

# **31<sup>st</sup> STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON**

## **MISSION**

## **LINEAGE**

31<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron

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## **STATIONS**

Yokota, Japan, 12 Jul 1950-14 Aug 1950

Kadena, Okinawa, 16 Mar 1949-12 Jul 1950

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

## **COMMANDERS**

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

As part of its war contingency plan the 31st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron immediately prepared to redeploy its RB-29s from Kadena AFB, Okinawa to Yokota. First to take off for Japan, late on the afternoon of 25 June and within hours of the start of the invasion, were Captain Joe Davis and his crew in one of the RB-29 Ferret planes. As dusk fell the plane was heading almost due north up the Yellow Sea, flying parallel with the west coast of Korea at 25,000 feet. Just short of Lueshun (Port Arthur) it turned east and, cloaked in darkness, flew across the width of North Korea. The RB-29 emerged over the Sea of Japan to the east of Korea, swung on to a more southerly heading and made for Yokota. Almost certainly it was the first operational mission by a US plane during the Korean conflict. Yet although it is of historical interest, the flight secured no positive intelligence. Lieutenant Jim Gahagan, one of the electronic warfare officers on the plane, told the author: "As I remember, we didn't pick up any signals from radars in North Korea during that mission."

At regular intervals the 31st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron Ferrets went out alone over enemy territory at night, or in company with bomber formations by day, searching for the radar signals which might presage some stiffening of the enemy air defenses. Such signals were not to be found, however, and the unit did not need to confine its activities to the war zone. As part of its strategic reconnaissance role it flew regular missions along the Chinese coast, looking for the redeployment of radars that might precede any attempt by the Chinese to invade Formosa. Occasionally it also sent aircraft north, along the coast of Siberia and into the Sea of Kohotsk, to check that there were no important new deployments in those areas.

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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.