

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
IMPROVEMENTS TO MILITARY TRAINING ROUTES IN ALASKA**

Lead Agency: U.S. Air Force, Pacific Air Forces, 11th Air Force

Cooperating Agency: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

Proposed Action: The U.S. Air Force (USAF) proposes to modify the existing network of twelve Military Training Routes (MTRs) throughout Southwestern and Interior Alaska. Under the proposed action, the ground tracks for eight of the existing MTRs would be modified, two would be removed from service, and two would remain unchanged. The USAF also proposes to establish two new routes. All of the existing routes would have a reduction in flight operations; operations on new routes would average about 1 sortie per week. In total, for twelve MTRs, there would be an average of up to 8 routine operation sorties per day. Major flying exercises, which typically occur for two-week periods up to six times per year, would normally use Alaska Military Operations Areas (MOAs), although they could use MTRs occasionally if no MOA airspace is available. All routes would be capable of flight operations at up to sonic speeds, low altitude (as low as 100 feet above ground level [AGL]), daylight or darkness, and in all weather conditions. Most routes would be 10 nautical miles wide, would be capable of flight under both visual and instrument conditions, and would support flight in either direction. The ceiling on these MTRs would vary from 1,500 feet AGL to 17,000 feet above mean sea level.

The two new routes which are proposed and analyzed in this document as MTR 960 and MTR 970 ***will not be implemented*** due to changes in the types of aircraft that are based in Alaska and their assigned missions that have occurred after the analysis of this proposed action was completed.

Alternatives Analyzed are those of the proposed action and the No Action alternative (retain the current route system).

Contact: Inquiries or comments on this document should be directed to:

611 CES/CEVQP (Mr. Hostman)
10471 20th Street Suite 302
Elmendorf AFB AK 99506-2200

Phone: (907) 552-4151 / FAX: (907) 552-0170/ e-mail: jim.hostman@elmendorf.af.mil

Designation: Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

ABSTRACT: This Final Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act to assess the potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the Proposed action and the No Action Alternative (Retain existing route structure) on the Alaskan environment. The proposed action is designed to correct the deficiencies in the existing route structure and improve the training capacity of the Military Training Route system in Alaska. Each MTR studied is a grouping of four routes having the same trace on the ground. They are the proposed VFR route and the reverse direction VFR, and the IFR route and its reverse direction route. The results of the analysis of impacts are provided in tables and figures which allow the reader to visualize the geographical location of the proposed routes and the area impacted by the proposed routes. The specific topics analyzed were determined by the concerns of the individuals residing or utilizing the resources located in the proposed study area for each route. This study area extends for 12.5 miles either side of the proposed route centerline. The actual width of the final proposed route is up to five miles either side of the centerline but may be less. There are two routes that have segments with unequal distances from the centerline. Two proposed routes allow for entrance to the route from Lower Cook Inlet (Gulf of Alaska) or from Norton Sound (Bering Sea).