

# FAA Director Recognizes Photogrammetry

**M**ORE THAN two-and-one-half years ago our American Society of Photogrammetry became actively concerned with Restrictive FAA regulations which might deny aircraft on photographic missions access to terminal-controlled areas until time-consuming clearance had been obtained. At that time President Fred Doyle wrote the FAA noting the uses of aerial photography and explaining the necessity for flying missions in strict accordance with predetermined plans and flight paths. He emphasized the requirement for clear weather, and its rarity, as a major and unpredictable factor in determining acceptable photography. He requested on behalf of our members that the proposed restrictive regulations make clear provisions for aerial photographic missions.

There was no immediate recognition by the FAA of the ASP problem and, in fact, further restrictions were being proposed which, in conjunction with lack of cooperation of certain individual air controllers, presented extreme difficulties for aerial photography companies to obtain adequate photographic coverage of missions.

Letters from our members emphasized the difficulties. General Jacobs, the ASP Executive Secretary, discussed the matter with Mr. Abraham Anson, the (then) Director of the Photography Division, and he (Anson) organized an *ad hoc* committee on the FAA problem. Mr. John T. Smith of the National Ocean Survey headed the committee and initiated activity. Influential ASP members soon became concerned and offered assistance.

In the early months of 1972, ASP President Joe Burns became personally involved and made numerous telephone calls. These led to arrangements for an open forum which was

held during the business meeting of the Photography Division at the March 1972 convention. The FAA position was presented by Robert A. Martin, Chief of Air Traffic Control Operations and Procedures. Mr. Ralph Kauffman, President of Abrams Aerial Surveys, ably represented the ASP members. The lively discussion period that followed brought out many specific problems which the aerial photography pilots had experienced — information which enlightened the subject. (Mr. Kauffman's paper was published in the May 1972 issue of this Journal, page 494, and reprints are available from the ASP headquarters.)

Mr. Martin, while noting that safety regulations must always be the first consideration, thought that the situation could be eased, if not fully corrected. It was the general opinion that improved communications between the air space controller (FAA) and the photographic mission operator would be most effective. At the close of the meeting the FAA officials pledged their support in investigating and taking action.

Since that time further discussions have taken place between the FAA officials and Joe Burns' committee. As a direct (first) result, the FAA has issued to their Air Space Controllers the directive that follows below. We believe this action will begin an era of better understanding on the part of the FAA personnel of the requirements of aerial surveying.

We invite comments on the effectiveness of this directive, and suggestions to our Photography Division Ad Hoc Committee, who will handle further liaison and educational work, will be most welcome.

—Clarice L. Norton  
Director, Photography Division

## HANDLING OF PHOTOGRAPHIC FLIGHTS IN THE NATIONAL AIRSPACE SYSTEM

1. *Purpose.* This Notice describes flight requirements for operators conducting photographic operations and establishes policy with regards to the handling of such flights.

2. *Distribution.* This Notice is distributed to selected offices, including Regions, Wash-

ington Headquarters, NAFEC, Aeronautical Center, area offices, and all Air Traffic Field Offices.

3. *Restatement of Policy.* The air traffic facilities have been established to provide service to those persons who desire to conduct

flight operations in the National Airspace System. Photographic operations are at any of many such operations.

4. *Background.* We have received a number of reports, through correspondence and through direct contact with the users, which indicate a few operators inform field facilities concerning the unique operational requirements of small aircraft conducting photographic missions. The service provided these aircraft varies throughout the system from excellent to poor. In the main, this is due to a lack of understanding on the part of controllers as to what the pilot is trying to accomplish which in turn is frequently caused by failure of the pilot to convey his wishes to the controller. We have been working with the American Society of Photogrammetry in an attempt to resolve some of the problems being encountered and the contents of this Notice have been coordinated with that organization.

5. *Discussions of photographic operational requirements and operations.*

a. There are about 500 aircraft in the U. S. which are utilized for photographic operations. They vary in size and performance from the light single-engine aircraft to the sophisticated business jet. Available navigational and communications equipment varies with the sophistication of the aircraft. Normally, the aircraft is well equipped and the pilot is a highly professional operator.

b. Except for rare instances, photographic missions must be conducted on "clear days," in VFR flight conditions and usually when the sun angle is high. As a result, many photographic missions will be conducted VFR and an IFR flight plan is generally filed only when required by area positive control. Additionally, most photographic missions will involve a series of overlapping photographic exposures, although some missions may involve only a single exposure. In any case, the photographic airplane must necessarily move precisely along a predetermined heading(s), at a predetermined altitude. This part of the mission is called the "flight plan." Photographic missions operating on an IFR flight plan or VFR under ATC con-

trol, as in a TCA, have been given clearances requiring an altitude or heading change while on a flight line. When this happens, it frequently negates the mission and the flight line must be reflight.

c. As mentioned above, photographic missions are flown in TCA's in control zones (sometimes in close proximity to the airport) in the en-route system IFR and in the en-route system VFR and requesting advisories. They occur at all altitudes.

6. *Procedures.*

a. Facilities should strive to work out details to accommodate photographic missions. (This is also true of other flight operations.) Naturally judgement must be exercised in approving and handling such operations to minimize the overall system impact. We have requested that the pilot make every effort to contact the appropriate ATC facility prior to the mission to explain his requirement. The requirement may sometimes include multiple altitudes while on the flight line. We have requested that pilots say, "This is a photo mission," when contacting the ATC facility on air/ground communications.

b. When contacted by the pilot in advance, the controlling facility should secure a complete understanding of the operation to be conducted. In this regard, it must be anticipated that the operation may be delayed due to weather (this possibility should be covered in the pre-flight planning). Since the flight could be delayed not only for hours but in some cases for days, facility personnel must be adequately briefed to cope with such situations on a spontaneous basis.

c. When the pilot commences the flight line (the actual photographic run) every reasonable effort should be made to permit him to continue uninterrupted, i.e., without change in heading or altitude. Should it become necessary to break him off the flight line, he should be vectored or cleared back into position for another run as soon as possible. Pilots have been requested to inform ATC when they are commencing their flight line.

—William M. Flener  
FAA, Director, Air Traffic Service