

24 RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE¹

24 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy constituted, 28 Mar 1944

Activated, 1 Apr 1944

Inactivated, 18 Oct 1948

Redesignated 24 Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 20 Dec 1950

Activated, 2 Jan 1951

Redesignated 24 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 16 Jun 1952

24 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron and activated, organized 25 Mar 1967

24 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy and 24 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron consolidated, 19 Sep 1985. Consolidated squadron retains 24 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron designation.

Inactivated 8 Jul 1992

Redesignated 24 Reconnaissance Squadron and activated

Inactivated, 1 Jul 1994

STATIONS

Dalhart AAFld, TX, 1 Apr 1944

¹ Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit yearbook. *6 Bombardment Wing*. 1954.

Grand Island AAFld, NE, 26 May-18 Nov 1944
North Field, Tinian, 28 Dec 1945
Clark field, Luzon, 13 Mar 1946
Kadena, Okinawa, 1 Jun 1947-18 Oct 1948
Walker AFB, NM, 2 Jan 1951-16 Jun 1952
Eielson AFB 25 Mar 1967-8 Jul 1992
Eareckson AFB, AK
Offutt AFB, NE

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Andersen AFB, Guam, 31 Oct 1955-26 Jan 1956

ASSIGNMENTS

6 Bombardment Group, 1 Apr 1944-18 Oct 1948
6 Bombardment Group, 2 Jan 1951
6 Bombardment (later Strategic Aerospace) Wing, 16 Jun 1952

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-17, 1944
B-29, 1944-1947
B-29, 1951-1952
B-36, 1952-1957
B-52, 1957
RC-135
WC-135

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Louis M. Sowers, Mar 1945
Lt Col Julian E. Smitherman, #1954
Lt Col W. H. Cox

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Japan
Eastern Mandates
Western Pacific

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Tokyo, Japan, 25 May 1945

Japanese Empire, 9-19 Jul 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 May 1960-31 May 1962

EMBLEM



On a disc per fess debased, light turquoise blue and light yellow, edged in black, a caricatured black cat with gold halo above head, standing on base segment, wearing yellow orange gloves and yellow orange trunks with black polka dots, holding in the right forepaw a large brown club, and in the left forepaw a red firecracker, lighted at the fuse, proper. (Approved, 24 Nov 1944)

On a green disc edged with a narrow white border a blue stylized aircraft fimbriated white, bendwise throughout trailing three converging contrails, the outer two yellow, the center red; on the blue aircraft six white stars. Around the aircraft an arc of nine white stars in the top of the disc and an arc of nine white stars in base. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The stylized aircraft and speed trails represent our modern day Air Force and the surrounding white border is symbolic of speed and the high state of electronic design in modern aircraft. The stars collectively denote unit designation and the six stars on the stylized aircraft identify the present wing designation. Attached below the disc a white scroll inscribed: WE OBSERVE THE UNKNOWN in blue letters.

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Combat in Western Pacific, 27 Jan-14 Aug 1945. No personnel assigned, 25 Apr 1947-18 Oct 1948. While retaining combat capability, trained B-52 crews for Strategic Air Command, 15 Jul 1959.



Lt Col Julian E. Smitherman

With the RC-135E, the 24th SRS, was destined to carry out the pursuit of objects entering the atmosphere, notably ballistic missiles whose trajectory could be recorded using optical equipment

RC-135 Cobra Ball applies to three specially modified aircraft for surveillance, still in the western Pacific, of Soviet ballistic missile launches and the re-entering into the atmosphere of spacecraft, gathering at the same time all sorts of telemetric data. For almost thirty years, that is until March 1995, these planes carried out their missions (named 'Burning Star') over international waters, but as close as possible to the Kamchatka Peninsula, a particularly sensitive area as it was close to Soviet missile launch sites. Put into service with a detachment of the 24th SRS based at Shemya in the Aleutian Islands, these aircraft were on permanent alert as the launch dates. The crew were therefore forced to live and sleep nearby until alerted by the Defense Special Missile And Astronautic Center.