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CITY OF VALPARAISO
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VALPARAISO, FLORIDA 32580

HOME OF
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE

May 4, 2009

Dear Valparaiso Resident:

Recently there have been articles, letters and guest opinions in the newspaper concerning the F-35 and the City's lawsuits against the Air Force. There is some accurate information and lots of opinions. But the misinformation written by General David Eidsuane in his Setting the Record Straight guest column in the Daily News greatly disturbs me.

He stated that he wanted to set the record straight before he left, but after reading his article and the misinformation it contained, I cannot allow it to go unanswered. I will address each of his points in the order he presented in his guest column. A copy is enclosed for your reference.

The first point deals with the City's request for information through the Freedom of Information Act. Gen. Eidsuane states that on two occasions the Air Force hand-delivered information to city offices. Although literally true, the statement is a gross distortion of the truth. The Air Force is required by law to provide copies of the EIS to local governments. The hand-delivered documents were merely copies of the draft and final EIS. He is implying that the Air Force provided additional information above and beyond what was required by law, which is not true.

The next point the General made was that the Air Force has conducted more than 30 community briefings to Valparaiso. Gen. Eidsuane is again implying that the Air Force is providing information that Valparaiso is seeking. Those briefings were nothing more than powerpoint presentations for USAF public relations (propaganda), giving a summary of how many planes will bed down, new personnel

"Home of the World's Largest Air Force Installation, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida"

and cost of construction. Those presentations are just that, public relations – nothing substantial such as how the Air Force will mitigate the negative impacts to our residents.

The next point concerns the Air Force's consideration of locating the training center site off Eglin main base. The General's statement is disingenuous. The Air Force has already made a final decision to place 59 planes on Eglin main and spend \$165 million on the cantonment area. It's incredulous that the Air Force claims to be able to select alternate sites in the supplemental EIS and justify spending that much money right now to beddown 59 planes for 18 months at Eglin main base. General Eidsaune's statements admit that the Air Force failed to follow the NEPA requirement to consider all reasonable alternatives in the bed down of the 59 F-35s.

Gen. Eidsuane's comments on the use of runway 01/19, that it will be used on a minimal basis and runway 12/30 will be the primary runway for the F-35, are also off the mark. He neglected to inform you that in the Record of Decision it states:

Due to the potential noise impacts both on and off Eglin AFB that the Air Force desires to consider more fully, there will be temporary operational limitations imposed on JSF flight training activities to both avoid and minimize noise impacts. Those limitations will remain in place until the SEIS has been completed and the Air Force has decided how best to proceed with BRAC operational requirements. These limitations take advantage of the gradual build-up of F-35s beginning in 2010. These limitations are not, however, practical for use on a long-term basis. Ultimately, cancellation or modification of these limitations will be required to accommodate the 59 F-35 PAA beddown, as well as potential beddown of up to 107 F-35 PAA, should that decision be made in the future. Where the maximum supportable numbers of F-35 aircraft might ultimately beddown on the Eglin Reservation, how they could be operated, and the degree to which other mitigations are possible are all subjects to be addressed in the forthcoming SEIS.

The ROD language very clearly imposes only temporary limitations on the use of runway 01/19. General Eidsuane apparently doesn't think anyone actually read the ROD.

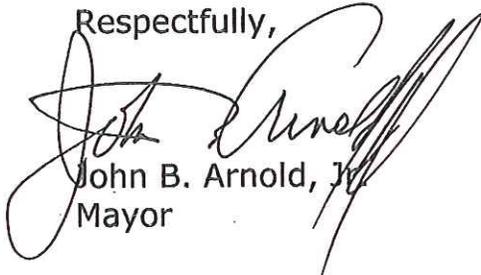
He claims that the Air Force is looking at a wide range of options. This is the very type of information that Valparaiso has been asking for and getting no response. It was the Air Force's obligation to look at and fully consider all of the options before issuing the Record of Decision for the 59 planes.

Regarding the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone Study (AICUZ), many of those homes were built before the first AICUZ was published. The AICUZ informs the city of the noise and accident potential that the Air Force imposes on the community. In the past, the City and Eglin

officials worked together to find solutions to minimize the noise and accident potential by adjusting operations and altering flight patterns. Unfortunately, the Air Force has not responded to our request to sit down and find a solution.

Eglin's approach is following, to the letter, the procedures outlined in the confidential memo crafted by Air Force attorneys. It is evident that the Air Force does consider Valparaiso residents to be redneck crackers. Gen. Eidsuane's attempt to "set the record straight" is just one more maneuver of the Air Force to confuse the public and evade the real issue of mitigating the negative impacts of bedding down the F-35 at Eglin main base.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John B. Arnold, Jr.", written over the typed name and title. The signature is stylized and cursive.

John B. Arnold, Jr.
Mayor

Guest Column

Setting the record straight on the F-35 bed-down at Eglin

By MAJ. GEN. DAVID EIDSAUNE

Recent letters to the editor have contained misinformation concerning the Joint Strike Fighter bed-down at Eglin Air Force Base. Without commenting on pending litigation, I wanted to take the opportunity before I leave to try to set the record straight on a few items.

The city of Valparaiso requested a large scope of information, not just from Eglin but also from the entire Air Force, and to some extent from the other branches of service as well. While we were able to provide some of the requested documentation, the majority of the information is being processed by the Air Staff because the request was for Air Force-wide records.

In order to narrow the scope, we asked, on multiple occasions, what specific information was needed. To date, we have not received an official response.

On two separate occasions, we hand-carried information, collected during the National Environmental Policy Act process and used to build the Final Environmental Impact Statement, to city offices.

It is interesting that I constantly hear "They won't talk to us," but the information we provided is referred to in multiple Valparaiso documents. In addition, we have briefed community organizations on BRAC progress more than 30 times since the final EIS was published in August 2008.

Another misconception is that we are not considering any locations off Eglin main base for the training center site. In fact, we are looking at all 724 square miles of Eglin, including the 10 auxiliary airfields on the range. We will investigate other airports and air bases in the southeastern United States as well to see if they can support some of the F-35 training events. All of this analysis will occur over the next 18 months as part of the supplemental EIS process.

Concerning the use of Runway 01/19, the Interim Record of Decision restricts the F-35 to Runway 12/30, except for unplanned contingencies such as emergencies, weather or closure of Runway 12/30 (due to a disabled aircraft, for example). Looking long-term, if the training center is sited on main base, Runway 12/30 will still be the primary runway for F-35 training, as it is now for the 33rd Fighter Wing's F-15s.

Under this scenario, our planning efforts to date have looked at a wide range of options to keep F-35 operations predominantly on Runway 12/30, and at Duke and Choctaw airfields, and to an absolute minimum on Runway 01/19. We will continue to explore options in greater detail during the supplemental EIS period.

There is also a misconception with regard to the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone study boundaries. For the past 30 years, we have identified clear zones and accident potential zones to the community. It has been, and continues to be, a community decision to implement proper landuse constraints within the clear or accident potential zones.

Eglin and the Emerald Coast communities have been partners for more than 70 years. During that time, we have always worked issues together and hope we can continue to do so throughout the execution of the congressionally directed BRAC mandates. We are planning a series of town hall meetings, starting at Crestview High School on April 30, to give the community an update on several Eglin topics, including the F-35 Integrated Training Center and 7 SFG bed-down.

As I have said on many occasions, the support from surrounding communities is the best I've ever experienced in my Air Force career. I am confident it will continue with Maj. Gen. C.R. Davis.
Maj. Gen. David Eidsaune is commander of the Air Armament Center and program executive officer at Eglin Air Force Base.