FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY
AIR TRAFFIC SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

January 14, 1963

CIVIL AIR REGULATIONS DRAFT RELEASE NO. 63-1

Subject: Key West, Florida, Terminal Area Rules

The Air Traffic Service has under consideration a proposal to prescribe traffic pattern and other rules governing flight of all aircraft in the vicinity of Key West, Florida. The reasons therefor are set forth in the explanatory statement of the attached proposal which is being published in the Federal Register as a Notice of Proposed Rule Making.

The Agency desires that all persons who will be affected by the requirements of this proposal be fully informed as to its effect upon them and is therefore circulating copies in order to afford interested persons ample opportunity to submit comments as they may desire.

Because of the large number of comments which we anticipate receiving in response to this draft release, we will be unable to acknowledge receipt of each reply. However, you may be assured that all comments will be given careful consideration.

All comments must be submitted in duplicate to the Docket Section, Federal Aviation Agency, Room A-103, 1711 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington 25, D.C. In order to insure consideration, comments must be received prior to March 8, 1963.

D. D. Thomas

Director, Air Traffic Service

NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING

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As published in the Federal Register
on January 22, 1963 (28 F.R. 553)

FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY

[14 CFR Part 619]

[Reg. Docket No. 1556; Draft Release 63-1]

SPECIAL AIRPORT TRAFFIC RULES

Key West, Florida, Terminal Area

Pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator (14 CFR Part 11), notice is hereby given that the Federal Aviation Agency has under consideration an amendment of Part 619, regulations of the Administrator, to prescribe special air traffic rules for flight operations in the vicinity of Key West, Florida. The special rules would segregate the traffic using the Naval Air Station, Key West (NAS Key West), and the Key West International Airport (International Airport).

Interested persons may participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views or arguments as they may desire. Communications should be submitted in duplicate to the Docket Section of the Federal Aviation Agency, Room A-103, 1711 New York Avenue NW., Washington 25, D.C. All communications received prior to March 8, 1963, will be considered by the Administrator before taking action upon this proposed rule. The proposal contained in this notice may be changed in the light of comments received. All comments submitted will be available in the Docket Section for examination at any time by interested persons. Because of the large number of comments which we anticipate receiving in response to this draft release, we will be unable to acknowledge receipt of each reply. However, you may be assured that all comments will be given careful consideration.

NAS Key West is in the eastern portion of the Key West control zone on the Boca Chica Key, Florida. Its airport traffic control tower provides approach control service for the control zone. It has three runways, i.e., Runway 7/25 which is 8,000 feet long, and Runways 3/21 and 13/31, which are 7,000 feet long. There are permanent mirror landing installations on Runways 7 and 13. Typically, landings and take-offs are made in an easterly direction due to prevailing easterly winds. Approximately 149,000 operations are conducted annually. Normally, the basic mission of NAS Key West is to provide all weather operational training for naval aviators flying high performance aircraft. Approximately 30 percent of these training flights terminate in a radar ground controlled approach (GCA) with a mirror landing. The GCA control unit is mobile. However, it takes 30 to 40 minutes to move the unit from one runway to another runway. Runway 7 is used much of the time because of the predominant easterly wind. In addition, since it is the longest available runway, it is used extensively by high performance aircraft.

The International Airport is in the western portion of the Key West control zone. It is approximately three and one-half statute miles from NAS Key West. Its one runway, Runway 9/27, is 4,800 feet long. It has an estimated 17,000 operations conducted annually and most of this activity is comprised of light aircraft with a considerable number of the local operations being conducted by student pilots. The majority of the locally based aircraft are equipped with two-way radio communications equipment. Only one or two scheduled air carrier flights per day, depending on the season, are scheduled for the International Airport.

At the present time, airport traffic control service is being provided at the International Airport. This service is an interim measure required by a recent heavy influx of air traffic in the Key West area. The temporary tower will be removed when traffic in the Key West area returns to normal. Upon its removal the FAA Flight Service Station at International Airport will provide, among other things, airport advisory information within five miles of the airport.

The traffic patterns of the two airports conflict because of their proximity. This conflict is aggravated by the prevailing easterly wind condition which offers little natural relief. In addition, the Navy's all weather training program emphasizes GCA approaches with a mirror landing. In conducting GCA approaches to Runway 7 (the primary instrument runway at NAS Key West), aircraft on the final approach course pass directly over International Airport. Normally, these aircraft maintain 1,300 feet MSL until passing the west boundary of International Airport. Further descent on the GCA glide slope places approaching aircraft at an altitude of approximately 700 feet MSL at a point one and one-half miles east-northeast from the center of the International Airport.

The area of greatest conflict occurs between aircraft operating in a left-hand pattern to Runway 9 at International Airport and aircraft on a GCA approach to Runway 7 at the Naval Air Station. Operating under normal flight and ground technical tolerances, an aircraft on a GCA approach may be below the glide slope and a civil aircraft in a left-hand pattern may be above the normal pattern altitude in this area. As a result, the two aircraft could be on collision courses in flight configuration and attitudes derogatory to accomplishment of see and avoid responsibilities.

Although the area northeast of International Airport can be considered the point of greatest potential hazard, authorities at both airports have indicated that aircraft operating to/or from one airport have flown through the traffic patterns of the other airport.

Resolution of this problem without regulatory action has been attempted. In 1958, it was suggested that a right-hand pattern be established for Runway 9 at International Airport. The Airport Manager, International Airport objected, reasoning that a right-hand pattern is nonstandard, users object to a nonstandard pattern, itinerant pilots might be unaware of the right-hand pattern and a conflict of opposite direction traffic would occur on the base leg to Runway 9, and a right-hand pattern would block the pilot's view in side-by-side seated aircraft. While a left-hand pattern has operational advantages, its retention must be weighed against the potential of a midair collision.

In another attempt to alleviate this condition, a NOTAM was issued in 1959 requesting that northeast bound operations, departing from International Airport, be conducted to the south of NAS Key West. Pilots of inbound flights to the International Airport were requested to contact NAS Key West Tower when 20 miles from their destination. Other corrective measures were also considered during the ensuing years. An attempt was made to curtail the number of GCA approaches to Runway 7. NAS Key West air traffic controllers issued advisories to military traffic to be alert for traffic in the vicinity of International Airport. Right-hand patterns were proposed for Runways 3, 25, and 31 at NAS Key West,

straight-in approaches to Runways 3 and 7 (other than GCA approaches) were not authorized, and military traffic was advised to maintain 1,500 feet MSL while within one and one-half miles of the International Airport.

Notwithstanding implementation of some of these measures, alleged incidents of traffic conflict continued to be reported. Accordingly, it appears that regulatory action should be taken to resolve the conflict of traffic patterns.

Part 60 comprises the air traffic rules and prescribes, in § 60.18, the general air traffic rules for operating on and in the vicinity of an airport. Although these rules represent the most satisfactory solution to most airport traffic problems, they do not satisfy the specific needs of the air traffic complexities attendant with the Key West area. Accordingly, the regulation proposed herein would amend Part 619, Special Airport Traffic Rules.

The regulations proposed herein would provide for the maximum segregation of air traffic by prescribing additional rules for operation in the NAS Key West Airport Traffic Area. The airspace in the immediate vicinity of the International Airport would be set aside for the principal use of pilots operating to or from this airport. Pilots would enter or leave the airport traffic area south of the International Airport at or below 1,000 feet MSL with a further requirement to remain at or below 500 feet MSL when north of the south shoreline of the Key West Island. In addition, the traffic patterns would be right-hand when Runway 9 is in use and left-hand when Runway 27 is in use. Such a direction of traffic flow would turn International traffic away from, rather than into, traffic on the final approach to Runway 7 at NAS Key West.

On the other hand, pilots conducting approaches to Runway 7 at NAS Key West would be required to comply with certain altitude limitations while in the area set aside for International traffic. Such pilots would be obliged to operate at or above 1,300 feet MSL when on final approach in the vicinity of International Airport with a further obligation to descend no lower than 800 feet MSL and then only when north of the south shoreline of Key West Island. Operations on all other runways would be limited to 1,300 feet MSL until maneuvering for a safe landing requires further descent. While such altitude limits provide a margin of safety between the traffic patterns at both airports, still further lateral segregation measures are proposed in the form of right-hand traffic patterns to Runways 3, 25, and 31 at NAS Key West.

A chart depicting the traffic flow of both airports is included. Additionally, this chart depicts that area within the NAS Key West Airport Traffic Area that has been set aside for pilots operating to or from the International Airport.

The 1,300 foot visual contact requirement, currently applicable to IFR approaches at NAS Key West, does not provide for the segregation of traffic operating at the respective airports when the ceiling is less than 1,300 feet. Accordingly, provision for such segregation would be the subject of an agreement between the Federal Aviation Agency and the Commanding Officer, NAS Key West. For example, with a ceiling of 1,100 feet, NAS Key West airport traffic controllers would instruct pilots executing an IFR approach to maintain 1,000 feet MSL until clear of the International Airport traffic flow. In such case, International Airport traffic would be required by other rules to maintain an altitude not in excess of 600 feet MSL to conform with clearance from cloud criteria. When weather conditions below VFR minimums would prevail, all traffic operating in the control zone would be subject to the control of NAS Key West approach control.

The need for a degree of flexibility is also recognized in the proposed rule and provision is made therein for air traffic control to authorize exceptions, whenever necessary, provided that such exceptions will not derogate safety. Air traffic control as referenced in this proposal normally will mean the NAS Key West tower or approach control.

This proposal is subject to the FAA Recodification Program. The final rule, if adopted, may be in the recodified form; however, the recodification itself will not alter the substantive contents proposed herein.

In consideration of the foregoing, it is proposed to amend the Regulations of the Administrator, Part 619, by adding a new § 619.16 to read as follows:

§ 619.16 Key West, Florida, terminal area rules.

Unless otherwise authorized or required by air traffic control, each person operating an airplane within the Key West Naval Air Station Airport Traffic Area shall—

(a) In operating to or from Key West International Airport,

(1) Conform to the flow of traffic as depicted on diagrams included herein; and

(2) Remain in that area of the airport traffic area bounded on the north and east by an east/west line ⅛ statute mile north and parallel to Runway 9/27 beginning at the west boundary of the airport traffic area then extending in an easterly direction to a point of intersection with a 2½ statute mile radius arc of the geographical center of Key West International Airport thence clockwise along the 2½ statute mile radius arc to the southwest boundary of the airport traffic area; and

(3) Maintain an altitude at or below 1,000 feet MSL when south of the south shoreline of the Key West Island south of the Key West International Airport, and at or below 500 feet MSL when north of the south shoreline.

(b) In operating to or from Key West Naval Air Station Airport,

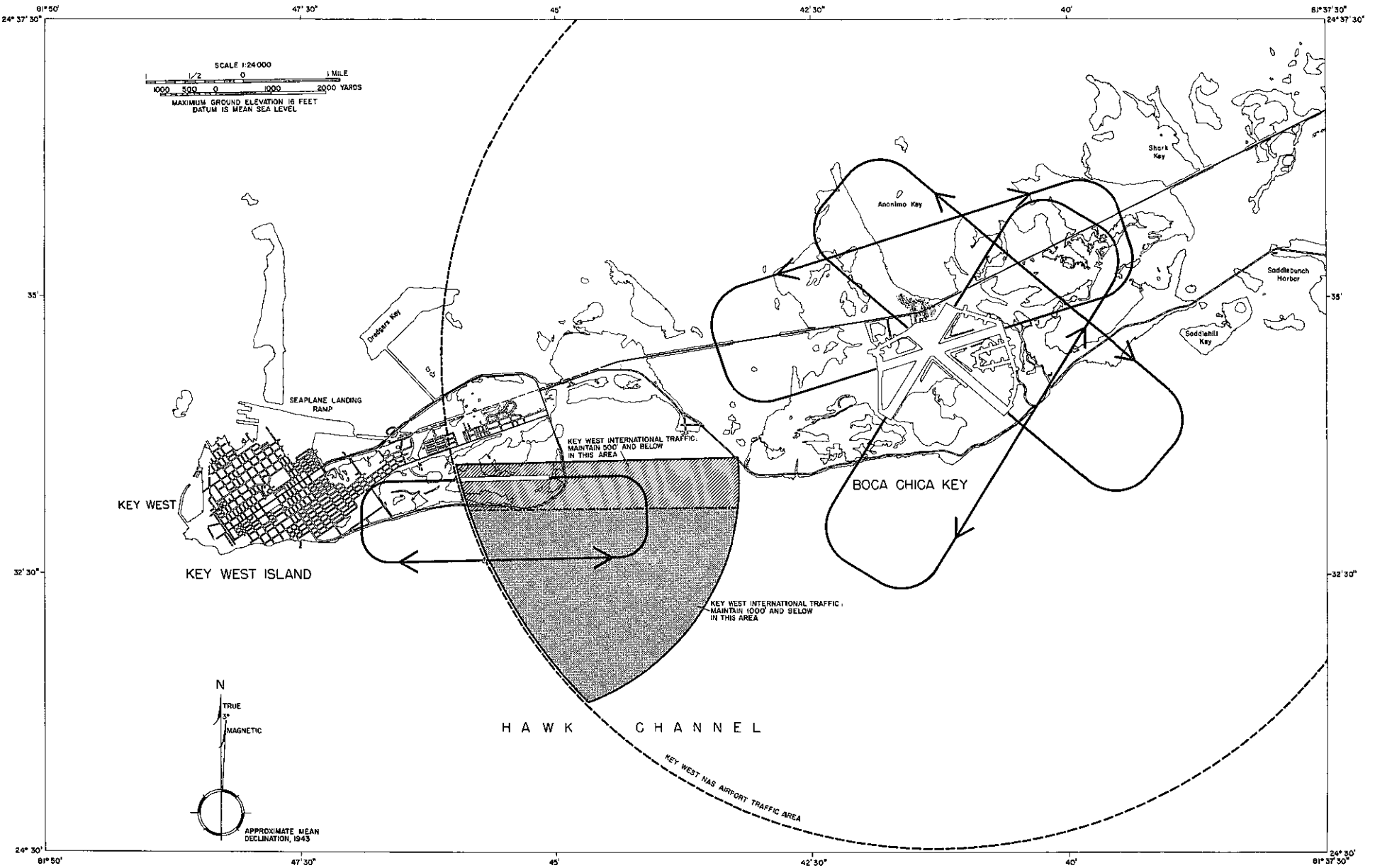
(1) Conform to the flow of traffic as depicted on diagrams included herein; and

(2) Maintain an altitude of at least 1,300 feet MSL until maneuvering for a safe landing requires further descent, except that airplanes landing on Runway 7 may be descended to 800 feet MSL within the area described in subsection (a)(2) when established on final approach and north of the south shoreline of Key West Island south of the Key West International Airport.

This amendment is proposed under the authority of section 307 of the Federal Aviation Act (72 Stat. 749, 49 U.S.C. 1348).

Issued in Washington, D.C., on January 14, 1963.

D. D. THOMAS,
Director,
Air Traffic Service.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Saddlehill Key
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SEAPLANE LANDING RAMP
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