

Lockheed Martin Proposes Craig Field Airport As Preferred Site In Bid For U.S. Air Force Introductory Flight Training Contract

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A former Air Force base, once used to train pilots for duty in World War II, the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War, may again play a role in training pilots to defend America's freedom. In its bid for a U.S. Air Force Introductory Flight Training contract, Lockheed Martin has selected Craig Field Airport near Selma, AL, as its preferred pilot-candidate training site.

The Air Force Air Education and Training Command's Introductory Flight Training program will provide flight screening and support services for approximately 1,300 to 1,700 students annually. If selected as prime contractor, Lockheed Martin would establish Craig Field Airport as the single location for all Air Force introductory pilot training. The Air Force is expected to award the contract during the first half of 2005.

"We believe our community's role in the proposal submitted by Lockheed Martin will provide the best overall flight training solution for the Air Force," said Wayne Vardaman, president of the Center for Commerce in Selma. "And, we believe that Craig Field Airport is the best choice to serve the needs of the Air Force flight training program."

Once home to the 29th Flying Training Wing -- whose mission was pilot training for the Air Force -- Craig Air Force Base was originally established as an Army Air Corps base in 1941 and trained pilots for duty in World War II. It was closed in 1978, renamed Craig Field Airport, and converted to civilian use. Lockheed Martin selected Craig Field Airport because it can meet all of the education and training command's support infrastructure requirements, including all support services.

"The best training possible for future pilots at the lowest cost to the Air Force is our number one goal," said Dan Crowley, Lockheed Martin Simulation, Training & Support president. "What sets us apart is our commitment to training and our years of experience delivering similar services for the Air Force."

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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