United States Air Force
Air Force Materiel Command
Air Force Development Test Center, Office of Public Affairs
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August 1996 FACT SHEET

Protecting Cultural Resources

Introduction

Eglin Air Force Base is the largest air force base in the free world, including 724 square miles of land area and about 130,000 square miles of controlled airspace overlying land and water. In this setting, Eglin conducts its primary mission of full-service air armament development through weapons system research, development, testing and evaluation; training; space operations; and base and range support. While fulfilling its mission, Eglin also manages its natural and cultural resources. Eglin's cultural resources program is an important part of the base's environ-mental protection program, providing stewardship to protect evidence about the past and to pass data about the past to future generations.

Over 10,000 years of human occupation are represented at Eglin. Historic sites and artifacts illustrate the culture of prehistoric and historic Native Americans, European colonists and pioneers, and World War II and Cold War military forces.

Eglin works to identify, locate and preserve important cultural resources such as structures, landscapes and archaeological sites. These sites, located on the base and off its shores, reflect much of the cultural heritage and historical development of the Florida Panhandle.

A mockup of a V-1 launching site still stands at Eglin as a reminder of the World War II Operation Crossbow.

Federal Laws and Regulations

At least seven federal laws are in place to protect the nation's cultural resources. Of these, provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act affect Eglin's daily operations most directly. Section 110 of this law requires federal agencies, including the Air Force, (1) to locate, identify and inventory historic properties within their boundaries, (2) to determine which are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and (3) to nominate historic properties to the Register. Section 106 of the law requires federal agencies to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office and offer the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation the opportunity to comment before undertaking any action that could affect eligible or potentially eligible properties. The requirements of these two sections are incorporated in Air Force Instruction 32-7065.

Managing Cultural Resources at Eglin

Eglin's approach to managing the cultural resources of the base has been systematic. Archaeological testing and evaluation of sites at the base as well as background and literature studies were used to develop a cultural resources management plan. One important outcome is the development of Geographic Information System (GIS) maps that combine computerized geographic position information with data about identified cultural resource sites as well as areas of probability for unknown sites. GIS makes it possible to predict the probability of finding cultural resources at a given site. This information is invaluable in planning new projects because it enables planners to minimize additional costs and delays by avoiding areas known to contain historic sites and areas where there is a high probability of finding historic sites in the future.

Areas on the base have been ranked according to the probability that they contain cultural resources. These areas are zoned as high, low or indeterminate. About 36.5 percent of Eglin?s land is zoned highly probable to contain historic or archaeological findings. More than 56.5 percent is zoned as low probability (unlikely to contain cultural resources). About 7 percent of

Eglin is zoned indeterminate. Both the highly probable and indeterminate areas must be surveyed before any activities at those sites can take place.

Eglin's Process for Evaluating Planned Activities

Eglin follows a systematic review process to assess the potential effect on cultural resources by a planned activity. Participants in Eglin's review process include the Base Historic Preservation Officer, the State Historic Preservation Officer, Advisory Council, and interested parties (local governments, Native American tribes, organizations or private individuals). The review must identify potential cultural resources, determine their significance, assess the effects of the proposed actions, and develop mitigation measures to eliminate or reduce any adverse effects.

If the review process identifies that a planned activity may cause adverse effects, the project may be redesigned or relocated. The proposed action may even be cancelled. When the avoidance of an adverse impact is not feasible, Eglin may choose

- to recover whatever data is possible
- to plan programs for preservation and maintenance;
- to relocate the historic structure or item; or
- to document details about the architecture, engineering, history, and/or archaeology prior to an activity.

Most Eglin airspace is over Gulf waters that are known to contain submerged prehistoric sites and historic shipwrecks. Presently, Eglin does not have specific guidance about management of the resources within these ranges. However, at the beginning of any new project, planners work closely with the Base Historic Preservation Officer.

Air Force Cultural Resources

Some structures at Eglin are significant because they are associated with pivotal moments in Air Force history. For example, Eglin was a training site for Lt. Col. James Doolittle and his Special Aviation Project No. 1, which ended in the historic air attack on Tokyo in the first year of U. S. involvement in World War II. Also during the war, a full-scale model of German beach defenses was constructed. Attacking this mock-up with several types of ordnance delivered from aircraft and underwater demolition teams helped find the best means for breaching these defenses. These tests contributed to the successful assault on Normandy's beaches.

Other examples help establish the links between current efforts and their early predecessors. For instance, both the B-17 and B-29 were tested at Eglin as were electronic warfare techniques, such as radar and radio beam target acquisition. Eglin's experience with ballistic missile testing began with Operation Crossbow, a top-priority project involving the evaluation of tactics for eliminating German V-1 and V-2 launching facilities and the research and development of similar models for Allied use. Two full-scale models of V-1 launch sites were built at Eglin in 12 days by thousands of workers. Attacking these models established P-47s as the most accurate and effective against these facilities. The tactics developed were used successfully in Europe.

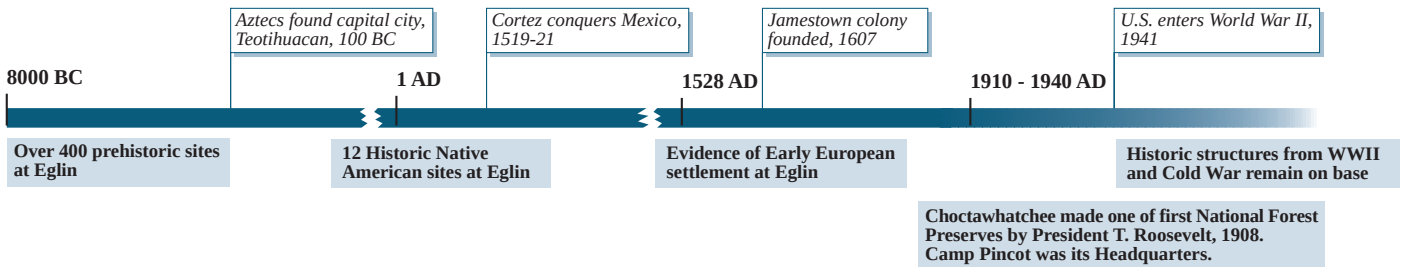
Eglin Sites on the National Register of Historic Places

Eglin has identified over 60 sites as eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This number includes 13 sites in the prehistoric Basin Bayou District, as well as the two JB-2 missile launching sites currently on the National Register. An additional 192 sites have been identified as potentially eligible and are now being evaluated. Of these sites, 13 are threatened by shoreline erosion. Eglin is currently working to protect these sites.

Eglin recognizes the importance of preserving its archaeological and historic findings. Careful planning and good communication effectively integrate Eglin?s military mission with its cultural resource stewardship.

People have been at Eglin for 10,000 years.

(Above the timeline are events and dates to use as reference points.
Below the timeline is information about Eglin sites or other Eglin evidence related to the dates in bold on the timeline.)



This fact sheet is one in a series designed to inform the public about ecosystem and resource management activities at Eglin Air Force Base.
For more information, contact Environmental Public Affairs Coordinator, AFDTC/PAV, (904) 882-4436, Ext. 333.
This fact sheet is also available on the World Wide Web via the Eglin Homepage at http://www.eglin.af.mil

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