

3510th TOW TARGET SQUADRON

During the early 1960s the RB-57A Canberras and T-33s flown by the radar evaluation squadrons of Air Defense Command were modified to enable them to provide jamming training for the Command's fighter pilots. Both planes were modified to carry two ALE-2 chaff dispenser pods under the wings, and the Canberras carried a single ALT-6B I band jammer and an APR-9 receiver to tune it in.

Captain Roy Fair flew as an EWO on the RB-57s with the 57th Radar Evaluation Squadron, based at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska:

"Our primary mission was to calibrate the ground radars. When we were not doing that, we flew as jamming targets for the F-102 squadron there. When a fighter intercepted us we could drop chaff and take evasive action. I would try to jam its airborne intercept radar with my ALT-6B, using the APR-9 to tune it in. But as soon as the fighter pilot saw the jamming he would immediately retune his radar to a clear frequency. I had no way of knowing whether he had moved up or down in frequency, and it took a long time to sweep the band with an APR-9 to find him. If I was able to find him and retune my jammer before he 'killed' our plane, he would change frequency again and I had to repeat the whole process. Our jamming did not provide much of a challenge for the F-102 pilots."

The RB-57A sorties showed fighter pilots what chaff and noise jamming looked like on their radar screens, and familiarized them with the process of retuning their sets to overcome the latter. But it was obvious that with a little better countermeasures equipment, the training value of the sorties would be greatly enhanced. As a result, during 1962 Air Force units operating in the jamming training role began to receive the TB-57E (later redesignated EB-57E) version of the Canberra. The new planes had a far more effective countermeasures suite than those they replaced: they carried ten ALT-6B jamming transmitters, plus one more which was part of the QRC-130 I band automatic search-lock-jammer; the two ALE-2 chaff pods remained in place under the wings and later the planes would be fitted with a UHF communications jammer. The TB-57Es were to provide jamming training for ground radar operators, as well as fighter pilots. All of the jammers and antennas were optimized for use against US systems. The planes were not intended to counter Soviet defensive systems.

With the TB-57E, the Radar Evaluation Squadrons could run graded exercises ranging from the relatively simple to the very difficult, to familiarize fighter pilots and ground operators with the appearance of jamming and teach them to use their counter-countermeasures systems to maximum effect. Roy Fair recalled:

"On our unit everyone felt it was incumbent upon us to be the finest aerial targets, to show the jamming and maneuvering capabilities that could be expected from a Soviet bomber. The B-57 was very maneuverable, like a fighter, so we kept our evasion down to what a real Soviet long-range bomber could do."¹¹

LINEAGE

STATIONS

DEPLOYED STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

UNIT COLORS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS