

2 AIR REFUELING SQUADRON



MISSION

The 2 Air Refueling Squadron is committed to its professional Airmen and has a legacy of providing “Second to None” service to the United States in support of national security objectives. Teamed with the KC-10 Extender, the 2 ARS and its personnel enable unrivaled Global Reach for America

LINEAGE

1 Company, 2 Aero Squadron organized, 1 Dec 1915
Redesignated 2 Aero Squadron, 20 Jul 1917
Squadron A, Kelly Field, TX, 23 Jul 1918
Demobilized, 18 Nov 1918

2 Aero Squadron (Observation) organized, 5 Jun 1919
Redesignated 2 Squadron, 14 Mar 1921
Redesignated 2 Observation Squadron, 25 Jan 1923

Squadron A, Kelly Field, TX and 2 Observation Squadron consolidated, 8 Apr 1924.

Consolidated organization designated 2 Observation Squadron.
Redesignated 2 Observation Squadron (Medium), 26 Feb 1942
Inactivated, 2 Apr 1946

2 Air Refueling Squadron, Medium constituted, 27 Oct 1948
Activated on 1 Jan 1949
Discontinued and inactivated, 1 Apr 1963

2 Observation Squadron (Medium) and 2 Air Refueling Squadron, Medium consolidated and

redesignated 2 Air Refueling Squadron, Heavy, 19 Sep 1985

Activated, 3 Jan 1989

Redesignated 2 Air Refueling Squadron, 1 Sep 1991

STATIONS

San Diego, CA, 1 Dec 1915–2 Jan 1916

Fort McKinley, Luzon, 3 Feb 1916

Fort Mills, Corregidor, 14 Feb 1916–15 Oct 1917

Kelly Field, TX, Nov 1917–18 Nov 1918

Rockwell Field, CA, 5 Jun–29 Nov 1919

Fort Mills, Corregidor, 24 Dec 1919

Kindley Field, Corregidor, 15 Oct 1920

Nichols Field, Luzon, Jun 1929

Clark Field, Luzon, 1 Nov 1940

Nichols Field, Luzon, Nov–Dec 1941

Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 1 Jan 1949

Chatham AFB, GA, 16 Sep 1950

Hunter Field (later, AFB), GA, 28 Sep 1950–1 Apr 1963

Barksdale AFB, LA, 3 Jan 1989

McGuire AFB, NJ, 1 Oct 1994

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Lakenheath RAF Station, England, 4 May–30 Aug 1951 and 4 Sep–3 Dec 1952

Benguerir AB, French Morocco, 12 Aug–20 Sep 1954

Sidi Slimane AB, Morocco, 6 Jul–24 Aug 1956

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 1 Dec 1915–Feb 1916

Philippine Department, Feb 1916–Oct 1917

Unkn, Oct 1917–18 Nov 1918

Unkn, 5 Jun–24 Dec 1919

Philippine Department, 24 Dec 1919

1 Observation (later, 4 Observation; 4 Composite) Group, 10 Mar 1920

Far East (later, Fifth) Air Force, 28 Oct 1941–2 Apr 1946

2 Bombardment Group, 1 Jan 1949

2 Bombardment Wing, 16 Jun 1952–1 Apr 1963

2 Bombardment Wing, 3 Jan 1989

2 Operations Group, 1 Sep 1991

458 Operations Group, 1 Jun 1992

305 Operations Group, 1 Jul 1995

ATTACHMENTS

2 Bombardment Wing, 10 Feb 1951–15 Jun 1952

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Martin S-Hydro, 1916–1917

JN-4, 1917–1918

HS2L

N-9

HS1L

S-1

DH-4, 1919–1925

DH-4

O-2

O-5

OA-1

S-1

COA-1, 1925–1931

O-19

C-6

OA-3, 1931–1938

O-46

OA-4

OA-9, 1938–1941

O-52, 1941

KB-29, 1950–1953

KC-97, 1953–1963

KC-10, 1989

B-50D

A-27

B-10B

C-6A

DH-4B

HS-2L

KB-29P

O-19C

O-19E

O-2H

O-46A

O-6A

OA-1A

OA-1B

OA-1C

OA-3

RO-46

RO-46A

ZO-19C

ZO-19E

COMMANDERS

Capt William L. Patterson, 1 Dec 1915

Maj Martin F. Scanlon

Lt James C. Farie

Lt Wilbur D. Tupper

Lt John F. Mcinnes

Lt William C. King

Lt William L. Schaffer

Lt George M. Palmer

Lt Earl Mcdonald

Lt Lewis L. Bowen

Capt R. Gilpin Ervin, Dec 1920

Capt Junius H. Houghton, 15 Dec 1921

Maj Thomas J. Hanley, Jr., 7 Mar 1922

Capt Idwal H. Edwards, 22 Sep 1922

Maj Benjamin G. Weir, 6 Oct 1922

Capt Idwal H. Edwards, 24 Mar 1923

Capt Vernon L. Burge, 26 Jun 1923

Capt Morris Berman, Apr 1925

Maj Leo A. Walton, 16 Dec 1925

Capt Louis R. Knight, 26 Feb 1926

Capt Elmer E. Adler, 7 Mar 1927

1lt Vincent J. Meloy, 20 Jan 1928

Capt Donald Wilson, 10 Apr 1929

Capt Benjamin F. Giles, 1 Sep 1929

Capt Arthur E. Easterbrook, 1 Aug 1930

Capt Edgar P. Sorenson, 19 Dec 1931

Capt Harold R. Rivers, 15 Feb 1934

Maj Martinus Stenseth, 1 Mar 1934

Capt James F. Phillips, 6 Feb 1936

1lt John W. Kirby

Capt Mark K. Lewis, Jr., 1 Jun 1937

1lt Alfred R. Maxwell, 1 Oct 1937

Capt John P. Kirkendall, 21 Feb 1938

Maj Lloyd C. Blackburn, 11 May 1938

Unknown, Sep 1939

1lt John A. Goodpasture, Nov 1940

Capt James Y. Parker Sep 1941

Unmanned, Dec 1941-2 Apr 1946

Lt Col Edwin A. Loberg, 1 Jul 1950

Lt Col Charles C. Fishburne, Jr., Feb 1951

Maj Jerald B. Wilson, Jul 1951

Lt Col Edmund A. Rafalko, Nov 1954
Maj Gordon D. McBain Jr., 4 May 1956
Lt Col William W. Parramore Jr., 13 Jul 1958
Lt Col John D. Cheek, 10 Aug 1959
Lt Col Raymond L. Miller, 13 Aug 1962-1 Apr 1963
Lt Col William D. Russell, 3 Jan 1989
Lt Col Allan M. Coleman, 15 Jul 1990-26 May 1992
Unkn, 26 May 1992-24 Jun 1994
Lt Col Clarence D. Smith, 24 Jun 1994
Lt Col James W. Carter, 14 Dec 1994
Lt Col David Fadok, 28 Jun 1996
Lt Col Robert S. Frost, 8 Jul 1997
Lt Col Richard Johnston, 9 Jul 1998
Lt Col Joseph Roeder, 2 Feb 2000
Lt Col Philip A. Iannuzzi, 30 Nov 2001
Lt Col Michael J. Hornitscheck, 25 Jun 2003
Lt Col Douglas K. Lamberth, 15 Jun 2005
Lt Col Timothy B. Macgregor, 15 Jun 2007
Lt Col David R. Mott, 7 Jul 2009

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Philippine Islands

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia, Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Philippine Islands, 7 Dec 1941–[Dec 1941]

Philippine Islands, 8–22 Dec 1941

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Nov 1956–1 Apr 1957

[3 Jan 1989]–30 Jun 1989

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII)

EMBLEM



2 Observation Squadron emblem approved, 21 May 1924



2 Air Refueling Squadron, Medium approved, 20 Feb 1952



2 Air Refueling Squadron emblem approved, 7 Mar 1989



2 Air Refueling Squadron emblem: Azure, "Neptune" grasping in sinister hand a trident fesswise Argent, bearded, eyed and crowned Sable, astride an eagle volant Gray, eyed Black head, beak, tail and outer wings White, grasping a refueling boom of the last, all within a diminished bordure Gules. Neptune suggested that the 2 Observation Squadron of the Army operated seaplanes (Approved, 13 April 1995)

MOTTO

ACTIVE AVIATORS (1919)
SECOND TO NONE

OPERATIONS

The squadron was organized November 15th, 1915 at San Diego, California, where the only Aviation School at that time was located, and it was from this school that the squadron selected most of its members. The rest of the members were taken from the 1st Aero Squadron then the only completely equipped squadron in the country. It was the policy of the Aviation School at

San Diego, Cal to completely train and equip a squadron before sending it into the field; because at that date, under peace conditions, time was not such an important factor and men were selected for the school with great care largely from other branches of the service. The military and civilian instructors at the Aviation School were men of national and international reputation.

The original 2 Aero Squadron consisted of six officers (Flying) and thirty-nine enlisted men (Mechanics). Two officers and ten enlisted men were taken from the 1st Aero Squadron, then stationed at the School of Fire, Fort Sill Oklahoma and four officers and twenty-nine enlisted men being taken from the Aviation School at San Diego, Cal. The officers were highly skilled pilots and each enlisted man was an expert mechanic in his line. Something noteworthy of the Squadron's enlisted personnel is that only three men out of thirty-nine were serving on their first enlistment in the Regular Army, and not a man with less than two years of service.

The Squadron after being organized left the United States for the Philippine Islands on January 5th, 1916, and Arriving in Manila on February 4th of that year, was stationed at Ft. Mills. Corregidor Island, Philippines. While there the Squadron did splendid work in conjunction with the heavy coast defense guns, observing fire, spotting mines establishing wireless communications, spotting improperly concealed gun and mortar batteries, photographing them so that the artillery officers knew at all times how their batteries looked from the air, thus enabling a more perfect camouflage. The Squadron maintained its own repair shop, motor overhaul, and magneto repair, also speed boat tender, airplane reconstruction and repair room, as well as manning and flying the heavy Martin Seaplanes with which type it was equipped at the time.

While in the Philippines the Squadron was increased to its full strength, the men being taken from other branches of the U. S. Army of the Philippines. These men were selected on their previous mechanical ability, character and army training and greatly affected the organizations from which they were taken, and whose commanders officially protested their transfers. In this instance, aviation reigned supreme inasmuch as the squadron was always able to secure the men it wanted. The new members were immediately and systematically trained along different lines, learning the art of repairing and handling airplanes and solving difficult problems which sprang up from time to time, and later proving to be masters of the game. This work continued until the Squadron was ordered back to the States, several months after war was declared against Germany, and on the 15 Oct 1917, the boys of the 2 Aero sailed from Manila, arriving at San Francisco on Nov. 17th. Immediately they set out for Kelly Field. Texas, reaching the city five days later. Here a number of men were transferred and sent to new fields that were being established throughout the country, serving as experienced backbones in their personnel.

Call Field at Wichita Falls, TX took an exceptionally heavy toll of the Squadron's experienced men and after about a month of indecision on the part of Washington, the organization was sent to Kelly Field. No. 2. This was bad news as the men expected to be sent overseas from Kelly No. 1. and knew that by this last move, they would be held here indefinitely. The Squadron was assigned as a Service Squadron assembling JN4D Type Curtiss airplanes. When

assembled, one of the crews from the organization would be selected to care for the airplane and would have them flying 20 minutes after taking charge of them. A few months elapsed and the men were so busy that they had little time to worry about their stay at Kelly Field, when suddenly various squadrons began to be ordered overseas. Immediately the men of the 2 Aero wanted to take advantage of this opportunity, and began bombarding headquarters with requests to be transferred to the various outgoing squadrons. Some of the members were fortunate enough to secure their transfers, while others were told that it would not be long before the old 2 would be sailing the high seas for France.

Soon several of the experienced men of other squadrons were transferred to this organization. Most of these men held responsible positions on the field and were made victims of the fatal indispensable list which meant that they were doomed to spend the remainder of their time in the army and at Kelly Field. Inasmuch as the 2 Aero Squadron fell victim to that list. it was equipped with the experienced men of the Field which enabled it to give the most satisfactory service at all times. And the former members of the 2, who were transferred to other squadrons throughout the field. Always discharged their duties like soldiers, and added greatly to the efficiency of those squadrons.

In the early part of July, 1918, certain changes were made in the Field and Hangar Division, and each squadron was assigned to stages over which they had complete control. The 2 Squadron was assigned to the "Advanced Cross Country" and "Acrobatic" stages, and at this point had its men relieved from all other stages. When reassignment was made, it was found that there were not enough responsible positions for the more experienced men, and many of them had to content themselves with the smaller jobs. Without a protest these men discharged their antics faithfully and needless to say, with such men the stages ran like clockwork. But about the middle of July, 1918. an order came that put the 2 Aero Squadron completely out of existence stating that the name would be changed to KELLY FIELD SQUADRON "A." This once more disheartened the men who realized that they would never get overseas as a unit. But they soon picked up courage and the Squadron reconciled itself to the inevitable and resolved to give the best possible service on this side.

To form some idea of the service which the old 2 Aero has given to Kelly Field, as well as various other fields throughout the country, it may be stated that there remain only six of the charter members who left San Diego, Cal., to make up its organization, and eighteen men who sailed from Manila with the Squadron. Fifteen men from the squadron have received commissions since war was declared on Germany, and about ten more of the members would have been commissioned had the war lasted a short time longer.

Since the organization of the Squadron it has been exceptionally fortunate in having able commanding officers and its success is due in no small measure to that fact, as they have all exercised their authority with firmness, kindness and justice to all. And now that the war is over and won, the good old 2 Aero Squadron can hold her head in the air without shame, even though she never had occasion to take part in the conflict over there. She can proudly say that it was her men who helped develop those squadrons that did participate in the struggle, and

for which they have since achieved fame.

Combat in the Philippines in Dec 1941, when Japanese attacks destroyed its aircraft, its surviving personnel were absorbed by other units; carried as an active unit without personnel from Dec 1941 until 2 Apr 1946.

2 Air Refueling Squadron participated in free throw exercise to familiarize personnel with operating conditions at forward operating base, Sidi Slimane, French Morocco. 1955

The 3926th Air Base Squadron at Ben Guerir Air Base welcomed the 2 Air Refueling Squadron from Hunter Air Force Base, Georgia, on August 7, 1954. The base now had a permanent-party compliment of 569 military, twenty-nine officers and 540 airmen, and looked forward to hosting this rotational SAC squadron. Two 1000-seat dining halls had just been completed and the 3926th Air Base Squadron felt they were prepared. A locust plague in the Ben Guerir area soon after the squadron's arrival created different working and living conditions for the visitors than seen at the home base. Huge locust swarms would appear over the base for two or three days and then disappear for two or three days. They devoured all the planted crops near the villages and plant life in the desert, as well as articles of clothing that happened to be unprotected. The locusts also posed a severe hazard to aircraft landing or taking off and a nuisance at all other times. The entire community heaved a sigh of relief when the locusts finally departed the area for the season, as quickly and unexpectedly as they had arrived. A new post-strike operational concept labeled "Leap Frog" came into being in August, 1954. Two B-47 bomb wings from Hunter Air Force Base, Georgia, the 2 commanded by Colonel Austin J. Russell and 308th led by Colonel John F. Batjer, flew non-stop from their home bases on a simulated bombing mission with targets in the Mediterranean area. The Leap Frog aircraft recovered at Sidi Slimane Air Base to refuel and immediately prepared to fly another mission or return to home base in Georgia. The 2 Air Refueling Squadron, refueled the B-47s participating in the Leap Frog exercise. Two of the B-47s from Hunter Air Force Base made it a round trip nonstop flight to Morocco and return to home base. Twenty-four hours and four minutes flying time for the first aircraft and twenty-five hours and twenty-three minutes for the second. They were air refueled four times by KC-97. SAC bombers could now fly direct from bases in the United States to assigned targets by being air refueled and recover at a base in French Morocco. This capability could greatly increase the effect of air strikes the first days of a war. SAC's earlier war plan called for some units to be deployed overseas at forward operating bases. Units remaining in the States had stood ready to deploy bombers to overseas bases to land for fuel and service, and then take off for assigned targets. The new Leap Frog concept accelerated operations, and SAC aircraft now arrived over their simulated targets sooner and bombed more accurately. The improving operational facilities and logistic support at the 5th Air Division bases were an important part of the success of this new concept.

USAF UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 28 Aug 2010

Updated: 12 Oct 2023

Sources

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

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

Kelly Field In the Great World War. Lt H.D. Kroll, Editor. San Antonio Press. San Antonio, TX. 1919.