

42nd ELECTRONIC COMBAT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

42nd Reconnaissance Squadron, Very Long Range, Photographic constituted, 24 Oct 1945
Activated, 7 Nov 1945
Inactivated, 19 Aug 1946
Redesignated 42nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Electronics and Weather, 11 Dec 1953
Activated, 18 Mar 1954
Redesignated 42nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Electronic, 1 Jul 1965
Discontinued and inactivated, 22 Aug 1966
Redesignated 42nd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron and activated, 15 Dec 1967
Organized, 1 Jan 1968
Inactivated, 15 Mar 1974
Redesignated 42nd Electronic Combat Squadron, 23 May 1983
Activated, 1 Jul 1983
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1992
Redesignated 42nd Airborne Command and Control Squadron, 24 Jun 1994
Activated, 1 Jul 1994
Inactivated on 30 Sep 2002
Redesignated 42 Electronic Combat Squadron on 9 Mar 2006
Activated on 10 Mar 2006

STATIONS

Smoky Hill AAFld, KS, 7 Nov 1945–19 Aug 1946

Spangdahlem AB, Germany, 18 Mar 1954
RAF Chelveston, England, c. 20 Aug 1959
Toul-Rosieres AB, France, 1 Aug 1962
Chambley AB, France, 1 Jul 1965–22 Aug 1966
Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, 1 Jan 1968
Korat RTAFB, Thailand, 22 Sep 1970–15 Mar 1974
RAF Upper Heyford, England, 1 Jul 1983–1 Jul 1992
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 1 Jul 1994
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 10 Mar 2006

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Chambley AB, France, 15 May–9 Oct 1963

ASSIGNMENTS

VIII Bomber Command, 7 Nov 1945
17th Bombardment Operational Training Wing, c. 31 Jan 1946
Second Air Force, 18 Feb 1946
Fifteenth Air Force, 31 Mar–19 Aug 1946
10th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 18 Mar 1954
10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 8 Dec 1957
25th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 1 Jul 1965
25th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Oct 1965–22 Aug 1966
Pacific Air Forces, 15 Dec 1967
355th Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jan 1968
388th Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Oct 1970–15 Mar 1974
20th Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jul 1983
66th Electronic Combat Wing, 1 Jun 1985
20th Tactical Fighter (later, 20th Fighter) Wing, 25 Jan 1991–1 Jul 1992
355th Operations Group, 1 Jul 1994
55 Electronic Combat Group, 10 Mar 2006

ATTACHMENTS

388th Tactical Fighter Wing, c. 21 Sep–14 Oct 1970
20th Tactical Fighter Wing

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-29, 1945–1946
RB-26, 1954–1957
T/WT-33, 1955–1957
RB-66, 1956
RB-66B
RB-66C
WB-66, 1957–1960
B-66, 1960–1966

EB-66, 1968–1974
EF-111, 1984–1992
EC-130, 1994-2002
EB-66E

COMMANDERS

LTC David L. Vesely, 1 Jul 1983

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Vietnam
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III
Vietnam Air/Ground
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV
TET 69/Counteroffensive
Vietnam Summer-Fall, 1969
Vietnam Winter-Spring, 1970
Sanctuary Counteroffensive
Southwest Monsoon
Commando Hunt V
Commando Hunt VI
Commando Hunt VII
Vietnam Ceasefire

Southwest Asia
Defense of Saudi Arabia
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Presidential Unit Citation
Southeast Asia, 12 Apr 1968–30 Apr 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards With Combat "V" Device
8 Jan–11 Apr 1968
1 Jul 1969–15 Oct 1970
[16] Oct 1970–20 May 1971

18 Dec 1972–15 Aug 1973

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

31 Dec 1959–1 Jan 1962

1 Jun 1989–31 May 1991

Navy Meritorious Unit Citation

10–16 Apr 1986

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

[1 Jan 1968]–28 Jan 1973

EMBLEM



42th ECS



1984 - Present





in a Gray disc in front of a White four-pointed star shaded Blue a Gold Brown eagle with White head and tail; Yellow beak, and legs, detailed Dark Brown, in flight to the viewers left; above a Blue demi-globe issuant from base gridlined Yellow and above the eagle's head two Yellow lightning flashes crossed diagonally all within a narrow Blue border. (Approved, 20 Jan 1984; replaced emblem approved, 20 Jul 1954)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Provided weather and electronic reconnaissance for US and NATO forces in Europe, Mar 1954–Aug 1966.

The 42nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Electronics and Weather mission was to provide information concerning location and character of electronic emissions and instrumented weather reconnaissance to ground, air and naval forces in areas of joint operations. To accomplish this mission, the squadron expanded its aircraft inventory during 1954-1956 to include RB-26C, TB-26, B-26, RB-66C and T-33 aircraft. Between 1956 and 1957, the 42nd flew "passive electronic countermeasure (ECM)" intelligence missions along the East German and Czechoslovakian borders, and deployed aircraft to Italy for missions along the Adriatic coast. During this same timeframe, the 42nd was converting to R/WB-66S and by 30 June 1958 had reached its full authorization of 12 RB-66Cs and 12 WB-66s for reconnaissance and weather.

The squadron moved to RAF Chevelston, United Kingdom on 25 August 1959. In late 1959, 12 B-

66Bs modified for ECM were transferred from the 47th Tactical Bomber wing to the 42nd and the squadron's WB-66B weather aircraft were returned to the United States. The 42nd's mission was changed to day and night electronic and visual reconnaissance and ECM.

From RAF Chevelston, the 42nd deployed aircraft to Aviano AB, Italy (a forward operating location for RB-66s) and a detachment at Toul-Rosieres AB, France where it maintained six RB-66s in support of USAF Europe's strike force. On 1 August 1962, the squadron moved to Toul-Rosieres placing USAFE's entire ECM force closer to the forward area.

By mid 1963, the 42nd, using modified RB-66s, expanded its mission capabilities to include ECM. In 1965 the squadron moved to Chambley AB, France and was redesignated as the 42nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Electronic. The squadron's aircraft were also later redesignated from RB-66s to EB-66s in 1966.

A detachment of five of the 42nd's aircraft were deployed to Takhli AB, Thailand on 20 October 1965 to support the Southeast Asian war. The aircraft proved highly effective in ECM sorties supporting Operations Rolling Thunder, Iron Hand, and Steel Tiger. As a result, the entire squadron was moved to Thailand. The squadron's aircraft were incorporated into PACAF's 6460th TRS and the 42nd was inactivated on 22 August 1966.

Airborne intelligence operations in Southeast Asia, 1968–1973.

The squadron was reactivated again as the 42nd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron at Korat AB, Thailand, participated in Southeast Asian campaigns through 15 August 1973, and was again inactivated on 15 March 1974.

The 42nd Electronic Combat Squadron begins operational flying at RAF Upper Heyford, England early in 1984 largely due to the efforts of the EF-111 Conversion Management Office. Tasked with arranging all aspects of establishing Raven facilities at Upper Heyford so that the 42nd ECS can commence operational sorties as soon as possible after arrival, the CMO has been working on the project since 1981.

Lt. Col. David Vesely, 42nd ECS commanding officer, commented on establishing the Upper Heyford squadron, "It's very challenging and a lot of fun to set up a new squadron, to watch it grow and build it into a functional fighting unit. Only experienced F-111 people are coming into the EF-111 community now and they're all volunteers with solid tactical mission experience. Anyone coming in will have F-111 experience as a necessity since the EF-111A does not have dual controls and can't be used for training. At present, there are adequate volunteers to fill the requirements of the 42nd and we try to take those people first if we can, although we might take non-volunteers in order to fill manning requirements."

Due to its involvement with our NATO allies, the 42nd will fulfill its operational role differently than EF-111A squadrons based in the United States. USAF units on the European continent ultimately report to the Commander in Chief of the United States Air Forces in Europe. In a

crisis, however, units such as the 42nd would report operationally to NATO. Lt. Col. Vesely explained, "The 42nd is NATO-committed and the NATO emblem on our squadron patch symbolizes that undertaking. In a time of hostilities, the United States will place some forces under the NATO command structure. The 42nd would be one of those units under NATO's operational command but logistics would be the responsibility of the U.S."

These differences between U.S. based operations and those undertaken with our NATO allies are addressed in training courses for Raven flight crews at Upper Heyford. The first classes were held in July and August 1983 for the initial cadre of personnel.

Right now our training will also be in conjunction with NATO units from several European air forces," continued the colonel, "NATO is very anxious to see EF-111 assets operational and have been counting on them for a long time. Our pilots, and especially electronic warfare officers, will be attending several schools to become familiar with NATO operations and also to acquaint NATO with the capabilities of the EF-111. The 42nd will participate in many joint exercises across Europe, from its northern to southern tiers."

Although NATO is a composite force, electronic warfare (EW) responsibilities rest squarely on the EF-111A. As the front-line USAF EW aircraft, it will bear the brunt of the airborne jamming role if a European confrontation ever develops. In that case, friendly forces couldn't ask for a better ally than the EF-111A to confound adversary radar, but at the same time, the aircraft's formidable capability may also act as a positive factor in preventing that possibility from coming to pass.

Early in 1986, F-111Fs of the 48th TFW began planning for possible counter-terrorist bombing attacks. In response to the simultaneous machine-gun killings of airline passengers in Rome and Vienna on December 17, 1985, the plan-ning was refined. The operation was waiting for another terrorist incident with an obvious link to the prime suspect, Colonel Muammar Khadafy's Libya. As a result of the bombing of the La Belle Disco in Berlin on April 5, 1986, the U.S. planned to go ahead. There were two basic plans: six aircraft, flying in international airspace, would attack; or, if over flight permission could be obtained from France, eighteen attacking aircraft would be used. The plan was changed with less than two days to go. Eighteen aircraft (plus six spares, which returned after the first inflight refueling) would attack through international airspace (around Spain) using massive inflight refueling support. A total of nineteen KC-10s and ten KC-135s launched from Mildenhall and Fairford to provide the seven million pounds of jet fuel required for this mission. This response reflected U.S. and British, from whose soil the raid was launched, determination to teach the sponsors of terrorism a lesson

Operation El Dorado Canyon was launched on the night of April 14, 1986. In addition to the twenty-four F-111Fs, six EF-111 As of the 42nd ECS would be used. Four aircraft accompanied the strike flights. One spare remained with the tankers. Six aircraft were prepared for the mission, including a ground spare. The six aircraft were: 66-0030, 66-0033, 66-0057, 67-0034, 67-0041, and 67-0052. Nine aircraft attacked the Azziziyah barracks in Tripoli (where Khadaffi

lived); Six attacked Tripoli's airport; while three others attacked the terrorist training camp at Sidi Bilal, west of Tripoli. Originally, the plan had been for six aircraft to go against each target, but this was changed at the last minute by the White House. The plan, as executed, had nine aircraft attacking the barracks in single file. The defenders had been alerted and apparently were able to shoot down the eighth aircraft (70-2389) - the crew was killed. Even though one aircraft was lost, the raid was the most successful military action by the United States since the Vietnam War.

Five, (66-0016, 66-0023,66-0038,66-0050, and 66-0056), deployed from the 42nd ECS at Upper Heyford which transferred to the 48th TFW(P) on the first day of the war. The EF-111As flew 875 missions for 4,401.4 flight hours.

The 42nd ECS redeployed to Incirlik in support of Operation Provide Comfort on 6 April 1991.

In May, 42nd ECS Avionics Maintenance Unit personnel, deployed to Saudi Arabia since December, 1990, returned to Upper Heyford. Other 42nd ECS/AMU personnel rotated into Saudi in the same month. The wing held a homecoming celebration for 42nd ECS aircrews and support personnel, returning from Operation Provide Comfort deployment on 14 August 1991.

On 30 September 1991, another rotation of 42nd ECS personnel to Saudi Arabia took place.

Approximately a year and a half after regaining the 42nd ECS, the wing lost it again when the 42nd was inactivated on 10 July 1992. The last EF-111A departed Upper Heyford in August 1992.

The only EF-111 lost, 66-0023 from the 42nd ECS, crashed on February 14. The crew was killed. It deployed to Saudi Arabia from the 42nd ECS at Upper Heyford and took part in Operation Desert Storm. While flying as Wrench 08 on February 14, 1991, the aircraft crashed and was destroyed in Saudi Arabia. Captains Douglas Bradt and Paul Eichenlaub II, were killed.

Ground Broken on Compass Call Training Facility. Construction began last week at Davis-Monthan, AFB, Ariz., on the new academic training facility for the 55th Electronic Combat Group, which operates EC-130H communications-jamming aircraft. Officials broke ground on the \$78 million complex on Aug. 15, according to the base's release. Work on the facility is expected to be done by October 2014, and the complex is slated to be fully operational by December of that year, states the release. The 42nd Electronic Combat Squadron, the Air Force's sole EC-130H formal training unit, will run the facility, which will house a flight-deck simulator, two different mission-crew simulators, the squadron operations center, office space for Air Force and contract instructors, and multiple training classrooms. "This multi-simulator facility will allow for initial, upgrade, and continuation training in one location and will enhance our ability to support current and future contingency operations," said Col. Marty Reynolds, 55th ECG commander. EC-130H training is currently spread across different buildings on Davis-Monthan as well as other bases, he said. 2013

2015. A new flight deck simulator for EC-130 Compass Call aircrews is operational after five years of development, 55th Wing. The \$35 million weapon system trainer, based at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., allows the 55th Electronic Combat Group to maintain readiness and currency, while reducing reliance on live fly training as the ECG's capabilities are in demand around the world, said Col. Marty Reynolds, the 55th Wing commander. The new trainer has been in development since 2010, and construction of the facility began in 2012. The WST went online for the first time in March and was declared fully operational in June. Previously, crews and maintainers had to make sure one of the group's 14 EC-130s was available for training, or airmen would have to travel to JB Lewis-McChord, Wash., to fly in another simulator, which had a dissimilar cockpit, different flight profiles, and instructional differences with the Compass Call curriculum, said Lt. Col. Dean Balstad, the 42nd Electronic Combat Squadron assistant director of operations. The cost of flying an EC-130 for a six-hour training mission is \$26,400, while six hours in the WST is \$7,800.

EB/RB-66 attrition

54-421 - Crashed, take-off, engine failure, near Skeffingham, UK, 12 DEC 59, 4 fatalities.

54-430 - Crashed, lost into North Sea during Royal Flush, 16 MAR 61, 3 fatalities.

54-451 - Crashed, shot down near Gardelegen, East Germany, 10 MAR 64, no fatalities, 3 ejections.

54-460 - Crashed, take-off, engine failure, on RAF Chelveston, UK, 7 FEB 62, 4 fatalities, 3 survivors.

Air Force Order of Battle

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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.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.