

AVON PARK AIR FORCE RANGE



MISSION

Avon Park Air Force Range (APAFR) is a 101,000-acre bombing and gunnery range located in Polk and Highlands Counties, Florida. APAFR, Operating Location Alpha (OL-A), is located approximately 100 miles east-southeast of MacDill AFB, FL. The site is home to a Deployed Unit Complex (DUC) of the 347th Wing Detachment 1 (347th WG), a unit of the 347th Wing located at Moody AFB, GA. Its mission at APAFR is to manage special use airspace and scheduling assets; provide access to extensive, diversified and convenient training airspace and ranges with unique training capabilities for military ground training; and provide operations and maintenance facilities to include aircraft parking.

In addition, APAFR provides a variety of air-to-ground targets in support of air and ground operations and supports a large natural resource program covering over 106,110 acres within the range complex, as well as fish and wildlife and grazing programs. The site is located approximately 10.5 miles southeast of the city of Avon Park (Pop. 8,042) in Okeechobee, Highlands and Polk Counties, Florida. Prior to its use by the military, most of the land was unimproved pasture and swampland. This part of Florida is characterized by a water table at or near the surface for the majority of the year. The land is irregular due to the dissolution of its limestone bedrock by acidic ground water. This causes caverns, sinkholes, pinnacles, solution pipes and a honeycomb-structure of voids in the limestone.

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LINEAGE

Avon Park Air Force Range

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

During World War II, the site was known as Avon Park Army Air Field and was used as a training base for B-17 Aircraft Crews for air-to-ground bombing.

Avon Park AAF had twenty-six thousand M1A1 practice bombs stored in an open area on 3 July 1945.

In 1947, the base was deactivated and placed in caretaker status. In 1949, the site was transferred to the Air Force and became known as Avon Park Air Force Base. In 1956, the site was renamed Avon Park Air Force Range. Improvements included storm drainage, sanitary sewer, electrical and water systems, roads, bridges, runways, fencing and over 500 buildings. These structures included: chapels, administration, dormitories, barracks, recreation, fire stations, mess halls, residences, and other miscellaneous structures.

Between 1946 and 1983, a total of 112,772 acres was disposed. The land excessed included a land skip bombing target, four practice bombing targets, two position firing courses, a formation bombing target and a practice and skip bombing target.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.