

**Finding Of No Significant Impact
and
Environmental Assessment
for
Routine Shore Fire Control Party Training
Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune
Onslow County, North Carolina**

Responsible Officers: Commanding General
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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT for ROUTINE SHORE FIRE CONTROL PARTY
TRAINING at MARINE CORPS BASE, CAMP LEJEUNE, ONSLOW COUNTY, NORTH
CAROLINA

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations § 1500-1508) implementing procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Lejeune and Atlantic Fleet give notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) have been prepared for the proposed Routine Shore Fire Control Party (SFCP) Training at MCB Camp Lejeune, Onslow County, North Carolina.

The United States Marine Corps (USMC) and the US Navy propose to conduct SFCP training on a routine basis at MCB Camp Lejeune. Currently, SFCP training is conducted at Vieques Island, Puerto Rico and San Clemente Island, California and training at these locations is logistically inefficient and expensive. Conducting SFCP training at Camp Lejeune will: 1) increase readiness by expanding frequency and opportunities for training, 2) decrease the number of days personnel are deployed or are away from their homeport or unit by allowing them to train at or near their home station, and 3) minimize costs associated with moving people, ships, and equipment to Vieques and San Clemente Island. Camp Lejeune is home to the eight East Coast Marine Corps SFCPs, who provide support from the shore to Navy ship gunners. During the proposed training, a SFCP will provide target coordinates to a prequalified Navy destroyer or cruiser for the purpose of directing naval gunfire. Marines will provide adjustments to the fall of the shot, as necessary, until the enemy target is engaged.

The EA addresses five alternatives: 1) conduct routine SFCP training at Camp Lejeune, 2) conduct SFCP training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, 3) conduct SFCP training at Eglin Range Complex, Florida, 4) conduct a computer simulation exercise, and 5) No Action, which is continuing East Coast-based training at Vieques, Puerto Rico and San Clemente Island, California. Conducting routine SFCP training at Camp Lejeune is the proposed action. Conducting SFCP training at Guantanamo Bay would be constrained operationally, could affect relations with the Cuban government, and would not significantly reduce the time and cost inefficiencies associated with the current training situation. Conducting SFCP training at Eglin Range Complex is not considered to be a feasible alternative because there is no existing site suitable for a naval gunnery range and there are operational and serious safety constraints. Conducting a computer simulation exercise is not considered feasible because it cannot provide an adequate substitute for this type of training. The No Action alternative, continuing SFCP training at either Vieques Island or San Clemente Island, would perpetuate the inefficiencies and costs involved with training personnel at these locations.

The proposed action, conducting routine SFCP training at MCB Camp Lejeune, will involve prequalified Navy ships firing live (explosive) gun rounds into the established G-10 Impact Area at MCB Camp Lejeune approximately 30 times per year. The ships will fire from within a predetermined Fire Support Area located in waters off the coast of Camp Lejeune with a depth of 46 feet or greater and within range of the target. It is expected this training will begin during the summer of 2002. Each four- to six-hour training evolution will occur between the hours of 7 am and midnight, depending on the amount of daylight by season. Over the course of the four- to six-hour training evolution, the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway will be closed in accordance with Base Order P3570.1.

Routine SFCP Training at MCB Camp Lejeune will have no significant adverse environmental impacts. The analyses and mitigation measures documented in the EA show that the potential for noise and physical impacts to threatened and endangered marine animals from the proposed action will be so

negligible as to be non-existent. The US Fish and Wildlife Service concurred that routine SFCP training is not likely to adversely affect red-cockaded woodpeckers or rough-leaved loosestrife. The proposed action will result in a minor disruption of boat traffic on the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway due to temporary closures (an additional 90 hours per year, about one percent of all available hours on an annual basis). North Carolina's Division of Coastal Management agreed that the proposed routine SFCP training is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of North Carolina's approved Coastal Management Program.

Noise monitoring for both naval gunfire and artillery fire and vibration monitoring for artillery fire (which closely approximates naval gunfire) were conducted and documented in the EA. All measured peak sound levels were below 126 dB, indicating a low to moderate risk of generating noise complaints. Vibration monitoring results were compared to similar monitoring conducted at Aberdeen Proving Grounds and found to be lower. Since no damage to residences was discovered nor claimed at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, it was concluded that the projected vibration levels from naval gunfire at MCB Camp Lejeune are not high enough to likely cause damage.

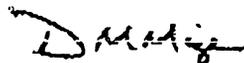
Computer modeling of naval gunfire activity was also done to address the noise impact of conducting naval gunfire in addition to current ordnance operations in the G-10 Impact Area. The incremental impact of adding naval gunfire operations is not significant. It is an increase of 1 to 2 dB in the C-weighted Day-Night Noise Level contours. That is less than 3 dB, which is considered to be a barely perceptible increase in noise level.

No significant impacts with respect to safety are expected as a result of routine SFCP training at MCB Camp Lejeune. The proposed naval gunfire target area lies well within the existing G-10 Impact Area, an area which presently accommodates artillery fire. The successful conduct of the SFCP Feasibility Study on October 19, 2001 further supports this conclusion.

Based on information gathered during preparation of the EA, the US Marine Corps and the US Navy find that implementing the proposed action will not significantly impact the quality of the environment. The EA addressing this action is on file and may be reviewed by interested parties by contacting: Commander, Atlantic Division Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 1510 Gilbert Street, Attn: Code BD33, Norfolk, VA 23511 (telephone 757-322-4886).

24 JUL 2002

Date



D. M. Miza
Major General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding General,
Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune

31 JUL 02

Date



M.P. Nowakowski
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