

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Willis J. McClure for the Master of Arts degree

in American History presented on August 12, 1983.

Title: No Bugles Will Blow, No Trumpets Will Sound: A Narrative History of
Smoky Hill/Schilling Air Force Base, Salina, Kansas 1942 to 1967.

Abstract Approved: *William H. Seiler*

No Bugles Will Blow is a narrative history of Smoky Hill/Schilling Air Force Base, Salina, Kansas starting prior to its construction in early 1942 to its last days as an Air Force installation in 1967. Smoky Hill AFB started its life in April, 1942 when Capt. Paul M. Long arrived to begin the process of acquiring and plotting land. It closed on April 3, 1967 when Lt. Col. Homer H. Houghton pulled down the flag of the officially deactivated Schilling AFB.

There are nine chapters in this paper, chapters one and nine are the introduction and conclusion, respectively, with chapters two through eight as the body of the paper. The latter chapters cover the two major eras of the base: 1942 to 1949 and 1951 to 1967, as well as the first deactivated period of late 1949 to mid-1951. In the first era, Smoky Hill was first a World War II training base for the B-17 and B-29 bomber aircraft and closed out the era as a B-29 bomber base in the Strategic Air Command (SAC) in 1949. Smoky Hill's second era started on August 1, 1951 when the base was reactivated as a SAC medium bomber base of two Wings and an Air Division equipped with the new B-47 strato-jet bomber. The Air Force left Salina for good in April, 1967 after disposition of most of the Air Force property at Schilling.

Attention focuses primarily on the air base as a small city as well as its relationship with the city of Salina two miles northeast of the base. Person-

nel sketches of the major Commanders are provided when available. However, the primary objective of this paper is to provide a view of the trials and tribulations of an air base during the 1940s, 1950s, and part of the 1960s.

Smoky Hill played a role in three major wars in which the United States was involved; World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam. Activated during the dark days immediately following Japan's attack on Hawaii, the base was reactivated during the Korean Conflict, and finally deactivated while the United States was escalating its involvement in Viet Nam. The base was indirectly involved in all three conflicts, although the housekeeping units were never involved in the actual combat. The runways of this base from its first activation to its final deactivation were among the longest military runways in the United States. Four of its original runways were 10,000 feet long and designed to handle the largest aircraft in the world which was then the B-29 bomber. By 1962, two of the runways had been extended to 13,330 feet with 1,000 feet overruns at each end to accomodate the B-52 bomber, which was supposed to be assigned to the base, but never arrived. The final closing took everyone by surprise, including, it seems, SAC which had assigned an overage of personnel to the base.

Appendices provide a listing of the units assigned to the base from 1942 to 1967, Commanders of the major units assigned to the base, capsule views of the base in 1945 and 1966, the origination of the current names of the base, upper streets when the city of Salina assumed control of the base, and capsule histories of the 40th and 310th Bomb Wings.

NO BUGLES WILL BLOW, NO TRUMPETS WILL SOUND
A Narrative History
of
Smoky Hill/Schilling Air Force Base, Salina, Kansas
1942 to 1967

A Thesis
Presented to
the Division of Social Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in History

By
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August, 1983

Thesis
1983
10

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436347

DATA PROCESSING

APR 16 1984

DEDICATION
AND
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This writer wishes to dedicate this paper to two people who played a significant role in making this paper possible. Miss Mary Crowther, Kansas Librarian, Salina Public Library, provided considerable assistance throughout the researching and writing of this paper. Her knowledge of Salina's history made it possible to correlate and verify some events that appeared questionable to this writer. Col. John F. "Mike" Scanlan, USAF, ret., General Manager of the Salina Airport Authority and one of the last Commanders of the base, provided his military expertise and encouragement to this paper. He was able to add first-hand knowledge to the 1946-1949 and 1964-1967 periods of this paper and provide insight into General Curtis LeMay's Strategic Air Command. In no way was any question too big or trivial for Miss Crowther or Colonel Scanlan to answer. Without these two individuals, this paper might have been difficult to write.

I also wish to acknowledge the help that Professors William H. Seiler and John J. Zimmerman provided from the day that I first suggested this topic to the last when I was able to declare it finished. Their suggestions (and patience) has helped change this paper from a regional and topical paper into a history of a unique military installation.

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CHAPTER I

PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Salina, Kansas is located near the center of the continental United States just southeast of the junctions of Interstate highways 70 and 135. Travelers on the Interstate highways pay little attention to the four exits for Salina on both highways as they hurry on to their destinations. However, they can not help but notice the "prairie castle" grain elevators which denote Salina's role as a milling center and agricultural center for central Kansas. There is nothing to indicate that Salina is anything more than a small city in the middle of Kansas.

Traveling on I-135, one will see a sign that announces an exit for "Schilling Road--Salina Area Vo-Tech--Kansas Technical Institute." The sign does not reveal that the road leads into an old air base that is now an industrial park and residential area. Nor does it reveal that as a result of that old air base, Salina has a municipal airport with some of the longest commercial runways in the world. From the highway, all one sees is the white and orange checked water tower, the base housing area, and a hangar now used by Beechcraft.

Turning off on the exit and heading west, one is taken to the former base proper. Signs start appearing which announce the various enterprises that are in the area: KTI, Salina Vo-Tech, Kansas Rehabilitation Center, Tony's Pizza, Beechcraft, Salina Municipal Airport, and the Kansas Army National Guard's Nickell Barracks. One can still see a group of rundown buildings which obviously resemble a closed military installation. A couple of old barracks have been con-

started into apartment buildings, but the rest remain vacant with broken windows
 and in obvious need of paint. The old base service station is now a tire center.
 One block south of where Schilling Road ends is a parked six-engined jet
 bomber with peeling paint and an unkempt appearance that is keeping in place
 with most of the area around it. Unknown to most, the plane is a B-47 strato-
 jet bomber which was once considered to be the "long rifle" of the Strategic Air
 Command and the whine of its engines were a symbol of America's military might.
 Across the plane's nose is a peeling decal with the words: "City of Salina"
 over a yellow Sunflower. There are deserted foundations about the plane; some
 thick, some thin, and most covered with weeds. There is an empty feeling about
 the place; a feeling that something of consequence happened here at one time
 and then mysteriously ended, even though civilian aircraft can be seen landing
 on runways designed to handle the largest of military aircraft. Kansas Highway
 Patrol cadets train in a building which once housed men waiting for a war they
 hoped would never come. But most of the buildings go unused and seemingly have
 no use. Little thought seems to have been given to keeping the areas free of
 weeds and trash as they had been when the area was a part of the mighty Stra-
 tegic Air Command. Now, it all looks very empty and harmless, belying its
 former importance.

But on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked United States military
 installations on Oahu Island, Territory of Hawaii, and created a day which
 President Franklin Roosevelt was to declare would "live in infamy," this area
 was on a flood plain of the Smoky Hill River and covered with farms. Inad-
 vertently, the Japanese attack created a need for the military installation
 whose planning and construction commenced within five months.

Beginning life as "the Army Air Base at Salina" while it was under con-
 struction, it then became Smoky Hill Army Air Field in December, 1942, when it

Formally opened, and ended life on April 3, 1967 as Schilling Air Force Base, Salina, Kansas. It was conceived to meet the demands of a global war. Militarily, its life ended just as American involvement in Southeast Asia was winding up. For twenty-five years, this tract of land, roughly four miles south of the city of Salina, played a vital role not only in the air defense of the United States but in the life of the city and the surrounding community as well.

From its conception during the dark days of World War II to its end in 1967, this base was the center of military activity in central Kansas. It was a self-contained city with a population that varied from one man to over 13,000 men, women, and children. At various times, it had the cantonment at Camp Phillips, the OQ Gunnery Range, and twelve Atlas F missile bases dependent upon it for support. Some of the most popular military aircraft in the United States were based here, such as the B-17, B-24, B-29, B-47, C-45, C-47, C-54, C-97, and KC-135. In addition, helicopters and small utility aircraft were based here from time to time. This city had its own shopping center, theaters, clubs, police force, fire department, restaurants, water and sewage plants, parking lots, parks, schools, church, work areas, and living areas for its population.

This is the story of Smoky Hill/Schilling Air Force Base. Other air bases have existed for a brief period of time and then closed with scarcely a concern by anyone, for these bases were built during times of great crisis and when their need ceased, closed. But Schilling Air Force Base was different. While the need existed in the early days of World War II to train air crews as fast as possible, Schilling was created as a base which eventually trained crews for a super plane later identified as the B-29, and time was taken with the construction of its runways. Closed briefly in 1950 and 1951, it was reopened with the

vision of making it a base for B-47 stratojet medium bombers. By the late 1940s, plans were being initiated to convert Schilling into a base equipped with missiles, B-52 long range bombers, and KC-135 jet tankers to refuel the bombers. In the first period of its life, the base seemed to be a foster child, which the parents were afraid that if they got too attached to the child, the government would take it away, while the government kept demanding more proof of love existed for the child. Yet, when the base reopened, its units won awards faster than the Air Force seemed able to come up with them. The community adopted the base and lavished attention upon it while ignoring the possibility of attracting additional industry to the area for economic support should the Air Force leave.

Although the primary function of this paper is to write a history of the base, attention will focus on the often described as "unique" base/community relationship which existed from 1951 to 1967 that seems to never have existed before or since and certainly did not exist in the 1942 to 1949 period.* While there appears to have been a chronic housing shortage from 1942 to the early 1950s, and especially during the 1942 to 1949 period, the people of the area went out of their way to make the men and their families at the base feel at home. The base/community relationship seems to have contributed to a high morale that became the envy of other bases and enabled it to become one of the best bases not only in the Strategic Air Command but in the Air Force as well.

This writer believes that the time has come to write a history of this base. Something exceptional existed in central Kansas between 1942 and 1967 that de-

*In conversations with various people, this writer discovered that Salinans believe even today, fifteen years after the base closed, that they had a good relationship with the base. In church affairs, they provided leadership for numerous projects. Salinans are proud to have had the Air Force in their community.

deserves a closer inspection. Prior to 1951, there is much to suggest that the base was just tolerated. But all of this changed when the base was reactivated in 1951. What happened to cause an about-face between 1949 and 1951 is difficult to determine as people seem to have forgotten the reasons. Perhaps the return of the civilian population of World War II veterans, who had seen the effects of poor community relations between the military installations where they had served and the communities outside the main gates, had something to do with this. This paper can only present the facts that were discovered and let the reader decide the cause of the change.

Technically, there are two eras in the history of the base; the World War II era of about nine years and the Schilling era of about sixteen years. This writer has elected to write a complete history of this base because to write about only one era leaves a void which is filled by writing about both. To this day, few in Salina believe that they were doing anything different while the base was open the second time save being neighborly, and few remember how the base was from 1942 to 1949, except that some mention wild times "out there" as well as at the watering holes on east highway US 40 (now Pacific Street). As a six-year veteran of the United States Air Force, this writer remains impressed with the local press coverage of the base and the base/community relations from start to finish. There is also an appeal to this writer because of what this writer interprets as a "second chance" given the base and the city to try to achieve a better relationship. In this instance, what often develops as a hostility existing between a military base and the surrounding communities was eradicated and mutual respect established.*

*In this writer's interviews with Salinans who lived in the area in 1942 and after, he kept picking up mention of Salina's desire to avoid becoming another "Junction City" which has been the home of Fort Riley since the 1850s.

There seems to be a unique flavor to this entire period and that is the objective of this paper; to try to recapture what this writer saw and felt in his research. This, then, is the history of an air base from its creation out of farm land south of Salina to its final demise twenty-five years later. In 1942, when the War Department literally began beating plowshares into swords, eagles blew, trumpets sounded, and banners were unfurled. Then on April 3, 1967, the banners were folded, the trumpets sounded their last notes, and the process of converting swords back into plowshares began as the last airmen left for new assignments, never to return.

A feature of the air base, noticeable until just the mid-1970s, was the zoned absence of any shopping areas, gas stations, etc., for a two-mile area outside the perimeter of the base. In late 1981, a convenience store, which sells beer, did open near the old main gate.

CHAPTER II

ARMY AIR BASE AT SALINA, KANSAS

DECEMBER 7, 1941 TO SEPTEMBER 1, 1945

Salina wants a role in the War

Although the surprise attack by the Japanese on United States military installations in Hawaii plunged America into World War II, involvement had been foreseen by the national government and plans created for possible mobilization. Military draft had been in effect for over a year. More important to this war, on December 7, 1941, the Army Air Forces (AAF) under the command of General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold had 354,000 men in uniform of whom 9,000 were trained pilots. However, there were only 1,000 first-line combat planes, although plants had been drafted to produce 50,000 warplanes a year. In addition, forty contract schools were increasing the number of pilots in training from 3,000 a year to 12,000. There were 114 air bases in operation with fourteen more on drawing boards.¹

The B-17 Flying Fortress bomber was just being introduced into the inventory, but it was planned as the forerunner of newer and better bombers, such as the B-19 which later became the B-29. Fortunately for the United States, there were few B-17s in Hawaii and the Philippines on December 7 and 8 when the Japanese attacked. There were 231 army and 169 naval planes in Hawaii and 250 planes in the Philippines of which many were obsolete and quickly destroyed in

¹Col. Carroll V. Glines (USAF, ret.), The Compact History of the United States Air Force (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973), pp. 150-151.

the attack.²

On this day, Salina, Kansas, roughly fifty miles west of the nearest military activity at Fort Riley, east of Junction City, was primarily a milling and railroad center, seemingly without much of a chance of doing any more for the effort than contributing men, money, and grain. These things were important, but Salina wanted to do more. Politically, Salina, a very Republican town, was represented in Congress by Representative Frank Carlson of Concordia, Senator Arthur Capper of Topeka, and Senator Clyde Reed of Parsons. Republican Payne Sawyer was Governor. Republican Roy Bailey was editor/publisher of the very Republican daily Salina Journal. (An irony here was that the better-written but daily Salina Advertiser-Sun was the official county paper and its editor was a Democrat.)

Under normal circumstances, although President Roosevelt was trying to avoid giving a partisan tint to the war effort (which President Wilson had been accused of doing in World War I), Salina, with its close proximity to Fort Riley, probably should not have expected much from the government, save perhaps a Prisoner of War (POW) camp (which it got) or an auxiliary air field. It appears that Salina's leaders saw the situation in the same light because on January 29, 1942, Saline County offered the closed County Poor Farm to the government for use as a school to train air cadets.³

During this time, a Democrat banker who had served one term as Governor and then served as Secretary of War, Harry Woodring, had managed or was about to arrange for Topeka to acquire an air base in its vicinity. Less certain is the role that Guy Helvering, a banker and former Congressman from Salina, was

²Ibid., pp. 161-163.

³Salina (KS) Journal, January 29, 1942.

laying at this time, in cooperation with Senators Capper and Reed, and Congressman Carlson, to get an air base for Salina but he was involved.⁴

It seems probable that the matter of an air base for Topeka was cut and dried and could have been one of the fourteen bases that was on the drawing board when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. After all, the expansion plans had been drawn up while Harry Woodring was Secretary of War. However, in this case, Salina had to compete with Hutchinson and Emporia.⁵ Of these three towns, only Emporia lost out completely as Hutchinson later acquired a naval air station.

Saline County remained very desirous of selling the County Poor Farm and probably nursed hopes until the land for Camp Phillips had been acquired by the middle of 1942 that the Federal Government would take the Farm off of its hands. Why it had trouble getting rid of this land and why the War Department did not take up the offer of starting with land owned by a local government are unexplained mysteries. Camp Phillips' northern boundary stopped two miles south of the Farm. Eventually, the land was acquired by the Protestant Episcopal Church and became Saint Francis Boys' Home. Familiar with the area, this writer believes that it would have been more practical to locate the base there, as the area has never flooded and was only one-half mile south of highway US 40 and the railroad. In another chapter, a period is covered when the Department

⁴Salina (KS) Journal, December 29, 1941. This did not seem to do very much for the political career of Harry Woodring. He ran for office at least three more times and lost. Guy Helvering never sought another political office after losing his bid for re-election to Congress in 1918. Before the war ended, the AAF located sixteen air bases in Kansas at Coffeyville, Dodge City, Garden City, Great Bend, Herington, Independence, Kansas City, Liberal, Pratt, Walker, Wichita, and Winfield, in addition to the four already mentioned. "Wings Over Kansas," Kansas Historical Quarterly, Summer and Autumn, 1959, ad passim. The Navy located air fields at Hutchinson and Olathe.

⁵Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, January 1, 1942.

Defense was directed to locate missile bases on government-owned property where possible.

Construction

After a series of rumors regarding Salina's role in the war had circulated awhile, Captain Paul M. Long, US Army Corps of Engineers, arrived in early April to make soil tests. On April 23, Congressman Frank Carlson confirmed the rumor that the War Department would spend three million dollars for the construction of a base. This was followed by an announcement on April 28, that the government had filed a condemnation suit in Federal District Court in Salina to 1,441 acres of land involving twelve owners two miles southwest of Salina.⁶

Finally, Salina was to have an increased role in the war effort. Little was known at the time about what sort of military air activity Salina would get. The Salina Journal reported on April 28 that the runways would be at least 1000 feet long. It was then reported on April 29 that three million dollars would be spent in construction.⁷ This must have made it seem well worth the effort. Three million dollars plus the payroll of the soldiers was a considerable amount of money in those days!

While preparations were underway to start work on the air base, the Army brought what seemed to be a surprise on Salina by starting to acquire a triangular piece of land of approximately 42,000 acres four miles southwest of Salina. Construction of what came to be known as Camp Phillips, Phillips Village, Camp Phillips Gunnery Range, and finally Smoky Hill Weapons Range started on May 1, 1942 with a simple ground breaking ceremony. At the time of construction, Camp

⁶ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, April 23, 1942 and Salina (KS) Journal, April 28, 1942.

⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, April 28 and 29, 1942.

ships was to be subordinate to Smoky Hill Army Air Field. However, owing to the number of men, there was usually a Major General in residence at the Camp making the air base subordinate to the Camp. In those days, the Army Air Force was de facto, a branch of the Army. Five days after construction began, Major General Caulkins arrived to assume command of what he described would become a 10,000 troop cantonment.⁸

Construction of the air base was considered to have officially begun on May 2, 1942. The first contract was released on May 2 for construction of a road spur and on May 4, the County began building up a county road one mile from highway US 81. This was Dry Creek Road, so named owing to a dry creek which crossed it. The road work was to cost the County \$18,443, use ninety-four men, and take six weeks to complete.⁹

The exigencies of the war effort put construction in high gear. Work was around the clock, seven days a week and was basically a non-union project.¹⁰

There remained one barrier to be removed before full-scale construction could commence. The Salina Journal announced on May 21 that the Army planned to dispose of four sets of buildings consisting of twenty-five farm buildings, which included four houses, four windmills, and a concrete stave silo. Terms of purchase required the new owners to remove the buildings from the area by June 7, 1942.¹¹

A unique feature associated with the base--the absence of taverns, pawn shops, etc.,--was created on June 3, 1942 when the Saline County Commissioners

⁸Salina (KS) Journal, May 1 and 6, 1942 and April 21, 1943.

⁹Salina (KS) Journal, May 2, 4, and 9, 1942. Apparently this was an improvement project as period maps show a road in existence at the time.

¹⁰Salina (KS) Journal, May 14, 1942.

¹¹Salina (KS) Journal, May 21, 1942.

ened the area for two miles around the base to keep it "pure" and free of honky tonks."¹² As has been noted in Chapter One, there was a strong desire by area leaders to keep the County from becoming another "Junction City." The results of this action are still in evidence. During the late 1950s, protests from Saline County kept the base from getting its own liquor store.

On August 11, 1942, the base acquired 480 more acres of land for \$56,434. This brought the size of the base to between 2,400 and 2,600 acres in size.¹³

At this time, construction had progressed to the stage that it was beginning to look like a military base. There were to be two runways 10,000 feet in length and two runways 7,500 feet long with twelve connecting taxi strips. The concrete apron was 4,000 by 600 feet and the buildings sat on 365 acres.¹⁴

What kind of buildings were constructed has been hard to determine. The buildings pointed out to this writer as being left over from World War II are on wooden stilts at least one foot off the ground. This would seem to indicate that the base was located on swampy ground. (The area was considered to be a flood plain of the Smoky Hill River.) The quality of the buildings is also of interest because during the night of June 16, 1943, a "typical summer storm" hit Salina and the base. "Several" buildings, which included at least one barracks, fell down with no injuries reported.¹⁵ No pictures of the base during this period have been found; however, the World War II structures still standing are long, narrow one-story affairs.

¹²Salina (KS) Journal, June 3, 1942. As of September 1, 1982, there was only one liquor store in the area and a convenience store where 3.2% beer could be obtained.

¹³Salina (KS) Journal, August 11, 1942.

¹⁴"Wings Over Kansas," KHQ, vol. 25, p. 348.

¹⁵Salina (KS) Journal, June 17, 1943. The kind of buildings will be brought up in greater detail in Chapter III.

Just what the War Department was planning for the base was open to speculation. The Salina Journal announced on September 12, 1942 that the base was designated a "super port," one of three in the Second Air Force area which would receive planes dubbed "Sky Dreadnaughts" and capable of carrying 400 men. The field was to be capable of handling blind landings and would have runways 600 feet wide. The idea of a large base seems to have caught the public's imagination, because on October 5 the Salina Journal heralded it as one of the three largest in the United States, with 583 acres of paved land. On October 8, 1942, the Salina Advertiser-Sun announced that "when completed, the base will become one of the world's largest. The largest ever-made will be the runways with combined length of 35,300 feet which with the apron and taxiways will contain 700,000 square yards of concrete pavement."¹⁶

Originally, it appears that the War Department had intended to complete construction by September 15, 1942, but the Salina Journal announced on January 8, 1944 that construction was nearing completion,¹⁷ nearly two years after construction had started. Interestingly enough, a little over a year later, the AAF would start phasing out activities at the Dodge City (KS) Army Air Field, its purpose in the war effort accomplished.¹⁸

OQ Gunnery Range

Salvo, the base newspaper, featured an article on October 9, 1943 about the gunnery range and only mentioned that it was located somewhere near the base. At this time, twenty-one men were stationed there to maintain it, working two

¹⁶Salina (KS) Journal, September 12 and October 5, 1942 and the Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, October 8, 1942. To the best of this writer's knowledge, not even the C-5A in use today can carry 400 men and it is the largest aircraft flying.

¹⁷Salina (KS) Journal, June 17, 1943.

¹⁸"Wings Over Kansas," KHQ, vol. 25, p. 348.

fts, sixteen hours a day.¹⁹

It was not until February 16, 1945 that the Salina Journal took note of the Range and then only that the War Department had announced that 32,000 acres had been transferred from Camp Phillips to the air base for use as a bombing range and air-to-ground gunnery range for the B-29s stationed at the base. This transfer involved only the land not used by the Prisoner of War (POW) camp, the Camp Phillips Hospital, and the cantonment.²⁰

At the same time, Col. Ralph W. Rodieck, Base Commander, warned civilians against trespassing on the Range proper due to the dangers involved. He publicly informed the farmers, who may have dreamed of purchasing the land (in some cases, repurchasing their land which had been condemned in early 1942) due to reduced activity on Camp Phillips, that they would have to wait until at least the end of the war²¹ to possibly reclaim the land for agricultural purposes.

From May, 1979 to February, 1981, this writer was assigned to the Range as clerk/receptionist. From time to time, he came in contact with farmers who recalled with bitterness how the Army had shoved the owners off of the land and let it lie, seemingly dormant, after purchasing it for between \$1 and \$15 an acre.

Today, little remains of the World War II era there. The POW camp bordered what has become the rifle range on the east and was one mile north of the Falun Road which, until the 1960s, was the main entrance to the Range. The foundations

¹⁹Salvo, October 9, 1943. The Operations Center was situated in what had been the Camp Phillips Warehouse area according to Mr. Royal Oakes in a letter to this writer. Private Oakes was stationed at Camp Phillips in 1944.

²⁰Salina (KS) Journal, February 16, 1945.

²¹Ibid.

operations building, a barracks, and the main control tower still exist. The writer learned that before the advent of jets, the bombers began their runs over the town of Marquette to the south. It appears that the construction was of a temporary nature because the foundations were thin and probably not reinforced with steel. Today, everything has been moved to the north side of the range, a distance of about six miles. The only remaining structure of the camp, a guard tower, stands deserted in a field. There are deserted bunkers at the north entrance to the Army National Guard rifle range.

Operations

The base, built to handle heavy bombers, was staffed with a complement of 1000 enlisted men, 500 officers, and a 176-bed hospital.²² Before the war ended, Smoky Hill distinguished itself as a B-29 training base, but until the plane became available, its mission was to serve as a processing and staging area for bombardment groups going overseas.²³

Name

Before the base could settle down to doing its part to win the war, the matter of its name had to be settled for purposes of identification. In its early days, its "project designation" by the US Army Corps of Engineers, which was charged with supervising construction, was Smoky Hill Air Base, while the Army called it the Army Air Base at Salina, Kansas. The confusion was three-fold. First, there was an army air field at Salinas, California. Second, there was the larger Camp Phillips near the base. In both cases, supplies for the base were frequently misrouted to either Salinas, CA or Camp Phillips. Finally,

²² Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB, AL. Cited reference is undated and untitled, on file in author's notes.

²³ "Wings Over Kansas," KHQ, vol. 25, p. 348.

to the fact that air bases were usually named for cities or deceased
 people, some supplies never got delivered when the Corps of Engineers project
 was used, as Smoky Hill, Kansas did not exist and no "Smoky" Hill ever
 performed a heroic deed while serving the United States as a military pilot or
 known as an aviation pioneer. Not to be overlooked in this matter is the
 considerable confusion that existed between the various War Department offices
 that had to deal with the base.

Congressman Carlson announced on November 12, 1942 that he had heard that
 the base would be designated "Smoky Hill Army Air Field" and would be the first
 named for a geographical feature. However, Lt. Col. William Cahill, Base
 Commander, announced that he preferred the name "Salina Army Air Field."²⁴ When
 the base was declared operational on December 23, 1942, it was called "Smoky
 Hill Army Air Field."²⁵

Salvo informed its readers on February 22, 1943 that the "Salina Army Air
 Field" had changed its name to Smoky Hill Army Air Field. "The local citizens
 always called it that but spelled it S-M-O-K-E-Y. . . ." ²⁶ Where the author
 of this article got his information and what took the paper so long to discover
 that the name of the base had been changed is unknown. Research has failed to
 come up with anything to indicate that the Smoky Hill Range has ever been spelled
 with an "e". There is a Smokey Mountain Range, but that is in another region
 of the country.

Military Operation

Although the base was not operational on August 1, 1942, Lt. Col. William

²⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, January 13, 1942.

²⁵ "Wings Over Kansas," KHQ, vol. 25, p. 348.

²⁶ Salvo, February 23, 1943.

Phill, Base Commander; Capt. J. E. Matthews, pilot; and Capt. Paul Long, into a three-seat O-47 observation plane (with a 975 horsepower engine), which was considered obsolete, based at the Salina Municipal Airport, and landed on an unfinished runway at the base, touching down at 10:33 A.M. Colonel Phill regarded the landing as a success. At this time, the runway was half completed and only the Post Headquarters Building had been completed.²⁷

From this time on, the tempo at the base increased. On September 10, 1942, the 376th Base Headquarters Squadron was activated and organized to operate the base with a complement of thirteen officers and six enlisted men.²⁸ This was followed seven days later by an announcement that a sub-depot under Maj.

War E. Stanton had been established to provide maintenance and supply to the aircraft connected with the base.²⁹

Finally on September 24, 1942, a B-17 landed at the base carrying officers who had come to inspect the base. This B-17 was the first actual combat plane to land at the base, whose runways were still unfinished.³⁰ This was followed

in December with the arrival of a flight of four-engined Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers.³¹ It appears that there may have been a few planes on base before December. Two combat units had been organized on base in October and

The Salina Journal reported on November 21 that a plane from the base was missing in Louisiana. Hugh E. Phelan, then a Second Lieutenant and a B-17 Bombardier, was on base in November, 1942 and his crew did some flying in their plane prior

²⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 6, 1942.

²⁸ Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center.

²⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, September 17, 1942.

³⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, September 24, 1942.

³¹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 3, 1959.

leaving Smoky Hill for overseas on December 10.³²

There was some training activity underway in November as is evidenced by Phelan's letter. The 21st Bomb Wing and the 346th Bomb Group were on base this time.³³ However, it was not until December 17, 1942 that any local newspaper picked up on this. On that date, the Salina Advertiser-Sun did an article on the training that the 21st Bomb Wing under the command of Colonel A. F. Penberger was undergoing.³⁴

On July 19, 1943, the Salina Journal announced that the first B-29 to use Smoky Hill's runways had landed to refuel. At long last, the plane for which the base had been designed put in its first appearance³⁵ and was greeted with the same fanfare that is accorded the sighting of the first robin in Spring.

In September, 1943, Lt. Col. Paul Tibbetts landed the first B-29 assigned to the base as a member of the 58th Bomb Wing, which was the first B-29-equipped unit to go overseas.³⁶ Later, Colonel Tibbetts would go into training at Hagerman AAF, Utah and from there would command the plane that dropped the atomic nuclear bomb in war on Japan in 1945.

Throughout the month of September, B-29s kept arriving until there were a record 252 B-29s on base and all were assigned to the 58th Bomb Wing. The XXth Bomb Command was probably on base at this time and later gained notoriety as the first B-29 unit to bomb the mainland of Japan. The unit had been or-

³² Hugh E. Phelan letter, undated, but received by this writer on August 26, 1942 and on file in author's notes.

³³ The reader may notice that a unit is designated "Bomb" or "Bombardment." They mean the same with the latter being formal. The AAF and later AF, seem to have used both interchangeably.

³⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 17, 1942.

³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, July 19, 1943.

³⁶ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, April 15, 1948.

and trained at Smoky Hill.³⁷ This was in addition to the complement of 17s already training there.³⁸

Hospital

In the next chapter, a rumor that Smoky Hill Army Air Field was a convalescent center for personnel suffering from emotional disorders will surface. It has already been noted that the base had a 176-bed hospital. There was also a large hospital at Camp Phillips during this period. On base, the hospital had a four-part program for convalescents. The reason for this program was that the Army felt that after an operation or recovery from an illness, there would be a better way of preparing personnel for a return to duty than just taking furlough which the convalescent often used for "running around" his home town area visiting friends rather than letting himself heal.

Rather than grant leave, patients were divided into four classes for training purposes. Class four was for those who had recently had an operation and were unable to get out of bed. For them, classes were held in the wards. When an individual could get out of bed, he was moved to Class three and involved in calisthenics, woodworking, etc. When a patient had almost recovered but still required medical supervision, he was placed in Class two, taken out of the ward, and moved into a barracks. Class one was the last step before discharge and return to duty. Classes one and two were similar and usually involved the patients doing yard work or other similar projects.³⁹ Apparently, this program evolved into something larger because the Salina Advertiser-Sun reported on August 9, 1945 that one of the activities this group was involved

³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, June 16, 1944.

³⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, February 6, 1948.

³⁹ Salvo, June 3, 1944.

digging a swimming pool behind the Officers' Club.⁴⁰

The irony to this (besides the enlisted personnel digging a swimming pool for officers without fiscal compensation) was that two years earlier there had been an outbreak of polio in Salina and the troops at Camp Phillips had been forbidden to use the local swimming pools. However, Maj. A. A. Towner, Surgeon, approved continued use of local swimming pools by Smoky Hill personnel. He did not feel that one reported case of polio constituted an epidemic.⁴¹ The concern then was legitimate. President Franklin Roosevelt had been struck with polio and was considered to be lucky in that he lived and retained partial use of his legs. This period was before Dr. Jonas Salk developed the vaccine and there was little that could be done for polio victims, if they

Accidents

The exigencies brought on by the hasty demands of war-time conditions often led to accidents. During the war, planes from Smoky Hill were involved in at least eleven accidents. Three involved the loss of no life. Smoky Hill's first reported accident occurred on July 29, 1943 when a small training plane had a forced landing three miles west of McPherson, KS. There were two men on board and neither was injured. Sadly, the last accident involving a Smoky Hill plane occurred on July 9, 1945 when a B-17 returning to the base from Monroe, crashed three miles south of the base at 2:20 A.M. Ten men were killed and seven were injured.⁴²

In less than three years of operation, the base lost sixty men and eight

⁴⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 9, 1945.

⁴¹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 6, 1943.

⁴² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 29, 1943 and Salina (KS) Journal, 27 and 28, 1945.

craft. Perhaps the most amusing accident, if there is such a thing, occurred May, 1945 when a Smoky Hill B-29 made an emergency landing in an Ottawa, KS field owing to a low fuel supply. It was not until July 28 that the plane was flown out by a team from the base. No one had been injured.⁴³ Whether or not the number of crashes by Smoky Hill planes was within the normal range of loss for World War II training bases is difficult to surmise. About two of the accidents occurred in Kansas. It is possible that there may have been more accidents, that for the lack of space, did not make the local news. The majority of reported crashes involved the B-17, which seems odd since the B-29 was a new plane and surely not all of the bugs had been ironed out. This writer noticed that if the Salina Advertiser-Sun did not pick up the news about an accident, the Salina Journal did and vice versa. Nevertheless, it is easy to speculate that there may have been accidents that were not picked up by either paper.

C-47s

The attention of the world seems to have centered more on the bombers and fighters than on the cargo planes which transported men, parts, food, and supplies to wherever they were needed. The Salina Journal featured an article on June 25, 1945 informing the public that a much smaller fleet of C-47s had been received and was operating from the base since October, 1944.⁴⁴

Training and Organization

As the end of the war was in sight when the Second Air Force, of which Smoky Hill Army Air Field was a part, directed its bases to start training its mili-

⁴³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 9, 1945.

⁴⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, June 25, 1945.

personnel to be useful in the civilian world after the war.⁴⁵ Also, with a move towards scaling down training activities, the AAF inaugurated a reorganization of base units to correspond with the work being done by personnel. When this was started, units had personnel doing work which overlapped the functions of other units creating confusion and inefficiency. Army Air Force Regulation (AAFR) 20-50, which directed the change stated in part: "When the degree of the geographical dispersion of an AAF base unit is such that military administration will be facilitated by subdivision of the unit, lettered squadrons will be organized. . . ."⁴⁶

By August 13, 1945, the end of World War II was in sight. Germany had surrendered in May permitting the Allies to devote their full energies to defeating Japan. Because the B-29 was primarily used against the Japanese, nothing had changed until August when it was announced that Smoky Hill Army Air Field was changing from an OTU mission (preparing groups for overseas duty) to a CCTS mission (concentrating on keeping the plane crews together).⁴⁷

Commanders

Undoubtedly, no one influenced attitudes more than the man who, at various times, was called Station Chief, Commandant of the Air Field, and Base Commander. The kind of attitude Salina took towards the base depended in considerable measure on how well the public took towards that man and how well he accepted the situation. Between April, 1942 and September 1, 1945, the base had seven Commanders, including Captain Long.

⁴⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, February 7, 1945. This is not as absurd as it first appears. During the days of the New Deal, it was the Army who had been charged with the supervision of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps.

⁴⁶ Salvo, April 1, 1945.

⁴⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 13, 1945.

little is known about Capt. Paul M. Long which has not already been pre-
 in this chapter. He was County Engineer for Jackson County, Missouri
 (City) and a reserve officer called to active duty in 1941. Construction
 of Hill was his second wartime assignment. Whether he had any military
 personnel under his command has not been determined and his primary role appears
 to have been supervisory.⁴⁸ Considering the detailed information distributed
 in local newspapers, it would appear that the Captain enjoyed a healthy
 relationship with the community.

The first man actually designated to command the base was Lt. Col. William
 Cahill, a reserve officer, from Savannah, Georgia, who had lived in Cincin-
 Ohio. He arrived in Salina on July 3, 1942 from Biggs Field, El Paso,
 where he had served as executive officer and Commander. Upon his arrival,
 he discovered that there was a housing shortage which would make it impossible
 to move his family to the area for a while.⁴⁹

On December 18, 1942, Col. Carlton F. Bond arrived to replace Colonel
 Cahill as Base Commander. Colonel Cahill's next assignment was not announced.⁵⁰
 Colonel Bond was from Syracuse, New York. Several weeks earlier, he had visited
 the Base on an inspection tour. He was a veteran flyer having logged more than
 4,000 hours in the air and had joined the Caterpillar Club in 1937 when he
 bled out of a troubled plane in Arizona.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Salvo, May 31, 1943. By the time of this article, he had been promoted
 Major.

⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 9, 1942 and Salina (KS) Journal,
 July 7, 1942.

⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, December 19, 1942. In "Wings Over Kansas," Autumn,
 1949, it was stated that Col. Cahill became Commander of Walker AAF, KS on
 December 19, 1942.

⁵¹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 19, 1943 and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun,
 January 25, 1943. The Caterpillar Club was a paper organization to honor those
 military personnel who were forced to leave a troubled plane by parachute.

Under Colonel Bond's leadership, base construction progressed towards completion and Smoky Hill received the first B-29s in 1943. On October 11, he was transferred to another assignment and replaced by Col. Raphael Baez, Jr. Colonel Baez came from Great Falls, Montana to take command. He had been commissioned in 1917 and had logged over 5,000 hours in the air.⁵² About three months later, Colonel Baez was on his way to Ardmore AAF, Oklahoma and was replaced by Col. Arthur J. Melanson. What happened to cause this change in command has not been determined. Colonel Melanson assumed command of the base on January 5, 1944 after being on base as a member of the XXth Bomber Command. He had joined the base after having opened Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho and turning it into a model field in the Second Air Force. Before this, he had opened the heavy bomber base at Mountain Home, Idaho. Like two of his predecessors, Colonels Bond and Baez, he had been commissioned in 1917.⁵³

As Commander of Smoky Hill, Colonel Melanson seems to have followed the policy established by two of his predecessors; maintaining a low profile with the local civilian population. Training with the B-29 was going full blast and the Army, which seems to have opened Camp Phillips to train men for the European Theater of Operations, was scaling down operations there which would give the base Commander greater autonomy in not having a General next door to worry about.

Colonel Cahill had kept the civilian population appraised of developments at the base as they occurred. The three Colonels who succeeded him either ignored Salina or were ignored by Salina. People this writer talked to do not remember the World War II Commanders; only that they knew a lot about what was

⁵² Salina (KS) Journal, November 10, 1943.

⁵³ Salina (KS) Journal, January 5, 1944.

through 1942 and then there was a literal blackout until the middle of 1944. Some of them thought that it was due to the nature of the training going on at the base and others thought that the Commanders saw themselves as being too busy and made no attempt to let the area get to know them.

A change in relations with the community was in the offing on July 10, 1944, though no one knew it at the time. Almost unnoticed, Lt. Col. Ralph W. Rodieck replaced Colonel Melanson as Base Commander. Prior to this, he had served as an assistant to Colonel Melanson.⁵⁴ Colonel Melanson's next assignment was not known and he vanished from the sight of Salina.

One of the first changes implemented by Colonel Rodieck was to make the position of Deputy Commander a part of the formal staff at the base. Lt. Col. A. Shedd was the first Deputy Commander to benefit from this action.⁵⁵ Up to this, the Deputy Commander was apparently just a "fifth wheel" with no part in the operation of the base.

It was not until October 13, 1944 that the public learned more about Colonel Rodieck. On that date, Maj. Gen. Uzel G. Ent, Commanding General of the Second Air Force, announced Colonel Rodieck's promotion to full Colonel. Colonel Rodieck was a native of Palestine, Texas and had enlisted in the regular army August 6, 1930. In March, 1933, he entered flight training and received a pilot's commission in 1939.⁵⁶

As will become evident later, Colonel Rodieck seems to have made himself more available to the local press than his predecessors and as a result, seems to have been liked by Salina. His picture frequently appeared in the newspapers.

⁵⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, July 10, 1944.

⁵⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, July 15, 1944.

⁵⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, October 13, 1944.

the time and as will be noted later, Mrs. Rodieck was one of the sponsors of the 1944 base Christmas party. Some of this may be attributed to a couple of other factors already mentioned such as the fact that the Japanese were being acquainted with the B-29 which was no longer a military secret and the Army's presence at Camp Phillips was being reduced.

The last Commander of this period was Col. William J. Bohnaker, a native of Platteville, Wisconsin. He replaced Colonel Rodieck, who left for Washington, D.C. on June 20, 1945. Colonel Bohnaker had been rumored to be taking command for several weeks. He had been a B-17 pilot with the 19th Bombardment Group assigned to Clark Field, Philippine Islands when the Japanese attacked on December 8, 1941. This group limped out of there to Java and to Australia. This was his second tour of duty on Smoky Hill. In August, 1943, he was Deputy Commander of the 73rd Bomb Wing when it was assigned to Smoky Hill. Later, he became Deputy Commander of the 472nd Bomb Group, also assigned to the base.⁵⁷ It is assumed that Colonel Bohnaker was a B-29 pilot by this time as the 73rd Bomb Wing was a B-29 unit.

Community Relations

Although a military assignment is often what the member makes it, the community near the base often plays a role. If the community is at least neutral or cooperative towards the base, morale on the base tends to be high. If the community is hostile or negative towards the base, however, friction is often the result and contributes to low morale on the base.

From the start, Salina seemed to be interested in its southern neighbor.

The completion date for the base is a secret, but the arrival of Colonel Cahill would seem to indicate that it is getting closer. . . . This is Salina's base."⁵⁸

⁵⁷Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 21, 1945 and Salina (KS) Journal, June 20, 1945.

⁵⁸Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 9, 1942, editorial.

Salvo, the base newspaper, commented about Salina in its February 23, 1943
 en: ". . .The war did not change Salina at first. . . .True, it knew no
 dent for the situation of thousands of Soldiers in its midst, and also
 that in some cases, the situation was not handled with the most possible
 but that was unusual. . . ." This article noted that Salina had built
 Servicemen's Centers and, in most cases, the merchants were honest.⁵⁹
 unfortunate that Salvo did not go into greater detail about the dishonest
 ants as it might have provided some insight into the problems that military
 panel faced in their dealings with these Salina businesses.

Security

The interest that existed in the base and the war effort was demonstrated
 the Salina Journal announced on November 23, 1942 that "Clip Your Lip
 had begun at the base and the cooperation of the people of Salina was
 ht. People were urged to "stop careless talk, preserve secrets, and avoid
 gossip" about what was going on at the air base.⁶⁰ Hereafter, although
 le, like all residents of small communities, probably knew what was going
 at the base, little of it reached the media in print.

Open Houses

When Colonel Cahill landed the first plane at the base on August 1, 1942,
 admitted that the public was curious about what was going on and that he
 nued to hold Open Houses from time to time to acquaint the public with the
 se.⁶¹ Whether he intended to hold an Open House before construction was com-
 ted is doubtful and it is doubtful that he knew how long his tenure at the

⁵⁹Salvo, February 22, 1943.

⁶⁰Salina (KS) Journal, November 23, 1942.

⁶¹Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 6, 1942.

ase would be. Unfortunately for him and Salina, he was transferred in
er.

It fell to Colonel Bond to open the base to the public. On June 30, 1943,
Salina Journal announced that the base would be open to the public on July 4,
from one to five in the afternoon. Transportation would be provided for
who arrived on foot at the base. No cameras would be permitted.⁶²
Apparently, the first Open House went off without a hitch. The 16th Air-
Squadron put on a show for an estimated ten thousand civilians.⁶³ The
interesting thing about this Open House is that the local press did not mention
Colonel Bond's name in reference to this or few other events held at the base
during this period. Whether he assigned the project to subordinates and let
them run the project as they saw fit or perhaps the press did not get along with
him is open to speculation. For a man who was Commander of Smoky Hill for about
ten months, such anonymity is unusual.

A little over a year later, Colonel Rodieck announced an Open House for
August 1 in honor of the thirty-seventh anniversary of the army air forces and
opened the public to the base. This event would also honor the thirty-fifth
anniversary of the purchase of the first airplane by the Army. The gates would
open at 1:00 P.M. and there would be a formal retreat at 4:30 P.M. No cameras
would be allowed on base. The runway areas would not be open to the public as
the training schedule would not be interrupted, according to Colonel Rodieck.⁶⁴

⁶²Salina (KS) Journal, June 30, 1943.

⁶³Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 8, 1943.

⁶⁴Salina (KS) Journal, July 28, 1944. Somehow, this "no camera" edict
does not conform to the picture of the GI of World War II armed with a Kodak.
One wonders if the military personnel assigned to Smoky Hill were permitted
to have cameras. So far, this writer has been unable to locate any pictures
from the base during the World War II era.

A low voter turnout was reported for the 1944 Kansas primary election held Tuesday, August 1. Despite that fact, as well as the fact that the day was one of the hottest days reported to that time for that summer, a large crowd gathered at the base for an Open House/War Bond Drive.⁶⁵

On May 23, 1945, the Salina Journal announced yet another affair which appeared to be better planned. The public was to be allowed to see a B-29 bomber at the base the following Sunday from one to four-thirty in the afternoon.

Planes were to be stationed at the east (main) gate for entrance to the field.

It was not to be an open field day as normal training operations would be under-

⁶⁶ Here was a chance to see the largest plane in the world, which was helping win the war, on a Sunday when most people did not have to work. However,

there was an "added," unannounced feature. The Salina Advertiser-Sun revealed

May 31 that the showing had been part of a war bond drive. Ten thousand

people turned out to see the plane and Capt. Curtis L. Arthur was the master of ceremonies.⁶⁷

The last Open House of this period received little attention in the local press and was held on Sunday, July 15, 1945. Five thousand people attended and the primary attraction was a glimpse of a B-29 interior.⁶⁸

Open Houses are a good public relations tool and the turnout can be indicative of the public's interest in the activities of the base. When one considers the fact that Salina entered this period with a population of around twenty thousand people and that fuel and tire rationing were in effect, a ten thousand

⁶⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, August 2, 1944.

⁶⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, May 23, 1945.

⁶⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 31, 1945.

⁶⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, July 16, 1945.

was phenomenal! Neither the Salina Journal or Salina Advertiser-Sun indicated how the attendance figures were determined.

Recognition

Interest in this period when seven men commanded the air base, newspaper indicates that only Col. Ralph W. Rodieck received any special mention in rapport with Salina. Sometime in the middle of November, 1944, the Chamber of Commerce presented him with a silver tray in appreciation of the good will existing between the military personnel at the base and the civil population of Salina. The opportunity was also used to congratulate him on his recent promotion to full Colonel.⁶⁹ Colonel Rodieck became the first and last Commander to be so honored until the 1950s.

Although Salinans basically seemed to receive the base with open arms, the Salina Journal reported on November 29, 1944, that the American Legion had ordered 400 presents to give the patients at the base hospital for Christmas but few had responded. People were reminded of their sons who were in the hospital and possibly spending Christmas in the hospital on a base near a strange town. However, all was not bad for the men, because on December 20, the Salina Journal announced that the patients of the base hospital would be the special guests of the American Legion show that was to be held the following night in Memorial Hall.⁷⁰

Then just before Christmas, the public was informed that the Blue Pacific had been placed "Off Limits" to commissioned personnel at the air base.⁷¹ It was noted that this action occurred after the XXth and XXIst Bomber Commands

⁶⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 16, 1944.

⁷⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, November 29 and December 20, 1944. Memorial Hall was the city auditorium. Although it still stands, it has been replaced by Bi-Centennial Center in east Salina.

⁷¹ Salina (KS) Journal, December 11, 1944. The Blue Pacific was a supper club located on east US 40 or Pacific Street near the junction of Ohio Street.

pleted training and left for overseas duty!

There was a general interest in the base and the accomplishments of the which had trained there. It is doubtful that the two local papers would printed so much about the base had there been a lack of interest. Much of interest was undoubtedly due to the war and the fact that many Salinans had relatives in the armed forces. On the basis of what Roy Bailey and Knox, editors of the Salina Journal and Salina Advertiser-Sun, respectively, in their papers, one could assume that there was some interest and support for the air field. How deep this support was can not be determined but the range ranged from Salina's pride in being a home of the XXth Bomber Command which bombed Tokyo to a plane that had been on the base, running out of fuel in 72 Perhaps the overall attitude of the public was summed up in a Salina Advertiser-Sun editorial during the last week of the war: ". . . Word that the base to remain open is good news for Salina. . . The soldiers have been assets in many ways to the community." 73

Personnel

Information about the personnel assigned to Smoky Hill during this period is minimal. When the first soldiers arrived is difficult to determine because the Salina Advertiser-Sun claimed one date and the Air Force claims another one. According to the Salina Advertiser-Sun, Maj. Alonzo A. Towner, a surgeon, arrived during the week of July 9, 1942 with the idea of "growing up with the base." He was followed less than a week later by three men who arrived on July 15, 1942 from Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona and reported to Colonel Cahill. The first enlisted men on base were: Sgt. Horance A. Blagg, Sgt. William J. Dulzer,

⁷² Salina (KS) Journal, November 28 and December 20, 1944.

⁷³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 30, 1945, editorial.

and TSgt Raymond O'Brien. Sgt. John D. Nunnery joined them a week later. Because construction was still underway, they had to live in town. The first troops did not arrive until September 10, 1942, at which time most of the work was nearing completion. The latter is in line with the Air Force view that thirteen officers and six enlisted men arrived on that date.⁷⁴ Just what the difference was between the four men who arrived in July and those who arrived in September is difficult to ascertain. The latter group was housed in three buildings on base and maybe this is the difference. None of the articles made light of the duties the two groups performed in those early days.

In any event, the first arrivals found the base unprepared to receive them because it was not scheduled for opening until December 15. As a result, most of the equipment had to be improvised. Desks and chairs were made from packing boxes and filing cabinets were fashioned from cardboard boxes.⁷⁵

Before these men arrived, there were civilians working on the base in construction jobs and there seem to have been Military Police (MPs) patrolling the base, because they arrested several workers for trespassing on the base during duty hours. The workers had thought that they were immune to arrest because they worked for the government.⁷⁶ (It is possible that the MPs were assigned Camp Phillips as in those days the MPs belonged to the Army and were detached to guard the AAF.) Two and one-half years later, a warehouse worker, a civilian purchasing agent, and a stock clerk were arrested and charged with stealing 1,100 and 1,350 pairs of sunglasses valued at \$3,500. They were sched-

⁷⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 9 and 15, 1942, and Salina (KS) Journal, May 6, 1948.

⁷⁵ Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center.

⁷⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, June 19, 1942.

sentencing in April of 1944.⁷⁷

This appears to have been an exception to the norm, because on April 26, forty-three civilian employees at the base were awarded the primary AAF award of civilian service for faithful, meritorious, and exceptional service.⁷⁸ The behavior of the military personnel assigned to the base seems to have been average. Awards for above average service were normal fare in press coverage of the base for this period. They were conferred at military retreats which occurred at 4:30 P.M., which seems to have been the time the normal business day ended at the base.

Some incidents reported were not normal. The Salina Advertiser-Sun reported in its October 15, 1942 edition that a 38-year-old private committed suicide by jumping down in front of an approaching train one mile south of the base. Then on August 9, 1943, the Salina Journal reported that a warrant had been issued for the arrest of a private stationed at Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska for the theft of arms and ammunition while stationed at Smoky Hill. The last incident on this level was reported in the Salina Journal on March 13, 1944 when two soldiers were caught in a car at 11:30 P.M. in downtown Salina the night after that had been reported stolen from the base at 10:00 P.M. Unfortunately for the men, the car belonged to a Colonel.⁷⁹

One of the stranger incidents reported occurred on or about May 11, 1944 when 2nd Lt. Warren Kraft, a navigator on a B-17 bomber, fell to his death through the open bomb bay doors of his plane near Junction City, KS.⁸⁰ The

⁷⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, January 5 and 8, and March 10, 1944.

⁷⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 26, 1944.

⁷⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, October 15, 1942 and Salina (KS) Journal, August 9, 1943 and March 14, 1944.

⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, May 11, 1944.

ation released only said that the plane was on a routine training mission.

Courts-Martial

During this period, three courts-martial were reported in the local press.

Three trials occurred between July 1, 1944 and July 5, 1945. One was held February 17, 1945 and merely mentioned the Private's name and the sentence of death. No additional information was provided.⁸¹

World War II was the era in which pilots delighted in flying under such conditions as the Golden Gate bridge. Less well publicized was the interest of pilots in skimming houses, flying at tree-top level, etc. On July 1, 1944, a pilot was found guilty of flying his B-17 low over thickly populated Kansas. He was found guilty, fined one thousand dollars plus no promotion for six months after he became eligible, and given a reprimand.⁸²

The last reported disciplinary action was reported in the Salina Advertiser-Sun on July 5, 1945 when a Private was found guilty of the statutory raping of a 16-year-old Salina girl. He received a sentence of fifteen years at hard labor, forfeiture of all pay, and a dishonorable discharge.⁸³

Negroes

When Colonel Cahill took command of the base on July 7, 1942, he informed the troops that a small percentage of the troops assigned to the base would be assigned to work on farms and serve as defense experts, jobs for which they had been found well

⁸¹ Salina (KS) Journal, February 18, 1945.

⁸² Salina (KS) Journal, July 1, 1944. "Buzzing" as it has come to be called is a popular sport in Salina, only jet aircraft makes determination of the target party more difficult. While assigned to the Weapons Range, this writer had to summon the Range Officer or Commander to the phone many a time because a farmer or housewife felt that a plane had dived at them.

⁸³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 5, 1945.

ted.⁸⁴ Negroes were present in Salina before the war and there appears to have been no overt racial segregation in the city at this time. Blacks remain the minority in the city to this day

During World War II, Negroes were confined to the 49th Aviation Squadron. It is known that sometime in late August, 1943, the 49th celebrated its anniversary.⁸⁵ Whether this unit was part of the contingent organized September 10, 1942 or whether it was organized on another base and transferred to Smoky Hill is unknown.

On June 23, 1943, four squadrons or 104 military personnel participated in a drill competition. The Salina Journal's headline was "WAACS ARE SECOND" and went on in the article to report that the "Negro boys of the 49th Aviation Squadron" won the competition. However, the Salina Advertiser-Sun's headline a day later was: "Aviation Squadron Wins Meet" and went on to explain that the Guards came in third but that the competition had been fierce.⁸⁶ Who came fourth was not mentioned nor was the fourth group's name.

Women

As was noted in the above paragraph, the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) was on the base during the war. This group was organized on the base May 1, 1943 as the 755th WAAC Post Headquarters Company under the command of Lt. Virginia A. Barton.⁸⁷

The Salina Journal announced on August 5, 1943 that 120 women would be inducted into the Army of the United States, Women's Army Corps (WAC) component.

⁸⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, July 7, 1942.

⁸⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, August 28, 1943.

⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, June 23, 1943, and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 24, 1943.

⁸⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 13, 1943.

are 140 members in this Company, but twenty were not planning to take as some were going home for family reasons. The actual number who to serve in the regular Army dwindled. Just before retreat on Friday, August 6, 1943, seventy-seven women of the 755th WAC Post Headquarters took the enlistment oath. There were twenty-two more women who were on temporary duty in Colorado or on furlough and they were expected to oath upon returning to the base.⁸⁸ In joining the Regular Army, little for the women. They continued to live in the same barracks. Their files did change in that the "auxiliary" was dropped and the full Army adopted.

Military Courtesy

Shortly after the women joined the regular Army, Colonel Bond, Base Commander, decided that the base needed to become more military in appearance. He felt that some military personnel had become lax about saluting and other courtesies. The Colonel announced a crackdown on this.⁸⁹ Unfortunately, there was no followup on how this crackdown turned out, nor were any specifics noted.

Activities on Base

There were diversions on base which livened up the normal routine. Much was made over the fact that Clark Gable, a movie actor, was on a plane on base for three hours refueling. Later, attention focused on General MacArthur's plane, a B-17 converted to his use, spending a day on base en route to the Pacific. Of interest was the visit by the two Royal Air Force

⁸⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, August 5, 1943 and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 12, 1943. There was some confusion in the press about what the "A" in stood for--Air or Army. This writer can find nothing to indicate that the was a formal part of the AAF until it became independent of the Army in 1947.

⁸⁹ Salvo, August 21, 1943.

who spent a day on base telling how things were in the European Theater of Operations. Finally, after dreaming about celebrities, the base got one to it. Hank Greenberg, a former Detroit Tigers baseball player, was sent to the base as a special services officer.⁹⁰

Although little was mentioned about them, there were Officers and NCO Clubs which some personnel visited for a drink or two before going home. However, near the end of the war, although no one knew that the end was coming, the building burned down during the night of January 18, 1945. Damage amounted to \$10,000 for the building and \$20,000 for its contents. However, the art center, which was located in the building, survived intact.⁹¹ What the NCOs utilized as a club of their own after this fire has not been determined from available information.

Waiting for celebrities to visit the base or haunting the clubs did not have the fancy of the personnel, they could get involved in musical groups as Charles Craig of the 49th Aviation Squadron was organizing them on base. Two years after the base was activated, a 2,000 volume library was opened. Orders for books were received, it would have 5,000 volumes, receive fifty magazines, and twenty leading newspapers. There appears to have been a contest for the best base war song because the Salina Advertiser-Sun reported on July 8, 1943, that Gerald Dillon, editor of Salvo, the base newspaper, had written such a song for the base. In addition, there were USO shows and movies. The ultimate was a "Sweetheart of the Field" contest being held on base and sponsored by Salvo. It was also announced that if the WACs desired a similar contest for their boyfriends, the paper would sponsor a contest for them.⁹² How this

⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, February 5, 1944.

⁹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 19, 1945.

⁹² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 10, 1944.

turned out and whether or not the WACs got into the act has not been confirmed as the local newspapers did not follow up on this and there are few proof Salvo in existence.

There were various non-celebrity visitors to the base. A group of school children visited the base in November, 1943. Admission to the base had been closed during the preceding months due to the war mission of the base.

That same month, the base dental clinic hosted a meeting of the Saline Dental Society. One year later, Congressman Carlson visited the base, accompanied by Colonel Rodieck, as he visited other Federal activities in his district.⁹³

Driving

Veterans of military service know that the adage about the grass being greener on the other side of the fence is especially true in the military when it comes to jobs. One of the seemingly "easy" jobs to get into relates to driving. Many people at Smoky Hill applied for driving jobs without really knowing how to drive. Rather than continue rejecting applications for those who could not drive, the base started a drivers' training course. This course was designed to enable personnel to drive civilian vehicles. Most of the training was conducted at Camp Phillips.⁹⁴

Apparently, the drivers' training course succeeded beyond expectations and within a year later, the base had a reckless driving problem. In an attempt to crack down on this problem, the Provost Marshall's office introduced a point-safety program that was to be rigidly adhered to:

"1. Orientation of all personnel as to the hazards of reckless driving and the disciplinary action which may be taken.

⁹³ Salina (KS) Journal, November 3 and 26, 1943, and November 16, 1944.

⁹⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 10, 1944.

2. Close cooperation with civil authority.
3. Military Police patrol.
4. If advisable, court martial action may be taken.
5. Revocation of the privilege of rationing separately and requiring of both officers and enlisted violators to live on the base.
6. Revoking of the privilege of driving vehicles on and off the base.
7. Forfeiture of gas ration coupons.
8. Impounding of the vehicles."⁹⁵

Morale

Morale was probably as good at Smoky Hill as it was at other military installations during this conflict when there was a rush to organize and train to win the war. There is little evidence available to indicate that morale was good. On the other hand, the things that reached the press indicate that morale was good.

A unique activity by the personnel at the base was reported by the Salina Journal on April 27, 1944. Capt. Herbert C. Rodde, medical supply officer, had to acquire around 1,000 chicks which would be fattened for hospital mess menus. The hospital had a two-acre garden to go along with this project. The profits from this venture were to go into the recreation fund for hospital personnel and medical personnel.⁹⁶ It would seem probable that other units were involved in similar projects. After all, this was in an era in which rationing was in effect. There was not that much to do with one's off-duty time. However, whether any other unit involved itself with raising poultry is open to speculation. No one has mentioned Smoky Hill personnel being awakened with the crowing of roosters instead of with the traditional reveille.

Colonel Rodieck did not become Base Commander until July 10, 1944, but

⁹⁵Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 16, 1945.

⁹⁶Salina (KS) Journal, April 27, 1944.

becoming Commander, he had been a special assistant to Colonel Melanson. Which he had to do with programs concerning morale before he became Commander known. But the Salina Journal reported that the House of Representatives Army Affairs Committee Investigator had visited the base during the week ending September 30, 1944 and had commended the base for its facilities. The base was rated excellent for its cleanliness, food, and morale. "Much credit was given to Colonel Rodieck, commandant at the field and to Lt. Col. Herbert Brillat, commanding officer and surgeon at the hospital. . . ." ⁹⁷

Christmas, 1944 was the third Christmas celebrated at the base and received mention in the Salina Journal. Mrs. Ralph W. Rodieck (the wife of the Base Commander) was President of the Post Women's Club which organized a Christmas party to be held on December 24 at 2:00 P.M. in the base theater for the children of officers and enlisted personnel. Cartoons were to be shown and Santa Claus was to put in an appearance to distribute gifts. Special church services were scheduled. The mess halls were planning to serve a lavish Christmas Day feast which military personnel would be permitted to invite their families or a

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Housing

Smoky Hill Army Air Field was Salina's base. But one area was to cause tension in base/community relations until late 1962. Two reasons given in late 1941 and early 1942 for not giving Salina an air base were its susceptibility to flooding and insufficient housing for a large influx of people. ⁹⁹ The housing problem would be present during the war years, although it would not be a public

⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, September 30, 1944.

⁹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, December 23, 1944.

⁹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, December 29, 1941 and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, January 1, 1942.

But from here on, it would be a thorn in the relations between the base community.

June 6, 1942, the Salina Journal announced that the Salina Chamber of Commerce was conducting a survey of all possible available housing facilities within a five-mile radius of Salina to handle upwards of 20,000 soldiers. This survey included the cities of Minneapolis, Lindsborg, Marquette, Abilene, and McPherson.¹⁰⁰ The writer's estimates conclude that there were at least 40,000 soldiers in the area by the middle of 1943. This figure consists of two divisions of about 15,000 men at Camp Phillips and 5,000 at the air base. It does not include the construction workers who may have been brought into the area or transient military personnel in the area for training purposes.

This article was followed by another one on July 15 which announced that the Army had asked the Office of Price Administration (OPA) to declare Salina a war zone and freeze rents. The Army also asked the government to construct 600 housing units.¹⁰¹

Only the Salina Advertiser-Sun took a stand on this matter. ". . .There are two military installations in Salina. . . .Colonel Cahill, base commander, has asked for six hundred houses funded by the government. . . .The plans for the base seem to indicate that after the war, the base will be here. If this is the case, then the houses should be built."¹⁰²

While researching the base, this writer heard that the market had been such that dirt-floored basements were rented and anything with a roof was deemed suitable to rent. This is believable because the population around a military

¹⁰⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 6, 1942.

¹⁰¹ Salina (KS) Journal, July 15, 1942.

¹⁰² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 16, 1942, editorial.

...atuates wildly during a war or international crisis. Military personnel are trained, and then move on. Unless the individual goes overseas, the community accompanies him. Salina was unprepared for the arrival of military personnel and had not received advance warning that it would be the home of two military installations. The smaller towns of Smolan, Falun, and Marquette did not experience some of the influx but there was fuel rationing to contend with which was one's choice of places to live. It will come out in the next chapter that after the war, this matter got worse, indicating a reluctance by real estate agents and contractors to build any new dwellings. In this instance, it was assumed that the area simply was not prepared for the influx of such a large group of people. Salina had a population of around 20,000 people on April 7, 1941. It is probably fortunate for Salina that its only wartime activity was the training of military personnel and that the military did provide housing for the men on base in the form of barracks.

End of the War

After Germany surrendered in May, 1945, plans were implemented to shift military forces from Europe to the Asian theater for a possible invasion of the Japanese mainland. However, things began looking up for the war effort there. Russia declared war on Japan in August, 1945. Shortly after Russia declared war, the United States Army Air Force B-29s dropped the only nuclear bombs ever used in war on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Peace was around the corner.

On August 17, 1945, Colonel Bohnaker announced that the base was to continue in operation unaffected by peace negotiations. On behalf of the base, he requested the cooperation of the community as the base switched from wartime to peacetime operation.¹⁰³

¹⁰³Salina (KS) Journal, August 17, 1945.

ceived in war as a base for a bomber that took the war directly to the
 of Japan, Salinans began wondering about the future of Smoky Hill Army
 old. The speculation had started in mid-1942 when the housing situation
 light and the Salina Advertiser-Sun, in an editorial, had stated that
 ns of the Army seemed to indicate that the base would continue in opera-
 after the war.¹⁰⁴ Thus, there was some relief when the Salina Journal
 ed on August 22, 1945 that the base was to remain in operation as a B-29
 g base and that personnel discharged would be replaced.¹⁰⁵

he formal end of World War II occurred on September 1, 1945 aboard the
Missouri in Tokyo Bay. Already, personnel who were overaged or had enough
 had been or were in the process of being discharged from the service at
 Hill Army Air Field. For the base, the next period was about to begin,
 which it would try to find itself. It had done well in its childhood,
 a period of adolescence would almost destroy it.

¹⁰⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 16, 1942, editorial.

¹⁰⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, August 22, 1945.

CHAPTER III

TIP-TOE THROUGH THE SUNFLOWERS

SEPTEMBER 2, 1945 TO DECEMBER 7, 1949

September 2, 1945 was the first day of peace for the United States since April 7, 1941. The work continued for the personnel at Smoky Hill Army Air Base because the base was to be kept open; but for the next four years, Smoky Hill would tip-toe through the Sunflowers as first the Army and then the Air Force tried to decide what to do with a base that had eight runways; four 10,000 feet long and four 7,500 feet long. (Each strip is considered to be two runways, one left and right. Although there were only four landing strips, each had a left and right designation.) During this period, the strength would vary between four and six Groups and the B-29 bomber would be the main aircraft assigned to the base. The base was reorganized three times and the last would culminate in December 1947 with the organization of the 301st Bomb Wing which would be the parent unit at Smoky Hill. The last three Groups assigned to Smoky Hill during this period; the 301st, 97th, and 22nd, went on to win greater glory, only after they were transferred from the base and the latter two became full-fledged Wings. (The 301st Bomb Group was a formal part of the 301st Bomb Wing.)

For the next fifty-two months or until December, 1949, Smoky Hill would wobble through the post-war period trying to find a niche for itself in the national defense. Ten men would hold the title of Base Commander, but one would be there for two weeks. Another would be named Base Commander but would never put in an appearance. These men would deal with a variety of problems

aged from gun play on the base to a chronic housing shortage and mercu-
 salings with Salina's leaders.

Although Salina had been assured that Smoky Hill would continue in operation
 the war ended, there was constant uncertainty over the role that the base
 play in the national defense. True, Salina was virtually in the center
 United States, which meant that in the event of an enemy attack on either
 planes based at Smoky Hill could easily participate in any battle to save
 tion. While location may have been a positive factor, the size of Salina's
 tion was a negative one. There just did not seem to be anything to do in
 when the men from the base were off duty.

In this period, Smoky Hill tried to find itself and failed. However, it
 came to the attention of Generals Eisenhower and LeMay, both of whom would
 poles in the future of the base. Of the ten men who served as Base Com-
 in this period, there is only a record of one who returned to the area
 visit after they left in this writer's sources. The officer who commanded
 base for two weeks in 1945 was in command of a unit assigned to the base in
 but never reported with his unit when it moved to Salina. Another former
 under was favorably impressed with his assignment at the base and was a
 frequent visitor until he retired in the late 1950s.

Salina did not change very much. The population remained near the 27,000
 throughout this period and that figure probably included the personnel as-
 sed to the base. Indecision was reflected in that it could not decide if
 base was permanent enough to warrant construction of new housing units which
 Air Force wanted. In the end, Salina would discover that anything might
 been better than nothing.

Organization

From its conception in April, 1942, Smoky Hill was a base of the Second

Force, headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO. In April, 1946, the Second Force was renumbered the Fifteenth Air Force and Smoky Hill became one of thirty-eight air fields.¹ When the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was organized in 1946, both the Fifteenth Air Force and Smoky Hill were made a part of SAC. Smoky Hill/Schilling remained an installation of SAC until it closed in 1961.

In the first two years after the war, there was a frequent organizing and reorganizing of units on base. At the start of this period, the 485th Bomb Group and the 519th Air Service Group were assigned to the base. The 44th Bomb Group and the 405th Air Service Group were transferred to Smoky Hill from Great Bend Air Field, KS on December 13, 1945. There were no plans to merge the latter groups with existing Groups on base.² However, there does appear to have been a realignment between February 7 and May 7, 1946. The 506th Bomb Squadron was transferred from the 44th Bomb Group to the 485th Bomb Group and the 830th Bomb Squadron, assigned to the 485th Bomb Group, vanished from the roster.³ The Salina Journal ran an IHS story on August 29, 1946 stating that Smoky Hill would soon have "four combat units which would be a part of a long range strategic bombardment force." Colonel Lee, Base Commander, informed the Salina Journal that this was the first time that he had heard the story.⁴ However,

¹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 18, 1946. At this time, the air fields at Great Bend and Pratt were counted in this figure. What the status of these fields was has not been determined although they were soon completely deactivated and declared surplus.

² Salina (KS) Journal, December 13, 1945.

³ US Dept. of the Army, Station List of the Army of the United States, 7 February 1945 and 7 May 1946. Cited pages are in author's private file. Throughout the rest of this paper, the designation of units as Bomb or Bombardment Groups is used. The official designation seems to be Bombardment. But in the cited reference, the units are designated "Bomb Group" or "Bomb Squadron."

⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, August 29, 1946.

Using the Station List of the Army of the United States from January 15, through May 7, 1946, all of the Bomb Groups assigned to the base carried designation "Very Heavy." This would seem to indicate that the combat units at the base had the potential to be part of a nuclear bomber force. B-29s were the primary bomber in the United States arsenal at this time with a long-range capability. Post-war temporary duty assignments to Europe and Alaska would also indicate that Smoky Hill units did handle atomic bombs.

An announcement was made on November 8, 1946 that the 97th Very Heavy Bomb Group, "a much decorated unit during World War II" and deactivated at the end of the war, had been reactivated and assigned to the base in July of 1946.⁵

The 97th (known as the 79th during the war) was the first unit assigned to the base which retained its numerical designation throughout its tenure.

The first attempt to consolidate the organizations on base occurred on May 9, 1947 when the 49th Combat Bombardment Wing (Very Heavy), Provisional, was organized and assumed responsibility for operating the base and maintaining training functions. "In addition, it was charged with performing any special tasks assigned to it by the Fifteenth Air Force or higher headquarters, which included temporary duty assignments (TDY) overseas."⁶

Ten months later, Maj. Gordon F. Goyt, Officer-in-Charge of Conversion, announced that the base was in the process of another reorganization under the provisions of the Hobson Plan. At the top of the organization was to be a Wing Headquarters and under it Combat, Maintenance and Supply, Airdrome, and Hospital Groups. The Combat Group was to have three squadrons, the Airdrome Group was to have six base function squadrons, and the Maintenance and Supply Group was

⁵Salina (KS) Journal, November 8, 1946.

⁶Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center.

maintenance and supply squadrons.⁷ The numerical designation of the 301st Bombardment Wing (Very Heavy) and it became operational on May 5, 1947,⁸ replacing the 49th Combat Bombardment Wing, Provisional, which operated the base since January 9, 1947.

On May 1, 1948, it was announced that the 97th Bomb Group, the twenty-ninth to be stationed at Smoky Hill, was to be transferred to Biggs Air Force Base, El Paso, TX. The reason for the move was the transfer of Biggs from command of the Tactical Air Command (TAC) to SAC. This move started on May 17.⁹ At the same time, the 22nd Bomb Group was transferred from Davis-Monthan Air Base, Tucson, AZ to Smoky Hill on May 21. This unit began arriving on May 21.¹⁰ This unit was one of the older bombardment groups in the Air Force and had been organized on February 1, 1940 at Mitchel Field, Long Island, NY. During World War II, it fought in the Asian Theater using the B-26, the B-25, and the B-24 bomber. At the end of 1945, the 22nd Group was deactivated only to be reactivated on June 6, 1946 in Arizona. The last commander of the 22nd while it was in Arizona was Col. Walter E. Arnold, who served as Commander at Smoky Hill for two weeks in September, 1945. He was in command of the 22nd in Arizona from December 23, 1947 until it began its move to Smoky Hill. Unlike the 97th and 301st Groups, which carried the "Very Heavy" designation, the 22nd, although equipped with B-29 bombers, was designated "Light" upon its arrival at Smoky Hill.¹¹

⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, October 9, 1947.

⁸ Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center.

⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 1 and 5, 1948.

¹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, May 21 and 26, 1948.

¹¹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 26 and August 5, 1948.

Smoky Hill's mission was updated on March 10, 1949 when the 301st Air Reconnaissance Squadron (ARS) was activated. The unit was equipped with the KB-29, a long range version of the B-29 bomber.¹² The activation of this squadron gave the 301st Wing greater range when it was TDY. It also saved time for Air Force units operating within range of Smoky Hill in that they did not have to land and refuel. Instead, the KB-29s of the 301st ARS could take fuel directly from the B-29s of the 97th Bomb Group, eliminating the need for a plane low on fuel to land, refuel, and takeoff again.

After being on base less than a year, the Air Force announced that the 22nd Bomb Group would be transferred to March Air Force Base, Riverside, CA in May, 1949. Salina was assured by the Air Force that not only would the 301st Bomb Wing remain at Smoky Hill, but that it would be expanded and that the base would have very many men, even after the 22nd Group left.¹³ Alas, by December, 1949, the 22nd had vacated Smoky Hill and no aircraft unit would arrive to replace it until September, 1952. It is interesting to note that in nine years, the 301st had served on the east coast, in the southwest, in the middle of the United States, and finally on the west coast.

It appears that although the 97th and 22nd Bomb Groups were equal in size to the 301st Wing without its support units, these units were subordinate to the 301st Wing, as was the 301st Bomb Group. The only public reference to this was made in the Salina Advertiser-Sun on March 18, 1948. The paper welcomed the 97th Bomb Group back from its six month tour of duty in Alaska and informed its readers that the 97th would formally become a part of the 301st Bomb Wing.¹⁴

¹² Salina (KS) Journal, March 10, 1949.

¹³ Salina (KS) Journal, March 29 and May 5, 1949.

¹⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 18, 1948.

had been organized during its absence. After the 97th and 22nd Bomb Groups at Smoky Hill, each became full-fledged Wings. By the time the base reopened and received new units, things had changed to where Groups were support units and Smoky Hill would have two Wings under an Air Division, the latter not in use by the Air Force during this period, or for that matter, World War II.

Band

Smoky Hill had three bands during this period, which probably played an important role, not only in morale, but in community relations as well. This was before recorded music was commonplace and every army installation had at least a bugler for reveille and retreat ceremonies. The Smoky Hill band played events on base such as Open House and when units returned from TDYs, etc. At the start of this period, the 555th AAF band was assigned to the base, but was discharged in October, 1945 and replaced by the 728th AAF band in November. This band came to Smoky Hill from Pyote AAF, TX. However, the 728th did not remain at Smoky Hill very long. On October 4, 1947, the 745th Air Force Band played its first retreat ceremony on base after arriving from Colorado Springs. Prior to its arrival, guns were fired for retreat.¹⁵

Until July 11, 1949, the band played at various ceremonies on base and in surrounding communities. On July 11, 1949, the band left for a two month tour, first to Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS and then Mountain Home AFB, ID.¹⁶ Thus, the band was not on hand to play "Taps" when it was announced that Smoky Hill would be deactivated. Whether the band later made the move with the 301st Wing to Mather AFB, LA or was assigned to another base has not been determined.

¹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, December 7, 1945 and October 3, 1947.

¹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, July 11, 1949.

Hospital

reference has already been made in this paper to the 176-bed hospital established at Smoky Hill. An obstetrical clinic was established in August, 1946. A year later, the 100th baby was born. It was announced on February 17, 1947 that Captain Ervine, chief obstetrician at the base hospital, had just delivered six babies in one 24-hour period for a base record.¹⁷

Col. Robert Corwin, a native of Dayton, Ohio, became Commander of the hospital in October, 1948 and started an association with the base that lasted until he retired in 1961. The association would be broken only by 18 years the base was closed. He came to Smoky Hill from the Pacific Air Force and would transfer with the 301st to Barksdale in 1949, and return to the hospital in 1951 when the base was reactivated.

Starting in late 1948, the base became a transfer point in the Air Force medical system. Planes with patients from Westover AFB, MA and Randolph AFB, TX stopped at the base for the night; the patients were unloaded and spent the night in the base hospital, were reloaded the next morning, and continued their journey. C-47 Skytrain and C-54 Skymaster transport planes were used. The fact that Smoky Hill became a stopover point was a need for refueling the aircraft as well as provide a rest for the patients being moved.¹⁹ (Here is an

example where location played a role in landing Smoky Hill a mission. But one can counter that Forbes in Topeka could just as easily have been utilized.)

There were volunteer workers at the base hospital, just as there are volunteer workers at civilian hospitals today. One who caught the Salina Journal's

¹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, February 17, 1948.

¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, October 4, 1948.

¹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 20, 1948 and June 16, 1949.

man was Apache Joe, an 83 year old Indian, then living in Smolan. He made leather crafts to the patients in the base hospital once a week.²⁰ Colonel Corwin announced on June 2, 1949 that the Air Force Medical Corps was being established and that the officers and enlisted personnel under his command had until June 6 to choose between the Army and Air Force.²¹ There is no record of their selection, but later it was revealed that the Chaplains were given the same choice at about the same time and all chose to remain in the Air Force. At the end, the Air Force was making plans for ways to use the base hospital. Colonel Corwin announced that the base would become a center of biological training for units in the Fifteenth Air Force and that an officer was named to plan the program.²² This program probably never advanced beyond the planning stage owing to a subsequent announcement that the base was to be closed.

To provide care for the families of married personnel, a mutual hospital association was formed in July, 1947 and 500 men joined. This organization, which charged membership dues, provided medical and emergency hospital care for a member's family. The dues were charged in order to provide replacements for nurses transferred or discharged from the base hospital. This organization continued its purpose until it was dissolved on August 1, 1949 owing to an acute shortage of doctors assigned to the base hospital.²³

Throughout this period, the base had a 176-bed, four-ward hospital serving

²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, February 24, 1949.

²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 2, 1949.

²² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 25, 1949.

²³ Salina (KS) Journal, July 17, 1947 and July 5, 1949.

tion that seldom had more than 5,000 men. In the following sections of the paper, matters will come out which seem to put the base in a bad light, but the matters concerned trouble with the Saline County Sheriff in 1946, a number of criminal actions involving personnel assigned to the base, and military aircraft accidents.

It is difficult to write about this period and overlook a rumor that came to the writer's attention many a time while he was researching this paper from the people of Salina and personnel assigned to the base during this period.

These people came a rumor that the base hospital had a psychiatric ward in operation during most of this period and that the Air Force sent men to the Smoky Hill hospital for the treatment of emotional disorders.

Mike Scanlan, who as a Major was assigned to the base between 1947 and 1950, denied that there was a psychiatric ward in the base hospital at any time he was associated with the base. The hospital did handle a psychiatric patient if it came up, but there were not that many cases to establish a command ward. Smoky Hill did have a contract with city hospitals for psychiatric patients. The last resort for the hospital Commander would have been to transfer a severe type of patient to a General Military Hospital that had a psychiatric ward which in this case would have been Wilford Hall at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX.²⁴ The way Scanlan put this, it seems probable that this was Air Force practice in all cases.

It is speculation as to how this rumor got started or why. But the fact is that it did. None of the people who responded to questions about this era said that the base was any worse than other assignments of this period, but something just was not right. There is evidence of problems with the personnel

²⁴Letter from Mike Scanlan, November 29, 1982.

pared to other periods of Smoky Hill/Schilling. It was only during this that the base was nicknamed "Smokey Hole" and getting "shafted" in . People assigned to the base before this period always refer to the Smoky Hill and people after this period refer to it as Schilling. It is known that the Smoky Hill hospital was more than just a base hospital. With the November 15, 1944 edition of the Station List of the Army of the United States and going through the May 7, 1946 edition, the description of the hospital is simply listed as: "AAF Regional Hospital."²⁵ It would seem that if this hospital served several other bases, as the title implies, it would have a psychiatrist or psychologist on its staff. In addition, there is evidence that Smoky Hill served as a receiving station for inductees through the summer of 1946 and during the winter of 1948-1949, approximately 800 basic airmen were assigned to the base for training in various jobs.²⁶ It would make sense that if this large a group of men were going to be on a base for training for the first time that there would be someone there who could help them adjust to a new environment.

To support how the rumor of a psychiatric ward got started may come out from the following incidents: On April 20, 1946, the Salina Journal reported that a Private was being held for psychiatric observation at the base hospital. He had been AWOL and apprehended after claiming that his wife had died of cancer and he had buried her in an unmarked grave. It turned out that he had never been married. Then the American Legion tried to find gifts for 200 patients at the base hospital for the Christmas of 1945 and for eighty-six men in 1946.²⁷

²⁵US Army, Station List of the Army of the United States, November 15, 1944, May 15, 1945, November 7, 1945, February 7, 1946, and May 7, 1946.

²⁶Salina (KS) Journal, October 22, 1948.

²⁷Salina (KS) Journal, December 18, 1945, April 20, and December 14, 1946.

cases, it had trouble getting people to donate gifts. There were also
 of unreported suicides in this period from sources who wrote this writer,
 which have been confirmed or negated.

seems probable that, given the mission of the base during this period
 recruiting center, a post-induction center, a transfer point for patients
 for the east or west coast, and finally as a training center for basic
 directly out of Lackland AFB, TX, the regional hospital did have some-
 its staff trained in the treatment of emotional disorders. Beyond this
 considering the fact that only Major Scanlan was positive one way or the
 it is doubtful that there was a psychiatric ward in operation at the
 hospital during this period.

Name

Smoky Hill changed its name twice during this period. From December, 1942
 1947, the base was officially known as "Smoky Hill Army Air Field"
 "SHAAF" (and unofficially known by people who detested their assignment there
 either "Shafted" or "Smokey Hole," the latter a name which has since been
 referred to the Weapons Range.) In September, 1947, the Air Force became an
 independent military branch, equal in stature with the Army and Navy.
 Colonel Mulzer, Commander of Smoky Hill, announced on November 20, 1947
 the noun "Army" had been dropped from the base's name and that the base
 hereafter be known as "Smoky Hill Air Field." This was followed by still
 other change in name on January 23, 1948. The Salina Journal announced that
 the base would be known as "Smoky Hill Air Force Base" or "SHAFB."²⁸

²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, November 20, 1947 and January 23, 1948. Actually,
 there is no difference between "field" and "base" in describing a military
 training field. The Army still calls its air bases "fields" and Peterson Field,
 is operated by the Air Force. "Field" appears to be an informal term used
 by the Air Force.

before it was announced that the base would be inactivated in August, Joe Kelly, Base Commander, announced that the Air Force had established a policy of renaming bases as a memorial to the men who had died a heroic death. Smoky Hill would be renamed in honor of a late Kansas airman with an outstanding war record. Colonel Kelly invited responses from the public and if any were valid, he would forward the suggestions on to higher headquarters for consideration.²⁹ In days to come, Salina would make the first of many attempts to get the base named in honor of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, a native of Salina and a licensed pilot. This attempt would not cease until 1956 when the base was named in honor of a Leavenworth man.

Mission

For an air base to perform its mission, it has to have aircraft assigned to it. The B-29 remained the primary aircraft assigned to Smoky Hill during the war period and was the only bomber assigned to the base. Each flying squadron had between ten and fifteen planes assigned to it and each B-29 unit had three squadrons which means that the base had at least sixty B-29s assigned during the war period. In addition, C-45 and C-47 transport planes were assigned to the base in a support capacity. By May 24, 1949, the base had been equipped with the improved version of the B-29.³⁰ These planes landed on runways which were unusually large and considered "the finest in the United States." Indeed, one of the Dam Busters' transport planes had landed on a taxiway because the pilot thought it was a runway, he said! These runways were designed for large planes and as 1948 started,

²⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 23, 1949. This writer knows of at least three bases not named for men who died heroic deaths; Warren AFB, WY, Little Rock AFB, AR, and Sheppard AFB, TX. All three bases are still open.

³⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, November 18, 1947 and May 24, 1949. A definition of this improved version was not mentioned.

as announced that Smoky Hill would be getting the B-36 "Peacemaker" bomber in the future.³¹

As World War II ended, Salina had been aware that its air base would probably be kept open. After all, it had four (or eight, depending on how they were counted) runways; two of which were 10,000 feet long and 500 feet wide!³² These runways were capable of handling the largest military aircraft in the world at that time, which were the B-29 and B-36 bombers.

America had an unusually large war machine to dismantle, but it was almost impossible to let its armed forces drop back to its pre-war size. In addition to now being a super world power and the nation whose leadership and resources had destroyed the Axis, the United States also had the atom bomb and had shown the world that it would use it if necessary.

Smoky Hill was caught up in this post-war confusion. In August, 1945, the training mission of the base had been changed from preparing groups for overseas duty to that of preparing combat crews for duty³³ as replacements in groups already there. But with the arrival of peace, the need for groups was greater than had been anticipated and Smoky Hill again reverted to preparing groups for overseas duty (OTU). This lasted for about forty-five days when the mission was again changed to preparing combat crews for duty (CCTS). All OTU training was transferred to other bases.³⁴

Senator Clyde Reed announced on October 15, 1945 that Smoky Hill was to

³¹Salina (KS) Journal, January 1, 1948.

³²USAAF, Airport Directory, Vol. I, January 1945, p. 88. Copy is on file with author's notes on base.

³³Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 13, 1945.

³⁴Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center.

operation for "some time to come."³⁵ This was followed by an announcement on October 18 that Smoky Hill was one of ninety flying fields to be kept open and would receive combat units. Topeka was the only other field in Kansas that would be kept open.³⁶ Thus, Salina could breathe easy for a while. It was decided to keep the air base with its payroll which was beneficial to the local economy.

Due to the demand by the civilian populace, the men in uniform, Congress, and the need to reduce expenditures as fast as possible, the Army began discharging men as fast as it could. Through this situation, Smoky Hill picked up a new mission; that of a pre-discharge center. After the paperwork was completed, personnel were shipped to Sioux City, Iowa for final processing. By November 15, 1945, more than 9,200 men had been processed through the base.³⁷ But there was a catch to all of this. For in addition to preparing crews for overseas duty and serving as a pre-discharge center, Smoky Hill was also performing a recruiting mission and made the headquarters for AAF recruiting in the region.³⁸ Perhaps the real role of the pre-discharge center was to attempt to convince men to remain in uniform. It must have worked to some degree because on November 8, 1945, 450 men had re-enlisted.³⁹

Gen. Charles F. Born, Commander of the Second Air Force, announced on December 28, 1946 that Smoky Hill would remain open and would be brought up to strength by June 1. The Army Air Forces were in bad shape and to keep men in

³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, October 15, 1945.

³⁶ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, October 18, 1945.

³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, September 15 and October 15, 1945.

³⁸ Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center.

³⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 8, 1945.

There would be no unnecessary shifting of personnel.⁴⁰ Within two years after the decision was made, the 97th Bomb Group would move to another base and the 97th Bomb Group would move in to replace it, only to move out one year later, to be replaced.

Eventually, the mission of the base was changed to the primary function of training. By the end of 1945, the pre-discharge center had been phased out. In May, 1946, recruiting was transferred to another base, although Smoky Hill continued to be an inductee-receiving station throughout most of this period.

At the same time, the Second Air Force became the Fifteenth Air Force and that training became Smoky Hill's primary and foremost function.⁴¹ By September 13, 1946, the door to overseas assignments had been shut except for emergency duty there by a member's unit on base.⁴²

Another function assigned to the base was responsibility for Sioux City Municipal Air Field, Iowa which was made a satellite of Smoky Hill sometime in 1946. Civilians were assigned there as part of the caretaker force.⁴³ How long this arrangement lasted is unknown as this was the only reference made to this particular mission in sources available to this writer.

On December 14, 1946, three B-29s of the 341st Bomb Squadron on temporary assignment (TDY) at Selfridge Field, MI under the command of Lt. Col. William C. Bacon accompanied a squadron of P-51 fighters to Alaska.⁴⁴ This was the first of many two TDY missions carried out by units assigned to the base. These mis-

⁴⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, March 28, 1946.

⁴¹ Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center.

⁴² Salina (KS) Journal, September 13, 1946.

⁴³ Salina (KS) Journal, October 24, 1946.

⁴⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, December 14, 1946.

ed anywhere from one day to six months and involved from one plane
 (or roughly sixty planes). In October, 1947, the 97th Bomb Group
 six month tour of duty to Eileson Air Force Base, AK, primarily to
 in the cold weather. There were 1,730 men involved in this mission.⁴⁵
 the 97th Group was in Alaska, the 301st Group was involved in several
 Although the B-29 had seen service in World War II, its limits were
 known. On December 19, 1947, a B-29 of the 352nd Bomb Squadron, 301st
 up, set a record by remaining in the air twenty-four hours, four min-
 Less than eight months later, Captain Walter Abbott set a world record
 5,120 miles non-stop from Germany to Marshall Field, Fort Riley, KS.
 Abbott's plane was one of three to attempt the flight and the only one
 at that close to Smoky Hill before low fuel forced the plane to land.⁴⁷
 It also found time to fly over Arlington National Cemetery in tribute to
 dead and conduct over-water training flights to Hawaii and the
 48

There were also practice bombing missions which took planes from Smoky Hill
 York, Utah, and Indiana. These were usually one-day missions and part
 larger group involving over 100 planes.⁴⁹ Ironically, the practice bombing
 Indianapolis, IN, involving eighteen planes of the 301st Bomb Group on May 14,
 was the last TDY assigned to the base in this period. Sixteen of the

⁴⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, October 21, 1947 and March 18, 1948.

⁴⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, December 19, 1947.

⁴⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, August 6, 7, and 21, 1948.

⁴⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, January 24 and 30, 1948.

⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 15, 1957.

⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 14, 1949.

no assignments were to overseas locations. (Alaska and Hawaii were and considered to be overseas assignments by the Air Force.)

The 22nd and 301st Bomb Groups were TDY to England during the winter of 1948 and participated in the Berlin Airlift that lasted from June, 1948 to May, 1949. "These units were the first to take part in the airlift drops of coal in Berlin parks and other open areas."⁵¹ It appears that only transport planes assigned to the 22nd and 301st were used as no reference can be found that B-29s performed anything more than convoy duty.⁵²

Goodwill Missions

Another type of mission which involved planes from Smoky Hill were those intended to generate and foster goodwill. It has already been mentioned that a plane from the base flew over Arlington National Cemetery in tribute to the dead as well as participated in the Berlin Airlift. In addition, planes from the base participated in inaugurations for the Presidents of Mexico and the Philippines. There was also participation in the various air shows held in the United States as well as lending planes to ship relief supplies to areas damaged by war. In all, Smoky Hill participated in thirteen goodwill missions. An unusual mission was conducted in January, 1949 when a Smoky Hill C-47 transport assisted the State of Kansas in its annual duck census.⁵³

Training

A function often overlooked in the activities of a military base is the

⁵¹ Flint O. DuPre, U. S. Air Force Biographical Dictionary (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1965), p. 122. The author infers that Smoky Hill was in the Berlin Airlift from the start and assigned to Germany under the command of Colonel Kelly. However, Colonel Kelly did not take command until January, 1949 when he arrived from Maxwell AFB, AL. The 22nd and 301st Groups were in England at Christmastime, 1948.

⁵² Glines, The Compact History of the United States Air Force, pps. 292-294.

⁵³ Salina (KS) Journal, November 26, 1946, January 8, and March 12, 1947.

of personnel in skills needed for the national defense. Smoky Hill was the home of a gunnery and a radar school in 1947 which received students from bases in the Fifteenth Air Force. (The gunnery school was probably at the OQ Gunnery Range.) There was even a school to teach officers their peacetime roles and an electronics school was established at Smoky Hill on March 29, 1949.⁵⁴

In addition to this training and the TDYs, Smoky Hill was twice charged with the training of reserve air forces. Colonel William Lee, Base Commander, reported on September 26, 1946 that the base had been opened to train reserve officers using AT-6, AT-11, and P-51 aircraft. While in operation, this unit, known as the 142nd Army Air Force Base Unit, employed six officers, 100 enlisted, and thirteen civilians full-time and had 100 reserve officers sent to it for training. However, this program, along with a similar one at Fort Sill, was phased out in 1947 due to budget cuts.⁵⁵

During the summer of 1948, the base was host to approximately 1,000 reserve officers who served their annual training there. One group participated in the simulated bombing of Omaha, NE. Finally, on April 8, 1949, another reserve unit was activated on base⁵⁶ and remained there until the base was deactivated at that year.

Weather

Weather is a factor that must be considered in military operations, especially when air forces are involved. The U. S. Army Air Force's Airport Directory for January, 1945 listed the following specifics for Smoky Hill Army

⁵⁴Salina (KS) Journal, January 1 and April 8, 1948.

⁵⁵Salina (KS) Journal, September 28, 1946.

⁵⁶Salina (KS) Journal, July 13, 1948 and April 8, 1949.

"Precipitation--Av. mo., 0.66" (Jan.) to 4.54" (June); av. yr.,
 Temperature--Av. min. and max., 42.6° to 67.0°; extremes--31° to 114°. June, Nov., Dec., and Jan."⁵⁷

made Salina sound harmless, but on April 5, 1947, the base Weather grounded all flights until April 7 due to the weather. Maybe he should waited until April 10 to release the planes because on April 9, there was storm which "shipped B-29s around" even though no damage was reported.⁵⁸ During the winter of 1947-1948, forty-one inches of snow fell in the area. The base estimated that 150,000 tons of snow had been moved off of its roads and runways. But Smoky Hill was prepared for this type of weather. It used 8-ton trucks with four horizontal augurs which ground up the snow and pushed it to one side, each cutting a ten-foot wide path. The base also used a snow truck, an 8-ton snow fighter, four truck plows, and three road graders for snow removal duty.⁵⁹

This was a bad winter, and with all of the snow removal duty the base may have gotten careless with its consumption of gasoline, because on February 18, the base motor pool officer announced that Smoky Hill had been ordered to limit its usage of gasoline down to 272 gallons a day.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, the officer did not mention the daily consumption rate before the order was received. In today's era of expensive gasoline, it would have been interesting to know how much the Air Force considered wasteful back then.

On May 30, 1948, rain with winds reaching 82 miles per hour hit the base,

⁵⁷USAAF, Airport Directory, January, 1945, p. 88.

⁵⁸Salina (KS) Journal, April 5 and 10, 1947.

⁵⁹Salina (KS) Journal, March 17, 1948.

⁶⁰Salina (KS) Journal, February 18, 1948.

wrecking two C-47s and eight B-29s. Ironically, the storm barely
 Salina. Another severe storm hit the base on July 19 with 75 mile per
 and barely touched the city again. This time, the base must have
 survived because only one C-47 was damaged.⁶¹

Accidents

Between July, 1943 and July, 1945, eight aircraft and sixty men assigned
 Hill were lost due to accidents. Peacetime seems merely to have es-
 the loss. Between November 29, 1945 and September 27, 1949, Smoky Hill
 were involved in twenty-two accidents which killed eighty-four men and
 sixteen planes. Twelve of the accidents involved no loss of life.

The first accident occurred on November 29, 1945 when a C-47 transport
 crashed at approximately 11:30 P.M. at McCook, NE shortly after takeoff,
 the pilot and co-pilot, the only two people on the plane. The plane
 route back to Smoky Hill.⁶²

It was announced on August 28, 1949 that the base would be placed on care-
 status by the end of the year. As if to make this event sadder, a Smoky
 B-29 made a forced landing at Lambert Field (a civilian airport), St. Louis,
 September 19 with no loss of life.⁶³ But eight days later, a B-29 crashed
 Salina, OK and killed all thirteen men on the plane.⁶⁴ These were the
 accidents involving Smoky Hill planes reported in the local press during
 era.

In between, there were many accidents. One of the more unusual accidents

⁶¹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 31 and July 19, 1948.

⁶² Salina (KS) Journal, November 30, 1945.

⁶³ Salina (KS) Journal, September 19, 1949.

⁶⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, September 28, 1949.

On November 11, 1947 when a B-29 from the base crashed into a plane at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma City, OK shortly after takeoff. Only two men were killed and five injured, their plane crashed into parked P-47 planes, totally demolishing four. The cost was \$1.4 million for the P-47s plus \$525,000 for the wrecked B-29 which with other expenses came to two million dollars,⁶⁵ a large amount of money in those days!

The safest year for the men who flew planes out of Smoky Hill was 1946. There were four accidents, no one was injured. On January 12, a C-47 "Whisper" while preparing to takeoff. The plane does not appear to have been damaged. Then on September 4 and 5, there were three accidents; a C-47 crashed into a C-47, a C-45 crashed on the runway due to a faulty landing gear and a B-29 blew two tires upon landing and an engine caught fire.⁶⁶

Although there were only five accidents reported in 1948, all five involved loss of a plane and four involved loss of life as well. Eighty-four men died in the 1945-1949 period but forty-five died in 1948. On May 10, a B-29 with eighteen men on board crashed in Arabia while on a training mission. Only one man survived. A little over four months later, a B-29 which had been loaned to Great Falls Air Force Base, SD was preparing to return to Smoky Hill. Something went wrong and the plane crashed shortly after takeoff killing all seven men on the plane.⁶⁷

The most tragic accident in terms of life occurred on January 17, 1949 when a B-29 of the 22nd Bomb Squadron, 301st Bomb Group, crashed and burned twelve miles west of Dunoon, Scotland, killing all twenty men on the plane. A resident

⁶⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, November 11 and 17, 1947.

⁶⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, January 12 and September 5, 1946.

⁶⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, May 15 and August 21, 1948.

heard an explosion and reported it to the authorities. Four hours later, a shepherd found the burning wreckage. The plane had been on its way to the United States after three months TDY.⁶⁸

On March 3 and April 1, 1949, thirty-three men were forced to bail out of disabled B-29s. Three B-29s were lost but aside from minor bruises and one was seriously injured.⁶⁹ All were promptly made members of the War Club.

One of the wierdest mishaps occurred on October 23, 1947. A B-29 had just landed for Wendover Air Force Base, UT scaring up a flock of "seagulls" near the end of the runway. A second B-29, preparing to take off, ran into the flock and was forced to abort its takeoff but not before 200 seagulls were killed, which covered most of the runway.⁷⁰ No other damage was done, although one suspects that it took a while to clean up the plane. There were twenty-two accidents in less than the fifty-two months covered by this period. All but three involved the B-29. Eight of the accidents occurred on base or within Saline County and four occurred while the planes were on TDY missions overseas. The rest occurred in the mid-west and south. There were seven accidents in 1949 and this was the year that it was decided to leave the base.

OQ Gunnery Range

The OQ Gunnery Range remained an integral part of the base during this period, thereby ruining the dreams of farmers who had hoped to get back the land the government had purchased in condemnation proceedings from them in early 1942.

⁶⁸ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, January 20, 1949.

⁶⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, March 4 and 11, and April 2, 1949.

⁷⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 23, 1947.

Now that the war was over, apparently there was no need to keep secret the activities transpiring at the OQ Gunnery Range, located seventeen miles south of Salina. During the war, the Army Air Force had come up with the idea of using remote-controlled robot planes to train aerial gunners who tried to bring these planes down from nine turrets on the ground which were similar to those found in the B-29. The 485th Bombardment Group, then the parent unit of the Range, was the sixth group to use the Range.⁷¹

Apparently there was a lull in usage of the Range after the war because on July 8, 1947, the Salina Journal warned farmers that they were apt to be shot down or bombed out of their fields around Camp Phillips by planes using the Camp Phillips Range and looking for something besides the stationary targets they found within the confines of the Range. The next day, the Salina Journal published a map showing where the planes were supposed to be doing their practicing and advising farmers to stay clear of these areas.⁷²

It was not made clear whether the farmers were actually on the Range or in fields adjacent to the Range. Today, the bulk of the 33,000+ Range is leased to farmers for grazing, haying, and crops. A series of checks has been devised to prevent the leaseholders from being injured and there is a "fan area" in which no one is permitted while the Range is being used by planes, but it is foolproof.

Commanders

Ten men served as Commander of Smoky Hill during this period, one serving two or three times. Somewhere along the line, the ranking officer on base ceased to serve as Base Commander and occupied himself with the duties involving commanding

⁷¹Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 29, 1945.

⁷²Salina (KS) Journal, July 8 and 9, 1947.

unit (or Bombardment Wing as it came to be known) on base, but to consistency and avoid confusion, this chapter will concern itself with the officer on base. There is some confusion as to when the Base Commander and Commander became separate positions.

William J. Bohnacker had taken command of the base on June 20, 1945 to make the base make the transition from wartime to peacetime operation. Nothing exceptional seems to have happened on the base during his tenure and on September 25, 1945, he left for a new assignment.

He was replaced by Col. Walter E. Arnold of El Paso, TX, who had commanded the 17th Bombardment Group when it was stationed at Fremont, NE. He had been a Prisoner of War in Germany from August, 1944 until the end of the war. It was announced that he would only be Commander for about two weeks or until William O. Eareckson arrived.⁷³

Colonel Eareckson took command of the base on October 3 and Colonel Arnold was to take command of the 17th Wing at Sioux City, Iowa. The new Commander, Smoky Hill was a native of Reno, NY and a graduate of the United States Military Academy, class of 1924. Prior to his assignment to the base, he had commanded Mountain Home AAF, ID. On leaving his Smoky Hill command, he was assigned to the University of Michigan.⁷⁴

One man who was reported assuming command of the base never showed up.

Colonel Algene E. Key, Commander of Pyote AAF, TX was announced as succeeding Colonel Eareckson on November 1.⁷⁵ Then on November 5, Col. Maurice A. Preston was announced to take command and begin what turned out to be a nine-month tour of

⁷³Salina (KS) Journal, September 25, 1945. As noted above, later Col. Bohnacker's unit in Arizona was transferred to Smoky Hill 1948 without him.

⁷⁴Salina (KS) Journal, October 3, 1945.

⁷⁵Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 1, 1945.

little was revealed about him save that he was a graduate of the United Military Academy, class of 1937. Two months after he assumed command of the base, he lambasted the city in public for not doing anything about the housing shortage. He had been on base two months and still did not have a place for his family to live. He also started out being opposed to the use of Smoky Hill's runway by a civilian airline. By June, 1946, he did an about face and came out in support of Salina's getting commercial air service even if it meant using the existing runways. The mission of the base was such that commercial use of the runway would not hamper the base.⁷⁶

It will be recalled that Salina seems to have liked Colonel Rodieck the best of the World War II Commanders. In this era, the Commander who seems to have been liked the best by Salina and/or who liked Salina the best, was Col. William L. Lee, who assumed command of the base on August 15, 1946. The new Commander was a native of Weatherford, TX and a graduate of Texas A & M College. He had entered the Army in 1929 as a Second Lieutenant and by January, 1944, had been promoted to the rank of temporary Brigadier General in command of the Fifteenth Air Force, then stationed in Italy. Colonel Preston left to attend the Air War College in Montgomery, AL.⁷⁷

Now an officer who had been dubbed a "fighting General" and had shown proof of greater rank, could lose his star, came out in 1947 when Drew Pearson published in his newspaper column that General Lee had gotten into an argument with a friend of President Truman's while in Italy over a hotel parking space. The result of this, according to Pearson, was that General Lee lost his temporary rank, returned to the rank of full Colonel, and was "exiled" to command

⁷⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, November 11, 1945, January 3 and 18, and June 26, 1946.

⁷⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, August 15, 1946.

Hill. All that Colonel Lee would say was that the story was true, but he did not regard Smoky Hill as a "place of exile."⁷⁸

Another factor that may have contributed to the Colonel's popularity was that William Lee had served in the Philippine Islands between 1936 and 1941 as a First Lieutenant. As an air officer, he taught then-Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower to fly, and assisted the Colonel in his efforts to create an air force for the Philippine Army.⁷⁹

These factors undoubtedly contributed to making Colonel Lee a hero in pre-war Salina. But the Colonel went farther as will later be seen. As Commander of the base, he seems to have involved himself in efforts to better the life of the base and making it more permanent. After he left Smoky Hill for other assignments, he was a frequent visitor to the base. Colonel Lee served as Commander a little over a year. On August 28, 1947, he announced that he had been named Commander of the 31st Fighter Wing at Turner Field, Albany, GA and would leave for there around September 5. One of his last duties as Commander of Smoky Hill was to get SAC to request appropriations for the construction of permanent-type barracks to house 1,800 men.⁸⁰ (Requesting appropriations is one thing, getting the money is another.) Colonel Lee had been "loaned" to Smoky Hill and he turned the assignment into something more than an assignment. (Two ironies are worth noting here. Less than two years later, he would be assigned to command of the 22nd Bomb Wing at March AFB, CA after it had left Smoky Hill. He may also have been the first Commander of the 310th Bomb Group, assigned to the base in 1952, when it was organized in 1942.)

⁷⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 3, 1946.

⁷⁹ Robert H. Ferrell, ed., The Eisenhower Diaries (New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1981), pps. 29, 30, 399, and 400.

⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, August 28, 1947.

officer who succeeded Colonel Lee was destined to command the base. Col. Leslie G. Mulzer, a native of Columbus, Ohio, arrived from Alaska to command of the base on September 15, 1947 and took up residence at Camp

⁸¹ This was the first mention that the Smoky Hill Commander had a home for its Commander, which was a far cry from the day when Colonel Mulzer had complained about the difficulties of finding a place for his family

August 3, 1948, it was announced that Colonel Mulzer had been named Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force, Smoky Hill's parent unit, with headquarters in Colorado Springs, CO. Col. Leonard T. Nicholson, a former Commander of Wendover Air Force Base, Utah would serve as Commander of Smoky Hill while Colonel Mulzer was gone.⁸²

Colonel Nicholson only served as Commander for about two weeks before he had to attend Armed Forces Staff College in Virginia. Command of the base was turned over to Lt. Col. John P. Gregg, a bachelor who was a native of Hugo, OK.⁸³ Two months later, Colonel Mulzer returned to take up command of the base, replacing Lieutenant Colonel Gregg, who returned to his duties as personnel officer of the 301st Wing.⁸⁴ Whether there was ever any chance of Colonel Mulzer being named permanent Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force is doubtful. The Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force was either a senior Brigadier General or a Major General.

Colonel Mulzer had not been back on base two months when it was announced

⁸¹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 16 and 17, 1947.

⁸² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 13, 1948 and Salina (KS) Journal, March 3, 1948.

⁸³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 19, 1948.

⁸⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, October 8, 1948.

ould be transferred to assume command of Maxwell Air Force Base, AL
 Col. Joe Kelly would arrive on January 3, 1949 to replace him as Com-
 Smoky Hill. Colonel Mulzer seems to have gotten along with Salina
 took copies of the Salina Journal with him when he went TDY, to be left
 "logic points along the way" to let people know that Salina, Kansas
 However, it appears that he was to be "best remembered for improving
 ing and quality of food served in the base mess halls."⁸⁵
 last Commander of Smoky Hill during this period was Col. Joe Kelly,
 ate of the United States Military Academy, class of 1932, who assumed
 of Smoky Hill on January 3. He was a command pilot and had three chil-
 On the day he took command, he had lunch with top city, county, and mili-
 officials,⁸⁶ thereby starting off on the right foot in the eyes of the
 ty.

little is known about what happened to five of Smoky Hill's Commanders
 they left Salina and Smoky Hill. Colonel Arnold was in Arizona in 1948.
 5, it is known that Colonel Preston was a Lieutenant General and that
 ol Kelly had retired that year as a full General and Commander-in-Chief
 Military Air Transport Service (now known as the Military Airlift Com-
 br "MAC"). Colonel Mulzer retired as a Brigadier General in command of
 air depot center in Ohio in the early 1950s. It is known that Colonel Lee
 ined his star in late 1952 and believed that he retired in 1959 as Commander
 arillo Air Force Base, TX.⁸⁷ Colonel Kelly started off his command doing
 right thing by having lunch with the civic leaders. He appears to have been

⁸⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, April 8, December 2 and 21, 1948.

⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, December 21, 1948, January 3 and 4, 1949.

⁸⁷ DuPre, U. S. Air Force Biographical Dictionary, pps. 122 and 192, and
Salina (KS) Journal, February 8, 1957.

at civic-minded of the post-war Commanders, but despite his later rise to rank in the Air Force, he does not appear to have had any connections which have saved the base when it was closed in 1949. Of the ten men who served as Commander of Smoky Hill during this period, three probably had an above average relationship with the town and their command.

Morale

Morale is an important factor which must be kept in perspective at all times in any organization. Low morale in the military hampers the effectiveness of a unit in the performance of its assigned mission. It has already been noted that Smoky Hill lost eighty-four men in twenty-two aircraft accidents and it can be noted that there was a considerable amount of trouble reported on the base, which may not have been all that unusual for the military of that era. It probably did not help morale any. From experience, this writer knows that an aircraft accident does jolt an organization until the reason is determined. Howard Frohman, an enlisted man assigned to the base during part of this period, noted in a letter to this writer that there were few promotions, living conditions on base were poor, and the food was poor plus there were no pay raises which would have done wonders for morale. Yet, he noted: "WE WERE DEDICATED." It may even have galvanized the men to discover that while they had trouble with equipment which would have made their job more bearable from the Air Force supply system, they could go into Salina and buy such things as flight suits, gloves, etc., from a military surplus store. It was their dedication and devotion that kept morale as good as it was. "WE WERE DEDICATED!"⁸⁸ This dedication provided a pleasant side to the base which was documented evidence exists that seems to indicate that morale may have been good as

⁸⁸ Letters from Howard J. Frohman, August 16 and September 3, 1982.

by Mr. Frohman's letters. The living and working conditions played a part in morale and the former will be discussed later in this chapter. Colonels Lee and Mulzer are on record as having tried to improve this

When the base shifted to peacetime operation, work hours were reduced. In 1945, it was announced that civilians would work forty hours a week and military personnel would work forty-four hours. The base would be closed for business at noon Saturday and re-open for business Monday morning.⁸⁹

On June 24, 1947, the base adopted new hours for the summer as part of a savings program. Personnel worked the same number of hours but reported that 7:00 A.M. and left at 3:45 P.M. instead of the former 8:00 A.M. to 4:45 P.M. schedule.⁹⁰ This, of course, was designed to give personnel more daytime to enjoy off duty.

Another means of building morale was giving recognition for outstanding service. Between October 25, 1945 and October 6, 1949, there were at least four ceremonies held on base in which twenty-eight men and one unit received awards for such service.

On November 1, 1945, the 204th Base Unit received the Meritorious Service Award plaque for the period October, 1944 to July, 1945. Only five organizations in the Second Air Force had received this award before the 204th at Smoky Hill. The award was given in recognition of superior performance or outstanding devotion to duty in the performance of exceptionally difficult tasks. Members receiving this award were authorized to wear a two-inch square piece of olive drab cloth with a golden yellow wreath on their uniform just below the collar.

⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, September 20, 1945.

⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 24, 1947.

patch on the left shoulder.⁹¹ It was not mentioned specifically

4th did to win this award.

most of the recognition was for service while base units were TDY.

1949, nine airmen received commendations for their work at Rapid

Force Base, SD between January 7 and 16, 1949 when that area was buried

award. The last award was made to 1st Lt. Jephtha D. Oliver for his role

"Mission Vittles" during the Berlin Airlift.⁹² It was not mentioned when

Oliver was involved, but presumably it was prior to January, 1949.

undoubtedly there were more awards made than were reported in the local

Only one such award was reported in 1946 and none were reported for

The Salina Journal reported eleven of the fifteen presentations, but

very vague in coverage, while the four reported by the Salina Adver-

er were very specific in nature.

Starting on January 1, 1948, the base operated a nursery on base so that

parents could get away for awhile leaving their children in competent care.

Service was available only to the men assigned to the base and was free.

Service was also provided by the base chapel on Sunday mornings so that parents

attend the services.⁹³

While the 97th Bomb Group was TDY in Alaska two things happened which helped

The first was the creation of the Top of the World Club by personnel of

unit. Membership was open to military air crews who had flown over the

Pole and a card was designed for members to carry. Then near the end of

TDY, Staff Sergeant Floyd B. Pivonka learned that his wife was seriously

⁹¹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 1, 1945.

⁹² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 21 and October 6, 1949.

⁹³ Salina (KS) Journal, January 1, 1948.

General Born, Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force, happened to Alaska on an inspection tour, learned about the illness, and flew the back to Smoky Hill in his plane.⁹⁴

It is possible that airmen on base suffered a jolt in morale when the Post announced that the free mailing privileges for members of the military which had been in effect for over five years was to end at midnight, December 31, 1941. This privilege had started shortly after the United States was attacked on December 7, 1941 and was probably the result of an immense swelling of patriotism.

The Air Force Look

Smoky Hill had always been an Army Air Force installation and was never anything but an air base, even when Camp Phillips was in operation. It has Marshall Field but uses it for helicopters and utility aircraft. To must airlift personnel, it utilized Smoky Hill/Schilling and today still Salina owing to the size of the runways.) When the Air Force became a service in 1947, Smoky Hill became an Air Force base.

Uniforms and the wear of them are a part of the daily life of military personnel. Proper uniform wear is drummed into the heads of recruits in basic training and it is still possible to be punished for improper wear throughout the life of an individual is a member of the military. There is a section on commissioned and enlisted performance reports that call for an individual to be evaluated on how well he/she wears that uniform.

⁹⁴Salina (KS) Journal, February 18 and March 4, 1948. This was in the era when jet aircraft was common and it seems that most major Commanders had aircraft permanently assigned for their use. Today, major Commanders in the Air Force utilize aircraft provided from a pool and maintained by the Military Air Command or fighter aircraft, etc., if their command has them and the Commander is qualified to fly the plane.

⁹⁵"Through The Years," Impact, December 19, 1952.

With the separation of the Army and Air Force, both services wore identical uniforms until 1949. A Private in the Army was identical in appearance to a Private in the Air Force when in uniform, save that the airman wore a different patch on his left shoulder. Undoubtedly, this caused a little confusion with the Air Force's esprit de corps. The Air Force was a separate branch of the military, yet it looked like the Army.

This changed in 1949 when the Air Force began altering its uniforms to achieve an "Air Force" look. The familiar winged chevrons with the star in the center for enlisted grades made their debut in February, 1949. Then it was announced on February 12 that a new uniform, slate blue in color and identical to the Army uniform for officers except for insignia, would become mandatory, along with white socks and black shoes, by September 1, 1950.⁹⁶ (At this time, the Army wore white socks and black shoes.)

But before the change in uniforms occurred, the Air Force had taken steps to change car identification stickers. To gain admission to a military installation, some sort of identification is required. Military personnel and their dependents are issued identification cards, possession of which are required when on base. Registration of cars on base is also required. By 1948, the military used windshield stickers as a means of identification. It was announced that the changeover had been made from metal plates to windshield stickers and the noun "Army" had been dropped. Red was to be issued to officers, green to enlisted, and blue to civilians.⁹⁷

Although many people are impressed by the sight of a military uniform, the

⁹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, February 4 and 12, 1949.

⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, January 19, 1948. Today, the color code is changed from time to time and the windshield sticker has given way to a two-piece bumper sticker affixed to the driver's side of the front bumper.

to have to wear it everyday like a change from time to time. Thus, on December 24, 1946, personnel were permitted to start wearing civilian clothing off-duty hours for the first time since the start of World War II. The permission for this wear was 6:00 P.M. Wednesday to 8:00 A.M. Thursday and 12 Noon Saturday to 8:00 A.M. Monday. In addition, they could wear this clothing on leaves, furloughs, and passes as well as in the base clubs.⁹⁸ This greatly helped morale, although from experience, this writer suspects that when the new Air Force uniforms were issued, there were a few who wore them where until people got used to the idea of seeing blue uniforms and the men got tired of wearing them.

Spiritual Affairs

On December 14, 1946, Colonel Lee, Base Commander, directed that personnel be given as much time off as possible between December 23 and January 3. Squadron commanders were to determine what they needed for a skeleton force and make arrangements accordingly. In addition, a children's party was planned on December 19 for the children of all enlisted and commissioned personnel.⁹⁹

Although Colonel Lee's directive did not mention the spiritual aspects of the celebration of Christmas, it was probably on his mind. Religion is given a prominent place in Air Force life. Each unit, no matter how small, is assigned a Chaplain. Catholic and general Protestant services are conducted every Sunday in the base chapel. If a Jewish Chaplain is assigned to the base, Jewish services are conducted. If not, arrangements are made for a monthly visit by a Jewish Chaplain from the nearest military installation which has a Jewish Chaplain or from the nearest community with a Jewish Synagogue.

⁹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, December 14, 1946.

⁹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, December 14, 1946.

asionally, a local group makes a special effort to get base personnel to its church. Although Salinans have repeatedly told this writer that personnel were welcome at local churches and that their role in church was deeply appreciated, no special effort was made to encourage their presence during this period.

There was one exception. Salina had three Negro churches: St. John's, Quayle Methodist (now with predominantly white membership), and Allen AME which joined together to send buses to the base to pick up men at 8:00 A.M. C, the Negro unit for services; taking them to different churches on Sunday, in rotation. The average number of men from the base participating was fifty-seven.¹⁰⁰

Throughout most of this period, there was probably a Negro Chaplain on base. However, the first publicly recorded Negro Chaplain was (Captain Elijah Person) assigned to the base on November 21, 1947.¹⁰¹ He was succeeded by Captain James A. Mayo, an ordained Episcopalian priest from Cleveland, OH, August 26, 1948¹⁰² and apparently served until the base was deactivated in 1949.

Colonel Mulzer appears to have been deeply religious and it was during his tenure as Base Commander that the greatest emphasis was placed on involvement of personnel in religious affairs. On November 4, 1947, he noted that the chimes in the base chapel be sounded daily from 12:45 to 1:00 P.M. in an attempt to give the base some spiritual guidance once a day.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, January 13, 1947.

¹⁰¹ "Through The Years," Impact, November 21, 1952.

¹⁰² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 26, 1948.

¹⁰³ Salina (KS) Journal, November 4, 1947.

Thanksgiving Day, 1947 was the first major holiday celebrated on base during Colonel Mulzer's tenure at Smoky Hill and it was celebrated with two programs; one on Wednesday afternoon for base personnel and the other on Thanksgiving morning which was open to the public. The programs were under the direction of Catholic Chaplain John Carlin and short talks were given by Colonel Mulzer and Protestant Chaplain Foster B. Perry. In addition, the choral group of the 353rd Bomb Squadron F, under the direction of Cpl. Lewis Quander (and whose organization had been encouraged by Colonel Mulzer) made its debut performance.¹⁰⁴

Although many units of the 301st Bomb Wing were TDY in England during the Christmas period of 1948, their families were invited to attend Christmas activities on base.¹⁰⁵ While their families were celebrating Christmas on base, the Chaplain of the 353rd Bomb Squadron hosted a Christmas Party for thirty-nine children from Scothern Children's Home, Lincolnshire, England at their base in England. The children were between the ages of three and six.¹⁰⁶

In June, 1949, the five Chaplains assigned to Smoky Hill exercised an option offered them of accepting Chaplain's commissions in the Air Force or retaining their Army commissions, which guaranteed them a transfer to an Army installation. All five joined the Air Force¹⁰⁷ and moved to Louisiana six months later.

Race

Race probably figured into the affairs of the base and affected morale in some way. The base did have a segregation policy and Negroes were confined to

¹⁰⁴Salina (KS) Journal, November 20, 1947.

¹⁰⁵Salina (KS) Journal, December 22, 1948.

¹⁰⁶Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, January 20, 1949.

¹⁰⁷Salina (KS) Journal, June 3, 1949.

a barracks area on base and assigned first to Squadron C and then to F. They had their own Post Exchange (PX) and NCO Club (designated as Number Two).

Salina Advertiser-Sun made no reference to race when reporting on at the base. However, the Salina Journal, the daily newspaper of the generally made it a point to distinguish between the whites and Negroes to the base when reporting on events which occurred there. Commonly today as a racist distinction, it was not an uncommon reference at the time in many newspapers. Yet, the Salina Journal reported a speech that Chaplain Captain John Carlin, a native of Salina, made before the Rotary Club on April 28, 1947 pleading for racial and religious tolerance.¹⁰⁸ By the middle of 1949, change was in the air and General Hoyt Vandenberg, Force Chief of Staff, ordered all bases to integrate their units. Col. Billy, 301st Bomb Wing Commander, held a mass meeting for his personnel in base theater and informed them that all units would be integrated "as soon as possible."¹⁰⁹

Civilians

Civilians continued to play a part in the operation of the base throughout period. On January 5, 1946, Colonel Preston announced that 263 of the 860 civilians then employed at the base would be discharged within thirty days. By October 24, there were only 480 civilians left and that number was being reduced by December with four assigned to the Sioux City, Iowa air base as part of caretaker force. The final reduction occurred effective June 30, 1947, with sixty-five positions were dropped and replaced with sixty-five untenured

¹⁰⁸Salina (KS) Journal, April 29, 1947.

¹⁰⁹Salina (KS) Journal, July 23, 1949.

ons. Those displaced would be given first shot at these positions.¹¹⁰

left 315 tenured positions on base and this was the last reduction-in-
(RIF) announced until the deactivation process started.

The man who survived these RIFs was Lester E. Ziegler, an employee in the
building shop for over two years, who commuted between the base and his
Industry, KS in a small 85 horsepower plane he owned, using the base
with the permission of Colonel Mulzer, Base Commander.¹¹¹

Traffic

If it is true that history repeats itself, then one could say that Smoky
lived up to this adage in the area of traffic control. It had been de-
in 1944 to teach Smoky Hill personnel how to drive rather than to reject
ations for driving jobs. By 1945, the base had a reckless driving prob-
and was forced to impose restrictions on those drivers.

Three years later, base personnel from states other than Kansas were re-
ed to attend a course on Kansas highway rules and regulations on base,
t by the Kansas Highway Patrol. One year later, the base decided that it
at "traffic deviation" problem and formed a Traffic Spotter's Committee,
ed by the base Provost Marshal, to reduce deviations by personnel assigned
base.¹¹²

It is ironic to note that the problem in 1945 occurred as the last combat
left for the Asian Theater and Smoky Hill settled down to a peacetime
on. In 1949, the irony was that the driving problem surfaced as the 22nd
Group prepared to transfer to California. (Since they were on base almost
ar, maybe they were the cause of the problem!)

¹¹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, January 5 and October 24, 1946 and June 17, 1947.

¹¹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, July 12, 1948.

¹¹² Salina (KS) Journal, April 16, 1948 and March 3, 1949.

Personnel Difficulties

Salina had been fairly lucky during the war in that the personnel at the base, as a rule, were well-behaved in town or else the people looked the other way out of a sense of patriotism. But the post-war period was different. Bill and Willie and Joe had returned to the civilian world and stored their rifles in the attic. World War II had made the United States a super-power with international interests to protect. These obligations required the maintenance of a large military force and the draft was used to fill the ranks, but the pay for personnel in those days was not very good. Not all of the draftees served were troublemakers and many who entered as troublemakers got a change of heart before they finished basic training. There were men who volunteered to serve and made a career out of the service.

There was the bad side which received plenty of attention and forty incidents were reported between November 15, 1945 and September 12, 1949 in the local press. What is interesting about all of this is that the Salina Journal reported twenty-eight of the incidents and the Salina Advertiser-Sun reported only two; in 1946!

The first incident was reported on November 15, 1945 when entrance was gained to the base post office during the night of November 14 and three packages were taken.¹¹³ Two things stand out about this incident: The first was that only three packages were taken. Second, this incident was reported on page 17 of the Salina Journal. (Until August 16, 1947, the base Post Office was run by the Salina Post Office as a branch and staffed by employees of that Office. After August 16, it was a contract operation.¹¹⁴ Since this theft

¹¹³ Salina (KS) Journal, November 15, 1945.

¹¹⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, August 20, 1947.

In 1945, it was a federal crime and probably the FBI investigated it. (No mention was made of this crime so the outcome is unknown.) It appears the perpetrators of this crime knew what was in the packages. Perhaps, they mailed something, regretted it, and retrieved it.

On May 30, 1946, Colonel Preston, Base Commander, and Lieutenant Colonels Whidden, and Klos, squadron Commanders on base, were arrested, convicted, and sentenced for hunting quail and doves out of season.¹¹⁵ It is interesting to note that after this happened Colonel Preston, who had been opposed to letting the base be used for commercial air service, reversed his position.

Two airmen were charged with breaking into an ice house in Salina and with temporary car theft.¹¹⁶ (What temporary car theft involved is unclear. It may be that a car was "borrowed" for the job and returned.) Ten days later, a Private was beaten up by a civilian in a Salina tavern. Less than six months later, another Private was injured by glass during a fight in a Salina restaurant and hospitalized on base.¹¹⁷ This was the last such incident reported in this period.

In a following section, it will be mentioned how a Private, an MP, shot and killed a civilian while trying to break up a fight in a Salina night spot. The mood was such that there was a demand for action and the Private was charged with first degree murder and held in the Saline County jail. He claimed self-defense and was released on \$10,000 bail with trial scheduled for October or November, 1946 in Topeka. Finally, on November 28, the charges were dropped but he continued to be held in the guardhouse on base pending review of his case.

¹¹⁵ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 30, 1946.

¹¹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, June 3, 1946.

¹¹⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 13, 1946 and Salina (KS) Journal, December 2, 1946.

enth Air Force headquarters.¹¹⁸

two biggest monetary crimes occurred in 1946. Someone went through a
adron barracks during the night of July 2 and stole \$1,400. During this
at Air Force barracks were open bay, e.g., there were no private rooms.
ring the night of December 2, the Post Exchange was broken into and a
th \$5,300 in it was taken. The safe was found on December 4 in a deserted
use where the door had been removed by dynamite, and the money was gone.
discovered that entrance to the base had been gained by cutting the fence
south perimeter of the base.¹¹⁹ In both cases cited in this paragraph,
not been determined whether the crimes were committed by military or
an personnel. Whether these crimes were ever solved was never announced.
After 1946, things seem to have quieted down. The last reported major
of this era occurred during the night of January 3, 1949 when the base
Office was broken into and a \$2,600 payroll was taken. This money was
personnel who were on Christmas leave and not present for payday. But by
28, a Sergeant, AWOL, was found in another state and returned to Smoky
for a general court martial. He was sentenced to six years confinement
and labor and given a dishonorable discharge.¹²⁰

There were six cases of car theft starting in late 1947 and ending by the
le of December, 1948. Besides the temporary car theft reported in 1946,
was one other such theft reported on January 29, 1948. Again, two airmen
involved. This time, their other crime was the theft of clothing. One
theft appeared unusual. In November, 1948, one Sergeant was charged with

¹¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, July 8, 9, 10, September 25, and November 28, 1946.

¹¹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 6, December 3 and 4, 1946.

¹²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, January 4 and April 29, 1949.

a car belonging to another NCO, and turned over to the County for prose-

¹²¹ This case was unusual in that normally when a case involves two of the military, the matter is handled by military authorities.

Between June, 1946 and December, 1948, there were six escapes from the Ardhouse (or jail). These escapes involved eleven men and in one escape got out at once, but all were quickly recaptured. Most of the men were for being absent without leave (AWOL). One of the more unusual escapes was on September 21, 1946 when two men escaped and then surrendered peacefully just to prove that it could be done.¹²²

Master Sergeant was found guilty of disorderly conduct at a special court on June 25, 1947. He was reduced to the rank of Private, sentenced to months confinement, and forfeited two-thirds of his pay for that period, on June 14, he had met a seven-year-old girl at a Salina theater and her to the north part of Salina to take her picture. He then returned her to the theater.¹²³ On August 17, 1948, the Salina Journal reported the arrest of Private by Saline County Sheriff's officers and he was charged with the statutory rape of a fourteen-year-old girl.¹²⁴ How this case turned out is unknown, but it is interesting to note that the authorities on base handled the former case but County authorities handled the latter one.

Other crimes involved a variety of things from assault and battery to theft of cameras and food (from the base) for sale in town to the theft of vending machines, etc. One of these miscellaneous crimes was made public on June 15,

¹²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 29 and November 1, 1948.

¹²² Salina (KS) Journal, September 21, 1946.

¹²³ Salina (KS) Journal, June 16 and 26, 1947.

¹²⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, August 17, 1948.

a Sergeant and an unidentified woman companion were arrested on South
 et and charged with cohabitation,¹²⁵ but no further details were pub-

etween January 30, 1947 and September 11, 1949, five incidents involving
 y were reported which took four lives. Three were labeled accidental.

ivate was critically injured by the accidental discharge of a prison
 shotgun on January 30, 1947.¹²⁶ This article failed to mention whether
 ivate was a prisoner, bystander, passer-by, or another guard. Also, the
 of the Private was not mentioned.

almost two years later, another accidental shooting occurred. This time,
 ate was walking along a sidewalk in front of a barracks when he was shot
 stomach. A Private in a barracks was cleaning his gun when it went off
 the bullet ricocheted off the sidewalk hitting the Private.¹²⁷

The last two incidents of this period occurred in September, 1949 and in-
 d the loss of life. During the evening of September 4, 1949, a Corporal
 ned to the 301st Air Base Group died when a pistol he was examining in a
 ia, KS gas station accidentally fell to the floor and fired.¹²⁸

One week later, two Privates, both members of the 301st Air Base Squadron,
 into an argument over the right-of-way on a sidewalk near NCO Club Number

One was charged with pre-meditated murder of the other. No ultimate
 unt is available.¹²⁹

¹²⁵Salina (KS) Journal, June 15, 1948.

¹²⁶Salina (KS) Journal, January 31, 1947.

¹²⁷Salina (KS) Journal, January 10, 1949.

¹²⁸Salina (KS) Journal, September 5, 1949.

¹²⁹Salina (KS) Journal, September 12 and 17, 1949.

Military Police

the first person an individual comes in contact with when he arrives at an air base is the guard at the main gate. This individual can either permit or deny admission to the base proper. Until 1948, the personnel who were charged with preserving law and order on an air base were called Military Police (MPs). After September, 1948, they were called Air Police (APs), of which there were 100 assigned to the base.¹³⁰

Although their primary duty was to deter crime, the base police were also charged with duties that involved capturing escapees from the base guardhouse who had gone AWOL, patrolling the town, and guarding aircraft.

During the night of July 7, 1946, a Private with MP duty sought to break up a fight in the Cloverleaf Dance Hall while on town patrol in the northeast part of Salina. Something happened while he was trying to break up the fight and he shot and killed a civilian. He was arrested by civilian authorities, charged, and then charges were later dropped.¹³¹

Two months after the above incident, an MP on guard at the base ordnance warehouse located in the southwest part of the base, reported that some people had threatened him. Base officials informed the Salina Journal that they regarded this as a false alarm.¹³²

Colonel Lee, Base Commander, now cut back on the number of MPs sent out on town patrol. The Sheriff was upset over this announcement and asked the Saline County Commissioners for the money to hire more men to make up what was lost as

¹³⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, September 23, 1948. Today, they are called Security Police (SPs) and at each base they are organized into a squadron.

¹³¹ Salina (KS) Journal, July 8, 1946.

¹³² Salina (KS) Journal, September 6, 1946.

of Colonel Lee's action.¹³³

During this period, the Salina Advertiser-Sun normally was reluctant to say anything of a negative nature about the base. If anything negative was in the local press, it was usually done on the pages of the daily Journal. But on October 3, 1946, the Salina Advertiser-Sun featured an item on page one which revealed that the MPs on base had been shooting at a car traveling along highway US 81. No one had been hurt and no explanation was offered at this time by the base on how this matter had come about. The base decided that the only way to curb this activity was to prohibit the carrying of guns by MPs when they left the base going to town. Anyone failing to comply with this would be arrested.¹³⁴

Reading this article, one gets the impression that this was not the first time this had happened. One would assume that the main gate and the highway were close together. In all probability, this threat was never carried out, for if it had been, the question of jurisdiction would have come up since the City of Salina was incorporated and had its own police force. Traditionally, the Sheriff of a Kansas county has jurisdiction only in unincorporated areas of the county and where arrangements have been made with the municipal authorities. No such arrangement appears to have existed between the City of Salina and Saline County.

Looking at this matter more closely, maps of the time reveal that US 81 ran where it did then and that the main gate was in the same location from 1942 to 1965, meaning that there was a distance of about two miles from the highway to the main gate. It would seem virtually impossible for anyone

¹³³ Salina (KS) Journal, October 2, 1946.

¹³⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, October 3, 1946.

le to hit anything at a distance of two miles.

comes to light through additional research is another story. Robert

, a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, was assigned to the base

his period and his comments indicate that the press had its location

shooting incidents wrong. First, it was not US 81 or the main gate, but

gate which was isolated and lonely.

A young and lonely soldier would be stationed there on guard
and a coyote or jack rabbit would rustle the grass. In his
imagination, he would see the enemy closing in and fire one or more
shots. To protect himself, he would report sighting what appeared
to be an enemy. However, the most feared enemy at the west gate was
a woman, dressed in white, who often appeared in ghostly form. On
one night when I was Officer of the Guard, the man on duty saw a head-
less woman with an apron full of apples, which she was trying to sell.
I solved the problem temporarily by putting two men on duty at the
West Gate so they could be company for each other and recommended
that be made the regular practice.

On another night, men assigned to guard an area that had sup-
posedly secret material stored in it started shooting at an imaginary
enemy. They called for reinforcements and when the reinforcements
arrived each group mistakenly thought the other was the enemy and a
substantial amount of shooting took place before order was restored.
Fortunately, the area was dark and the men were such poor marksmen
that nobody was hit!135

This writer had read of one such incident along this nature around the

that the Sheriff got upset. Taking the article that appeared in the paper

face value, it would appear that those in command were neglecting their duty

they were letting their men shoot at cars on a public highway. But this

not appear to be the case. It is quite probable that the first time Colo-

Lee, Base Commander, heard about this matter was when someone informed him

he read it in the paper. It appears that the officers in charge were trying

to do something about the problem as it occurred. Colonel Lee had a reputation

being tough, but fair. It is doubtful that he was a Commander who let a

take happen the same way twice. There is the possibility that in light of

¹³⁵Letter from Robert L. Brownfield, September 30, 1982.

... of guardhouse escapes reported during this period that someone may
 ... a gun on their way out of the base and fired at what may have been
 ... as his pursuers. It is also possible that, this being an election
 ... were rearranged a little to provide a campaign issue.

... calmed down until December 21, 1948 when a Private escaped from the
 ... guardhouse in a stolen car. His escape was detected by a guard at the gate
 ... commandeered a car and gave chase. Fourteen miles north of Salina, he appre-
 ... the escapee and returned him to the base. Private Frank Krivak, an AP,
 ... promoted to Corporal and others involved in this event were given commen-
 ... by Colonel Mulzer. They were Staff Sergeant L. E. Hemby and Claude
 ... a civilian working in the Civil Engineering section on base.¹³⁶

Improvements

... Smoky Hill had been constructed to meet the demands of World War II. Be-
 ... of this, most of the buildings on base were of temporary wooden construc-
 ... and susceptible to fire. Two fires were reported during this period and
 ... a limited amount of damage.

... During the morning of October 4, 1946, a fire broke out around 3:30 A.M.
 ... barracks. By 4:14 A.M. the fire had been extinguished after 11,000 gal-
 ... of water had been used. Despite the prompt action of the base fire depart-
 ... eleven men were injured and most of the residents lost all of their per-
 ... possessions.¹³⁷

... Then a fire broke out in the Negro post exchange during the early morning
 ... of March 13, 1947. The barracks-type structure was "practically gutted"
 ... damages were estimated at \$5,000. The fire was made worse when the flames

¹³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, December 28, 1948.

¹³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, October 4, 1946.

...ed by a "brisk wind"¹³⁸ that is still common to this area.

Despite the fires, various improvements were undertaken on base starting in 1944. Before this period ended, Smoky Hill had two swimming pools, four courts, new theater seats, and air conditioning in the theater. However, permanent structures would be erected, based upon material available to this base.

It was noted in Chapter Two that as a part of the Hospital's Convalescent Army Program, a swimming pool was being dug for the Officers. Apparently the end of the war slowed down this project and it was not completed until early 1948. The swimming pool officially opened on Memorial Day. It had cost \$13,000 to build and had a 250,000 gallon capacity. Two days were set aside for the enlisted personnel; one day for whites and the other for Negroes. The other swimming pool was completed in December, 1948 at a cost of \$136,000.¹³⁹ The article did not mention who it was constructed for; officers, enlisted, or general usage.

Prior to 1947, heating the buildings on base had been provided by coal "stove bellied" stoves. Plans had been afoot to convert the base to gas heat when the announcement was made that the base was to be closed. But on May 8, 1947, the order to proceed with the installation of gas for heating purposes was received. Colonel Lee was also ordered to submit work and fund requests for other improvement projects.¹⁴⁰ How far the gas heating project got is hard to determine. In the next chapter, it will be mentioned that the base had a large supply of coal on hand when the base was closed that was to be moved to other

¹³⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, March 13, 1947.

¹³⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 31, 1946, September 3 and December 20, 1948.

¹⁴⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, May 8, 1947.

When personnel began arriving to staff the reactivated base in 1952, started living in a barracks still heated with a coal stove.

Project that was undoubtedly appreciated by the people who made the daily between Camp Phillips and the base was the bituminous surfacing of the road.

this, it had been a gravel road. To get this project accomplished, Hill furnished the manpower and the county furnished the materials.¹⁴¹

On October 23, 1948, the base received 1,000 new theater seats at a cost of \$1,000 along with authorization to accept bids for air conditioning of the mess hall and several other projects.¹⁴² It was coincidental that Colonel Mulzer took up duties as temporary Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force where approval for these projects originated.

Community Relations

Base/community relations fluctuated between 1945 and 1949. There were low points in some disputes over law enforcement in 1946. The high point probably came when Colonel Lee kept the base open in 1947 and possibly in 1949 when Colonel Joe Kelly, new Base Commander, held a luncheon for the leaders of the area in 1949. During the war years, Smoky Hill had loaned trucks to the Salina Post Office to help deliver the mail during the Christmas rush. This continued, it was said, until the base closed and the number of trucks loaned was always six.¹⁴³ The extent of Smoky Hill's effect on the population of Salina was duly noted in the Kansas City Star in its August 1, 1948 Sunday edition. It claimed that the base helped "skyrocket Salina's population from 20,000 to 27,000." Salinans read newspapers to keep abreast of events that might affect the base and rela-

¹⁴¹Salina (KS) Journal, December 6, 1947.

¹⁴²Salina (KS) Journal, August 23, 1948.

¹⁴³Salina (KS) Journal, October 4 and 8, 1946, and December 21, 1948.

...serving there." Smoky Hill brought "the world to Salina's doorstep."¹⁴⁴
 Smoky Hill Air Force Base did bring the world to Salina and various civic
 organizations took advantage of this by inviting personnel to address their or-
 ganizations on their trips. One such event turned into a surprise birthday
 for Col. Joe Kelly who had been invited to address a gathering at the
 Country Club on January 19, 1949. Then members learned that Colonel
 Kelly, new to the area, had turned thirty-nine years of age, so they made it a
 birthday party for him.¹⁴⁵

Commercial Air Service

Since at least the 1930s, Salina had had a municipal airport which was lo-
 cated on east Crawford Street. In the early days of World War II, the first
 military plane assigned to the area had been based there. But despite the fact
 that both Glen Martin and the Braniff brothers had grown up in the area, Salina
 had not have established regular air service. Of course, few cities with a
 population of 20,000 did, but then few cities had an air base for a neighbor.
 Continental Airlines, a national airline, made an almost continual effort
 to get permission to use the 10,000 foot runways at the base during this period.
 The first such effort occurred in September, 1945, which was denied by the Army.
 Apparently, Continental saw a lucrative business in Salina in the government
 contracts and in airmen going home on leave and returning. However, this par-
 ticular rejection was interpreted as meaning that the base would become perma-
 nent.¹⁴⁶ Col. Maurice Preston became the first Base Commander to get involved
 in the issue of commercial air service for Salina. On January 17, 1946, he

¹⁴⁴Kansas City (MO) Star, August 1, 1948.

¹⁴⁵Salina (KS) Journal, January 20, 1949.

¹⁴⁶Salina (KS) Journal, September 19 and November 12, 1945.

the Chamber of Commerce that the training mission of Smoky Hill was that it precluded the use of the runways by civilian commercial carriers. By June 26, he changed his mind and offered to help Salina get regular service. He felt that there would be no inconvenience if an airline wanted to use the runways with the Army."¹⁴⁷

The Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) acknowledged plans by the Army to continue military use of Smoky Hill, but felt that the runways could be used both without impairing the military mission of the base. The Army continued to deny permission amid rumors that it planned to use the base as a base for large planes. With a Federal civilian agency now on its side, Continental applied for permission to use the base so that it could begin service to Salina.¹⁴⁸ Nothing came of this request.

This must have been the last straw for the Army Air Force. General Carl Spaatz, Commander of the Army Air Forces, informed General Vaughn, President Truman's military aide, that it was not safe or practical to have a military group operating beside a civilian airline and that his answer was a flat "NO!" to requests by Continental Airlines to use the runways at Smoky Hill Air Field.¹⁴⁹

The matter was dropped after this but Salina did eventually get regular service by Continental. It is interesting to note that after all of this no one was to try to get the runways after the base closed in 1949. It is hard to figure out why Salina did not try to expand the runway at the Municipal Airport if it wanted Continental that bad unless it was trying to get some-

¹⁴⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, January 18, and June 26, 1946.

¹⁴⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 9, and May 17, 1946.

¹⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 31, 1946.

for nothing.

Likewise, it is hard to figure Continental's objective in this matter.

Airline had stated in 1946 that it needed a refueling stop in the area and the base runways gave it extra security in landings and takeoffs.¹⁵⁰ Yet, did not try to get the runways in 1949.

Open House

Open Houses are good public relations affairs permitting both the community and the base to get acquainted with each other as well as permit the military to show off its latest equipment to a curious public. Between November 4, 1945 and August 7, 1949, Smoky Hill opened its gates to the public thirteen times. These may have helped soothe any harsh feelings that prevailed at times during this period.

The first three such events were Victory Loan Bond Drives held in November, 1945 and special offers were used to get people to purchase bonds. At the Armistice Day event, anyone purchasing a \$25 bond was permitted to pilot a radio-controlled plane, like the ones used for gunnery practice at the OQ Gunnery Range. However, November was a month of bad weather which hampered attendance and less than \$500 worth of bonds were sold. Other "attraction lures" offered were various planes in America's arsenal and the opportunity for a thorough inspection, provided that a bond was purchased.¹⁵¹ Admission to the base was free and one assumes that cameras were permitted; so even if one did not buy a bond, they could get a picture of the various planes and buildings.

Attendance at these events peaked in 1946 and the leaders of the base seem to have gone out of their way to provide interesting entertainment. A record

¹⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, July 29, 1946.

¹⁵¹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 1, 10, and 20, 1945 and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 22 and 29, 1945.

People turned out to see an air show at the base on March 24, which featured the P-80 Shooting Star fighter, one of the world's fastest aircraft in the United States arsenal. Jet planes were also there for inspection.¹⁵² Evidently, the new jet planes were responsible for this large turnout. (It is strange that the P-80 was regarded as the fastest aircraft with the jet engine scene.)

Another Open House was held on August 7 and 8, 1947 featuring Great Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) Squadron 617, better known as "The Dam Busters." Sixteen modified Lincoln bombers arrived for a show of goodwill to the United States. Five of the bombers were opened to public inspection.¹⁵³

A combination air show/carnival was held on August 7, 1949 as the last of this era. It was designed to raise money for the Air Force Aid Society and a 1949 convertible coupe was raffled off. But it was the new B-36 "Superfortress" bomber which drew 13,500 people to this event.¹⁵⁴

Sales

Another thing that was used to promote goodwill was the holding of sales of surplus and obsolete merchandise. Besides permitting the Air Force to save the cost of moving the merchandise to storage, it also permitted people to pick up things they may have wanted at reasonable prices. Between March 25, 1946

¹⁵²Salina (KS) Journal, March 21, 23, and 25, 1946 and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 28, 1946. Despite the attractions offered, 65,000 still seems an exaggerated figure for attendance.

¹⁵³Salina (KS) Journal, July 15, August 9 and 11, 1947. In an article announcing that the Dam Busters would be visiting Salina, residents were invited to open their homes to the British as house guests. It was not revealed whether this ever occurred and must be treated as one of those plans that never came off.

¹⁵⁴Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 29, 1949 and Salina (KS) Journal, August 8, 1949. Who won the car was not mentioned nor was the amount the base received.

ber 16, 1949, Smoky Hill opened its gates to the public nine times plus item sale. At these early day garage sales, everything from nuts to buildings were sold. At the first sale, two days were set aside only for veterans of World War II. These sales were usually well attended reported on November 21, 1947 and 500 at the last sale on December 16, however, only fifty-eight attended the July 29, 1948 sale.¹⁵⁵

Fund Raising Drives

Measure of the base/community relationship can often be determined by the base's response to fund raising requests for charity and the publicity the base gives the base's response. In 1945 and 1946, there is only one report of the base contributing to a fund raising drive and that was on November 1, 1945 when it was announced that the base had over-subscribed to its United Chest Fund by ten percent.¹⁵⁶ The base probably contributed to fund raising drives but they went unreported.

In 1947, Colonel Lee was in command of the base and the Salina Journal reported that the base gave \$1,078 to the March of Dimes and \$613.18 to the Cancer Fund. The wives of the men assigned to the base did most of the work but Major Kelly oversaw their efforts.¹⁵⁷

Colonel Kelly seems to have had a personal interest in fund raising drives, for after he took command of the base on January 3, 1949, Smoky Hill contributed over \$3,262 in two reported drives. The March of Dimes received \$3.60 and the Red Cross received \$2,008.44, the latter being \$8.44 over its

¹⁵⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, March 21, 1946, November 21, 1947, July 29, 1948, December 16, 1949.

¹⁵⁶ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 1, 1945.

¹⁵⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, February 3 and June 12, 1947.

goal.¹⁵⁸

Visitors

The military world greets us almost from the time we are born and stays with us to our death. We are acquainted with it in our study of history, for war often appears to be the answer to diplomatic failure. In our early study of history and viewing of television, we see the glories of life in front of forts and of cavalry charges. But as veterans of military service know, modern military bases can run the extremes between boring and something like "The Twilight Zone."

Part of the normal routine on a military base is preparing for and receiving visitors. The wrong kind of reception could affect a Commander's future or what he receives in appropriations and recognition.

On February 17, 1946, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, a native of Abilene, visited Smoky Hill in his capacity as Army Chief of Staff and was met by Col. Preston, Base Commander, and his staff. A little over a year later, Gen. Curtis LeMay led a delegation of three Major Generals and four Colonels on an inspection of the base to determine if it really should be closed.¹⁵⁹

The Red Cross selected Smoky Hill Army Air Field as the site for its conference of directors on September 11, 1946 and a tour of the base was arranged for them. Smoky Hill also provided encampments for several youth organizations. On June 11, 1947, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), the official civilian auxiliary of the Air Force, consisting of twenty-four cadets and six officers, started six weeks of training on the base. The next year, 125 air scouts from several areas held their meeting at the base on August 17, 1948. Finally, during this

¹⁵⁸Salina (KS) Journal, February 3 and 24, and March 17, 1949.

¹⁵⁹Salina (KS) Journal, February 18, 1946 and April 22, 1947.

good will, the Boy Scouts held a one-week encampment on the base starting August 20, 1949.¹⁶⁰

Further the good will of the Air Force with the community, Smoky Hill tours for local school children. In 1948, it was estimated by the base that 200 Salina children had toured the base.¹⁶¹

Smoky Hill's parent unit was the Fifteenth Air Force, headquartered during the war at Colorado Springs, CO. Visits by the Commander of that unit were routine. If there was any omen in the change of status of the base, it was to note that Maj. Gen. Born, Brig. Gen. Johnson, and Colonel Mulzer visited the base twice during their tenure as Commander of this unit,¹⁶² and subsequent Commanders of the Fifteenth Air Force visited the base, they were reported in the local press.

A surprise visitor to the base was Admiral Halsey. He flew in for a visit with Colonel Lee, Base Commander, on September 28, 1946. After having lunch with the Colonel, he continued his trip on to the west coast.¹⁶³

Shortly after Colonel Mulzer assumed command of the base, General George C. Kenney, Commander of SAC, paid a two day visit to the base on December 16, 1947. He left very impressed with what he had seen." In May and July of 1948, Major General Clements McMullen, Deputy Commander of SAC, paid visits to the base to confer with Colonel Mulzer." This was capped on July 29 by a visit from William H. Greeney, special assistant to the Assistant Air Force Secretary.¹⁶⁴ There

¹⁶⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 17, 1947, September 6, 1946, August 17, 1948, August 20, 1949.

¹⁶¹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 23, 1948.

¹⁶² Salina (KS) Journal, September 21, 1946, May 12, June 25, and September 2, August 20, 1949.

¹⁶³ Salina (KS) Journal, September 28, 1946.

¹⁶⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, December 6 and 8, 1947, May 20, July 10 and 29, 1948.

be a relationship between these visits and Colonel Mulzer's subsequent appointment as temporary Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force. These visits were unusual for the post-war period and these individuals had to approve of Mulzer's appointment.

After relinquishing command in 1947 to Colonel Mulzer, Colonel Lee returned in 1949 to visit the base. On June 29, 1949, he stopped in Salina on his way to California where he was to assume command of the 22nd Bomb Wing (formerly based at Smoky Hill) at March AFB, CA. Colonel Lee paid another visit to the base on August 14.¹⁶⁵

Housing

One of the most important factors that figured into base/community relations which may have propelled Smoky Hill to the top of the list of bases that were problematic was the lack of housing. During World War II, Lieutenant Colonel John Cahill, Base Commander, had tried to get the government to build houses to accommodate the occupancy by military personnel. This effort apparently came to nothing. Colonel Eareckson, Base Commander, in a speech before the Salina Chamber of Commerce, informed them that there was a need for adequate housing so that both civilian and military personnel could be kept in their jobs. Some civilians were filling jobs that had once been held by the military.¹⁶⁶ At this time there were over 800 civilians working at the base.

When Colonel Maurice Preston addressed the Kiwanis Club on Wednesday, February 2, 1946, he had been Commander of Smoky Hill just two months. Therefore, it was surprising that the subjects of his speech were the problems of discipline on the base and the housing shortage in Salina. Although he had

¹⁶⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, June 30, and August 15, 1949.

¹⁶⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, October 10, 1945.

Salina two months, he had not found a suitable place for his family to live. The base was permanent, yet Salina's response to the housing shortage indicated that they believed otherwise.¹⁶⁷

Smoky Hill had been built in the early days of World War II and the buildings were supposed to last five years. If the base were to remain open, a construction program would have to be launched. On June 20, 1946, the Army announced it planned to spend \$1,300 per man in the United States and \$2,100 per man for permanent barracks. Smoky Hill was at the top of that list for spending this money.¹⁶⁸ This was one of those projects that never material-

izing for single personnel was the same for all enlisted grades. They were long, narrow wooden structures better described as tar paper shacks built in 1942. These structures were open bay with no separate rooms and heated by coal stoves which left coal dust and soot on everything. There was no insulation or paneling which made the buildings hot in the summer and cold in the winter. The men had no wall lockers or closets to store their clothing in and had to hang them on open racks which made it hard to keep their clothing clean and dry. Around 1948, a couple of modern barracks, which eliminated these conditions were built and were considered self-contained.

To this writer, a novel feature of barracks life during this period were latrine/bathing facilities. If a man wanted to tend the call of nature or take a shower, he had to go outside his barracks and to another building especially built for this purpose. One latrine facility served four barracks. In winter, it was the unofficial policy for the first man who got up to build a fire in

¹⁶⁷Salina (KS) Journal, January 3, 1946.

¹⁶⁸Salina (KS) Journal, June 20, 1946.

stove which heated the facility.

ine, if you will, that you are on a military installation with row of long, low narrow barracks, painted white and neatly kept. If you the barracks, you knew that they were warm in the summer and cold in er. In an attempt to make these temporary structures warmer in the the Air Force authorized the installation of artificial brick siding 169

ter that year, Colonel Mulzer, Base Commander, announced plans for a at building program. If approved by the Air Force, the base would get y brick and steel bachelor enlisted housing, and a residential area for isted and commissioned families which included parks and playgrounds.¹⁷⁰ ether the artificial brick siding installed in 1947 was not completed or was temporary in nature, because the Salina Journal announced on ber 1, 1948 that \$37,386 was being spent on winterizing the barracks with icial brick siding, with 208 barracks receiving this treatment.¹⁷¹

Finally, the plans made by Colonel Mulzer in late 1947 began bearing fruit 49. The House Armed Forces Committee approved \$3.5 million for the con- tion of family quarters and barracks on Smoky Hill Air Force Base on 21, 1949. On August 16, the Senate Armed Services Committee approved the amount.¹⁷² Later that month, it was decided to close the base!

Family Housing

Smoky Hill got a boost for family housing for married personnel when the

¹⁶⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 28, 1947.

¹⁷⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, December 4, 1947.

¹⁷¹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 1, 1948.

¹⁷² Salina (KS) Journal, July 22 and August 16, 1949.

Administration began to move out of the Camp Phillips Hospital on September 7, 1946. The hospital was formally turned over to the base on September 7, and over forty buildings were to be occupied by base personnel. Lt. Col. H. Searles was named officer-in-charge of the housing there. For the coming year, eighty families, seventy-two for whites and eight for Negroes, were to live there. It would cost \$4,100 per unit for conversion and twenty units were to have three bedrooms.¹⁷³

While this was going on, Colonel Lee announced that 206 officers were to be released from active duty by December 31. This would alleviate the housing shortage in Salina and permit the retention of officers best suited to carry out a variety of additional duties.¹⁷⁴

By the middle of 1947, nineteen families were living in apartments built in the wards and sixty-eight were living in unconverted wards at Camp Phillips. The base started in August to convert Camp Phillips into 208 apartments at a cost of \$75,000. There were fifty-two wards and the facility was being planned to serve the base for ten years.¹⁷⁵

Camp Phillips apparently did not do much for the housing shortage because Colonel Mulzer warned the Kiwanis Club that two or three thousand more men were expected in Salina and would further complicate Salina's housing shortage. The Chamber of Commerce responded by conducting a housing survey in March. By March 24, only twenty units had been found.¹⁷⁶

1st Lt. Roberts, base Provost Marshal, addressed the Jaycees on August 10,

¹⁷³ Salina (KS) Journal, July 30, August 31, and December 11, 1946.

¹⁷⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, October 29, 1946.

¹⁷⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, May 26 and August 7, 1947.

¹⁷⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, February 11 and March 24, 1948.

informed them that Salina had to do something about the housing shortage
 were to expand. Otherwise, the Air Force might interpret it as a
 good faith and pull out.¹⁷⁷

In 1949, the situation was still bad. The base responded to the housing
 by authorizing the establishment of a trailer park on base near the
 Colonel Joe Kelly, Base Commander, gave the authorization provided
 men put up their own showers and rest rooms, and laid the sewage lines
 on their own time. Thirty-four families were involved and organized a small
 council-type government.¹⁷⁸

Phillips Village School

To handle the influx of children living in the Camp Phillips Housing area,
 the Air Force and Salina opened up a school there in the fall of 1948. Although
 projected enrollment was for 200 children, enrollment peaked at 139 and the
 school was closed on November 18, 1949 as the personnel from the base and their
 families moved to Barksdale AFB, LA.¹⁷⁹

Closing

Throughout this period, there were rumors and more rumors regarding the
 closing of the base. Once, plans were actually being put into effect for closing
 the base until Congress gave the Army more money and responsible officials de-
 cided to keep the base open. The rumors were contradictory. On one hand, the
 Secretary was considering closing the base, and on the other hand more money was
 to be spent to make the base permanent. Commanders and other military
 officials kept warning Salina to do something about the housing shortage if it

¹⁷⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 12, 1948.

¹⁷⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, June 27, 1949.

¹⁷⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, February 3, 1948 and November 17, 1949.

to keep the base, yet nothing seems to have happened, save that Salina after the Air Force Academy, when it was giving little indication that it was to handle an active military base.

On October 18, 1945, the Salina Journal informed its readers that Smoky Hill's status was that of an "interim station" pending a decision as to the future mission of the Army Air Force. Then on March 26, this paper announced that there were rumors of a building program to commence at the base and that personnel would start arriving around April 1 to bring the base up to full strength of between 4,000 and 5,000 men.¹⁸⁰

The First Closing

Nothing further was mentioned about the future of the base until January, 1947. On January 20, 1947, Colonel Lee, Base Commander, addressed the Salina Rotary Club and informed his audience that he believed Smoky Hill's permanence was almost a certainty. The base was at a strategic location in the defense posture with 10,000 feet runways and over thirty million dollars worth of permanent buildings.¹⁸¹

Colonel Lee seems to have reversed his position by February 27. He thought that with the proposed budget cuts, "Smoky Hill was a base that would have to be closed." By then, work on the conversion of the Camp Phillips' Hospital and housing units had been stopped.¹⁸²

The tempo picked up and rumors began circulating that the base was to be closed. Salina and the Chamber of Commerce moved to get assurances of the permanency of the base to no avail. On March 28, Washington, D. C. announced that

¹⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 18, 1945 and March 26, 1946.

¹⁸¹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 21, 1947.

¹⁸² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, February 27, 1947.

would be reduced to caretaker status "as soon as practicable." Rumor that Colonel Lee had received a telegram citing May 31 as that date. It was possible that Smoky Hill could be leased to civilian air lines."¹⁸³ March 29, the rumor had been confirmed and June 30, 1947 was the date the base would become inactive. The Salina Chamber of Commerce moved into by urging the Rotarians to join them in trying to get the decision re-citing the 10,000 foot runways and 75% flying weather as a factor that be considered in keeping the base open.¹⁸⁴

In an editorial on April 3, the Salina Advertiser-Sun asked for information the projected closing of Smoky Hill:

. . . People don't understand about what is going on. They know that the base is to be reduced to inactive status by June 30. . . Salina would like to keep the base here. But they want to know if the announcement means a permanent shut-down or merely a closing for remodeling and then a reopening. . . If the base is to be closed, why have more men been sent in here recently? Why have contracts been released for repainting and remodeling the buildings at the base? Why is the base being closed?¹⁸⁵

Why was the base being closed? Congressman Wint Smith and Senator Arthur had evidence that the closing was political (but what that evidence was not come to light) "contrary to what Senator (Clyde) Reed found out." Salina ps rallied and began waging a fight to keep Smoky Hill open claiming that Army people felt that the base was superior to all others with runways, ars, and servicing equipment outstanding.¹⁸⁶ While the area was fighting

¹⁸³ Salina (KS) Journal, March 19 and 28, 1947.

¹⁸⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, March 29 and April 1, 1947.

¹⁸⁵ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, April 3, 1947, editorial.

¹⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, April 22, 1947. Congressman Smith (R-Jewell) and Senator Reed (R-Parsons) were not politically supported by Roy Bailey. Smith defeated Bailey for the nomination to Congress in 1946. Reed was publisher of the rival Parsons (KS) Sun and not as conservative in his thinking as Bailey thought a Senator from Kansas should be.

the base open, fifteen Bachelor Officers Quarters at the base were deemed inadequate and between fifty and sixty single officers moved into Salina.¹⁸⁷ April 24, Colonel Lee announced that an inspection had revealed that \$25,000 was needed for adequate barracks and this would bring the base up to par. This encouraged a group from Salina to visit General Eisenhower, Chief of Staff, at his Pentagon office, to see what he could do to keep the base open. He informed them that General Spaatz and three Generals, who would make the final decision regarding the future of Smoky Hill Air Base.¹⁸⁸

It appears that the decision to send an inspection team to Salina had been made before the Salina group visited General Eisenhower because the three Generals, led by Maj. Gen. Curtis LeMay, was in Salina on April 30. Because General LeMay was in charge, there seemed to be "a cause for hope."¹⁸⁹

On May 5, it was announced that General Spaatz had decided to keep the base open rather than reduce it to standby status. Colonel Lee was active in efforts to keep the base open and was praised for his efforts. Salina promised to construct more housing units in an attempt to relieve the housing shortage.¹⁹⁰ It was a promise that was not kept in this period.

General Eisenhower may have played a larger role in keeping Smoky Hill Air Base open than was supposed or imagined at the time. From 1943 on, there was frequent talk of General Eisenhower becoming a candidate for the office of President which surfaced in the national press. Relatives and friends of this

¹⁸⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, April 10, 1947.

¹⁸⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 24 and 28, 1947.

¹⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 30, 1947.

¹⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 8, 1947 and Salina (KS) Journal, May 5, 1947.

who served in units commanded by General Eisenhower have stated their opinion that if those units had a predominance of Kansans or Nebraskans in them, the things they wanted they got, including autographs and pictures of the General. These people believed that Ike had his eye on a political office then and may have been obsessed with the idea of identifying himself in History as the thirty-fourth President just as Kansas was known as the thirty-fourth state. When General Eisenhower was involved in keeping the base open, he may have been discreet and used the chain of command to have his wishes carried out with the minimum of controversy. After all, he had spent most of his military career in various positions and knew how to covertly get his wishes carried out.

Ladislas Farago in The Last Days of Patton states that General Patton had informed by the middle of 1945 that General Eisenhower had "political aspirations" and instructed his victorious Generals on how they would conduct themselves when the war then over.¹⁹¹

If General Eisenhower's role was minimal in this matter, then the role of Colonel Lee must be looked at. He had been the one to teach Dwight Eisenhower to fly and seems to have assisted him in getting trainer planes for the Philippines.¹⁹² It is possible that once Colonel Lee became aware that Salina was to keep the base and might construct more housing, he got in touch with his former student. The Salina Journal did note Colonel Lee's role in saving the base but how many knew about his past is not known, but a few probably did.

In Between Closings: The Air Force Academy

In December, 1947, General Kenney, Commander of SAC, announced that Smoky

¹⁹¹Ladislas Farago, The Last Days of Patton (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1981), p. 65. Ike was very discreet about this. The Eisenhower Library does not have anything on file about the base.

¹⁹²Ferrell, The Eisenhower Diaries, pps. 29, 30, 399, and 400.

be a permanent installation and assigned a complement of 5,000 men to the 2,000 men then assigned. He urged Salina to construct more to accomodate the men. A possibility existed that B-36 bombers might be based there.¹⁹³

The Salina Advertiser-Sun was elated and in an editorial, stated that it was a relief. News: ". . .It (the announcement) relieved the minds of Salina businessmen who wondered if they would have to go through another period of uncertainty. The announcement should encourage the city to support the base. Homes were being built for Air Force families."¹⁹⁴

Since 1947 had been a near-miss for the closing of the base, 1948 was a year of rumors. Three times, rumors surfaced about closing the base and three times Colonel Mulzer assured the Salina Journal that the base was permanent. It is interesting to note that the Salina Journal was the paper which published the rumors, not the Salina Advertiser-Sun.

Until the Air Force became an independent service in 1947, the bulk of its commissioned officers were graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY. Most of the others came from Reserve Officer Training (ROTC) programs or cross-overs from the United States Naval Academy and a few officers were commissioned from the enlisted ranks. However, in the midst of the military establishment, the need existed for officers trained in an air environment for service in the air branch of the United States military establishment. On January 24, 1949, the Salina Journal took a stand on the need for such officers in one of its then-rare editorials while Roy Bailey was editor: ". . . There is a need for regular Air Force officers and the logical place for an

¹⁹³ Salina (KS) Journal, December 6, 1947.

¹⁹⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 11, 1947, editorial.

to train future air force officers is Salina, which is strategically in the center of the United States and Smoky Hill Air Force Base can be a start of the institution."¹⁹⁵ At this time, it was assumed that the base would soon be pouring money into the base to improve it.

Salina probably felt that it had advantages in acquiring the Academy. It is in the center of the United States and at the crossroads of highways US 40 and I-70, two then major highways that literally split the continental United States in two. But when such a plum as a permanent government institution like a military academy is available, everyone wants it. Salina may have had an air base, but there was no law in effect that said a military academy had to be located near a city with a military base. By March, 1949, four of the six Kansas Congressmen were seeking it for their districts.¹⁹⁶ One wonders why the other two Kansas Congressmen did not get into the act. Maybe they were more realistic in their appraisal of the Academy.

The Air Force Academy would have been a plum worth seeking for any community, but for Salina it would have ended its worries about the loss of a military base. Until the first class of cadets reported at Lowry AFB, Colorado Springs, in 1954, Salina continued attempts to get the Academy.

It is doubtful that anyone knew that 1949 would be the last year that the base would be active during this decade and the Salina Journal did not know it until it editorialized about the base's future on March 13:

Word from Washington that the new military appropriation bill provides for continuation of the Smoky Hill Air Force Base is good news indeed.

Frankly Salina has a selfish interest in the base. It would fool no one to pretend otherwise. A good many merchants depend upon

¹⁹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, January 24, 1949.

¹⁹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, March 16, 1949.

They the officers and airmen spend here. The whole town benefits in one way or another. . .

In the middle of Kansas and in the middle of the nation, SHAFB nonetheless is on the front line of our global defenses. The base is the long-striking bombers of our strategic air force. They are our decisive arm.

It is the best of tactics to have those bombers located centrally and safely. The flat Saline prairie, the open Kansas climate are ideal for air operations.

So far so good for SHAFB. There is one other essential that only Congress can provide. That is the facilities for men and machines. Weapons and operational equipment are important but equally so are substantial, comfortable, permanent barracks for the airmen who prepare and fly the ships. As any experienced military commander knows, the human factor is probably No. 1 on the priority list.

It appears Congress is now in the process of providing that essential for Smoky Hill. If the job is done, that will be the best of all.¹⁹⁷

The editorial recognized that living quarters were essential, but it looked

at the Air Force. Of course, permanent barracks would have made the base seem permanent, but nothing was said about Salina providing housing for married

1.

The Final Closing

When the closing was announced on August 24, 1949, Salinans were thinking of the base. The Associated Press reported that day that Smoky Hill would be inactivated but kept on a caretaker basis for possible future use in the event of a nation-wide economy move which would lay off 135,000 workers and close

bases.¹⁹⁸

This was confirmed by the Salina Advertiser-Sun on August 26 which stated that no time had been set for the movement of the 301st Bomb Wing from Wurtsmith AFB, Shreveport, LA but it would be around December 1. The closing was not due to political reasons but to the poor re-enlistment record of the wing. At this time, the 301st Wing had forty-five B-29s and twenty tankers but

¹⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, March 13, 1949, editorial.

¹⁹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, August 24, 1949.

arrived at Barksdale, it would be equipped with the new B-47 jets.¹⁹⁹

In an editorial, the Salina Advertiser-Sun commented on the closing of the

It is possible, of course, Secretary (of Defense) Johnson will change his mind. Congress may apply the pressure, fork over the money otherwise persuade him the military establishment should not be closed so drastically. There is a chance Smoky Hill air force base will not be inactivated after all, although a slim one.

But if the base is closed, what's ahead for Salina? Nearly everyone in town will discover some personal loss. Temporarily merchants will have less trade, workers less work. The rent problem may be more easily solved. So much for the dark side.

Salina was a good and growing town before the war. It was and is a prime marketing and distributing center. It is the capital of a prosperous agricultural area. It has not achieved its full possibilities as a manufacturing site; and the westward trend of industry makes Salina's potential considerable. Above all, it is a beautiful, well-fearing, friendly town, with fine parks, attractive homes, and substantial citizens. It is an ideal place to live and rear children. . . . Sure, it's a shame the base may be closed. But that very setback can be turned into an incentive. We can stand on our own feet with or without a prop from Washington. Salinans are of too strong stuff to fear the challenge.²⁰⁰

This was a philosophical approach to the base closing. Salina had barely seen the base in 1947. But this time, there was no one in Washington to turn to save the base. General Eisenhower had retired and was President of Columbia University in New York and not on the best of terms with President Truman. General LeMay was in Europe and Colonel Lee was in California. Senator Capper had retired and Senator Reed was in ill-health. That left Congressman Smith who was regarded as a maverick by Salina. Therefore, the Salina Journal's editorial on the closing is surprising:

. . . The unofficial explanation for the closing of the base was that it was in bad shape as far as living quarters went for the single personnel. The tar paper shacks were about to fall down and would not have held out another winter. Everything else about the base

¹⁹⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 26, 1949 and Salina (KS) Journal, August 30, 1949.

²⁰⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 26, 1949, editorial.

ideal. But it simply would have cost too much--more than Congress was willing to spend. Salina should have cultivated its political sources long ago. Maybe the next time, it will.²⁰¹

The surprising part of the editorial lies in the last two sentences. President Truman was not blamed, but overlooked was the fact that Kansas had a new United States Senator and the other one was very ill. Congressman Smith was in his first year in Congress. Congress was also controlled by the Democrats, not Republicans. In 1947, the Republicans had controlled both houses. Salina had used its political pull in 1947 to keep the base open.

On September 22, it was announced that it would cost over three million dollars to move the 301st Wing to Barksdale. One of the reasons Smoky Hill was being closed was because it did not have permanent-type buildings. However, the Air Force later claimed that the decision to close the base was made on the basis of operational as well as security reasons. It would have cost between twenty and twenty-five million dollars to provide the needed permanent buildings.

Smoky Hill was a temporary World War II base."²⁰² The reader is reminded that Smoky Hill may have been a temporary World War II base, but its runways were better than most temporary bases had received.

Most of the base's personnel were to leave by November 7. Approximately twenty officers, 100 enlisted, and 152 civilians would remain behind to do the cleaning and final packing.²⁰³

The last chance of keeping the base open passed on October 20 when President Truman impounded 615 million dollars of Air Force appropriations. Thus, the money from the base continued and, when completed, the 4108th Base Service

²⁰¹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 5, 1949, editorial.

²⁰² Salina (KS) Journal, September 22 and October 4, 1949.

²⁰³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, October 20, 1949.

commanded by Lt. Col. Dailey M. Jones, would be activated and charged with maintaining the base in order for any possible reactivation.²⁰⁴

December 7, the situation at the base compelled the issuance of a theft

The fact that the base had been closed did not mean that people could take whatever they wanted from the base or Camp Phillips. If people saw something they wanted, they were invited to contact the base as it might be surplus.²⁰⁵

The Salina Advertiser-Sun raised the question one last time on why the base was being closed in an editorial on December 8:

Smoky Hill Air Force base is being deactivated. Forbes Air Force base at Topeka has suffered a similar fate. And even the Cavalry post at Ft. Riley, once the largest in the world, is "down on its last horse."

...But the airplane is the most potent factor in our preparation for war, and it seems that the government is missing a bet by letting our good runways at Smoky Hill Air Force base go to waste.

There are rumors that men transferred to Shreveport are finding the base crowded and pretty unsatisfactory for so large a force. There are rumors that there are signs that the buildings at SHAFB may be improved or replaced by better ones.

Of course, Dame Rumor has had a field day when it comes to the base, but we hope she is right, for once, and that this means the government intends to reactivate SHAFB at some future date. It would seem to be wiser and more economical than crowding too many airmen into inadequate fields in the south.

In the meantime, however, we are wondering, as we consider the withdrawal of airbases from this state: "What's the matter with Kansas?" Are we being punished for our political "sins"?²⁰⁶

Taps

December, 1949 was the last month of full-scale operation of the base in its period. The next chapter will cover Smoky Hill's fallow period, a period in which around twenty-one men kept up the base while waiting to either leave for other assignments or become part of a nucleus that would reactivate the base.

²⁰⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, October 31, 1949.

²⁰⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, December 7, 1949.

²⁰⁶ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 8, 1949, editorial.

It would seem that the decision to place the base on caretaker status was influenced by its condition and reputation. It was frequently known as "Smokey" and "Shafted." In a way, there were those who saw this era as a step in history for the base in which it seemed to pretend to be a frontier or a cattle town. Colonels Lee and Mulzer, while temporary Commander of the Tenth Air Force, do appear to have tried to get money for the base. The overall impression of this period is that maybe Colonels Lee and Mulzer were trying to keep the base open without sufficient cooperation from the Air Force. Colonels Eareckson, Preston, Lee, and Mulzer went on record as saying Salina needed to build homes if the base were to be kept open. While overall Air Force accident statistics were not available to this day for this period, the accident rate at Smoky Hill may have been a factor in its demise. In 1948, forty-five men had died in four aircraft accidents and in 1949, eighty-five men had died between 1945 and 1949 in twenty-two aircraft accidents.

By 1949, Salina's situation had become precarious. Although it did not realize it, it lost a friend when General Eisenhower stepped down as Army Chief of Staff to become President of Columbia University. Colonel Lee was in California and probably waiting for the day when he would regain his General's rank. General LeMay was in Europe. Thus it seems that the Air Force probably placed the base on a "caretaker status" to wait and see what would happen in the world of politics and international events. Probably the runways kept the base in the Air Force inventory.

Throughout this period, the Air Force had tip-toed through the Sunflowers, and so often it appeared that Salina was not eager to join it. If Salina had constructed more housing, it seems possible that Salina might have had a better chance of getting the Air Force Academy or an Air Command headquarters. If

had tried to meet the Air Force part of the way, money might have been
to improve the base. Yet, in many ways, the Air Force did not seem to
even very much thought to improving the base. Two questions that could
be asked about this period are: What would have happened if Salina had con-
sidered even 1,000 more housing units? Would this have been enough to keep
the base open?

CHAPTER IV

INACTIVE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

DECEMBER 8, 1949 TO AUGUST 2, 1951

With runways 10,000 feet long, Smoky Hill Air Force Base had given Salina, status in the arsenal of the United States. Few installations could of having runways that size. At the same time, there were references to age of "Smokey Hole" or "Shafted." Salina had gone to great lengths to becoming another "Junction City," but there were those who said that it come one during the 1945-1949 period. By December 7, 1949, the Air Force reduced the base to "stand-by status," staffed at first by a force of 500 military and civilian personnel. Later that force was reduced to a staff of officer, four military, and nineteen civilian personnel. As long as this remained on station, there was hope that the base would be reactivated. It is hard to figure out what had happened to Smoky Hill. The Air Force claimed that the poor re-enlistment rate and condition of the buildings factors in closing the base. Yet, in the first place, Smoky Hill had given those large runways. Secondly, the Air Force might have protected investment by sending in another Colonel Lee to resolve the personnel problem. Money for barracks may have been a problem, but when thought was given closing the base in 1947, the Air Force had estimated that \$125,000 was needed to fix them.

Above all else, though, were "the runways." Runways can be built, but it

that there was something special about the runways at Smoky Hill. As a member of the Air Force, long after the base was closed in 1967, this writer met across many pilots who, upon discovering that this writer was from the Salina area, would heap praise, not upon the base itself, but "those beautiful runways." Those who referred to "Smokey Hole" may have seen a miniature front porch in Dodge City, but the weather, runways, and hangars seem to have made it difficult to keep the base in the Air Force inventory.

Smoky Hill Air Force Base would be inactive but not forgotten during this period. Save for one incident reported in 1951 when the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force could not find any reference to the base in his files. Salina residents made another attempt to get the Air Force Academy, keep an ear cocked in the direction of Washington for any rumor of reactivation, and finally rejoice at the news of the reactivation of the base and news that the base would be better than before as plans were made for a virtual facelift of the base in anticipation of receiving two Bomb Wings, an Air Division, and around 8,000 personnel. Courtesy of General Curtis LeMay, Commander of SAC.

During this period, there would be many rumors in circulation concerning the future of the base. Proposals were made on what to do with the base and the Air Force would seem to be approving them, while nothing actually happened. The Commander of the base for most of this period was Capt. Bernard J. Nied, who with his small force of men kept watch over the property, consisting of the base proper, Camp Phillips, and the OQ Gunnery Range. No one lived on the base between April, 1950 and February, 1951, when a force of approximately thirty men under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Leslie Farnham arrived from Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS to reactivate the OQ Gunnery Range and occupied three barracks on the base. Later, these men found themselves comprising the nucleus of the units that would arrive on base after August, 1951 to reactivate it.

By December 7, 1949, the bulk of the 301st Bomb Wing had moved to its new post at Barksdale AFB, LA. In its wake, the 4108th Base Service Squadron, consisting of approximately 500 military and civilian personnel, were left behind to clean up the base. On January 1, 1950, the Salina Journal gloomily lamented "the airmen moved out before the holiday season began" and the closing resulted in Salina losing a ten million dollar annual payroll.¹ But privately, Salinans probably felt relieved that they had not yielded to Air Force pressure to build more housing. The vacation of the base would have left a lot of empty homes if new ones had been built.

The Air Force Academy

The matter of the Air Force Academy had been put to rest on a back burner in March, 1949 and did not surface again until December, 1949. Despite the fact that Smoky Hill was in the process of being closed, it was announced that Salina was being considered as a site for the Air Force Academy.² Whether Salina was merely chasing after a rainbow or whether the Air Force was giving Salina a chance to redeem itself is speculative. In Salina's favor besides location was the fact that its military installation could easily expand in any direction it desired without fear of displacing a large segment of population. If the Air Force Academy to locate at the base or OQ Gunnery Range, it could expand in any direction and still be within a few minutes of any major north/south or east/west highway. By this time, Salina had regular air service and railroad depots. The drawbacks were the housing situation and the size of Salina which made it hard to find very much to do in off-duty hours. Perhaps, the Air Force was using a "carrot on a stick" approach to entice Salina to

¹Salina (KS) Journal, January 1, 1950.

²Salina (KS) Journal, December 13, 1949.

more housing in anticipation of a reactivated Smoky Hill Air Force Base.

On January 1, 1950, the Salina Journal announced that Salina was to be in-
ed as a possible site for the Air Force Academy by a three-man team on

day, January 5. To help the Air Force in making its decision, Congress-

Wint Smith "had introduced a bill to make Salina the official choice."³

is the matter of whether he really expected the bill to get anywhere.

all, Wint Smith was only a second-term Republican Congressman without much
fluence in a body controlled by the Democrats.

The visit went off without a hitch. Salina was surveyed as a possible

, but the team informed the Salina Journal that 150 other sites were under

consideration, including eight in Kansas.⁴ This was the last time that the

ter of an Air Force Academy being located in Salina was mentioned in the

al press until the base was reactivated.

Personnel

Little is known about Lt. Col. Dailey M. Jones who was Commander of the

08th Base Service Squadron at the start of this period. He was succeeded by

tain Bernard J. Nied on April 20, 1949. Captain Nied was 51 years old, had

listed in the Army in 1921, and was commissioned in 1943. By the end of 1949,

was Salvage and Disposal Officer.⁵ Throughout this period, he was the Com-

ander of the base, and when it was reactivated in 1951 he was the first Base

commander until his transfer to California in late 1951 for the purpose of re-

bring from the Air Force.

By January 17, 1950, there were fewer than 500 men assigned to the base,

³Salina (KS) Journal, January 1, 1950.

⁴Salina (KS) Journal, January 5, 1950.

⁵Kansas City (MO) Star, February 25, 1951 and Salina (KS) Journal, April 19, 1950.

permanent or TDY, and ninety civilians. This group was assigned the task of packing what was left of the 301st Wing and shipping it to Barksdale AFB. Most of the men left behind were married and lived with their families in Salina proper. However, there were a few single men still living on the base. These men were moved out of the many barracks into the few closest to the service club which had been rehabilitated. Because the base had been virtually closed, the base theater had been shut down. However, morale became a problem and when the men were moved into "new" barracks, the base theater was reopened and movies were shown three times a week. In addition, the food in the mess hall improved.⁶

A little over a year later, the Kansas City Star reported that Captain [redacted] commanded a force of four enlisted and nineteen civilians. Sixteen of the civilians were fire fighters/guards, two were utility maintenance men, and [redacted] was a clerk.⁷

OQ Gunnery Range

When Smoky Hill Air Force Base was deactivated, use of the Gunnery Range ceased. It does not appear that any men had been assigned there since the end of World War II and any work performed there was done by men assigned to the base. However, to permit 30,000+ acres to lie fallow for any period of time was wasteful. The OQ Range, approximately seventeen miles southwest of Salina, had been used periodically since around 1943 by planes assigned to the base. It is assumed that during the inactive period of the base, at least part of the Range was leased to area farmers for use as pasture and crop land.

In the early days of 1951, rumors circulated concerning the possible reac-

⁶Salina (KS) Journal, January 17, 1950.

⁷Kansas City (MO) Star, February 25, 1951.

of the base. On May 18, 1951, the Salina Journal announced that thirty-
 TDY from Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS, were working at the Range and living
 In June, Johnson-Sampson Construction Company of Salina received con-
 totaling \$39,289 for construction of launching tracks on the Range which
 be used by planes from Forbes AFB and Olathe Naval Air Station (NAS).⁸
 Mon was made of possible use of the Range by units assigned to a reacti-
 Smoky Hill Air Force Base.

Little else is known about the activities that transpired at the Range
 this period save that by August 2, 1951, there were sixty men working
 Range, TDY from Forbes, and living in three barracks on base. Lt. Col.
 G. Farnham was in command of this group.⁹

Operations/Activities

Smoky Hill had been a large base in terms of runways. When it was deacti-
 enough equipment was left behind to handle the first phase of reactiva-
 if that ever happened. The mission of the 4108th Base Service Squadron
 to have been basic upkeep of the base and no more. They seemed to be
 ting for something to happen; either more activity or complete disposal of
 base.

As early as January 17, 1950, it was apparent that the base was in worse
 pe than had been previously publicized. The Salina Journal commented that
 there was no grass in the streets--yet. Some tarpaper shacks are succumbing
 weather." However, had the base remained open, it would have received
 \$514,000 for family quarters and barracks. This appropriation was removed

⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 18 and June 21, 1951.

⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 2, 1951.

the FY 1950 budget in February, 1950.¹⁰ Most of the buildings were to be when the base was reactivated prior to the assignment of very many military personnel.¹¹

During this period, the matter of pigeons and coyotes arose. It seems that at any activity to speak of on the base, the pigeons moved into the hangars and the coyotes took over the base proper. Captain Nied invited local citizens to the base for a pigeon shoot one time in 1951 and a coyote hunt on the same day another time. Both events were well attended.¹² There may have been added incentive for the coyotes to frequent the base. The base proper had been released to a Texas sheep rancher for grazing in 1951!¹³

The Community

It has already been noted that the Salina Journal had complained that the town had left before the Christmas shopping season had begun in Salina. In another section, the matter of rumors regarding the base will be mentioned. Despite the fact that there were few people assigned to the base, Salina remained attentive to it and the possibility that it might be reactivated.

In the last chapter, it was mentioned that the base had a large supply of fuel on hand when the decision was made to deactivate the base. By March 2, 1950, only three furnaces were in use on base but there were 10,000 tons of fuel on hand which was being shipped to other air bases. This did not make any

¹⁰Salina (KS) Journal, January 17 and February 10, 1950.

¹¹Salina (KS) Journal, June 20, 1951.

¹²Impact, January 9, 1953.

¹³Salina (KS) Journal, June 17, 1951. Coyote hunting remains a popular sport in this area. This writer was surprised by this popularity when he first moved into the area in 1969 and the lengths that some people would go to get just one coyote.

Salina as there was a coal shortage in the nation and Salina felt that it should be kept in the area.¹⁴

While the base was on "stand-by status" 2,000 new homes were built in

¹⁵ Whether these homes had been on the drawing board prior to the deactivation was not mentioned but to have built them after the base was closed did not make any sense in terms of usefulness for base personnel. On May 3, 1951, rumors getting more frequent that the base would be reactivated, it was learned that Salina, Inc. had been formed to generate housing for possibly airmen. The Air Force had informed Salina that it wanted assurances that there would be "sufficient housing" in the area if the base were reactivated. Otherwise, the base will remain closed." This was one condition that General [redacted], Commander of SAC, had imposed on the area before the base would be reactivated.¹⁶

Proposed Usage of the Base

While the base was on "stand-by status" and rumors were circulating as to the future of the base, Salina looked around to see what could be done with the base if it were declared surplus. As previously mentioned, a Texas rancher was permitted to graze sheep on the base proper in 1951. Prior to that, the 127th Tactical Fighter Squadron of the Kansas Air National Guard, stationed in Wichita, requested and received permission to hold its two-week summer camp at the base from June 10 to June 24, 1950.¹⁷

Carl Rice, a farmer and Democrat candidate for Governor of Kansas, proposed

¹⁴Salina (KS) Journal, March 2, 1950.

¹⁵Salina (KS) Journal, February 8, 1951.

¹⁶Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 3, 1951.

¹⁷Salina (KS) Journal, March 10, 1950.

April 26, 1950 that Smoky Hill Air Force Base be used as a grain storage. The rent would be used to keep up the base in case the Air Force decided to reactivate it at some future date.¹⁸ The question can be asked about storing grain in facilities designed for five years use and which seemed at the time to be in a high state of disrepair. Still, it must have caused a lot of people to start thinking about possible uses for the base.

On June 15, 1950, the Salina Advertiser-Sun announced that 500 government-owned buildings "are now offered for lease to public industry. Invitations were invited for bids to lease the entire facility, including the land, with the privilege of sub-leasing. Included in the 500 buildings are seven hangars ranging in size from 141' x 158' to 202' x 211'. . . ." This proposal would end the military usage of the base unless an all-out war broke out.¹⁹

Nothing seems to have come of this decision. The government invited bids but never acted upon them. Shortly after this, the Korean Conflict began, but strong rumors of possible reactivation did not start surfacing until 1951. Whether the war had anything to do with this is unknown. It is possible that the Air Force agreed to permit bids to be accepted without having any plans of actually leasing the base. Then, it could be that Salina's size was a handicap to any industry thinking of leasing the base. At this time, Salina's population was not over 27,000 people and its economy was agricultural-based without much of a supporting labor force. No announcement was ever made in the local press as to whatever happened or to the cessation of accepting bids. Maybe the bids were too low for the government's acceptance.

¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 26, 1950.

¹⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 15, 1950.

Rumors on Reactivation

Most from the time the base was officially deactivated, rumors started saying that the base would be reactivated, as though the Pentagon had realized its mistake and wanted to keep the base open. The first rumor surfaced January 17, 1950 when the Salina Journal announced that there were "rumors of a battalion of engineers coming in this spring to fix up the runways. . . . New men have been assigned to the base. They were forty fire fighters who replaced those who went with the 301st Wing to Barksdale. The men were TDY from other bases."²⁰

Then on March 8, 1950, someone called Salina radio station KSAL with a rumor that the base would be reactivated. Colonel Jones, Base Commander, denied the story and the FBI and base Provost Marshal were investigating the source of the rumor.²¹ It seems preposterous that this much official attention would be made to a rumor unless there was more to the story than the Salina Journal and KSAL mentioned.

All was well until February 1, 1951. On that date, the Salina Advertiser-Sun ran a story on the announcement that Salinans were wondering why "it was necessary to spend over \$37 million for an air base at Wichita when Smoky Hill already existed. . . .The only reason given by the Air Force was the superior social and recreational facilities in the larger city."²²

Seven days later, the Air Force announced that one reason that the base had not been reactivated was due to a lack of trained men and planes. This was followed by an announcement that the Air Force had included a request for money

²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, January 17, 1950.

²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, March 8, 1950.

²² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, February 1, 1951.

ivate the base in a budget submitted to Congress. A spokesman for the
 ve stated that the opening of the base in Wichita would not affect
 23

the February 12, 1951 issue of Newsweek an article appeared concerning
 ing Congressman Wint Smith had with the Assistant Secretary of the Air
 Harold C. Stuart, to find out why Smoky Hill Air Force Base was being
 out of consideration for reactivation when it had cost nearly \$20 million
 ld in World War II and "is now on caretaker status. Stuart could not
 ny record of the base. Smith replied: 'My God--its one of the largest
 ses in the country and you mean to tell me you have no record of it here!?'
 later informed the Congressman that he had misplaced the list on his
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The Salina Advertiser-Sun informed its readers on March 15, 1951 that the
 tivation of Smoky Hill depended largely on the cooperation of Salina in
 erence to the housing problem. The government also intended to review such
 tors as recreation facilities, golf courses, parks, transportation, and
 ols.²⁵ Salina still prides itself on its parks and schools. Salina has
 y parks and tries to keep them up to par. As for schools, it had only one
 h school, but for higher education it had Kansas Wesleyan University and
 ymount College, the latter then being a women's college.

Reactivation

On June 21, 1951, Senator Andrew Schoppel announced that 1,000 officers,
 000 airmen, and 800 civilians would be assigned to the base when it was reac-

²³Salina (KS) Journal, February 8 and February 25, 1951.

²⁴"The Case of the Missing Kansas Air Base," Newsweek, February 12, 1951,
 19.

²⁵Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 15, 1950.

The mission of the base would be combat training with medium and bombers.²⁶ Salina and Smoky Hill were to be given a second chance. The remaining question was: When would the base be reopened?

The Salina Journal announced on July 30, 1951 that SAC had not received word to reactivate the base, and that when it did, it planned to raze most of the paper shacks and replace them with "substantial quarters" and provide facilities for new jet bombers. SAC wanted \$24 million to turn Smoky Hill into a cornerstone in the nation's defenses. No air units would be sent in until the construction was under way." Captain Nied, Base Commander, thought that it would be eight months to a year before the base was in full operation. For the first time since the base was closed, the main gate was being manned. Already, 175 barracks were in the process of being torn down and would be replaced by new ones. The runways were to be inspected and repaired. The guarding of the base was being done by the men who were TDY from Forbes AFB and who had originally been sent to Salina to work on the OQ Gunnery Range.²⁷

Two days later, the banner headline of the August 1, 1951 edition of the Salina Journal was: "SHAFB OPENED TODAY." Beneath the headline was a picture of a B-29 bomber landing on the base. Although the picture was an old one from days when the base had previously been active, it did express the elation that Salina felt about the reopening of the base. The picture did not mean that planes would be assigned to the base right away. On this date, Captain Nied had four airmen and twenty-one civilians directly assigned to the base, an increase of two people since 1950. The Gunnery Range was not ready for use, but planes from Forbes AFB were using the Range as it was. Salina was getting reacquainted

²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, June 21, 1951.

²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, July 30, 1951.

sounds of military aircraft. At the end of the articles announcing activation of the base was the reaction of Salina to this news. "Dear Salina, the reopening of Smoky Hill Air Force base is the best news Salina has had in a long time. Yours, Ina." ²⁸

In a way, the reopening of Smoky Hill in 1951 was similar to its opening in 1942. Its conception had been during the dark days of World War II when the Japanese were over-running American defenses in the Pacific. The reopening coincided with involvement in the Korean Conflict. However, the similarity ended there. This time, Smoky Hill had over eighty people assigned to it. In addition, it had runways and buildings, which although not in the best of shape, were the base partially ready and able to accept a few men. Salina had constructed over 2,000 new homes which were ready for the men assigned to the base. A problem that arose was that there would not be enough homes and when men of the 310th Bomb Wing, which had been reactivated at Forbes AFB, got word that they were moving to Smoky Hill, many rushed to Salina and acquired the homes, leaving the less-foresighted and the men of the 40th Wing, reactivated at Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ and assigned to Smoky Hill, to fend for themselves.

On August 1, 1951, Salina had received good news. This date commenced the start of a new era that would last over thirteen years. For Salina, the future had never looked brighter. Nevertheless, Salina in believing that this time things would work out and that the city would keep the base forever. Sadly, the city neglected to use the time to build up a solid economic base that would absorb any losses if the base were closed again.

This time, Salina and the Air Force began an experiment that succeeded to the point that over 125 towns with military installations in them would either

²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, August 1, 1951 and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 2, 1951.

Salina Chamber of Commerce or send delegations to Salina for a first-
at what seemed to be a "fairy tale" in base/community relations.
community relations would never be described as anything less than "excel-
though it would not be until the early 1960s that the housing situation
remedied. Then, Salina would over react to the construction activity
at the base and build too many.

CHAPTER V

". . . BACK IN BUSINESS"

AUGUST 1, 1951 TO MARCH 14, 1957

Reactivation

The base had been formally reactivated on August 1, 1951. Smoky Hill and Salina were to have a second chance and both sides would take advantage of it. Everything was done in a manner as though it were the first time it had ever been done. But before the base was formally reactivated, it was evident that change was in the air. Old buildings were being razed and over sixty-five people were working there, some of whom were manning the main gate, something which had not been done since early 1950.

It had been announced on July 30, 1951 just before the base was officially reactivated that the base would be a keystone in the nation's defense and no units were expected to be assigned to the base until new construction was well under way. The runways had to be inspected and repaired before the base could receive aircraft.¹

Although no bugles blew and no banners were unfurled to commemorate the reactivation, change was evident. It was announced on November 29, 1951 that the reactivation process would be completed by September, 1952. The base was being constructed with the thought that it would be active for at least ten years instead of the "usual" five years (as had been the case in 1942). It was estimated that eighty per cent of the 8,000 men assigned to the base would be single

¹Salina (KS) Journal, July 30, 1951.

on base.² For these single men, there would be modern dormitories to be built as opposed to the old "open bay" barracks still common in the military at that time.

Construction projects must have been bid for less than the government had anticipated because the Salina Journal learned on December 7, 1951 that the cost of opening the base would be one million dollars less than originally estimated.³ This started Smoky Hill/Schilling's reputation for being cost-conscious which would culminate in 1964 with the base being number one in the Department of Defense for cost consciousness.

Construction was going full blast by January, 1952. There were to be at least 7,000 men assigned to the base and B-47 jet bombers were expected to arrive on base by late 1952.⁴ Actually, the B-47s would not arrive until late 1953 and there would be an estimated 8,000 men assigned to the base.

Just two months later, Lt. Col. Miles W. Johnston, Base Executive Officer, announced that the first Bomb Wing would arrive in January, 1953 and that preparations were being made to receive it.⁵ This was another piece of misinformation. The first Wing arrived ahead of this schedule in September of 1952.

However, Colonel Johnston's announcement was partially correct. In January, 1953, the 40th Bomb Wing, the second Wing assigned to the base, was arriving.

At the same time, Colonel Frank W. Ellis, assigned to Strategic Air Command Headquarters, Offutt AFB, Omaha, NE, informed the Salina Journal that SAC had projected that the base payroll would amount to approximately \$1,633,000 a month.

²Salina (KS) Journal, November 29, 1951.

³Salina (KS) Journal, December 7, 1951.

⁴Salina (KS) Journal, January 19, 1952.

⁵Salina (KS) Journal, March 20, 1952.

Hill would need 1,600 family housing units. The base would be used for additional purposes rather than training.⁶

Before then, there was preparation work that had to be done. Col. Bud [redacted], Base Commander, made an appeal through the Salina Journal for furniture to furnish the barracks' dayrooms at the base until new furniture arrived. "Furniture will be an assist in creating a positive relationship between [redacted] and the base."⁷ Whether this appeal was successful was not revealed, but it is interesting to note that the plea appealed to the spirit of base/com-munity relations.

Smoky Hill had been formally active for about ten months when Colonel [redacted], Base Commander, in a speech at the Salina Public Library, announced that, with 500 men then on the base, the first significant increase in manpower would come by June 30, 1952 when another 500 men were expected. After this, things would pick up. There would be 2,500 men on base by September, and 6,500 by June, 1953. A high percentage would be married men who, expressing a more stable outlook, would want an active involvement in local affairs. The base planned to be liberal with three-day passes to keep morale high. An estimated five per cent of the personnel assigned to the base would be Negroes.⁸ This would be the only mention of Negroes in this period. Note, too, the variations in figures as to how many men were to be assigned to the base thus far in this chapter.

Undoubtedly, first arrivals at the reactivated base had heard of its old reputation of "Smokey Hole" and "shafted." There is evidence to suggest that the early arrivals may have lived in old World War II-era barracks for up to a

⁶Salina (KS) Journal, March 20, 1952.

⁷Salina (KS) Journal, April 19, 1952.

⁸Salina (KS) Journal, June 5, 1952.

er the 310th Wing arrived on base and they may have been detailed to
 an up the base which had been in a state of neglect since 1949.

get the base ready for operation, it was revealed that the Air Force
 lizing men from other bases in temporary duty (TDY) status. At the same
 en permanently assigned to the base were arriving daily.⁹ In addition,
 e TDY from Forbes AFB, KS to open the OQ Gunnery Range, most of whom
 permanently assigned to the base, but when this happened was never re-
 in newspaper sources.

Leutenant Colonel Johnston, Deputy Base Commander, had announced on June 17,
 at when all of the personnel arrived on station, there would be 8,000
 With their families, this would give Salina a military population of 25,000
 which would be equal to Salina's civilian population. This announcement
 consternation for the Salina School Board which was trying to figure out
 any military children would be in the area that fall. The Board knew that
 needed more teachers but the issue was how much the budget would need to be
 ed to meet the added expense.¹⁰

Enough people were on base by August 14 for the announcement that the base
 paper would be out that Friday. The first press run would be 2,500 copies
 as to be published by Globe Imprint Company of Salina. For the time being,
 base paper would be unnamed but a contest would be held at a later date to
 it.¹¹

More personnel were expected in November. On August 27, in the name of
 base/community relations, furnishings were solicited for a nursery that

⁹Salina (KS) Journal, July 15, 1952.

¹⁰Salina (KS) Journal, June 17 and July 23, 1952.

¹¹Salina (KS) Journal, August 14, 1952.

to be placed in operation on base. Nurses from the base hospital staff it.¹² This would seem like a waste of manpower but the nurses did much to do, which will come out in another section in this chapter. August 29, the base theater reopened for the first time since early 1951. There were 906 "plush new opera-type chairs to greet the patrons." To celebrate this event, Colonel Cather, Base Commander, made a brief speech before the movie began. Roughly four months later, the theater was given approval to start showing movies every night starting December 28. In the second week of December, 1952, attendance had risen to 2,262 adults and forty-three children.¹³

The 310th Bomb Wing began arriving on base in early September and base officials expected some personnel to experience difficulty in adjusting to their new environment. Lt. Col. Miles Johnston, Deputy Base Commander, was designated to handle the problems that arose during this period.¹⁴

Everything was being done for the first time in this period. Chaplain Johnston conducted the first Protestant services in the Phillips Village Chapel on Sunday, September 7, 1952; the base gas station reopened on December 19 selling Phillips 66 products; and on April 18, 1953, the Commissary (the military version of the grocery store) opened.¹⁵

Lastly, Bethany College, Lindsborg, and Kansas Wesleyan University, Salina, were offering college courses to the personnel at the base starting in 1953. Bethany held its classes on base while KWU conducted the courses on its campus.

¹²Salina (KS) Journal, August 27, 1952.

¹³Impact, August 29 and December 19, 1952.

¹⁴Impact, September 26, 1952.

¹⁵Impact, September 5 and December 19, 1952 and April 18, 1953.

Salina. A variety of courses ranging from Art to Speech were offered. The government encouraged enrollment by paying three-fourths of the cost. By March, 1956, Bethany College reported an enrollment of seventy-five people in its on-base courses.¹⁶ Enrollment for base personnel at KWU during this period was not revealed in the newspaper accounts available to this

OQ Gunnery Range

The OQ Gunnery Range had been reactivated in March, 1951 by thirty men under command of Lt. Col. Leslie Farnham. Most of the men lived on base, and when reactivated they were detailed to guard the base. Throughout this period, the range was manned by personnel assigned to the base but was used by units from continental Air Force bases. By December 16, 1951, four targets had been erected and were being used by B-29s. Sgt. Luke Crabtree was the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge and there were still thirty-five men assigned to the range.¹⁷

There were two parts to the Range. The air-to-ground part received the most attention, but on January 15, 1953, the Salina Advertiser-Sun focused attention on the Basic Rifle Range located two miles southwest of Camp Phillips. Air Force Regulations at the time required "every airman to qualify at least once during every calendar year" in the weapon assigned to him. Since opening, men had fired for scoring. Forty men were scheduled for each working day and it took five hours according to Tech Sergeant Joseph R. Ross.¹⁸

¹⁶Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 18, September 3, and December 17, 1953
Salina (KS) Journal, March 9, 1956.

¹⁷Salina (KS) Journal, December 16, 1951.

¹⁸Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, January 15, 1953. In today's Air Force, few men ever see a gun after leaving basic training but some pilots are required to qualify in the use of a hand gun.

foreseen at the time was a near-disaster in the offing when the Air Force on August 23, 1955 that RB-47s (reconnaissance versions of the B-47) using the Range at night starting on September 6 for purposes of night. Smoky Hill had the only Range in the 8th AF¹⁹ which meant that the Range belonged to the 8th AF.

Although the training was cancelled before it started on September 6, it was underway one month later with unforeseen results. The planes dropped bombs to light up the area they were photographing. Unfortunately, they completely missed the Range and dropped their bombs on farm fields near Salina, KS, south of the Range. The blasts broke windows in homes all about Salina and convinced many that the Russians had finally attacked.²⁰ It is difficult to figure out how the pilots missed 32,000 acres in an eight by eleven mile area, dropped their bombs six miles southwest, and did not discover the mistake until people began calling the authorities. This was the last time that night reconnaissance missions were reported during this period. Fortunately, the damage was confined to glass windows and holes in the fields.

Shortly after this incident, and perhaps partly as a result of it, members of the 2700th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron, from Hill AFB, UT, arrived at Smoky Hill to begin "a routine clearance of all unexploded ordnance which had accumulated over the past few years." There were twenty-three men assigned to this group and they were assisted by fifteen men from the base. This was the first time that the Range had been cleared since it was opened during World War II. The group reported finding an average of fifteen live shells and bombs

¹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 23, 1955.

²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 9, 1955.

less than a week after the Range had been cleared of unexploded ordnance, a target plane with a ten-foot wing span, snapped a control cable and fell into a storage shed. When it hit the shed, it was going between eighty and ninety miles per hour.²² Fortunately, no one was reported injured.

During the first three weeks of October, 1956, SAC F-84 planes used the Range during SAC's first annual combat capability competition. Apparently the Air Force feared a repetition of the mishap which occurred one year earlier, so this time the Air Force assured the people in the area that the planes, dropping twenty-five pound practice bombs, would utilize targets located in the center of the Range to "avoid chances of the bombs landing on farms." Furthermore, planes involved in this competition would not fly over cities or

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Construction

On September 25, 1951, the Salina Journal ran a request from the Chamber of Commerce requesting labor registration by those interested in working at the base. The next day, the paper pleaded for workers. The tone was literally one of "you asked for the base, now provide the labor needed so that we can keep it going." The wage scale varied between \$1.25 and \$3.00 an hour.²⁴ The first bids for nine buildings were to be opened on October 21, 1951.

²¹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, October 20, 1955 and Salina (KS) Journal, October 30, 1955. Clearance is now done on a semi-annual basis.

²² Salina (KS) Journal, November 3, 1955.

²³ Salina (KS) Journal, September 30 and October 2, 1956.

²⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, September 25 and 26, 1951 and January 24, 1952. Until 1969, \$1.25 an hour was a common hourly wage for unskilled labor in this area.

communications, photo lab, secure storage, three squadron headquarters, an airmen's club, an officers' club, and a cold storage warehouse.²⁵

For the new buildings, 102 old buildings were to be sold in sealed bids. Among them were barracks, wash racks, a fire station, and guard houses.²⁶

The buildings were to be sold was not mentioned. Another thing worth noting is that apparently not all of the barracks were in bad shape unless the barracks were merely being sold for their lumber content.

In February, 1952, it was announced that twenty-one two-story frame dormitories, four frame mess and administration buildings were to be built. Hope expressed in the article making this announcement that these buildings would be permanent.²⁷

In May, the Air Force revealed that it would take over thirty million dollars to reactivate the base. This money would be spent on acquiring land, airfield improvements, and facilities for operations, aircraft maintenance, storage, and utilities.²⁸

On May 15, 1952, the fifteenth contract involving \$6.1 million was released for building. This contract involved the construction of a trainer building, mess facilities, and street repair as well as a gasoline distribution system and bulk oil storage farm. The contract went to a Lubbock, TX firm.²⁹

Colonel Cather, Base Commander, took the Salina Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee on a tour of the base on July 28, 1952 and informed them

²⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, October 20, 1951.

²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, January 7, 1952.

²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, February 8, 21, 22, and March 7, 1952.

²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 1, 5, 8, 13, and 15, 1952.

²⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 12 and June 27, 1952.

Air Force was pleased with construction progress. Barracks construction was well ahead of schedule. He informed the committee that eventually the base would be based at Smoky Hill which would require eighteen-inch-thick concrete runways.³⁰

Most rehabilitation work had been completed by August 3, 1952. Thirty-one buildings had been reconditioned and contractors were trying to complete ten barracks and two mess halls by September 1. Work on runways and parking areas was also expected to be completed by that date. The construction program underway included twenty-one dormitories, four mess halls, and two Bachelor Officers' Quarters (BOQs). A planned 1953 project was an access road north to 1st Street which was to supplement the road running east to US 81.³¹ Construction work was going on at a high pitch that month preparing the base for the arrival of the 310th Bomb Wing and its 1,200 men.

Construction had begun on December 28, 1951 and was eighty percent complete by September 21, 1952. Approximately 900 men were working on construction jobs and much of that work was cleanup. Rehabilitation of 108 buildings was ninety-percent complete and a dormitory was eighty-four percent complete.³²

Whitley Austin, editor of the Salina Journal, informed his readers in an editorial on September 23, 1952 that architects had told him that Smoky Hill was being rebuilt with an honest and serious attempt at economy. Frills had been eliminated. In the editor's opinion, a personal inspection confirmed

³⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, July 28, 1952.

³¹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 3 and 20, 1952.

³² Salina (KS) Journal, September 21, 1952.

³³ Salina (KS) Journal, September 23, 1952, editorial.

Base Exchange (BX) is the military version of the civilian department. In the Air Force it is commonly referred to as the "BX" while in the civilian world it is known as the PX or Post Exchange. At Smoky Hill, \$35,000 was allocated to rehabilitate the building which opened at 12:30 P.M. on November 20, 1952. The Air Force base with a huge plane inventory needs a capacity for plenty more. On January 13, 1953, a twenty-five mile long pipeline with an eight-foot circumference was "blown-out" or tested and officially opened for use by the base. This line started northeast of McPherson, KS and ran to the base.³⁵ McPherson is the home of several pipeline terminals and is thirty miles south of Salina on then highway US 81. Another reason for this pipeline will be mentioned later in this section.

On April 2, 1953, contracts totalling \$13.8 million were released for the construction of four dormitories, a mess hall, a BOQ, alert and readiness hangar, and an air installation office warehouse. Seven bids were received and the contracts went to a Salina firm. Work was to begin within fifteen days.³⁶ This brought the number of new barracks under construction to twenty-five for a capacity of 3,450 men and five dining halls.

By July 10, 1953, the Air Force had spent over \$16 million in construction and rehabilitation projects since the base was reactivated and \$6½ million more was being planned. This money was to be spent on airfield improvements, operations, training facilities, and land purchase. Work included extending one runway 2,000 feet and strengthening another with twelve to fifteen inches of

³⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 20, 1952.

³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, January 13, 1953.

³⁶ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, April 2, 1953 and Salina (KS) Journal, February 6, March 27, and April 23, 1953.

The Government also planned to buy 160 acres of land. Five new squad-
 buildings were to be built to complement the two Wing Headquarters
 already under construction. When construction got underway on these
 in June, 1954, three were to be north of the warehouse area and two
 south. These buildings were 145 feet long and thirty-seven feet wide.
 The 44th, and 45th Bomb Squadrons of the 40th Bomb Wing, would move into
 buildings north of the warehouse area and the 310th and 40th ARS would move
 to the south buildings which would be completed in 300 working days.³⁷
 While construction plans were being made, other plans were discussed to
 improve the roads leading from Salina to the base. First, the Air Force
 and Salina clashed over the type of bridge that was to be built over Dry Creek.
 The Air Force felt that since the road (now Schilling Road) was soon to be
 widened, the County would be better off to build a steel bridge while the County
 had a wooden bridge. Then the State (of Kansas) began condemning land to
 widen US 81 from its junction with US 40 to the base into a four-lane high-
 way.³⁸
 Peter Kiewitt and Sons of Omaha, NE received a contract on August 18, 1954
 for \$556,142 to extend the concrete parking area and make it seventeen inches
 thick.³⁹ The thickness of the runways, taxiways, and parking aprons deserves
 mention from here on as this writer's research and interviews will be contra-
 dictory later on which will be explained in the conclusion of this paper.
 The base had used a control tower and operations building constructed in

³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, July 10 and August 9, 1953 and Salina (KS) Adver-
ser-Sun, July 15, 1954.

³⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, July 24 and August 11, 1953.

³⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 18, 1954.

Deactivated Smoky Hill found these facilities too small and on October 20, 1955, plans were taken to construct new facilities.⁴⁰ The Operations Building at the base is what civilians would call a terminal building. "Ops" has the ticket station, an In-Flight kitchen or snack bar, and other such things as is found in its civilian counterpart.

Ernest K. Eby of Wichita, KS, was awarded contracts of approximately \$1.46 million in a thirty-day period in 1955. On March 30, he was awarded a \$1.2 million contract to build eleven concrete igloo-type air-conditioned ordnance storage facilities, an inspection building, auxiliary power plant, gate house, utilities and security fencing. This work had to be completed within 180 days after the start of the work. Then the firm received a \$206,000 contract to build a permanent three-story dormitory of concrete-block construction measuring forty-one by 204 feet. The work was to be completed in 270 days.⁴¹

Construction Industries of Salina received two of three contracts put up for bidding on October 20, 1955. This firm bid \$180,000 for the crash and fire station and \$66,000 for a new Air Police headquarters. L. R. Foy of Hutchinson, KS, bid \$7,300 for a pyro magazine storage building.⁴²

A \$50,000 Base Operations building opened on November 30, 1955. It was a concrete-block building at the south end of the flight line. The central part of the building was two stories high with one-story wings on each side. It housed base operations, weather, and the In-Flight kitchen.⁴³

On May 23, 1956, there were several construction projects underway. On

⁴⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 20, 1954.

⁴¹ Salina (KS) Journal, March 30 and April 27, 1955.

⁴² Salina (KS) Journal, October 20, 1955.

⁴³ Salina (KS) Journal, November 30, 1955.

the Laborer's Union local 685 halted construction work at the base, posting picket lines at the three main entrances. They were trying to organize Jarvis Construction Company, a major contractor on base. Roughly forty of the 170 men employed on construction projects on base crossed the picket line. On June 12, eighteen employees of Jarvis Construction Company went to court to get the picket line withdrawn. The order was granted on June 13 and seventy-five of the workers returned to work.⁴⁴

Mention has already been made of the twenty-five mile long pipeline which was completed in 1953. On December 19, 1956, it was announced that Kanab Pipeline Company of El Dorado, KS was engaged in pumping jet fuel for the base into six underground caverns in western McPherson County. Each cavern held 50,000 barrels of fuel. There were twenty-four such caverns which used to be salt mines, located thirty-two miles south of the base. Smoky Hill was leasing six of them.⁴⁵ Presumably a tie-in to the base pipeline was effected at this time.

The \$300,000 T-shaped gym was completed and ready for inspection by Air Force engineers on January 7, 1957. It was scheduled for opening on February 1. The feature of the gym was the large parking lot in front of the building."⁴⁶ Between July 9, 1953 and July 12, 1955, the Air Force "surprised" Smoky Hill by requesting approximately \$30 million in appropriations from Congress which later turned out to be for construction projects. Each time, Smoky Hill officials responded to queries with the line that they did not know what the money was to be used for. In response to a request for \$12½ million on January 14, 1955, engineers at the base stated that they were confused because they had not

⁴⁴Salina (KS) Journal, May 23, 31, June 12, and 13, 1956.

⁴⁵Salina (KS) Journal, December 19, 1956 and March 1, 1957.

⁴⁶Salina (KS) Journal, January 6 and February 3, 1957.

the money and did not have any plans for it.⁴⁷

Organization

June 11, 1952, the Salina Journal announced that Col. John H. de Russy was to be as temporary Commander of the 802nd Air Division (AD). He had come from the 3902nd Bomb Wing at Offutt AFB, NE before arriving at Smoky Hill. His assignment was to get two bomb wings; the 40th and 310th, with the Colonel as Commander of the latter unit. Colonel Cather was Commander of the Air Base Group (ABG) which was in charge of housekeeping on base. The ABG would be larger in terms of personnel than it had been in World War II.⁴⁸ Two groups of personnel assigned to the 310th Bomb Wing arrived on August 28, 1952. One group arrived on a chartered United Airlines plane at Salina's Municipal Airport. The other group, basic airmen from Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX, arrived by train. These groups were different in the means by which they arrived in town. "Servicemen of World War 2 will notice that the airmen now carry duffel bags. The big duffle bags are missing. And the airmen were transported from Lackland AFB by bus instead of trucks."⁴⁹ The bulk of the 310th Wing arrived on September 4, 1953 from Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS. Some of the men had to live in barracks left over from World War II. Most were to live in the new barracks which each had forty-eight rooms, three men to a room. A majority of this group arrived by car and truck in a convoy escorted by the Kansas Highway Patrol. A parade was scheduled for 10:30 A.M.,

⁴⁷Salina (KS) Journal, July 9 and November 20, 1953, January 14, April 20, and July 12, 1955.

⁴⁸Salina (KS) Journal, June 11, 1952.

⁴⁹Salina (KS) Journal, August 27 and 28, 1952. The use of the term "airman" from here on in its lower case state can mean all personnel of the Air Force; officers and enlisted alike. It is an accepted and common term in the Air Force. Those familiar with these circumstances know that carrying duffle bags was "still military" as late as 1975 for some personnel!

to celebrate the arrival and the public was invited.⁵⁰

Stanley Donovan arrived sometime in late 1952 at Smoky Hill. But his move for being on base was not officially announced until January 18, 1953 when Congressman Wint Smith announced that the 40th Bomb Wing was to be moved to Smoky Hill "immediately," involving the movement of 400 officers and crewmen. The 40th Wing was a medium bomb wing and organized at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ with B-29 bombers. "Immediate" seems to have had a different meaning to the Air Force, because it was not until March that the 40th Tactical Bombardment Squadron began moving from Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ to Smoky Hill.⁵¹

One month later, the 310th Wing completed its organization and celebrated its first birthday. No special ceremony was held save for a birthday cake prepared by a civilian secretary at the Wing Headquarters. There were four flying squadrons assigned to the Wing; the 379th Bomb Squadron (BS), the 380th BS, the 381st BS, and the 310th Air Refueling Squadron (ARS) along with five support squadrons.⁵²

In 1955, the Air Force gave the 40th and 310th Wings a World War II heritage. There had been a 40th and a 310th Bombardment Group in World War II which were officially recognized as the ancestors of the Wings assigned to Smoky Hill. This action gave the Wings the right to claim the background, history, battle honors, and colors of the units of that war.⁵³ Now, the 40th and 310th Wings had heritages to live up to and improve upon.

⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, August 29 and September 4, 1952.

⁵¹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 16, 18, March 3, and 5, 1953.

⁵² Salina (KS) Journal, April 2, 1953.

⁵³ Salina (KS) Journal, July 15, 1955.

the start of this period, the units assigned to the base were under the command of the 15th AF, headquartered at March AFB, Riverside, CA. On July 1, 1952, the 8th AF, headquartered at Westover AFB, MA, assumed command with no change of Commanders because General Robert Sweeney, Commander of the 15th AF, was transferred to Westover AFB, MA as Commander of the 8th AF.⁵⁴

Air Police

One of the first groups to arrive at Smoky Hill after it was reactivated was a twenty-five man Air Police (AP) detail under the supervision of T. Sgt. W. Jenne, a native of Summerfield, KS. This group took over the guarding of the base which had been done by men TDY from Forbes AFB, KS to reactivate the Gunnery Range.⁵⁵

Contrary to the reputation they seemed to have acquired in the 1940s, this group of APs were a better-disciplined group. In late 1952, the APs assisted local police in tracking down a gunman on the loose in the area. But their main job remained the security of the base which included patrolling over ten miles of fence. There was also traffic control and town patrol which had seven men assigned to it at that time.⁵⁶

Until October, 1952, access to the base appears to have been relatively free and it was open to anyone who wanted to drive around and see what was going on. But on October 24, 1952, the Provost Marshal's office on base announced that dependents of Air Force personnel would have to show identification if they wanted to gain admission to the base.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Salina (KS) Journal, March 9, 1953 and July 3, 1955.

⁵⁵Salina (KS) Journal, March 30, 1952.

⁵⁶Salina (KS) Journal, October 5, 1952.

⁵⁷Salina (KS) Journal, October 24, 1952.

July, 1955, there were sentry dogs assigned to the base. There was a Dog section of the 802nd APS which had thirteen men and thirteen dogs. The men and dogs were assigned to Smoky Hill, they underwent a training together for eight weeks at Fort Carson, CO. A sentry dog was good for seven years of duty and it cost about \$500 to train and equip the dog. They were fed once a day and consumed about thirty pounds of horsemeat a

Band

Sometime in 1953, the 537th Air Force Band was activated at Smoky Hill. On August 16, 1953, there was a fear that budget cuts by Congress might force deactivation. The Band had eleven men assigned to it at this time but at full strength, it was supposed to have thirty-four men with a Warrant Officer Conductor. By April 29, 1954, the 537th's future was secure. It had sixteen members; three trombones, four trumpets, two drums, two bass horns, and two saxophones. Instead of a Warrant Officer for a Conductor, it had T. Sgt. Ed Jones, a trumpet player, who doubled as Conductor. More men were expected for assignment to the band in the future.⁵⁹

Hospital

Lt. Col. Robert Corwin had been Commander of the Smoky Hill Air Force Base Hospital in 1949 when the base was closed. He was transferred to the Barksdale Air Force Hospital at that time. On July 1, 1952, he returned to Smoky Hill to reopen the hospital, a task that he accomplished in thirty days.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, July 10, 1955.

⁵⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 16, 1953 and April 29, 1954. The Air Force no longer has any Warrant Officers. They were replaced with the "super" grades of Senior and Chief Master Sergeants starting in the late 1950s.

⁶⁰ Impact, August 22, 1952 and Salina (KS) Journal, July 16, 1952.

help Colonel Corwin reopen the hospital, the man who had been his adjutant in 1949, Maj. William R. Cotner, returned. Three nurses were also on duty having arrived ahead of Colonel Corwin and Major Cotner, but they had no room in the hospital⁶¹ and later assisted in opening the base nursery. Reopening the hospital must not have been the same as being totally operational. On October 17, 1952, Impact, the base newspaper, reported that Colonel Cotner, Base Commander, had been hospitalized at St. John's Hospital, Salina, for removal of his appendix.⁶² Obstetrical care became available on November 1952 and became the first type of care available to military dependents. Later, a nine-pound boy was born to the wife of S. Sgt. J. H. Collins at the base hospital, making this the first birth of the decade at the base.⁶³ On January 9, 1953, visitors were barred from the hospital for an indefinite period. A "number of respiratory cases" had suddenly cropped up and an investigation was then underway to determine the cause.⁶⁴ Two years later in 1955, the Air Force Surgeon General visited the hospital to survey the facilities. Little had changed since the World War II era as the hospital was located where it had always been in the same buildings and it was air conditioned. There is a suggestion that a new hospital would be in the air.⁶⁵

On April 8, 1956, it was announced that a new system for the medical care of dependents had been inaugurated at the base hospital. Appointments were no longer necessary.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Impact, October 17, 1952.

⁶³ Impact, November 21, 1952 and Salina (KS) Journal, January 1, 1953.

⁶⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, January 9, 1953.

⁶⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, July 10, 1955. A pamphlet about the hospital, circa 1952 - 1957, on file in the Kansas Room, Salina Public Library, states that the hospital only had sixty beds. This is one-third of the beds available in 1949.

necessary because a general sick call for dependents had been started.

They were from 1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. on week days.⁶⁶

On one aspect, there was a big change in the care of the families of Air personnel assigned to Smoky Hill. During the last years of the first era, they found themselves forming a mutual hospital association to provide care for their families. That had changed, probably for the better. At least they were not contributing money to hire nurses.

Operations

The 310th ARS found itself with a strange problem in June, 1954. Some bees had flown on to the base and decided to make their home in a KC-97. They tried to get into the fuselage but were defeated, so they accepted the area under the flaps on the left wing. The base tried to get rid of them by taxiing the plane around the runways at speeds of 100 mph but this failed. Plans were made for a routine mission in which the bees would be frozen to death at high altitudes.⁶⁷ This must have worked as this was the last time the matter was mentioned.

A flock of dead birds were found on the flight line in the morning hours of October 7, 1954 and stumped base officials as to what caused the deaths. They finally decided that the birds had been attracted to the bright lights on the runways and then flew through a cloud of toxic fumes while migrating south. For "several thousand" more birds were found on the runways during the 1955 migrating season, the base decided to dim the runway lights during future migrating seasons. By this time, the base had decided that the birds were either temporarily blinded or the lights blunted their sense of direction and they

⁶⁶Salina (KS) Journal, April 8, 1956.

⁶⁷Salina (KS) Journal, June 6, 1954.

For some reason, this only happened on the southward flights.⁶⁸

Interest is that by September, 1955, the base was worth \$356,952,251, to Lt. Col. Charles Vinson, Base Comptroller. The planes were worth \$10 million and the payroll was \$14.8 million for the 1955 Fiscal Year.⁶⁹

Mission

The story of Smoky Hill Air Force Base is the story of a Strategic Air bomber-base of the 1950s. In 1954, Salina tried to get the Air Force to come back once more and when that failed, the planes and the mission the base had became a matter of greater interest to Salina. New aircraft and important missions could be interpreted as a sign of the importance of the base to the Air Force which meant to Salina the permanence of the base.

After the base was reactivated, there was speculation about the kind of mission that the base would be assigned. It was learned in December, 1951 that the base called for two wings of B-47s to be stationed at the base in a training capacity. But Lieutenant Colonel Johnston, Base Commander, stated in March, 1952 that he believed that the base would be used for operational purposes rather than for training.⁷⁰

On September 5, 1952, it was learned that there would be four flying squadrons assigned to the 310th Wing. While the 310th Bomb Wing was settling down, Daniel Nolan, 310th Wing Commander, informed the press that Smoky Hill was to be a training base. The base would shortly receive thirty B-29s and get down to work.⁷¹ An average of thirty planes would be assigned to each Wing. In the

⁶⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, October 7 and 8, 1954 and December 6, 1955.

⁶⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 14, 1955.

⁷⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, December 21, 1951, January 14, 15, and March 20, 1952.

⁷¹ Impact, September 5, 1955 and Salina (KS) Journal, September 8, 1952.

B-29s would be assigned to the base, the same plane that had been assigned to the base from 1944 to 1949. Eleven men were assigned to each plane and 1,200 men to each Wing. Each pilot was to receive forty hours of flight time each month. The composition of that crew was five officers and six enlisted men for a plane commander, first pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, navigator, engineer, radio operator, and four gunners.⁷²

1st Lt. Joe Varga, who had been at Smoky Hill as a first lieutenant in 1949, was the first B-29 at the base at 6:04 P.M., Thursday, September 11, 1952. The plane stopped in front of the Base Operations building, Colonel Nolan, Bomb Wing Commander, announced to the crowd present for the event: "Smoky Hill is back in business." The plane had been reconditioned and flown in from the Lockheed plant in Marietta, GA.⁷³ What makes this interesting is that the B-29 had been built by Boeing.

The B-29 bomber would soon be replaced by the B-47 but another plane assigned to the base would remain until 1963. That plane was the KC-97 tanker, capable of refueling planes in mid-air. On November 14, 1952, the first KC-97 to be permanently assigned to Smoky Hill landed and was assigned to the 44th ARS.⁷⁴

Thus, with KC-97s assigned to the base in what would become two squadrons, the base was assured of more than a training mission for the KC-97s meant at least a support mission. With the arrival of B-47s, the mission of units assigned to the base was probably more combat-oriented than training although the latter could be considered synonymous in the peacetime military.

⁷²Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, September 11, 1952 and Salina (KS) Journal, September 8, 1952.

⁷³Salina (KS) Journal, September 12, 1952.

⁷⁴Impact, November 14, 1952.

Although the 40th Bomb Wing had not arrived from Arizona, the 40th ARS had planes at Smoky Hill and was fully operational on January 9, 1953 when ten fully-trained crews arrived on base. Each refueling squadron was to have twenty planes with a crew of three officers and four enlisted.⁷⁵ KC-97s assigned to the 40th and 310th Air Refueling Squadrons had prob-ly been engaged in refueling missions from the time they arrived on base. The first recorded refueling mission was on December 9, 1953 when a KC-97 of the 40th ARS refueled an F-84 assigned to Bergstrom, Austin, TX and when the F-84 developed engine trouble, the KC-97 towed it back to Bergstrom. The F-84 had some power, but the fuel hookup enabled the plane to remain in the air until it could glide to a landing.⁷⁶

On February 28, 1954, the 40th and 310th ARS were sent on a temporary duty assignment which lasted longer than one day. The B-29s of Smoky Hill were involved in this mission. On March 9, the 40th ARS returned but the 310th did not return until March 29. One of the jobs both units performed was assisting the 22nd Bomb Wing (assigned to Smoky Hill from 1948 to 1949) make a move from England back to March AFB, CA.⁷⁷

While the air refueling squadrons were TDY, Impact, the base newspaper, published an announcement from Colonel de Russy, 310th Wing Commander, that the 310th would begin conversion from B-29s to B-47s within ninety days. However, the 40th Wing would retain its B-29s "a while longer." The obsolete B-29s would be flown to Tinker AFB, OK and Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ for storage. Preparation for receiving the B-47 had been underway since the base was reactivated in

⁷⁵Impact, January 9, 1953.

⁷⁶Salina (KS) Journal, December 9, 1953.

⁷⁷Salina (KS) Journal, February 24, March 9, and March 29, 1954.

51. Each Smoky Hill Wing was to have forty-five planes assigned to the number of personnel assigned to each Wing would be increased. The medium bomber capable of flying 600 miles per hour and had a three-man crew composed entirely of officers.⁷⁸

Currently, the transition was underway by March 18, 1954. There were fifty B-29s still assigned to the 310th Bomb Wing and these planes were to leave in groups of five on March 25, 27, and 29. The 40th Bomb Wing was to retain its B-29s until a later date; however, all medium bomb wings of SAC were to be replaced with B-47s by the end of 1955.⁷⁹

When the 310th Bomb Wing prepared to dispose of its B-29s for jets, the 310th Bomb Wing, which had not been back from its first TDY a week, was sent to Ernest Harmon Airfield, Newfoundland for a short TDY. It was relieved by the 40th ARS in May and the 310th was to spend forty-five days there.⁸⁰ This writer got the impression there may have been a shortage of refueling units at this time owing to the rapid succession of TDYs for the two air refueling squadrons assigned to the 310th.

Less than three months after the first B-29 from the 310th Wing left for Europe, the first B-47 arrived to replace it and touched down at 12:32 P.M. on March 2, 1954. The three million dollar plane was piloted by Colonel de Russy, Wing Commander. Since this was a new plane to the area, the crew first flew the plane low over the base before landing to let the small group of spectators get a look at the plane in motion.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Impact, March 12, 1954 and Salina (KS) Journal, March 12, 1954.

⁷⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 18, 1954.

⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, May 4, 1954.

⁸¹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 2 and 3, 1954.

for the conversion of the 40th Bomb Wing to B-47s were advanced and on December 27, 1954, the 40th Wing received its first B-47 at 3:00 P.M. This plane was flown by Colonel Nolan, Deputy 40th Wing Commander, in from Wichita, Kansas, where it had been built. The Wing was expected to have a full complement of B-47s by October, 1954.⁸²

Initially, the Air Force was ready to receive the 1,000th B-47 built. Technically, the plane was supposed to go to the 40th Wing to round out its complement. However, the Air Force and SAC considered giving the plane to a base in need of publicity that went with it. However, base and civic officials protested. On December 9, 1954, the Air Force announced that the 40th Wing would get the plane.⁸³

At 11:00 A.M., Saturday, December 17, 1954, the 1,000th B-47 landed before a large crowd in front of Base Operations. It was greeted by the 537th AF Band, representatives from Boeing Aircraft, General Sweeney, 15th AF Commander, and General Land, 802nd AD Commander. After the ritual of transferring the title of the plane from Boeing to the 15th AF to the 802nd AD to the 40th Bomb Wing was completed, Donna Lindsey stepped forward and with a bottle of champagne, christened the plane the "City of Salina."⁸⁴

Although the plane had been in the Air Force inventory since 1949 (the 40th Bomb Wing had been equipped with the plane upon its arrival at Barksdale AFB, LA after leaving Smoky Hill in 1949), little was known about the plane in Salina. All that Salina knew about the plane was that there were nearly 100 B-47s in two Wings at the base and that the 40th Wing had received the 1,000th B-47 built. It fell to Colonel James Wilson, 802nd AD Commander, to enlighten

⁸² Salina (KS) Journal, August 29, 1954.

⁸³ Salina (KS) Journal, December 1 and 9, 1954.

⁸⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, December 9, 14, 16, and 17, 1954.

out the plane in an address before the Salina Rotary Club on September 17,

In construction, speed, and striking power, it is a magnificent

1. Each jet costs \$3 million making the base fleet of 100 with \$300 million.
2. A B-47's fuel weighs one and one-half times as much as the plane. (An empty plane weighs forty tons but carries sixty tons of fuel.)
3. The fuel weighs more than a fully loaded B-17 of World War fame.
4. The wings are so flexible that the tips flex up and down about five feet in flight and this can increase to twenty feet during a wind storm.
5. It can withstand sudden change in atmospheric pressure.
6. Engine fires have been reduced by the installation of a feature where a pilot can press a button and snuff it out.
7. The plane can do a million times more damage than a B-17 could. . . .85

This was an interesting view of the plane that would be assigned to the base for the rest of the history of the base. The B-47 could do more damage than it could deliver a nuclear bomb which the B-17 was not created to do. Equipped with the new B-47s, the Wings assigned to the base were ready for action. During the week of March 9, 1955, all 1,500 men of the 310th Wing left on a ninety-day TDY to England. This mission included the 310th ARS and the 321st Wing of Pinecastle AFB, FL. There were forty-five men involved in this mission. Of course, the families were not allowed to accompany the units. Shortly after the 310th Wing left for England, the 40th Wing participated in the ninth birthday celebration of the Strategic Air Command at Offutt AFB, NE. Four planes representing the 25th BS, 40th ARS, 44th BS, and 45th BS joined other SAC units in a fly-by demonstration and returned to their bases. 86

⁸⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, September 18, 1956.

⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, February 4, March 9, and 24, 1955.

310th Bomb Wing began returning to Smoky Hill from its first TDY on [redacted] and was met by the 537th AF Band. General LeMay, Commander of SAC, had [redacted] the Wing while it was in England and had been impressed with what he [redacted]. The Wing had been performing its mission exceptionally well with a [redacted] of problems and morale was high.⁸⁷

[redacted] time in June, the 40th Bomb Wing left on its first TDY since the unit [redacted] transferred to Smoky Hill in 1953. It began returning on September 7.⁸⁸ [redacted] had gone for its mission was not announced and has not been determined [redacted] writer.

[redacted] late 1955, the 310th ARS left for an undisclosed location. It returned [redacted] January 26, 1956. At this time, the unit had twenty-four KC-97s and 300 [redacted] assigned to it. Four months later, the 40th ARS left for two and one-half [redacted] TDY to an undisclosed location. It returned on September 5, 1956.⁸⁹

[redacted] Impact announced on June 8, 1956 that the 310th Wing had received the im- [redacted] B-47E aircraft which had a more accurate bombing system than the older [redacted] that the Wing had been using. In October of 1956, the 40th Wing began [redacted] wing the same model.⁹⁰

It was announced on August 12, 1956 that a 381st BS, 310th Wing, B-47 had [redacted] chosen to participate in a General Electric speed race on September 2 [redacted] B-47s from the 22nd and 301st Bomb Wings. On September 3, 1956, the [redacted] results were posted. The 22nd was first with an average speed of 601.1 mph; [redacted] 301st was second with a speed of 600.1 mph; and the 310th was last with a [redacted]

⁸⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, June 6, 7, and May 3, 1955.

⁸⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, September 6, 7, and 8, 1955.

⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, December 27, 1955, February 25, and September 5, 1956.

⁹⁰ Impact, June 8, 1956 and Salina (KS) Journal, October 11, 1956.

593.6 mph.⁹¹ What is interesting about the 310th's performance is the 40th Wing B-47 had set a speed record of 603 mph in January, 1956 which came out in another section of this paper. The reader may also recall the 22nd and 301st had been assigned to the base in the 1940s. On October 4, 1956, it was learned that the whole 310th Wing was leaving for an undisclosed period of time to an undisclosed place, which was learned by Salina to be England. The Wing returned to the base on January 7, 1957.⁹² Shortly after the 310th Wing left on its TDY, the 40th ARS took off for a week TDY to an undisclosed base, leaving only the 40th Bomb Wing and the 802nd ABG on base. The 40th ARS returned to the base on December 4 in time to celebrate Christmas. Salina was assured that this TDY was in no way related to the crisis in the Middle East.⁹³

There were at least 140 planes assigned to the base by the end of this year. The slow, ungraceful four-engine propellor-driven KC-97 (which did double-duty as a cargo and passenger plane) and the graceful swept-wing six-engine B-47 jet bomber, the "long rifle" of SAC, were assigned to the base. Hill seemed to have one foot in the modern era of warfare and one foot in the past with the old KC-97 which was being planned for replacement by the four-engine KC-135 jet, the military version of the Boeing 707. There were 100 planes assigned to the base under the command of the 802nd ABG which will be out later. These planes were piloted by officers assigned to administrative jobs on a part-time basis due to regulations which required personnel to put some time in the air in order to collect flight pay.

⁹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 12 and September 3, 1956.

⁹² Salina (KS) Journal, October 11, 1956.

⁹³ Salina (KS) Journal, November 15 and December 4, 1956.

During this period, units from Smoky Hill Air Force Base participated in TDYs which lasted from one day to ninety days or three months and in- from one plane to sixty-nine. Smoky Hill started out with the B-29 pro- driven bomber and closed this period with B-47 jets.

Smoky Hill's runways played a very important role in the mission of the runways play in the role of any air base. Their length and width deter- the kind of aircraft which would be based there and the role that the and its units would play in the Air Force mission. It was learned on er 29, 1953 that the north/south runway was to be strengthened in the and extended 1,100 feet to be ready for the B-47 when it arrived. This confirmed on March 26, 1954 when it was announced that bids would be opened ril 29 on "the runway overlay job, which was made necessary by the decision ee B-47s on base." The 10,000 foot north/south runway was to be "beefed own a center 200 foot strip with thirteen additional inches of concrete. edges of this overlay were to be tapered with crushed rock and asphalt to the present edges. As of the time of this article, the runways were eight s thick.⁹⁴

Apparently the runway was not extended 1,100 feet because it was announced January 14, 1955 that the north/south runway was to be extended 2,300 feet. er Kiewit Construction Company of Wichita got the \$1.7 million contract ch was to be completed within 300 work days after the work started.⁹⁵

This necessitated closing West Cloud street which had been the northern undary of the base. Why the Air Force did not go south is unknown. In those s, the whole area was a flood plain of the Smoky Hill River and all of it

⁹⁴Salina (KS) Journal, November 29, 1953 and March 26, 1954.

⁹⁵Salina (KS) Journal, January 14, 1955.

cultivation. It would have been just as easy to have gone south and
county road as to have gone the way it did and close a major thorough-

1. Jack Randolph, Base Commander, met with County Commissioners on
6, 1955 to discuss reopening the street. He informed them that money
available to reopen the street which would jog it around the northern tip
runway. This plan would have virtually merged it with Crawford Street.
was not acceptable to the County, no definite plans had been made by
30, 1955 concerning the street. But on March 7, 1957, a federal com-
m recommended that the Air Force pay Saline County \$20,374 for its loss.⁹⁶
result of closing part of Cloud Street was that Crawford Street became
the major east/west thoroughfare.

The drainage ditch which had killed four men in an accident on July 13,
(mentioned in the following section) was finally converted into a culvert
cost of \$56,000. The grading project had been scheduled prior to the acci-
but delays of an unspecified nature occurred. The project was completed
November, 1956. Had the ditch not been there, four men would still have
alive at the end of this period.⁹⁷

Accidents

During the sixty-seven months covered in this period, there were only four-
accidents, involving the loss of nineteen lives and nine aircraft, of
which six were B-47s reported in the local press.

The first accident, if it can be called that, occurred on June 13, 1953
when a B-29 belonging to the 380th BS, 310th Wing, developed engine trouble

⁹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, November 6 and 30, 1955, and March 7, 1957.

⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, September 30, 1956.

Denver, CO. Three men parachuted out of the plane before the trouble in flight and the plane landed safely in Denver.⁹⁸ The men were later mentioned. Whether this qualified them for membership in the Caterpillar Club mentioned.

Another accident which was hair-raising and caused more parachuting occurred in the desert, forty miles south of Gila Bend, AZ. A Davis-Monthan AFB-based KC-97 collided with a Smoky Hill 40th ARS KC-97 while attempting to refuel. Both planes landed safely at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ after most of the 40th ARS crew parachuted to safety. No one was injured.⁹⁹ Although it was not mentioned, the aircraft commander and co-pilot were probably the ones who stayed with the plane and landed it.

Four accidents between September 5, 1954 and April 20, 1955 involved no loss of life or required parachuting from troubled planes. A 379th BS B-47 crashed on the runway on base and burned during the night of September 27, 1954. Another accident happened during the night of December 1 which caused an explosion and millions of dollars in damage to a 310th Wing B-47.¹⁰⁰ The two other accidents mentioned in the local press were similar in nature.

The first loss of life in an accident since Smoky Hill was reactivated was the worst accident reported in this period. The accident occurred ninety miles off the coast of Iceland in the North Atlantic during the night of May 4, 1955. Nine lives were lost in a KC-97 which belonged to the 310th ARS. It was assumed that the cause of this accident was engine failure.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Impact, June 19, 1953.

⁹⁹ Impact, September 11, 1953.

¹⁰⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, September 28, 1954 and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 8, 1954.

¹⁰¹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 5, 1955.

Last three accidents of this period took ten lives and involved the F-4 Phantom II. Two belonged to the 40th Bomb Wing and the accidents all occurred within the State of Kansas. Worse was the fact that all occurred within the first seven months of 1956.

A broken plexiglass canopy and its loss was blamed for the loss of a 379th Bomb Wing B-47, which crashed three miles south of Westmoreland, KS on May 10, 1956. Four men, one an enlisted crew chief, died in this crash. The crash was investigated by a nineteen-man accident board from the base.¹⁰²

Four months later, while on final approach to the base, a B-47 belonging to the 25th BS, 40th Wing, burst into flames and crashed one-half mile south of Westmoreland, KS killing all three men on the plane. The plane gave no distress signals indicating trouble and the Smoky Hill investigating board believed that "pilot's error" probably caused the crash.¹⁰³

The last accident of this period occurred just seventeen days after the crash near Mentor and it occurred less than a half-mile from the end of the runway just as it was preparing to take off. This accident killed all four men on board. Some sort of engine trouble developed and the pilot tried to abort the take-off but hit a three-foot drainage ditch at the end of the runway. Had it not been for that ditch, the base believed that the plane could have skidded to a safe stop. The plane belonged to the 45th BS, 40th Wing, and the crew was part of the "top five" in the 40th Wing.¹⁰⁴ This ditch became known as "Death Ditch" as a result of this accident and its removal received priority in base planning as has been noted in an earlier section of this chapter.

¹⁰² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 15, 1956 and Salina (KS) Journal, February 12, 14, 15, and 16, 1956.

¹⁰³ Salina (KS) Journal, June 26, 28, and July 15, 1956.

¹⁰⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, July 15, 1956.

1944 was a mild period for the base in terms of loss of life and planes. The 40th Wing lost four planes of which three were B-47s; the 310th Wing lost four planes of which two were B-47s; and the 802nd ABG lost two transports. The 40th Wing only lost six men while the 310th lost thirteen men, nine of which perished in one crash. Compared to the 1942 to 1945 and 1945 to 1949 period, the losses were negligible but then the bomber crews were smaller after the end of 1954. The standard crew of a B-47 was three men; an Aircraft Commander, pilot, and navigator. Approximately thirty-nine people would have been involved in the last three accidents reported in this period had the planes involved been B-29s.

There were accidents but there were also a series of safety programs aimed at preventing accidents. On November 26, 1953, Smoky Hill was rated third in the October Safety contest and was just behind Lake Charles AFB, LA and Fort Worth AFB, TX. In September, the base had been fourth amongst twenty-four bases in the United States. One month later, Smoky Hill was first, Walker AFB, NM was second, and MacDill AFB, FL was third.¹⁰⁵

Little was heard about the safety programs until March 6, 1955 when it was announced that the 802nd ABG had been named to the Flying Safety Division Hall of Fame in SAC. The 802nd ABG was one of the first entries and had won the honor of flying over two years without an accident. At this time, the 802nd ABG operated the T-33 jet trainer, C-47 and C-119 transports, C-45 passenger, and B-25 bomber planes.¹⁰⁶

Training

Training is an on-going process in the military. There is a belief that

¹⁰⁵ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 26, 1953 and Salina (KS) Journal, December 24, 1953.

¹⁰⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, March 6, 1955.

can never receive too much training. During this period, training was conducted in a variety of ways including competition between units.

As the men of Smoky Hill awaited the arrival of their planes, they underwent "instant" training. Much of it was done at the OQ Gunnery Range,¹⁰⁷ where there were nine gunnery turrets similar to those found in the B-29 which was the bomber being assigned to the base.

Another means of training was the use of a simulator which conditioned the crews at high altitudes. The altitude chamber at Smoky Hill was capable of simulating altitudes up to 34,000 feet without their ever leaving the ground.¹⁰⁸

Fire fighting crews were taught the latest in fire-fighting techniques and drills were held to see how well they had learned their lessons. One such drill simulating an aircraft crash, was held at the OQ Gunnery Range on March 4, 1954. The simulated reality was far greater than the base had planned because the base had been called the base reporting a crash in the area.¹⁰⁹

In March, 1954, six officers went to the Boeing Aircraft plant in Wichita, Kansas for the purpose of attending a thirteen-week course to learn how to fly the B-47 bomber which was to be assigned to the base later that year. These men were the first assigned to the base to attend this course. While the officers were learning to fly the B-47, ten airmen assigned to Smoky Hill left to attend a two-month course on maintenance of the B-47. The school was held at Amarillo, Texas.¹¹⁰

Later in 1954, after the B-47 had arrived at Smoky Hill and been assigned

¹⁰⁷ Impact, September 26, 1952.

¹⁰⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 20, 1953.

¹⁰⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, March 4, 1954.

¹¹⁰ Impact, March 12, 1954 and Salina (KS) Journal, April 16, 1954.

...flying squadrons, two 380th BS crews became the first to be combat-ready
 ...10th Wing on December 1. In February, 1955, two 25th BS crews achieved
 ...honor for the 40th Wing.¹¹¹

...an "alert" is another form of training in which attack conditions are
 ...ted as realistically as possible. In the 1950s, it entailed setting up
 ...posts outside of the "attack" area. The first of many alerts occurred
 ...0 A.M. on July 6, 1955 when base sirens went off. Two convoys of military
 ...vilian vehicles evacuated the base as a part of the alert. One convoy of
 ...five vehicles went north to Bennington, KS and the other went west of
 ...on highway US 40. Another alert was held on October 28, 1955.¹¹²

...a new idea in Air Force technical training at the time was tested at Smoky
 ...in 1956 on an experimental basis. The idea was to cut down the time and
 ...se in training by sending units from the technical schools to the base
 ...ad of sending groups of men to the schools.¹¹³ It was thought that it
 ...be cheaper to send instructors from base to base but it probably took
 ...time to get whole segments fully trained.

...Flight simulators had been in operation at the base since B-29s were as-
 ...ed in 1952. SAC had three types of simulators in 1956 for its three major
 ...ers; the B-52, B-47, and B-36. Only the B-47 simulator was available at
 ...y Hill. Each simulator was designed capable of putting a pilot through
 ...y possible condition he might encounter in actual flight which included
 ...ty-five malfunctions for the B-47, including a "nerve-tingling crash." The
 ...lism was such that many students left the session exhausted and dripping

¹¹¹Salina (KS) Journal, December 1, 1954 and February 17, 1955.

¹¹²Salina (KS) Journal, July 6 and October 28, 1955.

¹¹³Salina (KS) Journal, December 16, 1955.

great. Each simulator cost \$500,000 (compared with \$3 million for the plane) and consisted of 700 vacuum tubes and thirty-five miles of wiring.¹¹⁴ was before the advent of transistors and circuit boards.

On February 3, 1957, all officers assigned to the base attended a day-long session in the base theater to learn about the Air Force mission and their role in the peace-time Air Force.¹¹⁵ Thus for one day, the enlisted personnel at Smoky Hill literally ran the base.

Two crews of the 310th Bomb Wing participated in SAC's sixth annual Bombing and Navigation Competition held at Barksdale AFB, Shreveport, LA, using the B-47 for the first time in 1954. The 380th BS team commanded by Capt. William T. [redacted] came in third. This contest involved bomb raids on Denver, CO and Omaha, NE as well as practice bomb drops on Smoky Hill's OQ Gunnery Range.¹¹⁶

In May of 1955, a 25th BS, 40th Wing, B-47 was honored for outstanding performance in the 15th AF's "Operation Parade Ground," an evaluation mission.¹¹⁷ At this time, Smoky Hill was under the jurisdiction of the 15th AF. This was the first time such recognition had been conferred on a Smoky Hill B-47 crew.

Smoky Hill sent four teams to the seventh annual SAC Bombing and Navigation Competition held from August 24 to August 29, 1955. At the end of the first round of competition, a 381st BS, 310th Wing, B-47, with Maj. Robert Foss as Aircraft Commander, was in third place. However, something went wrong and when the final results were posted on September 3, the 310th Wing placed twenty-fifth

¹¹⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 21, 1956.

¹¹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, February 3, 1957.

¹¹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, August 19 and 20, 1954.

¹¹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, May 29, 1955.

310th Wing placed thirty-second.¹¹⁸ How many units were involved in the competition was not mentioned, but obviously there were at least thirty-two.

310th Bomb Wing received a late Christmas present on December 28. In a ceremony at Westover AFB, MA, General Robert Sweeney presented the Brigadier General Jack Roberts Memorial Trophy to Col. Selmon Wells, 310th Wing Commander.

310th Wing won the 8th AF bombing competition held from December 7 to December 14, 1955. The trophy would be retired by the first unit to win it again.¹¹⁹

In early 1956, the 8th AF held a Commander's bombing competition to recognize Commanders with problems confronting their crews. Lt. Col. William J. Sutherland, Commander of the 45th BS, 40th Wing, placed ninth and Lt. Col. Samuel A. Wells, Commander of the 380th BS, 310th Wing, placed tenth. Ironically, Lt. Col. Sutherland, Commander of the 802nd AD, placed eleventh.¹²⁰ These showings were to be good.

44th BS, 40th Wing, B-47 set a speed record from Smoky Hill to Marietta, Georgia on January 11, 1956. The average speed for the 810-mile trip was 603 mph. The purpose of the mission was to fit the plane with drop tanks.¹²¹ This speed was 10 miles an hour faster than a Smoky Hill B-47 did in the General Electric Race in 1955. With a speed of 603 mph, Smoky Hill would have won the race. Drop tanks are fuel tanks which give the plane additional mileage and are usually mounted on the wings. However, they are often dropped or removed when the plane is on a combat mission. They are also dropped in times of emergency for

¹¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, August 21, 28, and September 2, 1955.

¹¹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, December 28, 1955.

¹²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, January 6, 1956.

¹²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 11, 1956.

, such as engine malfunctions.¹²²

General Sutherland was leaving Smoky Hill for another assignment in February, before he left, the 310th Wing gave him a farewell present by winning the Roberts Trophy a second consecutive time. The Wing only needed one more victory for the Trophy was its to keep, permanently.¹²³ This leads this writer to think that the competition was held similarly to an "alert," e.g., that it was "suddenly" sprung by higher headquarters with few knowing the exact time it was to start.

The 40th Wing barely beat the 310th Wing in competition for the Roberts Trophy on May 3, 1956. Had the 310th Wing won the competition, the Trophy would have been retired. Still, the Trophy remained at Smoky Hill, even though it was in old buildings.¹²⁴

In the eighth annual SAC Bombing and Navigation Competition held at Lockbourne AFB and Loring AFB, Limestone, ME near the end of August, 1956, the 310th Wing placed fourth. The crew responsible for this accomplishment was commanded by Maj. Clayton Balch, 380th BS. There were sixty-six crews competing, including two each from the 40th and 310th Bomb Wings.¹²⁵

The last competition held in this period was for the Roberts Trophy which was held in November, 1956. Because the 310th was TDY in England, it did not get to participate in the eighth 8th AF "Pacesetter" bombing competition as it was to come to be known. While the 40th Wing finished a close second, it was not enough to stop the 340th Wing of Whiteman AFB, Knob Noster, MO from winning the

¹²²Woodford A. Heflin, The United States Air Force Dictionary (Washington, D.C.: Air University Press, 1956), p. 177.

¹²³Salina (KS) Journal, January 29, 1956.

¹²⁴Salina (KS) Journal, May 4, 1956.

¹²⁵Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 22 and 30, 1956.

second time, thereby tying it with the 310th Wing.¹²⁶

Weather

At the time the base was reactivated in 1951, technology had made flying easier. Radar and improved forecasting techniques made it easier to determine weather patterns. Still, the unpredictability of Kansas weather sometimes failed to make it easy.

On November 24, 1952, Col. Julian M. Bleyer, acting Commander of the base, suspended all but essential operations at the base at 1:30 P.M. due to the arrival of a "sudden" blizzard. Normal operation was expected to resume the next day. It has been reported to this writer that it is believed that this blizzard may have kept the base closed for as long as three days. People recall the sudden blizzard being unusually severe for that early in the winter season. The organization charged with observing and forecasting the weather was Detachment 17 of the 2nd Weather Squadron headquartered at Westover AFB, MA. In March of 1956, Detachment 17 was rated "tops" by its parent unit. The unit was commanded by Maj. Charles E. Archambault.¹²⁸

Salina, Kansas is considered to be in the center of "Tornado Alley," an area which seems to get more than its share of tornadoes. In 1954, the 6th Weather Squadron (Mobile) from Tinker AFB, Oklahoma City, OK spent the summer at Rocky Hill tracking tornadoes.¹²⁹

The base maintenance men of the 802nd Installation Squadron were charged with snow removal during this period. When snow fell and reached a cumulative

¹²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, November 18, 1956.

¹²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, November 25, 1952.

¹²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 13, 1956.

¹²⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 27, 1954.

ifty men worked rotating twenty-four shifts until the snow was removed. Activation, it was reported that the base had been closed only once due and that was for one hour in December, 1954. The Base Operations Officer when the snow removal teams went to work.¹³⁰ Apparently, the incident ber 24, 1952 was not remembered.

Commanders

There were four major command units above the squadron level on Smoky Hill this period; the 802nd Air Division, the 802nd Air Base Group, the 310th Wing, and the 40th Bomb Wing. The Base Commander during this period also commanded the 802nd Air Base Group after it was organized sometime in and was directly subservient to the 802nd Air Division Commander whose also included the two Bomb Wings assigned to the base. The Commander of the 802nd Air Division (AD), as Commander of the highest of organization on base, set the tone for the base and was assisted by Commander of the 802nd Air Base Group (ABG), who was the Base Commander and in charge of the housekeeping and support chores. He was also in charge of Camp Village and the OQ Gunnery Range. The Wing Commanders had direct command of the planes and had the most men under their immediate command. In terms of rank, the AD Commander was anything from a full Colonel to a Major General and the ABG Commander was usually a full Colonel although in the early days of this period, a Captain, Major, and Lieutenant Colonel held the title of Base Commander and at the close of this period, a Lieutenant Colonel was Base Commander. Throughout this period, the Wing Commanders were always full Colonels.

802nd Air Division

The first Commander of the 802nd Air Division was Col. John F. de Russy,

¹³⁰Salina (KS) Journal, February 3, 1956.

...ran of the Korean Conflict and a graduate of the United States Military Academy, Class of 1936. Colonel de Russey arrived on base from Forbes AFB, Kansas in June, 1952 where he had organized the 310th Bomb Wing. On November 1, 1952, he relinquished command of the 802nd AD and resumed command of the 310th Bomb Wing. He served as Commander of the 310th Wing until August 18, 1955 when he was transferred to Wright-Patterson AFB, OH to work on atomic-powered aircraft. Before he left, he was honored by an informal party at the Salina Club where the Chamber of Commerce presented him a resolution of gratitude. During his tenure as the first Commander of the 802nd AD, the base was organized and completed its first stages of reactivation as well as received its first aircraft assigned to the base since 1949.

...ig. Gen. Wiley D. Ganey had the distinction of becoming the first General permanently assigned to the base and took command of the 802nd AD on March 25, 1952. General Ganey was a bachelor from Andalusia, AL who had "his wings" in 1931. Prior to arriving at Smoky Hill, he had commanded the 310th Bomb Wing (once assigned to Smoky Hill) and the 12th AD at March AFB, CA. During his tenure at Smoky Hill, which lasted until mid-April, 1954, he worked to develop the base and in December, 1952, described the facilities at Smoky Hill to the Salina Journal as the "best he had ever seen" in his career.¹³²

Before he was transferred to another assignment, he was promoted to Major General and married a Fairfax, VA woman. General Ganey was serving in a position normally held by senior Colonels or junior Brigadier Generals and once he was promoted to Major General could expect a new assignment. It was announced on March 2, 1954 that he was being transferred to Washington, D. C. to become

¹³¹ Impact, August 15, 1952 and Salina (KS) Journal, November 5, 1952, August 7 and 11, 1955.

¹³² Salina (KS) Journal, November 11 and December 19, 1952.

Director of Operations by May 1 and would be replaced by Brig. Gen.

Sutherland, then assigned to Headquarters, USAF, Washington, D. C.

General Ganey left, he sent the city of Salina a "thank you" note and

Commission voted to "respond in kind."¹³³

April 24, 1954, Brig. Gen. John R. Sutherland, 44 years old, a native

NY, and a graduate of the United States Military Academy, Class of

became the third Commander of the 802nd AD. In 1933, he had transferred

Cavalry to the Air Corps, and during World War II had been involved in

development of the atomic bomb. He had been promoted to Brigadier General

September 9, 1953. Upon his arrival in Salina on April 10, 1954, he spent the

time shopping and getting acquainted with Salina. He informed the Salina

that "Salina and Smoky Hill were highly recommended to him by people in

Salina." This was a far cry from 1946 when Colonel Lee had been "exiled"

base. Seven months later, General Sutherland turned 45 years of age and

received the command pilot's rating "as a present from the Air Force."¹³⁴ At

that time, to get a command pilot's rating, one needed fifteen years in the

service and 3,000 hours in the air as a pilot.

It was announced on January 9, 1956 that General Sutherland was leaving

base to become Chief of Staff of the 15th AF at March AFB, Riverside, CA.

His successor was announced until January 26, 1956 when Col. James W. Wilson

arrived at the base from Florida to look at his new command. It was also announced

January 9 that Col. Berton Burns, 40th Bomb Wing Commander, would serve as

Interim Commander of the 802nd AD until Colonel Wilson could arrive after trans-

ferring command of his unit in Florida to a new Commander. General Sutherland

¹³³Salina (KS) Journal, December 16, 1953, March 21, and April 27, 1954.

¹³⁴Salina (KS) Journal, April 1 and 11, 1954, November 30, 1954, and Impact, April 2, 1954.

March AFB on February 5, 1956 leaving Colonel Burns in command. Colonel [redacted] moved to take command of the 802nd AD on February 24 from MacDill AFB, [redacted] had commanded the 305th Bomb Wing. He was 36 years old, a native [redacted] WY, and had won his wings in 1940.¹³⁵

Colonel [redacted] was described as "soft spoken" and the B-47 was his "favorite [redacted]". He thrived on competition. One of his first surprises upon arriving [redacted] was to discover that Salina was "as big as it was." He informed the [redacted] Journal that one of his first projects would be to remodel the Officers' [redacted] allow townspeople to become members. Next, NCO Councils would be es- [redacted] in all base squadrons. Military courtesy would be emphasized at all [redacted] 6

Another innovation which helped morale and community relations was his de- [redacted] to permit himself and the Base Commander to be interviewed once a month [redacted] editor of Impact, the base newspaper, on Salina radio station KSAL.¹³⁷ [redacted] permitted the community to get an insight into the affairs of the base and [redacted] ly created a feeling of camaraderie with base personnel.

All of this probably helped Colonel Wilson's career because it was announced [redacted] October 26, 1956 that he had been selected for promotion to Brigadier General [redacted] January 1, 1957. The effective date was later changed to December 1, 1956. [redacted] tion to Brigadier General capped a seventeen-year military career. In the [redacted] time that he had commanded the 802nd AD, many changes had been implemented; [redacted] re-day work week had been instituted for the military, Commander's Calls [redacted] ted at all levels, and he visited with Officers and NCOs leaving the service

¹³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, January 9, 17, 26, and February 6, 1956.

¹³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, February 24, 1956.

¹³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, June 15, 1956.

at why they were leaving. As a result of this action, the re-enlistment rate at the base had climbed to 48.9 percent, an all time high.¹³⁸

Colonel de Russy had taken the base through its first phase of reactivation; Colonel Kinney had emphasized discipline; and General Sutherland had guided his men through the transition from propellor-driven B-29 bombers to jet-powered bombers. Colonel Wilson established once and for all the esprit de corps which made Smoky Hill enviable to other Air Force units. Nothing seemed to be impossible for the men of Smoky Hill to accomplish.

802nd Air Base Group

When Smoky Hill was reactivated on August 1, 1951, few, if any, knew what would be assigned to the base. There were only sixty-five military and one civilian assigned to the base, of which thirty-five were really needed to operate the OQ Gunnery Range. It is hard to determine, based upon the evidence readily at hand, when the 802nd ABG took "possession" of the base from the 4108th Base Service Squadron, but it is assumed that the changeover occurred when the first full Colonel arrived in 1952.

The first Commander of the reactivated base was Captain Bernard J. Nied, who had taken command of the 4108th Base Service Squadron on April 20, 1950. He served as Base Commander until September 21, 1951 when he was transferred to Travis AFB, CA for the purpose of retiring from the Air Force.¹³⁹ During Captain Nied's tenure as Base Commander, the base had been placed on caretaker status and then gradually reactivated. The first signs came when thirty-five men arrived TDY to reactivate the Gunnery Range. When he left, buildings were being razed and plans for new ones inaugurated. He served as Commander for

¹³⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, October 26 and December 6, 1956.

¹³⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 21, 1951 and January 1, 1953.

months which was a record for the base up to that time and would go unrivalled in the history of the base.

Major Leon Russell took command of the base on September 21, 1951. He arrived from Fairchild AFB, WA on that date.¹⁴⁰ About all that he had time to watch the base change. It is doubtful that he expected to remain in command of the base very long. The man who succeeded him was Lt. Col. Miles W. Johnston and he arrived on January 8, 1952. Colonel Johnston was a reserve aviator who had been recalled to active duty in 1951 due to the manpower needs of the Korean Conflict. Major Russell became Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of Communications.¹⁴¹

Colonel Myers B. "Bud" Cather, 34, a native of Nebraska as well as a veteran of the Korean Conflict, arrived to assume command of the base on March 4, 1952. On his arrival, Colonel Johnston became Executive Officer.¹⁴² Colonel Cather, the first full Colonel to be assigned to the base since Colonel Joe Kelly left Carswell AFB, LA in December, 1949, was born in Buffalo, WY, although he considered himself to be a Nebraskan, and had been commissioned in June of 1943.¹⁴³

Almost fourteen months later, it was announced that Colonel Cather was leaving Smoky Hill to assume command of Lincoln AFB, NE and would be replaced by Col. Robert Thacker, Deputy Base Commander, on May 10, 1953. Colonel Thacker arrived on base on April 1, 1953 from Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ where

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 8, 1952.

¹⁴² Salina (KS) Journal, March 4, 1952.

¹⁴³ Impact, August 15, 1952.

served as Deputy Base Commander. He was a native of El Centro, CA.¹⁴⁴

Currently, Colonel Thacker, recognizing the living difficulties of single men in the barracks with few opportunities for personal privacy, much and an assortment of other difficulties, decided on an experiment. He had his eight squadron Commanders to live in the barracks for one week and let their families during this period.¹⁴⁵ Unfortunately, we have no record of the results of this experiment.

On February 10, 1954, Colonel Thacker relinquished command of the 802nd and moved to the position of Director of Operations for the 310th Bomb Wing. He was succeeded by Col. John R. Kane, 47, a Medal of Honor winner, a native of Shreveport, LA. He had entered the Air Corps in 1931 as a
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During World War II, Luftwaffe (the German Air Force) Intelligence had identified Colonel Kane "Killer Kane" owing to his skill as a B-24 pilot. He won the Medal of Honor for his work during the August 1, 1943 raid on the Ploesti refineries. Separated from his main group, his plane arrived on the scene to find their assigned target destroyed by the earlier group. Kane's plane went through heavy flak and destroyed the main refinery. Shortly after his arrival at Smoky Hill, he requested and was granted an honorable discharge from the Air Force on May 10, 1954.¹⁴⁷ Why he did not remain in the service is not known.

¹⁴⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, April 15 and 28, 1953, Impact, April 17, 1953, and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, April 30, 1953.

¹⁴⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, October 22, 1953. The men of the 802nd Supply Squadron fixed a CARE package for their Commander to compensate him for being away from his family for a week.

¹⁴⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, February 11, 1954.

¹⁴⁷ Dupre, pps. 118 and 119.

Jack L. Randolph, 45, a father of two boys and a member of the Air Force since 1931, succeeded Colonel Kane as Commander on April 29, 1954. Colonel Randolph came to Smoky Hill from Norton AFB, San Bernadino, CA. Although Randolph served as Base Commander for twenty-two months, little is known about him. However, during his tenure, the runways were extended, the B-29 was introduced, and construction became permanent in nature. He left Smoky Hill AFB, Hopkinsville, KY on March 7, 1956 and his residence at Phillips was taken over by Colonel Wilson, 802nd AD Commander.¹⁴⁸

The Salina Journal announced on March 7, 1956 that Lt. Col. Gordon E. Cather, Deputy Base Commander, and former base Manpower Officer, had become "temporary Base Commander" (and 802nd ABG Commander, as well) "pending the arrival of a permanent successor to Colonel Randolph."¹⁴⁹ When this appointment became official is unknown and it is possible that this unusual honor for a Lieutenant Colonel had been planned all along. Three months later, he was being interviewed once a month on Salina radio station KSAL with Colonel Wilson, 802nd AD Commander, in his capacity as Base Commander, but little else is known about him.

Eight men held the title of Base Commander during this period. One started in a temporary capacity and wound up serving in a permanent capacity. Another held the Medal of Honor, which is the highest military decoration possible in the United States, but only served as Base Commander for approximately three months. Captain Neid, Major Russell, and Lieutenant Colonel Johnston probably did not expect to hold the job very long owing to the activities burgeoning on the base. Colonel Cather wanted to return to his native Nebraska and got that wish.

¹⁴⁸Salina (KS) Journal, February 28, 1956.

¹⁴⁹Salina (KS) Journal, March 7, 1956.

seemed to accept their assignment as part of their commitment to
 mission.

310th Bomb Wing

Robert J. Nolan, 34, was to enjoy a unique reputation at Smoky Hill
 his period in that he commanded at one time or the other, both Bomb
 base. He was a native of Trenton, NJ, had been commissioned in 1941,
 a veteran of Korea. Colonel Nolan assumed command of the 310th Wing
 was still being organized at Forbes AFB, KS so that Colonel de Russy
 to Smoky Hill as Commander of the 802nd AD. He brought the Wing to
 Hill in September, 1952 and served as Commander until November 5, 1952
 Colonel de Russy relinquished command of the 802nd AD to General Caney
 command of the 310th Wing. At that time, Colonel Nolan became Deputy
 Commander and held that job until August 2, 1953 when he became Deputy Wing
 Commander of the 40th Wing on base.¹⁵⁰
 Colonel de Russy assumed command of the 310th Wing for the second time on
 November 5, 1952.¹⁵¹ As has already been mentioned in this section, he left
 Wright-Patterson AFB, OH in August, 1955 after having served close to three
 years as Commander of the 310th Bomb Wing. In the Air Force, he was known as
 a maverick but at Smoky Hill, he had provided stability to the 310th Wing in
 formative days.

It was announced on August 7, 1955 that Col. Selmon Wells would arrive
 Mountain Home AFB, ID, where he commanded a Wing of B-36 bombers, to re-
 place Colonel de Russy in mid-August. Colonel was 39 years old and had five
 children. The Colonel served as Commander of the 310th Wing until July 5, 1956

¹⁵⁰Impact, September 12, 1952 and Salina (KS) Journal, November 5, 1952
 August 2, 1953.

¹⁵¹Salina (KS) Journal, November 5, 1952.

left to assume command of the 99th Bomb Wing then being moved from Fairchild AFB, WA to Westover AFB, MA and equipped with B-52 bombers, the third Wing was equipped. Although he had been hand-picked for the job, he was not happy about the assignment and tried to get out of it to no avail.¹⁵² When a new Commander was named, Col. D. P. Woods, 310th Wing Deputy Commander was named temporary Commander. Colonel Woods held this job until September 21, 1956 when he resumed his post as Deputy Wing Commander.¹⁵³ One of the ironies concerning the new 310th Wing Commander, Col. Bryson was that for the previous one and one-half years, he had commanded the 310th Bomb Wing at Fairchild AFB, WA while it was equipped with B-36 bombers.¹⁵⁴ The 310th Wing was the one that Colonel Wells had been named Commander of despite the tests.

40th Bomb Wing

The second Wing to be assigned to Smoky Hill had been activated at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ in 1952. To command it, Col. Stanley J. Donovan, 42, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, Class of 1934, and a full Colonel since November, 1942 was brought in from Forbes AFB, KS on December 8, 1952. He expected the Wing to be brought up to full strength by spring.¹⁵⁵ The Air Force must have decided that the organization of the Wing had been accomplished because on May 2, 1953, Colonel Donovan left for Travis AFB, CA to assume command of the 14th AD.¹⁵⁶ His tenure was brief but it must have been

¹⁵² Salina (KS) Journal, August 7, 1955 and June 15 and 17, 1956.

¹⁵³ Salina (KS) Journal, July 5 and September 21, 1956.

¹⁵⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, September 21 and 24, 1956.

¹⁵⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, December 9, 1952.

¹⁵⁶ Impact, April 17, 1953.

because command of an Air Division was a promotion involving supervision of more Wings.

David A. Burchinal, a native of Washington, PA, and the father of two, arrived from a two-year tour of duty in the Pentagon on May 2, 1953.¹⁵⁷ When he assumed Command of the 40th Wing, it was still equipped with B-24 bombers although plans were underway to convert the unit to B-47 stratojets. In October, 1953, Col. Robert J. Nolan, former Commander of the 310th Wing, assumed temporary command of the 40th Wing so that Colonel Burchinal could attend flying courses at Wichita AFB, KS on October 26, 1953.¹⁵⁸ It is believed by this writer that the courses were to teach Colonel Burchinal how to fly the B-47 because his next assignment was with a B-47 Wing.

William R. Large, junior, Chief of the Operations Branch, Directorate of Operations at Headquarters, SAC, Offutt AFB, Omaha, NE was named to replace Colonel Burchinal "in early January, 1954." A native of Dallas, TX, he had been a B-24 Group Commander with the 15th AF in Italy during World War II. His predecessor had been named Commander of the 43rd Bomb Wing at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ,¹⁵⁹ the base where the 40th Wing had been activated in late, 1952. What is interesting about Colonel Large is that the normally very informative Salina Advertiser-Sun did not provide any details about him.

Something must have happened or this was a planned brief tour of duty as Colonel Large's tenure was cut short. It was announced on June 14, 1954 that "Berton H. Burns who had "served here from December, 1943 to March, 1944"

¹⁵⁷ Impact, May 8, 1953.

¹⁵⁸ Impact, October 30, 1953.

¹⁵⁹ Impact, December 18, 1953 and Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 24, 1953. This writer went through every edition of the Salina Journal, Salina Advertiser-Sun, and Impact, the base newspaper, on file in Salina and found little information on any Wing Commander of this period.

to command the 40th Wing "replacing Colonel Nolan." Colonel Burns was at Port Arthur, TX and arrived at the base from a tour of duty in Japan.¹⁶⁰ After this, command stabilized for the 40th Wing. As has been noted, Colonel Burns assumed temporary-command of the 802nd AD in 1956 when his friend, Colonel Wilson, moved in. There may have been more than one man involved. Colonel Burns was the senior Commander at Smoky Hill. At that time, five men each commanded the 802nd AD, 310th, and 40th Bomb Wings which included the two extra tours of duty Colonel Nolan served as Commander of the 40th Wing, and eight men held the position of Base/802nd ABG Commander during this period.

At the end of this period, Brigadier General Wilson commanded the 802nd AD and had been in command of the 802nd AD for twelve and one-half months. Lieutenant Colonel Hein was Commander of the 802nd ABG/Base and had held his command for twelve months and one week. Colonel Bailey commanded the 310th Wing and had been in command for five months and three weeks. Colonel Burns was in command with thirty-three months at the helm of the 40th Bomb Wing.

In terms of command stability, the 802nd AD appears to have been the most stable. Of the five Commanders, only two had commanded it less than a year and it is known that Colonel Burns assumed command temporarily in February, 1956. Probably by virtue of his seniority on base, it is assumed that Colonel Burns, as first Commander of the 802nd AD, entered his duties with the knowledge that it was a temporary arrangement.

Command of the base was another matter. Captain Neid only served fifty-five days as Commander in this period, but he accumulated seventeen months over the period. After March, 1952, command was generally stable with the exception of

¹⁶⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 14, 1954.

who served two months three weeks and was discharged or retired
request.

10th Bomb Wing's command was also fairly stable. The shortest ten-
those of Colonels Nolan and Woods. The former served as the first
of the Wing at Smoky Hill and probably it was in a temporary capacity
Colonel de Russy could move over from the 802nd AD. Colonel Woods' tenure
temporarily temporary.

the 40th Wing seems to have lacked stability at the top save for the
Wing Commander who was Colonel Nolan. There exists the possibility that
Wing was a trial ground for future Commanders whom SAC was interested
to higher levels. The first two Commanders, Colonels Donovan and
al, went on to greater things after about five months as Commander of
Wing. In a nine-month period starting on October 21, 1953, Colonel
logged at least three months as Commander of this Wing. Then in June,
Colonel Burns assumed command and stayed in command. Colonel Large ar-
from SAC Headquarters and served approximately five months.

Economic Impact

Although Salina was an agricultural city, with the return of the Air Force
prevention of war became its major industry. Everything Salina did econom-
ly was dependent one way or another on the money spent by the Air Force and
personnel at Smoky Hill. On June 5, 1952, it was announced that "the first
bill at the base was \$40,000." The number of men stationed at the base at
time was "a secret."¹⁶¹ Using figures presented later in this chapter,
writer estimates that there were approximately 270 military personnel on
tion at this time.

¹⁶¹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 5, 1952.

economic impact of the base was felt in many ways. The military pay-plucrative deal for the bank that can get to the checks first. On 1953, it was announced that the National Bank of America (NBA) had the right to open a branch bank on base. It was to be housed in a with a photo studio, a barbershop, and a tailor shop.¹⁶² year later, the base paid out over one million dollars in disbursements month of May, 1954 for the first time since reactivation. Payments in-payroll and commercial bills with no breakdown available. If one were as to the breakdown, one only had to wait one more year. Then the curious that "2,042 military plus 383 civilian families earned most or all of income from direct employment at the base. There were 4.1 people in each per \$231 per family or \$279.50 for each civilian and \$209.31 for military as for a rough total of \$1½ million dollars a month.¹⁶³ was announced in July, 1955 that for the first time in the history of Hill, all personnel would be paid by check starting with the mid-July A machine that could sign 5,000 checks an hour had been installed on Officers and NCOs could have their checks mailed directly to their re-ve banks. This announcement was met with joy in Salina because it meant local businesses would have to keep more cash on hand to cash the checks the base.¹⁶⁴

Salina was reminded again on July 21, 1955 of the importance of Smoky Hill the local economy. During the 1955 fiscal year, a local purchasing and con-ting program pumped \$1½ million into the local economy according to Colonel

¹⁶²Salina (KS) Journal, April 12, 1953.

¹⁶³Salina (KS) Journal, June 2, 1953 and May 30, 1954.

¹⁶⁴Salina (KS) Journal, July 14 and 15, 1955.

...e, Director of Materiel for the 802nd ABG.¹⁶⁵ A little over a year later, Leonard Ritchard, Base Comptroller, revealed that it cost \$61 million to operate the base. There were approximately 6,000 military and civilian personnel, giving the base a population of around 10,000 people. (These must have included the families at Phillips Village.) The 1955 base payroll was \$14.5 million or \$1.5 million a month, while local service was at \$133,667 a month, and \$7.2 million for improvements made in 1956.¹⁶⁶ The Salina \$84 million, and assuming that most of the money was spent in the area, it was a very hefty asset to the local economy as opposed to the years prior to 1951 when there was little military activity in the area. As such, the permanency of the base was of vital concern to the area. Construction was well underway when Colonel Cather, Base Commander, announced that the Air Force had decided to convert construction from a ten-year planned use to twenty-five years of planned use which would cost \$275,000 to make adjustments accordingly on buildings then under construction.¹⁶⁷ Apparently, this was a premature announcement. In Air Force language, a ten-year base was a permanent base and it was wise to stop and figure out if Smoky Hill were really that important. On June 7, 1953, the base announced that it had been made permanent, but that the twenty-five year construction plans had not been approved.¹⁶⁸

There is some confusion here because it was not until nearly three years later that the Air Force Times, the unofficial weekly newspaper about the Air

¹⁶⁵Salina (KS) Journal, July 21, 1955.

¹⁶⁶Salina (KS) Journal, August 21, 1956.

¹⁶⁷Salina (KS) Journal, December 17 and 18, 1952.

¹⁶⁸Salina (KS) Journal, June 7, 1953.

primarily aimed at readership by airmen and their families, announced that Smoky Hill Air Force Base was one of ninety-eight continental and thirteen air bases that had been "listed as permanent" by Headquarters, USAF. The criteria for permanency were: A firm and continuing need for the site; base under exclusive Air Force or Federal control; government has a clear title to the site; and it must have community support, e.g., the local people want it.¹⁶⁹

Community Relations

Howard Frohman, who had been assigned to Smoky Hill in 1946 and 1947 as a Captain, returned to the base in November, 1952 as a First Lieutenant. One of the most noticeable differences he noticed was in base/community relations. The Country Club golf course was open to personnel assigned to the base, free. The attitude of Salina towards the base was 100 per cent better.¹⁷⁰ Impact, the base newspaper, announced on December 19, 1952 that the 802nd Vehicle Squadron (MVS) was loaning eight trucks to the Salina Post Office to assist in the Christmas mail delivery.¹⁷¹ It was a significant gesture in marking the second era of the history of Smoky Hill Air Force Base. Community relations with the base had taken a nose-dive in 1946, but near the end of the first era Salina appeared to have arrived approximate consensus on how the base should be treated when it began inviting base leaders to address civic organizations about their overseas experiences. At that time, it appears to have been too little, too late. When the base was reactivated, things were different. By the middle of 1953, the United States recognized that something unusual

¹⁶⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 1, 1956 and Salina (KS) Journal, February 24, 1956.

¹⁷⁰ Howard J. Frohman letter dated August 16, 1982.

¹⁷¹ Impact, December 19, 1952.

in the center of Kansas. It fell to the Air Force Times to publish the matter. In a report it published, the paper cited Smoky Hill Air Force Base as being one of four air bases in the continental United States to be in exceptionally good harmony with the city outside its main gate. The other three bases were: Ent AFB, CO; Lowry AFB, CO; and Francis E. Warren AFB, WY.¹⁷²

In November, 1954, the Salina Journal featured an article on night operations at the base and reported that the noise of the jets might keep Salinans awake at night. Readers were assured that the noise also kept the airmen living at the base awake. The Air Force was taking steps to head off complaints, although the situation was expected to get worse when the main north/south runway was widened. To ease this situation, flight patterns had been changed so that all aircraft no longer flew over the city and takeoffs turned away from the city as fast as possible. Smoky Hill was considering the feasibility of installing blast deflectors. Above all else, Smoky Hill and the Air Force were determined to avoid the warfare surrounding other bases over the noise problem.¹⁷³ But were relations between the base and community as good as they seemed in the local press? F. J. Feehan wrote a letter to the editor of the Salina Journal which appeared in the November 13, 1952 edition complaining that the Salina Police were harassing the airmen from the base. It appeared that the airmen were being treated like second-class citizens. The editor responded that the Air Force and city officials were striving to change all of this: "The Salina community considers the personnel at the base as first class citizens and is doing everything possible to make them feel at home."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷²Salina (KS) Journal, May 15, 1953.

¹⁷³Salina (KS) Journal, November 7, 1954.

¹⁷⁴Salina (KS) Journal, November 13, 1952.

le over two years later, Mrs. Billie Hilton wrote a letter to the Salina Journal stating that Salina needed to be friendlier to the
 1955: "It is common for the utility company to charge airmen \$40 for
 . Some landlords charge airmen \$25 a month more for apartments. Con-
 popular belief, airmen do pay income tax. . . .Salina needs to open
 the men at the base and make them feel at home."¹⁷⁵

1953, with the base at full strength, airmen assigned to Smoky Hill
 themselves in a quandary over where to buy car tags. County Treasurer
 Simpson refused to sell car tags to Air Force personnel assigned to the
 claiming that the men were not residents of Saline County, but did not
 the residency requirements. The Salina Journal wondered, on behalf of
 men, just what they had to do to establish residency. The airmen did
 Saline County.¹⁷⁶

How long this issue had been building has not been determined, but the
 State Vehicle Commission announced the next day that it had received
 anonymous letter from Salina complaining about the situation. It had given
 Simpson no authority to deny tags to Smoky Hill airmen and was investigating
 situation in cooperation with the base. On page two of the same edition
 the Salina Journal was an announcement that Mr. Simpson had decided to sell
 County car tags to Smoky Hill airmen on instructions from Topeka. His
 for refusing to sell car tags to the airmen was because "the regulations
 confusing. He had wanted to sell the tags but had had inquiries from other
 counties with military installations in them seeking his opinion and had
 decided to raise the issue even though the other counties had gone ahead and

¹⁷⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, January 7, 1955.

¹⁷⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, February 19, 1953.

tags to military personnel."¹⁷⁷

1955, Mr. Simpson appears to have accepted the situation, making an arrangement with the base to set aside January 15 to February 5 for airmen to buy car tags. Civilians could buy car tags on those days, but airmen would be exempt.¹⁷⁸ Presumably, although it was not stated, the airmen had to be present.

Another controversy that developed in 1953 was the issue of cab fares from the base and vice versa. The rate had been one dollar for the trip and cab owners complained to the City Commission that they were losing money and asked for an increase to two dollars. On June 8, the City Commission agreed to the request.¹⁷⁹ One week later, Lieutenant Colonel Farnham, by then Deputy Commander, was leading the base fight against the increase. The base opposed the suggestion that cabs wait for a full load before driving out to the base.¹⁸⁰

Finally, on June 23, a compromise was reached and the cab owners got just what they had originally asked for. The base had asked for a dollar for a person in a full cab but agreed on \$1.25 and 25¢ for each additional person in a full cab.¹⁸¹

Civic groups in the area found a ready supply of speakers in the reaction to Smoky Hill Air Force Base and took advantage of the base to the extent that reporting on them became routine and the articles were confined to the

¹⁷⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, February 20, 1953.

¹⁷⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, January 7, 1955.

¹⁷⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 9, 1953.

¹⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 16, 1953.

¹⁸¹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 23, 1953.

pages of the Salina Journal and the Salina Advertiser-Sun. In the latter, normally thorough in its reporting, little else was given beyond the date, and topic. During this period, six such visits by military personnel to the front two pages of the Salina Journal but none made it off the pages of the Salina Advertiser-Sun.

The first address of this period was made to the Rotarians on August 18, by Maj. Alex Thomson, base Manpower Management Officer. He explained how implementing Air Force plans to conserve manpower, money, and material. They were assured that the taxpayers were getting the maximum for their money.¹⁸²

Later that year, Colonel de Russy, Commander of the 310th Bomb Wing and a veteran of the Korean Conflict, addressed the Kiwanis Club on December 2. The theme of his speech was bombing, which he compared to striking an octopus. One must be careful that while striking one part, another tentacle did not reach out and strike from a different direction.¹⁸³

One week later, General Ganey, Commander of the 802nd AD and a veteran of the Korean Conflict, addressed the monthly convocation at Kansas Wesleyan University, Salina. He talked about the role of the Air Force in the 1950s and shared his experiences in Korea where he observed that the B-29 was "the workhorse of that conflict."¹⁸⁴ It was coincidental that the B-29 was also the aircraft assigned in the greatest number to his command.

Two months later, General Ganey addressed the Lions Club. This time he spoke on a subject that always interested Salina--the potential of Smoky Hill

¹⁸² Salina (KS) Journal, August 19, 1952.

¹⁸³ Salina (KS) Journal, December 2, 1952.

¹⁸⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, December 19, 1952.

Base. The General praised Smoky Hill as having the clearest aircraft approaches and for having the most favorable "potential for expansion of a large air base in the United States."¹⁸⁵ Although no rumors appeared during this period about closing the base (which would have been ludicrous after spending over \$20 million to rebuild it), the Air Force was constantly telling the community how permanent the base was. General Ganey's address on the subject may have allayed down any such sub-surface fears that the base was anything less than permanent and been responsible for the lack of rumors about closing the base during this period.

On March 22, 1955, General Sutherland, General Ganey's successor as Commander of the 802nd AD, addressed the Lions Club. His topic was base/community relations. "All taxpayers are stock holders in the Air Force." When the men complete their assignment, they did a better job which meant that the taxpayers received a bigger return on their investment in the nation's defense. Therefore, it was AS IMPORTANT for the locals to accept the airmen as members of their community.¹⁸⁶ Although this writer could find no evidence that the community was concerned over anything involving the base and vice versa, something may have prompted General Sutherland's selection of this topic.

The last major appearance before a civic group during this period, if it can be called that, was during the fourth annual "Honor the Uniform Week" on November 12, 1956 before the Sunflower Lions Club. Seven men from the base gave short talks on their work at the base.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, February 18, 1953.

¹⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, March 23, 1955.

¹⁸⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, November 13, 1956.

Honor The Uniform Week

Impact, the base newspaper, announced the chief vehicle through which Salina achieve its objective of keeping its air base. That vehicle was "Honor Uniform" Week. As of September 18, 1953, it was in the planning stages under the auspices of the Salina Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee. Special prices would be offered to personnel in Class A (dress) uniforms.

The date selected to kick off the week was Saturday, October 31, 1953.

Special prices would then be in effect for seven days at most businesses in the area. ¹⁸⁹ This established a tradition and through 1964, "Honor the Uniform" Week would be held usually during the first half of November.

1. Robert E. Thacker, Base Commander, expressed his appreciation for the "Honor the Uniform" Week in an open letter to the people of Salina which was published on November 26, 1953 in the Salina Advertiser-Sun:

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the citizens and many business firms who so willingly participated in "Honor the Uniform Week." I am sure that the officers and airmen of the base share my sentiments.

The friendliness and many benefits extended to the men of the base clearly shows that they have been recognized as a part of the community and that the people of Salina appreciate them. Though the men of Smoky Hill hail from every corner of the nation, the thoughtfulness, friendliness and cooperation of the citizens of Salina have done much to make our job more enjoyable and provide us with a home away from home. . . .¹⁹⁰

In 1954, the second annual "Honor the Uniform" Week was held from November 11 to November 12. At least 125 local firms and businesses were participating. Salinans and "urged to forget formal introductions and buy airmen a cup of coffee. During this week, it is considered proper for women to do the

¹⁸⁸ Impact, September 18, 1953.

¹⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 30, 1953.

¹⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 26, 1953.

the Salina Chamber of Commerce informed the Salina Journal that
 arms got acquainted with thousands of airmen. A total of 7975 airmen
 for prizes and over seventy took them."¹⁹² There is no denying that
 "Honor the Uniform" Week was becoming a successful Salina tradition. However,
 one must dispute the 7,975 airmen cited as having registered for prizes.
 If, there were no more than 8,000 airmen assigned to the base. Allowing
 normal fluctuation of personnel arriving on station, departing for new
 assignments, leaves, and TDYs, there had to be more than twenty-five men away
 from the area that week. Is it possible that some men registered more than
 once using a variation of their name, rank, and unit?

The third annual "Honor the Uniform" Week was held from November 5 to
 November 11, 1955. Seventy-five merchants contributed over \$2,000 in prizes
 and a free Bingo party was held on the night of November 7, open only to the
 community.¹⁹³

By 1955, the Air Force was aware of "Honor the Uniform" Week and liked
 it, for it meant that Salina was one place where the Air Force was
 welcome and that few irate citizens would complain to Congress about the noise
 from the base. General Robert Sweeney, Commander of the 8th AF of which Smoky
 was a part, sent the Salina Chamber of Commerce a letter made public on
 November 7, 1955 commending Salina for its "Honor the Uniform" Week project.
 This was concrete evidence of the cordial hospitality which has always existed

¹⁹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 8, 1954.

¹⁹² Salina (KS) Journal, November 17, 1954.

¹⁹³ Salina (KS) Journal, November 6, 8, and 11, 1955.

city and the base."¹⁹⁴

Al Sutherland, Commander of Smoky Hill's 802nd AD, gave a brief speech at the Rotary Club on November 8, 1955. His speech covered the history of the military uniform and praised Salina for its "Honor the Uniform" Week. He had never encountered anything even remotely like it before in his military career.¹⁹⁵

On November 10, 1956, the fourth annual "Honor the Uniform" Week started. In addition to the special prices, prizes, and Bingo game, airmen got to run the town for a day. The idea was to acquaint the airmen with how civilians ran the town.¹⁹⁶ All of the positions except the City Commission were filled by Master Sergeant level officers and those positions were filled by Master Sergeants (then the highest enlisted rank possible).

While the adage "an assignment is what one makes it" is especially true in a military assignment, the attitude of the civilian populace in the immediate vicinity outside the base plays a strong role and often affects morale. If things get too unbearable for a civilian, he/she can quit his/her job and move. Fortunately, most military careers are subject to the whims of Fate disguised as the Military Personnel Center (MPC) which issues Permanent Change of Station orders. With few exceptions, when PCS orders are received, the individual must make the move.

Salina was motivated by leadership which consisted of World War II veterans, people who remembered base/community relations in 1946, and an overwhelming desire to avoid becoming another Junction City. This time, Salina succeeded.

¹⁹⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, November 7, 1955.

¹⁹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, November 8, 1955.

¹⁹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, November 9 and 12, 1956.

"Honor the Uniform" Week also permitted Salinans to see airmen in dress uniforms. While doing research on the base, this writer wrote friends whose parents had served in the Air Force, as well as friends who were making the Air Force their career or who had been stationed at bases near small towns, asking about the uniqueness of this event. Only one of those friends did not consider it unique, and did not name a city or town that had honored its airmen, soldiers, or sailors more than once in the manner that Salina did annually. A careful investigation by this writer failed to discover anything like an "Honor the Uniform" Week anywhere in the nation. It is surprising that the Air Force did not appear to try to get other communities to try something like this or that the Lamer Hotel who had been transferred from Smoky Hill/Schilling did not try to organize such an event organized at their new assignments.

Open Houses/Receptions

Salina and the base truly found themselves during this era. Everything changed differently than it had been the first time and innovation became a part of life when it came to relations with the base. "Honor the Uniform" Week was the most visible, but there were other projects such as receptions and open houses which seemed to be a constant reciprocal venture that mushroomed and grew to dominate base/community relations.

The first event during this period was a reception, labeled a "Smoker," for key military personnel assigned to the base and out-of-town contractors. It was staged on July 31, 1952 at the Lamer Hotel in Salina. The host of this event was the Salina Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, July 24, 1952. Unfortunately, this was in the early days of the reactivated base and follow-up articles do not appear to have been done. Lamer Hotel was a popular place at the time and was located where City/County square is today.

inans were first invited to the base on August 4, 1952 at 8:00 P.M.

to be a night of games and the purpose was to raise money for the base's Welfare Fund. Visitors were to be directed to the dining hall from the gate. Bingo was scheduled with prizes offered by Salina merchants and women would serve refreshments.¹⁹⁸

An unusual reception was planned for Thanksgiving, 1952. A Solomon (KS) woman of two sons, Mrs. William Neahr, decided to offer a Thanksgiving dinner to the airmen from the base (the airmen were to be chosen by the Base Commander), because, if her sons were in the military, it was the sort of thing they would want people to do for them. Chicken was to be served in place of turkey and the people of Solomon were assisting by making contributions. If the event, which had been moved to the community hall, was successful, it would be repeated at Christmas and made an annual event. Unfortunately, this dinner was cancelled due to the blizzard that hit the area about the time that this event was scheduled¹⁹⁹ and to the best of this writer's knowledge, it was not repeated.

As has been stated in earlier chapters, Open Houses were a popular device in Salina, enabling the Air Force and City to associate with each other. It enabled the Air Force to show off its latest hardware and improvements to the base. There were concession stands operated by various units on base to raise funds for their activities, such as unit parties and to celebrate the completion of a successful inspection.

The first Open House of this era was held on Sunday, May 16, 1953. Colonel

¹⁹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, August 4, 1952.

¹⁹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 23, 1952 and Impact, November 28, 1952. Solomon, KS is roughly mid-way between Salina and Abilene, KS on US 40. Today, it has an approximate population of 1,200 people.

Base Commander, issued a blanket invitation to the public to attend

was welcome.²⁰⁰

How this event turned out is unknown, but the

at cameras were welcome would seem to indicate that nothing of a classi-

ture was out in the open on the base at this time. (The B-47 jets had

arrived.)

year later, another Open House was held in observance of Armed Forces

at. Col. Walter Hardzog, Deputy Base Commander, was project officer and

ed that no cameras would be permitted near the flight line. Visitors

see Colonel Randolph, Base Commander, review 1,800 airmen in formal review.

se expected 5,000 people to show up.²⁰¹

By this time, the 310th Wing was

ed with the B-47 jet which had many advanced classified features on it

is probably explains the "no camera near the flight line" edict. Whether

people showed up is not known.

The Salina Chamber of Commerce came up with another unique reception and

was a Stag party for junior airmen in which "no brass" were invited.

by 425 people, of which 225 were airmen, attended this event which was held

Memorial Hall on March 15, 1955.²⁰²

On Saturday, May 21, 1955, another

House was held in observance of Armed Forces Day and the gates were open

the public from 9:30 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. The Mayor of Salina signed a procla-

on for the Day on May 18 and urged citizens to visit Smoky Hill during Open

re on May 21. This Open House went off without a hitch and 2,000 people

ended it. Those attending were supposed to be treated to a mid-air refueling

²⁰⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, April 24 and May 14, 1953.

²⁰¹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 7, 12, and 14, 1954.

²⁰² Salina (KS) Journal, March 15 and 16, 1955.

ation, but turbulent air forced the cancellation of this event.²⁰³

Saying goodbye is always hard to do and Salina made it harder for General [redacted] and, 802nd AD Commander, to leave when a farewell party was held for him on January 27, 1956 at the Salina Country Club.²⁰⁴ Logic would seem to indicate General Ganey had received a farewell party when he left because he sent a "thank you" note after he left.

The Military Affairs Committee of the Salina Chamber of Commerce had honored senior airmen with a stag party in 1955 which proved to be popular. Another was scheduled for March 26, 1956 with two changes. First, it was to be a [redacted] and second, each businessman was to invite "at least one and not more than two airmen" to the event. Another change was that it was opened to all [redacted] personnel. Nearly 500 people attended, of which 225 were airmen. [redacted] no officers were in attendance.²⁰⁵

Less than a month later, a reception to welcome Col. James Wilson, new Commander of the 802nd AD, was planned and executed. It was held at the Salina Country Club and was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee.²⁰⁶

On Saturday, May 19, 1956, Armed Forces Day was celebrated with another [redacted] House. Maj. M. E. Saunders, Base Director of Operations, was the Officer-in-Charge of this event. This time, visitors were treated to the sight of thirty-four B-47s taking off for a fly-by over Washington, D. C. as well as to a static display of aircraft on the flight line. Busses took 7,000 guests up

²⁰³ Salina (KS) Journal, May 12, 18, and 22, 1955.

²⁰⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, January 26, 1956.

²⁰⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, December 2, 1955, March 26 and 27, 1956.

²⁰⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, April 19, 1956.

the flight line to see hangars and aircraft.²⁰⁷

For that year, a hamburger fry was planned for Lieutenants and Captains on September 25, 1956. Expecting 600 officers and 150 civilians to attend, the event was to begin at 6:30 P.M. in Memorial Hall.²⁰⁸ This writer was unable to write a follow-up article on this event.

The last event of this period, with the full cooperation of the Salina Office of Commerce, was an event designed strictly to raise money for the welfare of the various units assigned to the base, as well as improve the living halls. It was a carnival-type operation called "Air Force Jubilee," and a highlight of this event was the "Miss Stratojet Beauty Contest" held on August 18. This affair lasted from 2:00 P.M. to Midnight and was opened, of course, to the public. Miss Sonja Sheets, 18, Salina, was crowned "Miss Stratojet" from a field of thirty-eight women. Her uncle was Sergeant Richard Sheets, a member of the 25th BS, 40th Wing.²⁰⁹

Goodwill

Although it could be considered "easy publicity," one form of goodwill that gained plenty of attention was taking members of the press on plane rides. The first such ride was reported on November 28, 1954 when John Schmedeler, a reporter for the Salina Journal, took his first flight in a T-33 jet trainer. The T-33 was formerly a fighter plane. Arrangements for this flight had been made by Lieutenant Leon Shaddox, Base Information Officer.²¹⁰

This was followed by the same reporter accompanying General Sutherland,

²⁰⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, May 3, 13, and 20, 1956.

²⁰⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, September 13, 1956.

²⁰⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, July 16, August 8, 12, 13, and 19, 1956.

²¹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, November 28, 1954.

Commander, on a visit to the 310th Wing, then TDY in England in April, the reporter was given the rank of honorary Major and was gone from for three weeks, during which time he reported on what a unit did while TDY.²¹¹

Foot, a Salina Journal reporter, took two trips in planes belonging to 310th Wing spaced two weeks apart in 1956. The first flight was in a B-47 on March 30, 1956 and the last was in a 310th ARS KC-97 on April 14. On the latter ride, the reader learned that the KC-97 carried 15,000 gallons of fuel and could dispense it at a rate of 700 gallons a minute.²¹²

Fund drives are another form of goodwill. Before the first Open House and "the Uniform" Week, the base contributed to a charity fund-raising drive and kept up its high rate of contributions to the last days it was open.

On December 5, 1952, Smoky Hill presented a check for \$2,900 to officials of the Salina Community Chest Drive. This was over 200% of its share and had been collected in two drives. In the first drive, 100% had been reached but Salina was falling short of its goal, so the base held another drive to Salina and thereby established "another link in the chain of friendly relations between Salina and the base."²¹³

Although nothing was reported on fund-raising drives at the base in 1953, based on figures available to this writer through the local press, Smoky Hill contributed an average of \$11,000 a year to charity without the figures for that year. The amount contributed each year on an average is probably higher, as this writer believes that the base did contribute to fund-raising

²¹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 12 and May 2, 1955.

²¹² Salina (KS) Journal, April 1 and April 15, 1956.

²¹³ Salina (KS) Journal, December 5, 1952.

that year. An example of Smoky Hill's generosity came in 1956. In that year Col. Jim Wilson commanding the 802nd AD, the base gave \$43,750 to the community or between \$5.47 and \$6.84 per person assigned to the base. As has been noted, Colonel Wilson was described as a "go-getter" type and this would explain the base's interest in charity drives. Of course, all of this helped further base/community relations. It certainly did not hinder them. Other events enhanced relations. During the morning of June 19, 1955, three airmen, who were members of the 802nd Air Installation Squadron, were hitch-hiking on South 9th Street to the base when they were stopped by a man from electrical wiring around a Dillon's store sign and promptly removed it. One week later, for saving his store, the manager presented each of the airmen a check for fifty dollars as a reward at a special formation for the occasion.²¹⁵

The next year, the Kansas Landscape and Nursery Company of Salina gave the base some trees for a barracks general beautification project. Workers from the base removed the trees from the firm's field on East North Street. In return for the trees, the airmen cleaned up the field.²¹⁶ It was a pleasant pro quo and the fruits of this arrangement are still in evidence on the base proper.

Two weeks later, another arrangement was worked out similar in nature but this time with the City of Salina. This time, it concerned the removal of a brick chimney. In 1954, the city had purchased an abandoned brick plant near 10th and Iowa Streets for the expansion of Indian Rock Park. However, there

²¹⁴Salina (KS) Journal, June 14, 29, and October 16, 1956.

²¹⁵Salina (KS) Journal, June 19 and 26, 1955.

²¹⁶Salina (KS) Journal, April 13, 1956.

fty-foot tall brick smokestack that needed to be disposed of. A demo-
 am from the base offered to do the task in exchange for salvagable
 which the base intended to use for a patio at the Officers' Club. It
 the charges to bring down the smokestack which had been built in 1912
 considered to be a landmark in Salina.²¹⁷

Evacuation

1950s was a decade of getting a "bigger bang for a buck" in defense
 . It was also a period in which going to the brink of war with an
 ry hoping that the other side would back down before war broke out was
 adation of American foreign policy. This was called "brinkmanship" and
 lied with the "Domino" theory, which held that if one nation in a given
 succumbed to Communism, it was only a matter of time before its neighbors
 succumbed.

Military might was the keystone to this policy and Smoky Hill Air Force
 with its force of ninety "long rifle" B-47 stratojets and forty KC-97
 rs, located strategically in the center of the nation, was considered a
 where a last ditch stand could be made or in the event of an attack on
 ar coast, planes could be launched with relative ease. But if the enemy
 through coastal and Artic-area defenses, Salina was a probable target.
 Salinans were warned on May 25, 1956 that the city's role had changed from
 of a refugee center to that of a target due to the base. It was possible
 t in the event of conflict, Salina could be attacked by nuclear weapons, such
 bombs or missiles. There would probably be some warning and 100 Salinans
 re volunteer members of the Ground Observation Corps (GOC). In the event

²¹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, April 29, 1956.

was time and that Salina could be evacuated, the evacuation would be in the same direction as the prevailing winds to escape nuclear fall out.²¹⁸

On December 2, 1956, the Salina Journal again reminded its readers that Salina was a possible target in the event of an enemy nuclear attack because of the proximity of the base. People within a twenty-mile radius of the base would have to be evacuated.²¹⁹

Air Force Academy

As early as at least January, 1949, Salina had been trying to acquire the proposed Air Force Academy, perhaps converting the air base into a permanent-type installation not subject to the whims of the Department of Defense and the national government. In 1954, Salina made one last try, perhaps believing that having a re-designated air base near President Eisenhower's childhood home would give it an edge in acquiring the Academy.

The Salina Advertiser-Sun informed its readers on January 28, 1954 that local officials and the Chamber of Commerce "were involved in activity aimed at urging Congress to designate Salina as a site for the proposed Air Academy once the school is given approval by the nation's legislature. No predictions were being made on the outcome owing to the competition from such cities as Fort Worth and Dallas." Also, Senator Edwin C. Johnson, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, was from Colorado and, of course, he favored his hometown getting it.²²⁰ Not mentioned was the fact that President Eisenhower's favorite vacation spot was Colorado and he would have to sign the bill authorizing the Academy. Later Colorado Springs won and the first cadets arrived at

²¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 25, 1956.

²¹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, December 2, 1956.

²²⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, January 28, 1954.

ary location of the school at Lowry AFB, CO. Salina had to be content
 air base consisting of an Air Division and two Bomb Wings.

Salina really ever have a chance at getting the Academy? That question
 is speculation, but it probably had no more of a chance or no less of
 than any other city with an Air Force base near it. In Salina's favor
 which probably kept it in the running as long as it did was the fact
 a/community relations were unusually good.

Morale

er "Situations Wanted" in the July 31, 1955 edition of the Salina Journal
 and this ad: "Three officers want new station assignment---Have B-47, will
 221 Who the officers were was not revealed nor whether they had any
 But there was a humor displayed here which was symbolic of the kind
 Smoky Hill had become by then. Morale was much improved in comparison
 the earlier World War II and post World War II years. Attention was given
 needs of the personnel on base and the barracks/dormitories were modern.
 the most part, Salina contributed to morale on base. Smoky Hill was fortu-
 In the quality of the leaders the Air Force assigned to the base at the
 of this period. General Curtis LeMay, Commander of SAC, was responsible
 this by striving to make SAC "more human." General Ganey instilled disci-
 and General Wilson established an esprit de corps. In between, there
 leaders at all levels who tried to make Smoky Hill a first-class operation
 in the Air Force.

Before the base was closed in 1949, the duty hours had been changed for
 personnel to where they worked a forty-four hour week; eight hours a day,

²²¹Salina (KS) Journal, July 31, 1955. Undoubtedly this was inspired by
 popular TV series "Have Gun, Will Travel" of this period. However, the
 case is still common and this writer saw versions of this ad with the CT-39,
 C-130, etc., substituted during his enlistment in the Air Force in the 1970s.

rough Friday and four hours on Saturday. At the start of reactivation, [redacted] was working the same hours, except for the civilians who worked only [redacted] weeks and were usually off on the weekends. The training requirements were such that the base went on a seven-day work week for a while starting in February, 1955. The 310th Bomb Wing was preparing for a ninety-day TDY assignment. The 310th Bomb Wing was reputedly in line for its own TDY assignment and [redacted] as much to be done to get ready.²²²

One of the first acts taken by Col. James Wilson upon becoming Commander of the 802nd AD was to place all base personnel on a five-day work week, effective [redacted] day. Only a skeleton crew would man the base on Saturdays and Sundays. Regulations concerning the wear of the uniform on base after work hours were [redacted].²²³

Dining Halls

There is an old adage in the world which states that the military travels on its stomach. Food is important to morale and a wise Commander is one who keeps his eye on what is being served in the dining (mess) halls under his command. The first dining hall to be opened "for business" since reactivation began was the [redacted] dinner on May 25, 1952. One of the innovations was that instead of long tables and benches, this dining hall had small tables with four chairs and [redacted] were salt, pepper, sugar, and napkin dispensers at each table.²²⁴ At its peak, Smoky Hill would have seven dining halls, one in each of the five barracks [redacted] [redacted], one for the fire fighters on the flight line, and one for the civilian [redacted].

²²² Salina (KS) Journal, February 9, 1955.

²²³ Salina (KS) Journal, February 26, 1956.

²²⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, May 26, 1952.

and military personnel who lived off base but who wanted a hot meal for base.

year later, an airman working in a dining hall was injured when a big soup kettle exploded. The blast ripped a hole four inches deep in the concrete floor and crumpled a large \$1,700 air out-take mechanism over the kettle. It was estimated that the kettle exploded under 15,000 pounds of pressure. A defective safety valve was blamed for the accident.²²⁵

In February, 1954, the Salina Journal featured an article on the In-Flight Kitchen located just inside the flight line in the base operations building. Approximately 150 box lunches were prepared daily. Since March, 1953, 20,283 lunches had been served. Aircraft Commanders took the orders from their crews, phoned them in to the kitchen two hours in advance and then picked them up when the plane boarded. There were seven men working in the In-Flight Kitchen at this time under the supervision of an NCO.²²⁶

The 802nd Food Service Squadron (FSS) was responsible for the seven dining halls on base and the In-Flight Kitchen during this period. Most of the cooking and baking was done on base, although Smoky Hill purchased the bread it used from bakeries off base.²²⁷

The Salina Journal reported on November 23, 1956 that the men assigned to the base had eaten heartily on Thanksgiving Day. Over 3,000 airmen and their dependents had eaten dinner in the dining halls on base. They consumed: 2,617 pounds of turkey, 800 pounds of ham, 500 pounds of shrimp, 380 gallons of milk, 12 gallons of coffee, fifty gallons of cranberry sauce, 3,600 salads, 180 cans

²²⁵ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 28, 1953.

²²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, February 24, 1954.

²²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, March 15, 1955.

660 pounds of cornbread dressing, ten gallons of whipped cream, 650 sweat potatoes, 1,000 pounds of Irish potatoes, 200 mincemeat pies, min pies, 260 pounds of fruit cake, 360 pounds of candy, 290 pounds of cases of apples, 312 pounds of grapes, 120 pounds of dates, sixty raisins, eighty gallons of fruit punch, eighty gallons of gravy, 345 of celery, and 200 pounds of carrots.²²⁸ It should be noted here that the 40th Wing was TDY in England and the 40th ARS was TDY at an undisclosed location. But with fifteen per cent of the base permitted leave during a normal year this left approximately 2,000 men unaccounted for.

Library

The library provides a place for the curious to learn about the world about and to read books, magazines, and newspapers that they would normally be unable to read owing to the expense. It is a depository of technical manuals and military installation which is one of the major reasons for its existence, rather being that of a great asset to morale. Miss Barbara Bussard arrived at Smoky Hill on August 4, 1952 to serve as Base Librarian and opened the Library on September 17 with 2,000 books.²²⁹ For the rest of the history of the base, the Library would play a role in the lives of the personnel assigned to the base. On July 23, 1953, it was announced that the Base Library had instituted a "Book Exchange" for pocket-sized paper-backed books. These books were kept separate from other books and could be borrowed for two weeks. Then instead of returning the original book, the borrower could substitute it with another paper-backed book.²³⁰

²²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, November 23, 1956.

²²⁹ Impact, November 6, 1953.

²³⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 23, 1953.

General Curtis LeMay, Commander of SAC, was concerned about the morale of the men and saw the library as a place that helped keep up morale--especially when the men were out of money near the end of a pay period. Once, while in the base, he discovered that the library was closed "for inventory." An order with the General was ordered to open the library up "immediately" and the inventorying either before the library opened or after it closed the next day.²³¹

It was true it was that one could tell when payday was approaching by visiting the library and seeing how many people were there was confirmed by an article that appeared in the Salina Journal on August 3, 1953. Miss Bussard, Base Librarian, claimed that there was a distinct correlation between the number of books borrowed and the days left to payday. When the men could not afford anything else, they headed for the library. By the time that this article appeared, the Base Library had 4,600 volumes and was receiving 150 volumes a week from the Air Force.²³²

Miss Bussard left for Washington, D. C. in November, 1953 and was replaced by Bettie Sue Todd of Santa Anna, TX on January 11, 1954. The new Librarian found the Library stocked with 7,200 volumes and still growing. Airman 1st Class (A2C) Victor Kalinoski had served as interim Librarian.²³³

After this, the growth of the Library slowed down. By the middle of 1955, there were only 8,000 volumes, of which one-half were fiction. There were subscriptions to 109 magazines, ten newspapers, plus newspapers from other bases.

²³¹ Interview with Mike Scanlan, Col, USAF (ret), October 13, 1981.

²³² Salina (KS) Journal, August 3, 1953.

²³³ Salina (KS) Journal, January 11, 1954.

Salina Wright was the Librarian at this time.²³⁴

Wives

The role of the wife in the military is often overlooked, yet some military installations were littered with broken marriages. In the Army, the power of the major's wife is legendary. She ruled the social life of an Army installation and sometimes what she thought about a man's wife determined whether or not he was promoted. Still, the family life of a member of the military is one of hardship; especially in the 1950s when the men were sent on TDYs separated from their families for periods that varied from a few weeks to months. Then there were the reassignments. It usually fell to the wife to handle and supervise the moving details and pull the children out of school to make travel arrangements for the family. But there were some assignments when the man went on an unaccompanied assignment that lasted from twelve to sixteen months and often these assignments were devoid of leaves, meaning the wife was left to her own devices and had to run the family on her own. General LeMay's Strategic Air Command was well aware of the role wives played in the lives of their husbands. The contentment of the wife often determined how well her husband might enjoy his assignment. If she were not happy, the chances were that her husband would soon become disillusioned. To ensure that the wife was content, the Dependents Assistance Program was instituted to acquaint the wives with their role while their husbands were TDY and the program also provided assistance to the wives in dealing with matters concerning their families.²³⁵

Smoky Hill went one step farther and held a "Dependent's Commander's Call"

²³⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, July 31, 1955.

²³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, January 16, 1955.

wives on February 26, 1955 in the base theater. This was to prepare for the absence of their husbands during the first TDY of the 310th. Colonel de Russey's wife was planning to issue a newsletter during the trip the wives posted on the activities of their husbands, developments, and other things of interest to the wives.²³⁶ Sometime in March the 380th Bomb Squadron of the 310th Wing and commanded by Lieutenant Hopfenspirger, held an Open House for the wives of the men assigned to it. Over 100 wives attended this event and they got to see where their husbands worked and what they did. Refreshments were served.²³⁷ After this, the novelty of the Dependent's Assistance Program and Open House for the wives wore off. As to the former, in 1955, it was still new and the Air Force was not sure of how it would work. This permitted flexibility and the wives of the major Commanders were personally involved. But then the military bureaucracy took over and an officer was assigned to supervise the program.

There was an Officers' Wives Club and an NCO Wives Club on base. These were active in organizing "Welcome Home" parties for their husbands and helping with the charity fund drives on base and the annual base Christmas parties. In general, the wives accepted the base and Salina as "just another assignment" in their husbands' careers.

Spiritual Affairs

Spiritual affairs at the reactivated Smoky Hill Air Force Base received more attention in the local press at the start than they did in the first era of the base. This may have been due to the fact that Whitley Austin, a devout

²³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, February 25, 1955.

²³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, March 18, 1956.

man, was editor of the Salina Journal, but it could also have been due to the possibility that some exceptional Chaplains were assigned to the base. Capt. Kenneth L. Smith, a Protestant, arrived at Smoky Hill Air Force Base on June 20, 1952 and became the first Chaplain assigned to the base when it was reactivated. He was "native to the South."²³⁸ By November 21, 1952, there were three Chaplains assigned to the base. Maj. George C. Van Dine, 52, a Korean veteran, became the senior Chaplain on base when he died during the week of October 10, 1952. Then during the week of November 21, 1952, 1st Lt. Christian G. Le Frois arrived and became the first Catholic Chaplain since the base was reactivated to be permanently assigned to the base. He was there less than two months and was then reassigned to Elmendorff AFB, AK. Richard Spellman replaced him on January 29, 1953.²³⁹ This group was rounded out by the arrival of a fourth Chaplain who was assigned to Phillips Village Chapel during the week of January 23, 1953. 1st Lt. Bedingsfield, 33, a Baptist from Rentz, GA arrived from a tour of duty in Korea for which he had received the Air Force Commendation Medal.²⁴⁰ With the arrival of Lieutenants Bedingsfield and Spellman, the roster was complete at Smoky Hill. Chaplains would come and go during this period. The average time on station was about one year at first and then as long as two and a half years for some of them.

On September 3, 1953, the Salina Advertiser-Sun printed an article on the Smoky Hill Choir. The choir had been a recent addition, with the view that it would not only add to the effectiveness of the chapel services but give its members

²³⁸Salina (KS) Journal, June 20, 1952.

²³⁹Impact, October 10, November 21, 1952, and January 9, 1953.

²⁴⁰Impact, January 23, 1953 and Salina (KS) Journal, August 2, 1953.

portunity to "actually participate in the service." At this time, only rehearsals had been held and although things were encouraging, more voices were needed. It was under the direction of Chaplain Warren Bedingsfield and Burt Stansberg. Membership was open to all interested Protestant personnel.

Starting on October 4, 1953, the Chaplains made arrangements for personnel to leave their children in the base nursery while they attended either Protestant or Catholic services between 8:00 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. Sunday. Lieutenant Bedingsfield started a Sunday School for Protestant children between the ages of 3 and 8 starting at 9:50 A. M.²⁴²

It has already been noted that Phillips Village had a Chaplain assigned to it. The other Chaplains were assigned to each of the units on base, e.g., the 310th AD, 40th Wing, and 310th Wing. Although all of the Chaplains were available to all of the personnel, they had a special obligation to the unit they were assigned which included breaking the news of aircraft mishaps to the families of the men involved.

One of the probably more unpleasant duties the Chaplains probably performed, aside from accompanying the Wing Commander to the homes of the families to inform them that their husbands or fathers had died in an aircraft accident, was conducting Memorial Services for the deceased. The first Memorial service of this period was held on May 17, 1955 for the nine men who were lost aboard KC-97 near Iceland. The Air Force then assumed that the men were dead and that they had officially died on May 4. The Catholic Mass was held at 9:00 A.M. in the Base Chapel with Major Spellman presiding and the Protestant Service was

²⁴¹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, September 3, 1953.

²⁴² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, October 1, 1953.

at 10:00 A.M. by Captain Bedingsfield.²⁴³

At the end of this period, it was decided to construct a new chapel of the same size as the existing chapel probably before the end of 1957 at a cost of \$10,000. Smoky Hill was authorized two chapels and another one would eventually be built in the new housing area. As of February 10, 1957, services for Catholics, Lutherans, and Protestants were being held on base.²⁴⁴

Christmas

During this period, Christmas activities at the base received more attention from the local press than did the other holidays. Probably helping in this attention was the spirit of the holiday and of the times. With the exception of the units at the base gave attention to the needy and it may have been a highlight by the press that year.

The Salina Advertiser-Sun announced on December 11, 1952 that under the leadership of the Chaplains at Smoky Hill and Impact, the base newspaper, a campaign had been launched to raise funds for the purchase of food, clothing, and toys for Salina's needy. Contributions were voluntary and would end on December 20.²⁴⁵

Then, the Chaplains announced that they were providing a Christmas Party for the children of base personnel on December 20 and that Santa Claus would be present. There would be presents for everyone. The party was to be held in the Base Gym building and a movie would be shown.²⁴⁶

By 1953, the mission of SAC was such that it was decreed by regulation

²⁴³Salina (KS) Journal, May 17, 1955.

²⁴⁴Salina (KS) Journal, February 10 and 14, 1957.

²⁴⁵Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 11, 1952.

²⁴⁶Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 18, 1952.

15 percent of base personnel would be permitted Christmas leave and, only fifteen days with no extension unless a specific emergency existed. had set a deadline of November 25 so as to permit leaves to be processed on a priority basis.²⁴⁷

The Chaplains' Christmas Party for 1953 was to be held Saturday morning, December 19 starting at ten o'clock in Hangar 8. A ten-act circus would start at 9 A.M., and would include an elephant, clowns, acrobats, and trained animals. Nearly 1,000 children of military personnel between the ages of one and twelve were expected to attend. There was no charge but in order for the children to receive a present from Santa, they had to have a ticket which was obtainable from the parent's squadron orderly room. Funds to pay for the presents were to be donated by the Officer and NCO Wives Clubs.²⁴⁸

In 1954, "Operation Santa Claus" was launched which would discharge at least 152 airmen at the base. They were to be discharged by Christmas, and to ensure the men had to be planning to separate "under normal conditions" by January of 1955.²⁴⁹

Two groups were involved in helping the needy of Salina celebrate Christmas in 1954. The 802nd Supply Squadron held a Christmas Party for thirty needy children from Salina on December 15. The 310th ARS delivered food baskets to needy Salina families.²⁵⁰

Christmas, 1954 was also the year that eighteen units on base competed in a decoration contest. The 310th FMS won the competition with a manger scene

²⁴⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, November 26, 1953.

²⁴⁸ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 17, 1953.

²⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 19, 1954.

²⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, December 12 and 22, 1954.

Carolers backed by recorded Christmas music. Second place went to Headquarters Squadron. In third place was the 25th Bomb Squadron, which placed Santa in a B-47 instead of a sleigh.²⁵¹ Unfortunately pictures were published, but the latter must have been interesting to see a B-47 to such a peaceful use.

In 1955, SAC had had a change of heart and announced that it was permitting part of the personnel assigned to a base to take holiday leave. Personnel were either Christmas or New Year's leave but not both. The base itself was to operate with skeleton crews during this holiday period enabling personnel to be with their families. This held true during the 1956 season as well.²⁵²

Over 150 children attended a Christmas Party for Protestant Sunday School held on base on December 16, 1956. Santa Claus was there to distribute gifts and prizes.²⁵³

The 802nd Supply Squadron announced that it was holding a Christmas Party for children in its barracks dayroom starting at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, December 22. The Squadron had collected around \$400 to finance the project. That same day, the 802nd Headquarters Squadron was holding a party for unfortunate children starting at 2:00 P.M. It was the units' normal Christmas Party but \$150 had been collected for the "Special Guests."²⁵⁴

The 310th Bomb Wing was in England that year but the men sent a B-47 back to the base loaded with presents in the bomb bay for their families. Each

²⁵¹ Salina (KS) Journal, December 23, 1954.

²⁵² Salina (KS) Journal, December 18 and 20, 1956.

²⁵³ Salina (KS) Journal, December 17, 1956.

²⁵⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, December 20, 1956.

and a caretaker force on base and it fell to them to distribute the
to the various families.²⁵⁵

"Operation Santa Claus" in 1956 was different from its 1954 counterpart.

The objective had been to discharge men early. This time, the 310th Bomb
Group was in England, so the wives, who had been left behind, exchanged
with their husbands showing them wrapping presents and singing Christmas

Social Clubs

Social clubs on a military base are similar to social clubs in civilian
communities. They provide an opportunity for people with similar interests to
gather and share those interests. At Smoky Hill Air Force Base, there
were several organizations during this period, including the service clubs,
which contributed to the welfare of the personnel assigned to the base.
One of the first clubs organized at the reactivated Smoky Hill was an aero
club which made its debut on March 17, 1953. The meeting was held to discuss
measures for student fliers and membership dues.²⁵⁷ Aero clubs are a stan-
dard feature of an air base, naturally. Each club has at least two planes; a
one-engine and a two-engine plane. What Smoky Hill had in the way of
clubs for this period was not mentioned.

The Smoky Hill Masonic Club completed organization by May 6, 1953 with
more than 100 members." The regular meeting night was set for the first Wednes-
day of each month and was open to all Masons in the area.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, December 24, 1956.

²⁵⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, December 28, 1956.

²⁵⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 19, 1953.

²⁵⁸ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 19, 1953.

9,000 Airmen's Service Club opened on Friday night, July 10, 1953.

used in a red-framed structure adjoining the airmen's swimming pool

large lounge, game room, cafeteria, reading room, and other facilities.

T. Gibson, 537th AF Band, furnished piano music while guests toured

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NCO Club was scheduled for formal opening on Saturday, July 18, 1953.

entrance was on the west side of the building. Inside was a twenty-

ool bar in the north part of the Club and there was a bar in the ball-

cafeteria was to provide members with sandwiches, hot meals, and soft

There was also a package liquor store. The Gene Fullen Orchestra was

from 9:00 P.M. until 2:30 A.M. on opening night. A contest was being

for the name and the results would be announced at a later date.²⁶⁰

the opening of the NCO Club went off without any problems. However, the

contest resulted in fraud which was reported in the Salina Advertiser-Sun

July 16, 1953:

There's been something of a dither at the base and they applied some frost to nip a vote fraud in the bud. It seems that someone stuffed the ballot boxes, which called off the contest and started some sleithing. . . Club Director Lillian Nunziato called it off when the ballot box-stuffing became as transparent as a China egg.

Airmen were asked to vote for one of five names; Star Club, Little Wheels Club, Silver Wings, the Ole Smoky, and Sunflower.

. . . Several waggish airmen who know something of politics, have suggested the club be named the Pendergast or Tammany Hall. Staging of the referendum left voting wide open for the alleged fraud. There was no regular or numbering of ballots according to a base informant. Election engineering specialists took advantage of the situation and produced multiple balloting. The five names had been selected from a field of forty to fifty submitted earlier by airmen. The winning name would have brought 25 smackers, handshakes from some top brass, and two goes at the feedbag at a Salina eaterie. That would have been the take of the winner.

²⁵⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 16, 1953.

²⁶⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 9, 1953.

Ballots were distributed at five points about the base and under signs reading "Cast Your Vote." Well, somebody followed the lead of the sign with enthusiasm.²⁶¹

Follow-up on this vote fraud was reported nor was the final name of the person ever revealed.

NCO Club succumbed to a fire during the night of January 3, 1954. It was completely gutted and little was salvaged, but the base announced that the club would remain open in another location. Damage had been reported at over \$100,000.

It had been built and maintained by funds collected from members.

The building had been erected in 1943 at a cost of \$35,000 and was formally

turned over to the NCOs on July 18, 1953. There were 919 Staff, Tech, and Master

members. Later that month, SAC approved \$95,000 for a new NCO Club.

It was expected to start around April 1 and be completed by August. A temporary

Club was in operation and in another building.²⁶²

The expanded Airmen's Service Club was opened in October, 1955 and had every-

thing but girls. "The airmen want to belong to the community but do not want

to wear uniforms because they think Salina resents them."²⁶³ What

is interesting about this is that Salina was about to stage its third annual

"Wear the Uniform" Week in which the wearing of the uniform was encouraged

for all. This seemed to indicate that base/community relations were not quite

what was envisioned as well as intended or else the junior enlisted personnel were being

resented, especially if they were single and lived on base. In any case, it

seems that there was a small morale problem.

A new Officers' Club was opened on December 17, 1955 and open to the public

²⁶¹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, July 16, 1953.

²⁶² Salina (KS) Journal, January 4 and 28, 1954.

²⁶³ Salina (KS) Journal, October 9, 1955.

it. More than 2,000 people attended this event and the base was "pleased
turnout."²⁶⁴ It would not be until Col. James Wilson assumed command
22nd AD that Salinans became eligible for membership in the Officers'
until then, civilians were welcome only at the invitation of officer
Smoky Hill had always had a chorus but during General LeMay's tenure as
of SAC, when he had a program designed to make SAC more human, the
came into its own. On November 22, 1956, it was revealed that Smoky
male chorus was number one in SAC. There were twelve men in the organi-
and the competition had been done by tape-recording selections which
an sent to SAC Headquarters at Offutt AFB, NE for judging. Lt. Charles
n, 802nd Operations Squadron, was the Director.²⁶⁵

Difficulties

With the reactivation of the base and approximately 8,000 men assigned to
would expect to learn that there were a lot of problems with the person-
especially if one recalls the 1945 to 1949 period of Smoky Hill. However,
this period, only nine incidents reached the pages of the local press
roughly one and one-third cases a year with the first incident being reported
January, 1953.

That first case involved a nineteen-year-old airman stationed at the base,
returned to Wichita, KS on January 5, 1953 in the custody of officers from
Adgwick County Sheriff's Office. He was wanted on a possible auto theft

re.²⁶⁶ One month later, a twenty-five year old airman stationed at the base,

²⁶⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, December 18, 1955.

²⁶⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, November 22, 1956.

²⁶⁶ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, January 8, 1953.

ed after a Salina girl, fourteen years old, claimed that the airman
her up in downtown Salina on January 31, drove her "outside of town"
her. The airman denied it.²⁶⁷

ite the above, Salinans were assured that it did not pay to get out of
Smoky Hill. The base provided the Salina Advertiser-Sun a list of
taken by special or summary courts martial at the base during November
Charges ranged from absent without leave (AWOL) to disorderly conduct
ers under the uniform code of military justice (UCMJ). Sentences meted
cluded reduction in grade, restriction to the base, and confinement at
bor. The fines taken in from these actions totaled \$1,125.²⁶⁸

ring Halloween night, October 31, 1954, two young airmen, members of the
S, were arrested for robbing a McPherson liquor store of \$147 at gun-
The arrest came after a chase on north US 81 but no gun was found when
ere caught. They were then bound over for trial in January with bond
\$3,000 a piece.²⁶⁹ The outcome of this matter did not appear in the
s available to this writer. On March 8, 1956, a supply sergeant at the
was acquitted of charges of taking a revolver off base with the intent of
ing it. He had been arrested by the FBI in February, 1956. The Sergeant's
se was that he forgot to put the gun away before leaving for home.²⁷⁰

Just before the end of this period, four airmen were arrested in Salina
policeman who noticed that the driver of a car at an intersection "seemed
asy when he pulled up beside him (the driver) and decided to check the car

²⁶⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, February 5, 1953.

²⁶⁸ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 3, 1953.

²⁶⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 1 and 2, 1954.

²⁷⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, March 8, 1956.

Inside the car were items stolen from an apartment building on South 5th and the BOQ on base as well as extra tires, rims, auto tools, and a bat-
 The airmen were promptly arrested.²⁷¹ No mention was made as to the
 car the airmen were caught in but to have all of that loot in it, it
 must have been a big car.

Although suicide is not in the same league as criminal activities, it does
 result in the loss of life. Three apparent suicides were reported during this
 period. Two occurred in sentry booths on the base proper and another occurred
 in Salina. The latter involved a Tech Sergeant who died after being rushed to
 the Veterans Army Hospital in Denver, CO.²⁷²

In Chapter Three of this paper, it appeared that a popular pastime was to
 escape from the Guard House (or jail) on base. At the reactivated Smoky Hill,
 the attempt was successfully carried out which was reported in the local
 press. On March 24, 1956, two airmen escaped at 9:00 P.M. and were seen in
 Salina at 10:15 P.M. They were apprehended in Salina during the early hours
 of March 25 by Salina Police and returned to the base.²⁷³

Civilians

Civilian employees had played a role in the operation of the base from
 1945 to 1949. From April, 1950 to October, 1951, there were nineteen civilians
 working at the base as a part of the caretaker force and they outnumbered the
 military force of five men.

Although no aircraft had been assigned to the base at the start of this
 period, Elmo J. Mahoney, 42, a sub-contractor and Russell County (KS) wheat

²⁷¹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, February 14, 1957.

²⁷² Salina (KS) Journal, December 28, 1953, September 16, and November 29,
 1955.

²⁷³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 29, 1956.

commuted daily between his farm near Dorrance and the base in a Cessna plane. It was a thirty-five to forty minute trip and he used the base's ²⁷⁴

civil service jobs were advertised in the Salina Journal as being plentiful at the base. The wage scale ranged from \$1.10 to \$1.70 an hour. By March 1956, there were 330 civil service employees on base and 194 of that number received pay raises of six to eight cents an hour.²⁷⁵

These people were actively involved in bettering the way their jobs were done. On April 29, 1956, Eugene D. Cooper, a Base Installation Engineer Mechanic, received \$25 for a suggestion to save wear and tear on dishwashers. Three months later, twenty civilian employees were rewarded for outstanding work and at the close of this period, three incentive cash awards and two superior performance awards were made to base civilian employees.²⁷⁶

Traffic

With 8,000 personnel projected for work at the base when it reached full strength and construction going full blast, problems arose due to a shortage of parking spaces. People began parking wherever they could find a space, which quickly became the shoulders of the road between the main gate and US 81. This created a definite traffic hazard. Members of the Saline County Commission, acting with the encouragement of the base, designated the road as an area closed to parking. Sheriff Guy Lemon informed the Commissioners that their action should be "enforced immediately." By the end of June, 1953, the situation war-

²⁷⁴Salina (KS) Journal, May 18, 1952. Mr. Mahoney served one term in the legislature, 1949 - 1950 as a Democrat. Later, he ran for Congress against incumbent Wint Smith and lost. He also tried for the US Senate but lost the primary.

²⁷⁵Salina (KS) Journal, July 13, 1952 and March 31, 1954.

²⁷⁶Salina (KS) Journal, April 29, July 29, 1956, and March 4, 1957.

The Commissioners posting a \$500 fine against anyone found parking along the base.²⁷⁷ This seemed to end the problem because after nothing more was reported.

Access to the base in the past had been gained from the east by the main entrance from Camp Phillips via a county road south of the base. With the reconstruction of the base and a greater number of people assigned there, the base decided to open additional entrances in February, 1953 to ease the flow of traffic. The north gate to Crawford Street was open from 7:00 A.M. to 8:15 A.M. from 4:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. Near Drive-In 81, the northeast gate was open from seven to eight-fifteen o'clock, mornings only. Commercial and government passes, as well as temporary passes, were to be handled at the main gate.²⁷⁸

Before personnel could operate a government vehicle on base, they had to have a government driver's license and that could only be acquired after they passed an aptitude test and a training course. This training course consisted of a two-week drivers school on base and was held Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 4:15 P.M. Topics covered included map reading, safety films, lectures by state and Air Police, and the testing of aptitudes, vision, and reactions. Classes began every two weeks and were run throughout the year.²⁷⁹

Now, it is doubtful that personnel at the base were any worse than the national average when it came to driving. Still, there was probably a need to improve the driving habits of the personnel. On August 20, 1954, the base announced that it was instituting "traffic spotters" who were to keep track of careless drivers, both on base and off. This was authorized by a new base regu-

²⁷⁷ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 4, 1952, and Salina (KS) Journal, June 23, 1953.

²⁷⁸ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, February 26, 1953.

²⁷⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, September 10, 1953.

was to be enforced by the Base Provost Marshal. The "spotters" were the 802nd AD Commander and his staff, the Base Commander and his staff, Squadron Commanders and their staffs, and the Squadron Commanders.²⁸⁰

detail was offered but on February 20, 1956, a four-car accident occurred on base. A civilian worker was driving the lead car and the three cars following were each driven by an Airman Second Class (A2C), all members of the Bomb Wing.²⁸¹ No one was reported injured.

Despite the use of traffic spotters and the mildness of the accident on February 20, five airmen had been killed in traffic accidents by April 21, 1956.

Colonel Wilson, 802nd AD Commander, announced a new intensive base safety campaign of four points, effective immediately and consisting of the following:

1. More traffic signs were to be posted on base streets.
2. A publicity campaign was launched to boost safety measures.
3. Increased use of "spotters" to note traffic violations and license numbers of traffic deviations were to be reported to Squadron Commanders.
4. Increased Air Police patrols were to be inaugurated between the base and Salina. . . .²⁸²

Apparently this did not change the situation. The base announced in August 1956 somewhere at the base "seven men are going about their daily jobs, unconcerned about the future." They probably did not know each other but by the end of the year, they would be dead because they were the seven potential traffic accident victims who would die before the year's end if the base accident rate continued on its present course. Seven men had died during the first half of 1956.²⁸³

²⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, August 20, 1954.

²⁸¹ Salina (KS) Journal, February 21, 1956.

²⁸² Salina (KS) Journal, April 21, 1956.

²⁸³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 30, 1956.

Leadership Schools

Leadership Schools are considered important by the Air Force for its career personnel. These schools are designed to teach the personnel who attend to meet their responsibilities to their superiors, subordinates, and the Air Force mission.

It was announced by the base on February 18, 1954 that seven Smoky Hill Sergeants had been selected to attend the first class of the 15th AF NCO Academy at March AFB, CA starting on March 28, 1954. First Sergeants (the highest Administrative NCO) were given priority for attendance. The Academy was primarily for NCOs serving in actual supervisory capacities. This 162-hour course of four weeks duration was to provide top-level leadership and management training. Instruction was provided in management, leadership, military drill and command, security, principles of speech, and Air Force organization. 284

Later that year, M. Sgt. Thomas N. Smith, First Sergeant of the 310th ARS, a thirteen-year veteran of the Air Force, was named a top graduate of the AF NCO Academy. He had been on Smoky Hill for two years. 285

While the NCOs were attending the NCO Academy first at March AFB, CA while the base was under the 15th AF and then Westover AFB, MA when the base was transferred to the 8th AF, General Sutherland, Commander of the 802nd AD, created the 802nd Leadership School primarily for Staff Sergeants. The first class of fifteen graduated on October 2, 1955. General Sutherland addressed the group and presented them with diplomas. The 537th AF Band, conducted by M. Sgt. Lee

²⁸⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, February 18, 1954.

²⁸⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, October 1, 1954.

played at this event.²⁸⁶ This was one project of General Sutherland's that did not receive very much attention in the Air Force at the time. In March, 1956, M. Sgt. William F. Fortune, 802nd Operations Squadron, was the first NCO from the base to be named honor graduate of the 8th AF NCO Academy and the second man from the base to graduate from an NCO Academy with honors. Nine months later, M. Sgt. John C. Krier, 802nd Headquarters Squadron, became the second man from the base to graduate from the 8th AF NCO Academy with honors.²⁸⁷

Sgt. William Epps, 310th Tactical Hospital, was named honor graduate of the fourteenth 802nd AD Leadership School. There were twenty-five members in the class which was three weeks in length.²⁸⁸

Uniforms

Uniforms provide a part of the esprit de corps needed to retain morale in a military unit as well as provide a sense of identity. Jokes are heard about "band and polish" and the nit-picking at inspections on uniforms, but without uniforms the military would appear to be a sloppy, undisciplined organization. In Chapter Three, it was learned that blue uniforms would be mandatory in the Air Force in 1950. By 1954, there were more changes in Air Force uniforms. Airmen were permitted to wear short-sleeved shirts at Smoky Hill. Bermuda shorts were also under consideration. Short-sleeved shirts were an option, which meant that the airmen who opted to wear them were required to keep the

²⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, October 2, 1955. This writer was in the Air Force in 1976 when the Air Force came up with the same idea and called it Phase III Training, which prepared junior enlisted personnel for responsibilities as Sergeants. It appears that General Sutherland was about twenty-two years ahead of his time.

²⁸⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, March 30 and December 20, 1956.

²⁸⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, October 5, 1956.

number of long-sleeved shirts on hand ready for inspection.²⁸⁹

During in November, 1955, airmen were informed of a variety of uniforms that could be worn on base. They could wear short trousers (Bermuda shorts?) and knee-length stockings with either short-sleeved shirt (without necktie) or bush jacket; long trousers with either short-sleeved shirt (without necktie) or bush jacket; long trousers, short-sleeved shirt (with necktie), and bush jacket.²⁹⁰ Unfortunately, the press, which included the base newspaper, never ran an article about airmen on base wearing Bermuda shorts. It would have been very interesting to know how this uniform combination looked.

Recognition

A major means of preserving morale in the military is to recognize personnel for their contribution to the service and nation. This can be done through promotions, medals, or awards. Awards included such things as monetary recognition for suggestions and "Airman of the Month," "Crew of the Month," etc. Although there were probably promotions of personnel before 1953, the first promotion reported was when Master Sergeant Virgil Bigson, on base since August, 1950 and a member of the caretaker force that operated the base from 1950 to 1953, was recalled to duty as a First Lieutenant. He held a reserve commission that dated back to 1944 and had been a pilot during World War II. A record for promotions in this period was set in October, 1954 when 488 enlisted personnel were promoted. During that month, Smoky Hill acquired seven new Master Sergeants, fifteen Tech Sergeants, seventy-five Staff Sergeants, 154 Airmen First Classes, and 227 Airmen Second Classes. The record month for Officer promotions was in January, 1955 when fifty-five First Lieutenants received temporary pro-

²⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 26, 1954.

²⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, January 5, 1955.

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²⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 26, 1954.

²⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, January 5, 1955.

to Captain during the January to March period. Lt. Col. Richard D. [redacted] was the first man to be promoted to full Colonel since the base was [redacted]. His promotion was effective March 15, 1955. He was Commander of [redacted] BS, 40th Wing. The last promotions of this period were to full Colonel (second and third such promotions) and went to Lieutenant Colonels [redacted] G. Ivey, Commander of the 40th FMS, and Albert J. Wetzel, Commander of [redacted] BS, 40th Wing. They were announced on January 9, 1957 with effective [redacted] to be announced later.²⁹¹

Four medal presentations were reported during this period. The first presentation reported was on February 5, 1953 when Colonel de Russy, Commander of [redacted] 40th Bomb Wing, presented A1C Royal Heemeir, 380th BS, the Soldier's Medal; Charles Ustine, 381st BS, the DFC; and M. Sgt. George M. Dakis, 310th FMS, the Bronze Star.²⁹² What these men did to receive the medals was not reported. M. Sgt. William A. Marcoulier, Detachment 4, 1911th Airways and Air Communications Squadron, received the Air Force Commendation Medal (AFCM) on October 3, 1953 for his work as a control tower operator when a B-29 from [redacted] AFB, CA crashed near the base in August, 1953. The plane crashed eight miles northeast of the base while enroute to Forbes AFB, KS on a routine training mission.²⁹³

An unusual reward occurred on March 9, 1955 when Capt. Dwayne E. Hall, a navigator with the 40th ARS, was awarded a bronze medal by the Royal Humane Society for rescuing a swimmer in July, 1954 who was being attacked by a shark.

²⁹¹ Impact, April 17, 1953 and Salina (KS) Journal, October 8, 1954, January and March 16, 1955 and January 9, 1957.

²⁹² Salina (KS) Journal, February 5, 1953.

²⁹³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 3, 1953.

ived at Smoky Hill in February of 1955.²⁹⁴

First awards were presented to nine airmen by Colonel de Russy of the during the week of June 18, 1953. They were recognized for their performance during the preceding six months. All held the rank of Airman First Class or Airman Second Class.²⁹⁵

Though there had probably been "Crew of the Month" awards previously, did not reach the attention of the local press until June 25, 1953.

late, Colonel de Russy, 310th Wing Commander, announced that a KC-97 organization crew was the 310th Wing's Crew of the Month for May, 1953.²⁹⁶

1956, General Robert Sweeney, Commander of the 8th AF, presented members 310th Bomb Wing B-47 crews with engraved cigarette lighters. These were presented to the men for outstanding performance with their
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for outstanding work, thirteen airmen were honored with a trip to Puerto A 40th ARS crew needed the over-water celestial navigation time, so the sent the passengers along as "payment for jobs well done." Two 40th ARS were involved. One of the Aircraft Commanders was selected for the mis- because he was leaving the base for a B-47 observer's school the next
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The last form of recognition was for suggestions and inventions to make jobs at the base easier. T. Sgt. Lloyd Bright of the 802nd Motor Vehicle

²⁹⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, March 9, 1955.

²⁹⁵ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 18, 1953.

²⁹⁶ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 25, 1953.

²⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, January 19, 1956.

²⁹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, March 24, 1955.

Construction Engineer Equipment Maintenance Section, constructed a
 under for the Mobile Sweeper used to clean the runways and streets on
 ar to the construction of a broom rewinder, the broom cores had been
 rbes AFB, Topeka, KS for rewinding which took about a week and left
 without a sweeper. The machine cost \$40 to build and permitted two
 rewind a broom on base in about four hours.²⁹⁹ Although this machine
 saved the base and the Air Force money, one wonders why the Air Force
 equip the base with an extra set of broom cores. On March 16, 1956,
 Samuel R. Blanchard, 310th FMS, received a check for a suggestion on
 "O Rings" in the B-47. For this, he received \$25.³⁰⁰ This was the
 reported recognition for suggestions during this period.

Retention

ale can often be guaged by re-enlistments in the military or retention.
 Smoky Hill was deactivated in 1949, one of the reasons the Air Force gave
 iding to close the base was that the base had a low re-enlistment rate.
 the base was reactivated, the United States was involved in the Korean
 et and called up reserve units. This gave the Air Force extra manpower
 enabled it to reactivate Smoky Hill Air Force Base in 1951.
 y August, 1953, the Korean Conflict was over and the Reservists were being
 rged. Instead of expanding, budget cuts were the rule of the day. Smoky
 announced that it was discharging some airmen early owing to those budget
 . The early-release program was open to those personnel who were planning
 ave the service at the end of their enlistment with no intention of re-en-
 ng. At Smoky Hill, this came to approximately 600 men out of an Air Force-

²⁹⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, August 6, 1953.

³⁰⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, March 16, 1956.

of 12,500 men. Personnel in non-critical jobs with less than one year in their enlistments were being discharged at their request. This was followed by an announcement one month later that 300 men on base would be discharged two years ahead of the expiration of their enlistments by December 31, 1952.

There was a bright side to all of this which occurred during the first of May when five airmen at the base re-enlisted for a total of thirty years, setting a new re-enlistment rate at the base. These men saved the Air Force money in training expenses. The Base Recruiting Office first opened its doors on November 13, 1952.³⁰²

The first enlisted man to retire from Smoky Hill since the base was reactivated was M. Sgt. Albert Ferney, 802nd Supply Squadron First Sergeant, who had been on base since June, 1953. He retired after twenty-four years of service and was honored with a parade by the 802nd ABG. While on base, he helped organize the annual Christmas party for orphans and underprivileged children from the community.³⁰³

Col. Carl Lust retired as Director of Materiel for the 40th Bomb Wing after twenty-five years of service on August 26, 1955. He had been on base since May of 1954 and was the first full Colonel to retire from the base since it had been reactivated.³⁰⁴

Starting with the September 23, 1955 issue of Impact, the base newspaper, statistics were presented to show how Smoky Hill was faring in its retention

³⁰¹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 20, 21, and September 24, 1953.

³⁰² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 27, 1954.

³⁰³ Salina (KS) Journal, July 24, 1955.

³⁰⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, August 26, 1955.

personnel. In July, 1955, the Air Force had a 33.4% retention rate. Smoky Hill had 28.9% and Columbus AFB, MS had 100%. That figure jumped to 40.0% in August but dropped to 30.8% in September while Columbus maintained its 100% rate and Mountain Home AFB, ID found a new low in records by holding on to only 5.7% of its personnel eligible to re-enlist. In January, 1956, while SAC had a retention rate of 29.9%, the base had only 26.5% of its eligible personnel. Things began improving in April when the base retained 32.8% of its eligible enlisted personnel.³⁰⁵

Colonel Wilson's priorities when he assumed command of the 802nd AD were to find out why more men were not re-enlisting and then try to do something about the situation. It was announced on June 1, 1956 that his efforts were paying off. An all-time high re-enlistment rate of 53.3% was set at the base. This was out of a total of 101 men and many of them re-enlisted for six years. Smoky Hill had the third highest rate in the 8th AF and was one of thirteen SAC bases to go past the 40% mark.³⁰⁶

The last retention figures presented during this period appeared in Impact's September 7, 1956 edition. SAC had a rate of 30.3% and the base had 37.6%. Clinton-Sherman AFB, OK had 100%. From here on, the base would probably continue until it set AF and SAC records.³⁰⁷

Visitors

There were forty-one reported visits by groups to Smoky Hill during this period and they ranged from President Dwight D. Eisenhower to school children and Boy Scouts. Two former Commanders also visited the base. Many visitors

³⁰⁵ Impact, September 23 and November 18, 1955, March 16 and May 25, 1956.

³⁰⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, June 1 and July 13, 1956.

³⁰⁷ Impact, September 7, 1956.

of curiosity, but some came because they had relatives or friends in
they arranged an official visit to Smoky Hill.

First recorded visit to the base in this period came on January 18,
Brig. Gen. D. W. Hutchinson landed at the base and toured the facili-
Gunnery Range. General Hutchinson commanded the 21st AD at Forbes
KS and the men at the Range were under his overall command.³⁰⁸
men who provided the first guards at the main gate of the reacti-
se.

After this visit, there were several visits by Department of Defense and
officials who visited the base to observe construction and reactiva-
activities. Usually these visits received a couple of paragraphs in the
press but that was about all.

On September 26, 1953, 700 children toured the base as part of the Kiwanis
National Kids' Day Program. From this time on, such groups were welcome
base. The first Boy Scout unit to visit the base was Troop 10 of Salina.
Tour of the base was on February 7, 1954 as guests of Colonel Thacker,
Commander. Such was the response that the base assigned an NCO to duties
PIC of handling the visits of children to the base.³⁰⁹

The junior Senator from Kansas, Frank Carlson, made his first visit to the
activated base on November 8, 1953.³¹⁰ In 1941-1942, as a Congressman, he
one of the men responsible for getting the base for Salina.

President Eisenhower made his first visit to the reactivated base on October
1953. A total of 2,160 "polished airmen, dressed right at the normal inter-

³⁰⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, January 18, 1952.

³⁰⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 27, 1953, February 8, 1954, and August 25,
55.

³¹⁰ Impact, November 13, 1953.

along the street leading to the main gate for the President. The
 liked what he saw of the base and called the area "an ideal location
 for Force base. This level, open country is certainly fine for an air
 After he returned to the White House, he sent a letter of appreciation
 to Ganey, Commander of the 802nd AD, for his reception by personnel at
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than a year later, Senator Frank Carlson visited the base. He was
 to catch a ride with President Eisenhower on the President's plane, the
 II. President Eisenhower was returning to Washington from Colorado.
 The plane was on the ground at the base, he remained on board, reputedly
 he was asleep.³¹² (Until the Kennedy Administration, the President's
 was designated by the name he chose for it. For some reason, President
 did not name the Boeing 707 which went into service as his plane and
 that, it became known as Air Force One, no matter what the plane was or
 President was.)

little over two months later, the President returned to the base for the
 of driving to Abilene, KS to dedicate the Eisenhower Foundation. Upon
 arrival on November 11, he was greeted by a twenty-man honor guard commanded
 by Lt. John Mlade of the 802nd APS. Then General Sutherland, Commander of
 802nd AD, escorted the President while he inspected flights of the 40th and
 Wings. As an unintended treat, a KC-97 made an emergency landing at the
 base. Accompanying the President was the First Lady and his grandchildren.³¹³
 On November 19, 1954, Mrs. Curtis LeMay, wife of the Commander of SAC,

³¹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 13, 20, and 28, 1953.

³¹² Salina (KS) Journal, August 30, 1954.

³¹³ Salina (KS) Journal, October 27, November 2, 9, and 11, 1954.

one-hour visit to the base to review the Dependent's Assistance Program, her pet project. According to the article written about her visit to she was instrumental in getting her husband to make SAC more human.³¹⁴

Artis LeMay followed his wife almost three months later with his first Smoky Hill since September, 1953. He arrived at 10:25 A.M. and departed P.M. While on base, he had lunch at the Officers' Mess and visited most base in what General Sutherland, Commander of the 802nd AD, described "fairwind" visit.³¹⁵

Different sort of visitor(s) were the famous Budweiser Clydsdales. Approximately 1,000 people turned out at the base during the afternoon of October to see this team of draft horses put on a show for the base after arriving by truck. Mr. Barney Schwan, District Manager for Budweiser, arranged for.³¹⁶

General Robert Sweeney, Commander of the 8th AF, visited Salina during the annual "Honor the Uniform" Week on November 7, 1955. While in the area, addressed a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce and praised Salina for coming up with the idea. He was pleased with the way it was turning out.³¹⁷

On September 13, 1956, Smoky Hill was host to fifteen officials from the Department who had wanted to see a combat-ready base. George V. Allen, Ambassador-designate to Greece, was the senior VIP in the delegation.³¹⁸

The first former Smoky Hill Commander to visit the base was General Ganey,

³¹⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, November 19 and 24, 1954.

³¹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, February 8, 1955.

³¹⁶ Impact, October 14, 1955. Neither Salina paper mentioned this exclusive.

³¹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, November 8, 1955.

³¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, September 13, 1956.

Commander of the 802nd AD, who arrived on February 13, 1955 for an visit. But the former Commander who really caught Salina's attention was Gen. William L. Lee, who had commanded the base in 1946 and 1947. He came away from the Philippine Islands where he had commanded the 13th AF at Hilo AFB, TX as Commander of that base. Before he left, he was given a tour of his old command and liked what he saw. He was surprised at how the base had grown. During his tenure as Commander, the warehouses had been the outer boundary of the base; now they were in the center. He commented that the base was in an ideal location and when the base was closed in 1949, he was well known that the Air Force was making a big mistake because the weather was ideal for flying and access to the base was easy. Before General Lee left, he picked up his new car from McArthur Ford which was the eighth one he had bought in ten years from that dealer.³¹⁹

The last reported visitors of this period were the thirteen member 8th AF Advisory Council and General Sweeney, Commander of the 8th AF. The Council met at an 8th AF base every three months where it discussed problems that affected airmen and NCOs, making recommendations to General Sweeney. The meeting ended on October 31, 1956 after the General addressed the group and praised them for their work.³²⁰

Housing

Before the Air Force reactivated the base in 1951, it had secured assurances from Salina that plenty of housing would be available. Salina, Inc. had been asked to generate new housing but something seems to have happened because the new housing materialized. Of course, some of it was that Salina expected

³¹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, February 13, 1955, October 2 and 4, 1956.

³²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 26, 30, and 31, 1956.

to have no more than 5,000 men at the base (the size it had been in while the Air Force was thinking in terms of approximately 8,000 throughout this period, there would be a housing shortage in the area and would seem to be done to alleviate it. The attitude seemed to be that the Air Force had left once before and it could leave again. No one wanted to be holding a group of empty houses.

ing was of concern to the Salina Journal. On April 24, 1952, readers learned that the "Air Force was blunt but realistic" when it informed that 1,600 housing units were needed for the base. Many men were temporarily assigned to Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS but as soon as school was out, they were moving their families to the area and be ready for school when it started in the fall,³²¹ even though the 310th Wing was not due to arrive until the next year.

In the middle of 1952, 600 new units were being constructed southwest of the base but this did not seem to be enough. Indeed, people who were there throughout this period felt that at best affordable housing was difficult to find. The Chamber of Commerce pleaded with Salinans to come up with more rental properties for listing. There was already a steady stream of airmen arriving but there was no place for their families to live.³²²

Little seemed to change and with the arrival of more people, it got worse. On August 22, 1952, the Salina Journal dropped a small "bomb" on Salina with an editorial:

The housing shortage in Salina is bad and getting worse as the airmen arrive. Yet, fifty-two public housing units are standing empty. They could be repaired and put in use for around \$50,000 but aren't.

³²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 24, 1952.

³²² Salina (KS) Journal, June 30, 1952 and January 1, 1953.

Because the houses were built during World War II for the base provisions were made for the repair and upkeep of those units. His moved out, the buildings fell into disrepair and no agency to have any authority to get anything started with making those suitable for occupancy. . . .³²³

While, two neighboring cities; Abilene and Marquette, informed Salina had plenty of housing available. Abilene, Dwight D. Eisenhower's had plenty of housing available but thus far had had few house hunters. The Marquette Lions Club drew up a list of houses available for rent in and forwarded it to the base.³²⁴ Both towns were about thirty miles base.

Salina Journal editorial of August 22, 1952, finally drew a reaction. On October 28, 1952, the FHA announced that it had jurisdiction over Coronado which was the name for the housing units referred to in the Salina August 22, 1952 editorial, and that there were 100 units there which were being reconditioned and reduced to sixty in number to make them roomier. There were some tenants living there but they would not be evicted due to the turnover of tenants. However, as soon as they moved out, only military personnel assigned to Smoky Hill would be permitted to move in.³²⁵

Of course, every little bit helped, but was it enough? On December 19, the Salina Journal published another editorial on the situation:

The Air Force wants plenty of housing for the several thousand families coming in but the town is fearful that Salina will be overbuilt. There is always that fear that the base will be reduced or closed. It is encouraging that the Air Force has upped the base from a ten year base to a twenty-five year base and there are reports that more than 8,000 people may be assigned to the base.

Salina lost the base once because of inadequate housing. Now

³²³Salina (KS) Journal, August 22, 1952, editorial.

³²⁴Salina (KS) Journal, September 11 and 15, 1952.

³²⁵Salina (KS) Journal, October 28, 1952.

the need to maintain a strong defense force, the odds favor
na. Reasonable caution is necessary, but overcaution might be
trous.³²⁶

na seemed to be caught in a dilemma. Perhaps Franklin Roosevelt best
the situation when in his first inaugural address he said that "there
to fear but fear itself." Salina feared that if it did not build
housing, the Air Force would pull out, but if it built the housing and
force still pulled out, it would have over-built! The latter fear
came true in late 1964.

600 unit defense housing project "which grew out of a wheat field in
a year" was being finished in April, 1953. At that time, nearly
people from the base were living there." Rent for a two-bedroom house
from \$75 to \$84.50 a month.³²⁷ The area in Salina became known as
Village because the streets are named after famous Indians and Indian

things still had not changed in 1954 and the Chamber of Commerce convened
emergency meeting to discuss the housing shortage. It seems that the base
civilian populations had grown faster than planned. Worse were the complaints
that gouging that the leaders were frequently hearing.³²⁸ What the Chamber
Commerce decided was not announced. But there really seemed to be little
could be done. It is hard to get people to do something they lack interest
ing.

The base felt that it needed at least 400 new housing units in Salina as

³²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, December 19, 1952, editorial.

³²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, April 19, 1953. Rent does seem a little high here.
Only two years later, this writer knows that similar housing could be had for
approximately \$60 just outside of Richards-Gebaur AFB, Grandview, MO.

³²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, August 22, 1954.

1954. Lt. Col. Walter Hardzog, Deputy Base Commander, stated that many of base personnel were living in basements and this lack of housing was a major factor in the poor re-enlistment rate.³²⁹ The reader is reminded that more than two years later, the base had one of the higher re-enlistment rates in the 8th AF.

Things seem to have quieted down after this, but despite the fact that base/tenant relations were good, the Air Force was not satisfied. Personnel assigned to the base in the summer of 1956 were warned that "rent in Salina was high and homes hard to find."³³⁰

In July, 1956, approximately 2,500 Air Force families lived within fifty miles of Salina. All seemed quiet. Then on July 3, an Oklahoma City, OK firm, which had purchased 140 units of Indian Village started evicting tenants after they had been found. The firm feared that there would be a temporary overflow of housing in Salina in 1957 when the new base housing project was completed.³³¹

Colonel Wilson, 802nd AD Commander, announced on July 8 that he had written a letter to the firm protesting the "eviction-sale" policy of its 140 Indian Village units which was causing unnecessary hardship on the families. Ten families had already received eviction notices. As a result, he was reactivating five Phillips Village units and these were being offered to families evicted from Indian Village.³³²

A happy ending occurred when the firm responded to Colonel Wilson's letter

³²⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 23, 1954.

³³⁰ Welcome To Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Summer 1956. Copy on file in the Reading Room, Salina (KS) Public Library.

³³¹ Salina (KS) Journal, July 3, 1956.

³³² Salina (KS) Journal, July 8, 1956.

9. It reversed its "eviction-sale" policy and rescinded the ten eviction notices already mailed out. Thereafter, the units would be sold only after tenants moved out.³³³

Phillips Village

With the reactivation of Smoky Hill, there was a need for housing and Phillips was reactivated as Phillips Village on October 17, 1951. There were thirty-three buildings there which were to be rehabilitated "with four or five apartments in each building" for a total of 228 apartments exclusively for use by military personnel assigned to Smoky Hill. The Commanding officer of Smoky Hill was to live there.³³⁴ Which Commander was not made clear. Until the Base Commander lived there. When Col. James Wilson, Commander of the 44th AD, arrived on base in 1956, he displaced the Base Commander, but after the incumbent was transferred to a new assignment. Phillips Village housing was not great but it did provide a roof over the heads of the tenants. By June 8, 1952, fifteen families were living there and 90 percent of the apartments had been rehabilitated. The families were living there because "it was impossible to find housing in Salina." For the time being, there was no mail service, telephones, paper, garbage pickup, or recreation facilities, but plans were underway to change all of this. A fire station was in the process of construction which was probably needed considering the fact that the buildings were of temporary wooden construction and designed for five to ten years usage. Unfortunately the fire station was not completed in October 23, 1955 when a fire broke out in an unoccupied building in the northwest section of the Village.

³³³ Salina (KS) Journal, July 10, 1956.

³³⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, October 17 and November 30, 1951.

tion by that fire department saved the Village from destruction.³³⁵

at the Village was not glorious. It was twelve miles from Salina and any shopping conveniences. Yet, it was in the country, neighbors by, and TV reception was better than in Salina. The best part was rent and utilities were paid by the Air Force.³³⁶ This writer chal-

the article on several points. First, Phillips Village was no farther than miles from the heart of Salina. Next, there was a small grocery in Smolan, less than two miles away which was probably larger in those there was also a trailer park in Smolan which catered to the base.

ent and utilities were not free. Personnel living off base are usually quarters and rations, the former being forfeited if the individual on government property. The Village was probably a bargain considering that the quarters allowance (BAQ) is rarely, if ever, realistically with prevailing rental rates in the area.

May, 1956, the housing was apparently in bad shape at the Village. Air Times listed Phillips Village as "substandard." This seemed moot as the force had already announced that it planned to abandon and raze the Village on as the on base housing was built.³³⁷ But less than two months later, were eighty-five vacant units there which the Air Force threatened to private during a housing crisis in Salina.

In essence, Phillips Village was a small city which seemed to have a need a local government. During the week of October 17, 1952, a Council was ed with the blessings of the Commander of the 802nd AD and the Base Com-

³³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, June 8, 1952 and October 24, 1955.

³³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, January 30, 1955.

³³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, May 31, 1956 and October 24, 1955.

Throughout this period, this government provided a link between the men living there and the base.

Bachelor Housing

May in early 1951, General Curtis LeMay, by then Commander of SAC, was looking out a window from his office at Offutt AFB, NE which overlooked the barracks area at a place where a barracks had burned down. One of LeMay's philosophies was that "anyone could be made an officer but not everyone could be made an NCO." It so happened that at this time, SAC was plagued with a low reenlistment rate and something had to be done because SAC needed its experienced NCOs. An idea suddenly came to him and that was to improve living conditions for enlisted personnel. In place of the burned-down barracks which had been one long open room, an apartment-type barracks with three men to a room was constructed. As soon as SAC got the money, all of its barracks would be converted to that type.³³⁹ Since Smoky Hill was a SAC base, as well as one of the first to be reactivated, and had barracks in obvious need of razing, it would benefit from this decision. The Air Force announced on June 29, 1952 that it had erred. Originally, it had estimated that 80 percent of the men assigned to the base would be single. It was now evident that fewer than 70 percent would be single, which meant that more barracks would be needed and the Air Force recommended that \$4 million be taken out of barracks construction funding for the base.³⁴⁰

Barracks being constructed at Smoky Hill were classified as "temporary" and could be used as long as thirty years. Each housed three men to a room or

³³⁸ Impact, October 17, 1952.

³³⁹ Newsweek, February 12, 1951.

³⁴⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 29, 1952.

a building which was almost seven times more men than the barracks during World War II held. There were twenty-one barracks or dormitories to be completed by November 21, 1952. Each room was to be private equipped with a shoe rack, wash basin, shaving mirror, and clothes. Steam heat was to be supplied from the dining hall serving that par-group of buildings.³⁴¹

October 28, 1954, General Sutherland, Commander of the 802nd AD, announced that two three-story masonry barracks were being constructed and would be for occupancy by March, 1956. These were the first permanent-type barracks being built on base and would make the base "one of the best in SAC."³⁴² The Airman's Dorm being built for the US Air Force by the US Army was the one which appeared in a Salina Journal photograph on October 13, 1955. The dorm was a concrete-block building and was to have its own dining hall. By June 1, 1956, the first \$300,000 barracks had been completed and the 40th AES moved in. There were seventy-two rooms and the building was located just west of the Chaplain's Annex and the base processing center.³⁴³

There were several BOQs built during this period on base. One was being built in January, 1956 by Jarvis Construction Company for \$163,000 at the east corner of the base near the executive quarters directly behind the hospital. It was a two-story building measuring thirty-six feet by 160 feet with a full basement. There were twenty-four suites designed to accommodate eight officers. Each suite consisted of two single rooms with a connect-

³⁴¹Impact, August 15 and September 12, 1952. All of these buildings are still standing and are empty with the exception of one group in the south central part of the base which are used by the Kansas Army National Guard.

³⁴²Salina (KS) Journal, October 28, 1954 and June 17, 1955.

³⁴³Salina (KS) Journal, October 13, 1955 and April 6, 1956. One of these buildings is now painted brown and is an apartment building.

room.³⁴⁴

On-Base Housing

Before the base was deactivated in 1949, the housing at Camp Phillips was organized as a stop-gap measure. When the Air Force returned in 1951, it was assured that there would be plenty of housing. However, there was not enough and on June 7, 1954, the Air Force went to Congress and requested authorization for 402 Capehart housing units at Smoky Hill. By July 16, the House cut this number down to 293 units at a cost of \$4.2 million. One month later the Senate cut thirteen more units from the total as part of a national economy drive. This version was approved and signed by the President. The base announced that construction would start in the spring of 1955.³⁴⁵ But the 281 units were less than the base felt that it realistically needed. On January 7, 1955, the base announced that it was being surveyed for 500 Wherry housing units. Smoky Hill Air Force Base did not feel that the Wherry units were feasible for the area but before the base could apply for more Capehart housing, it had to be surveyed for the Wherry units.³⁴⁶ Delays occurred on the 281 units and construction was not expected to get away before September. The houses were to cost an average of \$15,000 each and were to be constructed on two sixty-five acre plots east of the base.³⁴⁷ It is strange about this is that plans had already been made to raze Phillips housing which the Air Force owned. Instead of building there, where sewage lines and streets existed, the Air Force, for some mystical reason, decided to

³⁴⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, January 15, 1956.

³⁴⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, June 7, July 16, August 12, and October 1, 1954.

³⁴⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, January 7, 1955.

³⁴⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, March 13, 1955.

east side of the base and build on land which it did not own and to purchase. There had to be a reason for this besides proximity but it has not surfaced in this writer's research.

June 30, 1955, a \$3.3 million bill was signed by the President which gave the base an additional 255 housing units for a total of 535 units. Of these new units, 153 were to be for married enlisted personnel, seventy-one for company grade officers, and thirty-one for field grade officers. The houses were to be built in the same area as the 281 units approved in 1954 on approximately 30 acres east of the main gate. Three homes would be for Generals and three would be for Colonels. The rest would be duplexes.³⁴⁸

Capehart housing was actually Title 8 under the Federal Housing Administration which permitted the military to negotiate for the construction of housing with private builders and then repay them with the quarters allowance military personnel forfeited to live there. It was named for Senator William Capehart (R-IN) who drafted the bill.³⁴⁹ On October 4, 1956, the base announced that the first ninety houses would be ready for occupancy within four or four months. These homes were of pre-fabricated construction.³⁵⁰

A Review

Smoky Hill Air Force Base had been reactivated on August 1, 1951 as a Strategic Air Command base with the intent of making it a home for the B-47 strato-medium bomber. With this move, a ghost town came to life. The new era brought with it a flurry of construction and when it was over, only the runways and warehouses remained in the same place, but the former were extended.

³⁴⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, June 30, July 8, and August 10, 1955.

³⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 28, 1955.

³⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 4, 1956.

Hill and Salina were given a second chance and both sides took advantage of it. There were problems and they came out from time to time, such as the closing of the expanded Serviceman's Club in 1955 when the junior enlisted men complained about being treated differently down town when they were in town. Despite this, a spirit had permeated the base and that spirit knew that the base was becoming Number One in the Air Force. It was out of the "Smokey Hole" or "shafted" image of the 1940s and recognizing this the Air Force decided to change the base's name.

Salina did not get the Air Force Academy, it did get an Air Division top-notch Bomb Wings which gave Salina plenty of attention from the Air Force. Most of the leaders at the base and wing level went on to bigger things. In recognition of this, the Air Force decided to rename the base and on March 14, 1957, Smoky Hill Air Force Base ceased to exist.

CHAPTER VI

SAME MISSION, NEW NAME

MARCH 15, 1957 TO JUNE 20, 1960

Smoky Hill Air Force Base had been built and opened in 1942, threatened closure in 1947, deactivated in 1949, reactivated in 1951, received modern equipment in mid-1952 and early 1953, and received the B-47 "long rifle" medium bomber in 1954. In its first era, the base probably justified the names of "Smokey Hole" and "Shafted," the latter a word created out of initials "SHAFB."

Things were different this time, as has been shown, and they were for the future. While no trumpets heralded the change, it was there. For one thing, the City of Salina came up with innovative ways to make the airmen feel at home through various receptions which honored personnel of all ranks and through the observance of "Honor the Uniform" Week. Then, there was the United States Air Force which continued to endow Smoky Hill with longer than usual runways. Money was used to eradicate the base of old structures and replace them with modern ones. The start of this period found Smoky Hill getting a new name and its close proximity to the base losing its Air Division, the 40th Bomb Wing, and gaining an Atlas missile squadron. Plans were afoot throughout this period to make the base into a keystone of the modern military defense of the United States. Salina was apprehensive about the future of the base, but there seemed to be a sign that the times were changing and that Schilling would be a part of the future. The personnel assigned to the units on base would enable it to win recognition undreamed of in the 1940s. Under Brigadier General Wilson and Colonel Ohlke, Commanders

and AD, an esprit de corps would exist that seemed to make the base. Still, it was a time of change for the base. Dwight D. Eisenhower was President of the United States, but that seemed to be all that was. The base received a new name and the mission would be the same with the horizon. Salina would be assured that Schilling would be receiving craft and weapons systems which would assure it of a place for some time in the defense of the United States.

Name

When the base was reactivated on August 1, 1951, it was under the name of Smoky Hill Air Force Base, the name it had gone by with modification since 1942. Forgotten were the plans announced in August, 1949 to try to name the base in honor of an Air Force hero. Throughout the period of reactivation the base remained Smoky Hill Air Force Base, but starting in April of 1956 a campaign had been launched, at the instigation of the Air Force, to rename the base, which culminated in a ceremony at the start of this period. The Salina Journal announced on April 6, 1956 that Salinans could help Smoky Hill in its search for a new name. The Air Force had decided to change the name of the base and the name would be that of an Air Force hero. Senator Frank Carlson (KS) informed the paper that the names of Glenn L. Martin AFB and Braniff AFB, both commemorating the names of early day Salina residents had been rejected. However, Forrest AFB, in honor of Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest, Grandson of the Confederate General, was a possibility.¹

¹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 6, 1956. Salina's claim as the home of two pioneers in the early days of airplane manufacturing and commercial airlines was unknown to this writer until he started researching this paper. It would have been interesting had the base been named for a Confederate General's descendant or a national airline. Just think of Braniff AFB, Salina, KS, being closed in 1967 just fifteen years ahead of that airline's bankruptcy.

April 12, several names had been proposed, including Jensen AFB, for a
 engineer during World War II, who was killed in action (KIA) in
 1945 and Menish AFB, for a Sergeant-Pilot for the Royal Canadian Air
 Force. Salina was the first Salinan to be killed in World War II. But by far, the
 most popular name proposed was Dwight D. Eisenhower AFB. However, the Air
 Force informed Salina that he was still alive and although a licensed pilot,
 he did not qualify to have a base named after him.²

In the opinion of this writer, it appears that Salina may have reasoned
 that "Eisenhower AFB" named in honor of the popular General-President would
 keep the base closed and Salina was constantly in search of a way of keeping their
 base open forever. After these names were rejected, a civilian advisory
 committee, working with Col. James Wilson, 802nd AD Commander, came up with
 Vandenberg AFB, in honor of General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, the first Air Force
 Chief of Staff in 1947. He was not a Kansan, but the name was popular with
 the people.³ Why it was a popular name is not known unless it had something to do
 with keeping the base open.

Colonel Wilson explained at that time why the Air Force wanted to change
 the name of Smoky Hill. Although the revitalized Smoky Hill could not be com-
 pared to the Smoky Hill of the 1940s, there were airmen who had served there
 during that period and never forgave the Air Force for assigning them to "Smokey
 Hill." A new name would change all of that and be symbolic of the new era that
 dawned at the base.⁴

The name of Vandenberg seemed to settle the matter and it was forwarded

²Salina (KS) Journal, April 12, 1956.

³Salina (KS) Journal, May 11, 1956.

⁴Ibid.

Headquarters at Offutt AFB, NE where General LeMay, Commander of SAC, forwarded it on to Washington, D. C. for final action. Alas, the USAF in Washington rejected the name and informed Salina that the base was being saved for another base.⁵

The Air Force turned down Salina's bid for the name after soliciting information that may never be fully known. A possible explanation may rest in the political arena. Senator Frank Carlson of Concordia was up for re-election in 1956. The dominant Republican Party in Kansas had gone through a rough primary election. Incumbent Governor Fred Hall had been defeated. During this time, Senator Carlson's popularity had declined, according to some observers. It can not be known whether during the week preceding the 1956 general election, the Air Force proposal came through Senator Carlson's office, and not through Congressman Smith's office. It was the norm, that the base was to be named for the late Colonel David Schilling, a native of Leavenworth, KS.⁶ Senator Carlson may have felt that he did not need the votes of central Kansas since that area was normally Republican. Anyways, but northeast Kansas was another matter and could decide the election. Was political expediency a factor?

On the other hand, it has been suggested to this writer by several enlisted commissioned personnel who were assigned to the base at this time that Colonel Wilson was behind the "surprise" change in names. The tone of the letters the writer has received range from amusing to outrage at a bomber base being named for a fighter pilot. Press accounts concerning the name change indicate that Colonels Schilling and Wilson had been friends. Was the desire to honor a friend behind the name change? Was it coincidence or is there another factor that has not come to light?

⁵Salina (KS) Journal, July 3 and August 9, 1956.

⁶Salina (KS) Journal, November 1, 1956.

for Carlson had announced the name on November 1, 1956. The base news-
 announced on December 14, 1956 that the name of Schilling had been for-
 moved by the Department of Defense after being recommended by the
 member of Commerce and Salina City Commission.⁷

Colonel David C. Schilling had been born on December 15, 1918 in Leavenworth,
 entered the Air Force in May of 1940. During World War II, he had been
 pilot and emerged from that war as tenth in rank of aces with twenty-
 one-half enemy planes shot down. In addition, he had destroyed ten and
 planes on the ground. During the war, he earned two DSCs, four Silver
 eleven DFCs, twenty Air Medals, and promotion to full Colonel. After
 he had been involved in several records involving jet planes. On
 14, 1956, he died in an automobile accident three miles south of Milden-
 England and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.⁸

Starting in January, 1957, the base began preparing for the extravaganza
 adding the name change. Col. Andrew S. Low, Director of Operations for
 2nd AD and a close friend of Colonel Schilling's, was placed in charge
 planning named, appropriately, "Project Rename." Project Rename's of-
 were housed on the first floor of a building just completed to serve as
 for the nurses and there were seventeen men assigned to this group.⁹
 Other events planned to make this event spectacular were visits by various
 Army and civilian dignitaries, an aircraft fly-by, and the unveiling of a
 of Colonel Schilling. The latter was a gift from the people of Salina to

⁷Impact, December 14, 1956.

⁸Dupre, US Air Force Biographical Dictionary, pps. 206 and 207.

⁹Salina (KS) Journal, January 29 and March 10, 1957.

had been done by Miss Jean Jehlin, a Kansas City sculptress.¹⁰

Everyone agreed with the name change and it fell to Marion Ellet of

Salina (KS) Blade-Empire, the daily newspaper in Senator Carlson's home-

town up the attitude: "We may lose the war but we are on record as op-

posing (name) change. There was nothing wrong with the name Smoky Hill,

but it had to be changed, why wasn't a local man honored?"¹¹

Smoky Hill Air Force Base ceased to exist forever save in history on March

1957. A crowd of around 5,000 turned out for the festivities. The Air

Guard Thunderbirds performed and there were displays of aircraft, including

"The Lone" a B-17 of World War II-fame paid for by the children of Salina

who they had collected for the war effort. The renaming of the base was

very important for Salina and the turnout was symbolic of the relationship that existed

between the base and community. Perhaps the highlight of this event came when

a statue of Colonel Schilling was unveiled.¹² Few air bases have sculptured

a permanent display of the person for whom they were named.

Organization

Throughout this period, Schilling Air Force Base would be the home of the

34th Air Division (AD) with the 40th and 310th Bomb Wings, both equipped with

B-47 stratojet medium-range bomber. Within each wing would be a refueling

squadron equipped with the KC-97, a tanker that could be used for freight and

combat support duty when the need arose. Schilling AFB would have between ninety

to one hundred B-47s and forty to forty-five KC-97s, plus an assortment of support air-

craft assigned to it during this period to perform any mission which being as-

¹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, March 10, 1957.

¹¹ Concordia (KS) Blade-Empire, February 19, 1957.

¹² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, March 21, 1957.

The Strategic Air Command (SAC) called for. This period will close with the transfer of the 40th Bomb Wing to Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS and the deactivation of the 802nd AD, but that will be covered later in this chapter. Schilling AFB was under the control of the 8th AF headquartered at Westover AFB, MA at the start of this period. Effective January 1, 1959, Schilling was transferred back to the control of the 15th Air Force (AF) at March AFB, CA. Schilling had been a member of the 15th AF (SAC) from 1947 to July 1, 1955.¹³ The change was given for the change. The base underwent two reorganizations with the first starting on January 1, 1959 when the flight line and PMS squadrons were consolidated and three air squadrons added, one of which was to be a support squadron added to the 802nd ABG. No change in strength of the personnel assigned to the base was made. This reorganization was completed on February 14, 1959 and the 310th Wing retained the 428th BS while the 40th Wing gained the 660th BS. The 802nd ABG Support Squadron was added to the 802nd ABG and the 802nd Medical Group was added to handle medical matters on base.¹⁴ What happened to the 428th Bomb Squadrons is not known. According to letters received by this researcher in his research of the base, these were training squadrons and by 1963, the 428th BS had ceased to exist. In any event, these squadrons never reached the attention of the local press and were not mentioned in the transfer of the 40th Wing in 1960 or the deactivation of the 310th Wing in 1965.

On February 12, 1960, all nine branches of the Schilling AFB Directorate and personnel office were located together in one building. This was part of

¹³ Salina (KS) Journal, January 1, 1959.

¹⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, January 15 and February 14, 1959.

wide reorganization effort to consolidate the offices.¹⁵ Born in
 the CBPO (Consolidated Base Personnel Offices) which is usually the
 arriving personnel visit at their new assignment and the last place
 personnel stop at as they leave their Air Force assignment.

Everything was up to date at Schilling by May 12, 1960. On that
 Schilling was linked to a new and fully automatic communications system
 and all Air Force bases in the world.¹⁶ What this meant was that the
 units could send messages to one another without having to use a com-
 mercial telegraph service or the Post Office.

Hospital

In the last chapter of this paper mention was made that the base had started
 to get a new hospital. Finally, the attempt was successful and on April
 14, Col. Robert Corwin, Hospital Commander, announced that bids would soon
 be opened for a \$2.7 million hospital at the base. Specifications called for
 a two-story building with seventy-five beds constructed of brick on a 150-bed
 site.¹⁷ What this meant was that if necessary, by adding another story in
 the future, the size of the hospital could be doubled without weakening the
 foundation. From this, it would appear that at this time, the Air Force was
 thinking of giving Schilling a greater mission.

This hospital was to be located just east of the existing hospital. It
 was announced on December 3, 1959 that Schilling expected the new hospital to
 be ready for occupancy by the end of May, 1960. At that time, the work was 68
 percent complete. As soon as the work was completed, the old hospital buildings

¹⁵Salina (KS) Journal, February 12, 1960.

¹⁶Salina (KS) Journal, May 12, 1960.

¹⁷Salina (KS) Journal, April 14, 1958.

old and removed. Then, landscapers would begin planting over 900 shrubs on the hospital grounds to assist in abating the noise.¹⁸ The hospital was unusually close to the flight line and this writer is surprised that the office located the hospital where it did.

What kind of care was available is difficult to determine. On September 1957 it was learned that Lieutenant Robert Brennenstull was transferred from the base hospital to Asbury Hospital in Salina to be near an iron lung. He was then diagnosed as having polio but did not appear to be paralyzed. In 1958, two years later, the base hospital received full accreditation by the Joint Commission for Accreditation of Hospitals for three years.¹⁹

After October 1, 1958, dependents of Schilling personnel had to use military hospitals if they wished to have the government pay for medical services. In the past, it was optional. If a Specialist were needed, the government would pay for the care only if the local military hospital had certified that the required specialty was unavailable in the immediate area. Civilian facilities could be used only if an acute emergency existed; the illness occurred on a military installation; or care started before October 1, 1958.²⁰ A base hospital record was broken on November 30, 1959 when the 100th baby, a boy, was born to the wife of A2C J. Hoydic, 802nd Medical Group, in one month. On December 3, three babies were born and it appeared that the record might be broken again²¹ however, since another article later appeared, it does not seem that the record was broken.

¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, December 3, 1959.

¹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 18, 1957 and November 19, 1959.

²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, September 26, 1958.

²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, December 4, 1959.

Fire Department

Firefighters assigned to Schilling spent a minimum of four hours a day in the fire station or performing drills. As of September 28, 1958, there were eighty-five firefighters in the base fire department, including two civilians. Carl L. Van Dine, a civilian, was Fire Chief.²²

Little over a year later, Schilling was in the middle of Fire Prevention Week. The base fire department was engaged in showing base personnel how to avoid fire hazards. In 1958, the base had only nine fires. There were three divisions on base under assistant Fire Chiefs.²³

OQ Gunnery Range

Compared with other periods in the history of the base, little happened at the OQ Gunnery Range during this period that was particularly newsworthy. Eighteen sections of grazing and hay land were opened for leasing in 1957, totaling to the amount of 11,700 acres. One year later, twenty-three parcels of land or 1,446 acres were opened for bidding. However, something happened and three of the leases did not bring in the minimum bids. The government had not decided whether to readvertise the bids or renegotiate the bids.²⁴

A fire broke out on the Range on April 3, 1958. For five hours, forty-one firefighters from the base spent around five hours fighting a grass fire. About two thousand acres of land were burned off before the fire could be brought under control. That year, it was learned that the Air Force was planning an expansion of the Range which would serve all of SAC as plans were underway to close the Ranges.

²²Salina (KS) Journal, September 28, 1958.

²³Salina (KS) Journal, October 8, 1959.

²⁴Salina (KS) Journal, July 19, 1957, April 3, and September 25, 1958.

ark, FL and Shaurette, AZ. Plans called for the installation of B-52 ten B-47 turrets, and possibly some for the B-58. Captain Jeff Elliott Base Training Officer, Captain M. L. Cully was OIC of the Range, and Lloyd Miller was NCOIC.²⁵ Whether any men were stationed on the Range mentioned.

Mystery behind the name of the OQ Gunnery Range came out on September in an article by John Schmiedeler. It was a semi-interview with S. Charles M. Cleek, a "gun plumber" or weapons mechanic at the Range. He know why the Range was called OQ but that in munitions terminology, it or ordnance qualification, which did not fit the operations at the Range.²⁶ of 1959, plans were still being made for the Range. The B-52 turrets be installed in the near future. Additional plans called for facilities training of pilots to operate the B-58 and B-66 armament systems, the being expected to replace the B-47. At this time, Captain William E. was OIC of the Range which was manned by fifty-two maintenance men, and instructors. Around seventy-five men trained at the Range each and that number was expected to grow to 125 a month.²⁷

Operations

near the start of this period, Schilling AFB was revealed to be worth over \$21,000. The planes were worth \$225,934,000; the buildings were worth \$3,000 and set on land worth \$421,000; and other equipment was worth \$4,000.²⁸ This figure did not include the salaries paid out or the money

²⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, April 3, August 14, and October 5, 1958.

²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, September 28, 1958.

²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, March 22, 1959.

²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, September 26, 1957.

ous funds maintained by the units for the welfare of personnel at the base.

(Unidentified Flying Objects) are still being reported and those who bring them receive a lot of derision from people who do not believe there are such things. But during the 1950s, these sightings were taken seriously and the Air Force even had a team investigating them under the name "Project Blue Book." The sightings were not confined to civilians. In 1957, the base encountered its first UFO sighting on its radar screens. Paul Beaugardt discovered it at 10:30 P.M. Alas, it turned out to be a flock of migrating birds. On take-off, a KC-97 tanker belonging to the 310th lost fifty of them. Over 200 birds were killed either by aircraft running over them or by the birds crashing into the runways. Fortunately, no serious damage was reported.²⁹ In the last chapter of this paper it was mentioned that the base had decided to dim runway lights during the migration period of birds flying south. At that time, it had been observed that the accidents with the aircraft only occurred on their south-bound migrations. This was an exception to the rule and if such an incident happened again, it was not reported. A little over six months later, two officers reported sighting an unidentified object which resembled a double star over the base during the evening hours of November 15, 1957. The next morning, two more officers sighted something similar at 3:00 A.M. as they drove onto the base and reported it to the (Control) tower. No planes had taken off or were in the vicinity at the time. Both officers were described as being "stone sober" at this time.³⁰ These were the first UFO sightings to reach the press from the base. (Maybe it was due to the

²⁹Salina (KS) Journal, May 10, 1957.

³⁰Salina (KS) Journal, November 17, 1957.

...ing that there was nothing of universal interest going on in Salina.)

The only incident in which weather seriously affected the base was re-
 during this period, some damage was done. During the night of May 29,
 twenty mile per hour winds ripped off a big accordian-type door from
 . The door was thirty-five feet high and no other buildings were damaged
 storm but the base received 2.71 inches of rain during the night.³¹

Erwin Prouty averted a possible plane crash during the night of April
 . Lightning struck the control tower and knocked out all electrical
 . The Airman went to the Ground Control Approach unit and used the emer-
 power system there until normal power was restored.³²

During the first era of the base, Continental Airlines had tried to get
 tion to use the base runways and operate permanently from that part of
 . In June, 1957, it succeeded in getting to operate out of the base on
 orary basis. Salina Municipal Airport was to be closed so that its run-
 could be worked on and Continental was given permission to relocate to the
 while the work was under way. Approval was formally granted on July 5,
 and Continental was expecting to be on Schilling for no more than ninety
 33

Continental Airlines announced on September 3, 1957 that it would return
 the Municipal Airport the next day. Schilling was commended for its hospi-
 ty extended to the Airline. Lt. Col. George Matsko was the project officer
 charge of making Continental feel at home while it operated out of the base.³⁴

³¹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 30, 1957.

³² Salina (KS) Journal, April 17, 1959.

³³ Salina (KS) Journal, June 16 and July 7, 1957.

³⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, September 3, 1957.

approaches to Schilling clear, the government moved to file condemnation proceedings on 198.59 acres of land southeast of the main runway. The current plan would have the right to use the property except where it might interfere with the clearance of aircraft.³⁵

The first rumors of a change in the future of Schilling reached the press on March 31, 1958. It was announced that by 1962, Schilling would be the home of jet bombers and Atlas Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) plus a Nike unit to protect the base. The B-52s would be complemented with the jet version of the KC-97 tanker. By 1962, when this plan was final, there would be 3,440 airmen and 590 officers, which was about three hundred fewer men than were on the base at this time. In making this announcement the Air Force asked Salina for more housing.³⁶ This request seems unusual. On one hand, the Air Force announced that fewer men would be assigned to the base in the future but it wanted more housing, while it was building 500+ units in what would become known as Schilling Manor. This matter dropped up again in 1959.

Schilling AFB was host to the crews of fifty-five planes from Shaw AFB, South Carolina, on September 26, 1958. The planes had been ordered to bases inland to escape Hurricane Helene. There were twenty-seven B-66s and twenty-eight F-101s in the area and 150 men. Some of these men were housed in Salina hotels and all were impressed with Salina's hospitality.³⁷

The Air Force reaffirmed its plans for Schilling on April 1, 1959 when it announced that a new era was dawning for the base. First, there would be a

³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, November 25, 1957.

³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, March 31, 1958.

³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, September 26 and 28, 1958.

B-47 to B-52 aircraft. Second, from eight to ten Atlas ICBM sites established around the area with headquarters at the base. Third, two bases would be built to guard the base. The transformation of to a B-52 base would be completed by 1962. This would require only to be stationed at the base by that time. The ICBM squadron would men for launch work, 100 for administrative work, and about 150 more security. Some \$45 million was to be spent to get the base ready within few years. One B-47 Wing would be transferred. With these changes, AFB was assured of a long life.³⁸ But the Air Force plans never realized. The Atlas ICBM missiles and KC-135 tankers would arrive but would never see a B-52 except when one landed for a visit.

Salina Journal commented on this news in an editorial on April 1, 1959. We will get B-52s within the next four years. . .By 1962, there will be people on base or 2,500 fewer than now. The Air Force feels that it will 470 housing units and now has 535. . .The Air Force wants to develop the at Salina is getting hostile."³⁹ The latter is hard to ascertain, but former will be clarified in the section on housing presented later in this er. But this writer was unable to determine how Salina was getting hos- from the reading of articles in the local press and talking to residents lina during this period.

To a pilot, the sky is a highway. At the base, control of that highway aged to the jurisdiction of the 2028th Airways and Air Communications Ser- Squadron of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS), a tenant unit on base. The air highways are located between 700 and 2,400 foot altitudes

³⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 1, 1959.

³⁹ Ibid.

ten miles wide. Once a plane received a reservation, it was assured that another plane would be within ten miles to the front or rear of it and maintain a 1,000 foot clearance on top and bottom. After 29,000 feet, there was a 500 foot clearance due to the lack of precise accuracy of the altimeter at those altitudes. Military pilots were governed by two types of flight rules; Visual Flying Rules (VFR) were used during fair weather and Instrument Flying Rules (IFR) were used during bad weather.⁴⁰

To provide up-to-the-minute weather conditions in all parts of the world, the base was one of fifty-seven SAC bases that received news about to leave Schilling, the base was one of fifty-seven SAC bases that received the new nation-wide facsimile network on May 27, 1959. It was designed and installed by Western Union Telegraph Company. The center of this network was the Global Weather Control at Offutt AFB, NE.⁴¹

On June 5, 1959, the American Electric Company of Kansas, Salina, submitted a bid for construction of runway overruns and approach lighting at the base. The contract called for 1,000 feet of additional paving at each end of existing runways. Schilling announced on July 1, 1959 that over \$4 million would be spent on the base to prepare it to receive B-52 bombers. The runways would be widened fifty feet on each side to make them 300 feet wide but construction would not start before the Spring of 1960.⁴² By March 11, 1960, the plans were firmly in place for Schilling. It would become a one Wing base by June, 1960 when the 40th Wing moved to Forbes AFB, KS. The 310th Wing would grow to include the 40th ARS and an ICBM unit. By 1963, the KC-97s would be replaced by KC-135 jet tankers. At the time of this article, the missiles were not

⁴⁰Salina (KS) Journal, May 24, 1959.

⁴¹Salina (KS) Journal, May 27, 1959.

⁴²Salina (KS) Journal, June 5, and July 1, 1959.

Mission

Throughout this period, Schilling depended on the B-47 stratojet bomber and KC-97 tanker to carry out its assigned mission. The Air Force announced in 1958 that the 1,400 B-47s in its inventory were being modified but the modification would in no way hamper its ability to maintain one-third of its aircraft on alert.⁴⁴ The first TDY reported in this period involved all squadrons of the 40th Bomb Wing which left in July of 1957 and returned on August 10. The last plane to return to the base was a KC-97 of the 40th Bomb Wing. Where it spent its time was not revealed. But "its destination is secret and is a part of the regular training mission."⁴⁵ Sometime in early 1958, the 310th ARS was "overseas TDY." When it returned from that mission, the Salina Journal revealed that a record-breaking event might have occurred. All aircraft of the 310th ARS left on schedule and returned on schedule with no deviations.⁴⁶

The 40th ARS left Schilling for a three-month TDY, probably in Newfoundland. When it was gone, one of its KC-97s found a downed commercial airliner in the north of Canada and assisted in getting the plane rescued. No one was injured on the downed plane. The 40th ARS returned to Salina between January 9 and 11, 1959, for a late Christmas.⁴⁷

The last reported mission during this period came when a 310th ARS KC-97

⁴³ Salina (KS) Journal, March 11, 1960.

⁴⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, May 4, 1958.

⁴⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, June 24, October 3, and 10, 1957.

⁴⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, April 11, 1958.

⁴⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, October 28, 1958, January 9 and 11, 1959.

Dyess AFB, Abilene, TX B-47 that was in trouble. The KC-97 was on training flight from Kelly AFB, San Antonio, TX when the crew learned of the B-47 and flew to its assistance. Around 3,500 gallons of fuel (or more) was transferred to the troubled B-47 which gave it enough to stay in the air until a Dyess AFB KC-97 could arrive with more fuel. For this action, the 310th ARS crew was named "SAC Crew of the Month" on April 7, 1959.

Training

Training continued to be important to the units assigned to the base. Training involved everything from TDYs overseas, which has already been mentioned, to competition with other units both on base and off, plus other activities designed to enhance the base's combat effectiveness. The first competition reported during this period was when it was announced that the 45th Squadron of the 40th Wing was the first winner of the Major E. W. Sharp Trophy. This trophy was awarded to the 40th Wing Squadron which did best in the Pacesetter competition. It (the trophy) was named in honor of a pilot who had died in a 1957 aircraft crash near the base. Capt. George Schilling, an instructor pilot (IP) with the 381st BS of the 310th Wing, became the first Schilling B-47 pilot to pass the 2,000 hour mark at the controls of the B-47 on base. The Captain had been assigned to Schilling since 1954. Schilling units participated in three Pacesetter missions between March 15, 1957 and January 1, 1959 when the base returned to the fold of the 15th AF. On May 23, 1957, the 310th Wing took first place in Pacesetter VII and the 40th Wing took second place. The 40th Wing took first place in Pacesetter X and the 310th finished second on December 29, 1957. In the last Pacesetter competi-

⁴⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, March 19 and April 7, 1959.

the base participated in, the 310th finished first.⁴⁹

were (and remain) a major means of testing a base's capability to in an emergency and measure the effectiveness of a unit's training programs. This means of testing a base's combat readiness had gradually started to attract attention in the local press in the last period and received more coverage in this period.

The first alert started at 10:00 A.M. on Friday, July 10, 1957 and lasted until 10 P.M. on July 12. In theory, a one-megaton bomb was dropped on the base at 8:19 P.M., July 10, 1957. It appeared to be a quiet day when suddenly, a siren sounded on base. Men sprang out of the barracks and offices on base and looked for vehicles to get to their emergency duty posts. The enemy had arrived and it was time for Schilling to respond. Casualties were light because of the speedy evacuation of the base. The Salina Journal responded to the practice with a quip: "Dear Sal: The only question now is whether the imaginary bomb dropped on Schilling was a "clean" or a "dirty" one. Yours,

During this period, there were nine such alerts reported in the local press. For the men involved, it was never known until they were in the middle of an alert whether or not it was the real thing.

On September 26, 1957, the base was blanketed by a "make-believe nuclear attack cloud." It was designed to test the ability of aircraft crews to operate while under a nuclear attack. According to the Salina Journal, the base responded appropriately.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 25, May 17 and 23, December 29, 1957, and December 21, 1958.

⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, July 12, 1957.

⁵¹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 26, 1957.

Schilling AFB was a part of SAC's Alert Force. The plan called for one planes to be airborne within fifteen minutes after the alert was sounded. The planes were parked on the runway and crews kept nearby twenty-four hours a day. The number of planes and crews on alert was classified. Alert crews were restricted to certain areas of the base and had to respond to klaxons and horn poles throughout the area and Salina.⁵² The 40th Bomb Wing won an "Outstanding" rating for its work in a December, 1958 nation-wide alert. In 1959, the 310th Bomb Wing won an award from the 15th AF for its work in the alert.⁵³ These articles did not go into specifics.

An article appeared in the Salina Journal concerning alerts on May 20, 1960. No matter what the men at Schilling were doing, when the signal came, they had to be in their aircraft and gone in minutes. Those men had to live on the runway for twenty-four hours a day for an entire week. If one went somewhere, the others had to go along and were to never be out of ear-shot of a klaxon. As a daily free meal hour, wives and families were permitted to visit the barracks at the Officers' Club. During the summer, a picnic area provided by the barracks, allowed the family to visit them there. The ultimate goal was to have one-third of the bomber crews on runway alert after October 1, 1957. They were underway to build an alert crew building which would make control of the crews tighter and after that building was opened, the crews would remain in that area, a "stone's throw" from their planes. While the crews waited for alert or attack, maintenance crews constantly went over the planes looking for trouble.⁵⁴

⁵² Salina (KS) Journal, November 13, 1957 and July 3, 1958.

⁵³ Salina (KS) Journal, December 21, 1958 and June 21, 1959.

⁵⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, May 20, 1960.

During this period, the 40th and 310th Bomb Wings participated in the annual flying and navigation competitions on an annual basis three times. In the 1957 competition, two crews from each Schilling Wing participated, but only one place in the top ten.⁵⁵ But in the 1958 competition, Schilling doubled its chances for placing by sending four crews from each wing to the competition. The Aircraft Company, which apparently sponsored the competition, presented the B-47 crew commanded by Maj. Norman F. Mueller, which won "nearly all the marbles" in this event.⁵⁶

In the 1959 competition, four crews from each Schilling Wing were again entered. This was the eleventh such competition in the Air Force. By October 1959, the 40th Wing was in twenty-seventh place and the 310th Wing was in thirty-third place at the half-way point. But the 40th ARS won third place in the fueling competition. It was not revealed how the 40th and 310th Wings finished at the end as only the first five places were announced.⁵⁷

The 802nd AD received the Air Force Flying Safety Award on October 24, 1957, after flying more than nine million miles or 25,752 hours safely from July 1 to June 30, 1957. General Wilson, 802nd AD Commander, accepted the award from General Sweeney, 8th AF Commander, and praised the role that the officers of the 802nd AD, 310th, and 40th Bomb Wings had played in making the award possible.⁵⁸

Between June 6, 1958 and April 27, 1960, the 310th Bomb Wing won four awards. On June 6, 1958, the Wing was named "the most effective B-47 Wing in

⁵⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, October 7 and November 5, 1957.

⁵⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, September 4 and October 13, 1958 and January 8, 1959.

⁵⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, October 26, 28, and 29, 1959.

⁵⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, October 24, 1957.

"Strategic Air Command" for the first quarter of 1958. The Wing had above average for the previous three years and took the honors from other B-47 Wings in SAC. In addition, the 379th BS scored 300 take-
 out a single abort and its maintenance crews had a 79 percent re-en-
 rate.⁵⁹ The Wing was still going strong when General Thomas Powers,
 of SAC, called the 310th Bomb Wing the best in SAC on December 19,
 for eight consecutive months, the 310th Wing had maintained an "outstanding"
 But in what areas was not mentioned. This was enough for the Wing
 ed the most efficient Wing in SAC for all of 1958. It won over thirty-
 for bomb and refueling Wings in SAC by being tops in all four quarters
 This was the first time that it had been done and the 310th did it
 one AWOL (absent without leave) reported! At the same time, the 40th
 in fifth place.⁶¹

on, the 310th Bomb Wing capped it off by winning the Air Force's Out-
 Unit Award for the January 1, 1956 to January 1, 1959 period. "The
 operation record during the three years is unique in the records of SAC
 Air Force. To be awarded, approval is required of all higher commands
 which the Wing served during this period." The award was won for excep-
 ly meritorious achievement and service of great international significance
 the period. "Dear Sal: The Air Force is saying what Salina knew all the
 the 310th is the finest there is anywhere. Yours, Ina."⁶²

But the 40th Wing was not far behind its sister. A 40th Wing B-47 commanded

⁵⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 6, 1958.

⁶⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, December 19, 1958.

⁶¹ Salina (KS) Journal, February 10, 1959.

⁶² Salina (KS) Journal, April 27, 1960.

Phillip H. Maxey was recognized by SAC for having never had a late mission abort, or failed to complete a mission. It placed in the top Pacesetter missions and had been named Combat Crew of the Month in flying four times. Then by July 26, 1959, the 40th ARS set a SAC record for consecutive takeoffs without an abort and the record was still growing.⁶³ In September and October of 1958, the 310th ARS won the Golden Boom Award. An 8th AF award and the 310th ARS won it the first time it was available. The unit won the award each time for outstanding operational effort. In the last four months of 1958, the 310th ARS flew 325 sorties and 10,000 gallons of fuel safely. During this period, Lieutenant Colonel Anton, junior, was Commander.⁶⁴ By March 15, 1959, the 310th Wing had "many awards." Other Air Force units had taken notice and ten bases sent representatives to Schilling to see how the 310th had done it. It was to have the men take pride in their work and know that the community was proud of them.⁶⁵ The last sentence appears to be the reflection of the writer of the article, although the fact remains that on the surface the base was good. After that month, it was announced that the altitude chamber, located near the hospital, was to be discontinued. Under a reorganization plan initiated in 1959, all Schilling crews were to go to Lincoln AFB, NE to take their training. Every flight crew member had to go through the Chamber once every three years.⁶⁶ In the last chapter of this paper, it was revealed that the Chamber could simulate taking personnel up several thousand feet without their ever having to

⁶³ Salina (KS) Journal, August 7, 1958 and July 26, 1959.

⁶⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, November 21 and December 11, 1958 and February 4, 1959.

⁶⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, March 15, 1959.

⁶⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, March 23, 1959.

ground, conditioning them to what they would encounter in actual

by the first quarter of 1959, the 310th Wing was rated the top organization with a 98 percent rating followed by the 40th Wing which had a similar rating. This was believed to be a record in SAC.⁶⁷

Accidents

Between April 25, 1957 and January 15, 1960, fourteen accidents occurred involving Schilling planes. Five of these accidents took ten lives and totaled 11 jets. Three of the accidents involved the KC-97, but no planes were lost. Only one man was reported injured. The 310th Wing lost four men and one plane. The 40th Wing lost six men and three B-47s.

The first accident was reported on April 26, 1957 when a 310th ARS KC-97 was on a routine refueling mission but during a routine check of the rear boom, the crew could not get it to return to the tail of the plane.

Apparently a control cable had broken and could not be fixed in flight so the mission was cancelled and the plane returned to the base. A layer of foam was

laid down the center of the runway and the Aircraft Commander guided the plane so that the boom stayed on the foam, thereby reducing friction which

might have ignited the load of fuel on the plane. Little damage was reported.⁶⁸

A 310th Bomb Wing B-47 crashed near Brookville, KS on October 30, 1957

killed two men. Capt. Bobby Hughes, Aircraft Commander, parachuted to

the ground and suffered only bruises and back injuries. Witnesses to the crash

reported that the plane had been too close to the ground for the others to

escape from the plane. This was the first accident reported in this period which

⁶⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, May 29, 1959.

⁶⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 26, 1957.

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man four months later, a 40th Wing B-47 crashed near El Paso, TX
 ss of one life. Lt. Samuel Harding, 27, Observer, went down with
 and died. The other three crew members parachuted to safety. This
 t Commander Captain Gerald Weimer's second crash since he had been
 Schilling. He had been involved in an October 4, 1955 crash near
 70 No other details concerning the crash were released.

has been noted that the sky is the highway for airplanes. On ground
 there are near-misses in which cars barely miss hitting each other.
 applies in the air where a wrong move can take more lives and cost
 of dollars in damage. A United Airlines pilot charged that a Schilling
 buzzed his plane near Salina on May 29, 1958. Both the Air Force and
 investigated and concluded that there was no basis for the complaint.
 had been on a strategical evaluation flight and was commanded by Maj.
 Mathis, a veteran of 5,500 hours in the air with a record of no acci-

380th BS B-47 crashed near Goose Bay, Canada on February 11, 1959 killing
 ficers and injuring two others. Lt. Gerle L. Buckner, Aircraft Commander,
 pt. Leigh A. Hochreich, Observer, escaped with minor injuries. This was
 first fatal accident for the 310th Wing since October, 1957.⁷² It was also
 first fatal accident for the 310th Bomb Wing reported in this period.

An unusual accident was reported on February 24, 1959. An eight-man main-

⁶⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 30, 1957.

⁷⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, February 28, 1958.

⁷¹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 1, 1958.

⁷² Salina (KS) Journal, February 11, 1959.

had been sent to Minnesota to repair a 40th ARS KC-97. Something went wrong and a one-ton propellor fell on A1C Kenneth Boehnen, 21, a member of the 40th ARS. He was single and was reported to be in good condition in a Minnesota hospital.⁷³ What is interesting about this accident is the weight of the propellor and that someone could survive after one fell on him.

More than a year later, a 44th BS, 40th Wing, B-47 crashed northwest of Garden City, KS in southwest Kansas and killed three men. Second Lieutenant Gordon J. Smith, 25, Navigator, and a native of Amarillo, TX survived. Before the crash the plane had been in the midst of an air refueling operation at 14,000 feet. There was no collision but the plane seemed to have lost power, stalled, and, of course, crashed.⁷⁴

The last accident of this period occurred a little over a week later when a B-47 belonging to the 44th BS crashed. This time, the accident occurred near Fairbanks, AK. Two men died and two survived. The plane had been in the air twelve minutes after taking off from Eileson AFB, AK on its return to Fairbanks AFB when a warning light flashed on in the cockpit indicating a malfunction in the landing gear. The plane attempted to return to Eileson but was forced to make a crash landing. The two survivors were able to leap out of the plane, but rescue of the others failed because of exploding shells.⁷⁵

Missiles

Salinans were informed on August 4, 1958 that a survey was underway to determine if Schilling had what it took to be a missile base. If the answer was affirmative, the base could become one of three in Kansas and one of twelve

⁷³Salina (KS) Journal, February 24, 1959.

⁷⁴Salina (KS) Journal, January 6, 1960.

⁷⁵Salina (KS) Journal, January 15, 1960.

tion. The mission of the base would not be changed and one year would elapse before anything was done. McConnell AFB, Wichita, and Hutchinson Station were also under consideration. At the same time, the Army was considering the feasibility of locating two Nike anti-aircraft missile sites in the area to protect the base and its missile system.⁷⁶

On August 12, Maj. Gen. Derrill M. Daniel informed Salina that it would have at least one Nike site which would add 100 military personnel and \$25,000 to Salina's economy. The site had been located and Salina had been selected by the Army because it warranted defense against enemy attack. When the time came, no test firing would be done.⁷⁷

Speculation continued about Air Force plans. Salina was to get Nikes and seemed to indicate that Air Force plans for Schilling warranted them.

On March 13, 1959, the Air Force informed Salina that it would get ten Atlas missiles. Approximately \$4 million would be spent in Fiscal Year 1960 and \$30 million in FY 1961.⁷⁸

A few days later, it was learned that bidding would open in about sixty days and Kansas would get more Atlas missiles than any other state. The Atlas missile had a range of 6,325 miles. Missiles installed in Salina would not be fired after they were installed. Schilling would get between 600 and 800 people to operate the missiles. The construction of Interstate Highway 70 was expected to ease transportation difficulties.⁷⁹ It seems strange to the writer that the Salina Journal would boast that it was getting more Atlas

⁷⁶Salina (KS) Journal, August 4 and 8, 1958.

⁷⁷Salina (KS) Journal, August 12, 1958.

⁷⁸Salina (KS) Journal, March 13, 1959.

⁷⁹Salina (KS) Journal, March 15, 1959.

which would make the state a more attractive first-strike target to
 Of course, missile construction activities meant a larger payroll
 purchases on the local economy which did mean that the state and Salina
 very prosperous days ahead of them. Of course, the Salina Journal's
 may have been philosophical. Whether Kansas liked it or not, the
 was going ahead with its plans to install a large number of missiles
 state, so the populace might as well learn to live with it.
 was announced on May 13, 1959 that Schilling was to be the center of
 mile pads which would be within a fifty-three mile radius of Salina
 and be worth \$135 million when completed. An Atlas missile was eighty-
 one-half feet long with a diameter of ten feet. Most of its 262,000
 in weight was fuel. The Air Force revealed on October 12, 1959 that the
 las F sites would be located in six counties. One was to be located in
 County forty-two miles north northwest of Schilling; two would be lo-
 in Dickinson County, thirty-four miles northeast of the base and the
 nineteen miles east southeast; one would be located in McPherson County
 miles south of the base; another would be located thirty-four miles
 west of the base in Rice County; two would be located in Ellsworth County,
 twenty-one miles west southwest and the other forty-two miles west north-
 of the base; Lincoln County would get a missile site twenty-seven miles
 west of the base; and one would be located in Cloud County forty-two miles
 of the base. Each site was to take some twenty acres of land.⁸⁰
 Two Nike bases also were to be built in the area; one south of Bennington
 the other north of Falun. The Army had been ordered to utilize government-
 ed land where possible and the Bennington site was on land owned by the

⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, March 13, September 4, and October 12, 1959.

County Highway Department. The two sites would cost \$2.1 million to build and were to be operational by July of 1960.⁸¹

While the Army was preparing to return to Salina, the Air Force was preparing to get work started on its Atlas sites. Bids were to be taken in January, released in February. The Air Force expected it to take another twenty-four months to construct and equip the sites. To begin with, 650 workers would be needed; Convair would assign 350 of its own personnel to Salina but would hire 300 workers from the local labor supply.⁸²

Lieutenant Colonel Edward Little arrived in October, 1959 to supervise the Atlas missile project in Salina. His title was Air Force Ballistic Division Field Office Supervisor and he was assigned to work out of Salina.⁸³ To man the Nike sites near Bennington and Falun, the Army announced that it needed at least thirty-five Salina men to enlist. Men who enlisted would be guaranteed assignment in the Salina area for their full term of enlistment.⁸⁴

On February 21, 1960, Colonel Little revealed more about the Atlas missile. The missile was to rest in a concrete-lined pit 174-feet deep with a fifty-foot diameter. The purpose of this hole was to protect the missile, its crew, and machinery from possible damage from enemy bombs. There would be six floors of machinery in each silo. Concrete doors three feet-thick would cover the entrance of the missile pit. When each site was completed, only a few air vents and a small storage shed would be visible on the surface along with the parking

⁸¹Salina (KS) Journal, May 14, September 10 and 29, 1959.

⁸²Salina (KS) Journal, October 8, 28, and December 13, 1959.

⁸³Salina (KS) Journal, December 11, 1959.

⁸⁴Salina (KS) Journal, February 4, 1960.

cameras would help guard the site.⁸⁵

Work on the Atlas sites got underway on March 21, 1960. By July 15, nine holes were expected to have been dug and lined with concrete. As work was going on, the Air Force announced that it was possible that three Atlas sites might be added to the area at an additional cost of \$5 million. It was confirmed on April 15, 1960 that three more sites would be added to Schilling's Atlas missile network, bringing the number to six. One site would be located near Tescott, nineteen miles north of the base; another near Minneapolis (KS), twenty-six miles north of the base; and a third near Abilene, twenty-four miles west of the base.⁸⁶

Schilling's Atlas missiles were to be the first to be placed in underground storage. They had not been installed when it was announced that the 6,000 mile-range missile might be replaced by a 9,000 mile-range missile. If that happened, no modifications would be necessary to the Salina sites.⁸⁷

Commanders

Throughout this period, there were four major units of command above the squadron level on Schilling Air Force Base; the 802nd AD, 802nd ABG, the 310th Bomb Wing, and the 40th Bomb Wing. At the end of this period, there would only be two major units on base; the 310th Wing and the newly formed 310th Combat Support Wing, the latter taking over the role of the 802nd ABG. At the start of this period, Brig. Gen. James Wilson commanded the 802nd AD, Lt. Col. Gordon Hein commanded the 802nd ABG, Col. Bryson Bailey commanded the 310th Bomb Wing, and Col. Berton Burns commanded the 40th Bomb Wing.

⁸⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, February 21, 1960.

⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, March 13, 18, 21, and April 15, 1960.

⁸⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, May 4 and 25, 1960.

802nd Air Division

Gen. James Wilson had commanded the 802nd AD as its fifth Commander January 24, 1956 when he arrived from MacDill AFB, FL where he had commanded the 305th Bomb Wing. On December 1, 1956, he had been promoted to Brigadier General. It was announced on March 6, 1958 that General Wilson was to move to Plattsburg AFB, NY to assume command of the 820th AD later that month. General Wilson had been hand-picked for the job owing to his successes at Schilling where he had imbued an esprit de corps in its units because the 820th had undergone a similar transformation. Under General Wilson, Schilling's reputation had climbed to where it was one of the best in the Air Force. In 1958, Schilling had been named the "Golden Anniversary Base" in honor of 50 years of military aviation in the United States.⁸⁸

Colonel Harold W. Ohlke, 43, Commander of the 90th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW) at Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS, was named to succeed General Wilson. He was a native of Kansas City, MO and a graduate of the University of Missouri at Columbia. Commissioned in 1937, he had over 4,500 hours in the air and on January 24, 1958, he assumed command of the 802nd AD as its sixth Commander.⁸⁹ Under his command, units assigned to Schilling continued to win awards after awards. In June of 1959, it was learned that Colonel Ohlke was to leave for Fairchild AFB, WA "almost immediately" where he would command a "triple-threat" combination of three Wings which were composed of B-52s, missiles, and KC-135 tankers. His successor was to be Col. George Y. Jumper, Commander of the 40th Bomb Wing on base.⁹⁰ No one knew it at the time, but Colonel Jumper was to be the last Commander of the 802nd Air Division. At the same time, he was destined

⁸⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, March 6, 7, and 11, 1958.

⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, March 6, 7, 24, and 25, 1958.

⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 20, 1959.

Colonel Nolan's record. In the 1951 to 1957 period, Colonel Nolan commanded both the 310th and 40th Wings on base. Colonel Jumper would be Commander of both Wings and the 802nd Air Division as well.

Colonel Jumper had been Commander of the 40th Wing since July 4, 1958.

In 1959, he assumed command of the 802nd AD. A native of Sacramento, he was 41 years old and a graduate of the United States Military Academy, Class of 1939, with more than 4,000 hours in the air. Less than a year later, he announced that he would assume command of the 310th Bomb Wing on June 1, 1959, when the 802nd AD was deactivated as a result of the 40th Bomb Wing being transferred to Forbes AFB, KS.⁹¹

802nd Air Base Group

At the start of this period, Lt. Col. Gordon E. Hein was Base Commander, a position that he had held since March, 1956. Despite the opening of Schilling AFB, Colonel Hein lived in Salina at 756 Sheridan. Colonel Hein continued to serve as Base Commander until July 7, 1959 when he left to attend the Air Force Academy at Maxwell AFB, AL.⁹² The forty months he served as Base Commander is a record not only in that position but for the rest of the units on base at Salina. Before Colonel Hein left Schilling, he was honored with a dinner at which the Salina Chamber of Commerce presented him with a plaque in recognition of his "outstanding work in developing and maintaining excellent relations between the base and Salina." Some 205 people attended the reception which also featured Maj. Gen. Archie J. Old, Jr., Commander of the 15th AF.⁹³ After Colonel Hein was replaced by Lt. Col. Carl W. Hauth who was the Deputy

⁹¹Salina (KS) Journal, July 2, 1958, June 14 and July 8, 1959, and June 3, 1960.

⁹²Salina (KS) Journal, May 2, 1957 and July 8, 1959.

⁹³Salina (KS) Journal, May 9, 1959.

under. This was a temporary arrangement until Col. William P. Mullins was able to assume permanent command of the base. Colonel Mullins, 43, took command of the base and the 802nd ABG on July 22, 1959. He had spent 10 years in the Air Force and had logged 5,000 hours in the air. Prior to his assignment at Schilling, he had served as air attaché in Bangkok, Thailand. He had been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel at the age of twenty-eight and to Colonel in 1951.⁹⁴

When something happened and on November 10, 1959, Colonel Jumper, 802nd Base Commander, announced that Colonel Mullins was trading assignments with Col. J. B. Summers, Jr., 802nd AD Director of Materiel. This was part of a plan to compensate for forthcoming changes and to stabilize forces.⁹⁵ The changes referred to were the addition of missiles to the base, the transfer of the 310th Bomb Wing, and the deactivation of the 802nd Air Division.

Little was revealed about the last Base Commander of this period. On November 30, 1960, a group of "about forty" Kansas Mayors held a meeting on base at the request of Colonel Summers. In his address to them, he called himself the last Base Commander of Schilling. His city had a permanent population of 6,000 men and women and property which were valued at three-quarters of a billion dollars.⁹⁶ Apparently the Mayor of Schilling's Mayor had not received the word that the population of his city was going to lose about 2,000 people within two months. However, Colonel Jumper would remain as Base Commander and Commander of the 310th Combat Support Group (CSG) which would replace the 802nd Air Base Group (ABG).

⁹⁴Salina (KS) Journal, July 8 and July 22, 1959.

⁹⁵Salina (KS) Journal, November 10, 1959.

⁹⁶Salina (KS) Journal, May 1, 1960.

310th Bomb Wing

Bryson Bailey had been Commander of the 310th Wing since September, 1957. It was announced on January 8, 1958 that he would leave Schilling on January 10, 1958 for Thule, Greenland where he would assume command of the Strategic Tanker Wing, a unit plagued with supply scandals. SAC was to clean up the unit and it was up to Colonel Bailey to do the cleaning.⁹⁷ On January 12, Col. Jean B. Miller arrived to assume command of the 310th Wing. He arrived from Offutt AFB, Omaha, NE where he had worked in the Inspectional section. Whether Colonel Bailey remained to help Colonel Miller get acquainted with the 310th was not revealed, nor for that matter was very much revealed about Colonel Miller. However, during the fifteen months he was Commander of the 310th, he saw the Wing become the most outstanding unit in SAC for 1958 and the 310th ARS twice named the top refueling squadron in 8th AF.⁹⁸

Col. Walter Y. Lucas succeeded Colonel Miller as Commander of the 310th Wing on April 8, 1959. Colonel Miller had received orders to report to Fort Monahan AFB, Tucson, AZ where he was to assume command of the 43rd Bomb Squadron.⁹⁹

When Walter Lucas arrived at Smoky Hill Air Force Base in May of 1956, he had been a Lieutenant Colonel who had left Headquarters, 8th AF, Westover AFB, where he had been Chief of Supply. Initially, he was Director of Materiel for the 310th Wing. By May 1, 1957, he was a full Colonel and Deputy Commander of the 310th Wing. He had been in the Air Force since March 24, 1940 and was

⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, January 8, 1958.

⁹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, January 12, 1958 and April 9, 1959.

⁹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 8, 1959.

of four children.¹⁰⁰ Apparently, Colonel Lucas did a good job as
 of the Wing because on October 23, 1959, he received a letter of com-
 from General Thomas Powers, Commander of SAC, for the Wing's perfor-
 ing a recent Operations Readiness Inspection (ORI) which kept the
 at the top in SAC ORI ratings for the 1960 Fiscal Year.¹⁰¹
 on June 3, 1960, it was announced that in the command shifts effective
 1960, Colonel Lucas was to attend the B-52 bomber school at Castle
 and then report to Walker AFB, NM where he would assume duties as
 Commander for Operations with the 6th Bomb Wing. However, on June 10,
 announced that his assignment had been changed and he would assume com-
 a B-47 Wing stationed at Mountain Home AFB, ID.¹⁰²
 Colonel Jumper was to assume command of the 310th Bomb Wing on June 20,
 when the 802nd Air Division was deactivated, as has already been mentioned.
 to command a Wing that was at the top in SAC and probably in the whole
 force.

40th Bomb Wing

The Dean of Schilling's Commanders at the start of this period was Col.
 Burns, Commander of the 40th Bomb Wing. He was to relinquish command
 of the Wing in June, 1957 so that he could attend the Air War College at Max-
 AFB, AL.¹⁰³ A noteworthy feature of this officer was that he served a
 and thirty-six months as Commander of a Schilling Wing and it would not be
 on.

¹⁰⁰ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 24, 1956 and Salina (KS) Journal,
 May 8, 1959.

¹⁰¹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 23, 1959.

¹⁰² Salina (KS) Journal, June 3 and 10, 1960.

¹⁰³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 30, 1957.

Andrew S. Low, who had been the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of "Project [redacted] was the 802nd AD Director of Operations, was named to succeed [redacted]. He was a native of Westerly, RI and a graduate of the United States Military Academy, Class of 1942. He had arrived at Schilling on November [redacted] to serve as Deputy Commander of the 40th Wing. Later, he was transferred to the Director of Operations position. Still later, it was learned [redacted] had been a POW at Stalag 3 in Germany from July 31, 1944 to the end of World War II in Europe.¹⁰⁴ On September 8, 1957, it was announced that he had been selected to attend the Air War College (the second 40th Bomb Wing Command School) at Maxwell AFB, AL during the 1958-1959 session. He was expected to remain at the base in command of the Wing until school started.¹⁰⁵

Colonel George Y. Jumper, 41, arrived at Schilling on June 27, 1958 and assumed command of the 40th Wing on July 2, 1958. He was a graduate of the United States Military Academy, Class of 1939, and arrived at Schilling from Johnson AFB, TX, where he had commanded the 3rd Wing.¹⁰⁶ Then Colonel Jumper succeeded Colonel Ohlke as Commander of the 802nd AD on July 8, 1959. To succeed Colonel Woodward B. Carpenter, who had been on base since May of 1958, Jumper was chosen to succeed him and assumed command of the 40th Wing on July 8, 1959. When the Wing was transferred to Forbes on June 20, 1960, he was supposed to go to Titan Missile Training at Ellsworth AFB, SD and then take command of the 40th Bomb Wing there. Somehow, his assignment was changed and on June 17, it was announced that he would become Deputy Chief for Officer Assignments at [redacted]

¹⁰⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 30, 1957 and Salina (KS) Journal, September 8, 1955 and January 16, 1958.

¹⁰⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, September 8, 1957.

¹⁰⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, June 27 and July 2, 1958.

, USAF in Washington, D.C.¹⁰⁷ Nothing else is known about this

end of this period, Col. George Y. Jumper, Commander of the 310th the senior Commander on base by virtue of the fact that his was the and left in tact. But even without this, he had been a Commander at since July 2, 1958 when he assumed command of the 40th Wing.

and of the major units on base was stable during this period. The periods of command occurred in the 802nd ABG immediately after Colonel relinquished command of the base after forty months in that job. Colonel a temporary Commander and served two weeks. He was followed by Colonel who served three months and three weeks.

the command records were set during this period. General Wilson set as 802nd Air Division Commander by serving twenty-four months three Colonel Hein served an even forty months as Base Commander and as Com- of the 802nd ABG. Colonel Burns set a record as Wing Commander by com- the 40th Wing thirty-six months. These records were permanent in the of the base and would never be broken. General Wilson and Colonel would go on to acquire higher rank, but the others would not make it the rank of permanent Colonel.

Construction

Construction of the Atlas and Nike missile complexes occupied the attention of the local press and were the big expenditures made at the base in the way of construction projects during this period. But the missiles were not the only

¹⁰⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, June 3 and 17, 1960. Assignment to a missile unit this period was not relished by officers who had piloted planes. One officer who had received an assignment to an Atlas unit in this period told this officer that when he received his orders, he went home early sick. He welcomed assignment to Viet Nam later to get out of missiles.

undertaken. New roads were built, along with a chapel, hospital, business building, and other projects.

Sometimes the Department of Defense even "sprang" surprises on the base of unasked for appropriations for construction projects. The first surprise came on May 1, 1957 when the Department of Defense asked Congress for \$2 million for construction projects at the base. "No one at the base knew about what the money would be used for." However, no one would object if the base got an intelligence building, a headquarters building for the 802nd Central Postal Directory, a theater, and a second story addition to the 310th Wing Headquarters. One year later, it happened again. This time the amount requested was \$4 million. Again, no one at the base knew what the money was for, although Schilling still wanted a new theater and a chapel.¹⁰⁸

Congress approved the construction of a \$2½ million hospital for the base on May 9, 1957. It was to be a two story building with a full basement, of brick construction with brick or native stone facing, and rated at seventy-five beds. However, it was not until April 30, 1958 that Olson Construction Company of Omaha, NE, was awarded the contract at \$2,290,351.20. Construction was expected to start immediately and take 900 days.¹⁰⁹ Two additional contracts were released for improvements on base and these went to two local companies on May 13, 1957. Gage Plumbing and Heating Company was given a \$1,655 contract to install ice machines at five locations on base. (It is assumed these were installed in the dining halls.) Socha and Bologoman received a \$1,395 contract to re-roof a base warehouse.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 1, 1957 and May 2, 1958.

¹⁰⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 9, 1957 and April 30, 1958.

¹¹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, May 13, 1957.

On June 22, 1957, a \$55,000 road improvement program was underway on the base. Most of the roads in the base proper were being repaved with a three-inch layer of asphaltic concrete with expected completion by July 17.¹¹¹ Work was also done on an access road to connect the base with Crawford Street to the north. This road was to be ready by early 1959. On September 26, 1959, Brown and Brown Construction Company submitted the low bid for the access road at \$175,084 and \$1,607 for a bridge over Dry Creek. Construction moved faster than expected because by December 22, 1958, it was ready for traffic. Schilling announced that the north/south route was to be named "Centennial Road" in honor of Salina's 100th birthday and was "to be a tribute to Salina's pioneers."¹¹² The road survived the base closing and continues to be a major route into the base. It is doubtful that few know why the road was named that as the name seems to be out of place in that area and with the names of other Salina streets. Schilling was the "Golden Anniversary Base" and the title seemed appropriate. There were more ways than one as the base was located in a part of Kansas where 100° Fahrenheit temperatures are common. Thus, it probably made sense that as part of the \$1,000 worth of maintenance contracts released between April 20 and May 15, 1959, eight office buildings were to be air conditioned.¹¹³

Lt. Col. Arnold L. Pach, Installation Engineer, accepted a new and modern hangar, complete with its own fire fighting system, and assigned it to the 4th Wing. It was the first hangar built on the base since 1945 and could accommodate four B-47s but six could be squeezed in if necessary. The \$2.6 million hangar had 109,000 square feet of floor space and measured 372 feet by 370 feet.

¹¹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 22, 1957.

¹¹² Salina (KS) Journal, April 11, September 26, and December 22, 1958.

¹¹³ Salina (KS) Journal, April 13, 1958.

rior, there were three stories of offices.¹¹⁴

As a result of these improvements, on April 2, 1959, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, which supervised all construction projects on military installations, announced that Schilling was about as permanent as it could be. New projects planned were 44,000 square yards of primary runway paving, a CON center, expanded lighting for runway approaches, and an education building. The new chapel, but these projects were not related to the missile program.¹¹⁵

Construction Industries, Inc., of Salina, submitted a low bid of \$538,000 for the construction of a seventy-man readiness crew building. Crews were then housed in temporary buildings which only provided sleeping quarters. They had to eat their meals in nearby dining halls and sometimes were farther away from their planes than the base planned for them to be.¹¹⁶

The last structure considered during this period was when Swanson and the Hale Construction Company of Minneapolis, MN submitted the low bid of \$800,000 for the construction of an Atlas missile assembly building on the base. The government estimate had been \$786,320. Work was expected to start in August, 1960, last two weeks and was to be completed by November 30, 1960.¹¹⁷

Community Relations

There were between 6,000 and 8,000 men assigned to Schilling during this period in what may have been the heyday of base/community relations. Perhaps the national attitude of intense patriotism was responsible for this. Dwight

¹¹⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, November 13, 1958 and March 29, 1959.

¹¹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, April 2, 1959.

¹¹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, April 24, 1959.

¹¹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, June 10, 1960.

er was serving his second and final term as President. George Docking, was serving the first of two terms as Governor of Kansas. Every-
 went, there was a feeling that it was great to be an American and
 entary military draft, while viewed as a nuisance, was tolerated because
 later, just about every male of military age had to serve two years
 ed forces. Patriotism was undoubtedly a factor in Salina's view of
 in base/community relations. Another factor was that with as many
 ere were at Schilling, a feud might jeopardize Salina's economic base
 then built upon the prevention of war industry.

nor the Uniform" Week was traditional, the Air Force Jubilee underwent
 change and came out Schilling Appreciation Day, but continued to be as
 onal as "Honor the Uniform" Week, and various groups visited the base
 ings, tours, and outings. Salina, in the center of Kansas, still con-
 its activities to make the men who served at Schilling feel at home.
 tedly, the fact that the base payroll contriubted \$1.3 million a month
 local economy and the fact that many Salinans had relatives serving in
 ilitary had something to do with this, but there was probably a certain
 of community pride. Tradition had been established and it was snowballing
 an institution.

The pride that Salina felt for the base on its southern doorstep was ex-
 ed in a May 12, 1957 editorial in the Salina Journal:

Those who will recall the sad array of tar-paper shacks that
 was the base in 1950 will be gratified by recent SAC competition
 between nine bases. The base was rated best in leadership, morale,
 dining halls, dayrooms, transient officer, and airmen's quarters.
 You don't buy those awards. You work at it and General Wilson and
 his men are to be commended. They are first rate.¹¹⁸

Living with a base that had two Bomb Wings next door brought the danger

¹¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 12, 1957.

near attack from enemy bombers. The Salina Journal confessed that it did not know what to do if enemy bombers visited the area. "They are among the fifty-six million Americans to perish." The Civil Defense Plan in Salina had devised evacuation routes to get the 35,000 Salinans out of the fifty-mile danger area because "Schilling is probably a target."¹¹⁹ Finally, this population figure included the families of military personnel stationed at the base.

Despite the possibility of annihilation as a consequence of being next to a base, relations were good and the feeling of goodwill solid throughout the period. An example of this goodwill occurred on June 26, 1958, when it was learned that the base Athletic Director, Lt. Jim Bowman, was working with city officials to provide summer recreation for children both on base and in the city.¹²⁰

The city rallied around a base request made on October 22, 1958 for better air service from Salina. Schilling wanted three daily flights to Kansas City, two to Denver, one to Omaha, and one to Wichita.¹²¹ The base probably wanted the flights to assist personnel in their leave plans and in training for transfer to other bases while the city saw it as a key for industry appeal. Thus, the motives on both sides was one of mutual cooperative interests.

Topeka's Daily Capitol heard about Salina and Schilling AFB from an officer assigned to Forbes AFB who had visited the base. The officer told the editor of the Daily Capitol that no one at Forbes would go downtown Topeka until they

¹¹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 26, 1957.

¹²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 26, 1958.

¹²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 22, 1958.

off their uniform except in an emergency. In Salina, it seemed to be the reverse.¹²² It may be recalled that a goal of Salina had been to become "another Junction City" when the base opened in 1942 and it was given attention in that effort.

When Colonel Ohlke left Schilling for his new command at Fairchild AFB, he commented on base/community relations in a meeting of his Commanders at

"In my entire career in the military service, I have never had such support and willing cooperation as the Salina Community has shown Schilling. The base has never gone wanting for support which civilian neighbors could provide. In the short time I have been here I have come to have many close friends in Salina. My family and I shall always remember them for their warm hospitality in accepting us into their community."¹²³

Ohlke appears to have enjoyed his tour of duty at Schilling, probably because Salina enjoyed having the airmen in the area. Salina clearly saw the base as an asset to the community and a key role to the defense of the United States. On September 23, 1959, the following editorial appeared in the Salina Journal:

Kruschev (the Premier of Russia) says he wants peace. One of the reasons he wants peace may be found in the hard-working men at Schilling Air Force Base.

Salina should be proud of its contributions to national defense through its support of the base. Frankly, we sometimes forget the real importance of these SAC units to our concern for the cash register. One of the better ways we can support the defense is to make the airmen and their families a part of our healthy community.

Ahead for Schilling is a period of transition from medium to big bombers and to missiles. The habits of friendship, if practiced, are enduring. And the valuable reputation for friendship endures.¹²⁴

Lt. Col. George Matsko was leaving for a new assignment in Japan in

¹²² Salina (KS) Journal, May 14, 1959.

¹²³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 20, 1959.

¹²⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, September 23, 1959, editorial.

of 1959. He had been at Schilling three and one-half years as Deputy of Operations for the 802nd AD. Schilling had been his fourth Kansas post since 1941 and was the best one as far as he was concerned. "I've found people as cooperative as in Salina. My duty at Schilling has been easier because of the city's interest in Schilling and in the welfare of the community. The spirit of Salina is the finest I've seen. If I ever get a chance to go back to Schilling, I'll be happy to return."¹²⁵ Colonel Matsko was the first person who found Salina different in its relation to the base. "The bonds of friendship, if practiced, are enduring. And the valuable reputation of friendship endures."

Goodwill

The first acts of goodwill reported during this period were not for Salina or other communities. After a storm wiped out power in Natoma, Osborne County, Kansas in early April, 1957, the base loaned an eleven-ton field generator to that town to restore power. Later that month, in honor of Colonel Schilling, the base began contributing English coinage to restore the Air Force chapel in London, England, which had been destroyed during World War II.¹²⁶ Colonel Schilling's last tour of duty had been in England.

Men from Schilling continued to be available to address civic groups in the area and seven such addresses made it to the pages of the local press. The first address was one made by Maj. H. O. Hilton, Munitions Officer at the base who addressed a meeting of Salina firemen and explained what could happen if a loaded bomber crashed in the area. He doubted that anything devastating would happen. Nuclear bombs were almost never armed while flying over the con-

¹²⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, December 17, 1959.

¹²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, April 4 and 18, 1957.

United States except at the direction of the President.¹²⁷ It was a relief to the area to know that the odds were that if they ever saw a cloud on the horizon, it was not the result of an accident on the base. The base Information Services Office announced on November 8, 1957 that the Public Affairs Bureau had been organized to provide speakers to clubs, schools, church groups who wanted to hear about the Air Force. The base had thirty-speakers with a wide Air Force background ready to talk.¹²⁸ Colonel Ohlke, 802nd AD Commander, addressed the Chamber of Commerce breakfast club on June 9, 1959 at the Lamer Hotel and in that address assured the public that manned bombers would be around a long time because the "gadgetry" of jet existence was not that reliable. He forecast that Schilling would get 52 bombers and KC-135 tankers within two years.¹²⁹ The last address recorded during this period was presented to the Rotarians on March 1, 1960 in the Lamer Hotel by Lt. Col. John W. Graybill. He spoke about the behind-the-scenes operation of the base and its weapons systems. At this same meeting, Col. James V. Farley was introduced as an "Honorary" Rotarian, representing the base to the group.¹³⁰

Another form of goodwill was the base's contribution to charity drives involving the local community. Under General Wilson, 802nd AD Commander, and Colonel Jumper, things seem to have flourished but under Colonel Ohlke, it seems to have occupied a minor role. It was announced on November 24, 1957 that the base planned to give Salina's Community Chest \$15,000 instead of an

¹²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, May 24, 1957.

¹²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, November 8, 1957.

¹²⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 9, 1959.

¹³⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, March 1, 1960.

ally planned \$11,000. The base also planned to give \$15,000 to the Air Aid Society. Both amounts came from a united fund drive at the base netted \$34,234.22. In 1958, the base collected \$32,755.30 and gave the City Chest \$11,000.¹³¹ In 1959, it was announced that the base had met a goal of \$22,000 for the Community Chest Drive. Before interest was lost by the press in the matter, the base had contributed over \$5,000 of its goal and the 49th BS of the 310th Wing was the first unit on base to reach 100 percent participation in the drive.¹³² This goodwill was reciprocated on June 10, 1959, when Bill Chaffee, owner of Chaffee Buick in Salina, presented the Schilling Air Club with a color TV "for the pleasure of the airmen."¹³³ Although it may be a few years before most programs were in color, the Schilling airmen were ready.

Air Force Jubilee Schilling Appreciation Day

In the last Chapter, Salina and the base had launched "Air Force Jubilee" to raise money for various improvements on base. The highlight came in a beauty contest when "Miss Stratojet" was chosen. By 1957, this was a regular event on the level of "Honor the Uniform" Week. On June 21, 1957, it was announced that plans were being made for the Air Force Jubilee on August 2 and 3 at the base. There was to be a bathing suit contest. Lt. Col. William Crawford, 49th Base Commander, was the project officer. The beauty contest would be open to all girls over the age of 18. There would also be several ball games, water ballet, and a sports car road-e-o. Salinans were reminded that the

¹³¹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 24, 1957.

¹³² Salina (KS) Journal, September 25 and October 2, 1959.

¹³³ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, June 11, 1959.

of the Jubilee was to raise money to improve squadron dayrooms and the dining halls. By July 26, 1957, forty women had entered the "Miss Strato-1957" contest. Admission would cost one dollar a ticket. It was announced the Air Force Jubilee had been a success and the base estimated that about 100 people had attended the festivities. Miss Sharon Youngquist, 18, was "Miss Stratojet, 1957."¹³⁴ In another section, the dining hall improvement will be brought up where waitresses were hired. Whether some of the expense was born by money collected from the Air Force Jubilee has not been determined.

Chilling was lucky in the plans for the 1958 Jubilee. It had arranged for the Air Force Thunderbirds, the Air Force's public relations aerobatic team using the F-100C Super Sabre jets, to appear on August 23. The base hoped to raise \$36,000. A seventeen-year-old girl won the "Miss Stratojet, 1958" beauty contest which was held in the gym because the festivities had outgrown the service club. Thirty-four girls entered the contest. Although it was expected, the Thunderbirds put on their scheduled performance.¹³⁵ The rules have been relaxed a little on the age limit for the beauty contest. In 1958 it was open to girls over the age of eighteen but this time a girl of nineteen won it.

Although there probably was an Air Force Jubilee which had been renamed Flying Appreciation Day in 1959, it was not reported in the local press. In 1960, the day had been moved to May 14 and usually followed the annual "Open House." The Norman Lee orchestra was to perform for a dance held in the "big" hangar. The Thunderbirds (frequently called the "T-Birds") had been invited

¹³⁴Salina (KS) Journal, June 21, July 7, 26, 31, and August 4, 1957.

¹³⁵Salina (KS) Journal, July 23, August 17 and 24, 1958.

another appearance but were unable to make it. Things were to be done differently this time. Two hundred two-man teams composed of military civilians formed to sell tickets and reported that the "money is rolling in." As an added attraction, models of spaceships would be on display at the base as well as a model of the Atlas missile being assigned to the area. The House of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee was touring the local community, inviting people to see the base. Emphasis was placed on those communities that were about to get a missile base.¹³⁶

Between 15,000 and 17,000 people visited the base for Schilling Appreciation Day and the base regarded it as a success. Around 10,000 people had visited the base in 1959 and the figure compiled by the base made this event the most popular ever. One of the most popular spots on base was the B-52 which had been opened for tours.¹³⁷ Who won the beauty contest was not mentioned. There had been plenty to do and see during the 1960 Schilling Appreciation Day. The theme that year was "Aerospace Power for Peace." At 11:00 A.M. there had been an Armed Forces Parade through downtown Salina. Throughout the day there were aircraft demonstrations, including helicopter performances. In addition, Schilling's sentry dogs put on demonstrations throughout the day.¹³⁸ The Salina Journal commented on the 1960 Schilling Appreciation Day in an editorial on May 16, 1960:

The Salina military and civilian people who planned the base Appreciation Days show now may count the gross and subtract the cost and determine one measure of success of the venture.

¹³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, March 20, April 1 and 7, 1960.

¹³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, May 15 and 16, 1960.

¹³⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 14, 1960.

The money's the least significant of the objectives of the program. Much more valuable is the closeness it promoted between the military and civilian segments of the area.

In so many ways, the two are tied together. It remains for the Appreciation Days and similar programs to bring them together closer on a person-to-person basis. When you see a muscular Sergeant holding a small child up high for a peek into a jet bomber, or listen to a 1st Captain explaining to a tanned farmer the workings of its engines, you can say: "Mission Accomplished."¹³⁹

Tradition had been established in Salina and it appeared to be just as good as "Honor the Uniform" Week and another mission of bettering relations between the base and the city had been accomplished.

"Honor the Uniform" Week

The fifth "Honor the Uniform" Week was held from November 10 to 16, 1957 with the objective of making the airmen feel at home. The Salina Transit Company provided free rides to men in uniform. Over 2,000 people attended the Bingo party held in Memorial Hall as a part of "Honor the Uniform" Week. At this event, special recognition was given to Capt. Edith Spohn as the only female woman present.¹⁴⁰

By 1958, over 125 towns had expressed an interest in the uniquely Salina "Honor the Uniform" Week which was held that year from November 9 to 15. Thirteen Salina restaurants gave away free coffee to men in uniform. A new award was the "Airman of Honor the Uniform Week" and the 1,111th re-enlistee honored on November 11. S. Sgt. Kenneth Gordon, 27, an engine mechanic with the 310th FMS, was that individual and he got the use of a Cadillac for the rest of November, 1958. In addition, there was the free Bingo Party and airmen were guests of the Kiwanis and Lions Clubs in Salina.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 16, 1960, editorial.

¹⁴⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 15, November 8 and 14, 1957.

¹⁴¹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 8, November 6, 7, 11, and 12, 1958.

seventh "Honor the Uniform" Week was held between November 7 and 13, 1959. This was the last held in this period. This time, the 711th airman to receive the honor was A2C John E. Shively of the 40th Wing, was honored. There was also the annual free Bingo Party and "Airman of Honor the Uniform Week." Over 100 prizes were given away, but to receive them the individuals had to wear their uniform.¹⁴² Much can be said about "Honor the Uniform" Week, but it was a tradition that gave Schilling personnel something to look forward to. For one week, the men and their families were special people. It was a little act that meant a lot to people who saw themselves as strangers in the area.

Open Houses/Receptions

Open Houses and Receptions seem to have been a nearly reciprocal arrangement during this period. "Honor the Uniform" Week and Air Force Juibilee were part of the base/community relations aspect, but they were commercial in nature. Open Houses and Receptions were different. The Open Houses gave the Air Force an opportunity to show off the base and create a feeling of goodwill. Likewise, Receptions gave Salinans a chance to show a different side of themselves. Schilling went all out in this period for the children and it may have been a factor for enlistment quotas in later years in that many of them undoubtedly remembered the hospitality of Schilling when it came time to think about military service.

The first Open House of this period was held on May 18, 1957 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of military aviation in the United States as well as to commemorate Armed Forces Day. The base was open to the public for four days.¹⁴³ Kids' Day, 1957, the first such event of this period, was held on a

¹⁴²Salina (KS) Journal, November 10, 1959.

¹⁴³Salina (KS) Journal, May 10, 1957.

September 28 and was open to boys and girls from elementary grades through nine. Around 1,200 children were expected on base for this event sponsored by the Kiwanis Club. On November 30 and December 1, 1957, seven Boy Scouts spent the weekend on base in an encampment.¹⁴⁴

Neither the Salina Journal or Salina Advertiser-Sun devoted much attention to early events. In the early days of this period, the Salina Advertiser-Sun was sold to two men from Topeka and the weekly paper concentrated more on news in Salina proper. It is possible that they did not understand the impact the base was having on Salina. As for the Salina Journal, it concentrated on other aspects of the base, such as rumors about the future of the base as shown in another section in this Chapter.

A party was held sometime in April, 1958 to welcome the new 802nd Air Division Commander, Col. Harold W. Ohlke and his wife to Salina. Approximately 100 people attended this event which was held at the Salina Country Club.¹⁴⁵

This was the first reception reported which honored base personnel in this area. It is assumed that as popular as General James Wilson, former 802nd AD Commander was, that some sort of farewell reception was held in his honor. General Ohlke returned the favor by hosting a reception for about seventy people during the night of July 12, 1958. Whitley Austin, editor of the Salina Journal, presented two awards recognizing his role in base/community relations.¹⁴⁶

Schilling hosted a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) encampment between August 16 and 22, 1958. During this encampment, eighty-seven boys and thirty-one girls learned about the Air Force along with their auxiliary role in Air Force operations.

¹⁴⁴Salina (KS) Journal, September 17 and 27, December 1, 1957.

¹⁴⁵Salina (KS) Journal, April 28, 1958.

¹⁴⁶Salina (KS) Journal, July 13, 1958.

A similar encampment was held from August 16 to 27 in 1959 under similar circumstances. Maj. Gerald Anderson was the project officer both times.¹⁴⁷ As mentioned in other chapters, the Civil Air Patrol was the official auxiliary arm of the Air Force. Adult personnel were officers and furnished the equipment, such as planes. The children held enlisted positions. Equipment as radios, etc., were furnished from surplus Air Force stocks. The base's chief role was helping in rescue missions for downed aircraft in the continental United States as well as assisting in disaster cleanups and searching for lost people.

Kids' Day, 1958 was held on September 28 and there were about 1,500 children in attendance. Boy Scouts from thirty-two Kansas Counties were expected to meet at the base for a meeting on November 9, 1958.¹⁴⁸ Plans for Kids' Day, 1959 included inspections of planes assigned to the base and the selection of an Auxiliary Base Commander. However, this part was cancelled when the klaxons went off signalling the start of an alert. A harassed Major summed up Kids' Day and the alert: "If there were any doubts about our ability to put bombers in the air quickly, today's alert should have dispelled them. 2,000 youngsters in the operations building and rain pouring down outside ought to test the facilities of any base." It was not known if the alert was nation-wide but Kids' Day was a national event.¹⁴⁹

The Salina Journal ran an article on October 13, 1959 on how the base accommodated Boy Scouts passing through Salina. Meals were offered to the first plane that passed through the area on any given day. Capt. Ralph H. McKay, pro-

¹⁴⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, August 8 and 24, 1958, August 14, 16, and 18, 1959.

¹⁴⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, September 28 and October 24, 1958.

¹⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 21 and 27, 1959.

ter, advertised Salina by including a map of the city and folders of the area to inquiries he received about the facilities.¹⁵⁰

During this period, the base hosted several groups, such as the Blue Cross/World, Red Cross, fire fighters, Mayors, law enforcement groups, etc.

Coming of missiles to the area, there was an interest in the problems communities would encounter with missiles at their door steps. On February 10, 1960, the North Central Kansas Peace Officers Association held a meeting on to discuss the effect the missiles would have on the area. Lt. Col. Robert W. Wemy, Deputy Commander for Security and Law Enforcement, hosted the affair with a crowd of 200 in attendance. He addressed the group on the security problem and the fact that with missile sites in the area, they might be visited by the military with an unnatural interest in the missiles and how they should react.¹⁵¹

On February 19, 1960, the Military Affairs Committee of the Salina Chamber of Commerce mapped out plans for five events to fete Schilling AFB personnel in the area. The first was to be a formal dinner party on February 29 at the Salina Country Club honoring the Schilling NCO Council, First Sergeants, and their families. In April, there was to be a cocktail party for the Junior Officer Council and their wives; a Command Personnel Reception would be held in September; and of course, "Honor the Uniform" Week would be held in November. Plans were being finalized for Schilling Appreciation Day in May.¹⁵² Note the absence of plans for a stag dinner for junior enlisted personnel such as the two that were held in 1955 and 1956. It would be interesting to find out why this event was discontinued.

¹⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 13, 1959.

¹⁵¹ Salina (KS) Journal, February 12 and 16, 1960.

¹⁵² Salina (KS) Journal, February 19, 1960.

the monthly Chamber of Commerce breakfast held on March 22, 1960 in the hotel, members of the 310th ARS crew which won SAC's Crew of the Month for February were honored. More than 100 members of the Chamber of Commerce were in attendance at this event. O. L. Daniels was Master of Ceremonies and described the recognition extended to the crew a part of the friendly atmosphere that prevailed between the base and the community.¹⁵³

The last affair held during this period was an Open House held on May 14. Over 10,000 people visited the base. A featured attraction at this event was the display of a C-124 Globemaster transport plane, then the largest such plane in the Air Force inventory.¹⁵⁴ The C-130 and C-141 were not in existence at the time but would come along in the 1960s. The former was a turbo-prop and the latter was a jet. At this time, jets were being used more for war planes. The only jet that could be converted to use as a cargo plane was the KC-135, which was primarily a refueling transport.

Morale

Morale, always a factor in how well a military unit will perform its assignment, was very high at Schilling and can probably be considered excellent. The old rumors were still around which led many to believe that they had been assigned to "Smokey Hole" or had been "shafted" by the Air Force but when they arrived at Schilling, they learned, probably to their relief that the base had undergone a transformation for the better.

Perhaps part of this was due to the leadership assigned to the base. It appears that they were honest with the personnel they commanded. For example, on May 28, 1957, the enlisted personnel attended an all-day briefing

¹⁵³ Salina (KS) Journal, March 22, 1960.

¹⁵⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, May 15, 1960.

Sal Hall in Salina (leaving the officers to run the base) which was the only place where all of the enlisted force could be assembled en for an orientation on the Air Force mission. Approximately 3,200 enlisted attended this briefing. Colonel Low, Commander of the 40th Wing, addressed the group and stated his belief that World War III would be fought by forces in existence because no buildup or mobilization would be possible. At least the men received an honest appraisal of where they stood in that was then envisioned as possible. However, note that only 3,200 personnel were reported as having been in attendance. This left at least 8,800 personnel unaccounted for. Apparently, not all of the enlisted personnel were required to attend or else many suddenly decided to go on leave. After nearly nine years at Schilling, M. Sgt. Arnold Guilford was being transferred to Iceland for a tour of duty there. Sergeant Guilford had been Schilling the longest of anyone, having arrived in Salina during August, 1949. While the base was closed between 1949 and 1951, he was Sergeant Major and caretaker force on base.¹⁵⁶

Not everyone anticipated an assignment to Schilling with glee. An English-born wife of an Air Force Sergeant threatened to divorce him if he received orders to Kansas. He received orders to Schilling and the unidentified Sergeant wrote the Secretary of the Air Force a ten page letter in an attempt to change his orders, the results of which were not revealed. There was a group of English-born wives in Salina who had formed a club and they expressed surprise. They thought that Salina was a nice assignment.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, May 29, 1957.

¹⁵⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, June 7, 1957.

¹⁵⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, July 25, 1957.

During this period, Schilling had its own-near celebrity in the person of Colonel Bruce Rogers whose brother, Buddy Rogers, was married to Mary Pickford. In March, 1958 and again in February, 1960, Buddy Rogers, who owned several radio stations in Kansas, and his famous wife, visited Colonel Rogers while in Kansas on radio business. Colonel Rogers was Deputy Base Commander for Materiel.¹⁵⁸

President Eisenhower signed a pay raise bill in 1958 which was projected to add \$89,475 a month to the payroll. In Chapter Five of this paper, this was stated how easy it was to determine how many people were assigned to the Base. The Salina Journal made this even easier by revealing how much money was made. The minimum raise was six percent and the paper even provided the old rate of pay had been. All rates were computed at the two year rate. An Airman Basic was \$98.80 to \$105 with the pay raise; A3C \$101.40/\$108; A1C \$117/\$124; A1C \$140.40/\$150; S. Sgt. \$163.80/\$180; T. Sgt. \$187.20/\$200; Warrant Officer 1 (W. O. 1) \$222.30/\$236; Warrant Officer 2 (W. O. 2) \$251.20/\$266; W. O. 3 \$281/\$300; W. O. 4 \$323.70/\$343; 2nd Lt. \$237.12/\$251; 1st Lt. \$291/\$318; Capt. \$351/\$372; Maj. \$429/\$455; Lt. Col. \$507/\$540; Col. \$631.80/\$660; and Brig. Gen. \$850.20/\$860.¹⁵⁹

Life in the barracks was also a factor that had to be considered in morale. In the last Chapter, it was revealed that Colonel Thacker, Base Commander, had this squadron Commanders to live in the barracks for a week. This may have had a hand in permitting men leeway in making their rooms livable. By 1959, the men had purchased plush chairs and divans for their "moderately sized"

¹⁵⁸Salina (KS) Journal, March 27, 1958 and February 12, 1960. The Rogers' were natives of eastern Kansas and graduates of the University of Kansas. Buddy Rogers and Mary Pickford were former movie stars.

¹⁵⁹Salina (KS) Journal, May 21, 1958.

Some men had even installed wall-to-wall carpeting.¹⁶⁰ Likewise, transient and newly arrived personnel were not forgotten at the mess hall. As of November 22, 1959, Schilling had the only "hotel" in SAC and enlisted airmen were not allowed to stay there. It had carpeted floors and semi-private bathrooms as well as piped-in music, maid service, and a snack bar. The facility was unique and innovated by the base with one of the highest re-enlistment rates in SAC as a means of keeping transient airmen happy and retaining them." The article made it clear that the building was not a "lavish" facility designed for comfort but to provide "every traveler what they deserve--a decent place to stay until a permanent home is found." This facility was operated by the Base Mess Hall Office.¹⁶¹ Today, every base has similar quarters which are often more comfortable than the barracks and one suspects to encourage the airmen to volunteer for TDYs.

A storm arose in late 1959 when it was learned that Forbes AFB, Topeka, Kansas, had implemented a "buddy system" to keep track of its enlisted personnel and keep them out of trouble. The furor was that what the enlisted personnel were off duty was no one else's business and that it smacked of tactics used by the Soviet Union and Russia's KGB. This article revealed that Schilling also used the "buddy system" and it worked. NCOs kept a lookout for their personnel but not for those personnel were off duty unless the individual was one who constantly got into trouble. "Dear Sal: Said the World War II vintage top-kick to the bird: 'I'm not your buddy: I'm your sergeant!' Yours, Ina."¹⁶² Whether this was a SAC innovation or not is unknown. This writer did not encounter

¹⁶⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, April 5, 1959.

¹⁶¹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 22, 1959.

¹⁶² Salina (KS) Journal, December 16, 1959.

like it while he was in the Air Force and did not hear of anything from his Air Force friends.

usual were plans for a 310th Bomb Wing reunion during the close of this year. General Wilson, former Commander of the 802nd AD, arrived in Salina on June 1, 1960 to make plans for the reunion. The initial plans were for an officers' gathering, but there would also be a get together with the enlisted personnel at the base.¹⁶³

Work Hours

Working conditions also affected morale; specifically, the time one worked. It was announced on April 26, 1957 that the base was going on "summer working hours" effective April 29, 1957. The 310th Wing and 802nd ABG would start work at 7:30 A.M. and leave at 4:00 P.M. while the 40th Wing kept the 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. hours. At the same time, optional wear of the khaki uniforms began on April 26 and mandatory wear started on May 11.¹⁶⁴

As a result of the 310th Wing placing first in a recent Pacesetter competition and the 40th Wing also placing high, General Wilson, 802nd AD Commander, announced to most of the base a four-day holiday for the 1957 Memorial Day period as a reward for their successful efforts.¹⁶⁵

Unrelated in a way to this section but offering a view of morale, was an article that appeared on December 15, 1957 which announced that the base had erected a five-foot tall Christmas tree atop the rotating beacon on the base air tower, making it 128 feet high. It was placed there by personnel in the

¹⁶³Salina (KS) Journal, June 2, 1960.

¹⁶⁴Salina (KS) Journal, April 26, 1957.

¹⁶⁵Salina (KS) Journal, May 29, 1957.

electric installations shop.¹⁶⁶

was followed by an announcement that flying had ended on December 22, all but essential work had been eased until January 6, 1958. SAC reg- forbade actual leave for more than 15 percent of base personnel at one Schilling had worked out a plan to keep the base at the ready and grant at the same time. This was a Christmas present from General Wilson to for helping make it one of the best bases in SAC.¹⁶⁷ By 1976, the reg- had been written that one had to be within phone-call range which was stated by many to be anywhere in the United States and this was frequently advantage of.

In 1958 and 1959, the Salina Journal reported that the men of Schilling giving the nation a Christmas present by remaining on alert. None of them Christmas bonus and most of the base had to be available to return to the within a few minutes. There would be a minimum number on the base at all in order to get one-third of the planes in the air while the others were ing to take their positions. There were decorations and a special dinner be served in the base dining halls. In addition, the 310th ARS was bring a Christmas party for thirty-four children from the Wichita Orphan's and the base chapel was planning to conduct special Christmas services.¹⁶⁸

Dining Halls

Throughout this period, the dining halls on base fed the personnel at the and during the holidays served traditional meals. But in November, 1957, thing new was tried and reached the attention of the press on April 7, 1959.

¹⁶⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, December 15, 1957.

¹⁶⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, December 22, 1957.

¹⁶⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, December 24, 1958 and December 21, 1959.

Arrived airmen at Schilling found it hard to believe that such a system, having waitresses wait on them, existed in the Air Force or for that anywhere in the military. This plan had been devised in 1957 by CWO E. Lewis, Food Service Commander, and M. Sgt. Cleveland Kilpatrick, Major. The reasoning behind this system was that more time could be spent on job by the airmen who would normally have to spend time on KP as well as boosting morale and providing a more comfortable atmosphere in the dining hall. It worked and was believed to help the re-enlistment rate as a result of increased prestige of having someone wait on them in the dining halls. At the time that this article appeared, there were twenty-seven waitresses in the three base dining halls who worked two shifts; from 6:00 A.M. to 10:30 A.M. and from 10:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. The waitresses were paid through a service charge which averaged three cents per meal and was charged to airmen who took their meals in the dining halls. A fourth dining hall, located on the flight line and used primarily by fire department personnel on a twenty-four hour alert, was also open to those persons who did not wish to pay a service charge. But personnel who ate there had to take their turn on KP. Sergeant Kilpatrick reported that the business was all but nil there except for fire department personnel.¹⁶⁹

Commanders were described as enthusiastic about the program and they thought the program had been instrumental in Schilling's accomplishing its mission and was proof that "satisfied people can do a better job." In the preceding year, Schilling had won such titles as the "Golden Anniversary Base," "Most Effective B-47 Wing in SAC," "Tops in Reenlistments with 1464," "Second Best Wing in SAC's Navigation Competition," and "The First Golden Boom Air Re-

¹⁶⁹Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, April 7, 1959.

Squadron."¹⁷⁰

Dependents

40th Wing dependents got together for a party on August 12, 1957 in Oak Dale Park. The 40th Wing was TDY and movies were taken to be sent by the Base Information Office to show the men what their families were doing. Over 200 dependents turned out for this affair.¹⁷¹

September 18, 1958, the 310th Field Maintenance Squadron (FMS) had an open house for the wives and children of its personnel so that they could see what the men did. There were three sections in this Squadron; power plant, maintenance, and aero repair. The Squadron was charged with much of the maintenance which kept the B-47s and KC-97s in the air.¹⁷²

The wives of airmen and officers were invited to attend the Family Services Open House being held on October 22 and 23, 1959. It was to be held in the auditorium and such topics as services, aid, and information services that were available to Air Force families would be discussed. The manager of the Chamber of Commerce would also meet with the group and outline Salina's Chamber of Commerce's services to the residents. Colonel Mullins, Base Commander, would present certificates of accomplishment to those who attended.¹⁷³

On February 14, 1960, the Salina Journal published an article about the Family Services office on base. There were more than 140 wives in Family Services who donated their time. In 1959, more than 3,000 people were helped by

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 12, 1957.

¹⁷² Salina (KS) Journal, September 18, 1958.

¹⁷³ Salina (KS) Journal, October 21, 1959.

ice.¹⁷⁴

Spiritual Affairs

Spiritual guidance continued to contribute to morale during this period. On 9, 1957, ground was broken for a new chapel on base which could seat 100 people. Its location was east of the commissary. Construction of the 100 edifice was completed by June 3, 1958 and was dedicated on July 13, 1958. The building was 112 feet long and sixty-three feet wide. By this time, services were being held for Jews and Christian Scientists on base.¹⁷⁵ In a 1959 article on military marriages on base, the Chaplains revealed that about three-fourths of the marriages performed in the base chapel found one spouse in civilian clothes. Chaplains Earl Allison, Methodist, and Ray Schilling, Lutheran, performed most of the marriages.¹⁷⁶ Capt. Christian G. Schilling, Roman Catholic, returned to Schilling in 1959. In early 1952, he had spent three months at the reactivated base in his first military assignment before being transferred to Nome, Alaska. He was a native of Rochester, NY. His second assignment to the base was his sixth military assignment.¹⁷⁷ It figures out to about one year to an assignment which means that he was transferred frequently. Charles E. Smith had been a Captain when he was assigned to the base as a Protestant Chaplain in 1952. He served until 1958 when a reduction-in-force (RIF) caused him to be dismissed from active duty because he held no reserve commission. He promptly enlisted as a Tech Sergeant and was named Senior Historian of the 310th Wing. At the same time, he was appointed pastor

¹⁷⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, February 14, 1960.

¹⁷⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, July 9, 1957 and July 11, 1958.

¹⁷⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, May 19, 1959.

¹⁷⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, July 24, 1959.

First Baptist Church in Canton, KS. On February 19, 1960, the fifty-old Historian and Minister died in an automobile accident five miles from Salina, KS on US 81.¹⁷⁸

Clubs

At the start of this period, it was revealed that the Aero Club at the base had four planes. A1C Max Pfauntsch was President, Capt. Charles P. [redacted] was Vice President, and Maj. John Creel, a B-47 Aircraft Commander, was Instructor for the Club.¹⁷⁹

In the previous chapter of this paper, it was revealed that the NCO Club had a package liquor store. Something must have happened, because in June of 1957, Congressman Wint Smith was protesting a proposed liquor store at the base because he felt that the consumption of liquor should be discouraged in the military. The Air Force endorsed the idea of a liquor store on the base because the nearest such store was six miles away. But the Congressman had announced on September 17 that the base would not get the store.¹⁸⁰

Both the Officers and NCO Clubs were remodeled during this period. On September 18, 1959, the remodeled Officers Club opened. Around \$270,000 was spent on the remodeling project. The Norman Lee Orchestra provided the music for the opening night.¹⁸¹ The remodeled NCO Club opened on May 1, 1960. Woods Construction Company of Salina received the \$50,000 remodeling contract. It outbid twenty-two other firms for the job. During the remodeling period,

¹⁷⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, February 10, 1960.

¹⁷⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 17, 1957.

¹⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, August 16 and September 17, 1957.

¹⁸¹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 18, 1959.

Club was closed.¹⁸²

Difficulties

A total of fourteen articles appeared in the local press regarding deaths involving personnel assigned to the base. Four of the deaths were fatal and occurred in three accidents, one of which was the crash of a lumber with two Schilling men on it who had hitched a ride to return to the from a military school at Altus AFB, OK.¹⁸³ The first incident reported May 2, 1957 when an NCO living in Phillips Village was charged with arson in Saline County authorities and held in the Saline County jail pending the posting of a \$1,000 bond. He was charged with setting fire to his car two miles south of Smolan on the Burma Road.¹⁸⁴ The outcome of this matter was learned through the local press. A twenty-year old Airman, who was a member of the 310th FMS, was found shot to death in north Salina on August 11, 1957. A resident of the area was charged with the shooting. He claimed that the airman had been prowling in the neighborhood and he had merely meant to hold him until the Police arrived. The resident was later charged with involuntary manslaughter and acquitted.¹⁸⁵ On September 27, 1957, a twenty-six year old NCO was held over for trial in Wichita, KS with eight others caught in a June 7 house raid. He was charged with the possession of marijuana.¹⁸⁶ This was the last such incident reported in this period.

A little over a year later, a twenty-nine year old Supply Sergeant for the

¹⁸² Salina (KS) Journal, December 2, 1959 and May 1, 1960.

¹⁸³ Salina (KS) Journal, May 16, 1957, December 11, 1958, February 10, and 17, 1959.

¹⁸⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, May 2, 1957.

¹⁸⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, August 11, 12, and 25, 1957.

¹⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, September 22, 1957.

, 40th Wing, was charged by the FBI with theft, embezzlement, and conversion to his own use of federal government property. A ton-and-a-half truck of stolen property was found at his trailer home in Smolan, south of the base. The Sergeant had been in the Air Force thirteen years and at Schilling since April, 1955.¹⁸⁷ Like many of the incidents reported in this era, the details of this case was not revealed in sources available to this writer. Then, a twenty-four year old enlisted member of the 310th ARS, who had been on the base three years, with the second degree murder of his three-year old stepson. His nineteen-year old wife was a waitress and at work when the murder took place. After the murder, the airman had told his supervisor that there was something wrong with the boy that he resented and immediately after the murder, he called his Squadron Commander and told him that he had "done something wrong." He was then confined to the Saline County jail.¹⁸⁸ The outcome of this matter was not reported. The only suicide reported during this period was reported on May 17, 1959. A nineteen-year old airman was found dead on base with a suicide note. A native of Milledgeville, GA, he had been at Schilling six months. The Office of Special Investigations (OSI), the Air Force's detective agency, was investigating the case to make sure that no criminal intent was involved.¹⁸⁹ A twenty-four year old First Lieutenant who was a member of the 347th BS, was charged of fourth degree manslaughter and was freed on \$2,000 bond. He told the Police that he accidentally shot his twenty-five year old wife while he was cleaning his .22 pistol at 9:30 P.M. on October 22 while she was lying on the floor watching TV. There were no signs of a scuffle. The Lieutenant

¹⁸⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, October 25, 1958. He may have been inspired by the popular TV series "Sergeant Bilko."

¹⁸⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, March 29 and 31, 1959.

¹⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 17, 1959.

not guilty.¹⁹⁰ The verdict of this case was not discovered.

During the night of November 11, 1959, a twenty-year old airman who was a member of the 40th OMS, robbed a Concordia, KS service station and kidnapped the owner, a Concordia, KS attorney, his wife, and daughter, and held them hostage for an hour before releasing them. He was later apprehended five miles northeast of Concordia, KS on a farm by a force of twenty-five men and taken to the Cloud County Jail in Concordia. On November 15, he was charged with three counts of first degree robbery and first degree kidnapping. When sentence was passed on him, sentencing him to an indefinite term in the Kansas Industrial Reformatory at Lansing, the charges had been reduced to second degree on both counts.¹⁹¹

The last incident reported during this period was on May 3, 1960. Two men were arrested by the FBI and charged with the theft of government property. They stole brass and salvaged batteries between September, 1959 and January, 1960.¹⁹²

There were fourteen incidents reported during this period and of that number, two were in 1959. Both murders and the only suicide occurred in that year. The kidnapping was followed through by the local press for some reason, so the outcome of these incidents is unknown. (Perhaps the interest in the kidnapping case was heightened by the murder of the Clutter family in Holcomb, KS at the same time had something to do with this.)

¹⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 23, 26, and 28, 1959. Fourth degree manslaughter was defined by statute as the involuntary killing of another by a person. The punishment was confinement for a term not exceeding two years or imprisonment in the County jail for not less than six months.

¹⁹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 12, 15, 1959 and January 15, 1960. First degree kidnapping was punishable by a maximum penalty of death or life imprisonment and a minimum penalty of not less than twenty years imprisonment.

¹⁹² Salina (KS) Journal, May 3, 1960.

Civilians

At the start of this period, there were 376 civilians employed at Schilling. The base had lost thirty-five civilian employees through a reduction-in-force in early 1957. On August 7, 1957, rumors were circulating that another reduction was in the offing but the base had received no official word about the matter.¹⁹³ The Salina Advertiser-Sun revealed on September 26, 1957 that fifty-five civilian employees had been informed that as of October 15 they would be losing their jobs as a result of the Department of Defense's economy program. This would leave 321 civilians on base and the base believed that this would be the situation for awhile.¹⁹⁴

Civilian personnel at the base were probably recognized throughout this period for their performance but the only time it reached the press was on August 13, 1959. On that date, ten civilian employees of the 802nd Medical Group were presented Sustained Superior Performance cash awards. Col. Robert L. Smith, 802nd Medical Group and Hospital Commander, made these presentations.¹⁹⁵ Pay raises of one to twenty cents an hour for 145 civilian employees was announced on October 22, 1959 and were effective on October 25. The raises applied to construction workers and laborers employed under the Wage Board provisions of the Civil Service. Laborers were to have their hourly wage increased from \$1.48 to \$1.57. On December 24, 1959, several Civil Service job openings at the base were announced for men and women. Men were needed in the fields of radio repair, electrician, air conditioning, and refrigeration. The starting pay was between \$2.19 and \$2.75 an hour. There were positions for women as

¹⁹³ Salina (KS) Journal, August 7, 1957.

¹⁹⁴ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, September 26, 1957.

¹⁹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, August 13, 1959.

assistants and grocery checkers with an average wage of \$300 a month.¹⁹⁶

Leadership Schools

As attention was paid to the enlisted leadership schools during this period, more than in the first period of this era. Twelve Master Sergeants graduated from the 8th AF NCO Academy in May of 1957. But one year later, M. Sgt. Robert Bizzack, 25th BS, 40th Wing, won three of the six awards distributed to graduates of the 8th AF NCO Academy. He won the Commandant's award, Student Leader, and Master-at-Drill awards. M. Sgt. Robert L. Bierma, 802nd Headquarters Squadron, won the Honor Graduate Award. Schilling was the first base to win four out of six awards and Sergeant Bizzack was the first man to win three of the awards offered.¹⁹⁷

It was announced on September 4, 1958 that A2C John E. Woods, 310th AES, became the first Schilling man chosen to attend the Air Force Academy Prep School. He was to report to Fort Belvoir, VA no later than September 15, 1958.¹⁹⁸ This was where the school was located in 1958.

By January 9, 1959, the 802nd Leadership School had changed its name to NCO Preparatory School. Class 58-J graduated at services held in the Service Auditorium. Twenty-three A1Cs, one S. Sgt., and three A1Cs from the Air Force Academy received diplomas.¹⁹⁹ No mention was made whether the curriculum had been changed or remained the same when the name of the school was changed.

Recognition

There were probably more promotions and recognition for a good job made

¹⁹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, October 22 and December 24, 1959.

¹⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, May 17, 1957 and May 9, 1958.

¹⁹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, September 4, 1958.

¹⁹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 9, 1959.

this period but little of it reached the local press. Between June 7, and September 4, 1959, there were seven groups of promotions reported for a total of 350 promotions. Included in this group were seven "spot" promotions announced on June 27, 1958 by Col. Jean Miller, Commander of the 310th. This was an incentive device created by General Curtis LeMay when he was Commander of SAC to recognize personnel for outstanding performance but where no rank vacancy existed. It was a temporary-type promotion which was valid only until the next promotion rosters were announced.²⁰⁰

There were five reports of recognition for Airmen and Crews of the Month in August 3, 1958 and January 29, 1960. On August 3, 1958, it was announced the Lamer Hotel was inviting Airmen of the Month to "live it up" for a weekend with everything being on the house. "This three day life of Riley is the Lamer way of showing appreciation to the outstanding airmen at Schilling," H. R. Lamer, hotel owner. The last award was to a 310th ARS KC-97 crew as SAC's Crew of the Month (and later honored at a Salina Chamber of Commerce breakfast) for overcoming an in-flight emergency and completing its mission in September, 1959.²⁰¹

Between September 11, 1958 and May 13, 1960 nine men received medals. CWO H. Swanson received the Legion of Merit for service between July 11, 1954 and July 15, 1957 for developing automotive maintenance techniques which were adopted by the Air Force. T. Sgt. Amos N. Prisock, 310th OMS, received the Dier's Medal on May 13, 1960 for saving a woman and five children from a

²⁰⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 7 and October 8, 1957, January 12, 31, and February 27, 1958, February 8, and September 4, 1959.

²⁰¹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 3, 1958, February 18, May 15, November 15, 1959, and January 29, 1960.

apartment building in Salina on August 2, 1959.²⁰²

The staff of the Manhattan (KS) Mercury visited Schilling in May of 1959 reported being impressed with what they had seen. "Seldom have we seen a situation of the type evident at Schilling, ably commanded by Colonel Harold E. Ke." There was also praise for the high re-enlistment rate and what it meant to the taxpayers and national defense.²⁰³

During this period, no articles concerning the suggestion program appeared in the local press. It almost appears that Schilling was being taken for granted. The freshness of the base had worn off and in late 1959, the announcement that the 40th Wing were coming and the 40th Wing leaving was probably more newsworthy than the cyclical promotions and suggestions. Another thing which may have affected the newsworthiness of the base to the local press was that Mr. Knox had transferred the Salina Advertiser-Sun to two Topeka men and Salina Journal's John Delier had been transferred to other duties. The former provided incentive to the latter and the latter's reporter kept things going until he left.

Retention

Undoubtedly morale was high at Schilling during this period. The Manhattan Mercury was impressed with what it saw. This writer believes that the base/community relations played a very significant role in this. While there is no such thing as a Utopia, Salina tried to make the men of Schilling think that Salina was as close as they were going to get. The Salina Journal was constantly telling its readers that Schilling was the best base in the Air Force. The men at the base had to be affected by this because this paper was the major daily newspaper in the area and this, in turn, may have shown up in Schilling's reten-

²⁰² Salina (KS) Journal, September 11, 1958, May 3 and December 13, 1959, May 13, 1960.

²⁰³ Manhattan (KS) Mercury, May 15, 1959, editorial.

The major motive was to avoid trouble but also to keep the base open and that had happened in 1949.

The first statistics of this period presented concerning retention appeared in Impact's (the base newspaper) June 7, 1957 edition. Smoky Hill retained 54.8 percent of its enlisted personnel eligible for retention. A little over a month later Impact announced that 805 men had re-enlisted in June setting an Air Force record and saved the Air Force \$1.9 million in funds that it might have had to use to train replacements. Major reasons given for remaining in the Air Force by Schilling's re-enlistees were: "Top-notch recreational and living facilities, NCO Councils, and base/community relations."²⁰⁴

One week later, Impact announced that the base had assigned a vehicle with a driver to pick up those individuals who were re-enlisting but who did not have transportation, drive them to the re-enlistment office and around the base to their physical, other stops in the "paper work schedule," and finally to the finance office for their re-enlistment bonus. Hot and cold drinks were available in the re-enlistment office for the airmen while they waited for their paperwork to be processed.²⁰⁵

Schilling continued to climb upward in its efforts to keep as many men as possible in the Air Force. In July, 1957, 78.7 percent or 140 out of 178 eligible men re-enlisted. Schilling set an 8th AF record in August when 75 percent or ninety-three men re-enlisted. An improvement had been made in the re-enlistment office by air conditioning it. There was even a bowl with two goldfish in it to amuse the re-enlistees.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Impact, June 7 and July 12, 1957.

²⁰⁵ Impact, July 19, 1957.

²⁰⁶ Impact, August 9 and September 6, 1957.

an editorial in the Salina Journal which appeared on September 16, 1957 as an example of Salina's interest in the base. Although the military would give a pay raise in 1958, the military was still having a problem of keeping men in the service once their initial period of service was over. The Journal recognized this but announced that Schilling continued to lead the 8th AF in re-enlistments. ". . . Unlike in other places, Schilling people here they are the best and know that it is important to keep at their best. Schilling says a lot."²⁰⁷

Three months later, it was announced that over 1,000 airmen and NCOs had re-enlisted at the base in 1957, which was 50 percent of those eligible. Of that number, 168 were first-term airmen which seemed to indicate high morale at the base. In 1957, according to the Salina Journal, it cost \$14,870 to train and equip a first-term airman.²⁰⁸ Incredible as it may seem, this writer and his colleagues who went through basic training in 1975 were told that it only cost \$10,000 to train them.

The above article appeared on a Sunday. By December 19, 1957, the 200th Light Bombardment Group's first-term airman had re-enlisted. A1C Gary Fetsch, a member of the 40th Wing, was that person and received the congratulations of General Sweeney, Commander of the 8th AF, and Colonel Low, 40th Wing Commander. Another light went on in the "Tree of Peace" in which a light on a Christmas tree was turned on for the hundredth enlistment with each SAC base assigned a different color.²⁰⁹ The next day, Schilling announced that it had probably won \$2,500 in prizes for the 8th AF SAC in its re-enlistment contest. First, \$1,500 was to be given to the

²⁰⁷Salina (KS) Journal, September 16, 1957, editorial.

²⁰⁸Salina (KS) Journal, December 15, 1957.

²⁰⁹Salina (KS) Journal, December 19, 1957.

With the most first-term re-enlistments from November 1 to December 20. \$1,000 was to go to the base with the most re-enlistments during the month. Since November 20, the base had re-enlisted 178. The 802nd ABG tripled its re-enlistments with seventy-seven, while the 310th and 40th Bomb Wings doubled their re-enlistments with fifty-four and forty-seven, respectively. The 8th AF led SAC with re-enlistments.²¹⁰ (Schilling was an 8th AF base.) It was formally announced on January 30, 1958 that the base had won the re-enlistment rate in the 8th AF. Schilling received an additional honor by receiving the "Golden Anniversary Base" title. On February 3, 1958, General Thomas Powers, Commander of the 8th AF, presented a check for \$2,500 to General James Wilson, Commander of the 802nd AD, who announced that the money would be used for base facility improvements.²¹¹

Re-enlistments at Schilling continued to be high in 1958 despite the change of Commanders in the 802nd AD. A2C Gerhardt Hallman, 40th ARS, was the first man to re-enlist as of September 14, 1958. Thus far, Schilling was running ahead of its 1957 rate.²¹² It appears that Colonel Ohlke was able to maintain the momentum started by his predecessor, General Wilson.

At 1:00 P.M. on Friday, February 6, 1959, the 1,464 men who had re-enlisted at the base in 1958, a record for SAC and probably the Air Force, met on the flight line and, in formation, spelled out SAC's motto: "Peace Is Our Profession." Part of the re-enlistment credit was due to the base's harmonious relationship with Salina and was remarkable considering "the low pay and arduous duty." The Air Force was having a problem retaining trained personnel and

²¹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, December 20, 1957.

²¹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 30 and February 3, 1958.

²¹² Salina (KS) Journal, September 14, 1958.

g's record was a bright light in this respect.²¹³

For 2,464 men re-enlisted during this period, which was about one-third of the enlisted force assigned to Schilling at the time. Unfortunately, seldom were percentages reported. When one considers that the Air Force had four and a half year enlistment terms in effect at this time, the fact that this many men re-enlist at a base in the middle of Kansas can only be attributed to morale at the base and competent leadership. Schilling's personnel were constantly reminded by the Salina Journal that they were the best. The fact that at least 2,464 men re-enlisted during this period seems to indicate that they believed it. The figures for 1959 were not reported so it is difficult to determine how many actually re-enlisted during this period, but since it was reported, one can assume that the rate was lower and not the best in the Air Force, SAC, or the 15th AF, to which Schilling returned in 1959.

Visitors

After the bally-hoo of the renaming festivities of March 15, 1957 died down at the start of this period, there were only twenty-three high-ranking visitors reported. It seems probable that given the mission of the base in this period, that this was a fairly accurate figure although it seems strange that the two Senators from Kansas and the six Kansas Congressmen did not pay a visit. The first visit reported was that of eleven NATO officers who visited the base one day on April 28, 1957. On September 27, 1959 a group of twenty-five NATO officers, representing eleven NATO countries, visited the base to observe how it performed its mission. Both reported tours were part of a nationwide tour.²¹⁴

²¹³ Salina (KS) Journal, February 6 and 8, 1959.

²¹⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, April 28, 1957 and September 27, 1958.

General Sweeney, Commander of the 8th AF, was the first Commander to visit in this period on May 29, 1957. He made two other visits before the took over jurisdiction of the base on January 1, 1959. During each he always insisted that he looked forward to visiting Schilling. But his May 20, 1958 visit where he got to observe how well the base performed its mission. Just before he left that day, an alert was called and the watched the men scramble into action and commented that Schilling had the "How-to-do-it" base and that other SAC units were sending men to see to see how they could do their jobs as well as Schilling.²¹⁵ Other commanders who visited the base included General Powers, who had served on the in 1943, Maj. Gen. Charles B. Dougher, 8th AF Deputy Commander, General Commander of the 15th AF, Maj. Gen. W. T. Hudnell, Commander of the Main-Force Division at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, and Col. George Wilson, Chief of SAC. An 8th AF inspection team was on base in July, 1957 and rated the base outstanding and number one amongst the ten 8th AF bases. Schilling had 882 out of 1,000 points and was the only base rated outstanding by the inspectors.²¹⁶ This meant that the visit was pleasant and agreeable to both.

Two former Commanders visited the base during this period and one of them visited it four times. Brig. Gen. William L. Lee, Commander of Amarillo AFB, made two reported visits to the base to visit friends in Salina. His first visit was in January, 1958 and he expressed amazement at the many improvements which had been made and were being made at the base. After a second visit, after that year, nothing more is heard about him. Brig. Gen. James W. Wilson

²¹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, May 29, 1957 and May 20, 1958.

²¹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, July 28, 1957.

visits to Salina during this period, the first of which was on July 15, 1957 and the last was on May 5, 1960 in his capacity as Inspector General which he also turned into a social visit to see friends.²¹⁷ Of interest is that General Lee is not reported to have attended the renaming festivities on July 15, 1957. Yet each time General Lee visited Salina, he was given a great deal of fanfare.

Adm. Howard Yeager and Com. Halsey Hines, both naval officers and commanders of the area, visited Schilling AFB and the area on June 20, 1958. They were met at the ramp by Colonel Ohlke, 802nd AD Commander, and Lt. Col. Hein, 802nd AD Commander.²¹⁸ The significance of this visit was not that the officers came to Schilling in a Navy plane but that the article appeared in the Salina Journal. Admiral Yeager was the son-in-law of Roy Bailey, former editor of the Salina Journal.

President Eisenhower, who had been reared in Abilene, KS, made his last visit to the base while he was President during this period. The first visit, the fourth since he had been elected President, was on October 19, 1958. He was honored by a guard of airmen standing at attention from the flight line to the main gate. His reason for the visit was to visit Abilene and he left the next day with less ceremony.²¹⁹ His last visit was on October 13, 1959 and is covered in greater detail. He was met at the foot of the unloading ramp by twenty Sergeants, all graduates of an Air Force NCO Academy, as an honor guard. At the end of this line stood the four Schilling Commanders of the major units on base and their wives and they exchanged greetings with the President.

²¹⁷Impact, January 31, 1958 and Salina (KS) Journal, May 22, July 10, 1958, May 5, 1960.

²¹⁸Salina (KS) Journal, June 20, 1958.

²¹⁹Salina (KS) Journal, October 19, 1958.

Schilling, the President got on a helicopter which took him to Abilene at 11:00 A.M. He was only on the base for fifteen minutes. When he left the next day to return to Washington (he had spent the night in Abilene), he was presented with a scroll with birthday greetings from the men of Schilling by a delegation of Major Schilling Commanders. "The President read the two by four foot scroll and thanked the group, smiling broadly." The scroll had been made by Francis J. Williams.²²⁰

The rest of the visitors during this period received sparse coverage or none at all. It was deemed unimportant to the mission of the base. All of these visitors were greeted by at least the Base Commander or his deputy and often were greeted by the 802nd Air Division or a Wing Commander. In the articles covering President Eisenhower's visits, the Salina Journal always referred to the base as "the Base."

Housing

With the base building housing on its east side, housing should not have been a problem during this period, but it appears that the situation had not improved. There seems to have been a reluctance by the real estate developers to do something about the situation and by the end of this period, it appears the situation had become critical. At the start of this period, there were two bomb wings at Schilling for an air division, but by the close of this period, it was evident that the 40th Wing was leaving for Topeka, the Army and many construction workers were coming into the area to build and operate the missile sites.

On April 19, 1957, with 535 Capehart units nearing completion at Schilling, the base revealed that it had asked the Air Force for 555 more Capehart units. If approved, NCOs would get 320 of the new units and officers would be allotted

²²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, October 13 and 14, 1959.

These units would cost \$9 million to build and help ease the housing problem in Salina. Of course, the realtors in Salina objected to the request for a base and stated that there was no housing shortage in Salina.²²¹ Mrs. W. E. Miller wrote a letter to the editor of the Salina Journal on April 24, 1957, reminding Salina that Salina had promised the Air Force adequate housing before it returned in 1951. "At the time of the base reactivation, we promised almost everything under the sun to get the base. Now that the base is here, the needs of the base are ignored."²²² Yes, Salina had promised to even form Salina, Inc., which was never heard from after it was formed. It is coincidental, of course, that the Salina Journal ran an editorial on the same day and on the same page that Mrs. Miller's letter appeared, supporting the request for more housing for Schilling personnel.

...No plan has been proposed for the group that needs housing the most--the families of the Airmen Basic through SSgt. An A3C receives \$101.40 a month for quarters and \$77.10 for rations. It is not much better for an A1C. . .A government-sponsored program is needed for these people. . .Salina should support a program which would improve and encourage re-enlistment.²²³

The last sentence of that editorial is interesting. First, the normal articles about the base during this period were on how great morale was and how a great job the men at Schilling were doing. The units at Schilling were winning their share of awards. Lastly, 1957 and 1958 were to be the peak years for re-enlistment in the history of the base. If morale needed improving, the units would have failed to retain so many men. It can only be assumed that the Salina Journal was supporting an Air Force bandwagon and hopeful that the Air

²²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 19 and 21, 1957.

²²² Salina (KS) Journal, April 24, 1957, letter to the editor.

²²³ Ibid., editorial.

would not get any ideas about closing the base.

By September 18, 1958, the base had reduced its request to 538 more Cape-
units. Already, 535 units had been completed. But, the article revealed,
2,283 of the 3,166 married personnel assigned to the base lived in adequate
housing and 541 of that number lived in Schilling Manor on base. There were
thirty families living in Phillips Village,²²⁴ which, as it may be re-
vealed from Chapter Five of this paper, the Air Force Times had revealed to be
substandard and that the Air Force had plans to raze as soon as the base
housing project was finished. On October 1, 1958, a special Salina Chamber of
Commerce committee endorsed more housing for the base provided that one-third
was for the lower-enlisted grades. "An acute need exists for adequate
housing for junior airmen with families."²²⁵

The Salina Journal placed the blame on the government and urged it to pro-
vide more housing and to provide adequate housing for junior airmen with fami-
lies in its October 2, 1958 editorial.

... Pay and allowances are not enough for many of them (junior
airmen) to rent or buy decent homes at present prices. . . . If this
nation wants to keep good men in the Air Force of all grades, it
must provide for their families. . . . It is most desirable the Air
Force families remain a part of this community--and not isolated as
if they had the plague. Good community relations have been one of
the reasons for Schilling's top rank. . . . We are short of housing
for all purposes now.²²⁶

There is little more that can be added, as junior enlisted personnel have always
been at the short end of the pay scale. They are, like their civilian counter-
parts, merely apprentices at the start of their service in the military. The

²²⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, September 18, 1958.

²²⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, October 1, 1958.

²²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, October 2, 1958, editorial.

pay and allowances increase significantly once they re-enlist and some that as an enticement to re-enlist because from then on, the pay and allowances are safely above the minimum subsistence levels.

However, Congressman Wint Smith, who represented the District that included Salina in Congress, was not satisfied with the Air Force's justification for the housing for the base. By March 12, 1959, the number of additional units at the base had been reduced to 275 and he blocked it in Congress without giving any reason save that the base did not need the housing.²²⁷

It was known by May of 1959 that missiles were coming to Salina. This meant that the Department of Defense would be spending over \$135 million to improve facilities of the base to accommodate the missiles and construct the missile bases. In an editorial on May 14, 1959, the Salina Journal once again turned attention to the housing situation: ". . .While this (construction) is going on, we will be hosts to a large group of scientists, technicians, and industrialists. If we want industry, here is our chance to sell our goods. The first problem is housing. . . .The job is up to us. This is the turning point--one way or another. . . ."228

As will be brought out in the following section, Schilling got 200 more units for Schilling Manor. This did not seem to alleviate the matter but may have only made it worse. It was learned on April 13, 1960 that the Army, which would operate the Nike missile sites in the area, was offering a year lease to the Nike personnel housed in Salina. The Army needed at least seventy-five houses which were in short supply in the area. There was hope that some houses

²²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, March 12, 1957.

²²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 14, 1959, editorial.

placed on the market as the 40th Wing left the area.²²⁹

Less than a month later, the construction of missile sites in the area was as a boom to the local economy but was also proving to be a headache in housing was getting harder to find. The Army, by then, was prepared to offer a five-year lease and above average rent to house its personnel but was having a difficult time finding even seventy-five homes. Bennington, KS, which was to have a Nike site was also in trouble in that there were few houses available there. It was estimated that about thirty men would be required to man the Atlas base and about seventy-five men would work at each site while it was under construction.²³⁰

Schilling Manor

While the housing shortage was being looked at in Salina, plans were under way to build a school in the base housing area. Since the base housing project was about ninety days behind schedule, the Salina school system did not feel that it would have any problems until 1958 when the housing area was scheduled for opening, but it was having trouble determining how many children would be attending school there.²³¹ By July 21, 1957, the work at Schilling Manor, as it had been dedicated on July 4, was half-way completed. Some of the personnel who were to live there had been taken on a tour of the area and were impressed with what they had seen. The first tenants of Schilling Manor were to be those personnel who were key personnel, such as First Sergeants and Squadron Commanders. There would be room for over 2,000 people including children. When completed, there would be 128 two-bedroom duplex units for airmen, 192 three-bedroom duplex

²²⁹Salina (KS) Journal, April 13, 1960.

²³⁰Salina (KS) Journal, May 6, 1960.

²³¹Salina (KS) Journal, May 7, 1957.

for airmen, thirty two-bedroom duplex units for officers, 120 three-bedroom units for officers, fifty three-bedroom duplex units for officers, eleven bedroom single units for officers, three four-bedroom General's quarters, and a four-bedroom Commander's quarters.²³²

On September 24, 1957, bids were accepted for the construction of a ten-elementary school at the base to accomodate 350 children. J. S. Frank Construction Company submitted a low bid of \$304,300 for the school and started construction on April 9, 1958. Salina had been trying to get the Air Force to add twelve rooms, and as construction started, the Air Force decided that Salina was right and began trying to get the money for the addition.²³³ Originally the occupancy date of Schilling Manor was to have been on October 15, but delays in construction forced postponement of that date. It was estimated that the occupancy date would be after Christmas. The dampest fall in Salina had caused the delay. Finally, the date was set for January 15, 1958 with the Non-Commissioned Officers' section being opened first.²³⁴

It was announced on December 29, 1957 that M. Sgt. Ernest L. McNeill, a thirty-year veteran and a Master Sergeant since August 10, 1942, had won the base housing sweepstakes by virtue of having been a Master Sergeant longer than anyone else on base and would be the first to move into Schilling Manor. Other families would also move into Schilling Manor by January 15. There were 180 units on the north side of the access road called Schilling Drive. Officers quarters were not ready for occupancy at that time. It had been decided that four families a day would move into the housing area during the

²³² Salina (KS) Journal, July 4 and July 21, 1957.

²³³ Salina (KS) Journal, August 30 and September 25, 1957 and April 9, 1958.

²³⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, October 27, November 10, and December 12, 1957.

and then after that it would be increased to seven families a day
the units were all occupied.²³⁵

problem crept up on January 24, 1958 and that was who paid the taxes for
Schilling Manor; McCann Construction Company which had built the housing
for the Air Force which would own the housing area. Saline County asked
Attorney General of Kansas, John Anderson, for an opinion. This issue
evolved into another one and that was whether the residents of Schilling
were voting residents of Saline County. The federal government had ac-
title to the property on which the housing area was located and persons
lived on such lands had no elective franchise as inhabitants of Kansas.
The housing had been built by a private firm. Attorney General Anderson,
at re-election that year and who would be elected Governor of Kansas in
ruled on August 4, 1958, that residents of Schilling Manor were eligible
to vote in the August 5, 1958 primary and in other elections affecting their
area. The Air Force was also held accountable for property taxes levied on
area.²³⁶

While the issue of who was to pay property taxes on Schilling Manor and
whether the residents of that area were eligible to vote in Kansas elections
was going on, the population of Schilling Manor increased by one boy. The
first child to be born to a resident of Schilling Manor occurred on February 7,
1958 when a boy was born to M. Sgt. Edward R. Shiver one day after he took up
residence there.²³⁷

On June 26, 1959, the government approved the construction of a five-room

²³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, December 29, 1957 and January 13, 1958.

²³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, January 24, July 4, and August 4, 1958.

²³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, February 7, 1958.

00 addition to Schilling School. When completed, the school would be accommodate 580 students. J. S. Frank Construction Company, the same which had built the school, bid \$109,990 to do the expansion work on the and started work on August 19, 1959.²³⁸

President Eisenhower signed the authorization for 200 more Capehart units on August 12, 1959. Of the then-existing 535 units, 320 were for enlisted personnel and 215 for officers. When the 200 new units were completed there would be 484 for enlisted personnel and 251 for officers. Emerson Company of Topeka submitted the low bid for the 200 Capehart units on May 19, and was expected to start work late in the fall of 1960. Two other bids were submitted for the project.²³⁹

To keep the area clean, a clean-up of the Manor was organized and conducted on April 13, 1960. More than 500 male residents of the area pitched in to dig, rake, and collect trash. Men of each major organization on base set up signs and posts for the portions of the Manor to which they were assigned and supervised by the Commanders of the 310th and 40th Bomb Wings, and the 40th Medical Group.²⁴⁰

The Salina Board of Education decided that Schilling School was still too small on May 20, 1960 and expected 220 new students when the Schilling Manor addition was completed. They asked the Air Force to enlarge the school as there was only one vacant room in the school and it was expected to be filled in the fall.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, June 26, July 17, and August 19, 1959.

²³⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 13, 1959, May 12 and 19, 1960.

²⁴⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, April 14, 1960.

²⁴¹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 22, 1960.

Phillips Village

As has been stated earlier, by September 18, 1958 there were still thirty families residing at Phillips Village. But by February 3, 1959, the Air Force announced that seventy-three buildings were to be sold. However, personnel living housing there would not be affected.²⁴² When the last families moved was not known, but a Texas firm bought 90 percent of the barracks-type one-story buildings on February 26, 1959 for \$120,000. Then on August 27, 1959, four more buildings and 204 acres of land were put up for sale. A Salina firm had already leased the buildings for grain storage for five and one-half years. Mineral rights were reserved by the government.²⁴³ This action ended the history of Camp Phillips/Phillips Village which had begun life in 1942 as an Army post before being converted to a VA hospital, and finally to an Air Force housing area. Its history was first as a stop-gap measure and then as a stopgap up the Air Force's sleeve. Nothing remains today of the area that would indicate that it had served a role in the military history of Schilling Air Force Base and Saline County. In the next chapter, it will be revealed that the Air Force started building a golf course in the area just before word was received that the base was to be closed.

Rumors

The air base at Salina was fifteen years old on April 7, 1957 and the reactivated base was six years old on August 1, 1957. Schilling Air Force Base, as it had come to be known, was Salina's major industry and its largest employer. By 1958, the base had been an integral part of Salina for sixteen years. Because of this, it was time for rumors to start circulating as to the future of

²⁴²Salina (KS) Journal, February 3, 1959.

²⁴³Salina (KS) Journal, February 26 and July 27, 1959.

owing to the defense needs changing with the times. Until the early 1950s the B-29 and B-36 bombers were the major means of retaliation against any attack. These two planes gave way to the B-47 and B-52 bombers. New systems were in the offing and it had been known in 1954 that the B-47 was a stop-gap plane until the B-52 could fully take over. Thus, there probably was a legitimate concern about the future of Schilling. Would it change with the times or would it be abandoned?

Salina was assured on January 17, 1958 that the base was to continue as a major base in SAC in spite of current United States dispersal plans." Congress was pushing a plan to make American military installations less attractive to the enemy but there was no such plan in effect for Schilling.²⁴⁴ A little over a year later, the Salina Journal commented on the successful efforts by Congressman Wint Smith to block a 240-unit housing development for the base. "A serious concern was present in Salina's attitude. "But there is still a chance. Salina must write and let Congress know that we care."²⁴⁵

Later that month in an editorial titled "Need Room Not Rumors," the Salina Journal looked at the rumors concerning the future of the base:

. . . Rumors grow naturally where secrecy is enforced. But here are some facts: 1. The B-47 and KC-97 will soon go the way of the B-17. 2. They will be replaced by missiles and faster than sound aircraft. 3. The number of people needed will be fewer but better trained. 4. The time-table for these changes will be stretched out over a number of years. 5. Schilling is one of the best bases in the nation. 6. Some \$45 million will be spent to install Atlas ICBM missiles in Salina.

It is clear that the long-range existence of Schilling as a number one base depends upon three factors: 1. The future of the global mission. 2. Invention of weapons not yet conceived. 3. Ability of both Salina and the Air Force, jointly and cooperatively, to provide the climate of morale necessary for a first-rate force.

²⁴⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, January 17, 1958.

²⁴⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, March 13, 1959, editorial.

The following day, on September 27, 1959, the Salina Journal looked at "new crop of rumors" which had sprung up concerning the base. It appeared the Salina Journal was trying to get the Air Force to reveal its future concerning the base. Within three years, it (the base) would achieve "new Strategic Air Command look." Schilling would get ICBMs and Nikes to protect them. B-52 and KC-135 jet aircraft would arrive to replace the B-47s and KC-97s. There would be fewer men drawing higher pay. Plans were already set to beef up two runways for the "heavier, wider" aircraft. The changes Schilling were to begin within the next year.²⁴⁸ It was nice to know that Schilling was to get the-then super aircraft in SAC's inventory (which remain mainstay of America's continental defense to the present) but what reasoning there for this speculation?

Senator Frank Carlson, junior United States Senator from Kansas, visited Salina on December 3, 1959 and gave what was described as a somber talk in which he reviewed a multitude of problems; domestic and international. Despite this, he dropped one note described as cheerful for the area. In response to a question about Schilling after the meeting, he stated that in his opinion the base was "in no danger of any curtailment in personnel or activity. In fact, Schilling will be more important than ever. It will be the center of missile activity in this area."²⁴⁹

Col. Julius Summers, Base Commander, met with the Salina Real Estate Board on May 11, 1960 and informed them that what Salina got in the way of additional military facilities in the future depended upon Salina. The Department of Defense would probably consider what an area provided in the way of housing in

²⁴⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, September 27, 1959.

²⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, December 5, 1959.

future plans. Schilling was the second largest base in SAC. Although approximately 650 families would leave with the 40th Wing when it moved to a new base, new plans for the base would bring in new families and probably exceed the loss of the Wing. He was not sure of just when the new aircraft would be moved to Schilling but the switch would probably mean only fewer aircraft, men, at the base.²⁵⁰

The last article concerning the future of Schilling in this period appeared on May 3, 1960 in an editorial in the Salina Journal, which seems to have taken on itself the role of a watchdog over the base. By this time, it was known that the 40th Wing would leave that month for Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS and that missile silos were under construction in the area.

How can Salina do an honest, conscientious tax-saving job for national defense and at the same time preserve for the area the economic benefits of Schilling Air Force Base? That's a good question today. Some of our friends in the 40th Bomb Wing are migrating to Topeka, many of our old Air Force friends are back in town for a 310th Wing reunion, the missile boys are digging a dozen silo holes faster than any prairie dog, and the Nike outfits are up in the air without benefit of propulsion.

Fortunately, there's a good answer. It meets squarely both halves of my question. That it should be a good answer is of concern not only to us but also to the government and certainly to the Schilling leaders and alumni who have put this base and its wings to the top in SAC performance.

First, digging Atlas sites is on schedule. Construction crews will reach 1300 to 1500 by March, 1961. They will be gone by late spring 1962. As the construction crews move out, the missile crews will move in. Even with the 40th Wing gone, the aircraft at the base will remain at 100 or more, about half of them bombers, half of them tankers. They will soon be replaced by more modern aircraft. To accommodate the larger aircraft, the runways are being beefed up. It is hoped the widening of the runways can be approved for a start between July 1961 and June 1962 and it will take about ten months.

Here is the uncertain time. During runway construction period, the Air Force will have three choices. It could try to sandwich flying time operations with runway building; it could move the troops out, leaving the base temporarily on a caretaker status which would be costly to the Air Force and Salina; or it could transfer flying

²⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, May 12, 1960.

operations to some other base but leave dependents and many of the command and support units here. This seems a wise compromise, preserving the important values to the Air Force that the base and Salina entente have developed.

Then by 1963, after a period of change, the base is expected to have a new look. It will be the headquarters of 9000 mile missiles. It will muster better bombers, better tankers, better runways and combat-ready troops. It should be a key base for national defense.

But in 1963, Schilling will also have something more to offer. The various facilities required for the new aircraft and the missiles also can accomodate an extra load if it is of the proper kind. The base will be ready to take on an extra unit, perhaps a strategic support group or squadron, perhaps a transport unit of the C-130 or C-133 variety. We will have the concrete, the ramps, the housing, the support facilities and a central location with the best flying weather in the nation. Above all, we can offer the know-how of backing the Air Force. It is logical and economical to put the extra unit here. If Schilling's friends and Salinans do not go after such an additional unit, if they do not start working now, they will be letting the Air Force, the taxpayers and Salina down.²⁵¹

Earlier, the Salina Advertiser-Sun had written that the base would be closed for a year for runway repairs. Colonel Jumper, 802nd AD Commander, had "outly denied" this possibility. Now, eight months later, the Salina Journal vindishes the idea of temporarily closing the base as if it were a brand-new possibility. This editorial came out of the clear-blue sky. But of equal interest was the attention the Salina Journal focused on the need for another mission for the base. Would a Military Airlift Command (MAC) or Air Training Command unit have altered the fate of the base in 1964? Salina had brought national attention to itself in this era. Its units were probably the best in the Air Force and certainly in SAC. The 802nd AD had a very good flying safety record while the 40th and 310th Bomb Wings were usually close to each other in competition contests. By winning re-enlistment contests in the Air Force, it is named the "Golden Anniversary Base."

²⁵¹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 3, 1960, editorial.

The One-Two Punch

Before the Air Force could start work on changing Schilling over to a B-52 supported with Atlas missiles, room had to be made to accommodate the B-52s. Work would be done on the runways to strengthen them farther for the heavy loads that the B-52 bombers and KC-135 tankers would be carrying. The increased use of the runways would permit Schilling to carry out its mission without really reducing its effectiveness. There had to be plenty of room for the construction crews working on the missile silos and runways, the arriving personnel to man the missiles once they were operational, and for the 310th Wing to continue its flying activities supported by the 40th and 310th ARS. To make room, the 40th Bomb Wing, stationed at the base since early 1953, had to be moved to Forbes AFB, KS by June, 1960. However, the 40th ARS would remain at the base with the 310th Bomb Wing. This was a part of a dispersal plan. Eventually, the B-47s assigned to the 310th Bomb Wing would be replaced by B-52s but only after extensive work had been completed, primarily widening and lengthening the base's runways.

The departure of the 40th Bomb Wing was not expected to be a blow to Salina's economy as the "B-52 components will be moving in almost immediately." About 1,000 people would be involved in the move and half of them lived on the base. Then there would be the Atlas missile personnel. SAC's plan was to have no more than one B-52 and B-47 Wing with refueling aircraft on a single base. The plan scattered the attractive targets and forced any aggressor to disperse his own force. Also, fewer planes on a base meant that they could be launched faster. Operation of the Atlas missile bases was expected to take 1,000 men. The Salina Journal summed up Salina's loss in the following way: "Dear Sal: It's hard to say 'Goodbye' to the 40th. But at least Forbes and Topeka will

but how a sharp outfit operates. Yours, Ina."²⁵²

Both Wings celebrated a birthday in early 1960. The 310th Wing received Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for a three-year period ending January,

The Wing had been organized in 1942 as the 310th Bombardment Group and activated on September 12, 1945. It was reactivated in March, 1952 and then

to Schilling in September, 1952. The 40th Wing was one year older and

been activated as the 40th Bombardment Group in New York on April 1, 1941.

had been transferred to Schilling in March of 1953 after having been reactivated

at Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ on May 28, 1952.²⁵³

The first major organizational change concerning the transfer of the 40th

was announced on March 27, 1960. The 802nd Combat Support Group (formerly

802nd Air Base Group) was to become the 310th Combat Support Group on June

1960. Then the 310th Bomb Wing would be placed under the 819th Air Division

quartered at Dyess AFB, Abilene, TX. Salina was assured that Schilling

would be getting the B-52 and KC-135 in the near future.²⁵⁴

It seemed that the Air Force was doing everything it could to make the

transfer of the 40th Wing as easy as possible for both Salina and the personnel

of the 40th Wing. On April 24, 1960, approximately 350 40th Wing men and their

wives attended a briefing held in the base theater to receive a briefing on

what they would find at Forbes and in Topeka when they arrived there. The

briefing lasted from 8:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. The transfer of the 40th Wing

began on May 23, 1960 with around 390 men leaving in the initial moving operation

which was expected to take at least a month and a half. However, around

²⁵² Salina (KS) Advertiser-Sun, January 2, 1960 and Salina (KS) Journal, December 31, 1959 and January 12, 1960.

²⁵³ Salina (KS) Journal, March 16 and 31, 1960.

²⁵⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, March 27, 1960.

would be declared surplus from the 40th and transferred to other units.

It was to make the move as gradual as possible and easy any economic

the transfer of the unit would have on both Salina and Topeka. "Dear

Wonder if Topeka appreciates what its getting in the 40th Bomb Wing?

Ina."²⁵⁵

Although the transfer of the 40th Wing had started on May 23 and the 802nd

Division would not be deactivated until June 20, signalling the formal and

end of Schilling as a two-Wing base, a ceremony was held on June 1, 1960

at which the 40th Wing standard was transferred from Schilling to Forbes at a

dinner held in the Schilling Officers' Club with representatives from Schilling,

the Chambers of Commerce from Salina and Topeka. After the stan-

dard was presented to the Topeka Chamber of Commerce by the Salina Chamber of

Commerce, Col. Woodward Carpenter, Commander of the 40th Wing, presented a

letter to Salina's Chamber of Commerce on behalf of the men of the 40th Wing

in way of saying "thank you" to Salina for its support of and interest in the

base's activities while it was stationed at the base. "Dear Sal: Hope the men

of the 40th return for a visit now and then. Yours, Ina."²⁵⁶

The 802nd Air Division and 802nd Combat Support Group were formally deac-

tivated on June 20, 1960. In their places, the 310th Wing took over responsi-

bility for the base and became the host unit while the 310th Combat Support

Group took over housekeeping chores at the base. Colonel Jumper became Commander

of the 310th Wing but Colonel Summers remained Base Commander by assuming command

of the 310th CSG. The 40th ARS joined the 310th Wing and a new unit, a consoli-

dation of the 40th and 310th OMS (Organizational Maintenance Squadron), the

²⁵⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, April 25 and May 18, 1960.

²⁵⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, June 1, 1960.

OMS, was born.²⁵⁷

Whether Salina or Schilling liked it or not, now the future rested with the 40th Bomb Wing and whatever the Air Force decided to do with it. Why the Air Force chose to move the 40th instead of the 310th was never explained. It was that the Commanders of the 40th Wing went farther in the Air Force hierarchy than the 310th, but the 310th Wing won more honors. The 40th Wing was one step older than the 310th, but both units ranked high in terms of honors conferred upon them. It was just that the 40th Wing usually came in second to the 310th.

On June 20, 1960, a change occurred at Schilling. Unknown at the time was that the change was to snowball and before five years had passed, both the 40th and 310th Bomb Wings would no longer exist. Salina would hear plenty about the KC-135 and millions of dollars would be spent on Schilling and the 40th. But in this period, Schilling Air Force Base distinguished itself in a manner that has probably never been rivaled since. Schilling had been named the "Golden Anniversary Base" during this period and ironically, it would be clear that this was Schilling's golden period.

²⁵⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, June 17 and June 20, 1960.

CHAPTER VII

THE ONE-TWO PUNCH

JUNE 20, 1960 TO NOVEMBER 17, 1964

With the deactivation of the 802nd Air Division and the transfer of the Bomb Wing to Forbes AFB, KS, Schilling was still being developed to deliver a one-two punch and was supposed to achieve that objective by 1962. The one-two punch meant that the 310th Bomb Wing could respond to any enemy attack with B-47s and then send in its nuclear-armed B-47s to finish up. The latter could be supported by KC-97 tankers belonging to the 40th and 310th Air Refueling Squadrons (ARS). By 1962, the B-47s and KC-97s were supposed to be replaced by more modern B-52 and KC-135 jets.

The future of Schilling, the 310th Wing, and Salina looked very bright. Salina was told that Schilling would soon be equipped with the new longer-ranged aircraft. At the start of this period, construction on the missile silos was going up to full blast while the base proper was prepared to receive modern B-52s. For a while, no one noticed the already-publicized fact that there would be fewer personnel assigned to the base owing to the increased construction activity.

Schilling and the 310th Wing continued to win awards during this period but never again did it seem to have the lustre that it had had when the 802nd and 40th Wing shared the base with the 310th Wing. When General Jim Wilson and Col. Hal Ohlke left, they seemed to have taken a part of the base with them. For a while in 1962 and 1963, the 22nd Strategic Air Division (SAD) would have headquarters on base, but that unit would only have a handful of personnel

ed to it at Schilling and failed to replace the lustre that the 802nd AD
 ren the base. Salina did not lose interest in the base and morale con-
 to be high. But everyone seemed to be waiting for the new aircraft to
 which would once and for all make Schilling invaluable to the defense
 United States and assure Salina of the air base for a long time to come.
 ll be shown, at first all seemed to be going well to that end but by the
 of this period, there seemed to be some sort of handwriting on the wall
 no one seemed able to decipher.

Organization

At twelve noon on June 20, 1960, the 802nd AD was officially deactivated
 the 40th Bomb Wing formally transferred to Forbes AFB, KS. From then on
 h the end of this period, the 310th Wing would be the primary unit as-
 ed to Schilling. At the same time on June 20, the 310th Combat Support
 p (CSG) was activated to handle the housekeeping chores formerly handled
 the 802nd CSG, as has already been covered in Chapter VI of this paper.
 the 802nd AD was deactivated, the 819th AD at Dyess AFB, Abilene, TX as-
 ed responsibility for the base under the 15th AF at March AFB, CA. The 310th
 would remain under the 15th AF until it (the 310th) was deactivated.
 Effective March 1, 1962, the 310th Bomb Wing received a new name. Owing
 its expanding role as a combined missile, bomber, and tanker wing, the desig-
 tion "Bomb Wing" seemed out of place and obsolete. Plans were underway to
 ip Schilling's flying units with B-52s and KC-135s, so the 310th was renamed
 310th Strategic Aerospace Wing (SAW) to commemorate its expanding defense
 le.¹

Congressman Bob Dole announced in early 1962 that effective July 1, 1962,

¹ Salina (KS) Journal, February 28, 1962.

AD at Malmstrom AFB, MT would be deactivated and transferred to Schilling where it would be reactivated as the 22nd Strategic Air Division (SAD).

There would involve few changes in personnel. However, the 310th SAW Commander, Colonel Jack W. Hayes, junior, would assume command of the 22nd SAD. Command of the 310th SAW would evolve upon another officer. The 22nd SAD would be composed of the 310th SAW at Schilling and the 4128th SAW at Amarillo. ²

When the 22nd SAD was activated at Schilling, it had a wing of B-52s under its command since the 4128th SAW already had been so equipped. On January 3, 1963, it was announced that the 4128th would also get KC-135 tankers. Thus, the 4128th was acquiring the modern look that Schilling was supposed to have had in 1962. In addition, the 22nd SAD only had twenty people stationed at Schilling to handle the paper and staff work. ³

Less than a year after the 22nd SAD arrived, it was announced that on July 1, 1963 that it would be transferred to Walker AFB, Roswell, NM. The whole 22nd SAD staff at Schilling which was composed of ten officers and eight airmen, including Colonel Hayes, Commander, would be transferred with the Division to Walker. At the same time, the 22nd SAD would gain jurisdiction over the 6th SAW at Walker. ⁴ The 310th SAW would remain under the 22nd SAD until it was deactivated in 1965.

One of the oldest units on base, the 40th ARS, was ordered deactivated effective March 21, 1963 and its phase-out began on September 18, 1962. At its peak, the 40th had a complement of twenty KC-97s and over 300 men assigned.

²Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, May 17, 1962. This paper was the former Salina Advertiser-Sun under new management.

³Salina (KS) Journal, May 11 and 22, 1962 and January 3, 1963.

⁴Salina (KS) Journal, April 12 and May 10, 1963.

the men were absorbed into the 310th ARS. This deactivation was subsequently undertaken to make room for the KC-135 jet tankers slated for assignment to Schilling in the near future. Lt. Col. Elbert L. Moore was the last commander of the 40th ARS.⁵

Missiles

It was called a realignment of Nike Missile defenses in the United States. The fact was that Salina would not get the two Nike Missile sites originally announced by the Army. This caused some real estate and personnel problems, the former which will be covered in a later section in this chapter.

Personnel who had enlisted in the Army to serve in Salina would be given options for further service in the Army at other locations, transfer to National Guard reserve units, or discharge.⁶

While the future of the Nike system was being determined, Atlas missile construction was escalating in the Salina area. Col. Arthur W. Cruikshank arrived in the area to assume duties as Task Force Commander of the Atlas missile units in the area. His job was to supervise construction and preparation of twelve sites for operation.⁷ To acquaint Salinans with the Atlas F missile, a model used for public relations purposes was shipped to Salina from Lincoln AFB. It arrived on September 12, 1960 and was to be on display for one week starting September 17. There would be no charge for viewing the seventy-five foot long weapon.⁸

A radio communication system was being installed to enable Schilling to

⁵ Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, March 28, 1963 and Salina (KS) Journal, March 13, 1963.

⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, June 30, 1960.

⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, July 29, 1960.

⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, September 13, 1960.

locate with the twelve missile sites. However, a fall-back system was and finalized on September 15, 1960 when the Air Force was granted a five foot temporary right of way and a sixteen and one-half foot permanent right of way easement through 250 miles of land in Saline, Cloud, Ottawa, Mon, Lincoln, Ellsworth, Rice, and Dickinson Counties in Kansas.⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Wells, a native of New Mexico and a veteran of twenty-one years military service, arrived on base on October 11, 1960 to command of the Air Material Command detachment on base. This unit was charged with the mission of handling logistics and engineering functions connected with the building of the Atlas missile sites around Schilling.¹⁰

When the announcement was made in 1959 that the missiles were to be installed around Schilling, mention was made of the ground transportation arteries in the area. But no mention was made as to how the missiles would get to the base. This matter was rectified on November 11, 1960 when it was revealed that the missiles and machinery would arrive on base by planes belonging to the Military Air Transport System (MATS).¹¹

Colonel Edward B. Jennings, Schilling area Engineer-in-Charge of Missile Construction, hosted a two-day seminar on February 15 and 16, 1961 to discuss construction procedures and problems. Schilling had the distinction of being the first with underground silos in the United States.¹² The first phase of missile construction was finished in March of 1961. In formal ceremonies on March 20, the Atlas site near Beverly was turned over to the Air Force. This

⁹Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, September 15, 1960.

¹⁰Salina (KS) Journal, October 11, 1960.

¹¹Salina (KS) Journal, November 11, 1960.

¹²Salina (KS) Journal, February 14, 1961.

the completion of the "brick and mortar" construction phase meaning the Air Force had the shell of the complex which was ready for the installation of machinery.¹³

The Atlas missile squadron on base had been without a name ever since the personnel had started arriving in 1960. That matter was rectified on July 19, 1961 at 8:15 A.M. when over 200 members of the squadron already on base were expected to appear in formation in the base hangar area to be formally named to Schilling by Col. James C. Robinson, Vice Commander of the 310th Bombardment Squadron. Col. Charles K. Agan would then assume formal command of the 550th Bombardment Missile Squadron (SMS) and M. Sgt. Robert L. Adams would assume the position of First Sergeant of the squadron. After the formation, many of the personnel were expected to depart for a year's training at Sheppard AFB, Wichita, KS and Vandenberg AFB, CA. Then they would return to Schilling to man the twelve Atlas F missile sites assigned to the base.¹⁴

On July 24, 1961, the first Atlas missile arrived at Schilling aboard a cargo transport plane from San Diego, CA. After testing, the missile was to be taken by truck to the Beverly site for installation.¹⁵ But apparently this did not mean that the site would be operational with the installation of that missile. Something happened and the Air Force announced on November 10, 1961 that work on the area missile bases was not being completed as far ahead of schedule as officials had hoped. Some modifications of an unspecified nature were being planned before the sites were activated.¹⁶

¹³ Salina (KS) Journal, March 16 and 20, 1961.

¹⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, March 31, 1961.

¹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, July 25, 1961.

¹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, November 10, 1961.

Congressman Dole announced on May 10, 1962 that the Air Force had informed that it would begin surveys in the near future to determine the feasibility from the geological and operational standpoints of installing Minuteman missile bases in the Salina area. This was only for advanced planning purposes and did not represent a commitment to use Schilling as a Minuteman base.¹⁷

Before the sites could be activated, technicians were needed to operate machinery. Five such personnel were graduated from SAC's phase-two operational readiness missile training course at Vandenberg AFB, CA during the week of July 6, 1962. The new missilemen were: Maj. James F. Dissault, Missile Crew Commander; Lt. George M. Bezek, Deputy Crew Commander; M. Sgt. A. Crone, M. Sgt. Bruce Flaghe, and S. Sgt. Charles W. Wilson.¹⁸

The first Atlas site activated was the Carneiro site west of the base on September 13, 1962. Around 150 people turned out for the opening ceremonies. The Atlas site would be operated by two officers and three airmen working in shifts of twenty-four hours on duty and forty-eight hours off. This would be a temporary arrangement. When more trained crews were available, the time-off schedule would be slightly longer.¹⁹

In the last chapter, the Army had started work on the construction of two missile sites in the Salina area. Men from the area had been recruited to live on the sites and the Army had been trying to get housing for them at better-than-average rental rates. On January 8, 1963, the Army formally announced that the Nikes were obsolete and that all installation work had stopped. Everything was to be sold (minus the missiles which had never arrived in the area)

¹⁷ Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, May 10, 1962.

¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, July 6, 1962.

¹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 14, 1962.

men were reassigned.²⁰ Somehow, it seems doubtful that the Army would keep seventy-five men in Salina over two years after halting work on the missile and it is assumed that this was an error on the part of either the press or the Army.

"Project Update" was the Atlas missile modification program begun in 1963 to improve the security systems and increase the range of the missiles assigned to the base. This work was declared complete on October 1, 1964, two months ahead of schedule. At its peak, a total of 420 men had been working on the project in the Salina area. There were seven men still on base taking care of final paperwork and cleaning up the work area.²¹

310th Combat Defense Squadron

With the advent of missiles to the area, the security of the base received more attention from the local press. On November 19, 1961, the Salina Journal featured a full page article on the 310th Combat Defense Squadron (CDS) which handled military security in the area. The base had a double-security system; Base Police, called Air Police (APs), were the "smartly groomed, white-robed airmen who greet visitors at the base entrance gates," and Central Security men who patrolled the flight line guarding aircraft and using rifles and guard dogs. Both groups were under the supervision of the base's Deputy Commander for law enforcement. There were over 400 men in the unit and twenty vehicles. As a result of the missiles and construction work on base, visitors were no longer permitted to enter the base through the north gate (Centennial Road) but had to enter the base through the main gate on Schilling Road. This gave

²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, January 8, 1963.

²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 1, 1964.

the better control over security as it pertained to Schilling.²²

An "aging veteran of eight years service" at the base was relieved from duty and shipped to Walter Reed Memorial Hospital in Washington, D. C. With the June 24, 1962 newspaper article went on, Tiny, a German Shepherd dog with a painful arthritic hip, an ailment common to that breed of dog, and a career in the Air Force that had begun in 1955, by taking a plane to Walter Reed where he would be put to sleep.²³

The Salina Journal's November 18, 1962 Sunday edition featured an article on "Air Force Infantry" who protected the B-47s on base. There were over 100 men assigned to the 310th CDS by that time and they were commanded by Maj. J. Hines. In an interview about his job, he commented that there was more to the job of guarding an installation like Schilling than having the men on post:

. . .The men have to be firm in their action. We don't train them to be blood-thirsty, but we expect them to take the necessary action when needed. Our job is 90% security and 10% police work. We are developing a capability for close combat to counter any threat to Schilling by espionage, sabotage, or any overt action by small, hostile groups. In other words, we are building a greater capability than just strictly guarding. We're mobile. We can move fast and hit hard, if necessary.²⁴

Schilling still had a police force of around 400 men when the Salina Journal did another article on the 310th CDS in early 1964. There were six sections in the Base Police Unit; investigation, administration, confinement, liaison, pass and registration, and traffic control. Liaison was by then what used to be known as "Town Patrol" and that unit was composed of six men who

²²Salina (KS) Journal, November 19, 1961 and December 15, 1961.

²³Salina (KS) Journal, June 24, 1962.

²⁴Salina (KS) Journal, November 18, 1962.

assigned to the Salina Police Station.²⁵

Hospital

Schilling had a new seventy-five bed hospital built for a possible expansion on a 150-bed chasis. This structure had replaced a barracks-type structure built in 1942 for an expected life of five years. Col. Robert Corwin remembered with a Salina Journal reporter about his experiences as Hospital Commander at Schilling. He was first assigned to the base as Hospital Commander in 1948 as a Lieutenant Colonel and closed the hospital in December, 1949 when the base was deactivated. He returned in 1952 to reactivate the hospital. At that time, his tour of duty was supposed to last just one year. In reactivating the hospital, he and his staff had to chase raccons out of the attic. Now, he has been on the base longer than any other officer and directed a staff of 235 enlisted men and thirteen medical officers.²⁶ After over eighteen years of service in the Air Force, Colonel Corwin retired on April 29, 1961. A native of Ohio, he was retiring to Beaumont, CA near March AFB. He was succeeded as Commander of the 802nd Medical Group and the Hospital by Lt. Col. William Marriott in a change of command ceremonies at the Hospital.²⁷

Lieutenant Colonel Marriott, the new Commander of the 802nd Medical Group at the Base Hospital, had been at Schilling since August 1, 1960. He had been born in Canada on August 4, 1918 and entered the Air Force in 1946. He took command of a unit that had fourteen medical officers, twenty-four registered nurses, ten dentists, a veterinarian, a registered pharmacist, and over 150 enlisted personnel. Under normal Air Force procedure, Colonel Marriott could

²⁵Salina (KS) Journal, March 22, 1964.

²⁶Salina (KS) Journal, October 12, 1960.

²⁷Impact, April 28 and May 5, 1961 and Salina (KS) Journal, April 28, 1961.

to serve as Commander of the Schilling Hospital for about three years.²⁸

On June 24, 1962, the Base Hospital got its first Physical Therapy Director since it was reactivated in 1952. She was Maj. Dorothy G. Woods, a veteran of seventeen years military service and a native of Charlotte, NC. Her husband was a retired Air Force administrative officer.²⁹ Later that year, the Hospital announced that it was prepared for 100 percent participation by military personnel and their dependents in the Sabin oral polio vaccine program on base. The vaccination was free to them. Active duty military personnel were to be given forms to fill out for their medical records.³⁰

Colonel Marriott's expectations of remaining at Schilling for three years did not materialize when he received a special assignment to Viet Nam. His successor was Lt. Col. William C. Rountree who assumed command of the 802nd Medical Group on April 13, 1963. Colonel Rountree had been Chief of Aerospace Medicine at Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, AL before receiving the Schilling assignment.³¹

OQ Gunnery Range

The OQ Gunnery Range, located seventeen miles southwest of Salina, continued to play a role in the affairs of the base training program during this period. Its importance may not have been appreciated until 1966, but there was activity there throughout this period which is presented here since the Range was an integral part of the base. There were 30,000 acres in the Gunnery Range complex, making it one of the world's largest bomb ranges. B-47 and B-52 gun turrets

²⁸ Impact, May 12, 1961 and Salina (KS) Journal, July 16, 1961.

²⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 24, 1962.

³⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, November 30, 1962.

³¹ Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, April 18, 1963.

installed on the ground there which enabled gunners to practice firing at which were in reality flying targets. These drones were launched from a circular concrete track and once in the air were capable of reaching speeds of 100 mph. They cost the Air Force \$2,600 a piece and had an average life of 10 flights or one hour. In 1960, a force of ninety men operated this range and saw over 1,000 men per year practice gunnery skills. Maj. Gerald A. [redacted] was Commander and M. Sgt. Lyle Pound was the Non-Commissioned-Officer-in-Charge (NCOIC).³²

By November 4, 1960, the OQ Range had its own distinctive main gate. T. Andres Pacheco and S. Sgt. Charles Artson, both assigned to the Range, had moved two salvaged target drones and a pile of scrap metal into a new entrance way for the Range. The drones were mounted on each end of the arch which bore the words "WELCOME SAC OQ RANGE" in bold metallic letters. The Range was a section of the 310th Operations Squadron.³³

Between January and November of 1961, the Air Force released \$1.3 million for work on the Range. Work planned was an extension of the water system from the base to the Range, construction of a sewage disposal facility, additions to buildings, new buildings, sidewalks, and roads. At this time, the OQ Range was the only one in the Air Force to use drones for target practice.³⁴ Not all of the land was used for bombing and gunnery practice. But it was kept under government control to ensure that no improvements were made which might interfere with bombing and gunnery practice. In November of 1962, it was announced that sealed bids were being accepted for the private leasing of approximately

³²Salina (KS) Journal, October 9, 1960.

³³Impact, November 4, 1960.

³⁴Salina (KS) Journal, January 19 and November 3, 1961.

acres of Range land in thirteen tracts for grazing or restricted agricultural purposes by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, which oversaw leasing of the land for the Air Force. These leases were for five years beginning January 1, 1963 and ending December 31, 1967. No bid would be accepted if it was accompanied by a deposit of not less than ten percent of the rent offered.³⁵

The Air Force announced on October 24, 1963 that starting on November 1, the Range would be used extensively by the Tactical Air Command (TAC), Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve units for an indefinite period of time. It would be used seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. Farmers and civilians were warned not to pick up any shells or fragments and were to report anything found to the base immediately. Hunting and fishing would be permitted after 5:00 P.M. and before 8:00 A.M. weekdays and all day on weekends and holidays.³⁶

On July 1, 1964, the OQ Gunnery Range, along with fifteen men, were transferred from SAC to the Tactical Air Command (TAC). The men would be attached to the Range as a tenant unit for administrative purposes. Maj. Charles R. [redacted], junior, was named Commander of Detachment 1, 23rd Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), as the Range would be formally known. By February of 1965, there were expected to be thirty-seven military personnel assigned to the Range.³⁷

Operations

Throughout this period, the mission of the base would be the deterrent of nuclear attack. It would do this with B-47 stratojet bombers and Atlas F missiles which

³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, November 23, 1962.

³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, October 24, 1963.

³⁷ Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center and Salina (KS) Journal, November 28, 1964.

operational in 1962. The B-47s were supported by the 40th and 310th Air Refueling Squadrons until 1963 when the 40th ARS was deactivated. The KC-97 was the plane used for refueling until November, 1963 when the last one left and never to return. In March, 1964, the base received the KC-135 jet and always expected to receive the B-52 bomber, which was originally expected in 1962.

Lt. Col. Karl H. Brauer, Deputy Commander for Civil Engineering at Schilf, compared his job to that of a city manager. His city had its own fire departments, water plant, and sewage disposal plant. There were seven rail sidings which unloaded "thousands of pounds of freight" each week. There was a new three-million-dollar hospital and a million-dollar multi-denominational church. Colonel Brauer had to keep up thirty-three miles of roads and runways. He also had 735 homes in "the suburbs." There were two giant vacuum cleaners to keep the runways and ramps clean of debris, a regular street sweeper and ten snowplows. There were sixty-three boilers which provided heat and power to the base. The electric bill was \$26,000 a month and the gas bill was \$17,500 a month. To keep his city operating, Colonel Brauer had a staff of 304 military and 120 civilians responsible to him.³⁸

On September 20, 1960, the Salina Journal proudly announced that the first phase of a \$3.9 million runway improvement program was about to get underway. At least, \$55,000 was to be spent on repair of runways which the B-47s would use while the main runway was rebuilt and expanded for the B-52 which was expected to arrive in 1962.³⁹ From here on, Salina would be looking to the skies for signs that the "castles in the air" were arriving.

³⁸Salina (KS) Journal, July 9, 1961.

³⁹Salina (KS) Journal, September 20, 1960.

With the addition of missiles, the base used enough oxygen to warrant construction of a plant to manufacture it for both the missiles and bombers on base. A special building was built for this project and was called the "LOX" building for short.⁴⁰

Speculation started about the future of the KC-97 propellor-driven tankers at Schilling when the Salina Journal informed its readers on September 18, 1962 that the base was losing some of its KC-97s by March, 1963 when the 438th AFSWRS was deactivated. It was assumed that this was being done to make room for the KC-135s and that shortly after this, the B-47s would be replaced by the B-52s. At this time, there were 5,083 military and 323 civilians on base or approximately 5,400 men and women assigned to Schilling.⁴¹

To keep the planes flying, "Operation High Blower" was created to maintain more than 100 planes assigned to Schilling. The way it worked was that the moment a plane parked on the flight line, a crew of twelve men started swarming it looking for trouble and fixing it on the spot. They did everything from washing the plane to inspecting the machine guns and engines. Schilling had twenty-four teams on duty twenty-four hours a day for the B-47s and KC-97s.⁴²

In the fall of 1962, a U-2 (a spy plane still in use) flying over Cuba took pictures revealing the existence of Russian missile sites capable of striking the United States. These sites had been installed by Russia and although not fully operational, they would be shortly if the United States did not act. President Kennedy demanded the removal of these missiles and for a while a war seemed probable. What was not publicly revealed until November 20,

⁴⁰Salina (KS) Journal, November 26, 1961.

⁴¹Salina (KS) Journal, September 18, 1962.

⁴²Salina (KS) Journal, October 14, 1962.

the fact that Schilling's flying units were involved and had flown to the southeastern part of the United States, ready for action. The planes began returning to Salina on that date and by November 26, flying missions and routine peacetime operations had resumed.⁴³

According to the information office, Schilling had been on an "increased status" for a period of around thirty-nine days. Schilling Air Force had resumed its normal alert posture held prior to the start of the Cuban crisis. Of the Strategic Air Command aircraft, fifty percent were on fifteen minute alert and a greater percentage of the missile force were on a similar alert. President Kennedy had announced his plans for a Cuban blockade on the 22nd after learning that Russian weapons capable of offensive action against the United States were being installed. Shortly after this announcement, stringent security measures were instituted at the base, followed by a news blackout which was not lifted until November 28. Although base officials would not comment about anything that happened during the alert period, Salina noted that the AP's on town patrol were recalled to the base and all leaves and passes were cancelled and most of the military personnel assigned to Schilling had been sent to the base for TDY to other areas of the nation.⁴⁴

Today, many Americans can still recall when a medium-sized new car could be purchased for \$5,000, but on March 7, 1963, Schilling accepted delivery of a brand-new \$99,000 P2 Fire Truck, which is nearly nine times the cost of a new car today. At this time, there were only sixteen such vehicles assigned to Air Force bases and only bases which had KC-135s and B-52s would get them until

⁴³Salina (KS) Journal, November 20 and 26, 1962.

⁴⁴Salina (KS) Journal, November 29, 1962.

are available.⁴⁵

month later the Air Force announced that Schilling would definitely get and KC-135s assigned to it in the near future. Formal announcement was made through the Kansas delegation to Congress. "Schilling is one of the nation's better bases and every attempt will be made to hang on to it." The statement came from Maj. Gen. Delmar E. Wilson, Deputy Commander of the 310th ARS, while on a visit to the base.⁴⁶ This was followed later by the statement that the 24th Bomb Squadron was to be transferred to Schilling from Walker AFB with its complement of B-52 bombers in the summer of 1964. When this transfer was completed, Schilling would have lost 944 men and eleven civilians leaving 4,571 military and 372 civilians on station. There would also be 10 KC-135 jet tankers assigned to the 310th ARS.⁴⁷

It appeared that things were starting to pick up in the modernization of Schilling's units. Schilling crews were to be retrained to fly and maintain KC-135s. A sixteen-man field training detachment (FTD) was to arrive on 1, 1963 to start the training program. Selected KC-97 crews were to go to Castle AFB, CA for retraining in flying KC-135s. Colonel Arnold, 310th SAW Commander, announced that B-47 crews would probably be retrained to fly B-52s. He had nothing positive to offer the press at that time beyond the fact that there would be no mass movement of manpower from the base.⁴⁸

As the modernization process speeded up, there would be fewer aircraft at the base in 1964. The base had already lost twenty KC-97s when the 40th ARS

⁴⁵Salina (KS) Journal, March 7, 1963.

⁴⁶Salina (KS) Journal, April 4, 1963.

⁴⁷Salina (KS) Journal, April 28, 1963.

⁴⁸Salina (KS) Journal, May 2, 1963.

activated and the 379th, 380th, and 381st Bomb Squadrons were to be deactivated when the 24th BS arrived with its B-52s in 1964 with the B-47s being transferred to other bases for storage. At this time, there were 630 B-52s in Air Force inventory and the plan was to have twelve B-52 wings and forty-squadrons at thirty-six stateside air bases. The Air Force planned to use B-52 through Fiscal Year 1971.⁴⁹ The longevity of the planned use of the B-52 is interesting to note here. It is still the major long-range bomber in Air Force inventory and saw use in the Viet Nam Conflict. Had the B-47 lived the same life, it would only now be in the process of being phased-out. Schilling received seven utility aircraft in 1963 to ferry missile crews to the missile bases in early 1963. These planes, similar to the Army's L-20, were designed to land on grass landing strips and within the boundaries of the twenty-acre missile bases.⁵⁰ It is doubtful that these planes ever saw use for the intended purpose, as most men seemed to prefer to drive to the bases to which they were assigned. This writer knows that one officer drove a Ford to his assigned sites in the area and he never mentioned flying. In fact, the officer was one of the few Texans this writer knows to claim that Salina had more hills than many supposed, indicating a belief that flying to some of the sites was not feasible.

To improve Schilling's response to any emergency, the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) was declared operational on October 24, 1963. This system was connected to bases with missiles to give them at least a fifteen-minute advance warning of impending enemy attack.⁵¹

⁴⁹Salina (KS) Journal, May 26, 1963.

⁵⁰Salina (KS) Journal, August 25, 1963.

⁵¹Salina (KS) Journal, October 24, 1963.

At 10:30 A.M. on November 21, 1963, the last KC-97 tanker took off from Salina never to return. In a ceremony covered by the Salina Journal, Colonel [redacted], 310th SAW Commander, signed the plane off of the base's inventory. The KC-97 assigned to Schilling had flown 2,300 hours for the 310th ARS. There were only twenty members of the 310th ARS on hand to witness the affair. The rest of the squadron were at other bases being retrained for the KC-135s. The plane was expected to arrive in early 1964. This plane was flown to the 9th SAW at Mountain Home AFB, ID. Members of the last crew were: Capt. Nicholas H. Howell, [redacted]; Capt. Donald K. Winston, co-pilot; 1st Lt. Clifford E. Shires, navigator; 1st Lt. Luther M. Wise, engineer; and A1C Connie A. Turner, boom operator. The plane was expected to return the next day.⁵²

The first KC-135 to be assigned to a Kansas base was christened the "City of Salina II" on March 8, 1964. When completed, the 310th ARS was to have a complement of fifteen KC-135s, flown direct to the base from Boeing's Spokane, Washington plant and there would be approximately 140 men assigned to the Squadron.⁵³ During the late 1950s, one-third of the B-47s had been kept on alert status. This had changed by April, 1964 while the base was in transition. Approximately 25 percent of the planes assigned to the base were kept on "ground alert." To make room on the base for its expanding role, most of the unused World War II vintage buildings on the south end of the base were in the process of being torn down.⁵⁴

An unexpected "bomb" was dropped on Schilling and Salina on May 8, 1964 when the Air Force informed Salina that the B-47s would remain at the base at

⁵²Salina (KS) Journal, November 21, 1963.

⁵³Salina (KS) Journal, February 13, 19, March 4 and 8, 1964.

⁵⁴Salina (KS) Journal, April 5, 1964.

until after Christmas, 1964. The B-52 squadron would not arrive until 1965. The delay was not expected to alter plans for the base but would require a greater number of personnel on base for Christmas. Behind this was the decision at Forbes. The 40th Bomb Wing was to be deactivated in the summer of 1965. Its deactivation had been advanced from original plans of early 1965.⁵⁵ How this affected Schilling was not mentioned or explained. Plans were finalized and announced on October 20, 1964 that the B-52s would arrive. Starting on January 1, 1965, the B-47s were to begin leaving the base and retired from the Air Force inventory. Then, the B-52s would start arriving on March 1. With this change, the 310th SAW would be redesignated a heavy bomber wing. The 24th Bomb Squadron (Heavy) would be deactivated at Forbes AFB, NM at this time. Instead of being reactivated at Schilling as originally planned, it would revert to control by Headquarters, USAF, and the 379th Bomb Squadron at Schilling would be redesignated a heavy bomb squadron. The 380th and 381st Bomb Squadrons would be deactivated and revert to control by Headquarters, USAF.⁵⁶

While speculation continued about the B-52s, it was learned that Schilling had been named one of five Air Force bases having the best cost reduction programs in the United States during FY 1964. Schilling saved the Air Force over \$400,000 and in FY 1965 saved the government over \$350,000. This started in 1962 when the base was recognized as having one of the best cost reduction programs in the 15th AF and in 1963 when it had one of the best in SAC.⁵⁷

The last item concerning operations appeared on Sunday, November 15, 1964

⁵⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, May 8, 1964.

⁵⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, October 20, 1964.

⁵⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, October 30 and November 8, 1964.

It was revealed that Schilling's personnel were being trained to handle with little effort. The 426C FTD had been on base since March, 1963 when arrived to start preparing the base for the KC-135. Equipment had arrived on October 19, 1964 so that the training could start, preparing personnel for the B-52. There were nineteen men involved in this project and they were under the supervision of the 3346th Field Training Squadron at Chanute AFB, Chanute, IL.⁵⁸

Training

Training during this period was accomplished through participation in air-competition and alerts and measured by Operational Readiness Inspections (ORI). Schilling always remained at the top and closed out this period as one of the better bases in SAC and possibly in the Air Force. Schilling planes participated in eight competitions between August, 1960 and October, 1962. At that, the Air Force appears to have stopped the direct competition and shifted to war games and alerts on base to prepare aircraft crews for the real thing.

On August 12, 1960, it was announced that a 310th ARS KC-97 crew had placed first in a navigation and air refueling competition in the 15th AF. The crew, commanded by Capt. William J. Bauer, was also going to represent the base in the Air Force-wide competition scheduled for September.⁵⁹ How it turned out was not learned until February 16, 1961 when Brigadier General Key, 819th AD Commander, presented the "world's championship air refueling and navigation team" with gold rings. They won the rings for their work in

⁵⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, November 15, 1964.

⁵⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 12, 1960.

vious fall's competition with other Air Force crews.⁶⁰ The next competition started on September 18, 1961 and was dubbed "SAC's World Series." There were about thirty planes involved and the bomber crews each flew one simulated combat mission. Eight KC-97 crews from Schilling but no B-47 crews from Salina participated. When it was over, the 40th and 310th ARSs had placed fourth and eighth, respectively.⁶¹ In the last competition reported on October 17, 1962, the KC-97s belonging to the 40th ARS had been named the best in SAC. The 310th maintained a 97.5 percent efficiency in maintenance and operations and as a result, the plans to deactivate the Squadron were under review. In the years the unit had been active, it had logged more than 75,000 accident-free flying hours.⁶²

Between January 14, 1962 and September 23, 1964, the local press reported Schilling winning nine awards which varied from personnel improvement to winning the SAC Ground Safety Award. These were the golden moments for Salina's base. One of the awards worth mentioning in this section was the top Field Maintenance Squadron Award presented to the 310th FMS by SAC for its work in 1964. This squadron was responsible for the maintenance of the several types of aircraft assigned to the base.⁶³ Later that year, the 310th SAW won the AF Haskell Gray Maintenance Award for the July through September quarter. The award, a twenty-six inch gold-plated traveling trophy (meaning that the trophy was re-presented each time another unit won the trophy), was awarded to the Wing on the basis of its management control system rating, alert aircraft

⁶⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, February 16, 1961.

⁶¹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 18 and 24, 1961.

⁶² Salina (KS) Journal, October 17, 1962.

⁶³ Salina (KS) Journal, June 12, 1962.

ity, base self-sufficiency, and personnel utilization. It was named in honor of the late S. Sgt. Haskell Gray, crew chief in the 96th Bomb Wing, March AFB, OK, who was killed in a B-47 crash in Hawaii.⁶⁴

Schilling scored high again in 1963. SAC announced that the base had won the first in non-tactical and B-47 aircraft maintenance during the October and December quarter of 1963. The non-tactical maintenance pertained to the housekeeping chores of aircraft maintenance.⁶⁵ The last award for this was announced on September 23, 1964 when the base won SAC's private safety award for the first quarter of 1964. During that time, the base had no time due to private vehicle accidents. The base also received a SAC ground safety award for not having a single reportable civilian injury during three million manhours during March. Colonel John F. Scanlan, Base Commander, accepted both awards from Major General James Wilson, Deputy Commander of the 15th AF (and former 802nd AD Commander at Schilling), in an awards ceremony at 15th AF headquarters at March AFB, CA.⁶⁶

Six inspections were reported by the 15th AF and SAC during this period starting on January 7, 1963 when a KC-97 pilot complained to Schilling's control room of engine trouble and requested permission to land. It was granted and the plane taxied to a stop, fifty-three Inspectors "jumped" out, signalling the start of an ORI (Operations Readiness Inspection). Schilling had not been inspected in approximately fifteen months while the Air Force-wide average was five months. When the inspection was over, the base came out on top with base activities receiving an "outstanding" rating, the highest rating possi-

⁶⁴Salina (KS) Journal, November 30, 1962.

⁶⁵Salina (KS) Journal, January 15, 1964.

⁶⁶Salina (KS) Journal, September 23, 1964.

550th SMS, which underwent its first ORI, came out with an average percent on written and practical tests.⁶⁷

was termed a "unique inspection" was performed on Friday, August 16, 1963. Instead of military bearing, creased uniforms, and shined shoes, the inspection concerned itself with tread on tires, tuned-up engines, and operational procedures. This inspection involved over 500 vehicles assigned to the base and was accomplished in compliance with a 15th AF Regulation, April 15, 1963 which required a semi-annual inspection of all ground vehicles assigned to a base.⁶⁸

The last two ORIs reported during this period occurred within two months of each other in 1964. On May 20, 1964, while Colonel Roy Crompton was on base preparing to assume command of the 310th SAW, a twenty-eight man team from the 15th AF "swooped down" on the base for an ORI. Ironically, the Chamber of Commerce was busy planning an event which had been known as Schilling Appreciation Day which for 1964 had been changed to Schilling Aerospace Day to recognize modernization of the base. Despite all of the activity on base, the 310th SAW passed through its fifth ORI in twenty-two months with ease.⁶⁹

During the week of July 15, 1964, around forty 15th AF inspectors paid a visit to the base for a facilities and maintenance inspection. All seemed to be in good shape and work had just been finished to modernize the base. All and 66 percent of the 162 facilities received an "excellent" rating which was just below an "outstanding" rating. This was to be expected as the base was in good shape and work had just been finished to modernize the base.

⁶⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, January 7 and 24, 1963.

⁶⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, August 16 and 22, 1963.

⁶⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 20 and 22, 1964.

missions in SAC.⁷⁰

Alerts

Although related to training and inspections, alerts were different from what had been learned from training exercises and inspections were put in practice in conditions which simulated actual combat conditions. Whereas training and inspections were known to be just practice, few were really sure that the alerts were nothing less than actual war until in the middle of the exercise. Alerts were also different in that they required maximum effort as a team from everyone involved rather than just one person. Everything had to be timed perfectly or else the whole war might be lost just as in the real thing; and this was the objective of the alerts--to find out problems before war broke out and it was too late.

Strategic Air Command units felt that they were always on alert. From time to time, however, things appeared so realistic from the outside that people were concerned. On March 14, 1961, Salina was informed that the base would be participating in a world-wide alert of all United States forces. It was to be of indefinite duration and not related to any special situation. However, the base was allowed to say no more.⁷¹ On March 16, 1962, the base was closed to the general public while simulated war games took place. Only emergency entrance was permitted. Although the base "suffered heavy losses," the planes of the 3rd Wing were not hampered as they took off and sought out the enemy. Unlike wartime, umpires from the 819th AD kept watch on events. There were simulated radioactive fallout and when a man had suffered a lethal dose, he was taken to a mortuary set up in the base communications center. The base thanked

⁷⁰Salina (KS) Journal, July 15, 1964.

⁷¹Salina (KS) Journal, March 14 and November 3, 1961.

for not trying to get on base while this exercise was underway.⁷²

However, in April of 1963, when the base underwent a similar exercise, it was a different story. Although the Salina Journal had announced on April 26 that the games would be held on base on April 27 and that the base would be open to civilians, some apparently did not get the word, because the base was deluged with phone calls from people trying to find out just what was going on.⁷³

A year later, the 310th SAW was engaged in a "Bar-None" training alert in which planes from the base were tested on how well they could handle a simulated wartime mission. Every bomber crew was tested, bar none with no advance notice, which was where the exercise got its name. It was a quarterly event. After the exercise was completed, the crews returned to the base for an evaluation.⁷⁴ In the last exercise, although no one knew it at the time, which was the "Bar-None" conducted during the first week of November, 1964, the bomb squad of the 310th SAW scored a "rare outstanding rating." Col. Roy Crompton, SAW Commander, sent his congratulations to all of the personnel involved in the Squadron Commanders.⁷⁵

There is a tendency in the military to "let go" and permit things to slide after an inspection is over. The personnel, through connections, usually know when an inspection is coming and work overtime to straighten things out so that the inspectors will find everything in top shape. After the inspectors leave, there is a "party to end all parties" and things start sliding until it is time

⁷²Salina (KS) Journal, March 14 and 16, 1962.

⁷³Salina (KS) Journal, April 26 and 28, 1963.

⁷⁴Salina (KS) Journal, April 14, 1964.

⁷⁵Salina (KS) Journal, November 9, 1964.

inspection. But at Schilling, this does not seem to have been the case. Although SAC is known for its "Marine atmosphere" and for being first class, Schilling seems to have adhered to the SAC creed better than most. A thoroughly trained unit is one that is relied upon in times of crisis. It appears that Schilling was one base whose units were to be relied upon in times of crisis.

Accidents

This period was a relatively mild one as far as aircraft accidents went. There were two accidents at missile sites and three accidents involving four aircraft reported which took the lives of six men. Only three planes were lost. The first loss of life reported during this period occurred on Monday, October 10, 1960, when J. C. Nelson, 20, fell 170 feet to his death at the bottom of a missile site near Minneapolis, KS. A platform he and three others were working on started to collapse and they grabbed on to protruding steel beams. Nelson was too far away to do that. During the summer, a man was killed at the Carlton site, bringing the missile deaths to two.⁷⁶

An incident that could have turned into trouble occurred on August 29, 1961, when a 40th ARS KC-97 commanded by Captain Conrad L. Wilson developed engine trouble shortly after takeoff on a training mission. The plane returned to the base without any problems after jettisoning its fuel.⁷⁷

The first fatal aircraft accident was reported on July 8, 1962. A 380th Bombardment Group B-47 took off from the base at 7:50 P.M., Friday, July 6 and crashed about 10 P.M. near Bird City, KS in the northwestern part of Kansas. 1st Lt. Howard A. Steen, 29, Observer, was the lone survivor and he said he ejected on the

⁷⁶Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, October 13, 1960.

⁷⁷Salina (KS) Journal, August 29, 1961.

1st Lt. Douglass P. Bishop, 28, Aircraft Commander, who died with 1st Lt. D. Welborn, junior, 27, Navigator. Debris was scattered over a two-acre area. Investigation at this site was hampered by a crowd of sight-seers. The Governor of Kansas had to send in the National Guard to keep the crowd back so that the Air Force could investigate the crash. Two months later, the Alt Society of the Bird City Methodist Church announced that they were going to hold a memorial service for the two officers killed in the crash and erect a memorial marker near the site. Part of the fuselage with the names of the officers engraved on it was embedded in cement.⁷⁸

On November of 1962, a 381st BS B-47 crew encountered engine trouble on a training mission and landed the plane safely at Clinton-Sherman AFB, OK. Their engines started filling up with smoke and fumes, indicating a faulty engine. Trouble was identified in the number three engine and it was shut off as a precaution to the neighboring number two engine to protect it. The approach and landing were made without mishap and the crew was commended for the "calm, deliberate, precise manner" in the way they handled this emergency. Colonel Arnold, USAF Commander, recommended the crew for SAC Crew-of-the-Month.⁷⁹

The last accident reported during this period came on August 19, 1963 when two B-47s from the base collided into each other near Irwin, IA. The planes were taken off from the base around 11:24 A.M. on a nine-hour and thirty-minute practice bombing and air refueling mission. They were supposed to fly about a mile apart with a 500-foot altitude difference. Before the crash, they were at the 27,000 foot altitude. Three died in this accident, but one body was not recovered for seven days at a place two and one-half miles southwest of the crash site.

⁷⁸Salina (KS) Journal, July 8 and September 12, 1962.

⁷⁹Salina (KS) Journal, November 9, 1962.

corn field.⁸⁰

reactivated base had a far different safety record than did the base in the 1940s. It would appear that the personnel were more thoroughly trained and had a greater pride in their work. Accidents often happen due to carelessness somewhere along the line and can be symptomatic of a problem in morale. The losses of the base between 1951 and 1964 never approached the losses between 1945 and 1949.

Commanders

This period starts at twelve noon on June 20, 1960 when the 802nd Air Division and the 802nd Combat Support Group were deactivated and the bulk of the 310th Bomb Wing was officially transferred to Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS, leaving the 310th Bomb Wing and the newly activated 310th Combat Support Group at Schilling. These units would be the major command units on base throughout the period. Between July 1, 1962 and June 30, 1963, the 22nd Strategic Air Division (SAD) would be headquartered at Schilling under the command of Col. W. Hayes, junior, who had served as Commander of the 310th Bomb Wing. He was the only Commander of the 22nd SAD while it was assigned to Schilling.

310th Bomb Wing 310th Strategic Aerospace Wing

Col. George Y. Jumper assumed command of the 310th Bomb Wing at twelve noon on June 20, 1960 and therein set a record on base which would never be equalled. Before assuming command of the 310th, he had commanded the 40th Bomb Wing and the 802nd Air Division. The only other person to come this close had been Col. Robert J. Nolan when he commanded the 310th and 40th Bomb Wings in the early years of the reactivated base. It was announced on February 2,

⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, August 19, 20, and 26, 1963.

Colonel Jumper had been named Vice Commander of the Technical Training at Lowry AFB, Colorado Springs, CO. He was being replaced by Col. Jack [redacted], junior, Commander of the 341st Bomb Wing at Dyess AFB, Abilene, TX. [redacted] arrival in Salina, Colonel Hayes informed the Salina Journal that he had a "great deal about Salina. The Air Force figures that community [redacted] at Salina and Abilene (TX) are the best in the Air Force. I was very [redacted] to be assigned here." He had been assigned to Dyess AFB since 1955.⁸¹

The 22nd SAD was transferred to Schilling AFB from Malmstrom AFB, MT on [redacted] 1962 and Colonel Hayes assumed command of it. To replace him as Commander of the 310th Wing, Col. Edison F. "Pete" Arnold, a twenty-one year veteran Air Force was transferred to Schilling from a base in England on July 11, [redacted] 1962. Colonel Arnold served as Commander of the 310th SAW around twenty-months. He received orders on May 5, 1964 transferring him to Fairchild AFB as Commander of the 92nd SAW. That unit was a B-52 Wing with a squadron of Atlas E missiles and KC-135 tankers. While in command of the 310th, Colonel Arnold had seen the last KC-97 leave and the first KC-135 arrive.⁸³

As taking command of a wing that was equipped in the same manner that plans the 310th called for it to be equipped.

Unknown to him, or probably anyone else at the time, Col. Roy Crompton was to be the last Commander of the 310th SAW. The new Commander of the 310th was born on July 12, 1919 in Atlanta, GA, received his wings in May of [redacted] and since June 1, 1963 had been Commander of the 821st CSG at Ellsworth AFB, SD. In June of 1948, Colonel Crompton had piloted the first C-54 trans-

⁸¹ Salina (KS) Journal, February 2 and 5, 1961.

⁸² Salina (KS) Journal, July 23, 1962 and May 5, 1964.

⁸³ Salina (KS) Journal, May 5, 1964.

that landed in Berlin to relieve the Berlin Blockade. He had over 84 in the air. From command of a combat support group to command is a promotion and this was the only time that such a promotion had in Schilling's history.

Salina Journal summed up the change of command of the 310th SAW at in its May 6, 1964 editorial:

Salina is glad to see Col. Pete Arnold, the wing commander at Schilling, move out. . . Colonel Arnold has been able to achieve with a command record at Schilling that he is being promoted after brief tour of duty. He has survived with honors a barrage of blitz inspections, alert tests, and SAC 3rd-degree inquisitions. That he has done so is proof again that the men of Schilling and the facilities of Schilling are of such high order that a commander who is on the job has no place to go except up.

For some fifteen years, despite mischance, and occasional slips this base has constantly improved. It has superb runways, a perfect mid-continent bombing range, compact support facilities of many kinds, and a record of economical operation. The community continuously and enthusiastically has supported it. For one reason or another, it also has attracted a large complement of skilled men who have met all kinds of records in a wide variety of military activity.

The Department of Defense relies upon them to carry out some of the most important of its missions. Sorry as Salina is to see the Arnolds go, we are also proud that our base is the kind that can insure good men deserved promotions.⁸⁵

An editorial on a departing Commander at Schilling was unusual. With hindsight, it appears more significant than it probably was at the time. There was nothing unusual about a Schilling Commander being transferred to command of another Wing. Colonels Burchinal and Wells had done it in the past. General Wilson had been transferred from command of the 802nd AD to command of the 821st AD. But it was definitely a promotion for Colonel Crompton to command of the 310th SAW.

⁸⁴Salina (KS) Journal, May 5 and 10, 1964.

⁸⁵Salina (KS) Journal, May 6, 1964, editorial.

310th Combat Support Group

has been noted earlier, the 802nd CSG was deactivated on June 20, 1960. The 310th CSG activated to take its place. The name changed but the mission remained the same. Col. Julius B. Summers continued to serve as Commander and 310th CSG Commander until July 31, 1961 when he was named Commander of the 310th Wing.⁸⁶ This was a promotion of sorts in that the logical step would have been a job as Wing Commander. However, it will be in another section that Colonel Summers found himself heading for Minot as Base Commander.

Col. Wallace F. MacGregor, on base since July, 1960 and Deputy Commander of the 310th CSG since January 12, 1961, succeeded Colonel Summers as Base Commander on July 31, 1961. Colonel MacGregor was a native of Wycoff, NJ and joined the military in 1942. During his tenure as Base Commander, he was active in promoting good relations between the base and Salina.⁸⁷ It was announced that Colonel MacGregor would be leaving Schilling for March AFB, CA on May 20, 1963 to become Base Director of Services there. Until a successor was named, Col. Curtis Youngblood, Vice Base Commander, would serve as Base Commander on an interim basis.⁸⁸

Col. John R. King assumed command of the base on June 18, 1963 from Colonel Youngblood who assumed his former duties as Vice Base Commander. The new Base Commander had arrived from Grand Forks AFB, ND on June 16, 1963. He had received his BA degree from South Dakota State Teachers College, Spearfish, SD

⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, August 3, 1961.

⁸⁷ Impact, March 13, 1961 and Salina (KS) Journal, August 3, 1961 and May 3, 1963.

⁸⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 3, 1963.

ated the Air Force on November 7, 1941.⁸⁹ Less than one month later, King was named Commander of the 550th SMS on base and Col. Charles K. [redacted] Commander of the 550th SMS, became Base Commander on July 16, 1963. Colo- [redacted] had been Commander of the 550th SMS since July 20, 1960 when he arrived [redacted] after a four-year tour of duty at Offutt AFB, NE.⁹⁰ No reason was [redacted] for these changes.

Colonel Agan left for an assignment to Malmstrom AFB, MT less than a year [redacted] He was replaced by Col. James R. Sheffield, Vice Base Commander, on an [redacted] basis until Col. John F. "Mike" Scanlan could arrive from England to [redacted] command of the base. The new Base Commander arrived on base on August [redacted] from a three-year tour of duty in England. He was a native of St. Paul, [redacted] had four children. In the late 1940s, he had served as Director of Ma- [redacted] at then-Smoky Hill AFB and two of his fellow officers assigned to the [redacted] at the time had been Lt. Col. Curtis Youngblood, Base Director of Personnel [redacted] who had also served as Base Commander for approximately a month in 1963), [redacted] Chaplain Chester W. Ross. They were among the first to greet Colonel Scanlan [redacted] returned to the base. Thus, this assignment was sort of a reunion for the [redacted] men.⁹¹

Mike Scanlan, who had received his nickname from Col. Leslie Mulzer, Smoky [redacted] Commander from 1947 to early 1949, had originally been slated to become [redacted] Commander of Mountain Home AFB, ID, but Colonel Arnold, 310th SAW Comman- [redacted] had asked for him and his orders were changed about the same time that [redacted] Colonel Arnold received orders to a new assignment. On his way to Schilling,

⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 19, 1963.

⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, July 21, 1960 and July 16, 1963.

⁹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 5, 1964.

Scanlan stopped off at Headquarters, SAC at Offutt AFB, Omaha, NE to see what he could find out about Schilling. He went over every inspection report and learned that all was in order and the base was in very good shape as he was about to continue his trip to Salina, a full Colonel friend called him into his office and showed him the criteria that SAC would use in closing bases. Schilling did not fit the criteria and he was assured that the base stood sixteenth or seventeenth on the list, meaning that SAC would have to be drastically cut back before Schilling would be closed.⁹² During this period, four men served as Commander of the 310th SAW and one man served as Commander of the 310th CSG and the base. The longest time was twenty-two months by Colonel Arnold and the command of the 310th was fairly stable. But the command of the 310th CSG appears to have been less stable with seven men serving as Base Commander. Two men served less than a month and another served a little over a month. Of these three, two were Base Commanders. Lieutenant Colonel MacGregor served twenty-one months, Colonel Summers serving a little over twelve months, and Colonel Scanlan serving a little under a year.

This was a period of change for Schilling. The missiles were activated, the KC-97s left, and the KC-135s arrived. Within months, the B-52s were expected to arrive on station. Colonels Crompton and Scanlan were on station in command fully expecting to serve at least a year at Schilling. Colonel Scanlan knew that his tenure was secure in that the base would not be closed while he was there.

Construction and Improvements

Missile construction was getting ready to shift into high gear at the

⁹² Interviews with Col. Mike Scanlan, USAF ret., October 31, 1981 and September 1, 1982.

this period. To assist the Convair Corporation, which was in charge of the missile program, fourteen buildings on base were being remodeled to provide space for the 1,500 technicians expected on base in the fall of 1960 to work on the missiles in the area.⁹³ Local firms were invited to submit bids for a cotidian contract for the new readiness crew building at the base which was accepted on July 28, 1960 and named "Minute Manor." This building provided sleeping, dining, and recreational facilities.⁹⁴ Communications with the sites had been thought of and on August 28, 1960, it was announced that a 140-foot radio tower was being constructed in north Salina to enable the base to communicate with the twelve Atlas sites. The original intent was for communication with the workmen but after they left, the tower would serve to enable the base to communicate with the personnel manning the missile sites.⁹⁵

The new hospital was dedicated on October 14, 1960. Construction had begun in June of 1958. Plans were to tear down the old hospital as soon as space to the new building was completed and some of the old barracks-type buildings had already been sold. Since reactivation, the base hospital had treated 20,000 patients while in the old building. The principal speaker at the dedication was Brig. Gen. Theodore C. Bedwell, junior, Command Surgeon of the 36th

Convair announced on September 27, 1960 that it would hire approximately 100 people locally for its work on the area missile sites. Only seventy-five

⁹³Salina (KS) Journal, July 21, 1960.

⁹⁴Salina (KS) Journal, July 22, 1960 and July 28, 1960.

⁹⁵Salina (KS) Journal, August 28, 1960.

⁹⁶Salina (KS) Journal, September 7 and October 16, 1960.

employees were then in the area and most hiring would not start until April. But by February 16, 1961 there were 1,800 people at work and that was expected to increase to around 3,000 by October, 1961.⁹⁷

A new radar approach control (RAPCON) facility was dedicated on November 1961. Lieutenant Colonel Greathouse, Commander of the 2028th AACS, accepted the facility for the base. It already had over \$700,000 worth of modern radar equipment in it.⁹⁸ In 1961, the Air Force awarded contracts in excess of \$100,000 for maintenance projects on base. This ranged from an \$11,000 contract for replacement of space heaters to building rehabilitation.⁹⁹ On June 9, 1961, it was announced that the first stage of construction at the twelve Atlas missile sites had been completed and formally turned over to the Air Force on June 15, 1961. Only the basic construction had been completed.¹⁰⁰

When the base had been reactivated in 1951, a labor dispute had broken out when a union tried to interrupt the work schedule by trying to organize workers. In 1961, the pipefitters stopped work at several missile sites in the area. There was no strike but the pipefitters charged that there was confusion over work jurisdiction involving members of their craft and General Electric, the firm then involved in the missile work. A tentative agreement was reached by October 2, 1961.¹⁰¹

The runways received attention in the local press on January 16, 1962 when it was announced that \$1.8 million dollars was to be spent on runway im-

⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, September 27, 1960 and February 16, 1961.

⁹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, November 3, 1960.

⁹⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 9, July 11, and September 11, 1961.

¹⁰⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 9, 1961.

¹⁰¹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 2, 1961.

at the base. It was needed for the B-52s and KC-135s that were to be moved to the base. Congress had released the money and work was expected to start shortly. The \$1.8 million was changed to \$2.3 million on February 28, 1962. Contracts for on-base repair and modification were released on March 1, 1962, and three went to Salina firms. These contracts varied from an \$8,304 contract for modification of the automotive maintenance shop to painting project and extension of the motor pool parking lot in the amount of \$12,782.¹⁰³ The base revealed how it intended to ready the runways for the new planes by getting to the local press on April 17, 1962. First, the repair of the base's 10,000 foot long "cross-wind runway" which was seldom used and ran from east to northwest was being fixed up for use while the main runway was being repaved. In addition to strengthening the main runway, it would also be repaved. Blast deflectors would be installed around the runways.¹⁰⁴ By the start of September, 1962, most of the work on the missile sites had been completed and the 550th SMS crews were taking over. This had brought about a temporary reduction in Salina's population which was reflected in school enrollments and the number of rental properties put back on the market. It was possible that the loss of the construction workers would be made up by the defense programs as well as private industry and business development. Twelve Atlas sites were formally turned over to the Air Force on September 1, 1962 in a token ceremony at the Carneiro site west of Salina. SAC took possession of them after they had been two and one-half years in the building.

¹⁰² Salina (KS) Journal, January 16 and February 28, 1962.

¹⁰³ Salina (KS) Journal, March 25, 1962.

¹⁰⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, April 17, 1962.

peak of construction, more than 3,200 men had been involved in the construction work.¹⁰⁵

Work on the runways was completed by November 18, 1962 and the Salina interpreted it to mean that Schilling would continue to be used by SAC. The base was capable of handling any aircraft in the United States which meant Schilling Air Force Base is one of the major bases in SAC." Base officials were unable to comment on the future of the base but in a carefully worded statement, Colonel Arnold, 310th SAW Commander, expressed optimism: "Our runway improvements are certainly a solid indication that Schilling will probably be used as a SAC base for the foreseeable future." A major portion of the work involved adding fifty-foot wide strips of concrete varying from twenty-two to twenty-seven inches in thickness, were installed on either side of the runway and increased the landing strips total effective length to 13,330 feet for the B-52. Twenty-four sets of blast-deflector fences were also installed alongside the runway line and were supposed to bounce noise into the air as well as keeping aircraft from kicking up debris and protect ground crews. "It is now believed that the deactivation of the 40th ARS is a part of the Air Force upgrading of Schilling."¹⁰⁶ Continuing to improve the base and make it possible to expand, Schilling officials announced on February 1, 1963 that five World War II-era buildings no longer in use were to be sold. A radio building, three administrative buildings, and a warehouse were to be sold by bids.¹⁰⁷

Rumors started circulating in June of 1963 that construction workers would be returning to Salina to update the Atlas missiles in the area and that someone

¹⁰⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, September 2 and 13, 1962.

¹⁰⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, November 18, 1962.

¹⁰⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, February 1, 1963.

ing motel rooms. This was confirmed on July 1 when the first of 400
 arriving for "Project Update." General Dynamics was charged with
 and announced that the firm expected to hire 375 workers from the
 labor supply to augment the labor force on the missiles. Over \$6 million
 expected to be pumped into the local economy. As this work was finished,
 authorized the installation of an "electric eye" system to replace
 as guards around the missile sites. This work was expected to be com-
 sometime in 1965.¹⁰⁸

In October of 1963, two contracts totalling \$26,520 were released for the
 of Schilling facilities. Salina Tent and Awning received a contract for
 to repair missile enclosure boots at the twelve area sites and Woods
 Construction of Salina received a \$3,252 contract to replace the glass
 control tower. This work was supposed to start on November 1, 1963.¹⁰⁹

Bids were taken by the Army Corps of Engineers for the construction of a
 radar building at the base and for the installation of new equipment.
 Current unit had a range of fifty-three miles while the new one was to have
 of sixty miles and would be available for civilian use.¹¹⁰ In 1964,
 contracts were awarded for work at the base. The first was a series of
 contracts involving \$164,000. One was a contract for \$64,000 awarded to
 Betts Baking Company of Hutchinson to supply the base with bread for a
 . Four painting contracts were awarded on October 4 along with a contract
 up a security fence around the south alert area for \$11,847. Seventeen
 later, it was announced that four more contracts had been released totalling

¹⁰⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, June 5, July 1, August 14, 1963 and November 20,

¹⁰⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 15, 1963.

¹¹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, November 14 and December 6, 1963.

One involved \$5,023 for the construction of side-walks in Schilling

Community Relations

has been noted in this paper that from 1951 on, community relations were and continued to draw attention throughout the Air Force. Salina ap- have continued remaining proud of the base. Examples of this ranged loudly displaying an Atlas missile in the Sunset Plaza shopping center brief period of time to noting from time to time that Schilling's economic on the area was quite significant to taking note that as a result of the Saline County was off limits to Communists to inviting Democrat President Johnson to visit Schilling and Salina during the 1964 Presidential elec- campaign.¹¹²

Two examples of the state of base/community relations during this period reported to this writer by young officers stationed at the base. Col. K. Winston was a young pilot who served first as a KC-97 and then a KC- pilot during his assignment at Schilling. He had heard of the old nick- pertaining to the base but found base/community relations to be "quite ant." "One payday, all military members were paid in cash and received pay in \$2 bills. They, of course, flooded the local economy for several as the multiplier effect was experienced."¹¹³

Wilfred C. Hamann arrived on Schilling during this period and it was his

¹¹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, April 12, October 4, and 21, 1964.

¹¹² Salina (KS) Journal, September 18, 1960, November 13, 1963, and October 1964.

¹¹³ Letter from Col. Donald K. Winston dated October 5, 1982. Col. Winston involved in another demonstration of a sign of base/community relations. 1964, the telephone company took a picture of his crew responding to an alert in their then-new KC-135 and used the print on the cover of the Salina, Kansas book for that year. That phone book is on file in the Salina Library.

assignment out of pilot training. He found the base to be about like
 for base he had been to by that time in his career.

However, I found the people of Salina to be extremely friendly
 and outgoing. For example, when my wife and I were shopping in a
 clothing store for the first time, I happened to be in uniform. We
 selected the items we wanted to buy and were asked if we would
 pay cash or charge it. When I replied that I did not have a charge
 account at the store, the salesman's comment was: "Lieutenant, if
 you are stationed at Schilling, you automatically have a charge ac-
 count at my store." I found this to be the attitude all over Salina.¹¹⁴

The base was Salina's chief industry and as such was the main prop in the
 city. It was reported in early 1961 that Schilling occupied 37,410 acres
 and (including the OQ Gunnery Range, Camp Phillips or Phillips Village, and
 missile bases), and had an inventory of over \$267 million with an annual
 bill of over \$25 million. There were nearly 5,000 military and civilian em-
 ployees on base with 13,000 dependents and these people spent approximately \$1.8
 million a month in Salina as opposed overall to \$5.6 million being spent totally
 on all segments of the local society. The base bought over \$3.5 million worth
 of goods on the local economy for local use.¹¹⁵

Schilling also did its part to keep community relations good in a variety
 of ways. One of those ways was to contribute to charity fund raising drives.
 In 1960, Schilling set a goal of \$14,000 as its share for the Community Chest
 drive and on October 25, Colonel Jumper, Commander of the 310th Wing, presented
 a check for that amount to local Community Chest officials. Little attention
 was paid to fund drives until December 5, 1963 when Lt. Col. Frank Knapp pre-
 sented a check for \$13,650 to local Community Chest officials which was 105

¹¹⁴Col. Wilfred C. Hamann letter dated October 6, 1982.

¹¹⁵Salina (KS) Journal, March 16, 1961 and February 11, 1962.

cover its goal.¹¹⁶ Whether Colonel Knapp was project officer for the base or merely a spokesman was not mentioned.

Later in 1961, it was revealed that every fourth person in Salina was either member of the Air Force or a member of an Air Force family. The 1960 census showed a total base population of 11,758, not counting those families who lived off base. Approximately 17 percent of the base's married personnel lived in Kings Manor and 3,000 of the 4,500 military personnel assigned to the base were married.¹¹⁷

Because of the economic impact that the base had on the area, there were concerns about the lack of industrial development in Salina. True, it had elevators and railroad yards, but that would not be enough to offset the loss of the base if anything ever happened. Although the base was expected to begin receiving B-52s and KC-135s indicating that the base would be around a while longer, there was a feeling that the base was not permanent and that Salina should start trying to build up an industrial base.¹¹⁸ What caused this fear was not stated. Was the writer of this article just speculating or was there something being whispered somewhere indicating that the base was doomed?

It was announced on April 20, 1961 that base officials were making arrangements with fourteen area communities for mutual aid in fire protection. Schilperding's fire department had assisted communities in the past when help was needed. With the twelve missile complexes as far away from the base as fifty odd miles, the base saw the possibility that it might need assistance in the event

¹¹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, October 6 and 25, 1960 and December 5, 1963.

¹¹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, June 12, 1961.

¹¹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 12, 1963.

le at any of the twelve sites.¹¹⁹

Julius B. Summers, junior, who had been at Schilling since June of 1961, received orders during the week of May 24, 1962 for Minot AFB, ND where he was to serve as Base Commander. Since his arrival at Schilling, he had served as Director of Materiel for the 802nd AD, Commander of the 802nd CSG/310th CSG, and his last assignment was as Vice Commander of the 310th Wing.¹²⁰

Before he left Schilling, he wrote a letter to the editor of the Journal which appeared on June 3, 1962 stating that "we feel we're leaving

On the eve of our departure from Salina, Marion and I, quite naturally, I feel, go back in our thoughts to our arrival. . .three years ago. We had just completed a wonderful 3½ year tour, split almost evenly between Japan and Hawaii, and were wondering what the future held for us. As we left Colorado. . .Marion said: "Tell me something about Salina and Schilling." I could only reply: "It's flat," not mentioning the tarpaper shacks, the snow, the wind and the cold I remembered from my last visit in February, 1954. Frankly, I was afraid to talk too much for fear that she would ask to be put off in Denver.

When we got to Salina, I found my fears unfounded. Trees shaded the beautiful lawns, flowers were in full bloom and most surprising of all, people smiled and spoke to us on the streets. We stopped at a very nice motel and the manager personally came over to see if we were comfortable. All of these were little things but believe me they counted.

At Schilling, we were also surprised. Almost all the tarpaper shacks were gone, buildings gleamed white in the sunlight and wonder of wonders, our belongings were on hand for immediate installation in a comfortable house in Schilling Manor. Of course, there have been problems over the three years. I couldn't justify my. . .rank if there were none. I'll never forget one morning when I got a hurry-up call from Wichita. The man explained that he was digging an oil well southeast of the base where a bombing range had formerly been located. His workers had uncovered an unexploded 1,000 pound bomb and in as much as he had heavy equipment running over it he was a little afraid that it might explode and someone might get hurt. You can be sure that we took care of that right away.

Tomorrow, we are leaving for our new duty station at Minot, ND,

¹¹⁹Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, April 20, 1961.

¹²⁰Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, May 24, 1962.

and a new adventure. Naturally, we are wondering what the people and climate will be like. So far, all I've told Marion is that it is flat and gets a little colder than Salina in February. To the good people of Salina and Schilling, we feel that we can pay you no higher compliment than to say that in twenty-six years association with the military, and over thirty duty stations, we really feel for the first time that we are leaving home.¹²¹

Although the Colonel was slightly in error about the location of the bomb, he probably said it best as to how most Schilling personnel felt about it. Salina offered the personnel from the base a variety of events open to military personnel and their families.

"Honor the Uniform" Week

"Honor the Uniform" Week continued to be a distinctly unique Salina event that honored the men at Schilling and encouraged them to wear their dress uniforms downtown for one seven-day period each year. For this, they received gifts from the merchants, free cups of coffee, and discounts off of any purchases they made.

The first "Honor the Uniform" Week of this period was held from November 3 to November 11, 1960. Local merchants donated over \$3,000 worth of merchandise to the free Bingo Party held in Memorial Hall and open only to people from the base. Around fifty airmen were invited to attend a joint meeting of Salina's civic clubs on November 9. On November 4, Colonel Jumper, 310th Wing Commander, asked his men to participate in "Honor the Uniform" Week. "To the best of my knowledge, this event is unique to Salina and Schilling. The people are top-notch and helpful. We are lucky to be here." Over 1,700 people attended the Bingo Party on November 9. Colonel Jumper later stated that the Week was the best community relations project that he had seen in twenty-four years of ser-

¹²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 3, 1962.

more than thirty bases.¹²²

"Honor the Uniform" Week, 1961 was held from November 6 to November 12.

The only change announced that year was that the Salina Journal offered a percent discount on all classified ads placed by members of the armed services in the area.¹²³ After it was over, Col. Jack W. Hayes, Commander of the 1st AF, sent an open letter to the Salina Journal, thanking Salina and its Chamber of Commerce for "Honor the Uniform" Week:

On behalf of the men and their families of the base, our sincere appreciation is extended to all of you who helped to make the week one of the highlights of this year's activities. This event is much looked forward to by all Schilling personnel and is concrete evidence of the goodwill existing between the military and civilian populace. Thanks for your generosity and good will. We are proud to be a part of your community.¹²⁴

About the only thing out of the ordinary that happened for the tenth "Honor the Uniform" Week was that it was supposed to occur between November 11 and 17, but the Cuban Missile Crisis forced the dispersion of planes from the base to other locations and the event was rescheduled for December 9 to 15, 1962.¹²⁵ The eleventh "Honor the Uniform" Week was routine. But during the last "Honor the Uniform" Week, held from November 8 to November 13, 1964, a special band reception was held at the Salina Country Club honoring Schilling's NCOs on November 9. Approximately 1,800 people played Bingo and received free lunches.¹²⁶ It is interesting to note that eight days later, the closing of Schilling was announced, which will be covered in greater detail in the next chapter.

¹²² Salina (KS) Journal, October 11, 31, November 4, and 10, 1960.

¹²³ Salina (KS) Journal, October 8 and November 5, 1961.

¹²⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, November 15, 1961.

¹²⁵ Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, November 8, 1962.

¹²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, November 25, November 11, and 12, 1964.

Schilling Appreciation Day

This event had become another Salina tradition and was openly designed to raise money for the base welfare funds. Still, it was popular and the Air Force seemed to condone it by permitting its "Thunderbirds" to put on shows when they were available and sent in popular aircraft for public tours. Ticket sales for Appreciation Day, 1961 were launched on April 10 and first day ticket sales reached the \$6,800 mark which was \$700 over the previous year. This event was no less assisted by an announcement on April 18 that the Thunderbirds, which had last visited Salina in 1958, would return on June 2 for Appreciation Day. By April 23, eleven thousand tickets at one dollar a piece had been sold. Appearances by the Mills Brothers and Connie Stevens were confirmed for the June 3 dancing floor show.¹²⁷

Finally, Schilling Appreciation Day came and went. Some 50,000 people visited the base and showed their appreciation for the base (and their dollar contribution) by attending the events on base. A change occurred in the beauty contest in that it was done by each unit putting up a candidate for the "Miss B-52, 1961" contest and the winner was determined by selling tickets to the contest by each squadron. The 36th MMS candidate won the title and \$150 prize money.¹²⁸

The last Appreciation Day, the eighth one, was held on June 6, 1964 and named Schilling Aerospace Day. "Thousands of visitors" showed up and toured the base as "Salina saluted its warlike but friendly neighbor to the south." Among the visitors was Congressman Bob Dole, Wint Smith's successor, who was seeking re-election to Congress. A B-52 was on display and tours were being

¹²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, April 11, 18, and 23, 1961.

¹²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, June 4, 1961 and Impact, June 9, 1961.

ed. The 310th ARS won first prize in the float contest. Crowd estimates difficult to determine owing to the number of cars that flocked in and out base.¹²⁹

Open Houses and Receptions

There were a host of receptions sponsored by the Military Affairs Committee Salina Chamber of Commerce and several Open Houses sponsored by the base were reported in the local press. The first reception reported during period was for Schilling's Commanders starting at 6:30 P.M. on September 1960 at the Salina Country Club. Other receptions planned for the rest of included ones honoring NCOs and Junior Officers. At the first event, Brigadier General Yancey, Commander of the 819th AD then the parent unit of Schilling praised Salina for its hospitality and stated that it was known throughout the Air Force. There were 227 people in attendance.¹³⁰

The first Open House of this period was on September 24, 1960 when the base open from 9:00 A.M. to 12 Noon in honor of Kids' Day. Around 500 kids visited the base and saw the latest in Air Force equipment. Lt. Col. Bruce was the project officer for this event.¹³¹

On February 7, 1961, Col. Jack Hayes, newly arrived Commander of the 310th, was presented Salina's Key to the City by Mayor Carl Ramsey at the Kiwanis Club's weekly luncheon. Colonel Hayes stated that "this is the first key to a city I've received. I've been escorted out of several, however."¹³² This was the first non-Chamber of Commerce event involving someone from the base reported

¹²⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 7, 1964. In early 1963, only 15,000 showed after 50,000 people had been expected.

¹³⁰ Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, September 15, 1960.

¹³¹ Salina (KS) Journal, September 21 and 25, 1960.

¹³² Salina (KS) Journal, February 7, 1961.

this period. Col. Robert F. Corwin, retiring 802nd Medical Group Commander, was honored with a retirement luncheon at the Salina Country Club, sponsored by the Salina Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee, on April 6, 1961. Col. Corwin received a plaque and made a parting comment about base/community relations:

The best thing you of this community have done and can do for your country is to give the men who defend you peace of mind. When our pilots know that their wives and children are safe at home in Salina, a good town, with good churches and schools, with good housing and medical care, they can concentrate on doing a good job. I know of no other place in the service where military personnel so rightfully speak of our community and where the civilians so rightfully speak of our base.¹³³

Over 1,000 people toured the base at its first full-scale Open House of the period commemorating Armed Forces Day on May 20, 1961. The gates were open from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and a display of thirty-three different types of aircraft then in the Air Force inventory were on display at the south end of the flight line near the Base Operations building.¹³⁴ Because of the proximity of Armed Forces Day to Appreciation Day, the attention of the local press seems to have been concentrated on the latter event which raised money for the base. By December 12, 1961, the base had just put together an hour-long slide and film presentation titled "The Schilling Story." There was a twenty-minute slide briefing covering the mission of the base and a thirty-minute movie on the Atlas program followed by a question and answer period. This was available to church and civic groups and the base furnished a speaker to answer any questions the audience might have about Schilling and its operation. Lt. Col. James Farley, special assistant to the Deputy Wing Commander for Maintenance, was

¹³³ Salina (KS) Journal, March 27 and April 7, 1961.

¹³⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, May 11 and 21, 1961.

st to present this program to the American Legion that night.¹³⁵

In 1962, the various receptions and Open Houses were held without incident and attendance was normal according to the descriptions that appeared in the Salina Journal. But over 4,000 people in 1,100 cars passed through the two main gates during the 1963 Open House held on May 18, 1963 between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. The chief attraction that day was a 310th Combat Defense Squadron sentry dog demonstration.¹³⁶

The Salina Journal informed its readers on October 18, 1963 that the annual Officers and Personnel Reception honoring Schilling's Commanders would be held on November 4. By November 3, it was known that forty-five officers and thirty-five members of Commerce members plus wives would attend. Col. Gerald G. Robinson, 310th SAD Commander, would be a special guest.¹³⁷

However, it appears that Salinans were not the only ones who read the Salina Journal because at 4:00 P.M. on November 4, inspectors of the 15th AF arrived to conduct an ORI. Colonel Arnold, 310th SAW Commander, "pleaded to no avail" and the inspection postponed to the next day. But twenty-five Commanders, twenty-five wives, and Colonel Robinson did attend the Reception.¹³⁸ Curiosity prompts the question whether the twenty-five Commanders who attended were ones who had their "shop ship-shape" and felt confident enough that they could attend the reception or whether these men commanded activities not essential to an ORI? There is no satisfactory response to this question.

Twelve Salina women were taken on a tour of an Atlas F missile site on Jan-

¹³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, December 12, 1961.

¹³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, May 18 and 19, 1963.

¹³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, October 18 and November 3, 1963.

¹³⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, November 5, 1963.

1964. Carolyn Dunham wrote an article about that adventure and was im-
 pressed with what she had seen. After a tour of the operations part of the mis-
 squadron on base, they (the women) had been taken on a tour of the McPherson
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It has already been noted that Schilling held a christening ceremony for
 first KC-135 tanker on March 8, 1964. The first Open House of 1964 was held
 at time to show off the "City of Salina II," as the plane was named, to the
 public. But the weather was not very warm that day and the temperature did not
 go past the mid-thirties.¹⁴⁰ As a result, attendance at this event was low.
 The last annual Commander's reception was held at the Salina Country Club
 during the evening of Monday, November 9, 1964. Over 200 Commanders, their
 families, and members of the Salina Chamber of Commerce attended this event.¹⁴¹

Red Cross Blood Drives

Participation in the Red Cross Blood Drives furthered base/community rela-
 tions and showed that the base was interested in helping to promote good will.
 Local press reported on five blood drives involving Schilling and Salina
 between December 16, 1960 and October 8, 1964. The drives of April 26, 1961
 and October 8, 1964 received little attention. For the blood drive that was
 held on December 15, 1960, Salina and the base had identical records. Both
 were assigned quotas of 160 pints and both gave 192 pints. This drive was spon-
 sored by the Saline County Red Cross.¹⁴² On August 23, 1962, the Red Cross an-
 nounced that its bloodmobile had recently visited the base and collected 123

¹³⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 4, 1964.

¹⁴⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, March 6 and 8, 1964.

¹⁴¹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 10, 1964.

¹⁴² Salina (KS) Journal, December 16, 1960.

of blood. Schilling's quota had been 121 pints. The bloodmobile planned a visit for October 8 and 9 with Schilling having a 175 pint a day quota.¹⁴³ Owing to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the bloodmobile did not return to base until November 26, 1962. Schilling was given a one-day quota of pints to meet but only contributed eighty-seven. However, the Red Cross announced that it was pleased with the response considering the fact that the base was on alert.¹⁴⁴

Morale

Morale appears to have been high during this period. Everyone knew that the 40th Bomb Wing and Schilling Air Force Base were the best, and with each other the base continued to hold its own. Schilling was in a state of transition. Work was progressing on the missile sites and runways. New aircraft were expected and relations with Salina continued to be good. Everything was up to par at Schilling. At the start of this period, Schilling Dining Hall number one, which catered to members of the 310th CSG, revealed that it was offering counter-type meals. That is, those eating there who only wanted a sandwich or cup of coffee could sit at the counter instead of at a table.¹⁴⁵ In the last year, it was learned that the dining halls had waitress service. Whether this was continued after the 40th Wing was transferred to Forbes AFB was not revealed.

Personnel at Schilling continued to better themselves by taking college courses during their off-duty time. Bethany College of Lindsborg, Marymount College of Salina, and Kansas Wesleyan University of Salina, offered twenty-two

¹⁴³ Salina (KS) Journal, August 23, 1962.

¹⁴⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, November 27, 1962.

¹⁴⁵ Impact, July 8, 1960.

the courses to base personnel for the 1960 fall semester.¹⁴⁶

The WAF Band, the only Air Force musical group composed entirely of women, expected to perform at Schilling on December 16, 1960 at 7:00 P.M. in the theater. This performance was open to the public and admission was free.¹⁴⁷

A team of Air Force and civilian food service experts were on base during week of February 24, 1961 as part of a world-wide Air Force food service competition. Schilling's dining halls were one of fifteen bases competing for 1961 Hennesy Trophy for food service excellence. The 310th Food Service Squadron had won the SAC competition three years running.¹⁴⁸ It won the Trophy, the time of presentation of the award was not announced in the press.

"Schilling University" received more attention on July 9, 1961. The "campus" was a one-story building west of the 310th CSG Headquarters building on base. "Amazing 95%" of all personnel assigned to the base were enrolled in some form of off-duty training and the base led SAC in off-duty education.¹⁴⁹ It would appear that either SAC or the 310th Wing Commander was deeply involved in encouragement of this program. Furthermore, it is doubtful that all airmen were involved in college courses, as some may have been taking correspondence courses in such diverse trades as watchmaking and locksmithing or on-base vocational courses.

In July of 1961, it was learned that twenty airmen at Forbes AFB had been relieved of their regular duties and assigned to life guard duty at an officers' swimming pool. In addition, each squadron had been ordered to provide a quota

¹⁴⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, August 14, 1960.

¹⁴⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, December 7, 1960.

¹⁴⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, February 24, 1961.

¹⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, July 9, 1961.

personnel to take care of the golf course. Schilling responded that it had swimming pools on base but no golf course. Some airmen had been detailed as guards in the past, but that practice had been stopped pending word from SAC Headquarters on procedures. To cover itself, Schilling announced that it had used civilians from Salina for this duty from time to time in the past.¹⁵⁰ There was a very real concern about nuclear warfare in the early 1960s, resulting in a rash of fall-out shelter construction in the United States to provide a means of surviving a nuclear war. However, the base informed the Salina Journal that no special fall-out shelter construction was underway at the base and none was planned. The base was doing everything it could to prepare personnel and dependents for survival from "a possible nuclear attack."¹⁵¹ Schilling started an Air Force Aid Society Drive on August 2, 1962 which was to run for fifteen days. The Air Force Aid Society was an emergency and relief fund set up exclusively for Air Force personnel. In 1961, Schilling had paid out \$4,328 in eleven grants and thirty-five non-interest bearing loans. As of August 1, 1962, it had paid out \$2,967 in seven grants and twenty-five loans.¹⁵²

President Kennedy inspired the fifty-mile hike and six airmen decided to prove that they were as tough as the Marines, who were supposed to be adept at completing such hikes, by going for a 50.2-mile hike. These men belonged to the 44th FMS and four completed the hike in fifteen and one-half hours. Before they started the hike, they traveled the hilly course by car and measured the distance. "Dear Sal: Anything a Marine can do, an Airman can do better!

¹⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, July 11, 1961.

¹⁵¹ Salina (KS) Journal, October 30, 1961.

¹⁵² Salina (KS) Journal, August 2, 1962.

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A big boost to morale occurred on October 2, 1963 when President John F. Kennedy signed "with great pleasure" a bill granting an average 14.4 percent increase to members of the 2.7 million members of the armed forces. "The fate of this world of ours and its security depend in good measure on these men." This act added \$2.5 million a year to the base pay roll and most of it was expected to find its way into the local economy. A Colonel with twenty-five years of service would get \$15,530 a year; Lieutenant Colonels with eighteen years \$12,432; Majors with fourteen years \$10,594; Captains with ten years \$8,656; First Lieutenants with four years \$7,596; Chief Warrant Officers with twenty-four years \$9,936; Chief Master Sergeants with twenty-six years \$7,632; Senior Master Sergeants with nineteen years \$6,792; Master Sergeants with eight years \$6,192; Tech Sergeants with fourteen years \$5,472; Staff Sergeants with ten years \$4,812; Airmen First Classes with five years \$4,003; Airmen Second Classes with one year \$3,200; Airmen Third Classes with no time in grade \$2,064; and Airmen Basics \$1,968. This did not include allowances for quarters and transportation.¹⁵⁴

Retention did not receive very much attention in either the local or base press during this period. But on October 11, 1963 A1C Amil Collins was the twenty-first airman to re-enlist on Schilling between May and October, giving Schilling a 100 percent mark on its retention quota in SAC.¹⁵⁵

Schilling seems to have been an oddity as an Air Force base in that while it had a recreation facility at Kanopolis Reservoir west of Salina, a gym, two

¹⁵³Salina (KS) Journal, February 13 and 14, 1963.

¹⁵⁴Salina (KS) Journal, October 2, 1963.

¹⁵⁵Salina (KS) Journal, October 11, 1963.

ing pools, tennis courts, a youth center, clubs, and a play ground, it did have a golf course. SAC released \$56,000 for a nine-hole golf course to be constructed on the old Camp Phillips reservation on February 25, 1964, four miles west of the base. Ground was broken on October 7, 1964. It was to be a help project, meaning that volunteer labor was to be used, with technical assistance provided by the 310th Civil Engineering Squadron.¹⁵⁶

Spiritual Affairs

In the early part of this period, the base's spiritual affairs received a lot of attention in the local press and then it died off after the early part of 1961. The Chaplains assigned to Schilling were actively involved in life on base. On July 12, 1960, twenty-three women under the direction of Chaplain A. Smith began an Air Force-directed religious census of base personnel. Information collected was to be used in planning the religious and cultural program on base.¹⁵⁷ The results of this census were not revealed but they would have been quite interesting had they been released to the public. It was learned on July 22, 1960 that Chaplain Hampe, A3C William Cowser, 1st Sgt. and Mrs. George Eaton, and Capt. and Mrs. Joseph C. Valentour were attending the eighth annual Spiritual Life Conference at Estes Park, CO from July 25 to July 27. Nearly 400 Air Force Protestants were expected to attend the conference.¹⁵⁸ What the objectives of this Conference were was not revealed but this was the only time that the Conference was referred to in the local press. An ambitious project started taking shape on August 26, 1960 for the first Laborer's Day, scheduled for September 19 on base. It was to be an all-day ac-

¹⁵⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, February 25 and October 8, 1964.

¹⁵⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, July 1 and 12, 1960.

¹⁵⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, July 22, 1960.

very similar in organization to Law Enforcement Day. The area covered was from Concordia, west to Russell, south to Hutchinson, and east to Abilene. Hundred invitations had been mailed out and sixty had accepted.¹⁵⁹ Apparently, it went off without any problems and approximately 200 clergymen attended the event held in the chapel annex. They were greeted by Maj. C. V. Smith, Chief of Schilling's Chaplains, and Col. George Y. Jumper, 310th Wing Commander.¹⁶⁰ It was assumed that since there was a considerable amount of interest in the Bible program at the base that the clergymen discussed the impact that the Bible bases would have on their respective congregations.

The Jewish Torah was dedicated at Schilling on Sunday, November 20, 1960 from 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. in the base chapel. This was the first time that a ceremony had been held in Salina. Around seventy-five people attended this event.¹⁶¹

To acquaint personnel assigned to the base with different religious practices of various Protestant denominations, Chaplain D. F. Riechers launched a different type of Protestant service at the February 24, 1961 evening service. He hoped to get various churches in the community to cooperate in presenting creative contributions of their particular churches demonstrating the riches of the Protestant Church and the contributions each denomination makes."¹⁶²

Clubs

Ever since General Wilson opened the base service clubs to civilian membership in 1956, the local press had given some coverage to what happened to them.

¹⁵⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 26, 1960.

¹⁶⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, September 15 and 19, 1960.

¹⁶¹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 16 and 21, 1960.

¹⁶² Salina (KS) Journal, February 24, 1961.

clubs, both service-type organizations and special-interest, provided an outlet for energy as well as boosting morale by giving personnel something to do in their off-duty time. There was also a National Sojourners Club at Schilling Chapter 442 honored Col. Robert F. Corwin, retiring 802nd Air Group Commander, on April 13, 1961 in the Officers' Club. Colonel Corwin was a former President and its oldest member. The Club had forty members and Capt. Robert Cameron was President.¹⁶³

An airmen's annex to the NCO Club was announced as ready for opening on April 1, 1961. The NCO Club Board of Governors allotted \$3,000 to recondition the building to house the annex and a committee of ten airmen had been formed to work with the NCO Board in managing the annex. Membership was open to all airmen twenty-one and over and they were to pay membership dues of two dollars a year.¹⁶⁴ The age restriction seems to indicate that the objective of this annex was to provide junior enlisted personnel with a place where they could get liquor by the drink. The present Airmen's Service Clubs usually have only a back bar where beer can be obtained and game rooms.

The Schilling AFB Coin Club announced on December 7, 1962 that it was holding a round table auction at 7:30 P.M. on December 18 in the Base Community Center. Maj. H. L. Oberholtzer was President and Maj. L. Bolce was Secretary/Treasurer. The group had been organized in November of 1962.¹⁶⁵

Lt. Col. Sam Elias had been manager of the Schilling Service Clubs for six years and had probably been the one charged with opening the Clubs to the public in 1956. It was announced that he had been transferred to Homestead AFB, FL to

¹⁶³Salina (KS) Journal, April 14, 1961.

¹⁶⁴Salina (KS) Journal, June 30, 1961.

¹⁶⁵Salina (KS) Journal, December 7, 1962.

in charge of the Clubs on that base effective July 16, 1963. He was to be replaced by CWO Frederick W. Gaddis who was serving in the Pacific and would arrive until sometime in September. Until then, the Clubs would be run by officers assigned the job on a temporary basis.¹⁶⁶

Holidays

Holidays are always a festive occasion and in the early days of this period, received attention in the local press. But for some reason, the coverage ended after Thanksgiving Day, 1962. The Base Fire Department and Salina's Fire Department had cooperated in 1960 to ensure that 200 underprivileged children in Salina received Christmas toys. Broken toys were to be collected by the Jaycees, sorted by the firemen at the base, and then distributed in town. S. Sgt. John Cantrell was in charge of this program and was assisted by twenty of his colleagues.¹⁶⁷

For the third consecutive year, the 310th Air Refueling Squadron, SAC's top champion air refueling unit, entertained forty orphans from Wichita's Children's Home. They were brought to the base in Air Force buses and welcomed by Major Cantrell, 310th ARS Commander. Then they were taken on a tour of the base and treated to lunch in the 310th Wing Dining Hall, which had been chosen one of the Air Force's best dining halls for 1960. Movies were shown and Santa Claus appeared presenting each child with candy and a gift. At 3:30 P.M., the children left Schilling to return to Wichita.¹⁶⁸

As far as things went for the base, a traditional holiday menu was planned for the men who remained on base for the 1960 Christmas holiday. Most of the

¹⁶⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, May 20 and 31, 1963.

¹⁶⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, November 27, 1960.

¹⁶⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, December 16 and 18, 1960.

personnel would be off but alert crews, security forces, maintenance men, and communications personnel would be on duty. However, the base reminded Salina that base aircraft crews remained on alert--a Christmas present to the nation.¹⁶⁹

To reduce loss of life, Schilling launched a "stay at home" campaign over the three-day 1961 Labor Day weekend. The idea was to keep as many people as possible at home and off the highways. Festivities included events at all of the Service Clubs on base to keep the men occupied.¹⁷⁰ But what occupied the men at the Clubs was not mentioned.

The 310th Wing held a semi-formal Yuletide party for its officers and their families at the Officers' Club on base. Approximately 250 couples attended the party which was held on December 16, 1961.¹⁷¹ For the fourth and last time that the Salina Journal reported it, the 310th ARS, with Maj. Charles J. York as Commander, collected \$500 for presents for forty-one orphans from the Wichita Children's Home. The squadron had originally planned on having thirty-three children as guests.¹⁷² If the 310th ARS sponsored more such events, the press did not report it during this period.

Schilling units were still on alert as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis during Thanksgiving time, 1962. Arrangements were made so that each man could have a full-course dinner without interfering with his alert status. The 310th Food Service Squadron had prepared more than 4,000 pounds of turkey, 800 pounds of ham, 1,000 pounds of potatoes, 600 pies, and 200 pounds of cranberry sauce. Around 4,000 people were expected to eat Thanksgiving dinner on base. At this

¹⁶⁹Salina (KS) Journal, December 23 and 25, 1960.

¹⁷⁰Salina (KS) Journal, August 25, 1961.

¹⁷¹Salina (KS) Journal, December 17, 1961.

¹⁷²Salina (KS) Journal, December 22 and 24, 1961.

there were 117 people assigned to the squadron.¹⁷³

Dependents

The first activity concerning Schilling's dependents was announced on August 19, 1960. Military personnel and dependents were given the opportunity to visit the new alert crew building on August 20 from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. The Manor, as it was named, was located at the north end of the base near the edge of the flight line. It was designed for quick exit and crews who would be on August 21, were expected to be able to reach their planes in about one-fourth the time previously required.¹⁷⁴

On October 13, 1962, around 500 dependents toured the base to see where men worked and the equipment they used. A briefing was held to acquaint visitors with the Air Force, SAC, and Schilling mission. Each squadron also conducted a briefing to explain the role they played at the base. Colonel George W. Brown, Vice Commander of the 310th SAW, was the project officer for this event.¹⁷⁵ Of interest was the announcement that an Air Force Wive's Orientation Course was to be held at Schilling in 1963. "All wives new to the Air Force or those who are required to attend this three-day course." Certificates of completion were to be presented at the end of this course.¹⁷⁶ What happened if the wives could not attend this course was not mentioned. This was the last time that such a course was announced in the local press.

Civilians

With the start of the missile complex construction in the Salina/Schilling

¹⁷³Salina (KS) Journal, November 21, 1962.

¹⁷⁴Salina (KS) Journal, August 19, 1960.

¹⁷⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, September 28 and October 14, 1962.

¹⁷⁶Salina (KS) Journal, November 17, 1963.

...a, a civilian labor shortage occurred and would not really end until late 1961 and early 1962. The Salina Journal announced on September 4, 1960 that there were immediate openings at the twelve area missile sites for over 100 mechanical and electrical inspectors. Salaries ranged from \$4,345 to \$6,435 a year and these were Civil Service positions which meant that an exam had to be taken.¹⁷⁷ It was learned on November 10, 1960 that 147 civilian employees at the base would get a five-cent-an-hour pay increase effective November 18. At this time, there were 326 civilians working at the base. Two years later, this group received an eight-cent-an-hour pay increase.¹⁷⁸

In June of 1962, Civil Service jobs were available on base for sewage plant workers, warehousemen, and pest controllers. The starting pay was \$2.20 an hour except for warehousemen who started at between \$1.75 and \$1.90 an hour. Fourteen months later, jobs for auto mechanics at \$2.36 an hour, gardeners at \$1.84 an hour, electricians at \$2.36 an hour, laborers at \$1.67 an hour, and refrigeration personnel at \$2.36 an hour were announced as being available at the base.¹⁷⁹

The Salina Journal announced on May 4, 1964 that examinations were being given on base for Civil Service jobs. Jobs available were for water and sewage plant workers, carpenters, painters, plumbers, sales store checkers, heavy equipment operators, and auto mechanics. These jobs paid \$2.34 an hour except for mechanics and heavy equipment operators who received \$2.23 an hour and sales store checkers who received \$302 a month.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, September 4, 1960.

¹⁷⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, November 3 and 10, 1960 and November 7, 1962.

¹⁷⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 29, 1962 and August 11, 1963.

¹⁸⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, May 4, 1964.

Personnel Difficulties

Only six incidents were reported during this period in the category of personnel difficulties relating to base/community relations. The first event was reported in November, 1960 and announced the arrest by the Saline County Sheriff's department of an airman who was to be charged with grand larceny and burglary after investigations had been completed. Between \$5,000 and \$10,000 worth of merchandise, allegedly stolen from the area, was found in his trailer home beneath a nearby bridge.¹⁸¹ No further report was forthcoming.

In the only bad check case reported in the 1951 to 1967 era, which in itself is an amazing statistic, the accused Air Force representative was released on \$5,000 bond after waiving a preliminary hearing on an arraignment on charges of transporting falsely drawn checks in interstate commerce.¹⁸² There is no report of the outcome of this case.

It was learned on March 5, 1962 that three airmen were being detained in connection with an alleged racial fight in Hutchinson, KS in which two men were stabbed. One of the airmen was charged with maiming and wounding a Hutchinson resident on March 4, but he was acquitted by a Hutchinson jury and returned to duty on April 15.¹⁸³

In October, 1962, two airmen stationed at Schilling, who, as soon as they were discharged from the Air Force, called the base and reported that a bomb had been planted there. They were identified, arrested, pleaded guilty, fined \$100 each, and given suspended three-month jail sentences.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 28, 1960.

¹⁸² Salina (KS) Journal, February 23, 1961.

¹⁸³ Salina (KS) Journal, March 5, 14, and April 15, 1962.

¹⁸⁴ Salina (KS) Globe-Sun, October 11, 1962.

The Salina Journal in March, 1963 reported a serious domestic relations situation involving two members of the Air Force and the ex-wife of one of them. The men had suffered emotional problems due to their recent divorces, according to the account, and with a contemplated marriage, the one man tried to kill the wife, killed the other man, and himself.¹⁸⁵

The last incident reported in this period found an airman charged with assault with a deadly weapon in connection with a tavern fight. He was released on \$5,000 bond.¹⁸⁶ No further details were given.

Recognition

Recognition of personnel for various acts is recognized in the military as a means of enhancing morale. It is usually done through promotions, medals, and recognition for suggestions made to improve job performance, and other like things. During this period, promotions were given considerable attention by the Salina Journal. Twenty-two articles appeared in that paper concerning them.

The first mention was made on December 4, 1960 when twenty-six NCOs were promoted to Tech and Master Sergeant. The last promotions announced during this period was on November 8, 1964 when three Majors were promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the 310th SAW.¹⁸⁷ On June 1, 1962, a record 422 airmen were promoted; forty-two NCOs were promoted on November 29, 1963; ninety-nine Lieutenants were promoted to Captain between October 1, 1963 and September 30, 1964; thirty Captains were promoted to Major between January 1 and March 31, 1961; and twenty Majors were promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on March 15, 1962.¹⁸⁸ Only two Lieu-

¹⁸⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, March 18 and 19, 1963.

¹⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, January 14, 1964.

¹⁸⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, December 4, 1960 and November 8, 1964.

¹⁸⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, June 1, 1962, September 22 and November 29, 1963, January 5, 1961, and March 5, 1962.

at Colonels were promoted to full Colonel during this period. Lt. Col. M. Berry, Chief of Maintenance for the 550th SMS, was promoted to full Colonel on March 31, 1963. He had been in the Air Force since 1940. The Commander of the 310th OMS, Lt. Col. James R. Sheffield, was promoted to full Colonel on November 13, 1963. He had been on base since April of 1961.¹⁸⁹ Later, he would become Vice Commander of the base and serve approximately forty days as Interim Base Commander in 1964.

There were seven presentations of medals reported at the base between May 1961 and January 20, 1964 involving forty-five men. M. Sgt. Paul Batterman received the Air Force Commendation Medal (AFCM) on May 22, 1961 for his work as COIC of the 310th Wing's Logistics Branch. He had been transferred to Dover AFB, MA. S. Sgt. Delbert L. Presslor received the Airman's Medal on May 19, 1964 for preventing a fire on a B-47 engine from spreading on May 1963.¹⁹⁰ During this period, five men received recognition for suggestions they had made which improved job performance. Lt. Col. George W. Eldridge developed the idea of reflector shields on radar. Several were built for the base and installed at the OQ Gunnery Range. He received the recognition on May 6, 1962 although he had been transferred to another base.¹⁹¹ The last suggestion to receive attention in this period was on January 3, 1964 when SAC decided to try civilian Bill Haase's suggestion of purchasing vehicle parts on the local economy rather than stockpile them as had been the practice. Mr. Haase was a civilian working at the base in the automotive section.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, March 31, and November 13, 1963.

¹⁹⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, May 22, 1961 and January 20, 1964.

¹⁹¹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 6, 1962.

¹⁹² Salina (KS) Journal, January 3, 1964.

There were thirteen other reports of recognition which contributed to morale during this period. Six of these were for Airman, NCO, and Crew of the Month. The first of the articles appeared on September 2, 1960 when a 310th ARS crew won the Saunders Trophy for outstanding performance in a 15th AF competition. When the crew, commanded by Capt. William J. Bauer returned to the base on September 16, 1960, they received spot promotions as did ten members of the maintenance crew.¹⁹³

T. Sgt. George E. Tucker, 310th FMS, and A1C Robert Bright, 802nd Medical Group, were named NCO and Airmen of the Year for 1960 by a board of officers at the base on November 4, 1960. On January 31, 1961, S. Sgt. Donald L. O'Krabel and A1C Gary L. Adams, members of the 4310th OMS, were named Maintenance Crew of the Year for 1960. They had won a similar award the previous year. T. Sgt. Forrest G. Messler, 802nd Medical Group, and A1C Douglas Q. Jones, 310th AES, were named NCO and Airman of the year for 1962. In 1963, M. Sgt. Robert E. Wallace, NCOIC of the Quality Control Division for the 310th SAW Deputy Commander of Maintenance, was selected to represent the 310th Wing in SAC's NCO of the Year Competition. The last individual honor was announced on May 22, 1964 when T. Sgt. Arthur G. Washer, Crew Chief of a B-47, was named Schilling's Outstanding Airman and nominated to represent the 15th AF at further competitions.¹⁹⁴

Colonel Arnold, 310th SAW Commander, returned from Offutt AFB, Omaha, NE on September 13, 1963 where he had received a trophy from General Thomas S. Power, Commander of SAC. The trophy was for Schilling's having achieved management leadership and best overall participation by a SAC base between July, 1962

¹⁹³Salina (KS) Journal, September 2, 1960.

¹⁹⁴Salina (KS) Journal, November 6, 1960, January 31, 1961, December 12, 1962, May 10, 1963, and May 22, 1964.

August, 1963.¹⁹⁵ An unusual honor was that acquired for standing in line at night. A2C Sal Dimatteo and A2C James R. Shaw, members of the 310th CES, stood in line through the night of January 1, 1964 outside the Saline County Courthouse. For their efforts, they had eggs tossed at them but they got the two 1964 car tags issued in Saline County.¹⁹⁶

Visitors

Over thirty different groups of people were reported to have visited the base between July 8, 1960 and September 21, 1964. This figure does not include 200 clergymen who visited the base in 1961 but does include such groups as Boy Scouts, Civil Air Patrol (CAP), NATO officers, a United States Senator, and the Governor of Kansas.

With the deactivation of the 802nd AD on June 20, 1960, the 310th Wing was placed under the command of the 819th AD at Dyess AFB, Abilene, TX and remained there until July 1, 1962 when the 22nd SAD moved to Schilling. Brig. Gen. William R. Yancey, 819th AD Commander, visited the base on July 5 and 6, 1960 and toured the OQ Gunnery Range. He returned on November 17, to present two awards. Brig. Gen. Pinkham Smith, General Yancey's successor, made his only recorded visit to the base on September 7, 1961. He commented on the base/community relations being the most impressive feature about the base.¹⁹⁷

Robert J. Dole was running for Congress from the Sixth District when he made his first reported visit to Schilling on October 12, 1960. While there, he pledged his full support to the base, commenting: "If elected to Congress,

¹⁹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, September 13, 1963.

¹⁹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, January 2, 1964. Until recently, one bought car tags annually in Kansas and the sooner one got to the courthouse, the lower the tag number one got.

¹⁹⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, July 1, 8, November 17, 1960 and September 8, 1961.

ring from the Air Force on July 1, 1962. But before he retired, he flew Salina with his wife to visit G. N. Waddell on June 17, 1962.²⁰³

Housing

At the start of this period, the housing situation in Salina appears to have been critical and in short supply. Although 535 units at Schilling Manor had been opened for occupancy with 200 more planned, and with the 40th Wing moved to Topeka, the missile construction workers were moving into the area. The situation was such that the Army, which was supposed to man the two Nike sites in the area, had offered above average rent to get seventy-five houses for its men but was met with only limited success. Then, before the Nike sites were made operational, they were declared obsolete. Some property owners in Salina had signed rental agreements with the Army. On June 30, 1960, the Army informed these people that their contracts carried a cancellation clause. However, the Army was mute about whether it would pay for damages done to the property it had already occupied.²⁰⁴

Ground was broken for 200 new Capehart units on August 11, 1960. Col. George Y. Jumper, 310th SAW Commander, turned the first spadeful of dirt and construction started immediately. These units were to cost around \$16,000 a piece and take around 450 days to complete. By June 11, 1961, construction was running ahead of schedule and all construction was expected to be completed by early November, 1961.²⁰⁵

In May of 1942, the 7th Service Command of the 5th Army, constructed a hospital, barracks, etc., to train draftees at Camp Phillips, southwest of Salina

²⁰³Salina (KS) Journal, June 17, 1962.

²⁰⁴Salina (KS) Journal, June 30, 1960.

²⁰⁵Salina (KS) Journal, August 4 and 11, 1960, and June 11, 1961.

Smolan. After the war, it had been converted into a housing area for men assigned to the air base. Until Schilling Manor was opened in 1959, it had served that purpose. During the week of November 4, 1960, A1C Oscar M. Bullock, 4th Supply Squadron, the last resident of Phillips Village, moved out for an overseas assignment. He left with the distinction of being the last airman to live there, because there would be no more military living there in government housing.²⁰⁶

When the final 116 units were accepted by the Air Force on November 29, 1961, Schilling Manor then had 735 units. Earlier that month, eighty-four units had been accepted and thirty families had moved in. Plans called for moving in thirty families a day until all units were occupied. The older section of the manor had been made up primarily of two and three-bedroom units while the newer section was composed mostly of three and four-bedroom units and were south of the older section.²⁰⁷

This should have ended the housing crisis in Salina and it did until March 1963 when the Air Force announced that it wanted 100 more units for Schilling. Local developers were concerned and the Salina Chamber of Commerce launched a housing survey to determine if the area needed the units. In the end, nothing came of this request although it made it through both houses of Congress as separate bills only to be struck out in conference.²⁰⁸

This matter did not seem to help those who rented homes in the area. The Salina Journal informed its readers that despite the new pay raise, the airmen could not make as much as was believed and could not really afford an increase in

²⁰⁶Impact, November 4, 1960.

²⁰⁷Salina (KS) Journal, November 29, 1961.

²⁰⁸Salina (KS) Journal, March 27, April 10, and May 31, 1963.

assuming that the President signed the new military pay raise.²⁰⁹ Then September 5, 1963, it was learned that the General Accounting Office (GAO) charged that the Air Force did not follow legal procedures in spending \$19 on Schilling Manor. The money had been spent on venetian blinds, tra- curtain rods, clotheslines, redwood fencing, and a central TV antenna; things for which no request had been entered in any budget request. The base made no comment on these charges.²¹⁰

Rumors

Salina was literally a total Air Force city, just as neighboring Junction City was a total Army town. But the similarity ended there, for the Army had been in the Junction City area first whereas Salina was a small city of approximately 20,000 people when the military arrived in 1942. In the 1940s, Salina lived with rumors of the base closing, something that Junction City seldom had to do.

This changed with the reactivation of the base on August 1, 1951 and until 1959, the future of the base was taken for granted. When news of the deactivation of the 802nd Air Division and the transfer of the 40th Bomb Wing was announced, Salina grew concerned but was eventually calmed down when it was learned that the base was to get missiles which would be the first to be enclosed in underground silos.

From June 20, 1960 to November 18, 1964, there was some concern about the future of the base. Yes, Schilling was a permanent base whose buildings had been constructed for twenty-five years usage which technically gave it a life span to 1977. The runways were among the longest in the Air Force and the base had

²⁰⁹Salina (KS) Journal, August 8, 1963.

²¹⁰Salina (KS) Journal, September 5, 1963.

the new hangar that it was using. There were 535 Capehart houses on base 200 more under construction. Better yet, morale was high. During this period, the missiles were modified and the KC-135s arrived but there was probably some concern about when the B-52s, which seemed to be the linchpin to the base's future, would arrive.

Ironically, the Salina Journal took some solace in the Air Force's December 1960 announcement that four major bases were to be closed. The transition from missiles and bombers was expected to reduce the number of personnel on base 10 percent but:

. . .the exact future of Schilling beyond the mid-60s can only be speculative. If the world picture remains unchanged, it is likely that the facilities here will be adapted for new bombers, new missiles, and new missile-carrying bombers as they are developed. Closing of the four bases will require the transfer of 16,000 officers and men plus the elimination of 2,300 civilian jobs within the next two years. . . .However, Schilling is considered to be one of the top bases in SAC.211

The concern that caused this article to appear may have been due to the election of John F. Kennedy, a Democrat, as President but he had run on the issue that there was a missile gap between the United States and Russia. Schilling was helped by two things in the election; it was becoming a missile base and Kennedy venerated President Eisenhower who was from the Salina area. By March 28, 1961, it appears that the Department of Defense was changing its priorities but the Atlas program at Schilling was not to be curtailed. The base was expected to lose its B-47s in the future but they were to be replaced by F-4s. "However, as is always true of military programs in these changing times, the future of any particular base, unit, or weapon is strictly in the lap of

²¹¹Salina (KS) Journal, November 29, 1960. The bases closed were Mitchell AFB, NY; Chennault AFB, LA; Donaldson AFB, SC; and MacDill AFB, FL. The latter survived and is now a TAC base.

ods and the Pentagon."²¹²

Always on the lookout for any means of securing the permanency of the air the Salina Journal latched onto the Air Force proposal to base the then-Minuteman Missiles in the area. In an editorial titled "Minutemen Welcome," paper commented:

Now is not the time to get excited about whether Minuteman Missiles will come to the base. The AF hasn't said yes and it hasn't said no. Only soil tests are to be made. If they come, it will be at least a year. If they come, Salina will welcome them. Salina has been, is, and will continue to be a friend of the AF. Regardless of future deployment of forces and weapons, Salina will continue to welcome AF children to its schools, AF wives to its bridge clubs, and AF families to the community. Bomber men or missile men, they are our good neighbors.

As for those persons who may feel that more missile installations would make this a prime Russian target area, we can only say: Has anyone been naive enough to believe it hasn't been all along? The Russians would give a sputnik full of rubles to have this and other defense centers eliminated, but we have called their bluff. They can't and won't dare move against us so long as a strong retaliatory defense force is maintained. There is every evidence that that force will be kept and strengthened. Schilling AFB will continue to pack a big part of that punch.²¹³

There was a valid point in this editorial. Since Schilling had been presumably an enemy target ever since the 802nd AD was activated in 1952 with two B Wings, its importance seems to have grown with the addition of the Atlas missile complex. Something not mentioned was that Salina, as an agricultural center in the mid-west and a point where two major highways met, was certain to be a target, with or without Schilling. But the idea of soliciting the weapons of war which with one accidental mishap could destroy the whole area without the benefit of an enemy attack is interesting. The truth was that Salina was really a one-industry town and that industry was the prevention of war.

²¹²Salina (KS) Journal, March 28, 1961.

²¹³Salina (KS) Journal, May 11, 1962, editorial.

Schilling was made the headquarters of the 22nd SAD on July 1, 1962 and again the base appeared to be on the upswing in the eyes of SAC and the force. In a July 2, 1962 editorial, the Salina Journal sought to explain this meant to Salina.

Even when Joe Kelly (the last Commander of the 301st Bomb Wing when it was at Smoky Hill/Schilling in 1949) locked up the tarpaper shacks more than a decade ago, it was essentially a good base. The AF knew this and within a dozen months sent John de Russy to put the shop in shape for revival. From B29s to B47s, from Smoky Hill to Schilling, from wing to division and back to wing, so Salina's base went, up and down and up again. . . .

This week, the base becomes the headquarters of the 22nd SAD. The Commander is Col. Jack W. Hayes. The significance of the division headquarters to Salina is this. The 310th itself is in the process of assuming greater importance in SAC. In the future, it will be possible but only possible that a gaggle of Minuteman missiles will be added to the armament. Chances are that in terms of manpower, the base will not grow and might shrink in terms of importance. The men and hardware are here because they are required by the SAC mission to preserve the base through strength.

This Salina has always known. The town and the area may take a quiet pride on the eve of Independence Day that the citizens support the mission with pat enthusiasm. This community relationship is as important in its way as the flying climate, the flat terrain or the geographic location.²¹⁴

Schilling existed, as this editorial stated, because it was required by mission imposed upon SAC to preserve the peace. The base/community relationship was important to the men and helped to keep morale high. Unfortunately, editor later forgot the second paragraph of his editorial. A little over months later, it was announced that the 40th ARS, the last reminder that 40th Bomb Wing had once been on Schilling, would be deactivated. Chamber Commerce leaders took the long-range view that the base was in a strong position to become the headquarters of a Minuteman missile squadron. "The base and will continue to be a strong portion of our community and economy. We proud of the 40th ARS and its record. It has been a fine military unit and

²¹⁴ Salina (KS) Journal, July 2, 1962, editorial.

men have been a part of our community. It does not mean the end of the base of our relationship with the base and its men and that relationship is the best anywhere. We'll keep it."²¹⁵

Col. E. F. Arnold, 310th SAW Commander, addressed the meeting of the Romans on September 29, 1963 and informed them that the future of the base was probably the same as SAC's. The base was probably going to play an important role in SAC. The problem that confronted Schilling was the retention of young officers and airmen. Salina's role was important in that by remaining hospitable to personnel from the base and making them feel at home. The base put \$25 million into Salina's economy each year.²¹⁶

What the Colonel did not mention but probably hinted at was that the future of Salina was also tied to SAC. If SAC did not feel that it needed the base and another air command could not find a use for the base, then it would be closed. Salina would probably be hit very hard in the pocketbook. The base/community relationship was a very important factor and by this time, the old thorn of unemployment had been removed due to the departure of most of the missile construction workers.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara announced that twenty-six bases in the United States would be closed or substantially reduced in size on December 1, 1963. With this announcement, he stated that he had "every reason to believe that studies now underway will lead to further reductions in the coming months." Of the twenty-six bases involved, twelve were air bases but none in Kansas were affected. Nevertheless, Salina was concerned. In response to queries from Salina, Senator Frank Carlson, Kansas's senior United States Senator,

²¹⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, September 18, 1962.

²¹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, September 30, 1963.

formed the Salina Journal that he was keeping in "close touch with the situation in regard to Schilling AFB." However, he believed that since Schilling is one of the top-rated bases in SAC and a center for the Atlas missile complex, the base would not be endangered by a reduction program. Besides, the aircraft at the base were slated to be changed to B-52s and KC-135s.²¹⁷

In an editorial titled "No Politics Seen In Closing of Bases" the Salina Journal commented on the closings in what can only be described as a smug manner:

If politics entered into Secretary McNamara's decision this week to close 33 military bases, it is not apparent. There is no evidence of it.

If motives were political, these were not the bases to close. Most of them are in populous states of crucial political importance or in the heart of the Democratic South.

While in other times, camp locations have been picked for political reasons, those reasons no longer are considered. The bases to be closed simply have outlived their usefulness.

Secretary McNamara deserves praise for courage as well as for vision and fairness in this decision. The nation's defense does not depend upon "voting right," and that is the way it should be.

When the first word of the closing came, Salinans were concerned lest Schilling Air Force Base might be included. But Schilling has never been a "political" base. When it was reactivated more than a dozen years ago, it was to serve a major purpose of the Strategic Air Command. The location, the flying weather, the facilities and the community "climate" were such that Schilling made a first-class site. The many improvements since then have made it more so.

The outstanding records made by Air Force units stationed here are a further proof that Schilling was and is a right choice.

As long as the Air Force has a need for such a base in the midlands and as long as Salinans cooperate with enthusiasm and patriotism, Schilling may be expected to remain active.

The time may come when bases and missiles and bombers are no longer required. Technological and strategic changes may eliminate the need for such installations. When and if this occurs, politics will be of no avail and in all honesty we would not want politics to prevail.

In the meantime, we are proud of our part in the national defense, of Schilling's function in SAC, and we are eager to do what we can to promote its mission.²¹⁸

²¹⁷Salina (KS) Journal, December 12, 1963.

²¹⁸Ibid., editorial.

Maybe politics did not figure into the base closings but maybe they did. Robert S. McNamara, a former President of Ford Motor Company, had been a Republican when President Kennedy made him a member of his Cabinet in 1961. Secretary McNamara was praised for his courage as well as for his vision and fairness in making the decisions. Yet, the editorial jumped on the fear that Schilling might be one of the bases to be closed and pointed out all of the benefits that the base had to offer SAC and the Air Force.

Congressman Bob Dole followed up on this by trying to find out what the Air Force had in mind for Schilling. He was assured that there were no plans to close Schilling and that the mission of the base would remain the same. The B-47s would never be assigned to Schilling again and it would be receiving KC-135s and B-52s, in that order. A B-52 squadron from Walker AFB, NM was being programmed for transfer to the base. The changeovers would result in a loss of around 900 men at the base. Schilling was ready for the new planes and would be receiving brand-new KC-135s within the next few weeks. Rumors were in circulation that bases with B-47s would be closed but Congressman Dole was assured that the B-52s would begin arriving at Schilling during the summer. There were, at this time, eighteen SAC bases with B-47s and the Air Force had been asked to recommend the closing of thirty-three bases.²¹⁹

If this was not enough assurance, the Air Force assured Salina through Col. George M. Lockhart, Deputy Director of Legislative Liaison for the Air Force, on April 19, 1964 that the future of Schilling was secure. "Schilling Air Force Base is considered one of the better Strategic Air Command bases from a facility standpoint. The adequacy of facilities plus the centralized location within the United States makes this base desirable for long-term Air Force retention."

²¹⁹Salina (KS) Journal, January 3, 1964.

is was in response to a letter from Wayne Dailey, chairman of the Salina Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee to Congressman Dole.²²⁰

Was this concern due to any rumors in circulation in the area at the time? Was one of the jobs of the Chamber of Commerce to constantly seek reassurance about its major industry? Certainly at this time, there was no serious rumor-mongering campaign transpiring in the local press. In fact, there was a belief in the press of that time that Viet Nam was going to be an active spot for United States military forces in the near future. Besides, 1964 was a presidential election year and seldom did an incumbent President close military bases if he wanted to win re-election. Far from it. In fact, there was usually the promise that the status quo would be maintained and perhaps a few new installations would be built.

There the matter rested until November 18, 1964. On November 17, 1964, the Salina Journal informed its readers that ninety-five more bases were to either be reduced or eliminated and that the names of those bases would be released the next day by Secretary of Defense McNamara. Congressman Dole stated that he had not learned which bases would be affected by that decision but that he did not think that Schilling or any other base in Kansas would be affected. Congressman Shriver of Wichita agreed with this assessment.²²¹

At the close of this particular day, Colonel Roy Crompton, 310th SAW Commander, was at Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ to receive an award on behalf of the base for its cost-reduction program. He planned to stay there a couple of days to visit old friends. The Base Commander, Colonel Mike Scanlan, had taken three KC-135s to England for a one-week TDY and had been gone since Saturday,

²²⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, April 19, 1964.

²²¹ Salina (KS) Journal, November 18, 1964.

ber 14. He was due back at Schilling on Saturday, November 20, 1964.

Dailey, Chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, was preparing to lead a delegation to Abilene, TX to assist that city in devising a program to improve base/community relations with neighboring Dyess AFB, TX.²²² General Curtis LeMay was preparing to retire from the Air Force, closing out his career as Air Force Chief of Staff and former President Eisenhower was living a comfortable retirement at his farm near Gettysburg, PA.

All was quiet. Perhaps the only ones dreading the next day were those communities who knew that their military installations would be slated for closure. Salina probably slept soundly that night content in the belief that Schilling would be in operation a few more years. As of November 18, Schilling Air Force Base had approximately 6,000 people assigned to it. But the B-52s had not arrived.

²²² Interview with Col. Mike Scanlan (USAF, ret.), September 1, 1982.

CHAPTER VIII

CASTLES IN THE AIR

NOVEMBER 18, 1964 TO APRIL 3, 1967

Castles in the air and castles on the ground. Schilling AFB had the Atlas missile complexes which helped make the base a well-defended castle on the ground. It also had KC-135 tankers, then the largest air tanker in the world, which gave United States warplanes virtually unlimited range. In addition, Schilling had been promised the B-52, the largest bomber in the world, a castle in the air. Unfortunately for Salina and Schilling, it remained a mythical castle in the air. Salina and Schilling were constantly looking to the horizon for signs of the plane's imminent arrival at the base; in vain, for it never arrived, save for an occasional visit.

Since the late 1950s, Salina had been told that B-52s and KC-135s were going to be assigned to the base by the early 1960s. First, the B-52 was to arrive in 1962, then 1963, 1964, and finally in early 1965. The last KC-97 flew out of Schilling in late 1963 and the first KC-135 arrived in early 1964. At the 379th, 380th, and 381st Bomb Squadrons of the 310th SAW continued to fly B-47 stratojets, the "long rifle" of SAC.

There was nothing really mystical about the B-52 heavy bomber. It was a giant eight-engined bomber designed to deliver nuclear payloads to the enemy's home turf. This had also been the purpose of the B-29, B-36, and B-47. But to Salina, it was the modern plane that would assure the future of its air base, which was Salina's largest employer and the keystone of its economy.

Schilling Air Force Base was ready for the new bombers and had been since 1952 when the runway modification program had been completed. In fact, the base was ready for an expanded role in the defense needs of the United States. Jet deflectors had been installed to deaden the noise of the planes and old buildings, dating back to World War II, had been removed to permit construction of newer buildings as needed. The 310th SAW and 310th CSG had received new commanders during the summer of 1964. If all went according to the norm, Col. J. Crompton, 310th SAW Commander, would be on base until 1966 and Col. Mike McMan, 310th CSG Commander, would be on base until late 1965.

In its history, the air base, which had started out as the "Army Air Base Salina, Kansas," had been the home of castles in the air only once before. That was when the B-29 was the largest bomber in the Air Force inventory. In the late 1940s, it had been denied the B-36 which replaced the B-29. Salina thought that Schilling would once again claim the largest bombers in the Air Force inventory for its own. Everything was ready.

Prelude to Closure

By the morning of November 18, 1964, Salina, Kansas, the county seat of Saline County, was a small city of over 40,000 people enclosed in an area of 1,159 acres. Of that acreage, 414 were in use as public parks. There were fifty-two churches, two privately-owned hospitals (Asbury--Methodist and St. John's--Catholic), twenty public and four parochial schools, two private four-year colleges (Kansas Wesleyan University--Methodist and Marymount College--Catholic), St. John's Military School for Boys (operated by the Protestant Episcopal Church), two schools of nursing, and Brown-Mackie School of Business.¹

¹Norris D. Olson, "Salina's Response to the Closing of Schilling Air Force Base" (M.S. thesis, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, 1968), p. 7.

Transportation in and out of Salina was relatively easy. Highways I-70 and US 81 (now I-135) met at Salina. Two commercial airlines provided daily service and Salina was a railroad center. Bus service was provided by Continental Trailways and Greyhound.

If one did not wish to travel, there was a variety of means for entertainment. There were three radio stations, Cable TV, movie theaters, taverns, clubs, sports events, concerts at Memorial Hall, and civilians had the privilege of membership in the Schilling AFB service clubs. Salina also had a public library and the Salina Journal was the major daily newspaper in the area.

Schilling Air Force Base on this day was a "sprawling complex of nearly 3000 acres" of the Strategic Air Command with over 700 buildings, a complete utility system, and airport facilities which could accommodate the largest aircraft in the Air Force inventory.² This did not include the 30,000 acre gunnery range, some acreage in what was left of Camp Phillips, and the twelve Atlas missile bases, each on at least twenty acres of land. As was noted in the previous chapter, the primary aircraft assigned to the base was the B-47 stratojet bomber in three squadrons of fifteen each and one squadron of fifteen KC-135 tankers. There were around 5,000 personnel assigned to the base.

Salina knew that Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara was going to announce the closing or reduction of a number of military installations on November 18, but knew that Schilling would not be affected in any manner. To demonstrate the confidence that Schilling would not be affected, the two major Commanders at Schilling, Colonels Crompton and Scanlan, were away from the base this day; one to receive awards at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ and the other commanding a three-tanker TDY in England. A delegation of the Salina Chamber of

²Ibid., p. 16.

Force's Military Affairs Committee were awaiting the departure time of a delegation that would take them to Abilene, TX to explain the Salina/Schilling base/community relationship that seemed almost unique.³ There was also an overage of personnel on base this day. Certainly, if the base were one to be closed, commanders would not have been away and instead of an excess of personnel, there would more likely have been a shortage of men with many units undermanned.

The Announcement

Norris D. Olson had been City Manager of Salina since May 1, 1964. At 10 A.M. on November 18, his telephone rang. It was his wife and she immediately asked: "Have you heard the news?" Assured that he had not, she went on to state that she had just heard over Salina radio station KSAL that Secretary of Defense McNamara had announced that Schilling AFB would be closed by June 30, 1965. The information had been received as a radio news bulletin with supporting information.⁴

That night, the Salina Journal under the banner headline "MAC'S AXE ON SCHILLING" went into greater detail about the closing. Schilling was one of twenty-five installations to be reduced in activity or closed. The last B-47s would leave by March, 1965 with the last KC-135s and Atlas missiles leaving by April. On June 30, 1965, Schilling AFB would be officially closed. "Dear Salina: A Merry Christmas to you, too, Secretary McNamara. Yours, Ina."⁵

³Ibid., p. 14. Olson states that the delegation was bound for Walker AFB, NM. However, both Mike Scanlan and Wayne Dailey, a member of that delegation, stated to this writer that Abilene, TX was the destination. It will be stated here that according to the Salina Journal, a group had been to Walker AFB, NM, well, NM prior to the day of the announcement.

⁴Ibid., p. 10.

⁵Salina (KS) Journal, November 18, 1964. The term "officially closed" is deceptive. There was no air activity on base, but as in 1950, there was military activity on the base until April 3, 1967 when the last Air Force unit was deactivated.

Few events had ever caught Salina more off-guard than this announcement. In May of 1964, Salina had been assured by the Air Force that the base was permanent and Colonel Scanlan had learned, during a stop at Offutt AFB, on his way to assume command of the 310th CSG in August, that the base was sixteenth or seventeenth on the list of SAC bases to be closed. The fact that Schilling had added it to the list without any advance warning has to make its closing one of the best-kept secrets in Washington, D. C.

Colonel Roy Crompton, Commander of the 310th SAW, immediately flew back to Schilling from Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ. Then he called Colonel Scanlan, who was in England on a TDY. Colonel Scanlan had not heard the news and was surprised to learn that his job would be abolished by June 30, 1965. Since most of the details were unknown, it was decided that he would return to the base at his scheduled time on Saturday.⁶

At the same time, the Salina delegation to Abilene, TX was in a quandary as to whether to make their trip to Abilene to explain base/community relations or to cancel it. It was obvious to them that something must have gone wrong somewhere else they would not have lost their air base. Finally, it was decided to make the trip and explain that they did not know what had happened.⁷ How the trip went off was not revealed.

Senator Frank Carlson, whom the Salina Journal had called "average" when he endorsed him for re-election in 1956, announced that he intended to ask President Johnson for a review on the status of Schilling in the hope that the closing order would be rescinded. "We have always been assured that Schilling is one of the best bases in the Air Force and that it was considered a perma-

⁶Interview with Col. Mike Scanlan, September 1, 1982.

⁷Ibid.

installation."⁸ The meeting of President Johnson and Senator Carlson had have been interesting, but unfortunately, this writer could not find how it went, or for that matter, if the meeting were ever held. But at the same time that Senator Carlson announced his plans, Secretary of Defense McNamara stated that his decisions on the fate of the military installations slated for retention or closure were "absolutely, unequivocally, without qualification irrevocable." Some new evidence might cause him to change his mind, but the chances of that are damned small."⁹

Why was Schilling closed? That was the question of greatest interest to the community. There seemed to be a number of reasons, but the two major ones offered by the Department of Defense were that the base had B-47s and Atlas F missiles. The B-47 was a relatively "old weapons system" and had been in the Air Force inventory since the early 1950s. As for the Atlas F missile, it was a first-generation ICBM and was programmed for withdrawal from the Air Force inventory.¹⁰ Schilling did have KC-135s and was ready to receive the B-52s, but the catch was that the B-52s had not arrived, even though millions of dollars had been spent on modernizing the base and the primary function of the base was to be combat-ready, not air refueling.

Like his mentor, William Allen White, Whitley Austin, editor of the Salina Journal, was capable of wielding an editorial sword in defense of his town when it was in trouble. On November 20, 1964, he lashed out at the decision to close Schilling AFB in one of the bitterest editorials he was ever to write:

Old Soldiers understand SNAFU--situation normal, all fouled up. Well, Schilling was snafued. Its like the time the Air Force bombed us in Burma because some cluck couldn't read a chart.

⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, November 20, 1964.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Meeting in Washington

The Salina city government met in an informal meeting during the evening of November 19 to chart a course of action. In his thesis, Norris Olson states that the only purpose of the meeting was to determine, if possible, whether a common consensus existed between the business community and City Hall. Ten topics were discussed at this meeting:

1. If the base closure were definite, it should be closed totally and completely, and not relegated to a partial or standby operation--military or otherwise.

2. What could or would the Federal Government be able to do to protect local property values during the deactivation period and until military owned and occupied homes were again being lived in?

3. If closed, what type of title would be available to local buyers or users?

4. Could the Federal Government re-activate the facility at a later date by a similar McNamara decision?

5. Would the closing actually result in a time saving to . . . taxpayers, or was this only a statement--easy to make and impossible to prove?

6. Did not the central and strategic location of Schilling outweigh any economic consideration that was given in the closure announcement?

7. If Schilling were closed, every effort possible should then be expended to return the approximately 32,000 acre bombing range back to agricultural use and to the local tax rolls.

8. Could the Schilling flight facilities be transferred directly to F. A. A. and the municipal airport operations be moved to the base area?

9. How could we be assured the McNamara decision was not one based totally on politics?

10. Could the City of Salina or Saline County even afford to maintain the base if it were given to either of them at no cost?¹³

A delegation of three was appointed and meetings arranged for them to visit with Department of Defense officials in Washington, D. C. on December 14. This group spent its time before the meeting collecting pertinent data on the base which might provide answers to the questions discussed at the November 19

¹³Olson, pps. 24 and 25.

meeting.¹⁴

Who represented Salina at the meeting has not been determined but at the Washington meeting, the group was joined by Senator Carlson, Congressman (and Governor-elect of Kansas) Avery, Congressman Dole, and staff representatives from the offices of Senator Pearson and Congressman Shriver. This group was met by Col. George Kelley, who gave the group a short briefing, and was then joined by Secretary of the Air Force Eugene Zuchert, Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance, and a couple of others.¹⁵

Schilling had twelve Atlas F missile sites which cost one million dollars a year to operate and maintain. This was ten times more than each Minuteman missile site cost. (The Minuteman was the successor to the Atlas.) In addition, the manpower requirements per site were eighty for the Atlas to twelve for the Minuteman. Then there was the B-47 jet which was obsolete and was to be completely phased-out by June, 1966. An original plan to replace B-47s with B-52s at Schilling had been scrapped. Without the Atlas, B-47, or B-52, Schilling would not be kept open for KC-135s. There was nothing to do but close the base.¹⁶

Never answered or explained at any time was why so much money was spent on the base between 1960 and 1964 improving the runways for the B-52 and KC-135 if these things were so obvious? If the Atlas missile was obsolete, why was money spent modifying it in 1963? If the base was doomed why did the Air Force continue to send personnel into the base in 1964 until there was a surplus of around 900 men on base as of November 18, 1964? At what level was the

¹⁴Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁵Ibid., pps. 26 and 27.

¹⁶Ibid., pps. 27 and 28.

decision made to close the base? Why were the new KC-135s assigned to the base in early 1964 when it would have been cheaper to send them to a base that would be able to utilize them for an indefinite period of time? With hindsight, it is possible to analyze the decision to close Schilling as one designed to release a group of trained personnel for the Viet Nam Conflict which was escalating at this time. But during this period that could not have been obvious to all; only to those who were "in the know."

December 1, 1964 to June 25, 1965

Operations

The Salina Journal announced on December 3, 1964 that some B-47s (with their three-man crews) had already left and would not return. The three B-47 squadrons on base were to gradually lose their aircraft until by March 31, 1965, none would be left on base.¹⁷ Whether the departure of the B-47s had been planned prior to the closure announcement is speculative. Although the base was closing, the three squadrons sent one B-47 each to Washington, D. C. in a flyover honoring retiring Air Force Chief of Staff General Curtis LeMay.¹⁸ It was only fitting that the base that General LeMay had helped create in an image that he felt Air Force bases should resemble was retiring around the same time as the base and was honored by that base in one of its last missions.

Colonel Roy Crompton, Commander of the 310th SAW, announced the next day that the last two B-47s would leave Schilling on February 25 for Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ where they would be placed in storage. The 379th, 380th, and 381st Bomb Squadrons would be formally deactivated on March 15. Around the same time, five KC-135s, with nine crews, consisting of a pilot, co-pilot, navigator, and

¹⁷Salina (KS) Journal, December 3, 1964.

¹⁸Salina (KS) Journal, February 2, 1965.

oom operator, would be transferred to Bunker Hill AFB, IN. The remaining KC-35s would go to Walker AFB, Roswell, NM at a later date. "Dear Sal: The people who used to complain about the bombers' roar probably will now complain about the silence. Yours, Ina."¹⁹

Just as the transfer of planes and equipment was accelerating, the Vietnam Conflict, in which United States involvement was increasing, affected the base. The Air Force confirmed rumors on February 12 that certain Schilling units were taking part in an "operational exercise" owing to the crisis in Vietnam. Base officials refused to confirm or deny that all personnel on orders had been temporarily frozen, keeping them at Schilling. The 310th ARS was the only Schilling unit still combat-ready.²⁰ For a brief period of time, there was a glimmer of hope that Schilling might not be closed.

But true to schedule, the last B-47 lifted off the runway at 10:00 A.M. on February 25, 1965. All that was left of the B-47 era on base were three "ghost" squadrons. (What this meant was that the squadrons were still active and had personnel requirements although no planes were assigned to them.) "Dear Sal: Now that we can no longer look up and see the gleaming B-47s, we'd better start looking around for something to make Salina's future gleam even more brightly. Yours, Ina."²¹

The Air Force shipped ten brand-new station wagons to Schilling, arriving in Salina by rail on April 2, 1965. No one at Schilling knew what had snarled up in the military bureaucracy or why the base had received the vehicles, or

¹⁹Salina (KS) Journal, February 3, 1965.

²⁰Salina (KS) Journal, February 12, 1965.

²¹Salina (KS) Journal, February 25, 1965.

whether they would be kept or shipped to another base.²²

At 9:30 A.M. on April 15, 1965, the "City of Salina II," Schilling's last KC-135 jet tanker, which had also been its first, left for Bunker Hill AFB, IN piloted by Capt. Donald K. Winston who had also piloted the last KC-97 to leave Schilling in late 1963. The moment the KC-135 lifted off of the runway, Col. Roy Crompton, 310th SAW Commander, turned off the red telephone which had linked Schilling to every SAC base in the world. Schilling still had some support aircraft assigned to it, but these were irrelevant to the future of the base. Transient aircraft would be permitted to land at the base with prior permission until June 1 when the runways would be closed to all aircraft.²³

As the base prepared to close, it was revealed that the 625 buildings and takeoff installations were valued at \$80,345,000. They covered 3,197,551 square feet with a land cost of \$1,064,000. These figures did not include the 735 housing units.²⁴ This appears to have made the aircraft formerly assigned to the base worth approximately \$200 million when the worth of the base was last reported in the early 1960s.

The Schilling Radar Approach Control (RAPCON) center was scheduled to be closed for good by June 30, 1965. By May 25, this fairly-new facility, with a sixty-mile range, was operating from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. every day. The base weather radar was no longer in operation.²⁵ In fact, the weather observers may have been the first to leave for other assignments. For some unexplainable reason, there has always been a shortage of weather observers in the Air Force.

²²Salina (KS) Journal, April 2, 1965.

²³Salina (KS) Journal, April 15, 1965.

²⁴Salina (KS) Journal, May 2, 1965.

²⁵Salina (KS) Journal, May 25, 1965.

Missiles

One of the reasons given for closing Schilling was that it was an Atlas F missile base and the Atlas missiles were obsolete although the 550th Strategic Missile Squadron (SMS) was one of the newer squadrons activated at Schilling. The first Atlas F missile left during the first week of 1965 aboard a C-133 transport aircraft for Norton AFB, San Bernadino, CA. It was a spare missile that had cost over three million dollars and weighed 16,200 pounds. The loading process had taken all day. Less than a month later, the first active missile was deactivated and shipped to California. The site near Carlton in Saline County was the first site to lose its reason for existence.²⁶ By March 7, 1965, the last Atlas F missile assigned to Schilling AFB had been pulled from site number six near Lyons and shipped to Norton AFB, CA. With this act, the 550th Strategic Missile Squadron (SMS) became a missile squadron without a mission.²⁷ Although it had no missiles, the men of the 550th SMS continued to man the twelve empty silos. The official reason given for this was that the diesel engines and maintenance of equipment still in place required twenty-four-hours-a-day attention. But as soon as community power was available, manning would be reduced.²⁸

Hospital

The base hospital was an integral part of Schilling AFB and was important enough to be designated a Group rather than a Squadron, which gave it considerable command autonomy. It was located in one of the newest structures on the base and was rated seventy-five beds built on a 150-bed chasis. The closing

²⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, January 5 and February 3, 1965.

²⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, March 7, 1965.

²⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 7, 1965.

of the base affected the hospital differently than it did other units. On December 22, 1964, it was announced that the hospital would not be dismantled when the base closed except for equipment needed for "war readiness" and a few items needed at other Air Force hospitals. Everything else would remain.

"Dear Sal: Now all we need is a use for the hospital. How do you feel? Sick? Ina."²⁹

An unforeseen consequence of the base closing was a shortage of nurses in the Salina area. The two Salina hospitals had depended upon personnel from the base to assist them when it (the base) was active.³⁰ This was probably one of the first pains that Salina actually felt in the closing of the base. Although the base was preparing to close, few personnel assigned to the base had left for new assignments.

Changes in hospital care for Schilling personnel was announced on April 15, 1965. The obstetrical service officially closed that day after a decrease in the birth rate, e.g., the number of babies born on base. On May 1, all inpatient care would end when the hospital was replaced by a dispensary. After that date, all military patients needing hospitalization would be referred to Irwin General Hospital at Fort Riley, KS or to one of Salina's hospitals. After July 1, the dispensary would give outpatient care from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. daily, and would be staffed with two physicians, one dentist, two civilian nurses, one secretary, and eighteen airmen.³¹

Community Relations

Although the base was to be closed and attention concentrated on the last

²⁹Salina (KS) Journal, December 22, 1964.

³⁰Salina (KS) Journal, January 31, 1965.

³¹Salina (KS) Journal, April 15, 1965.

any activities, one thing had been initiated before the closing was announced. The Salina Community Chest was presented a check for \$15,635 by base officials on December 11, 1964. This amount exceeded the base's goal by \$69.16.³²

Community relations appear to have remained good through this period. After all, it was not the fault of the personnel at the base that Schilling had been closed. Ironically, although the closing affected Salina, it also affected some students at Stanford University in California. They were enrolled in a course concerned with school planning and had chosen Salina as a project in September of 1964. The closing of the base was announced just as all of the term papers were being completed, making all of the calculations concerning the growth of the city and school system wrong. All of the term papers had to be re-written and new conclusions reached.³³ There were no Open Houses or other public relations events reported during this period. Thus, the last Open House, Schilling Aerospace Day, "Honor the Uniform" Week, etc., had been held just prior to the November 18, 1964 announcement. At least Salina and Schilling were spared the humiliation of the closing announcement coming during one of those events.

Personnel

The key to the phase-out of the base rested on the personnel assigned to the base. They were in a position of making the closing of the base smooth or difficult. According to Colonel Scanlan, the last Commander of the 310th CSG, morale remained high and the chief concern of the personnel was their next assignment.³⁴ If any serious problems arose during this period, they were not

³²Salina (KS) Journal, December 11, 1964.

³³Salina (KS) Journal, January 24, 1965.

³⁴Interviews with Col. Mike Scanlan (USAF, ret.) October 13, 1981 and September 1, 1982.

reported in the local press. But civilian personnel at the base received a bolt on December 4, 1964. Some of them, if they desired continued employment with the government, would have to move to other areas of the nation, which was probably expected, and take a cut in pay, which probably had not been anticipated.³⁵

There were five reports of promotions and recognition between December 24, 1964 and May 5, 1965. The first report was that eight Captains were to be promoted to Major. On April 2, 1965, five Majors were promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.³⁶ It is assumed that promotions of enlisted personnel continued during

this period, but none were reported in the local press. Although the base was closing, it won an award on April 29, 1965 for the best comptroller performance in the 15th Air Force from January through March of 1965.³⁷ Schilling's reputation for being a top-notch base remained strong right up to its retirement.

Seven men received medals for devotion to duty and valor in early May of 1965.

Three were officers and four were NCOs. Four of this group were retiring from

the Air Force.³⁸ Indeed, it would seem that the closing announcement speeded up the decision by some of Schilling's personnel to retire, probably involving several factors, such as the uncertainty of what the new assignment would be like, the cost of moving to another part of the country, etc.

The first word that Salina received concerning plans for the future of the base came on January 11, 1965 when Paul Wall, Deputy Civil Engineer at the base, told a meeting of Rotarians that closing the base on June 30 did not end the

³⁵ Salina (KS) Journal, December 4, 1964.

³⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, December 24, 1964 and April 2, 1965.

³⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, April 30, 1965.

³⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, May 2 and 5, 1965.

housekeeping chores on base. The government had \$146 million worth of improvements on base which would be kept up until they were disposed of.³⁹ It was expected that at least 500 military and civilian personnel would remain on base as a caretaker force after the base was officially deactivated on June 30. According to base officials, the Air Base Squadron could stay in existence on Schilling twelve months or longer. The number of personnel would gradually be reduced as the facilities were disposed of. Little else was known at that time.⁴⁰

One of the first high ranking personnel to leave Schilling was Col. George H. Watson, Vice Commander of the 310th SAW since June 1, 1962. He was to leave on February 2, 1965 to assume command of a detachment at Incerlik, Turkey.⁴¹

It was revealed the next day that approximately one-sixth "of the normal complement of men" had received orders for new assignments. Schilling's military population had shrunk from approximately 5,000 to 4,200 men. Some men would not receive orders but would be transferred to the caretaker force left on base to maintain the facilities and physical property.⁴² Although the personnel were busy closing the base and moving, they found time to exceed a Red Cross blood drive quota of 150 pints by giving 182 with only twenty-one rejections. The 310th FMS had fifty-two donors followed by the 310th CES with thirty-one, the 36th MMS had twenty-four, the 310th Supply Squadron with twenty-two, the 310th AES with sixteen, and the 310th OMS with thirteen pints.⁴³

³⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 11, 1965.

⁴⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, January 25, 1965.

⁴¹ Salina (KS) Journal, January 26, 1965.

⁴² Salina (KS) Journal, January 27, 1965.

⁴³ Salina (KS) Journal, February 14, 1965.

By March 15, 1965, the duty roster at the base had only shrunk by 414 men. The base military and civilian population as of October 31, 1964 had stood at 4,990 men. As of February 28, 1965, there were 4,576 men. This figure may have been slightly deceptive. Many had already received orders with delay en-route provisions. Others were on leave or in the process of processing out. The majority of men at Schilling did have orders. Personnel were carried on the base duty rosters until they checked in at their new duty assignments.⁴⁴ Tentative details of the housekeeping force to be left at Schilling after June 30, 1965 were released on March 15. The 4253rd Air Base Squadron (ABS) would be commanded by Colonel Scanlan with a manning authorization of twenty-seven officers, 548 airmen (including NCOs), and 156 civilians. In addition, there were expected to be an undetermined number of personnel on base awaiting discharge, early or scheduled retirement, and those awaiting an overseas assignment.⁴⁵

Impact, the base newspaper, had been published since August, 1952 when it first assumed publication in time to welcome the 310th Bomb Wing to the base from Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS. Starting with an unusual anomaly for a military newspaper, it crusaded against the wrongs inflicted on the personnel assigned to the base in a column known as "Reflections In Print" or "RIP," which also featured gossip as well as blurbs on what personnel were sneaking out of the main gate ahead of time or who was violating the various regulations on base. This column lasted a few months before the writer was discharged. Another ruse used was "Dear Ina--Yours Sal" barbs which imitated the "Dear Sal--Yours Ina" blurbs in the Salina Journal. After the first year of operation, the newspaper

⁴⁴Salina (KS) Journal, March 5, 1965.

⁴⁵Salina (KS) Journal, March 15, 1965.

settled down to a typical military newspaper format of presenting articles on events on base which would not get anyone in trouble. Impact crusaded for personnel, etc., adherence to traffic regulations, fair treatment of commissioned and enlisted personnel, and so forth. The last issue of this base newspaper made its appearance on Friday, April 16, 1965 with farewell comments by the Commanders of the four major Schilling units, a rundown on the history of Schilling and the 310th SAW, and a host of farewell advertisements from Salina merchants.⁴⁶

On April 28, 1965, Schilling officials announced that the removal of major equipment and the transfer of personnel was nearly half-way completed. There were 2,628 men assigned to the base or 2,362 less than when the closure announcement had indicated on November 18.⁴⁷ Most of the sentry dogs left Schilling on May 11. Fourteen of the twenty dogs assigned to the base, along with their handlers, were sent to new duty posts. There were approximately twenty-one dogs assigned to the base and the remaining seven were eventually put to sleep owing to arthritis and old age. As of May 10, there were 2,328 men assigned to the base. Plans were being finalized to deactivate the 310th SAW and 310th CSG on June 25 and turn over operation of the base to the 4253rd ABS.⁴⁸

The civilian personnel office on base had some news of an ironical twist on May 21 for the area. Military personnel were leaving the base for new assignments but craftsmen were needed to aid in the closing of the base in the following positions; water plant worker, sewage plant worker, air conditioner ser-

⁴⁶Impact, April 16, 1965.

⁴⁷Salina (KS) Journal, April 28, 1965.

⁴⁸Salina (KS) Journal, May 11, 1965 and interview with Col. Mike Scanlan (USAF, ret.), October 13, 1981.

viceman, steam plant operator, carpenter, auto mechanics, plumbers, and electricians. These were temporary appointments but some of them could last as long as a year. The salary range was from \$2.39 to \$2.50 an hour for a forty-hour week.⁴⁹

As the end neared for the units of the 310th SAW, the base began preparing for its next phase of life. A new main gate was built one-fourth mile east of the old main gate. This was being done so that security checks could be made of cars entering the housing area as well as those entering the base proper. The north entrance to the base had been reduced to auxiliary status and was only open from 7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. on weekdays.⁵⁰ The Salina Journal ruminated about the base's final days commenting that "the revolving beacon atop the water tower is dark. . . The barracks are shuttered, the doors barred by signs reading 'Off Limits.'" The last dining hall served its last meal on May 17, 1965. Most of the base was quiet with the lawn mowers replacing the whines of jet engines. "Dear Sal: The Schilling stories--and legends--are part of Salina's history. Yours, Ina."⁵¹

At no specific time on June 25, 1965, the 310th Strategic Aerospace Wing was deactivated, a much-decorated unit with a record virtually unrivalled in the history of the United States Air Force. On this date, Col. Roy Crompton left for his new assignment with the 15th AF at March AFB, Riverside, CA. In the stead of the 310th Wing was the 4253rd ABS under the command of Col. Mike Scanlan, dubbed "Sundowner" by Salina Mayor Jerry Waddell for his role in closing the base in 1949, a missile base in England, and Salina's air base, again.

⁴⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, May 21, 1965.

⁵⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, June 17, 1965.

⁵¹ Salina (KS) Journal, June 23 and 25, 1965.

Chief Master Sergeant William Retter was the first First Sergeant of the new unit.⁵²

The 310th SAW retired from active duty on June 25, 1965 and reverted to control by Headquarters, USAF but the base still had over fifteen months of life left as an Air Force installation. Schilling Manor and the OQ Gunnery Range would survive the closing of the base on April 3, 1967, with the former surviving until December, 1976 and the latter continuing in operation to the present time.

Housing

Housing posed a problem in this period that was different than it had been in the past. The demand for housing diminished in 1962 with the completion of missile construction. Salina over-extended itself in housing construction and as a result, many of the units started were never completed because there simply were no buyers. Over one thousand units were built as a result of the Atlas construction and many of Salina's builders were forced into bankruptcy.⁵³ It is interesting to note that from 1942 to 1949 and 1952 to 1960, the Air Force had had to plead with Salina to get housing for its personnel, then the missile construction, known to be temporary in nature, e.g., the construction personnel would not be in the area very long, caused Salinans to over-build until it caused a minor economic disaster.

Rumors surfaced in December of 1964 that military personnel were being forced to move into Schilling Manor. Specifically, Range personnel, who were expected to remain at Schilling after the base was closed, were the ones that this policy affected. Colonel Scanlan denied this and stated that there were

⁵²Salina (KS) Journal, June 25, 1965.

⁵³Olson, pps. 104 and 105.

no openings in the Manor and it was doubtful that anyone would want to move twice knowing that they would soon be leaving Salina.⁵⁴

Many personnel, when they first arrived at Schilling, expected to be there a while and bought homes in the area. When they received orders to another assignment, they expected to be able to sell the home with ease, possibly to incoming personnel. However, the closing of Schilling created an over-abundance of housing, making it a buyer's market, especially since most of the airmen could not afford to keep making payments until Salina recovered economically from losing the base. This caused problems and on February 19, 1965, the Salina Journal editorialized on the situation as it existed in Salina at that time:

Chances are that a few of our Air Force friends at Schilling will leave with a sour taste in their mouths for Salina. Many of these military and civilian personnel, who were buying homes while here, are going to suffer financial loss. Empty houses are many, buyers are few. Many properties which remain unsold will ultimately enter into foreclosure proceedings, as a number already have. Down payment and equity will be lost.

Such a situation provides a fertile field for the "equiteer." Several already are flourishing in Salina. He reaps a harvest of profits at no risk to himself, and the poor airman gets burned. Here's how it works. The airman, frantic over his predicament, is offered \$50 or \$100 for his equity in his property. Its like a message from heaven. He snaps at the chance to get out from under.

The wheeler-dealer installs renters in the house as soon as the airman moves out. He sets the rent low enough to insure the house doesn't long remain vacant. But the dealer makes no further payments on the mortgage. When the payments become several months delinquent, the mortgage holder applies for foreclosure. The house is sold at auction, often several thousand dollars below the outstanding mortgage. In that event, the VA or FHA, which guaranteed the loan, can file a deficiency judgement against the airman. Deeding a home to a third party does not relieve the homeowner of further liability. The note he signed in obtaining the original loan is his obligation and his alone.

Meanwhile the equiteer continues to rake in the loot. The law specifies a redemption of from six to eighteen months following foreclosure. During that time, the equiteer goes on renting the house. When the ownership finally reverts to the VA or FHA, he has collected the rent for periods of up to two years.

The Kansas Real Estate Commission is trying to stop this prac-

⁵⁴Salina (KS) Journal, December 29, 1964.

tice. When a real estate broker is involved, his license can be revoked. But that's not enough. The equiteer's dealings may be unethical but they aren't illegal. The only solution for the vet, if he can not sell his home, is to deed it back to the VA or FHA. This clears him of further liability. So tread carefully, Mr. Airman. Don't trade \$50 now for a big headache later.⁵⁵

It would be interesting to find out how long this practice had been going on in Salina. The closing of the base had been announced on November 18, 1964 and this editorial appeared on February 19, 1965, three months later. If the practice had been going on for two years, long enough to see how this practice actually operated, it would have had to have started in 1962 or 1963. But assuming that this practice had only started after November 18, 1964, then it would appear from the length of this editorial that the practice was widespread.

While the problem of the equiteers was being dealt with, Schilling was starting to mothball the first of 735 Schilling Manor houses. By February 19, 1965, twenty-two homes had been preserved and seventeen more would be taken care of the next week. Mothballing the homes meant that the utilities had been turned off and other measures taken to preserve the homes from the weather and vandals. Due to the number of Schilling Manor vacancies, it was possible to make units available to personnel holding the rank of Airman First Class (A1C) with over four years of service, provided that they would be able to live there at least sixty days.⁵⁶ Originally, SAC had intended to purchase a large amount of plywood lumber to put over the windows to protect the glass from vandalism. But Colonel Scanlan persuaded SAC that the \$250,000+ cost for the plywood was not worth the cost of a few broken windows. For the time being, there would

⁵⁵Salina (KS) Journal, February 19, 1965, editorial.

⁵⁶Salina (KS) Journal, February 19, 1965.

be constant surveillance of the area by Air Police patrols.⁵⁷

During a staff meeting in early March of 1965, Colonel Scanlan was discussing Schilling Manor when he got an idea on what to do with some of the 735 units that would soon be vacant. He knew that the Army's First Division, then stationed at Fort Riley, was about to embark for a tour of duty in Viet Nam and that when it did, the families of the men assigned to that unit would have to vacate any government housing they resided in to make room for incoming personnel. It made sense to invite the First Division to take advantage of the vacant government housing at Schilling Manor and he visited the Commanding General at Fort Riley to see if the First Division was interested. The General was, naturally, busy handling matters concerning the transfer of his unit, but he did send his First Sergeant to survey the situation. Ten families soon moved in and after a few more had moved in and with more wanting to, Colonel Scanlan informed the Air Force of his action and obtained permission to make Schilling Manor units available to the families of military personnel going overseas.⁵⁸

Salina's Board of Education decided not to open Schilling School for the 1965-66 school year on August 10, 1965. There simply were not enough students to justify it. Starting with 147 students, enrollment would have dropped rapidly after two months.⁵⁹ But by October, the Board of Education may have started revising its plans. The Department of Defense had not declared Schilling Manor surplus, as it had the air base proper, nor was it expecting to do so in the near future. In fact, the Army was planning to run Schilling Manor as a tri-service housing center. As of October 26, 1965, there were 150 Air Force and

⁵⁷ Interviews with Col. Mike Scanlan (USAF, ret.), October 13, 1981, September 1, 1982, and June 13, 1983.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, August 10, 1965.

fifty-five Army families living there.⁶⁰

The Army returned to Salina for the third time since 1942 on January 3, 1966 with a staff of thirty-five people to run Schilling Manor. On that day, Colonel Scanlan relinquished control of Schilling Manor to Maj. Roger Bradley, United States Army, who was to run the Manor as a sub-post of Fort Riley. It was to be operated as an experimental housing project for the families of men serving overseas and was to be open to members of all branches of the United States military establishment. By January 30, there were 201 families living there, including ninety-six of men assigned to Schilling's caretaker unit and seventeen of men assigned to the Range.⁶¹

By 1973, an average of 665 units were occupied at all times under the "Waiting Wives" program. With the end of the Viet Nam Conflict, approximately two-thirds of the units were occupied by Air Force families as the Air Force had more unaccompanied tours to send its personnel than did the Army.⁶²

For ten years, the Army ran Schilling Manor. Then starting in March of 1976, the Army began thinking of closing the Manor. As of March 3, 1976, only 564 units were occupied. A new Army and Air Force policy announced on April 1, 1976 permitted servicemen to leave their families at the base they were on when they received overseas orders. In addition, Fort Riley had opened 1,101 new military housing units. On December 1, 1976, the Army returned Schilling Manor to the Air Force which promptly declared the housing surplus and turned it over to the GSA. However, the units were not to be dumped on the local housing

⁶⁰Salina (KS) Journal, October 5 and 26, 1965.

⁶¹Salina (KS) Journal, December 22, 1965, January 11, and 30, 1966.

⁶²Salina (KS) Journal, March 18, 1973.

market all at once.⁶³

Schilling Manor had been a thorn in the side of Salina ever since it was first announced in 1955 and especially after November 18, 1964. When the Air Force decided to build the Manor, it was sort of in self-defense. The Air Force had pleaded with Salina to build more housing and Salina hesitated. Housing was scarce until 1962, when the situation reversed itself. Then, when the base was announced for closing, an abundant housing situation appeared on the verge of getting even worse. The decision of Colonel Scanlan to open the Manor to military families gave Salina eleven years to ready itself for the probability of 735 housing units being added to the local real estate market. What did happen after 1976 was that a private firm bought the houses, and after refurbishing them, did open them up on the market all at once in 1979. Salina's worst fears were never realized. The houses were cheap while the rest of the Salina housing market remained high, but there was no noticeable rush to buy former military housing and at the present time, the highest number of vacancies in Salina are in the Schilling Manor area.

OQ Gunnery Range
Smoky Hill Bombing Range

Salinans were assured on December 8, 1964 that the bombing range would not be affected by the closing of Schilling AFB. At the time, there were twenty-three men assigned to the Range and that number was expected to climb to sixty and possibly ninety by July 1, 1965, according to Maj. Charles R. Koons, Range Commander.⁶⁴ Some 32,000 acres were in the bomb range complex and approximately 27,000 acres were leased to farmers for agricultural purposes.⁶⁵ When

⁶³Salina (KS) Journal, March 3, April 1, November 29, and December 3, 1976.

⁶⁴Salina (KS) Journal, December 8, 1964.

⁶⁵Salina (KS) Journal, January 10, 1965.

the closure announcement was made, Salinans expected the Range to be returned to the local tax rolls and disposed of to private ownership. This dream, first espoused in 1944, was never to be realized.

In the summer of 1965, Senator James Pearson of Kansas queried the Air Force concerning the status of the Range. He was informed that until July 1, 1964, the Range had been operated by the Strategic Air Command. Since then, it had been operated by the Tactical Air Command (TAC). As of June 30, 1965, there were only fifteen military personnel assigned to the Range but until March 31, no personnel had been assigned there on a permanent basis. Support had come from Schilling on an "as needed" basis.⁶⁶

It would appear that Senator Pearson was given an evasive line which could have been theoretically accurate. Likewise, the December 8, 1964 Salina Journal article would have been just as factual. The twenty-three men at the Range could have been on an extended TDY from McConnell AFB, Wichita, KS. Since the unit was a detachment from that base, personnel at the Range could have been carried on McConnell's personnel rosters. Or what the Air Force may have meant was that no one lived on the Range proper.

TAC spent \$45,788 to provide facilities at the Range for personnel assigned there in 1965. Detachment 1, 23rd TFW had been replaced by Detachment 1, 835th CSG, McConnell AFB, KS but Major Koons remained in command of eighty men. Some of his men had lived in barracks on base but with the closing of the base, they had no place to live. Two buildings at the north end of the Range were remodeled; one for a dining hall and the other for a forty-man dormitory.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, dated August 24, 1965.

⁶⁷ Salina (KS) Journal, September 23, 1965.

Detachment 1, 835th CSG was strengthened during the last week in January of 1966 by personnel transferred from Schilling to the Range and at the same time from SAC to TAC. Twenty men were received in this manner bringing the Range strength up to fifty-six men. Major Koons received cooks, bakers, and five Air Police. At the same time, the barracks, dining hall, and a small Base Exchange (BX) were opened.⁶⁸

While the Air Force was closing Schilling, it was thinking of acquiring 2,200 acres for the Range. The Air Force felt that it needed the land as a safety corridor for tactical fighter planes in their approach to targets on the Range.⁶⁹

The desire for more land raised the ire of the Salina Journal and it lashed out at the Air Force in a July 5, 1966 editorial:

The Air Force should prove a critical need for national defense before it is allowed to confiscate 2,200 acres of crop and pasture land in Saline and McPherson counties as an addition to the existing Smoky Hill bomb range. That the need has not been studied thoroughly is perhaps indicated by the failure of the Air Force to consult county commissioners or other authorities in either county before making its request to the Congress.

This region has a long record of excellent cooperation with the Air Force and The Journal's questioning of the new proposal should be understood in that context. If patriotism demands the sacrifice of more productive land, we must be for it.⁷⁰

Despite this editorial, the United States Air Force went ahead with its objective. This, the Salina Journal had to recognize. Starting a July 24, 1966 article with "You can just about write off 2200 acres of crop and pasture land. . .," the paper informed the public that the House Appropriations Committee had approved \$609,000 for the acquisition of the land and for realignment

⁶⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, January 25, 1966.

⁶⁹ Salina (KS) Journal, July 1, 1966.

⁷⁰ Salina (KS) Journal, July 5, 1966, editorial.

of targets at the Range.⁷¹

Unpublicized at the time was the fact that near the end of August, 1966, the Range personnel roster jumped to between 165 and 200 men for a short period of time. Transfers of from 100 to 150 men from the 4253rd ABS at Schilling were made to the Range. No one in the Air Force knew how many men were needed to effectively run a bomb range and since Schilling still had some personnel who were either about to retire or not re-enlist and for whom there was not enough time left in service to justify transferring them to another base, they went to the Range.⁷²

After this, the Air Force ran the Range with fewer and fewer personnel until 1973 when it leased the Range to the Kansas Air National Guard who assigned it to the 184th Tactical Fighter Group (TFG), McConnell AFB, Wichita, KS. On July 1, 1979, the 184th TFG replaced what had been a civilian operation with active-duty personnel and ran it with twenty-four Guardsmen.

4253rd Air Base Squadron

Colonel Scanlan probably had more experience in closing down Air Force installations than any other officer on active duty at the time. After the shock of the closing announcement wore off, he went to his immediate superior, Col. Roy Crompton, 310th SAW Commander, and asked for the job of closing Schilling. He had been offered command of Travis AFB, CA and wanted a California assignment before he retired from the Air Force but felt that a full Colonel might keep military and civilian agencies from running rough-shod over a person of lesser

⁷¹ Salina (KS) Journal, July 24, 1966.

⁷² Interview with Col. Mike Scanlan (USAF, ret.), October 13, 1981. While serving at the Range as a clerk from 1979 to 1982, this writer frequently heard how it had once taken 165 men to do the job that "twenty-four Guardsmen were doing." The individuals telling this story, of course, did not know the real reason for assigning that many men there, but their version sounded good.

rank in taking what they wanted off of the base. Normally, a Captain or a Major closed a base. He dreaded the "Sundown" nickname but there was a job that needed to be done and Colonel Scanlan wanted to see it done right.⁷³ On June 25, 1965, he assumed command of the 4253rd ABS, the last unit to call Schilling home.

His headquarters were in the deactivated hospital and on June 27, 1965, he commented on the differences between his closing job in 1949 and 1965 in a Salina Journal interview:

This is a lot different than the 1949 closure. That was strictly a military move. We moved everything out--men and planes and desks and everything went to the same place. I was the director of materiel, a major, for Colonel Joe W. Kelly and he made me project officer. I stayed behind until the 15th AF had completed its inspection. This closure is considerably different. Men and planes went to the four winds and the civilian side has entered the picture. We're playing a lot of it by ear. I think we're about six weeks ahead of the time table for the closure, but there'll be caretaker troops here probably until next summer. . . .⁷⁴

In actual fact, twenty-one months would pass before the last airmen would leave Schilling. One of the probable reasons that this closing was different than the 1949 closing was because Mike Scanlan had played a role in both of them. Undoubtedly, he did things in 1949 that he felt could have been done better and moved to do that in the 1964 to 1967 period. Then, another opinion held that the quality of personnel were different. One gets the impression reading about the 1940s that some hoped that the sooner the base closed the better, and few men were sorry to leave. It was different this time. There was more property to dispose of, and this time, it appeared that the Air Force Force had no intention of returning, whereas in 1949, there was that chance

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Salina (KS) Journal, June 27, 1965.

that the Air Force would return. On July 28, 1965, SAC gave the Salina (KS) Public Library the entire 20,000 volume Schilling Library, worth an estimated \$44,500. This included the remaining subscriptions and its collections of periodicals and newspapers.⁷⁵

Finally, Schilling Air Force Base was declared surplus and was deemed ready for turnover to local governmental agencies on June 29, 1965.⁷⁶ What this meant was the Federal Government had no foreseeable future use for the base and was ready to place it on the market.

A ceremony involving twenty-seven men was held in the Base Commander's office on July 30, 1965. Fourteen members of the deactivated 550th SMS received the Air Force Commendation Medal (AFCM). At the same time, thirteen men, each with at least twenty years of service, retired from the Air Force. Col. John R. King, former Commander of the 550th SMS, was acting Base Commander and presided over these ceremonies.⁷⁷

Most Salinans were probably unaware that their Chamber of Commerce had a small investment at the base. The Military Affairs Committee held an auction on the evening of August 4, 1965 and took in over \$1,000 from the sale of such items as pictures (for dormitory dayrooms), table lamps, a movie projector, a ceramic kiln (for the base hobby shop), a snow blower, and seven lounge chairs. This equipment had been purchased for use by the base because they were things that could not be purchased with government funds but which helped morale.⁷⁸

By September 24, 1965, Col. Mike Scanlan's 4253rd ABS had shrunk to 584

⁷⁵Salina (KS) Journal, June 28, 1965.

⁷⁶Salina (KS) Journal, June 29, 1965.

⁷⁷Salina (KS) Journal, July 30, 1965.

⁷⁸Salina (KS) Journal, August 5, 1965.

military personnel; thirty-three officers and 551 enlisted. He expected the last airman to leave within twelve months.⁷⁹ As it turned out, he was only off by about six months.

Military families living in the Salina area were informed by Lt. Col. Joe Chapman, 4253rd ABS Vice Commander, on November 3, 1965 that the Schilling Commissary would remain open a while longer. However, it closed for good on January 19, 1966⁸⁰ although the Army did open up a commissary for Schilling Manor (and presumably military families in the area) residents after it had established itself at the Manor.

The last Christmas Party at Schilling to be reported in the Salina Journal occurred on December 17, 1965 at Schilling's Community Center. There were presents, food, drink, Christmas decorations, and Santa Claus. But unlike at other Christmas parties of the past, no whines of jet engines were heard from planes about to take off, no one stood guard over a hot-line phone, and this party was held secure in the knowledge that it would not be interrupted by klaxons sounding an alert. Approximately 400 men were still assigned to the base and were in attendance with their families. Most of them did not have orders and did not know where Christmas, 1966 would find them.⁸¹

Bit by bit, Salina and Saline County began to face a life after Schilling. On January 5, 1966, five county officials: County Attorney, his assistant, the Sheriff, Probate Judge, and District Court Clerk forfeited a total of \$7,544 a year in pay which they had been receiving for the extra work the base had caused

⁷⁹Salina (KS) Journal, September 24, 1965. Most of these troops were Civil Engineer personnel.

⁸⁰Salina (KS) Journal, November 3, 1965 and January 21, 1966.

⁸¹Salina (KS) Journal, December 19, 1965.

them.⁸²

Another facet of military life at Schilling was to be phased out on January 9, 1966 when Chaplain Chester Ross was to conduct the last morning services in the base chapel at ten and eleven o'clock on "The Unchanging Christ." Major Ross, a Protestant, was the last Chaplain on base and A1C Buddy G. Bray was the last Chaplain's Assistant. There would be an Air Force Catholic wedding on January 15 and a Protestant wedding on January 22. After January 9, base personnel were to be encouraged to attend Salina churches. Eventually, the chapel was to become an "all faiths" chapel for Schilling Institute.⁸³

Lt. Col. Norman Repp, 4253rd ABS Vice Commander, presented the guidons of the 379th, 380th, and 381st Bomb Squadrons to officials of Salina's Smoky Hill Historical Museum on February 17, 1966.⁸⁴ Colonel Repp had been the last Commander of one of the bomb squadrons before they were deactivated in 1965.

With the deactivation of the base, there was considerable curiosity about what was at the base and Salinans yielded to their curiosity by driving there. Some were curious as to how fast their cars would go and felt that the runways would be an ideal test, free from police interference. Salinans were warned that they took their lives into their own hands and were ordered to stay off of the runways. Schilling runways were still being used by Air Force and civilian planes for emergency purposes. Air Police patrols were trying to keep visitors off the runways.⁸⁵

⁸²Salina (KS) Journal, January 3, 1966.

⁸³Salina (KS) Journal, January 7, 1966. Today, the chapel is a Lutheran church. Schilling Institute is Kansas Technical Institute. (KTI).

⁸⁴Salina (KS) Journal, February 17, 1966. However, they are in storage in the basement of the Salina Library.

⁸⁵Salina (KS) Journal, March 3, 1966.

Col. John F. "Mike" Scanlan turned over command of the 4253rd ABS to Lt. Col. Homer H. Houghton on March 4, 1966 and left for Headquarters, SAC, Offutt AFB, Omaha, NE to assume duties as Director of Services. Before he left, he and his wife were honored with a farewell dinner on February 9, 1966 at the Salina Country Club. At the time of his departure, there were eighteen officers and 240 airmen on what was left of Schilling AFB.⁸⁶ Although his new job sounded simple, it turned out to be complex. Colonel Scanlan had hoped to receive command of another base, preferably in California. Instead, he was nominated for the coveted Legion of Merit medal, given a desk in SAC Headquarters, and charged with supervising the closing of other bases in the same manner that he had closed Schilling.⁸⁷

Little was revealed in the local press about the last Schilling Commander. He had been a member of the 550th SMS before it was deactivated. As the last Commander of the 4253rd ABS, one of his duties, in addition to supervising the final phase-out of the Air Force from Schilling, was to host visitors from other communities which were losing their air bases. Salina/Schilling were again role models for a successful "swords into plowshares" transition.⁸⁸

Although the United States Air Force would soon be leaving, two things happened which were bound to arouse some sort of curiosity in later years. The Salina Airport Authority decided to rename the streets of the base proper. Formerly designated by letters and numbers by the Air Force, now they were to honor former Commanders with three exceptions: Schilling Road, the east/west road into the base and formerly the main gate road; Centennial Road, the north/

⁸⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, December 31, 1965, February 9 and March 4, 1966.

⁸⁷ Interview with Col. Mike Scanlan (USAF, ret.), October 13, 1981. He received the Legion of Merit medal on August 18, 1966.

⁸⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 5 and August 26, 1966.

south road into the base; and Berschell Road, a street on the south side of the base which was named in honor of a former Civil Engineer assigned to the base in the late 1950s.⁸⁹

Plans were announced on May 15, 1966 for Salina to move its municipal airport from East Crawford Street to Schilling with the Base Operations building serving as the airport terminal.⁹⁰ This move fulfilled a dream that had first surfaced in 1945 and was a thorn in base/community relations during that period.

A B-47 stratojet bomber landed at Schilling on June 26, 1966 for the last time. It was the last B-47 on active duty and had been flown from Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS to Schilling where it was accepted by Mayor G. N. "Jerry" Waddell as a gift from the Air Force. The Air Force and Salina had finalized this deal on June 17, 1966.⁹¹ Speculation immediately focused on what to do with the plane. There was talk of an air museum where Salina would acquire other planes and place them on display in the old base proper. Sad to say, the B-47 is the only plane Salina has acquired at the present time and the idea of an air museum has faded. The GSA sold eight of the twelve Atlas missile sites by sealed bid on July 19, 1966. Four were reserved for use by Schilling Technical Institute (Now KTI) and Kansas State University.⁹² This action finished the missile story in Salina.

Colonel Houghton's command had shrunk to two officers, twenty enlisted, and thirty civilians by September 14, 1966. All personnel had orders except for Colonel Houghton and Senior Master Sergeant Williams, Personnel NCO. This

⁸⁹Salina (KS) Journal, April 21, 1966. See Appendix C for a complete list of names used.

⁹⁰Salina (KS) Journal, May 15, 1966. The old airport became a golf course.

⁹¹Salina (KS) Journal, June 17 and 27, 1966.

⁹²Salina (KS) Journal, May 24, June 28, and July 19, 1966.

group had thirty vehicles at their disposal. Headquarters of the 4253rd ABS had been moved to the Civil Engineering Building. At the same time, the Salina Airport Authority took possession of the airfield portion of the base. This transaction involved over 1,000 acres and fifty buildings as well as the runways, taxiways, terminal, tower, and support facilities.⁹³

Praise for Salina came from an unexpected source on November 17, 1966. Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, the man who had decided to close the base, in a statement read at the Ramada Inn, praised Salina for the way it had recovered from the jolt that his decision had caused almost two years prior. "Dear Sal: The patient is recovering nicely, thank you, Mr. McNamara. Yours, Ina."⁹⁴

Colonel Houghton announced on January 18, 1967 that the 4253rd Air Base Squadron would be deactivated on April 3, 1967. On that day, his command, which would consist of himself, two NCOs, two airmen, and eight civilians, plus a few guests would gather in his office in Building 595 where he would read the order deactivating his command. No bugles would blow, no trumpets would sound at Schilling's wake. "Dear Sal: The base is dead; long live the base. Yours, Ina."⁹⁵

April 3, 1967 was a bright, sunny spring day in Salina. Under normal circumstances, it would merely have been a typical day. But this day was to mark the final end of Schilling Air Force Base. For twenty-five years, Smoky Hill/Schilling Air Force Base, Salina, Kansas, two miles southwest of the center of the city, located near the center of Kansas, had played a role in the affairs

⁹³Salina (KS) Journal, September 14, 1966.

⁹⁴Salina (KS) Journal, November 17, 1966.

⁹⁵Salina (KS) Journal, January 18, 1967.

of a nation, a state, a county, and a city. At 10:00 A.M. on that day, twenty guests gathered in Colonel Houghton's office in Building 595 for the final moments of the base.

Special Order G-17 from Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, Offutt AFB, NE was read: "1. The 4253rd AB Sq, Schilling AFB, Kans. is discontinued effective 3 April 1967. Personnel rendered surplus by this action will be absorbed into other SAC units. Equipment rendered surplus by this action will revert to stocks. Disposition of orgl records will be per AFM 181-5. Authority: AFM 26-2."⁹⁶

This ended the life of the base. However, there was a small ceremony which made it more of a retirement party than a wake. Colonel Houghton, the last Schilling Commander, made a few farewell remarks: "There are mixed emotions. We're proud, naturally, of what Schilling has done and proud of the way in which the base has been phased into the community's civilian life. But saying 'Goodbye' is not easy. It makes us a little sad." The last personnel assigned to Schilling were given keys to the city, then the group went outside and watched the flag and headquarters sign pulled down. It was over. Schilling Air Force Base had retired.⁹⁷

Before Schilling Air Force Base could officially retire from the pages of the Salina Journal, it needed an editorial so that Whitley Austin could present thoughts which represented the way the area felt about the retirement of the base. On April 4, 1967, the last editorial concerning the active base was presented:

The Strategic Air Command is gone from Salina. In an informal

⁹⁶ Salina (KS) Journal, April 3, 1967.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

ceremony of coffee, cakes and pleasantries, the last handful of Blues pulled out Monday. The remarkable aspect of the drawnout closing of Schilling Air Force base is that there have been no tears. Not even many swear words. This is testimony to the maturity of the town. Emotionally and intellectually, Salina has proved its adulthood.

Since the word came out of Washington on November 19, 1964, Salina has known that the closing of the base would be painful. It still is. We have not fully recovered from the traumatic loss of men, payroll, and purchasing power. Nor have we replaced the friendship and leadership that the men and women of the Air Force provided in so many ways.⁹⁸

Thus, ended twenty-five years of history in which a small city, so to speak, interrelated with the city and county outside its gates. Sometimes both groups managed to rub the other the wrong way, but on the whole each complemented the other. The editorial cited above in the Salina Journal was correct in stating that the Air Force would be missed. If people this writer talked to while researching the base were sincere, the Air Force is still missed sixteen years later.

On April 3, 1967, Lieutenant Colonel Homer H. Houghton, the last Commander of Schilling Air Force Base, lowered the flag and a carpenter climbed a ladder and pulled down the sign at the headquarters building. Twenty-five years had passed since this area had been transformed from farm land into a military installation. As was the case twenty-five years earlier, no bugles blew, no trumpets sounded, no drums beat, no troops passed by in review, and the flags were bundled up and dispatched to the United States Air Force Archives. An era in the history of Salina and the Air Force had ended. Schilling Air Force Base now belonged to the ages.

⁹⁸ Salina (KS) Journal, April 4, 1967, editorial.

CHAPTER IX

NO BUGLES WILL BLOW

CONCLUSION

Ever since Spain settled Florida and the first English colonists arrived at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607, military installations have existed to provide for the common defense and general welfare of the American people. Some have existed for a few days, while others, such as Fort Leavenworth, KS and Langley AFB, VA, have continued in operation for decades. The purpose of military installations in the United States has undergone change through the years. Originally, American installations were designed to protect settlers from Indians, marauding enemies such as the French, English, Spanish, and later Mexicans whose objectives were to harass America's continental expansion, and from possible invasion from the high seas. Today, with an enemy a hemisphere away, the advent of air power has caused change. Theoretically, the Army can set up a defense in a few fortified buildings or trenches, but aerial warfare and defense requirements mean a fairly stable and secure rear-echelon base. Here, there must be paved taxi areas, a strip of at least 5,000 feet in length (and preferably much longer to allow for mishaps), and the capability of handling aircraft carrying loads of 60,000 pounds and greater. In addition, it must have fuel storage facilities for at least thirty aircraft and that storage area should be able to withstand enemy attack.

At the time the "Army Air Base at Salina, Kansas" was constructed, the demands of aerial warfare were simpler and the average length of the runways, based upon sources available to this writer, seems to have been 5,000 feet long.

What became Smoky Hill/Schilling Air Force Base, was destined to have some of the longer runways in the United States military establishment. When it closed in 1967, it had two runways 13,330 feet long with 1,000 feet overruns at both ends for a total effective length of 15,330 feet and it still had two runways 10,000 feet long, making the base still one of the largest in the United States when it came to runways!

Salina's air base was created in the dark days of World War II. Although it started out with B-17 bombers, its creation was a center for the "Sky Dreadnaughts" later known as the B-29. It was one of three bases in the continental United States charged with training crews in that plane and its Gunnery Range was probably used for practice bombing runs. The base had four 10,000-foot-long runways and four 7,500-foot-long for a total of eight runways.

After the war ended, the base was probably kept open because of its runways. When constructed in 1942, it was designed for a five years operation. As such, construction was on a temporary basis. It does not appear that much permanent construction was accomplished during this period. The mission of the base after the war was primarily combat training, although at one time or the other, it served as a recruiting center, a post-basic training center, and a way station for hospital patients being transported to a major Air Force hospital. Several Smoky Hill Commanders from this period went on to promotions of at least Brigadier General.

Economy and the poor re-enlistment rate were given as explanations for the forced closing of the base in 1949, and it was placed on a caretaker status under the command of one officer assisted by four enlisted men and seventeen civilians. Some equipment was left behind to provide for a cadre should the base be reactivated.

The United States had been involved in the Korean Conflict for a year when

the decision was made to reactivate the base. A group of men from Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS were already attached to the base to reactivate the OQ Gunnery Range when the word came on August 1, 1951 that the total base was reactivated. These men became the nucleus of the units newly assigned to the base.

Smoky Hill was to be a different base in its second era than it had been in its first era. In the beginning, the aircraft was the same B-29 model, but these gave way to the new B-47 stratojet bombers, the "long rifle" of the Strategic Air Command. In addition, KC-97 tankers were assigned in two squadrons to give the base mid-air refueling capability.

Two other significant changes that made the base different were personnel and base/community relations. As far as can be determined, the most personnel assigned to the base during the 1940s was approximately 5,000 military. This figure varied from one man in early 1942 to 5,000 at the peak of the war to fewer than 3,000 in 1946. At one time, there were four groups assigned to the base, although in the post-war period there were only two groups under one wing. The reactivated Smoky Hill had the 802nd Air Division and the 40th and 310th Bomb Wings assigned to it for an approximate total of 8,000 military personnel.

It would be hard to write about the base without a look at base/community relations. Without going into detail or wandering off on a tangent, it is believed by this writer, on the basis of the material available to him, that base/community relations fluctuated during the 1940s seldom venturing past the "good" mark and on occasion dropping down into the "poor" area. But with the reactivation, relations seldom dropped below "excellent" and have often been described as "unique" in modern military history. In the last era of the base, there were frequent Open Houses and Receptions on base for civilians which were reciprocated by the city of Salina with the annual week-long "Honor the Uniform" Week in which men in uniform were given discounts, prizes, etc., by Salina

merchants and townspeople were urged to buy airmen cups of coffee. Salinans were given memberships in the base clubs. Two planes, a B-47 and a KC-135 tanker, were named "City of Salina" and "City of Salina II," respectively. The reputation of base/community relations in Saline County, Kansas was such that over 125 communities in the United States with military installations near them either wrote or sent delegations to Salina to see how it was done.

What effect base/community relations had on the base can only be judged by the reader. What can be stated is that the base set re-enlistment records which set an Air Force record in 1958 and it was named "The Golden Anniversary Base" in recognition of that fact. The units assigned to the base were frequent winners of various Air Force competitions. Morale was probably above average. Once, the Air Force tried to catch the base off guard with three Operational Readiness Inspections (ORIs) within three months at a time when the average inspection was once every twelve months. Each time, the base passed the inspections with ease.

Construction in the second era of the base started out as a five-year plan, was changed to ten years, and finally to twenty-five years by 1952, meaning that the base was virtually permanent. Most of the office buildings were constructed of concrete block and the barracks were among the most modern in the Air Force for the times. As has been mentioned, the runways were among the largest in the United States. A rumor surfaced in this writer's research that the runways were six feet thick of reinforced concrete and capable of withstanding direct hits by nuclear bombs. Material available to this writer makes that rumor appear false. The best that can be determined is that they are twenty-four inches thick of reinforced concrete with six artificial drainage systems. With this, the runways can handle the heaviest of military planes which currently need only runways with a depth of nineteen inches. Whether

this makes the runways capable of withstanding direct nuclear attacks has not been determined and hopefully will never be determined.

Worth noting here is the fact that the base did have a secure fuel storage system. Six salt mine caverns in western McPherson County had been leased to the Air Force for storage of jet fuel. A pipeline connected the base to these caverns and it is assumed that these caverns could survive a limited enemy attack.

In 1960, the base underwent several changes. First, the 802nd Air Division was deactivated and the 40th Bomb Wing was transferred to Forbes AFB, KS. In their stead, a squadron of Atlas F missiles was deployed in twelve sites around the base and attached to the base for support. The base was upgraded to receive the B-52 heavy bomber and the KC-135 jet tanker. Through these changes, the base only lost approximately 3,000 personnel.

Until the construction for the base and the missile sites ended, there was considerable mention in the local press about a housing shortage in the area. This writer has received letters from people assigned to the base between 1942 and 1965 stating that until 1962, reasonable housing was nearly impossible to find. This writer has mentioned in Chapter V of this paper that men assigned to the 310th Wing when it was at Forbes AFB made excursions to Salina in mid-1952 to secure housing before that unit was transferred to Smoky Hill. Yet, this writer talked to several Salinans who were surprised to hear that there had ever been a housing shortage in the area. Despite their surprise, this writer believes that there was a critical housing shortage during most of the history of the base and that it may have been responsible for some of the ill-feeling that the airmen had for the area in the 1940s. Furthermore, this writer believes that the base housing area was constructed by the Air Force only after Salina failed to construct enough homes for its personnel. Why it

was difficult for contractors to decide to build housing can not be determined. This is a matter for the reader to decide.

By November, 1964, Schilling had an overage of personnel assigned to it. There were nearly 5,000 men and women assigned to the base and it was ready to receive the first B-52s, then a relatively new plane in the Air Force inventory. It had received the new KC-135s in March, 1964. There was no indication that Schilling would be closed, yet the announcement was made and caught everyone, it seems, in SAC by surprise. By the end of June, 1965, the 310th Wing had been deactivated and the planes had left. Yet, it took the Air Force nearly two more years to close up shop and remove the last of its personnel.

This writer remains curious as to why the base, in which millions had been spent to upgrade, was closed. It is possible to believe that the exigencies of world war and location were responsible for its creation in 1942, but there is no clear-cut answer for its closing. Did politics play a role? Was money needed for the Viet Nam Conflict and closing the base was one means of getting it? Or was location no longer a variable to consider? Perhaps the answer to one of these questions is the reason the base was closed. On the other hand, the reasons the Department of Defense gave for the closing such as the facts that the base had the obsolete Atlas F missiles, B-47 bombers, and as yet did not have B-52s, is the answer. Maybe, it rests with something not readily apparent to this writer. Why the Air Force then took nearly two years to leave after the 310th Wing was deactivated is another mystery when one recalls that in August, 1949, the announcement was made to close the base and by April, 1950, there was only a skeleton caretaker force of twenty-two people on base. There are probably simple, justifiable answers to these questions but, again, they are not readily apparent to this writer.

Throughout its history, Smoky Hill/Schilling was a base which was con-

sidered a keystone in the military defense of the United States. Its planes could be rushed to either coast, since the base was nearly equidistant to both. It was endowed with long runways and in the second era of its history, it had above average personnel assigned to above average units and its facilities were in good shape. The base was economical to operate and on the day it was announced for closing, Col. Roy Crompton, 310th Wing Commander, was at a meeting at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ to receive an award recognizing the base's success in saving the government money. Some of the nation's most famous military aircraft such as the B-17, B-24, B-29, B-47, KC-97, KC-135, to name a few were assigned to the base at one time or the other. Many top Commanders went on to higher rank after they left the base. It does not appear to ever have been a detriment to anyone's career to have been assigned to Smoky Hill/Schilling AFB.

Finally, one thing stands out in the mind of this writer about this base. The history of the base is a microscopic study of the United States Air Force, yet it is also a study of how a community reacted to having that base next door as a neighbor. It is especially evident in the last era (1951 to 1967) that this base was the Air Force at its finest. At the same time, this writer believes that it is also a history of a Kansas community behaving as it felt a Kansas community should behave when it has a group of strangers as guests. It appears that no history of Salina or the United States Air Force is complete without considering the contributions each made to the other between the years 1942 and 1967.

Today, there are two overt reminders of past events in this area: A parked B-47 with peeling decals and the freshly painted orange and white checkerboard-patterned water tower, the latter common to United States military bases worldwide. Col. John F. "Mike" Scanlan (USAF, retired), the next to the last Base Commander, is the General Manager of the Salina Airport Authority which oversees

the area, and his contribution to the once glorious past is to see that the tower remains painted in that familiar manner.

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APPENDIX A

UNITS ASSIGNED
1942 - 1967

DESIGNATION	PERIOD ON BASE	AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED
376th Base Headquarters Squadron	9-10-42 to c. 11-45	Admin
21st Bomb Wing	10- 3-42 to 5-43	B-17
346th Bomb Group	10-13-42 to 2-43	B-17
58th Bomb Operations Training Wing	5- 1-43 to 6-43	B-17
58th Bomb Wing	9-15-43 to 3-12-44	B-17
73rd Bomb Operations Training Wing	6-20-43 to 10-15-43	B-29
73rd Bomb Wing	11-20-43 to 2-28-44	B-29
462nd Bomb Group	7- 1-43 to 7-27-43	B-29
400th Bomb Group	7-31-43 to 9-43	B-24
468th Bomb Group	8- 1-43 to 3-12-44	B-29
472nd Bomb Group	9- 1-43 to 11-30-43	B-29
XX Bomber Command	11-20-43 to 2-12-44	B-29
499th Bomb Group	12- 1-43 to 7-22-44	B-29
XXI Bomber Command	3- 1-44 to 6-10-44	B-29
17th Bomb Operations Training Wing	March, 1944	B-29
39th Bomb Group	4- 1-44 to 1- 8-45	B-29
382nd Bomb Group	12-11-44 to 7- 8-45	B-29
485th Bomb Group	9- 8-45 to 8- 4-46	B-29
44th Bomb Group	12-14-45 to 7-12-46	B-29
519th Air Service Group	11- 7-45 to 1-47	Admin?
405th Air Service Group	2- 7-46 to 1-47	Admin?
92nd Bomb Group (Inactive)	10-25-46 to 6-20-47	Admin
49th Combat Wing, Provisional	1-47 to 11- 5-47	B-29
97th Bomb Wing/Group	8- 4-46 to 5-16-48	B-29
301st Bomb Wing/Group	11- 5-47 to 12- 7-49	B-29
22nd Bomb Wing/Group	5-18-48 to 5- 1-49	B-29
4108th Base Service Squadron	12- 7-49 to 6-52?	Admin
802nd Air Division	6-52 to 6-20-60	B-29/B-47/
(includes 802nd Air Base Group/Combat Support Group)		KC-97
802nd Medical Group	6-52 to 6-25-65	Hospital
310th Bomb Wing/Strategic Aerospace Wing	9-52 to 6-25-65	B-29/B-47
(includes 310th Air Refueling Squadron)		KC-97/KC-135
40th Bomb Wing	1- 8-53 to 6-20-60	B-29/B-47
40th Air Refueling Squadron	1- 8-53 to 3-14-63	KC-97
550th Strategic Missile Squadron	2-62 to 6-25-65	Atlas F Missile
22nd Strategic Air Division	7- 1-62 to 7- 1-63	B-47/B-52/
		KC-97/KC-135
		Atlas F Missile
310th Combat Support Group	6-20-60 to 6-25-65	Admin
4253rd Air Base Squadron	6-25-65 to 4- 3-67	Admin

COMMANDERS

Base Commander
 4108th Base Service Squadron
 802nd Air Base Group
 802nd Combat Support Group
 310th Combat Support Group
 4253rd Air Base Squadron

RANK	NAME/AGE AND STATE (if known)	DATE OF TOUR	PREVIOUS TOUR	FOLLOW-ON ASSIGNMENT
Capt	Paul M. Long (MO)	4- 1-42 to 7- 3-42	? ? ?	Base
Lt Col	William A. Cahill (OH)	7- 3-42 to 12-18-42	Biggs Field, TX	Walker AAF, KS
Col	Carlton F. Bond (NY)	12-18-42 to 10-11-43	? ? ?	? ? ?
Col	Raphael Baez, Jr.	10-11-43 to 1- 5-44	Great Falls, MT	Ardmore AAF, OK
Col	Arthur J. Melanson, 47	1- 5-44 to 7- 9-44	Base	? ? ?
Lt Col/ Col	Ralph W. Rodieck (TX)	7- 9-44 to 6-20-45	Base	Washington, D.C.
Col	William J. Bohnacker (WI)	6-20-45 to 9-25-45	Base	Washington, D.C.
Col	Walter E. Arnold (TX)	9-25-45 to 10- 3-45	German POW	Sioux City AAF, IA
Col	William O. Eareckson (NY)	10- 3-45 to 11- 5-45	Mountain Home AAF, ID	University of Michigan
Col	Maurice A. Preston, 33 (CA)	11- 5-45 to 8-15-46	Sioux Falls AAF, SD	Maxwell AAF, AL
Col	William L. Lee (TX)	8-15-46 to 9-15-47	Italy	Turner AFB, GA
Col	Leslie G. Mulzer (OH)	9-15-47 to 8- 3-48	Alaska	Colorado Springs, CO
Col	Leonard T. Nicholson	8- 3-48 to 8-18-48	Base	Virginia
Lt Col	John P. Gregg (OK)	8-18-48 to 10- 8-48	Base	Base
Col	Leslie G. Mulzer (OH)	10- 8-48 to 1- 3-49	Colorado Springs, CO	Maxwell AFB, AL
Col	Joe W. Kelly, 37 (IN)	1- 3-49 to 12- 7-49	Japan	Barksdale AFB, LA
Lt Col	Dailey M. Jones	12- 7-49 to 4-20-50	Base	Offutt AFB, NE
Capt	Bernard J. Nied, 51	4-20-50 to 9-21-51	Base	Travis AFB, CA
Maj	Leon Russell	9-21-51 to 1- 8-52	Fairchild AFB, WA	Base
Lt Col	Miles W. Johnston (NE)	1- 8-52 to 3- 4-52	? ? ?	Base
Col	Myers B. Cather (NE)	3- 4-52 to 5-10-53	Korea	Lincoln AFB, NE
Col	Robert Thacker (CA)	5-10-53 to 2-10-54	Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ	Base
Col	John R. Kane, 47 (LA)	2-10-54 to 4-29-54	Morocco	Discharged
Col	Jack L. Randolph, 45	4-29-54 to 3- 7-56	Norton AFB, CA	Campbell AFB, KY
Lt Col	Gordon E. Hein, 45	3- 7-56 to 7- 7-59	Base	Maxwell AFB, AL
Lt Col	Carl W. Hauth	7- 7-59 to 7-20-59	Base	Base
Col	William Mullins, 43	7-20-59 to 11-10-59	Thailand	Base

Col	Julius B. Summers, Jr.	11-10-59 to	7-31-61	Base	Base
Lt Col	Wallace F. MacGregor	7-31-61 to	5-20-63	Base	March AFB, CA
Lt Col	Curtis Youngblood	5-20-63 to	6-18-63	Base	Base
Col	John R. King (SD)	6-18-63 to	7-16-63	Grand Forks AFB, ND	Base
Col	Charles K. Agan	7-16-63 to	7-64	Base	Malmstrom AFB, MT
Col	James R. Sheffield	7-64 to	8- 5-64	Base	Base
Col	John F. Scanlan (MN)	8- 5-64 to	3- 5-66	England	Offutt AFB, NE
Lt Col	Homer H. Houghton	3- 5-66 to	4- 3-67	Base	Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ

802nd Air Division

Col	John H. de Russey	6-52	to 11-25-52	Forbes AFB, KS	Base
Brig Gen/ Maj Gen	Wiley D. Ganey (AL)	11-25-52 to	4-24-54	March AFB, CA	Washington, D.C.
Brig Gen	John R. Sutherland, 44	4-24-54 to	2- 5-56	Offutt AFB, NE	March AFB, CA
Col	Burton H. Burns (TX)	2- 5-56 to	2-24-56	Base	Base
Col/ Brig Gen	James W. Wilson, 39 (WY)	2-24-56 to	3-24-58	MacDill AFB, FL	Plattsburg AFB, NY
Col	Harold L. Ohlke (MO)	3-24-58 to	7- 8-59	Forbes AFB, KS	Fairchild AFB, WA
Col	George Y. Jumper, 42 (CA)	7- 8-59 to	6-20-60	Base	Base

22nd Strategic Aerospace Division

Col	Jack W. Hayes, Jr.	7- 1-62 to	7- 1-63	Base	Walker AFB, NM
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310th Bomb Wing

310th Strategic Aerospace Wing

Col	Robert J. Nolan, 34	9-52	to 11-25-52	Forbes AFB, KS	Base
Col	John H. de Russey	11-25-52 to	8- 7-55	Base	Wright-Patterson AFB, OH
Col	Selmon Wells, 39	8- 7-55 to	7- 5-56	Mountain Home AFB, ID	Westover AFB, MA
Col	Delmar P. Woods	7- 5-56 to	9-21-56	Base	Base
Col	Bryson Bailey	9-21-56 to	1-12-58	Fairchild AFB, WA	Greenland
Col	Jean B. Miller	1-12-58 to	4- 8-59	Offutt AFB, NE	Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ
Col	Walter Y. Lucas	4- 8-59 to	6-20-60	Base	Mountain Home AFB, ID
Col	George Y. Jumper	6-20-60 to	2- 2-61	Base	Lowry AFB, CO
Col	Jack W. Hayes, Jr.	2- 2-61 to	7-11-62	Dyess AFB, TX	Base
Col	Edison F. Arnold	7-11-62 to	5- 5-64	England	Fairchild AFB, WA
Col	Roy Crompton (GA)	5- 5-64 to	6-25-65	Ellsworth AFB, SD	March AFB, CA

40th Bomb Wing

Col	Stanley J. Donovan, 42	12- 8-52 to	5- 2-53	Forbes AFB, KS	Travis AFB, CA
Col	David A. Burchinal, 38 (PA)	5- 2-53 to	10-53	Pentagon	Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ
Col	Robert J. Nolan, 35	10-53 to	1-54	Base	Base
Col	William R. Large, Jr.	1-54 to	6-54	Offutt AFB, NE	? ? ?
Col	Robert J. Nolan, 35	6-54 to	6-14-54	Base	Base
Col	Burton H. Burns (TX)	6-14-54 to	6-57	Japan	Maxwell AFB, AL
Col	Andrew S. Low (RI)	6-57 to	7- 4-58	Base	Maxwell AFB, AL
Col	George Y. Jumper, 41 (CA)	7- 4-58 to	7- 8-59	Japan	Base
Col	Woodward B. Carpenter	7- 8-59 to	6-20-60	Base	Washington, D.C.

APPENDIX C

STREET NAMES
AFTER CLOSURE

<u>Name</u>	<u>In Honor Of</u>
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AVENUES

Arnold	Col. E. F. Arnold, 310th SAW Cmdr, 7-11-62 to 5- 5-63.
Berschell	Civil Engineer in the late 1950s.
Hein	Lt. Col. Gordon E. Hein, 802nd CSG Cmdr, 3- 7-56 to 7- 7-59.
Low	Col. Andrew S. Low, 40th Wg Cmdr, 6-57 to 7- 4-58.
Scanlan	Col. John F. "Mike" Scanlan, 310th CSG and 4253rd ABS Cmdr, to 3- 5-66.

ROADS

Bailey	Col. Bryson Bailey, 310th Wg Cmdr, 9-21-56 to 1-12-58.
Burchinal	Col. David A. Burchinal, 40th Wg Cmdr, 5- 2-53 to 10-53.
Corwin	Col. Robert F. Corwin, Hospital Cmdr, 8-52 to 4-61.
Crompton	Col. Roy Crompton, 310th SAW Cmdr, 5- 5-64 to 6-25-65.
Centennial	Salina's Centennial, 1958.
De Russy	Col. John H. de Russy, 802nd AD and 310th Wg Cmdr, 6-52 to 8- 7-55.
Ganey	Maj. Gen. Wiley D. Ganey, 802nd AD Cmdr, 11-25-52 to 4-24-54.
General Jim	Brig. Gen. James W. Wilson, 802nd AD Cmdr, 2-24-56 to 3-24-58.
Hayes	Col. Jack W. Hayes, Jr., 310th SAW and 22nd SAD Cmdr, 2- 2-61 7- 1-63.
Jumper	Col. George Y. Jumper, 802nd AD, 40th, and 310th Wg Cmdr, 7- 4-58 to 2- 2-61.
Lucas	Col. Walter Y. Lucas, 310th Wg Cmdr, 4- 8-59 to 6-20-60.
Ohlke	Col. Harold L. Ohlke, 802nd AD Cmdr, 3-24-58 to 7- 8-59.
Schilling	Col. David C. Schilling, Base named in his honor.
Summers	Col. Julius B. Summers, Jr., 802nd CSG and 310th CSG Cmdr, 11-10-59 to 7-31-61.
Sutherland	Brig. Gen. John R. Sutherland, 802nd AD Cmdr, 4-24-54 to 2- 5-56.
Wells	Col. Selmon Wells, 310th Wg Cmdr, 8- 7-55 to 7- 5-56.

APPENDIX D

THE BASE

1945

Location:

From City--4.0 air miles, SSW.
Position--Lat. $38^{\circ} 47' 18''$. Long. $97^{\circ} 39' 25''$.
Altitude--1,260'.
City Population--21,073.

Description:

Size--2,600 acres.
Landing area--Runways: N/S 10,000' x 500', NE/SW 7,650' x 150', E/W 7,650' x 150', NW/SE 10,000' x 500', concrete.
Drainage--Artificial.
Approach hazards--None.
Lighting--Beacons (rotating and code); course lights; obst.; contact; B-2 runway (portable); flood (stationary).

Facilities:

Hangars--(1) 200' x 184', door 120' x 29', wood; (1) 200' x 180', door 160' x 36', wood and concrete; (4) 120' x 80', door 120' x 25'8", steel.
Shops--Major engine repair and major aircraft repair.
Gasoline--73, 91, and 100 octane with 15 servicing trucks available on base. None reported in vicinity.
Oil--Available on base. None reported in vicinity.
Communications--Telegraph and teletype.
Personnel Accomodations (transient)--Available on base and in Salina.

Transportation:

Airlines--none reported.
Railroads--Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific; Missouri Pacific; Union Pacific; at Salina. Sidings on base.
Roads--US 40, 3.0 mi. NNE; US 81 2.2 mi. E; paved; access road, E. improved.
Facilities--Bus and taxi service.

Owned by the United States government and operated by the Army Air Force.¹

¹US Army Air Forces Airport Directory Continental United States, Vol. 1, January 1945, p. 88.

APPENDIX E

THE BASE
1965 TO 1967Location:

From City--Southwest edge of Salina. 90 miles from the geographical center of the nation.
Population--Over 42,000.

Description:

Size--Over 3,300 acres.
Landing area--Runways--N/S 13,330' x 300', NW/SE 10,000' x 500', NE/SW 10,000' x 150', concrete.
Taxiways--Concrete; 17,000' x 75', Bituminous; 10,500' x 70'.
Lighting--Complete runway and taxiway lighting. High intensity lighting on N/S runway and related taxiways.
Administration building--9,000 SF.
Undeveloped areas--Numerous, ranging in size from fractions of an area to over 40 acres. All served by existing utility systems.

Facilities:

Hangars--(1) 61,300 SF, (1) 47,000 SF, (3) 27,000 SF, and (1) 116,000 SF.
Shops--27,000 SF.
Aircraft Wash Platform--150' x 250'.
Buildings--Over 300, totalling 2,337,000 square feet including; 75-bed hospital; 15-chair dental building; 3 dining halls; 30 dorms; gym; laboratories; theater; chapel; bowling alley; 2 swimming pools; dozens of shop buildings; 20 warehouses; and office buildings. Natural gas heating and many buildings are air-conditioned.
Water system--Complete facility. Capacity of 1.5 million gallons a day and storage of 1.5 million gallons above ground.
Streets--Over 12 miles of paved streets and 13 miles of all-weather graveled and oiled roads.
Parking--190,000 square yards of bituminous surfaced parking with lots located to serve all buildings adequately and conveniently.

Transportation:

Airlines--Daily service provided by Frontier and Continental Air Lines.
Railroads--On-base service provided by the Missouri Pacific on a number of sidings.
Roads--I-70, 4 mi. NNW; US 40, 3 mi. NNE; I-35W/US 81 2 mi. E; paved; access road, E. paved.¹

¹Salina (KS) Journal, January 31, 1965 and Olson, p. 172.

APPENDIX F

CHRONOLOGY OF THE
40TH BOMB WING
PRIOR TO ITS ARRIVAL AT
SMOKY HILL AFB, KS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
April 1, 1941	Activated as the 40th Bomb Group and assigned to Boriquen Field, Puerto Rico.
May, 1942	29th, 44th, 45th, and 395th Bomb Squadrons, Heavy, assigned to the 40th Bomb Group. Its mission was to patrol the Caribbean with B-17, B-18, and B-24 bomber aircraft.
January, 1943	25th Bomb Squadron is assigned to the 40th Group and the 29th Bomb Squadron is transferred to another unit.
June 15, 1943	40th Bomb Group is rotated back to the United States and equipped with B-29 bombers.
Early 1945	40th Bomb Group is assigned to India and then to the Asian Theater of Operations where it was involved in the final missions over Japan.
August 14, 1945	Flew last World War II mission over Japan.
October, 1945	Deactivated.
May 28, 1952	Reactivated as the 40th Bomb Wing, Medium, at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ and equipped with B-29 bombers.
March, 1953	40th Bomb Wing transferred to Smoky Hill AFB, KS and assigned to the 802nd Air Division. ¹
June 20, 1960	Unit transferred to Forbes AFB, KS minus the 40th ARS which remained on base under the 310th Wing.
Summer, 1964	40th Wing deactivated at Forbes AFB, KS. ²

¹Impact, April 3, 1959.

²Salina (KS) Journal, May 8, 1964.

APPENDIX G

CHRONOLOGY OF THE
310TH BOMB WING
PRIOR TO ITS ARRIVAL AT
SMOKY HILL AFB, KS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
March 15, 1942	Activated at Tucson, AZ as the 310th Bomb Group, Medium, under the command of Lt. Col. William L. Lee with the 379th, 380th, 381st, and 428th Bomb Squadrons.
September 1, 1942	Received 54 B-25 bombers at Westover Field, MA while enroute to Africa where it flew 1,200 sorties and dropped 849.27 tons of bombs.
September 12, 1945	Deactivated at Pomigbiano, Italy.
December 27, 1946	Redesignated Headquarters, 310th Bomb Group, Light, inactive, and assigned to Hanscom Field, MA.
March 28, 1952	Reactivated at Forbes AFB, KS as the 310th Bomb Wing, Medium, and equipped as a B-29 unit.
September, 1952	Transferred to Smoky Hill AFB, KS and assigned to the 802nd Air Division. ¹
June 20, 1960	Receives control of the 40th Air Refueling Squadron.
March, 1963	The 40th ARS is deactivated.
June 25, 1965	310th Wing deactivated and returned to control by Headquarters, USAF.

¹Impact, July 26, 1957. The first Commander of the 310th Group was probably the same William L. Lee who later commanded the base in 1946-1947. He was a Lieutenant Colonel about this time and did rise to command of the 15th AF in Italy which had control of the 310th Group during World War II.

Note the 310th's paper status at Hanscom Field. This seems to have been common as Smoky Hill had the paper 96th Group assigned to it in 1946.

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