



# United States Air Force

## Craig Air Force Base

Craig Air Force Base near Selma, Alabama, was a U.S. Air Force undergraduate pilot training that closed in 1977. Today, the facility is a civilian airport known as Craig Field Airport and Industrial Complex .

### **Military Corner**

Originally built by the Air Force in 1940 to accommodate the growing number of flight trainees before World War II, Craig Field was one of the first training fields to offer single-engine training. Its first graduating class of 1941, the 39 cadets of Class 41D, completed the training course seven months before the country's entry into World War II.

The name chosen for the base honored 1st Lt Bruce Kilpatrick Craig, who was killed when his B-24 crashed in June 1941. He was born in Selma and was initially commissioned as an officer in the Infantry Reserve prior to transferring to the Army Air Force and attending flight training.

Army Air Force pilot training in 1941 was still considered as being peacetime and included a seventy-hour flying course. With the attack on Pearl Harbor, training was accelerated to speed the flow of pilots into combat. In total, Craig Field graduated more than 9,000 pilots before the end of the war.

By 1943, 1,392 RAF cadets had earned their wings at Craig Field. Following the war, the mission of Craig Field changed from time to time, but it remained primarily a training base. When the Air Force was established as a separate service in 1947, Craig Field was renamed Craig Air Force Base.

With the desperate need for additional pilots created by the Korean War, Craig AFB initiated the 3615th Pilot Training Wing in September 1950. The program stopped its basic single engine training and focused its efforts on pilot instructor training. In 1972, the by then-3615th Flying Training Wing was redesignated as the 29th Flying Training Wing of the Air Training Command and operated T-41, T-37 and T-38 training aircraft.

Representative of the time, Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 68-H graduated with more than 50 new pilots in June 1968. Most entered the "pipeline" for assignments to Vietnam in a variety of aircraft. Other pilots went to C-130, C-141, B-52 and KC-135 assignments. In addition to Air Force student pilots, the class included students from the Marine Corps, the Air National Guard and the former Imperial Iranian Air Force.

As an active air force base, Craig had two 8,000-foot parallel runways, a large aircraft parking ramp and several large maintenance hangars. In 1974, Craig AFB was selected as one of two UPT bases to be closed in a post-Vietnam economic move. In 1977, Air Training Command closed Craig Air Force Base along with Webb Air Force Base in Texas. Craig's 29th Flying Training Wing was inactivated in September and the field was placed on caretaker status the next day. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craig\\_Air\\_Force\\_Base](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craig_Air_Force_Base)]

