



History of Eglin Air Force Base

by
**Air Armament
Center
Office of History**





History of Eglin AFB



Origins

**Early
Development
Prewar
Development
Eglin during**



**Eglin after the War
Weapons**

**Development
Special
Operations
Tenant Units
Humanitarian**





Origins (1)



15 Oct 1934

James Plew, a local businessman, donated 1,460 acres of land to the US Government for a military airport near Valparaiso, FL.



Origins (2)



22 May 1935

The Army Air Corps activated the Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Range with one officer and 15 enlisted men assigned.



Prewar Development (1)



27 Mar 1936

The Air Corps Tactical School conducted the first gunnery training at the Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Range.



Prewar Development (2)



4 Aug 1937

Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Range was renamed Eglin Field in honor of Lt Col Frederick I. Eglin, killed 1 Jan 1937 near Anniston, AL.



Prewar Development (3)



26 Apr 1939

Maj Gen Henry "Hap" Arnold, Chief of the Air Corps, approved the findings of the Air Corps Board to locate a proving ground at Eglin Field.



Prewar Development (4)

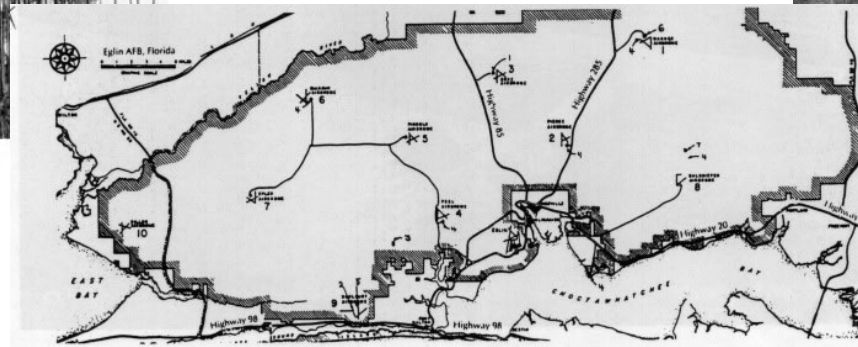


Dec 1939

Cpts Delmar T. Spivey and George W. Mundy, 23rd Composite Group, Maxwell Field, flew two P-37s to Eglin Field for engine testing, the first of 1000s of service tests.



Prewar Development (5)



27 Jun 1940

The Department of Agriculture transferred over 340,000 acres of the Choctawhatchee National Forest to the War Department for ranges to be used for gunnery and bombing training.



Prewar Development (6)

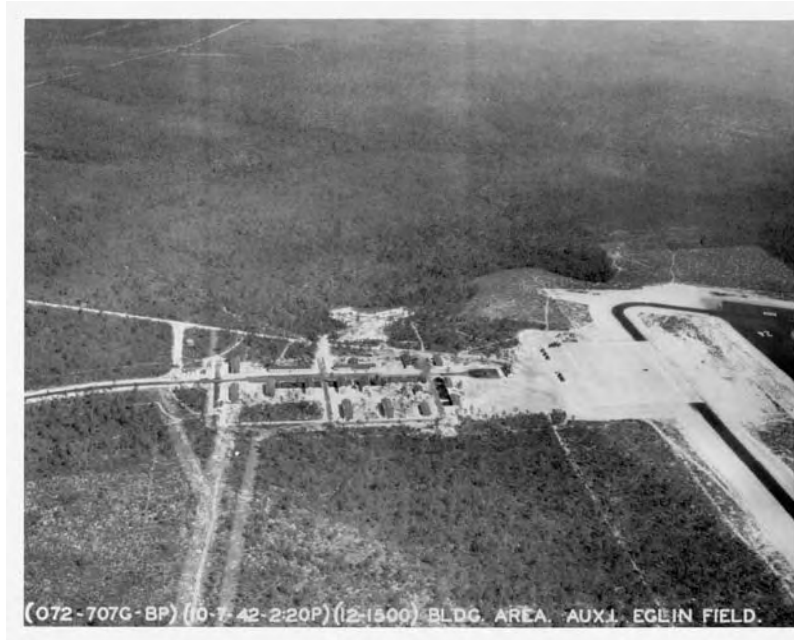


1 Sep 1940

The Army Air Corps established the Air Corps Specialized Flying School to train pilots of the Southeast Air Corps Training Center in pursuit gunnery.



Prewar Development (7)

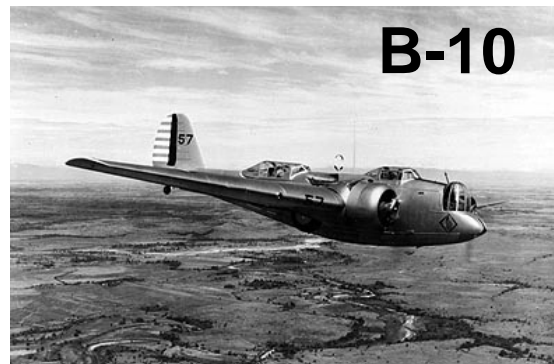


27 Nov 1940

Eglin Field began construction of the first of ten auxiliary fields for gunnery and bombing training and service testing of aircraft and armament.



Prewar Development (8)



30 Jun 1940

The 23rd Composite Group transferred from Orlando AAF for permanent assignment to Eglin Field to conduct flight testing activities.



Prewar Development (9)



19 May 1941

Eglin Field was redesignated as the Air Corps Proving Ground under the direct control of the Chief of the Air Corps with Col Donald P. Muse as its first commander.



Eglin during World War II (1)



9-25 Mar 1942

Doolittle Raiders learned to conduct carrier-style short takeoffs at Wagner Field (Aux Field #1) and Duke Field (Aux Field #3), in preparation for their 18 Apr raid on Japan.



Eglin during World War II (2)



15 Feb 1944

Gen “Hap” Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Force, observed an Operation CROSSBOW test, the program to determine the best method of attacking German V-1 “buzz bomb” sites along the French and Dutch coast, at Eglin Field.



Eglin and World War II (3)

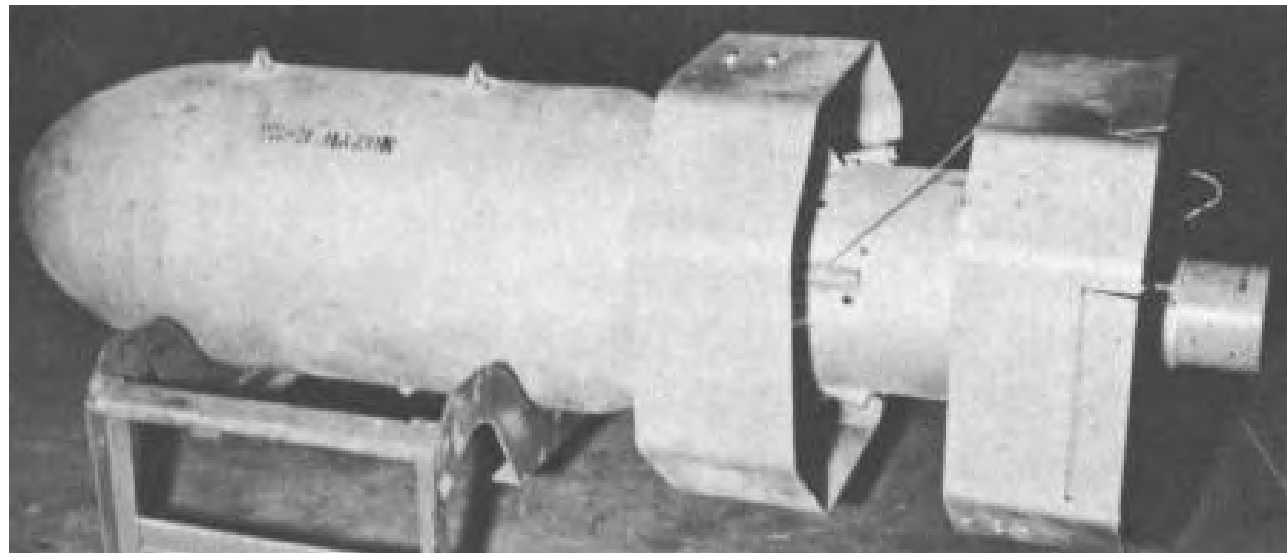


12 Oct 1944

The Air Proving Ground Command began testing the JB-2 Loon, an American version of the German V-1, which became the foundation of the Air Force guided missile program.



Eglin after the War (1)



31 Mar 1946

The Air Proving Ground Command completed the tactical suitability test of the JB-3, which destroyed 15 bridges during the Korean War.



Eglin after the War (2)



13 Jan 1947

The First Experimental Guided Missile Group conducted a simulated “bombing” mission of Washington, DC, with a B-17 drone.



Eglin after the War (3)



24 May 1947

Eglin AFB completed construction of the McKinley Climatic Laboratory that allowed the Air Proving Ground Command to simulate virtually all climatic conditions “indoors.”



Eglin after the War (4)



9 Feb 1956

The first production model of the Lockheed C-130 Hercules arrived for cold weather testing in the McKinley Climatic Laboratory. C-130 has served in over 15 roles and has been produced in 10 major variants.



Weapons Development (1)



26 Dec 1951

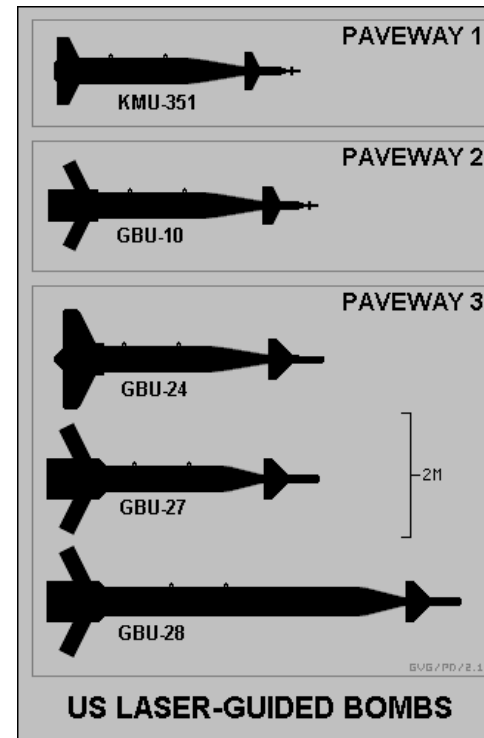
The Air Force established the Air Force Armament Center (AFAC), commanded by Maj Gen Edward P. Mechling, as a tenant unit on Eglin AFB, to develop air-delivered weapons for the Air Force.



Weapons Development (2)



1967



The Air Force began development of the BOLT-117 (BOmb, Laser Terminal), the world's first laser guided bomb, and completed combat evaluation in 1968.



Weapons Development (3)

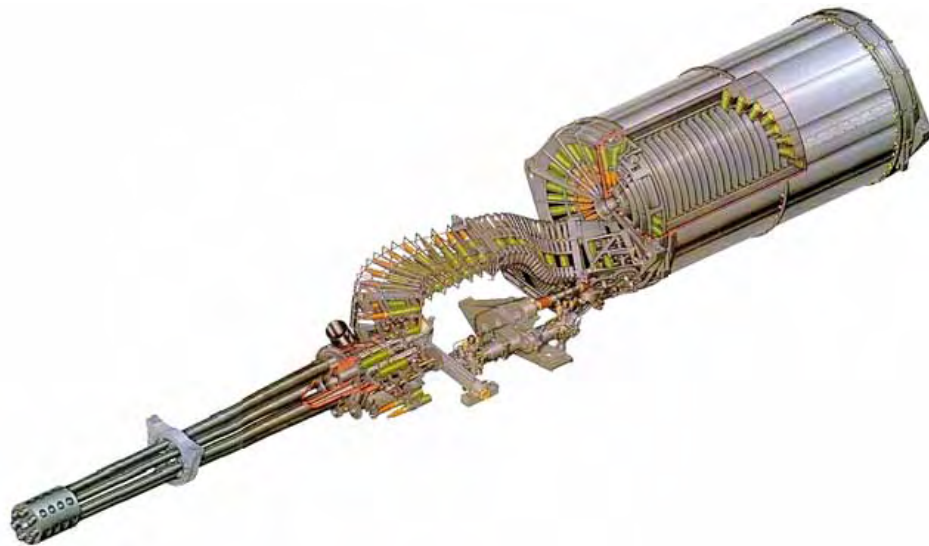


Sep 1972

The 3246th Test Wing completed testing of the first production television-guided AGM-65 Maverick air-to-ground missile.



Weapons Development (4)



2 Apr 1973

The Air Development and Test Center chose the GE version of the GAU 8/A gun system over the Philco-Ford competitor for exclusive use in the A-10 Thunderbolt II.



Weapons Development (5)



14 Oct 1976

The Armament Development and Test Center formed the Advanced Medium Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) Joint System Program Office to develop the follow-on missile to the AIM-7 Sparrow missile.



Weapons Development (6)



9 Jul 1984

The Armament Division awarded AVCO Systems Division a contract for the development of the Sensor Fuzed Weapon, the first wide-area cluster munition with “smart” warheads capable of multiple kills per pass against armored targets.



Weapons Development (7)



1 Aug 1988

The Air Force established the **SEEK EAGLE** Office at Eglin AFB to manage and direct the certification of weapons and stores for all Air Force aircraft.



Weapons Development (8)



19 Feb 1991



The 3246th Test Wing conducted a short notice test to certify the GBU-28/B "Bunker Buster," developed in only eight weeks, on the F-111 for immediate deployment for DESERT STORM.





Weapons Development (9)



Jul 1994

The 46th Test Group, Holloman AFB, NM, began construction of a magnetic levitation sled track to meet future sled track needs.



Weapons Development (10)



30 Apr 1997

The Air Force announced the decision to begin low-rate initial production of Joint Direct Attack Munition with the first production lot of 937 JDAM kits. Using the NAVSTAR GPS signal the JDAM has a CEP of about ten feet.



Weapons Development (11)



3 May 2001

Eglin AFB launched its first Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM) from a B-52 over the White Sands Missile Range. The JASSM maneuvered across 195 miles and hit its intended target.



Weapons Development (12)



11 Mar 2003

Eglin AFB exploded the Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb, the world's largest conventional bomb, on Eglin's western range.



Weapons Development (13)



20 Sep 2005

The AAC Commander certified the GBU-39/B Small Diameter Bomb to enter operational test and evaluation a month ahead of schedule and under cost.



Special Operations (1)



14 April 1961

The Air Force established the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron, nicknamed "Jungle Jim," at Hurlburt Field, to train allied pilots in counterinsurgency operations and their ground crews to maintain aircraft in austere conditions.



Special Operations (2)



Aug-Sep 1970

An Army Special Forces group, led by Col Arthur "Bull" Simons, trained on Eglin AFB before deploying to Thailand for the attempted rescue on 20-21 Nov 1970 of US POWS at the Son Tay prison camp in North Vietnam.



Special Operations (3)



22 May 1990

The Air Force established the Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field to conduct global special operations missions such as precision application of firepower, infiltration, aviation foreign internal defense, exfiltration, resupply and refueling of SOF operational elements.



Major Tenants (1)



15 Jan 1959

The 4751st Air Defense Missile Wing, Hurlburt Field, activated on 27 Feb 1958, launched the first BOMARC surface-to-air interceptor from the Santa Rosa Island launch site.



Major Tenants (2)



2 Apr 1962

The Air Force announced Eglin AFB as the site (C-6, 35 miles east of Eglin main) for the development and test of a phased array radar to detect and track satellites.



Major Tenants (3)



20 Nov 1951

The US Army located its Ranger training camp at Eglin Auxiliary Field #7 to provide realistic jungle/swamp training. In Jan 70, the camp moved to its present location at Field #6.



Major Tenants (4)



1 Dec 1958

The Strategic Air Command activated the 4135th Strategic Wing, equipped with B-52s, at Eglin AFB to disperse the manned bomber force and conduct final testing of the GAM-77 Hound Dog and the GAM-72 Quail.



Major Tenants (5)



1 Nov 63

The Tactical Air Command activated the USAF Tactical Air Warfare Center to improve use of tactical aviation in support of ground forces by operationally testing weapon systems and tactics for the joint US Strike Command.



Major Tenants (6)



24 Jun 1977

The Air Force announced that the 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing, located on the west side of Eglin AFB, would convert from the F-4E to the F-15. During DESERT STORM the 33rd shot down more Iraqi MiGs than any other unit, earning it the nickname of “MiG-killer.”



Major Tenants (7)



26 Jun 1996

A 5,000-pound terrorist bomb destroyed the Khobar Towers apartment building near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing 19 US service members, including 12 assigned to the 33rd Fighter Wing.



Major Tenants (8)



24 Jun 1988

The US Navy opened its new facility for the Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal School at Eglin AFB, relocated from Indian Head, MD.



Major Tenants (8)



20 May 2005

The DoD released the results of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Committee which recommended the placement of the Joint Strike Fighter training wing and the Army's 7th Special Forces Group at Eglin AFB.



Humanitarian Ops (1)



27 Apr 1975

The Department of Defense chose Eglin AFB as one of three processing centers in the US for Vietnamese refugees.



Humanitarian Ops (2)



25 Apr 1980

The Department of Defense chose Eglin AFB as a resettlement camp for over 9,200 Cuban refugees between 2 May and 15 Sep.



Humanitarian Ops (5)



Sep 2005

The UH-1 “Huey” helicopter of the 46th Test Wing rescued 23 people as part of the Eglin AFB response to flood-stricken New Orleans after the passage of Hurricane Katrina.



Eglin and Global War on Terror



Today

Eglin people regularly deploy to the Middle East to fight in the Global War on Terror. Eglin's weapons provide precision attack on insurgent sanctuaries in Iraq and Afghanistan



1935



?? Questions ??



2008