



# Lincoln Missileer

NUMBER 6

Strength Maintains Security

JULY 2004

## Presidents Corner:

## LET'S RENDEZVOUS - DAYTON IN 05

The 2005 *Dayton Rendezvous* will take place April 20<sup>th</sup> thru 23<sup>rd</sup>. Our "Field Headquarters" will be established at the *Holiday Inn at Fairborn* located at 2800 President Drive, in Fairborn, Ohio, at exit #17 on Interstate 675. The hotel is in close to several major shopping malls and has easy access to the USAF Museum. Many conveniences are within walking distance or a short driving distance. Tom Mulvey, Ron Resh, & yours truly stayed at this hotel during a recent visit to Dayton. This selection was made after we had inspected and stayed at other local hotels during other visits. In order to help us complete the planning phase of this reunion, those interested in attending *Dayton - 2005*, please fill out the form on page # 11 of this newsletter and return to me. It can be mailed or faxed.

If you look at the story and photo on page # 3 of this issue we have to thank Ron Resh for his dedication to this association. Ron was able to find an independent source that was willing to financially support the placement of a memorial to honor the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS at the AF Museum. So during our *Dayton Rendezvous* the memorial will be dedicated and it's the first bench to be placed there by a missile squadron. "A job well done" - Ron!

After watching television this past week, June 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup>, I'm proud to say that I am an American. While observing our uniformed military members participating in the various events of President Ronald W. Reagan's funeral. I realized that no matter what branch of the services that they represented, I was proud to say that I was once one of them.

Halfway around the world we have another group of our military. They too are serving us, helping to protect our homeland. Back in the days of the 'Cold War' we knew who our enemy was, but today, fighting terrorism, our enemy can be living right next door to us and we don't even know it. So please continue to support our men and women in uniform.

Several months ago I found out that 551st member Bob Brickner has a son who was activated and sent over to Iraq. Unknown to Bob a box of supplies was sent to his son who is a member of the Nebraska National Guard. I recently received a letter of 'thanks' from Army Sgt. Michael Brickner. "The package was shared with all the people in my section, they too want to thank you." **Guys, these soldiers need our help.** They are looking for "good meat" according to our source. I had mailed them dried meat that was pressure wrapped to preserve it. Postal officials will not permit the shipment of pork products to our troops in Iraq. There are meat products that are sealed in the supermarket that only contains beef products. If you would like to ship a care package out to these guys, most of them come from the Lincoln area, mark the box with a "551" on the bottom left corner & Mike will hand them out to the troops. His address is:

Sgt. Brickner, Michael A.  
267<sup>th</sup> ORD (FWD)  
FOB SPEICHER - OIF  
APO - AE 09393

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## 551<sup>st</sup> SMS Association

The 551<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Squadron Association is a non-profit Veterans Organization. All donations to the organization are gratefully received, but are not deductible under IRS Code. The Executive Board is elected by majority vote of all members at each business meeting.



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My granddaughter, Gabby, added her own letter to the box & Mike sent her a reply. You had to see the look on her face when she read her mail. These guys & gals have to know that we support them. So please let the former 551<sup>st</sup> members deliver that message to them. If anyone else has a daughter or a son serving in Iraq please let me know.

Growing up in NYC, I felt that the city was a major target if we were ever attacked. I had a safer feeling when I joined the Air Force and was assigned to Lincoln AFB. Yes, even living on a SAC base had to be less dangerous than residing in NYC, but my thoughts were recently shattered while I was doing research on LAFB and I discovered an article that not only appeared in newspapers in Nebraska, but also the New York Times. The Russians knew about Lincoln AFB since they were given a glimpse of its bomber force back in 1955. This issue of the *Lincoln Missileer* contains the story of the Russian visit to Nebraska. As I am writing this column, ironically enough I just learned that, a Russian airplane is taking on cargo while sitting on the tarmac of LAFB where the B-47s/KC-97s once sat. The huge Antoniv AN-124 Condor sat down Monday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, to load the farm equipment.

One of our members mentioned that he never received the last newsletter. So to make it easier for all to follow, it has been decided that starting with this issue we will no longer list each issue by Volume and Issue Number. Instead, for your convenience we will list them by a consecutive number, with this being issue number 6. The last issue was a double issue # 4 & 5.

We have just received the "**pocket rocket**" and the "**combat crew badge**," both 1960 design and not the new shinny type. They are brand new and available for a \$15.00 each donation to the association.

Anyone interested in writing an article for this newsletter, please feel free to do so especially if it involved the days of the 551<sup>st</sup> S.M.S.

**If you enjoy this newsletter then help to support the association with a donation, We need your help!**

Have a great summer & I hope to see you in Dayton in April of 05.

Ken

## USAF MEMORIAL APPROVED FOR 551 SMS

We are pleased to announce that during our reunion next spring in Dayton, a lasting memorial to the 551<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Squadron will be dedicated at the USAF Museum.

# 551<sup>ST</sup> STRATEGIC MISSILE SQUADRON

LINCOLN AFB NEBRASKA 1961-1965



WE SERVED WITH HONOR



ATLAS F ICBM



WE REMEMBER WITH PRIDE

Thanks to the generosity of a benefactor who wishes to remain unnamed, we were able to capitalize on a unique timing situation. The fact that our reunion will be held in Dayton in the spring of 2005, the fact that many of our reunion activities focus on the USAF Museum, the fact that there remain only a limited number of opportunities for the erection of a memorial of the type we prefer, and the fact that non-551SMS funding and design assistance were available, all entered into our decision process.

The 551 SMS memorial, which has received official approval from the USAF Museum, will be a strikingly handsome black India granite bench, located in a visible position close to the main entrance to the Museum. The contrasting white inscription will prominently display the name of the 551<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Squadron. Our place and dates of service, Lincoln AFB, Nebraska 1961- 1965, will be inscribed. The bench will feature the familiar emblem of the Strategic Air Command, our squadron emblem, and the missile badge as it appeared during our time of service with the 551<sup>st</sup>. Our weapons system, the Atlas F ICBM, and our feeling of pride and honor of service will be inscribed.

We are proud that the design of our Dayton memorial has received accolades from a multitude of sources. In summary, it is viewed as a thoughtful, dignified tribute to our squadron, to SAC, and to the important role we played in the defense of our country and our victory in the Cold War. We also note that it will be the first of its kind memorial erected by an ICBM squadron at the world famous USAF Museum.

We want to assure our members that nothing involved with our Dayton memorial interferes in any way with our efforts to erect a memorial to the 551<sup>st</sup> in Lincoln, NE. Our fund-raising and planning for that project continues to be one of our top priorities.

## LARGE 551st SMS TURNOUT AT MISSILEERS REUNION

May 19 – 23 marked the national meeting of the Association of Air Force Missileers at Omaha, Nebraska. By all accounts, this was the best ever reunion of that organization. Particularly noteworthy was the fact that of the 170 people attending this event, almost ten percent were members and friends of the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS Association.

Among the 551<sup>st</sup> people attending were Bob Carto (Columbia, MD), Dan and Sharon Duffy (Lincoln, NE), Ken Fisher (Bronx, NY), Vern Hastings (Mesa, AZ), Duane Koss (Blue Springs, MO), Ron Resh (Silver Spring, MD), and Siegfried and Roseann Thiele (Sterling Heights, MI).

Just before the official start of the reunion, 551st members Ken Fisher, Ron Resh and Bob Carto experienced a special treat. Thanks to the hospitality of Master Sergeant Jimmy Weber, NCOIC of Night Wing, the component of the Air Force Heartland of America Band that performed at our Lincoln reunion last year, Ken, Ron and Bob received a behind-the-scenes VIP tour of Offutt AFB. Later, they sat in on a lively Night Wing rehearsal session.

Among the other highlights of the reunion were a tour and briefings at Offutt, including mission briefings from the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing, Air Force Weather Agency, Airborne Launch Control System and STRATCOM. Also, dinner and tour of the former SAC Museum (now known as the Strategic Air and Space Museum), a golf outing, and Omaha tours of the Henry Doorly Zoo and the Durham Western Heritage Museum.

An interesting general membership meeting included a fascinating discussion by former Air Force Secretary Tom Reed about his new Cold War book, "At the Abyss." Also, a briefing by Gary Francis Powers, Jr. (son of the U-2 pilot) about plans for a Cold War Museum. The meeting concluded with a presentation on the progress of an art project sponsored by AAFM, honoring Air Force Missileers, to be displayed at Air Force Space Command headquarters in Colorado Springs.

The main event was a banquet featuring a stirring talk by Admiral James Ellis, Commander of STRATCOM. General Lance Lord, Commander of Air Force Space Command, introduced Admiral Ellis. Musical entertainment was provided by Looking Glass, another component of the Heartland of America Band.

In addition to all else, the concluding banquet was particularly meaningful to members of the 551<sup>st</sup>. Thanks to our large attendance, we had our own table, strategically located and marked with our name, emblem and logo. Charlie Simpson, Executive Director of the AAFM and a special friend of the 551<sup>st</sup> publicly recognized our significant presence at the reunion. Finally, personnel from the Heartland of America Band publicly announced how honored the band was to be able to perform for us at our 551<sup>st</sup> reunion in Lincoln last year, and how much their sister organization the Band of Flight at Wright-Patterson AFB is looking forward to performing at our reunion in Dayton next spring.

Our congratulations to Charlie Simpson and his team for an outstanding reunion and a job well done. We look forward to a continued close relationship with Charlie and the AAFM. Their next reunion will be in Cheyenne, Wyoming in 2006. You may be sure we'll be there.

## RUSSIANS GLIMPSE AIR MIGHT OF U.S.

By Seth S. King

Columbus, Neb, Aug. 1, 1955 — The Soviet farm delegation touring the Midwest corn and livestock areas got a brief look at a part of this nation's air strength.

The chartered bus carrying the Russians drove by for several minutes along the highway skirting the Lincoln Air Force Base. Lined up in plain view of the Russians were scores of B-47's, the medium jet bombers, and the huge tankers used to refuel the bombers in the air.

A unit of the Strategic Air Command, the field, at the edge of the city of Lincoln, serves as a training base for tanker crews.

Russian air bases are seldom in such plain sight and it was unlikely that many of the Russian visitors had ever seen so many planes in one place before. American officials conducting the tour said, however, that the visitors showed no particular interest in the field.

Before the start of today's tour Vladimir Matskevich, Acting Soviet Minister of Agriculture, who heads the twelve-man delegation, left to fly to Washington. There he will complete arrangements for a tour of Canada some time after Aug. 23, when the Russian journey through the Midwest and California ends. He is to rejoin the party tomorrow or Wednesday.

Before Mr. Matskevich left for Washington the Russians attended a coffee given by Mrs. W.V. Lambert, wife of the dean of the University of Nebraska College of Agriculture. Her husband is the leader of the group of American farmers and agricultural officials touring farm areas in Russia.

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It might not be the same view that the Russian's saw in 1955, but this aerial view of Lincoln Air Force Base flight line in the mid-60's showing some of the assigned B-47's of the 98th Strategic Aerospace Wing and the 307th Bomb Wing.

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Mr. Matskevich presented a dozen roses to Mrs. Lambert and told the assembled Americans: "We hope we may be able to meet you all again, either in Lincoln or in Russia."

University of Nebraska officials presented a large cardboard medallion to Andrew Shevchenko, advisor to the Soviet Ministry of Agriculture.

With the medallion today went a citation for "outstanding accomplishments in English." In his response Mr. Shevchenko achieved several new flights of English usage, saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to see you. Thank you very much for this presentation."

This afternoon the Russians inspected at the William Thiele farm near here a mobile irrigation system that is completely mechanized.

At a plant here the Russians saw a steel building that had gone through the May 5 atomic bomb test at Yucca Flat, Nev.

## **DAYTON – THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE**

No doubt the majority of members who urged us to have our next 551 SMS reunion in Dayton, Ohio were well aware of the tremendous attraction of the USAF Museum located at Wright-Patterson AFB. This outstanding facility is one of the oldest and largest military aviation museums in the world. It features more than 300 aircraft and missiles and has over 10 acres of indoor display space as well as a vast outdoor exhibit area. The displays reflect the development of aviation from the days of the Wright Brothers to the Space Age. It has a collection of presidential aircraft unrivaled anywhere in the United States. Its state-of-the-art IMAX theater features military and space aviation topics. Food is available in a large, pleasant dining area. The museum is handicapped accessible and mobility assistance is available for those needing it. It has a large, well-stocked gift shop featuring everything imaginable having to do with military, civilian and space aviation and patriotic themes. Surrounding the museum and in a nearby outdoor memorial section are hundreds of monuments and plaques honoring all types of Air Force units and organizations.

Perhaps some of our members were aware of recent developments at the USAF Museum that make a visit even more meaningful to members of the 551<sup>st</sup>. The addition of a large gallery dedicated to the display of Cold War Era aircraft and a soon-to-be-completed missile gallery are some of the new attractions.

The historians among us might have realized that the time of our reunion in Dayton, April 2005, marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the time when the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS, the last Atlas F unit to do so, stood down and went off alert.

But no one among us, from the newest 551<sup>st</sup> member to the President of our Association, was prepared for the unexpected development that will make our visit to Dayton and to the Museum even more memorable. During our reunion, a permanent memorial to the 551<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Squadron will be dedicated by us at the Museum. The details of this event are covered in an article on page three in this newsletter. Suffice it to say that for all these reasons, our presence at the April 2005 reunion in Dayton will be at the right time and at the right place.

## I REMEMBER

By Don Luther

In 1958 I attended a two-week Civil Air patrol summer Camp held at Clinton Air Force Base Wilmington, Ohio. During the encampment my squadron was bussed to Wright - Patterson AFB to spend the day at the Air Force Museum.

The next time I visited the Air Force Museum was in 2001 when Ken, Ron, and I were in Dayton to plan the future of our association and discuss the possibility of having a reunion. You can imagine the shock I had at seeing how much the museum had grown in 43 years. I figured there would be changes but I guess I didn't expect it to be so big! The building may have been a block square in 58', now it's around 10 acres in buildings, and growing.

The third trip I made to the museum was when I attended the 98th Bomb Wing reunion in Dayton. I had only planned on attending the 98th's business meeting but Ken twisted my arm, and made me an offer I couldn't refuse, and I'm glad I didn't. Attending a banquet dinner under the nose of a B-52 is more than impressive, it is a memory that will stay with me as long as I live.

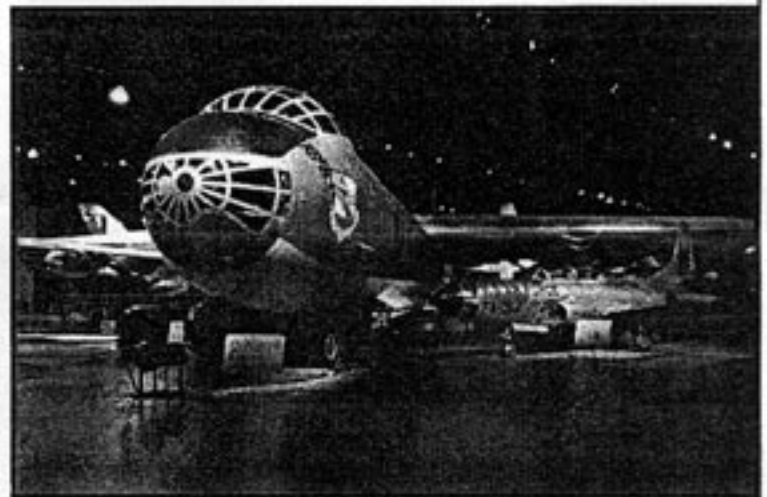
In 1972, I read a book called The Blond Knight of Germany, a biography about a fighter pilot, Eric Hartman, also known as the ace of aces. He is credited with downing 352 allied aircraft. I loaned the book to someone and it was never returned.

Over the years I attempted to acquire another copy but never found one. To my surprise the museum gift shop had it along with dozens of other aviation related publications. They have a selection that is

impressive, Miniatures of aircraft, Unusual shirts, Aviation related coins and things you won't find at your local K-Mart. The prices aren't that bad either, especially if you are a member of the museum. I could spend a day there and probably a year's Social Security income.

Ron Resh has taken the time to design a memorial bench in honor of the 551st, locate financing, and make arrangements with the museum to have it placed. I'm looking forward to the dedication and seeing the cold war exhibit.

I'm bringing the kids and the "old bat." I'm passing up the first reunion of the 780 AC&W Squadron SAGE so I can make the Dayton Reunion. Maybe the remaining members of Crew R-41 will make it this time. I'd bet money this reunion will be better than Lincoln and that will be hard to do.

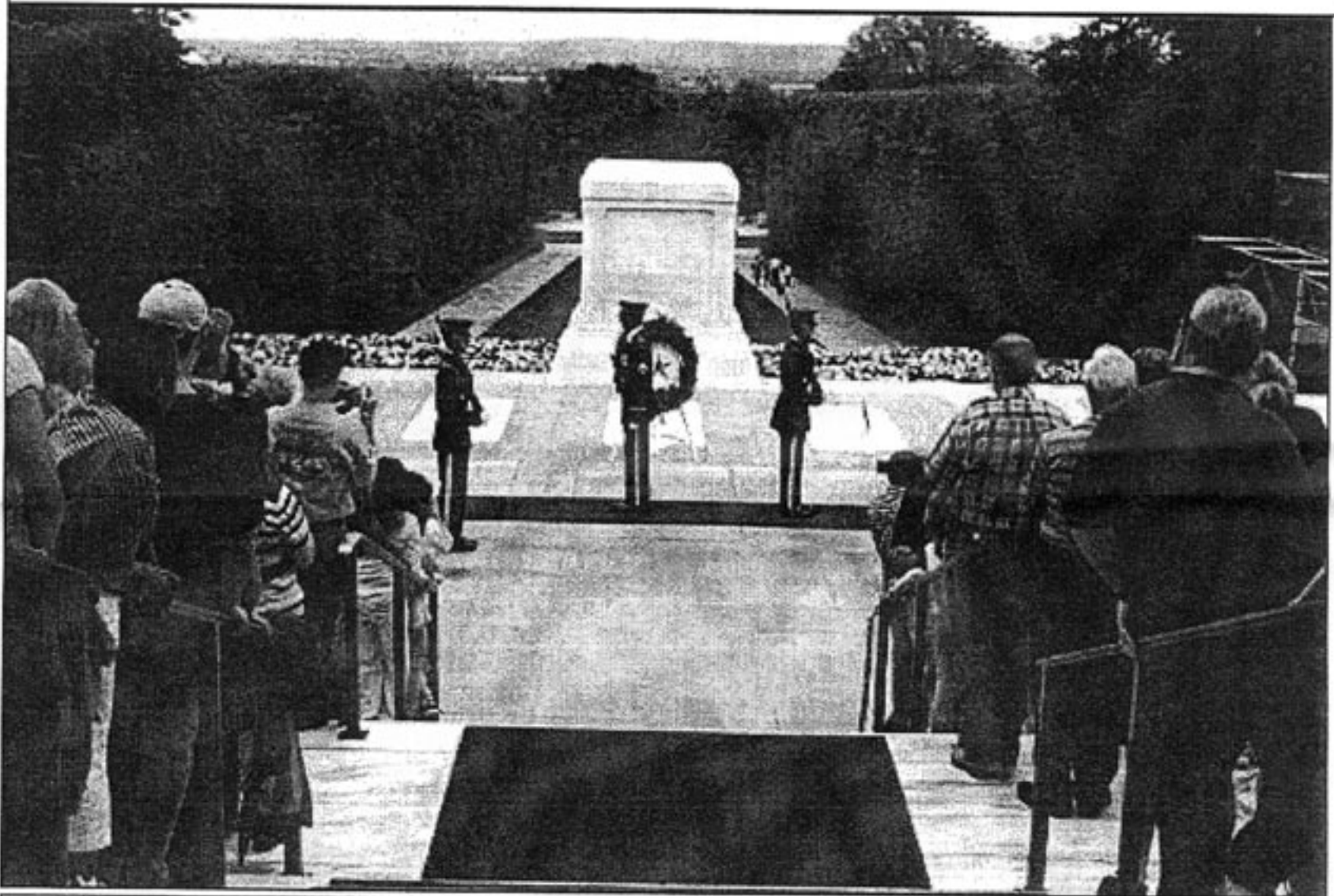


A former SAC B-36 sits indoors at the A.F. Museum ready for your inspection this coming April.

**MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE:****THE SENTINELS OF THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWNNS**

The Tomb of the Unknowns (also known as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier) is guarded 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and in any weather by Tomb Guard sentinels. Sentinels, all volunteers, are considered to be the best of the elite 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), headquartered at Fort Myer, Va.

After members of the 3rd U.S. Infantry become ceremonially qualified, they are eligible to volunteer for duty as sentinels at the Tomb. If accepted, they are assigned to Company E of The Old Guard. Each soldier must be in



With the wreath for the White House Moment of Remembrance before the Tomb of the Unknowns and other Memorial Day wreaths laid out behind, honor guard sentinels engage in a change of the guard the afternoon of Memorial Day 2003. The sentinels guard the tomb around the clock. During the summer months, the public can view guard changes on the hour and half hour from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

superb physical condition, possess an unblemished military record and be between 5 feet, 10 inches and 6 feet, 4 inches tall, with a proportionate weight and build. An interview and a two-week trial to determine a volunteer's capability to train as a tomb guard is required.

During the trial phase, would-be sentinels memorize seven pages of Arlington National Cemetery history. This information must be recited verbatim in order to earn a "walk." A walk occurs between guard changes. A daytime walk is one-half hour in the summer and one hour in the winter. All night walks are one hour. If a soldier passes the first training phase, "new-soldier" training begins. New sentinels learn the history of Arlington National Cemetery and the grave locations

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of nearly 300 veterans. They learn the guard-change ceremony and the manual of arms that takes place during the inspection portion of the Changing of the Guard. Sentinels learn to keep their uniforms and weapons in immaculate condition.

The sentinels will be tested to earn the privilege of wearing the silver Tomb Guard Identification Badge after several months of serving. First, they are tested on their manual of arms, uniform preparation and their walks. Then, the Badge Test is given. The test is 100 randomly selected questions of the 300 items memorized during training on the history of Arlington National Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknowns. The would-be badge holder must get more than 95 percent correct to succeed. Only 400 Tomb Guard Badges have been awarded since it was created in February 1958.

The Tomb Guard Identification Badge is a temporary award until the badge-holding sentinel has honorably served at the Tomb of the Unknowns for nine months. At that time, the award can be made a permanent badge, which may then be worn for the rest of a military career. The silver badge is an upside-down, laurel-leaf wreath surrounding a depiction of the front face of the Tomb. Peace, Victory and Valor are portrayed as Greek figures. The words "Honor Guard" are shown below the Tomb on the badge.

There are three reliefs, each having one relief commander and about six sentinels. The three reliefs are divided by height so that those in each guard change ceremony look similar. The sentinels rotate walks every hour in the winter and at night, and every half-hour in the day during the summer.

The Tomb Guard Quarters is staffed using a rotating Kelly system. Each relief has the following schedule: first day on, one day off, second day on, one day off, third day on, four days off. Then, their schedule repeats.

### **The Changing of the Guard**

The guard is changed every hour on the hour Oct. 1 to March 31 in an elaborate ritual. From April 1 through September 30, there are more than double the opportunities to view the change because another change is added on the half hour and the cemetery closing time moves from 5 to 7 p.m.

An impeccably uniformed relief commander appears on the plaza to announce the Changing of the Guard. Soon the new sentinel leaves the Quarters and unlocks the bolt of his or her M-14 rifle to signal to the relief commander to start the ceremony. The relief commander walks out to the Tomb and salutes, then faces the spectators and asks them to stand and stay silent during the ceremony.

The relief commander conducts a detailed white-glove inspection of the weapon, checking each part of the rifle once. Then, the relief commander and the relieving sentinel meet the retiring sentinel at the center of the matted path in front of the Tomb. All three salute the Unknowns who have been symbolically given the Medal of Honor. Then the relief commander orders the relieved sentinel, "Pass on your orders." The current sentinel commands, "Post and orders, remain as directed." The newly posted sentinel replies, "Orders acknowledged," and steps into position on the black mat. When the relief commander passes by, the new sentinel begins walking at a cadence of 90 steps per minute.

The Tomb Guard marches 21 steps down the black mat behind the Tomb, turns, faces east for 21 seconds, turns and faces north for 21 seconds, then takes 21 steps down the mat and repeats the process. After the turn, the sentinel executes a sharp "shoulder-arms" movement to place the weapon on the shoulder closest to the visitors to signify that the sentinel stands between the Tomb and any possible threat. Twenty-one was chosen because it symbolizes the highest military honor that can be bestowed -- the 21-gun salute.

Duty time when not "walking" is spent in the Tomb Guard Quarters below the Memorial Display Room of the Memorial Amphitheater where they study Cemetery "knowledge," clean their weapons and help the rest of their relief prepare for the Changing of the Guard. The guards also train on their days off.

The Guards of Honor at the Tomb of the Unknowns are highly motivated and are proud to honor all American service members who are "Known But to God."