

5 RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

5 Aero Squadron organized, 5 May 1917
Redesignated Squadron A, Souther Field, GA, 15 Jul 1918
Demobilized, 11 Nov 1918

5 Aero Squadron organized, 24 Oct 1919
Redesignated 5 Squadron (Observation), 14 Mar 1921
Redesignated 5 Observation Squadron, 25 Jan 1923

Squadron A, Souther Field, GA and 5 Observation Squadron consolidated, 1924

Redesignated 5 Bombardment Squadron, 1 Mar 1935
Redesignated 5 Bombardment Squadron (Medium), 6 Dec 1939
Redesignated 5 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 20 Nov 1940
Redesignated 5 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 28 Mar 1944
Inactivated, 20 Oct 1948
Redesignated 5 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Photographic and activated, 1 May 1949
Redesignated 5 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 1 Apr 1950
Redesignated 5 Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 2 Oct 1950
Discontinued, and inactivated, 25 Jun 1966
Redesignated 5 Strategic Reconnaissance Training Squadron, 12 Feb 1986
Activated, 1 Jul 1986
Inactivated, 30 Jun 1990
Redesignated 5 Reconnaissance Squadron, 21 Sep 1994

Activated, 1 Oct 1994

STATIONS

San Antonio, TX, 5 May 1917
Souther Field, GA, 1 May-11 Nov 1918
Hazelhurst Field, NY, 24 Oct 1919
Mitchel Field, NY, Nov 1919 (operated from Langley Field, VA, 6 May-26 Oct 1921)
Rio Hato, Panama, 13 Nov 1940
Beane Field, St Lucia, 28 Sep 1941
Orlando AB, FL, 31 Oct 1942
Pinecastle AAFld, FL, 15 Apr 1943
Brooksville AAFld, FL, 7 Jan 1944
Pinecastle AAFld, FL, 13 Feb 1944
Dalhart AAFld, TX, 9 Mar 1944
McCook AAFld, KS, 19 May-18 Nov 1944
North Field, Tinian, 28 Dec 1944-6 Mar 1946
Clark Field, Luzon, 14 Mar 1946
Harmon Field, Guam, 9 Jun 1947-20 Oct 1948
Fairfield-Suisun AFB, CA, 1 May 1949
Mountain Home AFB, ID, 1 May 1953-25 Jun 1966
Beale AFB, CA, 1 Jul 1986-30 Jun 1990
Osan AB, South Korea, 1 Oct 1994

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Fairford RAF Station, England, 23 May-8 Jul 1955

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 1917-1918
3 Observation Group (attached to Eastern Department) 24 Oct 1919
Eastern Department, 24 Mar 1920
Second Corps Area, 20 Aug 1920
9 Observation Group, 1 Aug 1922
1 Division, Air Service (later, 1 Division, Air Corps; 1 Division, Aviation), 30 Jun 1923
9 Observation (later, 9 Bombardment) Group, 15 Feb 1929-20 Oct 1948
9 Strategic Reconnaissance (later, 9 Bombardment) Group, 1 May 1949
9 Bombardment (later, 9 Strategic Aerospace) Wing, 16 Jun 1952-25 Jun 1966
9 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Jul 1986-30 Jun 1990
9 Operations Group, 1 Oct 1994

ATTACHMENTS

1 Provisional Air Brigade for operations, 6 May-3 Oct 1921
9 Observation Group, 30 Jun 1923-15 Feb 1929
9 Bombardment Wing, 10 Feb 1951-15 Jun 1952

WEAPON SYSTEMS

JN-4

DH-4

O-2

O-1

O-11

O-25

O-31

Y10-35

O-39

A-3

B-6,

C-8

B-10, 1936-1938

B-18, 1938-1942

B-24, 1942-1943

B-25, 1943

B-26, 1943- 1944

B-17, 1944

B-29, 1944-1947

B/RB-17, 1949-1950

RB-29, 1949- 1950

B-29, 1949-1954

B-47, 1954-1966

U-2/TR-1, 1986-1990

SR-71, 1986-1990

T-38, 1986-1990

COMMANDERS

Maj Henry Abbey, Jr., Dec 1920

Cpt Ira C. Eaker, 23 Jan 1922

1LT Samuel M. Connell, 19 Sep 1923

Cpt Harold M. McClelland, 1 Oct 1924

1LT Samuel M. Connell, 5 Sep 1925

1LT Marion L. Elliott, 21 Jul 1926

1LT Charles P. Prime, 7 Jan 1927

Cpt Walcott P. Hayes, 22 Mar 1928

1LT Byron E. Gates, 28 Jun 1928

Cpt Edwin J. House, 23 Aug 1929

Cpt Ernest E. Harmon, 3 Oct 30

Cpt John G. Colgen, 9 Sep 32

Cpt Willis R. Taylor, 23 Dec 33

Cpt Leo F. Post, 18 Feb 34

Cpt Willis R. Taylor, 1 Jul 34

Cpt Edward W. Raley, 15 Sep 34
Maj Francis B. Valentine, 18 Jul 36
LTC Ross F. Cole, 31 Aug 38
Maj Francis B. Valentine, May 40
Cpt Charles F. Born, Aug 40-Aug 41
Maj Earl C. Trees, 28 Nov 1942
LTC Rolle E. Stone Jr., 10 Feb 1943
LTC Malvern H. W. Brown, 2 Jun 1944-unknown
Maj Homer W. Morris, 15 Mar 1946
Cpt Orien T. Clark, 13 Jul 1946
Cpt Richard O. Giles, 16 Sep 1946
Maj Charles G. Allen, 14 Nov 1946
Cpt John R. McPherson, 16 Feb 1947
Cpt William G. Broach Jr., 13 Mar 1947
None (unmanned), 1 Apr 1947-20 Oct 1948
Maj John M. Clayton, 1 May 1949
LTC Walter Y. Lucas, 23 Aug 1949
LTC Raymond E. Holsey, 18 Sep 1951
LTC Edward A. Vivian, 2 Sep 1953
LTC Charles E. Bailey, 1 Mar 1956
LTC Jack D. Templin, Apr 1958
LTC Henry W. Ritter, 10 Jul 1961
LTC Edward T. Solomon, Mar 1963
LTC Dean W. Willson, Apr 1965-25 Jun 1966
LTC Charles W. Hinkle, 1 Jul 1986
LTC Michael G. Danielle, 9 May 1988
LTC Bruce R. Cucuel, 31 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1990
LTC Scott D. Mefford, 1 Oct 1994
LTC Charles P. Wilson II, 28 Jun 1995
LTC John B. Feda, 8 Jul 1996
LTC Peter J. Szyjka, 24 Jul 1997
LTC Gregory D. Augst, 20 Jul 1998
LTC William Schlecht, 19 Jul 1999
LTC Gregory A. Kern, 13 Jul 2000
LTC Daniel F. Baltrusaitis, 2 Jul 2001
LTC Jon L. Engle, 2 Jul 2002
LTC Jeffrey W. Stout, 27 Jun 2003
LTC Charles D. Cunningham, 27 Jul 2004

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Antisubmarine, American Theater
Air Offensive, Japan
Eastern Mandates
Western Pacific

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Kawasaki, Japan, 15/16 Apr 1945
Japan, 13-28 May 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jan 1957-31 Jan 1958
1 Jul 1986-30 Jun 1987
1 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1990
1 Jul 1994-30 Jun 1995
1 Jun 1998-31 May 2000
1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004

EMBLEM







5 Reconnaissance Squadron



5 Reconnaissance Squadron emblem: On a Blue disc piped with Yellow a Yellow increscent moon and five stars. On the lower horn of the crescent a Black and White owl holding in his right claw a Silver telescope. (Approved, 27 May 1924)

MOTTO

OPEATIONS

Flying training unit, 1917-1918.

Organized on 24 October 1919 at Hazelhurst Field, NY, and assigned to the 3rd Observation Group. Transferred in November 1919 to Mitchel Field, NY. Attached on 20 August 1920 to the Second Corps Area.

Designated 3 October 1921 as an element of the 1st Division Air Service.

Demonstrations of effectiveness of aerial bombardment on warships, Jun-Sep 1921.

Participated in flood relief duty in the vicinity of Waterbury, Winooski, and Montpelier, VT, 5-21 November 1927. Participated in the operations of the Mechanized Force at Camp George G. Meade, MD, in 1928 and 1931.



Ground elements departed from the port of New York 5 November 1940 on the U.S.A.T. Chateau Thierry and arrived 12 November 1940 at Rio Hato Airfield in Panama.

Aircraft and crews departed Mitchel Field on 17 November 1940 for Rio Hato and arrived several days later.

Antisubmarine patrols, and reconnaissance of Vichy French fleet at Martinique, Dec 1941-Oct 1942.

Trained cadres for bombardment units, Nov 1942-Feb 1944.

Combat in Western Pacific, 25 Jan-15 Aug 1945.

Unmanned, Apr 1947-20 Oct 1948.

On Dec. 14, 1960, Detachment H was created in Taiwan. The "Blackcat" nickname associated with today's 5 Reconnaissance Squadron was started by Det. H. Det. 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. The original Blackcat patch was designed in 1961 by LTC Whei-Shen Chen. Colonel Chen was shot down on Sept. 1, 1962.

Maintained alert during Cuban missile crisis, Oct 1962.

In February 1976, personnel from the 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., and the 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron at operating location UA, U-Tapao Airfield, Thailand, deployed to Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, to establish a 90 day test program. The first temporary duty commander was Col. L. M. Kidder, who was replaced in late March 1976 by LTC R.B. Birkett. In April of that year the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed the 99th SRS to move from U-Tapao to Osan. In mid-May 1976, LTC David G. Young arrived with the last contingent from U-Tapao and replaced Colonel Birkett. Shortly after his arrival, Colonel Young established the "Blackcat" as the Operating Location nickname. In July 1976, Lt. Col Jerry C. Sinclair arrived as the first permanent change of station commander. In September 1976, the 100th SRW was inactivated and OL-AO became Detachment 2 of the 9th SRW of Beale AFB, Calif.

LTC William R. Horton served as the Det. 2 Commander from 1977 to 1978. "Oscar," the detachment mascot (a black cat), was given to all Blackcats as a gift from Colonel Horton. Oscar had remained a true friend and a faithful supporter to all personnel since his arrival. Oscar went missing in action in 1990 and Oscar Jr., who was acquired in 1985, assumed the duties of squadron mascot. He has successfully carried out all traditional mascot responsibilities, and has earned a reputation throughout the U-2 world.

Reconnaissance pilot training, 1986-1990.

Cpt Marty McGregor gave the ultimate sacrifice on Jan. 15, 1992, when his U-2 aircraft crashed into the East Sea.

On Oct. 1, 1994, Det. 2 inactivated and the Blackcats received their current designation, 5 Reconnaissance Squadron. The 5 RS is a subordinate unit to the 9th Operations Group, 9th Reconnaissance Wing, at Beale AFB, California. The 5 RS is an Air Combat Command unit at a forward operating location tasked with a real-world reconnaissance mission reportable to the U.S. Forces Korea, Pacific Command commander-in-chief, ACC commander, along with other national authorities through the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There are approximately 200 men and women assigned to the 5 RS. U-2 pilots spend an average of 140-180 days per year TDY at different U-2 detachments world-wide.

In 1995 the 5 RS was the first unit to have the new U-2S fully operational and on Oct. 20, 1995, LTC Charles P. Wilson II flew the first ever U-2S operational mission. Also, in 1995 the U-2 flew the 2000th Advanced Synthetic Aperture RADAR System mission.

On 26 January 2003, at 1459 local (0559 Zulu), a U-2S, S/N 80-1095, crashed 5.65 miles west of

Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea. The U-2S, assigned to the 5 Reconnaissance Squadron (geographically separated unit located at Osan Air Base, ROK), 9th Reconnaissance Wing, Beale Air Force Base, California, was conducting a routine high altitude mission.

The pilot of the U-2S ejected safely, sustaining injuries to his back. The aircraft impacted the ground at an excavation site, resulting in injuries to three Korean nationals. Additionally, a house and two heavy equipment machines were completely destroyed, and a gas station, pharmaceutical company building, and several vehicles were damaged.

One hour prior to impact, at approximately 60,000 feet MSL, the pilot noticed a loud “chug” from the engine, followed by rapid engine deceleration and moderate airframe vibrations, resulting in a non-recoverable engine failure. The pilot glided the aircraft to the vicinity of Osan Air Base in an attempt to perform a flameout landing, entering solid instrument meteorological conditions at approximately 22,000 feet MSL.

Following an unsuccessful airstart attempt, the pilot noticed a failure of the standby airspeed indicator, accompanied by a loss of aircraft responsiveness, and immediately initiated an ejection. The aircraft was completely destroyed on impact. The pilot was promptly and safely rescued by members of the 33d Rescue Squadron. There is clear and convincing evidence the primary cause of the mishap was catastrophic failure of the number four bearing, resulting in complete engine failure.

Due to damage sustained at impact, it is impossible to determine the root cause of the bearing failure; however, there is no substantial evidence to indicate impending bearing failure should have been noticed prior to the mishap flight. Although the pilot was able to glide the aircraft to a position that would have facilitated a flameout landing, there is clear and convincing evidence his airspeed indicator failed as a result of icing conditions, which made it impossible to safely determine aircraft flight parameters.

There is substantial evidence the continuously deteriorating weather conditions significantly hampered the pilot’s ability to perform a flameout landing. There is also substantial evidence that the battery system was unable to provide necessary power to overcome icing conditions at the time of the failure.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 27 May 2023

Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.