

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

56-1999



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 4701 Memorial Drive

City or town: Blytheville State: Arkansas County: Mississippi

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

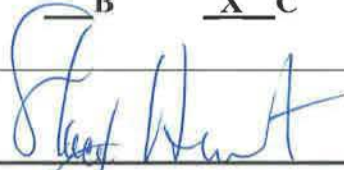
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

X national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

	12-6-17
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air
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Arkansas

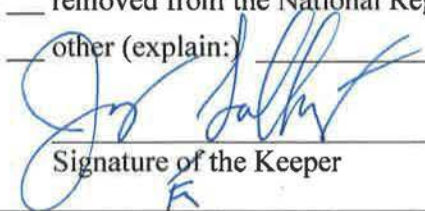
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register

other (explain):


Signature of the Keeper

1.26.2018

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
Public - Local
Public - State
Public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>23</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>33</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>59</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DEFENSE: air facility
DEFENSE: arms storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE
COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse
OTHER

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Blytheville Air Force Base (BAFB or Blytheville AFB) Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert Area and Weapons Storage Area Historic District is a historic district associated with the Cold War-era mission of nuclear deterrence, as well as SAC's alert mission. The historic district is divided into three primary areas: the alert apron area, the family visitation area, and the weapons storage area, which are all linked by a road and directly connected the missions. The historic district dates from the late 1950s when the apron area and the weapons storage area were originally constructed. The area also includes buildings and structures that were constructed in the 1980s, during the expansion of the Alert Crew Readiness Building, as well as the addition of new storage facilities specifically for the Air Launched Cruise Missile. The Historic District is composed of military vernacular style buildings that were constructed using standardized Air Force plans, built by local contractors. While the contractors used standardized plans, the plans were adapted to fit the geography and geology of the base.

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Narrative Description

Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Area

The Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Area is a high-security area containing the buildings and structures necessary for SAC to field bombers and tankers needed for alert readiness as part of the nuclear deterrent. The Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Area is located east of the southern end of the runway. Situated at the center of the fenced area is the Alert Parking Apron. A taxiway at the southern end of the apron joins the Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Area with the main runway, which allowed the bombers and tankers the quickest access to the runway. Positioned around the apron are the Alert Crew Readiness Building (Molehole, or Alert Facility), The Alert Area Aircraft Parking Apron (Alert Apron or Christmas Tree), Security Police Entry Control Building and Security Gate, The Electric Power Station Building, The Master Surveillance and Control Tower, Alert Fire Team Facility, a small guard shack, nine small shelters each located by one of the alert spaces, a basketball court, swimming pool, and security fence. A road surrounds the Alert Area just inside the security fence.

(Building #1225) Alert Crew Readiness Building (“Molehole” or “Alert Facility”) - Contributing

One of the two key features of the Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Area is the Alert Crew Readiness Building. According to architectural historian Karen Weitze, who studied the SAC alert infrastructure for the Air Force in the 1990s, there are three key features characterized SAC Alert Crew Readiness Buildings which are:

- Two-story height, with the lower story either fully below the ground or bermed,
- Egress tunnels from the underground story, and
- Simple 1950s design detailing.¹

The Alert Crew Readiness Building is a two-story, concrete building known informally as the "molehole". Unlike many of the other Alert Crew Readiness Buildings found on bases associated with the Strategic Air Command, Blytheville Air Force Base's Alert Crew Readiness Building was actually built as a two-story, above ground structure with an earth berm extending to the

¹ Karen J. Weitze, *Cold War Infrastructure for Strategic Air Command: The Bomber Mission*. (Sacramento: KEA Environmental, Inc., for Air Combat Command, November 1999), 155.

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second floor, due to the shallow water table in the Mississippi Delta region. The Alert Crew Readiness Building served as the living, sleeping, working, and recreational space for the bomber and tanker crews on alert duty at Blytheville AFB and other SAC bases worldwide. The original building was designed by the Leo A. Daly Company of Omaha, Nebraska, in conjunction with the Omaha District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) using standardized plans. In the 1980s, it was expanded to house the Tanker Alert crews as well. The Alert Crew Readiness Building is a large, reinforced-concrete structure designed to provide protection in the event of nuclear attack. The building has virtually no ornament, and is divided into two main blocks with both a flat roof and a low-pitched gable roof, which represent the two construction periods. The Southeastern section is the original structure, which consists of a two-story high, concrete building built at ground level with an earthen berm banked up to the top of the first floor, making the second-story visible above the top of the berm. Like other Alert Crew Readiness Buildings built during this time period, the original portion consists of a square footprint, and flat roof. Entry to the building is through eleven ramps (three on each elevation, and two on the north elevation) and extended through the earthen berm. Unlike many of the other Alert Crew Readiness Buildings associated with Alert Mission that had or have corrugated metal egress tubes, the Blytheville Air Force Base Alert Crew Readiness Building never did have the corrugated egress tubes. The Blytheville Alert Crew Readiness Building has boxed concrete tunnels that open up to reinforced-concrete side walls, but no ceiling. The egresses from the second floor consist of a sloped concrete path with hand rails that lead to the apron. The northeastern addition is also two stories high above ground level. The building has minimal windows and doors on the above ground level. The ground level floor extends the full length of the building. The interior of the Alert Crew Readiness Building consists of two floors: first floor rooms and briefing rooms, and the second floor kitchen and other non-mission related rooms. The Alert Crew Readiness Building is an “Integration of living, working, and learning spaces create a functional atmosphere dedicated totally to the alert force objective.”² The Alert Crew Readiness Building is a contributing element to the historic district.

The Alert Area Aircraft Parking Apron (Alert Apron or Christmas Tree) - Contributing

Alongside the Alert Crew Readiness Building, the alert apron is the second key competent of the Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Area. This was the area where the aircraft sat in a manner to maximize the speed in taking off from the base. According to Weitze, the key character-defining features of an alert apron are:

² The description and details about the Alert Crew Readiness Building are adapted from Earthtech, “LORING AIR FORCE BASE, ALERT AREA,” HAER No. ME-64-E, 1994, which is a similar crew readiness facility.

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- Alert space configured for four to ten bombers
- A taxiway that is angled 45 degrees from the end of the primary runway, and
- A crew alert facility nearby.³

The Alert Area Aircraft Parking Apron at the Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Area is a large, concrete bomber and tanker parking area with a taxiway that leads to the main runway. The apron contains asphaltic-concrete pavement and was constructed in 1959. The concrete apron, which is often referred to as the Chevron or Christmas tree, was designed in a manner that would provide a maximum parking and navigation area in a minimal amount of space. The apron at Blytheville contains nine separate aircraft parking branches (four on each side, and one at the end), each of which is capable of accommodating one B-52 bomber or refueling tanker aircraft (usually a Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker). By the 1980s, the usual configuration was five bombers and four tankers. The Alert Apron has not been altered since its construction in the 1950s. The Apron was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans for alert aprons. The Apron is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1227) Alert Pad Area Entry Control Point (ECP)- Contributing

Entry to the Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Area is through a high-security gate located off of Nevada Street near the southeastern portion of the base. Two 15-foot horizontal sliding gates keep vehicles in a small holding area until the security check is complete. Adjacent to the gate is the Entry Control Point for alert crew and other Air Force personnel. Pedestrians enter through a covered walkway and a 7-foot turnstile. The building, most likely constructed in the late 1950s, is a one-story concrete-block structure with a flat roof. The northern elevation has a set of pedestrian doors. The eastern and western elevations have a single window and gun port. The Entry Control Point was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans for entry control areas for high security areas. The Entry Control Point is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building # 1249) Generator Plant Building- Contributing

This building contains the electrical equipment that provides power to the Alert Area facilities. Constructed probably in 1981 according to files at the Blytheville- Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, the Generator Plant Building is a small, one-story, concrete-block structure with a slight gabled roof. The Generator Plant Building was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans for power buildings in alert areas. The Generator Plant Building is a contributing element to the

³ Weitze, *Cold War Infrastructure for Strategic Air Command: The Bomber Mission*, 155.

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(Building #1221) The Master Surveillance and Control Tower - Contributing

The tower is an approximately 40-foot tall steel tower constructed out of steel support beams and cross-braces. An open stairway wraps around the structure to the platform located above. The platform supports a small, one-story, windowed enclosure, which contained the security personnel, as well as surveillance equipment for the area. The tower was originally constructed in 1973 to provided general security for the Alert Area and assisted in controlling the movement of aircraft from the area. The Master Surveillance and Control Tower was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans, and it is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1218) Alert Fire Team Facility- Contributing

Located southeast of the Alert Crew Readiness Building, this small building was built of ribbed concrete block on a concrete foundation in the between late 1979 and late 1980. This building began being planned in late 1979, and was finished by the middle of 1980, but was not completely operational until November or December of 1980.⁴ Constructed with a flat, built-up roof and a metal fascia, the building has an overhead metal door, flush metal personnel door, and numerous gun ports. The Alert Fire Team Facility was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans, and it is a contributing element to the historic district.

Small Guard Shack- Contributing

The building, most likely constructed in the late 1950s, is a one-story concrete-block structure with a flat roof and is located to the southwest of the Alert Crew Readiness Building. The southern elevation has a pedestrian door. The other elevations have a single window and gun port. The guard shack was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans and is a contributing element to the historic district.

Nine Small Sheds- 9 Contributing

⁴ Comment on 97th SPS- Eaker- Blytheville AFB Arkansas Facebook page, August 16, 2017 (3:53 p.m.), accessed August 21, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/97thspseakerblytheville/>

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Located at each Alert Parking space is a small, wooden shed with a shed roof. The shelter is open on one elevation and closed on the other three to provide some shelter from the elements. The shed's main purpose was to provide shelter for the security personnel guarding each of the aircrafts on alert. The sheds are contributing elements to the historic district.

Basketball Court- Contributing

This is a standard size half basketball court, located north of the Alert Crew Readiness Building. It was designed to provide recreational activities for the crew while on alert. It is probable that this basketball court was constructed at about the same time that the pool was relocated closer to the readiness center. This then places the construction of the basketball court between 1988 and 1993. The Basketball Court is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1237) Swimming Pool- Contributing

This is a medium size swimming pool located north of the Alert Crew Readiness Building. Facility records show that the swimming pool was constructed in 1965. However, between 1988 and 1993, the swimming pool was relocated closer to the crew readiness center. It was designed to provide recreational activities for the crew while on alert. The Swimming Pool is a contributing element to the historic district.

Security Fence- Contributing

Located all around the Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Area (except for where it meets the runway), is a security fence that originally contained numerous sensors and alarms. The original fence was constructed in the 1950s, but underwent modification due to advancements in technology in the 1970s and 1980s. One such modification done to the security fence was the addition of a pressure alarm system outside of the fence.⁵ The fence was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans and is a contributing element to the historic district.

Family Visitation Area

The Family Visitation area was constructed between the middle of the 1970s through the middle of the 1980s, to provide a place for the families of the aircrews to see their husbands or fathers during the alert rotation. The visitation area usually included a "visitation center building, located near the alert compound, that has a kitchen, a large den area with TV, and several rooms

⁵ Jeffrey Rhodes, "On Alert," *Air Force Magazine*, October 1988, 81.

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where families can dine in privacy.”⁶ Debbie LaPlana, wife of 1st Lt. Peter LaPiana, a KC-135 copilot at another base commented that, "This place kind of defeats the purpose sometimes, though... Sometimes the stress builds, with kids running around, the noise, and not really being able to relax with everything going on here. Still, I am glad they have this place. It's good for the families to get to spend some time together.”⁷ The Family Visitation area at Blytheville AFB consists of the Family visitation building and four picnic sheds.

(Building #1244) Family Visitation Center- Contributing

This building contains the area where families could gather and spend time with their military personnel while they were stationed in the Alert Area facilities. Constructed between 1979 and 1980⁸, the Family Visitation Building is a one-story, L-shaped, concrete-block structure with a gabled roof. The Family Visitation Center is a contributing element to the historic district.

Picnic Shelters (4) - Contributing

Located on Friday Spur, and set east of the visitation building are four metal picnic sheds (two with slight gable roof, and two with flat roofs). The sheds cover concrete slabs that were used for picnics by the families. They appear to be constructed in the 1980s as part of the construction of the new family visitation area. The picnic shelters are contributing elements to the historic district.

Recreations Fields #1233 and #1239- (2) Contributing

These two fields are recognized on base layout plans from 1988. Field #1233 is a baseball/softball field, while Field #1239 was a large open grassy field. The only recognizable structure located on either of these fields is the chain-link metal backstop on the baseball/softball field. It is unknown when these fields were officially listed on the base maintenance list, but they are clearly defined on the base layout by 1988.

Weapons Storage Area

Unlike the surveys regarding Q Areas, so far, there has been no in-depth examination of weapons storage areas at SAC bomber bases. Since there is no baseline with which to compare the Eaker

⁶ *Ibid*, 82.

⁷ *Ibid*, 81

⁸ This date was taken from discussions with former members of the 97th Security Forces Squadron.

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AFB area, a brief survey of similar weapons areas at SAC bases was conducted by examining installation reports found in *A Systemic Study of Air Combat Command Cold War Material Culture*.⁹ Using these reports, five key character-defining features for weapons storage areas were identified:

- Bermed storage igloos;
- Multi-cubicle segregated magazine storage buildings;
- A surveillance inspection shop;
- A command and control building and;
- A security fence and guard gate.

In addition to these features, the survey of other SAC weapons storage areas demonstrated that no uniform layout of buildings was used. Weitze also stated that “Buildings always present for the Hound Dog/Quail mission include Hound Dog multi-cubicle storage facilities and a Hound Dog inspection and surveillance shop (weapons checkout); separate Hound Dog and Quail run-up shops; and, a joint Hound Dog/Quail service shop.”¹⁰ This area would continue to expand and be added on to as missions/weaponry changed over the weapon storage area’s roughly 34 year history. What is known is that this area was originally platted around 1958 as it shows up on a base layout in October 1958 with three buildings planned to be constructed in this area at that period of time.¹¹

(Building #1214) Weapons Storage Area Entry Control Point - Contributing

Entry to the Blytheville AFB SAC Weapons Storage Area is through a high-security gate on Friday Spur near the eastern end of the base. Two 15-foot sliding gates keep vehicles in a small holding area until the security check is complete. Adjacent to the gate is the Security Police Entry Control Building for alert crew and other personnel. Pedestrians enter through a covered walkway and a 7-foot turnstile. The building, most likely constructed in the late 1950s, is a one-story concrete-block structure with a flat roof. The northern elevation has a set of pedestrian doors. The eastern and western elevations have a single window and gun port. The Security Police Entry Control Building and Security Gate was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans

⁹ Lewis, Karen and Katherine Roxlau, Lori E. Rhodes, Paul Boyer, Joseph S. Murphey. *A Systemic Study of Air Combat Command Cold War Materiel Culture, Volume I: Historic Context and Methodology for Assessment*. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District for Langley AFB, Virginia: HQ Air Combat Command 1995).

¹⁰ Karen Weitze, *Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert Historic District Request for Determination of Eligibility Eglin Air Force Base (Stockton, CA: Weitze Research, 2005)*, 9.

¹¹ Building 215 Plans, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office.

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for entry control areas for high security areas. The Security Police Entry Control Building and Security Gate is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1202, #1203, #1204, and #1206) Storage Igloos (4) - Contributing

Located on the north side of Friday Spur in the Weapons Storage Area are four munitions storage igloos. The igloos, constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, are vaulted concrete buildings with parapet retaining walls at the front that house large metal secure doors. The concrete vaults are covered with an earthen berm and have vent stacks that protrude from the rear of the buildings. Munitions storage igloos originated before World War II and have remained the same design for much of the twentieth century. The munitions storage igloos were adapted from standardized military plans and they are contributing elements to the historic district. The northern two igloos are shown constructed by 1958, with the southern two igloos being shown drawn by 1960.¹²

(Building #1252-1253, #1270-1277) Air-Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) Storage facility- (10) Contributing

Located north of Friday Spur is a massive, ten bay storage magazine for the Air-Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM). Constructed in the mid-1980s,¹³ this structure has concrete foundation. The exterior walls and dividing walls between the cubicles are solid concrete, and the building is covered with an earthen berm. The building was constructed to house and store the new ALCM when they arrived at the base in the mid-1980s. The building is similar in design to the Hound Dog Cubicles, but it is larger in size to hold the larger missiles. The ALCM Storage Cubicle was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans and it is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1201) Small Arms Munitions Storage- Contributing

Located on McFall Street, is a small, six-compartment magazine constructed on a concrete foundation with masonry, concrete-block walls and flat roof. The roof has small gravity ventilators and a lightning protection system. The building was used to house small arms munitions at the base. This small arms munition storage is shown on the 1960 base layout, but is

¹² 1958 and 1960 Base Layouts, Building 215 Plans, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office.

¹³ Blueprints for Building 215 have base layouts attached to each of the renovation of the Building 215. On blueprints from March 1980, the ALCM storage facility is not shown; however, it is shown on new blueprints from July 1988. (Building 215 Plans, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office.)

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not on the 1958 layouts, therefore suggesting it was constructed c.1959. The Small Arms Munitions Storage was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans and it is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Buildings #1209 and #1210) Building Hound Dog and Quail Missile Cubicles - (2) Contributing

Located on McFall Street are two sets of Hound Dog and Quail Missile cubicles designed by Black & Veatch. These two cubicles are first shown on the 1960 base layouts with Building #1209 shown drawn and infilled in black, while Building #1210 is outlined in black. The magazines are configured as twelve missile stalls, accessed by individual loading doors with six stalls line each side of the magazine, offset along their adjoining rear walls. The western building has seven stalls on the western side. According to Weitze, the standard size for the buildings is:

Individual stalls were 10'6" high, 12' wide, and 25'6" deep. Framing, foundation, walls, and roofs are reinforced concrete. Walls were 12" thick between stalls, side to side; 3' thick back to back. The wall between the two groups of 10 stalls extends above the roofline by 2'9". The design of the standard Hound Dog magazine allowed SAC to augment facilities when required.¹⁴

The Hound Dog and Quail Missile cubicles were adapted from standardized Air Force Plans and they are contributing elements to the historic district. However, over these buildings' tenure, these buildings served a lot of different functions and changed quite frequently after the removal of the Hound Dog and Quail. According to those that served in and around the Weapons Storage Area, these cubicles held conventional munitions and non-propagating munitions.

(Buildings #1207, #1208, #1211 (Munitions Storage Igloos)- (3) Contributing

Located on the north side of McFall Street in the Weapons Storage Area are three munitions storage igloos. The igloos, which appear to have been constructed in the 1980s, are vaulted concrete buildings with parapet retaining walls at the front that house large metal secure doors. The concrete vaults are covered with an earthen berm and have vent stacks that protrude from the rear of the buildings. Munitions storage igloos originated before World War II and have remained the same design for much of the twentieth century. The munitions storage igloos were adapted from standardized Air Force Plans and they are contributing elements to the historic district.

¹⁴ Karen Weitze, *Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert Historic District Request for Determination of Eligibility Eglin Air Force Base*, 41.

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(Building #1247) The Master Surveillance and Control Tower- Contributing

The tower is an approximately 40-foot tall steel tower constructed out of steel support beams and cross-braces. An open stairway wraps around the structure to the platform above. The platform supports a small, one-story, windowed enclosure, which contained the security personnel and surveillance equipment for the area. It is believed that the tower was originally constructed in 1973 to provide general security for the Weapons storage area. The Master Surveillance and Control Tower was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans, and it is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1213)- Inspection and Surveillance Shop- Contributing

Located on the south side of McFall Street is the inspection and surveillance shop. Designed by Black & Veatch, SAC usually located the shop near the cubicle storage magazines for the missile. Information regarding building build dates from the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority show that the building was built in 1974, base layouts from 1976 do not show that it was on the site yet. However, it does begin to show up on the future base layouts. The building is a one-story, shed-roofed reinforced-concrete and concrete-block structure with a high-bay component.¹⁵ By the early 1990, the buildings function had changed greatly. By this point in time, the building was operating as a Missile Assembly Shop. The inspection and surveillance shop is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1212) – Munitions Maintenance Administration Building- Contributing

Located on the southeast side of Friday Spur is the Munition Maintenance Administration Building, or Building #1212. Information regarding the building's build dates from the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority shows that the building was built in 1959, and maps confirm that the date is correct. The building was constructed visually into two bays. The right bay is a very tall one-story, concrete block structure with four large vent-a-hoods protruding through the roof. The second bay is a one-story, shed-roofed reinforced-concrete and concrete-block structure with a large exhaust fan and steel-reinforced entry doors. By the early 1990s, the building's function had not changed and continued to be offices for munitions administration. The Munition Maintenance Administration Building is a contributing element to the historic district.

¹⁵ Karen Weitze, *Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert Historic District Request for Determination of Eligibility Eglin Air Force Base*, 39.

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(Building #1205)- Conventional Munitions Shop- Contributing

Located along the north side of California Street is the Conventional Munitions Shop Building, or Building #1205. Information regarding the buildings build dates from the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority shows that the building was built in 1971, and maps confirm that the date is correct. This building was planned as far back as 1961 according to base layouts.¹⁶ The building was constructed as a long one-story, concrete block constructed building with steel-reinforced entry doors. Near the north end of the east elevation there is the remnant of the former conveyor belt that once was used while the building was used as a munitions shop. By the early 1990s, the building's function had changed greatly. By this point in time, the building was operating as Munitions Administrative offices similar to those housed in Building #1212. The Conventional Munitions Shop is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1286)- Spare Inert Storage- Contributing

Located along the west side of McFall Street is the Spare Inert Storage Building, or Building #1286. Information regarding the buildings build dates from the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority shows that the building was built in 1985, and maps confirm that the date is correct. The roughly 9,000 sq. sf. building was constructed using metal frame and aluminum siding. Between 1985 and the closure of the base beginning in 1991, there was a need for a larger storage area attached for the Missile Assembly shop, or Building #1285. Building #1286, would become the new, larger inert storage area use for the assembly of munitions under the new functions of the B-52 bombers. By the early 1990s, the building's function had not changed and it continued to be used for inert storage. The Spare Inert Storage Building is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1285)- Missile Assembly Shop- Contributing

Located along the west side of McFall Street is the Missile Assembly Shop Building, or Building #1285. Information regarding the buildings build dates from the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority shows that the building was built in 1985, and maps confirm that the date is correct. The roughly 32,000 sq. sf. building was constructed using metal frame and aluminum siding. Between 1985 and the closure of the base beginning in 1991, there was a need for a larger Missile Assembly shop. Building #1285, would become the new, larger Missile Assembly shop probably about the time that the assembly plant left Building #1205. By the early 1990s, the

¹⁶ Building 215 Plans, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office.

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building's function had not changed and continued to be used for Missile Assembly. The Missile Assembly Shop Building is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1284)- Hazardous Storage Building- Contributing

Located along the west side of McFall Street is a Hazardous Storage Building, or Building #1284. Building #1284, was directly related to Building #1285, or the Missile Assembly Shop Building. Information regarding the buildings build dates from the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority shows that the building was built in 1985, and maps confirm that the date is correct. The roughly 96 sq. sf. building was constructed using metal frame, aluminum siding, and had a metal shed roof. Between 1985 and the closure of the base beginning in 1991, there was a need for a larger Missile Assembly shop. In order to meet the needs of the Missile Assembly Shop, the base decided to move the hazardous material to a separate location close to its shop, but not attached. Building #1284, would become the off-sight location for this hazardous material. By the early 1990s, the building's function had not changed and continued to be used for storage. The Hazardous Storage Building is a contributing element to the historic district.

(Building #1279) Generator Plant Building for WSA- Contributing

This building contains the electrical equipment that provides power to the Alert Area facilities. Constructed probably in 1981 according to files at the Blytheville- Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, the Generator Plant Building is a small, one-story, concrete-block structure with a slight gabled roof. The Generator Plant Building was adapted from standardized Air Force Plans for power buildings in alert area and in the Weapons Storage Area. The Generator Plant Building is a contributing element to the historic district.

Other Non-Associated Buildings

(Building #1287) Deluge Tank at the Water Pump Station - (2) Contributing

Located along the southwest side of Arizona Street is the Deluge Tank at the Water Pump Station, or Building #1287. Building #1287, was directly related to the Alert Pad. If a crash were to happen on the runway, the Deluge tank could be activated to suppress the flames via either water or foam from the deluge tank. Information regarding the buildings build date from the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority shows that the building was built in 1985, and maps confirm that the date is correct. The building was constructed using metal frame, aluminum

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siding, and had a metal shed roof. By the early 1990s, the building's function had not changed and continued to be used as a pump station and deluge tank. The Deluge Tank and Pump Station are contributing elements to the historic district.

(Building #1288) Aircraft/Survivability Equipment Storage Facility Shop- Contributing

Located along the southwest side of Arizona Street is the A/SE Storage Facility Shop, or Building #1288. Building #1288 was directly related to Alert Pad and the Alert Crew Readiness Building. The equipment stored and maintained in this location were crucial to the operations that were conducted by the personnel associated with the B-52 bombers on the Alert Pad. Information regarding the buildings build date from the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority shows that the building was built in 1985, and maps confirm that the date is correct. The building was constructed using metal frame, aluminum siding, and had a metal various gable roofs. Building #1288 was two large one-story bays. The bay to the right consisted of a large pull through garage door and four, small, vertical, single-pane windows. This section of the building was covered by a side gable roof. The Second bay consisted of three large pull through garage doors and a single steel entrance door. This bay is covered by a front facing gable roof. By the early 1990, the buildings function had only changed a little bit, as is was converted fully to a maintenance shop by 1990. The Aircraft/Survivability Equipment Storage Facility Shop are contributing elements to the historic district.

(Building #1215 and Building #1261) Kennel Area- (2) Non-Contributing

Located along the northwest side of the Friday Spur is the area use for the SAC dog kennel, or Building #1215 and #1261. Buildings #1215 and #1261 are directly related to Alert Pad and the Security Force team that protected the Alert Pad and aircraft. Building #1215 was originally built in 1961, with the plan for a long kennel building built along the southwest elevation. The kennel was not built until 1984, near the northwest portion of the lot. Information regarding the buildings build date from the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority shows that the building was built in 1961 and 1985, and maps confirm that the date is correct. By the early 1990s, the building's function had not changed and continued to be used as a kennel administration building and kennel. Consequently, the kennel that was planned to be built as early as 1961 was constructed on the site after the base was closed. The area surrounding Buildings #1215 and #1261 has changed drastically since the closure of the base as the Humane Society has taken over the buildings and have added onto them and in order to continue their mission. Therefore, the Kennel and Kennel Administration Building are non-contributing elements to the historic district.

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(Building #1222) Communication Transmitter Building - Contributing

Located along the northwest side of Friday Spur is the Communication Transmitter Building, or Building #1222. Building #1222 was directly related to Alert Pad and the communication between the alert pad and the operations building. Information regarding the building and the build date shows that the building was built in 1957, and maps confirm that the date is correct. The building was constructed using concrete-block construction; the building is covered by a front-facing gable roof. By the early 1990s, the building's function had not changed and continued to be used as a communication transmitter building. The building is in a current state of disrepair. The Communication Transmitter Building is a contributing element to the historic district.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Military

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1959-1991

Significant Dates

1959, 1960, 1985

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Leo A. Daly (Architect for Alert Crew Readiness Building)

Black and Veatch (designer of weapons storage buildings)

Ben White and Sons (contractor for Alert Crew Readiness Building)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Blytheville Air Force Base (AFB) SAC Alert Area and Weapons Storage Area Historic District (later Eaker AFB) Historic District in Blytheville, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with national significance under **Criterion A** for its significance in the areas of Political History and Military History. It is also being listed under **Criterion C** for embodying the distinct characteristics of an Alert Crew Readiness Building during the Cold War. It is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration G** as the period of significance extends to 1991. The Blytheville Air Force Base (AFB) SAC Alert Area and Weapons Storage Area Historic District is a well-preserved example of a Strategic Air Command Alert and Weapons Storage Area in Blytheville, Arkansas, constructed as part of a national expansion of Strategic Air Command Facilities across the United States and its Territories, to help in creating a “program to safeguard nuclear deterrence”¹⁷ through the SAC Alert program. Though arriving late to the Strategic Air Command’s Bomber Alert Program, it provided another installation that was able to augment SAC’s already strong ability to establish a one-third strike force that was able and ready to provide a counterattack within 15 minutes, in the event of a Soviet initiated strike on the United States. It is through the constant efforts of SAC and its airmen that the bomber fleet was considered the backbone of the SAC deterrent posture. The period of significance for the historic district dates to between 1959, when the base reopened, to 1991, which is commonly known as the end of the Cold War due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. For almost 34 years, this area had the dubious distinction of being one of the “highest security chunks of concrete imaginable.”¹⁸

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

*The general public is really not aware of the crews’ alert commitment.... We need to impress upon the minds of the American public that we are proud of our job motivation and job satisfaction and because of this, we are not merely pieces of the Dept. of Defense, we are the people....*¹⁹

- Captain Sandy Rea

¹⁷ Henry M. Narducci, *Strategic Air Command and the Alert Program: A Brief History*. Offutt Air Force Base, Neb: Office of the Historian, Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, 1988, 1.

¹⁸ Jim Clonts, *When Penguins Flew and Water Burned: A B-52 Navigator's Journey from Where It All Began to War and Back* (United States: LULU, 2006),

¹⁹ 2nd Lt. Krist J. Vasil- BAFB Information Officer, “Alexander Casts Holiday Lot with Base Alert Crews,” *The Blytheville Courier News*, December 28, 1978, 4.

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The statement above came from a B-52 crew member sitting on alert at the Blytheville Air Force Base on Christmas 1978. Representative Alexander commented on the statement made by Captain Rea that “we should be better aware of the personal sacrifices that crew members make to ensure our freedom.”²⁰ It is comments like this that really hit to the heart of the significance of the entire area. It is about the personal sacrifices that the crewmembers made on a daily basis while also possibly giving the ultimate sacrifice to protect the freedom of all Americans, in the case of sneak attack by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It is during this period of the Cold War with the Soviet Union that every flight and every training mission was seen as a method of deterrence in keeping peace throughout the world. The significance of the site lies in the fact that the flight training and readiness was never needed, though always shown as an active deterrent.

World War II (1941-1945) and the Creation of Blytheville Army Air Field²¹

Although the United States had been supporting the Allies from 1939 to 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war on the United States by Nazi Germany, only a month later, pushed the US’s military build-up into overdrive. While the United States had been slowly rebuilding its military since 1938, entry into the war allowed for greater expansion of bases across the nation. One of the main reasons for the drastic increase in the few years before the United States’ entrance into World War II was drastic demobilization of the United States Military, especially the Army Air Corps²², following the end of World War I. One of the main types of bases created by the United States Military were pilot training bases. Though Arkansas has had a long history of military occupation, it was not until World War II that Arkansas’s role became even more prevalent, especially with the Army Air Force. Arkansas’s role would be capitalized on due in part to the rural, agrarian society that could be found throughout the state, which helped in providing ample amount of open space for constructing such large land bases. The immensity of scale and rapidity of completion of WWII facilities nationwide is very difficult to overstate. In 1939, the Army Air Corps had seventeen airfields in the entire United States. By late 1945, the AAF had nearly *eight hundred* airfields in the continental United States. Many of these airfields were immense. The future Blytheville Army Air Forces Advanced Flying School in Arkansas covered 2,670 acres.²³ By the end of World War II the Army Air Force would

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Much of this context was developed from a timeline of events at Blytheville AFB that is in the possession of the Regional Airport Authority. The authors of the NRHP nomination are indebted to the author of the timeline for their research and their attention to details.

²² The United States Army Air Corps officially changed its name a few times between 1926 and 1947. However, between 1926 and 1941, it was known as the United States Army Air Corps. Upon entrance in to World War II, the name was officially changed to the United States Army Air Forces, before being abolished by the United States Legislature in 1947 and being reestablished as its own branch of military service as the United States Air Force.

²³ Kurt Landon, *History of the Blytheville Army Air Field, Blytheville, Arkansas: Preliminary Surveys and from Activation of Field on 10 June 1942 to 1 September 1944* (Washington D.C.: US Army Air Corps., 1944), 2. In newspaper articles from 1942 claim that the actual amount of acres commandeered by the United States military was 2,761 acres by way of 32 landowners. In the actual report, Landon speaks generally about the amount of acreage and that there were upwards of 40 property owners effected.

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construct seven new Army Air fields throughout Arkansas: Newport, Blytheville, Helena, Pine Bluff, Camden, Stuttgart, and Walnut Ridge.²⁴

The official notice to the public about the selection of a site in Mississippi County for an Advanced Flying School (Base) was made on March 31, 1942.²⁵ The initial correspondence regarding such a site had been an ongoing discussion between the military and the Chamber of Commerce in Blytheville. Prior to January 1942, “the Blytheville (Arkansas) Chamber of Commerce has been soliciting the interest of the War Department in establishing an air field in this vicinity.”²⁶ By January 19, 1942, “Col. A. Hornsby, then commanding officer at Gunter Field, flew over the section and studied various neighboring locations both from the air and from the ground.”²⁷ After scanning the nearby farmland from above and on the ground the lone suitable location was found to be located just to the east of Gosnell, Arkansas.²⁸ Only five days later, a meeting was convened by multiple officers and a few of the city leaders.²⁹ With the inspection of the Gosnell site complete, the officers returned to Memphis, Tennessee, and adjourned the meeting the following day, citing that the Gosnell site was “suitable and desirable as a station for a twin engine school of [*sic*] the Corps and recommended its acquisition.”³⁰ Historian Jillian Hartley, argued that, “Mississippi County was a prime location because of its close proximity to the Mississippi River, where supplies could easily be shipped in.”³¹ The official telegram authorizing the establishment of the twin engine flying field was received on March 31, 1942.³²

Construction of the base was started on May 10, 1942, and was scheduled to be completed by December 31, 1942. It is noted that “since there were various unavoidable delays, construction was not actually completed until April 8, 1943.”³³ As part of the construction of the new base, the runways, taxiways and apron were all constructed of Portland cement concrete. “The runways are four in number, each being 5,000 feet in length and 150 feet wide, with a crown of 6 inches.” It is the permanency of these runways that allowed for the reactivation of the base in 1955-56. The runways constructed in 1942-1943 are still visible on the current site, though they

²⁴ Travis Ratermann, *Blytheville Air Force Base Capehart Housing Historic District* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 2015), 8-18.

²⁵ Landon, 2. And “Air School Approved for Blytheville,” *Arkansas Gazette*, 31 March 1942.

²⁶ Landon, 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.* The report states that the site was chosen based on the fact that the soil was “suitable only at the Gosnell Site.”

²⁹ *Ibid.* The Officers that were at the meeting consisted of Col. A Hornsby, Lt. Col. W.L. Medding, Major E.R. Todd, and Capt. R.W. Young. The local citizens involved in the meeting consisted of E.R. Jackson, Mayor of Blytheville, C.H. Wilson and J.M. Brooks, President and Secretary of the Blytheville Chamber of Commerce, William Richards, US Corps of Engineers office, Memphis, Tennessee, and E. B. David, a state highway patrolman.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Jillian Harley, “Eaker Air Force Base,” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2795>.

³² Landon, 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, 12.

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were enlarged during reactivation. It is also through this initial construction that 323 buildings were erected on the base field. Of the original 323 buildings built as part of the World War II build-up, only a few remain on the site.

On June 10, 1942, the Army Air Forces (AAF) was activated, though still not fully operational, as the Blytheville Army Air Field under command of the 326th Base Headquarters and Air Base Squadron, as a twin-engine aircraft-training base for bomber pilots.³⁴ Yet, by August 1942, the base was still only partially operational. On August 7, 1942, the gates of the training school were opened to cadets. The AAF also constructed four smaller, auxiliary Army training airports in Steele, Missouri; Manila, Arkansas; Hornersville, Missouri; and Cooter, Missouri, to allow the pilots more landing strips to practice on. After the war ended in Europe, the AAF changed the focus of its training to meet the need of the planned invasion of Japan. In June 1945, the 809th Army Air Forces Base Unit assumed command of Blytheville AAF and the mission of BAAF was changed to Combat Crew Troop Carrier training for transport pilots.³⁵ With the end of World War II nearing, the need for airmen dropped substantially in the waning years. Through the use of the atomic bomb and the surrender of Japan, the AAF quickly shifted to demobilization. The flight school closed in October 1945, and the airfield was used as an out-processing center during the discharging of military personnel in 1945-1946. In 1946, the War Assets Administration officially closed the base and turned the land over to Blytheville.³⁶

Fighting for Reactivation (1945-1953)

During this phase of base inactivation, the United States initiated its commitment to containing Communism, began using deterrence as a national military policy, and exhibited a strong desire to keep military spending down. Phase I began with the nuclear explosion, known as Trinity, in Alamogordo, New Mexico, on 16 July 1945. This phase ended with President Eisenhower's "New Look" for military defense that focused on achieving maximum strength at a minimum cost. The end result was an emphasis on nuclear weaponry that was economically more efficient than conventional weapons. Philosophically and strategically, this phase was associated with a commitment to contain Communism, to reduce military spending, and to deter the Soviet Union through nuclear superiority.³⁷

In the years between closing of the Twin-Engine Training School and the reactivation of the base in 1955, the City of Blytheville leased the former base as manufacturing space, while using the

³⁴ Though the base was activated in June, cadets did not arrive until August. Therefore, the base was only open to contractors, who were still actively constructing the 323 buildings, and Air Corps personnel.

³⁵ Robert Mueller, *Active Air Force Bases Within the United States of America on 17 September 1982* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, United States Air Force, 1989), 35.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Lewis, Karen and Katherine Roxlau, Lori E. Rhodes, Paul Boyer, Joseph S. Murphey. *A Systemic Study of Air Combat Command Cold War Materiel Culture, Volume I: Historic Context and Methodology for Assessment*. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District for Langley AFB, Virginia: HQ Air Combat Command 1995), 25-30.

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infrastructure of the former base to promote a municipal airport. While the Blytheville Chamber of Commerce and the City of Blytheville tried to lease out the potential space on the former base, they were also actively trying to get the United States Air Force to reactivate the base and bring in a permanent installation. For a short period of time, the United States Air Force activated the 387th Composite Squadron of the USAF Reserves during 1949, but any military involvement was short lived. The “first indication that the Air Force had its eye on Blytheville came in August 1950. A three-man Air Force team inspected the \$10,000,000 field built in 1942 as a twin-engine training base, and city officials believed it might be used by a civilian flight contractor for training USAF cadets.”³⁸ The possibility of a reactivation of the base became the talk of Blytheville before the Air Force condemned the idea, saying that they had no plans for reactivating the base.³⁹ Although it was a minor setback, the City of Blytheville and the Chamber of Commerce would continuously push the idea to the public and the United States Air Force about reactivation.⁴⁰ According to Travis Ratermann in his National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the Blytheville Air Force Base Capehart Housing Historic District, he states that...

By 1952, the Chamber of Commerce was already setting up an exploratory committee for fund raising, in order to raise \$100,000.00 to purchase land so that the base could be reactivated.⁴¹ This new spark of enthusiasm came about after several “high ranking officers of the Tactical Air Command came to Blytheville on what they termed “a shopping tour.”⁴² Upon learning of this “shopping tour,” the city sent letters of support to the Air Force to pledge full support for any reactivation plans. When the original plan for the base went to Congress for approval, the appropriation bill it was attached to, was turned down, thus cutting spending on the possible reactivation of the base by almost \$5 million. With a need for more runway space and limited funds to purchase the property in need, the Chamber of Commerce launched a campaign to collect and purchase land for \$100,000. It was not until April 1, 1953,⁴³ that the city and the Chamber of Commerce received the final word that the base would be reactivated with contracts already being let for construction.⁴⁴

With word starting to spread across the county of the possibility of the base being reactivated, people began to wonder what the city was going to do about the previously leased properties located on the former base. The City needed to act quickly to discuss alternatives for those with

³⁸ “Based Okayed But Many Details Remain: Base Approval Ends 3-Year Effort,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 1 April 1953, 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ratermann, 8-23.

⁴¹ “Two Major Items Facing Council,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 11 November 1952, 1.

⁴² “Based Okayed But Many Details Remain: Base Approval Ends 3-Year Effort,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 1 April 1953, 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1 and 7.

⁴⁴ Ratermann, 8-23

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leases on the base. At the time of the announcement, there were four tenants still active on the property. The group that was affected the most by the possibility of the reactivation was the Gosnell School District, which was using some of the former air base buildings as a school. With a shortage of time to try to acquire property and a building before the reactivation, the Gosnell School District began to panic. The problem was alleviated when the school became eligible for federal funds.⁴⁵ The school would eventually be established and still currently resides just outside of the west gate across Arkansas Highway 181.

“Of the other three groups, Planters Flying Service moved its operations to Manila, Arkansas, to a flying field built as part of the World War II training base. The Veterans Housing located in a few apartments on the base, stated they would remain in their current location until they were told to leave. The Civil Air Patrol⁴⁶ planned on trying to work out a deal with the Air Force to stay though there were no definite contracts worked out in early 1953.”⁴⁷

Even with the main portion of the infrastructure already in place, though neglected due to lack of use, there were still large infrastructure projects that needed to be completed to upgrade the base prior to reactivation.⁴⁸ Word of a possible start date on the construction of upgrading facilities, while also meeting the new standards of living on military bases during this time, began to come out as early as September 12, 1952, when the *Blytheville Courier News*, reported that construction was due to start “about” January 1, 1953.⁴⁹ Part of the holdup in reactivating the base was a land deal swap situated on the north side of the base. The deal included trading 200 acres of land in the Air Force’s possession, for approximately 190 acres to the north.⁵⁰ Final approval for the reactivation of the base was made public around April 1, 1953. By May 26, 1953, the engineers for the project were finally given the opportunity to start the construction on the base.⁵¹ Many of the infrastructure upgrades were due in part to the changes in technology, speed, and weight of new aircraft since the end of 1945. The Air Force would have to spend the

⁴⁵ “Reactivation Means Shift of 4 Groups,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 1 April 1953, 1. The eventual location of the School would be located across the street from the eventual Capehart Housing gate.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 1 and 7.

⁴⁷ Ratermann, 8-24.

⁴⁸ The community was still unsure about whether the city was putting the reactivation above trying to lure industry to the site. Through there were many arguments in June 1954, the reactivation of the base from the City’s point of view was still being pushed forward. The cynics of the base activation through June were finally calmed down in September 1954 when the Air Force announced in Washington, D.C., that the Blytheville Air Force Base would be a permanent installation. (C. of C. Keeps Present Base-Industry Policy: New Plant Bid Forces Decision; USAF Disinterested in City Bared,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 2 June 1954, 1.)

⁴⁹ “Work on Base Here to Start About Jan. 1,” *Blytheville Courier News*, September 12, 1952, 1.

⁵⁰ “Air Force Report- No Answer Yet on Land ‘Swap-Out’,” *Blytheville Courier News*, October 30, 1952, 1.

⁵¹ It is with this article in the *Blytheville Courier* that rumors of the base being transferred from the Tactical Air Command to the Strategic Air Command began to surface. These rumors would continue to falsely circulate throughout the community and the local newspaper through late 1954. (Base Shifted to Strategic Air Command,” *Blytheville Courier News*, May 26, 1953, 1.)

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next two years repaving and extending the main runway, constructing new housing and support facilities to accommodate new jet aircraft. According to Travis Ratermann,...

By the end of 1954 and into 1955 the base was beginning to buzz with the sounds of construction equipment. One of the first construction projects was the building of the Guard Houses. Only fifteen days after the initial announcement the base would be permanent, the Guard House was nearly already completed. By January 7, 1955,⁵² the base was already bidding out seven more construction projects, with ten projects already completed at an estimated cost of \$5.7 million.⁵³

By May 21, 1954, the United States Air Force was already beginning to let contracts for runway improvements and expansion which was to be extended from 5,000 feet of runway to 10,000, with the runway being 150 feet wide.⁵⁴ The acknowledgement of the reactivation of the base began to raise the spirits of the community, while also helping to raise the pocketbooks of the shops and trades throughout town. The first round of construction brought in an estimated \$8 million⁵⁵ in construction work that was largely going to local contractors. In order to meet the demands of the new aircraft that would be stationed at the Blytheville Air Force Base cement contracts for the expansion of the runway was estimated at \$3 million.⁵⁶

Blytheville and Tactical Air Command (TAC)

The citizens of Blytheville continued to ride the roller coaster of emotions caused by every announcement regarding the reactivation of the base including who would be occupying it. Rumors continued to swirl about the transferring of operations between Tactical Air Command (TAC) and Strategic Air Command (SAC). By March 1955, there was no question that TAC would be stationed out of the newly reactivated base.⁵⁷ In July 1955, the USAF assigned Blytheville AFB to the Tactical Air Command (TAC) to house tactical bombers. The 4431st Air Base Squadron was the first squadron to arrive at the newly reopened base⁵⁸ and managed the

⁵² Roger Hooker, 97th Bombardment Wing Historian Office, *History of Eaker Air Force Base* (Blytheville, Arkansas: 97th Bombardment Wing Historian Office, 1988), 28-29.

⁵³ Ratermann, 8-24.

⁵⁴ "Some Base Contracts Due This Summer; To Be TAC Jet Field," *Blytheville Courier News*, May 21, 1954, 1. ; Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Little Rock District, *Evaluation Airfield Pavement: Blytheville Air Force Base* (Little Rock, Arkansas: Little Rock Corps of Engineers, January 1957), 3.

⁵⁵ "First Air Base Bids to Be Opened July 23," *Blytheville Courier News*, June, 1954, 1.

⁵⁶ 329,000 barrels of cement were shipped via barge down the Mississippi River from Missouri Portland Cement and Marquett Cement Company. The amount of concrete poured for the reactivation of the base and the newer heavier bombers, was enough to build a road from Blytheville to West Memphis, Arkansas. ("Pouring Begins on Base Runway," *Blytheville Courier News*, November 29, 1953, 1.)

⁵⁷ At one point around March 15, 1955, the Base was going to be renamed after World War II air hero Gordon Ramey. Needless to say, the renaming of the base would not happen until the 1980s, when it was renamed Eaker Air Force Base. (War II Air Hero Gordon Ramey May be Honored in Base Naming," *Blytheville Courier News*, March 15, 1955, 1.)

⁵⁸ "First Squadron Is On Hand at BAFB," *Blytheville Courier News*, July 19, 1955, 1.

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base until its completion that same year. The base was slow to activate more members of the 4431st due to the lack of Housing.⁵⁹ In October 1955, the 764th Bomb Squadron arrived at Blytheville AFB from Hill AFB, Utah. The 764th flew the B-57B night tactical bomber aircraft, which was the first operational squadron, assigned to the newly re-opened base. By April 1956, the 461st Bombardment Wing (BW)⁶⁰, which included the 764th 765th, and 766th Bomb Squadrons, fully relocated to the base once housing was able to be opened up for the incoming airmen.⁶¹ The USAF tasked the 461st BW with low-level bombing missions, usually in support of ground operations; however, the Air Force soon realized that the B-57 was not a good plane for that mission, and quickly decided to discontinue its use by the Air Force.

With the discontinuation of the B-57, Blytheville was open to new tenants. In May 1957, it was reported that the United States Air Force would transfer the Blytheville AFB from TAC to the Strategic Air Command (SAC) effective 1959. The change from TAC to SAC was not going to be cheap, by May 3, 1957, the United States Air Force was asking for \$125 million to finance the change in the mission.⁶² As part of the transition from TAC to SAC, the twin-engine B-57 would be replaced by 15 B-52 and a squadron of aerial tankers according to initial news reports.⁶³ Even before the official announcement of a mission change at the Blytheville Air Force Base, further improvements to the facilities was beginning to take place at essential locations which would be used by the SAC crews, with one of them being the Weapon Storage area. During 1957, an actual roadway was being constructed to what the letter refers to as the “bomb dump” and the new golf course.⁶⁴

The atomic (or nuclear) bomb would eventually characterize the Cold War like no other object had in the past. In the late 1940s, the United States used the threat of atomic weapons (atomic diplomacy) as a means to control perceived Soviet expansion. After the Soviets obtained nuclear weapons, both nations embraced a balance of power through mutually assured destruction (MAD), which stated both sides had maintained enough nuclear weapons to survive a first strike and to launch a retaliation that would destroy the other side. This uneasy balance was preserved by the deployment of different weapons platforms, including submarines, ICBM Missiles and bombers. Throughout the Cold War Period, this combination of nuclear armed submarines, missiles and bombers would become known as the Triad of Deterrence. The Bombers that would eventually be on alert and housed in the Crew Readiness Center, would become the cornerstone of the deterrence plan to keep the Soviet Union at arm’s length through this eventual show of force. During the 1950s, the Eisenhower Administration, not wanting to get into a conventional

⁵⁹ To see more about the housing shortage on the newly activated base, see the *Blytheville Air Force Base Capehart Housing Historic District* National Register of Historic Places Nomination.

⁶⁰ Number Men At Base Not Due to Rise,” *Blytheville Courier News*, May 3, 1957, 1.

⁶¹ Mueller, 38.

⁶² Number Men At Base Not Due to Rise,” *Blytheville Courier News*, May 3, 1957, 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Base Historian, History, 461 Bomb Wing January- June 1957 (Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, n.a.), 4, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office, Base History.)

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arms race with the Soviets, used the threat of nuclear weapons and a massive retaliation to any Soviet military action as the cornerstone of the national security policy.⁶⁵

Strategic Air Command (SAC)

Established in 1946, the SAC was created to oversee the Army Air Force's (and later the Air Force's) long-range bombing forces and "to conduct long range offensive operations in any part of the world either independently or in cooperation with land and Naval Forces."⁶⁶ In 1948, Lt. General Curtis LeMay became commander of SAC and greatly expanded the command into America's strategic nuclear force.⁶⁷ While SAC was the primary nuclear deterrent, its forces were not yet ready to meet the threat of surprise attack. After the Soviets developed the nuclear bomb and began to develop missiles, SAC commanders realized that it would take bomber crews on average six hours to become airborne. That was too long, and SAC decided to strive to reduce that number to 15 minutes. This would allow the crew time to become airborne and be able to strike back at the Soviets, therefore providing a true deterrent. The Strategic Air Command personnel would continue to fight a war of deterrence every day for 34 years beginning with its first ground alert October 1, 1957. For the next 34 years the SAC Alert would become the foundation of the SAC mission and the nation's defense.⁶⁸

The plans for the alert mission were dictated in a 1957 memorandum from SAC's commander General Thomas S. Power to all members of the SAC Alert Force, ordering that:

It stands to reason that the brunt of the initial attack would be directed against SAC because the Soviets know only too well that the price they would have to pay for aggression would be unacceptable to them unless they succeed in preventing SAC's strike forces from being launched. We can gain a certain degree of protection against overt and covert actions, designed to immobilize our forces, by appropriate means to deal with sabotage attempts, by a limited [sic] amount of base hardening, by dispersal, and by similar defensive measures. However, the only way of insuring the survival of some of SAC's combat capability, even in case of the most unexpected and massive attack, is our Alert Force.

As long as the Soviets know that, no matter what means they may employ to stop it, a sizeable percentage of SAC's strike force will be in the air for the counterattack within minutes after they have initiated aggression, they will think twice before undertaking such aggression. For this reason, it is my considered opinion that a combat ready Alert Force of adequate size is the very backbone of our deterrent posture.

⁶⁵ Walter Hixson, "Proliferation: The United State and the Nuclear Arms Race," *The American Military Tradition from Colonial Times to the Present*. Second Edition. Edited by John M. Carroll and Colin F. Baxter (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 267-288.

⁶⁶ Bill Yenne, *B-52 Stratofortress: The Complete History of the World's Longest Serving and Best Known Bomber*, (New York: Crestline, 2014), 23.

⁶⁷ Norman Polmar, *Strategic Air Command: People, Aircraft, and Missiles* (Annapolis, Maryland: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, Inc., 1979), 2 and 11.

⁶⁸ Henry M. Narducci, *Strategic Air Command and the Alert Program: A Brief History* (Offutt Air Force Base, Neb: Office of the Historian, Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, 1988), ii.

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To achieve our goal of maintaining as much as one-third of our strike forces on continuous alert will not be easy, but it can and must be done. I realize that this will entail personal inconvenience and sacrifices to you and your families. But you can be sure that I will do everything possible to ease this aspect of your alert duties. The success of this system depends on you, and I count on you to insure that the Alert Force will always be ready to achieve its vital objectives.⁶⁹

It is also in this same memorandum that General Power states, "As a member of SAC's Alert Force, you are contributing to an operation which is of the utmost importance to the security and welfare of this nation and its allies in the free world."⁷⁰ This statement alone, shows the emphasis and onus that the United States Air Force was putting on the SAC Mission, SAC personnel and the SAC bases, like the Blytheville Air Force Base during this Cold War period.

At a time just before SAC was announced to be taking over for the Tactical Air Command (TAC) at the Blytheville AFB, General Power made a statement regarding both talking about and also showing the United States' commitment to its air superiority. At that time he stated that "the best deterrent was to convey to the Soviets in clear and deadly terms the military readiness of his command."⁷¹ He would continue to use the show of force as a key deterrent in keeping world peace, as SAC continued to expand onto bases like Blytheville, where they took his words personally through this continued show of force, while on alert.

SAC Comes to Blytheville

By December 1957, the news was coming in that the base would be deactivated as a TAC base by April 1, 1958, and begin its physical conversion so that it would align with the SAC Mission.⁷² Following the deactivation of TAC's 461st Bombardment Wing in April 1958, SAC created the 4229th Air Base Squadron to facilitate the "operational control of the Blytheville Air Force Base,"⁷³ during its conversion.⁷⁴ By January 1958, the estimated time it would take for the conversion of the base from a TAC Mission to a SAC Mission was between 12 to 15 months,⁷⁵ with an estimate of 2,300 personnel being located on the base.⁷⁶ The number of personnel continued to rise with estimates reaching 3,000 personnel⁷⁷, even before the base was fully activated. In 1958, the Air Force asked for \$306 million for construction at installations across the world. The new SAC mission required additional mission-based infrastructure, including an

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 33. For a discussion of the military strategy and necessity for the alert operations, see United States. *Peace-- Is Our Profession: Alert Operations and the Strategic Air Command, 1957-1991*. (Offutt Air Force Base, Neb: Office of the Historian, Headquarters Strategic Air Command, 1992).

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 32.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 4.

⁷² "April 1 New Date for Base Inactivation," *Blytheville Courier News*, December 17, 1957, 1.

⁷³ *Blytheville Air Force Base* (Midland, Texas: Boone Publications, 1973), 7.

⁷⁴ The 4229th Air Base Squadron would "remain as the main occupying organization on the base until July 1, 1959, when the 97th Combat Support Group took over as the occupying force. The 4229th Air Base Squadron was deactivated at midnight June 30, 1959. (*Ibid*.)

⁷⁵ "AF Releases \$10 Million BAFB Funds," *Blytheville Courier News*, January 9, 1958, 1.

⁷⁶ "2,300 Eventual Base Strength," *Blytheville Courier News*, April 8, 1958, 1.

⁷⁷ "SAC Base to Bring 3,000 Men," *Blytheville Courier News*, August 26, 1958, 1.

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Alert Crew Readiness Building, alert apron, support structures, and a weapons storage area.⁷⁸ For Blytheville, the Air Force requested \$5.3 million to convert the base from TAC into a SAC base. Due to the advent of larger aircraft, like the B-52, Congress authorized another \$1.4 Million for airfield paving, instrument landing systems facility, Alert Crew Readiness Building and storage buildings,⁷⁹ including \$777,000 for the Apron operation alert and the readiness crew facility.⁸⁰ This new airfield paving and runway expansion brought the total length of the runway to 11,600' long and 300' wide. The conversion of Blytheville was part of a \$68 million project "to provide alert capability at 15 heavy bomber bases and 15 medium bomber bases."⁸¹ Unlike many of the other bases, Blytheville AFB had already received some upgrades in the 1950s thanks in part to the reactivation of the base for Tactical Air Command (TAC).

The Air Force had already constructed 360 additional family housing units for both officers and enlisted men through the Capehart Housing project that received funding in August 1956, while also building a hospital by 1957.

First Alert

The first alert called at Blytheville Air Force Base, happened even before aircraft arrived and the base had any combat capabilities. Therefore, it is not believed at this time, that the base was on Nuclear Alert, but placed on Personnel Alert in the case of deployment. In the summer of 1958, the U.S. became engaged in Operation Blue Bat, during the Lebanese crisis between July 15 and July 21, 1958. Due to the fact that the base was still incomplete during the transformation from a TAC base to a SAC base, there was no command post constructed yet. Therefore, when alert status was called, a temporary command post was set up in the Base Commander's Office. At the time only the 4229th Air Base Squadron was active on the base doing housekeeping while the base transitioned. The makeshift command post was then manned twenty-four hours a day by four senior officers. At the same time, all personnel were restricted to their place of duty. It is noted that these personnel were later relieved of their duty except for those that were deemed essential personnel or were augmented for Air Police Force duty. This group was then broken down into four teams, with one team on duty at a time and one team on standby readiness. By July 21, 1958, the alert status was cancelled with no alert incidents reported.⁸²

⁷⁸ "SAC will take Blytheville AFB," *The Times* (Shreveport, LA), May 9, 1957, 33.

⁷⁹ \$1.4 Million For Base Here," *Blytheville Courier News*, November 7, 1958, 1.

⁸⁰ United States. *Military Construction Authorization, Fiscal Year 1959: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Military Construction of the Committee on Armed Services, Eighty-Sixth Congress, Second Session, on S. 3756, S. 3863, and H.R. 13015, May 19 Through July 10, 1958* (Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1958), 214.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 209; "Air Force to Spend Big Sum in State," *The Camden News*, November 7, 1959, 4.

⁸² Dewey Mitchell, Technical Sergeant, USAF Historian, *History of the 4229th Air Base Squadron Blytheville Air Force Base, Arkansas: 1 July 1958- 31 July 1958* (Blytheville, Arkansas: Second Air Force Strategic Air Command, 1958), 2-3.

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Construction of the Alert Area

SAC alert facilities were composed of two major parts, a bomber alert facility (Alert Crew Readiness Building) where the crews were located - and the alert apron - where the aircraft were constantly on standby. In November 1958, the Air Force released \$1.4 million for the construction of the alert apron, Alert Crew Readiness Building and other support structures at Blytheville.⁸³ The US Army Corps of Engineers, who oversaw the construction at the base for the Air Force, awarded the contract for the Alert Crew Readiness Building to the firm of Ben White and Sons of Blytheville for \$439,477 on January 26, 1959.⁸⁴

The development of the Alert Crew Readiness Building was in response to the Killian Report, a document completed in 1954 that assessed the nation's ability to deter an attack by the Soviet Union. One suggestion made in the report was to disperse bombers across the nation and have pilots and crewmembers prepared to fly immediately in response to a Soviet attack. Maintaining such readiness required that aircraft be positioned along a runway - ready for takeoff - and that pilots and crew be housed in a nearby facility.⁸⁵

The Strategic Air Command contracted with the architecture firm of Leo A. Daly Company of Omaha, Nebraska, to prepare standard plans for the crew readiness facilities. Founded in 1915 by Leo Anthony Daly, Sr., the architectural firm prospered during World War II after it received numerous government contracts. After the death of Leo Daly, Sr., in 1952, his son took over the firm and directed it to more government contracts. Partly because of its location near SAC's headquarters in Omaha, the Leo A. Daly Company quickly became the "go to" architectural/engineering firm for SAC's building programs. The firm designed:

- the underground command post at Offutt AFB (1957),
- the SAC chapel (1956)
- the nationwide ready alert bomber facilities (1958),
- Minuteman assembly buildings (1960s),
- Concrete Sky hardened aircraft shelters (1970s), and
- Missile maintenance facilities for the Peacekeeper (1980s).

The firm was also active in designing civilian iron works, tool companies, dock facilities, airfields, an atomic energy plant, a computer center for Boeing, and a physics lab for Argonne

⁸³ "\$1.4 million for Base Here," *Blytheville Courier News*, November 7, 1958, A1.

⁸⁴ "City Firm Has Low Base Bid," *Blytheville Courier News*, January 22, 1959, 1.; Dewey Mitchell, Technical Sergeant, USAF Historian, *History of the 4229th Air Base Squadron Blytheville Air Force Base, Arkansas: 1-31 January 1959* (Blytheville, Arkansas: Second Air Force Strategic Air Command, 1958), 9.

⁸⁵ Karen Lewis, Katherine Roxlau, Lori E. Rhodes, Paul Boyer, Joseph S. Murphey. *A Systematic Study of Air Combat Command Cold War Materiel Culture, Volume I: Historic Context and Methodology for Assessment*, 32.

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National Laboratory.⁸⁶

SAC instructed Leo A. Daly to design three standardized crew readiness facilities for the alert areas: 18,000 square feet (70 men); 22,500 square feet (100 men); and, 31,000 square feet (150 men).⁸⁷ By mid-1959, SAC had 64 Alert Crew Readiness Buildings under construction, and two additional Alert Crew Readiness Buildings were in design (Ramey and R.I. Bong), with a 67th cancelled for SAC headquarters at Offutt.

The forty-five, 70-men crew readiness facilities were located at:

1. Altus (Oklahoma);
2. Amarillo (Texas);
3. Barksdale (Louisiana);
4. Beale (California);
5. Bergstrom (Texas);
6. Biggs (Texas);
7. **Blytheville (Arkansas);**
8. Carswell (Texas);
9. Castle (California);
10. Clinton-Sherman (Oklahoma);
11. Columbus (Mississippi);
12. Dow (Maine);
13. Dover (Delaware);
14. Eglin (Florida);
15. Ellsworth (South Dakota);
16. Fairchild (Washington);
17. Glasgow (Montana);
18. Grand Forks (North Dakota);
19. Griffiss (New York);
20. Kinross (Michigan);
21. K.I. Sawyer (Michigan);
22. Larson (Washington);
23. Loring (Maine);
24. Mather (California);
25. McChord (Washington);
26. McGuire (New Jersey);
27. Minot (North Dakota);
28. Otis (Massachusetts);

⁸⁶ Karen Van Citters, "Mountain Home Air Force Base, Read Alert Facility (Building 291). HABS No. ID-118-E (2013), 2; Steve Jordon, "Omaha-Area Leo Daly Projects," *Omaha World Herald*, October 12, 2015. http://www.omaha.com/money/in-its-th-year-leo-a-daly-architectural-firm-is/article_fl a6b2f6-744c-59b8-b842-e2cba88eb709.html.

⁸⁷ Weitze, *Cold War Infrastructure for Strategic Air Command: The Bomber Mission*, 117.

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29. Ramey (Puerto Rico);
30. Robins (Georgia);
31. Schilling (Kansas);
32. Seymour-Johnson (South Carolina);
33. Sheppard (Texas);
34. Travis (California);
35. Turner (Georgia);
36. Walker (New Mexico);
37. Westover (Massachusetts);
38. Wright-Patterson (Ohio);
39. Wurtsmith (Michigan);
40. Goose Bay (RCAF)(Labrador);
41. Ernest Harmon (RCAF)(Newfoundland);
42. Cold Lake Royal Canadian Air Force Station (RCAF)(Canada);
43. Churchill (RCAF, Canada);
44. Namao (RCAF, Canada); and
45. Frobisher Airport (RCAF, Canada).⁸⁸

The ten 100-man crew readiness facilities were located at:

1. Chennault (Louisiana);
2. Clinton County (Ohio);
3. Davis-Monthan (Arizona);
4. Dyess (Texas);
5. Homestead (Florida);
6. Little Rock (Arkansas);
7. MacDill (Florida);
8. March(California);
9. McCoy(Florida); and
10. Selfridge (Michigan)

And the eleven 150-man facilities were located at:

1. Bunker Hill (Indiana);
2. Forbes (Kansas);
3. Hunter (Georgia);
4. Lincoln (Nebraska);
5. Lockbourne (Ohio);
6. Malmstrom (Montana);
7. Mountain Home (Idaho);
8. Pease (New Hampshire);

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 120-122.

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9. Plattsburgh (New York);
10. R.I. Bong (Wisconsin); and
11. Whiteman (Missouri)

Alert Apron

In the early 1950s, SAC officials studied different flight line configurations to find the best possible design to facilitate the quickest launching of bombers. By 1957, two major apron configurations were developed: the mass rectangular apron and the "stub" parking for individual planes. Two types of stub aprons were developed and used. One of the styles had stubs at a 90-degree angle from the taxiway, and the other was the herringbone design (also known as - Christmas tree). The stub style aprons were used in early SAC base layouts. As the Air Force continued to strive for faster alert takeoffs they found that the stub style apron actually provided a slower response time than some of the other options like the Christmas Tree, or Herringbone design. The Christmas tree, or Herringbone, style apron became the most recognized SAC alert apron, while also providing for faster takeoffs, when combined with the close location of the Alert Crew Readiness Building, although the 90-degree stub style did remain at some bases.⁸⁹

Construction of the Weapons Storage and Alert Area

Some of the early construction projects in the potential historic area, included a contract for Ordinance Storage Facilities. This contract was let to Peterson, Garbi, and Joseph, Inc., out of North Little Rock, for \$634, 000.⁹⁰ In addition to this early construction contract and the deployment of the B-52s to the base, the Air Force also authorized the deployment of the Hound Dog and the Quail air-to-surface missiles to Blytheville AFB between January⁹¹ and April 1959.⁹² The Hound Dog Missile was an "air-launched supersonic missile designed to destroy heavily defended ground targets,"⁹³ while the Quail Missile was a decoy missile meant to confuse enemy radars into thinking that additional bombers were approaching, thus degrading an enemies air-defense- system. The two weapon systems were the precursor to the modern cruise missile and offered a standoff weapon that the US did not have prior to this point in time. In 1959, the Air Force requested \$29.6 million to construct "facilities for the Hound Dog and the Quail...to provide greater penetration capability" at SAC bases, including \$650,000 to build storage facilities for the missiles at Blytheville AFB.⁹⁴ In September 1959, the US Army Corps

⁸⁹ Weitze, *Cold War Infrastructure for Strategic Air Command: The Bomber Mission*, 109.

⁹⁰ Mitchell, June 1958, 13.

⁹¹ "Hound Dog, Quail Will Home at BAFB," *Blytheville Courier News*, January 31, 1959, 1.

⁹² "Missile Units for Base OK'd," *The Blytheville Courier News*, April 11, 1959, 1.

⁹³ "GAM-77/AGM-28 Hound Dog Missile," <http://www.boeing.com/history/products/gam-77-agm-28-hound-dog-missile.page>.

⁹⁴ United States. *Military and Naval Construction. Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, Eighty-Fifth Congress, Second Session, Pursuant to H.R. 12360 and H.R. 13015, Bills to Authorize Certain Construction at Military Installations, and for Other Purposes.* ([Washington]: [U.S. Govt. Print. Off.], 1958), 7449; "Hound Dog, Quail will home at BAFB," *The Courier News*, January 31, 1959, 1.

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of Engineers contracted with Ben White and Sons to build storage facilities for the Hound Dog and the Quail, including a 33,000 square foot, one-story steel structure and two small one-story masonry buildings for \$685,752. The work was to be completed in 225 days.⁹⁵

Localized storage of nuclear weapons was a critical element to SAC's nuclear war fighting ability and part of the dispersed alert force in the late 1950s and 1960s. In the 1940s and early 1950s, the US used centralized Q Areas⁹⁶ that maintained nuclear weapons under the supervision of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). These were highly secure installations where the elements of the nuclear weapons would be maintained and assembled before being dispersed to SAC bases.⁹⁷ Furthermore, since the AEC was civilian controlled, this allowed the civilian authorities to maintain some control over the nuclear arsenal. As the size of the nuclear weapons decreased, and they required less maintenance, the weapons could be dispersed to small weapons storage areas on the SAC bases allowing for quicker loading of weapons and the creation of more targets for the Soviet forces across the United States and ensuring the protection of a sizable retaliatory force. The commander of the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces in the 1950s and 1960s, Marshal N. Krylov, declared that the primary target for Soviet weapons would have been the enemy's delivery systems, weapons storage, and fabrication sites.⁹⁸

Unlike the Q Areas, which were constructed to hold large amounts of nuclear weaponry (atomic and thermonuclear) and designed to store the first generation of nuclear weapons, weapons storage areas were smaller complexes located at the bomber base and used to store primarily sealed-pit or second generation nuclear weapons that had been developed in the late-1950s. As with Q Areas, weapons storage areas have many of the same elements, including a security fence and gate, bermed storage igloos, and aboveground maintenance buildings. Since the weapon storage areas store sealed-pit weapons, however, they do not need "A" or "C" structures, or Type I and Type 2 plants for storage and assembly of the nuclear weapons that are elements of Q Areas. A structure, however, was present at the weapons storage area for inspection of the weapons.⁹⁹

The construction at the base was very fast after a slow start due to winter. Once the Crew Readiness Facility contract was let on January 36, 1959, the contractor began to layout the building by driving test piling into the ground starting February 5, 1959. No big progress was been made by the end of February 1959, due to poor construction weather, except for the

⁹⁵ "Missile Facility Contract Let," *The Courier News*, September 2, 1959, 1.

⁹⁶ A "Q" area represented the highest security level available during the Cold War in part because the mission of the "Q" area was to house nuclear weapon.

⁹⁷ For a discussion of Q Areas see, Bilderback, Daniel R. and Michael S. Binder. *Early DoD-Sited Nuclear Warhead Infrastructure*. Columbia, South Carolina: Department of History, University of South Carolina and MILSITE RECON, Dallas, for the Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program, May 1999

⁹⁸ Lee 1986:86

⁹⁹ Weitze, *Cold War Infrastructure for Strategic Air Command: The Bomber Mission*, 97-98.

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layout.¹⁰⁰ By September 1959, Jerry Hord, the US Army Corps of Engineers resident engineer reported the progress as:

The Alert taxiway has been paved from its juncture with the primary runway to a point about 1,735 to the east...and a total of 1,100 feet to the east end of the taxi way has been completed...Ben White and Sons are nearing the halfway point on a readiness crew building. ...ordinance and landing aid facilities have been finished up.¹⁰¹

In December 1959, the Corps of Engineers reported that the main runway was completed, and the readiness crew building and hound Dog and Quail facilities were still underway.¹⁰²

While construction continued at the base, the Air Force deployed the 97th Bomb Wing from Biggs AFB, Texas, to Blytheville. On December 9, 1959, Colonel Ralph Jenkins landed the first B-52, aircraft number 80-219, at Blytheville AFB while on a “routine acceptance flight from the Boeing plant in Wichita, Kansas.”¹⁰³ Col Jenkins was the first commander of the 97th Bomb Wing at Blytheville and would end up serving the longest stint of any 97th BW commander at BAFB. He served five years in total from 1959-1964.¹⁰⁴ He would also oversee the arrival of the first KC-135 aircraft with the 914th Air Refueling Squadron and the initial establishment of the 42nd Air Division.¹⁰⁵ On January 11, 1960, the first B-52 landed at Blytheville, and early the next month, over 20,000 visitors attended the reopening of the base.¹⁰⁶ The 97th Bomb Wings flew the B-52G. The first plane was named “The City of Blytheville” and was assigned to the 340th Bomb Squadron. This was to be the only variant of the B-52 to be stationed at the base for the rest of its existence. By May 17, 1960, all 15 of the B-52Gs had arrived at Blytheville AFB, completing the 340th Bomb Squadron with a full complement of bombers. With the full complements of aircraft at their disposal, it is noted that the 97th Bomb Wing officially assumed SAC alert status at Blytheville in July 1960.¹⁰⁷ By September 27, 1960, the 97th Bomb Wing was the first wing in the 2nd Air Force to receive the GAM-77 “Hound Dog” Missile and the addition of the GAM-72 “Quail” Missile added to the arsenal in January 1961. Both of these missiles would remain in

¹⁰⁰ Mitchell, January 1959, 10.

¹⁰¹ “Missouri in No Hurry on Route 55; Bog Base Runway Finished,” *Blytheville Courier News*, September 2, 1959, 6.

¹⁰² “BAFB Work is Approved,” *Blytheville Courier News*, December 11, 1959, 1.

¹⁰³ “New AF Bomber Touches Down at Airbase,” *Blytheville Courier News*, December 10, 1959, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Col. Ralph C. Jenkins retired from the United States Air Force in August 1968. Ralph Jenkins passed away May 10, 2017. (“Obituaries,” *The Seattle Times*, May 21, 2017.)

¹⁰⁵ The 914th Air Refueling Squadron was active at the Blytheville Air Force Base until March 15, 1964, when the 97th Air Refueling Squadron was transferred back to the 97th Bomb Wing. At that time the 914th Air Refueling Squadron was inactivated. (SSgt. Laura M. McGimpsey, *97th Bombardment Wing: Blytheville Air Force Base, Arkansas* (Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, 1985), vii.

¹⁰⁶ “First Stratofortress bomber lands at Blytheville AFB,” *Arkansas Gazette*, January 12, 1960, B1; “Reopening of Blytheville AFB draws 20,000 visitors,” *Arkansas Gazette*, February 2, 1960, A1.

¹⁰⁷ Base Historian, Blytheville Air Force Base, Arkansas: 1954-1966 (Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, n.a.), 3, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office, Base History.

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operation as part of the B-52G's bomb load as well as being stored in the Weapons Storage area in their own designated multi-cubicles.¹⁰⁸

In addition to the B-52s, the USAF assigned the KC-135A refueling aircraft to the 914th Air Refueling Squadron to support the bombers. It is noted that at the time of the final bombers arrival in May 1960, the base was still awaiting ten KC135 jet tankers which would allow for air-to-air refueling. This problem was alleviated early in 1962 when the 914th Air Refueling Wing received its first KC-135 tanker. Deliveries were complete by the middle of 1962 and the 914th was at full operational strength. During 1960-1961, aircraft from Blytheville AFB participated in OPERATION CHROME DOME. OPERATION CHROME DOME was the operational mission of SAC that kept B-52 aircraft on continuous airborne nuclear alert as part of the United States global policy of nuclear deterrence.¹⁰⁹ An article about the Alert Crew Readiness Building and its crewmembers appeared in the *Blytheville Courier* on October 8, 1960, and described very well the life and sacrifice that those in the Crew Readiness center dealt with on a daily basis. The article states:

They call it the "shack" and the "jail," Col. Ralph Jenkins smiled from behind a big cigar and a bigger desk, "but it's pretty good living out there."

The Boss of the Blytheville Air Force Base's 97th Bombardment Wing had reference to the Alert Crew Readiness Facility - that mound - built, multi- mouthed structure which sits not far from another mound, also built by and for Warriors - the old Chicksaw [*sic*] Indian burial¹¹⁰ mound, which is just off the Air Base highway.

Inside the modern concrete and steel bunker live BAFB crews... all the time. That is not all the men all the time, but some air crews are forever in there, their planes parked outside, waiting for the bell to ring.¹¹¹

It rings about once each 24 hours. They never know when. They scramble (and scramble hard...one man blasted through a plate-glass door recently getting to his plane) out the building and into the closely guarded airplanes when the klaxon goes off.... Not all the comforts of home, of course, but at that Jenkins comments "it beats the old days when they had us hopping all over the world.

"Then you sometimes were away from homes for 60 days or more at a time."

The price of peace has never been cheap.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ 97th Wing Historian, *Chronology of the 97th Wing and Eaker AFB, Arkansas 1940- 1992* Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, 1992), 17, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office, Base History.

¹⁰⁹ Robinson, Bill. "A Hard Day's Night." *Air & Space Magazine*, September 2006.
<http://www.airspacemag.com/military-aviation/a-hard-days-night-10134983/>

¹¹⁰ Chickasawba Mound.

¹¹¹ Correct name is not bell, but Klaxon.

¹¹² "BAFB Crewmen Await Klaxon As They Guard World's Peace," *Blytheville Courier News*, October 8, 1960, n.p.

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The cost to the families, that had to adjust to life “on alert,” was big for both the airmen and their families. While on Alert, the wives had to become both mom and dad. The problems that arose came from either boredom or over work. Those without children often found themselves on near the boredom side of the spectrum due to loneliness, while those with children often found themselves at the other end of the spectrum fighting not having enough time. Several wives with children described the lack of a husband, while on alert, as chaotic due to running children to after school activities, while also being concerned about smaller children becoming sick.¹¹³ These are not new problems for any family, but only become more compounded when the other parent is unable to get away and help with the children due to being on high nuclear alert. This problem was somewhat alleviated in 1979-1980 when the base built a Family Visitation center located just outside of the east entrance gate of the alert area. Bob Walls states that the Family Visitation center was there when he arrived in 1980. Still, instances involving separated families like this were not uncommon during the Cold War, it was only shortly after the Blytheville Alert Center was completed and had a full complement of aircraft that an Alert situation arose. That instance became known as the Cuban Missile Crisis and Blytheville was not immune to the ramifications of this global standoff, as Blytheville Air Force Base was put on full alert. Still even before going on alert during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the 97th Bomb Wing would continually fly a series of long-range daily missions in accordance with SAC requirements to maintain an airborne strike capabilities in forward areas, to be ready for just such an occasion.¹¹⁴

Blytheville AFB and the Cuban Missile Crisis

By October 22, 1962, the Soviet Union and the United States faced one of the most dangerous crises of the Cold War. It is during this time, that United States spy planes identified Soviet nuclear missile sites in Cuba. The US felt it could not allow the Soviet Union to deploy weapons that close to the United States mainland, and began a series of diplomatic and military actions to force the Soviets to remove the weapons.¹¹⁵ Even prior to President John F Kennedy’s speech admonishing the presence of Soviet built ballistic missiles in Cuba, “SAC had [already] begun to intensify its readiness posture.”¹¹⁶ Like most of the United States military forces, the units at Blytheville AFB were placed on 24 hour alert duty, with all previous leave cancelled. The Alert Crews were not unprepared for the standoff that would eventually happen in late October 1962, because only a week before escalation of tensions near Cuba, the Blytheville Air Force Base’s B-52s were participating in Operation Sky Shield.¹¹⁷ Their training was soon put to use as tensions

¹¹³ “Air Crews’ Families Learn to Adjust To ‘Alert Separations,’” *Blytheville Courier News*, April 14, 1961, 2.

¹¹⁴ Base Historian, Blytheville Air Force Base, Arkansas: 1954-1966 (Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, n.a.), 3, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office, Base History.

¹¹⁵ See Allison, Graham T., and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. (New York [u.a.]: Longman, 2010).

¹¹⁶ Narducci, 11.

¹¹⁷ Operation Sky Shield was a training exercise between NORAD and SAC that allowed for the testing of defensive measures in the case of a Soviet air attack. (“Base’s B52’s In Sky Shield,” *Blytheville Courier News*, October 17, 1961, 1.

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between the USSR and US escalated to a point where US placed its military readiness at DEFCON III; and the next day raised the alert to DEFCON II, one step away from war. To meet this level of readiness, the 97th BW maintained two bombers on airborne alert at all times. A typical airborne alert consisted of a mission briefing held a week out from takeoff. Due to the hastiness of the situation, briefings were required much closer to takeoff. In order to understand what the daily regime of an Alert Crew looked like while operating under situations like DEFCON II, It is best described in a *Time* magazine article that ...

On take-off day other crews run through the three-hour preflight checks on the alert bomber to lessen the fatigue of the crew going on duty. Take-offs are scheduled for around 10:00 am to allow for a full night's sleep....On the morning of [the] flight, the airplane commander passwords his way through a series of guards until he arrives at intelligence headquarters. There he picks up his Combat Mission Folder, which is really a box containing his charts and maps and the arming devices for the bombs ("blivits") that are secured in the airplane's bomb bay. Together, pilot, and intelligence officer unlock the orange box, take an inventory, [and] locks it up again. The pilot signs for it and the box is hauled to his plane, where it is chained to a post in the cockpit.¹¹⁸

When dealing with the briefing reports and assignments, much of this information is obtained in the briefing room located with the Alert Crew Readiness Building. While briefing happened within the building the repetitive nature of training took part in the air and out on the Alert Pad. This constant repetitive training become all the more important while handling nuclear tipped missiles. Therefore, a series of stipulations is set for alert crews when handling munitions. The *Time* article also explains the necessities of handling such weaponry by stating that...

To guard against accidental triggering of H-Bomb war, the SAC men are schooled in a complicated, checks-and-balances, fail-safe system that is not only foolproof, but 'damn foolproof.'.... No one crew member can do it alone; for each man who arms the bomb regulations require that another must be in attendance and watching closely. Knobs must be turned, safety seals broken, keys inserted and turned to close a series of detonator circuits embedded in the TNT that activates the nuclear core on impact.¹¹⁹

These types of alert operations take training to be able to master. Training and briefings held inside and outside of the Alert Crew Readiness Building allowed the crew to be confident in executing the mission once they were put on high alert during this tense time period. The entire operational force was later put on high alert with all personnel on a heightened state of alert readiness, regardless of whether they were assigned to alert duty at the Alert Crew Readiness Center. Every member of SAC knew that they could be called into action and were ready to be called upon if the Klaxon would go off. One bomber was armed with nuclear weapons and decoy missiles¹²⁰ and the other was armed with both conventional and nuclear munitions ensuring the Wing is able to respond to any contingency. The 97th Bomb Wing and the 914th Air Refueling Wing also deployed tankers to Zaragoza, Spain, in support of the bombers flying airborne alert.

¹¹⁸ SAC's Deadly Daily Dozen: The Airborne Alert Provides a Sure Reply to Russian Missiles, *Time*, March 17, 1961, 19.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Probably the Quail Decoy.

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Over the next couple of weeks, Kennedy and Khrushchev negotiated a peaceful end to the crisis. It is noted that between October 23 and November 21, 1962, there was a large increase in alert comments during this period.¹²¹ By November 20, 1962, the wing returned to a peacetime posture, and the tension surrounding the Alert Crew Readiness Building and the personnel inside eased for the time being. It was at this time that the 97th Bomb Wing was awarded its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its part in the international crisis. It is noted in the 97th Bomb Wing History, written by the Wing Historian SSgt Laura M. McGimpsey, that the 97th Bomb Wing received this award due to its 100 percent effectiveness during the Cuban Missile Crisis.¹²² It is situations like this that show the quick action of the alert force stationed at the Blytheville Air Force Base, while also illustrating the quick reaction time afforded to them by the Alert Crew Readiness Building, due to its close proximity to the Alert pad.

Blytheville AFB and the Vietnam War

In October 1964, the 914th Air Refueling Wing was replaced on the base by the 97th Air Refueling Wing; the new unit absorbed all of the previous unit's personnel and equipment. In December 1964, B-52s from Blytheville, who were normally on alert duty, were deployed to Vietnam for use in conventional bombing runs, rather than nuclear deterrence. For a short period of time, it was speculated that between April and September 1969, the 97th was put on a "freeze" due to a possible reassignment to the Tactical Air Command. The decision was finally made by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, to keep the 97th Bomb Wing as part of SAC on September 27, 1969.¹²³ With the designation reaffirmed, the remaining B-52s at Blytheville AFB would their deterrence mission, on strategic alert.¹²⁴

By the 1970s, the Nixon administration was looking to end the war in Vietnam. In the spring and summer of 1972 the US military deployed massive amounts of aircraft to Southeast Asia to counter the North Vietnamese's Nguyen Hue Offensive (Easter Offensive). This offensive was designed to destroy the South Vietnamese Army and to strengthen the North's position at the Paris Peace Talks. To support the South Vietnamese Army, the US conducted OPERATION BULLET SHOT¹²⁵, to quickly deploy additional aircraft to the theater to provide air support. In

¹²¹ Base Historian, Blytheville Air Force Base, Arkansas: 1954-1966 (Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, n.a.), 4, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office, Base History.

¹²² McGimpsey, vii.

¹²³ 97th Wing Historian, *Chronology of the 97th Wing and Eaker AFB, Arkansas 1940- 1992* Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, 1992), 17, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office, Base History.

¹²⁴ On May 15, 1956, the Air Force Base and the City of Blytheville held a celebration in which they held a public burning of the last bonds on the \$102,350.50 that they took out to purchase the 102 acres in 1952 to extend the runways. (Base Historian, Blytheville Air Force Base, Arkansas: 1954-1966 (Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, n.a.), 4, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office, Base History.)

¹²⁵ From 1965 to early 1972, SAC B-52 crewmembers would deploy as intact crews to fly the B-52D model exclusively in support of Operation Arc Light. They would deploy on a 179 day temporary duty Yonder (TDY) that

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April and May 1972, SAC deployed an additional 124 B-52s to Andersen AFB bringing the total number of B-52s to 209. One of the units deployed was the 340th Bomb Squadron, and all of the wing's aircraft and approximately 800 wing personnel were temporarily assigned to bases in Southeast Asia, Europe, and Alaska.¹²⁶

Later that year, President Richard Nixon ordered another round of strategic bombing attacks, known as LINEBACKER II, using aircraft based at Andersen AFB, on Hanoi and Haiphong in response to North Vietnam's exit from peace talks in Paris. Nixon told Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "this is your chance to win this war, and if you don't, I'll consider you responsible."¹²⁷

December 18, 1972, was the first night of OPERATION LINEBACKER II, with 129 B-52s striking target complexes in North Vietnam. The B-52 bombing campaign was conducted continuously, with bombers landing at Andersen AFB as the next wave of bombers took off. Charcoal 01 was the first B-52 shot down in the operation and was from Blytheville AFB. Of the six crewmembers aboard, three were killed in action and the other three became prisoners of war.¹²⁸ On the third night of OPERATION LINEBACKER II two B-52s with Blytheville AFB crewmembers aboard were shot down. Call sign Olive 01 was shot down with Lt. Col. Keith Heggen, the Deputy Airborne Commander for that night and Tan 03 another Blytheville B-52 was shot down. Of the 7 crewmembers from Blytheville aboard the two aircraft, there was only one survivor, Gunner James Lollar, who became a Prisoner of War and was repatriated in March

typically saw as little as a month at their home base between TDY's. They would deploy from all B-52 bases regardless of which model of B-52 was stationed at that base. If the crew came from a G or H model B-52 base, they would first attend "D" difference training at Carswell AFB in Fort Worth, Texas. The purpose of the 179 day TDY was that if the deployment lasted 180 days or longer, this would constitute a permanent change of station. To circumvent this, the USAF shortened the TDY by one day, thus not constituting a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) for the service member. Individual crews would deploy to Utapao Royall Thai Navy Base (RTNB) Thailand, Andersen AFB Guam, and Kadena AFB Japan, leaving behind their aircraft and stateside bases which would remain on ground alert in support of the Cold War. In 1972, Operation Bullet Shot deployed the entire B-52G force to Andersen AFB Guam. Previous to this, B-52G models had not supported the war effort in Vietnam. This marked the first time that crews would deploy as entire squadrons and wings in support of the war effort in Vietnam. They, for the first time, would fly their aircraft from their CONUS bases directly to their specific deployment bases in Southeast Asia. Only the B-52H force was left behind in the CONUS to sit nuclear alert. The B-52 crews returned to Blytheville in October of 1973. (CONUS= lower 48 states).

¹²⁶ Earl Tilford, *What the Air Force Did in Vietnam and Why* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1991), 224; Salo, Edward. "Andersen Air Force Base, North Field, Pati Point, Yigo, Guam, GU." WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA.

<http://cdn.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/gu/gu0000/gu0017/data/gu0017data.pdf>.

¹²⁷ Richard Nixon quoted in Richard C. Nalty, ed., *Winged Shield, Winged Sword: A History of the United States Air Force, Volume II*, 325. For an overview of Linebacker II, see James R. McCarthy, George B. Allison, and Robert E. Rayfield. *Linebacker II: A View from the Rock* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, U.S. Air Force, 1985); Salo, Edward. "Andersen Air Force Base, North Field, Pati Point, Yigo, Guam, GU." WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA.

<http://cdn.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/gu/gu0000/gu0017/data/gu0017data.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Lt. Col. Donald Rissi, Capt. Robert Thomas and MSgt Walter Ferguson are KIA and are listed on the memorial located on base.

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of 1973. Capt. Randall Craddock, Capt. George Lockhart, Maj. Bobby Kirby, 1Lt. Charles Darr, and Capt. Ronald Perry were listed as killed in action. Their names were listed on the memorial located in front of the Base Hospital at the former Blytheville Air Force Base.

OPERATION LINEBACKER II continued until late December when North Vietnam formally agreed to resume talks and reach an agreement.¹²⁹ Blytheville AFB based crews would continue to rotate into Southeast Asia for several more months. In January 1973, Crew B-04 of the 340th Bomb MS had the distinction of flying the final B-52 combat mission over Vietnam. In August 1973, Crew E-21 had the distinction of flying the last B-52 combat mission of the Vietnam War over a target in Cambodia. This was the last mission flown by any aircraft of the United States in support of the Vietnam War. The first three B-52s returned to Blytheville from Southeast Asia on September 30, 1973.¹³⁰

Still, 1973 was not without its potential for other problems. In October 1973, the Blytheville Air Force Base and the personnel inside the Alert Crew Readiness Building were put on military alert after the United States was notified that the Soviet Union might send troops to the Middle East to enforce a cease fire.¹³¹ This exercise of military might came about during what was known as The Yom Kippur War. Egypt and Syria engaged in a surprise attack on Israel. Due to the actions of the Israeli soldiers during this cease fire, the Soviet Union threatened to send in troops to rescue their Egyptian allies.¹³² This action to try to rescue the Egyptian troops caused the United States to elevate the Military Alert System to Stage 3 putting many if not all of the SAC bases on full alert.

Continued Nuclear Alert at Blytheville

While the war in Vietnam showed that strategic bombers were still necessary for conventional war, the nuclear deterrent mission remained the primary mission at Blytheville AFB. While Nixon worked to bring about a level of détente with the Soviets, the USAF still maintained its nuclear arsenal. The weaponry alone during this period needed its own crew to maintain them, so that in the case of alert status the weaponry would be in perfect order for deployment. This crew would be one of the main operational forces maintaining and monitoring the weapon storage area that was essential to the work of the SAC alert crews. This crew would receive high recognition in March 1966, as it was the recipient of the “Best in SAC” Trophy for their

¹²⁹ Salo, Edward. “Andersen Air Force Base, North Field, Pati Point, Yigo, Guam, GU.” WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA.

<http://cdn.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/gu/gu0000/gu0017/data/gu0017data.pdf>.

¹³⁰ 97th Wing Historian, *Chronology of the 97th Wing and Eaker AFB, Arkansas 1940- 1992* Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, 1992), 17, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office, Base History.

¹³¹ Fred S. Hoffman, “U.S. Military Put on Alert” *Blytheville Courier News*, October 25, 1973, 1.

¹³² Barry Schweid, “Alert Responds to ‘Brutal Note,’” *Blytheville Courier News*, October 25, 1973, 1.

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excellent work during 1965.¹³³ In August 1972, the USAF established the 97th Munitions Maintenance Squadron at Blytheville AFB to oversee the maintenance and upkeep of the wing's various munitions ranging from conventional practice weapons to nuclear bombs and missiles. In order to maintain a very secure area around the Alert Crew Readiness Building, Alert Pad and Weapon Storage Area, the Blytheville Air Force Base updated its security fence. The new saferamp security tower helped complement new sensors that were placed around the perimeter fence that enclosed both the weapons storage area and Alert Area. The sensors placed around the fence were added to help "detect any intruders attempting to cross the perimeter."¹³⁴ These sensors were an attempt to limit the number of patrol officers that would have to walk the fence line at any given point in time. Though the sensors were installed, foot patrols were still conducted in these areas.

Two years later, the Air Force deployed the new Short Range Attack Missile (SRAM) to the B-52s at the base. The SRAM was launched by the bomber, and could strike targets in advance of the bomber by approximately 100 miles, thus softening enemy defenses and affording the bomber a greater chance of survivability. The SRAMs were stored in the existing facilities at the Weapons Storage Area.

The next year, the base's B-52s received upgrades to their targeting systems with a new electro-optical viewing system and low light TV viewing system. This would enhance low level bombing accuracy. The Air Force eventually retired the AGM-78 Hound Dog and ADM-20 Quail decoy missiles at Blytheville AFB in 1978. Even with many of the changes taking place throughout the Alert and the Weapons Storage Areas, the Alert Crew Readiness Building and its staff continued to maintain their ground alert status as a deterrent to Soviet attacks on the United States.

Blytheville AFB and the new Cold War

With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, the nation turned to a more aggressive military buildup. Suspicious that the Soviet Union was not honoring the terms of the Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty (SALT), President Reagan suspended the limitations and ordered a massive military buildup, disrupting the delicate balance that the two nations had achieved. Such maneuvers sought to exhaust the Soviet Union economically. In addition to this tactic, Reagan advocated an extreme defense strategy that entailed the destruction of incoming nuclear weapons.¹³⁵

Blytheville AFB continued to serve as an important part of SAC's mission. Brig. General Rudolph Wacker, commander of SAC's 42nd Air Division described the importance of the base

¹³³ Base Historian, Blytheville Air Force Base, Arkansas: 1954-1966 (Blytheville, Arkansas: United States Air Force, n.a.), 5, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority, Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority Office, Base History.

¹³⁴ Sensors Ease Base Fence Patrol," *Blytheville Courier News*, August 28, 1973, 10.

¹³⁵ Lewis and Roxlau 1995:47- 51

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as "Blytheville is in the right place for a strategic unit. The geography is great because of time limitations. We're well inland and have warning time. Therefore, we could survive better."¹³⁶ The 1984 Reagan defense budget called for "Blytheville Air Force Base ... to receive over \$9 million for a 'major expansion'."¹³⁷ The budget called for the construction of a new aircraft parking area for \$3.5 million, as well as "a planned alert crew facility [that] would be built at a cost of \$1.6 million. 'This will include improving the current alert facility,' ... [as well as] two new buildings for the alert crews are slated, as is a recreation area."¹³⁸ The other portion of the appropriation for the Blytheville Air Force Base, \$1.8 million, would help finance the construction of two additional storage "igloos," for Air Launched Cruise Missiles.¹³⁹

As part of this buildup of nuclear and conventional forces, the Air Force introduced in 1984 the new AGM-86B Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM). This missile greatly enhances the B-52's ability to survive in the battle area. The B-52 can carry up to 20 of these new missiles and can launch them as far away as 1000 miles from the intended target. Brig General Wacker commented that Blytheville AFB was the fifth SAC base to get the new weapon.¹⁴⁰ In 1984, the 97th BW upgraded its B-52s to carry the new ALCM.

Along with updating the bombers, the Air Force had to update the weapons storage area. The Air Force spent approximately \$14.5 million for upgrading the weapons storage facilities at the base. Castle Construction Co. of Montgomery, Alabama, received the contract to build the new facilities that were designed by the Omaha District of the US Army Corps of Engineers. The new weapons storage area buildings included:

new administration, maintenance and data processing facilities, a new pump house new sewage lagoon, new water storage tank, new roads and parking areas, a new Munitions Maintenance Squadron-Aerospace Ground Equipment (MMS-AGE) shop, a new unarmed weapons storage building, eight new ammunition storage igloos, security fencing and *turfing* [sic] around the construction areas.¹⁴¹

Additionally, the new Integrated Maintenance Facility, which took 18 months to build, was completed in November 1983.¹⁴² In November 1984, the Air Force announced that the ALCM were operational at Blytheville AFB.¹⁴³

4. ¹³⁶ Clarke Canfield, "Military Muscle Deemed Vital," *The Blytheville Courier News*, September 18, 1981,

¹³⁷ "BAFB Due Big Bucks," *Blytheville Courier*, February 3, 1983, A1.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

4. ¹⁴⁰ Clarke Canfield, "Military Muscle Deemed Vital," *The Blytheville Courier News*, September 18, 1981,

¹⁴¹ Clarke Canfield, "ACLMs Brighten Up Job Picture," *The Courier Blytheville News*, February 25, 1982,

1.

¹⁴² Susan Caslin, "ALCMs Beefing Nation's Defense," *The Courier News*, August 21, 1984, 1.

¹⁴³ "Nuclear-tipped cruise missiles now based at Blytheville," *Arkansas Gazette*, November 22, 1984, A25.

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Architectural historian Karen Weitze argued that the new weapons systems of the middle 1970s and middle 1980s, including the SRAM (1972-1974) and air-launched cruise (ALCM) deployments, caused many of those alert aprons still useable for bombers to undergo major alterations. Also she stated "SAC constructed additional ancillary buildings at the perimeter of the alert apron, inclusive of power station, surveillance tower, a reserve fire team and security structure, and family visitation quarters."¹⁴⁴

As the new weapons were put on line, the Air Force also looked to renovate and expand the alert facility at Blytheville. The renovations were designed to house the pilots for the bombers and the tankers in a single building. Before the bombers were housed at the alert apron, and the tanker crews were located at the other side of the base.¹⁴⁵

On May 27, 1985, the Army Corps of Engineers in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and A/E Southwest Inc. Architects/ Engineers of Little Rock, Arkansas, developed the plans for the major renovations to the Alert Facility. Ben M. White Company of Blytheville again received the contract to construct an 11,275 square foot, two-story wing adding sleeping quarters, an administrative area, and exercise area.¹⁴⁶ In August 1987, the \$1.7 million dollar renovation work was finally completed. The dedication ceremony was led by Congressman Bill Alexander and also in attendance were 42nd Air Division Commander Brig. Gen. David Peterson, and 97th Bomb Wing Commander Col. Bruce Smith.¹⁴⁷ The expansion of the alert facility allowed crewmembers, who previously slept three to a room, to now have single occupancy rooms. The facility contained, "a briefing room, library, recreation room, exercise room, dining room and other amenities."¹⁴⁸ Captain Mike Connelly commented that, "Privacy is very important. This (renovated facility) has made life a lot nicer."¹⁴⁹

Another interesting point of the renovations was that female tanker crewmembers could be housed in the facility. This was a break from typical military protocol at the time. As an example, women were not allowed to serve on bomber crews, they were only allowed to serve on tanker crews since they were not combat aircraft. Still, base operations only allowed one or two women to be on alert at any given time.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ Weitze, *Cold War Infrastructure for Strategic Air Command: The Bomber Mission*, 123.

¹⁴⁵ This statement is still widely debated. Some assert the addition was made to allow for both the bombers and tanker crews to live under one roof. Interviews with crew during this period of time and photo documentation prove that the tankers and bombers were both co-located on the alert pad before the addition to the building. The second school of thought is that the addition allowed for female crew members of tanker to be located in the Alert Crew Readiness Building but separated from the male crew members, per military protocol.

¹⁴⁶ "White Low Bidder," *Blytheville Courier News*, May 27, 1985, A1.

¹⁴⁷ "Renovated Alert Facility Dedicated," *Blytheville Courier News*, August 10, 1987, A1.

¹⁴⁸ Jan Schipper, "\$1.7 Million Alert Facility Renovation, Expansion Completed," *Blytheville Courier News*, August 11, 1987, A1.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

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On May 26, 1988, the Air Force renamed Blytheville AFB to Eaker AFB in honor of World War II General Ira Eaker, former commander of the 8th Air Force.¹⁵¹ It was hoped at the time that the name change would endear the base to senior Air Force leadership as it was named after such a respected Air Force General, and this would allow for the base to be removed from any possible base closure lists that may have been circulating at the time. Conflicting rumors circulated that the base was possibly going to be scheduled for closure, however, these rumors would then be flipped as new rumors began to be stated that there would be the possibility of further expansion of the base, as part of a new mission circulating around the new MX ICBM. By April 1988, the now Eaker Air Force Base was one of eleven possible sites up for consideration for the new MX rail garrison. Representative Les Aspin assured the citizens of Blytheville that the base would not close in a May speech to the House Armed Services Committee. Representative Aspin¹⁵² also made the statement that Eaker Air Force Base would get the new Stealth Bombers which would be coming online in the 1990s, due to the phasing out of the B-52.¹⁵³ He stated, "Everybody knows they're going to get Stealth Bombers."¹⁵⁴ However, the Air Force did not select Blytheville for either the new MX missile or future Stealth Bombers.¹⁵⁵

By 1988, world politics were beginning to change, and in doing so, so was the mission of the Strategic Air Command and the mission of the Alert Crew Readiness Building. Even though changes were taking place throughout the world, changes were also taking place in the Alert Missions run out of the Alert Crew Readiness Building. By this period of time, technological advances in both weapons and in the aircraft helped modernized the B-52 fleet, which was still quoted as being the backbone of deterrence for the SAC alert force, because of its "aircrews, missile crews, logistic specialist, security police, and support staff."¹⁵⁶ These folks worked in and around the Alert Crew Readiness Building on a daily basis, thus creating the cornerstone of the SAC Alert.

Post-Cold War History (1990-2000)

Even before reaching what would be determined to be the end of the Cold War, the mission of SAC was beginning to wane as tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union began to ease up due to new communication and cooperation between the two countries. It was stated

¹⁵¹ "Eaker AFB Served Community, Nation with Pride," *Blytheville Courier News*, Air Force Association Insert, July 1989, 5.

¹⁵² It is interesting to note that Representative Les Apsin would make promised regarding the B-2 Bomber possibly coming to the Blytheville AFB /Eaker AFB, because only two years later he voted to terminate the B-2 Bomber program.

¹⁵³ Needless to say the B-52 has yet to be phased out

¹⁵⁴ "BAFB Called Stealth Bomber Shoo-in," *Blytheville Courier News*, May 22, 1988, A1.

¹⁵⁵ "Blytheville hearing finds support for rail-based MX missile," *Arkansas Gazette*, April 12, 1988, A10; "Blytheville AFB will not close, Representative Les Aspin says," *Arkansas Gazette*, May 21, 1988, A07; "MX Missile Study favorable for Eaker Air Force Base," *Arkansas Gazette*, August 3, 1988, A12.

¹⁵⁶ United States, Peace-- *Is Our Profession: Alert Operations and the Strategic Air Command, 1957-1991*, (Offutt Air Force Base, Neb: Office of the Historian, Headquarters Strategic Air Command, 1992), 44.

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that “the chances of a bolt-out-of-the-blue kind of attack these days is virtually gone”¹⁵⁷ and that any confrontation would be caused by the slow collapse of the Soviet economy. Nevertheless only months later the Soviet Union, among others, signed the Treaty of Conventional Forces, all but ending the Cold War in November 1990, though the official end date would be set about a year later after the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, and the signing of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.¹⁵⁸ It is really through these political steps that the everyday mission of SAC began to change and the end of nuclear deterrence was all but ceasing to exist in any form that would resemble the early days of this Cold War period.

Even as the political shuffling continued during the late 1980s and early 1990s, military operations throughout the Middle East continued to keep the personnel at the Alert Crew Readiness Building on their toes. Many of the B-52s that would operate in this theater, would not necessarily be conducting nuclear deterrence, but were shifting to conventional warfighting tactics.¹⁵⁹ Soon after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Eaker AFB’s B-52 crews began practicing for possible missions in the Middle East region to support the defense of Saudi Arabia.¹⁶⁰ By September 1991, the “three major operational commands- SAC, TAC, and MAC- would be inactivated”¹⁶¹ due to restructuring. This inactivation of SAC in September 1991, and the constant questions about retiring the B-52 fleet, all but closed the book on air force activity at the Blytheville AFB/Eaker AFB.

Even though the Blytheville AFB contributed a substantial amount to the nuclear deterrence during the Cold War through sorties for both ground and airborne alerts, it also helped the economic viability of the local economy. The continued construction between 1958 and the base closure in 1992, brought hundreds of local construction jobs to the area. In the case of the opening of the installation for the Strategic Air Command, \$1.4 Million was pushed back in to the local economy for the construction of paving the runways and apron, the instrument land system, the crew readiness center, and storage buildings in the Weapons Storage Area. The Crew Readiness Center alone was bid out of \$439,477 to a local contractor out of Blytheville. This same contractor also received the bid of the 1985 addition in the amount of \$1.65 Million. It is noted that the construction at the base on projects like the Alert Area created a pyramid effect. This effect really took hold on these large construction contracts because for each large construction contract, like the construction of the Crew Readiness Center, four to five smaller

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 46.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 52.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 53.

¹⁶⁰ By December 1990, it was clear that the mission of Desert Shield was transformed to the removal of Saddam from Kuwait, and the crews from Eaker AFB, were selected to fly night high-altitude practice bombing missions from Arkansas to a test ranges located at Nellis AFB, Nevada. Ken Ludden, one of the Radar Navigators on these missions, described the purpose of the missions as the final evaluation of the B-52’s ability to strike targets with conventional munitions in preparation for the air campaign launched on Iraq in January 1991. The next month, the B-52 crews, much like they had for Vietnam, deployed overseas. In January 1991, B-52s crews deployed to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the island of Diego Garcia, and Royal Air Force Base at Fairford, England, in support of Operation Desert Storm.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*.

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contracts were awarded to subcontractors, and another twenty smaller contracts below the \$5,000 range. Through the use of local contractors, who then used local labor, who then spent money in the local shops, these projects overwhelmingly brought economic success to the businesses in the area. Yet, the same can be said about the business community. Knowing how much the base and those that worked in the base, including the Alert area, meant to the economic viability of their businesses, the businesses held yearly events to celebrate the Strategic Air Command being in the community with things like "SAC DAYS." This sort of impact on the community could be felt throughout the time that the base was an active installation. The 24/7 alerts that the Strategic Air Command Alert Area was under, throughout almost the entire life the base, was also felt in the community, because the airmen on alert were part of the City of Blytheville and Gosnell. As soon as world peace was threatened anywhere in the world, the entire community surrounding the base and the Alert Area became tense knowing that those in their community would possibly be running into harm's way. Yet, they also knew that if world peace was being threatened, those in their community would be there to meet the threat head on.

Therefore, the Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District near Blytheville, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** for its significance in the areas of Military for its active role in Nuclear Deterrence during the Cold War, while also being nominated under **Criterion C** for embodying the distinct characteristics of an Alert Crew Readiness Building during the Cold War. The Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration G** as the period of Significance extend to 1991. The Strategic Air Command motto: Peace is our Profession, is exactly how the Crews at the Blytheville Air Force Alert and Weapons Storage Areas handled their mission. The significance of this historic district lies in that the United States never had to go outside its mission of deterrence and actually have to use the weapons that were loaded and on alert every minute of every day between 1959 and 1991. The significance of this area comes from the inaction of the alert bombers that is represented by the Alert Pad Area, Family Visitation Area, and the Weapons Storage Area. These three areas represent the chilling political climate that the United States found itself in for more than forty years. The action, or inaction, of the crews that were housed in, or worked in, really was the difference between life and death for millions of unsuspecting people worldwide.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

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Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 247 Acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| A. Zone: 16 | Easting: 234710 | Northing: 3982014 |
| B. Zone: 16 | Easting: 234781 | Northing: 3981785 |
| C. Zone: 16 | Easting: 235106 | Northing: 3981465 |
| D. Zone: 16 | Easting: 235277 | Northing: 3981464 |

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Name of Property	County and State		
E. Zone: 16	Easting: 235332	Northing: 3981520	
F. Zone: 16	Easting: 235306	Northing: 3981684	
G. Zone:16	Easting: 235456	Northing: 3982198	
H. Zone:16	Easting: 235543	Northing: 3982548	
I. Zone: 16	Easting: 236018	Northing: 3983109	
J. Zone:16	Easting: 235776	Northing: 3983372	
K. Zone:16	Easting: 235235	Northing: 3982882	

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

At the Northwest corner of the Alert Apron, and located at the south end of the runway, go to UTM 16 234710 3982014. Go southeast to UTM point 16 234781 3981785. Then go southeast again to UTM point 16 235106 3981465. Then turn east to UTM point 16 235277 3981464. The go northeast to UTM point 16 235332 3981520. Go northeast again to UTM point 16 235306 3981684. Continue northeast to UTM point 16 235306 3981684. Continue going northeast to UTM point 16 235456 3982198. Then head to UTM point 16 235543 3982548. Then go to UTM point 16 236018 3983109. Then head to the northwest to UTM point 16 235776 3983372. Then go to UTM 235235 3982882. Then return to the original UTM point.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Historic Distinct comprises all of the areas historically associated with the 1950s-era alert apron which includes the Alert Crew Readiness Building, and weapons storage area at Blytheville AFB, as well as the 1980s-era family visitation center and the roads that connect the three areas.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Edward Salo; Edward Harthorn; Zach Mitchell; Frank Walker ;Travis Ratermann Survey Historian,

organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

street & number: 1100 North

Street

Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air
Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons
Storage Areas Historic District

Mississippi County,
Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201

e-mail travis.ratermann@arkansas.gov

telephone: 501-3249874

date: September 11, 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District

City or Vicinity: Blytheville

County: Mississippi State: Arkansas

Photographer: Travis Ratermann

Date Photographed: October 4, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #1 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0001) Access Control point in to the Alert Area. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #2 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0002) Alert Fire Team Facility. Camera facing east.

Photo #3 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0003) The inside of the Alert Fire Team Facility in the small living room/dining room. Camera facing east.

Photo #4 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0004) Access ramp into the Crew Readiness Building. Camera facing west.

Photo #5 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0005) Overall photo of the south elevation of the Crew Readiness Building. Camera facing north.

Photo #6 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0006) Overall photo of the northeast corner of the east and north elevations of the Crew Readiness Building Camera facing southwest.

Photo #7 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0007) Overall photo of the west elevation of the Crew Readiness Building. Camera facing southeast.

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Photo #8 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0008) Inside of the Crew Readiness Building looking at the briefing room. Camera facing southwest.

Photo #9 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0009) Photo of the pool located within the Alert Area, used by the airmen while on 24 hour duty. Camera facing North.

Photo #10 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0010) Overall photo of the Generator Plant Building. Camera facing southeast.

Photo #11 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0011) Overall photo of one of the nine guard shacks used by the security team to guard the B-52 aircraft/ Camera facing east.

Photo #12 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0012) Overall photo of the Master Surveillance and Control Tower. Camera facing south and up.

Photo #13 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0013) Overall photo of the entire Alert Area, taken from the Master Surveillance and Control tower. Camera facing north and down.

Photo #14 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0014) Overall photo of the Family Visitation Building's South elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo #15 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0015) Overall photo of the playground equipment and picnic shelters within the Family Visitation area. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #16 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0016) Photo of the munition storage igloos and the ALCM storage facilities. Camera facing north.

Photo #17 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0017) Overall photo of the Munition Storage Igloos. Camera facing north.

Photo #18 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0018) Overall photo of the small arms storage lockers/cubicles. Camera facing north.

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Photo #19 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0019) Overall photo of the Hazardous Storage Building. Camera facing west.

Photo #20 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0020) Overall photo of the Inspection and Surveillance Shop Building. Camera facing east.

Photo #21 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0021) Overall photo of the Aircraft/Survivability Equipment Storage Facility Shop. Camera facing east.

Photo #22 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0022) Overall photo of the Munitions Maintenance Administration Building. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #23 (AR_Mississippi County_Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage_0023) Access Control point in to the Weapons Storage Area. Camera facing southwest.

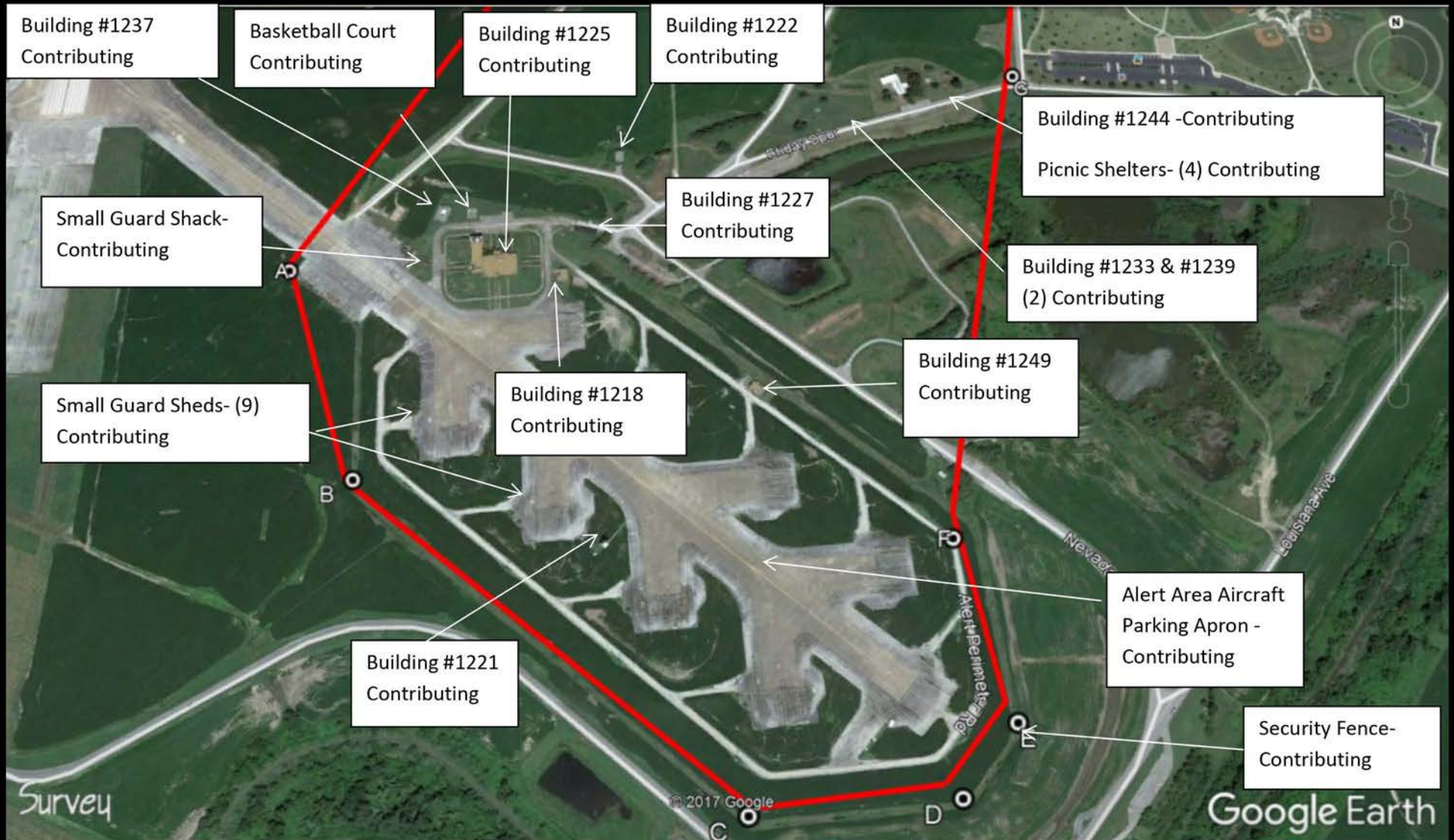
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District, Blytheville, Mississippi County
Contributing - Non-Contributing Map (1 of 2)



Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District, Blytheville, Mississippi County
Contributing - Non Contributing Map (2 of 2)



Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District, Blytheville, Mississippi County
Photo Location Map (1 of 2)



Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District, Blytheville, Mississippi County
Photo Location Map Map (2 of 2)















12.5



































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/12/2017 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: 1/26/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 1/26/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director

September 29, 2017

Honorable James Sanders, Mayor
City of Blytheville
124 W. Walnut
Blytheville, AR 72315

Re: Blytheville Alert Facility – Blytheville, Mississippi County

Dear Mayor Sanders:

We are pleased to inform you that the above referenced property will be considered by the State Review Board of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of the preservation. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places provides recognition and assists in preserving our nation's heritage.

Listing of this property provides recognition of the community's historic importance and assures protective review of the federal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic property.

Listing in the National Register does not mean that limitations will be placed on the property by the federal government. Public visitation rights are not required of property owners. The federal government will not attach covenants to the property or seek to acquire it.

We have enclosed a copy of the National Register nomination for your review. If you have any comments on the proposed nomination, please submit a letter with your comments, concerns, or concurrence to the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program at least 24 hours prior to the date of the State Review Board meeting.

You are invited to attend the State Review Board meeting at which the nomination will be considered. The board will begin meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 6th, 2017 at the Department of Arkansas Heritage headquarters at 1100 North Street in Little Rock.

If you have any questions regarding the State Review Board meeting feel free to call Ralph Wilcox, Callie Williams or Travis Ratermann at (501) 324-9880.

Sincerely,


Scott Kaufman
Director

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum



ARKANSAS HISTORIC
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THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director

Arkansas Arts Council

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DEC 19 2017

December 6, 2017

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

RE: Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC)
Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District –Blytheville,
Mississippi County, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the documentation for the Blytheville Air Force Base Strategic Air Command (SAC) Alert and Weapons Storage Areas Historic District. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Travis Ratermann of my staff at (501) 324-9874. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:tar

Enclosures