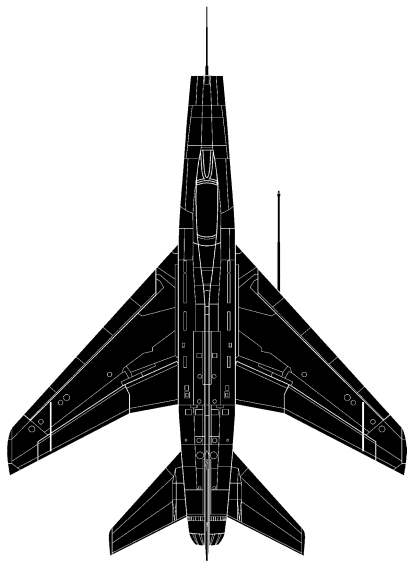


Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

F-100 Super Sabre



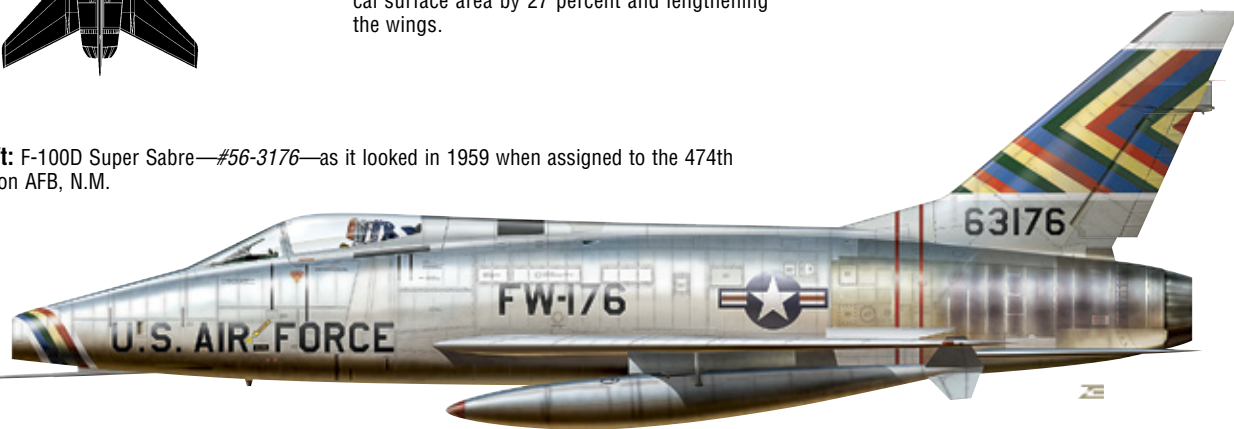
The sleek F-100 Super Sabre was the world's first operational fighter capable of supersonic performance in level flight. USAF's F-100, designed and built by North American Aviation, was derived from the fabled F-86 Sabre, but was bigger and more powerful. It underwent a metamorphosis. Designed as an air superiority fighter for countering Soviet airpower, the F-100 eventually emerged as a premier fighter-bomber.

The initial USAF contract called for three aircraft; it marked the start of the fabled "Century Series" of USAF fighters. The F-100 featured a wing with 45 degrees of sweep-back, leading edge slats, and slatted ailerons, but no conventional flaps. Its all-metal structure contained titanium to offset temperature rise at high speed. The YF-100 went supersonic on its first flight. A series of crashes forced design changes such as increasing vertical surface area by 27 percent and lengthening the wings.

The aircraft turned in a strong performance in the Vietnam War, used by both the regular USAF and the Air National Guard. It was flown in more than 360,000 combat sorties and was the first fighter to be used in the dangerous and innovative Wild Weasel mission. Later, the F-100 starred in the legendary "Misty" fast forward air control role.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: F-100D Super Sabre—#56-3176—as it looked in 1959 when assigned to the 474th TFW at Cannon AFB, N.M.



Super Sabre on the attack.

In Brief

Designed, built by North American ★ first flight May 25, 1953 ★ crew one or two ★ number built 2,294 ★ **Specific to F-100D:** one PW J57 turbojet engine ★ armament four 20 mm M-39E cannons, two AIM-9 or Bullpup air-to-ground missiles ★ max load 7,040 lbs of bombs ★ max speed 892 mph ★ cruise speed 587 mph ★ max range 1,200 mi ★ weight (loaded) 38,048 lb ★ span 38 ft 9 in ★ length 47 ft 5 in ★ height 16 ft 2 in.

Famous Fliers

Medal of Honor: George "Bud" Day. **Record Setters:** Frank Everest Jr. (world speed record, 755 mph, in 1953), Horace Hanes (world speed record, 822 mph, in 1955), Carlos Talbott (record coast-to-coast average speed of 611 mph in 1955). **Notables:** John Boyd, Wilbur Creech, Ron Fogleman, James McInerney, Merrill McPeak, Dick Rutan, Donald Sheppard.

Interesting Facts

Nicknamed "the Hun" ★ suffered high accident rate—889 lost ★ flown by forces of US, Taiwan, Denmark, France, Turkey ★ equipped for nuclear strike mission ★ generated "Sabre Dance," a dangerous reaction to stalls at high angles of attack ★ accidentally shot down a B-52 with AIM-9B missile (April 7, 1961) ★ used for quick overflights of Soviet territory ★ served in Thunderbirds aerial demonstration team (1956-68) ★ flown in the first successful supersonic ejection (1955).