

## 557 FTS Overview of Operations

The 557 FTS conducts over 12,600 training and competition hours annually, focused on developing officership, leadership and character of over 4,000 United States Air Force Academy cadets. It operates airmanship training at USAF's busiest day, VFR-only airfield to provide the maximum opportunity for cadet participation in a USAF operational environment, motivating them toward careers as Air Force officers. Currently 600 cadets per year take a motivational flying training course designed to introduce them to an operational USAF flying squadron and provide them an opportunity to solo a light, general aviation aircraft. The cadet Flying Team competes at the regional and national level against 23 other colleges and universities. There are 16 active duty officers and 11 reserve officers assigned to the 557<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Squadron. Flying resources currently include 27 aircraft.

### Airmanship 420 - Powered Flight Program

The United States Air Force Academy has a rich history of flight training to include soaring, parachuting, and flight screening. The 557 FTS has been an integral part of this history especially during the decades of flight screening. Cadets desiring to pursue an Air Force career in aviation had to successfully complete a flight program designed to measure the cadet's flying aptitude. From 1968 until 2007, USAFA had a flight screening program in place. In late 2007, USAF flight screening consolidated in Pueblo, CO leaving a powered flight void at USAFA.

AM-420, Powered Flight Program, started operational flying in January 2008 with the first class of 10 cadets. This Airmanship course was formed after the Chief of Staff of the Air Force directed such a course would remain in place at USAFA. The purpose of the Powered Flight Program is to expose cadets to an operational Air Force flying squadron, motivate them towards an aviation career, and provide them an opportunity to solo a light, general aviation aircraft.

Currently, the program is utilizing a fleet of twenty Diamond DA40 aircraft and approximately 80 instructor pilots. There are seven classes per year with approximately 90 cadets per class. The 557 FTS schedules to complete 600 cadets per year until FY12 at which time 750 cadets per year will participate. Course length during the school semester is 20 lessons and summer classes run 15 days.

The program includes approximately 30 hours of ground instruction ranging from aircraft systems, aerodynamics, applications of airpower, and crew resource management. There are nine sorties scheduled which focus on area maneuvering, navigation, aerodynamics, and traffic pattern operations. If the cadet is medically qualified and demonstrates he/she is capable of safely flying an aircraft, the cadet is permitted to solo in the pattern for a 10th sortie. After the first year of operation, the 557 FTS boasts a solo rate of close to 70%.

### Airmanship 465 - USAFA Cadet Flying Team



#### USAFA Cadet Flying Team - Mission

- Challenge, inspire, and motivate cadets to excel as individuals and as team members of an intercollegiate aviation competition team.
- Emphasize air discipline, professionalism, precision, and safety.
- Continue to broaden airmanship skills while providing team members with knowledge, character, and motivation essential to leadership.
- Develop a commitment to an Air Force career.

## USAFA Cadet Flying Team - History



### Members of the First Cadet Flying Team

The USAFA Cadet Flying Team was founded as a cadet club in the 1960's. In this club, licensed cadets paid for their own flight time in preparation for NIFA (National Intercollegiate Flying Association) competitions against other civilian universities across the United States. The team competed in their first competition in 1969. After noticing the success of Flying Team cadets in NIFA events, the Association of Graduates kindly donated three Cessna 150 aircraft between the years of 1984-1991 for future cadet member development and further NIFA competitions. With these aircraft, the USAFA Flying Team appeared on the international scene in 1999 and to this day successfully competes against other NIFA teams in flying events such as Short Field landings, Power Off landings, Navigation, and Message Drop, and ground events such as Computer Accuracy, Simulated Comprehensive Aircraft Navigation, Aircraft Recognition, simulator flight, and Preflight.

## USAFA Cadet Flying Team – Current Operations



### Precision Landing

Every year, a group of roughly 50 'Private Pilot' certified freshmen are put through three rounds of grueling tests, an intensive interview, and finally a tryout flight for selection for the team. Of the large number of freshmen trying out, though, only six are taken to be a part of the USAFA Flying Team. After selection, these six cadets are put through "Summer 3" upgrade training in order to fully function as qualified members of the team. The difficult three week program during the summer is meant to mimic Undergraduate Pilot Training and serves to transition the cadets from civilian flying to more precise and safe military standards. After successful completion of their very first military check ride, the cadets become the newest members of the USAFA Flying Team.

## USAFA Cadet Flying Team – Awards

The USAFA Flying Team currently holds 22 straight wins at their Region I competition, with top scores in both ground and flying events. As for their Region II yearly competition, the USAFA Flying Team is not considered a contestant but is kindly invited back each year as an opportunity to practice their NIFA events in a realistic competition environment. Other awards include the 2008 American Airlines Safety award and numerous other individual achievements.