



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet

RC-135V/W RIVET JOINT

Mission

The RC-135V/W Rivet Joint reconnaissance aircraft supports theater and national level consumers with near real time on-scene intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination capabilities.

Features

The aircraft is an extensively modified C-135. The Rivet Joint's modifications are primarily related to its on-board sensor suite, which allows the mission crew to detect, identify and geolocate signals throughout the electromagnetic spectrum. The mission crew can then forward gathered information in a variety of formats to a wide range of consumers via Rivet Joint's extensive communications suite.



The interior seats more than 30 people, including the cockpit crew, electronic warfare officers, intelligence operators and in-flight maintenance technicians.

The Rivet Joint fleet was re-engined with CFM-56 engines with an upgraded flight deck instrumentation and navigational systems to FAA/ICAO standards. These standards include conversion from analog readouts to a digital "glass cockpit" configuration.

All Rivet Joint airframe and mission systems modifications are overseen by L-3 Communications (previously Raytheon), under the oversight of Air Force Materiel Command.

Background

The current RC-135 fleet is the latest iteration of modifications to this pool of -135 aircraft going back to 1962. Initially employed by Strategic Air Command to satisfy nationally tasked intelligence collection requirements, the RC-135 fleet has also participated in every sizable armed conflict involving U.S. assets during its tenure.

RC-135s were present supporting operations in Vietnam, the Mediterranean for Operation El Dorado Canyon, Grenada for Operation Urgent Fury, Panama for Operation Just Cause, and Southwest Asia for operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. RC-135s have maintained a constant presence in Southwest Asia since the early 1990s.

All RC-135s are assigned to Air Combat Command. The RC-135 is permanently based at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., and operated by the 55th Wing, using various forward deployment locations worldwide.

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General Characteristics

Primary Function: Reconnaissance

Contractor: L-3 Communications

Power Plant: Four CFM International F108-CF-201 high bypass turbofan engines

Thrust: 21,600 pounds each engine

Wingspan: 131 feet (39.9 meters)

Length: 135 feet (41.1 meters)

Height: 42 feet (12.8 meters)

Weight: 173,000 pounds (78,743 kilograms)

Maximum Takeoff Weight: 297,000 pounds (133,633 kilograms)

Fuel Capacity: 130,000 pounds (58,967 kilograms)

Speed: 500+ miles per hour (Mach.66)

Range: 3,900 miles (6,500 kilometers)

Ceiling: 50,000 feet (15,240 meters)

Crew: (flight crew) five (augmented) - three pilots, two navigators; (mission flight crew) 21-27, depending on mission requirements, minimum consisting of three electronic warfare officers, 14 intelligence operators and four inflight/airborne maintenance technicians

Unit Cost: unavailable

Initial operating capability: January 1964

Inventory: Active force, 17; Reserve, 0; Guard, 0

Point of Contact

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