



Republic RF-84F Thunderflash

The RF-84F Thunderflash was derived from the F-84 Thunderjet, one of the early jet powered straight-wing fighters, which first flew in 1946. Although sharing the same F84 designation, the RF-84F Thunderflash, like the F-84F Thunderstreak, had a swept wing and tail surfaces. Two F-84 aircraft were modified with swept wings, the YF-84F (F-84F) keeping the nose intake, and the YFR-84F (RF-84F) adopting wing-root intakes. These wing-root intakes reduced thrust making the aircraft unsuitable as a fighter, but the long clean nose made it ideal for reconnaissance, the nose containing up to 15 cameras. A computerised control adjusted settings for speed, altitude, and light. A 'periscope' or view-finder display allowed the pilot to visualise what the vertical camera would see, and an audio recorder let the pilot narrate proceedings. It was armed with 4 x 0.5 inch machinguns at the wing-roots. Completed in 1952, it did not become operational until 1954. Along with the F-84F, the RF-84F suffered from the same construction delays, powerplant and other problems. Production models had the sliding canopy changed to an upward hinged unit. Later aircraft had futher modifications such as wing-fences, spoilers etc to improve handling and performance. The aircraft usually flew with 2 underwing fuel tanks, which also contained Photoflash ejectors for night operations.

Retired from service in 1957, but reactivated in 1961, finally retired from the Air National Guard in 1972.

The RF-84F was operated by other nations such as West Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Italy, and France. French aircraft operated from Cyprus in support of Anglo/French forces during operation Musketeer - the Suez Crisis;



























