



[BRAC Bases](#) > [California](#) >

Former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro

Former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro ▲

Meeting Material

Public Notices

Contact

Links

Document Search

Click and Subscribe to Updates

Other California Bases ▼



Base Summary

Base Property and Historical Use

The history of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) El Toro begins with a series of Spanish land grants in the first half of the 19th century. In 1860, San Francisco merchant and Irvine patriarch James Irvine Sr. acquired the 107,000-acre property from its Spanish owners. Irvine began farming the land (previously used only for grazing), including experimenting with Lima and black beans, which eventually became so successful that 20,000 acres were dedicated to these crops. The bean field that eventually became MCAS El Toro sat in a quiet valley at the base of the Saddleback Mountains. Only a few miles from the Pacific Ocean, it was without fog most of the year, and the main Santa Fe Railroad line ran along the site's west border. Camp Pendleton, which served as the Marines' Infantry Training Base and bombing range, was located just south. In early 1942, the Marines paid James Irvine \$100,000 for 4,000 acres, including 1,600 acres designated for a base for lighter-than-air vehicles (blimps). MCAS El Toro was commissioned on March 17, 1943. In 1950, it was selected as a permanent Master Jet Station and center of support for the operation and combat readiness of Fleet Forces, Pacific. Throughout its 56-year military life span, the MCAS quickly became a key economic and community hub of this part of Orange County, eventually becoming home to thousands military personnel, their families, and local residents providing economic support to the base community. The world-famous El Toro Air show drew two million visitors at the time of the final show in 1997.

Base Overview

- Irvine, California
- Total Acreage: 4692
- BRAC Year: 1993
- Closure Date: 2 Jul 1999
- [Action: Closure - Completing BRAC disposal and environmental actions](#)

Community Information

Future

Past

Hybrid RAB Meeting - September 06, 2023

[The Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Base Realignment and Closure Office \(NAVFAC BRAC PMO\) announces an in-person meeting of the Former Marine Corps Air Station \(MCAS\) El Toro Restoration Advisory Board \(RAB\).](#)

What's New

Current

Past

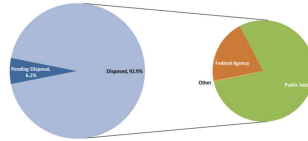
Skip to main content (Press Enter).

Closure date, planned reuses, parcels transferred

In 1993, under the authority of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, it was announced that MCAS El Toro would be closed. Operational closure occurred in July 1999. Of the approximate 4,700 acres, approximately 1,000 were transferred to other federal and state agencies. The remaining ±3,700 acres (of which only ±207 remain) were or will be transferred to a private developer and include Orange County Great Park and various residential communities and commercial businesses.

Former El Toro Conveyance Status

For a larger image please click on the chart below.



For website questions email the [webmaster](#)



This is an Official US Navy Website.

