

17 ATTACK SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

17 Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron constituted, 14 Jul 1942
Activated, 23 Jul 1942
Redesignated 17 Photographic Squadron (Light), 6 Feb 1943
Redesignated 17 Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, 13 Nov 1943
Inactivated, 19 Apr 1946
Redesignated 17 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Photo-Jet, 1 Apr 1951
Activated, 2 Apr 1951
Redesignated 17 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 1 Oct 1966
Inactivated, 1 Jan 1979
Redesignated 17 Reconnaissance Squadron, 4 Mar 2002
Activated, 8 Mar 2002
Redesignated 17 Attack Squadron

STATIONS

Colorado Springs AAB, CO, 23 Jul-24 Oct 1942
Camp Deptha, Noumea, New Caledonia, 2 Dec 1942
Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, 16 Jan 1943 (detachments operated from Munda, New Georgia,
13 Oct 1943-31 Jan 1944, 9 Mar-1 Apr 1944; Bougainville, 11 Dec 1943-Feb 1945;
Noemfoor, 8-23 Oct 1944; Sansapor, New Guinea, 13 Oct-4 Nov 1944)

Wama Airfield, Morotai Island, 4 Nov 1944 (detachment operated from Dulag, Leyte, 9 Feb Oct 1945)
Puerto Princesa, Palawan, 11 May 1945-19 Apr 1946
Shaw AFB, SC, 2 Apr 1951-10 May 1959
Laon AB, France, 10 May 1959
RAF Upper Heyford, England, Sep 1966
Zweibrucken AB, Germany, 12 Jan 1970-1 Jan 1979
Indian Springs AFAF, NV, 8 Mar 2002

ASSIGNMENTS

4 Photographic (later, 4 Photographic Reconnaissance and Mapping; 4 Photographic; 4 Reconnaissance) Group, 23 Jul 1942
Thirteenth Air Force; 5 Dec 1945
XIII Fighter Command, 10 Dec 1945
85 Fighter Wing; 1 Feb 1946
Pacific Air Command, U. S. Army, 1-19 Apr 1946
363 Tactical Reconnaissance Group; 2 Apr 1951
432 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 8 Feb 1958
66 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 10 May 1959
86 Tactical Fighter Wing, 12 Jan 1970
26 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 31 Jan 1973-1 Jan 1979
57 Operations Group, 8 Mar 2002

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-38/F-5, 1942-1946
B-25, 1944-1946
F-6, 1946
RF-80, 1951-1955
RF-84, 1954-1958
RF-101, 1957-1969
RF-4C, 1969-1978

COMMANDERS

Maj John E. Murray, Feb 1943
Capt Harris C. Andrews, 28 Jul 1943
Capt Albert C. Mathias, 19 Nov 1943
Capt Homer A. Baker Jr., 14 Mar 1944
Capt Walter M. Bartman, 23 May 1944
Capt William A. Stanton, 10 Jan 1945
Capt Otto C. Leipski, 12 Mar 1945
Capt Eston E. Balsiger, 28 Aug 1945
Maj James M. Campbell, Nov 1945
Maj Jesse H. Lochausen, 2 Dec 1945
Capt Keith P. Eubanks, 24 Dec 1945

1st Lt Robert V. Blucher, 14 Jan 1946
None (not manned), 1-19 Apr 1946
Maj Edward H. Taylor, 2 Apr 1951
Maj Charles E. Scott Jr., 27 Aug 1951
Maj Clyde B. East, 12 Oct 1951
Capt James C. Martin, 3 Mar 1952
Capt William W. Brothers Jr., 6 Mar 1952
Capt John B. Perry, 14 Mar 1952
Capt William W. Brothers Jr., 21 Mar 1952
Maj Clyde B. East, Unkn
Lt Col George W. Holmquist, Unkn
Capt Ralph Findlay, 24 Apr 1955
Lt Col Harold M. Miller, 27 Apr 1955
Maj Bruce B. Fish, 7 Mar 1956
Capt Howard M. Davis, 1 Jul 1956
Lt Col William H. Nelson, 13 Feb 1957
Maj Thomas E. Anton, 17 Jul 1957
Lt Col William H. Laseter, 14 Nov 1958
Maj Hiawatha Mohawk, 9 Jan 1961
Lt Col William H. Laseter, 1961
Maj Thomas D. Alexander, Jan 1962
Col William H. Hathaway Jr., 6 Mar 1963
Maj Lovic P. Hodnette Jr., 2 Aug 1965
Lt Col Paul B. Nelson, Jun 1968
Lt Col Arthur R. Gould, 25 Aug 1969
Lt Col David A. Nelson, 1 Aug 1970
Lt Col Clarence R. Autery, 25 Aug 1972
Lt Col Larry D. Krull, 11 Jun 1973
Lt Col Gary D. Cool, 17 Jun 1975
Lt Col Richard H. Slye, 22 Apr 1977-1 Jan 1979

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Guadalcanal
New Guinea
Northern Solomons
Bismarck Archipelago
Western Pacific
Leyte
Luzon
Southern Philippines

Central Burma
China Offensive
Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jan-31 Dec 1962

1 Jul 1973-31 May 1975

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII)

EMBLEM



17 Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron



Approved, 28 Feb 1957, newest rendition approved, 4 Jan 2008

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Combat in South, Southwest, and Western Pacific, 5 Feb 1943-13 Aug 1945.



Primarily replacement training, 1952-1959.

1959 was heralded by the not unexpected news that the 302nd and 303rd TRS were to be deactivated and their places in the 66th taken by the 17th and 18th TRS from Shaw AFB. These two units arrived at Laon in May, 1959, with the 302nd and 303rd officially deactivated on the 20th June. All the RF-84s were ferried to the IRAN facility at Naples for eventual distribution to NATO forces. Many of the pilots of both these squadrons were transferred to the new Voodoo squadrons; converting at Nouasseur. The passage of the 17th from the USA, code named *Fox Able 89* was a considerable contrast to the long and time consuming route taken by the RF-80s and RB-26s when the 66th had originally deployed in 1953. The RF-101s flew direct from Shaw refuelling en route. There was a minor hiccup when one flight of eight aircraft was prevented from making a refueling rendezvous because of a thunderstorm and had to divert to Bermuda.

The 17th and 18th squadrons had temporarily detached to Toul when the runway at Laon was closed for resurfacing. The codename for this detachment was *Dim View*. Whether this somewhat unusual name reflected the attitude of the personnel to the prospect of spending a long time at Toul.

The 17th and 18th TRS' flew 36 Voodoos to RAF Upper Heyford on September 11th 1966 and soon settled into their routine. Missions from Upper Heyford were very different from those out of Laon. Indeed the pilots had to fly further in order to exercise efficiently. Controls for missions over Europe came under the jurisdiction of Heathrow, and subsequently, Southern radar. Most practice missions not flown over the UK but were flown over Germany and the Low Countries; the French being characteristically uncooperative in allowing low level training and imposing many alarming restrictions on entry into their airspace.

In April 1970, lightning twice struck an RF-4C assigned to the 17th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, but through the “outstanding airmanship and professionalism” of the crew, a multi-million dollar aircraft was saved. Capt. Robin M. Lake, aircraft commander, and 1st Lt. Benny C. Watkins, navigator, were the crewmen. Following is the account of the incident as related by Lieutenant Watkins: “It all started with a routine mission out of Zweibrucken AB. After takeoff and on climb out, the aircraft was struck by lightning on the right side of the nose. “This strike rendered the navigation system and communication system between Robin and myself inoperative. We immediately actuated the standby attitude system and emergency generator and continued the climb in order to get above the clouds. “About this time, another RF-4C of the squadron joined us to look for damage. Only a slight discoloration was seen on our radome. Even so, we aborted the mission and requested an immediate recovery at Zweibrucken AB. “On the approach, a second and much more violent strike occurred which caused the aircraft to go into a 91-degree bank. We were able to right the plane and begin a climb by using the afterburner and the standby attitude system. If I hadn’t had a great deal of confidence in Robin’s ability, I think I might have left the plane at that point “On surveying the damage inside the cockpit, we noted that the airspeed indicator and angle of attack system were both out. The altimeter and vertical velocity indicators were fluctuating wildly and were useless. On reaching VFR conditions above the clouds, we made a ‘Mayday’ call and were again joined by the other 17th TRS aircraft. At that time, we were told that part of the nose and the top of the tail were missing. “The 86th (TFW) Command Post advised us to recover at Ramstein since the weather was better there. Ramstein was then called and told to prepare for a barrier engagement. We were going to make a ‘no-flap’ approach at a pretty high airspeed since a lot of buffeting and shaking were felt at normal landing speeds. We flew this approach on the wing of the other aircraft that had joined us earlier.” A successful landing and barrier engagement were made at Ramstein and the aircraft was saved. Damage included a shattered radome; all but one of the sensor windows were blown out; a sizeable portion of the tail was missing; and there was some structural damage to the tail fin. Upon landing, Captain Lake and Lieutenant Watkins were met and congratulated by Maj. Gen. Royal N Baker 17th Air Force commander, who praised them for a job well done.

The 17th Reconnaissance Squadron was activated March 8, 2002, because of increased mission requirements. The 17th RS was the first armed Predator squadron in the Air Force. Their mission is to provide theater commanders with deployable, long-endurance, near-real-time reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition to close the sensor-to-shooter timeline. When armed with Hellfire missiles, the unit can independently strike targets without risk to aircrew.

USAF will move all Predator UAV operational and support functions to Indian Springs AFAF. NV beginning late next year, according to Inside the Air Force. The 15th and 17th Reconnaissance Squadrons and the Predator Operations Center are operating out of Nellis AFB, NV because Indian Springs lacked the communications capability to handle ongoing combat operations. USAF plans to spend up to \$200 million to improve the communications infrastructure at Indian Springs, now host to the UAV Battlelab, which moved there from Eglin AFB, Fla. Officials said space was a concern at Nellis, which conducts advanced training, tactics development, and

weapons testing. 2007

CREECH AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. (AFNS) -- For the past 75 years, the 17th Attack Squadron have played an integral part in the defense of the nation by providing combatant commanders with reconnaissance capabilities, and more recently, with precision attack capabilities.

On July 23, 1942, in the midst of World War II, the 17th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron activated, and was tasked with flying the P-38 Lightning and B-25 Mitchell over the Pacific Theater, to observe and map enemy movements. After the war, the 17th PRS transitioned to aircraft such as the RF-84 Thunderflash, the RF-101 Voodoo, and the RF-80 Shooting Star. In 1958, the squadron realigned under the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, now known as the 432nd Wing.

Shortly after being assigned to the 432nd TRW, the squadron moved to France and then to England before being inactivated in 1979. In March of 2002 the 17th ATKS reactivated and began a new mission flying newly armed MQ-1 Predators in support of the fight against Al Qaeda in response to the attacks on the morning of September 11, 2001. "One of the cornerstone beliefs of our squadron is that today's date is 12 September 2001, which reminds us to approach each day and each mission with the same passion and purpose that drove the formation of our squadron in the aftermath of Al Qaeda's attacks on the homeland," said Lt. Col. John, the 17th ATKS commander.

This year, the 17th ATKS celebrates its 75th anniversary, and currently flies the MQ-9 Reaper. "Throughout our 75-year history, as we transitioned airframes and designations, the common thread weaving through our heritage has always been reconnaissance," said John. "Today, our squadron achieves national security objectives through worldwide dominant persistent attack and reconnaissance operations." With the addition of the MQ-9 Reaper in 2006, the 17th ATKS became the Air Force's first weaponized and dual-qualified remotely piloted aircraft squadron. By extension, the 17th ATKS has also been one of the first combat squadrons to receive and employ emerging technologies by industry partners.

"Along these lines, it's important to stress that while technology is a critical enabler, technology is not the decisive key to success," John said. "The decisive key to success is the innovation of our Airmen. Our Airmen are trusted and empowered to develop the tactics, techniques and procedures required to operationalize these technologies in training, prove them in combat, then share what we've developed and learned throughout the entire RPA community and the joint force." John attributes the effects and success of his Airmen to their understanding of the critical nature of their work, how they develop leaders within the squadron and their genuine belief in driving positive change through the RPA evolution.

"It's an absolute honor of a lifetime to lead and serve alongside the men and women of the 17th Attack Squadron," John said. "They are America's finest sons and daughters and it's a humbling experience to watch our airmen selflessly sacrifice, both personally and professionally, as they achieve our enduring end state of defending freedom and protecting the homeland." 2017

RF-101C attrition

56-0209 - Crashed, landing/weather, on Phalsbourg AB, France, 22 JAN 58, no fatalities.

56-0213 - Crashed, control loss, on Torrejon AB, Spain, 23 DEC 58, no fatalities.

56-0062 - Crashed, gear failure, 14nm SE of Nouasseur AB, Morocco, 28 FEB 59, no fatalities, ejected.

56-0074 - Crashed, on take-off, on Phalsbourg AB, France, 13 APR 59, 1 fatality.

56-0208 - Crashed, pitch-up, 9nm SE of Reims, France, 4 NOV 59, no fatalities, ejected.

56-0073 - Crashed, weather/go-around, on Phalsbourg AB, France, 10 MAR 60, no fatalities, ejected.

56-0076 - Crashed, collision on night take-off, on Toul AB, France, 22 MAY 60, 1 fatality.

56-0077 - Crashed, collision on night take-off, on Toul AB, France, 22 MAY 60, 1 fatality.

56-0082 - Crashed, GCA/weather, 13nm S of Phalsbourg AB, France, 22 SEP 60, no fatalities, ejected.

56-0103 - Crashed, mid-air/weather, 2nm NW of Reuilly, France, 29 APR 61 , no fatalities, ejected.

56-0118 - Crashed, mid-air/weather, 2nm NW of Reuilly, France, 29 APR 61 , no fatalities, ejected.

56-0111 - Crashed, GCA/weather, 1.5nm E of Landouzy la Cour, France, 10 DEC 61, 1 fatality.

56-0205 - Crashed, cause unknown, at Douzillac (Dordogne), France, 8 FEB 62, 4 fatalities.

56-0100 - Crashed, hit mountain in weather, 2.2nm E-SE of Treminis, France, 25 APR 63, 1 fatality.

56-0113 - Crashed, cockpit fire, 18nm SE of Toul AB, France, 17 APR 64, no fatalities, ejected.

56-0200 - Crashed, gyro failure/weather, 10nm N of Schladern, W. Germany, 14 MAY 64, no fatalities, ejected.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit yearbook. *Shaw AFB, SC, 1956*. Army and Navy Publishing Company of Louisiana. Baton Rouge, LA. 1956.