



84.5 hours in academics, 36.2 device hours and 18.7 hours flying 14 sorties. The re-qualifying Track II pilot spent some 82.5 hours in academics, 24.2 device hours and a total of 16 flying hours flying 12 sorties.

### Ground instruction

Academic training was divided into six different blocks, namely Aircraft General (AG 1 to 19), Avionics (AV 1 to 10), Weapons (WP 1 to 14), Life Support (LS 1 to 8), Phase Briefs (PB 1 to 4) and Specialized Training (ST 1 to 9). During AG-17 for example, students were lectured on the procedures and operation of the antenna control panel, UHF, Have Quick, KY-58 secure voice radio, Intercom and IFF. During AV-7, students were taught how to operate the Data Entry Panel (DEP), while in class AV-8 the Infrared Acquisition/Designation System (IRADS) was introduced. The characteristics of the F-117 specific GBU-27 (Paveway III) and the enhanced EGBU-27 were lectured during WP-6 and 7, respectively.

Each Track I student would, during some 24 sessions, spend 36.2 hours on Device Training, consisting of T-38 Cockpit Familiarization Training (CFT), Part-Task Training (PTT), Simulator Training (Operational Flight Trainer) and Aircraft Hands-on Training (AHT). Operational Flight Training (OFT) started on day 15 of the course and lasted until day 26.

Part-task simulator training missions were to reinforce aircraft general, avionics and weapon academics. They were aimed at making pilots familiar with the different displays, controls and procedures. During the single Aircraft Hands-on Training mission, training was accomplished on

**The F-117 is stable on the approach, if lacking thrust for emergencies, and the landing is easily mastered, especially as those pilots that went to the Nighthawk were already experienced. Note the radar enhancer fitted to the side of the fuselage for peacetime operations.**

the ground using an F-117A, putting emphasis on the preflight of the aircraft and its weapons. This lasted around two hours.

Flying Training officially started with the T-38 Landing Currency (LC) phase on day 2 and 3 of the course, consisting of two missions of approximately 1.1 hours each. During these the upgrading pilot was familiarised with the local area and practised aircraft handling, stall characteristics, and normal patterns and landings. This was the only time that the students flew the dual-seat Talon. They then had to wait until day 28 of the course before they got to fly again, but this time they were going solo in the F-117A Nighthawk. After their first flight the students were given their Bandit number, stemming from the days when the F-117 Formal Training Unit was the 417th Fighter Squadron 'Bandits'. Using this nickname, Nighthawk (or 'Stinkbug') pilots could talk about being Bandits without making any reference to the classified programme.

**One of the most iconic shapes in aviation, the front view of the F-117 highlights the angular design. Forward of the cockpit is the forward-looking turret of the IRADS, used for long-range target acquisition.**

After the first flight of this Transition (TR) phase, five more training missions in the F-117 were made until TR-6, when the student needed to fly an Initial Instrument/Qualification Check flight. During the TR phase, all flights in the F-117A were flown clean (no bombs) with the transponders and Radar Enhancers on to make sure the aircraft was visible on the radar. During the Transition phase, Track I and IA students needed to make a minimum of three chute landings, while Track 2 students needed at least two.

All students needed a minimum of one intentional no-chute landing while a F-117 Instructor Pilot in a T-38 chased all these flights in order to observe the student's performance in the single-seat F-117. Prior to going back to the academic

