



The 557th Bombardment Squadron (BS) was formed on 1 December 1942 as part of the 387th Bombardment Group (BG) at MacDill Field, FL. The initial mission of the 557 BS was training pilots and crews for combat in the Martin B-26 Marauder. In June 1943 the squadron was moved to Chipping Ongar, England where they flew air offensive attacks against Nazi Germany. The squadron would later move into France and Holland as the bombing campaign moved deeper into enemy territory. On 6 June 1944, the 557 BS led the group's D-Day attack. On 23 December 1944, the 387th Bombardment group, including the 557th, attacked the railway bridge at Mayen, Germany during the Nazi counter offensive known as the "Battle of the Bulge" without any fighter escort. They encountered heavy fire from ME-109 fighters and anti-aircraft flak, which damaged 21 or 26 aircraft. Despite heavy damages, the bridge was successfully destroyed effectively cutting off a major Nazi resupply route and greatly aided in defeating the counterattack. The 557 BS was known for pressing home its attacks, flying over 1,000 combat sorties under fire without loss of aircraft or crew. Because of this dedication, members of other units volunteered to fly with the 557 BS on their days off. The 557 BS ended combat operations in April 1945 and was inactivated on 12 November 1945.



The 557th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) was activated on 17 April 1962 at MacDill AFB, FL as part of the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) - sister units were the 558 TFS and 559 TFS. The 557 TFS was activated in January 1964, as the wing transformed from three squadrons of 25 aircraft each to four squadrons of 18 aircraft. The 12 TFW began with obsolete F-84F Thunderchiefs reclaimed from the Air National Guard and stood an important alert commitment during the Cuban missile crisis. Later, the 12 TFW was chosen to be the first Air Force combat wing to convert to the new F-4C Phantom II. After the conversion, and throughout 1965, the wing supported PACAF contingency operations by rotating combat squadrons quarterly to Naha Air Base, Okinawa. The 557 TFS moved to Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam in November 1965, and flew close air support, interdiction, and combat air patrols over both Vietnam and Laos for five years. On 31 March 1970, the 557 TFS was inactivated.



In December 1966, USAF Academy cadets were authorized a basic flight training course, but extremely limited facilities prevented the program from being located at the Academy's Pine Valley Airstrip. Therefore, the 3253rd Pilot Training Squadron was activated at Peterson Field, CO on 1 October 1967. The first student training began in January 1968 with the Cessna T-41C Mescalero. By 31 January 1974, the renamed 3253rd Flying Training Squadron (FTS) relocated to the newly expanded facilities at the Academy. Effective 31 July 1974, SO G-218 deactivated the 3253 FTS as part of a renumbering of units and activated the 557th Flying Training Squadron under the Air Training Command (ATC). In October 1982, the 557 FTS transferred from ATC to the Academy, which would change back and forth over the following years. As of October 2004, the 557 FTS was realigned under the Air Education and Training Command (AETC) as part of the 306th Flying Training Group (FTG).

The historical mission of the 557 FTS up to 2007 was to screen pilot candidates for future undergraduate pilot training through the Pilot Indoctrination Program, Introductory Flight Training, and the Academy Flight Screening (AFS) programs. In 2007, the Air Force consolidated all flight screening programs at Pueblo, CO leaving a powered flight void at USAFA. Under direction from the USAFA Chief of Staff, a newly formed Powered Flight Program (PFP) began in January 2008. The purpose of the program is to expose all cadets to powered flight, introduce them to an operational USAF flying squadron, and motivate them towards a career in aviation.

The 557 FTS is also home to the USAF Academy Flying Team.

## 557 FTS - Assignments

- 387 Bomb Group, 1 Dec 1942 – 12 Nov 1945
- 12 Tactical Fighter Wing, 17 Apr 1962 – 31 Mar 1970
- Air Training Command, 31 Jul 1974
- U.S. Air Force Academy, 1 Oct 1982
- 12 Operations Group, 1 Jul 1993
- 306 Flying Training Group, 4 Oct 2004 - Present

## 557 FTS - Stations

- MacDill Field, FL, 1 Dec 1942
- Lakeland AAF, FL, 12 Apr 1943
- Godman Field, KY, 12 May-10 Jun 1943
- Chipping Ongar, England, 1 Jul 1943
- Stoney Cross, England, c. 21 Jul 1944
- Maupertuis, France, c. 27 Aug 1944
- Chateaudun, France, c. 18 Sep 1944
- Clastres, France, c. 2 Nov 1944
- Beek, Holland, c. 2 May 1945
- Rosieres-en-Santerre, France, c. 27 May-c. 4 Nov 1945
- Camp Kilmer, NJ, 11-12 Nov 1945
- MacDill AFB, FL, 25 Apr 1962-Nov 1965
- Cam Ranh Bay AB, South Vietnam, 1 Dec 1965-31 Mar 1970
- USAF Academy, CO, 31 Jul 1974-Present

## 557 FTS - Aircraft

- B-26, 1942-1945
- F-84, 1962-1964
- F-4, 1964-1970
- T-41, 1974- Present
- UV-18, 1979-1982
- T-51A, 1982-Present
- DA20, 2002-2007
- T-52A, 2009-Present

## 557 FTS – Campaign Streamers

- World War II: Air Offensive, Europe
- Normandy; Northern France
- Rhineland
- Ardennes-Alsace
- Central Europe
- Vietnam: Defensive
- Vietnam: Air, Offensive Phase I – IV
- Vietnam: Air / Ground
- TET 69 / Counteroffensive
- Vietnam: Summer – Fall 1969; Winter – Spring 1970

## 557 FTS – Decorations

- Distinguished Unit Citations
  - ❖ Germany, 23 Dec 1944
- Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device: 1 Dec 1965-30 May 1966; 1 Jun 1966-31 May 1967; 1 Jun 1967-31 May 1968; 1 Jun 1968-31 May 1969; 1 Jun 1969-[10] Mar 1970 Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards: 1 Jan 1979-30 Apr 1980; 30 Mar 1981-31 Oct 1982; 1 Jan 1983-18 Dec 1984.
- Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm: [1 Dec] 1965-[10] Mar 1970.