

4453 COMBAT CREW TRAINING WING



MISSION

LINEAGE

4453 Combat Crew Training Wing

Activated, 1 Jul 1964

Inactivated, 30 Sep 1971

STATIONS

MacDill AFB, Tampa, FL, 1 Jan 1963 - 8 Jan 1964

Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ, 8 Jan 1964 - 30 Sep 1971

ASSIGNMENTS

836 Air Division, 1 Jan 1963-1 Jul 1964

Twelfth Air Force, 1 Jul 1964-30 Sep 1971

COMMANDERS

Col Frank K. Everest, Jr.

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The 4453rd activated on Oct 22, 1962 at MacDill AFB in Tampa, Florida. It was called the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Squadron. On Jan 1, 1964, we became the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Group. Finally, on April, 1, 1964, we were large enough to become the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Wing. We were part of the 836th Air Division. On July 1, 1994, we became part of the 12th Air Force. Our mission was to train aircrews for the F4. We received 27 Navy F4B's, the first aircraft was delivered on February 11, 1963. It was crewed by Col Stanton T. Smith, then Commander of the 836th Air Division and Major Jerry F. Hogue. These aircraft had Navy serial numbers as well as Air Force serial numbers.

The Air Force received 29 F4B's from the Navy. The additional 2 aircraft were sent to Langley AFB. Although they received the Air Force paint scheme and had F110A painted on the forward fuselage, they were not F110s. They displayed the Navy serial numbers on their rudders. The BuNos on these aircraft were 149405 and 149406 and the identifiers FJ-405 and FJ-406 were used. Later, they were given Air Force serial numbers 62-12168 and 62-12169 respectively

On 1 July 1964, when Davis-Monthan became the home of the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Wing (CCTW). The 4453rd, a unit of the Tactical Air Command, had moved from MacDill AFB, Florida. With approximately 50 Phantom II jet fighter-bomber aircraft, the 4453rd offered an intensive flying training program. Over the forthcoming years, that program would go on to produce the majority of the F-4c crews required during the Southeast Asia conflict.

As the 303rd was departing, components of the newly assigned 4453rd began to occupy its vacated facilities. The primary mission of Davis-Monthan's newest unit was to train the aircrews required for the complete conversions of 12 tactical wings to the F-4C aircraft. To accomplish that mission, the 4453rd conducted flying and radar training courses designed to prepare the two-man crews to fully utilize the exceptional capabilities of the new fighter-bomber. Following training, each crew returned to its parent organization as a fully qualified team. In addition, the 4453rd began a program in July 1966 to train replacement unit crews in the F-4 for direct assignment to Southeast Asia.

While McDonnell was tooling up for modifications to the TAC version of the Phantom, the Air Force "borrowed" 27 F-4B's from the Navy and began training. Colonel Hogue delivered the first F-4B to MacDill AFB, Fla., February 11, 1963. In the meantime, 13 instructor pilots had been trained by the Navy at Oceana NAS. These returned to MacDill to train other instructors in the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Squadron, which had been set up to conduct F4 training. One of the first 4453rd pilots to be checked out by Colonel Hogue was its commander, Col. Frank K. Everest, Jr. Colonel Everest called the F4 a fighter pilot's dream. "Our pilots should take to the F-

4C with pleasure," he said. "It's an easier plane to fly than some fighters and its equipment is less complicated." The first organization in the Air Force to phase into the F4 is the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing, commanded by Col. Harold M. McClelland. The first F4 class was composed of 24 pilots assigned or attached to the 557th Tactical Fighter Squadron, commanded by Lt. Col. Mark V. Wilson. It is one of the four squadrons in the 12th. During the 11 week course, pilots compiled 30 flying hours in the Phantom. After two familiarization rides, the class was divided into 12 two man crews who practiced instruments, low-level and high-level navigation, radio and radar navigation, air to air intercepts, dive-bombing, rocketry, low-level bombing, close ground support, nuclear delivery, in-flight refueling, and formation. The fighter pilots learned to work as part of a two man team. The front seat pilot is the aircraft commander, who makes the landings and takeoffs, flies the aircraft, and handles the armament. The rear seat pilot, the pilot systems operator, also flies the aircraft but he must also operate the Phantom's sophisticated radar and navigation equipment. Besides the ground school attended in conjunction with the 11 week, 30 flying hour course, pilot systems operators got an additional 250 hours of classroom work in radar and navigation. The first class graduated December 5, 1963, and the second one January 10, this year. (1964) All flying was done in the F4B the Navy training version of the Phantom.

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