



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
436th Civil Engineer Squadron (AMC)
Dover Air Force Base, Delaware 19902-5600**

436 CES/CEI
600 Chevron Avenue
Dover AFB DE 19902-5600

Ms. Linda C. Janey, J.D.
Assistant Secretary
Maryland Department of Planning
301 West Preston Street, Suite 1104
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2305

Dear Ms. Janey

Dover Air Force Base (AFB) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) of a proposal to revise aircraft operations. The eight elements of the Proposed Action described in Table 1 would improve operational efficiency and/or safety of flight at Dover AFB while allowing aircrews to train using procedures that more closely mirror those being used in ongoing worldwide contingency operations. The proposed changes would have no effect on the structure or management of airspace as charted by the FAA; aircraft operating at and near Dover AFB would continue to operate in accordance with all FAA regulations and coordination procedures as appropriate to current airspace classifications. The proposed changes would modify restrictions imposed by the Dover AFB personnel on its flight operations. The existing Dover AFB flight restrictions were initially implemented to reduce noise impacts associated with the C5B model aircraft stationed at Dover AFB. All of the louder C5B model aircraft stationed at Dover AFB have since been converted to the C5M model which is noticeably quieter. In addition, the C17 aircraft currently based at Dover AFB are also much quieter than the former C5B models.

Six of the eight actions identified in Table 1 would modify details of existing flight patterns (e.g., altitudes or relative frequency of use) while making no change to the ground tracks followed. In addition to the six revisions described above, the EA will evaluate allowing direct overflight of the Cherbourg Round Barn in Delaware and an extension to the existing Monster Mile pattern currently in use by C17 aircraft. The extension to the Monster Mile pattern is referred to as the Monster West corridor. The proposed Monster West corridor is six nautical miles wide which will allow aircrews flexibility while transiting this pattern extension. Portions of the proposed Monster West corridor are the only part of this action in Maryland.

Table 1. Elements of the Proposed Action	
Proposed Action	Benefit to Flying Operations at Dover AFB
1. Establish “Monster West” Low – Level training route	Establishment of this pattern will allow C17 pilots to conduct low-level, land based navigation in a simulated GPS-degraded environment. This pattern would utilize more land area than the currently utilized “Monster Mile” which primarily occurs over the Delaware Bay. This is the only action element that affects states other than Delaware.
2. Revise altitude restriction above the Town of Milford from 3,000 feet above ground level (AGL) to 2,000 feet above ground level	Modification will allow for the standard amount of time at 2,000 feet AGL reducing potential for task saturation by aircrews during instrument approaches resulting in improved flight safety.
3. Allow Overflight of Cherbourg Round Barn at above 500 feet AGL	During circling approach to Runway 14/32, aircrews could maneuver at standard offset distance from runway. Standard circling approach procedure reflects procedures used in contingency operations.
4. Increase Use of West Pattern	Increased utilization of the established western pattern will improve Air Traffic Control flexibility when managing aircraft in patterns around Dover AFB.
5. Reduce Minimum Overflight Altitude above the Town of Little Creek from 1,000 to 500 AGL	Improves flexibility associated with low-level tactical approaches. Also, removal of this restriction would allow C17 pilots to practice current tactics designed to avoid ground threats.
6. Reduce Minimum Overflight Altitude above Town of Kitts Hummock from 1,000 to 500 AGL	Will allow pilots to utilize a standard flight path and altitude that mirrors procedures followed during real-world operations
7. Retract flaps at 1,000 feet AGL versus 2,000 feet AGL during runway 14/32 departures	Flap retraction at a higher altitude was required of C5B to alleviate noise concerns resulting from slower climb rates and louder noise levels. The current C5M model has faster climb rate and is noticeably quieter eliminating the need for the restriction.
8. Create a low closed visual flight rules (VFR) pattern	Establishment of a visual pattern at 1,000 feet AGL for use by C17 pilots and aircrews allows practice approaches to continue when the cloud ceiling is below the current visual pattern altitude of 1,500 feet AGL. Current ground track would not change.

The noise modeling conducted as part of the EA, identifies minimal noise increases associated with implementation of the eight aircraft operations listed in Table 1. The analysis concludes that implementing the eight proposed actions would have no noise or structural impacts on the

resources below the proposed aircraft operational revision areas as all of these areas currently experience military and civilian aircraft overflight since the establishment of Dover AFB.

The proposed changes would have no effect on the operations of transient aircraft, some of which are substantially louder than the aircraft based at Dover AFB. Dover AFB plays a critical role in military logistics, and transient aircraft use the airfield frequently. The frequent and relatively loud operations of transient aircraft are the primary determinant of noise levels near the base, and effectively buffer the effects of changes to operations of the relatively quiet based aircraft. In areas farther from Dover AFB, such as the new portions of the Monster West corridor, low-flying military aircraft would be a new phenomenon. However, these flights would be infrequent and dispersed over a wide flight corridor, such that noise would not be expected to be a major concern. Noise and wake vortices generated by existing and proposed flying operations are not and would not be expected to become a risk to structures.

As part of the Air Force's Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP), we request your input in identifying general or specific issues or areas of concern you feel should be addressed in the environmental analysis. Please review the material enclosed, and if you have any questions concerning the proposal, please contact me at (302) 677-6839 or Mr. Lee DiSalvo at (302) 677-4753. Please forward your written comments regarding the proposed revisions to aircraft operations at Dover AFB to Steven M. Seip, P.E., 436 CES/CEI, 600 Chevron Avenue, Dover AFB DE, 19902-5600.

Sincerely

STEVEN M. SEIP, P.E.
Chief, Installation Management Flight

Attachment:
Area of Potential Effect Location Map