



Saying Goodbye to the F-15 and Hello to the F-35

1931: James E. Plew was a local businessman and airplane buff that saw the potential of a military payroll to boost the local area's depression-stricken economy. He leased the City of Valparaiso, 137 acres on which the airport was established.

1934: Plew offered the US government a donation of 1,460 contiguous acres for the bombing and gunnery range. This leasehold became the headquarters for the **Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Base**.

1937: The Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Base was renamed Eglin Field in honor of Lt. Col Eglin killed in an accident.

Eglin has been a major employer in the area from the 1930's to the present day.

1965: The 33rd Fighter Wing was activated at Eglin flying the F-4 Phantom II fighter jet

33rd Fighter Wing The 33rd Fighter Wing is the largest associate unit at Eglin AFB. With two F-15 squadrons and an air control squadron, the wing's mission is to deploy worldwide and provide air superiority and air control... to protect you and your family.

F-15 Eagle is an all-weather tactical fighter designed to gain and maintain air superiority in aerial combat. It was developed for the United States Air Force, and first flew in July 1972.

1978: Eglin's 33rd wing converted their planes from the F-4 to the F-15 Eagle

2008: 30 years later Eglin's 33rd Wing still flies the multi-staged refurbished F-15

Participating in Operations Desert Shield/Storm, Eglin's 58th squadron out of the 33rd Fighter Wing became the first Air Force unit to employ the F-15 in combat, achieving victories against Iraqi forces—a response against September 11, 2001.

Approximately 1,900 airmen and civilians associated with the 33rd Fighter Wing will be leaving with their families; total population loss of 4,145.



F-35 Lightning: First built in 2007, the Joint Strike Fighter is the new and improved fighter jet. It has enhanced capabilities in take-offs, landings, and fighting air-to-air as well as air-to-ground.

Just like a 10 year old car needs to be replaced due to aging mechanical parts, so does a 30 year old air plane.

The F-35 coming to Eglin is the next step in our military development and national protection.

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Initial Training Center (ITC) will replace the 33rd Fighter Wing's 1900 personnel and their families providing our area with a net gain of approximately 800 citizens.

2008: The first F-15 of the 52 based at Eglin AFB left. The departure schedule was approximately 3 a month; the last F-15 left Okaloosa County in September 2009.

Proposed Delivery Schedule for F-35 Aircraft to Eglin AFB

- Total Originally Planned F-35s: 107
- February 2009 Record of Decision Current Planned Beddown: 59
- First Plane: 2010
- Last Plane: 2016

Joint Strike Fighter – Estimated Personnel (based on 107 aircraft)	
Personnel	Count
Pilot Instructors	134
Maintainer Instructors	66
Pilot Students	109
Maintainer Students	436
Government Civilians	30
Contractors	150
Aircraft Maintainers	1,076
Aircraft Maintenance Squadron	325
Total JSF Personnel	2,326
<i>Spouses*</i>	1,163
<i>Children*</i>	1,396
Total Population Increase	4,885

Source: EAFB Draft EIS Executive Summary, Mar 2008



The military presence is the primary economic generator for Okaloosa County.

In 2007, the overall defense economic impact in Okaloosa County was over \$6,000,000,000 annually--\$6.7B for the tri-county area!

In 2008, the University of West Florida Haas Center for Business Research released a *Florida Defense Industry Economic Impact Analysis* providing these statistics.

- About 35% of Northwest Florida regional output is driven by defense spending; 18% for NE Florida, 5% for Central Florida, and 3% for South Florida.
- Average earnings per military job in Florida are at 175% of average earnings across all Florida jobs (*the more they make the more they spend in our retail and service sectors*).
- In 2005, average military earnings per job were \$68,540 compared to an average of \$39,990 for all Florida jobs.
- In Okaloosa County defense-related spending accounts for 73% of economic activity.

The defense-related spending in the tri-county generates additional employment, wages, consumption spending, and investments and continues to produce more spending as it circulates throughout the region's economy.

The military installations further generate employment by contracting with local businesses and national businesses that have facilities in the area.

Seven of the ten largest defense contractors in the State of Florida chose to have a presence in Okaloosa County in order to work with Eglin.

Eglin AFB was selected for the location of the F-35 ITC because it is considered a “national security treasure.” It contains the climate, land, air and water ranges/spaces needed to train and fly these planes.

