



## 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

**33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing** The 33<sup>rd</sup> 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 33<sup>rd</sup> wing converted their planes from the F-4 to the F-15 Eagle

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

**33<sup>rd</sup> Wing Personnel:** Approximately **1,900** airmen and civilians leaving with their families; total population loss of **4,145**.

Participating in Operations Desert Shield/Storm, Eglin's 58th squadron became the first Air Force unit to employ the F-15 in combat, achieving 16 aerial victories against Iraqi forces.

Most recently, the 33<sup>rd</sup> wing supported Operation Noble Eagle by patrolling strategic locations on the East Coast as a deterrent and response force against Sept. 11, 2001 – future terrorist attacks.



**F-35 Lightning:** 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 33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing's 1900 personnel and their families providing our area with a net gain of 740 citizens.

**2008:** The first of the 52 F-15s at Eglin AFB left. The planes will leave at 3/month; 23 departed as of February 2009 with the last one scheduled to leave 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

<b>Joint Strike Fighter – Estimated Personnel</b> (based on 107 aircraft)	
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Count</b>
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
<b>Total JSF Personnel</b>	<b>2,326</b>
<i>Spouses*</i>	1,163
<i>Children*</i>	1,396
<b>Total Population Increase</b>	<b>4,885</b>

Source: EAFB Draft EIS Executive Summary, Mar 2008

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

**The overall defense economic impact in Okaloosa County  
is over \$6,000,000,000 annually!**

The University of West Florida Haas Center for Business Research released a *Florida Defense Industry Economic Impact Analysis* in January 2008 and provided 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 Okaloosa County generates additional employment, wages, consumption spending, and investments throughout the county and continues to produce more spending as it circulates throughout the region's economy.

The military installations in the county 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.**

