

412 TEST WING



MISSION

LINEAGE

412 Fighter Group (Single-Engine) established, 20 Nov 1943

Activated, 29 Nov 1943

Inactivated, 3 Jul 1946

Redesignated 412 Fighter Group (Air Defense), 20 Jun 1955

Activated, 18 Aug 1955

Discontinued, 1 Apr 1960

Redesignated 412 Tactical Fighter Group, 31 Jul 1985 but remained inactive

6510 Test Wing established and activated, 1 Mar 1978

412 Tactical Fighter Group and 6510 Test Wing consolidated, 1 Oct 1992

Consolidated organization redesignated 412 Test Wing, 2 Oct 1992

STATIONS

Muroc, CA, 29 Nov 1943

Palmdale AAFld, CA, 1 Jun 1944

Bakersfield Mun Arpt, CA, 11 Oct 1944

Santa Maria AAFld, CA, 10 Jul 1945

March Field, CA, c. 29 Nov 1945–3 Jul 1946

Wurtsmith AFB, MI, 18 Aug 1955– 1 Apr 1960

Edwards AFB, CA, 1 Mar 1978

ASSIGNMENTS

IV Fighter Command, 29 Nov 1943
321 Wing, 3 Dec 1945
IV Fighter Command, 28 Jan 1946
Tactical Air Command, 21 Mar 1946
Twelfth Air Force, 15 May–3 Jul 1946
4708 Air Defense Wing, 18 Aug 1955
30 Air Division, 8 Jul 1956–1 Apr 1960
Air Force Flight Test Center, 1 Mar 1978

ATTACHMENTS

Detroit Air Defense Sector, 1 Apr 1959–1 Apr 1960

WEAPON SYSTEMS

F-89, 1955–1960
T-33, 1955–1960
F-102, 1956–1960
F-101, 1959–1960

COMMANDERS

Capt Brunner R. Coke, 29 Nov 1943
Maj John W. Mitchell, Dec 1943
Col Homer A. Boushey, 11 Jan 1944
Col David L. Hill, 29 Sep 1945
Col Bruce K. Holloway, 30 Jan–3 Jul 1946
Col Ralph A. Taylor, Jr., c. 18 Aug 1955
Col Thomas N. Wilson, Aug 1956
Col Clifford F. MaComber, 15 Jul 1959– 1 Apr 1960
Brig Gen William T. Twinting, 1 Mar 1978
Col Norman L. Suits, 28 Jun 1980
Col Michael D. Hall, 4 Aug 1980
Col Kenneth E. Staton, 4 Aug 1983
Col Richard M. Cooper, 27 Jan 1986
Col Roy D. Bridges, 21 May 1986
Col Vernon P. Saxon, Jr., 24 Mar 1989
Col Richard L. Engel, 22 Jan 1992
Col Ted M. McFarland, #1993
Col Perry L. Lamy, 1 Jul 1999
Col Steven E. Cameron, 23 Mar 2001

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jan 1983–31 Dec 1984

1 Jan 1985– 31 Dec 1986

1 Jan 2013-31 Dec 2013

EMBLEM



6510 Test Wing patches

412 Test Wing emblem: Per bend Celeste and Sable a demi-plate issuant in sinister base, a flight symbol in dexter chief ascending bendwise Argent between a lightning flash bendwise in dexter and a mullet in sinister chief Or: and issuing a contrail arcing to base Gules garnished Yellow surmounting a cloud outline of the first all within a diminished bordure Gold. **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 design reflects that of the unit's historical reference to the 412 Fighter Group. The Wing's all-weather environment testings are represented by the clouds, and the lightning bolt denotes power to harness and sustain combat missions. The stylized aircraft alludes to the Air Force. (Approved, 22 May 1957 and slightly modified, 15 Jun 1994)

The barren landscape with the cactus represents "the vast Mojave Desert, home of the 6510 Test Wing." The original version featured a Joshua Tree, common to California's high desert regions but it was considered "too exotic" and unrecognizable to most people. In the final version, approved in 1971, the Joshua Tree was replaced by the eminently recognizable but non-native Saguaro cactus also used on the Air Force Flight Test Center shield. The color blue "alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations" and the yellow alludes to "the sun and excellence of personnel in their assigned tasks." The two aerodynamic bodies in flight "represent phases of each test mission. The ascending vehicle symbolizes mission launch and man's quest for increased knowledge of the vehicle and flight environment." The descending vehicle symbolizes completion of the mission and return to earth from the flight environment." The three stars "signify each of the three separate organizations comprising the Test Wing: manned flight test, unmanned/drone flight test, and engineering support." The slide rule "is indicative of intensive engineering analysis of test data." The heraldic description of the emblem reads: Azure, two aerodynamic bodies saltire wise or below, three mullets fesswise in chief argent, on a base light brown a stylized mountain range fesswise throughout dark brown surmounted by a cactus palewise in sinister base vert and a slide rule bend sinisterwise in dexter base argent, all within a diminished bordure of the like.

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The 412 Fighter Group, first US jet fighter group to be activated, spent most of its early existence in experimental testing of the P-59A and P-80 aircraft. Developed training programs and trained aircrew and ground personnel as cadres for newly formed jet aircraft-equipped units. Inactivated 3 Jul 1946. Activated at Wurtsmith AFB, MI on 18 Aug 1955 with an air defense mission. Initially equipped with F-89 aircraft, the group added F-102s to its inventory in 1956 and F-101s in 1959. Inactivated on 1 Apr 1960. From 1 Mar 1978, the wing managed flight operations for the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB, CA. Using a mixed fleet of support aircraft, annually tested both experimental and USAF inventory aircraft, as well as others on loan from US government agencies and foreign governments. Component systems flight-testing included weapons and ordnance, avionics and sensors, flight controls, and aircrew life-support equipment. Operated the Air Force Test Pilot School, training students from around the world. Performed free-flight testing of the Space Transportation System (STS) for NASA, 1978-1980, and in Apr 1981 recovered the shuttle "Columbia" following the first-ever orbital mission of a reusable spacecraft. Continued to provide alternate landing site services for STS recovery. Deployed support personnel and equipment to Southwest Asia, Aug 1990- Mar 1991. While deployed, performed tests on radar and weapons system accuracy. Transitioned into an objective test wing in 1992 to enhance its mission of air vehicle development, testing, and evaluation.

The 412 Fighter Group deployed the first jet aircraft at March, initially with F-80s, which were inherited by the 1st Fighter Wing. These were later replaced by F-86s. Only a year after the war's end, four F-80s flew a round trip from March to Washington, D.C., and returned the same day. The pilots breakfasted at March, lunched in the capitol and dined back at March during that span of daylight hours.

The 412 Fighter Group, 4th Air Force, at March Field, California, received eleven P-51Hs and six F-6Ds during the summer of 1945. These Mustangs were then assigned to the Group's 39th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron for sundry duties. The 412 FG had been intended to become the Air Force's first combat jet Fighter Group but the envisioned Bell P-59 assignment did not pan out, and deliveries of the Lockheed P-80 did not occur in time for them to be shipped overseas before the war ended. The 412 FG became heavily tasked with evaluating both of the jet aircraft in all tactical functions.

Among the roles played by the 412 FG was how to break through bomber escorts (P-51s) with their jets to attack the bombers. How to defend against jet interceptors with conventional fighters (P-47s and P-51s). How bombers were to protect themselves against jet interceptors as B-17 and B-24 powered turrets could not traverse fast enough to track jet aircraft.

412 FG was established at Muroc AAF on 30 November 1943 as the USAAF's - in fact, America's - premier jet airplane equipped fighter unit. As part of the 4th Air Force, the 412 FG formed three squadrons: the 29th Fighter Squadron (FS) - "Gamecocks"; 31st FS - "Foxes"; and the 445th FS. Respectively, these three squadrons would go on to operate P-59As and P-59Bs.

In June 1944, the 412 FG had subsequently moved to Palmdale, California, which is some 30 miles from Muroc. They then moved north-ward to Bakersfield, California, in late 1944, and in July 1945, westward to Santa Maria, California.

It was during the late 1944-to-late 1945 time period that several additional squadrons were attached to the 412 FG. These were comprised of the 361st FS, 615th Air Engineering Squadron (AES), and the 624th Air Material Squadron (AMS). Another lesser-known P-59 unit - the 440th Army Air force Base Unit, a training squadron - was in operation at Santa Maria by late June 1945.

March AAF (now March AFB), located some nine miles southeast of Riverside, California was the next home of the 412 FG. Beginning in January 1946, with the inactivation of Santa Maria, most of the 412 FG's P-59s were ferried to March Field. The P-59s that did not move to March Field with the 412 were instead flown to a number of other locations within the U.S. Namely, to be used as A&P Mechanic teaching aids at various colleges, after which they were scrapped.

By July 1946, except for the one that had been retained for display (P-59A, 44-22614) at the March Field Museum, the P-59s at March Field were all gone - the 412 having completed its transition to P-80s Shooting Stars.

7/8/2012 -The Air Force Flight Test Center will be re-designated as the Air Force Test Center during a ceremony here July 13. Gen. Janet Wolfenbarger, the commander of Air Force Materiel Command, will preside over the ceremony. During the ceremony, the 95 Air Base Wing will transition to the 412 Test Wing, although both unit changes became effective July 6. The Air Force Test Center will play a critical role in developmental test and evaluation for AFMC's air and ground systems and is an essential cornerstone to the command's consolidation initiative from 12 centers to five. The 5-Center construct will increase efficiencies, reduce redundancies in management overhead and in acquisitions processes, and save approximately \$109 million annually. Ultimately, the consolidation ensures the command will improve the way it accomplishes the mission, providing better support to the warfighter, officials said. Brig. Gen. Arnold W. Bunch Jr. will lead the center and will oversee work at not only Edwards Air Force Base, but also at Eglin AFB, Fla., and Arnold AFB, Tenn., which was re-designated the Arnold Engineering and Development Complex on July 6. At Eglin AFB, the 96th Air Base Wing will be re-designated the 96 Test Wing on July 18. Missions at each location will continue. In addition to the Air Force Test Center, the Air Force Sustainment Center at Tinker AFB, Okla.; the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center and Air Force Research Laboratory at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio; and the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center at Kirtland AFB, N.M., make up AFMC's 5-Center construct. Initial operation capability is scheduled for October 1, officials said, with full operational capability planned for mid-2013. 2012

USAF Unit Histories

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

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

Unit History. *Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards Air Force Base, CA, 50th Anniversary. 1951-2001.*