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## CURRENT COMMANDER



Colonel Keagan L. McLeese, Commander,  
9th Reconnaissance Wing, circa July 2024.

Beale retired to Rancho Tejon, part of 270,000 acres he had acquired near present-day Bakersfield, California after the Civil War. In 1870, he bought the Decatur House in Washington, D.C. After that he divided his time between his two homes. In 1876, President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Beale as Minister to Austria-Hungary, a post he held for a year. Grant also suggested Beale as U.S. Navy Secretary during President Chester A. Arthur's administration, but Arthur preferred someone else. Beale died at Decatur House on April 22, 1893.

Camp Beale opened near Marysville, California nearly fifty years later in October 1942. The 13th Armored Division found the new camp's 86,000 acres an excellent training site. The 81st Infantry Division and 96th Infantry Division also trained at Camp Beale. During World War II Camp Beale's population grew to more than 60,000 and included a prisoner-of-war encampment and 1,000 bed hospital. The camp served as a personnel replacement depot during the war and a separation center when hostilities ended. The War Department declared Camp Beale surplus and the War Assets Administration assumed custody in 1947.

The following year the War Assets Administration transferred the camp to the U.S. Air Force. The Air Force conducted bombardier and navigator training at Beale and in 1951 reactivated the Beale Bombing and Gunnery Range for aviation engineer training. General Order 77 redesignated the Beale Bombing and Gunnery Range as Beale Air Force Base on 27 November 1951. The base has changed commands several times, moving from Air Training Command, to Continental Air Command, then Aviation Engineer Force, and Strategic Air Command from 1956 until 1992. Beale AFB has been a installation assigned to Air Combat Command since 1 June 1992. The base currently covers nearly 23,000 acres remains the home for approximately 4,000 military personnel. Beale AFB has a unique name and mission, a historic past, and a promising future.

bring the federal government proof of California's gold. After the fourth journey he married Pennsylvania Representative Samuel Edwards' daughter Mary on 27 June 1849. After making lieutenant on 3 August 1850, Beale resigned from the U.S. Navy in May 1851.

He returned to California as a manager for W.H. Aspinwall and Commodore Stockton, who had acquired large properties in America's newest territory. On 3 March 1853, President Millard Fillmore appointed Beale Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada. Congress appropriated \$250,000 to improve conditions in Beale's district. He left Washington bound for California on 6 May 1853 with a party of thirteen others. Beale crossed southern Colorado and southern Utah assessing the feasibility of the route for a transcontinental railroad. He reached Los Angeles on 22 August. He retained his position as superintendent until 1856. California Governor John Bigler also appointed Beale brigadier general in the state militia to give him additional authority to negotiate peace treaties between the Native Americans and the U.S. Army.

President James Buchanan appointed Beale to survey a wagon road from Fort Defiance, New Mexico to the Colorado River, on the border between Arizona and California in 1857. The survey also incorporated an experiment first proposed by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis four years earlier. To satisfy part of his transportation needs, Beale took twenty-five camels, imported from Tunisia, as pack animals during this expedition and on another in 1858-59. Beale felt the camels performed well but they scared horses and mules, so the U.S. Army declined to continue the experiment. After Abraham Lincoln's inauguration in 1861, the president appointed Beale Surveyor General of California and Nevada. Beale asked Lincoln for a Union Army command but the president convinced him he could better serve the country by remaining as surveyor general and helping keep California in the Union.

**COMMANDER'S SHORT BIOGRAPHY**

Col. Keagan L. McLeese is the Installation Commander and the 9th Reconnaissance Wing (9 RW) Commander, Beale Air Force Base, CA. He is responsible for approximately 7,000 military, civilian, and contractor personnel, and the entire USAF high altitude reconnaissance fleet of U-2 Dragon Lady aircraft. The 9 RW is comprised of four groups and four overseas operating locations, executing worldwide missions in support of all six geographic combatant commanders.

Col. McLeese entered the USAF in 1998, is a 2002 graduate from the USAF Academy, CO, and has over 22 years of active service. He attended Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training at Moody AFB, GA. and Columbus AFB, MS, where he earned his wings in 2003. His career includes operational flying assignments in the F-15C Eagle as a four-ship flight lead at Elmendorf AFB, AK; F-22 Raptor as a flight evaluator and functional check pilot at Langley AFB, VA; T-38C Talon as chief flight evaluator at Randolph AFB, TX; and F-35A Lightning II as a flight evaluator at Luke AFB, AZ. He has commanded at the flight, squadron, and wing levels.

As an F-15C and F-22 pilot, Col. McLeese has deployed five times in support of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command theater security packages. He also led U.S. Joint air and space strategy development for the Middle East, including the war against the Islamic State of Iraq/Syria (ISIS) in Operations INHERENT RESOLVE, and RESOLUTE SUPPORT as the Strategy Plans Division Chief, 609th Air Operations Center, Al Udeid AB, Qatar. Col. McLeese is a command pilot with over 2,300 flying hours in the T-6, T-38, F-15C, F-22, F-35A, U-2, E-11, and KC-135. Prior to his current position, the colonel was the Commander, 378th Air Expeditionary Wing, Prince Sultan Air Base, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Deliver persistent integrated reconnaissance and combat power for our Nation.

**VISION**

Empowered Airmen driving decision advantage and lethal force, protecting our way of life.

**EMBLEM**

Emblem



OCP Emblem

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The shield, in black and green, represents the old colors of the Air Service parted by a wavy line representing the Rio Grande River. On the gold band are four black crosses representing four WWI offensives, Aisne-Marne, Champagne-Marne, Meusse-Argonne, and St. Mihiel, in which squadrons later assigned to the 9<sup>th</sup> Wing fought. The crest recalls the service in Mexico.

Beale AFB not only has a unique mission but the installation was also named for a unique individual. Edward Fitzgerald "Ned" Beale was born 4 February 1822 in the District of Columbia. His father George served as a paymaster in the U.S. Navy and won a Congressional Medal for Valor in the War of 1812. His mother Emily was the daughter of Commodore Thomas Truxtun. Emily solicited President Andrew Jackson to appoint Ned to the Naval School when he was an attending Georgetown College. Beale graduated from the Naval School in 1842.

After a promotion to acting sailing master, he sailed for California in October 1845 on the frigate "Congress" under Commodore Robert F. Stockton. Twenty days later, Commodore Stockton sent Beale back to Washington with important dispatches. He reached Washington in March 1846 after a long and roundabout voyage. Beale sailed for Panama after being promoted to the grade of master, and then overtook the US Naval Frigate "USS Congress" at Callao, Peru, in May 1846.

Hostilities with Mexico had already begun when the vessel arrived at Monterrey, Mexico on 20 July. After reaching San Diego, Stockton dispatched Beale to serve with the land forces. He and a small body of men under Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie joined General Stephen W. Kearney's column just before the disastrous battle of San Pasqual (6 December 1846). After the Mexican Army surrounded the small American force and threatened to destroy it, Beale and two other men (his Delaware Indian servant and Kit Carson) crept through the Mexican lines and made their way to San Diego for reinforcements. Their actions saved Kearney's soldiers. Two months later (9 February 1847), although Beale still suffered from the effects of his adventure, Stockton again sent him east with dispatches. Beale reached Washington about the first of June. In October he appeared as a defense witness for John C. Fremont at the "Pathfinder's" court martial.

Beale made six more journeys across the country during the following two years. On the second of these (July-September 1848), he crossed Mexico in disguise to

**ABOUT EDWARD F. BEALE and CAMP BEALE**

*The Honorable Edward Fitzgerald Beale, circa 1876.*

Beale Air Force Base, California is an Air Combat Command (ACC) installation located about 45 miles north of Sacramento and 12 miles east of Marysville. The base serves as the home of the 9th Reconnaissance Wing, the 940th Air Refueling Wing, the 7th Space Warning Squadron, and the Distributed Ground Station 2. The aircraft stationed at Beale AFB include the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft, the KC-135, and the T-38 jet trainer. The 9th Wing's primary mission consists of global reconnaissance.

**EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE (continued)**

**OCP EMBLEM:** The official emblem with Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) Color Conversions necessary for wear with the new USAF uniform.

**SHIELD:** Per pale vert and sable a pallet wavy argent fimbriated, or, over all on a fess of four crosses patee of the second (sable).

**CREST:** On a wreath of the colors (argent and vert) a rattlesnake entwined about a prickly pear cactus all proper.

**MOTTO:** Semper Paratus (Always Ready).



*Members of the 1st Aero Squadron deployed to conduct operations as part of General John J. Pershing's punitive expedition against Mexico, circa March 1916.*

## CHRONOLOGY

05 Mar 1913	The U.S. Army unofficially organized the 1st Aero Squadron (Provisional) at Texas City, Texas as a separate air arm of the Army (officially organized and redesignated as the 1st Aero Squadron on 8 December 1913).
15 Mar 1916	The 1st Aero Squadron, commanded by Capt. B. D. Foulois, with headquarters at Columbus, New Mexico, began operations with General Pershing's punitive expedition against Mexico.
16 Mar 1916	Capt. T.F. Dodd, pilot with Capt B.D. Foulois as observer, made the first airplane-based aerial reconnaissance by the U.S. military. They flew over Mexican territory in a Curtis biplane.
05 May 1917	The 5th Aero Squadron organized at Kelly Field, Texas as a flying training unit.
21 Aug 1917	The Army organized the 99th Aero Squadron at Kelly Field, Texas.
13 Sep 1917	The 1st Aero Squadron arrived at Avord, France as the first American flying unit to officially join World War I.
12 Dec 1917	The 99th Aero Squadron arrived at Tour, France as part of the American contingent in World War I.
15 Jul 1918	The 5th Aero Squadron was redesignated "Squadron A" at Southern Field, Georgia (demobilized on 11 Nov 1918).
12 Sep to 15 Sep 1918	The 1st and 99th Aero Squadrons became part of the great air armada of 1,481 airplanes which undertook the mass air offensive at St Mihiel, France during World War I.
24 May 1919	The 99th Aero Squadron returned from France arriving at Mitchel Field, New York (transferring to the Eastern Department at Hazelhurst Field, N.Y. on the following day).
04 Aug 1919	The 1st Aero Squadron returned from Europe (Wiessenthurm, Germany) arriving at Park Field, Tennessee.
10 Oct 1919	The 1st Aero Squadron transferred to Mitchel Field, New York.

## Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards continued:

- 01 June 2002 to 31 May 2004
- 01 June 2005 to 31 May 2007
- 01 June 2007 to 31 May 2009
- 01 June 2011 to 31 May 2012
- 01 June 2013 to 31 May 2014
- 01 June 2014 to 31 May 2015
- 01 June 2015 to 31 May 2016
- 01 June 2017 to 31 May 2018
- 01 June 2019 to 31 May 2020

## Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers:

- Grenada, 1983.

## Streamers:

- *World War II: Antisubmarine, American Theater*
- *World War II: Eastern Mandates*
- *World War II: Western Pacific*
- *World War II: Air Offensive, Japan*

## Decorations:

- *Distinguished Unit Citation*: Kawasaki, Japan, 15/16 April 1945
- *Distinguished Unit Citation*: Japan, 13 May to 28 May 1945

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

### CAMPAIGN STREAMERS:

- Southwest Asia: Defense of Saudi Arabia; Liberation and Defense of Kuwait.
- Global War on Terrorism: GWOT-E.

### DECORATIONS:

#### Presidential Unit Citation:

- 31 March 1968 to 31 December 1968

#### Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat V Device:

- 01 July 1972 to 30 June 1973

#### Meritorious Unit Awards:

- 01 June 2009 to 31 May 2011
- 01 June 2013 to 31 May 2014
- 01 June 2016 to 31 May 2017
- 01 June 2020 to 31 May 2021
- 01 June 2021 to 31 May 2022
- 01 June 2022 to 31 May 2024

#### Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards:

- 01 January 1957 to 31 January 1958
- 01 July 1967 to 30 June 1968
- 01 July 1970 to 30 June 1971
- 01 July 1971 to 30 June 1972
- 01 July 1973 to 30 June 1975
- 01 July 1975 to 30 June 1977
- 01 July 1981 to 30 June 1982
- 01 July 1983 to 30 June 1984
- 01 July 1985 to 30 June 1986
- 01 July 1986 to 30 June 1987
- 01 July 1989 to 30 June 1990
- 01 July 1993 to 30 June 1994
- 01 July 1994 to 30 June 1995
- 01 June 1996 to 31 May 1998
- 01 June 1998 to 31 May 2000
- 01 June 2000 to 31 May 2002

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

- 24 Oct 1919 The Army organized the 5th Aero Squadron at Hazelhurst Field, New York with assignment to Mitchel Field, New York in November 1919.
- 14 Mar 1921 The 1st, 5th, and 99th Aero Squadrons were redesignated as the 1st, 5th, and 99th Squadrons.
- 06 May 1921 The 1st and 5th Squadrons were attached to the 1st Provisional Air Brigade through 3 October 1921. The squadrons, under the command of Brig Gen William "Billy" Mitchell, participated in demonstrations of the effectiveness of aerial bombardment on warships.
- 01 Aug 1922 The 9th Wing's earliest predecessor, the 9th Group (Observation), organized at Mitchel Field, New York as a headquarters with the 1st and 5th Squadrons assigned as the flying units.
- 25 Jan 1923 The 1st and 5th Squadrons at Mitchel Field, New York and the 99th Squadron at Bolling Field, Washington, D.C. were redesignated as the 1st, 5th, and 99th Observation Squadrons.
- 24 Mar 1923 The Army "attached" the 1st and 5th Observation Squadrons to the 9th Observation Group.
- 31 Jul 1927 The 99th Observation Squadron, Kelly Field, Texas, inactivated.
- 09 Nov 1928 The 99th Observation Squadron was activated and attached to the 9th Observation Group, Mitchel Field, New York.
- 15 Feb 1929 The 1st, 5th, and 99th Observation Squadrons were assigned to the 9th Observation Group (in place of attachment).
- 01 Mar 1935 The new established General Headquarters Air Force (GHQ) redesignated the 9<sup>th</sup> Observation Group as the 9th Bombardment Group with concurrent redesignation of the 1st, 5th, and 99th Bombardment Squadrons. The squadrons flew B-10s and B-18s during this period.
- 12 Nov 1940 The 9th Bombardment Group and its three bombardment squadrons were stationed at Rio

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

30 Oct 1942	Hato Field, Panama Canal Zone flying anti-submarine patrols with B-17 Flying Fortresses.
31 Oct 1942	The 9th Bombardment Group transferred to Waller Field, Trinidad, British West Indies, flying reconnaissance patrols of the Vichy French fleet at Martinique.
28 Mar 1944	Upon its return to Orlando, Florida, the 9th Bombardment Group trained cadres for bombardment units using B-17s, B24s, and B26s.
28 Dec 1944	The 9th Bombardment Group (VH) was redesignated a very heavy (VH) Bombardment Group as it began training with B-29s at McCook Field, Nebraska.
27 Jan 1945	The 9th made its first air attack against Japanese installations in the northern Marianas.
15 Apr to 16 Apr 1945	The 9th Group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for a maximum effort air strike against a Japanese aircraft factory at Kawasaki, Japan.
13 May to 28 May 1945	The 9th received its second Distinguished Unit Citation for mine-laying operations in the Shimonoseki Straits between the Japanese islands of Honshu and Kyushu.
20 Oct 1948	The 9th Bombardment Group inactivated at Harmon Army Field, Guam.
NOTE:	End of BESTOWED HISTORY
25 Apr 1949	The new U.S. Air Force established the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.
01 May 1949	The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing activated at Fairfield-Suisun AB (later Travis AFB), California. The 9th Bombardment Group and the 1st, 5th, and 99th Bombardment Squadrons were redesignated Strategic Reconnaissance Squadrons (photo) and activated on the same date. The squadrons flew mostly RB-29s and a few RB-36s.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

### COMMANDERS CONTINUED:

#	Name	Date
21.	Col. Lyman M. Kidder	30 Sep 1977
22.	Col. Franklin D. Shelton	01 Feb 1979
23.	Col. David G. Young	circa 17 Jul 1980
24.	Col. Thomas S. Pugh	20 Jul 1982
25.	Col. George V. Freese	04 Aug 1983
26.	Col. David H. Pinsky	28 Jan 1985
27.	Col. Richard H. Graham	17 Jul 1987
28.	Col. James S. Savarda	06 Dec 1988
29.	Col. Thomas J. Keck	12 Jun 1990
30.	Col. Richard A. Young	21 Nov 1991
31.	Col. Larry W. Tieman	28 Jun 1993
32.	Brig. Gen. John W. Rutledge	15 Jul 1994
33.	Brig. Gen. Robert H. Behler	22 Sep 1995
34.	Brig. Gen. Charles N. Simpson	18 Apr 1997
35.	Brig. Gen. Kevin P. Chilton	02 Jun 1999
36.	Brig. Gen. Stanley Gorenc	15 Sep 2000
37.	Brig. Gen. Thomas B. Wright	21 Mar 2003
38.	Brig. Gen. Lawrence L. Wells	06 Aug 2004
39.	Brig. Gen. Harry D. Polumbo Jr.	15 May 2006
40.	Brig. Gen. Robert P. Otto	02 Jun 2008
41.	Brig. Gen. Paul H McGillicuddy	04 Apr 2010
42.	Col. Phillip A. Stewart	10 May 2012
43.	Col. Douglas J. Lee	10 May 2014
44.	Col. Larry R. Broadwell	08 Jul 2016
45.	Col. Andrew M. Clark	13 Apr 2018
46.	Col. Heather A. Fox	11 Jun 2020
47.	Col. Geoffrey I. Church	07 Jun 2022
48.	Col. Keagan L. McLeese	09 Jul 2024

### AIRCRAFT AND MISSILES:

B/RB-17, 1949 to 1950; B-29, 1949 to 1954; RB-29, 1949 to 1951; RB-36, 1949 to 1950, 1951; KB-29, 1953; B-47, 1954 to 1966; KC-97, 1954 to 1965; Titan, 1962 to 1965; EB-47, 1962 to 1965; T-38, 1969 to present; SR-71, 1966 to 1990; U-2, 1976 to present; TR-1, 1981-1993; KC-135, 1983 to 1993; SR-71, 1995 to 1999; RQ-4, 2002 to 2019; MC-12, 2011 to 2015.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

assigned 16 June 1952 to 1 Apr 1971; assigned 30 June 1976 to 1 September 1991. 349th Air Refueling: 15 March 1983 to 1 September 1991. 350th Air Refueling: 15 March 1983 to 1 September 1991. 569th Strategic Missile: 1 June 1961 to 25 June 1965. 658th Bombardment: 1 October 1958 to 1 January 1962. 4029th Strategic Reconnaissance Training: 1 August 1981 to 1 July 1986. 4364th Support (later, 4364th Post Attack Command and Control): 20 July 1962 to 25 March 1965.

### STATIONS:

Fairfield-Suisun (later, Travis) AFB, California, 1 May 1949; Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, 1 May 1953; Beale AFB, California, 25 June 1966 to present.

### COMMANDERS:

#	Name	Date
01.	Col. Raymond L. Winn	01 May 1949
02.	Brig. Gen. Robert F. Travis	16 Jun 1949
03.	Col. Carlos L. Cochrane	06 Aug 1950
04.	Col. Joe W. Kelly	10 Aug 1950
05.	Col. Clifford J. Heflin	10 Feb 1951
06.	Brig. Gen. William C. Kingsbury	05 Jan 1953
07.	Col. Robert V. DeShazo	27 Jul 1957
08.	Col. Rufus H. Holloway	15 Jul 1959
09.	Col. Walter Y. Lucas	07 Jun 1960
10.	Col. William L. Gray	05 Jul 1962
11.	Col. William R. Smith	02 Apr 1964
12.	Col. Walter Y. Lucas	10 Jun 1965
13.	Maj Adelbert J. Lemke	circa May 1966
14.	Col. Douglas T. Nelson	25 Jun 1966
15.	Col. William R. Hayes	14 Dec 1966
16.	Col. Charles F. Minter Sr.	17 Jun 1969
17.	Col. Harold E. Confer	01 Jul 1970
18.	Col. Jerome F. O'Malley	31 May 1972
19.	Col. Patrick J. Halloran	10 May 1973
20.	Col. John H. Storrie	30 Jun 1975

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

01 Apr 1950	The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was redesignated as the 9th Bombardment Wing, Heavy along with similar redesignations for the operations group and squadrons.
05 Aug 1950	Sgt. Paul F. Ramoneda was posthumously awarded the Soldier's Medal and the Cheney Award for his role in the rescue of eight crewmembers from a crashed B-29. Against orders and in complete disregard for his own life, he ran back into the flames to rescue remaining crewmembers. The aircraft exploded killing Sgt. Ramoneda.
05 Aug to 15 Sep 1950	Fifteen B-29s and 514 personnel from the 99 BS and 9 BW deployed to Andersen AFB, Guam. The aircraft deployed with the non-nuclear components to ten atomic bombs.
02 Nov 1950	The 9th wing was redesignated 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium along with the group and squadrons that were flying B-29s.
10 Feb 1951	The Air Force Placed the 1st, 5th, and 99th Bombardment Squadrons under the operational control of the wing and placed the 9th Bombardment Group in Records Unit Status.
16 Jun 1952	The 9th Bombardment Group inactivated.
16 Jun 1952	The 9th Air Refueling Squadron activated with assignment to the 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium.
01 May 1953	The 9th Wing completed a move to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.
15 Sep 1954	The 9th Bombardment Wing received its first B-47.
Nov 1955	The 9th Bombardment Wing used aerial refueling to establish a non-stop point-to-point long distance record during an 8,300 mile flight from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho to New Zealand.
19 Jan 1957	The first modified B-47 arrived at Mountain Home AFB. It was christened "The City of Mountain Home."

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

01 Apr 1957	The 9th Bombardment Wing was one of three SAC units selected to service-test Fresh Approach, a centralized organizational concept, designed to allow SAC to achieve its desired 15-minute alert concept.
01 Oct 1958	The 9th Bombardment Wing officially converted to the Fresh Approach concept that centralized manpower and resources management and established the deputy commander system of management.
01 Oct 1958	The 658th Bombardment Squadron was activated as the fourth bomb squadron assigned to the 9th Wing.
12 Dec 1958	The 9th Bombardment Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its efforts in pioneering the deputy commander management concept.
01 Jan 1962	The 658th Bomb Squadron inactivated.
01 Apr 1962	The 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium was redesignated as the 9th Strategic Aerospace Wing as its mission expanded to include strategic missiles.
27 Aug 1962	The wing assumed control of three Titan I missile sites for the Air Force.
07 Jul 1965	The first T-38 Talon jet trainer arrived at Beale AFB, California to be used as a trainer and chase plane for the new SR-71.
15 Dec 1965	The 9th Air Refueling Squadron inactivated.
01 Jan 1966	HQ TAC assumed responsibility for Mountain Home AFB, Idaho and the 9th Wing became a tenant unit.
07 Jan 1966	The first SR-71 arrived at Beale AFB, California and was assigned to the 4200th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.
10 Feb 1966	The final 9th Bombardment Wing B-47E departed Mountain Home AFB.
25 June 1966	At the request of Fifteenth Air Force, the 9th Wing (which was under consideration for inactivation) replaced the 4200th SRW at Beale AFB, California as the parent organization for the SR-71. The 9th Wing was redesignated the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing with assignment to Beale; the

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

### ASSIGNMENTS:

311 Air Division, 1 May 1949; Second Air Force, 1 November 1949; Fifteenth Air Force, 1 April 1950; 14 Air Division, 10 February 1951; Fifteenth Air Force, 1 May 1953 (attached to 7 Air Division, 23 May to 11 July 1955; 3 Air Division, 3 to 22 October 1955 and 1 October 1957 to ca. 10 January 1958); 813 Air (later, 813 Strategic Aerospace) Division, 15 July 1959; 14 Strategic Aerospace (later, 14 Air) Division, 25 June 1966; Second Air Force, 1 September 1991; Twelfth Air Force, 1 July 1993; Eighth Air Force, 1 October 2002; Twelfth Air Force, (Air Forces Southern), 1 October 2009; Twenty-Fifth Air Force, 29 September 2014; Sixteenth Air Force, 11 October 2019 to present.

### OPERATIONAL COMPONENTS:

WINGS: 5th Strategic Reconnaissance: attached 12 November 1949 to 10 February 1951.

GROUPS: 5th Strategic Reconnaissance: attached 9 November 1949 to 10 February 1951. 9th Strategic Reconnaissance (later, 9th Bombardment; 9th Operations): 1 May 1949 to 16 June 1952; 1 September 1991 to present.

SQUADRONS: 1st Bombardment (later, 1st Strategic Reconnaissance): attached 10 February 1951 to 15 June 1952, assigned 16 June 1952 to 1 September 1991.

5th Bombardment (later, 5th Strategic Reconnaissance Training; 5th Reconnaissance): attached 10 February 1951 to 15 June 1952, assigned 16 June 1952 to 25 June 1966; assigned 1 July 1986 to 30 June 1990. 9th Air Refueling: 16 June 1952 to 15 December 1965 (detached 16 June 1952 to 30 April 1953). 38th Reconnaissance: attached 26 May to 1 June 1949. 95th Reconnaissance: 30 June 1991 to 15 September 1993. 97th Air Refueling: 15 July 1961 to 1 July 1962 (detached).

99th Bombardment (later, 99th Strategic Reconnaissance): attached 10 February 1951 to 15 June 1952,

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

patches as their pre-World War II predecessors, and the wing's motto "Semper Paratus," which means "Always Ready," is as true today as when it was first approved in 1924.



*An RQ-4 awaiting the arrival of a U-2 prior to departing the Beale AFB, circa June 2018.*

## LINEAGE AND HONORS

### LINEAGE:

Established as 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing on 25 April 1949. Activated on 1 May 1949. Redesignated as 9th Bombardment Wing, Heavy, on 1 April 1950; 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium, on 2 October 1950; 9th Strategic Aerospace Wing on 1 April 1962; 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing on 25 June 1966; 9th Wing on 1 September 1991; and 9th Reconnaissance Wing on 1 October 1993.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

4200th was discontinued; the 5th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron inactivated, and the 9th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron activated. The 1st and 99th Squadrons were redesignated as reconnaissance squadrons and transferred to Beale.

22 Nov 1968	The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 July 1967 to 30 June 1968 period.
05 Mar 1969	The 9 SRW received the Fifteenth Air Force Outstanding Reconnaissance Crew of the Year, Outstanding Maintenance Activity, and Outstanding Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Awards for 1968.
13 Feb 1970	A 9SRW SR-71 crew received the Fifteenth Air Force Reconnaissance Crew of the Year Award for 1969.
01 Apr 1971	The 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron inactivated.
30 Jun 1971	In a major realignment, the 14th Strategic Aerospace Division took command of the 9 SRW.
06 Jan 1972	The 9 SRW received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Ward for the 1 July 1970 to 30 June 1971 period.
18 Jul 1972	Lt Col Thomas B. Estes and Lt Col Dewain C. Vick, an SR-71 crew, received the Mackay Trophy for a 26 April 1971 record flight.
23 Jan 1973	The 9 SRW received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for 1 July 1971 to 30 June 1972.
20 Sept 1973	Lt Cols Estes and Vick received the Harmon International Aviator Award from President Richard M. Nixon.
12 Oct 1973	An operating location was established at Griffiss AFB, NY to support Giant Reach operations.
01 Nov 1973	The 99 SRS activated at U-Tapao, Thailand assigned to the 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.
15 Nov 1973	The Giant Reach operating location moved to Seymour-Johnson AFB, North Carolina with the official designation OL-SB.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

21 Jan 1974	A 9 SRW aircrew won the Fifteenth Air Force Reconnaissance Aircrew of the Year award.
30 Apr 1974	The 9SRW Maintenance Complex received the Fifteenth Air Force Haskell Gray Award for outstanding aircraft maintenance in 1973.
09 Aug 1974	Detachment 1, 9SRW was activated at Kadena, Okinawa, Japan replacing OL-KA.
01 Sep 1974	SR-71 #972 established a new world record on a flight from New York to London, England covering the 3,490 statute miles in one hour 56 minutes at an average speed of 1,800 miles per hour.
13 Sep 1974	SR-71 #972 set another world record. This time it flew from London to Los Angeles, 5,645 miles, in three hours 47 minutes: an average speed of 1,480 miles per hour.
18 Jan 1975	The 9 SRW won the Fifteenth Air Force Reconnaissance Unit of the Year and Reconnaissance Crew of the Year Awards for 1974.
06 Mar 1975	The 9 SRW was selected as the SAC Outstanding Reconnaissance Organization for 1974.
12 Mar 1975	The Air Force inactivated OL-SB at Seymour-Johnson, North Carolina.
01 Jul 1975	The 456th Bombardment Wing became the host wing on Beale AFB. The 9th assumed tenant status.
13 Jan 1976	The 9 SRW received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 July 1973 to 30 June 1975 period.
06 May 1976	The first class of U-2 pilots began T-38 training.
01 Jul 1976	In a consolidation of high-altitude reconnaissance assets, the Air Force reassigned the 99SRS and its U-2 aircraft from the 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ to the 9 SRW, Beale AFB, CA.
01 Jul 1976	Operating Location OA at Osan AB, Korea was redesignated Detachment 2, 9 SRW.
27 Jul to 28 Jul 1976	Three 9th Wing SR-71s established six new world altitude and speed records.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

down the mission at Beale AFB and transferred the aircraft to the U.S. Army, civilian contractors, and the Air National Guard. Headquarters, Air Combat Command inactivated the Formal Training Unit, the 489th Reconnaissance Squadron, on 1 May 2015. The MAJCOM inactivated the 427th Reconnaissance Squadron on 20 November 2015. The last MC-12W mission from Beale AFB occurred on 16 September 2015.

Headquarters, Air Combat Command consolidated the RQ-4 Global Hawk mission under the 319th Reconnaissance Wing, Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota in 2019. The MAJCOM inactivated the 69th Reconnaissance Group and 69th Maintenance Squadron at Grand Forks AFB on 28 June 2019. The 7th Reconnaissance Squadron, 12th Reconnaissance Squadron, and the 348th Reconnaissance Squadron were reassigned to the 319th Operations Group, Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota. Although RQ-4s continued to operate from Beale AFB, they were not assigned to the 9th Reconnaissance Wing.

The 9th Reconnaissance Wing's 9th Medical Group would also see changes in organization during 2019. HQ ACC redesignated the 9th Aerospace Medicine Squadron as the 9th Operational Medical Readiness Squadron and the 9th Medical Operations Squadron as the 9th Healthcare Operations Squadron on 1 August 2019. HQ ACC would inactivate the 9th Medical Support Squadron the following year on 30 September 2020. The 9 RW also began exploring the option of moving the 9th Physiological Support Squadron from the 9th Medical Group to the 9th Operations Group.

Today, the 9th Reconnaissance Wing currently operates the U-2S from Beale AFB and several overseas detachments. The wing continues to serve the nation's interests by providing America's leaders with the latest intelligence data and theater commanders with the latest tactical information available. Ever mindful of their unique responsibilities and distinguished history, the men and women of the 9th Reconnaissance Wing wear the same

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING



A 9th Reconnaissance Wing MC-12 at Beale AFB, California, 16 September 2015.

The RQ-4 intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance mission continued to grow. HQ ACC activated the 69th Reconnaissance Group (69 RG) as a tenant unit at Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota on 19 September 2011 to help manage the RQ-4 program. The 69 RG was assigned to the 9th Reconnaissance Wing and would eventually consist of four squadrons (also a detachment and operating location). The 348th Reconnaissance Squadron was also activated at Grand Forks AFB on 19 September 2011 and assigned to the 69 RG. The 12 RS (Beale AFB) would move to the 69 RG and the 69th Maintenance Squadron (Grand Forks AFB) would be activated. HQ ACC would activate the 7th Reconnaissance Squadron at Sigonella NAS, Italy on 15 May 2015 and assign the unit to the 69 RG.

The 9th Reconnaissance Wing would experience major changes between 2015 and 2019 to the MC-12W and RQ-4 missions. The U.S. Air Force believed the right fit for the MC-12W Liberty belonged more in the special operations community; thus, Air Combat Command stood

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

23 Oct 1976	A U-2 search and rescue flight and photographic processing by the 9th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron located Bruce Collins who had been adrift in a life raft for 28 days.
31 Mar 1977	The 9 SRW earned an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 July 1975 to 30 June 1976 period.
24 Feb 1978	The 9 SRW won the Fifteenth Air Force Reconnaissance Unit of the Year Award for 1977.
30 Mar 1978	The wing won the General Paul T. Cullen Award as the Outstanding Reconnaissance Unit in SAC for 1977.
12 Jan 1979	The 99 SRS U-2s flew the first Senior Smokey aerial photographs of selected national parks.
09 Mar 1979	The 9th and 100th Wings submitted a joint proposal for consolidating the two wings' functions.
01 Apr 1979	Detachment 4, 9 SRW, activated at RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom to fly the U-2R in the European Theater.
01 Sep 1980	Detachment 3, 9SRW activated at Akrotiri Sovereign Base Area, Cyprus in place of OL-OH.
15 Sep 1980	U-2R #338 became the first aircraft of its type to amass 10,000 flying hours.
01 Aug 1981	The Air Force's first TR-1, a descendent of the U-2, arrived at Beale AFB. On the same date the 4029th Strategic Reconnaissance Training Squadron was activated to conduct TR-1 and U-2R pilot training.
15 Sep 1981	The first 9 SRW-owned TR-1 arrived on Beale AFB.
15 Jan 1982	The 9th Wing's SR-71B flew its 1,000th sortie.
29 Jan 1982	Operating Location Olympic Flare (OL-OF) was established at Patrick AFB, Florida.
24 Feb 1982	The 9 SRW won Fifteenth Air Force Awards for the Outstanding Unit, Outstanding Reconnaissance Wing, and Outstanding Reconnaissance Crew for 1981.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

05 Apr 1982	The British Government announced the permanent basing of an SR-71 at Detachment 4, RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom.
09 Jul 1982	The last active U-2C in the Air Force inventory departed Beale for permanent display at Offutt AFB, Nebraska.
28 Sep 1982	The 9 SRW and 100th Air Refueling Wing submitted to 14th Air Division a proposal to consolidate their operations into one, large reconnaissance wing.
01 Oct 1982	Headquarters SAC announced the activation of the 17th Reconnaissance Wing (RW) at RAF Alconbury, United Kingdom. The 9 SRW's 4029th Strategic Reconnaissance Training Squadron was to train all pilots for the new wing's TR-1 operations.
01 Jan 1983	Headquarters SAC activated Detachment 5, 9 SRW at Patrick AFB, Florida (formerly Operating Location OF).
22 Feb 1983	The Detachment 4 U-2R departed RAF Mildenhall, UK as the TR-1s of the 17RW assumed the U-2 mission in Europe.
15 Mar 1983	The Air Force inactivated the 100th Air Refueling Wing and its associated base support units and consolidated its refueling mission with the 9SRW. The 349th and 350th Air Refueling Squadrons were assigned to the 9th while the 9th Combat Support Group, 9th Supply, Services, Transportation, Security Police, and Civil Engineering Squadrons were activated.
25 Mar 1983	The first TR-1B trainer model arrived at Beale for use in the 4029th SRTS pilot training program.
18 Apr 1983	HQ SAC announced the award of the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, seventh oak leaf cluster to the 9th Wing and subordinate units for 1 July 1981 to 30 June 1982.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

Squadron. The 9th Logistics Support Squadron was redesignated 9th Maintenance Operations Squadron and assigned to the 9th Maintenance Group. Many wings within Air Combat Command also merged their supply and transportation squadrons during this organizational change. The 9th Supply Squadron consolidated with the 9th Transportation Squadron and was redesignated the 9th Logistics Readiness Squadron on 1 October 2003.

“Recce Town” received notification in July 2010 that the U.S. Air Force had selected Beale AFB as the basing option for the MC-12W “Liberty” aircraft. The 9 RW had been identified as the preferred interim parent wing for a Project Liberty squadron since December 2008. The 9 RW and Beale AFB provided existing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) flying missions and the MC-12W would be collocated with the distributed ground station mission. The MC-12W was a medium to low-altitude twin engine turboprop aircraft with a primary mission of providing ISR support directly to ground forces. The aircraft was considered necessary to support the worldwide U.S. Air Force irregular warfare mission to include counterinsurgency, foreign internal defense, and building partnership capacity. The 9 RW would use the new aircraft mainly to provide MC-12W mission qualification training. The first MC-12W arrived at Beale AFB on 10 June 2011.

Headquarters, Air Combat Command activated the 489th Reconnaissance Squadron to serve as the MC-12W Formal Training Unit on 26 August 2011. HQ ACC activated the 427th Reconnaissance Squadron the following year on 1 May 2012. The two new squadrons were assigned to the 9th Operations Group. The MC-12W crews were heavily tasked to provide ISR support to ground forces in Afghanistan.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

squadron's RQ-4s complemented the U-2's capability and greatly enhanced the 9th Reconnaissance Wing's ability to provide vital information to our nation's decision-makers.



*A 9th Reconnaissance Wing RQ-4 at Beale AFB, California, circa June 2019.*

Headquarters, Air Combat Command would make changes to wing organizational maintenance and support structures throughout the organization in 2002. The 9th Maintenance Group would experience 13 changes to assigned organizations effective 18 September 2002. The 9th Logistics Group was redesignated 9th Maintenance Group and the 9th Support Group was redesignated 9th Mission Support Group. The 9th Maintenance Group would add the 9th Maintenance Squadron and 9th Munitions Squadron. The 9th Mission Support Group would pick up the 9th Civil Engineer Squadron, 9th Communications Squadron, 9th Contracting Squadron, 9th Mission Support Squadron, 9th Security Forces Squadron, 9th Services Squadron, 9th Supply Squadron, and 9th Transportation

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

10 Nov 1983 A KC-135Q tanker crew from the 9 SRW received awards as the best Air Force active duty refueling unit and best tanker unit in the Strategic Air Command during the annual SAC Bombing and Navigation Competition. A 9-SRW tanker crew also won the Navigation Trophy.

18 Sep 1985 Majors Donald D. Tabor and Robert F. Behler, of the 1st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, received the Jerome F. O'Malley award recognizing the Best Reconnaissance Crew in the Air Force.

08 Feb 1986 Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force announced that the 9 SRW had been chosen as the command's Outstanding Reconnaissance Wing. They also announced that the 99 SRS as the Outstanding Reconnaissance Squadron. Lieutenant Colonel Michael Musholt of the 99 SRS was honored as the Outstanding Reconnaissance Crew.

20 Feb 1986 Beale established shelters for 4,502 residents of Linda and Olivehurst, California. Floodwaters from the Yuba River swept through these communities causing the evacuation of their citizens.

Feb 1987 The 9 SRW won the Riverside Trophy, symbolic of the best wing in Fifteenth Air Force.

27 Aug 1987 The 9 SRW won the P. T. Cullen Award as Best Reconnaissance Unit in SAC for 1986.

14 Oct 1987 The 9th Strategic Hospital won the Gen. Alonzo A. Towner Memorial Trophy as the Best Hospital in SAC.

28 Dec 1987 The 1 RS conducted the final U-2CT flight from Beale.

01 Jan 1988 Headquarters SAC activated the 9th Comptroller Squadron.

Mar 1988 The wing received its first U-2RT training aircraft.

10 Aug to 13 Aug 1989 U-2s from Detachment 3 flew four search and rescue missions over Ethiopia in an attempt to find the missing aircraft of U.S. Representative Mickey Leland.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

01 Oct 1989 The 9th Wing activated Detachment 6 at Mather AFB, California. The detachment supported the B-52 alert force with aerial refueling.

08 Oct to 21 Oct 1989 The 99 SRS flew U-2 missions over the San Francisco and San Andreas fault areas.

19 Dec to 26 Dec 1989 Detachment 5 U-2s flew missions in support of Operation Just Cause: the invasion of Panama.

01 Jan 1990 14th Air Division became the host unit on Beale AFB. The 9 SRW became a tenant.

26 Jan 1990 The Air Force retired the SR-71 Blackbird. The wing began shutting down Detachment 1 and Detachment 4.

06 Mar 1990 The SR-71, on its way to retirement in Washington D.C., broke three world speed records.

28 Mar 1990 The SR-71 flew its final flight from Beale AFB.

17 Aug 1990 First U-2s arrive at Taif AB, Saudi Arabia to support Operation Desert Storm.

19 Aug 1990 First U-2 missions supporting Operation Desert Shield

19 Aug 1990 Beale KC-135Q tankers began deploying to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Desert Shield. On the way, the initial deployers refueled F-117 stealth fighters.

01 Nov 1990 Detachment 5, 9SRW, Patrick AFB, closed.

01 Nov 1990 HQ SAC announced the 9 SRW had been awarded its 11th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. This award covered the period from 1 Jul 89 to 30 Jun 90.

17 Jan 1991 Two Beale KC-135s saved a Royal Saudi Air Force Tornado via navigational assistance.

10 Mar 1991 Captain Troy Devine, 99 SRS, the USAF's first female U-2 pilot, flew her first operational mission from Detachment 2, 9 SRW, Osan AB, Korea.

28 Jun 1991 The 17 RW inactivated. The 9 SRW gained the 95th Reconnaissance Squadron and its TR-1s at RAF Alconbury, UK.

02 Aug 1991 Headquarters SAC announced plans to activate Second Air Force at Beale AFB.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

Virginia on 1 June 1992. Second Air Force moved from Air Combat Command to the Air Education and Training Command on 1 July 1993; thus, the 9th Wing became a subordinate unit of 12th Air Force, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona. The wing also underwent its own organization and designation changes. When the Air Force returned to the group organizational concept, the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was redesignated as the 9th Wing on 19 September 1991. This action also activated the 9th Operations Group (lineal descendant of WWII's 9th Bombardment Group), the 9th Support Group, the 9th Logistics Group, and the 9th Medical Group. These new groups would streamline and consolidate wing operations. The reorganization strengthened the wing's chain of command by replacing deputy commanders with group commanders. Further Air Force reorganization actions moved the KC-135 tankers from Air Combat Command to Air Mobility Command in 1993. With the reassignment of the KC-135 tankers, the wing's designation changed again to the 9th Reconnaissance Wing to reflect a more specialized mission on 1 October 1993.

Another step in the wing's restructuring required the inactivation of the 9th and 609th Organizational Maintenance Squadrons and the movement of flightline maintenance personnel to the flying squadrons. Several former OMS elements (tanker phase, U-2 periodic inspections, aero repair, and the heel and tire shop) transferred to the 9th Field Maintenance Squadron, which was redesignated as the 9th Maintenance Squadron.

The 9th Reconnaissance Wing welcomed a new squadron in 2001. HQ ACC activated the 12th Reconnaissance Squadron (12 RS) on 8 November 2001 and assigned the unit to the 9th Operations Group. The 12 RS would serve as the parent unit for the high altitude, unmanned RQ-4 Global Hawk reconnaissance aircraft. The aircraft was flown for the first time at Edwards AFB, California on 28 February 1998. The first Global Hawk arrived on 28 October 2004. The

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

Besides providing global reconnaissance, the 9th Reconnaissance Wing served the local and national communities in other times of crisis. For example, a devastating flood swept through the neighboring towns of Linda and Olivehurst in 1986. The wing welcomed 4,502 people forced from their homes by the flood to Beale AFB. Base personnel set up several centers to shelter and feed the evacuees until the water level dropped and they could return to their homes. The wing flew several missions over Ethiopia to search for an airplane carrying Congressman Mickey Leland in July 1989. At the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the wing flew U-2 photo missions over the San Francisco and Oakland areas after the strong Loma Prieta earthquake in October 1989. U-2s also surveyed earthquake damage over California's Yucca Valley in June and July 1992 and again at Northridge in 1994. The reconnaissance photographs helped geologists map surface ruptures, fault lines, and potential landslide sites. The pictures also pinpointed infrastructure damage and allowed local and national planners to assess the relief and recovery needs.

One constant of the wing's history consists of change. The 14th Air Division became the host unit at Beale AFB on 1 January 1990. As a result, the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing became a tenant unit and its support units were inactivated. The change was short-lived, however, as the Air Force inactivated the 14th Air Division on 1 September 1991. The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing reacquired the necessary squadrons to act as the host organization at Beale AFB. In the 14th Air Division's place Second Air Force activated at Beale AFB to serve as the U.S. Air Force's reconnaissance command. On the same day, the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing transferred from Fifteenth Air Force to Second Air Force and to officially become the host unit on Beale AFB again.

The U.S. Air Force made a major change by inactivating Strategic Air Command and the wing joined the newly activated Air Combat Command, Langley AFB,

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

01 Sep 1991	Second Air Force activated, 14th Air Division inactivated on Beale AFB. The 9th Wing assumed duties as host unit on Beale.
19 Sep 1991	The wing was redesignated 9th Wing. The deputy commander system also ceased. In its place the wing activated the 9th Operations Group, 9th Logistics Group, 9th Support Group, 9th Medical Group, and the 9th Intelligence Support Squadron.
28 Sep 1991	Headquarters SAC announced the end of the ground alert program. 9th Wing tankers went off alert at Mather.
05 Mar 1992	The Air Force activated the 9th Contracting Squadron at Beale AFB.
22 Apr 1992	Headquarters SAC announced that the 9th Wing had been selected as the recipient of the General Paul T. Cullen Memorial Reconnaissance Trophy for 1991. The award recognized the SAC reconnaissance unit providing the greatest contribution to imagery and signals intelligence collection.
03 Apr 1992	The Air Force inactivated the 9th and 609th Organizational Maintenance Squadrons. All flightline maintenance functions moved to the 9th Operations Group.
01 Jun 1992	The Air Force inactivated Strategic Air Command. The 9th Wing joined the newly formed Air Combat Command.
05 Jun 1992	The Air Force inactivated the 349th Air Refueling Squadron.
01 Jul 1992	U-2s flew missions to assess earthquake damage in Yucca Valley, California.
21 Jul 1992	AFCOMAC moved to Beale AFB from the Sierra Army Depot.
01 Nov 1992	Detachment 1, 548th AIG activated at Beale.
12 Nov 1992	AFCOMAC activated at Beale AFB.
11 Jun 1993	The 350th AREFS won the General John Meyer Trophy for Best Air Refueling Team during AMC's "Rodeo '93."
01 Jul 1993	The 9th MMS and AFCOMAC consolidated into 9th Combat Munitions Squadron under the 9th Logistics Group.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

01 Jul 1993	Second Air Force inactivated at Beale AFB. The 9th Wing became subordinate unit of 12th Air Force.
12 Jul 1993	U-2s began OPERATION DOLPHIN surveying flood damage along the Mississippi River.
15 Sep 1993	The 95th RS inactivated. OL-UK activated at RAF Alconbury.
01 Oct 1993	The 350th AREFS transferred to AMC.
03 Dec 1993	The 9 MWR & 9 SVS combined to become 9th Services Squadron.
18 Jan 1994	U-2s flew the first of two sorties surveying damage following 17 January 1994 Northridge, California earthquake.
27 Jun 1994	Last KC-135Q tanker left Beale AFB as the 350 ARS moved to McConnell AFB, Kansas.
11 Aug 1994	Aircraft 68-0338 became the first U-2 to surpass 20,000 flying hours.
01 Oct 1994	The 9th Medical group restructured into five squadrons: 9th Medical Operations Squadron, 9th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, 9th Dental Squadron, 9th Medical Support Squadron, and 9th Training Squadron.
28 Oct 1994	First three U-2S models arrived at Beale.
12 Jan 1995	The first of three SR-71s flew into Palmdale, California for a complete overhaul and refitting before rejoining the Air Force.
24 Feb 1995	The base announced the closure of the Edward F. Beale Museum.
01 Apr 1995	Detachment 2 activated at Edwards AFB, California to support SR-71 operations.
26 Apr 1995	SR-71 made its first flight at Palmdale since reactivation.
25 Jul 1995	Lt Cols G.I Luloff and M. Finan flew the first Air Force mission in the reactivated SR-71.
29 Aug 1995	First SR-71 crew declared mission-ready.
25 Jul 1995	General Hawley, ACC commander, awarded the 9 RW with its fourteenth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period 1 July 1994 to 30 June 1995.
07 Aug 1996	A wing U-2 crashed in Oroville, CA. The pilot, Capt Randy Roby died in the accident.
04 Feb 1997	Beale AFB won ACC General Thomas D. White Environmental Planning Award.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

Reconnaissance Wing and the U-2 aircraft remained in the region to help the United Nations verify Iraqi compliance with the terms of the cease-fire agreement when the ground war ended and most troops returned home.

The 9th Reconnaissance Wing's personnel and aircraft provided reconnaissance coverage during the crises in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s. The U-2s were later used to verify compliance with the Dayton Peace Accords that ended the immediate crisis. When Serbia began the "ethnic cleansing" of Albanians in Kosovo, 9th Reconnaissance Wing U-2s provided over 80 percent of the targeting intelligence for NATO forces during Operation ALLIED FORCE. NATO leadership credited the U-2 with the destruction of 39 surface-to-air missile sites and 28 aircraft of the Serbian military.



KC-135Q, tail number 0120 parked on the Beale AFB ramp, circa 1988.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

retirement were no longer valid. The 9th Reconnaissance Wing activated Detachment 2 at Edwards AFB, California to support SR-71 operations. The U.S. Air Force accepted the first renovated Blackbird on 25 June 1995. The SR-71 was again operational with a mission-ready crew on 29 August 1995. President Bill Clinton exercised his line-item veto power, however, and eliminated the Congressionally approved \$39 million allocated to the SR-71 program in the fiscal year (FY) 1998 budget. Detachment 2 immediately ceased operations. The Supreme Court later declared presidential line-item veto authority unconstitutional. The future of the SR-71 program remained uncertain at this time. Congress did not include funding for the program in its FY1999 budget. Air Combat Command received a message from the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force ordering cessation of SR-71 operations and disposal of all related assets on 7 April 1998. The last member of Detachment 2 left Edwards AFB, California on 10 January 1999. Upon transfer of the two remaining airframes to Air Force Materiel Command, Air Combat Command declared the SR-71 retirement complete as of 15 July 1999. Air Combat Command inactivated Detachment 2, 9th Operations Group, Edwards AFB, California on 1 August 1999.

The late 1980's and early 1990's consisted of a dynamic period for the 9th Reconnaissance Wing's U-2 operators who continued the tradition of providing important information to the National Command Authorities. The wing's most notable intelligence operation took place from August 1990 to March 1991 in Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM. Following what became the largest U-2 deployment ever conducted, the 9 SRW's Dragon Ladies flew more than 800 missions over the Persian Gulf region. The U-2s tracked Iraqi troop and armor buildups, assessed bomb damage, and monitored a massive oil spill in the Persian Gulf. The U-2 pilots even alerted the Allied anti-missile networks of inbound Scud missiles. Personnel assigned to the 9th

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

21 Feb 1997	Maj Domenick Eanniello flew the U-2R on that model's last operational mission.
29 Aug 1997	Wing named California Air Force Association's Outstanding Military Unit in the state.
10 Oct 1997	Majors Bert Garrison and Ochoterino flew the last USAF SR-71 sortie.
17 Oct 1997	The SR-71 was grounded due to funding cuts.
17 Feb 1998	The last U-2R left Beale for Palmdale. While at Palmdale, Lockheed upgraded the aircraft to a U-2S.
18 Feb 1998	First KC-135E of the 940th Air Refueling Wing (ARW), Air Force Reserve, arrived at Beale. The 940th ARW became a tenant unit.
06 Mar 1998	The Air Force again retired the SR-71.
07 Apr 1998	ACC received a message from the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force ordering cessation of SR-71 operations and disposal of all related assets.
11 Aug 1998	The Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUUA) for 1 June 1996 through 31 May 98. This was the Wing's fifteenth AFOUUA.
12 Dec 1998	Maj Al Zwick, a 1 RS instructor pilot, broke a 19-year old payload-to-altitude record. Major Zwick flew his U-2S to an altitude of 66,800 feet with a 4,400-pound payload. This flight far surpassed the previous record of 28,513 feet set by a Czechoslovakian Yak-40 in 1979.
28 Apr 1999	The National Aviation Club and the National Aeronautic Association awarded the 1998 Robert J. Collier Trophy to the designers, manufacturers, and operators of the U-2S/ER 2. The U-2S/ER-2 became the oldest aircraft to win the prestigious award.
01 Aug 1999	ACC inactivated Detachment 2, 9th Operations Group, Edwards AFB, CA.
01 May 2000	Francis Gary Powers Jr. flew the U-2 on the 40th Anniversary of his father's "shoot down."
05 May 2000	First U-2S models with Power EMI upgrade arrive at Beale.
29 Jun 2000	The U-2/DGS-2 team flew its 1,000 SENTINEL TORCH mission supporting the Dayton Peace Accords.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

11 Aug to 16 Aug 2000 The National Airborne Operations Center E-4B visited Beale to evaluate the base's readiness to support the NAOC mission.

09 Oct 2000 The Deployable Shelterized System – Film deployed to Kuwait to provide JTF/SWA with in-theater wet-film processing ability.

31 Oct 2000 The wing received its sixteenth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period 1 June 1998 to 31 May 2000.

25 Feb 2001 U-2S A#329 reached the 20,000 flying hour milestone.

09 Mar 2001 The 9th Services Squadron earned ACC's Major General Eugene L. Eubank Award.

08 Apr 2001 Airfest '01, featuring the AF Thunderbirds, attracted more than 50,000 guests.

27 Jul 2001 The US Air Force announced the Global Hawk reconnaissance aircraft and mission would be assigned to the 9 RW at Beale AFB.

31 Jul 2001 The 9 CES dedicated Sgt Kenneth Kincaide Park, honoring individual who died 13 Jun 76 fighting a wildfire.

12 Sep 2001 The 9 RW increased force protection level to "Charlie" in response to terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

08 Nov 2001 The 12 RS activated as parent organization for Global Hawk.

17 Jan 2002 The new cockpit procedures training facility in Bldg. 1025 opened.

21 Feb 2002 President Bush visited 5 RS at Osan AB Korea.

16 Apr 2002 First block-20 U-2 arrived at Beale.

August 2002 The 9 RW was awarded its seventeenth AF Outstanding Unit Award.

18 Sep 2002 The 9th Reconnaissance Wing reorganized. The 9th Logistics Group was redesignated 9th Maintenance Group. The 9th Support Group was redesignated 9th Mission Support Group. The 9th Logistics Support Squadron was redesignated 9th Maintenance Operations Squadron. The 9th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron was activated. Lastly, 9th Supply, Transportation and Contracting Squadrons were moved from 9 MXG to 9 MSG.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

the excellence with which the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing performed its expanded mission.

The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing mission and organization expanded significantly in the early 1980s. The U.S. Air Force inactivated the 100th Air Refueling Wing and transferred its refueling and base support missions to the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing on 15 March 1983. The 349th Air Refueling Squadron and 350th Air Refueling Squadron became part of the 9 SRW. The U.S. Air Force also activated the 9th Combat Support Group and 9th Supply, Transportation, Services, Security Police, and Civil Engineering Squadrons. The consolidation smoothed the reconnaissance tasking and response process.

### A TIME OF CHANGE

A unique chapter of the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing's history ended on 1 January 1990 with the retirement of the SR-71 Blackbird. High maintainability and operating costs and the availability of similar intelligence from other sources convinced Air Force officials the aircraft was no longer vital to national defense. The Blackbird went out with gusto. Major Don Watkins and his RSO, Major Bob Fowlkes, flew the last SR-71 flight from Beale AFB to the Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio on 28 March 1990. Just three weeks earlier, Lieutenant Colonels Ed Yeilding and J.T. Vida set four new speed records: West Coast to East Coast in one hour, eight minutes, and 17 seconds (2,110 mph); Los Angeles to Washington D.C. at 2,153.24 mph; St. Louis to Cincinnati at 2,242.48 mph; and Kansas City to Washington, D.C. at 2,200.94 mph on 6 March 1990.

The Blackbird did reemerge for a short time after Congress allocated \$100 million to reactivate three SR-71s in 1994. The Senate Appropriations Committee acknowledged that SR-71 had a unique operational capability that no other system could match. Committee members believed the reasons for the aircraft's 1990

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

Intelligence data collected during the Cuban missile crisis, and intelligence collected during the Vietnam conflict. The U-2R, an improved version of the 1955 vintage U-2A, was capable of spending more time "on-station" and cover longer distances without refueling than the SR-71. The Dragon Lady was also less expensive to operate.

The reconnaissance mission assigned to the 9 SRW continued to evolve as the Air Force's first TR-1 arrived at Beale AFB on the 1 August 1981. The first TR-1 production model was assigned six weeks later. A descendent of the U-2, the Lockheed-built TR-1 would gather tactical reconnaissance data in the European Theater. The U.S. Air Force would eventually drop the TR-1 designation and the aircraft series would also be referred to as U-2s. With the new aircraft's arrival, the U.S. Air Force activated the 4029th Strategic Reconnaissance Training Squadron on 1 August 1981. The new squadron would become responsible for training all TR-1 and U-2 pilots until the activation of the 5th Reconnaissance Training Squadron (5 RTS) in 1986. The 5 RTS would become responsible for training all TR-1, U-2, and SR-71 pilots and renewed their longtime association with the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.

The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing began operating detachments and operating locations around the world as the importance of intelligence collection increased during the 1980s. The British government publicly announced the stationing of SR-71 aircraft at Detachment 4, RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom on 5 April 1982. The 9 SRW also established Operating Location OLYMPIC FLAME (OL-OF) at Patrick AFB, Florida, on 29 January 1982. OL-OF (U-2s) became Detachment 5 on 1 January 1983. As world events dictated the need for accurate and timely reconnaissance data, the 9 SRW operated OL's and detachments around the globe, including Korea, Panama, Okinawa, Cyprus, and Saudi Arabia. An Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (7th oak leaf cluster) for the 1 July 1981 to 30 June 1982 confirmed

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

01 Oct 2002	The 9 RW was reassigned from Twelfth Air Force to Eighth Air Force.
08 Oct 2002	A total of 48 new Brookview Military Family Housing units opened for small families and junior NCOs. The \$8.4 Million project also resulted in the demolition of 76 1970-era units.
15 Nov 2002	A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for new flightline fire station. The new facility replaced fire stations 1 and 2.
Jan 2003	Nearly 100 California Army National Guardsmen arrived to backfill for 9 SFS personnel deployed worldwide.
26 Jan 2003	A 5 RS U-2 crashed near Osan AB Korea. Pilot ejected safely, civilians injured, with some property damage.
21 Mar 2003	Brig Gen (S) Thomas "Rudy" Wright assumed command of 9RW from Brig Gen Stanley Gorenc.
03 Apr 2003	Ribbon-cutting for new \$4.1 M water treatment facility. This concluded multi-mission construction projects upgrading base's entire drinking water system.
May 2003	The 9 RW awarded Omaha Trophy for 2002.
13 Jun 2003	Air Force Secretary James Roche visited Beale AFB.
23 Jun 2003	The new maintenance support facility opened.
25 Jun 2003	The new Beale control tower opened.
02 Oct 2003	The 9th Supply Squadron was redesignated as the 9th Logistics Readiness Squadron and consolidated with the 9th Transportation Squadron. The 9th Transportation Squadron was inactivated.
Nov 2003	Beale AFB received ACC CINC Installation Excellence Award.
01 Dec 2003	The 548th Intelligence Group, assigned to the 480th Intelligence Wing at Langley AFB, activated at Beale AFB. The 9 IS transferred from the 9 OG to the 548 IG. The 548 IG included 13th and 48th Intelligence Squadrons (DGS-2).
30 Jan 2004	The 9 RW won U.S. Strategic Command's 2003 Omaha Trophy for sustained ISR excellence.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

29 Mar 2004 The US Air Force announced that Beale AFB had won the 2004 Air Force Commander-in-Chief Installation Excellence Award

28 Oct 2004 The first RQ-4 Global Hawk arrived at Beale.

03 Nov 2004 A Dedication ceremony was held for the new Lt. Gen. Winston D. Powers Communications Building.

Apr 2005 The 940 ARW took delivery of the first of eight KC-135T aircraft.

02 Jun 2005 Lt. Col. Flint and Maj Rob Creedon, 9 OSS, piloted aircraft number 1065, the last Block 10 TU-2S, from Beale AFB to Palmdale, CA. The aircraft underwent scheduled upgrades necessary for conversion to a Block 20 aircraft.

22 Jun 2005 Maj Duane Dively died when his U-2 crashed in Southwest Asia as he returned from a combat flight.

15 July 2005 Fire Station 2, located in base housing, was opened.

31 July 2005 Redeployed personnel from the 9th Civil Engineer Squadron (9 CES) returned from Iraq where they supported the ongoing War on Terrorism.

09 Sep 2005 Lt. Col. David Russell, the 99 RS Commander, and other crewmembers flew reconnaissance missions over the Gulf Coast region in late August and early September to assess hurricane damage to the region.

30 Sep 2005 The Air Force Combat Munitions Center (AFCOMAC) operated by the 9 MUNS, graduated its 10,000th student from the Combat Ammunition Planning and Production Course.

28 Oct 2005 The flightline dining facility was dedicated in honor of Sgt Paul R. Ramoneda, a 9th Food Service Squadron baker who lost his life attempting to rescue crewmembers when their B-29 crashed at Fairfield-Suisun AFB (now Travis AFB) in 1950.

05 Jan 2006 Grand opening of the new Airman Leadership School facility at Beale.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

altitude. Photos of North Vietnam captured by SR-71 crews were used by rescuers to plan the raid on Son Tay prisoner-of-war camp to free American POWs.

The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing turned to more peaceful accomplishments following the end of American involvement in Vietnam. The most spectacular of these were the SR-71 speed runs from New York to London and from London to Los Angeles. Major James Sullivan and his RSO, Major Noel Widdefield, flew their SR-71 from New York to London in one hour, 55 minutes, 42 seconds, an average speed of 1,817 mph on 1 September 1974. A Royal Air Force F-4 "Phantom" had set the old record of four hours, 46 minutes in 1969. A few days later, Captain Harold "Buck" Adams, accompanied by Major William Machorek as RSO, established another record by flying the 5,645 miles from London to Los Angeles in three hours, 48 minutes on 13 September 1974. The wing's assault on speed records continued in 1976. Major Adolphus Bledsoe, pilot, and Major John Fuller, RSO, flew the SR-71 over the 1,000-kilometer closed course at 2,092 mph, beating the Soviet MIG-25 "Foxbat's" record of 1,853 mph by more than 200 mph on 27 July. The next day, Captain Eldon Joersz, with Major George T. Morgan as RSO, broke the YF-12A's record of 2,070 for the 15-25 kilometer straight course by flying 2,194 mph. Captain Robert Helt and Major Larry Elliot's flight to 85,131 feet broke the YF-12A's altitude record for horizontal flight also occurred on 28 July.

The 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron rejoined the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing on 1 July 1976 after a stint with the 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. The 99 SRS brought the U.S. Air Force's other high-altitude reconnaissance platform, Lockheed's U-2 "Dragon Lady" to Beale. The nation's high altitude reconnaissance assets resided in one wing for the first time. Much of the U-2s early operational successes were still cloaked in secrecy. The Dragon Lady had gained national and international recognition with overflights of the USSR, overflights of China.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

The 1st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron and 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadrons remained with the 9 SRW and began adjusting to their new mission on 25 June 1966. The 5th Bombardment Squadron, Medium, was inactivated. The SR-71 was a technological marvel and gave the 9 SRW a unique mission. The Blackbird could outperform all previous reconnaissance aircraft. Its versatility ranged from simple battlefield surveillance to specialized strategic surveillance of large areas of the world. Capable of flying at more than 2,000 mph with a 45-degree viewing angle on each side, the SR-71 could survey 60,000 square miles in an hour from altitudes above 80,000 feet. The airplane required a crew of two consisting of a pilot and a reconnaissance systems operator (RSO). Crewmembers were volunteers under 35 years of age and had accrued a minimum of 1,500 flying hours in jet aircraft. The RSO had to be a highly qualified navigator.

The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing focused upon developing the organization and infrastructure necessary for SR-71 operations during the remainder of 1966. Wing personnel included a Director of Intelligence and a Director of Tests who monitored the exhaustive testing program during the primary stages. The wing also needed its own supply squadron to handle the specialized supplies and equipment this unique aircraft required. The 9 SRW passed a Maintenance Standardization and Evaluation Team (MSET) inspection in March 1967 and received the highest rating ever earned a SAC wing. The 9 SRW leadership knew their unit was ready for recce operations.

U.S. Military Commanders assigned to Vietnam quickly recognized the intelligence data collected by the SR-71 as an important resource. The 9 SRW gathered photographic and electronic intelligence data on Southeast Asian nations involved in the conflict until the end of the war. SR-71 crews risked their lives daily to obtain the latest and best reconnaissance data despite the aircraft's advantages regarding speed and operating

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

15 Mar 2006	Captain Heidi Palmer, 940th Civil Engineering Squadron, was killed in an automobile accident while on duty in Honduras.
24 Mar 2006	The 99th Reconnaissance Squadron Theater was dedicated in memory of Maj Duane Dively who died when his U-2 crashed returning from a combat mission in Southwest Asia
03 Apr 2006	Detachment 1, 9th Operations Group, was inactivated.
May 2006	The 5th Reconnaissance Squadron relocated to Suwon Air Base, ROK, from Osan Air Base, ROK, to conduct surge operations during heightened missile activity on the Korean Peninsula.
03 Jun to 04 Jun 2006	Beale AFB hosted an air show featuring the USAF Aerial Demonstration Team, "The Thunderbirds."
14 Jun 2006	The first Block 20 U-2S aircraft arrived at 5th Reconnaissance Squadron, Osan Air Base, ROK.
21 Jul 2006	Maj Jon Huggins, 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, reached a landmark 2,000 flying hours in the U-2 Dragon Lady.
06 Oct 2006	The Air Force Combat Ammunition Center (AFCOMAC) celebrated its 20th anniversary.
03 Nov 2006	The second RQ-4 Global Hawk, a Block 10 model, arrived at Beale AFB.
21 Nov 2006	The first operational RQ-4 Global Hawk mission flown from Beale AFB.
19 Jan 2007	The 9 RW achieved a new landmark this day as the 6,000 consecutive of the U-2 program's continued dedication to missions in SWA Mar 2007 The 9th Munitions Squadron won the Air Force explosive safety plaque for an eighth time for safe munitions handling and training.
03 Mar 2007	Members from Beale's 9th Medical Group returned from a two-week medical readiness training exercise in Nicaragua where they provided medical care to over 6,000 patients
21 April 2007	The SR-71 static display near the flight line was moved to the Heritage Park, across the street from the new running track.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

05 May 2007 The 5th Reconnaissance Squadron at Osan Air Base, ROK, celebrated their 90th Anniversary.

Jun 2007 Beale AFB received the much-anticipated latest weather observation system, the Fixed Meteorological Equipment – 19 (FMQ-19).

23 Jul 2007 The 9 RW RQ-4 Global Hawk Program completed its first operational deployment from Beale AFB to Anderson AFB, Guam.

24 Aug 2007 The 18th Reconnaissance Squadron inactivated. The training mission for the RQ-4A Global Hawk will continue with the 1 RS which is the Formal Training Unit (FTU) for the U-2.

Sep 2007 Team Beale recently celebrated the unique achievement of two veteran U-2 pilots: Maj Brian Peek, a U-2 instructor with the 1 RS, currently deployed to Southwest Asia, and Maj Michael Means, 1 RS Operations Officer, achieved the 2,000 flying hours plateau which few U-2 pilots ever achieve. Only 21 pilots in the history of the U-2 program have ever reached the 2000-hour mark. Maj Peek is number 20 and Maj Means is number 21.

24 Oct 2007 The 9 RW's U-2s and RQ-4s were tasked to collect high-altitude imagery of the wildfires in Southern California. Flown in support of NORTHCOM. The imagery collected during the missions helped to support fire suppression operations in the affected areas.

08 Jan 2008 The 9 RW received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period of 5 Jun 2005 to 31 May 2007.

17 Jan 2008 The first of two KC-135R Stratotankers assigned to the 940th Air Refueling Wing, a tenant assigned to Beale AFB, departed for the 916th Air Refueling Wing at Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina.

22 Feb 2008 Inspectors rated the 9 RW "Excellent" during an ACC Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI).

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

The "Blackbird" first flew at Palmdale, California on 22 December 1964. The aircraft exceeded 1,000 mph at more than 45,000 feet of altitude during the flight. The first SR-71 touched down on the Beale runway in January 1966. The first T-38, a Northrop built aircraft to be used as a trainer and chase plane for the SR-71, had arrived six months earlier. Fifteenth Air Force suggested the 9th Strategic Aerospace Wing be redesignated the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing and continue the proud history of the organization in October 1965. The U.S. Air Force accepted the suggestion. The 4200th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was inactivated and the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing transferred to Beale AFB to assume the "recce" mission on 25 June 1966. The U.S. Air Force also activated the 9th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron to replace the 4200th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron.



*Personnel assigned to the 9 SRW prepare for a DV flight circa 1989. The first T-38 was assigned to Beale AFB in 1965.*

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

building, and constructed several new facilities which included 337 additional housing units.



*Captain Joersz, Pilot and Major Morgan, RSO, flew a flyby with the SR-71 at the Toronto Air Show on 29 August 1975.*

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

28 Feb 2008	The RQ-4 Global Hawk program reached a prominent milestone when it surpassed the 10-year anniversary mark since its first flight at Edwards AFB, California.
18 Mar 2008	The Honorable Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, visited Beale AFB to meet with Airmen and observe the 9 RW's unique high-altitude Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance mission.
20 May 2008	HQ ACC redesignated the 9th Services Squadron (9 SVS) as the 9th Force Support Squadron (9 FSS).
30 Jun 2008	The first Block 20 model RQ-4 Global Hawk arrived at Beale AFB for assignment to the 9 RW.
14 Aug 2008	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Rodney J. McKinley, visited Beale AFB to learn more about the base's role in the U.S. Air Force's Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance mission.
24 Sep 2008	Two war-tested RQ-4A Global Hawk unmanned ISR aircraft arrived at Beale AFB after several years supporting combat operations in SWA.
20 Nov 2008	The 12th Reconnaissance Squadron conducted a RQ-4 mission that marked the first RQ-4 Global Hawk mission in support of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and also the day that the Global Hawk passed 27,000 flying hours.
Dec 2008	The 9 RW designated the interim parent wing for the new Project Liberty MC-12 mission.
12 Aug 2009	The 9 RW earned an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 June 2007 to 31 May 2009 time frame.
16 Aug 2010	The 9 RW earned an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 June 2009 to 31 May 2010 time frame.
10 Jun 2011	The first MC-12W Liberty arrived at Beale AFB.
29 Jul 2011	The 9 RW earned a Meritorious Unit Award for the 1 June 2009 to 31 May 2011 time frame.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

26 Aug 2011 The 489th Reconnaissance Squadron was activated and assigned to the 9th Operations Group, Beale AFB, California (MC-12W operations).

19 Sep 2011 The 69th Reconnaissance Group was activated as a tenant at Grand Forks AFB, ND and assigned to the 9 RW at Beale AFB, CA to manage RQ-4 operations.

19 Sep 2011 The 348th Reconnaissance Squadron was activated at Grand Forks AFB, ND and assigned to the 69 RG to conduct RQ-4 operations.

01 May 2012 The 427th Reconnaissance Squadron was activated and assigned to the 9th Operations Group at Beale AFB, CA (MC-12W operations).

21 Sep 2012 The 9 RW earned an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 June 2011 to 31 May 2012 time frame.

21 Jan 2013 The 9 CES Headquarters building was damaged due to a structure fire. No one was seriously injured; however, the building would need to be replaced.

01 Mar 2013 Detachment 1, 69 RG was activated at Anderson AB, Guam. Detachment 3, 9 OG was inactivated.

01 Mar 2013 Detachment 2, 69 RG was activated at Singonella NAS, Italy. Detachment 4, 9 OG was inactivated.

01 Mar 2013 Operating Location A, 69 RG was activated at Beale AFB, CA.

10 Jun 2013 HQ ACC inactivated the 9th Maintenance Operations Squadron at Beale AFB.

29 Sep 2014 HQ ACC reassigned the 9th Reconnaissance Wing from Headquarters, 12th Air Force to Headquarters, 25th Air Force.

18 Nov 2014 The 9 RW earned a Meritorious Unit Award for the 1 June 2013 to 31 May 2014 time frame.

01 May 2015 HQ ACC inactivated the 489th Reconnaissance Squadron.

15 May 2015 HQ ACC activated the 7th Reconnaissance Squadron, Singonella NAS, Italy (assigned to 69 RG). Detachment 2, 69 RG was inactivated.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

Strategic Aerospace Wing (9 SAW) on 1 April 1962. The wing received its first Titan I missile on 13 April. The 9 SAW continued to fulfill its nuclear deterrence role until 1966. Strategic Air Command and Tactical Air Command (TAC) completed a transfer agreement on 8 November 1965 assigning Mountain Home AFB to TAC effective 1 January 1966. The 9th Air Refueling Squadron inactivated on 15 December 1965. The 9 SAW became a tenant unit and began final phase-out activities at Mountain Home AFB on 1 January 1966. The last 9 SAW B-47E departed Mountain Home AFB on 10 February and assigned personnel followed soon after; however, the 9th was not destined to disappear.

### WORLDWIDE STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE

As the 9th Strategic Aerospace Wing began inactivation activities at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho in early 1966, plans were already being laid to keep the 9 SAW lineage and traditions alive. President Lyndon B. Johnson announced the development of the SR-71 "Blackbird" in July 1964. This new and advanced aircraft would give SAC a reconnaissance capability that far exceeded any then available in terms of speed, altitude, and increased area coverage. The SR-71 would fly at more than three times the speed of sound and operate at altitudes above 80,000 feet. Two Pratt and Whitney J-58 turbojet engines, the first engines to be flight qualified at Mach 3 by the Air Force, powered the Blackbird. It would carry the most advanced observation equipment in the world. Speculation began immediately that Beale Air Force Base, California would be the home of this new aircraft. The Department of Defense announced in December 1964 that the 4200th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing would activate at Beale AFB, California on 1 January 1965 as the parent unit of the Lockheed SR-71. To prepare Beale AFB for its new mission, contractors lengthened the runway, remodeled the former Semi-Automatic Ground Environment (SAGE)

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

remained in the FRESH APPROACH organizational structure when it redeployed back to Mountain Home AFB in mid-January 1958. The U.S. Air Force officially adopted the deputy commander concept and the 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium became the first unit to officially convert to the new organizational structure on 1 October 1958. The organizational structure change made it possible for the U.S. Air Force to launch an immediate retaliatory strike in response to nuclear attack on the United States. Massive retaliation became a cornerstone of national policy and an effective deterrent to perceived threats. For its meritorious service in testing and refining reorganization efforts, the 9th Bombardment Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.



*A 1st Bombardment Squadron aircrew discusses a mission in front of their B-47, February 1956.*

To reflect its expanding role as a bomber and missile organization, the 9th Bombardment Wing became the 9th

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

31 Aug 2015	The 9 RW earned an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 June 2014 to 31 May 2015 time frame.
16 Sep 2015	Recce Airmen conducted the final flight of the MC-12W from Beale AFB.
20 Nov 2015	HQ USAF inactivated the 427th Reconnaissance Squadron.
27 Jun 2016	Detachment 2, 9 OG was activated at Edwards AFB, California.
20 Sep 2016	A TU-2S two-seat trainer crashed 20 miles west of Beale AFB. Lt. Col. Ira S. Eadie, the instructor pilot, was killed during the ejection sequence. The student pilot received minor injuries.
22 Sep 2016	The 9 RW earned an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 June 2015 to 31 May 2016 time frame.
22 Mar 2017	HQ ACC activated Detachment 3, 9 OG at Beale AFB, California.
01 Aug 2017	Detachment 4, 9 OG was activated at Anderson AB, Guam.
17 Oct 2017	The 9 RW earned a Meritorious Unit Award for the 1 June 2016 to 31 May 2017 time frame.
02 Aug 2018	HQ ACC activated Detachment 1, 69th Maintenance Squadron and Detachment 2, 69 RG at Beale AFB, California.
02 Aug 2018	Operating Location A, Detachment 2, 69 RG was activated at Grand Forks AFB, ND.
29 Aug 2018	Detachment 5, 9 OG was activated at Beale AFB, California.
04 Sep 2018	The 427th Reconnaissance Squadron was activated at Beale AFB, California and assigned to the 9 OG. Detachment 3, 9 OG was inactivated.
08 Nov 2018	A blaze known as the "Camp Fire" ignited near Paradise, California located roughly 50 miles north of Beale AFB in Butte County. Smoke and heat from the large fire created unpredictable weather conditions, and the dense smoke affected Beale Airmen conducting activities outdoors (aircraft maintenance, security, civil engineering, etc.) for much of November 2018. The fire caused

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

at least 85 civilian casualties, injured 12 civilians and firefighters, burned an area of 153,336 acres, and destroyed more than 18,000 structures. The Northern California towns of Paradise and Concow were almost completely destroyed.

07 Dec 2018 The 9 RW earned an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2018 time frame.

28 Jun 2019 HQ ACC inactivated the 69th Reconnaissance Group and 69th Maintenance Squadron at Grand Forks AFB, ND. The 7th Reconnaissance Squadron, 12th Reconnaissance Squadron, and 348th Reconnaissance Squadron were reassigned to the 319th Operations Group, Grand Forks AFB, ND.

01 Aug 2019 USAF changes to the medical field began to affect the 9th Medical Group at Beale. The 9th Aerospace Medicine Squadron was redesignated 9th Operational Medical Readiness Squadron. The 9th Medical Operations Squadron was redesignated 9th Healthcare Operations Squadron.

11 Oct 2019 HQ ACC reassigned the 9th Reconnaissance Wing from Headquarters, 25th Air Force to Headquarters, 16th Air Force.

19 Dec 2019 HQ ACC activated the 74th Reconnaissance Squadron at Beale AFB. The unit was assigned to the 9 OG.

21 Feb 2020 HQ ACC activated Detachment 3, 9 OG at RAF Fairford, UK.

28 Feb 2020 The 9th Medical Group provided Beale AFB personnel with public health precautions advised by the CDC to help Airmen and their families remain healthy during a COVID-19 outbreak in the local community.

06 Mar 2020 The 9th Medical Group informed Beale AFB personnel about USAF Health Protection Conditions (HPCON) "0" to "D" in anticipation of possible changes as the monitored COVID-19 issues in the local area.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

The 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium and its contingent of B-47s were an integral part of America's deterrent capability during the Cold War against communism. Strategic Air Command maintained its forces in a constant state of alert from shortly after World War II to the early 1990s. The 9 BW trained and practiced incessantly to achieve and maintain the high state of readiness needed to fulfill its vital mission. The development of faster aircraft and missiles steadily reduced reaction time in the decade after World War II. Strategic Air Command had to be ready to launch its armada of nuclear bombers within 15 minutes and be poised for retaliatory strikes with the arrival of the missile age. Meeting this challenge required radical changes to the organizational structure that was in place following World War II. After almost two years of planning, SAC developed a new organization. Nicknamed FRESH APPROACH, the new organizational structure was designed to ensure a 15-minute response time. The new organizational structure required extensive testing for practicality, mobility, and economy before command leaders were willing to discard the proven organizational structure.

The 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium, under the command of Colonel Robert V. DeShazo, was one of three SAC units to begin "service-testing" the new deputy commander system of management on 1 July 1957. The wing implemented FRESH APPROACH concept and worked out the "kinks" of the new organization from July to December 1957. The test of the proposed organizational structure came during a large SAC mobility and overseas deployment exercise. The 9 BW was the only participating unit with the deputy commander organizational structure. Elements of the 9 BW and 9th Air Refueling Squadron were scattered from Elmendorf AFB, Alaska to Andersen AFB, Guam between October 1957 and January 1958. Although some problems occurred during the overseas mobility test, the 9 BW continued to firmly support the new concept. The wing

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

February 1951. The U.S. Air Force inactivated the 9th Bombardment Group, Medium on 16 June 1952 and then placed the organization in Records Unit Status. The U.S. Air Force bestowed the honors earned by the inactive 9th Bombardment Group, Medium upon the 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium on 4 January 1955.

The 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium remained at Fairfield-Suisun AFB flying B-29s until 1 May 1953. Strategic Air Command (SAC) assumed jurisdiction of Mountain Home AFB, Idaho from the Military Air Transport Service on 1 May and transferred the 9 BW to the base. Although some personnel began arriving at Mountain Home early in April 1953, the bulk of the 9 RW and its assigned B-29s moved in May. Simultaneously, the 2nd Aerial Refueling Squadron at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona became the 9th Air Refueling Squadron and transferred to the 9 BW at Mountain Home AFB. A vast construction project was planned for Mountain Home AFB to accommodate the personnel and equipment assigned to the 9 BW. The wing was anticipating the acquisition of B-47s to replace their B-29s.

Colonel William C. Kingsbury, Commander, 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium, landed at Mountain Home in the wing's first B-47 "Stratojet" on 15 September 1954. The remainder of new aircraft arrived over the next few months. The 9 BW was ready for a mobility test by June 1955. The 9th Bombardment Wing, Medium, bombers and crews spanned the continent and the Atlantic Ocean for a 60-day temporary duty assignment to England to test the wing's mobility training concept earlier that month. The 9th Bombardment Wing displayed Strategic Air Command's deterrent capability to strike anywhere in the world at anytime in November 1955. The B-47 aircrews flew from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho to New Zealand for a distance of 8,300 miles nonstop with the aid of aerial refueling. This was the longest point-to-point flight for any Strategic Air Command aircraft or unit up to that time.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

09 Mar 2020      Colonel Andrew M. Clark, Commander, 9th Reconnaissance Wing directed the implementation of HPCON Alpha (report of unusual health risk or disease) at Beale AFB in response to the spread of COVID-19 in the local area. Beale personnel were directed to review all health alerts; review plans and make preparations; conduct routine hand washing; cough or sneeze into sleeves; eat a healthy diet, exercise, receive vaccinations, and familiarize themselves with COVID-19.

Aug 2020      A series of lightning-sparked fires ignited within counties mainly to the north and west of Beale AFB. The "August Complex" fires eventually burned 1,032,648 acres and destroyed 935 structures in Mendocino, Humboldt, Trinity, Tehama, Glen, Lake, and Colusa counties. Smoke from the large fires created unpredictable weather conditions, dense smoke affected Beale Airmen conducting activities outdoors, and limited visibility necessary for flying activities depending on wind conditions for much of August and September 2020.

28 Aug 2020      The 9 RW began experimenting with an A-Staff Organizational Structure. Unofficially, the assigned groups would be "stood-down," assigned squadrons would report directly to the wing commander, and a wing A-Staff would communicate unit issues directly to their A-Staff counterparts assigned to HQ ACC.

30 Sep 2020      HQ ACC inactivated the 9th Medical Support Squadron.

30 Dec 2020      The 9 RW earned an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the 1 June 2019 to 31 May 2020 time frame.

20 Sep 2021      The 9 RW earned a Meritorious Unit Award for the 1 June 2020 to 31 May 2021 time frame.

07 July 2022      The last RQ-4 Global Hawk assigned to Beale AFB departed.

21 Nov 2022      The 9 RW earned a Meritorious Unit Award for the 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022 time frame.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

Oct 2024 The 9th Reconnaissance Wing began deploying personnel as part of the new Air Force Force Generation model.

07 Nov 2024 The 9 RW earned a Meritorious Unit Award for the 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022 time frame.

## 9TH RECONNAISSANCE WING

photographic, electronic, and weather reconnaissance operations. The 1 SRS, 5 SRS, and 99 SRS crewmembers would be expected to operate RB-29s and a few B-36s to carry out their mission. The 9th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron also joined the 9 SRW on 1 May 1949. The reconnaissance mission continued for only eleven months.



*A 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, B-29, "The Spearhead," circa August 1945.*

The U.S. Air Force redesignated the 9 SRW as the 9th Bombardment Wing (9 BW), Heavy, with similar redesignations of subordinate units (9th Bombardment Group, Heavy; 1st Bombardment Squadron, Heavy; 5th Bombardment Squadron, Heavy; and 99th Bombardment Squadron, Heavy) on 1 April 1950. Seven months later, the wing and subordinate units were redesignated again to Bombardment, Medium (9th Bombardment Wing, Medium; 9th Bombardment Group, Medium; 1st Bombardment Squadron, Medium; 5th Bombardment Squadron, Medium; and 99th Bombardment Squadron, Medium) on 2 November 1950. The U.S. Air Force realigned its flying operations and placed the flying squadrons directly under control of the wings in early

and combat equipment to and from the Japanese main islands.

The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy continued to conduct combat operations against Japan from North Field on Tinian Island until August 1945. The group conducted other operations other than bombing and mine-laying operations such as sea search, weather reconnaissance, radarscope, counter-radar, wind runs, and photo reconnaissance. The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy remained active after Japan surrendered on 14 August 1945 by transporting personnel and supplies around the vast Pacific Theater. The group also conducted several “display-of-force” missions over the next three years. The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy eventually moved to Harmon Field, Guam, where it inactivated on 20 October 1948 (end of “Bestowed History”).

### THE U.S. AIR FORCE EMERGES

The National Security Act of 1947 established the U.S. Air Force as a sister service of the Army and Navy following the end of World War II. The concurrent establishment of major commands within the U.S. Air Force brought wholesale realignments and included the creation of wings complete with subordinate groups and squadrons. The U.S. Air Force established the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (9 SRW) on 25 April 1949. The Air Force activated the new wing on 1 May 1949. The new military branch of service also activated the redesignated 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Group (9 SRG) and the 1st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron (1 SRS), 5th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron (5 SRS), and the 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron (99 SRS) after only seven months of inactivation. The wing and its subordinate units were stationed at Fairfield-Suisun (later Travis) Air Force Base (AFB), California. The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing's mission was to obtain complete data through visual,



A 99th Aero Squadron rear gunner aboard a Salmson, circa 1917.

### BIRTH OF THE 9TH

The 9th Reconnaissance Wing (9 RW) remains stationed at Beale Air Force Base located in California's Northern Sacramento Valley. The Air Force activated the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing on 1 May 1949. The new wing inherited the bestowed honors of the 9th Bombardment Group. The U.S. Army Air Corps initially established the 9th Bombardment Group as the 9th Group (Observation) on 19 July 1922. The 9th Group (Observation) was organized at Mitchel Field, New York on 1 August 1922 and served as the headquarters for the 1st Squadron (Observation) and 5th Squadron (Observation). The 99th Observation Squadron was initially attached to the group on 9 November 1928. The squadron would officially be assigned to the group on 15 February 1929.

The 1st Squadron (Observation) traced its lineage back to the 1st Provisional Aero Squadron, the oldest squadron in the Air Force. Known today as the 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, the unit originally was

organized on 5 March 1913. The 1st Provisional Aero Squadron's mission consisted of helping the Second Army Division guard the United States and Mexico border. Three years later, in March 1916, the Mexican outlaw Pancho Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico, and the United States Army rushed units to Columbus to protect the town. The 1st Aero Squadron, commanded by Captain Benjamin D. Foulois, also moved to Columbus. The military action marked the first time air and ground units combined efforts during an operation. The U.S. Army ordered the 1st Aero Squadron, the only U.S. tactical air unit in the field, to support General John J. Pershing's punitive expedition against Mexico on 15 March 1916. Captain T. F. Dodd worked with Captain Foulois who served as an observer and launched in a Curtiss R-2 for a flight across the border and into Mexican territory the following day (16 March 1916). The flight marked the first American military aerial reconnaissance mission under combat conditions.

The following year the 99th Aero Squadron joined the 1st Aero Squadron to support General Pershing in Europe. The 1st Aero Squadron arrived in France in October 1917 and the 99th Aero Squadron followed two months later. Both squadrons began combat training in French Salmson and Breguet aircraft to conduct observation duties for Allied forces during World War I. In 1918, the 1st Aero Squadron participated in the Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne combat operations. The 1st Aero Squadron also saw action in the defense sectors in Lorraine and Champagne. The four black crosses depicted on the 9th Reconnaissance Wing's emblem commemorate these air battles. The 99th Aero Squadron participated in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne operations and the defense of the Lorraine sector. Both squadrons joined the great air armada consisting of 1,481 airplanes participating in the air offensive ordered by General Pershing in the St. Mihiel sector from 12 September to 15 September 1918.

The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation the following month while conducting another air operation against Japan. The Allies planned on isolating Japan and depriving her of resources transported from conquered territories located in China, Manchuria, and Korea by laying mines in the sea lanes surrounding the Japanese home islands. The mining operations would help to immobilize the Japanese sea transport service. The Allies expected the denial of these war materials to drastically reduce Japan's military power and ability to continue fighting the war. The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy would help the Allied effort by conducting mining operations of the Shimonoseki Straits and the waters around the harbors of northwest Honshu and Kyushu in conjunction with other bombardment groups. It was hoped that the mining operations would block sea traffic on the Inland Seas and isolate the important northern ports.

The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy conducted eight missions requiring 209 sorties between 13 May and 28 May 1945. The aircrews flew the missions at 5,500 feet, on alternating nights, and often faced unpredictable and adverse weather conditions. The group usually faced determined Japanese anti-aircraft artillery fire and fighter aircraft protecting the target areas. The Group's bomber crews systematically covered the vital sea-lanes despite the adverse navigational and enemy defense difficulties. The group employed 18 B-29s to successfully mine the Inland Sea approaches to the Shimonoseki Straits on 18 May and 19 May. The group launched another 18 B-29s to mine the outer approaches to the straits, while four aircraft mined the inner approaches again on 20 May and 21 May. The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy returned with 30 B-29s to mine the main channel of the Shimonoseki Straits on the night of 22 May to 23 May. The mine-laying operations crippled Japanese efforts to move shipments of food, raw materials, manufactured war supplies, troop elements,

included heavy and light anti-aircraft artillery, search lights, flak boats, and fighter aircraft.

The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy earned Distinguished Unit Citations for two very difficult missions. The first mission involved the group's attack on the industrial area of Kawasaki, Japan on 15 April and 16 April 1945. Japanese industries located in Tokyo and Yokohama depended on Kawasaki's components. Maintenance personnel readied 33 group B-29's for the bombing mission. The Japanese had positioned heavy defenses on both flanks and within the immediate target area. The approach to, bomb run, and egress of the immediate target area was considered extremely hazardous. The aircrews had to navigate the 1,500 miles between Tinian and Japan at low-level, over water, and at night. Severe turbulence during the flight affected navigation equipment but the bombers managed to remain on course. The plan of attack placed the 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy as the last formation to make a bombing run over the target area. Group personnel expected Japanese defenses to be fully alerted, know the approximate bombing altitude of the formation, and know the course and speed of the attacking aircraft. The group noted exceptionally close coordination between enemy searchlights and antiaircraft guns which subjected the bombers to concentrations of anti-aircraft fire on their way to the target, over the target, and after the egress of the target area. Group personnel also noted intense, accurate fire from flak boats positioned along the flight path to and from the target area. Aircrews identified approximately 56 Japanese fighter aircraft during the attack. The industrial area of Kawasaki was destroyed during the attack but the 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy sustained heavy losses. The group lost four of their 33 attacking B-29s which crashed during the mission and six others suffered severe damage.



5th Squadron (Observation) Airmen pose near their aircraft at Mitchel Field, New York, circa 1921.

The 1st Squadron (Observation) and 5th Squadron (Observation) participated in a series of bombing tests led by Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell to prove a warships vulnerability to aerial attack in 1921. After the completion and careful study of three successful tests, a joint Army and Navy board concluded that it was imperative to national defense to develop aviation as quickly as possible. The 9th Group (Observation) was organized at Mitchel Field, New York on 1 August 1922 to serve as headquarters for the 1st Squadron (Observation) and 5th Squadron (Observation).

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the 9th Group performed normal observation, bombing, and training flights. In addition, their crews participated in numerous air shows. The aircraft assigned to the group evolved from the bamboo and bailing-wire models of World War I to the DH-4 Liberty, B-7, B-10, and B-18 bombers used during the inter-war period.

The Army transferred the 9th Bombardment Group (Medium) to the Panama Canal Zone in 1940 as the potential for war began to be viewed as threatening to American interests. The group's bombers were flying anti-submarine patrols from Trinidad in the British West Indies when the United States joined the Allies during World War II. The anti-submarine mission continued until the autumn of 1942 when the group moved to Orlando, Florida. The 9th Bombardment Group (Heavy) trained bombardment group cadres, developed new combat tactics, and tested new flying equipment while stationed at Orlando.

In February 1944, the 9th Bombardment Group (Heavy) was suddenly relieved from assignment to the Army Air Force Tactical Center. The group received orders to leave its B-17s behind as it transferred first to Dalhart, Texas and then onward to McCook Field, Nebraska. The group's personnel found the reason for leaving their Flying Fortresses behind upon arrival at McCook Field: the new Boeing B-29 Super Fortresses. The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy completed training in November 1944 and began movement to the Pacific Theater. The group had settled at its new home at North Field, Tinian Island, located in the Marianas by 20 January 1945.

The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy began conducting bombing raids against Japanese installations in the northern Marianas just one week later between 27 January and 31 January 1945. The unit attacked its first defended target on 9 February which consisted of the seaplane base on Moen (an island located in the Truks). The group struck heavy gun emplacements on Iwo Jima in preparation of the planned amphibious landing just three days later. The group utilized their B-29s, each carrying an experienced naval officer as observer, to search for Japanese picket ships in advance of the Navy planned carrier attack against Japan's main islands on 14 February.



*The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, flightline, North Field, Tinian Island, circa 1944.*

The 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy Super Fortresses returned to the Japanese homeland five days later. The group worked with B-29s assigned to the 504th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy to inflict heavy damage on a well-defended aircraft factory in Tokyo. Incendiary bombs proved to be the most effective munition to use against the wooden buildings that housed Japan's war industry. A total of 32 bombers assigned to the 9th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy joined an all-out Allied effort against Tokyo's port and industrial areas on 25 February 1945. The group continued to attack Japanese aircraft factories, chemical plants, naval bases, and airdromes throughout the final months of the war. The group participated in Allied raids that destroyed large areas of Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe, Tokyo, and other Japanese cities. Many of the designated targets were protected by various Japanese defensive systems that