

24th RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



LINEAGE

24th Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy) constituted, 28 Mar 1944

Activated, 1 Apr 1944

Inactivated, 18 Oct 1948

Redesignated 24th Bombardment Squadron (Medium), 20 Dec 1950

Activated, 2 Jan 1951

Redesignated 24th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 16 Jun 1952

24th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron and activated, organized 25 Mar 1967

24th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) and 24th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron consolidated,
19 Sep 1985

Inactivated 8 Jul 1992

Redesignated 24th Reconnaissance Squadron and activated (unknown)

Inactivated, 1 Jul 1994

STATIONS

Dalhart AAFld, TX, 1 Apr 1944

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

6th Bombardment Group, 1 Apr 1944-18 Oct 1948
6th Bombardment Group, 2 Jan 1951
6th 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

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

UNIT COLORS

COMMANDERS

LTC Julian E. Smitherman, #1954
LTC W. H. Cox

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

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)

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

This design (black cat) was worn through the Squadron's B-29 and B-36 era and well into it's B-52 era. On October 23, 1964 a new design with a delta shaped aircraft and 24 stars was approved. The new design was worn by the 24th Bombardment Squadron until it was inactivated on January 25, 1967.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

24 AND 39 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRONS (BS) SCHEDULED TO CONVERT FROM CREW TRAINING TO TACTICAL MISSIONS IN SEP 63

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-.

24th BS

Equipped with B-52E from 12/57 and used this version until 1967. Inactivated on 25/1/67.

LT COL LOUIS M. SOWERS

24th Squadron Commander

Lt Col Sowers was the 24th Squadron Commander from March to June-1945 when he became Group Operations Officer. Receiving his wings and commission in May 1941, he joined the 11th Bomb Group and served with this group in Hawaii and the Southwest Pacific where he flew forty-six combat missions. He returned to the U.S. in Feb 1943; joined the Sixth in April 1944.

440623	B-17F	42-30615	24BS	6BG	Grand IsLand AAF, Grand Island, NE	GAC	Davis, Alfred C	Grand Island AAF, NE
--------	-------	----------	------	-----	---	-----	--------------------	----------------------------

440919	B-17F	42-6123	24BS	6BG		TAC	Guay, Phillip A	Batista Fld
441212	B-17F	42-6121	24BS	6BG		TAC	Alger, Bruce R	Love Fld (Dallas)
450205	B-29	42-24759	24BS	6BG		TAC	McElroy, Edgar E	
450404	B-29	42-93906	24BS	6BG	North Fld	MF	[parked aircraft]	North Fld
450408	B-29	42-65347	24BS	6BG		KCR	Preston, Clark A	North Fld/ 2mi off
450422	B-29	42-24889	24BS	6BG		CRLEF	Mutch, Dean J	West Fld



24 RECCE SQ
RC135T
WC135W
61-2665
55-3121

With this special equipment, the RC-135E, AFB (Alaska) with the 4157th Strategic Wing, a wing replaced in March 1967 by the 6th SW and its 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-1355'Cobra Ball' or 'River Ball'

This designation applies to three specially modified aircraft for surveillance, still in the western Pacific, of Soviet (then Chinese) ballistic missile launches and the re-entering into the atmosphere of spacecraft, gathering at the same time all sorts of telemetric data (TELINT missions). 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 (named 'The Rock') in the Aleutian Islands, these aircraft were on permanent alert as the launch dates, as we can imagine, were not announced beforehand. The crew (pilot, co-pilot, two navigators and a dozen systems operators) were therefore forced to live and sleep nearby until a erted by the Defense Special Missile And Astronautic Center (DEFSMAC).

It was finally decided to use a C-135B, one of which (s/n 62-4128), was modified by E-Systems beginning in 1983. The program having seen a lot of delays, the plane was only finally delivered in July 1989 and began its missions the following month. Attached to the 24th SRS of the 6th SRW based at Eielson in Alaska, and operating from Shemya ('The Rock', a base that has since been renamed Eareckson), the RC-135X was destined to visually identify and differentiate ballistic missiles penetrating into the atmosphere when these are halfway along their path. The gathered intelligence of various USSR missile tests came within the framework of the SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative), better known as Star Wars. Equipped with a longer nose, the 'Cobra Eye' (sometimes also designated Cobra Ball II) does not have the usual rectangular lateral fairings, but a sliding door in the right hand side of the fuselage in front of the wing, protecting the electronic detectors when these are not in use.





Air Force Order of Battle
Created: 15 Mar 2011
Updated:

Sources