

Air Force Flying Training

Air Force pilot candidates normally begin with introductory flight training (IFT). In IFT, civilian instructors provide 50 hours of flight instruction to pilot candidates who must complete requirements for a private pilot license. IFT is not required if the candidate already has a private pilot license.

Pilot candidates then attend either Euro-NATO joint jet pilot training (ENJJPT) or joint specialized undergraduate pilot training (JSUPT).

ENJJPT is located at Sheppard AFB, Texas. The entire course lasts about 54 weeks. Students learn with, and are taught by, U.S. Air Force officers and officers from various air forces of our European allies. Student pilots first fly the T-37 mastering contact, instrument, low-level and formation flying. Next, they strap on the supersonic T-38 and continue building the skills necessary to become a fighter pilot.

JSUPT students accomplish primary training in the T-37 Tweet at one of three Air Force bases -- Columbus AFB, Mississippi, Laughlin AFB, Texas, or Vance AFB, Oklahoma; or may also fly the T-34C Turbomentor at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Florida. Joint training is conducted at Vance AFB, NAS Whiting Field, and in the T-6A Texan II at Moody AFB, Georgia for students from the Air Force and Navy.



During the primary phase of JSUPT, students learn basic flight skills common to all military pilots. Students will use the Joint Primary Aircraft Training System during the primary training phase. The aircraft portion of JPATS is the T-6 Texan II, which is being phased in as the primary trainer replacing the Air Force's T-37 and the Navy's T-34C.

After the primary phase of JSUPT, student pilots elect one of several advanced training tracks based on their class standing. Track select will be one of the most significant events in the student pilot's life. This is a moment he or she will never forget. During track select, the student pilots are first notified of what aircraft they will get for follow-on training. The most important thing to remember is that ALL assignments are good ones. The student pilot has EARNED the right to track select. At track select, you may hear others in the audience rooting or moaning for different aircraft. This does not signify what type of assignment it is. People feel very strongly about their aircraft and differences of opinion are definitely in the eye of the beholder. They may have dreamed about and used their very best effort to get their top choice. It may help the student to talk to experienced pilots. Many pilots do not receive their first choice of aircraft but go on to stellar, rewarding and enjoyable careers in another aircraft. Most pilots realize later that there is a reason things work out the way they do. The important thing to focus on is that the student has accomplished something that few are able to do and is now amongst a group of elite Air Force warriors.

Prospective airlift and tanker pilots are assigned to the airlift/tanker track and train in the T-1 Jayhawk at Columbus AFB, Laughlin AFB, or Vance AFB. Student pilots headed for bomber or fighter assignments are assigned to the bomber/fighter track and train in the T-38 Talon at Columbus, Laughlin or Vance. Students assigned to the multi-engine turboprop track fly the T-

44 turboprop trainers at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, and will eventually fly the C-130 Hercules.

Those students selected to fly helicopters are assigned to the helicopter track and fly the UH-1 Huey at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Nineteenth Air Force also provides follow-on training for most Air Force pilots in their assigned aircraft. Pilots assigned to fighter aircraft complete the introduction to fighter fundamentals course at ppard AFB, or Moody AFB, flying the AT-38C d then move on to train in either the F-15 Eagle at Tyndall AFB, Florida, or the F-16 Fighting Falcon at Luke AFB, Arizona. Altus AFB, Oklahoma, hosts training for pilots assigned to C-5 Galaxy, C-141 Starlifter, KC-135 Stratotanker or C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. Aircrews assigned to fly the C-130 train at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, and pilots assigned to fly MC-130 Combat Talon, HC-130 aircraft, UH-1N, MH-53 Pave Low or HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters receive their training at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. Keesler AFB, Mississippi, provides training for pilots assigned to the C-21, and the Army at Fort Rucker provides training in the C-12 Super King Air.

In addition to pilot training, Nineteenth Air Force provides joint specialized undergraduate navigator training. JSUNT is conducted at Randolph AFB, Texas and NAS Pensacola, Florida, and provides training for Air Force, Navy and Marine student navigators. Students at Randolph complete training in the T-43A and move to follow-on assignments in transport and tanker aircraft such as the C-130 and KC-135.

Students at NAS Pensacola, complete primary and intermediate training in the T-34C and T-1 aircraft, and then enter the one of two tracks in the next phase. Students in the strike track will serve as navigators in the B-52 Stratofortress or as weapon systems officers in the B-1B Lancer. Navigators assigned to the B-1B attend a special training program at Randolph. Students in the strike/fighter track will receive follow-on assignments in the F-15E Strike Eagle as weapon systems officers and attend special training in the IFF course.

What to expect when your spouse is in Pilot Training

Acceptance into pilot training marks an initiation into a unique society--the society of Air Force pilots. Your spouse's determination and aspirations resulted in his or her entry into pilot training.

Pilot training will be one of the most challenging times you will have ever encountered. The program is intensive and demanding, and the standards are high. The student pilot will literally spend almost every waking moment either in training or studying. Close to 100% of the student pilot's attention and effort will be devoted to their training.

Succeeding in pilot training will take a strong commitment from both partners. If you are engaged, it is strongly encouraged that you wait until the end of pilot training to get married. Couples also need thoughtful discussion before choosing to start a family during pilot training. The student pilot will be extremely focused on training and won't have the time and attention necessary to be an active parent.

The spouse can be immensely supportive to the student pilot. Handling household chores, shopping, laundry, cooking and errands may not sound like a joy, but it will remove a large burden from the student pilot. Your spouse is graded on *everything* from tests to attitudes. A poor attitude from lack of sleep or external concerns will be noticed and will definitely affect the student's training. You can make a huge contribution to his or her training by keeping the home running smoothly.

You need to be very understanding and tolerant of the student pilot's study needs. Very, very few student pilots are able to succeed on their own. Student pilots are strongly encouraged to form study teams. This means the student will not be at home much. It will be very difficult and may seem daunting at times, but the student will be spending more time with his or her fellow students than with you. After 12-hour days of training, the student will need to study 2–3 hours every day and more on weekends. You need to understand that the student pilot will be able to give very little time and/or attention at home while they are training to be pilots.

Student pilots are not authorized to take leave during training except under extreme circumstances. The same rules will apply during any type of training throughout his or her AF career. Exceptions:

- Death of an immediate family member
- Federal holidays concurring with a weekend
- Christmas breaks – during no fly periods
- A medical emergency – including birth

Spouses are encouraged to form support groups to cope with loneliness and isolation, and for companionship. You may find yourself in an area that is completely different from the one you came from. You're away from your family and friends. Spouses can help each other get through this time by planning outings, get-togethers and a phone network.

What if you can't find the support or help you need from the other students' spouses? DO NOT be ashamed or afraid to ask for help. Do not suffer alone. Family problems can greatly affect the student pilot's career. In the Air Force, the member is performing a service for our country. This means that oftentimes, the member has to put the Air Force's needs before family. The Air Force does not think you are not important. The Air Force realizes that family members have a great supporting role that can be difficult, too. The Air Force has many programs and services to assist family members. Your Family Support Center is a great resource with many programs available. Family Advocacy can help you cope with family concerns. The base Chaplain is an excellent person to go to. You do not have to be of any particular faith or have a religious background at all. The Chaplain will help any who need help, even if you just want someone to listen to you. The Chaplain will keep confidentiality, but if there is an urgent need, the Chaplain will request additional assistance from other base agencies. The Chaplain may request that the student pilot be granted emergency leave, but does not have to reveal the circumstances.

You may find yourself with a lot of free time as pilot training consumes your spouse's life. Many spouses will want to work. The Family Support Center has a staff member to assist you in finding work. Other opportunities include volunteering at base agencies or with the base

Spouse's Club. You may want to use this time to continue your education. The base Education Office can assist you with determining your needs and desires.

You are strongly encouraged to attend any functions or events you're invited to. Military protocol can be confusing at first. If you have any questions, ask a more experienced AF spouse for advice.

At times, student pilot training will be difficult. It is important to understand that this is the foundation of your spouse's career, and you have a major role in building this foundation. A strong commitment and seeking all available support will benefit you both and help you to succeed.

