

71st OPERATIONS GROUP



MISSION

The 71 Operations Group provided initial flight training, and follow-on training for fighter, bomber and airlift/tanker aircraft.

LINEAGE

71 Observation Group established, 21 Aug 1941
Activated, 1 Oct 1941
Redesignated 71 Reconnaissance Group, 2 Apr 1943
Redesignated 71 Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 10 May 1944
Redesignated 71 Reconnaissance Group, 20 May 1945
Inactivated, 1 Feb 1946
Activated, 28 Feb 1947
Redesignated 71 Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 18 Aug 1948
Inactivated, 1 Apr 1949
Redesignated 71 Operations Group, 9 Dec 1991
Activated, 15 Dec 1991

STATIONS

Birmingham, Alabama, 1 Oct 1941
Salinas AAB, California, 21 Dec 1941
Rice AAB, California, 18 Aug 1942
Salinas AAB, California, 19 Oct 1942
Esler Field, Louisiana, 24 Jan 1943
Laurel AAFld, Mississippi, 31 Mar-24 Sep 1943
Port Moresby, New Guinea, 7 Nov 1943
Nadzab, New Guinea, 20 Jan 1944

Biak, 8 Aug 1944
Leyte, 5 Nov 1944
Binmaley, Luzon, 2 Feb 1945
Ie Shima, Aug 1945
Chofu, Japan, 6 Oct 1945
Tachikawa, Japan, 23 Oct 1945
Irumagawa, Japan, 15 Jan-1 Feb 1946
Itami, Japan, 28 Feb 1947
Johnson AAB, Japan, 15 Apr 1947
Yokota, Japan, 31 Oct 1947-1 Apr 1949
Vance AFB, Oklahoma, 15 Dec 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

II Air Support Command, 1 Oct 1941
IV Air Support (later, IV Ground Air Support) Command, Mar 1942
II Air Support Command (later, II Tactical Air Division), Aug 1942
Fifth Air Force, Nov 1943
5212 Photographic Reconnaissance Wing (Provisional), early 1944
91 Photographic Reconnaissance Wing, May 1944
Fifth Air Force, 10 Nov 1945-1 Feb 1946
315 Composite Wing, 28 Feb 1947
314 Composite Wing, 15 Apr 1947
71 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 18 Aug 1948-1 Apr 1949
71 Flying Training Wing, 15 Dec 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

O-38, 1941
O-46, 1941-1942
O-47, 1941-1942
O-49 1941-1942
O-52, 1941-1942
L-2, 1941-1942
A-20, 1942-1943
F-5, 1942-1946
P-38, 1942-1946
B-25, 1942-1946
L-5, 1943-1945
L-4, 1944
UC-61, 1944
UC-78, 1944-1945
F-6, 1945-1946
P-39, 1942-1944
P-40, 1942-1945
P-51, 1946-1947

F-15, 1947-1949
F-2, 1947-1948
F-2, 1947-1948
RF-61, 1949
T-37, 1991
T-38, 1991
T-1, 1994
T-6, 2006

COMMANDERS

Unkn, 1 Oct 1941-Feb 1942
Col William C. Sams, Feb 1942
Col Henry C. Thompson, Oct 1944-Oct 1945
Maj Jowell C. Wise, 12 Oct 1945
1st Lt Wilburn H. Ohle, 21 Oct 1945-unkn
Unkn, 28 Feb-2 Nov 1947
Lt Col William L. Gray, 3 Nov 1947
Lt Col Ben K. Armstrong, 23 Feb 1948
Lt Col Donald Lang, 25 Feb 1948
Col William E. Basye, 5 Jun 1948
Lt Col Ben K. Armstrong, 25 Mar-1 Apr 1949
Col Henry R. Yancey Jr., 16 Dec 1991
Col Milton E. Branch Jr., 30 Aug 1993
Col John B. Saxman, 13 Oct 1995
Col Dale C. Waters, 19 May 1997
Lt Col Joseph F. Barron, 15 May 1999
Col Charles G. Duke III, 23 Jul 1999
Col Walter D. Givhan, 23 Jul 2001
Col Keith W. Snyder, 15 Jul 2002
Col Kevin C. Kriner, 1 Jul 2004
Col Douglas Troyer, Jul 2006
Col Glen VanHerck, Sep 2008
Col Dean Lee, Jan 2010 (interim)

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Antisubmarine, American Theater
Air Offensive, Japan
New Guinea
Bismarck Archipelago

Leyte
Luzon
China Defensive
China Offensive
Western Pacific

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

[15 Dec 1991]-31 Mar 1992

1 Jul 1993-30 Jun 1995

1 Jul 1996-30 Jun 1997

1 Jul 1997-30 Jun 1998

1 Jul 1998-30 Jun 1999

1 Jul 1999-30 Jun 2000

1 Jul 2001-30 Jun 2003

1 Jul 2003-30 Jun 2004

1 Jul 2004-30 Jun 2005

1 Jul 2009-30 Jun 2010

1 Jul 2010-30 Jun 2011

1 Jul 2012-30 Jun 2014

1 Jul 2016-30 Jun 2018

1 Jul 2018-30 Jun 2020

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

EMBLEM



Group will use the wing emblem with group designation in the scroll.

Approved, 9 Mar 2022

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The 71st Observation Group trained with B-25, P-38, and P-40 aircraft beginning in Oct 1941. It moved to California in Dec 1941 and flew antisubmarine patrols off the west coast, then moved to the Southwest Pacific in the fall of 1943 and flew reconnaissance missions over New Britain, New Guinea, and the Admiralties from bases in New Guinea and Biak. It also flew combat missions against Japanese installations, airfields, and shipping, while supporting Allied ground forces on New Guinea and Biak. During that time, it flew courier missions, participated in rescue operations, and hauled passengers and cargo. From Nov 1944, the group flew reconnaissance missions over Luzon, supported ground forces, photographed and bombed airfields in Formosa and China, and attacked enemy shipping in the South China Sea. Maj William A. Shomo earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for shooting down seven enemy aircraft on 11 Jan 1945. From Ie Shima in Aug 1945, the 71st attacked transportation targets on Kyushu and flew reconnaissance missions over southern Japan.

From Feb 1947 to Aug 1948, the group, equipped with reconnaissance aircraft, flew aerial photographing missions over Japan and southern Korea.

In Dec 1991, the 71st Operations Group assumed operational control over the 71st Flying Training Wing's T-37, T-38, and later T-1A aircraft, and provided undergraduate pilot training for USAF, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and allied countries.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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