

Whiteman Air Force Base

Whiteman AFB is the home of the 509th Bomb Wing, which operates and maintains the Air Force's premier weapon's system, the B-2 Stealth Bomber, the AF Reserve 442nd Fighter Wing, the Missouri Army National Guard 1st Battalion 135th Aviation Unit and the US Navy Reserve Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit 114.

SEDALIA ARMY AIR FIELD

Whiteman's proud heritage dates back to 1942 when US Army Air Corp officials selected the site of the present-day base to be the home of Sedalia Army Air Field and a training base for WACO glider pilots, who saw action in World War II.

Following the war, the airfield remained in service as an operational location for Army Air Corp C-46 and C-47 transports. In December 1947, the base was inactivated but with the birth of the US Air Force as a separate, independent service, and the subsequent formation of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), the site of the former airfield was considered for other missions.

On August 24, 1955 the US Air Force, informed Mrs. Earlie Whiteman of Sedalia that the recently reopened Sedalia Air Force Base would be renamed Whiteman Air Force Base in tribute to her son, 2nd Lt. George A. Whiteman, was one of the first airmen killed during the assault on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The dedication and renaming ceremony took place on December 3, 1955.

340 BOMBARDMENT WING

In August 1951, SAC selected Sedalia AFB to be one of its new bombardment wings, with the first all-jet bomber, the B-47 Stratojet, and the KC-97 aerial refueling tanker assigned to the unit. Construction of facilities was conducted by the 4224th Air Base Squadron until October 20, 1952, when the base was turned over to the 340th Bombardment Wing. The first B-47 arrived on March 25, 1954 and six months later the first KC-97 arrived.

The early 1960s ushered in a period of change for Whiteman and the 340th when the Department of Defense (DOD) declared the B-47s and KC-97s obsolete and would be retired. The 340th BMW gradually phased out operations at Whiteman and its remnants were transferred to Bergstrom AFB, Texas, on September 1, 1963.

351 STRATEGIC MISSILE WING

The story of the 351 Strategic Missile Wing (SMW) at Whiteman began in April 1961 when test borings made in the area around the base determined the geological make-up would support a land-based ICBM system. Three months later the DOD announced plans to base the Minuteman I ICMB system at Whiteman. Groundbreaking ceremonies with a host of dignitaries in attendance were held in April 1962 at the site now called Oscar-01.

The project called for the excavation of 867,000 cubic yards of earth and rock. Contractors used 168,000 yards of concrete, 25,355 tons of reinforcing steel and 15,120 tons of structural steel, and the installation of a vast underground intersite network with enough cable to run from Whiteman AFB to 100 miles beyond Los Angeles. Amazingly, the construction and equipping of the 150 missile sites and 15 launch control centers took only two years, two months, and two weeks to complete. On June 29, 1964, the 351st went on full operational alert.

During the period May 1965 to October 1967 the Minuteman I was upgraded to the Minuteman II. Other modernization programs in the following decades improved the system and increased the survivability of the missile. In the mid-1980s the Minuteman Integrated Life Extension (Rivet MILE) program improved the safety, maintainability, and reliability of the missile facilities.

On July 31, 1991, President George H.W. Bush and Premier Mikhail Gorbachev signed the historic Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) which called for dismantling and destruction of the Minuteman II ICBMs. President Bush ordered a stand-down of all Minuteman II missiles from alert well before the requirements of START called for such action. Less than 24 hours later, the 351st reported to SAC that its missile were off alert.

Two years later the wing's first launch control center, India-01, shut down operations. On May 7, 1993, the last reentry vehicle was removed from Golf-02, and on December 8, 1993 the wing imploded its first silo, India-02. On May 18, 1995, the last Minuteman II missile, located at Juliet-03, was removed from its site. The 351st SMW was officially inactivated on July 31, 1995.

In 1988 Congressman Ike Skelton announced the B-2 Advanced Technology Bomber would be based at Whiteman. On September 30, 1990, the 509th Bomb Wing was transferred to Whiteman AFB and in July 1993, accepted host responsibilities for the base. During this same month the wing received its first fixed-wing aircraft, a T-38 complete with a B-2 style paint job.

On December 17, 1993, the ninetieth anniversary of Orville Wright's historic first successful, controlled, heavier than air powered flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the world's most sophisticated and advanced aircraft, the B-2 Advanced Technology Bomber, the *Spirit of Missouri*, arrived at Whiteman Air Force Base.

The most powerful weapon is not, however, the B-2: it is Whiteman Airmen. The 509th BW has recently deployed more than 1,600 Airmen from 24 squadrons in support of global combat operations. Airmen were also on the front lines of disaster bringing relief to the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina devastated the region in September 2005. Whether serving at home or in forward locations, Whiteman Airmen exemplify the phrase, "Service before Self."