26 INFORMATION OPERATIONS WING

MISSION

LINEAGE
5 Photographic Group established, 14 Jul 1942
Activated, 23 Jul 1942
Redesignated 5 Photographic Reconnaissance and Mapping Group, 15 May 1943
Redesignated 5 Photographic Reconnaissance Group, 11 Aug 1943
Redesignated 5 Photographic Group, Reconnaissance, 13 Nov 1943
Redesignated 5 Reconnaissance Group, 4 May 1945
Inactivated, 28 Oct 1945
Disestablished, 6 Mar 1947

26 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Medium, established, 9 May 1952
Activated, 28 May 1952
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1958

5 Reconnaissance Group Reestablished and consolidated with 26 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Medium, 19 Apr 1965

Redesignated 26 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and activated, 19 Apr 1965
Organized, 1 Jul 1965
Inactivated, 31 July 1991
Redesignated 26 Intelligence Wing
Activated, 1 October 1991
Redesignated 26 Information Operations Wing, 1 August 2000
Inactivated, 5 Jul 2006

STATIONS
AAB, Colorado Springs (later, Peterson AAFld), CO, 23 Jul 1942
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 11-19 Aug 1943
Bizerte, Tunisia, 4 Sep 1943
La Marsa, Tunisia, 8 Sep 1943
San Severo, Italy, 6 Dec 1943
Bari, Italy, 11 Oct 1944-8 Oct 1945
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 26-28 Oct 1945
Lockbourne AFB, OH, 28 May 1952-1 Jul 1958
Toul-Rosieres AB, France, 1 Jul 1965
Ramstein AB, West Germany, 5 Oct 1966
Zweibrucken AB, West Germany, 31 Jan 1973
Ramstein AB, Germany, 1 Oct 199-5 Jul 2006

ASSIGNMENTS
Second Air Force, 23 Jul 1942
Third Air Force, 8 Mar 1943
Twelfth Air Force, 4 Sep 1943
90 Photographic Wing, Reconnaissance, 22 Nov 1943
Fifteenth Air Force, 1 Oct 1944
Army Service Forces, New York Port of Embarkation, c. 26-28 Oct 1945
801 Air Division, 28 May 1952-1 Jul 1958
United States Air Forces in Europe, 19 Apr 1965
Third Air Force, 1 Jul 1965
Seventeenth Air Force, 1 Sep 1965

ATTACHMENTS
Northwest African Photographic Reconnaissance Wing, 4 Sep-21 Nov 1943
7 Air Division, 13 Sep-29 Oct 1954

WEAPON SYSTEMS
P-38/F-4
P-38/F-5, 1943-1945
B-17, 1943-1944
B-24/F-7, 1943
B-25, 1943-1944
A-20, 1944
F-8, 1944
YRB-47, 1953-1955
B-47, 1953-1954
KC-97, 1953-1955, 1956-1958
RB-47, 1954-1958
RB-66, 1965
RF-4, 1965

F-4, 1966-1973
RF-101, 1966
EB-57, 1966, 1967, 1968-1969
F/TF-102, 1968-1970
C-130, 1972-1973
C-47, 1972-1973
UH-1, 1972-1973

COMMANDERS
2nd Lt Frederick A. Williams, 23 Jul 1942
Maj J. D. Russell, c. Sep 1942
Maj James F. Stechell, 12 Jan 1943
Lt Col Waymond A. Davis, 27 Feb 1943
Capt Paul M. Thorngren, 1 Apr 1943
Maj John S. Adams, 17 Apr 1943
Lt Col Waymond A. Davis, 8 May 1943
Maj Leon W. Gray, 23 Oct 1943
Maj Lloyd R. Nuttall, 4 Feb 1944
Col Wilbur H. Stratton, 21 Sep 1944
Lt Col Bernard S. Hendler, 9 Aug 1945-unkn
None (not manned), 28 May 1952-9 Jan 1953
Col Henry R. Sullivan, Jr., 10 Jan 1953
Col George W. Humbrecht, 10 Feb 1953
Brig Gen Henry R. Sullivan, Jr., 27 Apr 1953
Col Lawson C. Horner, Jr., 22 Jul 1955
Col William J. Meng, 16 Aug1955
Col Robert F. Layton, 4 Jun 1957
Col William H. Reddell, 10 Jun 1957
Maj Lester Meltzer, 15 Apr 1958-unkn
None (not manned), 19 Apr-30 Jun 1965
Col Robert L. Boardman, 1 Jul 1965
Col Harvey P. Hall, c. Jun 1966
Col Glyn W. Ramsey, 21 Jun 1966
Col William R. MacDonald, 5 Oct 1966
Col William T. Douthwaite, Jr., 23 Jun 1967
Col Bryce Poe II, 1 Jul 1969
Col Howard M. Lane, 23 Jun 1970
Brig Gen William F. Georgi, 1 Mar 1971
Col James E. Mclnerney, Jr., 31 Jan 1973
Col Lloyd C. Ulrich, 2 Jul 1973
Brig Gen George M. Browning, Jr., 6 May 1974
Col Robert C. Karns, 4 Jun 1976

HONORS

Service Streamers
American Theater

Campaign Streamers
Air Combat, EAME Theater
Air Offensive, Europe
Naples-Foggia
Rome-Arno
Normandy
Northern France
Southern France
North Apennines
Rhineland
Central Europe
Po Valley

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations
Distinguished Unit Citation (Balkans)
6 Sep 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
21 Mar-9 May 1956
5 Oct 1966-23 Jun 1967
1 Mar 1971-30 Jun 1972
1 Jul 1973-31 May 1975

EMBLEM

5th Reconnaissance Group: azure, on a chevron inverted or two wings conjoined in lure and

elevated of the field, in chief a camera lens proper ringed of the second. (Approved, 25 Jan 1943)

per fess nebuly abased azure and vert, overall on a saltire argent change to light green on the vert part of the shield, two lightning flashes throughout tenne behind an eye vert, vitreous body argent, pupil and outlines sable. The 26th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing patch incorperates the Air Force colors, ultra marine blue and golden yellow. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theatre of Air Force operations. Yellow symbolizes the sun and the excellence required of personnel in their daily tasks. The focal point of the emblem is a green eye which symbolizes the penetration of radar and radio. The blue background represents the sky; the light green, the sea; and the dark green, the earth. (Approved, 4 Sep 1953)

MOTTO
BEWARE, WE SNAP!

SABER ES PODER— Knowledge is power

OPERATIONS

Not operational from activation to Jan 1943. Tactical components assigned in Sep 1942, but unit remained unmanned until 12 Jan 1943. Trained in photographic reconnaissance and mapping, Jan-Aug 1943. Arrived in Tunisia Sep 1943.

Flew missions to Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Balkans, using F-5s. Also flew some photographic missions at night with B-17s and B-25s.

On 30 October 1943, the 5th flew its first mission to Germany, photographing targets in Munich, Augsburg, Regensburg and Stuttgart. In October 1943, allied forces successfully landed troops in southern Italy.

Photographed areas near Anzio prior to the Allied landings. Provided reconnaissance of road and rail targets to support US Fifth and British Eighth Army in southern Italy. Made bomb-damage assessments at Cassino. Operated over northwest France, photographing rail targets to be bombed in connection with the invasion of Normandy. Mapped coastal areas in preparation for the invasion of Southern France. Received a DUC for action on 6 Sep 1944 when the group secured photographic intelligence of German Air Force installations in the Balkans and thus enabled fighter organizations to destroy large numbers of enemy transport and fighter planes. Provided reconnaissance services for Fifteenth AF's campaign against the enemy's oil industry, aircraft production, and communications. Also assisted the advance of ground forces in northern Italy by supplying intelligence on enemy installations in the area.

Received DUC for action on 6 Sep 1944 when the group secured photographic intelligence of German installations in the Balkans, enabling fighter units to destroy many enemy transport and fighter planes.

Beginning in November 1944, the 5th Photo group flew its mixed bag of aircraft all over the European Theatre of Operations. The 5th photographed many strategic targets in Germany including: oil refineries, aircraft factories, and communication facilities. Their destruction helped reduce the strength of the Luftwaffe. In the mountain campaign of Northern Italy, the 5th gathered intelligence which helped allied forces break the hold of the German Army in Italy. In Eastern Europe, the 5th's reconnaissance reports resisted partisan and other Allied forces to push the Germans out of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and the Balkans.

In August 1945, the group was notified that it was scheduled for shipment to the United States during September, but the departure was delayed until 9 October, when the men sailed from Naples aboard the SS NOAH WEBSTER. On 26 October 1945, the ship carrying the men of the 5th arrived at New York Harbor. Two days later, the group was inactivated at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. Two years later, on 6 March 1947, the non-operational and unmanned 5th was disbanded.

Activated in May 1952, but unmanned until Jan 1953. The 26 SRW was created as a means to gather intelligence before a war began. From this era came a need for better, faster-flying, longer ranged reconnaissance aircraft, and a need to gather intelligence on a global scale, for the strategic objective of the US. From that need, the strategic reconnaissance force of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was born. From its home at Lockbourne AFB, the 26 SRW not only flew operational reconnaissance, but developed the capabilities of the Boeing YRB-47 "Stratojet"

The wing participated in a variety of SAC directed exercises and operations between 1953 and 1958. These included numerous simulated combat missions and deployments, ranging from a few days to a few months. The exercises took the wing's reconnaissance and tanker aircraft to such bases as Eielson AFB, Alaska; Thule AFB, Greenland; Royal Air Force stations at Upper Heyford and Fairford, United Kingdom; Sidi Slimane in Morocco; Goose Bay, Laborador; and Lajes Field in the Azores.

In December 1957, the wing learned that it was to be inactivated the following summer. On 15 April 1958, the 321st Air Refueling Squadron was reassigned to the 301st Bombardment Wing, as were the remainder of the wing's aircrews. The wing's strength was slowly reduced by transferring personnel to other units.

Not operational 15 Apr-1 Jul 1958. Maintained proficiency in tactical reconnaissance, both visual and photographic, day and night from Jul 1965, adding regional air defense capabilities in Nov 1968, electronic counter-measures training and requirements in Oct 1966, and special operations in Mar 1972.

The 26 TRW while at Ramstein AB acquired a number of other units with different flying missions. One function gained by the 26 TRW, almost immediately after arriving at Ramstein, was the maintenance and flying of the HQ USAFE liaison aircraft. The wing was responsible for flying members of the HQ USAFE staff to Air Force and NATO bases throughout Europe. The unit was only designated a flight, because of it's small size. It consisted of a mixture of aircraft, including: T-29s, T-33s, T-39s, C-54s, O-2s, H-19s, and UH-1s. The 526th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS), flying F-102 aircraft, was assigned to the wing in November 1968, thus adding an air defense role to the mission of the wing. In the spring of 1972, the 7th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) was assigned flying C-130Es, C-47As, and UH-1Ns. Because of the special operations mission of the 7 SOS, it reported directly to HQ USAFE for operational control.

As part of CREEK ACTION, a command-wide effort to realign functions and streamline operations, USAFE transferred the 26 TRW from Ramstein to Zweibrucken AB, Germany, and the 86th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) from Zweibrucken to Ramstein on 31 January 1973. These moves were made without the transfer of personnel or equipment with the exception of the 38 TRS, 7 SOS and 81 TFS. The 38th remained under the control of the 26 TRW by moving to Zweibrucken with the wing and the 7 SOS transferred to Rhein-Main AB. The 81 TFS transferred from Zweibrucken to Spangdahlem AB, Germany. When the wing moved to Zweibrucken, the 17 TRS stayed there to become part of the 26 TRW. The 17 TRS had been stationed at Zweibrucken since January 1970. The 526 TFS remained at Ramstein AB, and it was reassigned to the 86th Tactical Fighter Wing.

On 10 August 1987, the 26 TRW became the only tactical reconnaissance wing in USAFE, when the 10 TRW at RAF Alconbury was redesignated the 10th Tactical Fighter Wing and assigned to fly A-10. This left US Forces in Europe the services of just one US tactical reconnaissance unit and one squadron of RF-4Cs.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES
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Sources
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The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.