

# Quick Turn at

**Just three years after they arrived, the F-22s at Holloman Air Force Base are moving on.**

**Photography by Jim Haseltine  
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# Holloman



*A Raptor sextet representing each of Holloman's F-22 squadrons—the 7th Fighter Squadron, 8th Fighter Squadron, and Reserve associate 301st Fighter Squadron—flies over the Sacramento mountains near the base.*

**R**aptors settled in at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico three years ago, and already it's the end of an era. As USAF consolidates F-22 operations to a select few bases, Holloman's combat squadrons will soon be replaced by F-16 training units from Luke AFB, Ariz. First to inactivate this summer, the 8th Fighter Squadron will split its fleet between JB Langley-Eustis, Va., JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, and Nellis AFB, Nev. The 7th FS will stay at Holloman awhile longer—seeing the base through its transition to F-16s. Amid the shuffle, departing F-22s and T-38s used for related training will mingle with arriving Vipers and Predators on the flight line. **1** A T-38 flies a training mission to support F-22s from Holloman. **2** F-22s fly in formation. **3** Loaders hang an AIM-120 training missile into one of



the F-22's internal bays to preserve its low radar profile. **4** Lt. Col. Mike Hernandez (l) shares a laugh with Lt. Col. David Raggio after an F-22 training sortie.



*111 A Raptor passes over the gypsum waves of White Sands National Monument, just off Holloman's runways. 121 An F-22 breaks away from the two-ship training sortie out of Holloman. 131 Canopies open to reduce sweltering in the desert heat, three T-38s hold short of the runway, preparing for takeoff. 141 Like the squires of old, Holloman Talons bear the heraldry of their knight—three Raptors on a fesse argent.*

**11** Before an F-22 taxis out of its hangar, a crew chief performs a final preflight check. **12** A Raptor, wearing titles of the 44th Fighter Group, lifts off on a local training mission. **13** Halted short of the runway, a Raptor bears a much subdued version of the 7th Fighter Squadron's "Screaming Demon" on the intake. **14** A loaded F-22 taxis through the hangar area—known as "the canyon"—fitted with external fuel tanks. **15** Maj. Kurt Duffy (l) and crew chief Parris Veasley go over the log book for a T-38.





*1* A brace of F-22s split during training. Under the right lighting, the gray F-22s reflect like silver. This is a by-product of their stealth coating. *2* Taxiing out for a sortie, a Talon receives a “good to go” from crew chief Roy Marshall. *3* Holloman’s “Ghost Park” bespeaks a proud fighter

tradition, from the F-84 through to the stealth F-117. *4* Holloman’s T-38s carry a dual identity—each aircraft jointly serves the 7th FS and 8th FS, bearing the colors of both.

*11* A pilot glances back while preparing to accompany Raptors on training. *12* Disrupting the aircraft's observable characteristics, external fuel tanks are nonetheless vital to some missions requiring extra range but not necessarily a full suite of stealth characteristics. *13* An F-22 taxis out for a training mission. *14* The end-of-runway crew drags away the chocks, signaling the pilot is clear to taxi.





*1* Their iridescent paint and blended surfaces shimmering in the sun, wing-tanks stand out from the Raptor's fifth generation design. *2* Flaps lowered, a trio of Talons adds jet exhaust to the desert heat. *3* A pilot runs through positive control checks, as a crew chief visually confirms the unfettered movement of a Raptor's control surfaces. *4* While many bases offer sunshades, Holloman's Raptors enjoy the rare luxury of climate-controlled hangars purpose-built for the 7th Fighter Squadron's former resident—the F-117 Nighthawk. Raptors are not retiring, but they will soon join the Nighthawks as aircraft formerly flown at Holloman. ■