

# Minot

## AIR FORCE BASE

*Celebrating  
Minot Air Force Base's  
50th Anniversary  
1947-1997*

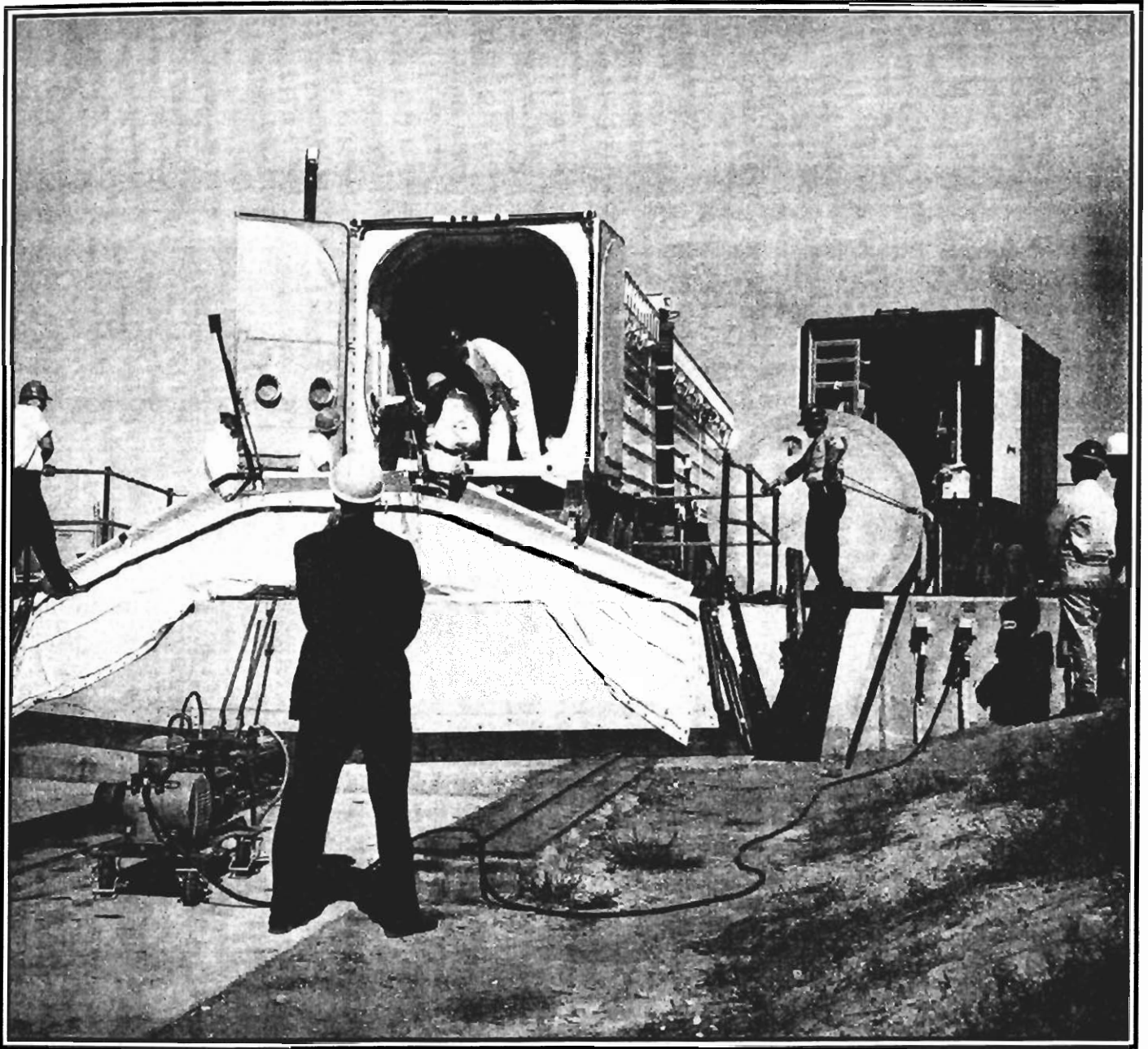


U.S. AIR FORCE



1947 - 1997

# MINOT AFB HISTORY



**Missile maintenance crews implaced the first  
Minuteman I missile in launch facility A-02 on September 9, 1963.  
The last Minuteman I was implaced in launch facility O-06 on February 26, 1964.  
The Minuteman I missiles were replaced by the Minuteman III missiles from 1970 to 1971.**



**W**ith the threat of an enemy attack from the north in the early 1950s, the

United States wanted to defend itself by building bases along the northern border. The city of Minot sold the Air Force on becoming a site for a base. It was officially announced in the spring of 1954 that Minot would be home of an Air Force base.

Minot businessmen and citizens donated approximately \$50,000 to buy the first portions of land for the base located 13 miles north of Minot. The ground breaking took place July 12, 1955. The Air Force accepted the first building on Jan. 10, 1957. Minot AFB's first host unit, the 32nd Fighter Group, was activated on Feb. 7, 1957. The base was under control of Air Defense Command.

A year later, the 32nd USAF Dispensary opened to provide immediate medical care to the base populace. Facilities opened gradually. Personnel celebrated the first church service on July 4, 1958 and the opening of the Base Exchange on Sept. 1, 1958.

That same year, Air Defense Command established a Semi-Automatic Ground Environment or SAGE, sector at Minot AFB. Construction of a huge, windowless blast-resistant concrete building (today known as the PRIDE Building) started

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*The first B-52H "Peace Persuader," arrived on the base on July 12, 1961. The Governor of North Dakota along with many other dignitaries were present and Miss North Dakota christened the aircraft.*

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in July. IBM engineers installed two gargantuan, 275-ton computers in the building. Activated in June 1961, the SAGE facility processed air surveillance information and sent the data to Air Defense Command units.

The first permanent Strategic Air Command unit assigned to Minot AFB was the 4136th Strategic Wing in September 1958. Its flying unit, the 906th Air Refueling Squadron, activated March 24, 1959, and provided air refueling support to the northern defense operations. The first KC-135A Stratotanker, dubbed "Miss Minot," arrived Sept. 23, 1959.

As the base entered the 1960s, the 32nd Fighter Group brought the first F-106 Delta Darts from California in January 1960. The following day the 5th Fighter Interceptor Squadron transferred to Minot from Suffolk County Airport, New York. The scope of operations grew as the Air Force assigned the 525th Bombardment Squadron to the 4136th. In July 1961, the first B-52H Stratofortress, "Peace Persuader," arrived.

Later in 1961, the Air Force selected the land around Minot for a new Minuteman I Intercontinental Ballistic Missile complex. Field construction began on the missile complex in

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January 1962, with the first Minuteman I missile arriving from Hill AFB, Utah, and placed in Launch Facility A-02 Sept. 9, 1963. In just 26 months, working through two winters, contractors turned the North Dakota prairie into a potent strategic missile force. As Minot's mission changed, the SAGE center was deactivated in May 1963 and eventually housed numerous base agencies.

Minot AFB's organizational makeup changed in mid-1969, when the 91st Strategic Missile Wing replaced the 455th Strategic Missile Wing, and the 5th Bombardment Wing replaced the 450th Bombardment Wing. These changes were in line with the Air Force policy of keeping active those units with the most illustrious histories. Today these units, which have distin-

guished themselves since the beginning of America's military aircraft era, work side by side and represent two elements of America's triad.

Force modernization characterized Minot AFB during the 1970s. The Air Force selected the 91st SMW to become the first wing to convert to the Minuteman III ICBM. The Minuteman III tripled the striking power and enhanced the credibility of the SAC deterrent force. The 741st Strategic Missile Squadron became the first operational Minuteman III squadron in December 1970, and the entire wing converted by December 1971. Three years later, the Minuteman modifications made Minot's missiles the most versatile and modern in the world. The 5th BMW added the Short Range Attack Missile to its arsenal in

September 1973, and later equipped its bombers with an improved offensive avionics system for more accurate bombing.

Following the 1980 Iran hostage crisis, SAC tasked the former 57th Air Division to organize the Strategic Projection Force. The 57th AD became the first division in SAC to implement this concept. The 5th BMW's B-52H fleet became the spearhead of this force, which proved itself able to conduct conventional warfare anywhere in the world. During this era, the 57th AD became the host unit, providing logistical, security, administrative and other support services to the 5th BMW,

*Sign placed at front gate and base operations during START Inspections. It is Cyrillic (Russian), translated to "Welcome to Minot AFB."*





91st SMW and tenant organizations.

Entering the 1990s, Minot AFB demonstrated its war-fighting capabilities by deploying aircraft and personnel to the Middle East for the overwhelming victory over Iraq during Operation Desert Storm. After Desert Storm, the base prepared for changes as the Air Force directed a major reorganization. Here, the 5th BW assumed host base responsibilities. The "Cold War" came to an end and 5th BW aircraft came off alert status in September 1991 after 35 years of continuous alert.

The 5th BW activated the Advanced Cruise Missiles on the B-52 in May 1993. The 906th Air Refueling Squadron was transferred to Grand Forks AFB, N.D. in January 1994 and

the final KC-135 departed Minot in April 1994.

From Nov. 15-17, 1994, senior representatives of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and the Ukraine, joined On Site Inspection Agency (OSIA) personnel in a mock Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) baseline ICBM and bomber inspection at Minot AFB. Minot AFB personnel demonstrated inspection procedures with special emphasis on Treaty requirement measurements for bombers and ICBMs. The demonstration was a gesture of good faith by the United States government to show its commitment to the treaty. START entered into force on Dec. 5, 1994. The base has had several START inspections since the treaty was signed.

*Lt General T.K. McGehee and MSgt King hold 5th Fighter Squadron Spitten Kitten, the mascots for the 5th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. The kittens produced several offspring and when the 5th Fighter Interceptor Squadron was inactivated in 1988, they were donated to the zoo downtown, where they are still today. The 5th Fighter Interceptor Squadron was stationed at Minot AFB from February 1960 through February 1988. They flew the F-106 Delta Dawn and the F-15 Eagle while at Minot.*

Minot AFB has undergone many changes through the years, but one thing remains constant -- The TEAM MINOT spirit continues to reign, re-emphasizing the truth that "Only the Best Come North."