

21st EXPEDITIONARY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



LINEAGE

Constituted 21 Observation Squadron (Light) on 5 Feb 1942

Activated on 2 Mar 1942

Redesignated 21 Observation Squadron on 4 Jul 1942

Redesignated 21 Reconnaissance Squadron (Bomber) on 2 Apr 1943

Redesignated 21 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron on 11 Apr 1943

Disbanded on 1 May 1944

Reconstituted, and consolidated (19 Sep 1985) with 1 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, which was constituted on 5 Nov 1945

Activated on 6 Dec 1945

Inactivated on 1 Apr 1949

Redesignated 1 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Night-Photo, on 25 Jun 1952

Activated on 10 Jul 1952

Redesignated 1 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Night-Photo-Jet, on 15 May 1959

Redesignated 1 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron on 1 Oct 1966

Inactivated on 15 Jan 1988

Redesignated 21 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, and converted to provisional status, on 10 Aug 2007.

STATIONS

Langley Field, VA, 2 Mar 1942

Kellogg Field, MI, 9 Mar 1942

Will Rogers Field, OK, 30 Aug 1942

William Northern Field, TN, 12 Mar 1943

Key Field, MS, 19 Aug 1943-1 May 1944

Creil, France, 16 Dec 1945

Istres, France, 13 Jan 1946

Compiègne, France, 30 May 1946

Furth, West Germany, 12 Sep 1946- 20 Jun 1947
Langley Field, VA, 25 Jun 1947
Lawson Field, GA, 8 Sep 1947
Pope Field (later, Pope AFB), NC, 29 Sep 1947-1 Apr 1949
Toul-Rosieres AB, France, 10 Jul 1951
Spangdahlem AB, West Germany, 8 May 1953
RAF Alconbury, England, 25 Aug 1959-15 Jan 1988

ASSIGNMENTS

Air Force Combat Command, 2 Mar 1942; Army Air Forces, 9 Mar 1942
75 Observation (later, 75 Reconnaissance; 75 Tactical Reconnaissance) Group, 12 Mar 1942-1
May 1944
10 Reconnaissance (later, 10 Tactical Reconnaissance) Group, 16 Dec 1945-1 Apr 1949
10 Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 10 Jul 1952
10 Tactical Reconnaissance (later, 10 Tactical Fighter) Wing, 8 Dec 1957-15 Jan 1988
United States Air Forces in Europe to activate or inactivate at any time on or after 10 Aug 2007

WEAPON SYSTEMS

L-4
C-47, 1942
A-20, 1942-1943
B-25, 1942-1943
P-39, 1942-1943
1943-1944
P-40, 1942-1943
1943-1944
P-51, 1942-1943
1943-1944
L-4, 1943
C-47, 1945-1946
UC-64, 1945-1946
C-45, 1946
P-51/F-6, 1946-1947
F-6, 1947-1948
P-51, 1947
AT-6, 1947-1949
RB-26, 1952-1956
RB-57A, 1954-1957
RB-66B, 1957-1965
RF-4C, 1965-1987

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

RB-26C

43-22268	44-35256	44-35512	43-22477	44-35359
	44-35343	44-35607	44-35257	44-35583

44-35616	44-35599	44-35500	44-35691	44-35858
44-34186	44-35617	44-35606	44-35808	44-35889
44-35262	44-35227	44-35621	44-35822	
44-35385	44-35322	44-35682	44-35846	

RB-66B

53-423	54-432	54-440	54-545
54-524	53-449	54-518	54-429
53-426	54-514	54-420	54-508

RF-4C

68-553

68-555

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

RF-4C

AR

UNIT COLORS

Black and white bands

Blue

Shooting star with four-color tail on vertical stabilizer

COMMANDERS

Unkn, 2 Mar 1942-1 May 1944

Maj Walter W. Dickson, 16 Dec 1945

Maj James L. Wrathall, 2 Feb 1946

Capt John D. Walker, 3 Apr 1946 (temporary)

Maj James L. Wrathall, 9 Apr 1946

LTC Harrison R. Christy Jr., 11 Apr 1946

Capt John D. Walker, 5 Jul 1946 (temporary)

LTC Harrison R. Christy Jr., 9 Jul 1946

Maj James M. Williams, 30 Dec 1946 (temporary)

LTC Harrison R. Christy Jr., 9 Jan 1947

Capt Charles I. Davis Jr., 20 May-20 Jun 1947

Maj James M. Williams, 26 Sep 1947

Capt Lewis A. Forman, 5 Oct 1947

LTC Robert T. Simpson IV, 6 Oct 1947

LTC Harrison R. Christy Jr., 24 Mar 1948

LTC James L. Rose, 1 Jun 1948

Capt Willard L. Burghoff, Jan 1949

Capt David F. Thwaites, Jan 1949

LTC James L. Rose, Feb 1949

Capt David F. Thwaites, 11 Feb-30 Mar 1949

LTC Steven R. Wilkerson, Jul 1952
Maj William H. Laseter, 22 Sep 1953
LTC Steven R. Wilkerson, by Mar 1954
LTC John K. Graham, by Jul 1955
Maj Robert T. Hoyt, 8 Jul 1957
LTC Edward Ellis, May 1959
Maj Harrison Lobdell Jr., 10 Feb 1961
Maj Edward L. Scott, 19 Feb 1962
Maj Paul W. Von Wiedenfield, 23 May 1963
Maj Gerald D. Martini, 10 Jun 1964
LTC Charles M. Sargen, 19 Apr 1965
LTC John E. Buchanan, Jul 1966
LTC Robert R. Heaton, 16 Aug 1969
Maj Emery S. Wetzel Jr., 1 Jun 1970
LTC Richard H. Wolf, Jun 1973
LTC Donald D. Karges, 9 Jul 1974
LTC Leonard Andrews, 1 Jul 1975
LTC Lawrence W. Foley, 1 Jun 1977
LTC Steven J. Whittenberger, 1 Jun 1979
LTC Dale O. Wiener, 15 Jun 1981
LTC Donald S. Pickard, 1 Jul 1982
LTC Carl Loveland, 2 Jul 1984
LTC Steven A. Bryan, 18 Feb 1986-30 Jun 1987
Unknown, 1 Jul 1987-15 Jan 1988

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

None

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

31 Dec 1959-1 Jan 1962

15 Jul 1968-15 Jul 1969

1 Jun 1972-1 Jun 1973

15 Nov 1977-14 Nov 1979

1 Jun 1985-31 May 1987

EMBLEM

On a red disc, bordure white, a pair of binoculars in silhouette black, surmounted by a silhouette aerial bomb white, falling bend sinisterwise. (Approved 12 Jun 1943)

On a disc Azure, a stylized firefly Argent, eye, antennae, tail and exaggerated tail outline Or, nose Gules, grasping a camera to base of the third, all within a narrow bordure Yellow. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "21ST EXPEDITIONARY RECON SQ" in Yellow letters. Approved on 20 Jul 1954, modified on 2 Nov 2010. 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 firefly holding a camera symbolizes the unit's primary mission of reconnaissance. Its glowing tail is representative of the crew's ability to highlight enemy capabilities and weaknesses. The firefly's look of concentration symbolizes the crew's determination and commitment to the mission.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

CALL SIGN

OPERATIONS

Served as a replacement training unit, Dec 1942-Apr 1944. During 1945-1949, provided photographic reconnaissance for Army and Air Force agencies; photographed national cemeteries.

Provided ground, air, and naval forces with visual and photographic information concerning disposition, movement, and activity of friendly and hostile forces, 1952-1965.

Maintained combat readiness to accomplish visual, photographic, and electronic reconnaissance in support of United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Royal Air Force (RAF), 1965-1987.

RB-66B 54-421 Crashed on, take-off due to engine failure, near Skeffingham, England on 12 Dec 1959, with 4 fatalities.

RB-66B 54-430 Crashed into the North Sea during Royal Flush on 16 Mar 1961 with 3 fatalities.

RB-66B 54-460 crashed on take-off due to engine failure, at RAF Chelveston, UK, on 7 Feb 1962, with 4 fatalities, 3 survivors.

RB-66B 54-451 was shot down near Gardelegen, East Germany, on 10 Mar 1964, all crew survived.

On 6 May 1970, RF-4C 64-1018, crashed in woods at Unthank, near Dronfield in Derbyshire, England. Crew ejected over Curbar Edge in Derbyshire. The pilot, Maj Don Tokar, 37, of Colorado Springs, CO, suffers a compound leg fracture after landing in rocks. The weapons systems officer Maj Peter Dunn, 34, of Salem, Illinois, escaped with minor cuts and lacerations sustained on landing.

On 25 Aug 1977, RF-4C 66-0424, crashed in a field at Thuine, Germany, 9 nm north of Rheine-Hopsten Air Base, from which it had just departed. Both crew perished and Capt. Alan Aertker, weapons systems officer is credited with remaining with the aircraft rather than ejecting to avoid devastation of the village. No civilians were injured or killed in the crash and citizens of Thuine erected a monument near the crash site.

460322	UC-64A	44-70293	GMAC	Comstock, Ira A	Tarascon
460324	UC-64A	44-70344	KCR	Hughes, Jack E	Cigean/ 1/2mi E
460324	UC-64A	44-70289	TOA	Webster, Harold D Jr	Mayres/ 1mi N
460625	C-45F	43-35851	GL	Richmond, William L Jr	Compiegne/ 1 1/2mi NW
460923	P-51D-25NA	44-73239	BOF	Sullivan, Edmund J	Eichstratt/ 2mi E
461018	F-6K-10NT	44-12227	TOANU	Minard, Craig F	Horsching AAF
461020	F-6K-10NT	44-12230	TOACBL	Sullivan, Edmund J	Horsching AAB
470311	C-45	44-87021	TAC	Finnell, Harry T	Furth AB
460103	L-5	42-98595	TACNU	Shenk, Richard E	Frankfurt-Eschborn (Y-74)
431219	B-26B	41-17845	LAC	Brast, Alexander N	
430207	A-20B	41-3481	CRLOG	Woellner, Edwin D Jr	Will Rogers Field, OK
430207	P-39D	41-28289	LACMF	Dinker, William R	Will Rogers Field, OK
430217	P-39D-1	41-28289	LACMF	Zirkle, Robert P	Will Rogers Field, OK
430302	P-39D	41-38233	CRTEF	Glass, William E	1 Mi N Will Rogers Field, OK
430303	L-4A	42-36435	LAC	Shimonek, Charles M	Okmulgee, OK
430304	P-39F	41-7175	FLOG	Jones, Herbert A	2 Mi SE Will Rogers Field, OK
430226	P-40F	41-13834	TACMF	Jones, Abner L	Will Rogers Field, OK
430307	P-40E	41-25010	TOAEF	Salmon, Robert J	Will Rogers Field, OK
430318	A-20B	41-3669	BOW	Calkins, Chadwick R	6 Mi NE Russellville, KY
430101	P-40F	41-13687	KLAC	Vanvliet, Glenn F	Will Rogers Field, OK
420725	L-4A	42-36523	TACNU	Steere, Russell L	Kellogg Field, MI
420921	P-40F	41-13687	TOAEF	Turner, John W	Will Rogers Field, OK
421003	B-25C	41-12784	KBOEF	Stevenson, John K.	Oklahoma City, OK
421006	P-40F	41-13607	FLEF	Shaffer, Levi A	Will Rogers Field, OK
421026	P-40F	41-13682	LACSSP	Whitesides, John L	Will Rogers Field, OK
421027	P-40F	41-31977	TOAEF	Holland, James D Jr	3 mi N of Will Rogers Field, OK
421102	B-25C	41-12700	CBLMF	Surginer, William E	Will Rogers Field, OK
421110	P-40F	41-13690	KCRGC	Shaffer, Levi A	NE of Noble, OK
421115	P-40F	41-13834	TACNU	Powers, John F	Will Rogers Field, OK
421223	L-4A	42-36426	TACNU	Vaughn, Ronald E	Will Rogers Field, OK
421223	P-40F	41-13666	LACSF	Vizi, Joseph C	Will Rogers Field, OK
421230	P-40E	40-387	TAC	Perkins, Kenneth M	Will Rogers Field, OK
421231	P-40F	41-13834	LACNO	Willis, William H	Will Rogers Field, OK
421231	L-4A	42-36460	FLCR	Kerr, Don O	2 mi E of Yukon, OK
420526	L-4A	42-36515	TAC	Matesa, Thomas M.	Kellogg Field, MI
430511	RDB-7B	AL-377	TACMF	Lubben, John F	William Northern AAF, TN
430517	A-20B	41-2673	TAC	Calkins, Chadwick R	Myrtle Beach, SC
430520	A-20C	41-19203	KLACEF	Dearing, Charles E	2 Mi W Cumberland Springs, TN
430526	A-20B	41-3481	MACOB/EF	Hewes, Harry E	2 Mi E Cowan, TN
430618	AT-6C	41-17164	TACGC	Semos, Steve A	William Northern AAF, TN
430618	B-25C	41-12682	TACGC	Parked Airplane	William Northern AAF, TN
430626	RB-25B	40-2293	TOAMF	Talcott, Frederick L	William Northern AAF, TN
430718	AT-6B	41-17164	TACGC	Semos, Steve A (mechanic)	William Northern AAF, TN
430804	B-25C	41-12693	KCRoG	Talcott, Frederick L	1 1/2 Mi N William Northern AAF, TN
430914	P-40N	42-105536	CREFEXF	Peterson, Adolph F	3 1/2 Mi E Lockart, MS

430928	P-40N	42-105590	BOMF	Peterson, Robert M	Stratton, MS
440103	P-40N	42-106015	CBL	Vanecek, Edward J.	Key Field, MS
440110	P-39N	42-18882	MAC	Dean, George G.	40 Mi SE Montrose, MS
440118	P-40N	42-106036	LAC	Braun, Eldon W.	Key Field, MS
440309	P-40N	42-106015	LAC	Thayer, T J	Key Field, Meridian, MS
440320	P-40N	42-106140	TACGC	Clark, Ralph W	Key Field, Meridian, MS
440413	P-40N	42-105581	BOF	Selkregg, James B	Key Field, Meridian, MS
440103	P-40N	42-106015	CBL	Vanecek, Edward J.	Key Field, MS
440110	P-39N	42-18882	MAC	Dean, George G.	40 Mi SE Montrose, MS
440118	P-40N	42-106036	LAC	Braun, Eldon W.	Key Field, MS
431105	P-39N	42-18882	LAC	Harrison, Harry F	Keesler Field, Biloxi, MS
431111	P-40N	42-105575	GACF	Martin, Paul M	Key Field, MS
431116	P-51B	43-12325	KCRSF	Ward, Olen E	2 mi NW of Key Field, FL
431116	P-40N	42-105562	TACNU	Cox, Perry S	Key Field, MS
431118	P-40N	42-10699	LAC	King, Bethurum (NMI)	Key Field, MS
431121	P-39N	42-18497	LAC	Marman, George R	Key Field, MS
431216	P-51B	43-12176	FL lost	McClaran, Hugh J	DeKalb, MS





Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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

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