tons per year. Therefore, a Conformity Determination would not be required.

Socioeconomics: No long-term adverse effects on the region's socioeconomic conditions would be expected. Some short-term benefits would occur during each training event due to increased expenditures in the local economy. Property values near DMAFB have not experienced decreases as dramatic as those of other properties in the outlying portions of the City of Tucson or Pima County, suggesting that existing aircraft operations have not decreased property values compared to other properties in the local area. Consequently, property values would not be expected to be adversely affected by the Total Force Training operations as proposed under any alternative; potential buyers of those properties that would be included in the 65 dBA DNL contour under either alternative would require

notification that the property would be located within that noise contour, pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes 28-8461. The additional 128 single-family residences and 4 multi-family residences located within the 65-69 dB DNL contour are within the current notification zone, and therefore no additional requirement would result from implementation of either alternative. Since no displacement or relocation of houses or community facilities (e.g., churches, schools, and parks) would occur, no adverse effects on community cohesion would be expected. There would be no additional disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations near DMAFB compared to those impacts associated with the No Action Alternative. There would also be no additional disproportional impacts regarding the protection of children.

Public Health and Safety: Public safety risks would not be measurably increased under either of the action alternatives. The risk factors for F-16 and A-10 aircraft, which compose 70 percent of the aircraft participating in the training activities, are extremely low. The Air Force has supported training of visiting units at DMAFB for over 35 years without a single major mishap, and this safety record is expected to continue. Compliance with DMAFB standard flying procedures would further enhance the safety of training events for the visiting units. Because there would be an imperceptible shift in the 65 dBA DNL contour, no significant adverse effects on public health would be expected.

Cultural Resources: Under certain circumstances, prehistoric and historic structures are vulnerable to damage from aircraft overflights, especially supersonic flights. Airspace restrictions are in place, however, that limit the altitude of overflights and the areas in which supersonic flights can occur. The U.S. Air Force has determined that the Preferred Alternative would not adversely affect historic properties. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer and the Native American Tribes that claim cultural affinity have concurred with this determination; Section 106 consultation has been completed.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the EA conducted pursuant to the relevant requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR § 1508.13 et seq.) regulations, and Air Force Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) (32 CFR § 989.15), and after careful review of the potential impacts, I conclude that significant impacts on the quality of the human or natural environment would not result from either the proposed action of updating and implementing the Total Force Training Mission at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (the Preferred Alternative), Alternative 2 or the No Action Alternative. Therefore, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is warranted, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for these actions.



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Date