

## 4 EXPEDITIONARY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

4 Observation Squadron constituted, 22 Nov 1940

Activated, 1 Apr 1941

Redesignated 4 Observation Squadron (Medium), 26 Feb 1942

Redesignated 4 Observation Squadron, 4 Jul 1942

Redesignated 4 Reconnaissance Squadron (Special), 25 Jun 1943

Redesignated 4 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 20 May 1944

Redesignated 4 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Photo-Jet, 17 Jun 1948

Inactivated, 14 Mar 1949

Redesignated 4 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron and activated, 25 Oct 1966

Organized, 18 Nov 1966

Inactivated, 15 Oct 1971

Redesignated 4 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Flight and converted to provisional status, 31 Jan 2005

Redesignated 4 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, 16 May 2007

### STATIONS

Ponce Air Base (later, Losey Field), Puerto Rico, 1 Apr 1941

Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico, 27 Oct 1943

Coolidge Field, Antigua, 21 May 1945

Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico, 5 Oct 1945

Rio Hato, Panama, 20 Aug 1946

France Field (later, AFB), Canal Zone, 1 Dec 1947  
Howard AFB, Canal Zone, 20 Aug 1948-14 Mar 1949  
Bergstrom AFB, TX, 18 Nov 1966-15 Oct 1971  
Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan

#### **ASSIGNMENTS**

13 Composite Wing, 1 Apr 1941  
Puerto Rican Department, 11 Jul 1941  
72 Observation Group, 29 Mar 1942  
Antilles Air Command, 1 Jun 1943  
Caribbean Air Command, 25 Aug 1946  
6 Fighter Wing, 1 Jun 1948  
5620 Group, 26 Jul 1948  
5600 (later 5600 Composite) Wing, 20 Aug 1948-14 Mar 1949  
75 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, c. 18 Nov 1966  
67 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 15 Jul-15 Oct 1971  
Assigned to Air Combat Command to activate or inactivate at any time on or after 31 Jan 2005

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Puerto Rican Department, 29 Mar 1942-23 Mar 1943  
Antilles Air Task Force, 23 Mar-1 Jun 1943  
Provisional Composite Reconnaissance Group, 1 Feb-28 Jul 1948

#### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

O-47, 1941-1945  
O-49, 1941-1945  
O-52, 1941-1944  
B-18, 1943  
L-4A, 1943-1945  
UC-78, 1943-1945  
UC-45  
P-39, 1943  
B-25, 1944  
TB-26, 1944-1945  
F-5, 1945-1946  
C-25, 1946-1947  
C-47, 1946-1947  
CQ-3, 1946-1947  
PQ-14, 1946-194  
F-6, 1947-1948  
FP (later RF)-80, 1947-1949  
RF-4, 1966-1971

#### **COMMANDERS**

1st Lt Cecil L. Wells, 1 Apr 1941  
Lt Col Eugene H. Rice, 1 May 1941  
Lt Col Willard W. Lazarus, 25 Feb 1942  
Capt Elmer A. Dixon, 29 Jan 1943  
Capt Richard L. Rider, 29 Mar 1943  
Maj Gerard F. Markey, 11 Jun 1943  
Maj Bertram S. Petersen, 25 Feb 1944  
1st Lt George M. Ries, Dec 1944  
Maj Bertram S. Petersen, Dec 1944  
Capt William F. Monzel, 20 Dec 1944  
Capt Alberto A. Nido, Jun 1945  
Maj William F. Monzel, Jun 1945  
Capt Edward M. Fritsch, Dec 1945  
1st Lt Erwin K. Priwer, 2 Jan 1946  
Capt Ronald G. Rutt, 26 Aug 1946  
Capt Russell J. Nash, Oct 1946  
Capt Valentine W. Krug, 24 Jan 1947  
1st Lt Homer H. Houghton, C. 26 Oct 1947  
1st Lt Thomas F. Barton, Nov 1947  
Capt William M. Gates, 15 Dec 1947  
Capt Valentine W. Krug, 20 Dec 1947-Unkn  
Col Robert O. Crabtree, 18 Nov 1966  
Lt Col Fred W. Wright, Aug 1967  
Lt Col Gustav B. Klatt, Jun 1969  
Lt Col Dannie T. Waddle Jr., Sep-15 Oct 1971

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

World War II American Theater

### **Campaign Streamers**

None

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jan 1968-30 Apr 1969

1 Nov 1969-31 May 1971

15 Jul-15 Oct 1971

## **EMBLEM**



4 Observation Squadron emblem: Over and through a red-orange disc, border blue, piped white, a caricatured black bird, yellow beak and feet, smoking a cigar proper and wearing a light blue turtle neck sweater, white aviator's helmet and goggles, having a wood chip proper on the left shoulder and peering through a monocular; the figure leaning against the edge of the disc with feet crossed, expressing an attitude of watchful cockiness. (Approved, 12 Mar 1943)



4 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron emblem: On a disc Gules, a caricatured bird Sable standing and leaning toward dexter with sinister hand on hip and dexter foot crossed over sinister foot, smoking a cigar of the last flamant of the first, smoke Argent; wearing an aviator's helmet with goggles and peering through a monocular all of the last detailed of the second also wearing a sweater Celeste with a wood chip on the sinister shoulder Or with a beak and feet of

the like, all within a narrow border Blue. Attached below the disc, a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed "4 EXP RECONNAISSANCE SQ" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The black bird aptly expresses the squadron's spirit and mission by his nonchalant attitude of "observing". His demeanor intimates that the squadron is "looking for trouble". (Approved, 15 Mar 2005; updated, Oct 2009)

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

The Squadron trained from Apr 1941-Oct 1943 to support ground forces under the 13 Composite Wing alert plan, taking part in maneuvers, towing targets, and tracking missions to train and test installations in the Caribbean.

One of the unit's L-4A, made a forced landing in a remote area of Puerto Rico on 3 March 1944 and, while the pilot was unharmed, when a unit Stinson L-1 was sent to investigate and rescue the pilot, it too crashed and suffered major damage.

One of the first P-39Q's (42-19618) was destroyed by fire following a crash on a test flight near Mayaguez, Puerto Rico on 24 March 1944 but, again, the Squadron avoided a loss and the pilot got out OK. 2LT John Martin, Jr. was not so fortunate when he crashed a P-39Q on 7 July 10 miles south of Mayaguez and was killed in the crash. Later, on 27 December, another P-39Q was lost at Borinquen Field when 1st Lt Robert J. Greene was killed. But the greatest loss came on 19 February 1945 when one of the B-25Gs, while attempting a special aerial photography mission of Tobago Island in the British West Indies, crashed with the loss of all six crew members.

In mid-May 1945, the 4 was equipped with F-5Gs and moved to Antigua in the British West Indies where it flew practice missions until the end of the war. On 5 Oct 1945, it returned to Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico and carried out navigational training and photo missions of installations in the Caribbean perimeter. Reduced to one officer and three enlisted, the squadron placed its aircraft in storage until its move without personnel and equipment to Rio Hato, Panama in 1946. In Panama, it carried out tracking and tow-target missions for the coast artillery.

The squadron received its first jet aircraft FP-80As (later, RF-80As) on 18 Dec 1947 but lost its tow-target and radio control flight capabilities.

From Mar 1948 until its inactivation in Mar 1949, it flew training missions and reconnaissance missions in Central America.

From activation in Nov 1966-Nov 1969, it served as a replacement training unit for crews training in the RF-4C. The squadron lost its mission of training new crews and became an operational reconnaissance squadron at the end of 1969. From then until inactivation in Oct 1971, it flew reconnaissance training missions and maintained a worldwide mobility capability.

The first Air Force MC-12W intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance aircraft destined for operations in Afghanistan arrived Dec. 27 at Bagram Airfield. That same day, Bagram's 455th Air Expeditionary Wing stood up the 4 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, which will operate the twin-engine turboprop aircraft. "Knowledge is power and that is what we provide," said Lt. Col. Douglas Lee, the new unit's commander. Such knowledge, he added, "will help protect Afghans, provide security, and protect coalition lives." The MC-12 provides real-time full-motion video to ground troops and also collects signals intelligence. By late summer 2010, the Air Force expects to have 24 MC-12s operating in Afghanistan out of a force of 30 combat-ready airframes. The other six are already operating in Iraq out of Joint Base Balad. In addition to those 30, there will be another seven MC-12s based stateside that are dedicated to training.

The 4 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, in October surpassed 10,000 total sorties flown and 50,000 total flight hours with its MC-12s since its airmen began operating them less than two years ago. October also saw the squadron reach another milestone: its MC-12 flights, which provide live overhead streaming video and signals intelligence to ground troops, have resulted in the capture or elimination of more than 4,000 enemy targets. "It's been amazing," said Lt. Col. James Thompson, 4 ERS commander. 2011

The Air Force's mission with the MC-12 Liberty in Afghanistan is over. The 4 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron flew its last flight Oct. 1 at Bagram Air Field, the last of more than 40,000 combat missions and more than 200,000 hours of surveillance flights since 2009. The Army stood up Joint Task Force Thor at Bagram to take over the MC-12 mission from the Air Force. "The history and success of the Project Liberty is attributed to one thing; the people," Air Maj. Tanner Woolsey of the 4 Squadron, said at "They are Airmen with our country as part of one of the greatest tactical success stories of Operation Enduring Freedom. The inactivation came one month after the other remaining MC-12 squadron in Afghanistan, the 361st Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, deactivated at Kandahar Airfield. Both squadrons are based at Beale Air Force Base, California. During the last year of the 4 the squadron helped operations that killed or captured 2,450 enemy combatants, including 376 high value targets, outgoing 4 ERS Commander Lt. Col. Boland said. The MC-12 program began in 2008 as a way to quickly outfit Hawker Beechcraft Air 350s with intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment to address needs in Iraq. Following the inactivation, airmen will remain with the Army task force to help conduct operations.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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#### Sources

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The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

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