

4 SPACE OPERATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

The 4 Space Operations Squadron is responsible for command and control of the Milstar satellite constellation through the Milstar Satellite Operations Center, Mobile Constellation Control Stations, and the Milstar Support Facility.

The Milstar system is composed of three distinct segments: The Space Segment (satellites), the Terminal Segment (users), and Mission Control Segment (ground control stations). Milstar is the most advanced military communications satellite system to date. The multi-satellite constellation links command authorities to high priority U.S. forces via Milstar terminals on aircraft, ships, submarines, trucks, and ground sites with encrypted voice, data, teletype, or facsimile communications. The Mission Control Segment provides satellite command and control and mission support to the Milstar constellation. The fifth and final operational Milstar satellite was launched in April 2003. The 4 Space Operations Squadron operates the \$31 billion Milstar system executing communications management, satellite command and control, and ground segment maintenance for the Milstar constellation.

The Squadron performs satellite command and control, communications resource management, systems engineering support, mission planning, and anomaly resolution for the Milstar system. The Squadron has three fixed Constellation Control Stations (CCS), which interface with the geographically distributed Mobile CCSs, executing satellite command and control. The Milstar Support Facility personnel, also located in the Operations Building perform ground control maintenance and testing, and hardware and software configuration control.

LINEAGE

4 Photographic Squadron constituted, 15 May 1941

Activated, 10 Jun 1941
Redesignated 4 Mapping Squadron, 13 Jan 1942
Redesignated 4 Photographic Mapping Squadron, 9 Jun 1942
Redesignated 4 Photographic Charting Squadron, 11 Aug 1943
Redesignated 4 Reconnaissance Squadron, Long Range, Photographic, 15 Jun 1945
Redesignated 4 Reconnaissance Squadron, Very Long Range, Photographic, 20 Nov 1945
Inactivated, 14 Apr 1946
Redesignated 4 Reconnaissance Squadron, Photographic, 5 Sep 1947
Activated in the Reserve, 20 Sep 1947
Inactivated, 27 Jun 1949
Redesignated 4 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Medium, 9 May 1952
Activated, 28 May 1952
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1958
Redesignated 4 Space Operations Squadron, 1 Apr 1992
Activated, 30 Apr 1992
Changed Status from a unit of United States Air Force to a unit of United States Space Force, 21 Oct 2020

STATIONS

Moffet Field, CA, 10 Jun 1941
March Field, CA, 10 Dec 1941 (detachments operated from various bases in Alaska, Canada, Central America, Caribbean, and South America, 1942–1944)
Peterson Field, CO, 4 Jan 1944
Buckley Field, CO, 1 Jul–14 Oct 1944
Hollandia, New Guinea, 7 Nov 1944 (detachments operated from Morotai, Dec 1944–Jan 1945; Australia, Jan–May 1945; Zamboanga, Mindanao, Apr–Jun 1945; and Clark Field, Luzon, Jun–Aug 1945)
Tacloban, Leyte, 11 Jul 1945 (detachment operated from Okinawa, Aug–Oct 1945)
Seoul, South Korea, 25 Oct 1945–14 Apr 1946
Niagara Falls Muni Aprt, NY, 20 Sep 1947
Buffalo, NY, 3 May 1948–27 Jun 1949
Lockbourne AFB, OH, 28 May 1952–1 Jul 1958
Falcon (later, Schriever) AFB (later, SFB), CO, 30 Apr 1992–.

ASSIGNMENTS

1 Photographic (later, 1 Mapping; 1 Photographic Charting) Group, 10 Jun 1941
311 Photographic (later, 311 Reconnaissance) Wing, 5 Oct 1944–14 Apr 1946
First Air Force, 20 Sep 1947
26 Reconnaissance Group, 23 Oct 1947–27 Jun 1949
26 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 28 May 1952–1 Jul 1958
50 Operations Group, 30 Apr 1992
50 Operations Group (later, Space Delta 8), 30 Apr 1992

ATTACHMENTS

Thirteenth Air Force, c. 7 Nov 1944
4 Photographic Group, Dec 1944
6 Reconnaissance Group, 3 May 1945
308 Bombardment Wing, 22 Oct 1945–14 Apr 1946

WEAPON SYSTEMS

F-2, 1941–1942
A-29, 1942
A-29B
B-34, 1943–1944
B-24/F-7, 1943–1946
YRB-47, 1953
RB-47
B-47
Satellites, 1992

COMMANDERS

Capt Elvin F. Maughan, 10 Jun 1941
1st Lt Karl L. Polifka, Nov 1941
Capt John B. Stewart,
Maj Frank N. Graves, 29 May 1942
Lt Col Eakes, May 1943
Lt Col Roland A. Campbell
Lt Col Theodore W. Beck,
Unkn, 20 Sep 1947-27 Jun 1949
Capt Edward J. Majeskie, May 1952
1st Lt William R. Ward, Jun 1953
Maj William E. Beaty Jr., 17 Jul 1953
Cpt James R. Tucker, Aug 1953
Lt Col Lawson C. Horner, Oct 1953
Lt Col William H. Edwards, Jul 1954
Lt Col Robert C. Bachtell, Nov 1956
Maj Cornelius E. Buckley, Dec 1956
Lt Col Charles H. Mcconnell, 16 Sep 1957-1 Jul 1958
Lt Col Charles L. Thompson Jr., 30 Apr 1992
Lt Col Kimber L. Mckenzie, 15 Jun 1993
Lt Col Michael R. Mantz, 10 Jan 1995
Lt Col Philip B. Fitzjarrell, 15 Aug 1996
Lt Col Allen Kirkman Jr., 18 Mar 1999
Lt Col Roger W. Teague, 26 Feb 2001
Lt Col Ronald L. Huntley, 5 May 2003
Lt Col John E. Shaw, 14 Jun 2005
Lt Col Tommy A. Roberts, 14 Jun 2007
Lt Col Douglas A. Schiess, 19 June 2009

Lt Col Scott Trinrud, 24 June 2011
Lt Col Monte Munoz, 19 June 2013
Lt Col Sherman Johns, July 2015
Lt Col Armon Lansing, 13 July 2017
Lt Col Timothy Ryan, July 2019
Lt Col Brian Dea, 17 June 2021
Lt Col Michelle L. Haines, 20 July 2023

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Japan

New Guinea

Leyte

Luzon

Southern Philippines

China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

21 Mar–9 May 1956

1 Oct 2000-1 Oct 2001

1 Oct 2001-1 Oct 2002

2 Oct 2002-2 Oct 2003

1 Oct 2007-30 Sep 2009

1 Jan 2015-31 Dec 2016

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII)

EMBLEM



On a light blue shield, a golden winged gray aerial camera, focused on a sphere, in base, royal blue, with white grid lines, the sphere encircled with a white cloud formation, a red stream spiraling from the globe to the camera. (Approved, 20 Jan 1956)



4 Space Operations Squadron emblem: On a disc Sable a winged Or star Argent detailed of the first, issuing four lightning flashes Gules, in base a terrestrial globe Azure gridlined of the third, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "4 SPACE OPERATIONS SQ" in Yellow letters. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "LINKING THE FORCES" in Yellow letters. **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 background symbolizes space and suggests the link between ground-based operations and satellites. The star represents the satellites of the Milstar System which the Squadron operates. The lines of the star denote the unique cross-link capabilities of Milstar. The wings of the star allude to the unit's historical reconnaissance lineage. The lightning flashes represent instant electronic communication provided by Milstar and the Squadron and also indicated the unit's numerical designation. The globe signifies the ability of the unit to operate Milstar as a constant communication network worldwide in any theater. (Approved, 20 Aug 1992)

Space Force emblem approved on 2 Mar 2022.

MOTTO

LINKING THE FORCES

OPERATIONS

Mapped areas of Alaska, Canada, Central and South America, 1942–1944; Southwest and Western Pacific, Dec 1944–1946.

The 4 Photo Mapping Squadron was detached for duty in small increments to the Caribbean, Central and South America repeatedly between 1942 and 1944.

Operated A-29s and B-34s configured for aerial mapping.

November 15, 1994 The 4 Space Operations Squadron assumed satellite control authority (SCA) for the first Milstar satellite.

November 25, 2008 The 4 Space Operations Squadron opened its new Protected Satellite Operations Center in Building 400. The ribbon-cutting ceremony included the unveiling of a memorial to America's combat forces outside the Protected Satellite Operations Center door. Squadron personnel, place a hand on the memorial as they pass to remember those combat forces Milstar directly supports.

The 4 Space Operations Squadron at Schriever AFB, Colo., received satellite control authority of the third Advanced Extremely High Frequency communications satellite during a recent transfer ceremony. The MILSATCOM Program Office, a division of the Space and Missile Systems Center in Los Angeles, has had satellite control authority over AEHF-3 since its launch in September. The satellite reached geosynchronous orbit in January. "The operational position of the satellite, and hence its coverage area, is up to US Strategic Command. We are prepared to support users and the combatant commands' needs wherever the satellite is finally positioned," said Lt. Col. Alistair Funge, 4 SOPS operations officer. The transfer ceremony took place March 21. The fourth AEHF vehicle is tentatively slated to launch into space in 2015. 2014

4 SOPS' mission is to operate the U.S. Space Force's protected and wideband Military Satellite Communications systems. They provide joint and coalition warfighters global, secure, survivable, strategic, and tactical communication during peacetime and throughout the full spectrum of conflict. The squadron also operates three mobile constellation control stations at various locations in conjunction with host partners. At higher readiness levels and during exercises, these personnel deploy with U.S. Strategic Command and U.S. Northern Command respectively.

Additionally, they provide reliable space-borne communications to national authorities, U.S. and Allied forces. 4 SOPS' motto, "Linking the Forces," reflects the squadron's responsibility to

enhance the nation's secure and wideband communications capability for today's military forces. The squadron is responsible for command and control of the Milstar/Advanced Extremely High Frequency, Defense Satellite Communications System Phase III, and Wideband Global Satellite Communications satellite constellations through dedicated Extremely High Frequency antennas and the Air Force Satellite Control Network.

The multi-satellite constellation links national command authorities to high priority U.S. forces via communications terminals on aircraft, ships, submarines, trucks, and ground sites with encrypted voice, data, teletype, or facsimile communications. They also provide secure high-rate data communications links to the President, Secretary of Defense, theater commanders, coalition, and strategic and tactical forces worldwide.

On June 13, 2017, the 3rd Space Operations Squadron was inactivated and 4 SOPS assumed responsibility of the DSCS-III and WGS constellations.

As of Sept. 25, 2019, 4 SOPS operationally accepted the Enhanced Polar System mission, providing protected communication capability to the underserved polar region.

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.