

82 RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



MISSION

82 Reconnaissance Squadron mission is to maintain combat readiness of attached aircraft; prepare combat capable aircrews; and analyze, process, and disseminate intelligence data for RC-135 reconnaissance missions flown in the Pacific theater of operations. These missions are flown either independently or in conjunction with other forces, during peacetime as well as all levels of potential conflict. The information obtained during these missions is used at all levels of the DoD and other government agencies.

LINEAGE

82 Observation Squadron constituted, and activated, 1 Jun 1937
Redesignated 82 Observation Squadron (Medium), 13 Jan 1942
Redesignated 82 Observation Squadron, 4 Jul 1942
Redesignated 82 Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter), 2 Apr 1943
Redesignated 82 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 10 May 1944
Redesignated 82 Reconnaissance Squadron, Photographic (Jet-Propelled), 23 Jan 1947
Redesignated 82 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Photo-Jet, 10 Aug 1948
Inactivated, 1 Apr 1949
Redesignated 82 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Fighter, 4 Nov 1954
Activated, 24 Jan 1955
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1957
Redesignated 82 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, activated and organized, 25 Aug 1967
Inactivated, 30 Sep 1976
Redesignated 82 Reconnaissance Squadron, 30 Sep 1991
Activated, 2 Oct 1991

STATIONS

Moffett Field, CA, 1 Jun 1937 (flight at Brooks Field, TX, 28 Jun 1940-9 Apr 1941)
Hamilton Field, CA, 12 Sep 1940
Salinas, CA, 9 Apr 1941
Esler Field, LA, 27 Jan 1943
Laurel AAFld, MS, 1 Apr-24 Sep 1943
Milne Bay, New Guinea, 6 Nov 1943
Dobodura, New Guinea, 22 Nov 1943 (detachments operated from Finschhafen, New Guinea, Dec 1943-19 Apr 1944)
Saidor, New Guinea, 5 Apr-3 Jun 1944 (operated from Saidor to 27 Jun 1944)
Biak, 12 Jun 1944
Owi, Schouten Islands, 20 Jun 1944
Biak, 16 Jul 1944
Morotai, 1 Oct-31 Dec 1944 (air echelon at Biak to 17 Oct 1944, at San Jose, Mindoro, 29 Dec 1944-17 Jan 1945, and at Lingayen, Luzon, after 17 Jan 1945)
Lingayen, Luzon, 20 Jan 1945
Ie Shima, 28 Jul 1945
Irumagawa, Japan, 7 Oct 1945
Yokota, Japan, 1 Feb 1947
Johnson AB, Japan, 25 Mar-1 Apr 1949
Larson AFB, WA, 24 Jan 1955-1 Jul 1957
Yokota AB, Japan, 25 Aug 1967
Kadena AB, Ryukyu Islands (later, Japan) 2 Jan 1968-30 Sep 1976
Kadena AB, Japan, 2 Oct 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

Ninth Corps Area, 1 Jan 1937
Fourth Army, 3 Oct 1940
III Army Corps, Jan 1941
Fourth Air Force, 1 Sep 1941
69 Observation Group, 3 Sep 1941
71 Observation (later, 71 Reconnaissance; 71 Tactical Reconnaissance; 71 Reconnaissance) Group, 29 Mar 1942
V Bomber Command, 1 Feb 1946
314 Composite Wing, 31 May 1946
71 Reconnaissance (later, 71 Tactical Reconnaissance) Group, 28 Feb 1947-1 Apr 1949
71 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 24 Jan 1955-1 Jul 1957
3 Air Division, 25 Aug 1967;
4252 Strategic Wing, 2 Jan 1968
376 Strategic Wing, 1 Apr 1970-30 Sep 1976
55 Wing, 2 Oct 1991
55 Operations Group, 1 Jul 1992-.

ATTACHMENTS

35 Fighter Group, 20 Oct 1945-9 Feb 1946
314 Composite Wing to Nov 1947

WEAPON SYSTEMS

O-31
O-43, 1937-1938
O-47, 1938-1940
O-46, 1940-1942
O-47, 1941-1942
O-49
O-52
A-20
B-25
P-39
P-40
P-39, 1943-1944
P-40, 1944-1945
P-51/F-6, 1944-1946
F-5, 1946
P-51/F-6, 1946-1947
FP-80, 1947-1949
B-25, 1946
A-26, 1946-1947
F-2, 1947-1948
RF-61, 1949
RF-84, 1955- 1957
RC-135, 1967-1976
RC-135, 1991

COMMANDERS

Maj Robert H. Finley 1 Jun 1937
Maj Horace S. Kenyon, Jun 1937
Maj Bushrod Hoppin, 21 Jun 1937
2Lt Jay D. Rutledge, 1938
1Lt Robert Alan 18 Jul 1938
Maj Fred C. Nelson, 17 Jun 1939
Maj William C. Sams 1 Jul 1939
Cpt Walter C. Bass 7 Nov 1941
Maj Donald M. Gordon, May 1943
Maj Malcolm P. Elvin, 26 Mar 1944
Maj W. E. Pictor, 1 Aug, 1944
Maj William A. Shomo, 24 Dec 1944
Maj Harlan B. White, 25 May 1945
Capt Robert G. Fenske, 12 Oct 1945

1Lt Robert Klingensmith, 22 Oct 1945
1Lt Bernard J. Meinerz, 25 Oct 1945
1Lt James R. Malone, 30 Oct 1945
Maj Gilbert L. Gilliland, Nov 1945
1Lt William Reed, 12 Dec 1945-Jan 1946
1Lt William R. Bozman, Jan-Feb 1946
Unkn, Feb-1 Apr 1946
Capt Heath Bottomly, 1 Apr 1946
Capt Russell M. H. O'Day, 27 Aug 1946
Capt Heath Bottomly, Oct 1946
Lt Col Charles W. King, 15 Aug 1947-25 Mar 1949
Unkn, 25 Mar-1 Apr 1949
Maj Robert D. Ingalls, 24 Jan 1955-1 Jul 1957
Lt Col Marvin M. Morss, 25 Aug 1967
Lt Col Robert L. Nicholl, 3 Jun 1969
Lt Col Regis F. A. Urschier, 28 Jun 1971
Lt Col William W. Klausner, by Jun 1973
Lt Col Walter E. Savage, by Jan 1975
Lt Col Christopher A. McAloon, 8 Jun 1975-30 Sep 1976
Unkn, 2-29 Oct 1991
Lt Coll William L. Macelhaney, 30 Oct 1991
Lt Col Craig R. Allen, 19 Jul 1993
Lt Col William S. Thomas, 23 Jun 1994
Lt Col Mark Gilzean, 18 Jul 1996
Lt Col Andrew M. Marotta, 28 May 1998-unkn
Lt Col Laura Koch, 14 May 2002
Lt Col Doug Sachs, by Mar 2007

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Air Offensive, Japan

New Guinea

Bismarck Archipelago

Western Pacific

Leyte

Luzon

Southern Philippines

Ryukyus

China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

Japan, 31 Jul and 5 Aug 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

2 Mar 1969-31 Mar 1970

1 Apr 1970-31 Mar 1972

1 Apr 1972-28 Jan 1973

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

25 Aug 1967-2 Jan 1968

2 Mar 1968-1 Mar 1969

29 Jan 1973-31 Mar 1974

1 Jul 1974-30 Jun 1976

1 Jul-30 Sep 1976

1 Jul-30 Sep 1976

1 Jul 1992-30 Jun 1994

1 Jul 1994-31 Jul 1995

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII)

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

25 Aug 1967-28 Jan 1973

EMBLEM



82 Observation Squadron emblem

On an Orange disc an eye (Red, Blue, White, and Black) below a conventionalized White wing extending upwards and casting a Black shadow; issuing from the pupil of the eye a White zigzag ray fimbriated Black extending to base. (Approved, 14 Apr 1938)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Antisubmarine patrols off California coast, 8 Dec 1941-16 Aug 1942; combat in Southwest Pacific and Western Pacific, 27 Nov 1943-15 Aug 1945. Strategic reconnaissance over Southeast Asia, Aug 1967-Mar 1973.

Army on 1 June 1937 and concurrently organized at Moffett Field, CA. Assigned on 17 July 1937 to the 12th Observation Group. Transferred on 12 September 1940 to Hamilton Field, CA. Assigned on 3 October 1940 to the Fourth Army. Assigned on 15 November 1940 to the III Corps. Transferred on 9 April 1941 to Salinas, CA. Assigned on 3 September 1941 to the 68th Observation Group (III Corps).

The 82d Reconnaissance Squadron had its beginnings prior to the start of World War II. Originally constituted as the 82d Observation Squadron on 1 June 1937, the 82d flew a variety of light observation airfield until 1942, when it was redesignated the 82d Observation Squadron, and later the 82d Reconnaissance Squadron. The squadron flew fighters, photographic, and armed reconnaissance missions in the A-20, B-25, P-39, and P-40. Active throughout the Pacific theater, the unit saw action in New Guinea, the New Britain Islands, and the Shouten Island Group. Re-equipped with the P-51 "Mustang", the 82d continued to support landing operations in Borneo and the Philippines. On 11 January 1945, during the Philippines operations, Captain William A. Shomo, Commanding officer of the 82d, shot down seven enemy aircraft while his

wing man shot down three aircraft during die same engagement. Despite being outnumbered 13 to 2 during the engagement, Captain Shomo and his wing man both escaped without injury. Captain Shomo subsequently received the Medal of Honor for "extraordinary gallantry and intrepidity in attacking such a far superior force." In August 1945, pilots from the 82d flew pre and post strike reconnaissance missions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The unit was temporarily inactivated in 1949 and reactivated in 1954 as the 82d Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron flying the RF-61 and RF-84 until it was inactivated in 1957.

The 82d entered the Cold War in 1967 as the 82d Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron at Yokota Air Base, Japan. The squadron moved in January 1968 to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan. From the latter part of 1967, reconnaissance sorties were flown by RC-135s on COMBAT APPLE missions in support of the Vietnam conflict. COMBAT APPLE missions averaged 19 hours in duration and involved 12 hour orbits over the Gulf of Tonkin, and later over Laos. The 82d routinely flew other Strategic Air Command (SAC) reconnaissance missions as well, performing peripheral reconnaissance missions over the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and Gulf of Tonkin. By the end of the Vietnam conflict, the 82d had flown over 3,250 operational sorties and 39,268 orbit hours. The unit flew its last combat sortie on 1 July 1975, and reverted to a peacetime reconnaissance posture. Unit crews flew their final mission on 10 Sept 1976 and inactivating on 30 Sept 1976. After the 82d SRS inactivation, Kadena became a forward operating base for RC-135 operations with the 376th Strategic Wing managing the operations, intelligence, and maintenance functions. RC-135 aircraft and crews were deployed to Kadena from the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska. The 82d Reconnaissance Squadron reactivated on 2 October 1991, as a stand alone unit, at Kadena AB, Okinawa, Japan and operated first under the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and then under Air Combat Command (ACC). The 82d is subordinate to the 55th Operations Group, 55th Wing, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska which is subordinate to the 12th Air Force at Davis Monthan AFB and Headquarters Air Combat Command at Langley APP.

The RC-135 aircraft provides the United States with tailored reconnaissance for strategic and tactical operations. Collectively known as Rivet Joint, Combat Sent and Cobra Ball, these modified thirty-year old Boeing C-135 aircraft are air refuelable and cruise at the speed of modern jet aircraft providing global capability. A program of electronic upgrades by Raytheon Systems, Greenville (TX) Division, and Detachment 2645th Materiel Squadron, have kept this aircraft on the leading edge of technology. A veteran of the Cold War since the mid-1960s, the RC-135 assumed a tactical role in the mid 1980s, and its utility was demonstrated during Operation Desert Storm. The RC-135 fleet is operated by Air Combat Command's 55th Wing, Offutt AFB, Nebraska. The 55th Wing's ties to reconnaissance started in the early 1950s with the RB-29, RB-50, and RB-47, culminating with the introduction of the RC-135. There are eight RC-135Vs and six RC-135Ws. They are difficult to distinguish from one another. All RC-135Vs except one, are 1964 models. The RC-135s were modified for reconnaissance operations during the Vietnam War, and saw extensive duty in Southeast Asia. Rivet Joint has seen duty in every major contingency operation involving U.S. troops including Urgent Fury, Just Cause, Proven Force/Provide Comfort, Desert Shield/Storm and Deny Flight/Provide hope.

An RC-135 prepares to refuel over Southeast Asia. At left: Feeding data into the Teaball system were a variety of sensor platforms, including RC-135M Combat Apple aircraft. Combat Apple preceded Teaball and completed its 1,000th mission in 1969. Shown here celebrating the event at Kadena AB, Okinawa, were (l-r) Lt. Col. Doyle Larson, commander of the 6990th Security Squadron; Lt. Col. Robert Nicholl, pilot and commander of the 82 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron; and Maj. Victor Prislusky, the aircraft commander.

Replacing the B-47 aircraft and attached to the 82 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, formed in August 1967, a detachment of the 4252nd SRW, normally based at Yokota (Japan), the Rivet Cord took part in almost all of the large scale operations lead by the United States in Vietnam during their 'Linebacker' I and II intervention, as well as 'Frequent Wind', the evacuation of Saigon in 1975. Despite the particularly difficult weather conditions (heavy rains) that put the men and aircraft under great strain, the RC-135M carried out nearly 3,250 sorties during their six-year spell in the Far East, spending 40,000 hours in the zone.

On 25 August 1967 the 82 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron was organized and shortly thereafter moved to Kadena to handle RC-135M reconnaissance missions. The huge airbase on Okinawa had now become the centerpiece of SAC tanker and reconnaissance operations in the South-East Asia conflict. A RC-135M from Kadena flew the first mission in a new programme called 'Combat Apple' on 11 September 1967.

The RC-135V/W Rivet Joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance fleet recently surpassed three years continuous Pacific deployment at Kadena AB, Japan, officials announced. Given both China and Russia's increasing antagonistic activities in the region "the operations tempo and demand for ISR ... has increased dramatically over the past three years," 82 Reconnaissance Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Beau Nicewanner said. The 82 RS, deployed from Offutt AFB, Neb., has logged some 400 sorties, totaling 3,400 flying hours over the course of 19 deployment rotations. Specialized RC-135U Combat Sent, WC-135W Constant Phoenix, and RC-135S Cobra Ball from Offutt added more than 300 additional sorties totaling more than 2,600 flight hours over the past two years alone, according to the release. "On any given day, we are flying missions in the Pacific, covering the map from India to Alaska. These missions support our nation's nuclear interests, ensure freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, and support counterterrorism efforts," added Nicewanner. The 82 RS and systems operators, analysts, and technicians of the 390th Intelligence Squadron marked the milestone on Sept. 26.2015

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.