

Hidden Military Airways

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What military pilots need to know:

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Between 1986 and 1995, there were three midair collisions and 51 known near-midair collisions between civilian and military aircraft operating on or near Military Training Routes (MTRs)—VR and IR routes. In 45 of the near-midair collisions (NMACs), the military pilots spotted the civilian aircraft and managed to avoid an accident. The actual number of midair collisions between military and general aviation aircraft is relatively low, considering the thousands of sorties flown each year by military aircraft. However, 80 percent of reported military near misses occur with general aviation aircraft—"bug smashers."

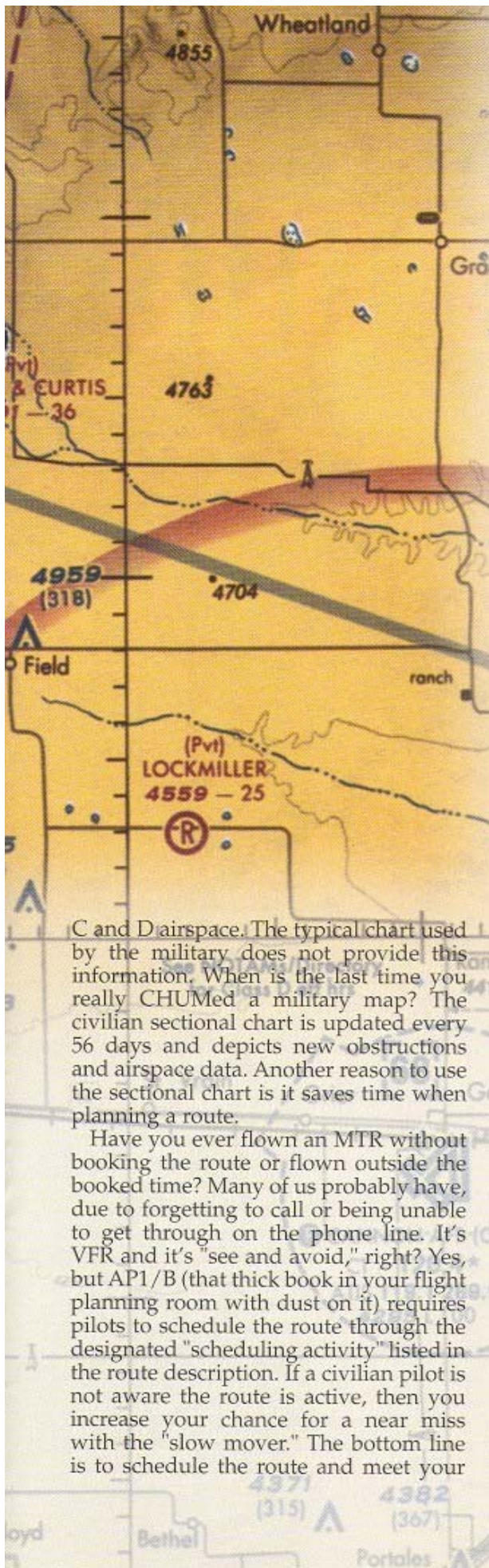
I personally know of multiple unreported close encounters between military jets and civilian light aircraft, and

you probably do, too. What can we do to avert a near-midair collision? Here are three rules of thumb: 1) Effective Mission Planning; 2) Comply With the Rules; and 3) Report All Close Encounters.

Effective Mission Planning

It begins with mission planning: Many near misses can be averted if we effectively plan and utilize all available resources. Have you ever used a civilian sectional chart to plan your low-level? The sectional chart has all the MTRs (military training routes) printed on the chart. These thin gray lines, which can get lost in all the clutter, represent the centerline of your route. You should be aware that civilian aviators may not know you could be off your centerline.

A sectional chart can also be used as a reference for the actual boundaries of airfields, accurate location of special use airspace and the boundaries of Class B,



entry time—if you can't, then relay the information to the nearest flight service station (FSS). It is difficult for all pilots (both civil and military) to obtain accurate information on active MTRs. Don't make the situation worse by forgetting to book the route!

How many of you annotate the conflicting MTRs on your route? This can be a tedious and time-consuming activity that is usually disregarded (unless you use standardized route booklets). Here is where a sectional chart can assist as well. Remember, most routes are only deconflicted at the entry time by the "scheduling agency." Several bases are now using computer programs to deconflict routes owned by that "scheduling agency." But, deconfliction with routes owned by others is not common.

Comply With The Rules

Intercepting civilian aircraft. Have you ever locked and intercepted a civilian aircraft while in an MOA or on an MTR? Don't! Use your radar to ensure separation from civilian traffic. The last thing the military needs is an NMAC or TCAS alert due to a fighter pilot with a cowboy attitude.

Complying with Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) speed restrictions. Have you ever exceeded the speed restrictions below 10,000 feet? Many of us have! It is easy to do in a high performance jet. Timely corrections to comply with the FARs may make the difference in preventing a mishap with another aircraft.

Report All Close Encounters

Should I report that near miss? Definitely YES. If we are to fix the problems associated with airspace and training routes, we have to report the information via the proper channels. See your flight safety officer for the proper HATR forms to fill out.

The bottom line is that civilians and the military have to share the same airspace. If you mission plan effectively, abide by the procedures and report all close encounters, then the *hidden military routes* can be seen by others sharing the same airspace. ➔

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C and D airspace. The typical chart used by the military does not provide this information. When is the last time you really CHUMed a military map? The civilian sectional chart is updated every 56 days and depicts new obstructions and airspace data. Another reason to use the sectional chart is it saves time when planning a route.

Have you ever flown an MTR without booking the route or flown outside the booked time? Many of us probably have, due to forgetting to call or being unable to get through on the phone line. It's VFR and it's "see and avoid," right? Yes, but AP1/B (that thick book in your flight planning room with dust on it) requires pilots to schedule the route through the designated "scheduling activity" listed in the route description. If a civilian pilot is not aware the route is active, then you increase your chance for a near miss with the "slow mover." The bottom line is to schedule the route and meet your

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