

## 99 RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



### MISSION

The 99 Reconnaissance Squadron is responsible for providing critical intelligence for use by the highest levels of our government. Squadron pilots fly the U-2S aircraft as they continuously train to upgrade from normal aircraft commander status to that of instructor pilot status.

Pilots from the squadron frequently rotate overseas to support the wing's various operating locations. The squadron has one of the highest TDY rates in the Air Force, second only to that of the aircrews supporting the E-3 Sentry AWACS. This high operations tempo could not be effectively maintained without the crew chiefs assigned to the squadron who perform routine maintenance to keep the aircraft flying on a daily basis.

### LINEAGE

99 Aero Squadron organized, 21 Aug 1917

Demobilized, 9 Jun 1919

Reconstituted 99 Corps Observation Squadron and organized, 2 Jul 1919

Redesignated 99 Squadron (Observation), 14 Mar 1921

Redesignated 99 Observation Squadron, 25 Jan 1923

Inactivated, 31 Jul 1927

Activated, 9 Nov 1928

Redesignated 99 Bombardment Squadron, 1 Mar 1935

Redesignated 99 Bombardment Squadron (Medium), 6 Dec 1939

Redesignated 99 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 20 Nov 1940

Redesignated 99 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 28 Mar 1944

Inactivated, 20 Oct 1948

Redesignated 99 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Photographic and activated, 1 May 1949

Redesignated 99 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 1 Apr 1950  
Redesignated 99 Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 2 Oct 1950  
Redesignated 99 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, 25 Jun 1966  
Inactivated, 1 Apr 1971  
Activated, 1 Nov 1972  
Redesignated 99 Reconnaissance Squadron, 1 Sep 1991

## **STATIONS**

Kelly Field, TX, 21 Aug 1917  
Garden City, NY, 3-14 Nov 1917  
Tours, France, 12 Dec 1917  
Haussimont, France, 11 Mar 1918  
Amanty, France, 31 May 1918  
Luxeuil-les-Bains, France, 1 Jul 1918 (flight operated from Corcieux, 19-24 Jul 1918 and  
Dogneville 24 Jul-26 Aug 1918)  
Souilly, France, 7 Sep 1918  
Foucaucourt, France, 20 Sep 1918  
Parois, France, 4 Nov 1918  
Belrain, France, 31 Nov 1918  
Chaumont-sur-Aire, France, 13 Dec 1918  
Chaumont, France, 25 Dec 1918 (flights operated from Prauthoy, Bourbonne-les-Bains, and  
Montigney-le-Roi, France, until c. 1 Feb 1919)  
Colombey-les-Belles, France, 19 Feb 1919  
Sadirac, France, 5 Mar-8 May 1919  
Mitchel Field, NY, 24 May 1919  
Hazelhurst Field, NY, 25 May-9 Jun 1919  
Mitchel Field, NY, 2 Jul 1919  
Camp Alfred Vail, NJ, Jul 1919  
Bolling Field, DC, 17 Aug 1919  
Kelly Field, TX, 23 Jun-31 Jul 1927  
Mitchel Field, NY, 9 Nov 1928- 6 Nov 1940  
Rio Hato, Panama, 12 Nov 1940  
Piarco Field, Trinidad, 17 Oct 1941  
Zanderij (later, Zandery) Field, Surinam, 27 Nov 1941-31 Oct 1942  
Orlando AB, FL, 31 Oct 1942  
Montbrook AAFld, FL, 5 Feb 1943  
Kissimmee AAFld, FL, 14 Nov 1943  
Brooksville AAFld, FL, 5 Jan 1944  
Orlando AB, FL, 25 Feb 1944  
Dalhart AAFld, TX, 9 Mar 1944  
McCook AAFld, NE, 19 May-18 Nov 1944  
North Field, Tinian, 28 Dec 1944  
Clark Field, Luzon, 14 Mar 1946  
Harmon Field (later AFB) Guam, 9 Jun 1947-20 Oct 1948

Fairfield-Suisun (later Travis) AFB, CA, 1 May 1949 (detachments operated at Andersen AFB, Guam, c. 7 Aug-17 Sep 1950; 9 Apr-19 Jan 1951; and 17 Jun- 22 Sep 1952)  
Mountain Home AFB, ID, 1 May 1953  
Beale AFB, CA, 25 Jun 1966-1 Apr 1971  
U-Tapao RTNAF, Thailand, 1 Nov 1972-30 Jun 1976  
Beale AFB, CA, 30 Jun 1976

### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

RAF Fairford, England, 23 May-9 Jul 1955  
Andersen AFB, Guam, 4 Oct 1947- 12 Jan 1958

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Unkn, 21 Aug-11 Dec 1917  
Second Aviation Instruction Center, 12 Dec 1917- 9 Mar 1918  
Unkn, 10 Mar-6 Aug 1918  
V Corps Observation Group, 7 Aug- Dec 1918  
Unkn, Dec 1918-May 1919  
Eastern Department, May-9 Jun 1919  
Eastern Department, 2 Jul 1919  
Third Corps Area, 20 Aug 1920  
District of Washington, c. Jan 1922  
8 Division, Air Service, 24 May 1923  
Air Corps Training Center, Jun-31 Jul 1927  
9 Observation (later, 9<sup>th</sup> Bombardment) Group, attached 9 Nov 1928, assigned 15 Feb 1929-20 Oct 1948  
9 Strategic Reconnaissance (later, 9 Bombardment) Group, 1 May 1949  
9 Bombardment (later, 9 Strategic Aerospace; 9 Strategic Reconnaissance) Wing, 16 Jun 1952-1 Apr 1971  
100 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Nov 1972-30 Jun 1976  
9 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 30 Jun 1976  
9 Operations Group, 1 Sep 1991

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Third Artillery Observation School, c. 1 Apr-31 May 1918  
9 Bombardment Wing, 10 Feb 1951-15 Jun 1952  
Air Division Provisional, 17, 1 Nov 1972-1 Jan 1975

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

Sopwith 1, 1918  
Salmson 2, 1918-1919  
DH-4  
SE-5, 1919-1927  
O-1  
O-11

O-25  
OA-2  
O-31  
Y10-35  
O-38  
O-39  
Y10-40  
O-40  
O-43  
B-10, 1936-1938  
B-10B  
OA-4, 1937  
B-18, 1938-1942  
B-18A  
OA-8, 1939  
P-12, 1939  
P-40, 1941-1942  
B-25, 1943  
B-26, 1943  
B-17, 1943-1944  
B-29, 1944-1946, 1946-1947  
B/RB-17, 1949-1950  
RB-29, 1949-1950  
B-29, 1949-1954  
B-47, 1954-1966; SR-71, 1966-1971  
DC-130, 1972-1975  
CH-3, 1972-1975  
U-2, 1972-1976, 1976- (also carried TR-1 designation, 1981-1991)  
T-38, 1976

### **COMMANDERS**

1<sup>st</sup> Lt W. T. White, 21 Aug 1917  
Capt William E. Goodman Jr., 29 Sep 1917  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Andrew B. Shiland, 23 Feb 1918  
Maj Arthur R. Christie, 30 Mar 1918  
Capt James E. Meredith, 6 Aug 1918  
Capt Lyle S. Powell, 9 Nov 1918  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Leo D. Quackenbush, 28 Feb 1919  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Edward Jenkins, 9 Jun 1919  
Capt Horace N. Heison, 6 Oct 1920  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Ray A. Dunn, 17 Nov 1920  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Paul C. Wilkins, 30 Dec 1920  
Capt Ray A. Dunn, 30 Mar 1921  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Earl J. Carpenter, 22 Aug 1921

1<sup>st</sup> Lt Howard K. Ramey, 7 Nov 1921  
Lt Courtney Whitney, 12 Dec 1921  
Maj George E. Lovell, 15 Aug 1922  
Capt Clearton H. Reynolds, 16 Apr 1923  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Howard K. Ramey, 30 Aug 1923  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Aubrey I. Eagle, Jan 1924  
Capt Clearton H. Reynolds, 14 Apr 1924  
Maj Millard F. Harmon, 30 Jun-18 Jul 1925  
Capt William H. Crom 28 May 26-1 May 27  
Capt Byrnes V. Baucom 1 May 27-4 Jun 27  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt James A. Healy 4 Jun 27-31 Jul 27  
Capt Francis M. Brady 9 Nov 28-11 Aug 29  
1st Lt. Paul H. Prentiss 11 Aug 29-5 Nov 29  
Capt Frederick W. Evans, Sep 1929-Aug 1933  
Capt Charles A. Pursley 28 Aug 33-20 Oct 34  
Maj Leo F. Post 20 Oct 34-12 Jul 36  
Maj Samuel M. Connell 12 Jul 36-25 Oct 39  
Capt Fay R. Upthegrove 25 Oct 39-21 Oct 40  
Unknown 21 Oct 40-Ao Oct 41  
Maj Gerald E. Williams Ao Oct 41-4 Jan 42  
Maj Walter W. Gross, 4 Jan 1942  
Lt Col Eugene C. Rice, 14 Apr 1942  
Capt Richard H. Gunckel, 18 Apr 1942  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt John W. Stock, 20 Apr 1942  
Capt Richard H. Gunckel, 29 Apr 1942  
Lt Col Randolph L. Wood, 5 May 1942  
Maj Harry L. Caswell, 15 Aug 1942  
Maj Harry C. Morrison, 9 Sep-31 Oct 1942  
None (Not Manned), 31 Oct 1942-20 Jan 1943  
Unknown, 20 Jan-7 Feb 1943  
Capt Erwin W. Huber, 8 Feb 1943  
Maj James I. Hopkins Jr., 17 Jun 1943  
Maj James T. Mckee, 18 Jun 1943-18 Jan 1944  
Unknown, 19-20 Jan 1944  
Lt Col John W. Chiles, 21 Jan 1944  
Maj James I. Hopkins Jr., 28 Feb 1944  
Maj Harlold M. Brecht, C. Apr 1944  
Maj Folmer J. Sogaard, 9 Jun 1944  
Lt Col William L. Hall, 8 Jul 1944  
Lt Col Lewis J. Wright, 8 Mar-Aug 1945  
Unknown, Sep 1945-Aug 1946  
None (Not Manned), Aug-26 Sep 1946  
Capt Robert T. Henning, 27 Sep 1946  
Maj Kenneth E. Hill, 23 Nov 1946

Capt Joseph B. Webb, 17 Mar-25 Apr 1947  
None (Not Manned), 26 Apr 1947-20 Oct 1948  
Capt Carl F. Hynek, 1 May 1949  
Capt Henry L. Choate, May 1949  
Maj James M. Smith, C. 1 Jun 1949  
Lt Col Francis E. Tiller, 5 Sep 1949  
Maj Mason A. Dula, 30 Jun 1950  
Lt Col Rufus H. Holloway, C. 7 Jul 1950  
Maj Frank M. Wyman, 7 Aug 1950  
Lt Col Rufus H. Holloway, 20 Sep 1950  
Capt Roger H. Smith, 9 Apr 1951  
Col Rufus H. Holloway, C. 19 Jun 1951  
Lt Col Mason A. Dula, 27 Aug 1951  
Lt Col Eldridge G. Shelton, 14 Jun 1952  
Lt Col Mason A. Dula, C. 22 Sep 1952  
Lt Col John P. Wolfe, By 17 Feb 1952  
Lt Col Robert L. Rund, 1 Mar 1956  
Lt Col Glenn F. Stephens, C. 30 Jun 1957  
Lt Col Earl A. Lilley, Apr 1958  
Lt Col Glenn F. Stephens, Oct 1958  
Lt Col Sherwin G. Desens, 1 Oct 1961  
Lt Col Maurice E. Saunders, 15 Dec 1961  
Lt Col John W. Grow Jr., C. Aug 1964-C. 25 Jun 1966  
None (Not Manned), 25 Jun-Sep 1966  
Lt Col John B. Boynton, C. Sep 1966  
Lt Col Robert G. Sowers, C. Jun 1967  
Lt Col John C. Kennon, 25 Mar 1968  
Lt Col Harlon A. Hain, 5 Dec 1969-1 Apr 1971  
Col Jack E. Gatewood, 1 Nov 1972  
Col Buddy L. Brown, 18 Dec 1972  
Col Russell S. Morton, 12 Dec 1973  
Col Roger L. Cooper, 2 Dec 1974  
Lt Col David C. Young, 3 Oct 1975-Apr 1976  
None (Not Manned), Apr-30 Jun 1976  
Lt Col George V. Freese, 1 Jul 1976  
Lt Col Jerry L. Sinclair, 30 Sep 1977  
Lt Col William F. Horton Jr., 21 Dec 1978  
Lt Col James E. Wrenn, 22 Aug 1980  
Lt Col Wilbur F. Furr Jr., 2 Jul 1982  
Lt Col Kenneth L. Stanford, 21 Nov 1984  
Lt Col Larry W. Driskill, 2 Aug 1985  
Lt Col Mark W. Fischer, 19 Jul 1988  
Lt Col Richard H. Bishop, 18 May 1990  
Lt Col Stephen M. Peterson, 21 Jun 1990

Maj Kenneth R. Flye, 4 May 1992  
Lt Col Bruce W. Carmichael, 30 Jul 1992  
Lt Col Edward A. Walby, 9 May 1994  
Lt Col John J. Jacobson, 23 Aug 1996  
Lt Col Paul W. Nelson, 3 Jun 1998  
Lt Col Keith E. Gentile, 8 Feb 2000  
Lt Col Troy E. Devine, 17 Aug 2001  
Lt Col Robert A. Yahn, 1 Jul 2003  
Lt Col David L. Russell Iii, 7 Jul 2005

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

World War I

Lorraine

Alsace

St Mihiel

Meuse-Argonne

World War II

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Air Offensive, Japan

Eastern Mandates

Western Pacific

Vietnam

Vietnam Ceasefire

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

Kawasaki, Japan, 15-16 Apr 1945

Japan, 13-28 May 1945

Presidential Unit Citation

31 Mar-31 Dec 1968

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards With "V" Device

1 Nov 1972-28 Jan 1973  
1 Nov 1972-30 Jun 1973

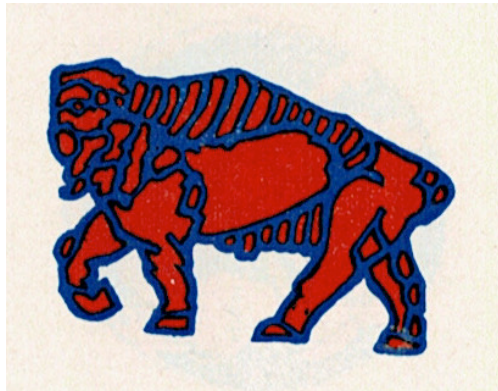
**Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards**

1 Jan 1957-31 Jan 1958  
1 Jul 1967-30 Jun 1968  
1 Jul 1970-1 Apr 1971  
1 Jul 1975-30 Jun 1976  
30 Jun 1976-30 Jun 1977  
1 Jul 1981-30 Jun 1982  
1 Jul 1983-30 Jun 1984  
1 Jul 1985-30 Jun 1986  
1 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1990  
1 Sep 1991-30 Jun 1993  
1 Jul 1993-30 Jun 1994  
1 Jul 1994-30 Jun 1995  
1 Jun 1996-31 May 1998  
1 Jun 1998-31 May 2000  
1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004

**Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm**

1 Nov 1972-28 Jan 1973

**EMBLEM**







Buffalo, red, lined with blue. Approved, 4 Mar 1924

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

Combat as corps observation unit with French Eighth Army and American V Army Corps, 22-23 Jun, Sep-Nov 1918; school squadron with V Army Corps Infantry Liaison School, Jul-Sep 1918, during which time one flight of unit, operating in Vosges region of Alsace and Lorraine, participated in combat with French XXXIII Corps and American 5th Division, Jul-Aug 1918.

During the summer while American divisions were in line in the Vosges Mountains the 99 Aero Observation Squadron received its first battle training, operating over the southern end of this sector and participating in the attack on Frapelle.

Toward the middle of July, 1918, the 5th Division (United States), holding a sector in the Vosges Mountains to the southwest of the towns of Celles and Frapelle, was ordered to advance and capture the last-named place. To assist the 5th Division in the operation the 3d Flight of the 99 Aero Squadron was brought forward from the station of the squadron at Luxouil-les-Bains and took station on the airdrome at Dogneville near Epinal. The flight was assigned to the 33d French Corps observation group operating at Dogneville. Seven Salmson airplanes, with a corresponding number of pilots and observers and adequate mechanic personnel in charge of the flight commander, composed the flight. Armament and radio sections were attached. To all intents and purposes the flight was organized as a self-contained unit and was administered along similar lines to those obtaining in the French squadrons of the group.

The 5th Division occupied a mountainous, wooded sector. The defenses of the friendly sector were of the stabilized warfare type, consisting of trenches, barbed-wire entanglements, dugouts, and carefully prepared and camouflaged artillery positions. The infantry was supported by the usual complement of light and heavy artillery.

The enemy was strongly organized for defense at Frapelle. The town lay within a salient

conforming to the course of a small creek which ran through a mountainous defile.

The operations in view contemplated cutting off the enemy salient and forcing the abandonment of the town of Frapelle, which constituted an important rail head and road junction.

The mission of the 3d Flight, 99 Squadron, in view of the tactical situation and plan of attack, was as follows:

To photograph the enemy defenses previous to the attack.

To insure effective surveillance of the enemy positions previous to and during the attack carefully noting and reporting any indication of counteroffensive or local reactions in preparation.

To adjust the friendly divisional artillery on sensitive points within the enemy lines.

To report the location of and adjust fire on enemy batteries in action.

To maintain contact, by means of infantry contact patrols, between the command and the front line during the offensive operations.

To photograph the friendly positions at the close of the operation contemplated.

Immediately upon arriving in the sector personal liaison was established by officers of the 3d Flight with the divisional command and commanders of divisional artillery and infantry units. Means and methods of airplane cooperation with the troops were discussed and definite lines of procedure arranged by mutual agreement. Telegraphic, telephonic, radio, and courier communication was established. The commanding officer of the French group lent valuable advice and assistance in perfecting the plan of liaison and of operations.

In order to assure cooperation of the troops with the airplane during infantry contact patrols, terrain exercises were carried out with the 9th and 10th Infantry Brigades of the 5th Division.

Prior to the attack airplanes of the 3d Flight successfully carried out, by prearrangement, adjustments with the divisional artillery on enemy battery positions and strong points. Photographic missions reconnoitered enemy territory to a depth of 40 kilometers, securing photographs of considerable tactical value to the command. It is worthy of note in this connection that heretofore no corps squadron had ever photographed enemy territory in this sector deeper than 10 kilometers. Careful visual reconnaissance of enemy territory was carried out at frequent intervals and the command assured of the absence of any abnormal activity on the part of the opposing forces.

On August 17, following a heavy artillery preparation, the 9th Brigade took the offensive at daybreak. Two airplanes of the 3d Flight were over the lines when the attack began, one of these being an infantry contact airplane and the other an artillery airplane charged with the

mission of detecting and reporting indications of enemy counter-attacks in preparation. These airplanes were replaced at frequent intervals during the day until the successful issue of the operation.

In spite of the terrain exercises carried out by the infantry in preparation for the attack, calls of infantry contact airplanes for the line were consistently disregarded. The line was never staked by means of panels. The approximate location of the friendly advance elements was, however, determined and reported to the command at frequent intervals, contact patrols being carried out at altitudes as low as to permit distinguishing and identifying the uniforms of troops on the ground. In the course of these missions the friendly airplanes were submitted to heavy machine-gun and rifle fire from hostile forces at close range. In many instances airplanes of the 3d Flight on infantry contact patrol took active part in the combat on the ground, attacking and silencing enemy machine guns and scattering with their fire groups of German soldiers caught in the open and on the roads. It is a matter of record that several machine-gun nests were completely put out of action in combat with corps observation airplanes of the 3d Flight.

Upon the successful issue of the attack and the establishment of a new front line of defense, the airplanes of the 3d Flight were dispatched and successfully photographed the friendly front line.

Enemy aerial activity at Frapelle was negligible, the work of the airplanes seldom being hindered by hostile pursuit. During the inactive period on the Toul sector covering the late spring and summer of 1918 and up to the St. Mihiel offensive which commenced on September 12, army observation in the American Air Service was carried out by one unit, the 91st Aero Service Squadron. Previous to its assignment to the 1st Army on August 10, 1918, this organization worked under orders of the Chef de l'Aeronautique of the 8th French Army.

This squadron was engaged in the operations in the Toul Sector, at St. Mihiel and the Argonne-Meuse first and second offensives. The squadron performed many reconnaissance's and war missions into German territory, fought 18 combats and received official confirmation for 3 victories. It suffered 13 casualties, consisting of 6 killed and 7 wounded. It ceased operations February 13, 1919.

Stationed at Hazelhurst Field, NY, as of June 1919 as the 99 Aero Squadron and assigned to the Eastern Department. Transferred in August 1919 to Camp Alfred Vail, NJ. Transferred on 17 August 1919 to Bolling Field, DC. Assigned on 20 August 1920 to the Third Corps Area. Redesignated as the 99 Squadron (Observation) on 14 March 1921. Redesignated as the 99 Observation Squadron on 25 January 1923. Assigned on 24 March 1923 to the 8th Division. Transferred on 23 June 1927 to Kelly Field, TX. Inactivated on 31 July 1927 at Kelly Field. Relieved from the 8th Division 15 August 1927 and allotted to the Office of Chief of the Air Corps for mobilization purposes.

In 1928, the 99 moved to Mitchell Field, N.Y., to perform observation duties and participate in aerial demonstrations and maneuvers.

Relieved from assignment to the OCAC on 1 September 1928 and allotted to the Eighth Corps Area. Withdrawn from the Eighth Corps Area on 27 October 1928 and allotted to the Second Corps Area. Activated on 9 November 1928 at Mitchel Field, NY, and attached to the 9th Observation Group. Assigned on 15 February 1929 to the 9th Observation Group. Reorganized and redesignated 99 Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on 1 March 1935 and assigned to the 9th Bombardment Group. Redesignated as the 99 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 6 December 1939. Ground elements departed from the port of New York on 5 November 1940 on the U.S.A.T. Chateau Thierry and arrived on 13 November 1940 at Rio Hato Airfield in Panama.

In 1940, the squadron moved to the Canal Zone, then on to Trinidad to fly antisubmarine patrols. The squadron moved to Florida in 1942 and started training cadres for bombardment units.

Aircraft and crews departed Mitchel Field on 17 November 1940 for Rio Hato and arrived several days later. Transferred on 3 December 1941 to Zandery Field, Surinam.

Antisubmarine patrols, and reconnaissance of Vichy French fleet at Martinique, Dec 1941-Oct 1942.

Trained cadres for bombardment units, Feb 1943-Feb 1944.

Combat in Western Pacific, Jan-Aug 1945.

Unmanned, Apr 1947-Oct 1948.

Redesignated a reconnaissance squadron in 1949, and based in California, the 99 flew B/RB-17s and, later, B/RB-29s.

5 August 1950 A USAF Boeing B-29, *44-87651*, of the 99 Bomb Squadron, 9th Bomb Group, 9th Bomb Wing, carrying a Mark 4 nuclear bomb, suffers two runaway propellers and landing gear problems on takeoff at Fairfield-Suisun Air Force Base, Fairfield, California. The crew attempts an emergency landing but crashes, causing a huge explosion that kills 19 aboard the plane and on the ground, including mission commander Brig. Gen. Robert F. Travis; the airfield is later renamed Travis Air Force Base in his honor. Numerous nearby mobile homes are severely damaged and many civilians, firefighters, and USAF ground crew are injured- 60 required hospital treatment and 47 suffered superficial injuries according to newspaper reports, but other sources place the total as high as 173. The USAF attributes the explosion to ten or twelve conventional 500-pound HE bombs aboard the B-29 and claims that the nuclear bomb's fuel capsule was aboard a different aircraft, but admits that the bomb casing contained depleted uranium used as ballast, and later orders a public health assessment of the crash site.

The 99 was redesignated a bombardment squadron in 1950, moved to Idaho in 1953, and received B-47s in 1954 making several deployments to England and Guam. In 1966, the 99 again

became a reconnaissance squadron and moved to California conducting category I, II and III testing of SR-71 aircraft through 1967. Global Strategic Reconnaissance was flown until 1971 when the squadron inactivated. In November 1972, the 99 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron activated at U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield, Thailand. The squadron relocated at Beale Air Force Base in 1976 and began flying U-2 missions.

Global strategic reconnaissance, 1967-1971 and 1972-present, including Southeast Asia, Nov 1972-Jun 1973; Grenada, 1983; Panama, 1989; and Southwest Asia, 1990-1991.

Operational missions include extensive reconnaissance efforts during OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM as well as humanitarian efforts covering fire and earthquake damage in California and Midwestern U.S. floods. 99 personnel are currently temporarily assigned to four overseas detachments

Surviving a Harrowing U-2 Flight: The Air Force has awarded the Koren Kolligian Jr. Trophy to Lt. Col. Joseph Santucci for safely landing a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft following an in-flight emergency that left him struggling to keep the U-2's nose up and flying. Santucci, 99 Reconnaissance Squadron commander at Beale AFB, Calif., had to use all his strength and both arms to pull back on the yoke, making it nearly impossible to troubleshoot systems. Complicating matters, he said, "There was bad weather, no horizon, no moon illumination, and the disorientation was horrible for me; probably the worst I have ever experienced." Santucci credited control tower supervisor of flight, Capt Eugene Georgescu, and an unidentified mobile driver—a pilot in a chase car to aid U-2 landings—with helping him get down with only minor injuries. USAF will make the formal award later this year. 2010

On 22 June, at approximately 0315 local (21/2315 Zulu), a U-2S, S/N 80-1082 crashed 17 miles south of its forward operating location in Southwest Asia. The mishap aircraft (MA) and mishap pilot (MP) were part of the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing, assigned to the 99 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, 9th Reconnaissance Wing, Beale Air Force Base, California, and was returning from an operational high altitude mission. The MA impacted uninhabited desert and was destroyed. The MP did not attempt to eject and died at impact. No one on the ground was injured, and no private property was damaged. Due to the lack of a cockpit voice recorder and aircraft data recorder, the profile of the final 20 minutes of the mission was reconstructed using radar data, voice transmissions, and a handheld GPS that was recovered from the wreckage. Last contact with the MP occurred at 0307L, 8 minutes prior to impact as he descended below 22,000 ft and acknowledged being cleared to 2,000 ft. At 0314L, at 4,400 ft, the MP began a 70 degree turn to intercept the 17 mile arc on the published arrival. Radar data indicated the MA had intercepted the arc and continued descending below 2,000 ft until radar track was lost at 0315:24L. There is clear and convincing evidence that the primary cause of the mishap was a catastrophic, cascading sequence of events beginning with vibrations and the in-flight failure of the power takeoff shaft (PTS). This resulted in an instantaneous loss of power to the Airframe Mounted Accessory Drive (AMAD) and the immediate loss of hydraulics, AC and DC generators, primary cockpit lighting, and cockpit multifunction displays (MFDs), during a descending turn, below 3,500 feet AGL, and during a critical phase of flight—arrival routing for a night landing.

There is substantial evidence to conclude that the vibration and noise caused by the in-flight failure of the PTS, followed by the immediate loss of MFDs, led the MP to conclude he was experiencing a serious engine malfunction when in fact he had an operating engine and a flyable jet. Substantially contributing human factors of task oversaturation, channelized attention, and spatial disorientation led to the MP's loss of situational awareness and the steady descent of the MA until ground impact.

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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.