

F-16 Training over the Gila

Community Input to the Environmental Impact Statement

FEBRUARY 2019



Air Force Sorties

The Need For Greater Understanding

The Air Force has proposed the expansion of F-16 fighter pilot training in two areas of southern New Mexico for Holloman Air Force Base. One alternative the Air Force put forward entails the expansion of an existing airspace where Holloman AFB is currently conducting F-16 training. The other alternative includes expansion of two military operating areas (MOAs) and the creation of a new MOA over the Gila National Forest where no F-16 training is currently being conducted. It is impossible for residents of areas where flight training will be added or increased to understand how this training will impact them. To help citizens better understand the impacts of F-16 training in the proposed MOAs, before the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is released, Headquarters Air Force should provide examples of flight training tracks for F-16s as they currently occur at White Sands Missile Range.

The Holloman F-16 training proposal anticipates 10,000 sorties annually—about 30 per day. A sortie is a military term defined as: *sortie, in air operations, is an operational flight by one aircraft.* (JP 3-30)

<http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/dictionary.pdf>

In the case of the Holloman proposal, one sortie is a training flight of a single F-16 from the time of its departure to the time of its return to the base. This sortie may include learning and practicing any one of several missions, including basic flight maneuvers, aerial bombing/strikes, intercepts, and forward air control, which involve climbs, turns, acceleration, and low altitude flying. Some examples of these maneuvers are displayed on the next page.

Peaceful Gila Skies

A coalition of business and community leaders, sportsmen and concerned citizens, united in our goal of protecting the Gila Region from military aircraft training.

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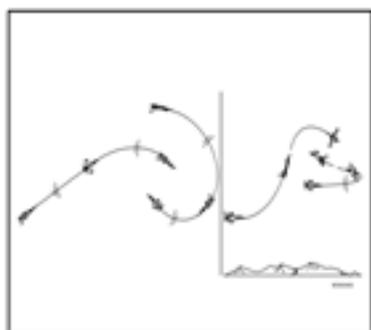


Figure 4.27: Multi-Maneuvering Out-of-Flow

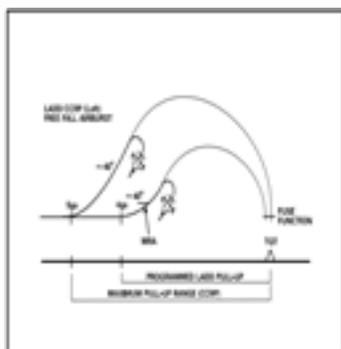


Figure 4.28: LARDF All Profile



Figure 4.29: Parallel Ridge Crossing

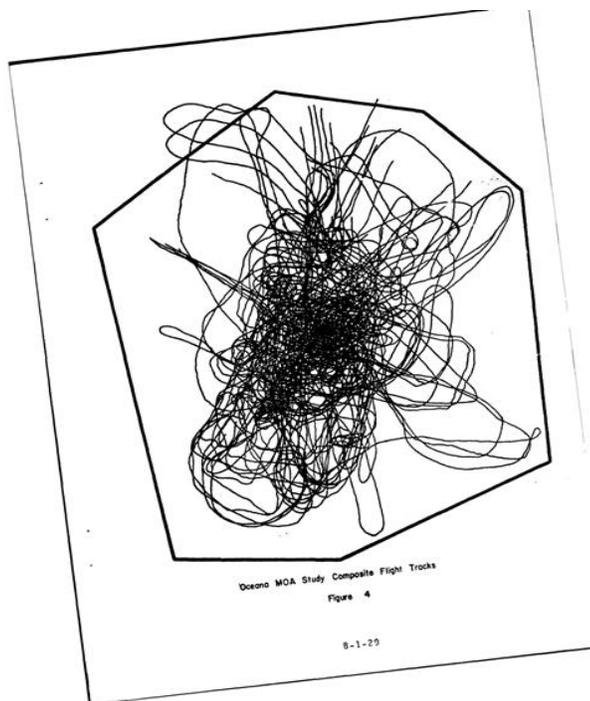


Figure 4.30: Parallel Ridge Crossing

<https://fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/ac/docs/16v5.pdf>

An F-16 pilot practicing these missions does not fly in a straight line the way a commercial airliner does. The pilot will repeatedly fly the maneuvers associated with the mission that is being performed within the MOA until the training sortie is completed.

To help visualize these training missions, consider the composite flight tracks of approximately 21 sorties by F-15s in an MOA used by the Oceana Naval Station in Virginia. See the illustration below.



- “The average duration of sorties was approximately 20 minutes while the aircraft were within the MOA.”
- “For F-15 maneuvers, the aspect ratio of the ellipse surrounding the maneuvering area is approximately 1.7:1, or 20 miles wide by 34 miles long, covering approximately 534 square miles.”

<https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a225826.pdf>

Revised Draft: Environmental Impact Statement: Flight Operations in the Sells Airspace Overlying the Tohono O’Odham Indian Reservation & the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Southern Arizona. 1986. Appendix B-1.

Holloman AFB proposes 30 F-16 sorties a day, on average, over a larger area, of course.

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