

Fledgling F-15C Eagle pilots learn the art of air superiority at Tyndall AFB, Fla.

# The Air Dominanc



# e School

Photography by Guy Aceto, Art Director, and Paul Kennedy



*F-15C Eagles form a four-ship over the Gulf of Mexico during a training sortie.*

**T**yndall AFB, Fla., perched on a beautiful stretch of beach along the Gulf of Mexico in northern Florida, is home to the 325th Fighter Wing. The 325th includes three fighter squadrons—1st, 2nd, and 95th. Since 1983, the wing has been training F-15 pilots in the art of air superiority. In 1993, the wing's transfer to Air Education and Training Command from Air Combat Command signaled a more heightened emphasis on the wing's training mission. In 1994, USAF's air weapons controller training mission transferred to the wing as well.



Staff photo by Guy Aceto



At left, 1st Lt. Jason Trew takes careful notes at the debriefing that comes after a morning's flight. A carefully monitored range, together with data from the Air Combat Maneuvering and Instrumentation system pod (below), means pilots are able to minutely dissect every aspect of every flight.



One-on-one instruction can be the best way to instill just the right mix of aggression and thoughtfulness in a new fighter pilot. At right, Maj. David Cool illustrates some fine points to Capt. Jay Moore.



Photos by Paul Kennedy



*Above and right, four-ship formations of F-15s from the 95th Fighter Squadron cruise over the Apalachicola area. Good flying weather and a large instrumented range make the Florida panhandle an ideal training location.*

*Tyndall offers four basic training courses for pilots.*

*The "B" course is for newly minted pilots learning to fly the F-15. The students get 224 hours of classroom time over 115 training days, not including holidays and weekends. Completing the course takes about six months.*



Photo by Paul Kennedy



*Three other tracks transition already experienced pilots from other fighters into the F-15; requalify former F-15 pilots; and train senior officers and test pilots in the F-15.*

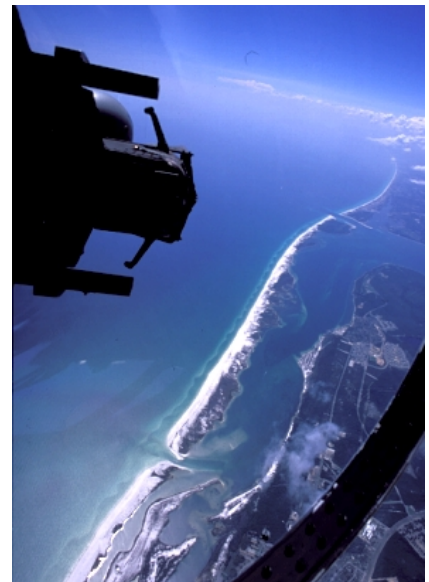
*Additionally, a 70-day instructor pilot course is mandatory for those coming to Tyndall to teach.*

*The B course students spend more than 47 hours in an F-15 simulator, practicing every imaginable contingency. Each "what if" has a correct response, and the instructors make sure that each pilot's reaction to a possible combination of events becomes automatic before the student takes to the skies.*

*After they master "the box," the novice fighter pilots will spend almost 57 hours in the cockpit of an Eagle, flying 46 sorties before completing the course.*

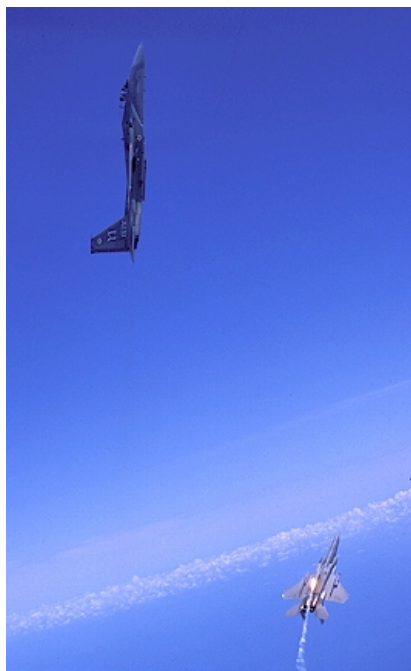


*The F-15 has long been the world's premier air superiority fighter, but USAF officials point out that by 2010 the nonstealthy F-15 will be well past its prime. The F-15 is due to be replaced by the F-22 Raptor, a stealthy supercruise fighter. The F-22 is scheduled to begin arriving at Tyndall in spring 2003.*

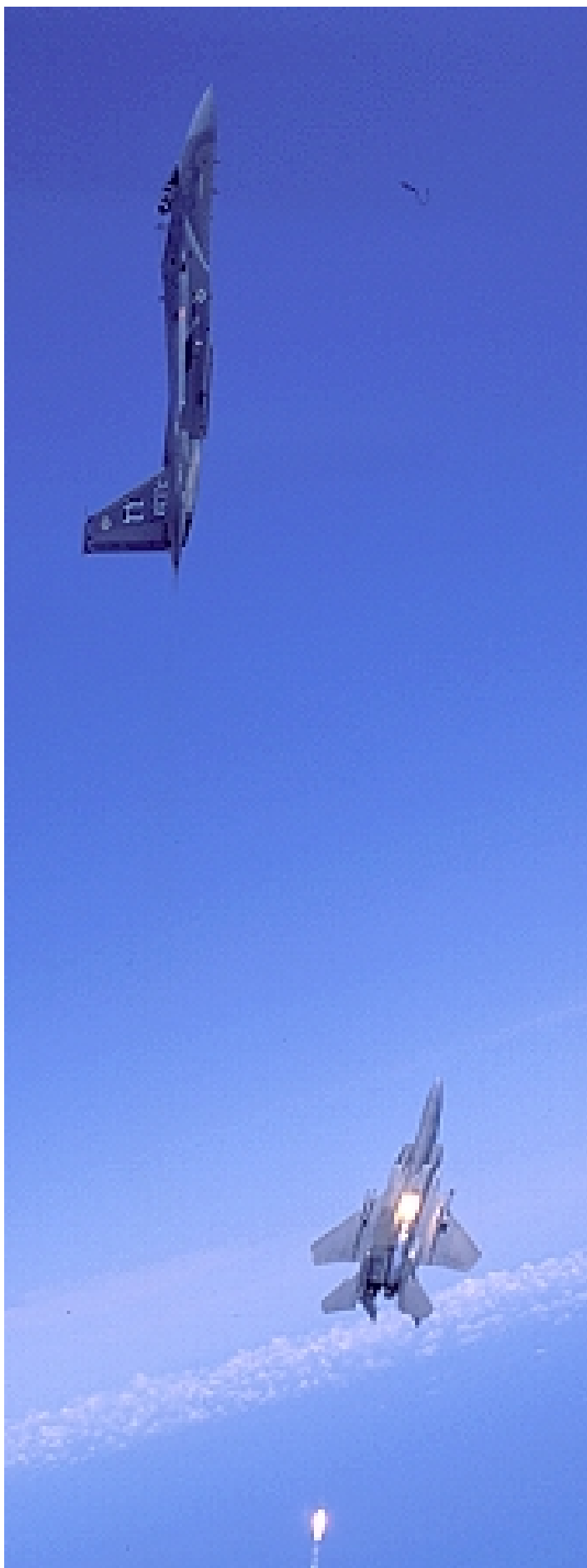


*Student pilots practice aerial refueling, a skill just as critical as combat maneuvering. At left, Eagles take turns hooking up with a KC-135R from the Air National Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing, Key Field, Miss.*





***F-15s served in the Persian Gulf War—where they accounted for 34 of 37 USAF air-to-air victories. They patrol the no-fly zones in Iraq and are helping to wage the war on terrorism.***



Staff photos by Guy Aceto



*At left, Lt. Col. Leigh Hinkle, 325th Fighter Wing F-22 Integration Office chief, inspects an F-15 prior to takeoff. Hinkle is responsible for making preparations to ensure the successful beddown of two F-22 squadrons at Tyndall.*

*The air superiority team would not be complete without weapons loaders, and their training never stops. They undergo monthly proficiency training and quarterly evaluations. At right, SSgt. Kirk McManious works on fitting an AIM-120 missile to an F-15 launchrail.*

*Tyndall is also a training ground for F-15 crew chiefs. The 362nd Training Squadron, a tenant unit that is part of the 82nd Training Wing at Sheppard AFB, Tex., is responsible for crew chief training. In 2001, 477 USAF members underwent crew chief training at Tyndall. The projected total for 2002 is 538 graduates.*



*Instructors use sorties generated for the F-15 pilot trainees as classrooms for the future crew chiefs. The trainees actually have to bend over backward as they learn nearly every rivet on the fighter. Some day they may see their names stenciled on an F-15.*





*Above, a four-ship heads out for a training sortie. Below, crew chiefs carefully arrange their spots and wait for "their" jets to return.*

*For the USAF members at Tyndall, job No. 1 is providing the nation crews that are just as efficient as the fighters they fly and maintain.*



*The 325th FW considers its mission to be "building an air superiority team." Today, that means the F-15. Tomorrow, they'll provide the same level of commitment with the F-22.*

*For the United States military, air dominance is not optional. The team at Tyndall works hard to ensure that USAF maintains its edge on the enemies both present and future. ■*