**Eglin Air Force Base**

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| **Eglin Air Force Base** **Air Force Materiel Command** |
|  |
| [USGS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USGS) aerial image - February 15, 1999 (1999-02-15) |
| [**IATA**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Air_Transport_Association_airport_code)**: VPS –** [**ICAO**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Civil_Aviation_Organization_airport_code)**: KVPS –** [**FAA**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Aviation_Administration)[**LID**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Location_identifier#FAA_identifier)**: VPS** |
| **Summary** |
| **Airport type** | Military: [Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Base) |
| **Owner** | [United States Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Air_Force) |
| **Operator** | [Air Force Materiel Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Materiel_Command) |
| **Location** | [Valparaiso, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valparaiso%2C_Florida) |
| **In use** | 1935 (1935) – Present |
| **Occupants** | [96th Air Base Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/96th_Air_Base_Wing) |
| **Elevation**[**AMSL**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Above_mean_sea_level) | 87 ft / 27 m |
| [**Coordinates**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system) | [30°29′N 086°32′W﻿ / ﻿30.483°N 86.533°W﻿ / 30.483; -86.533](http://toolserver.org/~geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Eglin_Air_Force_Base&params=30_29_N_086_32_W_region:US_type:airport) |
| **Website** | [www.eglin.af.mil](http://www.eglin.af.mil/) |
| [**Runways**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Runway) |
| [**Direction**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Runway#Orientation_and_dimensions) | **Length** | **Surface** |
| **ft** | **m** |
| 1/19 | 10,012 | 3,052 | Asphalt |
| 12/30 | 12,005 | 3,659 | Asphalt/Concrete |
| Source: official site and [FAA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Aviation_Administration) |

Eglin AFB

Location of Eglin Air Force Base, Florida

Team Eglin Logo

F-15C of the 33rd Fighter Wing.

Five [F-15Cs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-15_Eagle) from the 33rd Fighter Wing of Eglin Air Force Base soar over the mountains ranges of Alaska during an overseas deployment to [Elmendorf Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elmendorf_Air_Force_Base), Alaska.

An [A-10C Thunderbolt II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A-10_Thunderbolt_II), piloted by the 40th Flight Test Squadron, flies over what's left of a target that was successfully hit by a Laser Joint Direct Attack Munition drop on the Eglin range.

The [F-35 Lightning II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-35_Lightning_II) Joint Strike Fighter test aircraft AA-1 performs a touch-and-go maneuver with the Eglin Air Force Base control tower in the background.

A [Northrop F-89C](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-89_Scorpion) landing at Eglin Air Force Base during the 1950s.

An [A-10 Thunderbolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A-10_Thunderbolt_II) fires an [AGM-65 Maverick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AGM-65_Maverick) missile over the Eglin range during a Combat Hammer Air-to-Ground Weapons System Evaluation Program (WSEP) mission, which are conducted by Eglin's 86th Fighter Weapons Squadron (FWS).

An [F-16 Fighting Falcon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-16_Fighting_Falcon) from the 40th Flight Test Squadron of Eglin Air Force Base refuels from a [KC-10 Extender](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KC-10_Extender) during Air & Space Power Expo '99.

May 1992 air-to-air view of an [F-16 Fighting Falcon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-16_Fighting_Falcon) equipped with an [AGM-84 Harpoon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AGM-84_Harpoon) all-weather anti-ship missile over Eglin Air Force Base. Note Air Force Systems Command badge on vertical fin.

An [AC-130A Specter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_AC-130) gunship aircraft, *55-011*, performs a pylon turn over Range 77 during a training mission in 1984. The aircraft was from the 919th Special Operations Group at Eglin's [Duke Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_Field), retired to [AMARC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AMARC) on 15 November 1994. This late afternoon view looks south with [Santa Rosa Sound](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Rosa_Sound), [Santa Rosa Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Rosa_Island), home of Eglin missile launch sites since 1944, and the [Gulf of Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) beyond.

A 58th Aircraft Maintenance Unit crew chief marshals an [F-15 Eagle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-15_Eagle) ready to takeoff for a simulated Operation Noble Eagle tasking during a 33rd Fighter Wing exercise.

**Eglin Air Force Base (AFB)** ([IATA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Air_Transport_Association_airport_code): **VPS**, [ICAO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Civil_Aviation_Organization_airport_code): **KVPS**, [FAA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Aviation_Administration) [LID](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Location_identifier): **VPS**) is a [United States Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Air_Force) base located approximately 3 miles (5 kilometers) southwest of [Valparaiso, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valparaiso%2C_Florida) in Okaloosa County.

The host unit at Eglin is the [**96th Air Base Wing**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/96th_Air_Base_Wing) **(96 ABW)** assigned to the [Air Force Materiel Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Materiel_Command) [Air Armament Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Armament_Center). The 96 ABW supports the Air Armament Center and other tenant units of the installation with traditional military services as well as all the services of a small city, to include civil engineering, personnel, logistics, communications, computer, medical, security.

Eglin AFB was established in 1935 as the **Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Base**. It is named in honor of [Lieutenant Colonel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant_Colonel) [Fredrick I. Eglin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fredrick_I._Eglin) (1891–1937), who was killed in a crash of his Northrop A-17 pursuit aircraft on a flight from [Langley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langley_AFB) to [Maxwell Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxwell_Field), [Alabama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alabama). The 96th Air Base Wing is commanded by [Colonel Sal M. Nodjomian](http://www.eglin.af.mil/library/biographies/bio.asp?id=13659). Its Command Chief Master Sergeant is [Chief Master Sergeant Thomas S. Westermeyer](http://www.eglin.af.mil/library/biographies/bio.asp?id=12337).

**Overview**

Eglin is the home of the [Air Armament Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Armament_Center) (AAC) and is one of three product centers in the [Air Force Materiel Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Materiel_Command) (AFMC). Serving as the focal point for all Air Force armaments, the AAC is the center responsible for the development, acquisition, testing, deployment and sustainment of all air-delivered weapons.

The center plans, directs and conducts test and evaluation of U.S. and allied air armament, navigation and guidance systems, and command and control systems and supports the largest single base mobility commitment in the Air Force. AAC accomplishes its mission through three components – the [46th Test Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/46th_Test_Wing), 96th Air Base Wing, and the 308th Armament Systems Wing.

AAC is the focal point for the acquisition of the world's most advanced armament products. The center engages in scientific research, system management, production, operational performance, business management, requirements definition, customer and engineering support, technology planning, materiel identification, and field support activities.

Some of the major programs managed by the center include the Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile, High-speed Anti-Radiation Missile, HARM Targeting System, Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile, Joint Direct Attack Munition, Miniature Air Launched Decoy, Sensor Fuzed Weapon and the Small Diameter Bomb.

**Units**

The host wing at Eglin is the [96th Air Base Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/96th_Air_Base_Wing) (96 ABW) whose mission consists of supporting the Air Armament Center and the myriad of tenant commands and associate units with traditional military services as well as all the services of a small city, to include civil engineering, personnel, logistics, communications, computer, medical, security, and all other host services. Critical to the success of Eglin’s mission, the 96th Air Base Wing provides a large number of base operating support functions.

The residential portion of the base is a [census-designated place](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Census-designated_place); its population was 8,082 at the [2000 census](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Census%2C_2000). Eglin Air Force Base has 2,359 military family housing units. Unmarried junior enlisted members generally live in one of Eglin’s seven dormitories located near the dining hall, chapel, base gym, Enlisted Club and bus lines on base. Each individual unit generally handles dormitory assignments. Bachelor Officer Quarters are not available. Several units and one dormitory are currently being renovated in 2011. The base covers 463,128 acres (1,874.2 km²).

**Major units**

* [Air Armament Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Armament_Center) (AAC)

The center plans, directs and conducts test and evaluation of U.S. and allied air armament, navigation and guidance systems, and command and control systems and supports the largest single base mobility commitment in the Air Force. It operates two Air Force installations, providing host support not only to Eglin, but also [Kirtland AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland_AFB), [New Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Mexico).

AAC accomplishes its mission through four components:

* Armament Product Directorate (Eglin AFB, FL)
* 46th Test Wing (Eglin AFB, FL)
* 96th Air Base Wing (Eglin AFB, FL)
* 377th Air Base Wing ([Kirtland AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland_AFB), NM)
* [46th Test Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/46th_Test_Wing) (46 TW)

The 46 TW is the test and evaluation center for Air Force air-delivered weapons, navigation and guidance systems, Command and Control (C2) systems, and Air Force Special Operations Command systems. The Eglin Gulf Test Range provides approximately 130,000 square miles (340,000 km2) of over water airspace.

* [96th Air Base Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/96th_Air_Base_Wing) (96 ABW)

The 96 ABW supports the Air Armament Center and other tenant units of the installation with traditional military services as well as all the services of a small city, to include civil engineering, personnel, logistics, communications, computer, medical, security.

* [33d Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/33d_Fighter_Wing) (33 FW)

(F-15C/D Eagles) Tail Code: "EG"
The 33d FW “Nomads” were the largest tenant combat unit at Eglin, as well as the premier air-to-air combat unit of the [Air Combat Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Combat_Command) (ACC). With two [F-15C](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonnell_Douglas_F-15_Eagle)/D squadrons and an air control squadron, the wing’s mission was to deploy worldwide and provide air superiority and air control. First established as the 33d Pursuit Group, the wing’s contribution to tactical airpower during its 50-year history has been significant with participation in campaigns around the world, while flying various fighter aircraft. Reactivated at Eglin on 1 April 1965 with [F-4C Phantom IIs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-4_Phantom_II), the wing operated, successively, F-4D and E models into the 1970s before transitioning to the F-15 Eagle. As of October 2009, the 33d FW transitioned to a training wing for the new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) under Air Education and Training Command. The final F-15s assigned to the 33d departed the base in September 2009. The 33d Fighter Wing "Nomads," an associate unit at Eglin Air Force Base, was re-designated under Air Education and Training Command on Oct. 1, 2009. As the first of its kind in the Department of Defense, the joint wing is responsible for F-35 A/B/C (Joint Strike Fighter) pilot and maintainer training for the Marine Corps, the Navy and the Air Force.

* [58th Fighter Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/58th_Fighter_Squadron) (Blue tail stripe)
* [60th Fighter Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/60th_Fighter_Squadron) (Red tail stripe)
* [53d Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/53d_Wing) (53 WG)

The 53 WG is headquartered at Eglin and serves as the Air Force’s focal point for operational test and evaluation of armament and avionics, aircrew training devices, chemical defense, aerial reconnaissance improvements, electronic warfare systems, and is responsible for the [QF-4 Phantom II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-4_Phantom_II) Full Scale Aerial Target (FSAT) program and subscale drone programs (located at [Tyndall Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyndall_Air_Force_Base), Florida). The wing tests every fighter, bomber, unmanned aerial vehicle, and associated weapon system in the Air Force inventory. The wing reports to the USAF Air Warfare Center at [Nellis Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nellis_Air_Force_Base), [Nevada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevada), a Direct Reporting Unit (DRU) to Headquarters, [Air Combat Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Combat_Command) (ACC).

* [49th Test and Evaluation Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/49th_Test_and_Evaluation_Squadron) (a squadron attached to the 53d Wing but located at [Barksdale Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barksdale_Air_Force_Base), Louisiana)
The squadron plans, executes and reports ACC's weapon system evaluation programs for bombers ([B-52](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-52), [B-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-1_Lancer) and [B-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-2_Spirit)) and nuclear-capable fighters ([F-15E Strike Eagle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-15E_Strike_Eagle) and [F-16](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-16)). These evaluations include operational effectiveness and suitability, command and control, performance of aircraft hardware and software systems, employment tactics, and accuracy and reliability of associated precision weapons. These weapons include air-launched cruise missiles, standoff missiles, and gravity bombs. Results and conclusions support acquisition decisions and development of war plans. The unit also performs operational testing on new systems and tactics development for the B-52.
* [308th Armament Systems Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/308th_Armament_Systems_Wing) (308 ASW)

A joint U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy organization responsible for cradle-to-grave management of air dominance weapon system programs equipping warfighters with strike weapons to fight and win decisively.

The mission of the 308 ASW is to equip warfighters with strike weapons to fight and win decisively. The wing designs, develops, produces, fields, and sustains a family of air-to-ground munitions, enhancing warfighter capabilities (both U.S. and Allies) in defeating a spectrum of enemy targets.

* AFRL Munitions Directorate (AFRL/RW)

AFRL/RW develops, demonstrates, and transitions science and technology for air-launched munitions for defeating ground fixed, mobile/relocatable, air and space targets to assure pre-eminence of U.S. air and space forces. The directorate conducts basic research, exploratory development, and advanced development and demonstrations. It also participates in programs focused on technology transfer, dual-use technology and small business development. The directorate is dedicated to providing the Air Force with a strong revolutionary and evolutionary technology base upon which future air-delivered munitions can be developed to neutralize potential threats to the United States.

* [7th Special Forces Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Special_Forces_Group_%28United_States%29) (7th SFG)

In 2011, the [United States Army's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army) 7th Special Forces Group will relocate to Elgin Air Force Base from [Fort Bragg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Bragg%2C_NC), as part of the [2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Base_Realignment_and_Closure%2C_2005) realigning Fort Bragg. It is tasked with conducting special operations in [Latin America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_America).

**Other units**

* [919th Special Operations Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/919th_Special_Operations_Wing) (919 SOW)

The 919 SOW, located about five miles (8 kilometers) south of Crestview and 20 miles (32 km) from Eglin main at Eglin AFB Auxiliary Field #3 ([Duke Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_Field)) and is the only special operations wing in the [Air Force Reserve Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Reserve_Command) (AFRC). In wartime or a contingency, the 919 SOW reports to [Air Force Special Operations Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Special_Operations_Command) (AFSOC) at [Hurlburt Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurlburt_Field), Florida, its gaining major command.

* [20th Space Control Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/20th_Space_Control_Squadron) (20 SCS)

The mission of the 20 SCS is to detect, track, identify, and report near earth and deep space objects in earth’s orbit, and provide space object identification data in support of [United States Strategic Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Strategic_Command)’s space control mission. A unit of the [Air Force Space Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Space_Command) (AFSPC), the men and women of the 20th SCS operate and maintain the AN/FPS-85 radar, the Air Force’s only phased-array radar dedicated to tracking earth-orbiting objects.

* [6th Ranger Training Battalion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranger_School) (6th RTB)

Eglin AFB Auxiliary Field #6 (Biancur Field) is the site of Camp [James E. Rudder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Earl_Rudder) and the home of the U. S. Army’s 6th Ranger Training Battalion. The 6th RTB conducts the final phase of the U.S. Army Ranger Course. The entire course is 61 days long and is divided into three phases. Each phase is conducted at different geographical and environmental locations. Its mission at Eglin is to expose Ranger students to a fast-paced, 18 day field training exercise.

* Naval School of Explosive Ordnance Disposal ([EOD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bomb_disposal))

The Naval School of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (NAVSCOLEOD) is a Navy-managed command, jointly staffed by Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps personnel. NAVSCOLEOD had its official ribbon cutting on the new consolidated training facility in April 1999.

* The Joint Fires Integration and Interoperability Team (JFIIT)

This is a subordinate, functional command of [U.S. Joint Forces Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Joint_Forces_Command) (USJFCOM), tasked with improving the integration, interoperability, and effectiveness of Joint fires.

USJFCOM established JFIIT in February 2005 to provide assistance to Joint force commanders and Service headquarters in planning, coordinating, and executing Joint fires at the tactical level. JFIIT's 120-member team is made up of members from all four Services and Department of Defense (DoD) civilians with contractor support.

* AFOTEC Det 2

The Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center stood up Detachment 2 at Eglin to meet the growing demand to provide realistic operational testing for new and modified weapon systems. Since then, Detachment 2 has partnered with the warfighter and the developmental test community to provide the most thorough and rigorous operational test programs found anywhere in the world.

* 728th Air Control Squadron

Largest Air Control Squadron in the Air Force.

**History**

**Previous Names**

* Established as Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Base, 14 June 1935

(spelling changed on 1 February 1937 from "Valparaiso" to "Valpariso" and on 1 March 1947 back to "Valparaiso")

* Eglin Field, 4 August 1937
* Eglin Field Military Reservation, 1 October 1940
* Eglin Field, 28 December 1944
* Eglin Air Force Base, 24 June 1948–present

**Auxiliary fields**

A number of auxiliary fields were constructed on the Eglin reservation during World War II, many of which are still in service in various roles, either in support of flight operations or special test activities.

* Work on Auxiliary Field 1 began 27 November 1940. Auxiliary Field 1 is named [Wagner Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagner_Field) for Maj. Walter J. Wagner, former commanding officer for the 1st Proving Ground, Eglin Field, who was killed 10 October 1943 in the crash of [AT-6C-NT Texan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AT-6_Texan), *41-32187*, c/n 88-9677, at Auxiliary Field 2. Much [Doolittle Raid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doolittle_Raid) and [Operation Credible Sport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Credible_Sport) training took place here. It is also known as Site C-5. Range C-72 extends SE from Wagner Field.
* Auxiliary Field 2 is named Pierce Field for Lt. Col. George E. Pierce, killed 19 January 1942 while piloting [B-25C-1 Mitchell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-25_Mitchell),*41-13118*, which crashed into the [Gulf of Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) 2 miles (3.2 km) S of [Destin, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destin%2C_Florida). [Joe Baugher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Baugher) cites date of 19 October 1942 for loss. It is also known as Site C-3.
* Auxiliary Field 3 is named [Duke Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_Field) for 1st Lt Robert L. Duke, killed in the crash of [Curtiss A-25A-20-CS Shrike](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SB2C_Helldiver), *42-79823*, near [Spencer, Tennessee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spencer%2C_Tennessee), on 29 December 1943. He was assigned as Assistant A-3 of [Eglin Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eglin_Field). Used as the set for the fictional 918th Bomb Group in the 1949 film [*Twelve O'Clock High*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_O%27Clock_High). Aircraft were "sanitized" (stripped of all identification) here for the failed [Bay of Pigs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_of_Pigs) invasion of Cuba.
* Auxiliary Field 4 is named Peel Field for 2nd Lt. Garland O. Peel Jr., who died in the crash of [Martin B-12AM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_B-10), *33-262*, 2 January 1942. He was a gunnery school instructor at Eglin. Peel Field was utilized for the filming of scenes for the 1944 film [*Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty_Seconds_Over_Tokyo)*.*
* Auxiliary Field 5 is named Piccolo Field for Capt. Anthony D. Piccolo, who died in the crash of [AT-6A-NT Texan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-6_Texan), *41-16372*, on 6 October 1942. Piccolo was the commanding officer of the 386th Single Engine Gunnery Training Squadron at Eglin. Today, the area is due north of Field Four and serves as a microwave station. On most base maps, it is identified as Site C-4. [Doolittle Raid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doolittle_Raid) training was conducted here.
* Auxiliary Field 6 is named Biancur Field for 1st Lt. Andrew Biancur, a test pilot of the Medium Bombardment Section of the 1st Proving Ground Group, killed 8 January 1944 in the crash of [YP-61-NO Black Widow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-61_Black_Widow), *41-18883*, c/n 711, at [Eglin Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eglin_Field). The U.S. Army Ranger facility [Camp Rudder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Rudder) is located here. It is designated Site B-6.
* Auxiliary Field 7 is named Epler Field for Col. Robin E. Epler, deputy commander (Technical) of the [Air Proving Ground Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Proving_Ground_Command), [Eglin Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eglin_Field), Florida, killed 28 January 1944 in the crash of [A-20G-10-DO Havoc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A-20_Havoc), *42-54016*, one mile (1.6 km) NE of [Crestview, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crestview%2C_Florida). It is designated Site B-12.
* Auxiliary Field 8 is named Baldsiefen Field for 2nd Lt. Richard Edward Baldsiefen, a gunnery instructor at Eglin, killed 4 March 1942 along with Lt. John W. Smith, in the crash of [AT-6A-NA Texan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AT-6_Texan), *41-528*, which came down at Auxiliary Field 4. It is designated Site C-52C.
* Auxiliary Field 9 is named [Hurlburt Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurlburt_Field) for Lt. Donald Wilson Hurlburt, killed 1 October 1943 when his [Lockheed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_Corporation) [AT-18-LO Hudson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AT-18_Hudson) gunnery trainer, *42-55591*, c/n 414-7313, crashed during take-off at Eglin. After flying [B-17](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-17_Flying_Fortress) combat missions from Great Britain and receiving the [Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished_Flying_Cross_%28United_Kingdom%29), Hurlburt was assigned in mid-1943 to the First Proving Ground Electronics Test Unit at Eglin Field. Field 9 was named in his honor by base commander General Grandison Gardner. Hurlburt's nephew was Captain [Craig D. Button](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craig_D._Button) (noted for his mysterious flight and crash of an A-10 Thunderbolt on 2 April 1997). It should be noted that an official history of Eglin AFB's early years cites 2 October 1943 as the date of this accident.
* Auxiliary Field 10 is named Dillon Field for Capt. Barclay H. Dillon, test pilot of the Fighter Section of the 1st Proving Ground Group, killed 2 October 1943 when [P-38J-5-LO Lightning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-38_Lightning), *42-67103*, crashed 8 miles (13 km) W of [Milton, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milton%2C_Florida). Field 10 was later named Eglin Dillon Airdrome. Now used primarily for U.S. Navy basic flight training, the Navy refers to it as [Outlying Field Choctaw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outlying_Field_Choctaw) (OLF).
* Auxiliary Field 11 is an unconfirmed name for a [RED HORSE](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RED_HORSE) unsurfaced airstrip that shows up on Google Earth in [Walton County](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walton_County%2C_Florida).

**Major commands to which assigned**

* Air Corps Training Center, 9 June 1935 – 27 August 1940
* Southeast Air Corps Training Center, 27 August 1940 – 1 April 1942
* AAF Proving Ground Command, 1 April 1942 – 1 June 1945
* AAF Center, 1 June 1945 – 8 March 1946
* AAF Proving Ground Command, 8 March 1946 -10 July 1946
* Air Proving Ground Command, 10 July 1946 – 20 January 1948
* Air Materiel Command, 20 January 1948 – 1 June 1948
* Air Proving Ground, 1 June 1948 – 20 December 1951
* Air Proving Ground Command, 20 December 1951 – 1 December 1957
* Air Research and Development Command, 1 December 1957 – 1 April 1961
* [Air Force Systems Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Systems_Command), 1 April 1961 – 1 July 1992
* [Air Force Materiel Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Materiel_Command), 1 July 1992–present

**Base operating units**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * 84th Service Sq (Det), 14 June 1935 – 1 September 1936
* Section V, Eglin Field Section, 13th Air Base Sq, 1 September 1936 – 1 August 1940
* Det 13th Air Base Sq, 1 August 1940 – 1 December 1940
* 61st Air Base Gp, 1 December 1940 – 19 June 1942
* 51st Base HQ and Air Base Sq, 19 June 1942 – 1 April 1944
* 610th AAF Base Unit, 1 April 1944 – 30 June 1947
* 609th AAF Base Unit, 1 July 1947 – 1 July 1948
 | * 3201st Air Base Gp, 1 July 1948 – 31 March 1951
* 3201st Air Base Wg, 31 March 1951 – 8 August 1951
* 3201st Air Base Gp, 8 August 1951 – 1 July 1953
* 3201st Air Base Wg, 1 July 1953 – 16 September 1964
* 3201st Air Base Gp, 16 September 1964 – 1 June 1992
* 96th Air Base Wing, 1 June 1992–present
 |

**Major units assigned**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * AAAF Proving Ground Command, 4 January 1942-30 June 1946
* 3201st Air Base Group, 1 July 1948-4 February 1958
* Air Proving Ground Command (later Armament Division and Test Center; Air Armament Center), 1 July 1948–present
* 3206th Support Wing, 1 July 1953-20 February 1964
* [17th Bombardment Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/17th_Bombardment_Wing), 1 April 1955-25 June 1958
* [34th Bomb Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/34th_Bomb_Squadron), 1 April 1955-25 June 1958
 | * [37th Bomb Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/37th_Bomb_Squadron), 1 April 1955-25 June 1958
* 4135th Strategic Wing, 1 December 1958-1 February 1963
* [335th Tactical Fighter Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/335th_Tactical_Fighter_Squadron), 1 May 1960-22 November 1961
* USAF Special Air Warfire Center, 27 April 1962-1 July 1974
* 39th Bombardment Wing, 1 February 1963-25 February 1965
* 33d Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 April 1965–present
 |

**Operational history**

**The 1930s**

What became Eglin Air Force Base had its beginnings with the creation in 1933 of the Valparaiso Airport, when an arrowhead-shaped parcel of 137 acres (0.55 km2) was cleared for use as an airdrome.

In 1931, personnel of the [Air Corps Tactical School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Corps_Tactical_School) ([Maxwell Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxwell_Air_Force_Base), [Alabama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alabama)) while looking for a bombing and gunnery range, saw the potential of the sparsely populated forested areas surrounding Valparaiso and the vast expanse of the adjacent Gulf of Mexico.

Local businessman and airplane buff James E. Plew saw the potential of a military payroll to boost the local area’s depression-stricken economy. He leased from the City of Valparaiso the 137 acres (0.6 km2) on which an airport was established in 1933, and in 1934, Plew offered the U.S. government a donation of 1,460 acres (6 km2) contiguous for the bombing and gunnery base. This leasehold became the headquarters for the Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Base activated on 14 June 1935, under the command of Captain Arnold H. Rich.

Two unpaved runways, with a supply house at their intersection, were in use by 1935. "On 1 March 1935, application was made for a [FERA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Emergency_Relief_Administration) grant to pave the runways and to build an office, a barracks 30 by 120, a mess hall and kitchen, and an oil storage building..."

Fredrick I. Eglin

On 4 August 1937, the installation was renamed Eglin Field in honor of **Lt Col Frederick Irving Eglin** (1891–1937). First rated as a military aviator in 1917, Lt Col Eglin helped train other Army flyers during [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I). On 1 January 1937, while assigned to General Headquarters, Air Force at [Langley Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langley_AFB), VA, Colonel Eglin was killed in the crash of his [Northrop A-17](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northrop_A-17) pursuit aircraft, *35-97*, on a flight from Langley to [Maxwell Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxwell_AFB), [Alabama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alabama).

A ceremony was held in June 1939 for the dedication and unveiling of a plaque honoring [Valparaiso, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valparaiso%2C_Florida) banker and businessman [James E. Plew](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=James_E._Plew&action=edit&redlink=1), as founder of Eglin Field. Embedded in the stone gate to the airfield, the plaque read "In memory of James E. Plew, 1862–1938, whose patriotism and generosity made this field possible."

Captains Delmar T. Spivey and George W. Mundy, 23rd Composite Group, [Maxwell Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxwell_Field), Alabama, flew two [Curtiss YP-37s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curtiss_P-37) to Eglin Field for engine testing in December 1939, the first of thousands of service tests.

**The 1940s**

With the outbreak of war in Europe, a proving ground for aircraft armament was established at Eglin. The [U.S. Forestry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Forestry_Service) ceded to the [War Department](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_War) the [Choctawhatchee National Forest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choctawhatchee_National_Forest) on 18 October 1940. Hunters had to be reminded regularly that the base reservation was now off-limits in 1941–1942 and there was some local resentment at the handover. On 15 May 1941, the Air Corps Proving Ground (later the Proving Ground Command) was activated, and Eglin became the site for gunnery training for Army Air Forces fighter pilots, as well as a major testing center for aircraft, equipment, and tactics. The 23rd Composite Group moved from Orlando to Eglin Field, 1 July 1941. It comprised the [1st Pursuit Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Special_Operations_Squadron), the [54th Bombardment Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/54th_Bombardment_Squadron) (M), the [24th Bombardment Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/24th_Bombardment_Squadron) (L), the 54th School Squadron, the [61st Air Base Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/61st_Air_Base_Group), and the 3rd Gunnery and Bombing Range Detachment.

On Friday, 16 August 1940, the Okaloosa News-Journal, Crestview, Florida, reported that the [Southern Bell Telephone Company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BellSouth_Telecommunications) was cutting a right-of-way for a line directly across the military reservation to connect the Eglin Field Army headquarters to the company line at [Holt, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holt%2C_Florida). The newspaper also stated that President [Franklin Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_Roosevelt) had approved a plan on 14 August for a [Works Projects Administration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Works_Projects_Administration) (WPA) expenditure of approximately $64,842 to make additional improvements at Eglin, including grading and surfacing a road to the machine gun range, clearing and grubbing 500 additional acres of landing field, and other work. A [Civilian Conservation Corps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian_Conservation_Corps) (CCC) camp was erected at Valparaiso, Florida from November 1940 to house 1,000-plus CCC workers engaged in base construction.

On 1 October 1940, the installation was renamed the Eglin Field Military Reservation in recognition of its increased importance to the Air Corps and its increasing size, as characterized by the construction of numerous auxiliary airfields in [Okaloosa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Okaloosa_County%2C_Florida), [Walton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walton_County%2C_Florida) and [Santa Rosa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Rosa_County%2C_Florida) counties, the clearing of areas in the Choctawhatchee Forest for which was begun in January 1941. Work on Auxiliary Field 1 began 27 November 1940. Clearing and grading for Auxiliary Field No.2 began 9 January, Auxiliary Field No. 3 on 23 January, and $800,000 allocated for the grading and paving of fields 1, 3, 5, and 6 on 24 April 1941. The Okaloosa News-Journal on Friday, 31 January 1941, listed the following construction: 30 enlisted men's barracks, eight day rooms, an enlisted men's mess building, a flying cadets mess building, four officers' quarters, eight supply rooms, eight administration buildings, a hospital, a post exchange, a motor repair shop, a theatre, four warehouses, six operations buildings, a [Link trainer](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Link_trainer&action=edit&redlink=1) building, a parachute building, five magazines, and necessary utilities. The [Louisville and Nashville Railroad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisville_and_Nashville_Railroad) laid a long sidetrack in [Crestview, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crestview%2C_Florida) to handle the number of oil tankers required to supply the Asphalt Products Company with material for the vast paving job of the new airfields. A fleet of trucks were operated round the clock to offload an estimated 180 car loads of petroleum product for the task. There were more than just a few vehicle accidents under the urgent tasking, some fatal. The clearing of Auxiliary Field No. 6 began 7 March 1942. Building construction at Auxiliary Field No. 7 began 14 March 1942.

Appropriations of $202,536 were announced by Congressman [Bob Sikes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_L._F._Sikes) of Crestview in mid-April 1941 for construction and installation of water, sewage, electrical facilities, sidewalks, roads, fences, parking areas, landscaping and for the construction of a sewage disposal plant. Submitted to the WPA headquarters in Washington, D.C. in late March, the request received presidential approval in April. Work continued apace on some projects on a 24 hour a day basis.

A severe housing shortage in the region for the burgeoning base-oriented expansion was partially alleviated by the construction of 100 units of the Plew Heights Defense Housing Project near Valparaiso for civil service employees and enlisted personnel. The [Federal Works Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Works_Agency), Division of Defense Housing, awarded the contract for the task to the Paul A. Miller Construction Company of [Leesburg, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leesburg%2C_Florida) on 5 May 1941, with construction beginning on 8 May. The 11 November 1941 deadline for completion was beaten by almost a month.

In June 1941, the Officers Club of Eglin Field made arrangements to take over the [Valparaiso Inn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valparaiso_Inn), Valparaiso, Florida, as the "O Club". [Doolittle Raiders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doolittle_Raid) would later lodge here during their training at Eglin.

In June 1941, the Army Air Corps became the [U.S. Army Air Forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Army_Air_Forces) (USAAF) in order to provide the air arm a greater autonomy in which to expand more efficiently, and to provide a structure for the additional command echelons required by a vastly increased force. Although other nations already had separate air forces independent of the army or navy (such as the British [Royal Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Air_Force) and the German [Luftwaffe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luftwaffe)), the USAAF remained a part of the [United States Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army). Following the 7 December 1941 attack on [Pearl Harbor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearl_Harbor) and the United States entry into World War II, Eglin became a major stateside installation in support of the war effort.

On 10 March 1942, the first test flight of a second batch of [Kettering-General Motors A-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kettering-General_Motors_A-1&action=edit&redlink=1) flying bombs was conducted at Eglin Field but crashed. In a second test on 19 March, the airframe flew for 1 hour, 57 minutes, and a third test on 2 April saw a flight of 1 hour, 40 minutes. The design was noted for having particularly poor directional control, and after a report on 24 August 1943 questioned the cost and development time involved in the program, it was cancelled on 6 September 1943.

Eglin became a major training location for the [Doolittle Raid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doolittle_Raid) on the Japanese mainland. The 24 crews selected and led by [Lieutenant Colonel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant_Colonel) [James "Jimmy" Doolittle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Doolittle) picked up modified [North American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_Aviation) [B-25B Mitchell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-25_Mitchell) medium bombers in Minneapolis, Minnesota and flew them to Eglin beginning on 1 March 1942. "9–25 March: Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle and a B-25 detachment of 72 officers and 75 enlisted men from Lexington County Airport, Columbia, South Carolina, were at Eglin Field in rehearsals for the Tokyo raid." There the crews received intensive training for three weeks in simulated carrier deck takeoffs by [Naval Aviators](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Aviator) from nearby [Naval Air Station Pensacola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Air_Station_Pensacola), as well as low-level and night flying, low altitude bombing, and over water navigation. Lt Col Doolittle stated in his after action report that an operational level of training was reached despite several days when flying was not possible due to rain and fog. One aircraft was heavily damaged in a takeoff accident at Eglin and another aircraft was taken off the mission because of a nose wheel shimmy that could not be repaired in time.

On 25 March, the remaining 22 B-25s departed Eglin for [McClellan Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McClellan_AFB), California, arriving on 27 March for final modifications at the Sacramento Air Depot. A total of 16 B-25s were subsequently flown to [Naval Air Station Alameda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Air_Station_Alameda), California on 31 March for embarkation aboard [USS Hornet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Hornet) (CV 8). When now-promoted-to-General Doolittle toured the growing base in July 1942 with C.O. Grandison Gardner, the press made no mention of his recent, and still secret, training at Eglin.

A captured Japanese [Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A6M_Zero), c/n 3372, originally coded 'V-172', of the 22nd Air Flotilla Fighter Unit, found after a forced-landing on a beach at Leichou Pantao, China, on 26 November 1941, and transported to the U.S., was test-flown at Eglin during mid-war.

In March 1942, the base served as one of the sites for Lieutenant Colonel [Jimmy Doolittle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Doolittle) to prepare his [B-25](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-25) crews for their [raid against Tokyo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doolittle_Raid). A number of auxiliary fields were constructed on the Eglin reservation at this time, many of which are still in service in various roles, either in support of flight operations or special test activities.

Operational suitability tests were conducted with a pair of [P-38F Lightnings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-38_Lightning), *41-7536* and *41-7612*, between 7 August 1942 and 26 January 1943.

On 29 January 1943, the sole [XB-41](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XB-41), a conversion of [B-24D-CO Liberator](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consolidated_B-24_Liberator), *41-11822*, into a gunship, was delivered to Eglin Field. Additional guns were provided which brought the total armament to fourteen 0.50-inch machine guns. Tests were carried out for two months at Eglin during the early winter of 1943. These indicated that the center of gravity was improperly located, which made the aircraft quite unstable in flight. In addition, the climbing rate and service ceiling were rather poor because of the additional weight. The port waist gun position had originally been covered by a Plexiglas bubble, but this was found to cause severe optical distortion and was removed. Consequently, because of these problems, on 21 March 1943, the Army declared the XB-41 as being operationally unsuitable, and plans for thirteen YB-41 Liberator conversions were cancelled. Consolidated continued to work on the XB-41 prototype, however, and equipped the aircraft with wide-blade propellers and subjected the plane to a weight-reduction program in which some of the armor was removed. On 28 July 1943, the XB-41 was returned to Eglin for more tests. Tests showed that the stability problem had been cured, but the aircraft was still plagued with poor maneuverability. In the meantime, the [Boeing YB-40](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_YB-40) had entered combat in Europe, and the initial results had demonstrated that the basic escort gunship concept was fundamentally flawed. The heavily-laden YB-40 escorts could not keep up with the bomber formations once they had dropped their bombs. As a result of the negative experience with the YB-40, further work on the XB-41 was abandoned. The sole XB-41 was later redesignated TB-24D and was used as an instructional airframe for training Liberator mechanics until struck-off-charge at [Maxwell Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxwell_Field), Alabama on 2 February 1945.

During the war, a battleship-sized target float was anchored in the [Choctawhatchee Bay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choctawhatchee_Bay) just south of Black's Point of what is now known as the [Lake Lorraine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Lorraine) area of [Shalimar, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalimar%2C_Florida).

In April 1943, in-flight refueling trials were conducted at Eglin with a [B-24D Liberator](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-24_Liberator) modified as a tanker and a [B-17E Flying Fortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-17_Flying_Fortress) as a receiver aircraft by [Pennsylvania Central Airlines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania_Central_Airlines) with the assistance of Flight Refueling engineers. The B-17 received the fuel through a grapple system mounted in the tail gunners position.

On 12 July 1943, Eglin suffered its worst loss of life when 17 personnel were killed in an explosives test at ~1700 hrs. Wartime censorship and the fact that 15 of the 17 were airmen of the African-American-staffed 867th Aviation Engineering Battalion contributed to the accident receiving virtually no publicity. The identities of the dead, including the two white officers supervising, were never released, and only one small newspaper article was published mentioning the incident. The Okaloosa News-Journal, Crestview, Florida, reported that the base "Public Relations office, who made the announcement, stated that the names of the men would not be released until the next of kin had been notified. Bodies of two officers were brought to McLaughlin Funeral Home in Crestview while those of the colored victims were taken to a parlor in Pensacola. No announcement has been made as to how the accident occurred [sic]." A documentary, "*The Eglin 17*", debuted at the 2009 African American Heritage Month luncheon at the Eglin Air Force Base Officer's Club on 18 February 2009, providing the story of the forgotten accident. "The cause and circumstances surrounding the incident remain 'clouded in mystery,' according to the documentary," although Lt. Col. Allen Howser (Ret.), featured in the documentary, recalled that it was part of an exercise to test fire a newly acquired explosive.

At its wartime peak, the base employed more than 1,000 officers, 10,000 enlisted personnel and 4,000 civilians.

Two upgraded [P-38K Lightnings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_P-38_Lightning) were produced in 1943. The first prototype's performance led to an official request for the second aircraft, a modified P-38G-10-LO (re-designated P-38K-1-LO) fitted with four-blade propellers and new Allison V-1710-75/77 (F15R/L) powerplants rated at 1,875 bhp (1,398 kW) at War Emergency Power. The AAF took delivery in September 1943, at Eglin Field. In tests, the P-38K-1 achieved 432 mph (695 km/h) at military power and was predicted to exceed 450 mph (720 km/h) at War Emergency Power with a similar increase in load and range. The initial climb rate was 4,800 feet (1,500 m) per minute and the ceiling was 46,000 feet (14,000 m). It reached 20,000 feet (6,100 m) in five minutes flat; this with a coat of camouflage paint which added weight and drag. However, the War Production Board refused to authorize P-38K production due to the two- to three-week interruption in production necessary to implement cowling modifications for the revised spinners and higher thrust line. Some doubted Allison's ability to deliver the F15 engine in quantity. As promising as it had looked, the P-38K project came to a halt.

By late 1943, Maj. Gen. [Henry H. Arnold](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_H._Arnold) directed Brig. Gen. Grandison Gardner's electronic engineers at Eglin Field, Florida, to outfit war-weary bombers with automatic pilots so that they could be remotely controlled. This was the preliminary work for the [Operation Aphrodite](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Aphrodite) flying bomb drone missions in Europe in 1944. In a post-war interview, "Gardner refers to Arnold’s hesitation to use Wright Field engineers for important projects. Tactical research was even taken away from Wright Field and moved to Eglin AFB [sic] under command of Gardner for this very reason."

In January 1944, the [Curtiss XP-60E-CU](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curtiss_P-60), *42-79425*, was flown to [Eglin Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eglin_Field) for official trials, where Army Air Force pilots found that it did not compare favorably to later aircraft. The whole P-60 project is canceled in May 1944.

Following the first flight of the [Beechcraft XA-38 Grizzly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XA-38_Grizzly) on 7 May 1944, the airplane was flown to Eglin Field, where it underwent extensive tests. In these tests it established outstanding records for availability, for flight and for efficiency. The type was not ordered into production, however.

"In January 1944, Eglin became an important contributor to '[Operation Crossbow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Crossbow),' which called for the destruction of German missile launching facilities. Thousands worked around the clock for 12 days to construct a duplicate German V-1 facility. Subsequent bombing runs against this copycat facility taught Army Air Forces tacticians which attack angles and weapons would prove most effective against the German launchers." Gen. Arnold telephoned Gen. Gardner on 25 January with orders to accomplish the task "in days and not weeks." Arnold witnessed a test on 15 February. The first [JB-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic-Ford_JB-2) launch at Eglin took place on 12 October 1944. Eglin would continue JB-2 tests through 1946 to improve launch and guidance, including remote launchings from B-17s and B-29s. In 1996, the Operation Crossbow site, consisting of nine structures on a 14-acre area, was placed on the [National Register of Historic Places](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places), as were two JB-2 launch ramps on [Santa Rosa Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Rosa_Island).

Experimental B-24J-15-CO, *42-73130*, with B-17G nose section, containing chin turret, grafted on; modification not adopted for production.

From March 1944, the [Wright Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright_Field), Ohio, Weight Reduction Committee, working to improve performance and crew accommodations in the [B-24 Liberator](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-24_Liberator), proposed mating a [B-17 Flying Fortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-17_Flying_Fortress) nose to a B-24, with the [Air Materiel Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Materiel_Command) assigning the experiment a First Priority Project rating on 25 May 1944. The modification was undertaken at [Middletown Air Depot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middletown_Air_Depot), Pennsylvania, with the nose of a B-17G-30-VE, *42-97772*, damaged in an accident at [Langley Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langley_Field), Virginia, grafted onto B-24J-15-CO, *42-73130*, made available by Aircraft Test Control and flown to Middletown on 5 June with the modification completed on 2 July. During a brief check-out flight on 6 July by the Flight Section of Materiel Command at Wright Field, with a gross takeoff weight of 56,000 lb. (25400 kg) and after speed, power and stability tests at 10,000 ft. (3048 m) the test crew concluded the aircraft performance was "essentially the same as other B-24 airplanes", but with an airspeed "apparently 8.5 mph (13.7 km/h) faster". The aircraft was sent to the Air Proving Ground at Eglin Field, via [Bolling Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolling_Field), Washington, D.C., for inspection by [Pentagon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentagon) representatives. Three test flights were scheduled, the first, at low altitude, was for familiarization and instrument calibration, while the next two would be identical except that, on the third, the aircraft would carry the weight of a fully-loaded B-24J. Flown during August 1944, on both altitude flights, the aircraft was only able to reach a ceiling of 18,500-19,000 ft. (5638-5791 m.), about 2/3 that of an ordinary B-24. At that point cylinder head temperatures soared and the cowl flaps had to be opened, adding to drag, preventing any further climbing, and producing a mild tail buffeting. The Eglin report condemned the modified aircraft as "operationally unsuitable". They pointed to weight increase, stability problems, the poor ceiling and generally poor performance, and recommended the project be discontinued. Finally, the Engineering Division of Air Materiel Command admitted that it would be better simply to redesign the B-24J nose. Most of the added weight was due to ammunition for the B-17 nose and cheek guns, almost a third of a ton.

Second XP-77 prototype, *43-34916*, which was lost during Air Proving Ground tests on 2 October 1944.

Both prototypes of the light-weight [Bell XP-77-BE](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_XP-77) fighter were tested at Eglin beginning in July 1944. Spin problems led to a crash of the second aircraft, *43-34916*, on 2 October 1944, which the pilot survived. The type would not be placed into production.

The sole [Northrop JB-1A Bat](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Northrop_JB-1A_Bat&action=edit&redlink=1), unofficially known as the "Thunderbug" due to the improvised General Electric B-1 turbojets' "peculiar squeal", a jet-propelled flying wing spanning 28 feet 4 inches (8.64 m) to carry 2,000 lb. (910 kg). bombs in pods close to the engines, made its first powered, but unmanned, flight from [Santa Rosa Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Rosa_Island%2C_Florida) on 7 December 1944, launching from a pair of rails laid across the sand dunes. It climbed rapidly, stalled, and crashed 400 yards from the launch point. Makeshift B-1 turbojets do not live up to expectation, so JB-1s are completed with pulsejet power as [JB-10s](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=JB-10&action=edit&redlink=1). The JB-10 tests disappointed the Army Air Force, which considered only 2 of the 10 flights a partial success. On its longest flight, on 13 April 1945, the missile only covered 26 miles due to longitudinal instability, and the program is canceled in March 1946.

On 28 December 1944, Eglin reverted to its original name of Eglin Field as part of a new standardization practice by the USAAF. With the creation of a separate [United States Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Air_Force) in 1947, Eglin Field continued to retain its name until 24 June 1948, when it was renamed to its current designation as **Eglin Air Force Base**.

The success of the [Royal Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Air_Force) using [Barnes Wallace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barnes_Wallace)'s [bouncing bombs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bouncing_bomb) in the dam busting missions of [Operation Chastise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Chastise) on 16–17 May 1943, led the USAAF to investigate using similar tactics. After initial testing with a modified A-26 in January 1945 which was adapted at the [Vickers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vickers) experimental facility at Foxwarren, near [Esher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esher), [Surrey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrey), to drop the RAF spherical 35-in [89 cm] Highball casing, with [an overall weight] of 950 lb. [431 kg], twenty-five Speedee bomb casings (the American nomenclature for the Highball) were sent to the U.S. On 28 April 1945, [A-26C-25-DT Invader](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A-26_Invader), *43-22644*, assigned to the 611 Base Unit at [Wright Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright_Field), Ohio, departed Eglin for a low-level test drop on Water Range No. 60 in the [Choctawhatchee Bay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choctawhatchee_Bay). Dropped at low altitude (~10 feet), the weapon skipped back into the aircraft, completely knocking off the tail unit causing the bomber to nose over instantly and crash into the bay 3 miles NE of [Fort Walton, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Walton%2C_Florida). Following this accident, the Army Air Force dropped its interest into this attack method.

At the time of the design of the super-heavy intercontinental [Convair B-36 Peacemaker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convair_B-36_Peacemaker) bomber in the mid-1940s, Eglin Field had one of only three runways in the world capable of withstanding the landing gear footprint of the original 110-inch (2,800 mm) single tire main gear design of the fully-loaded bomber (concrete at least 22 inches thick). The B-36 would undergo a redesign for a four-wheel main gear bogie with 56-inch (1,400 mm) tries to reduce this operational constraint and allow B-36s to operate from runways able to support [B-29 Super fortresses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-29_Superfortress). (The other two runways were at the [Convair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convair) plant at [Fort Worth, Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Worth%2C_Texas), and at [Fairfield-Suisun Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairfield-Suisun_Air_Force_Base), California.)

[B-29-20-BW Superfortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-29_Superfortress), *42-6413*, was sent to the Eglin Proving Ground for tests on 31 August 1945.

After the war, Eglin became a pioneer in developing the techniques for missile launching and handling; and the development of drone or pilotless aircraft beginning with the [Republic-Ford JB-2 Loon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic-Ford_JB-2), an American copy of the [V-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-1_%28flying_bomb%29). The [1st Experimental Guided Missiles Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=1st_Experimental_Guided_Missiles_Group&action=edit&redlink=1) was activated at Eglin Field, Florida on 6 February 1946. Pursuant to an order from the War Department, dated 25 January 1946, the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces Center at Eglin Field was directed to activate the Headquarters, 1st Experimental Guided Missiles Group, the [1st Experimental Guided Missiles Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=1st_Experimental_Guided_Missiles_Squadron&action=edit&redlink=1) and the [1st Experimental Air Service Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=1st_Experimental_Air_Service_Squadron&action=edit&redlink=1). The total authorized strength for the three organizations was 130 officers, one warrant officer and 714 enlisted men. Eglin's commander was directed to supply manpower for the units from his own resources, but, given the recent postwar demobilization, his ability to do so was extremely limited. Operations were conducted out of Auxiliary Field 3 ([Duke Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_Field)). On 13 January 1947, a successful drone flight from Eglin to [Washington, D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington%2C_D.C.) was conducted utilizing a [QB-17 Flying Fortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-17_Flying_Fortress). A QB-17G, *44-85648*, was utilized in a ditching test program at Eglin in 1948 when it was landed in the water by radio control. Ironically, although nine of the approximately 43 surviving intact B-17s in the world were assigned to the 3200th and 3205th Drone Groups at Eglin, the example displayed at the [Air Force Armament Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Armament_Museum) is not one of them, having been a former [U.S. Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Navy) PB-1W patrol model.

On 31 March 1946, the Air Proving Ground Command completed the tactical suitability test of the [Hughes JB-3 Tiamat](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hughes_JB-3_Tiamat&action=edit&redlink=1), Project MX-570, an air-to-air missile. Program canceled post-war due to other more promising types being developed.

Between mid-1946 and January 1947, the Army Air Force evaluated two of the three [Boeing XF8B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_XF8B) Navy fighter prototypes at Eglin as a potential fighter-bomber, but nothing came of the idea, it being found to be inferior in the rôle to the [P-47 Thunderbolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-47_Thunderbolt) already in service.

[Lt. Col. Ashley C. McKinley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashley_Chadbourne_McKinley), because of his experiences in ferrying aircraft to the Soviet Union, suggested in 1943 that all aircraft and equipment be operable at temperatures as low as -65 degrees F (-54 degrees C) and that a refrigerated hangar be erected at Eglin AFB to produce such an environment under controlled conditions. Since testing in Alaska was expensive and had produced only meager results, Col. McKinley reasoned that testing under controlled conditions would be far superior in useful results and up to ten times more economical. Construction of the [Climatic Laboratory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McKinley_Climatic_Laboratory) that allowed the Air Proving Ground Command to simulate virtually all climatic conditions “indoors” was completed 24 May 1947. Initial costs were estimated at nearly $2,000,000. The actual cost, at the end of construction, had risen to $5,500,000, indicative of the many problems encountered by the designers and builders. Testing began in May 1947. The first items tested included the [Fairchild C-82 Packet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairchild_C-82_Packet), [Boeing B-29 Superfortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_B-29_Superfortress), [Lockheed F-80](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_F-80), [North American P-51](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_P-51), [Lockheed P-38](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_P-38), and the [Sikorsky H-5D](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_H-5) helicopter.

January 1948 was the first month without an aviation accident since the base was founded. Total flying hours for the month were 3,725, "an unusually high number for the Proving Ground," said Lt. Gerald E. Gibson, aircraft safety officer for the base. A six-month fatality-free period came to an end on 9 April 1948 when a pilot was killed in a [P-51D Mustang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-51_Mustang) crash N of [Crestview, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crestview%2C_Florida).

The first production [B-36A-1-CF Peacemaker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36_Peacemaker) heavy bomber, *44-92004*, c/n 1, officially accepted by the USAF in May 1948, was delivered on 18 June 1948 to the Air Proving Ground Command to undergo extensive testing.

A [C-97 Stratocruiser](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-97_Stratocruiser) was assigned at Eglin for tests from 1948 onward and made two flights to Alaska and two trans-Atlantic crossings to the British Isles by July 1950.

On 7 November 1948, the second prototype of the Republic [XR-12 Rainbow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XF-12_Rainbow) reconnaissance design, *44-91003*, crashed at 1300 hrs. while returning to Eglin from a photographic suitability test flight on its second test flight at the base by the Photo Test Squadron of the 3200th Proof Test Group . Unable to maintain control after the number 2 (port inner) engine exploded, the pilot ordered the crew to bail out. Five of the seven crew escaped safely and were rescued by Eglin crash boats and helicopters. Airframe impacted two miles (3 kilometers) south of the base, in the [Choctawhatchee Bay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choctawhatchee_Bay). Although further testing of the first prototype was conducted (at [Aberdeen Proving Grounds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aberdeen_Proving_Grounds), Maryland), an order for an additional six was cancelled.

The sole remaining [Hughes XR-11](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hughes_XR-11) reconnaissance aircraft prototype, *44-70156*, arrived at Eglin in December 1948 from [Wright Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright_Field), Ohio, to undergo operational suitability testing through July 1949 but a production contract for 98 was cancelled. The airframe was transferred to [Sheppard AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheppard_AFB), Texas, on 26 July 1949 for use as a ground maintenance trainer by the 3750th Technical Training Wing, and was dropped from the USAF inventory in November 1949.

Between 2 February and 6 March 1949, the Air Proving Ground conducted tests in conjunction with Wright-Patterson AFB to determine if the [F-84D Thunderjet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-84_Thunderjet) had improved shortcomings in earlier models of the fighter. These concluded that the F-84 range, acceleration, versatility, load carrying ability, high altitude climb, and level flight speed exceeded that of the [F-80 Shooting Star](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-80_Shooting_Star). The F-84 was inferior to the F-80, however, in shortness of takeoff roll, low altitude climb, and maneuverability.

In the spring of 1949, the 3200th Proof Test Group tested launching [JB-2s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic-Ford_JB-2) from the wings of [B-36](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36) bombers at [Eglin AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eglin_AFB). About a year later, JB-2s were tested as aerial targets for experimental infrared gunsights.

Realizing the necessity of testing and evaluating the [B-36 Peacemaker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36_Peacemaker)'s [APG-3](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=APG-3&action=edit&redlink=1) radar tail turret system, Headquarters, United States Air Force, directed the [7th Bomb Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Bomb_Wing) to undertake testing. The APG-3 was a radar airborne gun sighting system that provided for aircraft detection and automatic fire control of the tail-turret guns, designed to detect and automatically track targets up to 5,000 yards in range on fighter-type aircraft. However, it was possible to extend that search range temporarily on fighters. After a particular target had been selected by the gunner-radar operator, the system automatically tracked the target within its angular limits in both range and direction. Also, the system automatically directed and pointed the gun turret in the correct firing position. The only mechanical function of the gunner was the activation of the firing mechanism when the target was in effective firing range. One B-36B, *44-92042*, of the 26th Bomb Squadron, 11th Bomb Group, was modified for testing as the right gun on the APG-3 was removed and a 35mm Vitarama camera installed in lieu of the turret. The first mission was flown on 25 October 1949, over Eglin AFB Gunnery Range, at 25,000 feet. Three passes were made on the tail position by two [Lockheed F-80 Shooting Stars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_F-80_Shooting_Star). Following those passes the APG-3 radar system failed. The malfunction of the radar system was due to low voltage transmitted to the modular and to the antenna tilt motor which became inopera­tive. Fifty feet of film was obtained and taken to Eglin for operational analysis.

On 1 November, the wing flew its second APG-3 Tail Turret System evaluation test. A total of 12 passes were made in the Eglin AFB Gunnery Range by two F-80 jet fighters at 25,000 feet. Both fighters and the B-36B assigned to the 26th Bomb Squadron, 11th Bomb Group, staged out of Eglin AFB. The next day, a fighter intercept gun-camera mission was flown on 2 November, out of [Carswell AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carswell_AFB), Texas, in a B-36B of the 7th Bomb Group. Two [North American F-82 Twin Mustang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_F-82_Twin_Mustang) fighters from [Bergstrom AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bergstrom_AFB), [Austin, Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austin%2C_Texas), intercepted the bomber at 25,000 feet in the vicinity of Austin. The purpose of the mission, as in any gun-camera mission, was to provide "tracking" and "framing" experience for the B-36 gunners. Also, it provided experience in interception for the fighter pilots. A third test of the APG-3 system was flown out of Eglin AFB on 7 November. A total of 18 passes were made by two F-80s on the bomber at 15,000 feet.

On 15 December 1949, Johnson Hall, home of Headquarters Air Proving Ground Center, was named for Maj. Simon H. Johnson, Jr., deputy commanding officer of the [Eglin AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eglin_AFB), Florida, fighter section, who was killed on 11 May 1948 when his [Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_Aviation) [P-84 Thunderjet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-84_Thunderjet) disintegrated during an air demonstration at Range 52 on the Eglin reservation, in front of some 600 witnesses. Johnson was also serving as the acting commanding officer, operations officer, and test pilot for the Eglin fighter section at the time of his death.

**The 1950s**

A U.S. Air Force [F-100C](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-100_Super_Sabre) jet takes off from Eglin Air Force Base. Note the Air Proving Ground griffin badge ("Trial by Fire") on the vertical fin. The McKinley Climatic Laboratory is at the right rear of the photo.

USAF [Northrop F-89B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-89_Scorpion) sits on the tarmac at Eglin Air Force Base.

The Main Base public address system, known as the "giant voice", first conceived in 1946 and installed by the communications maintenance division of the Mobile, Alabama Air Material Area, went into operation in February 1950 with preliminary testing completed by February 15. "The new PA system, situated in the Johnson Hall information booth, resembles an instrument panel from some Buck Roger's [sic] space ship. Two record turn tables are available for the transmission of transcribed bugle calls, and appropriate music. A telephone extension running to the commanding general's office will enable him to make special addresses to Eglin personal [sic]. The third method of transmitting announcements and emergency bulletins is the microphone connection to the control console. Four amplifier speakers are located in clusters at each of the seven sites. Designed to saturate the area, the speakers are installed at the radio base maintenance shop, guided missiles headquarters, headquarters air proving ground, the motor pool area, the maintenance and supply area, the boat squadron area, in the Plew Heights housing area, and a direct connection to the station hospital's public address system." The system is now used to broadcast lightning warnings after an airman was struck while out on a ramp and killed.

By March 1950, the 550th Guided Missiles Wing, comprising the 1st and 2nd Guided Missile Squadrons, had replaced the 1st Experimental Guided Missiles Group. The 2nd Guided Missile Squadron, SSM, had 62 pilots manning 14 [B-17s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-17), three [B-29s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-29), and four [F-80 Shooting Stars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-80_Shooting_Star), yellow-tailed drone aircraft used in the role of testing guided missiles. In 1949, the 2nd GMS tallied 3,052 flight hours without mishap and secured the green and white pennant denoting safety supremacy for USAF B-17 type aircraft for the fourth straight time, gaining permanent possession of the three-starred flag. The 550th GMW played a prominent part in the spring of 1949 in the aerial filming of "[Twelve O' Clock High](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_O%27_Clock_High)", filmed in part at Eglin AFB. The 2nd GMS flew B-29s in [Operation Banshee](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Operation_Banshee&action=edit&redlink=1) before switching to B-17s. Seven Flying Fortresses were joined by another seven in November 1948, bringing the squadron complement up to 14 mother and drone Forts. DB-17P, *44-83559*, assigned to both the 3200th and 3205th Drone Squadrons at Eglin between 22 June 1950 and May 1958, was dropped from the inventory to become a display aircraft at [Patrick AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_AFB), Florida. Flown to [Offutt AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offutt_AFB), Nebraska, in May 1959, it is now on exhibit at the [Strategic Air and Space Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_and_Space_Museum), [Ashland, Nebraska](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashland%2C_Nebraska).

A large hump-backed steel hangar, the "Butler Hangar", 160 feet (49 m) X 130 feet (40 m), transported from [Trinidad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinidad), was erected at Auxiliary Field 3 between 1 April and ~10 July 1950, by personnel of Company 'C', 806th Aviation Engineering Battalion, under Capt. Samuel M. Cable, and the men of the 550th Guided Missiles Wing. Project Officer was Capt. Clarence A. Ebbert of the [Air Proving Ground Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Proving_Ground_Command) Installations Division. An additional four feet of roof clearance was added to accommodate [B-17s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-17) in the 21,000-square-foot (2,000 m2) structure. Concrete block buildings, 160 feet (49 m) X 40 feet (12 m), were erected on the flanks of the hangar. Concurrently, the 8,000-foot- (2,400 m)runway was widened to 100 feet (30 m) and additional parking ramps were constructed, with 117,327 cubic yards of dirt excavated. The new ramps and runway expansion consisted of asphalt over a crushed shell base.

In 1950, the Air Force Armament Center was established at Eglin. After the start of the [Korean War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War), test teams moved to the combat theater for testing in actual combat. In 1957, the Air Force combined the Air Proving Ground Command and the Air Force Armament Center to form the Air Proving Ground Center. In 1968, the Air Proving Ground Center was redesignated the Armament Development and Test Center to centralize responsibility for research, development, test and evaluation, and initial acquisition of nonnuclear munitions for the Air Force.

The [T-28A Trojan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-28_Trojan) arrived at Eglin in mid-June 1950 for suitability tests as an advanced trainer by the 3200th Fighter Test Squadron, with consideration given to its transition, instrument, and gunnery capabilities.

The Fledgling's Roost nursery opened on base on 30 June 1950, staffed by a practical or registered nurse and volunteers, and offered military and civilian families assigned to the Air Proving Ground space for up to 80–90 children, 8 a.m. to midnight, and 3 a.m. on special occasions. The establishment of this project was supported by base commander Col. M. C. Woodbury and the various wives clubs on base.

A 40-lot trailer court opened on base at Postal Point in early July 1950. Proposed in April by Col. M. C. Woodbury, deputy commander of the Air Proving Ground, Col. E. W. Moore, deputy of material, and Lt. L. F. Strain, of budget and fiscal, site preparation was delayed until June by planning for the visit to Eglin by President [Harry S Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_S_Truman) on 22 April.

The [Convair XB-46](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convair_XB-46) concluded its test program at Eglin Air Force Base, arriving from [Wright-Patterson Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright-Patterson_Air_Force_Base), Ohio, on its last flight, in July [1950](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1950_in_aviation). Its [pneumatic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pneumatic) landing gear and brake system was tested under the coldest conditions in the large [climatic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climatic) facility there. Most aircraft used hydraulic or electrical systems. When this concluded in November 1950, the Air Force no longer had need for it, a fact acknowledged in the press as early as August, and on 13 January 1951 the nose section was sent to the [U.S. Air Force Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_the_United_States_Air_Force) at [Wright-Patterson Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright-Patterson_Air_Force_Base), [Ohio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohio). The rest of the airframe was scrapped 28 February 1952.

Assault transport evaluations were done in the second half of August 1950, involving a modified [Fairchild C-82 Packet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-119_Flying_Boxcar), the [Chase C-122](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chase_C-122) and [C-123](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-123) [Avitrucs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avitruc), the [Northrop C-125A Raider](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YC-125_Raider), and two gliders, the [Chase XG-18A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YC-122_Avitruc) and [Chase XG-20](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-123_Provider). Tests included short-field approaches over 50-foot (15 m) obstructions, and operational abilities over rough, unprepared fields and roads with simulated full loads. Initial landing tests were conducted at the municipal airport at [Crestview, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crestview%2C_Florida). " 'The assault transport airplane was developed as a replacement for the glider to be used as the vehicle for delivering ground force troops and equipment into an airhead assault area,' asserted Capt. H. A. Lyon, Eglin project officer. 'We are primarily interested in which airplane does this job best, and determining if the assault transport can match the landing performance of the glider under the worst conditions of rough terrain operation.' "

The first [B-36D Peacemakers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36_Peacemaker) accepted by the Air Force, in August 1950, were sent to Eglin AFB for testing.

On 12 September 1950, a [26th Bomb Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/26th_Space_Aggressor_Squadron), [11th Bomb Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11th_Wing), [7th Bomb Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Bomb_Wing), [Eighth Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eighth_Air_Force), [B-36D-5-CF Peacemaker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36_Peacemaker), *49-2653* (the first D model in the wing) took part in the first D-model gunnery mission. It was a test evaluation mission flown over the Eglin AFB Gunnery Range, Florida at 24,000 feet. During the mission seven malfunctions of various types occurred before the plane returned to [Carswell AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carswell_Air_Force_Base), Texas. Just over a week later on 20 September, three B-36Ds ([436th](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/436th_Training_Squadron), [492d](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/492d_Bombardment_Squadron) and [9th Bomb Squadrons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9th_Bomb_Squadron)) of the [7th Bomb Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Bomb_Wing) participated in an exact profile of the war plan. The mission consisted of a night attack on Fort Worth with additional training accomplished by making a simulated bomb run over Birmingham, Alabama. Also, the aircraft conducted a live firing over the Eglin AFB Gunnery Range, Florida, before recovering at Carswell.

In January 1951, control of the armament test center, located at Eglin, was transferred from Air Material Command headquarters at [Wright-Patterson AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright-Patterson_AFB), Ohio, and assigned to the Air Proving Ground. The APG also reassumed control of the 320\_ (?) Chemical and Ordnance Test Group which had squadrons at the [Aberdeen Proving Grounds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aberdeen_Proving_Grounds), Maryland, and the Army chemical center at [Edgewood, Maryland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgewood%2C_Maryland).

"A B-29 assigned to the 581st Air Resupply Squadron, 580th Air Resupply and Communications Wing (ARCW), based at [Mountain Home AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Home_AFB), Idaho, conducted trials at Eglin AFB, during the summer of 1951 to determine if the aircraft could be used to extract personnel utilizing the prototype Personnel Pickup Ground Station extraction system. The test aircraft was modified with a 48-inch diameter opening in place of the aft-belly turret and with an elongated tailhook at the rear of the aircraft. The system was similar to the one adopted in 1952 by Fifth AF for the C-47s of the Special Air Missions detachment in Korea. The tests proved technically feasible, but the project was dropped for the B-29 aircraft due to aircraft size and safety considerations of flying it so close to the ground."

On 10 July 1951, a special training mission was flown by [B-36D Peacemakers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36_Peacemaker) of the [11th Bombardment Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11th_Bombardment_Wing), [19th Air Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/19th_Air_Division), out of [Carswell AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carswell_AFB), Texas, including a high altitude penetration of Eglin AFB, utilizing F-84 fighter escort from the [12th Fighter-Escort Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/12th_Fighter-Escort_Wing), [Bergstrom AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bergstrom_AFB), Texas. On that date, nine B-36s took part escorted by 18 F-84 fighters. The bombers flew out of Carswell south to [Port Arthur, Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_Arthur%2C_Texas). At Port Arthur the bombers picked up their escort fighters and headed east to Florida reaching the Eglin Range. Several F-86 fighters from Eglin AFB intercepted the bombers enroute to targets in the area. Completing the scheduled mission the bombers returned to Carswell and the escort fighters recovered at Eglin AFB, returning to Bergstrom AFB the next day.

In the summer of 1951, a [B-36](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36) crew on a training mission out of [Carswell AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carswell_AFB), [Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas), to the [Eglin AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eglin_AFB) bombing range in the [Gulf of Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) was to drop an unarmed obsolete nuclear gravity bomb on a water target. Due to past mechanical problems, the bombardier was briefed to open the bomb bay doors at the Initial Point (IP). Although the bomber's bombing navigation radar was still in the navigation mode, the bomb dropped unexpectedly when the bay doors were opened, and the 5,000 lb (2,300 kg). of high explosives in the weapon burst in the air over a non-designated target area. An intensive investigation concluded that a corroded D-2 switch, a hand-held bomb release switch, was found to be in the "closed" position and the bomb was dropped through equipment malfunction.

On 22 August 1951, the [11th Bombardment Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11th_Bombardment_Wing), [19th Air Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/19th_Air_Division), [Carswell AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carswell_AFB), Texas, conducted its first [B-36F-model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36_Peacemaker) gunnery test over the Eglin AFB Gunnery Range, Florida. Results of the test were satisfactory.

On 11 October 1951, the [11th Bombardment Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11th_Bombardment_Wing) conducted a unit simulated combat mission out of [Carswell AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carswell_AFB) using three B-36Fs (9th, 436th and 492nd Bomb Squadrons). The mission was flown in the Eglin AFB Range, Florida. All three aircraft completed the mission as scheduled and returned to Carswell on 12 October.

In 1951–1952, some of the non-combat-capable [B-47A Stratojets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-47_Stratojet) (delivered without operational equipment) were assigned to the [Air Proving Ground Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Proving_Ground_Command), two of which were utilized to test the Emerson A-2 (*49-1906*) and General Electric A-5 fire-control systems (*49-1908*)

On 28 March 1952, 12 [7th Bomb Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Bomb_Wing) B-36s, four each from the 9th, 436th and 492d Bomb Squadrons, flew a unit simulated combat mission in the Eglin AFB Range, Florida. All aircraft recovered at [Carswell AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carswell_AFB), Texas, on 29 March.

Building 100 on the flight line is named the Audette Airborne Systems Building. A dedication plaque at the front entrance reads: "In memory of Lieutenant Colonel Leo R. Audette, United States Air Force – in recognition of his contribution in the development of airborne electronics systems – who on 25 August 1952, while a member of this command, gave his life while participating in operations which advanced the development of these systems." His aircraft was [F-86D-1-NA Sabre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-86_Sabre), *50-469*.

In 1953, under the [FICON project](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FICON_project), the [GRB-36F-1-CO Peacemaker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36_Peacemaker), *49-2707*/[EF-84E-1-RE Thunderjet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-84_Thunderjet), *49-2115*, was sent to Eglin Air Force Base where 170 airborne launches and retrievals were subsequently performed.

The first two production [B-61A Matador](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-61_Matador) missiles arrived at Eglin in September 1953, under the control of the 6555th Guided Missile Squadron, out of [Patrick Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Air_Force_Base), Florida, for climatic testing, although instrumentation and pre-test check-outs kept the actual cold-weather tests from beginning until November.

From March to October 1954, the [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15bis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-15), USAF *616*, ex-2nd Regiment, Korean People's Air Force 'Red 2057', was tested at Eglin AFB. Flown to [Kimpo Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimpo_Air_Base), South Korea, from [Sunan Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Sunan_Air_Base&action=edit&redlink=1) near [Pyongyang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyongyang) by defecting North Korean pilot Lt. [No Kum-Sok](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Kum-Sok) on 21 September 1953, this, the first MiG-15 to fall into Western hands, was flown extensively in comparisons with the [B-36](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36_Peacemaker), [B-47](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-47_Stratojet), [F-84](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-84_Thunderstreak) and [F-86](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-86_Sabre) before returning to [Wright-Patterson AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright-Patterson_AFB), Ohio, in October.

In mid-1954, problems with the [J-35-A-21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allison_J35) jet engines equipping the first 48 [F-89 Scorpions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-89_Scorpion) produced negatively affected the Air Proving Ground test program for the new night fighter, with both the F-89A and F-89B models concurrently undergoing operational suitability tests at Eglin. Modified J-35-A-21A engines would replace the initial versions.

North American [F-100A-10-NA Super Sabre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-100_Super_Sabre), *53-1538*, arrived at Eglin on 15 August 1954 to undergo cold-weather testing in the Climatic Hangar under the auspices of the Wright Air Development Center. The Air Force Operational Test Center of the [Air Proving Ground Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Proving_Ground_Command) at Eglin expected to receive six F-100s soon for operational suitability testing. Also, this date, the Air Proving Ground Center received its first [F-105 Thunderchief](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-105_Thunderchief) for armament and fire control system testing.

The [48th Air Rescue Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/48th_Rescue_Squadron) was assigned to Eglin AFB from 10 Jan 1955 to 7 Feb 1969, operating [SA-16 Albatrosses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-16_Albatross) (1955-1968), [H-19 Chickasaws](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H-19_Chickasaw) (1954-1963), ([SC-54 Rescuemasters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-54_Skymaster) (1956-1965), [HH-43 Huskies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HH-43_Huskie) (1963-1965, 1966-1968), [HC-130 Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-130_Hercules) (1965-1969), [Sikorsky CH-3s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H-3_Sea_King) (1966-1969), and [Sikorsky HH-53s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_HH-53) (1966-1969).

The [F-86K Sabre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-86_Sabre) underwent operational evaluation and testing at Eglin in 1955.

The [34th Bombardment Squadron (Light, Night Intruder)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/34th_Bomb_Squadron), reactivated 10 May 1952 at [Pusan, Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pusan%2C_Korea), in the midst of the [Korean War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War), equipped with the [B-26 Invader](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-26_Invader), remained in Korea until 10 October 1954, when it moved to [Miho](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miho), [Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan). On 1 April 1955, it moved to Eglin AFB, administratively assigned to [Hurlburt Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurlburt_Field), still flying the B-26. While there, the squadron transitioned into the [B-57A Canberra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-57_Canberra) and conducted evaluation testing of the aircraft. The receipt for the B-57 caused another redesignation to the 34th Bombardment Squadron (Tactical) on 1 October 1955. In 1956 the unit transitioned to the [B-66B Destroyer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-66_Destroyer), the first squadron to equip with the new tactical bomber. Deployed to [RAF Sculthorpe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Sculthorpe), [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England), briefly in 1958 before returning to Eglin and performing more testing on B-66s with [Jet Assisted Take Off (JATO)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JATO). Following three years of peacetime operations at Eglin, the unit was again inactivated on 25 June 1958, due to budget cuts later in the year.

The [37th Bomb Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/37th_Bomb_Squadron), reactivated at [Pusan, Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pusan%2C_Korea) on 10 May 1952 during the [Korean War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War) and equipped with [B-26 Invaders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-26_Invader), moved to [Miho](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miho), [Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan), from circa 9 October 1954 to circa 19 March 1955, then transferred to Eglin AFB, administratively assigned at [Hurlburt Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurlburt_Field) on 1 April 1955. Reequipped with the [B-66B Destroyer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-66_Destroyer) in 1956, the unit deployed to [RAF Alconbury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Alconbury), England, on 11 May 1958. Returning to Eglin on 12 May 1958, the unit was deactivated 25 June 1958.

In mid-1955, a heavily modified [JB-17G Flying Fortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-17_Flying_Fortress), operated by [Pratt & Whitney](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pratt_%26_Whitney) as an engine testbed for their [T34 Turbo Wasp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pratt_%26_Whitney_T34) with the huge fifth engine mounted in the nose of the former bomber (Boeing Model 299Z), was present for a base open house and made several passes over the flight line with all four reciprocating engines shut down and powered solely by the turboprop. It is unclear whether the design underwent tests at Eglin, however.

Wright Air Development Center delivered a B-47 with Doppler-augmented K-system to the Air Force Armament Center, in July 1955, for tests aimed principally at the MA-6A bombing system. The test installation also contained provisions for automatic crosshair-laying, semi-automatic fix taking, and dead reckoning navigation. The first flight at Eglin on 22 July 1955 revealed that the Doppler set caused "Wander" in the wind values calculated by the D-system, a condition which made the equipment completely unsatisfactory for bombing. General Precision Laboratories went to work on the APN-81, and Sperry on the computers already modified by International Business Machines, in an attempt to resolve the difficulties. By July 1956, the Doppler tie-in was at last working satisfactorily during test flights.

King Hangar was built in 1955 and named for test pilot, Maj. Lyle R. King, assistant chief of weapons and missiles branch directorate of test operations of the Air Force Armament Center at Eglin, who was killed in the take-off crash of [North American EF-86D-5-NA Sabre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-86_Sabre), *50-516* at Eglin on 22 September 1954. The hangar is considered a historical Korean War-era facility. [Bob Hope](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Hope) performed in King Hangar.

On 11 October 1955, one [7th Bomb Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Bomb_Wing) B-36 flew from [Carswell AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carswell_AFB), Texas, to Eglin AFB, to take part in a firepower demonstration.

Contracts for constructing a new 12,000-foot (3,700 m) runway, 32/14, were awarded in late November 1955 to R. B. Tyler and Hyde Construction Co. of Jackson, Mississippi, whose $3,191,577 bid was the lowest received for the project, said Col. Walter W. Woodard, deputy chief of staff for material for the [Air Proving Ground Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Proving_Ground_Command). The new runway will connect with the existing north-south runway at its south end, and head northwest from that point. The new runway will be 300 feet (91 m) wide, with a parallel taxiway, 12,000 feet (3,700 m) X 150 feet (46 m). One thousand feet of the new runway at each end will be constructed of 12-inch-thick (300 mm) cement concrete, with the remainder and taxiways of asphaltic concrete. The intermediate area's surface depth will be total four inches (102 mm) combined of asphaltic concrete binder and surface materials. Underlying will be a sub-base of oyster shells seven to eight inches (203 mm) deep, with a 79-foot (24 m) strip in the center of the runway further reinforced by an additional four-inch (102 mm) deep stabilized sub-base. Emergency overruns of 150 feet (46 m) will be at the ends of the new facility. The contract includes clearing and grubbing of 877 acres (3.55 km2) of reservation as well as relocation of a section of the base railroad main line and the ammunition area spur. Some parking aprons and connecting taxiways are also part of the project, which will be supervised for the Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by Resident Engineer James K. Glennon.

The Air Munitions Development Laboratory was reassigned from the Wright Air Development Center at [Wright-Patterson AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright-Patterson_AFB), Ohio, to the Air Force Armament Center at Eglin by Headquarters Air Research and Development Command in December 1955. The responsibility for development of guns, bombs, rockets, fuses, guided missile warheads and other related equipment in the armament field was transferred from the Dayton, Ohio facility at this time. Work on nuclear weapons was not included in this mission.

The fifth production [C-130A Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-130_Hercules), *53-3133*, c/n 3005, was delivered to the 3206th Test Wing at Eglin in January 1956 for testing. It was joined in July 1956 by [JC-130A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-130_Hercules), *54-1623*, c/n 3010, the tenth production Hercules, for the Air Force Operational Test Center.

In September 1956, [B-57E-MA Canberra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_B-57_Canberra), *55-4244*, was assigned to the Air Force Operational Test Center at the [Air Proving Ground Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Proving_Ground_Command), Eglin AFB, becoming a JB-57E for test missions. In December 1957, it transferred to the Air Proving Ground Center, [Air Research and Development Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Research_and_Development_Command), at Eglin, reverting to a B-57E in October 1967, and finally to the [Armament Development and Test Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Armament_Development_and_Test_Center&action=edit&redlink=1) of [Air Force Systems Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Systems_Command) in November 1968. Retired and dropped from the inventory in December 1969, it was sent as an exhibit to what is now the [Strategic Air and Space Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_and_Space_Museum), [Ashland, Nebraska](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashland%2C_Nebraska).

In 1957, [P2V-7U Neptune](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_P-2_Neptune), BuNo *135612*, c/n 7047, as an [RB-69A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RB-69_Neptune), *54-4037*, acquired by the [Central Intelligence Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Intelligence_Agency) under Project Cherry, was sent to Eglin AFB for testing aircraft performance at low level and under adverse conditions.

Work began on new missile launching facilities on [Santa Rosa Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Rosa_Island) at site A-15, south of [Hurlburt Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurlburt_Field), in March 1957, the planning for which dated to October 1955, to accommodate the testing of the new [IM-99 Bomarc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIM-10_Bomarc) surface-to-air missile. By 1958 the site hosted missile ground testing and personnel training facilities by the 4751st Air Defense Missile Wing of the [Air Defense Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Defense_Command), activated on 15 January 1958 (another source gives the date as 27 February 1958) to supplement Bomarc testing done at [Patrick AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_AFB), Florida. Launchers were constructed so that Bomarcs could be fired into what became known as the Eglin Gulf Test Range. The first Santa Rosa Bomarc was launched 15 January 1959. Launch tests were conducted against [QF-80s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-80_Shooting_Star), [QB-47H Stratojets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-47_Stratojet) and KDBU ([Regulus II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regulus_II)) drones.

The week of 1 April 1957 a [Lockheed C-130 Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_C-130_Hercules) from the Air Force Operational Test Center at Eglin Air Force Base became the first turbo-prop aircraft to carry U.S. mail across the Atlantic. The C-130 was on its way to [Evreux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evreux), France, where it was to be put through another phase of Employment and Suitability Testing by AFOTC. Stopping at [Dover, Delaware](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dover%2C_Delaware), on the first leg of the Atlantic crossing, the Hercules took on 4,800 pounds of mail for servicemen overseas.

A [7th Bomb Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Bomb_Wing) [B-36](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36) was flown to Eglin AFB, on 24 May 1957 for static display.

After ten years of service, primarily for electronic testing, the first [B-50A-1-BO Superfortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-50_Superfortress), *46-002*, reclassified as an EB-50A in March 1949, and then as a JB-50A in January 1956 for testing of special instrumentation, concluded its career by verifying a stellar monitoring inertial bombing system and was then salvaged at Eglin on 12 July 1957.

The Low Altitude Bombing System (LABS), or [toss bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toss_bombing), tactic was first made public in front of a crowd of 3,000 including 11 state governors on 7 May 1957 at Eglin AFB, when a [B–47 Stratojet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-47_Stratojet) entered its bombing run at low altitude, pulled up sharply (3.5 g) into a half loop, releasing its bomb under computer control at a predetermined point in its climb, then executed a half roll, completing a maneuver similar to an [Immelmann turn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immelmann_turn) or [Half Cuban Eight](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Half_Cuban_Eight&action=edit&redlink=1). The bomb continued upward for some time in a high arc before falling on a target which was a considerable distance from its point of release. In the meantime, the maneuver had allowed the bomber to change direction and distance itself from the target. The development of this system at Eglin dated to at least mid-1955 under Project Back Breaker. The unintended consequence of this tactic would be a series of crashes by B-47s in early 1958 caused by stress-induced cracks which caused the bombers to shed their wings. A fleet-wide inspection and repair program known as Milk Bottle was begun in May 1958 which led to no fewer than nine technical orders, with most aircraft cycled through the program by October 1958.

From 5 to 10 October 1957, one [7th Bomb Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Bomb_Wing) [B-36](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-36) participated in a firepower demonstration at Eglin AFB, Florida.

In 1958, the 3215th Drone Squadron from Eglin's Air Proving Ground Center deployed to [Cape Canaveral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Canaveral) to provide the target drones for the [IM-99 Bomarc](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=IM-99_Bomarc&action=edit&redlink=1) test program. On 5 December 1958, the Squadron was discontinued, but it was succeeded by the 3205th Drone Group, Detachment #1, which continued flying drone targets for BOMARC tests well into 1959. Once the IM-99A portion of the program was completed, drones were no longer required. Detachment #1 departed for Eglin on 8 June 1959.

Unreported at the time, the military planned a live nuclear test in the Gulf of Mexico in mid-1958 involving [Nike Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIM-14_Nike-Hercules) and [Genie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIR-2_Genie) missiles. "The Pentagon scheduled a Nike-Hercules operational exercise and a second full-fledged Genie test to take place over the Gulf of Mexico in 1958. However, [President Eisenhower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwight_David_Eisenhower) halted the operation a week before it occurred following two [Oval Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oval_Office) meetings with senior military and civilian officials. From the outset, the [AEC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atomic_Energy_Commission) opposed the operation. AEC Chairman [Lewis Strauss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_Strauss) 'questioned the possible adverse public reaction'" if the operation went ahead. Nonetheless, the Army prepared to have a Nike-Hercules battery at Eglin Air Force Base's Santa Rosa Island launch two missiles over the Gulf, each with different version of the W-31 nuclear charge, at a formation of three obsolete Air Force [F-80](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-80_Shooting_Star) fighters converted into drones. In the same exercise, the Air Force intended to have interceptors fire Genies at other unmanned aircraft. Both the Army and Air Force were to make use of airspace '25 nautical miles horizontal distance from the nearest populated area' which had been a military training area for years and was routinely used to test Air Force weapons (albeit never nuclear arms). On June 27, 1958, Lewis Strauss, [Secretary of State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_State) [John Foster Dulles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Foster_Dulles) and others discussed the Eglin operation with President Eisenhower. Strauss emphasized his belief that what he considered unnecessary tests of production nuclear arms might imperil future test activities he thought which were central to the AEC's mission. Dulles and his deputy, [Christian Herter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Herter), expressed concern that neighboring nations might react poorly to the operation. Eisenhower decided that if the governments of Cuba or Mexico objected, 'the matter would have to be reconsidered.' A month later, as test preparations proceeded, another White House meeting was convened. Dulles reported to Eisenhower that 'consultations' with Cuba and Mexico led him 'to recommend strongly' that the nuclear operation be moved to the [Pacific](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific). The president then 'approved transfer or cancellation' of the operation but requested 'some study of some combination of activities to accomplish the same objectives.' While the military moved to continue the operation in Florida with conventional rounds, [Public Health Service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Health_Service) officials contacted their state-level counterparts, informed them of the nuclear test halt, expressed appreciation for 'complete cooperation,' and asked them to 'forget our activities in the area.' The request was heeded. There is no evidence that the 1958 test arrangements became known at the time."

The first [F-105B Thunderchiefs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-105_Thunderchief) to reach an operational unit were delivered to the [335th Tactical Fighter Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/335th_Tactical_Fighter_Squadron) of the [Tactical Air Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactical_Air_Command)'s [4th Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th_Fighter_Wing) at Eglin in August 1958.

On 1 December 1958, the [4135th Strategic Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4135th_Strategic_Wing) of the [Second Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Air_Force), [Strategic Air Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command), flying the [B-52 Stratofortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-52_Stratofortress) and [KC-135 Stratotanker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KC-135_Stratotanker), was assigned to Eglin as part of SAC's dispersal program. The wing was reassigned to the [Eighth Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eighth_Air_Force), [822nd Air Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/822d_Air_Division) on 1 January 1959. A five-pronged concrete Christmas-tree alert ramp was constructed at the west end of runway 32/14 as Taxiway 3 to accommodate the eight-engined bombers. All the buildings of the SAC Alert area were erected between 1958 and 1961. Buildings 1343, 1344 and 1345 were built as B-52 service nose bays, while 1339 was a fuel system "nose dock", so-named because only the nose and wings fit inside.

From the late 1940s through the mid-1960s, Eglin played host to annual Fire Power Demonstrations on its extensive test ranges. President [Harry S Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_S_Truman) attended one such event on 22 May 1950, as did President [John F. Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) on 4 May 1962.

Category II testing of the [F-101B Voodoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-101_Voodoo) was completed at Eglin on 15 March 1959.

On 23 April 1959, a B-52 launched the first flight test of a prototype [GAM-77 Hound Dog A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AGM-28_Hound_Dog) missile at Eglin AFB.

Testing of the General Electric APN-115 navigational radar system took place at Eglin from mid-1959 utilizing a [JRB-57 Canberra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-57_Canberra).

The first operational [Strategic Air Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command) [GAM-77 Hound Dog A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AGM-28_Hound_Dog) missile, *59-2794*, arrived at Eglin AFB in December 1959 to equip the [4135th Strategic Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4135th_Strategic_Wing), operating [B-52G Stratofortress’s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-52_Stratofortress) out of the base.

**Base railroad**

One of the [U.S. Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army) [ALCO RSD-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ALCO_RSD-1) locomotives originally assigned to Eglin Air Force Base, now preserved at the [Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee_Valley_Railroad_Museum).

Col. George P. Kendrick, chief of installations of the Air Proving command, announced on Thursday, 11 August 1949, that negotiations were underway between the U .S. Air Force and the chief of the U. S. engineers relative to salvaging railroad materials at Camp Claiborne and Camp Polk, Louisiana, the Playground News, [Fort Walton, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Walton%2C_Florida), reported on 18 August 1949. Kendrick stated that Third Army headquarters had indicated that the 44th Engineers Construction battalion, now in training at [Fort Bragg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Bragg_%28North_Carolina%29), North Carolina, would do the work on moving the railroad materials to the new location. Although no official date had been set, an unofficial report gave 15 November as an approximate arrival date for the engineer battalion.

The Eglin Air Force Base railroad was first constructed from an interchange with the [Louisville & Nashville Railroad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisville_%26_Nashville_Railroad) at [Mossy Head, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mossy_Head%2C_Florida) down to the main base complex, with spurs to Auxiliary Fields 1 and 2, the ammunition dump, and other parts of the military reservation, with a total of 45 miles (72 km) of track. It was constructed with materials salvaged from the [Claiborne and Polk Railroad](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Claiborne_and_Polk_Railroad&action=edit&redlink=1), a 43-mile (69 km) line between the two camps, abandoned in 1945. The line, nicknamed the "B & F" (for back and forth), began operation on 1 February 1952 as part of the transportation division, Air Proving Ground Command, and utilized three [ALCO RSD-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ALCO_RSD-1) military diesel-electric locomotives. Its first yard manager was Shelby White.

Part of the base main track and spur to the ammunition dump were realigned in 1956 with the construction of the 12,000-foot-long (3,700 m) runway 32/14.

Initial construction of a railroad line into the region had been discussed as early as 1927 as part of the [Choctawhatchee and Northern Railroad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choctawhatchee_and_Northern_Railroad), though military-use proposals didn't come forward until 1941. German [POWs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/POW) were used in clearing and grading the alignment during World War II. There was one commercial customer served by the line, a lumber pulp yard at [Niceville](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niceville%2C_Florida) which is now community athletic fields. The line was later abandoned in the late 1970s and the southern end, west of State Road 285, pulled up by the mid-1980s. Much of the tracks remain in place from the former L&N (now [CSX](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CSX_Transportation)) interchange to just south of Bob Sikes Road, about 11 miles (18 km) long, albeit overgrown. Building 538, formerly the two-track, four-engine capacity engine house, serves as the vehicle maintenance corrosion control shop in 2009. Two of its four oversize doors have been walled closed. The (by then) four RSD-1 diesels were donated to the [Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee_Valley_Railroad_Museum). One authoritative source on Florida railroad history has reported that steam was operated on the neophyte base railroad, but no local accounts support this.

**The 1960s**

3246th Test Wing Emblem

On 14 January 1960, Eglin AFB conducted the first test launch of a rocket-borne transmitter.

The first [GAM-77 Hound Dog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GAM-77_Hound_Dog) missile assigned to the [Strategic Air Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command) was carried aloft for the first time on Friday, 29 January 1960, aboard a [B-52G-75-BW Stratofortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-52_Stratofortress), *57-6472*, c/n 464177, of 4135th Strategic Wing, commanded by Capt. Jay L. McDonald. The strategic missile was carried on the port underwing pylon during the flight that lasted more than four hours. An operational test of the [GAM-77 Hound Dog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GAM-77_Hound_Dog) first took place over the Eglin water range on 31 March 1960 when a [B-52G](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-52_Stratofortress) of the [4135th Strategic Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4135th_Strategic_Wing) launched the missile from a point near [Tampa, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tampa%2C_Florida), which then flew several hundred miles NW to hit a target in the [Gulf of Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) off the northwest Florida coast. This test followed a series of successful flights over the Atlantic Missile Range at [Cape Canaveral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Canaveral) as well as on the test ranges of Eglin.

The first [GAM-72 Quails](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ADM-20_Quail) began to join the [4135th Strategic Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4135th_Strategic_Wing) at Eglin AFB on 27 February 1960.

On 11 April 1960, a 4135th Strategic Wing B-52 crew took off from Eglin AFB, carrying two operational Hound Dogs, made a 20-hour, 30-minute flight to the North Pole and back, and on 12 April, launched a Hound Dog missile over the [Atlantic Missile Range](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_Missile_Range). This test, called Operation Blue Nose, verified the ability of the B-52 and missile to operate in temperatures as low as 75 degrees below zero.

Testing continued with the [Bomarc B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIM-10_Bomarc) model. Designated the IM-99B, this missile underwent its inaugural service test on 13 April 1960.

On 8 June 1960, the first [SAC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command) launch of an [GAM-72 Quail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ADM-20_Quail) decoy was made by a [B-52G](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-52_Stratofortress) of the [4135th Strategic Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4135th_Strategic_Wing), operating out of Eglin.

A [Nike-Asp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nike-Asp) sounding rocket was launched from Eglin Air Force Base on 27 June 1960 with an X-ray detector on board but failed to return any useful data.

The first production [GAM-72 Quail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ADM-20_Quail) missile was delivered to the [4135th Strategic Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4135th_Strategic_Wing) at Eglin on 13 September 1960. Initial operational capability was reached on February 1, 1961 when the first squadron of the 4135th Strategic Wing was equipped with the GAM-72A.

On 16 December 1960, the [Semi-Automatic Ground Environment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi_Automatic_Ground_Environment) (SAGE) facility at [Gunter AFS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunter_AFS), Alabama, controlled two BOMARC-B missiles launched from Eglin AFB, and directed their interception of a QB-47 drone flying at 500 mph at 30,000 feet.

Category II testing of the instrument displays, fire-control and navigation systems of the [F-105D Thunderchief](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-105_Thunderchief) was conducted at Eglin between 26 December 1960 and 31 October 1961 by the [335th Tactical Fighter Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/335th_Tactical_Fighter_Squadron).

One squadron of the B-52G equipped [4135th Strategic Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4135th_Strategic_Wing) at Eglin was declared Operational with the Quail missile, by SAC Headquarters on 1 February 1961, the first B-52 unit to obtain this status.

In an experiment conducted at Eglin AFB, on 23 February 1961, the direct measurement of atmospheric densities between the altitudes of 70 miles and 130 miles was accomplished for the first time.

On 17 August 1961, the BOMARC-B missile completed a critical profile flight by destroying a QB-47 drone at a minimum range of 50 nautical miles and 5,000 feet in altitude.

On 19 September 1961, a [Bomarc B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIM-10_Bomarc) launched from Eglin, and controlled from a [Semi-Automatic Ground Environment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi_Automatic_Ground_Environment) (SAGE) facility at [Gunter AFS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunter_AFS), Alabama, intercepted a supersonic [Regulus II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regulus_II) drone off the Florida coast at a seven-mile (11 km) altitude, 250 miles (400 km) from the launch point. The Bomarc successfully executed a 180-degree turn to make the intercept. Another source lists the launch date as 19 September 1962.

Combat Evaluation Launches of the [GAM-77 Hound Dog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GAM-77_Hound_Dog) began at Eglin AFB on 18 December 1961, by elements of the B-52G equipped [4241st Strategic Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4241st_Strategic_Wing) at [Seymour Johnson AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seymour_Johnson_AFB), North Carolina.

In early 1962, Eglin was considered as one of the possible launch sites for the [Little Joe II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Joe_II) ballistics test for the [Apollo program](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_program), although the U.S. Army's [White Sands Missile Range](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Sands_Missile_Range) was eventually selected in late spring due, in part, to the simplified recovery on a land versus a water range.

In the early 1960s, the Air Force investigated the conversion of the [Cessna T-37](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_T-37) jet-powered primary trainer for counterinsurgency missions. The project was intended to provide an inexpensive aircraft for the U.S. export market. In 1962 two T-37Bs, *62-5950* and *62-5951* were modified and tested at Eglin Air Force Base. The aircraft retained the T-37's Continental J69 engines, but since gross weight increased to accommodate the ordnance and attack avionics, the aircraft was underpowered and performed poorly.

The USAF Special Air Warfare Center was activated 27 April 1962.

On 4 May 1962, President [John F. Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) visited Eglin for an airpower tour. The [4080th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4080th_Strategic_Wing), [Laughlin AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laughlin_AFB), Texas, dispatched a [Lockheed U-2A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_U-2), piloted by [Rudolf Anderson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Anderson) for static display. Although Kennedy's motorcade only drove past the spy plane without stopping, Anderson later briefed the president, accompanied by Generals [Curtis E. LeMay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curtis_E._LeMay), [Thomas S. Power](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_S._Power), and Secretary of the Air Force [Eugene M. Zuckert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_M._Zuckert), on the spy plane's capabilities. Also on display for the president's firepower demonstration was [B-58A-10-CF Hustler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-58_Hustler), *59-2460*, of the [43d Bombardment Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/43d_Bombardment_Wing).

After a three-year testing program, on 10 May 1962, a U.S. Air Force Bomarc A launched from Eglin AFB, Fla., intercepted a [QF-104 Starfighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=QF-104_Starfighter&action=edit&redlink=1) drone 150 miles away.

On 1 July 1962, the 4751st Air Defense Missile Wing was deactivated and the unit redesignated the 4751st Air Defense Missile Squadron, in which capacity it would provide ground training and practice missile shoots for [Air Defense Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Defense_Command) crews until 1979.

On 19 September 1962, a [Bomarc B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIM-10_Bomarc) launched from Eglin, and controlled from [Gunter AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunter_AFB), Alabama, intercepted a supersonic [Regulus II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regulus_II) drone at a seven-mile (11 km) altitude, 250 miles (400 km) from the launch point. The Bomarc successfully executed a 180-degree turn to make the intercept.

During the [Cuban Missile Crisis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis) in October 1962, [F-104C Starfighters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-104_Starfighter) of the [479th Tactical Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/479th_Tactical_Fighter_Wing) from [George AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_AFB), California, were deployed to Eglin as part of the immense buildup of military strength and material in the State of Florida in preparation for possible military action. The 4135th Strategic Wing, Strategic Air Command, Alert crews at Eglin were placed on airborne alert priority with two Eglin B-52s on 24-hour flights within cruising range of Russia. Flights of 24 hours, more than double the usual ten-hour missions, were refueled by KC-135 tankers. Following the end of the crisis, the SAC crews returned to their usual routines. Ready Force, A Company, of the [82d Airborne Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/82d_Airborne_Division), U.S. Army, was deployed to Eglin from [Fort Benning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Benning), Georgia, for a possible jump into Havana to seize the airport.

Testing of specialized U.S. Navy equipment intended for use in the unsuccessful [Operation Coldfeet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_COLDFEET) salvage of Soviet drift station equipment (as a Navy undertaking) in the Arctic in late 1962-early 1963 was conducted in the Climatic Laboratory post-September. Eventually a [CIA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIA) proprietary company carried out the mission in late May-early June 1963.

Minnesota [Honeywell Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honeywell_Corporation) conducted flight tests on an inertia guidance sub-system for the later-cancelled [X-20 Dyna-Soar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X-20_Dyna-Soar) project at the base utilizing an [NF-101B Voodoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-101_Voodoo), completed in 1963. [QB-47E Stratojets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-47_Stratojet) and [QF-104A Starfighters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-104_Starfighter) were operated by the 3205th Drone Director Group through the late 1960s (QB-47s) in support of such programs as the testing of the [IM-99 Bomarc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIM-10_Bomarc) interceptor missile, and into the 1970s (QF-104s).

The USAF Tactical Air Warfare Center was activated on 1 November 1963. It would be re-designated as the USAF Air Warfare Center on 1 October 1991.

Three [SC-54 Rescuemasters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-54_Skymaster) and an [HU-16 Albatross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HU-16_Albatross) of the [48th Rescue Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/48th_Rescue_Squadron) deployed from Eglin to [Grand Turk Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Turk_Island) with a contingent of some 40 squadron personnel supporting four pararescue men who jumped from SC-54s to recover four camera cassettes, and sight and mark a fifth, from the launch of [Apollo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_program) mission [SA-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-5_%28Apollo%29) with launch vehicle AS-105 at 1625 hrs. GMT, 29 January 1964, the first launch of a Block II Apollo with a live second stage. Two other Eglin-based [HU-16s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HU-16) were flown to [Patrick Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Air_Force_Base), Florida, for alert missions during this launch.

A large AN/FPS-85 Space Track Radar was constructed at Site C-6, ~35 miles (56 km) E of Eglin main base, from October 1962, with [Bendix](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bendix) as the primary contractor. Testing was scheduled for May 1965, but four months before, the building and all the equipment were destroyed in a fire caused by arcing electrical equipment. Rebuilt, this was the first phased-array radar system especially designed to detect and track objects in space. The physical structure of the system was 13 stories high, and the radar contained 5,134 transmitters and 4,660 receivers and utilized three computers. The Air Force took ownership of the site in September 1968 with the [20th Surveillance Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/20th_Surveillance_Squadron) as the primary operator. Initially charged with tracking objects in Earth's orbit, new software installed in 1975 allowed tracking of submarine launched ballistic missiles. This became the unit's primary mission, while continuing to perform space tracking. The AN/FPS-85 played an active role in America's space program. From 1971 to 1984, the 20th SURS was the site of the Alternate Space Surveillance Center. It provided computational support to the Space Surveillance Center at Cheyenne Mountain AS, Colo. If the need arose, the squadron could assume command and control for worldwide space track sensors. Space operations began in February 1969. Initially designed to track satellites, new software installed in 1975 enabled the unit to track submarine launched ballistic missiles, or SLBMs. This became the unit's primary mission, while space surveillance became secondary. From 1971 to 1984 the 20 SURS served as the Alternate Space Surveillance Center, providing computational support to the Space Surveillance Center at Cheyenne Mountain AS, Colorado. If the need arose, the squadron could assume command and control of worldwide SSN. In 1979, the 20 SURS was renamed the [20th Missile Warning Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=20th_Missile_Warning_Squadron&action=edit&redlink=1), or 20th MWS, and four years later, with deactivation of Strategic Air Command, the squadron was transferred to Air Force Space Command. During this time, the AN/FPS-85 was the proving ground for development of phased array radars designed specifically for early warning of SLBM attacks. These PAVE Phased Array Warning System radars assumed missile warning responsibilities from the 20th MWS and in 1987, the unit returned to its original mission of space surveillance with a corresponding name change to the 20th Space Surveillance Squadron. In February 2003, the unit was again re-designated, this time as the 20th SPCS. In October 2004, a detachment was activated under the 20th SPCS at [Dahlgren, Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dahlgren%2C_Virginia), and the unit assumed control of the U.S. Navy's AN/FPS-133 Space Surveillance Radar Fence and the Alternate Space Control Center.

A low security Federal Prison Camp was established under a maintenance contract with the Air Force, located at the old Niceville Road Prison where German POWs had been incarcerated during World War II, from November 1962. The camp moved to a 28-acre (110,000 m2) compound at Auxiliary Field 6 in November 1969, and served as a minimum security facility for non-violent offenders. It would gain the nickname "Club Fed". The facility was closed in 2006 as a cost-cutting measure, with most of the prisoners transferred to the Pensacola Federal Prison Camp, [Saufley Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saufley_Field), at [NAS Pensacola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NAS_Pensacola) in December 2005. [Watergate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watergate) conspirator [E. Howard Hunt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._Howard_Hunt), former Maryland Governor [Marvin Mandel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marvin_Mandel), and fashion maven [Aldo Gucci](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Aldo_Gucci&action=edit&redlink=1) (tax evasion) were among those who served time at Eglin.

The [39th Bombardment Wing, Heavy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/39th_Air_Base_Wing), was activated on 15 November 1962 at Eglin AFB as a [Strategic Air Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command) [B-52G Stratofortress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-52G_Stratofortress) bombardment wing. It was assigned to SAC's [822d Air Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/822d_Air_Division) at [Turner AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turner_AFB), Georgia. The 39th BW was a redesignation of the former [4135th Strategic Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4135th_Strategic_Wing) which was inactivated on 1 February 1963 and the unit redesignated in order to retain the lineage of the combat units and to perpetuate the lineage of many currently inactive units with illustrious World War II records. The wing's [62d Bomb Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/62d_Bombardment_Squadron) flew B-52G's which it acquired from the [301st Bomb Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/301st_Bombardment_Squadron).

As a preliminary step towards the [AC-47 Spooky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AC-47_Spooky) gunship program, under Project Tailchaser [C-131B Samaritan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-131_Samaritan), *53-7820*, was given a gunsight for the side window, but instead of guns it had cameras in the cargo area. In 1964 the C-131 was ferried to Eglin AFB and a [General Electric SUU-11](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minigun)A/A 7.62 mm Gatling-style Minigun was installed. Live ammunition was used and both over-water and over-land tests were successful.

[Ryan Model 147B Firebee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryan_Firebee) reconnaissance drones, launched from [DC-130A Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-130_Hercules) controllers, were tested at Eglin in 1964 under [Strategic Air Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command)'s project Lightning Bug, reaching operational status by May. They were deployed to Southeast Asia in August following the passage of the [Tonkin Gulf Resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonkin_Gulf_Resolution), and initially operated out of [Kadena Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kadena_Air_Base), [Okinawa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Okinawa), for missions over southern China.

On 23 March 1964, the [GAM-72A Quail](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=GAM-72A_Quail&action=edit&redlink=1) missile made its first operational test flight (nicknamed Shotgun) at Eglin AFB.

The U.S. Air Force performed its first Fulton Skyhook recovery on 27 November 1964 when Capt. Nelson Gough was picked up by a modified [C-123H Provider](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-123_Provider) at Eglin.

A [CH-21B Shawnee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H-21_Shawnee) helicopter, *51-5857*, named "The Joker", was retired from Eglin in January 1965 to the [U.S.A.F. Air Force Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_the_United_States_Air_Force), [Wright Patterson AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright_Patterson_AFB), [Dayton, OH](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dayton%2C_OH), where it is on display today.

The [48th Air Rescue Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/48th_Rescue_Squadron) was redesignated the 48th Air Recovery Squadron on 1 February 1965.

During the early part of 1965 about one dozen personnel of the 109th Quartermaster Corps, U.S. Army, were sent TDY to Eglin Air Force Base, where they assisted Air Force personnel developing an air delivery technique called the low-altitude parachute extraction system (LAPES). The 109th's mission was to provide parachute packing, temporary storage and rigging of supplies and equipment for aerial drop by aircraft of all the services. In addition, the 109th was to render technical assistance in the recovery and evacuation of airdrop equipment. Using the LAPES system, while a cargo plane flew a few feet above ground level, a drogue parachute would be released, pulling palletized cargo out of the aircraft and onto the drop zone. An alternative method was the ground proximity extraction system (GPES), in which cargo was yanked from the aircraft by a hook that snagged a cable traversing the runway. The 109th's mission was to provide parachute packing, temporary storage and rigging of supplies and equipment for aerial drop by aircraft of all the services. In addition, the 109th was to render technical assistance in the recovery and evacuation of airdrop equipment. At full strength the unit would be capable of preparing 200 tons of material per day for delivery by free, high velocity or low-velocity drop techniques.

The [33d Tactical Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/33d_Tactical_Fighter_Wing) was organized at Eglin on 1 April 1965 as an associate unit with [F-4C Phantom IIs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-4_Phantom_II), taking over the area of the base where [Strategic Air Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command) had dispersed B-52s.

On 25 June 1965 the [39th Bomb Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/39th_Air_Base_Wing)'s [62d Bomb Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/62d_Bombardment_Squadron) was reassigned to the [2d Bombardment Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2d_Bombardment_Wing) at [Barksdale AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barksdale_AFB), [Louisiana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisiana) to support SAC [Arc Light](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arc_Light) combat operations over [Southeast Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southeast_Asia), marking the phaseout of SAC operations at Eglin. At this time the 39th Bomb Wing was inactivated.

During 1965, [F-5A Freedom Fighters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-5_Freedom_Fighter) were evaluated at Eglin under project Sparrow Hawk prior to being deployed to overseas under project [Skoshi Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Skoshi_Tiger&action=edit&redlink=1). Between 1965 and 1966, USAFTAWC personnel saw combat in Vietnam while simultaneously performing the combat evaluation of the Northrop F-5. The center was conducting this evaluation to determine if an inexpensive, uncomplicated fighter would be beneficial in lower levels of conflict, such as in Southeast Asia.

In 1965, the Air Force was initiating development of a low-cost guided bomb capability for its aircraft. Aiding that effort, [Texas Instruments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas_Instruments) conducted a series of tests at the Armament Development and Test Center at Eglin AFB. These tests incorporated laser technology to guide free falling ordnance. This classified project received the code name PAVE and was the beginning of what would later become a series of sensors and precision-guided munitions.

The North Vietnamese began launching surface-to-air missiles against U.S. aircraft in 1965. The Air Force had little or no defense against these missiles and assigned the USAF Tactical Air Warfare Center the critical mission of developing effective surface-to-air missile (SAM) countermeasures to protect aircrews over the skies of Vietnam. In response to this new threat, USAFTAWC originated and fielded the Wild Weasel program. Simultaneously, the center was testing radar homing and warning equipment and self-protection electronic countermeasures jamming pods. Four [F-100F Super Sabres](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-100_Super_Sabre), modified as [Wild Weasel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_Weasel) I groundfire suppression aircraft, deployed from Eglin to Southeast Asia on 21 November 1965, assigned to the operational control of the [388th Tactical Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/388th_Tactical_Fighter_Wing).

The [48th Air Recovery Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/48th_Rescue_Squadron) was redesignated the 48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron on 8 January 1966.

In 1966, [HU-16 Albatrosses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HU-16_Albatross) of the 48th ARRSq were deployed to Southeast Asia as Detachment 7, based at [Da Nang Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Da_Nang_Air_Base), South Vietnam.

On 1 March 1966, the Air Force Armament Laboratory was established at Eglin, replacing the Directorate of Armament Development, which had assumed the responsibilities for the discontinued Air Force Armament Center in early 1965. The new laboratory, the eighth major lab of the Air Force Systems Command, was composed of the Biological Chemical Weapons, Ballistics, Targets and Scorers, and the Engineering and Evaluation Divisions. The lab was designated the "lead" laboratory of the Research and Technology Division for non-nuclear munitions for the Air Force.

The first [Tactical Air Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactical_Air_Command) [F-4D Phantom IIs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-4_Phantom_II) assigned to a combat unit arrived at the [33d Tactical Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/33d_Tactical_Fighter_Wing) at Eglin on 21 June 1966.

With the increasing U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia in the 1960s, the need for increased emphasis on conventional weapons development made Eglin's mission even more important. On 1 August 1968, the Air Proving Ground Center was redesignated the Armament Development and Test Center to centralize responsibility for research, development, test and evaluation, and initial acquisition of non-nuclear munitions for the Air Force. On 1 October 1979, the Center was given division status. The Armament Division, redesignated Munitions Systems Division on 15 March 1989, placed into production the precision-guided munitions for the laser, television, and infrared guided bombs; two anti-armor weapon systems; and an improved hard target weapon, the [GBU-28](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GBU-28), used in Operation Desert Storm during the Persian Gulf War. The Division was also responsible for developing the [Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advanced_Medium_Range_Air-to-Air_Missile) (AMRAAM), an Air Force-led joint project with the U.S. Navy.

On 9 January 1967, [Tactical Airlift Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactical_Airlift_Command) initiated Combat Lady, a test of classified weapons at Eglin AFB.

In 1967 the Air Force experimented with several [B-58 Hustlers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-58_Hustler) for the conventional strike role in Project BULLSEYE. The four stores pylons were modified for the carriage of conventional bombs, and the aircraft were flown on low-level strike test missions out of Eglin.

On 1 June 1967, two 48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron [Sikorsky HH-3E](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_H-3_Sea_King) helicopters completed the first helicopter crossing of the Atlantic. The 4,270-mile flight followed Lindbergh's route from New York to Paris of 40 years earlier. They completed the flight in 30 hours, 46 minutes with nine inflight refueling from [HC-130P](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_C-130_Hercules) tankers to set a FAI record.

The [48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/48th_Rescue_Squadron) was redesignated the 48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Training on 8 Jul 1967.

The [AC-130A Spectre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AC-130_Spectre) gunship was operationally tested at Eglin Air Force Base from June to September 1967.

Beginning in 1965, Project Black Spot was a test program designed to give the Air Force a self-contained night attack capability to seek out and destroy targets along the [Ho Chi Minh Trail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ho_Chi_Minh_Trail). After the program was approved by the Department of Defense in early 1966, [E-Systems](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-Systems) of [Greenville, Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenville%2C_Texas) modified two [C-123K Providers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-123_Provider) which were redesignated NC-123Ks, but were often referred to as AC-123Ks. The aircraft were equipped with a long, 57.75 inch nose fairing that housed an X-band forward-looking radar. Below and aft of the extended radome was a turret with [Forward-Looking Infrared Radar](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Forward-Looking_Infrared_Radar&action=edit&redlink=1) (FLIR), Low-Level Light Television (LLLTV), and a laser range-finder/illuminator. Also, a low-level Doppler navigation radar and weapons release computer were installed. Two rectangular aluminum weapons dispensers (for CBU bomblets) were stacked within the fuselage. Each container housed 12 cells, each cell containing three [Cluster Bomb Units](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cluster_Bomb_Unit&action=edit&redlink=1) (CBUs). Depending on the type of CBU installed, the containers had a capacity of between 2,664 and 6,372 one pound bomblets. The bomblets were released through 12 openings in the cargo floor that aligned with the cells in the weapons dispenser. The lower fuselage contained 12 inward opening doors that aligned with the openings in the cargo floor, forming a chute. Bomblet release was controlled by a weapons panel in the forward section of the fuselage. In the event of an emergency, the entire load could be jettisoned manually. The first aircraft, *54-691*, was delivered to Eglin AFB in August 1967 and the second, *54-698*, incorporating an AN/ASD-5 Black Crow direction finder set (engine ignition sensor), was delivered in February 1968. The two aircraft were then deployed, first the Republic of Korea, to be evaluated against North Korean high-speed patrol boats used to insert agents, 19 August - 23 October 1968; and then to South Vietnam with operations beginning 15 November 1968. Despite their success, with 70 percent of all missions completed and in-commission rate of 84 percent, there were no follow-on NC-123Ks modified. The two aircraft were transferred to the [16th Special Operations Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/16th_Special_Operations_Squadron) at [Udon RTAFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Udon_RTAFB&action=edit&redlink=1), Thailand, where they continued to serve from late 1969 to June 1970. Both airframes were then returned to standard C-123K configuration to serve again as airlifters.

Flight testing of laser guided bombs began at Eglin AFB on 18 November 1967. The first use in combat will be on 23 May 1968, when an [F-4D Phantom II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonnell_Douglas_F-4_Phantom_II) of the [8th Tactical Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8th_Tactical_Fighter_Wing), drops a Paveway Laser Guided Bomb. Modified F-4Ds, fitted with laser illuminators, designate target for the strike.

In 1968, an area was added to the main chamber of the Climatic Laboratory to specifically allow the [C-5A Galaxy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-5A_Galaxy) to be tested. This appendant area is approximately 60 feet by 85 feet with a ceiling height of 75 feet. With this appendant area included, usable floor space is approximately 55,000 square feet.

The first [North American OV-10A Bronco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_OV-10_Bronco) for the U.S. Air Force was accepted, along with the first U.S. Marine Corps OV-10A, in a joint ceremony held at [Port Columbus International Airport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_Columbus_International_Airport), Columbus, Ohio, in February 1968. Maj. Gen. Thomas C. Corbin, commanding officer of the Special Air Warfare Center, represented the Air Force at the event. The USAF Bronco was then flown by Capt. Gary Sheets to Eglin for the [4410th Combat Crew Training Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Special_Operations_Wing), designated as the first Air Force OV-10A squadron.

Sensors used in Southeast Asia for [Operation Igloo White](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Igloo_White) were developed, in part, at Eglin. Under the related [Pave Eagle](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pave_Eagle&action=edit&redlink=1) I project, [YQU-22A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beech_U-22) aircraft (modified [Beechcraft Bonanzas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft_Bonanza)) primary mission equipment and PME flight tests were conducted at Eglin in 1968. Later, the 424th Special Operations Training Squadron operated pilot training for the new QU-22B out of [Duke Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_Field), Auxiliary Field 3, under Special Operations Force.

The first separation of a dummy air-to-surface [SRAM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SRAM) missile from a [FB-111A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FB-111A) (at [Mach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mach) 0.9 and 25,000 feet (7,600 m) altitude) took place at Eglin on 19 October 1968.

On 7 February 1969, the [48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Training](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/48th_Rescue_Squadron) was inactivated at Eglin AFB.

**The 1970s**

Specially-selected raiders for [Operation Ivory Coast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Ivory_Coast), the attempted [POW](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/POW) rescue from [Son Tay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_Tay) prison in [North Vietnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Vietnam), were extensively trained and rehearsed at Eglin Air Force Base, while planning and intelligence gathering continued from 25 May to 20 November 1970. The mission failed when it was found during the raid that all the prisoners had been previously moved to another camp.

On 15 August 1970, two new [Sikorsky HH-53](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_HH-53) rescue helicopters made a 9,000-mile flight from Eglin AFB, to [Da Nang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Da_Nang), [South Vietnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Vietnam). The flight, which took nine days with seven intermediate stops, included a 1,700-mile nonstop transpacific flight between [Shemya Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shemya_Island) in the [Aleutians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleutians) and [Misawa Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misawa_Air_Base), [Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan). HC-130 tankers refueled the helicopters in this first transpacific helicopter flight.

On 2 October 1970, the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Force at Hurlburt Field, took possession of the first [Bell UH-1N Twin Huey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_UH-1N_Twin_Huey).

From 11 July 1971, in a joint operation with the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Department_of_Agriculture), seven [UC-123Ks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-123_Provider) from [Langley AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langley_AFB), Virginia, and Hurlburt Field, and eight [C-47s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_C-47_Skytrain) from [England AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England_AFB), Louisiana, sprayed [Malathion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malathion) on more than 2.5 million acres in southeast [Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas) to combat [Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venezuelan_Equine_Encephalomyelitis).

The [55th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/55th_Rescue_Squadron), equipped with [HC-130H Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-130_Hercules), was reassigned from [McCoy AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCoy_AFB), Florida, to Eglin AFB on 25 June 1971. It will also operate [Sikorsky CH-53s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_CH-53) from 1973 to 1980, [Sikorsky CH-3s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_H-3_Sea_King) from 1980 to 1982, and then [Sikorsky MH-60 Black Hawks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MH-60_Black_Hawk) from 1982 to 1999.

[North American Rockwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_Rockwell) Block 1 [Apollo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_program) [Command Module](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Command_Module), serial *007*, a Block 1 spacecraft, built for training and Earth-orbit missions, delivered to [NASA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASA) in 1966 (and originally identical to CM *012* in which astronauts [Gus Grissom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gus_Grissom), [Ed White](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ed_White), and [Roger Chaffee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Chaffee) died in the 1967 launchpad fire), after serving as a ground test vehicle was modified in 1967 for use in water-survival training. As part of their training, astronauts inside the capsule were dropped into the Gulf of Mexico by a crane from an aircraft carrier to simulate the force of splashdown. Apollo crews also trained for extended recovery by remaining at sea for several days at a time in the Command Module. This prepared astronauts for the possibility of a splashdown far from the planned recovery site. In 1971, CM *007* was transported to Eglin Air Force Base, where it was exposed to cold water and cold air during testing for the forthcoming [Skylab program](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skylab_program). It was displayed at several open houses during this period at the base. The Command Module survived the tests only to end up in an equipment lot of the Houston Department of Public Works, where it remained for 12 years. In 1988, CM *007* was restored for the [Museum of Flight](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_Flight) in Seattle, Washington, where it is now preserved, by the [Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kansas_Cosmosphere_and_Space_Center).

In May 1971, the [Aeronautical Systems Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Aeronautical_Systems_Division&action=edit&redlink=1) at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, initiated the program Credible Chase to evaluate the potential use of armed light utility short takeoff and landing aircraft in Southeast Asia. The program was designed to add mobility and firepower to the South Vietnamese Air Forces in a relatively short time. Two commercial aircraft were selected for testing: the [Fairchild Porter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-6) and the [Helio Stallion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helio_Stallion). Initial performance testing was conducted with leased aircraft (Porter N352F, c/n 2011) at Eglin Air Force Base and was successful enough to warrant a combat evaluation. The Porter, designated AU-23A, was fitted with a side-firing 20mm [XM-197](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=XM-197&action=edit&redlink=1) Gatling cannon, four wing pylons and a center fuselage station for external ordnance. The 20mm cannon was essentially a three barrel version of the M61 Vulcan 6-barrel 20mm cannon. The aircraft could carry a variety of ordnance including forward firing gun pods, 500 and 250 pound bombs, napalm units, cluster bomb units, flares, rockets, smoke grenades and propaganda leaflet dispensers. The combat evaluation, PAVE COIN, was done in June and July 1971.

The AU-24A Stallion had the same side-mounted gun, as well as five underwing and fuselage stations. In January 1972, the second test phase for the AU-24A began at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The initial aircraft used, *72-1319*, was leased from Helio and retained its civilian configuration, but it allowed basic flight testing to begin. The combat evaluation of the Credible Chase program was canceled in February 1972, but the initial (stateside) evaluation was kept on the program schedule. The first combat equipped AU-24A was delivered on 4 March 1972, and operational test and evaluation began on 17 March, but was delayed after a review of contractor quality control began on 3 April. On 10 April, the review imposed a number of flight restrictions on the AU-24A limiting maximum airspeed, dive and bank angles, and all instrument, weather and night test flights. The OT&E of the AU-24A was officially started over on 22 April, and by 3 May, the aircraft was again in trouble. This time the problem was a dynamic instability during flight. The problems were resolved by 12 May, and the test program continued until completion on 22 May. Starting on 28 June, the AU-24As were flown to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. for storage. The Credible Chase program was canceled and no AU-24A was delivered to the South Vietnamese Air Force.

The 4400th Special Operations Squadron (Provisional) was created to complete the operational test and evaluation of the Credible Chase aircraft. The first AU-23A, *72-1306* was delivered to the 4400th SOS on 2 January 1972, followed by two more aircraft (*72-1304* and *-1305*) at the end of the month. Testing continued until 4 February, when the three aircraft were grounded because of cracks in the rudder assemblies. The first three aircraft were returned to Fairchild for repair and delivery of new aircraft resumed in late April 1972. On 10 May 1972, an AU-23A, *72-1309*, crashed after an in-flight engine failure. The pilot was not hurt, but all AU-23As were grounded until 22 May, during the accident investigation. The last AU-23A was delivered on 7 June and testing was completed on 28 June. The 4400th recommended the aircraft not be used in combat without a major upgrade program. Specific problems identified included a slow combat speed (135 knots), a low working altitude, no capability for "zoom" escapes after delivering ordnance and a complete lack of armor protection for the crew and vital aircraft systems. On 30 June 1972, the 4400th SOS ferried the AU-23As to [Davis-Monthan Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davis-Monthan_Air_Force_Base), Arizona, for storage.

The climatic facility was named the [McKinley Climatic Laboratory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McKinley_Climatic_Laboratory) on 12 June 1971 after the late [Col. Ashley C. McKinley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashley_Chadbourne_McKinley).

A new base exchange, commissary and movie theatre were constructed in the Bens Lake area of the base in 1972.

In 1972, the [58th Tactical Fighter Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/58th_Tactical_Fighter_Squadron), [33d Tactical Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/33d_Tactical_Fighter_Wing), was deployed to [Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udorn_Royal_Thai_Air_Force_Base), [Thailand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand) under what was known as the "Summer Help Program." During this period, the 58th was credited as the first temporary duty unit to down an enemy aircraft. On 2 June 1972, [Major](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_%28United_States%29) Philip W. Handley and [Lieutenant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant) John J. Smallwood shot down a [MiG-19](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-19) with a 300 round burst from their [M-61A Vulcan Cannon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M61_Vulcan), disproving the perception that American aircrews had lost their [dogfighting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogfight) skills (Smallwood was later shot down and to this day remains listed as [missing in action](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missing_in_action)). Just over two months later on 12 August 1972, another 58th [Phantom II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-4_Phantom_II) was credited with a kill after shooting down a [MiG-21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-21) with an [AIM-7 Sparrow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIM-7_Sparrow), a radar guided missile. This second kill was the last credited to the 58th during its six-month rotation in [Southeast Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southeast_Asia).

The final [QF-104 Starfighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-104_Starfighter) drone operation took place 3 July 1972 when *56-0737* flew an unmanned mission and was killed by an [AIM-9J Sidewinder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIM-9_Sidewinder) missile, its 21st unmanned mission. The two F-104Ds assigned to base flight (formerly assigned at [George AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_AFB), California), are turned over to the [Puerto Rico Air National Guard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_Rico_Air_National_Guard) as the QF-104 program ends in the summer of 1972. One of these airframes, *57-1331*, later returns to Eglin in 1975 for display at the infant [Air Force Armament Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Armament_Museum).

The last [ADM-20C Quail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ADM-20_Quail) operational test was flown at the Eglin AFB water test area on 13 July 1972.

In April 1973, [Pave Deuce](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pave_Deuce&action=edit&redlink=1), an Eglin AFB program calling for low-cost, full-size, supersonic targets, was awarded to [Sperry Rand Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sperry_Rand_Corporation) to convert [F-102A Delta Daggers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-102_Delta_Dagger) into QF-102A (manned) and PQM-102A (unmanned) drones.

The [Windecker YE-5A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windecker_E-5) low-visibility airframe underwent testing at Eglin in 1973.

The last [AGM-28 Hound Dog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AGM-28_Hound_Dog) operational test was flown at the Eglin AFB water test area on 24 July 1973.

On 2 April 1973, The Armament Development and Test Center selected the General Electric version of the [GAU-8/A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GAU-8_Avenger) 30mm cannon over the Philco-Ford model for the [A-10 Thunderbolt II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A-10_Thunderbolt_II). Test Site C-74L on Range 21 West in Walton County was used for weapons testing of the pre-production [Gatling-type rotary cannon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gatling_gun) from 1974 to 1978 using various types of rounds, including [depleted uranium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depleted_uranium). An estimated 16,315 pounds of DU was expended at the site. Approximately 9,257 pounds of DU were collected and disposed of during remediation activities conducted between March 1978 and June 1987. The remainder of the material has since been remediated, was dispersed or vaporized as part of DU ordinance testing, or remains onsite and requires remediation. The test area currently consists of a 4-acre radiologically controlled area, fire control/ballistics building, gun corridor, target area, well house building, drum storage area, and surrounding land. The Department of the Air Force has proposed shutting down and remediating Site C-74L, post-2002.

The [Air Force Armament Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Armament_Museum) was founded on base in 1975.

Selected on 27 April 1975, the installation served as one of four main U.S. [Vietnamese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam) Refugee Processing Centers, where base personnel housed and processed more than 10,000 Southeast Asian refugees. Eglin again became an Air Force refugee resettlement center on 25 April 1980 processing over 9,200 [Cubans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba) who fled to the U.S. between April and May 1980.

The half dozen [Convair C-131Bs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convair_C-131_Samaritan) assigned to the 3246th Test Wing, ADTC, were retired to [MASDC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MASDC) at [Davis-Monthan AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davis-Monthan_AFB), Arizona, in mid-1975.

From late 1975, until it was finally sunk in 1980, the former mine counter-measures ship [USS *Ozark*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Ozark_%28LSV-2%29) was anchored south of [Destin, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destin%2C_Florida) as a water range target for Eglin tests. It lies in about 320 feet of water ~60 miles offshore.

Climatic testing of the ground-test-vehicle (GTV) for the [Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UH-60_Black_Hawk) program was conducted in the McKinley Climatic Laboratory from September to November 1976, spanning temperature ranges from -65 degrees to +125 °F (52 °C).

On 2 March 1977, the historic [Valparaiso Inn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valparaiso_Inn), which once served as the Eglin Officers' Club, was heavily damaged by fire.

In 1978, the USAF Tactical Air Warfare Center assumed responsibility for the USAF Air Ground Operations School. In the same year, the Electronic Warfare Evaluation Program became another one of the USAFTAWC's weapons system evaluation programs, and resulted in the activation of the 4487th Electronic Warfare Aggressor Squadron in 1990.

Following the mass suicides by members of the Peoples Temple, a cult led by [Jim Jones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Jones), at [Jonestown](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonestown) in [Guyana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guyana) on 18 November 1978, CH-53 helicopters of the 55th ARRSq were utilized to evacuate the dead.

In 1979, the 4751st Air Defense Missile Squadron was deactivated. It had conducted practice [Bomarc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIM-10_Bomarc) missile shoots for [Air Defense Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Defense_Command) crews since 1963, and was activated in February 1958 for testing of the Bomarc A and B models.

**The 1980s**

Flight-testing of modified [C-130 Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-130_Hercules) for [Operation Credible Sport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Credible_Sport) were conducted at Eglin and Auxiliary Field 1 ([Wagner Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagner_Field)) in 1980.

The [AGM-114 Hellfire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AGM-114_Hellfire) missile underwent test firings at the Site C-7 Hellfire range on Range 72 from 1980. Upgraded Hellfire tests continue through 2011, with the AGM-114R Hellfire II being successfully tested in August 2010.

The first [AGM-65E laser Maverick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AGM-65_Maverick) missile was fired at Eglin AFB on 3 June 1980 from a Marine Corps [A-4M Skyhawk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A-4_Skyhawk). The missile was the laser-guided version of the USAF’s air-to-ground Maverick with a heavier warhead. It was being developed by [Hughes Aircraft Company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hughes_Aircraft_Company) for use by the Marine Corps in close-air support of combat troops.

On 25 October 1980, the historic [Valparaiso Inn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valparaiso_Inn), which served as the Eglin Officers' Club during World War II, was destroyed by fire. It had remained vacant since another blaze severely damaged it on 2 March 1977.

In 1981 the original building housing the [Air Force Armament Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Armament_Museum) was condemned and the facility closed until 1984.

The Navy [F/A-18 Hornet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F/A-18_Hornet) began climatic testing by the Air Force’s 3246th Test Wing at the McKinley Climatic Laboratory on 23 March 1981. The tests were designed to evaluate the F/A-18 airframe’s ability to withstand the wide range of temperatures and climatic conditions which the aircraft would experience in its everyday operations.

Two [Piper PA-48 Enforcers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piper_PA-48_Enforcer) were tested during 1983 and 1984 at Eglin AFB, and [Edwards AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwards_AFB), California. As in the Pave COIN tests of 1971, the PA-48s were found to perform well in their intended role for counter-insurgency, but the USAF again decided not to purchase the aircraft being apparently uninterested in adding tail-dragger propeller-driven aircraft to the inventory.

Construction began in 1984 on the Bob Hope Village, the only retirement facility that caters to enlisted military, opening in February 1985. Residents pay below market value for the 256 independent apartments. Col. Bob Gates, [Bob Hope](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Hope)'s [USO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USO) pilot, was key in getting the comedian's support for the undertaking, as well as lending his name and prestige to the project. He was named an honorary board member of the foundation in 1978 and held benefit concerts for nearly two decades.

In November 1984, the Air Force Armament Museum reopened in a new 28,000-square foot building on State Highway 85.

In 1987, the [American Society of Mechanical Engineers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Society_of_Mechanical_Engineers) (ASME) designated the [McKinley Climatic Laboratory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McKinley_Climatic_Laboratory) a National Historical Mechanical Engineering Landmark.

The [55th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/55th_Rescue_Squadron), equipped with [HC-130 Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-130_Hercules), was redesignated the 55th Special Operations Squadron on 1 March 1988, relinquishing its four-engine transports at this time.

On 24 June 1988, the US Navy opened its new facility for the Navy Explosive Ordinance Disposal School at Eglin AFB, relocated from Indian Head, Maryland. To commemorate those EOD Technicians that have given the last full measure in performance of their duty, the EOD Memorial Foundation was created in 1969 by a group of volunteers. The construction of the EOD Memorial was started that same year at [Indian Head Naval Ordnance Station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Head_Naval_Surface_Warfare_Center), Maryland, home of the first Naval School of Explosive Ordnance Disposal. The Memorial is composed of four cenotaphs, one for each branch of the armed forces, with a bronze tablet inscribed with the names of those EOD technicians who lost lives in line of duty. In 1999, the memorial was relocated to Eglin AFB, across the street from the now relocated EOD School.

On 4 May 1989, the [AIM-120A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIM-120A) advanced medium-range air-to-air, or [AMRAAM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AMRAAM), passed its final flight test for use on U.S. fighters. The AIM-120A demonstrated its ability to achieve multiple targets. On the Gulf Test Range near Eglin Air Force Base, an [F-15 Eagle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-15_Eagle) fired two missiles at two [QF-100](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_F-100_Super_Sabre) drones at 10,000 feet and two more at two drones at 5,000 feet. The test resulted in three direct hits and one pass within lethal distance. More than 200 of the test missiles were launched during flight tests at Eglin AFB,; [White Sands Missile Range](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Sands_Missile_Range), New Mexico; and [NAS Point Mugu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NAS_Point_Mugu), California.

**The 1990s**

Following [Saddam Hussein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saddam_Hussein)'s August 1990 invasion of [Kuwait](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait), 24 F-15s of the [58th Fighter Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/58th_Fighter_Squadron), [33d Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/33d_Fighter_Wing), under the command of [Colonel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonel_%28United_States%29) Rick Parsons, departed Eglin for [King Faisal Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=King_Faisal_Air_Base&action=edit&redlink=1), [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia) as part of the buildup of coalition forces in [Operations Desert Shield](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War#Operation_Desert_Shield) and [Desert Storm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Desert_Storm). In the early morning hours of 17 January 1991, Operation Desert Storm commenced. [Captain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_%28United_States%29) John J.B. Kelk claimed the first aerial victory by downing the first [MiG-29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-29). As the war progressed, the 58th flew 1,689 combat sorties and destroyed 15 other enemy aircraft. During the course of the war, the 58th accomplished feats that no other coalition member matched including: the most air-to-air kills, the most double kills, and the most sorties and hours flown by any F-15 unit in theater. The 58th also destroyed the most MiG-29s (a total of five) and had the only wing commander who had an air-to-air victory.

On 19 February 1991, the 3246th Test Wing conducted a short notice test to certify the [GBU-28/B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GBU-28) “Bunker Buster,” developed in only eight weeks, on the F-111 for immediate deployment for [DESERT STORM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DESERT_STORM).

On 9 July 1991, [Lockheed F-117A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_F-117A), *84-0824*, c/n A.4038, was flown to Eglin for climatic testing. The aircraft was prepped and then installed in the chamber using special fixtures and tooling designed to allow simulation of conditions in flight. Testing began under cold weather conditions (-40 F ambient) on 15 July 1991, and continued through conditions of snow loading, blowing snow, hail, freezing rain, ice and fog, hot weather (140 F ambient), water intrusion testing, and concluded in January 1992 with tropical rain and human factors evaluations. Cold soaks to -60 F and 160 F were also included. A typical mission "flown" included pre-flight, pilot ingress, APU and engine start, full power takeoff, cruise, systems operation and weapon delivery, landing, pilot egress, and post flight inspection. Aircraft maintenance was performed and evaluated throughout the testing sequence.

On 13 August 1991 ground was broken for a new 14-story air traffic control tower that would replace the older and less capable tower attached to the King Hangar.

On 1 October 1991, the USAF Tactical Air Warfare Center, activated on 1 November 1963, is re-designated as the USAF Air Warfare Center.

Eglin Air Force Base tested the first flight of a [GPS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Positioning_System) [Joint Direct Attack Munition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Direct_Attack_Munition) guided weapon on 10 February 1993.

Following bombing difficulties in [Operation Desert Storm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Desert_Storm), the Air Force sought an all-weather "smart" bomb that could work regardless of smoke, fog, dust, and cloud cover, with research, development, testing and evaluation (RDT&E) of an "adverse weather precision guided munition" beginning in 1992. Several proposals were considered, including a radical concept that used GPS. To identify the technical risk associated with an [INS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inertial_Navigation_System)/[GPS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GPS) guided weapon, the Air Force created in early 1992 a rapid-response High Gear program called the "[JDAM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JDAM) Operational Concept Demonstration" (OCD) at Eglin Air Force Base. [Honeywell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honeywell), Interstate Electronics Corporation, Sverdrup Technology, and [McDonnell Douglas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonnell_Douglas) were hired to help the [46th Test Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/46th_Test_Wing) demonstrate the feasibility of a GPS weapon within one year. The OCD program fitted a [GBU-15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GBU-15) guided bomb with an INS/GPS guidance kit and on 10 February 1993, dropped the first INS/GPS weapon from an Air Force [F-16](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Dynamics_F-16_Fighting_Falcon) on a target 88,000 feet (27 km) downrange. Five more tests were run in various weather conditions, altitudes, and ranges. The OCD program demonstrated an 11-meter [Circular Error Probable](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circular_Error_Probable) (CEP).

During a 1992 reorganization, the Air Force disestablished Eglin's parent major command, [Air Force Systems Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Systems_Command) (AFSC) and merged its functions with the former [Air Force Logistics Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Logistics_Command) (AFLC). The newly created major command from this merger, [Air Force Material Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Material_Command) (AFMC), remains Eglin's parent command to this day. The Development Test Center, Eglin's host unit, became part of AFMC on 30 June 1992. The [46th Test Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/46th_Test_Wing) replaced the 3246th Test Wing in October 1992.

In July 1992, an [MV-22 Osprey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-22_Osprey) prototype, BuNo *163914*, c/n D0004, concluded four months of tests in the McKinley Climatic Laboratory. Unfortunately, on 20 July, this airframe crashed at [MCAS Quantico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MCAS_Quantico), Virginia, after a flight from Eglin, killing 5 crew members in front of an audience of high-ranking US government officials, the first of a series of fatal accidents involving the controversial [tiltrotor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiltrotor) aircraft. A U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry (COI) concluded that the aircraft "experienced multiple emergencies upon entering the downwind" and that "the primary cause of the mishap was a flammable [sic] fluid leak which was ingested by the right engine."

On 31 October 1992, the first U.S. Air Force [McDonnell Douglas C-17 Globemaster III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_C-17_Globemaster_III) to deploy to a base outside of California completed a 4.2-hour, 1,870-mile flight to Eglin Air Force Base. C-17A Lot 2, *89-1189*, c/n P-3, the third production aircraft, flew from [Edwards AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwards_AFB) to the Florida base where it underwent pressurization and temperature control tests inside the climatic test facility. The tests were expected to last five to six months, after which P-3 was return to the flight test program at Edwards.

On 25 March 1993, the [55th Special Operations Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/55th_Rescue_Squadron), equipped with [MH-60 Black Hawks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MH-60_Black_Hawk), was reassigned from Eglin Main Base to [Hurlburt Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurlburt_Field), where it would remain until its inactivation on 11 November 1999.

In 1993, [B-2A Block 10 Spirit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-2), *82-1070*, AV-5, "The Spirit of Ohio", endured over 1,000 hours of extensive temperature testing at the McKinley Climatic Laboratory at Eglin AFB. It was given the second nick-name "Fire and Ice". This name was painted on the nose gear door. This component was donated to the [National Museum of the United States Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_the_United_States_Air_Force) at [Wright-Patterson AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright-Patterson_AFB), Ohio, in 1999, and installed on the test B-2 airframe displayed there.

The [USAF](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USAF) test facilities at Eglin were heavily involved in the [F-15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-15_Eagle) AUP (Avionics Upgrade Program) for the [Israeli Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Air_Force) that integrated the [AIM-120](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIM-120) Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile ([AMRAAM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AMRAAM)) in the mid-1990s.

On 10 August 1994 construction began on the All Conflicts' Veterans War Memorial on the site of the old POW/MIA memorial on the western end of Eglin Boulevard. The memorial was dedicated on 15 August 1995.

On 1 October 1995, Headquarters [Air Combat Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Combat_Command) consolidated the USAF Air Warfare Center, Eglin Air Force Base, with the inactive 53d Tactical Fighter Group, and it was re-designated as the [53d Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/53d_Wing).

A 5,000 pound terrorist bomb destroyed the [Khobar Towers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khobar_Towers) near [Dharan, Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dharan,_Saudi_Arabia&action=edit&redlink=1) on 26 June 1996, killing 19 U.S. servicemen including 12 assigned to the [33d Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/33d_Fighter_Wing).

Fully remodeled and renovated, the McKinley Climatic Laboratory reopened in June 1997.

In 1998, as part of the Air Forces' strategic plan to guide the service into the 21st century, the Air Force Development Test Center became the Air Force Materiel Command's Air Armament Center (AAC), responsible for development, acquisition, testing, and fielding all air-delivered weapons.

The [55th Special Operations Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/55th_Rescue_Squadron) at Hurlburt Field was inactivated on 11 November 1999.

**The 2000s – present day**

The [GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GBU-43/B_Massive_Ordnance_Air_Blast_bomb) live prototype is shown an instant before impact on Range 70, 11 March 2003. The detonation created a mushroom cloud that could be seen 20 miles away.

Under Project Linked Seas, a [NATO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO) exercise, conducted between 1 May and 12 May 2000, two missions were flown by [RPV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RPV) [RQ-4Q Global Hawk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RQ-4), AV-4, *98-2004*, from Eglin AFB to [Portugal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal).

From June to August 2002, [F-22A Block 10 Raptor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-22_Raptor), *91-4004*, c/n 4004, was tested in the McKinley Climatic Laboratory. The aircraft arrived from [Langley AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langley_AFB), Virginia, on 30 May 2002, piloted by Maj. Colin Miller, 36, of [Falls Church, Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falls_Church%2C_Virginia).

Given the initial tasking 10 September 2002, experts from the Air Armament Center, Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, Air Force Research Laboratory Munitions Directorate and 53rd Wing developed, tested and delivered the new [CBU-107 Passive Attack Weapon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CBU-107_Passive_Attack_Weapon) by December. The weapon’s full production was completed 9 March 2003. The Air Force used the new weapon following a 98-day, $40 million development program.

[Lockheed Martin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_Martin) successfully conducted the first test flight of a prototype NetFires [Loitering Attack Missile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loitering_Attack_Missile) (LAM) at Eglin Air Force Base, on 11 November 2002. The LAM vertically launched flawlessly, transitioned to stable flight and performed several maneuvers during the short flight test. Test objectives were successfully achieved. The Lockheed Martin-designed LAM was flown without a Laser Radar (LADAR) seeker or warhead. A solid rocket motor vertically launched the 7-inch, 100-pound missile from a closed breach canister mounted in a Lockheed Martin prototype launcher. Control surfaces and a pivoting wing deployed as planned as the missile began its programmed assent-phase roll and pitch maneuver. Protective covers on the forward dome, scoring camera and turbojet inlet were ejected properly and engine start sequence began as scheduled. Turbojet ignition sequence completed approximately five seconds after launch, and the engine came up to speed as the prototype approached apogee. For the next eight minutes, the LAM prototype executed preprogrammed maneuvers over the Eglin test range, demonstrating impressive stability and validating aerodynamic performance, navigation and autopilot performance design parameters.

The 'Massive Ordnance Air Blast' or 'Mother of All Bombs' ([MOAB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massive_Ordnance_Air_Blast_bomb)) was first tested live at Eglin AFB on 11 March 2003.

In May 2003, seven *Luftwaffe* [MiG-29A Fulcrums](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-29) of *Jagdgeschwader* 73, visited Eglin to participate in Sniper 2003 training exercises, staging to the United States through [Keflavik, Iceland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keflavik%2C_Iceland). This was the MiGs' last major deployment before being dropped from the German Air Force. They were *29+02*, *29+06*, *29+08*, *29+10*, *29+14*, *29+15* and *29+19*. *29+10* carried special markings that read "Fulcrum Farewell USA 2003". The Eastern Bloc aircraft flew training and secret missions with and against U.S. military units of the Air Force, Air National Guard, and U.S. Navy. Live missile launches were made against aerial targets, including [BQM-34 Firebees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BQM-34_Firebee), over the extensive water ranges.

The [X-43A-LS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X-43) low-speed demonstrator underwent testing out of Auxiliary Field 6 in November 2003.

From 2004, the Team Eglin Miniature Munitions Systems Group conducted development and testing of the GBU-39 [Small Diameter Bomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small_Diameter_Bomb), the fastest major acquisition program in Eglin history.

The first upgraded [A-10C Thunderbolt II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A-10_Thunderbolt_II), *81-0989*, c/n A10-0684, made its debut flight at Eglin on 20 January 2005.

In September 2005, a [Raytheon Hawker Horizon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raytheon_Hawker_Horizon) business jet underwent testing in the McKinley Climatic Laboratory.

Lockheed Martin’s [Sniper® Advanced Targeting Pod (ATP)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_Martin_Sniper_XR) successfully demonstrated compatibility with the launch of a Maverick missile from an adjacent A-10C wing pylon at Eglin in August 2006. The ability to fire missiles so close to the Sniper ATP uniquely qualifies Sniper for this weapon configuration, doubling the previous A-10C Maverick loadout capabilities.

“The addition of Sniper ATP greatly enhances the capabilities of the A-10,” said Ken Fuhr, Sniper ATP program director at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control, prime contractor for the U.S. Air Force-led ATP program. “It provides the A-10 the ability to deliver both laser-guided and J-series weapons while enhancing existing close air support capabilities and providing greater capability to positively identify targets and growth capability for future weapons.”

The test was conducted by the U.S. Air Force’s [46th Test Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/46th_Test_Wing), [40th Flight Test Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/40th_Flight_Test_Squadron) at Eglin. The Sniper ATP was mounted on an A-10C Precision Engagement aircraft adjacent to the Maverick missile mounted on the [LAU-88](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=LAU-88&action=edit&redlink=1) missile rail. In this configuration, Sniper ATP is approximately 15 inches (380 mm) from the missile body. Test pilots from the [40th Test Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/40th_Flight_Test_Squadron), and the [422nd Test Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/422d_Test_and_Evaluation_Squadron) at [Nellis AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nellis_AFB), Nevada, reported that they were impressed with the ATP’s performance during the developmental and operational flight tests of the A-10C. The A-10C’s avionics upgrade and targeting pod integration are part of the Precision Engagement (PE) program, led by Lockheed Martin Systems Integration-Owego in New York.

[Lockheed-Martin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed-Martin) announced on 27 September 2006 that successful guided test flights of its [Compact Kinetic Energy Missile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compact_Kinetic_Energy_Missile) (CKEM) against a reinforced urban structure (RUS) were recently conducted at Eglin Air Force Base. All objectives for this test were achieved. In addition to demonstrating CKEM’s capability against a RUS, the test also gathered performance data about the missile’s guidance system and collected thermal, shock and vibration effects data. This flight was the second of four guided test flights scheduled for this calendar year. “This test demonstrated CKEM against a reinforced structure at the missile’s maximum kinetic energy,” said Loretta Painter, CKEM Advanced Technology Demonstration (ATD) program manager at the [U.S. Army Research and Development Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=U.S._Army_Research_and_Development_Command&action=edit&redlink=1) (RDECOM), Aviation and Missile Research, Development, and Engineering Center (AMRDEC), [Redstone Arsenal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redstone_Arsenal), AL. “This test collected target effects data to assess the lethality potential of CKEM against various targets, and substantiates what CKEM could provide the warfighter.”

Anonymous all-white [Boeing C-32B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_C-32) or [Boeing 757-23a](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_757) aircraft, said to be operated by the U.S. State Department Foreign Emergency Support Team, have operated out of Eglin Main in the post 9/11 era.

On 30 July 2007, the Eglin and Hurlburt base commanders took turns in a front-end loader to ceremonially begin demolition of the first of 380 sub-standard base housing to be razed by March 2008. All Air Force installations in the United States are slated to privatize under the Office of the Secretary of Defense's goal to eliminate all inadequate military family housing by 2007. The developer will provide Eglin AFB with 1,214 new homes and Hurlburt Field with 470 new homes.

At the Air Force Association's 2008 conference, it was reported that the AC-27J variant would be named "Stinger II" after the [AC-119K Stinger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairchild_AC-119). [C-27A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeritalia_G.222) *90-0170* (c/n 4097) was removed from storage at [AMARC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AMARC) in October 2008 and delivered to [Eglin AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eglin_AFB), Florida, for use by the [Air Force Research Laboratory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Research_Laboratory) to test the feasibility of mounting of 30 mm and 40 mm guns. The fully assembled airframe was at the Eglin main base by December 2008.

As of 2009, the original World War II–era base theatre still exists, and is used for a briefing space.

A move is afoot in 2009 to get the base hangar in which the modifications and maintenance of the [Doolittle Raiders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doolittle_Raid) [B-25s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-25) was performed, declared a national historic site. This work was performed by personnel from [Wagner Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagner_Field), Aux. Fld 1.

The [Air Force Armament Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Armament_Museum) is located on the south side of Eglin main base after originally opening in 1975 in a converted World War II–era base gymnasium near the Valparaiso gate. When the gymnasium/museum structure was razed, it was replaced by a new facility housing the Eglin Training Center.

With the departure of the 33rd Fighter Wing F-15 Eagles and the transfer of mission to [AETC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AETC) in the fall of 2009, Air Combat Command Gate (formerly Tactical Air Command Gate) on State 85 has been renamed Northwest Gate.

In February 2009 it was announced that Eglin would become the home base to 59 [F-35B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-35B) fighters, divided into one squadron each for the USAF, USN, and USMC. The first aircraft would arrive in March 2010, and deliveries would continue until 2014. In an ironic turn from the past, given how closely the founding of the base is tied to the history and businesses of [Valparaiso, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valparaiso%2C_Florida), the Valparaiso Commission voted, 3–0, on Wednesday 18 February 2009 to sue the Air Force over the Record of Decision on 6 February to bring the F-35 training operations to Eglin. Citing concerns over noise levels of the new jet, the city has until 5 April to file suit in federal court, sixty days from the military's announcement. The city had previously filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit to gain more information on the potential impact of the JSF operations on the community, located under certain potential flight paths. The Air Force has received five bids for the $100 million in military construction money in preparation for arrival of the F-35 since the 6 February announcement, with at least four more bids in the works. "Military construction is expected to bring nearly $700 million to the area," reported the Northwest Florida Daily News on 19 February, but this may be jeopardized by the actions of Valparaiso city officials. Other communities in the region view the Valparaiso actions with disdain, and billboards have been erected in the Fort Walton Beach area supporting the F-35 decision. The Valparaiso mayor, Bruce Arnold, called the special meeting when he knew that the two city commissioners in favor of the F-35 basing decision would be unavailable – one out of town at [Creech Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creech_Air_Force_Base), Nevada, on business, and the other attending to his regular job.

On 23 April 2009, the first [F-35A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-35A) [Joint Strike Fighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Strike_Fighter) to visit Eglin, AA-1, arrived and was displayed in front of the McKinley Climatic Laboratory.

Runway 19/01 reopened to air traffic on 15 March 2010 after a six-month repaving and construction project.

On 25 March 2010, [A-10C Thunderbolt II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A-10_Thunderbolt_II), *81-0989*, c/n A10-0684, (the first A-10C conversion to fly), flown by Maj. Chris Seager of the 40th Flight Test Squadron, made the first flight on a blend of [Hydrotreated Renewable Jet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synthetic_fuel), or HRJ, and [JP-8](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JP-8). This first-ever feasibility flight demonstration was using HRJ, a hydrocarbon synthetic jet fuel, created from animal fats and plant oils. The flight was conducted by members of the [40th Flight Test Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/40th_Flight_Test_Squadron), a developmental test squadron that is part of the Air Armament Center here. "The Air Force is committed to reducing our reliance on foreign oil," said Terry Yonkers, assistant secretary of the Air Force for installations, environment and logistics. "Our goal is to reduce demand, increase supply and change the culture and mindset of our fuel consumption." A [C-17A Globemaster III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-17A_Globemaster_III), *03-3121*, c/n P-121, of the [412th Test Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/412th_Test_Wing) at [Edwards AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwards_AFB), California, will successfully be tested at that base between 23 August and 27 August 2010 using a blend of renewable fuels and JP-8. "The C-17 fleet is the biggest Air Force consumer of jet fuel annually," said Lt. Gen. Mark Shackelford, Military Deputy, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Acquisition). "This is a big step forward in achieving the Air Force's energy goal of increasing the available supply of fuel by acquiring half of the Air Force's domestic jet fuel requirement from domestically derived, environmentally friendly alternatives sources by 2016."

In April 2010, the third [Boeing 787 Dreamliner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_787_Dreamliner), N787BX, ZA003, arrived at Eglin on 18 April for cold weather testing in the McKinley Climatic Laboratory. The tests mark the first time the lab has tested a commercial Boeing aircraft. Until the mid-1990s, the lab only conducted military testing, including Boeing’s F-15, F-18 and F-22 jets. The lab usually requires an appointment two years in advance, said Matt McCarty, one of McKinley’s five test engineers. Boeing got in for two weeks of tests because of a cancellation.

On 21 April 2010, Building 68, a hangar used by the [Doolittle Raiders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doolittle_Raid) in 1942, was dedicated as the Horton J-PRIMES Test Facility in honor Master Sgt. Edwin Weston Horton, Jr. Horton was a gunner on one of 16 B-25s that took part in the Doolittle Tokyo Raid during World War II, and worked at the Climatic Laboratory until his retirement. The plaque reads: "MSGT (RET) EDWIN J. HORTON HANGAR - Dedicated to Master Sergeant Horton For his 25 years of honorable service to his country as a Doolittle Raider and his 22 years of service as a civil service to Eglin AFB." Horton died on 26 November 2008, age 92. He was the last surviving member of crew 10 of the raid.

As of July 2010, two new childcare facilities are under construction at Eglin Main. The $18 million project includes two 37,890-square-foot buildings that will each accommodate 305 children. "In addition to the infant, toddler, and preschool rooms, both Child Development Centers are equipped with a full kitchen and laundry, administrative spaces, and multiple playgrounds," said Paula Harris, spokeswoman for Barge Waggoner Sumner and Cannon, defense contractors for the project. The buildings are scheduled for completion by 15 August 2011, and will be located on Boatner Road between the hospital and the Officer’s Club. The facilities will provide care for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old. "They will be side by side and they will mirror each other in design," said Malinda Camp, chief of the Airmen Family Services flight. BWSC has teamed with contractor A.E. New Jr., out of Pensacola, for the project. The new facility was financed with $9.6 million in BRAC funds and $8.8 million in military construction money. The CDC currently has a waiting list of about 80 children. Nearly 400 children attend the CDC. "Years ago, before I even came here, (the CDC) had a large waiting list and they built a temporary facility that houses more than 270 children. And that facility will be replaced with one of the centers," Camp said. "The other one is to accommodate the demand once the 7th Special Forces and the Joint Strike Fighter families get here." In addition to the new facilities, a $3.06 million addition of the current CDC is under way. Scheduled for completion on 25 February 2011, the new addition will be used for before- and after-school care of children 5 to 12 years old. The 10,300-square-foot addition will include classroom space, a food service kitchen, storage areas and administrative and staff support.

On 19 August 2010, at ~1115 hrs., non-operational [F-16B Block 1 Fighting Falcon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-16_Fighting_Falcon), *78-0097*, a training airframe assigned to the 40th Flight Test Squadron, was destroyed on a range in a test by the 780th Test Squadron, overseen by the QF-16 special program office, of an aerial-target flight termination system. The F-16 was split in half between the cockpit and the wings. The purpose was to demonstrate that the FTS design will be sufficient to immediately terminate the flight of a QF-16, as well as determine a range safety debris footprint, according to Kevin Diggs, QF-16 test and evaluation lead. The QF-16 is a supersonic reusable full-scale aerial target drone modified from an F-16. The QF-16 will provide a 4th generation full-scale aerial target for air-to-air and surface-to-air weapons system evaluation, conducted by the 53rd Weapons Evaluation Group at Tyndall AFB, Fla. At this time, the WEG uses QF-4s to conduct their full-scale aerial target missions. Each drone contains a FTS needed to satisfy range safety requirements for use in unmanned missions. The test was a milestone in the development to prepare the F-16 for its new QF-16 mission. "We're taking these non-operational aircraft and reusing them, recycling if you will," said Mr. Diggs. "We find a better purpose for them in making them flight worthy, which gives our weapons designers the opportunity to test our advanced weapons against a modern aircraft. Additionally, our warfighters get an opportunity to train against a quality fourth generation fighter." The first QF-16 is expected to be delivered in 2014 to replace the QF-4 Phantom II in use by the 82d Aerial Targets Squadron.

Demolition of the old Non-Commissioned Officers Club building began on 15 October 2010 with the structure due to be removed by November to make way for new Navy EOD dormitories, to be completed by summer 2011.

On 22 October 2010, an [F-15E-41-MC Strike Eagle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-15_Eagle), *86-0184*, c/n 1049/E024, of the [40th Flight Test Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/40th_Flight_Test_Squadron), successfully conducted over an hour of flight testing, fueled by a 50-50 mixture of [Hydrotreated Renewable Jet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synthetic_fuel), or HRJ, and [JP-8](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JP-8), piloted by Maj. Matthew Coldsnow of the 40th FTS. "The flight went as expected; we didn't anticipate any issues going into it. The chemical properties are very similar to that of normal fuel. I didn't notice any change in thrust or performance degradation," said Coldsnow.

On 13 January 2011, the 33d Fighter Wing received four F-16s from the [56th Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/56th_Fighter_Wing) at [Luke AFB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luke_AFB), Arizona. The jets will help establish a "battle rhythm," as the wing stands up the first Joint Training Center for the fifth generation F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

**Demographics**

Eglin employs more than 8,500 military and approximately 4,500 civilians, with an additional 2,200 jobs due to move to Eglin under the 2005 [BRAC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Base_Realignment_and_Closure).

As of the [census](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Census) of 2000, there were 8,082 people, 2,302 households, and 2,262 families residing on the base. The [population density](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_density) was 2,640.1 people per square mile (1,019.8/km²). There were 2,320 housing units at an average density of 757.9/sq mi (292.7/km²). The racial makeup of the base was 71.8% [White](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_%28U.S._Census%29), 14.8% [Black](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_American_%28U.S._Census%29) or [African American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_%28U.S._Census%29), 0.5% [Native American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_%28U.S._Census%29), 3.0% [Asian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_%28U.S._Census%29), 0.4% [Pacific Islander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Islander_%28U.S._Census%29), 4.2% from [other races](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_%28U.S._Census%29), and 5.3% from two or more races. [Hispanic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanics_in_the_United_States) or [Latino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latino_%28U.S._Census%29) of any race were 11.2% of the population.

There were 2,302 households out of which 79.8% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 89.8% were married couples living together, 5.2% had a female householder with no husband present, and 1.7% were non-families. 1.6% of all households were made up of individuals and 0.0% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 3.50 and the average family size was 3.51.

On the base the population was spread out with 43.5% under the age of 18, 15.2% from 18 to 24, 39.6% from 25 to 44, 1.6% from 45 to 64, and 0.1% who are 65 years of age or older. The median age was 22 years. For every 100 females there were 100.6 males.

The median income for a household on the base was $31,951, and the median income for a family was $31,859. Males had a median income of $25,409 versus $19,176 for females. The [per capita income](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Per_capita_income) for the base was $10,670. About 4.5% of families and 4.5% of the population were below the [poverty line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_line), including 4.5% of those under the age of 18 and none of those 65 and older.

**National historic status**

There are two U.S. [National Historic Landmark Districts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Historic_Landmark) with connections to the base: [Camp Pinchot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Pinchot_Historic_District) and [Eglin Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eglin_Field_Historic_District).

**Notable residents**

* Infielder [Jay Bell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay_Bell) was born here.
* Author [Hunter S Thompson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunter_S_Thompson) served here in the 1950s.

**Eglin AFB in pop culture**

* Three movies have been filmed in part at Eglin Air Force Base or its outlying auxiliary airfields, [*Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty_Seconds_Over_Tokyo) in 1944, [*Twelve O' Clock High*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_O%27_Clock_High) in 1949, and [*On the Threshold of Space*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Threshold_of_Space) in 1955.
* Several Tom Clancy novels refer to "raking the sand traps on the officers' golf course" at Eglin as a common activity for low-security prisoners at the associated [Federal Prison Camp, Eglin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Prison_Camp%2C_Eglin), now closed.
* [F-15 Eagles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-15_Eagles) from Eglin's [33rd Fighter Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/33rd_Fighter_Wing), 59th Fighter Squadron, were used in the filming of the 1997 movie "[Air Force One](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_One)".

**Climate**

Warm, [subtropical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtropics) [weather](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weather) lasts almost nine months out of the year. The annual [precipitation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precipitation_%28meteorology%29) ranges from 25 inches (640 mm) to 60 inches (1,500 mm). Year-round, the average temperatures run:

Jan – March: 60–69 High and 42–51 Low
Apr – June: 76–88 High and 58–72 Low
Jul – September: 86–89 High and 70–77 Low
Oct – December: 63–79 High and 44–69 Low

The area gets only 50 to 60 days of annual precipitation or more rainfall. There are few days without sunshine, which allows year-round outdoor activities.

**Environment**

The forests and shores of Eglin Air Force Base are at the center of one of the most [biodiverse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biodiversity) locations in North America. Over 50 [species threatened](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Threatened_species) in Florida are found on the base, including [sea turtles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_turtle) that nest on its white-sand beaches and [red-cockaded woodpeckers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-cockaded_woodpecker) that thrive in its [longleaf pine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longleaf_pine) forests. The base has a natural resources management team that constantly monitors important species within the base with the goal of balancing their national defense mission with environmental stewardship. Longleaf pine forest, a forest type reduced to 5% of its former range in the last few centuries, covers 200,000 acres (810 km2) of the base. Part of this forest, 6,795 acres (27.50 km2), is [old growth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_growth), making the base home to one of the most extensive old-growth longleaf pine forests in the world.

In order to deal with the high noise levels of the "stealthy" [Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_Martin_F-35_Lightning_II), officials from Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties are studying which homes, businesses and public buildings will require additional noise protection.

**Civil rocketry**

Eglin Air Force Base is also a launch site for civil rockets of [NASA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASA). There are three launch pads: one at 29.6700 N, 85.3700 W at Cape San Blas; and two on Santa Rosa Island at 30.3800 N, 86.7400 W and 30.3800 N, 86.8170 W. Rockets launched here have included Arcas, Nike Cajun, Nike Apaches, and Nike Iroquois. This site was formerly operated by the 4751st ADMS with CIM-10 [Bomarcs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bomarc), which inactivated in 1979. In the 1940s, captured [V-1 flying bombs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-1_flying_bomb) and American copies, [Republic-Ford JB-2 LOONs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic-Ford_JB-2), were launched out over the [Gulf of Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) from these sites. Two concrete launch ramps were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. A rusting Loon launch ramp still exists at Auxiliary Field 1, [Wagner Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagner_Field).

Eglin is known to have been used for 441 launches from 1959 to 1980, reaching up to 686 kilometers altitude.

**See also**

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|  | [***United States Air Force portal***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal%3AUnited_States_Air_Force) |
|  | [***Military of the United States portal***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal%3AMilitary_of_the_United_States) |
|  | [***Florida portal***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal%3AFlorida) |

* [Air Force Armament Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_Armament_Museum)
* [Duke Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_Field) (Eglin AFB Auxiliary Field #3)
* [Hurlburt Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurlburt_Field) (Eglin AFB Auxiliary Field #9)
* [Federal Prison Camp, Eglin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Prison_Camp%2C_Eglin)
* [Florida World War II Army Airfields](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida_World_War_II_Army_Airfields)
* [Fort Walton Beach-Crestview-Destin, Florida Metropolitan Statistical Area](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Walton_Beach-Crestview-Destin%2C_Florida_Metropolitan_Statistical_Area)
* [Khobar Towers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khobar_Towers)
* [List of accidents and incidents involving military aircraft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_accidents_and_incidents_involving_military_aircraft)
* [List of aircraft accidents at Eglin Air Force Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_aircraft_accidents_at_Eglin_Air_Force_Base)
* [Northwest Florida Regional Airport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_Florida_Regional_Airport) (located with Eglin AFB)
* [Rocket launch sites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocket_launch_site)