

457 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

457 Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine constituted, 5 Oct 1944

Activated, 21 Oct 1944

Inactivated, 16 Dec 1945

Redesignated 457 Strategic Fighter Squadron, 20 Nov 1952

Activated, 20 Jan 1953

Redesignated 457 Fighter-Day Squadron, 1 Jul 1957

Redesignated 457 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1 Jan 1958

Redesignated 457 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jul 1959

Inactivated, 1 Apr 1959

Activated in the Reserve, 8 Jul 1972

Redesignated 457 Fighter Squadron, 1 Feb 1992

STATIONS

Lakeland AAFld, FL, 21 Oct 1944-16 Feb 1945

North Field, Iwo Jima, 25 Apr-3 Dec 1945 (air echelon operated from Tinian, 23 Mar-11 May 1945) Camp Anza, CA, 15-16 Dec 1944

Dow AFB, ME, 20 Jan 1953

Tinker AFB, OK, 20 Mar 1955-1 Apr 1959

Carswell AFB (later, ARS) TX, 8 Jul 1972

NAS JRB Fort Worth, TX

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Misawa AB, Japan, 15 Aug 1953-5 Nov 1953

Ramstein AB, Germany, 24 Mar 1958-16 Aug 1958

ASSIGNMENTS

506 Fighter Group, 21 Oct 1944-16 Dec 1945

506 Strategic Fighter (later, 506 Fighter-Day; 506 Fighter-Bomber; 506 Tactical Fighter)
Wing, 20 Jan 1953-1 Apr 1959

506 Tactical Fighter Group, 8 Jul 1972

301 Tactical Fighter (later, 301 Fighter) Wing, 25 Mar 1973

301 Operations Group, 1 Aug 1992

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-51, 1944

F-84, 1953-1957

F-100, 1957-1958

F-105, 1972-1982

F-4, 1981

F-16, 1990

COMMANDERS

Maj Malcolm C. Watters, Oct 1944

Maj Daun G. Anthony, 12 Jun 1945

Capt Jack H. Folsom, 10 Sep 1945-unkn

2LT Francis E. Cabrillias III, Jan 1953

Maj John M. Porter, Feb 1953

Maj Thomas E. Stewart, Oct 1954

Maj Alfred N. King, May 1955

Maj Charles E. Francis, 1 Dec 1957

Lt Col Ralph E. Keyes, 1 Oct 1958

Maj Charles E. Francis, 12 Jan 1959

Capt Frederick T. Hiebert, 22 Jan 1959

1LT Douglas W. Case, 2 Feb 1959

Maj George J. Hayes, 13 Feb-1 Apr 1959

Maj Gordon W. Goodier, Jul 1972

Lt Col Jervis W. McEntee, by Dec 1973

Lt Col Leo J. Canavan, 5 Mar 1977

Lt Col Robert H. Jones, 16 Jan 1979

Lt Col Randolph S. Reynolds, by May 1984

Lt Col Frederick R. Flom, 13 Dec 1984

Lt Col Eugene L. Haggerty, by Oct 1987

Lt Col Courtlan Hazelton, Apr 1988

Lt Col Floyd G. Whitehouse III, by Oct 1990

Lt Col Michael L. Goode, 7 Mar 1992

Lt Col Carl M. Gough Jr., Mar 1993

Lt Col James M. Sluder III, 4 Jun 1994

Lt Col Thomas R. Coon, 15 Jun 1996

Lt Col Frank E. Anderson, 3 Jan 1998
Lt Col Tommy J. Williams
Lt Col Keith Knudson Mar 2008 - Nov 2009
Lt Col Chris Yancey, 8 Nov 2009
Lt Col Joshua G. Padgett, 13 Jul 2017
Lt Col Charles A. Huber, 6 Oct 2019

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Japan

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

Japan, 7-10 Jun 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

14 May 1992-13 May 1994

30 Jun 1995-1 Jul 1997

1 Oct 2000-30 Sep 2002

1 Oct 2002-30 Sep 2004

1 Oct 2004-30 Sep 2006

1 Oct 2006-30 Sep 2008

EMBLEM





On a disc Gules, a cloud formation bevilly throughout Argent overall a mosquito caricature volant to base bendwise sinister Sable, trailing speed lines two and one bendwise sinister Celeste neck Vert thorax of the like charged with four bars black winged Light Blue, face and proboscis White, attired with a flight helmet and gloves Or, a pair of goggles above the eyes of the second lens of the fourth, and earphones Argent ear piece Yellow, holding in its four rear legs a machine gun bendwise sinister barrel to base fired at the muzzle, grasping in its dexter foreleg a hatchet to chief bendwise hafted Brown blade White face Red, and clutching in its sinister foreleg an automatic pistol of the third firing a cloud of smoke to base bendwise sinister of the second garnished of the fourth, all within a diminished bordure Black. Attached below the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed "457 FIGHTER SQ" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The emblem is symbolic of the high degree of skill attained by the personnel assigned to the Squadron, showing a determination of effort, an aggressive spirit and a challenge to those who would oppose it. (Approved, 20 Jan 1945; modified, 27 Apr 2000)

MOTTO

Spads

OPERATIONS

The 457 Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine, was activated on 21 October 1944 at Lakeland Army Air Field, Lakeland, Florida. Personnel to man the unit came from the Third Air Force. Although the Squadron received only a small cadre during the first week of activation, by the end of November the unit had grown to sixty-five officers and two hundred sixty-two enlisted men. During the first two months of activation, the Squadron practiced long-range escort missions

and instrument flying.

The 457 Squadron, received orders, which alerted it for overseas movement. The unit began a more intensified training program, which emphasized serial aerial strafing, skip bombing and navigation. Ground crews disassemble and reassembled the unit's P-51's until they were thoroughly familiar with the aircraft and its parts.

Moving to the Pacific in stages, the unit departed Florida in February 1944, boarded ship at Seattle, and after a brief visit to Hawaii, arrived on Tinian. The air echelon traveled with its Mustangs on CVE-68, Kalinin Bay while the ground echelon slogged across the Pacific in the transport Bloemfontein. The airman began making bets on the degree of list necessary to capsize the old ship. Not until 20 April did the ground echelon arrive in the Mariana's, and after a brief stop they were en route to Iwo Jima, dropping anchor there on 24 April.

It was in the Mariana's that the squadron suffered its first loss as 2nd Lt. Wilbur D. Mansfield was killed in a crash two miles west of Tanapag Harbor. 2nd Lt. John Hall sustained serious back injury when he crash landed his P-51 on. Not until the 16th of May was the group reunited as the air echelon finally advanced to Iwo. A lack of air transport delayed the last of the Tinian contingent for another three days.

As the air unit pickled their P-51s and began flying CAP missions from West Field #4 on 27 Mar 1945. The ground echelon was suffering much seasickness in heavy seas. As the transport was caught repeatedly between swells, there was some breakage to equipment & some injuries.

Meanwhile, the air echelon flew coastal patrol missions from Tinian in the Mariana's during the period from 27 March to 24 April. On 5 May the Squadron's twenty-seven green-tailed aircraft joined the ground echelon on Iwo Jima.

At Iwo Jima, the 457 Squadron, In addition to aiding in the defense of the island, the unit participated in attacks on neighboring islands held by the enemy. To the north, 150 miles away, was Chichi Jima , where the Japanese Bonin Islands garrisons had their headquarters and where the enemy's installations included a harbor, troop housing, radio and radar facilities, and the Susaki airfield. To keep this field inoperative, the VII Fighter Command's aircraft flew daily bombing sorties against it.

The 457 began flying CAP missions immediately and was dispatched on its first combat strike to Chichi-jima Island on 19 May, a ten plane mission. The first night air raid followed on the 21 May with the realization that there were not enough slit trenches for everyone.

1st Lt. Horace F. Bozarth, was the next casualty, lost when his P-51 crashed in the sea off Iwo Jima on 22 May 1945.

There were a few more sorties to Chichi Jima and a planned VLR mission to Honshu, scrubbed by weather forecasts, and then the major event came - a mission for the 506th Group to attack

an airfield on Honshu. It had been a long wait for the 457 , and to say the pilots were "up" for the mission was an understatement. The group destroyed or damaged some 50 Japanese aircraft on Kasumigaura Airdrome losing only one plane & pilot (from the 462nd squadron). The only aerial encounter involved the 457 and Maj. Malcolm Watters shot down a Tojo.

The 457 was euphoric about the results of their first showing against the enemy and deservedly so. The lack of any losses was also a sobering reminder of the dangers inherent in such operations.

The mission of 1 June was to escort B-29's to Osaka. The 457 contributed nineteen planes to the Group's escort mission and all were airborne by 0738* Rendezvous with the B-29'S was made over Kita Iwo Jima, 39 miles north of Iwo Jima. The planes' climbed to 12,000 feet and headed for Japan. At 1000 hours, approximately 400 miles from the base, the P-51's encountered a solid weather front. After the planes followed the navigator B-29's into the front, weather conditions suddenly seemed intolerable. Visibility dropped to zero. Sleet, hail, and rain poured down thorough the skies, icing, and severe downdrafts made matters worse. The large formations of Mustangs began to break apart. Visual contact with the navigator planes was lost. Communications were disrupted. Of the two hundred P-51's, which the VII Fighter Command sent out to escort the B-29's only twenty-seven succeeded in reaching Osaka. As a result of this abortive mission five of the Squadron's pilots failed to return and were listed as missing. The 457 suffered the loss of 5 pilots, Lieutenants James Best, Robert Griffith, Leonard Kleiber, Robert Klipped and William Saks. Six other pilots and planes from the 506th Group were also not accounted for.

Just as the killer front was reached, Lawrence Grennan of the 457 developed a rough engine and turned back to Iwo Jima. The Merlin power plant failed him just 6 miles short of base and he was forced to parachute. A rescue ship had him aboard almost immediately, and Grennan was one of the lucky ones on a luckless day.

Malcolm Watters moved on to the 506th Group staff and Capt. Daun G. Anthony assumed command of the 457 Squadron.

Somewhat better weather conditions existed on ensuing strikes during June. While escorting B-29's the Squadron flew to Osaka on 7 June and to Tokyo on 10 June. For its performance on repeated long range escort missions and its defense of AAF B-29s between June 7 & 10, 1945, the 506th Group won a Distinguished Unit Citation.

During July the flying weather improved greatly. By that time, Japanese fighter opposition to the B-29's was so negligible that fighter escort was unnecessary. Hence, the 457 began to devote itself almost entirely to strafing attacks against enemy airfields and other military installations. The strafing of enemy aircraft on the ground, however, proved to be very difficult because the Japanese dispersed their airplanes to areas some distance from the airstrips. The Squadron also conducted strafing missions against the Japanese transportation system and continued its regular missions to the Bonin's, keeping Susaki Airfield inoperative.

The squadron found it difficult to lure Japanese air forces into aerial engagements, so it continued to hammer enemy aircraft on Honshu's airfields. However, on July 16, 1945, near Nagoya, the 506th Group was jumped from above by Japanese Army fighters and destroyed ten with one probable and nine claimed damaged. The 457 scored five of the kills, with Capt. Abner M. Aust getting three victories. There was a price as Capt. John W. Benbow was shot down and killed.

CAPTAIN ABNER M. AUST JR., 457 fighter Squadron: "I was leading Blue Flight in the second section of our squadron in the Nagoya area when six bogies were called out at nine o'clock low. I called my section to drop their tanks and we peeled off low on a flight of six Franks. I made almost a head on pass at their number one man and gave him about a two or three second quirt around the cockpit and he broke away to his right. As I turned to the left I was almost on top of another. I split-essed with him and got hits with a three second or more burst around the engine and cockpit area. After I passed him my flight saw him bail out. As I pulled up another was almost in front of me and as I closed in on him he split-essed and I followed him. I was getting hits all the way through and I finished up with a burst into the cockpit and I believe that I killed the pilot because he went straight into the clouds.

As I pulled up another was coming almost head on and I fired a burst into his engine and he split-essed and I followed. I closed in on him and got hits in the right wing root and cockpit and he started smoking and burning in the right wing and fuselage, as he went straight into the clouds. We pulled off this one and I was almost behind another. As I closed in he split-essed and I followed him and he went into a dive. I got hits in the root of the left wing and before he went into the clouds I saw smoke coming out of the wing. I fired all my remaining ammunition at him and followed him down into the clouds to about 350 or 375 mph and elevation of the ground was about 1,000 feet. He was going almost straight down and made no move to shake us. I don't believe he could have pulled out."

The dangerous and increasingly unproductive airfield strafing missions continued through July and into August, as it seemed that the war would go on forever. 2nd Lt. Joe Winn was lost on 28 July (a POW), 2nd Lt. John Coneff was killed in action on 3 August, and Capt. Evelyn Neff was killed on 5 August.

The last major aerial engagement for the Seventh Fighter Command occurred on August 10, 1945 and the 457 played a dominant role, claiming five kills and seven damaged against Japanese fighters. They escaped without loss from the swirling air battle northwest of Tokyo. In this final aerial duel Abner Aust destroyed two more enemy aircraft to become an ace, the only one in the 506th Group.

When the war ended on August 14, 1945, the 457 Fighter Squadron had achieved a record of 13 kills and 17 damage claims in the brief weeks of air-to-air action. They had also destroyed or damaged many Japanese aircraft on the ground.

In August 1945, the Squadron conducted three fighter strikes and two B-29 escort missions. On

14 August the 457 escorted B-29's on their last mission to Japan.

After the end of war against Japan, the 506th Fighter Group, including the 457 Squadron, remained on occupational duty at Iwo Jima. The unit returned to the United States aboard the USS Independence in December 1945 and was inactivated on 16th December at Camp Anza California.

Approximately 8 years later, on 20 January 1953, the unit, re-designated the 457 Fighter Escort Squadron, was activated at Dow Air Force Base Maine. Assigned to the Strategic Air Command's 506th Fighter Wing, the Squadron began training with the F-84 fighter aircraft. The pilots flew cross-country navigational training flights refueling. During March 1952 the 506th Wing, including the 457 Squadron, moved to Tinker Air Force base, Oklahoma. Meanwhile, temporary duty assignments to distant staging areas had begun. In August 1953, the Squadron moved to Misawa, Japan, for a 90 day period. In November 1955 and again in August 1956, a detachment of or the Squadron's pilots and crew was on temporary duty for Nielson Air Force Base, Alaska.



NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. – For the first time in 16 years, members of the 457 Fighter Squadron “Spads” and the 301st Maintenance Squadron deployed to Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., to participate in the advanced aerial combat training exercise known as “Red Flag.” “We

came to participate in Red Flag because it has been a long time since our involvement with the exercise, and this is excellent training for our pilots and maintainers,” said Col. Richard Scobee, 301st Fighter Wing commander. The last time NAS JRB Forth Worth attended Red Flag was in 1994. Since the threat of terrorist attacks have become more prevalent, aerial combat training is more extensive and extremely vital to the safety of America. “The exercise provides advanced learning, more simulation and integration across the spectrum of warfare for our Airmen,” said Colonel Scobee. NAS JRB Forth Worth is one of two Air Force Reserve units participating in Red Flag. The 482nd Fighter Wing from Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., is also deployed and is partnered with NAS JRB Forth Worth in Air Expeditionary Force missions. “One unit can’t complete the mission alone. And by working with Homestead ARB we are able to establish a positive relationship for when we deploy,” said Colonel Scobee. The 457 FS operates the F-16C. Their mission while taking part in Red Flag is to engage the enemy through means of interdiction. “We put bombs on targets and on time to comply with the combined coalition Air Force commander,” said Lt. Col. David W. Smith, 93rd Fighter Squadron commander of Homestead Air Reserve Base. There are 85 aircraft from the U.S. Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps, U.S. Navy and the Royal Air Force, plus 1,285 service members from 19 different units deployed to Red Flag this year. The exercise has two teams: “Blue” forces and “Red” forces. A majority of the deployed aircraft and personnel are part of the blue forces. Their mission is to use war-like tactics to attack various targets such as missile sites, tanks and air fields. The targets are defended by the red forces, or “aggressor,” who use enemy tactics to interfere with the blue force mission. “We train people here for realistic threats, and it takes a lot of people in the air and on the ground to make that happen,” said Lt. Col. Dave Jorgensen, 414th Combat Training Squadron (Red Flag) deputy commander. Red Flag was developed 35 years ago to give pilots realistic training for combat missions. It is a simulated combat training exercise which incorporates all air forces from the different branches of the U.S. military and its allies.

9 February 1974 Two USAF Republic F-105 Thunderchiefs of the 457 TFW (TH tailcode), Carswell AFB, Texas, suffer mid-air collision, downing one aircraft near Holliday, Texas, with the pilot ejecting, suffering broken right leg on landing, recovered by helicopter. Second F-105 recovers to Carswell despite damage, pilot uninjured. 1st Lt. Hayes C. Kirby in F-105D-10-RE, 60-5375, had a violent pitch up and roll in the aircraft and hit his leader in F-105D-10-RE, 60-0513. Ejected in a flat spin. Leader landed okay.

On 28 August 2000, at 1807 CDT, an F-16C, S/N 85-1456, crashed four miles north of Tulia, TX while performing an unauthorized aerobatic maneuver. The F-16C, assigned to the 457 Fighter Squadron, 301st Fighter Wing, Fort Worth Naval Air Station (NAS), TX, was on a depot return flight. The Mishap Pilot (MP), a member of the 457 Fighter Squadron, was killed in the mishap, which occurred on the property of his parents-in-law as they watched. There were no civilian injuries or casualties. A hog pen and plowed field sustained damage.

Shortly after take off, the MP cancelled his Instrument Flight Rules clearance with Air Traffic Control, Having previously phoned to say he was coming by, he proceeded under Visual Flight Rules to the farm of his parents-in-law. The MP, violating governing regulations accomplished his first pass over the property at 300 feet above the ground, straight and level, from West to East. He followed with a maneuvering left-hand turn to reposition for a loop. Again, violating

governing regulations, the MP began his second pass at 140 feet above the ground, completing the first half of the loop normally. At the top of the loop the MP's attention became channelized on a point on the ground where he intended to finish the maneuver. At the top of the loop, 4,759 feet above the ground, the MP pulled the throttle to idle. While maintaining focus on his ground reference, he pushed the control stick forward for 6-7 seconds in an attempt to float the inverted aircraft to maintain altitude and adjust his ground track.

The MP failed to use sufficient forward stick to prevent altitude loss. While still focused on the ground references, the MP began a moderate 8-second pull—insufficient to successfully complete the maneuver—bringing the aircraft's nose down through the horizon to a near vertical nose down attitude. At approximately 3.5 seconds prior to impact, the MP initiated a maximum effort pull, and then advanced the throttle to afterburner in an attempt to recover; however, the aircraft impacted the ground. There is clear and convincing evidence that the cause of the mishap was pilot error. The MP breached flight discipline in attempting to execute unauthorized aerobatic maneuvers. Thereafter, channelized attention led him to focus on ground references to the exclusion of all other parameters, putting himself into a position from which he could not recover the aircraft.

The 457 FS went to war in 2001 when it deployed for Operation Southern Watch but ended up participating in Operation Enduring Freedom over Afghanistan as a result of the horrific terrorist attacks in the US on September 11th, 2001. In spite of fighting in Afghanistan, the 457 also had to keep up its role for OSW. The 457 FS took the Litening targeting pod and datalink which gave them an edge over many other aircraft that were deployed. These two items made their F-16s perfect for the Close-Air-Support role. The datalink is not the Link16 but a less costly version of that system.

Most missions over Afghanistan were more than ten hours. Weapon of choice was the 500 lb LGB-12. Night Vision Goggles were worn through out the combat mission

USAF F-16C block 30 #85-1412 of the 457 FS is carrying Sidewinders on the tips and an ALQ-184 pod under the center station when its ready to leave for a new mission. We never knew if we were going to drop until we checked in with a FAC. On my first mission, no one in my flight dropped. On my second mission, only my flight lead dropped. We flew against a Quonset hut area south of Kandahar. We showed up and checked in. We were working with a UAV. The UAV controller lased the target and we used our laser tracking capability to find the spot. We described what we saw and the controller confirmed the target. The controller asked if we wanted him to lase the bombs in. We said we would lase our own bombs. He then asked us to coordinate our attack with an incoming B-1. We held and waited for the B-1 to show. We circled back, joined with the B-1, and away we went. We used our NVGs to deconflict with the bomber. We had two separate targets about 700 meters apart. The controller wanted the bombs to hit at the same time. The B-1 dropped a JDAM, and my flight lead dropped a GBU-12. I flew in trail formation and captured both hits through my targeting pod. Just after the drop, the controller driving the UAV came over the radio and said that the Secretary of Defense was watching. Rumsfeld saw the bombs hit the targets in real-time. We walked into the chow hall the next day for breakfast and our video was playing on CNN. – Capt. David, 457 FS

Heading into 2007 the 457 had 18 jets in the squadron. As a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) committee recommendations, nine F-16Cs were transferred from the 149th FS/192nd FW of the Virginia ANG as the 149th FS became the USAFs first ANG associated F-22 Raptor unit at Langley AFB, Virginia. By the end of 2007 the squadron was operating 27 F-16C block 30 airframes. The 457 FS was fortunate as out of the 2005 BRAC decisions came the closure of two more F-16 Air Force Reserve Command squadrons. This left the 93rd FS and the 457 FS as the only F-16 operators in the AFRC out of the eight squadrons that flew the F-16s at one point in the 90s.

Operation Deny Flight Aviano AB, Italy (December 1st, 1993 to January 3rd, 1994) The 457 Fighter Squadron flew 368 missions in Operation Deny Flight out of Aviano AB, Italy.

Operation Decisive Edge Aviano AB, Italy (December of 1995 to January of 1996)

Operation Southern Watch (May 29th, 1998 to 1998). This was a short deployment for the 457 FS which sent eight aircraft but their date of return is still yet unknown. Just prior to the deployment the squadron trained on the usage of Laser Guided Bombs.

Operation Northern Watch Incirlik AB, Turkey (June of 1999) Saw a little more action than most deployments to for ONW in which they dropped LGBs.

Operation Northern Watch Incirlik AB, Turkey (June of 2000) For the second year in a row the 457 FS deployed to Incirlik AB, Turkey for Operation Northern Watch. Operation Northern Watch was a US European Command Combined Task Force (CTF) who was responsible for enforcing the United Nations mandated no-fly zone above the 36th parallel in Iraq. This mission was a successor to Operation Provide Comfort which also entailed support for the Iraqi Kurds.

Operation Southern Watch/Operation Enduring Freedom Ahmed Al Jaber AB, Kuwait (September of 2001 to December of 2001) The 457 FS participated by sending three F-16s as part of a rainbow team on a regularly scheduled Aerospace Expeditionary Force rotation (AEF 7/8 - Cycle 2). Ten aircraft participated in total with the other units being the 93rd FS, 466th FS and pilots & crew only from the 302nd FS. They were to return in November of 2001 but this was extended because of the war in Afghanistan. Crew of the 457 FS covered the last portion of this deployment so hence they saw mostly the war in Afghanistan but still had to cover southern Iraq at the same time.

Operation Iraqi Freedom Balad AB, Iraq (September of 2005 to January 19th, 2006) USAF Reserve Command "Rainbow Team" deployment AEF 7/8 (Cycle 5) involving three units; the 93rd FS, 457 FS and the 466th FS. A total of twelve jets were sent between the three squadrons. Operation Iraqi Freedom was initiated in March of 2003 to drive Saddam Hussein from reigning Iraq. Over the next years, multiple units were tasked to perform air cover over Iraq in the wake of this war.

Operation Iraqi Freedom Balad AB, Iraq (May 16th, 2007 to August 16th, 2007) The 93rd FS and 457 FS departed Fort Worth, Texas (home of the 457) for Balad AB, Iraq in May of 2007 with twelve aircraft, six each squadron. Both squadrons returned to Homestead AFB, Florida in August of 2007.



F-16C at Campia Turzii, Romania, 26 June 2019. (U.S. Air Force photo)

The 457 EFS participated as one of several key units in ASTRAL KNIGHT 2019 (AK19). This U.S. Air Forces Europe exercise took place from 3-7 June at various locations in Croatia, Germany, Italy and Slovenia. AK19 is a joint exercise conducting integrated air and missile defense of key terrain. AK19 involved a combination of flight operations and computer-assisted exercise scenarios, which included participation of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, U.S. Army Europe and the Croatian Air Force. In addition, 457 EFS was integrated into operations with U.S. Army Europe that includes the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command deploying to Ramstein Air Base, Germany; Aviano Air Base, Italy; Port of Koper, Slovenia; and personnel aboard an Aegis Destroyer.

In DECISIVE STRIKE 2019 (DS19), North Macedonia's national exercise from June 5 – July 10, at the Krivolak Military Training Center in Krivolak, North Macedonia. The 457 EFS participation marked the first time F-16s have joined in North Macedonia's training exercise. The exercise was co-led by Army of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, which culminated in a company-level combined arms live-fire exercise. This provided opportunities for U.S. and North Macedonia to improve readiness and interoperability as allies and partners. Highlights of DS19 included air-ground operations, an explosive breach, live fires, and simulated medical evacuations. SABER GUARDIAN 2019 (SG19), an exercise co-led by Romanian Land Forces and U.S. Army Europe took place from 3-24 June 2019 at various locations in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. F-16s of the 457 EFS supported ground operations including vehicle road marches, a medical exercise, multiple river crossings, and an air assault.

SG19 was designed to improve the integration of multinational air and ground combat forces.

Redeployment to home station at NAS Fort Worth JRB began on 23 July 2019 and concluded in the first week of August 2019 with eight C-17s requested with 90 seats for ADVON/ESTA and 129 seats for main body. Twelve pilots returned via F-16s, eight on commercial air from the AOR, nine on commercial air from Germany, and two on commercial air from Italy.⁴² Several chinks of military aircraft arrived in late July at NAS Fort Worth JRB, and family members of the 301 FW redeployed airmen awaited their arrival in either in wing auditorium or at commercial airports in the Dallas Fort Worth Area.



F-16C at Naval Air Station Fort Worth JRB, 23 November 2020 commemorating the 75 years serving the United States. (U.S. Air Force photo).

03-10 Aug 20 The 457th and 24th Fighter Squadrons assigned to the 301 FW participated in Counter Fast Inshore Attack Craft (C-FIAC) training exercises over Possum Kingdom Lake, TX. The two week training exercise over the north Texas skies was an extremely rare opportunity and provided the Squadrons to hone a very unique capability to Combatant Commands not traditionally practiced or inherent within U.S. Air Force F16 mission sets.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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