



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Eglin-Hurlburt Community Selected as Great American Defense Community

Okaloosa County, FL – March 1, 2016 –At the National Association of Defense Communities (ADC) Installation Innovation Forum held in Charleston, SC this week, 10 communities from across the nation were designated as “Great American Defense Communities” for providing unwavering support to service members and military families.

“We are absolutely delighted that Okaloosa County has been recognized as a Great American Defense Community by the Association of Defense Communities,” said Nathan Sparks, executive director of the Okaloosa County Economic Development Council. “This prestigious award is a true testament to the many dedicated organizations and individuals who work every day to support and sustain our military members and their families.”

The Great American Defense Communities program was launched this year to acknowledge the unique contributions cities, counties and regions that host military installations make to improve quality of life for service members, veterans and their families. This inaugural class of communities was selected by a panel of defense community advocates and experts from dozens of nominees based on the broad range of efforts they carry out on behalf of military personnel and their families, covering areas such as education, job opportunities, housing, family support during deployments and community appreciation.

“It’s a distinct honor to have the Eglin community recognized by the Association of Defense Communities for the Great American Defense Community Award,” said Brig. General Christopher Azzano, commander of the 96th Test Wing, Eglin AFB. “Spanning more than 80 years, Eglin Air Force Base has played a prominent role in America’s airpower history. None of this would be possible without the amazing support from the tri-county Defense Support Initiatives committee, military affairs committees, County Commissions, municipalities, economic development organizations, and multiple community and civic organizations.”

“All 10 of our inaugural class of honorees truly embodied the ideals this initiative was designed to celebrate — making host communities for our nation’s military installations ‘Great Places to Call Home,” said ADC CEO Tim Ford. The Great American Defense Communities program will help ADC and the Defense Communities Caucus share positive stories about the exemplary efforts being made in communities to support defense installations and their personnel.

"At AFSOC and the 1st SOW at Hurlburt, one of our priorities is creating an environment for Airmen and families to thrive," shared Colonel Farrell, Commander Hurlburt Field. "The community support that our Airmen and families receive here on the Emerald Coast is a tremendous part of creating that environment. When our Air Commandos are deployed, knowing that their families back home are being taken care of eases their mind and helps them focus on the mission. Our Emerald Coast neighbors are a vital part of their support structure at home"

This year’s awardees will be recognized throughout 2016 at a variety of events in Washington, D.C. and locally, including an exhibit and reception on Capitol Hill.

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