

49 INTELLIGENCE SQUADRON



MISSION

The mission of the 49 IS was providing fully integrated, mission ready cryptologic ISR Airmen to enable the global cryptologic ISR enterprise through deployed aircrew operations.

The 49 Intelligence Squadron directly supported Air Combat Command's 97th Intelligence Squadron. That support was provided by organizing, training, and equipping Air Force Reservists to fly as aircrew tasked to execute multi-platform, real-time intelligence support of tactical units, special operations forces (SOF) and national agencies. The Squadron also provided analytical support to ongoing RC-135 operations around the globe. When fully mobilized or activated, the Squadron was postured to provide a 10 percent increase in qualified RC-135 operators.

LINEAGE

111 Reconnaissance Technical Squadron constituted, 24 Jul 1951

Activated, 1 Aug 1951

Inactivated, 1 Jan 1953

Redesignated 49 Intelligence Squadron, 19 Mar 2014

Activated, 17 Apr 2014

STATIONS

Fairchild AFB, WA, 1 Aug 1951-1 Jan 1953

Offutt AFB, NE, 17 Apr 2014

ASSIGNMENTS

111 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Aug 1951-1 Jan 1953

655 Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group, 17 Apr 2014

COMMANDERS

Maj Michael S. Sieg, 21 June 2014

Maj Demian Vieira De Souza, 26 August 2016

Lt Col Jed S. Snarr, 5 March 2017

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, 1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2018

EMBLEM



On a disc Gules, between a contrail issuing from sinister chief to dexter base, splitting into two segments, one segment arcing to dexter chief, each segment ending at two mullets Or, in chief a sphere Azure, gridlined and fimbriated Argent surmounted by a lightning bolt arc towards a mullet of the second garnished of the first, in base a Pegasus volent downwards Sable, detailed of the first, its underside Argent (Silver Gray), all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached below the disc, an Old Glory Red scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed “49TH INTELLIGENCE SQ” in Yellow letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. The background signifies the unit’s first Classic Associate Unit affiliation with the 97th Intelligence Squadron. The colors mirror those of their active duty counterparts, demonstrating that the two complement one another and are closely related. A chess knight is the historical symbol

for USAF intelligence units. The flying Pegasus symbolizes the mission of intelligence collection while in flight. The Pegasus is in aggressive flight, expressing the fervor with which the Squadron approaches its flying mission. The splitting path of shooting stars represents the shared history of members of the new 49 IS and the 97 IS with the break in line denoting the period when the unit was deactivated; the path of the 49 IS diverges from its path, forging a bold new path. The globe and lightning bolt are legacy symbols conveying the power and reach of the unit's worldwide intelligence mission. (Approved, 30 Sep 2014)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The 49th Intelligence Squadron was activated 01 August 1951 at Fairchild AFB, Washington as the 111th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron until it was inactivated there 01 January 1953. On 19 March 2014, while still inactive, it was redesignated as the 49th Intelligence Squadron. It was then activated at Offutt AFB, Nebraska 17 April 2014 in a ceremony that was not held until June 2014. The 49 IS was activated to support the 97 IS which was a subordinate unit of the 55th Wing at Offutt AFB, NE.

After two years of hard work, the 49th Intelligence Squadron has achieved full operational capability. The 49th IS was activated in April 2014 with only 18 members and now stands as a fully functioning squadron with 72 assigned Reservists. "We would like to thank our active duty associate unit, the 97th Intelligence Squadron, the 55th Operations Group commander, Colonel Mohan Krishna, as well as Air Force Reserve Command's 655th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group leadership and the Air Force Reserve Command's A2 for their efforts on our behalf," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Michael Sieg, 49th IS commander. "Without their support we would not have had this successful stand-up."

The 49th is a classic associate unit supporting Offutt's own 97th IS and is subordinate to the 655th ISR Group at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. They are the only AFRC unit directly providing intelligence operators on the RC-135V/W Rivet Joint. By reaching FOC, the 49th has completed a long list of requirements setting up administrative programs, command and control duties, and ensuring 75 percent of their billets are filled with mission-ready Airmen. "Setting up every program associated with any Air Force squadron with only nine full-time personnel was a tremendous challenge," Sieg said. "We could not have reached FOC status without the hard work and dedication of our phenomenal part-time traditional reservists."

The 49th IS has a unique mission set that made their road to FOC a bit more challenging than some other units. Most airborne cryptologic operators take more than two years to train, which is longer than the time that was allotted for the unit to arrive at their mission capable status. "We have tried to take as many qualified airborne cryptologic linguists and intelligence operators coming off of active duty as possible," said U.S. Air Force Maj Kenneth Larson, 49th IS chief of training. "By bringing them into the Reserves we keep qualified, experienced Airmen available to our country while they pursue their career or education outside the military. The Air Force invested years in training these Airmen, and keeping them in the RC-135 community allows them to share their experience and knowledge with their active duty counterparts."

Larson added the 49th IS has opened the door to pipeline training for airborne cryptologic

operators. The first pipeline reserve Airborne Cryptologic linguists are still in training. Additionally, the 49th IS has had to adapt its training schedule. "Most Reserve and Guard squadrons have a rigid monthly drill schedule that does not leave a lot of room for individuals to change drill times," he said. "Because we work so closely with our active duty counterparts we've had to become extremely flexible for our members to schedule flying events and meet currency requirements." With the 49th achieving FOC, they are positioned better than ever to provide their unique skills to commanders around the world as needed.

"We are now more capable of providing volunteer support to our active duty partners with trained and qualified RC-135 aircrew and ground intelligence personnel. We are also positioned to meet required tasking in our deployment window that comes every couple of years," Sieg said. "Over the past two years we've had a number of volunteer Airmen deploy to Southwest Asia as well as supporting exercises and other real world contingencies around the world."

By the end of 2020, the 49th Intelligence Squadron had overcome and adapted to the challenges posed by COVID-19 restrictions in order to maintain their unit readiness and provide operational support to our CAU and other mission partners. On 15 March 2020, Offutt AFB, Nebraska went into Health Protection Condition (HPCON) Charlie due to rising COVID-19 cases in the local area and in response to local guidance, the 49 IS shifted to telework. However, through proactive planning the 49 IS was postured to have a fully virtual April drill, one of only two units within the 655 ISRW that was prepared to do so. Through quick adaption to Desktop Anywhere-the Air Force Reserve's telework platform - and their research into other approved virtual work environments, the 49 IS ensured requirements continued to be met.

Training rates increased to their highest rates since the unit was activated, and through coordination with the 55th Medical Group, the 49 IS conducted the first-ever hands-on Self Aid Buddy Care (SABC) training at the Wing, enabling the squadron to also sustain readiness training. One third of our members live out of town and we were able to use the DoD's risk analysis tool before every drill which enabled us to smartly drive Unit Training Assemblies (UTA) participation decisions resulting in zero members contracting COVID related to any work performed in status. Despite being able to meet some of the training requirements, travel and base restrictions prevented our members from traveling to Offutt AFB to fly and maintain positional currency and qualification. During the summer of quarantine twelve aircrew members lost their qualification and nearly all of our aviators lost currency.

The 49th Intelligence Squadron provided airborne collection, analysis, and reporting capabilities for National and combatant commander tasked Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance through their total force integration (TFI) partner the 97 IS at Offutt AFB, Nebraska which was part of the 55th Operations Group and the 50th Space Wing. It was one of only two squadrons within the 655 ISRG that had airborne operators as well as ground personnel. Their primary focus remained supporting their classic association unit (CAU) by providing mission ready cryptologic ISR Airmen that supported global RC-135 mission such as RTVET JOINT.

Additionally, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, the 49 IS continued to make significant operational impact within the 55th Wing. Notable success included four members completed

instructor upgrade, one completed Data Link Operator upgrade, another member completed Signals Search and Development Initial Qualification Training (IQT) (1A8X2) and Survival Training, one member completed Unit Training Manager (UTM) technical school, one member filled an European Command (EUCOM) global force management allocation plan (GFMAP) tasking requirement as an Airborne Mission Supervisor on the RC-135U COMBAT SENT.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

Created: 19 Feb 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.

