

Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Shore Fire Control Party Feasibility Study
Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune
Onslow County, North Carolina

Responsible Officer: Commanding General
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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for the
SHORE FIRE CONTROL PARTY FEASIBILITY STUDY
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 Shore Fire Control Party Feasibility Study at MCB Camp Lejeune, Onslow County, North Carolina.

The Proposed Action is to conduct a one-day Shore Fire Control Party (SFCP) Feasibility Study at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune (hereinafter "Camp Lejeune"), North Carolina. This study would be conducted in two phases: Phase I - firing inert (non-explosive rounds, which are actually concrete); and Phase II - live (high explosive) naval gunfire (NGF) rounds into the G-10 Impact Area at Camp Lejeune. This phased approach would allow Naval gunners the opportunity to more accurately refine the computer firing solutions and mitigate the risk of targeting error when using live rounds. The proposed Feasibility Study would occur no earlier than mid October 2001.

The purpose of the proposed study is to determine whether Camp Lejeune is suitable to accommodate SFCP training, which involves NGF, on a routine basis. Therefore, it is the only alternative site for such training addressed in this EA. The study is one step towards fulfilling a need to evaluate alternative East Coast locations for conducting this training. SFCP training is presently limited to Vieques Island, Puerto Rico and San Clemente Island, California.

Marine Corps operations and training personnel reviewed Camp Lejeune's training areas using existing weapons safety footprints and initially concluded that four areas had the potential to accommodate the non-explosive and/or live NGF rounds necessary for the SFCP Feasibility Study. However, upon further study, Marine Corps personnel found that the Greater Sandy Run Area, the K-2 Impact Area, and the N-1/BT-3 Impact Area on Brown's Island were not feasible alternatives. The G-10 Impact Area can accommodate both inert and live ordnance and is the proposed location for the SFCP Feasibility Study.

The No Action Alternative would impair the USMC's ability to train Atlantic Fleet forces in the Atlantic Fleet operational area (Section 5063 Title 10 USC) and would impair the integration of SFCP and naval ship crew training, so that Navy and Marine personnel can train together.

The potential for NGF noise to affect marine mammals and the potential for ship collisions with marine mammals will be minimal. The evaluation considered measurements and studies conducted over the past 20 years and criteria and thresholds for injury and harassment of marine mammals and other protected marine species from impulsive noise developed by the Navy in support of the *Seawolf* Shock Test Final Environmental Impact Statement (1998). With the mitigation measures proposed, the potential for injury or harassment under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, or 'takes' of endangered marine mammals and sea turtles, is negligible and there will be no effect.

The Feasibility Study may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the red-cockaded woodpecker and rough-leaved loosestrife, both of which are Federally listed endangered species. Impacts to protected species are highly unlikely due to the short duration and limited intensity of

the study. Also, the Feasibility Study will not introduce new impacts to Camp Lejeune habitats, or to species associated with Camp Lejeune or their habitats. Artillery firing which has impacts similar to NGF is already ongoing at Camp Lejeune. Thus, there would be no significant impacts to threatened and endangered species.

The Feasibility Study will result in a minor disruption of vehicle and boat traffic through two one-hour closures of NC Highway 172, Lyman Road, and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW). The AIWW is presently closed about 20 times per year for current Marine Corps training operations. Closing of NC 172 has been less frequent, but has occurred in support of training exercises. Roadblocks will be put in place barring motor traffic on NC 172 and Lyman Road. Range Control boats will be placed on the AIWW to prevent entry into the surface danger zone. Existing warning signs for both facilities will be modified as necessary. The USMC will publish a Notice to Mariners for the date and time of the Feasibility Study.

The location in Onslow Bay from which Naval ships will fire is greater than 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the closest populated or public areas. Based on the 145-decibel level observed at 3,700 feet above sea level (1,128 meters) and the closest land-to-ship distance (greater than 37,000 feet [11,278 meters]), the noise levels on land resulting from NGF are expected to be in the 90-120 decibel range. These levels are considered as low risk of disturbing the public.

In accordance with Camp Lejeune's existing artillery firing procedures, naval guns will not fire at an angle of less than 15 degrees during the Feasibility Study. At 15 degrees or greater, NGF has a higher trajectory and falls at a steeper angle than currently authorized artillery operations. The steeper angle of fall results in an even lower probability of skipping a round. Therefore, firing NGF rounds into the G-10 Impact Area has no greater chance of producing a skipped round than currently authorized and routinely conducted artillery fire into G-10.

Based on information gathered during preparation of the EA, the Marine Corps and the Atlantic Fleet find that implementing the proposed action, the Shore Fire Control Party Feasibility Study, will not significantly impact the human environment. The EA addressing this action is on file and may be reviewed by interested parties at: Commanding General, Consolidated Public Affairs Office, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina 28542-0004, Telephone: (910) 451-7440.

SEP 14 2001

Date

D. M. Mize

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

24 SEP 2001

Date

M. P. Nowakowski

M.P. Nowakowski
Rear Admiral, USN
Director, Shore Activities Readiness
U. S. Atlantic Fleet
(See attached Addendum)

ADDENDUM

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**SHORE FIRE CONTROL PARTY FEASIBILITY STUDY
MARINE CORPS BASE, CAMP LEJUENE
Onslow Bay County, North Carolina**

The purpose of this action is to evaluate a site for training Marine Corps Naval gunfire spotting teams. This action, consisting of 12 non-explosive rounds and, potentially, 12 explosive rounds is not intended to and cannot replace the Naval surface fire support training and certification conducted elsewhere. That training and certification requires approximately 80-120 rounds fired in approximately 11 different training missions including, in part, direct observation of some of the targets for shipboard fire control, which is not being conducted in this action.