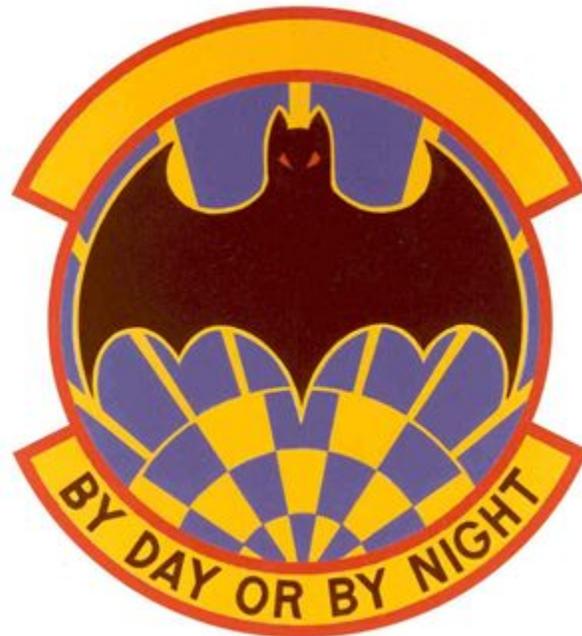


488th INTELLIGENCE SQUADRON



MISSION

The 488th Intelligence Squadron is an operational component of the Air Intelligence Agency (AIA) executing information operations that shape the national security environment and the battlespace. Serves as a combat force multiplier by providing vital information to theater, tactical, and national decision makers. Provides critical support to military operations and national decision makers wherever and whenever required. Provides intelligence and communications-computer systems security to tactical commanders, naval commanders, other airborne electronic combat assets and national agencies.

Conducts RC-135/RIVET JOINT airborne reconnaissance missions across the USEUCOM area of responsibility. The aircraft is an extensively modified C-135. The RIVET JOINT's modifications are primarily related to its on-board sensor suite, which allows the mission crew to detect, identify and geolocate signals throughout the electromagnetic spectrum. The mission crew can then forward gathered information in a variety of formats to a wide range of consumers via the RIVET JOINT's extensive communications suite. The interior seats 32 people, including the cockpit crew, electronic warfare officers, intelligence operators and airborne systems engineers.

488th Intelligence Squadron airborne mission specialists also help to ensure that friendly air and ground command and control communications are secure. Additional functions of the 488th include support to search and rescue operations.

LINEAGE

6954th Security Squadron activated, 1 Apr 1974
Redesignated 6954 Electronic Security Squadron, 1 Aug 1979
Redesignated 6988 Electronic Security Squadron, 1 Jun 1980
Redesignated 488 Intelligence Squadron, 1 Oct 1993

STATIONS

RAF Mildenhall, England

ASSIGNMENTS

6944th Security Wing, 1 Apr 1974
USAF Security Service (later, Electronic Security Command), 1 Mar 1979
Electronic Security, Europe (later, European Electronic Security Division), 1 Jun 1980
693rd Electronic Security Wing, 7 Jul 1988
6950th Electronic Security Group, 23 May 1991
26th Intelligence (later, 26th Information Operations) Group, 1 Oct 1993
55th Operations Group, 1 Oct 2002

COMMANDERS

LTC Gary D. Payton
LTC James Poss

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Meritorious Unit Awards
1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004
1 Jun 2004-31 May 2006
1 Jun 2006-31 May 2007
1 Jun 2007-31 May 2008
1 Jun 2008-31 May 2009
1 Jun 2009-31 May 2010

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1982-30 Jun 1984
1 Jul 1984-30 Jun 1986
1 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1991
1 Jul 1991-30 Jun 1993
1 Oct 1993-30 Sep 1994

1 Oct 1994-30 Sep 1995
1 Oct 1996-30 Sep 1997
1 Oct 1997-30 Sep 1998
1 Oct 1999-30 Sep 2000
1 Jun 2001-31 May 2002
1 Jun 2011-31 May 2012

EMBLEM



6954th Security Squadron emblem

488th Intelligence Squadron emblem: The "Bat" patch is an essential piece of the squadron's legacy. It dates to the earliest days of Air Force airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and ties the squadron's current Airmen to those who came before. Following World War II, several airborne units were established to conduct ISR; one of these was the 6988th Radio Squadron Mobile at Yokota Air Base, Japan. The original 6988th RSM conducted missions on RB-29 and RB-50 aircraft - modified bombers specially configured for ISR. The RB-29 and RB-50 pilots referred to the back of the aircraft as the "cave" due to the dark conditions in which the intelligence personnel worked and began to call the aircrew "Bats."

The name stuck. The bat became part of the unit's official patch and members of the squadron are still referred to as "Bats." The seven rays in the background of the patch are also significant as they symbolize the seven "Bats" who perished in the unit's very first RB-50 mission in 1952. The rays remind squadron members of the sacrifices of our predecessors and highlight the dangers associated with conducting airborne operations.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

6954 Security Squadron was activated in 1974 at RAF Mildenhall UK tasked with the collection analysis and reporting of electronic signals intelligence SIGINT foreign command and control communications countermeasures weapons systems and target acquisition with the provision of specialist intelligence language and cryptographic personnel known as backenders ravens and crows operating a variety of optical and electronic sensors on board RC 135 reconnaissance aircraft. In addition the Squadron was responsible for electronic security support and maintenance of U-2R reconnaissance aircraft deployed for Central European Theatre operations.

The Squadron was redesignated 6954 Electronic Security Squadron in August 1979 when the United States Air Force Security Service became the Electronic Security Command.

The mission of the 6988th ESS is to provide command, control and communications countermeasures services and products to theater commanders. In this capacity, the unit employs techniques and materials designed to ensure that air-to-air and air-to-ground communications are reliable and secure. It also performs direction-finding and range estimations of downed aircraft in support of search and rescue operations.

In February 2000, a 488 IS aircrew from RAF Mildenhall, England, flew a new RC-135RJ on its first operational mission. The combat support sortie in the Balkans region marked the first time in nearly 30 years that a new RJ aircraft joined the existing fleet. On 15 October, Raytheon Systems delivered the 15th RC-135 to ACC. 2000

488 IS—OPERATION ALLIED FORCE Highly visible during operations in Kosovo, the 488th Intelligence Squadron provided 26th Intelligence Group contributions in the air.

The primary job of the 488th IS was to protect aircrews and act as a communications platform. One of the most important jobs the Rivet Joint did was to assist in combat search and rescue efforts. Because of their altitude, robust communications suite, and endurance, the RJ crews played a vital part in both the F-117 and F-16 operations

At the peak, the 488th IS had four jets and six separate crews on station, providing the perfect blend to accomplish the mission. This was a team effort with linguists from different languages and areas of responsibilities participating in this operation.

Squadron members flew over 100 RJ missions (averaging two missions per day), provided 1,000 hours of on-watch time, issued 53 threat calls and provided direct targeting information for Operation Allied Force. During Allied Force, the 488th IS had over 30 augmentees, including airborne linguists, analysts, and communications experts, at different times involved in unit operations.

AIA commander Maj. Gen. John R. Baker hailed the aircrews for their "contributions" and for "proving invaluable to the success of this important operation." Baker also noted their

"performance is a testimony to the dedication, devotion to duty, and selfless sacrifices of world-class airmen."

Lt Col. James Poss, 488th IS commander, spoke effusively about his aircrews. I couldn't have been more proud of my troops—especially my linguists and airborne maintenance technicians. This was an air war we did right—Able Flight was spot-on with their training and analysis of the Serbs, our LG folks handled double our normal maintenance load, plus juggling three different RJ baselines at once, and my SC folks did some of the fastest circuit and computer upgrades I've seen.

"It really showed the advantages of forward-based forces tightly integrated with USAFE and NATO. We wouldn't have done nearly as well if we had to deploy in from the states and fight this one from a "cold start," said Poss.

488th Intelligence Squadron grew up during the Cold War and its "bread-and-butter" was conducting sensitive reconnaissance operations to ensure the United States was prepared for potential threats. These missions were never discussed openly and only recently has limited information began to come out about what their predecessors - the Silent Warriors - accomplished during the Cold War.

Today through the missions it conducts aboard RC-135U Combat Sent and RC-135V/W Rivet Joint aircraft, the squadron enables decision advantage for NATO, allied forces, national decision-makers, and tactical warfighters through the rapid delivery of highly perishable intelligence. The squadron's Airmen - which include aircrew, cyber specialists, maintainers and support personnel - have been involved in nearly every combat action of the last half century.

In 2014 alone, the squadron's Airmen have a combined 5,300 deployed man-days and are consistently among the first to be sent forward when the nation's leaders need timely and actionable intelligence.

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 19 Nov 2010

Updated: 5 Nov 2018

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.