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*Topeka,
Kansas*

1962





BRIGADIER GENERAL R.O. HUNZIKER

COMMANDER, 21st AIR DIVISION

Brigadier General Richard O. Hunziker was born in Los Angeles, California July 6, 1916.

After graduating from high school in Tuscon, Arizona, General Hunziker entered the University of Arizona but left school at the outbreak of World War II. He later received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1948.

He received his wings and commission in 1942. During World War II, he served as a fighter pilot in Africa, Italy, France and Corsica. During his wartime service, General Hunziker completed 203 combat missions.

Following the war, General Hunziker was a wing commander in various locations in Europe and the United States. Following completion of the National War College in 1958, he was named Director of Materiel for Strategic Air Command's Second Air Force with headquarters at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. He assumed command of the 21st Air Division at Forbes Air Force Base on July 16, 1960.

General Hunziker is a rated command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours to his credit. His decorations include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal with thirteen clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation with two clusters and the Croix de Guerre with Palm and Croix de Guerre with Silver Star.

The 548th STRATEGIC MISSILE SQUADRON

The officially described primary mission of the 548th Strategic Missile Squadron is to maintain a state of readiness for, and to execute assigned strategic surface-to-surface intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) operations as directed by the 21st Air Division, Headquarters Second Air Force and in accordance with policies of higher headquarters.

The Commander of the 548th SM Squadron is responsible for monitoring the equipping of the organization for accomplishment of the assigned mission; the monitoring of formal training and providing adequate local training for Missile Combat Crews; maintaining the combat ready unit in a state of readiness to permit immediate strategic missile operations in case of hostilities; being prepared to perform tasks assigned in existing emergency plans and related operations orders; and performing special missions directed by the Commanders of higher echelons of command.

Forbes AFB entered the missile era in February 1959 when the Strategic Air Command announced that Atlas intercontinental ballistic missiles would be sited in an area around the base.

Groundbreaking for the first of the complexes took place on June 12, 1959. The first launcher was installed near Burlingame, Kansas by November 30, 1960. Less than two months later, on January 24, 1961, the 548th received its first Atlas ICBM. Since that time, programmed

construction of all complexes has been completed and the missiles have been delivered.

On October 16, 1961, the Air Force Systems Command officially turned the Forbes missile complexes over to the Strategic Air Command. This was the second squadron of "E" model Atlas missiles—an advanced version of the Atlas equipped with all inertial guidance and larger re-entry vehicle capable of carrying a heavier nuclear payload—to be turned over to SAC. The first was at Fairchild AFB, Washington some two weeks earlier.

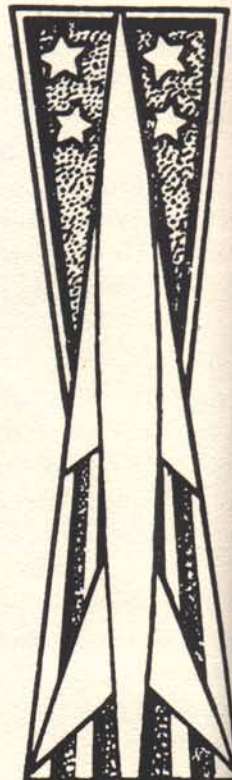
A short number of years ago, the 548th had a very different mission. The original designation was the 548th Bombardment Squadron. As such it was constituted on November 25, 1942 with assignment to the 385th Bomb Group of Second Air Force.

The 548th Squadron accomplished its B-17 heavy bombardment training in April 1943 and was assigned with the 385th Bomb Group in England in July 1943. The 548th was not long in entering combat. Before the end of the month, the Squadron took part in successful bombing missions over Germany. Through the year and the early part of 1944, superfortresses of the 548th concentrated on strategic bombing of enemy targets, designed to weaken the German air arm and transportation system.

During June 1944 combat activities of the squadron were concerned exclusively with tactical targets along the northern coast of France, first as a means of helping



A MATS C-133 Cargomaster unloads an Atlas ICBM at Forbes AFB



to prepare for the allied invasion and then in support of it.

For the remaining months of the war the 548th concentrated on strategic targets and following a combat mission on April 20, 1945 the squadron began its return to the United States. On August 29, 1945, the squadron was deactivated at Sioux Falls Army Air Field, South Dakota.

Late in January 1947 the 548th was reactivated and designated a very heavy bombardment squadron, allotted to the organized reserves and assigned to the Air Defense Command. Without ever having had a change of station, despite its various assignments, the unit was again deactivated on June 27, 1949.

On January 22, 1960, the 548th was again reactivated and redesignated the 548th Strategic Missile Squadron (Atlas-ICBM), assigned to the Strategic Air Command and organized in July 1960 at Forbes AFB, Kansas.

The SAC missileman is a highly trained and skilled technician who is working in one of the most selective career fields in the U.S. Air Force. After schooling, he may be assigned to duty in an operational blockhouse, upon the launching pad itself, with a maintenance or assembly unit, or in a missile control center or command post, depending upon his particular missile specialty.

Technicians concerned with actual launch operations are organized into Missile Combat Crews. Each crew has the same clearly defined mission: to be prepared 24 hours a day—upon receipt of orders initiated by the President—to effect the near instantaneous launch of one or more intercontinental ballistic missiles toward targets located in territory of a designated enemy.

The size of a missile combat crew varies with the type of ICBM for which it is responsible.

Missile Combat Crew Commanders are senior captains or of higher rank. Each is selected for his maturity, judgment and proven abilities. He need not be a rated flying officer.

The performance of Missile Combat Crews must meet the same high standards that have always distinguished SAC air crews. They have been accorded equal career status.

The Atlas ICBM

The United States' first operational intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) is the Atlas, designed to deliver a nuclear warhead to targets 6,300 miles distant.

The first operational Atlas was fired from Vandenberg AFB, California on September 9, 1959 by a SAC crew. The Atlas squadron at Vandenberg has been integrated into SAC's emergency orders and will be able to launch within the warning time provided by the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System.

The stage-and-a-half missile is powered by burning liquid oxygen and RP-1, a kerosene-like hydrocarbon fuel.

Height is 82-1/2 feet, with a body diameter of about 10 feet. Launching weight is more than 250,000 pounds.

The Atlas has a power plant consisting of two large booster engines and one large sustainer engine, plus a pair of small vernier rockets.

All five rockets are ignited prior to launching, and

within a few minutes of flight, during which time the missile is lifted well into its trajectory, the booster engines are jettisoned. The missile is then accelerated by the sustainer engine until a velocity of over 15,000 miles per hour has been reached. At this time the sustainer engine is shut off. The small vernier rockets are then used to "trim" velocity to the exact amount required.

The re-entry vehicle is separated from the rocket's structure after the verniers are shut down and the missile is following a ballistic course.

The guidance system of the missile governs the course and speed during powered flight.

Thin-gauge stainless steel makes up the tank structure of the Atlas missile which houses over 40,000 parts—not including the nose cone, guidance and engine parts.

General Dynamics-Astronautics Corporation, San Diego, California, makes the airframe and is responsible for assembly and test of the missile. The power plant is made by North American Aviation, Inc., Rocketdyne Division, Neosha, Missouri.

The radio command guidance system is made by the General Electric Company, Military Electronics Division, Utica, New York, with a ground guidance computer by Burroughs Corporation, Detroit, Michigan.

The re-entry vehicle is made by General Electric Company, Missile and Space Vehicle Department, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



One of Forbes' Atlas Missiles stands ready on the launching pad. The ICBM's are assigned to the 548th Strategic Missile Squadron.