

DEFENSE SUPPORT INITIATIVES FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POINT-PAPER 2022

DoD's effectiveness and survivability in near-real-world combat conditions is dependent on military readiness capabilities, capacity and support infrastructure vital to complex training and execution situations ensuring our nation's security against adversaries; today and tomorrow.

Prepared and Provided by

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



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DSI Focus Area



THE DEFENSE SUPPORT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Robert Marinan, Chairman, Lt Colonel USAF Ret

Kay Rasmussen, Manager

Sponsored by
One Okaloosa EDC
P.O. Box 4097, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549
850-362-6467
www.oneokaloosa.org

BACKGROUND

The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County (DBA One Okaloosa EDC) originated the **Defense Support Initiatives** committee as a military issues advocacy group for local military installations and their missions across the three-county region housing Eglin Air Force Base (EAFB)—Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties. EAFB supports Air Force, Army and Navy test and training units, and hosts major organizations for numerous development programs, operational units, military schools and various Federal agencies.

The **Major Range and Test Facility Base (MRTFB)** is a designated set of Department of Defense (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. Concurrently, the MRTFB supports the development of rapid response solutions to technology related issues experienced by warfighters engaged in conflict. The MRTFB is regarded as a “national asset” consisting of Army, Navy, and Air Force ranges—one of which is managed by the 96th Test Wing at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida; the **Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range (EGTTR; aka Eastern Gulf Test & Training Range)**.

The EGTTR connects ranges and capabilities across the eastern Gulf of Mexico extending from NW Florida to Key West. It includes 180,000 square miles of DoD controlled air-space, 724 square miles of adjacent land ranges, and 17 miles of Gulf shoreline accommodating high-altitude supersonic air combat training, air-to-air missile testing, air-to-ground targeting, drone targeting, hypersonic weapons testing, space launches, and other activities. The EGTTR is vital for testing the next generation of air armaments, and for training in combat-surrogate conditions; those expected in an actual conflict. The size of the EGTTR allows for use of large-footprint weapons that could not be tested on any land-based military range, offers a land-to-water transition as well as the ability to execute multiple missions simultaneously in the maritime, air, and land spaces. Due to its tremendous capabilities, the EGTTR complex is an integral part of DoD’s Training Resources Strategy.

Eglin AFB is home to the **Eglin Test and Training Complex (ETTC)** and is one of ten Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) host bases. A critical part of the MRTFB, the **96th Test Wing** is the installation host wing, and the test and evaluation center for Air Force air-delivered weapons, navigation and guidance systems, Command and Control systems, and Air Force Special Operations Command systems. The wing provides expert development, evaluation and validation of the performance of systems throughout their lifecycle to ensure the warfighter has technologically superior, sustainable and safe systems. Protection and enhancement of the EGTTR is necessary to ensure these capabilities.



The EGTTR provides safety footprint opportunities enabling multi-service test and training, and 5th and 6th generation development activities supporting our National security.

TOP PRIORITIES

1. Permanently Sustain the Military Mission Line Moratorium
 - a. Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA)
2. Support the Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range Maximization Plan
 - a. Fund and Implement Gulf Range Enhancement Plan
 - b. Fund and Implement the Spectrum Warfare/Electronic Combat Range
3. Implement Eastern Gulf Aquaculture Anti-Encroachment Buffering
4. Support Construction of Additional Housing on Eglin AFB
5. Support Child Development Center Construction
 - a. Fund Road Capacity Improvements
6. Support NexGen Eglin's Strategic Plan
 - a. Amend 10 U.S.C 2854 - Restoration or Replacement of Damaged or Destroyed Facilities
 - b. Weapons Technological Innovation Center MILCON

FEDERAL REQUESTS

Military Mission Line

Federal policies have protected the Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range (aka Eastern Gulf Test & Training Range, EGTR) since 1983 providing a buffer zone, now defined by Public Law 109-432, section 104, the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act established in 2006 with the Military Mission Line restricting oil and natural gas drilling and exploration. This Military Mission Line moratorium **protects the EGTR** from encroachment by incompatible energy sector activities. The DoD 2018 report to Congress,

Preserving Military Readiness in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, documents the presence of oil and gas infrastructure in the eastern Gulf of Mexico as being incompatible with defense industry test and training activity, and the safety of oil and gas personnel and infrastructure.

The EGTR provides military teams the opportunity to conduct realistic missions in the safety of a test/training environment. The Range must be maintained, adequately funded, and immediately available for present and emerging needs. Compromising the size, capability, or utilization of the EGTR assets could directly result in military mission failure. Oil drilling structures and associated exploratory activities anywhere in the Moratorium area east of the MML are incompatible with military activities, would adversely impact military readiness, and would therefore compromise **military readiness**.

The Congressional moratorium will expire June 30, 2022, without Congressional action to extend the date. A September 2020 Presidential Executive Order extended moratorium protection to June 30, 2032. However, an Executive Order can be rescinded at any time by any sitting President. The 2021



Build Back Better Act seeks to prohibit oil/natural gas lease, exploration, or development within the GOMESA Moratorium area along the Eastern Gulf Outer Continental Shelf. While this protects the OCS boundaries, it opens the remaining eastern Gulf to encroachment activities. Failure to codify the moratorium extension would be catastrophic for national defense interests. The EGTR and our national military capabilities would be in jeopardy. The Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, and/or other legal instrument, must endure beyond June 30, 2022 to **sustain the national defense needs** of Test and Training capabilities within the EGTR.

Congressional Ask

- Support permanent sustainment of the Military Mission Line; Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act
- Provide Congressional Bills to enact Federal Law extending protection of the EGTR by amending or replacing the current Public Law 109-432, section 104 entitled the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, to *permanently* ratify the moratorium protection

Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range – Maximization (EGTR-MAX)

The Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range, the largest asset in the Department of Defense’s MRTFB structure, is vital for testing the next generation of air armaments. The EGTR capabilities and capacity evolve to keep pace with current, and future, smarter and smaller weapons. Historically, missions conducted in the EGTR were concentrated in areas closest to EAFB. However, missions are being pushed farther from land due to increased congestion, longer flight paths, and larger safety footprints. The EGTR must be sustained and configured to provide a fully instrumented capability for future test missions. The 96th Test Wing Plans and Programs office conducted a 2020 EGTR Maximization Study documenting future mission requirements, possible solutions and recommendations.

The 2018 Test Resource Management Center’s Strategic Plan, *Test and Evaluation: Enhancing Readiness of a more Lethal Joint Force*, identified long-range flight test capability and autonomous systems test capability as **top needs**. The EGTR provides a national capability for integrated test and evaluation of advanced military weapon systems. Nearly 40 associated organizations from all branches of the military services use the range capabilities to conduct developmental and operational testing and to facilitate training exercise. It provides airspace, land, water, and electromagnetic spectrum environments to conduct air-to-surface, air-to-air, and surface-launched operations.



The EGTR is required to provide a realistic military operationally representative environment. The 2021 RAND analysis identified the EGTR as a priority for national security infrastructure upgrades.

The range has aging infrastructure and instrumentation that cannot keep pace with rapidly evolving modern electronic equipment. The northern Gulf range is saturated with current mission demand. Increased demand must be supported by new instrumentation infrastructure to leverage the full EGTR capacity. The entire EGTR must be configured to provide a fully instrumented test capability with an operationally representative combat battlespace environment to meet advanced weapons and T&E requirements

There is no single solution. Maximizing the EGTR utilization will require a **system-of-systems**.

Gulf Range Enhancement Plan

The Gulf Range Enhancement (GRE) is a modernization program to expand critical instrumentation coverage further southward into the Gulf of Mexico and Florida's west coast using new land, water and airborne assets. The GRE plan is an approved United States Air Force project [funding in **Program Element (PE) 0604759F, Major T&E Investment**] with phased increments to improve infrastructure capabilities of the MRTFB in Florida (i.e. EGTR). The GRE project grew out of a 2012 Air Force Long Range Stand-Off Weapons study on where future large footprint weapons could be tested. While the study found that no existing US range had all the capabilities needed, the EGTR was the most cost-effective range for modernization. The GRE enhances instrumentation, test capability and capacity of the EGTR. GRE is part of the larger investment project called **EGTR MAX** which further improves capabilities by replacing aging **Range Support Aircraft**, and providing advanced threat emitters for an **Electronic Combat Range** and resilient **telemetry relay infrastructure** with a dual pathway of land and underwater based fiber. This will enhance the range's capability of supporting the full spectrum of armament/munitions developmental and operational testing required today and in the future. The plan also improves secure and encrypted data relay/transmission capabilities, and capacities with connection to underwater fiber. The upgrades would ensure the EGTR's ability to support required unmanned swarming, autonomous, and **hypersonic platforms**. Recent advancements in hypersonic test capabilities by Russia and China pose a clear and present threat to the national security of the United States. It is therefore imperative that the EGTR test infrastructure be immediately funded and upgraded. Failing to do so, will further degrade U.S. military readiness.

The project was originally approved in 2014 with a need date of 2019. Funding profiles were originally proposed using FY12 cost data. However, this antiquated funding baseline will not provide adequate funding in today's market. Constrained budgets and high operational ops tempo of recent years has resulted in delays in funding GRE implementation.

Congressional Ask

- Fund the Gulf Range Enhancement program to enable modernization and full spectrum test and training capabilities of next generation armament, platform, and advanced systems

Spectrum Warfare / Electronic Combat Range Assets

The DoD requires a comprehensive set of capabilities to fully assess the entire target identification and destruction in contested environments. A broad multi-spectrum integrated set of T&E capabilities is required including advanced electronic warfare (EW) assets to emulate a relevant contested environment. The Advanced Program directorate at Eglin has proposed a plan which includes acquiring new electronic warfare infrastructure assets supporting the EGTR.

The EGTR-Max Electronic Combat Range component proposes upgrades to 96TW EW capabilities and aligns range EW capabilities with DoD's September 2020 **Electromagnetic Spectrum Superiority Strategy** [Goal 2: Evolve to an Agile, Fully Integrated Electromagnetic Spectrum Infrastructure, Objective 2.4: Modernize EMS Live, Virtual, Constructive, Infrastructure for Testing, Training, and Analysis]. Eglin's three phase plan (FY20-28) adds 6 advanced threat systems within a new Distributed Integrated Air Defense System to the existing Multi Spectral Test & Training Environment capability at a total initially estimated integration/acquisition cost of \$76.2M. When all assets are in place funding for an additional estimated \$3.0M/yr. in operations/maintenance cost will be required. The funding profile for the 6 modern EW threat systems is included in PE 0604256F,

Threat Simulator Development and the associated 663321 Project: EW Ground test Resources. Assuming the Budget Reconciliation process moves forward as anticipated, funding has been placed in the appropriate PE through FY22. Additional funding is needed for spares for the acquired assets (approximately \$2.5M in FY23). Authorization and funding for the **Low Frequency Early Warning Radar** needs to be placed into the PE line starting in FY23 (total plus up of \$17M) and an additional plus up of \$1.85M is needed for the Dynamic Moving Target Simulator in FY23.

Congressional Ask

- Approve \$97.55 Million to support requests for Program Element 0604256F, project: 0663321 EW Ground test Resources in the FY23 Authorization Bill to provide ability to align Eglin range mission capabilities with DoD's September 2020 Electromagnetic Spectrum Superiority Strategy and to relieve flight test scheduling pressure with Nevada Test & Training Range.
- Approve an additional \$3.0 Million per year under Program Element 0605807F beginning in FY23 to support increased threat simulator operations and maintenance for comprehensive test and realistic operational training capabilities in an Electronic Combat Range in the Appropriations Bill.

Eastern Gulf Aquaculture Buffering

H.R 6258 Advancing the Quality and Understanding of American Aquaculture Act (AQUAA Act) seeks to establish a regulatory system for sustainable offshore aquaculture in the United States exclusive economic zone. The AQUAA Act supports a national plan to identify and designate aquaculture opportunity areas. Aquaculture farms can **inhibit military test and training** activities due to the presence of non-participating personnel, infrastructure costs and resultant liabilities. The main concern of the DoD is to ensure the public safety of non-participating personnel and infrastructure. The permitting process needs to put language in place to require coordination between the parties and to prevent encroachment on the DoD assets and operations.

Congressional Ask

- Submit legislation to require the permitting process to reinforce DoD position regarding safety of non-participating personnel and infrastructure in the areas of hazardous military operations.

Additional Housing on Eglin Air Force Base

Eglin Air Force Base is experiencing a **critical housing crisis** which is affecting military readiness and retention. There are current local conditions impacting rising costs, high demands and limited housing supplies in the Military Housing Area (MHA). Eglin Air Force Base has documented a 415 housing deficit from the last housing requirements market analysis with a majority of that deficit in the junior non-commissioned officer (JNCO) category. At its peak, Eglin Air Force Base had upwards of 2,400 on-base military housing, but that number has dwindled to 747 on-base homes due to **caps** placed on housing privatization through the military housing privatization initiative. Currently, there are more than 275 on the wait list for on-base privatized housing with the wait time averaging up to 10 months. Availability of affordable rentals and short term lodging off base is almost non-existent with long wait lists with up to 30 people. Military members are making the decision to look for affordable lodging up to 2 hours away; requiring an extended commute time.

The MHA has not recovered from the effects of Hurricane Michael in 2018 when it had a direct impact on Tyndall Air Force Base. The hurricane displaced military, DoD federal employees and non-base affiliated civilians who moved to the Eglin's MHA depleting the housing inventory and creating a supply and demand crisis. Additionally, due to the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19), Florida experienced a huge influx of people moving to its state with the local airport experiencing unprecedented travelers. This exacerbated the problem by causing biddings wars for housing with rental costs soaring upwards of 30%. Additionally, many local owners opted to convert rental properties to Air BNBs or vacation rentals to maximize their income. And, those that decided to sell their homes are doing so at remarkably high sales prices brought on by unusual market forces. On top of that, Eglin Air Force Base is in the midst of six new basing actions supporting additional growth and new mission beddowns resulting in 2,123 additional personnel arriving in the MHA through FY24.

The Department of Defense provided some relief in the fall of 2021 when it granted 56 MHAs out of 306 nationwide to receive a temporary increase in Basic Housing Allowance (BAH) to assist military families with out-of-pocket expenses. Eglin's MHA was one of 5 which was given the max 20% increase, and thus, documenting the affordable and suitable housing crisis military members are experiencing in the Tri-County area.

Congressional Ask

- Congressional advocacy for construction of additional housing on base for military members. Support and submit legislation to authorize an increase in the current cap for on-base housing thru the military housing privatization initiative to address the lack of affordable and suitable housing in the local area which is impacting military readiness.

Childcare Development Center

Providing affordable quality childcare is a growing conundrum for the military and civilian families alike in the Tri-County area of Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties. With over 23,000 people working on Eglin AFB, there is an **identified deficit** in quality and quantity of daycare centers in the area. There are two CDCs located on Eglin's main base; and, the demand is high with approximately 400 children on the CDC waiting lists.

Duke Field, Eglin Auxiliary Field 3, and Camp Simons, Army 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), are located on the northern section of the Eglin range and have an additional challenge with the required commute time to the CDC on Eglin Main; a 19-mile drive.

In addition to being a family priority, the inadequate facility challenge also negatively impacts **military readiness and retention**. A proposed WellPlex–KinderCare facility is planned for development in the City of Crestview north of the range which will alleviate some of the requirement for on-base childcare, but will not address the needs for all military families living in the surrounding towns.

If both additional housing could be authorized, and another CDC authorized and appropriated to be constructed on base, these two legislative actions would address three issues simultaneously in the



Tri-County area: (1) lack of affordable and suitable housing; (2) lack of roadway capacity and traffic management issues; and, (3) lack of affordable and quality childcare.

Congressional Ask

- Congressional advocacy for the military construction of a third Child Development Center on Eglin Air Force Base. Support and submit legislation to authorize and appropriate needed funds to address the CDC shortfalls impacting military readiness.

Road Capacity

Due to the lack of affordable and suitable housing options closer to Eglin's main base, military families are forced to live in towns in neighboring counties. These families experience a long commute upwards of 25 miles each way which is further aggravated by **extreme traffic congestion** on limited roadways resulting in a one-way commute time of up to one hour. Those that work on one of the four cantonment areas within the Eglin Test and Training Complex at Camp Simons (7th Special Forces Group, Airborne), Camp Rudder (6th Ranger Battalion), Navy School Explosive Ordnance Disposal, or on Duke Field (919th Special Operations Wing and 492nd Special Operations Group) may experience multiple trips to Eglin's main base to access affordable childcare resulting in commute times up to 3-4 hours. While there are ongoing efforts by each respective Tri-County's Department of Public Works to address the capacity of the local roads and traffic management, more could be done through the support of federal or state grants.

Congressional Ask

- Congressional advocacy for state and federal funding to address the lack of roadway capacity and traffic management issues in the Santa Rosa, Walton and Okaloosa County areas.

NexGen Eglin

Eglin Air Force Base needs adaptive, resilient, right-sized and fiscally sustainable infrastructure to assure **combat readiness** and lethality. A majority of Eglin's infrastructure is not suitable for modern mission requirements and is beyond cost-effective life-cycle repair. Combined with existing repair authorities, updated authority language to completely replace a facility when more cost effective will greatly increase opportunities for consolidation into **right-sized facilities** and the disposal of unneeded facility space. This will avoid unnecessary sustainment costs, and generate realized cost savings, thus allowing for additional optimization of the DoD's built infrastructure. As the host wing to the installation, the 96th Test Wing developed an **infrastructure investment strategy** (NexGen Eglin) to capture requirements necessary for future capabilities. This NexGen Eglin strategy identifies the planning and programming support necessary to realize the largest recapitalization and sustainment effort at Eglin AFB in over 50-years; and, will provide the required facility and infrastructure necessary to support a technologically advancing environment.

Restoration or Replacement of Damaged or Destroyed Facilities

Recapitalization by replacement will allow aging and inefficient federal facilities to be replaced with **operationally optimal facilities** instead of continually performing workarounds. By allowing whole facility repairs by replacement using operational and maintenance (O&M) funds, military construction (MILCON) funding can remain focused on new mission priorities. Current

programming rules limit options for large scale restoration and modernization (R&M) construction projects (i.e. an entire facility cannot be replaced as a repair project). This strategy would allow for replacement of a facility using funds available from O&M when replacement is more cost-effective than repairing the facility. The intent here is to capitalize on repair authorities to effectively re-use, repurpose, and restore facilities.

Congressional Ask

- Amend 10 U.S.C 2854 language for “Restoration or Replacement of Damaged or Destroyed Facilities” to allow for the modification of authority to restore or replace damaged or destroyed facilities to include economically unrepairable facilities, thus allowing for replacement of facilities with O&M dollars only when it is more economically-beneficial to replace the facility than to repair it.

Weapons Technology Innovation Center

The rise of near-peer adversaries and the rapid proliferation of technological advancements have challenged the US military advantage. This rapid advancement in technology is also changing the character of war, increasing the speed and complexity with multi-domain warfare and the effects of contested actions in the air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace. The complexity of future warfare drives the need for more **advanced weapon systems** that can operate at the speed necessary; adapt to situations in a complex, multi-domain environment; and perform multiple roles while executing its primary mission. The Weapons Technology Innovation Center (WTIC) is a federal research laboratory providing modern, secure space that makes the transition to digital weapons research, development, test/evaluation and life cycle management a reality.

The Air Force Research Laboratory and its partners have identified the WTIC to be a weapons enterprise focused on **state of the art collaborative labs and secure space** for next-gen weapons development and testing. As directed by the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy, modernization of U.S. weapon systems is required and at the speed of relevance. The WTIC would enable achieving these needs with the required technologically advanced laboratory space to enhance research and development capabilities, and a collaborative, multi-disciplinary workforce that enables rapid transition of technologies to the warfighter. By supporting the WTIC MILCON, the Lab and other Air Armament Enterprise partners will continue to address the needs of newer weapons such as Long-Range Stand-off Weapons, Directed Energy Weapons, Hypersonic Weapons, and Swarming/Artificial Intelligence Weapons.

Congressional Ask

- Approve \$40 Million to complete the Planning and Design (P&D) phase of the WTIC MILCON Expansion.
- Authorize and fund Phase 1 MILCON with updated information after completion of the P&D efforts

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DSI Leadership Team

Bob Black

Colonel, USAF Ret.
850-737-0651
robert.e.black5@gmail.com

Gordon Fornell

Lt. General, USAF Retired
850-240-2585
gbfornell@cox.net

Pete Gandy

Colonel, USAF Retired
850-712-5179
mpgandy@att.net

Jim Heald

Colonel, USAF Ret.
850-420-2739
jheald@indyneinc.com

Bob Marinan, Chairman

Lt. Colonel, USAF Ret.
850-714-3565,
Bobmar422@yahoo.com

Kay Rasmussen, Manager

EDC Associate Director
850-585-9518
kay@oneokaloosa.org

Nathan Sparks

EDC Executive Director
850-585-0883
Nathan@oneokaloosa.org

John Wilcox, PhD

SES USAF Ret.
850-226-9295
john.s.wilcox@ngc.com



