

## 560<sup>th</sup> FLYING TRAINING SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

560<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 19 Dec 1942

Activated, 24 Dec 1942

Redesignated 560<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 20 Aug 1943

Inactivated, 28 Aug 1945

Redesignated 560<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 6 Feb 1947

Activated, 6 Mar 1947

Inactivated, 27 Jun 1949

Redesignated 560<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron, and activated, 1 May 1962

Organized, 1 Oct 1962

Inactivated, 31 Oct 1970

Redesignated 560<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Squadron, 22 Mar 1972

Activated, 1 May 1972

### STATIONS

Gowen Field, ID, 24 Dec 1942

Wendover Field, UT, 1 Feb 1943

Sioux City AAB, IA, 1 May–8 Jun 1943

Knettishall, England, 6 Jun 1943–6 Aug 1945

Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 13–28 Aug 1945

Orchard Place Arpt, IL, 6 Mar 1947–27 Jun 1949

McConnell AFB, KS, 1 Oct 1962

Homestead AFB, FL, 25 Sep 1968–31 Oct 1970

Randolph AFB, TX, 1 May 1972

## **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Kunsan AB, South Korea, 29 Jun–15 Dec 1969

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

388<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, 24 Dec 1942–28 Aug 1945

Second Air Force, 6 Mar 1947

388<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, 30 Sep 1947–27 Jun 1949

Tactical Air Command, 1 May 1962

388<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1962

23<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, 8 Feb 1964

4531<sup>st</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, 25 Sep 1968

31<sup>st</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, 15–31 Oct 1970

12<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Wing, 1 May 1972

12<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 15 Dec 1991

## **ATTACHMENTS**

354<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, 29 Jun–15 Dec 1969

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-17, 1943–1945

B-17F

B-17G

Unkn, 1947–1949

F-100, 1962–1964

F-105, 1963–1968

F-4, 1969–1970

T-38, 1972

## **COMMANDERS**

LTC Ronald Perrilloux

LTC Kenneth D. Frollini

LTC Robert Otto, May 1998-Jun 1999

LTC Russell D. Driggers, Mar 2011-May 2013

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace  
Central Europe  
Air Combat, EAME Theater

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

**Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

Germany, 17 Aug 1943

For three missions (Hannover, Germany, 26 Jul 1943; Brux, Czechoslovakia, 12 May 1944; and from England to Russia, 21 Jun 1944)

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

[25 Sep 1968]–30 Jun 1970

1 May 1972–28 Feb 1973

1 Jan 1986–31 Dec

**EMBLEM**

On a Green disc edged with a narrow White border, the head of a cheetah affronte couped, Gold Brown, detailed White, Brown and Black, eyes Green, pupils Black, highlighted White, teeth White, tongue Red, all outlines and details Black. (Approved, 7 May 1969) (Approved, 10 Apr 1978)





560<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Squadron emblem: The Cheetah Squadron patch description is a cheetah's head on a green disk, edged in white. The green signifies the continents of the earth. The cheetah is the fastest of all the feline family and its speed symbolizes the several rapid mobilizations and deployments in the squadron's history. The cheetah's feline lineage also represents the stealth and cunning exhibited during the squadron's historic shuttle bombing

missions. The cheetah's eyes denote the squadron's capability of night and day vigilance. The open snarled jaws represent the squadron's constant attack posture.

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

CHARGIN CHEETAHS

## **OPERATIONS**

Combat in ETO, Jul 1943–Apr 1945. F–105 replacement pilot training, Jan 1966–Jun 1968. Trained US and friendly nation instructor aircrews, May 1972–

In World War II, the 560th participated in combat in the European Theater of Operations, carrying out historic shuttle bombing missions from England to Germany to Potlava, USSR, to Foggia, Italy, and back to England.

Beginning in October 1962, the 560th Tactical Fighter Squadron conducted tactical operations and training in preparation for global deployment. The squadron moved to Korea in response to the Pueblo incident in June, 1969. After maintaining alert status in Korea and later Japan, the Squadron was located at Homestead AFB, Florida from February, 1970 through October, 1970.

On 1 May 1972, the 560th was reactivated at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, and took over the mission of training T-38 instructor pilots for Air Training Command's Undergraduate Pilot Training bases.

In October 1993, the 560th took on the mission of Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals and Upgrade Instructor Pilot Training in the "Smurf Jet" AT-38. In May 1998, the Smurf operation had become squadron-sized and was split off to reactivate the 435th Flying Training Squadron. The 560th still prepares rated pilots from varied backgrounds for fighter lead-in training. Today the 560th Flying Training Squadron carries on the traditions born in the skies of Europe and Asia by training those who train the world's finest pilots.

The 560th has and will always maintain a deep and meaningful bond with all Vietnam era POW pilots. Since 1973, all repatriated pilots, physically able to return to active flying duty came to the 560th for requalification training. As the final chapter in Operation Homecoming, the Cheetahs' mission was to return over 150 active duty pilots to flight status. Over the next two years the 560th flew more than 6000 hours and established a bond with these former POWs, which has held fast over the past twenty-nine years.

The first flight for each returning pilot with the 560th FTS granted what the last flight in Southeast Asia should have been. Traditionally, after each pilot completed his last flight, his comrades greeted him on the flight line to celebrate a safe last landing. A bottle of champagne was passed around to commemorate the occasion and to pause briefly in remembrance of

those who had not returned. In keeping with the tradition, the 560th Flying Training Squadron gave each pilot returnee his "Freedom Flight", complete with champagne. Following the initial wave of pilot requalifications, the USAF began providing Freedom Flights to POW pilots who, for one reason or another, did not attend requalification training here at Randolph AFB. Over the years the Cheetahs have flown 193 Freedom Flights.

The Freedom Flyers wear a patch called "Three's In" which symbolizes the very spirit of Operation Homecoming. Designed by a pilot for pilots, it captures the blue of the sky, the stars and stripes unfurled, a missing man formation reunited with number three, and the heartfelt words spoken by a POW stepping from a freedom bound C-141-"God Bless America."

Each year the 560th Chargin' Cheetahs host the annual two-day reunion of the "Freedom Flyers" commemorating the anniversary of Operation Homecoming. Scheduled events include aircraft static displays, fly-bys, a wreath laying ceremony, a POW Symposium, a formal Dining-In, and on the second day, a charity golf-tournament held by the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association (the "River Rats").

Mission Statement: Sustain combat air forces by producing the world's best T-38 instructor pilots for joint specialized undergraduate pilot training and ensuring U.S. Air Force and allied pilots successfully transition to fighter assignments.

Mission: The 560th FTS is the sole provider of T-38 pilot instructor training for U.S. Air Force and Allied instructor pilot candidates who will train all U.S. Air Force pilots in the advanced phase of joint specialized undergraduate pilot training. It upgrades international pilots to IPs destined for worldwide assignments and performs training to re-qualify pilots in high-performance jet aircraft. It also executes various U.S. Air Force flight indoctrination programs.

560th Bomb Squadron was one of four bomb squadrons of the 388th. Like any of the four squadrons, the 560th had about 12 combat crews, maintenance crews, 20 B-17's, support personnel in administration, armament, munitions, medical, cooking, photo, and equipment repair.

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION T-38A, SERIAL NUMBER (S/N) 70-1949 560TH FLYING TRAINING SQUADRON (FTS), RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE (AFB), TX On 19 March 2003, at approximately 1544 Central Standard Time (CST), the Mishap Aircraft (MA), a T-38A, S/N 70-1949, flown by a highly experienced instructor pilot in the rear cockpit, was cleared for a no-flap touch-and-go on runway 32R at Randolph AFB, Texas. Immediately after a normal touchdown, the right main tire failed. The crew executed a highspeed abort on the runway and asked the tower to raise the BAK-15 arresting barrier. The right main tire disintegrated near mid-field, and the aircraft shifted from slightly left to slightly right of the runway centerline. Nearing 2000 feet from the end of the runway, the crew determined they would not stop within the runway remaining and locked their shoulder harnesses in anticipation of engaging the BAK-15 barrier. The combined effects of strong winds (19 knots left-to-right crosswind

component), reduced rudder authority, and friction from the dragging right main wheel caused the aircraft to drift right during the last 1000 feet of roll out. Despite full left rudder deflection, differential braking, and intermittent use of nose wheel steering, the pilot could not regain directional control. The aircraft departed the concrete portion of the runway at approximately 80 knots and continued over the asphalt portion of the overrun. The right main gear dropped off the hard surface into the dirt just before impact with the right BAK-15 support stanchion and concrete mounting pad. The force of impact from the 5.5 inch steel pole ripped through the left side of the aircraft nose, front cockpit, and engine intake before stopping at the left wing root. As the stanchion breached the front cockpit, it forced the throttle quadrant into the left leg brace of the front seat. This contact overcame the seat locking mechanisms and forced the leg brace up, initiating an involuntary ejection for the front seat pilot. At the time of ejection, the aircraft was 5-10 degrees nose low and banked 10-15 degrees to the right (the nose strut and right main landing gear were sheared off in the collision with the concrete support pad and barrier motor housing). Safe ejection parameters for the T-38A seat did not exist and the front seat pilot was fatally injured. The rear seat pilot stayed in the aircraft until it came to rest 83 feet from the BAK-15 support stanchion and escaped serious injury. The aircraft was damaged beyond economical repair, with an approximate loss of \$3,471,930.00. The mishap took place adjacent to the runway on Randolph AFB, TX, and no private property was damaged in the mishap. Clear and convincing evidence reveals that the cause of this accident was catastrophic failure and disintegration of the right main tire leading to loss of directional control at the end of a highspeed abort.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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#### Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.