

324 EXPEDITIONARY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

324 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 28 Jan 1942

Activated, 15 Apr 1942

Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945

Redesignated 324 Reconnaissance Squadron, 11 Jun 1947

Activated, 1 Jul 1947

Redesignated 324 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, 10 Nov 1948

Redesignated 324 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron (Medium), 6 Jul 1950

Inactivated, 8 Nov 1957

Redesignated 324 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, and converted to a provisional status,
25 Jun 2009

Activated, 2 Jul 2009

STATIONS

Harding Field, LA, 15 Apr 1942

MacDill Field, FL, 13 May 1942

Walla Walla, WA, 22 Jun-24 Aug 1942

Kimbolton, England, 13 Sep 1942

Bassingbourn, England, 14 Oct 1942-23 Jun 1945

Drew Field, FL, 3 Jul-7 Nov 1945

Andrews Field, MD, 1 Jul 1947

McGuire AFB, NJ, 19 Jul 1948
McGuire AFB, NJ, 20 Jul 1948-30 Sep 1949
Barksdale AFB, LA, 1 Oct 1949
Lockbourne AFB, OH, 11 Sep 1951-8 Nov 1957
Ramstein AB, Germany, 2 Jul 2009.

ASSIGNMENTS

91 Bombardment Group, 15 Apr 1942-7 Nov 1945
91 Reconnaissance (later Strategic Reconnaissance) Group, 1 Jul 1947
91 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 28 May 1952-8 Nov 1957
404 Air Expeditionary Group, 2 Jul 2009

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-17, 1942-1945
B/RB-17, 1949
W/RB-29, 1949-1950
B/RB-45, 1950-1953
RB-47, 1953-1957

COMMANDERS

Unkn, 15 Apr-15 May 1942
Capt Harold C. Swelser, 16 May 1942
Capt Edward D. Gaitley Jr., 23 Nov 1942
Maj Claude E. Putnam, 29 Nov 1942
Capt Edward D. Gaitley Jr., 16 Jan 1943
Maj Haley W. Aycock, 29 Jan 1943
Lt Col Richard W. Weitzenfeld, 30 Jun 1943
Maj Immanuel J. Klette, 26 Jul 1944-unkn
Unkn, 1 Jul 1947-30 Jun 1950
Maj Rodger L. Howard, 1 Jul 1950
Capt Landon E. McConnell, Nov 1950
Capt Jack G. Emerson, 23 Feb 1951
Lt Col John A. Des Portes, 20 Mar 1951
Lt Col John R. Archer Jr., 1 Nov 1952
Maj Hugh P. Marohl, Jun 1955
Lt Col William V. Strait Jr., Jul-8 Nov 1957

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France

Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Hamm, Germany, 4 Mar 1943
Germany, 11 Jan 1944
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award: 8 Sep 1953-8 Nov 1957

EMBLEM



324 Bombardment Squadron emblems

Insignia has no special significance unless it may be said to represent the cockiness and self-deprecatory good humor of men who have done a damned good job but who haven't let it go to their heads. In operations the combat crews refer to themselves as the "Wild Hares." The central figure was picked as their insignia by the original combat crews of the squadron who came to this theater as one of the first elements of the Eighth Air Force. (Approved, 24 Aug 1944)



324 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron (Medium)

324 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron (Medium) emblem: On and over a turquoise blue disc with white clouds, a caricatured brown and white rabbit wearing a red jet helmet, yellow flak vest, and brown flying boots, holding a black camera and astride a gold jet engine. (Approved, 24 Aug 1953)



324 Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 7 Nov 1942-25 Apr 1945.

324 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron mission was radar scope photography, visual observation, day and night, large and small-scale aerial photography and charting photography.

During 1949 the 324 Squadron received six B-29s modified as radio countermeasures trainers, with APR-4 and APR-5 receivers and direction-finding and analysis equipment. Initially, the squadron mission had an emphasis on reconnaissance rather than jamming, and though the planes could carry jammers these were rarely fitted.

The 324 Squadron, with its B-29s fitted with ELINT receivers, was the Air Force unit best equipped for Ferret missions. As a result, during 1949, the squadron was given an operational role in addition to its commitment to train new electronic countermeasures officers. The 324 detached planes and crews to Ladd AFB, Alaska, to carry out ELINT missions off the north coast of Siberia. Apart from a continuous wave radar on Wrangel Island (probably an old RUS-1 interference detector) these flights detected no ground radars in that area, though signals from a few shipborne sets were picked up. For SAC planners, the confirmation that there were still virtually no ground radars in the area was of considerable importance: it meant there were holes in the Soviet early warning cover through which bombers could be routed in time of war.

Toward the end of 1949 the 324 Squadron moved to Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. The unit's Ferret and training missions continued as before until it was inactivated and most of its Ferret modified B-29s and crews transferred to the 343rd Squadron of the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, based at Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE 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 yearbook. *91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing*. 1950.