

MCAS to handle more airspace

CAMP LEJEUNE — The Federal Aviation Administration's Washington Center will transfer airspace management and air traffic control responsibilities Wednesday to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point's Approach Control, the Marine Corps announced.

The move is to address deficiencies in high altitude tactical maneuver space, meet training requirements for Department of Defense aircraft and better serve general aviation needs.

Cherry Point's expanded ATC service area will include the Warren Field Airport in Washington, Plymouth Airport in Plymouth, Dare County Regional Airport in Manteo, First Flight Airport in Kitty Hawk and Dare County Ranges.

New communication lines between U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy Ranges and U.S. Marine Corps ATC will provide real time information when military aircraft

are operating in special use airspace. As a result, Cherry Point's Approach Control capabilities will substantially improve ATC services, real time restricted area and route information for civilian and military aircraft in a formerly underserved area over the eastern Albemarle Sound and Roanoke Island, according to the Marine Corps.

"Airspace is a precious resource and improvements such as these will greatly benefit aviation and commerce in this region of the state," said Bobby Walston, director of the N.C. Division of Aviation. "This transfer has been a goal of the state and our military partners for some time and we are extremely excited to see this transfer of management and services take place."

"We've been working together with the Federal Aviation Administration for quite some time to improve ATC services in Eastern North Carolina," said

Marine Corps Installations East airspace representative David Plummer.

"In the past, we had issues with having to 'borrow' the training airspace over top of Cherry Point from Washington Center. The borrowing and giving back required lots of coordination and was a burden on the air traffic controllers. This new arrangement will make the formerly 'borrowed' airspace available on demand and removes the coordination burden. As part of the agreement, Cherry Point also agreed to expand the ATC service area to include airports where Washington Center currently performs airport services typically performed by Approach Controls. The outlook going forward for the local aviation community looks very positive."

Notices to airmen will be sent and flight information publications will be updated to announce Cherry Point Approach Control radio frequencies for pilots.

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