



The 586th FTS (above left) is a component of the 40th Test Group (above), itself a part of the 46th Test Wing - the USAF's primary armaments test organisation. The flying operations of the 'Roadrunners' are just one element of the 40th Test Group's work at Holloman - it also conducts ejection seat and other sled tests, and co-ordinates work on directed-energy weapons and advanced navigation/landing systems.

Left and right: One of the 586th's three AT-288s cruises over the White Sands National Monument close to the base at Holloman. The unit's Talons are very busy, not only acting as platforms for a myriad of equipment tests, but also being employed as simulated targets and as target-tugs.

mounted on pylons or ordnance at a variety of heights, orientations and locations to meet virtually any measurement requirement. The other site contains the RCS Advanced Measurement System (RAMS) that is designed for monostatic RCS measurements of RCS targets, and is equipped with a fully - in the ground - retractable pylon.

The 46th TG Directed Energy (DE) Office was formed to assist the Air Force DE Program Office in designing meaningful and effective test programmes. DE weapons are devices using electromagnetic waves or sub-atomic particles to achieve military objectives. The 46th Test Group's unique test capabilities, with its remote and secure location adjacent to WSMR's airspace, make the Test Group the ideal test organisation to conduct passive, active or lethal DE weapon tests against airborne targets using the two High Altitude Test Sites at North Ocreux Peak and Salinas Peak, working with the Air Force Research Laboratory Directed Energy Directorate at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico, on test and evaluation of the Air Force's new YAL-1A Airborne Laser.

Last but not least, Air Force Detachment 1 (DET 1) provides a liaison function for coordination of all Air Force test and training operations at White Sands Missile Range.

'Roadrunners'

Originally constituted as the 586th Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on 15 February 1943, the unit was known as the 'Bridge Bosses'. Stationed at MacDill Field (USA), Andrews Army Air Field (USA), Keesler Field (USA), Botham (UK), Holmsley (UK), Tour-en-Bassin (France), Bricy (France), Cambrai-Niergnies (France), Verlis (Holland), Kitzingen (Germany) and Bolling Field (USA), operating B-26 Marauders and A-26 Invaders, it was disbanded on 31 March 1946. It was reconstituted on 1 October 1992 with the 6586th Test Squadron based at Holloman AFB, which was designated and activated on 15 December 1982. The 6586th was re-designated as the 586th Test Squadron on 1 October 1992 and renamed 586th Flight Test



Squadron on 15 March 1994, acquiring the name 'Roadrunners' - New Mexico's state bird.

Currently commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Dawn Dunlop, the 586th Flight Test Squadron is the only Flight Test Squadron based at Holloman AFB and is responsible for a wide variety of test and test support missions that are executed on the White Sands Missile Range. The unit supports 46th Test Group programmes as well as Air Armament Center (AAC) objectives for Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground weapons development, and, as such, it plans, coordinates, analyses and conducts flight tests of avionics, guidance, navigation and laser systems, as well as advanced weapon systems.

Weapons testing includes ordnance being fired or dropped with live warheads.

In addition, the unit provides operational support to those Department of Defense test aircraft staging out of Holloman AFB. The unit provides target, chase and photo support for numerous Joint test programmes, and is involved with the oversight of UAW and commercial testing at Holloman. The unit is also responsible for target recovery, collecting the different type of test articles dropped on the range. This can vary from target tugs to actual weapons such as, for example, a JASSM that may need to be recovered and sent back to the manufacturer for further analysis.