



Homestead Air Reserve Base



City of Homestead Gateway

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB) consists of approximately 1,900 acres in unincorporated Miami-Dade County, northeast of the Cities of Homestead and Florida City (See Figure 1). The military has been a presence in this south Florida community since 1942 when Homestead Army Airfield functioned as a WW II training site and staging area. After a period of civilian airport operations on the site between 1945 and 1953, the U.S. Air Force resumed military activity on the base. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew inflicted significant damage to the installation, prompting the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) to order a downsizing of military operations the following year.

The base shrank from its original 3,000 to 852 acres and housed only Air Force Reserve and National Guard units following the reassignment of active units. Plans called for Miami-Dade County to operate the surplus portion of the base for commercial aviation. However, public opposition to reuse as a commercial airport triggered a reversal of the BRAC decision and the Air Force resumed operational control of the airfield.

Today, HARB serves as home of the 482nd Fighter Wing and other tenant units, such as the Florida Air National Guard, Special Operations Command South, the U.S. Coast Guard, the US Customs Service and the Army Air Force Exchange Service.

While the history of the military at Homestead reflects a periodic expansion and contraction of mission, foreseeable plans indicate a steadily evolving and critical role for the Air Force and other tenants at the base.

An active military presence in a growing community, such as south Miami-Dade County raises a variety of challenges that are central to the Joint Land Use Study effort. When communities add houses, schools, infrastructure and businesses around an installation, more people begin to live and work near the impacts of military operations. The resulting conflicts between military and civilian uses can in turn place pressure on an installation to modify its activities, possibly degrading the overall military mission.

The Department of Defense (DoD) has two major programs designed to address these potential conflicts between military and civilian land uses. The Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) program seeks to protect the health, safety and welfare of people near military airfields, while preserving the safety and effectiveness of aviation training activities. The program identifies noise and air safety impacts that extend beyond the installation boundary and recommends uses that are compatible within these zones. The military encourages local planning agencies to adopt land use guidelines.

In 1985, the DoD initiated the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) program to create a participatory, community-based framework for land use planning around military installations.

The objectives of the JLUS are two-fold:

1. to encourage cooperative land use planning between military installations and the surrounding community; and
2. to seek ways to reduce the operational impacts of military installations on adjacent land.

The JLUS process encourages residents, local decision-makers, and installation representatives to study issues of compatibility in an open forum, balancing both military and community interests. Civilian and military stakeholders joined in initiating this effort for the area around HARB as part of the DoD's

nationwide JLUS program. The Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) within DoD funded three-quarters of the study, while participating jurisdictions supplemented the initiative with local resources.

1.2 STUDY GOALS

The HARB JLUS is the outcome of the public, private and military sectors working in concert to achieve the following overall goals:

- increase communication between the military and the communities;
- evaluate the potential impacts of current and future military operations on the surrounding community and private property; and
- evaluate the potential impacts of community growth on the long-term viability of the HARB mission.

The ultimate goal is to reduce potential land use conflicts, accommodate future development and sustain the regional economy.

Figure 1. Homestead Air Reserve Base, Regional Location

