

427 RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



MISSION

The 427 Reconnaissance Squadron organizes, trains, equips and deploys MC-12W aircraft and aircrew in support of combatant commander directed operational requirements.

LINEAGE

38 Provisional Aero Squadron organized, 12 Jun 1917
Redesignated 38 Aero Squadron organized, 3 Aug 1917
Redesignated Squadron A, Chanute Field, IL, 13 Jul 1918
Demobilized, 1 Dec 1918

38 Pursuit Squadron constituted, 24 Mar 1923
Activated, 1 Aug 1933

Squadron A, Chanute Field, IL reconstituted and consolidated with 38 Pursuit Squadron, 1933

Redesignated 38 Observation Squadron (Long Range, Light Bombardment)
Inactivated, on 1 Mar 1935
Redesignated 38 Reconnaissance Squadron and activated, 1 Sep 1936
Redesignated 38 Reconnaissance Squadron (Long Range), 6 Dec 1939
Redesignated 38 Reconnaissance Squadron (Heavy), 20 Nov 1940
Redesignated 427 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 22 Apr 1942
Redesignated 427 Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 20 Aug 1958
Activated, 1 Dec 1958
Discontinued and inactivated, 1 Jan 1962
Redesignated 427 Reconnaissance Squadron, 17 Aug 2011
Activated, 1 May 2012
Inactivated, 20 Nov 2015
Activated, 4 Sep 2018

STATIONS

Camp Kelly, TX, 12 Jun 1917

Chanute Field, IL, 25 Aug 1917-1 Dec 1918

Selfridge Field, MI, 1 Aug 1933-1 Mar 1935

March Field, CA, 1 Sep 1936

Albuquerque, NM, 5 Jun-22 Nov 1941 (air echelon departed Hamilton Field, Calif, 6 Dec 1941, arrived Hickam Field, TH, 7 Dec 1941; subsequently dissolved and personnel assigned to other units; ground echelon departed San Francisco aboard ship, 6 Dec 1941; returned 9 Dec 1941)

Bakersfield, CA, 17 Dec 1941

Gowen Field, ID, 13 Mar 1942 (operated from Muroc, CA, 28 May-14 Jun 1942)

Alamogordo, NM, 18 Jun 1942

Biggs Field, TX, 7-22 Aug 1942

Molesworth, England, 12 Sep 1942

Casablanca, French Morocco, 31 May-25 Jul 1945

Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 1 Dec 1958-1 Jan 1962

Beale AFB, CA, 1 May 2012-20 Nov 2015

Beale AFB, CA, 4 Sep 2018

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 1917-1918

18 Pursuit Group (attached to 1 Pursuit Group), 1 Aug 1933-1 Mar 1935

1 (later 1 Bombardment) Wing (attached to 19 Bombardment Group), 1 Sep 1936

IV Bomber Command (attached to 19 Bombardment Group), 19 Sep 1941

Sierra Bombardment Group, 16 Dec 1941

Fourth Air Force, 17 Jan 1942 (attached to IV Bomber Command, 26 Jan 1942)

19 Bombardment Group, 25 Feb 1942 (attached to 303 Bombardment Group, 13 Mar 1942)

303 Bombardment Group, 31 Mar 1942-25 Jul 1945

303 Bombardment Wing, 1 Dec 1958-1 Jan 1962

9 Operations Group, 1 May 2012-20 Nov 2015

9 Operations Group, 4 Sep 2018

WEAPON SYSTEMS

JN-4, 1917-1918

P-26

B-10

B-17

B-18

OA-4

Y10A-8

B-17, 1942-1945

B-47, 1958-1961

MC-12W, 2012

COMMANDERS

Unkn, 12 Jun 1917-1 Dec 1918
Maj Warren A. Maxwell, 1 Aug 1933-1 Mar 1935
Inactive Mar 1935-1 Sep 1936
Maj William S. Gravely, 1 Sep 1936
Capt Charles B. Overacker, Jr., 20 Jul 1937
Maj Harry A. Halvorson, 26 Jul 1937
Maj Paul H. Prentiss, 16 Aug 1937
Maj Truman H. Landon, Jan 1940
Maj Charles C. Sheridan, 20 Mar 1942
Maj Glenn E. Hagenbuch, 3 Jan 1943
Lt Col Edgar E. Snyder Jr., Aug 1943
Maj Robert W. Sheets, 1 Nov 1944-Mar 1945
Unkn, Mar-25 Jul 1945
Lt Col Richard L. Walker, 1 Dec 1958
Lt Col Walter S. King, 31 Aug 1960-31 Aug 1961
Unkn, 1 Sep 1961-1 Jan 1962
Lt Col David W. Berg, 1 May 2012

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Central Pacific
Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater
Antisubmarine, American Theater
Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Germany, 11 Jan 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
1 Jan-[Sep] 1961
1 Jun 2014-31 May 2015

EMBLEM



38 Reconnaissance Squadron emblem: a disc divided horizontally green, light blue, and ultramarine blue; through the center of the light blue a horizontal checkered bar of eight oblong pieces orange and black; the disc and all its sections separated by narrow gold bands. **SIGNIFICANCE:** the color scheme represents the land, sea, and sky and the alternating rectangles of orange and black represents reconnaissance.



427 Bombardment Squadron unofficial emblem adopted in Jul 1942. It was intended to have an insignia a popular, attractive cartoon character depicting aggressive spirit and cocky rabbit with one foot on a bomb was selected.



427 Bombardment Squadron: On an orange equilateral triangle, one point up, bordered white, a SAC ribbon arched from dexter base to sinister chief, light blue spattered with white stars, surmounted by an Air Force golden yellow mailed hand issuing from sinister base and grasping a white globe, and areas Air Force blue, and a green olive branch arched throughout from the base of the triangle to its apex; outlines and details of hand and globe Air Force blue. (Approved, 18 Jul 1960)

MOTTO

VIGILANT, DEDICATED, PREPARED

OPERATIONS

Flying training unit, 1917-1918. Reconnaissance patrols and photographic missions in support of flood-relief operations in Southern California, 2-5 Mar 1938. Air echelon, en route to Philippine Islands, arrived Hickam Field, HI, during Japanese attack of 7 Dec 1941; flew patrol and search missions in mid-Pacific under direction of Hawaiian Air Force from 9 Dec 1941 until echelon's identity lost through absorption by other units (Feb 1942). Training activities of new air echelon interspersed with emergency antisubmarine patrols off California coast, late May-early Jun 1942. Combat in ETO, 17 Nov 1942-25 Apr 1945.

Constituted in the Regular Army on 24 March 1923 as the 38th Pursuit Squadron and assigned to the 16th Pursuit Group. Designated Active Associate was the 88th Observation Squadron 1923-27. Designated mobilization station was Wright Field, OH, 1923-33. Allotted to the Fifth Corps Area on 28 February 1927. Withdrawn from the Fifth Corps Area on 1 September 1928 and allotted to the Eighth Corps Area. Kelly Field, TX, designated as headquarters location on organization, but the unit was never organized at that location. Activated on 1 August 1933 at Selfridge Field, MI. Relieved from assignment to the 16th Pursuit Group on 15 June 1932 and assigned to the 18th Pursuit Group. Consolidated in 1933 with the 38th Aero Squadron (a WWI unit organized in July 1917 at Chanute Field, IL, ; demobilized on 1 December 1918 at Chanute Field, IL; reconstituted in 1933). Reorganized and redesignated 38th Observation Squadron (Long Range, Light Bombardment) on 1 March 1935, assigned to the 1st Wing, and inactivated at Selfridge Field. Redesignated as the 38th Reconnaissance Squadron on 1 September 1936 and activated at March Field, CA. Conducted reconnaissance and photographic missions in connection with floods in southern California 3-15 March 1938. Transferred on 5 June 1941 to

Albuquerque, NM. Transferred on 22 November 1941 to Hamilton Field, CA. Ground elements departed from the port of San Francisco on 6 December on an army transport en route to the Philippines. Aircraft and crews began departing Hamilton Field, CA, on 6 December en route to Hawaii. Elements of the squadron flew their B-17s into Hickam Field at the height of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Disbanded on 1 January 1962 as the 427th Bombardment Squadron (Medium).

Served as flying training unit, 1917-1918. Flew reconnaissance patrols and photographic missions in support of flood-relief operations in Southern California, 2-5 Mar 1938. Air echelon, en route to Philippine Islands, arrived at Hickam Field, TH, during Japanese attack of 7 Dec 1941; flew patrol and search missions in mid-Pacific under direction of Hawaiian Air Force from 9 Dec 1941 until echelon's identity lost through absorption by other units (c. Feb 1942). Training activities of new air echelon interspersed with emergency antisubmarine patrols off California coast, c. late May-early Jun 1942. Between arrival in England in Sep 1942 and departure for Casablanca, French Morocco in late May 1945, bombed targets in France, Belgium, and Germany as part of strategic bombing campaign of occupied Europe. From Dec 1958 to Dec 1961, conducted training and exercises to prepare for long-range bombardment operations with atomic or conventional weapons. Flew MC-12 Liberty aircraft; provided intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support directly to ground forces, 2012-.

Chanute felt the hectic pace of the country to get men trained and over to France as soon as possible. On 25 August 1917, two additional aero squadrons, the 38th and the 39th, arrived by special train from Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas. The 380 men arrived at 9:30 in the evening and were met by over 1,000 people who hoped to see the soldiers. But to the disappointment of the townspeople, the men had already retired for the night, and did not march to Chanute until the following morning. The arrival of the two squadrons brought the complement of men at the field to nearly 1,000, the number for which the field had been built. Three weeks later, on 12 September 1917, Chanute's first 24 graduates left for the larger "aerial concentration camp" at San Antonio, Kelly Field, to complete their training. These men were the first cadets from the University of Illinois. Among them was Reed G. Landis, who later became an ace, downing nine enemy airplanes and one balloon. On 7 October 1917, Chanute received orders from the War Department ordering the 10th and the 16th Aero Squadrons to be ready to leave within 48 hours for Ft. Wood at Mineola, New York. The men, anxious to be off to fight the Hun, cheered the news. Chanute had expected to retain the squadrons through the winter, and had given them permanent assignments in camp. The news of a student departure required a certain amount of shuffling of personnel. All the field's best truck drivers and motorcycle riders were included in the order and several such men from the 38th and 39th squadrons were transferred to the 10th and 16th. These two squadrons were to become part of the 3rd Provisional Aero Squadron once they arrived in France.

The field hastened to ready the squadrons for a rapid departure. All members were forbidden to leave Rantoul, but it was an exercise in futility. The railroad companies did not have enough cars available to move the soldiers. The men waited for nearly a month. The bedding had been turned into the quartermaster, and the only bedding the men had was the blankets carried in

their knapsacks. They slept on the bed springs of their old barracks. After five delays, the squadrons finally left early in the morning of 2 November 1917. Captain "Pop" Hinds was in charge of both companies. The squadrons went to Garden City, New York, rather than the expected Mineola destination to await transportation to Europe. The departure of the two squadrons cut Chanute's complement of men nearly in half. Only the 38th and 39th squadrons, two reservist squadrons and the medical corps in charge of the field hospital, less than 400 men, remained on the field. But even then three new squadrons were expected from Texas.

As winter approached, it became uncertain whether the field could be kept open. Colonel Jones traveled to Washington DC in early November 1917 to attend a special meeting of commanding officers of 15 aviation fields. He returned in mid-month with the news that the field would remain open, but flying would be suspended on 15 December. Actually bad weather prevented flying after 7 December and on the 13th the 39th Aero Squadron left for Rich Field at Waco, Texas, to continue flying training there. Later in the month, the field sent 20 Standard planes and 15 Hall-Scott motors to Wichita Falls and 39 Curtiss planes to Kelly Field. Only a few planes remained at Chanute for officers' winter flying. Until the 152nd, 153rd, 173rd, and 174th Aero Squadrons arrived from Kelly at Christmas time, the departure of the 39th left only the 38th squadron to man the field. In time, the 38th became the headquarters squadron with the nickname of "Home Guards."

* In late July 1918, the squadrons were given letter designations rather than numerical ones. The 38th became A; the 112th, B; the 203rd, C; the 287th, D; and the 288th, E. To avoid confusion, the numeral designation has been retained in this narrative.

And then the war ended. The ringing of the fire bell and the blowing of the light plant whistle at 2 a.m. on 11 November 1918 informed the people of Rantoul of the armistice. Pandemonium broke loose. The energy reserved for so long for the war effort suddenly found a new release. Every conceivable object that would make a noise was brought out and put into use. A huge bonfire was built near the village flagpole and the Kaiser was hung in effigy. Monday was declared a general holiday and a parade was held in the afternoon. There was a victory dance in the evening. Chanute for some reason remained aloof from the initial celebration, and during the morning of the 11th, training continued as usual. The soldiers did not join the village's celebration until the afternoon. There can be at least two explanations for the hesitancy on the part of Chanute. Perhaps the officers in charge remembered the false rumors of the week before, and waited for official confirmation or perhaps they waited until the armistice took effect at 11 a.m. before relaxing. With the armistice, the need for aviators disappeared, and on 19 November 1918 a dispatch from Washington, DC closed Chanute to flying. Cadets already in training had the option of continuing at another field or receiving their discharge. Many wanted out, but still others wanted to go overseas with an occupation army. None wanted to return to Texas. The 38th and 203rd Aero Squadrons were demobilized on 1 December, and by 4 December 1918, the airplanes were being crated up and shipped out. All restrictions were removed on the comings and goings of the remaining soldiers, and rumors on the future of Chanute were rampant. On 15 December 1918, the 112th and the 287th Aero Squadrons left the field for Americus, Georgia, one of the chief winter flying fields outside of the fields at San

Antonio, Texas. Their departure depleted the field's complement to less than 400 men. The two squadrons were amalgamated into the Aviation General Supply Depot Detachment once they reached their destination. Chanute's contribution to the winning of the Great War was highly commendable. Although the exact number of flyers produced by Chanute could not be determined,* the local press noted that of the 8,688 aviators produced at all fields in the United States, Chanute graduated twice as many as the average field while being one of the smallest. In addition, the field had played host to 18 Aero Squadrons, five of which had been recruited and organized at the field. Of the 18 squadrons, the 10th, the 16th, the 152nd, the 153rd, the 173rd, the 174th, the 210th, the 267th, the 268th, the 831st, and the 832nd reached Europe. At least three of the aviators who received training at Chanute became aces by shooting down a minimum of five of the enemy's aircraft.

Between December 15 and April 1, flying ceased at Chanute Field, and all instructors and students were transferred to southern camps to continue training during the winter months. Instruction of ground crews and administrative personnel from various aero squadrons continued as before. The training planes, though unused, were serviced and maintained by student mechanics, riggers, and electricians just as they had been during the busy flying season. Early in January, the 153d and 210th Aero Squadrons received orders to prepare for overseas shipment, and two more squadrons left the Kelly Field depot to train at Rantoul. Before the end of that month, all but the 38th, the headquarters squadron, were alerted for shipment. In spite of the steady drain of units and personnel, the number of men at the field did not fall below 500. After the 83d, 268th, and 269th Aero Squadrons were organized in February and were followed to Chanute by the 831st and 832d Squadrons, the field reached its capacity of 1,500 men. In mid-March, the 83d Squadron, composed mostly of local recruits, reported to Langley Field, Virginia, to serve as school squadron; a new unit, the 203d Squadron, was recruited and organized to fill the vacancy. During the wartime program, 19 squadrons received training at the field; of this number, 12 served overseas, 10 in Europe.

On November 13 1st Lt. Swenson was promoted to the grade of Captain, A. C. Reserve (temp.), and 2d Lts. Allen, Cooper, Hastings, Pittman, Richards and Zubko were promoted to the grade of First Lieutenants, A. C. Reserve(temp.).

On November 18 seventy-seven enlisted men were transferred in grade and rating from the 37th Air Base Group at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma.

On November 21 Capt. Jenson, 1st Lts. Funk and Vickers, 2d Lt. Rang (all of whom were on D. S. with the Ferry Command), 2d Lt. McKnight (in William Beaumont Gen. Hosp.), and 2d Lts. Miller, Pittman, Stansberry and Turner, together with a number of enlisted men who were in schools or hospitals, were transferred to the 4th Air Base Group, Albuquerque. Included in the enlisted men was S/Sgt. Homer L. Edwards. At that time 2d Lt. Seldon T. Miller and S/Sgt. Homer L. Edwards were missing in a plane. It was later found that they had crashed and both been killed.

On November 22 the Ground Echelon of the squadron, consisting of eight officers, two aviation cadets and two hundred and thirty three enlisted men, under the command of Capt. Ben B.

Stone, departed from Albuquerque by train enroute to PLUM, by way of San Francisco, Port of Embarkation. The squadron's Air Echelon, under the command of Maj. Truman H. Landon, remained in Albuquerque. The Ground Echelon reached San Francisco on November 24, and was stationed at the Overseas Replacement and Discharge Depot at Ft. McDowell, where it remained until 11:30 A. M. on December 5, at which time it departed for San Francisco for the purpose of boarding the U. S. A. T. PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

During the afternoon of December 5 the organization boarded the President Johnson, and it sailed at 12:10 A. M. on December 6. The voyage was uneventful until news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was received, about 11:30 A. M. on December 7. The ship was turned back about 2:00 P. M. on December 7. During the return to San Francisco black-outs and radio silence were maintained, and the ship was reported by numerous radios in the United States to be "Missing". However, the return was without incident, San Francisco being reached at 2:10 A. M. on December 9. The organization disembarked at 7:00 P. M. on December 9, and about midnight was taken to Golden Gate Park, where it bivouacked until 11:30 P. M. on December 12, when it entrained for March Field, Calif. It arrived there at 10:30 A. M. on December 14, and remained there until 7:00 P. M. on December 16, at which time it entrained for Bakersfield, Calif., reaching there at 3:00 P.M. Oh December 17, Upon reaching Bakersfield the squadron went into camp at the Kern County Air Port.

A few days before the Ground Echelon of the squadron sailed from San Francisco M/Sgt. Reuben E. Wiseman and S/Sgts. John C. Minnick, Harry P. Moynihan and Robert E. Abbott were detailed to sail earlier, on the S.S. Malaria, which has since been reported as having been missing so long that it is presumed to be lost.

On or about December 4, 1941, the squadron's Air Echelon, under the command of Maj. Truman H. Landon, took off from Albuquerque, N. M., for Hamilton Field, Calif., enroute to PLUM for permanent change of station.

On the evening of December 6 the squadron's Air Echelon, with the exception of the planes piloted by 1st Lts. Hastings and Zubko which were delayed by engine trouble, took off for Hickam Field, T. H. The six planes which took off arrived over the island of Oahu while the Japanese attack on it was in progress. Four of the planes were able to land with little trouble, but Capt. Swenson had to make a forced landing, badly damaging his plane, and 1st Lt. Richards plane was attacked and forced down by Japanese pursuit planes. He was able to land it, but S/Sgt. Velarde and Pvt. Tomlinson were injured by gunfire. It is also understood that 1st Lt. William R. Schick, the Flight Surgeon, was killed, either before or after landing.

As this is written the details are not known, but it is understood that Maj. Landon was decorated for the manner in which he led the squadron, and that several other officers and men received the Order of the Purple Heart.

Shortly after December 7 1st Lt. Hastings flew his plane over to Hickam Field. However, 1st Lt. Zubko was ordered to take his plane to Muroc Lake, Calif. While the squadron's Ground Echelon

was at Bakersfield Lt. Zubko brought his entire crew there and they rejoined the Ground Echelon, Lt. Zubko going to foreign duty.

It is also understood that Capt. Swenson and Lt. Barthelmess, with their respective crews, have gone from Hawaii to foreign duty. Maj. Landon has been promoted to Lt. Colonel, and he and the other members of the Air Echelon have now been assigned to the 7th Bomber Command, at Hickam Field.

On December 26 a plane piloted by Lt. Cooper was forced down at sea while on patrol duty near Hawaii. With him at the time were Lts Crockett and Eberenz, T/Sgt. Broyles, Pvt. McCord, and one or two other officers and enlisted men. After floating in a rubber life raft for four days and five nights they were all rescued by a naval patrol plane. The rescue was made under very difficult circumstances and the naval flyers were decorated for accomplishing it.

Lt. Wheless, who was assigned to the 19th Bombardment Group, as heretofore mentioned, has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. While on a bombing mission, his plane was attacked by a great number of Japanese fighter planes and badly shot up, in spite of which he managed to return and land it. He has been promoted to Captain as has also Lt. Coats.

Dec. 6, 1941. This squadron departed from Hamilton Field, California, at approximately 21:30 PST for Hickam Field, T. H. 6 airplanes (2 B-17E's and 4 B-17C's) and 55 officers and men.

Dec. 7. Made the trip. (2 B-17C's and two crews were left at Hamilton Field) All 6 planes arrived over the island of Oahu between 09:00 and 11:00 H.T. during an attack on the island by Japanese aircraft. Since our planes had no ammunition (7 B-17Es of the 88th Recce Sq. were in a similar situation at the time) we landed as soon as possible. 1 B-17C was shot while landing at Hickam and burned. One of the crew, 1st Lt. Wm. Schick, M. C., died of wounds received at the time. Other crewmembers escaped. Another B-17C crashed while landing at Bellows Field. Several crew members were wounded. Remainder of planes landed safely at Hickam, although some damage was done by bullets. Crews were scattered by ground strafing immediately upon landing, and the squadron was reunited in the afternoon to spend the night in temporary camp in the brush at the east end of Hickam Field.

Dec. 8. Squadron moved to Headquarters in Bldg. T-I, Hickam Field, sharing it with 88th Recce Sq. Remainder of day spent in completing organization of squadron.

Dec. 9. Squadron sent two planes on morning patrol mission. No report. Spent afternoon repairing planes and securing equipment. Warning order for move to island of Maui. 4th Reconnaissance Squadron to furnish ground echelon.

Dec. 10. Air raid warning at 04:20, but no raid. There has been none since initial attack last Sunday.

Mar 1 1942 Had air raid alarm this morning at 9:40, All planes took off but no target was spotted, False Alarm.

Mar. 2. High point of today was arrival of four B-25s from the mainland. They flew by dead reckoning and arrived here about 6 P.M. Being delivered to Dutch. Quite a few B-26s have been put together and are flying around now.

Mar. 3, Lt. Col. Landon paid man today for February. About the only way he has to remind us that he is still CO of the 38th. Men's Morale seems to be on a steady decline, due largely to lack of promotion and operation under attached status.

Mar. 4. Everybody called down to hangar at one AM on alert. Air Raid expected but only pursuit took off. Learned later that four bombs were reported dropped north of Honolulu by a four-motored plane at 20,000 feet.- Maybe he'll come back tonight.

Mar. 5. Nothing today. Japs didn't come tack last night.

Mar. 6. Just another day.

Mar. 7. Had Air Raid Alert this morning. Striking Force took-off but was called back. False Alarm Nothing else to report.

Mar. 8. No change. Weather has been pretty bad for this place last couple of weeks, men still discontented over lack of ratings.

Mar. 9. Everybody neatly engaged nowadays with Squadron Schools. Major Allan insists on hard work but is not a hard men to work for. Heard Rumor today that our men were assigned to Hawaiian Department.

Mar. 10. It's true. Our remaining enlisted personnel has been assigned to 7th Bomber Command.

Mar. 11. Another day. 42nd now has new mess operating end officers are eating there instead of at the club which suddenly switched from field ration to cash basis.

Mar. 12. Ordinary day except for arrival LB-30s about 5 P.M. Haven't found out where they came from yet. Have read news item on bombing raids near How Guinea led by Major Carmichael which is the same outfit that Swenson and Barthelmess are with, Hope those two crews ore still intact, Don't know when any more of us will leave here.

Beale AFB, Calif.-MC-12W Liberty crews returned to Beale AFB, Calif., from the type's final combat deployment on Oct. 13, before Air Combat Command stood-down the mission. Pilots from Beale's 427th Reconnaissance Squadron and sensor and tactical systems operators from the 306th Intelligence Squadron flew some 2,500 missions and 8,000 combat hours over the

six-month deployment to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. "As we've gone to divestiture it's been a really significant, emotional event-understandably so-for a lot of airmen," 9th Operations Group Commander Lt. Col. Darren Halford. "You can't overstate the contributions of the airmen that made the MC-12 happen. We gave them very little guidance, it was all ingenuity, blood, sweat, and tears to figure out how to make that all work," he said in an interview at Beale. MC-12 airmen flew integrated missions with Army aviation and intelligence personnel over the last year until contractors took over the mission, 427th RS Commander Lt. Col. Joey Laws. "It's a pretty incredible relationship we've developed with the Army," said Laws. "There was a lot of trepidation in the beginning, switching over to Army rules-as it turns out, professional aviators are professional aviators," he added. 2015

The 427th Reconnaissance Squadron "Spartans" inactivated in a Nov. 20 ceremony at Beale AFB, Calif., completing Air Combat Command's divestiture of the MC-12W Liberty. "We're witnessing a tremendous chapter of airpower history close, not only for Beale, but for the Air Force," 9th Operations Group Commander Col. Darren Halford told Air Force Magazine in an interview at Beale. "The aircraft saved lives" on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan and "the fact that we had their back, and had the high ground brought a lot more [people] home in better shape," he added. Since the 427th RS stood up at Beale in 2012, the unit trained and deployed some 455 aircrew and flew 4,770 combat sorties, according to a release. The last aircrew returned from deployment to Afghanistan in October. ACC dispersed its MC-12s to the Army and civilian contract operators, retaining 13 airframes to stand up a new Air National Guard mission under Air Force Special Operations Command. "It's probably a better placement ... the mission set is going where it belongs," 427th RS Commander Lt. Col. Joey Laws said in an interview. A Beale cadre is helping stand up the new MC-12 schoolhouse at Will Rogers ANGB, Okla., where Guard crews will begin training next year. "I would love to be a part of the MC-12 program for the rest of my career because I'm so proud of what it's accomplished," said Laws. 2015

The 9th Reconnaissance Wing flew its final MC-12W Liberty sortie from Beale AFB, Calif., ending Air Combat Command's operation of the aircraft on Sept. 16. "The MC-12 is a great story because it linked those people in the aircraft with people on the ground and it allowed them to carry out a critically important mission," 9th RW Commander Col. Douglas Lee said in a release. Beale's 427th Reconnaissance Squadron has flown the aircraft since June 2011, following the Air Force's decision to normalize the MC-12 as a permanent fleet. Air Force MC-12s clocked some 400,000 combat flying hours and more than 79,000 sorties over Iraq and Afghanistan since they were first deployed in June 2009, according to officials. The Air Force is retaining 13 of the 41-strong fleet to stand up a special operations-tasked unit with the Oklahoma Air National Guard, while eight MC-12s are transferring to the Army. "Although the mission is leaving ... the aircraft are going to very good homes," said 9th Operations Group Commander Col. Darren Halford. "Our joint and Total Force partners will ensure the MC-12 continues to help find, fix, and finish the enemies of freedom." 2015

The 427th Reconnaissance Squadron derives its early heritage from the 38th Provisional Aero Squadron organized at Camp Kelly, Texas, on 12 June 1917. Reactivated in 1933 as the 38th

Pursuit Squadron at Selfridge Field, Michigan, it was then reassigned to March Field, California and redesignated the 38th Reconnaissance Squadron in 1936. The squadron was then equipped with the B-18 Bolo medium bomber and the A-17A attack dive bomber. They were reequipped with B-17s and ordered to the Pacific to defend the Philippine Islands. While enroute they were engaged in combat while arriving at Hickam Field, Hawaii on 7 December 1941 during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The squadron was sent back to the mainland and activated as the 427th Bombardment Squadron on 22 April 1942. From September 1942 until the end of the war, the 427th was assigned to RAF Molesworth England as part of the famous 303rd Bomb Group. The 427th supported D-Day, struck the Schweinfurt ball bearing plants, were part of the first mass daylight raids on Berlin, and decimated the V-1 and V-2 rocket sites at Peenemunde. During World War Two the 427th Bombardment Squadron took some of the worst casualties and was one of the highest decorated units in 8th Air Force. After deactivating in 1946, the squadron was reactivated and re-equipped with the Boeing B-47 Stratojet in December 1958. It served as a cold war sentinel until it was again deactivated in January 1962. After being dormant over fifty years, the squadron was reactivated as the 427th Reconnaissance Squadron on 1 May 2012 as Air Combat Command's first MC-12W combat operations squadron.

23 August 1942, Boeing B-17E-BO Flying Fortress, 41-9091, of the 427th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group, operating out of Biggs Field, El Paso, Texas, suffers center fuselage failure in extremely bad weather 12 miles W of Las Cruces, New Mexico, only the radio operator and the engineering officer for the 427th Bomb Squadron, both in the radio room, survive by parachuting. Pilot was James E. Hudson. The 303rd BG was due to deploy overseas from Biggs on 24 August.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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

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

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