



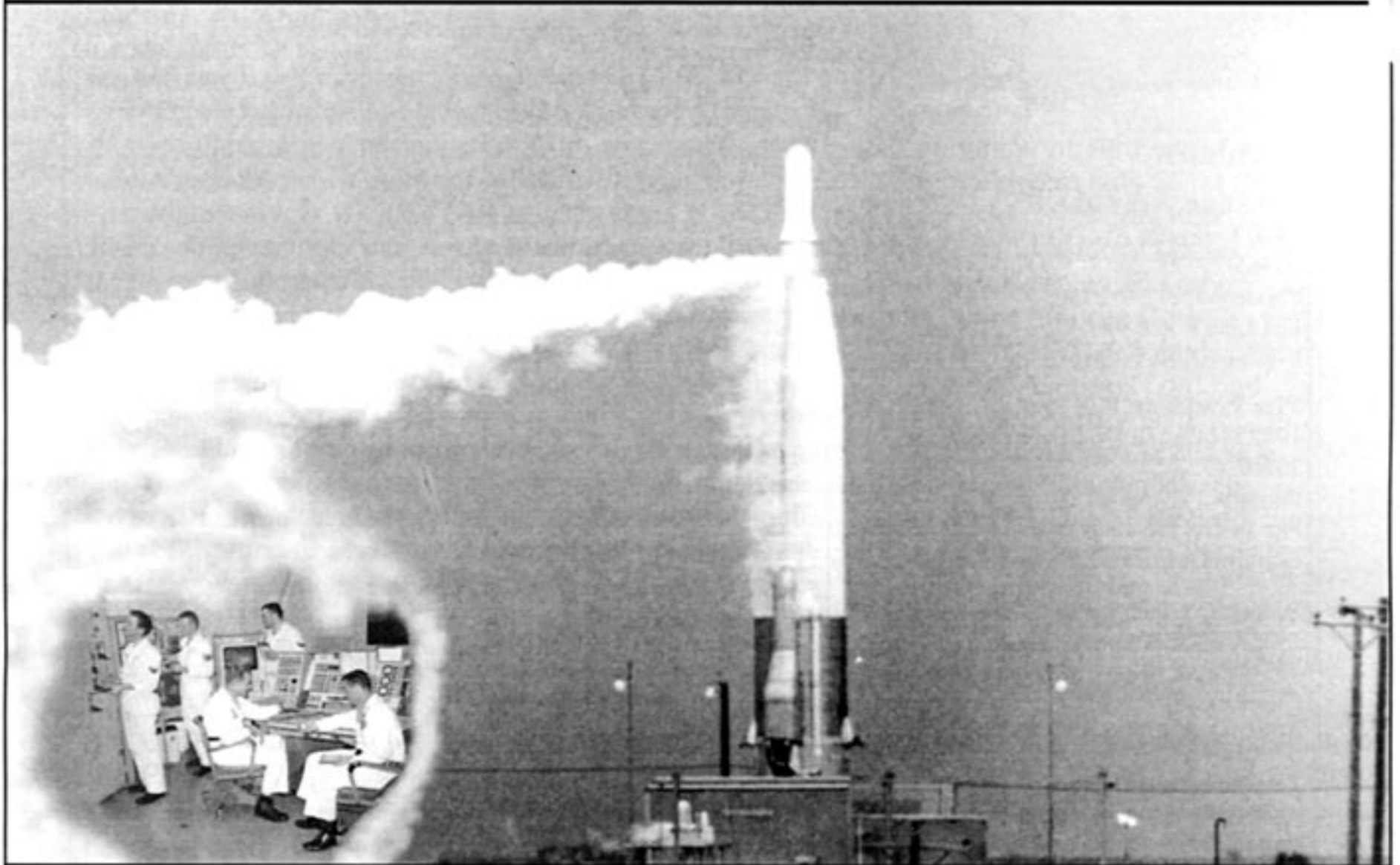
# Lincoln Missileer

ISSUE # 8

Strength Maintains Security

MARCH 2005

MEMORIES: 40 years ago  
551st SMS PERFORMS LAST  
ATLAS "F" ALERT TOUR



***LAST CALL:* FOR THE 551st SMS REUNION  
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB — APRIL 20th - 23rd**

## 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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**Editor:** Ms. Laly Rivera

## The President's Corner

This April, as we prepare to reunite in the vicinity of Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio for our celebration, it is hard to believe how quickly time has elapsed. It has been 40 years since the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS's Crew #30 was commanded by Major Bob Haun; Deputy, Capt. Arza Patterson; BMAT, A1C Robert Mason; MFT, SSGT James Fink; and EPPT, A2C Douglas Weisbarth and completed the last full Atlas "F" Alert tour. Subsequently, Crew #49 under the command of Captain Elmer Brooks; Deputy, Lt. August Mendeke; BMAT, A1C Paul Hensley; MFT, A1C Henry Cornish; and EPPT, A1C James Harris were responsible for overseeing the removal of the last bird from its silo. This was the second removal that this crew completed during our phase-out in April of 1965.

Ultimately, there were many other hands involved in this operation that were just as valuable to its success but have gone duly unnoticed. There had to have been a dozen or more persons working on the silo cap that day. If you were there on this infamous day, we are anxious to hear your particular experience in the making of this turn in history.

The 551<sup>st</sup> SMS continued making history when it was decided that one of our missile sites would be dismantled piece-by-piece. Afterwards, all of the equipment was formally displayed in what was called the Mini-Missile Market. Airman Fred Davis, know today as **REVEREND**, was one of the guys assigned to oversee this operation, exercised inside one of the Air National Guard hangers on base. If memory serves me correctly, Site #12, Brainard/David City, was chosen for this operation. Uncle Sam wanted to see how long it would take and if it was cost-effective to remove all the equipment that was installed only five years earlier. Other government agencies came over to the hanger to inspect the equipment in case they had a use for it. Billy Jeas, one of our former Deputy Crew Commanders, told me of how he came across two of our diesel generators at a remote site in Korea after they had served at a military site in New York State for a few years.

The 551<sup>st</sup>, in their four and a half years of service, was the only Atlas "F" squadron to lose a crew in the line-of-duty, as far as I am aware. I note that two of the other squadrons blew up four of the 72 Atlas "F" missile silos, however, we were also responsible for losing a bird at Site #2, Eagle. Thank God no one was injured in that mishap.

As we look back we can accurately say: "mission accomplished!" We maintained a combat-ready status during the hottest times of the Cold War, helping America to remain a free country.

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We served with honor, maintaining Peace worldwide.

Forty years later, we are reuniting to dedicate a Memorial Bench to honor all of those who served in the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS at the home of the National Museum of the United States Air Force. We could not have selected a more appropriate location to anchor the first memorial in honor of our service to our great country. Plans are also being developed to have a memorial for our squadron placed in Lincoln, Nebraska. Several hundred dollars have already been collected for this project. Back in 1999, when I started searching for our members, I never envisioned us having a reunion, much less a memorial bench to be dedicated at Wright-Patterson AFB. Bob Brickner summed up our accomplishment very nicely – “Now I have something to show my grandchildren when I take them to the National Museum of the United States Air Force.” Speaking of Bob, I am happy to report that his son has safely returned home from his mission in Iraq.

In the past few years we have lost 14 of our “found brothers,” with the latest being Tommy Gates from our Maintenance Section. With each fallen brother we have lost a parts of our unit’s history. During this reunion, we will attempt to piece together as much history about the 551<sup>st</sup> that can be remembered. We have accounted for nearly 600 of those who served in the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS. Unfortunately, 125 of those members have passed on. Your help in obtaining any pertinent data is crucial in order to preserve this time in history.

Tommy Gates was one of our guys who stepped up to help plan the Lincoln Homecoming. Assisted by his lovely wife Ladonna they helped with the planning and execution of the reunion plans until such time that Tom’s illness became unbearable. Tom looked forward to attending the Ohio reunion. He wanted to be with his brothers, even if only to partake in one event. We were happy that he had the opportunity to make our previous Banquet Dinner as it meant so much to him to attend. It was really special having Tom and Ladonna with us that evening, as well. In this issue of the *Lincoln Missileer* we have printed a letter from Ladonna Gates addressed to all.

I recently received a letter along with copies of a few additional orders for our library. A former member of the 551<sup>st</sup>, Don Batson, who worked in the Supply Section generously made the donation. From these orders alone, I was able to retrieve ten more names of former squadron members. What I found interesting was the question that our brother asked, “Was anyone from the Supplies Section going to attend this reunion?” Unfortunately, I cannot honestly answer this, as many of you have not sent in your membership applications. Although, we may have your name, we do not have the section of the squadron you were assigned to. To reiterate the importance of obtaining this information, I relay the following. The other day, I received a call from Jack Turner, a former crewmember.



General Lance Lord, Commander of Air Force Space Command, presents 551st SMS Association President Ken Fisher with a special Space Command pen among other gifts during the Iron Gate Chapter of AFA Veteran’s Day Luncheon. General Lord had been invited to join us in Dayton, but had to decline due to his current obligations. He commented “The 551st SMS played a critical role in the defense of our nation. Best wishes for an outstanding reunion.”

*Official USAF Space Command Photo*

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During our conversation, the name of Mike Green from Oklahoma, a squadron member, was mentioned. Since we do not have any orders with his name on it, this was the first time I heard of him. To compile a more accurate register and to coordinate a more enjoyable gathering, please forward the names of the members you worked with, hung around with, or knew who were in the squadron. If you remember what city or state they came from, or even a wife's name, that would be of great help.

I am pleased to report that General Russ Dougherty, former SAC Commander, is doing well after falling gravely ill around the Thanksgiving holiday. He finished his rehabilitation at Falcons Landing and has been home for several weeks. During my visit with him this past September, I presented him with a 551<sup>st</sup> SMS Association shirt on behalf of the association.

Once caught up on his correspondence and various other projects, the General should approach "mission ready" status once again, fairly soon. His recovery has been remarkable considering the severity of his condition, as you know. John Correll wrote an excellent article on General Dougherty in the February issue of Air Force Magazine. Undoubtedly, Correll's piece is a reminder of how fortunate we all are to have leaders, friends and role models as premier as General Dougherty.

As some of us prepare for the reunion, we are still requesting the input of those unable to attend. In this newsletter is a copy of our proposed agenda for the Business Meeting and the proposed By-Laws for the association. One of the most important events will be our official elections which will take place during our Business Meeting. We will be appointing our officers and volunteers for the association until the next reunion. (Please refer to the By-Laws in this issue for positions open for election.) If you are interested in running for an office, notification must be received before April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Your comments are necessary so please contact any of the officers by mail or E-mail and voice your opinion. One major change that we would like to implement is the reversion to a three-person executive board. It is difficult establishing a four-person conference call since most of our work is handled from homes where there are limited technical resources. In light of our current international reach, the association has accessed 46 states and two foreign countries; the availability of cross-country communications and exchange are vital if we are to expand our membership.

Looking ahead to Dayton, my sincere appreciation goes out to Oscar Baker and his friend, Bob Himes. Both contributed countless hours of work to create a "Local Bus Tour" for our association. Oscar had served in the 551<sup>st</sup> as a crew commander and resides near the Dayton area. Gentlemen, thank you for your time and adding this pleasurable event to our reunions.

**If you have already submitted a pre-registration form for the reunion, you still must fill out a registration form to reconfirm your attendance.**

Note: *The reunion is only a few weeks away!* There are still availabilities, however, do not wait until the last minute to ask, "Can I still come?" Please be aware that your hotel reservations need to be made directly with the hotel, contact the Holiday Inn at **1-937-426-7800** — they are awaiting your call! Make sure you inform the receptionist that you are attending the **551st SMS Association Reunion** to obtain the discounted rate of \$79.00. **Hoping to see you in Dayton!**

**Cover Photo:** courtesy of **Joe Amberg—Crew # 63** Major Dwight Burton—MCCC, Lt. Boyd Wasgatt—DMCC, TSgt Jim Buckwalter—BMAT, A2C Robert Domineck—MFT, & A1C Joe Amberg—EPPT.

## IN MEMORIAL OF TOM GATES - 551st SMS

Dear Ken and All 551<sup>st</sup> SMS members and friends:

It has taken several attempts for me to complete this letter as words cannot express my gratitude and thanks to all of you for the kindness you have shown me. The flowers Ken sent, on behalf of the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS Association, for Tom's funeral were gorgeous. We took them to the gravesite along with the flowers from me and our children and grandchildren. Ken and I have had several telephone conversations that have been very comforting to me.

It must be shared that Tom felt truly honored to be asked to participate in the planning of the first reunion in Lincoln. He loved coming to the reunion banquet, although it had only been 3 weeks since his surgery. Last fall he was wondering in the hope that he would be able to travel to Dayton. It was with quiet reserve and my own hopes that I told him we would have to see how he was progressing before we made that decision. As fate would have it, he will not be there and, regretfully, I cannot attend. However, Ken has assured me I will remain on the membership list and receive future newsletter and reunion notices.



Tom Gates

Tom's illness took an ample toll on him. Cancer is a formidable enemy. He gave a valiant fight for 19 months. The tenacity of this illness is relentless and as tough as we fought, it finally took him on December 6, 2004. I miss him terribly. He was the love of my life and it has been hard continuing my journey through this life without him. We were married 40 years. In retrospect, I do have some solace knowing how truly lucky and deeply blessed I am, to have had my soul mate for that long.

The hospice nurses and the aides made his struggles mildly bearable his last 9 months and he was somewhat active until the last 12 days of his life. Those last 12 days, however, were survived without food or water. It was Thanksgiving eve when the cancer returned with a vengeance. He took to his bed that evening-never to get out of bed again. Although he never gave up his fight to live, he was prepared to move on to the next adventure. Fortunately, I was right by his side when he passed. His passing was serene, just as we had planned.

We had no regrets in our life together. We did everything we wanted to-whenver we wanted to. We loved each other very deeply and shared our love for life. Although I miss him immensely, I continue to honor him by living each day to the fullest. His wish for me was not to "hole-up" in the house, he wanted me to continue living my life. Sometimes my loneliness is overwhelming. At time, I will cry, then get up and do something or go out with my friends and family. My friends are good at keeping me occupied. They must be alternating their invitations; I am always busy!

Probably one of the hardest things for me are the "firsts" without him i.e. the first Christmas, the first New Year's, the first Valentines Day, and such. Somehow, however, I seem to be surviving. It would be untrue to say that I am yet at the place of inner peace, but I am doing okay.

Once again thank you sincerely. Each of you shared in a special part of Tom's life that gave him pride and brought him happiness. You were like an extended family and I will always consider you my friends.

Love,

*Ladonna Gates*

## I REMEMBER

By Don Luther

It was in early in 1965 when things started changing dramatically. We all knew the squadron was going to be disbanded but I never gave it much thought. Abruptly, from one day to the next Jim Kaiser and Grady Risinger were off the crew. Resulting in Lesli Smith replacing Risinger as BMAT and Gary Clayton replacing Kaiser as MFT. I didn't even get to know them very well when the next thing I remember is getting orders transferring me to the 818th CES, silo maintenance program.

Having been moved out of barracks 1444 and into a Civil Engineering barracks, I was assigned to do punch cards for man-hour accounting. We would play a couple of games of volleyball and be cut loose for the day. I was able to work a 52-hour a week part-time job pumping gas at the West Conoco station, next to Kings Restaurant. On Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1965, William Bynum, Thomas Moran and I received our orders for a 120-day TDY to Viet Nam.

The following day, Lincoln AFB was closed for a nuclear disaster drill so we processed base in four hours; we're given seven shots, our pay, some supplies and the like. That same Friday we also had to attend a briefing in SAC Headquarter at Offutt, afterward, we returned to Lincoln. On Sunday morning we boarded a C-97 aircraft for the seven-day flight to Tan Son Nhut.

Having been called back to Lincoln, I never completed the full 120-days. I returned to Lincoln on December 7<sup>th</sup> at about 1800 hrs. Flying on a commercial flight into Lincoln, I was shocked that there was not one B-47 left! Years later I read in a 98th Bomb Wing newsletter that the last B-47 flight had departed around noon that same December day.

On returning to silo maintenance the following day, I was issued a carbine with 60 rounds of ammo and took a crew vehicle on site to guard the contractors stripping the silo. Apparently, someone had previously shot at them.

After the 115-degree weather in Nam, the 37-degree weather in Nebraska felt great. A couple of days later, I reported to sick call and ended up in the base hospital for 12 days. They thought I brought something back with me from Nam, so as a precaution, I was put in isolation.

During my stay there, the cook told me he would prepare anything I wanted. Disappointingly, the only foods that tasted good to me were OJ and mashed potatoes. However, once my appetite reappeared, I made up for lost time! The day before I was released from the hospital I had a steak. The next morning it was steak & eggs and then a steak again for lunch. Supper was a change I ate a "King's" burger. On December 24<sup>th</sup> at 1630 hrs I was discharged, feeling so weak I could hardly walk. I realized I had dropped from 192 lbs to 160 lbs!

It was Jim Kaiser and someone else who brought a small Christmas tree to the hospital, roots and all. They told me the tree came from the front lawn of the base headquarters building. The nurse, who was also a Major, was on duty that evening and the one who brought in the decorations. The tree was decorated with two full cans of beer!

While in the hospital I received a call from personnel asking me where had I been; my answer was "where the hell did you find me!" I was given an assignment to Italy for three years that I declined; I had only 2 years on my enlistment. Jack Turner got the assignment--a mountaintop in Sardinia. I ended up at Vandenberg and the 395<sup>th</sup> SMS but that's another story!

**See you in Dayton!**

## ***IT'S OUR FORTIETH - LET'S CELEBRATE!***

Depending on how you look at it, forty years can be a long or a short period of time. In the overall history of the world, it's hardly noticeable. In our private lives, forty years can cover many milestones; educational achievements, careers, marriages, children, grandchildren, health issues, retirements, deaths, and a great deal more. All are part of life's experiences.

In the history of the United States of America, the last forty years have indeed been eventful. Seven presidential administrations have come and gone, and the eighth is now into its second term. Man has walked on the moon, and scientific visits have been made to distant planets. Among other things, the country has experienced Vietnam, victory in the Cold War, terrorism, the tragedy of 9/11 as well as a variety of other military engagements throughout the world.

This April those of us who served with the 551<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Squadron will have a special occasion to remember and celebrate. Forty years ago the 551<sup>st</sup> was the last Atlas F Intercontinental Ballistic Missile unit to go off alert. That essentially marked the end of our unit's five-year period of service to the Strategic Air Command, the United States, and to peace-loving people throughout the world.

Two years ago, we had the opportunity to gather together as a group in our military home of Lincoln, Nebraska. That was our first reunion since the 551<sup>st</sup> concluded its active service. Old friendships were renewed and new ones were made. We proudly celebrated our victory in the Cold War and were filled with nostalgia when we realized that in 1992, SAC ceased to exist. In many cases, our families and friends were able to share with us in these special reunion experiences.

In a few short weeks the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS will gather again with our families and friends at our upcoming reunion in Fairborn, Ohio. Much of our focus will be on the nearby National Museum of the United States Air Force, where a permanent memorial to the 551<sup>st</sup> will be officially dedicated. In addition to its other world-renowned exhibits, the Museum's Cold War and Missile Galleries will be of particular interest to our members.

To further enhance this event, our attendees will have the opportunity to hear firsthand accounts of how the 551<sup>st</sup> was and is viewed by our former Soviet adversaries as well as active-duty Air Force personnel and top civilian officials in the Pentagon.

This promises to be another memorable reunion. We hope to see you there.

## ***SYSTEMS GO TO PERFORM AT BANQUET DINNER***

*Systems Go* is a six-member popular music group, part of the USAF's Band of Flight that performs for hundreds of military protocol functions, community festivals, and high schools and university shows annually.

This versatile, high-energy group plays a mixture of rock, pop, country, and jazz tailored to every occasion. They have appeared at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Dollywood, and on The Nashville Network. *Systems Go* has also performed with country superstar Lee Greenwood.



*Systems Go on Saturday Night*

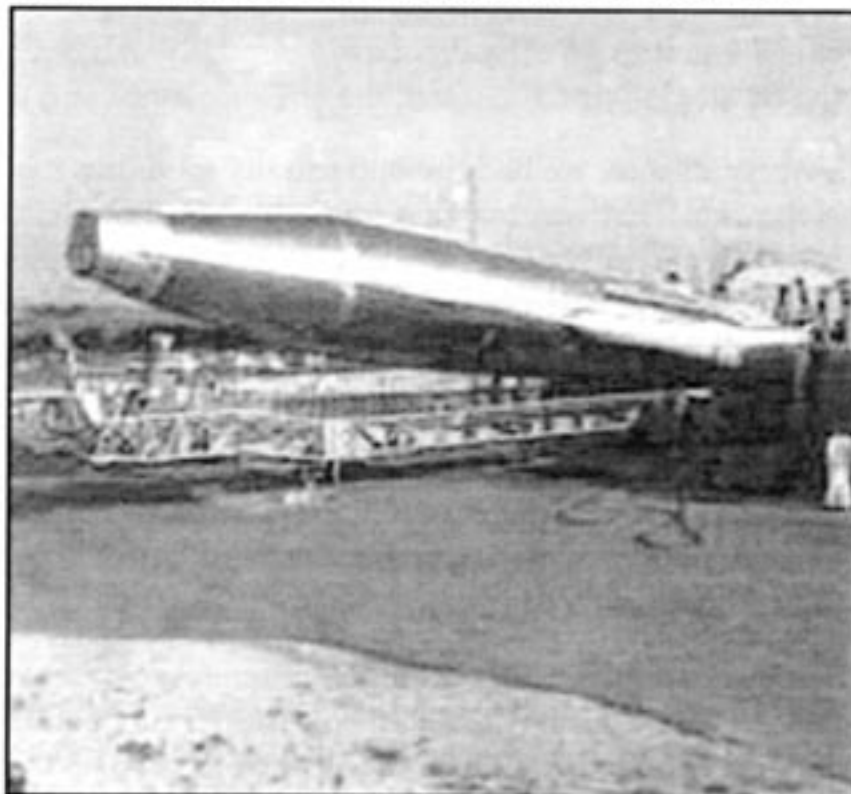
*History in the making:***NOTIFY THE CP— “SITE # 8 OUT OF SERVICE”**

By Lt. Col. Jon Tucker

The March 2003 AAFM (Association of Air Force Missileers) newsletter included a note about 551<sup>st</sup> SMS Site #8 (Beatrice, NE) being taken off alert on 14 March 1964. Crew R-17, commanded by the late Maj. Carol Smith, was on duty that day. Other crew members were 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Jon Tucker (DMCCC), Msgt. Vonard Bedker (BMAT), A1C Elbert Witt (MFT) and A1C Richard Becker (EPPT). I had the pleasure of making the call to the Command Post to report the Site 8 “off alert”. As usual they requested an Estimated Time on Alert (ETA). I promptly responded – “Never!” Major Smith always had us put the missile in “stretch” anytime we were off alert; following that practice we promptly placed the missile in stretch in preparation for deactivation activities. At the end of that tour we had to turn in all of the “Classified”; sure was a relief that every page was there – yes, I know there should have been no question but I still breathed a sigh of relief when we all agreed.

Site #9 was supposed to be the first 551<sup>st</sup> SMS site to be taken down but a Titan having the same target went off alert and therefore, Site #9 could not be taken down until later. Site #8 was selected as the alternate.

Crew #17 was also the first partial (4 men with one officer only) crew to man a site. This was permitted after hazardous materials were removed. On that day I led the crew at Site #8 and there were numerous maintenance personnel crawling all over the site performing deactivation tasks. Shortly after assuming control of the site, we were advised that the IG had landed and part of their team appeared to be headed our way. Sure enough the IG showed up at our site to observe a partial crew in operation. Shortly after their arrival a cooling tower malfunction occurred that would require us to shut down the diesels and lose all NC power (commercial power was not available). With no water in the cooling towers and no power to run the pumps we would have to evacuate maintenance personnel and wait for a portable power source or water truck from the base to restart diesels. When troubleshooting the problem, with nothing but plumbing diagrams and systems knowledge, we knew we could manually override the systems and prevent the power loss. The dilemma was that there were no procedures for what we were about to do but we went ahead, under the watchful eye of the IG Team leader, knowing we were at risk of being the good guys or the goat depending on the IG’s evaluation of whether we were following “Technical Data” or not. As luck would have it, the IG Team leader was a former Atlas F Crew Commander – when we returned to base the next day the crew got several accolades for “a job well done” and was complimented on knowledge and use of the technical information to address a unique problem not addressed by normal procedures.



An ATLAS “F” Missile held by the erector while being lowered onto a transporter at a 551<sup>st</sup> SMS Site during the deactivation phase.



## AAFM'S Executive Director – REUNION KEYNOTE SPEAKER Charles G. Simpson, Colonel (Retired), USAF

Retired Air Force Colonel Charles G. Simpson, the Executive Director of the Association of Air Force Missileers, has accepted the task of being the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS Association's Reunion Key Note Speaker. Colonel Simpson, one of the founders of the AAFM, will present a power point presentation covering the *History of Air Force Missiles* during Friday night's dinner at the Holiday Inn.

At the 551<sup>st</sup> SMS Association's Lincoln Homecoming in 2003, Colonel Simpson addressed the membership during the association's business meeting. Afterwards, he commented that the 551<sup>st</sup> first gathering was the largest reunion that he had ever seen for a missile squadron.

Colonel Simpson has served in a volunteer position, since January, 1993, as the Executive Director of the Association of Air Force Missileers, which is a nationwide organization with more than 2,700 members. Its goals are to preserve the heritage of the USAF missiles, to recognize outstanding missileers, to encourage reunions and meetings and to keep members informed.

Colonel Simpson served as an Air Force officer from 25 November 1959 until 31 July 1989. After graduation from the University of Miami, Florida, in August 1959, he spent a short time as a design engineer with Pratt Whitney Aircraft before entering active duty. He and his wife, Carol, have resided in Breckenridge, Colorado, since September 1989. He serves as a director on the board of the Breckenridge Music Institute, and spends days either skiing or playing golf.

His assignments included:

Nov. 1959 – Sept 1961 – Aircraft Maintenance Officer, Hanscom Field, Mass.

Sept. 1961 – May 1965 – Missile Maintenance Officer, Titan 1, 569 SMS,  
Mt. Home AFB, Idaho

May 1965 – June 1970 – Missile Combat Crew Commander, Instructor, and  
Evaluator, Minuteman II, 321 SMW,  
Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota.

*Member of the Blanchard Trophy winning team in Olympic Arena 1969 and competed in 1970.*  
Earned an MS Industrial Management at University of North Dakota.

June 1970 – May 1973 – Minuteman II Evaluator an Minuteman Operations,  
Team Chief, 3901 SMSES, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.

June 1973 – June 1977 – Chief, Accuracy and Chief, Evaluation, Ballistic  
Missile Evaluation, Headquarters SAC, Offutt AFB,  
Nebraska developing SIOP planning factors for ICBMs

July 1977 – May 1978 – Student, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama

June 1978 – May 1981 – Commander, 68 SMS and Assistant Deputy  
Commander, Operations, 44 SMW, Ellsworth AFB,  
South Dakota

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May 1981 – March 1983 – Commander, 44th Combat Support Group,  
Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota

April 1983 – July 1984 – Commander, 487<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Group,  
Comiso AB, Sicily  
(Ground Launch Cruise Missile) First USAF permanent  
party on base, responsible for base activation.

July 1984 – July 1986 – Commander, 39<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Squadron  
Incirlik AB, Turkey

July 1986 – February 1988 – Commander, 406<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Group  
Zaragoza AB, Spain

March 1988 – July 1989 – Chief of Staff, 57<sup>th</sup> Air Division, Minot AFB,  
North Dakota

## **OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL REUNIONS AND WEBSITES**

**551st SMS Association** — April 20 — 23, 2005. Holiday Inn Fairborn, Ohio (937-426-7800)  
<http://members.tripod.com/sms551association/id2.htm>

**98th Bomb Wing Veteran Association** — Sept. 11—16, 2005. Las Vegas, NV.  
<http://www.pyramidiers.com/>

**307th Bomb Wing Association** — *April 23—27, 2006*. Charleston, S.C. (*Dates have changed*)  
<http://www.307bwassoc.org/>

**Strategic Air Command** — May 24—27, 2006. Tucson, AZ.  
E-mail: [AO@barksdale.af.mil](mailto:AO@barksdale.af.mil)  
Toll Free # 1-866-544-2412

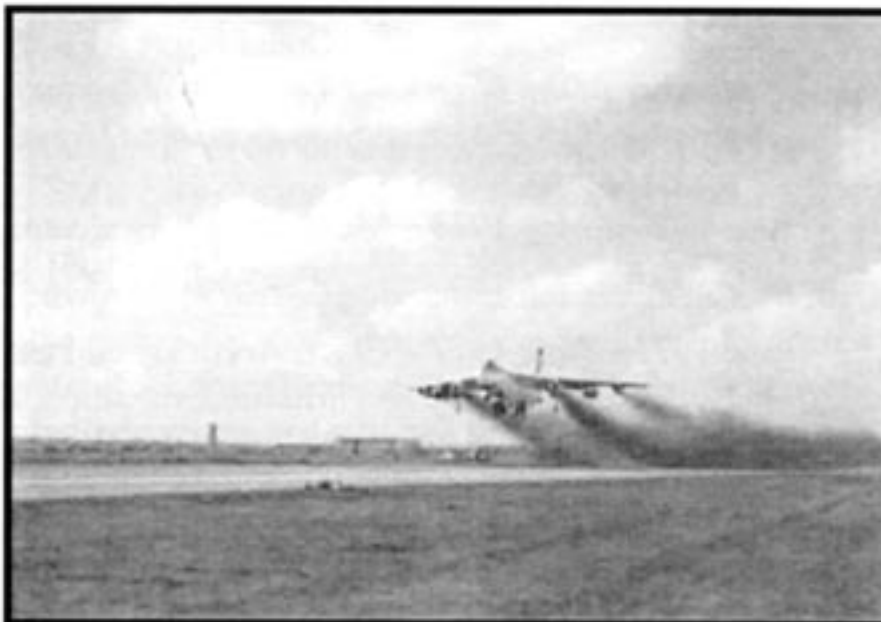
**SAC** — <http://www.strategic-air-command.com>

**Association of Air Force Missileer's**—  
Sept. 27 — Oct. 1, 2006. Cheyenne, WY.  
Little America Hotel and Resort  
<http://afmissileers.org/>

**Lincoln AFB** —

<http://www.geocities.com./bigrob685/>

[http://formerbases.com/neb\\_lincoln.htm](http://formerbases.com/neb_lincoln.htm)



**B-47 FROM THE 98th SAW TOOK OFF FROM  
LINCOLN AFB, FOR THE LAST TIME—12-7-65.**

**PROPOSED AGENDA**  
**551SMS ASSOCIATION**  
**APRIL 22, 2005**  
**0900 Hours**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
  
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 26, 2003 (Don Luther)**
  
- III. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Ken Fisher)**
  
- IV. **TREASURER'S REPORT (Ken Fisher - Al DeRonda)**
  
- V. **OLD BUSINESS**
  
- VI. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - A. APPROVAL OF ASSOCIATION BY-LAWS*
  
  - B. LEADERSHIP/ELECTION OF OFFICERS*
    - 1. Report of Nominating Committee
    - 2. Nominations from the floor
    - 3. Elections
      - a. President
      - b. Vice President
      - c. Secretary/Treasurer
  
  - C. FUTURE REUNIONS*
    - How often?
    - Where?
    - When?
  
  - D. LINCOLN NEBRASKA MEMORIAL (Ron Resh)*
  
- VII. **OTHER BUSINESS**
  
- VIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

**(PROPOSED)**  
**BY-LAWS OF THE**  
**551<sup>ST</sup> STRATEGIC MISSILE ASSOCIATION**

**PURPOSE:** The 551<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Association, hereinafter referred to as the Association, is a nationwide association of former members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America and civilians assigned to or associated with the 551<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Squadron at Lincoln AFB, Nebraska between 1961 and 1965. The purpose is to preserve and perpetuate the history, memory and legacy of the 551<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Squadron and its parent organization, the Strategic Air Command, and to promote camaraderie and goodwill among its members, families and friends.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Voting membership in the Association shall be open to individuals who meet the criteria set forth above, and to surviving spouses of those who qualify, without regard to grade, rank or position. Ethnic background, race, national origin, religious belief, or any other condition prohibited by federal law shall never be a consideration for or against membership in the Association. The Executive Board of the Association, at its discretion, may grant a limited number of honorary non-voting memberships where such action would further the purpose and goals of the Association.

**OPERATION:** The Association shall operate as non-profit veterans' organization. It may or may not apply for federal tax exempt status. The Association shall not engage in any political activity or support any candidate or party for election to public office. No member of the Association shall receive any compensation from the Association other than reimbursement for actual authorized expenses incurred on behalf of the Association.

**MEETINGS:** From time to time the Association may conduct reunions and meetings for the benefit and enjoyment of its members, their guests, and others interested in and supportive of the purpose and goals of the Association. Such reunions and meeting shall be open to all members of the Association.

**GOVERNANCE:** The Association shall be governed by a three-member Executive Board consisting of the following elected officers: President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer. These officers shall be chosen by a majority vote of the membership present at a reunion business meeting and shall serve until the next reunion. The President shall function as the Chief Executive Officer of the Association and shall be responsible to the membership for the operation and conduct of the Association. The President shall appoint appropriate committees to make arrangements for the next reunion, for the publishing of a periodic newsletter, and to perform other tasks in support of the Association as may be required from time to time.

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**DUES, DONATIONS, FEES:** The Association shall not levy mandatory dues or fees as a condition for membership. However, the Association may recommend to the members a level of voluntary dues to be used to sustain the general activities of the Association. Among other things, this would include maintaining a membership locator roster, publishing a newsletter, maintaining an Association website, and planning for future reunions and meetings.

**AMENDMENT AND DISOLUTION:** These by-laws may be amended by a majority vote of the membership present at a reunion business meeting, provided that the purpose of the Association and the requirements for membership shall remain unchangeable. The Association shall continue to exist in perpetuity unless dissolved by a majority vote of the membership.

By-laws approved by the Executive Board \_\_\_\_\_ 2005

By-laws adopted by the membership \_\_\_\_\_ 2005

## Friendship

How does one explain a friendship

How does one describe

At once a feeling like and trust

That happens deep inside.

All are somehow different

Though very much alike

Always a very person thing

Yet with little if anything to hide

To be and to have a friend

Perhaps God's greatest gift to all of humankind

Is a gift to be nurtured and protected

So it will last until the end of human time.

By George Hoag

551st S.M.S.