

9th RECONNAISSANCE WING



MISSION

LINEAGE

9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, established, 25 Apr 1949
Activated, 1 May 1949
Redesignated 9th Bombardment Wing, Heavy, 1 Apr 1950
Redesignated 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium, 2 Oct 1950
Redesignated 9th Strategic Aerospace Wing, 1 Apr 1962
Redesignated 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 25 Jun 1966
Redesignated 9th Wing, 1 Sep 1991
Redesignated 9th Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Oct 1993

STATIONS

Fairfield-Suisun (later, Travis) AFB, CA, 1 May 1949
Mountain Home AFB, ID, 1 May 1953
Beale AFB, CA, 25 Jun 1966

ASSIGNMENTS

311th Air Division, 1 May 1949
Second Air Force, 1 Nov 1949
Fifteenth Air Force, 1 Apr 1950
14th Air Division, 10 Feb 1951

Fifteenth Air Force, 1 May 1953

813th Air (later, 813th Strategic Aerospace) Division, 15 Jul 1959

14th Strategic Aerospace (later, 14th Air) Division, 25 Jun 1966

Second Air Force, 1 Sep 1991

Twelfth Air Force, 1 Jul 1993

Eighth Air Force, 1 Oct 2002

ATTACHMENTS

7th Air Division, 23 May-11 Jul 1955

3rd Air Division, 3-22 Oct 1955 and 1 Oct 1957-c. 10 Jan 1958

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B/RB-17, 1949-1950

B-29, 1949-1954

RB-29, 1949-1951

RB-36, 1949-1950, 1951

KB-29, 1953

B-47, 1954-1966

KC-97, 1954-1965

Titan, 1962-1965

EB-47, 1962-1965

T-38, 1969

SR-71, 1966-1990

U-2, 1976

TR-1, 1981-1993

KC-135, 1983-1993

SR-71, 1995-1999

RQ-4, 2002

COMMANDERS

Col Raymond L. Winn, 1 May 1949

BG Robert F. Travis, 16 Jun 1949

Col Carlos J. Cochrane, 6 Aug 1950

Col Joe W. Kelly, 10 Aug 1950

Col Clifford J. Heflin, 10 Feb 1951

BG William C. Kingsbury, 5 Jan 1953

Col Robert V. De Shazo, 27 Jul 1957

Col Rufus H. Holloway, 15 Jul 1959

Col Walter Y. Lucas, 7 Jun 1960

Col William L. Gray, 5 Jul 1962

Col William R. Smith, 2 Apr 1964

Col Walter Y. Lucas, 10 Jun 1965

Maj Adelbert J. Lemke, c. May 1966

Col Douglas T. Nelson, 25 Jun 1966

Col William R. Hayes, 14 Dec 1966
Col Charles F. Minter, Sr., 27 Jun 1969
Col Harold E. Confer, 1 Jul 1970
Col Jerome F. O'Malley, 31 May 1972
Col Patrick J. Halloran, 10 May 1973
Col John H. Storrie, 30 Jun 1975
Col Lyman M. Kidder, 30 Sep 1977
Col Franklin D. Shelton, 1 Feb 1979
Col David G. Young, c. 17 Jul 1980
Col Thomas S. Pugh, 20 Jul 1982
Col George V. Freese, 4 Aug 1983
Col David H. Pinsky, 28 Jan 1985
Col Richard H. Graham, 17 Jul 1987
Col James S. Savarda, 6 Dec 1988
Col Thomas J. Keck, 12 Jun 1990
Col Richard A. Young, 21 Nov 1991
Col Larry W. Tieman, 28 Jun 1993
BG John W. Rutledge, 15 Jul 1994
BG Robert H. Behler, 22 Sep 1995
BG Charles N. Simpson, 18 Apr 1997
BG Kevin P. Chilton, 2 Jun 1999
BG Stanley Gorenc, 15 Sep 2000
BG Thomas B. Wright, 21 Mar 2003
BG Lawrence L. Wells, 6 Aug 2004
BG Harry D. Polumbo Jr., 15 May 2006
BG Robert P. Otto, 2 Jun 2008
Col Larry Broadwell

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Grenada, 1983

Decorations

Presidential Unit Citation

31 Mar-31 Dec 1968

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device

1 Jul 1972-30 Jun 1973

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jan 1957-31 Jan 1958

1 Jul 1967-30 Jun 1968

1 Jul 1970-30 Jun 1971

1 Jul 1971-30 Jun 1972

1 Jul 1973-30 Jun 1975

1 Jul 1975-30 Jun 1977

1 Jul 1981-30 Jun 1982

1 Jul 1983-30 Jun 1984

1 Jul 1985-30 Jun 1986

1 Jul 1986-30 Jun 1987

1 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1990

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 2000-31 May 2002

1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004

1 Jun 2005-31 May 2007

1 Jun 2007-31 May 2009

Bestowed Honors

Authorized to display honors earned by the 9th Operations Group prior to 1 May 1949

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Eastern Mandates

Western Pacific

Air Offensive, Japan

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Kawasaki, Japan, 15/16 Apr 1945

Japan, 13-28 May 1945

EMBLEM



Per pale vert and sable a pallet wavy argent fimbriated, Or, over all on a fess of four crosses patee of the second (sable). The shield, in black and green, represents the old colors of the Air Service parted by a wavy line representing the Rio Grande River. On the gold band are four black crosses representing four WW I offensives, Aisne-Marne, Champagne-Marne, Meusse-Argonne, and St. Mihiel, in which squadrons later assigned to the 9th Wing fought. The crest recalls the service in Mexico. (Approved for 9th Group on 20 Mar 1924 and for 9th Wing on 1 Jul 1952)

MOTTO

SEMPER PARATUS — Always ready

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Conducted strategic reconnaissance with assigned components, May 1949- Mar 1950, and with components of 5 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Nov 1949-Feb 1951. Conducted strategic bombardment training, Feb 1951-Dec 1965. Performed air refueling, May-Jul 1953, Sep 1954-Dec 1965, and Mar 1983-Oct 1993.

Conducted Strategic Air Command (SAC) airborne communications relay missions, Dec 1962-Mar 1965. Deployed at Fairford RAF Station, England, May-Jul 1955, at Kadena AB, Okinawa, 3-22 Oct 1955, at Eielson AFB, AK, 18-22 Jan 1956, and at Andersen AFB, Guam, Oct 1957-Jan 1958.

Controlled a Titan missile complex, Jun 1961-Jun 1965. Phased down operations at Mountain Home AFB, ID, Jan-Jun 1966, then moved to Beale AFB, CA. Equipped with the SR-71 aircraft in 1966; performed strategic reconnaissance in Southeast Asia beginning in 1968; provided photographic intelligence for the Son Tay prison camp raid in North Vietnam, Nov 1970.

Conducted humanitarian and scientific missions for Department of Defense and other government agencies when requested. Added U-2 & U-2R aircraft in 1976 and specialized KC-135Q tankers in 1983 to become the only USAF wing so equipped. Participated in USAF operations worldwide, including Grenada, Oct-Nov 1983, and Libya, Apr 1986.

Following the 1990 retirement of SR-71 aircraft, U-2 aircraft flew intelligence-gathering missions, Aug 1990- Mar 1991, in Southwest Asia, particularly during the Gulf War buildup and subsequent combat operations. Continued to provide worldwide reconnaissance as directed. In 1993, lost its air refueling capacity and specialized in global high altitude manned surveillance and reconnaissance missions for the National Command Authorities, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and theater commanders. While flying U-2s as its primary aircraft, it also flew SR-71s from 1995 to 1999.

Although the wing headquarters remained at Beale AFB, California, it also operated components at several locations around the world. After the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, wing elements took part in reconnaissance missions in support of U.S. military efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, flying both the manned U-2 and the new unmanned RQ-4 Global Hawk aircraft.

As the Air Force's only U-2 training center, provided initial, requalification and proficiency training for all U-2 pilots and mission planners and all RQ-4 crewmembers, 2004.

The 9th Reconnaissance Wing flew its final MC-12W Liberty sortie from Beale AFB, Calif., ending Air Combat Command's operation of the aircraft on Sept. 16. "The MC-12 is a great story because it linked those people in the aircraft with people on the ground and it allowed them to carry out a critically important mission," 9th RW Commander Col. Douglas Lee said in a release. Beale's 427th Reconnaissance Squadron has flown the aircraft since June 2011, following the Air Force's decision to normalize the MC-12 as a permanent fleet. Air Force MC-12s clocked some 400,000 combat flying hours and more than 79,000 sorties over Iraq and Afghanistan since they were first deployed in June 2009, according to officials. The Air Force is retaining 13 of the 41-strong fleet to stand up a special operations-tasked unit with the Oklahoma Air National Guard, while eight MC-12s are transferring to the Army. "Although the mission is leaving ... the aircraft are going to very good homes," said 9th Operations Group Commander Col. Darren Halford. "Our joint and Total Force partners will ensure the MC-12 continues to help find, fix, and finish the enemies of freedom." 2015

9th RW, Detachment 1 was activated at Kadena, Okinawa, Japan on 9 August 1974 (replacing OL-KA) and was inactivated in 1990. DET 1 3+ ICHI BAN-- Number One)

Glowing Heat deployments to Kadena, Okinawa were first undertaken in March 1968, and for a while the SR-71 crews were co-based with their 'grey-suit' colleagues from 'the Agency'. The SR-71 detachment was known as OL (Operating Location) -8, and was declared operationally ready with three aircraft on 15 March 1968. It flew its first combat mission on 21 March 1968. In early 1970, as the need for reconnaissance grew, the detachment was enlarged to four aircraft. On 30 October 1970 it was redesignated OL-RK (for Ryukyus, the island chain in which Okinawa was situated) and on 26 October 1971 became OL-KA (for Kadena).

A high level of activity was maintained through the last months of the war in Southeast Asia, although with the end of the war the detachment was reduced in size to two aircraft. On 1 August 1974 OL-KA was redesignated as Detachment 1 of the 9th SRW. Reconnaissance missions in the post-war years were aimed at the Soviet Far East, China, North Korea and Vietnam, although Det 1 was tasked with flights over the Persian Gulf during the Iran/Iraq war. All operations ceased on 22 November 1989 and the two aircraft were returned to Beale.

9th RW, Detachment 2 was activated at Osan AB on 1 July 1976 (replacing OL-OA, 9 SRW) and was redesignated Detachment 2, 9th Wing on 19 September 1991. The "Blackcat" nickname was started by Detachment H, Central Intelligence Agency activated in Taiwan from 1960-1974. Detachment H flyers would frequent an establishment called the "Blackcat" in a nearby town. The name "Blackcat" soon became synonymous with the members of the U-2 Detachment. Lieutenant Colonel David G. Young established the "Blackcat" as OL-OA's nickname in 1976. The nickname transferred to Detachment 2 and is now used by the 5th Reconnaissance Squadron at Osan.

Detachment 4 of the 9th SRW was established in April 1979 with a single U-2R employed in Europe on Senior Ruby Elint missions, and continued to support the periodic SR-71 visits. The English government stipulated that the early deployments should be no longer than 20 days and required UK permission for each sortie. The deployments gradually became more frequent and the aircraft stayed longer. In March 1979 Mildenhall was the operating location for a Yemen reconnaissance flight. In 1981 Mildenhall was used for monitoring the situation in Poland. By late 1982 the demands in Europe resulted in a second aircraft arriving at Mildenhall, while in July 1983 the base played host to the first operational test of an ASARS-equipped aircraft. By this time Det 4 had ceased U-2R operations, which had been transferred to the newly-established 17th Reconnaissance Wing with TR-1s at Alconbury. Finally, on 5 April 1984, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher announced that Det 4 would be a permanent SR-71 detachment with two aircraft, with some UK control remaining for the more sensitive sorties. The two-aircraft detachment ceased operations on 22 November 1989, and the last aircraft left for Beale on 18 January 1990.

9th Wing, Detachment 4 was activated at Howard AFB, Panama in 1991 and was inactivated in 1993. SERPIENTES DEL SOL (Translation= Serpents Of The Sun)

Operating Location OLYMPIC FLAME (OL-OF) was activated at Patrick AFB, Florida on 29 January 1982 and inactivated 1 January 1983 (replaced by Detachment 5, 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing).

OL-UK moved from RAF Alconbury, United Kingdom to RAF Fairford, United Kingdom on 15 March 1995. From 2-4 January 1996, OL-UK's U-2s were moved to Istres AB, France and the unit was inactivated.

Det 2, Song Tansi, South Korea

Det 3, Hellenikon, Greece

Det 4, RAF Mildenhall, England

Det 5, Patrick AFB, FL

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 13 Nov 2010

Updated: 9 Mar 2014

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.