

## 38 RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



### MISSION

The 38 is responsible for worldwide reconnaissance operations in support of Air Force strategic, airlift, and tactical missions.

### LINEAGE

38 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 20 Nov 1940

Activated, 15 Jan 1941

Redesignated 38 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) (Twin Engine), 31 Jan 1942

Redesignated 38 Fighter Squadron (Twin Engine), 15 May 1942

Redesignated 38 Fighter Squadron, Twin Engine, 20 Aug 1943

Redesignated 38 Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 5 Sep 1944

Inactivated, 20 Aug 1946

Redesignated 38 Reconnaissance Squadron, Very Long Range, Mapping, 3 Feb 1947

Activated, 15 Mar 1947

Redesignated 38 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Photo-Mapping, 1 Jul 1949

Inactivated, 14 Oct 1949

Redesignated 38 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Medium, Photo, 27 Oct 1950

Activated, 1 Nov 1950

Redesignated 38 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Medium, 16 Jun 1952

Redesignated 38 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, 16 Aug 1966

Inactivated, 1 Apr 1970

Activated, 1 Apr 1979

Redesignated 38 Reconnaissance Squadron, 1 Sep 1991

### **STATIONS**

Hamilton Field, CA, 15 Jan 1941

Columbia Aprt, Portland, OR, 21 May 1941

McChord Field, WA, 14 Dec 1941

Paine Field, WA, 9 Sep 1942-20 Aug 1943

Nuthampstead, England, 16 Sep 1943

Wormingford, England, 16 Apr 1944

Kaufbeuren, Germany, 20 Jul 1945

Giebelstadt, Germany, 4 Apr-20 Aug 1946

Clark Field (later, AFB), Philippine Islands, 15 Mar 1947-6 May 1949

Fairfield-Suisan AFB, CA, 26 May 1949

Topeka (later, Forbes) AFB, KS, 1 Jun-14 Oct 1949

Barksdale AFB, LA, 1 Nov 1950

Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico, 6 Jan 1951

Forbes AFB, KS, 9 Oct 1952

Offutt AFB, NE, 16 Aug 1966-1 Apr 1970

Offutt AFB, NE, 1 Apr 1979

### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

RAF Bassingbourne, England, 15 Jan-28 May 1951

RAF Sculthorpe, England, 5 Apr-15 May 1952

RAF Upper Heyford, England, 15 May-9 Aug 1952

Benguerir AB, French Morocco, 30 May-6 Aug 1955

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

55 Pursuit (later, 55 Fighter) Group, 15 Jan 1941-20 Aug 1946

5 Reconnaissance Group, 15 Mar 1947

311 Air Division, 26 May 1949

55 Strategic Reconnaissance Group, 1 Jun-14 Oct 1949

55 Strategic Reconnaissance Group, 1 Nov 1950

55 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 16 Jun 1952-1 Apr 1970

55 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Apr 1979

55 Operations Group, 1 Sep 1991

### **ATTACHMENTS**

9 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 26 May-1 Jun 1949

91 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Nov 1950-6 Jan 1951

55 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 6 Jan 1951-15 Jun 1952

3 Air Division, 15 Jan-28 May 1951

7 Air Division, 5 Apr 1952-9 Aug 1952

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

P-43, 1941  
P-38, 1941-1944  
P-47, 1943  
P-51, 1944-1946  
P-80, 1946  
A-26, 1946  
B-17, 1947, 1949  
FB/RB-17, 1947-1949  
RC-45, 1948-1949  
C-46, 1948-1949  
C-47, 1948-1949  
B-29, 1949  
RB-50, 1950-1954  
RB-47, 1954-1965  
ERB-47 (later, EB-47), 1957-1965  
EC-135, 1966- 1970  
KC-135, 1966-1968  
RC-135, 1979

## **COMMANDERS**

1<sup>st</sup> Lt Kermit A. Tyler, 15 Jan 1941  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Loring F. Stetson Jr., 18 Feb 1941  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Leo F. Dusard Jr., 30 Apr 1941  
Maj Milton Joel, 3 Oct 1942  
Maj Mark K. Shipman, 29 Nov 1943  
Capt Joseph Myers, 10 Feb 1944  
Capt James H. Hancock, 22 Apr 1944  
Maj John D. Landers, 3 Jul 1944  
Capt Clayton L. Peterson, 12 Oct 1944  
Capt Donald M. Cummings, 23 May 1945  
Maj Clayton L. Peterson, 22 Jun 1945  
Capt Donald M. Cummings, 29 Sep 1945  
Maj Clayton L. Peterson, May-20 Aug 1946  
None (not manned), 15 Mar-21 Sep 1947  
Maj Riley N. Whittington, 22 Sep 1947  
Maj John M. Clayton Jr., 9 Dec 1948  
2nd Lt Jacques K. Tetrick, 1 Jun 1949  
Capt Moxie A. Shirley, 1 Jul 1949  
Maj Raymond T. Eakes, 11 Jul 1949  
Maj Lee R. Williams Jr, 26 Aug-14 Oct 1949  
Capt Bernard W. Zimmerman, 1 Nov 1950  
Maj Lee R. Williams Jr., 5 Nov 1950  
Lt Col Joel Q. Braddock, 18 Nov 1953

Lt Col Richard M. Ragland, 14 May 1954  
Maj Grady T. Stapp, 3 Jun 1954  
Maj William L. Reynolds, 10 Jun 1954  
Maj Dale Maluy, 15 Jul 1954  
Lt Col Richard M. Ragland, 12 Aug 1954  
Maj George M. Broutsas, Jun 1955  
Maj Keith Hanna, Jul 1956  
Lt Col George M. Broutsas, Dec 1956  
Maj Daniel Emrich, Jan 1957  
Maj Elmer Keppler, Apr 1957  
Lt Col Marion E. Minor Jr., Apr 1958  
Maj Robert S. Rich, Nov 1958  
Maj Alva R. Reid, Apr 1959  
Maj Warren R. Aylsworth, Sep 1960  
Maj Robert L. Smith, 2 Aug 1961  
Lt Col Douglas E. Hagie, 28 Sep 1962  
Lt Col Vernon N. Luber, Sep 1964  
Lt Col Douglas E. Hagie, Nov 1964  
1lt Bruce, Jul 1965  
Maj William Hilton, 16 Aug-Dec 1965  
Unkn, Jan-29 Aug 1966  
Lt Col Donald S. White, 29 Aug 1966  
Lt Col J. D. Murfield, 25 Sep 1967  
Lt Col Harry F. Baker, 1 Jun 1968  
Lt Col Billy L. Skipworth, Aug 1969-1 Apr 1970  
Lt Col Robert E. Jaecques, 1 Apr 1979  
Lt Col Howard Hamm Jr., 1 Apr 1981  
Lt Col John B. King, 15 Dec 1981  
Lt Col John R. Denny, 2 Apr 1984  
Lt Col Leo M. Cutliff Jr., 23 Jul 1986  
Lt Col Gary L. Stewart, 1 Dec 1987  
Lt Col Kenneth S. Turner, 8 Jan 1990  
Lt Col Collin F. Flynn, 30 Sep 1991  
Lt Col Joseph W. Siniscalchi, 27 Sep 1993  
Lt Col George W. Ballinger, 7 Jul 1995  
Lt Col Ronald Machoian, 5 Jul 2005  
Lt Col Michael Kelly, 24 Apr 2007  
Lt Col Ryan Rogers, May 2009  
Lt Col Paul Rehome, May 2011

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

World War II

American Theater

## **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

ETO, 3-13 Sep 1944

Germany, 19 Feb 1945

Meritorious Unit Awards

1 Jun 1999-31 May 2001

1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004

1 Jun 2004-31 May 2006

1 Jun 2006-31 May 2007

1 Jun 2007-31 May 2008

1 Jun 2008-31 May 2009

1 Jun 2009-31 May 2010

1 Jun 2012-31 May 2014

1 Jun 2014- 31 May 2015

1 Jun 2016-31 May 2017

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

Jul 1956–Nov 1957

1 Jul 1963–30 Jun 1964

1 Jul 1966–30 Jun 1967

1 Apr 1979–30 Jun 1980

1 Jul 1987–30 Jun 1989

1 Jul 1989–30 Jun 1991

1 Jul 1992-30 Jun 1994

1 Jul 1994-31 Jul 1995

1 Jun 1997-31 May 1999

1 Jun 1999-31 May 2001

1 Jun 2011-31 May 2012

1 Jun 2015-31 May 2016

## EMBLEM



38 Pursuit Squadron emblem





38 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron emblem: On a white shield bordered red, an Air Force golden yellow lightning bolt in bend sinister, surmounted by a dragon's head issuing from sinister base Air Force blue, tongue, mouth, fire from mouth, nostrils, nose markings and pupils of eyes of the second, talons and iris of eyes Air Force yellow eyeball and teeth white; heavy eyebrows, and facial outlines black, wearing earphones white, with black detail and head strap; carrying in his talons an electronic symbol of three black entwined orbits with three nuclei red, entwined around an electronic testing box white, instruments outlined black. On a blue scroll, DUCIMUS CETERI SEQUUN TUR in white. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The central figure is an upright dragon, breathing fire in defiance of anything that may stand in the way of the accomplishment of the mission. The bolt symbolizes the technological skill surrounding the dragon's mission. The electronics symbol indicates the mission is to provide air intelligence of enemy electronic missions throughout the full range of the usable spectrum. The motto is also indicative of the mission in that the squadron seek out enemy potential so that others may follow a safer path to their objective. (Approved, 24 May 1957)

38 Reconnaissance Squadron emblem: On an Azure disc a Red winged tomahawk outlined in Yellow, the head fastened to the handle by Black thongs. (Approved, 3 Mar 1942 and reinstated, 1994)

#### **MOTTO**

DUCIMUS CETERI SEQUUN TUR = We Lead, Others Follow  
FIGHTING HELLCATS

#### **OPERATIONS**

The 38 Reconnaissance Squadron was forged during the turbulent years of World War II. Formed on 15 January 1941 as a pursuit squadron, the Fighting Hellcats carried out bomber escort, strafing, dive-bombing, and photographic reconnaissance missions using P-38s and P-51s from Nuthampstead, England. The squadron received a Distinguished Unit Citation for destroying 37 and damaging 27 enemy aircraft during fighter sweeps from 3-13 September 1944. The 38 Reconnaissance Squadron flew its last combat mission on 21 April 1945 and was

deactivated on 20 August 1945.

The Fighting Hellcats were reactivated on 22 September 1947 as the 38 Reconnaissance Squadron, Very Long Range, Mapping. This began the true reconnaissance era for the squadron. Flying B-17, RB-17, RC-45, C-45, and C-47 aircraft, the squadron operated from Clark Field in the Philippine Islands, mapping the Borneo, Celebes Islands, and Formosa until its deactivation on 31 July 1949. The squadron resumed activities on 1 November 1950 as the 38 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Medium Range, Photo-mapping from Ramey Air Force Base, Puerto Rico.

1951 On January 4th, elements of the 343d Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron began arriving with RB-29s and immediate action was taken to convert the unit to RB-50s. Two days later, elements of the 38 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron began arriving at Ramey AFB from Barksdale AFB. On January 8th, air crews and ground support personnel for the 55th Air Refueling Squadron began arriving, joining the advance echelon already in place.

From January 15th to May 17th, the 38 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron was deployed at Bassingbourne RAF Station, England. All the 55th Wing's tactical units, and later, of the 72d Wing, were frequently deployed away from Ramey AFB. As a matter of fact, a reorganization of the 55th Wing on February 1st resulted in the commander of the 55th Air Base Group becoming the base commander. Previously, the senior officer had usually been the base commander.

1951

The earliest missions that have been revealed to date occurred between 2 April and 30 June 1952 when RB-50E 47-128 of the 38 SRS, 55th SRW and P2V-3W BuNo 124276 of VP-931 flew 11 missions from Shemya AFB to collect photo and signals intelligence over the Kamchatka and Chukotskiy Peninsulas. Three segments of the Peninsula were covered, each usually requiring two to three missions. The first segment ran along the east coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula from southwest of Petropavlovsk northeast to Ulka and on to Apuka. The next covered the coastal areas between Apuka to a point between Anadyr and Beringovskiy and across the Anadyrskiy Gulf to Provideniya on the Chukotskiy Peninsula. The final leg was from Provideniya north-northeast to Uelen, then west past Mys Shimidta to nearly Pevek, returning to friendly territory after crossing the Chukchi Sea south of Wrangel Island.

The second known over flight occurred about six weeks later from Thule AB, Greenland. RB-50E, 47-130 High and Lonesome, of the 38 SRS, 55th SRW at Ramey AFB deployed via Barksdale AFB and Goose AB, arriving at Thule on 4 September. It then flew a single 3,000-mile unrefueled sortie over the Franz Josef Land Archipelago on 17 September 1952. Once again, the goal was to determine if Tu-4s had been deployed to the group of 190 islands or if the Soviets had established early warning radar stations in the area. The mission was unusually hazardous for many reasons. First, it was flown at extremely high latitudes using a special form of polar dead reckoning and celestial navigation known as grid navigation. Second, it involved a 3,000-mile round-trip over the Arctic with no chance of rescue outside of Thule airspace in case of emergency landing or ditching. Finally, it required flight in hostile airspace of unknown threats



and in unknown or poorly forecast weather conditions over a relatively unmapped area.

RB-50E 47-132 on the ramp at Forbes AFB, KS, in 1953 when assigned to the 38 SRS, 55th SRW. It is finished in overall aluminum lacquer with insignia red Arctic markings. By this time all unit markings had been removed. Visible just below and aft of the national insignia is one of the trimetrogon camera ports.

Worldwide strategic reconnaissance including in support of crises in Cuba, Oct 1962; Grenada, Oct 1983; Libya, Apr 1986; Panama, Dec 1989; and Southwest Asia, Jan- Feb 1991.

The 38 Reconnaissance Squadron moved to Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska on 16 August 1966, and began operating both KC-135s and EC-135s conducting Strategic Air Command's Looking Glass mission. On 2 April 1970, the 38 transferred this mission to the 2nd Airborne Command and Control Squadron and was deactivated again.

On 1 July 1966, the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing based at Forbes AFB, KS, assumed responsibility for LOOKING GLASS from the 34th Air Refueling Squadron. Detachment 1 of the 55 SRW based at Offutt AFB, NE, conducted flight operations for the Glass. About a month later, the wing headquarters was moved to Offutt. At that time LOOKING GLASS operations were transferred to the 38 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, whose responsibility was to fly the five EC-135C's in support of the SAC ABNCP mission.

On 26 October 1979, the squadron joined the 343rd Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, flying RC-135 worldwide electronic and scientific reconnaissance missions from locations in Alaska, England, Japan, and Greece.

The 38 crew members earned the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for their support in the Grenada and Lebanon operations. The 38 also provided reconnaissance coverage for the 15 April 1986 retaliatory strike against terrorist training facilities in Libya and for United States operations in Panama. Throughout Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, the Hellcats flew over 900 sorties and 10,000 hours.

On 1 September 1991, the squadron was redesignated as the 38 Reconnaissance Squadron and aligned under the 55th Operations Group.

---

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

Created: 1 Jan 2025

Updated:

#### 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.