

# PROPOSED DUKE LOW MOA

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

LAST UPDATED -- 6/16/2021

### ABBREVIATIONS

AGL: Above Ground Level  
ANG: Air National Guard  
ATC: Air Traffic Control  
DEA: Draft Environmental Assessment  
DoD: Department of Defense  
EA: Environmental Assessment  
MOA: Military Operations Areas  
MSL: Mean Sea Level  
NGB: National Guard Bureau  
NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act  
NOTAM: Notice of Airman

### ABOUT MILITARY OPERATIONS AREAS (MOAS)

A military operations area (MOA) is airspace designated outside of Class A airspace, to separate or segregate certain nonhazardous military activities from IFR (instrument flight rules) traffic and to identify for VFR (visual flight rules) traffic where these activities are conducted.

According to the [FAA](#), MOAs are recommended to be located:

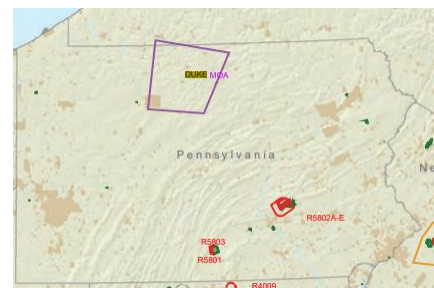
- Within 100 miles of the user's base of flight origin
- Outside terminal airspace, federal airways, charted terminal VFR routes, and know high volume VFR flyways
- Within radar and communications coverage of an ATC or MRU

MOAs may be designated temporary or permanent. If regular training exercises are needed, FAA recommends a permanent MOA be established. MOAs can be active ("hot") which means training is in progress or inactive ("cold") meaning the airspace is not currently in use.

MOAs often have different types of aircraft training at different altitudes and may have designated "high" and "low" areas. When training is active within the MOA, the airspace is considered "hot".

### EXISTING DUKE MOA

The existing Duke MOA provides airspace beginning at 8,000 ft above MSL and extending to 17,999 feet MSL. The airspace is currently controlled by two different Air Traffic Control Centers: Cleveland and New York Center. Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspaces (ATCAAs) over the Duke MOA allow military training up to 45,000 feet MSL. Many aircraft and units use the airspace from all over the



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United States. However, the primary need for the low altitude airspace is coming from the 175th Wing, Maryland Air National Guard which flies the A-10C and 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey National Guard, which flies the F-16C.

### PROPOSED DUKE LOW MOA

The National Guard Bureau has proposed a low MOA within a smaller footprint of the existing Duke MOA specifically for the Maryland Air National Guard, 175<sup>th</sup> Wing (175 WG) stationed at Martin State Airport near Baltimore, to train their squadron on [A-10 Warthogs](#). The mission of the A-10 is ground attack against tanks, armoured vehicles and installations, and close air support of ground forces.

The proposed action would create a low-flying airspace (as low as 100 feet AGL) for MD ANG 175 WG to train on A-10s. The proposal would:

- Reduce the altitude limits from 7,999 feet MSL to 100 feet AGL.
- Authorize training opportunities approximately 170 days per year with expected activation of two hours per day, one hour at a time. The Duke Low MOA would be activated Tuesday - Friday between 10:00am-12:00pm / 2:00pm-4:00pm. Weekend and nighttime operations (by Notice of Airman) at low-altitude would be limited.
- prohibit supersonic operations, release of chaff and flares, ordnance development, or allow any weapons to be fired.
- Mitigate altitude over sensitive areas:
  - No less than 500 feet AGL for state parks
  - No less than 1000 feet AGL for Wild Areas
  - No less than 1000 feet above Bald Eagle nesting areas.

The creation of this low airspace would create opportunities for other Wings (ANGs) to schedule low-flight training for a variety of aircraft. In developing this proposal, the ANG notified the additional three units that utilize the existing Duke MOA to determine potential usage. These Wings include:

- 113th Wing (DC ANG) for F-16s\*
- 177<sup>th</sup> Wing (NJ ANG) for F-16s
- 193<sup>rd</sup> Wing (PA ANG) for C-130s

*\*DC ANG has new airspace available in West Virginia (Evers MOA) that could ultimately decrease the total number of days required for training.*

In accordance with both federal law and FAA regulations, the DoD is required to report annually to the FAA on usage for delegated military airspace. If there are significant changes to the intended usage, the DoD is required to facilitate another NEPA analysis. This includes any ANG unit using the airspace.

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In regards to the enforcement of the Duke Low MOA boundaries and altitude buffers, all military airspace are assigned a Controlling Agency. Typically, this is an FAA Air Route Traffic Control Center. When military airspace is activated (it is considered “hot”), the FAA will keep all nonparticipating aircraft away from the boundaries – both vertically and horizontally. If the controlling agency observes a military target leaving the boundaries of activated military airspace, either to the sides or above, it’s called a “spill out”. Reports are generated and the DoD/ANG may be required by the FAA to report how it will prevent this from happening again.

The ANG notes that enforcing floors within designated military areas can be difficult. Noise complaints are investigated and if day, time, and location are provided the FAA and DoD can likely determine the aircraft that violated the altitude buffers.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [175<sup>th</sup> Wing Website](#)
- [Bullet Background Paper on Proposed Duke Low MOA](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

### AREA OF IMPACT

The proposed low MOA would use much of the current Duke MOA footprint which is approximately 2,178 square miles. The proposed low MOA would include all or parts of the following counties:

- Cameron (northern half)
- Clinton (northwestern corner)
- Elk (northeastern corner)
- McKean (eastern half)
- Potter (majority of county)
- Tioga (western portion)



The Duke Low MOA is the only option that the ANG is considering other than the No Alternative option which, per NEPA, is required for review.

### DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The ANG plans to release a draft environmental assessment (DEA) in late summer or early fall of 2021. The DEA will be available on the [175<sup>th</sup> wing’s website](#), in local libraries, and emailed to key stakeholders. If you are interested in receiving the DEA directly, please contact Major Jeffrey M. Andrieu at <mailto:jeffrey.andrieu.4@us.af.mil> to request a copy when available.

