562d Flying Training Squadron

T-43A Retirement Ceremony

Friday, 17 September 2010

1100 Hrs, Base Operations

Randolph Air Force Base, Texas

AIR EDUCATION & TRAINING COMMAND

AKA The Mighty 'Gator' / The Flying Classroom II

Sequence of Events

Narrator
Major Jeffrey H. Welborn
Director of Operations, 562d Flying Training Squadron

Entrance of the Official Party

Posting of the Colors

National Anthem

Invocation
Chaplain (Colonel) Bobby V. Page
Command Chaplain, Air Education and Training Command

Introduction
Colonel Richard M. Murphy
Commander, 12th Flying Training Wing

T-43A History at Mather AFB/Randolph AFB
Colonel Andrew A. Croft
Commander, 12th Operations Group

AETC Aerial Review

Final T-43A single-ship pass
Closing Remarks
Colonel Richard M. Murphy
Commander, 12th Flying Training Wing

Reception
Gators/Aces Gathering Area
Located in-between the 562 FTS/563 FTS (Near the T-29)

T-43A

The T-43A is primarily used in the Combat System Officer (CSO) training program. Its mission at Randolph AFB is to train these officers for strategic and tactical aircraft.

The T-43A is the Air Force version of the Boeing 737 transport. One jet engine is mounted under each wing. The exterior differences between the military and commercial aircraft include the addition of many small black-type antennas, sextant ports, a wire antenna for high-frequency radio and fewer windows.

Inside each T-43A training compartment are two maximum proficiency, two minimum proficiency and 12 student stations. The training compartment is functionally arranged into three complexes. Each complex has four student positions and one instructor position. Two student stations form a console, and instructors can move their seats to the consoles and sit beside students for individual instruction. The large cabin allows easy access to seating and storage yet reduces the distance between student stations and instructor positions.

The student training compartment is equipped with advanced avionics gear similar to that of Air Force operational aircraft. This includes mapping radar; VOR (VHF omni-directional radio range) and TACAN (tactical air navigation) radio systems; inertial navigation system; radar altimeter; and all required communications equipment.

The master student position is the only position that has a complete avionics panel. Other student stations have a partial panel with decals in those positions where avionics would otherwise be, providing continuity between the simulator and the airplane, and familiarizing the student with equipment location to ease transition from student positions to the master position.

History of T-43A at Mather AFB

In April 1973, the first-ever flight of the Boeing T-43A navigation trainer occurred when Mather AFB's 3535th Navigator Training Wing was redesignated as the 323d Flying Training Wing (FTW). The 323d FTW conducted operational test and evaluation of the aircraft from August 1, 1973 – October 31, 1973. The first aircraft was ready for operational use in September 1973 while the last group was ready in July 1974. This coincided with the 323d FTW's newly designated mission of Undergraduate Navigator Training, and later, Interservice Undergraduate Navigator Training (IUNT).

The T-43A had considerably more training capability than the plane it replaced, the T-29C. The T-43A exposed navigator candidates to avionics and techniques that previous generations had to learn in the field. Graduates were better prepared to take their place in the high speed, multi-mission jet aircraft of the future and go beyond the classical role of the Navigator to become "Systems Managers."

UNT/IUNT was located at Mather AFB from October 1973 through December 1992. Throughout the T-43A's time at Mather AFB, the aircraft was the primary trainer for over 17,500 navigator students.

History of T-43A at Randolph AFB

After Mather AFB closed, IUNT was relocated to Randolph AFB. The first T-43A, tail number 73-1153 ('The Spirit of San Antonio' and the flagship aircraft of the squadron commander), arrived on December 15, 1992. Under the 12 FTW, IUNT was transformed into Specialized Undergraduate Navigator Training (SUNT). As SUNT further evolved into Joint Specialized Undergraduate Navigator Training (JSUNT) and finally Combat Systems Officer (CSO) Training, the "Flying Classroom II" remained the centerpiece of navigator and electronic warfare officer training.

Today marks the end of the T-43A's era as the UNT, IUNT, SUNT, JSUNT and CSO trainer aircraft for the USAF, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and 36 nations. During the T-43A's 37 years of service, the Mighty "Gator" has flown more than 93,000 sorties, logging over 372,000 hours and training over 23,000 navigators. During this time, the "Flying Classroom II" set the bar as a true "Blacksmith" of American Airpower!

Silver Wings

"The Navigator Graduate"

I've won the right to wear these Silver Wings
And see the many awesome sights
Of which the Poet sings.
I've earned a place among the Gods of Flight
Under the sun's and moon's eternal light.

I now can join that group so proud
Who can look down upon a cloud
And find their way across unmarked space
Where for them alone there is a place.

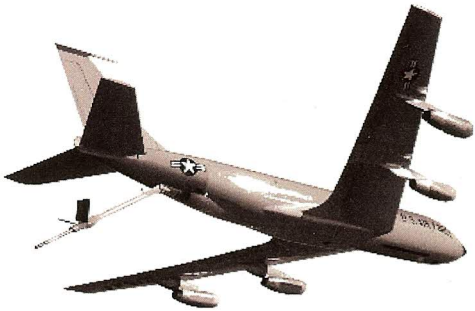
I can now join that honored fraternity
Whose members look into eternity,
Who fly beyond the fetters of the Earth
And see at once, yesterday's death
And tomorrow's birth.

I stand today upon duty's threshold here
Where opportunity is shining clear
And know that what tomorrow brings
Depends on how I guide these Silver Wings.

The T-43A lays the foundation

Cargo, Tanker, Special Operations

C-130



KC-135

MC/AC-130

HC-130

Aircraft Picture Unavailable

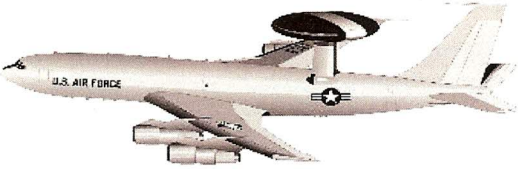
U-28

for CSO's in the following aircraft:

Bomber, ISR

B-52

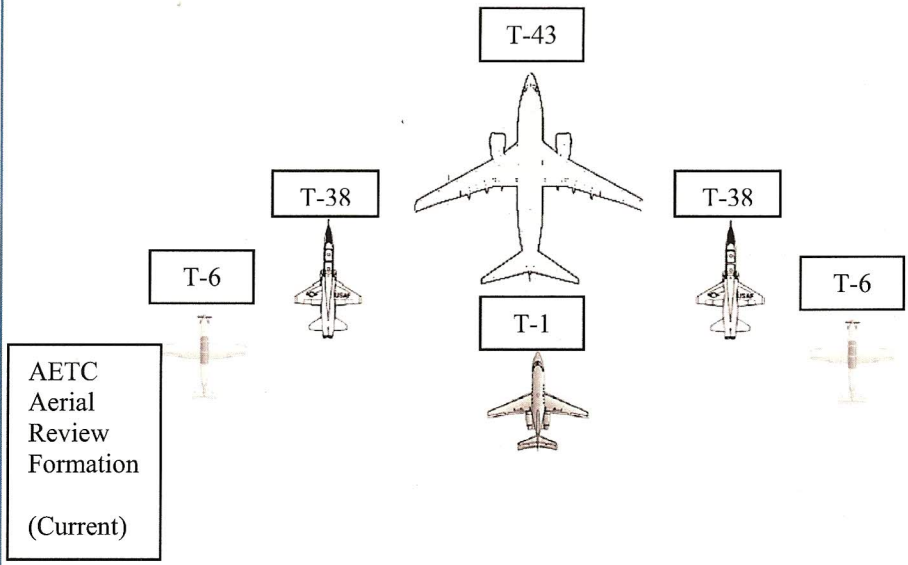
E-8C



E-3

EC-130H

OC/WC/RC-135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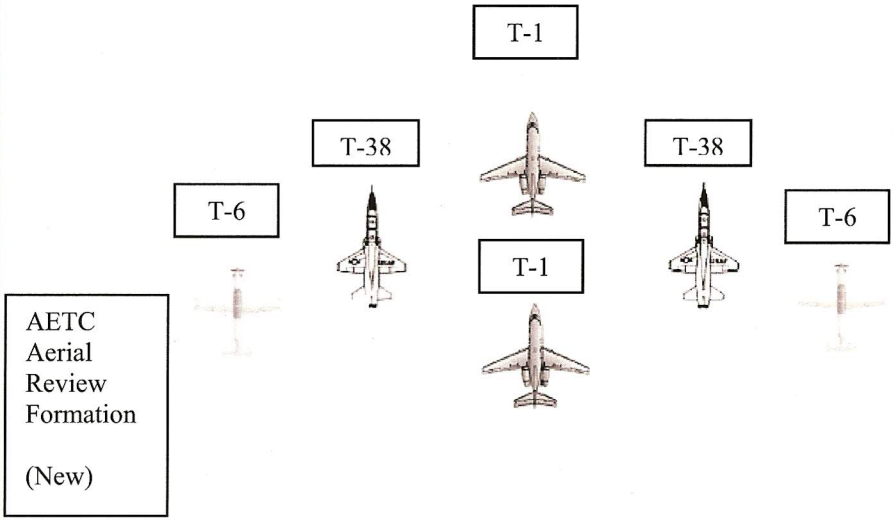
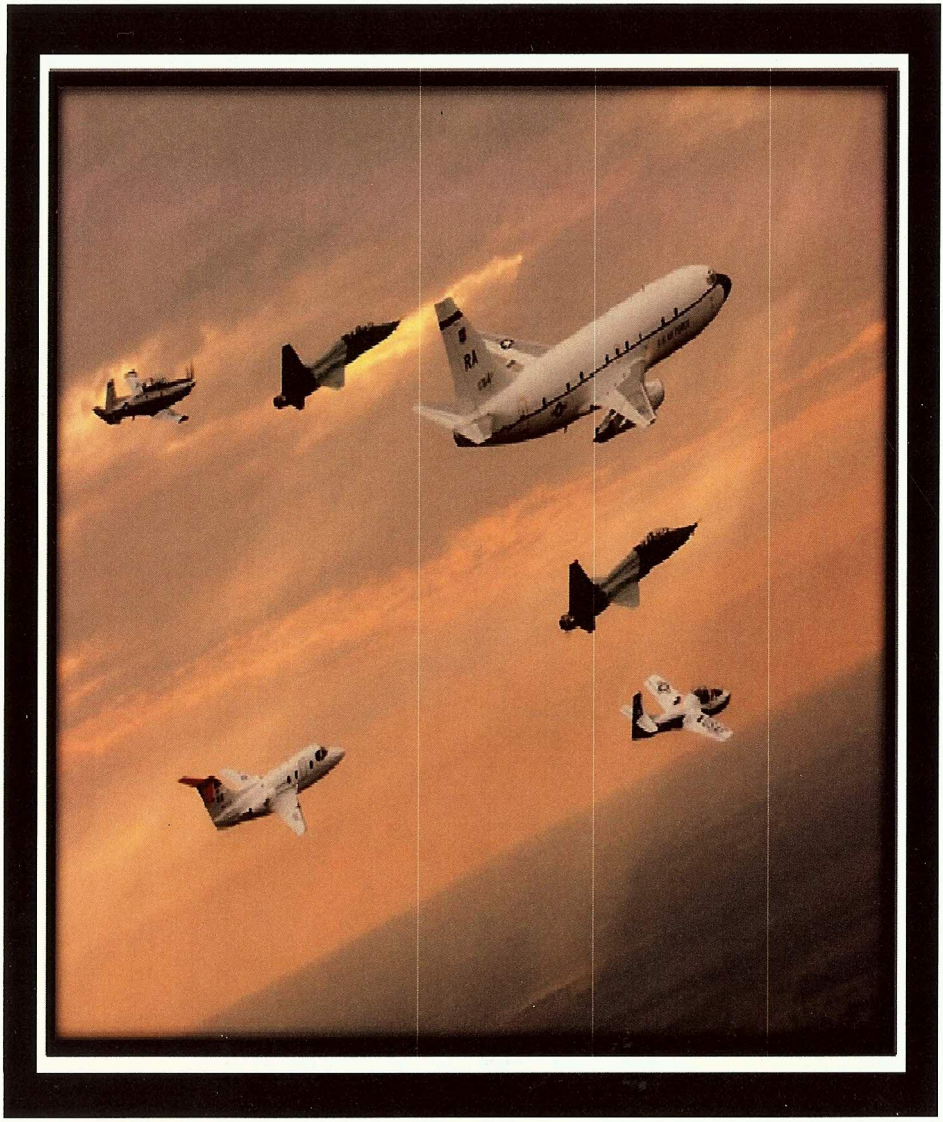
T-38
T-38
T-6
T-6
T-1
AETC
Aerial
Review
Formation
(Current)


T-1
T-38
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