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# MILITARY PRIORITIES POINT-PAPER



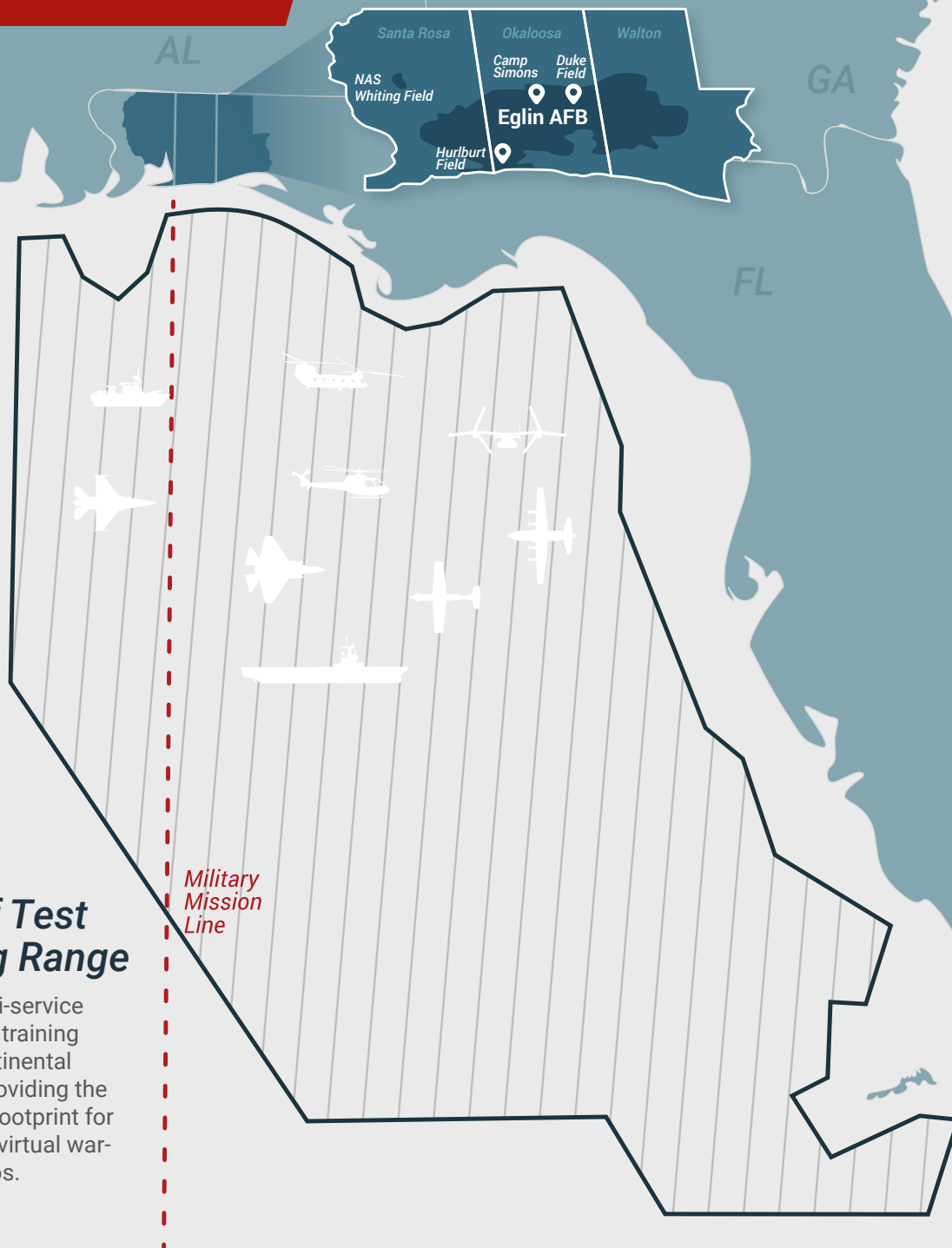
*DoD's effectiveness and survivability in combat conditions is dependent on military readiness capabilities, capacity and support infrastructure ensuring our nation's security against adversaries; today and tomorrow.*

*Prepared and Provided by*

DEFENSE SUPPORT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE  
OKALOOSA – SANTA ROSA – WALTON COUNTIES  
FLORIDA, USA

FEBRUARY 13, 2025

## DSI FOCUS AREA



### Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range

The largest multi-service military test and training range in the continental United States providing the required safety footprint for real-life live and virtual war-fighting scenarios.

## DEFENSE SUPPORT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

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## BACKGROUND

The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County, Florida (DBA One Okaloosa) stood up the **Defense Support Initiatives (DSI)** committee as a military issues advocacy group supporting local military installations and their missions across a three-county region in Northwest Florida housing Eglin Air Force Base (EAFB) and Hurlburt Field in Okaloosa County and NAS Whiting Field in Santa Rosa County. Local installations support Air Force, Army and Navy test and training units, and host major organizations for numerous development programs, operational units, military schools and various Federal agencies.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) ensures military superiority to protect Americans against threats to national security. The **Major Range and Test Facility Base** (MRTFB) is a designated set of DoD facilities, ranges, and their associated workforce that provide the foundation, or base, for the Nation's Test and Evaluation (T&E) capabilities deemed critical to maintaining our Nation's military readiness. The MRTFB is a national asset consisting of broad-based test and evaluation ranges—one of which is the Eglin Air Force Base complex, managed by the 96th Test Wing, and includes the **Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range** (EGTTR; aka Eastern Gulf Test & Training Range). The largest military range in the continental United States, the EGTTR connects ranges and capabilities across the eastern Gulf of Mexico/Gulf of America extending from



NW Florida to Key West, and supports missions varying from testing missiles and aircraft to conducting surface and subsurface training exercises. It provides for water-to-land transitions, high-altitude supersonic air combat training, air-to-air missile testing, air-to-ground targeting, drone testing and targeting, hypersonic weapons testing, space launches and recoveries, and other activities. The EGTTR is vital for testing the next generation of air armaments, and for training in realistic combat-surrogate conditions. The EGTTR complex is an integral part of DoD's Training Resources Strategy. The military range of the future must provide for demanding, high-fidelity, next-generation environments for the development of relevant joint warfighting capabilities.

*The U.S. Department of Defense ensures military superiority to protect Americans against threats to our national security*

The **Eglin Test and Training Complex (ETTC)** is one of ten Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) host bases and consists of the largest land range in the U.S; large enough to fit three D.C. beltways. The **96th Test Wing (96TW)** is the installation's host and the test and evaluation organization for Air Force (AF) air-delivered weapons, navigation and guidance systems, Command and Control systems, and AF Special Operations Command systems.

The **Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)** is a major command located at Hurlburt Field and provides specialized forces, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and agile combat support across the spectrum of conflict for rapid worldwide deployment. The **1st Special Operations Wing**, the host unit at Hurlburt Field, is a pivotal component of AFSOC's ability to provide airpower to conduct special operations missions worldwide.

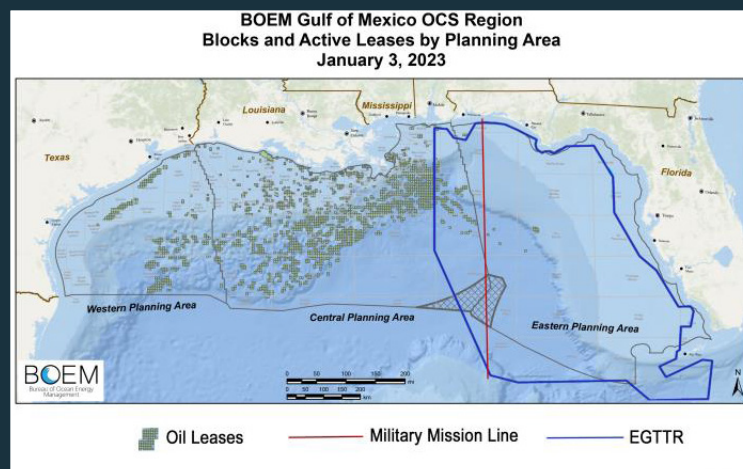
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*Any infrastructure developments within the EGTTTR boundary would encroach upon and impede military test and training capabilities placing our national security in jeopardy*

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The Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range is regarded by DoD as a national asset for ensuring American security. Compromising the size, capability, or utilization of the EGTTTR assets could directly result in military mission failure. Energy and oil drilling structures along with associated exploratory activities are incompatible with military activities, would adversely impact military missions, and would compromise military readiness. To protect this vital asset, the 2006 Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA), Public Law 109-432, Section 104, codified the north-south **Military Mission Line (MML)** providing an encroachment protection zone for the EGTTTR by preventing oil and gas exploration and production in the GOMESA Moratorium Area in the eastern Gulf.

The Congressional 2006 GOMESA MML moratorium had an expiration date of June 30, 2022. In September 2020, then President Trump leveraged U.S. Code 43, Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) authorization to withdraw the areas of the Outer Continental Shelf designated by Section 104 of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (the moratorium area in the eastern Gulf containing



the EGTTTR) from oil and gas leasing for ten years through June 30, 2032. In January 2025, then President Biden utilized the same OCSLA authority to withdraw the EGTTTR, and other OCS areas, from oil or natural gas leasing for a time period without specific expiration. Also in January 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order temporarily halting all offshore wind energy leasing within the OCS areas. These Presidential actions clearly illuminate the necessity to permanently protect, by law, the GOMESA Moratorium Area.



# EGLIN MRTFB ACTIVITY

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## *Stakeholders*

### **AIRFORCE**

- 96TH TEST WING
- AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND HQ
- AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY MUNITIONS DIRECTORATE
- 505TH COMMAND & CONTROL WING
- 53RD WING
- ARMAMENT DIRECTORATE
- 24TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING
- 919TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING
- 1ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING
- 33D FIGHTER WING
- 350TH SPECTRUM WARFARE WING
- AIR FORCE – OTHER

### **ARMY**

- 6TH RANGER TRAINING BATTALION
- 7TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE)
- ALABAMA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
- ARMY – OTHER

### **COAST GUARD**

- STATION DESTIN

### **NAVY**

- NAVY SCHOOL EXPLOSIVE ORDINANCE DISPOSAL
- NAVY – OTHER

### **JOINT**

- UNITED STATE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
- JOINT – OTHER

### **SPACE FORCE**

- 20TH SPACE SURVEILLANCE SQUADRON

## TOP PRIORITIES

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- 1** Support Long-Range Weapons Kill-Chain Portfolio
  - 2** Authorize Weapons Technology Integration Center MILCON
  - 3** Authorize McKinley Climatic Laboratory Modernization
  - 4** Authorize 350 Spectrum Warfare Wing MILCON
  - 5** Authorize Eglin Main Fitness Modernization
  - 6** Support Air Space Encroachment Protection
  - 7** Support Hurlburt Field CDC P&D Future MILCON
  - 8** Support Transportation Capacity Improvements
  - 9** Support Hurlburt Field Access Gate Future MILCON
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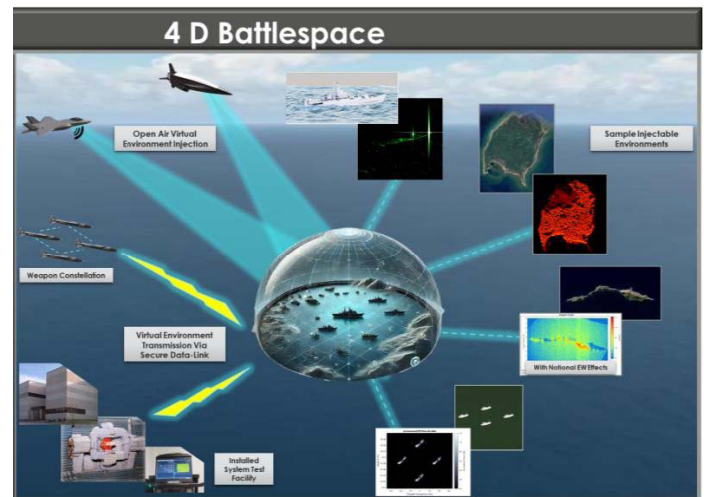
# PRIORITIES

## Long-Range Weapons Kill-Chain

The Long-Range Weapons Kill-Chain (LRWKC) is a test and evaluation (T&E) range infrastructure modernization portfolio that enables long-range weapon kill-chain and hypersonic testing at the Eglin Test and Training Complex (ETTC). It will accomplish this goal by building the necessary physical and virtual/simulation capabilities. A LRWKC is a military process utilized for attacking targets over long distances. It's a chain of steps that must be completed in order to successfully engage a target.

The LRWKC effort builds upon previous modernization programs such as the **Gulf Range Enhancement (GRE)** and the **Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range – Maximization (EGTTR-MAX)** plans in an effort to create a physical test range with sufficient space, telemetry, photo-optics, physical storage, and time/space/position information (TSPI) to inform decision-makers fielding long-range systems. The LRWKC effort will also create hardware-in-the-loop (HITL) virtual capabilities to address key areas that cannot be practically explored in flight test due to cost, complexity, limitations, and security concerns.

In the virtual domain, a vital piece of the LRWKC effort is the **Gulf Range Autonomous Collaborative Environment (GRACE)** where high-fidelity, developmental test simulation spaces across the 96th Test Wing and beyond can be integrated and



aligned with real world data and event timing to provide a holistic and blended environment. The LRWKC effort looks to mature these technologies by identifying and integrating a data link suitable for injecting virtual data from this environment to a weapon in flight and by acquiring high bandwidth cross domain solutions and multilevel security for real-time mission execution, simulation systems, facility control, data storage, and analysis functions.

The LRWKC plan was approved in FY24 and approved in the FY27 POM. The total funding of the FY27 POM is \$855M; from FY25-FY31. \$1.8M was authorized in FY25 NDAA. It is critical to support and protect this T&E security necessity.

## CONGRESSIONAL ASK

Support execution of the LRWKC Portfolio as currently funded in the AFTC baseline without modification or delay.

\$1.8M currently funded in Program Element 65807F, Test and Evaluation Support

## Weapons Technology Integration Center

The rapid advancement in technology is changing the character of war in the air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace domains. The complexity of today's and all future warfare drives the need for more advanced weapon systems that are agile; adapt to situations in a complex, multi-domain environment; and perform multiple roles while executing its primary mission. The need is to field new advanced weapon system orders of magnitude faster than today, keeping pace with new technologies and outpacing our adversary's capabilities. This cannot be done in the existing 1960s laboratory infrastructure at the Eglin AFB installation.

The Air Force Research Laboratory's planned Weapons Technology Integration Center (WTIC) Project is critical to national defense and to retaining our uncontested superiority. The WTIC includes unique laboratories focused on expediting the development and fielding of new weapon capabilities with advancements in hypersonic weapons, precise

weapons navigation in GPS denied environments, military use of artificial intelligence, swarming drone technology and new sensors technologies for multi-role weapons. The WTIC will provide the necessary secure processing capabilities with ultra-high-speed networks and workspaces, enabling a completely digital development environment with a digital twin of every system that gives the AF the capability to do near real time changes to the weapons as the threat evolves — new capabilities within 48 hours. Without the WTIC, the existing antiquated IT infrastructure and outdated facilities impede DoD's ability to field new technologies faster than our near-peer adversaries and places our fighting forces at risk. With the WTIC, AFRL can develop and field the weapons the USAF and DoD needs, when they need it.

Planning and Design total requirement is \$35M; \$10M was authorized in FY24 for P&D; \$25M is required to meet 100% P&D requirements.

### CONGRESSIONAL ASK

Support Weapons Technology Integration Center development  
Authorize \$25M for Planning & Design in PE 91211F, Major Military Construction

## McKinley Climatic Laboratory

The McKinley Climatic Laboratory (MCL) is the world's largest environmental test chamber and produces realistic global climatic testing conditions facilitating weapons and support systems development in order to function worldwide. The environmental conditions capable of being achieved range from the extremes of windswept arid deserts to the cold northern regions, and include extreme high and low temperatures, sand, dust, wind, rain, snow, salt spray, solar radiation, freezing rain, icing, high altitude, rapid decompression, and high humidity. The MCL is intended to simulate any climatic environment in the world. These simulations help



ensure maximum reliability and operational capability of complex systems in the harshest environments.

Tests items have included large aircraft, tanks, missile launchers, shelters, engines, automobiles and tires. Completed in 1947, with revisions throughout the years, the Climatic Lab instrumentation and facilities

are legacy systems. Instrumentation currently requires manual operation at all levels.

Modernizing the lab with digital capability is a must for this unique asset to sufficiently support DoD’s advancing needs. **Modernizing the infrastructure** will increase capabilities and reduce the overall cost of maintenance.

**CONGRESSIONAL ASK**

Support McKinley Climatic Laboratory technological modernization  
Authorize \$202M in PE 0605976F, Facilities Restoration and Modernization-T&E

350 Spectrum Warfare Wing Superiority Complex

In 2018 and 2019, the Air Force’s Electronic Warfare/ Electromagnetic Spectrum (EW/EMS) Enterprise Capability Collaboration Team (ECCT) assessed the Air Force’s readiness to dominate in the EMS field. From that analysis, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force directed the Air Force to consolidate and modernize the EW /EMS Reprogramming Enterprise. Eglin AFB was designated for the 350 SWW permanent beddown and the Wing was activated in 2021 in temporary facilities.

The 350 SWW MILCON was approved initially with two buildings plus site prep for a third “pad” for a third building that wasn’t part of the initial scope. Mission requirements for the Wing to reach Full Operational Capability now requires the third building; estimated at \$100M to design and build. This third building will be required to accommodate expanding growth.



Complete buildout cannot be further delayed without putting mission accomplishments in danger. The lack of full facility infrastructure challenges the 350 SWW to provide asset resources needed to launch the US into the next stages of EMS supremacy.

\$43.3M is required for 100% planning and design; \$10M was authorized in FY2025.

**CONGRESSIONAL ASK**

Support 350 Spectrum Warfare Wing full operational capacity  
Authorize and appropriate \$33M, PE 91211F, Major Military Construction

Eglin Main Fitness Center

Eglin’s Fitness Operations provide support to 9 Wings/Wing equivalents and a total population of 98K personnel, averaging 30,000 customers a year. Eglin’s Main Fitness Center has been closed since 25 December 2024 due to significant damage sustained

in a fire. Eglin has two satellite facilities with limited space, which are unable to support the demands of the installation: Lightning Fitness Center (capacity: 86) and the Field House (capacity: 58). Since the closure of the Main Fitness Center, data shows that the Lightning



Fitness Center has seen a 444% increase in patronage and the Fitness Field House has seen a 179% increase when compared to the previous calendar year.

The infrastructure of the Main Fitness Center is 53 years old (constructed in 1972) and its layout is not conducive to fitness standards. The Department of the Air Force manual that implements physical fitness requirements (DAFMAN 36-2905) highlights that: “The goal of the Physical Fitness Program is to motivate

all members to participate in a year-round physical conditioning program that emphasizes total fitness, to include proper cardiorespiratory conditioning, muscular endurance training, and healthy eating. An active lifestyle increases productivity, optimizes health, and decreases absenteeism while maintaining a higher level of readiness.”

A modernized fitness facility is necessary for Team Eglin to meet the fitness demands of the base populace and ensure year-round readiness for active-duty personnel.

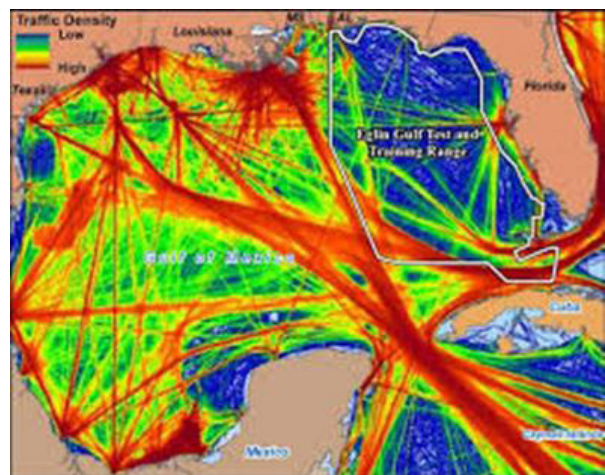
### CONGRESSIONAL ASK

Support Eglin’s Main Fitness Center modernization  
Authorize \$40M in PE 0605976F, Facilities Restoration and Modernization-T&E

## Air Space Encroachment

The Eastern Gulf Test & Training Range connects capabilities across the eastern Gulf and supports missions varying from testing missiles and aircraft to conducting surface and subsurface training exercises. It provides for high-altitude supersonic air combat training, air-to-air missile testing, air-to-ground targeting, drone testing and targeting, hypersonic weapons testing, space launches, and other activities. The entire military range must be adequately protected to meet advanced military mission requirements and necessary test and training capabilities to support national security requirements. An emerging threat to these capabilities is in the form of commercial flights desiring the ability to fly across the military range; thereby encroaching upon and reducing the capabilities of the military test and training missions.

Additionally, drone sightings over military bases and in military air space across the country has increased concerns that the U.S. doesn’t have clear government-wide policy for how to deal with unauthorized



incursions that could potentially pose a national security threat. It’s unclear what these unmanned aerial systems could be doing. Their intent could be anything from attempting to gather intelligence on the base or testing its defenses and response time, to gaining a better understanding of how the bases work, or they could be harmless hobbyists flying drones too close to restricted areas.

### CONGRESSIONAL ASK

Congressional and state support to sustain full EGTTTR capacities by maintaining current protections and preventing air and maritime traffic and other types of encroachment (e.g. frequency), as applicable. Support improving protections for military air space and restricted areas by enacting counter-UAS legislation to expand existing counter-drone authorities to mitigate threats.

## Hurlburt Field Childcare Development Center

There is an **identified deficit** in quality and quantity of daycare centers in the tri-county area of Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties. In addition to being a family priority, the inadequate facility challenge also negatively impacts military readiness and retention.

Hurlburt Field is headquarters for the Air Force Special Operations Command and the 1st Special Operations Wing. Hurlburt’s current CDC total capacity/enrollment

is 644 with a shortfall of 300; as defined by their waitlist. Hurlburt Field’s #1 MILCON priority is an additional CDC to accommodate an additional 305 children—bringing total capacity to 949. \$300K is required for a Planning Charrette Report to validate the project scope, site, and costs. It will also provide the designer a basis for understanding the project requirements and establishes a framework for project execution. This is the first required step in developing DD Form 1391.

### CONGRESSIONAL ASK

Support an additional CDC development on Hurlburt Field to meet readiness needs.

## Transportation Capacity

The tremendous footprint of the Eglin installation results in transportation infrastructure challenges. It is reported that 80-90% of military personnel live in the communities surrounding Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field. Housing costs have increased exponentially in the coastal communities within the tri-county area. As a result, the rising housing costs have driven military families further away from their respective duty installation. Due to **extreme traffic congestion** these families and military members experience extended commute times of over an hour for 25 miles one-way. Highway 85 is the main north-south

thoroughfare in Okaloosa County while Highway 98 is the east-west roadway across the Florida panhandle. Traffic congestion on these two main commute pathways cause negative impacts to the area’s military missions and required response times.

While there are ongoing efforts by respective Department of Public Works offices, the Florida Department of Transportation, and others to address capacity and traffic management, more is required to elevate the infrastructure improvements in priority ranking.

### CONGRESSIONAL ASK

Congressional and state support expediting roadway capacities and traffic management improvements related to Highway 85 and Highway 98, as applicable.

## Hurlburt Field Installation Access Gate

U.S. Highway 98 is a main thoroughfare in Northwest Florida, and in Okaloosa County it is one of only two east-west routes. Hurlburt Field’s main gate is located on Hwy 98 and experiences extreme traffic back-up during prime commute times. The traffic congestion on Hwy 98 west of Hurlburt Field imposes a mission readiness threat to Air Force Special Operations Command and the 1st Special Operations Wing headquartered at Hurlburt Field. Military leadership have stressed their concern of the mission threat caused by the traffic congestion.

1 SOW maintains a no-notice alert posture to support crisis response missions; this requires personnel to be recalled to base within a short timeframe to generate and launch aircraft. US 98 traffic backups have delayed the 1 SOW’s response time; which ultimately could impact a hostage rescue or other national mission. A new secure west entrance gate is required to move traffic off of Hwy 98 and alleviate congestion at Hurlburt’s Main Gate. This new installation access point is required for mission readiness. An environment study is currently underway with a completion date in 2026.

### CONGRESSIONAL ASK

Support AFSOC and 1SOW mission readiness requirements with a new West Gate.





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